



# Congregation of the Good Samaritan

“Little Thoughts from the Big Thicket”

November 7, 2010

Check out our website at <http://www.cgsorder.com>

## We Are Learning to Cope



Remember the sitcom, Green Acres? Well, our days often remind us of the problems faced by Oliver and Lisa. In fact, Father John Benedict has made “Green Acres, is the place to be!” our theme song. But, like Lisa and Oliver, we are working on it and learning to cope with the problems of rural life. Like Lisa, we miss (?) being able to run down to the corner store let alone a mall. A trip to the buy groceries or go to the bank involves a round trip of about an hour, no matter which little town we choose. If we want to use our cell phones to make a call—(actually talk to someone)—we have to drive about 10 minutes out of the “thicket” and park in front of the liquor store so we don’t lose the call. (Oliver had to climb up the telephone pole—we just have to go to the liquor store.) Father says it gives a whole new meaning to “looking for bars.”

But, the electrician is finally done, and the lights work off of switches with no orange extension cords draped around the house. No more ‘electrisical’ problems with a generator, as Lisa used to say. We do have internet—Hughesnet. We have to buy tokens to be able to use it much for downloading stuff, but it works. We have Direct TV—so we have two satellite dishes. The water is pretty much working, although there is one small leak somewhere. We had to boil our water for about 10 days because the water company was doing repairs, but that is fixed now.

The nights have been quite cool but the days are still warm. We had very little rain in September and October, but November has proved better, and the trees and shrubs are a bit happier now. No hurricane watches,

but a couple of fire watches—something new to think about.

Father John Benedict has set up his woodworking shop under the back of the house on what used to be the “sleeping porch.” We were able to purchase the Z-Truck that he needed, due to a very generous gift from one of the ACC priests, and it has arrived and will be installed by the time you read this. As money is short, he has been busy building a desk and shelving out of “found” wood, and he is well able to make do.

The heat in the house consists of a revitalized old potbelly stove (excuse me—it is a ‘parlour stove’- not a potbelly stove) in the living room, which is almost up and ready to go. We need a boot to connect it to the chimney. But in the meantime we are collecting kindling and wood for the winter months—a new project for us. We did purchase a chain saw to help a bit. We do have electric heaters for each bedroom and for the chapel, so we expect to be warm and cozy.

Almost all of the boxes are out of the living room, but lots of them are now stacked in our cells. Sister’s cell will double as the sewing center, so there are boxes of fabric surrounding the walls there. Father John Benedict has the overflow of tools in his cell and Brother John of the Cross’s DVD collection is still in boxes.

But we do feel great progress has been made. We are happy with the way things are working out and thoroughly enjoy living in the middle of God’s glorious world! The trees are beginning to lose their leaves and there is some fall color, but we live in Southeast Texas and not in Colorado or New England. Actually, there are

a few trees in bloom for the fall. We have cleaned out the pond in one of the garden areas and cut down the overgrowth, but the St. Francis garden is still a mess. One step at a time. We do keep busy!

## Our Oblates What is an Oblate?

The Congregation of the Good Samaritan has adopted the Benedictine concept of **Oblates**, a group of men and women, not called to live their lives in the seclusion of the monastery, but who do feel called to serve God in the way of Christ; to devote their lives to growing in their spiritual relationship with God and serving His people in need, using the gifts and talents that have been given to them by The Father. Oblates, members of the Congregation who live and pray and function in the world, rather than in the monastery, are able to profit from the wisdom of the Governor General and the Governess of the Congregation, and from the spiritual experiences of the Congregation. In addition, they have encouragement and spiritual guidance that speaks to their daily lives as Christians. The Congregation works to assist them in their journey through this life and in their commitment to the Gospel of Christ that calls them on this journey.

*(From our brochure, "What In An Oblate? How Can I Become One?" Want a copy? Just as us—we will be glad to send you one!)*

## The Oblate's Corner

Each month we plan to introduce you to one of the Oblates. This month, we want to introduce you to Father Barrie Hodgins, a Postulant Oblate, which means that he has not yet been received in the Congregation as a Novice, nor has he officially begun his training. Part of the reason this is so is that he lives in Venezuela, and it is hard for Father John Benedict to get to him to receive him. We are working on that problem, because it is a problem with other Oblates and we need to find a solution. In the meantime, Father Hodgins is, as far as we are concerned, an unofficial, but actual member of the Congregation. So here follows his story.

**Father Barrie Hodgins** was 60 years old in July, (a fact of life which, he says, he fully intend to celebrate all this year). He spent most of his working life in various parts of South Africa, first as a Roman Catholic Priest, then as an Anglican. He joined the Anglican Catholic Church about 7 years ago.

He is married to Noluvuyo, and they have two children, Sandiswa and Khakhalethu, who in Vene-

zuela will be known as Benedicto and Dorothea (their second names in Spanish).

Father Hodgins is a "stipendiary priest" working in St Mary's Cathedral, Caracas. St. Mary's Cathedral is the oldest non-Roman Catholic church in Venezuela. At present he and Fr. Pavon, a military Chaplain, are the only two ACC Priests in Caracas. Fr. Pavon has just joined the ACC from the Roman Catholic Church, and is presently under a lot of pressure. We ask you to please pray for them both.

One of Father Hodgins's chief ministries in Venezuela is to develop what will hopefully become an Anglican Catholic Diocese in Venezuela. He says he believes that there is a great opportunity for the ACC Church here. When Archbishop Mark, who incidentally introduced him to the Congregation of the Good Samaritan, asked if he would prayerfully consider exercising his ministry there, he says he believed, and still does believe, that it was a call from God.

As a Roman Catholic Father Hodgins was a member of a Religious Order and therefore can appreciate the value of a "Regula Vitae" which, he points out, acts as a tool which God can use to develop ones life in the direction that God wishes it to develop.

When asked what he would like to see happen in the Oblate community he replied that he thought it would be good if the Oblates could keep in touch with each other.

edited by Sister Anne, CGS  
*(Next month, Father Hodgins will interview and write an article about another of the Oblates. That way, we can introduce them all to you over a period of months.)*

### **CGS Needs Your Help**

**Remodeling this house to make it suitable for an education center and a retreat center is going to be very expensive. We can't do it without your help. Please consider sending a donation now, before the end of the year. We are a Church organization and all donations are tax deductible—great timing!**

**Please consider sending a check made out to the "Congregation of the Good Samaritan"; P.O. Box 527, Rye, TX 77369 or you can send it by Paypal to**

[srannecgs@gmail.com](mailto:srannecgs@gmail.com).

**Either way, it will be greatly appreciated.**

## Victory for Father John Benedict

On October 22, 2010, at Evening Recreation, Father John Benedict, CGS won the Uno game. Brother John of the Cross, CGS/FODC was distraught, but has since recovered nicely. Sister Anne assures us, "It won't ever happen again!"



## N.T. Study Guide

Bishop Hutchens has asked CGS to work on some of the notes and guides for the Diocesan Educational Program. Bishop Mote left his New Testament Study Guide in Bishop Hutchens' care and he has turned it over to CGS to copy. It was typed on a very old typewriter, so Br. John has begun the task of retyping it to the computer so that it can be reproduced. Lots of work, but well worth the time.

## Peace in the Thicket Gives Us More Time for Prayer

One of the joys of rural is the extra time we have for prayer and meditation—something that city life makes hectic. We have been able to expand our Horarium to include Midday Prayers, Holy Hour and Benediction, along with our usual Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and Compline. So, as of this moment, our prayer schedule is as follows:

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| Morning Prayer and Communion                | 8:00am      |
| Midday Prayers (announced by Angelus bells) | 1:00pm      |
| Evening Prayer                              | 6:00pm      |
| Compline                                    | 9:30pm      |
| Grand Silence until 7:30am                  |             |
| Holy Hour and Benediction                   |             |
| Thursday                                    | 3:00-4:00pm |

In addition, each of us set aside an hour each day for reading and meditation. If we are away from home during one of the prayer hours, we do recite the Angelus in its place. Are we perfect? No—but we are working on it. Like any thing else that is new, it takes a bit of time to get used to it. We haven't had our own chapel before. Father John Benedict is working on adding music to our worship which we all enjoy.

Almost everything for the chapel has been located and unpacked—a major problem for a while. We added real Sanctus Bells on Sunday and we found the linen. We are still using an old wooden jewelry box for a Tabernacle, but it works just fine for now. Progress is being made.

## The Monastery Menagerie

The cats and dogs seem to be very happy in their new surroundings. The dogs, Hannah and Nicki, love the outdoors and the woods and chase each other around the yard, stopping along the



Nicki  
Leo

Hannah  
Blackie

way to sniff any item they missed the last time around. We don't let them out alone, although most of the neighbors seem to let their dogs roam free. But either Father John Benedict or Sister Anne accompany them on their treks and insist that they come back in the house. Nicki has a hard time remembering that rule, but she is learning.

Leo, who is about a year and a half, spends a lot of his time outdoors under the house. He has proved a good mouser and is proud of his feats of prowess. The kitten, Blackie, is still confined to Brother John of the Cross's cell until she get a bit bigger. She and Nicki play together occasionally, but Hannah has proved too rough so we keep them separated for now. The dogs attend chapel with us, but are still working on remembering to be quiet. Cats, as you may know, aren't much interested in chapel. They do their praying in private.



Br. John and Hannah

## May They Rest In Peace

On October 12, 2010, Rex A. Tynes, stepfather of The Rev'd Father George Parrish, Postulant, CGS, died unexpectedly in Orange, Texas. Rex was a retired electronics technician and was a United States Army veteran.

In addition to Father Parrish, Priest-in-Charge in Atmore, Alabama, Rex is survived by his wife of 29 years, Joan, and two daughters, Cheridan Roberts and Cecily Tynes as well as six grandchildren and four sisters.



Our prayers are with Father Parrish, his mother, Joan, and with the family. And may the Soul of Rex Tynes rest in peace.



## Life Is Never Dull Even in the Thicket

It had to happen—driving home from a grocery shopping junket to Livingston, the car sputtered and quit. (It is 2005 Saturn Vue, but it has 150,000 miles on it.—It is almost paid for!) We had it towed to the Monastery, and a friend called a mechanic to come take a look at it. It seems it blew a hole in the engine. That is the bad news.

The good news is we can get a used engine from a junk yard, guaranteed for 1 year, for a mere \$600 and the mechanic can put it in for about \$400. That's the good (?) news.

But the even better news is that a loving and concerned family member has volunteered to front the money. It is already on its way, and the car has been towed to the shop. In the meantime, we have the 1986 Plymouth Gran Fury to fall back on. The mechanic has even agreed to put a seat belt in the driver's seat so that we can get it licensed in Texas. (That is another story—for another time.)

Just in case we might begin to wonder, God proves again and again that He is in control and is taking care of us.

## Looking For a Good Advent Read?

For something new you might want to take a look at:

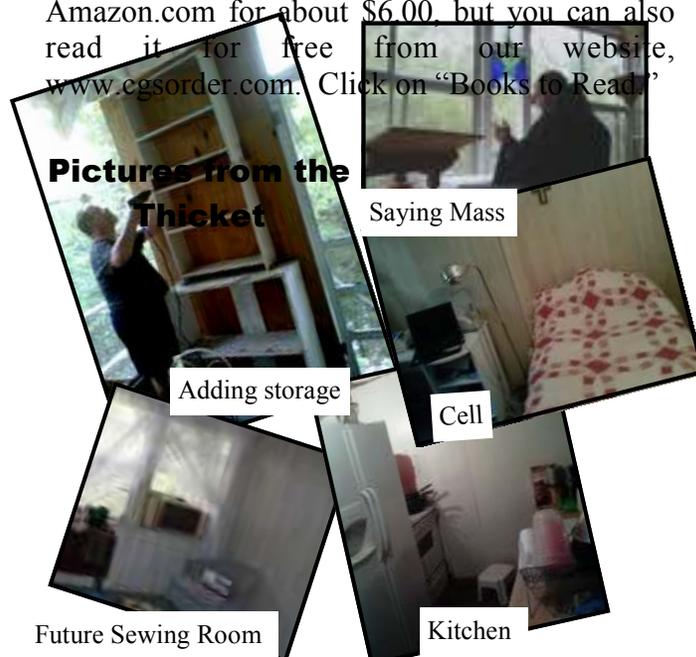
**From Holidays to Holy Days:  
A Benedictine Walk Through Advent**  
by **Albert Holtz, OSB**

The author, a Benedictine monk who lives in a large city, invites the reader to join him on his daily walks during the season, as he points out dozens of often unnoticed connections between our 'holidays' and the spiritual meaning of Advent and Christmas. It is available at most bookstores and at Amazon.com, for about \$15.00, and may even be in the library. It is an easy daily read with a meditation and a prayer for each day of Advent.

Or, for an old favorite, how about :

**The Practice of the Presence of  
God**  
By **Brother Lawrence**

This work has taught generations of Christians how to feel God's love while being in the thick of a busy world. In his letters, Brother Lawrence's example shines through. No matter your circumstances you can know Him in your life now and forever. It, too, is available at Amazon.com for about \$6.00, but you can also read it for free from our website, [www.cgsorder.com](http://www.cgsorder.com). Click on "Books to Read."



**For now until December, please pray for us as we pray for all of you!**