

OBLATE NEWSLETTER

Oblates of St. Benedict | Belmont Abbey



THE ORDO

Listed below are the feast days (f), solemnities (s) and memorials (m) that are observed at the monastery. These dates follow the Ordo of the American Cassinese Congregation. These dates can also be found online at: <http://oblatesosbbelmont.org/ordo>.

April

- 7 | John Baptiste De La Salle (m)
- 11 | Stanislaus (f)
- 19 | Election of Pope Benedict XVI
- 21 | Anselm (m)
- 25 | Mark (f)
- 29 | Catherine of Siena (m)

May

- 2 | Athanasius (m)
- 3 | Philip and James (f)
- 14 | Matthias (f)
- 15 | Pachomius (m)
- 24 | Mary, Help of Christians (s)
- 31 | Visitation of Mary (f)



The Fullness of Prayer

“Abba Matta El-Meskeen said, ‘If honey, which is transient food, warms the human body, how much more will God enkindle a person’s whole spiritual being, so that he or she feels a divine fire raging within, working for purification and remorse, for gladdening and comforting—at one time instilling in a person the earnest yearning for the kingdom of heaven, at another spurring him or her on to service and sacrifice for others. And so man receives during his or her prayers the inspirations of the will of God relevant to him or her.’

Abba Matta concludes this long saying with a remarkable statement: *‘And so a man receives during his or her prayers the inspirations of the will of God relevant to him or her.’*

It is tempting to think of prayer as requests or desires with

Oblate Formation

Next Meeting: May 18

Novices :: 2:30 p.m.

Oblates :: 3:30 p.m.

Vespers :: 5:30 p.m.

FIRST YEAR NOVICES

READING ASSIGNMENT

Introduction to the Rule of St. Benedict

Chapters 50-63 :: Step 7 - Hope

QUESTIONS

What is your main motivation for the big decisions and changes of your life? What is already changing because of your decision to become a novice?

SECOND YEAR NOVICES

READING ASSIGNMENT

St. Benedict's Toolbox

Chapter 5 - Conversion of Life

QUESTIONS

Read the toolbox questions and assignments at the end of each chapter & be ready to discuss.

OBLATES

READING ASSIGNMENT

Life Lessons from the Monastery

Chapter 17 :: The Noonday Devil

Describe the "noon day demon" in your own words.

What is Cassian's definition of the noon day demon?

As an oblate, how do we deal with the noon day demon when it attacks?

Chapter 18 :: Baptized into Death

What does this statement mean: "are you unaware that we who

a focus on fulfillment in the future, especially during the process of spiritual transformation. Abba Matta is clear that 'a man receives during his or her prayers'. He is clear that 'inspirations of the will of God' are received during the flow of energy between God and a human being in the context of personal prayer. These inspirations are the movement of God's Spirit within the spirit of the person who 'works for purification'. A first step is openness to the movement of the Holy Spirit so that the desires of God for a person become the same desires that person wills for herself or himself. But this is a gradual process and Abba Matta knows that this will happen in a manner that is 'relevant' and personal."

- Excerpt From: David G. R. Keller. *Desert Banquet*. 2011



Sanctification and Love

"Abba Matta continues, '*Working for purification and remorse, for gladdening and comforting—at one time instilling in a person the earnest yearning for the kingdom of heaven, at another spurring him or her on to service and sacrifice for others.*'"

Abba Matta uses very few words to describe the gradual and balanced process of human transformation that takes place in our life of prayer. Part of our prayer is 'working for purification'. This takes place through honest 'remorse' (awareness) of those aspects of our lives that are not congruent with God's desires.

were baptized into Christ were baptized into His death”?

What is unique about the death of Jesus?

Do Lectio with this sentence: “The interior gift of love and obedience, which animated Jesus’ entire life, culminated in His complete self-gift on Calvary.” What key words popped out at you? Try to relate them to the monastic life as well as to your life as an oblate.

Chapter 19 :: Yield

How do you as an oblate yield to God’s presence moment by moment?

Think about the secret of Holiness as “letting God reverse the pattern of Adam in us, letting pride and disobedience be replaced by humility and obedience, giving up control of our lives.” What key words relate to the Benedictine life?

How does God keep us in line and cause us to simplify with the words “drop by drop” and “moment by moment”?

Chapter 20 :: Freedom

Has being an Oblate helped you to be more free to allow God to heal you from insecurity or anything else?

At this point in your prayer life, how close have you become to God?

At the same time we experience ‘gladdening and comforting’ as the burdens and futile consequences of our self-centeredness are lifted and we become more aware of God’s love and desires for us. This holy praxis of prayer results in a firm ‘yearning’ for intimacy with God and what God desires (the kingdom) and at the same time a genuine passion to share our lives with our neighbor. It is neither self-centered nor self-serving. Inner transformation becomes tangible in our way of life.”

- Excerpt From: David G. R. Keller. *Desert Banquet*. 2011



When the Human Heart Does Not Have God as Its Treasure

“A corrupt heart: this is where the problem lies. Why does a heart become corrupt? For the human person, the heart is not a dead end, closed on itself; it is not where the give-and-take of relations (including moral relations) stops. On the contrary, the heart is human insofar as it can refer to something else, can adhere, can love or deny love (which is hatred). This is why Jesus, when He invites us to see the heart as the source of our actions, calls our attention to the ultimate direction taken by our questioning heart: “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

To know a man’s heart, to see what state it is in, necessarily involves finding out the treasure with which the heart is concerned, the treasure that liberates and fulfills it or the treasure that destroys and enslaves it—or, in the case at

As an oblate have you begun to know your worth and the worth of those around you better?

Chapter 21 :: Always A Life For Others

Pope Benedict says that Christianity is consistently about the salvation of a people - the Body of Christ. We are going together to God. Our joy and our hope are bound up with the progress of all on the way. The first letter of John says, "we are writing this to you so that our joy may be complete." Keeping this in mind, why does Pachomius say, "I am going to the desert"?

How does the monk connect with God?



hand, the treasure that corrupts it. From the fact of corruption (whether personal or social), then, we come to the human heart as originator and maintainer of that corruption; and from the heart, we come to the treasure to which that heart is attached."

- Excerpt From: George Mario Bergoglio (Pope Francis). *The Way of Humility: Corruption and Sin*. 2005



"Faith in the resurrection of Jesus says that there is a future for every human being; the cry for unending life which is a part of the person is indeed answered... God exists: that is the real message of Easter. Anyone who even begins to grasp what this means also knows what it means to be redeemed."

- Pope Benedict XVI

"The claim that "Christ died for us" means that we have been reconciled by a truthful forgiveness: the Father of the Son we have murdered invites us to be forgiven by and make peace with Him."

- Stanley Hauerwas

"Now let the heavens be joyful, Let earth her song begin:
Let the round world keep triumph, And all that is therein;
Invisible and visible, Their notes let all things blend,
For Christ the Lord is risen Our joy that hath no end."

- Saint John of Damascus