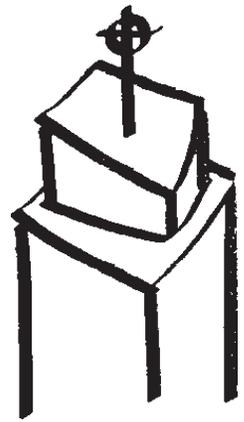


# OUR FAMILY



# NEWS

For Oblates of St. Bede Abbey, Peru, Illinois



September &  
October, 2019



## **THE CROSS AND MONASTIC STABILITY**

The feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross was observed on September 14, and its celebration in the Church commemorated three different events: the finding of the True Cross by St. Helena, the dedication of the churches built over the Holy Sepulchre and on Mount Calvary by Emperor Constantine, and the restoration of the True Cross to Jerusalem by Emperor Heraclius II.

After the Jewish Revolt, much of Jerusalem was left in ruins by Emperor Hadrian, and pagan temples were built over many of the holy sites of Judaism and Christianity. After Constantine became emperor in 312 AD, he legalized Christianity, and his mother Helena converted about the same time. According to Eusebius, Helena travelled to Jerusalem in 326 on a pilgrimage with the intention of finding the True Cross. Assisted by Bishop Macarius, she directed excavations around the Holy Sepulchre and discovered the True Cross on which Christ was crucified. This discovery was confirmed by some miracles (although the details provided by St. John Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, Rufinus, and other writers are sometimes contradictory).

In honor of this great discovery, her son, Emperor Constantine, built churches at the site of the Holy Sepulchre and on Mount Calvary which were dedicated on September 13 and 14, 335. The anniversaries of these dedications came to be celebrated as the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Three centuries later, the Persians conquered Jerusalem, and their king, Khosrau II, captured the True Cross and took it to Persia. In 629, the Christian Emperor Heraclius II defeated Khosrau II, regained the Cross, and restored it to Jerusalem. This restoration of the relic also became part of the feast.

But the feasts of the liturgical year are never merely commemorations of historical events. The “exaltation” referred to is not solely the “raising up” of the Cross from the excavations, nor the building of the churches, nor the recovery of the Cross from from a pagan ruler and its restoration. The cross is raised up for veneration, both at the dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and in churches throughout the world every year on September 14.

The cross is raised up as a call to repentance—like the bronze serpent for those Israelites who had been bitten by seraph serpents as a punishment for their unbelief-

—so that we might be confronted by the effects of our own sin. The cross is raised up from being a sign of shame and horror to be a sign of hope for all of humankind. What once was an implement of cruelty, torture, and death is now exalted as the sole instrument of redemption and eternal life (*Numbers 21:6-9*). It is raised up before all the nations as a proclamation of the good news: “God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (*Romans 5:8*).

As a monk, I see the cross raised up as a sign of my commitment to my community in monastic stability. For the monastic, the vow of stability means accepting one’s fellow religious, with all their faults and weaknesses. It means bearing cheerfully with the financial and physical limitations imposed by the realities of the community’s resources. Stability requires that one live in the community’s “now”, rather than chronically lamenting the passing of better days or focusing dreamily on a brighter future without attending to present realities.

For monastics and oblates alike, stability means a similar commitment to every community to which we belong: family, neighborhood, parish, the Church itself. It means to be at peace with the unavoidable and necessary limitations of our lives. This commitment is not the same as complacency or apathy—quite the opposite. Stability is the most flexible of all the vows, because it demands that we continually adapt to changing conditions and still “never lose hope in God’s mercy” (*RB 4:74*).

But this stability is indeed a share in the cross. Every community, every family, every institution disappoints us, even wounds us sometimes, drastically and cruelly. Making a sincere and generous commitment to frail and sinful human beings, to imperfect families and flawed institutions, requires a crucifixion of one’s will, a pouring out, a *kenosis*, of pride in submission to the Lord’s command to “love one another as I have loved you,” with a love that lays down one’s life for others. We allow ourselves to be fastened, fixed, even *nailed* to the very real, human, fallible, frustrating, gloriously loveable people with whom we live, the people for whom Christ died, making his cross the one stable point in a changeable world.

Let us worship the majesty we see in this glorious cross—the majesty of a God who emptied himself of his glory and power, who humbled himself unto death for our sakes—and imitate him in his humility, his compassion, and his willingness to give his life for others out of love. Let our lives be an exaltation of this cross, which is our only hope.

---Fr. Dominic Garramone, O.S.B.

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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, September 15, 2019

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2019

Sunday, November 10, 2019  
(*Oblate Day*)

Sunday, December 8, 2019  
Sunday, January 12, 2020  
Sunday, February 9, 2020  
Sunday, March 8, 2020  
Sunday, April 5, 2020  
Sunday, May 3, 2020

## NOVEMBER 10 OBLATE 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 September Meeting

God created us—because He thought we'd enjoy it.

Leo Rock, S.J.

## Passage for *Lectio* at the October Meeting

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

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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. 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.

