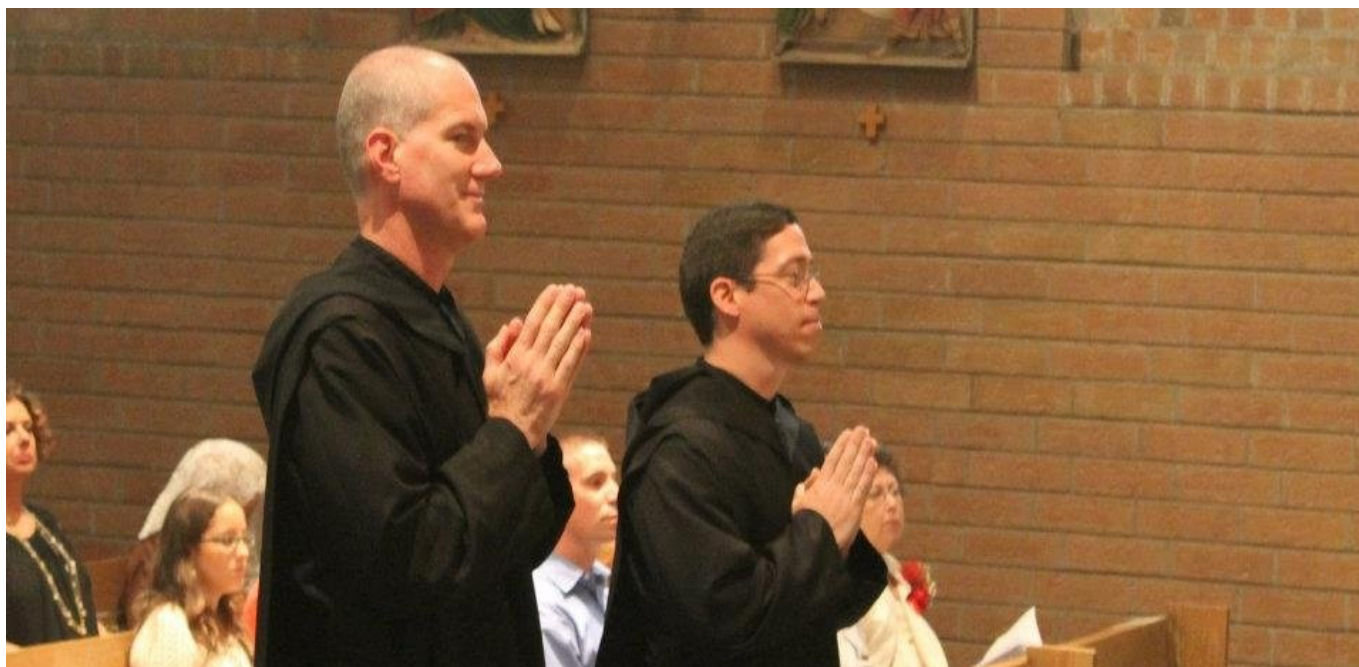




Oblates of St. Benedict Belmont Abbey

September, 2012



Brother Tobiah Abbott (left) and Brother Elias Correa-Torres took their solemn vows as monks of Belmont Abbey on July 11, the Feast of St. Benedict. (Christopher Lux photo)

Meeting in September

Oblates will meet in September on the 16th, the third Sunday of the month, and will begin at 3:30 p.m. in the Gallagher Room. First and second year novices will meet at 2:30 p.m. in the Gallagher Room to discuss the coming year's reading material.

First year novices need to get a copy of *Finding Sanctuary: Monastic Steps for Everyday Life* by Abbot Christopher Jamison and *Benedict of Nursia: His Message for Today* by Anselm Grun. They should read *Part One: Everyday Life* in the Jamison book.

Second year novices need to get a copy of *The Life of St. Benedict* by Terrence Kardong and *A Guide to Living in the Truth: Saint Benedict's Teaching on Humility*, by Fr. Michael Casey, OCSO. They should read Section 1 and 2 of *The Life* and chapter one of *A Guide*.

Oblates will continue reading Michael Casey's *Toward God: The Ancient Wisdom of Western Prayer*.

Mass is scheduled for October 21 at 3 p.m. Abbot Placid will be principal celebrant and will receive the new Oblates' and Novices' Oblations.

If you are making your novice or final oblation for the first time, please notify George Cobb, OblSB, by email immediately (gkcobb0428@gmail.com) or send a request to George through the Abbot's Office, Office of the Abbot, 100 Belmont-Mt. Holly Road, Belmont, NC 28012 no later than September 28.

Oblates who are present will also renew their Oblations at that time. Oblates who cannot attend because of health and distance need to send in the enclosed Oblation renewal form to maintain their name on the mailing list. If you wish to make either your first or final Oblation, please fill out the enclosed form and mail to the Abbey no later than September 14.

Two Belmont Abbey monks take solemn vows

Brother Tobiah Abbott, O.S.B., and Brother Elias Correa-Torres, O.S.B., took their solemn vows as monks of Belmont Abbey on July 11, the Feast of St. Benedict. The Profession Mass was held in the Abbey Basilica.

Brother Elias, whose given name was Ricardo José Correa-Torres, was born in Oklahoma. Before coming to Belmont Abbey, Brother Elias studied Meteorology at Florida State University, and earned his doctorate in that field. Upon completion of his studies, he accepted an opportunity to be one of the four co-founders of a new weather forecast service, Weather Predict, which originated in Florida and then relocated to Raleigh. After working with Weather Predict for eight years, Br. Elias decided to enter the monastery at Belmont Abbey. Since becoming a monk, Brother Elias has taught courses in Meteorology and in Mathematics and begun studies for ordination to the priesthood.

Brother Tobiah Abbott, whose given name is Derrick Lamar Abbott, was born and raised in Greenville, S.C. Before coming to Belmont Abbey, he served in the U.S. Coast Guard, and was stationed in such diverse places as New York, Alaska, Japan and Hawaii. Brother Tobiah was raised in the Baptist faith and came into the Catholic Church and to his monastic calling later in life. His current duties as a monk include serving as the assistant to the novice master in the monastery's formation program, overseeing and assigning the daily manual labor assignments of the monks in the formation program; and tending to the monastery's small fleet of cars, as well as the Abbey cemetery. One of Brother Tobiah's avocations is brewing homemade beer.



Passing: Henry Saul, OblSB

Henry Dare Saul, 59, passed away suddenly August 21 at Rutherford Regional Medical Center. He and his wife Judith Merton Saul have been oblates affiliated with the Belmont Abbey for many years, frequently attending monthly meetings at the Abbey when farm duties did not intrude.

A native of Augusta Georgia, he was a son of the late William Saul and Myrtle Virginia Lansdell Saul. Henry was a member of St. John The Baptist Catholic Church in Tryon, NC and had a career in the computer industry.

Left to cherish his memory are wife Judith, children Pamela Hester, Robert Nivens, Jacqueline Nivens, Jennifer Swezey, Charles Nivens and Elizabeth Saul. He is also survived by one brother James Saul, two sisters Linda Axton and Lynn Sutherland as well as ten grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers memorials are requested to St. John The Baptist Catholic Church 180 Laurel Ave. Tryon, NC.

Pilgrimage to eastern European monasteries

Pilgrimage to eastern European monasteries, Novy Dvur, Czech Republic, July 17

Thou, of all consolers best,
Thou, the soul's delightful guest,
Dost refreshing peace bestow.
-- Veni, Sante Spiritus

Once again, God has found green pastures for His child. Sitting on this wood bench outside the new guesthouse (converted from the old stable of the manor house), I can see for miles and not a house or village in sight. In the distance, atop another hill, a field of rapeseed (canola) glows in the evening dusk because of its brilliant yellow flowers. Most of the fields, though, are just for hay.

This new Trappist monastery, in the past year raised to the status of abbey, sits on top of its own hilllock and is surrounded by large green pastures, and they, in turn, are encompassed by dark pine forests. Much of this land is owned by the monks. Sept-Fons, the Motherhouse in central France whose monks founded Novy Dvur ten years ago, must be a wealthy monastery. Some would argue that all this money should have been used to feed the poor, but I am pleased to believe that it is all for the glory of God.

As awe-inspiring as the scenery is, it is the utter calmness, the refreshing silence, the total sense of peace that is so striking. The only sounds are the variety of birds with their own hymns of praise -- "the thunder and the singing of the birds are but His voice" -- the monastic steeple bells chiming out their quarter-hour glory to our Lord, and, overhead, the occasional drum of an airplane.

Yes, I have this same sense of recollection when I sit on our back deck at home on a quiet May morning over my coffee and Lectio. But here, on this isolated hill a light-year away from central Ohio, the sense of His presence seems to permeate the entire day and is only interrupted by the seven calls to the daily Divine Office and for meals. But even these daily prayers provide their own form of beauty and serenity, and they are always sung in Gregorian chant. However, I must admit the prayers are accompanied by a degree of personal frustration, as they are sung entirely in Latin or Czech. Fortunately I have my own breviary and English Bible with me. And the meals, shared with the other international guests in the guest refectory, pose no problem with this serenity, for they are all in silence.

How is one to account for this prevailing calmness, these pastures of peace? How can one explain this new monastic complex appearing suddenly like a Phoenix on the site of a nineteenth century manor house that had been unoccupied for 50 years, in a sparsely populated pocket of western Bohemia, and in a country that claims to be 60 percent agnostic? And how are we to explain the lives of these 25 intelligent, highly educated men who have chosen to give up all, the world and its allures, and to take up their crosses (His cross) to follow a young carpenter who lived 2000 years ago?

For the non-Christian it is all quite inexplicable, as the Cross has always been, "a stumbling block for the Jews and foolishness for the Greeks." But, for these monks who have surrendered their lives as much as possible to this carpenter, they would agree with Psalmist:

On a rock too high for me to reach,
[You have] set me on high . . .
Let me dwell in Your tent forever
and hide in the shelter of Your wings.
-- Psalm 61

Note: This entry was written in May and passed on in July. Richard subsequently moved on to Germany for a month and then on to Lithuania and Poland. He is now back in Ohio and is slated to give oblates a report on his travels sometime this fall.

- Richard Hansgen

Ordo

Listed are the Feast days and Memorials that are observed at the Monastery and follows the Ordo of the American Cassinese Congregation. You can also see the observed feast days by going to: <http://oblatesosbbelmont.org/ordo/>.

SEPTEMBER

- 9 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
- 13 John Chrysostom, Memorial.
- 14 Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Feast.
- 15 Our Lady of Sorrows, Memorial.
- 16 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time;
- 20 Andrew Kim Taegon, Paul Chong Hasang, and their Companions, Memorial.
- 21 Matthew, Feast.
- 23 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time; (Begin Novena in honor of the Guardian Angels, Patron on the American Cassinese Congregation)
- 27 Vincent de Paul, Memorial
- 29 Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, Archangels. Feast.
- 30 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

OCTOBER

- 1 Thérèse of the Child Jesus, Memorial.
- 2 Guardian Angels. Feast. Patron of the American Cassinese Congregation
- 4 Francis of Assisi, Memorial.
- 6 Bruno, Presbyter, Memorial.
- 7 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time
- 14 28th Sunday in Ordinary Times.
- 15 Teresa of Jesus, Memorial.
- 17 Ingatius of Antioch.
- 18 Luke. Feast.
- 21 29th Sunday in Ordinary Times.

Meeting in October

Oblates will meet in October on the 21st. Mass is scheduled for 3 p.m.

Should you have any questions, please contact:
George K. Cobb, OblSB,
Belmont Abbey Monastery
100 Belmont-Mt. Holly Road,
Belmont, NC 28012
gkcobb0428@gmail.com.