



Oblate Community of Saint Martin's Abbey

Oblates of Saint Benedict

May 2024

Volume 2 Issue 69

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

Dear Oblates and friends of St. Martin's Abbey:

We here at the Abbey had a beautiful conclusion to the Lenten Season with the Triduum. Our morning offices are long because of the added psalms, antiphons and reading. This prepared us for Easter, which was another climax with the Easter Vigil and then Sunday Day mass. Those of you in parishes probably witnessed baptisms, confirmations, and first communions. This past week was a gentle let-down with everyday being a solemnity since it was within the octave of Easter. Our celebration of Easter will continue for the next several weeks.

We live in a time where LOVE is greatly needed. We all know of the surrounding violence. Country conflicts which bring out the very worst of humankind. There are civil conflicts that turn ugly and the disrespect of others' rights while only considering selfish wants. There are family and community disputes which destroy unity. Where has love gone?

Our Lord Jesus Christ showed us once how to love beyond measure. He not only died but rose victoriously for those of us to come after Him. He suffered at the hands of his own people and his friends, who abandoned him in his time of need. Still, he loved and forgave them. He suffered and died for me, us, all peoples because he loved us and wanted to save us all. His resurrection draws us ever closer to him, showing us there is life after death, life with Him and the Father.

There is a song entitled, "What's Love got to do with it?" The answer is everything. Without love, there is no peace. If there is no love, God is not present. If God is not present, then perhaps the evil one is at work. Our Savior, Jesus Christ, was guided by love and so too must we be guided.

Ever since I read a bit about the Trinity, I recall these words: the Trinity is the Father looking at the Son face to face with love and the Son looking back at the Father with love and the Holy Spirit is the breath that each share as they breathe in unison. Think of two people in Love as they gaze into one another's eyes. Let us strive to love one another by doing what is right for the other person.

In St. Benedict I am, Br. Edmund



Image found at needpix.com

OBLATE COMMUNITY SUNDAY - MAY 19TH

Join us at 3:00 pm for a talk on Venerable St. Bede by Oblate Bede Colvin.
Evening Prayer along with investitures and oblations will take place followed by a social with the monks.

The following folks are eligible for:

- Investiture: Sid Ortigoza and Clare Santiago.
- Oblation: Tony Schmitz, Ignatius Park, Lanna Moore Duncan, Ed Glidden, and Pamela Colvin.

If we have missed someone who is ready for either investiture or oblation please contact Brother Edmund pronto. Contact information 360-438-4457 or at Br_edmund@stmartin.edu

PRAYER REQUESTS

Let us remember those who have died, are sick or are troubled:

Abbot Volker Wolfe, former Abbot Primate.

Oblate Michael Wilson.

Oblate Suzanne Rothwell with several ailments.

Oblate Patricia McClure to begin Chemo therapy.

For those Oblates that may be homebound, overworked or stressed.

For the right to life.

For special Thanksgiving that Oblate Joshua Roberts has been accepted to the next Deaconate Program.

LENTEN RENEWALS: Did you see the form in the last newsletter? If so please send it in.

There are many oblates that have not renewed their Oblations. Have you fallen away from the Benedictine life? If so maybe we can help bring you back to the fold, feed your parched soul with spiritual nutrients? Don't let yourself wither because you have fallen on rocky soil. Soon you may be receiving a phone call, a letter or an email from one of the Council members to see if we can help you be and feel more apart of our Oblate Community.

You can help...

Rummage Sale is set for early September: Please do a spring cleaning and bring your rummage items. You can contact Oblate Bede at bede.orthodox@gmail.com or Brother Edmund about when and where to drop off items. Our clientele will be primarily students as they arrive for school in the fall. Clothing, housewares, and the like are welcome donations.

Come and grow with us...

Please join us at the Zoom study of the Rule and at either mentoring meetings, they are open to all who want to grow richer in the Benedictine life. See calendar of events for times and dates.

Contemplation Begins with Self-Awareness by Father Peter Tynan O.S.B.

At the core of western philosophy is the Delphic command to “know yourself.” This short command would lead great figures like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle to reflect on themselves and question why they acted as they did, why they believed as they did, and if it was truly worthy of their time. Plato recorded in the *Apology* that Socrates defended himself at his trial by stating that “the unexamined life is not worth living.” The following generations of philosophers would embrace this maxim.

When early Christianity encountered Greek philosophy, it followed Saint Paul and adopted its best elements. Part of this was self-examination. Early Christians found significant benefit in stopping their busyness and asking themselves not only if they were doing what they ought to be doing but whether they were able to love and know God as scripture commanded. This reflection naturally led to contemplation. Though, as the early practitioners discovered, and we know all too well ourselves, contemplation is difficult. The problem, as we know, is distraction.

Contemplation requires inner stillness, what Eastern Christianity calls *hesychia*. Without this stillness, we find our deep, mental prayer a constant struggle. Memories intrude and emotions rise, causing us to find turbulence instead of peace. What can be done? The ancient fathers and mothers discovered that self-awareness was indeed the key, but it needed to be used correctly. It needed to be done step-by-step, beginning with our outward and moving inward.

The first step is to become aware of our outward actions. This first step is, of course, the hardest. The adage “look before you leap” is what we ought to keep in mind. When we act, we should try to be conscious of whether what we are doing is bringing harmony or disharmony to ourselves. As Oblates, this is more difficult than for us who live in the monastery, but is not impossible. One simply needs to slow down and act with purpose rather than live by reaction.

The second step is to become aware of our thoughts. We begin by asking ourselves which thoughts bring consolation and which disturb our inner lives. For the Desert Father Evagrius, disturbing thoughts fell into eight general categories. These were: lust, gluttony, greed, sorrow, despondency, anger, vainglory, and pride. From these later generations of monastics would formulate the Seven Deadly Sins. For us, we should look at them broadly as encompassing:

- a) what we desire
- b) what we reject
- c) how we see ourselves.

With these two steps taken, we ought to notice the stillness we need to pray deeply.

The third step is to pray by focusing on what we can see and know. This is where a prayer practice like *lectio divina* begins to yield its full fruit. The idea behind this step is to contemplate using a focusing image or idea. When we focus on something intently, we are less likely to become distracted.

The fourth and final step is full contemplation of the divine, the mystic experience. Admittedly, most of us will never quite make this final step. Yet, it is there for those who commit themselves to taking it. It is at this step that we have such inner peace that we are able to clear our minds of all images (all that is not God) and then relate with God heart-to-heart.

As Benedictine Oblates living in the world, it is quite possible that the first two steps are enough work. This is fine. Whatever you are able to do will improve your prayer life and bring great peace to your heart. The important thing to keep in mind is that no progress can be made unless we are willing to take the first step.

Oblate Council's Corner

Current council members are open and ready to listen to your concerns and suggestions. They can be reached via email or on Sunday Oblate Community meetings. The current members are:

The current members are:

Bede Colvin, bede.orthodox@gmail.com

Bene Reece, anforait@yahoo.com

Ellen Borland, ejboblsb@yahoo.com

Joshua Roberts, oblate.joshuaroberts@gmail.com

JT Batstone, batstonejt@gmail.com

Patricia McClure, Ravenwings@comcast.net

Ron Fialkowski, ronaldbenny24@gmail.com

February Meeting

Storage room will get reorganized.

Website: Talking to those in charge on how to get more information up for our Oblates.

Silent Retreat: Looking for presentors and finding venues for small group discussions.

Oblate Sunday: Looking for presenters for July and December.

Bazaar:

- Decided to allow 3-4 vendors. Decided not to charge an entrance fee.
- Looking at how to reconfigure the space for maximum flow.
- Will have new road signs made for the bazaar and rummage sale.

Budget:

- We need to submit our budget by May.
- New items to be added are food cost for the two socials we have a year.

March Meeting

Council discussed:

A survey that was sent out electronically and it was decided to publish it in the newsletter. We need more feedback to steer us in the direction of being able to define our ministry opportunities.

Contacting folks directly by phone to find out what their needs are and how to offer them ministry opportunities. Council members will come up with questions to facilitate that conversation.

Visiting and making contact with home bound Oblates.

Need certification and safe environment training to accomplish this.

Two-person team for each in person visit.

Oblate Council's Corner continued:

A master contact list of Oblates will be made so we can easily discern who is active and who is not.

Rummage sale.

Bede will be our contact person for this event, coordinating what items are acceptable, where to drop them off. Contact information will be placed in the newsletter.

St. Placid needs help to build a vegetable garden. We discussed what it would take to get that project going. Asking if this is an opportunity for our two Oblate communities to come together in service.

April Meeting

The budget was discussed. Increase is needed in:

Postage - we no longer can mail at bulk rate

Printing - new signage for our events is needed

Rosary supplies - we are now teaching local community members how to make rosaries.

We discussed getting logo table clothes for our events and possibly a banner made.

Formation group

Series one is coming to an end. We discussed what worked and what to add and how to continue beginning in June. Our topics seemed to work well and we will continue using them.

Suggestions:

Longer sessions

A question and answer panel session.

Council presenter leads the group session when they present.

Continuing formation

We want to stay connected and feed our community so we discussed what we could do.

Continue the study of the Holy Rule on zoom and possibly start an in person session of that.

Book study of on one of the many books about Benedictine spirituality.

Need to thank Brother Bede for his hospitality on formation days.

Come up with a certificate of completion for those who have finished part one of formation series.



ON THE BOOK SHELF

The Grace to Desire It by Dom Pius Mary Noonan, OSB (Meditations on the 12 Degrees of Humility).

Seventy-Four Tools for Good Living by Michael Casey

The Path of Life by Cyprian Smith, OSB

When you read any books suggested, by the Director or otherwise, please write a summary of the book, and send it by email to Brother Edmund so we can share it with readers of this newsletter.

Book Recommendations by Oblate Leilani Roberts

Martin of Tours: Soldier, Bishop, Saint

Regine Pernoud

St. Martin was born in the fourth century shortly after Christian worship was legalized in the Roman empire.

Despite being born into a pagan family, St. Martin became a devout follower of Christ. This biography chronicles not only his life, but also the events of the wider world around him. It includes writings from close friends of his who took the time to write about some of the events of his life and death. This book is a new addition to our oblate library! Check it out and get to know about the amazing life of this saint.

Walking with Mary: A Biblical Journey from Nazareth to the Cross

Edward Sri

Dr. Edward Sri breaks open scripture and takes a closer look at key events involving Mary in the New Testament. From her humble response at the Annunciation, to her heart-piercing presence along the Way of the Cross, and onto her royal splendor in the book of Revelation, we are invited to ponder all these moments and keep them in our hearts! This book would be most appropriate for a small group study or for personal lectio divina. Take the time to walk alongside our most Holy Mother during the month of May!

Our oblate library is full of wonderful books just waiting to be read by you! It is available to browse online at <https://www.librarycat.org/lib/OblateLibrary>. You can even put a hold on books to pick up at the next oblate meeting. You will need to email the librarian for initial access by clicking on the “Ask the Librarian” link at the bottom of the Oblate Library page or by emailing directly to OblateLibrary@gmail.com.

Easter by Oblate Kathleen Hystad

On that dark day when they crucified You.
I was crushed deep in my spirit. In anguish, my soul cried.
What have they done to my Lord?
Have You really died?

My mind reeled. How could this be?
You are Lord. Could they not see this?

Longing for You, I carried on as best I could.
I clung to Your Word like a starving jackal.
My ears buzzing with the sound of the crowd's laughter and cackle.

My sorrow rushed through my veins like a sharp knife, an icy river chilling me to the bone.
I felt so alone.

My sorrow clung to me like a dark, wet blanket weighing me down.
The sky cleared...what is that sound?
What do I hear?
The tomb is empty. You are near!

Rejoice my heart!
Oh, my soul rejoices, dancing in a lover's rhythm.
Jesus Christ, our Lord, has risen!
Indeed, He has risen!!
Rejoice!!!



ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE BY OBLATE MARY RANDALL

For the past several weeks, I have had the opportunity to view a series of videos by Bishop Greg Homeming, a member of the Decalced Carmelite Order since 1985. Bishop Homeming is shepherd of Lismore Diocese in Eastern Australia. I happened to discover him when he suddenly popped up during a video I was listening to of another well-versed theologian.

Bishop Homeming is of Chinese descent born in Australia in 1958. Before entering the Carmelite Order in 1985, he was practicing law in Sydney, Australia. Since becoming Bishop in 2016, he has offered his diocese a series of lectures during the Lenten Season. Bishop Homeming is quiet spoken, yet articulates well in his half-hour segments on Carmelite Spirituality.

In 2022, his four-week series of lectures covered several insights of St. John of the Cross. Just days before this Lenten series began, Eastern Australia was hit hard with a devastating flood that made Lismore and surrounding areas look like a war zone once the flood waters receded. Based on some of the images described by St. John of the Cross, Bishop Homeming posed the question, “What is your deepest desire?” He was acutely aware that people of Lismore prior to the flood might have answered this question with a more worldly view. However, with the flood devastation still fresh in their minds and hearts, it was now their desire to help their brothers and sisters feel safe after many of them lost literally everything. While streets were piled high with decayed goods, furniture, and clothing, the main concern was to raise people’s hopes from crippling despair.

So, let’s pause here: “What is your deepest desire?” “Have you ever been in a situation where you lost everything?”

In 2023, Bishop Homeming offered insights into his founder Saint Theresa of Avila. While most founders create or created an order for the good and care of others, Saint Theresa of Avila selfishly created the Decalced Carmelites for her. She had such a profound experience of God that she wanted to create a convent that nurtured that experience through penance, fasting and prayer. In the Sixteenth century, the regular order of Carmelites was in serious decay and in desperate need of reform, and the Spanish Inquisition was not helping matters either. When Saint Theresa was made to burn all her spiritual books as other convents and monasteries were called to do, she turned to Jesus with tears and cried out, “What can I read to feed my spirituality?” and Our Lord answered her. “I will be the book you read.” Now, in our day, we would think Our Lord was referring to reading the Gospels. However, Books of Scripture were not readily available back then, and Saint Theresa’s only source would be scribbling scraps of Biblical quotes. Therefore, Our Lord did become the book she read.

Let us pause here: “What are your most favorite books?” Name three that you wouldn’t want to be without.

Bishop Homeming makes the distinction between theology and spirituality when he says, “While theology is for the mind, the intellect, spirituality is for one’s experience of God.” Interestingly, the Decalced Carmelites do not teach people how to pray but how to love. For when you love God first, then yourself and neighbor (as in the second command of Our Lord) you are fulfilling what God desires of us. As Saint Augustine reminds us, “Our hearts are restless until they rest in You (God).”

As Oblates, let us reflect on our Benedictine Spirituality. What are we noted for? Why were we founded? How would you describe your Oblation experience to others?

In the Spirit of Learning,
Mary Randall, Oblate

My Healer and Savior By Br. Ramon Newell OSB

Jesus weak and battered comes to me
Who am weak and battered.

In my hurt, I want to run away and hide,
To seek solitude and close in on myself.
So that no one can see or hurt me more.

But this isolation can work against me,
I can deprive myself of healing,
Become hard
Bitter,
Unforgiving,
Failing to learn and grow.

Jesus comes to me,
Taking me in his weary arms,
Placing his nail imprinted hands
On my head and heart and embraces me.

He is transformed now with strength and power.

His touch calms my mind and heart.

His loving embrace tells me I am not alone,
There is one who loves and cares for me.
My wounds heal. His light overpowers my darkness.
He walks with me, and I walk with him
Into a new day.



OBLATE COMMUNITY CALENDAR 2024

April

27th Formation meeting at 3:30 pm - 6:30 pm in the guest dining room.

29th Formation meeting at 11:00 am - 1:30 pm in the guest dining room.

May

3rd Oblate Council meeting 9:00 am Zoom.

4th Rosary Making 1:30 –3:30 guest dining room.

11th Rosary Making 1:30 –3:30 guest dining room.

19th Oblate Community Sunday 3:00 pm Talk on Venerable St. Bede by Oblate Bede. Investing and Oblations with Evening Prayer with the Monks.

25th Formation meeting at 3:30 pm - 6:30 pm in the guest dining room.

June

1st Rosary Making 1:30 –3:30 guest dining room.

7th Oblate Council meeting 9:00 am Zoom.

8th Rosary Making 1:30 –3:30 guest dining room.

9th Holy Rule Study 1:30 pm - 2:00 pm Zoom.

24th Formation meeting at 11:00 am - 1:30 pm in the guest dining room.

29th Formation meeting at 3:30 pm - 6:30 pm in the guest dining room.

July

6th Rosary Making 1:30 –3:30 guest dining room.

12th Oblate Council meeting 9:00 am Zoom.

13th Rosary Making 1:30 –3:30 guest dining room.

14th Oblate Community Sunday 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm Annual Potluck Picnic. Speaker Sr. Laura on Desert Ascetic and Oblates today.

27th Formation meeting at 3:30 pm - 6:30 pm in the guest dining room.

29th Formation meeting at 11:00 am - 1:30 pm in the guest dining room.

August

2nd Oblate Council meeting 9:00 am Zoom.

3rd Rosary Making 1:30 –3:30 guest dining room.

4th Holy Rule Study 1:30 pm - 2:00 pm. Zoom.

10th Silent Retreat 9:00 am - 5:00 pm On Humility.

26th Formation meeting at 11:00 am - 1:30 pm in the guest dining room.

31st Formation meeting at 3:30 pm - 6:30 pm in the guest dining room.

September

6th Oblate Council meeting 9:00 am Zoom.

7th Rummage sale

14th Rosary Making 1:30 –3:30 guest dining room.

15th Oblate Community Sunday 3:00 pm talk on monks and nuns in Trinidad and Bahamas by Dr. Ramon Luzarraga. Investing and Oblations, Evening Prayer with the monks.

28th Formation meeting at 3:30 pm - 6:30 pm in the guest dining room.

30th Formation meeting at 11:00 am - 1:30 pm in the guest dining room.

October

4th Oblate Council meeting 9:00 am Zoom.

5th Rosary Making 1:30 –3:30 guest dining room.

6th Holy Rule Study 1:30 pm - 2:00 pm Zoom.

12th Rosary Making 1:30 –3:30 guest dining room.

26th Formation meeting at 3:30 pm - 6:30 pm in the guest dining room.

28th Formation meeting at 11:00 am - 1:30 pm

November

5th Rosary Making 1:30 –3:30 guest dining room.

8th Oblate Council meeting 9:00 am. Zoom.

10th Holy Rule Study 1:30 pm - 2:00 pm Zoom.

12th Rosary Making 1:30 –3:30 guest dining room.

21st noon set up for the Bazaar.

22nd – 23rd Bazaar.

25th Formation meeting at 11:00 am - 1:30 pm in the guest dining room.

30th Formation meeting at 3:30 pm - 6:30 pm in the guest dining room.

December

7th Rosary Making 1:30 –3:30 guest dining room.

13th Oblate Council meeting 9:00 am Zoom.

14th Formation meeting at 3:30 pm.- 6:30 pm.in the guest dining room.

15th Oblate Community Sunday 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm in the Abbey Church. Talk by Fr. Peter.

16th Formation meeting at 11:00 am - 1:30 pm in the guest dining room.

Please fill out a short survey about the Saint Martin's Abbey Oblate Community. Please provide your honest feedback. Put as much detail as you can into your answers. Send your answers by email or snail mail. Thank you.

1) How do you live your Oblation in actions and service to the Oblate Community and Monastic Community of St. Martin's Abbey?

2) How do you live your Oblation in actions and service to the local community you live in?

3) In your opinion, how does our Oblate Community serve the local community?

4) What are your suggestions to implement and grow the services we offer to the Abbey, Oblate and Local Communities?

5) What are your suggestions to implement and grow the services we offer to the local community?

6) What strengths and how much time can you dedicate to sustain the services offered by our Oblate Community and to fuel the improvements you are suggesting?

7) How do you want to receive the Oblate Community Newsletter?

Electronic Version, Paper Version (Mailed), Other.

8) Any other feedback you wish to provide regarding the Oblate Community.

*Saint Martin's Abbey
5000 Abbey Way S.E.
Lacey, WA 98503*

Return Service Requested

St. Martin's Abbey Oblates are people who earnestly seek a more deeply spiritual life rooted in God according to the Holy Rule of St. Benedict. The Oblate lives and works in the secular world guided by the wisdom of Benedictine life.

We can be found on the web at <https://stmartinsabbey.org/news-and-events/oblate-newsletter/>