

+

OBLATES OF SAINT BENEDICT

Saint Vincent Archabbey

300 Fraser Purchase Road, Latrobe, PA 15650-2690

February - April, 2010

724-805-2291

Volume 63, Number 1

Please note forms on flier for renewal of Oblation, celebration on March 22, and day of recollection on April 10.

SAINT BENEDICT AND THE CROSS: PUTTING ASIDE OUR OWN CONCERNS AND LEAVING THINGS UNFINISHED

Dear Oblates, Oblate Novices, and Friends,

As I began to compose this essay about Saint Benedict and the Cross, I looked over the pamphlet that we give to newly invested Oblate novices along with a medal of St. Benedict. To my surprise and dismay, I noticed that the pamphlet's pages are in the wrong order; it took me a while to discover that the text on the front continues not on the next page but on another page. My first impulse was to plan to reassemble the master copy right away to eliminate all confusion. (When I discover any errors, I tend to want to set everything right in an instant!) On the other hand, common sense and prudence dictated that I allow the error to remain for the time being because I had plenty of other projects of higher priority. I must simply trust that Oblates and Oblate novices who have the pamphlet will have the ingenuity to read the pages in the proper order, and, even more importantly, I must trust that God will lead me to make the corrections in His time and His way. I had to let go of my impulse to straighten out everything now. Again and again, I must embrace the cross of leaving something unfinished.

The process of revising our monastic Divine Office, which has been going on for over two years, presents a similar situation. (How I wish it were all done right now!) Despite all efforts to proofread drafts of each master booklet, errors have appeared after the printing of the booklets in every instance. (In fact, in several cases the company that prints the booklets mysteriously received a file with uncorrected psalm texts and music; so we ended up having six hundred booklets with a huge number of errors!) Under such circumstances it is tempting to go to one of two extremes: (1) to throw up one's hands in despair and give up on the whole effort or (2) to begin hasty, frantic efforts to correct all the errors as soon as is humanly possible – or even “more rapidly.” In either case I would be plunging myself into slavery to my concerns and my will instead of calming down, reexamining my frenzied emotions, and truly seeking God and His will in the whole matter, as weighed against other responsibilities that He has given me.

The word “cross” (*crux* in Latin) does not appear even

once in the *Holy Rule*; and yet the text of the *Rule* has a number of references to the Passion of Christ, which make it clear that the life of a Benedictine must be a continual taking up of one's crosses in communion with Christ. The Prologue reminds us that in faithfully observing Christ's teachings, “we shall through patience share in the sufferings of Christ” (*RB* Prol: 50). In the “Instruments of Good Works” the monk is told: “Renounce yourself in order to follow Christ” (4:10); that is, the monk is to embrace the cross of self-denial in order to go wherever Christ leads him. In Chapter 5 on obedience, St. Benedict quotes Mt 7:14 and reminds the monk, “Narrow is the road that leads to life” (5:11). Of course, that is the road of the Cross. The one explicit reference to Our Lord's death occurs in Chapter 7, where St. Benedict describes ideal obedience to a superior as being done “for the love of God” and in imitation of “the Lord of whom the Apostle says: ‘He became obedient even to death’” (Phil 2:8, *RB* 7:34). Also, St. Benedict's many exhortations about being patient (e.g., 2:25, 7:35, 36:5, 58:3, 68:2, 72:5) can be taken to imply a sharing in Christ's own patience, which culminated in His bearing all of humanity's sufferings on the Cross.

The medal of St. Benedict, which displays an image of a cross, engages us in the struggle against evil through the inscriptions on the medal. The Latin initials on the arms of the cross, CSSML, mean in English, “May the holy Cross be my light! May the dragon [Satan] never be my guide!” The margin around the cross has the initials VRNSMV and SMLIVB, which can be translated, “Begone, Satan! Tempt me not with your vanities! What you offer me is evil. Drink the poisoned cup yourself!” Both sayings assert that our Christian struggle against evil is real, that evil must be resisted firmly and persistently, and that the Cross is our weapon against evil. Therefore, when each day we encounter sufferings of various sorts and are tempted to become angry, to complain or blame, or to give in to depression, the Cross urges us to “offer up” the sufferings in union with Christ on the Cross. He shares our pain and distress and gives us every grace to let go of futile human strivings and to entrust the whole situation to God the Father in union with Him. We need to calm our anxieties and fears; we

need to call upon Christ relentlessly for the grace to ward off self-centered thoughts and feelings; and we need to make acts of faith in God, with confidence that He is working to bring good out of our painful situation. Thus we already share in the fruits of the Resurrection even while we bear our crosses. Satan would drive us into discouragement or rebelliousness self-sufficiency; God in His mercy encourages us to keep walking in a faith that will lead to ultimate glory, of which we already have a tentative taste.

How, then, are we to respond to the pieces of unfinished business that we have in our lives? Should we just give up on the projects, or should we feverishly attack them? First, it might be helpful to realize that even when we think we have finished a task, there still remains more to be done. Most of us like to have a sense of closure to our tasks, but, in truth, we cannot bring anything to perfection by our own efforts. Even the most beautiful and complete work on earth is poor, incomplete, and flawed in comparison with God's all-perfect activity. What we fail to bring to completion, however, God will complete in His way and His time, as long as we cooperate with Him. Perhaps God will choose someone else to carry on what we have begun. As St. Paul said to the Philippians, "I am sure of this much: that He who has begun the good work in you will carry it through to completion, right up to the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil 1:6). On the other hand, God certainly wants us, with joy and good zeal, to do our part in every worthy project; He expects us to cooperate with His graces and to try our best to do things in His way.

Secondly, when we find ourselves frustrated over unfulfilled goals, we need to focus more on the Lord Jesus and His Cross, a sign of His immense love, rather than on ourselves and our misery. The latter leads only to bitterness, hopelessness, and greater anxiety. The former leads us to a growing communion of love with Christ and a growing joy in the opportunity to share in His Cross. As St. Paul boldly asserts, "For to me, 'life' means Christ; hence dying is so much gain" (Phil 1:21). Is not one form of "dying" the letting go of stubborn insistence that a project be completed in my way and according to my timetable? Furthermore, we can grow in wisdom to discern more carefully between our plans and God's will for us. We may very well think that we are proceeding according to His will, but then He may reveal to us that we need to drop our project temporarily or permanently. Perhaps, for His own good reasons, He wanted us to begin an endeavor and then to leave it. What we know that God really wants is our whole self – our will, our mind, our heart, and our total response to His ineffable love; He wants us, through the ordinary events of daily life, to be drawn into an ever deeper communion with Himself. That is indeed our glory! As we heard at Mass on the Second Sunday of Ordinary Time, "You shall be a

glorious crown in the hand of the Lord, a royal diadem held by your God. As a young man marries a virgin, your Builder shall marry you; and as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride, so shall your God rejoice in you" (Is 62: 3, 5).

Those of us who are Oblates, Oblate novices, or monks presumably entered into our vocation because we wanted to give ourselves totally to God, to become people of deep prayer, and to grow in generous love for others in the pattern of Christ's own sacrificial love. Our valid desire to please God in everything, which perhaps was very intense at the outset, may have been sparked by an emotionally rewarding experience; this may have led us to think that we were already willing and able to do God's will in everything. Most likely, we subsequently realized how imperfect our motives were and how many other less worthy desires we still had. We wanted to please God, but often we had (and still have) our own ideas about how and when to fulfill what we think to be His will. The coming of crosses can help to detach us from self-centered thoughts, feelings, and desires; they can help to reduce the "me" in whatever we plan and do. Little by little we can learn to let go quickly of whatever we want to do and to embrace joyfully whatever new direction God has in store for us. We can let Him rule more and more over our impulses that can so easily lead us away from loving communion with Him.

Thirdly, the Cross, the Gospel, and the *Rule* arm us powerfully to deal with our chronic faults. It may be that we would like to rid ourselves instantly of a tendency to talk too much, of a recurring preoccupation with our health, of temptations to overindulge in food, of a lamentable habit of arriving late, of a longstanding resistance to finding enough time to pray, of a desire to dominate conversations, or of any of many other seemingly insuperable flaws. Our desire to overcome these quickly is commendable. However, if we are doing our best to struggle against sinful tendencies and to trust in God's ever-available help and forgiveness, then it may be even better to accept, with humility and peace, our very slow progress in improving. Why does not God take these away instantly? His ways are mysteriously different from ours. The Scriptures and the Church's long spiritual traditions hint that God may be challenging us to grow in humility. Perhaps He is showing us how to trust more in Him and less in ourselves. Perhaps He is teaching us to long more for eternity, when, after a likely stop in Purgatory, we shall be truly free. (Along with St. Teresa of Avila, it might be valuable for us to see life on this earth as "one overnight stay in a bad inn.") Perhaps God is using our flaws to help us not to judge others whom we might consider less virtuous than ourselves. In any case, God is certainly urging us to unite the sufferings linked to our chronic faults with the sufferings of Christ on the Cross. In doing so, we are to leave behind murmuring, worry about what other people think, worry

about how and when God will intervene, and preoccupation with how well we are coping. With the graces flowing from the Cross, we can learn to accept the loving embrace of our crucified Lord to heal us and purify us in His way and His time. Just as St. Benedict's monks were to "put aside their work to be ready for the second signal [for prayer]" (*RB* 48:12) when the first bell for None rang, so are we to put aside our worries and fears concerning our miserably imperfect spiritual condition, as long as we are doing our best to cooperate with God's lavish outpouring of graces.

In his Christmas letter to Oblates affiliated with St. John's Abbey, Oblate director Fr. Michael Kwatera, O.S.B., addressed the issue of "wanting it all" at Christmas time. In contrast to people's desire to grasp possessions, power, and popularity, Fr. Michael noted that the birth of Jesus "is the clearest proof that God wants to give us all, all that God has to give: God's very self given to us in Jesus the Lord. The Savior born for us is more than we could ever want, ever deserve, ever ask for. God's gift of God's Son at Christmas was not what the chosen people were expecting – not a political liberator but a Suffering Servant of God who would save humanity from sin and death." It was in giving up His very life on the Cross that Our Lord gained "all" for us; so we need not fret that we do not yet have the "all" of spiritual perfection as seen from our very limited perspective.

As Lent approaches, it is especially appropriate to look to the Cross and to learn from St. Benedict's devotion to it. The ashes we may receive are a healthful reminder that although we shall die and return to dust, if we join ourselves to Christ in traveling through this vale of tears, our share in His Cross brings us into a wonderful communion with Him even now. In Christ and with Christ we can ready ourselves to put aside our own concerns, to embrace the cross of obedience, and to gain the everlasting inheritance He has prepared for us. It is with Christ that we suffer. It is with Christ that we prepare for a holy death. It is with Christ that we are ready to die and be purified in Purgatory with total surrender to His ways. It is with Christ that we struggle daily with our crosses and avoid the twin dangers of overconfidence and despair. It is with Christ that even now, amid all our miseries, we live in joyful hope of "hastening on to the perfection of [monastic] life" (*RB* 73:2) and of some day arriving "at that perfect love of God which casts out fear" (*RB* 7:67).

In the peace of Christ and Saint Benedict,

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

A MESSAGE FROM ARCHABBOT DOUGLAS

Lent, 2010

Dear Oblates and Friends of Saint Vincent,

The Lenten Season is a time for reflection and prayer in preparation for the celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord at Easter – the feast of the triumph of God's mercy and goodness over the darkness of sin and death in our lives and in our world. Lent calls us to do penance for our sins and to renew our commitment to ongoing conversion.

With a little reflection and soul-searching, we all recognize how easy it is to get spiritually derailed in our journey of faith. Bitterness, envy, jealousy, arrogance, indifference, cynicism, gossip, and self-centeredness are but a few symptoms of such spiritual derailment. Jesus recognized that there is a great danger to turn religion into a spectacle, to turn worship into an external show, and to turn religious practices into exercises of self-satisfaction.

May your Lenten journey of 2010 be the journey that gets you back on the road that leads to God's Kingdom and not the kingdom of fantasy or self-delusion. Know that you are remembered in the prayers of the Benedictine community throughout this season of conversion.

Sincerely in Christ,

Archabbot Douglas

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 the Solemnity of Saint Benedict (March 22 this year) and to send a completed renewal form (see the flier) 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 who is not involved in a deanery and if you 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 on 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. If you are genuinely interested in continuing your pursuit of an Oblate vocation, please make it a point to renew your Oblation in a living, faith-enhancing way!

THE SOLEMNITY OF ST. BENEDICT AT THE ARCHABBEY ON MARCH 22, 2010

Oblates from all areas are welcome to join Oblates of the Latrobe (St. Gregory) Deanery on Monday, March 22, to celebrate the Solemnity of the Passing of Our Holy Father Benedict with the monastic community and other guests. The schedule includes concelebrated Mass at 4:00 P.M., supper at 5:30 P.M. (in Placid B), Oblation ceremonies at 6:30 P.M. (in the basilica), Evening Prayer with the monastic community at 7:30 P.M., and a social at 8:05 P.M. (in the parish Assembly Room). Members of the Oblate community and their guests who wish to attend should fill out the form on the flier and send it to Chris Karem by March 15. The cost of the supper is **\$6.50**. 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.

SPECIAL OBLATE DAY OF RECOLLECTION ON SATURDAY, APRIL 10, 2010

A day of recollection on Saturday, April 10, is scheduled from 8:30 A.M. through supper especially for those interested in hearing about the Second World Congress of Oblates in Rome last October. The presenters will be those Oblates who attended the congress. The day will include Mass, the opportunity for confession, and prayer with the monastic community (much like the day of recollection in October). To register, please use the form on the flier.

OBLATE DAY 2010 ON SEPTEMBER 26; DAY OF RECOLLECTION ON OCTOBER 16

This year's Oblate Day will be Sunday, September 26. Fr. Jacques Daley, O.S.B., is scheduled to be the guest speaker. The fall day of recollection is scheduled for Saturday, October 16, and Fr. Boniface Hicks, O.S.B., is to be the retreat master.

"OBLATE RETREATS," MAY 28-30 and JUNE 4-6, 2010

Oblates and others interested in Benedictine spirituality are invited to participate in either (or both) of this year's two "Benedictine" retreats. Fr. Edward Mazich will direct the retreat from Friday, May 28, to Sunday, May 30, and Fr. Boniface Hicks, will direct the retreat from Friday, June 4, to Sunday, June 6. The latter will be a silent retreat. **Note that both of these retreats will be based on Benedictine spirituality.** All those on the Oblate mailing list should have received a listing of retreats, but if you need a brochure, contact the Oblate Office. Registration (and all other special arrangements) should be done through the St. Vincent Retreat Program, and not through the Oblate Office.

PLEASE CHECK BOOKSHELVES FOR BOOKS MISSING FROM OBLATE LIBRARY

Despite efforts to check books out only through a librarian at Oblate meetings in Latrobe, some books continue to "walk away." Please review the list of lost and missing books at the end of this newsletter, and see if you might have any of them on your bookshelves. Thank you!

OBLATES RECEIVE 10% DISCOUNT AT BASILICA GIFT SHOP

If you are shopping at the Basilica Gift Shop and are an Oblate or an Oblate novice, mention your affiliation with the Oblate community to the volunteers at the shop, and you will receive a 10% discount on your purchases.

MENTORING PROGRAM: THOSE WHO DESIRE MENTORS OR WHO WISH TO MENTOR

Please contact the Oblate Office if you are an inquirer or an Oblate novice (or even an Oblate) who would like to have an Oblate to help you on your journey in Benedictine spirituality. Likewise let us know if you are willing to volunteer to serve as a mentor; if you do volunteer, you will receive a packet of information to assist you in your ministry.

OBLATE BOARD OF ADVISORS: Meeting on January 15

The Oblate Board of Advisors met on Friday, January 15. Among the items discussed were the finalization of a booklet of deanery histories, the scheduling of a day of recollection on April 10, early planning for the 2011 Oblate directors' meeting at St. Meinrad Archabbey, the naming of the Oblate newsletter, and contact among Oblates in the Philadelphia area. If you would like a copy of the minutes, contact the Oblate Office. The next meeting will be on Friday, April 16, at 6:30 P.M. in Brownfield 203.

RECOMMENDED READING

- Thomas Merton, *The Rule of Saint Benedict: Initiation into the Monastic Tradition 4* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press [Cistercian Publications], 2009) – especially the last part on the steps of humility
- Jerome Oetgen, *Boniface Wimmer: Letters of an American Abbot* (Latrobe, PA: Saint Vincent Archabbey Publications, 2008)
- Br. Joseph F. Schmidt, F.S.C., *Everything Is Grace: The Life and Way of Thérèse of Lisieux* (Ijamsville, MD: The Word Among Us, 2007)

A HISTORICAL NOTE FROM JEROME OETGEN'S BOOK OF ARCHABBOT BONIFACE'S LETTERS

On page 305 of this book, in a letter written on July 11, 1867, Archabbot Boniface wrote, "Our Benedictine Confraternity is established in practically every one of our parishes. I expect much from it." Does this statement refer to Oblates of St. Benedict? It probably does. When Archabbot Boniface was in Rome in 1865, he inquired about starting an Oblate program at St. Vincent and in its parishes. However, in the Oblate Office there are no records about any Oblate novices' being invested before 1913. Perhaps the records were lost or burned in the fire of 1963. If anyone in the parishes that we Benedictines have staffed can find any records of Oblate activities in their parish's records, please notify the Oblate Office about the information.

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 February 21, March 14, April 18, and May 16. 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 line for reaching Fr. Donald is (724) 805-2291. Classes on Benedictine spirituality will continue to be offered at 3:00 P.M. on the same dates. On February 21, Fr. Vincent de Paul will offer a teaching on "Craftsmen of the Monastery"; on March 14, Fr. Jean-Luc a teaching on the Eucharist in Benedictine spirituality, and on April 18, Br. David Kelly a presentation on the forthcoming abbatial election.

ADORATION FOR VOCATIONS: The Blessed Sacrament exposed every Sunday from 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. in St. Gregory Chapel. Oblates are urged to use these times for Eucharistic adoration, if possible, especially on the Sundays of Oblate classes and meetings, to pray for vocations, and especially for vocations to the Archabbey.

SUGGESTED LENTEN PROJECTS FOR 2010

It is suggested that the Oblates and Oblate novices affiliated with St. Vincent Archabbey rededicate themselves to the regular praying of the Liturgy of the Hours (as much as their schedules allow) and the regular practice (ideally daily) of *lectio divina*. The undertaking of good spiritual reading in the place of less beneficial activities is also recommended. **Also, please offer prayers for the monks of the Archabbey as they prepare to elect an abbot in May; prayer cards are available from the Oblate Office.**

CHRISTMAS CARDS WANTED TO HELP PRISONERS

One of our Oblates, an inmate in Florida, has written about the radical shortage of Christmas cards made available to inmates to send out before Christmas, 2009. If any of you have unused Christmas cards (and envelopes) from this past season that you would be willing to donate, please drop them off at the Oblate Office, or send cards directly to: Chaplain Augustine, Century Correctional Institution, 400 Tedder Rd., Century, FL 32535. It is hoped that these cards may add some joy to the lives of the prisoners as Christmas, 2010, draws near. Thank you!

COPIES OF LIFE AND MIRACLES STILL AVAILABLE

Orders for *Life and Miracles of Saint Benedict*, which is being used by the Latrobe Deanery at monthly meetings, may still be made until March 10 by use of the flier enclosed with this newsletter. Fr. Donald apologizes for the difficulties from misinformation in the November newsletter. First, the stated deadline of November 20 was totally unrealistic. Secondly, the listed price, based on that in a recent catalogue, was shortly thereafter raised from \$5.95 to \$7.95. The Oblate Office should have charged \$6.36 per copy instead of \$4.76. There is no need to make up the difference, but if any of you who paid \$4.76 would like to assist the Oblate budget, your donations to reduce the shortfall would be welcome.

BR. JEREMIAH MAY BE CONTACTED BY E-MAIL

For those of you who prefer to use e-mail, Br. Jeremiah Lange, O.S.B., the assistant Oblate director, may be contacted at his e-mail address: jeremiah.lange@email.stvincent.edu.

OBLATE CONDOLENCES

- Let us together offer prayers for those of our Oblate community who mourn the loss of loved ones:
- Oblate novice Elaine Cournoyer of Prince Albert, Sask., Canada, whose mother-in-law died last July
 - Oblate Michael McDermott of Guelph, Ont., Canada, whose sister-in-law Jennie Edwards died on September 10 (at age 50) and whose cousin's son Nathan Healy died on November 7 (at age 34); please also pray for the grieving families
 - Oblate Mary Ann Facetti of St. Marys, PA, whose mother, Bertha A. Feldbauer, died on November 2
 - Oblates Frances Sammarco and Lily Waldman of Williamsport, whose brother Menotti M. Sammarco died on November 11
 - Oblate Paul Mangiardi of Minersville, PA, whose aunt Dorothy Schaeffer died in November
 - Oblate moderator Fr. Ralph Tajak, O.S.B., of Pittsburgh, whose father, Ralph Tajak, Sr., died on December 5
 - Oblate Joseph Kump of St. Catharines, Ont., Canada, whose brother Gottfried died in mid-December
 - Oblate Janet DeCecco of Erie, PA, whose father, Owen Farland, died on December 17
 - Oblate Dorothy Minnick of St. Marys, PA, whose brother John Minnick died on December 20
 - Oblate Michael Weddle of Lonaconing, MD, whose mother, Amelia "Amie" Weddle, died on January 4
 - Oblate novice William Shearouse of Savannah, GA, whose mother, Katherine "Bootsie" Shearouse, died on January 22 [see below]
 - assistant moderator Fr. Jean-Luc Zadroga, O.S.B., whose grandmother Annabelle Faulk died on January 28

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:

- 24 Dec 2009 – Edna J. (Martin) Brock of St. Marys, PA (Oblate since Sept., 1954; Edna was also the great-aunt of Fr. Paul Taylor, O.S.B.)
- 24 Dec 2009 – Helen B. (Mary) Murphy of St. Marys, PA (Oblate since Sept., 1991)
- 22 Jan 2010 – Katherine C. "Bootsie" Shearouse of Savannah, GA (Oblate novice since Oct., 2003)

NEWS FROM OBLATE DEANERIES

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

Moderator Ralph DeCecco wrote on November 30. At the meeting on November 28, after the praying of Midday Prayer, Oblate novice Joseph Hartdegen led a discussion on "communication." After a long and fruitful exchange the group began a dialogue based on the first part of the book *Rediscovering Catholicism*. Then they shared some thoughts on the day's reading from the *Rule* and closed with a prayer of thanksgiving. The group decided not to meet in December.

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

Lay leader Gabrielle Terrill wrote on January 19. At the meeting last October 25, attended by 13 people

besides Fr. John Peck, moderator, Fr. John talked about the four-month sabbatical he would be taking in February. Then the Oblates reflected about the retreats that they had made since the last meeting. Next Fr. John read a chapter from *Perspectives on the Rule of St. Benedict* by Sr. Aquinata Böckmann, O.S.B. Then refreshments were served.

The meeting on November 29 was attended by 14 people besides Fr. John, who spoke about Advent as a time of waiting and anticipation. He emphasized that we need quiet time with God and recommended a book, *From Holiday to Holy Day* by Fr. Albert Holtz, O.S.B., on the meaning of Advent. The group planned not to meet in December but to have renewals of Oblation on January 24. Fr. John urged the group to continue to meet monthly from February until he returns from his sabbatical in June.

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

Fr. Paschal Morlino, moderator, reported in person on November 17. At the meeting on September 20, Fr. Thomas More gave a well-received presentation on stability. On October 18 Fr. Charles Benoit, O.S.B., from St. Joseph Abbey in Louisiana, offered a talk about hospitality. On November 15 Fr. Paschal offered a review of the events and conferences of the Second World Congress of Oblates in Rome.

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

Lay leader Ethel Galli wrote on January 2. The meeting on November 21 began, as usual, with Evening Prayer and group *lectio divina* using the day's Gospel. Then Ethel and Oblate Grace Kolander gave a summary of events at the World Congress of Oblates in Rome in October, and there was some discussion. The session closed with prayer and refreshments.

At the meeting on December 17, a cold and windy night, Br. Jeremiah Lange, assistant Oblate director, gave a talk about the importance of humility both for monks in community and for lay Christians. He pointed out that the spiritual life has its basis in humility and showed how St. Benedict's use of Scripture in the *Rule* encourages the soul to turn from pride to humility again and again.

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

Lay leader Mary Catherine Hoover wrote on January 25. The meeting on January 10 began with Evening Prayer and continued with a discussion of the chapter "Humility" from *The Path of Life*. Fr. Jude, moderator, pointed out that the theme humility is very much connected with all the previous topics of the book. Those attending generally thought that humility was difficult to learn and to put into practice. Fr. Jude also updated the group with news from the Archabbey.

Chincoteague Island, VA (Our Lady of Guadalupe Deanery) -- monthly meetings at St. Andrew Church.

Lay leader Mary Hoffken wrote on November 10 and January 11. The meeting on September 22, attended by five people in addition to Fr. Paschal Kneip, moderator, began with an invocation to Our Lady of Guadalupe. Then the group continued its discussion of Pope Benedict's encyclical *God is Love*. It was mentioned that there are over 1,000 studies about the encyclical on the Internet. The participants pondered the possible reasons for the encyclical.

The meeting on October 27, attended by seven people, began with a reading from Song of Songs and then continued with a discussion of *Deus Caritas Est*. Fr. Paschal pointed out the love God had in making creation, and there was a lively discussion about the meaning of love - our love for one another, God's love for us, and our love for Him.

At the meeting on December 8, attended by Fr. Paschal and five Oblates, the group discussed "Silence and Sacred Spaces" with reference to the November Oblate newsletter. The participants talked about a parish survey, the *Rule*, personal memories of past parish memberships, and the role of hospitality in sacred space.

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

Lay leader Carl Motter wrote on November 12, December 15, and January 12. At the monthly meeting on November 11, Msgr. Michael Becker, moderator, was present for the first time in six months; he had been on teaching assignments for the diocese. Msgr. Becker gave a talk, supplemented by photographs, about his trip to Ethiopia during the summer. He spoke about the people's religious culture and their poverty.

The meeting on December 14 consisted of a Mass and a pre-Christmas social. During the Mass

Frank (Gregory) Albacete of Johnstown, PA,

made his final Oblation in the presence of Msgr. Becker and the others attending.

The meeting on January 11 began with Evening Prayer. Since Msgr. Becker had to be absent, Oblate Mike Russo gave a talk on his involvement with the diocese's diaconate formation program, and he gave suggestions about what Oblates can do for their parishes. Also, Frank Albacete reported about his recent service trip to Mexico. (See above.)

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 15, some 20 people gathered to discuss the chapter "Humility" from *The Path of Life*. The discussion involved the countercultural dimension of humility and its necessity in Christian life as the foundational virtue. Earlier in the day, after the 3:00 class and before Vespers, Fr. Donald invested

Julie A. Feight of Bedford, PA,

as an Oblate novice in the presence of some 12 Oblates and Julie's parents.

Despite a snow storm the previous day and the closeness of the date to Christmas, some 20 people attended the meeting on December 20. They engaged in a final discussion based on *The Path of Life*, this time on the chapter "Making Life a Unity." The *Rule*, it was emphasized, calls for a persistent seeking of God in all the activities of one's day. An attitude of humility is essential to this pursuit. Copies of *Life and Miracles of St. Benedict* were distributed in preparation for the meeting in January.

At the meeting on January 17, attended by some 24 people, the deanery began its discussion of *Life and Miracles of St. Benedict* by Pope St. Gregory the Great. (**Copies of the book are still available.**) The session covered facts about St. Gregory, his motives for writing the *Dialogues* (the larger work of which *Life and Miracles* is a part) in 593 A.D., the type of literature the book is, and the early part of St. Benedict's life, with emphasis on his fleeing from the evil atmosphere in Rome. The group spent some time discussing what Oblates need to flee in order to be countercultural in a Christian way.

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

On November 15 Oblate Liz Hart of Latrobe gave a presentation "Hospitality in Benedictine Spirituality." Liz referred to *RB* 53 and 48, connected hospitality with self-emptying love, cited references to hospitality in the New Testament, emphasized the need to show special kindness to people with infirmities, and interwove in her presentation experiences of hospitality at the Second World Congress of Oblates as well as at St. Walburga Abbey in Bavaria, St. Vincent Archabbey and St. Emma Monastery.

On December 20 Fr. Thomas Hart, a professor of religious studies and theology at St. Vincent College, gave a lively presentation on "Poverty and Simplicity" to some 11 people. Noting that Benedictine spirituality is undramatic and unspectacular, he asserted that the word "poverty" can be used in various ways. He referred to St. Luke's parable of Lazarus and the rich man and the story about Lydia in Acts to give a teaching on the right use of wealth. Regarding simplicity of life, Fr. Tom referred to the book *A Complaint-Free World* and emphasized the need to avoid murmuring in order to live in simple trust in God. St. Paul encourages us through his statements, "Do all things with out grumbling or complaining" (Phil 2:14) and "Rejoice in the Lord always" (Phil 4:4). Our world murmurs and complains; we Christians should be different.

On January 17 Br. Isidore Miner, a junior monk at St. Vincent, gave a very thorough presentation on "Holiness and Benedictine Spirituality." After some reflections on holiness and spirituality (which basically means living in the Holy Spirit and being made into Christ), he reflected on each of seven characteristics of Benedictine spirituality: flight from the world (*fuga mundi*), conversion, humility, stability, *lectio divina*, obedience, and silence. **A transcript of Br. Isidore's talk is available**, and recordings on C.D.'s may be available as well.

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

Lay leader Paul Mangiardi wrote on November 8, November 22, December 1, December 18, January 5, and January 21. At the meeting on October 27, attended by 13 members, readers were assigned for Mass during November, and Chapters 4, 9, 13, 18, 19, and 20 of the *Rule* were read and studied, with reflections on how the underlying values could be lived outside the monastery. Pages 29-32 of the formation booklet were assigned for study at the next meeting. Finally, there were intercessions for all Oblates, their families, and those who were ill. A pre-Christmas dinner was scheduled for December 2.

On October 28, during Mass in the chapel in Minersville, Rev. Robert J. Potts invested

Anthony J. Andersen of Minersville, PA,

as an Oblate novice.

On November 17, during Mass in the same chapel, Fr. Potts invested

Marc S. Boriosi of Minersville, PA,

as an Oblate novice.

On November 25, during Mass in the same chapel, Fr. Potts invested
Jeffrey Coleman of Minersville, PA, and
James Walsh of Minersville, PA, as Oblate novices.

At the meeting on December 1, the group discussed humility and obedience from the *Rule*, read pages 29-32 from the formation booklet, read a letter from Fr. Donald, and made plans for the Catholics' pre-Christmas dinner on December 2.

The meeting on January 5, attended by 15 members, began with prayer and the selection of readers for Masses during January. Then the group discussed the forthcoming visit by the Bishop of Allentown on January 20. They read and discussed RB 69-73 and pages 55-58 of the *Oblate Formation Booklet*. The meeting closed with a Novena to Christ the King of All Nations and the Litany of St. Benedict. A Eucharistic service followed.

On January 20 Bishop John Barres of Allentown celebrated Mass at the chapel in Minersville, and the Oblate community was present; some served as altar servers, some as clean-up volunteers, and some in other capacities. It was the first time that a bishop had come there. The Oblates "placed all the monks and Oblates of St. Benedict on the altar during our Mass." Bishop Barres preached about Fr. Walter Ciszek, S.J., who spent many years in prisons and prison camps in Russia and whose cause for beatification is being promoted.

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

Secretary Trudy Bretzler wrote on December 4 and January 27. The meeting on November 27, attended by 15 people, began with the customary Liturgy of the Hours, rosary, and Litany of St. Benedict. A monthly prayer list and an article on stability were handed out. Then Fr. Francis Hubilla, O.S.B., moderator, gave a talk on healing our woundedness and the woundedness of others. He began by having all recite together the poem "Children Learn What They Live." For the healing of hurts Fr. Francis emphasized the importance of help from others, spiritual direction, and prayer. He then spoke about the endurance of the *Rule* of St. Benedict for over 1400 years because of its balance and charity. The meeting closed with a blessing, prayer, and the "Salve Regina."

At the meeting on January 22, after the time of devotion, treasurer Roy McKenzie gave a report, and the group decided to donate \$100 to the relief efforts in Haiti. Fr. Francis spoke about the day's Gospel, in which Jesus withdrew into silence before choosing His apostles. He encouraged the Oblates to make time for silence and to withdraw into periods of silence from time to time. We need thus to put our decisions before God so that He can guide us.

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

Outgoing lay leader Bill O'Neil reported on January 12. While recovering from a stroke, Bill has stepped down as lay leader after nearly 10 years of service in that position. Oblate James Perini has agreed to be the new lay leader for the St. Peter Deanery. We thank Bill for his years of generous, dedicated service.

New lay leader Jim Perini sent an e-mail message on January 20. At the meeting on January 20, attended by seven people, the group continued a study of *Introduction to the Devout Life* by St. Francis de Sales. Covering Chapters 19-21 of the Second Part of the introduction, they discussed the practice in St. Francis' time to receive communion every Sunday if one had gone to confession the Saturday before and the suggestion that, for those wishing to serve God devoutly, the longest acceptable time between communions was a month.

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

Secretary Peggi Gabler wrote on November 8. The deanery began its meeting on November 5 with Evening Prayer and Benediction, with Fr. Daniel Wolfel, O.S.B., presiding. Lay leader Ben Hoffman led the meeting. After the reading of minutes from October, the group prayed for Oblate Mary Ann Facetti, who had recently lost her mother. Then RB 29:1-3 on the "readmission of brothers" was read. For the rest of the meeting Oblate Lynn Nicklas spoke about her participation in the Second World Congress of Oblates and distributed special medals of St. Benedict that she had obtained. The group agreed not to meet during the winter months.

Saint Vincent College -- monthly meetings during the school year, usually in Mary, Mother of Wisdom Chapel

Lay leader Katie Wojtunik reported on November 12. The Oblates have been meeting with Fr. Jean-Luc

Zadroga, O.S.B., in the Campus Ministry meeting room. On October 29 Fr. Jacques led a discussion on spirituality. On November 12 Fr. Cyprian gave a presentation on the Liturgy of the Hours. Each meeting ended with the praying of Compline. At the meeting on January 28, Br. Jeremiah spoke about humility to a small but enthusiastic group of students.

Savannah, GA -- *special monthly events at Sunday Vespers at Benedictine Priory*

Michael Williams, leader of the Oblate Advisory Council, reported by phone on February 4. Monthly events at the priory have continued. In January Fr. Jude Brady, O.S.B., the former moderator of the deanery, was the guest speaker at Sunday Vespers.

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

Lay leader Gretchen Meyers wrote on November 20 and January 27. The meeting scheduled for November was cancelled because it seemed that only two people would be attending. At the meeting in January, Gretchen and two others discussed being the best Oblates possible, using deanery funds to contribute to mission groups, and choosing positive practices for Lent. Gretchen also mentioned a book that she had found helpful; it was written by a local Sister of Notre Dame of Montreal.

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

Secretary Ashley Leggett wrote on November 11, December 13, and January 12. The meeting on November 9 was attended by 14 Oblates and Oblate novices and one inquirer as well as Fr. David, moderator. The group was pleased to welcome Oblate Fran Mauceri, who had moved to Virginia three years ago. Fr. David led Evening Prayer. Then the group discussed Chapters 3 and 4 of *The Path of Life*. Two presenters summarized the book's reflections on *conversatio morum* (from different viewpoints), and then there was a less structured discussion of obedience. The book's observation that true obedience is based on love was considered especially meaningful. The meeting closed with the singing of the "Ultima" and prayers for the monks and personal intentions.

Eleven people joined Fr. David for the meeting on December 10. Plans were made for the January meeting, which was to include Oblation ceremonies and a dinner. Ashley circulated for review and correction a roster of those who have been attending meetings. Oblate Becky Leggett then summarized Chapter 5, "Silence," from *The Path of Life* and urged the practice of "taciturnitas" (restraint of speech) to counteract the noise of the modern world. Oblate Maria DiCola summarized Chapter 6, "Lectio Divina," shared what she had learned about *lectio* from monks at St. Vincent, and gave a demonstration of *lectio* on certain passages of Scripture. The meeting ended according to the usual format.

The monthly meeting on January 11 began with a Mass at Our Lady of Victory Church celebrated by Fr. David. During the Mass Fr. David invested

Alice M. Pickering of State College, PA,

as an Oblate novice. Alice is the wife of Oblate novice Howard Pickering. Ten Oblates also renewed their Oblation. Then friends and relatives joined the Oblate community for a pot-luck dinner in the parish's activities center.

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 January 15, and Oblate Donna Quinones wrote on January 7.

At the meeting on November 4, Fr. Cristiano, moderator, spoke about the end of the liturgical year, which points to the return of Christ. Awaiting Christ's return was a significant endeavor for the first Christians and the early Christian monks in the desert. At that time in the early Church, more and more Christians chose a cloistered form of life largely to pray in an intense manner.

At the meeting on December 2, Fr. Cristiano talked about the meaning of Advent, especially in terms of having a spirit of expectation. Although Advent is not mentioned in the Rule, one can compare Benedictine spirituality with waiting in a cold, silent environment for the coming of warmth and goodness.

On January 6, since many members were still away because of travel after Christmas, the actual meeting was brief. Fr. Cristiano led a discussion on the meaning of Epiphany and the star followed by the Magi, and he

asked the group what star they were following in their search for God. Who are the people being led by a star today, and how do we interpret signs from God today? Then there was a social for Christmas, and the group spent an hour in informal discussion on Fr. Cristiano's presentation.

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

No report was given.

Various Locations

Last September 9 at the chapel in Lebanon, OH, Fr. Gene Carmichael, S.J., invested

Dean Preston of Lebanon, OH, as an Oblate novice.

On November 6, at St. Isidore Church in Quakertown, PA,

Arlene (Monica) Coley of Quakertown, PA,

made her final Oblation in the presence of Rev. Edward Brady, the pastor. Also present were Arlene's husband, Bill, and members of the parish's charismatic prayer group, who surprised Arlene with a cake and flowers at a reception prior to the group's meeting.

On November 14 in the Archabbey Basilica, Fr. Donald invested

David R. Ludwig of Columbus, OH,

as an Oblate novice. David is a seminarian at the Josephinum Pontifical Institute in Ohio. Also present for the ceremony was Karen Oprenchock, an Oblate affiliated with St. Benedict Abbey in Oxford, MI, who happened to be at the Archabbey on a private retreat.

On November 30 at the chapel in Folkston, GA, Rev. Mr. William H. Wilson, a deacon at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Folkston, invested

Christopher A. Brown of Folkston, GA,

as an Oblate novice. Other members of the community were also present.

On December 23 in St. Gregory Chapel at the Archabbey, Fr. Donald invested

Patrick Fitzsimmons of Coopersburg, PA,

as an Oblate novice. Several other monks, Oblates Carl Burlas and Carol Ramela, and Carol's grandsons were present for the ceremony.

On December 28 in the Archabbey Basilica,

Carolyn M. (Scholastica Walburga) Smith of Centerville, VA,

made her final Oblation in the presence of Fr. Donald, Br. Jeremiah, her three daughters (Meredith, Hilary, and Allison, a student at St. Vincent College), and Joelso Ferreira, a student at St. Vincent College.

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. Flavian, Fr. Paschal Kneip, Fr. Jacques, Br. Anthony Kirsch (surgery on Feb. 3), Fr. Ronald (surgery on Feb. 5), Fr. Frank, Fr. Paul Rubadue, Fr. Cuthbert, and Fr. Lee.

PLANNING FOR THE NAABOD MEETING IN 2011

The next biennial meeting of the North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors, which was held at St. Vincent in 2009, is scheduled for July 1-6, 2011, at St. Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, Indiana. Two Oblate representatives from each participating monastery are allowed to attend. One Oblate from the St. Placid Deanery has already offered to go. If you are an Oblate who are active in the Oblate community in your area and would like to attend the 2011 NAABOD meeting, please contact the Oblate Office.

Poem by Oblate Paul Manqiardi, Minersville, PA

Thanksgiving is a holiday
with yams and birds;
but do we remember
those cherishing words

given to us by the Almighty Lord:
"To give is to receive"?
And if we do,
then surely we believe

in offering thanks
to the One who died
while beside Him knelt
mourners who cried;

for He gave His life
that we might live.

He should be remembered;
to Him we shall give.

We shall offer to Him
the meal on the table.
Turn off the T.V.,
take time from the cable,

cherish each other,
those whom He gave to us.
Place everything in Him.
Our love for Him is a must;

for there may come a Time, facing Him
on a Thanksgiving Day.
Don't let life be squandered;
Kneel down and pray.

OVERDUE OR MISSING LIBRARY BOOKS AND TAPES: 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. Others were admittedly lost by their 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.

- Robert Benson, *A Good Life: Benedict's Guide to Everyday Life*
- St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Selected Works*
- Roberta C. Bondi, *To Pray and to Love*
- Rev. William Burk, *Protect Us from All Anxiety: Meditations for the Depressed*
- Rozanne Elder (ed.), *The Contemplative Path: Reflections on Recovering a Lost Tradition*
- Rev. Bernard Head, *Blessed Marmion: A 21st-Century Appreciation* (pamphlet)
- Fr. Thomas Keating, O.C.S.O., *Intimacy with God*
- Fr. George A. Maloney, S.J., *The Jesus Prayer* (pamphlet)
- John Moschos, *The Spiritual Meadow*
- Susan Annette Muto, *Meditation in Motion*
- Fr. Guy-Marie Oury, O.S.B., *A Monastic Pilgrimage: Following the Footsteps of St. Benedict*
- Abbot David Parry, O.S.B., *Household of God*
- Pseudo Macarius, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter*
- Ghislane Salvail, *At the Crossroads of the Scriptures: An Introduction to Lectio Divina*
- Fr. Michael Scanlon, O.F.M., *Let the Fire Fall*

Cassette Tapes and Compact Disks:

- Sr. Jean Francis Dolan, O.S.B., "Group *Lectio*," from 1995 NAABOD meeting
- Msgr. Francis Mannion, "Holy Dwelling: Monastic Stability in an Unstable Culture"
- Sr. Anne McCarthy, O.S.B., presentation on AIM meeting, from 1995 NAABOD meeting
- *Preaching Today*: "Guarding Human Life"
- Janet F. Smith, "Is Pre-Marital Sex Wrong?"
- Fr. Columba Stewart, O.S.B., "Formation in Benedictine Spirituality," from 2001 NAABOD meeting
- Christopher West, "John Paul II's Theology of the Human Body"

RESERVATION FORM FOR CELEBRATION OF ST. BENEDICT DAY ON MARCH 22

Name _____
Address _____

Phone _____

___ I plan to attend the dinner for Oblates at St. Vincent on Monday March 22, 2010, along with ___ guests; I enclose _____ (\$6.50 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 22. On becoming a full Oblate, I plan to take the Oblate name _____. (*application form required*)

___ I would like overnight accommodations. (Please contact Fr. Donald well in advance.)

Please send this form to: **Mrs. Christine Karem, 2012 Souli St., Greensburg, PA 15601 (phone: 724-875-0285).**

SCHEDULE FOR SOLEMNITY OF SAINT BENEDICT, MARCH 22, 2010

4:00 P.M. – Concelebrated Mass in Archabbey Basilica

5:30 P.M. – dinner in Placid Hall Dining Room B

6:30 P.M. – Oblation ceremonies, Archabbey Basilica, choir area

7:30 P.M. – Vespers with monastic community, Archabbey Basilica, choir area

8:05 P.M. – social in Parish Assembly Room

Schedule for Oblate Day of Recollection, April 10, Oblate Presenters on 2nd World Congress

8:30 A.M. Registration, Leander Hall

8:30-9:30 A.M. Confessions, Leander parlor and near-by office

9:30 A.M. First presentation, Brownfield Center 202

10:15 A.M. Mass, Basilica Choir or Crypt

11:30 A.M. Midday Prayer, St. Gregory Chapel

11:45 A.M. Lunch, Placid Dining Room B

1:00 P.M. Second presentation, Brownfield Center 202

3:00 P.M. Third presentation, Brownfield Center 202

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, April 10, 2010

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

___ I plan to attend the Oblate day of recollection on April 10 at St. Vincent.

___ *Enclosed is the fee of \$18.00 (or \$10.00 for only one meal).*

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

___ I would like overnight accommodations for ___ Apr. 9, ___ Apr. 10 (Please contact Fr. Donald several weeks in advance.)

Please send this form to Mrs. Christine Karem, 2012 Souli St., Greensburg, PA 15601 (phone: 724-875-0285) and not to the Oblate Office. Please mail in this form by April 3.

Prayer for Oblates regarding the abbatial election in May

God our Father,
we ask you to open
the hearts and minds

of all the monks
of Saint Vincent Archabbey
to the guidance of the Holy Spirit
and to unite them in Your Son
as they prepare to choose an archabbot.
May they thus select a monk
characterized by "holiness of life
and wisdom in teaching"
who will best lead the Archabbey
into the future in the Benedictine way
according to your all-wise plan.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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 .

Purchase of *Life and Miracles of St. Benedict* at \$6.36 each

If any Oblate or Oblate novice wishes to purchase one or more copies of *The Life and Miracles of St. Benedict* by Pope St. Gregory the Great (Liturgical Press edition), please make out a check to ST. VINCENT ARCHABBEY for **\$6.36** for each copy, and mail the check to the Oblate Office. If you wish to have the book(s) mailed to you, please add money for postage. Orders should be submitted before March 20. The book is being used at monthly meetings of the St. Gregory the Great (Latrobe) Deanery.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ e-mail address _____

DIRECTORY OF OBLATES: PREPARING FOR THIS SUMMER'S REVISION

If any Oblate or Oblate novice who is currently listed in the *Directory* wishes to report a change of address, phone number, or e-mail address, please contact Bill O'Neil, who keeps a current listing of the *Directory* on computer. Likewise, if you are not included in the *Directory* but wish to be included in the next revision, please send the information that you wish to be printed to Bill. The *Directory* is revised about every two years, and copies are sent only to those who wish to participate. The next revision is to be issued this summer. Bill's e-mail address is:

boneil2@peoplepc.com .

One can also write to Bill at William O'Neil, 4122 Beehner Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15217-2811, or phone him at 412-422-1313.
