

# Oblate Community of Saint Martin's Abbey

O B L A T E S O F S A I N T B E N E D I C T

## A LETTER FROM THE OBLATE DIRECTOR - BROTHER EDMUND EBBERS, O.S.B.

Although many disagree with Mr. Donald Trump, as our new President and fear the worst, I believe it is in the best interest of our Country and faith to do our part to try to make his Presidency and our Country prosper. This depends at lot on how well our politicians work with him.

Now, I am not a politician nor do I care much for any type of politics. It seems most people are into what they can get for themselves. That does not sit well with me.

Religious life is no less challenging than any other form of disciplined life. Even in the monasteries and convents, there is politics. I shudder with disdain when I see this around me.

It has been said, "What doesn't kill us will make us stronger." The emotional and physical sides of our cross are still a "cross." It is our burden and we must learn to bear it with joyful hope. The threats on a good life, whether it comes from outside of our environment or within us as a physical ailment cannot be carried alone, we need hope. For the Christian believer, Jesus is that hope. When we trust in God's mercy and love and decide on some level to share our burden we are able to weather better what changes come our way.

I believe, what we see and hear about the political world will change for the better. How this will happen, I haven't a clue. I have hope that the politicians and the people of our nation will pull together and pray to the greatest power (Jesus) to guide us. We must remain vigilant, and keep the peace if people strike out at one another. We cannot become our own enemy. Negativity has never won a battle. Only by being positive, expressing love, and forgiveness, and by working together as a team can we build bridges of understanding and stable, lasting relationships.

For those of us that follow the "Holy Rule of Benedict" I offer you the challenge, to pick up this wise book and read Chapter 5, on Obedience. As you read this chapter, replace the word superior with President Trump. This will not be an easy task but try it. Keeping in mind, even if it is a difficult task we are all bound in obedience. However, St. Benedict does give his hope when he states, "God forbid that he should ask for something that is contrary to God's law," in this later chapter. Should a superior continue to act contrary to God's law he should be deposed.

Obedience and humility are emphasized here, and by these, we shall climb that ladder of which Jacob described in our journey toward humility and discipline.

Let us hope and pray for our country and for one another during these challenging times.

In St. Benedict, I am, *Brother Edmund Ebbers, O.S.B.*

## ABBOT'S REFLECTION - ABBOT NEAL ROTH, O.S.B.

In the last page of the Rule, Chapter 73, Benedict refers to the monastic Rule as the order by which one may attain virtue and the rudiments of religious life. There are times in life when we might not remember this, especially when we don't feel all that virtuous. Discouragement might follow. I will be 79 in a few months, and I still struggle with some of the same things I struggled with when I was young. Age is not an automatic label with "virtuous" printed on it. We are, however, not good judges of ourselves. Sometimes our modest efforts are underrated by our own evaluation. Our "funk" is likely more than simple fatigue. Ignoring what we are called to in the Rule and ignoring its wisdom, leads one to failure as a follower of Benedict.

Benedict teaches that the monk is not to hide his problems from the Abbot. Translate that to the Oblate is cautioned to share problems with a trusted person. Sometimes the problem is not all that serious when viewed through a friend's insights. There are times when we need some outside opinion from a trusted friend, a priest, or even a professional counselor.

Talking to someone, taking a walk, viewing a movie, or listening to some favorite music can help. Doing something kind for someone else or volunteering in a service organization focuses one on the positive and not on the self. The point is we need to do something.

We cannot allow life's circumstances to deter us from being at peace and enjoying at least some happiness. We must not abandon ourselves to discouragement because of problems we are struggling with today.

Tomorrow may present a different situation and challenge. At the end of Chapter 73, Benedict does not promise that we will be perfect for having lived life according to the Rule. He does, however, leave us with the hope that we will be disposed to the will of God, that we will be committed to the search for God, and this is very important. Above all, prayer in our daily life turns us to the Lord with our problems. We must not fall backward, but rather, run forward. In so doing, we have a better chance to grow from the negative and unpleasant experience to the positive. We turn to Jesus like the poor in scripture. We accept help. We allow ourselves to depend on the Lord and not on ourselves. And we emerge stronger from the experience of darkness and discouragement. We will, with the help of Christ, be able to live "this minimum Rule which we have written for beginners" (quote from Chapter 73, RB).



## IN THE BEGINNING - FATHER GERARD KIRSCH, O.S.B.

On Nov. 15, 1955, English professor Michael Contris left for Spokane to present a paper to the National Catholic Educational Association on the psychological impact of the liberal arts. On Nov. 19, **Abbot Raphael Heider (1903-1971)** and dean of men **Father Bede Ernsdorff (1909-1982)** returned from a visit to our clerics studying at Mount Angel Seminary in Oregon. On Nov. 21, **Brother Hugh Evans (1900-1957)** had a slight stroke affecting his left side. A few days, Bert Crowley, brother of **Brother Charles Crowley (1876-1958)** and **Brother Joseph Crowley (1884-1973)** were also patients at Saint Peter's Hospital in Olympia. On Nov. 28, the novices began setting up stone grave markers, 10 headstones being required to bring the markers up to date. On Nov. 30 **Br. Brendan Kelly (1898-1971)** completed the work of engraving and gold plating chalices which had been given to **Fathers Urban Feucht (1927-2013)** and **Nicholas Rausch (1928-2003)** for their ordinations.

On Dec. 1, Don Batey, brother postulant, and Br. Rocco Seipp began operations in the candle shop in anticipation of Candlemas Day (Feb 2). On Dec. 3, in light of recent heavy rains, gravel was hauled to the cattle loafing area down at the farm, and **Fathers Paul Kolling and Urban** led a crew of hard-working students to alleviate a difficult drainage problem. On Dec. 5, **Brother Dominic Hahn** began to learn the operation of the multilith press in order to handle the many duplicating jobs required by the schools and the abbey. On Dec. 10, **Father Prior James Piotrkowski (1897-1974)**, expert machinist, was developing a method of forming metal sheet in connection with the construction of reliquaries for the main altar. **Brothers Jerome Keppers (1880-1960)**, Brendan and **Francis Hehn (1881-1966)** would each have their share of craftsmanship to contribute to the final product. On Dec. 12, a telegram from the Ford Foundation announced that Saint Martin's College was to receive a grant of \$135,900, the interest of which was to be used to raise faculty salaries.

An era came to an end on Dec. 14, 1955 when it was discovered that **Father Matthew Britt (1872-1955)** had died that morning just after he had finished writing a letter to **Frater Nicholas Rausch** studying at Mount Angel. After breakfast, he had instructed **Frater Thaddaeus Arledge (1927-2015)** to come to his room at 9 AM to insert a note in the letter he had written and to mail it. It was then that the community learned of his passing. On Dec. 15, the body of **Father Matthew** was brought back to the abbey to lie in state through the night and until the funeral the next day. An authority on liturgy, he had made first vows in 1896 and had been ordained a priest in 1901. **Abbot Raphael** pontificated at the funeral Mass in the presence of Bishop Joseph P. Dougherty of Yakima and of Archbishop Thomas A. Connolly of Seattle. Archbishop Connolly gave the final absolution.

Practically all the priests of the abbey who did not have regular weekend parish assignments assisted in various parishes of the Yakima diocese and the Seattle archdiocese for Christmas. **Father Jerome Toner (1899-1977)** took advantage of the three-week vacation to visit the east coast and assist at St. Joseph's Church in Newark, New Jersey. He also attended annual meetings of the American Economic Association, the Industrial Relations Research Association, and the Catholic Economic Association in New York, to all of whose journals he had contributed numerous articles.

## FROM THE HILL - BONIFACE V. LAZZARI, O.S.B.

"If you but trust in God to guide you, and place your confidence in Him..." So begins one of the hymns with which we begin our monastic Office. When we are discerning whether or not God may be calling us to the religious life, we do place our confidence in Him and trust that he will guide us in the discernment process. We pray. We discuss it with others. We come to a decision and pray more that He will sustain us in our decision.

On January 1st, the monastic community at Saint Martin's was increased by one, when Saint Martin's University employee **BRANDON RAPPUHN** was received by **ABBOT NEAL ROTH** as a postulant. In March 2016, **BRANDON** accepted a position in the University as the manager of the content of the University's website. A convert of five years, when **BRANDON** arrived at Saint Martin's, he was already discerning a vocation to the religious life and visited several religious communities. He also had many conversations with **FATHER PAUL WECKERT**, Abbey Vocation Director, and **ABBOT NEAL**. Almost as soon as he arrived last Spring, Abbey Choir Master **BROTHER AELRED WOODARD** incorporated him into the Monastic Schola. **BRANDON** had the opportunity to know the Abbey community and its spirit, and this Fall made a decision to join us, a decision affirmed by the abbot and council. Retired **ABBOT ADRIAN PARCHER**, newly appointed Postulant Director, is charged with directing **BRANDON** during his first months of monastic life. A warm welcome to **BRANDON** and "ad multos annos".

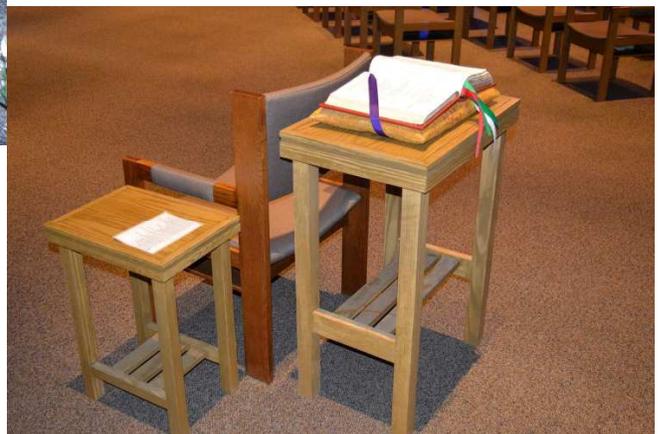
**BROTHER EDMUND EBBERS** and the Abbey's Oblates held a very successful pre-Christmas bazaar. Of the monies earned from the sale of various objects, **BROTHER EDMUND** and the Oblates are sending 1,500 to 1,800 to the Benedictines in Norcia, Italy. The Norcia monasteries were severely damaged in recent earthquakes and almost eight million dollars is needed to set things aright. American Benedictine monasteries, as well as religious communities and others throughout the world, are contributing what funds they can for the re-building effort.



## FROM THE HILL CONTINUED



This fall, the Abbey commissioned local artisan David "Dusty" Knobel to construct several new pieces of furniture for the Abbey Church. This included a replacement credence table and a simple bench for the atrium of the Abbey Church. The pieces were delivered early in the New Year by Mr. Knobel and his son. Mr. Knobel's skills as a craftsman are extraordinary, and the pieces he created are very worthy of being used in a House of God.



The Catholic parish in Yelm, Washington, celebrated its centenary this fall. Saint Martin's provided many pastors for the parish over the years, including **FATHER LUKE O'DONNELL**, **FATHER FELIX WIRTH**, **FATHER TERENCE WAGER**, and,

most recently, **FATHER PAUL**. Saint Martin's was represented at the celebrations by **ABBOT NEAL** and **FATHER PAUL**. While there, **ABBOT NEAL** also blessed two newly written icons for the parish church. Through the generous bequest of Saint Martin's High School and College alum Jack Sareult, the Abbey was able to have new Abbey hymnals printed. **BROTHER NICOLAUS WILSON** was chief typesetter. He also edited, as did **BROTHER AELRED**, who also was one of the proof readers. The books are very handsome, and already are in use for Abbey liturgies. This semester, **BROTHER NICOLAUS** is at Mount Angel, Oregon, finishing up some academic work, including a thesis.

Our dedicated sacristan, **BROTHER BEDE NICOL** spoke to the University students this fall about his patron, the Venerable Bede, and **BROTHER NICOLAUS** participated in a vocation panel sponsored by the University's Benedictine Institute. **FATHER PETER TYNAN** joined **BROTHER NICOLAUS** and **FATHER PAUL** in directing a retreat at the Palisades geared toward young adults.

Trust in God, and put your confidence in Him.

## THE CANARY TREE BY FATHER BENEDICT AUER, O.S.B.

"The wind, a child's breath, a game."  
Diana Kappel-Smith, *Wintering*

I walk  
among the flowering crabtrees,  
pink snowflakes smashing  
my being with softness,  
licking my arms with fury,  
pulling me inside out  
into a world  
alive with spring.



Two groundhogs,  
fat and sassy, espy my moves;  
nonthreatening. I'm approved  
to walk over their kingdom,  
to watch them burrow beneath my feet,  
earthshakers,  
hollowing out a house within the dark.

A fir tree,  
pointing an index finger  
at the cerulean sky,  
sings from camouflage an uncaged song.  
I vision yellow Monet movement,  
a multitude of wild lemon canaries  
in greenness -  
a canary tree singing spring.



## MARCH 5TH OBLATE COMMUNITY SUNDAY

Join your fellow Oblates and Monks for Mass in the Abbey church at 11 A.M. , followed by brunch for purchase in the student cafeteria (St. Gertrude's Hall). A time to share your journey and get to know your community. At 1:30 attend a presentation in the Abbey Church given by Abbot Timothy on "Lectio Divina."

December 4, 2016 Deacon Joe Nichols spoke to us and presented us with questions to ponder and discuss. For those who were not able to attend we are publishing the questions for your reflection and if so inclined you could drop Brother Edmund not or email with your answers.

- 1) What led to your decision to become an Oblate?
- 2) Do you see instances where the Rule of Saint Benedict can apply to your life as an Oblate?
- 3) The Rule demands absolute obedience to the abbot. What do you think are the reasons for this? What are the advantages and disadvantages?
- 4) Overall, do you think it would be good to be a member of a Benedictine monastery? How would your life be different if you belonged to such a community? What would it do for your spiritual life?

### Oblate Community dates for 2017

May 7th Sr. Gertrude speaking on "The art of searching for God."

July 2nd Fr. Peter speaking on "Wisdom." Also our annual potluck picnic.

August 12th Retreat and potluck at Lambert lodge.

September 3rd Br. Nicolaus

December 3rd Br. Luke

# SUCCESS

RE: Novembers Oblate Bazaar: Much hard work was applied to the great success of this first major fundraiser. Some operational challenges were presented and learned so we may improve the next time. About \$2,500 was collected through sales and donations. Of this we may be sending \$1,800 to Norcia, Italy. I, Brother Edmund, thank every person that put in time on this fundraiser!!

## ON THE BOOK SHELF

*The Benedictine Order* by Joel Rippinger, OSB, *A interpretive History A Testament of Devotion*  
by Thomas R. Kelly, published first in 1941.

*Illuminating the Way: Embracing the Wisdom of Monks and Mystics*  
by Christine Valters-Paintner. Oblate of St. Placid Priory.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

Please hold the following in your prayers:

For Fr. Kilian Malvey continued healing,

For Oblate Suzanne Rothwell healing,

For home bound and sick Oblates,

For vocations for St. Martin's Abbey,

For favorably resolution to the labor union conflicts in St. Martin's University,

For greater respect for life,

For our Archbishop Sartain healing.

November of 2017 is the next scheduled Oblate Congress. Obl. Bene Reece has been participating on an international council in preparation for this Council. It will be under new direction with Fr. Edward from San' Anselmo giving it his touch, along with the New Abbot Primate. This is the first year that Directors are being invited and selected to attend. I have been given permission by Abbot Neal to attend so if all proceeds well I will go and then spend some extra days in Rome. I ask for your prayers for this Congress and our travels.

## ABBHEY CHURCH EVENTS

[http://www.saintmartinsabbey.org/ArtsEvents/Concert\\_Lecture\\_Series.htm](http://www.saintmartinsabbey.org/ArtsEvents/Concert_Lecture_Series.htm)

April 28th at 7:00 pm **Bishop Robert D Hofstad** will speak on "Roman Catholic- Lutheran Relations: Which way is Forward"

April 29<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 pm **Clamus**, vocal quintet

Events are not ticketed and seating is generally unreserved. Doors open one hour prior to starting time. A freewill donation in support of Abbey Church Events is suggested.

## It Pays to be Optimistic

By Oblate Bill Lagreid

Becoming pessimistic about the world we live in seems easy during the winter, and spring months of this particular year. The elections brought a profound shock to many that lead to a feeling of fear and gloom. The world economy also shows signs of deterioration, during the posturing and positioning by political candidates fueled by the information industry. It became increasingly difficult to find good news stories with the threat of job loses across the board, hope for a comfortable retirement future dwindled in our society, every family seems to have felt the negative impact. Optimism about a better future and world for both the young and old became harder to come by.

A few years back, I came across a piece in a magazine in the waiting room of the hospital where I was watching my wife recovering from major surgery. I was at a point when our future was in question. The title of the piece was, "The Optimism Bias", written by Tali Sharot who is a researcher at University College, London.

Part of the subtitle is "Why our brains tilt toward the positive." The data presented demonstrates that as human beings our brains are hardwired for hope enabling us to process and project information from the past to solve current problems and project possibilities beyond the present and to imagine with hope. It also reminds me of the quote of F.D.R. "Plan for the worst, hope for the best and take what comes." And Alfred North Whitehead's Book "Paralysis by Analyses."

As people of God who pray, meditate, and contemplate in our spiritual lives, we must live in the present knowing that there are many things that are beyond our control. At the same time, we have the model and teachings of Jesus in the scripture. He faced his present and prepared for the future knowing God was always available to him in prayer. The scene of the agony in the garden before his crucifixion when Jesus prayed to his Father for relief reminds us and teaches us to be optimistic and accepting of God's will and His presence in our lives.

Recent research data indicates that it pays to be optimistic because it seems to leads to better mental health and longevity. Pray to God for optimism, we are the only creatures on earth that can project thoughts to him in hope for a future to be in His presents.

## FALLING LEAVES by Oblate Carmen Hertel

Come to me Holy Spirit  
 In this autumn day  
 Bestow on me your grace  
 As many and unique  
 As each leaf that falls  
 In all the myriad colors  
 That in little ways I do  
     In word and deed  
     Build your church  
 As swiftly as this wind  
 Mirrored in you Abba.



**GOOD WORKS**  
 Contact Brother Edmund at 360-438-4457  
 Email: br\_edmund@stmartin.edu

**LAMBERT LODGE WORK**

Time: 10:00 - 3:00  
**2017** Dates: March 11th, and Oct. 14<sup>th</sup>

The day includes, Prayers, Work, and a Potluck. In you are interested in lending a hand contact Brother Edmund.

*Gardening and Wood:*

Saturdays 1:00pm to 3:30pm  
 Gardeners and wood workers are appreciated during the summer and winter. Please call Br. Edmund to make arrangements.

**Rosary Makers will meet:**  
 Time: 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm.

Location: Guest dining room of Old Main across from the Monastery refectory.

March 4th,  
 April 1st,  
 May 6th,  
 June 3rd,  
 July 1st,  
 Aug. 5th,  
 Sept. 2nd,  
 Oct. 7th,  
 Nov. 4th,  
 Dec. 2nd.

RIP Oblate Chi Chi: A fine remembrance service with prayer and song was held in the Abbey Church on this 1st anniversary of her passing, a dinner was served with continued exchanges of memories. She was a blest woman.

Anyone, oblate or not, wanting and able to help with gardening or wood stacking, splitting, please give Br. Edmund your emails and names that he may contact you when he plans to do works of mercy.

**Oblate Advisory Meeting**

Time: 10:00AM  
 Place: St Gertrude’s Hall. (student cafeteria)

2017: March 4th, May 6th, July 1st, Sept. 2nd, Dec. 2nd.

**Oblation Renewals:** Attached is a form. Please fill out and return to the Oblate Director during Lent with your offering. If you don't normally make a contribution during the year, this would be a fine time to make an offering to support the works of the Oblate Program such as : Mailings, gifts to San Anselmo in Rome, Alliance of International Monastic's etc.

Mail your form to the Oblate Director Brother Edmund Ebberts, O.S.B.  
St. Martin's Abbey  
5000 Abbey Way SE  
Lacey, WA 98503

2017

**Renewal of Oblation**

I renew my oblation as an Oblate of St. Benedict of the community of St. Martin's Abbey. I promise again to serve God and all people according to the Rule of St. Benedict.

Let us Pray:

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.

Oblate Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

A Prayer to Saint Benedict,  
by: Abbot Elfwine, 11th Century

O holy and most blessed lord and father Benedict,  
the Lord has given you to us as our patron, our shepherd, and our intercessor.  
You blessed pauper,  
gentle, merciful, lover of peace, filled with every beatitude:  
you longed for Christ, and now you live with him  
in the fellowship of the blessed apostles Peter, Paul and Andrew,  
one with the other apostles, martyrs, confessors and virgins.  
And I, wretched and frail,  
have sinned in your courts and in your house with my wicked way of life.  
You who are one with the holy apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins,  
help me to amend my life and find remission of sins,  
that I might find in turn the Lord's mercy,  
leave off my sins, and enter the kingdom of heaven,  
lest I perish eternally and proceed to the second death  
or the land of oblivion according to my vices and sins,  
which I, wretched and frail, have done in my wicked ways.  
Amen.