

Oblate Update June 2019

On Sunday, July 21, Abbey Oblates and guests gathered for a “Day of Reflection” with guest speaker Father Tom Hart, OSB, from St. Vincent Archabbey, PA.

After Mass, we enjoyed a delicious brunch provided by the Monks. We are very grateful for Abbey Chef John’s wonderful cooking and the Monks’ generosity! Especially during a time when the kitchen was about to be moving over to the mobile kitchen for renovations!!

Fr. Tom Hart inspired and challenged the audience with his topic, “A Positive Joyful Asceticism.” We heard the history of fasting in the early church through Vatican II as well as the gradual lack of focus now in the church except for Lent.

The topic was introduced to us prior to the Day of Reflection with this statement: “The three main pillars of Christian spirituality are laid out in the Sermon on the Mount, namely: prayer, fasting, and works of mercy (Matthew chapter 6). We talk a lot about the first and the third, but not so much anymore about the second, yet Saint Benedict, in his Tools for Good Works exhorts his readers “to love fasting” (RB 4:13). Hindus fast, Buddhists fast, Muslims fast, Orthodox Christians fast, Health enthusiasts fast; what happened to Catholics? We will take a look to see how a Vatican II-informed spirituality can re-appropriate ancient forms of spirituality allowing us to speak of a positive and joyful asceticism.”

We heard through many examples and quotes that the root to the joy of fasting is in love, forgiveness and witnessing our faith by how we practice Jesus’ messages. Prayer, fasting and forgiveness appears many times in the old and new testaments!

From the Ten Commandments, “Love thy neighbor as thyself,” to the Didache (first catechism year 100), “If then you are able to bear the Lord’s yoke, do the best you can,” to the center of the Torah, “Love thy neighbor is the fulfillment of the law,” to the quote etched in the Liberty Bell in PA from Leviticus 25:10 “you shall make sacred by proclaiming liberty in the land for all its inhabitants,” to 1 Corinthians 13:5 “Love does not keep a record of wrongs,” we were given much to ruminate.

Fr. Tom Hart ended his wonderful talk on this compelling note: Is there someone you need to go to and ask the question, “is there anything I should ask of you for forgiveness?”

Oblates meet the first Tuesday every month August-June with a Day of Recollection in July.