

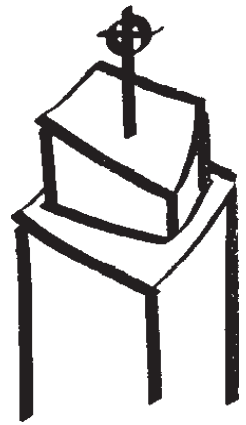
OUR FAMILY



NEWS

For Oblates of St. Bede Abbey, Peru, Illinois

Summer, 2016



LISTENING TO GOD

In Psalm 95:7-8, we read the following: “Oh, that today you would hear his voice: Harden not your hearts,” In this verse, God pleads with Israel to listen to his voice and his direction. Because they often refused to listen to God, the Israelites brought much hardship on themselves and were not as close to God as they could have been. They spent many years journeying a few miles in the desert. The journey would have taken them a much shorter time if they had learned to hear and to obey God’s voice.

One of the main reasons why many of us make slow progress in the spiritual life is because we never develop an inner spiritual ear with which to listen to the leadings of God’s Holy Spirit. In his book, *Opening to God*, Thomas Green, S.J., wrote the following: “Listening is a real art which some people never learn. We all have experienced people who cannot or do not listen. They hear but they do not understand; their bodily ears pick up sound, but their hearts are not attentive to its meaning. ... The good pray-er is above all a good listener.”

We should not try to dominate the time we spend with God. In the Scriptures we read where the young boy Samuel says to God, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening” (1 Samuel 3:10). It seems that many of us have misread that passage, thinking that it says, “Listen, Lord, for your servant is speaking.” So often in prayer we speak too much and listen too little. In theory we may believe that what God has to say to us is much more important than what we have to say to God, but in practice we act as if what we have to say is the more important of the two. We rush into our place of prayer, say our prayers, do our reading, and then rush away without ever giving God any chance to speak to us. If we treated our friends like that, we would lose them. God created us with two ears and one mouth, hoping perhaps that we would listen twice as much as we would speak. If that was God’s intention, not many of us got the message.

True listening in prayer is a real challenge, demanding faith, selflessness, patience, a reflective attitude, and courage.

We need faith to believe that God does communicate with us, his people; and we especially need faith to believe that God really does want to speak to us personally.

We need selflessness because listening always demands the ability and the willingness to put aside our own need to talk or our desire to be center stage, so that we can listen to others and give them center stage.

We need patience because God does not always speak to us according to our time schedule. God tells us so: “Nor are your ways my ways” (Isaiah 55:8).

We need to develop a reflective attitude toward life so that we can learn to read God’s messages as they come to us in the events and encounters of daily life.

True listening demands courage because God sometimes asks us to travel to places we'd prefer not to go. Remember the story of Jonah who took the first ship out of port to get away from God (see Jonah 1:1-2:11). Recall, too, what Jesus himself said to Peter toward the conclusion of the gospel of John: "When you grow old . . . someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go" (John 21:18).

We should pray for a desire to hear God's voice and for the above mentioned dispositions that enable us to hear and respond to the Word of God. In the spiritual life all is a gift. We must constantly pray for the dispositions of heart that will facilitate our growth in Christ.

The Lord wants us to regard him as a friend with whom we would want to "waste time," someone to whom we willingly listen. It would be sad if we treated God as a "Divine Do-gooder" whom we called upon only in time of need. If we are to develop a personal relationship with the Lord, we must be willing not only to open our hearts to God about our needs, but also to sit quietly at the feet of the Master so that he can speak to us (see Luke 10:38-42).

---Fr. Michael Calhoun, O.S.B.

Fr. Michael, the youngest member of St. Bede Abbey, is the community's Prior, Master of Novices, chief liturgist, and head sacristan. He also serves on the Council of Seniors and in a variety of other capacities.



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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, MAY 1, 2016



UPCOMING EVENT

The annual oblate picnic is set for

**Sunday, July 17,
from 12:00 Noon to 3:00 P.M.,**

in the shelter across from the academy.

Please bring a dish to pass and your own
table service and beverage.

Feel free to bring a lawn chair, a deck of
cards, or anything else that you think
might be enjoyable for yourself
or for the group.

Passage for *Lectio* at the May Meeting

O God, make haste to my rescue;
Lord, come to my aid!
Let there be shame and confusion
on those who seek my life.

Oh, let them turn back in confusion,
who delight in my harm.
Let them retreat, covered with shame,
who jeer at my lot.

Let there be rejoicing and gladness
for all who seek you.
Let them say forever, "God is great,"
who love your saving help.

As for me, wretched and poor,
come to me, O God.
You are my rescuer, my help;
O Lord, do not delay.

Psalm 70

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 summer, the monks' schedule is as follows.

6:00 A.M.	Morning Prayer*
12:00 Noon	Midday Prayer
8:00 A.M.	Conventual Mass**
7:10 P.M.	Evening Prayer***
* on Sunday,	7:00 A.M.
** on Sunday,	10:00 A.M.
*** on Sunday,	5:00 P.M.

