

OblateNews

Newsletter for the Oblates of Saint Benedict's Monastery | April 2011

Letter to Oblates from Laureen Virnig, OSB



Dear Oblates and Friends,

I began this letter while enjoying a few days of solitude in one of our hermitages. With soft instrumental music in the background, I pondered some words that catch my eye each time I pray them. "Come," my heart says, "seek his face. Your face, God, do I seek. Do not hide your face from me" (Ps 27:8-9, NRSV).

What does it mean to seek God's face? Somewhere in my memory is a line in Scripture that says no one can see God's face and live. So, I decide, I want to see God's face, but not yet, because it sounds like physical death has to happen.

There is one practice I've found helpful, whether dealing with an issue in relational living, a question I've been wondering about, a decision that needs to be made or a psalm verse tugging at my heart. Basil Pennington, in his book *Living in the Question*, writes: "A pat answer is closed; it is finished; that's it . . . A question, the mystery, opens the space for us. It is full of possibility. It gives hope of life and ever more abundant life." He suggests doing *lectio* with a question, a verse or a quote, and responding three times, each time going a little deeper.

My first response to the question was a surface response. When I came back to this question, I was prompted to pay more attention to the verb, "seek." I understand seeking as a process; I can never say I have accomplished it. Seeking God is the quest of Benedictine monastics and Benedictine Oblates. It is seeking God's presence in this place, at this time, with these people, in these circumstances. I experience God's presence in my wrestling with, meditating on and chewing over the Word of Scripture. When I started thinking about where I had seen glimpses of God's face, many images from life came to mind: I saw

the face of God in the discernment process of electing a new prioress, in the face of a brother coming out of heart surgery, in the daughter who sacrifices her career to tend to her dying father, in sunrises and sunsets, in the professional who offers free service to needy children, in the face and voice of an excited three-year-old boy, in gentle snowfalls and raging blizzards, in the soldier who put himself in harm's way to save his comrades yet didn't feel he deserved to receive a medal of honor.

And as I came back to this verse a third time, I realize that seeking the face of God is a lifelong process and, as with other practices, the more often I engage it, the more I hope to be ready for that final moment when I say, "Your face, O God, do I seek; do not hide your face from me." "Now," as Saint Paul says, "we can only see in a mirror dimly." It is only in eternity that we will truly see God face to face. "God's face is hidden until the veil is removed" (2 Cor 3:1, 16). This seeking God is not just about what I am doing; more importantly, it is God who is always seeking me. There is a kind of intimacy in seeking to know and be known.

In this issue Sister Ruth Feeney, former subprioress of Saint Bede Monastery in Eau Claire, reflects on Easter questions and invites you to join her. I would suggest you respond three different times, each time moving to another level in your reflection.

May God's blessings be on you as you continue walking these Lenten days into Easter joy!

Laureen Virnig, OSB

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Meet Sister Michaela Hedican, Prioress-Elect Ruth Feeney, OSB



Walk in someone else's shoes and your feet may be cramped. Or, you may find yourself sloshing forward in shoes too big for you, unable to match the stature of the owner. Walk alongside the sole-bearer and you may discover the soul itself.

As a classmate (high school and monastic profession), I have walked alongside Sister Michaela Hedican, the recently elected prioress of Saint Benedict's Monastery, for many years. Her transparency has revealed a soul that is both focused and free. As many others will attest, she is a woman of competency, commitment and compassion. Ask anyone who has spent time with her and they will affirm that she left a deep impression. It may be her quick wit and interest in the speaker which engages them. More than likely, it's her ability to make connections, to find common ground and shared interests which delights people. She finds the good in others and magnifies it. Who wouldn't enjoy her company?

While she was awarded master's degrees from Seattle University and Saint John's University School of Theology, her competency for teaching and leadership come from integrating theology and monastic life. She continues to seek and apply the practical values of the *Rule of Saint Benedict*. The rhythms of prayer, lectio, study and service have been lived in the context of community. It is with her Sisters that she shares the sacred wisdom and tradition of monasticism. Her love for liturgy has been reflected in her close work with the monastery liturgists over the years.

Her formative influence made her a good choice for vocation ministry and as novice director. Natural leadership skills brought her to assume positions as subprioress and prioress,

retreat center director and, for six years, the president of the Federation of Saint Benedict.

Compassion is better described than defined. It is the quality of S. Michaela's presence to people which makes her caring extraordinary. Whether as a spiritual director or one who is sought out for consultation, S. Michaela is totally available and attentive. She holds another's care in sacred confidence. She encourages, invites fresh thinking, supports, challenges and affirms. Humor makes all of it palatable.

S. Michaela knows how to have a good time. She is earnest about staying informed of current events. She honors her need for solitude. Yet, where there is work to be done, she's in the middle of it, making it more a social affair than labor. Celebrations are enjoyable when she is part of the storytelling and fun. In short, she offers a wholesomeness that comes from Benedictine moderation and balance.

I have no doubt that the Sisters of the Order of Saint Benedict will continue to flourish under the leadership of S. Michaela. She will blend grace and natural abilities to serve the community well. She will draw forth the gifts of the Sisters, consult with them, and collaborate with those sharing leadership responsibilities. She will come to know her Sisters' values and truth and thus be able to represent them well.

S. Michaela will want to meet with all who have particular ties with the monastery. Undoubtedly, she will attend some of the Oblate gatherings. You will see for yourself what a pleasure it is to get to know her. She will enjoy meeting you as well.



Reflection on RB 53.1 Lynda Gradert, OblSB

"All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ ..." RB 53.1

What if this well-known quote by Saint Benedict actually read: "All drivers who present themselves on the road are to be welcomed as Christ..."? That's a tall order. I live in the geographic center of Minneapolis. I also live within a mile of three of the

five most congested interchanges/freeways in the state. I get a lot of practice in patience and tolerance. I can always tell where I'm at spiritually on the road. I can be perfectly calm one minute and then, when someone cuts me off, I find myself suddenly angry and laying on the horn. In these cases I ask myself: What could I do better the next time?

The first thing I need to work on is how I'm reacting or my expectations of other drivers. I know that when I consciously let people in, instead of freaking out over being cut off, or expecting other drivers to do the unexpected, I'm in a much better place.

George Carlin said: "Have you ever noticed that anybody driving slower than you is an idiot, and anyone going faster than you is a maniac?" I know that sometimes I'm the idiot and sometimes I'm the maniac. I also know that when I'm courteous on the roads, I see a lot more courtesy displayed by others. Sometimes it's downright inspiring.

Welcoming other drivers as Christ is difficult for me. It's where "the rubber meets the road" in living the Benedictine value of hospitality. By trying to maintain an atmosphere of calm and acceptance while I'm driving, I have a better chance of not meditating on how stupid that last driver was, but instead being able to listen to what God is calling me to do.

So, the next time you're driving through the Cities and someone honks at you, smile and wave. It's probably me, still struggling with highway hospitality.



Psalm 145 *Juliana Howard, OblSB*

Nan Merrill's rendition of Psalm 145 has inspired, sustained and emboldened me since I first read it in a hotel room in Charlotte, North Carolina, over ten years ago. I'd recently been given a copy of *Psalms for Praying* and was using it for morning lectio before going across

the street to present a workshop at a diocesan education conference. Psalm 145 was the psalm for the day, and I read it hungrily, looking for a message to calm the butterflies already forming in my stomach at the thought of what lay ahead. Asking for words of support, I propped the pillows up behind my back and read--

*Do you not know that your whole being
is encompassed by my love?*

*I am the infinite and eternal
within your soul;*

O, that I might make myself known to you!

At the end of the psalm was my perfect response to this comforting promise:

O, Heart of my heart, envelop me!

I know You are near to all who call upon You,...

When I speak, may it be of blessing and gratitude.

Let Your glory within me shine out to the world!

Let Your glory within me shine out to the world!

I leapt from my bed, full of spit and vinegar, and sang—

Let Your wisdom within me shine out to the world!

Let Divine Light within me shine out to the world!

Let Your glory within me shine out to the world!

An hour later, I was teaching the chant to local children, who then taught it to the workshop participants. The spit was flying! Since that day in Charlotte, I have written psalm chants for all of the psalms, using Nan Merrill's texts. However, I keep coming back to Psalm 145 to remind me of the Presence, the Source, the Christ within that enlivens, inspires and sustains us -- as close as our breath.

This voice that spoke to me so clearly that morning in Charlotte -- the voice of the Divine Indwelling -- had spoken to me many years ago in the form of a children's story written at a women's spiritual retreat. Though I didn't realize it then, it was another call from deep inside whispering, "Can you hear me now?" This December, *Catie the Copycat*, illustrated by my granddaughter Sophia Heymans, was published by Beaver's Pond Press as a children's picture book. When the fears and doubts arise over this expensive and all-consuming venture that I've undertaken in my elder years, I take a deep breath and belt out these words:

Let Your glory within shine out to the world!

Celebration of Thanksgiving – February 6, 2011

On Sunday, February 6, the Sisters of Saint Benedict's Monastery gathered for a celebration of thanksgiving in honor of their prioress, Sister Nancy Bauer.

The afternoon program began with a theme of hope as the Sisters gratefully remembered the dreams Sister Nancy shared and the hope she planted in their hearts. Quotes taken from conferences, talks and letters by S. Nancy, along with photos she had taken, were included in a slide presentation. Poems, piano music, songs, drawings and gifts all enhanced the events of the day. Through technological assistance, the Sisters living at Saint Scholastica Convent and Mount Benedict Monastery in Ogden, Utah, were able to participate in the program.

After evening prayer, a festive meal was served in the dining room. Four oblates and oblate candidates assisted in serving the meal.



Pictured l to r: Sue Meers, Obl cand; Marge Lesnick, Obl cand; Sister Nancy; Ruth Lindstedt, OblSB; Pat Giesen, OblSB



Interrupted Journey *Mary Baier, Oblate*

*“Looking back, may I be filled
with gratitude.
Looking forward, may I be filled
with hope.
Looking upward, may I be aware
of strength.
Looking inward, may I find peace.”*

(Unknown)

It had been almost a full year since I began at the monastery in St. Joseph on retreat, using those precious days for reflection and prayer. During that time, I completed my letter of Oblate commitment to the prioress, Sister Nancy Bauer, and I was looking forward to September when I was to become an Oblate of Saint Benedict's Monastery. For me, Saint Benedict's had become my spiritual home. I found the teachings of the Benedictine values to be extraordinarily useful in my day-to-day life as a wife, mother, grandmother, daughter and principal of an elementary school, and in the many roles we are all “assigned” by our spiritual director, God.

In August I began putting the finishing touches on welcoming back staff and students for another school year. The staff workshop week was prepared, new staff had been hired and I was relieved we would be ready for the first day. I was also preparing for my youngest son and his daughter to come live with us while he finished his student teaching. Our son had recently been through a long and difficult custody battle for his daughter and, much to our relief, he had gained custody of her. Our granddaughter had been through so much in her six years that we knew it would take much love, patience and a stable, loving home to support her transition. We spent a rushed week in August painting and decorating her room, taking her school shopping and preparing to fill our once empty nest.

Sunday, August 29, was a beautiful summer day. My husband and I went to the grocery store after Mass. Our granddaughter was still sleeping and had stayed back with her father, which was unusual. I would like to think it was God's plan that our granddaughter was not with us that day. On the way home, I was looking forward to reading the Sunday paper, a simple joy I had not done for years. We didn't talk as we drove toward home. We were comfortable with the quiet, and I became absorbed in the paper.

There is a Bible passage which reminds us to always be prepared for meeting the Lord, for none of us know the time or place when we will be called. When I heard my husband cry out “Oh, no,” I looked up from my paper and saw the truck approaching. I knew it would be a bad accident, and in that split second of time, I knew I might not survive. My thoughts were clear, my words were simple. I asked for God's mercy for whatever wrong I had done to others and then I felt the peace of God come over me. There was no fear, for I let go and put all in the hands of God.

Immediately after the impact, I knew something was seriously wrong with me, but I was still calm. I told my husband to call 911. As I tried to breathe and absorb the pain, God continued to be present. Within minutes, a registered nurse appeared at my side. She told me she had seen the accident and stopped to help. She began to take my pulse and ask me questions. When I told her I just wanted to sleep, she kept me awake. Then a doctor driving by stopped and helped the nurse. I am convinced these two angels were sent by God. Once the ambulance crew arrived, they took over. I never did find out the names of those angels.

In the hospital, a CT scan determined I had nine broken bones: seven ribs on my left side, my sternum bone covering my heart and my collar bone on my right side. They also found on the CT scan that day two tumors, one on my thyroid and one on my adrenal gland.

Since that accident, I have applied the Benedictine values to my experience. My first lesson was letting go and putting my life in the hands of God to experience an inner peace I had never known before. I now believe God has probably found it quite humorous over the years watching me try to control everything around me. Yet, when we truly let go and give over the situation to God, we receive the very peace we all crave. My second lesson was awareness of God. God is everywhere, present in those who are angels of kindness and service to others. The third lesson was relearning to live simply, finding a balance between my work and rest. I was no longer able to go 110%, full steam ahead. It was an adjustment. I began a daily dialogue with God with such simple prayers as, “God help me heal” or a simple “Thank you” when I could get out of bed without help. When I returned to work, I had the support and love of staff and students. I found I didn't have to be the only leader; others could and would take care of things. It was the work of community at its finest, watching the staff and students take the lead and provide me time to heal.

I believe my story is not unique. I have experienced the joys and sorrows all of us do. I have learned it is unlikely we will fully feel the joys in life unless we also go through the challenges and experience sorrows. As one doctor said to me, “If not for the accident, we may not have found the tumors. God had a plan.”

May we all find this inner peace.

Note: Although it was in Mary Baier's plans to make her final commitment on September 18, 2010, a near-death experience brought Benedictine values more deeply into her life.

Meet the Oblate Advisory Team

Four times a year the Oblate Advisory Team meets “to advise and give direction to the Oblate director as the group studies ways and means of fostering the Oblate way of life at Saint Benedict’s Monastery.” (from directives set up by the Oblate Advisory Team, November 2007). At the meetings, team members give feedback, respond to what is happening and offer suggestions.

In addition to Sisters Eunice Antony, Roberta Werner and Laureen Virnig, there are six Oblates on the team. **Here are three of the six Oblates on the team and their reflection on what it means to live the Oblate way of life as an Oblate of Saint Benedict’s Monastery.**

Paul Dieser, OblSB - I was invited to join the Oblate Advisory Team in September 2010. I have lived in Edina, Minn., the past 12 years and I’m currently retired. Prior to retiring in 2005, I was the director of fiscal services for Shriners Hospitals for Children in Minneapolis. Living the Oblate way of life means to me following the *Rule of Saint Benedict* as a lay person. It is a way of life for me. It means being more hospitable to the people I meet, such as visiting with and getting to know the guests that I serve at Loaves and Fishes or taking some extra time visiting with a patient at the hospital after giving them Communion. There are always one or two individuals that are lonely and just need to talk to someone. Following the *Rule of Saint Benedict* means trying to have balance in my life: time for prayer, praying the psalms and spiritual reading. It also means making time for daily Mass, my volunteer activities and my routine household chores. It is keeping God ever in the forefront of my mind as I progress through my daily activities.

Peggy Sietsema, OblSB - I am from Willmar, Minn., and a member of the Willmar area Oblate Small Group. I am married and have three grown children and three grandchildren. I retired four years ago after a career as a nurse and health care administrator. Although one of my sisters-in-law is a member of the St. Joseph Benedictine community and I had long admired the Benedictines I met, I did not investigate the Oblate way of life until eight or so years ago. Following a period of discernment and study, I had the privilege of becoming an Oblate of Saint Benedict’s Monastery in St. Joseph, Minn., in March 2006.

It was a time when life circumstances led me to question my long-held Christian/Catholic beliefs; the *Rule* and the practices of the *Rule* helped me. Seeking to live the Benedictine way of life has added depth, richness and discipline to my spiritual life. The call to “listen” and to seek “balance” have provided me with a wonderful framework for finding God in the world and within myself. Of course, there is also the extra benefit of meeting and enjoying so many others with large Benedictine hearts.



(l to r) Ruth Lindstedt, OblSB; Peggy Sietsema, OblSB; Laureen Virnig, OSB; Jan Fredell, OblSB

Jan Fredell, OblSB - My life’s journey has graced me with the opportunity to live in small town and big city Minnesota as well as in the rainforest of Liberia, West Africa, and then back to northern Minnesota where you will now find me, along with my husband, John, and his 95-year-old mother. We live in Ogema, Minn., on the White Earth Indian Reservation. By training, I am a social worker; by life’s work, I am a community and political organizer. Now I am the primary caregiver to Grandma Val. Long before I knew of *Saint Benedict’s Rule*, I had claimed the Biblical teachings which inform Benedictine values. Long before I knew the term “Benedictine spirituality,” mentors were teaching me about it. My mother was a role model for a daily, reflective prayer life. From Ruth, my Mennonite friend, I learned about living simply and making choices that promote sustainability for God’s people and creation. The Liberian people taught me hospitality. But it is through community that I am renewed and challenged as I learn and grow in faithfulness to the Gospel. It was the Benedictine value of community which led me first to “Evenings at the Monastery” and then to the study and rhythm of Benedictine spirituality. Today, the Benedictine value of balance in prayer, work and leisure provide structure and strength to my caregiving days.

(In the next issue of *OblateNews* the other three Oblates will share their reflections.)

(l to r) Eunice Antony, OSB; Roberta Werner, OSB; Marie Hanauska, OblSB; Mickey Pula, OblSB; Paul Dieser, OblSB



Happy Birthday!

If you would like your birthday added to our list, please contact us with that information. You can e-mail oblatesbm@csbsju.edu. Or you can write to **Oblate Director, 104 Chapel Lane, St. Joseph, MN 56374.**

June		July		August	
June 1	Martha Fairley	June 27	Lorrayne Traut	August 1	Deborah Orzechowski
June 2	Joan Krause	June 28	Mary T. Buley	August 3	Jim Fairley
	Jan Hier		Marjorie Brutger		Sharon McVary
	Margaret Schwob	June 29	Honor Hacker		Joyce Morrison
June 3	Elizabeth Birnstihl			August 4	Betty Nicolin
	Julie Kelvie			August 8	Kathy Roos
June 4	Stanley Idzerda	July 1	Marcia Casper	August 9	Lorraine Picard
June 5	Kate Maxwell		Bernadette Stein		Mary Alice Tomporowski
June 6	Marlene Jansen	July 2	Janet Schleper	August 11	Peggy Kelley
June 7	Mary Ann Kinney Pattison		Rosemary Ebnert	August 16	Janet M. Taylor-Schoepp
June 8	Mary Hughes	July 4	Rosemary Brever	August 19	Linda Hutchinson
	Karen Kruse	July 5	Janet Waldbillig		Bonnie Kucala
	Ron Lane	July 6	Judith Christenson	August 20	Jeannie Weber
June 9	Barbara McGinnis		Mary Stackpool	August 21	Vivian McGervey
	Mary Berry	July 7	Janice Kaylor	August 22	Anne Templin
	Elizabeth Barringer	July 9	Lana Faber		Delores Duffy
June 10	Bernadette Reardon	July 12	Kevin Kluesner	August 25	Joan Walkowiak
	Rosemary Menard	July 13	Steve Heymans	August 26	Leann Enninga
	Margaret Sietsema	July 16	Wayne Landry	August 27	Ricarda Maria Kelso
June 11	Denise Stachnik	July 21	Karen Phillips	August 28	Christine Maul
June 12	Elna Goodspeed	July 22	Lorraine Matusak		Eileen McCormick
June 13	Karen Roertgen		Geraldine A. E. Skager	August 29	Geraldine Idzerda
June 16	Janice M LaVine	July 23	Marge Blenkush		Di Ann Vinck
June 19	Betty Nystrom	July 24	Lila McDermott	August 30	Bernadine St. Pierre
	Shirley Marcks Batchelder		Loretta Javra		Nancy F. Fandel
June 20	Sharon Kelly	July 25	Lori Weaver		
June 22	Patricia Giesen	July 27	Jana Preble		
June 23	Patricia Cicharz	July 28	Carol Sisterman		
June 26	Nanette Dagnon	July 30	Mary Novak		
June 26	Theresa Taylor				

Prayer Intentions

Please remember the following in your prayers.

- + **Oblate Irene A. Meaney** died on December 27, 2010.
- + **Sister Aurelianne Kelsch, OSB**, died on January 21, 2011.
- + **Bernard Durnin**, father of Oblate Candidate Kathy Roos, died on February 7, 2011.
- + **Stanley Zlotkowski**, father of Oblate Theresa Zlotkowski, died on February 8, 2011.
- + **Oblate Arlene Gray Ceynowa**, sister of Oblate Betty Gray Moriarity, died on February 10, 2011.
- + **Oblate Joan Jackson** died in February 2011.
- + **Donna Rademacher**, mother of Oblate Beth Rademacher, died on February 11, 2011.
- + **Oblate Beata M. Wolak-Chute** died on February 19, 2011.
- + **Oblate Damaris Wagner Boerschinger**, sister of Oblate LeMay Wagner Bechtold, died on February 21, 2011.
- + **Sister Marette Malley, OSB**, of St. Benedict's Monastery, died on February 27, 2011.
- + **Sister Elaine Schindler, OSB**, of St. Benedict's Monastery, died on March 4, 2011.
- + **Oblate Mary Lavina Hagel** died on March 26, 2011.
- + **Sister Carolinda Medernach** died on April 11, 2011.

Coming Events at the Monastery

Oblate Sunday

May 15, 2011
Mary Jane Berger, OSB

In March we saw the significant places in Benedict's life and heard what was happening in the world at that time. Now we will return to Benedict's words to uncover the meaning beneath this ancient, sixth-century text.

Oblate Renewal Days

Saturday, September 17, 2011
Abbot John Klassen, OSB

Saturday, September 15, 2012
Rev. Dr. Jane Tomaine

Oblate Sunday Presentation: Walking the Way of Benedict

More than 50 Oblates and Sisers gathered for an enlightening presentation on “Walking the Way of Benedict” by Sister Mary Jane Berger on Sunday afternoon, March 20. Through the use of slides, S. Mary Jane introduced us to the time and place where Benedict lived, a process she referred to as “earthing” Saint Benedict. The slides showed a terrain that is rocky and hilly. Buildings are perched on the side of hills so they seem to come out of the rock and are built close together for protection. In the sixth century when Benedict was alive, there were wars and invasions from the north. Monasteries were locations of security inside the walls. Many young, uneducated men sought this source of stability. Living together peacefully had to be worked at all the time. The Roman Empire fell in 476 AD. This was followed by chaos, poverty, hunger and devastation. There was decadence in education and instability in the Church. During Benedict’s lifetime there were 13 popes.

Some of the places featured on the slides were:

Norcia/Nursia, the home of Benedict and Scholastica; a church was built around the cell of Benedict when he was a student in Rome;

Vicavaro, the monastery where monks wanted Benedict as their abbot, but then tried to poison him when he wanted to discipline them;

Subiaco, where he spent three years in solitude and prayer and the monk Romanus tended to his needs;

Monte Cassino, which was founded in 529, was where Benedict and Scholastica were buried. The monastery was destroyed four times, most recently in 1944 during WWII. It was a strategic location for anyone wanting to invade Italy. Even today there is an ever-burning lamp on the altar at the gravesite of Benedict and Scholastica.



Easter Questions

Ruth Feeney, OSB



Leaning forward toward the anticipated glories of Easter, the Gospel of the Transfiguration on the second Sunday of Lent already pointed to the exaltation of Christ. In the Scripture text used at Morning Prayer that weekend, there was a reference to another mountain revelation: Elijah on Mount Horeb (1Kings 19:9b). This led to considering Moses on Mount Sinai. While each reading pointed to the majestic

presence of God, I was most taken by the words personally addressed to the awed and frightened witnesses. Elijah, for example, twice heard the word of God ask him: “What are you doing here?” It is this question which drew me into deeper reflection. Like a reverberating echo I kept hearing: “What are you doing here?” and felt personally questioned.

Startled and perplexed, I wondered what was being asked. Did here mean this place, this moment? Was there emphasis on doing? Was God inquiring about purpose, intent, commitment, mission, daily responsibilities, a direction of life? I pondered the implications of both question and personal response. Letting go of any fear of interrogation or accusation, I felt I was being asked to give some basis for my faith and actions. I was being invited to stand before the Ultimate and speak for myself.

During the Easter season, we hear the accounts of resurrection appearances. We note, too, the awe and fright of those who witnessed the Lord in places close to the tomb, behind closed doors, walking away from Jerusalem, sharing the intimacy of a meal and returning from a fishing trip. There are other questions in those stories: “Who is it you are looking for” (John 20:15)?

“Who will roll back the stone for us” (Mark 16:3)? “Do you love me” (John 21:16)? “What are you discussing as you go your way” (Luke 24:17)?

Yet the question that causes me to interact with the Easter disciples is the one asked of Elijah: “What are you doing here?” Imaginatively entering each Gospel account, I’m prone to ask the women, the apostles, other followers of Jesus: “What are you doing here?” The synoptic writers and John give some obvious reasons.

They are looking for the body of Christ. They’re hiding out. They are on their way to Emmaus. Yet, at a deeper level, the question may also ask them about human longings and may intimate feelings and uncertainties that we also have. The question is not attempting to manipulate the revealed text nor conjure up some fantasy. Rather, it discovers resonances, shared reactions and our solidarity in a faith continuing to be open to the revelation of Christ. Meditative prayer reaches back to the first Easter to appreciate the first appearances of the Risen Lord. Then it lets us stand with the community of believers of all time living the answer to that question: “What are you doing here?”

Perhaps, too, in the presence of the Risen Lord, you may be asked the same question during this Easter season. Inquire what Christ may be asking of you. Reflect on what may be your immediate answer. Then take time to live with the question. Respond to it later at a time of deeper reflection. May prayer reveal new understandings and grace direct your response. “What are you doing here?”



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Easter Triduum at Sacred Heart Chapel:

Thursday, April 21, 7:30 p.m.

Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper
Food shelf donations are encouraged.

Friday, April 22, 2:30 p.m.,

Good Friday Service with veneration of the cross
and distribution of Eucharist.

EASTER VIGIL and EASTER SUNDAY

Saturday, April 23, 8:30 p.m.

Service of Light and Liturgy of the Word

*Night watches, brief periods of prayer and silence around the
Easter candle, are held throughout the night.*

Sunday, April 24, 6 a.m.

Liturgy of Baptism and Easter Eucharist

Summer Events at the Monastery

Sunday, June 5

Intallation of Prioress Michaela Hedican
Eucharist: 1:30 p.m.
Reception: 2:30 – 4 p.m.

Sunday, July 17

Golden Jubilee Celebration
Eucharist: 10:30 a.m.

Friday, August 19

Donor Appreciation Event
3 – 7 p.m.

*Also check www.sbm.osb.org/programs to register for one of the
community retreats or other retreat opportunities this summer.*