



Oblates of St. Benedict

Oblate Program at Belmont Abbey, NC

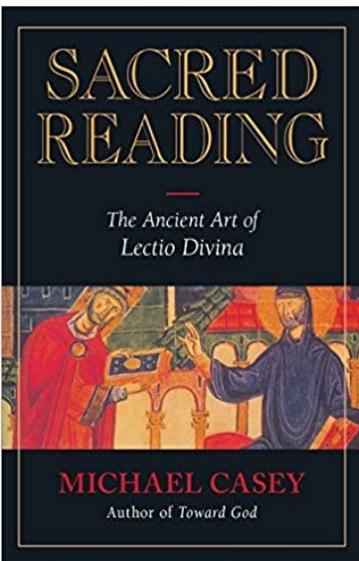
September, 2017

MEETING DATES

There is some confusion over meeting dates so let's set the calendar. Oblates will meet the third Sunday of every month unless notified in the newsletter. The only exception would be inclement weather and a notice will be placed on the website. Meetings will be:

September 17	October 15
November 19	December 17
January 21	February 18
March 18	April 15
May 20	June 10

READINGS FOR THE YEAR



In the next meetings discussions will be concerned with two different readings. First, we will begin Fr. Michael Casey's book *Sacred Reading: The Ancient art of Lectio Divina*. For those of you who are not comfortable purchasing books on-line, six copies are reserved on a first come basis. Please contact George Cobb at (704) 370-3328 or at gkcobb0929@gmail.com.

In addition we will continue with the Liturgical Press, *Alive in the Word* series. We will start this year off with the Benedictine charism of *Hospitality*. Booklets will be available at no charge at the next meeting.

HOSPITALITY

To set the stage we will discuss at the next meeting what Hospitality means to the Benedictines. Keep the following questions in mind as you read the following article from the Benedictine Sisters at Sacred Heart Monastery in South Dakota.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER:

1. What is the biblical foundation of hospitality?
2. What is your favorite biblical passage that demonstrates Hospitality?
3. How is faith involved in the practice of hospitality?
4. How is the practice of hospitality part of the spiritual journey?
5. What does Benedict's Rule have to say about hospitality?
6. How do you experience hospitality when you are the guest?

Hospitality in the Rule of St. Benedict:

31.9: *[The Cellarer] must show every care and concern for the sick, children, guests and the poor, knowing for certain that he will be held accountable for all of them on the day of judgment.*

53.1-2: *All guest who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, for he himself will say: I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Matt 25:35). Proper honor must be shown to all, especially to those who share our faith (Gal 6:10) and to pilgrims.*

53.6-7: *All humility should be shown in addressing a guest on arrival or departure. By a bow of the head or by a complete prostration of the body, Christ is to be adored because he is indeed welcomed in them.*

53.9-10: *The divine law is read to the guest for his instruction, and after that every kindness is shown to him. The superior may break his fast for the sake of a guest, unless it is a day of special fast which cannot be broken.*

53.15: *Great care and concern are to be shown in receiving poor people and pilgrims, because in them more particularly Christ is received; our very awe of the rich guarantees them special respect.*

The most universal and the oldest way monasticism has made its presence felt in the world is through the practice of hospitality. Of course, hospitality was a tradition long before the Christian era. In the ancient world, it usually had spiritual overtones. The Greeks used to consider readiness to offer hospitality the criterion that distinguished the civilized person from the barbarian. In the Bible, hospitality is seen both as a work of mercy and a witness to the faith. Think of Abraham who left the shade of his tent in the noonday heat to welcome three strangers who turned out to be messengers from God. Having been a stranger himself in desperate places, Abraham was willing to open his life deliberately to what was unknown and programmed.

In one of the last climactic chapters of Matthew's Gospel, the evangelist has the Last Judgment scene. Here Jesus reveals the depth of the mystery of Christian hospitality: to welcome strangers is to welcome Christ. "I was a stranger, and you took me in" (Matt. 25:35). In Luke's Gospel, we have the wonderful Emmaus story. Two distinguished disciples are walking along the road to Emmaus. They meet a stranger and tell him about their sorrow at the death of all their hopes. The stranger, who is Jesus, then begins to tell them why the Messiah had to suffer. When they come to an inn, the disciples persuade him to eat with them, and only when eating together do they recognize him as their crucified Lord. Only in breaking the bread of hospitality did their confusion turn to hope. And the Book of Revelation says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and sit down to supper" (Rev. 3:20).



To welcome the stranger is an act of faith. That is why St. Benedict stresses, as he does, hospitality to guests. The stranger is not just a person, but also all the ambiguity, the unknown, the otherness in life. Faith can help us greet this otherness not as a threat, but as a possible gift. God is the ultimate stranger, unpredictable, potentially threatening our security. Faith is the attitude of one who, looking for God, searches the face of every stranger and guest.

The first monks, those men and women of the Syrian and Egyptian deserts, who lived in austerity, silence, and faith, knew the meaning of hospitality and were ready to dispense with their usual practices of asceticism to welcome guests. There are some endearing little anecdotes on this theme. Consider the following. Once a monk came to a hermit, and as he was taking his leave, he apologized, "Forgive me for hampering you in keeping your rule." But the hermit answered, "My rule is to welcome you with hospitality and to send you on your way in peace." Another time, two monks came to an old hermit whose custom it was not to eat every day. When the hermit saw them, he greeted them gladly and said, "A

fast has its reward. Those who eat from a motive of charity obey two commandments; they leave their self-will and refresh their guests."

ORDO

SEPTEMBER

- 3 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week II)
- 8 Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Feast
- 10 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week III)
- 13 John Chrysostom, Bishop, Doctor of the Church. Memorial.
- 14 Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Feast
- 15 Our Lady of Sorrows. Memorial
- 16 Cornelius and Cyprian, Martyrs. Memorial.
- 17 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week IV)
- 20 Rev. Kim Taegon, Paul Chong Hasang, and Companions, Martyrs. Memorial
- 21 Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist, Feast
- 23 Pius of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio), Priest. Memorial. (*Begin Novena to the Guardian Angels*)
- 25 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week I)
- 26 Vincent De Paul, Priest, Religious Founder. Memorial
- 29 Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, Archangels. Feast
- 30 Jerome, Doctor of the Church. Memorial

OCTOBER

- 1 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week II)
- 2 Guardian Angels, Patron of the Congregation
- 4 Francis of Assisi, Religious Founder. Memorial.
- 6 Bruno, Priest, Hermit, Religious Founder. Memorial.
- 7 Our Lady of the Rosary. Memorial.
- 8 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week III)



NECROLOGY

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

SEPTEMBER

1 Br. Aloysius Foerenbach	1914
2 Fr. Bernard Rosswog	1999
5 Br. Leonard Metzger	1941
6 Fr. Julius Pohl	1924
7 Br. Obl. John Morton	1952
20 Fr. Gerard Pilz	1891
24 Br. Francis Zwiesler	1929
24 Fr. Cornelius Selhuber	1962
25 Fr. Dominic Vollmar	1942
25 Br. Stephen Schockling	1974
25 Fr. Gregory Eichenlaub	1975
27 Fr. Jerome Finn	1958
30 Fr. Gregory Windschiegel	1912

OCTOBER

1 Br. Obl. Timothy Guidera	1951
4 Fr. Paschal Baumstein	2007
9 Br. William Murray	1926
10 Fr. John Oetgen	2009
12 Br. Boniface Schreiber	1928
14 Fr. Charles Rettger	1916
20 Fr. Augustine Ecker	1934
24 Fr. Alcuin Baudermann	1975
26 Fr. Lawrence Willis	2003
27 Fr. Patrick Donahue	1994
29 Fr. John Smith	1942
31 Fr. Walter O'Brien	1932
31 Fr. Stanislaus Bethel	1941

In Chapter 53, St. Benedict provides for guests and is quite evidently glad guests always will be present in a monastery. He is prepared for to face considerable inconvenience in taking care of guests because he is convinced that they represent Christ. Benedict goes on to make clear that the care of guests is to have a distinctively religious tone and that it be done in a way that does not disturb the peace of the community. The Rule shows Benedict's belief that spiritual values can be transmitted through hospitality. It does not consider that guests merely are to be entertained, but that the monks are to witness to a life experienced as deeply meaningful, with Christ as its center.

Guests who come to our Benedictine monasteries today find many reasons for visiting. Basic to all these is a desire to experience God through a lifestyle that speaks to them of peace and deeply held convictions. So many people today are wearied of a hectic, impersonal existence, wearied of the kind of competition and materialism that seems to lead only to despair. These people come to monastic houses looking for a vision of life with Christ at the heart of it, Christ with his power to reconcile and transcend differences of age, background, education, and opinion.

Benedictine oblates who share the monastic experience and the monastic vision can witness in this fashion to their own guests and in their own kind of hospitality. For the greatest source of hospitality is not our houses but ourselves. It is we who can allow them to be what they really are and who through this gift of self can help restore some measure of balance and wholeness to their lives. Hospitality is the challenge of welcoming the other who may look at first like the gardener whom Mary Magdalene saw in the garden at Easter, or like the traveler on his way to Emmaus, but who turns out to be Christ.

Source: *Oblates' Handbook*, Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, South Dakota.

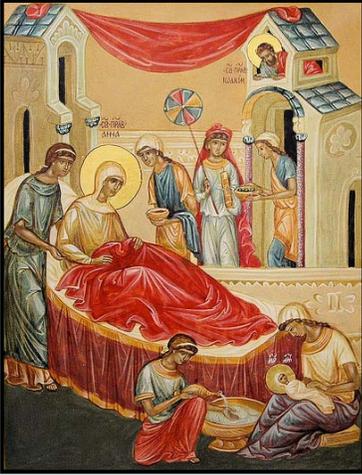
NOVENA TO THE GUARDIAN ANGELS FEAST DAY OCTOBER 2 (BEGIN SEPTEMBER 23)



Heavenly Father, Your infinite love for us has chosen a blessed angel in heaven and appointed him our guide during this earthly pilgrimage. Accept our thanks for so great ablessing. Grant that we may experience the assistance of our holy protector in all our necessities. And you, holy, loving angel and guide, watch over us with all the tenderness of your angelic heart. Keep us always on the way that leads to heaven, and cease not to pray for us until we have attained our final destiny, eternal salvation. Then we shall love you for all eternity. We shall praise and glorify you unceasingly for all the good you have done for us while here on earth. Especially be a faithful and watchful protector of our children. Take our place, and supply what may be wanting to us through human frailty, short-sightedness, or sinful neglect. Lighten, O you perfect servants of God, our heavy task. Guide our children, that they may become like unto Jesus, may imitate Him faithfully, and persevere till they attain eternal life.

Amen

SEPTEMBER 8: NAVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY



The Catholic Church celebrates the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary on its traditional fixed date of September 8, nine months after the December 8 celebration of her Immaculate Conception as the child of Saints Joachim and Anne. The circumstances of the Virgin Mary's infancy and early life are not directly recorded in the Bible, but other documents and traditions describing the circumstances of her birth are cited by some of the earliest Christian writers from the first centuries of the Church. These accounts, although not considered authoritative in the same manner as the Bible, outline some of the Church's traditional beliefs about the birth of Mary.

The "Protoevangelium of James," which was probably put into its final written form in the early second century, describes Mary's father Joachim as a wealthy member of one of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Joachim was deeply grieved, along with his wife Anne, by their childlessness. "He called to mind Abraham," the early Christian writing says, "that in the last day God gave him a son Isaac." Joachim and Anne began to devote themselves extensively and rigorously to prayer and fasting, initially wondering whether their inability to conceive a child might signify God's displeasure with them. As it turned out, however, the couple were to be blessed even more abundantly than Abraham and Sarah, as an angel revealed to Anne when he appeared to her and prophesied that all generations would honor their future child: "The Lord has heard your prayer, and you shall conceive, and shall bring forth, and your seed shall be spoken of in all the world."

After Mary's birth, according to the Protoevangelium of James, Anne "made a sanctuary" in the infant girl's room, and "allowed nothing common or unclean" on account of the special holiness of the child. The same writing records that when she was one year old, her father "made a great feast, and invited the priests, and the scribes, and the elders, and all the people of Israel."

"And Joachim brought the child to the priests," the account continues, "and they blessed her, saying: 'O God of our fathers, bless this child, and give her an everlasting name to be named in all generations' . . . And he brought her to the chief priests, and they blessed her, saying: 'O God most high, look upon this child, and bless her with the utmost blessing, which shall be for ever.'"

The Protoevangelium goes on to describe how Mary's parents, along with the temple priests, subsequently decided that she would be offered to God as a consecrated Virgin for the rest of her life, and enter a chaste marriage with the carpenter Joseph. Saint Augustine described the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary as an event of cosmic and historic significance, and an appropriate prelude to the birth of Jesus Christ. "She is the flower of the field from whom bloomed the precious lily of the valley," he said. The fourth-century bishop, whose theology profoundly shaped the Western Church's understanding of sin and human nature, affirmed that "through her birth, the nature inherited from our first parents is changed." Source: Catholic News Agency/EWTN

OBLATE PSALTER

The second printing of the Oblate Psalter has been sent to the book binder and may be available by the Oblate meeting September 17, but definitely by the October 15th meeting. 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.