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THE SAINT VINCENT OBLATE NEWS

Saint Vincent Archabbey

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PRACTICING GOOD ZEAL: KEEPING ALIVE THE FIRE OF LOVE IN OUR SOULS

Dear Oblates, Oblate novices, and Friends,

Why consider good zeal?

Every time is a favorable for growing in good zeal. One might even say that maintaining good zeal is a way to express perseverance in the love of God and of neighbor, which forms the very core of Christian life. Good zeal, as monks and Oblates know, is the topic of Chapter 72 of the *Rule* of St. Benedict, in which it is the penultimate chapter, preceding the epilogue. As such, good zeal sums up all the virtuous practices of Benedictine life.

Some months ago another Director of Oblates contacted me about the topic of good zeal. He was preparing to lead a retreat on good zeal but had not found many resources on the subject. Soon afterward I began to look through books on Benedictine spirituality. Scanning tables of contents and indices, I was surprised to find so few references to zeal. Not only did I fail to come up with a book on good zeal, but for a while I could not even find a full chapter on the subject - until I finally remembered Blessed Columba Marmion's book *Christ, the Ideal of the Monk* and its chapter "Good Zeal," the next to last chapter. As we approach the end of the Church year, it is surely worth reflecting on this key virtue with the guidance of such a reliable authority as Blessed Columba.

Blessed Columba's perspective

What does Blessed Columba say about good zeal? He describes it as the means of keeping alive "the fire of love in the soul, not only the fire of divine love, but also of charity towards our neighbor" (p. 397). He writes of zeal in general as "an ardor that burns and is communicated, that consumes and is spread abroad; it is the flame of love - or of hatred - manifested by action" (p. 397). Blessed Columba comments that "the more glowing this inward fire is, the more it radiates outwardly" (p. 398). Turning to St. Benedict's description in *RB* 72, he asserts that good zeal is displayed in three ways: "respect, patience, and promptitude in rendering service" (p. 400), particularly as shown within a monastic community. The respect is what "safeguards love" (p. 401); it is a way of loving but always "in God, and for God" (p. 401). Patience is needed because we all have infirmities and defects. Perhaps God allows these imperfections both to keep us humble and also to give others opportunities to practice the warmth of charity when it may not come naturally. Our Lord Himself is "the most perfect Example of this wonderful patience" (p. 405). Finally, serving others promptly should be a

manifestation of self-giving love; such service "ought to be warm, ready to adapt itself generously, lovingly and always, to all our brothers' needs" (p. 409). Since the call to serve comes from the God who first loved us, "we shall immediately leave our own occupations in order to serve Christ with joy" (p. 409). Blessed Columba further remarks that the practice of good zeal may require much suffering, but he exhorts his readers, "Let us devote ourselves to the accomplishment of this charge even if it absorbs our time and makes painful demands on us" (p. 414).

Insights from the Holy Rule, Chapter 72

Chapter 72, "The Good Zeal of Monks," outlines a program for practicing this zeal. The basis of this kind of living is to "prefer nothing whatever to Christ" (72:11), and this love overflows, as Blessed Columba says, into being "the first to show respect to the other" (72:4), into supporting "one another's weaknesses of body or behavior" with "the greatest patience" (72:6), and into "competing in obedience to one another" (72:6). This zealous love also leads the monk to act on what is better for the other rather than himself (72:7), to "show the pure love of brothers" (72:8) to fellow monks, to relate to God with "loving fear," and to display to the abbot "unfeigned and humble love" (72:10).

Manifestations of good zeal in other chapters of the Rule

The *Rule* abounds in examples of good zeal, whether or not the word "zeal" is used. It is interesting to note that the Latin word "zelus" can also mean "jealousy" (or bad zeal). "Zelus" occurs in this way in 4:66 (not to be "jealous of anyone") and in 65:22 (which warns the abbot not to let "the flames of jealousy sear his soul" regarding his relationship with the prior). Also, the abbot is warned in 64:16 not to be "jealous or oversuspicious." The one positive use of "zelus" outside of *RB* 72 refers to the duty of the local bishop, local abbots, and other people to prevent the election of a wicked abbot; if they do this "with pure motives and zeal for God's honor," "they may be sure to receive a generous reward" (64:6).

Other numerous manifestations of good zeal appear without use of the actual word "zelus." The final verses of the Prologue speak of "run[ning] on the path of God's commandments," "never swerving from His [God's] instructions," and "through patience [sharing] in the sufferings of Christ" (Prol: 49-50). The abbot has a special calling to practice good zeal in his ministry. He does so when he "faithfully [shepherds] a restive and disobedient flock" and strives "to cure their unhealthy ways" (2:8), when he shows "equal love to everyone"

(2:20) in his community, when he strives to “accommodate and adapt himself to each one’s character and intelligence” (2:32), and when he “[keeps] in mind that he has undertaken the care of souls for whom he must give an account” (2:34). Furthermore, he must “fear God and keep the rule in everything that he does” (3:11). All the seventy-four instruments of good works in Chapter 4 can be seen as ways to practice good zeal. Among the central ones are the stipulations that “the love of Christ must come before all else” (4:21) and that one must “pray for [one’s] enemies out of love for Christ” (4:72). Likewise, all the steps of humility in *RB* 7 might be considered attitudes and practices that foster good zeal. Perhaps the most challenging display of zeal occurs in the fourth step when a monk encounters “difficult, unfavorable, or even unjust conditions” (7:35) and yet “quietly embraces suffering and endures it without weakening or seeking escape” (7:35-36). Surely one cannot do that without an abundance of grace! Prompt obedience also manifests good zeal; monks receiving an order from a superior are to “put aside their own concerns, abandon their own will, and lay down whatever they have in hand, leaving it unfinished” (5: 7-8). All the monks show good zeal when they “serve one another in love” (35:6). The cellarer practices good zeal when he “[provides] the brothers with their allotted amount of food without any pride or delay” (31:16). The porter demonstrates good zeal when, at the arrival of a guest, he responds “with all the gentleness that comes from the fear of God” and “provides a prompt answer with the warmth of love” (66:4). When asked to do something seemingly impossible, any monk can show good zeal when he abides in patience and chooses an appropriate moment to explain “to his superior the reasons why he cannot perform [a certain] task” (68:2); he also practices good zeal when the superior persists in his order and the monk realizes “that this is best for him” and, “trusting in God’s help,” obeys in love (68: 4-5).

Good Zeal in Scripture

Of course, there are many examples of good zeal in Scripture, whether or not the word is actually used. In the Old Testament, prophets, patriarchs, and occasionally kings acted with great courage and conviction despite the sufferings resulting from their adherence to God’s will. They acted out of faith in the God who had called them. The Letter to the Hebrews, Chapter 11, provides a multitude of examples of Old Testament figures like Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Moses who “were approved because of their faith” (Heb 11:35). (In many cases their actions would be considered immorally violent by Christian standards.) All that this “cloud of witnesses” (Heb 12:1) did was fulfilled in Christ, who “for the sake of the joy that lay before Him ... endured the cross, heedless of its shame” (Heb 12:2). Even before His ultimate witness through His Passion and Death, Our Lord exhibited immense good zeal in His stay in the temple, “My Father’s house” (Lk 2:49), at the age of twelve; in His cleansing of the temple (Jn 2: 11-22), regarding which St. John quotes

Psalm 69:10: “Zeal for your house consumes me” (Jn 2:17); and in His innumerable acts of compassion towards ill, deformed, and possessed people, not to mention His preaching of hard truths. Christians are to reflect this good zeal. St. Paul urges the Ephesians and us to make every effort “to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace ...” (Eph 4: 1-3). St. Benedict may be alluding to this passage, in addition to Rom 12:10, in his description of good zeal.

Challenges to good zeal in our modern society

Practicing good zeal in our culture can be especially difficult because we are surrounded by bad zeal. A recent presentation at an Oblate meeting in Latrobe demonstrated how the social media are often used to vent anger and to render evil to those who supposedly deserve it. Also, the clerical abuse crisis may give some people an excuse to abandon their faith or to take it less seriously because of some clergy’s failure to live their faith. Furthermore, the media often entice people to have zeal for success, power, pleasure, possessions, attractiveness, and the good opinion of others. As a result, people can expend so much zeal on earthly concerns that they have little zeal left for relationships with God and other people. Yes, “there is a wicked zeal of bitterness which separates from God and leads to hell” (72:1), and it does affect monks and Oblates! The good zeal promoted by the *Rule* requires self-denial, healthy discipline, an embracing of the Cross, and sacrificial love that responds to Christ’s own self-emptying love. These are values that are not highly popular in our society.

Evidence of good zeal - for our encouragement

Nonetheless, there *is* plenty of good zeal in the Church and even in the world outside the Church. We need only to seek it out, observe it prayerfully, and imitate it. Sometimes the challenge of traveling to an unfamiliar place can open us to see graces that we would otherwise miss. Last summer, though I generally avoid long- distance travel, I felt obligated to make a trip to Ann Arbor, Michigan. Fortunately, another monk went with me, and he did all the driving. During the course of our two and a half days away from the Archabbey, I was touched by the apparent “fire of love” in other people’s souls. The married couple who housed us for two nights, old friends of mine, showed us strikingly warm hospitality even though they are not Christians. They treated my confrere as a dear friend although they had never met him previously. There was also manifest good zeal at the Mass for the profession of perpetual vows by seven Dominican sisters, which was the main reason for our trip. How wonderful it was to observe these young women cheerfully giving their lives to Christ, to the Church, and to their Dominican community amid all the sacrifices entailed! Good zeal was also exhibited by the parents and other family members of the sisters, some of whom definitely made a significant sacrifice in “giving

up” their loved ones to religious life. After the Mass of profession I felt graced with an opportunity to meet a couple who had become friends of the sisters and both of whom were recent converts to the Catholic faith. I was blessed also with an occasion to visit distant cousins in Livonia, one of whom is a Felician sister whom I had not met before. In the course of our visit, she showed us pictures of her work in clinics in poor villages in Haiti. Being a nurse who teaches nursing in a college, she nonetheless finds the time and energy to make trips to Haiti several times a year to deliver much-needed medical supplies and to treat very needy patients. What love and what sacrifice her mission trips entail! Also, I must be grateful for my monk companion, with whom I shared prayer, meals, and company in the car for many hours. Now it is my task to recognize similar good zeal in the daily life of my monastic community. It is here! However, it is often easier to observe goodness away from home than to find it in our normal daily rounds with familiar faces and familiar tasks.

Some suggestions for practicing good zeal in daily life

How can we improve our practice of good zeal, that is in the living of our Christian vocations with a more radiant fire of love in our souls? We might first examine whether we have shown excessive zeal for things that might diminish our faith. Do we spend too much time and energy thinking about food and drink, worrying about possible failure, seeking some kind of advantage over others, or simply seeking our own will in some area without surrendering it to God’s will? If so, we must let go of our misdirected zeal and become zealous for the “things that matter to God” (Lk 12:21). Furthermore, we must not let ourselves be discouraged by the bad example of others; rather, we must pray for those who witness negatively and welcome the grace to do what will counteract whatever wrong they have done. On the positive side, we can strive to pray the Liturgy of the Hours as faithfully as possible; as St. Benedict tells us, “nothing is to be preferred to the Work of God” (RB 43:3). We can make *lectio divina* a high priority by spending a few minutes with the Scriptures each day, if possible; St. Benedict urges us, “Listen readily to holy

reading” (4:55). We can confess our sins often (cf. 4:57) and react quickly with prayer when we are tempted to “gratify the promptings of the flesh” (4:59). In dealing with other people, we can learn to show respect whether or not we receive it. We can ask God regularly for patience in our encounters with difficult people in family, community, and workplace (cf. 72: 4-5). We can strive to think more and more about what will benefit others instead of being preoccupied with what pleases us (cf. 72:7). To our superiors we can aim to show “unfeigned and humble love” (72:10) out of love for Christ. At home and at work, when we feel alienated from people who do not share our outlook on life, we can learn to “pray for [our] enemies out of love for Christ” and “make peace ... before the sun goes down” (7:72-73) when we have mental or verbal disagreements. Obviously, we cannot agree with those who express values that are contrary to the Gospel; yet we must show them respect and civility as children of God who have gone astray. (Have not we gone astray in plenty of ways, too?)

Yes, good zeal is especially tested in our living and working amid people who seem not to care or seem not to believe. To live our faith zealously in their midst and to be lovingly patient with them may seem like an impossible task. If, however, we rely on the grace of God, He will surely help us to “prefer nothing whatever to Christ” (72:11), to “continue joyfully” (7:39) in our efforts to love and trust amid opposition or other adversities, and eventually to come to do everything “out of love for Christ, good habit, and delight in virtue” (7:69). Then “the Holy Spirit [will] graciously manifest” in us, the Lord’s workmen, the good zeal which will lead us and others “to God and everlasting life” (72:2). The Season of Advent teaches us to await this grace with eager longing. It will surely come if we do not grow weary awaiting it and welcoming it!

In the peace of Christ and St. Benedict,

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

***P.S.:** Fr. Donald and Fr. Augustine Yang 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.

RETREAT SCHEDULE FOR 2019

The retreats at St. Vincent for summer, 2019, have been scheduled. Regarding the two retreats on Benedictine spirituality; there will one on May 24-26, 2019 (to be directed by Fr. Donald), and a second one in June or July (not yet scheduled). All Oblates and Oblate novices are urged to consider making a summer retreat at the Archabbey.

OBLATE DAY AND DAY OF RECOLLECTION FOR 2019

Oblate Day for 2019 has been scheduled for Sunday, September 22, 2019, since facilities will be available on that day. The fall day of recollection for 2019 has been scheduled for Saturday, October 12, 2019.

MENTORS NEEDED

A number of people who are Oblate novices or inquirers have requested Oblate mentors. There are still a few people 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 mentors.

NEXT SUMMER’S BIENNIAL ASSEMBLY OF DEANERY REPRESENTATIVES: June 22, 2019

The Assembly of Deanery Representatives in 2019 has been scheduled for Saturday, June 22, a date when not many other events are occurring. Each deanery is asked to seek members who might wish to attend and consider if any might need overnight accommodations. Two representatives from each deanery would be ideal, but if a married couple is involved, three may attend.

A MESSAGE FROM ARCHABBOT DOUGLAS

November, 2018

Dear Oblates and Friends of Saint Vincent,

For the universal Church, the month of November is dedicated to the remembrance of all of our departed family members and loved ones. On All Souls Day, November 2, and throughout the month of November, the names of all those for whom prayers have been requested are placed on the altar of the Archabbey Basilica for special prayers of remembrance by the Benedictine community during Masses and the Divine Office.

Each day we pray for our family members and loved ones who have died. Pope Saint John XXIII once said that “prayer is the raising of the mind to God. We must always remember this. The actual words matter less.” We find great comfort in keeping alive that communion with those who have gone before us. It is our faith and hope that one day we will be reunited with them in Jesus Christ.

Be assured of the continued prayers of the Benedictine community for you and for all of your family members and loved ones.

Faithfully in Christ,

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

OBLATE DAY: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2018

Nearly 30 people, Oblates, family members, and other guests, came to the Archabbey for our 31st annual Oblate Day. Fr. Earl 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 the following made their final Oblation in the presence of Fr. Donald and the other participants:

Doris (Francis of Assisi) Clinton of Greensburg, PA
William C. (Boniface) Matthews of Greensburg, PA
Michelle (Paschal) Mocco of Virginia Beach, VA
Cecelia Oshnock of Latrobe, PA
JoAnn Oshnock of Greensburg, PA.

Doris is the mother of Oblate Cynthia Ruff; Cecelia is the wife of Oblate Robert Oshnock; and JoAnn is Robert’s cousin.

After a period for confessions in the basilica, there was a social in the Parish Assembly Room.

Then at 3:45 Fr. Nathanael Polinski, O.S.B., teacher of Scripture at St. Vincent Seminary and College and a recent recipient of a doctorate in Biblical Theology, gave a presentation entitled “Participation in Jesus’ Perfect Worship through the Liturgy.” He began by referring to the *Rule’s* call to recognize Christ’s special presence in the Divine Office and by mentioning Vatican II’s words about Christ’s presence in the Eucharistic liturgy. The signs of the liturgy are meant to lead us into the mystery of divinity. Fr. Nathanael then spoke especially about St. John’s account of Christ’s Passion and Death and its liturgical implications. He showed that, especially in

Jn 19: 25-37, there are indications of amazing fulfillment of Old Testament passages. In His Passion and Death Christ fully reveals God the Father to us and shows us perfect obedience to the Father. In our participation in the Mass, we take part in the perfect worship offered by Christ as He continues to perfect us as members of His mystical Body.

After the praying of Vespers with the monks, the day’s events ended with supper and the singing of the Benedictine “Ultima.”

TWELFTH FALL OBLATE DAY OF RECOLLECTION AT THE ARCHABBEY - Saturday, October 13, 2018

Some 37 people, mostly Oblates and Oblate novices, attended this annual event, with conferences in St. Gregory Chapel. Fr. Shawn Matthew Anderson, the retreat master, delivered conferences about forgiveness and healing, with many references to Scripture and the *Rule*.

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

Oblates: **Sharon (Martha Mary) Bopp** of Butler, PA
Thomas J. Caldwell of Clairton, PA
Edythe (Teresa of Avila) Schirra of Butler, PA.

Edythe and Sharon belong to the St. Hildegard in Butler, and Tom belongs to the Bl. Columba Marmion Deanery in the South Hills of Pittsburgh. Also present besides the Oblates who attended were Sharon’s husband, John, and one of Edythe’s granddaughters and a great-grandsons.

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

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM OBLATE EVENTS AVAILABLE; REQUEST FOR PHOTOGRAPHS FROM VARIOUS LOCATIONS

If anyone would like copies of photos from recent Oblation ceremonies at the Archabbey, please contact cjlruff@att.net (or phone the Oblate Office); you will be sent a copy of the photo by e-mail. Also, if you have any photographs from Oblate events from your deaneries or elsewhere, please send them to the same e-mail address for inclusion in a collection of Oblate photographs. Thank you.

RECOMMENDED READING

The following book will soon be in the Oblate Library:
- Wilfrid Stinissen, *Into Your Hands, Father* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2011)

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 17 and October 5, 2018

Members of the Board assembled for their 69th and 70th regular meetings at 6:30 P.M. on August 17 and October 5 in Brownfield Room 203. The meeting on August 17, attended by fourteen members and one guest, involved reports on the formation lessons, consideration of prayers for the canonization of Dorothy Day, evaluation of a potential speaker at Oblate events, the need to start planning for the 2019 Assembly of Deanery Representatives, consideration of the 2019 NAABOD Biennial Meeting, a redistribution of duties involving the Mentoring Program and the Oblate *Directory*, the possibility of putting monks' presentations to Oblates on the Oblate website, and an introduction of the new assistant Director of Oblates, Fr. Augustine Yang.

The meeting on October 27, attended by ten members, involved discussions about the planning committee for the 2021 International Congress of Oblates, various options for the mentoring of inmate Oblates, and some of the issues discussed at the August meeting. The next meeting was scheduled for Friday, January 11, weather permitting.

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* – for \$1.00 each
- (3) booklet of deanery histories – free or with donation for postage
- (4) book *Nadeem Feroze: Oblate of Saint Benedict, Pakistani, Defender of the Faith* - \$8.00 each
- (5) booklet *You Are Loved* (Catholic Answers Press) for those needing help with pornography addiction - for a donation

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.

OBLATE GROUP IN CAMBRIDGE, ONTARIO, CANADA –meetings on 1st Thurs. mornings at St. Gregory the Great Church in Cambridge

Oblate Cathy Mayled reported by phone on October 11. The meetings in September and October each drew five people. In September the group studied Chapters 50 and 51 of the *Rule*, and in October Chapter 52.

OBLATE GROUP IN MORGANTOWN, WV

Secretary Pauline Lanciotti reported by e-mail on September 10 and 27 and on October 30. The meeting on August 20 was attended by three Oblates and three inquirers in addition to Fr. Justin Blanc, moderator. After the praying of Vespers for St. Bernard, Fr. Justin drew the group's attention to Psalm 136, with its repeated refrain "for his love endures forever." He suggested the cultivation of gratitude for God's goodness by substituting personal blessings for the other lines in the psalm. The attendees then completed their discussion of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger's (the future Pope Benedict) book *Introduction to Christianity*. The evening's focus was on the final section, Part III, "The Holy Spirit." The group found all of Part III especially relevant to the challenges currently facing the Church. The points discussed included the gifts of the Holy Spirit; the Mystical Body of Christ; and the operation of the Holy Spirit in the sacraments of baptism, penance, and Eucharist, which is essential for forgiveness and the foundation of healthy Christian community.

On September 18 in the Archabbey Basilica, after the praying of Midday Prayer in St. Gregory Chapel,

James (Benedict) Kirby of Morgantown, WV,

made his final Oblation in the presence of Fr. Donald. Also present were Pauline Lanciotti, lay leader of the Oblate group in Morgantown; a friend from Morgantown; several local Oblates; and an Oblate from Ohio and his guest. The attendees then went to lunch in the Eichstätt Room.

The meeting on September 24 was attended by five Oblates, two inquirers, and Fr. Justin. After the praying of Vespers, Pauline shared the news of James Kirby's final Oblation. The group then began a study of the book *A Guide to Living in the Truth: St. Benedict's Teaching on Humility* by Fr. Michael Casey, O.C.S.O. The book is a commentary on *RB 7*; so Pauline began with a review of the layout of the chapter for the benefit of the Oblate novices and inquirers. She suggested that the word "degree" might be better than "step" in describing the twelve phases of humility. Then the attendees discussed Chapters 1-3 of the book, with the notions of humility as a network of attitudes, as not denying one's gifts and talents, as requiring their use in service of others, and as not depending on "personality types." Also discussed were four foundations of an attitude of a life characterized by humility: "we are not divine," "we are creatures," "we are sinners," and "we are stilled human beings."

The meeting on October 29 was attended by two Oblates and three inquirers in addition to Fr. Justin. After the praying of Vespers, Pauline briefly brought up the St. Vincent Oblates' commitment to pray monthly for the cause of Dorothy Day's canonization. The

group decided to pray individually for the cause. Then Fr. Justin led a discussion of Chapters 4 through 7 of *A Guide to Living in the Truth*, involving the prologue of *RB 7* through the fourth step. The group first considered an expanded definition of humility as a primary disposition of heart involving receptivity to God's gift of salvation and the removal of anything inhibiting this receptivity. Along with reliance on grace, the spiritual life requires serious, determined effort involving body and soul; the disciple must be truly teachable. Other notions that were discussed were the holy fear of God and mindfulness, the choice to turn away from evil and do good, and the seeking of God's will in one's particular situation. The difference between self-will and self-determination was mentioned. Finally, the group considered the connection among obedience, patience, and perseverance as essential elements of progress in the spiritual life. The next meeting was set for November 26.

RECOMMENDED C.D'S & D.V.D'S

- various presentations by Benedictine monks & also C.D. of presentation by Fr. Adam Potter, Diocese of Pittsburgh, "Secularism and 'the Benedict Option,'" July 8, 2018 (see order form on flier)

OBLATE GROUP IN TENNESSEE COLONY, TX (Michael Unit)

Lay leader/secretary Robert Bernhardt reported on August 8. The group has been meeting each Tuesday after Mass to pray the Liturgy of the Hours and to read a passage from the *Rule*. On the fourth Tuesday of each month, there is a fuller meeting.

On June 26 the group chose Robert Bernhardt to be their leader. Former leader Alex Torres was given the responsibility of mentoring inquirers. The group also reflected on the passage *RB 19: 1-7*.

On July 24 the attendees reflected on *RB 44: 1-10*, with the comment that it is no longer appropriate to prostrate oneself when one violates a precept of the *Rule*. Attendees were encouraged to pray the Liturgy of the Hours as often as possible. Plans were made for the mentoring of inquirers each Tuesday in sessions separate from those for Oblates and Oblate novices.

OBLATE GROUP IN ROSHARON, TX (Terrell Unit)

Secretary Gilberto Gomez wrote on September 19. The group has meetings weekly that attract twelve to nineteen people. They recently chose Oblate Richard Owings as their leader. The meetings involve readings from the Church Fathers, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and the *Oblate Formation Booklet*.

OBLATE GROUP IN BEAUMONT, TX (Stiles Unit)

Oblate novice José Alvarado, serving as secretary, wrote on September 25 concerning meetings May 16 and 30, June 6 and 20, July 18, August 1, 15, and 29, and September 5 and 19. Attendance ranged from two to eleven. The group normally prayed the Invitatory and Morning Prayer and discussed the passage of the *Holy Rule* for the day. Various members presented lessons on stability, prayer, *lectio divina*, the Liturgy of the Hours, and the Holy Eucharist. On August 29 and September 5, the attendees viewed a D.V.D. entitled "Nothing Is Impossible," by John Michael Talbot. On September 19, there was a discussion about the struggle to avoid grumbling, and José gave a lesson based on a Cistercian retreat, with focus on "the false self" from Thomas Merton's writings.

OBLATE MEETINGS IN LATROBE AND PRESENTATIONS ON BENEDICTINE SPIRITUALITY

Oblates from all locations and guests are invited to monthly meetings at the Archabbey. The forthcoming meetings will be on Sundays November 18, December 16, January 20, and February 17 at 6:45 P.M. in Brownfield Room 202. As stated above, the book *Seventy-Four Tools for Good Living* will be discussed. On the same days as meetings in Latrobe, presentations on Benedictine spirituality are being held in Brownfield 202 from 3:00 to 4:15. They are given by monks or Oblates. All are welcome. The session on November 18, to be offered by Fr. Thomas Hart, O.S.B., will address the topic "Humility in Benedictine Spirituality," and the session on December 16, to be offered by Br. Dominic Leo, O.S.B., will be about "*Conversatio morum*." Those wishing to come early for Evening Prayer (at 5:00) and supper should phone Fr. Donald (724-805-2291) in advance.

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

The Blessed Sacrament is generally exposed on Sundays from 2:00 P.M. to 4:15 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, exposition will begin at 12:30 P.M. in the basilica and will conclude with Benediction at the end of Vespers in the nave, which begins, as usual, at 5:00.**

REMINDER ABOUT "THE SAINT VINCENT OBLATES SCHOLARSHIP"

On October 19 Br. Norman, President of Saint Vincent College, wrote a letter to Fr. Donald in gratitude for donations to the Oblates Scholarship. He reported that for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2018, the book value of the scholarship fund was \$10,745, and the market value was \$13,756. Funds available to be awarded are the result of the spending policy adopted by the Saint Vincent College Board of Directors. In accordance with this policy, the college awarded \$618 from the fund during the 2017-18 fiscal year. If anyone has questions or would like additional information, he or she may contact Joan Aungier Davis, Director of Stewardship and Communications, at 724-805-2215 or at joan.davis@stvincent.edu .

PRAYER INTENTIONS: [Note: All cities without mention of a state are in Pennsylvania.]

The following members of the Oblate Community request or need our prayers: Curless Abshire of Port Neches, TX (for full recovery from a serious illness); Rebecca Baker of Somerset (for the repose of the soul of her pastor, Fr. Daniel O'Neill on October 29; he was a priest of the Altoona-Johnstown Diocese); Ronald Bergman of Gibsonia (for full recovery from serious injuries); Bonnie Bezila of Mt. Airy, MD (for her mother's continuing recovery from illness); George Bordell of Greensburg (for healing from several ailments); Kathleen Brooks of Morgantown, WV (for recovery from serious ailments); John Cain of New Alexandria (for relief from problems at work; for special intentions for his family; for God's protection); Andy Chick of Philadelphia (for access to Church & sacraments); Brian Chisholm of St. Catharines, Ont. (for the special needs of the men in his house); Milissa Chomiak of Republic (for

improvement of health & relief from financial problems); Vincenzo Croce of Monaca (for full recovery from back surgery on Sept. 18); Lawrence Cuda of Latrobe (for his wife Yvonne's full recovery from back surgery on Sept. 28 & for her healing from a debilitating back problem); Deacon Ralph DeCecco of Erie (for healing from Crohn's disease); Bernadette Edwards of Mt. Pleasant (for relief from severe pains that make walking difficult; for her husband Bob & success of his treatments for leukemia & recovery from surgery for cancer on his ear on Oct. 10); Paul Fling of Conway, SC (for special intentions regarding his pro-life prayer ministry); Theresa George of Philadelphia (for her husband Chris & for stability in his new business); Bill Gibson of Wheeling, WV (for the Steubenville Diocese in a time of reorganization; for the Wheeling-Charleston Diocese during difficulties after the resignation of the bishop); Liz Hart of Mt. Pleasant (for her mother Mary Ellen Haas' recovery from a broken hip); David & Pat Hicks of Decatur, GA (for their daughter Kaycee's continued recovery from injuries from an accident); John Hudock of Greensburg (for grace to cope with various health problems); Florence Huson of Bradenville (for resolution of health problems); John Jacoby of Greensburg (for relief from excessive stress); *(continued)*

Mary Ann Kaufman of Pittsburgh (for her brother Robert Cribbs' recovery from fluid on the brain); Robert Kinkead of Apollo (for suitable employment); Mary "Kory" Leftwich of New Cumberland (for healing from cancer & other ailments; for success of cancer treatments); Timothy Lenhart of Latrobe (for his sister Dolores Gorton's recovery from a fall & for grace for her to cope with dementia; for his brother-in-law Donald Gorton's relief from stress; for the well-being of a friend, Margaret Krivakula); John James Matiko of North Huntingdon (for recovery from illness); Cheryl Matta of Greensburg (for healing from various ailments; for her daughter Courtney's emotional & physical healing & safety); Cathy Mayled of Ayr, Ont. (for her sister Judy Klomp's recovery from a bad infection in her leg; for her father Ron's continued healing); Roy McKenzie of St. Catharines, Ont. (for recovery from a mini-stroke); Andrew Mitschell of Pelham, GA (for advancement of his legal case; for relief from unsuitable living conditions); Michelle Mocco of Virginia Beach, VA (for her two-year-old grandson's healing from a developmental disorder); Ann Orosz of Reynoldsburg, OH (for full recovery from difficult knee surgery; for her sister-in-law Shirley Siefker's recovery from pneumonia & a bad infection); Robert & Cecelia Oshnock of Latrobe (for their daughter Cheryl Perry's relief from severe back pain & other ailments); Margaret Perhats of McKeesport (for grace to cope with severe heart & lung problems; for her husband Richard's recovery from internal bleeding); Joseph Pagano of Greensburg (for his son-in-law David Howell's full recovery from illness); Ann Pakos of Latrobe (for God's comfort & peace); Pendleton Deanery (for the Catholic community at C.I.F.; for the repose of the soul of Fr. Joe Resola, who died on July 22 at the age of 52); Celeste Pileggi of Charleroi (for special intentions for herself & her son, Seth); Carol Ramela of Acme (for her daughter Susan's continued recovery from paralysis & other effects of Guillain-Barré syndrome); Ann Riddle of New Alexandria (for quick healing of a broken foot); Brian Rinehart of Tennessee Colony, TX (for success of his mother's chemotherapy treatments for cancer); Angie Schubert of Livonia, MI (for her mother, Clare Quesada, & success in resolving problems with medications & her memory); Linette Schreiber of Ardmore (for relief from pain & upheaval; for healing from dental problems; for the wisdom to make good decisions in light of changes in health-care provisions; for healing from vertigo; for trust, peace, and good discernment; for a favorable outcome of medical tests for her daughter, Hannah; for recovery from health problems for many family members & friends); Andrei Sergueev of Woodbridge, Ont. (for continued healing for his son, Kirill, towards full mental health); Caroline Smith of Centreville, VA (for recovery from skin cancer & success of future surgery); Patrick Smith of Gatesville, TX (for Sister Catherine & her special ministry; for Fr. Victor Beltran & his ability to overcome physical challenges; for the St. Dismas Catholic Community in Gatesville); Ronald Stachoni of Bear, DE (for continued healing from bleeding on the brain); Marcia Stoner of Broomfield, CO (for her grandson Jacob's healing from dyslexia); Anthony "Dutch" Surman of Pittsburgh (for recovery from serious illness); Frank Stoshack of Shamokin (recovery from various ailments); Tennessee Colony (Michael Unit) Oblates (for the repose of the soul of Chaplain Thomas Cussen's son); Leslie Todd of Beaumont, TX (for Michael Scalf & his healing from persistent cancer; for Michael's brother Paul & his healing from lung problems); Thomas Tomasky of Bolivar (for relief from severe knee pain & hip pain); Samuel Webb of Pittsburgh (for full recovery from amputation of a foot & for grace to cope with diabetes); Michael Williams of Pooler, GA (for employment in the Savannah area); Jan Woodruff of Derry (for her health & the health of her mother); Dale Yeckley of Greensburg (for his brother Carl's recovery from a collapsed lung).

PERSONAL NOTES:

- (1) On August 24 Oblate **William O'Shea** of Fulton, NY, and his wife, Adrienne, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Our prayers and congratulations are with Bill and Adrienne.
- (2) Oblate **Michael Sobjak** of Muncy, PA, reported that after a very difficult pregnancy his daughter Lisa gave birth to healthy twins, Ella and Phoebe, on August 24. Mike is grateful for all the prayers and asks for continued prayers for Lisa, her husband Eric, and the babies.
- (3) Sr. Kelly Williams, R.S.M., professed her first temporary vows as a religious sister last July. A former Oblate novice, she is the daughter of Oblates **Michael & Lori Williams** of Pooler, GA. Our prayers and congratulations are with Sr. Kelly and her parents.

CONDOLENCES

Through the trials of sickness and death, Christ brings about the fullness of healing and new life. Let us through prayer share in the sorrows of those members of the Oblate community who have recently lost loved ones:

- Oblates Vera Trabold and Diane Crownover of Johnstown, PA; Richard "Dick" Trabold, Vera's husband and Diane's father, died on June 9 [see below]; please pray especially for Vera, who now lives in a nursing home and has very poor eyesight
- Oblate Cecelia Oshnock of Latrobe, PA, whose sister-in-law Donna died in August
- Oblate novice Mark Moore of Waveland, MS, whose brother Robert Lanclos died on August 3
- Oblate John Lesley Miller of Tennessee Colony, TX, whose step-mother, Linda Miller, died on August 11
- Oblate novice Robert Kinkead of Apollo, PA, whose mother, Winifred Jean Kinkead, died on August 31
- Oblate Christine Miller of Pittsburgh, PA, whose son Randall Karl Miller died on September 11 (after nine months of struggle with cancer)
- Oblate Kathleen Garland of Bethel Park, PA, whose father-in-law, Howard Garland, died on September 25
- Oblate Richard Rutkowski of Erie, PA, whose son James "Jim," age 43, died of a massive heart attack on September 27 (please

pray also for Jim's children Adam and Abby)

- Oblate Deborah Johnston of Derry, PA, and her husband, George, whose brother Clifford Johnston died on October 5
- Oblate Mary Ann Bingeman of Mechanicsburg, PA, whose mother, Muriel Schatz, died on October 12

OBLATE DEATHS

With the support of our prayers, may the recently deceased members of our Oblate community receive the fullness of life in Christ with all the choirs of angels and saints:

- 15 Dec 2017 - Salvatore (Maurice) Rotolo of Chalk Hill, PA (age 94; Oblate since Aug. 11, 1962)
- 09 Jun 2018 - Rickard K. "Dick" (Arnold) Trabold of Johnstown, PA (age 90; Oblate since July 11, 2007)
- 02 Aug 2018 - Ursula H. (Anne) Koenig of Smithville, Ont., Canada (age 90; Oblate since Sept. 24, 2006)
- 29 Aug 2018 - Alger C. "Al" (Jerome) Harris of Jacksonville, AL (Oblate since Mar. 29, 2013)
- 29 Sep 2018 - Elmer (Placid) Furman of East Pittsburgh, PA (Oblate since Nov. 21, 1960)
- 03 Oct 2018 - Nial B. (Antoninus) Murray of St. Catharines, Ont., Canada (widower of Oblate Cecilia Murray; Oblate since June 1, 1996)
- 12 Oct 2018 - Rev. Francis C. Graff of the Diocese of Pittsburgh (Oblate since July 12, 1955 [probable date])

NEWS FROM OBLATE DEANERIES

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

The meeting on August 26 was attended by nine people in addition to Fr. Job, moderator, and Fr. Donald, who happened to be at St. Paul Church that weekend to preach the Benedictine Annual Appeal. The session began with the praying of Vespers in the church. Then Fr. Donald invested as an Oblate novice

Jonathan E. Clark of Lebanon, PA.

The group subsequently went to the meeting to enjoy some refreshments. There followed a lively discussion on the questions from Chapter 4, "Obedience," of the *Formation Lessons for Oblate Novices and Oblates*.

Baltimore, MD (St. Walburga Deanery) -- meetings at 3:00-4:45 on 3rd Sun. of month, parish house, St. Benedict Church

Lay leader/secretary Jay Wells reported by e-mail on September 28. During the summer months Fr. Paschal Morlino, moderator, sent to all the Oblates a list materials for *lectio*. The meeting on September 23 drew eleven people and was led by Fr. Paschal. He began by announcing the forthcoming regional Oblate meeting in Bristow, VA, on October 13. Then he led a discussion of an article entitled "Come with Me to a Quiet Place," which included themes of silence, hearing God's word, and knowledge of ourselves. Fr. Paschal then informed the group about another article on good zeal in its relation to the *Rule* of St. Benedict. There was to be no meeting in October. The attendees ended the session by singing Vespers in the church at 5:00 P.M.

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

Lay leader/secretary Ronald Weleski reported by mail on October 1. The meeting on July 25 began with nine deanery members' attending Mass at St. Fidelis Church; then the group prayed Evening Prayer. Oblate novice Edythe Schirra led the discussion on the last chapter of the book *Lessons from Saint Benedict*, namely "Preparing for a Holy Death." There was a very lively discussion on preparing for death, with references to the practices of the Liturgy of the Hours, *lectio divina*, study of the *Rule*, and seeking joy in a balance of work and prayer each day.

The meeting on August 22 began with Evening Prayer. The group then reviewed the book *Divine Renovation: Bringing Your Parish from Maintenance to Mission* by Fr. James Mallon. The text offers a powerful, practical call to action that can energize parishes. The discussion focused on two of the insights: (1) the avoidance of clericalism along with the Catholic laity's need to understand the universal call to holiness and mission and (2) the importance of creating small communities within parishes in which members will be "known, loved, challenged and supported." Oblate deaneries can be examples of such small communities.

The meeting on September 26 followed evening Mass at St. Fidelis. As had been previously decided, the deanery began to study the lessons contained in the *Formation Lessons for Oblate Novices and Oblates*. They began with a review of Lesson One, "On Holiness and Pursuing Benedictine Spirituality." There was a lively discussion about areas in which the attendees felt the need for growth in personal holiness and about practical ways to foster this growth. As at every meeting, the session ended with "A Prayer for Oblates" and a brief social.

Cyber Deanery (St. Isidore of Seville Deanery) [Those interested in the deanery may contact tmgeorge.oblate@gmail.com.]

Co-lay leader Theresa George reported by phone on October 30. As of that date, there were 37 members. The deanery has been discussing the formation lessons, one per month. In October the group completed Lesson 4.

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

Lay leader/secretary Kathy Kristofko wrote on September 14 and October 22. On Friday, September 7, there was a brief meeting and dinner, especially for older Oblates who have difficulty traveling at night to attend the regular meetings. Other Oblates also attended. The regular meeting on September 10 began with Evening Prayer. After the consideration of some business, the group continued a discussion based on the book *Humility Rules* by Fr. Augustine Wetta, O.S.B.

The meeting on October 1 began with Evening Prayer in the John Paul II Center. The attendance was lower than usual because Deacon Michael Russo, moderator, and some Oblates were on a pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi. Those present continued a discussion of two chapters in the book *Humility Rules*. Also, refreshments were served.

Kalispell, MT (Holy Trinity Deanery) - meetings at St. Matthew's Roman Catholic Church in Kalispell on 2nd Tues, 9:00 A.M.

Lay leader/secretary Tanishia Sperling reported by e-mail about October 20. The meeting on October 17 was attended by five Oblates, one of whom was previously affiliated with Mount Angel Abbey. Tanishia commented that also belonging to the group are two women who will soon become Oblate novices although they are not physically able to attend monthly meetings. After an opening

prayer, the attendees shared what they wanted to read and discuss during the 2018-19 year in addition to their in-depth study of the *Rule*. The consensus seemed to be to discuss the book *Seventy-Four Tools for Good Living* by Fr. Michael Casey, O.C.S.O. In preparation for the next meeting on November 14, the group was urged to read *RB 7* (on humility) and to use *lectio divina* as a tool to hear the word of God.

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

At the meeting on August 19, some ten people gathered to continue a discussion of the instruments of good works (*RB 4*) based on the book *Seventy-Four Tools for Good Living* by Fr. Michael Casey, O.C.S.O. The group covered tools 25 through 30. Among the topics were the practice of charity in difficult situations, enduring trials with patience, and truthfulness in relationships. As usual, the attendees went to the Archabbey Basilica at 8:15 P.M. to pray Compline.

At the meeting on September 16, some ten people continued the discussion on the tools of good works and covered tools 31 through 34, involving the challenging precepts of loving enemies, returning curses with blessings, enduring persecution for the sake of righteousness, and avoiding pride. The group ended the session with the praying of Compline. (continued)

Also on September 16, after the 3:00 presentation, the attendees went to the Archabbey Basilica, where Fr. Donald invested **Debra D. Vanden Berk** of Latrobe, PA,

as an Oblate novice. Besides the Oblates attending the meeting, Debbie's husband Daniel, who teaches physics at St. Vincent College, and their five children were present.

On October 21, after the 3:00 presentation, the attendees went to the Archabbey Basilica, where

Bonita Mae "Bonnie" (Joseph) Lee of Austintown, OH, made her final Oblation in the presence of Fr. Donald and the others who were gathered, including Bonnie's daughter.

At the meeting on October 21, some seven people gathered to discuss tools of good works 35 to 38, all involving food, drink, and sleep, that is bodily needs which need to be met in moderation. The themes discussed were the need to allow for individual differences, the avoidance of self-indulgence and preoccupation with self, the regarding of our bodily needs as part of our spiritual lives, and the countercultural dimension of practicing Christian moderation in food, drink, and sleep. The session ended with the praying of Compline in Brownfield 202.

Please note that Vespers on December 16 is likely to be at 7:00 P.M.; so the Oblates will have supper at 4:45 P.M., meet for the second session at 5:45 P.M., and then join the monastic community for Vespers at 7:00 P.M.

Latrobe, PA: Presentations at 3:00 P.M.

On August 19 Br. Ignatius Camello gave a presentation on humility to about sixteen people. He focused on the second and eighth degrees of humility from Chapter 7 of the *Holy Rule*. Among the themes considered were detachment from self-will (with a number of Scriptural references), wholehearted surrender to God's will like the Blessed Mother's, the importance of humility for growth in prayer and self-knowledge, the call to take one's proper place in community and family, and the importance of a daily examination of conscience. Humility, remarked Br. Ignatius, is strongly linked with a number of other virtues.

On September 16 Fr. Jeremiah Lange gave a presentation on poverty and simplicity to about twenty people. He first described the Catholic community at St. Nicholas Parish in Nicktown, of which he is pastor, as being close to ideal. However, because of the current crisis in the Church, all Catholic institutions are fragile. Fr. Jeremiah proposed that what the Church needs is a return to its foundations. He then gave a meditation on the story of the rich young man encountering Jesus in Mt 19: 16-26. Just as Our Lord challenged the man to let go of his wealth, He is challenging us to become more poor so that we may not make an idol of wealth and material things. Such figures as St. Anthony of Egypt and St. Benedict give us examples of saints who gave up wealth in order to live simpler lives focused on God. However, all too often Christians have not followed their example; instead Christians have sometimes allowed possessions to numb them to the reality of Christ in their lives. Fr. Jeremiah then gave some practical examples of choosing asceticism in small things in daily life. Then, addressing the current crisis in the Church, he suggested that individual Catholics may have to live in greater spiritual poverty, with greater trust in God and less trust in the structures in the Church. Clergy, religious, and lay Christians are all being called to live in a more countercultural way. One great consolation is our relationship with Christ; with Him, we can move forward to live with less complacency and greater poverty, authenticity, and eagerness for holiness.

On October 21 Br. Placid Sellers gave a presentation on the social media and Benedictine spirituality. He sought the participation of the twenty-four-or-so attendees as much as possible. First, he handed out a list of questions and suggestions on the use of television and other media involving the dangers and the potential for Oblates to be a positive presence. Two key words that Br. Placid used were "anger" and "deserving." He showed a student film on the theme of "deserve," with the message that God never gives up on looking for His beloved children, and so we owe Him the praise that He deserves. Br. Placid showed another short film on the theme of anger, its toxicity, and the possibility of forgiveness to overcome anger. Connecting the challenge of today's social media with the *Rule*, he urged the Oblates to listen to what is happening in the world, to other people's applauding of bad behavior, and also to other people, to Scripture, and to the prayers of the Mass. Through listening we can learn how to allow God's love to cover over His wayward children's disobedience and to tell other people about God's mercy. Br. Placid also shared about his conversion experience while he was working in the eastern European country of Moldava to report news.

Niagara Area, Ontario, Canada (St. Henry/St. Gertrude Deanery) -- meetings on 3rd or 4th Thurs. of each month, meeting room of St. Thomas Aquinas Church, St. Catharines, Ont.

Lay leader Brian Chisholm reported by phone on September 21 and October 25. The meeting on September 20 began with a holy hour in the church attended by over 20 people. About eleven of them, including four previous regular attendees, came to the subsequent meeting, which was moderated by Fr. Benjamin Weber. Copies of the study of the *Rule* that was to begin in October were distributed, and the attendees showed great interest in the plan of study.

Eleven people attended the meeting on October 18 after the holy hour. Although the group had planned to discuss Lesson 1 from the formation lessons, Fr. Ben provided a basic lesson on God's providence and the meaning of becoming an Oblate. The next

meeting was scheduled for November 22.

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

Secretary Frederick Laux reported on September 11. Unavoidable circumstances prevented the Oblates from meeting in August. The meeting on September 11 was attended by six Oblates, one Oblate novice, and one inquirer. The group began by praying Vespers, with the inclusion of intercessions from the Archabbey. Then Oblate Chris Beard gave a presentation on *RB 2: 12-15*, along with two Scripture citations. He spoke about a monastery's abbot as called to help to weed out the monks' faults even while he has to be aware of his own. Chris pointed out how easy it is to focus on the faults of others while being blind to one's own. There was also some talk about praying the Divine Office at the "canonical hours." Finally, the group viewed a D.V.D. of a presentation by Fr. Donald on obedience in Benedictine spirituality, with emphasis on obeying with love and cheerfulness and on the freedom that comes with obedience.

Philadelphia, PA (St. Augustine of Canterbury Deanery) – *meetings at Saint Mary's (Episcopalian) Church, Philadelphia, every two months*

Moderator Fr. Vincent de Paul Crosby, O.S.B., reported on October 30. At the meeting on October 6, the group continued to discuss the book *Monastery of the Heart*. Focusing on Chapter 6, they reflected on the importance of *lectio divina* in Benedictine spirituality. *Lectio* was compared with the Ignatian method of prayer, and the attendees also discussed practical ways of relating *lectio* to Oblate life. Several people shared how they personally understood and practiced *lectio*. After the meeting the group enjoyed a lunch prepared by their generous hosts, Sharon Fischer and her daughter Joann. The next meeting was scheduled for December 8. (*continued*)

During the meeting two members of the deanery made their final Oblation before Fr. Vincent de Paul and the others present:

D. Tysen "Ty" (Benedict) Nutt, Jr., of Belle Mead, NJ
Robert M. (Oscar Romero) Quinn of Bensalem, PA.

Pittsburgh, PA (North Side - St. Peter Deanery) -- *meetings on 3rd or 4th Mondays, 7:00 P.M., basement of St. Peter Church.*

Oblate George Ponticello reported by e-mail on September 3. The meeting on August 15 was attended by eight Oblates, one guest, and Fr. Thomas More, moderator. After Evening Prayer in the church, the group gathered in the park near the church for an annual picnic in beautiful weather. Oblate Will Crum sent out photographs of the picnic by e-mail.

Pittsburgh, PA (South Hills - Blessed Columba Marmion Deanery) -- *meetings on 1st Sunday of month at St. Louise de Marillac Church in the Bishop Leonard Room, 1:45 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.*

Lay leader Mary Ann Kaufman reported personally in mid-September and by e-mail about October 10. The meeting on July 8 was attended by 36 people, including eleven Oblates, five Oblate novices, and others who were guests, along with three children. Mary Ann welcomed all who were present, and a "goodwill bag" was passed around. Several announcements were made concerning sign-in for guests; the availability of books for sale, donated books, and C.D.'s of deanery presentations; and carpool options for attending the July 11 event at the Archabbey. When Fr. Adam Potter arrived, the group prayed Daytime Prayer, "A Prayer for Oblates," and "Consecration to the Blessed Trinity." Mary Ann then introduced Fr. Adam, who was the parochial vicar of three parishes in the McMurray area and chaplain at W&J University. Fr. Adam subsequently began his presentation with St. Paul's words from Rom 12:2: "Do not conform yourselves to this age" He then referred to passages from the book *A Secular Age* by Charles Taylor that expressed the current age as suffering from a loss of a religious worldview at least in the public sphere, from a decline of personal religious practice, from the separation of individuals from community, and from the tendency to define religious faith in whatever way an individual wishes. Fr. Adam also spoke of secularism as having a profound effect on us in distancing us from our need for conversion, from the concept of sin, and from the very presence of God. He challenged the group by asking, "How does Catholic life differ from non-Catholic life?" and then shared thoughts of Pope Benedict XVI about "the Church of tomorrow," with a smaller, creative, purified group of faithful people. Then he shared how he came to know St. Benedict as a source of hope when he read *The Benedict Option* during his seminary days. St. Benedict chose the pursuit of holiness instead of worldly success. For us who follow the way of St. Benedict today, we can accept the challenge to respond with radical openness to the graces that God gives us to live a distinct way of life as lights in a dark world. We today are sent out to all the nations to reflect the light of Christ. (Fr. Adam's presentation is available as a C.D. recording.)

On August 18 a gathering was held at the Kaufman home, with five Oblates, three Oblate novices, and five guests attending. After an opening with Daytime Prayer, "A Prayer for Oblates," and "Consecration to the Blessed Trinity," the attendees shared a meal, with side dishes brought by all the participants. It was a relaxed afternoon of warm conversation. At the end of the gathering, the "St. Benedict Prayer" was recited.

The meeting on September 9, held at St. Louise Church, drew five Oblates, four Oblate novices, and two guests. After the praying of the usual opening prayers, the feast days of Br. Columba Marmion (October 3) and of St. Gregory the Great (September 3) were noted. After being given several options, the Oblates voted that a surplus from deanery donations be given to Archabbot Douglas for the Health and Welfare Fund at the Archabbey as well as to the host parish. Other announcements were made, and the attendees discussed their thoughts related to the current crisis of the Church, and there was sharing about pastoral letters and online sources that provided encouraging responses. Positive developments have included increased Mass attendance, prayer and penance services, and expressions of support to faithful priests; all of these have brought blessings to the Church. Healing can come through reaching out to Christ and to others in community for strength and perseverance. The meeting ended early so that the attendees could spend time in silent prayer in the church. The meeting ended with personal petitions and the St. Benedict Prayer.

The meeting on October 7 was attended by four Oblates, five Oblate novices, and three inquirers. As usual, the meeting began with Daytime Prayer, "A Prayer for Oblates," and "Consecration to the Blessed Trinity." Mary Ann then announced that the history of the deanery had been updated, that new "beggar-bench" items were available, that C.D.'s of previous presentations were available, and that rides would be offered for the day of recollection on October 13. Also, all were handed the letter regarding praying for the canonization of Dorothy Day, and full Oblates were asked to consider being deanery representatives for the Assembly of Deanery

Representatives this coming summer. Furthermore, the idea of a spring pilgrimage to the Archabbey and to St. Emma Monastery was considered and well received. Next the group listened to a C.D. presentation on the Liturgy of the Hours by Fr. Donald. Mary Ann read *RB 19* and compared the communal praying of the Divine Office with musicians' playing of beautiful music in a symphony. Praying the Hours entails a group's becoming one voice in praise of God and in self-offering to God. A rich discussion followed. Participants shared about the process of their coming to know the breviary about various resources. The attendees also brought up questions and mentioned difficulties and blessings encountered in praying the Hours. The next meeting was scheduled for November 4, when Fr. Nathanael Polinski, O.S.B., was to make a presentation on *lectio divina*.

There will be a full report of the meeting on November 4 in the next newsletter. In the course of the meeting, Fr. Nathanael received as an Oblate novice **Janice Calzacorto** of Bethel Park, PA.

Rosharon, TX [Ramsey Unit] (St. Bede Deanery) -- *monthly meetings*

Lay leader/secretary Roland Fernandez reported on September 8. The meeting in August began with opening prayers from the *Oblate Formation Booklet* followed by Evening Prayer. Then, after a reading of the Gospel for the day and a reading from the *Rule*, there was a prolonged discussion concerning the issue of clerical abuse in the Catholic Church. A deacon who was present explained what the Church has been doing to correct the problem and the restrictions in seminaries that screen out unqualified candidates. After the discussion the group viewed a video on the Mass from Bishop Robert Barron's series "Word on Fire." The meeting ended with closing prayers from the formation booklet.

The meeting in September included individuals' needs for prayers and the mention of those former members who had moved to other locations. The meeting again began with opening prayers from the formation booklet, the praying of Vespers, and readings from the *Rule* and from the Gospel. Then there was some discussion about some Christians' efforts at proselytization on the basis of abuses within the Catholic Church. Next the group viewed the concluding part of Bishop Barron's video "The Mass." The meeting ended with a closing prayer. Attending the meetings in August and September were three Oblates, two Oblate novices, and five inquirers.

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

Lay leader/secretary Peggi Gabler reported by mail in mid-August and about October 25. The meeting on August 2 occurred at Queen of the World Church after Evening Prayer and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Three people attended. After the recitation of the "Oblate prayer" and the reading of minutes from July, the passage from the *Rule* for the day was read. Then the group reviewed the highlights of Lesson 3 from the book of formation lessons, which deals with conversion of heart. The attendees had a discussion about the difficulty of placing all one's trust in God when faced with trials. The meeting ended with the "Benedictine prayer."

The meeting on September 6 again followed Evening Prayer and Benediction at Queen of the World Church. Five people attended. After the praying of the "Oblate prayer" and the reading of the minutes from August, the group reviewed Lessons 3 and 4 from the book of formation lessons, and a short discussion followed. Then the attendees entered into a discussion about the future of the deanery. The members expressed the desire to attend a monthly Bible study given by Fr. Michael Gabler, moderator of the deanery, and mentioned that a priest's attendance at meetings was important to most people. Therefore, they agreed to suspend Oblate meetings indefinitely in order to attend the Bible study and thus to obtain spiritual nourishment from these monthly sessions.

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

Oblate moderator Fr. Ronald Gatman, O.S.B., reported on October 1. The gathering of Oblates at the priory on September 23 began at 2:00 P.M., and it was led by Fr. Ronald. The group shared in a meditation on the Resurrection appearance of Christ involving St. Thomas. Then Fr. Ronald celebrated Mass for the group at 3:00 P.M., and a covered-dish supper followed the Mass. About ten people attended the event.

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

Oblate co-lay leader/secretary Teresa Warlow reported by e-mail on August 13 and September 28. The meeting on August 12 opened with the "Prayer for Oblates" and continued with the viewing of a D.V.D. of a presentation on silence given by the late Fr. Sebastian Samay, O.S.B. After a discussion on the presentation, the group ended the meeting by praying Midafternoon Prayer.

The meeting on September 9 opened with the "Prayer for Oblates." Then the group discussed the essay on praising God from the August issue of *Saint Vincent Oblate News*. The meeting ended with the praying of Midafternoon Prayer.

Only two Oblates came for the meeting scheduled for October 14; so the session was very short.

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

Co-lay leader/secretary Michael Reichert wrote on August 8, August 30, and October 9. Meetings scheduled for July had to be cancelled because of circumstances beyond the group's control. The meeting on August 14 was attended by seven Oblates and one Oblate novice. Deacon David Hornick moderated the meeting, and Oblate Brandon Cavanaugh helped to lead the session. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, there was a general discussion on the *Rule*, on the meaning of being an Oblate, and on ways in which being an Oblate had made a difference in the attendees' lives.

The meeting on August 28 was attended by eight Oblates, one Oblate novice, and two inquirers. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, Oblate Ron Bergman gave a presentation about St. Benedict, with details about his life, his monastic leadership, and the medal of St. Benedict. There was a lively discussion based on the talk, which included comments about St. Benedict as an inspirational figure and as a spiritual father and about the sense of community in the deanery.

Two meetings were held in September, but it was decided that in the future only one meeting would be held each month. The meeting on September 11 was attended by seven Oblates and one Oblate novice in addition to Deacon David. After an opening

prayer and the day's reading from the *Rule*, the group had an open discussion on the Liturgy of the Hours. Many shared how praying the Hours had enriched their prayer lives. Also, there were some questions about how and when the Hours should be prayed.

One inquirer joined Deacon David, seven Oblates, and one Oblate novice for the meeting on September 25. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, Michael gave a presentation entitled "Locked Up in Christ," which reflected on the unique circumstances of incarcerated Christians and the challenges involved in using their free time well to nurture ongoing conversion. One inmate had used his time in the "hole" to pray, read, and practice various devotions, and, once he left the hole, the man's cell mate wanted to share in what he had gained through prayer. Many members of the deanery attended a "Inside-Outside Retreat" sponsored by the Good Shepherd Prison Ministry from September 28 to 30.

State College, PA (St. Joseph Deanery) -- meetings on 2nd Monday of each month, 6:30 P.M., Our Lady of Victory Church, St. Joseph Activity Center.

Secretary Phyllis Austin reported by e-mail on September 17 and October 16. At the meeting on September 10, Fr. David Griffin, O.S.B., moderator, led the praying of Vespers. Attending were seven Oblates, one Oblate novice, and one inquirer. The group had chosen to study the series of presentations entitled *Catholicism* by Bishop Robert Barron, with the viewing of the associated videos and the reading of one chapter each month. The books associated with the videos contain some additional details; so both the books and the videos are being used. All present seemed to agree with the format. The meeting ended with prayers and the singing of the Benedictine "Ultima."

The meeting on October 8 was attended by seven Oblates, one Oblate novice, and one inquirer in addition to Fr. David. He began the meeting by leading Evening Prayer. Then the group focused on Chapter 2 of the *Catholicism* series, which considers the teachings in the Beatitudes, the story of the prodigal son, and the scene of the Last Judgment in Matthew 25. They discussed the power of non-violent resistance as seen in Pope St. John Paul, St. Teresa of Calcutta, Dorothy Day, Peter Maurin, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King. All were encouraged to do the same in small ways in ordinary life. The meeting ended with a closing prayer, prayers of petition, and the "Ultima."

Tennessee Colony, TX [Coffield Unit] (St. Boniface Deanery)

Lay leader/secretary John Lesley "Les" Miller reported on August 22. For six weeks until August 29, no meetings could be held because of circumstances beyond the deanery's control. On July 11 Fr. Gary Rottman, moderator, had invested as an Oblate novice **Larry Wagner** of Tennessee Colony, TX.

Also, it was belated reported that on March 20, 2017, Fr. Rottman had invested as an Oblate novice **Joseph M. Macias** of Tennessee Colony, TX.

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

Lay leader/secretary Nancy Chrobot reported by mail on September 18. Two members of the deanery had been ordained to the permanent diaconate on September 15 (see above). Many of the Oblates were able to attend.

The meeting on September 5 was attended by thirteen people. Fr. Lee Yoakam, O.S.B., moderator, led a discussion on Eucharistic miracles. A video was shown, and two books were recommended. It was announced that St. Gregory Parish would have exposition of the Eucharist on October 4 from 6:30 P.M. to 8:30 P.M., and the Oblates were encouraged to attend and to spread the word about it. The meeting ended with the praying of Vespers.

Also, Fr. Lee recently reported that he was soon to have a new liver transplant. Deacon Kevin Gorman will serve as the deanery's moderator for at least several months while Fr. Lee recovers.

Waynesburg, PA (St. Dismas Deanery) -- meetings on 1st Wed. of each month

Oblate Ronald Bergman reported by phone on November 5. Because of unavoidable circumstances, there were no meetings for five months. At the meeting on October 3, the attendees reviewed what the Oblates had been doing since the previous meeting. They also discussed Lesson 2 from the *Formation Lessons for Oblate Novices and Oblates*.

On November 2, 3, or 4, Fr. Malcolm McDonald, moderator, received as an Oblate novice **Peter A. Treadway** of Waynesburg, PA.

Williamsport, PA (Saints Martha, Mary, & Lazarus Deanery) -- meetings on 2nd Sun. of some months, 2 P.M., former convent at St. Anne Catholic Church

Assistant lay leader Helen Prien reported by e-mail on August 14. Four people attended the meeting on August 12. After a period of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from 2:00 to 2:30, the group prayed Midday Prayer. Then they read from Lesson 2 of the formation lessons and went through the questions for discussion. The session ended with a praying of the Our Father.

Various Locations

On September 3 in the Archabbey Basilica, Fr. Donald invested as Oblate novices:

Gabriel A. Jakubisin, Sr., of Toledo, OH, and
Lauren A. Jakubisin of Toledo, OH.

Gabriel and Lauren, husband and wife, are both graduates of St. Vincent College. Also, their three young children, **Johanna Marie, Lucille Marie, and Gabriel Andrew, Jr.**, entered the Oblate Program as junior Oblate novices who are part of an "Oblate family." Attending the investiture were Fr. Isaac Haywiser, Oblate Betty Wass, and guest Nate Dippold, a classmate of Gabriel.

On September 12, at the Chapel of Our Lady of the Rosary at San Quentin, CA,
Todd (Amadeus) Garton of San Quentin, CA,

made his final Oblation in the presence of Fr. George Williams, S.J. Todd reported that the ceremony was solemn and beautiful, and it included the reception of Holy Communion.

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. Augustine Flood, Fr. Bede Hasso, Fr. Andrew Campbell, Fr. Nathan Munsch, and Fr. Paul-Alexander Shutt.

DECEASED MONK

Br. James Cartwright, 71, died on September 29, 2018, after a long struggle with severe diabetes, infections, and kidney failure. Please pray for the repose of his soul. Please also pray for the repose of the souls of Rita Adams, mother of Fr. Joseph Adams, and Reynaldo Camello, father of Br. Ignatius Camello, both of whom died recently.

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. Sometimes guests sing loudly and erratically, and the result is chaotic for everyone! 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. Oblates are welcome to attend concerts offered by the Saint Vincent Camerata. On Saturday, November 3, at 7:30 P.M. St. Bernard Church in Mt. Lebanon and on Sunday, November 4, at 3:00 in the Archabbey Basilica, there will be a performance of "Antonio Vivaldi - Gloria and G.F. Handel Dixit Dominus" with Chatham Baroque as special guests. On Saturday, December 8, at 7:00 P.M. in the Archabbey Basilica, there will be "5th Annual Festival of Lessons and Carols." On Saturday, February 9, 2018, at 7:30 P.M. in the Archabbey Basilica Crypt, there will be a concert of choral music celebrating American poets ("Music Was My Refuge"). Finally on Saturday, April 6, 2019, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Mt. Lebanon and on Sunday, April 7, 2019, in the Archabbey Basilica, there will be a performance of "Brahms - A German Requiem" with a number of special guests. For tickets and further information for all performances, phone 724-805-2579.

3. 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 initials after their names such as "O.S.B.Obl." (This provision is in the *Oblate Formation Booklet*.) Using such an appendage is contrary to Catholic tradition and practice.

4. For those who would like to plan ahead for Oblate events in 2019, the Solemnity of St. Benedict (with Mass at 4:00 P.M.) will be on Thursday, March 21, 2019. The Feast of St. Benedict (with Mass at 10:00 A.M. for the solemn profession of vows) will be on Thursday, July 11, 2019.

DIRECTORY OF OBLATES: Application form

I would like to be included in the next edition (whether e-mail or not) of the *Directory* of Oblates affiliated with Saint Vincent Archabbey. (The next hard copies will not be issued until 2019.) The information that I would like to have included is the following:

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ e-mail address _____

Please send this form to the Oblate Office by U.S. mail or by e-mail to svaoblates.stvincent.edu .

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. Wulfstan Clough's talk on the Holy Eucharist (August 20, 2017):

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

Fr. Donald Raila's talk on stability in Benedictine spirituality (September 17, 2017):

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

Fr. Edward Mazich's talk on silence in Benedictine spirituality (October 22, 2017):
C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Cyprian Constantine's talk on obedience in Benedictine spirituality (November 19, 2017):
C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. John Paul Heiser's talk on work in Benedictine spirituality (December 17, 2017):
C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Robert Keffer's talk on beauty in Benedictine spirituality (January 21, 2018):
C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Justin Nolan's talk on Everyday Spirituality (February 18, 2018):
C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Br. Hugh Lester's talk on stability in Benedictine spirituality (March 18, 2018):
C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Isaac Haywiser's talk on *conversatio morum* at St. Louise de Marillac Church (April 8, 2018):
C.D. _____ (number)

Br. Albert Gahr's talk on sustainability in Benedictine spirituality (April 15, 2018):
C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Donald Raila's talk on obedience at St. Louise de Marillac Church (May 6, 2018):
C.D. _____ (number)

Br. Martinho Zevallos' talk on *lectio divina* (May 20, 2018):
C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Pio Adamonis' talk on silence in Benedictine spirituality (June 10, 2018)
C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Adam Potter's talk on secularism & *The Benedict Option* (July 8, 2018)
C.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Nathan Munsch's talk on the Liturgy of the Hours (July 15, 2018):
C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Br. Ignatius Camello's talk humility - the 2nd step (renunciation of one's own will) (August 19, 2018):
C.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Shawn Matthew Anderson's three retreat conferences on forgiveness (October 13, 2018):
C.D. _____ (number)

Br. Placid Sellers' talk on social media & Benedictine spirituality (October 21, 2018):
C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

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

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

Name _____

Address _____

_____ I will pick up my order. _____ Please mail my order to me.

(*Remember to include \$4.95 for postage per order plus tax [if PA resident].)

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