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# THE SAINT VINCENT OBLATE NEWS

## Saint Vincent Archabbey

300 Fraser Purchase Road, Latrobe, PA 15650-2690



August - October, 2017

724-805-2291

Volume 70, Number 3

e-mail address: [svaoblates@email.stvincent.edu](mailto:svaoblates@email.stvincent.edu) ; web site: <http://www.svaoblates.org>**\*Please note registration forms for Oblate Day and the day of recollection are on a colored flier.**

### SEEKING PEACE AND PURSUING IT (RB Prol:17): AIMING FOR DEEPER PEACE AMID STRUGGLES

Dear Oblates, Oblate novices, and Friends,

#### **Meaning of peace**

Peace is a gift and a virtue that we naturally seek. In the deepest recesses of our hearts, we desire peace within ourselves, peace with other people, and peace among the nations of the world. At Vespers each evening we monks pray for peace in the world and for an end of violence and terrorism, far from the goal though our planet may be. The 1981 edition of *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* offers the following definitions of peace: (1) "a state of tranquility or quiet," (2) "freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts and emotions," (3) "harmony in personal relations," or (4) "mutual concord between governments." The first two pertain to individuals whereas the other two involve, respectively, persons with whom we deal and the whole world. For most of us, I would guess, achieving inner peace is quite difficult. If we find it nearly impossible to establish peace within ourselves, how much more challenging it is to nurture lasting peace in relationships with others and, ultimately, among nations and peoples.

#### **God's essential role in establishing peace**

Thanks be to God, true and lasting peace comes as a freely bestowed gift - as well as a mandate - from God. Scripture and the Church teach us that peace is the third fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22). In his book *The Sanctifier* (Boston; Pauline Books & Media, 2003), Archbishop Luis M. Martinez writes: "St. Thomas teaches that peace is the perfection of joy. A joy which cannot be experienced because of exterior or interior obstacles is frustrated, imperfect. Jesus Christ spoke of this to his apostles on the eve of his passion: 'These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full' (Jn 15:11)." He continues: "Peace is the singular pleasure that we experience when we taste the joys of our soul in their fullness. When those things are removed that hinder the sweetness of our joy, then we have tranquility, peace, that celestial gift that refreshes all our faculties, that full purification of the heart that makes us see the vanity of exterior things" (pp. 254-255). Archbishop Martinez also states: "[Peace] not only delivers the soul from the fretful trouble of exterior things, but calms the inner fluctuations of its desires and marvelously disposes and unifies its affection. Thus it makes our heart single in its triumphant love, which then has complete mastery over our being" (p. 256). Certainly, God wants us to have peace, which we might also describe as a reflection of the harmony among the Persons of the Blessed Trinity. In His discourse to the

apostles at the Last Supper, Our Lord declares, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you" (Jn 14:27). So significant is this verse that we include the first part of it at every Mass right before the sign of peace. In His appearances in the Upper Room on Easter Sunday and then a week later, the risen Christ says, "Peace be with you," three times (Jn 20: 19.21.26). This greeting of peace is echoed in Lk 24:36. Furthermore, when Our Lord sent His disciples out on mission (Mt 10:5-42), He instructed them: "As you enter a house, wish it peace" (10:12). In St. Luke's Gospel Our Lord similarly exhorts His disciples, "Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household'" (Lk 10:5). Yes, the acquisition of peace may indeed be difficult, but if we pursue it sincerely, we can be assured that God is working even harder than we are to grant us peace. Furthermore, He commands us as Christians to bring peace to others.

#### **Example: peace amid a distressful situation**

Sometimes peace descends upon us in remarkable ways without much effort on our part. Several months ago, after celebrating a Sunday Mass in a parish located near an expressway, I had to return to the expressway on a ramp. The time was about 11:15 A.M., and the traffic was heavy. Not at all confident about launching into such traffic, I lingered for quite a while on the ramp as long as I felt it was unsafe to dart out into the stream of vehicles. However, the people in the cars behind me did not think as I did. One by one, they made their way around me and hastened into the expressway traffic, and I became even more baffled about how I was going to enter the road. After some minutes, I finally spotted a clear opening, and I gratefully emerged from the ramp. Thanks be to God! What was remarkable was that I experienced an inner peace despite surface anxiety over my predicament. (Such calm is not normal for me.) Why did I possess such peace? I think it came as a grace-filled effect of what had happened before and during the Mass that I had celebrated. Before the Mass the deacon who assisted told me that his wife had died only a few days earlier and that he would serve at her funeral the next day. I was deeply touched. Throughout the Mass I could not help thinking how profoundly that deacon was sharing in the Passion of Christ and that despite his enormous grief, he carried on courageously and effectively. I could sense that he was carrying a cross of sacrificial love throughout the Mass, and that realization led me to enter into the Mass more

intensely even as I felt both great sorrow and deep peace. The incident provided me with a powerful lesson about the influence we exert on one another in receiving true peace.

### **Peace in the Rule**

The *Rule* of St. Benedict mentions “peace” eight times, and in fact “pax” has become one of the mottos of Benedictine life. In the Prologue St. Benedict, quoting Psalm 34:15, recommends to the one seeking life, “Let peace be your quest and aim” (Prol: 17) (Another translation renders the passage, “Seek after peace and pursue it.”) Reminding us that peace is not merely an individual goal, St. Benedict demands, “If you have a dispute with someone, make peace with him before the sun goes down” (4:73). The placement of this precept as the next-to-last tool of good works seems to give it heightened importance. The communal dimension of peace appears also in the *Rule*’s chapter on the distribution of goods; if things are given out with respect for each one’s real needs, “all the members will be at peace” (34:5). The peace of the community is meant to overflow to others. When a guest arrives, the monks who greet him are to pray together with him “and thus be united in peace” (53:4). (On the other hand, a false peace, or “hollow greeting of peace” (4:25), is also possible; perhaps it is the prayer with the guest that helps to ensure that he has come with a good, spiritual motive and not for some selfish advantage.) At Mass the monks are to come forward “for the kiss of peace and for Communion” (63:4) in proper order. In the final use of peace in the *Rule*, St. Benedict prescribes that the abbot should “make all decisions in the conduct of his monastery” and thus foster “the preservation of peace and love” (65:11). (St. Benedict himself thought that having “deans” instead of a prior would better lead to such peace; such a system would not conform to today’s realities in monasteries.)

### **Avoiding false peace**

It is significant that there is such a thing as “false peace,” which in effect is no peace at all. On an individual level, we might experience emotional gratification with the accomplishment of a task (not a bad thing in itself), with the defeat of an opponent, or even with the persistent repetition of a bad habit with the blocking out of good conscience. Such kinds of “peace” are not genuine because they go against our God-given purpose. We might remember that Our Lord insisted, “Not as the world gives do I give it [peace] to you” (Jn 4:27). What is the world’s sense of peace? It can be a false security that comes with having wealth, power, or success. It can be a misleading feeling that “nothing can ever harm me.” It can be a sense that one has achieved sufficient spiritual growth so that one need not strive further. All these notions of “peace” are connected with mere earthly contentment that has no connection with God or His plan for us. It may be the “peace” experienced by the man who built bigger barns and then said to himself, “You have blessings in reserve for years to come. Relax! Eat heartily, drink

well. Enjoy yourself” (Lk 12:19). It may be the “peace” in which one compromises one’s values in order to get along with others. Our Lord seems to be referring to this misleading form of peace when He says: “Do not suppose that my mission on earth is to spread peace. My mission is to spread, not peace but division” (Mt 10:34). Failing to practice our faith out of fear of others’ opinions should disturb our sense of peace; speaking out about our faith with loving respect for our hearers may cause disturbances of our relationships but will, in Christ, leave us with the genuine inner peace that comes with a good conscience and that can even grow in times of distress.

### **Ways to seek peace**

How, then, are we to “seek peace and pursue it”? On this earth seeking true peace will almost always involve some conflict, both inner and outward. Peace of mind and heart generally comes only with a struggle against our disordered passions. To achieve peace we must exert at least “a little strictness” (Prol: 47) on ourselves. We need to dash evil thoughts and other temptations against Christ (cf. Prol: 28 and 4:40). We need to reign in our tendencies to curse those who curse us (4:32). We need to battle against impulses for eating or drinking too much, sleeping too much, grumbling, or speaking ill of others (4:35-40). Paradoxically, when we are determined “to give up [our] own will, once and for all” and “with the strong and noble weapons of obedience ... do battle for the true King, Christ the Lord” (Prol: 3), then and then alone can we attain to the peace that comes from God as a fruit of the Holy Spirit. On the Christian journey of faith true peace prevails in us only along with struggle against the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

Again, it is important that we distinguish this true interior peace from the satisfaction that comes from earthly fulfillment, even though such satisfaction may be legitimate. If my peace comes solely from having opened all my mail, then it is not genuine peace; there will probably be more mail tomorrow. If my peace comes from not having to do an undesirable task, it is not genuine peace; I shall most likely have many burdensome duties in days to come. If my peace on the road depends on having no traffic problems, it is not genuine peace; sooner or later (unless I stop driving) I shall encounter tie-ups and reckless drivers. Genuine peace perseveres through all sorts of hardships, which, by God’s grace, test it and strengthen it. St. Paul possessed this peace through an assortment of adversities since he had grown so close to Christ. He could, therefore, boldly ask, “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Trial, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or the sword?” (Rom 8:35). St. Paul’s clear answer is “No”; and if we are firm in the love of Christ, we shall also possess His gift of perduring peace.

### **The key roles of prayer and silence**

Seeking this true peace, then, comes as an effect of seeking God the Father, following Christ, and living in the Holy Spirit. Growing in the capacity to put God first

in everything can occur only with a life of committed prayer. For Oblates and monks, faithfulness to *lectio divina* and the Divine Office is especially important. It is necessary also to live prayerfully by turning to Christ often, especially when we feel that our peace is beginning to evaporate. When we are bombarded by people needing our attention, we must refocus, again and again, on Christ and bless those people and pray for them. (Sometimes it may be appropriate to flee, at least for a while, from the excessive demands.) When we encounter people whom we dislike or whom we even find repulsive, we need to thank the Lord for challenging our very weak love in order to expand it. When we begin to feel annoyed on the road by unruly drivers, we can choose to bless them and ask for the grace to see them as fellow pilgrims and as poor, needy children of God who, however haltingly, long for peace in their disordered lives. In such ways we can strive daily to receive inner peace and to radiate that peace, at least in some small way, to others. By opening ourselves to the gift of peace in prayer, we can learn to value it, accept it, and nurture it. Peace is also very much connected with the practice of silence, especially interior silence. In *The Power of Silence*, Cardinal Sarah asserts, "God's silence is a glowing burn for the man who approaches him. ... Through silence we return to our heavenly origin, where there is nothing but calm, peace, repose, silent contemplation, and adoration of the radiant face of God" (p. 54). Cardinal Sarah continues, "All the great saints were familiar with this incomparable experience [of living in God's own silence] ... This immensity came to draw them into a grand silence of adoration and interior peace" (p. 55).

**Caution: perfect peace is found only in heaven**

In our pursuit of peace, given our frail human natures, we may easily become discouraged because the peace that we experience now and then, even if it is genuine peace from

God, can be very elusive. We lose that peace very easily because we prefer noise to silence, we let earthly concerns overwhelm us, and we prefer our own goals over obedience out of love for Christ. Let us not lose our peace even further from discouragement! Although we are called to strive relentlessly for peace, we need to know that it will become perfect only in heaven, where we shall belong totally to Christ and share completely in His peace. Even though while on this earth we can seek to "rejoice in the Lord always," to develop a remarkable degree of kindness, and to "have no anxiety at all" (Phil 4:4-6), we can expect to enjoy these qualities only tentatively in the here and now. Our striving, however, can keep us looking forward to the day when "the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard [our] hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:7).

**Conclusion**

Let us take heart, then, that God wondrously supports our feeble but determined efforts to live in peace. We cannot do much to create peace in the world or even in relations with other people; but we as individuals can strive realistically for the interior peace that God so longs to offer us. By seeking that peace and pursuing it relentlessly, we can help our homes, roadways, and work places to become places where "all the members will be at peace" (RB 34:5).

In the peace of Christ and Saint Benedict,

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

P.S.: A quote included the recent report of the Cyber Deanery aptly summarizes the quest for inner peace. It comes from St. Francis de Sales: "Never be in a hurry; do everything quietly and in a calm spirit. Do not lose your inner peace for anything whatsoever, even if your whole world seems upset."

**OBLATE DAY - September 24, 2017**

All Oblates, Oblate novices, and their guests are welcome to attend the 30<sup>th</sup> annual Oblate Day on Sunday, September 24, from 9:00 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. The guest speaker will be Fr. Brian Boesel, O.S.B., teacher of history at St. Vincent College. See the registration form on the colored insert, and send in a completed form before Monday, September 18, if you plan to attend. Note that Mass will be offered in Mary, Mother of Wisdom Chapel at 10:30 A.M. Those who would like overnight accommodations should notify Fr. Donald in advance since guest rooms are limited. Be sure to indicate if you plan to be received as an Oblate novice or Oblate; if so, a completed application form is required. Please also try to register on time; it becomes very difficult for the person processing registrations when large numbers notify us at the last minute.

**OBLATE DAY OF RECOLLECTION - October 14, 2017**

A day of recollection for Oblates, Oblate novices, and other interested persons will be held at the Archabbey on Saturday, October 14, from 8:30 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. 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. Isaac Haywiser, O.S.B.; an opportunity for confession; Middy Prayer and Evening Prayer with the monastic community; and lunch and supper. The cost will be \$37.00 (or \$28.00 without supper). One may send a check with the registration form or pay on arrival. Those who cannot pay the full price may request a discount. Please send the registration form [see the colored insert] to the Oblate Office by Monday, Oct. 9.

**COST OF MEALS AT FUTURE OBLATE EVENTS**

For some years the Parkhurst Dining Service at Saint Vincent has been charging Oblates very low prices for meals at Oblate events. The discounted prices cannot continue. Beginning with Oblate Day on September 24, the prices will be the standard ones charged to everyone else, namely \$7.50 for lunch and \$9.25 for supper. Those who lack financial resources to pay for meals at Oblate events can request a subsidy from the Oblate Office. We are grateful to those Oblates who, regarding almost every event, donate extra for those who cannot afford to pay or who make a donation even though they cannot attend.

Dear Oblates and Friends,

As September approaches, our thoughts begin to turn to the beginning of a new academic year. Here at Saint Vincent, we are preparing to welcome over 450 new students to campus. What we seek to offer is an education both of the mind and of the heart.

Pope Francis has indicated that the goal of a Christian educational institution "is not only to form individuals who will be useful to society, but also to educate people who can transform it." Our commitment to Catholic education is to form hearts that embrace the love of Christ, which alone can transform hate and violence into love and caring. Our Holy Father reminds us that the goal of education is not to turn our young men and women into "lifeless puppets of a consumerist society," but to enable them to become the visible face of God's love to the excluded and marginalized everywhere.

As disciples of Christ, we are all called to be teachers of the love of Christ by the way in which we live our lives. Young people - whether they be our children or grandchildren, students, friends, or the child next door - are in need of God's loving presence which comes through us. God's blessing be with you.

Sincerely in Christ,

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

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

Some 35 people, mostly Oblates and Oblate novices, attended this year's first retreat on Benedictine spirituality, entitled "The Four Last Things." It was directed by Fr. Maurus Mount, O.S.B. At ceremonies in St. Gregory Chapel on May 20 at 2:10 P.M., Fr. Donald received the following:

Oblate: **Theresa (Mary) Colbert** of North Wales, PA  
Oblate novices: **Kevin Gorman** of Virginia Beach, VA  
**Florence "Flo" E. Huson** of Latrobe, PA  
**Stephen J. "Steve" Riffon** of Morgantown, WV  
**Janet "Jan" Woodruff** of Derry, PA.

Also, all the Oblates present renewed their Oblation. Kevin is the husband of Oblate novice Cynthia Gorman. Flo and Jan have been regularly attending meetings of the Latrobe Deanery.

**"OBLATE RETREAT." June 2-4**

Some 35 people, mostly Oblates and Oblate novices, attended this year's second retreat on Benedictine spirituality, entitled "Benedictine Spirituality: Growing in the Holy Spirit through the Rule of Saint Benedict." It was directed by Fr. Boniface Hicks, O.S.B. At ceremonies in St. Gregory Chapel on June 3 at 2:10 P.M., Fr. Donald received the following:

Oblate novice: **Mitchell Megliola** of Duryea, PA  
Oblate: **Rachel Ruffing** of Latrobe, PA.

Other Oblates who were present renewed their Oblation.

**MEN'S RETREAT. July 21-23**

During the men's retreat, directed by Fr. Edward Mazich, O.S.B., there were Oblation ceremonies in St. Gregory Chapel on June 22 at 1:15 P.M., during which Fr. Donald received two final Oblations:

Oblates: **John A. (Benedict) Azzara** of Monroeville, PA  
**Curtis S. Miller** of Clairton, PA.

Other Oblates who were 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.

**OBLATE BOARD OF ADVISORS – meeting on June 16:** The Oblate Board of Advisors met at the Archabbey on Friday, June 16. The topics discussed were: the Assembly of Deanery Representatives on June 10, the newly published book on Oblate Nadeem Feroze, the new formation program for Oblate novices (to be proofread, edited, published in binders, and extended to Oblates who would like copies), news from the various deaneries, and a new newsletter for Oblates in prison. The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Friday, August 25, at 6:30 P.M. in Brownfield 203.

## **JULY 11 – CELEBRATION OF FEAST OF ST. BENEDICT**

Oblates and their guests, some fifty-five 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 two 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. Ignatius Camello, O.S.B., Br. Matthew Hershey, O.S.B., and Fr. Robert Keffer, O.S.B.

At 2:00 in St. Gregory Chapel, Br. Lawrence Machia, O.S.B., who professed solemn vows last year, gave a presentation about the Benedictine vows as compared with the evangelical counsels (namely, poverty, chastity, and obedience). In particular, he spoke of the vows and the counsels as ways of making a self-offering of one's whole being - possessions, body, and will.

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

Oblates: **Adrian (Teresa) Banaszak** of Pittsburgh, PA  
**Kathleen "Katie" (Veronica) Garland** of Bethel Park, PA  
**Ronald (Joseph-Mary) Toczek** of Danville, PA  
Oblate novices: **William "Bill" Kruchas** of Mifflinburg, PA  
**Ruth A. Pevarnik** of Greensburg, PA.

Adrian and Katie belong to the new deanery being formed in the South Hills of Pittsburgh.

As part of the Oblation ceremonies, the following Oblate jubilarians were honored: Rev. Donald P. Breier - 50 years, Rev. James R. Orr - 40 years, Gloria J. Harvey - 30 years, Emmett & Mary Elizabeth Henry - 25 years, Debra A. Femia - 15 years, Deacon Michael L. Russo - 15 years, Clareece "Clare" Godt - 5 years, David J. Reintjes - 5 years, Linda "Linette" Schreiber - 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 twenty-seven Oblates joined the monastic community and other guests for Vespers at 5:00 and then had supper in Placid Dining Room B.

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

The 2017 meeting of the North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors took place at St. Scholastica Monastery in Duluth, Minnesota, on July 14-19. The theme of the conference was "Benedictine Values & Practices: Tools for Living, Tools for Life." The two Oblates affiliated with St. Vincent Archabbey who attended were Marie Callan of Bethesda, MD, and Celeste Pileggi of Charleroi, PA. Reports of the event should be available soon.

## **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:

- Rod Dreher, *The Benedict Option: Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation* (N.Y.: Penguin Random House LLC, 2017) (N.B.: I have not read the book but have heard both strongly positive and strongly negative comments about it.)

## **RECOMMENDED READING**

The following books are in the Oblate Library:

- Robert Cardinal Sarah (with Nicholas Diat), *The Power of Silence: Against the Dictatorship of Noise* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2017)  
- Joseph Tissot, *How to Profit from Your Faults: Based on the Writings of St. Francis de Sales* (London: Scepter Publishers, Inc., 2004) [originally published in French, 1878]  
- Benjamin Wiker, *The Catholic Church & Science: Answering the Questions, Exposing the Myths* (Charlotte, NC: TAN Books, 2011)

## **NEW BOOK AVAILABLE: NADEEM FEROZE: OBLATE OF ST. BENEDICT, PAKISTANI, DEFENDER OF THE FAITH**

A 34-page book on the life story and death of Oblate Nadeem Feroze of Pakistan has been published by Archabbey Publications. It was compiled largely by Oblate Lora Jacob of Cincinnati from e-mail messages sent by Nadeem to the Oblate Office and to Oblate Michael LoPiccolo, through whose website Nadeem came to discover our Oblate Program. The book is available for picking up from the Oblate Office for \$8.00 each. It may also be ordered from Archabbey Publications. It is also available from amazon.com for \$10.00.

## **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](mailto:wmsgibson@comcast.net) (with the subject line "SVA Oblate Store").

### **OBLATE SCHOLARSHIP: Thank you to donors, and invitation to continued support**

Fr. Donald recently received two letters from Saint Vincent College students thanking those who have contributed to the Oblate Scholarship. As recipients of the scholarship, they were very grateful for this assistance to help them to finance their education. If any Oblate or Oblate deanery would like to contribute to the scholarship, please contact Marsha Brasile by phone at 724-805-2268 or by e-mail at [marsha.brasile@stvincent.edu](mailto:marsha.brasile@stvincent.edu).

### **TEMPORARY MAILING LIST TO BE REDUCED**

Some 250 people receive this newsletter because their names are on a temporary mailing list controlled by the Oblate Office (in contrast to the regular mailing list on the college's computer system). The great majority of these people are those who have inquired about the Oblate Program (and perhaps even applied) but who have not been invested as Oblate novices. Before the next newsletter (November) Fr. Donald plans to remove the names of those people who have not been in contact with the Oblate Office for over two years. If you are on this temporary mailing list and wish to continue to receive this newsletter, please contact the Oblate Office as soon as possible. (Please inform us, too, if you no longer wish to receive the newsletter.) Thank you.

### **EUCCHARISTIC 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. 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. Note that on Sunday, November 26, there will be exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the basilica all afternoon for the Feast of Christ the King.

**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 20, September 17, October 22 (fourth Sunday), and November 19. 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: Fr. Wulfstan Clough, Br. Martinho Zevallos, Fr. Edward Mazich, and Fr. Cyprian Constantine. 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.

### **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 the Oblate Office. Those who offer to be mentors receive a booklet of guidelines. If you would like to have a monk as a prayer-partner, please contact Fr. Donald or Br. Joachim at the Oblate Office. According to the revised prayer-partner program, every new full Oblate is to be assigned a monk as a prayer-partner. Previous prayer-partners will continue as long as both parties agree to maintain the partnership.

### **OBLATE GROUP IN CAMBRIDGE, ONTARIO, CANADA**

Oblate Cathy Mayled reported by e-mail on May 11 and June 4 and by phone on August 1. Meetings began to be held in April on the first Thursday of the month at 10:30 A.M. The meetings on April 6 and May 4 were both attended by four people. They began with an opening prayer and continued with discussions of Chapters 34 and 35 of the *Rule*. After the discussion of business, the meetings were closed with prayer.

The meeting on June 1, attended by six people, consisted of the reading and discussion of Chapter 36 of the *Rule*. There was an especially interesting and long exchange about the care of the sick. The meeting ended with the praying of Midday Prayer.

### **OBLATE GROUP IN TENNESSEE COLONY, TX (Coffield Unit)**

Oblate novice John Lesley Miller reported on June 4 and 28. At a meeting of Oblates on May 31, the group agreed to meet each Wednesday from 12:15 to 12:45, with a reading from the *Rule*, prayer, and time for answering questions from inquirers. The meeting on June 21 was attended by one Oblate, four Oblate novices, and two inquirers. The group read the passage from the *Rule* for the day, offered prayer intentions, discussed possible patron saints (for the time when the group will become a deanery), and talked about seeking a new time for meetings. The meeting on June 28 was attended by one Oblate, five Oblate novices, and four inquirers. They considered St. Boniface as a possible patron saint, talked once again about meeting at a different time, read the passage from the *Rule* for the day, and discussed some local issues as well as the need for more breviaries for the group.

### **OBLATE GROUP IN ROSHARON, TX (Terrell Unit)**

Oblate novice Gilberto Gomez wrote on April 30, May 26, and July 16. The "Oblate prayer group" has been meeting weekly since April to pray Evening Prayer, read from the *Rule* of St. Benedict, read from the book *Church History* by Fr. John Laux, and pray the rosary and the Divine Mercy chaplet. The number of attendees has ranged from seven to sixteen. Oblation ceremonies were scheduled for Monday, August 7; this event will be reported in the November newsletter.

### **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 August 2. The meeting on June 3 began with Morning Prayer according to the Roman Rite. The group introduced a new format for meetings and started to read and discuss the book *Monastery of the Heart* as a study guide. All were to obtain copies of the book. At the close of the meeting Fr. Vincent de Paul, moderator, administered the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick to one of the regular attendees, Msgr. John Miller. As usual, the group then enjoyed a lunch prepared by generous hosts Sharon Fischer and her daughter Joann.

## **POTENTIAL OBLATE DEANERY IN SOUTH HILLS OF PITTSBURGH, PA**

For several months now, a group of Oblates has been meeting in the home of one of the Oblates with the hope of forming a regular deanery with monthly meetings at St. Louise de Marillac Church in Upper St. Clair. Since Benedictine monks assist at that parish almost every weekend, there is hope that every so often one of them would be able to make a presentation on a Sunday afternoon. The several planning sessions to date have been fruitful. The last of the sessions was held on Sunday, August 6, and the first regular meeting is planned for September 3.

## **NEWS FROM OBLATE DEANERIES**

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

There was no report.

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

Lay leader/secretary Mary Ann Bingeman reported on March 26, May 28, and July 13. The meeting on March 26 was attended by Fr. Job Foote, O.S.B., moderator, and nine others. After the praying of the "Oblate prayer," there was a social, which included talk about the orphan Francisco in Honduras, whom the deanery is sponsoring. The money collected was turned over to Fr. Job. Then Chapter 26 of the *Rule* was read, and another Oblate read the reflections on that chapter by Br. Jerome, O.S.B., from his website. The themes considered were the need to resolve differences in an open, respectful, humble way; people's reluctance to admit their failures; and the importance to own up to one's failures for the sake of growth of love and peace in community. The meeting ended with Vespers. There was no meeting scheduled for April because the normal date would be Divine Mercy Sunday and many members planned to attend services in their own parishes on that date.

Fr. Job was joined by seven Oblates at the meeting on May 28, which began with the praying of Vespers in the sanctuary of the church. Then there was a short business meeting, during which another collection was taken up for Francisco. Fr. Job also translated a letter to the Oblates from the home where Francisco is staying. Next the group considered possible books for future discussions. Fr. Job recommended *The Benedict Option*, and one Oblate recommended *Fatima for Today*. Fr. Job was to seek a bulk rate for purchasing whatever book would be chosen. Finally, the attendees read and discussed the first four steps of humility from *RB 7*. They talked about the healthy fear of not wanting to offend or disrespect the one we love, especially God. As love grows, the fear of dread more and more gives way to the fear connected with love. In the difficult ascent of "Jacob's ladder" toward perfect humility, prayer is essential. The meeting ended with the "Oblate prayer."

The meeting on July 3 began with Vespers in the sanctuary and a brief business meeting. Then the group enjoyed a social with food prepared by one of the Oblates. A discussion of the fifth step of humility from *RB 7* followed. The attendees spoke about the difficulties about humility, especially when one is asked to do something that is not within one's power to do or something that one thinks should be done in another way. The effort to become humble is an ongoing struggle. The group then agreed to buy copies of the book *Fatima for Today* for future discussions. Next they entered into a discussion about some of the Church's laws that are confusing to some people, in particular laws about marriage, divorce, annulments, and reception of the Eucharist by non-Catholics. Fr. Job answered a good number of questions that were posed. In returning to business, the attendees then agreed to have the annual Oblate picnic on Sunday, July 30. The meeting ended with the "Oblate prayer."

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

Moderator Fr. Paschal Morlino, O.S.B., reported on May 8. At the meeting on April 30, eight people met with Fr. Paschal. They began with a discussion of Lesson 1 of the formation program from the Archabbey, and Lesson 2 was also discussed. The meeting ended with a social with desserts. As usual, the group proceeded to the church for the praying of Vespers at 5:00 P.M. There were no regular meetings scheduled for May, June, July, or August.

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

Lay leader/secretary Ronald Weleski reported by e-mail on June 30. The meeting scheduled for May was canceled because of vacations and illnesses. Six people attended the meeting on June 22. After the praying of Evening Prayer, Ron gave a report on the Assembly of Deanery Representatives that had been held on June 10, and the group discussed Br. Barnabas' presentations on evangelization. They referred to the qualities of being vulnerable, being present to others, being authentic, being courageous, and being creative. The group also read excerpts from Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium* in which the Holy Father describes the person-to-person dialogue that occurs when the joy of the Gospel and the love of Christ are shared effectively. The meeting concluded with a lively, lengthy discussion about ways in which the deanery could use these concepts to attract others to the Oblate Program in the Butler area.

### **Cyber Deanery (St. Isidore of Seville Deanery)** [Those interested in the deanery may contact hislittleone14@gmail.com.]

Co-lay leader Theresa George reported by e-mail on July 29. As of that date, the deanery had 72 members from all over the U.S. The group spent the last two weeks of July on Chapter 48 of the *Rule* ("On the Daily Manual Labor") as interpreted by Delatte's *Commentary*. There were many good fruits since the chapter is especially applicable to Oblates living in the world. Oblate Brenda Conyers has been leading the discussions on the book. The members continue to pray for all the intentions on the weekly prayer chain, and they strive to unite themselves with the monks and Oblates of the Archabbey when they pray the Work of God.

### **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 wrote on July 5 and 26. The meeting on June 19 began with Evening Prayer in the presence of the exposed Blessed Sacrament. Then the fifteen Oblates present renewed their Oblation. Deacon Michael Russo, moderator, reflected on the importance of Benedictine spirituality in today's world and on the challenge for Oblates to spread the Gospel and to share their experiences of being Oblates.

The group met on July 10 at 1:30 P.M. to pray Midafternoon Prayer and then to enjoy a luncheon at a local restaurant. It was an opportunity to have some Oblates present who cannot drive at night and, therefore, cannot attend the evening meetings.

**Kalispell, MT (Holy Trinity Deanery)** (monthly meetings at St. Matthew's Roman Catholic Church in Kalispell)

Lay leader/secretary Tanishia Sperlberg reported on May 8. Four people attended the meeting on May 8, which began with a common prayer and voiced petitions. Then there was some discussion of prison ministry, with the reading of a poem by a mentee in prison. Next each attendee shared thoughts about the promises of stability, fidelity, and obedience, as was assigned at the previous meeting. It was concluded that the Benedictine promises help people to grow together in faith and that they are gifts from God as well as offerings to God. The "homework" assigned for the summer was reflecting on *RB* 1 and considering what one did "with God" over the summer. The meeting ended with a listening to a rendition of the song "Holy Mother." The next meeting was scheduled for September 11.

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

At the meeting on May 7, some twelve people gathered to continue a discussion of Fr. Demetrius Dumm's book *Flowers in the Desert*. They addressed the topics of response to covenant love in service, healthy use of freedom in loving outreach, the importance of praying the psalms and blessing God, sin as a failure to respond to love, and the danger of daydreaming as an escape from reality (and an opening to murmuring). As usual, the meeting ended with the praying of Compline in the Archabbey Basilica about 8:15 P.M.

Some twelve people gathered for the meeting on June 11 to continue the discussion of Fr. Demetrius' book. Considering Chapter 4, "The Adventure," they treated the themes of monastic life as a journey, the Passover and the Israelites' journey through the desert, the beginning of the journey of Christ's first disciples, the notions of "wilderness" and divine mystery, entertaining divine mystery in hospitality, and the Blessed Mother as the perfect disciple. The meeting ended with Compline. Among the attendees were two new Oblate novices and an Oblate from the Baltimore Deanery.

About thirteen people came to the meeting on July 16. The group completed a discussion of Chapter 4 of *Flowers in the Desert*, with the themes of the Paraclete and living in the Spirit, and then undertook a discussion of Chapter 5, "Prophetic Guidance." Among the topics discussed were the living of faith as a journey, God as a God of hiddenness and mystery, Elijah and St. John the Baptist as role models for monastic life, Our Lord's relationship with the Jewish temple, and the meaning of His Transfiguration. There was an especially lively exchange about the challenge to grow old gracefully and the importance of respect for elders and their wisdom. As usual, the meeting ended with the praying of Compline.

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

On May 7 Fr. John-Mary Tompkins gave a presentation to some 25 people on the Liturgy of the Hours. He began with a quote that described a faithful monk as being transformed "from fire to fire." The one thing necessary for this transformation is prayer. All of us are called to the transforming union. The key to prayer is abandoning oneself to God; if we do this, there is no room for boredom or mere routine. Fr. John-Mary then commented on *RB* 8-18, which deals with the Divine Office. In particular, *RB* 18 calls us to avoid lukewarmness. He next defined the Liturgy of the Hours as prayers meant to sanctify all the hours of the day; it is a prayer of the whole Church and for the whole Church, including the saints and angels in heaven. The Hours remind us to look up to God, especially "when things look down." Although praying the Hours is an obligation for clergy and religious, it is far more than an obligation; it is a holy obligation, an opportunity, and a privilege; it is connected to the call to holiness. (continued)  
Like Mary of Bethany, we need to sit at Our Lord's feet and listen to him in prayer. Prayer is countercultural and, often through suffering, challenges us to die to self-will. All of us, Oblates and monks, need to ask ourselves how well we pray the Liturgy of the Hours and to strive to pray each Hour as if it were our only one or our last. Fr. John-Mary then responded to some questions and comments.

On June 11 about 18 people attended a unique presentation about Camaldolese Benedictine spirituality by Dr. Matthew Fisher, an associate professor of chemistry at St. Vincent College and an Oblate of New Camaldoli Hermitage in Big Sur, CA. Matt used PowerPoint to show photos of the Monastery of Camaldoli in Italy, the monastery in Big Sur, and Holy Family Hermitage in Ohio. He briefly described each monastery and then gave some history of the two Camaldolese congregations. St. Romuald (950-1027) was the original founder of the Camaldolese (with the new phenomena of hermits who lived by a rule) in 1023, and then Bl. Paul Giustiniani founded a reformed group of Camaldolese in 1522. The key elements of Camaldolese life are silence, solitude, and fasting. The Camaldolese also live by the "threefold good" proposed in the early years of the congregation, namely solitude, community, and evangelization, with a seeking of the proper balance among these three "goods." Matt next described daily life at New Camaldoli in California, which has about 500-600 Oblates affiliated with the community. He concluded by speaking about the Camaldolese emphasis on the "primacy of love," which means that their entire way of life is relational and based on the love of Christ. Their solitude is not an end in itself. Matt then addressed a number of questions from the attendees, and he distributed reprints on "St. Romuald's Brief Rule," on the Camaldolese Congregation, Order of St. Benedict (OSB Cam), and on the Camaldolese Hermits of Monte Corona (er.cam.). He also requested prayers for New Camaldoli, which has been in great financial need for the past few months because mud slides have prevented access to the monastery and thus income from guests and customers to their gift shop has dried up.

On July 16 Fr. Canice McMullen gave a presentation on *lectio divina* to an audience of some 24 people. He first reflected on the meaning of *lectio* and spoke about the literal sense and the three spiritual senses of Scripture. He then reviewed the four traditional dimensions in comparison with the stages of eating an apple. Next Fr. Canice used the passage John 20:15-18 to illustrate how one can do *lectio* with the help of the allegorical, moral, and eschatological senses of phrases in that passage. The attendees participated by offering the words or phrases that touched them from three readings of the passage. Finally, Fr. Canice addressed some questions, including ones about dryness in *lectio* and about his vocations to the monastic life and to the priesthood.

**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 and Oblate Roy McKenzie attended the Assembly of Deanery Representatives at the Archabbey on June 10. Oblate Roy McKenzie reported by phone on August 7. Six members attended the meetings on May 28 and June 25. The book being discussed was *The Rule of Saint Benedict for Beginners*, and there were many questions. The deanery leaders are still searching for a priest moderator. There was no meeting in July because the usual meeting room was not available.

**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 June 19. The meeting on June 18 was attended by outgoing moderator Fr. James Podlesny, O.S.B., and eight others. It began with Evening Prayer in the church, during which Fr. Jim invested

**Zoe Loftus** of Harrisburg, PA,

as an Oblate novice. Zoe's husband was present for the occasion. Since Fr. Jim was being reassigned to two parishes near Latrobe, the group had a social for him in place of the usual annual picnic.

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

Secretary Frederick Laux reported on May 24, June 26, and July 25. The meeting on May 9 was attended by two Oblates, five Oblate novices, and four inquirers. Deacon John Etter, moderator, began by leading the group in praying Evening Prayer. Then Oblate novice Chris Beard gave a presentation on the Prologue: 33-38, with reference to the need to build a spiritual foundation on rock (Christ) instead of sand (the Devil's ways). Repentance from evil ways and trust in God's mercy are essential. Then the group reviewed Lesson 6, on *lectio divina*, of the formation lessons from the Archabbey. There was much discussion about the notion of stopping and letting a Scripture passage "do its work" and the four dimensions of *lectio*.

Attending the meeting on June 13 were two Oblates, four Oblate novices, and four inquirers. After the praying of Vespers, Oblate novice Ted Davis gave a presentation on *RB* 10:1-3, concerning the Night Office in the summer. He pointed out that the chapter provided an example of St. Benedict's concern for balance between prayer and work. Referring to the formation booklet, he mentioned the ideal of seeking God in all that we do. Everything can be a spiritual sacrifice to God. Work can be regarded as a privilege and as a redemptive means of sanctification, although for fallen man it can also seem to be a punishment. Ted referred also to parts of the *Catechism* and to 1 Thes 3:10. A lengthy discussion followed. One of the inquirers treated the group with pizza and other snacks from the local kitchen; so Deacon John led the group in blessing the food and closing the meeting before they enjoyed the food.

The meeting on July 11 drew two Oblates, four Oblate novices, and two inquirers. After the praying of Vespers, Fred read an essay from July's *Magnificat* on St. Petronax, who helped to rebuild Montecassino after its first destruction. Then Oblate novice Steve Davisson gave a presentation on *RB* 33, which deals with private ownership. He read the chapter and then a paraphrase of Acts 4:32. He continued by mentioning the importance of sharing not only material goods but also personal experiences, advice, and thoughts. Christ shared His whole being with us, and the *Rule* calls us to "share and share alike." Steve and others then talked about experiences about sharing and its connection with hospitality. Next Deacon John gave out some copies of *Shorter Christian Prayer*. It was hoped that in August the group would discuss the possible use of D.V.D.'s or C.D.'s for future deanery meetings.

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

Oblate George Ponticello reported by e-mail on May 21 and June 25. Fr. Vincent Zidek, moderator, and eight Oblates attended the meeting on May 2. Some of the group met for dinner and conversation at a restaurant near the church prior to the meeting. After the praying of Vespers in the church, the group continued a discussion of *Flowers in the Desert*; they covered Chapter 8, entitled "Letting Go." Two members represented the Pittsburgh Deanery at the Assembly of Deanery Representatives on June 10.

Eight people joined Fr. Vincent for the meeting on June 12. After Evening Prayer in the church, the group discussed the final chapter, "The Resurrection as Homecoming," of *Flowers in the Desert*. There was feedback from Oblates Janice Heagy and Sam Webb from their attendance at the Assembly of Deanery Representatives. The group planned for their annual summer picnic on July 13 and decided to begin to discuss lessons from the *Oblate Formation Booklet* at the meeting in August.

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

Lay leader/secretary Roland Fernandez reported on May 4 and June 2. In April there was a first combined meeting with the "Brothers of St. Dismas." The meeting began with an opening prayer and the "Oblate prayer" and continued with a praying of the Liturgy of the Hours, a reading from Scripture, and a discussion.

The meeting on May 4, also a joint meeting, drew eighteen people and involved the same format. The Gospel passage from the day's Mass was read, namely, John 6: 44-51. It was mentioned that "ora et labora" offers a helpful solution to many problems. When one stays busy with prayer and God's work, one is less inclined to idle chatter and to worry about problems. Among the attendees were Oblates affiliated with St. Benedict's Abbey in Atchison, KS.

The meeting on June 1 was attended by two Oblates, one Oblate novice, three people who were ready to become Oblate novices soon, and eight others who pray the Liturgy of the Hours with the group. After opening prayers, the group prayed Vespers and then entered into a discussion on "Silence and Humility" from *RB* 7 and the *Oblate Formation Booklet*. The first three steps of humility were read and discussed. Volunteer David Littlefield was especially impressed with the meeting. It ended with a closing prayer from the formation booklet.

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

Lay leader Peggi Gabler wrote on May 19 and early in June. The meeting on May 4 followed Evening Prayer and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Nine people attended. After a praying of the Oblate prayer, minutes from the last meeting were read. Photographs were taken to be part of a booklet for the International Oblate Congress in November. Then the Prologue of the *Rule*,

verses 1-7, was read and discussed. Next one of the questions proposed for the International Congress was discussed, namely "How can we show hospitality in the face of war and terrorism?" The group concluded with three points: (1) Pray constantly for peace and unity; (2) Help our families and friends as much as possible; (3) Accept all well-intentioned immigrants. Finally, those present renewed their Oblation in the presence of Fr. Alfred Patterson, moderator. The session ended with the Benedictine prayer and a blessing from Fr. Alfred.

The meeting on June 1 once again followed Evening Prayer and Benediction. Six people attended. After the Oblate prayer and a reading of the minutes from the last meeting, the group read and discussed verses 8-13 of the Prologue. Explanations of those verses were read from reflections by Fr. Michael Gabler, O.S.B. (who will soon become the pastor of Sacred Heart Church in St. Marys). The group also decided to enhance meetings with other spiritual readings and homilies by Fr. Michael. Oblate Sandy Tucker agreed to represent the deanery at the Assembly of Deanery Representatives at the Archabbey on June 10. The meeting ended with the "Benedictine prayer."

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

Moderator Fr. Ronald Gatman, O.S.B., reported by letter on May 27, with a photograph of two of the Oblates' presenting a check for \$200.00 to the Alzheimer's Society in Savannah a few days before. This past year the deanery agreed to raise money to help fund research to find a cure for Alzheimer's disease. At each general meeting money had been collected, and at the end of the school year it was given to the chosen cause.

On April 23 a day of recollection for Oblates was held at the priory. It included two conferences by Fr. Ronald, the opportunity for confession, some quiet time, and a Mass celebrated by Fr. Paul Cabrita, S.M., a parochial vicar at St. Peter the Apostle Church on Wilmington Island. Then the retreatants enjoyed supper together. It was hoped that the arrival of three new monks from the Archabbey in July would result in some new ideas for the Oblate deanery.

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

Oblate Co-lay leader/secretary Teresa Warlow reported by e-mail on May 18. The meeting on May 14 opened with the prayer for Oblates, and then the group listened to a recorded presentation by Fr. Boniface, O.S.B., on poverty and simplicity. A discussion followed. The session ended with the praying of Mid-afternoon Prayer.

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

Co-lay leader/secretary Michael Reichert wrote on May 25, July 2, and August 1. The meeting on May 9 was moderated by Fr. Aron Maghsoudi, who was filling in for Deacon David Hornick. Attending were seven Oblates, five Oblate novices, and six inquirers. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, Oblate novice Wendell Caldwell gave a presentation on the Gospel of St. Mark and on St. Mark's life, and he read a short piece about Pope Francis' visit to the U.S. in 2015. A brief discussion followed. Then Fr. Aron gave a presentation on the early history of the Church in the U.S. from colonial times. He condensed his talk to fit within the limited time allowed, and he closed the meeting with a prayer.

Present at the meeting on May 23 were moderator Deacon David Hornick and six other Oblates, six Oblate novices, and two inquirers. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, Oblate John Liebel gave a presentation on peace from the perspectives of God's revelation, man's law, and the *Holy Rule*. Questions and a discussion followed. Attendance at the Assembly of Deanery Representatives at the Archabbey was mentioned, and Lesson 5 from the Archabbey was distributed. (*continued*) The meeting ended with a prayer.

The meeting on June 13 was moderated by Pastor Craig Hess and attended by six Oblates, seven Oblate novices, and two inquirers. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, Oblate novice Jordan Leese gave a presentation on "glorifying God in all things." He cited verses from Scripture and the *Rule* pertaining to the subject and spoke of the dangers of grumbling. When he asked the group to share how they glorified God in daily life, they gave excellent examples. The meeting ended with Compline.

The meeting on June 27 was moderated by Deacon David and attended by three other Oblates, six Oblate novices, and five inquirers. After an opening prayer Deacon David invested as an Oblate novice

#### **Justin Bloom** of Somerset, PA.

Then a passage from the *Rule* was read, and Oblate Robert Fadden gave the second part of his presentation on "Music and Spiritual Warfare." The distinction was made between "Godly music," which is sung and played with the intent of leading people to God, and "selfish music," which is performed to attract attention to the performers. A discussion followed.

The meeting on July 11, led by Deacon David Hornick, was attended by four Oblates, six Oblate novices, and three inquirers. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, Oblate novice Tyler Reed gave a presentation on St. Benedict, including his miracles and his contributions to monastic life. Since it was the Feast of St. Benedict, Michael posed the questions "What has being involved in Oblates meant to you? How have you changed as a result?" Many good insights were shared, especially regarding the importance of community and family. The meeting ended with the praying of Compline.

The meeting on July 25 was attended by five Oblates, six Oblate novices, and five inquirers. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, Oblate Brandon Cavanaugh gave a report of another Oblate's visit to the Archabbey Basilica. Then, since a scheduled presenter was absent, the group viewed a D.V.D. with a presentation on "work" by Br. Joachim, O.S.B. A brief discussion followed, and the meeting ended with Compline.

#### **State College, PA (St. Joseph Deanery)** -- meetings on 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month, 6:30 P.M., Our Lady of Victory Church, Activity Center.

Secretary Phyllis Austin reported by e-mail on May 11. The meeting on May 8 was attended by ten Oblates, three Oblate novices, and moderator Fr. David Griffin, O.S.B. It began with Evening Prayer, during which

#### **David A. (Joseph) Nice** of Houtzdale, PA,

made his final Oblation in the presence of Fr. David and the others who were gathered for the meeting. Then the group discussed the final chapters of Fr. Michael Casey's book *Seventy-Four Tools for Good Living*. The group agreed that the book was an excellent resource for making the *Rule* come alive and be applicable to many circumstances of life. The meeting ended with prayers

of intercession and the singing of the Benedictine "Ultima." Then some business was discussed. It was decided that no Oblate was available to attend the June 10 assembly at the Archabbey. Lay leader Ashley Leggett resigned his position. We are grateful for his years of faithful service. He will help the deanery to find a new lay leader. An end-of-year Mass and breakfast were planned for June 10. Finally, the group shared a cake to celebrate Fr. David's birthday.

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

Outgoing lay leader/secretary Peggy Gambardella reported in person on May 19, and new lay leader/secretary Nancy Chrabot reported by letter on July 11. Seventeen people, including some inquirers, attended the meeting on May 3. Fr. Lee Yoakam, moderator, suggested that presentations be given each month on the *Oblate Formation Booklet* by Kevin Gorman, who was to become an Oblate novice on May 20 and who was preparing to be ordained a deacon. At each meeting a portion of the formation booklet would be covered.

Some twelve people from the deanery, driving up in two vans, came to the Archabbey for the first retreat on Benedictine spirituality. They arrived on May 18 and stayed until May 22. (One member stayed longer for a private retreat.)

During the summer Peggy Gambardella turned over her role as lay leader/secretary to Oblate Nancy Chrabot. We thank Peggy for her term of service and for the many trips that she has organized and made for summer retreats at the Archabbey.

At the meeting on July 5, attended by 16 people, began with an opening prayer. Oblate novice Kevin Gorman gave a presentation about humility and pride, with a description of pride as the root of most sins. He suggested that Oblates should look to the life of Our Lord and to the *Holy Rule* for guidance. Kevin also urged the Oblates to read a part of the *Rule* daily (according to the standard pattern) and to pray Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer daily. The meeting ended with the praying of Evening Prayer.

**New Deanery in Waynesburg, PA (St. Dismas Deanery)** -- meetings on 4<sup>th</sup> Wed. of each month

On May 7, Rev. J. Francis Frazer invested as an Oblate novice

**Jacob M. Maldonado** of Waynesburg, PA .

Lay leader/secretary Timothy Lenhart reported on May 24 and July 19 and 27; Oblate Ronald Bergman, assisting volunteer, phoned on May 26; and the new secretary, Jacob Maldonado, reported on June 28. The first meeting of the deanery, held on May 24, attracted six Oblates, one Oblate novice, and two inquirers. After an opening prayer the group discussed the organization of the deanery. Timothy Lenhart was chosen as lay leader, and Kenneth Miller was chosen as his assistant. They also selected St. Dismas as the patron of the deanery. The attendees also shared about their favorite Scripture passages, and portion of the *Rule* for the day was read. The meeting ended with a closing prayer.

Ten men attended the meeting on June 28. After an opening prayer, there was a reading of a part of the *Rule* and discussion on the passage. Then Tim Lenhart gave a presentation on mortal and venial sin, the precepts of the Church, and the Holy Eucharist. Jacob Maldonado was chosen as secretary. After a discussion on Tim's talk, Oblate Ken Miller spoke about the "armor of God," and some discussion followed. Next, a visitor Peg, coming from the Good Shepherd Prayer Group, gave a presentation on the life of St. Benedict and the medal of St. Benedict. The meeting ended with a prayer.

The meeting on July 26 was attended by five men along with Peg. After an opening prayer, Lesson 1 of the formation lessons from the Archabbey was distributed. It was decided to discuss that lesson at the next meeting. Also, Timothy gave a presentation on the Jesus Prayer, and there was some discussion. The group also read Chapter 3 of Colossians and the passage of the *Rule* for the day. The meeting ended with a closing prayer.

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

Lay leader/secretary Sue Wykoff reported by phone on August 5. Only two members attended the meeting scheduled for May 14; the fact that it was Mother's Day probably explained the lack of attendees. The two prayed the Liturgy of the Hours and discussed the forthcoming luncheon for the deanery scheduled for August. Regular meetings will resume in September.

**Various Locations**

On January 21, 2017, **E. Steven Reid** of Craigsville, VA, made his final Oblation in the presence of Deacon Gordon Cartwright in the chapel at Craigsville.

On June 14 in the Archabbey Basilica, right after Midday Prayer, **Kathryn "Katie" (Nicodemus Bernard) Knapp** of Rochester, NY, made her final Oblation in the presence of Fr. Donald along with local Oblates Deborah Johnston and Cynthia Ruff. The group then had lunch together in the guest dining room.

On July 1 in the Archabbey Basilica, Fr. Donald received the following:

Oblate: **Timothy J. (Peter) Humm** of Jacksonville, NC

Oblate novices: **Johnny R. Carr** of Jacksonville, NC

**Robert E. Hilton** of Jacksonville, NC

**Kimberly S. Humm** of Jacksonville, NC

**José O. Irizarry** of Jacksonville, NC

**Andrea "Andie" Sopko** of Jacksonville, NC.

Timothy and Kimberly are husband and wife, and their three young children were present, as well as José's wife and two children and Oblate James Hough, Oblate Joseph Pierce, Oblate novice Robert Butler, and several others who were on retreat from Infant of Prague Parish in Jacksonville, NC.

On July 20 in the Archabbey Basilica, Fr. Donald invested

**Christopher "Scott" Berger** of Houston, TX, as an Oblate novice. Also present were Oblate Clare Godt and a friend of hers.

### **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: Fr. Bede Hasso, Fr. Augustine Flood, Fr. Paul Rubadue.

### **DECEASED MONK**

Retired Archabbot Paul Maher, O.S.B., died on June 29, his name's day, at the age of 91. He had served as archabbot from 1983 to 1990. Please pray for the repose of his soul.

### **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. 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.

3. The fourth International Oblate Congress in Rome is to take place November 4-10, 2017. Our Oblates Beth Grabiak of Latrobe, PA, and Sandra Tucker of St. Marys, PA, will be attending. Please pray for the fruitfulness of this event, which brings together Oblates from all over the world.

4. Our program for the formation of Oblate novices (with twelve lessons, which ideally can be completed monthly over the course of a year) has been completed. It was first implemented in July of 2016. The lessons were 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, any other Oblate novices, and any mentors of Oblate novices or inquirers. 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 their hard work on this valuable program. In September it is hoped that all twelve lessons will be duplicated, bound, and made available to anyone who would like them.

**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.)**

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

C.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)      D.V.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

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

C.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)      D.V.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

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

C.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)      D.V.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

Br. Lawrence Machia's talk on hospitality in Benedictine spirituality (August 21, 2016):

C.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)      D.V.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

Fr. Donald Raila's talk on obedience in Benedictine spirituality (September 18, 2016):

C.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)      D.V.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

Fr. Nathan Munsch's talk on *conversatio morum* on Oblate Day (September 25, 2016):

C.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)      D.V.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

Br. Joachim Morgan's talk on *lectio divina* (October 23, 2016):

C.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)      D.V.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

Fr. Anthony Grossi's talk on the Liturgy of the Hours (November 20, 2016):

C.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)      D.V.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

Bishop Edward Malesic's talk on the centrality of Christ in the *Rule* (November 20, 2016):

C.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)      D.V.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

Fr. Robert Keffer's talk on simplicity (December 18, 2016):

C.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)      D.V.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

Fr. Thomas Acklin's talk on holiness and humility (January 15, 2017):

C.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)      D.V.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

Br. Cassian Edwards' talk on poverty & simplicity (February 12, 2017):

C.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)      D.V.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

Br. Ignatius Camello's talk *Conversatio morum* (March 12, 2017):

C.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)      D.V.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

Fr. Boniface Hicks' talk on hospitality in Benedictine spirituality (April 9, 2017):

C.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)      D.V.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

Fr. John-Mary's talk on the Liturgy of the Hours (May 7, 2017):

C.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)      D.V.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

Dr. Matthew Fisher's talk on Camaldolese Benedictine Spirituality (June 11, 2017):

C.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)      D.V.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

Fr. Canice McMullen's talk on *lectio divina* (July 16, 2017):

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](http://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.**

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**SCHEDULE FOR OBLATE DAY, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2017**

- 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. Brian Boosel, O.S.B., Assembly Room (Monks are also welcome to attend.)
- 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 24, 2017**

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

- I plan to attend Oblate Day on Sept. 24 at St. Vincent.
  - (number of reservations) for lunch at \$7.50 each (money enclosed).
  - (number of reservations) for supper at \$9.25 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. 23, \_\_\_ Sept. 24. (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 18; please mark on envelope "September event."**
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**SCHEDULE FOR OBLATE DAY OF RECOLLECTION, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2017, Fr. Isaac Haywiser, 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 14, 2017**

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

- I plan to attend Oblate day of recollection on Oct. 14 at St. Vincent.
  - Enclosed is the fee of \$37.00 (or \$28.00 for lunch only).(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. 13, \_\_\_ Oct. 14 (Please contact Fr. Donald well in advance.)
- [If 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 7; please mark on envelope "October event."**
- Also, if you plan to be received as an Oblate or as an Oblate novice, please let Fr. Donald know in advance.

**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.

