



Oblate Letter

St. Joseph, a Man of Mystery

By Sr. Veronica Sokolosky, O.S.B., St. Joseph Monastery

His ancestry is somewhat a mystery. What we know of him comes from the gospels of Matthew and Luke. Matthew (1:16) says, "Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Of her was born Jesus who is called the Messiah." Luke (3:23) claims he was, "the son of Heli." But both writers agree that Joseph was from the House of David.

His work was a mystery. Jesus is identified in the Gospel of Matthew (13:55) as the son of *tekton*, a carpenter, and the Gospel of Mark (6:3) states that Jesus was a *tekton* himself. This word *tekton* has many connotations. Some early historians claim the word could mean makers of objects of various materials, even builders. Other historians say it refers to itinerant workers, or to a highly-skilled artisan in wood and metal. But the Jewish historian, Geza Vermes, states that the terms "carpenter and son of a carpenter" were used in the Jewish Talmud to signify a very learned man. He suggests that as a carpenter Joseph was considered wise and highly literate in the Torah.

His messages from God were a mystery. Not many of us have an angel speak to us in a dream. This was a common occurrence in Joseph's life. When Joseph pondered what to do about his pregnant betrothed, God told him exactly what to do. Matthew (1:20) says "...take Mary your wife into your home." He defied the law of stoning the adulterer and took Mary as his wife. Surely there were many wagging tongues about his action.

Can you imagine Joseph's bewilderment at the birth of his son? There was no room for

them in the inn; they were housed in a barn. All of a sudden angels came singing, shepherds came with their flocks, a bright star lighted up the whole area and later three kings came bringing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Then Joseph had another message from God in a dream. The angel said, (Mt 3:13) "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you." To escape the hatred of King Herod, Joseph did as he was told.

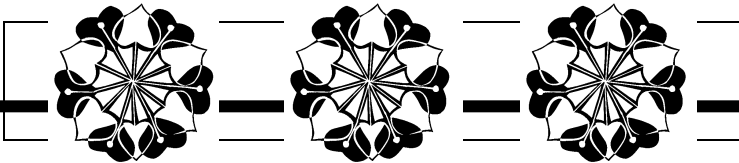
The family's life at Nazareth was a mystery. To Joseph and to Mary was given the privilege of seeing and hearing the one whom many kings and prophets longed to see and hear. To them was given the privilege of carrying, leading, embracing, nurturing and protecting this promised one. One event we know of their life at Nazareth was the presentation of Jesus in the Temple where he is proclaimed "a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel." (Lk 2:32) When Jesus was 12 the family make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Jesus stayed behind and his parents spent three days looking for him. They found him in the temple discussing the Scriptures with the scholars. They were amazed at his knowledge. Jesus returned home with his parents and "advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man." (Lk 3:53)

It is a mystery why it took 13 centuries for devotion to St. Joseph to develop in the Western church. The first recognition of the sanctity of St. Joseph originated in the Eastern church; Joseph the Carpenter's feast was

celebrated on July 20. It seems that devotion to St. Joseph flourished in the Eastern church, but it was not until the 13th century that it seemed to catch on in the Western church. Prompted by the private devotions to St. Joseph by Sts. Bernard, Thomas Aquinas, Gertrude and Bridget of Sweden, Pope Sixtus IV (1471) placed the feast of St. Joseph on the Roman calendar on March 19. In later years a proper office was compiled for the feast and in 1621 Teresa of Avila named Joseph as the patron of the Carmelites. Since that time St. Joseph's name has been added to the Litany of the Saints and a Litany has been composed in his name. By the 19th century no devotion seemed to appeal more to the heart of Christian people, and in particular to the working class than devotion to St. Joseph. In 1955, Pope Pius XI honored St. Joseph with another feast—St. Joseph the Worker on May 1. He is the patron of the universal Church, of carpenters, of workers, of foster children, of a happy death.

It is a mystery why St. Joseph was chosen as the patron and namesake of the Benedictine Sisters at St. Joseph Monastery in Tulsa. As St. Mary's School in Guthrie flourished, Mother Paula had in mind to build an academy for young ladies in Guthrie. The people of the town had requested it. With the help of four men Mother Paula gained access to 40 acres of land, just west of the tent city of Guthrie, two miles south of the river. The land was the highest elevation point in all of Logan County. Mother Paula built a large four-story building on the land and established a boarding school. The school was named St. Joseph's Retreat.





ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 9th

Feast of St. Frances of Rome

Oblate Patron

March 19th

Feast of St. Joseph

March 21st

Feast of the Death of St. Benedict

March 25th

The Feast of the

Annunciation

Feast Day of

Sr. Eugenia Brown



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



OBLATE MEETING

March 13, 2011

- **10:30 A.M. Mass in the Oratory—everyone is welcome**
- **12:15 p.m. Study Group will meet in the Monastery Library**
Please bring your book
- **12:15 p.m. Novice Study Group will meet in the Conference Room**
- **1:15 p.m. Vespers in the Marian Chapel followed by Refreshments & Program**

*Mary's Prayer for her Husband Joseph
by Sister Veronica*

O Lord, he is my just and honorable husband.

His arms bear the knotted muscles
and his hands bear the toughed calluses
of hard work.

They still say things behind his back;
they consider him weak.

If only they understood
of his bewilderment
of what he was asked to do:
to defy the law
to take me a pregnant girl as his wife,
to rush to Bethlehem for the census
only to be given a stable for the birth of his son,
to swallow fear as we crossed the desert to
Egypt
to escape the jealousy of Herod.

He has a way with the boy.

At the workbench he shows him
how to use and treasure his tools,
how to work together,
how to laugh together.
And when Joseph places his hands on his shoulders
how our son brightens up.

I know Joseph has plans for his son
like any father.
But he may not understand yet
the purpose for our son,
who already understands the scriptures
better than the scholars in the temple.

This is my prayer for my beloved husband
Joseph
and our son's earthly father:
May he know the blessing of your favor
and may he find honor among our people.

(An adaptation of a poem by Joseph Longoni-
University of AZ)

Save the Date

This year's Oblate retreat will take place on
Saturday, April 2, 2011.

We are very excited to
announce that

Sr. Macrina Wiederkehr, O.S.B.,
noted author and
spiritual guide will
lead our retreat this year.

Sr. Macrina wrote the book:

Seven Sacred Pauses which the study group will be
reading and discussing.



Prayer Intentions:

We pray for the Repose of the Soul of:

Robert "Joe" Rendon
brother of Marta Segura, Oblate

We pray for abundant healing of:

Jessica Crew,
daughter of Toni Wersal, Oblate

unborn Baby of Doug & Hiro Carter,
son & daughter-in-law of Cathy Carter,
Oblate

David Reagan,
brother of Sr. Scholastica Reagan

Kevin Reagan,
nephew of Sr. Scholastica Reagan

Si Dorado,
brother of Sr. Jacinta Dorado



*Listening is a religious discipline
that depends on respect and
leads to conversion.*

- Rule of St. Benedict

Lenten Reading 2011

by Mary Beth Frampton, Oblate, St. Joseph Monastery

Lent seems the most natural of times to settle one's soul in spiritual reading. We seem more able during this holy season to allow ourselves to express our need for that connection to things beyond ourselves. And during this time we are more willing to engage in activities that enhance that center where silence and solitude can blossom into a new awareness of the heights and depths that at other times are hidden from us. In short, we tend to make more of an effort in Lent to do what we should be doing all of the time! And spiritual reading is definitely one of those things...

We are immensely blessed at St. Joseph Monastery with a remarkable spiritual library. The sisters have made a commitment as a community to maintain a library for the benefit of not only the sisters themselves, but for the benefit and development of Oblates and the local community as well. The ongoing effort to digitally catalog the library is one way to make the books and tapes that are housed here more accessible to a greater number of people.

There are numerous books in the library designed specifically for Lenten reading. Most of these books are divided into short daily reflections that build upon the daily Mass readings or other Lenten themes. Among these types of books are the following:

Pilgrim Road: a Benedictine Journey through Lent by Albert Holtz, O.S.B. Fr. Albert is also the author of a previously reviewed book, *Downtown Monks*. He is a gifted storyteller who uses images of a journey to take the reader on a Lenten pilgrimage closer to God. The sisters used this book a few years ago as community Lenten reading.

Ashes to Easter: Lenten Meditations by Bishop Robert F. Morneau. Bishop Morneau, who has written two books on the poetry of Carmelite poet and mystic, Jessica Powers, takes a more poetic path through Lent in his popular little book of meditations. He offers probing daily questions and prayers related to a short teaching derived from a poem or canticle.

The Fire in the Cloud: Lenten Meditations by Francis Martin. The imagery of Exodus pervades this more intense, desert approach to the Lenten journey. Fr. Martin provides a more in-depth look at the liturgical readings and offers an overt challenge to the reader to enter into the transfiguring nature of the Christian experience.

Journey to Easter: Spiritual Reflections for the Lenten Season by Pope Benedict XVI. The pope also focuses on the desert nature of Lent practiced well, but helps us never to lose sight of the ultimate joy that waits for each of us at the Eucharistic table and in the promise of the resurrected Jesus. Much more scholarly and somewhat disjointed due to the compilation of unrelated essays, this book offers a look into the faith of this intellectual pope.

A Lenten Hobo Honeymoon: Daily reflections of the Journey of Lent by Edward Hays. On a more whimsical and lighthearted level, Edward Hays sees the Lenten journey as a romantic return to our roots in God. Using the imagery of the secret markings left by hoboos to guide others through unknown territory, he guides the reader down Lenten paths that lead ultimately back home to a joyful return home to God.



BENEDICTINE OBLATES OF
SAINT JOSEPH MONASTERY

CONGREGATION OF BENEDICTINE SISTERS
OF THE SACRED HEARTS INC.
2200 SOUTH LEWIS AVENUE
TULSA, OK 74114-3117

Monastery Schedule

2011

*Oblates & Friends of the Benedictine Sisters are invited to join them in
praying the Liturgy of the Hours at St. Joseph Monastery*

Morning Prayer: Monday—Friday—6:30AM / **Eucharist** at 7:00AM (Monday, Wednesday & Friday) 8:15 am (Tuesday & Thursday with Students in the Marian Chapel)
Saturday—11:00AM / **Eucharist** at 11:30AM
Sunday—8:15AM / **Eucharist** at 10:30AM

Midday Prayer: Monday thru Friday—11:45AM, followed by lunch

Vespers: Monday—Saturday—5:00PM
Sunday—4:00PM (3rd, 4th & 5th Sunday of the month)
Oblate Sunday—2nd Sunday—1:15PM followed by an Oblate Meeting—all are welcome

*****be sure to call to verify schedule for the day you plan to come,
because at times it does change.*****



Watch the new website grow: www.stjosephmonastery.org