



The Procopian Oblate Newsletter

Oblates of Saint Benedict affiliated with Saint Procopius Abbey

March 2009

+PAX

Oblation Prayer

God, most holy and loving, strengthen me in my commitment to follow you in the way of Saint Benedict. Through my daily prayer and work may I be inspired to live in Christ and to bring his love to the world and his peace to all hearts. Amen.

Oblates and the Liturgy of the Hours

(Fourth in the series that began in the December 2008 newsletter)

The Liturgy of the Hours for Sunday takes on a special character befitting this day, the ^TDay of the Lord. In the Liturgy, it becomes the Lord's Day because of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This is the day of victory and triumph when the mighty power of God to bring to life is seen. The Roman Office (i.e., the Liturgy of the Hours as issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship for use by most people following the Latin Rite) selects particular psalms to highlight this victory of Jesus over death. What is less frequently recognized is that St. Benedict, in his distribution of the psalms over the week (that differed significantly from the Roman Office) has chosen three psalms to give emphasis to this day. Indeed, we can say that in the choice of these three psalms Benedict has found the basis for his entire distribution of the psalms throughout the week.

Monks and Oblates today do not necessarily follow the order of psalmody found in the *Rule*, yet it could be very important for our theology of and practice of the Liturgy of the Hours to understand the psalms Benedict chose for the opening of Vigils, Lauds, and Vespers on the Lord's Day. These psalms are: Vigils—Psalm 20 [21]; Lauds—Psalm 117 [118]; and Vespers—Psalm 109 [110]. We must remember that the *Rule* numbers the Psalms following the numbering in the Vulgate version of the Bible. In the explanation

here, we will put in brackets the numbers of the Psalms as we will find them in current versions of the Bible and in the various editions of the Liturgy of the Hours available for use by our Oblates.

Together, these psalms form a triad that celebrates the Messiah and his Victory, the Christ and his Resurrection. These psalms announce at the beginning of the Sunday Hours of Prayer who Christ is and what God has accomplished in the resurrection of his Son. May the marvelous notes of these psalms sound forth!

VIGILS:

Let us imagine a monk newly risen from sleep. He has heard the great Invitatory Psalm 94 [95], and has assembled with the other monks, who are united to consider and remember the actions of God. Now they hear:

He asked life of you; you gave it to him, length of days forever. – Psalm 20 [21]: 5

Triumph and victory! In the sleep of the night, the monk has entered into the prayer of Jesus before his death. It is a prayer of hope, a prayer of confidence: to God alone is the power to deliver from death. Now in vigil, the monk's heart is filled with the thoughts of the Risen Christ. Death has lost its power. Our Christ lives forever. In the darkness of the night, the monk finds that which will echo for all eternity—not death but life. In his heart, the monk finds not only the presence of God's word, but the assurance that a final triumph over Adam's weakness is given. There is a new Adam—Jesus Christ—and all his children are children of life.

LAUDS:

Let us continue to follow our monk. Vigils have ended, the sun is rising, and he has prayed for the Spirit of God to create in him a new heart (Psalm 50 [51]). Now with the image of the rising of the sun, a further note is sounded: a new day, the “day on which the Lord has acted (Psalm 117 [118]: 24).

The Lord's right hand is raised; the Lord's right hand strikes with power. I shall not die but live and declare the deeds of the Lord. – Psalm 117 [118]: 16-17.

In the fullness of this day's light, the monk knows that the tomb is empty, that this is the new day, the day of the new creation. While he will wonder at the marvels and beauties of the world, still greater the wonder at the dawning of this new day in which, truly, there is a new creation: life is born out of the tomb, eternal life is given to the Lord Jesus Christ and to all who belong to him. The monk, in the resonance of such a note, peers beyond the dawning of this day to the very dawn of eternity. In the morning hour of praise, he glimpses, approaches, enters sacramentally, into eternal life.

VESPERS:

Our monk advances through the day of Sunday, passing many moments in *lectio divina* and with the Eucharist. Now at the closing of the day, a third triumph note is raised:

The Lord said to you, my lord: Take your throne at my right hand, while I make your enemies your footstool. – Psalm 109 [110]: 1.

Jesus Christ is ascended in glory and truly is enthroned at the right hand of the Father. He is exalted to make intercession for us, and, indeed, there is found the complete assurance that his victory is final and definitive—his enemies, sin and death, shall be

forever vanquished. Life shall reign. In the evening hour, as the day of praise is closing, the monk is reminded that our God and his Christ are forever united in a divine effort to bring us life forever.

In such wise, St. Benedict marks the Lord's Day with songs of triumph and victory. In the *Rule's* scheme of things, it is these psalms that give purpose and clarity to the Sunday hours. Indeed, in the themes of these psalms we find the theology of Easter, the place of Christ in our Sunday prayer, and the exemplar for these hours throughout the week and throughout the liturgical seasons.

I believe it would give us a greater understanding of these hours if we were to look in some detail at each of the psalms we have mentioned above. What follows is not so much a commentary on the particular psalm, but a reflection on the use of these psalms at Sunday Vigils, Lauds, and Vespers. (May I suggest that each psalm be read in its entirety before moving to what follows. Also note that if you are using a contemporary edition of the Bible—that is, the New American Bible, the New Revised Standard, the New English Bible, etc.—you will use the psalm numbers in the brackets: Psalms 21, 118, and 110.)

I. PSALM 20 [21]

God is on the side of his Christ!

In the Roman Liturgy of the Hours, we find this introduction to the psalm: *He accepted human life, so that he could rise from the dead and live for ever and ever* (St. Irenaeus). (For some reason the American translations/editions attribute the quote to St. Hilary.)

A “Template” of Psalm 20 [21]:

*Lord Jesus Christ, before your death you often went off alone
To converse with your God, speaking as son to Father, listening.
You ever spoke of your “heart’s desire” and this became your prayer.
Thus, were you determined to do the Father’s will.
Now, after your death, the Father acted on your behalf,
The tomb is empty and you live forever.
You are the new King crowned with life without end:
Days that will last for ever and ever.
When we confess you to be our Lord, risen from the dead,
The words of our first Sunday psalm surround you with heaven's splendor:
RICH BLESSINGS, CROWN OF PURE GOLD,
GLORY, SPLENDOR, MAJESTY!
For truly we confess with our hearts that you know the joy of God’s presence.*

Psalm Prayer

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have shown yourself victorious and triumphant over death by emptying the tomb and bringing your Christ to the fullness of life in your presence. Unite us to him that we may see your hand at work in our every battle and struggle and may come to know the joys of life with you forever.

This presentation of Psalm 20 [21] may serve as a template through which all the psalms of Sunday Vigils, indeed all psalms of vigils, can be filtered. In this way the vigil psalms do indeed become the prayer of Christ calling out to his Father and the prayer of the Church longing for the fullness of life. Vigils are prayed in Benedict's scheme before the celebration of the resurrection (Lauds). Yet they are prayed with the confident assurance that the dawn will come, that death will be conquered, that Christ is the triumphant king who will bring all of us to the glory of the resurrection.

Although Vigils are prayed in the dark, the Vigil psalms become the way to introduce life into the darkness of this world, which is something of the triumph of the Paschal Christ. In a way, Vigils beckons us to shout an Alleluia into the night, and bring refreshment to earth and dry hearts. It is as if this template Psalm becomes the call: know Christ, join in his prayer, come to share his victory.

II. PSALM 117 [118]:

This is the day the Lord has made!:

A quotation from the Acts of the Apostles is used to introduce this psalm in the Roman Office:

This Jesus is the stone which, rejected by you builders, has become the chief stone supporting all the rest. – Acts 4:11.

A “Template” of Psalm 117 [118]:

*Lord, indeed, you are good and you do wonderful things.
When you led Israel out from Egypt, it was truly good.
When you promised a new deliverance, it was truly good.
When your foretold a new covenant, it was truly good.*

*O the goodness of the Lord. He is with me, he is for me, he is at my side!
The goodness of the Lord established for ever the Paschal Character
Of his action—out of Egypt, through the Desert, into the Promised Land;
Dying, I shall not die; in distress, shouts of joy and victory.*

*Jesus, you alone can pray this psalm:
I shall not die, but I shall live;
Punished, but not delivered into death for ever;
Rejected, but the chosen and precious stone, the corner of the building.*

*The Paschal Character—it calls forth the new creation;
This is the Day the Lord has made:
Day of light and life; day of triumph and victory,
Day, New Day in which all days fade and all creation is made new.*

Psalm Prayer

Lord our God, we praise you. You have given us this new day, the first day of the new creation in which we celebrate the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is risen from the

dead and though he was surrounded by evil, your arm has triumphed and he lives for ever. You have entrusted to your Church this Paschal Character of Salvation. May this Church become the gateway that leads all peoples to the new creation to share the life of Christ who truly lives triumphant and victorious in your presence.

III. PSALM 109 [110]: Messiah, King, Priest

The Roman Liturgy of the Hours introduces this psalm with a quotation from Saint Paul:

For he [Christ] must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. – 1 Corinthians 15:25-26

A “Template” of Psalm 109 [110]:

*We bless you for the revelation of your power
In which Jesus Christ risen from the dead
Is enthroned at your right hand.*

*We bless you for the word of prophecy
In which Christ is proclaimed to be Lord
Subjecting every evil force, death most especially.*

*We bless you for this gift of priest
In which Christ has become our High Priest,
Sacrifice, and Altar—uniting us by the power of his blood.*

*We bless you for this transformed king
In which Christ will reign forever
Over the living and all begotten by you.*

*We bless you for the marvel of his eternal birth—your Son in eternity.
We bless you for the marvel of his earthly birth—your Son born in time.
We bless you for the marvel of his birth into heaven—your Son reigning for ever.*

Psalm Prayer

Lord our God, in the name and power of the exalted Lord Jesus, we praise you. Jesus ascended into heaven and enthroned at the Father’s right hand, speak, we ask, all our desires to the Father, most especially our desires to be where you are. Jesus, ask the Father for the gift of the Spirit that all our worship and praise may reach heaven’s throne and that we may be lifted through you in the Spirit to behold the face of the Father for ever.

Here, too, we find that this Psalm becomes a template for all Sunday Vesper psalms and for all the weekday psalms of vespers. We begin to see that it is Jesus who is the meaning of all our psalmody, it is Jesus we celebrate and remember. This psalm becomes the great oracle about Christ proclaiming his final victory over all his enemies.

Benedict's Sunday Psalms become a prism through which we see Jesus descending and ascending, emptying himself and being exalted. In these psalms, we find the most wonderful action of God that brings Jesus to new life.

In the opening chapter of the letter to the Hebrews, the author, much like Benedict, unites in song seven texts of the Old Testament. He concludes with a quotation from Psalm 110, as if to say that here we find the summation of all that can be said about Christ.

As the monk retires on Sunday evening, he goes to rest with the assurance of his prayer: all enemies will be subjected to Christ, even death. Then his song—our song—sung in the fullness of the new day, will be a magnificent and living accolade to the living God: all has been conquered—even death!

Fr. Simon O'Donnell, O.S.B.
Valyermo Chronicle

(We wish to express our gratitude to Abbot Francis Benedict, OSB and Fr. Simon McDonnell, OSB of St. Andrew's Abbey, Valyermo CA for their kind permission in allowing us to reprint this article for our oblates.)

Oblate Calendar for March 2009

Su	1	First Sunday of Lent <i>(Psalter week 1)</i>
M	2	Willeic , OSB, Prior of Kaiserwerth Abbey Fergna , Second Abbot of Iona
Tu	3	Katharine Drexel , SBS, Religious Founder, Missionary Anselm , OSB, Abbot of Nonantola
W	4	Appian , OSB, Hermit, Missionary Basinus , OSB, Abbot of St. Maximin, Bishop of Trier Felix , OSB, Hermit on Quessant Is., Abot of Rhuys
Th	5	Gerasimus , Hermit Kieran , Hermit, Bishop of Ossory
F	6	Balthar , OSB, Hermit at Tinningham Billfrith , OSB, Hermit at Lindsfarne Canroe , OSB, Abbot of Waulsort

		Fridolin , OSB, Abbot of Säckingén
Sa	7	Perpetua and Felicity , Martyrs Ardo , OSB, Abbot of Aniane Esterwine , OSB, Abbot of Wearmouth Frowin II , OSB, Blessed, Abbot of Engelberg
Su	8	Second Sunday of Lent <i>(Psalter week 2)</i> Oblate Sunday <i>(Abbey Refectory)</i>
M	9	Frances of Rome, <i>(Co-patron of Oblates)</i>
Tu	10	Andrew , OSB Vall, Abbot of Strumi Emilian , OSB, Abbot of Lagny Failbhe the Little , Abbot of Iona John , OSB Vall, Blessed, Monk of Vallumbrosa, Hermit
W	11	Amunia , OSB, Widow, Hermitess at San Millán Aurea , OSB, Hermitess at San Millán Firmian , OSB, Abbot of Fermo
Th	12	Alphege , OSB, Bishop of Winchester Justina Bezzoli , OSB, Nun at All Saints Mura McFeredach , Abbot of Fahan Peter the Deacon , OSB, Secretary to Pope Gregory the Great
F	13	Gerald , Abbot of Mayo Heldrad , OSB, Abbot of Novalesé Mocheomoc , Abbot of Leamokevoge Peter II , OSB, Blessed, Abbot of Cava
Sa	14	Paulina , OSB, Widow, Abbess of Zell Arnold , OSB, Blessed, Abbot of Padua
Su	15	Third Sunday of Lent <i>(Psalter week 3)</i>
M	16	Eusebia , OSB, Abbess of Hamage Megingaud , OSB, Abbot of Fritzlár, Bishop of Würzburg
Tu	17	Patrick , Bishop of Ireland Gertrude , OSB, Abbess of Nivelles

		Stephen , OSB Cist., Blessed, Bishop of Palestrina
W	18	Edward , King, Martyr (Nameday of Fr. Edward) Anselm , OSB, Bishop of Lucca Frigidian , Bishop of Lucca
Th	19	Joseph , Husband of Mary (solemnity) (Nameday of Fr. Joseph and Br. Joseph) Gemus , OSB, Monk of Moyenmoutier Lactan , Abbot of Achadh-Ur John the Syrian , Hermit
F	20	Cuthbert , Prior of Lindisfarne, later Bishop of Lindisfarne, Missionary Benignus , OSB, Abbot of Fray Herbert , Hermit
Sa	21	The Passing of our holy father Benedict , Abbot of Monte Cassino (solemnity)
Su	22	Fourth Sunday of Lent (Psalter week 4)
M	23	Benedict of Campania , OSB, Hermit
Tu	24	Aldemar the Wise , OSB, Abbot of Bocchignano Hildelid , OSB, Abbess of Barking Caimin , Abbot of Inish-Keltra
W	25	Annunciation of the Lord (Solemnity) Dismas the Good Thief (Nameday of Abbot Dismas) Humbert , OSB, Abbot of Marolles
Th	26	Ludger of Utrecht , OSB, Bishop of Münster Peter Marginet , OSB Cist., Monk of Poblet Sincheall , Abbot of Killeigh
F	27	Romulus , OSB, Abbot at Nimes John of Egypt , Hermit
Sa	28	Gundelindis , OSB, Abbess of Niedermünster Tutilo , OSB, Monk of St. Gall
Su	29	Fifth Sunday of Lent (Psalter week 1)

M 30 **Clinius**, OSB, Abbot of Monte Cassino
 Tu 31 **Daniel**, OSB Cam., Hermit at Murano
Guy, OSB, Abbot of Pomposa, Martyr

Monks of the Abbey celebrating March Namedays:

18	Fr. Edward Kucera, OSB	St. Edward the Martyr
1	Fr. Joseph Chang, OSB	St. Joseph, Husband of the Virgin Mary
19	Br. Joseph Vesely, OSB	St. Joseph, Husband of the Virgin Mary
25	Abbot Dismas Kalcic, OSB	St. Dismas the Good Thief

Thank you to those who have remembered our monks on their nameday in your prayers and with notes and phone calls. The listing for the month will continue to appear in each newsletter.

Please remember in your prayers the deceased members of the St. Procopius community who died in the month of March. May they rest in peace.

3	1996	Fr. Ronald Rigovsky, OSB
4	2007	Fr. Paschal Honner, OSB
6	1937	Br. Pius Glasser, OSB
7	1930	Fr. Aloysius Keclik, OSB
7	1984	Fr. Adrian Klepac, OSB
11	1985	Fr. Andrew Skvarla, OSB
12	1964	Br. Anthony Hubka, OSB
12	1967	Br. Francis Totka, OSB
16	1988	Fr. Donald Hardesty, OSB
23	1970	Br. Benedict Kohout, OSB
24	1949	Fr. Norbert Lukes, OSB
25	1946	Fr. Anselm Fleisig, OSB
25	1955	Fr. Cyril Zenisek, OSB
26	1993	Fr. Martin Horak, OSB
29	1935	Br. Anthony Jana, OSB
30	1966	Fr. Ernest Ziska, OSB
30	1988	Fr. Brendan McGrath, OSB

"I was like a stone lying in the deep mire; and He that is mighty came, and in His mercy lifted me up, and verily raised me aloft and placed me on the top of the wall."

--Saint Patrick

A NEW ADDITION TO OUR OBLATE WEB SITE

Did you miss last month's Oblate meeting? Have you ever wished that you could hear what Fr. David said again? Would you like to share our meetings with someone? You can do all of this and more, NOW. Our Oblate web site has a new feature – podcasting. You can review a meeting, hear again how Fr. David explained something, or pass a thought on to friends by using the podcast link on our Oblate Web Site. To find our web site, go to the St. Procopius Abbey web site (www.procopius.org), at the bottom of the page click on “Oblates” in the box, click on “Our Abbey Oblates” above the boxes, and click on “podcasts” at the bottom left side. If you have any problems with or comments about this feature or have any questions, please let us know at st_procopius_oblates@yahoo.com or tlynch@procopius.org

Tentative Oblate Meeting Schedule for the Remainder of 2009

March 8
April 5 (moved due to Easter being on the second Sunday)
May 3 (moved due to Mothers Day being on the second Sunday)
June 14
July 12
August 9
September 13
October 11
November 8
December 13

Any changes from this schedule will be sent via email as soon as we are aware of them.

WHAT ARE YOU READING?

What are you reading?? Keep these suggestions coming. Send your recommendations to us at: st_procopius_oblates@yahoo.com or mail them to the Abbey. We look forward to hearing from you.

A PRAYER FOR MONASTIC VOCATIONS

Loving and Generous God,
it is You who call us by name
and ask us to follow You.

Help us to grow in the Love
and Service of our Church
as we experience it today.

Give us the energy and courage
of Your Spirit
to shape its future

Grant us faith-filled leaders
who will embrace Christ's Mission
of love and justice.

Bless the Abbey of St Procopius
by raising up dedicated and generous leaders
from our families and friends
who will serve Your people as Priests and Brothers.

Inspire us to know You better
and open our hearts
to hear Your call.

We ask this through our Christ our Lord .

Amen.

ABBAY PRAYER SCHEDULE

Effective 08/16/2007

Sunday

Lauds	6:25 AM
Conventual Mass	11:00 AM
Solemn Vespers	5:00 PM
Compline	7:00 PM

Monday - Friday

Lauds	6:00 AM
Noon Prayer	12:00 Noon
Conventual Mass	4:50 PM
Vespers	7:00 PM

Saturday

Lauds	6:25 AM
Conventual Mass	7:00 AM
Noon Prayer	12:00 Noon
Vespers	5:00 PM
Compline	7:00 PM

We are invited to pray with the monks at any of these times.

PRAYERS FOR EVERYDAY USE

For an Increase of Spiritual Life

Almighty and everlasting God, grant unto us an increase of faith, hope, and charity; and that we may deserve to obtain what you have promised, make us to love what you. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

+++++

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This e-mail, and any attachments and/or documents linked to this email, are intended for the addressee and may contain information that is privileged, confidential, proprietary, or otherwise protected by law. Any dissemination, distribution, or copying is prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please contact: Oblates of St. Benedict affiliated with St. Procopius Abbey at st_procopius_oblates@yahoo.com .