

The Oblate

News Magazine of the Oblates of Saint John's Abbey

February 2018

Volume 62, Number 1

Lenten Day of Reflection — March 18, 2018

The Good Zeal of Oblates



Father Cyril

Fr. Cyril Gorman, OSB, will lead the Lenten Day of Reflection on 18 March. About his chosen theme he writes: "Near the end of the Rule, Saint Benedict calls chapter 72 'The Good Zeal of Monks' (RB 1980). An earlier translation of the Rule

called this chapter 'On the Good Zeal That Monks Ought to Have.' A monk with an unconcealed smile used to call that chapter, 'On the Good Deal That Monks Ought to Have.' The truth is he had hardly anything in his room.

"Good zeal. What is it? What is it not? A sister giving a retreat to the abbey once told of another sister visiting her room. Noticing that there was hardly anything in the room the visitor said, 'Sister, this isn't simple; this is stupid!' Yet, to a Trappist sister, which the above sisters were not, such an arrangement would not seem strange at all.

"Benedict is not focused on rooms and possessions but 'the good zeal which separates from evil and leads to God and everlasting life.' Oblates, like monks, are persons of different characters, personalities, responsibilities, and stages of life. Good zeal, as reflected in prayer, activity, or non-activity cannot be expressed by everyone in the same way at all times.

With the approach of Holy Week and our participation in the Paschal Mystery of Christ in a special way, what is good zeal for you? Come, let's look at these questions together!"

Father Cyril gave the annual oblate retreat in 2001 when Fr. Allen Tarlton, OSB, was oblate director, and an Advent Day of Reflection when Fr. Michael Kwatera, OSB, was director. Cyril is a native of Currie, Minnesota, born just before the beginning of Vatican II. He transferred to Saint John's University as a sophomore and *eventually* came to appreciate the monastic life through a mosaic of experiences and persons that overcame his skepticism.

Father Cyril has had a variety of work and educational experiences, having worked at Saint John's University's Alcuin Library, Liturgical Press, and in Guest Ministry. He has a doctorate in historical theology from Notre Dame. He recently returned to the abbey after eleven years in Japan. For six years he was chaplain to the Trappist sisters of Our Lady of Nasu Abbey. At Saint John's he is now guesthouse assistant. He also helps with the oblate program, especially to assist with the oblates in Japan and with production of the newsletter.

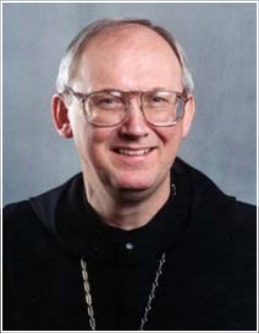
Registration by March 12 is necessary. Simply inform the oblate office that you will attend. Phone: 320-363-2018

Email: oblates@csbsju.edu

Cost: Free-will offering

- 9:30 Arrival in Great Hall**
- 10:30 Community Eucharist**
- 11:30 Lunch in Q264**
- 12:45 Group *Lectio Divina***
- 1:30 Conference**
- 2:30 Discussion, Prayer, and Departure**

Message from Abbot John



The forty days of Lent offer us Christian monastics and oblates a good span of time to incorporate significant change into our lives – all levels. This energy for change originates in the lively presence of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us and daily nudges us to a more complete living of the Gospel, a more authentic embracing of the power of the dying and rising of Christ in our lives.

Decluttering is a powerful metaphor and a traditional practice for Lent. A few years ago a flood occurred in my monastery room and the wooden floor warped. In addition, I discovered that the extreme summer humidity had created a mold problem in the upper closets and they had to be removed.

I had to move into a room with twenty-five percent less space. It was a graced moment. I was able to get rid of some clothes, about two hundred books, a second humidifier, and a number of things I had clung to when I moved into the space fifteen years earlier and had never used. The books were such an extension of my mind and life, but I wanted simplicity more. I felt liberated and energized.

I still have a long way to go. If I die next week, within about two days someone will start sorting the rest of the books. Some will go to the SJU library, Benedictine resources will go to the cloister library, and the rest will go to the free store. Some pictures and a few other things will go to my family.

Some clothes will go into the monastery free store, some to Goodwill, and others directly into the dumpster. In other words, all those things that were so precious that I could not possibly let go of them will be gone. The room will be cleaned and painted and will have a sign on it marked Guest.

As important as decluttering our personal physical space is, the decluttering of our hearts is equally important. It is vitally important to create a space of receptive silence for *lectio divina*, for reflection, and for prayer. Silence, a vital emptying, is essential if we want to hear God's voice and if we seek to grow more deeply into the Paschal Mystery.

Letter from Father Michael



Last summer I was sitting in some long grass on the shore of Glacial Lake, Minnesota. I bunched up some grass, made a pillow, and lay down under the warm sun, listening to the songs of the birds and the gentle movement of water. I felt completely relaxed and deeply connected to the earth and would have been happy to be turned into a rock and remain there for a thousand years.

Powerful experiences of creation often move us to reverence. We are held in the moment, and we know that interrupting that moment with talking or even moving would somehow diminish the reverence of that moment. It's really about experiencing glory. Glory is closely connected with one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit called the fear of the Lord or the wonder, awe, and wow in God's creative presence. An encounter with glory takes our breath away and, indeed, brings about not the fear that makes us want to run and hide but a fear that makes the whole world seem magnificent and altogether holy.

Creation is that place where we often stand in silent awe, savoring the beauty that is our world. Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato Si* writes, "From panoramic vistas to the tiniest living form, nature is a constant source of wonder and awe. To sense each creature singing the hymn of its existence is to live joyfully in God's love and hope. To contemplate creation is to hear a message, to listen to a [sacred] voice."

Listening is one of the most valued of Benedictine practices. Indeed, Benedict encourages us to "listen with the ear of the heart." The heart, for Benedict, meant the whole person, every fiber of our being, down to our marrow. Listening to the sacred is like placing a funnel in our ear, with glory filling us from head to toe.

Journeying on the path of Saint Benedict, we live the liturgy of life, doing our ordinary tasks of ordinary daily existence under the eye of God and in the spirit of reverence and thanksgiving. God's glory is everywhere and creation joyfully sings.

Oblate News and Notes

Remembering the Deceased



Kathrine Jeanette (Delong) Clements, ObISB, died on Sunday, December 10, 2017. She will be fondly remembered as a loyal and dedicated

oblato. She and her loving husband Joe regularly attended the Twin Cities Oblate Chapter at Saint Joan of Arc Church and participated in numerous retreats and days of reflection at Saint John's Abbey. Jeanette's love of literature and passion for social justice were hallmarks of her life as a caring wife, mother, teacher and oblato. (By Ron Joki, ObISB)

Kaela Sue Carlson, daughter of Oblate Galen Schroeder, 14 Feb 2017

William J. Weiler, ObISB, 27 Aug 2017

Richard "Dick" Rudolph, brother of Oblate Laurel Kniech, 28 Aug 2017

Marietta Haeg Schwartz, daughter of Oblate Richard Haeg, 6 Sept 2017

Fr. Joseph Kieselbach, ObISB, priest of Crookston Diocese, 25 Oct 2017

Ned Arriola, ObISB, 16 Nov 2017. Ned graduated from Saint John's University and led a group of oblates in Saipan. His widow Kathy, also an oblato, informed us that Ned died of pancreatic cancer on National Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Day.

Gladys Kobishop, sister of Fr. Don Tauscher, OSB, 22 Nov 2017

Virginia Denisen, sister of Oblate Patricia Koenig, 4 Dec 2017

Special Events



Toshihiro (Toppo) Takamura, ObISB, a Lutheran pastor, was homilist at the abbey Eucharist on Sunday 21 January as part of the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. A native of Japan, Toppo be-

came an oblato through the guidance of Fr. Kieran Nolan, OSB. Toppo has a long-standing connection to Saint John's, having graduated from the School of Theology and Seminary before further study and ordination in Japan. Toppo is presently at the Collegeville Institute, writing his doctoral dissertation. He will return to Japan this summer.

Lecture, 15 February, 7:45 pm, Quad 264

Toppo will give a lecture, free and open to the public, on "Shusaku Endo as a Theologian of the Cross: *Silence* through a Lutheran Perspective." Toppo remarks that Scorsese's 2016 film *Silence* has rekindled among Catholics and Protestants their interest in the original novel by Shusaku Endo, a Japanese Catholic novelist. Fifty years after its publication, Endo's work still offers Christians serious challenges and stimuli and thus remains controversial.

Endo's book is available in English, providing a good choice for reading during Lent.

Palm Sunday Eve

The monastic community invites the public to the Solemn Evening Prayer on 24 March, the Vigil of Palm Sunday.

The special musical setting composed by Fr. Jerome Coller, OSB, is an annual treat. After the 7:00 pm prayer service, all are welcome to gather in the Chapter House for refreshments and visiting with monks and others.



*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let your perpetual light shine upon them.
May they and all who have died rest in your peace.*

Regional Chapters

Collegeville

Fr. Kilian McDonnell, OSB, at 96 the eldest member of our monastic community at Saint John's Abbey, shared some of his poetry with our monthly Collegeville oblate chapter meeting on 21 January. Oblates Rick Koetter and Joe Bauer came up with the idea and made it possible. Father Kilian shared with us his poem on the Annunciation, his vocation story, and some highlights of his life as a monk. Our chapter has been reading one of Father Kilian's poems each time we meet, and it was great to have him with us in



Father Kilian and Oblate Joe Bauer

person. Some have noted how alive and energetic Father Kilian was and how for days

afterwards he was reveling in his experience of participating in this meeting of our oblates. By any measure the oblates too were impressed, energized, and grateful.

The oblate life is really about monks and oblates meeting together in friendship and sharing our Benedictine life together.

Joan of Arc (Minneapolis)

Ron Joki reports that the oblate meeting on 21 January went well, thanks to Steven Pederson who handled all of it including prayer, discussion topic, and wonderful refreshments. We were very blessed. I needed to be there to open up the building, but I found that it was a good break away from my visits to the hospital room and a time to be supported by fellow oblates, again a Spirit moment.

Red River Valley (Fargo Moorhead)

Father Don facilitated the 20 January meeting at Sacred Heart Convent as the Presentation Sisters opened their home for six of us to discuss self-discipline. Frank and Dian Zeck provided goodies, the sisters made coffee, and everyone contributed to a lively conversation. A Spirit moment for us too.

Oblate Candidacy

Pastor Craig Mueller, Chicago, 15 November 2017

Final Oblations

Margaret (Peg) Peter McDonald, Wisconsin Rapids WI and Kirbyville MO, 15 October 2017

Paulina Whang, Korea, 8 December 2017. She has submitted the following poem.

Empowered Spirit

As birds fly in a flock,
as fishes swim through in a school,
so do we, in a flock,
journey into the Vineyard of the Lord,
spirits fully empowered, full of grace.

Along the way,
some, apace tread,
others, fall behind,
still others, sway left and right.

The compassionate reach out
to pull them back in,
the indifferent turn their head
with no difficulty.

In the end,
with the Amazing Grace of God Almighty,
all reach to the finishing line here on earth,
in His own different time,
and onward to home in heaven,
as Saint Paul triumphantly finished his race,
long and hard.



International Oblate Congress

Judith Valente, oblate of St. Scholastica Monastery in Atchison, Kansas, reported on the Congress. The following excerpts are included by permission of Global Sisters Report. The original article can be viewed at: <http://globalsistersreport.org/node/50531>.

Valente writes: Benedictine oblates — people like me who vow to live the monastic values of listening, community, hospitality, humility and daily prayer in our secular lives — stand at an important crossroads in history.

Oblates currently outnumber monks and sisters living within a monastery's walls, marking both a historic opportunity and a significant challenge. If the nearly 1,600-year-old Benedictine tradition of *ora et labora*—work and prayer, contemplation and action—is to survive, lay associates of monasteries will need to play an increasingly critical role in transmitting it. That challenge, the central theme of the Nov. 4-10 **Fourth International Oblate Congress** in Rome, drew 260 people from six continents. The conference explored the role of Benedictine lay associates in the past and worked to develop a way forward in an uncertain future for monastic life.

There are currently an estimated 25,000 oblates worldwide compared to 21,000 Benedictine monks and sisters. In his opening remarks at the Rome congress, Abbot Primate Gregory Polan said it is time to "give wings" to the oblate community. He described oblates as part of a "sacred triangle" that includes "God at the top, the oblates in one corner and the monastic community in the other."

The first international Oblate Congress took place 16 years ago in Rome. As former Abbot Primate Notker Wolf noted in his homilies at this year's gathering, oblates have moved in less than two decades from a kind of spiritual childhood to the portal of adulthood. Indeed, oblate life in the past largely centered on following the rituals of the monastery itself and

deepening one's personal spirituality under the direction of monks and sisters. Now, Wolf said, oblates are required to become not only witnesses to the values espoused in the Rule, but to be the active bearers of those values to the world at large.



Benedictine Oblates from seven countries display a poster they created that depicts a vision for oblate life in the future. Judith Valente is in the front row, right. (Provided photo)

Much of the 2017 congress focused on how the oblate life will unfold over the long term. Because oblates commit to offer their services to a particular monastery (the word "oblate" derives from the Latin word for "offering"), a key question is what will happen to oblates whose monasteries close or merge because of declining numbers. How can oblates better support their monasteries? In an increasingly global world, how can oblates form an international network?

Valente concluded her article by saying that she parted from her new oblate friends in the global community with the words of Fr. Edward Linton, an American Benedictine at Sant'Anselmo in Rome and the leader of the congress ringing in her ears.

"Today's oblates must forge a new dream where their passion for the Rule and Benedictine values becomes a flame through which the rest of the world can see a better way to love and live."

[Judith Valente is the author of *How to Live: What the Rule of St. Benedict Teaches Us About Happiness, Meaning, and Community* and the senior correspondent at GLT Radio, an NPR affiliate in Illinois.]

Oblate Chapter in Japan

There are twenty-seven members of the oblate chapter in Japan. These dedicated people came to us either through Saint Anselm's Priory, founded in 1947 in Tokyo, or through Trinity Benedictine Monastery in Fujimi. Saint Anselm's was the predecessor to the monastery in Fujimi and in 1999 all the monks in Tokyo made a transition to the new monastery. Both monasteries were dependent daughter houses of Saint John's Abbey. When Trinity Benedictine Monastery closed in 2016, the oblates in Japan expressed their desire to strengthen their relationship with the other oblates of Saint John's rather than to dissolve the group or to affiliate with a different monastery. One of the interesting features of the oblate gatherings is that the Masses have usually been enhanced

Cyril Gorman, OSB

Schedule for the Day

Mass
Conference and Discussion
Meal
Group Lectio
Business Meeting
Evening Prayer
Departure

In 2017 the oblates held their regular meetings in March and November at the Convent of the Sisters of the Infant of Jesus in Yotsuya, Tokyo. In addition, they held an informal meeting at Saint Anselm's in February, and in the summer Nakanishi Sumi-san led a *lectio divina* retreat for oblates at Nasu Trappist Abbey. See next page, column 2.



As part of the November chapter meeting in Tokyo, oblates enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.

by the music of Katsumata-sensei's ("sensei" is a polite way to speak of an educator) Gregorian Chant Choir. Members of the choir, who are not oblates, can freely participate in the group lectio and the shared 90-minute meal and conversations.

The sharing of ideas and experiences among oblates will help all of us to become better "caretakers of the storeroom" who can draw wisely from what is old and what is new (Mt 13:52 & RB 64:9).

Continued next page

The oblates range in age from their thirties to more than twice that, with some of the senior members having been well acquainted with the founding monks of Saint Anselm's. Their specific vocations and work experiences represent a wide variety of experiences: women and men; single, married, and widowed; mothers, fathers, grandparents; company leaders and company workers; persons involved in teaching the young and the not so young. There are oblates who can play the organ or the harp, or teach yoga or English.

Most of the oblates are Catholic, but some are Lutheran. What they all have in common is their love of Christ, their love of Saint Benedict and Saint Scholastica, and the desire to live according to the spirit of the Rule as it applies to their individual lives.



Sister Marumori, Father Cyril, Satoh-san

Oblate Veronica Satoh (above right), has formally accepted the position of oblate coordinator. As coordinator Satoh-san ("san" is one of the polite ways of speaking about another person in Japanese) is chair of the oblate leadership team which includes two other women (Sister Marumori and Nakanishi Sumi-san) and two men (Wada-san and Nishikawa-san). Satoh-san and Wada-san have experiences going back to the Benedictine days at Saint Anselm's.

The hope is that oblates on both sides of the Pacific Ocean will strengthen their mutual bonds through contributions to *The Oblate* newsletter and in other ways. The oblates in Japan are considering the formal use of social media as a means of supporting one another—and perhaps us as well.

Group *Lectio* in Nasu: Silence and Listening, by Father Cyril and Sumi Nakanishi

Cyril: Over three days selected passages from the Passion and Resurrection accounts in the Gospel of John were read for the *lectio* retreat led by Sumi.

Sumi: Each session included silence, the value of which I had rediscovered in the Trappist monastery in Nasu, a secluded getaway in a valley three hours from Tokyo. I needed that experience as leader of the *lectio* retreat last July in Nasu. Silence began each session, guided us through the three rounds of *lectio*, and concluded the session. I was mindful that, in group *lectio divina*, we listen beyond the sounds we hear with our ears, to God as God fills our hearts with silence, enhanced in the most special way.

Cyril: For each of the sessions the group gathered in silence. At the designated time one of the participants read the passage, followed by about five minutes of silence. Then each one chose one or two verses which particularly struck the heart and, without commentary, shared that Scripture with the group.

Then, after more silence, participants spoke briefly about why their chosen verse moved them. After another period of silence they conversed freely about the passages. In the first two rounds, sharing began with the leader or another designated person and then continued by "going around the circle, in order." The final round was "as the Spirit moved," but allowing everyone an opportunity to speak.

Group *lectio* typically includes the reading aloud of a chosen selection several times, once in each of three rounds. This was my first experience of the passage being read aloud only once, but the periods of silence allowed participants to read silently if they wanted. The arrangement also kept the *lectio* sessions from becoming too long. Because retreat participants also participated in the monastery's prayers, meals in the guesthouse, and time in personal reflection, we found that this schedule worked well for us.



Conversion of Heart

Tracy Dereszynski, OblSB



Conversion of heart is something we hear about a lot in the gospels. We are continually called to conversion of heart, to let God into our lives at all times and not just when we need God. What is it that keeps us from conversion of heart and letting God into our lives

at all times? Is it anger, bitterness, prejudices, anything really that doesn't lead us to God but in the complete opposite direction of God?

Reflecting on conversion of heart, I realized that in the past 18 months I had been experiencing a conversion of heart. This conversion of heart stemmed from a lot of anger and bitterness that was connected to being denied a job that I really wanted at a parish where I had worked for six years. I let that anger get the better of me for two years.

It all came to a head when a young man in my youth ministry program took his own life on New Year's Day. Eventually it led me to leave my position of Director of Youth Ministry that I had held for eight years, but only after I spent a lot of time in grief counseling sessions. Every time the therapist wanted to talk about the anger that I held onto I wouldn't let her go there, because I didn't want to go there. Who wants to keep feeling all that pain? Anger was an emotion that could be justified. It was an emotion that could be kept in "check." It was part of who I was and I could live with it. The anger and bitterness that came with grief was magnified a hundredfold.

I didn't see how it was affecting my family until one night when my husband and I were having an argument. My daughter, who was 11 at the time said, "I just want mom to be happy again, and I want to go back to the way things were."

Talk about a wake-up call. In time I found the strength and courage to face this demon of anger

and bitterness in the context of sacramental reconciliation. Then conversion of heart really started to happen. As I looked back over my years of youth ministry and thanked God for all the people and experiences I had over the course of 17 years, I really started to see how blessed I had been.

That experience of reconciliation was one of the most powerful experiences in my life. It truly set me on the road to letting go and letting God into those parts of my life and heart that I hadn't allowed him into before.

The best way to describe the conversion of heart that I was feeling was summed up by Fr. James Martin, SJ, in his book *Jesus, A Pilgrimage*. I don't remember the context for his writing about a feeling

of conversion; I just remember that it totally spoke to how I was feeling at that time. According to Martin, conversion of heart is like watching the leaves change colors in the fall. It's a slow process, one that takes time, and we can see it happening before our very eyes. The end result is something beautiful. In the moment I read that description of conversion of heart, I knew that it described exactly what I had been feeling and experiencing in my own life.



Because of this conversion of heart, letting go of the anger and bitterness and allowing God to slowly change the colors of my heart and allow healing to happen, I became a better pastoral minister. I could empathize more with people who were struggling with anger, bitterness, etc., and I could share my experience with the people I visited.

Along with this conversion of heart came this journey to becoming an oblate and being open to where this is going to lead.

I am very aware that conversion of heart isn't a one-time event but that we are called to conversion of heart always, as we strive to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect, yet knowing we'll most likely never attain perfection!

A Conversation between an Oblate and Oblate Director Fr. Michael Peterson, OSB

Oblate: I have spent the last couple months helping a friend pack up her home of 18 years and move. It has been quite an experience. I have helped a lot of people move, even moved my children quite a few times until they got settled, but this was very different. This person and I have become very close over the last few years and although I was happy to help her pack, I was helping her to move four hours away from me. So I had very mixed feelings about the process. I know there were very good reasons why she had to move, and I know it was an experience we both had to go through, but that really didn't make it any easier. People say, "Well, just get in the car and go see her; it only takes four hours." We all say we are going to do that, but I also know it doesn't happen. So for the second time in my life I am saying good-bye to a very dear friend. The first time I lost my best girlfriend to cancer at age 36.

As I read the paragraph I just wrote I realize how selfish it sounds. I am really very happy for my friend as she starts a new chapter in her life.

Father M: I'm not sure that you're really being selfish. It's tough to see a person move away. Friendship is so very important, and although four hours is not across the country, it's still far enough away that you simply can't just stop over. At least, like a good friend, you helped her, for which I'm sure she was really grateful.

One of the great Benedictine saints who wrote about the value of friendship was Saint Ælred of Riveaulx, who died in 1167. He wrote, "How happy, how carefree, how joyful you are if you have a friend with whom you may talk as freely as with yourself, to whom you neither fear to confess any fault nor blush at revealing any success, to whom you may entrust all the secrets of your heart and confide all your plans."

Oblate: As we packed her things I watched her have to detach from things that held great memories for her. Memories that were made over a lifetime. That was very hard for her.

Fr. M: I know what you mean. When my mom died five years ago (my dad died in 1997), my sister and I had to go through all her stuff. Much of it had mem-

ories connected to it, but could we keep all of it? No. My space in the monastery is small, and my sister has limited space too. So, we had to throw or give away. It made for a lengthy move because my sister and I went through everything, and if something had a memory, we would talk about it, remember it with gratefulness, and move on. I suppose there is value in remembering with gratefulness but without clinging to earthly things.

Oblate: It made me realize how easy it is to get attached to material things. What do we need all this *stuff* for, to trigger memories? The memories are always there anyway, and all we have to do is recall them. So what do we need these things for? The answer is we don't. In the end it's just *stuff* and we won't be taking it with us when we move to the next world.

So what did I learn from this experience? We spend a lifetime accumulating things that may have a monetary value or an emotional value but in the end they don't have any spiritual value and that's the only thing that counts, the only thing we will take with us. The kindness and helpfulness we show to others is more valuable than any material thing.

Having compassion for others and not being judgmental has value. Friendship has value, and I don't believe that is something you ever have to detach from because when that friend passes over she will help from the other side. I firmly believe that is true. I have many angels on the other side helping me. The trick is to listen to them and not think that I know more than they do.

Fr. M: Jesus Christ is to be discovered in our ordinary lives and in our friendships. To touch the holy in one another! It's no use saying that we were born two thousand years too late to encounter Christ when he is present in our world and in and around us in every situation and circumstance.

Becoming God's friend . . . is the only thing worthy of honor and desire.

With these words Saint Gregory of Nyssa summed up *The Life of Moses*, one of his major works.

Jesus called his disciples "friends." Becoming God's friend: a noble Lenten exercise.

Holiness

The way to become holy is to faithfully fulfill God's commandments every day by loving chastity, hating no one, avoiding envy and hostile rivalry, not becoming full of self but showing due respect for our elders and love for those who are younger, by praying in the love of Christ for those who are hostile to us, by seeking reconciliation and peace before the sun goes down whenever we have a quarrel with another, and never despairing of the mercy of God.

What does all that mean in my life of marriage and family and work? Avoid drama with my coworkers, be forgiving and patient with my husband and child, respect my boss, pray for those who are rude in traffic, be kind and patient with my students, and trust that on bad days God is with me? These are a few ideas that come to mind. These are common virtues that many aspire to, I guess. What makes a Benedictine life different? Prayer? Mindfulness?

Attitudes that lead to holiness, according to the Rule, are humility, charity, generosity, and trust in the goodness of Christ. Humility does not mean humiliating oneself, although God knows I've done that before! Humility, I think, means walking in a humble way before the greatness of God and God's love for all. Having a proper perspective of my importance in the great scheme of things, I am neither the most important person nor am I a worthless person. With my personality it is easy to swing either way on this pendulum, and I want to strive to live between these two extremes. It seems that when one attempts to seriously live in a way of acting that is humble, helpful, and generous, one is able to exist in a loving way in one's community, one's family, and with oneself. My communities in particular include my workplace (a school), my family (immediate and extended), my church, my sangha, and the new experience of the oblate community, as well as my neighborhood, to a lesser extent.

I think of charity not just as giving to the poor but as giving to anyone in need. Charity is also spending time with my three-year old child when I'd rather be

Reverend Kate Spindler, OBlSB

reading a good book. Charity is helping my husband with chores when I'd rather take a nap. Of course, charity is also contributing to the wider world in need, both financially and through the gift of time. Generosity of spirit is much the same idea, but it takes place in the heart. I can perform acts of charity but if I'm doing it begrudgingly, which I often am, then I'm not really being generous.

Trust in the goodness of Christ sounds really good, and intellectually I believe it wholeheartedly. It is more difficult to remember the goodness of Christ when I am feeling depressed or just having a bad day.

Trust in the goodness of Christ sounds really good, and intellectually I believe it wholeheartedly. It is more difficult to remember the goodness of Christ when I'm feeling depressed or just having a bad day. Then the goodness of Christ seems like a far-off idea, like a nice thing to say but hard to really grasp. I wish I knew how to use the goodness of Christ when I'm depressed. If you can trust in God's care, you can free yourself from the worry that Jesus assures us is unnecessary. I believe that Holy Scriptures were canonized for our journey of faith. As soon as God removes one difficulty, he will reveal another character defect so that we may grow spiritually and plumb the depths of our souls and our journey with him.

We do not live in a vacuum. We are in contact with friends, families, coworkers, church communities, etc. Not only do people depend on us but more importantly we learn about holiness through acceptance of others in our interactions with them. I may not like the things my boss or husband or friend does, but it is precisely in that situation that I most rely on my faith to learn better how to be the person whom Jesus urges me to be. In those conflicts, maybe I can learn more about holiness.

Reading for Lent and Easter

***Vatican II: Its Impact on You.* Peter Huff, Liguori, 2011.**

Vatican II is known to every Catholic at least by name, but we're a little skimpy on the details. What happened there? Why did it take place? Why have there been mixed reactions to it? Most importantly, what is the impact of the Second Vatican Council on the People of the Church now?

***Dialogue of the Heart: Christian-Muslim Stories of Encounter.* Martin McGee, OSB. Orbis, 2015.**

Benedictine Fr. Martin McGee presents a timely and heartfelt plea encouraging Christians everywhere to cultivate harmonious relationships with their Muslim neighbors. Practical wisdom shows readers how the Algerian Church can teach us in the West how to respond to Islam, how to see the face of Christ in our Muslim neighbor.

***Benedict Backwards.* Terence Kardong, OSB. Liturgical Press, 2017.**

Kardong builds the case that the Rule of Benedict is best read "backwards," that is, with emphasis on the last chapters, not the first ones. Benedict starts out dependent on the Rule of the Master, but he ends on a much more self-assured note, revealing more about his own thoughts on matters of monastic life.

***The Rule of Benedict.* Georg Holzherr, OSB. Translated by Mark Thamert, OSB. Liturgical Press, 2016.**

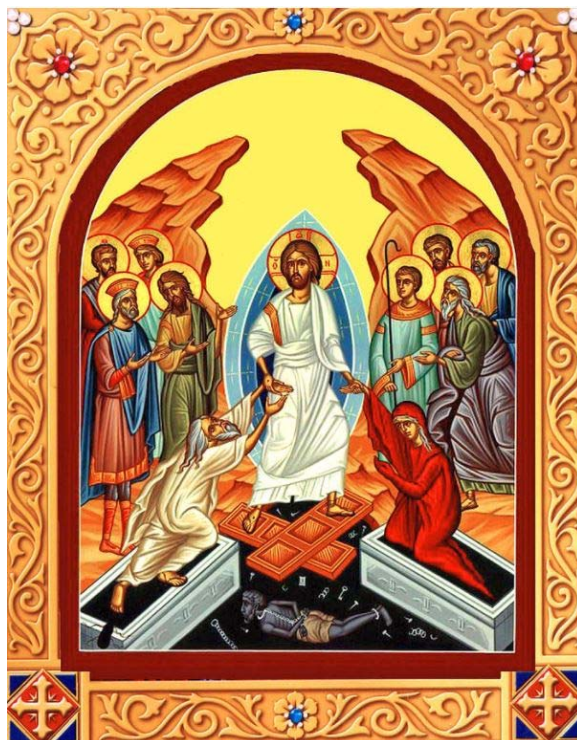
Holzherr is recognized as one of today's leading experts on the Rule of Benedict and its sources, spirituality, and applicability to everyday life. This fresh translation by Saint John's Mark Thamert (d.2017) merits reading more than once for study, *lectio*, and spiritual enjoyment.



Celebrating Easter



Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white.... She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). *John 20:11-16*



THAT IN ALL THINGS GOD MAY BE GLORIFIED

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Mark Your Calendar — 2018

March 18, 2018: Lenten Day of Reflection

July 13-15, 2018: Annual Oblate Retreat

November 18, 2018: Fall Day of Reflection

Regional Chapter Meetings: Collegeville, Red River Valley (Fargo), Joan of Arc (Minneapolis), South East Wisconsin, Japan.

See website for details: saintjohnsabbey.org/monastic-life/oblates/reg/



Photo by John-Bede Pauley, OSB

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