



*Nothing Dearer than
Christ*

Oblate letter of
the Pluscarden Benedictines, Page |
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DMB series No 55 Michaelmas 2022

Monastic Voices:

**Bible: Old Testament: Douay Rheims Translation: 2
Samuel 23.14-17**

23:14. And David was then in a hold: and there was a
garrison of the
Philistines then in Bethlehem.15. And David longed,
and said: O that some man would get me a drink
of the water out of the cistern, that is in Bethlehem, by
the gate.16. And the three valiant men broke through
the camp of the

Philistines, and drew water out of the cistern of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and brought it to David: but he would not drink, but offered it to the Lord,¹⁷. Saying: The Lord be merciful to me, that I may not do this: shall I drink the blood of these men that went, and the peril of their lives? therefore he would not drink. These things did these three mighty men.

See also 1 Chronicles-- 11.15-19.

Allegorical commentary on 2 Samuel 23.14-17--'De Apologia Prophetae David' by St Ambrose:-

34. Perceiving this, too, as the fierce triumph of the vanquished nation, he once more took up a mighty war in the valley of the Titans, no less against the enemy than against nature. For being thirsty when engaged in battle, he had nothing to drink: Who will give me a drink, he said, from the lake that is at the gates of Bethlehem (2 Kings 23:15). Now the enemy was intermingled between the lake and St. David, and in the middle of the enemy's camp. The three men overtook the multitude of the adversaries, and filled water from the lake which was in Bethlehem, and offered it to the king to drink: but the king would not drink, and poured it upon the Lord. Indeed, he was worthy of such a role, so that what was the sign of

lively virtue might become a sacrifice of piety. And he said a sentence worthy of a prophetic spirit: It is not for me to do this; lest I drink the blood of men who have departed from their souls (Ibid., 17). Therefore he overcame nature, so that when he was thirsty he would not drink; and set an example of himself, by which every army should learn to endure thirst. He also trained his subjects to the duty of valour, so that even in the face of danger the volunteer soldiers would obey the royal command. Now that he refused to drink, he declared that he was commanded by the grace of the proband soldiers, and not by necessity of thirst for food. Finally, the pious wound of conscience pleaded, because the water, bought with the blood of so many men, could not have the sweetness of drinking, which was consistent with the horror of the intended death. 35. *But if you wish to look deeper, and to look into the mystery, David was thirsty, not for water from the lake that is in Bethlehem, but he foresaw Christ in spirit coming from the Virgin. Therefore he wanted to drink not the water of the river, but the drink of spiritual grace, that is, he was not thirsty for the element of water, but for the blood of Christ. Finally, he did not drink the offered water, but poured it out to the Lord, signifying that he thirsted for Christ's sacrifice, not for the flow of nature: that sacrifice in which there was remission of sins, he thirsted for that eternal fountain, not one that was sought by the dangers of strangers;”(my italics)*



*Aqueduct Hebron to
Bethlehem to Temple*

Archaeological and Scriptural conjectural notes from several sources:-

Possibly even King Solomon son of David established the nub of the original, complex water aqueduct system from Hebron, through Bethlehem to Jerusalem perhaps about 950 BC as a major design factor of the Temple itself. Solomon may have been advised that the Gihon spring for the Jerusalem city of David's water did not have enough water pressure to supply the Temple above, water being a

major requisite to wash the blood away and keep the area from putrefying. A large source of water was needed and constructed-- Solomon's pools are South-east of Jerusalem above and at Bethlehem, King David's home town.

The blood of so many lambs at the time of the Passover Sacrifice overflowed into the inrush of water from aqueducts that swept it all away down into the Kidron brook. At the same time the book of John 19:33-34 tells us “19.33 And when they came toward

Jesus, they saw that He was dead already, and they did not break His bones, 34 except one from the soldiers struck Him in His side with his spear, and at once flowed out blood and water.” Water sourced in Bethlehem, and blood from Sacrificial Lambs poured out from the side of the Temple, a visible fulfilment of David's prophetic offering of water and blood from Bethlehem and itself is taken up and fulfilled as the blood from the side of Christ's body which again is taken up and explained by the Fathers of the Church as Baptism and the Holy Eucharist issuing from the heart of Christ.

FROM THE OBLATE MASTER'S DESK:-

Biblical form and redaction criticism have proved invaluable tools for understanding the formation of Holy Scripture and intimate relations within it rather on the model of science and physics in relation to lived being as experienced directly—by being! Criticism famously or infamously murders to dissect. The whole of Scripture-- the Canon-- gives a broad living picture of the inspired Word. Nevertheless an ever increasing number of pixels of every kind of criticism can sharpen or tint that picture -- even if the odd pixel is a bit off colour. The more pixels the sharper

the image-- but the broad image remains the same if intensifying, informed by the living Word.

So it is that a St Ambrose can without aid of all the processes of scientific criticism, form criticism and source criticism, Biblical archaeology and palaeography open up an overarching Old testament and New Testament, theological vista-- St Ambrose unswervingly leads us through all the senses of Scripture as detailed in the Catechism: "The *literal sense* is the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis.... The *spiritual sense*. Thanks to the unity of God's plan, not only the text of Scripture but also the realities and events about which it speaks can be signs.... The *allegorical sense*. We can acquire a more profound understanding of events by recognizing their significance in Christ The *moral sense*. The events reported in Scripture ought to lead us to act justly. As St. Paul says, they were written "for our instruction"..... The *anagogical sense* (Greek: anagoge, "leading"). We can view realities and events in terms of their eternal significance, leading us toward our true homeland"--and Christ in His Mysteries. David "*poured it out to the Lord, signifying that he thirsted for Christ's sacrifice*". This is the whole sweep of Old and New Testament informed by Christ.

BOOKS AND MEDIA

Handmaids of the Lord. Women Deacons in the Catholic Church by Jane Coll, oblate.

One of the most hotly-debated topics today in the Catholic Church concerns the role of women. Jane Coll upholds as binding the Church teaching that they cannot be ordained as priests. She then explores whether women could be ordained deaconesses. The author takes a new look at this issue and seeks an answer that is compatible with the teachings of Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium.9780852447727
Publishers Gracewing Publishing

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The Message of Monastic Spirituality By Abbot Andre Louf O.C.S.O et al. What a lot of ground this covers, much of it very readable if uneven(not all from Andre Louf's pen even if the same translator)

This little book gives an entry to so many monastic avenues even in its bibliography' Congress no.:-64-19816 1964
Desclee Co.----bit of a collector's item!

The Rule of Saint Benedict for Family Life Today--- Don Massimo Laponi OSB

Available £6.95 St Pauls--publisher- totally available

"Is it really true that husband, wife son and daughter who want to live together wisely and in a Christian manner are helped in this by their family and the habits within the home? Or rather is it not the case that what is now the almost universally imposed state of affairs which no one has the courage to correct suffocates every best intention made by as individual member of the family? But if every member of the family listens to Saint Benedict in order to learn how to live Christian community life wouldn't things be so much better?"

Product Code St Pauls 9780854397716 Also as free download (edited highlights)

IMPORTANT Announcement:-

COMPLINE (NIGHT PRAYER) AT Page |
PLUSCARDEN ABBEY IS AT 7.30 PM FROM 8
NOW ON.

Uk Oblate Website---- <https://www.benedictine-oblates.net> Always worth consulting.

Pluscarden Benedictines Br. Cyprian Bampton: For inclusion on the mailing list write Br. Cyprian Bampton OSB at the Abbey address -- similarly subscriptions and changes of address to him.

Pluscarden Live Streaming --go to our website and you will find a drop-down list leading you to livestreaming-- click onto that and choose past or present items or click on this link :-

<http://pluscardenabbey.org/live> Br. Michael is in charge of the live streaming. All queries to him.

- **RESIDENTIAL BOOKINGS:- FR. GILES BY LETTER** (S.A.E. ALWAYS A GOOD

IDEA!)

- OR guestmaster.pluscarden@gmail.com for bookings or guestmaster@pluscardenabbey.org EMAIL for officially
- or a form through the website **www.pluscardenabbey.org**

The Pluscarden website is the primary source for day to day information: Please keep an eye on it--especially if you have a "booking"----and for livestreaming.

NEXT YEAR 2023 OBLATE RETREATS 2023

- **2023 Lent Friday 24th February to Monday 27th February Fr. Abbot.**
- **2023 Summer Friday 11th to Monday 14th AUGUST Bishop Richard Moth**

WORLD CONGRESS -- "It has been decided that the "5th World Congress of Benedictine Oblates" will be held at the *Badia Primaziale Sant'Anselmo*, in Rome, from 9 to 16 September 2023." Abbot Primate Gregory Polan O.S.B. ---- Registration will be from January 1st 2023. Further details to follow.

PRAYER INTENTIONS The Repose of the soul of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and for God's blessing on the

reign of King Charles III. The repose of the soul of Br. Gabriel our bursar (and former guestmaster). Abbot Anselm's intentions. Bishop Hugh's & Bishop Richard Moth's intentions. --Vocations here and to St Mary's and St. Scholastica's, Petersham (where they have recently, this Summer, had covid), U.S.A and Kristo Buase Priory. **Repose of the souls of Oblates: Julie McCann and Pat Foster and Peter Wynne faithful server of 8.00 am Mass here for decades.** Prayers for Dawn Cole in her 90's and Br. Thomas her only carer. Health of Oblates: Margaret Kessack, Rev. John Cuthbert, Marie's husband, George Brand's wife Yvonne in hospital, Justyna Tymecka and Marvia McCulloch, Joe Bagley, Robert Cantafio and his mother Margharita, Ursula Humphrey, Jane Coll's granddaughter Natasha Gunn. Fr. Francis Wilson, 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 Netta Ewing. For Siobhan Gilmour's husband, for Mrs. Allie Brien, Margaret Johnston's mother, for Gitte Mackay, Leonora Duson, and her daughter, Joe Barrett senior, Maureen Woodhead & her Sister Doreen (leg amputation), Bob Barr, Brian Milne, Fiona Sellar, Nick MacCrae. Martin MacCrae, Jacqui Heath-Anderson and daughter Sally, Poppy Sinclair, Ian Fred's Twin, Pam Woodhead (nursing home), Alison Donald (nursing home) Carolyn, Marshall & Malcolm Boardman, and also for Eileen Kerr, Elizabeth MacKay, Peter (hospital after a fall) and Brian Wynne, Evelyn, and Sheila, Alistair Macdonald (operation scheduled), Elizabeth Mackay *and for ALL the sick.*

Our three sponsored seminarians are all doing well.
One Taking a year "out". Charles has finished his

Philosophy degree with an Upper Second, and is now embarking on a year's post-graduate course in education. He is with the Servite Order and the teaching qualification will be useful for him when he is ordained, God willing. One will be ordained Deacon next year God willing. They are extremely grateful for the financial support we give them and pray for us. Please pray for them and for Sr Catherine OSB, who does so much to keep everything running smoothly & our new coordinator of the seminarian programme--

Penelope Coate's contact details: penelopecoate@yahoo.com. 0794 9399592.

OBLATE CHAPTERS

PLEASE MAKE USE OF THE CONTACT DETAILS BELOW TO FIND OUT HOW THINGS STAND OR--Contact me (details at the head of every letter) I can forward or:-

St Mungo's Chapter: In abeyance. Prayers for Peter Aitken convenor please, housebound.

St Margaret's Chapter: 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 & Orkney and Shetland by zoom .

St. Peter's Chapter, Aberdeen: 7.00-8.00 pm Mondays as below, Cathedral Persbytery, Huntly Street, Aberdeen contact Chairman Mr. Robert Ian Johnston,

31, Tay Road, Mastrick, ABERDEEN AB16 5LA or secretary Mr. George Brand geobra@msn.com:-
Schedule: Mondays: 17th October, 21st November, 19th December. 7.00-8.00--prayer & discussion & centred around Compline from the Abbey---contact chairman & secretary.

St Andrew's Chapter. "I will send out an invitation email to you in good time. Live-streamed Oblates at None have resumed & are available on:

<http://pluscardenabbey.org/live> Warm regards and prayers"

Eileen Fitzpatrick Oblate OSB Co-ordinator St Andrew's Chapter (local to Moray)

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

Also I understand there is a **Benedictine Confraternity** in Glasgow, and an **Ordinate, Benedictine Chapter**(website)--more details may emerge.

Benedictine Prayer Circle--If interested some oblates may like to know of John McKinlay's Benedictine Prayer Circle, see Links on the UKOT website—John McKinlay jgjm07@yahoo.co.uk

We entrust our Abbey and our Oblates and our(God's!) struggling world to the prayerful intercession of Our Holy Father St Benedict!

Blessings, Love and Prayers Fr. Martín PAX