



# Benedictines

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*Journal of the Benedictine Monastery of the Good Shepherd*

*P.O. Box 1501  
Rio Grande City, TX 78582*



Our dear Friends,

May the fullness of God's life and light be within you this holy season of Christmas and into the New Year. We have been remembering you daily in our prayer in the midst of our work. Since we last shared our life with you in our July Journal much has happened of which a little is recorded here.

Undergirding all of our life is the freedom to have about five hours in prayer each day including the celebration of the Eucharist in local parishes. Because we do not

have salaried positions away from the monastery, we are so blessed to focus on Prayer and Work right here! It is because of YOU that we are able to do this work of God, of which you are an integral part! We are also very grateful that we already have one-third of the funds to build the \$1.8 million, much needed, additional retreat facility.

As the troubles in the world grow we seek Him Who is our HOPE, Lord, Rock, and Beloved, and has that perfect plan which we will see unfold more and more in our lifetime. There is much joy knowing the graces that we see flooding into the hearts of all of our dear friends.

*With love and gratitude we are having nine Masses offered for you these upcoming months.*

*Your Sisters Fran, Luella and Nancy*



## **Oblates Return to Say Yes— Amidst Prayers, Peacocks, & Peanut Butter**

In the Order of St. Benedict, provision is made for men and women, single or married to offer themselves to God as oblates. As they live out their Baptismal promises, they strive to incorporate some of the monastic practices into their state in life according to the wisdom of St. Benedict, such as praying the Liturgy of the Hours and *Lectio Divina*, to mention two important ones. One privilege of being a Benedictine oblate is the opportunity of attending the annual oblate retreat held in autumn at the monastery. It is a time set aside for deep prayer and spiritual reflection. Excellent retreat masters offer wonderful insights for spiritual growth. At the retreat, many oblates renew their oblation, others make their first formal oblation, and others are welcomed as candidates as they begin their formation process which begins each fall.

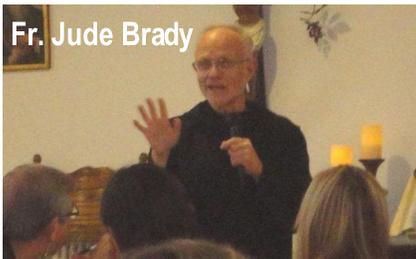
At this year's retreat, prayers, peacocks and peanut butter each played a role in some way. The team of oblates that organizes the retreat ensures that prayer is always an important part of the retreat: daily Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, *Lectio Divina*, adoration, rosary, and Chaplet of Divine Mercy. But where and how did the peacocks and the peanut butter come in?



A flock of peacocks, those “proud” birds created by God, happen to live and shed their big fancy feathers on a nearby ranch. Since caring for God’s creation (i.e., recycling) is a known concern for Benedictine communities, one oblate decided to gather the free peacock feathers and make unique floral arrangements with them. So

the Montecassino Conference Center, already a beautiful building, looked even nicer, dressed up in colorful peacock feathers. Another oblate who “googled” the symbolism of peacock feathers, ironically found that peacock feathers were used by the early Christians as a Catholic symbol to denote eternal life.

As for the peanut butter—no, the Sisters did not feed us just peanut butter sandwiches! On the contrary, Benedictine hospitality calls for happy meals. It was actually Fr. Jude Brady, the retreat master, who impressed something about peanut butter in our minds when he tied in a personal story to the theme of the retreat: *Continual Conversion of Heart*.



Fr. Jude Brady

Fr. Jude, who is a Benedictine monk of St. Vincent’s Archabbey, Latrobe, PA and a pastor of a parish in Carrollton, PA, is also a clinical psychologist. With his vast experience in human development and counseling, he added a

dimension of psychological expertise to his conference talks. He and Fr. Don Krebs, an oblate and a Winter-Texan priest who helps in parishes of the Brownsville Diocese, heard confessions at the retreat for two hours.

Fr. Jude shared that an everyday conversion or renewal is a daily “yes” to do what God is calling us to do, much like cleaning a peanut butter jar. Recalling his youth when he used to do volunteer work in a convent, one of his kitchen duties was to wash the peanut butter jar when it became empty. The peanut butter was purchased by the convent in large containers and then placed in the smaller jar, to be washed and refilled with peanut butter (recycled, as in the Benedictine tradition). One day, after Fr. Jude had washed the jar, the kitchen superior brought the jar up to the light to detect any traces of peanut butter. Aha!

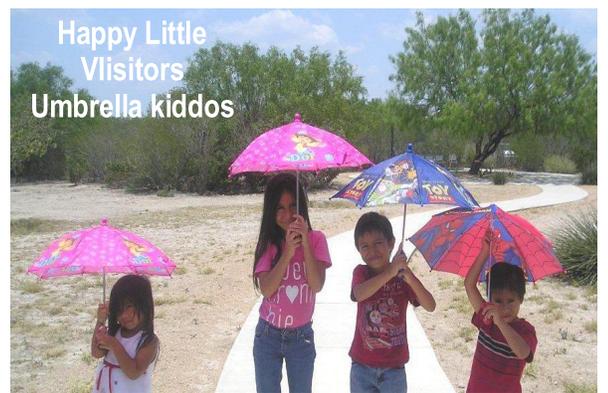
Thus it is with our everyday yes to follow Jesus, when we get up and make a decision for the Lord. If we mess up, we ask for forgiveness and keep on trying, until our inner being is like a clean peanut butter jar, held up to the light of Christ.

Forming a deeper relationship with God involves spending time in prayer and silence. We can do something realistic with faithfulness, as simple as saying the same prayer daily. Silence allows us to get to know who we are, not in a narcissistic way but to enable us to be transformed in Christ. Thereby, we will recognize the time-consuming habits and noisy distractions that tend to enslave us. Hopefully, we can shed these obstacles like unnecessary feathers.

The Benedictine Sisters are dedicated to providing a peaceful, holy place where people can seek inner renewal, which lead to helping Jesus Christ renew the whole world.



100th Anniversary at St. Benedict’s Church, San Benito



Happy Little Vliitors Umbrella kiddos



Fr. Jim Erving with us for our Lady of Guadalupe Liturgy



Friends make pozole here for Fr. Juan Victor



Our godson, Juan Victor, with his godfather, Fr. Juan Victor

## KSGS 99.9 LPFM ON THE AIR!

Our Catholic radio station has been on the air since Ash Wednesday, 2011 and we are very hopeful that through this means we can reach many more of our brothers and sisters in Rio Grande City and the surrounding areas. There is undoubtedly a great need for evangelization, and Catholic radio is a contemporary way to cast that wider net as the truths of our Catholic Faith are promoted and propagated.

The Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) provides the programming. There are programs of evangelization, apologetics, faith formation, catechesis and much more. Most of the programs are in Spanish, but we have some programs in English as well. In addition, pro-life programs and discussions on current events from a Catholic perspective are also available. The homebound or those on the road have the opportunity to lift their minds up to God through devotional prayers, such as the Rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet. The holy Mass is broadcast in English as well as in Spanish. We are working toward getting local parishes to take part in some of the broadcasts in the future.

We are grateful to those partners who assist us in this adventure. Roel Smith, pro-bono General Manager, along with Sister Nancy, head up the committee that works with matters concerning the radio, such as promoting it in the wider community and inviting Catholic groups and organizations to become part of this effort. Other members of the committee include Father Tom Sepulveda, Pastor of Immaculate Conception Church, Ana Maria Gonzalez, Jorge Perez and Rudy Martinez. We are indebted to Billy and Rosario Pope for the use of their upstairs apartment in downtown Rio Grande City, plus their tower, all a gift to our listeners.

Our Holy Father Benedict XVI exhorts each one of us in the Year of Faith *"to rediscover our joy at believing and our enthusiasm for communicating the truth of faith to all..."* In this spirit we invite everyone to tune in to KSGS 99.9 FM on the radio dial. To all those in the local community we say, whether at home or on the road, listen and learn! Turn the dial to **Good News Radio 99.9FM** and

don't move it again. Let's help change our culture, one station at a time! If you

are in the RGC area, watch for the eight-foot wide sign soon to go up across from Wal-Mart.



## Ora et Labora Discernment Weekends for Single Women

A highlight for us since August, when Bishop Flores was here, is to have monthly discernment weekends for women who are serious about seeking God's plan for their life. It has been very valuable and we have also appreciated two of our local pastors who have assisted us, both of whom were in vocation ministry in their communities. Basilian priest, Fr. Tom Sepulveda and Fr. Jim Erving, OMI come regularly for input with the women. Several women are caring for some issues and will then be more ready to enter into deeper discernment here with us. Our monastic life is our ministry which also seeks to integrate work which will restore the Culture of Life. If you or someone you know has this nudging, do contact us. 956-486-2680



Welcome to the Montecassino Renewal Center



New "Stairway To Heaven" built for Montecassino Renewal Center



## HORARIUM

6:00 Lauds  
6:40 Breakfast  
7:10 Adoration, Lectio Divina  
8:00 Communal Rosary  
9:30 Work  
12:00 Noon prayer  
3:00 Mid-Day prayer and Divine Mercy Chaplet  
5:00 Vespers  
8:00 Compline - Closing prayer  
MASS TIMES VARIES IN LOCAL PARISHES

## A SPECIAL EVENT

At our **2012 Good Shepherd Night, Opera and Oldies** we honored Jorge Perez, Lillie Tejerina and Mario and Rosie Guerra for their outstanding goodness to the monastery. God bless them and ALL our thousands of benefactors over the years!

## PLEASE JOIN US IN 2013

April 20<sup>th</sup> for our **Paisano (Roadrunner) Festival**

July 13<sup>th</sup> **Good Shepherd Night with Opera and Oldies**  
Meal and Music at the Monastery

## IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN READING MORE ON THE MONASTERY

The **Valley Catholic**, the official newspaper of the Brownsville Diocese, has an article in it about the monastery, entitled **CLOSE TO HOME**. see <http://cdob.org> **Valley Catholic** for November, 2012

*"Treat all guests as Christ Himself!"*

**St. Benedict**

We try to set aside Tuesdays for our personal and in-house needs so we generally do not have guests on that day. Also, one Tuesday a month we make a "Desert Day". *"Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest awhile."* (Mark 6:30) It is helpful if you give us a call before coming in case we are not available for you at the time you would like to be here. 956-486-2680 or [sanbenito@grandriver.net](mailto:sanbenito@grandriver.net)

*Thank You and God bless you!*

These twenty-five years have been rich with the goodness of the Lord through hundreds of friends who have shown great care for the Good Shepherd's work here. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your friendship, prayer, and support in so many varied ways. Our daily prayers are with you! Know of our affection for each one of you.

*Your Sisters,  
Luella, Fran and Nancy*



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