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THE SAINT VINCENT OBLATE NEWS

Saint Vincent Archabbey

300 Fraser Purchase Road, Latrobe, PA 15650-2690



August - October, 2011

724-805-2291

Volume 64, Number 3

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

PERSEVERING IN *LECTIO*:

IT MAY NOT BE AS DIFFICULT AS YOU THINK!

Dear Oblates, Oblate novices, and Friends,

Is *lectio divina* a problematic task fraught with difficulties, or is it a marvelous opportunity to encounter Christ? A number of people, including Oblates, have told me that they find it very hard to practice *lectio*. They verbalize their hardships with such expressions as "I read and read, and nothing comes"; "I don't hear God saying anything to me"; "I have no insights"; or "I just feel bored and distracted." Indeed, I agree that the practice of *lectio* can be difficult and unrewarding at times. I recently finished going through the prophet Ezekiel for my *lectio*. The last chapters of that book describe in great detail the "New Israel," the "New Temple," and the "New Law," idealized phenomena which never came about in the history of the Jewish people. Those chapters abound in technical details which most of us would probably find uninspiring. (I rejoiced, however, that the chapters are nicely interrupted by the delightful passage about the "wonderful stream" in Ezek 47: 1-12.) At first glance, such "problematic" chapters may seem irrelevant to us. I did find those sections of Ezekiel a chore much of the time, and I had to keep reminding myself, as I remind others, "Lord, this is your sacred word. You are here, and I am here, and I encounter You in a special way through the vehicle of Your word. Whether I have any great insights or not is not so important. What matters is that I be present to You and be ready for any special message that you might have for me. In the mean time I must just plod ahead, with trust and acceptance of the Cross."

In our practice of *lectio* a better understanding of a difficult passage can help. Knowing, in the above example, that the descriptions of the ideal temple and the ideal Israel were a faint but important attempt to portray the glorious future God had in store for His faithful ones can shift our approach from regret over having no insights to delight in the future joys God has in store for us (and all Christians who persevere in faith). The details of this future are beyond description, and yet we can rejoice even now in the hints of the joyful communion that God promises us. It might also be beneficial to observe that whatever God has given to our Blessed Mother, assumed into heaven, He also wishes to bestow on all of us in some way. Thus pondering the overall pattern reflected in the words of Scripture that in themselves seem dry and empty can lead us to see something that is very relevant to us and thus move us to give thanks.

Let me mention another approach, which I "learned" (although it is not something totally new) when I was giving a retreat at a Camaldolese hermitage last March. In my practice of *lectio* there, despite the ideal atmosphere of silence and solitude, I had trouble focusing on the words of Scripture while I was sitting (or sometimes kneeling) in the room assigned to me. To heighten my involvement with the word of God, I decided to leave my Bible open on the bed or on the desk so that every time I got up to do something or go somewhere I almost *had* to look at the passage of the Bible where I had last left off in my *lectio*. I found that this technique of repeating a phrase of Scripture while I was walking helped me to have more peace and to gain more insights than I was getting from prolonged sitting. Furthermore, since meals were taken in individual cells (delivered by the cook of the day to each person), I was able to keep the Bible near my food tray while I was eating, and thus I could try to nourish my soul with some words from Scripture even while my body was being nourished by earthly food. Sometimes it "worked" in terms of helping me to absorb the word of God.

However, there are times when no technique enables us to resonate with a given passage, and then we must simply accept the poverty of our efforts. Our efforts are always poor, and when we experience this poverty in a striking way, we need only, in faith, to hand over the whole of our emptiness to Christ, who fills us with riches of grace, whether or not we perceive them. All we need to do is to be open, and that act of the will is always possible. That is, we should not be so concerned whether or not our session of *lectio* "works" or gives insights. Our task is to be as present and as faithful as possible, and the rest is up to God.

St. Benedict urges monks to "listen readily to holy reading" (*RB* 4:55), presumably whether they are in the mood for it or not. In the daily schedule for monks (*RB* 48), St. Benedict allows some two to three hours a day for *lectio*. During the summer the brothers "will devote themselves to reading [*lectio*]" "from the fourth hour [about 10:00 A.M.] until the time of Sext [about noon]" (48:4). During Lent more time is scheduled for *lectio*; the monks "should be free in the morning to read until the third hour [about 9:00 A.M.]" (48:14), and each monk is to be given a book from the library "to read the

whole of it straight through" (48:15). These volumes, which were rare and precious in the sixth century, might have been books of the Bible or writings of the catholic Fathers (cf. 73:4-5), and the texts were surely meant to be read as *lectio* and not merely as what we now call "spiritual reading." It may be consoling to realize that some of the monks of St. Benedict's day had problems with doing *lectio*. There might be a brother who was "so apathetic as to waste time or engage in idle talk to the neglect of his reading, and so not only harm himself but also distract others" (48:18). Therefore, there were senior monks assigned to "make the rounds of the monastery" (48:17) during times for *lectio* to see that such things did not happen; if they did, the guilty ones would be reprov'd, or punished after repeated reproofs. On Sundays "all are to be engaged in reading" (48:22) except those assigned to necessary duties. It may strike us as strange that St. Benedict legislated, "If anyone is so remiss and indolent that he is unwilling or unable to study or to read, he is to be given some work in order that he may not be idle" (48:23). Thus, in St. Benedict's view, it is better to do some light work on a Sunday than to make trouble for others! (Hopefully, we monks and Oblates in 2011 can use our time on Sundays for public worship, *lectio*, other forms of prayer, family events, and deeds of charity without resorting to unnecessary work.)

Oblates are not bound by law to do any particular quantity of *lectio*, but they have a moral obligation to practice *lectio* frequently, even daily, say for at least ten minutes. It is important to realize that "spiritual reading" (although *lectio* is sometimes wrongly so termed) is not a substitute for *lectio*. Spiritual reading can be done prayerfully, but it is not meant to be prayer *per se*. For example, by reading Fr. Michael Casey's book *Sacred Reading*, one can learn much about *lectio* and thus enhance one's spiritual life. However, as Fr. Michael himself states, his books are not meant to be read as *lectio*; that is, one generally reads through pages and chapters without prayerful pauses to ponder certain phrases. (Of course, if a particular phrase does resonate with something in the depths of one's heart, then there is nothing wrong with doing *lectio* on that phrase!) *Lectio* is practiced on Scripture or, by exception, on writings which are largely reflections on Scripture, such as the works of the early Church Fathers. *Lectio* is a form of prayer. *Lectio* is done not for information but for spiritual formation. *Lectio* provides a living encounter with Christ through a sacred text, whether or not one feels stimulated emotionally or intellectually.

How, then, can one overcome barriers to *lectio*? It is ideal to have the same daily slot for *lectio*, even if the interval is very brief. One should settle down and avoid external distractions and begin with a prayer to the Holy Spirit for openness to whatever graces God wishes to give. One should read very slowly from phrase to phrase, verse to verse, without the least

concern about covering a certain quantity of text. When a word or phrase seems to speak to one's situation, one should pause, "chew it over" (*meditatio*), offer one's response to God (*oratio*), and be open to the possibility of resting peacefully in God's presence without words (*contemplatio*). If one has insights that are memorable, it is best not to write them down during *lectio*; one can record them later. The time of *lectio* should not be interrupted by anything except emergencies. On the other hand, any particular message should be remembered so that one can put it into practice. Hearing the word without trying to understand it and without acting on it is a futile effort. As St. James asserts, "A man who listens to God's word but does not put it into practice is like a man who looks into a mirror at the face he was born with; he looks at himself, then goes off and promptly forgets what he looked like" (James 1:23-24). That is, the word of God fundamentally tells us who God is and who we are in relationship with Him; if we ignore the message, we are shortchanging ourselves and defeating the purpose of *lectio*.

Let me make a few suggestions on doing *lectio* when walking or pausing from work (in addition to the standard way of sitting still with a text). One can keep the Bible open to the passage where one last left off on a desk or a stand. During a free moment, one deliberately looks at the next phrase and reflects on it. If one needs to leave the room to go on an errand, one can keep that phrase in one's mind and savor it during the walk. (Of course, if one encounters other people on the way, charity must prevail.) Such an extension of *lectio* is best done when one is not likely to lose one's focus on the word of God. This process may help one to hear the Word of God in new ways. A new understanding came to me lately while I was doing *lectio* on the temptations of Christ from St. Matthew's Gospel. In meditating on the verse "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to turn into bread" (Mt 4:3) while I was walking, I noticed some murmuring inside of me about not being able to cope with all my burdens. I caught myself pleading interiorly, "Lord, take away these 'hard stones' of too many tasks to do, too many people to see, too many decisions to make, and too many priorities to set. Give me self-gratifying 'bread' by which all this becomes simple and clear-cut." Just as Our Lord answered the Devil, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God" (Mt 4:4), He was urging me to be content with the "stones" of life, that is the crosses which are full of graces and blessings if only they are received with gratitude. Just as Moses drew water from a rock, Our Lord pours out lavish graces from the hard stones of our lives. He usually does not turn the stones into something pleasant, but through our acceptance of hardship we become one with Him on the Cross and one with Him in the hope of future glory. In any case, the aim of this form of *lectio* is to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thes 5:17), as God calls us constantly to do.

By God's grace there seems to be renewed interest in the word of God in the Catholic Church, and we can rejoice in it. In Pope Benedict XVI's post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Verbum Domini (On the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church*, September 30, 2010), there is a section entitled "The prayerful reading of Sacred Scripture and *lectio divina*" (page 48 of the Internet version). In several paragraphs the Holy Father quotes *Dei Verbum* (from the Second Vatican Council) and several Church Fathers, all of whom urge that the reading of the sacred Scriptures be accompanied by prayer. Pope Benedict then actually goes on "to review the basic steps of this procedure": *lectio, meditatio, oratio, and contemplatio*. He concludes by saying, "We do well also to remember that the process of *lectio divina* is not concluded until it arrives at action (*actio*), which moves the believer to make his or her life a gift for others in charity...." In the concluding paragraph of *Verbum Domini*, the Holy Father exhorts us, "Let us be silent in order to hear the Lord's word and to meditate upon it, so that by the working of the Holy Spirit it may remain in our hearts and speak to us all the days of our lives. In this way the Church will always be renewed and rejuvenated, thanks to the word of the Lord which remains for ever."

The final section of *Verbum Domini* also speaks about "the word and joy." Pope Benedict asserts, "The proclamation of the word creates communion and brings about joy. This is a profound joy which has its origin in the very heart of the Trinitarian life and which is communicated to us in the Son. This joy is an ineffable gift which the world cannot give." May our practice of *lectio divina* lead not to frustration and preoccupation with stumbling blocks but rather to the joy that is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. St. Elizabeth and St. John the Baptist in her womb experienced this joy when the Blessed Mother brought them the Word of God, the infant within her. Mary herself knew true joy in being the first among those who "hear the word of God and do it" (Lk 8:21). The Holy Father invites us to share this joy and blessedness: "Jesus points out Mary's true grandeur, making it possible for each of us to attain that blessedness which is born of the word received and put into practice."

In the peace of Christ and Saint Benedict,

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

A MESSAGE FROM ARCHABBOT DOUGLAS

July 11, 2011

Feast of Saint Benedict

Dear Oblates and Friends of Saint Vincent Archabbey,

Greetings on this Feast of Saint Benedict 2011! Today the Benedictine community celebrated the solemn profession of three fine junior monks – Brother Maximilian Maxwell, Brother Jeremiah Lange, and Brother Michael Antonacci.

July is always an exciting time for the community as we welcome new novices, as our current novices make their first profession, and as the junior monks renew their profession as they continue toward solemn vows. It is inspiring to see the deep faith and love for Christ and the Church which they bring as they join us on this journey of faith.

We live in a complex and conflicted world with war, terrorism, and economic uncertainty, along with the personal challenges we all confront on a daily basis. In the midst of these challenges, we commit ourselves to being witnesses to hope because of the ever abiding love of Christ, who is "the Model and Ideal" for every monk.

We are grateful for you, our Oblates and friends, who join us through your own commitment to prayer and to being instruments of hope in the particular circumstances of your life. Through the intercession of our Holy Father Saint Benedict, may blessings be with you always!

Sincerely in Christ,

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

POSTSCRIPT TO THE MAIN ESSAY:

I experienced a bit of the joy of carrying God's word with me and observing its fulfillment the other week as I was preparing for minor surgery. By God's grace – and probably by the very suggestion I am making to others – I decided firmly to take a psalm verse with me to the hospital. It was a verse from the responsorial psalm for the day: "He rained down manna for their food and gave them bread from heaven" (Ps 78:24). While waiting for quite a while before the surgery, I kept repeating the verse without at first making any connections with my situation. Then I gradually realized how wonderfully God was "feeding me with manna" through the many acts of kindness which I was experiencing: the generosity of the monk who drove me to and from the hospital; the kindness and cheerfulness of nurses, doctors, and technicians; the thoughtful administration of anti-nausea medication; and the promise of one monk to wheel me about in the monastery as long as I would need a wheelchair. Thus, even in a potentially painful and undesirable circumstance, I could experience how Our Lord leads us, even now, to a deep, abiding joy because of the abundance of His ever-present love! May we welcome God's word to speak to us continually and thus "pray without ceasing."

OBLATE DAY 2011 - September 25

All Oblates, Oblate novices, and their guests are welcome to attend Oblate Day on Sunday, September 25, from 9:00 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. The guest speaker will be Oblate Deacon Michael L. Russo of Johnstown. See the registration form on the insert, and send in a completed form before September 19 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; if so, a completed application form is required. Please also try to register on time. (See the admonition on the back of the flier.)

OBLATE DAY OF RECOLLECTION - October 15, 2011

A day of recollection for Oblates, Oblate novices, and other interested persons will be held at the Archabbey on Saturday, October 15, from 8:30 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. **Registration will be on the first floor of Leander Hall from 8:30 to 9:00 A.M.** The day will include conferences by Fr. Jacques Daley, O.S.B.; opportunity for confession; Midday Prayer and Evening Prayer with the monastic community; and lunch and supper. The cost will be \$33.00 (or \$26.00 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 RETREATS, May 20-22 and June 3-5, 2011

Some 30 people, mostly Oblates and Oblate novices, attended this year's first retreat on Benedictine spirituality, entitled "Keep Death Daily before Your Eyes': the Only Way Truly to Live" and directed by Fr. Maurus Mount, O.S.B. At ceremonies in St. Gregory Chapel on May 21 at 3:30, Fr. Donald invested

Michele Bloch of New Kensington, PA,

as an Oblate novice.

Some 40 people, mostly Oblates, made the silent retreat from June 3 to 5. Fr. Donald preached conferences on "Humility: An Essential Ingredient of the Spiritual Life." During the meals there were readings from *Fire Within* by Fr. Thomas Dubay, S.M. At Oblation ceremonies on June 4 in St. Gregory Chapel, Fr. Donald invested the following as Oblate novices:

Clareece "Clare" Godt of Pittsburgh, PA

Mark S. Monier of Irwin, PA

Sandra L. Monier of Irwin, PA .

Mark and Sandy are husband and wife. Also, the full Oblates who were present renewed their Oblation.

MEETING OF DEANERY REPRESENTATIVES, May 21, 2011

At 1:00 P.M. on May 21, representatives of Oblate deaneries met with Fr. Donald in the Brownfield Center. Attending were representatives from Butler, Carrolltown, Latrobe, the Niagara Area, Virginia Beach, and Williamsport. Also attending was Carolyn Smith of the area of Fairfax, VA, since she has begun to publicize the Oblate Program in her area. The group discussed agenda items from the last Oblate Board of Advisors meeting, the formation of an Oblate Ongoing Formation Committee, the formation of an Oblate Retreat Committee, and recently published books on Benedictine spirituality. Then the representatives spoke briefly about what was happening in their respective deaneries. Fr. Donald also brought up the possibility in future years of having more extended meetings of deanery representatives at the Archabbey, although such an endeavor would require much planning.

2011 DIRECTORY AVAILABLE

The biennial Oblate *Directory* for 2011 has been completed by Oblate Christine Karem. Those who submitted e-mail addresses should receive the *Directory* by e-mail. Others can pick up a copy at the Oblate Office when you visit the Archabbey. If you would like a copy of the *Directory* mailed to you, please contact the Oblate Office. Only those who have entries in the *Directory* may receive copies.

STATUE OF ST. BENEDICT AVAILABLE FROM BASILICA GIFT SHOP

By popular request, the Basilica Gift Shop is making available, by phone order, a statue of St. Benedict, which is plastic ("resin") and 8 inches tall. The cost is \$19.95 (or \$17.95, for Oblates and Oblate novices, who receive a 10% discount). To order, phone the gift shop at 724-532-5060. If you want the statue mailed to you, add money for postage and handling. Some Oblates have voiced a desire for a larger statue, but so far the staff of the gift shop has not been able to find one.

PRAYER CHAIN IN LATROBE AREA CONTINUES; NEW MEMBERS ARE WELCOME

The prayer chain for Oblates in the Latrobe/Greensburg/Ligonier/Jeanette areas which began on July 21, 2009, has continued faithfully each Tuesday evening at 6:30 P.M.. The process begins with requests made to the Oblate Office. Those interested in submitting prayer requests may phone the Oblate Office at 724-805-2291. **Those in the Latrobe area interested in joining the prayer chain, which is activated every Tuesday evening, may contact Oblate Anthony Sunseri at 724-832-8068.**

JULY 11 – COMMEMORATION OF FEAST OF ST. BENEDICT

Oblates and their guests, almost 80 people, participated in the Archabbey's celebration of the Feast of St. Benedict, Patriarch of Western Monasticism. Several of the Oblates arrived on July 10 and thus were able to witness the first profession at Evening Prayer of Benedictine monks Br. Canice McMullen, Br. Gregory Zimmerman, Br. Joachim Morgan, and Fr. Killian Loch. At the concelebrated Mass at 10:00 on July 11, Archabbot Douglas, the principal celebrant and homilist, received the solemn profession of vows of Br. Maximilian Maxwell, Br. Jeremiah Lange (assistant Director of Oblates), and Br. Michael Antonacci.

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

Oblates: **Kathleen A. (Hedwig) Brestensky** of New Kensington, PA
Fr. Deacon Stephen G. Dozier of Southern Pines, NC
Fr. Randal A. (Justus) Foster of Southern Pines, NC
William Gratchic of Scottdale, PA
Richard (Edward) Gummo of Penn, PA
Elsie (Mary di Rose) Kunik of Vass, NC
Laura Lowder of Jackson Springs, NC .

Oblate novices: **Vincent M. Cirotta** of Clarksville, PA
Teresa D. Warlow of Liverpool, PA .

The four from North Carolina belong to the Southern Pines Deanery, and Teresa belongs to the new Selinsgrove Deanery. The others come to meetings at the Archabbey.

After the Oblations the following Oblate jubilarians were honored: Joseph Hamilton – 61 years, Arthur Raimondo – 60 years, John Hall – 55 years [accidentally omitted from the ceremony], Frances Gigliotti – 25 years, Donna Ciarcinski – 20 years, Margaret Perhats – 20 years, Karlin Grapes – 15 years, Linda Rockey – 15 years, John Rosick – 15 years, Robert Zera – 15 years, and Ronald Berardi – 5 years. Also, some Oblates who had wished to come but who could not were honored in absentia: Edith Sarneso – 50 years, Bernadette Edwards – 20 years, Frank & Mary Van Schie – 15 years. Some of the group also stayed for Evening Prayer and supper, and some stayed until Morning Prayer, Mass, and breakfast on July 12.

OBLATE BOARD OF ADVISORS – meeting on June 17

The Oblate Board of Advisors met at the Archabbey on Friday, June 17. The nine members present discussed the organization of an Oblate Ongoing Formation Committee and an Oblate Retreat Committee, the possibility of making a statue of St. Benedict available for purchase by Oblates, tentative plans to promote the Oblate Program to college students through campus ministry, and a proposal to congratulate the monks professing first and solemn vows from the Oblate community. The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Friday, August 19, at 6:30 P.M. in Brownfield 203.

N.A.A.B.O.D. CONFERENCE AT ST. MEINRAD ARCHABBEY, JULY 1-6, 2011

The biennial meeting of the North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors took place at St. Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, Indiana. Oblates Joyce Collins of West Newton and Mary Catherine Hoover of Patton represented St. Vincent along with Fr. Paschal Morlino, moderator of the Baltimore Deanery, associate Oblate director, and vice president of NAABOD. A D.V.D. of the conferences, given to us by Mary Catherine, is available in the Oblate Library. More information will be forthcoming.

OBLATE GROUP MEETING IN CAMBRIDGE, ONTARIO, CANADA

Oblate novice Cathy Mayled sent an e-mail message on June 26 about a first monthly meeting at St. Gregory the Great Church in Cambridge, Ontario, attended by nine people, including an Oblate from Guelph. They had a discussion on "listening" and closed with Compline. They agreed to continue to meet on the fourth Thursday of each month through the summer.

ITEMS AVAILABLE FROM THE OBLATE OFFICE

- (1) pamphlet "God's Love for You" with subtle evangelization – free
- (2) booklet *St. Benedict for Busy Parents* – \$.40 each
- (3) booklet of Oblates' reflections on verses of the *Rule* – free or with donation for postage
- (4) booklet of deanery histories – free or with donation for postage
- (5) book *Lessons from St. Benedict* by Fr. Donald - \$10.00 each, only by personal pick-up (Otherwise order from Sacred Winds Press at www.sacredwindspress.com .)

VISIT TO OBLATES IN LANCASTER

Fr. Donald and Oblate Richard Hanula of Brownsville visited Oblates in Lancaster, PA, at St. Joseph Church on May 19. After the praying of Vespers Fr. Donald gave a presentation on three aspects of silence. The Oblates in the Lancaster group are mostly affiliated with St. Meinrad Archabbey although several are affiliated with St. Vincent.

OBLATE PRESENTATION AT ST. VINCENT BASILICA PARISH

On July 24 Br. Jeremiah was scheduled to give a power-point presentation on the Oblate Program to interested people after the 9:30 A.M. Mass at St. Vincent Basilica Parish. As it turned out, no one from the parish showed up, but a couple all the way from Plum Borough, who happened to come to the basilica for Mass on that particular Sunday, attended the presentation and found it interesting.

OBLATE LIBRARY

Oblates and Oblate novices are always welcome to borrow books from the Oblate Library in person or by mail. You may contact Fr. Donald for a list of books that are in the library. If you borrow a book when you are personally present, please make sure to sign a card, and please do not keep books out for more than six months. Note that most issues of the *American Benedictine Review* from the late 1960's are available in the library.

RECOMMENDED READING:

The following recommended books are in the Oblate Library:
- Fr. M.M. Philipon, O.P., *The Spiritual Doctrine of Dom Marmion*, trans. by Dom Matthew Dillon, O.P. (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1956)

NEW (OR NEWLY DISCOVERED) BOOKS ON BENEDICTINE SPIRITUALITY

(All of the books listed are available for borrowing in the Oblate Library.)

- (1) Sister Margaret Mary Funk, O.S.B., *Tools Matter for Practicing the Spiritual Life* (New York: Continuum, 2001)
- (2) David Robinson, *Ancient Paths: Discover Christian Formation the Benedictine Way* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2010)

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION FOR VOCATIONS

Eucharistic adoration is being held on every Sunday from 1:00 to 3:00 P.M. in St. Gregory Chapel. Oblates are encouraged to attend to pray for vocations to the religious life and the priesthood.

Also, there is Eucharistic adoration every Friday in St. Gregory Chapel from 8:15 A.M. to 3:45 P.M., with the Divine Mercy Chaplet prayed at 3:00 and Benediction at 3:30 P.M. There is an effort to make sure that there are people praying in the chapel at every hour or half-hour. **If you would like to be on a list of regular adorers or of substitutes, please phone the Oblate Office at 724-805-2291.**

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 Brownfield Room 202 on Sundays. The next four meetings will be on August 21, September 18, October 16, and November 20. Also, presentations on Benedictine spirituality are given in the same room at 3:00 P.M. on the same days. Those wishing to pray Vespers with the monks at 5:00 and to have supper in the guest refectory should phone Fr. Donald (724-805-2291) a day or so in advance.

OBLATES WELCOME TO JOIN SAINT VINCENT DEVELOPMENT CLUB

The Development Club, a fund-raising program begun by the Archabbey 46 years ago, assists in the funding of the community's various apostolates. One becomes a member by purchasing a 10-month ticket for \$10.00 a month (or \$100.00 paid in full). There are five cash prizes each day, Monday through Saturday, totaling \$514,700.00, with two St. Vincent College scholarships. Winners are based on the 4-digit Pennsylvania evening lottery. For more information, write to the Development Club Office at the Archabbey, or phone 724-805-2218.

PRAYER INTENTIONS AND PERSONAL NOTES:

(1)The following members of the Oblate Community request or need our prayers: Ronald Berardi of Latrobe (for complete healing from arrhythmia of the heart); Eileen Brennen of St. Marys (for improved health); Mary Carty of Virginia Beach (for her health); Joseph Cirelli of Coraopolis (for continued healing for his wife, Judy); Arlene Coley of Quakertown (for healing from knee pain; for employment; for her sons, Ian and James, in their difficulties); Joyce Collins of West Newton (for Fr. Ronald Simboli's complete recovery from surgery for prostate cancer on July 28; for the health of her elderly parents); Christopher Colna of Pottsville (for healing from back problems); Margaret Connor of Lebanon (for safety for her son Col. Bob Connor during his final six months in Iraq; for fulfillment of the special needs of her nine-year-old grandson Eoin); Ximena DeBroeck of Greensburg (for the success of a retreat for diocesan ministers); Jane Dixon of Youngwood (for healing from macular degeneration and astigmatism, which make it difficult for her to read); Dean Everett of Westville, IN (that EWTN be received for broadcast in his facility; for the repose of the soul of his Aunt Margie; for his Uncle Wayne's healing from a recurrence of cancer; for his father, Herschell Everett, who has suffered from bladder cancer, intestinal problems, a major stroke, and complete memory loss; for Dean's mother); Julie Feight of Bedford (for her grandfather Merle Hinson, who had a cancerous tumor removed in July and was considering options for treatment); Robert Frey of Waynesburg (for improved health for his parents, Robert & Lucille; for Stanley Shriner, Jr., as he prepares for baptism and entry into the Catholic Church); Peggi Gabler of St. Marys (for healing for her mother, Edna Auman); Pat Geiger of Virginia Beach (for her health); Kathleen Gladden of Ridgway (for the repose of the souls of Floyd Pennington and David Fantaskey; for Elizabeth Cassolo and her mother); Rufina & Pablo Gonzaga of Virginia Beach (for their health); Dana Grasha of Parma, OH (for her husband John's full recovery from surgery for colon cancer); Margie Greenwell of Virginia Beach (for her health); Donald "Tim" Hackman of Orwigsburg (for success of surgery for melanoma); Liz Hart of Norvelt (for resolution of difficulties for her brother John); Patricia Hoover of Fr. Myers, FL (for her father Bob Nichols' recovery from surgery; for her sister Kristen's healing; for her niece Isabella's healing from breathing problems); John Hudock of Greensburg (for relief from severe back pains); Louis Jacobs of Mercer (for Sam Petrillo's healing from pancreatitis); Patricia Kassebaum of Southern Pines, NC (for complete recovery from foot surgery on July 15); Maureen Knack of Ruffs Dale (for Rose Ann Taylor's healing from pancreatic cancer); James Knepp of Albion (for healing from gall-bladder surgery, heart problems, digestive problems, and other health conditions; for Msgr. James Peterson; for Deacon Ralph DeCecco; for James' family; for the medical staff at SCI-Albion); Fred Letzeisen of Spring Hill, FL (for relief from back problems); Laura Lowder of Jackson Springs, NC (for Ben & Andrea Cude of California as they grieve the loss of their new infant Gabriel, who died shortly after his birth on June 10); Laura Manning of Toms River, NJ (for healing from fractured arms and back & from multiple myeloma); Cathy Mayled of Ayr, Ont. (for two-year-old Oscar Galvin, who suffers from leukemia, & for his family); Michael McDonald of Kissimmee, FL (for employment & perseverance through difficulties); Dianne Meltzer of DeWitt, NY (for success of her job application to Lemoyne's Human Resources Department); John & Carol Meridionale of Annville (for their grandson Tyler Grudi, who was to undergo lung surgery on August 8); Gretchen Meyers of Scranton (for relief from pain for Jim & Loretta Weis); Dorothy Minnick of St. Marys (for healing from a broken hip); Mary Lynn Nicklas of St. Marys (for full recovery from hip-replacement surgery on July 18); Joseph Nurek of Lisbon, OH (for his cousin George Lovse's restoration of health); Robert O'Brien of Asheboro, NC (for employment and improvement of his finances); Annabelle Orejana of Toronto, Ont. (for her sister-in-law Socomo, who suffers from lung cancer; for her niece Kristin, who was injured in an accident); Peg Palfy of Penn (for healing for Russ Wallace, who has stage-4 cancer of the lung & the brain); Paul Palombo of Pittsburgh (for healing from prostate cancer & success of bone scans); Delina Pauls of Virginia Beach (for safe delivery of her granddaughter Katey's baby in August; for relief from back pain); Thomas Power of Hampton, VA (for his wife Ann's recovery from knee surgery); Barbara Rossi of Virginia Beach (for her husband Tony's healing from leukemia; for her daughter Loretta's healing from health problems); Christine Rossmiller of Donegal (for the health of her husband's elderly Aunt Freda); Robert Sager of Trevorton (for his mother, Eileen, who suffers from congestive heart failure); William Sedoma of Minersville (for healing of a friend, George Atkinson, from lung cancer; for the success of Fr. Robert Potts' hernia surgery); St. Marys Deanery (for the repose of the soul of Celine Schlimm, who died suddenly on May 1 [she was the sister of Fr. Chrysostom, O.S.B.]); Patrick Smith of Gatesville, TX (for divine guidance for direction in his life; for Anne-Marie Place's growth in freedom to follow Christ); Michael Sobjak of Muncy (for recovery of Kenny & Donna Weimer from a motorcycle accident [Kenny had a leg amputated; Donna suffered a broken leg]; for Mike's 4-year-old great-nephew Colton's healing from leukemia; for Colton's mother,

Nicole; for Colton's grandparents, Steve & Linda, that they come to accept God's will); Charlotte Spino of Latrobe (for her daughter Orlie Ferretti's recovery from an illness of the immune system); Kathryn Stuart of Conshocton, OH (for recovery from hemorrhaging in June); Miguel Such of Wilkes-Barre (for his whole family; for Gabriel & his wife, who have been undergoing bankruptcy; for Chrissy Simpson; for Kylie Sox); John J. Toth of Clairton (for his health); Frank & Mary Van Schie of Welland, Ont. (for improved eyesight & full recovery from cataract surgeries); Robert Zanolli of Cape Coral, FL (for his wife Terri's recovery from a complete hysterectomy on June 3).

(2) Oblate **Charles Blankmeyer** of Lancaster and his wife, Rose, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on May 19. Our prayers and congratulations are with Charlie and Rose.

(3) Oblate **Barry Kraynack** of Drums and his wife, Linda, celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on June 26. Our prayers and congratulations are with Barry and Linda.

(4) Oblate **Lucy Ludwikowski's** husband Jeffrey was among 43 men ordained to the permanent diaconate for the Diocese of Pittsburgh on June 11. Our prayers and congratulations are with Jeff and Lucy. They live in Allison Park.

(5) Oblate **Mary Lynn Nicklas** of St. Marys and her husband, David, recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Our prayers and congratulations are with Lynn and David.

(6) Oblate **Scott E. Schul** was ordained a minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on June 3. The ordination took place during the opening worship service of the 24th assembly of the Allegheny Synod of the E.L.C.A. at the First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Altoona, PA. Pastor Schul then began his ministry as pastor of St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Martinsburg, PA. Our prayers and congratulations are with Scott and his family.

(7) Oblate **Michael Patterson** of New York Mills, NY, reports that a group of Oblates and other interested persons have been meeting monthly for quite some time at St. Joseph & St. Patrick Church in Utica, NY, to study Benedictine spirituality and to do group *lectio divina*. The group has been led by Rev. Richard E. Dellos, the pastor of the parish and an Oblate affiliated with Mr. Saviour Monastery in Pine City, NY. Four of the attendees recently became Oblate novices affiliated with Mt. Saviour.

In an e-mail message of June 20 and a letter of June 21, Michael reported on the meeting on June 13, during which the group reflected on the reading from Exodus for Trinity Sunday and on Chapters 43, 53, and 72 of the *Rule*. Fr. Dellos commented that it may become harder to be patient as one grows older and needs to be careful about one's health and diet. The restrictions can help us to remember that the life of a monk or Oblate should be a continual Lent.

Michael also mentioned in his communications that his parish was the home parish of Blessed Mother Marianne Cope of Molokai (1838-1918), who was an immigrant from Germany and spent her last thirty years caring for victims of leprosy in the place where St. Damien ministered.

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 novice John Anderson of Century, FL, whose mother, Germaine Anderson, died on May 4
- Oblate Robert Zanolli of Cape Coral, FL, whose father, Mario Zanolli, died on May 29
- Oblate Christine Rossmiller of Donegal, PA, whose father, Leonard Heller, died on May 30
- Oblate novice Robert Kinkead of Apollo, PA, whose aunt Mary Ann Speer died late in June
- Oblate Timothy O'Brockta of Fredericktown, PA, whose cousin David Cook died suddenly on July 17 in a motorcycle accident .

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:

- 13 Jun 2008 – Anna L. Pfadt of Erie, PA (Oblate since March 25, 1956)
- 18 Jan 2010 – Charlotte M. (Gabrielle) Haynes of Glen Burnie, MD (Oblate since August 22, 1993)
- 2 Dec 2010 – Francis A. Perchinsky of Bentleyville, PA (Oblate since August 2, 1986)
- Apr 2011 – Jan Jackson of Atlantic, VA (Oblate novice since January 20, 2006)
- 29 May 2011 – Rev. Leonard J. (Joseph) McAlpin of the Diocese of Greensburg (Oblate since December 8, 1965)
- 24 Jul 2011 – Gertrude M. (Julia) Brechtel of St. Marys, PA (Oblate since April 9, 1985) .

NEWS FROM OBLATE DEANERIES

Albion, PA (St. Paul Deanery) -- *monthly meetings at chapel in Albion*

Moderator Deacon Ralph DeCecco wrote on May 10 and June 25. At the meeting on May 10, the ten people present prayed the Liturgy of the Hours. Then inquirer Fred Stiver gave a lesson based on *RB* 6, "Restraint of Speech." The group discussed ways to find quiet space and to prepare for quiet contemplation.

Deacon Ralph and his wife, Janet, met with four other Oblates on June 25. They began with praying the Liturgy of the Hours. Then Oblate John Simpson led a lesson on adversity, patience, and humility. The group also discussed the importance of *lectio divina* and closed the meeting with the "Litany of Humility."

Annville, PA (St. Placid Deanery) -- meetings at 3 P.M. on 4th Sunday of each month, St. Paul the Apostle Church, Annville, or St. Joseph Church, Mechanicsburg

Secretary Gabrielle Terrill wrote on May 29 and July 10. The meeting on May 22, held at St. Joseph Church in Mechanicsburg, began with Evening Prayer, during which

Judith (Odilia) Lackovic of Mechanicsburg, PA, and
Tanishia (Benedict) Sperling of Lebanon, PA

made their final Oblation in the presence of Fr. John Peck, O.S.B., moderator, and the other twelve people who were present. A new inquirer was welcomed. Oblate Mary Ann Bingeman spoke about the week that she spent at Easter time at the Monastery of Holy Angels in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Then Fr. John talked briefly about a move on the Jesus Prayer, which he hoped that the deanery could view together. It was planned to read from the book *Poustinia* at the next meeting.

Fifteen people joined Fr. John for the meeting on June 26, which began with Vespers. Those present agreed to revive the deanery's fund to assist St. Vincent seminarians and the infirm and elderly monks at the Archabbey; those willing to participate were to save money at home until the February, 2012, meeting. The group also agreed to send e-mail greetings to Sr. Lisa Kayser, formerly an Oblate, in Princess Anne, MD. Then Fr. John led a discussion about the book *Poustinia* by Catherine de Hoeck Doherty and about the importance of silence, which can be described as "the search of man for God, the speech of lovers, [something] holy, a prayer beyond all prayers." More important than exterior silence is interior silence, opening the way to encounter with God. It was planned for the next meeting on July 24 to view the movie *The Mystery of the Jesus Prayer*.

Asheboro, NC (St. Joseph / St. Gabriel Deanery) – meetings at Lillian Hazelwood's home, 4th Sat. of month
There were no reports

Baltimore, MD (St. Walburga Deanery) -- meetings at 3:00-4:30 on 3rd Sun. of month, parish house, St. Benedict Church
There were no reports.

Butler, PA (St. Hildegard Deanery) -- monthly meetings at St. Fidelis Church, generally the 3rd Thurs. of month

Lay leader Ethel Galli reported on June 11. On May 26 the Oblates met first in St. Fidelis Church to pray Vespers and to participate in Oblation ceremonies. At that time Fr. Thomas Hart, O.S.B., visiting from the Archabbey, received the following:

Oblates: **Rosemary (Joanna) Pawlowicz** of Butler, PA
Eugenia "Jean" M. (Frances) Schweikart of Butler, PA

Oblate novice: **Vivian A. "Jeanie" Kline** of Butler, PA.

Jeanie is the wife of Oblate James Kline. Then Fr. Thomas gave a talk explaining the work of the Association of Benedictine Colleges and Universities. He commented that Pope John Paul II issued a document stressing that Catholic schools must show commitment to Catholic identity. The Benedictines in the U.S. responded by formulating a document "Education within the Benedictine Tradition" during the association's meeting in 2007. The ten core values of a Benedictine education were given as love, prayer, stability, *conversatio*, obedience, discipline, humility, stewardship, hospitality, and community. After the presentation there was a social to honor the new Oblates and Oblate novice.

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

Lay leader Mary Catherine Hoover wrote on May 21 and July 25. The meeting on May 15 began with Evening Prayer. Then two inquirers, a married couple from Patton, were introduced to the group. Under the guidance of Fr. Jude, moderator, the attendees concluded a discussion of *RB 6* on silence and began to study *RB 7* on humility. The group rejoiced to see Oblate Paul Lieb, who had recently turned 90 and had been in poor health. The deanery decided not to meet in June or July.

Chincoteague, VA (Our Lady of Guadalupe Deanery) – 2nd Tues. of month at St. Andrew Church.

Lay leader Mary Hoffken wrote on June 27. The group had difficulty "getting the meetings back on schedule" after the retirement of Fr. Paschal Kneip. They finally settled on the second Tuesday of each month. The current agenda for the meetings is to read through the *Rule* slowly.

The meeting on May 12 was attended by five Oblates and Fr. Richard Chirichiello, pastor. After an invocation to Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Oblates started to read from *RB 7* on humility. They discussed the meaning of humility, Jacob's ladder, and the need to choose daily the way of Christian humility. They also referred to the book *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* by St. John Climacus. The meeting concluded with the praying of the Our Father.

The meeting on June 14, also attended by six people, involved a discussion of *RB 7:55*, the eighth step of humility. The hour was filled with an exchange about the "common rule" for Oblates, who superiors are for monks and Oblates, and the application of this one sentence to Oblates.

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

Lay leader Carl Motter wrote on May 12 and June 21. At the meeting on May 9, Deacon Michael Russo, moderator, received the renewal of Oblation by the 20 Oblates present during Evening Prayer. The group also discussed the importance of Benedictine hospitality as an element of one's spiritual life. Deacon Michael mentioned ways in which different monasteries welcome guests, and he suggested a workbook for future study of the *Rule* by the deanery. The Oblates also served as "hospitality representatives" to welcome newly ordained Bishop Mark Bartchak to St. Benedict Church.

The meeting on June 20 began with Evening Prayer, during which

Carol (Jerome) Massingill of Johnstown, PA,

made her final Oblation in the presence of Deacon Michael and the other Oblates present. Also attending were the pastor of St. Benedict Church and the co-pastors of Carol's parish. After the ceremony there was a reception to celebrate Carol's Oblation.

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

On May 15 some 20 people gathered first to hear Oblate Joyce Collins give a presentation on her experience at the planning session last October at Our Lady of Montserrat Monastery in Spain for the 2013 World Congress of Oblates. Joyce supplemented her interesting verbal presentation with handouts, photographs displayed on a poster, and some music from the boys' choir at Montserrat.

Then the group began its first discussion based on the book *St. Benedict and St. Thérèse: The Little Rule and the Little Way*. The attendees reflected on the introduction, in which (now Father) Dwight Longenecker told of his encounter with Benedictine monasteries on a journey from England to Jerusalem and of his first visit to Lisieux, France, where his initial skepticism about the "Little Flower" gradually was transformed to an embracing of her "little way." Both St. Benedict and St. Thérèse were seen as saints who were able to find God in ordinary daily "reality."

At the meeting on June 12, the twelve-or-so people who attended discussed most of Chapter 1 of the text. It was noted that the little way and the little rule of St. Thérèse and St. Benedict are meant to be lived and that we have a living relationship with these saints, who are very real persons in heaven. In his reflection on the lives of these two saints, the author comments that all saints are unique (since they ultimately are trying to be who God wants them to be), that there is much humor in the life of St. Benedict, that despite his many miracles he was mostly concerned with obedience to God in ordinary ways, and that St. Thérèse's life was remarkable for its ordinariness. Her holiness was great but hidden. Both saints are "apostles of the ordinary."

The meeting on July 17, attended by about 20 people, began with Joyce Collins' giving a brief summary of her experience at the NAABOD meeting on July 1-6. Then Fr. Donald led a discussion based on the end of Chapter 1 and the beginning of Chapter 2 of *St. Benedict and St. Thérèse*. There was some discussion on the meaning of "myth," on the way in which the *Rule* is "little," on the controversy of grace versus works, on the ways in which the two saints draw Christians together, and on the call always to be beginners, or learners.

Lessons in Latrobe at 3:00 P.M. before Oblate Meetings

On May 15 Fr. Andrew Campbell gave a presentation on "Holiness and Benedictine Spirituality" to an audience that overflowed the meeting room. He tied in the theme with the topic of the day's Gospel, that is hearing the voice of Christ, the Good Shepherd. He commented that "we hear what we train ourselves to hear." Oblates are to listen to the voice of God daily, especially in *lectio divina*. Humility is a key and an essential ingredient to growth in holiness. We need to learn that our hearts are too small, that we are absolutely dependent on God's grace, and that on our own we do not know how to be faithful to Oblation or religious consecration. Regarding the difficulties of our lives, we need to learn to pray, "Thank you, Lord, for the mystery of the Cross in my life." Fr. Andrew also distributed copies of Cardinal Merry del Val's "Litany of Humility" with some commentary on the life of the cardinal.

On June 12 Fr. Donald gave a presentation on "Silence in Benedictine Spirituality." He spoke about three dimensions of silence: restraint of speech, a quiet environment, and the nurturing of inner peace. Noise and excessive speech can be linked to pride and self-centeredness. A healthy silence in our lives can help us to listen to God and to one another and to grow in humility and self-emptying love. Nurturing silence may be a difficult uphill battle, but it is worth the struggle since silence ultimately opens us to the very life of God.

On July 17 Br. Isaac gave a presentation on *conversatio morum*. Using some explanations on power point, he spoke about the universal call to holiness, the three classical stages of the spiritual life, and several references in the *Rule* to ongoing conversion. In sum, every moment of every day is a time for conversion. Br. Isaac also offered some practical tips for ongoing conversion, including ample prayer, submission to God, obedience to the Church, time for silence, spiritual direction, vulnerability, overcoming murmuring and concupiscence, and giving priority to God. He also supplied a list of books that are good references for understanding ongoing conversion.

Minersville, PA (St. Malachy Deanery) – *monthly meetings at the chapel in Minersville*

Lay leader William Sedoma reported on May 25. On March 30 the weekly Mass for the Catholic community was a memorial Mass for former lay leader Paul Mangiardi, who had died a year earlier. There was a large turnout, and Rev. Robert J. Potts was the celebrant.

The meeting in April was a routine one. Prayers were offered for those intentions coming from the Archabbey, and booklets of deanery histories were distributed to the Oblates and Oblate novices.

The meeting in May attracted several inquirers.

Niagara Area, Ontario, Canada (St. Henry/St. Gertrude Deanery) -- *meetings on 4th Friday, meeting room of St. Thomas Aquinas Church, St. Catharines, Ont.*

Lay leader Brian Chisholm reported by phone on July 15. The Divine Mercy devotions sponsored by the Oblates on May 1, Divine Mercy Sunday, were very well attended. The meetings in April, May, and June were marked by low attendance and largely involved preparations for the parish mission planned for the end of June. A new study program was to begin in October, when attendance was expected to go back to normal.

From June 30 to July 2, Fr. Justin Matro, O.S.B., rector of St. Vincent Seminary, conducted a parish mission for St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, an event sponsored by the Oblates as part of the parish's celebration of its 50th anniversary. Fr. Justin spoke about the Eucharist, and 50-60 people attended the conferences.

Pittsburgh, PA (St. Peter Deanery) -- *meetings on 2nd or 3rd Wed., Our Lady Queen of Peace Worship Site.*

There were no reports.

St. Marys, PA (St. Maurus Deanery) -- *meetings on Thurs. before 1st Fri. of month, 7:00 P.M.*

Lay leader Peggi Gabler wrote on May 12 and July 13. The Oblates met on May 5 for the first time in 2011. Ten people attended. Fr. Daniel Wolfel, O.S.B., first led Benediction and Evening Prayer. Then the group prayed the prayer to St. Benedict, heard a reading of minutes of the previous meeting, and noted Oblates who were ill and needed prayers. The Prologue of the *Rule*, verses 21-32, was read. Fr. Daniel then spoke about recent events involving the Benedictines of St. Vincent Archabbey and about the forthcoming retirement of the Bishop of Erie.

The meeting on July 7, attended by nine people, began with Evening Prayer and Benediction led by Fr. Michael Ferrick, moderator. Then minutes from the past meeting and a letter from Fr. Donald were read, and there was a reading of *RB* 30: 1-3. There was some talk about attending Oblate Day at the Archabbey on September 25. Then Fr. Michael gave a reflection on the Gospel of the day and spoke about the need to struggle against the distractions of the world in order to live and proclaim the Gospel. Then there was some sharing about various personal situations and needs for prayer.

Saint Vincent College – *monthly meetings during the school year, usually in Mary, Mother of Wisdom Chapel*
(No report is expected during the summer.)

Savannah, GA -- *special monthly events at Sunday Vespers or Mass at Benedictine Priory and its chapel*

Fr. Ronald Gatman, O.S.B., moderator, reported by e-mail on July 19 and gave a summary of Oblate events during the past school year. Beginning in August, 2010, the Oblate Council met once a month through the following April (except in December) to discuss and plan events of the year. Each gathering was on a Sunday afternoon, and a supper in the monastery refectory concluded each event.

In September, 2010, the Oblates gathered for Mass in the priory chapel, with Fr. Ronald as celebrant and homilist. A covered-dish supper followed. In October the Oblates gathered for Evening Prayer during which a seminarian, Kevin O'Keefe, gave a presentation on the way in which God's call came to him. In November Fr. Mark Van Alstine, a priest of the diocese and an alumnus of St. Vincent Seminary, celebrated Mass for the Oblates and preached. In January Fr. Ronald led Evening Prayer, including the reading of a passage from the Gospel of St. Matthew, with shared reflections on the passage. In February Fr. Frank, prior, celebrated Mass for the Oblates. In March Fr. Meinrad, former prior and now pastor in St. Marys, PA, came to share with the Oblates some insights on the *Rule*. In April Fr. Ronald gave a day of recollection, with prayers, a presentation and time for reflection, an opportunity for confession, and a closing Mass.

Also, for the past couple of years the deanery has been taking up a monetary collection to help support a worthy cause selected by the group. It was planned that the Oblate Council would meet again in August, 2011, to plan for another spiritually rewarding year.

Scranton, PA (St. Boniface/St. Lioba Deanery) -- *monthly meetings on 3rd Fri. at Immaculate Conception Church*

Lay leader Gretchen Meyers wrote on May 23, June 27, and July 23. At the meeting on May 20, the three Oblates present continued a discussion based on the book *Engaging Benedict* by Sr. Laura Swan, O.S.B. Gretchen reflected, "It is such a treasure chest of ideas and insights. This month we talked a little about hospitality. On the surface it seems such a tame, ordinary thing, but underneath it is a driving force for change and so much harder to practice than it would seem."
(continued)

The three Oblates met once again on June 17 and began a discussion on obedience based on *Engaging Benedict*. Gretchen commented, "The book we are using is not one to hurry through but one to chew over and savor. We are all pleased with it." An inquirer contacted the group in June. Because of travel and car trouble, there was no meeting in July.

Selingsgrove, PA (St. Anselm Deanery) – *monthly meetings on 2nd Sundays at St. Pius X Church in Selingsgrove*

Secretary Marcia La Bant reported by e-mail on May 18, June 27, and July 12. Seven people, including three inquirers, attended the meeting on May 15. After the playing of a hymn "In the Stillness," the group prayed Evening Prayer in the chapel. Then there was a discussion about obtaining a prayer card with St. Anselm and about making plans to travel to the Archabbey on July 10-11 for the Feast of St. Benedict. Finally, Oblate novice Doug Shader led a prayer for Bob Sager's mother and for all the Oblates and family members and friends in need.

Seven people attended the meeting on June 12, which again began with Vespers. Two of the Oblate novices reported about the very positive experience they had had at the silent retreat at the Archabbey earlier in the month. Since it was Pentecost Sunday, the group discussed the gifts of the Holy Spirit, with a focus on knowledge and wisdom and with mention that God often chooses the least ones to have these virtues. Oblate Bob Kurland pointed that June 12 was also the Jewish holiday of Simchat Torah, commemorating the handing down of the Torah to the Jewish people; there was some discussion about the correlation between that feast and the beginning of the Christian Church at Pentecost.

There was no meeting scheduled for July. On July 10-11 four of the deanery members attended events at the Archabbey for the feast of St. Benedict and the profession of vows. Marcia later expressed gratitude for their being able to attend those events; for some of them it was their first time at St. Vincent.

Southern Pines, NC (St. Ephrem the Syrian Deanery) – *monthly meetings on 2nd Thurs. of month at the parish office of St. Anthony of Padua Church in Southern Pines*

Secretary Laura Lowder reported by e-mail on June 10 and July 12, and Fr. Deacon Stephen Dozier wrote on July 14. Five people attended the meeting on May 12. The group prayed Evening Prayer and then proceeded to a continuing discussion of the chapters of the *Holy Rule*, ending in the midst of *RB 42*.

At the meeting on June 9, the ten attendees continued a discussion of *RB 42*, with reflections on bringing peace and quiet into our lives and on combating the distracting influences of the Internet and other media. Since it was the feast of St. Ephrem, Fr. Deacon Steven Dozier read an excerpt from the saint's writings. The attendees also discussed their planned pilgrimage to the Archabbey on July 10-12. Five members of the deanery were planning to go. (Four actually traveled to St. Vincent. See the above report on events of July 11 concerning the four who made their Oblation at that time. Those who came to the Archabbey later expressed gratitude for being able to "share in such a solemn and glorious occasion.")

On July 14 at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Southern Pines,
Patricia (Mary) Kassebaum of Southern Pines, NC,
made her final Oblation in the presence of Fr. Deacon Stephen, who had made his Oblation on July 11. Pat subsequently underwent foot surgery on July 15.

State College, PA (St. Joseph Deanery) -- *meetings on 2nd Monday of each month, Our Lady of Victory Church, St. Joseph Activity Center.*

Secretary Phyllis Austin wrote on May 9 and June 20. At the meeting on May 9, nine Oblates and two inquirers met with Fr. David, moderator, to pray and to discuss Chapters 6 and 7 of *To Whom Shall We Go?* by Archbishop Timothy Dolan. In those chapters the author reflected on ways to get to know Christ better and the sacrifices required. He recommended prayer, frequent reception of the Eucharist, and "getting to know God's family." Then there was a business meeting, including a treasurer's report and plans for a year-end social on June 18, which would consist of breakfast at a restaurant, with Oblates and guests invited. The session ended with prayer and the singing of the "Ultima."

The meeting on June 13, attended by nine Oblates and two inquirers, began with Evening Prayer and continued with a discussion of the last two chapters and the afterword of *To Whom Shall We Go?* From reflections on St. Peter's trials and his confession of faith and on some related life experiences, it was concluded that in times of testing and in matters of truth it is evident that we need to go to the Lord and to trust in His mercy and love. The attendees agreed that the trials of St. Peter offered many valuable lessons, and they recommended the book to other Oblate deaneries. **(N.B.: The Oblate Library now has a copy of the book, thanks to a donation from Phyllis.)** Then the treasurer gave a report, and the group was reminded of the end-of-year Mass and breakfast on June 18.

In July Oblate Katharine "Kay" Tittmann agreed to serve as secretary. We thank Phyllis for service during these past months.

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

Lay leader Delina "Dee" Pauls wrote on June 2 and July 7. At the meeting on April 6, attended by nine Oblates, after the opening prayer and prayers for the sick, Dee showed a video of a talk given by Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen entitled "Wasting Your Life." The presentation dealt with the dangers of neglecting prayer.

At the meeting on May 4, attended by ten people, moderator Fr. Michael Gabler spoke on parts of the Prologue of the *Rule* according the traditional reading for the day. No meeting was scheduled for June because of a bishop's coming for confirmations on the usual meeting date.

The deanery also decided not to have meetings during July or August because so many of the members would be taking vacations or having company. Also, two of the active members were moving to the Baltimore area.

Four members of the deanery enjoyed attending the Oblate retreat at the Archabbey in May.

Williamsport, PA (Saints Martha, Mary, and Lazarus Deanery) -- meetings on last Sunday of each month, 1 P.M., St. Joseph the Worker (Mater Dolorosa) Church, meeting room in former school

Oblate Susan Wykoff sent an e-mail message on June 24, and lay leader Ted Richardson phoned during June to report that he was to be released from nursing care on June 27. There was no indication about monthly meetings.

Various Locations

On May 21 at Our Lady of Nazareth Church in Roanoke, VA, Deacon Richard Surreco invested **Scott Cundiff** of Roanoke, VA,

as an Oblate novice. The ceremony took place during a Mass, with Msgr. Joseph Lehman presiding.

On May 26, in the crypt of the monastery church of the Benedictine Nuns in Vadstena, Sweden, Fr. Henrik Roelvink, O.F.M., invested

Annika F. Spalde of Mjölby, Sweden, as an Oblate novice. Annika is a deaconess in the Lutheran Church. The nuns of the monastery were praying in the church at the time of her investiture.

On June 24 at Infant of Prague Church in Jacksonville, NC, Rev. Anthony V. DeCandia, parochial vicar, invested

David J. Reintjes of Jacksonville, NC, as an Oblate novice. David belongs to the same parish as Oblates James Hough and Joseph Pierce, who had visited the Archabbey for a week-long retreat just previous to the ceremony.

On July 11 at St. Gertrude Church in Vandergrift, PA, Fr. James Loew, O.S.B., pastor, invested **Justine "Judy" Donghia** of Vandergrift, PA,

as an Oblate novice. Judy has long served as the sacristan of St. Gertrude Parish.

On July 12, Oblate

Annabelle M. Orejana of Toronto, Ont., Canada, officially transferred her Oblation from St. Benedict Monastery in Pittsburgh to St. Vincent Archabbey.

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. Sebastian Samay, Br. Edward Grinder, Br. Francis Ehnat, Br. David Carlson, Fr. Ananias Buccicone, Fr. Lee Yoakam and Br. Jeremiah Lange (who underwent foot surgery on July 25). Please also pray for healing for the mother of Fr. Vincent Crosby and the father of Br. Michael Antonacci.

OVERDUE OR MISSING LIBRARY BOOKS AND TAPES: PLEASE RESPOND!

During the past several years a number of books from the Oblate Library have been found to be missing, presumably because people withdrew them without signing them out. Others were admittedly lost by their borrowers. **Please check your bookshelves to see if you have any of the missing books.** Thank you!

- Fr. George A. Maloney, S.J., *The Jesus Prayer* (pamphlet)
- Fr. Guy-Marie Oury, O.S.B., *A Monastic Pilgrimage: Following the Footsteps of St. Benedict*
- Abbot David Parry, O.S.B., *Household of God*

Several books have been out of the library for three years or more. I list them here as an incentive for their borrowers to return them as soon as possible:

- Fr. Peter Damian Belisle, *The Privilege of Love*
- Esther de Waal, *Lost in Wonder*
- *The Holy Rule of St. Benedict*, ed. by the monks of St. Meinrad Archabbey
- Fr. Terrence Kardong, O.S.B., *Benedictine Rule: A Translation and Commentary*
- Fr. Thomas Keating, O.S.C.O., *Intimacy with God*
- Rachel M. Srubas, *Oblation: Meditations on the Rule of St. Benedict*

SCHEDULE FOR OBLATE DAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2011

- 9:00 A.M. - 10:20 - Registration & get-together, Faculty Dining Room (Placid A) (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 Hall, Room B
- 11:55 P.M. - Lunch, Placid Hall, Room B
- 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 Oblate Deacon Michael Russo, Assembly Room
- 5:00 P.M. - Evening Prayer with the monastic community, basilica
- 5:35 P.M. - Supper, Placid Hall, Room B
- 6:45 P.M. - Departure.

Registration Form for Oblate Day, September 25, 2011

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

- I plan to attend Oblate Day on Sept. 25 at St. Vincent.
- (number of reservations) for lunch at \$5.50 each (money enclosed).
- (number of reservations) for supper at \$6.50 each (money enclosed).
- Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

(Please make out checks to St. Vincent Archabbey.)

- 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. 24, ___ Sept. 25. (Please contact Fr. Donald several weeks in advance.)

Please send this form to Mrs. Christine Karem, 2012 Souli St., Greensburg, PA 15601 (phone: 724-875-0285), and not to the Oblate Office. Please mail in this form by September 19.

Schedule for Oblate Day of Recollection, October 15, 2011, Fr. Jacques Daley, O.S.B.

- 8:30 A.M. Registration, Leander Hall
- 9:00 A.M. First conference, St. Gregory Chapel
- 9:30-10:10 Confessions, Leander parlor and near-by office
- 10:15 A.M. Mass, St. Gregory Chapel
- 11:30 A.M. Midday Prayer, St. Gregory Chapel
- 11:45 A.M. Lunch, Placid Dining Room B
- 1:00 P.M. Second conference, St. Gregory Chapel
- 1:30 P.M. Oblation ceremonies, St. Gregory Chapel
- 3:30 P.M. Third conference, St. Gregory Chapel
- 5:00 P.M. Evening Prayer, St. Gregory Chapel
- 5:35 P.M. Supper, Placid Dining Room B

Registration Form for Oblate Day of Recollection, October 15, 2011

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

- I plan to attend Oblate day of recollection on Oct. 15 at St. Vincent.
- Enclosed is the fee of \$33.00 (or \$26.00 for only one meal).

(Please make out checks to St. Vincent Archabbey; please make out separate checks for the day of recollection and Oblate Day if you are attending both. Thank you!)

- I would like overnight accommodations for ___ Oct. 14, ___ Oct. 15 (Please contact Fr. Donald several weeks in advance.)

Please send this form to Mrs. Christine Karem, 2012 Souli St., Greensburg, PA 15601 (phone: 724-875-0285) and not to the Oblate Office. Please mail in this form by October 8.

On registering for Oblate events: Please try avoid last-minute rush!

For the Feast of St. Benedict on July 11, we were blessed to have some 76 people attending the Mass and then registered for lunch. However, some 20 of these phoned in their registrations within the last two or three days, and some who phoned on short notice then did not appear! I urge all of you to do your very best to register at least a week in advance except in case of emergencies. Last-minute sign-ups cause distress to our faithful lay leader, Chris Karem, and to our food-service people, who have to keep readjusting numbers. You know that we never turn away anyone, but please do not take advantage of this policy. Please be considerate, plan ahead, and register on time! Please also be considerate of food-service people if and when we run out of food or when they cannot provide immediate service of some sort. On big occasions they are often over-stressed already and need our courtesy and patience.

Novena Prayer for the Unemployed

Oblate Anthony Sunseri of Greensburg reports that there is a 30-day "Holy Cloak Novena" to St. Joseph that is specifically geared to unemployed people. One can find the novena on Internet, or one may obtain a copy from Anthony. You may reach him by phone at 724-832-0868.

Form for those in Latrobe/ Greensburg/ Ligonier/ Jeannette area interested in phone prayer chain

I would like to be part of the prayer chain that meets by phone about 6:30 P.M. every Tuesday to pray for the needs of the Oblate community and others who ask for our prayers. My information is as follows:

Name _____ Phone _____
Address _____ e-mail address _____

Please send this information to **Anthony Sunseri, Janyce Drive, Greensburg, PA 15601**, or phone Anthony at 724-832-0868.

Letter of Thanks from Florida for Greeting Cards Sent to Prisoners

June 23, 2010

Dear Fr. Donald and my beloved fellow Oblates,

What a blessing you all are to so many men that you will never know personally, nor will they ever know you. That's where the true charity is. Since I know that all of you are avid Bible readers, you know these verses from Matthew:

“And He will place the sheep at His right hand, but the goats at His left. Then the King will say to those at His right hand, ‘Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry, and you gave me food; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you welcomed me; I was naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me.’ ... Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me” (Matt 25: 33-36 & 40).

Also:

“Thus when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (Matt 6:2-4).

The above are two of my favorite passages from St. Matthew's Gospel, both dealing with helping the

less fortunate and the rewards promised by Jesus to those who serve unselfishly. The cards you've sent us are equivalent to your storing up treasures in heaven. "As you did to one of the least of my brethren, that you did unto Me." What an assuring statement! It is, I believe, being said by Jesus to you fine people who have helped these forgotten men. Yes, most are guilty career criminals, murderers, rapists, addicts, and thieves. But all are children of God, just lost and unable to realize that they are children of God. Yet there also are a great number who have see the light and are real Christians.

So on their behalf I thank you and ask God to bless you all abundantly. Each time we have Mass, I will ask for God's blessings upon all the good people affiliated with St. Vincent Archabbey. Thank you!

Love always in Christ,
Your brother in Benedict,
John Anderson
Pax Christi

It is hard to believe that the pipe organ installed in the basilica in 1956 and now no longer functioning cost \$40,000. Now the replacement of this organ is one of the last projects remaining as part of the total renovation project of the basilica begun in 1996. Over the course of the last 10 years, our beautiful church, which can be seen from miles around, has undergone significant changes, including a new roof and interior renovations such as artwork and window restoration, painting, plastering, and lighting.

An organ fund was begun several years ago. However, the cost of a custom-made pipe organ today is extremely expensive compared to that of 1956. The project is now estimated to be well over a million dollars; however, the beauty and the sound will be well worth the cost. It will be built by hand and will take several years of labor and skilled craftsmanship. The result should be outstanding. Music is very critical to any liturgical celebration, and it is hoped that a new pipe organ will do much to enhance liturgies in the basilica.

Please consider a donation to the Organ Fund. To discuss this project further, please contact the Director of Development, Paul Whiteside, at 724-532-6740, or e-mail Paul at paul.whiteside@email.stvincent.edu.

OBLATE DIRECTORY FOR 2007 TO BE READY IN AUGUST

Thanks to Oblate Bill O'Neil of Pittsburgh, the 2007 *Directory* of Oblates will soon be available for distribution. If your name is included and you have not yet received one, please contact the Oblate Office. Copies will be given out at the August 21 and September 11 meetings of the Latrobe Deanery and then on Oblate Day on September 18. All those not picked up will then be mailed out. If you wish to be included in the next edition, which will probably be issued in the summer of 2007, please contact Oblate Bill O'Neil. (Write, phone, or e-mail: Mr. William O'Neil, 4122 Beehner Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15217, 412-422-1313, boneil2@stargate.net .)

PUBLICITY FOR OBLATE PROGRAM FOR BULLETINS OF NON-BENEDICTINE PARISHES

If any Oblates would like to inform their fellow parishioners (or parishioners in near-by parishes) about the Oblate Program, they may wish to ask their pastors if they are willing to place in their parish bulletins a flier that invites people to consider becoming an Oblate novice. The flier includes a card for inquirers to fill out and is accompanied by a cover letter for pastors. These are available from the Oblate Office.

DIRECTORY OF OBLATES: Application form

I would like to be included in the summer, 2009, edition of the *Directory* of Oblates affiliated with Saint Vincent Archabbey. **(Entries in the 2007 Directory will not automatically be carried over.)**The information that I would like to have included in given as follows:

Name _____ Phone _____
Address _____ e-mail address _____

Please send this form to William O'Neil, 4122 Beehner Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15217-2811, or phone Bill at 412-422-1313, or send him an e-mail at boneil222@gmail.com .

Statue of St. Benedict – can be ordered from Basilica Gift Shop

The statue is plastic (“resin”) and 8 inches tall. The cost is \$19.95 (\$17.95 for Oblates and Oblate novices, who receive a 20% discount). Add additional money if you want the statue mailed to you. To order, phone the Basilica Gift Shop at 724-532-5068.)

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