

PAX – WITH THE GOSPEL FOR OUR GUIDE
Advent/Christmastide (2018-2019),
and
Ordinary Time through to Ash Wednesday, March 6, 2019.

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".

This booklet is also on our website and is sent personally to oblates who prefer to receive it by email.

SECTION ONE: READING AND REFLECTION

We had the privilege this year to have Fr. Michael Casey lead our annual retreat. As usual with Michael Casey, there was much wisdom to savour, and spiritual nourishment given as gift from his monastic storehouse.

In his reference to 'the practice of silence, or recollection of the presence of God, for the purpose of continuous prayer', one particular phrase was given to me by the Holy Spirit, and I have remained with this text for the last three weeks:

"The eloquent silence of words left unsaid."

I am taking these words as a theme for Advent, Christmastide, and Ordinary Time, up to Ash Wednesday.

"The eloquent silence of words left unsaid."

The word 'eloquent', used in this context means powerful, or expressive, or fluent. So a silence which is eloquent is a silence which is powerful, expressive, fluent.

This quotation, adapted from the Rule of St. Benedict chapter 6, verse 2, instructs us thus:

"Here the Prophet indicates that there are times when good words are to be left unsaid out of esteem for silence." So, do we have to talk all the time, about every situation and person?

I have never opened this out before in the 28 years I have been Oblate Director.

In so doing, I am referring to all of us as monastics: nuns, oblates, monks. We are all monastics, living Benedictine monastic life, and equal before God. The term "monastic" eliminates a certain class distinction. Benedict, in his Rule, will not tolerate class distinction.

Back to Michael Casey and his words spoken ever so gently: “The eloquent silence of words left unsaid.”

To begin with, Benedict cites Psalm 38[39], verses 2-3: “I said, I have resolved to keep watch over my ways that I may never sin with my tongue.”

The spirit of the quotation Michael used, is essential for all who aspire to live Benedictine monastic life.

Let us translate the word “eloquent” and say it differently:

“The powerful silence of words left unsaid.
The expressive silence of words left unsaid.
The fluent silence of words left unsaid.”

Powerful, expressive, fluent – all three meanings hold their own storehouse of wisdom.

All three meanings are crucial in this discussion.

But each of us will identify with one of three.

The one I identify with is “fluent”.

When I leave words unsaid for the good of another, then life flows from my silence.

When I dive in with hurtful words, I wish I hadn’t spoken at all.

So, the eloquent silence of words left unsaid is about discernment. When is it appropriate to speak about some particular matter?

When is it not appropriate?

When is it appropriate to utter words that are encouraging, supportive, affirming?

When is it not appropriate?

These are the daily questions which we ask and answer.

When to speak?

When to keep silent?

“The eloquent silence of words left unsaid.”

This piece of wisdom consists of seven words.

In the Sacred Scriptures, the number seven means fullness or completion. Nothing more is necessary.

SECTION TWO: FURTHER READING AND REFLECTION

There is a hymn with which we may be familiar. The first line is: “Immortal invisible, God only wise...”

The second verse describes God and God’s Presence as “un-resting, un-hasting and **silent as light**.”

When I remain silent, for the good of another, my silence is not only fluent, but also gives off light. It may show another the way forward.

The opening of a flower is a silent miracle.

When I remain silent, out of respect for another, I may be helping that person to open out into full bloom.

The gentle squeezing of the hand of another at a time of grief is a gesture of solidarity. Words are not appropriate, so we leave them unsaid.

When I can hardly wait for another person to finish speaking so that I can jump in, I haven't really understood St. Benedict's teaching.

The Benedictus Antiphon for Lauds of the Holy Family is as follows:

"While gentle silence enveloped all things, and night in its swift course was half gone, your all-powerful Word, O Lord, leaped down from heaven..."

The "night" as used in this text is the night of darkness – the coming of Divine Light dispels the darkness of the world.

"Rise and shine forth for your light has come, and upon you breaks the glory of the dawn." (Epiphany – text from Isaiah).

The Word made flesh, our Saviour, was the final word God spoke. God had spoken words through the prophets of the Old Testament and through the immediate forerunner of Jesus, John the Baptist.

With the coming of Jesus, the era of darkness ended, and the era of Light began, a Light which no darkness can overcome. (John 1)

SECTION THREE: ABOUT THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT

Chapter six of the Rule of St. Benedict has the heading, "Restraint of Speech", not "Silence". We are familiar with Proverbs 18:21, cited by St. Benedict: "The tongue holds the key to life and death."

A footnote in RB 80 alerts us to the fact that "restrictions placed on speech, even for a mature monastic, must be understood in reference to that person's role as a disciple. Disciples are called to listen. When we refrain from even good words, we are disciples listening to the words of God as they come to us through others."

SECTION FOUR: COMMUNITY HISTORY

One of the obituaries in this edition, is that of Eliza Nagle, who became Sr. Mary Gertrude upon entering our monastic community. She became a Catholic in June 1850. Because of this she suffered serious rejection from her family. She was impoverished and already ill, when she sought, and was given refuge by our community. Her father repeatedly threatened Archbishop Polding (Head of the Church of Sydney and beyond, from 1835 until his death

in 1877), that he would remove his daughter from the convent. Her father exchanged letters about her conversion and his objections, with the prior of St. Mary's in Sydney. These letters were exchanged in the Sydney Morning Herald. It is not surprising then, that this poor young woman died at the age of 20, from tuberculosis, on December 18, 1853.

SECTION FIVE: LITURGY

Advent begins a new liturgical year: **The Sunday Liturgy readings** take **Year C**, and **Weekdays** take **Year 1**.

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 2: First Sunday of Advent

December 3: St. Francis Xavier (Memorial)

December 7: St. Ambrose (Memorial)

December 8: The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Solemnity)

December 9: Second Sunday of Advent

December 13: St. Lucy (Memorial)

December 14: St. John of the Cross (Memorial)

December 16: Third Sunday of Advent

December 17: This day, the greater Advent Ferias begin

The 'O' Antiphons are used at Vespers each day for the *Magnificat*.

December 23: Fourth Sunday of Advent

Vespers on this day is the First Vespers of Christmas

December 25: Christmas Day

December 26: St. Stephen, first martyr

December 27: St. John the Evangelist

December 28th: The Feast of the Holy Innocents

December 29: 5th Day in the Octave of Christmas

December 30: The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph (Feast)

December 31st 7th day in the 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)

06: SOLEMNITY of the EPIPHANY of Our Lord

11: St. Aelred of Rievaulx

13: Baptism of Our Lord (feast). This is a special day of remembrance in our community, - the first Abbatial Blessing in 1983.

17: St. Anthony of Egypt

- 20: Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C
- 21: St. Agnes (Memorial)
- 24: St. Francis de Sales (Memorial)
- 25: The Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul
- 26: AUSTRALIA DAY (Solemnity)
- 27: Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C
- 28: St. Thomas Aquinas (Memorial)
- 29: Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C
- 31: St. John Bosco

FEBRUARY

- 02: Titular Solemnity: Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple – the title of our Abbey.
- 03: Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C
- 05: St. Agatha (Memorial)
- 06: Sts. Paul Miki and Companions (Memorial)
- 10: Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year
- 11: Our Lady of Lourdes – World Day of Prayer for the Sick).
- 14: Sts Cyril, and Methodius (Memorial)
- 17: 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C
- 22: The Chair of St. Peter, apostle (Feast)
- 23: St. Polycarp, (Memorial)
- 24: 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

MARCH

- 03: 8th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C
- 06: Ash Wednesday

SECTION SIX: YOUR COMMUNITY

Congratulations to the three Oblates and to Jemma Taylor who took the challenge of living with us during this past year, and shared daily in the Liturgy of the Hours, Mass, Lectio Divina, housework, and remunerative work. One of the four Oblates, Patricia (Julian) Morgan has almost completed the 12 months she promised. Felicity Giles kept her promise to do three months. We are grateful.

Patricia Benedict Thomas did from February until May, and was called to care for her ageing parents. It has been a hard year for her. Please keep her in prayer.

Congratulations to Ralph Kershler, who made his oblation of August 22. Ralph has been coming to the Abbey for twenty years with students from St. Leo's College at Wahroonga. He has been waiting for the right time to become an oblate. He took the name Placid for two reasons: Placid fell in the water – he must have been a naughty boy! Falling into the water has been the story of Ralph's life, although many of us would disagree with that. He also remembered our Sr Placid who died in 2008. She was the nun with the golden smile.

One of Ralph's students from long ago is Xavier MacDonald, who is now a physiotherapist and has set up his practice in Jamberoo. He went from school to University, and then worked with children at the Children's Hospital in Randwick. He went to India to help in Mother Teresa's hospital, and has used his skills in a number of needy areas within Australia and overseas. He became a father for the first time this year.

Congratulations to: Christopher Francis Capper, Christine Mary Gilbert, Gabrielle Brigid Nicholson, Tristram Moses Ellicott and Reshika Mary Magdalene Fernando, who made their commitment as Oblates on November 10, at the 9.00 a.m. Mass. May the Grace of God be showered upon them as begin to live out the commitment to prayer and Holy Reading, promised at this ceremony.

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.

Elizabeth (Adele) Quinn for December 24.

Oblate Ethel (Emmanuel) Parriwa-Murray, for December 25.

Obl. Robert (Stephen) Basham, 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, 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

Gabrielle Brigid Nicholson, for February 1.

Lynne Scholastica Middleton, Rhonda Scholastica Kinsela, Jacqueline Scholastica Collins and Cathy Scholastica Ransom, and Mary Scholastica Drury, for February 10.

John Gregory Wynen for February 13.

Peter Damien McElhone, Ira Peter Wilson, for February 22.

Anniversaries of Oblation:

December 3rd: Patrick Martin (Hildegard) O'Connor, and Beppi Lioba O'Connor.

December 5th: Sandra (Julian) Cooper

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
December 28: Maria Teresa Elisabetta Gambino.
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 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.
February 17: Edward Dowsey, Vincenzo Gerardo Cappetta, Elaine Brigid Guy, Wendy Lucy Browning, Barbara Elizabeth Jamieson.
February 18: M. del Carmen Teresa Boharull-Vita, and Robert Anselm van Oort.
February 20: Christine Frances Angus, and Patricia Hildegard Benedict
February 21: Fr. Henry Bernard Byrne
February 27: Robert Anselm Cashman and Colleen Augustine Cashman
March 5: Donn Gregory Corcoran

MARCH 6 begins Lent, so anniversaries after 5th will be in the Lenten booklet.

ANNIVERSARIES OF SOLEMN PROFESSION:

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

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

DECEMBER:

03.12.2015 Oblate Maxine Francis Pickering
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.
 29. 1. 2018 Oblate Irene (Patricia) McAllister

FEBRUARY

02. 2.1899 Mother M. Benedict Lett,
 02. 2. 2015 Fr. Ronald Bede Harden.
 08. 2.1973 Sr. Mary Bernadette Hughes.
 26.02.1931 Sr. Mary Mildred Smythe

SECTION SEVEN: SAINTS

From the wisdom of Philotheus of Sinai...

Nothing is more ruinous than talkativeness and more harmful than an uncontrolled tongue; and nothing is more destructive and disorganizing to the treasure of the soul. For whatever we succeed in building in ourselves every day is destroyed by much talking, and what we collect together with great labour our soul dissipates again through this disease of the tongue.

Why not make this holiday season and time free of negative talk and gossip?

SECTION EIGHT: FOR REFLECTION

From the writings of Fr. Karl Rahner...

"Do not drift into the great days on which we celebrate our redemption, in a listless state, an everyday form of mind. Prepare yourself. Have the courage to be alone. Only when you have really achieved that...can you hope to present a Christmas heart, a heart that is a gentle, patient, courageous, a delicately affectionate heart, to those whom you are striving to love. Allow yourself to meet yourself in silence.. "while gentle silence enveloped all

things, and night in its swift course was half gone, your all-powerful word leapt down from heaven..."

Fr. Karl Rahner also uses the word "eloquent" in relation to "silence". It can be found in one of his homilies for All Souls Day. Those who have gone before us are the ones who are ALIVE. And God "grants them this favor: that their silence will become the most eloquent word of their love for us, the word that will accompany our love home to them, into their life and their light." This insight may help someone at this time.

OBLATE RETREATS:

16 & 17 March, 2019.

16& 17 November, 2019.

OBLATION CEREMONIES TAKE PLACE DURING MASS ON 16 March and 16 November.

If you are ready to make a commitment as an Oblate of the community, you need to write a formal letter to Sr. Hildegard, Oblate Director, and I will then pass it on to Mother Abbess. In this letter, you need to state your reasons for the request. You also need to write your Rule of Life. This would contain your commitment to some or all of the Liturgy of the Hours, to prayer and Holy Reading (Lectio Divina), stating as far as possible, times in each day. Added to this would be your work in the vineyard of the Lord: Visitation, or a Eucharistic Minister who takes the Blessed Sacrament to the sick in homes and nursing homes; work with the disabled; a grandmother who looks after grandchildren on a regular basis, and teaches them the important values in life: love, and giving without counting the cost, courtesy etc.

Most Oblates who make a booking, arrive on the Friday evening. If you are eligible for your commitment, it is good to arrive on Friday evening, it gives our Mistress of Ceremonies a chance to arrange practice.

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.

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 THE NEW YEAR BE BLESSED
WITH LIGHT, STRENGTH AND JOY!



Image by Mary Southard csj