



# Oblate Letter

## Hospitality By Pat Conn, Oblate

( Taken from a talk she gave on this aspect of Benedictine Spirituality)

I spent time with Webster's 7th Collegiate Dictionary and with the Oxford English Dictionary, since I always feel more secure when I know (at some level) what I'm talking about. The OED is used to find the etymology of words, their common roots and changes in usage over time. There we find the words Hospital, Hospice, Hospitality, Hotel, Hostel, among others. These words all share the same root and involve caring for others.

For instance, *Hospital* comes from the Latin word for guest room and is defined by Webster as:

1. A charitable institution for needy, sick, young or elderly people;
2. An institution where the sick or injured are given medical, surgical care.

*Hospitality* (the quality of being hospitable) has 2 definitions:

1. The generous and cordial reception of guests—offering a pleasant or sustaining environment;
2. Being readily receptive or open. The example given is being "open" to new ideas.

*Hospice*: Originally:

1. A lodging for travelers maintained by a religious order. The Hospice of St. Bernard (Big dogs with brandy) in Switzerland is an example.

2. Currently the term is used to define a medical modality for the care of the dying. I've just read a book by a Catholic hospice nurse entitled Midwife for Souls: Spiritual Care For the Dying. It's a truly wonderful, grace-filled understanding of a nurse's vocation to help travelers on the road we all will take.

*Hotel* or *Hostel*: These both refer to inns or lodging places for travelers. Benedict's simple (but not easy) rule governing hospitality (RB 53.1) states: "All guests are to be welcomed as Christ"; he refers to Matthew 25:35: "I [Jesus] was a stranger and you welcomed me." Benedict also uses Matthew 25 in his rule governing the care of the sick. (RB 36.1) He says: "Care of the sick must rank above and before all else so that they may truly be served as Christ". From Matthew: "I was sick and you visited me".

Kathleen Norris in her book Amaz-

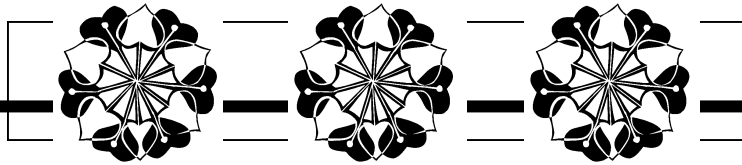
ing Grace a Vocabulary of Faith discusses the Benedictine charism of Hospitality and talks about the burden (she uses this word) that it can impose, since caring for guests is something done in addition to one's other tasks. True in the monastery as it is at home when Aunt Ethel visits for a "few weeks".

I'll end this dictionary review with one last word from the OED. That word is *Hospitage*, defined as the "condition of being a guest". This word is no longer in common usage. Kathleen Norris mentions that guests have duties as well as hosts. She says that "...being a guest...brings with it certain burdens [also, as it does for the host], primarily being willing to accept the pure grace of being welcomed *without expectations*." We hear that it's more blessed to give than receive. I've also found it much easier to give. Receiving without expectations involves much humility. Something to think about, indeed.

### JESUS AND HOSPITALITY

To continue our discussion of hospi-  
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# ANNOUNCEMENTS

January 2nd  
Feast of Basil the Great &  
Gregory Nazianzen

January 4th  
Feast of the Epiphany  
Feast Day of  
Sr. Veronica Sokolosky

January 10th  
The Feast of St. Gregory  
of Nyssa, bishop

January 15th  
Feast of St. Maurus, Ob-  
late patron & St. Placidus;  
disciples of our holy fa-  
ther St. Benedict

January 17th  
Feast of St. Anthony

⊕  
*Please keep all of the Sisters  
in your prayers  
as they do for you.*  
⊕

# OBLATE MEETING

January 11, 2009

- 10:30 a.m. Mass in the Oratory—everyone is welcome
- 12:15 p.m. Study group will meet in the Monastery Library.  
We will begin a new book: The Practice of the Presence of God by Brother Lawrence. Please call Vicky at 918-746-4223 if you would like your name added to the book order.
- 12:15 p.m. Novice Study Group will meet in the Conference Room
- 1:15 p.m. Vespers in the Marian Chapel  
Program: Community History—Relationship to the Sacred Heart

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tality, let's turn to the 10th Ch. of Luke. Here we find that the Parable of the Good Samaritan is followed immediately by the account of Jesus' visit to his dear friends Martha and Mary. This was the first time I noticed that these stories come together: that they directly follow the question "What must I do to gain eternal life?"

Referring back to Benedict's rule, what are the 2 most important things? They are the care of the sick [again "Care of the sick must rank above and before all else so that they may truly be served as Christ" (RB36.1)]. Benedict's second priority is the reception of guests: "All guests are to be welcomed as Christ. (RB53.1)

So here we are at Luke Ch. 10:25. [We read "What must I do to gain eternal life...who is my neighbor"? In response, Jesus relates the parable of the Good Samaritan [Luke 10: 30-37]

William Barclay in his commentary

on the Gospel of Luke presents an interesting discussion of this parable. He describes the foolhardy traveler who goes alone on a notoriously dangerous road; the legalistic priest who won't make himself "unclean"; the Levite who fears an ambush; and finally, the despised "Samaritan", whose love for his fellow man outweighs his fears. Barclay emphasizes the point that to follow Christ we must love beyond risk or reason. That we are enjoined to help *even when the person's predicament is his own fault*. How often have I said 'Well, he brought it on himself' as an "out" or excuse for my own inaction?

Luke immediately segues into the Martha and Mary story. [Luke 10: 38-42]. Barclay in his commentary discusses the two types of temperament: the Active and the Contemplative, presenting Martha and Mary as archetypes. He brings out the inevitable clash between these personalities, and describes Martha's activity as the wrong type of hospitality: Mary's calm demeanor

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## Prayer Intentions:

### We pray for the repose of the soul of:

Algenia Grandi ,  
*sister of Rita Ksepka, Oblate*

Thomas Eubank,  
*uncle of Marta Segura, Oblate*

### We pray for abundant healing of:

Donna Montgomery, Oblate

Ken Conn,  
*husband of Pat Conn, Oblate*

Stephanie Statan,  
*daughter of Leda Diedrich, Oblate*

Betty Filgas,  
*mother of Cathy Carter, Oblate*

Jane Hogestyn,  
*daughter of Shirley Hogestyn, Oblate*



## Around the House

Sisters Anita Marie, Agatha, Cabrini and Mary have been enjoying monthly shopping trips and out to lunch days with the Health Care staff. The pictures posted on the Health Care bulletin board show some of their shopping and eating adventures.

A mural of the Sacred Heart Shrine which graces the grounds at the first site of St. Joseph Monastery in Guthrie now decorates the hall outside the monastery dining room. Michaela Lawless of Locust Grove painted the mural from an original picture. The shrine was completed in 1903 under the leadership of the monastery's third prioress, Mother Alphonsa Reid, who had dedicated the community to the Sacred Heart.

Sr. Mary Clare was chairperson of the North Central evaluation team for Bishop Kelley High School. In November, Monte Cassino School received the highest rating from their North Central evaluation team. The team had high praise for the leadership of the school and the academic excellence of the teachers and students.

The Sisters participated in a week of spiritual enrichment the week of November 17th. Sr. Meg Funk, a Benedictine Sister from Beech Grove, IN presented some insights into practices for living in the awareness of God's presence.

The Sisters have attended Bishop Slattery's annual Christmas party for them in his home on December 6th.

On December 12th the Tulsa Community Band along with Sr. Anna has gifted the community with their annual Christmas concert in the Monte Cassino Performance Center.

Sisters Christine and Catherine have given an Advent mission to the people of Sacred Heart Church in Miami, OK the week of December 14th. Specific topics of discussion included "Humility, Hospitality and Silence".

The vocation team—Sisters Catherine, Eugenia and Veronica—have hosted seven young women from St. Vincent de Paul parish in Coweta for an overnight Confirmation retreat on December 13th —14th.



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provided the tranquility Jesus looked for before he faced the ordeal of his Passion. In RB72 "The good zeal of Monks" Benedict talks about the "wicked zeal of bitterness" which separates from God (RB72.1) and from each other. Martha with her worries and resentments was well on her way to wicked zeal: What Esther de Waal calls "a tired and angry impatience", which is the antithesis of hospitality. One bible translation says that Martha was "distracted", and that Mary "listened". Martha took pride in her hospitality at the expense of love. As Benedict says (RB72.2) "No one is to pursue what he judges better for himself, but instead what he judges better for someone else. Barclay's point that Jesus needed a quiet time with his dear friends as he prepared to die, NOT an elaborate meal, is insightful.

The love and care the Samaritan provided for the injured traveler (a stranger), and the hospitality Jesus received at the home of Martha and Mary is, in the end, a reflection of the same principle. We can overcome our fear, our impatience, and the desire to do it "our way". With God's grace...



Watch the new website grow: [www.stjosephmonastery.org](http://www.stjosephmonastery.org)