



Oblates of St. Benedict Belmont Abbey

February, 2013



The Belmont Abbey Monastery on Saturday, Jan. 26, the day after a winter storm brought frigid temperatures, heavy winds, sleet and freezing rain to the area. (Photo by Gary Nielson.)

Meeting in February

Oblates will meet in January on the 17th.

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 Two: Step 2: Contemplation in the Jamison book.

Second year novices need to continue with *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.

At the oblate meeting, Richard Hansgen, OblSB, from Columbus, Ohio will be telling the story of his pilgrimage last year to Eastern Europe. That 14-week trip included many prayerful retreats at monasteries and convents -- Benedictine, Carmelite, Norbertine and Trappist -- in the Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia. Richard is planning to share many photographs of the monasteries and countryside and read reflections from the journal he kept.

Classroom #215 in Stowe Hall at the Belmont Abbey has been reserved for this presentation at 3:30 p.m. We will still meet in the Gallagher Room before heading upstairs.

Three Comings of Christ

We know that there are three comings of the Lord. The third lies between the other two. It is invisible, while the other two are visible. In the first coming he was seen on earth, dwelling among men; he himself testifies that they saw him and hated him. In the final coming all flesh will see the salvation of our God, and they will look on him whom they

pierced. The intermediate coming is a hidden one; in it only the elect see the Lord within their own selves, and they are saved. In his first coming our Lord came in our flesh and in our weakness; in this middle coming he comes in spirit and in power; in the final coming he will be seen in glory and majesty.

In case someone should think that what we say about this middle coming is sheer invention, listen to what our Lord himself says: If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him. There is another passage of Scripture which reads: He who fears God will do good, but something further has been said about the one who loves, that is, that he will keep God's word. Where is God's word to be kept? Obviously in the heart, as the prophet says: I have hidden your words in my heart, so that I may not sin against you.

Keep God's word in this way. Let it enter into your very being, let it take possession of your desires and your whole way of life. Feed on goodness, and your soul will delight in its richness. Remember to eat your bread, or your heart will wither away. Fill your soul with richness and strength.

Because this coming lies between the other two, it is like a road on which we travel from the first coming to the last. In the first, Christ was our redemption; in the last, he will appear as our life; in this middle coming, he is our rest and consolation.

If you keep the word of God in this way, it will also keep you. The Son with the Father will come to you. The great Prophet who will build the new Jerusalem will come, the one who makes all things new. This coming will fulfill what is written: As we have borne the likeness of the earth-

ly man, we shall also bear the likeness of the heavenly man. Just as Adam's sin spread through all mankind and took hold of all, so Christ, who created and redeemed all, will glorify all, once he takes possession of all.

St. Bernard

Sermo 5, In Adventu Domini, 1-3: Opera Omnia

On prayer

Prayer changes at every moment in proportion to the degree of purity in the soul and in accordance with the extent to which the soul is moved either by outside influence or of itself. Certainly the same kind of prayers cannot be uttered continuously by any one person. A lively person prays one way. A person brought down by the weight of gloom or despair prays another. One prays another way when the life of the spirit is flourishing, and another way when pushed down by the mass of temptation. One prays differently, depending on whether one is seeking the gift of some grace or virtue or the removal of some sinful vice. The prayer is different once again when one is sorrowing at the thought of hell and the fear of future judgment, or when one is fired by hope and longing for future blessedness, when one is in need or peril, in peace or tranquility, when one is flooded with the light of heavenly mysteries or when one is hemmed in by aridity in virtue and staleness in one's thinking.

- John Cassian



Novena Prayer to St. Benedict

Glorious Saint Benedict, sublime model of virtue, pure vessel of God's grace! Behold me humbly kneeling at your feet. I implore you in your loving kindness to pray for me before the throne of God. To you I have recourse in the dangers

that daily surround me. Shield me against my selfishness and my indifference to God and to my neighbor. Inspire me to imitate you in all things. May your blessing be with me always, so that I may see and serve Christ in others and work for His kingdom.

Graciously obtain for me from God those favors and graces which I need so much in the trials, miseries and afflictions of life. Your heart was always full of love, compassion and mercy toward those who were afflicted or troubled in any way. You never dismissed without consolation and assistance anyone who had recourse to you. I therefore invoke your powerful intercession, confident in the hope that you will hear my prayers and obtain for me the special grace and favor I earnestly implore.

(mention your petition)

Help me, great Saint Benedict, to live and die as a faithful child of God, to run in the sweetness of His loving will, and to attain the eternal happiness of heaven. Amen



Spreading the Gospel by being saints

There was to be nothing special about it, nothing that savored of a religious Order, no special rule, no distinctive habit. She, and those who joined her, would simply be poor--there was no choice on that score, for they were that

already--but they would embrace their poverty, and the life of the proletariat in all its misery and insecurity and dead, drab monotony. They would live and work in the slums, lose themselves, in the huge anonymous mass of the forgotten and the derelict, for the only purpose of living the complete, integral Christian life in that environment--loving those around them, sacrificing themselves for those around them, and spreading the Gospel and the truth of Christ most of all by being saints, by living in union with Him, by being full of His Holy Ghost, His charity.

Thomas Merton

The Seven Storey Mountain

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/>.

FEBRUARY

- 13 Ash Wednesday
- 17 1st Sunday of Lent (Week I)
- 22 The Chair of Peter
- 24 2nd Sunday of Lent (Week II)
- 25 Walburga (Opt. Memorial)

MARCH

- 3 3rd Sunday of Lent (Week III)
- 9 St. Frances of Rome, Patroness of Oblates (Opt. Memorial)
- 12 Novena in honor of our holy father Benedict begins today
- 17 5th Sunday of Lent (Week IV)
- 19 Joseph, husband of the Bl. Virgin Mary, Solemnity
- 21 Passing of Our Holy Father Benedict, Solemnity
- 24 Palm Sunday (Week I)
- 28 Holy Thursday
- 29 Good Friday
- 31 Easter (Week 1)

Since the Solemnity of The Annunciation of the Lord, normally celebrated on March 25, falls within Holy Week, the feast is deferred to April 8th.

Meeting in March

Oblates will meet in March on the 17th. Should you have any questions, please contact:

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