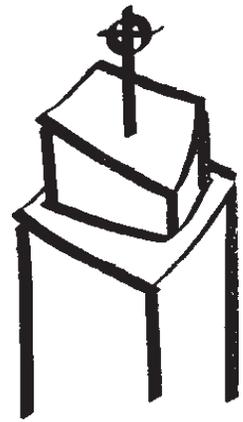


OUR FAMILY NEWS



For Oblates of St. Bede Abbey, Peru, Illinois



November &
December, 2017



THE SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS

**Today by your gift we celebrate the festival of your city,
the heavenly Jerusalem, our mother,
where the great array of our brothers and sisters
already gives you eternal praise.**

**Towards her, we eagerly hasten as pilgrims advancing by faith,
rejoicing in the glory bestowed upon those exalted members of the Church
through whom you give us, in our frailty, both strength and good example.**

This is how the preface of the Mass of this day sets forth the meaning of the solemnity that we celebrate. In the course of the liturgical year, we celebrate not only the principal events in the life of our Lord and of our Lady, but also the feasts of the angels, of the apostles, of numerous saints from all periods of Christian history who influenced the universal Church, and of the special patrons who have had a particular influence upon us. We often think of this solemnity of all the saints as the feast of all those others, of that innumerable band of holy men and women who have followed Christ to glory, many of them anonymous, who are not brought to our attention on special feast days of their own. And this is not incorrect, for they are included by the book of Revelation, in the first reading of the day's Mass, as part of that *great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue, who are wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands* (Rev 7:9). The liturgy calls them "the great array of our brothers and sisters." Like us, they once struggled in this vale of tears, but they have happily reached their destination in the Jerusalem that is above, and we do well to remind ourselves of them on this one day in the course of the year.

This solemnity, however, reminds us of much more than simply the inhabitants of heaven who do not have a feast of their own. For it speaks eloquently of the very reason why we honor and revere the saints, of that quality that makes them citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem and to which we ourselves aspire. The saints are the *holy ones of God*, not primarily because of their own efforts, but because of God's gift, for holiness is a quality of God. It is that which sets him apart from everything and everyone else, makes him *totally other* than anything that we can conceive or imagine. Yet he invites us to share in his otherness, to rise above our creatureliness and to enter into the society of his holiness. It is a destiny of which we could not even dream if left to our own resources, but to which we are invited out of his generosity. It is not reserved to some kind of special people: popes and cardinals and bishops and monks and nuns have no more claim upon it than anyone else, for it is offered to everyone who has been baptized and perhaps, in God's mysterious providence, even to those who have not.

The Second Vatican Council calls it "the universal call to holiness" and says of it, "All in the Church, whether they belong to the hierarchy or are cared for by it, are called to holiness, according to the apostle's saying: *This is the will of God, your holiness* (1 Th 4:3). And the Council adds, "It is therefore quite clear that all Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love, and by this holiness a more human manner of life is fostered also in earthly society." In other words, all of us, regardless of our state in life, are called to be *saints*. This solemnity of all saints celebrates not only those who have reached the goal of the heavenly Jerusalem, but also those of us who are still struggling along the way to it: we too have

been given a share in the holiness of God—which we call *grace*—and the vocation of bringing it to fulfillment. This is what we call the *communion of saints*: that vast fellowship of all who belong to Christ and hope to join or have already become part of that *great multitude, which no one could count*. We already belong to the communion of saints, together with the apostles and martyrs and all those who have sought to live according to the gospel.

In Psalm 16 (15) we say to God, *You will show me the path of life, the fullness of joy in your presence, at your right hand happiness for ever*. Just before this verse is the passage quoted by St. Peter in the Acts of the Apostles as a prophecy of our Lord's resurrection: *You will not leave my soul among the dead nor let your beloved know decay*. The psalm is thus a kind of pattern for the Christian life in imitation of Jesus: we follow him in walking along the path of life already during the time allotted to us here on earth in expectation of the fullness of life that will come after. St. Benedict repeats these same words from Psalm 16 (15) in the Prologue to his *Rule* when, referring to the scriptures, he tells us, "Behold, in his kindness the Lord is showing us the road of life." In the Mass readings for this day he has done precisely this, for we see illustrated therein the twofold character of this feast: St. Matthew's gospel rendering of the beatitudes (Mt 5:1-12) shows us the road of life—the way leading to life—that will guide us through our present existence, while the reading from Revelation (Rev 7:2-4.9-14) describes the joyful scene to which this path will bring us when at last we share in the liturgy of heaven. St. John includes both perspectives when he tells us, in the second reading, from his First Letter (1 Jn 3:1-3), that *we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed*. But we already know that *we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*. That is the promise of the communion of saints that we celebrate this day.

+ Fr. Claude Peifer, O.S.B.



Director of Oblates: Br. Nathaniel Grossmann, O.S.B.

Editor: Vicki L. Gensini

Our Family News is published in the special interest of the oblates of St. Bede Abbey. Please send changes of address and comments to The Editor, Our Family News, St. Bede Abbey, 24 W US Highway 6, Peru, IL 61354.

We welcome your submissions to this publication, either instructive or reflective, whether prose or poetry. They should in some way relate to the **Rule of Benedict**, Benedictine spirituality, and/or the oblate program. The editor reserves the rights to choose material for publication and to edit as necessary.

NOVEMBER 12 OBLATES DAY SCHEDULE

- 10:00 A.M. Conventual Mass, within which oblates will renew their oblations
- 12:00 noon Midday Prayer with the monks
- 12:15 P.M. Lunch with the monks in the monastery refectory
- After lunch Gathering in the abbey church
- 2:30 P.M. Conclusion of meeting

Passage for *Lectio* at the December Meeting

And you, my child, will be called a prophet
of the Most High;
for you will go on before the Lord to
prepare the way for him,
to give his people the knowledge of
salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins,
because of the tender mercy of our God,
by which the rising sun will come to us
from heaven
to shine on those living in darkness and
in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the path of peace.

Luke 1:76-79

SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING MEETINGS

Meetings are held in the abbey church from
1:30 P.M. to 4:30 P.M.

Sunday, November 12, 2017
(Oblates Day)

Sunday, December 3, 2017
Sunday, January 7, 2018
Sunday, February 11, 2018
Sunday, March 11, 2018
Sunday, April 8, 2018
Sunday, May 6, 2018



Abbey Prayer Schedule

Visitors are welcome to join the monks for Mass and for the hours of the Divine Office. Conventual Mass is celebrated on the first level of the abbey church, the hours of the Divine Office on the second level. During the school year, the monks' schedule is as follows.

- 5:45 A.M. Morning Prayer*
7:45 A.M. Conventual Mass**
12:00 Noon Midday Prayer
5:30 P.M. Evening Prayer***
* on Sunday, 7:00 A.M.
** on Sunday, 10:00 A.M.
*** on Saturday & Sunday, 5:00 P.M.

