

Oblate Program at Belmont Abbey, NC July-August, 2018

FINAL OBLATION



From left to right: Joseph Bolick, Paula Bolick and their Oblate Companion Tiffany Gallozzi with Michael Boggs and his Oblate Companion Phillip McGee.

On June 17 Joseph Bolick, Paula Bolick and Dr. Michael Boggs made their final Oblation as Oblates of St. Benedict. The ceremony was presided over by Abbot Placid. Over 30 Oblates were in attendance to witness the Oblations and renew their own Oblation to Belmont Abbey during the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

FEAST OF ST. BENEDICT: SOLEMN MONASTIC PROFESSION OF BR. JAMES R RABER

With thanksgiving to God the Monks of Belmont Abbey invite you to celebrate with them the Solemn Monastic Profession of their Brother, James R. Raber, O.S.B. during the Eucharistic Liturgy on Tuesday, the 11th of July, 2017 the Feast of Our Holy Father Benedict at ten-thirty in the morning (10:30 AM), at Belmont Abbey, Belmont, North Carolina.

INTRODUCING HOME PRAYER SPACES

Many people who pray the Liturgy of the Hours find that having a specific place, or several specific places to pray, is conducive to being able to enter quickly into the spirit of prayer. In coming issues of the newsletter, we want to share information about personal places for prayer. First, we hope that seeing how others arrange space for prayer will reinforce our own commitment to pray. Second, as we view what others have done, and hear their stories about their spaces, we Look forward to finding our imaginations stimulated to enrich our own prayer spaces. Third, as we share stories about these spaces, we

pray that our witness will lead us all into a deeper commitment to prayer and an enlarged vision of prayer's importance in our own lives.

In our home we have a couple of places for prayer, depending on how many will be praying at one time and on how our homespace is being used. Our home is too small to have a room set aside exclusively for prayer. The photographed space is located in our bedroom as that room is relatively unused except for sleeping. By going in and closing the door, two things happen. First, simply closing the door provides privacy. Second, this room is away from the street and a relatively quiet space for prayer can be attained even if the TV, a radio, or music is being played elsewhere in the house.



On top of the dresser (L-R), a photo taken at the instant of sunrise at Oak Island Beach stands behind a statuette of our Lady and a bottle of holy water. The sunrise picture was taken at the end of December. With a stiff wind blowing in off the ocean, I was shivering from the cold since I'd already been outside for nearly an hour and a half. The warming rays of the sun and the dawning of full light reminded me of full light of grace and goodness which come to us through our Lady's obedient consent and how she brings us to her Son so that others may experience such gracious goodness in us.

The book under the votive candle on the dresser top is a 1930's edition of Egermeir's Bible Story Book. Between the ages of five and nine, mom called my two brothers

NECROLOGY

JULY

- 3 Fr. Maurice McDonnell (1950)
- 4 Br. Lawrence Bittel (1946)
- 6 Br. Francis Buss (1944)
- 10 Fr. Bede Lightner (2002)
- 17 Fr. Obl. Bertrand Pattison (1992)
- 20 Fr. Stephen Dowd (1985)
- 22 Br. Philip Berhard (1907)
- 22 Br. Vincent Melber (1946)
- 23 Fr. Raphael Arthur (1941)
- 24 Abbot Leo Haid (1924)
- 26 Fr. Raymond Geyer (2009)
- 27 Br. Obl. Jude Morris (1951)

AUGUST

- 3 Fr. Nicholas Gibilisco (1994)
- 5 Br. Fidelis Kuhn (1916)
- 6 Fr. Ignatius Remke (1944)
- 12 Br. Rupert Sebald (1953)
- 13 Br. Leodegar Ochsenkuehn (1973)
- 14 Fr. Martin Hayes (1992)
- 19 Br. Meinrad Buechling (1894)
- 31 Fr. Brendan Dooley (1964)



ORDO

JULY

- 1 13th Sunday in Ordinary time (Wk I)
- 3 Thomas, Apostle. Feast
- 8 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Wk II)
- 11 **Benedict, Patriarch of Western Monasticism. Feast**
- 15 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Wk III)
- 22 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Wk IV)
- 25 James, Apostle, Feast
- 26 Joachim and Anne, Memorial
- 29 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Wk I)
- 31 Ignatius of Loyola, Memorial

AUGUST

- 1 Alphonsus Liguori, Memorial
- 4 John Mary Vianney, Memorial
- 5 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Wk II)
- 6 Transfiguration of the Lord. Feast
- 8 Dominic, Priest. Memorial
- 10 Lawrence, Martyr. Feast
- 11 Clare, Virgin, Memorial
- 12 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Wk III)
- 14 Maximilian Kolbe, Memorial
- 15 **Assumption of the Virgin Mary. Solemnity**
- 19 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Wk IV)
- 20 Bernard, Abbot. Memorial
- 21 Pius X, Memorial
- 22 Queenship of the Virgin Mary. Memorial.
- 24 Bartholomew, Apostle, Feast
- 26 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time (Wk I)
- 27 Monica, Holy Woman, Memorial
- 28 Augustine, Bishop. Memorial
- 29 Passion of John the Baptist. Memorial

and me to one of our beds for bedtime stories nearly every night. This was the book she read, and we went completely through it four or five times. Hearing these stories and talking about them provided a formative catechesis for me. Seeing the book is stimulus for gratitude toward faithful parents and is a definition of what familial affection feels like.

On top of the storybook, I've placed a hickory nut, both as a reminder of Blessed Julian of Norwich and her meditation on a nut ("Who made this and why?"), and because nuts are reminders of the life held within a shell, like our Lord's body in the tomb. Along with the nut there are a couple of significant medals.

An icon of St. Benedict of Norcia, my confirmation name saint and founder of our order stands to the right of the candle. Tucked away, partly behind this icon is a glass jar containing tea lights and the means for lighting them.

The icon on the wall below the crucifix illustrates a whole series of scenes from sacred history. This is what's known as a calendar icon; it illustrates the principle feasts of the Orthodox church year, nearly all of which also occur in the Roman calendar. The large center panel of that icon shows the events of Holy Week and Paschaltide. The smaller images around the border tell the story of the incarnation from the Nativity of the Virgin to her Dormition and Assumption.

The matrimonial icons were a gift to us for our wedding

thirty-five years ago and have been displayed prominently in our home throughout our lives. They remind us each day that Jesus and our Lady are powerfully present for us and that they desire that we share their presence with those whose lives we will touch during our daily round of activities.

The crucifix is perhaps the newest item here and was selected to go with the other objects. Behind the upper right side of the crucifix and above the icon of our Lord are palm fronds from the most recent Palm Sunday Mass. They serve as a reminder that we who acclaim Him King need to be watchful lest we soon betray Him again.

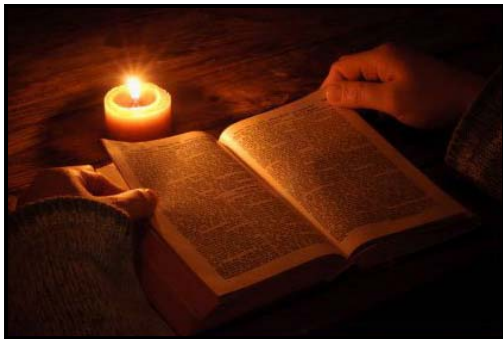
If you would like to share your prayer space with the rest of us, please send a description of no more than 500 words and a photo in .jpg (most smartphones support this format) by e-mail to dr.mikeboggs@gmail.com. Please include a phone number and note whether or not you can be reached by text message.
Dr. Michael Boggs, OblSB

OBJECT OF LECTIO DIVINA

... *Lectio*, reading, is an ambiguous substantive word: it may designate both the action of reading and what is read. Divina is an adjective that qualifies the word *lectio*, and signifies "divine" or "of God." Hence *lectio divina* literally means "divine reading" or "reading of God." That is to say, it signifies reading which has God as its

object. We read Cervantes or we read Marx; in *lectio divina* we read God. Because God is the author of a book or more exactly of a library: the collection of writings, different in character, which form the Old and New Testaments. St. Gregory the Great calls Scripture *scripta Dei* (the writings of God), *scripta Redemptoris nostri* (the writings of our Redeemer), and considers it a letter sent to us by God.

The Bible contains the written Word of God. For that reason the proper and immediate matter for *lectio divina* can be nothing else than Scripture. The object of *lectio* can only be the Word of God contained in the Bible. A learned critic, A. Mundo, observed that the early monastics, in contrast to many modern ones, gave a "most strict meaning" to *lectio divina*, namely, "the reading of the Word of God contained in the books of Sacred Scripture and by concomitance the commentaries on them." Only "by concomitance," subsidiarity, in so far as they helped to understand the Scriptures better, the commentaries of the Fathers of the Church were accepted as matter for *lectio divina*.



Since the Bible is the proper object, *lectio divina* acquired its specific form, as a result of which one cannot read God as one would any other author. The "reading of God" cannot be equated with other readings. Now, in the measure that personal experiences were accumulated by this contact with the Word of God, in the measure that people knew how to conduct themselves with regard to the Word of God to penetrate its unfathomable depths, to relish it, to appropriate it and put it into practice, the various features which determine "divine reading" became clear.

God in the Bible

Instead of *lectio divina* Pelagius and the Rule of the Four Fathers use an equivalent formula: *vacare Deo* ("Rest in God"), to devote oneself to God. Because, as A. de Vogue comments, "to open the Bible is to meet God." It is a felicitous expression. Likewise, that of G. Bessiere, when he calls Scripture "the book of the God-seekers." "If one meets God in the Bible, then the goal of *lectio divina* cannot be anything else than the "seeking of God in the written Word," as the Benedictine abbots declared in the Congress of 1976, or, as Yeoman's says with a play on words, "the reverent, pious seeking of the Word in the Word."

Since "to open the Bible is to encounter God," it is readily understandable that God-seekers threw themselves

upon the Bible with true passion. This happened with the monastics, those considered professionals in the quest for God. From the beginnings of monasticism till the end of the Middle Ages, when *lectio* was abandoned in favor of "spiritual reading," the Bible enjoyed incomparable prestige among monastics. The reading and "meditation" of Scripture constituted for generation upon generation of monastics an assiduous occupation, highly esteemed and regarded as essential. For them the Bible was not only the supreme rule of life, the mirror for self-contemplation, the book of edification par excellence, the nourishment of the soul - food so nutritive that, according to St. John Chrysostom, sometimes a single word of Scripture sufficed "as viaticum for the entire journey of life;"? not only was it "a safe harbor," "an insurmountable wall, a solid tower, a glory that nothing can tarnish, a weapon that never fails, complete security, lasting pleasure and every good that one can think of," St. Basil of Caesarea assures us. Not only does it supply "divine remedies" for the wounds of the soul, a protective shield against the darts of the enemy, the "tools" needed by a Christian, a "priceless treasure" that must not be buried, according to St. John Chrysostom; and as St. Gregory the Great asserts:

"a bread of life, wine that inebriates, strength in time of trial, a light in the night and a fire that consumes the heart ... But also, and above all, it is the privileged place to meet God. "In the Scriptures," Origen writes, "with face unveiled we contemplate the glory of the Lord!" The biographer of St. Odilo of Cluny says that the Bible is "the book of the contemplation of God."

These are not pious hyperboles. God personally speaks and is manifested in the Bible. The word is the complete form of human communication. There are other ways of communicating: a glance, a gesture ... but only the word can convey with precision, with detail, anything that can be expressed. In language the supreme human revelation is fulfilled. Now, God chooses the same means of communication to be revealed to humanity. That is what supernatural revelation formally consists of: Creation and the government of the universe are a natural revelation: God's mind is manifested as knowable mediately. In supernatural revelation, on the other hand, God's mind is manifested, as we communicate our thoughts to another: by means of language, in the proper sense of the word. In Scripture God speaks to us immediately, because Scripture is the formal Word of God.

The Bible is "the book of the God-seekers." In the sacred books, the Father in heaven goes forth to meet his children with great love and speaks with them. "To open the Bible is to meet God."

Garcia M. Colombas
Reading God, pp. 25-28

AUGUST 6: FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

Today the Gospel presents the Transfiguration. It is the second stage of the Lenten journey: the first was the temptation in the desert, last Sunday; the second, the Transfiguration. Jesus “took with him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain apart” (Mt 17:1). The mountain in the Bible represents a place close to God and an intimate encounter with Him, a place of prayer where one stands in the presence of the Lord. There up on the mount, Jesus is revealed to the three disciples as transfigured, luminous and most beautiful. And then Moses and Elijah appear and converse with Him. His face is so resplendent and his robes so white that Peter, awestruck, wishes to stay there, as if to stop time. Suddenly from on high the voice of the Father resounds proclaiming Jesus to be his most beloved Son, saying “listen to him” (v. 5). This word is important! Our Father said this to these Apostles, and says it to us as well: “listen to Jesus, because he is my beloved Son”. This week let us keep this word in our minds and in our hearts: “listen to Jesus!”. And the Pope is not saying this, God the Father says it to everyone: to me, to you, to everyone, all people! It is like an aid for going forward on the path of Lent. “Listen to Jesus!”. Don’t forget.

This invitation from the Father is very important. We, the disciples of Jesus, are called to be people who listen to his voice and take his words seriously. To listen to Jesus, we must be close to him, to follow him, like the crowd in the Gospel who chase him through the streets of Palestine. Jesus did not have a teaching post or a fixed pulpit, he was an itinerant teacher, who proposed his teachings, teachings given to him by the Father, along the streets, covering distances that were not always predictable or easy. Follow Jesus in order to listen to him. But also let us listen to Jesus in his written Word, in the Gospel. I pose a question to you: do you read a passage of the Gospel everyday? Yes, no... yes, no... half of the time ... some yes, some no. It is important! Do you read the Gospel? It is so good; it is a good thing to have a small book of the Gospel, a little one, and to carry in our pocket or in our purse and read a little passage in whatever moment presents itself during the day. In any given moment of the day I take the

Gospel from my pocket and I read something, a short passage. Jesus is there and he speaks to us in the Gospel! Ponder this. It’s not difficult, nor is it necessary to have all four books: one of the Gospels, a small one, with us. Let the Gospel be with us always, because it is the Word of Jesus in order for us to be able to listen to him.



From the event of the Transfiguration I would like to take two significant elements that can be summed up in two words: ascent and descent. We all need to go apart, to ascend the mountain in a space of silence, to find ourselves and better perceive the voice of the Lord. This we do in prayer. But we cannot stay there! Encounter with God in prayer inspires us anew to “descend the mountain” and return to the plain where we meet many brothers weighed down by fatigue, sickness, injustice, ignorance, poverty both material and spiritual. To these brothers in difficulty, we are called to bear the fruit of that experience with God, by sharing the grace we have received. And this is curious. When we hear the Word of Jesus, when we listen to the Word of Jesus and carry it in our heart, this Word grows. Do you know how it grows? By giving it to the other! The Word of Christ grows in us

when we proclaim it, when we give it to others! And this is what Christian life is. It is a mission for the whole Church, for all the baptized, for us all: listen to Jesus and offer him to others. Do not forget: this week listen to Jesus! And think about the matter of the Gospel: will you? Will you do this? Then next Sunday you tell me if you have done this: that you have a little book of the Gospel in your pocket or in your purse to read in little stages throughout the day.

And now let us turn to our Mother Mary, and entrust ourselves to her guidance in pursuing with faith and generosity this path of Lent, learning a little more how to “ascend” with prayer and listen to Jesus and to “descend” with brotherly love, proclaiming Jesus.

Pope Francis
March 16, 2014



Enjoy your summer. Next meeting will be September 16 in the Geyer Room (Oblate Room) in the Music Building.