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# THE SAINT VINCENT OBLATE NEWS

## Saint Vincent Archabbey

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### ANGELS IN SCRIPTURE, LITURGY, AND THE HOLY RULE: HELPING US TO SING PRAISE WISELY AND CONTINUALLY

Dear Oblates, Oblate novices, and Friends,

#### **Truth of the angels' presence**

Angels are not a common topic of conversation among most circles of people, even Christian believers. Although there arose some popular enthusiasm for angels not too many years ago, most of us, I would surmise, have never met an angel, nor do many of us pay much attention to the presence of angels. And yet angels are very much a part of God's creation, as both Judaism and Christianity have taught for millennia. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* asserts that "the existence of the spiritual, non-corporeal beings that Sacred Scripture usually calls 'angels' is a truth of faith. The witness of Scripture is as clear as the unanimity of Tradition" (#328). In sections 329 through 336, the *Catechism* tells us that angels are "servants and messengers of God" (as indicated by the meaning of "angel"), that they have intelligence and will (but no bodies), and that they belong to Christ as heralds of His saving plan. Besides many appearances in the Old Testament, angels are present to Christ throughout His time on earth. "From the Incarnation to the Ascension, the life of the Word incarnate is surrounded by the adoration and service of angels" (#333). "They will [also] be present at Christ's return" (#333), and "the whole life of the Church benefits from the mysterious and powerful help of the angels" (#334). In particular, the Church joins with the angels' adoration in her liturgy; this presence of the angels is particularly manifest in funeral liturgies, in part of Eucharistic Prayer I, and in the "Holy, Holy" at every Mass. It is also an article of faith that each of us has a guardian angel; "besides each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life" (#336).

Not long ago the Church celebrated the feasts of the Archangels (September 29) and the Guardian Angels (October 2). Those occasions led me to think how little attention I pay to the angels. I was also reminded that the Guardian Angels are the patrons of the American-Cassinense Congregation and, therefore, of all monks and Oblates affiliated with the monasteries of our congregation. Perhaps all of us would benefit from a little more consideration of the heavenly messengers, given to us by God in His solicitude for us.

#### **Angels in the Holy Rule**

The *Rule* of Saint Benedict includes five references to angels, according to an appendix in the large version of *RB 1980*. Three of these occur in *RB 7*, and two in *RB 19*. The first occurrence, in 7:6, calls to mind the dream described in Gen 28:12, in which Jacob was given a vision of angels going up and down on a stairway

leading to heaven. The Lord also stood beside Jacob, reminded him of the promise given to Abraham, and assured him, "Know that I am with you; I will protect you wherever you go, and bring you back to this land" (Gen 28:15). Surely, that was a very humbling experience for Jacob as it would be for us. After this awesome encounter Jacob set up a memorial stone to God and vowed that "the Lord shall be my God" (Gen 28:21). St. Benedict uses the incident to reinforce Christ's teaching about descending by exaltation and ascending by humility. The reference to angels might motivate us to practice humility, too. How marvelous it is that besides becoming incarnate and suffering and dying for us, Christ would give us angels to lead us on the way to salvation and to be present to us at every step of the way! All of us have a supernatural calling, and the angels remind us that we have a divine destiny that is too often obscured by our earthly pursuits. Let us welcome the angels to stir us beyond our narrow-minded vision of life so that each day we may hasten on our journeys of ongoing conversion and keep "climbing the ladder" to heaven.

The references in 7:13 and 7:28 assert that the monk's "actions everywhere are in God's sight and are reported by angels at every hour" and that "the angels assigned to us report our deeds to the Lord day and night." Of course, our all-knowing God does not *need* angels to tell Him what we are doing. Neither does He spy on us in such a way as to try to catch us in wrongdoing and then condemn us. Rather He knows us in the depths of our beings and, in His love for us, ever seeks to convert us more deeply. He wants us to acknowledge His watchful care and to respond with reverent attention so that we may receive the graces that He wishes to lavish on us. This reverent attention is especially important when we are praying the Divine Office, as St. Benedict tells us in Chapter 19. Thus we need to remember that God sees us in our depths always and everywhere. For his own benefit, the monk must seek to "be conscious of God's abiding presence" (Dom Paul Delatte, *Commentary*, p. 107) and to "keep up ... vigilance" (p. 108) against evil thoughts. The very basic principle of the first step of humility is an excellent summary of the whole spiritual life. Because it is so important that we focus and refocus on God's loving presence through the day, God sends us angels to maintain our beings in continual recollection and to help us ward off evil thoughts and any other distractions. The specific "angels assigned to us" (*RB 7:28*) surely refers to our guardian angels.

In *RB 19*, which concerns the discipline of praying the Divine Office, St. Benedict reminds us that we are

praying “in the presence of the angels” (*RB* 19:5; Ps 138:1). The fact that in the Divine Office we are especially and intentionally “in the presence of God and His angels” (*RB* 19:6) should motivate us to strive ardently to “consider ... how we ought to behave” (19:6). For us today, it is important to remember that in praying the Divine Office, we are joining the heavenly choirs in praising God. In his commentary Dom Paul Delatte exhorts us, “We are face to face with God. All creation is united. The Angels are around the altar. We are going to sing with them and chant the triple *Sanctus* which they have taught us. Surely, then, we should vie with them in reverence and love” (p. 186). Dom Paul further reminds us that to pray the Office well requires that “each individual [contribute] his whole presence of mind, his full measure of good behaviour, of spiritual courtesy, and finally of self-denial; for we must then especially take account of the whole body and co-ordinate our movements with those of others” (p. 187).

#### **Benefits for us**

How, then, can we benefit from the presence of the angels? First of all, it is of great advantage to us to believe in them and to acknowledge their watchful presence. In a sense, God did not “have to” create the angels to communicate with us, but He did, in fact, choose to do so. For the sake of our salvation He lovingly intervenes in our lives in many different ways, and some of these involve angels. Angels announce God’s salvation “from afar and near” and serve “the accomplishment of the divine plan” (*Catechism*, #334). Of course, Christ is our one and only Savior and the unique Mediator between the Father and us fallen human beings. Since God, however, has also given us angels and saints (as well as one another in Christian community) to bring us into a deeper communion with Himself, who are we to ignore the gracious means God has provided for us?

The presence of angels, as St. Benedict implies, may provide special support for us when we are praying the Divine Office and, similarly, when we are participating in Mass. *The General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours* (1971) tells us that, among other functions, the Office “is the voice of the bride [the Church] addressing the bridegroom [Christ]” (#15). Furthermore, “by offering praise to God in the Hours, the Church joins in singing that canticle of praise which is sung throughout all ages in the halls of heaven; it is a foretaste of the heavenly praise sung unceasingly before the throne of God and the Lamb, as described by John in the Apocalypse” (#16). The choirs of angels, present both to us on earth and before the throne of God in heaven, whet our appetites to long for our heavenly home. The angels remind us of divine realities and help us to be mindful of them in our ordinary lives. It is by pursuing continual conversion in the love Christ that we gradually become “worthy” (only by grace!) to participate fully in the choir in heaven.

If the angels assist us, as they do, in worshiping properly during the Divine Office, how much more so during the Holy Eucharist? Just as the angels

“‘evangelize’ by proclaiming the Good News of Christ’s Incarnation and Resurrection” (*Catechism*, #333), so they help us to enter the mysteries of Christ during the celebration of Mass. It seems that every preface of the *Roman Missal* makes some reference to the angels, some with greater elaboration than others. For example, Prefaces I and II for Sundays in Ordinary Time conclude with the words, “And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:” Preface I of the Blessed Virgin Mary also refers to “the Virtues of heaven and the blessed Seraphim.” Very few people have studied the different categories of angels, but we can all appreciate the truth that an enormous number of these heavenly beings are helping us to adore Christ in the liturgy and to make Him the center of our lives always and everywhere.

#### **The guardian angels’ protecting presence**

Psalms 91 includes the verse, “For you has he [God] commanded his angels, to keep you in all your ways” (Ps 91:11). As the Israelites set out on their journey through the desert, the Lord told them through Moses: “See, I am sending an angel before you, to guard you on the way and bring you to the place I have prepared. Be attentive to him and heed his voice” (Ex 23: 20-21). Our Lord, after speaking to His disciples about the importance of children and of becoming childlike, declared, “See that you never despise one of these little ones. I assure you, their angels in heaven constantly behold my heavenly Father’s face” (Mt 18: 10). The fact that guardian angels are often associated with children does not mean that they are only for children. If children are especially vulnerable and in need of guidance, are we not all prone to moral weakness and aimless wandering if left to our own resources? The guardian angels are God’s precious gifts to us as they serve to steer us away from moral dangers all day and all night. Just as they worship unceasingly before God in heaven, so each guardian angel stands by us faithfully “as protector and shepherd leading [each believer] to life” (*Catechism*, #336). The angels do not necessarily protect us from suffering since God Himself often permits us to endure sufferings for our ultimate spiritual benefit. The angels rather lead us through the journeys of life in order to keep us from wandering into self-gratification, to help us to avoid unnecessary dangers, to prevent us from being discouraged over hardships, and to guide us again and again on the path that God intends for us – the path that leads to expansion of our hearts in His love and, ultimately, to heaven.

#### **Guidance on a journey to a court house**

At a recent Oblate meeting, I found myself talking (perhaps once too often) about another journey on which I had had difficulties. One Oblate remarked smilingly that perhaps I should just stop driving anywhere! On the contrary, I replied, the fact that we encounter difficulties (so long as they are not life-threatening) on the road and then find a way out is a marvelous way to discover anew God’s providential care and to grow in trust of Him. Such

was the case this past September, when I was called, for the first time in my life, to report to duty at the county court house in Greensburg. Although I had adequate directions, I was confused about the location of the nearby parking garage and its entrance. Fortunately, a car right in front of me turned into the entrance, and I just followed him. Perhaps it was guardian angels who guided both of us. Then, as I was leaving the garage and wondering where exactly the court house was, a woman who knew me called out to me. It turned out that she worked at the court house, and so she led me to the jurors' entrance. Once again, perhaps the angels were vehicles of that grace! In the main jurors' room itself, I resigned myself to a possibly long stretch of waiting, although I had brought some work with me. Then it was announced that we were allowed to go across the hall to a room with big tables. Hardly anyone else took up the offer, but I found it to be a wonderful place to write five or six letters in great peace. Perhaps, once again, I had good reason to thank the angels. Finally, after some five and a half hours of waiting (and, in my case, working), we were all dismissed to go home. Alas, I was once more uncertain about the location of the parking garage, and I almost tried to enter the wrong garage. Thanks be to God, when I turned to a fellow juror to ask for help, he asked me to show him my parking ticket. He then said, "That's the place where you are parked!" (I at first thought that he was wrong, but he was right.) Was it not an angel who kept me from trying to go to the wrong place?

***Conclusion: singing and behaving in union with those in heaven***

If we find that angels, at God's bidding, often guard us from physical dangers, foolish decisions, and embarrassment, how much more do they guard us from spiritual dangers? How wonderful it is that God has chosen to provide us with creatures that pray with us, encourage us, and strive to keep us on the "[narrow]

road that leads to salvation" (*RB* Prol: 48)! We don't *have* to be attentive to their presence, but isn't it to our benefit and isn't it out of grateful respect to God that we do so? The monastic life was traditionally seen as an "angelic life." That term did not mean, of course, that we do not have physical bodies or that we are already perfect in obeying God's will. (Far from it!) The word, however, served as an apt reminder that our citizenship is ultimately in heaven, that we are not to forget our eternal destiny amid the attachments of this life, and that we ourselves are to behave, in the love of Christ, as "messengers" from God to one another. In particular, the life of a monk or of an Oblate is to be one of continual awareness of God's presence (that is, we are at least striving ardently for that goal); we are to recall with repeatedly firm intention that our actions "everywhere are in God's sight" (*RB* 7:13). Finally, we are to place high value on liturgical prayer as an opportunity to join in the continual praise given by angels and saints in heaven. If we learn to pray in a focused and joyful way here on earth, shall we not do so all the more fully in heaven? In a sense, when we participate in the sacrifice of the Mass or in the Liturgy of the Hours, are we not in heaven already? Let us rejoice, then, that the angels help us "to sing the psalms in such a way that our minds are in harmony with our voices" (*RB* 19:7). Thus may we more and more enter into the harmony of the heavenly choirs, who encourage us to live, even now, in continual praise and thanksgiving and in intense love for God and for one another.

In the peace of Christ and St. Benedict,

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

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**A MESSAGE FROM ARCHABBOT DOUGLAS**

November, 2014

Dear Oblates and Friends of Saint Vincent,

During the month of November, the Church provides us with the opportunity to remember all of our faithful departed family and friends. We begin with All Saints Day and All Souls Day at the beginning of the month and end with the celebration of the Feast of Christ the King and Thanksgiving Day.

This month of remembrance reminds us to be grateful for all of the blessings which God so generously gives to us each day. We give thanks first of all for the gift of our faith and for those who have nurtured that faith from the moment of conception through the formative years of early childhood and adolescence. Our parents and family experiences in childhood provide the foundation for our growth in faith and our human maturation throughout life.

As we prepare for the grace-filled seasons of Advent and Christmas in celebration of the great Gift of God's Love made visible in the Birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, let us pray for grateful hearts that are ready to welcome Him as we offer His love to those who come to us in need each day. God's blessings be with you!

Sincerely in Christ,

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

P.S.: Fr. Donald and Br. Joachim join Archabbot Douglas and the monastic community in wishing all Oblates, Oblate novices, and other readers of this newsletter a joyful Advent and a grace-filled Christmas Season.

### **OBLATE DAY: SEPTEMBER 28, 2014**

Some 38 people, Oblates and family members and other guests, came to the Archabbey for our 27th annual Oblate Day. (The turnout was unusually small because of individuals' health problems and deaths in some families.) Fr. Prior Earl Henry celebrated Mass at 10:30 A.M. for the group in Mary, Mother of Wisdom Chapel. After Midday Prayer, lunch, and some free time, Oblation ceremonies were held in the basilica at 1:45, during which Fr. Donald received the following:

Oblates:           **Randi (Therese) Anderson** of St. Marys, PA  
                          **Carl E. DePaulis** of New Bloomfield, PA  
                          **Elizabeth "Betty" (Martha) Wass** of Greensburg, PA  
Oblate novices:   **James Folkens** of Washington, PA  
                          **Phyllis A. Dolan** of Irwin, PA .

After confessions in the basilica, there was a social in the Parish Assembly Room. Then at 3:45 Fr. Maximilian Maxwell, O.S.B., Director of Vocations, gave a presentation about ten factors that are important in discerning a religious or priestly vocation. Some of the factors were applicable to all Christians for making decisions in daily life. Fr. Max encouraged the audience to mention to young people the possibility of a vocation to religious life or priesthood.

Then the Oblates joined the monastic community for Vespers. The day's events ended with supper and the singing of the Benedictine "Ultima."

### **NINTH FALL OBLATE DAY OF RECOLLECTION AT THE ARCHABBEY - October 11, 2014**

Forty-four people, almost all Oblates, attended this annual event, with conferences in St. Gregory Chapel. Fr. Jeremiah Lange, O.S.B., the retreat master, delivered conferences about prayer, with emphasis on the call of every Christian to advance in prayer and reach the heights of prayer. Such progress can be made, he observed, if only we really want to and are willing to put our relationship with God first in everything.

During ceremonies at 1:45 P.M. in St. Gregory Chapel, Fr. Donald received the following:

Oblate:               **M. Diane (Elizabeth) Zelenak** of Greensburg, PA  
Oblate novice:     **Joanne M. Robertson** of Alexandria, VA.

Diane regularly attends meetings of the Latrobe Deanery. Joanne is the mother of Oblate Pauline Lanciotti of Morgantown, WV.

Most of the retreatants joined the monastic community for Vespers and then some 26 stayed for supper, which ended with the singing of the Benedictine "Ultima." C.D.'s and D.V.D.'s of Fr. Jeremiah's conferences are available (for pick-up only) from the Oblate Office.

### **OBLATE DAY AND DAY OF RECOLLECTION FOR 2015**

Oblate Day for 2015 has been scheduled for Sunday, September 27, 2015, since facilities will be available on that day. The October day of recollection for 2015 has been scheduled for Saturday, October 17, 2015.

### **RETREAT SCHEDULE FOR 2015**

The retreats at St. Vincent for summer, 2015, have been scheduled. The retreat on Benedictine spirituality is to be held on May 16-18, 2015, and the silent retreat is to be offered on May 23-25, 2015. The first retreat will be directed by Fr. Warren. The silent retreat will be directed by Fr. Wulfstan.

### **DEANERY REPRESENTATIVES' ASSEMBLY IN 2015: Saturday, June 6**

The 2015 Assembly of Deanery Representatives is scheduled for Friday, June 5, to Sunday, June 7. All deaneries are encouraged to consider sending up to two representatives to this event of fellowship and of sharing about important issues related to our Benedictine ideals. More details will follow in forthcoming newsletters.

### **BASILICA GIFT SHOP OFFERS 10% DISCOUNT TO OBLATES**

Oblates and Oblate novices who purchase items in the Basilica Gift Shop may receive a discount of 10% on all purchases.

### **MEETINGS OF OBLATE BOARD OF ADVISORS, August 8 and October 3, 2014**

Members of the Board assembled for their 49th and 50th regular meetings at 6:30 P.M. on August 8 and October 3 in Brownfield 203. The meeting on August 3, attended by only five members, involved discussion of the bibliography of Benedictine books, the Assembly of Deanery Representatives for 2015, the release of *The Rule in Bits and Pieces*, and the ongoing project of sending a form letter to all who have been Oblate novices for five years or more.

The meeting on October 3, attended by eight members, considered a number of issues: the scheduling of the Assembly of Deanery Representatives for 2015, the pamphlet of guidelines for mentors of prisoners, the search for a monastery of affiliation by 26 Oblates in Nevada, and the idea of planning regional days of recollection to draw isolated Oblates into community and to foster enthusiasm for the Oblate Program. The next meeting, barring inclement weather, has been scheduled for January 9, 2015.

### **REMIINDER: AVAILABILITY OF CYBER DEANERY**

Those Oblates and Oblate novices who find it difficult or impossible to attend meetings of any of the geographically located deaneries are welcome to consider joining the Cyber Deanery, which discusses issues of Benedictine spirituality online. Feel free to contact the lay leader, David Hicks, at [revdavid53@yahoo.com](mailto:revdavid53@yahoo.com) .

### **MENTORS NEEDED!**

A number of people who are Oblate novices or inquirers have requested Oblate mentors. There are still a number of people, many of them prisoners who have requested mentors but who have not been matched. If you are a full Oblate and think that you could serve as a mentor for someone new to the program, please contact the Oblate Office. There is a set of guidelines available for all mentors and a special brochure for mentors of prisoners. **To those of you who are mentors: Would it be helpful for you to have a list of other mentors for mutual support and guidance?** (At least one mentor thinks that such a list would be useful.)

### **SAINT BENEDICT EDUCATION FOUNDATION: LOTTERY TICKETS AVAILABLE**

Fr. Benoit Alloggia, O.S.B., president of the foundation, has asked that Oblates participate in the raising of money for its mission to assist Benedictine monks and nuns studying at Sant' Anselmo, the international Benedictine university in Rome. The funds raised are directed to students from Benedictine communities that are experiencing financial hardship. As a new method of raising money, the foundation is selling lottery tickets at \$5.00 each, with the winners to be determined by the number drawn next July 11 and with the cash prize being \$5,000. Those who are interested may contact Fr. Benoit at 724-805-2607 or benoitloggia@yahoo.com, or you may consult the foundation's website: [www.stbenedictfoundation.org](http://www.stbenedictfoundation.org). Also, those who would prefer to bypass the lottery and make a direct donation are most welcome to do so.

### **THE OBLATE DIRECTORY: ONGOING WORK BEING DONE**

A new printed version of the *Directory* is expected to be issued in July, 2015. Oblate Mary Ann Kaufman continues to work on updating the *Directory* and may issue an occasional e-mail revision. If you have moved or wish to have your name and information added, please contact Mary Ann at 412-302-8501 or 305makaufman@gmail.com. (See the enclosed flier.)

### **NEW BOOK OF REFLECTIONS ON THE RULE BY OBLATES AND MONKS IS NOW AVAILABLE**

The book *The Rule in Bits and Pieces*, which monks of the Archabbey and Oblates affiliated with the Archabbey were working on for over a year, was released at the end of August. Orders may be made by contacting the website [www.sacredwindspress.com](http://www.sacredwindspress.com). The prices are \$19.95 for the paperback version and \$31.95 for the hardback version. Those who contributed essays to the book will receive a 10% discount; in ordering, they should use the "coupon code" contributor. Also, copies are available at the Basilica Gift Shop, at the St. Vincent College Book Center, and (for pick-up only) at the Oblate Office.

### **LIST OF BENEDICTINE BOOKS AVAILABLE**

Oblate Lawrence Cuda of the Oblate Ongoing Formation Committee has, with great effort, assembled a rather inclusive list of books on St. Benedict and Benedictine spirituality. After the experience of some complications, the list is finally available on the Oblate website. (See the heading of this newsletter.)

### **SOME 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 deanery histories – free or with donation for postage
- (5) book *Lessons from St. Benedict* by Fr. Donald - \$12.00 each, only by personal pick-up; also, *The Rule in Bits and Pieces* - \$16.00, only by personal pick-up (Otherwise order from Sacred Winds Press at [www.sacredwindspress.com](http://www.sacredwindspress.com))

### **OBLATE LIBRARY: FEEL FREE TO USE IT WELL!**

Members of the Oblate community are always welcome to borrow books from the Oblate Library, either by mail or by personal visits to the Oblate Office (or by attendance at Oblate meetings in Latrobe). Those who would like a list of books in the library are welcome to write to Fr. Donald. If you have any library books that you have had for six months or more, please return them to the Oblate Office as soon as possible.

### **NEW BENEDICTINE ADDITIONS TO OBLATE LIBRARY**

- Br. Victor-Antoine d'Avila-Latourrette, O.S.B., *Walk in His Ways: A Monastic Journey of Life and Light* (Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 2014)
- Fr. John R. Fortin, O.S.B., *A Lenten Journey with Jesus Christ and Saint Benedict: Daily Gospel Readings with Selections from the Rule of Saint Benedict* (Wellesley, MA: Christus Publishing LLC, 2009)
- Br. Bruno Heisey, O.S.B., *Prayer, Study, and Work: Renewing the Benedictine Ideal* (St. Louis, MO: Sacred Winds Press, 2014)

### **RECOMMENDED READING**

- Fr. Michael Casey, O.C.S.O., *Seventy-Four Tools for Good Living: Reflections on the Fourth Chapter of Benedict's Rule* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014)
- Fr. Thomas Dubay, S.M., *Seeking Spiritual Direction: How to Grow the Divine Life Within* (Cincinnati, OH: Servant Books, 1993)
- Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson, & Robert P. George, *What Is Marriage Man and Woman: A Defense* (N.Y.: Continuum, 2012) – a good, rational explanation, in our age of questioning sacred traditional values, of why marriage can only be in conjugal love between one man and one woman
- Br. Elliott C. Maloney, O.S.B., *Saint Paul: Master of the Spiritual Life "in Christ"* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014)
- Abbot Primate Notker Wolf, O.S.B., and Salesian Sister Enrica Rosanna, *The Art of Leadership* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013) [with especially good "Benedictine" advice for business managers, teachers, and parents]

### **OBLATE GROUP IN CAMBRIDGE, ONTARIO, CANADA** – meetings at St. Gregory the Great Church in Cambridge

Oblate Cathy Mayled reported by e-mail on August 30 and October 26. Five people met on July 24 to read and discuss *RB 2: 1-10* with the help of the commentary *Preferring Christ* by Norvene Vest. On August 28 four people gathered to consider *RB 2: 11-22*. Both meetings began with a prayer and ended with the praying of Compline.

Four people attended the meeting on September 25, during which the group completed a discussion of Chapter 2 of the *Rule*. On October 23 the six attendees discussed Chapter 3. Both meetings began with a prayer and ended with the praying of Compline.

### **OBLATE GROUP IN PHILADELPHIA, PA** – meetings at Saint Mary's (Episcopalian) Church, Philadelphia

Fr. Vincent de Paul Crosby, O.S.B., reported on October 17. The meeting on October 4 began with Morning Prayer according to the Roman Rite. Since it was the feast of St. Francis, the topic for reflection was "St. Francis' gift to the Church and to the world." (Fr. Vincent de Paul had sent out some reading material prior to the meeting.) He spoke about St. Francis' love for nature and the way in which that love informed his prayer life. He also explained why St. Francis is considered the patron saint of ecologists and how his love for all living things ties in with the way St. Benedict looks upon the monk's use of material things. Fr. Vincent also spoke briefly about the sacramental worldview of the Church. The meeting ended with prayer and a hymn, followed by the sharing of lunch. The next meeting was scheduled for December 6 at 10:00 A.M. at Saint Mary's (Episcopalian) Church, 630 E. Cathedral R., Philadelphia, PA 19128.

### **OBLATE GROUP IN MORGANTOWN, WV**

Secretary Pauline Lanciotti wrote on September 17 and October 15. Four Oblates joined Fr. John Paul Heiser, O.S.B., newly assigned to the apostolate at Morgantown, for the meeting on September 17. It had been decided that for the next few months the group would be discussing St. Gregory the Great's biography of St. Benedict, *The Life and Miracles of St. Benedict (Dialogues, Book 2)*, under the direction of Fr. John Paul. The emphasis will be on the spiritual principles and their manifestation in the *Rule*. It was mentioned that Pope St. Gregory included a life of St. Benedict in his *Dialogues* first as inspiration amid the frustrations of the times (with the disintegration of the Roman Empire and the disunity of the Church) and secondly as good example (the possibility of holiness, with God providing holy men and women according to the needs of the times). Fr. John Paul then gave an outline of parallels of principles and examples in *Life and Miracles* (Prologue through Ch. 10) with precepts in the *Rule*.

On October 10, at the St. John University Parish church,

**Sarah Marie (Walburga) Goodall** of Morgantown, WV,

made her final Oblation before Fr. John J. Peck, moderator, and others who were gathered for Evening Prayer in the church.

Fr. John Paul led the meeting on October 15, which was attended by seven Oblates and one inquirer. The group congratulated Sarah Goodall and Joanne Robertson on their Oblation and novice Oblation, respectively. Then they resumed a discussion of St. Gregory the Great's biography. It was emphasized that that *The Life* and the *Rule* should be read together. In *The Life* the Devil appears frequently an antagonist, and the charism of St. Benedict is highlighted. A few more chapters in *The Life* were examined, and then the spiritual principles from each chapter were gleaned, especially those values expressed in the *Rule*. The group planned to finish the study at the meeting on November 19. Fr. John Paul closed the meeting with a prayer and his blessing.

### **OBLATE GROUP IN ROSHARON, TX**

Oblate novice William Tkacik wrote on August 16, September 21, and October 25. At the meeting on August 16, eight of the nine Oblate novices attended. After an opening prayer, the group prayed the Liturgy of the Hours and entered into a discussion about humility and how that virtue can be practiced in daily life. The meeting ended with the Oblate prayer and closing prayers.

The meeting on September 20 began with an opening prayer and continued with a discussion about the Oblate novices' readiness for final Oblation. Seven of the Oblate novices in attendance expressed readiness and were eager to receive applications. The meeting was cut short because the chaplain/leader was called away.

Six people attended the meeting on October 25, which consisted of an opening prayer, Morning Prayer, a discussion of *RB 18: 20-25* (on the order of the Psalmody at the Divine Office), and the Oblate prayer. Oblations are tentatively planned for the end of November.

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

Oblate Kenneth Lavin of Toronto reported on October 20 that he had sent out an invitation to eight Oblates or Oblate novices in the area to ask them to consider beginning meetings and ultimately forming a deanery. Ken and Fr. Anselmo Park, O.S.B., a Benedictine monk from Korea who is studying in Toronto, had spoken with Fr. Donald at the Archabbey in August about the possibility of beginning a deanery in Toronto..

### **OBLATE MEETINGS IN LATROBE**

Oblates from all locations and their guests are invited to monthly meetings at the Archabbey. The forthcoming meetings will be on Sundays Nov. 16, Dec. 21, Jan. 18, and Feb. 15 at 6:45 P.M. in Brownfield Room 202. Those wishing to come early for Evening Prayer (at 5:00) and supper should phone Fr. Donald (724-805-2291) in advance. **(N.B.: The November meeting will be in B 301.)**

### **CLASSES IN BENEDICTINE SPIRITUALITY AT ST. VINCENT**

On the same days as Oblate meetings in Latrobe, classes in Benedictine spirituality are being held in Brownfield 202 from 3:00 to 4:25. They are taught by monks or Oblates. All are welcome to attend. The class on November 16, to be taught by Fr. Fred Byrne, O.S.B., will address the topic "Obedience in Benedictine Spirituality," and the class on December 21, to be taught by Br. Lawrence Machia, O.S.B., will be about "Poverty and Simplicity in Benedictine Spirituality." **The November meeting will be in B 301.**

**ADORATION FOR VOCATIONS IN ST. GREGORY CHAPEL; EXPOSITION & ORGAN CONCERT ON SOLEMNITY OF CHRIST THE KING:**

The Blessed Sacrament is generally exposed on Sundays from 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. in St. Gregory Chapel. Oblates are urged to use these times for Eucharistic adoration, if possible, especially on the Sundays of Oblate meetings, to pray for vocations and especially for vocations to the Archabbey. **On the Solemnity of Christ the King, November 23, the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed at 12:30 P.M., and exposition will end with Benediction at 2:00. A concert and the dedication of the new pipe organ will begin at 3:00 P.M., and Vespers will be prayed, as usual, at 5:00.**

**Definition of an Oblate Deanery Affiliated with Saint Vincent Archabbey (as discussed at recent meetings of the Oblate Board of Advisors)**

An "Oblate deanery" is a group of at least four Oblates/Oblate novices, with at least one full Oblate, affiliated with St. Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, and engaging in meetings on a monthly or semi-monthly basis at least six times per year. Each deanery should have at least a moderator (a Benedictine monk or a Catholic priest or permanent deacon from a diocese or another religious order) and/or a lay leader and/or a secretary. The meetings should generally focus on the *Rule* of St. Benedict and the values of Benedictine spirituality. It is recommended that each meeting begin or end with the praying of the Liturgy of the Hours. The secretary or other deanery member should send a report to the Director of Oblates (by letter, e-mail, or phone) soon after each meeting. Each deanery should stay in regular contact with the Archabbey, especially concerning Oblations, investitures, and new inquirers, and encourage members to visit the Archabbey whenever possible. The deanery should also seek to make the Oblate Program known to other Christians in the area so that those who are called to the vocation of being Oblates of St. Benedict may be able to respond.

**NEWS FROM OBLATE DEANERIES**

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

Deacon Ralph DeCecco, moderator, reported on October 15. Problems with health and a multiplicity of duties have prevented the deanery from having meetings since July 19. During a communion service on October 11,

**Jamie (Paul) Rowles** of Albion, PA,

made his final Oblation in the presence of Deacon Ralph and all those present.

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

Lay leader/secretary Mary Ann Bingeman reported by e-mail on October 9. The cover page mentioned that a meeting had been held on September 28 and that there would be a meeting on October 26, for which Oblates were to bring their breviaries. However, the page with the actual report was missing. The news will be reported in the February newsletter.

**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 reports by e-mail on September 22 and October 19. At the meeting on September 21, fourteen people joined Fr. Paschal, moderator, for the first monthly meeting since May. Some articles on *lectio divina* were distributed to each attendee. Then the group continued to discuss the book *Sacred Reading* by Fr. Michael Casey, O.C.S.O. They covered pages 35-39. Then there was talk about the regional Oblate meeting to be held at St. Anselm's Abbey, Washington, DC, on October 18 and about the status of a proposed Baltimore Catholic radio station and of a proposed building project on the property behind St. Benedict Church. As usual, the group went to the church at 5:00 P.M. for Vespers, ending with the singing of the "Ultima."

Twelve people, including one inquirer, joined Fr. Paschal for the meeting on October 19. Fr. Paschal began by introducing an article entitled "Memories, Our Hidden Treasures," with reference to the Paschal mystery, the ability to forgive, the value of recalling death daily (cf. *RB* 4), the Psalms and remembrance of God, and divine mercy. The next meeting was scheduled for November 23, with adoration in the church and with the praying of the "Advent Stations." Next there was a summary of the happenings at the regional meeting, attended by Fr. Paschal and ten Oblates from the Baltimore Deanery. Then some topics from the 2013 World Congress were discussed. Finally, the group resumed the study of the book *Sacred Reading*; pages 39 to 41 were covered. The attendees then proceeded to the church for Vespers.

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

Lay leader Ethel Galli wrote on September 9 and October 27. The meeting on July 24 began with Evening Prayer and continued with a discussion of *RB* 7: 35-38, from the fourth step of humility. Then Ethel led a study of an article "The Eucharist in Benedictine Spirituality," which Br. Canice had presented to the Oblates in Latrobe. The group appreciated the many insights offered. The meeting closed with a prayer and refreshments.

At the meeting on August 28, after the praying of Evening Prayer, Oblate Ron Weleski led a reading and discussion of parts of *Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)*, with the guidance of the outline from the Assembly of Deanery Representatives. Once again, the meeting closed with a prayer and refreshments.

The meeting on September 25 began with the praying of Vespers. Then Chapter 7 of the *Rule*, verses 39-43, were read and discussed. It was mentioned that St. Benedict paraphrases verses in the Gospel of St. Matthew about turning the other cheek and having patience amid adversities. Next the group studied Chapter 3 of the book *A Blessed Life*, concerning "Twelve Signposts on the Way of Humility." The meeting closed with a prayer and the serving of refreshments.

At the meeting on October 23, which again began with Vespers, the group discussed *RB* 48 (on "The Daily Manual Labor") and then Chapter 4 of *A Blessed Life*, entitled "Blessed Work: A Benedictine View of Our Daily Work." It was emphasized that work is important for the spiritual well-being of a person and can help one to glorify God in all things. Then Oblate Bob Zera shared some insights from his time as a monk. The meeting closed with a prayer and refreshments.

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

Fr. Jude reported in September that meetings had not been held for a while but that there was consideration of scheduling meetings

at several churches staffed by Benedictines in Cambria County.

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

There was no report. The deanery may be disbanded.

**Cyber Deanery**

Lay leader David Hicks reported by phone on August 18, in person on October 8-15, and by phone on November 5. The group continues to read and discuss the book *Lessons from Saint Benedict*. A couple of new members have joined. There have been efforts to put the deanery on Face book, but some difficulties were encountered. It is hoped that the project can be completed soon.

**Frackville, PA (St. Dismas Deanery)** – monthly meetings at chapel in Frackville, Wed., 6:30-8:00

There was no report.

**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 August 15, September 25, and October 21. The meeting on August 11 began, as usual, with Evening Prayer. Then Deacon Michael Russo, moderator, led a discussion on Chapter 31 of the *Rule*, on the cellarer of the monastery. The group considered the issues of doing all things in moderation, knowing the difference between needs and wants, seeking a lifestyle of simplicity, realizing how an excess of material things can hinder our journey to God, attending to the present moment, spending time with God, and refraining from grumbling.

The meeting on September 22 began with Evening Prayer in front of the tabernacle of St. Benedict Church. Then, in the meeting room, the group discussed *RB* 4:75 (“the tools of the spiritual craft,” referring to all the tools of *RB* 4). The attendees, led by Deacon Michael, concluded that one must seek a balance in life, with a regular daily rhythm of prayer, work, eating, and sleeping. Also, in light of the upcoming Forty-Hours devotion in the parish, the group shared their thoughts about their experiences in adoration of the exposed Blessed Sacrament.

At the monthly meeting on October 20, the Oblates gathered for Evening Prayer, during which Deacon Michael Russo, moderator, invested

**Rosemarie Arcurio** of Johnstown, PA,

as an Oblate novice. After Evening Prayer, the group enjoyed a social to celebrate Rose’s investiture.

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

Some twelve people attended the meeting on August 17, during which the group continued to discuss the book *Cherish Christ above All*. They completed reflections on Chapter 9 with a consideration of the Holy Eucharist in monastic life and then proceeded to Chapter 10, on “Personal or Private Prayer.” In the book Fr. Demetrius emphasizes the importance of living in awareness of God’s presence as a key dimension of private prayer. The *Rule* often calls for vigilance, recognition of God’s presence and His gaze upon us, and purity of heart. Aside from discussion of the book, Fr. Donald suggested that all those present read the summary notes from the Assembly of Deanery of Representatives so that at future meetings the recommendations made during the presentations might be implemented in the Latrobe Deanery. Those present at the 3:00 session welcomed Oblates from Toledo, OH; Daphne, AL; Hanover, PA; and State College, PA.

At the meeting on September 21, some eighteen people gathered with Fr. Donald to discuss the final pages of *Cherish Christ above All*. First, the group reflected on the notion of private prayer as constant attention to the Lord, which seems to be an important theme of the *Rule*, and the idea of being hospitable to God and having reverence for time as God’s gift. Then the attendees addressed the issue of mystical prayer and the hints, in parts of the *Rule*, of the goal of an experienced loving communion with Christ. The group also made some preparations for Oblate Day on September 28 and for beginning discussions on a new book in October.

At the meeting on October 19, attended by some thirteen people, the group began a study of the *Rule* based on the *Commentary* by Dom Paul Delatte, O.S.B. After some preliminary remarks about the nature of the commentary and the way in which St. Benedict probably wrote the *Rule*, the attendees discussed the first three verses of the Prologue. Some of the themes treated were the importance of docility, the need to pay attention to God’s word, and the hard labor involved with obedience.

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

On August 17 Fr. Robert Keffer gave a presentation to over 30 people on silence in Benedictine spirituality. He began with a true story about resistance to the notion of silence in the 1960’s and 1970’s since it had sometimes been imposed rigidly in an earlier era. Nonetheless, silence is necessary for spiritual growth, and one needs to practice outward silence in order to develop a spiritual appreciation of silence. Fr. Robert noted that silence is a virtue connected with the theological virtue of charity and with the cardinal virtues of temperance and prudence. The letter of James and passages in the Old Testament mention the danger of using many words, which can easily lead to sin. St. Benedict recognized the need for rules for silence in order for his monks to have a peaceful environment and to be able better to seek the will of God. The *Rule* addresses the need for silence in terms of cautioning against raucous laughter, gossip, idle talk, and murmuring. Silence is encouraged in the oratory, in the refectory, at work, and during the practice of *lectio divina*. The practice of silence is not meant to deny our God-given gifts or to prevent healthy conversation or camaraderie; neither is it a mere mental or physical exercise. Ultimately, silence is meant to transform our loneliness to genuine solitude (with our minds cleansed of “junk”) and then to mystical communion with God. The practice of a daily “conscious examen” can help one to free the mind from noisy thoughts and to strive for recollection (with a “radar” against disordered thoughts) all day long.

On September 21 Br. Thomas Sanders, a monk of St. Andrew Abbey and a third-theology student at St. Vincent Seminary, gave a power-point presentation on the Liturgy of the Hours to an audience of over 30 people. After describing his first encounter with the

Divine Office when he was in high school, Br. Thomas defined the Liturgy of the Hours and described its ecclesial, communal, and personal dimensions. He then went on to speak of the Office's prominence in the Benedictine tradition, its nature as a "service" to God, and its significance in responding to our human need to "pray always." Br. Thomas next described each of the Hours, the connection of the Hours with the Holy Eucharist, and the great value of praying the Psalms. By "preferring nothing to the Work of God," he concluded, we undertake the ministry of making God's saving action visible in the world. Although most Oblates cannot each day pray the five Hours required of clergy and religious, they can pray as much of the Office as their schedules allow and thus try to live in a disposition of continual praise of thanksgiving.

On October 19 Fr. William Beaver, a former pastor and teacher, gave a presentation on hospitality in the *Rule*. He first referred to the traditional hospitality of the Irish people (even before Christian times) and hospitality in the Old Testament. He then noted examples of hospitality in the Gospels. Fr. Bill emphasized that hospitality is not only a performance of outward deeds but even more significantly and inner attitude of openness to other people rooted in Christ's love. Hospitality is to be shown first of all in families and communities, often by small courtesies. An overriding principle of Christian hospitality is that, as Our Lord says in Matthew 25, whenever we welcome a stranger, we really welcome Christ Himself. Such acts of hospitality are also acts of faith.

**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 September 22 and November 5. Various problems kept the Oblates from meeting in September and October, although they continue to sponsor a holy hour every Thursday in the church. Brian was phoning members to plan for the next meeting, scheduled for November 23. Several prayer intentions were mentioned.

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

Secretary Gabriele Terrill reported on October 22. This new deanery was recently formed from some members of the Annville Deanery as well as interested parishioners of Holy Spirit Church. The first meeting took place on October 19, with five Oblates and eight inquirers attending. The session began with Evening Prayer in the church. Fr. James Podlesny, pastor, was present at Evening Prayer and then gave a welcome to everyone, with some reflections on the importance of the psalms as expressing every human emotion, on the union of God with His Church foretold in the psalms, and on the necessary role of community in Oblate life. Then, after Fr. James left because of another commitment, the group enjoyed some refreshments, and the attendees introduced themselves to one another. Brochures and fliers were available for the inquirers. There was a lively discussion about the life of an Oblate and the importance of the virtue of simplicity in a materialistic world. Interest was expressed about retreats at the Archabbey. Finally, the Prologue of the *Rule* was read. The next meeting was scheduled for November 9 at 2:00 P.M.

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

Secretary Frederick Laux reported on August 17 and September 28. On July 31 Fr. Sean Pogue, moderator, celebrated Mass for the group, and Deacon John Etter led the meeting, which was attended by two Oblates and ten inquirers. The meeting opened with the Angelus and then proceeded to a continuing study of the Book of Wisdom. Oblate Curtis Kennedy gave a presentation on *RB* 49 and showed how it complemented the Book of Wisdom, with special citation of 7:14 and 1:5 and reference to the practice of self-denial and discipline. Curt also noted that obedience is connected with the practice of wisdom. The meeting ended with a praying of the Glory Be.

On August 14, **Daniel E. (Ansgar) Bauer** of Pendleton, IN, made his final Oblation in the presence of Fr. Sean Pogue.

After some discussion it was agreed that Deacon John Etter would serve as moderator for the deanery although Fr. Sean would continue to provide support. Before the meeting on August 28, Fr. Sean celebrated Mass. Three Oblates and eight inquirers attended the meeting. Fred gave a presentation about Chapter 68 of the *Rule*, which exhorts against the case of defending another monk. The example of St. Maximilian Kolbe was cited, in an incident in which he did not try to champion the cause even of his own brother. In a monastery it is the abbot who has the special charism to guide his flock; others are not to take on this responsibility.

Once again, on September 25, Fr. Sean celebrated Mass before the monthly meeting. Deacon John opened the meeting, attended by three Oblates and six inquirers, with the recitation of the Angelus. Then Oblate Dan Bauer gave a presentation on humility, with focus on *RB* 7: 1-4. It was stated that our gifts have been given to us for the glory of God, and they become useless if we use them only for self-exaltation. Again, an example from the life of St. Maximilian was cited. Deacon John closed the meeting by leading the praying of Glory Be.

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

Oblate George Ponticello reported by e-mail on September 1, September 23, and September 30. The meeting on August 21, attended by eight people, began with Evening Prayer in the church and continued with a discussion in the rectory about Chapter 15 of *Lessons from St. Benedict*. The group also considered taking a field trip to visit another local Benedictine community in October. Some possibilities considered were the sisters in Greensburg, Bakerstown, or Erie or the monks in Butler or Cleveland.

Nine people attended the meeting on September 25. After Evening Prayer in the church, the group gathered in the rectory to discuss Chapter 16 of *Lessons from St. Benedict*. They also decided, for the October meeting, to go on a field trip to visit the Benedictine Sisters of Pittsburgh in Bakerstown.

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

Secretary Peggi Gabler wrote on August 14, September 11, and October 5. The meeting on August 7, attended by six people, began after adoration, Evening Prayer, and Benediction. After a prayer Peggi read the minutes from the last meeting, and an Oblate novice expressed her desire to make final Oblation in September. Then the group read *RB* 55: 1-14 and discussed the matter of clothing allowed by the *Rule* versus the excess of possessions that many people have today. The meeting closed with prayers of intercession and the Oblate prayer.

The meeting on September 4 followed Evening Prayer and Benediction. Nine people attended, and Fr. Alfred Patterson, O.S.B., moderator, led the meeting. After a Benedictine prayer and the reading of the minutes from August, there was a reading of *RB* Prol: 21-32. Fr. Alfred recommended the reading of the life of St. Benedict by Pope St. Gregory the Great. It was decided to celebrate Lorraine Gerber's final Oblation on October 2. The meeting ended with the recitation of the Oblate prayer.

The meeting on October 2 began with Vespers and reposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Then

**Lorraine C. (Theresa Faustina) Gerber** of St. Marys, PA,

made her final Oblation in the presence of Fr. Alfred and the others gathered for the meeting. Then the group of twelve went to the school cafeteria for a short meeting, which included the recitation of the Oblate prayer and a reading of the minutes from the meeting in September. Fr. Alfred recommended that the Oblates purchase and read *The Life and Miracles of St. Benedict*. The attendees then read the fourth step of humility (*RB* 7: 35-43), set the next meeting for November 6, and closed with a prayer of St. Benedict.

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

Fr. Killian Loch, O.S.B., reported on September 10 and then late in October. The first gathering for the semester occurred on September 8 and was promoted as an "information night" for those college students interested in the Oblate Program. Only two Oblate novices attended. Also, Fr. Killian sent out an e-mail message to all Oblate novices and those who had expressed interest.

At the first regular meeting in September, one Oblate and three Oblate novices shared about why they chose to enter the Oblate Program with the seven other students who attended. Also, Fr. Killian gave an overview of what an Oblate is and what are the requirements. The inquirers were invited to attend subsequent meetings for several months before they would be asked if they were interested in becoming Oblate novices.

In preparation for the meeting in October, Fr. Killian sent the members a description of *lectio divina* from the *Oblate Formation Booklet*. This handout served as the basis for the discussion at the meeting. The group took part in an exercise of group *lectio*.

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

Moderator Fr. Ronald Gatman reported by mail on September 22. The Oblate Council met in August and September to put together an agenda for the coming academic year. The first full gathering of the Oblate community for 2014-15 took place on September 21, beginning at 2:00, with a session of *lectio* in the prayer room. The group meditated on the passage in St. Mark's Gospel dealing with Jesus' raising of the daughter of Jairus. At 3:00 Fr. Ronald celebrated Mass for the group, and then they enjoyed a covered-dish supper together.

The Oblate community in Savannah has also been involved in charitable work. During 2013-14 the community raised \$700.00 and sent half to help St. Vincent Academy in Savannah with scholarships and the other half to the Carmelite nuns in Savannah to help them with the construction of a new monastery. (continued)

### **Savannah, GA** (continued from last page)

In October the Oblates met for a discussion on the *Rule* and for Vespers with Peter Palouci, who is involved with vocational work, as a speaker. In November Fr. Jay Madden is scheduled to celebrate Mass for the group. In January Deacon Jerry Clark, a member of the faculty at Benedictine Military School, was to be the speaker at Vespers. In February Fr. Frank, O.S.B., is to celebrate Mass for the Oblates. In March Sr. Lisa Griffith, R.S.M., who works at St. Vincent Academy, is to speak at Vespers. In April there is to be an annual Oblate day of recollection. It was noted by Fr. Ronald that a number of Oblates attend daily Mass at the priory at 6:20 A.M.

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

Oblate Marcia LaBant has assumed the role of co-lay leader/secretary. In her e-mail report of October 6, she mentioned that four members of the deanery had met on October 4 at the Haven Retreat Center for a retreat from 9:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. The event gave the Oblates and Oblate novices a chance to pray the Liturgy of the Hours together as well as to walk in the labyrinth and to have some time for personal prayer. The next meeting was scheduled for November 9 at St. Pius X Church.

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

On August 8-10, the Catholic community at S.C.I.-Somerset sponsored a retreat with themes and workshops based on the *Rule* of St. Benedict. The overall theme was "Wake Up to Christ," and the workshops focused on humility, obedience, prayer, and the Eucharist. Members of the St. John Paul II Deanery, along with their moderator, Fr. James Dugan, were instrumental in the planning of the retreat and led workshops, provided music, and shared about the lives of relevant saints. On the morning of August 9, Fr. Donald gave a conference on humility, and in the afternoon Fr. Nathan Munsch, O.S.B., gave a conference on obedience.

After the conference on humility and some discussion,

**John (Justus) Liebel** of Somerset, PA,

made his final Oblation in the presence of Fr. Donald and the others who were gathered in the chapel at Somerset.

Co-lay leader/secretary Steward Steckley wrote on August 20, October 4, and October 14. The meeting on July 22 was attended by five Oblates, four Oblate novices, one inquirer, and Fr. Dugan. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, Steward spoke about the memorial of St. Mary Magdalene. Then Oblate Jeff McCaughtry gave a presentation on contrition, including the statement, "Conversion is, first of all, a work of the grace of God, Who makes our hearts return to Him." The meeting closed with the praying of Compline and special prayers for Oblate Lora Jacob, who would be moving and would no longer be able to attend deanery meetings.

The meeting on August 5, attended by twelve people, including two inquirers, began with an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*. Oblate novice Christian Gagnon then gave a reflection on the Sacrament of Baptism, with emphasis on the necessity of Baptism and on the graces which flow from it. The meeting closed with Compline.

On August 19 Fr. Dugan invested in his office

**Richard Stambaugh** of Somerset, PA,

as an Oblate novice. Oblates Steward Steckley, Jr., and Jeff McCaughtry were also present.

The meeting on August 26 was attended by six Oblates, two Oblate novices, and two inquirers in addition to Fr. Dugan. After an opening prayer (one by St. John Chrysostom) and a reading from the *Rule*, inquirer Mark Doncic gave a presentation on the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. Then Steward led a discussion about the difference between the Eastern Catholic Churches and the Orthodox Churches. The meeting ended with Compline.

The meeting on September 9 was attended by five Oblates, three Oblate novices, four inquirers, and Deacon David Hornick, who was leading in the absence of Fr. Dugan. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, Oblate novice Richard Lafayette gave a presentation about his journey of faith. Then there was some clarification about questions concerning Catholicism and Orthodoxy. The meeting ended with Compline.

On September 23 four Oblates, three Oblate novices, and three inquirers gathered with Deacon David. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, Oblate novice Jeffery Hahn gave a presentation on the twelve steps of humility from *RB 7*, with emphasis on practicing humility in a non-monastic setting. A handout was distributed. It was mentioned that charity and humility work together, with reference to 1 Cor 13. It was decided that the last meeting for 2014 would be held on October 14 and that the first meeting for 2015 would be held on January 13. The meeting ended with Compline.

The meeting on October 14 was attended by a number of Oblates, Oblate novices, and inquirers in addition to acting moderator Deacon David, who after an opening prayer invested

**Ronald C. Bergman** of Gibsonia, PA,

as an Oblate novice. Then Steward led a group discussion about Chapter 4 of the *Rule*. There was much discussion about ways to apply the "tools for good works" in one's given environment. The meeting ended with a special prayer for a member who was about to depart and then with the praying of Compline.

### **Southern Pines, NC (St. Ephrem the Syrian Deanery)** – *monthly meetings on 2<sup>nd</sup> Thurs. of month*

Lay leader Laura Lowder reported by e-mail on October 1 and October 24. The three members who met in September began with Vespers. Then they agreed to begin to study the *Rule* again from beginning to end. They proceeded to read and study the Prologue and gained some insights that were different from those gleaned on the previous read-through.

The next meeting, on October 9, was attended by two members, who prayed the Office, discussed Chapter 1 of the *Rule*, and then discussed Chapter 2, with particular emphasis on how the role and duties of the abbot translate into family life and into the vocation of teacher. Other members were not able to attend either because of illness or because of a parish crisis. One Oblate has some ideas about helping to attract new members.

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

Secretary Kay Tittmann reported by e-mail on September 10 and October 15. There was a recording of the praying of the rosary on August 18 for radio station WAOB/WJVM. Nine Oblates attended the session, which was aired on September 9. (*continued*)

### **State College, PA** (*continued from last page*)

The meeting on September 8 began with the sharing of tea and cookies to celebrate the Blessed Mother's birthday. Nine Oblates, two Oblate novices, and three inquirers attended along with Fr. David, moderator. After the praying of Vespers, the group began a discussion of a new book, *The Road to Eternal Life* by Fr. Michael Casey, O.C.S.O., which is a collection of reflections on each verse of the Prologue of the *Holy Rule*. The purpose of the Prologue is to map out the road that leads to heaven, which requires the acquisition of virtues and the help of a spiritual mentor. Also required is perseverance and a struggle against spiritual inactivity, which is the major obstacle to spiritual growth. The meeting ended with a prayer, a singing of the "Última," and the voicing of several prayer intentions.

The meeting on October 13 began with Evening Prayer. Seven Oblates, two Oblate novices, and four inquirers were in attendance in addition to Fr. David. The group continued to discuss *The Road to Eternal Life*, with emphasis on the themes of doing God's will at all times (with no time off!), the need to keep reactivating one's spiritual journey, and the vision of our journey as an exciting adventure of following Christ to glory. Spiritual awareness requires moving toward a "low-impact environment"; listening to God ever more intensely and the avoidance of hardening the heart are crucial. Four causes of the hardening are forgetfulness of God, the pursuit of trifles, a defect of self-knowledge, and a defect of self-acceptance. Furthermore, the call to holiness is universal, and the journey to God is accomplished in communion with one another. The primary source of guidance is the word of God; hence the practice of *lectio divina* is strongly recommended. The meeting ended with a prayer, the singing of the "Última," and the voicing of prayer intentions.

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

Lay leader/secretary Delina Pauls wrote on August 19 and September 11. At the meeting on July 2, one inquirer and an Oblate affiliated with another monastery were among the attendees. At the meeting on August 6, Br. Joachim, visiting from the Archabbey, spoke about his discernment process in becoming a Benedictine monk, including his travels and his studies. The group found his presentation very interesting. Two inquirers were among those present.

Fifteen members attended the meeting on September 3, with Fr. Lee, moderator, leading. Since it was the feast of St. Gregory the Great, Fr. Lee mentioned that all that we know about St. Benedict is from St. Gregory's *Life and Miracles of St. Benedict* and the *Rule*. Chapter 33 of *Life and Miracles*, concerning the final encounter between St. Benedict and St. Scholastica, was read and discussed. Then the group considered a possible mini-retreat in October, with a speaker from St. Vincent and with a tentative date of October 18.

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

Lay leader/secretary Sue Wykoff reported by phone on November 6. Six people attended the meeting on September 14. Although a new sacristan had accidentally locked the group out of the church, they were able to meet in the picnic area outside the church. First, the attendees practiced some chant tones from the Archabbey that they would be able to use in the psalmody. Then they prayed the Office of Readings for the Exaltation of the Holy Cross and had a discussion about the meaning of the feast. The three Oblates present renewed their Oblation. The meeting ended with a praying of the Angelus and some discussion about the program for the coming year.

Because of other commitments, including a pilgrimage, only two people met on October 12. After praying the Office of Readings, the

attendees viewed Br. Canice's presentation on the Eucharist. Then they prayed the Angelus and discussed the next meeting, which was scheduled for November 9.

### **Various Locations**

On August 26 in the Archabbey Basilica, after the praying of Vespers,  
**Kenneth (Francis) Lavin** of Toronto, Ont., Canada,  
made his final Oblation in the presence of Fr. Donald; Fr. Anselmo Park, O.S.B.; Br. Joachim; and Oblate George Bordell. Fr. Anselmo is a monk of Waegwan Abbey in Korea who is currently doing graduate studies in Toronto. He happened to meet Ken last year and invested Ken as an Oblate novice.

On September 17 at the W.T.S.P. chapel in Henning, TN,  
**Devin (Amadeus) Banks** of Henning, TN,  
made his final Oblation in the presence of Rev. John J. Hourican.

On October 29 in Dallas, PA, Deacon Steve J. Napoli invested  
**Patrick E. Izzo** of Dallas, PA,  
as an Oblate novice.

### **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. Noel Rothrauff, Fr. Bede Hasso (recovering from back surgery), Fr. Jeremy Bolha, Fr. Jacques Daley, Fr. Cyprian Constantine (eye surgery on Nov. 3), Fr. Paul Rubadue, Br. James Cartwright

### **A NOTE ON THE MAILING TO OBLATE NOVICES DONE IN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER**

From August to November, Oblate Deborah Johnston helped Fr. Donald to prepare a mailing to over 150 Oblate novices who have been Oblate novices for over five years. The reason was to remind these people of their Oblate commitment and to ask whether they wished, at least eventually, to pursue final Oblation or perhaps withdraw from the Oblate Program. We thank the many who have replied so far. Many have decided to leave the Oblate Program, often with expressions of gratitude for their time with us. For those who have not yet replied, please do so whenever you can – by U.S. mail, by e-mail, or by phone. One should not feel pressured to become a full Oblate if one is not really ready; on the other hand, it is important to realize that the state of being an Oblate novice is normally meant to result in final Oblation.

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

Br. John Paul's talk on *lectio divina* in Benedictine spirituality (April 21, 2013):  
C.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)      D.V.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

Fr. Sebastian's talk on silence in Benedictine spirituality (May 19, 2013):  
C.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)      D.V.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

Fr. Chad's talk on St. Benedict & his *Rule* (June 23, 2013):  
C.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)      D.V.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

Sandra Monier's talk on the Eucharist in Benedictine spirituality (July 21, 2013):  
C.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)      D.V.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

Liz Hart's talk work in Benedictine spirituality (August 18, 2013):  
C.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)      D.V.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

Fr. John Peck's talk on hospitality in Benedictine spirituality (September 15, 2013):  
C.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)      D.V.D. \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

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's talk on hospitality (October 19, 2014):

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

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**Please order from Saint Vincent Book Center over the phone at 724-805-2557 or online at [www.stvincent.bkstr.com](http://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.**

### **OBLATES ARE INVITED TO ATTEND CAMERATA CONCERTS**

Oblates are welcome to attend concerts offered by the Saint Vincent Camerata. On Saturday, December 6, at 7:30 P.M. and on Sunday, December 7 at 2:30 P.M., there will be a "Festival of Lessons and Carols" in the Archabbey Basilica. On Saturday, April 11, at 7:30 P.M. in the Basilica and on Sunday, April 12, at 4:00 P.M. at Synod Hall, St. Paul Cathedral, Oakland, Pittsburgh, the Camerata Scholars will perform "Early Baroque Works by Monteverdi, Buxtehude, and Schütz." On Saturday, May 2, at St. Bernard Parish in Mt. Lebanon, Pittsburgh, and on Sunday, May 3, at 2:30 P.M. in the Basilica, the Camerata and The Academy Chamber Orchestra will perform the *Requiem*, Opus 9, by Maurice Duruflé. For tickets and further information, phone 724-805-2579.

### **A REMINDER: OBLATES SHOULD NOT USE INITIALS**

Since Oblates of St. Benedict are a "pious association of the faithful" and not a canonical order of the Catholic Church, Oblates should not use such initials after their names as "O.S.B.Obl.," despite the fact that some Oblates have developed this custom. Using such an appendage is contrary to Catholic tradition and practice.

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### **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 the following:

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

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

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Please send this form to Mrs. Mary Ann Kaufman, 305 Harvester Circle, Pittsburgh, PA 15241 (412-302-8501); or send the information by e-mail to [305makaufman@gmail.com](mailto:305makaufman@gmail.com) .

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