

**PAX - WITH THE GOSPEL FOR OUR GUIDE
ADVENT/CHRISTMASTIDE (2020-2021), and ORDINARY TIME THROUGH
TO ASH WEDNESDAY, 27 February, 2021.**

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.

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

Br. Hugh Feiss, in his book "Monastic Wisdom", presents to monastic women and men the necessity of reclaiming the often lost art of reading. He says: "The application of this monastic tradition becomes steadily more difficult as audio-visual entertainments fill the hours once dedicated to reading...each person has to discern what particular mix of religious and secular reading and viewing is fit for them. A criterion of judgment might be whether the reading or viewing helps develop in this person the qualities of [a monastic] character." (pages 14 and 15). It is now Advent and Christmas time and holiday time when hopefully we have ample space to look at our habits of reading and watching.

St. Benedict teaches the importance of holy reading (*Lectio Divina*) in our daily lives, but in our own age (21st Century), there is "watching". We watch television news, programs, documentaries, the 7.30 report, or catch the late programs on iView. And of course, there is Netflix, Stan, Disney+, Hulu...the list of streaming platforms grows by the day!

The question worth pondering: is our reading well-balanced by our watching?

How do we categorize our reading material?

The Sacred Scriptures, monastic spirituality (e.g. Michael Casey's books, Br. Hugh Feiss); deep and lasting Gospel spirituality – Jean Vanier, Henri Nouwen, Karl Rahner, Cardinal Basil Hume and so many others.

Then: interesting books on a range of subjects: poetry, history, religion, biographies, autobiographies, fiction, recreational reading. About twenty years ago, a friend of mine once told me that 2,000 Sydney buses moved two hundred and fifty thousand people a day! Her interest was in statistics. She couldn't get enough of statistics. Her head was full of numbers!

Br. Hugh Feiss refers to Eugene Burke, a distinguished historian of theology, who "used to tell his classes that he learned the methods of historical research by reading murder mysteries." I understand that. My passion too is research, and I love the incident rooms in most of the British crime programs. Being in the incident room with DCI Vera Stanhope is certainly akin to research: I too keep asking that question about my own research: "What am I missing?"

Thomas Merton is quoted by Br. Hugh as saying that “in the interior life, there should be moments of relaxation, freedom and browsing.” Perhaps the best way to do this is in the midst of nature, but also in literature. We could also add art, movement and music. (From *Contemplation in a world of action*). Br. Hugh also offers us some life-giving wisdom of Sr. Joan Chittister: “Benedict wants us to do more than just read the Scriptures. He wants us to study them, to wrestle with them, to understand them, to make them part of us, to let them grow in us through the work of traditional and contemporary scholarship, so that the faith can grow green in us.” (Sr. Joan, “The Rule of Benedict” – in Br. Hugh’s book, page 36).

SECTION TWO: FURTHER READING AND REFLECTION

Over the years since our Oblation, or while we are preparing for our oblation, we will have built a *Lectio Divina* library. The books which have helped me the most are reference books: A good concordance; a Who’s Who of Biblical Characters, which is also a very thorough look into Biblical history; Vine’s Expository Dictionary of the Old and New Testament words. This book will pinpoint the exact word as it is used in context. The reference is noted, whether it be a Gospel verse, or a verse from the letters of Paul, or the other New Testament Letters. I also have Nigel Hepper’s *Plants of the Bible*. Hepper is responsible for the Biblical Garden at Kew in London. I still use Bauer’s three volume work, “Biblical Theology”. The entries in these volumes can be very long, but it is worth persevering. Bauer’s three-volume work may only be available on e-bay. Otherwise you need access to a Theological Library. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church is helpful when wanting the origins of certain feasts. The Epiphany is one such feast.

For all of us: In addition to reference books, there are the books which help us stay on course, grounded in Christ.

We may stay with these books for a while, and move on. But they remain in our *Lectio Divina* library. They are always there for our perusal, or for a return to their wisdom.

A series I have recourse to often, is the “Enfolded in Love” Series. The General Editor is Robert Llewelyn, and it includes:

Enfolded in Love (Julian of Norwich).

In Love Enclosed (Julian of Norwich).

The Dart of Longing Love (The Cloud of Unknowing)

An Oratory of the Heart (Brother Lawrence)

The Flame of Divine Love (Jean-Pierre de Caussade)

A Thirst for God (Francis de Sales)

Fire from the Flint (William Law)

Threshold of Light (The Celtic Tradition. (eds A.M. Allchin and Esther de Waal).

The Heart at Rest (St. Augustine). Introduced and edited by Dame Maura Sée (Darton, Longman and Todd, seem to have been the original publishers)..

“The Great Church Year” by Karl Rahner is also a favourite of mine.

SECTION THREE: ABOUT THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT

Chapter 48 bears the title: The daily manual labour. It is no accident that *Lectio Divina* (holy reading) is in chapter 48 which addresses manual labour. Remembering our Latin, we know that “manual” comes from “manus” the hand. Work with the hands followed by time for *Lectio Divina*.

I believe that *Lectio Divina* is also “work”. Benedict envisaged study of the Sacred Scriptures much more than sitting quietly with an open book. “Idleness is the enemy of the soul, therefore the community members should have specific periods for manual labour as well as for prayerful reading. *Lectio Divina* is hard work. It demands a listening and a response. It is not something airy-fairy, and spaced out – looking peaceful in a kind of spiritual coma. No. It is part of the hard work of a monastic woman or man. When the Holy Spirit leads us into stillness, that is a gift. It is not contrived, and has very little to do with us. And when we hear the call to respond, that is a gift. We must remember that our task is to take up the Sacred Scriptures with open hearts and open hands.

SECTION FOUR: COMMUNITY HISTORY

In 1941, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour, and destroyed much of the American navy and air force. America then entered the war. Our nuns prepared the cellars of the Macarthur House (our first home), with what would be needed in the event of an attack by the Japanese. The Chapter Room became a temporary Chapel (the old Macarthur Ballroom). Permission had to be obtained in order to move the Blessed Sacrament. The Government had ordered “lights out”, and so Midnight Mass was not celebrated.

SECTION FIVE: LITURGY

Advent begins a new liturgical year: The Sunday Liturgy readings take Year B, 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. Unfortunately, this year, due to Covid restrictions, the number of people who can join us is extremely limited and only available by booking through the Abbey. We look forward to welcoming everybody back in 2021.

Feasts and Solemnities:

November 29:	First Sunday of Advent
November 30:	St. Andrew (Feast)
December 03:	St. Francis Xavier (Memorial)
December 06:	Second Sunday of Advent.
December 07:	St. Ambrose (Memorial)
December 08:	The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Sol)
December 13:	Third Sunday of Advent.
December 14:	St. John of the Cross (Memorial)

December 17: This day, the greater Advent Ferias begin. The 'O' Antiphons are used at Vespers each day for the *Magnificat*.
 December 20: Fourth Sunday of Advent.
 December 25: Christmas Day.
 December 26: St. Stephen, first martyr.
 December 27: The Holy Family of Jesus Mary and Joseph. (St. John the Evangelist is omitted this year).
 December 28: The Feast of the Holy Innocents
 December 30: 5th Day in the Octave of Christmas.
 December 30: 6th Day in the Octave of Christmas.
 December 31: 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. World Day of Prayer for Peace.
 02: Sts Basil and Gregory Nazianzen. (Memorial).
 05: SOLEMNITY of the EPIPHANY of Our Lord.
 11: St. Aelred of Rievaulx
 12: 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
 19: Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Yr. B
 21: St. Agnes (Memorial)
 24: St. Francis de Sales. (Memorial)
 25: The Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul
 26: Within Australia, the Australia Day Liturgy replaces the Liturgy for the 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B (Ordo 2021).
 28: St. Thomas Aquinas (Memorial)
 31: St. John Bosco (Memorial)

FEBRUARY

02: Titular Solemnity: Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple – the title of our Abbey. Blessing of Candles and Procession take place on this day. This Liturgy takes the place of the Liturgy for the Fourth Sunday of the year B.
 05: St. Agatha (Memorial)
 06: Sts. Paul Miki and Companions (Memorial)
 09: Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B.
 10: St. Scholastica, sister of St. Benedict of Nursia. (Feast or Solemnity in Benedictine Houses. Memorial elsewhere).
 11: Our Lady of Lourdes – (World Day of Prayer for the Sick).
 14: Sts Cyril, and Methodius (Memorial)
 16: 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B.
 17: Ash Wednesday

SECTION SIX: YOUR COMMUNITY

We are sad that another Oblate has died. Barbara Catherine Mary Crawford made her Oblation on 7 January, 2007. She was received by the Abbess

Emeritus, Mary Barnes. Barbara (known to us as Barbie) was Sr. Mechtild's mother. She passed over into the hands of God on 30 October. Oblates John and Robyn Wynen have also been in a place of grief. John's mother, Anna, died on 23 August.

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, 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.
 Oblate 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, for February 10.
 John Gregory Wynen for February 13.
 Peter Damien McElhone, Ira Peter Wilson, for February 22.

Anniversaries of Oblation:

03 December: Patrick Martin (Hildegard) O'Connor, and Beppi Lioba O'Connor.
 05 December: Sandra (Julian) Cooper
 06 December: Robert Arsenius Daly
 10 December: Catherine Mary Thomas Corban
 11 December: Irene Gertrud Bajda, David Alan Brendan Mumford.
 15 December: Kathryn Mary Proctor
 16 December: Rev. Kevin Bede Walsh
 18 December: Jeanette Magdalen Murray
 18 December: Deborah Martha Pike
 28 December: Maria Teresa Elisabetta Gambino.
 Epiphany: Sr. Carmel Mechtilde Leighton, Graham Stephen and Mary Hildegard McCall
 09 January: Elaine Mechtild Alinta
 11 January: Rob Aelred Johnstone and Elizabeth Aelred Sheppard.
 15 January: Donna Sturgeon, and John Placid Limbourn
 18 January: Joan Augustine Lorente, Carmen Teresa Lorente, Georgette Sharbel Najjar, and Peter Bernard Sheehan.
 21 January: Robyn Hildegard Wein
 30 January: Catherine (Thomas More) Lindsay
 03 February: Ingrid (Ruah) Cheng
 03 February: Therese (Anthony) Harding.
 04 February: Rev. Ann Clare Dittmar-McCollim

08 February: Shirley Clare Basham and Robert Stephen Basham.
 10 February: Ellen Benedicta Woods
 11 February: Patricia Julian Morgan, Garry Benedict Gleeson, Marie Catherine Gleeson, Frances Mildred Cormack, Ken Ambrose Halliday, Elizabeth Adele Quinn, Patrick Bede Quinn, Maureen Frances Williamson, Margherita Hilda Cappetta, Russell Benedict Collins, Jacqueline Scholastica Collins.
 12 February: Sylvia Dymphna Honeysett.
 13 February: John Gregory Wynen and Robyn Teresa Wynen
 14 February: Bendetta Marina Di Mattia.
 17 February: Edward Dowsey, Vincenzo Gerardo Cappetta, Elaine Brigid Guy, Wendy Lucy Browning, Barbara Elizabeth Jamieson.
 18 February: M. del Carmen Teresa Boharull-Vita, and Robert Anselm van Ort.
 20 February: Christine Frances Angus, and Patricia Hildegard Benedict
 21 February: Fr. Henry Bernard Byrne
 27 February: Robert Anselm Cashman and Colleen Augustine Cashman

Anniversaries of Solemn Profession:

Sr. Maria Frances Slade, Sr. Hildegard Ryan, Sr. Naomie Ruth Varnakulasingham, Sr. Hannah Massy-Greene for 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 Lequaetermaine
 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
 26.12.2018 Oblate Bill (Benedict) Price
 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 Hawthorn (the title "mother" is a title of honour.
 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

The title "Dame" was adopted when a set of Constitutions was given to us from the Abbey of Beuron in Germany.

Dame for women; Dom for men. Dame and Dom distinguished Choir nuns and monks from Lay Sisters and Lay Brothers. After the Second Vatican Council, the title Dame was 'dropped' in our community, and 'Sister' was used.

FEBRUARY

02.2.1899 Mother M. Benedict Lett,
02.2.2015 Obl. Fr. Ronald Bede Harden.
08.2.1973 Sr. Mary Bernadette Hughes.
26.2.1931 Sr. Mary Mildred Smythe

SECTION SEVEN: SAINTS:

There are a number of saints to report on: All the doctors and nurses who contracted COVID-19, while attending to the patients, as they were brought into hospitals and clinics. These are men and women of our own times. They will never be canonised, but they should be. As long as we live, we will keep their memory alive.

SECTION EIGHT: FOR SERIOUS REFLECTION

The amount we give is not judged by the largeness of the gift, but the largeness of our hearts. (St. John Chrysostom). Fr. Kevin Ryan has used this quotation in "Real Life – a collection of columns, Volume 1, 1977-2001." Fr. Kevin wrote the column every week in the Catholic Leader, and helped countless people through his focus on reality. I bought his book some years ago; it was published by the Catholic Leader.

There is no information yet on Oblate retreats for 2021, or Oblations for 2021. We are only very slowly coming out of lockdown. We have been protecting our elderly sisters, and all those who are not elderly but vulnerable. It may be that I won't have the information about 2021 until the Lenten Pax is published.

Thanks to all our oblates who send donations towards the production of our booklet, including the oblates who want to pay for more than their own.

Thank you for the generous donations we have received while struggling to make ends meet. Our cottages are not yet opened, and our shop is closed.

The ABC radio has been reminding us that a new Australian Christmas Carol is being composed. The last ones we learnt were by Wheeler and James. We sang them at school in the 1960s, and they remain ever new. So before you plan the traditional roast Christmas dinner or look for the snow, recall the words of one such Australian Christmas Carol:

***The north wind in tossing the waves
And the red dust is over the town
The sparrows are under the eaves
And the grass in the paddock is brown,
As we lift up our voices and sing,
To the Christ-Child the Heavenly King.***

*The tree ferns in green gullies sway;
The cool stream flows silently by
The joybells are greeting the day,
And the chimes are adrift in the sky.
As we lift up our voices and sing
To the Christ-Child the heavenly king.*

Christmas blessings to all!



*We lift up our voices and sing,
To the Christ-Child the Heavenly King!*