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# THE SAINT VINCENT OBLATE NEWS

## Saint Vincent Archabbey

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### SERVING GOD WITH “THE GOOD THINGS HE HAS GIVEN US”: ECOLOGY IN THE RULE OF SAINT BENEDICT

Dear Oblates, Oblate novices, and Friends,

#### **Pope Francis, St. Francis, & St. Benedict**

Much of the world has become familiar with Pope Francis' (and the Church's) concern for the environment as well as for the plight of the world's poor, both of which are treated at length in the recent encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home* (LS). In addressing the problem of “global environmental deterioration,”\* the Holy Father, as one might expect, often refers to St. Francis of Assisi, who had a deep appreciation for nature and its relationship with mankind and who is often considered the patron saint of ecology. However, in a similar way, St. Benedict can be considered a patron of wise stewardship of material things because of several passages in the *Rule* and because of the broad vision of reality that he experienced near the end of his life. What can we learn about our relationship with nature and with the poor from what St. Benedict says in the *Rule* and from the 1500-year-old Benedictine tradition?

Pope Francis refers specifically to St. Benedict in #126 of *Laudato Si'*, in which he states, “We can also look to the great tradition of monasticism. Originally, it was a kind of flight from the world, an escape from the decadence of the cities. The monks sought the desert, convinced that it was the best place for encountering the presence of God. Later, Saint Benedict of Nursia proposed that his monks live in community, combining prayer and spiritual reading with manual labor (*ora et labora*). Seeing manual labor as spiritually meaningful proved revolutionary. Personal growth and sanctification came to be sought in the interplay of recollection and work. This way of experiencing work makes us more protective and respectful of the environment; it imbues our relationship to the world with a healthy sobriety.” St. Benedict's vision of manual labor as a dignified activity and as an important element in the monks' daily schedule was countercultural. Unlike the Roman culture's regard for such work as demeaning, St. Benedict reminded his monks that the way in which one worked and the way in which one handled things at work formed part of one's journey toward God.

#### **Sacredness of material creation**

One of the most quoted verses of the *Rule* is RB 31:9, which prescribes that the cellarer “will regard all utensils and goods of the monastery as sacred vessels of the altar.” The cellarer, that is the keeper of the monastery's material goods, is also to be “aware that nothing is to be neglected” and must avoid being “wasteful and extravagant with the goods of the monastery” (31:11-12). He is only a steward of these things, which are gifts from

God intended for the common use of the community. The implication is that all the monks are to be careful stewards of the material things entrusted to them. We show our reverence for God not only in the chapel, not only in communal prayer and private prayer, but also amid our daily duties. When we handle our tools, our computers, our appliances and other machines, our books, and our pencils and pens with respect and care, then we are also showing our love for God, who made these things and entrusted them to us as an overflow of His bountiful love. These days it is especially urgent that we handle the computer in a morally responsible way. It is so easy to become addicted to pornographic images on the Internet. For the sake of vigilance, it might be prudent to pray before every time we turn on the computer with such words as “Lord, help me to use this time only for Your glory and for spiritually or intellectually edifying purposes. Nudge me firmly away from anything indecent. Guide me in being faithful to the work that You want me to do.” In the first place, of course, we had better not even use the computer on a particular occasion if we do not have some specific worthy purpose in mind.

#### **Simplicity and moderation**

Simplicity of lifestyle is also characteristic of Benedictine monasticism. For example, St. Benedict specifies that the monks' clothing, which “should vary according to local conditions and climate” (55:1), is to be sufficient but not excessive. He insists that “monks must not complain about the color or coarseness of all these articles, but use what is available in the vicinity at a reasonable cost” (55:7). Furthermore, “whenever new clothing is received, the old should be returned at once and stored in a wardrobe for the poor” (55:9). Thus St. Benedict connects care for material goods and simplicity of life with care for the poor, much as Pope Francis does in greater detail. These prescriptions of the *Rule* might challenge us to ask ourselves how we deal with our clothing. Do we clothe ourselves with simplicity and modesty? Do we respect clothing as a gift from God that has passed through many hands in the process of manufacturing? Do we seek not to accumulate more clothes than necessary? Do we buy new clothes too readily instead of reusing or repairing what is older? When we do need to replace old clothing, do we donate it to the poor if it is still usable? Do we avoid being influenced by current fashions, especially if having what is fashionable leads to unnecessary expenses or inward slavery to what appeals to certain people? Do we ever pray over the matter, “How much is really sufficient for me?”

### **Other references in the Rule and custody of desires**

St. Benedict also speaks of material goods in several other passages of the *Rule*... In Chapter 2 he warns the abbot “not [to] show too great concern for the fleeting and temporal things of this world, neglecting or treating lightly the welfare of those entrusted to him” (2:33). This idea accords with the Christian principle of using material creation for the benefit of mankind’s ultimate welfare, of resisting impulses of greed and useless worry, and of dealing with things in such a way as to promote justice in society. In the first and second steps of humility, St. Benedict asserts that “we must ... be on guard against any base desire” (7:24) and describes the second step as a monk’s “[loving] not his own will nor [taking] pleasure in the satisfaction of his desires” (7:31). Presumably, “base desires” include excessive attachment to material goods and the pleasures that come from them. Such cravings and attachments are what lead to abusive and self-centered dealings with the earth’s goods. Chapter 32 prescribes that “the goods of the monastery ... should be entrusted to brothers whom the abbot appoints and in whose manner of life he has confidence” (32:1). Furthermore, St. Benedict insists that “whoever fails to keep the things belonging to the monastery clean or treats them carelessly should be reproved” (32:4). Thus the disciplined, respectful care for material goods is a key Benedictine virtue. Chapters 33 and 34 address the avoidance of private ownership and the fair distribution of goods. The common ownership of goods and their just distribution (according to need) constitute a necessary dimension of monastic spirituality; the manner in which one treats and distributes material realities is very much connected with the interior life of the soul. This principle is also shown in Chapter 35, in which kitchen servers are told to “wash the towels which the brothers use to wipe their hands and feet” (35:7). The proper care for utensils is repeated in verse 10, which specifies that “the utensils required for the kitchen service are to be washed and returned to the cellarer.” In addition, various regulations for food and drink in Chapters 36-41, 49, 51, 53, and 56 indicate that grace-filled attention to bodily needs is a part of the call to holiness. Finally, Chapter 57 deals with the artisans and the products that they make and sell. The stipulations that fraud and avarice are to be avoided remind the monk and the Christian that material goods and money are not meant for self-gratification but should help the monks live by the principle “that in all things God may be glorified” (*RB* 57:9; 1 Pt 4:11). We might ask ourselves whether, in our families and communities, we are solicitous of each individual’s real needs for material things and whether, if we have any authority, we seek a just distribution. We might remind ourselves often that our material goods are only on loan to us and that, as St. John Chrysostom preached, whatever we do not really need belongs to the poor. We might examine our ways of eating to discern whether we eat what is genuinely good for our bodies or whether we are sometimes captivated by flavor or by the need to impress people by what we serve. Does our purchasing and eating of food reflect Christian principles and good stewardship of our bodies?

### **Insights from Sister Mary McDonald, S.G.S.**

Last July Sister Mary McDonald, S.G.S., from the Good-Shepherd Benedictines in Australia, put out a reflection on the Internet entitled “Common threads: Francis’ encyclical and Benedict’s rule.” She mentions that Pope Francis’ stress on the interconnectedness of all aspects of life is “also central to the Rule of Benedict.” She asserts that St. Benedict’s invitation to “listen with the ear of the heart” (*RB* Prol: 1) corresponds to Pope Francis’ call “to listen so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” (*LS*, #42). St. Benedict’s stipulations about cultivating silence in *RB* 6, 7, and 42 correspond to Pope Francis’ warning against the unhealthy use of the media and the digital world, whereby “their influence can stop people from learning how to live wisely, to think deeply and to love generously” (*LS*, #47). St. Benedict’s great concern for the care of the poor in *RB* 4 and 31 reflects Pope Francis’ deep compassion for the world’s poor, who suffer more than others from environmental problems. The Holy Father urgently exhorts us, “Let us not only keep the poor of the future in mind, but also today’s poor, whose life on earth is brief and who cannot keep waiting” (*LS*, #162). St. Benedict’s vision of the monastery as “the house of God” (*RB* 31:19, 53:22) and his references to the sacredness of the tools and goods of the monastery are very much related to Pope Francis’ insistence that everything is connected (*LS* #16) and that the problems of pollution and climate change “are closely linked to a throwaway culture which affects the excluded just as it quickly reduces things to rubbish” (*LS* #22).

### **Practical Responses for Oblates**

How can we as Oblates and monks respond to the call to become better stewards of “our common home”? Pope Francis has an abundance of practical suggestions for individuals as well as for institutions. Let me just mention a few that seem to reflect a “Benedictine way” of thinking and acting on a small scale. This way, as reflected in Chapter 49 on the observance of Lent, is one of joy in simplicity, out of love for Christ. Pope Francis states, “Christian spirituality proposes an alternative understanding of the quality of life, and encourages a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption” (*LS*, #222). We are to learn to nurture “moderation and the capacity to be happy with little” (#222). Like the *Rule*’s urging of the monks to pursue peace, Pope Francis implores us to seek “inner peace” and a “balanced lifestyle together with a capacity for wonder which takes us to a deeper understanding of life” (#225). Just as we can learn to treat creation with reverence, we need to “[approach] life with serene attentiveness,” which involves “being fully present to someone without thinking of what comes next” and accepting “each moment as a gift from God to be lived to the full” (#226). The Holy Father urges all believers “to return to [the] beautiful and meaningful custom” of “stopping” and [giving] thanks to God before and after meals” (#227).

He also praises St. Thérèse of Lisieux and her “little way”; “an integral ecology,” he says, “is ... made up of simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation, and selfishness” (#230). A healthy observance of the Sabbath rest on Sundays “protects human action from becoming empty activism; it also prevents that unfettered greed and sense of isolation which make us seek personal gain to the detriment of all else” (#237). In #211 of the encyclical Pope Francis specifically recommends “cultivating sound virtues that will enable people to make a selfless ecological commitment.” Among the Holy Father’s specific suggestions are using less heating, wearing warmer clothes to save on heat, “avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can be reasonably consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or carpooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of other practices” (#211). He lauds these small actions and assures us, “We must not think that these efforts are not going to change the world. They benefit society, often unbeknown to us, for they call forth a goodness which, albeit unseen, inevitably tends to spread” (#212).

Yes, little things can make a big difference! We who follow St. Benedict’s *Rule* are called to “keep this little rule” (*RB* 73:8) day in and day out and to seek out other literary sources “for the cultivation of virtue” (73:6). In little ways every day we can learn to show greater respect for the poor; counteract our tendencies to over-consumption, gluttony, and greed; and help to conserve

and beautify the environment around our homes and work places. We can learn to buy only what we need, not to travel any more than necessary, not to take more food than we can eat, to use recycling bins consistently, and to persist in all such practices even when doing so is inconvenient. In all these ways we help to make “our common home” of the world a peace-filled “house of God,” where no one is “disquieted or distressed” (31:19) and where the earth’s natural resources are appreciated as God’s gifts and distributed “to each one as he [has] need” (*RB* 34:1; Acts 4:35). As St. Benedict exhorts us in the Prologue, “We must always so serve Him with the good things He has given us, that He will never as an angry Father disinherit His children” (Prol: 6, Doyle translation). Let us each day embrace the little opportunities the Lord gives us to make our contributions to fulfilling His plan for the world, “our common home.”

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, 2015

Dear Oblates and Friends of Saint Vincent,

On All Souls Day and throughout the month of November, the Church invites us to remember our departed family members and friends. In the Mass for Christian Burial, we pray: “For your faithful, Lord, life is changed, not ended.” Pope Saint John XXIII adds that “to remember the dead in prayer gives me courage and joy in confident hope of joining them all again in the everlasting glory of heaven.”

This “Month of Remembrance” calls us to be grateful for the blessings which we have received from those who have gone before us in faith. Thus, we give thanks for the gift of our faith and for those who have nurtured that faith throughout our lives. Our parents and families provide the context for our growth in faith and our maturation in hope and love.

In celebration of the great gift of God’s mercy revealed to us in Jesus Christ, Pope Francis proclaimed 2016 as the “Year of Mercy.” Let us pray that our hearts may be ready to welcome God’s mercy as we, in turn, offer His love and mercy to those who come to us in need.

Sincerely in Christ,

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

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: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2015**

Some 46 people, Oblates and family members and other guests, came to the Archabbey for our 28th annual Oblate Day. 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:

Oblate: **Phyllis A. (Faustina) Dolan** of Irwin, PA  
Oblate novices: **Joan Fye** of Erie, PA  
**Joshua S. Solomon** of Pittsburgh, PA.

After confessions in the basilica, there was a social in the Parish Assembly Room, during which the Archabbey String Quartet performed selections from *Water Music* by Georg Handel.

Then at 3:45 Fr. Boniface Hicks, O.S.B., program manager for radio station WAOB, gave a presentation about community in the *Rule* and the importance of both weakness and strength in helping us grow in our lives of faith. Earlier in the day, Pope Francis had spoken to the U.S. bishops about the importance of family, and those themes are reflected in the *Rule*. The high point of creation was God's gift of the human family, and He chose to redeem us through a family - the Holy Family. Consumerism leads us to have more options but takes away from the bonding involved in human relationships, so that we end up discarding whatever is not satisfying. Our culture is characterized by loneliness, a chase after the latest fad, a fear of commitment, and limitless effort to feel recognized. The gift of community as St. Benedict portrays it in the *Rule* can be an antidote for these dysfunctions. Fr. Boniface commented, "When weakness and strength come together, something beautiful happens." Unfortunately, our culture tries to discard all weakness. In contrast, St. Benedict has compassion for weaknesses of all sorts - in the infirm, in the old, in the young. Those who have strength are put into the service of those who are weak; those who are weak give the strong an opportunity to serve. In sum, having weakness and serving others in weakness work together to build community. St. Benedict also warns against those tendencies and behaviors that destroy community: spiritual worldliness (as that of the gyrovagues and sarabaites), self-sufficiency, murmuring, and gossip. Such behaviors spurn our weaknesses and the weaknesses of others. Another great danger is the destruction of differences, along with the objectification of people. Our communities and families need commitment, humility, love, and attention to others' needs. These must be practiced again and again! How can we do better to overcome the individualism of our society? We need to live by the mercy shown to us in the Gospel! (Fr. Boniface's talk was recorded, and C.D.'s and D.V.D.'s are available at the St. Vincent College Book Store and at Oblate meetings in Latrobe.)

Then the Oblates joined the monastic community for Vespers. The day's events ended with supper and the singing of the Benedictine "Ultima." Ten attendees were overnight guests, and seven of them stayed until Monday.

### **TENTH FALL OBLATE DAY OF RECOLLECTION AT THE ARCHABBEY - Saturday, October 17, 2015**

Some 46 people, mostly Oblates, attended this annual event, with conferences in St. Gregory Chapel. Fr. Robert Keffer, O.Cist., the retreat master, delivered conferences about the season of autumn, the angels, and dealing with suffering.

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

Oblate: **Joanne M. (Gertrude the Great) Robertson** of Alexandria, VA  
Oblate novice: **Mitchell Megliola** of Duryea, PA.

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."

### **OBLATE DAY AND DAY OF RECOLLECTION FOR 2016**

Oblate Day for 2016 has been scheduled for Sunday, September 25, 2016, since facilities will be available on that day. The October day of recollection for 2016 has been scheduled for Saturday, October 15, 2016.

### **RETREAT SCHEDULE FOR 2016**

The retreats at St. Vincent for summer, 2016, have been scheduled. The retreat on Benedictine spirituality is to be held on May 13-15, 2016, and the silent retreat is to be offered on June 24-26, 2016. The first retreat will be directed by Fr. Donald, and the silent retreat by Fr. Boniface. **All Oblates and Oblate novices are urged to consider making a summer retreat at the Archabbey.**

### **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 7 and October 2, 2015**

Members of the Board assembled for their 54th and 55th regular meetings at 6:30 P.M. on August 7 and October 2 in Brownfield 203. The meeting on August 2, attended by seven members, involved discussion of a questionnaire to be sent to all Oblate groups and deaneries, results of the NAABOD meeting in July, plans to have a special formation program for Oblate novices, thoughts about a new version of the prayer-partner program, the planned brochure for first-time Oblate visitors, and potential new members of the board.

The meeting on October 2 was attended by ten members. The group welcomed Gabriel Pellathy as a new member and considered a number of issues: work on a new formation program for Oblate novices, continuing work on a brochure for guests, a proposed revision of the prayer-partner program, and happenings in the various deaneries and other Oblate groups. The next meeting, barring inclement weather, has been scheduled for January 8, 2016.

### **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 .

### **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.

### **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 one 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.

### **MAILING TO OBLATE NOVICES DONE DURING AUTUMN OF 2014**

Last year the Oblate Office undertook a mailing to about 188 Oblate novices who had been novices for over three years. The reason for the form letter 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. About 60 people replied, almost half of whom withdrew from the Oblate Program. Unfortunately, the record of those who replied and those who did not has been lost. If you are among 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. In any case, please do keep in touch with the Oblate Office!

### **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 (this often happens), please return them to the Oblate Office as soon as possible.

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

- Abbot Jean-Charles Nault, O.S.B., *The Noonday Devil: Acedia, the Unnamed Evil of Our Times* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2015) - highly recommended
- Fr. Kurt Stasiak, O.S.B., "Getting to the Heart of Stability: What kind of monk/oblate are you?" (St. Meinrad, IN: Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 2007) - paper booklet

### **SPECIAL WEBSITE DEALING WITH THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE PSALTER**

One of our Oblates, Dennis Flowers of Summerfield, OH, recommends a website, PSALLAM DOMINO, which describes the spirituality of the "Benedictine Office" and of *lectio divina*. Denny says that it is also a good source of information about the psalms.

### **RECOMMENDED READING**

- Fr. Matthew Kelty, O.C.S.O., *Singing for the Kingdom: The Last of the Homilies* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2008)

### **\*OBLATE DEANERIES AND OTHER GROUPS: PLEASE RESPOND TO SURVEY**

In September and October a questionnaire, which may become an annual endeavor, was sent by e-mail or U.S. mail to all Oblate deaneries or other groups that meet regularly. Only a few have responded as of November 7. If your group has not yet responded, please do so by December 15 so that the Oblate Board of Advisors may begin to compile and assess the results beginning in January.

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

Fr. Vincent de Paul Crosby, O.S.B., reported on September 26. The meeting on September 12 began with Morning Prayer according the Roman Rite. Attending the meeting were special guests, Rev. & Mrs. Peter & Deborah Allsworth from North Wales, U.K., who had been invested as Oblate novices at the Archabbey on September 3. Fr. Vincent de Paul used the occasion to speak in more detail about Oblate life, with an explanation that it is a reaffirmation of one's original baptismal commitment. The Allsworths and the other Oblates who were present gave testimony about what their Oblate commitment had meant for their lives. There was subsequently some enthusiastic sharing. Finally, Fr. Vincent de Paul invested as an Oblate novice

**Theresa M. George** of Philadelphia, PA.

Then the group enjoyed lunch together. The next meeting was scheduled for November 7, 2015, at 10:00 A.M. at Saint Mary's

(Episcopalian) Church at 630 E. Cathedral Rd., Philadelphia, PA 19128.

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

Secretary Pauline Lanciotti reported by e-mail on October 12. Although monthly meetings are not possible at this time, there is hope that the Oblates and Oblate novices will, for the time being, meet informally in the members' homes to discuss Benedictine spirituality.

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

Oblate Cathy Mayled reported by e-mail on September 3 and October 31. On August 27 a group of five met in Julie Sousa's house. After an opening prayer, the group concluded a series of discussions on Chapter 4 of the *Rule*. They also talked about the forthcoming trip to the Archabbey. The meeting ended with the praying of Compline. (Five of the group attended Oblate Day at St. Vincent.)

The meetings of September 24 and October 22 were both attended by five people. Over the two meetings the group discussed Chapter 5 of the *Rule*. The meetings ended with the praying of Compline.

#### **OBLATE GROUP IN TENNESSEE COLONY, TX**

There was no report.

#### **OBLATE MEETINGS IN LATROBE** (N.B.: As mentioned below, we are currently studying Delatte's *Commentary* on the *Rule*.)

Oblates from all locations and their guests are invited to monthly meetings at the Archabbey. The forthcoming meetings will be on Sundays November 15, December 20, January 17, and February 21 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.

#### **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 4:15. They are taught by monks or Oblates. All are welcome to attend. The class on November 15, to be taught by Fr. Boniface Hicks, O.S.B., will address the topic "Work in Benedictine Spirituality," and the class on December 20, to be taught by Fr. Donald., will be about "The Liturgy of the Hours."

#### **ADORATION FOR VOCATIONS IN ST. GREGORY CHAPEL; EXPOSITION 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 22, exposition will begin at 12:30 P.M. in the basilica and will conclude with Benediction at the end of Vespers, which begins, as usual, at 5:00.**

#### **NEWS FROM OBLATE DEANERIES**

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

There was no report.

**Annvile, 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 August 23. At the meeting on July 26, during Evening Prayer, Fr. Job, moderator, invested

**Claudia M. Leo** of Hershey, PA,

as an Oblate novice. During the past few months Oblates have made suggestions about how the deanery could serve the local community. The discussion is intended to continue.

The meeting on August 23, which was attended by twelve people besides Fr. Job, began with Evening Prayer in the sanctuary of the church and continued with the annual "Oblate picnic." During the picnic Fr. Job read an excerpt from a booklet used at Mass, with a question about how we approach the Eucharist. (Are we attentive to the presence of Christ or distracted? Do we look forward to receiving the sublime gift of Christ's Body and Blood from the loving hand of the Father?) Also, Fr. Job answered questions about his recent trip to Honduras to visit an orphanage with some 400 orphans. Those wishing to learn more about it were encouraged to visit the website NPH USA (Nuestros Pequenos Hermanos). Then Mary Ann informed the group about an invitation to attend a day of recollection on September 12 sponsored by Oblates in Lancaster and led by a monk of St. Meinrad Archabbey. The meeting ended with a prayer and a blessing from Fr. Job.

**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 October 29. The turnout at the meeting on October 25 was low; so the decision to choose a book for study was postponed. Fr. Paschal gave a presentation on the Holy Cross as a mystery of faith. He connected his reflections with an explanation of the jubilee medal of St. Benedict. Fr. Paschal also distributed copies of a homily given for the 25<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time to assist the group with *lectio divina*. He also shared some of his experiences from a recent trip to France and reviewed the status of a potential Catholic radio station in Baltimore. Future meetings were scheduled for November 15 and December 13. The session ended with the praying of Vespers in the church at 5:00 P.M.

**Butler, PA (St. Hildegard Deanery)** -- *monthly meetings at St. Fidelis Parish Hall, 4th Thurs. of each month*

Lay leader Ethel Galli wrote on October 19. The meeting on July 23 began with Evening Prayer and continued with a report on the Third Assembly of Deanery Representatives by Oblate Ronald Weleski, who had attended. The meeting ended with prayer and the sharing of light refreshments.

On August 27 Ethel led a discussion based on the book *Lessons from Saint Benedict* and the accompanying study guide. The group reflected on Chapter 6, on dryness in prayer, with a lesson on God's use of dryness to draw us closer to Him. Dryness needs to be seen as a normal part of the spiritual life and as an opportunity rather than a cause for discouragement.

On September 24 the meeting began with Evening Prayer and continued with a discussion of Chapter 7, on stability, of the same book. The meeting ended with a prayer, including special intentions for ill members, and the sharing of light refreshments.

### **Cyber Deanery**

Lay leader/secretary David Hicks reported by phone on August 11 and in person on October 7. In August 38 people belonged to the deanery. Recently there has been some discussion about people's favorite breviaries.

As of October 7, there were 44 members. David was planning to welcome as co-leaders Michael LoPiccolo of Cuyahoga Falls, OH, and Theresa George of Philadelphia. There were also plans to begin using the *Commentary* on the *Holy Rule* by Dom Paul Delatte, O.S.B., for the group's common discussions.

### **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 19, September 23, and October 21. The meeting on August 17 began with Evening Prayer and continued with a discussion of Chapter 4 of the *Rule*. The group reflected on the first twelve "tools of good works" and their application to modern daily life.

The meeting on September 21 began with the praying of Evening Prayer. Then Deacon Michael Russo, moderator, showed a video entitled "One Bread, One Cup" from St. Meinrad Archabbey. It concerned a Summer Liturgical Leadership Conference, to which St. Benedict Parish was considering sending some of its high-school students. Also, some of the Oblates were planning to help the parish with a rosary rally on October 4.

The meeting on October 19 began with the praying of Evening Prayer, during which

**Rosemarie (Frances of Rome) Arcurio** of Johnstown, PA,

made her final Oblation in the presence of Deacon Michael Russo, moderator, and the others who attended. Then there was a social to celebrate Rose's Oblation.

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

Some thirteen people attended the meeting on August 16, during which the group continued to discuss the *Rule* with reference to the commentary by Dom Paul Delatte, O.S.B. The group reflected on Chapter 3, "Of Calling the Brethren to Council," and considered the themes of authority and its limits, the need for cheerful obedience and the avoidance of murmuring, the importance of asking for advice, the value of listening to the young, the challenges of offering advice with humility and reverence and of accepting graciously a decision that goes against one's preference.

Some thirteen people attended the meeting on September 20, which began with a summary of the commentary on Chapter 3, regarding the importance of asking for advice and the call of the abbot, at times, to make decisions on his own. The group then began to discuss the first two instruments of good works in *RB* 4, namely love of God and love of neighbor. It was mentioned that we can never respond to God's love sufficiently, and yet God has commanded us to love Him for our own good and for our spiritual growth. It is a blessing, too, that God has commanded us to love others, both those who are easy to love and those who are difficult to love. The neighbor belongs to God, and there is something of God in every neighbor. The neighbor gives us an opportunity, in a very concrete way, to show that we truly love God. Instruments 3 through 9 were then discussed. Most of these are from the Ten Commandments. Monks and Oblates can always benefit from being reminded of the "basics."

Some thirteen people attended the meeting on October 18, one day after the annual October day of recollection. The meeting consisted of reports by Oblates Mary Ann Kaufman and Cynthia Ruff about their attendance at the N.A.A.B.O.D. meeting at Subiaco Abbey in Subiaco, Arkansas, from July 10 to 15, 2015.

Mary Ann summarized the presentation by retired Abbot Jerome Kodell, entitled "Monasticism and the New Evangelization." Oblates, said Abbot Jerome, have an important role as a bridge between the monastic community and the world. Evangelization, in order to be genuine and effective, must be rooted in contemplation, in the sense of being receptive to God. We cannot be sent into the world until we first are with Christ, as was the case of the apostles. The story of St. Benedict and the barbarian oppressing a peasant shows the power of *lectio divina* in setting people free. The seeking of God is the key to Benedictine spirituality. Having a close relationship with Christ and a growing sense of the divine within us are essential for the mission of bringing the Gospel to others.

Cindi summarized the presentation by the Rev. Jane Tomaine, an author and an Episcopalian priest in New Jersey, who had spoken largely on the theme of wrestling with unsolvable problems. Being preoccupied with such issues leads one to distraction and lack of openness to the Holy Spirit. Such "wrestling" takes the joy out of life and can be represented by the phenomena (from learning to ski) of fear, falling, and forgetting. In contrast to these unhealthy preoccupations, the Christian is called to abandon his or her whole self into the hands of God and to regard life as receptivity to the action of God, whose work on us can be compared to that of a sculptor. With courage and focus on one thing at a time, we can share in God's creative work and exert a positive influence on others in the way of the Gospel.

Because of the coldness of the room and the need of some to pray Morning Prayer in the basilica at 5:45 A.M. the next day (because of a power outage), the meeting ended a bit early, with the praying of Compline in the classroom.

**N.B.:** A D.V.D. and C.D.'s of the presentations from the N.A.A.B.O.D. meeting are available from the Oblate Library.

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

On August 16 Fr. Edward Mazich gave a presentation to over 30 people on *conversatio morum*. Fr. Edward began with explaining the meaning of *conversatio* in terms of a continual examination and transformation of one's way of life. In the Christian sense, it means leaving behind what is unredeemed and impure and embracing what leads us closer to God. *Conversatio morum suorum* is at the heart of all Christian life since at the beginning of St. Mark's Gospel, Christ called on His disciples to "repent and believe in the Good News." Because of the call to *conversatio*, every day in a Christian's life should be an opportunity for a new beginning. All negative things of the past should be left behind. *Conversatio* is sustained especially by the theological virtue of faith and by the practice of humility, which reminds us that the grace of ongoing conversion must be received as a gift. The grace of Christian charity is also essential for *conversatio* since only the motivation of the love of Christ can help us to maintain the fervor of ongoing conversion. **Unfortunately, Fr. Ed's talk, because of the malfunctioning of the recording equipment, was not recorded.**

On September 20 Oblate Nicholas Parrendo of Pittsburgh, an artist and owner of Hunt Stained Glass Studios, gave a presentation



entitled "A Spiritual Journey in Light." Some 24 people attended. During his introduction he honored his late wife, Luella. He also narrated how he entered the stained-glass business as a young man, how he learned about the art, and how he rose in the company. Nick then explained the detailed process of creating a stained-glass window for installation in a church, hospital, university, business, or private residence. A three-dimensional stained-glass panel of Christ on the cross and a full-size "cartoon" (preparatory drawing) of St. Thomas were displayed. Also, holy cards signed by Nick were available to take. In closing, Nick, with the help of his son and his daughter, gave a power-point presentation highlighting some the stained-glass windows that his company has installed throughout the country. He emphasized that he tries to give glory to God in each window that he makes, as indicated in Chapter 57 of the *Rule*. After the presentation he answered questions from the Oblates.

On October 18 Br. Mark Liatti gave a presentation to some 18 people on St. Benedict and his *Rule*. After giving some brief historical background about St. Benedict and Italy during the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, Br. Mark mentioned some of the references that St. Benedict used in writing the *Rule*. He then gave a brief summary of the Prologue and of each of the 73 chapters. Next he spoke about the spread of the *Rule* in Europe, especially under the Emperor Charlemagne, and the motto *ora et labora*. After the presentation Br. Mark fielded a number of questions and spoke personally about his vocation to join St. Vincent Archabbey in July of 2013 and about the struggles and joys of being a junior monk.

**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 2. There have been no meetings, and Brian is in search of a moderator. The deanery continues to sponsor weekly Thursday devotions at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, and they are planning Divine Mercy devotions for this coming spring.

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

Secretary Gabriele Terrill reported on September 27 and October 25. Five people attended the meeting on September 27, which began with Evening Prayer in the church. The group welcomed new inquirer, Julie Monzi, who was hoping to be invested as an Oblate novice at the Archabbey. The group partook of some snacks and introduced themselves to Julie. Three of the attendees had attended a day of recollection on September 12 at St. Joseph Church in Lancaster, PA. The speaker, Fr. Martin Espamer, O.S.B., of St. Meinrad Archabbey, had addressed the theme "Living in the Presence of God: An Oblate's Lifelong Work." The group then discussed the three principal themes of the day of recollection: peace, humility, and liturgy.

The meeting on October 28 was attended by Fr. James Podlesny, O.S.B., moderator, and eleven others. During Evening Prayer, Fr. Jim received as an Oblate novice

**Cheryl B. Martin** of Hershey, PA.

Also attending the ceremony in the church were Cheryl's husband and two daughters. Then the group went to their usual meeting room to have a social. At that time Fr. Jim explained the symbolism on the jubilee medal of St. Benedict to the group, and they entered into a discussion of evil in the world. The next meeting was scheduled for November 15.

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

Secretary Frederick Laux reported on September 9. The meeting on July 30 drew twelve attendees, including three Oblates. Fr. Sean Pogue celebrated Mass before the meeting, and moderator Deacon Etter opened the meeting with the Angelus, which was followed by the Prayer of St. Benedict. The group continued a study of the Book of Judges in conjunction with the *Rule*. Oblate Curt Maxwell gave a presentation dealing with Chapter 48 of the *Rule*, with emphasis on the danger of idleness, especially regarding correct worship.

The meeting on August 27 again drew twelve attendees, including three Oblates. Fr. Sean celebrated Mass before the meeting, and Deacon John led the praying of the Angelus and announced that the deanery would be studying the papal encyclical *Laudato Si'* after the study of the Book of Judges was completed. Oblate Dean Everett gave a presentation that related Chapter 29 of the *Rule* (on the wrongness of monks' defending one another) to passages in Judges. He mentioned that there times when the defense of others is commendable. While St. James warns us not to show partiality based on selfish gain, we need to treat people differently according to their needs.

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

Oblate George Ponticello reported by e-mail on August 16, September 23, and October 25. Seven Oblates participated in a visit to St. Emma Monastery on Sunday, August 2. The group enjoyed beautiful weather, a tour of the grounds, a visit to the gift shop, Vespers with the nuns, and dinner. Oblate Janice Heagy took pictures of the event as well as of the picnic earlier in the summer.

Seven people, including a new inquirer, attended the meeting on September 3. After the praying of Evening Prayer, the group had some lively discussion based on Chapter 23 of the book *Lessons from Saint Benedict*.

The meeting on October 6 drew ten attendees, including former lay leader Bill O'Neil, who had been away for some time because of poor health. The group began by praying Evening Prayer in St. Peter Church and then went to the rectory to discuss Chapter 24 of the same text. It was suggested that the group consider what book to use next since they are nearing the end of their current book.

**Rosharon, TX**

On August 29 Deacon Dale Hayden invested as Oblate novices:

**Anthony Chiofalo** of Rosharon, TX

**Gilberto Gomez** of Rosharon, TX

**Donald Schmidt III** of Rosharon, TX.

Lay leader/secretary Dale Smith reported on October 27 and 29. Regular monthly meetings have been held and attended by a number inquirers as well as by the Oblates and Oblate novices. The meeting on October 18 was held after a Mass celebrated by Fr. Frank Wittouck, S.C.J. Attending were four Oblates and one inquirer. After an opening prayer from the *Oblate Formation Booklet*, the group prayed Morning Prayer from *Shorter Christian Prayer*. They also viewed twenty minutes of a D.V.D. of Fr. Alfred's presentation on simplicity of life at the Archabbey. The meeting ended with a closing prayer from the formation booklet. A tentative date of December



19 has been chosen for ceremonies for new Oblates and Oblate novices.

**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 11, September 14, and October 9. The meeting on August 6 followed Evening Prayer and Benediction. Six people attended. After the praying of the Oblate prayer, the minutes from the previous meeting and a letter from Fr. Donald were read. Prayers were requested for Oblate Jerry Brennen, who had been critically injured in a fall from a ladder. The group also read the day's passage from the *Rule* and closed with the Benedictine prayer.

The meeting on September 3, attended by seven people, began with the praying of Evening Prayer and the Benedictine prayer. Then the group read *RB* Prologue: 14-20 on the yearning for eternal life. Fr. Alfred, moderator, noted that it was the feast of St. Gregory the Great, author of the life of St. Benedict, and urged that the Oblates read some of St. Gregory's writings. Next there was some talk about promoting membership in the Oblate Program in St. Marys, and Mary Lynn Nicklas offered to write a description of what it means to be an Oblate for publication in the three St. Marys parish bulletins. The meeting ended with a praying of the Oblate prayer and Fr. Alfred's blessing.

The meeting on October 1, attended by nine people, began with Evening Prayer and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. In attendance besides the Oblates were Fr. Alfred, moderator, and two monks of the Archabbey who were in St. Marys for a two-week practicum, namely Deacon Br. Matthew Lambert and Br. Raphael Dos Santos, a seminary student at St. Vincent who is from a monastery in São Paulo, Brazil. After a praying of the Oblate prayer and a reading of the minutes from September, the Oblates introduced themselves to the guests. Br. Raphael gave an interesting account of his call by God to the monastic life and to the priesthood; his submission to God's will brought him true peace after a period of emotional trauma. Br. Matthew shared about his entry into the Catholic faith while in college through attendance at Mass and RCIA classes. A few years later he was called to monastic life at the Archabbey. The group very much enjoyed the sharing of these vocational stories. Br. Matthew and Br. Raphael were planning to visit the Catholic schools in St. Marys to speak about their vocations. Then Oblate Lynn Nicklas presented to the group a flyer about the Oblate Program that she had put together for inserting into parish bulletins in St. Marys. Lynn discussed with Fr. Alfred the possibility of speaking to congregations at Sunday Masses about the Oblate Program. Next, there was a reading of *RB* 7:34. The meeting ended with the Benedictine prayer, a blessing from Fr. Alfred, and a scheduling of the next meeting for November 5.

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

Information sessions for interested students were held on September 3 and October 1. Two students attended the first session. At the second session, with the Oblate Program promoted as a way "to incorporate Benedictine values into your life as a student," there was also instruction on *lectio divina*. One Oblate novice and three inquirers attended the session on October 1, and several others expressed interest but were unable to attend. (Fr. Killian reports an enthusiastic attendance of five at the meetings in Oct. and Nov.)

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

Moderator Fr. Ronald Gatman reported by e-mail on October 29. At the beginning of July, Fr. Ronald brought three members of the Oblate Council to the Archabbey to see St. Vincent and to meet some of the monks. Two of them had never been to the Archabbey.

On September 20 the first general Oblate meeting of the year began with a session of group *lectio divina* at 2:00 P.M., with one of the Oblates leading. After about an hour, Fr. Ronald celebrated Mass for the group. Finally, they enjoyed a covered-dish supper in the monastic refectory, as is the deanery's custom.

On October 25 the meeting began with a discussion of Chapter 20 of the *Rule*, on "Reverence in Prayer." It was led by an Oblate. One of the key ideas discussed was the need to have silent prayer, with a simple being alone and remaining still and attuned to God's presence. Then the group prayed Evening Prayer together, which included a presentation by a guest speaker, Sister Julie, who operates the Social Apostolate for the Savannah Diocese. She spoke about the various services performed by the apostolate, including a soup kitchen, a food pantry, clothes for the needy, and a shelter for the homeless. Then the group ate supper.

As in past years, the Oblates volunteered to prepare all of the food and to do the set-up for the priory's annual pre-Christmas party on December 17 or 18.

Each year the deanery has been deciding to undertake some kind of charitable work. Last year they collected some \$350.00 to donate to the Carmelite nuns in Savannah toward the building of a monastery. This year the group is collecting money to support the "Wounded Warrior Project," which helps returned troops who have been wounded in battle and their families.

In February the group has a commitment from Gerrard MacLeod, M.D., to speak to the Oblates about a pilgrimage that he and two of his daughters made this past summer as they walked from France to Campostello in Spain.

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

Oblate Bonnie Morgan reported on August 20. Attending the meeting on August 16 were three Oblates and one Oblate novice. The meeting began with the "Oblate prayer" and continued with a discussion of Chapter 7 of the *Rule* with the help of the commentary by Dom Paul Delatte, O.S.B. The first step of humility was treated, namely the fear of God, which "opens our minds to encompass more than our perception of reverence to an awesome and omnipotent God by making us descend to the confines of nothingness ... to encounter the fullness of being." The meeting ended with the praying of Mid-afternoon Prayer.

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

Co-lay leader/secretary Steward Steckley wrote on August 6 and 29 and October 19. The meeting on July 14 was attended by five Oblates, five Oblate novices, eleven inquirers, and Fr. James Dugan, moderator. After an opening prayer and a reading of a passage from the *Rule*, Oblate Jeff Hahn gave a presentation on the life of St. Benedict, with mention of his miracles and the two attempts on his life. Jeff also spoke about the jubilee medal and the symbolism on the medal. There were many questions posed. The meeting closed with Compline.

The meeting on July 28 was attended by five Oblates, five Oblate novices, seven inquirers, and Fr. Dugan. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule* for the day, Oblate novice Ron Bergman gave a presentation on the Mormons, their beliefs, and their doctrines and compared them with the teachings of the Catholic Church. The meeting ended with the praying of Compline.

The meeting on August 11 was attended by five Oblates, five Oblate novices, and four inquirers in addition to Fr. Dugan. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, Oblate novice Richard Lafayette gave a presentation on heaven, hell, and purgatory, with some mention of indulgences. A group discussion followed. The meeting closed with Compline.

The meeting on August 25 was attended by five Oblates, four Oblate novices, two inquirers, and Fr. Dugan. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, inquirer Wendell Caldwell spoke on the life of St. Martin de Porres, in particular about his love for slaves and those in captivity. Then Steward spoke briefly about the seven sacraments and the history of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. A lengthy discussion followed. The meeting ended with a prayer.

The meeting on September 8 was attended by five Oblates, four Oblate novices, six inquirers, and Fr. Dugan. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, Oblate novice Brandon Cavanaugh spoke about the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, with reference to Chapter 36 of the *Rule*. He gave a thorough explanation of the use of the sacrament, the oil of the sick, and the blessing of the oils at the annual Chrism Mass. The meeting ended with the praying of Compline.

The meeting on September 22 was attended by four Oblates, four Oblate novices, eight inquirers, and Fr. Dugan. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, Steward spoke on the Golden Rule and sins against the Golden Rule, such as gossip, detraction, and calumny. Using several quotes and stories from Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, he also addressed the need of building up one another in Christian community. Also, the group agreed that in the future there would be Oblate ceremonies only at meetings in April and September. The meeting ended with the praying of Compline. The next meeting was scheduled for January 12, 2016.

Almost all members of the deanery attended a three-day retreat on October 16-18. The retreat was organized by Good Shepherd Prison Ministry from the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Oblate Ronald Bergman, a member of the ministry, and the other members presented a "Koinonia" retreat to over 45 people. It was based on the "four pillars of the Catholic faith." There was also time for Eucharistic adoration and confession. Ron Bergman gave the opening talk, which concerned the meaning of "koinonia," and another talk on Christian prayer. The retreat concluded with the celebration of Mass. After the Mass Oblation ceremonies were held in the Parish Council Room. Those received by Fr. James Dugan were:

Oblate: **Ronald C. (Boniface) Bergman** of Gibsonia, PA,

Oblate novice: **Gabriel P. Leshko** of Somerset, PA.

Also attending the ceremonies were four other Oblates and four Oblate novices.

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

Lay leader Laura Lowder reported by e-mail on August 13. Four people met on the evening of August 13 to pray the Divine Office and to plan for the future of the deanery. The group completed a discussion of the Prologue of the *Rule*, with a deep and animated discussion, which lasted rather long. The meeting ended with prayer at nearly 9:00 P.M.

The pastor of St. Anthony Church, Fr. Andrew McNair, agreed to officiate in September at the Oblates' renewal of Oblation and the investiture of one candidate. On the weekend on July 11-12, the Oblates had literature on the Oblate Program handed out after the Masses, and there was friendly and cheerful response to the distribution. Also, notices were published in the bulletins of two local parishes.

#### **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 15 and by letter on October 13. The meeting on September 14 was attended by six Oblates, six Oblate novices, and one inquirer, along with moderator Fr. David Griffin, O.S.B. After the praying of Evening Prayer, the group began to discuss the apostolic letter *The Joy of the Gospel*. Fr. David began by defining "joy," and his definition led to some discussion. In reflecting on paragraphs 1-33 of the document, the group mentioned the topics of having a spirit of joy from Christ, of keeping that spirit even amidst demanding tasks, of being more sensitive to the needs of others, and of carrying out evangelization in relationship to the Church. The discussion concluded with the assertion that all needed to pray for the Holy Father as he visited the U.S. and for patience for the local bishop. The meeting ended with a prayer and the singing of the Benedictine "Ultima."

The meeting on October 12, for various reasons, had very low attendance; so the attendees decided to postpone the discussion of *The Joy of the Gospel* to the meeting in November. The group prayed Evening Prayer, led by Fr. David, and closed with a prayer and the singing of the "Ultima."

#### **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 September 4. At the meeting on June 3, since there was no Benedictine moderator present, Dee led a discussion about four saints or saints-to-be, namely Bishop Oscar Romero, Bl. Junipero Serra (now canonized a saint), St. Bernadette of Lourdes, and St. Thomas More (who was an Oblate).

At the meeting on July 1, once again there was no moderator; so the group decided, somewhat by chance, to discuss Chapter 6, "On Restraint of Speech." The discussion turned out to be very fruitful, with some laughter about the fact that all the attendees recognized their need to work more on restraining speech.

At the meeting on August 5, Fr. John Peck served as moderator and spoke about hospitality after an opening prayer. He had the group read Chapter 53 of the *Rule* and spoke about the greeting of guests, along with his personal experiences. Fr. John then read from the book *Monastery of the Heart*, and some discussion followed. The meeting ended with Evening Prayer and a blessing.

Fr. Lee Yoakam, official moderator, was present at the meeting on September 2 after some months of absence to recover from major surgery. Fr. Lee spoke about St. Maurus and his relationship with St. Benedict, along with the miracles attributed to St. Maurus. Since he brought with him a relic of the True Cross (obtained some years ago for St. Gregory Parish by Fr. Paschal Kneip), Fr. Lee gave the St. Maurus to ten people.

#### **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 e-mail on September 19. Four people attended the meeting on August 10, including one new inquirer. After the praying of Midday Prayer, the new inquirer asked questions about the meaning of being an Oblate; so the group discussed that topic, with a reading from the *Oblate Formation Booklet* and some discussion, which included the theme of recreation

and rest in the rhythm of Benedictine life. The meeting closed with the praying of the Angelus.

Seven people attended the meeting on September 13. After the opening prayer, the group talked about the calendar of Oblate events for the coming year. There were tentative plans to make group trips to the Archabbey some time before November 1 and then in April. Two people were given applications for investiture. Then the group prayed Midday Prayer and viewed a presentation about hospitality given by Fr. John Peck, O.S.B. One of the attendees brought a copy of an icon of Saints Martha, Mary, and Lazarus to be displayed along with the icon of St. Benedict already possessed by the deanery. The meeting ended with the Angelus.

### Various Locations

On August , 2014, in Waynesburg, PA, Fr. J. Francis Fraser, pastor of St. Thomas Church in Clarksville, invested  
**John Binion** of Waynesburg, PA,  
as an Oblate novice. (The ceremony was reported only recently.)

On July 2, during a communion service,  
**David A. (Jerome) Shepherd** of Nashville, TN,  
made his final Oblation in the presence of Deacon Robert Ochoa and the others in attendance.

On August 15 at Sacred Church in San Jose, CA, Rev. Walter Suarez, pastor, invested  
**Beverly Zapien** of San Jose, CA,  
as an Oblate novice.

On August 17 at a parish in Sabah, Malaysia, Rev. Felix Chung invested  
**Pius Subil** of Kota Kanabalu, Sabah, Malaysia,  
as an Oblate novice. Pius had applied almost 10 years previously, but various circumstances prevented his investiture. We thank Pius for his perseverance!

On September 3, the feast of St. Gregory the Great, in the Archabbey Basilica crypt, Fr. Donald invested  
**Deborah Allsworth** of Rhuddlan, North Wales, U.K. and  
**Rev. Peter Allsworth** of Rhuddlan, North Wales, U.K.,  
as Oblate novices. Father Peter is an Anglican priest, and he and Deborah are husband and wife. Fr. Vincent de Paul also assisted in the ceremony. The Allsworths became acquainted with the Archabbey through Fr. Vincent de Paul's vestment studio and decided to make a pilgrimage to St. Vincent for some days on the occasion of their joining our Oblate Program.

On October 11 in the Archabbey Basilica,  
**Patricia L. (Cecilia) Hicks** of Decatur, GA,  
made her final Oblation in the presence of Fr. Donald. Pat is the wife of Oblate David Hicks, who was also present. David and Pat were making a week-long retreat at the Archabbey. Also present were Br. Joachim, Oblate Gabriel Pellathy, Oblate novices Bill & Gisela Iglesias, and Bill's parents, who happened to be visiting.

### 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: Br. Stephen Nazaruk (recovering from knee-replacement surgery), Fr. Jeremy Bolha, Fr. Aaron Buzzelli (recovering well from a broken arm), Fr. Paul Rubadue, Br. James Cartwright (recovering from foot surgery), Fr. Luke Policicchio, Br. Pio de Souza da Silva Lopes (in Brazil; with heart infection & heart-valve problems).

### DECEASED MONKS

Fr. Blane Resko, 85, died on August 7, and Fr. Jacques DePaul Daley, 79, died on October 25. Please pray for the repose of their souls.

### SOME SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Oblates and all their guests are always welcome to pray the Liturgy of the Hours with the monastic community. If large numbers are coming, it is good to notify the Oblate Office in advance so that there will be sufficient booklets for all the guests. Please note the importance of praying with the monastic community. If you are a guest and do not know the community's pace, please do not recite or sing until you know the right pace. During one retreat this past summer, some of the retreatants sang loudly and erratically, and the result was chaotic! If you have a good voice, please be especially careful to sing at a moderate tone and in synchronization with others so that we may sing together and with reverence. Thank you!

2. Thanks to Oblate Lawrence Cuda, Oblate novice Bill Iglesias, and employee Kim Metzger (in Archabbey/Seminary Public Relations), we have a bibliography of Benedictine books listed on the Oblate website (<http://www.svaoblates.org>). Please feel free to consult this very exhaustive list, which has taken several years to compile.

3. Oblates are welcome to attend concerts offered by the Saint Vincent Camerata. On Saturday, November 14, at 7:30 P.M. in the Archabbey Basilica and on Sunday, November 15, at St. Peter's Church in Steubenville, OH, at 4:00 P.M., there will be a performance of Schubert's *Mass in G* and Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem*. On Saturday, December 12, at 7:30 in the Archabbey Basilica, there will be "Festival of Lessons and Carols." On Friday, March 18, at 7:30 P.M. in the Basilica and on Sunday, March 20, at 3:00 P.M. at the First Presbyterian Church in Johnstown, there will be a performance of "Songs for the Soul" and Leonard Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*. On Friday, April 1, at 8:00 P.M., on Saturday, April 2, at 8:00 P.M., and Sunday, April 3, at 2:30 P.M. at Heinz Hall in Pittsburgh, the Camerata will join the

All-University Choir in performances with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. For tickets and further information for all performances, phone 724-805-2579.

4. 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.

5. For those who would like to plan for Oblate events in 2016, the Solemnity of St. Benedict (with Mass at 4:00 P.M.) will be on Tuesday, April 5. The Feast of St. Benedict (with Mass at 10:00 A.M. for the solemn profession of vows) will be on Monday, July 11.

6. Because of various commitments, Fr. Donald was not able to open much of his mail in early November; so there may be some news items that have reached the Oblate Office but that cannot be included in this newsletter. However, he hopes to include them all in the February newsletter

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

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)

Br. Matthew Hershey's talk on poverty & simplicity in Benedictine spirituality (May 17, 2015):

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

Fr. Jean-Luc's talk on obedience in Benedictine spirituality (June 14, 2015):

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

Fr. Matthew Lambert's talk on silence in Benedictine spirituality (July 19, 2015):

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

Oblate Nicholas Parrendo's presentation "A Spiritual Journey in Light" (September 20, 2015):

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

Fr. Boniface's talk on weakness and strength on Oblate Day (September 27, 2015):

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

Br. Mark Liatti's talk on St. Benedict and his *Rule* (October 18, 2015):

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

Fr. Robert Keffer's three conferences for the day of recollection (October 17, 2015):

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to order copies of recent presentations at a discounted price.

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**DIRECTORY OF OBLATES: Application form**

I would like to be included in the e-mail edition of the *Directory* of Oblates affiliated with Saint Vincent Archabbey. 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 the Oblate Office or by e-mail to [305makaufman@gmail.com](mailto:305makaufman@gmail.com) .

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