

# From the Heights: Monastic Musings from the Mountains

Newsletter of the Holy Monastery of Our Lady and Saint Laurence

Advent, 2021

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## Comfort ye my people!

In this holy season of Advent, we call to mind the longing and hope of the People of Israel – in the midst of their many trials and struggles – for one who would bring them comfort and vindication. The Prophet Isaiah gave voice to this longing in his preaching, and his words have come to signify not only the longing of ancient Israel, but of the Church, the “Israel of God” (cf. Gal. 6:16). For even though we know of and celebrate the “first coming” of the Savior, and are citizens of his kingdom, yet we, too, long for a comfort and a vindication that will be fully manifested only at the time of the “second coming,” when our Lord Jesus Christ will “reconcile [to God] all things in himself” (Col. 1:20).

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field...

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

—Isaiah 40:1-6, 8-10

And so, we wait, even though the waiting seems to go on endlessly, year after year, century after century, millennium after millennium. Indeed, Advent is by nature a season of “waiting in expectation.”  
(cont'd on p. 2)

1. *Comfort, comfort ye my people,  
Speak ye peace, thus saith our God;  
Comfort those who sit in darkness,  
Mourning 'neath their sorrows' load;  
Speak ye to Jerusalem  
Of the peace that waits for them,  
Tell her that her sins I cover,  
And her warfare now is over.*

2. *Hark, the voice of one that crieth  
In the desert far and near,  
Bidding all men to repentance,  
Since the kingdom now is here.  
Oh that warning cry obey,  
Now prepare for God a way;  
Let the valleys rise to meet Him,  
And the hills bow down to greet Him.*

3. *Make ye straight what long was crooked,  
Make the rougher places plain,  
Let your hearts be true and humble,  
As befits His holy reign;  
For the glory of the Lord  
Now o'er earth is shed abroad,  
And all flesh shall see the token  
That His Word is never broken.*

**Text:** Johannes Olearius, (1611-1684), *Geistliche Singekunst, Leipzig, Germany: 1671*) Trans., Catherine Winkworth (d. 1878); edited.

**Music:** Claude Goudimel (c.1505-1572), *Trente quatre*

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## Benedictine Wisdom



The Church is the type and model of the contemplative soul. She is first Rachel, before she is Leah; she shows herself to be Mary, before she becomes active like Martha; she gives to the exterior only from her own inner fulness... The Father desires the beauty of this splendid Virgin; but that beauty is not merely exterior – or rather, the exterior is only the shining forth of the internal radiance. “All

the glory of the king’s daughter is within” (Ps. 44[45]:14); and so it is with all the power of the Holy Church; all the beauty of her passage through the ages; all the splendor she sheds as she passes, even upon human things: literature, the arts, the sciences; the life she communicates to everything connected with her; everything, even the progress of civilization proceeds from within, that is from her close union with God. This exuberant power appeared in her from the

very start, and the unbelievers, who misjudged its origin said: “They are filled with new wine” (Acts 2:13).

– Abbess Cécile Bruyère, d. 1909



## Comfort Ye... cont'd from p. 1

But we do not wait in fear or inaction: we are not quietists who shun activity in favor of sitting still, though sit still we do, at times. We make good use of our waiting to prepare ourselves, our families, our congregations, for what God has done, is doing, and will do for and with all who have placed their hope in him. We do this daily as we strive to manifest repentance, hope, love, mercy, and witness. We do this in a special way in this holy season of preparation for the celebration of the Nativity in the Flesh of God’s Eternal Word. The Scriptures, prayers, hymns, and customs of Advent give expression, in a focused manner, to all the longing – whether articulated or inchoate – of men and women for God (Ps. 65:5): From the time of our creation and fall; through the ages of the Patriarchs and Prophets; in our redemption by the Cross and Resurrection of Christ; in the mystery of the Church; and until the Last Day, when Christ will return in glory to fulfill his work and reveal the truth of every person’s life by the light of his Truth, Love, and Mercy.

Let us, therefore, in the present circumstances of worldly uncertainty, anxiety, and change, hold fast the hope that we have in God’s kingdom, in relationship with our King and Lord Jesus, “who is and who was and who is to come” (Rev. 1:4): who promised us that his power is made perfect in our weakness (II Cor. 12: 9); in whom we are freed from fear and renewed in hope (Eph. 2:4-7); by whom we are defended in battle with the powers of darkness and evil (I Peter 2:9).

*Isaiah before the Virgin Kyriotissa, Sinai, 13th Century*





## News and Events



**New Scent!** *Mountain Monk Beard Butter* is now available in *St. Nicholas Blend*, a holiday fragrance created in honor of the beloved St. Nicholas and his lovely white beard. You may order this hand-crafted beard butter (\$20, including shipping) on the home page of our web site: [www.ladyminster.com](http://www.ladyminster.com) We hope this blend will be a worthy follow-up to our popular *Benedict Blend*.

**On August 14, 2021**, the Vigil of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Dormition), in the presence of His Grace, Bishop JOHN, and Father Abbot,



**Dom Joseph-Marie** (Brown) pronounced his Solemn, Life Vows of Stability, Fidelity to Monastic Discipline, and Obedience. We were honored to have two of our ex-claustral monastics, Dom Emmanuel-Gerasim and Dame Olga present to support our Brother as he joined himself inseparably to our brotherhood. Fr. Joseph-Marie is currently assigned as Cellarer, Cook, and Iconographer.



**On August 15, 2021**, the Feast of the Assumption (our Patronal Feast), Father Abbot received the oblation of six novices, who made their first Annual promises of Stability of Heart, Ongoing Conversion, and Obedience. He also invested a new novice oblate. This took place during the 2021 Annual Oblate Retreat at the monastery from **August 13–16**. We had a good and it was especially good to welcome a number of oblates who had not previously visited the monastery.

**On November 19, 2021**, at First Vespers of the Feast of St. Edmund, King and Martyr, Father Abbot received and clothed **Michael-Lincoln Hammond** as a novice, with the name, **Brother Edmund**. He comes to us from Prophet Elijah Antiochian Mission in Ellensburg, WA. At one time, he spent six months as a postulant on Spruce Island, Alaska. Brother is assigned as the Librarian and wood-fire attendant, and will soon take on handling our web site and some other publicity work.



*Our Lady of Glastonbury, pray for us!*



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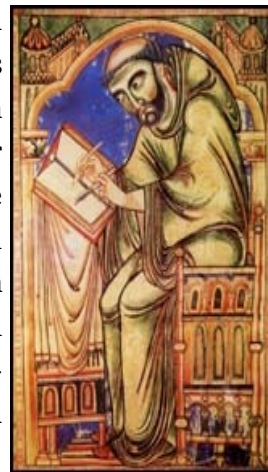
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## The Oblate Corner

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“[St] Benedict devotes one chapter of his Rule to the oratory, stating very clearly that ‘the oratory ought to be what it is called and nothing else is to be done or stored there’ (RB 52:1) ...when it comes to our daily offering of the [*Opus Dei*], the praying environment is important and should not be overlooked.

“Very few oblates will be able to devote a whole room to the *Opus Dei*, but to set aside some space for this purpose unites us with the spirit of the Rule. Even those whose daily prayer takes place in a church or chapel will do well to consider the arrangement of the space they are using. Wherever we pray, a visual focal point is often helpful, whether a cross or crucifix... An icon of St. Benedict can also provide a powerful visual reminder of our spiritual identity and of our membership in a community which seeks to model its life in accordance with his Rule.



—Simon Jones in,  
*The Oblate Life*, pp 88-89

*N.B.* There is much of value in the above book, however, as Orthodox we should read it carefully as not all of its advice or ethos is in accord with our understanding of prayer and life in the Spirit. *Abbot Theodore*

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### How you can help!

- Pray for the Monastery’s well being, growth in holiness, and vocations.
- Make a special donation towards paying off our 2016 Jeep Cherokee!
- Register with **Amazon Smile** for your online purchases, and designate the *Benedictine Fellowship of St Laurence* as the beneficiary of their support for non-profits.
- Give [Lancelot Andrewes Press](#) icons, books, or the 2022 Western-rite Calendar as gifts.
- Donate towards the support of the St. Laurence Center and/or the Monastery: see the Paypal Button on our web site, [www.ladyminster.com](http://www.ladyminster.com)
- Consider purchasing a plot in the St. Laurence Cemetery or a vault in the new Mausoleum.

**For Information, contact:** [molslabbot@gmail.com](mailto:molslabbot@gmail.com)

Or

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*Active in Prayer and Prayerful in Action*

