

**PAX – WITH THE GOSPEL FOR OUR GUIDE**  
**LENT 2016**

**SECTION ONE: READING AND REFLECTION**

***Misericordiae Vultus*, the Official Letter of Pope Francis for the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy (St. Paul’s Publications)**

The Lenten journey is not about “giving up things”, it is about be-coming more than we are. The Lenten journey is a spiritual journey, given to us each year as a time of renewal. Let us think about be-coming more than we are, not about depriving ourselves of “things”. When we limit the Lenten journey to a time of deprivation, we lose the whole meaning of the Season.

While I am using the Letter of Pope Francis as our focus for “becoming more than we are” this Lent, it is also imperative that you purchase or download your own copy and sit with it for *Lectio Divina*. When you respond to the “call” of this Letter, you will surely become “more than you are”, - more merciful, compassionate, generous, big-hearted, understanding, kind, and more balanced.

The motto for this Holy Year which began on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015, is “Merciful like the Father”.

*Day after day, touched by God’s compassion, we also can become compassionate towards others.* (# 14, page 23). This quotation is in the context of paragraph 14, which has just focused on the prayer which begins every “hour” of the Liturgy of the Hours: “O God, come to my aid, O Lord, make haste to help me.” In our community, we sing “our” and “us”, not “my” and “me”. As Oblates of St. Benedict, those committed to some or all of the “hours”, we need to take this third paragraph of #14 for *Lectio Divina*.

#15 is brutally challenging for all of us: the call to open our hearts to those living on the outermost fringes of society, the fringes created by contemporary society – those who have no voice – their voice is drowned out by the indifference of the rich.

It is the call to heal wounds with the oil of consolation, to bind them with mercy, cure them with solidarity. We are being called to behold our brothers and sisters in the human family, who are denied their dignity. And – we are compelled to heed their cry for help, to reach out to them so that they feel the warmth of our presence, our friendship, our fraternity. We are being called to break down barriers of indifference. Barriers of indifference mask hypocrisy and egoism.

After this great challenge, the Pope addresses corporal and spiritual works of mercy. So, as we “lectio” and “ruminate” on this letter, we then need to respond to it in our living (the evangelization part of *Lectio Divina*). Those of you who receive *Lectio Divina* from me each week in the post or by email, or by accessing it on our website are well versed in this monastic practice. We read, reflect, listen to the Holy Spirit praying within us, take time to be still, respond in a practical way, and then continue to carry the Word (with its challenge) in our hearts.

It is a way of life, not a method of prayer. We carry the text as we work, walk, garden, ride the bus or train, even share insights with a spouse or a friend or a son or daughter.

## SECTION TWO: FURTHER READING AND REFLECTION

I recommend for further reading:

“The Church of Mercy”, by Pope Francis. (Loyola Press, Chicago. 2014, English text published under licence from Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, London, UK Paperback edition, ISBN-13: 978-0-8294-4168-0).

For those who like something simpler or more in the area of prayer, there is “A Year of Mercy With Pope Francis”, Daily Reflections, edited by Kevin Cotter. (Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46750; 1-800-348-2440;

ISBN: 978-1-61278-835-7. Inventory No. T1642.

Please take one of these books for Lent or another book of your choosing, one which focuses on mercy, compassion, social justice.

**We also suggest that you pray with the Liturgy Readings for each Sunday. These can be found on our website in the Prayer Section under Lectio Divina. They are posted the week before the particular Sunday to enable you to read the texts and reflect on them. There is a little background to each Reading and a shared response. This weekly exercise may help or you may prefer to go to *Lectio Divina* your way.**

## SECTION THREE: THE RULE OF ST BENEDICT – FOCUS ON MERCY

Chapter 27 of our Holy Rule oozes mercy and compassion.

Pray with it, take it for *Lectio Divina*. Take it on board.

Every part of the Rule is written for each follower of St. Benedict.

Chapter 64, verse 10 is a dynamic proclamation: The abbot/abbess should always let MERCY TRIUMPH OVER JUDGMENT.

Do we live this? Do we let mercy triumph over judgment?

Chapter 66, verse 4 is addressed to the Porter of the Monastery and to each monastic “heart”. So, do I provide a prompt answer with the warmth of love when a person knocks or a poor person calls out? Or, as Pope Francis puts it, do the poor feel the warmth of our presence, our friendship, our fraternity? Perhaps the barriers of our “indifference” are too strong.

St. Benedict writes a lot on “serious faults” and on “correction” and “discipline”. Pope Francis may call a “serious fault” a lack of MERCY, national or international INDIFFERENCE to the plight of Asylum Seekers and Refugees.

Even as I write this booklet well ahead of Lent, I hear the news ringing in my ears – another boat load of Asylum Seekers off the coast of Turkey – more people drowned, among them children.

In this Jubilee Year of Mercy, the following words will hopefully challenge us:

“The idea that the spiritual life is only for the strong, for those who don’t need it anyway, is completely dispelled in the Rule of Benedict. Here spiritual athletes need not apply. Monasticism is for human beings only. What we have in monasteries [and in all who seek the monastic way] are just people, simple people who never meet their own ideals and often, for want of confidence and the energy that continuing commitment takes, abandon them completely. Then, our role, the Rule of Benedict

insists, is simply to try to soothe what hurts them, heal what weakens them, lift what burdens them and wait. The spiritual life is a process, not an event. It takes time and love and help and care.” (Sr. Joan Chittister, osb “The Rule of Benedict, Insights For the Ages”, page 100)

## **IT TAKES MERCY, WHICH MUST TRIUMPH OVER JUDGMENT.**

### **SECTION FOUR: COMMUNITY HISTORY**

During the Depression of the 1890s and in decades before that, whenever a family couldn't afford school fees, our nuns took students for no cost. That meant they boarded at our school and were given the same benefits as those who could afford to pay. The 1890s brought terrible drought, strikes and the rise of trade unions which prevented shearers from doing their work in the outback. Many country people gave up and walked off the land. They couldn't afford to send their children away to school. We also took an indigenous girl into our school in that era and she died from one of the many viruses which claimed the lives of children of that time. She was buried in our cemetery at Subiaco, Rydalmere. The first act of mercy is that she was given an education by the family on whose property she lived at Cootamundra.

### **SECTION FIVE: LITURGY**

ASH WEDNESDAY: February 10<sup>th</sup>.

March 17: St. Patrick (Solemnity in Australia)

March 19: St. Joseph (Solemnity)

March 21: THE PASSING OF ST. BENEDICT (Not celebrated this year because it is the Monday of Holy Week).

March 25: THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD. (Transferred to April 4<sup>th</sup>)

March 20: PALM SUNDAY

March 24: HOLY THURSDAY

March 25: GOOD FRIDAY

March 26: HOLY SATURDAY

March 27: EASTER SUNDAY

### **SECTION SIX: YOUR COMMUNITY**

**Oblate Maxine Francis Pickering died on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015.** Maxine was surrounded by her family. She had been ill for some time, and was finally released from her suffering. Maxine was born on 9<sup>th</sup> October, 1924 and lived a long and full life. Maxine was one of the first persons to come forward and begin the Oblate Program after we moved to Jamberoo in 1989. Her daughter Judith, is also an Oblate of our community.

#### **Congratulations to:**

Oblate Laynie (Rita) Pullen and Oblate Noella (Mary Emmaus) Sheerin. Both women completed Doctorates in Nursing in 2015.

Congratulations to the following persons who made Oblation at the end of 2015:

**November 14:**

Rose De Angelis, of Canberra. Rose took the name “Francis”.

Kathleen Daysh, of Trinity Beach, Qld. Kathleen took the name “Catherine” (of Siena).

Monica Hunt of Forster, NSW. Monica took the name “Augustine”

Brenda Williams of Mount Martha, VIC. Brenda took the name “Joan”

Robert Hamilton, of Bellawongarah, close to the Kangaroo Valley on the south coast of NSW. Robert kept his own name and is taking Robert of Molesme as his patron.

Felicity Giles, of Cronulla, NSW. Felicity took the name “Benedict”.

**December 5:**

Sandra Cooper of Hoppers Crossing, Vic. Sandra took the name “Julian”.

**Anniversaries of Oblation: FEBRUARY**

Ellen Benedicta Woods – for February 10<sup>th</sup>.

Garry Benedict Gleeson, Marie Catherine Gleeson, Frances Mildred Cormack, Kathleen Lioba Mason, Ken Ambrose Halliday, Elizabeth Adele Quinn, Patrick Bede Quinn, Maureen Frances Williamson, Margherita Hilda Cappetta, Russell Benedict Collins and Jacqueline Scholastica Collins,

Patricia Julian Morgan, - for February 11<sup>th</sup>.

Sylvia Dymphna Honeysett, for February 12<sup>th</sup>.

John Gregory Wynen and Robyn Teresa Wynen for February 13<sup>th</sup>.

Benedetta Marina Di Mattia, for February 14<sup>th</sup>.

Giovanna Scholastica Tesoriera and Matthew Edward Dowsey, for February 17<sup>th</sup>.

Vincenzo Gerardo Cappetta, Elaine Brigid Guy, Sidney Michael Rice, Wendy Lucy Browning, Barbara Elizabeth Jamieson, for February 17<sup>th</sup>.

M. del Carmen Teresa Boharull-Vila – February 18<sup>th</sup>.

Christine Frances Angus – Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>.

Patricia Hildegard Benedict – Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>.

Fr. Henry Bernard Byrne – Feb. 21<sup>st</sup>.

Alice-Anne Hildegard MacNaught – Feb. 21st

Robert Anselm Cashman and Colleen Augustine Cashman – Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>.

**MARCH**

Donn (Gregory) Corcoran – March 5.

Nazin (Hildegard) Atalay – March 7.

Ian (Godric) Thomas – March 15

June (Benedicta) Jenkins – March 16

Bernard Quinn – March 19

Cecilia (Teresa Thomas) Larkin, and Carol (Mary of the Cross) Xuereb – March 21

Elizabeth Mary Hildegard Muntz, and Jennifer Ancilla Shirvington – March 25.

**Solemn Profession Anniversaries:**

**February 10:** Sr. Clare Gamble and Sr. Joanna Bagot. For Sr. Clare, this is her Silver Jubilee day, but because it is also Ash Wednesday, the celebration for this Solemnity is on Monday, February 8<sup>th</sup>.

**March 2:** Sr. Mechtild Crawford

## **FEAST DAYS DURING LENT.**

### **Happy feast day to:**

Lynne Scholastica Middleton, Rhonda Scholastica Kinsela, Jacqueline Scholastica Collins and Cathy Scholastica Ransom – for February 10. This year, 2016, February 10<sup>th</sup> is Ash Wednesday. We have transferred this Solemnity to Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February.

John Gregory Wynen, for February 13<sup>th</sup>.

Peter Damian McElhone, Ira Peter Wilson – for February 22<sup>nd</sup>, St Peter Damian.

Donn Gregory Corcoran, for March 5<sup>th</sup>.

Maureen Frances Williamson, Catherine Frances Turek, Susan Frances Carter, Isabel Frances Vicary, Kevin Francis Vicary, Helena Frances O’Neill, Elizabeth Frances Fahey, Denise Frances Hill, Julie Frances Redican, Christine Frances Angus, for March 9th, St. Frances of Rome.

Maria Matilda Curtis, and Kay Matilda Myers for March 14th, St. Matilda

Rev. Ian Patrick Crooks, Irene Patricia McAllister, for March 17th, St. Patrick.

Mary (of the Annunciation) Wyatt, Bernadette (Mary) Maher, Jenny (Ancilla) Shirvington, Sr. Ancilla Leech, Sr. Hannah, Massy-Greene, for March 25th, The Annunciation of the Lord. This Solemnity has been transferred to the first available day after Holy Week and the Easter Octave, and is therefore celebrated on Monday, April 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **Necrology:**

Sr. Mary Mildred Symthe, 26<sup>th</sup> February, 1931.

Oblate Bernie Daniel Fitzgerald, 7 March, 2004

Sr. M. Cecily Bourke, 9 March, 1984

Sr. Mary Jones, 11 March, 1995

Most Rev. John Bede Polding, 16 March, 1877

Oblate Peter (Bernard) Smith, 17 March, 2009

Sr. M. Margaret Gallagher, 18 March, 1913

Sr. M. Mechtilde O’Grady, 20 March, 1888

Oblate Sydney (Stephen) Long, 21 March, 2008

Sr. Maria McKenzie, 21 March, 1997.

Sr. Mary Bridget Kelly, 22 March, 1960.

Sr. Marguerite Burke, 25 March, 1997.

Sr. Mary Clare Gabriel, 26 March, 1910.

## **SECTION SEVEN: SAINTS**

Read again the “Life and Miracle of St. Benedict” by Pope St. Gregory the Great, and re-visit the mercy, compassion, kindness and empathy of our Patron Saint.

## **SECTION EIGHT: For Reflection**

“What I want is mercy, not sacrifice.” (Jesus).