

**PAX - WITH THE GOSPEL FOR OUR GUIDE
ADVENT/CHRISTMASTIDE (2017-2018) &
ORDINARY TIME THROUGH TO ASH WEDNESDAY, FEB 14, 2018.**

Pax-With the Gospel for our Guide is sent out to oblates and 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.

SECTION ONE: READING AND REFLECTION

For many years now, our Sr. Elizabeth (91), has been saying: "St. Benedict says, 'Whoever you are...'" She has encouraged many sisters over many decades, to hold on, and not (in the words of Benedict), run away at the outset, because it is hard-going. St. Paul had the same message: "Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world...to bring to nothing things that are, so that no one can boast in the presence of God. God is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our sanctification and our redemption." (1 Corinthians 1:26-31). You may prefer a different translation from your own bible.

Everyone should be given a chance. Certainly, St. Benedict gave every person a chance, (be it the sons of noble families or ex-barbarian army men), asking only one question: "Is there anyone here who yearns for life and desires to see good days? (Ps. 33:13) If I answer "yes" to the question, God speaks further to me, saying: "If you desire true and eternal life, keep your tongue free from vicious talk and your lips from all deceit; turn away from evil and do good; let peace be your quest and aim. (Ps. 33:14-15). Here is the challenge of the Benedictine life, because it encompasses the rest of the Benedictine Rule: silence, love, (tough love from time to time), compassion, kindness, *lectio divina*, the liturgy of the hours, the way we work, our preference for Christ above all; good zeal; mutual obedience. With your copy of the holy rule, take up some of these texts and do a personal assessment on where you are now in your Benedictine journey in accordance with the commitment you made however many years ago, answering St. Benedict's question in the prologue. It's a way of nailing things down.

The first assessment would be one's tongue. This assessment could be done side by side with the letter of James chapter 3:6-18. I have prayed so often and so long with this text over my life, and yet I so easily fall back into things I wish I hadn't said.

Are there things you wish you hadn't said? Negative words you've passed on?

St. Benedict targets tongues and lips first up. No doubt he too had trouble. The fact that he targets tongues and lips and the damage they are capable of doing, seems to say that if, with God's help, we master this area, then we will be fit to go on.

SECTION TWO: FURTHER READING AND REFLECTION.

Because Advent is the beginning of a new Liturgical year, may we ask: How is our prayer holding up?

The two pillars of prayer in the Benedictine Rule are:

- Liturgy of the Hours
- Lectio Divina

One might ask: “Where is the Eucharist?” The editors of RB 80 have a lengthy explanation on this subject. We can sum it up as: “*Communio* occurs in RB 38:2 in the phrase *post missas et communionem*. Adalbert de Vogue (probably the greatest scholar of the Benedictine Rule in the 20th century), seems to think this phrase means after Mass and Communion. Since the invitation of St. Benedict is to everyone who yearns for life, so the invitation to become an Oblate of St. Benedict is to all who yearn for life. The Oblate community is an ecumenical community. The prerequisite is that one is baptized a Christian. Obviously, one wouldn’t want to become an oblate if this wasn’t first in place – the mark of Christ on each of us. While some faiths have the Eucharist, all faiths have the lived *Communio* in their ministry to the Body of Christ in the sick, the lonely, the disabled, the poor, the socially isolated, the homeless and hungry. If we take the Incarnation seriously, then we have this in common.

Christmas and the holiday season is the time which challenges us to reach out to Christ as present through the Mystery of the Incarnation. We all want to stay with the nativity scene in our churches, but what of Jesus present in the other who needs me and calls me forth? What am I doing this Christmas and this holiday season to give a little of my time to the needy?

SECTION THREE: ABOUT THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT

Two books by Bl. Columba Marmion are available in our bookstore. These are deeply spiritual, probably best if you are a good way along your Benedictine journey:

1. Christ the Life of the Monk – it will lead you to the riches of the Benedictine Rule.
2. Christ the Life of the Soul – a more general work of Christological beauty.

If you yet haven’t read “The Life and Miracles of St. Benedict”, it is available in our store now. (The Life and Miracles of St. Benedict, by St. Gregory the Great, Dom Edmund J. Luck, Ed).

A challenge is also available for the more studious of our oblates:

1. “A Critical Study of the Rule of Benedict, Vol 1” by Adalbert de Vogue, the greatest scholar of the Benedictine Rule in the 20th century.
2. A beautiful book is: “Portraits of Monastic Oblates”, edited by Linda Kulzer and Roberta Bondi.

Other books include:

1. “Wisdom. The Good Life – Wisdom, Liturgy and the Rule of St. Benedict”, by Irene Nowell.
2. “A Tree Full of Angels: Seeing the Holy in the Ordinary” is truly beautiful. It is written by Macrina Wiederkehr osb.
3. Our list wouldn’t be complete without a reference from Joan Chittister. Her book, “The Breath of the Soul, Reflections on Prayer”, is most enlightening and encouraging, no matter where we are on our journey.

SECTION FOUR: COMMUNITY HISTORY

Our last entry in this section (Pax Pentecost II), finished with Foundation Day, February 2nd, 1849. So, we carry on with the next installment of our history: The women who entered on that day were: **Alicia Lett** and **Elizabeth Burrows**. These two women entered to be Choir Nuns. Alicia became Sr. Benedict. She was one of seven children of Helen and John Lett, Irish Immigrants, who came to

Australia on the “Ann” of 1839. Elizabeth (Eliza on the shipping records) was the second youngest child of Stephen Burrows and Mary Kennedy of Co. Longford, Ireland. She was four years old when her family emigrated on H.M.S. “Cleopatra” in 1828. Elizabeth became Sr. Placida, the feminine of Placid, one of Benedict’s disciples (Feast Day – Jan. 15).

Susannah and Margaret Diamond who entered to be Lay Sisters, were born in Ireland. It is possible they came to Australia and worked as domestic servants in Sydney before entering our community. Their ages, 36 and 45 respectively would indicate a previous working life. Alicia Lett’s mother was a talented, educated woman, and ran a school at 15 Upper Fort Street in Sydney. It was advertised as a school for young women. Agnes Hart, one of the first women to enter the Good Samaritan Congregation, was educated at this school.

SECTION FIVE: LITURGY

Advent begins a new Liturgical Year: The Sunday Liturgy readings take Year B, and Weekdays take Year 2.

The ‘O’ Antiphons begin on December 17.

Christmas Midnight mass at Jamberoo Abbey is preceded by the traditional monastic Vigil at 10.45 p.m. You are invited to this traditional Vigil and then to the singing of carols preceding Midnight Mass. The Vigil takes an hour, the Carols just fifteen minutes before Midnight.

Feasts and Solemnities

December

03: First Sunday of Advent

07: St. Ambrose (Memorial)

08: The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Solemnity)

10: Second Sunday of Advent

13: St. Lucy (Memorial)

14: St. John of the Cross (Memorial)

17: Third Sunday of Advent. This day the Greater Advent Ferias begin. (O Antiphons at Vespers).

24: Fourth Sunday of Advent. Vespers on this day is the First Vespers of Christmas.

25: Christmas Day

26: St. Stephen, first martyr.

27: St. John the Evangelist

28: The Feast of the Holy Innocents

29: 5th Day in the Octave of Christmas.

30: 6th Day in the Octave of Christmas

31: The Feast of the Holy Family

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)

07: Solemnity of the Epiphany of our Lord

08: 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

14: Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

- 21: Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B. (St. Agnes is omitted this year).
- 25: The Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul
- 26: Australia Day (Solemnity)
- 28: St. Thomas Aquinas (Memorial)
- 29: Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B. (St. Thomas Aquinas is omitted this year).

February

- 02: Titular Solemnity: Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple – the title of our Abbey.
- 04: Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B
- 06: Sts. Paul Miki and Companions (Memorial)
- 10: St. Scholastica – Solemnity
- 11: Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B. (Our Lady of Lourdes is not celebrated this year). – World Day of Prayer for the Sick.
- 14: Ash Wednesday
- 18: First Sunday of Lent, Year B.

SECTION SIX: YOUR COMMUNITY

This edition of Pax – With the Gospel For Our Guide went to the printing room, at the beginning of November. Therefore, those who made commitment as Oblates on November 11, are not included here. You will be remembered in the Lenten edition of our Oblate Booklet.

My apologies to Julie Connah, who made her Oblation on November, 2016. I omitted her name from the Oblate Booklet. Julie took the name “Elizabeth”. I am always happy to be reminded if I leave out your name for your anniversary or your feast day. I rely on your telling me.

Death Notices

Oblate Sidney (Michael) Rice died in the Lord, on September 13. His daughter rang to inform us of her father’s death. We were grateful to know.

Oblate Beth Muntz farewelled her beautiful mother, Margaret Jean, who went over into the arms of God on 21st July this year.

Michael Armstrong went to God on August 31st. Michael was the beloved brother of Oblate Colleen Hines.

We have a number of Oblates whose wives/husbands are very ill. I don’t have the freedom to mention their names, but trust that we as community will hold them before the Lord.

We have other Oblates who are down-sizing their accommodation and therefore are grieving as they face leaving the home where their family grew up. Please pray for them.

A few Oblates are out of work, as more and more people are made redundant from the workplace.

The very good news is that a number of Oblates are taking on prayer groups, large or small, praying together, doing *Lectio Divina* together, meditating together.

Oblates who live in Sydney are becoming involved in ecumenical meetings, reaching out to people of other faiths.

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.

Oblates Ethel (Emmanuel) Parriwa-Murray and Sarah Louise (Emanuelle) Kirsop for December 25, Christmas Day.

Oblates Robert (Stephen) Basham and Graham (Stephen) McCall for December 26.

Sr. Joanna Bagot, Anders Gottfrid (Johannes) Nilsson, Therese Veronica (Johanna) Nilsson and Neville (John) Feeney, for December 27.

Fr. Nigel Thomas Wright, for December 29.

Marie (Basel) McGuckin, for January 2.

Fr. Dixon Seraphim Kenny, Helen Seraphim Shorter and Sandra Seraphim Temple 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 3: Patrick Martin (Hildegard) O'Connor and Beppi Lioba O'Connor

December 5: Sandra (Julian) Cooper

December 6: Robert Arsenius Daly

December 10: Catherine Mary Thomas Corban

December 11: Irene Gertrud Bajda and 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

December 28: Maria Teresa Elisabetta Gambino

January 7, Solemnity of the Epiphany: Sr. Carmel Mechtilde Leighton, Graham Stephen and Mary Hildegard McCall

January 9: Elaine Mechtilde 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 Stephen Basham
 February 10: Ellen Benedicta Woods
 February 11: Patricia Julian Morgan, 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, Jacqueline Scholastica Collins
 February 12: Sylvia Dymphna Honeysett
 February 13: John Gregory Wynen and Robyn Teresa Wynen
 February 14: Bendetta Marina Di Mattia

After February 14, we are in the season of Lent. The Lenten Oblate booklet will record anniversaries and feast days relevant to that time.

Anniversaries of Solemn Profession

February 2: Sr. Maria Frances Slade, Sr. Hildegard Ryan and Sr. Naomie Ruth Varnakulasingham.
 February 10: Sr. Clare Gamble and Sr. Joanna Bagot.

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

December:

3.12.2015 Oblate Maxine Francis Pickering
 5.12.1913 Dame Mary Teresa Parkinson
 6.12.1961 Dame Mary Winifred Price
 7.12.1923 Dame Mary Romanus McKee
 7.12.2013 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

2. 1.2004 Oblate Elizabeth (of the Trinity) Corcoran
 7. 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

2. 2.1899 Mother M. Benedict Lett,
 2. 2. 2015 Obl. Fr. Ronald Bede Harden.
 8. 2.1973 Sr. Mary Bernadette Hughes.

26.02.1931 Sr. Mary Mildred Smythe

SECTION SEVEN: SAINTS

From St. Teresa of Calcutta: “There are so many sorrows in today’s world...due to hunger, dislodging, all kinds of illnesses. I am convinced that the greatest of all sorrows is to feel alone, to feel unwanted, deprived of all affection. It consists in not having anyone, in having gotten to the point of forgetting what human contact is, what human love is, what it means to be wanted to be loved, to have family...may we all be instruments of peace, love and compassion [this Christmas season].

SECTION EIGHT: FOR REFLECTION

Being a fan of G.K. Chesterton, I risk sharing this poem once again. It is a long time since I have shared it. It may hold the key to what is wrong with a world gone mad, as many of us say these days:

“Oh, how I love humanity,
With a love so pure and pringlish.
And how I hate the horrid French
Who never will be English!

The International Idea,
The largest and the clearest,
Is welding all the nations now,
Except the one that’s nearest.

This compromise has long been known,
This scheme of partial pardons,
In ethical societies
And small suburban gardens –

The villa and the chapels where
I learned with little labour.
The way to love my fellow-man
And hate my next-door neighbour.”

Let us ponder seriously on our prejudices, if we have any, over Christmas and the holiday season. There will be times when prejudice rears its ugly little head. May we be vigilant. We can’t profess to be followers of Jesus and at the same time to be prejudiced against anyone.

Oblate Retreats:

16 - 18 February, 2018.

9 - 11 November, 2018.

Most Oblates who make a booking, arrive on the Friday evening. If you want to make your commitment as an Oblate of our Community, the ceremonies are held on the Saturday morning at the 9.00 a.m. Mass. If you live locally, or you can drive to the Abbey, you are welcome to attend one or more of the talks. Best to be here for 9.00 a.m. Mass on either of the days and then you can be sure of the times, as things often happen which cause changes.

A question that is frequently asked is: “If I am not an Oblate, may I attend the Oblate Retreat or the talks etc.?” The answer is “Yes”. The Oblate community is not a secret society, but a Monastic community. We are always open to whoever God may send to us at any given time.

Final Notes

Due to the high cost of postage, our Annual Newsletter will once again be published online. It will appear towards the end of December and can be found at www.jamberooabbey.org.au in the section called “News & Events”.

Thanks to Sr. Clare who keeps on printing the Oblate Booklet after I have written it. Thanks to Oblate Cathy Milgate and her husband Les, who see the process through to the Post Office each time.

Thanks to all our oblates who send donation towards the production of our booklet, including the oblate who simply said: “I want to pay enough for every oblate on your address list.” What generosity!

*MAY THE PEACE OF CHRIST
FALL GENTLY INTO YOUR HEARTS
THIS CHRISTMASTIDE
AND MAY YOU BE GRACED WITH STRENGTH
FOR ANOTHER CALENDAR YEAR.
PLEASE KNOW THAT YOU ARE ALWAYS
IN OUR HEARTS AND OUR PRAYER.*

