



THE SAINT VINCENT OBLATE NEWS

Saint Vincent Archabbey

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Please note flier with form for registration for July 11 & with form for 2015 Directory.

SHOULD CHRISTIANS LIVE A "CONTINUOUS LENT" EVEN DURING EASTER? OF COURSE - AND WITH THE JOY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT!

Dear Oblates, Oblate novices, and Friends,

The themes of continuous Lent and spiritual joy

The fact that St. Benedict writes about having joy during Lent is a fascinating phenomenon among many monks and Oblates. Back in 1993 our Fr. Kurt Belsole wrote a dissertation entitled *Joy in Lent: Gaudium in Chapter 49 of the Regula Benedicti: The Monastic and Liturgical Contexts*. That sounds like a very technical study, but I am convinced that many of its ideas are applicable to ordinary people and are relevant to the Christian disciplines that we undertake during Lent, Easter, and the whole of the year. Besides, in 1995 there was published by St. Vincent Archabbey a 106-page, double-spaced summary of Fr. Kurt's dissertation which makes the key themes much more palatable to the ordinary reader. (It is out of print, but the Oblate Library has a copy.) In that book Fr. Kurt points that St. Benedict "makes the Lenten observance a model for all of monastic life" (p. 15) and that the term *omni tempore* (at all times) also occurs in the Prologue, *RB 4*, *RB 7*, and *RB 72*, so that these chapters contribute to the notions of living a "continuous Lent" and abiding in Christian joy all through the year. Fr. Kurt asserts that St. Benedict is thus indicating "not only that Lenten observance is paradigmatic for monastic life, but also that the admonitions of the Prologue, the application of the instruments of good works, the cultivation of the steps of humility, and the exercise of good zeal should characterize the whole life of the monk" (p. 15). Of course, this principle would apply, in an extended way, to Oblates as well. How, then, are Oblates to live a "continuous Lent" (*RB 49:1*) and to manifest the "joy of the Holy Spirit" (*RB 49: 6*) throughout their lives?

Potential ongoing value of Lenten penances: 2 examples

In recent years I have heard from a number of people that the penances that they chose for Lent proved to be so helpful that they decided to continue the practices beyond Lent and into their whole lives. I myself learned that lesson on two notable occasions. One involves my previous attachment to putting large quantities of salt on my food from the time I was a child. (Even my parents warned me about the excessive use of salt!) At some point, perhaps in high school or college, I decided to refrain from using salt during Lent in order to discipline my overuse. During one Lent, in 1973 or 1974, a group of us Catholic graduate students were eating lunch together and talking about our chosen Lenten practices. When I mentioned my forgoing of salt, another student responded, "A few years ago, I gave up salt altogether, and now I can taste the salt that already is in much of the food we eat." My almost spontaneous response was to think, "If he can do it, then I can do it," and I resolved to omit added salt from my diet always and everywhere. I have kept that resolution with very few exceptions, and I am glad that I came to that conclusion, which seems to have flowed from a grace-filled situation.

On a deeper level, the Lord used a Lenten practice of doing *lectio divina* to teach me to continue to reflect on Scripture every day. Back in 1968, I listened attentively to a Lenten homily that urged the congregation to consider doing something other than just "giving up things"; the priest gave

some examples of doing something positive, one of which was the reading of Scripture. At that time I had not at all heard of *lectio divina*, but I felt the call to take up the Bible during that Lent and to meditate on a small passage daily. A few years later, in 1973, a different priest in a different chapel urged his listeners to consider the notion of *learning* something from our Lenten penances so that they would have some positive effect on our lives beyond Lent. From those words I discerned rather quickly that I should continue my 10-or-15 minute reflections on Scripture into Easter and beyond. Although I was feeling much pressure from preparing for comprehensive exams, I somewhat reluctantly concluded that I could not deny God what He was asking of me; therefore, I plunged in and continued the daily meditation on Scripture, probably early each morning. That praying over God's word opened me to an opportunity to visit patients in a nursing home. Those visits led me to consider seriously the possible call to priesthood, which had been part of my prayer for some years. That consideration led me to seek out a priest on campus, who gave me spiritual direction and urged me to consider religious life. Those sessions of spiritual direction began a two-year search into various religious communities, which led ultimately to my finding St. Vincent Archabbey. Thus I can attribute the discernment of my ultimate vocation to the extension of a Lenten penance into Easter. (Of course, I am sure that God was behind all this!)

On joy in the whole of Christian life

Also, as Fr. Kurt clearly points out as the theme of his dissertation, St. Benedict's words about Lent in Chapter 49 of the *Rule* tell us that just as joy is to characterize our Lenten practices, so also joy should pervade our lives all year long. The word joy (*gaudium* in Latin) occurs only two times in the *Rule*, both instances in the chapter on Lent. However, other words that imply a joyful spirit are to be found in several other key chapters of the *Rule*. In the Prologue, verse 1, the monk is called to "receive willingly [or cheerfully] ... your loving father's advice." In verse 19, St. Benedict asks, "What, dear brothers, is more delightful than this voice of the Lord calling to us?" The end of the Prologue proposes the desirable goal of being able to "run the way of God's commandments with unspeakable sweetness of love" (Prol: 49). Surely the term "sweetness" implies a good measure of joy. Likewise, our total focus on Christ should bring us an abundance of joy, which is a foretaste of eternity; a monk needs to "hold nothing dearer ... than Christ" (5:2) and so be eager to show "unhesitating obedience" (5:1) with a cheerful heart. Yes, such obedience should bring us joy, whether or not it gratifies our earthly senses. St. Benedict specifies that "the disciples' obedience must be given gladly, for 'God loves a cheerful giver' (2 Cor 9:7)" (5:16). In the fourth degree of humility, St. Benedict exhorts monks who are undergoing "difficult, unfair, or even unjust conditions" (7:35) to "continue joyfully" because "they are so confident in their expectation of reward from God" (7:39). At the end of the steps of humility, St. Benedict describes the "final product" of years of growth in humility, that is, monks who are truly Christ-centered and joyful in practicing

virtue; they are to observe God's precepts "out of love for Christ, good habit, and delight in virtue" (7:69). Finally, although Chapter 72, on the good zeal of monks, does not include such terms as "joy" or "delight," it describes a joyful spirit in the monks' showing of "pure love" (72:8) to one another, in their offering of "unfeigned and humble love" to their abbot (72:10), and in their welcoming God to "bring [them] all together to everlasting life" (72:12). That is, the genuine joy of living in a community strong in mutual love is a foretaste of the ineffable joy of eternal life in heaven. In any case, all these references in key chapters of the *Rule* flesh out what it means to live joyfully in a monastic community - and in any Christian community.

Implications for daily life - openness to joy

What does the notion of a "continuous Lent" imply for the daily life of an Oblate or monk? We are to enter into our prayer and our ordinary tasks with a spirit of joy, or at least with an openness to the joy that is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:23). God wants us to have joy! To amplify this point, let me quote from the last paragraph of Fr. Kurt's *Joy in Lent*. "Benedict's summons to joy in Lent asks that one recognize that the monastic life is a dynamic process of maturity in the Spirit rather than a state of perfection. This life is built upon the salvation that God has wrought in Christ's paschal mystery and presumes a generous response to grace. Benedict recognizes that this spiritual maturity takes time and alludes to it in the Prologue and chapters four and seven as well. Secondly, to arrive at this maturity, one must give oneself over to the practices or the observances which Benedict recommends to his monks during Lent. They lead one to joy and are not obstacles to it. ... Thirdly, joy in Lent is tied to a certain spiritual freedom, a tranquility, a peace and calm, and a generosity which are accessible only to those who are willing to submit to a radical transformation of their wills and desires. This they do through unhesitating obedience, praying that the will of God be done in them no matter what it costs, and preferring what is eternal and of the Spirit to what will perish with this world and belongs to the flesh. Finally, joy in Lent implies an unconditional preference for and attachment to Christ. Joy, love, peace and the other characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit are signs of the life of Christ in the Christian, and in this case, in the monk. To rejoice in Lent really means to struggle constantly against the flesh, to be removed from personal autonomy, and to be attached totally to Christ" (pages 53-54).

Psalm 71: a model for joy amid hardship

Recently, in the four-week cycle of our Divine Office, we prayed Psalm 71 at Vigils, and it captured my attention more than usual. It is one of my favorite psalms. When I prayed it, the words resonated in me with the themes of joy, praise, and thanksgiving even amid trials. The psalmist is suffering from "the hand of the wicked" and "the grip of the unjust, of the oppressor" (v. 4). He is experiencing old age and God's apparent rejection; his "strength fails" (v. 9); he has become "old and gray-headed" (v. 18). His enemies "are speaking about me" (v. 10), "watch me" (v. 10), "seek my life" (v. 13), and "seek to harm me" (v. 13). All that would seem like a recipe for utter misery! However, despite all the "bitter troubles" (v. 20) of living in "the depths of the earth" (v. 20), he trusts that God will deliver him, and so he keeps living in thanks and praise. He remembers that "from my mother's womb you have been my help" and so can say with bold confidence, "My lips are filled with your praise" (v. 8), "I will always hope and praise you more and more" (v. 14), "my lips will tell of your justice and day by day of your help" (v. 15), and "I will declare the Lord's mighty deeds" (v. 16). No matter what happens, the psalmist will "praise your strength and justice to the skies" (vv. 18-19); he will "give you thanks on the lyre" (v. 22), "sing with the harp" (v. 22), and "rejoice" with his lips (v. 23) in songs of praise. If a faithful Jew long before the time of Christ could have such

confidence and joy, how much more can we, who live continually in the mystery of Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection!

Practical ways to work with Lenten penances

What does this openness to joy tell us about practices that we choose to undertake during Lent? First of all, we might examine our attitude toward Lent and toward our chosen penances. Lent is a time of growth in our communion with our crucified Lord and a time of joyful anticipation of Easter. It is a joyful season not because penances are delightful in themselves or because we look forward to being more self-indulgent at Easter but because the opportunity to sacrifice ourselves out of love for Christ is a precious gift to be received with gratitude and joy. If Christ is our true joy (and for a Christian, He ought to be!), then any practice that nurtures a fuller communion with Him is a joyful endeavor. If we regard Lent or penances in general with a sense of bearing grudgingly with oppressive requirements, then we must pray for a transformation of our attitude.

Now there are some penances that we undertake during Lent that we probably would not rightly extend into Easter. If we have been praying the Stations of the Cross regularly during Lent, we might choose to use that time to pray in some other way during Easter. Likewise, certain individually chosen dietary disciplines are meant to last only during Lent, just as the Catholic Church prescribes days of fasting and abstinence during Lent. Easter is a season of relative feasting, but, of course, without overindulgence (cf. *RB* 39: 8-9), which would only do damage to our spiritual lives and to our physical health. Just as we fast during Lent to be reminded of Christ's sacrificial love for us, so we feast during Easter to be reminded of the blessings that flow from Christ's Resurrection. No banquet on this earth can even faintly approach the glory of the banquet that we are to share in heaven with Christ and all the saints. In any case, whatever we do during Lent and Easter should help us to focus on Christ, to obey Him ever more cheerfully, and to love Him ever more wholeheartedly.

All that being said, we surely can learn from our Lenten practices certain lessons that might be valuable for the rest of the year. If, for example, we made some extra time for *lectio divina* during Lent and found the practice to be quite doable, why stop doing it when Easter arrives? If we gave up some kind of food or entertainment that might have been harmful to us, why not continue this discipline and thwart the damage that we were inflicting upon ourselves? If we made some extra efforts to be kind to some difficult people and learned some techniques to deal with them more charitably, then, by all means, should we not continue to strive to improve these relationships during Easter? If during Lent we committed ourselves to perform some charitable works for needy people and realized that we really did have the time for such outreach, then would it not be laudable to continue to extend ourselves in this way beyond Lent? If we found it possible and valuable to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation more frequently during Lent, then could we not also be more regular in going to confession during the Easter Season? (Alas, we do not cease to be sinners during Easter, and we still have need for repentance, forgiveness, and disciplines that nurture ongoing conversion. I once heard someone say that we should not have confessions during Easter because we are celebrating the Resurrection. Surely, that would not be very helpful to our need to overcome sinful tendencies always and everywhere!) Above all, as followers of Christ, we must at all seasons be disciplined in prayer, practice some self-denial out of love for Christ, counteract our evil habits, and nurture some silence and avoidance of excessive or inappropriate speech. All such practices, recommended in *RB* 49, like the tools of good works, are to be undertaken "without ceasing day and night" (*RB* 4:56), whether it is Lent or not. These open us to the

graces that keep us moving forward on our spiritual journeys and help us to look forward to the *real* experience of Easter in eternity "with joy and spiritual longing" (49:7).

Summary: Joy and self-denial for love of Christ go together

The *Rule* of St. Benedict, like the Gospels themselves and all of Scripture, offers us precious wisdom that is meant to hasten us on the way of salvation. Being weak, needy, and sinful people, we often lose our way and perhaps are even tempted to lose hope. Only the knowledge and love Christ, coming from the Church's teachings, the sacraments, and the Scriptures, will successfully lead us beyond the abysmal frailties of this vale of tears to the heights of life and holiness that God has intended for us from the moment of our conception. Insofar as the means to eternal joy are genuine gifts from God (whether they are self-chosen or, even better, directly given by God, sometimes against our willing them), we should be grateful for

them. We should embrace them with joy, whether they come to us during Lent, during Easter, or during any moment of our lives. God continually puts such means at our disposal so that we might treasure His outpourings of love and learn very practically to cherish Christ above everything else in our lives. Let us, then, pray from Psalm 4, recommended as a psalm for Compline, "You have put into my heart a greater joy than they have from abundance of corn and new wine" (Psalm 4: 8). May we ever seek this greater joy!

Your brother in Christ and Saint Benedict,

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

A MESSAGE FROM ARCHABBOT DOUGLAS

May, 2015

Dear Oblates and Friends of Saint Vincent,

The Feast of Pentecost provides us with a wonderful testimony to the power of the Holy Spirit which transformed the lives of the disciples on that first Pentecost Day 2,000 years ago. The disciples were huddled together in fear, believing that the fate which came to Jesus in the crucifixion would soon be theirs because they were His disciples.

The Acts of the Apostles describes how they were transformed when the Holy Spirit descended upon them. They went forth from the Upper Room proclaiming the news of Jesus' resurrection, speaking in many languages through the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is that same Holy Spirit that transforms us and liberates us from the fears we encounter in our own life experiences - poor health, broken relationships, the loss of a loved one, or the more global concerns and universal anxieties of war, terrorism, racism, ethnic cleansing, drugs, etc. In all circumstances of life, the Holy Spirit is the "Bearer of Hope." Let us join our prayer at the time of Pentecost with that of believers throughout the world: "Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful, and kindle in them the fire of Your love."

May the graces of the Holy Spirit be with you at Pentecost and always!

Sincerely in Christ,

+ Archabbot Douglas, O.S.B.

RETREATS OF POSSIBLE INTEREST, May 29-31, June 19-21, June 26-28 and May 15-17

It may not be too late to register for this year's retreats. The retreat on Benedictine spirituality is to be held on May 29-31, 2015, and Fr. Jeffrey will be the retreat master. The silent retreats will take place on June 19-21, 2015 and June 26-28, and they will be directed respectively by Fr. Edward and Fr. Shawn Matthew. Registration (and all other special arrangements) should be done through the St. Vincent Retreat Program, and not through the Oblate Office. Also of possible interest to Oblates is a retreat weekend with spiritual direction available, from May 15 to 17, with Fr. Robert as the retreat master. **Oblates are no longer automatically placed on the Retreat Program's mailing list; so if you would like to receive retreat brochures, please contact Br. Hugh at the Retreat Office at 724-805-2139 or hugh.lester@email.stvincent.edu. You may also wish to see the retreat website at www.saintvincentretreats.org.**

OBLATE DAY 2015 ON SEPTEMBER 27; DAY OF RECOLLECTION ON OCTOBER 17

This year's Oblate Day will be Sunday, September 27, and Fr. Boniface Hicks will give the afternoon presentation. The fall day of recollection is scheduled for Saturday, October 17, and Fr. Robert Keffer is to be the retreat master.

TALKS PRESENTED TO LATROBE DEANERY AVAILABLE ON C.D.'s AND D.V.D.'s

Thanks to Fr. Andrew, talks given at Oblate meetings in Latrobe (when the presenter is willing and when someone is able to videotape) are available to those who desire to have C.D.'s or D.V.D.'s. Orders will be taken only by St. Vincent College Book Center unless one attends monthly meetings in Latrobe (where orders will still be taken for recent presentations). Please see the order form on the flier attached to this newsletter.

VIGIL OF SOLEMNITY OF ST. BENEDICT AT THE ARCHABBAY, FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 2015

A number of Oblates and their guests, some 37 people, joined the extended Benedictine community for the annual celebration of the

Passing of Our Holy Father Benedict, Abbot. At Solemn Vespers at 5:00 P.M., Archabbot Douglas presided and gave a reflection largely on the missionary dimension of Benedictine life.

After dinner, Oblation ceremonies were held at 7:00 P.M. in St. Gregory Chapel, during which Fr. Donald received the following:

Oblates: **Patrick B. Anderson** of Ebensburg, PA
J. Gilbert (Gregory) Kaufman of Pittsburgh, PA
Steven J. (Benedict) Kurdziel of Shaker Heights, OH
Richard F. (Francis) McCormack of Sewickley PA
Gabriel S. Pellathy of Latrobe, PA
Karen R. (Beatrice) Vogliano of Carnegie, PA.

Oblate novice: **Jerome Le Febvre** of Oakdale, PA.

It was a blessing that the spouses of all those making a commitment were present, as well as other members of the Kaufman family. Gil is the husband of Oblate Mary Ann Kaufman. Gabriel is a retired, part-time professor at St. Vincent College.

After the ceremonies the group enjoyed a social in Placid Dining Room B.

The next day, Saturday, March 21, two others who were unable to be present on Friday came to make their Oblate commitments. At ceremonies in St. Gregory Chapel at 12:40 P.M., Fr. Donald received

Blaze (Conrad Aldhelm Longinus Solomon) Bingham of Newark, OH,

as a full Oblate and Blaze's sister

Regina Bingham of Newark, OH,

as an Oblate novice. Blaze is a high-school senior, and Regina a high-school sophomore. Their mother, Colette Bingham, was also present. She is a Third-Order Carmelite.

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 at the Archabbey Basilica at 10:00 A.M. on Saturday, July 11. The Mass should include the profession of solemn vows. Oblates are invited to stay for lunch and for a meeting at 2:00, for Evening Prayer at 5:00, and for supper. If you are coming for Mass, lunch, or supper, please fill out the form on the insert and send it to the **Oblate Office (c/o July 11 event)** 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. The meeting at 2:00 will include a reflection by Br. Joachim on monastic vows and then the ninth annual ceremony to honor Oblates who this year celebrate 5, 15, 20, 25, 30, 40, 50, 55, or 60 or more years of Oblation. We shall make some time for the taking of photographs after the jubilarian ceremonies.

Those needing overnight room reservations should call Fr. Donald at the Oblate Office (724-805-2291).

NOVICE TO PROFESS FIRST VOWS ON FRIDAY, JULY 10, 5:00 P.M.

Oblates are welcome to attend the ceremony for the profession of first vows at Evening Prayer in the Archabbey Basilica on Friday, July 10. Those wishing to stay for supper should contact Fr. Donald.

SCAPULARS AVAILABLE AGAIN

Some months ago the Oblate Office ran out of blessed St. Benedict/St. Scholastica scapulars. A new supply of faces was ordered from St. Meinrad Archabbey, and Oblate Debbie Scott of Sebring, OH, once again has generously donated her services to sew together dozens of scapulars. If you would like to have one, please contact the Oblate Office. A small donation would be appreciated.

PHONE PRAYER CHAIN AND E-MAIL PRAYER CHAIN:

Oblates in the Latrobe/Greensburg/Jeanette area have had a prayer chain by telephone since 2009, and later we began a prayer chain that transmits intentions by e-mail. If any Oblate or Oblate novice would like to join the weekly prayer chain by phone, please contact the Oblate Office. If you wish to be a part of the weekly e-mail prayer chain, please send an e-mail message to macherubini@comcast.net, or contact the Oblate Office.

ITEMS AVAILABLE FROM THE OBLATE OFFICE

- (1) pamphlet "God's Love for You" with message of evangelization – free
- (2) booklet *St. Benedict for Busy Parents* – \$.40 each
- (3) booklet of Oblates' reflections on verses of the *Rule* – free or with donation for postage
- (4) booklet of the histories of Oblate deaneries – free or with donation for postage
- (5) cards with colored picture of St. Benedict and with prayer for a happy death; also St. Benedict & St. Scholastica cards from the sesquimillennium celebration in 1980.
- (6) copies of the book *Lessons from Saint Benedict* (from Oblate newsletters), \$12.00 each if picked up at Oblate Office
- (7) copies of the book *The Rule in Bits and Pieces*, \$15.00 each if picked up at Oblate Office

THIRD ASSEMBLY OF DEANERY REPRESENTATIVES TO BE HELD AT ARCHABBEY, JUNE 5-7

Each deanery affiliated with the St. Vincent Oblate Program is invited to send one or two delegates to the Archabbey from Friday, June 5, to Sunday, June 7, for the third weekend meeting of deanery representatives. (Oblates from near-by deaneries who do not wish to stay overnight may choose to come on Saturday only. All the essential events occur on Saturday.) Each deanery should decide which one or two Oblates will be attending. **To register, reply to the form sent out in April by the Oblate Office.**

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.

CONTACTING PEOPLE IN LATROBE/GREENSBURG/JEANNETTE AREAS FOR FUNERALS & OTHER EVENTS

Whenever an Oblate or spouse dies in the Latrobe area, local Oblates gather for a wake service whenever possible. Oblates and Oblate novices who have requested to be notified by e-mail or by phone will be notified by Fr. Donald via two volunteers. If you are not

on these lists and would like to be, please contact the Oblate Office. These people are also contacted about other events of significance regarding the Archabbey and local Oblates (e.g., changes in the monastic schedule or monks' wakes and funerals).

RENEWALS OF OBLATION

Fr. Donald and Br. Joachim are grateful for the many Oblates (over 100) who have 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.

ADORATION FOR VOCATIONS

Oblates in the Latrobe/Greensburg area are welcome to participate in Eucharistic adoration in St. Gregory Chapel every Sunday from 1:00 to 3:00 P.M. to pray for vocations to the religious life and the priesthood, especially for vocations to St. Vincent Archabbey. Oblates are encouraged to participate especially on those Sundays of Oblate meetings.

RECOMMENDED READING (volumes available in the Oblate Library)

- Johann Christoph Arnold, *Why Children Matter* (Rifton, NY: The Plough Publishing House, 2012)

NEW (OR NEWLY DISCOVERED) BOOKS ON BENEDICTINE SPIRITUALITY

- Sister Margaret Malone, S.G.S., *Living in the House of God: Monastic Essays* (Athens, OH: Cistercian Publications, 2014)

- Br. Francis de Sales Wagner, O.S.B. (editor), *Sacred Rhythms: The Monastic Way Every Day* (St. Meinrad, IN: Abbey Press, 2011)

NAABOD MEETING IN 2015: JULY 10-15, SUBIACO ABBEY IN SUBIACO, ARKANSAS

Subiaco Abbey in Arkansas will host the 2015 NAABOD meeting. In addition to Fr. Paschal Morlino, moderator of the St. Walburga Deanery in Baltimore and vice-president of NAABOD, two Oblates, Mary Ann Kaufman of Pittsburgh and Cynthia Ruff of Toledo, OH, have agreed to represent St. Vincent Archabbey at the meeting.

OBLATE BOARD OF ADVISORS

The Oblate Board of Advisors met at the Archabbey on Friday, April 17. They discussed various issues, including the forthcoming Assembly of Deanery Representatives, dealing with long-term Oblate novices who did not respond to the questionnaire sent out last fall, the need to limit entries in the *Directory* to Oblates and Oblate novices, greeters at the Latrobe meetings, membership on the Board of Advisors, the possibilities of deaneries' submitting annual reports, and the issues of concern to the various Oblate deaneries. The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Friday, June 26, at 6:30 P.M. in Brownfield 203. Note that input from all the deaneries is always welcome.

MENTORING PROGRAM AND PRAYER-PARTNER PROGRAM

The Mentoring Program for guiding inquirers and Oblate novices in Benedictine spirituality is in need of volunteers to serve as mentors. If you would like to mentor in this way or if you are an inquirer or an Oblate novice who would like to have an Oblate mentor, please contact the Oblate Office by mail [indicate **c/o Mentoring Program**], or send an e-mail message to 305makaufman@gmail.com. Those who offer to be mentors receive a booklet of guidelines. Also, if you would like to have another Oblate (novice) as a prayer-partner, please contact the Oblate Office by mail [indicate **c/o Prayer-Partner Program**], or send an e-mail message to jshudock@verizon.net. If you would like to have a monk as a prayer-partner, please contact Fr. Donald or Br. Joachim at the Oblate Office.

OBLATE MEETINGS AND CLASSES IN LATROBE

All Oblates and their guests are welcome to attend monthly meetings of the Latrobe (St. Gregory the Great) Deanery, held at 6:45 P.M. on Sundays in Brownfield 202 at St. Vincent. All are also invited to the classes on Benedictine spirituality that begin in the same place at 3:00 P.M. The next four sessions will be held on May 17, June 14, July 19, and August 16. (Note the change to the second Sunday in June to avoid meeting on Father's Day.) Those wishing to be present for Vespers and supper should phone Fr. Donald (724-805-2291) in advance.

THOSE WHO CANNOT DRIVE TO MEETINGS IN LATROBE

Those who would like to have a ride to monthly meetings in Latrobe (and those who are willing to drive others) are urged to sign up for the Oblate *Directory* and to mention their specific needs. If you contact the Oblate Office, the Oblate who coordinates this driving ministry will try to match each one who needs a ride with a volunteer driver.

EIGHTH ANNUAL MONASTIC INSTITUTE FOR BENEDICTINE OBLATES, JULY 16-19

The Oblate Office has received word about this monastic institute at the Sophia Center at Mount St. Scholastica in Atchison, Kansas. The speaker this year is Sister Irene Nowell, O.S.B., a prominent Benedictine Old Testament scholar. For a registration form, please contact the Oblate Office, or for more information contact the Sophia Center at sophiaspiritualitycenter@mountosb.org. The cost of the program, including overnight housing, is \$300.00.

VISIT WITH OBLATES IN LANCASTER, PA

On April 30 Oblate Edward Conroy of Ligonier and Fr. Donald drove to Lancaster to attend the monthly Oblate meeting at St. Joseph Church. Fr. Donald gave a presentation on "Joy in Lent," as a model for welcoming joy amid both the blessings and the trials of life. Most of the Oblates in the group are affiliated with St. Meinrad Archabbey, but several are affiliated with St. Vincent Archabbey. At 6:30 A.M. on the morning of May 1, in the perpetual-adoration chapel, Fr. Donald celebrated a well-attended Mass for the memorial of St. Joseph the Worker; it was especially appropriate to commemorate the patron of the parish.

OBLATE GROUP IN CAMBRIDGE, ONTARIO, CANADA

Oblate Cathy Mayled reported by e-mail on January 31, February 28, and April 4 and 25. Six people gathered for the meeting on January 22. After an opening prayer the group continued their reading and discussion of the *Rule* by considering Chapter 4: 10-21. The meeting ended with the praying of Compline.

Five of the group met on February 26, which was a very cold night. After an opening prayer, they read and studied *RB* 4: 22-23. The meeting ended with Compline. The Oblates were hoping to renew their Oblation at the meeting in March.

Seven of the group gathered for the meeting on March 26. After an opening prayer, Fr. John Redmond received the renewals of Oblation of the four Oblates present. Then the group discussed *RB* 4: 34-40. The meeting ended with the praying of Compline.

Six people met for the meeting on April 23, which began with prayer. They discussed *RB* 4: 41-47 and closed with Compline. Some of the group were planning to come to the Archabbey in September for Oblate Day.

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

Fr. Vincent de Paul Crosby, O.S.B., reported on April 23. The group's meeting on April 12 began with Morning Prayer according to the Roman Rite. Since they had discussed the vow of obedience at the last meeting, they considered stability and conversion of morals at the April meeting. As a guide they used two chapters from the book *Seeking God* by Esther deWaal. The resulting understanding was that the three monastic vows are interrelated and thus create a unified monastic spirituality. The meeting ended with prayer and a hymn and was followed by the sharing of lunch. The next meeting was scheduled for June 6, 2015, at 10:00 A.M. at Saint Mary's Church, 630 E. Cathedral Rd., Philadelphia, PA 19128.

OBLATE GROUP IN MORGANTOWN, WV

Oblate Pauline Lanciotti reported by e-mail on February 26 and April 10. One Oblate, two guests, and two regular inquirers were present at the meeting on February 25, along with Fr. John Paul. After an opening prayer Fr. John Paul gave a presentation on the four temperaments (choleric, sanguine, melancholic, phlegmatic) based on the book *The Temperament God Gave You* by Art and Laraine Bennett. The participants completed an inventory to determine their likely primary and secondary temperaments, as explained by Fr. John Paul. Understanding our God-given temperaments and inclinations, he explained, informs all facets of our lives, and such self-knowledge is a catalyst for ongoing conversion. Fr. John Paul closed the meeting with a prayer.

The group took some time off from meetings because of some need to reorganize, but it was hoped that meetings could resume in May.

NEWS FROM OBLATE DEANERIES

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

Deacon Ralph DeCecco, moderator, reported on February 23, March 23, and May 3. The meeting on February 21 was attended by six people. It began with the praying of Mid-Morning Prayer and continued with a reading from *RB* 19: 1-6, on the "Discipline of the Psalmody." Then Oblate Jamie Rowles gave a presentation on silence, and the group discussed the future of the deanery and the possibility of more regular meetings. The meeting closed with a praying of the "Litany of Humility."

The meeting on March 21, which took place from 9:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M., was attended by Deacon Ralph, his wife Janet, and four others. After the praying of Mid-Morning Prayer and a reading of *RB* 42, Janet gave a presentation on "The Work of Our Hands." Then the group discussed the future of the deanery and closed the meeting with the "Litany of Humility."

Scheduling problems prevented the deanery from meeting in April. On May 2, during a communion service for the St. Paul Roman Catholic Community, Deacon Ralph invested

William H. Beam of Albion, PA, as an Oblate novice.

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

Lay leader/secretary Mary Ann Bingeman reported by e-mail on March 22 and April 26. The meeting on March 22 was attended by Fr. Job, moderator, and eight other people. It began in the church with the group's attending a play presented by the children of St. Paul Parish entitled "The Tale of the Three Trees." Then the Oblates who were present renewed their Oblation in the presence of Fr. Job. The group read *RB* 49 on the observance of Lent and engaged in a discussion about Lent, including such topics as mortification and prostrations. Fr. Job suggested the possible need for more sleep and the importance of discussing one's proposed Lenten penances with a spiritual director or friend. Two members who had been religious sisters spoke about their experiences in the convent and how their orders used the *Rule* of St. Benedict even though they were not Benedictine. Also discussed were various interpretations of the *Rule* in different communities, the process of formation in religious communities, the role of the abbot, and the meaning of nuns, sisters, monks, priest-monks, and cloistered communities. After the discussion the group returned to the church to pray Vespers.

The meeting on April 26 was attended by Fr. Job and eleven others. During Vespers in the sanctuary of St. Paul Church, three Oblates renewed their Oblation. Then there was a brief social. At the beginning of the meeting proper, the group discussed making a donation to Sant' Anselmo College in Rome. There was also some talk about the assignment of pastors by the Bishop of Harrisburg. The attendees decided to begin reading and studying the whole *Rule*, beginning with the Prologue. Fr. Job asserted that although the *Rule* was written primarily for monks, its principles for working together and living together have proved to be relevant to people of all states in life for almost 1500 years. St. Benedict was a keen observer of human nature, realized that people often fall from their Christian ideals, and was concerned to help the weak; so he enjoined the abbot to regulate all matters in such a way that souls might be saved and that the monks might go about their activities without justifiable grumbling. There was also talk about the appointment of a new bishop (a priest of the Harrisburg Diocese) to the Greensburg Diocese. The next meeting was scheduled for June 28.

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

Secretary Jay Wells sent a report by e-mail on April 2. The meeting scheduled for February was cancelled because of snow. The meeting on March 15 began with moderator Fr. Paschal's giving out a few articles and booklets for the group to meditate upon during Lent. He then gave a presentation based on an article, "Stability of the Heart" by Sr. Pascaline Coff, O.S.B.; offered an overview of *RB* 49 on Lent; and spoke about the "Sequence of St. Scholastica." One attendee suggested that there might be time for fellowship and refreshments at monthly meetings. The meeting ended with Vespers sung in the church; the liturgy involved the renewal of Oblation by the Oblates who were present.

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

Lay leader Ethel Galli wrote on March 30. The meeting on January 22 began with the praying of Evening Prayer and continued with a study of Chapter 1 of the book *Lessons from Saint Benedict*. There was a lively discussion about the subject of God's order. The

meeting scheduled for February was cancelled because of bad weather.

The meeting on March 26 began with Evening Prayer and a prayer for members who were ill. Then the group proceeded to study Chapter 2, "The Truth That Sets Us Free," from the same text. The meeting ended, as usual, with a prayer and the serving of light refreshments.

Carrolltown, PA (Sacred Heart Deanery) -- monthly meetings in St. Benedict Church or meeting room,

Fr. Donald has been in contact with Fr. Michael Gabler, pastor of St. Nicholas Church in Nicktown, about having an information session later this spring or summer, with hopes of resuming monthly meetings soon thereafter.

Cyber Deanery

Moderator David Hicks reported by phone on May 8. During the past three months three new members have joined. There was some discussion about the breviaries that are used and about why people prefer different versions. The discussions online were not as frequent as usual because of health problems that David has been experiencing.

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 March 10 and April 17. The February meeting had to be cancelled because of bad weather. The meeting on March 9 began with Evening Prayer led by Deacon Michael Russo, moderator. Then the group had a discussion about the *Rule* and *lectio divina*. *Lectio* is a matter of being in the presence of God, who loves us, and of having a conversation with Him.

The meeting on April 13 began, as usual, with the praying of Evening Prayer. Several members asked Deacon Michael about the matter of spiritual direction. Those questions led to a lengthy discussion about the benefits of having a spiritual director and the way to choose a director. There was also some discussion about the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and Deacon Michael gave a helpful discourse on confession.

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

Despite very cold weather, seven people gathered on February 15 for a continued discussion of the *Rule* with reference to the *Commentary* by Dom Paul Delatte, O.S.B. First, however, at the suggestion of one of the Oblates, *RB* 49 was read and discussed since Lent would begin three days hence. Then the small group had a lively exchange about verses 45-50 of the Prologue. They reflected on the causes of our suffering, on learning to accept sufferings with patience, on the expansion of our hearts that comes with perseverance, and on the call to focus on the goal of eternal life. The meeting ended with the praying of Compline in the classroom.

On March 15 about ten people gathered to hear and view presentations by Oblate Gilbert Kaufman. The first talk, prepared by Gil's wife, Mary Ann (who was unable to be present), involved reflections on a presentation called "Benedictine Service" given by Sister Thomas Welder, O.S.B., at the July, 2013 NAABOD meeting. Sister Thomas emphasized the call of all Oblates to "wake up" to be actively involved in their communities. In a world that values success and efficiency, Oblates are called to value prayer, relationships, and community. The *Holy Rule* summons people to balance and wholeness and to the integration of prayer and service in our lives. Instead of focusing on the accumulation of material goods and the overcoming of suffering, we need to grow in patience, in compassion for others, and in eagerness to serve in the name of Christ and in the ways God asks of us.

The second part of Gil's presentation involved visits to Benedictine and others sites last summer in Vienna, Salzburg, Bratislava (Slovakia), and Bavaria. The power-point presentation began with views of the beautiful St. Stephen Cathedral in Vienna and ended with churches and monasteries in Bavaria, including St. Walburga in Eichstätt, the mother house of St. Emma Monastery. The Kaufmans were visiting these many places because their son Robert was playing the 'cello with a youth orchestra that was performing in cities in Austria, Slovakia, and Germany.

On April 19 some fifteen or more people gathered to discuss Chapter 1 of the *Rule* with reference to Delatte's commentary. There was discussion about the divisions of the *Rule*, the meaning of "monk" (from the Greek *monachos*), the history of consecrated life (which began with hermit monks), and St. Benedict's comments on cenobites, anchorites, and sarabaites. It was mentioned that all of us may have some of these tendencies, both the good and the bad. The discussion is scheduled to continue on May 17 with a consideration of gyrovagues and then of Chapter 2 of the *Rule*.

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

On February 15 Fr. Wulfstan gave a thorough and practical presentation on prayer as related to the *Rule*. Beginning with a comment on the importance of intercessory prayer and spontaneous, conversational prayer, he then read *RB* 20 and reflected on the importance of purity of heart, humility, and reverence. It is important, he said, to remain faithful to prayer whether or not we get the results that we want. In the *Rule*, when St. Benedict talks about prayer, he usually means the Liturgy of the Hours. Fr. Wulfstan then spoke about the value of the Divine Office and other types of formal prayer, about the great significance of the Psalms, and about the need to spend time simply being present to God. Fr. Wulfstan also commented on darkness in prayer and some ways in which God works through the help of other people to answer our prayers.

On March 15 Fr. Justin Matro gave a presentation on hospitality to over 20 people. He began with a prayerful reflection on the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman (Jn 4: 7-30); he asked the attendees to close their eyes and imagine themselves to be the woman in the story. The method was based on the truth that we are meant to participate in all of Scripture. Fr. Justin emphasized that hospitality is basically being receptive to others as Christ was. In St. Benedict's day, with much of Italy in disarray because of barbarian invasions, monasteries became centers of peace, refuge, and hospitality. St. Benedict believed that, despite the danger, it was worth the risk to welcome the stranger; he understood the "hidden Christ" in the other person. We can show hospitality by being as fully present as possible to other people. A small greeting to another person may make a big difference. Although we may need to be cautious about strangers, we can show hospitality to those with whom we interact every day by being open to them and their needs and overcoming our way of viewing people. Listening with the ear of the heart is a form of hospitality.

On April 19 Br. Ignatius, a junior monk, gave a presentation on *lectio divina* to well over 30 people. He mentioned that the practice of *lectio* helped him to discern his vocation and should lead all of us to a personal encounter with the Lord. *Lectio*, he said, should be like an adventure full of surprises as we move closer to Him. In response to the question "What is *lectio divina*?", Br. Ignatius described it as

“meditative holy reading which involves the whole person.” *Lectio* helps to restore the original harmony that man had before the fall. It is a “tool of the spiritual craft” that requires mental attentiveness and active listening. For Benedictines, it is important that our whole lives be “flavored by the Word of God.” In response to the question “How to do *lectio divina*?”, he recommended chewing the Word of God, reading as an act of faith, being patient with oneself, and reading in a peaceful, contemplative way with humility. One must not fret if “nothing comes.” Finally, Br. Ignatius began to describe the four dimensions of *lectio*, but time ran out since the group needed to depart to attend Fr. Cyprian’s concert on the new pipe organ at 3:00 P.M.

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

Lay leader Brian Chisholm reported by phone on May 2. There were no meetings in February or March. The meeting on April 26 was attended by only two people. (Brian realized the importance of phoning people before meetings.) They prayed together and made plans for devotions during May. The deanery collected money to place an advertisement in a secular newspaper for Divine Mercy Sunday, and there were plans to sponsor Marian devotions for a Sunday in May. Also, the deanery continues to sponsor Eucharistic adoration every Thursday. Six to eight people generally attend.

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

Secretary/lay leader Gabriele Terrill reported on February 22 and April 23. The meeting on February 22 was attended by Fr. James Podlesny, moderator, and eight others. It began with Evening Prayer in the church. Next, Fr. Jim led a discussion about the meaning of the 40 days of Lent and the history of Lenten practices. He then spoke about the Harrisburg Diocese’s starting of a Permanent Diaconate Program. Next the group talked about “working on our faith,” especially with respect to doubts and questioning. Fr. Jim recommended the book by Br. Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, to assist Christians with walking always in the presence of God. Finally, there was some talk about the validity of experiences in prayer, Centering Prayer, *lectio divina*, and the goal of our being in a “marriage” relationship with God.

The meeting on March 8 was attended by Fr. Jim and seven other people. It began with Evening Prayer in the Church, which included the renewal of Oblation for those Oblates present. Then Fr. Jim explained the meaning of the Solemnity of the Passing of St. Benedict on March 21. He also spoke about the origins of monasticism in Europe and the ultimate prevalence of St. Benedict’s *Rule* over many other rules. The group then discussed the book *The Practice of the Presence of God*, with comments about the great amount of practice and discipline required to live continually in God’s presence. There was also some talk about the danger of relativism and lawlessness in today’s culture. St. Benedict provides a remedy for these problems.

The meeting on April 19, attended by Fr. Jim and eight others, began with Evening Prayer in the church. Gabriele announced the Assembly of Deanery Representatives in June. Then there was some talk about the parish’s beautiful exhibition about “Eucharistic Miracles of the World.” Also discussed were issues concerning the Catholic priesthood, the way non-Catholic Christians read the Bible, and the importance of knowing the Old Testament. There were plans for a picnic in June, and the next meeting was scheduled for May 17.

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

Secretary/lay leader Frederick Laux reported on February 8, March 22, and April 19. Twelve were in attendance at the meeting on January 29; among them were two Oblates, one Oblate novice, and moderator Deacon John Etter. After a praying of the Angelus and the Oblate prayer, Fred gave a presentation on “humble diversity in the Body of Christ.” He dealt with themes from 1 Cor 12 as related to Chapter 7 of the *Rule*. Unity in the Body, Fred commented, requires humility in knowing one’s place and role. He referred to quotes from Fr. Thomas Dubay’s book *Authenticity* and the book *The Rule in Bits and Pieces* to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy diversity. *RB* 7:24 gives us important direction about avoiding the notion of diversity without demands. Deacon John closed the meeting with a “Glory Be” and a blessing.

The meeting on February 26, led by Deacon John, was attended by two Oblates, one Oblate novice, and ten others. After a praying of the Angelus, the group continued a study of 2 Corinthians. Fred gave a presentation and pointed out the correspondence between St. Paul’s exhortation in 2 Cor 6:1 and St. Benedict’s statements about prayer in *RB* 20. Reverence in prayer, he said, helps to facilitate receiving God’s grace, and praying the Psalms helps us to be attuned to God in the ebb and flow of life; our life-situations likewise influence how we pray. All prayer should be from the heart since “we must know that God regards our purity of heart” (*RB* 20:3). The meeting closed with a “Glory Be.”

The meeting on March 26 followed Mass celebrated by Fr. Sean Pogue. Fred and eight inquirers were in attendance besides Deacon John, who began the meeting by leading the Angelus. Fred then gave a presentation on dealing with faults and mistakes based on *RB* 45:2 and 46: 3,5 and made a connection with 2 Corinthians 13: 7,9. He offered the following questions for consideration: “How well -that is, how honestly and how rigorously - do you discipline yourself in your faith and your practice of it? Would your critics or your enemies agree with you?”

Pittsburgh, PA (St. Peter Deanery) -- meetings on 2nd or 3rd Wed., St. Peter Church.

Oblate George Ponticello reported by e-mail on March 7, March 22, April 8, and April 13. The meeting on February 26 drew nine attendees in addition to Fr. Vincent, moderator. After Evening Prayer in the church, the group gathered in the rectory to discuss Chapter 19, “The Slow Ongoing Death to Self,” from the book *Lessons from Saint Benedict*.

Seven people attended the meeting on March 26, which began with Evening Prayer. The group discussed Chapter 20 of the same text. A suggestion was made that the deanery might plan a retreat day. Also, George was working on arranging a field trip to St. Emma Monastery in May. The trip was ultimately planned for Sunday, May 31.

Rosharon, TX (St. Bede Deanery) -- meetings on Mondays

Outgoing lay leader/secretary William Tkacik reported on February 10 and 23, on March 30. The meeting on February 23 followed the praying of the rosary and the Way of the Cross (as is done every Monday during Lent). Then the meeting began with a prayer from the formation booklet and continued with the Liturgy of the Hours and the Oblate prayer. St. Bede was chosen as the patron of the deanery. Next the group discussed “The Order of the Psalmody,” Chapter 18 of the *Rule*. The meeting ended with a closing prayer, a chaplet of Divine Mercy, and prayers for all Benedictines and Oblates.

A number of the Oblates assisted with the “ACTS Retreat” from March 19 to 21. Sixty-seven men made the retreat and were led by

thirty men from the ACTS team. Those who assisted worked very hard and were very tired after the retreat.

The meeting on March 30 began with an opening prayer, the praying of the Liturgy of the Hours, and the Oblate prayer. (Before the meeting there was a praying of the rosary and the Stations of the Cross.) William read some information about St. Bede, patron of the deanery. Then the group discussed *RB* 48: 22-25 on the daily manual labor. The meeting ended with a closing prayer.

Because William recently moved to Pampa, TX, Oblate Dale Smith has accepted the duties of lay leader/secretary of the deanery.

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

There was no report.

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

There was no report.

On the Feast of St. Scholastica, February 10, a social in the Campus Ministry Lounge was sponsored by the St. Vincent College Oblates. The social lasted from 8:30 P.M. to 9:30 P.M., and refreshments were served.

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

Moderator Fr. Ronald Gatman, O.S.B., reported on February 19. In December a number of the Oblates organized the annual Priory Christmas Party and prepared food for the event. They did an excellent job and performed their tasks with joy. At the meeting in January, the group met in the priory's prayer room for a discussion from the *Rule* on the times for daily prayer, and then Oblate Michael Williams gave a presentation at Evening Prayer. Mike's talk emphasized the need to keep in contact with God throughout one's day and to be aware of His presence even in the midst of busy work schedules. Supper followed Evening Prayer.

On February 15 the Oblates gathered for *lectio divina* at 2:00 P.M. Oblate Chuck Medlock had chosen the topic for meditation, namely the Scripture passage "Perfect love casts out fear" (1 Jn 4:18). Chuck also offered some questions to generate discussion. Then Fr. Frank, prior, offered Mass for the group at 3:00.

On March 22, Sister Lisa Griffith, R.S.M., a campus minister at Saint Vincent Academy in Savannah, was scheduled to give a talk to the Oblate community at Evening Prayer. Before Evening Prayer there was to be a discussion of some part of the *Rule*.

The annual day of recollection was to take place on Sunday, April 19, from 2:00 to 5:00. Following words of welcome by Mike Williams, there was to be a presentation by a guest. Then, after a break for snacks, there was to be a period of *lectio divina* and some quiet time in the priory's prayer room. During that time there would be the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Next Fr. Ronald would celebrate Sunday Mass for the group, and finally there would be a covered-dish supper.

The Oblate Council was to meet on Tuesday, May 12, to plan for Oblate events during the coming academic year.

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

Co-lay leader Frank Stoshack reported by phone on April 14. There were meetings at 2:00 on March 8 and at 1:30 on April 12 (before Divine Mercy devotions). Oblate Teresa Warlow led discussions about Chapter 7 of the *Rule*.

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

Co-lay leader Steward Steckley reported on March 1, April 4, April 15, and May 3. The meeting on February 10 was attended by five Oblates, two Oblate novices, three inquirers, and Fr. James Dugan, moderator. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, Steward led a group discussion on *RB* 49 since the season of Lent was approaching. The group discussed the benefits of fasting, both spiritual and physical, as well as of abstinence and works of mercy. After the discussion Steward talked about the role of bishops in the Church and about the difference between the sacerdotal priesthood and the "priesthood of the laity," that is, of all the faithful because of baptism. Questions were raised regarding the denominations which stem from the Reformation. The meeting closed with a special prayer for an Oblate who was about to leave the area, followed by the praying of Compline.

The meeting on February 24 was attended by four Oblates, one Oblate novice, five inquirers, and Fr. Dugan. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, Steward led a group discussion on Martin Luther because of the questions raised at the previous meeting. There was a reading of a summary of Luther's life and a discussion about his "95 Theses" and the problems therein. There was also a clarification about the terms "heresy," "schism," and "apostasy." Many more questions were posed, and it was anticipated that the discussion would continue at the next meeting. The meeting closed with Compline.

The meeting on March 24 was attended by four Oblates, two Oblate novices, three inquirers, and Fr. Dugan. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, Steward led a continuing discussion about heresy, apostasy, and schism. Among the topics discussed were Martin Luther, Lutheranism, and the difference between the Latin Rite Mass and the Lutheran Communion Service. The meeting ended with the praying of Compline.

The deanery also devised a proposed schedule of meetings and ceremonies from April 28 through October 13, with basically two meetings per month.

The meeting held on April 14 was attended by Fr. Dugan, four Oblates, two Oblate novices, and six inquirers. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, various topics were discussed for future meetings in 2015. Then Steward spoke about the Holy Trinity and the role of the Holy Spirit. In his talk he mentioned the symbols of the Holy Spirit, such as the finger, the hand, the dove, and fire, and the significance of each one, and he brought up the fruits and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The meeting closed with the praying of Compline.

Although the meeting scheduled for April 28 had to be cancelled because of a conflict in scheduling, Fr. Dugan held Oblation ceremonies in his office, during which he received:

Oblate : **Jeffery A. (Ambrose) Hahn** of Somerset, PA
Oblate novices: **Brandon Cavanaugh** of Somerset, PA
David Clewes of Somerset, PA
David Jones of Somerset, PA
John R. Lohr of Somerset, PA.

Also present were Oblates Steward Steckley, Robert Fadden, Richard Lafayette, and John Liebel. The next meeting was scheduled for May 12.

Southern Pines, NC (St. Ephrem the Syrian Deanery) – monthly meetings on 2nd Thurs. of month

Lay leader/secretary Laura Lowder reported by e-mail on April 12 and April 24. The small deanery has been meeting monthly to pray Vespers and to have discussions. The group hopes soon to undergo some reorganization, with more focused discussions on the *Rule*, with more publicity about the Oblates, and a possible information session to invite people to consider the Oblate Program. (*continued*)

A special meeting was held on April 23, with three Oblates attending. They prayed Vespers and then entered into a business meeting. They expressed the need for the "core group" of four to remain in frequent contact with one another, with hopes for others to join the deanery. Some of the issues that were raised were the need to discuss a portion of the *Rule* at each monthly meeting, the value of rotating responsibility for preparation for the meetings, and the advisability of having regular programs that would be more fully advertised in local parish bulletins. There were suggestions also to inform local priests about the deanery, to do something special to commemorate the Feast of St. Benedict on July 11, and to put out a basket for voluntary donations to have a fund to cover costs of copying and of purchasing copies of *Shorter Christian Prayer* for guests. The attendees agreed to pray about the suggestions, to discuss them more fully again, and to meet again on May 14.

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

Secretary Kay Tittmann reported by e-mail on February 10 and April 14. The meeting on February 9, which was attended by seven Oblates, two Oblate novices, and two inquirers besides Fr. David, moderator, began with Evening Prayer. The group continued to discuss the book *The Road to Eternal Life* by Fr. Michael Casey, O.C.S.O. They covered Fr. Michael's reflections on Prol: 22-28 of the *Rule*. Some points of emphasis were that we need to run towards God's Kingdom by good actions, that we must take time for rest from activity (with a prime example of encountering God deeply in Eucharistic adoration), that we need to struggle against murmuring, that we need to show charity especially to those around us, and that we are to take troublesome thoughts to prayer. The meeting ended with a prayer, the singing of the "Ultima," and the voicing of prayer intentions. Then two thank-you notes were read concerning the Oblates' donation to Fr. David for "Mission Mexico": one from Fr. David and one from the president of Mission Mexico.

Since Fr. David would be away in Mexico in March, the group decided not to schedule a meeting but to encourage members to attend a presentation by Fr. Neil Dadey on the Book of Job on March 9.

The meeting on April 13 was attended by nine Oblates, two Oblate novices, and three inquirers. The group continued a discussion of the Prologue, verses 29-37, with the guidance of the book by Fr. Michael Casey. The discussion included comments about the trap of being pleased with oneself when one succeeds in "being good." We must remember often that to God alone belongs glory. We need to nurture gratitude to God as a fruit of faith; with St. Paul we can state, "It is by God's grace that I am what I am." We need to recognize everything as gift and be ready to exercise virtues over a long period in order to grow in them. God is ever waiting patiently for us to turn back to Him. The meeting ended with a prayer, the singing of the "Ultima," and the voicing of prayer intentions. Then Fr. David brought out a thank-you note from the recipients of the Oblates' donation to Mission Mexico along with photographs. Fr. David also spoke briefly about experiences with Penn State students during their mission trip. Also, there was some publicity about retreats at the Archabbey and WJVM Catholic Radio.

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

Lay leader/secretary Delina Pauls wrote on February 15 and March 15. Sixteen people attended the meeting on February 4, including a visitor who is affiliated with a monastery in the Philippines. Fr. Lee, moderator, spoke about Lent and the obligation of monks to make their lives a continuous Lent. He also suggested that the Oblates consider doing something positive for Lent, such as adoring the Blessed Sacrament, reading the Bible or lives of the saints, or attending a program on Centering Prayer in one of the local churches. After his talk Fr. Lee invested as an Oblate novice:

Judith A. Lynch of Virginia Beach, VA.

Thirteen people attended the meeting on March 4. Fr. Lee introduced a guest speaker from Ascension Parish, who spoke about Centering Prayer. She spoke about her experiences with Centering Prayer, answered questions from the group, and mentioned places and dates of gatherings which practiced Centering Prayer. After the talk eight Oblates renewed their Oblation, including one Oblate from the Philippines. Fr. Lee then told the group that he would be away for three months because of health problems. There were plans to listen to tapes or view videos during these months. (As of May 6, Fr. Lee was scheduled for surgery on June 3.)

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

Lay leader/secretary Sue Wykoff reported by e-mail on February 11 and March 8. Nine people attended the meeting on February 8. After an opening prayer, the group discussed what the *Rule* has to say about Lent, and they read *RB* 48:14 - 49:10. The discussion involved standard Lenten practices in the Catholic Church, the practice of reading a book straight through, the reasons why St. Benedict encourages us to go beyond usual spiritual disciplines, and the need to perform any Lenten penances with love. There were a number of excellent comments and insights offered. Also, Sue suggested that the deanery spiritually adopt an unborn child and pray for the child and the parents throughout the year, with the holding of a birthday party after nine months. The baby was named Benedict Joseph. It was also suggested that the deanery might be able to support a pro-life ministry in Williamsport. The meeting ended with the praying of the Angelus.

Eight people attended the meeting on March 8. After an opening prayer and the praying of the Office of Readings, one of the group read aloud an article about St. Frances of Rome, whose feast day was the next day (March 9). There was some discussion about the life of St. Frances and how she could be an example for us in our lives as Christians and Oblates. The group then honored Oblate Helen Sammarco, whose Oblate name is Frances of Rome, for her 51 years as an Oblate by giving her a signed card with an image of St. Frances and then presenting to her a "Tears of Christ" rosary at the end of the meeting. The group also entered into a discussion about acedia: what it is and how one should deal with it. Assisting the discussion were an article written by Benedictine Sisters of St. Mary's Monastery and a book *The Spirit of Acedia from the Institutes of John Cassian*. The meeting closed with the praying of the Angelus.

On March 25, at Immaculate Conception Church in Lock Haven, Fr. Joseph T. Orr, the pastor of Holy Spirit Parish, invested

Helen Prien of Lock Haven, PA,

as an Oblate novice. Also present were Sue Wykoff and Deacon Kenneth Prien, Helen's father. The ceremony was reported as being quite beautiful; the Scripture reading Romans 12: 1,2,9-13 was used, and Fr. Orr gave a short homily about choosing community as a

means of deepening one's love for Christ.

Various Locations

Last August 12, at St. Ann Chapel in Waynesburg, PA,
Stanley (Francis) Shriener of Waynesburg, PA,
made his final Oblation in the presence of Fr. J. Francis Frazer, pastor of St. Thomas Parish in Clarksville, PA.

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. Jacques Daley, Br. James Cartwright, Fr. Lee Yoakam, Fr. Paul Rubadue, and Fr. Cuthbert Jack.

SOME SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The monks of the Archabbey will be on retreat from June 8 to 12. Please pray for the fruitfulness of this retreat. On Thursday, June 11, at 4:00, the annual Jubilarian Mass will be celebrated in the Archabbey Basilica. Among the jubilarian monks who will be honored are Fr. Justin Nolan, who will be marking 60 years as a priest and 65 years of monastic profession. Those wishing to stay for supper should contact the Oblate Office.
2. Note: If you would like copies of the old or new *Oblate Formation Booklet* for yourself or for your deanery, please request as many as you would like from the Oblate Office. Preferably someone from your deanery can pick them up at the Archabbey.
3. On April 25 in the Archabbey Basilica, three Benedictine monks were ordained to the diaconate by Bishop Lawrence Brandt of the Diocese of Greensburg. They were Br. Pio Adamonis and Br. Matthew Lambert, both of St. Vincent Archabbey, and Br. Thomas Sanders, of St. Andrew Abbey in Cleveland. We congratulate the new deacons.
4. On May 3 in the Archabbey Basilica, Fr. Isaac Haywiser, O.S.B., was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Lawrence Brandt of the Diocese of Greensburg. We congratulate Fr. Isaac.
5. On May 8 Archabbot Douglas Nowicki, O.S.B., celebrated his 70th birthday. Our prayers are with him!
6. a note to mentors and mentees: It is gratifying that many Oblates have volunteered to serve as mentors to the many inquirers and Oblate novices who have requested mentors. It often happens that a mentor writes to a mentee and then receives no response, or perhaps a response only after a long time. We urge mentors to be patient; perhaps a given mentee has many other issues to deal with, or perhaps he or she was not genuinely interested in being mentored. Please do not contact the Oblate Office unless there is a real need. We urge mentees gratefully to receive the offers of help from mentors. If you really do not want a mentor, then please let the Oblate Office or the mentor know. Thank you!

Reservation for Feast of St. Benedict on July 11, 2015

Name & Phone _____

___ I plan to come to St. Vincent for ___ lunch, ___ supper along with ___ guests;
I enclose _____ (\$5.50 for lunch, \$6.50 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 a full 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 contact Fr. Donald.)

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

Oblate Office, c/o July 11 event, 300 Fraser Purchase Rd., Latrobe, PA 15650.

If you would like overnight accommodations, please phone Fr. Donald at 742-805-2291. Please also contact Fr. Donald if you plan to be invested as an Oblate novice or to make your final Oblation on July 11.

Schedule for Oblates, Feast of St. Benedict, July 11, 2015

10:00 A.M. Mass, Basilica

12:00 P.M. Dinner, Placid B (1st floor, Placid Hall)
(approximate)

2:00 P.M. Conference by Br. Joachim Morgan & Oblation ceremonies (investitures, Oblations, honoring of jubilarians), St. Gregory Chapel

5:00 P.M. Evening Prayer, St. Gregory Chapel

5:40 P.M. Supper, Placid B (1st floor, Placid Hall)

DIRECTORY OF OBLATES: Application form

I would like to be included in the summer, 2015, edition of the *Directory* of Oblates affiliated with Saint Vincent Archabbey. **(Entries in the 2013 *Directory* will automatically be carried over.)** The information that I would like to have included is given as follows:

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ e-mail address _____

Please mail this form to the Oblate Office, **c/o Directory**, or send the information by e-mail to 305makaufman@gmail.com .

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

Fr. Wulfstan's talk on obedience in Benedictine spirituality (October 20, 2013):

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

Fr. Thomas Acklin's talk on *lectio divina* (November 17, 2013):

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

Fr. Jean-Luc's talk on the Liturgy of the Hours (December 15, 2013):

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

Br. Étienne's talk on *lectio divina* (February 16, 2014):

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

Fr. Killian's talk on *conversatio morum* (March 16, 2014):

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

Br. Canice's talk on the Holy Eucharist (June 22, 2014):

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

Fr. Thomas Hart's talk on work (July 20, 2014):

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

Fr. Robert Keffer's talk on silence (August 17, 2014):

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

Br. Thomas Sanders' talk on the Liturgy of the Hours (September 21, 2014):

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

Fr. William Beaver's talk on hospitality (October 19, 2014):

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

Br. Lawrence's talk on poverty and simplicity in Benedictine spirituality (December 21, 2014):

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

Br. Hugh's talk on holiness and Benedictine spirituality (January 18, 2015):

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

Fr. Wulfstan's talk on prayer in Benedictine spirituality (February 15, 2015):

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

Fr. Justin Matro's talk on hospitality in Benedictine spirituality (March 15, 2015):

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

Br. Ignatius' talk on *lectio divina* (April 19, 2015):

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

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

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

Name _____

Address _____

I will pick up my order _____ Please mail my order to me _____ (Remember to include 6% tax & \$4.95 for postage per order.)

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