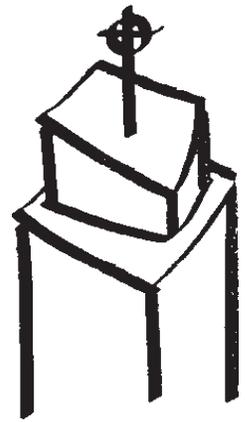


OUR FAMILY



NEWS



For Oblates of St. Bede Abbey, Peru, Illinois

September &
October, 2011

A Letter from the New Director of Oblates

Dear Oblates and Friends,

When, at the oblates' picnic last Sunday, Abbot Philip announced that I had succeeded Fr. James as Director of Oblates, one of you remarked to me, "You have some big shoes to fill!"

Especially because the first presentation that I intend to give is on humility in the *Rule of St. Benedict*, it behooves me to acknowledge, first, that Fr. James's shoes are indeed, metaphorically speaking, large, and second, that *he* filled them well. Possessed of both a deep spirituality and a vast array of organizational skills, and fired by an extraordinary zeal, he single-handedly revived a program that had been defunct for years and turned it into a thriving organ of monastic outreach. Since its resurrection, it has brought innumerable and inestimable blessings not only to you, the oblates and friends of the monastery, but to the monks of St. Bede Abbey as well.

It further behooves me to state outright that I cannot possibly fill Fr. James's shoes. The only shoes that I can fill – and the only shoes that God, at least, expects me to fill – are my own, the ones that God himself gave me. My prayer, one in which I hope that you will join me, is that in trying to do so, I can be of some help to you... and that you can be of some help to me.

In making these observations, I am already touching upon the essence and the three main aspects of that virtue of humility that we'll be considering at our September meeting. For humility is a matter of recognizing the truth and then living according to it: the truth about God, the truth about ourselves, the

truth about all else in this created world. Better, it is "living the truth," pure and simple.

It's easy enough thus to define humility. How easy is it to acquire it? The thought of coming to terms merely with the truth about himself caused the German poet Goethe to quip, "Know thyself? If I knew myself, I'd run away." Is it any wonder that, centuries earlier, St. Benedict deemed that for his monks to acquire humility, it would take a lifetime of staying put in the monastery – bound, in fact, by a special vow of stability *not* to run away – and that he characterized the monastery as a lifelong "school of the Lord's service."

As fallen human creatures, we all find it unpleasant and difficult to be mindful of the fact that, as the French essayist Montaigne put it, "Perched on the loftiest throne in the world, we are still sitting on our own behind." And when forced to face our deficiencies, we all tend to react like the young lady in the famous Yiddish proverb, "The girl who can't dance says the band can't play."

Yet we also all know the wonderful sense of freedom that comes with just being ourselves, at least on those all-too-rare occasions when we feel we can be. "The truth will set you free" may be a cliché, but clichés get to be such precisely because what they express is the truth – in this case, the truth about the truth.

Let the oblates' meeting on Sunday, September 18, be one of those occasions of which I speak. Let us step down from the various thrones on which we have perched ourselves and gather to explore humility, the truth that constitutes it, and the freedom that that truth can give us.

In the Lord,
Br. Nathaniel Grossmann, 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 HWY 6, Peru, IL 61354.

We welcome your submissions to this publication, either instructive or reflective, whether prose or poetry. They should of some way relate to the *Rule of St. 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

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

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

Sunday, October 9, 2011
Sunday, November 13, 2011
Sunday, December 4, 2011
Sunday, January 8, 2012
Sunday, February 12, 2012
Sunday, March 11, 2012
Sunday, April 15, 2012
Sunday, May 6, 2012

Information about investitures, oblations, oblation renewals, days of recollection, and the summer picnic to be announced.

Scripture for Group *Lectio* at the September Meeting

The following are the two scriptural passages that we'll be pondering together. You may wish to get a head start, as it were, by pondering them privately beforehand.

We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that sees for itself is not hope. For who hopes for

what one sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait with endurance.

Romans 8:22-25

So then, my beloved, obedient as you have always been, not only when I am present but all the more now when I am absent, work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For God is the one who, for his good purpose, works in you both to desire and to work.

Philippians 2:12-13

Please bring this newsletter with you to the meeting so that you'll have these Pauline passages in hand.



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 monk's schedule is as follows.

6:00 A.M. Morning Prayer*
12:00 Noon Midday Prayer
5:00 P.M. Conventual Mass**
7:20 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.

