



FINAL OBLATIONS – Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB congratulates Myrna Kostash of Edmonton, and Stephen Hallford of Dundas, Ontario on their Final Oblations, July 12, at Oblate Day.



Participants at the 2014 Mount Carmel Pilgrimage, attended by approximately 425.

Oblate Fund Donations

Annual donations to the Oblate fund are being accepted to help meet our Oblate expenses: Oblate newsletters, meetings, supplies and better serving the Oblates. Donations can be made to: St. Peter's Abbey Oblate Fund. Our address is: St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster, SK, S0K-2Y0. Please let us know if you wish to receive a tax receipt for your donation.

Oblate Day Agenda — November 8, 2014



- 7:20 a.m. Lauds
- 10:40 a.m. Noon Hour Prayer
- 11:00 a.m. Eucharist
- Noon Lunch with the Monks
- Meeting in Jerome Assembly Hall
- 1:30 p.m. Welcome and Prayer by Oblate Director Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB
- 1:40 p.m. Presentation on "Praying the Office"
- 2:30 p.m. Break – Coffee – Discussions
- 4:00 p.m. Vespers

Next Meeting Dates: March 21, July 11, October 24, 2015

Oblates are invited to submit ideas, reflections, and stories on the Oblate way of life. We will attempt to publish all articles in part or in whole when space allows. Send your articles, as well as questions or comments to paulpaproski@hotmail.com (Fr. Paul Paproski, St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster, SK S0K 2Y0)



Freedom is integral to obedience

By Paul Paproski, OSB

Freedom is an essential characteristic of obedience, Bishop Donald Bolen said, July 12, at St. Peter's Abbey while discussing the topic of obedience. God created everyone in God's image and likeness and that includes free will, he said to 50 attending Oblate Day in the Jerome Assembly Room.

Bishop Donald recalled, humorously, going for a walk and seeing many mosquitoes and dragon flies chasing after them. Insects don't live in freedom, he said, because they are driven by instinct. Insects don't know what obeying is about. Bolen recalled a story he once read which spoke of God creating the world and Satan telling God to deny freedom to people. God, in his love, said he would give people free will. Satan was more concerned about being served and rebelled. Then Satan tempted Adam and Eve to be disobedient in the Garden of Eden.

The Old Testament tells us that God has desires for creation. God wants us to enter into a covenantal relationship with God who is steadfast love and graciousness. God only asks for our hearts in return, he said. In the New Testament we learn of Jesus revealing himself to us in love and striving to be obedient to the Father's will. Jesus, in His humility, was a model of this obedience. He even prayed to choose to do God's will. Jesus said, "Not my will, but yours be done," Bolen remarked. (Lk 22:42) Jesus lived in obedience, not to rid himself of freedom and life, but to have joy in freedom.

Similarly, Mary was a model of obedience through her willingness to do God's will. She ex-

pressed this in the Gospel of Luke: "May it be done unto me according to your word." (Lk 1:38) Mary resisted taking control of her life and, instead, she freely chose to open herself to God. Obedience is saying yes to what God desires of us.

Obedience encompasses opening ourselves to God's grace; seeing God's grace in everything; seeking God's will and surrendering ourselves to it, Bolen remarked. Trust is an important part of this. He recalled serving in the Archdiocese of Regina and sometimes feeling overwhelmed in his work. He was among only two priests serving eight parishes spread out over long distances. He later worked in Rome where his workload was often very heavy. Now, as a bishop, he faces many new challenges.



ADDRESSES OBLATES - Bishop Donald Bolen of Saskatoon addresses Oblates of St. Peter's Abbey, July 12, at Oblate Day. His topic was "Obedience". Bolen is an Oblate of St. Peter's Abbey.

Continued on page 2

"...that in all things God may be glorified"



Freedom is integral . . . continued

God sometimes asks more than we think we can give, Bolen commented. It is important to trust that things will work out for the better.

Jesus, in his obedience, sought communion with everyone, Bolen said. The example of Jesus teaches us that obedience is found with others in community, not division or isolation. It is important for Christians to work together so they can be faithful to Christ. Obedience frees us from the possibility of living entirely for ourselves. People can deceive themselves into believing that they are being obedient when, in actuality, they are serving their own passions and disordered desires.

Bolen said he first came to St. Peter's Abbey when he was 20 years old. He learned that monks are under obedience to the abbot. Submitting to authority may sound burdensome to many, but everyone lives under some kind of obedience, he commented. People are required to be obedient to their parents when they live at home. Christians, in their journey, seek to become mature disciples of Christ and obedience is a part of this.

Our culture sees obedience as negative. Yet, scripture teaches us that Christ was obedient unto death and His death led to the resurrection. There is life beyond obedience since obedience is larger than ourselves, Bolen remarked.

Citing some of his personal interpretations of obedience, Bolen said he has decided to follow the example of scripture and Pope Francis, and live more simply. He will be leaving his rectory for a smaller apartment in a more modest part of Saskatoon. The move will force him to give up some of his possessions, but he said he cannot find any place in scripture that says we must accumulate more as

we grow in wealth or titles.

Believing that obedience involves the larger community, Bolen said he consults with the larger church community in decision-making. Consultation and working together must be part of the decision-making process of church life, he said.

Oblates were invited to give input into the topic of obedience following the presentation. Jim Penna of Saskatoon said that it is important to practice hospitality, but also to know when to take our seats. The foundation for the motivation of obedience is love.

Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB commented that obedience in monastic spirituality is shown in moderation and balance in all things, as opposed to extremism and fanaticism.

Obedience gives a foundation to discipline and structure, said Pat Whittaker of Edmonton.

Obedience is informed through the experiences and perspectives of others on the Rule of St. Benedict, commented Marion Penna of Saskatoon.

Donna Erickson of Saskatoon said she was impressed with how the Rule is a guide to spiritual growth.

Obedience is a guide to structured relationships, said Bolen. Diversity is legitimate when we celebrate common beliefs even though we celebrate differently. Diversity is illegitimate when Christians stand in contradiction to one another. The example of Jesus teaches us that obedience compels us to seek reconciliation. Christ desires us to have communion with the Father. Obedience to Christ's will drives ecumenism, he said. Jesus prayed that his followers would be one so that they could remain together and love one another as love as Jesus loves them. (Jn 17:11)



Br. Cosmas takes final vows at St. Peter's Abbey

By Paul Paproski, OSB

"Br. Cosmas, we ask you, today, to consider well the covenant you are about to enter with the Lord. ... To embrace it, you must leave all else aside. Yet this very renunciation, which is evidence of dying to ourselves, at the same time proclaims the victory of Christ's cross," Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB, of St. Peter's Abbey said, July 11, at the Rite of Monastic Profession for the solemn vows of Br. Cosmas Epifano, OSB.

A few years ago, the President of Harvard University was asked about the greatest problem facing students, Novecosky said in Sts. Peter and Paul Church. The president remarked that the students have an emptiness and lack meaning and passion for life. St. Benedict had a much different vision for his monks when he wrote in his Rule (guideline for monastic life) that as monks progress in their monastic life their hearts should overflow with the inexpressible delight of love, Novecosky commented.

St. Benedict seemed to have an understanding of how the zeal for life can be promoted in community. He was aware that communities are made up of many different personalities and he adjusted for them. St. Benedict wrote in the Rule that the abbot should arrange everything so that the strong have something to yearn for and the weak nothing to run from. Novecosky said he remembers a plaque that once hung in

the entrance of the bishop's house in Saskatoon and on it were three simple lines: See everything. Overlook a great deal. Correct a little. The wisdom of the plaque speaks to the Rule of St. Benedict which promotes discretion in making decisions and correcting faults. St. Benedict was likely very aware of his own imperfections, resentments, lack of patience and judgmental tendencies, Novecosky remarked. Conversion of life is continual and always ongoing.



In May of 2011, Br. Cosmas made his simple vows at St. Peter's Abbey and began studying theology in Rome that year. Br. Cosmas was ordained a deacon, July 30, at his home parish of Holy Redeemer in Sydney, Nova Scotia. He will be serving at St. Augustine's Parish in Humboldt for the summer, and

will return to Rome for his final year of theology.

Br. Cosmas, 54, was born and raised in Sydney, Nova Scotia. Following high school he attended Nova Scotia Teachers College in Truro, Nova Scotia for one and a half years. He later earned a three-year bachelor of arts Concentration in Theology degree.

Br. Cosmas joined Scarboro Missions as a lay missionary and served overseas in China for four years. Upon returning to Canada, he joined an eremitical community, The Association of Hermits, in his home diocese of Antigonish, Nova Scotia, and remained with them for five years. He served as a caregiver for his parents for seven years. Both his parents are deceased. Br. Cosmas has three sisters living in Nova Scotia.