



Oblates of St. Benedict

Oblate Program at Belmont Abbey, NC

January, 2015

JANUARY 22 DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE LEGAL PROTECTION OF UNBORN CHILDREN



A great prayer for life is urgently needed, a prayer which will rise up throughout the world. Through special initiatives and in daily prayer, may an impassioned plea rise to God, the Creator and lover of life, from every Christian community, from every group and association, from every family and from the heart of every believer.

*Pope Saint John Paul II, Evangelium Vitae, no. 100**

The over 56 million abortions since the 1973 decisions of *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* reflect with heartbreaking magnitude what Pope Francis means by a "throwaway culture." However, we have great trust in God's providence. We are reminded time and again in Scripture to seek the Lord's help, and as people of faith, we believe that our prayers are heard.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM), no. 373, designates January 22 as a particular day of prayer and penance, called the "Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children": "In all the Dioceses of the United States of America, January 22 (or January 23, when January 22 falls on a Sunday) shall be observed as a particular day of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life and of penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion."

As individuals, we are called to observe this day through the penitential practices of prayer, fasting and/or giving alms. Another way to take part is through participating in special events to observe the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. Call your local diocese or parish to find out what events might be taking place in your area.

FEBRUARY 10: FEAST OF ST. SCHOLASTICA

Scholastica is, according to tradition, the twin sister of Benedict. She is a shadowy figure whom we know from a single charming story in the Dialogues. She led some form of consecrated life with a group of Christian women. Gregory tells us that yearly she journeyed to meet her brother at a small house midway between their residences. On one momentous occasion, as evening fell, Benedict packed up his monks to return to the monastery from which, according to his own Rule, he was not permitted to be absent overnight. Scholastica begged him to make an exception and stay over so that they could continue their holy conversation. When Benedict refused, Scholastica wept and prayed and immediately such a torrent of rain fell that no one could leave the house. As Gregory says,

the woman's prayers prevailed with God because her love was the greater. When Scholastica died, Benedict had her body brought to Montecassino and placed in his own tomb. Scholastica's name means "she who has leisure to devote to study." Some skeptical historians have suggested that she is only a literary device: a personification of the Benedictine practice of reflective study. She remains very real, however, to Benedictine women, with the reality which can transcend simple historical existence, as a model of the feminine aspects of Benedictine monasticism, and an example of the power of the soul who loves God.

Sr. Margaret Clarke, O.S.B.

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PRAYER TO ST. SCHOLASTICA

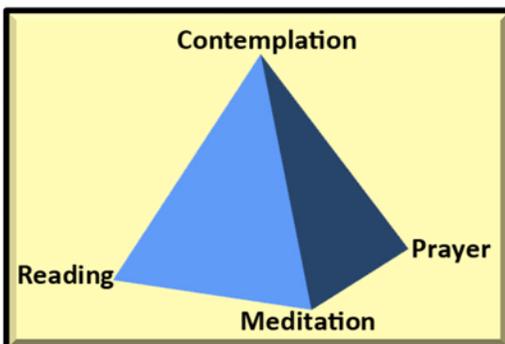
O God, Who, to show the innocence of her life, did cause the soul of your blessed virgin Scholastica to ascend to Heaven in the form of a dove, grant, we beseech Thee, by her merits and prayers, that we may live so innocently as to deserve to arrive at eternal joys, through Jesus Christ, your Son, Our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



Lectio Divina— A Way of Living

We often read scripture or other texts like the newspaper—scan for the important points, skim the parts that may not make immediate sense, and then move on. Rather than reading for quick facts and information, *lectio divina*, or “divine reading,” is a spacious, prayerful process inviting us to savor the text. The reader enters into a prayerful dialogue with text, chews on it, ponders it in her or his heart, and looks beyond the obvious to make connections with life and prayer. *Lectio divina* is not a method with steps that must be done in order. Rather it is a way of living the text.

- **Reading.** Choose a passage and read it slowly many times. Read it silently, read it aloud. Without focusing too much on perfection, try memorizing the passage.
- **Meditating.** As words or phrases stand out, focus on them. Dialogue with them—why do they “stand out” or “shimmer” to you. What do they remind you of? Other verses? Memories? Do they inspire you to prayer?
- **Praying.** As you read and meditate, do you find yourself asking God questions? Do people come to mind or life situations which could be brought to God? Allow the connections you make become a natural conversation with God.
- **Contemplating.** This is a gift from God. It may not happen and it is not the “reward” for a well-done *lectio divina*! It is the delightful “aha-moment,” a sense of timelessness, an inner awe at the beauty or love or wisdom or (fill in the blank) of God, revealed through the text.



At any point, praying may lead back into reading, contemplating back into meditating. Reading could lead directly into contemplation. Over time, this way of reading scripture can become second nature and spill over into other areas of life. One can “read” a situation, a world event, a personal crisis, or a relationship in this manner.

Susan Forshey, 2008

ORDO

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

JANUARY

- 17 Anthony, Abbot. Memorial
- 18 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week II)
- 21 Agnes, Virgin, Martyr. Memorial
- 24 Francis De Sales, Bishop, Doctor of the Church. Memorial.
- 25 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week III)
- 28 Thomas Aquinas, Priest, Doctor of the Church. Memorial
- 31 John Bosco, Priest, Religious Founder, Educator. Memorial

FEBRUARY

- 1 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week IV)
- 2 Presentation of the Lord. Feast
- 5 Agatha, Virgin, Martyr. Memorial
- 6 Paul Miki, Religious, Missionary, Martyr, and His Companions, Martyrs. Memorial
- 8 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week I)
- 10 Scholastica, Virgin, Religious Founder. Feast
- 11 *Our Lady of Lourdes* (Opt. Memorial)
- 14 Cyril, Monk, Missionary, and Methodius, Bishop, Missionary. Memorial
- 15 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week II)

LENT

- 17 Ash Wednesday

NECROLOGY



Please remember to pray for the following deceased monks of the Abbey.

JANUARY

- 3 Fr. Gerard Rettger
- 4 Fr. Herman Gronos
- 5 Fr. Benedict Rettger
- 7 Fr. Paul Milde
- 8 Br. Benedict Marschall
- 9 Fr. Anselm Biggs
- 14 Fr. Maurus Buchheit
- 15 Fr. Matthew Graz
- 22 Br. Felix Keilhacker
- 24 Br. Obl. Fredrick Schleid
- 28 Br. Philip Lobinger
- 29 Br. Aloysius Buss

FEBRUARY

- 3 Br. Eugene O'Neil
- 8 Fr. Kenneth Geyer
- 18 Fr. William Regnat
- 24 Br. Aegidius Seier
- 24 Br. Gregory Corcoran



WHY THE PSALMS

... There is no aspect of the interior life, no kind of religious experience, no spiritual need of the human person that is not depicted and lived out in the Psalms. But we cannot lay hands on these riches unless we are willing to work for them. ... We cannot by mere human ingenuity or talent exhaust all that is contained in the Psalms. Indeed, if we seek only to "get something out of them" we will perhaps get less than we expect, and generous efforts may be frustrated because they are turned in the wrong direction: toward ourselves rather than toward God. In the last analysis, it is not so much what we get out of Psalms that rewards us, as what we put into them. If we really make them our prayer, really prefer them to other methods and expedients, in order to let God pray in us in His own words ... then indeed we will enter into the meaning of the Psalms, and they will become our favorite vocal prayers.

Thomas Merton
Praying the Psalms

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE NEXT OBLATE MEETING: STRANGERS TO THE CITY

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?

WEBSITE: NEW ORDO FEATURE

Each month the listing of solemnities, feasts and memorials 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.

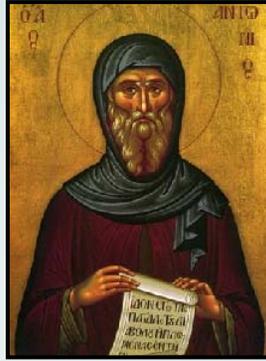
Over the summer a new Ordo feature was added to the homepage of the website. It is more complete than the old calendar including moveable Solemnities and Feasts as well as the optional Memorials. An additional feature will show when there is an unusual change in the weekly sequence of the psalter.

We will continue to publish the Ordo in the newsletter but it is hoped this new feature will be of added assistance.

The screenshot shows a website interface with a quote at the top: "Those who possess the fear of God are the furthest from telling lies, because they have an honest judge, their own conscience." Below this is a section titled "Events on January 2, 2015" listing "Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen" with start and end times and a description of a memorial. A "Next quote" link is also visible. The main feature is the "ORDO" section, which includes a "Back" link and a calendar for January 2015. The calendar shows days of the week (S, M, T, W, T) and dates from 1 to 31. Below the calendar is a "Benedictine" section with links to Belmont Abbey College, Belmont Abbey Monastery, Benedictine Charism Today, and International Benedictine Oblates. On the right side, there is a "Br. Marks" section with a sub-section "Beyond Goodbye: A" and a small image of a person.

JANUARY 17: ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT, FATHER OF MONASTICISM

. . . Aware of the historical period in which he lived and of the change that was taking place - from pagan Rome to Christian Rome - in a period of profound crisis, Leo the Great knew how to make himself close to the people and the faithful with his pastoral action and his preaching. He enlivened charity in a Rome tried by famines, an influx of refugees, injustice and poverty. He opposed pagan superstitions and the actions of Manichaeian groups. He associated the liturgy with the daily life of Christians: for example, by combining the practice of fasting with charity and almsgiving above all on the occasion of the Quattro tempora, which in the course of the year marked the change of seasons. In particular, Leo the Great taught his faithful - and his words still apply for us today - that the Christian liturgy is not the memory of past events, but the actualization of invisible realities which act in the lives of each one of us. This is what he stressed in a sermon (cf. 64, 1-2) on Easter, to be celebrated in every season of the year "not so much as something of the past as rather an event of the present". All this fits into a precise project, the Holy Pontiff insisted: just as, in fact, the Creator enlivened with the breath of rational life man formed from the dust of

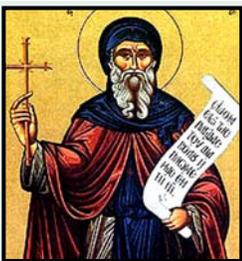


the ground, after the original sin he sent his Son into the world to restore to man his lost dignity and to destroy the dominion of the devil through the new life of grace.

This is the Christological mystery to which St Leo the Great, with his Letter to the Council of Ephesus, made an effective and essential contribution, confirming for all time - through this

Council - what St Peter said at Caesarea Philippi. With Peter and as Peter, he professed: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God". And so it is that God and man together "are not foreign to the human race but alien to sin" (cf. Serm. 64). Through the force of this Christological faith he was a great messenger of peace and love. He thus shows us the way: in faith we learn charity. Let us therefore learn with St Leo the Great to believe in Christ, true God and true Man, and to implement this faith every day in action for peace and love of neighbour.

Pope Benedict XVI
General Audience
5 March 2008



A VIRTUOUS LIFE IS HARD TO ATTAIN (AND HARDER TO KEEP)

“One should not say that it is impossible to reach a virtuous life; but one should say that it is not easy. Nor do those who have reached it find it easy to maintain. Those who are devout and whose intellect enjoys the love of God participate in the life of virtue; the ordinary intellect, however, is worldly and wavering, producing both good and evil thoughts, because it is changeful by nature and directed towards material things. But the intellect that enjoys the love of God punishes the evil which arises spontaneously because of man’s laziness.”

St. Anthony the Great

**The February meeting of the Oblates will be on the 15th at 3:30
unless otherwise announced.**