



Oblate Program at Belmont Abbey, NC

May, 2022

MEETINGS SCHEDULE

The following are the remainder of the scheduled meeting for the Oblates and Oblate Novices:

- May 4: Oblate Novices (ZOOM Meeting) 7:00 PM
- May 15: Oblates (Oblate Meeting Room in the Music Building) 2:30 PM
- June 8: Oblate Novices (ZOOM Meeting) 7:00 PM
- June 12: Oblates (Oblate Meeting Room in the Music Building) 2:30 PM
- There will be no meetings the months of July and August

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 MAY 15 MEETING

Oblates will continue to discuss Chapter 9 of the St. Benedict Toolbox. We will also discuss Chapter 2 of the Mercy booklet. For those who missed the last meeting the questions for Chapter 2 (Psalm follow):

- Pope Saint John Paul II wrote that “mercy is the greatest of the attributes and perfections of God, and the Bible, Tradition and the whole faith life of the People of God provide particular proofs of this” (Dives in Misericordia 13). What other stories in Scripture remind you of God’s mercy?
- How do the Hebrew words for mercy change or add to your understanding of the word?
- When have you heard of a judge, leader, or group of people acting with surprising mercy?
- Who in your life has shown you mercy?

- Return to the passage in Psalm 103:6-18, reading it carefully and prayerfully. What words or phrases speak to you? Let yourself linger with these words or phrases as you let God speak to you.
- Living the Word: When someone upsets or hurts you, call to mind the description of God as “slow to anger, abounding in mercy.” Try to follow God’s model in Psalm 103: do not stay angry; do not hold a grudge; do not respond as the other person’s wrongs deserve. Do you feel differently when you choose mercy? Does the situation shift because of your change of heart?



WHY IS THE FIRST SATURDAYS DEVOTION CALLED THE 'UNFULFILLED PART OF THE FATIMA MESSAGE'?

When the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to three shepherd children at Fatima, she asked that certain devotions be followed in order to bring peace to the world.

The most well-known of her requests is for the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart. But there is another request Our Lady made: For people worldwide to dedicate the first Saturday of the month, for five consec-

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

utive months, to prayer, confession, and attending Mass.

These days of prayer are commonly known as the Five First Saturdays devotion.

This devotion is considered by some to be the “unfulfilled part of the Fatima message,” one Fatima expert told CNA (Catholic News Agency).

With another first Saturday approaching on April 2, here is some background about this powerful spiritual practice.

WHAT IS THE DEVOTION?



The Five First Saturdays devotion was first revealed to the children at Fatima, Portugal, during an apparition on July 13, 1917. On that day, the Blessed Virgin Mary showed the three children a vision of hell and asked them to offer up their lives in reparation for sin.

In her 1941 memoir written for the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima, one of the visionaries, Sister Lucia, wrote that the

Blessed Virgin Mary said to the children: “You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace.”

According to Sister Lucia’s account, the Blessed Virgin Mary went on: “The war [World War I] is going to end, but if people do not cease offending God, a worse one will break out during the Pontificate of Pius XI. When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that this is the great sign given you by God that he is about to punish the world for its crimes, by means of war, famine, and persecutions of the Church and of the Holy Father.

“To prevent this,” the apparition continued, according to Sister Lucia, “I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart, and the Communion of reparation on the First Saturdays.”

Mary returned to Sister Lucia on Dec. 10, 1925 and specifically requested this devotion, according to a document Sister Lucia wrote, as recorded in the book “Fatima in Lucia’s Own Words.”

According to the document, the Blessed Virgin Mary asked that on the first Saturday of any five consecutive months, Catholics go to Confession, receive Holy Communion, say five decades of the Rosary, and keep her company while meditating on those mysteries of the Rosary for 15 minutes.

This devotion shall be done with the intention of making reparation for sins against the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Sister Lucia wrote.

A FATIMA EXPERT EXPLAINS

The devotion of the Five First Saturdays was given to make up for the five blasphemies against the Immaculate Heart of Mary, David Carollo, executive director of the World Apostolate of Fatima U.S.A., told CNA.

As listed on the World Apostolate of Fatima U.S.A.’s website, those five offenses consist of: offenses against Mary’s Immaculate Conception, by denial or ridicule; offenses against her perpetual virginity; offenses against her divine maternity, that is, refusing to accept her as the mother of all mankind; offenses by those who implant in children’s hearts indifference toward, contempt for, and even hate of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and insults or damage done purposefully to sacred images of Mary.

PROMISES CONNECTED TO THE DEVOTION

When Mary asked for Russia’s consecration and the practice of the First Saturdays devotion, she promised that there would be certain fruits if her requests were fulfilled.

“If my requests are heeded, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace; if not, she will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the Church,” Mary said, Sister Lucia wrote in her memoir. “The good will be martyred; the Holy Father will have much to suffer; various nations will be annihilated. In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me, and she shall be converted, and a period of peace will be granted to the world.”

Carollo told CNA that the grace of “final perseverance” at the hour of death will also be granted to any soul who fulfills the Five First Saturday devotion. But, he added, that “grace has to be cooperated with.”

REQUEST NOT YET FULFILLED?

It was Carollo who called the Five First Saturdays devotion the “unfulfilled part of the Fatima message.”

How can that happen then? Carollo said that the fulfillment of the promises of Fatima “will come when we merit it.”

“And we merit it,” he added, “primarily if enough people are fulfilling that Five First Saturdays devotion.”

Speaking of Pope Francis’ recent consecration of Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Carollo said that grace would surely come. “But there has to be cooperation on our part,” he said.

“We have to start living the Fatima message, particularly the Five First Saturdays devotion. We have to fulfill that,” he said.

SIGN (AND FULFILL) THE PLEDGE

On the World Apostolate of Fatima’s website, Carollo invites people to sign a membership pledge that was formulated by Sister Lucia with the apostolate’s founder, John M. Haffert, as a commitment to pray the daily rosary, devote themselves to the brown scapular, offer up the sacrifices demanded by the daily duties of each individual’s state in life, and move toward the fulfillment of the Five First Saturdays devotion.

Carollo told CNA that although no official records have been kept, an estimated 20 million people worldwide have signed the pledge since it was formulated 75 years ago.

As far as fulfilling the Five First Saturdays devotion goes, receiving the sacrament of reconciliation may occur eight days before or after the first Saturday, “if you are in a state of grace,” the website says.

Reception of Holy Communion may be received at a Saturday evening Mass, the website also says. And when praying the Rosary, five decades is what the pledge calls for, Carollo told CNA.

Although praying the rosary while kneeling in front of the Blessed Sacrament is preferred, Carollo said, it can be prayed in various other situations, such as while driving a car.

When asked what his message to readers would be about the Fatima apparitions, Carollo said: “Live the message of Fatima.”

He added: “Learn, live and spread the message of Fatima because it is a reiteration of the gospels.”

Joe Bukuras/CANNews April 1, 2022 (Used with Permission)

The pledge can be found here: <https://www.bluearmy.com/pledge/>

“In these latter times Mary must shine forth more than ever in mercy, power and grace; in mercy, to bring back and welcome lovingly the poor sinners and wanderers who are to be converted and return to the Catholic Church; in power, to combat the enemies of God who will rise up menacingly to seduce and crush by promises and threats all those who oppose them; finally, she must shine forth in grace to inspire and support the valiant soldiers and loyal servants of Jesus Christ who are fighting for his cause.” St. Louis de Montfort



ORDO

MAY

1 Third Sunday of Easter (Wk III)

2 Athanasius, Bishop, (Memorial)

3 Philip and James, Apostles (Feast)

8 Fourth Sunday of Easter (Wk IIII)

11 Odo, Maiolus, Odilo, Hugh and Peter the Venerable, Memorial

13 Our Lady of Fatima (opt. Memorial)

14 Matthias, Apostle, Feast

15 Fifth Sunday of Easter (Wk I)

22 Sixth Sunday of Easter (Wk II)

24 Mary Help of Christians, Solemnity

25 Bede the Venerable, Memorial

29 Ascension of the Lord, Solemnity*

31 Visitation of the Virgin Mary to Elizabeth, Feast

*Note: The Diocese of Charlotte has transferred the feast of the Ascension to the Seventh Sunday of Easter. The Ordo of the American Cassinese Congregation, OSB still recognizes the feast on May 26.

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

5 Fr. Edward Bissy (1969)

7 Fr. Ambrose Andelfinger (1889)

7 Fr. Adelard Bouvilliers (1950)

9 Br. Anthony Cahill (1985)

17 Fr. Leo Kuntz (1917)

18 Fr. Alphonse Buss (1951)

24 Fr. Hugh Hagerty (1979)

24 Fr. Matthew McSorley (2012)

26 Br. Andrew Huemer (1900)

27 Fr. Charles Kastner (1959)

30 Fr. Francis Meyer (1905)

31 Br. Joseph Maria Rabbani (1972)

MAY 27: AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY

An Italian Benedictine monk who became the “Apostle of the English,” Saint Augustine of Canterbury is honored by the Catholic Church on May 27.

Under the direction of Pope Saint Gregory the Great, Augustine founded the famous See of Canterbury and preached the Catholic faith to the country's Anglo-Saxon pagans during the late sixth and early seventh centuries.

He is not to be confused with the earlier St. Augustine of Hippo, the famous author of the “Confessions” and “City of God.”

Augustine's date of birth cannot be established, nor are any details of his early life known. Most likely born in Rome to a noble family, he entered monastic life as a young man. The community he joined had been recently founded by a Benedictine monk named Gregory, who would go on to become Pope and eventually be known as St. Gregory the Great. The friendship between Gregory and Augustine had great historical consequences, as it was the Pope who would eventually send his fellow monk to evangelize England.

Around 595, five years into his 14-year pontificate, Pope Gregory set to work on a plan for the conversion of the English people. The Catholic faith had already been preached and accepted among England's original Celtic inhabitants in earlier times, but from the mid-fifth century onward, the country was dominated by Anglo-Saxon invaders who did not accept Christianity, and were not converted by the small number of isolated Celtic Christian hold-outs. Thus, England largely had to be evangelized anew.

For this task the Pope chose a group of around forty monks – including Augustine, who was to represent the delegation and communicate on its behalf. Though he was not explicitly chosen as its leader at that time, that was the role he ended up taking on with Gregory's support. The group left for England in June 596, but some of the missionaries lost their nerve after hearing fearsome reports about the Anglo-Saxons. Augustine ended up returning to Rome, where he got further advice and support from the Pope.

Persuaded to continue on their way, the missionary-monks reached their port of departure and set sail for England in spring of 597. After arriving they gained an audience with King Ethelbert of Kent, a pagan ruler whose Frankish wife Queen Bertha was a Christian. Speaking with the king through an interpreter, Augustine gave a powerful and straightforward presentation of the Gospel message, speaking of Christ's redemption of the world and his offer of eternal life.

Ethelbert would later convert, and eventually even be canonized as a Saint. But his initial response to Augustine's preaching was only mildly positive: he would receive the missionaries with hospitality, and permit them to evangelize without any restriction. Despite his early ambivalence, however, the king became a generous patron of the monks. They

made their home in Canterbury, after dramatically entering the city in procession with the Cross and an image of Christ.

The Canterbury community lived according to the Rule of St. Benedict, as they had in Italy, but they also preached in the surrounding area in accordance with their mission. Augustine and his companions succeeded in converting King Ethelbert himself, while Queen Bertha also became more zealous in her practice of the faith after her husband's baptism. Augustine traveled to Gaul, where he was consecrated as a bishop for the English Church. By Christmas of 597, over ten thousand people were actively seeking baptism from the missionaries.

Through his written correspondence, Pope Gregory continued to guide the work of Augustine – the first Archbishop of Canterbury – and the other Catholic missionaries. The great Pope, and the “Apostle of England,” would both die during the same year, 604.

Though Augustine had not managed to sort out some disagreements with the native Celtic bishops, he had given the faith a firm foothold among the Anglo-Saxons. Canterbury would continue on for centuries as the ranking see of English Catholicism, until its fall into schism during the 16th century.

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