



The Procopian Oblate Newsletter

Oblates of Saint Benedict affiliated with Saint Procopius Abbey

January 2009

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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

(Second in the Series that began in the December newsletter)

The last time I began with some thoughts about the Liturgy of the Hours in terms of participation, gathering, about being present with the monastic community at the celebration of the Hours. In conclusion last time, we looked at the Liturgy of the Hours as conversation between God the Father and our Lord Jesus.

We cannot forget that the very nature of the Liturgy of the Hours is dialogic, conversational. The psalmody and the whole liturgy consist of this dialogue. The Hours as dialogic prayer is not limited to the exterior structure: alternating between two sides of the choir or between cantors and choir. It is really in the interior, in the heart of the participants, that the essential dialogue takes place. Even when the Hours are prayed alone it is necessary to retain this dialogue, interiorly and exteriorly. Exteriorly this

dialogue can be maintained by appropriate use of silent times in which we truly listen for the Other, God, to speak. In the listening silence we really are trying to give God time to converse with us. Interiorly this dialogue must originate in union with Christ. The only way to enter into conversation with God is in union with Christ. In the first verse of John's Gospel, we see Christ eternally in conversation with the Father. The eternal existence of the Trinity points to an external conversation in which one or the other person is always speaking and another always listening.

Our Union with Christ

Who is the Christ with whom we are united? Is it the exalted Christ? Yes! Is it the Christ on earth or the Christ in heaven? Yes! Is it the Christ who was on earth and prayed to the Father? Yes! Are we united with Christ who was foretold by the prophets? Yes! But primarily our union with Christ is through the words of Sacred Scripture. That is why the bulk of the Liturgy of the Hours has always been taken directly from Scripture. The Church, from its beginnings, has always recognized that in the Scriptures there are two interpenetrating voices: God's and man's. We might say that there is a hypostatic union between God and man in Christ, so, in the Scriptures, there is a kind of hypostatic union between the divine and the human word.

Scripture is not simply the revealed word of God but as prayer it becomes the word of man revealing himself to God. This occurs above all and especially in Christ himself: for his word reveals God to us and his word reveals us to God. The psalms used in the Liturgy of the Hours reveal not only God's purposes and intentions, but they also reveal to God something we want God to know about our expectations, needs, and desires.

There is no other word like this on earth. Our words might express what we want but they can never have that surety that Scripture has, that is, these are words of God. The monastic tradition, as the Church's, has chosen the psalms for the means of this dialog for they recognized that with no other words are the unity of God and man so close as is the words of Scripture.

The psalms become the compendium of the whole of revelation. This is not simply a quantitative question; all is contained in miniature in the Psalter. Rather, it is a question of what the psalms are in themselves and what the psalms become when they are placed on the lips of the praying Jesus and the praying Church. Christ is the first to speak the psalms in their fullest sense. The revelation of the Father's mercy, His promises, and the fulfillment of God's intention are found in the psalms when Jesus prays them. In this prayerful way, Jesus is the author of the Psalter and he is the first to use them in their complete sense: God's word to us, our word to God. They are words ascending and descending, with the sense that they must have in light of Christ's dad and resurrection, His surrender to the Father and his full trust in the Father's love.

Participation in the Liturgy of the Hours is a means whereby heavenly realities are transported to earth and we are carried into the heavenly realities. In many of the lips for jackal prayer is there is the request that our hearts may be directed to heavenly realities

and that heavenly realities made been made present to costs. There is something very powerful here; this is not just one activity among many others or one prayer among many others. This is the summit of what we do as Christians at prayer. The one praying the Liturgy of the Hours is intimately wrapped up in this conversation between Father and Son, sharing the prayer of Jesus and the dialogue of His heart and His conversation with the Father.

The Words of Scripture

The words of Scripture are the vehicles that carry us to Christ and Christ to us. When we say the Psalms, yes, they are our words, but in a deeper sense, they are the words of Christ. And in the deepest sense, they are the words that Christ uses to speak to his father. And in this, he speaks from the depth of his human experiences, his expectations, his needs, his desire, and his wants.

Now we want to focus on something that the words are meant to do, but they do wait inside costs. What happens in the interior of a person who is faithfully praying the liturgy of the hours? The Church is tradition is that our quote mammary unquote is being made alive with the actions and deeds of God. What we want to do is commemorate, become mindful of what God has done. The remembering of his needs and of his words is the essence of what happens in the old posts day he area in the Psalms our memories, being jotted into our faithful remembrance and a heartfelt consideration of what God dies. The Psalms are filled with words like considering and remembering. To become mindful in this sense is not simply to introduce old or new thoughts about God into our Intel engines. Being mindful involves the whole of ourselves in the deeds that God has done. In the Jewish Seder meal, the people remember the great events of the Passover, not as a past event, but as a reality in which they participate. They live the event in the remembering. The same thing happens when we celebrate the Eucharist. We called this Mass or Eucharist, but it could equally be called the Remembering. We remember what Christ did on the night of His betrayal. In that remembering we say that Christ becomes present.

In the Liturgy of the Hours the same thing happens when we prayerfully and attentively remember the events we speak. The very presence of Christ comes in that remembering. Indeed without the remembering the words are just words. In liturgy, remembering is the “soul” of the words. The words are empty and ineffective until you pour memory into them. The pouring of the memory into words is the action of the whole assembly, the community of faith.

In all our liturgical prayer, the central event that is remembered is the salvage fake activity of God in Christ. What we are remembering is that God has chosen to bring about salvation in the Paschal mystery of Christ. The active remembering, this pouring into the words the remembrance of Christ dying and rising makes the liturgy a salvific activity. Liturgical prayer, in the mind of the Church, is a salvific action. It saves and it God is what it says. It is ineffective. Can you imagine that? The very same power and the very same energy and the very same intention that worked in Jesus death and

resurrection is at work when we do the Liturgy of the Hours. Most Christians do not understand this or if they did they would fall down in a daze at every hour of prayer!

Now of course this memory is more than "my" memory and more than "our" memory. It is the memory of the whole Church. And so the person praying the Hours must be alert to the Church's memory. As the Church teaches: in the Eucharist the bread is the sacramental sign of Christ's presence. In the Liturgy of the Hours it is the same. It takes the Church remembering to make Christ present in the word. This idea needs to be recaptured by the Catholic mind (and the Oblates' minds) because this is really what is at stake in a proper understanding of the Hours.

What the Christian who prays the Hours wants to be really is a pulsating living memory of Christ. When the early monks memorized the psalms they did not do it as an intellectual discipline. They memorized so that their whole being would be alive with what they were remembering.

Now the real power at work in remembering in the liturgical sense is not the intensity and the energy of my intellectual awareness, but it is the presence of God's Holy Spirit. The liturgy has to be filled with this action of the Spirit. I can sit without the Spirit and think and remember all I want, but it is not effective liturgy. The Spirit must be present to enliven the memory. There is one confirmation of the power of the liturgy and that is the presence of the Spirit. We have no assurance that the Spirit is in me, but when we have a gathering in the name of Christ, we have the assurance that the Spirit is present. That is why when we pray the Hours alone it is good to know that we are united with the whole Church, with our Oblate group, with the community of monks. This union becomes the validation that the Spirit is at work in our prayer.

Fr Simon O'Donnell, OSB

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 January 2009

Th	1	Octave Day of Christmas <i>(Psalter week 1)</i> Mary Mother of God <i>(Solemnity)</i>
F	2	Basil the Great , Doctor of the Church Gregory Nazianzen , Doctor of the Church Seraphim , Monk of Sarov, Hermit
Sa	3	Holy Name of Jesus Finlugh , Abbot at Derey
Su	4	Epiphany <i>(Solemnity)</i> <i>(Psalter week 2)</i>
M	5	John Neumann , Bishop, Religious, Missionary, Educator Convoyon of Redon , OSB, Abbot of St. Saviour
Tu	6	Erminold of Prüfening , OSB, Abbot of Lorsch Guarinus , OSB Cist, Abbot of Aulps, Bishop of Sion, Valais Peter of Canterbury , OSB, Abbot of Sts Peter and Paul
W	7	Raymond of Penyafort , Presbyter, Religious Cedd , OSB, Bishop of the East Saxons Emilian , OSB, Monk of Saujon
Th	8	Atdhelm , OSB, Abbot of Glastonbury, Bishop of Wales Frodobert , OSB, Abbot of Moutier-la-Celle
F	9	Julian , Martyr <i>(Nameday of Fr. Julian)</i> Adrian , OSB, Abbot of SS. Peter and Paul

- Waningus**, OSB, Abbot of Fecamp
- Sa 10 **Gregory of Nyssa**, Bishop
- Benincasa**, OSB, Abbot of LA Cava
- Peter Orseolo**, OSB, Hermit at Cuxa
- Su 11 **Baptism of our Lord** (*Feast*)
- (Psalter week 1)
- Oblate Sunday**
- (*Abbey refectory*)
- M 12 **Benedict Biscop**, OSB, Abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow
- Tu 13 **Hilary**, Bishop of Trèves, Doctor of the Church
- W 14 **Amadeus of Clermont**, OSB Cist.
- Odo of Novara**, O. Cart.
- Th 15 **Maur**, Disciple of St. Benedict
- Placid**, Disciple of St. Benedict
- Ita of Limerick**, Abbot of Hy Conaill
- Peter of Castelnau**, OSB Cist., Apostolic Legate and Inquisitor, Martyr
- F 16 **Furse**y, OSB, Abbot of Lagny
- Henry**, OSB, Hermit on Crocket Island
- Dunchaid O'Braoin**, Abbot of Clonmacnoise
- Sa 17 **Antony**, Abbot of Fayum and Pispir, Patriarch of All Monks
- (*Nameday of Fr. Anthony*)
- Pior**, Hermit, Disciple of Antony
- Richimir**, OSB, Abbot of Saint-Rigomer-des-Bois
- Su 18 **Second Sunday of Ordinary Time**

(Psalter week 2)

- M 19 **Wulfstan**, OSB, Bishop of Worcester
Beatrix of Lens, OSB Cist., Blessed, Nun of Epinlieu
- Tu 20 **Sebastian**, Martyr
(Nameday of Br. Sebastian)
- W 21 **Agnes**, Virgin, Martyr
Alban Bartholomew Roe, OSB, Martyr
Maccallin, OSB, Abbot of Waulsort
Meinrad, OSB, Hermit of Einsiedeln, Martyr
- Th 22 **Vincent**, Deacon, Martyr
Brithwold, OSB, Bishop of Sarum
Dominic, OSB, Abbot of Sora
- F 23 **Bernard of Lippe**, OSB Cist., Bishop of Sengallen, Abbot of Dunemunde
Colman, Abbot/Archbishop of Lismore
- Sa 24 **Francis de Sales**, Bishop, Religious Founder, Doctor of the Church
Felix O'Dullany, OSB Cist., Bishop of Ossory
- Su 25 **Conversion of Paul**, Apostle *(Feast)*
Third Sunday of Ordinary Time
(Psalter week 3)
- Joel, OSB, Abbot of Pulsano
Amarinus, OSB, Abbot of Vosges, Martyr
- M 26 **Robert, Alberic, Stephen**, Abbots of Citeaux
Ansurius, OSB, Bishop of Astorga
- Tu 27 **Timothy**, Bishop of Ephesus and **Titus**, Bishop of Gortyna, Martyrs

(Nameday of Fr. Timothy)

- W 28 **Thomas Aquinas**, Presbyter, Religious, Doctor of the Church
Antimus, OSB, Abbot of Brantôme
Odo, OSB, Bishop of Beauvais
Richard, OSB Cist., Abbot of Vaucelles
- Th 29 **Charles of Sayn**, OSB Cist., Abbot of Viciers
- F 30 **Adelelmus**, OSB, Abbot of St. John
Amnichad, OSB, Hermit of Fulda
Haberilla, OSB, Nun of Mehrerau
- Sa 31 **John Bosco**, Presbyter, Religious Founder, Educator
Adamnan, OSB, Monk of Coldingham
Bobinus, OSB, Bishop of Troyes
Eusebius, OSB, Monk of St. Gaul, Martyr

Monks of the Abbey celebrating January Namedays:

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| 1 | Fr. Julian Von Duerbeck, OSB | St. Julian |
| 17 | Fr. Anthony Jacob, OSB | St. Antony |
| 20 | Br. Sebastian Kuhn, OSB | St. Sebastian |
| 27 | Fr. Timothy Marceau, OSB | St. Timothy |

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

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| 2 | 1986 | Bishop Vladimir Tarasevitch, OSB |
| 5 | 1981 | Fr. Lewis Cernak, OSB |

- 9 1987 Fr. Leo Vancura, OSB
- 11 2003 Fr. Stanislaus Vesely, OSB
- 12 1963 Br. Thomas Capek, OSB
- 17 1950 Br. Maur Stejskal, OSB
- 18 1992 Fr. Charles Kolek, OSB
- 21 1902 Br. Bernard Hruby, OSB
- 26 1974 Fr. Gilbert Laketek, OSB
- 28 1984 Fr. Robert Mastny, OSB
- 31 1951 Br. Gabriel Kandzer, OSB

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.

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

My Lord God,
I have no idea where I am going.

I do not see the road ahead of me
Nor do I really know myself,
And the fact that I think I am following your will
Does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you
Does in fact please you.

And I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
And I know that if I do this,
You will lead me by the right road
Though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore will I trust you always though,
I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
And you will never leave me to face my struggles alone.

Amen.

Prayer of Thomas Merton

ABBAY PRAYER SCHEDULE

Effective 08/2008

Sunday

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

Monday - Friday

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

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

PRAYERS FOR EVERYDAY USE

For the Spirit of Patience

O God, who by the patience of your only begotten Son, the pride of the enemy of old has been crushed; grant us, we beseech you, devoutly to keep in mind all that he endured in his love for us, and thus, by the help of his example, to bear our troubles with equanimity.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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