



Oblates of St. Benedict Belmont Abbey



June-July, 2009

June Meeting

The next Oblate meeting is on June 21 and will begin at 3:30 in the Gallagher Room.

Living in Community is not just for Monks

We talk a lot about being “community” and we use the term a great deal in general terms; the parish community, the city as a community, the monastic community. But do we think any further on what it actually means?

Michael Casey, OSCO, talks a great deal about the subject in his book *Strangers to the City*. In it he writes:

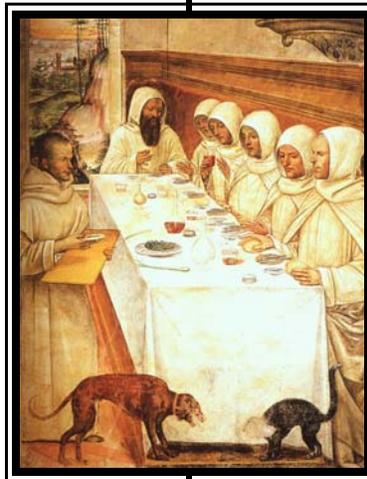
“Living in community involves my recognizing that I am not alone in the house. I do not have unrestricted access to community resources. These are to be shared by all. I alone do not have the right to decide future directions; each accredited member will have something to contribute to the common vision. If something is to be done, all are to be consulted, and sometimes the solution adopted will go against my preferences. I need to have an entrenched belief in the probable integrity of options taken as a result of the common decision-taking and leave the outcome to Providence” (pp. 116-117).

Now, reread the statement slowly and think how this might apply within the home. Societal trends show that what Casey writes is so different from what we actually experience. If the surveys are correct, in many families the children run the household while the parents are complacent, basically giving large portions of income so the children are not “deprived” based on the society they live in. And the children expect it. Then there are other families where parents spend inordinate amounts of money on themselves with little or no regard for the children. We cannot do anything directly for many of these families, we can only openly examine how we care for our own and support the programs and agencies dealing with these issues with our own time and money.

While we are entitled to a share in the communities’ resources “each accredited member will have something to contribute to the common vision” or purpose. Does your family have a common purpose? Does it even discuss a common purpose? Probably not because we have become a

population obsessed with “me” and not “us.” But St. Benedict calls us to community, not self.

But you say this is the ideal, not something that will really work in the world today? Really? Then what of the Oblate’s Oblation to live the Rule in their daily life? Does not Benedict specifically say *“As often as anything important is to be done in the monastery, the abbot shall call the whole community together and himself explain what the business is ...”* (RB 3:1) For the Oblate the monastery is not just Belmont Abbey but also their own family home, the “domestic Church.” The parents are the “abbot” of the family or maybe the more appropriate term “abba” or “amma.” The parents are the spiritual guides for the children but parents must also set the example by living what they say.



“But they are just children. What do they know? They have neither the age nor wisdom to help make decisions.” Not when it comes to the “community.” St. Benedict is very clear that even the youngest should have a voice since *“... the Lord often reveals what is better to the younger.”* (RB 3:3) As the Abbot must do in the monastery, so the “seniors” or parents must do in the family, we must be constantly watchful for how the Lord will reveal his wishes in a situation. And if we are devoted in prayer and patient Our Lord will make himself known, and often from the children.

But this does not mean the children are running the show, the decision is always the “abba’s” (RB: 3:5) And the members of the community are not *“...to contend with his abbot defiantly, or outside the monastery”* (RB 3:9) Nor is anyone to *“...follow their own heart’s desire...”* (RB 8). Simply put the needs of all must be considered within the family avoiding *“... all favoritism”* (RB 2:16). Children must understand this, but so should the parents for *“... all are to follow the teaching of the rule, and no one shall rashly deviate from it.”*

So think about how you apply the Rule in your own daily life. Is it something that is private or does it apply more broadly. Perhaps this example may have you take a second look at the wisdom of St. Benedict. The Rule has broader implications to us and the “monastery” we live in.

Wisdom from the Desert

Seek, my child, the nobility of the soul, for it is truth; that of the body is false. Do not seek honor from men, for this injures one; but rather, seek heavenly glory... . Be sympathetic with all the brethren and help them as much as possible; and, minister to all those unable or weak. Do not desire to live by another's labors... . Never ridicule anyone, and especially when they are in misfortune. When you hear that a certain brother is disorderly, supplicate God to correct his life. Visit and help the sick, and serve the brethren as their servant; so you might be a friend of Christ Who, for your sake, became a servant and minister. Always heed, my child, not to fall into temptations. However, if it happens that thou should fall, straightway, rise up and amend your life with repentance, and again hasten to prayer. In this manner, live your life, my child, and God shall always hearken to you and help you in soul and body.

St. Theodora of Alexandria

Oblate Website

Please remember that over the summer, if all plans go well, we will be moving the website to it's new permanent domain. In case you have been busy here are a few of the articles that were posted since the last newsletter:

Pope reflects on Mary's bond with the Holy Spirit
Free Will and God's Grace are Necessary for Spiritual Progress
Solid Buildings and Stodgy Thinking
Veni Sancte Spiritus (video)
The Holy Spirit and the Church's Mission
Caricature of Contemplation
US Ambassador to the Vatican Comes from Benedictine Schools
Every Rational Soul has Free Will and Choice
Truth to be Loved more than Self
The Culture of Death and Entertainment
Our Salvation is in Reality
Western Nihilistic Culture
Ascension of the Lord (video)
Mary, Help of Christians
Entertainment becomes necessary when life has lost all meaning
Novena to the Holy Spirit
Let us take up arms against them courageously
Pope calls for Internet evangelists
Divine Gift of Reason
It's 2009. Do You Know Where Your Soul Is?
Deny Yourself in Order to Follow Christ
Redefining "Family Time"
Pursue Hospitality in Every Way
New video encouraging recitation of the Rosary
No one knew about it
St. Pachomius, Father of Communal Monasticism
Holy Father to grant plenary indulgences for the Year of Priests
Cardinal Bergoglio Comments Applies to Laity as well as Pastors

Hospitality Toward Others
Prayer to Our Lady of Fatima
The Miracle of the Sun (video)
Theology on Tap attendees hear call to evangelize

As soon as news or material is available, it is posted on the website. There are several videos that are very popular. The site is updated almost daily. This is your website, so do not be afraid to offer comments, articles, or suggestions. Just email them to gkcobb0428@gmail.com.

The Ordo

Listed are the Feast days and Memorials that are observed at the Monastery and follows the Ordo of the American Cassinese Congregation. You can also see the observed feast days by going to: <http://oblates.gastonhobbit.org/ordo>.

JUNE

- 21 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week IV)
- 24 **Birth of John the Baptist.** Solemnity.
- 28 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week IV)
- 29 **Peter and Paul, Apostles.** Solemnity.

JULY

- 3 Thomas,* Apostle. Feast.
- 5 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week IV)
- 11 **Benedict, Patriarch of Western Monasticism.** Feast.
- 12 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week I)
- 13 Henry, Emperor, Married Man (Co-Patron of Benedictine Oblates). Opt Mem
- 15 Bonaventure, Bishop, Religious, Doctor of the Church. Memorial.
- 19 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week II)
- 22 Mary Magdalene, Disciple of the Lord. Memorial.
- 25 James, Apostle. Feast.
- 26 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week III)
- 29 Martha, Mary and Lazarus. Memorial.
- 31 Ignatius of Loyola, Presbyter, Religious Founder. Memorial.

AUGUST

- 1 Alphonsus Liguori, Bishop, Religious Founder, Doctor of the Church. Memorial.
- 2 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week IV)
- 4 John Mary Vianney, Presbyter. Memorial.
- 8 Dominic, Presbyter, Religious Founder. Memorial.
- 9 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week I)
- 10 Lawrence, Deacon, Martyr. Feast.
- 11 Clare, Virgin, Religious Founder. Memorial.
- 14 Maximilian Mary Kolbe, Presbyter, Religious, Martyr. Memorial.
- 15 **Assumption of the Virgin Mary.** Solemnity.
- 16 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week II)

August Meeting

Our next meeting will be August 16, 2009. There is no meeting in July. Have a safe and restful summer.