



Oblates of St. Benedict

Oblate Community of Saint Martin's Abbey

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A Letter From the Oblate Director — Brother Edmund Ebbers, O.S.B.

Dear Oblate brothers and sisters;

Most, if not all of us adults can recall events where we have been falsely accused of something. Here, I would like to write about the damages and hopes when these situations occur, when we are not prepared, which most of the time we are not.

The scriptures, old and new are full of examples, when prophets, prophetesses, apostles, disciples and yes, even Our Lord himself have been falsely accused. The times have changed and circumstances may change today but this still happens. Perhaps, even more dramatically with social media and yes even the gossip, which seems to be our pass time. Too many of us fall prey to gossip and false accusations.

There may be any number of reasons that accusations are made: In gossip, perhaps it is because our ego wants us to feel larger than the other. Unless we work on that ego, we will not progress up the road to our God.

Humility is the only answer to improve our spiritual progress. "Pride comes before the fall." The lack of clear listening with the heart gives us misinformation and off we go down the wrong path in judgment. In anger, too, there are misunderstandings on one side or another. And at times, there are those who have so much self confidence that others are incorrect, this amounts to a large ego. St. Benedict has no tolerance for gossip and false accusations. So how can we prepare ourselves, so that our responses in these situations is to disarm the other and we can walk away less wounded.

The Monastic Community has been listening to a book in our Refectory about the early Desert Fathers and Mothers, from the later 4th century. The author suggests that the minds of early monastics were, if a type of problem plagued you, you were placed with folks (monks or nuns) who had similar issues. This is analogous to the "rock tumbling polisher." To take off the rough edges of rocks you put many together and let them wear smooth as they tumble around inside a given space. For today's taste, we could say that this is crude or cruel. Our method today is to work slowly through therapists, psychologists, and psychiatrists.

For those who use the Holy Rule of St. Benedict, we have Scriptures as well as the Rule to find our way and strength. Asking God for direction in this matter is very helpful. We need His support daily for strength.

The Rule and Scripture both point toward humility. Humility does not come quickly or with ease. A practice of getting to know our weaknesses, strengths, and ourselves, of listening more with care and fully opened hearts and closed mouths, of knowing when to dismiss yourself from the place because you can't accept what the other is telling you, can be helpful.

If it can be comforting to know you are in great company by the many that have fallen under the weight of false claims. But they did not fall without learning much and becoming very humble, more perfect, and become as Jesus has asked, "become like little children" for the Kingdom of Heaven. Children who are innocent yet wise.

Let us remain rooted in humus (earth) and climb the ladder of Jacob to heaven.

In St. Benedict I am, Br. Edmund Ebbers, OSB

Abbot's Reflection - Abbot Neal Roth, O.S.B.

On Conversion

This last Lent I decided that I would work on conversion with more focus than in the past few years! As a monk and a priest, it embarrasses me to present a conference to the monks or a homily at Mass when I know that I have lots of room for personal conversion.

I am not someone who enjoys travel. Twice when I returned from the Congress of Abbots in Rome, I returned to Seattle, but my suitcase went elsewhere. I hate losing my bag! When things don't go the way we want them to go, we can be upset or even angry. When people say what we don't want to hear, we can get upset. When the family (or monastic community) decides plans contrary to ours, we can get upset. There are serious things that can make us upset and there are insignificant matters that can make us upset or even angry. Somehow, we have that little something in us rears its ugly head and says, "I think I know better!" In other words, things should flow along lines that allow me to determine what is good or not good for the family. So, who are we to think that we have the answer that is correct, logical, and intelligent or that my plans or ideas are so much better? This can be a hard question.

After we answer this question, we have a second one: is there anyone who has the right to have things go his or her way? I watched a reality television program recently and one person made the bold statement that he is never wrong - big mistake! Only God is always right. If God is always right, who do we think we are?

God gave us a free will, the right to say yes or no, the right to run to God or to run away from God. God gives us the right to be one with him. We know from scripture and we know from life that God is tolerant with us and full of forgiveness and mercy. This is the gift that God gives us with no strings attached.

In some strange way, God brought us all together whether in the family or in the monastery. We all have different backgrounds, traditions, educations, and minds. We cannot all be geniuses. We will either help one another or hinder one another. If we treat others as God treats us, we will find tolerance, forgiveness and salvation. All of this is related to "conversion" and spiritual growth and maturity.

We are all sinners and we live with sinners striving to grow in the "school of the Lord's service" (Prologue: 45). If we don't acknowledge that we are in this school learning the ways of God, then we are always sitting in the principal's office awaiting our fate. We need to look into our heart, sift out the hurts, real or imagined, and forgive. This is essential and the first step of conversion.

In the Beginning - Father Gerard Kirsch, O.S.B.

During June 1956, the gymnasium was being covered with cement-asbestos (!) siding ... On June 16, Fr Maurus Keller returned from studies at Notre Dame ... On June 19, several monks attended the profession ceremony at Saint Placid Priory ... On June 21, Fr Paul Kolling (a monk of Assumption Abbey, North Dakota, who served at Saint Martin's 1952-1960) supervised a heavy cutting of silage into the recently completed pit silo at the farm ... On June 22, **Father Dunstan Curtis (1921-1981)** left for summer courses at Stanford University, California ... On June 28, Anselm Hall and Benet Hall (military barracks on lower campus used as dormitories) were being painted by **Fathers Christopher Abair (1924-88)** and **Paul Kucera (1887-1974)** with the help of students ... On June 29, **Father Thaddeus Arledge (1927-2015)** left for his assignment at Saint Joseph's parish, Wenatchee, where he would be stationed until August 26 ... On June 30, the Abbey Theatre building was also being covered with cement-asbestos (!) siding.

On July 2, a check for \$60,000 was received from the Ford Foundation for increasing teachers salaries. On July 4, a solemn Pontifical Mass of Thanksgiving was offered by **Abbot Raphael Heider (1903-1971)** to mark his silver anniversary of ordination ... On July 10, the investiture of 3 choir novices and 3 brother novices took place at a quasi-Pontifical Mass ... On July 11, **Brother Dominic (Darrel) Hahn** professed first vows. On July 12, Frater Gerard Frederick received his driver's license after intensive study with Frater Leo Patten ... On July 15, **Father Leonard Feeny (1908-1980)** drove to his assignment at Assumption parish in Bellingham in the panel truck which had seen better days - and he made it!

In other news, **Brother Bernard Anderson (1898-1971)** was hailed for sending out 5000 copies of the Saint Martin's News every month via addressograph - to say nothing of his work as abbey barber and locksmith ... **Father Prior James Piotrkowski (1897-1974)** and his brother **Father Lawrence (1894-1965)**, pastor of Holy Rosary in Tacoma, took a few days off in late July to go fishing in the Olympics ... **Father Bede Ernsdorff (1909-82)** was doing catch-up work in the chemistry laboratory which (according to Father Bede) ought to have been done five years before!

Father Sebastian Ruth (1875-1958) celebrated his golden jubilee of ordination Mass on August 12, 1956 at the mission church of Santa Clara, California, where he had offered his first solemn Mass exactly fifty years before, his 6 surviving brothers and sisters attending. Apart from his role as host of the laymen's retreats at Saint Martin's from 1918 to 1955, he was also founder of the radio station W7YS, which was sold to Olympia in 1932 and became KGY. Inevitably, he was a weekend assistant in Tacoma Benedictine parishes, first at Holy Rosary and latterly at Visitation.

(**Father Gerard** can well remember, on the evening of January 5, 1958—the first night back from Christmas vacation, the freshman-sophomore dorm was listening to the “pop” records **Father Leonard** provided every night when the abbey bells broke through the song then being played. For those interested in extraordinary trivia, the name of the song was “Joanne.” Well, I knew “Joanne” didn't have bells in it so I was not too surprised when **Father Leonard** paused the record to let us know that **Father Sebastian** had just died. Rest in peace, **Father Sebastian**: you, more than anyone, made Saint Martin's what it is today.)

Some years ago, I received a wonderful book of poems for a birthday or Christmas from a long-time friend in Edinburgh. Among the poems in that book, that I've become fond of is "Leisure"

It begins:

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare?

The poet continues:

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

He concludes:

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

Though holy leisure is a part of the monastic life, most of the time the monk isn't afforded much opportunity to just "stand and stare", our summer begins with "down time" in the form of an annual retreat, which has a more relaxed schedule than the rest of the year, and offers us conferences by a retreat director who delivers several conferences to us each day.

Our annual retreat, a week or two after the close of the academic year, begins with a series of business meetings, and concludes with a special Mass of Thanksgiving and dinner in honor of those celebrating anniversaries. This year at retreat time, we honored four confreres: **ABBOT NEAL ROTH**, 25 years as Abbot of Saint Martin's; **FATHER TIMOTHY LAMM**, 70 years in vows; **FATHER KILIAN MALVEY**, 60 years in vows; and **FATHER GEORGE SEIDEL**, 60 years ordained. **FATHER GEORGE** was the principal celebrant at the Mass of Thanksgiving, and the jubilarians all were feted at a celebratory dinner and received a gift behalf of their confreres.

All of our jubilarians this year have been involved in our educational apostolates. **ABBOT NEAL** taught in both high school and college; **FATHER TIMOTHY** taught high school French and journalism at Saint Martin's High School and later in the Bahamas and Southern California; **FATHER KILIAN** and **FATHER GEORGE** are college professors. **ABBOT NEAL**, in addition to celebrating the anniversary of his abbatial election, marks a special birthday this year, and will be honored by the University in early August. This is a year of honors for **ABBOT NEAL**: in the spring, he was publically honored by a local organization for his many contributions to the local community and at the 2018 Commencement, Saint Martin's University awarded him an honorary doctorate.

From The Hill— continued

Retired **ABBOT ADRIAN PARCHER** is spending the summer away from the Abbey. He is acting chaplain to a monastery of Benedictine Sisters in South Dakota ... **BROTHER LUKE DEVINE** traveled with a group of the University's students in early summer to Saint Gertrude's, Cottonwood, Idaho. The students experience life among the Benedictine Sisters there, praying and working with them ... This writer will attend a meeting in Salamanca in late June and then be a guest of the abbess and community at the Benedictine monastery of San Pelayo, in Oviedo, Asturias ... **FATHER PAUL WECKERT** had several potential candidates to the community here for a few day's visit. While here they live our life of prayer and work, often experiencing the later under the direction of Oblate Director **BROTHER EDMUND EBBERS** ... **FATHER GERARD KIRSH**, long-time history teacher in our University, retired from teaching at the close of the 2017-2018 academic year. A former Oblate Director, **FATHER GERARD** is Abbey Archivist, and Chaplain at Saint Placid Priory in addition to offering a regular Mass at the local Catholic hospital.

Congratulations to all our 2018 jubilarians, and also to **NOVICE DAMIEN - JOSEPH RAPPUHN** who is scheduled to make his first vows this summer.

May your summer be filled with some holy leisure when you're afforded some time to
"stand and stare."

A Famous Speech by Oblate Mary Randall

“Know where you stand, and stand there,” said priest and poet Daniel Berrigan, SJ-this was reportedly the entirety of his commencement address to Xavier High School in New York.

I remember so well this now deceased Jesuit when he came to Saint Martin’s University when it was still a college in 1989. He came as a guest lecturer for Spiritual Life Institute, a then week long series of talks for college credits under the tutelage of Father Kilian Malvey, OSB.

Father Berrigan fought for social justice issues in so many thought-provoking ways. He was truly a prophet for our times.

He once shared that where he lived in New York City was a 15 minute walk to his office. Yet it took him 2 hours to get to work each and every day. Why you ask? Not because of car traffic which you might have thought, but, rather, because of the foot traffic; strangers and friends stopping to ask him questions, which he answered patiently knowing he was doing God’s work.

How patient am I when a stranger or friend calls me on the phone without warning or sees me in person when I am in a hurry to get to where I want to be? Is my agenda that important? Obviously to Daniel Berrigan this interruption was just part of his everyday life.

Let us pray that our daily interruptions are part of God’s plan. And let us pray for those souls who never get interrupted.

Blessings in Saint Benedict,

Mary Randall, Oblate of Saint Benedict

July 8th Oblate Community Sunday

Come join us for Mass in the Abbey church at 11 A.M. followed by our annual picnic. Please bring a dish to share, eating utensils and drinks will be provided.

At 1:30 attend a presentation in the Abbey Church where Anatha Attar will speak on “Pilgrimage Making Travel Sacred.”

June 29– July 1st Regional Oblate and Directors Conference

Last chance to register for the NW Conference is now. Registering at the Door may cost an added \$50. Know what the Oblate Congress believes are the responsibilities of Oblates – the are many. We all have gifts and unless you know in what way you can use these gifts you not be giving the Lord His due. Don’t fall short of making meaningful contributions to God’s people. Thank you all that decide to join us for this Conference. We are working to make it worth your while.

Brother Edmund will be sending out a list of those Volunteering at the coming NW Conference, hopefully by mid-June for the Conference. Job descriptions will be included.

Oblate Community dates

September 9th (day of Investitures and Oblations) Br. Luke will give a presentation on “Benedictines & Ecology”

August 11th Oblate Retreat at Lambert Lodge Sister Laura Swan presenter.

December 2nd presenter Father Kilian.

Oblates Mission Statement

We, the Benedictine Oblates of Saint Martin’s Abbey, according to our particular vocation in life and our personal commitment to the Benedictine community of Saint Martin’s, endeavor through prayer, hospitality, listening to others, and service, to live the values found in the Holy Rule of St. Benedict.

Prayer Requests

Prayers Please:

Father Benedict Auer - End stage cancer is in Hospice.

Oblate Margaret Mazeski - Thanks you for your prayers she is recovering, keep up the prayers.

For Oblate Patricia McClure and her family regarding the loss of brother and mother-in-law.
For their Peace!

For the sick, disabled and shut-ins and elderly Oblates and friends.

For Vocations to St. Martin's Abbey.

For the Holy Spirit to shed peace over the world.

On the Book Shelf

To Dare the Our Father – A Transformative Spiritual Practice by John Shea.

Bored Again Catholic – How the Mass Could Save Your Life by Timothy O'Malley

Forgiving Mother, A Marian Novena of Healing and Peace by Marge Steinhage Fenelon.

Thanks and thanks again.

I, Brother Edmund wish to say again how much I appreciate you Oblates and the works and sacrifices you make to make this a better world. It begins with "one step at a time." I HOPE AND PRAY for the best of each of you!

Many Thanks to those who have renewed their Oblations and sent their forms to the Abbey and to those who have given a donation to support the Oblate Program. The Renewals are a reminder to yourself and the Director that you are being mindful of your Offering of self. The monastics do this yearly even though we have made vows for life.

Thanks for all who responded to the Vision Statement Worksheet.

Contact information for these events:

Brother Edmund Ebbers OSB

Saint Martin's Abbey

5000 Abbey Way S.E.

Lacey, WA 98503

Phone: 360—438 -4457

Email: br_edmund@stmartin.edu

Gardening and Wood:

Saturdays 1:00pm to 3:30pm

Spring is here and so are many chores here at the Abbey. Many hands make the work lighter.

Please call Br. Edmund to schedule a time

Oblate Advisory Meeting

Time: 10:00AM

Place: St. Gertrude's hall.
(cafeteria)

2018: July 7th, Sept. 8th, Dec. 1st.

If you are interested in becoming more involved please contact Brother Edmund.

Rosary Makers will meet:

Time: 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm.

The first Saturday of each month.

Exceptions: no meeting in July and we will meet on the second Saturday in September.

We have supplies and will teach you how. There are never enough Rosaries for the Missions and Military. Your help is greatly appreciated .

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

LAMBERT LODGE WORK

Time: 10:00 - 3:00

2018 Dates: Sometime in October

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