



Nothing Dearer than Christ

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Oblate Letter 45 Lent 2019

### **Monastic Voice**

DAME LAURENTIA JOHNS OSB OBLATE DIRECTOR STANBROOK ABBEY: **THE WAY OF BENEDICT**

EIGHT BLESSINGS FOR LENT published 2019

*Blessings of attentiveness*

*The great blessing of attentiveness has to be that through it we grow closer to God. Prayer begins when we are attentive to the pull towards God that he has placed in our hearts.*

*When we heed that call, and start to respond by deciding to commit time to personal prayer, we grow in self-knowledge. With this knowledge, there usually comes a realization that we need to change -metanoia -and the grace to do so is never lacking if we ask, so conversion can be seen as a further blessing of attentiveness. Gradually, through faithfulness in prayer, a kind of spiritual transfusion takes place as our more negative drives are overtaken by the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, humility and self-control (Gal. 5.22-23). There are many regressions, of course, and any 'improvement' may be fairly imperceptible, but a sign that we are growing closer to God in prayer is that we are generally more accepting of our own and other people's shortcomings.*

### **FROM THE OBLATEMASTER'S DESK:-**

Our Monastic Voice in this quarter that coincides with Lent focuses our minds on what monastic life is about and what Lent is about and what Oblate life is about-- conversion of life-- conversatio morumand how this can come about.

The season of Lent reminds us that monks and nuns and Oblates and all the faithful are in their own ways engaged in the same thing-- the liturgy of Lent and Easter makes this deeper insertion into Christ clear, this conversion, this more fulsome turning towards Christ.

One of the most precious and beautiful liturgical offerings the Second Vatican council gave us was "The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults".

"The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults" follows more closely the practice of the early church by involving the whole local community, the whole

parish and replacing what had been the more recent historical practice of "private", individual preparations, usually solely carried out by the pastor himself and often a private baptism and launching into an anonymous community to sink or swim for the rest of one's life. This "private" focus was a poor beginning for Christians' engaged in the Church's mission and ignored that new entrants to the Church were God's way of renewing and transforming the vitality of the whole Church and the conversion of the whole Church as a lived reality.

The pastor, catechists and whole community are to be involved with clearly marked stages liturgically brought before the whole assembled community and then after baptism or reception into the Church the involvement of the community is to carry on (fancy word "mystagogy"! ). Everything culminates each Lent and Easter Vigil and Easter-tide but with a sort of "cycle course" that can last as long as each individual needs or is comfortable with.

Each Lent and Easter therefore *becomes a renewal of the faith and practice of the whole community* culminating in the entry, initiation, reception, of new members and the whole community renewing their baptismal commitment -- conversion of life--what we Benedictines are engaged in too in our own parallel way.

The process summed up in the official introduction to the Rite is this:-

"1. The first period consists of inquiry on the part of the candidates and of evangelization and the pre-catechumenate on the part of the Church. It ends with the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens.

2. The second period, which begins with the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens and *may last for several years*, includes catechesis and the rites connected with catechesis. It comes to an end on the day of election.

3. *The third and much shorter period, which follows the rite of election, ordinarily coincides with the Lenten preparation for the Easter celebration and the sacraments of initiation. It is a time of purification and enlightenment* and includes the celebration of the rites belonging to this period.

4. The final period extends through the whole Easter season and is devoted to the postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy. *It is a time for deepening the Christian experience, for spiritual growth, and for entering more fully into the life and unity of the community."*

Highlights in Lent are the three chapters from St John's Gospel contained in the Rite for the "Scrutinies" on the 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays of Lent

- The Samaritan woman at the well Jan 4.1 – "Christ the Living Water."

- The Cure of the Man Born Blind 9.1 -"Christ the Light of the World." Bringing new birth through water and the Spirit.
- The Resurrection of Lazarus 11.1. "...I am the Resurrection..."

Catechumens and neophytes(Newly baptised!)---- **and all the faithful**----  
 - have to be formed in reading and understanding, in its deepest meaning, the whole Bible: two essential, fundamental, historical events viewed in faith can be used to read and interpret the **whole Bible** -1) *the Exodus* 2) *The Resurrection*. Each of them can be used separately and together to interpret the whole Bible - It is a lifetime's work applying this. These two poles of understanding open out into a lived faith, a mystagogy, which belongs to Christians as it is lived ( as they) derive a new perception of the faith, of the Church and of the world" (Rite p.145)

It's all very exciting!

### Books and Media

- *"The Way of Benedict" Eight Blessings for Lent* by Dame Laurentia Johns  
 OSB Publisher SPCK  
 ISBN 978-0-281-07581-2

eBook ISBN 978-0-281-07582-9

"Living Lent well involves turning back to god to receive His blessing. In this deep and practical book, a guide for Lent and the rest of the year, Sr. Laurentia distils the sixth-century Rule of St Benedict as a series of blessings. closely based on Scripture, the Rule highlights that the whole of life has a Lenten character and points to a joyful eternity."

Paperback • £8.99 Hardback Edition Price: £14.99

- *Please let the book shop or me know* if you want a copy of **The Pluscarden Abbey Oblate Handbook** ; please state if hardback or paperback.
- RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS Geoffrey Chapman ISBN 0 225 66489 5 £22- £8 Or £9 second hand

-----For we Oblates reading these rites and about these rites during Lent leading to Easter can deepen our re-entry into the Paschal mystery and of the whole liturgical year.

All who receive this email can get the whole official liturgical book to download (free) and read or study it during the upcoming Lent and at any time at:

- <https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Rites/RCIA.pdf>

- Other books-- The Awe Inspiring Rites of Initiation- Edward Yarnold ISBN 0 85439 028 0 ( £10-£15 -used-- NOT Amazon!)
- Mystagogy by Enrico Mazza ( in English!) Pueblo publishing company ISBN 0-916134-93-8 Father Mazza delves into the stage of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults known as mystagogy. Ebay about £25-- Or read *most* of the book free online at googlebooks!( misses out bits) There are other useful books with a similar title which are cheaper!

## Oblate Events

**LENTEN RETREAT THIS YEAR 2020**

FRIDAY 28TH FEBRUARY TO MONDAY 2ND MARCH. 1ST WEEKEND OF LENT.(  
AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

FR. ABBOT: SCRIPTURAL LECTIO

BOOK NOW IF ANY PLACES LEFT-- OR PERHAPS A CANCELLATION

***Arrivals Friday 28th--Please Note:- Residents meal arrangements in  
guesthouses just as normal this year. Liturgy-- standard times as notice  
boards and website.***

***Special items only as follows:-***

***Saturday February 29th 10.30 am first conference***

***Saturday February 29th 3.00 pm second conference***

***Sunday 1st March 10.00 am Mass sermon FR. ABBOT***

***Sunday 10th Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament Lady Chapel***

***2.00-4.00 pm--opportunity for confession during.(Fr. Martin---Baxter's  
former parlour.)***

***Renewal of Oblation during 9.00 am Mass Monday 19th.***

St Scholastica's and St Benedict's are reserved for YOU so don't be shy about  
booking! ( even at the 11th hour!)

[guestmaster.pluscarden@gmail.com](mailto:guestmaster.pluscarden@gmail.com)

## SUMMER RETREAT THIS YEAR 2020

FRIDAY 31ST JULY TO MONDAY 3RD AUGUST

CANON LUKE SMITH (O.S.B. OBLATE) SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR OF ST JOHN'S  
SEMINARY WONERSH

Book Now-- both guesthouses reserved for you-- the Oblates--reserve a place  
early.

[guestmaster.pluscarden@gmail.com](mailto:guestmaster.pluscarden@gmail.com)

## Other Events:

Dates announced for the Pluscarden Monastic Experience Weekend 2020 The Pluscarden community plans to host another Monastic Experience Weekend in 2020. The weekend will start at tea time on Friday 7 August, and end with the 0900 Conventual Mass on Monday 10 August. Once again, the invitation is extended to single men, Catholics who practise their faith, under the age of 35. Participants will join the monks in their daily prayer and work, and will be offered a close-up insight into some of the treasures of the monastic tradition. The weekend should be interesting, enjoyable, and grace-filled. It may also be of assistance in the process of discerning one's vocation in life. There will be no charge for the weekend. **Please share this with those who may be interested. Thank you! Book with [guestmaster.pluscarden.com](mailto:guestmaster.pluscarden.com)**

Monastery of Santa Brígida (Gran Canaria – España--Canary Islands)  
 Monasterio de la Santisima --perhaps your **own individual** retreat this year?--  
 ideal for that-- -----group venture-- *maybe(?)* some future year?

**PRAYER INTENTIONS** --- The repose of the soul of Sarah Akehurst's son Jonny. Brothers Joseph Carron and Brother Simon Piatkowski both newly made Acolyte. For Fr. Abbot's intentions, Bishop Hugh's intentions. For Oblate Bishop Richard Moth's intentions.

--For our New Oblate Ann St Paul Ryans.

For Fr. Stuart Chalmers (Oblate) spiritual director of the Scots College in Spain & Canon Luke Smith(Oblate) spiritual director of Wonersh Seminary England. For Prior Bede & For Fr. Ambrose Flavell in charge of the Shetlands. For vocations to Pluscarden especially Brs. Innocent & Ben; vocations to St Mary's and St. Scholastica's, Petersham, U.S.A and Kristo Buase Priory, Ghana. For Health: Jane Coll's granddaughter Natasha Gunn through the intercession of Margaret Sinclair. Fr. Francis Wilson, Connie Reid, Mary Frances McGregor's daughter Ruth, For Eileen Grant's son Robin & grandson, Bryce. Please pray for the health of Fr. Matthew, Br. Cyprian, Br Finbar, Rev. Christopher Mayo, Rev. Angus Macleod, for Mary Bradley, for Gillian Cockwill's Mother, for Gail & Tony Schmitz. For Siobhan Gilmour's husband, for Mrs. Allie Brien, Mrs. Janet Fraile, Gitte Mackay, Martin Farrelly, Leonora Duson, and her daughter, and Margaret Rawcliffe, Robert Cantafio's mother Margharita, Joe Barrett, Maureen Woodhead, Bob Barr, Brian Milne, Fiona Sellar, Johan(Joy) Baillie, Nick MaCrae. Martin MaCrae, Dr. David Paterson and his wife Angela, Jacqui Heath-Anderson and daughter Sally, Dr. Hester du Plessis, Poppy Sinclair, Ian & Frederick Brodie, for Pat Foster, Pam Woodhead, Carolyn, Marshall & Malcolm Boardman( great improvement!), and also for Eileen Kerr, Peter and Brian Wynne, Susan Stephen, Cindy's husband, Danielle & her son Osyp, Evelyn, Violet and Sheila, Bernadette Harris, Alistair Macdonald and all the friends of the Abbey and for all Oblates, and for ALL the sick and those who care for them--and for our 3 sponsored seminarians. For vocations and all our novice and postulant Oblates and all our Oblates living and dead. All we have omitted or forgotten, living and dead.

**Our Sponsored Seminarians:- *Appeal: some sponsors have dropped so danger of a future shortfall in their essential fees*** If you would like to make a financial contribution (usual amount is £10/£20 standing order per month) please contact: Campbell Murdoch, email: jcmurdoch@yahoo.co.uk or mobile: 07810 350006 (Address: Fircroft, Knockbuckle Road, Kilmacolm, Renfrewshire, PA13 4JT).

**St Mungo's Chapter**, Glasgow:-We meet on the second Saturday of each month at 2 p.m. Contact can be made via Peter Aitken. Tel. 0141 427 2084.

**St Margaret's Chapter**, Dunfermline meetings as announced. All details contact Deacon Pat Carrigan smcb\_oblates@live.co.uk

St. Monica's Chapter for far North -- Thurso. Contact Jane Coll. "Scaraben", Westside, Dunnet, Thurso, Caithness, KY14 8YD. Phone 01847 851467 (informal)

**St. Peter's Chapter**, Aberdeen –next 11th December. 7.00-8.00 pm each second Tuesday of each month, Church Hall, St Joseph's, 2 Tanfield Walk, Aberdeen &/or contact Mr Robert Ian Johnston, 31, Tay Road, Mastrick, ABERDEEN AB16 5LA

**St Mirin's Chapter** Paisley meets at 2pm on the 1st Saturday of each month at: Cathedral House, St Mirin's Cathedral, Cathedral Precincts, Ince Street, Paisley, PA1 1HR. Campbell Murdoch, mobile 07810 350006 or email jcmurdoch@yahoo.co.uk (address: Fircroft, Knockbuckle Road, Kilmacolm, Renfrewshire, PA13 4JT).

**"St Andrew's Chapter"** Pluscarden Abbey St Andrew's Chapter Saturday 9th May 2.00pm - 3.30pm, and the theme will be Pentecost . St Benedict's Guest House Men's Breakfast Room (next door on left from Abbey Shop)

**"St Columba's Chapter"** in Dundee -- if interested please contact Mrs. Georgina Quinn 2D, Church Street, Broughty Ferry DUNDEE Fife DD5 1EZ

**"Benedictine Prayer Circle"**-If interested—John MacKinlay jgjm07@yahoo.co.uk

Our Lady of Pluscarden, St John the Baptist and St Andrew pray for us!

*" As you know, baptism is a burial and a resurrection; the old self is buried with Christ to sin and the new nature rises from the dead 'which is being renewed after the image of its Creator.' We are stripped and we are clothed, stripped of the old garment which has been soiled by the multitude of our sins, clothed with the new that is free from all stain. What does this mean? We are clothed in Christ Himself. St Paul remarks: ' As many of you as were baptized in to Christ have put on Christ.' ( St John Chrysostom)*

+With a blessing for our Lenten observance,

Fr. Martin --- PAX