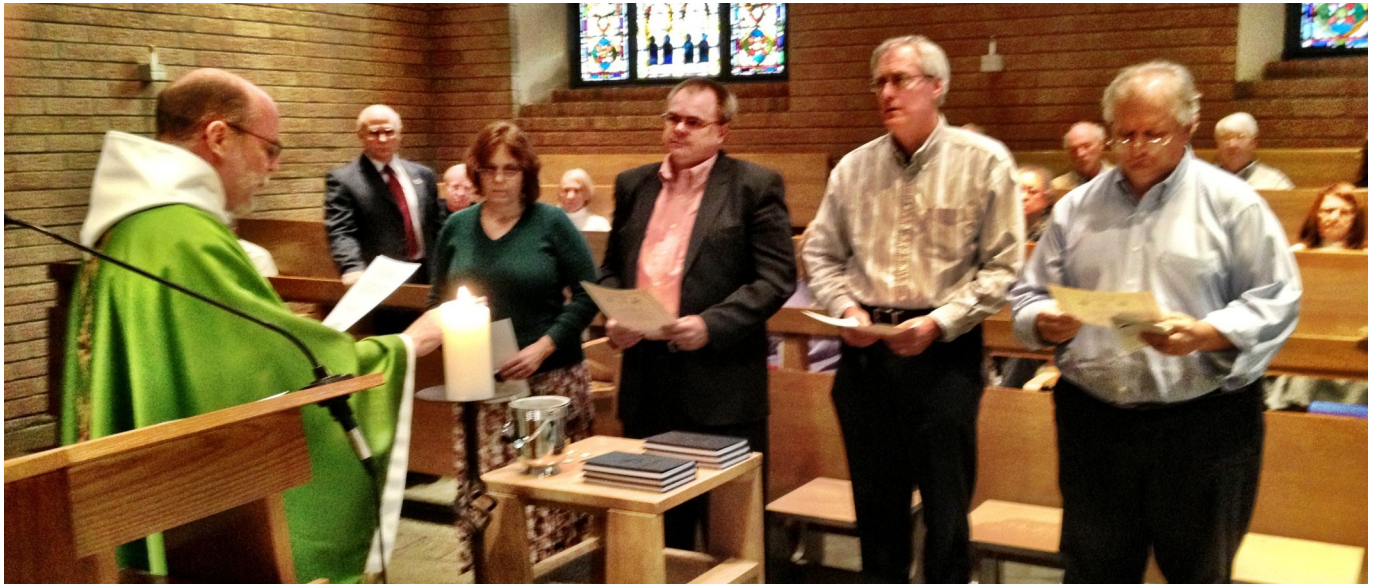




# Oblates of St. Benedict Belmont Abbey

November, 2012



*From left to right, oblate novices Natalie and Larry McKenny, Jim Nielsen and Hal Cline make their novice oblations before Abbot Placid Solari in the Belmont Abbey Basilica on Sunday, October 21.*

## Meeting in November

Oblates will meet in November on the 18th.

First year novices will continue reading *Finding Sanctuary: Monastic Steps for Everyday Life* by Abbot Christopher Jamison and *Benedict of Nursia: His Message for Today* by Anselm Grun. They should continue to read Part One: *Everyday Life* in the Jamison book. At the last meeting, we left off at the sub-chapter "Get Away From It All."

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 chapter 4 of Michael Casey's *Toward God: The Ancient Wisdom of Western Prayer*.



## Bishop Curlin's Remembrances of St. Teresa of Calcutta



*Bishop-Emeritus William Curlin, who retired as Ordinary of the Diocese of Charlotte in 2002, spoke at Belmont Abbey's Grace Auditorium on Oct. 23 about his friendship with Mother Teresa. He was invited to the school to speak by Brother Edward Mancuso, OSB. Curlin's work with the famed nun – whom Bishop Curlin calls "one of the greatest saints of our times" – led him to aid in founding homes for the poor and homeless with terminal diseases, notably AIDS. Here are excerpts from his talk:*

**God sent me to find you:** On Christmas Eve, 1969, Curlin learned that he was going to be moved to a parish in a slum five minutes from the White House. The place was in miserable condition and in debt. "Nobody wanted to go to that dump," he said. "It was a bad place to be." On Christmas Day, he was in his new church. He thought the place was empty when he heard someone coughing. It was a little African-American lady almost 90 years old, half-blind. She asked if he wanted to have dinner with her. He asked what she was serving. "Dog food with beans and rice," she said. "it makes a great meatloaf." He thought better of that and invited her to eat with him. He went down to a little store and got some hot dogs and beans. And they ate together. Something hit him. He told his dinner companion, "I think God sent me down here to find you." Because of that meeting, he started a food program for the elderly and homeless. "Five minutes from the White House and people were eating dog food." Because of his work feeding the poor, he was told a nun was coming to town who also worked with the poor and he should meet her. "I had never heard of Mother Teresa. When I met her that next Sunday, at first I thought she was a Hare Krishna, the way she dressed. She asked me what kind of food I made for the poor. I said sandwiches and soup -- I made pretty good soup -- and she asked me if I risked my heart. That question changed my life. A few months later, she called me and said, 'I'll see you Wednesday.' I asked if she was coming to Washington. She said. 'Np, you are coming to India!' I said I couldn't afford to even go to Baltimore. But a friend said he would pay my way if I would pray for him and his wife. The man said she was a holy woman. I said 'Yes, I know, but she's crazy! When I arrived in Calcutta, she was waiting for me and said, 'I knew you would come.'"

**Dying like an animal:** "There were 15 million people in Calcutta and I think 10 million were in the streets. And Mother would walk down those streets. People would rush up to her and touch her feet. They considered her like Gandhi, the holy woman of India. She told him that after a monsoon, she had seen something moving in the gutter. It was a human face and she dragged the man into a house. He was half-eaten by rats. He told her he was dying like an animal. That is when she knew why God had sent her to India."

**Is my dad coming?:** "In 1985, Mother opened a place in New York City for people with AIDS. I remember a young man came back from Vietnam. He had AIDS. The man was dying. He didn't want to talk to me. I

told me that's OK, but I'll be back. A nurse told me he had AIDS. I hadn't heard of it. People were afraid to even touch people who had it. Back then, nobody wanted these people. I could tell you stories about it. If you had AIDS, you were trash. God would punish you and put you in Hell... you know, that type of thumbs down on human beings. The next day I saw the young man with his Army buddies. He had a birthday cake in front of him and he said to me, "I guess you want a piece of cake, don't you?" And I said, "Yes, cut me a piece of cake." When he was finished he told everyone to leave but me and asked me if I'd hear his confession. I visited him every day until the day he died. He died on Good Friday. I called Mother and told her what happened. Mother said when you see someone suffering, you ask what you can do to bring Jesus and give them love and peace... There was another young guy, 22, whose father was a prominent Catholic in Washington. He asked me if I would call his father and he gave me the number. I called his father. He asked who I was and I told him. I said your son... He told me he is not my son. I said he is your son and he's dying. I said the boy prays the Rosary every day and wants to die a holy death and he wants to say goodbye to you. He told me where to go and slammed the phone down. I went back and the boy asked, 'Is my dad coming?' I couldn't say he doesn't want you. I said, will you call me Father? Can I be your dad just for the night? He died in the morning. After I buried him, I called the pastor of that parish to inquire about the father and he told me the man went to Communion every day and was their best parishioner. I thought what a hypocrite: what happened in church didn't go beyond the doors. Let God be the judge of that... You know, you go to church and you say your prayers, but does it go beyond that? You don't transform... see things differently... see God's presence."

**Why are you frightened?:** "Mother said it was better to be blind in your eyes than blind in your heart. She said see with your heart and listen with your heart, not just your ears. The first time she asked me to wash a leper, I did not want to touch that guy. He was a mess. The blood... And Mother asked, 'Why are you frightened? Don't you recognize Jesus? In the least person, you will find me. Don't you see God?' And when she said that, everything changed. "

**No promise of any reward:** "I told Mother that God gave her a special gift. Some people do things because they get a reward out of it. If I do this, I get my candy bar. I do this... what am I getting? But to give and

(expect) nothing in return is heroic. The greatest act of faith is to do something out of love with no promise of any sense of reward... I talked to her before she died and she said, 'My key to heaven is I love Jesus in the night.'"

**We do not discuss these things:** "One time, Mother sent word for me to meet her at the plane when she was coming in. (While I waited) a young beautiful woman came up. She was gorgeous, like a movie star. And her husband was apparently a pilot and he was with her. And she was weeping. And she removed her veil and it looked like pearls, tumors all over her throat, horrible. She told Mother she had four little children and asked Mother to help her. Mother put her hands beside her face, touching the horrible disfigurement and said, 'I promise you that Jesus will cure you. Your children need you. Please do not fear.' The woman smiled and walked away. The next time I was there, I inquired as to what had happened to that woman. Mother said the woman woke up one day and (the tumors) were all gone. I asked Mother what happened? She said, 'We do not discuss these things.'..."

**As God is my judge:** "I was in a room with these rusty fans in Calcutta (at night) with a flashlight and I reached up and the fan cut me and ripped my arm... blood and gore. I didn't know what to do... The nuns washed and bandaged it. It was terrible. I had to leave the next day to travel (back from India to the States.) I didn't know what to do. Mother came in and said do not fear. She washed the wound as best she could and put a bandage around it and said a prayer and took me to the airport. When we got there, I had to go to the bathroom. As God is my judge, I came in to the bathroom and checked under the bandage, thinking this is going to be a mess, bloody. From here to here on my arm, not a scratch. Am I crazy? I asked. When I got home, I called Mother about it and she said, 'We don't discuss these things.'"

**God puts us where we need to be:** "Mother really believed that if you believe in Jesus and you become his disciple, God wakes up in you. She believed God possessed her. I was in my parish one morning around 2 a.m. It was raining like mad. For some reason I got up, got dressed, went to the car and got soaking wet and drove to the hospital and when I got there, I thought, 'I'm crazy, nobody sent for me.' Yet he walked through the hospital and arrived on a floor and encountered a man who said he had been praying for me to come. He needed to talk. I told Mother and she asked why I was surprised: God moves you. She said the worst disease is not leprosy, it's not AIDS, it's not cancer, the worst disease is the absence of God in us. If you wake up in the morning and believe God wakes up in you, he acts in us. He puts us where he needs to be. I remember coming back from a retreat and my pastor asked where I was going. I said I was going to church. He asked if I was going to pray all

day. I said I didn't know. And all that day I felt depressed. I am not a depressed kind of person. I felt so discouraged. I felt scared about it. What's happening to me? I'm not like this. And so I went to the church and there was this man there who asked if I would hear his confession. He said it was strange, Father, he said, he'd felt this depression and passed the church and I suddenly felt peace and happiness and said if there's a priest in that church when he came by around 3-4 o'clock that afternoon, he promised not to sin again."

## 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/>.

## NOVEMBER

- 21 The Presentation of the Bl. Virgin Mary, Memorial.
- 22 Cecilia, Memorial.
- 24 Andrew Dung-Lac & His Companion, Memorial.
- 25 Sunday: Solemnity of Christ the King (Week II)
- 30 Andrew, Apostle, Feast.

## DECEMBER

- 2 First Sunday of Advent (Week I)
- 3 Francis Xavier
- 7 Ambrose
- 8 The Immaculate Conception of the Bl. Virgin Mary (Solemnity)
- 9 Second Sunday of Advent (Week II)
- 12 Our Lady of Guadalupe (Feast)
- 13 Lucy
- 14 John of the Cross
- 16 Third Sunday of Advent (Week III)
- 21 Peter Canisius]
- 23 Fourth Sunday of Advent; John of Kanty (Week IV)
- 25 Christmas Day (Solemnity)
- 26 Stephen, First Martyr (Feast)
- 27 John, Apostle (Feast)
- 28 Holy Innocents (Feast)
- 30 Holy Family (Feast)
- 30 Feast of the Holy Family (Week III)
- 31 Sylvester I

## Meeting in December

Oblates will meet in December on the 16th. Should you have any questions, please contact: George K. Cobb, ObISB, Belmont Abbey Monastery, 100 Belmont-Mt. Holly Road, Belmont, NC 28012, [gkcobb0428@gmail.com](mailto:gkcobb0428@gmail.com).