



Oblates of St. Benedict

Oblate Program at Belmont Abbey, NC June, 2021

ON-LINE MEETINGS

There is some confusion as to which on-line meeting Oblates and Novice-Oblates should attend. The current schedule is:

Oblates and Novice-Oblates *who have completed the formation program*: Meetings are third Sunday of each month at 3:00 PM.

Inquirers and Novice-Oblates: Meetings are usually the fourth Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM.

None of the meetings are exclusive to either group and are, of course, open to everyone. But ZOOM requires an invitation to be sent so, if you wish to attend, and you have not already sent your information, please contact George at gkcobb0321@pm.me



READING ASSIGNMENTS FOR ON-LINE MEETINGS

The following are the materials for each of the ZOOM meetings for the month of June:

Oblates and Novice-Oblates who have completed the formation program. June 20: St. Benedict's Toolbox: Chapter 3

Inquirers and Novice-Oblates:

June 9: Work. The material has already been emailed

June 30 (please note the change of date): Prayer: Material will be sent with the June 9th invite

DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS



The heart has always been seen as the "center" or essence a person ("the heart of the matter," "you are my heart," "take it to heart," etc.) and the wellspring of our emotional lives and love ("you break my heart," "my heart sings," etc.) Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is devotion to Jesus Christ Himself, but in the particular

ways of meditating on his interior life and on His threefold love -- His divine love, His burning love that fed His human will, and His sensible love that affects His interior life.

Pope Pius XII, of blessed memory, writes on this topic in his 1956 encyclical, *Haurietis Aquas* (On Devotion To The Sacred Heart).

The Friday that follows the Second Sunday in Time After Pentecost is the Feast of the Sacred Heart which brings to mind all the attributes of His Divine Heart mentioned above. Many Catholics prepare for this Feast by beginning a Novena to the Sacred Heart on the traditional day for the Feast of Corpus Christi, the Thursday of the week before, June 3 this year. On the Feast of the Sacred Heart itself, we can gain a plenary indulgence by making an Act of Reparation to the Sacred Heart.

From the earliest days of the Church, "Christ's open side and the mystery of blood and water were meditated upon, and the Church was beheld issuing from the side of Jesus, as Eve came forth from the side of Adam. It is in the elev-

enth and twelfth centuries that we find the first unmistakable indications of devotion to the Sacred Heart. Through the wound in the side, the wound in the Heart was gradually reached, and the wound in the Heart symbolized the wound of love." (Catholic Encyclopedia)

This general devotion arose first in Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries of that time, especially in response to the devotion of St. Gertrude the Great, but specific devotions became popularized when St. Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690), a Visitation nun, had a personal revelation involving a series of visions of Christ as she prayed before the Blessed Sacrament. She wrote, "He disclosed to me the marvels of his Love and the inexplicable secrets of his Sacred Heart." Christ emphasized to her His love -- and His woundedness caused by Man's indifference to this love.

- He promised that, in response to those who consecrate themselves and make reparations to His Sacred Heart, that:
- He will give them all the graces necessary in their state of life.
- He will establish peace in their homes.
- He will comfort them in all their afflictions.
- He will be their secure refuge during life, and above all, in death.
- He will bestow abundant blessings upon all their undertakings.
- Sinners will find in His Heart the source and infinite ocean of mercy.
- Lukewarm souls shall become fervent.
- Fervent souls shall quickly mount to high perfection.
- He will bless every place in which an image of His Heart is exposed and honored.
- He will give to priests the gift of touching the most hardened hearts.
- Those who shall promote this devotion shall have their names written in His Heart.

In the excessive mercy of His Heart that His all-powerful love will grant to all those who receive Holy Communion on the First Fridays in nine consecutive months the grace of final perseverance; they shall not die in His disgrace, nor without receiving their sacraments. His divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment. *(continued on last page)*



ORDO

JUNE

- 1 Justin, Martyr, Memorial (Wk. I)
- 3 Charles Lwanga and Companions, Martyrs, Memorial
- 5 Boniface, Bishop/Martyr, Memorial
- 6 Corpus Christi (Wk II)**
- 11 Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Solemnity
- 12 Immaculate Heart of Mary, Memorial
- 13 11th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Wk III)**
- 19 Sacred Heart of Jesus, Solemnity**
- 20 Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Memorial)
- 21 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Wk IV)**
- 24 Nativity of St. John the Baptist, Solemnity**
- 27 13th Sunday of Ordinary Time (Wk I)**
- 28 Irenaeus, Bishop, Martyr, Memorial
- 29 Peter & Paul, Apostles, Solemnity**

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

- 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 Spoetl (1949)
- 28 Prior Felix Hintemeyer (1924)



READING OF THE ANCIENTS

The Fathers and the Bible

Taking us by the hand, as it were, the Fathers lead us to the source of all Christian wisdom, Holy Scripture, and they teach us to love it, read it and taste it.

The most convincing reason for including the writings of the Fathers as an object of *lectio divina* alongside the Bible is that according to the early and medieval monastics, the Bible cannot be separated from the commentaries upon it by the Fathers of the Church. The literary genre of the Fathers makes no difference: they always explain or develop Scripture. Besides, not only what the Fathers wrote and said, but also what they did, was related to Scripture. Everything was reduced to the theoretical or practical illustration of the Bible.

The Fathers — and the various liturgies, the work of the Fathers — aid us in an excellent manner to interpret Scripture, to penetrate its mysteries, to discover the treasures of life which it contains. They assist us in reading Scripture "with the eyes of the Spouse." In truth, the Fathers are primarily the authorized interpreters of the Scripture. Their work stands in constant and intimate dependence on the sacred books. Paul Evdokimov does not exaggerate when he says that "they lived from the Bible, they thought and spoke by the Bible, with that admirable penetration which went so far as the identification of their being with the very substance of the Bible." Their spirituality — contrary to what we find in later authors — was in reference to the Bible in an immediate, explicit and constant manner. The Fathers explored almost the entire spiritual content of Scripture, and that exploration gave rise to the whole ascetical and mystical teaching of later times. Occasionally, the Fathers digressed, allowing themselves to indulge allegorical fantasies, but generally they base their spiritual exegesis on a literal interpretation of the sacred text. For them the Old Testament is prophecy of Christ, a figure of the eschatological times of the New Testament. We must never read Scripture with the eyes of archeologists, philologists or historians, but with the eyes and the heart of Christians. That is the great lesson which the Fathers give us.

Difficulties

As with the Bible, the reading of the Fathers is not easy. It requires an almost constant effort, especially at the beginning.

After all, the Fathers belong to an epoch very different from ours, with tastes and preferences, problems and circumstances that vary largely from ours. Their society, their environment, their language and literature, their human and religious culture reach far back into the past. The greater part of their works, if not all, including those of a doctrinal character, were deeply influenced by their time. Almost all of the Fathers, at least the most important ones, were bishops; they participated very actively in the life of the Church, and their works have a practical and immediate purpose. Apologies, catechetics, homilies, sermons, dogmatic, exegetical and spiritual treatises — these writings were adapted to the tastes and exigencies of the moment, to the mentality of their immediate readers. Despite the skill of modern translators, the style of the Fathers remains archaic and difficult for us. To gain entrance into that world, so different from ours, calls for no little persistence. But anything worthwhile costs. If we succeed in breaking through that slightly hard shell and penetrate to the marrow of the writings of the Fathers, we shall no longer know how to do without them. They will become, in Newman's expression, "familiar books." Contact with them will produce the delight of an incomparable heritage, the exhilaration of intercourse with friends we know intimately. The company and the friendship of the Fathers will always enrich our soul. For the Fathers are not dead; the friends of God never die.

Finally — and this must be strongly underlined — the assiduous reading of the Fathers produces a great religious satisfaction, an increase of genuine piety. They communicate to us a more ample and complete concept of the Church, of her teaching, of her continuity, of her hidden life. And they help us to live fully the Christian community, as children of God and members of the mystical body of Christ.

MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE AND THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

On Oct. 16, Roman Catholics celebrate the life of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, the French nun whose visions of Christ helped to spread devotion to the Sacred Heart throughout the Western Church.

Margaret Mary Alacoque was born in July of 1647. Her parents Claude and Philiberte lived modest but virtuous lives, while Margaret showed herself to be a serious child with a focus on God. Claude died when Margaret was eight, and she suffered a paralyzing illness from the ages of nine to 13. A struggle over her family's property made life difficult for Margaret and her mother for several years.

During her illness, Margaret made a vow to enter religious life. During adolescence, however, she changed her mind. For a period of time she lived a relatively ordinary life, enjoying the ordinary social functions of her day and considering the possibility of marriage.

Her life changed in response to a vision she saw one night while returning from a dance, in which she saw Christ being scourged. Margaret believed she had betrayed Jesus, by pursuing the pleasures of the world rather than her religious vocation. At age 22, she decided to enter a convent.

Two days after Christmas of 1673, Margaret experienced Christ's presence in an extraordinary way while in prayer. She heard Christ explain that he desired to show his love for the human race in a special way, by encouraging devotion to "the heart that so loved mankind."

She experienced a subsequent series of private revelations regarding the gratitude due to Jesus on the part of humanity, and the means of responding through public and private devotion. But the superior of the convent she dismissed this as a delusion. This dismissal was a crushing disappointment, affecting the nun's health so seriously that she nearly died. In 1674, however, the Jesuit priest Father Claude de la Colombiere became Margaret's spiritual director. He believed her testimony, and chronicled it in writing.

Fr. de la Colombiere – later canonized as a saint – left the monastery to serve as a missionary in England. By the time he returned and died in 1681,

Margaret had made peace with the apparent rejection of her experiences. Through St. Claude's direction, she had reached a point of inner peace, no longer concerned with the hostility of others in her community. She died on October 17, 1690, and was canonized by Pope Benedict XV in 1920..

ACT OF CONSECRATION TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Most sweet Jesus, Redeemer of the human race, look down upon us humbly prostrate before Your altar. We are Yours, and Yours we wish to be; but, to be more surely united with You, behold each one of us freely consecrates himself today to Your Most Sacred Heart. Many indeed have never known You; many too, despising Your precepts, have rejected You. Have mercy on them all, most merciful Jesus, and draw them to Your Sacred Heart.

You are King, O Lord, not only of the faithful who have never forsaken You, but also of the prodigal children who have abandoned You; grant that they may quickly return to their Father's house lest they die of wretchedness and hunger.

You are King of those who are deceived by erroneous opinions, or whom discord keeps aloof; call them back to the harbor of truth and unity

of faith, so that soon there may be but one flock and one Shepherd.

You are King of all those who are still involved in the darkness of idolatry or of Islamism; refuse not to draw them all into the light and kingdom of God. Turn Your eyes of mercy toward the children of that race, once Your chosen people. Of old they called down upon themselves the Blood of the Savior; may it now descend upon them a laver of redemption and of life.

Grant, O Lord, to Your Church assurance of freedom and immunity from harm; give peace and order to all nations, and make the earth resound from pole to pole with one cry: Praise to the Divine Heart that wrought our salvation; to It be glory and Honor forever. Amen.

