

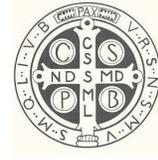


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# THE SAINT VINCENT OBLATE NEWS

## Saint Vincent Archabbey

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### MAKING LITTLE SACRIFICES: OUR FAITH-RESPONSES TO THE GOD WHO GAVE HIS LIFE FOR US

Dear Oblates, Oblate novices, and Friends,

Daily life is replete with decisions which may seem insignificant in themselves but which cumulatively can draw us closer to Christ or can distance us from Him. We as Benedictine Oblates and monks are called in a special way to “prefer nothing whatever to Christ” (*RB* 72:11); so to choose in accord with love for Christ even in the smallest of matters is a substantial dimension of our Christian commitment. As the autumn has brought colder weather, the water coming from our faucets, especially early in the morning, has become colder. While washing up early one day, I reflected on the choice I had either to accept the cold water (from the hot-water tap) or to keep the water running until it would become warmer. The right decision was quite clear. Letting the water run for an extra fifteen seconds or more would serve to waste water, might wake up some of my neighbors, and might trap me in a pattern of self-indulgence (possibly with the thought, “I deserve warm water!”). Accepting the cold water cheerfully can enable me to accept other less-than-ideal situations without murmuring. The little cross of splashing cold water on my face (and I should not make too much of such a small thing!) also puts me in harmony, if I accept the grace, with Our Lord’s doctrine of the Cross: “If a man wishes to come after Me, he must deny his very self, take up his cross, and follow in My steps” (Mk 8:34).

#### **Caution against pride and self-will**

The making of sacrifices in union with our crucified Lord is especially characteristic of Lent, but then “the life of a monk [or Oblate] ought to be a continuous Lent” (*RB* 49:1). Why miss *any* opportunity for spiritual growth? On the other hand, one must be careful not to choose unnecessary sufferings that might be contrary to God’s will. In the eighth step of humility, St. Benedict asserts that a monk ought to do “only what is endorsed by the common rule of the monastery and the example set by the superiors” (*RB* 7:55). This brief injunction does not mean that every monk must be a carbon copy of every other or that there is no room for individual creativity in the monastery. It does imply, however, that a Christian must beware of pride in his choices and practices. Is he or she doing something in order to look better than others or to gain others’ praise, or is one genuinely and humbly striving to make a selfless return of God’s gifts? Especially in spiritual matters it can be dangerous to go

to excesses since what is being done can seem so virtuous, whereas in reality it might be the Devil who is leading an over-zealous monk in the way of pride. All that being said, one must also avoid the opposite extreme of being lax and self-indulgent because it seems to be the way that “everyone else” is functioning. As the Lord Jesus sacrificed His life for us, He expects our whole life to be a sacrifice of love returned to Him; and that sacrifice of love is expressed by many little sacrifices of love every day. St. Benedict urges the monk, “Renounce yourself in order to follow Christ; discipline your body; do not pamper yourself, but love fasting” (4:10-13). He likewise exhorts the monk, “You must not be proud, nor be given to wine. Refrain from too much eating or sleeping and from laziness. Do not grumble or speak ill of others” (4:34-40).

#### **Examples of sacrifice in the Rule**

Thus, although the word “sacrifice” may not appear in the *Rule* (I could not find *sacrificium* in the listing of Latin terms in the back of the expanded version of *RB 1980*), the *Rule* does provide monks and Oblates with the basis of a rule of life that involves much Christian sacrifice in accord with God’s will. Though the *Rule* does indeed recommend “moderation,” yet it challenges the individual relentlessly to embrace a way of ongoing conversion. In particular, it summons the disciple to be disciplined in little things and so prepare himself for the greater sacrifices that need to be made out of love for God and for others. Daily life is full of small inconveniences which one can learn to see as grace-filled opportunities to grow in sacrificial love. The practice of silence is one example. In *RB* 6 St. Benedict reminds us, “There are times when [even] good words are to be left unsaid out of esteem for silence” (6:2). The monk must guard “himself at every moment from sins and vices of thought or tongue, of hand or foot, of self-will or bodily desire” (7:12). St. Benedict also warns, “We must then be on guard against any base desire, because death is stationed near the gateway of pleasure” (7:24). Again and again, the monk is called by his superiors, his fellow monks, and his conscience to sacrifice what is immediately gratifying in order to welcome something that better expresses God’s will and better fulfills His law of love. When it is time to go to the oratory for the Divine Office, the monk must not dawdle but should rather “be ready and arise without delay when the signal is given” (22:6). At common prayer monks need to guard against

the mind's tendency to wander; they are to "sing the psalms in such a way that [their] minds are in harmony with [their] voices" (19:7).

### **Sacrifices dealing with other people**

Perhaps the greatest sacrifices are those involving life with other people, with whom one may or may not be naturally compatible. The abbot must distance himself from his own subjective impressions in order to minister to his flock in a Christ-like way; thus "he should realize that he has undertaken care of the sick, not tyranny over the healthy" (27:6). The cellarer must be careful not to assume authority beyond bounds and must serve the brothers patiently even when they annoy him; he must "keep to his orders [from the abbot]" (31:5) and not reject the "brother [who] happens to make an unreasonable demand of him" (31:7) but instead "reasonably and humbly deny the improper request" (31:7). All the monks are to seek not their selfish advantage but strive to benefit the other in every encounter. "No one," says St. Benedict, "is to pursue what he judges better for himself, but instead, what he judges better for someone else" (72:7). That can require many sacrifices each day!

### **Another caution: true sacrifice as response to God**

All instances of Christian self-sacrifice, of course, are based on faith. The sacrifices of the Old Testament were regarded by the New Testament as a possible means of self-justification and distancing oneself from God. Psalm 51 includes the noteworthy verse, "My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit; a heart contrite and humbled, O God, You will not spurn" (Ps 51:19). The Letter to the Hebrews, warning against presumptuousness in ritual sacrifices likewise states, in quoting Psalm 40:7-9, "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for me; ... Behold, I come to do Your will, O God" (Heb 10:5-7). What is the use of sacrificing something in a religious rite or in life unless one is really trying to please God, the One who in Christ sacrifices Himself for us so that our little sacrifices are leading me to eternal salvation and the fullness of joy?

### **Connections with the Year of Faith**

During this Year of Faith (October 11, 2012 – November 24, 2013), Catholics are being urged to make sacrifices to know their faith better, to live their faith more radiantly, and to proclaim their faith with enthusiasm. In his apostolic letter introducing the Year of Faith (*Porta Fidei [The Door of Faith]*), Pope Benedict wrote that Christians today are often "more concerned for the social, cultural and political consequences of their commitment, continuing to think of their faith as a self-evident presupposition for life in society. In reality, not only can this presupposition no longer be taken for granted, but it is often openly denied" (#2). That is, most of us no longer live in an atmosphere of Christian faith. On the contrary, "large swathes of society" are experiencing "a profound crisis of faith that has affected many people" (#2). To believe these days may require a greater sacrifice of time, energy, and commitment than it

did in previous generations. In order to become more authentic witnesses, Christians must undertake "a sincere and continuing work of conversion" (#13). Faith also requires that we sacrifice ourselves by reaching out in charity; "it is faith that enables us to recognize Christ, and it is His love that impels us to assist Him whenever He becomes our neighbor along the journey of life" (#14). Our faith must never be taken for granted, nor must we assume that others' faith is as strong as it should be. St. Paul urged St. Timothy to "stir up the gift of God bestowed when my hands were laid on you" and to "bear your share of hardship which the Gospel entails" (2 Tim 1:8). Similarly, the Holy Father extends to the Church an invitation "that none of us grow lazy in the faith. It is the lifelong companion that makes it possible to perceive, ever anew, the marvels that God works for us" (#15). Perhaps today more than ever our faith is likely to be "tested by fire" (1 Pet 1:7); at the same time it enables us to see that "the trials of life, while helping us to understand the mystery of the cross and to participate in the sufferings of Christ (cf. Col 1:24), are a prelude to the joy and hope to which faith leads" (#15). Thus it is our duty to make the sacrifices required to be continually renewed in faith amid the trials and joys of ordinary life.

### **Practical sacrifices in daily life**

What, then, are some of the little sacrifices that can open us to deeper faith? For one thing, we can avoid pampering ourselves (cf. *RB* 4:12), since that keeps us focused on ourselves and the pleasures we can gain. We can refrain from overindulgence in food and drink and from attachment to delicacies. We can shun slavery to styles of clothes. We can eliminate unnecessary trips by car and decide to walk up steps, when we do not really need an elevator. (One of our 86-year-old monks does this!) Regarding our stewardship of the environment, we can make an effort to keep our domain of living and working clean, simple, and beautiful; we can recycle; we can strive to clean and repair things before we too readily discard them. We can seek to close doors slowly and mindfully instead of slamming them shut (or just letting them shut with a bang). The few extra seconds or minutes that we invest in being mindful can be accompanied by a prayer of praise and thanksgiving that the Lord has given us an opportunity to respond to His call. Regarding other people, we can struggle to bear patiently with the weaknesses of those around us. We can fight against the temptation to murmur or criticize in our minds and thus keep poisonous attitudes from being spread through our lips. We can learn to be more silent and to listen to others more attentively even when it is more natural to babble on about our experiences, our opinions, or our desires. Perhaps most importantly, we can make sacrifices to carve out of our schedules sufficient time for the Liturgy of the Hours, *lectio divina*, other forms of prayer, and spiritual reading, whether we feel like it or not. Unless charity demands that we extend our work beyond normal bounds (and that can

sometimes be a sacrifice that the Lord asks of us), we need to sacrifice our attachment to the task at hand in order to enter into silence, solitude, and whatever type of prayer we may be called to practice.

***Forthcoming opportunities to make little sacrifices***

The book *St. Benedict and St. Thérèse: The Little Rule and the Little Way*, which our Latrobe Deanery recently finished discussing, shows the numerous ways in which the two spiritualities are similar. Both St. Thérèse and St. Benedict urge us to be attentive to little things as opportunities to encounter Christ and to let God direct and redirect our lives. In the book *The Context of Holiness* (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 2008), the author, Fr. Marc Foley, O.C.D., quotes St. Thérèse as saying, “[I do not allow] one little sacrifice to escape, not one look, one word, profiting by all the smallest things and doing them with love” (page 141). May we followers of St. Benedict likewise be vigilant for the little opportunities God grants us daily to make sacrifices out of love for Him and for others. As we approach the seasons of Advent and Christmas, there may be more occasions than usual to make unselfish sacrifices in meeting people whom we do not especially like, in planning for celebrations, in striving for simplicity despite other people’s expectations, in trying to be generous

with our very lives without becoming worn-out with shopping and gift-giving, and in remaining prayerful and focused while the “world” urges us to become swamped in a frenzy of commercialism. If we cheerfully accept these sacrifices in obedience to God’s will, then we are entering more fully into the greatest sacrifice of all human history, namely the Passion and death of Our Lord. We are making our way toward the communion with Our Lord that we hope to enjoy in eternity. We are extending the Mass into our whole lives, since every Mass is the re-presentation of the one great Sacrifice of Our Lord. May our ordinary sacrifices of time, energy, and self-will indeed help us to “entrust ourselves to [the Lord Jesus]” and to do our part to render “the Church, the visible community of His mercy “to abide “in Him as a sign of definitive reconciliation with the Father” (*Porta Fidei*, #15). May this ever deeper abiding be ours through our little sacrifices!

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, 2013

Dear Oblates and Friends,

The Advent Season invites us to renew our baptismal commitment with undivided hearts as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. The celebration of All Saints Day on November 1 sets the stage for the Advent Season. The saints remind us that it is possible, with God’s grace, to live with an undivided heart – to focus our hearts, minds, and souls on the reality that God is present to us at every moment. Satan, of course, is always there, tempting us to invest our hearts in those things that pull us away from God.

November also includes Thanksgiving Day in the United States – a day for us to gather as a nation, as a community of faith, and as individual believers to express gratitude to God for the blessings that we receive at every moment of life, particularly the blessing of God’s ever abiding presence through Jesus Christ: “Behold, I am with you always!”

After Advent, a season of hope, December brings Christmas, a season of hope fulfilled. God’s love is made visible in the birth of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Gratitude and hope are gifts of the forthcoming seasons of grace. May God’s grace fill your heart with these wonderful gifts in great abundance.

Sincerely in Christ,

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

P.S.: Fr. Donald and Br. Jeremiah 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.

P.S. to essay: In my recent *lectio divina* from the book of Exodus, I have come to see how prevalent is the fear of sacrificing what we have for something in the unknown future, even if it is something very good promised by the Lord. Moses is reluctant to respond to the Lord's call because he presumably does not want to sacrifice the relative stability of his life. (When the Lord calls him, it is amazing how many times he uses the word "but.") The Israelites detest their slavery but are hesitant to listen to the Lord's call to be set free because they do not wish to sacrifice their relative material comfort in Egypt. Pharaoh, of course, does not want to let the Israelites go because he depends on them for slave labor; and even after he finally lets them go after the slaughter of the first-born among the Egyptians, he changes his mind. Are we not like all of them in some way? Even when the Lord calls us, we are reluctant to make sacrifices unless we have assurance that the unknown good which we are to attain is better than that which we are called to sacrifice. May God be patient with us in our reluctance to move on to more genuine holiness!

### **OBLATE DAY 2012 – SEPTEMBER 23**

Nearly 70 people, Oblates and family members and other guests, came to the Archabbey for our 25th annual Oblate Day. Fr. Prior Earl Henry celebrated Mass at 10:30 A.M. for the group and preached about the disciples' slowness to understand the message of the Cross. Oblate novice Brian Myers, a senior at St. Vincent College, graciously played the organ for the Mass and also led a student choir to enhance the singing and to render some chanted parts.

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:       **Craig (Ambrose Barlow) Callan** of Bethesda, MD  
                  **Marie A. Callan** of Bethesda, MD  
                  **Nellie (Mary Martha) Dias** of Ayr, Ontario, Canada  
                  **Robert W. Gerwing** of Pittsburgh, PA  
                  **Rev. Joel B. (Damien of Moloka'i)** of Hanover, PA

Oblate novices: **Theresa K. Gerson** of Mt. Pleasant, PA  
                  **Terri Helfer** of Renfrew, PA  
                  **Lora A. Jacob** of Greensburg, PA  
                  **Andrei Sergueev** of Woodbridge, Ontario, Canada .

The Callans are a married couple, and Pastor Hummel is a Lutheran minister who is chaplain of a health-care facility in Hanover.

After confessions in the basilica, there was a social in the Parish Assembly Room. Then at 3:45 Fr. Andrew Campbell, O.S.B., gave a presentation on the urgent need for Benedictine spirituality in today's world. He led a "shared *lectio*" on the temptations of Christ, divided into nine parts, and read from e-mail messages sent to him from spiritual directees, some of them Oblates, who had powerful insights about Benedictine values in their lives. Some of the themes emphasized were the need for silence and solitude, our wayward world's radical lack of love and community, the importance of fasting, our ultimate call to continual (and contemplative) prayer, and the saying "Listen well; pray regularly; see everyone as Christ."

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

### **OBLATE DAY 2013**

Next year's Oblate Day has been scheduled for September 22, 2013, since facilities will be available on that day.

### **EIGHTH FALL OBLATE DAY OF RECOLLECTION AT THE ARCHABBEY - October 13, 2012**

Some 43 people, mostly Oblates, attended this annual event, with conferences in St. Gregory Chapel. Fr. Thomas Acklin, O.S.B., the retreat master, delivered conferences about the immense love of God for all of us, His seeking of us, and the ways in which we resist His love.

During ceremonies at 1:30 P.M. in St. Gregory Chapel, Fr. Donald received the following:

Oblates:       **Mark S. Monier** of Irwin, PA  
                  **Sandra L. Monier** of Irwin, PA

Oblate novice: **John F. Cain** of Lakemont, Altoona, PA .

Mark and Sandy are husband and wife. At 2:00 those who wished remained in the chapel to pray a rosary for the intentions of respect for life and for religious liberty.

Most of the retreatants joined the monastic community for Vespers and then stayed for supper, which ended with the singing of the Benedictine "Ultima."

### **DAY OF RECOLLECTION IN 2013**

The October day of recollection for next year has been scheduled for October 12, 2013.

### **Oblate Directory for 2013 Being Planned**

The 2013 version of the *Directory* is being put together by Oblate Mary Ann Kaufman, with hopes that it will be ready by July, 2013. It assumed that those in the 2011-2012 *Directory* wish to be included again. If you are not in this version and if you would like to have an entry in the 2013 *Directory*, please use the form on the flier, and send it to Mary Ann Kaufman by U.S. mail or e-mail.

### **RETREAT SCHEDULE FOR 2013**

The retreats at St. Vincent for summer, 2013, have been scheduled. The retreats on Benedictine spirituality are to be held on May 18-20, 2013, and June 8-10, 2013. The first, to be directed by Fr. Donald, will probably include a Mass for priestly ordination. The second, also to be directed by Fr. Donald, will be a silent retreat.

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

Oblates who purchase items in the Basilica Gift Shop may receive a discount of 10% on all purchases, according to a policy continued by the store's current manager, Br. André Melli, O.S.B.

### **MEETINGS OF OBLATE BOARD OF ADVISORS, August 24 and October 26, 2012**

Members of the Board assembled for their 39th and 40th regular meetings at 6:30 P.M. on August 24 and October 26 in Brownfield 203. The meeting on August 24, attended by eight members besides Fr. Donald, involved discussion of photographs of Oblate events, terms for Board members, schemes for updating the Mentoring Program and the Prayer-Partner Program, plans for the 2013 *Directory*, developments in the deaneries, and possibilities for the next book for discussion at Latrobe Deanery meetings..

The meeting on October 26, attended by about ten members and one potential member, focused on the possibility of a cyber-deanery (with Oblate David Hicks of Decatur, Georgia, offering to be the lay leader/coordinator); the beginnings of the digitization the Oblate files; progress in the organization of the Mentoring Program, the Prayer-Partner Program, and the 2013 *Directory*; ongoing work on a reading list of books on Benedictine topics for the Oblate website; and some people's need for prayers. The next meeting, barring inclement weather, has been scheduled for January 11, 2013.

### **MENTORS NEEDED!**

Several people who are Oblate novices or inquirers have requested Oblate mentors, but we have run out of Oblates who have volunteered to serve in this way. 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.

### **DIGITIZATION OF OBLATES' BASIC INFORMATION**

To facilitate access to Oblates' information (such as when figuring out who will be a jubilarian in a given year), the card files in the Oblate Office are being put on computer, **only for use by the Oblate Office**. Oblates who would like to offer their e-mail addresses, dates of birth, and dates of baptism are welcome to contact the Oblate Office with this information. (Before January, 1996, there were no application forms, and even now the applications do not ask for candidates' e-mail addresses.) Again, this information will not be made public but is only for internal use – in the Oblate Office and the monastery's archives.

**HOPE TO ESTABLISH A "CYBER-DEANERY"**: Over the past few years a number of Oblates who live at some distance from the Archabbey and from locations of deanery meetings have expressed interest of having some sort of deanery over the Internet. Oblate David Hicks of Decatur, GA, has agreed to initiate this project. Any Oblate or Oblate novice who is interested may contact David by e-mail at [revdavid53@yahoo.com](mailto:revdavid53@yahoo.com) .

### **ITEMS AVAILABLE FROM THE OBLATE OFFICE**

- (1) pamphlet "God's Love for You" with subtle 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 (Otherwise order from Sacred Winds Press at [www.sacredwindspress.com](http://www.sacredwindspress.com) .)

### **COPIES OF CHERISH CHRIST ABOVE ALL AVAILABLE AT DISCOUNT**

The Latrobe Deanery will soon be using the book *Cherish Christ above All*, by our Fr. Demetrius Dumm, O.S.B., for discussion at monthly meetings. Since we shall be ordering copies in bulk from Archabbey Publications and, therefore, getting a substantial discount, we are making the book available to all Oblates. Because of the time and effort required to fill mail orders, we prefer that you order only for pick-up, but mail orders will be accepted. Please use the form on the flier.

**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.

**RECOMMENDED READING** (available for borrowing from the Oblate Library)

- Fr. W. Paul Jones, *A Different Kind of Cell: The Story of a Murderer Who Became a Monk* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011)
- Fr. James Martin, S.J., *My Life with the Saints* (Chicago, IL: Loyola Press, 2006)

**NEW (OR NEWLY DISCOVERED) BOOKS ON BENEDICTINE SPIRITUALITY** (also available from the Oblate Library)

- Ian Adams, *Cave Refectory Road: Monastic Rhythms for Contemporary Living* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010)
- Sr. Maureen F. McCabe, O.C.S.O., *I Am the Way: Stages of Prayer in Saint Bernard* (Trappist, KY: Cistercian Publications, 2012; distributed by Liturgical Press)
- Duncan Robertson, *Lectio Divina: The Medieval Experience of Reading* (Trappist, KY: Cistercian Publications, 2011)

**BENEDICTINE OBLATE PROGRAM ON RADIO WEDO, 810 AM:** This program, hosted by Oblate John James of North Huntingdon, is broadcast from 8:45 A.M. to 9:00 A.M., Monday through Friday.

**THIRD WORLD CONGRESS OF OBLATES, OCTOBER 4-10, 2013**

The next World Congress of Oblates is scheduled to be held in Rome from October 4 to 10 in 2013. Five of our Oblates have volunteered to attend, and we have yet to learn how many of them will be allowed to attend. At the last world congress in 2009, St. Vincent sent nine Oblates. Please keep this event in prayer. **Also, donations to subsidize participation of Oblates from poor countries are welcome.** Please send donations to the Archabbey with the appropriate designation.

**OBLATE GROUP IN CAMBRIDGE, ONTARIO, CANADA**

Oblate Cathy Mayled reported by e-mail on July 28. Meetings continued during the summer, with an ongoing discussion of the book *Songs of the Heart*. Five people attended the June meeting, and four the July meeting. The topics discussed during those months were patriotism and hospitality. There were reflections on the hospitality that members of the group had experienced as guests at the Archabbey.

**OBLATE GROUP IN PHILADELPHIA, PA**

Fr. Vincent de Paul Crosby, O.S.B., reported on September 20. The "Philadelphia Ecumenical Oblate group" met on September 1 at St. Mary's (Episcopalian) Church at Cathedral Village in Philadelphia. The twenty people present began the session with Morning Prayer from the Roman rite, and then Fr. Vincent de Paul spoke about the place of work in Benedictine spirituality since it was Labor Day weekend. The group spent some time sharing their own thoughts on the subject. The meeting closed with Noon Prayer from the Anglican rite. Then they gathered for lunch.

**PLANS FOR OBLATE GROUP IN MORGANTOWN, WV**

Fr. John Peck, O.S.B., former moderator of the Ansville Deanery, was recently reassigned to St. John University Parish in Morgantown, WV, where Fr. Fred Byrne, O.S.B., had already been serving. It is reported that Fr. John will lead an initial meeting on November 28 for people interested in the Oblate Program. All area Catholic churches are being notified.

**OPPORTUNITY FOR BENEDICTINE FORMATION IN SCRANTON, PA**

Rev. Peter Pearson, pastor of Church of the Good Shepherd (Episcopalian) in Scranton hopes to start a Benedictine study group with monthly meetings, including prayer, fellowship, and food. An initial session on November 3 included a presentation by author Jane Tomaine entitled "Simplifying Life Benedict's Way: Finding Balance Using the Rule of Benedict." The session lasted from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M., and participants were asked to bring a bag lunch. The church is located at 1780 North Washington Avenue, and registration was required, with a \$20 donation requested. For more information, one may call 570-347-1760.

**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. 18, Dec. 16, Jan. 20, and Feb. 17 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 4:25. They are taught by monks or Oblates. All are welcome to attend. The class on November 18, to be taught by Br. Mark Floreanini, O.S.B., will address the topic "Silence in Benedictine Spirituality," and the class on December 16, to be taught by Br. Joachim Morgan, O.S.B., will be about "Work in Benedictine Spirituality."

### **ADORATION FOR VOCATIONS IN ST. GREGORY CHAPEL AND ON THE 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 25, the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed after the 11:30 Mass in the basilica, and adoration in the basilica (not St. Gregory Chapel) will end with Solemn Vespers, starting at 5:00 and ending with Benediction. All are welcome.**

### **NEWS FROM OBLATE DEANERIES**

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

Moderator Ralph DeCecco reported on September 10. On August 25 Deacon Ralph, his wife Janet, and six others met to pray the Liturgy of the Hours and to hear a lesson on obedience by Oblate Carmen Musolino.

On September 9 Deacon Ralph met with two Oblates in Mercer, PA, along with eight inquirers. They viewed the D.V.D. entitled "Poverty and Holiness" by Fr. Boniface, O.S.B. and discussed it.

At the meeting on October 13, which again began with the Liturgy of the Hours, Oblate Janet DeCecco presented a lesson on "Change," with a handout quoting Bl. John Henry Newman. It was followed by a profound and lengthy discussion.

#### **Annvile, PA (St. Placid Deanery)** -- *meetings at 3 P.M. on 4th Sunday of each month, St. Paul the Apostle Church, Annvile, or St. Joseph Church in Mechanicsburg or St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Mechanicsburg.*

Lay leader Gabriele Terrill reported by e-mail on July 31, September 2, and September 28. The meeting on July 22, held at St. Paul Church, attracted 13 people in addition to Fr. John Peck, moderator, and began with Evening Prayer. After a reading of *RB* 72 and 73: 1-9, Fr. John spoke about the first monks in Lebanon and their isolated lives in caves. Then he read some chapters from *The Life and Miracles of St. Benedict* and commented on miracles in the early Church and the final encounter between St. Benedict and St. Scholastica. The next meeting, the deanery's annual picnic, was scheduled for August 26.

Fr. John hosted the picnic in the back yard of the rectory, and nineteen people attended. The group was grateful for his hospitality and for his having served the deanery as moderator for over 10 years. Fr. John was being transferred to the St. John University Parish in Morgantown, WV. All of us in the Oblate Program are grateful to Fr. John for his faithful leading of the St. Placid Deanery from the time of its conception in 2001. Fr. Job Foote, O.S.B., new pastor of St. Paul the Apostle Church, has agreed to serve as the deanery's new moderator.

The meeting on September 23 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, attended by ten people, began with Evening Prayer and the reading of *RB* 58. In the absence of Fr. Job, Oblate Phil Reemes agreed to lead the session. The discussion revolved about the themes of stability and obedience. The Oblates recognized the need for stability in their lives, a stability rooted in God. Oblates are bonded together by their common search for God, their desire to do good, and to live a life that has meaning through their following of the *Rule*. Gabriele commented, "These promises of Oblation should be taken seriously as part of a carefully discerned lifelong commitment. It is easy to get too comfortable, not even noticing that one is not listening to God but to what the world has to offer; so sometimes it may not be such a bad thing when something awakens us to remind us that we need to be obedient and listen to what God is telling us."

#### **Asheboro, NC (St. Joseph / St. Gabriel Deanery)** -- *anticipated meetings at St. Joseph Church*

There was no report See the report from the Southern Pines Deanery.

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

Secretary James Wells reported by e-mail on September 4 and 24 and October 27. Some 20 people gathered on September 3 for an annual Oblate Labor-Day picnic at St. Benedict Church, hosted by Fr. Paschal Morlino, moderator. The attendees brought a wide variety of food and beverages. Because of a carport and tents in the picnic area, the rain did not dampen the celebration, which began about 4:00 P.M. The event ended with Vespers at 6:00 P.M., followed by the serving of ice cream and cookies.

Fourteen people attended the meeting on September 23, led by Fr. Paschal, who gave a presentation on the purpose of the Year of Faith as declared in Pope Benedict XVI's apostolic letter *Porta Fidei*. The Church is to be a light to the world, and Oblates, as active participants in the "New Evangelization," need to know how they can be the light of Christ to others in daily activities. "Faith," Jay reported, "is ultimately choosing to stand with the Lord so as to live with him. Therefore, we should ask ourselves how present the Lord is in our lives." After the presentation there were some comments and discussion, and then some administrative matters were discussed, especially a forthcoming regional Oblate meeting in Ridgely, MD. The meeting ended with the singing of Vespers in the church at 5:00.

About October 26 Oblate Dale Dombrosky reported on the regional "Oblate retreat" on October 13 at St. Gertrude Monastery in Ridgely, MD. The main presentation was entitled "Right and Just: The Relationship between the Oblate and the Monastery," delivered by Sister Vicki Ix, O.S.B. The talk included reflections on the characteristics of life-giving relationships, such as mutuality, respect,

humility, obedience, and self-giving love. After the talk the day included a period of quiet reflection, Midday Prayer, a pause for lunch, a sharing by a panel of Oblates (including Dale), and a question-and-answer period with the panelists. The "Northeast Region" of Oblates includes those affiliated with St. Anselm's Abbey in Washington, DC; St. Benedict Monastery in Bristol, VA; Emmanuel Monastery in Baltimore; St. Gertrude Monastery in Ridgely, MD; and the St. Walburga Deanery in Baltimore affiliated with St. Vincent Archabbey.

Some seven people attended the regular monthly meeting on October 21. It was moderated by Fr. Leonard, who gave a presentation on the history of Vatican Council II in light of the current Year of Faith. He also summarized the project of "new evangelization" as (1) starting with what we believe, (2) providing testimony of how God has helped us and changed our lives, (3) showing true love in Jesus Christ, with reference to 1 Corinthians 13. After some discussion the group went to the church for Vespers at 5:00 P.M..

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

Oblate Ronald Weleski wrote on August 28, and lay leader Ethel Galli wrote on September 16. At the meeting on August 2, after Evening Prayer, Ron spoke about the retreat given by Fr. Edward Mazich at the Archabbey entitled "The Gifts and the Call of God Are Irrevocable." He summarized the retreat conferences as an examination of passages from the Pentateuch to explain how the mystery of God, revealed through the Mosaic Law, is brought to fulfillment through Jesus Christ. Those in attendance discussed the themes developed by Fr. Edward. The meeting ended with prayer and fellowship.

The meeting on August 30 began with Evening Prayer and continued with a presentation by Ethel on Chapter 16 of the *Rule* (on performing the Divine Office during the day) with the help of *Preferring Christ*. The author, Norvene Vest, states that the Office is to be prayed for praise of God and for punctuating the day with prayer so as to ground oneself in God and to build up a spirit of habitual recollection within oneself. Next there was a presentation given on the first chapter of the book *Life Lessons from the Monastery* by Abbot Jerome Kodell, O.S.B. The chapter dealt with the unconditional love of God for us, His children. Finally, the group listened to the C.D. of Fr. Robert Roche's presentation in Latrobe on *lectio divina*. The meeting closed with a prayer and refreshments.

**Carrolltown, PA (Sacred Heart Deanery)** -- *monthly meetings at St. Benedict Church, in the church and/or a meeting room, on Sunday evenings at 6:00.*

Lay leader Mary Catherine Hoover reported by phone and by letter on November 6. The Oblates met with Fr. Jude, moderator, in October and discussed *RB* 41 and 42, regarding meals and silence after Compline. Also, three members of the deanery attended Oblate Day at the Archabbey on September 23.

**Charleston, SC** -- *monthly meetings at Daughters of St. Paul headquarters, 1<sup>st</sup> Sat. of month at 1000 A.M.*

Lay leader Marsha Boles reported by phone on August 17 and by e-mail on September 3 and by U.S. mail about September 13. The group was happy to have found a priest-moderator in Rev. James Parker. The first meeting after a gap of over a year took place on September 8. During that meeting Fr. Parker introduced himself and also led ceremonies, during which he received the following:

Oblate: **Cheryl (Cecilia) LaRose** of Charleston, SC  
Oblate novice: **Anne Marie Zur** of Charleston, SC.

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

Lay leader Mary Hoffken reported on October 6. The four people who attended the meeting on September 13 began with an invocation to Our Lady of Guadalupe and then viewed the first 20 minutes of a D.V.D. from St. Vincent, Fr. Boniface's talk on poverty and simplicity. They then spent the next 20 minutes in discussion, which involved reflections on the vulnerability of Jesus in the womb and our need to rely on God for everything as part of God's plan for us humans. The attendees found the session very edifying. They ended the meeting with the Lord's Prayer.

During September and October, Oblate Mary Detwiler and her husband, Marlin, and then Oblates Daniel and Pauline Hoppe traveled to the Archabbey for the first time to visit Fr. Paschal Kneip, former moderator, and also met Fr. Donald.

**Frackville, PA (St. Dismas Deanery)** -- *meetings on 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays at 6:00 at chapel in Frackville*

Oblate Jeffery McCaughtry, secretary, reported by letter on September 3, September 26, and October 30. A regular Oblate meeting was held on August 22, with Rev. William Seifert, moderator, one Oblate, and seven Oblate novices attending. After a praying of the Liturgy of the Hours, Fr. Seifert gave a presentation on the Letter of St. James, offered a lesson on Chapter 1 of the *Rule*, and exhorted the group about the need to live in faith and to grow toward a full and absolute faith linked with humility. The meeting closed with a reading from Psalm 103, the Lord's Prayer, and prayer intentions expressed by the group. Jeff and Fr. Seifert decided that Oblate meetings would be held on the second and third Wednesdays of the month at 6:00 P.M. It was hoped that the bishop of the Allentown Diocese would visit the deanery in November.

On September 12 the group held an "Oblate movie night," with eleven people attending, including three inquirers. They viewed a D.V.D. entitled "The Thirteenth Day," which tells the story of the apparitions at Fatima, and then prayed the rosary as part of a 54-day novena for all priests, monks, and Oblates. Fifteen people attended the regular Oblate meeting on September 19 in addition to Fr. Seifert and two special guests from the office of Catholic Life and Evangelization Services of the Diocese of Allentown. After the Liturgy of the Hours were prayed, Jeff presented a review of Chapter 4 of the *Rule* and posed the question, "What is the biggest tool available to improve our lives?" Then Fr. Seifert gave a lesson on Ephesians 4- 5, with emphasis on God's grace coming to help us to understand Him. Many questions were posed and answered. The session ended with a Glory Be, the Our Father, and a prayer of St.

Benedict.

On October 17 one Oblate, seven Oblate novices, and four inquirers met with Fr. Seifert and opened with Psalm 148, a Benedictine prayer, a novena prayer to St. Athanasius, and three Hail Mary's and a Glory Be. Then Fr. Seifert offered a detailed lesson on faith in light of the Year of Faith. He spoke of the faith of the apostles, distinguished between "gift and content," demonstrated that "I" is in the center of sin, and explained the process of *lectio divina* in terms of faith. The meeting closed with the praying of Vespers.

The meeting on October 24, attended by Fr. Seifert and ten others, included a novena prayer to St. Athanasius, prayers of intercession, and an instruction on "ora et labora" and the principles of obedience, humility, stability, ongoing conversion, and reverence. Accepting what God reveals requires that we understand the truth and live the truth. The meeting closed with Vespers.

On October 27 Fr. Seifert invested as an Oblate novice

**Russel Golas** of Frackville, PA.

### **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 September 13 and October 18. There were no meetings in July or August. Those who came for the meeting on September 10 began with Evening Prayer before the tabernacle in the church; they had decided to pray there instead of in the meeting room in order to render the praying of Vespers more reverent. Then the group discussed different ideas about what might attract more people to the Oblate program in the Johnstown area and what might make meetings more interesting. Also, the attendees expressed their motives for becoming Oblates and what Oblation has meant to them over the years.

The meeting on October 15 began with Evening Prayer, followed by a discussion led by Deacon Michael Russo, moderator, about what the Oblate group could do for the Year of Faith. There was a suggestion to plan an afternoon prayer service during Advent or Lent, with the praying of Midday Prayer with a cantor and a congregation. It was also suggested that the parish's youth group could become involved with the prayer service, and Deacon Michael planned to consult with the youth-ministry director and the music director.

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

At the beginning of the meeting on August 19, the group of nearly 20 people assembled in the basilica for the investiture of **William R. Crum, Jr.**, of Pittsburgh, PA, by Fr. Donald. Will brought his wife, Gretchen, and his two daughters, Elizabeth and Isabella, to the ceremony.

Then the attendees proceeded to discuss the last chapter, "The Porter's Perfection," of the book *St. Benedict and St. Thérèse*. The topics covered included the hiddenness of holiness, the danger of excessive self-analysis and of wanting to see one's spiritual progress, the importance of knowing one's sinfulness, the call to submit ourselves totally to God's power in our lives, and the qualities of the porter that can help us on the way to holiness (e.g., eager obedience out of charity).

The meeting on September 16, after an opening prayer, began with a presentation by two men from the Cemetery Office on St. Vincent Cemetery and the mausoleum that is about to be built. Oblates were urged to make plans for their funeral arrangements and burial well before death approaches, and they are welcome to purchase plots or spaces in the mausoleum, with the option of having a bronze medal of St. Benedict inserted. **The possibility of having a special section for Oblates in the mausoleum was brought up; those interested may phone the Cemetery Office at 724-532-5045.** The meeting then continued with a discussion of the beginning of the *Oblate Formation Booklet*, with emphasis on our need for ongoing conversion. Also, Oblate Mary Ann Kaufman took orders for her home-baked pumpkin bread, with the proceeds from the sales to be given to a charity of the Oblates' common choice.

The meeting on October 21, after an opening prayer, began with Mary Ann Kaufman's offering of pumpkin and cranberry bread for sale as mentioned above. Then the group continued a discussion from the formation booklet, involving such topics as motives for becoming Oblate novices, the meaning of Oblate life, means of mutual encouragement, Oblates as "monasticism's gift to the world," and criteria for entering the Oblate Program. Some 15 people attended the session.

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

On August 19 Fr. Philip Kanfush, O.S.B., gave a presentation on "St. Benedict and His *Rule*." He began with an explanation of the background of the *Rule* (who, what, when, where, why) and mentioned the secular, ecclesial, and monastic influences on the writing of the *Rule*. It was interesting to note that nowhere in the *Rule* does St. Benedict identify himself. Fr. Philip then went on to describe the structure of the *Rule*, which is less well organized than the *Rule of the Master*, from which St. Benedict borrowed large sections. He next listed some major themes of the *Rule*, including charity, balance (with everyone doing work), emphasis on motives (keeping the *Rule* out of love as the ultimate end), and the three vows. Finally, Fr. Philip spoke about the relevance of the *Rule* for us today as we live in a morally chaotic society not totally unlike the social environment of St. Benedict's day. The session closed with Fr. Philip's answering questions about his job as procurator, on *conversatio morum*, on the shortage of vocations, and on good commentaries on the *Rule*.

On September 16 Fr. Edward Mazich, O.S.B., gave a presentation on "The Eucharist in Benedictine Spirituality" to an overflow audience of some 30 people. Fr. Ed first gave a historical perspective. He noted that while there have been growth and change in the Church's understanding of the Eucharist and in Eucharistic piety over the centuries, there is also a strong thread of continuity. He then reflected on the four passages in the *Rule* that seem to refer to the Eucharist. It may be that St. Benedict referred so sparsely to the Eucharist because it was presumed to be a normal part of the monks' lives. Fr. Ed then reflected on the historical movement toward daily Mass, the growth in Eucharistic devotion, and the promotion of the frequent reception of the Eucharist by Pope Pius X. Finally, he noted the centrality of the Eucharist in our

faith today, the strong connection between the Eucharist and the other sacraments, and the relationship between the Eucharist and the vow of *conversatio morum*. After the formal presentation Fr. Ed addressed a number of questions from the attendees.

On October 21 Fr. Ananias Buccicone, O.S.B., gave a presentation on "Silence in Benedictine Spirituality" to an audience of nearly 24 people. He began by referring God's hospitality at the time of creation, when God gave man the unearned gift of life in the garden of Eden. However, man has repeatedly rejected God's hospitality; nonetheless, we are called to return to God and to imitate His hospitality. Chapter 53 of the *Rule* urges us to welcome all guests as Christ. At the same time, in the *Rule*, the expressions of hospitality are generally limited to the monk appointed as guest master. Fr. Ananias then reflected on his own tenure as guest master from 1985 to 1993, during which he learned the stresses and joys of accommodating a wide variety of guests. We need to remember to be grateful for Christ's coming to us in the form of guests and recognize that we ourselves are guests in this passing world. We need to note, too, that the Church offers us hospitality in all of the sacraments. Hospitality needs to be offered with charity, humility, and openness to Christ's presence. If we show hospitality to Christ in others, then we shall be offered hospitality at the time of our death. In sum, hospitality in the monastery is "the balm of healing for people who need peace and prayerfulness .

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

Lay leader Brian Chisholm reported by phone on November 2 & 5. Illnesses and other problems caused the cancellation of meetings in August and September. Early in October four people met to plan for a possible retreat. They also decided to use the book *Asking Benedict* by Fr. Terrence Kardong, O.S.B., for future meetings. Brian has been in contact with the bishop of the St. Catharines Diocese about appointing a priest to serve as moderator for the deanery.

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

Fr. Donald happened to hear from one of the Oblates that the deanery would resume meeting in November and at that meeting discuss the essay from the August newsletter.

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

Secretary Peggi Gabler wrote on August 14, September 16. The meeting on August 2, as usual, followed Evening Prayer and Benediction in the church. After a prayer to St. Benedict and a reading of minutes from the last two meetings, Fr. Thomas More, moderator, spoke about obedience and freedom with reference to Chapter 2 of *Lessons from St. Benedict*. He asserted that only the truth sets us free, and real freedom comes only with obedience to God's will as opposed to the world's enslavement to self-will and sin. Then Oblate Mary Lynn Nicklas gave an account of her trip in May to Douai Abbey in England for a planning session for the 2013 World Congress of Oblates. The meeting ended with the Oblate prayer and a blessing by Fr. Thomas More.

Ten people attended the meeting on September 6, which as usual followed Evening Prayer with Benediction. After the Oblate prayer and a reading of the minutes from the previous meeting, Fr. Thomas More addressed the theme of stability from Chapter 7 of *Lessons from St. Benedict*. He stressed the importance of stability in St. Benedict's day, when the Roman Empire was collapsing, and in our day, when we must hold on to the truth and to genuine goodness amid a secularistic world. Then there was some discussion about the attendees' efforts to provide an environment of love and stability for their loved ones along with a mindfulness of God's presence. Stability calls us to do everything, no matter how small, for love of Him. The meeting concluded with a prayer to St. Benedict and a blessing by Fr. Thomas More.

The meeting on October 3, attended by nine people, began with Evening Prayer and Benediction, the Oblate prayer, the reading of minutes, and the reading of a letter from Fr. Donald. Fr. Thomas More was unable to attend. The group read the sixth step of humility from the *Rule* and page 101 from *Lessons from St. Benedict*. After some discussion the meeting closed with the prayer to St. Benedict.

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

Fr. Killian Loch, O.S.B., moderator, reported on October 28. During the summer vacation the eleven Oblate novices participated in "distance formation" with Fr. Killian through group e-mail. In June they studied the Prologue of the *Rule*; in July they studied Chapter 1 of the book *Lessons from St. Benedict*; and in August they reviewed pages 15-24 of the *Oblate Formation Booklet* and shared insights about the reading. This process kept the group in contact with one another and helped with the initial formation. (They were invested as Oblate novices last May.)

The first meeting of the academic year took place on September 13. The group reviewed pages 25-27 of the formation booklet and discussed how best a college student can live out Benedictine values on campus. Since the Oblate novices expressed interest in learning to practice *lectio divina*, it was decided to include a teaching on *lectio* at the next meeting.

The next meeting, on October 18, focused on *lectio divina* and began with a reading aloud of the section "The Practice of *Lectio Divina*" from the formation booklet. The group then went into a more detailed discussion based on the article

"The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina" by Fr. Luke Dysinger, O.S.B. Several of the Oblate novices expressed an interest in group *lectio*, and so a weekly session has begun to meet in St. Benedict Hall on Wednesday evenings to practice group *lectio*.

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

There was no report.

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

Secretary Marcia La Bant reported by e-mail on July 31. There was no meeting during August.

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

Secretary Laura Lowder contacted the Oblate Office in August or September. The Oblates from Southern Pines were to visit the Oblates in Asheboro on October 29 for a joint meeting.

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

Secretary Kay Tittmann wrote on September 11 and October 10. At the beginning of the meeting on September 10, attended by nine Oblates, three Oblate novices, and two inquirers, Fr. David, moderator, asked that each person share a highlight of his or her summer. He then gave the group an updated report about the new Catholic Spiritual Center at Penn State, which had been dedicated on September 8. The attendees then prayed Evening Prayer and began a series of discussions of the book *The Only Necessary Thing: Living a Prayerful Life* by Fr. Henri J.M. Nouwen. Fr. David first spoke a bit about Fr. Nouwen and mentioned some themes, such as "being alone together" in prayer, discovering that "we are already home while on the way," and "You learn to pray by praying." Then the group discussed the first chapter, "Desire," with the lessons that our desire for God should guide all our other desires and that the deepest desire of the human heart is to have communion with God. The meeting ended with the praying of one of Fr. Nouwen's prayers, a singing of the "Ultima," and the voicing of several prayer intentions. (continued)

Six Oblates, two Oblate novices, and three inquirers attended the meeting on October 8, which began with Evening Prayer. Fr. David began the discussion with a talk about the academic and spiritual credentials of the late Fr. Nouwen. The group then discussed Chapter 2, "What Is Prayer?", and focused on the quote: "A spiritual life without prayer is like the Gospel without Christ." The attendees also discussed Chapter 3, on the need for solitude, which involves making a time and a place for God and God alone; this is a necessary but most difficult discipline. The meeting ended with the praying of one of Fr. Nouwen's prayers, the singing of the "Ultima," and the voicing of several prayer intentions.

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

Lay leader Dee Pauls wrote on August 6 and September 19. At the meeting on August 2, attended by nine people besides Fr. Michael Gabler, moderator, Fr. Michael led a final discussion of the Prologue of the *Rule*. The group reflected on the meaning of "a school for the Lord's service," "the expansions of one's heart in love," and "running in the way of God's commandments." The group also discussed a book which they could read and discuss as a group.

On September 5 the six Oblates present heard Fr. Michael speak about the "four kinds of monks" from Chapter 1 of the *Rule*. He explained the term *monachorum* (from the word for alone, simple, or unique) and explained why the cenobites were considered the strongest kind of monks. The group ordered copies of the book *With God in Russia*, by Fr. Walter Ciszek, S.J. (servant of God), for future discussions.

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

Acting lay leader Sue Wykoff reported on October 13. The first meeting at St. Anne Church, held on September 23, began with Midday Prayer. Five people, all Oblates, attended. The group talked about ways to make the meetings more consistent and decided to meet on the second Sunday of every month. Then they read and discussed an article entitled "Lessons from a Benedictine Monastery" by Judith Valente from *U.S.A. Today* (April 9, 2012). They also together read the promises that they had made as Oblate novices and talked about the forthcoming information session. The meeting closed with the praying of the "Angelus."

The information session took place at St. Anne Church from 7:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. on October 12. Three Oblates and five inquirers attended. Br. Jeremiah, Assistant Director of Oblates, gave a presentation on Benedictine spirituality and Oblate life, and a time for questions followed. Two of the guests stayed after the meeting and expressed further interest.

## **Various Locations**

On August 4 Oblate **Michael (Maurus) Morow** of Indianapolis, IN, transferred his Oblation from Blue Cloud Abbey to St. Vincent Archabbey. Michael is the husband of Oblate novice Jewell Morow. Blue Cloud Abbey in Marvin, SD, closed down in August because of lack of vocations and prospective vocations. Please pray for the monks and Oblates of Blue Cloud as they seek new monastic communities of affiliation.

On August 16 at St. Peter Catholic Church in Columbia, SC, Msgr. Leigh Lehocky, pastor, invested

**Catherine Howard** of Columbia, SC,  
as an Oblate novice. The ceremony took place during the 8:00 A.M. Mass.

On September 9 at the chapel in Waynesburg, PA, Rev. J. Francis Frazer, pastor of St. Thomas Church in Clarksville, invested as an Oblate novice

**Darran A. Chick** of Waynesburg, PA.

On September 28 at a chapel in Nashville, TN, Rev. Joseph V. McMahon of Christ the King Church in Nashville invested as an Oblate novice

**Devin Banks** of Nashville, TN.

On October 11 in the Archabbey Basilica, Fr. Donald invested

**Rev. Thomas M. Lutz** of Highland, NY,

as an Oblate novice. Father Lutz is a Catholic priest of the Archdiocese of New York and pastor of St. Augustine Church in Highland. Also present was Oblate David Hicks of Decatur, GA, who was making a retreat at the Archabbey.

On October 18 at St. Joseph Church in Lancaster, PA,

**Linda "Linette" (Rachel Kateri Theresa Bernadette) Schreiber** of Ardmore, PA,

made her final Oblation in the presence of Deacon Robert E. Weaver and the Oblates (mostly affiliated with St. Meinrad Archabbey) who had gathered for their monthly meeting.

### **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. Paschal Kneip, Br. Timothy Waid (recovering from knee surgery), Fr. Jonathan Murmann, Fr. Jacques Daley, Fr. Dominic Petroy (recovering from shoulder surgery), Fr. Kurt Belsole, Fr. William Beaver, and Fr. Francis Ehnat.

### **OVERDUE OR MISSING LIBRARY BOOKS AND TAPES: PLEASE RESPOND**

During the past several years a number of books from the Oblate Library have been found to be missing, presumably because people withdrew them without signing them out. Others were admittedly lost by their borrowers. **Please check your bookshelves to see if you have any of the missing books.** Those overdue books (out for over 6 months) whose borrowers are known are not listed below; but if you are one of these borrowers, please return the books promptly. Thank you!

- Fr. George A. Maloney, S.J., *The Jesus Prayer* (pamphlet)
- Susan Annette Muto, *Meditation in Motion*
- Fr. Guy-Marie Oury, O.S.B., *A Monastic Pilgrimage: Following the Footsteps of St. Benedict*
- Abbot David Parry, O.S.B., *Household of God*

**DIRECTORY OF OBLATES: Application form**

I would like to be included in the summer, 2013, edition of the *Directory* of Oblates affiliated with Saint Vincent Archabbey. **(Entries in the 2011-12 *Directory* will automatically be carried over.)**The information that I would like to have included in given as follows:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form to Mrs. Mary Ann Kaufman, 305 Harvester Circle, Pittsburgh, PA 15241 (412-835-8977); or send the information by e-mail to [305makaufman@gmail.com](mailto:305makaufman@gmail.com) .

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**OBLATES ARE INVITED TO ATTEND CAMERATA CONCERT**

Oblates are welcome to attend a concert offered by the Saint Vincent Camerata in December. An All-Bach program for the first Sunday of Advent is being offered at Sacred Heart Church in Pittsburgh on Saturday, December 1, at 8:00 P.M. and at Saint Vincent Basilica on Sunday, December 2, at 2:00 P.M. The program included Bach's Cantata number 140 and choruses and arias from Advent cantatas.

**ORDER FORM FOR *CHERISH CHRIST ABOVE ALL***

**Please enclose \$7.00 per copy of *Cherish Christ above All* by Fr. Demetrius Dumm, O.S.B.  
Enclosed is \_\_\_\_\_ for my order of \_\_\_\_\_ books.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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I will pick up my order \_\_\_\_\_ Please mail my order to me \_\_\_\_\_ **(Add postage.)**

**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.

**Order Form for C.D.'s & D.V.D.'s of Presentations in Latrobe**

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