



Oblates of St. Benedict Belmont Abbey April, 2009

April Meeting

The next Oblate meeting is on April 19 and will begin at 3:30 in the Gallagher Room.

The Great Wound

Over the years, many people have come to the Abbey wishing to become Oblates. But if you asked them why, you often will not get the same answer. Some come because they are inspired by the faith and discipline of the monks they see at the Abbey. Some would say they wish an association with the Abbey. Others would say they are seeking "something" and find it by living their life by following the Rule. Perhaps, also, it is a "sign of the times." People are looking for stability in a time of uncertainty, looking for a simpler life.



Underlying everything there is one word — looking. What they are looking for even they could not tell you. We become Oblate Novices because we are looking and have not yet found. We become Oblates because we have found but are still learning and adhere to the Rule to help us in our journey to find.

But this looking or seeking is not unique to our generation. The early monastics also moved to the desert seeking. Cowan pondered this question with a Coptic hermit, Lazarus, in the desert of Egypt and there conclusions are worth quoting:

“The sense of alienation that humankind feels when confronted by a lack of meaning in life (Antony) likened to the 'great wound.' To heal such a wound it was important for a person to return to the ... law of oneness, which (Antony) called the law of promise,... Clearly the great wound represented a loss of perception on the part of

humankind as to the true nature of being — that of attaining to what he called 'a knowledge of one's eternal substance....'”

“There is a loss of rootedness "... not caused by accident or fate, nor did it stem solely from negligence or superficiality in the way we live. Rather, such a loss sprang from the spirit of our age. We have become victims of a desire to clutch at things, a desire to plan and calculate, to organize and automate. (Antony) saw our love of efficiency as one reason for uprootedness and our loss of self. In the process, we had lost the ability to reach toward the heavens and so converse with the spirit... .”

“Lazarus had spelled out the reason that people like me wander about the world. We are on the lookout for anything that might give meaning to our lives. ...This is what Lazarus stood for: a return to an ancient spirituality in order to affirm his relationship with the spirit.”

Each person who becomes an Oblate must ask the same question. What is it I seek? The real question is not what, but Who. And then the next question, How does following the Rule help me to find the Risen Lord in my own life? Only He can give meaning and purpose to our lives. Only He can guide us in an age where nothing seems constant. But there is one thing that does remain constant — the Scriptures and specifically the Gospel. No matter whether Catholic or Lutheran, Methodist or Baptist, all Christians are one in the message of the Gospel; the Good News of the Risen Christ.

As we prepare for the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, let us pray that the Spirit that Jesus promised will come and allay the spirit of the modern age and heal the "great wound" in each of us. May Our Lord Jesus Christ reveal the "true nature of being" to each one of us and may the Holy Spirit grant to each of us the graces to be the being we are each called to be in this life.

From the Web

The Oblate website continues to draw more visitors. We will likely surpass 1,000 pageviews for the month of March. The temporary website is <http://oblates.gastonhobbit.org>. If you have not been visiting the site, you are missing quite a bit. Over the month of March, in addition to establishing a prayer line (1stprayers@bellsouth.net), the following articles were posted:

- A Prayer of AIM for Monastic Life
- "Breastplate" of St. Patrick
- Cardinal George warns Obama against moving U.S. towards despotism (text and video)
- Catholic 'complacency' shares blame for country's failures
- De Profundis (video)
- Direct order from Pius XII to protect Jews uncovered by researchers
- Five Ways to Pray Always (Seven part series)
- Gregorian Chant , et lux in tenebris... (video)
- Humility and Obedience
- In Praise of the Virgin Mother
- In Search of Truth
- Lectio Divina and Prayer (video)
- Litany of St. Joseph
- Hound of Heaven
- "The Hound of Heaven" and a Young Russian Agnostic
- The "Hound of Heaven" and You
- The Lord Is Watching Over Your Struggle
- The Love of Poverty
- My Soul Proclaims the Greatness of the Lord (video)
- Novena in Honor of St. Benedict
- On the Observance of Lent
- Passing of Our Holy Father Benedict
- Path of Descent
- Relic of St. Benedict Discovered
- Resist the Spread of Secularism
- Serve Christ the Lord
- Seven Instructions of Abba Moses
- Stations of the Cross go back to the Fourth Century
- Three Biscuits, Six Biscuits
- Transfiguration
- Try and Make Peace
- Update from Tarrawarra Abbey
- Working a Field filled with Thorn-apples and Thistles

As you can see, the site is regularly updated, usually daily, so make it a habit to visit it regularly. Also, if you see something you would like to share with the others, please let me know.

Wisdom from the Desert

The blessed Antony often used to say, "If the miller does not blindfold the eyes of his animal, it will consume the fruits of his labor. In the same way, by the dispensation of God, we

put a blanket over our good deeds so as not to pay any attention to them, lest we beatify ourselves, and become puffed up, and lose our due reward. And when we are assailed by evil thoughts, it is necessary that we should always condemn ourselves and our attitudes, lest the evil things in us should obscure what little good we have done. Even if people have good intentions, they cannot be really good unless God dwells in them, for no one is good save God. We must therefore always accuse ourselves honestly. Anyone who rebukes himself will not lose his reward."



The Ordo

Listed are the Feast days and Memorials that are observed at the Monastery and follows the Ordo of the American Cassinese Congregation.

APRIL

- 19 **Second Sunday of Easter.** Mercy Sunday. **(Week II)**
- 21 Anselm, Bishop, Religious, Doctor of the Church. Memorial.
- 25 Mark, Evangelist. Feast.
- 26 **Third Sunday of Easter.** **(Week III)**
- 29 Catherine of Siena, Virgin, Doctor of the Church. Memorial.

MAY

- 2 Athanasius, Bishop and Doctor. Memorial.
- 3 **Fourth Sunday of Easter.** **(Week IV)**
- 10 **Fifth Sunday of Easter.** **(Week I)**
- 11 Odo, Maiolus, Odilo, Hugh and Peter the Venerable, Abbots of Cluny. Memorial
- 14 Matthias, Apostle. Feast
- 15 Pachomius, Abbot. Memorial.
- 17 **Sixth Sunday of Easter** **(Week II)**

May Meeting

Our next meeting will be May 17, 2009. If you need to reach me please write to:

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