

# THE SAINT VINCENT OBLATE NEWS

AUGUST - OCTOBER, 2021 • VOLUME 73, NUMBER 3

## A MESSAGE FROM ARCHABBOT MARTIN - AUGUST 2021

**Dear Oblates and Friends,**

As you probably recall, last month on July 11, the 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time took precedence over the feast of Saint Benedict. Therefore, the readings for the solemn profession of Brother Gilbert and Brother Anselm were not those proper to the feast, but rather the regularly prescribed readings for that Sunday. Almost providentially, however, it seems that the day's gospel provided a very apt message for them and for all of us.

That gospel began with the words, "Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two" (Mark 6:7a). What great advice, as we travel the path of monastic life, marked by obedience,

conversion of life, and stability, by vows or by oblation!

Jesus reminds us that we do not travel in isolation. We are challenged to be mutually supportive as we experience the ups and downs of life. We are not alone; we walk with others, not only for safety, but for companionship, encouragement, and assistance. Being sent two by two is at the heart of our common life. By stability, we commit ourselves to being a reassuring presence to those around us; I am here for you, and you are here for me.

My grandmother, a great philosopher, though not widely publicly acclaimed, used to say, "Joy shared is joy doubled. Sorrow shared is sorrow cut in half." We

walk as companions, both in our accomplishments and in our struggles. As such, our successes are magnified and our challenges diminished.

All of us are classmates in the school of the Lord's service. We travel that road together as one.

Be assured of our community's continued prayers for you and your families. May God make all your paths straight and prosper all your endeavors and plans (Tobit 4:19a).

Fraternally,



Martin de Porres Bartel, O.S.B.  
Archabbot

## THE CALL TO HASTEN ON TO THE "MUCH MORE" OF PERFECTION: DESPITE MISERIES, NEVER LOSE HOPE!

**Dear Oblates, Oblate novices, and Friends,**

### THE CALL TO EMBRACE "MUCH MORE"

Every now and then, though less often than I would like, a phrase from the readings at Mass touches my heart and then sticks with me. Toward the end of

the Easter Season, when Gospel passages were taken from Saint John, we heard Our Lord assert, "I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now" (Jn 16:12). Then He adds that when the Holy Spirit comes, "He will guide you to all truth" (Jn 16:13). The words "much more" give me encouragement. When my prayer, both private and communal, is dry over long periods of time, it seems that the Lord

is not saying anything to me—at least nothing that I can experience as touching me or changing me. I then wonder whether if I am being hard of heart and failing to listen. Perhaps the Lord has given up on me and on the possibility of my further renewal in Christ. (I know that God never gives up on us, but sometimes it certainly seems to be the case when I feel that I have "lost" Him.)



Being resistant, even culpably resistant, to God's word is surely part of the problem. Another dimension, however, is that I may not be ready for the "much more" because it is not yet God's time to reveal the next step to me. I must, therefore, be attentive to the Holy Spirit's promptings as He guides me to a fuller understanding of the truth proclaimed by Christ and the Church. Jesus also said, "I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father" (Jn 16:15). Everything? We cannot deny Our Lord's words to the apostles and to us; but we can acknowledge that we, like the apostles at the Last Supper, certainly have not absorbed the "everything" that Our Lord wishes to tell us. That fullness of truth has been revealed through Scripture and Sacred Tradition, but it comes to us continually and gradually, in bits and pieces. Whether it is our fault or not, the Lord is very patient with us, and so we must be very patient with ourselves as we strive for the perfection that seems so much beyond us. We need to be like the Blessed Mother and the eleven apostles as they waited together in the Upper Room for a clear manifestation of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 1:13-14).

Even on a merely human level, we are created to advance to "something more," even "much more," to render our lives more satisfying. Some months before the coming of the pandemic in 2020, I was assigned on a Sunday to offer Mass at a church where I had never been before. Although I had accurate directions, I was fearful that I might miss a turn and get lost. As it happened, the final road onto which I was to turn had

no sign with its name. Perhaps it was the Holy Spirit who told me, "This looks like a good intersection; turn right here!" To my great relief, the road was the right one. On my way back to Saint Vincent, I carefully observed a landmark at the intersection so that on future trips I would be more confident. The next trip to that church did not occur until a few weeks ago. My earlier recording of a landmark did indeed help me, but on that occasion I was assigned to offer a second Mass at a location that was new to me. By God's grace and with the help of good directions, I found the church without trouble but not without anxiety over the unfamiliar environment. When I asked someone the best way to return to a familiar road, I was told to retrace my path to the road. There was a shorter way, but it was suggested that I might lose my way on the shortcut. Despite my desire for safety and control, I find myself nonetheless eager to go to the second church again, if only to learn the shorter route—and thus to offer Mass there with greater joy and greater ease.

### THE "SOMETHING MORE" IN DISTRESSFUL SITUATIONS

Even as on our "bad days" we still have a sometimes hidden propensity to embrace something new and better in secular realms, so also do we possess a far richer treasure in our aspiring for the fullness of virtue and of a deepening relationship with God. However, we can smother that God-given desire by yielding to discouragement or the hankering for creature comforts as an unfortunate substitute for the challenge to grow. A part of us deeply desires the growth, but another

part of us fears the sacrifices involved with the growth and shies away from the detachment that is necessary. We monks and Oblates are summoned to seek perfection in the way of Christ and of the Holy Rule and then to witness to the rest of the Church; this perfection comes about partly through the willingness to embrace the "something more" of finding Christ in new and unexpected situations. It is my experience that sometimes we have to be dragged into accepting such initially undesirable situations. Last August, after careful discernment, I reluctantly started to use e-mail. In retrospect I can see how my limited involvement with e-mail has helped me not only to do essential business but also to renew and enhance relationships. At times, however, I wish I had never embarked on the journey into Internet. One morning, after I had received a great blessing of having data from an aging flash drive saved onto a new one, I encountered three major problems on a computer; one of them was an inability even to sign in for some time. It was one those occasions when nothing seemed to go right. I was especially distraught over the loss of time with seemingly nothing to show for it. In the afternoon a monk who is an expert with computers came to assist me and resolved all my problems. How grateful I need to be! I must be grateful also for the incidents of the "bad morning" since they taught me how vulnerable I am, how easily I can become very impatient, how dependent I am on God and others, and how generous God is in rescuing me from my dilemmas as well as from my inner disorders. Through the miseries of life, little ones as well as major ones, God guides us gradually to accept some of the "much more"



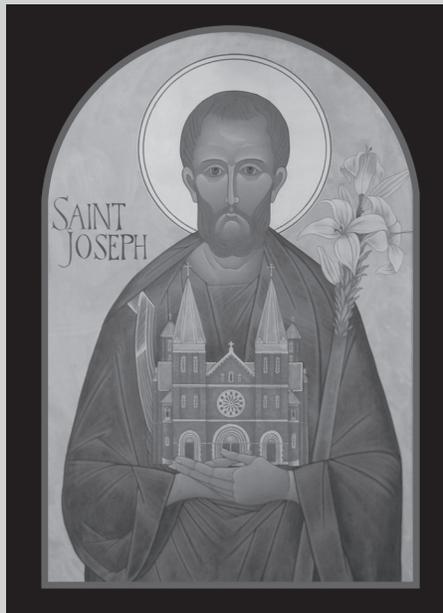
He has in store for us. We best learn to embrace this “much more” when we humble ourselves, entrust our whole situation to the Lord, and welcome Him to exalt us in His love in His own way and in His own time. He must take charge!

## CHALLENGES TO GROWTH IN THE RULE

Throughout the *Rule*, Saint Benedict challenges us to aim for the “much more.” In the Prologue he urges us to “desire true and eternal life” (Prol: 3), to delight in the Lord’s voice as He lovingly shows us “the way of life” (Prol: 19-20), to seek to “dwell in the tent of this [God’s] kingdom” (Prol: 22), and to “progress in [the] way of life and faith” (Prol: 49). The steps of humility are intended to lead us “to reach the highest summit of humility” and thus to attain “exaltation in heaven” (7:5). This ascent to perfection takes place gradually as we persevere in keeping the fear of God before our eyes (7:10), turning away from self-will (7:31), obeying superiors for love of Christ (7:34), and learning to be “patient amid hardships and unjust treatment” (7:42). All the degrees of humility help us eventually to “arrive at that perfect love of God which casts out fear” (7:67, 1 Jn 4:18). The struggle of mutual obedience also assists us greatly on the journey of going to God (71:2). All monks and all Christians are challenged to “[hasten] on to the perfection of monastic [or Christian] life” by following the *Rule* (73:1,8), doing lectio on the Bible (73:3), and doing healthy spiritual reading (73:4-6). Only God can give the growth, but we can and should prepare ourselves for it through the prayerful and persistent practice of monastic disciplines.

## ASSISTANCE FROM SAINT JOSEPH

In this “Year of Saint Joseph,” it might be especially valuable to turn to the foster father of Jesus to propel us forward on the way of ongoing conversion. In his book *Through the Heart of Saint Joseph* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2021), our Father Boniface Hicks shows how Saint Joseph and the pondering of his virtues can lead



us “on a journey of prayerful discovery” (p. 5). In particular, on pages 161 to 184, Father Boniface points out that the virtues of Saint Joseph and the Holy Family are very much like the virtues cultivated by Saint Benedict in the *Rule*. He indicates “a number of connections between the monastic life of Benedict and the home life of Joseph” (p. 163). Pope Saint Paul VI called the Holy Family’s life in Nazareth a “school in which we begin to understand the life of Jesus” (p. 165). Saint Benedict likewise expresses his intention to “establish a school for the Lord’s service” (Prol: 45), a school being a place “where we grow in knowledge and virtue” (p. 164). Father Boniface calls the environment in which Our Lord, our Blessed Mother, and Saint Joseph lived the “Joseph Option,” the setting of an atmosphere which “could have a powerful influence on individuals and could even become a leaven for a renewal of culture and society” (p. 161). He also suggests that, without consciously invoking Saint Joseph, “St. Benedict implemented the Joseph Option” “by building a school for the Lord’s service in which the virtues of Saint Joseph were practiced” (p. 167). Perhaps among the greatest of these was silence. Father Boniface comments, “St. Joseph was a master of silence and carried out his goodness, prayer, and suffering in secret as his Son would later instruct us to do ...” (p. 54) (see the Sermon on the Mount, Mt 6:3-4, 6:6-8, 6:17-18). We know how much Saint Benedict treasured silence in various places and situations in order to

foster prayer and an ongoing awareness of God’s presence. Saint Joseph’s example of firm, silent trust can lead us to overcome the chaos of our noisy culture and our own tendencies to murmur, judge, or doubt. Simple, prompt obedience characterizes both the life of Saint Joseph and the way of Saint Benedict.

## FINDING “SOMETHING MORE” EVEN AMID ILLNESS

Paradoxically, it is suffering that can provide Christians with splendid opportunities for spiritual growth. Illness, in particular, can teach us to trust, to be humble, to learn patience, and to be gratefully dependent. In her book *Beginning Again: Benedictine Wisdom for Living with Illness* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2004), Mary C. Earle describes her own growth that occurred after her diagnosis with acute pancreatitis at the age of 45. The initial diagnosis and all the limitations it imposed provoked a major crisis in her life, but little by little she discovered hidden blessings and the very presence of Christ in the midst of her physical miseries and of the demand to let go of so much. In her chapter “Ongoing Conversion,” she writes, “When you live with illness, lots of changes get set in motion whether you like it or not. Frequently those changes aren’t welcome. Yet you and your body are changed. How you respond to those changes is part of the process of ongoing conversion” (p. 97). Serious illness can lead a person to become bitter and cranky; or, with God’s grace, it can render us “open to the possibility that God is slowly shaping us into the people we are called to be, and we acknowledge that there is much that we do not know or control” (p. 99). Near the end of her book, Mary Earle writes, “You may not be able to perceive a future of any sort. Into this unknowing, mercy comes. Mercy comes as we tend [to] the details of nutrition, rest, exercise, and medications. Mercy comes as we allow ourselves to be shaped by the deep and prayerful listening of obedience, by stability marked by the willingness to stand in the reality of the illness, by choosing to be open, [and by nurturing] the willingness to let go, so that ongoing conversion may happen”

(p. 121). The author continues, “Even in the shadow of death, joy remains an incongruous possibility. Even in the shadow of death, God is with us. ...Choosing to begin again, to allow the illness to teach you how to shape a new rule for living in a God-ward direction, means opening to something new, something alive, something eternal” (p. 122). Saint Benedict would surely agree. Facing our vulnerability and the reality of death can be a great blessing; it can enhance our ability to surrender to God and can stimulate our progress on “the [narrow] road that leads to salvation” (Prol: 48).

### CONCLUSION: PROBLEMS BECOME OPPORTUNITIES FOR “MUCH MORE”

Yes, God in Christ is present to challenge us and change us most especially in the adversities of life. When we see only a problem and our own inadequacy, He sees “much more” and urges us to try to see in the same way. Just think of the Gospel passages of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. Our Lord’s disciples see only a deserted place, too many

people, not enough food, and not enough money to feed a huge crowd. Christ sees in the few loaves and fishes an opportunity to trust in the Father and to welcome Him to bring about a great banquet, foreshadowing both the Holy Eucharist (especially in John 6) and ultimately the eternal banquet in heaven, where all the saints will enjoy much more divine abundance than they could ever imagine on earth. We can and must grow in our capacity to see “something more” and to go beyond the tendency to murmur over our imperfect or even tragic situations. We can learn to turn to Our Lord, who is “something greater than the [Jewish] temple” (Mt 12:6), “something greater than Jonah” (Mt 12:41), and “something greater than Solomon” (Mt 12:42). Jesus Christ is “our true King” (RB Prol:3), the one who was “obedient even unto death” (RB 7:34, Phil 2:8), and the one “who so greatly loved us” (RB 7:39, Rom 8:37). Although we are stubborn, wavering, unfaithful, and inadequate, He will hasten us on to perfection (cf. 73:2) if we offer Him our modicum of trust and really try to surrender our lives to Him. Christ the Lord is the One who will give us “the gift of life-giving water” (Rev 22:17) and “make all things new”

(Rev 21:5) for us. Out of our miseries He will shape us into His own renewed and virtuous people, dwelling in the heavenly Jerusalem and rejoicing in having our names “written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev 21:27). May all our problems lead us to entrust ourselves to Our Lord and to embrace the “much more” He has in store for us, both in this life and in its supremely joyful fulfillment in eternity.

**In the peace of Christ and Saint Benedict,**

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

**PS.:** What is said above about illness also applies to the aging process, which confronts many of us. We may be tempted to think that there is “nothing new under the sun” except physical and mental decline. Such a lapse into cynicism is dangerous. Instead, we need to “put on Christ” and relentlessly seek the “much more” of spiritual ascent, which will culminate in heaven (often through purgatory). May we never lose hope in God’s relentless efforts to move us forward!

## OBLATE EVENTS



### NEW ARRANGEMENT FOR MEALS AT OBLATE EVENTS UNTIL CONSTRUCTION OF DINING AREAS IS COMPLETED

For the time being, only box lunches (and served meals for special events) are being served because of the danger of spread of the coronavirus and because of the massive construction taking place in the

dining areas at Saint Vincent. The current prices for meals at the Rogers Center or the Westmoreland Room (the temporary locations of group meals until guest dining facilities are reopened) are \$7.95 for the “express bag lunch” or \$16.25 (and up) for served meals. We are grateful to those Oblates who regularly donate extra to assist those who cannot afford to pay. Oblates are always welcome to these events even if they cannot pay.

### SUMMER RETREATS

Because of the coronavirus epidemic, no summer retreats were held at the Archabbey this year; there were only two virtual retreats, which became available on June 1. To access these retreats you may wish to check the website of the Summer Retreat Program. Let us pray that in-person retreats may resume next summer.

### OBLATE BOARD OF ADVISORS MEETING SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST 20

The Oblate Board of Advisors last met on June 25. The topics discussed included the translation of Oblate brochures into Spanish, the then-forthcoming Oblate events on July 10 and 11, the possibility of Oblate input regarding a potential future guest house, the value of the Cyber Deanery, and the issue of cyber security. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, August 20, at 6:30 P.M. in the Faculty Dining Room (Placid A), with Vespers and supper preceding the meeting.

## OBLATE DAY SEPTEMBER 26, 2021

All Oblates, Oblate novices, and their guests are welcome to attend the 34th annual Oblate Day on Sunday, September 26, from 9:00 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. Archabbot Martin has kindly agreed to be our guest speaker. As of early August, overnight rooms are available, but it is not yet certain whether guest dining services will be available beyond the two meals on September 26, which will be served in the Rogers Center. See the notice at the end of this newsletter for the schedule, registration, and other details.

### “OBLATES FOR THE FUTURE” SYMPOSIUM

This year's symposium is scheduled for September 28-October 2, 2021. This is a correction from previously announced dates. Those interested in attending this meeting at Monastery of Saint Gertrude in Cottonwood, Idaho, may contact [membership@stgertrudes.org](mailto:membership@stgertrudes.org).

### OBLATE DAY OF RECOLLECTION OCTOBER 30, 2021

A day of recollection for Oblates, Oblate novices, and other interested persons

will be held at the Archabbey on Saturday, October 30, from 8:30 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. The first conference, confessions, and Mass are scheduled for the Basilica Crypt, and other events, including meals, will be in the Fred Rogers Center. Father Boniface Hicks, O.S.B., has agreed to be the retreat master. As of the beginning of August, some overnight rooms were available. As with Oblate Day, the two meals scheduled will be served in the Rogers Center, but it is not yet certain whether guest dining services will be available for other meals for overnight guests. See the notice at the end of this newsletter for the schedule, registration, and other details.

### PREPARATIONS FOR 2022 INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF OBLATES

Because of the coronavirus, the International Congress of Oblates originally planned for November of 2021 has been rescheduled for November of 2022. The dates are November 5-11, 2022. If you have tentative interest in attending, please inform the Oblate Office.

## OBLATE NEWS

### CHANGES TO THIS NEWSLETTER

Because the pandemic caused financial problems in our institutions, the Mailing Department of Saint Vincent College was disbanded in April of 2020. Therefore, this newsletter is no longer duplicated or mailed here at Saint Vincent but by a commercial company, which prefers to do both duplicating and mailing. The cost to the Oblate Office is quite a bit more. **It was reported in the last newsletter that there would be a change of format in the last issue. Well, that did not happen simply because there was not enough time for the public-relations staff to do it. The new format will probably apply to this August-October issue. If you have any comments about it, please inform the Oblate Office.**

### JULY 10 AND THE CELEBRATION OF TEMPORARY VOWS

Over 30 people, Oblates and their guests, attended festivities at the Archabbey on July 10. Most of them first came to a presentation at 3:00 P.M. by Brother Placid Sellers, O.S.B., in Brownfield 301. Brother Placid, who professed solemn vows last year, gave a video presentation, with some personal comments, about his conversion to the Catholic faith and his vocation to become a monk of the Archabbey. He emphasized the themes of “choosing” (especially God’s choice of us) and “humility.” Copies of images from the presentation (six pages) are available from the Oblate Office. Brother Placid responded to a number of questions after his talk, which will be available for purchase in the form of D.V.D.’s.

Next came ceremonies for the final Oblation of **Harold C. (Charbel-Pio) Seger**





of Morgantown, WV. Harold made his final Oblation in Brownfield 301 before Father Donald and the others who were present; then he and Father Donald went to the altar of the Basilica to sign the Oblation certificates.

Also, a number of Oblate jubilarians were honored at a brief ceremony in Brownfield 301. (Several who were present received certificates later because Father Donald forgot that they were jubilarians at the time of the ceremony.) The ones honored were Donna (Nativity) Ciarcinski - 30 years, John S. (Stephen) Hudock - 30 years, Linda S. (Elizabeth) Rockey - 25 years, Josephine (Maria) Smart - 20 years, Ronald D. (Vincent de Paul) Fasano - 5 years, Joan (Scholastica) Fye - 5 years, Gisela (Maria) Iglesias - 5 years, William T. (Bernard) Iglesias, Jr. - 5 years. Other Oblates who contacted the Oblate Office about being jubilarians but who could not attend have been sent certificates in the mail. These Oblates are: John W. Hall, Jr. - 65 years, Annabelle M. Orejana - 40 years, Bernadette C. Edwards - 30 years, Mary Lou Schutz - 30 years, Michael J. Tupta - 30 years,

Robert F. Zera - 25 years, Karen Koscelek - 20 years, Jonathan Claire - 15 years, Adele Grimes - 15 years, Michael M. LoPiccolo - 15 years, Regina Bingham - 5 years, and Father Joseph Matlak - 5 years.

Most of those who attended the event in Brownfield 301 also attended a served dinner in the Faculty Dining Room and then a festive Vespers at 7:00 in the Basilica, during which Brother Bosco Hough and Brother José Rosa professed first vows, other junior monks renewed their vows, and Brother Romuald Duchene re-entered the community as a vowed monk, all before Archabbot Martin, who presided.



## JULY 11 AND THE CELEBRATION OF SOLEMN VOWS

Some 15 people, Oblates and their guests, attended festivities at the Archabbey on July 11. At the Mass at 2:00 in the Archabbey Basilica, Brother Gilbert Heater and Brother Anselm Zhang professed solemn vows before Archabbot Martin de Porres Bartel, who was the principal celebrant and homilist. (Father Augustine Yang, who had

been the assistant Oblate director for two years, professed his solemn vows at Wimmer Priory in Taiwan on the same day.) After the Mass some thirteen members of the Oblate community stayed for Vespers with the monastic community at 5:00 and for a boxed-lunch supper in the Faculty Dining Room.

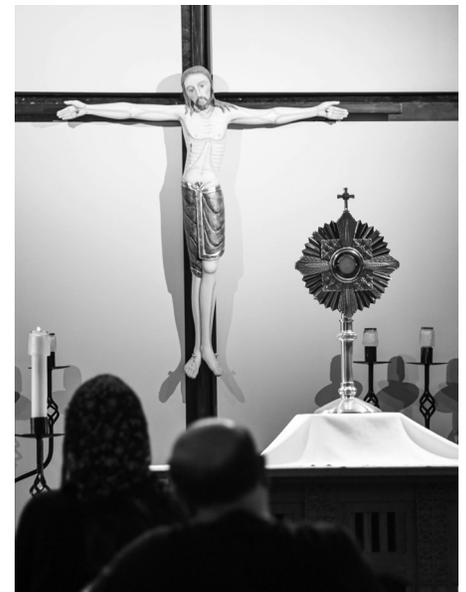
Next year the Oblate event is likely to take place on Monday morning and afternoon, July 11, 2022.

## OBLATE LOGO CLOTHING & APPAREL ITEMS FOR PURCHASE

Oblate Maryann Cleaveland of Unity Township now serves as the administrator of this program. To order Oblate logo clothing or apparel, you may contact <https://stbenedict.qbstores.com>. If you have any problems, you may contact Maryann at [maryannnowakowski@gmail.com](mailto:maryannnowakowski@gmail.com) with subject line "SVA Oblate Store," or contact the Oblate Office for a flier regarding the present arrangement.

## EUCCHARISTIC EXPOSITION FOR VOCATIONS:

Eucharistic exposition is now held on Fridays in the Archabbey Basilica Crypt from 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M., with the Divine Mercy Chaplet prayed at 3:00 and Benediction offered at 3:45 P.M. Oblates are always welcome to spend time with



our Eucharistic Lord and, in particular, to pray for vocations to the religious life and the priesthood.

## MENTORING PROGRAM AND PRAYER-PARTNER PROGRAM

The Mentoring Program for guiding inquirers and Oblate novices in Benedictine spirituality is sometimes in need of volunteers to serve as mentors. If you would like to mentor in this way or if you are an inquirer or an Oblate novice who would like to have an Oblate mentor, please contact the Oblate Office. Those who offer to be mentors receive a booklet of guidelines. Also, according to the revised prayer-partner program, every new full Oblate is to be assigned a monk as a prayer-partner. Previous prayer-partner arrangements will continue as long as both parties agree to maintain the partnership. The standard option involves no communication between partners.

## OBLATE LIBRARY

Oblates and Oblate novices are always welcome to borrow books from the Oblate Library in person or by mail. You may contact Father Donald for a list of books that are in the library. If you borrow a book when you are personally present, please make sure to sign a card, and please do not keep books out for more than six months. **A number**

**of Oblates are holding on to overdue books; please, if you think that you are one of them, check your bookshelves!**

## RECOMMENDED READING

The following books are in the Oblate Library:

**Fr. Boniface Hicks, O.S.B.**, *Through the Heart of Saint Joseph* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2021)

**Ralph Martin**, *The Fulfillment of All Desire* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2006)

## NEW (OR NEWLY DISCOVERED) BOOKS ON BENEDICTINE SPIRITUALITY

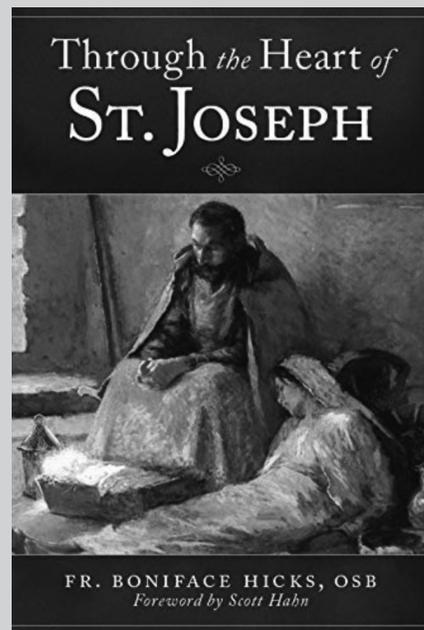
The following books are in the Oblate Library:

**Fr. Columba Cary-Elwes, O.S.B.**, & **Sister Catherine Wybourne, O.S.B.**, *Work and Prayer: The Rule of Saint Benedict for Lay People* (London: Burns & Oates, 1992)

**Mary C. Earle**, *Beginning Again: Benedictine Wisdom for Living in Illness* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2004)

## PERSONAL NOTES:

**Oblate Deacon Stephen Olenchock** of Pawleys Island, SC, recently published his third book: *The Price of a Sparrow: Reflections on Holy Scripture III* (Meadville, PA: Christian Faith Publishing, Inc., 2021). Deacon Steve reports that the book is



available on Amazon, Kindle, Barnes & Noble, and Nook.

**Oblate Katherine O'Brien** of Dubuque, IA, produces a weekly “Quo Vadis” show on the radio. The shows are available on the kcrd-fm.org website. In May Katharine created a special show about Saint Joseph. May God prosper her evangelizing work.

Former assistant Oblate director Timothy Sheridan became **Brother Aidan, N.O.S.B.**, when he and three other men were invested in habits as novices on July 10. Brother Aidan will continue to assist the Oblate Office as part of his novice work assignments.





## NEWS FROM OBLATE DEANERIES AND GROUPS

### OBLATE MEETINGS IN LATROBE



Oblates from all locations are welcome to attend the monthly meetings of the Latrobe Deanery of Oblates, temporarily held on Sundays at 3:00 P.M. in the Archabbey Basilica crypt church. The next four meetings are scheduled for August 15, September 19, October 17, and November 21. The presentations on Benedictine spirituality are to be offered by Father Wulfstan Clough, Father Brian Boosel, Father Philip Kanfush, and Brother Francisco Whittaker. Those intending to attend should phone Father Donald (724-805-2291) at least two days in advance. For the time being, because of the coronavirus, guests are

asked to pray in the nave, where books are provided. (During the summer Evening Prayer has been in Saint Gregory Chapel, and guests are asked to sit on chairs outside the chapel.) Supper and the evening session at 6:30 P.M. are being held either in the Parish Assembly Room or in the Westmoreland Room on the second floor of Placid Hall. It is hoped that after the massive construction of the dining areas (and the genuine end of pandemics) we shall have a guest dining room for supper and Brownfield 202 for our meetings. In fact, it is already reserved for meetings beginning in September.

### LATROBE, PA (SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT DEANERY)

*Meetings usually on 3rd Sunday, 3:00 in Basilica Crypt; 6:45 P.M., in Fred Rogers Center*

The 3:00 meeting on May 16, occurring in the Basilica, was attended by about 17 people in person. It was meant to be broadcast by Zoom, but something went wrong. We apologize to those who tried to tune in. The presentation was given by Father Justin Matro, who gave a presentation on "Purity of Heart." He began by referring to purity of heart as a great monastic virtue and as one of the Beatitudes. He then defined "heart" and described why our hearts need cleansing. Next Father Justin entered into a beautiful rendition of the story of the creation of Adam and Eve and their "fall." He emphasized God's

own purity of heart; God is love, we are created in God's image, and love is a three-fold dynamic action, each action being reflected in a Person of the Blessed Trinity, who lives in an eternally new and pure exchange. Initially, Adam and Eve shared in this pure love by yearning to serve each other in love. After the devil tempted them and they fell into self-focus, their desires were perverted, and they experienced the consequences of their choice of a wrong direction. However, God continued to love them, and we see evidence of His love for them right after the Fall, especially with the promise of a Redeemer. Father Justin then reflected on the phrase "They shall see God" and on Christ's coming as the revelation of the Father's love. From His death and Resurrection came a "second creation" so that we continue to be invited to share in God's Trinitarian exchange of love. Mary, the New Eve, is indeed full of grace and the only human being who possesses a completely pure heart; her will is whatever God desires; so let us join our desires to hers. Finally, Father Justin responded to several questions. It is strongly recommended that Oblates view or listen to this very rich presentation.

In the evening ten Oblates came to supper in the Foundations Room, and seven stayed for a discussion from the book *A Study Guide for the Rule of Saint Benedict* by Abbess Emerita Maria-Thomas



Beil, O.S.B., of Saint Walburga Abbey in Colorado. The exchange focused largely on the vow of stability and the different levels of stability: stability of place, stability in community, and interior stability, which is characterized by steadfastness through trials. Many references to the notion of stability in the *Rule* were mentioned. As usual, the session ended with the praying of Compline.

On June 13 about thirteen people gathered in the basilica crypt for a presentation by Brother Gregory Visca, a junior monk, on the vow of conversatio morum. About four people also tuned in by Zoom. Brother Gregory began by defining the term as the monastic way of life (beyond mere conversion) and mentioned that to seek conversatio was very much like seeking purity of heart, the subject of the presentation in May. Purity of heart is the aim of conversatio. Using several quotes from the Prologue of the *Rule*, Brother Gregory showed that conversatio is related to peace, the constant seeking of God, and the preferring of nothing to Christ. Also, conversatio is intertwined with the other two vows. He then stated three main points of his talk: personal discipline, communal discipline, and witness to others. Personal discipline involves the removal of exterior and interior hindrances to holiness of life, in particular the eight (or seven) deadly sins. Also important in personal discipline are the practices of lectio divina, study, work, fasting, silence, the praying of Vigils, and poverty and chastity (loving God and others with pure love). Communal



discipline involves love for others in family and community, with a disposition of perseverance in “carrying one another” on our journeys of faith, as did the early Christian community described in the Acts of the Apostles. Perseverance through trials with the help of others is especially important. Finally, conversatio morum involves the call to be missionaries, just as our founder Abbot Boniface Wimmer was a missionary. Like Saint John the Baptist, we are to point to Christ by our very lives. We can help to bring the world to Christ only if we first nurture a personal relationship with Christ. Finally, Brother Gregory responded to a number of questions and told the story of his own vocation to become a monk at Saint Vincent. Some five Oblates joined Father Donald for supper in the Faculty Dining Room, but because of conflicts with evening schedules, an evening session was not held on June 13.

Some ten people attended the presentation on July 18 in person, and others attended by Zoom. Father Thomas Hart spoke about “Fruit of the Spirit” from Galatians 5:22-23. He began by describing the context of the passage as Saint Paul’s efforts to remind the Galatians that their works were not the way to salvation, which is God’s free gift, from which works flow. Father Tom then referred to the tendency of us human beings to be conflicted and to seek after “the works of the flesh,” which are false ways to achieve happiness. In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit brings us into God’s order, whereby we become integrated. Next Father Tom reflected on “fruit” and on other images from nature in Scripture. Finally, he offered reflections on each of the nine dimensions



of fruit of the Spirit given in Galatians and said in conclusion that the practice of these nine virtues brings us peace with everyone and enables us to be good witnesses. After the talk Father Tom responded to a number of questions. In the evening about six people stayed for supper, and about four for the discussion based on Mother Maria-Thomas’ book. Topics included in the discussion were stability in monastic life, the importance of commitment, God’s total fidelity to us, and the psychological need for stability. Also discussed was the relationship between stability and the openness to change and the need for a life of balance. We are called to stability in our commitment to Christ and the Church as well as to change in obedience to God and His plan for us.

### INVITATION TO JOIN CYBER DEANERY

Lay leader Patrick Kenny, with the approval of the Oblate Office, has invited any Oblates or Oblate novices who cannot attend local meetings or who have no local meetings available to join the Cyber Deanery. You may contact Patrick at [patrickckenny@att.net](mailto:patrickckenny@att.net).

### CYBER DEANERY (SAINT ISIDORE OF SEVILLE DEANERY)

*Those interested in the deanery may contact [patrickckenny@att.net](mailto:patrickckenny@att.net).*

Lay leader Patrick Kenny, in his report by letter on July 9, noted that the deanery

had 45 active participants and enclosed their e-mail addresses. The most prolonged activity of the deanery has been daily postings on the Holy *Rule* with reflections by Michael LoPiccolo, an Oblate affiliated with Saint Vincent, and by Brother Jerome Leo, O.S.B., a monk of Saint Mary's Monastery in Massachusetts. Members occasionally comment on these reflections. Although there are not meetings by Zoom, member Aaron Talbott of Elkins, WV, provides Vespers by Zoom on occasion. Members are encouraged to take advantage of the many various spiritual videos available online.

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

Oblate Cathy Mayled sent numerous e-mail messages to the Oblate Office with prayer intentions, but there have been no meetings because of the ongoing threat of the pandemic. Cathy remains in touch with the members.

### **OBLATR GROUP IN TENNESSEE COLONY, TX (MICHAEL UNIT)**

Oblate Emmanuel Rios wrote on July 5. Although Oblate meetings have not yet resumed, there has been a weekly Mass on Tuesdays. Emmanuel asks for prayer for overcoming problems on the unit.

### **OBLATE GROUP IN ROSHARON, TX (TERRELL UNIT)**

There was no report.

### **OBLATE GROUP IN LIVINGSTON, TX (POLUNSKY UNIT)**

Oblate Alex Torres, formerly of the group in Tennessee Colony (Michael Unit), has helped to form a new group in Livingston. He reported on May 15, June 6 and 14, and July 4. He mentioned that two men were ready to be invested as Oblate novices and that two inquirers wanted to receive introductory packets. At the meet-

ing on April 9, the group prayed the Liturgy of the Hours and then read and discussed the daily passage of the *Rule* from RB 56. The attendees then discussed a variety of topics related to the community's prayerful growth, such as formation and academics.

On April 16 the group prayed the Liturgy of the Hours and discussed the passage of the day from RB 61, with the help of the commentary by Dom Paul Delatte, O.S.B. They then entered into a music-theory lesson given by one of the attendees, who was a music teacher, and finally enjoyed some snacks together.

On May 21 the group prayed the Liturgy of the Hours and reflected on part of RB 4, and the accompanying commentary was read. They also discussed a possible patron for the community if it becomes a deanery. Then another lesson in music theory was given.

At the meeting on May 28, after praying the Liturgy of the Hours, the attendees read and reflected on the passage of the day from RB 7. The ensuing discussion focused on growth in virtue. The group then continued to discuss a saint's name for the community as they enjoyed a snack. Next there was another music-theory lesson. Finally, the group began drafting a particular set of regulations based on those compiled by the group on the Michael Unit in Tennessee Colony.

On June 4, four inquirers gathered with Alex to pray the Liturgy of the Hours and to reflect on a passage from RB 7 on the sixth step of humility. Then they entered into a discussion on a variety of topics pertaining to the Catholic faith.

At the meeting on June 11, the group used *Give Us This Day* to pray the Liturgy of the Hours and read and discussed Chapter 8 of the *Rule*, which concerns the Divine Office at night. Saint Catherine of Siena was chosen as the patron saint of the group. Then the attendees discussed possible regulations for the group and procedures for welcoming Oblates who are affiliated with monasteries other than Saint Vincent Archabbey. Finally, they had another lesson in music theory.

The meeting on June 25 was brief because of intense heat. The group gathered to pray the Liturgy of the Hours and to read the daily passage of the *Holy Rule*.

### **ANNVILLE, PA (SAINT PLACID DEANERY)**

*Meetings at 3 P.M. on 4th Sunday of each month, Saint Paul the Apostle Church*

Former lay leader Mary Ann Bingeman has moved to Maryland, with hopes to find others there who are interested in the Oblate Program. We thank her for her years of faithful service as lay leader. Oblate Phyllisann Godfrey has agreed to serve as the new lay leader. She phoned the Oblate Office on June 17 and expressed the firm hope that the deanery would resume meetings in September.

### **BALTIMORE, MD (SAINT WALBURGA DEANERY)**

*Meetings at 3:00-4:45 on 4th Sun. of month, parish house, Saint Benedict Church*

Moderator Father Paschal Morlino sent e-mail messages on May 21, May 30, and June 12, 15, and 29. The meeting scheduled for May 23, the Solemnity of Pentecost, had to be canceled because of the celebrations of the Sacrament of Confirmation on that date. However, Oblates were invited to participate in the Solemnity of Corpus Christi on June 6 by joining a procession with the Blessed Sacrament after the 10:30 Mass, exposition all afternoon, and Solemn Vespers with Benediction at 5:00, followed by another Mass at 6:00 P.M.

Father Paschal led the meeting on June 13 with an opening prayer. He then distributed a handout on the Holy Eucharist and spoke of Holy Communion as conforming us to Christ in a deep way, and he recommended Eucharistic adoration, with "quiet and peaceful prayer in the presence of our Eucharistic Lord" as a way to intimacy with Him. Father Paschal then distributed an article "Immaculate Heart of Mary" by Father Peter M.J. Stravinskis and spoke about the solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the memorial of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. He reflected on the meanings of "heart" and of "mercy." At 4:45 he offered a closing prayer, and the group adjourned to the church for Ves-

pers at 5:00, followed by Mass at 6:00 P.M. The next meeting was scheduled for September.

On June 29, Father Paschal sent an e-mail message to Oblates with several prayer requests and some attachments.

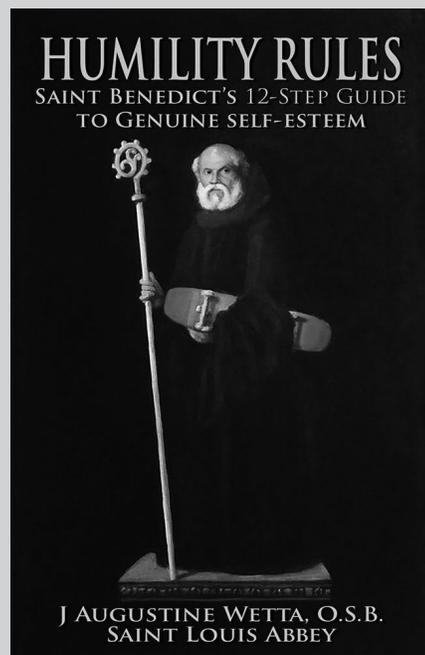
### BEAUMONT, TX [STILES UNIT] (SAINT STEPHEN DEANERY)

There was no report.

### BUTLER, PA (SAINT HILDEGARD DEANERY)

Monthly meetings at Saint Conrad double classroom, 6:30 P.M., 4th Thurs. of each month

Lay leader/secretary Ronald Weliski reported by mail on June 19 and June 30 and included copies of the newsletter that he sends to Oblates in the area. Eight Oblates attended the meeting on May 27, the first in over a year. (Several others were unable to attend because of health problems.) After the praying of Vespers, the group viewed a presentation on the Liturgy of the Hours by Father Edward Mazich, O.S.B., at the Archabbey. Also, the group chose for future discussions the book *Humility Rules* by Father Augustine Wetta, O.S.B.



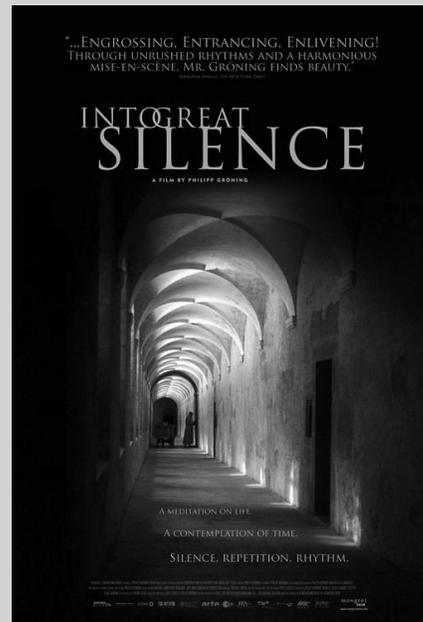
Six Oblates and an inquirer attended the meeting on June 24. After the praying of Vespers for the Solemnity of the Birth of Saint John the Baptist, the attendees discussed the forthcoming merger of the five Butler-area Catholic parishes into All Saints Parish on July 1. They noted that it was an opportunity to invite members of the whole Butler Catholic community to consider attending a deanery meeting. They also planned for an article on the deanery to appear in the parish bulletin. The group then began a study on the book previously chosen and viewed a YouTube interview with the author. The attendees went on to discuss the twelve steps of humility from Chapter 7 of the *Rule*. The meeting ended with the "Prayer for Oblates."

### JACKSONVILLE, NC (SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL DEANERY)

Meetings at parish hall of Infant of Prague Church, 7:00 P.M., 3rd Tues. of month

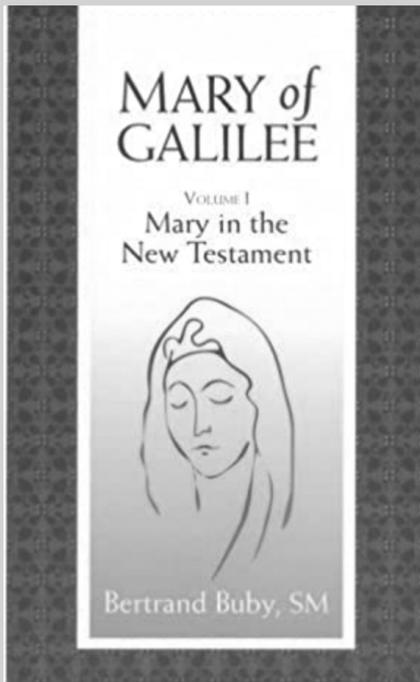
Oblate Robert Hilton wrote on May 12, May 27, June 24, and July 2, 16, and 22. Nine people attended the meeting on April 20. There was some discussion about the Liturgy of the Hours and the availability of the Liturgy of the Hours on cell phones. The meeting ended with the praying of Vespers.

The meeting on May 18 was attended by nine people, including moderator Father Victor Gournas and one inquirer, and began with a prayer. Since it was the day of the liturgical memorial of Pope Saint John I, Father Vic devoted a few minutes to speak about the saint's life and death. He then talked about the inception of monasticism in Europe, Benedictine spirituality, and the beneficial effects of Benedictine monasticism in Europe. Next Father Vic asked the attendees how they came into contact with Benedictine spirituality, and there was some discussion about the members' connection with Benedictine life and Saint Vincent Archabbey. Following that sharing was a discussion on RB 5 (on obedience); on the love of neighbor, mercy, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation; and on RB 6 (on restraint of speech). In light of the consideration of RB 6, Father Vic recommended the film *Into the Great Silence*, which is a documentary on Carthusian monks. The meeting ended with the praying of Vespers and a blessing.



The meeting on June 15 was attended by Father Vic and thirteen others, including three inquirers. After the praying of Vespers, Father Vic gave a detailed presentation on the medal of Saint Benedict and spoke about the divisions of the Book of Psalms, the origin of the Liturgy of the Hours, the distribution of psalms in the Liturgy of the Hours, Mary as the "new Ark of the Covenant," modes of knowledge pertaining to angels, and the cardinal and theological virtues. The meeting ended with a blessing.

The meeting on July 20 was attended by ten people, including three inquirers. Since Father Vic was out of town, former lay leader James Hough, despite serious illness, presided. He provided the attendees with a 17-page handout with information about the various Benedictine congregations, the types of vocations within the Benedictine Order, Saint Vincent Archabbey, and Chapter 6 of the *Rule*, which concerns the "spirit of silence." In addition to his presentation, James recommended two publications, of which he had brought samples. Also, in light of the need for the previous lay leader to assume family responsibilities, it was decided that Robert Hilton would serve as the new lay leader and secretary. We are grateful for the services provided for years by James Hough and then by Annemarie Marr. The meeting ended with the praying of Compline.



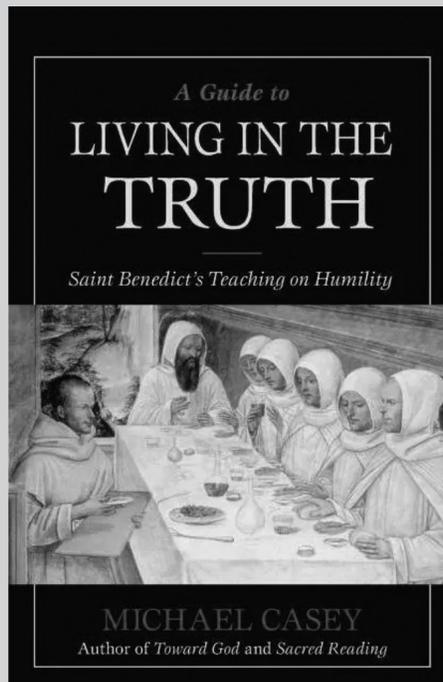
## JOHNSTOWN, PA (SAINT JOHN GUALBERT DEANERY)

Meetings on 1st Monday of each month, 6:30 P.M., Saint Benedict Church

Lay leader/secretary Kathy Kristofko wrote on May 10, June 21, and July 13. The group met by Zoom on May 10 after two months of not being able to meet. The theme of the discussion was Saint Joseph, with reference to a popular song and to a homily by Deacon Michael Russo, moderator. During the session it was reported that sixteen Oblates of the deanery had renewed their Oblation privately.

The deanery held an in-person meeting on June 14 in the John Paul II building. (They had planned to meet outside, but the weather was inclement.) They discussed possible agendas for July and the choice of a book for discussion beginning in August. The group chose *Mary of Galilee: Mary in the New Testament* by Father Bertrand Buby, S.M. Deacon Michael then led the praying of Vespers and explained how to pray the Divine Office for the sake of an inquirer.

The meeting on July 12 began with Evening Prayer, followed by a small celebration for Saint Benedict's feast (which would have been on July 11 if it had not fallen on a Sunday). Then there was a



discussion, with some good lessons included, about the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, with some comparison with arrangements in Lutheran congregations since one of the attendees was Lutheran.

## KALISPELL, MT (HOLY TRINITY DEANERY)

Meetings at Saint Matthew's Roman Catholic Church in Kalispell on 2nd Wed., 10:00 A.M.

Lay leader/secretary Tanishia Sperling reported by e-mail on May 17. At the meeting on May 11, attended by three Oblates in-person and by three others by verbal reporting, the attendees, after an opening prayer, continued to study and discuss the book *Living in the Truth* by Father Michael Casey, O.C.S.O. In Chapter 6 the theme of God's will is emphasized. The group discussed the difference between following one's human will with a false sense of control, and aligning oneself with God's will and the path He has in mind for us, which is ultimately always more fulfilling.

## NIAGARA AREA, ONTARIO, CANADA (SAINT HENRY/SAINT GERTRUDE DEANERY)

Meetings on 3rd or 4th Thurs. of each month, meeting room of Saint Thomas Aquinas Church, Saint Catharines, Ont. (after a holy hour with benediction)

Lay leader Brian Chisholm and Oblate Roy McKenzie reported by phone on May 15 and July 16. The meeting on April 25 took place, as usual, after a holy hour. Some ten people attended. Father Benjamin Weber, moderator, spoke about the *Rule* of Saint Benedict and about expectations for Oblate novices and Oblates. Ceremonies were then held, during which Father Ben received:

Oblate novice: **Eileen Cullen** of Saint Catharines, Ontario and

Oblate: **Stephen Morrison** of Saint Catharines, Ontario.

At the meeting on May 20, again following a holy hour, Father Ben gave a presentation about how Oblates are to follow the *Holy Rule* and about obedience to legitimate authority, especially in light of recent restrictions by the Canadian government that go against Christian teachings. Father Ben mentioned that God's laws must take priority and that Catholics must rely on the judgment of their bishops.

Father Ben was not able to attend the meeting on June 17. Four people attended, and they discussed the meaning of Oblation. Prayer requests were also brought forward.

## PENDLETON, IN (SAINT CELESTINE DEANERY)

Monthly meetings in the chapel in Pendleton

Secretary Frederick Laux reported on May 23, June 13, and July 25. A Liturgy of the Word service was held for the Solemnity of the Ascension on May 16, and it was followed by a monthly deanery meeting. It was attended by three Oblates and one guest. After the praying of Midday Prayer, Oblate Cory DesArmo gave a presentation on RB 2:33-40, which considers some qualities of an abbot. The emphasis was on the abbot's call to focus on the salvation of the monks' souls and to avoid having an excessively temporal perspective. Oblates likewise have individual missions to help others (and ourselves) to get to heaven. The meeting closed with the "Prayer for Oblates." On the same day a small group in another unit in Pendleton met to dis-

cuss the same passage, with emphasis on the great responsibility held by the abbot and on his need to be merciful.

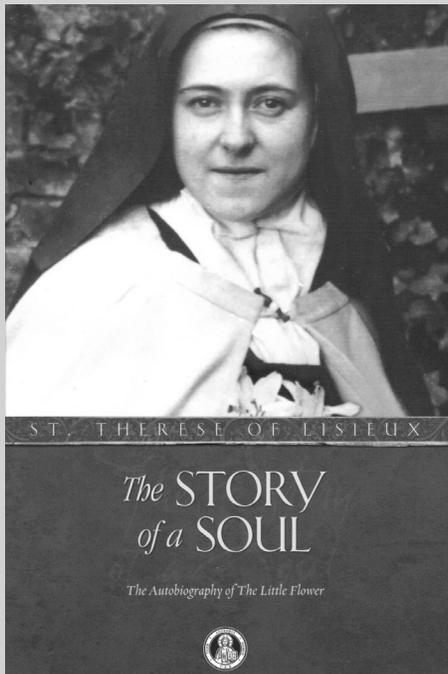
The monthly meeting on June 6, as usual, followed a Liturgy of the Word service and was attended by three Oblates and one inquirer. The group began with the praying of Midmorning Prayer. Then Fred gave a presentation on the eighth step of humility, with reference to RB 68 and to the book *The Handbook of Spiritual Perfection* by Father Philip E. Dion, C.M. Fred spoke about having responsibilities that seem like more than one can handle and about responding well by avoiding discouragement and asking God for the desire to want to try. He also quoted from *The Imitation of Christ*. There was another meeting of Oblates in another housing unit, with discussion of RB 7:55. The group concluded that Christ is our example in the practice of humility and in following the Father's commands; we have a call to obey with love and to stay joined to God like a branch attached to a vine.

The meeting on July 25 took place after a Liturgy of the Word service and was attended by two Oblates and one inquirer. After the praying of Midday Prayer and the "Prayer for Oblates," Oblate Curtis Kennedy gave a presentation on RB 45, which concerns mistakes in the oratory. Since worship is a solemn event, reverence and care are important; so mistakes should not be ignored. Three days earlier, Argumedo Alvarez led a meeting on another unit, with Evening Prayer and a presentation on RB 18: 1-6, concerning the "order of the psalms." It is our duty always to pray and to glorify and thank God. Praying the Psalter helps us to do this.

### **PHILADELPHIA, PA (SAINT AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY DEANERY)**

*Meetings at Cathedral Village, 700 E. Cathedral Rd., Philadelphia, PA 19128, in Classroom 2, on first Saturdays every two months (before the pandemic)*

Moderator Father Vincent de Paul Crosby, O.S.B., reported that the deanery was hoping to resume meetings in September.



### **PITTSBURGH, PA (NORTH SIDE - SAINT PETER DEANERY)**

*Meetings on 4th Monday, 7:00 P.M., Saint Anthony Chapel in Troy Hill*

Oblate George Ponticello reported by e-mail on May 29, June 25 and 27, and July 31. Six Oblates and Father James Orr, moderator, attended the meeting on May 24. After the praying of Vespers, Father Jim facilitated a discussion based on Chapter 5 of *The Story of a Soul* by Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, the book that had been discussed for several months.

The meeting planned for June 28 had to be canceled at the last minute; a number of Oblates as well as Father Jim would not have been able to attend, and there was a special Solemn Vigil Mass at Saint Peter Church for the Vigil of the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul.

At the meeting on July 26, eight Oblates joined Father Jim for Evening Prayer and a continuing discussion of *The Story of a Soul*. Father Jim provided a commentary and facilitated the discussion about Chapters 5 and 6.

An annual summer picnic was planned for the August gathering. After Evening Prayer in the chapel, the group was planning to have the picnic on the back patio of Father Jim's rectory.

### **PITTSBURGH, PA (SOUTH HILLS - BLESSED COLUMBA MARMION DEANERY)**

*Meetings on 1st Sunday of month at Saint Louise de Marillac Church in the Bishop Leonard Room, 1:45 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.*

Lay leader Mary Ann Kaufman sent an e-mail message on May 25 announcing an in-person meeting on June 6; however, the meeting apparently did not take place. She later reported that a meeting planned for July at her home had to be postponed because of a "stomach bug." The deanery finally did meet on August 1. Mary Ann, in a tentative report by phone later in the day, said that six people had attended and that they had discussed the topic of spiritual poverty. The attendees expressed joy at being able to meet again for the first time in well over a year. A fuller report will appear in the November newsletter.

### **ROSHARON, TX [RAMSEY UNIT] (SAINT BEDE DEANERY)**

*Monthly meetings*

There was no report. Because of the pandemic. Oblate meetings are not yet allowed.

### **SAVANNAH, GA (SAINT KATHARINE DREXEL DEANERY)**

*Special monthly events (Sept. - May) at Sunday Vespers at Benedictine Priory*

There was no report. Meetings, God willing, will resume in September.

### **SELINGSGROVE, PA (SAINT ANSELM DEANERY)**

*Monthly meetings at 2 P.M. on 2nd Sundays at Saint Pius X Church in Selingsgrove*

There was no report. Lay leader/secretary Teresa Warlow hopes to contact members about the possibility of resuming meetings.

## SOMERSET, PA (SAINT JOHN PAUL II DEANERY)

*Meetings on 2nd Tuesdays, 6:30 -8:15,  
chapel annex*

There was no report. Because of the pandemic, Oblate meetings are not yet allowed.

## STATE COLLEGE, PA (SAINT JOSEPH DEANERY)

*Meetings on 2nd Mon., 6:30 P.M., Our  
Lady of Victory Church, Saint Joseph  
Activity Center.*

The next meeting was planned for September 13, 2021.

## TENNESSEE COLONY, TX [COFFIELD UNIT] (SAINT BONIFACE DEANERY)

Acting secretary Kenneth Kerr has written several times, but because of the pandemic there have been no meetings. In his letter of July 3, Kenneth reported that at least three of the scattered Oblates were faithful in keeping the discipline of the *Holy Rule*.

## VIRGINIA BEACH, VA (SAINT SCHOLASTICA DEANERY)

*Meetings on 1st Wed., 7 P.M., Assembly  
Room, Saint Gregory the Great School*

Lay leader/secretary Nancy Chrabot reported on May 14, June 11, and July 28. The meeting on May 13 was attended by seven Oblates along with Father Dominic Leo, moderator. It was the feast of Our Lady of Fatima; so the group opened the session with a Hail Mary. Then Deacon Kevin Gorman read the daily passage from the *Rule* (part of RB 2), on the abbot, and there was some discussion about the precept of not showing favoritism in the family and the workplace. Also, just as an abbot must sometimes show extra love to a monk who is undergoing some difficulty, so must we offer extra help to people who are struggling. Next the attendees talked about the appearances at Fatima, the messages of Our Lady, and the strong faith

of the three children, two of them now canonized. Deacon Kevin encouraged the Oblates to attend Eucharistic adoration on the evenings of the first Thursday of each month, which has been extended to all-night adoration. The meeting ended with the praying of Vespers and a blessing from Father Dominic.

From May 27 to 31, Deacon Kevin Gorman and Deacon Michael Brown made a private retreat at the Archabbey. During that time, on March 28 in Saint Gregory Chapel, **Deacon Michael D. (Paschal) Brown** of Suffolk, VA, made his final Oblation in the presence of Father Donald, Deacon Kevin, and assistant Oblate director Timothy Sheridan (now Brother Aidan).

The meeting on June 10, because of inclement weather, was attended only by Father Dominic, Deacon Kevin, Nancy, and an inquirer. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule* by Deacon Kevin, he initiated a discussion about the three monastic vows (Oblate promises): obedience, stability, and ongoing conversion. These key values, according to Father Dominic and Deacon Kevin, are to be incorporated into our daily lives over a period of time. In the process, we need to turn to God in everything and to thank Him for everything and thus do everything for the glory of God. The meeting ended with the praying of Vespers and a blessing.

On June 12 in Saint Gregory Chapel at the Archabbey, **Santiago "Jojo" (Boniface) Camano** of Virginia Beach, VA, made his final Oblation in the presence of Father Donald. Also present were his wife Josefina, his son Joseph, assistant Oblate director Tim Sheridan (now Brother Aidan), and Father Ignatius, O.S.B. The Camano family was visiting Saint Vincent for several days, June 10-13.

The meeting on July 15 was attended by twelve people, including three inquirers, besides Father Dominic. Eight of the Oblates present renewed their Oblation. Father Dominic then reflected on the Gospel passages from the daily Masses for the week and on the lives of the saints being commemorated that week. He also referred to the example of Archabbot Boniface Wimmer, the founder of Saint Vincent, and his promise of "the Cross" to his monks. The saints mentioned were Saint Henry (an Oblate) Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, and Saint Bonaventure. There was a discussion about achieving holiness through

detachment, silent prayer, restraint in speaking, the practice of good listening, and resistance against selfish desires. Also emphasized was the great virtue of perseverance and the value of asking the Blessed Mother for assistance. The meeting ended with the praying of Vespers and a blessing from Father Dominic.

## WAYNESBURG, PA (SAINT DISMAS DEANERY)

*Meetings on 1st Wed. of each month*

There was no report. Apparently, there have been no meetings because of the pandemic.

## WILLIAMSPORT, PA (SAINTS MARTHA, MARY & LAZARUS DEANERY)

*Meetings on 2nd Sundays, 2 P.M., former  
convent at Saint Anne Catholic Church*

Outgoing lay leader Sue Wykoff reported by phone on July 25. On July 24 she met with Oblates Helen Prien and Larry Hamm about the future of the deanery. The group, after consultation with others, expressed the desire to continue and to publicize the Oblate Program in parishes in the Williamsport area. Helen agreed to serve as the new lay leader, and Larry took responsibility for other tasks. They considered having meetings between April and October because of the difficulty of coming to meetings in the winter for many members.

## VARIOUS LOCATIONS

On May 30, Trinity Sunday, **Peter Allsworth** and his wife, **Deborah Cotter Allsworth**, both of Rhyl, Denbighshire, U.K., made their final Oblation in the presence of Father Terence Carr, pastor at Ss. Peter & Frances Catholic Church in Prestatyn, Denbighshire. Peter and Debbie became acquainted with Saint Vincent's Oblate Program through their friendship with Father Vincent de Paul Crosby, O.S.B., and his gift of vestment-making.

On July 11, during Sunday Mass at Saint Callistus Church in Kane, PA, Rev. William J. O'Brien, pastor, invested as an Oblate novice **Francesca E. "Fran" Cecchetti** of Kane, PA.

# ORDER FORM FOR CDs & DVDs OF PRESENTATIONS IN LATROBE

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(See past newsletters or phone Saint Vincent College Book Center for previous presentations.)

**Fr. Basil Burns's talk on the true meaning of stability**

(December 15, 2019):

CD  DVD \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

**Br. Hugh Lester's talk on conversatio morum**

(January 19, 2020):

CD  DVD \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

**Br. Angelo Lichtenstein's talk on poverty & simplicity**

(February 16, 2020):

DVD only \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

**Fr. Donald Raila's talk on the abbot according to the Rule**

(April 17, 2020):

CD  DVD \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

**Fr. Nathanael Polinski's talk on lectio divina** (April 17, 2020):

CD  DVD \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

**Br. Albert Gahr's talk on silence in Benedictine spirituality**

(May 17, 2020):

CD  DVD \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

**Fr. Michael Antonacci's talk on stability in Benedictine spirituality**

(June 14, 2020):

CD  DVD \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

**Fr. Cyprian Constantine's talk on the Liturgy of the Hours**

(July 19, 2020):

CD  DVD \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

**Fr. Ignatius Camello's talk on prayer** (August 16, 2020):

CD  DVD \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

**Fr. Vincent de Paul Crosby's talk on work in Benedictine spirituality**

(September 20, 2020):

CD  DVD \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

**Fr. Donald Raila's 3 talks on the Beatitudes** (October 17, 2020):

Set of 3 CDs \_\_\_\_\_ (number) set of 3 DVDs \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

**Fr. Anthony Grossi's talk on obedience in Benedictine spirituality**

(October 18, 2020):

CD  DVD \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

**Fr. John-Mary Tompkins' talk on humility in Benedictine spirituality**

(November 15, 2020):

CD  DVD \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

**Fr. Shawn-Matthew Anderson's talk on hospitality in Benedictine spirituality** (December 20, 2020):

CD  DVD \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

**Fr. Isaac Haywiser's talk on silence in Benedictine spirituality**

(January 17, 2021):

CD  DVD \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

**Fr. Killian Loch's talk on stability in Benedictine spirituality**

(February 21, 2021):

CD only \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

**Fr. Edward Mazich's talk on lectio divina**

(March 14, 2021):

CD  DVD \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

**Dr. Catherine Petranj's talk on "Prayer: the Psalms"**

(April 18, 2021):

CD  DVD \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

**Fr. Justin Matro's talk on "purity of heart"**

(May 16, 2021):

CD  DVD \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

**Br. Gregory Visca's talk on conversatio morum**

(June 13, 2021):

CD  DVD \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

**Br. Placid Sellers' talk on the vows and vocation**

(July 10, 2021):

DVD \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

**Fr. Thomas Hart's talk on "Fruit of the Spirit"**

(July 18, 2021):

CD  DVD \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

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## REGISTRATION: OBLATE DAY & OBLATE DAY OF RECOLLECTION

### OBLATE DAY, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2021

- 10:30 A.M. Celebration of Mass, Mary, Mother of Wisdom Chapel  
11:40 A.M. Midday Prayer, chapel or Fred Rogers Center  
12:00 P.M. Lunch, Rogers Center  
1:30 P.M. Oblation ceremonies, Rogers Center  
2:30 P.M. Confessions, Rogers Center  
3:45 P.M. Presentation by Archabbot Martin, Rogers Center  
5:00 P.M. Evening Prayer with the monastic community,  
Basilica nave  
5:35 P.M. Supper, Rogers Center  
6:45 P.M. Departure

### OBLATE DAY OF RECOLLECTION SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2021 • FATHER BONIFACE

- 8:30 A.M. Check-in, Basilica Crypt  
9:00 A.M. First conference, Basilica Crypt  
9:30 A.M. Confessions, Basilica Crypt  
10:30 A.M. Mass, Basilica Crypt  
11:30 A.M. Midday Prayer, Basilica nave  
11:45 A.M. Lunch, Fred Rogers Center  
1:00 P.M. Second conference, Rogers Center  
1:30 P.M. Oblation ceremonies, Rogers Center  
3:30 P.M. Third conference, Rogers Center  
5:00 P.M. Evening Prayer, outside Saint Gregory Chapel  
5:35 P.M. Supper, Rogers Center

### REGISTRATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I plan to attend Oblate Day on Sept. 26.

I plan to attend Oblate Day of Recollection on Oct. 30.

**The fee will be \$40.00 (or \$30.00 for lunch only). You may  
enclose your donation, or bring it when you come.**

\_\_\_\_\_ (number of reservations) for served dinner at \$16.25 each  
**(enclose donation, or bring it when you come).**

\_\_\_\_\_ (number of reservations) for box supper at \$7.95 each  
**(enclose donation, or bring it when you come).**

Reduced prices are available. Please make checks payable to Saint Vincent Archabbey. Please send this form to the Oblate Office by September 13 for Oblate Day or by October 18 for the Oblate Day of Recollection; please mark on envelope either "September event" or "October Event" and indicate whether you prefer a vegetarian lunch or supper. Some overnight accommodations are available. If you are staying overnight, you must provide proof of full vaccination. Also, please let Father Donald know in advance (by September 19 or October 23, depending on the event) if you plan to be received as an Oblate novice or Oblate.