

## OBLATES OF SAINT BENEDICT

JULY 2010

**I WAS THINKING...** BY BROTHER EDMUND EBBERS, O.S.B.**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

Abbot's Reflection 2

Mark the calendar 3

Oblate J.J. Nugent 4

In the Beginning 5

Oblate Bill Lagreid 6

From the Hill 7

Books and Prayers 8

Oblate Patricia McClure 9

Poetry 10

Good works 11

That in Chapter 63 of the Rule of St. Benedict is entitled, "On the Order of the Community", while St. Benedict gives instruction for a community, one can easily make a shift from a monastic community to a family and work. Let's look at this idea more closely.

In most work places and families, there is a hierarchy in place that successfully puts order and peace in the environment. I am certain many of us have observed where there seems to be no one in charge. There may be a supervisor or a parent present but they have taken a back seat for whatever reason. On the other hand, the opposite can occur where you may have a dictator. Both roles can lead to chaos and trouble for all concerned. St. Benedict lays out an order, a need for respect, discipline. Oh, how our world and country, in which it seems that too many want to be charge, could use this chapter.

If we replace the abbot with parent or manager we would find ourselves with a different kind of a leader. St. Benedict tells us that an abbot, in our example parent or manager:

- 1) makes the final decisions.
- 2) is not to disturb the flock unnecessarily.
- 3) is not to use power arbitrarily and to take counsel.
- 4) will be accountable to God for actions.

And St. Benedict encourages the one in charge to

- 5) show signs of love to one another.
- 6) listen for great wisdom and actions in making decisions.
- 7) note the date of entrance in the group and unless warranted by the leadership the ones having been there first may have more experience and wisdom.
- 8) again, love and reverence should be shown to one another. Note the importance of love being repeated.
- 9) the one in charge represents Christ and so they should be honored for the love of Christ.
- 10) finally, the leader should reflect on all this so they can be truly worthy of the honored position they hold.

Can we imagine what peace filled families, companies, and societies we could have if these principles of St. Benedict's were followed? Those of us who proclaim St.. Benedict's way can help spread the news by our actions and by our words.

I can't say enough... but then, perhaps it is better for each of us to use our personal wisdom to reflect on St. Benedict's words and I, the director will be silent.

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



I suspect that the reading audience in this brief article is composed of a majority of married persons; nevertheless, I want to write a few thoughts about priestly and religious vocations.

Here at the Abbey we often pray for vocations to the religious/monastic life and to the priesthood including prayers for priestly vocations for the Seattle Archdiocese. A few years ago, I appointed one of our monks, Father Paul Weckert, O.S.B., as full time Vocation Director for the Abbey. He frequently preaches vocations at various parishes throughout the Archdiocese and at other university campus ministry Masses such as Western University. A time consuming assignment involves repeated visits and talks with young people about a life of commitment and ministry to the Church for the benefit of the people of God.

While the shortage of priests has empowered many lay ministries to flourish in the Church, the Church is still seriously hurting for priests. We are a sacramental Church. The Eucharist is central to our faith and therefore we need ordained ministry. The Lord gives the priestly vocation, I believe, as a personal call. Because the Lord's wisdom cannot be questioned (God graces whomever he calls), the call itself is definitely a grace. However, that grace is not always accepted. Like the rich young man in the gospel, some walk away or put it off.

Join us in prayer

Religious consecration by vows in an Order or Congregation, such as made by sisters, brothers, and monks, likewise reflects a personal invitation by Christ. Hence such a call is also a grace in itself.

As a commitment to Christ, religious/monastic life is also a commitment to Christ's Body, the Church. It is a valuable service to the Church. The late Pope John Paul II said that the religious' service to the Church is "... an extension of Christ to whom you have dedicated your life."

The call to the life of a priest or religious is a beautiful invitation. Community life is difficult at times (but so is the community of married life difficult at times!). Both vocations are not for the faint of heart! Our Church is under attack both from within and outside. We need to pray for the Church. We need to pray for priestly and religious/monastic vocations today and every day, and for all those who have received such calls. We need to pray for their perseverance and faithfulness to their call. We need to pray that young people will open their hearts to a call to the priesthood or religious/monastic life. I think praying for vocations daily is a great mission for Benedictine Oblates. Won't you, our Oblates, join us in praying for growth in vocations to all Church ministries and that young people will hear God's call to serve?

**OBLATE SUNDAY JULY 11TH 2010**

Join us for Mass in the Abbey church at 11AM. Then we will have our annual picnic on the lawn in front of the Abbey church. Please bring a potluck dish to share. Utensils, drinks, and napkins will be provided.

From 1PM to 1:30PM Brother Luke will open the museum for our viewing pleasure. It is located in the basement of Placid Hall Lynch center.

At 1:30PM Brother Peter will speak to us about "Monastic Dining". This talk will take place in Gertrude Dining Hall. For those needing more scared space time, Brother Edmund suggest that after socializing one could slip back into the church until the conference or possibly stay and join the community for evening prayers.

Don't forget to bring your copy of the Rule and be prepared to discuss Chapter 33 on Ownership. Questions to ponder: Do we need it or want it? Do possessions own us or we them? How much is enough? Why does St. Benedict come down hard on individual ownership and raises up community ownership?

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

**August 7th 2010** Oblate Retreat at Lambert Lodge. Please sign up with Br. Edmund in advance if you can or show up for Mass on August the 7th and follow us to the lodge. The retreat begins with Mass at the Abbey church at 8AM and then we will go to the Lodge (map provided) and remain there until about 3:30PM. Lunch will be potluck and dinnerware is provided. In preparation for this retreat please re-search your patron saint. How are you like or not like your patron?

**September 5th 2010** Bshp. Joseph Tyson will talk about Conversion of Life. Investitures and Oblations

**December 5th 2010** possible talk by Br. Vincent Francis, O.S.B.

**MORE OPPORTUNITIES**

Yearly, St. John's University School of Theology/Seminary puts on a Monastic Institute. This years institute is scheduled for June 27 - July 1, 2010. If you are interested in the contact Cindy Maile, Monastic Institute, 320-363-2612 or [www1.csbsju.edu/sot/](http://www1.csbsju.edu/sot/)

For more information please see Br. Edmund .

## HOW MUCH STUFF IS ENOUGH? BY OBLATE J.J. NUGENT

One day as my wife and I discussed plans to upgrade to a bigger place it occurred to us that we didn't actually need all this stuff. In fact as a family of four, we had too much stuff. Our three bedroom mobile home had become overrun with "things." Every nook and cranny was filled with "storage." In fact, our lives and living space were burdened with the clutter.



So began a two-year odyssey of simplifying our lives. We began by sorting through the useable clothing, that we didn't need and giving it away to needy friends or Saint Vincent De Paul. The same procedure was applied to kitchenware, sporting goods, bedding, appliances, TVs, VHS tapes, books, and toys. Stuff that couldn't be given away or recycled was sent to the dump.

We discovered that along the way we had become lazy stewards of the material things given us. We had so much stuff that we often couldn't find an item and would end up buying a replacement! The more we cleaned, the more we realized how much wealth we had compared to others.

Then one day I realized that we were still wasting money. We had almost every cable TV channel and didn't even watch that much TV. We reduced our service to basic and saved 1200 dollars a year. Now we watch Net Flicks for fewer than ten dollars a month.

Every aspect of our lives is now fair game for simplification and the responsible use of time, money and resources. Far from being a burdensome life style now, we are much more conscious of the gifts we have from God and far less attached material belonging. We have the energy to be generous with others. It seems that the more we give the more we prosper. Even when I became unemployed, we now actually have enough income to make some house repairs, buy a third vehicle, and upgrade our tithing.

I'm so glad we stopped hoarding and put God in charge of our finances.

Perhaps every Oblate and Christian should examine their relationship to the material goods God has gifted to them.

## IN THE BEGINNING... BY FR. GERARD KIRSCH, O.S.B.

The requirements for priests to assist in various parishes during Holy Week and Easter in the spring of 1953 made heavy demands on abbey's manpower. Fourteen priests already had regular weekend assignments throughout the year, either as weekend assistants or as having charge of parishes. For Holy Week and Easter, an additional 17 priests would assist parishes in Washington they included **Father Bede Ernsdorff (1909 - 1982)** in Yakima; **Father Marcel Berton (1899 - 1975)** at Visitation in Tacoma; **Father Philip Bagan (1905 - 1992)** in Kent; **Father Damian Glenn (1907- 1986)** in Everett; **Fathers Leonard Feeney (1908 - 1980)** and **Michael Feeney (1919 - 2000)** at Port Angeles; **Father Meinrad Gaul (1907- 1984)** at Assumption in Seattle; **Father Ansgar Hallen (1902 - 1985)** at Saint Patrick's in Tacoma; **Father David Prebula (1918 - 2009)** at Fife; **Father Richard Cebula (1916- 2004)** at Saints Peter and Paul in Tacoma; **Father Clement Pangratz** at Shelton; **Father Felix Wirth (1913 - 1984)** at Cle Elum; **Father Conrad Rausch** at Kelso; **Father Dunstan Curtis (1921- 1981)** at Snoqualmie; **Fathers Marian Esterman (1874 - 1957)** and **Paul Kucera (1887 - 1974)** at Fort Lewis; and Father Gilbert Wolters, a visiting monk from St Bede Abbey in chemistry. With the return for the Easter recess of the clerics studying theology at Mount Angel — **Fraters Timothy Lamm, Placidus Reischman (1926-2000), Ambrose Turner, Maurus Keller, Christopher Abair (1924 - 1988), Urban Feucht, Nicholas Rausch (1928 - 2003)** and **Thaddeus Arledge** — the master of ceremonies at the abbey would find sufficient help to carry out the whole splendor of the Holy Week liturgy so characteristic of a Benedictine monastery. The absence of so many priests was a definite limitation in the recitation of the Divine Office, and it required many sacrifices of those who remained at home to fulfill all the duties of the Easter and Holy Week liturgies. At this time too, it must be recalled, there were two recitations of the Divine Office: in English by the Brothers and in Latin by the priests and the clerics and novices studying for the priesthood.

Beginning with the third Sunday in April 1953, **Father Alphonse Fuchs (1904- 1971)**, oblate director, consolidated the oblates of Lacey and vicinity. Since Saint Martin's College lies within the parish limits of Sacred Heart, Lacey, all students and lay persons working at Saint Martin's would, in future, attend oblate meetings at Sacred Heart Church. Meetings would be at 7:30 PM on the third Sunday of the month and would be conducted by **Father Alphonse**.



## THE JOY OF SILENCE

BY OBLATE BILL LAGREID



Our ears feel vibrations but it is our minds that hear sound. If we can block out the vibrations of the world we live in we may then experience silence. Silence being the absence of sound. That is where we come face to face with spirituality. In the joy of silence we open the gates of our mind to God. Meister Eckhard is quoted as saying, "Nothing resembles the language of God so much as silence."

Our modern world bombards us with noises. The sound of cell phones and people walking and conversing everywhere, television, and sound of traffic all seem to invade our quest for silence. A silence that we need to feel closer to God, a silence we long for.

The drive between my home and the Abbey is sixty-five miles one way and takes over two hours to travel on a good day. I know there are other oblates that travel farther. During that driving time, I experience the joy of silence and quality time to listen to myself in my mind and God. It is a blissful time.

The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence.

Habakkuk 2:20

Sister Barbara reminded us regularly in the classroom that empty barrels make the most noise and it is better to keep your mouth closed and seem stupid than to open it all the time and prove that you are. Talking too much and listening too little is not the road to wisdom. The sound of our own voice is not necessarily the sound of the voice of wisdom and knowledge.

St. Benedict speaks to us of silence in Chapter six of his rule about Restraint of Speech. Although he is directing his rule to monks of the strict observance of speech, he also speaks to us oblates about his high regard for silence. A reading of that rule may be in order for our personal reflection on how we in our own lives practice silence and in doing so we also afford the opportunity for others to also experience the joy of silence.

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



Korean poet Ok-Koo Kang Grosjean wrote: "The peony...possesses the purest beauty... and blooms here in my garden." Our abbey gardens are home to many peonies. In May, there were several beautiful tree peonies in bloom in the back of the Abbey church, large as cabbages and rich in a deep red, rose, and white. They are part of the church's Japanese garden, professionally designed, and installed under the direction of **BROTHER EDMUND EBBERS** a year or two ago. Recently, the gardens were enhanced by the installation of lighting, a project of **BROTHER MARK BONNEVILLE**. They now can be enjoyed both day and night.

University graduation exercises were held early in May, and **BROTHER NOLASCO MWALONGO**, a Tanzania Benedictine who has been in residence at the Abbey for about seven years, received his Masters of Arts in counseling...

**FATHER GEORGE SEIDEL**... had a special "gig" this spring when he played the piano at an alumni event at the Governor's Mansion in Olympia... In celebration of the spirit of Arbor Day, **ABBOT NEAL ROTH** blessed and presided over the planting of a Styrax Japonicas in the plaza in front of the O'Grady Library ... **BROTHER LUKE DEVINE** participated in a Campus Ministry sponsored service trip following graduation. The group traveled by air to Cincinnati to do outreach work under the direction of the Franciscan Sisters there... In late April, **ABBOT NEAL** presented the Monks of Saint Martin's Abbey 2009 – 2010 awards to Outstanding Staff and to Outstanding Faculty at the annual Honor's Convocation/Student Scholar's day... The Abbey's Vocation Committee was recently re-constituted. **FATHER PAULWECKERT** is Vocation director and **BROTHER NICOLAUS WILSON** chairs the committee. Besides **FATHER PAUL** and **BROTHER NICOLAUS**, other members are: **BROTHER LUKE**, **BROTHER PETER TYNAN**, **BROTHER MARK**, **BROTHER VINCENT FRANCIS**, and **BROTHER BEDE NICOL**.

Congratulations to all of our jubilarians and "ad multos annos."

Summer officially begins with the monastic community's annual retreat, which this year was directed by Abbot Placid Solari, O.S.B. It is a long tradition at the Abbey to celebrate major anniversaries of the monks at the time of the annual retreat. This year's honorees were **FATHER THADDAEUS ARLEDGE**, **FATHER PRIOR ALFRED HULSCHER**, and **BROTHER BEDE**. **FATHER THADDAEUS**, who is recovering from a heart attack, celebrated sixty years of monastic profession. He has worked in parishes, as a long-time chaplain to the Benedictines on Shaw Island, as a resident hall counselor, and as teacher. **FATHER ALFRED**, prior of the Abbey, marked his golden anniversary of priestly ordination. **FATHER ALFRED** had been principal of Saint Martin's high school, a teacher and a professionally trained counselor. He has studied German and library science. **BROTHER BEDE** celebrated his silver anniversary of monastic profession. **BROTHER BEDE** is the Abbey sacristan. He also works on the Saint Martin's switchboard, in the University advancement office and in the Abbey library. It also falls to **BROTHER BEDE** to keep our mailing lists up to date.

ON THE BOOK SHELF...

*Seeking God: The Way of St. Benedict* by Esther de Waal.  
Not a new book but is always good for reflections.

Want to know what the monks read during the meals?  
*The Jesuit Guide to Almost Everything* by James Martin, S.J. and  
edited by Roger Freet.

This book is very insightful, worth the time and effort. Yes, even the  
Jesuits can teach us a thing or two.

*Illuminated Life - Monastic Wisdom for Seekers of Light* by Sr.  
Joan Chittister, O.S.B.



Read something particularly interesting or inspiring that has helped you in your life as a  
Benedictine?

How about sharing it with others? We encourage and welcome your book reviews or stories.



Prayer requests

The Monks at St. Martin's Abbey will be making their  
annual retreat the week of retreat May 25<sup>th</sup> thru the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup>. Abbot Placid Solari of  
Belmont will be directing it. Please keep him and St. Martin's monks in your prayers.

Prayers for Fr. Thaddeus Arledge who continues to heal and recover from surgery after having a  
pacemaker installed. He is presently at Mother Joseph Care Center working to regain his strength  
and is making great progress.

## LISTEN TO THE SILENCE

BY OBLATE PATRICA MCCLURE



This morning on the BBC I heard that on the Autobahn in Germany there is a church that drivers pull off to visit and take five minutes to sit in silence and slow the world down. As Bill said in his article, there is joy in silence and it is such a vital part of Benedictine living. I recall when I could attend the liturgy of the hours with the monks on a daily basis with great fondness. It was a time of silence and an opportunity to step out of the day and focus. Now days, I find that I still seek out the time for silence, when the lawn mowers have stopped and the children are asleep. I often sit on the porch and listen to the birds sing. I spend a lot of time gardening and someone once suggested that I use the time to listen to books on tape. I have opted not to but instead I pull and plant in silence and often spend hours renewing my spirit with the experience of silence. I find that the time I spend in silence arms me for the assault of noise I have to deal with later in my day. I think that in our modern world we are hungry for peace and quiet. I relish the rare occasion when the power goes out and I am forced to see how much I distract myself from the quiet. I encourage everyone to re-embrace the Benedictine ideal of silence and take a few moments to sit without reading something or hearing someone, and listen to the silence.

Oblate Loretta Matulich spoke to us on May 2nd about work and prayer and left this "A Meditation" by Cardinal Newman, for all of us.

God has created me to do him some definite service;  
 He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another.  
 I have my mission -  
 I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told of it in the next.  
 I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.  
 He has not created me for naught, I shall do good, I shall do his work.  
 I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place  
 while not intending it — if I do but keep His Commandments.  
 Therefore, I will trust Him.  
 Whatever, wherever I am, I can never be thrown away.  
 If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him;  
 in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him;  
 if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him.  
 He does nothing in vain.  
 He knows what He is about.  
 He may take away my friends.  
 He may throw me among strangers.  
 He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me,  
 still He knows  
 what He is about.

## THE MADRONA TREES

BY FR. BENEDICT AUER, O.S.B.

"The sea is not so full of water as I am of joy."

Raymond Llul

Outside my window two Madrona trees stand  
with their smooth bark and shiny leathery leaves,  
that the wind rustles

while a motorboat crosses the watery horizon  
heading upwind.

The trees bend as if falling to the ground  
or worshipping the sun in some exotic land.

I know these are evergreens,  
but unless I knew it I would never know.

They grow among the pines,  
but even their smooth bark  
is orange in tone,  
nothing like the trees that surround them.

They appear like a multi-limbed goddess  
in a Hindu temple I once visited,  
arms stretched with multiple fingertips.

Now a sailboat crosses  
between the trees slowly making  
its way downstream,  
with sails blowing  
in the afternoon breeze,  
yet the hum of its motor reaches the shore.

A heron, possibly blue, takes flight shocked  
by the noise and flies over the water,  
low, looking for a late lunch, but staying in the air.

I sit at the window  
typing a poem  
that photographs the scene  
with words, not digital pictures,  
trying to keep a memory  
in black and white,  
but missing the variegated colors  
of this sunny afternoon.

I can only find so many words to capture "green":  
olive, lime, chartreuse, grass, light and dark pine,  
but there are so many shades  
of the spectrum between yellow and blue,  
that words fail as a camera,  
and even a camera would find it hard to capture  
as many tints of green as my eye can see.



## GOOD WORKS

### Rosary Work.

Saturdays, 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm.

Meet in the Guest dining room of Old Main.

June 5th

July 10th

August 14th

September 11th

October 9th

November 13th

December 11th



### Gardening:

Saturdays 1:00pm to 3:30pm when rosary making isn't in session come join us in the dirt. Weather permitting there is work to be done so if you join us for noon prayer, we will feed you before we go out to work. Bring a smile and be ready for some fun.

### Lambert Lodge: 1pm to 3:30pm.

Br. Edmund plans to go out earlier in the morning. If you need directions please contact him in advance.

October 2nd 2010

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