

OBLATES OF SAINT BENEDICT

Saint Vincent Archabbey

300 Fraser Purchase Road, Latrobe, PA 15650-2690

February - April, 2006

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Please note form for renewal of Oblation on page 11 and form for celebration on March 21 on page 9.

PUTTING A BREAK ON OUR DESIRES: CALLING NOTHING ONE'S OWN (RB 33:6) AND KNOWING THE JOY OF DISPOSSESSION

Dear Oblates, Oblate Novices, and Friends,

Looking back on our experience of the Christmas Season, we might do well to consider what, if anything, brought us genuine joy during our celebration of Christ's nativity. Most likely, it was not elaborate decorations, festive food, or material gifts. These elements of Christmas celebrations surely can contribute to our entering into the joyful mystery of the Incarnation, but in and of themselves they cannot provide true and lasting joy. In fact, they can engender disappointment and perhaps even depression if one has put hopes in the material dimension of Christmas, which is so overemphasized in the media. The succession of buying gifts, planning and attending social events, and putting up (and taking down) decorations can become a vicious cycle of empty ritual if it leaves out the essence of Christmas, which is Christ Himself. Material things, though they may temporarily delight the eyes or palate or bring us fleeting praise, do not bring us ultimate satisfaction. Only communion with God and communion with others in the love of Christ bring us the enduring joy for which we were created.

In our materialistic culture we can be trapped in the illusion that material things can make us happy, even if we are relatively distanced from the frenzy of pre-Christmas preparations. One day when I was feeling a bit gloomy, I noticed that the towel by my sink was a little worn, and I began to think, "If I find a nicer towel, it might pick up my spirits; maybe some of my gloom is caused by this worn-out towel." (What folly! In truth, the towel will undoubtedly be quite serviceable for several more years.) Although I caught the illusory nature of my foolish thought rather quickly, the experience of being led astray showed that such illusions are pervasive and can appear unannounced to catch us off guard. We consecrated religious explicitly leave behind all things to follow Christ, in a context provided by the Church, and yet the temptation to find gratification in material things can still catch hold of us from time to time.

Oblates might do well to join us vowed religious in reading the apostolic exhortation *Consecrated Life (Vita Consecrata)*, Pope John Paul II, 1996) and its follow-up document *Starting Afresh from Christ* (2002). Although both works are addressed principally to people in vowed religious life, secular institutes, or societies of apostolic life, the wisdom of the Gospel proclaimed in these authoritative writings applies to all Christians, especially people like Oblates, who have offered themselves in a special way to adhere to an intensively Christian lifestyle. Lay people are not officially vowed to live by the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience (nor do Oblates make vows to follow the *Rule*), but all Christians are called to live in the spirit of the three counsels.

What do these documents say about poverty? *Vita Consecrata* asserts, "*Poverty* proclaims that God is man's only real treasure. When poverty is lived according to the example of Christ who 'though he was rich ... became poor' (2 Cor 8:9), it becomes an expression of that *total gift of self* which the three Divine Persons make to one another" (#21). Later the document reflects on the challenge of "*a materialism which craves possessions*, heedless of the needs and sufferings of the weakest, and lacking any concern for the balance of natural resources. The *reply* of the consecrated life is found in the profession of *evangelical poverty*, which can be lived in different ways and is often expressed in an active involvement in the promotion of solidarity and charity" (#89). Evangelical poverty, however, "is a value in itself" (#90), even before it is taken up as a practical means for serving the poor. "Its primary meaning, in fact, is to attest that God is the true wealth of the human heart. Precisely for this reason evangelical poverty forcefully challenges the idolatry of money, making a prophetic appeal as it were to society, which in so many parts of the developed world risks losing the sense of proportion and the very meaning of things. Thus, today more than in other ages, the call of evangelical poverty is being

felt also among those who are aware of the scarcity of the planet's resources and who invoke respect for and the conservation of creation by reducing consumption, by living more simply and by placing a necessary brake on their own desires" (#90).

Starting Afresh from Christ likewise proposes that "the evangelical counsels ..., lived by Christ in the fullness of his human nature as the Son of God and embraced for the love of God, appear as a way for the full realization of persons opposed to dehumanization. They are a powerful antidote to the pollution of spirit, life and culture; they proclaim the liberty of the children of God and the joy of living according to the evangelical beatitudes" (#13). Thus Christians find their identity and freedom not in having many possessions or many choices but in total commitment to Christ and His self-emptying love. Consecrated life can show all Christians the way to truth as "it finds its identity in the call of the Lord, in following him, in unconditional love and service, which are capable of filling a life to the brim and giving it fullness of meaning" (#13).

We find this joyful identity and freedom first of all by "putting a break on our desires." The *Rule* provides us with ample advice about knowing our desires, discerning which ones are in accord with God's will, restraining disordered desires, and promoting those that lead us to loving communion with Christ and the human family. Perhaps the most holy and beneficial desire is to long to hear "the voice of the Lord calling to us" (Prol:19) and to know that this voice is most delightful, whether or not it seems so at any given moment. At the same time one must realize that we provide a breeding ground for many less worthy desires. Gyrovagues "are slaves to their own wills and gross appetites" (1:11); perhaps St. Benedict mentions them because he knows that there are elements of such disorders in many human hearts. He also warns us that "in the monastery no one is to follow his own heart's desire, nor shall anyone presume to contend with his abbot defiantly" (3:8-9). One dimension of the monk's vocation to renounce self "in order to follow Christ" is the observance of such instruments of good works as "discipline your body; do not pamper yourself, but love fasting" (4:11-13); "do not gratify the promptings of the flesh; hate the urgings of self-will" (4:59-60). To embrace the first step of humility is to recognize our base desires and to turn away from them (7:19), to acknowledge that God knows our desires and wishes to transform them (7:23), and to "be on guard against any base desire, because death is stationed near the gateway of pleasure" (7:24). The second step of humility requires that a monk "love not his own will nor take

pleasure in the satisfaction of his desires" (7:31) but rather submit his will continually to the Father as Christ did. Like people in the world, monks are tempted to give in to overindulgence in food and drink (39:7 and 40:6), to ask for material things at inopportune times (31:18), to treat material things carelessly or to soil them (32:4), to cling to gifts that are sent to them as if they were private possessions (54:1-2), and even to store possessions under their beds (55:16).

In place of these disordered, ungodly desires, monks are to nurture desires for holiness, for communion with God, and even for the generally painful process of detachment that leads to total surrender to God. St. Benedict urges us to "run and do now what will profit us forever" (Prol:44). If we do not feel like "running" to do what is right, then we should at least, with God's grace, make a good start, and then we shall find that God will fire us up with the strong desires needed to keep running. The abbot -- and all the monks by implication -- must "seek first the kingdom of God and His justice" (2:35). The monks are to learn to love their enemies (who are actually great blessings to us since they challenge us to love as Christ loves) (4:31), to "pray for ... enemies out of love for Christ" (4:72), and to "prefer moderation in speech" (4:52). Monks are those who choose "to live in monasteries and to have an abbot over them" (5:12). The novice monk is evaluated according to "whether he shows eagerness for the Work of God, for obedience and for trials" (58:7). Monks who are "hastening on to the perfection of monastic life" (73:2) will be eager to read Scripture, "the holy catholic Fathers," and Cassian's *Conferences* and *Institutes*, even though such writings "make us blush for shame at being so slothful, so unobservant, so negligent" (73:7); amid the pain of self-awareness monks read these works since they are "tools for the cultivation of virtues" (73:6). In all these ways a monk learns, sometimes slowly and painfully, to dislike whatever distances him from God and to embrace whatever leads him to a fuller communion with God.

The readings at Mass for the Christmas Season, taken largely from the Gospel of St. John and the First Letter of St. John, also speak of this transformation of our desires. St. John urges us to "have no love for the world, nor [for] the things that the world affords" (1 Jn 2:15); "carnal allurements, enticements for the eye, the life of empty show" (1 Jn 2:16) are part of a world that is passing away whereas "the man who does God's will endures forever" (1 Jn 2:17). As children of God, we nurture a hope to "be like Him [God]" and to "see Him as He

is" (1 Jn 3:2); "everyone who has this hope based on Him keeps himself pure, as He is pure" (1 Jn 3:3). St. John the Baptist exemplifies this stripping away of self-will and humble conformity to God's will. He lives simply; he points others to Christ and away from himself; he desires Christ the Bridegroom to take possession of his followers. As the Bridegroom's "best man," he is "overjoyed to hear His voice" (Jn 3:29), and he makes the powerful witness: "He must increase, while I must decrease" (Jn 3:30). (Truly this may be one of the most important verses of Scripture for us!) The transformation of our desires is a natural overflow of the Christmas mystery. In Christ God became man so that we might become like God in our role as His adopted children. To fulfill that vocation our self-centered human desires must be purged away so that we might learn to want what God wants and ultimately to love as Christ loves.

How, then, can we let go of materialistic attachments in order better to follow Christ and enter more fully into communion with Him? First, we might ask ourselves if there are any things or activities that enslave us by taking up an undue amount of our time and energy. Are there some things that are definitely optional in life and yet which I think I absolutely need? Do I become angry or impatient if I am deprived of a certain food, a certain television program, or a certain commercial product? We can learn to exercise appropriate caution by turning on the television only for spiritual or intellectual benefit (or not at all). We can discipline ourselves to go shopping only when we really need something. We can avoid looking at ads unless we are scanning them for a definite product that we need. We can learn to like truly nourishing food and to dislike junk foods or whatever other foods might harm our health or overburden our budget. We can resist fashions in our choice of clothes and seek to dress with simplicity and modesty. We can cease worrying about what other people think and stop trying to "keep up with the neighbors." On the positive side, we can nurture a spirit of thanksgiving for everything we use. Perhaps a prayer before starting a computer, driving a car, or

entering a store would help us to regard things as gifts from God to be used prudently according to His will. Handling things -- even pencils and pens, books, and dinnerware -- with a sense of reverence and gratitude can enhance our communion with God through everything we touch. We can praise God, too, for what we cannot use or touch insofar as it is enhancing someone else's life. I can rejoice in not owning something because (1) it does not belong to me and (2) it can serve someone's needs better (or perhaps the other person needs to let go of it in God's good time). Finally, recognizing the truth that I am only a steward of what I have and use, I can nurture the desire to give my excess to the poor, as St. Benedict recommends several times (cf. *RB* 4:14-15, 53:15, 55:9).

In his book *Approach to Monasticism* (N.Y.: Sheed and Ward, 1960), Dom Hubert van Zeller, O.S.B., wrote, "The pressure of the monastic life is not that of a leaden weight, reducing the material of man's will to an even level, but rather that of the tide or current which carries the human will along with it to its fullest natural and supernatural expression. ... It is often through the soul's desires that God makes known his will. A man comes into a monastery in order to purify his own desires so that he desires only the desires of God. ... [A]bove all he wants to see and know in order to love. Monasteries were invented neither to keep people out of mischief nor to keep people happy, but to keep people trying to be good" (pp. 7-8). May we who are Oblates and monks keep turning to our all-good God for the grace to put a prudent break on our wrongful desires, to know and love our Bridegroom, Christ, above all else, and to seek the complete joy of living in Christ's love and keeping His commandments at all times (cf. Jn 15:10-11). Then in due time we shall embrace the joy of Christ Himself and joy of the Holy Spirit that propels us forward to the perfect joy of an eternal Easter.

In the peace of Christ and St. Benedict,

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

A MESSAGE FROM ARCHABBOT DOUGLAS

February, 2006

Dear Oblates and Friends,

At Christmas we celebrated God's love made visible in the birth of Jesus. In the subsequent weeks, we celebrated the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God, the Epiphany, the Baptism of our Lord, and the calling of Peter and Andrew to discipleship. In the readings for each of these weeks, we see an unfolding of the **mystery** of God's love in our world.

As we begin this new year, we ask God for the grace to be open to the mystery of His love as it unfolds in our lives. It is always in the most unexpected ways that we come to know the nearness of God in our lives. The unfolding of the mystery of God's love inevitably involves some aspect of suffering. Jesus has shown us the way to the heavenly Father -- a way that involved suffering and, ultimately, death on a cross. We are able to embrace the crosses which we experience in our lives because we know that for Jesus and for each of us, the cross is the way that ultimately leads to the resurrection.

As we begin a new year, let us ask for the grace to take up our cross daily and to trust that God's love is with us always -- even when we cannot see the way so clearly.

Sincerely in Christ,

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

RENEWAL OF OBLATION AND KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH THE ARCHABBEY

All Oblates who do not have the occasion to renew their Oblation at St. Vincent or with local deaneries are encouraged to make the renewal privately on or about March 21 and to send a completed renewal form (see page 11) to the Oblate Office. It is helpful to know of your ongoing, active interest in the Oblate Program and your personal growth in Benedictine spirituality. Those wishing to make donations may write out checks to ST. VINCENT ARCHABBEY.

Also, if you are an Oblate novice or an Oblate who does not participate in a deanery and have not contacted the Archabbey for several years, please use the renewal form to express your interest in the Oblate Program. In particular, if you have been an Oblate novice for over a year, please remember that you are eligible to become a full Oblate if you fulfill the requirements in II. E of the *Oblate Formation Booklet*. In any case, it would be good to know if we at the Archabbey can help you in any way in your journey as an Oblate or as an Oblate novice. Also, if you are no longer interested in the Oblate Program and no longer wish to receive the newsletter, this might be a good opportunity to let us know your intention.

SOLEMNITY OF ST. BENEDICT AT THE ARCHABBEY ON MARCH 21

Oblates from all areas are welcome to join Oblates of the Latrobe (St. Gregory) Deanery on Tuesday, March 21, to celebrate the Solemnity of the Passing of Our Holy Father Benedict with the monastic community and other guests. The schedule includes a festive Mass at 4:00 P.M., supper at 5:15 P.M. (in the Westmoreland Room, 2nd floor of Placid Hall), Oblation ceremonies at 6:30 P.M. (in the basilica choir), Evening Prayer with the monks at 7:30 P.M., and a social at 8:00 P.M. (in the Parish Assembly Room). Archbishop Wilton Gregory of Atlanta will be the principal celebrant and homilist at the Mass. Members of the Oblate Community and their guests who wish to attend should fill out the form on page 9 and send it to Jackie Milko by March 15. The cost of the supper is \$6.00. Checks should be made out to ST. VINCENT ARCHABBEY, and reservations should be made in advance in order to plan for the right number of people.

ARCHABBOT LAMBERT REILLY TO SPEAK AT OBLATE MEETING ON MARCH 12

On Sunday, March 12, at 6:45 P.M., Archabbot Lambert Reilly, O.S.B., retired Archabbot of St. Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, Indiana, will be the guest speaker at the monthly meeting of the Oblates in Latrobe. Because of the possible large crowd, the talk will be held in the Westmoreland Room on the second floor of Placid Hall. Archabbot is a well-known retreat master and the author of two books. Those coming to Vespers (at 5:00 P.M.) and supper (after Vespers) should contact Fr. Donald at 724-805-2291.

DAY OF RECOLLECTION AT ST. EMMA, APRIL 23

A day of recollection especially for Oblates is scheduled at St. Emma Retreat House in Greensburg for Sunday, April 23, the Second Sunday of Easter. The schedule begins with arrival and confessions at 9:00 A.M. and continues until 4:30 P.M. (after Vespers at 4:00) or until 6:00 P.M. (after supper). The retreat master will be Fr. Donald. The cost is \$25.00, including one meal, or \$35.00, including the second meal at 5:00. For those coming to supper only the cost is \$15.00. For registration or further information, write to St. Emma Monastery, 1001 Harvey Rd., Greensburg, PA 15601, or phone 724-834-3060, or e-mail benedictinenuns@stemma.org. Note that the Latrobe Deanery's April meeting will be held at St. Emma at 6:15 that same evening. **Even if you are not attending the day of recollection, if you wish to come to supper before the meeting, please contact the sisters at St. Emma so that they will know the correct number of people coming for supper. Thank you.**

OBLATE RETREAT, MAY 19-21

Oblates and others interested in Benedictine spirituality are invited to participate in this year's "Oblate retreat" from Friday, May 19, to Sunday, May 21. Br. Benedict Janecko, O.S.B., will direct the retreat. All those on the Oblate mailing list should have received a listing of retreats. Registration (and all other special arrangements) should be done through the St. Vincent Retreat Program, and not through the Oblate Office.

OBLATE DAY 2006, SEPTEMBER 24

This year's Oblate Day will be Sunday, September 24. A guest speaker has not yet been chosen.

RECOMMENDED READING

- Msgr. Timothy M. Dolan, *Priests for the Third Millennium* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 2000) [meant especially for Catholic seminarians (and priests), but gives excellent insights and suggestions concerning the Catholic priesthood that may be of interest to all]
 - Scott Hahn, *A Father Who Keeps His Promises: God's Covenant Love in Scripture* (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1998)
 - Fr. Philip Schuster, O.S.B., *Seeking God's Will: Through Faith, Hope & Charity* (Conception, MO: The Printery House, 2000)
- All these books are available for borrowing from the Oblate Library.**

NEW BOOKS ON BENEDICTINE SPIRITUALITY

- Aquinata Böckmann, O.S.B., *Perspectives on the Rule of Saint Benedict: Expanding Our Hearts in Christ* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005) -- an excellent partial commentary
- Terrence Kardong, O.S.B., *Day by Day with Saint Benedict* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005)
- Br. Benet Tvedten, O.S.B., *How to Be a Monastic and Not Leave Your Day Job: An Invitation to Oblate Life* (Orleans, MA: Paraclete Press, 2005)
- Rachel M. Srubas (Oblate), *Oblation: Meditations on St. Benedict's Rule* (Orleans, MA: Paraclete Press, 2006)
- Carmen Acevedo Butcher, *Man of Blessing: A Life of St. Benedict* (Orleans, MA: Paraclete Press, 2006).

The last three books are being made available by Paraclete Press at a 50% discount if 50 or more copies (combined from any of the three) are ordered. Please phone the Oblate Office (724-805-2291) if you are interested, and let Fr. Donald know how many of each book you would like. Do not send money until we know whether we have 50 or more copies altogether. Please be sure to leave your phone number so that we can finally let you know whether we can get the 50% discount. Thank you.

OBLATE BOARD OF ADVISORS, Meeting on January 15

The Oblate Board of Advisors, along with two deanery representatives, met on January 15. Among the items discussed were the celebration of anniversaries of Oblation, outlines of lessons for inquirers and Oblate novices, and a change in the schedule for Oblate Day in September. If you would like a copy of the minutes, contact the Oblate Office. The next meeting will be on Friday, April 7, at 6:30 P.M. in Brownfield 203.

NEW EDITION OF WHAT IT MEANS TO ME TO BE AN OBLATE BEING PLANNED

As you can see from the attached flyer, you are welcome, if you are a full Oblate or an Oblate novice close to final Oblation, to make a written contribution to this publication. Two Oblates have already volunteered to edit and type up the entries, but we could probably use a few more volunteers. Let the Oblate Office know if you are interested (724-805-2291).

ST. BENEDICT/ST. SCHOLASTICA SCAPULARS AVAILABLE AGAIN

Thanks to Debbie Scott, sister of Br. Mark Floreanini, O.S.B., scapulars of St. Benedict/St. Scholastica are available for our Oblates. Debbie generously donated her time, energy, and materials to make several dozen scapulars for us. We are grateful to her!

NEW MONASTIC BREVIARY IN LATIN AND ENGLISH AVAILABLE

The Monastic Diurnal, or The Day Hours of the Monastic Breviary in Latin and English, which contains seven hours of the Divine Office (lacking only Vigils), is available through the Basilica Gift Shop in a leather-bound version for about \$60.00.

BENEDICTINE OBLATE PROGRAM ON RADIO WEDO, 810 AM: This program, hosted by Oblate John James of North Huntingdon, is broadcast from 8:45 A.M. to 9:00 A.M., Monday through Friday.

OBLATE MEETINGS IN LATROBE

Oblates from all locations are welcome to the monthly meetings of the Latrobe Deanery of Oblates, mostly at 6:45 P.M. in seminary classroom Brownfield 202 on Sundays. The next four meetings will be on Feb. 12, Mar 12 (in Upper Placid, with Archabbot Lambert Reilly as guest speaker), Apr. 23 (at St. Emma), and May 21. **Note that the meeting on April 23 will be held at St. Emma Monastery at 6:15; those wishing to come for supper at 5:00 (and Vespers at 4:00) should contact the sisters at St. Emma, as described above.** Those wishing to come early for Evening Prayer (at 5:00) and supper before the meetings at St. Vincent should phone Fr. Donald in advance. The direct lines for reaching Fr. Donald are (724) 805-2291 (Mon.-Sat.) and (724) 532-6709 (Sundays only).

PERSONAL NOTES

(1) The following members of the Oblate Community request or need our prayers: Tom Angelo of Latrobe (for his brother Tony, who underwent surgery on Nov. 18, suffered a heart attack on Jan. 4, and then underwent heart surgery; for their Aunt Rita, who fell in the nursing home where she lives); Murray & Kathy Barrett of Niagara Falls, Ont. (for Murray's healing from mini-strokes and other ailments); Margaret Bott of Harrisburg (for recovery from cancer surgery on Jan. 19); Brian Chisholm of St. Catharines, Ont. (for Ted, a man in his shelter, who has cancer of the throat); Milissa Chomiak of Republic (for recovery of her father, Mike Chomiak, from surgery on Jan. 25; for recovery of her uncle Louis Fratrach from surgery on Jan. 26; for the health of her mother, Josephine Chomiak); Ken Craven of Sparta, TN (for his son as he begins receiving peritoneal dialysis and hopes for the donation of a kidney; for his daughter Kathleen as she perseveres in raising seven children and hopes, with her husband, to care for two foster children); Edward Dixon of Philadelphia (for his daughter Margaret, who has been struggling with her teaching job); Dale Dombrosky of Baltimore (for her son Christopher and his girl friend Lissa); Bernadette Edwards of Mt. Pleasant (for continued strength for her husband, Bob, in his struggle against leukemia; for the health of her daughter, Lori, who is recovering from surgery in Oct.); Phil & Nancy Engle of Greensburg (for the special needs of three of their children, Jon, Anina, and Maribeth); Randy Garver of Erie (for a friend's father, Richard J. Kennedy, who is dying of cancer); Mary Henry of Greensburg (for her health, especially regarding nodules on her lung); Mary Katherine Hoover of Patton (for complete recovery from surgery in Oct.); Mary Leftwich of Cumberland (for healing from illness); Fred & Angela Letzeisen of Spring Hill FL (for their daughter Carolyn, especially that she find a steady job; for a 12-year-old boy Bradley, who was diagnosed with 3rd-stage Hodgkins's lymphoma); Roy McKenzie of St. Catharines, Ont. (for healing from a heart problem); Jackie Milko of Latrobe (for complete healing of her brother Jim from open-heart surgery on Jan. 23; for continued healing of her great-niece Michaela from asthma & its complications); Delina Pauls of Virginia Beach (for continued healing from surgery on Dec. 6 & bad reactions to anesthesia); Art Raimondo of Greensburg (for healing for his daughter Beverly from severe ailments); Linda Rockey of Pittsburgh (for her mother, whose health has been failing); Pastor Ron Shellhamer of Shamokin (for his son Chris, who was deployed to Iraq for a second time in early Nov.); Radames Sipe of Somerset (for his parents); Patrick Smith of Gatesville, TX (for Deacon Klaus Adams and his family as they mourn the death of his son-in-law in battle in Iraq; for a friend Angela Garrett and her mother Helen, who suffers from stage-2 Alzheimer's disease); Michael Sobjak of Muncy (for successful preparation for back surgery that might relieve severe spinal pain); Gabriele Terrill of Annville (for continued healing from an auto accident last Oct. & for the success of surgery in Feb.); Christine Williams of Allenhurst, GA (for healing from shingles; for her husband, John, and her son); Robert Zanolli of Cape Coral, FL (for his wife Terri's complete recovery from surgery).

(2) Oblate **Terry Davis** of McMechen, WV, spent some time in December helping victims of Hurricane Katrina in Mississippi through a relief project called "8 Days of Hope." He commented in a letter of Jan. 6, "Words or pictures cannot describe what I saw while on the gulf coast." Terry also requests prayers for his unborn granddaughter, due in May, who has severe intestinal problems.

(3) Oblate **Bill O'Neil** of Pittsburgh and his wife, Eileen, made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in November. It included Mass in a different church every day and visits to Jerusalem, Nazareth, Jericho, Bethlehem, the Sea of Galilee, Joppa, and Cana. Bill commented, "It certainly makes the readings at Mass come alive for us."

(4) On December 18, at Sacred Heart Church in Del Rio, TX, Oblate **Josef Orosz** was married to Ann Siefker, a native of Fort Jennings, OH. During the Mass they performed a song, "This Divine Moment," which they themselves had composed for the occasion. As of January Josef and Ann were back in Bedford, PA, at "Patience Manor." Our congratulations and prayers are with Mr. & Mrs. Orosz.

(5) Oblate **Pastor Ronald Shellhamer** of Shamokin, PA, is spending three weeks in Liberia in January and February as part of the Lutheran Church's outreach to that war-torn country. He is teaching and serving as a "caring friend." Please pray for Pastor Ron and for the people of Liberia and all missionary efforts to assist reconciliation and reconstruction there.

(6) Oblates **Anthony & Donna Sunseri** of Greensburg are especially grateful for prayers for Anthony's father, Anthony, in his

prolonged recovery from heart surgery and from numerous subsequent infections. While he was at a nursing home in Mt. Lebanon the week of Jan. 14, a fire started in his room, and he felt that the Lord awakened him so that, seeing fire shooting out of the heater, he could run into the hall and shout, "Fire!" Although he lost most of his personal belongings, he returned home after six weeks of recuperation and was feeling better at last. Unfortunately, as of Jan. 27, he was back in the hospital because an aortic aneurysm requiring another major surgery was diagnosed. Please continue to pray for Anthony, Sr., and the whole family.

(7) Oblate **Mary Van Schie** of Welland, Ont., made a memorable pilgrimage to Poland, Prague, and Medjugorje during 2005. Included in the trip was a visit to St. Faustina's grave, her chapel, and her convent.

FORMER MODERATOR OF LATROBE DEANERY, FR. ERMIN, DIES

Fr. Ermin Smith, O.S.B. died on Jan. 13, 2006, at the age of 88. He had revived the Latrobe Deanery in the early 1960's and led Oblate meetings until he departed for the Archabbey's mission in Brazil in 1964. He also led meetings in Latrobe during the 1970's and 1980's. Please pray for the repose of his soul.

BR. ADRIANO DIES ON JANUARY 23

Br. Adriano Goldoni de Sá, O.S.B., member of the community at São Bento Monastery in Vinhedo, Brazil, died in an automobile accident on January 23. He was 41 years old and had professed solemn vows in 2005. Please pray for the repose of his soul and for the consolation of his family and of the monastic community in Vinhedo.

OBLATE CONDOLENCES

Let us together offer prayers for those of our Oblate community who mourn the loss of loved ones:

- Oblate Rev. Ronald Shellhamer of Shamokin, PA, whose mother died on July 19, 2005
- Oblate John C. Henry of Melbourne, FL, whose wife, Eileen, died in Oct., 2005
- Oblate Anna Mary Taylor of Latrobe, whose brother Regis Kintz died on Oct. 28, 2005
- Oblate novice Jody Bish of Mercer, PA, whose grandmother Dora Bish died during 2005
- Oblate Patricia Morgan of Gibsonia, PA, whose mother, Margaret Foreman, died on Dec. 15, 2005
- Oblate Van Reidhead of McAllen, TX, whose mother, Elizabeth Jewell Reidhead, died on Dec. 24, 2005
- Oblate Willard Edwards of Williamsport, PA, whose wife, Carolyn, died on Jan. 3 [see below]
- Oblate Rita Mayercsik of Johnstown, PA, whose cousin Mary Rita Tucker died on Jan. 27 .

OBLATE DEATHS

Let us be united in prayer for the recently deceased members of our Oblate Community, that having died with Christ, they might experience the fullness of life in Him:

- 30 Aug 2004 – Louise P. Silware of Vandergrift, PA (Oblate since Oct., 1969)
- 21 Oct 2005 – Anna (Cecilia) Lonergan of Virginia Beach, VA (Oblate since Mar., 1994)
- 27 Nov 2005 – James (Andrew) Heinlein of Johnstown, PA (Oblate since Mar., 1987)
- 2 Dec 2005 – Frank A. Carnovale of Johnsonburg, PA (Oblate since Apr., 1985)
- 3 Jan 2006 – Carolyn (Jerome) Edwards of Williamsport, PA (Oblate since Mar., 2000) .

NEWS FROM OBLATE DEANERIES

Albion, PA – Deacon leader Ralph DeCecco wrote on November 22, December 13, and January 23. At the meeting on November 21, the group used *RB 22* and 43 for *lectio divina* and study of the *Rule*. Deacon Ralph and his wife, Janet, delivered some donated books from the Archabbey, and they played taped music from monastic Vespers at St. Vincent. Also, the group pondered possibilities for a patron saint.

At the meeting on December 12, after Vespers for the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Oblate novice Carmen Musolino led the meeting using *RB 58*. There followed a long discussion among Deacon Ralph, his wife Janet, and the eight other Oblate novices present, with special reference to the ceremony of investiture of Oblate novices on Dec. 11, 2004. The discussion emphasized the need for stability, obedience, perseverance, and humility on the journey of a monk or Oblate. The meeting closed with the praying of Compline.

The meeting on January 9 began with Vespers and then was led by Oblate novice John Simpson, who shared about the *Rule* with well-prepared personal insights, which were written down with copies for each of the ten people present. Time went by quickly during the interesting discussion until it was time for Compline.

During a Saturday-evening Mass on January 21, Msgr. James Peterson invested

Joseph Hartdegen of Albion, PA,

as an Oblate novice. The Gospel concerned the call of the first four apostles, and Msgr. Peterson's homily about being called by Christ aptly fit the occasion

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

Secretary Gabriele Terrill wrote on December 8 and January 16 (with a current roster). At the meeting on November 20 at St. Paul Church, there was a lively discussion about the Prologue and first three chapters of the *Rule*. Those attending shared about the *Rule's* capacity to make life simpler and more peaceful, to help us see the small things in life as holy, and to motivate us to regard Christ as more important than anything else in one's life. After the discussion refreshments were served. No meeting was held in December because of the stress of preparing for Christmas.

The Oblate community has been trying to stay in touch with Oblate Margaret Bott, who had yet another cancer surgery on January 19.

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

Acting secretary Dale Dombrosky wrote on November 22 and December 21. At the meeting on November 19, the group discussed the second conference from the World Congress of Oblates in September. It was announced that one or two people would be ready for investiture as Oblate novices in December.

At the meeting on December 11, Fr. Paschal Morlino, moderator, invested

David O. Robeson of Columbia, MD,

as an Oblate novice. His wife and two sons attended the ceremony. David is the brother of Oblate Brent Robeson of Harpers Ferry, WV.

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

Secretary Mary Catherine Hoover phoned on January 30. On January 10 the Oblates met for Evening Prayer in the church and then went to the Boniface Wimmer Room of the new Sacred Heart Annex to discuss the first chapter of the book *Cherish Christ above All* by Fr. Demetrius Dumm, O.S.B..

Johnstown, PA (St. John Gualbert Deanery) -- meetings on 2nd Monday of each month, St. Joseph Chapel

Lay leader Carl Motter wrote on November 16, December 13, and January 10. The meeting planned for November 14 was canceled because Fr. Benjamin, moderator, was ill in the hospital. A Mass and a pre-Christmas celebration were scheduled for December 12, but the event was canceled because of inclement weather.

Msgr. Michael Becker of St. Benedict Church in Johnstown offered six Saturday sessions in September and October on the life of St. Benedict. Carl and his wife, Joyce, attended the sessions, and 18 other attendees expressed interest in the Oblate Program.

On January 9 the Oblates met with Msgr. Becker since Fr. Ben was still ill. Each Oblate introduced himself or herself to Msgr. Becker and explained how he or she became an Oblate. The group discussed the future of the deanery and Msgr. Becker's hopes to promote the Oblate Program in his parish. He has been continuing a series of presentations on the spirituality of St. Benedict on Saturday mornings in January and February.

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

At the meeting on November 20, Br. Nathan Cochran, O.S.B., gave a presentation entitled "Art and Architecture in Benedictine Monasteries." Using video equipment to show examples of art in various monasteries in Europe and the U.S. and inserting quotes from the *Rule*, he emphasized that Benedictines have typically used whatever style of art was prevalent in any given age but ideally sought to make everything in monastic life a work of art, with the best of materials and great care of workmanship. He also noted that all places of gathering in monasteries (even wash basins) have been potential locations of good art. When the Oblates gathered in basilica for Compline, Fr. Donald invested

Alan G. Sawitski of Wheeling, WV, as an Oblate novice.

At the meeting on December 18, Oblate Michael L. Russo of Johnstown gave a video presentation on the First World Congress of Oblates, held in Rome, September 19-25, 2005. Mike noted that the main theme of the congress was "communion" and that Abbot Primate Notker Wolf had reminded the Oblates that they belonged to a great spiritual movement. Mike also emphasized the notion that Oblates have their spiritual roots in their relationships with monks and other Oblates and in the Benedictine tradition; the world needs Oblates for evangelization and prayers for vocations. Some of the scenes showed liturgical celebrations with contributions by different nationalities around the world, along with musical presentations. Included in Mike's report were many beautiful slides from a tour of the monastery at Montecassino.

When the Oblates gathered in the basilica for Compline, Fr. Donald received the following:

Oblates: **Anthony (Maurus) Sunseri** of Greensburg, PA
Donna (Thecla Francis) Sunseri of Greensburg, PA

Oblate novice: **Janis E. Matthews** of Carmichaels, PA .

Anthony and Donna are husband and wife, and their three young daughters are part of their Oblate family.

At the meeting on January 15, the Oblates were engaged in a lively discussion of simplicity and authenticity from Chapter

22 of *Benedict's Way*. Among the points emphasized were living a countercultural lifestyle and not wasting time and energy to be artificial or merely to please others. When the group gathered in the basilica for Compline, Fr. Donald invested as Oblate novices:

Patrick B. Anderson of Ebensburg, PA
Liz Hart of Greensburg, PA .

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

Lay leader Brian Chisholm phoned on November 13 and December 12, and secretary Suzanne Keays wrote on December 15. At the meeting on October 27, the group discussed Chapter 22 of *Benedict's Way*. At the meeting on November 24, Msgr. Charles Gagné, moderator, led a discussion on *lectio divina* from Chapter 23. *Lectio*, the group was told, is at the heart of Benedictine spirituality. They reflected on the four phases of *lectio* and the fruits of *lectio*: truer relationships, softening of sharp edges, less inclination to gossip and act on selfish impulses. In sum, *lectio* is about listening and responding to the Lord and leads us to be converted by the Word of God. The Oblates also made preparations for an Advent day of recollection and a pre-Christmas supper.

At the day of recollection, held on November 26, retired Bishop O'Mara gave a conference in the morning, celebrated Mass, and remained with the group until 1:00. During the afternoon there was adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Fr. Gagné was available to hear confessions.

A good turnout came to the pre-Christmas dinner, which was held at a restaurant at 4:30 on December 12. At 7:00 the group gathered for Mass celebrated by Fr. Joseph at St. Patrick's Church.

The Oblates were planning a raffle for the New Year to help to finance a window in St. Patrick's Church.

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

Lay leader Bill O'Neil wrote on January 20. At the regular meeting on January 18, Evening Prayer was followed by an announcement by Fr. Ralph, moderator, that Fr. Tom Acklin, O.S.B., was to give a parish mission at St. Peter Church on April 4-6 (at 7 P.M. each evening). The group decided that in February they would begin discussions based on the book *Toward God* by Fr. Michael Casey, O.C.S.O. Then they enjoyed a social with refreshments, and Bill and his wife, Eileen, gave a presentation on their pilgrimage to the Holy Land in December. Those in attendance asked many questions.

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

Lay leader Bernard "Ben" Hoffman wrote on January 6. At the meeting on December 1, Ben was chosen as the new lay leader, and St. Maurus was chosen as the patron saint of the deanery.

At the meeting on January 5, after Compline and Benediction at Queen of the World Church, Fr. John-Mary, moderator, began by reflecting on the 2005 Advent Season and the busy Christmas Season, with hope that the Oblates would take advantage of the slower pace of life after Christmas to reconnect with Sacred Scripture and to listen more intently to God. He then read passages from St. Gregory's *Life and Miracles of St. Benedict* that mentioned St. Maurus and St. Placid. Deceased Oblate Frank Carnovale was fondly remembered. Then a study of the *Rule* continued with a discussion of the seventh step of humility. Finally, Fr. John-Mary read an excerpt from a speech by Pope Benedict in which the Holy Father promoted the practice of *lectio divina*. He emphasized the importance of daily communication with God in order to build a loving relationship with Him.

Savannah, GA -- Some 30 people, Oblates and their guests, attended a day of reflection given by Fr. Donald on Sunday, November 6. He spoke on the Benedictine spirituality of time. The event included an afternoon conference, Mass for the day, and a covered-dish dinner in the dining room of Benedictine Priory.

Moderator Fr. Jude Brady wrote on December 4 and January 12. On December 4 about 25 Oblates met for Mass at Benedictine Priory. The homily emphasized the importance of St. John the Baptist in the origins of monastic life. During the Mass Fr. Jude invested two Oblate novices:

Richard H. Fitzgerald of Mt. Pleasant, SC, and
Kelly Williams of Savannah, GA.

Kelly is a senior at St. Vincent's Academy. Also, the Oblates were invited to a special school event on December 16.

On January 11 the Oblate Advisory Council met over supper following Evening Prayer with the monks of Benedictine Priory. Future events for the Oblate deanery were planned, including Mass at the Priory on February 26, a celebration of the Solemnity of St. Benedict (anticipated) on March 19, a one-day retreat at Mepkin Abbey (Trappist) in South Carolina on April 22, and an outdoor family activity some time during June.

State College, PA (St. Joseph Deanery) -- meetings on 2nd Tuesday of each month, Benedictine residence

Secretary Ashley Leggett wrote on November 9, December 12, and January 11. The meeting on November 8 was attended by nine Oblates, two inquirers, and Fr. Boniface, moderator. It was decided to have renewals of Oblations on December 12. Lay leader Laura Schneider mentioned that the cash fund needed to be replenished for Christmas-Season donations and

expenses. Then the group continued to discuss the book *The Way of the Lamb*, with related themes of humility and hope in God. Several Oblates told personal stories about feeling out of place in this world.

RESERVATION FORM FOR CELEBRATION OF ST. BENEDICT DAY ON MARCH 21

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

___ I plan to attend the dinner for Oblates at St. Vincent on Tuesday, March 21, 2006, along with ___ guests; I enclose _____ (\$6.00 per person; make out checks to **ST. VINCENT ARCHABBEY**. An additional donation for the social would be welcome.).

___ I plan to be invested as an ___ Oblate, ___ Oblate novice on March 21. On becoming a full Oblate, I plan to take the Oblate name _____. (*application form required*)

Please send this form to: Miss Jacqueline Milko, 820 Beatty Valley Rd., Latrobe, PA 15650 .

Fr. Boniface pointed out how trials, like Job's, can lead us to a deeper understanding of God's ways.

On December 12, the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Oblates met with Fr. Boniface for Mass and renewals of Oblation. During the Mass Fr. Boniface invested

Joel Moore of State College, PA,

as an Oblate novice. Joel had been attending meetings for two years. After the Mass the group gathered for a covered-dish dinner at the Benedictine Residence; numerous family and friends also attended.

At the meeting on January 10, eight Oblates and two visitors were in attendance. After Evening Prayer Fr. Boniface proposed having a novena to St. Benedict culminating with a Mass on the Penn State Campus on the Solemnity of St. Benedict on March 21, and the group explored possible locations for the novena. For the rest of the meeting the group discussed Chapter 2 of *The Way of the Lamb*. Among the topics covered were time and eternity, praying for others' repentance (recommended as a very fruitful practice), and the good that can come out of evil deeds, such as the conception of children in unethical circumstances. All were struck by Charles Péguy's statement, "The everlasting God is not so much exceedingly old as immeasurably young."

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

Lay leader Delina Pauls wrote on November 3 and January 24. At the meeting on October 5, which was well-attended, Fr. Cristiano, moderator, continued a talk about spiritualities of the Church through history, with reference to St. Augustine, St. Francis, Julian of Norwich, St. Hildegard, and various other saints. The group felt very nourished by the conference.

The meeting on November 2 suffered from low attendance, probably because of conflicts with other events. Fr. Cristiano spoke about the meaning of All Saints Day and All Souls Day. There was also a discussion about burial customs in various cultures.

At the meeting on January 4, Fr. Cristiano spoke about the meaning of Oblation and expectations of what Oblates should be doing. During the meeting Fr. Cristiano invested

Frank Schuetz of Norfolk, VA, as an Oblate novice.

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

Lay leader Ted Richardson wrote on December 18. At the meeting on October 30, the group discussed Chapter 15, entitled "Conflict," from *Benedict's Way*. On November 20 the five members present had a productive discussion on "Friendship" from Chapter 16. On December 11 the four members present discussed "Leadership," the theme of Chapter 17.

Various Locations

On November 13 at Old St. Patrick's Church in Ann Arbor, MI,

James (Maurus) Durka of Whitmore Lake, MI,

made his final Oblation in the presence of Rev. Gerald Gawronski. Jim is a former member of the St. Scholastica Deanery in Virginia Beach.

On December 30 in the Archabbey Basilica,

Rev. Michael C. (Gregory) Richards of Vienna, WV,

made his final Oblation in the presence of Fr. Donald, along with his wife, Evelyn, and Oblate Jackie Milko. Michael is pastor of Wayside United Methodist Church in Vienna, WV.

On January 20, Fr. Paschal Kneip, O.S.B., pastor, invested the following as Oblate novices at St. Andrew

Church in Chincoteague Island, VA:

Jan Jackson of Atlantic, VA
Andrej Kodjak of Chincoteague, VA
Lorraine Kodjak of Chincoteague, VA
Joelle Peeters of Williamsburg, VA
John Peeters of Williamsburg, VA .

Andrej & Lorraine and John & Joelle are married couples. Also received as part of their Oblate family were the four Peeters daughters: **Claire, Marie Christina, Anne Sophie,** and **Marie Helena.** The Peeters family are currently moving from Chincoteague Island to Williamsburg.

On January 30 in the Archabbey Basilica,
Scott D. "Dusty" (Alfric) Warner of Mt. Desert, ME,
made his final Oblation in the presence of Fr. Donald, as well as Dusty's wife Anne and Oblates Jackie Milko and Carl Burlas.

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. Brinstan Takach, Fr. Benjamin Walker, Fr. Roland Ripoli.

OBLATES AND OBLATE NOVICES WHOSE ADDRESSES HAVE BEEN LOST

Following the listing begun in the last issue, the list below is part of a large file of names of Oblates and Oblate novices who are no longer on our mailing list. If anyone knows the current whereabouts of any of the people listed or the dates of death, please contact the Oblate Office. Such information will help us to update our files, which include hundreds of "lost" people. Thank you.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Last Known Location</u>	<u>Date of Oblation</u>	<u>Date of Last Contact</u>
Bergman, Charles.	New Castle, PA	3/25/1955	----
Berk, Aloysius B.	Glenwood, PA	11/21/1962	----
Berke, Christopher B.	Homosassa, FL	3/21/1993	8/1999
Berna, James A.	Fayette City, PA	8/2/1974	-----
Bernarding, Edward	Elizabeth, PA	7/25/1936	-----
Bevenour, Bernard G.	Spring Grove, PA	3/24/1964	-----
Bevenour, Michael G..	Spring Grove, PA	10/25/1969	-----
Beyers, Henry H.	Pittsburgh, PA	8/7/1933	-----
Biel, Stanley J.	Turtle Creek, PA	8/3/1947	-----
Bigley, Harry A., Jr..	Sun City Center, FL	8/13/1960	8/1995
Biscoe, Joseph A.	Belle Vernon, PA	8/10/1941	-----
Blackburn, Mrs. R.A.	Covina, CA	5/14/1956	-----
Blackwell, Lani Kay	Edinboro, PA	11/15/1984	9/1995
Blanc, William E.	Pittsburgh, PA	8/10/1947	-----
Blass, Mrs. A.J.	Kenley, NC	12/8/1964	-----
Blimmel, William J.	Johnstown, PA	3/25/1954	-----
Blotzer, William J.	Pittsburgh, PA	12/29/1963	-----
Bobinski, John W.	Pittsburgh, PA	4/4/1989	-----
Bock, Charles	Bellvue, PA	8/1918	-----
Bodis, Joseph P.	Connellsville, PA	8/8/1953	-----
Boggs, James R.	Pitcairn, PA	7/17/1954	-----
Boland, Goerge	Leetsdale, PA	8/14/1938	-----
Bollans, Leo F.	Deltona, FL	8/5/1923	-----
Bonanni, Louis J., Jr.	Rural Ridge, PA	11/21/1955	-----
Borland, Gregg	Leeper, PA	7/13/1973	-----
Bott, John	Wexford, PA	8/8/1959	-----
Bott, Rose	Columbus, OH	10/12/1958	-----
Boucek, Margaret	Miami, FL	11/24/1940	-----
Bowden, William A.	Pittsburgh, PA	7/29/1928	-----

RENEWAL OF OBLATION

Peace! In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

I, (name), renew my Oblation and offer myself to Almighty God, through the Blessed Virgin Mary and our holy Father Benedict, as an Oblate of Saint Vincent Archabbey, and I promise again, before God and all the saints, to dedicate my life to the service of God and neighbor according to the *Rule* of St. Benedict, insofar as my state in life permits.

“Sustain me, O Lord, as You have promised, that I may live, and disappoint me not in my hope” (Ps 119:116 & RB 58:21).

Name _____

Address _____

Date of Renewal _____

Please detach and return to:
Director of Oblates
St. Vincent Archabbey
300 Fraser Purchase Rd.
Latrobe, PA 15650-2690

OVERDUE OR MISSING LIBRARY BOOKS: PLEASE RESPOND!

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

Missing books

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

Lost books

- Bernard of Clairvaux, *Selected Works*
- Michael Casey, O.C.S.O., *Toward God*
- Anselm Grün, O.S.B., *The Challenge of Silence*
- Thomas Merton, O.C.S.O., *Praying the Psalms* (small booklet)
- Michael Scanlon, O.F.M., *Let the Fire Fall*

OBLATE PROJECT FOR LENT, 2006

A suggested project for Lent, 2006, for Oblates affiliated with St. Vincent Archabbey is to make a written contribution to a new edition of the booklet *What It Means to Me to Be an Oblate*. During Lent, if you are a full Oblate (or hope soon to make final Oblation), you are invited to submit a reflection on “what it means to me to be an Oblate.” The length of the reflection is to be ½-page typed or one page written. An alternate option is to give permission to use reflections which you already submitted on your application for final Oblation or investiture.

If you are making a new written contribution, you are welcome to use the back of this form. The deadline for submissions is April 30, 2006. Please make a copy of your submission since the original cannot be returned. You may remain anonymous if you do not wish your name to be included with your entry.

RELEASE:

Date: _____

Option 1: (Please sign.)

I, _____, give my permission to the Oblate Office to publish my reflection (enclosed) in the forthcoming booklet *What It Means to Me to Be an Oblate*. I understand that my reflection may be edited for grammar or length.

Option 2: (Please sign.)

I, _____, give my permission to the Oblate Office to publish my statement from my application for Oblation (or novice Oblation) in the forthcoming booklet *What It Means to Me to Be an Oblate*. I understand that my reflection may be edited for grammar or length.

Anonymity:

I would be glad to have my name included with my reflection.

I prefer not to have my name printed with my reflection.