

NIL⁺ CARIVS CHRISTO

HOLY RULE CH.V.



Nothing Dearer than Christ

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DMB Oblate Letter No 57 Lent 2023

Monastic Voices:

From A Lenten Sermon of St Bernard

“Who is more separated from worldly activities than a pilgrim? To them the Apostle says, You have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. A pilgrim can easily be held back from his quest and oppressed by his burden on the pretext of what he needs for his journey; a dead person will not even feel the lack of a tomb! He hears those who heap blame on him as if they are praising him, and those who fawn over him like those who find fault—rather, he doesn't hear them because he is dead! His death, which keeps him thus unstained, or rather, which separates him inwardly from this world, is altogether happy. Christ has to live in a person who does not live in himself. That is what the Apostle says: I live, yet not I, for Christ lives in me, as if he were saying, "I have died to all else; I do not feel, I do not notice, I am not concerned; if these things are truly of Christ, they find me alive and ready. If I can do nothing else, at least I feel pleasure at what I see being done for His honour, and displeasure at what is done for any other reason.” This is a very large step.

But perhaps we can find something still higher. Where shall we seek it? Where do you suppose, but in him of whom we were just speaking, who was caught

up to the third heaven? What keeps us from speaking of a third heaven if you can find some step above those? Hear him then from his lofty height, not glorying in himself but saying, Let me not glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. Note that he says not only dead to the world, but also crucified, which is a dishonourable kind of death. I have been crucified to it, he says, just

as it has been crucified to me. Everything the world loves is, to me, a cross: pleasures of the flesh, honours, riches, the empty praise of human beings. As for the things the world reckons a cross-I have been attached to them, I cling to them, I embrace them wholeheartedly. Is this not greater than the first and second steps? A pilgrim, if he is wise and not forgetful of his pilgrimage, passes by, although with suffering, and is not much involved in worldly matters. A dead person spurns the blandishments of this world just as much as its hardships. To him who was taken up to the third heaven, the cross is everything to which the world clings, and he clings to the things which seem to the world a cross. We can also understand the Apostle's words to mean that the world has been crucified to him as a result of his reflecting upon it, and he to the world by compassion. He saw the world bound to the cross by its vices, and he himself was crucified to it by his feelings of compassion.

Let us all consider for ourselves what step each of us is set on, and let us be zealous to advance from day to day, because from strength to strength the God of gods will be seen in Zion. Especially in this holy season, I beg, let us endeavour to live in all purity. A certain short number of days has been set; otherwise in our human frailty we might lose hope. If we were told, Be careful at all times to maintain the purity of your way of life, who would not lose hope? But now we are bidden to amend the negligences of other times in a few days so that we may taste the sweetness of perfect purity, and that from now on the vestiges of this holy Lent may be radiant in our way of life.”

FROM THE OBLATEMASTER'S DESK

“A pilgrim can easily be held back from his quest and oppressed by his burden on the pretext of what he needs for his journey; a dead person will not even feel the lack of a tomb! He hears those who heap blame on him as if they are praising him, and those who fawn over him like those who find fault-or rather, he doesn't hear them because he is dead! His death, which keeps him thus unstained, or rather, which separates him inwardly from this world, is altogether happy.”

Total detachment is a Lenten lesson that the dead are well on the way to practising, as St Bernard tells us, and all of us are being taught to practise it in a big way at the beginning of this Lent in 2023! What was my numbed surprise when my brother (an Oblate as it happens) phoned me to say he thought I had been “hacked”-- a nasty word used of email programmes and information whose security has been breached with criminal intent—and something of which, up until now, I have had no direct experience. At first I said he needn't show me but quickly changed my mind and said “Yes, send it to me.”

Well I think I must have felt as prisoners beaten into false confessions must feel when seeing their name signed to a tissue of lies and presented to people who trusted them! To see a real baby human being (whose name we may not know and whose parents we do not know) in a most sorry state and probably a real description of physical ailment all used to cruelly exploit and play on the feelings of the unsuspecting to extract money by every means for foul purposes with at the bottom the “guarantee” of my own name. I was and am appalled. Each day since, some friend of mine, usually an Oblate, gets in touch with me by phone now or email and says “I'll give as much as I can Father-- how should I do it?”---And then there seems like almost unbelief as I tell them “It's not me-- It's all false-- this is a SCAM and is SPAM and is PHISHING-- someone(or a criminal gang) is using my name and address list which has been breached and HACKED---Fr. Martin does not have an email address(nor had!)--- --- oblatemaster01@gmail.com. A swindler has borrowed my name and signature to create a false email address. There you have-- it. Don't be taken in!---Despite the pathetic picture pulling at the heart-strings!

So to Lent and detachment, “as of the dead”, to both praise and blame. My pre-Lenten lesson and preparation are almost complete. If in pride and vainglory I “prized” some good name, some minor noise in the world, all is a fair way to being banished and blown away.

In Lent, as St Bernard and St Paul say, we must learn and beg the grace to glory only in Christ and Him crucified! If we are open to it, the Lord will help us and will find a way to help us embrace the Cross---- like St Andrew --- to “Uplift me to my only good Who died on Thee for me”!

BOOKS AND MEDIA:

Many of St Bernard of Clairvaux's sermons and other texts are available from Cistercian Publications www.cistercianpublications.org

This one is in volume/no. 52 Cistercian Fathers Series: Sermons for Lent and the Easter Season (above is part of Sermon six) ISBN 978-0-87907-452-4 or ISBN 978-0-87907-744-0 as an ebook

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.

THIS YEAR'S OBLATE RETREATS 2023

RESIDENTIAL BOOKINGS:- FR. GILES BY LETTER (S.A.E. ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA!)

OR EMAIL guestmaster.pluscarden@gmail.com for bookings or officially guestmaster@pluscardenabbey.org 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.

- **2023 Lent Friday 24th February 2023 to Monday 27th February 2023 Fr. Abbot.** Fr Giles **holding rooms vacant for Oblates(or enquirers, postulants or novices) i.e., for us** until a few days before! We follow the liturgy of Lent, Mass and Divine Office (timetable posted in rooms etc) with these additional extra events—Conference 1 Saturday 25th 10.30 am, Conference 2 Saturday 25th 3.00 pm, Sunday 26th Mass 10.00 am Fr. Abbot preaching, Conference 3 Sunday 26th 3.00 pm, Monday 27th opportunity to renew Oblation during Mass at 9.00 am. Ladies usual eating arrangements at St Scholastica's. Menfolk breakfast and supper in St Benedict's, lunch in refectory. Visitor Centre open on Saturday and Sunday for eating sandwiches for non-resident attendees(with tea & coffee or cup o' soup). Fr. Martin available for Confession &/or chat throughout.
- **2023 This Summer Friday 11th to Monday 14th AUGUST Bishop Richard Moth**

- 2023 September 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 9th to 16th September 2023." Abbot Primate Gregory Polan O.S.B. ---- Registration has been open from January 1st 2023. FURTHER UPDATE: 9th January 2023: REGISTRATION IS INDEED NOW OPEN!

Full details about Congress Registration and Payment have been sent to Oblate Directors who have been asked to inform their Oblates who must get permission from their Oblate Director to attend.

Places are very limited.(12 for UK) Therefore, if you would like to attend, please contact your Oblate Director (Fr. Martin) as soon as possible to indicate your interest However, there will be a waiting list. It is also hoped that there will be live streaming of some of the events. *5TH INTERNATIONAL OBLATES CONGRESS! THEME 'MOVING FORWARD: LIVING THE WISDOM OF THE RULE' SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 9 - FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 15 2023* The Rome Congress will include attendance at Pope Francis' general Audience and visits to Monte Cassino and Subiaco. The Congress will be based at San Anselmo, our Benedictine HQ, with accommodation in and around San Anselmo. Bookings opened on 1st January 2023. Full information and registration is available on the Sant Anselmo website

www.collegiosantanselmo.com

Each country is allocated a certain number of places. (12 for UK) Therefore, if you would like to attend, please contact your Oblate Director in advance to indicate your interest. Your Oblate Director will have to send a short reference supporting your application. Click on the following link to read about the 2023 Congress.

Congressdescription

Neil Zoladkiewicz,Oblate of Ealing Abbey UK National Coordinator for Rome Congress 2023.

PRAYER INTENTIONS For Fr. Matthew Tylor O.S.B.,who is dying. The Repose of the soul of Emeritus Archbishop Mario Conti and his retired housekeeper(102!) --Oblate Jean Johnstone, Oblate Alexandrina(Allie) Brien. For Abbot Anselm's intentions, Bishop Hugh's & Bishop Richard Moth's intentions. Br. Simon being ordained Deacon. --Vocations here at Pluscarden and to St Mary's and St. Scholastica's, Petersham U.S.A and Kristo Buase Priory. Health for Dawn Cole in her 90's and Br. Thomas her only carer. Health of Oblates: *Peter Aitken Co-ordinator of St Mungo's chapter, Glasgow for decades now in nursing home in Largs,* George Brand's wife Yvonne and George himself, Justyna Tymecka and Marvia McCulloch, Joe Bagley, Mrs Sheila Barr, 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. Please pray for the health of Br. Cyprian, Br Finbar, Rev. Christopher Mayo, Rev. Angus Macleod, & for Netta Ewing. For Siobhan Gilmour's husband, Margaret Johnston's mother, for Gitte Mackay, Leonora Duson, and her daughter, Robert Johnstone & his father, for Joe Barrett senior, Maureen Woodhead & her Sister Doreen, 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, Alistair Macdonald **and for ALL the housebound and the sick.**

Our three sponsored seminarians are all doing well. *Josaphat will be ordained Deacon this 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 or Contact me- details at the head of every letter.

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 Presbytery, Huntly Street, Aberdeen contact Chairman Mr. Robert Ian Johnston, 31, Tay Road, Mastrick, ABERDEEN AB16 5LA or secretary Mr. George Brand geobra@msn.com:- prayer & discussion & centred around Compline from the Abbey---contact chairman & secretary.

St Andrew's Chapter. Moray. Live-streamed Oblates at None –next, resumed, 2.30pm, 14th March 2023 followed by tea in the Visitor Centre.

Past Oblate None at <http://pluscardenabbey.org/live> Warm regards and prayers
Eileen Fitzpatrick Oblate OSB Co-ordinator St Andrew's Chapter

Benedictine Prayer Circle- Oblates may like to join John McKinlay's Benedictine Prayer Circle, see Links on the UKOT website—John McKinlay jgim07@yahoo.co.uk

Our Holy Father St Benedict! Pray for us!

The Temptation of Jesus Mt 4 *1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And he fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." 4 But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" 5 Then the devil took him to the holy city, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will give his*

angels charge of you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" 7 Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'" 8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; 9 and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! for it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" 11 Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him.



Prayers for Peace and Blessings in Lent

Fr. Martin PAX