



Mount Michael Oblates

March – October 2009 Mount Michael Abbey, Elkhorn, NE

Dear Oblates,

The monastic journey is the journey of Lent/ Easter. The Lenten journey is the path of waking-up, of seeking God. St. Benedict gives us a chapter on Lent to encourage our faithfulness to this journey.

This journey is a walk to the center, to the light of Christ. We have chosen the path which follows the Rule of Benedict, under the Abbot, in community, with the Gospel as our guide. Our seeking God moves us to the center so that Christ might rise in us each day.

To enter the desert in silence and solitude is the path of the monk. The desert experience brings about death. It strips away illusions that cause death which brings life.

Lent helps us to tear down the walls which keep us from the center where Christ waits for our return. The Gospel passages that lead to the suffering and death of Jesus show us the threat that Jesus posed to people who wanted to protect power, prestige and possessions, to people who wanted to keep themselves in slavery.

What are the walls that keep us in slavery?
Do we listen to the Gospels which we have chosen as our guide on our journey seeking God?

Who wants to hear:
"The last shall be first"
"The grain of wheat must die"
"You need to loose your life to gain it"
"Keep death before your eyes"?



We do hear because of the cross. The crucifixion shows the extent that God goes to free us from all that is keeping us in slavery. So let us tear down, remove and die to those stones that block us, so that we can experience the sun each Easter day.

The Monastic Community keeps you and your family in our prayers each day. May the Risen Christ bless you all with much Joy and Peace.

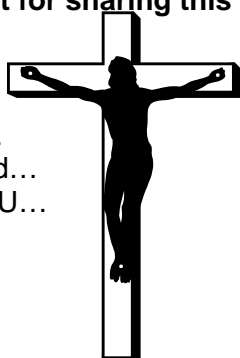
Brother Jerome



**A Healing Prayer by Margaret Bergeron, submitted by our Oblate Gerry Jancik.
Gerry, thank you from the heart for sharing this prayer with us!**

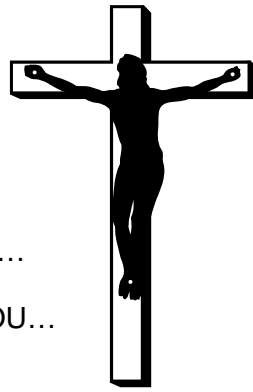
Dear God...

Sometimes pain can be severe...
Overwhelming the body and mind...
Sometimes I lose my sight of YOU...
Leaving YOU way behind...



When illness, pain and troubles...
Come to jumble up the day...
Clouding up my daily life...
YOU help me get away...

Away to just a quiet place...
Only YOU and I can go...
To pray for healing comfort...
Because YOU love me so...



LORD, help to heal this body...
Or give me strength to bear...
Whatever YOU have for me...
I know YOU'RE always there...

YOU free me from my burdens...
To make my faith so strong...
YOU told me I could trust in YOU...
And YOU cannot be wrong...

Most of all remind me...
To put my all in you...
To be cheerful while I pray today...
Like YOU would want me to...

Conclusion of the message of His Holiness Benedict XVI for Lent 2009

"He fasted for forty days and forty nights,
and afterwards he was hungry" (Mt 4,1-2)

Dear brothers and sisters, it is good to see how the ultimate goal of fasting is to help each one of us, as the Servant of God Pope John Paul II wrote, to make the complete gift of self to God (cf. Encyclical Veritatis splendor, 21). May every family and Christian community use well this time of Lent, therefore, in order to cast aside all that distracts the spirit and grow in whatever nourishes the soul, moving it to love of God and neighbor. I am thinking especially of **a greater commitment to prayer, lectio divina, recourse to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and active participation in the Eucharist, especially the Holy Sunday Mass.** With this interior disposition, let us enter the penitential spirit of Lent. May the Blessed Virgin Mary, *Causa nostrae laetitiae* (Cause of our Joy), accompany and support us in the effort to free our heart from slavery to sin, making it evermore **a "living tabernacle of God."** With these wishes, while assuring every believer and ecclesial community of my prayer for a fruitful Lenten journey, I cordially impart to all of you my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 11 December 2008.

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI



Please read the complete message at:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/lent/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20081211_lent-2009_en.html

An excerpt from "The Origins and History of the Oblate Movement" by Judith Sutera

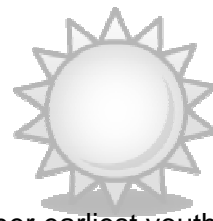
From *The Oblate Life* – Ed. by Gervase Holdaway OSB – Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN
(Copyright 2008, published by Canterbury Press Norwich)

In a world where commitment is often devalued or even avoided, oblates choose to make public their desire for a life of witness. They promise their stability to a group of like-minded people who will be there for them but will also challenge them to greater holiness. They are united to the prayers and works of the monastery to which they are oblates, even as they continue to carry on their lives in their own locale and lifestyle. Just as the word 'oblate' comes from a root word denoting the offering of a gift, each oblate's life is an offering to God and a gift to the Benedictine community, which is enriched by the oblate's presence and prayer.

Giving one's self to a loving relationship is the essence of oblation and, therefore, the oblate movement should have many more centuries of prosperity. As Benedict notes, the Benedictine way is not to be harsh or burdensome but is offered to those who seek God and the sweetness of God's voice. Across cultures, generations, denominations, and lifestyles, people of good faith continue to hear and respond to that voice and to be welcomed as an offering at the altars of Benedictine monasteries.



Benedictine Saints



St. Scholastica – Feast day: February 10th

St. Scholastica, twin sister of St. Benedict, consecrated her life from her earliest youth. After her brother went to Monte Cassino, where he established his famous monastery, she took up her abode in the neighborhood at Plombariola, where she founded and governed a monastery of nuns, about 5 miles from that of St. Benedict, who, it appears, also directed his sister and her nuns. She visited her brother once a year, and as she was not allowed to enter his monastery he went in company with some of his brethren to meet at a house some distance away. These visits were spent in conferring together on spiritual matters.

On one occasion they had passed the time as usual in prayer and pious conversation and in the evening they sat down to take their refectio. St. Scholastica begged her brother to remain until the next day. St. Benedict refused to spend the night outside his monastery. She had recourse to prayer and a furious thunderstorm burst upon them so that neither St. Benedict nor any of his companions could return home. They spent the night in spiritual conferences. The next morning they parted to meet no more on earth.

Three days later St. Scholastica died, and her holy brother beheld her soul in a vision as it ascended into heaven. He sent his brethren to bring her body to his monastery and laid it in the tomb he had prepared for himself. She died about the year 543, and St. Benedict followed her soon after.

PRAYER *God our Father, today we celebrate the memory of Saint Scholastica. Grant that, following her example, we may serve You with perfect love and rejoice in experiencing Your goodness. Amen.*



Saint Frances of Rome – Feast day: March 9th Patroness of Oblates and widows

St. Frances was born in Rome of a noble family in 1384. She wished to enter a monastery, but in obedience to her parents, at the age of twelve, she married a wealthy nobleman named Lawrence Ponziani.

In the matrimonial state she led a very pious life, though she never allowed her spiritual exercises to interfere with her domestic duties. She had to endure many trials, particularly during the great schism, when her husband was banished; but she suffered all with exemplary patience, blessing the holy will of God.

After the schism her husband recovered his estates. In 1425 she founded the Oblate Congregation of Tor di Specchi, to which she gave the Rule of St. Benedict. After the death of her husband she received the habit in this community in 1437, and began to live as though she were the lowest of the sisters. Soon after, she was chosen superior. God conferred upon her numerous favors in the supernatural order. She died March 9, 1440, at the age of fifty-six and was canonized in 1608 by Pope Paul V.

PRAYER *God, in Saint Frances You have given us a singular example of both the monastic and the conjugal way of life. Help us to persevere in serving You so that in all the vicissitudes of life we may both look to You and follow You. Amen.*

From: Lives of the Saints – Catholic Book Publishing Co. – New Jersey

If you would like to submit any thought, prayer, poem or personal reflection to be shared with all our Oblates in our next newsletter, please write to

Francesca, e-mail MDammermann@aol.com by August 31st, 2009.

Oblates Meetings

Sunday, March 1st (1st Sunday)

2:00 – 3:00 pm Oblate Novices +Candidates
3:00 – 4:30 pm Lectio Divina/ Meeting
4:30 – Social
5:15 pm Evening Prayer

Sunday, March 22nd (4th Sunday)

Celebration of the Feast of St. Benedict
5:15 pm Evening Prayer, followed by dinner
with monastic community. Please RSVP
Br. Jerome at 206-2069 or e-mail at
oblates@mountmichael.org

Sunday, April 5th (1st Sunday)

3:00 – 5:00 pm Lenten Retreat
5:15 pm Evening Prayer

Sunday, April 26th (3rd Sunday)

1:00 – 3:00 pm Abbey Open House

Sunday, May 3rd (1st Sunday)

2:00 – 3:00 pm Oblate Novices +Candidates
3:00 – 4:30 pm Lectio Divina/ Meeting
4:30 – Social
5:15 pm Evening Prayer

JUNE: NO MEETING

Sunday, July 12th (2nd Sunday)

5:15 pm Evening Prayer, followed by
Potluck Picnic

AUGUST: NO MEETING

Sunday, September 13th (2nd Sunday)

2:00 – 3:00 pm Oblate Novices +Candidates
3:00 – 4:30 pm Lectio Divina/ Meeting
4:30 – Social
5:15 pm Evening Prayer

Sunday, October 4th

2:00 – 3:00 pm Oblate Novices +Candidates
3:00 – 4:30 pm Lectio Divina/ Meeting
4:30 – Social
5:15 pm Evening Prayer with Reception of
Candidates and Profession for Oblates'
Novices
6:00 pm Social with monastic community

**“Love bears all things, believes all
things, hopes all things, endures
all things. Love never ends.”
(1Cor 13:7-8)**



*On June 28th Pope Benedict officially
opened the Year of St. Paul, which will
run through June 29th, 2009.*

**During this Pauline Year let us
include St. Paul and His Letters in
our daily Lectio!**

Mount Michael Oblates

A Newsletter of the Oblates of
Mount Michael Abbey
22520 Mount Michael Road
Elkhorn, NE 68022