

**PAX - WITH THE GOSPEL FOR OUR GUIDE
EASTER and EASTERTIDE, 2023**

SECTION ONE: READING AND REFLECTION

Theme: A school for the Lord's service.

These six words can be found in verse 45 of the Prologue to our Rule. We know them well. We have read them many times, but taking these words to heart can only be to our advantage.

Benedictine life is built on Christ, the Servant of God.

We look to Christ on our Benedictine journey because He is our Model for SERVICE.

Judith Sutera, osb, says that the "Latin word that is translated as "school" is far more than a place where the uneducated sit passively and receive information. In English, we refer to a 'school of fish' or a 'school of thought', in which the individuals have actually blended into a distinct entity." She continues: "Throughout the rest of the Rule of Benedict, we will often see Benedict return to the balance and paradox of hard work and great reward. Those who persevere will be those who stay in school – learning, training, mastering. (St. Benedict's Rule, An Inclusive Translation and Daily Commentary by Judith Sutera, osb. Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota)

SECTION TWO: FURTHER READING AND REFLECTION

A reflection on Easter, by a Carthusian Monk:

What is the Resurrection for me? The Resurrection is repose after the painful tension of the Passion, it is the stone rolled away from the tomb, it is the joyful cry of Mary Magdalen, it is the other side of death, become luminous. It is the certainty that life is already triumphant and that it will triumph in the end: the fundamental force that sustains the world and history is love, and love is stronger than death. It is only in the light of the Resurrection that I understand what life is...a seed of indestructible life is sown in our hearts, a love stronger than death is given to us, here and now."

SECTION THREE: ABOUT THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT

The only reference to Easter in the Rule of Benedict, is that it is "holy" (sanctum), and a "time" we long for. Lent in chapter 49, is understood as a preparation for Easter. The Latin in verse 7 of chapter 49 uses the words "desire", "joy", and "spiritual longing". In our deepest beings we long for the Resurrection of Jesus. We desire holy Easter from the depths of our hearts, and we rejoice in this awesome Mystery of Christ.

There are indirect references to Easter throughout the Rule, but the one in Chapter 49 is the most important.

SECTION FOUR: COMMUNITY HISTORY

We are now officially members of the English Benedictine Congregation. Following the release of the Vatican document “Cor Orans”, monasteries such as ours were asked to join a congregation, or have one imposed on them. We chose the English Benedictine Congregation which has monasteries in North and South America, Madagascar, and now, Australia Ireland and Sweden. There is much work for those on official committees. Thank God for Zoom! Nuns on committees can speak face to face.

SECTION FIVE: LITURGY

We are now in Eastertide

The Octave of Easter ends with the Liturgy of *Compline* (Night Prayer), on the Second Sunday of Easter - but strictly speaking, each Sunday in Eastertide is considered in terms of ‘solemnity’ in the Church, and in monastic communities. From Easter Sunday, April 9, until the Second Sunday of Easter, April 16, no Feast or *Memorial* is celebrated because of this SOLEMN week of Liturgy. The Liturgical Calendar for the rest of Eastertide is printed here for your reference.

April 23: Third Sunday of Easter

April 25: Anzac Day.

April 26: St. Mark the Evangelist (Feast).

April 28: St. Peter Chanel (Memorial)

April 29: St. Catherine of Siena (Memorial)

April 30: Fourth Sunday of Easter

Mary 02: St. Athanasius.

May 03: Sts. Philip and James (Feast)

May 07: Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 13: A day to honour Blessed Julian of Norwich

May 14: Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 21: The Ascension of the Lord

May 24: Our Lady Help of Christians

May 25: St. Bede of England

May 26: St. Philip Neri (Memorial)

May 28: PENTECOST SUNDAY

SECTION SIX: YOUR COMMUNITY

In the Easter Pax last year, I had to tell you all the sad news that our chaplain, Fr. Paul Gurr O.Carm, was leaving us after 31 years.

The chaplain who replaced Fr. Paul is Fr. Wayne Stanhope O Carm. He is a person of prayer and seasoned by life’s experiences – the highs and the lows – he has been there and understands. The people of Cooparoo in Brisbane can vouch for his giftedness. He was Parish Priest there, on and off, for 30 years.

Fr. Wayne is having some surgery (not major) in Holy Week, so Fr. Paul will be with us for Palm Sunday. An apology: I have been in hospital since January 20th. I was just beginning to pray about the Lenten Pax, when I fell at 3.30 a.m. that morning, (Jan. 20), and sustained a compound fracture of the right ankle. My surgeon was Dr. Andrew Wines, who is a foot and ankle specialist. He operates in the Mater Hospital (North Sydney).

Srs Ancilla and Joanna came with me and stayed in a house owned by the Sisters of Mercy. They were attentive to my needs and were there morning and evening to organize me – cutting up food for me and doing personal things. I won't forget their kindness. I was there a month, and after that another month at Figtree Private Hospital for rehabilitation. The experience has cured me of taking any risks with my walking, so, my room is full of night lights and I have the help of Lauren, Rachel, and Michelle, our nurses. I will need personal care for a while. I also have Sr. Veronica as my Carer. She looks after my little dog Polly, feeding her and taking her to the vet when necessary. So, I'm well off. Thank you to the oblates and friends who visited me in the Mater Hospital, and to Fr. Paul, who came in by train from Wentworthville to see me.

Other oblates rang me, and sent me those lovely, scented soaps, powders and lotions which are so welcome in a hospital. This is my second day home (25th March). The hardest thing for me was having to let you down, by not sending the Lenten Pax.

Sr. Elizabeth (now 96) is a resident at Elanora Nursing Home in Shellharbour. She has been there about six weeks. It is a beautiful place, with gardens and a coffee shop. We miss her greatly at the Abbey, but her health is picking up and she is beginning to get her strength back thanks to the wonderful care she is receiving.

Please pray for Oblate Libby (Therese) Denny, who is also in the business of breaking bones! She is trying to come to the Abbey for Easter, and we pray that she makes it. Libby made her Oblation on June 24, 2007.

We welcome Margaret Heuschele to our Oblate community. Margaret and her husband travelled from Toowoomba, Queensland, so that Margaret could have her ceremony on January 8. Margaret took the name "Ruth".

Mother Mary Barnes (Abbess Emeritus), has a 74-year-old brother, Ted Barnes, who has been diagnosed with Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma has is currently receiving treatment. Please pray for Ted, his beloved wife, Wendy, his children, Anthony, Matthew and Tracey, and their own children.

Happy Feast Day to:

April 21: Tony Anselm Tarleton, Alfred Anselm Breznik, Robert Anselm van Oort, and Kate Anselm Trevenen,

April 29: Claire Catherine Devlyn, Marie Catherine Gleeson, Kathleen Catherine Daysh, for St. Catherine of Siena

May 13: Patricia Julian Morgan, Brigid Julian Inder, Rev. Catherine Julian Eaton, Colleen Julian Hines, Therese Julian Proctor, Jean Julian Reid, Margaret Julian Crooks,

Sr. Julian Barbara Garwood, Sandra Julian Cooper, Sr. Julian Grigor. (Sr. Julian is in Temporary Vows).

May 22: Laynie Rita Pullen and Doreen Rita Soballa.

May 24: Amanda Mary Hickey

May 25: Alan Bede Hickey, Heather Bede Thompson, Cheryl Bede Townsend, Antonio Bede Zaragoza, and Fr. Kevin Bede Walsh.

Happy Anniversary to:

April 16: Helen Seraphim Shorter.

April 19: Margaret Thomas More Whetham

April 19: Ewa Maria Teresa Komorowska

May 4: Abbess Hilda Scott, (Solemn Monastic Profession).

May 24: Ivan Benedict Fitz

May 25: Phyllis Magdalen Rodrigues, Clare Therese Sydenham, Rev. Jeanette Therese McHugh and Phillip John Wilson

Necrology

APRIL

17 - Sr. Mary Editha Thompson (1983)

23 - Mother M. Ignatius Harnett (1915)

27 - Sr. M. Magdalene Parkinson (1900)

28 - Sr. M. Placida Burrows (1859)

MAY

01 - Sr. M. Veronica Brown (1992)

02 – Sr. M Dolores Haselden (1951)

04 - Sr. M. Angela Regan (1859)

17 – Most Rev. Charles Henry Bishop Davis (1854)

29 – Sister Mary Ann Hogan (1876)

SECTION SEVEN: SAINTS

“St. Augustine’s Prayer: Guiding my mind by the rule of faith, I have sought you with all my heart, with all the power you have given me. I have longed to understand that which I believe.

Lord my God, you made me to find you; give me strength to seek you. My strength and my weakness are in your hands: preserve my strength and help my weakness. Where you have opened the door, let me enter in; where it is shut, open to my knocking.”

When I was struggling earlier this year, I went to see my spiritual director. I said I was finding it hard to pray. He told me that St. Augustine taught: If you desire God, you are praying. I was greatly helped by this. Maybe you or someone you know will be helped by this teaching.

SECTION EIGHT: FOR REFLECTION

There is a book which bears the title: “Shaped by the end you live for: Thomas Merton’s Monastic Spirituality”, by Bonnie Thurston.

From this title we can ask just two questions: 1. What is the end I live for? Surely, it is, as Macrina Wiederkehr says: “the home of a Loving Presence, where I will feel safe [for all eternity].”

And: 2. Am I shaped by that end as I embrace the Benedictine journey? Our holy Rule says: “never swerving from his instructions, but faithfully observing his teaching in the monastery until death, we shall through patience share in the sufferings of Christ that we may deserve also to share in his kingdom. Amen.

We are Benedictine monastics, On the same journey – the journey home. Hopefully, according to our integrity and sincerity, we are shaped by the end we live for.

THE ABBEY IS CLOSED FROM April 23 – May 14 for the Annual Community holiday.