



# Oblates of St. Benedict

*Oblate Program at Belmont Abbey, NC*

*January, 2017*



Why do so many people make New Year's resolutions? Is it because we see something in our lives we want to improve? We all look at ourselves from time to time, and see things we want to improve. A new year gives us a reason to reflect and strive for a new beginning. So maybe we want to improve our health. Or fix up our finances. Or maybe simply try to become a better person.

Well, as Christians, this type of self-reflection that many do for their New Year's resolutions is something we are called to do on an ongoing basis. We are to constantly do self-evaluations and strive to re-orient our lives back to God,

again and again. We fall down and then we get back up. We are constantly taking stock of ourselves, confessing to God, repenting (which ultimately means changing our direction from a self-centered one and reorienting our lives toward God). God gives us a second, third, fifth, tenth and hundredth chance to start anew!

So with this in mind, what would be some good resolutions for us to make as Christians? Here are ten suggestions:

1. **Pray every day.** Accept a Prayer Rule in your life, and then try to follow that rule every day. Prayer is connecting with God, communing with the Source of life. Say set prayers every morning and evening, but then seek to talk with God throughout the day. Don't let an hour go by where you don't "check in" with God and turn your attention to Him.
2. **Do not only pray, but meditate.** This means sitting in silence for 10 or 15 minutes each day, and trying to clear your mind of all clutter, simply sitting in the presence of God. You can do this in front of an icon, or you can sit anyone and close your eyes, reciting the Jesus Prayer – "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have Mercy On Me, a Sinner."
3. **Strive to fill your mind each day with something that is "true, noble, just, pure, lovely, holy" (Phil 4:8).** In other words, take time every day to read Holy Scripture, and other edifying spiritual writings – for five or ten minutes. Fill your mind with words and thoughts that will sanctify you. Meditate on what you read, and try to apply what you read in your life.
4. **Take time each day to express gratitude, first towards God and then towards others.** Even when you are having a tough day, pause and think of five things for which you can thank God. And make it a point that whenever you are frustrated, you thank God even more!
5. **Each day hand over any anger or resentment to God.** Don't allow the day to end while holding on to any bitterness. This means that we have to practice forgiveness daily. Take time each day to reflect on your own mis-

*Remember meeting times have been changed to 2:30PM during Daylight savings time.*

*The next Oblate meeting will be January 15th.*

*Please bring your copy of Magn'icat or Give Us This Day.*

## AS AN OBLATE OF BELMONT ABBEY YOU ARE INVITED

With thanksgiving to God the Monks of Belmont Abbey invite you to celebrate with them the **Solemn Monastic Profession** of their Brother,

**Gregory Andrew Marshall, O.S.B.**

during the Eucharistic Liturgy on Sunday, the 15th of January, 2017 at eleven o'clock in the morning in Basilica of Mary Help of Christians Belmont Abbey, Belmont, North Carolina.

You are also invited to a reception in the Haid Ballroom after the Liturgy.

**R.S.V.P. by January 4, 2017, to:**

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takes, asking God for forgiveness. Then, offer your forgiveness to anyone who may have hurt or offended you.

6. **Refuse to let jealousy, covetousness, greed, and envy preoccupy your mind.** Thank God for what you have, and "rejoice with those who rejoice
7. **Every day remember how Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, and then think about how you can humbly serve others.** And strive to serve others with joy. Remember that it's a blessing to be able to serve and to give to others.
8. **Do some random acts of kindness each day.** Better yet, be deliberate in conscious acts of kindness. Each day think about how you can do something special for the people who cross your paths?
9. **Smile, and try to brighten up each person who crosses your path.** Say words that will "edify and bring grace to the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29)
10. **Keep an eternal perspective on life.** Each day remember that some people have tragically died. Remembering death can help us live life better. If we remember that we are but brief sojourners on this earth, and that our ultimate citizenship is in heaven, it changes our perspective on how to live

These are 10 concrete resolutions that each of us can try to do. IF we do each of these every day, they will greatly bless us, as well as bless others. We will become instruments in God's hands, shining forth His light of love to the world around us!

May the New Year bring happiness to keep you sweet; trials to keep you strong; sorrow to keep you compassionate; hope to sustain you; failure to keep you humble; success to keep you eager; friends to give you comfort; wealth to meet your needs; enthusiasm to make you look forward to tomorrow; and determination to make each day better than the day before.

A happy and blessed new year!

<http://www.schwebster.org/sermons/blessed-new-year-resolutions>



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

## ORDO

### JANUARY

- 1 Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
- 2 Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops and Doctors of the Church, Memorial (Week II)
- 8 Epiphany, Solemnity (Week III)
- 9 Baptism of the Lord, Feast

### ORDINARY TIME

- 10 Begin Week I of the Psalter
- 15 Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week II)
- 17 Anthony, Abbot. Memorial
- 21 Agnes, Virgin, Martyr. Memorial
- 22 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week III)
- 24 Francis De Sales, Bishop, Doctor of the Church. Memorial.
- 25 Conversion of St. Paul, Apostle, Feast.
- 28 Thomas Aquinas, Priest, Doctor of the Church. Memorial
- 29 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week IV)
- 31 John Bosco, Priest, Religious Founder, Educator. Memorial

### FEBRUARY

- 2 Presentation of the Lord. Feast
- 5 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week I)
- 6 Paul Miki, Religious, Missionary, Martyr, and His Companions, Martyrs. Memorial

## QUESTIONS FOR THE JANUARY 15TH MEETING



We will continue with the dual format makeup of the meeting for January 15. The Scripture study for the first half of the meeting concerns Luke 10:25-37. The questions to ponder before the meeting are:

1. If you could ask Jesus one question about love, what would you ask?
2. When have you turned away from someone in need?
3. Who are you comfortable having as a neighbor? Who are you uneasy caring for — in your neighborhood, the wider community, or across the world?
4. When have you reached out to help a stranger in need? When have you been a recipient of such assistance?
5. What small, concrete act of mercy could you do today?
6. What new insight have you gained about this familiar parable?

The Catholic Church has traditionally named seven merciful actions that tend to bodily needs and seven that speak to spiritual needs. Many of these works of mercy are illustrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Reflect on your own life over the past week, month, or year. Which of these acts of mercy have you done? Which have you been hesitant to try?

This is the last session on “Mercy.” Next month we will begin the short scripture course on “Trust”



Questions from Br. Edward to think about before we meet on December 15. *Reflections on the Psalms* by C.S. Lewis: Chapter 7 “Connivance”

1. According to C.S. Lewis how should we behave in the presence of very bad people?
2. As an oblate, how would we add to C.S. Lewis’s answer to question 1?
3. How can a Christian avoid, meeting with people who are bullies, lascivious, cruel, dishonest, and spiteful and so forth? (Priggery-A person who demonstrates an exaggerated conformity or propriety, especially in an irritatingly arrogant or smug manner. 2. Archaic. a. A petty thief or pickpocket.)
4. What makes the contact w/ wicked people so difficult? Please explain your answer. (Connivance - Willingness to secretly allow or be involved in wrongdoing, especially an immoral or illegal act. "This infringement of the law had taken place with the connivance of officials" synonyms: collusion, complicity, collaboration, involvement, assistance)
5. Closely connected with warnings against what C.S. Lewis calls “connivance” are the protests of the psalter against other sins of the tongue. Describe how the psalmists feel about sins of the tongue?

### NECROLOGY



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

#### JANUARY

- 3 Fr. Gerard Rettger
- 4 Fr. Herman Grones
- 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

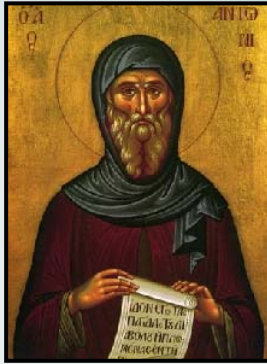
#### FEBRUARY

- 3 Br. Eugene O'Neil
- 8 Fr. Kenneth Geyer
- 18 Fr. William Regnat
- 24 Br. Aegidius Seier
- 24 Br. Gregory Corcoran
- 25 Fr. Melchior Reichert
- 28 Br. George Poellath

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

Some elders came to St. Antony and asked him, “Which is the greatest of all virtues?” Each one then gave an opinion, some saying that “fasting and keeping of vigils” best help one come near to God; others said “voluntary poverty” and “detachment”; others said “compassion.” Last of all, Anthony gave his reply: “All that you have said is both necessary and helpful for those who are searching for God and wish to come to Him. But we cannot award the first place to any of these virtues; for there are many among us who have endured fasting and vigils, or have withdrawn into the desert, or have practiced poverty to such an extent that they have not left themselves enough for their daily sustenance, or have performed acts of compassion so generously that they no longer have anything to give; and yet these same monks, having done all this, have nevertheless fallen away miserably from virtue and slipped into vice.

What was it, then, that made them stray from the straight path? In my opinion, it was simply that they did not possess the grace of discrimination [discernment]; for it is this virtue that teaches a man to walk along the royal road, swerving neither to the right through immoderate [excessive] self-



control, nor to the left through indifference and laxity. Discrimination is a kind of eye and lantern of the soul, as is said in the Gospel passage: ‘The light of the body is the eye; if therefore your eye is pure, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness’ (Matt. 6:22-3). And this is just what we find. For the power of discrimination, scrutinizing all the thoughts and actions of a man, distinguishes and sets aside everything that is base and not pleasing to God, and keeps him free from delusion.... Scripture also refers to it as ‘discernment’ without which we must do nothing—not even drink the spiritual wine that ‘makes glad the heart of man’ (Psalm 104:15), for it is said, ‘Drink with discernment’ (Proverbs 31:3), and ‘he that does not do all things with discernment is like a city that is broken down and without walls’ (Prov. 25:28). Wisdom, intellect and perceptiveness are united in discrimination; and without these our inner house cannot be built, nor can we gather spiritual wealth (cf. Prov. 24:3-4).... These passages show very clearly that without the gift of discrimination no virtue can stand or remain firm to the end, for it is the mother of all the virtues and their guardian.” (quoted by John Cassian in his *Conferences*)

### OBLATE PSALTER READY

The *Oblate Psalter* is complete and will be available at the next meeting. If you will remember from previous meetings, the need for the psalter arose when Oblates discovered that *Magnificat* and *Give Us this Day* were not breviaries. Since then we have attempted to develop a system for the Liturgy of the Hours that would permit individual Oblates to continue to use the devotionals they were used to using and at the same time being faithful to the Rule.

The Oblates that have tested this psalter have found the system preferable to the traditional breviary because of its simplicity, flexibility, updated Psalm translations, and revised collects (with use of the devotionals). It makes a nice compliment to *Benedictine Daily Prayer* for those who were not comfortable with the psalter in that volume.

The cost is \$15 for a hard-bound copy. We are printing only a limited number of copies and will print additional ones as needed. **Please bring your copy of *Magnificat* or *Give Us This Day* to the January meeting.**

**The February meeting of the Oblates will be on the 19th at 2:30  
unless otherwise announced.**