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**OBLATES OF SAINT BENEDICT**  
**Saint Vincent Archabbey**  
**300 Fraser Purchase Road, Latrobe, PA 15650-2690**

August - October 2006

Volume 59, Number 3

Please note registration forms for Oblate Day and for the October day of recollection on the colored insert.

**STABILITY AND CONVERSION:  
ALWAYS REMAINING FIRM IN CHRIST AND ALWAYS MOVING FORWARD WITH CHRIST**

Dear Oblates, Oblate novices, and Friends,

God often lets us be thrown off balance, but He never leaves us without His sustaining presence and the grace to remain firmly rooted in His love. This past June I went away for five whole days to give a retreat, and on my return to the Archabbey I bemoaned the fact that my usual control over my work load was in shambles. Furthermore, a few days after my return I was asked to move the Oblate Office from Roderick 202 to Leander 116. When I initially heard the news, I appropriately responded, "Yes, of course. This is surely God's will, and I shall obediently prepare to move whenever the signal is given." However, within a day or two my mind began to give in to worries and fears about all the inconveniences of moving, and well-meant words of sympathy from others led me to indulge in to self-pity over the messy process. "Yes, I'll do it," I mused, "but oh, what a chore it will be!" When the moving date was announced and I began to pack, graces beyond measure proceeded to arrive. An Oblate volunteer generously assisted me to pack most of the books and other items in a methodical way. The moving crew who came on the morning of June 19 were quick, efficient, cheerful, and gracious in putting all the heavy (very heavy!) furniture exactly where I wanted. Less than a day later an employee in charge of phones reactivated my phone at the same number and soon afterward brought me the longer cord that was needed. Besides all that, I received the unexpected assistance of one of our novices (after I reluctantly and not very expectantly asked for help) to work with me to unpack all the boxes the day after the move; and together we put everything in places that were even better than some of the haphazard arrangements in the old office. What did I do to deserve all these graces? (Nothing, of course!)

Despite such great incentives to trust and not to fear or cling to "old ways," we still do cling and fear. We do that because we tend to focus on

our perceived needs and wants instead of God's all-powerful love and His sustaining presence in every situation. For several days before the move I had to accumulate boxes for packing things. Within a short time I began impulsively to look into every nook and cranny of Saint Vincent for suitable empty boxes. (There were further graces here: the Mailing and Duplicating Office saved several boxes for me, and a kind food-service worker emptied several cartons of salad dressing so that I could have more boxes.) However, after I was all moved in and the empty boxes were placed in a recycling area, I found myself continuing to be on the look for boxes for several days; a voice within me was still saying, "I must grab that box!" as if it were precious gold. Such is the nature of our clinging. Instead of adapting to new circumstances and changed needs, our unredeemed selves tend to desire more and more of whatever we have been geared to crave, whether the objects of our desires are beneficial to us or not. Oh, what untrusting creatures we are!

All this has much to do with daily conversion and, at the same time, remaining stable in Christ and in His values. A major part of our Benedictine spirituality involves restraining our disordered desires and refocusing them on what God desires for us, as best as we can discern. St. Paul exhorts us, "Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be brave and strong. Let everything you do be done in love" (1 Cor 16:13-14). Our promise of stability helps us to stand firm in faith even when our external circumstances baffle us and our internal cravings gyrate wildly. When we "place [our] hope in God alone" (*RB* 4:41) and regularly check to see if our desires are focused on Christ and His Kingdom, we learn not to be swept up by self-centered desires or merely human ambitions but rather to welcome Christ to show us how, when, and in what manner we are to grow and change. In fact, the very awareness that our desires have wandered helplessly into

disorder is a grace that can direct us back to stability in Christ.

In his book *Strangers to the City*, Fr. Michael Casey, O.C.S.O., refers to stability in terms of both “not giving up” and “reaping the benefits.” Amid a culture that offers us a “sense of life as a vast supermarket” (p. 189), the monk or Oblate stands firm in committing himself to perseverance. Stability keeps us from being enslaved in the demand to have “the freedom to choose” (p. 190) every possible option. Stability keeps us from giving in to whimsical desires because it “is grounded in the unchanging fidelity of God. ... It is our faith in God’s fidelity that enables us to weather whatever storms come our way” (p. 190). Fr. Michael further comments that “stability comes from the verb *stare*, to stand. ... The best way to remain upright is not to stay still but to keep walking. ... The best way to persevere is to keep growing. ... Stability is ... an ongoing call to transcendence, not an excuse for nesting in the present” (p. 191). Among the great benefits of stability is that “its strength lies in its attention to the present moment, like the peasant at his plow, concentrating on the job at hand and not much looking up from it” (p. 193). Living a stable life involves being “vigilant and proactive concerning our thoughts and imagination” (p. 195). “Often such vigilance requires that we [intervene] decisively to stop escaping from the present by half-living in the past or daydreaming about a possible future” (p. 195). Then when it is time to change directions, we can set our desires completely on pursuing a new course (with a grateful glance at Christ), stop worrying whether we shall like the change or not, and cease seeking diversions from the path that God has set for us. The process of keeping guard over our thoughts and desires and frequently resubmitting them to Christ (in some cases through a spiritual director) brings us the benefits of “simplicity of life and lightness of spirit” (p. 196). Such a simple lifestyle directed to God and God alone “knows its ultimate and immediate goals, and provides access to the means by which these are realized. ... Walking [the well-trodden paths of essential monastic observances] avoids wasting time and energy. Persevering on these sometimes hard and rough roads (58:8) will finally lead to God” (p. 196). Stability thus keeps our hearts undivided and freely bound in a loving communion with Christ.

How, then, amid the vicissitudes of life can

we better remain constant in our focus on Christ? How can we better abide in Him? Sometimes we seem to have very limited choices, but we can always choose to submit to God’s direction for our day or to cling to our self-chosen direction. As the Liturgy of the Hours teaches us to do, we can turn frequently to Christ for the true freedom to surrender our wills to God and to remain constant in that surrender over the days, weeks, and years. Even from a secular perspective, remaining steady in our focus and refocusing when we wander off course are desirable and necessary skills for attaining our goals. When we are driving a vehicle, we need to refocus on the road and the traffic situation when the eyes or mind begin to wander. (I have discovered the danger even of trying to change a cassette tape when I am driving; I can easily begin to swerve!) When we are speaking to another person, we need to keep ourselves as attentive as possible to the other person’s words and disposition. When we are at liturgical worship, we need to catch distractions quickly (without wasting time in self-blame) so that we may redirect our minds and hearts to the action of the liturgy and to the mystery of Christ alive in our midst. In our lives that are consecrated to Christ, no matter what we are doing, we are to “give thanks to God the Father always and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph 5:20); we are to “pray constantly and attentively for all in the holy company” (Eph 6:18); we are to “put on the armor of God” so as to “stand firm against the tactics of the devil” (Eph 6:11); we are to “put on that new man created in God’s image” (Eph 4:24); we are to “do all for the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31) and do “whatever we do in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Col 3:17). That is quite a challenge! It requires a continual struggle against laxity, indifference, self-indulgence and every self-centered impulse; but the grace of God will always be available to sustain us in this battle. Furthermore, walking continually in and with Christ will lead us to become the loving, selfless people that God meant us to be. In his new book *So We Do Not Lose Heart*, Fr. Demetrius Dumm, O.S.B., referring to Micah 6:6-8, comments, “And when we learn how to walk humbly with God, we will also know how to be patient and forgiving and gentle toward all our fellow humans” (p. 249).

While we strive to remain stable in Christ, we as Oblates and monks must keep moving, for Christ is ever propelling us forward. He loves us too much to let us remain stagnant. If we find

ourselves less than vibrant in our religious commitment, then perhaps we need to reexamine our desires and our readiness to “come and see” where Christ dwells and heed His live-giving instructions. If we find ourselves thinking, “I’ve had enough spiritual growth; I’m fine where I am,” then perhaps we’ve become too comfortable with our old human ways and resistant to the persistent call of the Holy Spirit. If we have forgotten the words we pledged when we became Oblate novices or Oblates, then perhaps we had better review these statements of serious commitment. It is easy to become lax about spiritual practices after our initial enthusiasm begins to wane. That is the point at which we have an opportunity to prove the sincerity of our commitment. When we no longer feel the joyful driving force of doing “something new” in our spiritual lives, it is then that Christ beckons us to persevere in our practices (and all our Christian commitments, some of which may demand, in love, that we reduce our spiritual practices for a while) with renewed zeal that comes from Him and not from ourselves. Our praying of the Divine Office, our practice of *lectio divina*, and, where possible, our involvement in the local Oblate community can renew our ability to keep our desires focused on Christ and to walk with Him

wherever He leads. Giving up this “straight and narrow path” for more convenient pursuits will only render our hearts divided and our lives ultimately miserable.

Let us, then, heed the Holy Spirit’s words in the letter to the Hebrews to renew us in stability and conversion: “We earnestly desire each of you to demonstrate the same eagerness for the fulfillment of hope until the end, so that you may not become sluggish, but imitators of those who, through faith and patience, are inheriting the promises” (6:12); “let us approach [Christ and His abode] with a sincere heart and in absolute trust, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water. Let us hold unwaveringly to our confession that gives us hope, for He who made the promise is trustworthy” (10:23).

In the peace of Christ and Saint Benedict,

Fr. Donald S. Raila, O.S.B.,  
Director of Oblates

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## **A MESSAGE FROM ARCHABBOT DOUGLAS**

July, 2006

Dear Oblates and Friends of Saint Vincent,

July has been a very active month here at Saint Vincent with the reception of new novices, the first profession of vows for those monks who completed the novitiate, and the final profession of monks who made a lifetime commitment to seek God through a monastic manner of life. July is also the time when our community gathers for our annual community meetings to review our apostolic works and do some short-term and long-term planning regarding our apostolates.

This year we celebrate the 160th anniversary of the founding of Saint Vincent by Archabbot Boniface Wimmer, whose life and accomplishments continue to inspire young men to join us in this journey of faith.

We are grateful for the Oblates who assist us in this pilgrimage through their prayers and their participation in our commitment to “cherish Christ above all.”

Sincerely in Christ,

+Douglas R. Nowicki, O.S.B.  
Archabbot of Saint Vincent

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## **OBLATE DAY 2006 - September 24**

All Oblates, Oblate novices, and their guests are welcome to attend Oblate Day on Sunday, September 24, from 9:00 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. The guest speaker will be Fr. Ananias Buccicone, O.S.B., Pastor of Our Lady Queen of Peace Church in Patton, PA. One may attend any or all parts of the day's events. Please see the schedule and registration form on the insert, and send in a completed form before September 18 if you plan to attend. Note that Mass will be offered in Mary, Mother of Wisdom Chapel at 10:30 A.M. Those who would like overnight accommodations should notify Fr. Donald in advance since guest rooms are limited. Be sure to indicate if you plan to be received as an Oblate novice or Oblate; a completed application form is required of those invested as Oblate novices after January 1, 1996.

## **ADDITIONAL OBLATE DAY OF RECOLLECTION, October 14**

A day of recollection for Oblates, Oblate novices, and other interested persons will be held at the Archabbey on Saturday, October 14, from 8:30 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. The day will include conferences by Fr. Wulfstan Clough, O.S.B.; Saturday morning Mass; the opportunity for confession; Midday Prayer and Evening Prayer with the monastic community; and lunch and supper. The cost will be \$32.00 (or \$25.00 for lunch only); one may send a check with registration or pay on arrival; those who cannot pay the full price can request a discount. Please send the registration form [see the flier] to Chris Karem by October 8.

## **OBLATE RETREAT, May 19-21**

This year's retreat on Benedictine spirituality, directed by Br. Benedict Janecko, O.S.B., drew some 77 people. An especially large contingency drove all the way from the area of St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada.

On the afternoon of May 20, Fr. Donald led Oblation ceremonies in St. Gregory Chapel, during which the following were received:

Oblates: **Lorraine (Cecilia Thérèse) Johnston** of Grimsby, Ont., Canada

**Vincent G. (Benedict) Petroy** of Pittsburgh, PA

Oblate novices: **Patricia Hodge** of St. Catharines, Ont., Canada

**Susan M. Krouse** of Carrolltown, PA

**Janet Kurisko** of Johnstown, PA

**Paul C. Kurisko** of Johnstown, PA .

The Kuriskos are husband and wife.

## **MEETING OF DEANERY REPRESENTATIVES, May 20**

At 1:00 P.M. on the Saturday of the retreat, representatives of the various Oblate deaneries met with Fr. Donald to discuss issues of common concern. The deaneries represented were: Annville/Harrisburg, Baltimore, Carrolltown, Johnstown, Niagara Area, and Pittsburgh. Fr. Donald mentioned various projects being discussed or initiated by the Oblate Board of Advisors and called for volunteers to be mentors. Each person attending summarized what his or her deanery had been doing.

## **JULY 11 - FEAST OF ST. BENEDICT**

Oblates and their guests, numbering about 75 people, participated in the Archabbey's celebration of the Feast of St. Benedict, Patriarch of Western Monasticism. At the concelebrated Mass at 10:00, Benedictine monks Br. Michael J. Gabler and Br. Fernando P. Lanás Medina professed their solemn vows.

During Oblation ceremonies at 2:30 at St. Gregory Chapel, Fr. Donald received the following:

Oblate novices: **James A. "Jack" Cherubini** of Greensburg, PA

**Maryann Cherubini** of Greensburg, PA

**Dunstan Jayasekera** of Wheeling, WV

**V. Ann Orosz** of Bedford, PA .

Jack and Maryann are husband and wife, and Ann is the wife of Oblate Josef Orosz.

During the ceremonies at St. Gregory Chapel, Oblate jubilarians were honored for the first time. Those present to receive certificates to note their years as full Oblates were: Rev. Peter Pilarski (51 years), Rev. Carl Gentile (50 years), John M. Hall (50 years), Mary Facchine-Spowart (20 years), Mary Ann Facetti (20 years), Frances Gigliotti (20 years), Dorothy Guido (20 years), Louis Guido (20 years), Donna Ciarcinski (15 years), Dale Dombrosky (15 years), Margaret Perhats (15 years), Marsha Mencer (5 years), Josephine Smart (5 years).

Some of the group also stayed for Evening Prayer with the monastic community and then for supper.

## **BLESSING OF SAINT MAURUS - PAMPHLETS AVAILABLE**

The blessing of St. Maurus over the sick, a longstanding Benedictine sacramental, is available in reprinted pamphlets, thank to permission granted by Liturgical Press. The blessing may be given by a Benedictine priest using a blessed medal of St. Benedict or a relic of the True Cross. Anyone desiring copies of the pamphlet may contact the Oblate Office.

## **OBLATES TO RECEIVE NEWSLETTER FROM SANT' ANSELMO**

Fr. Paschal Morlino, O.S.B., North American National Coordinator for the World Congress of Benedictine Oblates, wrote on July 24 that as a result of the World Congress last September, the Abbot Primate in Rome will be publishing a newsletter from Sant' Anselmo, the Benedictine College in Rome, for all Oblates. The mailing list of Oblates affiliated with Saint Vincent Archabbey will be submitted to Fr. Paschal so that he can have the newsletter mailed from the Archabbey.

## **BOOKS ORDERED AT 50% DISCOUNT MAILED OUT ON JULY 26**

Some 118 books ordered at 50% discount were sorted and packaged on July 25 by Oblate volunteers Cheryl Matta, Donna Sunseri, and Donna's daughter Maria. A few extra books were ordered by mistake. If anyone would like one of these (on a first-come-first-served basis), please contact the Oblate Office. The books are: *Strangers to the City* (\$8.00), *Oblation* (\$6.50), *How to Be a Monastic and Not Leave Your Day Job* (\$7.50), *Man of Blessing* (\$11.00). Those who indicated that they would pick up their ordered books may pick them up during a monthly meeting of the Latrobe Deanery or at the Oblate Office whenever Fr. Donald is in.

## **OBLATE OFFICE MOVED TO LEANDER HALL 116**

The location of the Oblate Office was moved from Roderick Hall to a former guest room in Leander Hall on June 19. The phone number of the Oblate Office (724-805-2291) remains the same.

## **PRAYERS REQUESTED FOR COLLEGIANS' RETREAT IN TEXAS**

Archabbot Douglas recently received a request for prayers for a retreat called Raider Awakening in Lubbock, Texas. Fr. Abbot passed on the request to Fr. Donald, and so it is included in the flier that accompanies this newsletter. Please pray for the fruitfulness of the retreat on October 13-15, and if you can, write a letter or send an e-mail message of encouragement to the retreatants.

## **MANY NEW TITLES IN OBLATE LIBRARY**

Thanks to many donations from personal libraries and to contributions from the monks' "beggars' bench," dozens of additional books have been made available for the Oblate Library. On July 17 Oblates Donna Ciarcinski and Mary Catherine Hoover sorted through well over a hundred books to determine which ones were suitable for the Oblate Library. Oblates and Oblate novices are always welcome to borrow books either at local meetings or by request in the mail. You may contact Fr. Donald for a list of books that are in the library.

## **RECOMMENDED READING**

- Fr. Demetrius Dumm, O.S.B., *So We Do Not Lose Heart: Biblical Wisdom for All Our Days* (Latrobe, PA: Archabbey Publications, 2006); written especially for those who have passed into mid-life or are elderly
- Fr. Michael Casey, O.C.S.O., *An Unexciting Life: Reflections on Benedictine Spirituality* (Petersham, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 2005)

## **BENEDICTINE OBLATE PROGRAM ON RADIO WEDO, 810 AM**

This program, hosted by Oblate John James of North Huntingdon, is broadcast from 8:45 A.M. to 9:00 A.M., Monday through Friday.

## **OBLATE MEETINGS IN LATROBE**

Oblates from all locations are welcome to the monthly meetings of the Latrobe Deanery of Oblates at 6:45 P.M. in Room Brownfield 202 on Sundays. The next four meetings will be on Aug. 20, Sept. 17, Oct. 15, and Nov. 19. Those wishing to pray Vespers with the monks at 5:00 and then to have supper in the guest refectory should phone Fr. Donald (724-805-2291) a day or so in advance.

## **OBLATE CONDOLENCES**

Let us pray for healing and strength for members of our Oblate Community who have lost loved ones as well as for the repose of the souls of the deceased:

- Oblate Frank Vanek of Munhall, whose wife, Margaret, died in November, 2005
- Oblate Marion Vavrek of Johnstown, whose husband, Martin, died on April 3
- Oblate Kathy Goodine of St. Catharines, Ont., whose nephew died late in April
- Oblate novice Toomas Karmo of Toronto, Ont., whose Uncle Ranne died on May 3
- Oblate Liz Hart of Greensburg, PA, and her husband, George, whose brother Jerome Hart died on May 20 (Jerome was also the husband of Annette Hart, who works in the Archabbey/Seminary Development Office.)
- Oblate novice Patricia Garant of Welland, Ont., whose husband, Zoli Schwartz, died on June 8
- Oblate Jonathan Claire of Pittsburgh, whose father, Robert Claire on June 8
- Oblate Mary Virginia Himes of St. Marys, PA, whose uncle Fr. Alphonse Meier, O.S.B., died on June 8 [see below]
- Oblate Maggie Forbes of Mt. Pleasant, PA, and her husband Gene, whose Aunt Pauline died on June 13
- Oblate Cheryl Matta of Greensburg, PA, whose mother-in-law, Helen Matta, died in mid-June
- Oblate Nancy Lee Mehalko of St. Marys, PA, whose husband, James, died on June 20
- Oblate Jean Hammer of Johnstown, whose son David died on July 6
- Oblate Gregory McNaughton of New Alexandria, PA, whose mother, Margaret McNaughton, died on July 22
- Oblates Pedro and Mercedes Vega of Johnstown, whose twin granddaughters Adriana and Carissa died before birth on July 24; please also pray for the bereaved parents

## **OBLATE DEATHS**

Let us pray that the recently deceased members of our Oblate Community attain the fullness of life with Christ and all the saints:

- 26 Oct 2004 - Anthony J. Tarasi of Pittsburgh, PA (Oblate since July, 1954)
- 9 May 2005 - Ernest W. Bayus of Spring Hill, FL (originally from Grindstone, PA; Oblate since July, 1955)
- 12 Oct 2005 - John P. (Andrew) Stibrik of Whitaker, PA (Oblate since July, 1990)
- 2006(?) - Angeline S. (Jude) Harris of Louisville, KY (originally from Virginia Beach; Oblate since March, 1991)
- 10 Jan 2006 - James A. (Bede) Farrell of Swanton, MD (originally from Blairsville, PA; Oblate since July, 1967)
- 7 May 2006 - Rev. George T. Leech of the Diocese of Pittsburgh (Oblate since March, 1955)
- 19 May 2006 - Rose Mary (Julia) Esposito of Punxsutawney, PA (Oblate since July, 1961)
- 22 June 2006 - Robert B. (Anthony) Davis of Greensburg, PA (Oblate since Sept., 1990) .

## **NEWS FROM OBLATE DEANERIES**

Albion, PA (St. Paul Deanery) – Deacon leader Ralph DeCecco wrote on June 20 and July 10. At the meeting on June 19, which began with Vespers, Oblate John Simpson led a discussion on humility based on the *Rule*, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the *Oblate Formation Booklet*, and the book *Day by Day with St. Benedict*. Several members commented about the new insights that they received. The meeting closed with Compline.

At the meeting on July 10, Oblate novice Janet De Cecco led a discussion entitled “Thoughts, Words, and Actions: Forming Our Thoughts.” She used Prov 10:19 and 18:21, part of a treatise on perfection by St. Gregory of Nyssa, the *Holy Rule*, and the *Oblate Formation Booklet* to reflect on how our thoughts can affect our words and our actions throughout the day. Reference was also made to the Feast of St. Benedict, which was to occur the following day.

Anville/Harrisburg Area, PA (St. Placid Deanery) -- meetings at 3 P.M. on 4th Sunday of each month, St. Paul the Apostle Church, Anville, or Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Church, Harrisburg

Secretary Gabriele Terrill wrote on May 28 and June 25. The meeting on May 28 took place in the backyard of St. Paul Rectory. After Evening Prayer the group discussed the book and the movie *The Da Vinci Code*. Fr. John Peck, moderator, had seen the movie and mentioned its many discrepancies from the truth. The group then spoke about a forthcoming trip to St. Emma and St. Vincent in early June.

On May 27 some of the Oblates gathered for a barbecue to celebrate Fr. John's 17th anniversary of priestly ordination; he provided the main dishes, and the Oblates brought salads and desserts.

At the meeting on June 25, Evening Prayer was followed by the serving of light refreshments. The group spoke positively about the trip to St. Emma and St. Vincent on June 8. Then Fr. John read excerpts from a new book on Benedictine spirituality, *Engaging Benedict*, by Sr. Laura Swan, O.S.B. There was discussion

about the call to be countercultural, especially by the avoidance of purchasing items from companies that exploit the poor.

Baltimore, MD (St. Walburga Deanery) -- meetings at 3:30 on third Sunday of each month, parish house, St. Benedict Church

There was no report.

Carrolltown, PA (Sacred Heart Deanery) -- monthly meetings at St. Benedict Church, in the church and/or a meeting room

Secretary Mary Catherine Hoover wrote on May 13 and June 25. At the meeting in April, attended by only four people, the group prayed Vespers and held a brief discussion.

At the meeting on May 9, after Vespers in the church, the group proceeded to the Boniface Wimmer Room for the rest of the evening. Condolences were expressed to Oblate Paul Lieb, who had lost his sister on April 24 and his brother (Fr. Germain, O.S.B.) on April 30. Several Oblates shared stories about encounters with Fr. Germain. Then the group entered into a lively discussion of *Cherish Christ above All*. They planned to have the author, Fr. Demetrius Dumm, O.S.B., as the guest speaker at the June meeting.

Fr. Demetrius gave the talk at the meeting on June 13. He gave an account about how he came to write the book *Cherish Christ above All* and then presented a brief synopsis of each chapter. The Oblates then posed questions and offered comments. Finally, refreshments were served.

Johnstown, PA (St. John Gualbert Deanery) -- meetings on 2nd Monday of each month, 6:30 P.M., St. Benedict Church in Geistown section of Johnstown.

Lay leader Carl Motter wrote on May 21, June 14, and July 13. On May 21, during the 8:30 A.M. Mass at the church, Msgr. Michael Becker, moderator, invested the following as Oblate novices:

**M. Dianne Brandle** of Johnstown  
**Elizabeth Campagna** of Johnstown  
**Frank Campagna** of Johnstown  
**Louann Clites** of Johnstown  
**Zoraida Duca** of Johnstown  
**Mary Frances Gorchesky** of Johnstown  
**David G. Hornick** of Windber, PA  
**Lucille M. Janisko** of Johnstown  
**Virginia Kozuch** of Johnstown  
**Evelyn Ann Mrsnik** of Johnstown  
**Mercedes Smith** of Johnstown  
**Richard K. Trabold** of Johnstown  
**Vera May Trabold** of Johnstown  
**Joseph F. Washington** of Johnstown .

The Campagnas and the Trabolds are married couples. After the Mass there was a social gathering, especially for so that the Oblates could meet the new Oblate novices. Msgr. Becker had been strongly promoting Benedictine spirituality in the parish for several years. With the closing of St. Joseph Church, all meetings are now held in St. Benedict Church.

On June 12 the deanery met with Msgr. Becker with the new Oblate novices present. He spoke about the Oblate Program and reviewed several books which might be used for discussion at future meetings. Oblate Rita Mayercsik informed the group about the normal format for deanery meetings. Oblate Michael Russo spoke about his involvement in the Oblate Program and about his trip to the World Congress of Oblates last September. There was also talk about attending the celebration at St. Vincent on July 11 and about visiting a monastery in Virginia later during the summer.

The meeting on July 10 drew a large number of people, including several guests. The topic for discussion was a verse from Scripture used at Evening Prayer: "And for this reason we too give thanks to God unceasingly ..." (1 Thes 2:13). Msgr. Becker asked each person to reflect on this verse, and there was a discussion about its meaning. Then he distributed copies of the book *How to Be a Monastic and Not Leave Your Day Job*, which is to be used for future monthly discussions. The group also talked about a bus trip to Holy Cross Abbey in Berryville, VA, on August 2.

Latrobe, PA (St. Gregory the Great Deanery) -- meetings usually on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of month, 6:45 P.M., Brownfield 202

At each meeting during May, June, and July, the group continued to discuss a chapter from *Benedict's Way*. The chapters covered were 25 ("Words"), 26 ("Obedience"), and 27 ("Spiritual Discipline"). An

especially large number of people, including several guests, came to the meeting on July 16. At the meetings people volunteered to help with work during the events on July 11 and September 24.

Niagara Area, Ontario, Canada -- meetings on 4th Friday of each month, St. Patrick's Church, St. Catharines, Ont.

Lay leader Brian Chisholm phoned on May 5 and July 31 and wrote on May 28. At the meeting on April 28, there was a discussion of Chapter 27, "Words," from *Benedict's Way*, with emphasis on the need for silence. (continued)

At the meeting on May 26, attended by 15 people, Fr. Charles Gagné, moderator, led the group in a discussion on "Pleasure" from the same text. The group stressed that genuine pleasure comes from prayer and the living of a devout Christian life. There was also some discussion about choosing a patron for the deanery.

The meeting on July 28 attracted two guests, but attendance was otherwise small. Still, there was lively discussion based on a topic from *Benedict's Way*.

Pittsburgh, PA (Our Lady, Queen of Peace Deanery) -- meetings on 2nd or 3rd Wednesday of each month, Our Lady Queen of Peace Worship Site

Lay leader Bill O'Neil wrote on May 2, May 18, and July 25. The meeting on April 19 was centered on the Oblation of Jonathan Claire (reported in the last newsletter), which took place at Our Lady, Queen of Peace Church. In addition to the Oblates, Jonathan's mother and a friend of hers were present. After the ceremony refreshments were served. Then, after some deliberation, the group chose "Our Lady, Queen of Peace" as patroness for the deanery. Also, the dates for the next three monthly meetings were chosen.

At the meeting on May 17, after Evening Prayer, Fr. Ralph, moderator, led a discussion of Chapters 4 and 5 of *Toward God* by Fr. Michael Casey, O.C.S.O.

At the meeting on July 19, Fr. Ralph led Evening Prayer and then coordinated a discussion based on Chapters 8 and 9 of *Toward God*. The next meeting was scheduled for August 16.

St. Marys, PA (St. Maurus Deanery) -- meetings on Thurs. before 1<sup>st</sup> Fri. of month, 7:00 P.M., Queen of the World Rectory

Moderator Fr. John-Mary reported by phone on June 15. At the meeting on May 23 the group reflected on the final Oblation of Peggy Gabler in May, and then they discussed the ninth and tenth steps of humility. They also discussed topics for future discussions and scheduled the next meeting in August.

At a meeting on June 1, after Compline and Benediction,  
**Barbara (Benedicta) Mclsaac** of Emporium, PA,  
made her final Oblation in the presence of Fr. John-Mary.

Fr. John-Mary was reassigned to the Archabbey to be chaplain at Latrobe Hospital as of August 2; so the deanery is in need of a new Benedictine moderator.

Savannah, GA

Moderator Fr. Jude Brady wrote on May 11 and June 26. The Oblate Advisory Council for the deanery met on April 18. After Vespers the chairman, Ben Perez, agreed to prepare minutes of each meeting, suggested that "after-action reports" be prepared, and handed the other four members present copies of Pope St. Gregory's *Life and Miracles of St. Benedict*. Other items discussed were a planned trip to Mepkin Abbey, the distribution of Oblate pamphlets to local parishes, tentative plans for a picnic in September, and the possibility of guest speakers for future events. The council met again on May 10 to plan other activities for the summer and the fall.

On Sunday, June 25, about 35 of the Oblate community attended an anticipated celebration for the feast of St. Benedict. During the Mass the following made their final Oblation in the presence of Fr. Jude:

**Florence C. Fennell** of Savannah, GA

**Robert H. Fennell** of Savannah, GA

**Sebastian J. Orsini** of Savannah, GA

**Bienvenido "Ben" Perez, Jr.**, of Savannah, GA

**Pamela B. Perez** of Savannah, GA .

Bob and Florence and also Ben and Pam are married couples.

State College, PA (St. Joseph Deanery) -- meetings on 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month (beginning in September),  
Benedictine residence

Secretary Ashley Leggett wrote on May 3 and June 22. At the meeting on May 2, four guests were

present along with six Oblates, one Oblate novice, and Fr. Boniface, moderator. It was reported that Rosemary Dombroski had fallen and broken her arm. The group decided to have a picnic in June, and Maria Melchioris offered her backyard for the event. They also decided to change the date of meetings to the second Monday of each month. Then Fr. Boniface asked those present about their experiences as Oblates and about what had attracted them to Benedictine spirituality. Members of the group shared about the beginnings of the deanery under the late Archabbot Leopold Krul, O.S.B., and about their connections with St. Vincent Archabbey. (continued)

For the last session of the 2005-06 season, the deanery held an annual gathering with a meal on June 20. This time it was a pot-luck dinner at the residence of Maria Melchioris in State College. Some 30 people attended, including 13 Oblates, Fr. Boniface, and many family members and other guests.

Virginia Beach, VA (St. Scholastica Deanery) -- meetings on 1<sup>st</sup> Wed. of month, 7 P.M., Computer Library, St. Gregory the Great School

Lay leader Delina Pauls wrote on May 6 and July 20. At the meeting on May 3, Fr. Cristiano, moderator, spoke about the Resurrection and its power to bring us joy and deepen our faith. Oblate novice Tom Power spoke of his visit to the shrine at Stockbridge on Divine Mercy Sunday and of his having had a Mass offered for the deanery. There was no meeting in June since no one was available to lead one.

At the meeting on July 5, Fr. Cristiano spoke about humility from *RB 7* and from the story of the widow's mite in Mark 12. Humility, he said, means welcoming God to reveal to us who we really are, accepting the power of grace to change us, and becoming selfless in every thought, word, and action. Also, Oblate Peggy Gambardella gave a brief report on the retreat that she and Lila Morgan had attended at St. Vincent in May.

Williamsport, PA -- meetings on last Sunday of each month, 3 P.M., St. Boniface Church (or rectory) meeting room

Lay leader Ted Richardson wrote on May 12. At the meeting on May 21, the group discussed Chapter 21, "Joy," from *Benedict's Way*. The next meeting will be in September.

### Various Locations

On May 11 in the Archabbey Basilica,  
**James V. (Pius) Hough** of Sneads Ferry, NC,  
made his final Oblation in the presence of Fr. Donald. Sr. Clare Joseph, O.S.B., of St. Joseph Monastery in St. Marys was also present.

July 17 at the chapel in Minersville, PA, Rev. Robert J. Potts, pastor of St. Joseph Church in Shepton and St. Mary Church in Ringtown, invested the following as Oblate novices:

**Richard Descano** of Minersville, PA  
**Thomas Early** of Minersville, PA  
**Paul J. Mangiardi** of Minersville, PA  
**Ken Samuelsen** of Minersville, PA .

On May 24 at Immaculate Conception Church in Scranton, Rev. John M. Kita invested  
**William Flynn** of Scranton, PA,  
as an Oblate novice after a Vigil Mass for the Ascension. About 20 people attended, including those who have been meeting regularly with Fr. John to learn about Benedictine spirituality.

On June 3, after a Vigil Mass for Pentecost,  
**Rev. John M. Kita** of Scranton, PA,  
made his final Oblation in the presence of Rev. Richard Fox, the pastor, and some 40 parishioners. After the ceremony other parishioners expressed interested in the Oblate Program.

In Toronto, Ontario, Canada, there is continuing interest in beginning Oblate meetings at St. Clare Church, with the initiative and support of Oblate John H. Kelly and the pastor, Rev. Ernesto DeCiccio.

Oblate James Durka of Whitmore Lake, MI, reported on July 20 that an initial meeting of people interested in the Oblate Program took place on July 15 at Old St. Patrick's Church in Ann Arbor, MI, under the guidance of the pastor, Rev. Gerald Gavronski. There was a hope to invest four Oblate novices on August 19.

### Summer Retreats

During the various retreats of the Archabbey's summer Retreat Program, Fr. Donald spoke to the retreatants about the Oblate Program and received renewals of Oblation of those Oblates who were present.

### SICK & INFIRM MONKS

The following monks of the Archabbey have been hospitalized or otherwise seriously ill or infirm over the past three months and could use the Oblates' prayers: Fr. Benjamin Walker.

### **DECEASED MONKS**

Please pray for the repose of the souls of the recently deceased monks of the Archabbey: Fr. Alphonse Meier, who died on June 8 at the age of 83, and Fr. Damian Abbaticchio, who died on June 19 at the age of 89.

### **OVERDUE OR MISSING LIBRARY BOOKS: PLEASE RESPOND!**

During the past year a number of books from the Oblate Library have been found to be missing, presumably because people withdrew them without signing them out. Below is a list of such books, as well as others that have been lost by borrowers. Please check your bookshelves to see if you have any of the missing books. Also, if anyone would like to donate a copy of any of the lost books, such a donation would be welcome.

#### **Missing books**

- Roberta C. Bondi, *To Pray and to Love*
- Rev. William Burk, *Protect Us from All Anxiety: Meditations for the Depressed*
- André Gozier, O.S.B., *Fifteen Days of Prayer with Saint Benedict*
- Richard J. Hauser, S.J., *Finding God in Troubled Times*
- Guy-Marie Oury, O.S.B., *A Monastic Pilgrimage: Following the Footsteps of St. Benedict*
- Abbot David Parry, O.S.B., *Household of God*
- Basil M. Pennington, O.C.S.O., *Lectio Divina: Renewing the Ancient Practice ...*
- Pseudo Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter*
- Marsha Sinetar, *Ordinary People as Monks and Mystics*
- Columba Stewart, O.S.B., *Prayer and Community: The Benedictine Tradition*

#### **Lost books**

- Bernard of Clairvaux, *Selected Works*
- Basil Pennington, O.C.S.O., *Call to the Center*
- Michael Scanlon, O.F.M., *Let the Fire Fall*

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**SCHEDULE FOR OBLATE DAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2006**

- 9:00 A.M. - 10:20 - Registration & get-together, Placid Dining Room (no registration during Mass)  
10:30 A.M. - Mass for participants, Mary, Mother of Wisdom Chapel (college chapel in Carey Center)  
11:40 A.M. - Midday Prayer, Placid Dining Room  
11:55 P.M. - Lunch, Placid Hall, 2nd floor (Foundations Room)  
1:00 P.M. - Basilica Gift Shop open (also all morning)  
1:45 P.M. - Oblation ceremonies, basilica  
2:15 P.M. - Confessions, basilica  
3:00 P.M. - Social with the monastic community, Assembly Room  
3:45 P.M. - Presentation by Fr. Ananias Buccicone, O.S.B., Assembly Room  
5:00 P.M. - Evening Prayer with the monastic community, basilica  
5:35 P.M. - Supper, Placid Hall, 2nd floor (Foundations Room)  
6:45 P.M. - Departure .
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**Registration Form for Oblate Day**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

- I plan to attend Oblate Day on Sept. 24 at St. Vincent.  
 I am making \_\_\_ reservation(s) for lunch at \$5.00 each (money enclosed).  
 I am making \_\_\_ reservation(s) for supper at \$6.00 each (money enclosed).  
 I plan to be received as an Oblate (application required for those invested after 1/1/96);  
I wish to take \_\_\_\_\_ as an Oblate name.  
 I wish to be received as an Oblate novice (application required).  
 I would like overnight accommodations for \_\_\_ Sept. 23, \_\_\_ Sept. 24. (Please contact Fr. Donald several weeks in advance.)

**Please send this form to Mrs. Christine Karem, 2012 Souli St., Greensburg, PA 15601, and not to the Oblate Office.**

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**Registration Form for Oblate Day of Recollection, Oct. 14, 2006**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

- I plan to attend Oblate day of recollection on Oct. 14 at St. Vincent.  
 Enclosed is the fee of \$32.00 (or \$25.00 for only one meal).  
 I would like overnight accommodations for \_\_\_ Oct. 13, \_\_\_ Oct. 14. (Please contact Fr. Donald several weeks in advance.)

**Please send this form to Mrs. Christine Karem, 2012 Souli St., Greensburg, PA 15601 and not to the Oblate Office.**