



*Oblate Program at Belmont Abbey, NC*

*March 2017*

### MEETING TIMES

At the beginning of the year we changed the meeting times to 2:30 PM. This has been so well received that we will continue at 2:30 for foreseeable future. So meeting agendas will be arranged as follows:

- 2:30: Opening with Daytime Prayer immediately followed by the scripture study.
- 3:20: Break and refreshments.
- 3:30: Discussion of the current book/reading.
- 4:15: Close of the formal meeting followed by social and small group meetings. This is an excellent opportunity for mentors to meet with their associates.
- 5:15: Adjourn for Vespers in the Abbey church.

### QUESTIONS FOR NEXT MEETING

For the March meeting we will follow the Office with the discussion of the book instead of the Scripture study. This is to permit us time to catch up on **Reflections on the Psalms**. The questions for the Chapter 7 "Connivance" are:

- 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' answer to question 1?
- 3- How can a Christian avoid, meeting with people who are bullies, lascivious, cruel, dishonest, and spiteful and so forth?
- 4- (On page 74) What makes the contact w/ wicked people so difficult? Please explain your answer.
- 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?

Helpful definitions while you are reading this chapter:

**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.

**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

The second half of the meeting will be discussing "God's Plan and Judah's Response" from **Trust** (Isaiah 30:8-26). You should reflect on the following questions:

1. Where do you see a critical conflict between our society's norms and values and those identified in God's word?
2. Have you ever felt insecure or unworthy in God's presence? Did that prevent God from accepting you or using you for a greater purpose?
3. When have you experienced the collapse of some false sense of security? Where did you turn for help?

The next Oblate meeting will be March 19, 2017 at 2:30 PM in the Gallagher Room on the first floor of Stowe Hall.

4. Isaiah's words call Judah to a level of trust that may seem foolish, naive, or impractical. When have you been encouraged to defy what seems logical and trust instead that God will show you a better way?
5. Psalm 27:14 indicates that waiting for the Lord requires courage. What does your experience teach you about this need for courage?
6. Sometimes it seems that God is slow to act or even deaf to people's needs. How can waiting, rest, and quiet become important spiritual tools?

### BE MERCIFUL AS YOUR FATHER IS MERCIFUL

It was recommend through our readings and through discussion at the meeting that the Oblates should select a particular work of mercy to be observed during lent this year. Below is the list of the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy.

Corporal Works	Spiritual Works
Feed the hungry	Teach the ignorant
Give drink to the thirsty	Pray for the living & dead
Clothe the naked	Correct sinners
Shelter the homeless	Counsel those in doubt
Comfort the prisoners	Console the sorrowful
Visit the sick	Bear wrongs patiently
Bury the dead	Forgive wrongs willingly

### IMPORTANT! APRIL MEETING

**The normally scheduled Oblate meeting would occur on Easter Sunday. The meeting will be moved to the following week, Sunday, April 23 at 2:30PM.**

### WHY THE PSALMS



This is the secret of the Psalms: they contain in themselves all that matters to a Christian of the history of the world, because in a mysterious and quasi-sacramental manner, by virtue of their intimate connection with the Sacrifice of the the Mass, the salvation of the world is all worked out in them. Breviary, Psalter and Missal. charged with the grandeur of the Word of God, contain the might secret of Christ's spiritual victory. The secret is placed in the hands of each Christian. It only needs to be discovered and fulfilled in our own lives.

Thomas Merton, OCSO  
*Bread in the Wilderness*

### NECROLOGY



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

#### MARCH

- 3 Fr. Michael McInerney (1963)
- 10 Fr. Vincent Campbell (1965)
- 14 Fr. William Mayer (1904)
- 17 Br. Christian Hierl (1930)
- 18 Fr. Florian Checkhart (1951)
- 18 Fr. Joseph Tobin (1978)
- 21 Prior Nicholas Bliley (1943)
- 24 Br. Celestine Wiegerle (1928)
- 25 Fr. Patrick Dolon (1913)
- 28 Fr. Ambrose Gallagher (1946)
- 28 Fr. Richard Graz (1952)

#### APRIL

- 13 Br. Xavier Segerer (1903)
- 16 Br. Richard Kleiner (1940)

### ANTIPHONS FOR LENT AND EASTER

For those Oblates currently using the *Oblate Psalter*, antiphons for use during Lent and Easter are available in PDF format from the Oblate website:

[http://oblatesosbbelmont.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Seasonal-Antiphons\\_revLent\\_Easter.pdf](http://oblatesosbbelmont.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Seasonal-Antiphons_revLent_Easter.pdf)

A link has been placed on the home page. It can be printed locally. Download the file and then print the pages as you need them. They are arranged by week so print two pages at a time (two pages will fit on one 8.5x11 piece of paper) and trim them so you can place them in the *Psalter*.

### OBLATE PSALTER

We are currently sold out of the *Oblate Psalter*. We are preparing the texts for a second printing. If you would like a copy please email George Cobb at gkcobb0929@gmail.com. The cost is \$15.00 a copy plus shipping if you want it mailed.



**ORDO**

### MARCH

- 1 Ash Wednesday (Memorial)
- 5 1st Sunday of Lent (Week I)
- 12 2nd Sunday of Lent (Week II)
- Begin novena in Honor of Our Holy Father St. Benedict*
- 17 Patrick, Bishop, Missionary (opt. Memorial)

- 19 3rd Sunday of Lent (Week III)
- 20 Joseph, Spouse of the Virgin Mary. Solemnity
- 21 Passing of Our Holy Father Benedict, Abbot. Solemnity
- 25 Annunciation of the Lord. Solemnity
- 26 4th Sunday of Lent (Week IV)
- 28 Belmont Abbey: Anniversary of Dedication of Church. Solemnity

### THE PASSING OF OUR HOLY FATHER, ST. BENEDICT (MARCH 21)

In the year that was to be his last, the man of God foretold the day of his holy death to a number of his disciples. In mentioning it to some who were with him in the monastery, he bound them to strict secrecy. Some others, however, who were stationed elsewhere he only informed of the special sign they would receive at the time of his death.

Six days before he died, he gave orders for his tomb to be opened. Almost immediately he was seized with a violent fever that rapidly wasted his remaining energy. Each day his condition grew worse until finally, on the sixth day, he had his disciples carry him into the chapel where he received the Body and Blood of our Lord to gain strength for his approaching end. Then, supporting his weak body on the arms of his brethren, he stood with his hands raised to heaven and, as he prayed, breathed his last.

That day two monks, one of them at the monastery, the other some distance away, received the very same revelation. They both saw a magnificent road covered with rich carpeting and glittering with thousands of lights. From his monastery it stretched eastward in a straight line until it reached up into heaven. And there in the brightness stood a man of majestic appearance, who asked them, "Do you know who passed this way?" "No," they replied. "This, he told them, is the road taken by blessed Benedict, the Lord's beloved, when he went to heaven."

Thus, while the brethren who were with Benedict witnessed his death, those who were absent knew about it through the sign he had promised them. His body was laid to rest in the Chapel of St. John the Baptist, which he had built to replace the altar of Apollo.

St. Gregory the Great  
*Book Two of the Dialogues, Chapter 37*



### NOVENA TO SAINT BENEDICT

**G**lorious St. Benedict, sublime model of all virtues, pure vessel of God's grace! Behold me, humbly kneeling at thy feet. I implore thy loving heart to pray for me before the throne of God. To thee I have recourse in all the dangers which daily surround me. Shield me against my enemies, inspire me to imitate thee in all things. May thy blessings be with me always, so that I may shun whatever God forbids and avoid the occasions of sin.

Graciously obtain for me from God those favors and graces of which I stand so much in need, in the trials, miseries and afflictions of life. Thy heart was always so full of love, compassion, and mercy towards those who were afflicted or troubled in any way. Thou didst never dismiss without consolation and assistance anyone who had recourse to thee. I therefore invoke thy powerful intercession in the confident hope that thou will hear my prayers and obtain for me the special grace and favor I so earnestly implore (mention it), if it be for the greater glory of God and the welfare of my soul.

Help me, O great St. Benedict, to live and die as a faithful child of God, to be ever submissive to His holy will, and to attain the eternal happiness of heaven. Amen.



## THE INCARNATION AND ICONS

*It is clearly a prohibition against representing the invisible God. But when you see Him who has no body become man for you, then you will make representations of His human aspect. When the Invisible, having clothed Himself in the flesh, become visible, then represent the likeness of Him who has appeared. When He who, having been the consubstantial Image of the Father, emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant, thus becoming bound in quantity and quality, having taken on the carnal image, then paint and make visible to everyone Him who desired to become visible. St.*

John Damascene, *Oratio I, ch. 8*

John Damascene was among the first to distinguish, in the cult, both public and private, of the Christians, between worship (latreia), and veneration (proskynesis): the first can only be offered to God, spiritual above all else, the second, on the other hand, can make use of an image to address the one whom the image represents. Obviously the Saint can in no way be identified with the material of which the icon is composed. This distinction was immediately seen to be very important in finding an answer in Christian terms to those who considered universal and eternal the strict Old Testament prohibition against the use of cult images. This was also a matter of great debate in the Islamic world, which accepts the Jewish tradition of the total exclusion of cult images. Christians, on the other hand, in this context, have discussed the problem and found a justification for the veneration of images. John Damascene writes,

*In other ages God had not been represented in images, being incorporate and faceless. But since God has now been seen in the flesh, and lived among men, I represent that part of God which is visible. I do not venerate matter, but the Creator of matter, who became matter for my sake and deigned to live in matter and bring about my salvation through matter. I will not cease therefore to venerate that matter through which my salvation was achieved. But I do not venerate it in absolute terms as God! How could that which, from non-existence, has been given existence, be God?... But I also venerate and respect all the rest of matter which has*



*brought me salvation, since it is full of energy and Holy graces. Is not the wood of the Cross, three times blessed, matter?... And the ink, and the most Holy Book of the Gospels, are they not matter? The redeeming altar which dispenses the Bread of life, is it not matter?... And, before all else, are not the flesh and blood of Our Lord matter? Either we must suppress the sacred nature of all these things, or we must concede to the tradition of the Church the veneration of the images of God and that of the friends of God who are sanctified by the name they bear, and for this reason are possessed by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Do not, therefore, offend matter: it is not contemptible, because nothing that*

*God has made is contemptible" (cf. *Contra imaginum calumniatores, I, 16*, ed. Kotter, pp. 89-90).*

We see that as a result of the Incarnation, matter is seen to have become divine, is seen as the habitation of God. It is a new vision of the world and of material reality. God became flesh and flesh became truly the habitation of God, whose glory shines in the human Face of Christ. Thus the arguments of the Doctor of the East are still extremely relevant today, considering the very great dignity that matter has acquired through the Incarnation, capable of becoming, through faith, a sign and a sacrament, efficacious in the meeting of man with God. John Damascene remains, therefore, a privileged witness of the cult of icons, which would come to be one of the most distinctive aspects of Eastern spirituality up to the present day. It is, however, a form of cult which belongs simply to the Christian faith, to the faith in that God who became flesh and was made visible. The teaching of Saint John Damascene thus finds its place in the tradition of the universal Church, whose sacramental doctrine foresees that material elements taken from nature can become vehicles of grace by virtue of the invocation (epiclesis) of the Holy Spirit, accompanied by the confession of the true faith.

Pope Benedict XVI

Wednesday, 6 May 2009

[http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2009/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_aud\\_20090506.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2009/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20090506.html)