

**PAX - WITH THE GOSPEL FOR OUR GUIDE
ADVENT/CHRISTMASTIDE (2015-2016), and ORDINARY TIME THROUGH
TO ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10th, 2016.**

PAX-WITH THE GOSPEL FOR OUR GUIDE IS SENT OUT TO OBLATES AND TO THOSE WHO ARE ENROLLED IN THE OBLATE FORMATION PROGRAM, **FIVE** TIMES EACH YEAR. THIS EDITION IS ALWAYS **NUMBER ONE**, BEING SENT OUT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH'S LITURGICAL YEAR. PLEASE TAKE YOUR DIRECTION FROM EACH EDITION OF "PAX – WITH THE GOSPEL FOR OUR GUIDE".

SECTION ONE: Reading and Reflection

The theme of this edition of "Pax – With the Gospel for our Guide" is: CHRIST IN THE MARGINS. We are fully aware that the Rule of St. Benedict is a Christological Rule, a Christo-centric Rule, or an abridgement of Christianity. Summarizing this theme from the writings of Blessed Columba Marmion, we read: "St. Benedict constantly places Jesus Christ before our eyes. If he tells us we ought to deny ourselves, it is that we may follow Christ. All our obedience is to be inspired by the love of Christ. If temptations assail us, we are to have recourse to Christ. It is against Christ as against a rock that we must dash temptations and negative thoughts and judgments as soon as they enter our hearts. Our trials are to be united to the sufferings of Jesus Christ. Our whole lives are to consist in walking along the path traced out by the Divine Master in the Gospel. In all things St. Benedict would have us think of Jesus, lean upon Jesus, see Jesus in everyone, especially in other Oblates, friends, in the sick, in strangers, in the poor." And now, this Advent, we are looking at the face of Jesus in the marginalized persons around us. One of the cities Pope Francis visited during his pilgrimage to America recently, was New York. The last thing he did before leaving this city was to visit a shelter for the homeless and to help serve meals. The homeless poor are the marginalized of our society and our world.

As Oblates of St. Benedict, we are called this Advent to give ourselves first of all to daily *Lectio Divina* with the Gospel and with the strength gained from this prayer, to seek out the marginalized around us and minister to them.

So, who are the marginalized?

The answer to this depends on where we live and in what circumstances we are placed.

If we live in a retirement village with nursing home attached and the availability of progressive care, it is not hard to find a lonely person, someone who doesn't have much family, or who is alienated from family. If we are still active and live in a retirement facility, we only have to walk as far as the nursing home to visit someone who is needy, lonely, on the margins.

If we are mostly housebound, because of our age or failing health, we only have to be attuned to the daily news to see the face of Christ in the marginalized. And then? May we embrace these persons into our heart and pray for them.

If we are well and active, we may seek out the marginalized in prisons. One of our Oblates visits a prison (with other women) regularly and spends quality time with women prisoners. Once a year, she stays within the prison for a whole week. She enters the world of the marginalized – goes inside their lives.

Another of our Oblates walks a certain way to work daily, and if passing a homeless person, offers a few dollars, or a piece of fruit, or a sandwich, - and always accompanied by a kind word.

Another Oblate and her husband, have taken a young woman of 19 into their home. She is six months pregnant and has run away from her partner who is a violent drug addict. They are looking after this young woman who until now, was on the streets. She needs proper care if her baby is to be born healthy. They have given her a part time job and have opened a bank account for her. Her face is the face of Christ.

Could we simply speak to a refugee family trying to settle into our neighbourhood? What stops us is fear, isn't it? Marie Curie said: "Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood." These families who come from war-ravaged countries bear the face of Christ.

If we are Oblates in inner Sydney, could we help with the Mobile Food Van occasionally, or serve a meal at the Loaves and Fishes Restaurant? On Christmas day, they serve 1,000 meals to the homeless poor.

Maybe the most marginalized is a son or daughter of our own. Could we invite him or her to Christmas dinner? They can only say "no". But we will have grown closer to Jesus for having issued the invitation. We will have become more "whole".

Are the marginalized my own parents – ageing, suffering from dementia, or at least with a string of medical problems? Can I take Christmas dinner to them? Can I take them for an extra drive in the country? They bear the face of Christ.

Two of our Oblates are raising their granddaughter, because her mother didn't want her and her father (their son) wasn't able to care for her on his own. This little girl bears the face of Christ. Before they took her into their home, she was a marginalized child.

Two of our Oblates work for the United Nations Children's Organization and are all too familiar with the plight of poor, sick and starving children – those in the margins – those who bear the face of Christ.

Another of our Oblates is a passionate surfboard rider, competing in competition surfing. He makes a point of seeking out a lonely youth, often just sitting on the beach looking at the ocean. He has prevented a number of suicides by being a friend to the troubled who have left home or been turned out of home. Each young person bears the face of Christ.

I know of two Oblates who can't manage active ministry any more, but who sponsor a child through World Vision. Those children bear the face of Christ.

May we all, as Oblates of St. Benedict, rise to this call throughout Advent, and Christmastide. Could we take as our model the Mother of God, who, forgetting her own pregnancy and any discomfort she may have been experiencing, went straight to the hill country to help her cousin Elizabeth, a much older woman, pregnant with John the Baptist and in need of support and care?

Recently, our Chaplain gave me a book to read. In this book was an ICON. This Icon is called “Mother of the Streets”. The garments of Our Lady and of her Son Jesus are bound with gold and jewels, representing the worth and dignity of each homeless person who is a living Icon of Christ – Christ in the margins. It hangs outside the Church of St. Boniface in San Francisco. The Franciscan Priests who look after that Church leave it open all year round so that the homeless poor can come inside and keep warm.

SECTION TWO: FURTHER READING AND REFLECTION

Please take for *Lectio Divina*, the readings for the Sundays of Advent and the Sundays of Christmastide. The usual *Lectio Divina* guide is on our website at the beginning of every week with a view to the following weekend. This is the case for the whole year.

SECTION THREE: ABOUT THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT

Sr. Joan Chittister has some wisdom for us in regard to the daily practice of *Lectio Divina*. She says: “In the Rule of St. Benedict, more time is allotted to the practice of *Lectio Divina* than to any other activity except formal prayer. Thoughtful, reflective reading – *lectio* – immersion in the lessons of Scripture and what the Rule of Benedict calls ‘other holy books,’ provides the background against which the entire rest of the life is lived. It is in *lectio* that the monastic mind comes to know itself. The thoughtful reading of Scripture does two things: it tells us what we bring to the Word of God and it confronts us daily with what the word of God is bringing to us.” St. Benedict places his teaching on *Lectio Divina* in the same chapter with the daily Manual Labour. *Lectio Divina* is a work to which we go daily. So, at the end of each day, when we take time quietly to review our day, we must always ask the question: Have I taken time for *Lectio Divina* today?

SECTION FOUR: COMMUNITY HISTORY

We have in our history the following beautiful story. Our nuns in the 1860s, employed a woman as a domestic servant. At that time, we had a school and very few nuns in community. Women were employed to help with the school children, and to assist with guests. The name of the woman concerned was Catherine Gogarty. Catherine and her husband Thomas bore the stamp “convict”. They were convicted of having forged money, tried in Ireland in 1826, and sent to Australia to the Penal Colony of New South Wales for fourteen years. Convicts were the “marginalized” persons of their times. When Catherine gained her ticket of leave, she may have worked as a laundress in Sydney for some years. In the Sands Directory for 1871, she is listed as doing this work. Catherine had been a convict on the worst convict ship which ever sailed, the “Elizabeth” of 1828. She had weathered the sea voyage, weathered the harsh treatment, moved on with her life as a worker and servant and

ended up with our community when it was in residence at “Subiaco”, Rydalmere. Catherine died at “Subiaco” on 8th October, 1871 and was buried at “Subiaco” with our nuns and many of the priests. Most likely she had not made provision for her burial because she was poor. She was one of the donors for the Mortuary Chapel which was built at the entrance to the Cemetery. Catherine bore the face of Christ for our nuns. Her brief details and the lives of all women convicts who were on that ship, have been written up by Suzanne Voytas in her Book, “Elizabeth 1828 – the worst and the most turbulent. From Celtic Cross to Southern Cross.”

Suzanne has this to say in her “dedication” page: “To forget one’s ancestors is to be a brook without a source, a tree without a root.” This is an old Chinese Proverb.

So, may we remember that our community has a tradition, a long tradition of seeking out Christ in the marginalized of society. Catherine’s story is one of many in our history.

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SECTION FIVE: LITURGY

Advent begins a new liturgical year: The Sunday Liturgy readings take Year C, and Weekdays take Year 2.

THE ‘O’ ANTIPHONS BEGIN ON DECEMBER 17th.

CHRISTMAS MIDNIGHT MASS AT JAMBEROO ABBEY IS PRECEDED BY THE TRADITIONAL MONASTIC VIGIL AT 10.45 p.m.

Feasts and Solemnities:

November 29: First Sunday of Advent

November 30: St. Andrew, Feast

December 3: St. Francis Xavier (Memorial)

December 7: St. Ambrose (Memorial)

December 8: THE SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION and the beginning of the JUBILEE YEAR of MERCY.

December 25: Christmas Day.

December 26: St. Stephen, first martyr.

December 27: Feast of the Holy Family – St. John the Evangelist is omitted.

December 28th: The Feast of the Holy Innocents

December 29: 5th Day in the Octave of Christmas.

December 30th: 6th Day in the Octave of Christmas.

December 31st: 7th Day in Octave of Christmas.

Vespers on this day is First Vespers of the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God.

JANUARY:

01: Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God.

02: Sts Basil and Gregory Nazianzen. (Memorial).

03: SOLEMNITY of the EPIPHANY of Our Lord.

10: BAPTISM OF OUR LORD (feast). This is a special DAY OF REMEMBRANCE IN OUR COMMUNITY, - the first Abbatial Blessing in 1983.

11: St. Aelred of Rievaulx

- 15: Sts. Maurus and Placid, Disciples of St. Benedict.
- 17: Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C.
- 21: St. Agnes (Memorial)
- 24: Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C.
- 25: The Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul
- 26: AUSTRALIA DAY (Solemnity)
- 28: St. Thomas Aquinas (Memorial)
- 31: Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C.

FEBRUARY

- 02: Titular Solemnity: PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE – the title of our Abbey.
- 05: St. Agatha (Memorial)
- 06: Sts. Paul Miki and Companions (Memorial)
- 07: 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C.
- 10: ASH WEDNESDAY. The Solemnity of St. Scholastica is omitted this year.

SECTION SIX: YOUR COMMUNITY

Thank you to all our Oblates who have sent a donation for the new bee project. We have received over 34 donations for bee hives. This project is underway and training days have already been held.

This edition of “Pax – With the Gospel For Our Guide” goes to the printing room in October, so we will miss news of the next Group Ceremony in November. However, your ceremonies will be mentioned in the Lenten Booklet which goes out at the beginning of February, 2016.

Our prayers are with Oblate Elaine (Brigid) Guy. Her husband Peter, also an Oblate, died on 9th August this year. His Funeral was held at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church Narrabeen on 13th August. Peter did not take an oblate name. He took the title “of the Cross”, after St. John of the Cross. He was also devoted to St. Mary of the Cross, our first Australian Saint. He died the day after her Feast Day.

On August 12th, Sr. Hilda’s mother died. Eileen Scott was surrounded by her six children as she went forth from her earthly pilgrimage. Sr. Hilda was deeply moved by the fact that two of our Oblates were present at her mother’s funeral. We thank you supporting her.

Our prayers are with all Oblates who are ill at this time – those in nursing home care, those in palliative care, those coming through surgery for cancer and those with chronic illness.

Unless you ask me to mention you by name, I refrain from doing so, because of privacy.

The only person who has asked for prayer is Oblate Judith (Magdalen) Pickering. Her Mother Maxine (Francis), also an Oblate, is 90 and has serious cancer. We hold Maxine in our prayer.

We also remember Bill Manly, the brother of our Sr. Agnes. Bill has cancer and is battling to come through.

HAPPY FEAST DAY TO:

Robert Arsenius Daly, for December 6.
Sr. Maureen Therese Woodhouse, and Oblate Wanda (Immaculata) Kwan, for December 8.
Oblate Catherine (Thomas) Corban, for December 10.
Oblates Doreen (Adele) O'Sullivan and Elizabeth (Adele) Quinn for December 24.
Oblate Robert (Stephen) Basham, Andrew (Stephen) Davies and Graham (Stephen) McCall for December 26.
Sarah Louise (Emanuelle) Kirsop for Christmas Day.
Sr. Joanna Bagot, Anders Gottfrid (Johannes) Nilsson, and Therese Veronica (Johanna) Nilsson, for December 27.
Fr. Nigel Thomas Wright, for December 29.
Marie (Basel) McGuckin, for January 2.
Fr. Dixon Seraphim Kenny and Helen Seraphim Shorter, for January 2.
Oblate Rob (Aelred) Johnstone for January 11.
Oblates Aaron (Placid) McElhone and John (Placid) Limbourn for January 15.
Oblate John (Anthony) Dunne, for January 17.
Sr. Agnes, for January 21.
Brian (Robert) Brennan for January 26.
Lynne Scholastica Middleton, Rhonda Scholastica Kinsela, Jacqueline Scholastica Collins and Cathy Scholastica Ransom for February 10.

Anniversaries of Oblation:

December 3rd: Patrick Martin (Hildegard) O'Connor, and Beppi Lioba O'Connor.
December 6th: Robert Arsenius Daly.
December 10th: Catherine Mary Thomas Corban.
December 11th: Irene Gertrud Bajda, David Alan Brendan Mumford.
December 15: Kathryn Mary Proctor.
December 16: Rev. Kevin Bede Walsh.
December 16: Jeanette Magdalen Murray.
December 18: Deborah Martha Pike.
Epiphany: Sr. Carmel Mechtilde Leighton, Graham Stephen and Mary Hildegard McCall.
January 9: Elaine Mechtild Alinta.
January 11: Rob Aelred Johnstone and Elizabeth Aelred Sheppard.
January 15: Donna Sturgeon, and John Placid Limbourn.
January 18: Joan Augustine Lorente, Carmen Teresa Lorente, Georgette Sharbel Najjar, and Peter Bernard Sheehan.
January 21: Robyn Hildegard Wein.
January 30: Catherine (Thomas More) Lindsay.
February 3: Ingrid (Ruah) Cheng.
February 3: Therese (Anthony) Harding.
February 4: Rev. Ann Clare Dittmar-McCollim.
February 8: Shirley Clare Basham and Robert Stepehn Basham.
February 10: Ellen Benedicta Woods.

ANNIVERSARIES OF SOLEMN PROFESSION:

Sr. Maria Frances Slade, Sr. Hildegard Ryan and Sr. Naomie Ruth Varnakulasingham
February 2nd.

Sr. Clare Gamble and Sr. Joanna Bagot: February 10th.

Let us pray for those who anniversary of death occurs during this season.

DECEMBER:

05.12.1913 Dame Mary Teresa Parkinson
06.12.1961 Dame Mary Winifred Price
07.12.1923 Dame Mary Romanus McKee
07.12.2013 Oblate David Aelred Russell
10.12.1911 Dame Mary Philomena Hay
11.12.1985 Oblate Carmel Condon
14.12.1998 Oblate Richard Damian Lequaietermaine
14.12.2014 Oblate Valerie Mary Cecilia Proverbs
18.12.1855 Sr. Mary Gertrude Nagle
19.12.1969 Sr. Mary Benedict Walsh
21.12.1985 Sr. Teresa Gillin
22.12.1950 Sr. Mary Anthony O'Connor
23.12.2012 Sr. Immaculata Briglia
29.12.1908 Sr. Mary Martha Comyn
30.12.1949 Mother Mary Joseph Brady, third elected Prioress of the Community.

JANUARY

02. 1.2004 Oblate Elizabeth of the Trinity Corcoran
07. 1. 1882 Mother Mary Bernard Hawthornethwaite
10. 1.1985 Sr. Moira Bradshaw
12. 1.1923 Sr. Mary Catherine Connolly
17. 1.1923 Sr. Mary Baptist Schahill
20. 1.1913 Sr. Mary Placid de Castella
20. 1. 2008 Oblate Dr. Carney (Bede) Fisher.

FEBRUARY

02. 2.1899 Mother M. Benedict Lett,
02. 2. 2015 Obl. Fr. Ronald Bede Harden.
08.02.1973 Sr. Mary Bernadette Hughes.

SECTION SEVEN: SAINTS

All Oblates who seek to serve Christ in the marginalized are living saints. Saints are those who reflect the light of Christ in our midst. When you light a candle for one person each day, you are a saint. A candle can be a coin, a sandwich, a cup of coffee and kind word, a hand-shake, a kind deed, a listening ear, a phone call to a lonely person, knowing you'll be kept on the phone interminably. No "light" is too small. A kind word is just as valuable as a telethon which raises thousands of dollars. Goodness is goodness. An Oblate who reaches out to Christ in the marginalized is a saint in our midst. We thank God for you.

SECTION EIGHT: FOR REFLECTION

“The need to belong is probably the least-recognized need of the human heart. Our need to feel connected is dense and desperate and if we do not feel that we belong – to a place, to a person, to a community – we are rootless, abandoned and miserable.” WE ARE MARGINALIZED. (Quotation from “Day by Day”, a treasury of meditations on mindfulness to comfort and inspire. **The author:** Sr. Stanislaus Kennedy was the first religious sister ever to receive an honorary Doctorate in Law from Trinity College, Dublin. She joined the Irish Sisters of Charity in 1958 and has become one of the most influential social innovators of her time. She founded Focus Ireland, the Immigrant Council of Ireland and Young Social Innovators, and established “The Sanctuary” – a place of peace and meditation set in the heart of Dublin City Centre. www.srstan.ie).

**Included with this edition of “Pax” is a leaflet advertising Retreat Weekends for 2016. If you are reading this online, the Retreat program will soon be uploaded and can be found in the upper menu bar under “Retreats”. In the light of so many weekends, we have not added Oblate Meetings.
NO OBLATE MEETINGS IN 2016.**

OBLATE RETREATS: These are included in the leaflet and will soon be online.

OBLATE CEREMONIES FOR 2016:

Saturday 13TH February, 2016 at the 9.00 a.m. Mass

Saturday 19th November, 2016, at the 9.00 a.m. Mass

The final meeting for 2015 is December 12th.