



# Oblates of St. Benedict

Oblate Program at Belmont Abbey, NC

November, 2015

SUFFUSED WITH REMEMBRANCE

By Fr. Columba Stewart, OSB



November is the month of remembering. All Saints, All Souls, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving, the first days of Advent: they whiz by. As we zigzag between the famous and the humble, modern history and the deep past, God help anyone with a November birthday or anniversary to throw in the mix!

Why so much remembering? We learned it from the Jews. In their Scriptures they kept a vibrant memory of spiritual ancestors, communal trials and trauma, moments of peace and prosperity. For them it was all worth remembering, every bit they could write down. They had the honesty and confidence to describe the often painful and embarrassing saga of growing into God's plan for them. They taught us the importance of genealogy, of making sense of our small lives by placing them within a much bigger frame. This instinct is evident in the Gospels, as the evangelists in their various ways locate Jesus within a matrix of patriarchs, prophets, and kings. Only by remembering where Jesus came from could they understand who he might be for us.

At first glance this can seem like an obsession with the past or a fixation on purity of lineage. This misses what

remembrance meant in the religious culture that shaped Christianity. Invoking these people, these events, was for Jews and early Christians a daily celebration of God's faithfulness. It flowed from generation to generation.

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*"The most valuable thing the Psalms do for me is to express the same delight in God which made David dance."*

— C.S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*

## FOR THE NEXT MEETING...

Questions from Br. Edward to think about before we meet.

*Reflections on the Psalms*, by CS Lewis

Introductory chapter

1. How does CS Lewis write this book?
2. How does Lewis say that the psalms can only be read?
3. What is the chief formal characteristic, the pattern that is used in all the psalms?
4. Where did Jesus learn this style?

The next Oblate meeting will be November 15, 2015 at 3:30 PM in the Gallagher Room on the first floor of Stowe Hall.

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### ALSO FOR THE NEXT MEETING...

Please bring your copy of *Magnificat* or *Give Us This Day*. A few minutes will be set aside to demonstrate how to use these two devotionals as your daily Office.



### NEW GUIDELINES FOR PROSPECTIVE OBLATES

The following guidelines were put into affect with Abbot Placid's approval on September 15, 2015.

The Oblate Program of Belmont Abbey welcomes all Christians who are truly seeking God and who have discerned a desire for affiliation with the Abbey. Individuals who are interested should contact the Director of Oblates at:

Belmont Abbey Monastery  
100 Belmont-Mt. Holly Road  
Belmont, NC 28012

The following are the steps that need to be followed:

1. The person must submit to the Director of Oblates a signed, written summary of at least several sentences, stating why he or she seeks to become an Oblate as a means of enhancing his or her faith-journey with Christ and the Church. The person should also submit a brief autobiographical statement including significant landmarks of one's Christian life.

2. Meet with the Director of Oblates after the application has been accepted.

3. After the meeting the Director will match the prospective oblate to a senior Oblate who will "walk" with them as a mentor while exploring Benedictine spirituality. Sometime during this first phase of formation the prospective oblate, hereafter referred to as "associate", will be invited to make their first formal promise (oblation) if their mentor concurs. The time and place will be determined by the Abbot and the Director of Oblates.

4. There is no specific time frame for formation but a minimum of 18 -24 months is appropriate depending on the individual. The formation period gives the person time to become acquainted with the spirit of the Rule of St. Benedict and to let its values have a transforming effect on his or her Christian life. Practices that are highly recommended during this period of time include:

- a. the studying and reading the Rule of St. Benedict at least weekly and trying to apply the passages to one's daily life; one should read the Rule reflectively as *lectio divina* and study it with the help of a commentary and be open to discussion of the Rule with their mentor. The commentary should be selected with the aid of the mentor;
- b. Begin to pray the Liturgy of the Hours (especially Morning and/or Evening Prayer) (see RB 19:1-2) as well as;
- c. Practice *lectio divina* at least 3 days a week (see RB 48:10-16, 22).

Other recommended practices include (fulfill at least one). This should have the concurrence of the mentor and the Director of Oblates:

### ORDO

#### NOVEMBER

- 1 All Saints. Solemnity (Week III)
- 2 Commemoration of All the Faithful De-  
parted, Memorial
- 4 Charles Borromeo, Bishop. Memorial
- 8 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week IV)
- 9 Dedication of the Lateran Basilica, Feast
- 10 Leo the Great. Memorial
- 11 Martin of Tours, Bishop. Feast
- 15 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week I)
- 16 Gertrude, Virgin, Memorial
- 21 Presentation of the Virgin Mary.  
Memorial
- 22 Christ the King (Week II)
- 24 Andrew Dung-lac and his Companions,  
Martyrs. Memorial
- 28 Begin novena in honor of Immaculate  
Conception
- 29 First Sunday of Advent (Week I)
- 30 Andrew, Apostle, Feast

a. making a retreat of at least several days or making at least 3 days of recollection (see RB 49:1-3).

b. contributing in a significant way to a project that improves the natural environment for one's community or parish (see RB 31:10-12)

c. participating actively in a movement that works for peace and justice in one's local community, one's country, or the world (see RB Prol:14-17)

d. undertaking in a specific and regular way one of the spiritual or corporal works of mercy: instructing and advising in the ways of faith, consoling,

e. comforting, forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently; feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, burying the dead (see Mt 25:31-46; RB 31:9, 4:14-19)

f. helping to build up one's parish family or civic community by concrete, regular involvement in a parish or community project (see RB 58:24- 5)

5. When both the Oblate mentor and the associate believe the associate is ready to make the final Oblation, they will schedule a meeting with the Oblate Director. The associate must submit to the Director of Oblates a written summary, at least two paragraphs long, stating:

a. how he or she has grown as an Oblate novice and has undertaken the required practices (plus other recommended ones, if desired), and

b. how he or she hopes to continue to grow closer to Christ and the Church as a full Oblate.

6. Upon the recommendation of the Oblate mentor and the Director of Oblates the associate must participate in the authorized ceremony of Oblation including the Act of Oblation at a time and place determined by the Abbot and the Director of Oblates.



### PRAYER OF THE NOVENA OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Immaculate Virgin Mary, you were pleasing in the sight of God from the first moment of your conception in the womb of your mother, St. Anne. You were chose to be the mother of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I believe the teaching of holy Mother the Church, that in the first instant of your conception, by the singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human and beloved Son, you were preserved from all stain of original sin. I thank God for this wonderful privilege and grace he bestowed upon you as I honor your Immaculate Conception.

Look graciously upon me as I implore this special favor: (mention your request).

Virgin Immaculate, Mother of God and my Mother, from your throne in heaven turn your eyes of pity upon me. Filled with confidence in your goodness and power, I beg you to help me in this journey of life which is so full of dangers for my soul. I entrust myself entirely to you, that I may never be the slave of the devil through sin, but may always live a humble and pure life. I consecrate myself to you forever, for my only desire is to love your divine Son Jesus. Mary, since none of your devout servants has perished, May I too be saved. Amen.

## NECROLOGY



### NOVEMBER

- 2 Fr. Lawrence McHale (1957)
- 3 Fr. Albert Goetz(1935)
- 5 Abbot Vincent Taylor(1959)
- 5 Fr. Wilfrid Foley(1968)
- 7 Fr. Raphael Beer(1893)
- 8 Br. Gilbert Koberzynski(1920)
- 9 Fr. Boniface Hilgenboecker(1890)
- 9 Fr. Cornelius Diehl(1957)
- 15 Fr. Thomas Oestreich(1943)
- 21 Fr. Anthony Meyer(1928)
- 22 Br. Willibald Marschall(1932)
- 24 Fr. Raphael Bridge(1996)
- 29 Fr. Bernard Haas(1933)

### DECEMBER

- 1 Fr. Cuthbert Allen(1977)
- 5 Fr. Eugene Egan(1940)
- 6 Br. Albert Popp(1924)
- 7 Fr. Boniface Bauer(1974)

## JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE

On [the] last Sunday of the liturgical year, we [celebrate] the Solemnity of Christ the King, a Feast established relatively recently but which has deep biblical and theological roots. The title "King", designating Jesus, is very important in the Gospels and makes possible a complete interpretation of the figure of Jesus



and of his mission of salvation. In this regard a progression can be noted: it starts with the expression "King of Israel" and extends to that of universal King, Lord of the cosmos and of history, thus exceeding by far the expectations of the Jewish people. It is yet again the mystery of Jesus Christ's death and Resurrection that lies at the heart of this process of the revelation of his kingship. When Jesus is hung on the Cross, the priests, scribes and elders mock him saying: "He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him" (Mt 27: 42). In fact, it is precisely as the Son of God that Jesus freely gives himself up to his Passion. The Cross is the paradoxical sign of his kingship, which consists in the loving will of God the Father in response to the disobedience of sin. It is in the very offering of himself in the sacrifice of expiation that Jesus becomes King of the universe, as he himself was to declare when he appeared to the Apostles after the Resurrection: "All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Mt 28: 18).

But in what does this "power" of Jesus Christ the King consist? It is not the power of the kings or the great people of this world; it is the divine power to give eternal life, to liberate from evil, to defeat the dominion of death. It is the power of Love that can draw good from

evil, that can melt a hardened heart, bring peace amid the harshest conflict and kindle hope in the thickest darkness. This Kingdom of Grace is never imposed and always respects our freedom. Christ came "to bear witness to the truth" (Jn 18: 37), as he declared to Pilate: whoever accepts his witness serves beneath his

"banner", according to the image dear to St Ignatius of Loyola. Every conscience, therefore, must make a choice. Who do I want to follow? God or the Evil One? The truth or falsehood? Choosing Christ does not guarantee success according to the world's criteria but assures the peace and joy that he alone can give us. This is demonstrated, in every epoch, by the experience of numerous men and women who, in Christ's name, in the name of truth and justice, were able to oppose the enticements of earthly powers with their different masks, to the point that they sealed their fidelity with martyrdom.

Dear brothers and sisters, when the Angel Gabriel brought the announcement to Mary, he predicted that her Son would inherit the throne of David and reign forever (cf. Lk 1: 32-33). And even before she gave him to the world, the Blessed Virgin believed. Thus she must certainly have wondered what new kind of kingship Jesus' would be; she came to understand by listening to his words, and especially by closely participating in the mystery of his death on the Cross and in his Resurrection. Let us ask Mary to help us too to follow Jesus, our King, as she did, and to bear witness to him with our entire existence.

Pope Benedict XVI, 22 November, 2009

## WHY THE PSALMS



The human qualities of the raw materials show through. Naivety, error, contradiction, even (as in the cursing psalms) wickedness are not removed. The total result is not "the Word of God" in the sense that every passage, in itself, gives impeccable science or history. It carries the Word of God; and we (under grace, with attention to tradition and to interpreters wiser than ourselves, and with the use of such intelligence and learning as we have) receive that word from it not by using it as an encyclopedia or an encyclical but by steeping ourselves in its tone or temper and so learning its overall message.

— C.S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*