



nothing Dearer than Christ

Oblate letter of the Pluscarden
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DMB series No 47

**Oblate Letter 47 Autumn Exaltation of
the Cross 2020**

Monastic Voice

*Fr. Augustine Baker from "Directions for Contemplation book G" &
"Ideot's Devotions" (Devotions for the Untrained that is!)*

*"Some choice aspirations, for the most part taken out of the
Scripture, whereof the party may take such as his soul sha11 relish, when he
is invited(by God)or enabled to use aspirations.(note"mantraic", short
"arrow" prayers)*

"For them that understand the meaning of the Latin words, I think it
will be best for them to use the Latin rather than the same in English.
But let not the party so tie himself to these or to any other aspirations,
that he do forbear to use any other aspirations that his soul more
relisheth. If the Latin do relish you, you may very profitably use them
though you do not understand the meaning of the words. So long as
you can well tarry in one aspiration, do not pass to another. St. Austin or St.
Francis, or each of them, spent one whole night in one short
aspiration. But others must do as their souls shall require. Commonly
those aspirations are most grateful to the soul which are somewhat short &
run most glibly & currant(flowing), & have no rubs or jobs(awkwardnesses) in
them; as are these few that immediately follow, though perhaps they are not
so glib & currant in the English as they are in the Latin.

O et praesidium et dulce decus meum.

O my safeguard & my sweet ornament. ,

Da Quod iubes et iube quod vis.

Grant me to do what thou commaundest, & commaund me what thou wilt. This was an aspiration of St. Austin.

O vita animae meae. O lumen oculorum meorum.

O life of my soul, O light of my eyes.

In manus tuas, Domine. commendo spiritum meum.

Into Thy hands O Lord I commend my spirit.

Ecce Ancilla Domini; fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.

Loe the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to Thy word.

Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum.

My heart is ready ,O God, my heart is ready, or prepared.

Ecce ego, mitte me.

Loe here I am, send me whither thou please.

Tolle quod Tuum est et vade.

Take that wch is Thine, & goe thy wayes.

These are words in the Gospel used by the master to the hired servant that murmured, but you are to use them towards God in your own sense; & so you are to do for all other aspirations.

Harphius teacheth this aspiration (or rather a saying)

to one that is in desolation, & it implies a tota1 resignation.

Dominus meus et Deus meus.

My Lord & my God. So said St Thomas to our Saviour when he discovered it was He.

Domine, quid mihi in caelo, et a te quid volui super terram?

Lord, what is there in heaven, or what in the earth that I would have besides thee?

Hei mihi quia incolatus meus prolongatus est.

Alas that my habitation with God is put off, or deferred.

In Tua ditione cuncta sunt posita.

All things are within Thy dominion, & Thou hast power over them all.

Domine, Tu scis quia amo Te, et animam meam pono pro Te.

Lord, thou knowest that I love Thee, & will bestow my life for Thee.

The former words were used by St Peter towards our Saviour.

Quaemadmodwn desiderat ceruus ad fontes aquarum,

ita desiderat anima mea ad te. Deus.

Even as the hart(deer) doth thirst after the fountains of the waters,
doth my soul thirst after thee, O God.

Infaelix ego homo, quis me liberabit de corpore mortis huius?

Unhappy man that I am. who shall deliver me from the body of this
death? This St Paul said, longing to be with God.

Argentum et aurum non est mihi: quod autem habeo, hoc tibi do!

I have nether gold nor silver; but what I have, that I give unto thee! This
(as we read in the Acts of the Apostles) was the saying of the Apostle
to the infirm man whom he cured, that had asked an almes of him.

Precor caelestem regem, ut me dolentem nimium faciat eum cernere.

I beseech the heavenly King, that He cause me (that am very much
grieved for the want of it), to come by the sight of Him whom I so much
love.

These words in the Breviary are laid to the words of Jacob longing to
recover the sights of his sons Beniamen & Joseph, whom he feared
were perished.

Domine, si inveni gratiam in oculis Tuis ostende mihi faciem Tuam.

Lord, if I have found (or may find) grace in Thy sight, shew unto me Thy
face. These were the words which Moses used to God, when he desired to
see Him.

Domine, quid me vis facere?

Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? These words st Paul used upon his
conversion.

Nouerim Te. Nouerim me.

Let me know Thee, let me know myself. This St Augustine often
repeated, yea spent one whole night in saying nothing else but
(re)iterating this aspiration.

Te Deum laudamus, Te Dominum confitemur.

We praise thee (O God), we acknowledge Thee to be our Lord.

Benedic, anima mea, Domino, et omnia quae intra me sunt nomini
sancto eius.

My soul & all that is within me, do you bless our Lord, & his holy name.
O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte, si est dolor sicut
dolor meus.!

O all you that pass by this way, do you attend & see if there be any
grief so great as mine. This is the Lamentation of Jeremiah & may be

applied to one that longs through love, or through love is sorry for his sins.

Sanctus. sanctus. sanctus. Dominus Deus Sabaoth; pleni sunt caeli et terra maiestatis gloriae tuae.

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Sabaoth; The heaven & the earth are full of the majesty of Thy glory.

Deus. Deus meus. ad te de luce vicilo.

O God, O my God, to thee I awake in the morning.

Deus. Deus meus. respice in me: Quare me dereliquisti?

My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?

Deus, meus adiutor meus, sperabo in Te.

My God my helper, I will hope in Thee.

Domine, in caelo misericordia Tua, et veritas Tua usque ad nubes.

Lord, Thy mercy is in heaven, & Thy truth reacheth up even to the clouds.

Usquequo, Domine, oblivisceris me in finem? Usquequo avertis faciem Tuam a me?8

How long (O Lord) wilt Thou forget me? How long wilt Thou turn away Thy face from me?

Ad Te levavi oculos meos, Qui habitas in caelis.

To thee have I lifted up my eyes, Who dwellest in heaven.

Fili Dei, miserere mei.!

Son of God, have mercy on me!

Domine Deus meus, in te speravi: salvum me fac ex omnibus persequentibus me!

My Lord God, in Thee have I hoped; make me safe from all those that persecute me.

.....Here follow many aspirations from the Song of Songs.

Other aspirations.

Jesu, Jesu, Jesu.

This is a very noble aspiration when it cometh forth as of itself, & may be used infinite times one after another, if the soul do relish the use of it.

Lord, when shall I be wholly Thine & Thou mine?

O my secure refuge.

O life of my soul; my maker, my redeemer & conserver.

O joy of my soul.

When shall I love Thee with all my heart, with all my soul, & with all my might?

When shall I enjoy Thee, when shall I possess Thee?

Jesu my sweetness, my consolation. my life, my love, my riches, my treasure & all my good.

O that I were buried in Thee.

When shall I fully please Thee?

When shall my soul be according to Thy heart's desire?

O that my soul were as clean & as pure as when it first proceeded from Thee-

O that I could perfectly obey Thee.

O that I could always serve Thee.

O treasure of my soul.

O that I had never offended thee.

O that I could see myself free from (this or that) imperfection.

O that I could obtain this or tht excellent virtue.

When shall I perfectly love Thee?

When shall this earthly tabernacle be dissolved, & my soul oned with Thee!

Give me, O my sweet Jesus, purity of soul, humility of heart, & poverty of spirit.

O my sweet Jesus, that I knew Thee & knew myself!

Grant me, O sweet Jesus, that I may entirely love Thee!

Grant me O my only love, that I may continually revere Thee.

O bottomless sea of mercy, pardon me all my sins & offences.

Permit me not, O my Lord Jesus, ever to be separated from Thee!

Posses me, O sweet Jesus, & unite me wholly unto Thee.

I am nothing, I can(do)nothing, I desire nothing, but thee O

Jesu: Jesu, Jesu, Jesu.

Grant unto me (O Lord), the holy hatred of myself, & the perfect love of Thee.

.....

Quench my thirst, O Jesu; Jesu, Jesu, Jesu.

Thee only doth my soul relish, O Jesu, Jesu, Jesu.

When shall my soul be plunged, swallowed up, & buried in the infinite

depth of Thy divinity?

When shall I burn in thy love?

O my happiness!

O my only delight!

O joy of my heart.

My hope, my solace, my beginning & end.

O Lord Jesu, O Emmanuel, O Messias!

O Christ anointed of our Lord!

When shall this my earthly tabernacle be dissolved!

Most sweet & most loving God!

When shall I be united to Thee; when shall I be drowned in Thee?

When shall I be fully mortified?

When shall I embrace thee with the arms of my soul?

When I shall be inflamed with Thy love?

When shall I be according to Thy heart's desire?

Here I have given you some form of aspirations; but use you such aspirations as best please you, be they of those that I have expressed, or some of your own finding or invention; Those are best for you which your soul doth most relish. It is no matter what the sense or meaning of the words be; if they delight your soul, it is well enough & all in all, be the meaning of the words what it will, or have they no sense or meaning at all (that you understand), but be "without wit or sense"; yea, such may be & are like

to be best of all, as I heretofore signified unto you; & you must know that aspirations that have sense in them are of two sorts: the first sort is of those that we exercise immediately towards God, as in wishing well to Him, praising Him, admiring Him, &c.; The other sort is of those aspirations that we exercise immediately upon ourselves (but finally for God), as when we annihilate ourselves, humble ourselves, or do any other acts upon ourselves in regard of God.

Of the end of aspirations.

Aspirations being prosecuted together With a life of mortification, do at

length cause in the soul so great a degree of mortification & love towards God, that it seemeth to her that she can work no farther, but is

as it were at an end for all working of her own, & is ripe & ready for God to work in her..."

FROM THE OBLATEMASTER'S DESK:-

We hear so much of lectio divina or holy reading as an exercise both in reading and praying and we hear much about prayer of the divine presence or contemplation on the other hand. Father Augustine Baker (1575-1641, see also oblate Letter number two) collected the above "Aspirations"-- arrow-like raisings of the heart and mind, ejaculatory prayers which lie at the threshold of contemplation. Page 7

So often devout souls puzzle over lectio divina and over contemplative prayer and indeed prayer in general and wonder where the connection lies if any.

Group exercises of shared lectio can be very enriching and yet leave some again puzzled as to the interface between this usually scriptural, shared, devout reading and the threshold of pure prayer in the presence of God, contemplation. Do the two ever meet?-- And yet prayer is set before us as the aim of lectio divina!

The above "aspirations" both in Latin and in English culled by Fr. Augustine Baker from scripture and scores of spiritual books, which I have left to a great extent in his English of the period (but not always in the spelling of the period!)-- these short groups of words, designed to be repeated slowly and attentively--these are at the interface between lectio and contemplation. These aspirations as Fr. Baker calls them, are the spiritual, written and spoken runways of prayer. They are runways that lie between the heart and mind and God. They are places of both take-off and of landing and immersion.

So much of the secret of lectio and of prayer is hidden in these simple lists aspirations that are indeed the Holy Wisdom, the Sancta Sophia of prayer which finally has to be the gift, the charism of the Holy Spirit. Run as fast as we like the kite of our soul must be caught up by the Holy Spirit or else we remain hobbled and lame in the end. The compunction of heart of St Benedict "with tears and fervour of heart" is the very hobbled lameness that paradoxically brings a lift-off.

Prayer's very "failure" is its own God-given springboard, God comes to the broken-hearted.

Books and Media

"Holy Wisdom" by Fr. Augustine Baker digested by Fr. Serenus Cressy (Sancta Sophia) is the most accessible form of Fr. Augustine Baker's 2,000,000 words in manuscript. There are many copies of this available in libraries, second hand, free pdf, Kindle 0.99p,online, audiobooks etc, as well as new.

The Above extracts are taken from the Analecta Cartusiana comprehensive printing of many of his works in his genuine, period English which is no barrier to understanding but rather thought provoking, I find.

Oblate Events 2021

LENTEN OBLATE RETREAT NEXT YEAR 2021

19TH FEBRUARY – 22ND FEBRUARY

FR ABBOT SCRIPTURAL LECTIO FOR LENT

guestmaster.pluscarden@gmail.com for bookings

PLEASE CONSULT THE WEBSITE OF PLUSCARDEN ABBEY FOR DAY TO DAY INFORMATION ABOUT THE GUESTHOUSE AND EVENTS THAT ARE COMING OFF. PRESENT CONDITIONS VARY DAY TO DAY AS YOU KNOW-- AFFECTING EVERYTHING ESPECIALLY TRAVEL, LITURGY, MEETINGS, RETREATS, THE GUEST-HOUSE ETC -- YOU MUST WATCH THIS SPACE PLEASE-- NAMELY-- THE PLUSCARDEN WEBSITE-PRIMARY SOURCE OF INFORMATION

www.pluscardenabbey.org

(try again!!)SUMMER OBLATE RETREAT NEXT YEAR 2021

30TH JULY – 2ND AUGUST

**Canon Luke Smith (Oblate) SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR OF St John's
Seminary Womersley**

Page |
9

guestmaster.pluscarden@gmail.com for bookings

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

FOR THOSE AWAITING A CHANCE TO BOOK INTO THE GUESTHOUSES, THEY HAVE JUST RE-OPENED-- TAKING TWO MEN AT A TIME MAXIMUM AND TWO LADIES MAXIMUM AT ANY ONE TIME.

MEN HAVE TO EAT IN THE GUESTHOUSE NOW IN THE MEANTIME-- FOOD PROVIDED TO MICROWAVE. LADIES AS BEFORE.

THE CHURCH IS STILL CLOSED TO DAILY VISITORS EXCEPT FOR MASS AT 9.00 DURING THE WEEK AND 8.00AM ON SUNDAYS WITH THE LIMITED DISTANCED PLACES BEING BOOKED THE DAY BEFORE BY EMAILING FR.GILES (SAME EMAIL AS GUESTMASTER SEE ABOVE)

APART FROM THAT DAY VISITS ARE ONLY TO THE GROUNDS OR SHOP TWO AT A TIME. IN ALL CASES MASKS ARE TO BE WORN. I THE

OBLATEMASTER CAN MEET WITH OBLATES DISTANCED WITH MASKS OR IN THE VISITOR CENNTRE OR LARGER PARLOURS FOR DISTANCING.

IF YOU CAN BOOK IN OR CALL IN THEN POSTULANCIES, NOVICIATES AND OBLATIONS CAN TAKE PLACE NOW IF WE ARRANGEIT ALL.(MY EMAIL AS ALWAYS IS AT THE TOP OF THE LETTER AT LEAST IN THE POSTAL VERSION.--OR SIMPLY REPLY TO THIS OBLATE LETTER MAILING.

This is to let you know that the UK Oblates Team is preparing an online retreat to replace the one planned for Douai Abbey in October which was cancelled because of the pandemic.

Please find the details below:↓

→Inter Oblate Event for UK monasteries:- **ONLINE RETREAT 2020**
'APPROACHING ADVENT'
Online National Oblate Retreat

SATURDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2020 (11.00 – 17.00 GMT)

Page |
10

Delivered via Zoom

GUEST SPEAKER:

DAME LAURENTIA JOHNS O.S.B.

We are delighted and grateful that Dame Laurentia has accepted the invitation to be this year's speaker at our National Oblate Retreat. Dame Laurentia is a Benedictine Nun of Stanbrook Abbey. Her works include 'The Way of Benedict: Eight Blessings for Lent', 'Touched by God - Ten Monastic Journeys' (Ed. and contributor) and 'To Prefer Nothing to Christ' (Co-author).

Registration for the retreat is online by using the following link:

<http://eepurl.com/hdFSq1>

The final date for registration is Saturday November 13 2020.

We are suggesting a donation of £15 which can be paid via credit transfer to the UK Oblates

account: Sort Code 08-92-99; Account No 65302976 or by cheque to myself at 24, Virginia

Close, New Malden, Surrey KT3 3RB

Once you have registered, you will receive an acknowledging email and a support pack will

be emailed to you in the week of November 14 2020.

Please also note that, if circumstances allow, there will also be a residential retreat at

Belmont Abbey from May 17-19 2021. Details are on our website:

www.benedictine-oblates.net.

With all good wishes in St Benedict

Neil Zoladkiewicz Oblate of Ealing Abbey and UK Oblates Team Treasurer

(NB--Please let me know if you are thinking of going to the 2022 Oblate Congress--Fr. Martin)

PRAYER INTENTIONS

Abbot Anselm's intentions. Bishop Hugh's & Bishop Richard Moth's intentions. Fr Anthony Buaful O.S.B. Of Kristo Buase, Ordained priest on the 10th September in Trinidad. Oblates Sue Nicholson and Eileen Kerr both 80 years old. Oblate Janet Boyd Moss 100 on 4th November.

Silver jubilee of Ordinations of Fr. Benedict, Fr. Ambrose (both emeritus oblatemasters) and Abbot Martin of Prinknash. Silver jubilee of profession of Fr. Martin, current oblatemaster. Postulantcies , novitiates and oblations have been on hold this last quarter, now changing slowly.

All those hit by the virus living and dead-- and all sufferers throughout the world-- suffering in mind or body and those tending them.

For Fr. Stuart Chalmers (Oblate) spiritual director of the Scots College in Spain &. For Prior Bede & For Fr. Ambrose Flavell in charge of the Shetlands.; vocations to St Mary's and St. Scholastica's, Petersham, U.S.A and Kristo Buase Priory, Ghana.

John McKinlay recovering from a stroke, Jane Coll's granddaughter Natasha Gunn through the intercession of Margaret Sinclair. Fr. Francis Wilson(any news still welcome), Mrs Anne Morgan, Janet Boyd Moss, Connie Reid, Mary Frances McGregor and her daughter Ruth. Please pray for the health of Fr. Matthew, Br Cyprian, Br Finbar, Rev. Christopher Mayo, Rev. Angus Macleod, for Gillian Cockwill's Mother, for Gail & Tony Schmitz. For Siobhan Gilmour's husband, for Mrs. Allie Brien, Margaret Johnston's mother, for Gitte Mackay, Martin Farrelly, Leonora Duson, and her daughter, and Margaret Rawcliffe, Robert Cantafio's mother Margharita, Joe Barrett, Maureen Woodhead& her sister Doreen, Bob Barr, Brian Milne, Fiona Sellar, Johan(Joy) Baillie, Nick MacCrae. Martin MacCrae, Dr. David

Paterson and his wife Angela, Jacqui Heath-Anderson and daughter Sally, Dr. Hester du Plessis, Poppy Sinclair, Ian & Frederick Brodie, for Pat Foster, Pam Woodhead, Carolyn, Marshall & Malcolm Boardman, and also for Eileen Kerr, Elizabeth MacKay, Peter and Brian Wynne, Susan Stephen, Cindy's husband, Danielle & her son Osyp, Evelyn, Violet and Sheila, Bernadette Harris, Alistair Macdonald and all the friends of the Abbey and for all Oblates, and for ALL the sick and those who care for them--and for our 3 sponsored seminarians. For vocations and all our novice and postulants, monks and Oblates and all our Oblates living and dead. All we have omitted or forgotten, living and dead.

Our Sponsored Seminarians:- *Appeal: some sponsors have dropped out and there is still a danger of a future shortfall in their essential fees* If you would like to make a financial contribution (usual amount is £10/£20 standing order per month) please contact: Campbell Murdoch, email: jcmurdoch@yahoo.co.uk or mobile: 07810 350006 (Address: Fircroft, Knockbuckle Road, Kilmacolm, Renfrewshire, PA13 4JT).

ALL THE CHAPTER'S ARE AS FAR AS I KNOW ON HOLD OBVIOUSLY DURING THE LOCKDOWN UNLESS PERHAPS IF UNDER SIX PERSONS SO PLEASE MAKE USE OF THE CONTACT DETAILS BELOW TO FIND OUT HOW THINGS ARE PROGRESSING.>>>>>▼▼▼▼Contact me(details at the head of every letter!) I can forward or:-

St Mungo's Chapter, Glasgow:-We meet on the second Saturday of each month at 2 p.m. Contact can be made via Peter Aitken. Tel. 0141 427 2084.

St Margaret's Chapter, Dunfermline meetings as announced. All details contact Deacon Pat Carrigan smcb_oblates@live.co.uk

St. Monica's Chapter for far North -- Thurso. Contact Jane Coll. "Scaraben", Westside, Dunnet, Thurso, Caithness, KY14 8YD. Phone 01847 851467(informal)

St. Peter's Chapter, Aberdeen --next 11th December. 7.00-8.00 pm each second Tuesday of each month, Church Hall, St Joseph's, 2 Tanfield

Walk, Aberdeen &/or contact Mr Robert Ian Johnston, 31, Tay Road, Mastrick, ABERDEEN AB16 5LA

St Mirin's Chapter Paisley meets at 2pm on the 1st Saturday of each month at: Cathedral House, St Mirin's Cathedral, Cathedral Precincts, Ince Street, Paisley, PA1 1HR. Campbell Murdoch, mobile 07810 350006 or email jcmurdoch@yahoo.co.uk (address: Fircroft, Knockbuckle Road, Kilmacolm, Renfrewshire, PA13 4JT).

"St Andrew's Chapter" Pluscarden Abbey St Andrew's Chapter on a Saturday! Saturday 2.00pm - 3.30pm St Benedict's Guest House Men's Breakfast Room (next door on left from Abbey Shop)-Contact Eileen Fitzpatrick.

"St Columba's Chapter" in Dundee -- if interested please contact Mrs. Georgina Quinn 2D, Church Street, Broughty Ferry DUNDEE Fife DD5 1EZ

"Benedictine Prayer Circle"-If interested—John McKinlay jgjm07@yahoo.co.uk

Rule of St Benedict Chapter 72

*"Let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ, and may
He lead us all together to life everlasting."*

In the love of Christ and SPNB

Fr. Martin

PAX