

**PAX - WITH THE GOSPEL FOR OUR GUIDE
POST-PENTECOST I 2015 – Covering the
period from Pentecost Sunday until August
31st.**

SECTION ONE: Reading and Reflection

Theme: The Desert shall rejoice and blossom. (Isaiah 35:1).

DESERT WISDOM

The term used for the collection of Desert Wisdom is “Apophthegmata”. These “sayings” or gems of “desert wisdom” have come down to us from “the very beginnings of Christian Monasticism. In the fourth century, Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Arabia were the forcing ground for monasticism in its Christian expression; every form of monastic life was tried, every kind of experiment, every kind of extreme. Monasticism is of course older than Christianity but this was the flowering of it in its Christian expression and in many ways it has never been surpassed. The roots of Western Monasticism are in the East, and the wisdom of the desert, the understanding of this way of life, has formed a central, though often unidentified source for Christian living through the centuries.” (Sr. Benedicta Ward, Foreward, “Sayings of the Desert Fathers”). Sr. Benedicta goes on to say that “these experiments of the fourth and fifth century monasticism, especially in Egypt, produced a remarkable new literary genre in the records of the

“Apophthegmata”. They were close to parable and folk-wisdom, and their themes and anecdotes passed into the world of the Middle Ages. **The essence of the spirituality of the desert is that it was not taught but caught;** it was a whole way of life.” A Desert Father was called “Abba”. A Desert Mother was called an “Amma”. They did not work to a system or have a systematic way of prayer. They had the hard work and experience of a life time of striving to re-direct every aspect of body, mind and soul to God, and that is what they talked about.” In the preface of the same Work, Archbishop Anthony of Sourzah writes: “If we wish to understand these wisdom sayings, let us approach them with veneration, silencing our judgments and our own thoughts in order to meet them on their own ground and perhaps to partake ultimately in their own silent communion with God.”

We are all Monastics. I continue to use this term, rather than oblate/monk/nun. I use the term as all-inclusive. And we have been travelling the monastic journey for many years, decades, or just a few years. One way or another, we have been directing our whole selves to God, because we have “caught” the spirituality of monasticism. The Desert into which we have all entered and in which we have been planted, as in a garden, shall bring forth flowers according to the degree to which we direct every aspect of our lives to God. THE DESERT SHALL REJOICE AND BLOSSOM.

The early Desert Fathers and Mothers brought forth the blossoms of wisdom. This wisdom was caught, not taught.

One example of Desert Wisdom is the following story: A meeting was called in an area of the desert where many monastics lived. The meeting was about a “desert monk” who had sinned. The Abbots said what they thought of the one who had sinned, but one old Abba kept silence. Then he got up and left. He went outside and filled a sack with sand and carried it on his shoulder. Then he put some more sand in a small bag which he carried in front of him. He went back to the gathering. Those present asked him the meaning of his actions. He took the large sack and said: “In this sack which contains much sand, are my sins which are many; I have put them behind me so as not to be troubled about them and so as not to weep; and see, here are the little sins of my brother whom we have come to judge. These are in front of me, and I am here spending time judging them. This is not right. I ought rather to carry my sins in front of me and concern myself with them, begging God to forgive me for them. All those present stood up and said, ‘Truly, this is the way of salvation.’ And so there was no more judgment of the one whose sins they had come to discuss.

This kind of wisdom comes with age, experience, and spiritual maturity, as we submit more and more to the power of the Gospel.

In the Desert tradition, we will find wisdom sayings on how to deal with anger and avarice, how to live in love, how to follow Christ, how to discern, how to be a disciple. There is teaching on faith, on fasting, on combating fear, on the proper amount of food and drink and on fasting. There is teaching on hope, on humility, on joy, on work, on the power of the mind, and the power of negative and positive thoughts, on peace, on prayer and praise, on the essence of salvation. There is teaching on sorrow, simplicity, silence, the Sacred Scriptures, solitude, truth, and being vigilant in the way we live the Christian life.

For these three months, can we steep ourselves in the wisdom of the Desert Fathers and Mothers. There is no need to take on 15 or more books. This is overload, and certainly militates against the whole idea of Desert Wisdom. Why not take just one theme and work with that, taking texts for Lectio Divina and ruminating with the texts for days on end. The story I have shared above, about non-judgment is enough work for a month – OR A LIFETIME.

SECTION TWO: Further Reading and Reflection

The following books are available in our BookShop at present:

“Desert Christians” by William Harmless, S.J.

“The Book of Elders” by John Wortley

“Journey Back to Eden” by Mark Gruler, osb

“The Lives of the Desert Fathers” with an Introduction by Sr. Benedicta Ward, SLG. Trans. Norman Russell.

“The Wisdom of the Desert Fathers and Mothers” with a Foreword by Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove.

“The Wilderness of God” by Andrew Louth

“Praying with the Desert Mothers” by Mary Forman, osb.

Alternatively, you may already have a book containing the sayings of the Desert Fathers and Mothers. In that case, go back to the book and pray with it from now until the end of August.

SECTION THREE: About the Rule of St. Benedict.

Most of the Desert Wisdom has been incorporated into the Rule which St. Benedict wrote for Monasteries. In fact the Rule of St. Benedict is a Wisdom Rule.

We may be familiar with Sr. Joan Chittister’s work, “Wisdom Distilled from the Daily”, - a commentary on the Rule which comes from a wisdom figure who has given her whole life to the monastic tradition.

And in Chapter 73 of the Rule itself, St. Benedict refers us to further reading. He notes that the Rule he has written is a “little Rule for beginners”. (This in itself is a wisdom statement). Verse 5 of this chapter is a reference to the works of St. John Cassian, who was formed in the Desert Tradition, prior to writing his “Institutes” and “Conferences”. St. Benedict is the wise physician, the healer in the spirit of Jesus. St. Benedict tells the Abbot to go after one who is lost, the one on the “outer” of the community, the one who can’t fit in. St. Benedict teaches compassion. On the other hand, he is also the wise disciplinarian. Sometimes there is a need for discipline, just as there is in any

group, family, community, wider community. Sift through the Rule yourself, and make your own notes on the wisdom of St. Benedict.

I think we would all agree that real wisdom is in short supply in our world today, where violence and crime, calumny and detraction, seem to have the upper hand. More than ever, our world needs words of wisdom, and we as monastics are in a position to provide those words of wisdom because of the values we have embraced. Let us go about doing that.

SECTION FOUR: Community History

We haven't noted our early history for a while, so: Our founding Mothers, Sr. Scholastica (Jane) Gregory, and Sr. Magdalen (Constantia) le Clerc, left Liverpool, England, on October 7th, 1847, on the St. Vincent, under Captain Young. It was a difficult journey which at one stage brought Sr. Scholastica close to death. The ship reached Sydney in the early hours of February 6th, 1848. On board was a crew of 25 including the Captain. With Archbishop Polding (our founding Father) were the two nuns; three priests: Peter Magganotto, CP, John Gourbeillon, OSB, and Ruggiero Emmanuelle, OSB; two deacons Messrs Ryan and Luckie, candidates for the diocesan clergy; three professed monks: Brothers Edmund and Bernard Caldwell, and Brother Edmund Moore; three postulants (for St. Mary's) a French manservant of Polding's. Three young, unnamed passengers were also on board, bound for Sydney. For those who don't know our history well, St. Mary's in Sydney was at that time

was a community of Benedictine monks. Our two founding mothers lived at Sr. Mary's in a section of the house, until "The Vineyard Estate" at Rydalmere was purchased for us in October, 1848.

SECTION FIVE: Liturgy

MAY:

24 – PENTECOST SUNDAY

25: OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS (Solemnity in Australia).

26: St. Philip Neri. M

31: THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

JUNE:

01: St. Justin Martyr. M

03: St. Charles Lwanga & Companions. M

05: St. Boniface. M

07: The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. (Corpus Christi)

11: St. Barnabas. M.

12: The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. S

13 – St. Anthony of Padua. O. M.

14: 11th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

21: 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

24: The Nativity of St. John The Baptist. S

28: 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

29: Sts. Peter and Paul. S

JULY:

03 – St. Thomas. F

05 - 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

11 – St. Benedict. F

12 – 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

15 – St. Bonaventure. M.

16 - Our Lady of Mt. Carmel M . A Solemnity for all Carmelites.

19- 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

22 - St. Mary Magdalen M

25 – St. James. F

26 – 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Sts. Joachim and Anne, parents of the Mother of God are omitted this year. The Sunday takes precedence.

29 - Sts. Martha, Mary and Lazarus - M

31 – St. Ignatius of Loyola. M

AUGUST:

01 – St. Alphonsus Ligouri M

02 – 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

04 – St. John Vianney, Memorial

06 - Transfiguration of the Lord - F

08 - St. Mary of the Cross MacKillop Solemnity

09 – 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time. St. Edith Stein is omitted this year. The Sunday takes precedence.

10 – St. Lawrence. F

11 – St. Clare, M.

14 – St. Maximilian Kolbe. M

15 - SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY. This is a holy day of obligation for Catholics.

16 – 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

20 - St. Bernard M

21– St. Pius X. Memorial

22 – Queenship of Mary. M.

23 – 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time.

24 – St. Bartholomew. F

27 - St. Monica M

28 – St. Augustine

29 – The Passion of St. John the Baptist. M.

30 – 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time.

M = Memoria. F = Feast. S = Solemnity.

All other days are Ferial days.

SECTION SIX - Your Community

On March 13th, Oblate Pam Rice died in her home at Elanora Heights. Her husband, Sid, who is also an Oblate of our community, is in Nursing Home Care and would appreciate prayer. The Prayer Group to which Pam belonged for many years, was here at the Abbey for their weekend retreat when the news came through. While it wasn't the news we wanted to hear, at least we were together in prayer for Pam and Sid and their family.

We apologize that the last edition of "Pax" had already gone to be printed, so we couldn't inform you of Pam's death. So, since December 14th last year, we have farewelled three faithful Oblates: Valerie Proverbs (14th December), Fr. Ron Harden, (February 2nd), and Pam Rice on March 13th. Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, and may perpetual light shine upon them...

Our next oblate meeting is September 19th. Meetings are not obligatory, but it is encouraging to see so many oblates gather and share together.

Our heartfelt thanks go to all the Oblates who live in reasonable proximity to the Abbey and have been helping with cooking, serving in the Shop, gardening and housework.

WE WISH YOU THE RICHEST BLESSING OF PEACE ON YOUR FEAST DAY:

May 24: (This year it is transferred to 25th). Amanda Mary Hickey

May 25: Heather Bede Thompson, Alan Bede Hickey, Cheryl Bede Townsend, Patrick Bede Quinn, Antonio Bede Zaragoza, Fr. Kevin Bede Walsh.

May 30: Brenda Joan Payne

May 31: Jo Elizabeth Wickens, Sr. Elizabeth Funder, Mary Elizabeth Locke and Margaret Elizabeth Crooks.

June 5: Allen Boniface Flanagan, Jeff Boniface Smart, Arno Boniface Struzina, Rev. Cameron Boniface Freese

June 11: Brian Barnabas McKinlay, Jan Barnabas Trevenen and Rosalie Barnabas Jacques.

June 12: Sr. Hilda Scott

June 13: Therese Anthony Harding

Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus: Sr. Caritas Rodrigues

June 22: Katherine Thomas Lindsay, Margaret Thomas More Whetham.

June 23: Frances Mildred Cormack.

June 24: Carmen Giovanna Xuereb

June 30: Annette Cuthbert Dawes

July 3: Leo Thomas Montgomery, Douglas Thomas Fitzpatrick

July 11: Ian Benedict Macdonald, Valerie Benedicta Dickson, Ken Benedict Press, Bill Benedict Price, Patrick Benedict Sleight, Marianne Benedict Scarf, Sonia Benedicta Aquilina, Sr. Benedetta Cerato, Russell Benedict Collins, Margaret Benedicta Houen, Geraldine Mary Benedicta Doyle, June Benedicta Jenkins, Garry Benedict Gleeson, Ellen Benedicta Woods, Brenda Benedicta Verbeek, Benedetta Marina di Mattia, Dorothy Benedicta Taylor, Chantal Mary Benedicte Jacquier, Patricia Benedict Thomas, Rosslyn Teresa Benedicta Rice, Matthew Benedict Ransom, Ivan Benedict Fitz, Claire Benedict Lanigan, Debra Benedicta Verbeek.

July 14: Dorothy (Veronica Guiliani) Touzell

July 15: Pamela Henry Herrick

July 16: Fr. Paul Gurr O.Carm.

July 20: Valerie Margaret Johnson

July 22: Sr. Magdalen Mather, Margaret Mary Magdalen Oomens, Kerri Mary Olson, Jeanette Magdalen Murray, Pamela Magdalen Hassell. Marilyn Mary Magdalen Caruana, and Phyllis Magdalen Rodriguez.

July 25: Peter James Lambert-Brown

July 26: Daphne Anne Spelter

July 29: Sr. Joy Martha Jensen, Deborah Martha Pike and Wendy Mary Young.

August 8: Peter of the Cross Guy, Carol (Mary of the Cross) Xuereb

August 9: Anne (Edith) Fry, Hilary (Teresa Benedicta of the Cross) Scarce.

August 11: Sr. Clare Gamble, Shirley Clare Basham, Rev. Ann Clare Dittmar McCollim, Marie Clare Manning

August 15: Sr. Maria Frances Slade

August 20: Bernard Quinn, Fr. Henry Bernard Byrne, Peter Bernard Sheehan, Lee Ann Bernardine Wein, Dean Bernard Godric Piryak

August 22: Christina Maria de Angelo Camron

August 23: Victoria Rose Sultana

August 27: Colleen Monica Fletcher

August 28: Joan Augustine Lorente, and Monica Augustina Rodriguez, Colleen Augustine Cashman

August 31: Leslie Aidan Whittet.

LET US PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER AS OUR ANNIVERSARIES OCCUR:

May 24: Ivan Benedict Fitz

May 25: Phyllis Magdalen Rodrigues, Clare Therese Sydenham, Rev. Jeannette Therese McHugh, Phillip John Wilson.

May 30: Wendy Godric Orrock.

June 1: Fr. Mark Aelred Podesta

June 3: Matthew Benedict Ransom

June 6: Lorraine Mary Irmina Stilo

June 6: Dorothy Veronica Guiliani Touzell.

June 7: Ian Benedict MacDonald.

June 8: Brenda Benedicta Verbeek, Judith Catherine Brown, Helene Miriam Mackey, Rev. Catherine Julian Eaton.

June 12: Maxine Frances Pickering, Christine Gertrud Phillips, Lenka Gregoria Hill, Catherine Frances Turek, Peter Damian McElhone, Alfred Anselm Breznik, Susan Frances Carter, Rhonda Scholastica Kinsela, Debi Gertrud Russell, Isabel Frances Vicary and Kevin Francis Vicary.

June 14: Jean Julian Reid

June 14: Fr. Brian Gregory Mascord

June 22: Valerie Benedicta Dickson, Dorothy Benedicta Taylor and Christina Maria de Angelo Camron.

June 23: Aaron Placid McElhone, Margaret Benedicta Houen, Carmen Giovanna Xuereb and Josephine Antonia Petrie.

June 24: Libby Therese Denny, Catherine Scholastica Ransom

June 25: Varcha Giles Sidwell, Elizabeth Lioba Anderson, Bernadette Mary Maher, Paul Godric Griffiths, Colleen Monica Fletcher, Nancy Hilda Sage

June 28: Sonia Veronica Pleines

June 29: Sr. Julain Barbara Garwood

June 30: Rev. Nigel Thomas Wright

Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus: Anthony Anselm Tarleton, Ewa Mary Grajewska.

July 1: Barbara Catherine Mary Crawford

July 9: Pam Magdalen Hassell

July 10: Lee Ann Bernardine Wein

July 11: Rev. Ian Patrick Crooks and Margaret Julian Crooks. Rosslyn Teresa Benedicta Rice, Ellen Benedicta Woods
July 12: Margaret Mary Magdalen Oomens
July 18: Melanie Syncletica Phillips
July 19: Susan Nano Dickson.
July 22: Kerri Mary Magdalen Olson
July 25: Sr. Joy Martha Jensen
July 26: Anne Sophia Norrie and Denis Nicols
August 6: Kilian Veronica de Lacy.
August 8: Anne Edith Fry
August 9: Hilary (Teresa Benedicta of the Cross) Scarce
August 10: Anthony John Smith and Vilma Elizabeth Smith.
August 15: Noella Mary-Emmaus Sheerin
August 15: Michelle Anne Mary Higlett
August 18: Valerie Mary Cecilia Proverbs and Marie Clare Manning
August 22: Laura Gertrud Moya, Marianne Benedict Scarf, Irene Patricia McAllister, Josette Elizabeth Wickens, Mary Gertrud Connors, Antoinette Gertrud Jenkins, Ruth Hedwig Huebner, Assunta Benedicta Aquilina, Wilfrid Ambrose Moon, Nereda Gertrud Blake, Doreen Adela O'Sullivan.
August 24: Wendy Begu Fisher-Hudson
August 27: Kay Matilda Myers
August 29: Leslie Aidan Whittet, Susan Columba Marmion Lambert, Peter James Lambert-Brown.
August 31: Pamela Hannah Winter

SOLEMN PROFESSION ANNIVERSARIES:

Corpus Christi: Sr. Agnes Manly

Sacred Heart: Sr. Mary Mellitus Troy, Sr. Antonia Curtis, Sr. Maureen Therese Woodhouse and Sr. Gertrud George.

July 11: Sr. Therese Gilmour, Sr. Mary Bernadette Sunarjo

August 6: Sr. Mary Veronica Chandler

August 23: Sr. Caritas Rodrigues

**MAY ETERNAL LIGHT SHINE UPON THEM AND
MAY THEY REST IN PEACE:**

June 2nd, 1924: Mother Mary Austin Marum (the title Mother in this case is an honorary title – she lived 72 years in our community).

June 2nd, 1987: Sr. Marian Bourke

June 4th, 1976: Sr. Mary Gertrude Flannery

June 8th, 1905: Sr. Mary Scholastica Therry

June 9th, 2011: Sr. Janice Robertson

June 10th, 1973: Sr. Mary Bernard Bryant.

June 13th, 1988: Sr. Miriam Murray

June 16th, 1920: Sr. Mary Paul Fairland

June 16th, 1932: Sr. Mary Stanislaus Egan

June 18th, 1861: Sr. Mary Aloysius Shortall

June 18th, 1980: Sr. Mary Audrey Bourke

June 18th, 2008: Oblate John Anselm Jamieson

June 22nd, 2011: Oblate Gabriele Angelica Harders

June 23rd, 1994: Oblate Clare Scholastica Empen

June 23rd, 2001: Oblate Dr. William Canice Hudson

June 23rd, 2012: Oblate Jean Edmond Peter Antoine

June 27th, 1972: Sr. Mary Bede Muschiali

June 28th, 1894: Mother Mary Placid Loughnan

June 29th, 1932: Mother Mary Justina Merewether

July 2nd, 1888: Sr. M. Elizabeth Dwyer,
July 5th, 2008: Oblate Billie Jude Balson.
July 10th, 1891: Sr. M. Bridget O'Sullivan
July 15th, 1943: Sr. Mary Scholastica Sugrue
July 15th, 1985: Sr. Mary Boniface McConnell
July 19th, 2009: Oblate Henning Maximilian Harders
July 22nd, 2003: Sr. Marie Gregory Forster
July 23rd, 1994: Oblate Clare Scholastica Empen
July 24th, 1952: Sr. Mary Ann Harrington
August 9th, 1968: Mother M. Mildred Potts, Fourth
Elected Prioress of our community.
August 11th, 1950: Sr. M. Annette Cunningham
August 22nd, 2012: Oblate Teresa Benedict Pozniak.
August 24th, 2006: Mother Benedicta Philips, first
Abbess of the community.
August 31st, 2005: Sr. Joy Reynolds

SECTION SEVEN: Saints

St. John Cassian (c. 360-435), according to just one tradition was born in Scythia. He initially joined a Monastery in Bethlehem, and soon left that Monastery and went to Egypt where it was all happening: the flowering of desert monasticism, and desert wisdom. Cassian wrote two great books: "the Institutes" and "The Conferences". What is in these works was gleaned from the great "Abbas" of the Egyptian Desert. The traditions of the Desert reached the West mostly through the work of St. John Cassian. St. John Cassian's works are also available in our Bookstore. St. Benedict, in chapter 73, refers us to the works of St. John Cassian.

SECTION EIGHT: For reflection

“The wilderness and the dry lands shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing.” (Isaiah 35:1).