

**PAX – WITH THE GOSPEL FOR OUR GUIDE
POST-PENTECOST II, 2019.**

September, October, November.

More specifically, this edition of “Pax” spans the period from September 1 until the first Sunday of Advent.

SECTION ONE: READING AND REFLECTION

Let us study and reflect on a new theme for these three months: Discernment (also called “discretion”. Brother Hugh Feiss, in his book, “Monastic Wisdom”, offers some insight when he says that “possibly no quality has been more characteristic of the monastic tradition than discretion or discernment.” (Monastic Wisdom, page 113).

And then we come to St. Benedict, whose Rule for Monasteries is classed by some people as not tough enough because of his moderation in food, clothing, work, and the daily *horarium* (timetable) As we are aware, Benedict was born into a decaying empire – the Roman Empire. His Rule was written with this reality in mind. Everything was not black and white. And today, it is not black and white. Those who want a black and white Rule need to look elsewhere – not in the direction of the Rule of Benedict.

One of the texts which speaks to me, and to all those who have been in authority in our community is the following: *A hunter in the desert saw Abba Antony enjoying himself with the brothers and he was scandalized. Wanting to show him that sometimes it is necessary to take care of the needs of the brethren, the old (wise) Abba said to him, “Put an arrow in your bow and shoot it. So he did. The old wise Abba said to him, “Shoot another.” And he did. Then the old wise Abba said to him, “Shoot yet again.” And the hunter answered, “If I bend my bow too much I will break it.” Then the old wise Abba said to him, “It is the same with the work of God. If we stretch the brethren beyond measure, they will soon break. Sometimes it is necessary to come down to meet their needs.” When he heard these words, the hunter was pierced by compunction.*

Stay with this text and reflect over and over again.

St. Antony of Egypt speaks again on the subject of discernment: “Truly my children, I want you to know that there are many who have pursued asceticism throughout their life, but lack of discernment killed them.

Amma Syncletica, desert Mother says that, “It is essential for us to govern our souls with all discretion, not to seek our own will, but to obey our spiritual mother in faith.”

This raises the topic of “accountability”. We need to be accountable to someone, sharing our own response to God through the Rule of St. Benedict.

Do we have spiritual directors, spouses, friends, partners – those who listen to our journey, and either support our ascetical practices, or scale them down to a more realistic way?

Examples: If I am a diabetic, I mustn’t avoid meals, just because I want to fast.

If I have teenage children, and have to drive them to extra-curricular activities, I need to be alert on the road, not fainting from lack of food.

The question to ask is: If I do this (whatever it is), what are the effects for me, for my family?

Ways of asceticism which we could well take on board are:

Taking the “elderly” to their appointments. And these are occasions when we can practise the virtue of “patience” – a Benedictine virtue as well.

Cooking a meal for a young mother in the parish, because she has three small children and needs a helping hand. A casserole is always welcome, especially in winter. Choosing to speak positively and avoiding negativity and negative criticism.

There are a thousand ways to embrace asceticism.

There is one way to carry it out: discretion or discernment.

Whatever asceticism you chose as a “monastic”, test it, put into place the process of discernment, asking basic questions:

Is it right for me to take on this asceticism?

Is it right for me to take on extra prayer at night, when I need to be with my family?

Is it right for me to attend two Masses on a Sunday, when I need to help with Sunday dinner?

Is it right to buy take-away food three nights a week, because I am visiting a nursing home and helping to feed the sick and dying?

A personal sharing on my part, could be the reality for a number of us: My father was heavily into St. Vincent de Paul ministry up to four nights a week. He was a natural carer and the work he did was admirable. But, one day my mother asked him when he was going to spend some time with his family. We, his children, didn’t really know him because his ministry took him to the Matthew Talbot Hostel, and into the homes of the poor. He would receive a phone call to come to work because so & so was ill and couldn’t work that night. My father always said “Yes”. If I was discerning that situation, I would suggest that he go out one night a week, so that he could be with the family the other six nights – a growing family needs their father.

St Benedict teaches:

“All things should be done in moderation because of the faint-hearted.”

“The abbot should arrange all things moderately...”

“The sick who are physically weak are allowed to eat meat to restore their strength.”

“Taking into account these and other examples of discretion, the mother of virtues, the abbot should arrange all things so that the strong have something to strive for and the weak are not driven away.”

SECTION TWO: CONTINUING OUR READING AND REFLECTION

St Bernard of Clairvaux talks about the virtue of discretion, saying: “...intense zeal runs wild without the guidance of discretion.”

In her commentary on the Rule of Benedict, St. Hildegard on Bingen sums up the importance of discretion. Hildegard says: “Benedict was a closed fountain (Song of Songs 4:120), who poured forth his doctrine in the discretion of God. For he drove in the sharp nail of his doctrine neither too high nor too low, but in the middle of the wheel, so that each one, whether strong or weak or sick, would be able to drink according to his purpose.”

SECTION THREE: ABOUT (CONCERNING) THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT

The editors of RB80 have the following to say about discernment (discretion): The author (St. Benedict), understands human nature, both its grandeur and its weakness, respects it and wants to facilitate its organic growth. He [Benedict], knows that human persons and their actions are of infinite variety and complexity, and that individual problems require individual solutions.

The abbot or abbess must exercise discretion, that ‘mother of virtues...which enables one to select, out of all possible choices, the one that best fits present circumstances.’ (RB 80, page 93).

SECTION FOUR: COMMUNITY HISTORY

An example of discernment:

From our community Chronicles, the following story is earliest instance of a discernment. “Sr. Evangelista (Joanna) Donovan was professed with Sr. Walburge (Ruth Woods) Wallis, on the Solemnity of St. John the Baptist, 1856. Joanna Donovan was restless, and difficult in community. In 1864 (22 April), the year of the first election of a Prioress, by the nuns in solemn vows, Polding wrote, in a letter to a friend in England, that Joanna Donovan was one of the two thorns afflicting the young Prioress (Walburge Wallis).¹ In another letter of 1870, he wrote: “They have had trouble at *Subiaco* from S. M. Evangelista Donovan. I have arranged for her to go to the Sisters of Mercy, Albury, as a visitor.² If she has a vocation I shall apply to Rome for transfer.” He did apply for this transfer in March 1871.³

As the real Superior of the *Subiaco* community, Polding’s course of action in the case of S.M. Evangelista Donovan, manifests an understanding and fidelity to the Rule of Benedict, in an *obsculta* (listening) which “let mercy triumph over judgment” (James 2:13, RB 64:10), and did not “crush the bruised reed.” (RB 64:14. Isaiah 42:3).

Discernment in the Rule of Benedict is one of the duties of the Abbot. It is found in Chapter 2, verses 16 and 21, the first chapter on the Abbot. It is reiterated, though differently, in chapter 63, verses 1 and 5, where it is stated that “monks keep their rank in the monastery according to the date of their entry, the virtue of their lives, and the **decision of the Abbot.**”⁴

Finally, in chapter 64, verse 17, the abbot is to “show forethought and consideration in his orders, and whether the task he assigns concerns God or the world, he should be discerning and moderate, bearing in mind the discretion of holy Jacob, who said: *If I drive my flocks too hard, they will all die in a single day* (Gen. 33:13).

If you are a Parent, you will have gone through this exercise many times:

Your child isn’t working as hard as he or she should be. What can we do? We can help that particular child to find a way(s) to bring out the best in her or him. What we’ve come to know as a “gap year” has saved many a teenager from just collecting

¹ Walburge (Ruth Woods) Wallis was elected as the first Prioress three years after the departure of the *Princethope* nuns.

² This arrangement, on the part of Polding, is an early example of discernment which later, after the Second Vatican Council, became essential for the acceptance of candidates for monastic and religious life.

³ The Sisters of Mercy in Albury did not accept her for profession and no further information is held in the Archives of Jamberoo Abbey. Joanna’s sister, Catherine, entered the Goulburn Sisters of Mercy, and was the first Australian born woman to do so. (JAA – a small note in the Chronicles, for 1865).

⁴ RB 1980.

the dole. Parents I have spoken to, say the gap year changed their son or daughter for the better because they had to work to earn a living. They found their feet, working in England, or America, or in Europe. They saw what life is about. When they return to Australia, they have changed for the better.

Then there is the situation where your son or daughter is looking for work. What brings out the best in them? Are they good with small children, teenagers, adolescents. How can they find work in these areas? What training do they need? Teaching, Nursing, Physiotherapy, Physical Education, Flying, a Paramedic, the Police Force? A friend told me that her grandson has autism, and yet is one of the best out front fighters in the Rural Fire Service on the South Coast of N.S.W.

And then there are the medical professions and scientific research. The sky is the limit. If we can help find one young person a career, that is so good for our world. I had the opportunity in 2018, to encourage a young woman to learn the pipe organ. She was keen and didn't know how to go about it. So, in a couple of years, she will be ready to find a position for a musician in a number of parishes throughout Australia. She belongs to the Anglo-Catholic tradition.

SECTION FIVE: LITURGY

SEPTEMBER:

01: 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time. It is also St. Giles which we will miss this year. And it is also the Day of Prayer in Praise of Creation – a day to reflect on the state of the earth, and its flora and fauna, on oil spills in the oceans, on nuclear testing, and on wars which desecrate the earth, and human beings. This day was introduced by Pope Francis in 2015.

03: St. Gregory the Great. (Feast)

06: Spring Ember Day – day of prayer and penance. (Within Australia).

08: 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time. Birthday of Our Lady is not celebrated this year.

13: St. John Chrysostom.

14: Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

15: 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Our Lady of Sorrows is omitted this year.

17: St. Hildegard of Bingen (Feast)

20: Sts. Andrew Kim Taegon, and Paul Chong Ha-sang and companions. (Memorial)

21: St. Matthew. Feast

22: 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

27: St. Vincent de Paul (Memorial)

28: St. Lioba. Feast.

29: 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time. The feast of the Archangels is omitted this year.

30: St. Jerome (Memorial).

OCTOBER:

01: St. Therese of Lisieux. (Feast)

02: Guardian Angels. Memorial.

03: Blessed Columba Marmion. Feast in Benedictine Houses.

04: St. Francis of Assisi. Today is also World Pets' Day and Animal Welfare Day.

06: 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

07: Blessed John Henry (Cardinal) Newman (Memorial)

10: English Missionary Bishops (from the time of Augustine of Canterbury): Memorial.

12: St. Mechtild von Hackeborn - Feast or Memorial in Benedictine communities.

- 13: 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B
- 15: St. Teresa of Avila. (Memorial).
- 17: St. Ignatius of Antioch. Memorial.
- 18: St. Luke (Feast)
- 20: 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time.
- 27: 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

NOVEMBER:

- 01: All Saints. Solemnity.
- 02: Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day).
- 03: 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time.
- 04: St. Charles Borromeo (Memorial)
- 09: Dedication of the Lateran Basilica. Feast. The Lateran Basilica is the official Church of the Pope.
- 10: 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time. (Pope St. Leo the Great is not celebrated this year).
- 13: All Saints of the Order of St. Benedict.
- 14: All Souls of the Order of St. Benedict.
- 16: St. Gertrud the Great. Feast.
- 17: 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B.
- 21: Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is the Annual Feast for all Presentation Sisters. It is also *Pro Orantibus Day*. This day was proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI on November 19, 2006, as the day dedicated to remembering cloistered religious.
- 22; St. Cecilia (Memorial).
- 24: Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. Last Sunday of the Liturgical Year.

December 1st is THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT, and the beginning of a new Liturgical Year.

The Sunday Cycle is Year A. The Weekday Cycle is Year II.

SECTION SIX: YOUR COMMUNITY

On 16 August, Oblate Christina Camron was found dead – having died during the night. Christina Camron has been looking after Dorothy Taylor who is now 95. It was a case (many years ago) of Dorothy needing a home and a family. Christina took Dorothy in her family, because Christina found her feeding Christina's mother, while her mother was in hospital. Dorothy found a home and family and love because of Christina's magnanimity, and deep dedication to Christ, and to the Scriptures. She and Dorothy prayed the Psalms together most days.

There is a little tragedy surrounding this situation. Christina was an asthmatic and also had a bad heart. A spate of juvenile crime had made Christina and Dorothy very stressed: rubbish bins turned over and rubbish scattered, external lights smashed, fruit and eggs thrown at the house. The police told Christina to get a dog. She did this, but the crime did not stop. Their rubbish bin and front fence was decorated with graffiti. Oblate Dorothy Taylor has been taken in by Christina's family. The dog "Rosie" has gone back to Christina's brother who has a property in western New South Wales. Christina wrote to me once a month for the last two years. This is why I am familiar with the juvenile crime. Her letters were full of it. It was causing her terrible stress. I spoke to Wade, her grandson, on 17th August and he was very upset. He told me that his mother would look after "Dotti" as they call her.

Oblate Commitments for November:

If you are planning on making a commitment to the community on November 16, at the 9.00am Mass, you need to write your formal letter to Mother Abbess, stating why you want to do this. You also need to submit to me (Sr. Hildegard), your Rule of Life. This need only be a simple outline of how you intend to live out your life as an Oblate of St. Benedict. It is good if you can incorporate your apostolic outreach to others. Perhaps the other is wife or husband who is ill. One oblate works with handicapped children. Another oblate goes now and then to relieve his sister who cares 24/7 for her husband who has had a stroke at the age of 49. Please include with your Rule of Life, the time you give to *Lectio Divina* and some of the Liturgy of the Hours. We are reminded that the two foundations of prayer in Benedictine life are: *Lectio Divina* and the Liturgy of the Hours. Most of us add some personal prayer to this: the Rosary, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, Christian Meditation and Centering Prayer.

Attention to the following notice:

Abbess Hilda is asking for volunteers for the Shop on weekends. Already one oblate is here most Sundays and we are deeply grateful for this help.

You can contact me by email on oblatedirector@jamberooabbey.org.au if you are willing to help. Then I will give your name to our Abbess and you will be contacted with some dates. Probably it is Sr. Mary Bernadette who will give you the training needed.

Congratulations to Bernadette Packer from Albury, New South Wales, who made her oblation on 11 June this year. Bernadette took the name "Scholastica". Being visually impaired, Bernadette used an amazing piece of technology whereby she scanned the charter of commitment and then read it in braille. It was so wonderful – the fact that such technology is available. Bernadette brought her guide dog with her. He goes by the distinguished name of "Reuben". Reuben also received a medal of St. Benedict, who because of his love for God's creation, will certainly keep Reuben safe.

Blessings on your Feast Day:

SEPTEMBER:

01: Varcha (Giles) Sidwell, and Jill (Anna) Grienke

03: Lenka (Gregoria) Hill, and Donn (Gregory) Corcoran, The Most Rev. Brian (Gregory) Mascord.

04: Tristram (Moses) Ellicott

06: Wendy (Begu) Fisher-Hudson

06: Sr. Antonia Curtis

14: Sr. Veronica Chandler, and Sonia (Veronica) Pleines, Dorothy Veronica Guiliani Touzell.

16: Val Margaret Johnson.

17: Pam (Hildegard) Russell, Linda (Hildegard) Childs-van-Wijk, Patrick (Hildegard) O'Connor, Diane (Hildegard) Young, Beth (Hildegard) Muntz, Robyn (Hildegard) Wein, Mary (Hildegard) McCall, Elaine (Hildegard) Housen, Louise (Hildegard) McMahan, Anne (Hildegard) Morris Bannerman, Nazin (Hildegard) Atalay, Sr. Hildegard Ryan.

28: Rosie (Lioba) Jenkins, Gerardine (Lioba) Healy, Beppi (Lioba) O'Connor, Kathy (Lioba) Mason, Elizabeth (Lioba) Anderson, Rev. Sharon (Lioba) Baird

OCTOBER:

01: Jan (Therese) Clark, Fiona (Therese) Harris, Libby (Therese) Denny, Sr. Therese Gilmour.

03: Susan (Columba) Lambert.

04: Christine (Frances) Angus, Diane (Frances) Greenway, Rose (Francis) De Angelis, Eva (Francis) Leppard, and Christopher Francis Capper.

12: Elaine (Mechtild) Alinta, Sr. Carmel (Mechtild) Leighton, Sr. Mechtild Crawford.

15: Carmen (Teresa) Lorente, Robyn (Teresa) Wynen, Elizabeth (Teresa) Montgomery, Maria (Teresa) Elisabetta Gambino, Beate (Teresa Hildegard) Steller, Ewa Maria (Teresa) Komorowska.

16: Ruth (Hedwig) Huebner, Vincenzo (Gerrado) Cappetta.

25: Wilf (Ambrose) Moon, Ken (Ambrose) Halliday.

NOVEMBER:

16: Mother Mary Gertrud Barnes (Abbess Emeritus), Joan (Gertrud) Dray, Irene (Gertrud) Bajda, Rita (Gertrud) Schembri, Joan (Gertrud) Eldaher, Christine (Gertrud) Phillips, Nereda (Gertrud) Blake, Debi (Gertrud) Russell, Toni (Gertrud) Jenkins, Laura (Gertrud) Moya, Maria Elena (Gertrude) Zaragoza, Christine (Gertrud) Simons.

21: Kathryn (Mary) Proctor.

Anniversaries of Oblation:**SEPTEMBER**

03: Maree Basel McGuckin.

08: Lyn Hilda Yates.

09: Helen Therese (no surname on the charter of commitment).

14: Rev. Andrew Aidan Doohan.

15: Maria Elena Gertrude Zaragoza, Antonia Bede Zaragoza, Doreen Rita Mary Soballa, Monica Augustina Rodrigues, Geraldine Mary Benedicta Doyle.

16: Dean Bernard Godric Piryak.

22: Elaine Hildegard Housen, and Harry Gregory Housen.

24: Daphne Anne Spelter, Douglas Thomas Fitzpatrick, Brian Barnabas McKinlay, Brenda Joan Payne, Anne Hildegard Morris Bannerman,

29: Chantal Mary Benedicte Jacquier, Debra Benedicta Vermeer, Claire Benedict Lanigan, Judith Magdalen Pickering

30: Lindsay Samuel Alban Roe, and Vivien Teresa Hilda Arnold.

OCTOBER:

05: Diane Frances Greenway

14: Louise Hildegard McMahon.

17: Rev. Dixon Serafim Kenney, Wendy Mary Kenney. Philip Benedict Ryan, Gudrun Majella Muling, Paul Bernard Muling, Lilette Monica Louise, Helen Therese Subramanian

22: Janet Therese (of Lisieux) Clark

23: Beate Teresa Hildegard Steller.

27: Valerie Margaret Johnson

NOVEMBER

09: Diane Hildegard Young

11: Eva Francis Leppard, Matthew Hermann James Sebastian Tague and Ethel Emmanuel Paraiwa-Murray

14: Rose Francis De Angelis, Kathleen Catherine Daysh, Monica Augustine Hunt, Brenda Joan Williams, Robert (of Molesme) Hamilton, Felicity Benedict Giles.

15: Alan Bede Hickey, Amanda Mary Hickey, Pamela Hildegard Russell, John Antony Dunne, Irene Sutherland, Helena Frances O'Neill, Joan Gertrude Dray, Heather Bede Gorman, Mary of the Annunciation Wyatt, Claire Catherine Devlyn, Gerardine Lioba Healy, Pamela Henry Herrick, Ira Peter Wilson, Elizabeth Frances Fahey, Rita Romanus Gertrude Schembri, Linda Hildegard Childs-Van-Wijk, Jeff Boniface Smart, Margaret Hilda Watts, Denise Frances Hill, Ken Benedict Press, Rosie Lioba Jenkins, Brian Robert Brennan, Patrick Benedict Sleight.

17: Colleen Julian Hines and Victoria Rose Sultana

19: Helen (Anna) Howard, Lucy (Lioba) Sneesby-Tooth, Judith (Anne) Kendall

21: Christine Gertrud Simons, Patricia Benedict Thomas.

22: Catherine Anne Cecilia Milgate, Janet Therese Clark.

23: Majorie Teresa Carroll.

24: Fiona Therese Harris

26: Therese Julian Proctor, Arnold Boniface Struzina.

SOLEMNITY OF CHRIST THE KING: Mary Elizabeth Locke.

Solemn Profession Anniversaries:

OCTOBER:

11: Sr. Elizabeth Funder

NOVEMBER:

03: Sr. Magdalen Mather

16: Abbess Emeritus, Mary Gertrud Barnes.

Necrology:

SEPTEMBER

03: Sr. Mary Patricia Kelly.

07: Sr. Mary Chanel Pechy

12: Fr. Maurus O'Connell, who was chaplain for a short time from 1888, following upon the death of Fr. Bonaventure Curr. (chaplain from 1874-1888)

15: Oblate Patricia Mary Atkins.

21: Sr. Fidelis Williams

24: Sr. Gertrude Hishon

26: Sr. Marie Therese Malone

27: Oblate Philip Francis Bruno Price

OCTOBER

Sometime in October, 2016: Oblate Enid Fleming.

04: Oblate Ann Gertrud Anderson

08: Mother Mary Scholastica Gregory (one of two founding Mothers).

09: Sr. Mary Aloysius Carroll, Sr. Mary Scholastica O'Loughlin.

10: Sr. Dominic Fitzpatrick, Sr. Mary Magdalen Brown.

11: Mother Walburge Wallis (first elected Prioress - 1864).

11: Oblate Vivienne (Martha) Chiswell

- 13: Sr. Marie Vianney Loughnan
17: Fr. Bede Sumner. Fr. Bede lived at our monastery in the last years of his life. He freed our community from debt in 1864, and was therefore our most generous benefactor of the early decades of our history.
18: Oblate Aubrey Patrick Connors
19: Sr. Mary Joseph Diamond.
19: Sr. Placid Wilson, fifth elected Prioress.
19: Jennifer (Benedicta) Morrow-Canty
24: Oblate Leo (Thomas) Montgomery
25: Sr. Mary Lucy Kirsch
26: Sr. Mary Patrick Emblem.

NOVEMBER

- 03: Oblate John (of the Cross) Delaforce
09: Sr. Mary Stanislaus Dwyer.
21: Sr. Mary Francis Macklin.
23: Sr. Mary Veronica Hennessy
24: Sr. Mary Gabriel Enge
25: Sr. Mary Teresa Diamond.

SECTION SEVEN: SAINTS

From the wisdom of St. Francis de Sales on “discernment” or “discretion”. This quotation takes in all the meanings expressed in Section Eight: “It would not do for a bishop to adopt a Carthusian solitude, or the father of a family to refuse to save money like a Franciscan; for a workman to spend his whole time in Church.” These three examples show boldly that moderation is needed. Discernment is called for. St. Francis goes on to say that “...true prayer hinders no one. Rather it perfects everything. Whenever it is out of keeping with any person’s calling, it is false.”

SECTION EIGHT: FOR REFLECTION:

Discretion/discernment has a number of meanings. Probably one will speak to each of us and help us understand the true meaning of this virtue:

Discretion means:

Maturity, caution, responsibility, diplomacy, tact, good judgement.