



Oblates of St. Benedict

Oblate Program at Belmont Abbey, NC

November, 2014

NOT TWO BUT THREE COMINGS OF THE LORD

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 earthly 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 of Clairvaux (*Sermo 5, In Adventu Domini, 1-3: Opera Omnia, Edit. Cisterc. 4 {1966}, 188-190*)

The next Oblate meeting will be November 16, 2014 at 3:30 PM in the Gallagher Room on the first floor of Stowe Hall.

NOVENA TO THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION



O Mary Immaculate, lily of purity, I salute you, because from the very first instant of your conception you were filled with grace. I thank and adore the Most Holy Trinity for having imparted to you favors so sublime.

O Mary, full of grace, help me to share, even though just a little, in the fullness of grace so wonderfully bestowed on you in your Immaculate Conception. With firm confidence in your never failing intercession, we beseech you to obtain for us the intention of this novena, [State your intention here...] and also that purity of mind, heart, and body necessary to unite us with God.

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you. O Mother of God, by your Immaculate Conception, intercede for us with your Divine Son, and obtain for us from Him, the favor for which we pray. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR MEETING

Strangers to the City: Chapters 4, 6, 8

Chapter 4

- 1-If your mind is preoccupied and your body can't keep still, what do you need to do to focus on God?
- 2- Much of our culture makes entertainment out to be a top priority. (p.41) How does entertainment play a part in your life, as an Oblate?
3. Why is reading at the center of the seriousness that Benedict prized? (It broadens the mind and brings about a certain refinement opposite of vulgarity and roughness.) P.44-45
- 4- Why is it so important to incorporate scripture into your lectio, ? whether directly from the bible or from a book referencing the bible? Because we need to feed our minds on the gospel message, to ponder it in our hearts and to become, in our own small way, doers of God's words. (p.49)What is the most important difference between sacred reading and other reading? (p.50) Is the fact that lectio is a work of love, a gift of self through the dedication of time, a way to enter more into the presence of God.

Chapter 6

1. (top.p.77) How do we approach dispossession?
2. Why do we practice monastic poverty? In order to seek God.
3. Why does Benedict prohibit monks from receiving unauthorized gifts?
4. Does RB.58.24 say it all concerning monastic dispossession?
5. (P.86, 2nd to last par.) Without poverty of spirit, what is not possible and why? Explain your answer.
6. What is the most essential ingredient in poverty of spirit?
- 7-(Bottom p.89) What is the monastic tradition formed around?

Chapter 7

- 1- At end first paragraph on p. 92, How does Casey define obedience?
- 2-(p. 94.) As an oblate, what is the significance of the line: "As soon as a monk heard the signal, he was to drop whatever was in hand, and run quickly yet gravely to respond? RB 43.1
- 3- (End of 1st par. p.97) Is monastic life a sprint or a marathon?
- 4- As an oblate do we need to be self-aware and use our experience to watch our ways?
- 5- How would Christ correct a person?
- 6- (p.104-105 last par) How is it helpful to look at Obedience as embracing Christ's cross?



"You didn't *either* just friend the Pope!"

THE ADVENT WREATH



Advent Wreath at Belmont Abbey.
Photo by Br. Tobiah Abbott, OSB

The Advent Wreath, a venerable European tradition, can be a way to involve even very little children in learning about Christian preparation - not only for celebrating Our Lord's birth, but to make our hearts truly ready to receive Him.

The wreath's symbolism of the advent (coming) of Light into the world is clear. The gradual lighting of the four candles, one on each Sunday of the Advent season, combined with the liturgical colors of the candles (purple is the penitential color used during Advent and Lent; rose is a liturgical color used only on Gaudete Sunday in Advent and Laetare Sunday in Lent) help to symbolize not only our expectation and hope in Our Savior's first coming into the world, but also in his Second Coming as Judge at the end of the world.

The wreath itself is also symbolic. The circle of evergreen in which the candles are placed represents everlasting life. The seedpods, nuts and cones used to decorate the wreath are symbolic of resurrection, and fruits represent the nourishing fruitfulness of the Christian life.

Gathering materials for the wreath-perhaps on an outing in the park or woods, or even in the backyard- and assembling it at home is an interesting family project in which even the youngest children can participate.

On the first Sunday of Advent, you may sprinkle the wreath with holy water and bless it before the first purple candle is lit. The appropriate Advent collect can be said as the candle[s] are lit each day of the week, followed by the blessing before meals, if you use the wreath at mealtime. The second Sunday two purple candles are lit; the third Sunday, two purple and one rose; and all candles are lit on the fourth Sunday.

Children who are old enough can take turns lighting the candles. (The littlest ones can blow them out at the end of the meal.) If you use the wreath at mealtime, it is helpful to place it on a tray or platter so it can be moved, and to protect the table from candle wax.

On Christmas Day, all the greens and decorations are replaced with fresh ones, and four new white candles, symbolizing Christ, replace the colored ones and are burned throughout the Christmas season. The Advent season is a good time to pray the Angelus at family meals.

WEBSITE: NEW ORDO FEATURE

Each month the Ordo as celebrated at the Abbey is published in the newsletter. What is not included are the optional Memorials that may not be observed at the Monastery but of which many of you look forward. The website did have a calendar but needed improvement.

Over the summer a need Ordo feature was added to the homepage of the website. It is more complete than the last calendar and includes moveable Solemnities as well as the optional Memorials. We will continue to publish the Ordo in the newsletter but it is hoped this new feature will be of added assistance.

ORDO

Indeed, Nothing Is to Be Preferred to the Work of God. (RB 43)

NOVEMBER

- 21 Presentation of the Virgin Mary. Memorial
- 22 Cecilia. Memorial
- 23 **Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. Solemnity**
- 24 Andrew Dung-lac and His Companions. Memorial
- 29 *Begin novena in honor of Immaculate Conception*
- 30 **1st Sunday of Advent** (Week I)

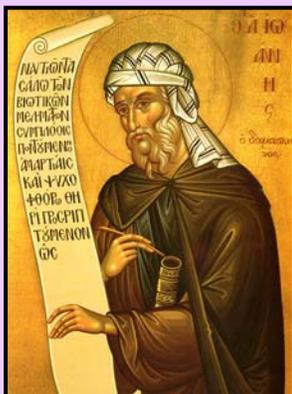
DECEMBER

- 3 Francis Xavier. Memorial
- 7 **2nd Sunday of Advent** (Week II)
- 8 **Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. Solemnity**
- 12 Our Lady of Guadalupe. Feast
- 13 Lucy, Virgin, Martyr. Memorial
- 14 3rd Sunday of Advent (Week III)
- 21 4th Sunday of Advent (Week IV)

ST. JOHN OF DAMASCUS (DAMASCENE), DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH: DECEMBER 4

“The whole earth is a living icon of the face of God.”

“The saints must be honored as friends of Christ and children and heirs of God, as John the theologian and evangelist says: ‘But as many as received him, he gave them the power to be made the sons of God...’ Let us carefully observe the manner of life of all the apostles, martyrs, ascetics and just men who announced the coming of the Lord. And let us emulate their faith, charity, hope, zeal, life, patience under suffering, and perseverance unto death, so that we may also share their crowns of glory” (*Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*).

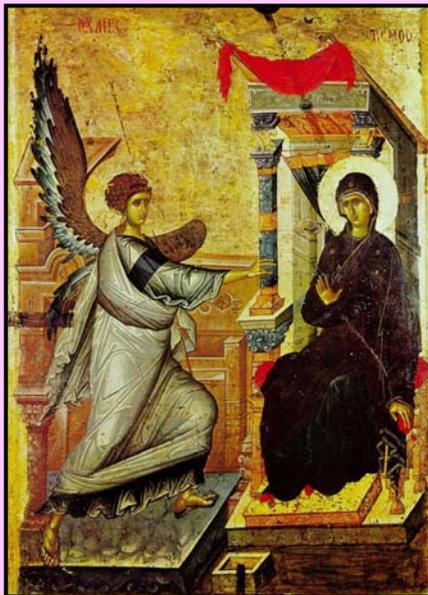


“Wherefore, brethren, let us plant ourselves upon the rock of faith and the Tradition of the Church, removing not the landmarks set by our holy fathers, nor giving room to those who are anxious to introduce novelties and to undermine the structure of God’s holy ecumenical and apostolic Church. For if everyone were allowed a free hand, little by little the entire Body of the Church would be destroyed.”

St. John of Damascus

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR ADVENT

One way of preparing for Jesus’ First Coming is to spend some extra time reading the scriptures. The following suggested readings were prepared by Catholic Online.



First Week of Advent

Sunday: Romans 13:11-14
Monday: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Tuesday: Mark 13:33-37
Wednesday: John 1:1-5
Thursday: John 1:6-9
Friday: Jeremiah 33:14-16
Saturday: Isaiah 6

Second Week of Advent

Sunday: Romans 15:4-13
Monday: Psalms 43:3-6
Tuesday: Psalms 27:1-4
Wednesday: Psalms 119:105-106
Thursday: John 12:35-36
Friday: Ephesians 5:6-14
Saturday: 1 Peter 2:5-9

Third Week of Advent

Sunday: Isaiah 60:1-3
Monday: 2 Corinthians 4:3-6
Tuesday: 1 John 1:4-7
Wednesday: John 3:16-21
Thursday: Isaiah 40:1-11
Friday: John 9:1-7
Saturday: Luke 3:1-6

Fourth Week of Advent

Sunday: Isaiah 11:1-10
Monday: Zephaniah 3:14-17
Tuesday: Matthew 1:18-25
Wednesday: Luke 2:8-20
Thursday: Matthew 4:14-16
Friday: Isaiah 2:1-5
Saturday: Luke 2:25-33

The December meeting of the Oblates will be on the 21th at 3:30 unless otherwise announced. Please check OblatesOSBBelmont.org for any changes.