



# OBLATES OF SAINT BENEDICT

Saint Vincent Archabbey

300 Fraser Purchase Road, Latrobe, PA 15650-2690

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724-805-2291

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Please note registration form for July 11 and forms for a prayer chain and the *Directory* on the insert.

## SEEKING THE TRUTH AND HANDING IT DOWN: DELIGHTING IN OUR LORD'S INSTRUCTIONS

Dear Oblates, Oblate novices, and Friends,

Truth is a commodity that is sometimes difficult to find in our society. The media regularly mislead us by promising happiness through the purchase of various products and services, whose benefits are highly overstated. The very use of language has been distorted in subtle ways to deceive both speakers and hearers. Instead of acknowledging the actual brutality of abortion, people may speak of "termination of pregnancy"; instead of admitting the sinfulness and destructiveness of fornication, people may refer to "companionship," "significant relationship," or other euphemistic misnomers. All of us can be caught up to some extent by such insidiously distorting terminology. Commitment to the truth is not as prevalent as it should be because many individuals, including some very intelligent ones and some very prominent ones, apparently do not believe in the existence of objective truths that come from God. Some people's defiant or indifferent attitude can be expressed in Pontius Pilate's unmindful response to Jesus during His trial: "'Truth!' said Pilate, 'What does *that* mean?'" (Jn 18:38; italics mine). A dominant but usually not very well reasoned line of thought in our society is that whatever seems beneficial at the moment is somehow "true" or that truth (if there is any) comes from the consensus of the people at any given time. Of course, this type of thinking is thoroughly illogical and well as immensely harmful, and yet it seems to be powerfully promoted and accepted. (Also, many people seem to think that the most reliable "truth" comes from science. Indeed, what is discovered by science forms a part of the wonderful truth imparted to us by God; but since all scientific discoveries are made by finite people using finite instruments on finite samples, scientific truth can never be absolute. In contrast, how much more reliable is the truth offered to us by our all-knowing, all-loving, infinite God!)

The challenge to adhere to objective truth in matters of morality in our very ambivalent culture is vividly portrayed in the book *A Refutation of Moral Relativism* by Peter Kreeft (Ignatius Press, 1999), which is a transcription of a taped debate between a moral relativist and a moral absolutist. The relativist, who is a reporter, keeps accusing her wily opponent of trying to impose his absolute views on others. At one point she states, "I think most Americans and Europeans view moral absolutism with alarm because they see a connection there [with violence and interreligious warfare in other countries]" (p. 16). The absolutist demonstrates through various logical arguments that if truth is indeed relative, then it is not

even worth arguing about the matter; why should a relativist, for example, try to win a debate if the outcome is not genuinely true or if it leads to the self-contradictory conclusion that "it is true that truth is relative." (Of course, that statement must itself be relative, and therefore not completely true, if all truth is relative!)

We as Christians firmly believe in the existence of absolute truths, and we believe that all truth ultimately comes from God. The whole Bible proclaims truths for the sake of our salvation; and although it would take more than a lifetime to come to understand all the truths therein, we must begin now and welcome God to lead us ever more deeply into the truth. Our Lord speaks about the truth most especially in St. John's Gospel: "If you live according to My teaching, you are truly My disciples; then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (Jn 8:31); "when He comes ..., being the Spirit of truth, He [the Holy Spirit] will guide you to all truth" (Jn 16:13); "consecrate them [My disciples] by means of truth -- "Your word is truth"" (Jn 17:17); and "The reason I was born, the reason why I came into the world is to testify to the truth. Anyone committed to the truth hears My voice" (Jn 18:37). Thus we Christians have a fundamental duty and privilege to seek out the truth, to live it, and to proclaim it. The truth is most fully expressed in the life, teachings, Passion, death, and Resurrection of Our Lord; in fact, He is "the way and the truth and the life" (Jn 14:6). For us who are Catholic that truth is passed down to us with divine assurance not so much through individual inspiration as through Sacred Tradition, the magisterial teachings of the Church.

One of the time-tested non-Biblical sources of spiritual truth is the *Rule* of St. Benedict. Although the *Rule* uses the word "truth" (in Latin *veritas*) only three times, the whole tenor of the document is to help monks to live the truth of the Gospel according to their particular circumstances. St. Benedict urges, "Speak the truth with heart and tongue" (*RB* 4:28). Like the Bible itself, the *Rule* exists to challenge all its readers to seek the truth, to speak the truth, and to live the truth of Christ from moment to moment. Since it is often rightly said that "humility is truth," the chapter on humility most intentionally guides the disciple to be weaned away from the falsehoods of secular culture and the old, unredeemed self and to embrace the lasting, life-giving truths of Christ and the Church. If we try to exalt ourselves by clinging to our own will, then God must humble us to bring us closer to the reality that He alone defines (*RB* 7:1-7). When we look into ourselves and seek to guard our thoughts and words from evil influences, then we shall discover the truth of our

wretchedness as “God searches [our] hearts and minds” (RB 7:14) and reveals unflattering tendencies that we need to overcome with the help of His grace. Again and again, we need to look to the great truth proclaimed by our crucified Lord, who “became obedient even to death” (RB 7:34 & Phil 2:8); it is He, through His Passion and death, who shows us the way to humble obedience and strengthens us to be “patient amid hardships and unjust treatment” (RB 7:42). The truth is often painful, but it must be faced if we are to emerge out of the darkness of untruth and to become the new persons in Christ that God means us to be. The truth of our “sinful thoughts” and other “wrongs committed in secret” (RB 7:44) must not be evaded but rather exposed as the monk confesses humbly to the abbot or to those assigned as confessors; only such efforts to bring painful truths into the light (and ultimately before the Light who is Christ) will pave the way for purification and healing. In contrast, we circumvent the truth when we engage in excessive talk or boisterous laughter (RB 7:56-61); so we need external and internal silence to disengage from our habitual evasions and to discover the truth of God’s healing love that seeks to uproot all the ways in which we “live a lie.”

Living together in Christian monasteries and homes should support us in living the truth of Christ; they should be places where Christian truth is passed along from seniors to juniors and from parents to children. St. Paul exhorts us, “Let us profess the truth in love and grow to the full maturity of Christ the head” (Eph 4:15); he also urges the Ephesians, “Never let evil talk pass your lips; say only the good things men need to hear, things that will really help them” (Eph 4:29). In the monastery the abbot has a special responsibility to proclaim the truth taught by Christ. St. Benedict exhorts the abbot “never to teach or decree or command anything that would deviate from the Lord’s instructions. On the contrary, everything he teaches or commands should, like the leaven of divine justice, permeate the minds of his disciples” (RB 2:45). Coming to know the truth also means that each disciple must own up to failures to embrace the truth and live the truth. “If someone commits a [public] fault ..., he must at once come before the abbot and community and of his own accord admit his fault and make satisfaction” (RB 46:1,3). The precepts of St. Benedict’s “penal code” (RB 23-30, 43-46) seem harsh, inhumane, and lacking in compassion to us modern disciples; and indeed, although such measures were quite acceptable and considered moderate in St. Benedict’s day, most of them would not at all be appropriate today either for monks or for lay people. Nonetheless, these purgative measures have a definite and valuable purpose in calling monks to accountability; if one becomes wayward by living in such a way as to deny his vows, then he must accept the consequences and be given penalties that help to make him aware of his sin so that he make seek healing and return to the truth of his Christian commitment. Every community, it is hoped, will have people especially gifted to bring offenders to the truth in a firm and loving way. RB 46:5-6 tells us, “When the cause of the sin lies

hidden in [the monk’s] conscience, he is to reveal it only to the abbot or to one of the spiritual elders, who know *how to heal their own wounds as well as those of others* [italics mine], without exposing them and making them public.” The novice master should be among those special people who can guide others to the truth; he is “a senior chosen for his skill in *winning souls* ... appointed to look after them [the novices] with careful attention” (RB 58:6). And are we not all novices in the spiritual life who need others as wise guides to save our souls from the darkness of sin and disbelief?

The 50 days of the Easter Season are intended to help us become steeped in the most basic truth of all the universe and all history: Christ our Lord, fully God and man, suffered and died and rose again to bring us forgiveness and new life. We come to embrace this truth by seeking to live in the risen Christ at every moment of our lives. The apostles and other early disciples as portrayed in the Acts of the Apostles provide us with excellent examples of living and proclaiming the truth -- even with joyful exuberance -- in an often hostile environment. They are so steeped in the truth of Christ’s Resurrection that nothing can stop them from their vocation to proclaim Christ and His saving truth. When brought before the Sanhedrin and questioned by hostile religious leaders, “Peter and the apostles said in reply, ‘We must obey God rather than men. The God of our ancestors raised Jesus, though you had him killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as leader and savior to grant Israel repentance and forgiveness of sins’” (Act 5:29-31). Later, after the apostles were flogged, ordered to stop speaking in the name of Jesus, and dismissed, “they left the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been found worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name [of Jesus]” (Acts 5:41). Some time later St. Paul and St. Barnabas experienced similar opposition and expulsion; after persecution and expulsion from the territory of Antioch in Pisidia, “the disciples were filled joy and the Holy Spirit” (Acts 13:52).

How can we better know the truth, live the truth, and proclaim the truth with love and joy, no matter what our outward circumstances may be? We must use the tools given us by God to be healed of our self-deception and to become immersed in Christ and His truth. We are called both to cling to the truth and to grow in the truth as Christ reveals it to us in everyday life. The Mass for the Thursday of the Third Week of Easter expresses our goal beautifully in two prayers: “Father, in this holy season we come to know the full depth of your love. You have freed us from the darkness of error and sin. Help us to cling to your truths with fidelity,” and “Lord God, by this holy exchange of gifts you share with us your divine life. Grant that everything we do may be directed by the knowledge of your truth.” Attentive, full, conscious participation in the Eucharistic liturgy is one fundamental way to enter deeply into the truth. We become one with Christ, more and more fully, when we hear His word and, most especially, when we receive His Body and Blood. It is God Himself who thus leads us to the truth if we give

Him the opportunity. In praying the Liturgy of the Hours, we consecrate ourselves further to the truth who is Christ; we pray in communion with Him and the whole Church and welcome the words of the psalms to become our own so that we become immersed in God's own words, which are truth. When we practice *lectio divina*, we give God a chance to speak the truth to us in a more personal and intimate way, and He may very well show us ways in which we have been living in falsehood and in which we can become more fully conformed to Christ in thought, word, and deed. A program of good spiritual reading can also enhance our capacity to know the truth; in terms of the teachings of the Catholic Church, I strongly recommend the recently published *United States Catechism for Adults* (Washington, DC: U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006). Seeking regular spiritual direction can also assist us in listening for God's will among all the competing voices of our environment and our disordered impulses. Furthermore, examining our consciences regularly can help us to face the truth of the sinful tendencies that lie within us and sometimes lead to actual sins. Knowing our abysmal moral defects and bringing them to Christ can free us from the illusion of sin. We Catholics also have the marvelous gift of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which we should use frequently, to aid us in our journey of leaving behind the "old man" and the "life of the flesh" so that we can emerge again and again to put on the "new man," who is Christ, and thus to "live in the Spirit." Finally, we come to live in the truth by praying and working mindfully all day long; if we seek to be attuned to Christ around us and within us, He will surely reveal important truths to us about our relationship with Him (and its weaknesses). During my Holy Week as a novice in 1978, I was very frustrated by all the server practices, longer-than-expected liturgies, and other last-minute demands that rendered my Holy Week less blissful than I had expected. (After all, in my first year in a monastery, was I not entitled to an especially uplifting experience of Our Lord's Passion, death, and Resurrection?) When on

Easter evening I half-grudgingly attended the mandated monastic social, I was able to express to another concerned monk my "terrible" experience of Holy Week and the Sacred Triduum. He listened attentively and then said to me, "Might not all that have been your share in the Passion?" The next morning I even more fully realized the truth of what he had said when an older monk asked me at breakfast, "What was your Resurrection experience this Easter?" Indeed I came to know that the Lord was truly risen and risen in my life to free me from my self-centered illusions! He came to me in many ways (though I was largely blind and deaf to them) to show me that the purpose of celebrating the paschal mystery was not to give me a blissful experience but to help me to unite my sufferings with those of Christ, to accept new and risen life from Him in His way and His time, and thus to take one more little step in my quest to live in Christ, who is Truth beyond all human truths.

As we continue to live the Easter mystery, let us all welcome the ways in which Christ invites us to a deeper participation in His truth. Let us welcome Him to speak to us through Scripture, the Church's teachings, liturgy, private prayer, and the events of daily life so that we may come to know Him as our way, our truth, and our life and may accept the grace to proclaim, "We have seen the Lord" (Jn 20:25), "He has been raised just as He said" (Mt 28:6), and "the Lord has truly been raised" (Lk 24:34). May our immersion in the newness of life that comes from Christ free us from the deceptions of this world and keep us living joyfully in God's Kingdom of peace, justice, and self-emptying love.

Your brother in Christ and Saint Benedict,

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

## **A MESSAGE FROM ARCHABBOT DOUGLAS**

Easter 2007

Dear Oblates and Friends of Saint Vincent,

A blessed and joyous Easter Season to you! Please know that you and your loved ones are remembered in the Masses and prayers of the Benedictine Community as we celebrate this season of the triumph of the light of Christ over the power of darkness of sin and death.

The Easter Season provides us with an opportunity to renew our faith and hope in the power of God's love in our lives. Let us ask for God's grace to embrace the cross, which our Lord shows us leads to eternal life.

Faithfully in Christ,

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

## **SOLEMNITY OF ST. BENEDICT AT THE ARCHABBEY, MARCH 21**

A number of Oblates and their guests, over 70, joined the extended Benedictine community for the annual celebration of the Passing of Our Holy Father Benedict, Abbot. At the Mass at 4:00 P.M., Archabbot Douglas, the principal celebrant and homilist, preached about two key elements of abiding continually in Christ's love, namely gratitude and joy. He also referred to St. Benedict's warning against murmuring as contrary to Christian hope and to persistent surrender to God.

After a festive meal, Oblation ceremonies were held in the Archabbey Basilica, where Fr. Donald invested the following:

Oblates: **Edward A. (Ralph) Conroy** of Ligonier, PA

**Elizabeth (Mary Catherine) Hart** of Greensburg, PA

**Christine R. (Scholastica) Karem** of Greensburg, PA

**Janis E. (Juliann) Matthews** of Carmichaels, PA

**William J. Morley** of Manchester, MD

Oblate novices: **Christine M. Gannon** of Greensburg, PA

**Audrey L. Hoepfer** of Herminie, PA

**Shirley A. Lazar** of Belle Vernon, PA .

After dinner the group prayed Vespers with the monastic community at 7:30. A social in the Parish Assembly Room followed.

## **DAY OF RECOLLECTION AT ST. EMMA, APRIL 22**

A turnout of some 13 Oblates and others came to the annual day of recollection at St. Emma Retreat House. The retreat master was Fr. Maurus Mount, O.S.B., and the monthly meeting of the Latrobe Deanery followed.

## **"OBLATE RETREATS", MAY 18-20 and JUNE 1-3**

It is still not too late to register for this year's retreats. Use the retreat brochure that you received in the mail, and register directly with the St. Vincent Retreat Program. Fr. Thomas Acklin, O.S.B., will be the retreat master on May 19-21, and Fr. Donald will be the retreat master on June 1-3 for a silent retreat. (The retreat brochure did not refer to "Oblate retreat" or "Benedictine spirituality" in the titles, but in fact both retreats are for Oblates and others interested in Benedictine spirituality.) On the afternoon of May 19, there will be a meeting of representatives of Oblate deaneries, and Oblation ceremonies will also be held later in the afternoon.

## **FEAST OF ST. BENEDICT AND CELEBRATION OF JUBILEES OF OBLATION, JULY 11**

All Oblates, Oblate novices, and their guests are welcome to attend the festive Mass for the Feast of St. Benedict, including ceremonies for the profession of solemn vows, at the Archabbey Basilica at 10:00 A.M. on Wednesday, July 11. Oblates are invited to stay for lunch and for a 2:30 meeting, Evening Prayer at 5:00, and supper. If you are coming for Mass, lunch, or supper, please fill out the form on the insert and send it to Christine Karem by July 4. (Even if you are coming only for Mass, it is good for the sacristans to know how many pews to reserve for the Oblates.) This year for the second time the meeting at 2:30 will include a ceremony to honor Oblates who this year celebrate 5, 15, 20, 25, 30, or 40 or more years of Oblation. (Those who are celebrating up to 50 years of Oblation should receive personal invitations; those who have been Oblates for over 50 years should have been invited last year; but if they did not come last year, they will be honored this year if they are able to attend.) At the suggestion of the Oblate Board of Advisors, there will be time for photographs after the jubilarian ceremonies.

Also, overnight accommodations will be available for Oblates coming for the festivities on July 11. Ten double (air-conditioned) rooms in Aurelius Hall have been reserved for Oblates from July 9 to July 13 at a cost of \$23.00 per person per night (or \$19.00 for those who bring their own linens). Those needing room reservations should call Fr. Donald at the Oblate Office (724-805-2291) and send (or give) the money to him.

## **OBLATE DAY 2007 - September 23**

Fr. Cyprian Constantine, O.S.B., Director of Music and principal organist of the monastery and Academic Dean of the seminary, has agreed to serve as the guest speaker on Oblate Day, Sunday, September 23, 2007. A schedule and a registration form for the event will appear in the August newsletter.

## **OBLATE DAY OF RECOLLECTION - October 20**

The past two years' fall days of recollection at the Archabbey were quite successful, and so another similar day of recollection will be offered this fall on Saturday, October 20. Fr. Thomas More Sikora, O.S.B., who teaches in the Department of Religious Studies at St. Vincent College, will serve as the retreat master.

## **ADORATION FOR VOCATIONS**

Oblates in the Latrobe/Greensburg area are welcome to participate in Eucharistic adoration in Mary, Mother of Wisdom Chapel from 1:30 P.M. to 4:15 P.M. on Sundays before Oblate meetings. The times of adoration will occur in 2007 on September 16, October 21, November 18, and December 16; and in 2008 on January 20, February 17, March 16, April 20, and May 18. The intention of adoration will be for vocations, especially to St. Vincent Archabbey, and the adoration will close with Benediction at 4:15. The August newsletter will have a flier for signing up for half-hour slots; but if you would like to sign up now, please contact Anthony and Donna Sunseri at 146 Janyce Drive, Greensburg, PA 15601 (phone: 724-832-0868; e-mail: ajsdms@verison.net).

## **RECRUITING FOR PRAYER CHAIN FOR OBLATES IN LATROBE/GREENSBURG/ JEANNETTE/ WHEELING/ LIGONIER AREA CONTINUES**

If you are interested in joining this prayer chain, please submit the form on the enclosed flier to Anthony and Donna Sunseri. If you have any questions about what the prayer chain is about, you may contact them.

## **RENEWALS OF OBLATION**

I am grateful for the many Oblates who, as of the end of April, had renewed their Oblation by using the form in the last newsletter. If you have not recently been in contact with the Oblate Office or your local deanery and have not renewed your Oblation at St. Vincent during the past year, please renew your Oblation privately and send in the renewal form.

## **OBLATE RADIO PROGRAM**

Radio station WEDO, 810 AM, offers an almost daily program of reflections especially geared for Oblates. Oblate John James manages the station and arranges for this program. The program is scheduled at 8:45 A.M., Monday through Friday.

## **RECOMMENDED READING** (volumes available in the Oblate Library)

- (1) Pope Benedict XVI, *God Is Love (Deus Caritas Est)* (Washington, DC: U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006)
- (2) Scott Hahn, *Lord Have Mercy: The Healing Power of Confession* (N.Y.: Doubleday, 2003)
- (3) Fr. Albert Holtz, O.S.B., *Pilgrim Road: A Benedictine Journey through Lent* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2006)
- (4) Fr. Cyprian Smith, O.S.B. *The Path of Life: Benedictine Spirituality for Monks & Lay People* (York, England: Ampleforth Abbey Press, 1995) -- an excellent set of reflections on Benedictine spirituality; good for group discussions.

## **VISIT TO OBLATES IN LANCASTER**

On April 19 Fr. Donald, accompanied by Oblate George Bordell of Murrysville, visited the Oblate group in Lancaster, PA. At the monthly meeting at St. Joseph Church, Fr. Donald delivered a talk on "Distinctiveness in Benedictine Life." Most of the Oblates in Lancaster are affiliated with St. Meinrad Archabbey, but a few are affiliated with St. Vincent.

## **OBLATE BOARD OF ADVISORS**

The Oblate Board of Advisors met at the Archabbey on April 13. They discussed the mentoring program, the proposed prayer chain, the offering of condolences to deceased Oblates' and spouses' families, and plans for Eucharistic adoration for vocations.

## **MENTORING PROGRAM**

The recently established Mentoring Program for guiding inquirers and Oblate novices in Benedictine spirituality is still in need of volunteers to be mentors. If you would like to serve as a mentor or if you are an inquirer or an Oblate novice (or even an Oblate) who would like to have an Oblate mentor, please contact the Oblate Office. Those who offer to be mentors receive a booklet of guidelines.

## **PRAYER-PARTNER PROGRAM**

Oblate Daniel Marston has been coordinating the Prayer-Partner Program. He has changed his contact information and apologizes to anyone who could not contact him or who did not hear from him because of his moving. Any Oblates or Oblate novices who are not participating but who wish to participate may enroll in the program. If you wish to have another Oblate or Oblate novice as a prayer partner, please contact Dr. Daniel Marston at 412-380-2695 (work) or by e-mail at drdanmarston@comcast.net. You can also send a letter to him at 222 Spartan Drive, Monroeville, PA 15146. Please indicate whether you wish to communicate by letter and/or e-mail with your partner or whether you wish merely to pray for him or her. If you prefer to have a monk as a prayer partner, please contact Fr. Donald. (Fr. Donald apologizes also for being negligent in assigning monk-partners; there has simply been too much to do!)

## **BIENNIAL MEETING OF OBLATE DIRECTORS AND OBLATES, July 28-August 2, 2007**

This year's biennial meeting of North American Oblate Directors will take place at St. Martin's Abbey and University in Lacey, WA, from Saturday, July 28, to Thursday, August 2. Two Oblates from each participating monastery are invited to attend this event, which involves presentations by excellent Benedictine speakers. The meeting in 2009 is scheduled to be held at St. Vincent Archabbey. We are grateful to Oblates Joyce Collins of West Newton, PA, and Bill Gibson of Wheeling, WV, for their having volunteered to represent St. Vincent at this year's meeting. Fr. Paschal Morlino, O.S.B., moderator of the deanery in Baltimore, will also attend to represent the Director of Oblates.

## **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.

## **PREPARATION OF DEANERY HISTORIES**

Lay leaders and moderators of our Oblate deaneries are urged to consider writing histories of their respective deaneries, whether new or old. It would be best if the histories are as detailed as possible. (It would be good to have at least a few paragraphs with some exact dates and names.) There is no deadline, and thoroughness and quality will be valued over promptness of submission. For those deaneries that have been in existence for many years, older members might be interviewed or reached by letter for their historical input. A few histories have been submitted, but the rest have yet to come in. There is no hurry, but it would be good if all the histories could be turned in by the fall of 2007.

## **OBLATE DIRECTORY BEING PREPARED FOR SUMMER**

A new revision of the biennial Oblate *Directory* is being prepared by Oblate Bill O'Neil of Pittsburgh. If you wish to be included and you were included in 2005 with currently valid information, then you need not submit an entry. If your data has changed since 2005 or if you were not included in 2005 and now wish to be included in the *Directory*, then please see the flier for the form to be sent by U.S. mail or e-mail to Bill O'Neil.

## **OBLATE MEETINGS IN LATROBE**

All Oblates and their guests are welcome to monthly meetings of the Latrobe Deanery, held at 6:45 P.M. on Sundays in Brownfield 202 at St. Vincent. The next four meetings will be on May 20, June 24, July 15, and August 19. (Note the change to the fourth Sunday in June.) Those wishing to come early for Vespers and supper should phone Fr. Donald (724-805-2291) in advance.

## **LESSONS ON BENEDICTINE SPIRITUALITY IN LATROBE**

Held from 3:00 to 4:25 generally on the same day as monthly meetings, these sessions are meant to offer a deepened understanding of Benedictine values in a somewhat organized way to Oblates, Oblate novices, and other interested people. On February 18 Fr. John-Mary gave a presentation on "St. Benedict and His Rule"; on March 18 Oblate Mary Lou Mlecko gave a lesson on "Conversion of Heart"; on April 29 Fr. Jacques spoke about "Obedience." The next three sessions will be entitled "Prayer" on May 20 (Pamela Johnson), "Lectio Divina" on June 24 (Michael Russo), and "The Liturgy of the Hours" on July 15 (William Gibson).

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR BENEDICTINE FORMATION OUT WEST**

From October 30 to November 4, the Monastery of the Ascension in Jerome, Idaho, is sponsoring a retreat on the theme "Benedictine Saints." It is also sponsoring a pilgrimage in Europe from October 7 to 22 and two new courses with "Benedictine Distance Learning." Also, from July 1 to 7, the Monastery of St. Gertrude in Cottonwood, Idaho, is sponsoring a workshop on Benedictine spirituality entitled "Living in Community: Insights from the Rule of Benedict." Anyone interested in either of these opportunities should contact the Oblate Office.

## **CONDOLENCES**

Let us together offer prayers for those of our Oblate Community who have lost loved ones, that they may receive consolation and new strength from our risen Lord:

- Oblate Barbara Llewellyn of Virginia Beach, VA, whose daughter Deborah died during 2006
- Oblate Henry V. Giobbi of Greensburg, PA, whose wife, Helen, died on Feb. 15
- Oblate DeSales Karawsky of Vandergriff, PA, whose sister Leonarda Karawsky died on Feb. 20 [see below; she was also the sister of the late Fr. Clarence Karawsky, O.S.B.]
- Oblate Dale Yeckley of Latrobe, PA, whose father, Lewis, died on Feb. 21
- Oblate Doris Blase of Asheboro, NC, whose sister-in-law Margie Watson died on Feb. 27
- Oblates John Henry of Jeannette, PA, and Emmett Henry of Greensburg, PA, whose brother Silas died on Mar. 5
- Oblate Ted Richardson of Montgomery, PA, and his wife Maryann, whose mother, Phyllis Hanobic, died on Mar. 15
- Oblate Mary Regina Maher of Latrobe, PA, whose aunt Regina Maher Atkinson died on Apr. 2 [she was also the sister

of retired Archabbot Paul Maher, O.S.B.]

- Oblate Michael McDonald of Orlando, FL, whose uncle Owen McDonald died recently .

## **OBLATE DEATHS**

Let us be united in prayer for recently deceased members of our Oblate Community, that they may enjoy the fullness of life with the risen Christ and all the saints:

- 17 Jan 2007 - Barbara M. (Scholastica) Thomas of Norfolk, VA (Oblate since May, 1991)
- 20 Feb 2007 - Leonarda M. (Cecilia) Karawsky of Vandergrift, PA (Oblate since May, 1988)
- 12 Mar 2007 - Peter Booley of Grapeville, PA (Oblate since Aug., 1958)
- 11 Apr 2007 - James (Robert) Ackerman of Greensburg, PA (Oblate since July, 1955) .

## **NEWS FROM OBLATE DEANERIES**

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

Deacon leader Ralph DeCecco wrote on January 30 and February 27. The meeting on January 29 was led by Oblate novice Jefferey McCaughtry. After Vespers he distributed a handout and directed a lengthy discussion on "integrity." Beginning with consideration of the patriarch Joseph, the group shared about the standards by which they tried to live and the dimensions of their lives which they needed to change for greater personal integrity. The meeting ended with Compline.

The meeting on February 26 was once again led by Jefferey, who was to leave the community on March 5. After Vespers Jeff led a discussion about Christian values, with the assistance of a hand-out, which emphasized the need for an interior focus on Christ that will produce authentic living.

### **Ann Arbor, MI** -- *monthly meetings at Old St. Patrick's Church*

Lay leader James Durka wrote on March 25. The meeting in February, led by Oblate novice Bob Christian, involved a discussion of Lent with the help of *RB* 49 and its Scriptural references.

The meeting in March involved a discussion of *RB* 6 (on silence) with some reference to *RB* 5. Jim, who led the meeting, suggested the use of external silence to help one to quiet the soul to make more room for the Holy Spirit.

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

Secretary Gabriele Terrill wrote on February 1, March 8, and April 3. The meeting on January 28 began with Evening Prayer, followed by light refreshments. From a request at the previous meeting, Fr. John Peck, moderator, explained *lectio divina* in great detail. He admitted that *lectio* can be difficult at times, but there will be other times when it will tangibly move us closer to God. We need to realize that God initiates the process and invites us to give ourselves totally to Him as we listen to His word. At times *lectio* can lead to contemplation, a resting in the overflowing love of God. Gabriele recommended the book *Too Deep for Words* by Thelma Hall, which she had read during a silent retreat. The attendees ended the interesting session only with reluctance.

The meeting on February 25 began with Vespers and a ceremony, during which Fr. John invested

**Lauren Little** of Annville, PA,

as an Oblate novice. Then the group enjoyed some refreshments in honor of Lauren's investiture. Fr. John then read some reflections from the book *Pilgrim Road* by Fr. Albert Holtz, and there followed a discussion about the value of detachment in a materialistic culture which tempts us to become unhealthily attached to things. The conclusion was that if one loves God above all else, then one will have greater compassion for others and loving acceptance of others.

The meeting on March 25 continued after Vespers with a discussion of St. Benedict's life, especially in light of the solemnity on March 21. Fr. John had brought a copy of *The Life and Miracles of St. Benedict*, and the group discussed St. Benedict's rejection of the secularistic culture of his time, his emergence from the hermit lifestyle, and the miracles that he performed while he was abbot.

### **Asheboro, NC (Guardian Angels Deanery)** -- *monthly meetings at St. Joseph Church, 4th Sat. of each month, 10:00-11:00 A.M.*

Lay leader Doris Blase wrote on February 2 and 27, and secretary Robert O'Brien wrote on March 29. At the meeting on January 27, the five people present prayed the Liturgy of the Hours from the formation booklet and had a lively discussion about how the group came to be, what they hoped to accomplish, and what books should be read. Doris also led a discussion on humility based on *RB* 7:13-18. The group also set a time for their monthly meetings and considered the value of obtaining *Christian Prayer* as a group. Oblate novice Bob O'Brien agreed to type up minutes and send them to the Archabbey.

The meeting on February 24 took place in the Knights of Columbus Room of St. Joseph Church from 1:30 to 3:00. The group began by praying Mid-afternoon Prayer and then discussed what Vatican Council II had to say about prayer and the Liturgy of the Hours. They also exchanged about what they had read from *RB* 7 to *RB* 20. The attendees also chose the Guardian Angels as their deanery patron. The meeting closed with the Liturgy of the Hours and the Litany of St. Benedict.

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

Oblate Dale Dombrosky wrote on March 15, and moderator Fr. Paschal Morlino phoned on March 26 and e-mailed on April 22. At the meeting on February 18, Fr. Paschal spoke about the Transfiguration of Our Lord and its connection with Lent. On March 18 the group continued to discuss the observance of Lent and shared about how their Lenten practices had been going.

On March 21 the Oblates gathered to celebrate the Solemnity of St. Benedict with Solemn Vespers, Mass, Compline, and Benediction. About 10 Oblates renewed their Oblation.

On March 25, during a Mass for the Anointing of the Sick at St. Benedict Church, Oblates served as ministers of hospitality by registering those to be anointed, giving them name tags, and seating them.

At the meeting on April 15, the group reviewed the parish's celebrations of the Sacred Triduum, and there was a continuing discussion about Pope Benedict's encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*.

**Butler, PA** -- monthly meetings at St. Fidelis Church, generally the 3rd Tues. of each month

Lay leader Ethel Galli wrote on January 26, March 2 and 23, and April 23. At the meeting on January 23, attended by some 16 people, Fr. Brian, moderator, gave a review of *RB 7* on humility and explained the image of Jacob's ladder. The attendees were greeted at a table with a sign-in sheet, information to be picked up, and name tags.

At the meeting on February 27, Fr. Brian spoke about *RB 49* on Lent and emphasized that Lent is a gift, an opportunity to "clean the house" of the soul, and that we can nurture a joyful spirit by doing penance out of love for God. Then at a prayer service in the church, Fr. Brian invested three Oblate novices:

**Sharon Bopp** of Butler, PA

**Theresa Piroch** of Butler, PA

**Ronald Weleski** of Butler, PA.

At the meeting on March 21, attended by 17 people, Barbara Bekris announced the possibility of choosing a patron saint for the deanery, and it was decided to discuss the possibilities in April. Fr. Brian assigned readings from the *Rule* for the next two meetings. It was also announced that St. Fidelis Church has a good lending library of spiritual books, and after the meeting attendees visited the library. Fr. Brian gave a presentation on *RB 55*, about monks' clothing, and on *RB 33* as it is related to *RB 55*. The meeting ended with a social and Compline.

At the meeting on April 17, the attendees were reminded of the "Oblate retreat" on May 18-20. After the praying of Vespers the group discussed *RB 20* and *RB 47* under Fr. Brian's guidance. Regarding "Reverence in Prayer," he gave examples of prayer and emphasized that prayer must come first in Benedictine life and must be from the heart. Regarding "Announcing the Hours of the Work of God," he remarked that the monastic horarium helps to keep the day in order, with each task done at its proper time and with everything centered on prayer. Fr. Brian also spoke about the use of *Shorter Christian Prayer*.

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

Mary Catherine Hoover has returned to the position of deanery secretary, and she wrote on April 12.

In February, in place of a regular meeting, the deanery decided to make a trip to the Archabbey for Evening Prayer and supper on February 16. Five deanery members and Fr. Vincent Zidek, moderator, attended.

At the meeting on April 10, the attendees were reminded of the Oblate day of recollection at St. Emma and the two "Oblate retreats" at the Archabbey. Then there was a discussion of the last chapter of *Cherish Christ above All*. Since Fr. Vincent would be away on May 8, Fr. Robert Roche, O.S.B., of Queen of Peace Parish in Patton had been asked to conduct that meeting.

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

Fr. Paschal Kneip, O.S.B., moderator, wrote on February 10, and secretary Mary Hoffken wrote on February 27 and March 25. During a Mass for the Feast of St. Scholastica on February 10, Fr. Paschal received the following in St. Andrew Church:

*(continued on next page)*

Oblate: **Lorraine (Benedicta) Kodjak** of Chincoteague Island, VA

Oblate novices: **Donald J. Barkman** of Greenbackville, VA

**Ellen H. Barkman** of Greenbackville, VA

**Mary I. Detwiler** of Chincoteague Island, VA

**Barbara Gray** of New Church, VA

**Daniel J. Hoppe** of Atlantic, VA

**Pauline R. Hoppe** of Atlantic, VA

**David Loescher** of Parksley, VA

**Patricia O'Donnell** of Atlantic, VA .

The Barkmans and Hoppes are married couples.

The first regular meeting of the deanery took place on February 22, with two Oblates, seven Oblate novices, and Fr. Paschal attending. After Vespers Fr. Paschal spoke on Lesson 1 from Sr. Dolores Dowling's series of 10 lessons. There

were readings from the *Rule*: *RB* Prol:14-21; 4:62-77; and 73:8-9, and there was a discussion about these verses and about Benedictine spirituality, prayer, and the vocation to be an Oblate (novice).

The meeting on March 8 again began with Vespers, and then the group discussed an article "Monastics and Oblates: Mutual Blessings," by Norvene Vest, an Oblate, with emphasis on Oblates' call to tap into the spirituality of monastic life and to carry it into the world. The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

On March 22 Fr. Paschal led the group in discussing Lesson 2, "St. Benedict and His Rule," from the series of 10 lessons. The topics discussed included St. Gregory's *Dialogues*, the *Rule's* applicability to all times and places, and themes from *RB* 66 and 73. Also, a hand-out entitled "Domestic Benedictines" was distributed, and the group reflected on the Scriptural injunction "that in all things God be glorified."

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

Lay leader Carl Motter wrote on February 23, March 23, and April 11. The turnout at the meeting on February 21 was rather low, probably because it was Ash Wednesday. Msgr. Michael Becker, moderator, led a discussion about what the Oblates could do for Lent, and one of the suggestions was to practice *lectio divina*. Oblate novice Mercedes Smith related that she had encountered two Oblate novices at the prison in Huntingdon, where she works.

On March 21 the meeting followed a Mass for the Solemnity of St. Benedict and Evening Prayer. There was also a social. Twelve Oblates renewed their Oblation, and there was a discussion about preparation for final Oblation on the part of those who had become Oblate novices last May.

At the meeting on April 10, the group prayed Vespers and then discussed what the Easter Season meant to each individual. Also, there were preparations for Oblation ceremonies during a Sunday Mass on May 20. Then the group reflected on *RB* 4 and how the "tools for good works" could make one a better Oblate. Finally, there was some discussion about the Holy Father's choice of the name Benedict.

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

At the meeting on February 18, Fr. Donald led the first of a series of discussions based on Fr. Michael Casey's book *Strangers to the City*. The exchange focused on the ways in which Oblates are called to live counterculturally. Cold, snowy weather resulted in a lower-than-usual turnout; nonetheless, some hardy souls came from long distances.

At the meeting on March 18, the group completed its discussion of Chapter 1, "Distinctiveness." The turnout was especially large, perhaps because of clear weather. Some plans were made for the celebration on March 21, and the attendees were urged to consider being part of the prayer chain planned for Oblates in the area.

The meeting on April 22 was held at St. Emma after the annual Oblate day of recollection. The group discussed the first part of Chapter 2 of *Strangers to the City*, namely "Asceticism." The attendees then joined the Benedictine sisters for Compline at 7:30.

### **Minersville, PA (St. Malachy Deanery)**

Lay leader Paul Mangiardi reported on February 4 and 20, March 7 and 20, and April 4. The meeting on January 23 opened with a prayer for all Oblates, monks, and families in need. Then there was a lesson, led by Oblate novice Ken Samuelson, on humility and obedience, "spiritual prayers," and giving glory to God.

At the meeting on February 20, the group began by praying a rosary for the sick. An inquirer attended and completed an application. Then the group had a discussion about Lent and what it means to Oblates. The attendees agreed to try to bring back as many Catholics as possible to Mass or Eucharistic services as an evangelical outreach.

At the meeting on March 6, after a rosary for all the intentions sent to the deanery, the group of seven discussed the importance of receiving Christ in the Eucharist and the significance of Eucharistic prayer services in the absence of a priest.

At the meeting on March 20, after a rosary for special intentions, there were plans to pray the Stations of the Cross during Holy Week. There were hopes of having a priest chaplain assigned soon. (*continued on next page*)

At the meeting on April 3, attended by all the members and one guest, the group prayed the Stations of the Cross and the Novena of the Sacred Heart for the prayer requests of Oblates, monks, and families. Paul also read a letter from the Bishop of Allentown regarding a possible chaplain and a letter from Fr. Donald. The group also read pages 46-50 from the *Oblate Formation Booklet*.

### **Niagara Area, Ontario, Canada (St. Henry/St. Gertrude Deanery)** -- meetings on 4th Friday of each month, St. Patrick's Church, St. Catharines, Ont.

Secretary Trudy Bretzler wrote on January 20, February 6, March 7, and April 12. The meeting on December 22 began in the church, as usual, with Evening Prayer, a rosary, and a chaplet of Divine Mercy. Lay leader Brian Chisholm led the meeting in the absence of moderator Fr. Charles Gagné, who was ill. Brian announced that a guest speaker had been chosen for May and reminded the group of the choices of St. Henry as primary patron and St. Gertrude as secondary patron for the deanery. Prayer requests were brought up, and the members signed a get-well card for Fr. Gagné.

At the meeting on January 26, attended by 18 people including Fr. Gagné, after prayers in the church, plans for a Lenten

day of recollection on February 17 were announced. Then Fr. Gagné presented a lesson on the “the heart of monastic life,” namely stability, conversion, and obedience, and suggested portions of the *Rule* were read. The day of recollection, attended by some 35 people and led by Fr. Gagné, included Mass, adoration, confessions, and time for prayer.

The meeting on February 23, attended by 13 people plus Fr. Gagné, began with the Stations of the Cross and Evening Prayer in the church. Fr. Brian announced that the Oblates would sponsor a celebration for Divine Mercy Sunday, April 15, with confessions and a Mass that afternoon. Copies of a prayer list with the needs of monks and Oblates of the Archabbey were distributed. Additional intentions were brought up. Then Fr. Gagné read the introduction to the book *The Rule of Benedict for Beginners* by Wil Derkse, and a discussion followed.

At the meeting on March 23, after the usual beginning, Brian read from the *Companion to the Liturgy of the Hours*, and Trudy handed out a prayer list for the month. Brian confirmed that the deanery would host a holy hour on Divine Mercy Sunday. Then Fr. Gagné led a discussion on Wil Derkse’s book, pages 1-6. The members mentioned that, as recommended by St. Benedict, even small actions should be performed with respect and care out of love for Christ.

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

Lay leader Bill O’Neil wrote on April 24. At the meeting on April 18, after Evening Prayer, Fr. Ralph, moderator, led a discussion of *RB 7* on humility. Besides Fr. Ralph 13 people were in attendance.

**St. Marys, PA (St. Maurus Deanery)** -- meetings on Thurs. before 1<sup>st</sup> Fri. of month, 7:00 P.M., St. Mary’s Annex

There was no report. Apparently the deanery has not been meeting because of various difficulties.

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

Moderator Fr. Jude Brady wrote on February 16 and 26, March 26, and April 18. The Oblate Advisory Council met on February 13 at the priory with Fr. Ronald Gatman, O.S.B. They joined the monks for Vespers and then met over supper to prepare for the Oblate event of February.

On that date Sr. Lourdes Sheehan, R.S.M., gave a reflection entitled “The Vow of Obedience” during Vespers. Then a covered-dish supper was held in the priory refectory. The talk was very well-received by the 30-or-so people who attended.

The Solemnity of St. Benedict was celebrated with a Mass followed by a covered-dish supper on March 25. Some 30 people attended. Fr. Jude, the principal celebrant, preached about community and stability. During the Mass

**Bobbie Jeane Bridgers** of Savannah, GA,

**Richard (Nathaniel) Fitzgerald** of Mt. Pleasant, SC, and

**James N. Letendre** of Charleston, SC,

made their final Oblation before Fr. Jude and the gathered community.

On April 21 some of the Oblate community were to travel to Mepkin Abbey in South Carolina for a day of recollection. The Oblate Advisory Council planned to continue to meet over the summer to plan events for the Oblate program during the 2007-08 season.

**Scranton, PA (St. Boniface/St. Lioba Deanery)** -- monthly meetings at Immaculate Conception Church, Scranton, or in Dunmore

Lay leader Gretchen Meyers wrote on February 11, March 17, and April 22. During the celebration of Vespers on February 10 at St. Joseph Melkite Church in Scranton

**Michele Ann (Emma Maria Scholastica) Fitzgerald** of Scranton, PA, made her final Oblation in the presence of Rev. Christopher Manuele of St. Joseph Church and several members of the Oblate community.

A ceremony was held on March 9 at Immaculate Conception Church in Scranton, during which Rev. Richard Fox, pastor, invested

**Vincenta M. Grum** of Scranton, PA,

as an Oblate novice. Several members of the deanery and a few parishioners also attended the ceremony.

*(continued on next page)*

The meeting on April 13, attended by all but one member, began with a discussion of St. Paul’s letter to the Romans, which they had agreed to read during Lent, and a discussion of *lectio divina*. The group also reflected on passages of the *Oblate Formation Booklet* regarding the meaning of Oblation as a deeper living of baptismal vows. They also agreed to invite the pastor of St. Joseph Melkite Church to speak to them in June about the Blessed Mother.

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

Secretary Ashley Leggett wrote on February 16 and April 12, and Oblate Joel Moore wrote on April 4. At the meeting on February 12, attended by seven Oblates, one Oblate novice, and three guests, Fr. Boniface, moderator, suggested that the group sponsor another novena to St. Benedict as was done last year. Then the group entered into a discussion of Chapters 7 and 8 of *Strangers to the City* by Fr. Michael Casey. There was talk about ascetical practices and the danger of adopting excessively extreme practices and about the value of letting the needs of others govern our lives, even to the

point of interfering with scheduled appointments.

The meeting on March 19 began with Vespers for the Solemnity of St. Joseph. Then the group discussed Chapter 9, "Generativity." Some participants pointed out how in a Christian family parents and other elders nurture the young with the hope of great progress in their journeys with the Lord.

At the meeting on April 9, attended by five Oblates, one Oblate novice, and six guests, Fr. Boniface led a discussion of Chapters 10 and 11 of the same text. There was a discussion about the difference between self-importance and Christian self-acceptance, which includes love of Christ, detachment, and readiness for self-sacrifice. It was concluded that pious practices can be valuable if they reinforce love of Christ and do not become routine or lead to pride.

### **Toronto, Ontario, Canada** -- *monthly meetings at St. Clare Church, Toronto*

Lay leader John Kelly wrote on February 9 and March 6 and 9. Only two members have been able to meet on the third Monday of each month, and because of illnesses there were no meetings in November and December. The meetings resumed on February 19. Because of the difficulty of finding a common meeting time, John suggested that the Oblates and Oblate novices in the area keep contact with one another through e-mail for the time being.

John Kelly has painted a picture of St. Benedict, which Fr. Ernie DeCiccio, moderator, has allowed to be displayed at St. Clare Church on the feast days of Benedictine saints.

Working with Fr. DeCiccio, John has been working to obtain official status for the Oblates as a diocesan organization.

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

Lay leader Delina Pauls wrote on February 8 and March 20. At the meeting on February 7, there was a good turnout despite cold weather. Fr. Cristiano, moderator, spoke about the communion of saints, with mention of the meaning of veneration, of recent American saints, of the value of statues and images, of miracles that have occurred through the intercessions of saints, and of the call to all people to become holy as God is holy -- and to be transformed through the fire of God's purifying love.

Despite a prevalent "flu bug," 10 members of the deanery met on March 7 with Fr. Cristiano, who made a presentation "On the Observance of Lent" from *RB* 49. He emphasized the importance of ongoing conversion, the value of tears, the practice of silence, the need to listen to others more closely, and the nurturing of joy in giving to others. He also suggested six possible projects for Lent.

### **Williamsport, PA** -- *meetings on last Sunday of each month, 1 P.M., St. Boniface Church (or rectory) meeting room*

Lay leader Ted Richardson reported by phone on April 23. Monthly meetings have continued with varying degrees of discussion. At the meeting on March 25, the group neared its completion of the book *Benedict's Way* and began to consider what book they might begin in the fall.

### **Various Locations**

On February 20 during Mass in the chapel at Pelham, GA, Rev. Michael Smith, pastor of Immaculate Conception in Moultrie, GA, invested

**Gregory Class** of Pelham, GA,

as an Oblate novice. The congregation showed much interested in St. Benedict and monastic life, and during the ceremony Oblate Andrew Mitschell spoke about the Oblate Program.

On March 4 during Sunday Mass in the chapel at Somerset, PA, Rev. Albert J. Anselmi, chaplain, invested

**Melvin Schwartz** of Somerset, PA,

as an Oblate novice.

On April 19 in the chapel at Mercer, PA, Rev. Charles S. Murcko, chaplain, invested

**Claud L. Ellis** of Mercer, PA,

as an Oblate novice.

### **SICK & INFIRM MONKS**

The following monks of the Archabbey have been hospitalized or otherwise seriously ill or infirm over the past three months and could use the Oblates' prayers: Fr. Omer Kline (healing from ulcers on his feet), Fr. Michael McKay (recovering from back surgery).

### **DECEASED MONKS**

Please pray for the repose of the souls of the recently deceased monks of the Archabbey: Fr. Brinstan Takach, 84, who died on February 24, and Br. Nicholas Nicol, 67, who died on March 3.

## **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. It is baffling that, even with our current check-out system, books continue to disappear. 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*
- 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 (taken out but not returned)**

- St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Selected Works*
- Sr. Rachel Callahan, C.S.C., & ..., *Harvest Us Home: Good News As We Age*
- Christopher Derrick, *The Rule of Peace: St. Benedict & the European Future*
- Rev. Richard Hauser, *Finding God in Troubled Times*
- Rev. Bernard Head, *Blessed Marmion: A 21st-Century Appreciation* (pamphlet)
- Mark Plaiss, *The Inner Room*
- Fr. Joel Rippinger, O.S.B., *The Benedictine Order in the United States*
- John A. Sanford, *Ministry Burnout*
- Fr. Michael Scanlon, O.F.M., *Let the Fire Fall*
- Fr. Columba Stewart, O.S.B., *Prayer and Community*

**Excerpt from Pope Benedict XVI, *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today***, tr. by Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), pages 64-65. Reprinted with permission.

This seems to me to be a cardinal point: at the inmost core of the new commission, which robs the forces of destruction of their power, is the grace of forgiveness. It constitutes the Church. The Church is founded upon forgiveness. Peter himself is a personal embodiment of this truth, for he is permitted to be the bearer of the keys after having stumbled, confessed and received the grace of pardon. The Church is by nature the home of forgiveness, and it is thus that chaos is banished from within her. She is held together by forgiveness, and Peter is the perpetual living reminder of this reality: she is not a communion of the perfect but a communion of sinners who need and seek forgiveness. Behind the talk of authority, God's power appears as mercy and thus as the foundation stone of the Church; in the background we hear the word of the Lord: "It is not the healthy who have need of the physician, but those who are ill; I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mk 2:17).

The Church can come into being only where man finds his way to the truth about himself, and the truth is that he needs grace. Wherever pride closes him to this insight, man cannot find the way to Jesus. The keys to the Kingdom of Heaven are the words of forgiveness, which man cannot speak of himself but are granted by God's power alone. We also understand now why this pericope passes directly over into an announcement of the Passion: by his death Jesus has rolled the stone over the mouth of death, which is the power of hell, so that from his death the power of forgiveness flows without cease.

**Reservation for Feast of St. Benedict on July 11, 2007**

Name & Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ I plan to come to St. Vincent for \_\_\_ lunch, \_\_\_ supper along with \_\_\_ guests;

I enclose \_\_\_\_\_ (\$5.00 for lunch, \$6.00 for supper, per person).

\_\_\_ I plan to come only for 10:00 A.M. Mass on July 11.

\_\_\_ I hope to be invested as an \_\_\_ Oblate, \_\_\_ Oblate novice on July 11. (If becoming an Oblate, I choose \_\_\_\_\_ as an Oblate name. ***An application form is required.***)

\_\_\_ I am a jubilarian Oblate and hope to be present to receive a certificate.

Please send this form and a check made out to **ST. VINCENT ARCHABBEY** for meals before July 4 to:

**Mrs. Christine Karem, 2012 Souli St., Greensburg, PA 15601 (phone: 724-216-5830).**

If you would like overnight accommodations, please phone Fr. Donald at 742-805-2291. (The cost is \$23.00 per person per night or \$19.00 if you bring your own linens.)

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**DIRECTORY OF OBLATES: Application form**

I would like to be included in the summer, 2007, edition of the *Directory* of Oblates affiliated with Saint Vincent Archabbey. The information that I would like to have included in given as follows:

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form to William O'Neil, 4122 Beehner Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15217-2811, or phone Bill at 412-422-1313, or send him an e-mail at **boneil2@peoplepc.com** .

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**Application for joining the proposed prayer chain for Oblates and Oblate novices in the Latrobe area**

\_\_\_ As an Oblate novice or Oblate of the Latrobe/ Greensburg/ Jeannette/ Ligonier /Wheeling areas, I am willing to contact one other person once a week to pass on prayer requests.

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form to: Anthony & Donna Sunseri, 146 Janyce Dr., Greensburg, PA 15601.