



Oblates of St. Benedict

Oblate Program at Belmont Abbey, NC June, 2019

NEXT MEETING: FINAL OBLATIONS AND MASS

Abbot Placid Solari will join us at **2:00 PM** in the Abbey Basilica for Mass. At that time he will accept the final Oblations for the Oblate Novices who are ready and recommended by their Oblate Companion. Family members are welcome to attend. The Oblates present will renew their Oblations at that time.

Oblates unable to attend are requested to renew their Oblations and mail in the form on the inside of the newsletter.

Please note: Due to a scheduling conflict Mass on June 9 will be at 2:00 PM, not the time announced on the card mailed out separately.

READING GOD = CONVERSATION WITH GOD

The Fathers teach that prayer must interrupt reading. Thus St. Jerome, St. Augustine, Cassian, St. Isidore of Seville... The last named gives the reason: "Often prolonged reading fatigues the memory. For that reason it is better to read a paragraph, close the book and review mentally the truth that has just been read. In this way a person will read without fatigue, and the doctrine will not slip away from the surface of the mind." Origin gives another reason: When we do not find what we are looking for, when we do not understand the text we are reading, we must have recourse to God and ask to grant under-

standing, since "it is absolutely necessary to pray in order to comprehend divine things." Prayer is required in the first place, says St. Basil, because the Holy Spirit alone allows us to discover the meaning of the words of Scripture. William of Saint-Thierry assures us that the interruptions devoted to prayer (which he highly recommends), far from disturbing the soul, provide it with light to understand what has been read.

For his part, St. Benedict mentions among the principal Lenten observances *oratio cum fletibus, lectio et compunctio cordis*, (prayer with weeping, lectio and compunction of heart). This wonderful passage of Chapter 49 of the Rule, better than anything else, reveals the mind of the saint. Evidently, according to him, when the *effectus inspirationis divinae gratiae* (effect of the inspiration of divine grace), that is, the grace of intimate prayer of which Chapter 20 speaks, is produced, the monastics interrupt reading in order to pray, and this inaugurates the dialogue between God and humanity. When you pray, you speak to your Spouse; when you read, the Spouse speaks to you."

In reality, it would not be necessary for the Fathers and other spiritual masters to advise associating prayer and reading. When *lectio divina* is practiced as the tradition teaches, that is to say, when it is truly "divine reading" and not merely "spiritual reading," and not dominated by intellectual or utilitarian preoccupations; when lectio is attention to God and personal, intimate contact with God's Word -- then prayer breaks forth spontaneously and irresistibly. Furthermore, prayer forms a part of lectio. In truth, one does not read God like any other author. Emphasis has been laid on the point that a reader must establish intimate contact with the author, and that is

The June 9 meeting will be the last for the year. Meetings will resume in September.



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

JUNE

- 2 Br. Bernard Geil (1931)
- 4 Br. Charles Eckel (1918)
- 6 Fr. Edward Meyer (1914)
- 7 Br. Xavier Hauman (1983)
- 13 Br. Altmann Alt (1893)
- 17 Br. Maurus Lobenhofer (1964)
- 19 Fr. Gabriel Stupasky (1974)
- 20 Novice Martin Linseisen (1909)
- 21 Fr. Sebastian Doris (1990)
- 26 Br. Placid Spoettl (1949)
- 28 Prior Felix Hintemeyer (1924)

The Cistercian Arnold of Boheries says of the monk-novice: "When he reads, let him seek taste, not knowledge. Sacred Scripture is Jacob's well, whence is drawn the water that immediately spills over into prayer. It will not be necessary to go to the oratory to begin to pray, because reading itself will offer occasion for prayer and contemplation." For that reason in hagiography and in medieval monastic treatises we find expressions such as these: "But the reading was also prayer;" "Wholly in reading, wholly in prayer..." Another anonymous Cistercian of the twelfth century writes: "While reading I pray;" "while praying contemplate." The Abbot General Dom Ambrose Southey stands in the same tradition; according to him lectio consists of "ruminating on the Word of God in prayer," and a monastic of our own day describes it as "reading meditated, especially that of the Bible, and prolonged in contemplative prayer." Lectio divina is a dialogue of love, heart to heart, in the most complete personal intimacy. Reading and prayer are inseparable. In many texts they are considered identical.

Reading God, Garcia Colobas, pp. 48-51

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true. In order to read well, in order that an author may communicate the truth of his or her thoughts to us and answer our questions, it is necessary that we consider that we are in conversation with him or her. This clearly is a fiction, since the author does not know us nor is he present to reply to our questions except as far as his or her responses are written in the text.

With the Bible it is different. God, who is present in it, is a living God. Not only has God spoken in the past, but is also speaking now -- to me. For that reason "reading God" equals "conversation with God."



ORDO

JUNE

- 1 Justin, Martyr, Memorial
- 2 **Seventh Sunday of Easter (Wk III)**
- 3 Charles Lwanga and Companions, Martyrs, Memorial
- 5 Boniface, Bishop/Martyr, Memorial
- 9 **Pentecost (Wk I)**

ORDINARY TIME

- 10 Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, Memorial
- 11 Barnabas, Apostle, Memorial
- 13 Anthony of Padua, Priest, Religious and Doctor of the Church, Memorial
- 16 **Most Holy Trinity (Wk II)**
- 19 Romuald, Abbot, Memorial
- 21 Aloysius Gonzaga, Religious, Memorial
- 23 **Corpus Christi (Wk III)**
- 24 **Nativity of St. John the Baptist, Solemnity (Week IV)**
- 28 **Sacred Heart of Jesus, Solemnity**
- 29 **Peter & Paul, Apostles, Solemnity**
- 30 **13th Sunday in Ordinary (Wk I)**



OBLATE PSALTER

We are gearing up to do an additional printing of the *Oblate Psalter*. 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.

Renewal of Oblation

I renew my oblation of St. Benedict for the community of Mary, Help of Christians Abbey and promise again to serve God and all people according to the Rule of St. Benedict.

God, most compassionate and loving, strengthen me in my commitment to follow you in the way of St. Benedict. Through my daily prayer and work may I be inspired to live in Christ and to bring his love to the world and his peace to all hearts. I make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Every year each Oblate is expected to renew their Oblation. If circumstances prevent you from attending the annual ceremony at the Abbey, you should make this Oblation in private. After renewing your Oblation, please complete this form and mail to:

Director of Oblates
Belmont Abbey
100 Belmont-Mt. Holly Road
Belmont, NC 28012

Signature

Date

Name (Printed or typed)

IMPORTANT!: PROPOSED MEETING FORMAT CHANGE

The Formation Team is considering a change in the meeting formats. First, we are asking if you would prefer meeting on Saturdays or Sundays. Second we are suggesting a change in the meeting formats which would be:

11:00 AM — Mass at the Abbey

12:00 Noon — Lunch (with a small charge)

1:00 PM — Meeting begins with short prayer or reflection

1:15 PM — Concurrent Break out sessions:

Oblate Novice Orientation

Oblate Meeting

3:00 PM — Meeting closes at 3:00 with Daytime Prayer followed by refreshments.

Please let us know what you think. Please return before July 11.

Preferred Meeting day	
Sunday	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/>
No Opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>

Preferred Meeting format (Choose one)	
Keep the current meeting format	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer the suggested meeting format	<input type="checkbox"/>
No Opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>

NOVENA PRAYER TO ST. BENEDICT (FEAST DAY JULY 11)

Glorious Saint Benedict, sublime model of virtue, pure vessel of God's grace! Behold me humbly kneeling at your feet. I implore you in your loving kindness to pray for me before the throne of God. To you I have recourse in the dangers that daily surround me. Shield me against my selfishness and my indifference to God and to my neighbor. Inspire me to imitate you in all things. May your blessing be with me always, so that I may see and serve Christ in others and work for His kingdom.

Graciously obtain for me from God those favors and graces which I need so much in the trials, miseries and afflictions of life. Your heart was always full of love, compassion and mercy toward those who were afflicted or troubled in any way. You never dismissed without consolation and assistance anyone who had recourse to you. I therefore invoke your powerful intercession, confident in the hope that you will hear my prayers and obtain for me the special grace and favor I earnestly implore. (mention your petition) Help me, great Saint Benedict, to live and die as a faithful child of God, to run in the sweetness of His loving will, and to attain the eternal happiness of heaven. Amen

THE CHURCH IS THE COMMUNITY THAT LISTENS AND PROCLAIMS THE WORD OF GOD

... The Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, whose drafting I personally witnessed as a young theologian, taking part in the lively discussions that went with it, begins with a deeply meaningful sentence: "*Dei Verbum religiose audiens et fidenter proclamans, Sacrosancta Synodus...*" ["Hearing the Word of God with reverence, and proclaiming it with faith, the Sacred Synod..."] (n. 1).

With these words the Council points out a descriptive aspect of the Church: she is a community that listens to and proclaims the Word of God.

The Church does not live on herself but on the Gospel, and in the Gospel always and ever anew finds the directions for her journey. This is a point that every Christian must understand and apply to himself or herself: only those who first listen to the Word can become preachers of it.

Indeed, they must not teach their own wisdom but the wisdom of God, which often appears to be foolishness in the eyes of the world (cf. I Cor 1: 23).

The Church knows well that Christ lives in the Sacred Scriptures. For this very reason - as the Constitution stresses - she has always venerated the divine Scriptures in the same way as she venerates the Body of the Lord (cf. *Dei Verbum*, n. 21).

In view of this, St Jerome, cited by the conciliar Document, said that ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ (cf. *Dei Verbum*, n. 25).

The Church and the Word of God are inseparably linked. The Church lives on the Word of God and the Word of God echoes through the Church, in her teaching and throughout her life (cf. *Dei Verbum*, n. 8). The Apostle Peter, therefore, reminds us that no

prophecy contained in Scripture can be subjected to a personal interpretation. "Prophecy has never been put forward by man's willing it. It is rather that men impelled by the Holy Spirit have spoken under God's influence" (II Pt 1: 20).

We are grateful to God that in recent times, and thanks to the impact made by the Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, the fundamental importance of the Word of God has been deeply re-evaluated. From this has derived a renewal of the Church's life, especially in her preaching, catechesis, theology and spirituality, and even in the ecumenical process. The Church must be constantly renewed and rejuvenated and the Word of God, which never ages and is never depleted, is a privileged means to achieve this goal. Indeed, it is the Word of God, through the Holy Spirit, which always guides us to the whole truth (cf. Jn 16: 13).

In this context, I would like in particular to recall and recommend the ancient tradition of *Lectio divina*: the diligent reading of Sacred Scripture accompanied by prayer brings about that intimate dialogue in which the person reading hears God who is speaking, and in praying, responds to him with trusting openness of heart (cf. *Dei Verbum*, n. 25). If it is effectively promoted, this practice will bring to the Church - I am convinced of it - a new spiritual springtime.

As a strong point of biblical ministry, *Lectio divina* should therefore be increasingly encouraged, also through the use of new methods, carefully thought through and in step with the times. It should never be forgotten that the Word of God is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path (cf. Ps 119 [118]: 105). . . .

Pope Benedict XVI
Friday, 16 September 2005