

From the Heights: Monastic Musings from the Mountains

Newsletter of the Holy Monastery of Our Lady and Saint Laurence

Epiphanytide, 2022

Volume IX, Issue 1

Made Manifest in Manifold Ways

Throughout this season of Epiphanytide (Theophany in the Eastern Tradition) we hear in the Sunday Gospels of the beautiful and varied ways in which the Truth of God-made-man in Christ was revealed in word and deed as those around him, family, friends, and followers were led slowly but steadily to awareness that this was no “mere” man, but that God was, in him, doing something wondrous and profound.

Heralded by a unique star; greeted by a mysterious voice at his baptism in the Jordan; changing water into wine to help an embarrassed host; calming the wind and waves for his frightened disciples — who gave voice to the astonishment felt, no doubt, by all around Jesus: “What manner of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey him?” (Matt 8:27)

By presenting a series of such episodes to us in the wake of the Christmas season, Holy Church is challenging us to understand that the Nativity is not merely a beautiful, human story, but is the beginning of an astonishing, Divine intervention in the life of humankind: an intervention culminating not only in “signs and wonders,” in wise words and good example, but in the saving Cross and Resurrection of Christ, his Ascension, and his sending of the Holy Spirit to bring the work of God to fulfillment in each and every person who recognizes his or her need, and accept God’s help.

We would be mistaken to treat these weeks as if they were unimportant, “throw away” times in between the high points of Christmas and Pascha. The truth is, that the Savior’s wondrous Birth and glorious Resurrection cannot be understood, appreciated, or made effective in our lives without the context the rest of the “story,” read out to us on the Sundays following Epiphany and those that follow Pentecost. But when we allow ourselves, week by week, to be immersed in the whole Truth, nourished upon the True Bread, and refreshed by the Precious Blood, our ears are opened, our vision is clarified, and our lives are transformed according to the likeness of God, manifested in the Ikon of the Father, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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Marriage at Cana, from the Codex Egberti, 10th Century



Requiem aeternam: Dame Olga (Susan Krum)

After having contracted COVID and being hospitalized for several days, our dear Sister, Mother Olga, reposed in the Lord at 3:45 a.m. on January 4, 2022.



Mother transferred to us from the Monastery of Saint Barbara, Santa Paula, California, where she had resided for 16 years and been tonsured to the rank of Stavrophore Nun. She had spent one year living with her daughter in Wichita Falls, TX, before moving here to the monastery. For reasons of health, after a year here in the mountains, she returned to Wichita Falls with the blessing of Father Abbot, where she lived in a modest apartment and served as Organist at St. Benedict Orthodox Church, which had been her parish before she entered monastic life. She was a strong support and dear friend to Fr. Peter Kavanaugh, the Rector at St. Benedict's, and was actively engaged in interesting learning programs for senior adults. She faithfully maintained the little rule for Benedictines living in the world, given her by Father Abbot, with whom she was in frequent contact. Although she missed being with us here, she flourished where she was and enjoyed being with her family. We were blessed to have Mother with us last August for the solemn Profession of Dom Joseph-Marie and the Oblate Retreat.

Through the special generosity of Fr. John Connely, Executive Director of the Benedictine Fellowship of St. Laurence, Fr. Abbot was able to fly down to participate in the Wichita Falls obsequies, then fly Mother's remains back to Denver, where Fr. John will pick them up and transport them to the monastery for burial, temporarily in the mausoleum; then, when the thaw comes, in the St. Laurence Cemetery's monastic section, where she will rest alongside Dame Sophia (Roe).

A Requiem Mass was served at St. Benedict's Orthodox Church, Wichita Falls, on Saturday, January 8th. A Requiem and interment are planned at the St. Sophia Mausoleum on the St. Laurence campus, on **Friday, January 14, 2022, at 11:00 a.m.** All are welcome to join us for this service, to be followed by refreshments at the Monastery. Limited overnight accommodations are available: molslabbot@gmail.com



Mother with her daughter Jennifer; her granddaughter, Stephanie;



Mother tickling the ivory at St. Benedict's Church

News and Events

Dec. 29th: Thanks be to God, we were able to pay off our used Jeep Cherokee before the end of 2021, in a total of only nine months. This will free up income for other important projects.

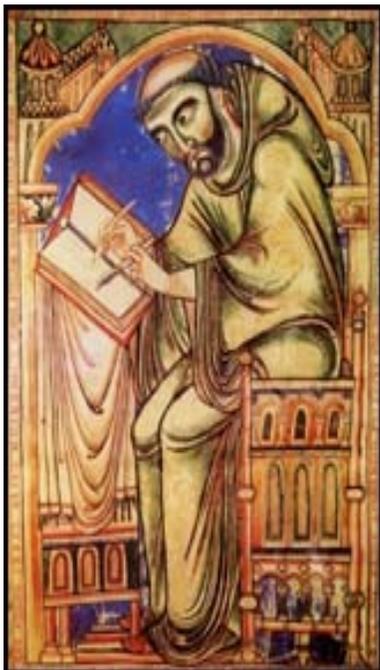
Dec. 9th: With money from the estate of Father Theodore's late mother, we were able to purchase, at a tremendous discount, a Reuter Pipe Organ (Opus 414-1931) that was refurbished in 2017. Originally in a Funeral Home, it was subsequently purchased by the seller and installed in his home. The seller has agreed to be hired to install it, again at a significant discount, as he is greatly pleased that it will now be in a church.



As we did not have room in the 2021 Advent Issue, we here present a photo from the reception of **Br. Edmund** (Lincoln Hammond) as a novice on November 19th, eve of the feast of St. Edmund, King and Martyr.

Abbot Theodore and the Brotherhood extend a heart-felt thankyou to **Fr. Peter Kavanaugh and his family, to the Parish Council, and to the faithful of St. Benedict Parish in Wichita Falls** for their generosity and kindness in hosting the Abbot while he was with them for Mother Olga's Requiem. Their hospitality was truly a model of Orthodox community and outreach.

The monastery, in conjunction with the Benedictine Fellowship of St. Laurence is offering a **Silent Lenten Retreat**, with meditations led by the monks, from **Feb. 25 — 27**. Participation is limited to 10 people, and the cost is \$100 including room and board. For more information, contact: molslabbot@gmail.com



The Oblate Corner

Day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, Oblates are called to join with the monks in the experience of “holy monotony,” praying the same Offices, keeping a regular schedule of *lectio divina*, a relentless routine of attendance at Liturgy and participation in Confession and Holy Communion. It may be that, in our time of frenetic and unstable schedules and expectations, this holy monotony has become not only harder, but more necessary.

Our society is dominated by those who encourage and model novelty, flexibility, and freedom from routine. While a little flexibility can be a very good thing, a life of constant novelty and instability is destructive of the spiritual life. It also wreaks havoc on family life, threatens job security, and creates in the soul an ever-increasing need for what is new or exciting.

As Benedictines, we are called to settle down and “be still” so that we might come to know God through faithful stability in daily prayer and asceticism. Like the monks, Oblates need to examine their priorities and let those priorities govern their schedule and activities as fully as possible. If, indeed, Oblates are striving to fulfill the precept that they “prefer nothing to Christ himself,” then that preference must indeed be applied to time, relationships, extra-familial activities, and work.

Balance has long been considered a defining feature of the Benedictine Way. While it will certainly look different in practice, this is no less true for Oblates than for the monks themselves. “To everything there is a season,” as Scripture reminds us.

Just as snow storms are not helpful in July (at least in the northern hemisphere), so the intrusion of other aspects of our lives into the time set apart for God is disruptive. Let each important aspect of our lives keep to the proper time, so that their balance may provide the time and space needed to rightly know ourselves and our God. *Abbot Theodore*

How you can help!

- Pray for the Monastery’s well being, growth in holiness, and vocations.
- Schedule individual or group retreats at St. Laurence Center or invite Abbot Theodore as a speaker or guest preacher.
- 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.
- Join our monthly donors’ association, *The Friends of Our Lady and Saint Laurence*, as a Founder (\$50), Patron (\$25), Benefactor (\$10), or Friend (\$5). See our [web site](#) for a Paypal Donation Button.
- Consider purchasing a plot in the St. Laurence Cemetery or a vault in the new St. Sophia Mausoleum.

Contact: molslabbot@gmail.com

Active in Prayer and Prayerful in Action

