

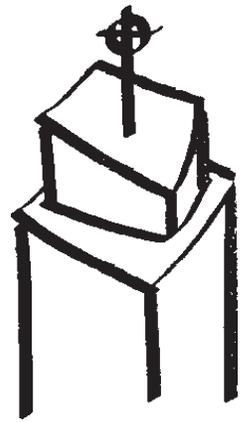
# OUR FAMILY



# NEWS

For Oblates of St. Bede Abbey, Peru, Illinois

January &  
February, 2014



# THE SAVIOR OF ALL

Throughout the Old Testament nothing is clearer than the idea that Israel has been specially chosen by God. Nothing is more fundamental to the old covenant than the idea of Israel's having a special relationship with a God who is seen to be supremely powerful and to share his glory with no other god. Not only are his promises directed exclusively to this people, whom he has chosen out of all the peoples on earth, but he also makes particular demands upon them, especially in the area of communal and personal morality. In the light of this special relationship, in the older layers of the Old Testament we can find no positive evaluation of the other nations. Either they are enemies of Israel, or they are irrelevant; even God does not seem to care about them. It is when we come to the prophets that we find the first reflection upon the role of the nations. Sometimes they serve as the scourge of God to punish his people for their infidelity. Isaiah even foresees their eventual conversion, and portrays them as streaming to Jerusalem seeking instruction in the ways of the Lord.

It would seem that greater exposure to the nations, which came about when Israel was exiled to Babylon in the sixth century, brought the chosen people to reflect more deeply upon what God may have had in mind for these foreigners, and why Israel had herself been chosen. The great prophet of the exile whose work has come down to us in the second part of the book of Isaiah perceived clearly that the nations are also children of God whom he wishes to save, and that he has chosen Israel simply as a starting point in whom he hopes to instill a beginning of knowledge of himself and his purposes. So Israel had not been chosen for its own sake, but so that it might become a light to the nations: *I, the Lord, have called you for the victory of justice...; I formed you, and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations* (Is 42:6). Now the plan of God was gradually becoming clear: eventually the great treasure of God's self-revelation that was being made known to Israel would be imparted also to all the other peoples on earth.

When we come to the third part of the book of Isaiah, apparently a later composition, a still more glorious scenario is presented to us. Jerusalem is viewed as the center of the world, and all the nations are flocking to it, no longer simply to gain instruction, but now to become part of its life as full citizens, as sons and daughters. Vast riches will flow into the holy city: *The wealth of nations shall be brought to you. Caravans of camels shall fill you..., bearing gold and frankincense, and proclaiming the praises of the Lord* (Is 60:5-6). *All those who despised you shall fall prostrate at your feet. They shall call you "City of the Lord"* (Is 60:14). *You shall know that I, the Lord, am your savior* (Is 60:16).

And not only *your* savior, but the savior of all. It was difficult for Israel, preoccupied with its own privileges, to maintain such a universal view of God's intentions. Such a vision of the opening of salvation to all of humankind is what came about fully only with the New Testament, and then not without a struggle, when the early Christians came to realize that the risen Lord wishes to welcome all human beings into his Church, and that Israel was only a first phase, preparing the way for the time when all the nations will become disciples. St. Matthew sees this foreshadowed in the adoration of the magi. The infancy gospels provide us with a first glimpse of Christology, that is, of who Jesus is and what he was to

bring about through his life, death, and glorification. The adoration of the magi is the first fruits of that final stage of sacred history when the entire human race will be gathered into his sheepfold.

That phase of sacred history is still a work in progress. It proceeds by fits and starts, sometimes making great gains and at other times—or even at the same time—suffering losses. But it is in progress. The Church is *catholic*, that is, universal: Christ, who died and rose for all, earnestly desires that all human beings should be saved, and he invites us all into his kingdom. The light of the star that brought the magi to recognize the King of kings still shines, inviting us all to Bethlehem, there to discover the source of truth and of life. We shall not find him in the palace of Herod or among his advisers, but only in the simplicity of Bethlehem. Like the magi, we shall have to kneel before him in adoration and recognition of his truth, present him with the gifts that symbolize the humble renunciation of our self-assurance, and return by another way to a changed pattern of thinking and of living.

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

## A PRAYER OF PRAISE TO OUR INCARNATE LORD

Lord Jesus, you came as one sent by your Father, to seek out and to save what was lost. Many had been sent before you to guide and teach the people of God: Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the greatest of all, John the Baptist. But they were only a prelude to you. God spoke through them, but he did not speak through you—he spoke you. You are the Word of God uttered from the mouth of the Father by the breath of the Holy Spirit, the unique eternal Word which expresses the fulness of the Godhead. You, Lord Jesus, are the language of God to his human creature. You are his message to us. You, and you alone, are his good news, his gospel to us. You are the voice of God in whom God speaks himself—almighty Father, Creator, lover of humanity; holy, just, true. You spoke of the Father by being the perfect Son. You spoke of the Creator by becoming a creature in your humanity. You spoke of love by loving all human beings. You were the preacher who was the sermon he spoke, the missionary who was himself the mission he was sent on. You became the very humanity you came to save.

A Monk of St. Bede Abbey



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**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.

## SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING MEETINGS

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

SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 2014

Sunday, February 9, 2014  
Sunday, March 9, 2014  
Sunday, April 6, 2014  
Sunday, May 4, 2014

## Passage for *Lectio* at the January Meeting

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

Ephesians 1:17

## Passage for *Lectio* at the February Meeting

This is eternal life: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

John 17:3



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### 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.

6:00 A.M. Morning Prayer\*  
12:00 Noon Midday Prayer  
5:00 P.M. Conventual Mass\*\*  
7:10 P.M. Evening Prayer\*\*\*

\* on Sunday, 7:00 A.M.

\*\* on Sunday, 10:00 A.M. and on Monday, 7:30 A.M.

\*\*\* on Sunday, 5:30 P.M.

