

## *Oblate Program at Belmont Abbey, NC*

*October, 2019*

### **FOR THE NEXT MEETING, OCTOBER 20**

**Meeting will begin at 2:30 PM**

**Oblates:** The discussion will continue from the book "Monastic Practices" and will be covering the chapter on "Silence."

**Novice Oblates:** Review of the material distributed last month on *Lectio Divina*.



### **ACTIVE AND PASSIVE READING**

Reading is an activity. Ortega Gasset noted, "It must not be forgotten that reading is always collaboration." And Peguy says that "true reading is a common act, a common operation, of the one who reads and what is read." *Lectio divina* is that par excellence: common act, mutual assimilation (the Word of God is living), the adventure of a person enmeshed in the net of the Word and the unforeseeable course of the Word in the life of a person.

In "divine reading" there is no question of escaping our own existence, not even for a fleeting moment; the "reading of God" is not an evasion, however sublime it may appear. It is a matter of assimilating the Word, of allowing it to assimilate us. It is a matter of confronting ourselves not only with a message from God with a teaching, but with the very voice of God. It is matter of a personal remaking, of reliving, the experience of the obligation contracted by God with humanity in a history that culminates in the incarnation of the Word and which has left its written - but living - imprint in Scripture.

One of the primary and almost exclusive reasons for the interest the early monastics felt for Scripture manifests

itself precisely in the conviction that a very close bond exists between monastic life and the Word of God. They were persuaded of the profound unity of successive phases of the "history of salvation" in the Old Testament as well as in the New; and in the life of the Church throughout the ages it is always the same "history of salvation." It reaches its culminating point in the Paschal Mystery, in which all Christians, all monastics, must participate, reliving it, renewing it in themselves.

Now, this cannot come about unless we appropriate to ourselves the mysteries of which the Scriptures which recount such events speak. In a certain way it is true to say that the same Spirit of God who inspired the authors of the sacred books continues to work in those who read them and try to experience the reality of which the Bible speaks to us.

In other words, "divine reading" is active reading inasmuch as the one who practices it must truly attempt to be adapted to what the Scripture says. It does not suffice to consider the letter and the spiritual interpretation, and thus to discover what really happened in the "history of salvation." One must relive, as it were, the adventures of God's People in the desert, the Gospels, the lives of the apostles of our Lord, the lives of the first Christians, the religious experiences of the personages of whom the Scripture speaks. Such experiences are extremely varied and respond to the needs of all, whatever be their age, in all spiritual circumstances and situations. To sum up, the "history of salvation" is not a drama which the reader contemplates from the outside, as a simple spectator, but an action in which he or she participates intensely, experiencing the interior states of the saints of the Old and New Testaments, reproducing their virtues, avoiding their vices, imitating their patience. All this, of course, requires great activity.

The Bible is not accustomed to proposing theories, but facts, concrete and personal examples, experiences. All this we must appropriate and make it penetrate our own life. This holds true particularly of the Gospels. To read the words and deeds of the Lord actively means to put

into practice the exhortation of St. Paul, "Your sentiments must be those of Christ." "To feel with Christ." To transform oneself in some way into Christ. To realize in truth what the name of Christian signifies. To read in this fashion, with the whole soul, with the whole being, overturning our entire personality, we might call that "integral reading." A reading that penetrates our entire life and moves our whole being: imagination, intellect, affections, a reading really living and life-giving.

Still, while eminently active, *lectio divina* can at the same time be called passive, insofar as it likewise lets the voice of God who speaks to us resound in us, allows God's Word to transform us by abandoning ourselves to God. Father Besnard utters some very profound thoughts about "how one must respond" to God. For people who have overcome trials which brought them to the edge of despair, he says, "to put into practice the Word" no longer would mean "voluntary conformity to rule, with recourse to moral force and to the subtle vanity that accompanies mastery of the ego over one's own actions;" to put the Word into practice means to say in this case that people allow themselves to be transformed by it - allow themselves to be led by it toward the new man, created by God since before the creation of the world, but in view of the resurrection of Jesus in holiness of truth ... It also means to say to allow the Word the possibility of communicating to us all the powers contained in the Gospel which it announces." It means "to leave time for Lord, so that he may tell us that he alone creates, saves us, perfects us and loves us; and when he has told us that, to give him at last the opportunity of realizing what he says. That is all he hopes for from us!"

Garcia M. Colombas, *Reading God*, pp. 55-58

## ORDO

### OCTOBER

- 1 Therese of the Child Jesus, Virgin. Memorial
- 2 Guardian Angels, Patron of Congregation. Feast
- 4 St. Francis of Assisi, Memorial
- 6 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week III)
- 7 Our Lady of the Rosary. Memorial
- 11 John XXIII, Pope. (Opt. Memorial)
- 13 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week IV)
- 15 Teresa of Jesus, Virgin. Memorial
- 17 Ignatius of Antioch, Memorial
- 18 Luke, Feast
- 20 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week I)
- 22 John Paul II, Pope. (Opt. Memorial)
- 28 Simon and Jude, Apostles. Feast
- 27 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week II)

## OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY



*Madonna del Rosario*

On October 7, the Roman Catholic Church celebrates the yearly feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. Known for several centuries by the alternate title of "Our Lady of Victory," the feast day takes place in honor of a 16th century naval victory which secured Europe against Turkish invasion. Pope St. Pius V attributed the victory to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who was invoked on the day of the battle through a campaign to pray the Rosary throughout Europe.

The feast always occurs one week after the similar Byzantine celebration of the Protection of the Mother of God, which most Eastern Orthodox Christians and Eastern Catholics celebrate on October 1 in memory of a 10th-century military victory which protected Constantinople against invasion after a reported Marian apparition.

Pope Leo XIII was particularly devoted to Our Lady of the Rosary, producing 11 encyclicals on the subject of this feast and its importance in the course of his long pontificate.

In the first of them, 1883's "Supremi Apostolatus Officio," he echoed the words of the oldest known Marian prayer (known in the Latin tradition as the "Sub Tuum Praesidium"), when he wrote, "It has always been the habit of Catholics in danger and in trou-

blous times to fly for refuge to Mary."

"This devotion, so great and so confident, to the august Queen of Heaven," Pope Leo continued, "has never shone forth with such brilliancy as when the militant Church of God has seemed to be endangered by the violence of heresy ... or by an intolerable moral corruption, or by the attacks of powerful enemies." Foremost among such "attacks" was the battle of



*Protection of the Theotokos*

ilization against Turkish invasion. Its fleets sailed to confront the Turks near the west coast of Greece on October 7, 1571.

Crew members on more than 200 ships prayed the Rosary in preparation for the battle - as did Christians throughout Europe, encouraged by the Pope to gather in their churches to invoke the Virgin Mary against the daunting Turkish forces.

Some accounts say that Pope Pius V was granted a miraculous vision of the Holy League's stunning victory. Without a doubt, the Pope understood the significance of the day's events, when he was eventually informed that all but 13 of the nearly 300 Turkish ships had been captured or sunk. He was moved to institute the feast now celebrated universally as Our Lady of the Rosary.

"Turkish victory at Lepanto would have been a catastrophe of the first magnitude for Christendom," wrote military historian John F. Guilmartin, Jr., "and Europe would have followed a historical trajectory strikingly different from that which obtained."

Source: *Catholic News Network*, Used with Permission

Lepanto, a perilous and decisive moment in European and world history.

Troops of the Turkish Ottoman Empire had invaded and occupied the Byzantine empire by 1453, bringing a large portion of the increasingly divided Christian world under a version of Islamic law. For the next hundred years, the Turks expanded their empire westward on land, and asserted their naval power in the Mediterranean. In 1565 they attacked Malta, envisioning an eventual invasion of Rome. Though repelled at Malta, the Turks captured Cyprus in the fall of 1570.

The next year, three Catholic powers on the continent – Genoa, Spain, and the Papal States - formed an alliance called the Holy League, to defend their Christian civ-

## NECROLOGY



### 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)



## *An Oblate Psalter*

We are preparing the fourth printing of An Oblate Psalter. If you would like a copy please email George Cobb at [gkcobb0929@gmail.com](mailto:gkcobb0929@gmail.com). The cost is \$15.00 a copy plus shipping if mailed.

## JOHN XXIII, JOHN PAUL II LINKED BY LOVE OF DIALOGUE WITH WORLD

*The memorials of these two giants of the modern Church are both celebrated during the month of October: John XXIII, October 11; John Paul II, October 22.*

John XXIII and John Paul II . . . are “bound together” by their love for addressing the world in conversation, a cardinal who worked with them both has said. “Before John XXIII, the Pope was perceived as one who made pronouncements from on high; John XXIII was the first Pope speaking off the cuff, and he paved the way for a new style,” said Cardinal Paul Poupard, president emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Culture, in an April 15 interview with CNA. “And of course we all remember the spontaneous meetings John Paul II had, especially with young people.” Cardinal Poupard worked at the Secretariat of State beginning in 1959, the second year of Angelo Roncalli’s papacy. John Paul II appointed him head of the Secretariat for Non-Believers in 1980, and he was president of the Pontifical Council for Culture from 1988 to 2007. Cardinal Poupard had the opportunity to spend time with both Popes, and saw that “during their meetings, both of them turned into, in a sense, who they had been before their election.”

He recalled his first meeting with John XXIII, when he, a 29-year-old priest of Paris, presented the Roman Pontiff with the book he published after his doctoral dissertation, about the appointments of bishops in France. “The appointment of bishops! You wanted to work hard!,” John XXIII told Fr. Poupard, reminded of his own efforts in French bishop appointments. Roncalli had been apostolic nuncio to France from 1944 to 1953. “In the conversation, he turned into the apostolic nuncio again,” Cardinal

Poupard reflected.

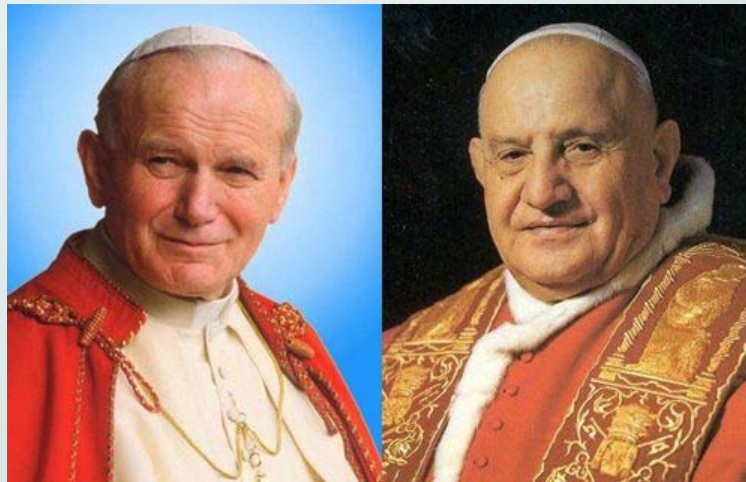
He then recounted that “when John Paul II spoke about the situation in Poland, he spoke such that he turned back to being the Bishop of Krakow, mentioning the Primate, Stefan Wyszynski.” Cardinal Poupard said that “John XXIII was the first Pope ‘speaking off the cuff’”, and he also “introduced into the style of encyclicals, the reading of the signs of times.” This style is peculiarly evident, he said, in *Pacem in terris*, John XXIII’s last encyclical and “his spiritual legacy, I would say, since he died some weeks after the encyclical had been issued.” Cardinal Poupard explained that “every chapter of the encyclical starts with a statement dealing with an aspiration of men

... to peace, to freedom, to dignity.” This style of *Pacem in terris* was an inspiration for the Second Vatican Council’s Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, which was something “new in the history of ecumenical councils.” “Conciliar documents had always

been based on God, on revelation ... *Gaudium et spes* inaugurated a new way of addressing the world, an inductive method which began from the aspirations of the human being instead of a deductive method with a basis in revelation.”

He said John XXIII paved the way to a more spontaneous way of being Pope, upon which John Paul II built, citing in particular the Pope’s institution of World Youth Day. John Paul II frequently engaged in conversation with the world through his trips to 129 countries, and his dialogue with other Christians and with the followers of other religions.

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**The November meeting of the Oblates will be on November 17 in the Geyer Room (Oblate Room) in the Music Building.**

