

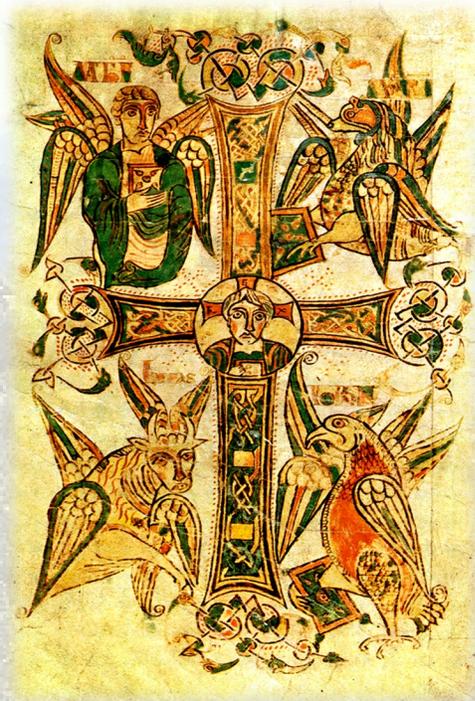
# From the Heights: Monastic Musings from the Mountains

Newsletter of the Holy Monastery of Our Lady and Saint Laurence

Exaltation of the Cross, 2020

Volume VII, Issue 3

## Holy Cross: Foundation Day



This Holy Cross day marked the seventh anniversary of the founding of the Monastery of Our Lady and Saint Laurence by Schema-

monk Theodore and Dame Sophia.

The choice of Holy Cross Day as the day on which we signed papers formally establishing the community and fixing our stability here on the St. Laurence campus was quite intentional. Although all Christians are called to “take up [the] Cross” and follow Christ, the monastic vocation, sometimes called “white martyrdom,” has always aimed to do this in a particular, more literal sense through embracing self-denial not so much out of external circumstances, as through a personal choice to shape one’s life through the “evangelical counsels” of poverty, celibate chastity, and obedience.

The choice of this glorious Feast as the moment to formalize our communal commitment to monastic life here in the mountains provides us with an annual impetus to remember that we have willingly chosen to exalt the Cross— trophy of Our Lord’s triumph over sin and death— as a public witness not only on our altars, but in our daily struggle against the passions, sin, and self-will.

Many have come and gone, testing if this life is for them. God willing, other men will come—soon! — and find the courage to face all the challenges that monastic life, especially in such a small community, presents.

Facing the first Foundation Day without the earthly presence of co-founder Dame Sophia, presents an important opportunity to reflect on what has gone before and to entrust to God whatever is yet to come:

*Unless the Lord  
builds the house,  
in vain do the builders labor!*

— Psalm 127:1

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## *Benedictine Wisdom — Supernatural Prosperity of the Church*

Abbess Cécile Bruyère,  
d. 1909



We mustn't be surprised that God should desire to be actively addressed in prayer, in order to admit his rational creatures to close union with him; for that is both the final end of his works and the guarantee of the supernatural prosperity of the Church. Let those who love the Church ponder that for a moment. If they wish to work for her, the most effective way of doing so is to possess the knowledge of the saints, and to be able, though it, to bring pressure to bear upon the center at

which human events unroll. It is thanks to that powerful intervention that Moses won battles for his people: "Whenever Moses held up his hands, Israel prevailed" (Exodus 7:11).

Holiness of life and the spirit of prayer achieve everything in the world; and when the Lord does not find that element on this earth, he bewails it as if he could no longer exercise his mercy. It is in these terms that he speaks to Ezekiel: "And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none" (Ezekiel 22:30). That is certainly the secret behind many revolutions among empires. One can understand,

then, that private interest as well as social interest call for an increase in the number of souls truly united with God. Undoubtedly such an increase is a grace; but, once again, it is nonetheless promised to prayer that is ardent and generous.

— *The Spiritual Life and Prayer*



## *2020 Oblate Retreat*

This year, due to the circumstances surrounding the outbreak of COVID 19, we chose to move the annual Oblate Retreat from the Feast of St. Benedict in July, to the Monastery's Feast of Title, the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in August.

As expected, the turnout was somewhat smaller than usual, but we were pleased to have some first-time retreatants along with some of the regulars. Abbot Theodore received two



oblations: Sr. Ruth (far left); and, Br. Christopher (far right).

*Ad multos annos!*



## *News and Events*

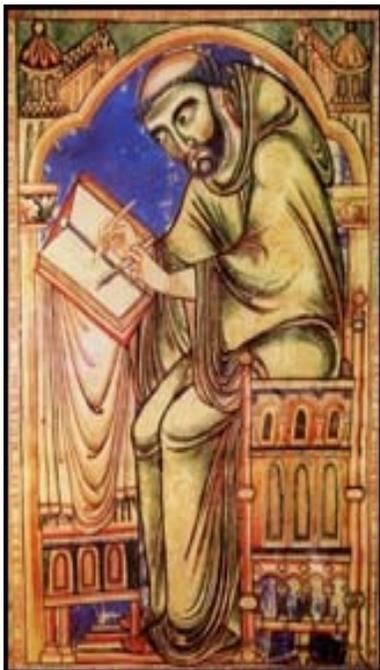
- ◆ **July 17 – 20: Project Mexico** sponsored a mission trip to the monastery by members of St. Columba Parish (Lafayette, CO). Led by the Rev. Demetrios Andrews, Executive Director of Project Mexico. They carried out some very valuable work, staining the two decks of St. Herman's Guest Lodge, assisting with some tidying of the grounds, and joining in other tasks and in the daily *horarium* (schedule) of the monastery.
- ◆ **July 31 – August 1:** We hosted a small Women's Retreat from St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Pueblo.
- ◆ **August 3 – 8:** A small group from **St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church**, Spokane, WA, led by the Very Rev. Stephen Herney, Obl.SB, came to the monastery for a retreat.
- ◆ Shortly **before the Feast of the Assumption**, our **Associated Monastic Job**, a rasophore monk affiliated with ROCOR, arrived to begin a stay of several months here at the monastery. He is assisting with the care of the grounds and with the guest rooms, and is proving a real blessing in these obediences.
- ◆ **August 24: Stefan Johansson**, a recent graduate of St. Vladimir Orthodox Theological Seminary, arrived to begin an internship at the monastery. He anticipates being with us through the end of this year, and has been assigned the obedience of organizing and cataloging our growing library, which has been in great disarray. He is also helping out with various other tasks related to our guest ministry and the daily services in the Oratory.
- ◆ **August 20, and 25-31: Associated monastic Daniel**, a rasophore monk who lived several years at Christminster before it was closed, and is now resident in Arizona, visited us while in Colorado to visit his brother. He kindly brought us donations of books and household items, and helped Intern Stefan get started with work in the Library (Father Daniel was a librarian by profession).
- ◆ **September 9–10:** Along with much of the "Front Range" of the Rockies, we were hit with an unseasonable cold front and snowstorm. We received around 8" of snow; others received up to 16". The moisture is very welcome, due to the prevailing drought conditions, but we were saddened to see many birds killed by the early cold and snow.
- ◆ On **September 16, 2020**, in the early evening, our dear friend the **Rt. Rev. Dom James Deschene, lately Abbot of the Monastery of Christ the Savior (Christminster)**, reposed in the Lord after several years of illness. Father was a true gentleman, devout monk and priest, and scholar of the writings of C.S. Lewis. He was also a link in the traditions of Orthodox Benedictine Life, reaching from the Monastery of Our Lady of Mount Royal, through Christminster, to our own House, co-founded by the late Dame Sophia Roe, whose Solemn Profession Abbot James received in 2010. May he rest in peace ✠ and rise in glory.
- ◆ **The Monastery and Guest House will be closed to visitors from September 21 – 25, and from October 3 – 15**, for times of monastic retreat, conferences, and special projects. We apologize for any inconvenience, but ask your prayers for us during these quiet times.



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## The Oblate Corner

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### [Lancelot Andrewes Press](#)

Your source for traditional Benedictine Liturgical Books, and the Holy Rule arranged for daily reading and reflection.

There is a wise maxim reminding us that it is possible to have too much of a good thing. We all know persons who are entirely praiseworthy in the pursuit of particular goals but are so single-minded that their total practice begins to exceed the boundaries of common sense and decency. We usually call such people ‘fanatics.’ According to the insight of ancient Greek philosophy, a virtue becomes a vice when it is not governed by the cardinal virtue of temperance. *In medio virtus stat\**; a tendency can be regarded as virtuous only the extent that it pilots a course between two extremes. Virtue is equally opposed to both extremes, not only to one. Overwork and idleness are opposite possibilities; the virtue of avoiding idleness must be protected equally from overwork. It is not virtuous to eat either too much or too little. Moderation is obviously the opposite of the vice of superfluity and extravagance (Rule 36:4; 55:11; 61:2, 6), but it is also the opposite of penury and [miserliness]. Sometimes, monastic administrators and cellarers seem to forget this. Note, however, that between generosity and meanness there could be seen to exist a whole spectrum of virtues, each located closer to or farther from the mean: magnanimity, liberality, reasonableness, abstemiousness, austerity...

Both qualitative and quantitative forms of moderation are important for the long-term survival of a monastic institution. Opposite virtues need to enter into dynamic tension without either polarity moving into a zone of excess, and the end result of this balance is harmony, good order, and peace.

*The Oblate Life*, Chapter 19: The Key to Permanence,  
Essay by Michael Casey, O.Cist.

**Reflection Questions from Abbot Theodore:** Where is moderation lacking in your life? Do you obtain the proper blessing to make adjustments to your personal rule/routine? Why are oblates expected to do so?

*\*Virtue lies in the middle.*

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### *How you can help!*

- Pray for the Monastery’s well being, growth in holiness, and vocations.
- Donate “twin” and/or “queen” cotton sheet sets for some of our guest rooms.
- Schedule individual or group retreats or events at the St. Laurence Center or invite Abbot Theodore as a speaker.
- 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.
- Donate towards the support of the St. Laurence Center and/or the Monastery.
- Consider purchasing a plot in the St. Laurence Cemetery or a vault in the new St. Sophia Mausoleum.

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*Active in Prayer and Prayerful in Action*

