



Oblates of St. Benedict

Oblate Program at Belmont Abbey, NC

November-December, 2021

FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Novice Oblates: Novice Oblates will continue to meet on-line on the last Wednesday of each month at 7:00. The subject for discussion is Obedience and the material has already been emailed to those already enrolled.

Oblates: The discussion will continue from the book *St. Benedict's Toolbox*, Chapter 6, Walking through the Day with God .”

For the Scripture portion of the meeting (John 1:14-18) we will discuss the following questions:

1. Imitate the Israelites by recalling some of God's "Might deeds" in your own past. How does this recollection help you to recognize God's presence in your past? What does it tell you about God? How does remembering help you understand the present and future differently?
2. In a prayer spoken near the end of his life, Jesus said to the Father, "Your is truth." Jesus is God's Word. How is Jesus the central truth in your life? How does his presence with you ground your life and give it purpose?
3. How does the description of Wisdom from the book of Sirach correspond with the incarnation of the Word? Can you hear echoes of the life of Christ in this ancient text that predates his birth?
4. Recall a time in your life when words deeply impacted and enriched a relationship. How does Jesus as God's Word deeply impact and enrich your relationship with God? What has God said to you about Jesus?
5. Every Advent, the Lectionary readings invite us to recall the ministry and testimony of John the Baptist. John said that he came to "make straight the way of the Lord" How can we imitate John the Baptist by being voices in the wilderness that "make straight the way of the Lord" in our world?
6. John associates Jesus with the word "grace". Grace means gift. Jesus is a generous, voluntary, unexpected,

and undeserved gift. How does this gift arrived in your life? In what areas of your life do you most experience this grace?

7. In what ways does Jesus reveal the Father to you? How can you renew your sense of encounter with the Father this Advent?

ADVENT



The present holy season which we call Advent directs our thoughts to our Lord's twofold coming. We have therefore a double reason for rejoicing because we are meant to derive from it a double benefit. Advent calls to mind the two comings of our Lord: first the coming of the fairest of the sons of men and the desire of all nations, so long awaited and so fervently prayed for by all the fathers when the Son of God graciously revealed to the world his visible presence in the flesh, that is to say when he came into the world to save sinners; the other that second coming to which we look forward no less than did our fathers of old. While we await his return our hope is sure and firm, yet we also frequently remind ourselves with tears of the day when he who first came to us concealed in our flesh will come again revealed in the glory which belongs to him as Lord. Of that day the psalmist sings: God will come openly; it is the Day of Judgment when Christ will come as judge in the sight of all. Our Lord's first coming was indeed known only to a small number of good people, but his second will be evident to good and bad alike, as is known to us by the prophet's announcement: All flesh will see

***The next meeting of the Oblates will be
November 21, 2021 at 2:30 PM in the Oblate
Room in the Old Music Building.***

the salvation of God. To speak more precisely, however, the day we are shortly to celebrate in memory of our Lord's birth brings him before us as a newborn child, that is to say it more expressly signifies the day and the hour when he first came into the world, whereas the season we keep beforehand represents him to us as the longed-for Messiah and reminds us of the yearning that filled the hearts of those holy fathers of ours who lived before his coming.

How beautifully then at this season the Church provides that we should recite the words and recall the longing of those who lived before our Lord's first advent! Nor do we commemorate that desire of theirs for a single day, but share it so to speak for a long period of time, because when something we greatly love and long for is deferred for a while it usually seems sweeter to us when it does arrive. It is our duty then to follow the example and recall the longing of the holy fathers and so inflame our own souls with love and longing for Christ.

You must understand that the reason why this season was instituted was to inspire us to remember the desire of our holy fathers for our Lord's first coming, and through their example learn to have a great longing for the day when he will come again. We should consider how much good our Lord did us by his first coming, and how much more he will do for us by his second. This thought will help us to have a great love for that first coming of his and a great longing for his return. And if our conscience is not so perfect that we dare entertain such a desire, we ought at least to fear his second coming and by means of that fear to correct our faults, so that if perhaps we cannot help being afraid here and now, we shall at least be secure and fearless when he comes again.

St Aelred, Sermo 1 in adventu Domini 1-6: CCCM IIA from Word in Season 1

NOVENA PRAYER IN HONOR OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION



Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful, and kindle in them the fire of Thy love.

V. Send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created./ R. And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray: O God, who hast taught the hearts of Thy faithful people by the light of the Holy Spirit; grant us in the same Spirit to relish what is right, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort. Through Christ our Lord. R. Amen.

Virgin most pure, conceived without sin, all fair and stainless from thy Conception; glorious Mary, full of grace, Mother of my God, Queen of angels and of men, - I humbly venerate thee as Mother of my Saviour, who, though He was God, taught me by His own veneration, reverence, and obedience to thee, the honour and homage which are due to thee. Vouchsafe, I pray thee, to accept this Novena, which I dedicate to

ORDO

NOVEMBER

- 1 All Saints. Solemnity (Wk III)**
- 2 All Souls, Memorial
- 4 St. Charles Borromeo, Memorial
- 7 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Wk IV)**
- 9 Dedication of the Lateran Basilica, Feast
- 10 St. Leo the Great*, Pope, Memorial
- 11 Martin of Tours, Bishop, Feast
- 14 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Wk I)**
- 16 Gertrude the Great, Virgin, Memorial
- 21 Jesus Christ, King of the Universe (Wk II)**
- 22 Cecilia, Virgin. Memorial
- 24 Andrew Dung-Lac, Priest, Martyr and Companions, Memorial

ADVENT

- 28 First Sunday of Advent (Wk I)**
- 29 *Begin novena in honor of Immaculate Conception*
- 30 Andrew, Apostle, Feast

DECEMBER

- 3 Francis Xavier, Priest, Religious
- 5 2nd Sunday of Advent (Wk II)**
- 7 Ambrose*, Bishop, Memorial
- 8 Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. Solemnity**
- 12 **3rd Sunday of Advent (Wk III)**
- 13 Lucy, Virgin, Martyr, Memorial
- 14 John of the Cross*, Priest, Memorial
- 20 4th Sunday of Advent (Wk IV)**

CHRISTMAS

- 25 Nativity of the Lord, Solemnity**
- 26 Holy Family. Feast
- 27 John, Apostle, Evangelist. Feast
- 28 Holy Innocents, Martyrs, Feast

*Doctor of the Church

thee. Thou art the safe refuge of the penitent sinner; it is very fitting, then, that I should have recourse to thee. Thou art the Mother of compassion; then wilt thou surely be moved with pity for my many miseries. Thou art my best hope after Jesus; thou canst not but accept the loving confidence that I have in thee. Make me worthy to be called thy son, that so I may dare to cry unto thee, "Show thyself a mother." Source: *St. Charles Borromeo Seminary Prayer Book*, 2006



CHRISTMAS

Strange and wonderful is the mystery I behold. In my ears rings the sound of shepherds, not piping a lonely melody but chanting a heavenly hymn. Angels carol, archangels celebrate with song and dance, the cherubim sing hymns, the seraphim give praise, all of them keeping festival as they contemplate God on earth and our nature in heaven. By divine decree he who dwells on high is now here below; by God's love those who dwell below are raised on high. Bethlehem today is like heaven: instead of stars it has welcomed angels praising God. Everyone is leaping for joy, so I too want to leap for joy; I want to dance, I want to join the festival; but as I dance I do not pluck the lyre, nor carry pipes, nor kindle torches. Instead of musical instruments I bear Christ's swaddling clothes, for they are my hope, my life, my salvation; they are my pipe and my lyre. Carrying them I come that endowed with eloquence by their virtue I may say with the angels, Glory to God in the highest; and with the shepherds, Peace on earth for men on whom his favour rests. Today he who was inexpressibly begotten by the Father is marvellously brought forth by a virgin for my sake. In his nature he was begotten by the Father before all ages in a manner known only to the One who engendered him; outside his nature he is today brought forth anew in a manner known only to the Holy Spirit's grace. His birth on high was real; his birth here below is real. He was truly begotten as God from God and he is truly brought forth by the Virgin as man. In heaven he is the Father's only Son, Unique from the Unique; on earth he is the Virgin's only Son, unique from her who is also unique. I know a virgin bore a son today and I believe that God begot a son before time was, but the manner in which this happened I have learned to venerate in silence and I have been taught not inquisitively to inquire by busy reasoning. Where God is concerned we should not regard the order of nature, but believe in the power of the One at work therein.

St John Chrysostom, *Oratio in natalem Christi diem* (PG 56, 385-388), from *Word in Season 1*

NECROLOGY



NOVEMBER

- 2 Fr. Lawrence McHale (1957)
- 3 Fr. Albert Goetz (1935)
- 5 Abbot Vincent Taylor (1959)
- 5 Fr. Wilfrid Foley (1968)
- 7 Fr. Raphael Beer (1893)
- 8 Br. Gilbert Koberzynski (1920)
- 9 Fr. Boniface Hilgenboecker (1890)
- 9 Fr. Cornelius Diehl (1957)
- 15 Fr. Thomas Oestreich (1943)
- 21 Fr. Anthony Meyer (1928)
- 21 Abbot Oscar Burnett
- 22 Br. Willibald Marschall (1932)
- 24 Fr. Raphael Bridge (1996)
- 29 Fr. Bernard Haas (1933)

DECEMBER

- 1 Fr. Cuthbert Allen (1977)
- 5 Fr. Eugene Egan (1940)
- 6 Br. Albert Popp (1924)
- 7 Fr. Boniface Bauer (1974)
- 8 Fr. Philip Tierney (1971)
- 9 Abbot Jude Cleary (2005)
- 21 Br. Alphonse Schoene (1889)
- 23 Prior Willibald Baumgartner (1930)
- 25 Br. Louis Marschall (1945)
- 26 Fr. Jerome Dollard (1985)
- 27 Br. Obl. Thomas MacPherson (1955)
- 28 Fr. Mark Cassidy (1928)
- 28 Abbot Walter Coggin (1999)
- 29 Br. Joseph Ringelstaetter (1920)
- 30 Fr. Robert Brennan (1964)
- 30 Fr. Aloysius Wachter (1977)

ST. NICHOLAS OF MYRA (DECEMBER 6)

Nicholas was born at Patara, a seaside town in Licia, in southern Turkey, in the third century. He came from a good family that raised him as a Christian. His life, from his earliest days, was marked by obedience. When he was orphaned at a young age, Nicholas, remembering the rich young man in the Gospel, used his inheritance to assist the needy, the sick, and the poor. He was elected Bishop of Myra, and under the emperor Diocletian was exiled and imprisoned. After being freed, he attended the Council of Nicea in 325. He died in Myra on 6 December 343. Many stories have been handed down about Nicholas, all testifying to a life spent in service to the weak, the small, and the defenceless.

Defender of the weak

One of the most ancient stories about Saint Nicholas involves a man with three daughters of marriageable age. The family was poor, and the young girls were in danger of being forced into prostitution, because their father could not afford to offer a suitable dowry. One night, Nicholas went to the family's home, and threw a bag of coins through the open window -- then fled before he could be identified. With the money, the father was able to procure a marriage for his eldest daughter. Nicholas returned twice more, always at night so that he could not be identified. But the third time, the father rushed out of the house to identify his mysterious benefactor. Nicholas begged him not to tell anyone what he had done.

Another story relates the fate of three young theologians travelling to Athens. Along the way, they stopped at an inn, where they were robbed and killed by the innkeeper, who hid their bodies in a barrel. Saint Nicholas, then a bishop, stopped at the same inn when he travelled to Athens. In a dream, he saw the crime that had been committed by his host. Turning to prayer, Saint Nicholas miraculously restored the three young men to life, and obtained the conversion of the wicked innkeeper.

A third story tells how Saint Nicholas freed a young boy, Basileos, who had been kidnapped from his home in Myra, and forced to serve as a cup-bearer for a foreign potentate. While his parents prayed for his safety, Saint Nicholas appeared to Basileos, and miraculously restored him to his family -- still holding the potentate's golden cup.

These and similar stories helped to spread devotion to Saint Nicholas as patron of children and young people.

Protector of seafarers

St Nicholas is also the patron of sailors and seafarers. When he was a young man, Nicholas boarded a ship to take him on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Following in the footsteps of the Lord, Nicholas prayed that he might be able to experience more fully the closeness of Jesus, and share in His sufferings. Returning to Greece, a frightful storm arose, and the ship he was on was in danger of flooding. Nicholas calmly prayed, and suddenly the wind ceased and the waves died down, to the wonder of the sailors, who feared shipwreck.



Saint Nicholas of Bari

After the death of Saint Nicholas, his tomb at Myra soon became a place of pilgrimage; his relics were considered miraculous on account of a mysterious liquid that flowed from them, known as the "manna of St Nicholas." After Licia was conquered by the Turks in the tenth century, Venetians attempted to make him their patron -- but sailors from Bari were able to acquire his relics first, and brought them to their town in Puglia in 1087. Two years later they were buried in the crypt of a new Church, which the Baresi had built over the place where a Byzantine palace had once stood. The relics were placed under the altar by the reigning Pope, Urban II, as the Norman rulers of Puglia looked on. The translation of the relics of Saint Nicholas was seen in the Medieval period as an extraordinary event, and his sanctuary soon became an important goal for pilgrims, with the result that devotion to Saint Nicholas "of Bari" (rather than "of Myra") spread throughout the world.

Santa Claus

In the Low Countries, and throughout Germanic lands generally, the winter feast of Saint Nicholas (in Dutch, "Sint Nikolaas" and later "Sinteklaas"), and his patronage of the young, gave rise to the tradition of giving gifts on his feast day: on the Eve of his feast, children would leave socks or shoes on a chair, or next to the fireplace, and go to sleep trusting that the following morning they would be filled with gifts.

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/saints/12/06/saint-nicholas-of-bari--bishop-of-myra.html>