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THE SAINT VINCENT OBLATE NEWS

Saint Vincent Archabbey

300 Fraser Purchase Road, Latrobe, PA 15650-2690



August - October, 2016

724-805-2291

Volume 68, Number 3

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***Please note registration forms for Oblate Day, the day of recollection, & the November 20 event on the colored fliers.**

MERCY, MODERATION, AND JUDGMENT: PARTS OF ONE PACKAGE FOR OUR SALVATION

Dear Oblates, Oblate novices, and Friends,

The importance of deadlines

More and more, I find myself dreading certain deadlines. Perhaps my dislike is connected with aging and not wishing to feel overwhelmed (as I often do), with wanting to work at my own pace, and with worry that focus on one task leads me to neglect other important tasks. Surely, there is also an element of rebelliousness in all this; a part of me simply wants to do what I feel like doing rather than to respond to external demands (and ultimately what God is asking of me). However you or I may feel, deadlines are a necessary part of life on earth. Notices for parish bulletins and newspapers must be turned in by a certain date in advance of publication. Students must finish papers before a fixed day so that teachers can correct them and give grades before their deadlines. This month, I have been told, quite rightly, that I should turn in this newsletter to the Mailing & Duplicating Office before the second week of August because professors will start submitting large amounts of material for duplication at that time. Whether we like them or not, deadlines are essential, and in a practical way they help us to set priorities and to make decisions about how to proceed with our work.

Connection between deadlines & God's judgment

My dictionary gives as the first definition of deadline the following: "a line drawn within or around a prison that a prisoner passes at the risk of being shot." Thus deadlines, as the word implies, are linked with death. A project becomes "dead" if it is not completed before a deadline, and all the work put into it may turn out to be futile. Our ultimate deadline, of course, is the date of our death. Some day all our projects on this earth will cease, or "die," because we shall die. Furthermore, all that we have done on earth will be submitted to God for judgment. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches, all of us will be subjected to a particular judgment and to a final judgment. The *Catechism* states, "The New Testament speaks of judgment primarily in its aspect of the final encounter with Christ in his second coming, but also repeatedly affirms that each will be rewarded immediately after death in accordance with his works and faith" (#1021). That is, "each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of death, in a particular judgment that refers his life to Christ: either entrance into the blessedness of heaven - through a purification or immediately - or immediate and everlasting damnation" (#1022). Then, as the Scriptures and the *Catechism* inform us, there will be a

Last Judgment, at which "in the presence of Christ, who is Truth itself, the truth of each man's relationship will be laid bare" (# 1039). The Last Judgment will reveal "even to its furthest consequences the good each person has done or failed to do during his earthly life" (#1039). The reality of these judgments is indeed a gift from God. These "deadlines" can motivate us to make decisions now in accordance with God's will and to be zealous in our love for Christ and for the people whom He places in our midst.

Judgment in the Rule

St. Benedict refers to God's judgment a number of times in the *Rule*. Many of these occurrences refer to the abbot, who is warned rather sternly that "on judgment day he will surely have to submit a reckoning to the Lord for all their [the monks'] souls - and indeed for his own as well" (*RB* 2:38). At the same time, if the members of his flock are "restive and disobedient" and he strives "to cure their unhealthy ways" (2:8), then "the shepherd will be acquitted at the Lord's judgment" (2:9). In that case, "the sheep that have rebelled against his care will be punished by the overwhelming power of death" (2:10). In Chapter 3 the abbot is reminded once again that "he can be sure beyond any doubt that he will have to give an account of all his judgments to God, the most just of judges" (3:11). The superior is told again in Chapter 63, on community rank, that "he will have to give God an account of all his decisions and actions" (63:3), and Chapter 65 says much the same, but specifically regarding the abbot's dealings with the prior; "he must give God an account of all his judgments, lest the flames of jealousy or rivalry seer his soul" (65:22). Chapter 64 brings into play the essential aspects of mercy and moderation. The abbot must allow God's judgments to determine his own judgments, and so he "should always 'let mercy triumph over judgment' (Jas 2:13) so that he too may win mercy" (64:10). In punishing "he should use prudence and avoid extremes" (64:12). "He should prune [faults] away with prudence and love as he sees best for each individual" (64:14). Also, regarding the abbot's allotment of goods to the monks, "in all his judgments he must bear in mind God's retribution" (55:22). Mercy and just judgments must go together.

At various points in the *Rule*, all the monks are also urged to keep in mind death, judgment, and the Last Judgment. Every monk is to "live in fear of judgment day and have a great horror of hell" (4: 44-45). The "tools of the spiritual craft" (4:75) in Chapter 4 - all 74 of them! - are to be "used ... without ceasing day and

night” and then “returned [to God] on judgment day” (4:76). The spiritual journey of monks demands that they “no longer live by their own judgment, giving in to their whims and appetites” (5:12); rather they choose “to live in monasteries and to have an abbot over them” (5:12). The judgments of the abbot and other superiors are to reflect God’s judgments. As an aid to humility, a monk “should consider that he is already at the fearful judgment” (7:64) and thus imitate the disposition of the tax collector in Luke 18:13. Praying the Divine Office gives monks an opportunity to “praise our Creator for his just judgments” (16:5). In his own realm the cellarer is very much like the abbot and so “will be accountable for all of them [those monks whom he is called to serve] on the day of judgment” (31:9). Thus making just judgments, in imitation of God Himself, and living by others’ judgments form an important dimension of Benedictine community life.

Judgment linked with mercy and compassion

During this Year of Mercy, the theme of judgment may seem at odds with the celebration of God’s merciful love. However, with God mercy and just judgments are one. God judges us precisely because He loves us and is merciful. He wants us to live in a way that will lead us to eternal joy and so must lead us back to His all-just ways. Therefore, He necessarily judges us - not to condemn us but to save us. On the other hand, we may react negatively to the fact that God is continually judging our thoughts and actions and that He will also judge us thoroughly at the time of our deaths and on the Last Day. Such a phenomenon may not appeal to us. We would rather not have Someone constantly watching over us and calling us to responsibility. We may prefer, for one thing, to set our own deadlines rather than to have God intervene in our lives and set the date of our death and of our particular judgment. We would like to act, at least at times, according to our own whims rather than according to His all-wise laws. However, whatever reluctance we may have in submitting to God’s ways shows all the more that we need His judgments. We need Him to redirect our ways to the path that leads to eternal life. He has made us for Himself, and the fact that He judges us even now displays His merciful love. He will surely affirm us when we follow His ways, but He will also judge us wrong when we stray. He will not abandon us to our own disordered desires but will do all that He can, without forcing us, to choose the way that leads to eternal communion with Him.

Examples of judgment in Scripture

The Scriptures that we have heard in recent weeks at Sunday Mass include the theme of judgment in various ways. St. Paul urges the Galatians not to sink back into reliance on the Jewish law but rather, like him, to “boast ... in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Gal 6:14) and to become “a new creation” (Gal 6:15) in Him. Our Lord, receiving back His seventy-two disciples after their mission, warns them not so much to rejoice in their power over evil spirits (which is God’s power anyway) but to rejoice that their “names are

written in heaven” (Lk 10:20); that is, God’s power of love has bestowed on them an eternal relationship with Him, which is judged to be more essential than any actions that they happen to perform. The people of Israel apparently complained to Moses that God’s law was “too mysterious and remote” (Deut 30:11) for them; so he had to admonish them not to seek such a simplistic escape but rather to carry out the difficult but quite comprehensible law, which is “something very near to you” (Deut 30:14). The Lord Jesus Himself judges those who escape from loving their neighbors and urges them to extend themselves generously like the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37). Our Lord judges His dear friend Martha for her excessive anxiety, frenzy, and condemning attitude toward her sister Mary; He judges Mary’s way of sitting at His feet and listening to His words as more pleasing to Him. He urges Martha to slow down and focus on the “only one thing needed,” which, in His eyes, is the “better part” (Lk 10:42). The Lord also judges the man who demands his share of an inheritance (Lk 12:13) and advises him not to “store up treasures for [himself]” but rather to become “rich in what matters to God” (Lk 12:21). The parable about the rich man who built bigger barns warns those who are greedy and heedless of God’s judgment; they may die at any moment and then know the pain of having missed opportunities to use their wealth for God’s good purposes rather than self-indulgence.

In the Gospels we see that Our Lord often judges and reproves His own disciples rather frequently since as future leaders of His Church they must be models of proclaiming His Kingdom. He thus helps them to turn away from their limited and faulty vision. After they misunderstand His teaching about “the yeast of the Pharisees,” He rebukes them: “Do you still not see or comprehend?” (Mk 8:17). After they fail to heal a possessed boy, apparently because they do not use the power of prayer that He has given them, He says to the crowd along with His disciples, “What an unbelieving lot you are!” (Mk 9:19). After St. Peter tries to dissuade Jesus from going to the Cross, He rebukes him with the words, “Get out of my sight, you satan!” (Mt 16:23). Our Lord also opposes St. John when he objects to the work of a non-disciple, and He reprimands St. James and St. John when they seek to “call down fire from heaven” (Lk 9:55) to destroy the inhospitable Samaritans. Again and again Our Lord corrects His disciples’ incorrect judgments so that He might mold their minds and hearts in the truth of His Kingdom. He judges their faulty perspective because He loves them. Surely He does the same for us.

Learning gratitude for God’s judgments

We can and should all grow in gratitude to God for judging us. Because, in His love for us, He wants us to enjoy eternal life, He relentlessly seeks to redirect us from wayward tendencies. However long a life we may have on earth (and we never know for sure, thanks be to God!), God is lengthening our life span “by way of a truce, that we may amend our misdeeds” (RB Prol:36).

In His mercy He gives us grace “while there is still time, while we are in the body and have time to accomplish all these things [good deeds] by the light of life” (Prol:43) to help us “run and do now what will profit us forever” (Prol: 44). God’s judgments upon us in the present provide wonderful opportunities to prepare well for our particular judgments at death and for the Last Judgment. Better than the best of abbots, God generally nudges us with gentleness and moderation and expects us to assist one another in the same way. For example, He sometimes makes it clear that He gives us “no reward” (5:19) when we obey with a grudging attitude or grumbling; He will allow us to “incur punishment for grumbling” (5:15), and if we heed His signals, we shall have a grace-filled occasion to “[change] for the better and [make] amends” (5:19).

Growing older may help us or hinder us in accepting God’s judgments. Becoming weary of this life and its burdens can move us to long for death and even for His final judgment, which one day will supersede the fallible judgments of this earth. We may be tired of the changes of season and of the dangers of winter. We may be tired of having to face the growing limitations of our bodies. We may feel disgusted with the unpromising political situation in our country. We may bemoan the seemingly endless reports about shooting and terrorist attacks. We may also experience frustration with our own chronic faults, against which we may have struggled for 30, 40, or 50 years without much apparent success. Though the natural feeling of weariness can help to open us to God’s graces, the Lord surely has higher expectations for us. We might do better to prepare for death and judgment by striving to live in praise and thanksgiving despite all the dysfunctions and diminutions of life on earth. (See the book *Praise God and Thank Him* by Jeff Cavins.) Bemoaning the miseries of one’s personal life or of the world without reference to God’s concern for us can lead to bitterness and despair. However, if we aim to renew ourselves in the belief “that the divine presence is everywhere and that in every place the eyes of the Lord are watching the good and the evil” (*RB* 19:1), then we have every reason to live in hope and

confidence. In Christ God is encouraging us to persevere in doing good, however difficult. In Christ God is constantly opposing the evil without violating human free will. God knows all the miseries that we suffer (and that we cause) from all the inner turmoil of our lives and the darkness of evil in the world. Even through our sufferings He may be urging us to do our little part to bring about His Kingdom of justice. His just judgments will, if we remain faithful to Him, remake us into a “new creation” and even transform the Church and the whole world into “new heavens and a new earth” (Rev 21:1), in which “there shall be no more death or mourning, crying out or pain” (Rev 21:4).

Conclusion: striving to live in God’s word

How can we best prepare for God’s ultimate judgment of us and our deeds? We can learn to listen each day to His merciful, just judgments that come to us through His word, primarily in the Sacred Scriptures. *Lectio divina* on the Bible is a powerful tool in overcoming the prevailing disposition of hopelessness in the world and the temptation to give in to the weariness of our hearts. God’s word reminds us each day what we are doing right and what we are doing wrong. God’s word reassures us that He is acting powerfully in our lives. God’s word challenges us to keep changing and growing in the way of the Gospel even while it asserts convincingly that He will never abandon us. God’s word proclaims that He is using even the worst of tragedies to bring about His Kingdom of love, where His just and loving judgments will prevail. Let us, therefore, be faithful to daily *lectio*, if possible, so that we may tap into His hope-filled words and thus be ready for all the really important deadlines of life as well as for the final and most welcome deadline when we pass from death to the fullness of life in eternity.

In the peace of Christ and Saint Benedict,

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

Results of 2015-16 Questionnaire/Survey of Deaneries Soon to Be Available

During the Assembly of Deanery Representatives in June of 2015, the attendees pondered the possibility of having an annual questionnaire or survey for all the deaneries (and other groups that meet regularly) to encourage them to follow appropriate standards at meetings and to enable them to express any special needs. As of July 31 all but one deanery had responded, and the results have been compiled and written up diligently by a committee consisting of Oblates Donna Ciarcinski and Jana Gruber. These results, a longer form and a shorter form, once they have been proofread, should soon be available. They will be sent to all the deaneries and other groups that have regular meetings, probably in August, but any Oblate who wants a copy may ask for one from the Oblate Office.

PRAYER CHAINS IN LATROBE AREA CONTINUE; NEW MEMBERS ARE WELCOME

The phone and e-mail prayer chains for Oblates in the Latrobe/Greensburg/Ligonier/Jeannette areas, which began in 2009, have continued faithfully each Tuesday evening (at 6:30 P.M. for the phone chain). 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 phone prayer chain may contact the Oblate Office. Those interested in the E-mail prayer chain may contact Theresa at tkgerson@gmail.com.

Dear Oblates and Friends of Saint Vincent,

In July the monks of Saint Vincent gathered for our annual community meetings. Monks serving in our educational, pastoral, and missionary apostolates throughout the world joined with the resident community here to review our apostolic works and to recommit ourselves to the evangelizing mission of Christ.

Pope Francis reminds us that “evangelization is the mission of the Church. It is your mission. It is my mission.” Evangelization involves giving witness to the love of God through the concrete works of charity we do for those who come to us in need each day. Experiencing the loving presence of Christ opens hearts and minds to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ in the unique circumstances of our daily lives.

May the Holy Spirit renew us with the grace of our baptism to “go forth” to give witness to Jesus Christ, who has transformed our lives to become with Him “bridges” to the fountain of God’s mercy and compassion.

Faithfully in Christ,

+Douglas R. Nowicki, O.S.B.
Archabbot

OBLATE DAY 2016 - September 25, 2016

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 Fr. Nathan Munsch, O.S.B., teacher of theology at St. Vincent College and sacramental minister of two parishes. See the registration form on the insert, and send in a completed form before Monday, 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; it becomes very difficult for the person receiving and processing registrations when large numbers contact her at the last minute.

OBLATE DAY OF RECOLLECTION - October 15, 2016

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. Checking-in will be on the first floor of Leander Hall from 8:30 to 9:00 A.M. The day will include conferences by Fr. Wulfstan Clough, O.S.B.; an opportunity for confession; Midday Prayer and Evening Prayer with the monastic community; and lunch and supper. The cost will be \$34.00 (or \$27.00 without supper); one may send a check with the registration form or pay on arrival. Those who cannot pay the full price can request a discount. Please send the registration form [see the flier] to the Oblate Office by Mon., Oct. 10.

“OBLATE RETREAT,” May 13-15

Some 50 people, mostly Oblates and Oblate novices, attended this year’s regular retreat on Benedictine spirituality, entitled “Never Lose Hope in God’s Mercy: Mercy in the *Rule* of St. Benedict and in Daily Life.” It was directed by Fr. Donald. At ceremonies in St. Gregory Chapel on May 14 at 2:00, Fr. Donald received the following:

Oblates: **Regina (Mary Faustina Anneliese Scholastica) Bingham** of Northeast Warren, OH,
Ronald D. (Vincent de Paul) Fasano of Boardman, OH
Oblate novice: **Joshua Moss** of Uniontown, PA.

Also, all the Oblates present renewed their Oblation. Regina is the sister of Oblates Blaze and Xavier Bingham, and her mother and several other members of her family were present for the ceremony.

OTHER RETREATS

On Saturday afternoon, July 23, during the men’s retreat, which was directed by Br. Elliott, Fr. Donald invested **Curtis S. Miller** of Clairton, PA, as an Oblate novice in St. Gregory Chapel. The other Oblates present at the ceremony renewed their Oblation. Also, during the father-and-son retreat on July 30, the Oblates present renewed their Oblation.

ON THE BROCHURE FOR SUMMER RETREATS: Let us know if you wish to receive mailings!

Oblates are no longer automatically on the Retreat Program’s mailing list. If you wish to be on the retreat mailing list and receive the annual retreat brochure, please contact the Retreat Office. Br. Hugh, the Director of Retreats, can be phoned at 724-805-2139.

JULY 11 – COMMEMORATION OF FEAST OF ST. BENEDICT

Oblates and their guests, some 55 people, participated in the Archabbey's celebration of the Feast of St. Benedict, Patriarch of Western Monasticism. Some of the Oblates arrived on July 9 or 10 and thus were able to witness the first profession of six monks at Evening Prayer on July 10. 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. Lawrence Machia, O.S.B.

At 2:00 in St. Gregory Chapel, Br. Rafael Quesada, O.S.B., who professed solemn vows last year, gave a presentation about the Benedictine vow of *conversatio morum*.

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

Oblate novices: **Adrian Banaszak** of Pittsburgh, PA
Kathleen "Katie" Garland of Bethel Park, PA
Ronald Toczek of Danville, PA

Oblates: **James Folkens** of Washington, PA
Gisela (Maria) Iglesias of Latrobe, PA
William "Bill" (Bernard) Iglesias of Latrobe, PA
Lillian (Benedicta) Kauffman of McMurray, PA
Robert (Bede) Kefferstan of Morgantown, PA
Joseph N. (Pio) Smith of Donora, PA .

Bill and Gisela are a married couple who regularly serve as greeters at monthly meetings of the Latrobe Deanery.

At 5:00 in the Archabbey Basilica, there was another ceremony, this one being for the final Oblation of

Jerome (Joseph) LeFebvre of Oakdale, PA,

since he was unable to be present at 2:30.

After the Oblation ceremonies at 2:30, the following Oblate jubilarians were honored: Sandra Tucker – 30 years (in 2014), Frances M. Gigliotti – 30 years, Donna Ciarcinski - 25 years, John C. Rosick - 20 years, Karen B. Koscelek - 15 years, William "Bill" O'Neil - 15 years, Josephine Smart - 15 years, Kathleen "Kathy" Brestensky - 5 years, Richard "Rick" Gummo - 5 years, and Sr. Marie Theresa Tellier, C.H. - 5 years. Also, other jubilarians who contacted the Oblate Office about their inability to be present were honored *in absentia* by being sent a certificate in the mail. Some Oblates joined the monastic community and other guests for Vespers at 7:00, after supper in Placid Dining Room B.

OBLATE BOARD OF ADVISORS – meeting on June 17

The Oblate Board of Advisors met at the Archabbey on Friday, June 17. The topics discussed were: the bibliography of Benedictine books for the Oblate website, the next Assembly of Deanery Representatives (in 2017), the survey of Oblate deaneries (and other groups), the new formation program for Oblate novices to be implemented on July 11, and news from the various deaneries. The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Friday, August 5, at 6:30 P.M. in Brownfield 203.

N.A.A.B.O.D. CONFERENCE AT ST. SCHOLASTICA MONASTERY IN DULUTH, JUNE 14-19, 2017

It was recently announced that the 2017 meeting of the North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors will take place at St. Scholastica Monastery in Duluth, Minnesota, on June 14-19. The theme of the conference will be "Benedictine Values & Practices: Tools for Living, Tools for Life." Two Oblates affiliated with St. Vincent Archabbey are welcome to attend. Those who attend should be active in their deaneries and have the capacity to share with our Oblate community whatever they gain from the conference. Subsidies from the Oblate Office are available to help with travel expenses. If you are interested, please contact the Oblate Office.

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. (On a number of occasions Oblates have kept books for over a year, and sometimes even over two years.)

NEW (or newly discovered) BOOKS ON BENEDICTINE SPIRITUALITY

The following books are in the Oblate Library:

- Jane Foulcher, *Reclaiming Humility: Four Studies in the Monastic Tradition* (Athens, OH: Cistercian Publications, 2009)
- Fr. Raymond Studzinski, O.S.B., *Reading to Live: The Evolving Practice of Lectio Divina* (Trappist, KY: Cistercian Publications, 2009)

RECOMMENDED READING

The following books are in the Oblate Library:

- Jeff Cavins, *Praise God and Thank Him: Biblical Keys for a Joyful Life* (Cincinnati, OH: Servant Books, 2014)
- Jacques Philippe, *Thirsting for Prayer* (trans. by Helena Scott; New York: Scepter Publishers, Inc., 2014)

OBLATE LOGO CLOTHING & APPAREL ITEMS FOR PURCHASE

Oblate Bill Gibson of Wheeling, WV, has been coordinating this project. Oblates are welcome to shop online by going to web site <http://www.stbenedict.qbstores.com> . Following instructions, they are asked on this "St. Vincent Oblate Logo Store" to provide basic information to create a personal account and to make purchases. Purchases are paid for online via credit card. If anyone would like more information about this, he or she may ask for a flier from the Oblate Office or may contact the e-mail address wmsgibson@comcast.net (with the subject line "SVA Oblate Store").

EUCHARISTIC EXPOSITION FOR VOCATIONS

Eucharistic exposition is being held every Sunday **from 2:00 to 4:15 P.M.** (with Benediction at 4:00) in St. Gregory Chapel. (Please note the change of times, beginning in August.) Oblates are encouraged to attend and pray for vocations to the religious life and the priesthood.

Also, there is Eucharistic exposition every Friday in St. Gregory Chapel from 8:30 A.M. to 3:45 P.M., with the Divine Mercy Chaplet prayed at 3:00 and Benediction at 3:30 P.M. All are welcome to participate.

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 23 (fourth Sunday), and November 20. Also, presentations on Benedictine spirituality are given in the same room at 3:00 P.M. on the same days. Those offering presentations from August until November are: Br. Lawrence Machia, Br. Dominic Leo (St. Peter's Abbey), Br. Joachim Morgan, and Fr. Anthony Grossi. **Note that on November 20 there will be exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the basilica all afternoon. Bishop Edward Malesic of Greensburg will serve as the guest speaker at the meeting at 7:00 P.M. (See below.) Those who plan to come for dinner on that day should register in advance by using the enclosed flier.** Regarding other monthly meetings, 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.

Please also note the change of dates for meetings in 2017 (to avoid Easter Sunday and closeness to St. Benedict Day, etc.): January 15, February 12 (2nd Sunday), March 12 (2nd Sunday), April 9 (2nd Sunday), May 7 (1st Sunday), and June 11 (2nd Sunday).

BISHOP EDWARD MALESIC TO SPEAK TO OBLATES IN LATROBE ON NOVEMBER 20

Bishop Malesic of Greensburg has kindly agreed to address the Oblates and others who attend the evening meeting in Latrobe on Sunday, November 20. Also, on that day, which is the Solemnity of Christ the King, there will be exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the Archabbey Basilica from 12:30 until Vespers, which begins at 5:00. Bishop Malesic will preside at Vespers, which will end with Benediction. Because of the possibly larger number of attendees, supper will be in the Placid B Dining Room about 6:00, and those planning to attend should complete the enclosed registration form in advance. Bishop Malesic will join us for supper and then give his presentation at 7:00 in the Foundations Room (second floor of Placid Hall). See the attached flier for registration.

MENTORING PROGRAM AND PRAYER-PARTNER PROGRAM

The Mentoring Program for guiding inquirers and Oblate novices in Benedictine spirituality is in need of volunteers to serve as mentors. If you would like to mentor in this way or if you are an inquirer or an Oblate novice who would like to have an Oblate mentor, please contact 305makaufman@gmail.com. Those who offer to be mentors receive a booklet of guidelines. Also, if you would like to have another Oblate or Oblate novice as a prayer-partner, please contact jshudock@verizon.net. If you would like to have a monk as a prayer-partner, please contact Fr. Donald or Br. Joachim at the Oblate Office. (The prayer-partner program is soon to be revised so that, it is hoped, every new full Oblate will be assigned a monk as a prayer-partner.)

OBLATE GROUP IN CAMBRIDGE, ONTARIO, CANADA

Oblate Cathy Mayled reported by e-mail on May 29 and June 30. At the meeting on May 26, attended by six people, began with prayer and continued with a discussion of Chapter 4: 34-43 of the *Rule*. The meeting closed with the praying of Compline.

Five people attended the meeting on June 23. After an opening prayer the group discussed the fifth and sixth steps of humility from the *Rule*. The meeting ended with the praying of Compline.

ECUMENICAL OBLATE GROUP IN PHILADELPHIA, PA - semi-monthly meetings on Saturdays at 10:00 A.M.

Fr. Vincent de Paul Crosby, O.S.B., reported on May 23. The meeting on May 14 began with Morning Prayer according to the Roman Rite. The topic for discussion was "Benedictine Spirituality - a Liturgical Spirituality." It was noted that although we all participate in liturgical worship on a regular basis, we may not often appreciate its rich meaning and history. We have a great gift in the liturgy, and we should not take it for granted; rather we should want to know more about it so that we can live it more fully. After some general remarks by Fr. Vincent de Paul, the group engaged in some fruitful sharing of thoughts. At the close of the meeting, Fr. Vincent de Paul invested two people as Oblate novices:

Mary R. Biddle of Philadelphia, PA,

Mary Louise Coté of Philadelphia, PA.

The celebration continued over the sharing of lunch prepared by the devoted hosts, Sharon Fischer and her daughter JoAnn. The next meeting is scheduled for August 6, 2016, at 10:00 A.M. at Saint Mary's Church, 630 E. Cathedral Rd., Philadelphia, PA 19128.

OBLATE GROUP IN TENNESSEE COLONY, TX (Michael Unit)

Oblate novice Alejandro Torres reported on May 29, July 11, and July 26. On May 17 a group of four Oblate novices met for 45 minutes. The meeting opened with Morning Prayer and continued with a discussion of *RB* 3: 1-6. The meeting ended with a prayer. Because of special circumstances there was no meeting in June.

On July 5, during a ceremony attended by about 60 people, Msgr. Zacharias Kunnakkattuthara received the final Oblations of:

Alejandro "Alex" (Moses the Black) Torres of Tennessee Colony, TX, and

Raymond (Michael) Bingham of Tennessee Colony, TX.

After the ceremony some of the attendees expressed interest in the Oblate Program.

The meeting on July 19 began with Evening Prayer and continued with a discussion of Chapter 40 of the *Rule*. Because two inquirers were present, Alex commented on several statements from the *Oblate Formation Booklet*. Seven people attended.

NEW OBLATE GROUP IN ROSHARON, TX (Terrell Unit)

Oblate novice Gilberto Gomez wrote on April 25, July 11, and July 17. An "Oblate prayer group" has been meeting regularly. The members and potential members consist of Oblate novices and several inquirers. They have been praying the Liturgy of the Hours and reading the *Rule* along with the book *Christian Warfare*. Five people attended a meeting on July 13. They prayed the Liturgy of the Hours, reflected on *RB 35*, prayed for various intentions, and discussed the "nine offices of the Sacred Heart of Jesus." They also discussed seeking to have an education ministry and "the Apologetics of San Juan."

NEWS FROM OBLATE DEANERIES

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

Moderator Deacon Ralph DeCecco reported by mail on May 26, June 30, and July 12. There were meetings on April 18 and May 23, both of which were attended by Deacon Ralph, his wife Janet, and six others. During these meetings the group prayed Vespers, and Oblate John Simpson gave a presentation on contemplation and his favorite mysteries of the rosary. There was also some group *lectio divina* on Chapter 5:1-13 of the *Rule*, and the attendees planned to have a renewal of Oblation on July 11.

The meeting on June 27 was attended by Deacon Ralph, Janet, and six others. After the praying of Vespers, Oblate novice William Beam gave a presentation on "Reverence in Prayer" (from *RB 20*), and there was time for *lectio divina* on the same topic. An inquirer was present and submitted an application to be invested as an Oblate novice.

Seven others joined Deacon Ralph and Janet for the meeting on July 11. The group prayed Vespers, listened to a presentation on "Important Bible Scriptures about Priorities," shared some *lectio divina* on the Prologue of the *Rule*, and closed with the "Litany of Humility." Also, during the meeting Deacon Ralph received the following:

Oblate: **William H. (Simon) Beam** of Albion, PA

Oblate novice: **Aaron Wygant** of Albion, PA.

The four full Oblates who were present also renewed their Oblation.

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

There was no report.

Baltimore, MD (St. Walburga Deanery) -- *meetings at 3:00-4:30 on 3rd Sun. of month, parish house, St. Benedict Church*

There were no meetings in May, June, July, or August. They will resume in September. However, Fr. Paschal Morlino, moderator, reported personally to Fr. Donald on July 20 and kept in touch with members of the deanery by E-mail and, in particular, announced the funeral Mass for Kay Volo's mother on July 23. Also, the Oblates were hoping for the establishment of a Catholic radio station in Baltimore, which would use St. Benedict Church for broadcasting.

Butler, PA (St. Hildegard Deanery) -- *monthly meetings at St. Fidelis Parish Hall, 4th Thurs. of each month*

There was no report.

Cyber Deanery

Note: Those interested in joining the Cyber Deanery need to do the following:

- (1) Have an account with yahoo.
- (2) Search for sva oblate cyber deanery.
- (3) Request approval from one of the leaders to join.

Co-lay leader Theresa George reported by e-mail on May 17. As of that date she was leading a discussion of the *Commentary* by Dom Paul Delatte, O.S.B. They were on their 22nd week of discussing the book and were up to Chapter 5 on obedience. Also, co-lay leader Michael LoPiccolo continued to share "A Few Thoughts" on Benedictine spirituality every morning with the cyber community. The membership had increased to 58.

Co-lay leader David Hicks reported on July 8 that he had assigned Theresa George to serve as the "co-owner" of the group.

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

Lay leader/secretary Kathy Kristofko (replacing Carl Motter) wrote on May 24 and July 12. The meeting on May 23 began with the praying of Vespers in the church. Carl Motter, who had died rather suddenly in April, and his family were remembered in a special way during Vespers. Then the meeting continued with a discussion of Chapter 4 of the *Rule*. In the treatment of the "Tools of the Spiritual Craft," each attendee shared about his or her personal disciplines. The meeting concluded with some planning for future meetings.

The meeting on June 20 began with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Evening Prayer, during which

Michael W. (Daniel) O'Connor of Johnstown, PA,

made his final Oblation in the presence of Deacon Michael Russo, moderator, and the others present for the meeting. Then all the sixteen Oblates present renewed their Oblation. Following the ceremonies there was a social in the meeting room.

There was no meeting in July because of the annual Parish Reunion.

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

On May 15 some twenty people gathered first to engage in a session of group *lectio divina* and then to continue a discussion of the *Rule* based on the *Commentary* by Dom Paul Delatte, O.S.B. The *lectio* session was led by Oblate novice (now Oblate) William Iglesias and involved the passage Romans 5:1-5, the second reading for the following Sunday. There were three readings of the passage, each followed by two minutes of silence and sharing by the participants. The session took up practically the whole time for the meeting and seemed to be quite fruitful; the group may have a similar session after a few more months. At the end of the *lectio* session, an Oblate affiliated with St. Scholastica Monastery in the Philippines, who was staying for some time in Virginia Beach and had made the Oblate retreat, introduced herself and took photographs of the group. The evening ended, as usual, with the praying

of Compline in the Archabbey Basilica at 8:15 P.M.

On June 12 some twelve people gathered to continue a discussion on the *Rule* based on Delatte's *Commentary*. First, they completed a discussion of Chapter 6 (on silence) by reflecting on the last verse, which deals with complete avoidance of certain kinds of talk. Then the group entered into a consideration of the first degree of humility, the fear of God, from *RB* 7. The crucial importance and necessity of a proper practice of the fear of God in Christian life was emphasized. It is based on a continual renewal of our contact with God in daily life and a reorienting of our wills to God's will. This is a key element of Benedictine spirituality and the foundation of the other degrees of humility.

On July 17 some twelve people continued the discussion on humility, with continued reflections on avoiding self-will, being on guard against "subversive desires," striving to be watchful always, and learning to enjoy doing God's will, which comes from healthy self-restraint. Also, the group welcomed Oblate **Mary M. Randall** of Belle Vernon, PA, who transferred her Oblation from Our Lady of Peace Monastery in Columbia, MO, to St. Vincent Archabbey. Finally, since the deanery had decided to use the book *Flowers in the Desert* for its next text for discussion, copies were made available at a discounted price of \$7.77.

Lessons in Latrobe at 3:00 P.M. before regular Oblate meetings at 6:45 P.M.

On May 15 Fr. Thomas Hart gave a presentation to some 25 people on the Eucharist in Benedictine spirituality. Since it was Pentecost Sunday, he began by speaking for a while about the Holy Spirit. He suggested that the attendees memorize the prayer to the Holy Spirit "Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful ..." as part of their repertoire of prayers. He commented that today many Catholics have not been catechized properly and that we can help by knowing our faith well - and by memorizing important formulas. Fr. Tom then referred to Our Lord's calling the Holy Spirit "another Advocate [or Paraclete]" and explained the meaning of Paraclete as "defender" or "defense attorney." The "prosecuting attorney" is Satan, who specializes in accusing; thus the Holy Spirit helps us to overcome the wiles of Satan, who seeks to defeat us. Fr. Tom next went on to speak about the Eucharist in the early Church. He referred to a hand-out from the "first apology in defense of Christians" by St. Justin, martyr, written about 150 or 160 A.D. The quote describes the Eucharist in the second century very much as the Mass is celebrated today. He mentioned that the Eucharist empowers us, with the Holy Spirit (coming down at the epiclesis), to continue to do what Christ told us to do - both in terms of celebrating the Eucharist and in terms of continuing His mission. The Eucharistic celebration is a mystery and something revolutionary. Just as Jesus gave thanks on the night He was betrayed, we receive grace to keep giving thanks and offering forgiveness during our hard times. The Eucharist is a healing sacrament that gives us power to give ourselves in love as Christ did. We should want to have what the early Christians had - boldness, confidence, and trust in Christ - i.e., taking Him at His word. Fr. Tom commented also that not everyone was welcome to the early Church's Eucharist; only the initiated were allowed to partake of the great mystery. In the little time that was left, Fr. Tom mentioned the few references to Mass and Holy Communion in the *Rule* of St. Benedict. He noted that we today are blessed to have regular access to the Eucharist. After the presentation there were many questions, and the group seemed to be much edified by the whole session.

On June 12 Fr. Vincent de Paul Crosby gave a two-part presentation to an audience of some 20 people. The first part involved the beginnings of the ecumenical Oblate group in Philadelphia and its current status. The group originated with Fr. Vincent's studying in Philadelphia and the request by the rector of St. Mary's Episcopalian Church to have vestments made by Fr. Vincent. Parishioners in the parish became interested in the Archabbey and Benedictine spirituality, and so meetings were begun in 2011. The meetings have emphasized what is common to Episcopalians and Roman Catholics, especially the praying of the Liturgy of the Hours. Fr. Vincent noted that the Church in England was strongly influenced by Benedictine monasteries before the Reformation, and that influence has continued ever since.

The second part of Fr. Vincent's presentation involved work in Benedictine spirituality. The motto *ora et labora* expresses the two main hinges of Benedictine life. It is important to realize that work is not a substitute for prayer but that we can learn to work prayerfully. Both prayer and work can glorify God. The Christian attitude toward work as a continuation of God's creative work stands in contrast with the pagan attitude during Roman times, which regarded manual labor as the domain of slaves and peasants. Like St. Paul, who did hard work and expected Christians in his communities to do the same, St. Benedict required his monks to work, whether they were priests, former nobles, former peasants, or former slaves. Today we face the danger of over-attachment to work and workaholicism. It is a healthy Benedictine practice to drop work as soon as one hears the bell for prayer, which has been described as "the voice of God." In today's society people must strive to see work as a gift from God, meant to build up His Kingdom. Our work should also build up community life and family life and not dominate our lives so that our careers become "everything." St. Benedict teaches us to do mindfully whatever work we have been given.

On July 17 Fr. Shawn Matthew spoke to some 24 people about silence. He based his talk on the section of St. Luke's Gospel describing the call of the fishermen to be apostles (Lk 5: 1-11). He explained that Jesus called the men to "put out into deep waters" since during the day fish go down to cooler water. Also, catching fish requires silence. Fr. Shawn made the analogy of our preference to "fish" in "shallow waters" in our spiritual lives by avoiding a deep relationship with God and thus not "catching any fish." A Christian needs to do the ongoing work of "receiving and believing." We can be filled with the Holy Spirit only if we are silent and still. In our silence Christ points out to us the things in our lives that we do not like, analogous to the "disgusting stuff" at the bottom of a well that needs to be cleaned. To reach the clear water we must admit our messiness and brokenness and welcome God to show us His mercy. When we begin a life of regular prayer, as Thomas Merton wrote, we start to see the depths of our sinfulness and may feel rejected by God. Persistence in silence enables us to hear Christ's words, "Do not fear," and to learn the deeper reality of our being children of God. Finally, Fr. Shawn gave some practical ways to open ourselves to a deeper relationship with God: "first thought wrong," reevaluating our reckless first reactions, practicing turning off cell phones for a part of each day, establishing new patterns of learning through persistent (and usually difficult) practice, and letting the rosary lead us into silence. Fr. Shawn also responded to a number of questions and comments. In the course of his talk he recommended the book *Thirsting for Prayer* by Jacques Philippe.

Niagara Area, Ontario, Canada (St. Henry/St. Gertrude Deanery) -- meetings on last Sunday of each month, meeting room of St. Thomas Aquinas Church, St. Catharines, Ont.

Lay leader Brian Chisholm reported by phone on June 1 and July 25 and by letter on July 14. The meeting on May 22, the first in some months, was attended by eight people, including four inquirers. It began with the usual prayers and continued with discussion about the history of the deanery (given by Brian) and about the hope to study the *Rule* methodically, perhaps using a new book. Application forms were given to the inquirers.

On July 10, after a Sunday Mass at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, the pastor, Fr. Charles Moser, invested three people as Oblate novices:

Keith Beaulieu of Welland, Ont.

Ruth Davis of St. Catharines, Ont.

Stephen Morrison of St. Catharines, Ont.

After the ceremony all went out to breakfast together.

Four people attended the meeting on July 24. It began with a praying of the rosary and the Litany of St. Benedict. The group decided on a book for study in subsequent months, namely the latest version of the *Oblate Formation Booklet*. There was also hope of sending news about the investitures to the diocesan Catholic newspaper, *The Vineyard*, in the near future and of having literature about the Oblate Program available before Masses at St. Thomas Aquinas Church.

Palmyra, PA (Holy Spirit Deanery) – *monthly meetings on Sundays at Holy Spirit Catholic Church, Palmyra*

Lay leader/secretary Gabriele Terrill reported by E-mail on May 26. The meeting on May 22, attended by moderator Fr. James Podlesny and seven others, began with Vespers in the church; then Fr. Jim had to leave. Next there was a social with refreshments. The group welcomed a new inquirer and then listened to part of a C.D. on the twelve degrees of humility by Thomas Merton. The lesson concerned humility, suffering, evil, and goodness, with the point that through humility we share in the passion of Christ and thus experience salvific suffering in union with Christ on the Cross. Truly salvific suffering is that which we cannot control or dominate. In suffering we should not compare ourselves with others but rather think about others with love. The group also had some discussion about the annual picnic, planned tentatively for July 17.

Pendleton, IN (St. Celestine Deanery) – *monthly meetings in the chapel in Pendleton*

Secretary Frederick Laux reported on June 21. During a Mass celebrated by Fr. Sean Pogue on May 26, Fr. Sean invested as Oblate novices:

Myron S. Davisson of Pendleton, IN

Cory Des Armo of Pendleton, IN

Deacon John P. Etter of Cicero, IN.

Deacon John serves at Sacred Heart Church in Cicero and also has been serving as moderator of the deanery. Before the Mass Fr. Sean announced that the ceremony would take place and that for those interested in the Oblate Program information would be made available on June 14.

The meeting later in the day on May 26 began with the praying of the Angelus. In attendance were two Oblates, the recently invested Oblate novices, and five inquirers. Fred then gave a presentation on humility, with a focus on *RB 7: 1-9* as quoted in the book *The Rule in Bits and Pieces*. Fred also referred to the Letter of James and the challenge not to claim, "I'm a victim," when things go wrong. He said that St. Benedict and St. James both suggest that regardless of who is responsible for something wrong, such mishaps are really opportunities to grow closer to God and to know how much He loves us. Deacon John ended the meeting with a blessing.

The meeting on June 14 was attended by three Oblates, three Oblate novices, and eight inquirers. The meeting began with Evening Prayer. Then Deacon John gave a history of the deanery, including its "pre-history." The purpose of the meeting was largely reorganizational. Also, Fred shared with the group a letter from Bishop Emeritus William Higi of the Lafayette Diocese, which congratulated the deanery and its new Oblate novices, and reviewed what was expected of Oblate novices and Oblates, with reference to the *Oblate Formation Booklet*. The structure of future meetings was established as follows: Evening Prayer, announcements, old and new business, prayer intentions, a personal testimony, the viewing of D.V.D.'s from the Archabbey, a reading from the *Rule*, and a presentation based on the *Rule*. The group also discussed the possibility of coming up with a "community project." Deacon John closed the meeting with a blessing, and the attendees introduced themselves to one another for the benefit of the inquirers.

Pittsburgh, PA (St. Peter Deanery) -- *meetings on Thursdays (usually 3rd or 4th), 7:00 P.M., basement of St. Peter Church.*

Oblate George Ponticello reported by E-mail on July 16. Thirteen people, including moderator Fr. Vincent Zidek and one guest, attended the meeting on May 11. Prior to the meeting a number of the group met for dinner at a near-by restaurant. At the meeting the group discussed Chapter 1 of the book *Flowers in the Desert* by Fr. Demetrius Dumm, O.S.B.

Fr. Vincent along with five Oblates attended the meeting on June 15. After Evening Prayer in the church, the group met to discuss Chapter 2 of *Flowers in the Desert*. There was no meeting planned for July because of vacations and other events.

The next meeting was planned for Wednesday, August 17, with Evening Prayer at 6:00 followed by the deanery's annual summer picnic, with much organized planning about who was to bring what.

Rosharon, TX [Ramsey Unit I] (St. Bede Deanery) -- *monthly meetings*

New lay leader/secretary Roland Fernandez reported on May 21. The group had a meeting on May 21 after the celebration of Mass by Fr. Frank Wittouck. Then the meeting began with an opening prayer and a praying of the Liturgy of the Hours. Next they discussed the *Rule*, Chapter 4: 44-61. Six Oblates and one inquirer were in attendance.

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

Secretary Peggi Gabler wrote on June 16 and July 15. The meeting on May 12 began, as usual, after Evening Prayer and

Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Because of conflicting activities, only three Oblates attended. The session began with the Oblate prayer and a reading of the minutes of the meeting on April 7. The group also read *RB 2: 11-15*, reflected on the passage, and ended with the prayer to St. Benedict.

Five people attended the meeting on June 2. After a recitation of the Oblate prayer and the reading of minutes from May, Peggi read a letter from the Oblate Office regarding the celebration of jubilees on July 11. Then the group read and discussed *RB 7: 35-43*, involving the fourth step of humility. There was some exchange on the current persecution of Christians. The attendees also brought up a few items from the Oblate newsletter and closed with the prayer to St. Benedict.

Eight people, including a new inquirer, attended the meeting on July 7. The group was especially glad to see Oblate Mary Lynn Nicklas, who had some good news regarding her bout with cancer, and two new attendees. After recitation of the prayer to St. Benedict and the reading of the minutes from June, the group read and discussed *RB 30* on the reproving of boys. The meeting ended with a praying of the Oblate prayer.

Saint Vincent College – *monthly meetings to begin in September, in Mary, Mother of Wisdom Chapel*

There were no meetings during the summer. Fr. Killian Loch, O.S.B., moderator, gave a report on June 12 about the Oblate activities during the spring semester. The group continued to meet monthly, although it was a challenge to maintain steady attendance. Usually two or three students attended these monthly studies of the *Holy Rule*. On April 25 sophomore Alexsi Engleka was invested as an Oblate novice by Fr. Donald. (See the May newsletter.) Alexsi had been actively in the Oblate meetings since her freshman year.

Savannah, GA (St. Katharine Drexel Deanery) -- *special monthly events at Sunday Vespers at Benedictine Priory*

There was no report

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

Oblate Teresa Warlow reported by E-mail on May 12 and June 13. The meeting on May 8 began with a praying of the “Oblates’ prayer” and continued with a discussion of Chapter 2 of the *Rule* based on the *Commentary* by Dom Paul Delatte, O.S.B. The group reflected on those attributes of the abbot that are relevant to lay people. The meeting closed with the recitation of Mid-afternoon Prayer.

At the meeting on June 12, the group began with an opening prayer and then discussed how the *Rule’s* prescriptions for the abbot apply to all of us when we are in positions of authority and leadership and what are the challenges and blessings involved. The group read Chapter 2 of Delatte’s *Commentary*. The meeting ended with Mid-afternoon Prayer.

Somerset, PA (St. John Paul II Deanery) – *meetings on 2nd & 4th Tuesdays, 6:30 -8:15, chapel annex*

Co-ay leader Steward Steckley wrote on May 16, and new secretary/co-lay leader Jeffery Hahn wrote on June 1 and July 4, 17, and 28. Fr. James Dugan, who had been moderator for the deanery for several years, was transferred to Hollidaysburg, PA; so Oblate Deacon David Homick became the moderator. Steward had been both lay leader and secretary, but because of a multiplicity of other duties, Oblate Jeffery Hahn became the secretary in May. (Steward later moved away in July; so Jeffery Hahn and Robert Fadden are now the co-lay leaders.)

On May 10 four Oblates, three Oblate novices, and six inquirers met together with Deacon David. After an opening prayer and a reading of the daily passage from the *Rule*, Steward led a discussion of the *Rule* and introduced inquirer Stephen Killian, who gave a personal testimony to the deanery about how an accident that nearly killed him brought him to Christ and the Church. There was considerable discussion after the presentation, with some further sharing of personal stories of faith. The meeting ended with the praying of Compline.

On May 24 six Oblates, four Oblate novices, and seven inquirers met with Deacon David. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, Steward led a discussion on that passage of the *Rule* and then gave a presentation entitled “A Walk through the Celebration of the Mass.” Steward went through the entire Mass and provided explanations for “why we do what we do when we do it.” Questions were answered, and handouts were provided for additional reading and information. It was then announced that future ceremonies for investitures and Oblations would be held during Mass. The meeting ended with Compline. The meeting on June 14 was attended by five Oblates, three Oblate novices, and four inquirers. In the absence of Deacon David, Pastor Craig Hess moderated the meeting. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, Oblate John Liebel gave a presentation on the topic of malice, which included quotes from the *Rule* (Chapters 25-28) and philosophical reflections on malice from St. Thomas Aquinas. An in-depth discussion followed. The meeting ended with Compline. (*continued*)

The meeting on June 28 was attended by four Oblates, four Oblate novices, and six inquirers, along with Deacon David. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, there followed some discussion and questions regarding the reading. Then Steward introduced a series of presentations on St. Peter and St. Paul. (It was the vigil of the Solemnity of Ss. Peter and Paul.) Inquirer Jimmy Polites spoke about St. Peter in his denial of Christ, his repentance, and his role as the first Pope. Oblate novice Paul Burke spoke about St. Paul, with emphasis on his letters in the New Testament, his insistence on the development of the mind, and his focus on the role of love in Christian life, especially as shown in 1 Cor 13. The meeting closed with Compline.

On Sunday, July 3, during a Communion service, Deacon David received the following:

Oblates: **Brandon (Walter) Cavanaugh** of Somerset, PA

Richard (Roman) Lafayette of Somerset, PA

John (Thomas Justus) Lohr of Somerset, PA

Oblate novice: **Jimmy Polites** of Somerset, PA.

Lay leader Steward Steckley assisted with the ceremonies, and four other Oblates and three Oblate novices were in attendance.

The meeting on July 12 was attended by five Oblates, two Oblate novices, three inquirers, and Deacon David. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, inquirer Wendell Caldwell gave a presentation on hagiology, with reference to St. John the Baptist’s “seven degrees of faith” and St. Benedict’s twelve degrees of humility, especially the degrees dealing with control of speech. There was some discussion on the need for priests and the importance of praying for more vocations.

Prior to the meeting on July 26, Deacon David officiated, in the Chaplain's Office, at the final Oblation of

Joseph (Angelo) Siebor of Somerset, PA.

Jeff Hahn assisted at the ceremony, and three others of the Oblate community attended. Then the regularly bi-weekly meeting was attended by five Oblates, two Oblate novices, and seven inquirers besides Deacon David. There was some discussion of "housekeeping" matters, and the group voted to continue to meet on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month. Then Jeff Hahn led a discussion on Chapter 46 of the *Rule* and posed the question, "What does it mean to be in a deeply committed, loving relationship with God?" The discussion that followed also included consideration of the feasts of Ss. Joachim and Ann and of St. James the Apostle. The meeting closed with the praying of Compline.

Southern Pines, NC (St. Ephrem the Syrian Deanery) – *monthly meetings on 2nd Thurs. of month, St. Anthony of Padua Church*
There was no report.

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

Secretary Kay Tittmann reported by e-mail on May 10. The meeting on May 9 began with Mass at 5:00 P.M. at Our Lady of Victory Church celebrated by Fr. David Griffin, moderator. Attending were nine Oblates, five Oblate novices, and five guests. Fr. David's homily revolved around John 17, including Our Lord's prayer for the Church involving the coming of the Holy Spirit. Our Lord prays that we would receive the Spirit and be one with Him and the Father - in whatever state of life we may be. We are to carry this prayer within us in all that we do. After the Mass the group enjoyed a potluck supper in the church's social hall. The pastor, Fr. Dadey, and Msgr. Saylor joined the group for the meal. The evening with the group's presenting a signed Mass card to Fr. David since his birthday was approaching. The next meeting was scheduled for September, and Oblate Phyllis Austin would begin serving as secretary for the deanery. We thank Kay for her years of faithful, detailed reporting.

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

On May 15, after the Oblate retreat at the Archabbey, Oblate Peggy Gambardella submitted a report for the meetings in February, March, and April. (Lay leader/secretary Delina Pauls had not been well enough to report on those meetings.) The meeting scheduled for February 3 was replaced with a parish celebration for Fr. Cristiano Brito, O.S.B., parochial vicar and former Oblate moderator, who was celebrating the 25th anniversary of his priestly ordination. Many Oblates were involved in the celebration, and Archabbot Douglas was the principal celebrant and homilist.

The meeting on March 3 was attended by moderator Fr. Lee Yoakam, O.S.B., and fifteen others. Fr. Lee spoke about the Divine Mercy devotion and about St. Bernard of Clairvaux. St. Bernard, Fr. Lee mentioned, considered *lectio divina* and contemplation guided by the Holy Spirit as the keys of a nourishing Christian spirituality.

Twelve members and Fr. Lee attended the meeting on April 6. The group discussed Pope Francis' homily for Easter entitled "The Divine Mercy Message" and shared about some ways to mark the Year of Mercy. There was also some discussion about attending the "Oblate retreat" at the Archabbey on May 13-15.

Outgoing lay leader/secretary Dee Pauls wrote on June 6 to report on the meetings in April, May, and June. At the meeting on May 4, there was more discussion about the forthcoming retreat, and Fr. Lee gave the attendees a prayer called "Prayer to the Shoulder Wound of Jesus." He also asked them to consider who might take the place of Dee as the lay leader and secretary of the deanery.

At the meeting on June 1, only six people were in attendance because of vacations and illnesses. Two Oblates gave a report on the retreat at the Archabbey, and Peggy Gambardella had brought a picture album with photographs from some of the first Oblate retreats at the Archabbey attended by people from Virginia Beach.

Ultimately, Peggy Gambardella was chosen as the new lay leader/secretary. We thank Dee Pauls for her years of faithful service despite advancing years and health problems.

Williamsport, PA (Saints Martha, Mary, & Lazarus Deanery) -- *meetings on 2nd Sunday of each month, 2 P.M., St. Anne Church*

Lay leader/secretary Sue Wykoff reported by letter on June 25. At the meeting on May 8, the four attendees began by praying the Office of Readings and then viewed a D.V.D. from the Archabbey about the Liturgy of the Hours. The session ended with a praying of the Angelus.

The meeting on June 12 was attended by five people. After praying the Liturgy of the Hours, the group viewed a D.V.D. about holiness and the *Rule* given by Fr. Killian Loch, O.S.B., at the Archabbey. Once again, the meeting closed with the Angelus. Their next meeting was to be held in August.

Various Locations

On May 19 in the Archabbey Basilica, Fr. Donald invested as an Oblate novice

L. John Reintjes of Jacksonville, NC.

John is the brother of Oblate David Reintjes, who was present, and of Oblate Michele Reintjes. Also attending were Oblate Paul Fling, Paul's wife Pamela, and Oblate novice Mary Ann Evangelista.

On May 25 in the Coffield Unit of Tennessee Colony, Msgr. Zacharias Kunnakkattuthara of Sacred Heart Church in Palestine, TX, invested as an Oblate novice

Robert R. Reeves of Tennessee Colony, TX.

On July 6 "Msgr. Zach" received, also in the Coffield Unit, the final Oblation of

Kenneth H. (David) Kerr III of Tennessee Colony, TX.

On May 28 in St. Gregory Chapel at the Archabbey, Fr. Donald received the following:

Oblate: **Wayne I. Morales** of Olney, MD

Oblate novice: **Timothy J. Humm** of Jacksonville, NC.

Also present were Wayne's wife Eliane, Oblate Vincent Thomas of Munhall, and several members of the Oblate community in Jacksonville, NC, who were on a week-long retreat at the Archabbey.

On June 1 in the Archabbey Basilica,

Bernard J. (Donald) Hudak of Weirton, WV, made his final Oblation in the presence of Fr. Donald. Also present were Bernard's wife, Elizabeth, and Br. Benedict Janecko, a good friend who grew up with Bernard.

On June 26 at Morning Prayer before Sunday Mass at Church in San Antonio, TX, Deacon Clinton McKenzie invested **Fr. R. Michael Cook** of San Antonio, TX, as an Oblate novice. Fr. Cook is a retired priest of the Anglican Rite of the Catholic Church. He hopes to contact other Oblates in Texas who are affiliated with the Archabbey so as to establish some communication among them.

SICK & INFIRM MONKS

The following monks of the Archabbey have been hospitalized or otherwise especially ill during the past three months and could use our prayers: Br. James Cartwright, Fr. Augustine Flood, Fr. Bede Hasso, Fr. Jonathan Murrman, and Fr. Chrysostom Schlimm. Fr. Paul Rubadue, Fr. Luke Policchio.

SOME SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Oblates and all their guests are always welcome to pray the Liturgy of the Hours with the monastic community. If large numbers are coming, it is good to notify the Oblate Office in advance so that there will be sufficient booklets for all the guests. Please note the importance of praying with the monastic community. If you are a guest and do not know the community's pace, please do not recite or sing until you know the right pace. During summer retreats, a few retreatants tend to sing loudly and erratically, and the result is chaotic! If you have a good solo voice, please be especially careful to sing at a moderate tone and in synchronization with others so that we may sing together and with reverence. Thank you!

2. Thanks to Oblate Lawrence Cuda, Oblates Bill & Gisela Iglesias, and employee Kim Metzgar (in Archabbey/Seminary Public Relations), we have a bibliography of Benedictine books listed on the Oblate website. Please feel free to consult this very exhaustive list, which has taken several years to compile.

3. If anyone needs a ride for Oblate Day, for the Oblate day of recollection, and/or for monthly Oblate meetings in Latrobe, please contact the Oblate Office. We have a list of volunteer drivers.

4. Another World Congress of Oblates in Rome is being planned for November 4-10, 2017. Several Oblates have expressed interest in attending. The details are still forthcoming. If you are an Oblate who has been active in the Oblate Program and/or in your local deanery and would like to consider attending, contact the Oblate Office. Subsidies are available to help to cover expenses.

5. In addition to the prayer intentions listed above, please pray for the repose of the souls of relatives of monks who have died recently and for the consolation of their families. The recently deceased family members include Fr. Stephen Honeygosky's brother Kevin, Fr. Myron Kirsch's sister Maxine Bender, Fr. Anthony Grossi's grandmother Margaret Fagan, Fr. Nathan Munsch's sister-in-law Fran Munsch, Br. George DeFazio's grandmother Antoinette DeFazio, Fr. Aaron Buzzelli's brother Donald, Fr. Kurt Belsole's brother Patrick and (one week later) his father, Michael Belsole.

6. A new program for the formation of Oblate novices was recently begun after many months of preparation. The package of 12 lessons was assembled largely by Oblates Deborah Johnston and Mary Ann Kaufman. The program is available currently for those who have been invested on or after July 10, 2016, although it may be extended to others in the future. The lessons and responses to questions can be conveyed by E-mail or U.S. mail. Fr. Donald is grateful to Mary Ann and Deborah for preparing and launching this long-awaited program.

Order Form for C.D.'s & D.V.D.'s of Presentations in Latrobe ***(See past newsletters or phone Saint Vincent College Book Center for previous presentations.)***

Br. Matthew Hershey's talk on poverty & simplicity in Benedictine spirituality (May 17, 2015):
C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Jean-Luc's talk on obedience in Benedictine spirituality (June 14, 2015):
C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Matthew Lambert's talk on silence in Benedictine spirituality (July 19, 2015):
C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Oblate Nicholas Parrendo's presentation "A Spiritual Journey in Light" (September 20, 2015):
C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Boniface's talk on weakness and strength on Oblate Day (September 27, 2015):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Br. Mark Liatti's talk on St. Benedict and his *Rule* (October 18, 2015):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Robert Keffer's three conferences for the day of recollection (October 17, 2015):

Set of 2 C.D.'s _____ (number) Set of 2 D.V.D.'s _____ (number)

Fr. Boniface's talk on work in Benedictine spirituality (November 15, 2015):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Donald's talk on the Liturgy of the Hours (December 20, 2015):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Br. Rafael Dos Santos' talk on holiness and Benedictine spirituality (January 17, 2016):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Killian's talk on prayer in Benedictine spirituality (February 21, 2016):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Chad's talk on *conversatio morum* (March 20, 2016):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Maurus' talk on St. Benedict and his *Rule* (April 17, 2016):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Thomas Hart's talk on the Holy Eucharist (May 15, 2016):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Vincent de Paul's talk on work and the ecumenical group in Philadelphia (June 12, 2016):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Shawn Matthew's talk on silence in Benedictine spirituality (July 17, 2016):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Please enclose \$6.00 per D.V.D. and \$3.50 per C.D. (Pennsylvania residents only: Add 6% Pa. sales tax before shipping cost; then add \$4.95 for postage & handling per order.)

Enclosed is _____ for my order of _____ C.D.'s and _____ D.V.D.'s.

Name _____

Address _____

_____ I will pick up my order. _____ Please mail my order to me. (Remember to include \$4.95 for postage per order plus tax [if PA resident].)

Please order from Saint Vincent Book Center over the phone at 724-805-2557 or online at www.bookstore.stvincent.edu, or by mail (St. Vincent Book Center, 300 Fraser Purchase Rd., Latrobe, PA 15650-2690); or come in person to the Book Center. Please make out checks to ST. VINCENT ARCHABBEY. N.B.: Those who attend monthly meetings in Latrobe will still be able to order copies of recent presentations at a discounted price.

SCHEDULE FOR OBLATE DAY, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2016

9:00 A.M. - 10:20 - Check-in & get-together, Faculty Dining Room (Placid A) (no check-ins 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 A

11:55 A.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 Fr. Nathan Munsch, O.S.B., 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, Sunday, September 25, 2016

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 checks payable to St. Vincent Archabbey; **if you are an overnight guest, please make out a separate check for the two meals.**)

___ I plan to be received as an Oblate (application required before September 19);

I wish to take _____ as an Oblate name.

___ I wish to be received as an Oblate novice (application required before September 19).

___ I would like overnight accommodations for ___ Sept. 24, ___ Sept. 25. (Please contact Fr. Donald well in advance.) **[In case all guest rooms have been taken, you may seek to reserve a room at the Bishop Connare Center on Route 30; phone 724-834-7350.]**

Please send this form to the Oblate Office by September 17; please mark on envelope "September event."

Schedule for Oblate Day of Recollection, Saturday, October 15, 2016, Fr. Wulfstan Clough, O.S.B.

- 8:30 A.M. Check-in, Leander Hall
- 9:00 A.M. First conference, St. Gregory Chapel
- 9:30-10:10 A.M. 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, Saturday, October 15, 2016

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

___ I plan to attend Oblate day of recollection on Oct. 15 at St. Vincent.

___ Enclosed is the fee of \$34.00 (or \$27.00 for only one meal).(Please make checks payable to St. Vincent Archabbey; please make out separate checks for the day of recollection and Oblate Day if you are attending both. If you are an overnight guest, please make out a separate check for the additional time stayed. Thank you!)

___ I would like overnight accommodations for ___ Oct. 16, ___ Oct. 17 (Please contact Fr. Donald well in advance.)

[As of July 31, all guest rooms have been taken. You may seek to reserve a room at the Bishop Connare Center on Route 30; phone 724-834-7350.]

Please send this form to the Oblate Office by October 8; please mark on envelope "October event."

Schedule for special Oblate meeting in Latrobe, Sunday, November 20, 2016

- 3:00 P.M. Presentation by Fr. Anthony Grossi, O.S.B., on the Liturgy of the Hours, Brownfield 202
- 5:00 P.M. Solemn Evening Prayer with Benediction, Archabbey Basilica (nave)
- 6:00 P.M. Supper, Placid Dining Room B (\$8.75 per person)
- 7:00 P.M. Presentation by **Bishop Edward Malesic**, Foundations Room (2nd floor of Placid Hall)

Registration Form for Special Oblate meeting, Sunday, November 20, 2016

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

___ I plan to attend supper along with the Oblate meeting(s) on Sunday, November 20.

___ Enclosed is the fee of \$8.75 for supper.

___ I would like overnight accommodations for ___ Nov. 19, ___ Nov. 20. (Please contact Fr. Donald well in advance.)

Please send this form to the Oblate Office by November 15; please mark on envelope "November event."

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 mail this information to the Oblate Office, and mark **prayer chain** on the envelope.

SCHEDULE FOR OBLATE DAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2015

- 9:00 A.M. - 10:20 - Check-in & get-together, Faculty Dining Room (Placid A) (no check-ins 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 A
- 11:55 P.M. - Lunch, Placid Dining Room B
- 12:45 P.M. - Basilica Gift Shop open until 1:30 (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. Boniface Hicks, O.S.B., Assembly Room

5:00 P.M. - Evening Prayer with the monastic community, basilica
5:35 P.M. - Supper, Placid Dining Room B
6:45 P.M. - Departure

SCHEDULE FOR OBLATE DAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2015

9:00 A.M. - 10:20 - Check-in & get-together, Faculty Dining Room (Placid A) (no check-ins 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 A
11:55 P.M. - Lunch, Placid Dining Room B
12:45 P.M. - Basilica Gift Shop open until 1:30 (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. Boniface Hicks, O.S.B., Assembly Room
5:00 P.M. - Evening Prayer with the monastic community, basilica
5:35 P.M. - Supper, Placid Dining Room B
6:45 P.M. - Departure

SCHEDULE FOR OBLATE DAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2015

9:00 A.M. - 10:20 - Check-in & get-together, Faculty Dining Room (Placid A) (no check-ins during Mass)
10:30 A.M. - Mass for participants, Mary, Mother of Wisdom Chapel
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3:00 P.M. - Social with the monastic community, Assembly Room
3:45 P.M. - Presentation by Fr. Boniface Hicks, O.S.B., Assembly Room
5:00 P.M. - Evening Prayer with the monastic community, basilica
5:35 P.M. - Supper, Placid Dining Room B
6:45 P.M. - Departure

Schedule for Oblate Day of Recollection, October 11, 2014, Fr. Jeremiah Lange, O.S.B.

8:30 A.M. Registration, Leander Hall (with coffee & hot water in parlor)
9:00 A.M. First conference, St. Gregory Chapel
9:30-10:10 Confessions, Roderick parlor and Leander Room 116
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

Schedule for Oblate Day of Recollection, October 11, 2014, Fr. Jeremiah Lange, O.S.B.

- 8:30 A.M. Registration, Leander Hall (with coffee & hot water in parlor)
- 9:00 A.M. First conference, St. Gregory Chapel
- 9:30-10:10 Confessions, Roderick parlor and Leander Room 116
- 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