

THE SAINT VINCENT OBLATE NEWS

FEBRUARY - APRIL, 2022 • VOLUME 75, NUMBER 1

A MESSAGE FROM ARCHABBOT MARTIN - FEBRUARY 2022

Dear Oblates and Friends of Saint Vincent,

We'll soon be embracing the grace-filled season of Lent with the observance of Ash Wednesday.

Some years ago, Dr. Daniella Zsupan-Jerome, Director of Ministry Formation and Field Education at Benedictine Saint John's University, introduced me to John Berney Crome's painting, *Great Gale at Yarmouth on Ash Wednesday*. The canvas invites us into the Lenten season with a visual story of turbulence featuring clouds and waves converging on the coast. The clouds belie the invisible power of the wind. That wind in turn stirs up the waves tossing the boat and slapping the coastal buildings.

The clouds are varied: large white ones as well as dark storm clouds. The central black cloud is especially imposing; it is



smeared, in the shape of a cross, much like the sign marked on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday.

Lent calls us to conversion on the journey to Easter. That path is often through rough waters. We are tossed in the waves of our own desires and poor decisions; we are assaulted by our temptations and selfishness. Lent is the time again to confront our personal turbulence. The wind is not a danger, but the breath of the Spirit seek-

ing to eliminate all that hinders us from the fullness of life in Christ.

May Lent 2022 be for us a time of peaceful but determined conversion culminating in the bright calm of our victorious Savior.

Sincerely in Christ and Saint Benedict,

+Martín de Porres Bartel, O.S.B.
Archabbot



THE CHALLENGE OF RESISTING WORLDLY ENTANGLEMENTS: KEEPING CHRIST AS LORD OF DAILY LIFE

NEED TO KEEP CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS & IN EVERY TIME

Traveling to and from parishes before and after Christmas, I noticed billboards that proclaimed the reminder: “Keep Christ in Christmas” (thanks largely to the Knights of Columbus). That cause is indeed a worthy one, and I hope that the billboards have been producing a salutary effect on those driving by. We live in a very secularized culture that tends to exclude God from any public functions as if He were being cast out as an unwelcome guest. As Christians we know that Christmas without Christ makes no sense. Our Lord’s incarnation and birth anticipate His Passion, Death, and Resurrection, which constitute the most important events in human history. As many Christmas carols tell us, Christ was born to die—and then to rise and ultimately to “save us all from Satan’s power” and lead us to eternal communion with the Blessed Trinity. Thus Christ must be at the center of every moment of our lives. We could truly say, “Let us keep Christ in daily life, and may He be Lord of every moment.”

The *Rule* of Saint Benedict is meant to give us strong support in this endeavor. Along with leading us to a closer relationship with Christ, the *Rule* provides ways to resist the evils of our culture.

THE *RULE*’S CALL TO LIVE COUNTERCULTURALLY

Right from the outset, Saint Benedict reminds us that we are engaged in a spiritual battle against Satan, against our inclinations to evil, and against the perversions of our culture. The Prologue reminds us that we are to be “armed with the strong and noble weapons of obedience to do battle for the true King, Christ the Lord” (Prol: 3). While the world promotes self-indulgence and self-will, the monk, the Oblate, and the Christian are summoned to “prepare our hearts and bodies for the battle of holy obedience to [God’s] instructions” (Prol: 40). While the world promotes pride in what we humans achieve, we Christians

“fear the Lord, and do not become elated over [our] good deeds; [we] judge it is the Lord’s power, not [our] own, that brings about the good in [us]” (Prol: 29).

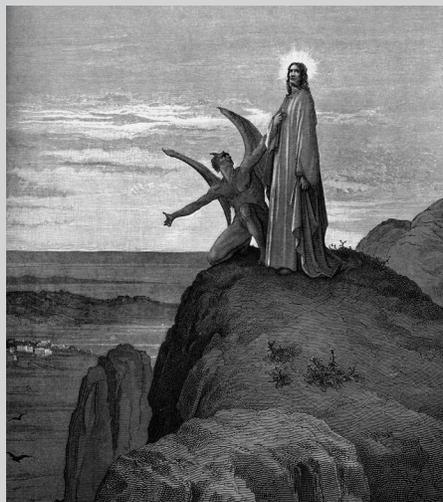
The abbot in particular, perhaps because he must take care of much secular business for the monastery, is warned not to adopt worldly ways. He is to strive to cure monks of “their unhealthy ways” (2:8), to “avoid all favoritism” [a tool of the fallen world] (2:16), and to remember the reckoning he must give on judgment day for the souls of all his monks and for his own soul (2:38). Saint Benedict places strong emphasis on the abbot’s call to spiritual leadership when he asserts, “Above all, he [the abbot] must not show too great concern for the fleeting and temporal things of this world” (2:33). In sum, the abbot is summoned to keep Christ first in all his dealings and to show forth Christ to his monks since “he is believed to hold the place of Christ in the monastery” (2:2). The admonitions that “the love of Christ must come before all else” (4:21), that one must “dash ... against Christ ... all wrongful thoughts” (4:50), and that monks strive to “cherish Christ above all” (5:2) apply first and foremost to the abbot.

At the same time, the *Holy Rule* calls all monks—and indeed all Christians—to serve as counterwitnesses to the world’s ways, insofar as “world” represents the forces that are hostile to God—people and movements that rebel against God’s plan. (“World” is used in Scripture also to

signify the physical world in a neutral way or the created universe as created by God and, therefore, as basically good.) Saint Benedict sternly warns all of us: “Do not gratify the promptings of the flesh” (4:59) and “hate the urgings of self-will” (4:60). We are also told, “Your way of acting should be different from the world’s ways” (4:20). The cellarer, who has to deal with material things on a daily basis, must be especially careful to avoid worldly ways. He must “not [be] an excessive eater” (31:1); he should “keep watch over his own soul” (31:7); rather than seeking his own importance, he must “show every care and concern for the sick, children, guests and the poor” (31:9). The very material objects which he regularly handles belong to God and are to be treated with care and respect; indeed, the cellarer “will regard all utensils and goods of the monastery as sacred vessels of the altar” (31:10). In our “throwaway culture,” we must be eager to make Christ Lord over the way we interact with His material creation.

Priors of the monastery are warned not to be “puffed up by the evil spirit of pride” (65:2) nor to “[think] of themselves as second abbots” or exercise “tyrannical power” (65:2); rather, the prior is to show exemplary obedience to the abbot—and to Christ—by “[carrying out respectfully what his abbot assigns to him” (65:16).

Toward the end of the *Rule*, Saint Benedict urges builders of monasteries, if possible, to include “all necessities” (66:6) within its walls so that “there will be no need for the monks to roam outside, because this ... is not at all good for their souls” (66:7). Even in Saint Benedict’s time, we know from the *Rule* and from Pope Saint Gregory’s *Life and Miracles of Saint Benedict* that monks did go forth from the monastery on legitimate business, probably even on missions of evangelization. In fact, in the centuries that followed, missionary monks became a common phenomenon and contributed greatly to the evangelization of Europe. We could in-



POPE SAINT GREGORY
THE GREAT

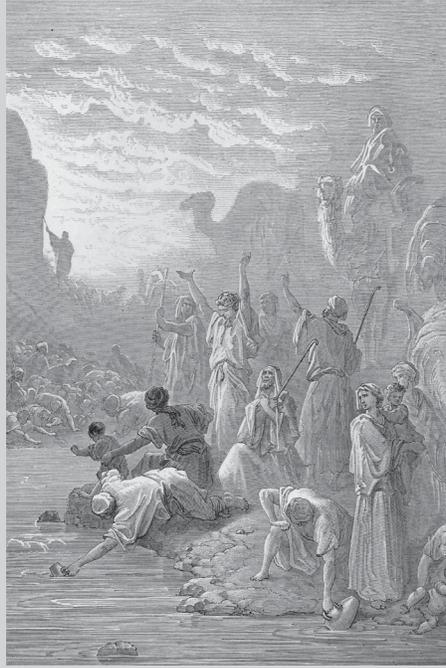
LIFE AND MIRACLES OF ST. BENEDICT



interpret the admonition against “roaming outside” as a warning to reject worldly ways when a monk (or any Christian) leaves the safe haven of a Christian environment. Most especially, a Christian must not roam spiritually outside of a strong commitment to Christ and to practices that keep one rooted in Christ. On the contrary, we Christians have an obligation to be proactive in bringing the world to Christ, perhaps one soul at a time, rather than to let secularistic values infect our minds and hearts.

BIBLICAL CAUTIONS ABOUT THE “WORLD”

In the Old Testament, especially the prophetic books, the Israelites are warned time and again not to worship the idols of the pagan nations that surrounded them. It may seem amazing to us that after all that God did for the people in saving them from slavery in Egypt and providing them with manna and springs of water in the desert, they still reverted often to the idolatry of other peoples. Such worship was less demanding and involved superficially appealing control over the pagan gods. The true God called the people to be particularly His own, but they repeatedly forgot their chosenness and instead preferred other gods, as if there really were gods other than the God of Israel. In the separation of Judah (and Benjamin) from the northern tribes after King



Solomon’s reign, the whole of the northern kingdom (“Samaria” or “Israel”) fell into false worship. We can be very much like such “reverts” when we at least temporarily forget Christ’s sacrifice of love for us and sometimes prefer wealth, status, physical comforts, or power over others.

The New Testament abounds in passages that warn disciples of Christ against adopting worldly ways. In His “Last Supper Discourse” (Jn 13-17), Our Lord makes strong statements about not being “of the world.” He also speaks about the suffering inflicted by the world upon disciples who remain true to His words. In Jn 14:27, Christ says, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you.” A few verses later, He asserts, “I will no longer speak much with you, for the ruler of the world [Satan] is coming. He has no power over Me, but the world must know that I love the Father and that I do just as the Father has commanded Me” (Jn 14: 30-31). The implication is that through His Passion, Death, and Resurrection and through His

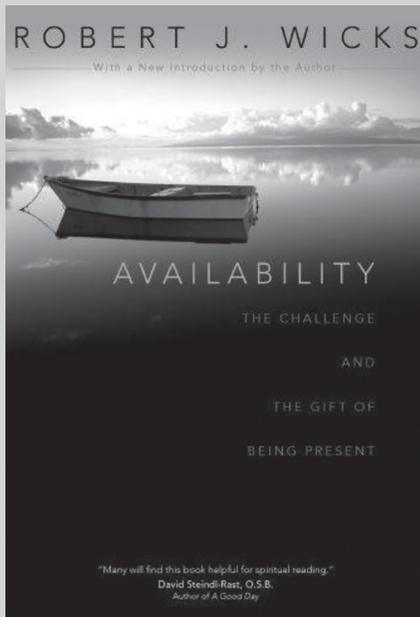


disciples’ witness, those in the world who are open to conversion will come to know Him, to know the Father, and to accept their unconditional love. In John 15, Our Lord tells His apostles, “If the world hates you, realize that it hated Me first. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you do not belong to the world, and I have chosen you out of the world, the world hates you” (Jn 15: 18-20). In His “High Priestly Prayer” (John 17), Jesus prays that His disciples not belong to the world even though they must live in it. He prays: “I speak this in the world so that they may share My joy completely. I gave them Your word, and the world hated them, because they do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. I do not ask that You take them out of the world but that You keep them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. Consecrate them in the truth. Your word is truth” (Jn 17: 13-17). These precious words of Our Lord remind us how much struggle it can be to live a Christian life and how much the worldly forces of our culture will oppose us when we live our faith zealously. How we shall need God’s grace to be victors in the struggle!

HOW TO OPPOSE “THE WORLD” TODAY

How are we to live this tension of living in the world (as if we had a choice) while not giving in to “worldly ways”? For one thing, we need diligently to adhere to a regime of spiritual practices, not for their own sakes but for a strengthening of our covenant relationship with God and for growth in our love of Him and trust in Him rather than reliance on human strength. We need to be strong in our faith to resist the unspeakably horrible developments in our culture, especially





during the past few decades. Today not only has there been much popular approval of abortion, contraception, and euthanasia, but more recently God's ways are being rejected in the condoning of a "redefinition" of marriage and of efforts to change our God-given gender. Such evil trends are even being encouraged among young people in some public schools. They attack the very foundation of society, which involves stable traditional marriages which follow the moral law of God. Of course, we must all be firm in opposing such developments. Most of us do not have much political influence; but we can all pray ardently for the conversion of those being deceived by these evils, and we may have opportunities with family and friends to dissuade people who are moving toward these destructive trends. It is a wicked phenomenon indeed when governments promote gross immorality and even try to force perverted doctrines upon children.

However, our struggle is not only against these outer forces. Even more relevant to our daily lives is the need to oppose the "worldliness" that has invaded our own minds and hearts. To the extent that we are motivated not by the love of Christ but rather by pleasure, power, and popularity, we are still worldly. We all can easily be deluded by our desire for praise or success. By a consistent prayer life, we can come to recognize these motives within us that are inconsistent with our Christian profession and to work against them with the help of the sacraments and of devout family, friends, and spiritual directors. In his

book *Availability: The Challenge and the Gift of Being Present* (Notre Dame, IN: Sorin Books, 2015), popular author Robert Wicks wrote, "As children we recognize at an early age that the world is not the kingdom-fulfilled. From the trauma of birth through the early formative years (birth to approximately five years of age) and into the other major period of identity formation-reformation, adolescence, we see the many things that we feel are missing in ourselves. We unconsciously pick up the insecurities of our parents who, no matter how wonderful they or our early guardians were, also had issues and conflicts to confront" (p. 94). At an early age we may "begin to feel we have the answer [to our discomfort]: success!" (p. 94). Then we learn, sooner or later, that success in one area or another does not bring us ultimate fulfillment or save us from our inner inconsistencies. By grace and with an environment with people who lead us to seek salvation in Christ, we may learn that only He and a growing faith in Him will deliver us from the "mess" that lies within us.

FAITH AS A "TOOL" FOR OVERCOMING THE WORLD

At weekday Masses during the Christmas Season, the first Scripture reading comes largely from the First Letter of Saint John. In that letter the apostle reminds us often to struggle against "the world" taken in its negative sense, with references also to the battle against "darkness" and "the evil one." Saint John cautions us, "Do not love the world or the things of the world" (1 Jn 2:15). After listing the elements of the world as "sensual lust, enticement for the eyes, and a pretentious life" (1 Jn 2:16), he concludes that "the world and its enticements are passing away. But whoever does the will of God remains forever" (1 Jn 2:17). Near the end of his letter, Saint John speaks of the Christian as having conquered the world. Baptized Christians strive to love God by keeping His commandments. He adds, "And His commandments are not burdensome, for whoever is begotten by God conquers the world. And the victory that conquers the world is our faith. Who indeed is the victor over the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 Jn 4-5).

JOY OF LOOKING BEYOND THIS WORLD

Christian life is not just a struggle against "the world" and the evil one. Coupled with

that battle is the nurturing of gratitude for being begotten by God, for the opening of our hearts to growth in love, and for the gift of eternal life, in which we share even now. The events of Christmas, Epiphany and the Baptism of the Lord are joyful mysteries that remind us of God's love that caused Him to take on human nature, to show Himself to us, and lovingly to humble Himself in baptism in order to share with us the arduous battle against sin. Let us live these joyful mysteries all year long. Let us struggle valiantly against the secularistic world's enticements so that the Lord may better work through us in our self-sacrificing love for Him and for others.

This gigantic task can be a joyful one because in the battle we are united with Christ, who is our joy, and He even rejoices in us insofar as we are even minimally responsive to His loving outreach to us. In the first reading at the first Sunday Mass after the Christmas Season, we heard that God wishes to call us by a new name and to share with us His glory. Like the exiled Israelites, we may often see ourselves as "Forsaken" and "Desolate." Instead, the Lord wishes to call us "My Delight" and "Espoused," as if we were in the best possible marital relationship with Him. God Himself tells His people Israel and us, "For the Lord delights in you and makes your land His spouse. As a young man marries a virgin, your Builder shall marry you; and as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride so shall your God rejoice in you" (Is 62: 4-5). All our struggle against the evils of the world is surely not an end in itself. It is meant to purify us of our unhealthy attachments so that we may truly prefer Christ to everything else and welcome God to espouse us in infinite love. This ultimate goal of infinite, perfect joy in communion with God and all the saints is very much worth the arduous battle against evils within and evils without. With "our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight love," (RB Prol: 49) even on this earth, let our whole beings rejoice that someday we shall "deserve ... to share in [Christ's] kingdom" (Prol: 50) in its fullness.

In the peace of Christ and Saint Benedict,

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

OBLATE EVENTS

RETREATS FOR 2022

Because of the pandemic, the status of retreats this coming summer is still uncertain. Brother Hugh Lester, O.S.B., director of the Summer Retreat Program, urges people who are interested to check the Retreat website, www.saintvincentretreats.org to see the planned offerings. Plans are for three weekend retreats and one Day of Recollection. Last year two virtual retreats were offered and these are still available. Links are on the retreat website.

OBLATE DAY AND DAY OF RECOLLECTION FOR 2022

Oblate Day for 2022 has been scheduled for Sunday, September 25, 2022, and the fall Day of Recollection for Saturday, October 29, 2022. The form of these events will depend much on the status of the pandemic. If you are considering staying overnight as a guest, do remember that, as of now, the guest house is open only for guests who are fully vaccinated.

MEETING OF OBLATE BOARD OF ADVISORS, JANUARY 14, 2022

Members of the board assembled for their 83rd regular meeting at 6:30 P.M. on January 29 in the Faculty Dining Room (after supper). Five members, including Father Donald, were able to attend in person, and two others attended by Zoom. The topics discussed included the 2023 World Congress of Oblates, the event on March 21, the possibility of a deanery representatives' meeting this summer, the need to express grati-

tude to the public-relations staff, possible speakers for Oblate Day in September and the Day of Recollection in October, and the NAABOD meeting scheduled for August 4-9, 2022, at Saint Meinrad Archabbey. The board agreed to schedule its next meeting for April 29.

THE SOLEMNITY OF SAINT BENEDICT AT THE ARCHABBEY ON MARCH 21, 2022

Oblates are welcome to attend events at the Archabbey on Monday, March 21, to celebrate the Solemnity of the Passing of Our Holy Father Benedict with the monastic community and other guests. The schedule includes Mass at 4:00 P.M., supper at 5:15, Oblate ceremonies at 6:15, and Vespers at 7:00. (See the schedule and reservation form elsewhere in this issue.) The registration form should be sent to the Oblate Office by March 12. The cost of the dinner, depending on the menu chosen, will range from \$16.29 to \$19.50. At the suggestion of the Board of Advisors, no one will be obliged to pay, but free-will donations will be accepted at the time of the dinner. Checks should be made out to Saint Vincent Archabbey.

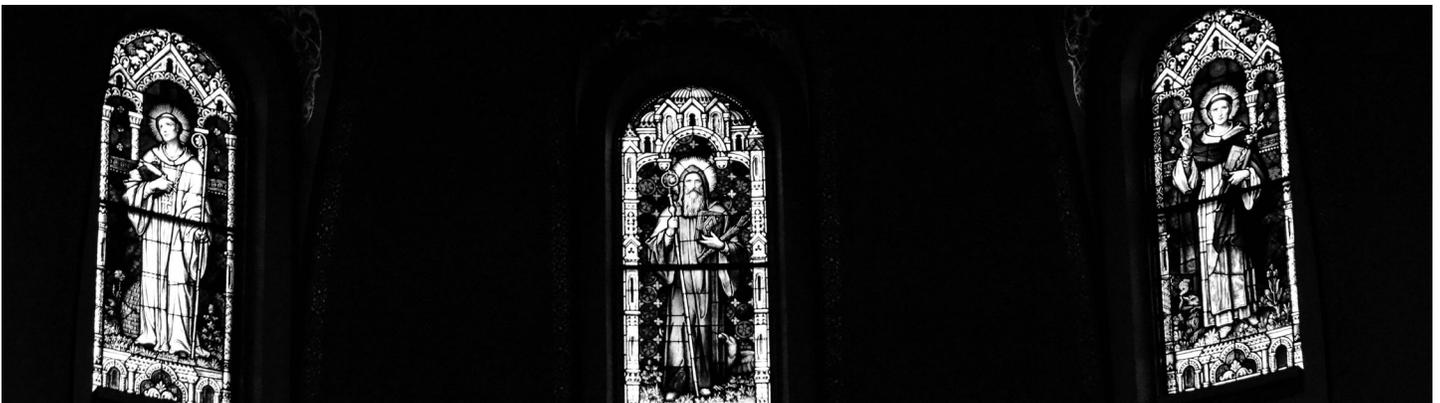


PLANS FOR THE 5TH WORLD CONGRESS OF BENEDICTINE OBLATES

The international Oblate Congress originally scheduled for November of 2021 has been rescheduled again for September 9-16, 2023. Presumably the pandemic will be over by that time. This rescheduling was announced on December 1 by Abbot Primate Gregory Polan, O.S.B. In his letter to superiors of monasteries, Abbot Primate Gregory said, "We count on your usual collaboration for the success of this important event, which we are working on together with the International Team of Benedictine Oblates." Four Oblates affiliated with Saint Vincent Archabbey have already expressed interest. For more information you may contact the website for the congress or our Father Benoît Allogia, O.S.B., who has been coordinating plans for the congress.

ASSEMBLY OF DEANERY REPRESENTATIVES ON SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 2022

The semi-annual Assembly of Deanery Representatives, postponed from last year because of the pandemic, is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, June 4. One or two representatives from each deanery are invited to participate. Some are likely to need overnight rooms on June 3-4 and/or June 4-5. Please let Father Donald know by early May if you will need an overnight room. A speaker and a topic have not yet been chosen, but deanery representatives will be welcome to bring up their own issues for discussion among the group.



OBLATE NEWS

SUGGESTED LENTEN PROJECTS

It is suggested that the Oblates and Oblate novices affiliated with us rededicate themselves to the regular praying of the Liturgy of the Hours (as much as one's schedule allows) and the regular practice of lectio divina on the Bible (daily, if possible). The undertaking of good spiritual reading replacing less beneficial activities is also recommended. It is also important to keep reading the *Holy Rule*, ideally a bit each day, and to apply it personally to one's everyday life, as in performing the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

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



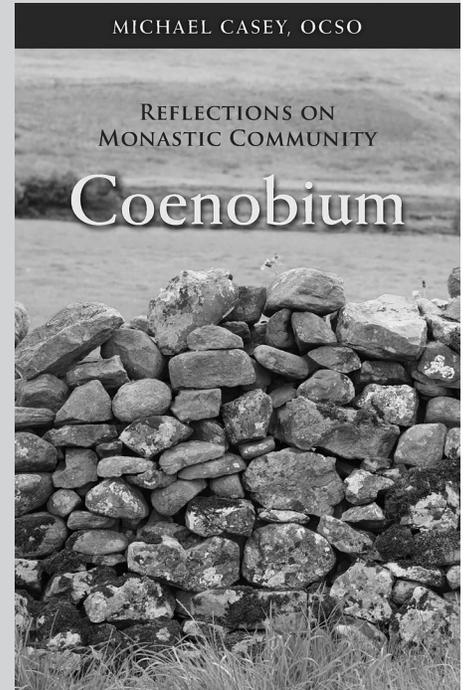
purchases. Just let the volunteer at the cash register know. The hours of the gift shop are 11:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M., Monday through Saturday.

QUOTES FROM FATHER MICHAEL CASEY, O.C.S.O.

(from new book *Coenobium: Reflections on Monastic Community* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2021)

"It is the sacred character of the monastic community that is its most distinctive feature. Its role as a visible sign of the church is to witness to the presence of the risen Christ to an indifferent world and to be a sign of hope to a generation that sometimes seems to be fading into despair. By the attractiveness of their fully realized humanity monks and nuns can be lights on a hilltop, trailblazers for all who wish to follow Christ, who is our road to eternal life" (p. 23) [This challenge also applies to Oblates and Christian families.]

"The Liturgy of the Hours is an invitation to come away to the desert so that God may speak to the heart. It involves leaving behind the world of practical utility, allowing tasks to be left undone or unfinished in order to stand before God... In part, going to the Office is routine, but it is more



than that. It is yielding control—moving from a zone of activity into a condition of responsiveness and service. There is no explicit agenda in going to the Office except being there" (p. 30).

PRAYER-PARTNER PROGRAM

Our revised Prayer-partner Program has been implemented now for several years. Each new Oblate (soon after final Oblation) is partnered with a monk who



has agreed to participate. There is no communication between partners unless both agree to such communication. Each partner prays for the other regularly, ideally daily, as best as he or she can. If you are a full Oblate who wishes to have a monk prayer-partner, please phone the Oblate Office.

OBLATES AS GUESTS AT THE ARCHABBEY - NOW POSSIBLE FOR THOSE FULLY VACCINATED

Oblates are again welcome to come to the Archabbey as overnight guests if they are fully vaccinated and send proof of their vaccination. The number of rooms in Leander Hall is very limited; so reservations should be made as far in advance as possible. No fee is required or specified, but donations are welcome. The current break-even cost for one guest staying one overnight and taking three meals is \$60.00. Also, some Oblates and Father Donald have put togeth-

er a brochure for first-time Oblate guests, but any Oblate is welcome to request a copy. **As of January, with construction of buildings still occurring, guests must pick up meals in the Community Center (college cafeteria).**

OBLATE LOGO CLOTHING & APPAREL ITEMS FOR PURCHASE

Clothing and other items with the Oblate logo is available; you may contact the website <https://stbenedict.qbstores.com>.

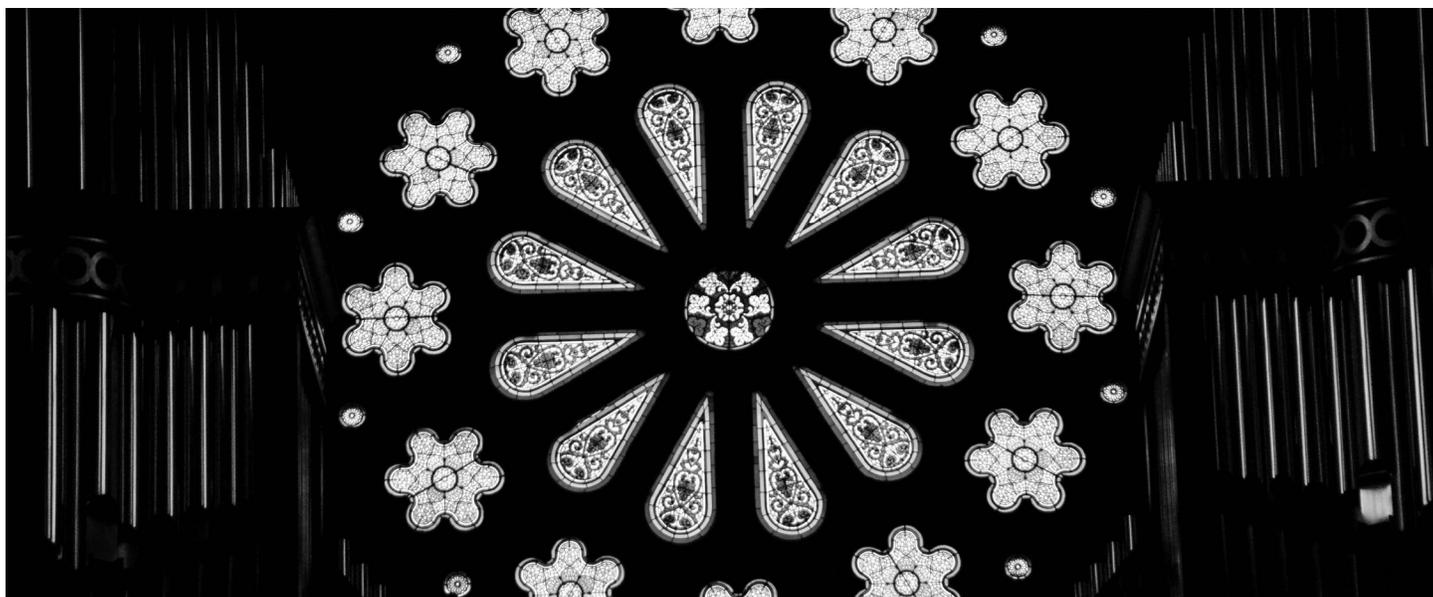
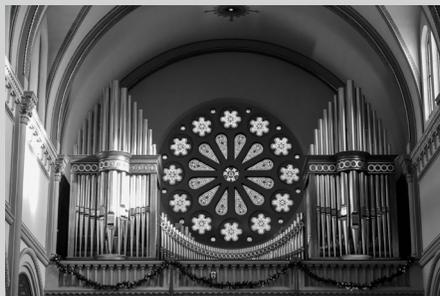
COMPLETION OF SAINT VINCENT BASILICA ORGAN

Several years ago a new pipe organ for the basilica was installed, but one whole section was left unfinished because of lack of funds. Now the monastic community has decided to complete the organ, provided that the funds are available. In an ongoing effort to enrich the liturgical experience at Saint Vincent Basilica, to provide organ instructions for budding organists

among collegians and seminarians, and to maintain a world-class instrument for special events and concerts, Saint Vincent Archabbey and Saint Vincent Parish ask for your help in raising funds for the enhancement of our pipe organ so that it can be played to its fullest. If you would like to make a gift for these improvements to the Saint Vincent Basilica organ, please call or email: Shannon J. Jordan, Chief Mission Advancement Officer, Saint Vincent Archabbey, Seminary, and Apostolates, 300 Fraser Purchase Road, Latrobe, PA 15650; 724-532-6740; Shannon.jordan@stvincent.edu.

REMINDER ABOUT “THE SAINT VINCENT OBLATES SCHOLARSHIP”

Funds available from the “Oblate Scholarship” of Saint Vincent College to be awarded are the result of the spending policy adopted by the Saint Vincent College Board of Directors. If anyone has questions or would like additional information, he or she may contact Carolyn Walsh, by e-mail, at Carolyn.walsh@stvincent.edu or, by phone, at 724-805-2412. This scholarship may benefit your children or grandchildren if they attend Saint Vincent College. (The last newsletter had the wrong e-mail address.)



were able to save 72 babies from abortion and to persuade 29 people to accept Christ into their lives. Let us praise God for these graces and the cooperation given to the Lord by His ministers of life!

(3) Oblate **Clareece “Clare” Godt** of Pittsburgh, PA, has been working for some years on an English translation of a book in Italian on Saint Philip Neri, which was recently published. She was scheduled to give a presentation on Saturday, January 29, at 7:00 at the

Pittsburgh Oratory as part of the “Oratory Lecture Series.” The title of the discussion with Clare as translator, in conversation with Father Michael J. Darcy, C.O., was “Saint Philip Neri: His Work and His Legacy.” We congratulate Clare on her arduous accomplishment.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

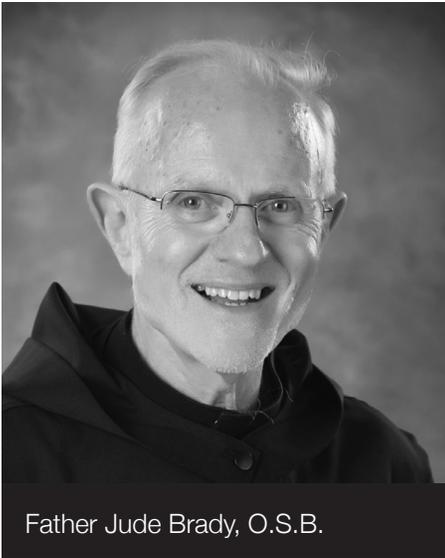
1. Oblates who wish to attend services during the Paschal Triduum may phone the Oblate Office a few days in advance. The times for Morning Prayer and Mass

generally change during Holy Week and the Triduum.

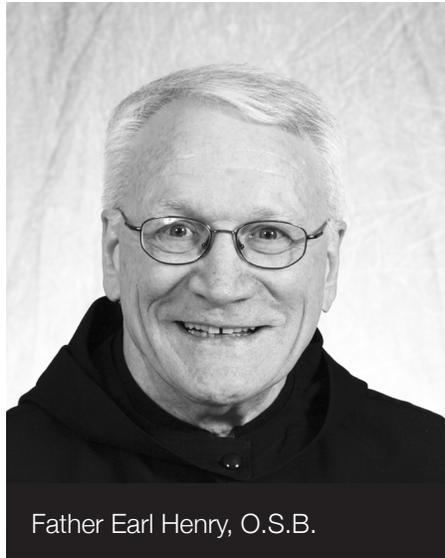
2. Father Donald apologizes for his late response to a large volume of Christmas mail. Duties with the Archabbey Liturgy Committee and other factors have left a big pile of Christmas greetings unanswered even in late January. He plans to reply to each piece of mail, but it may be well into March before he can finish responding. Please be patient.



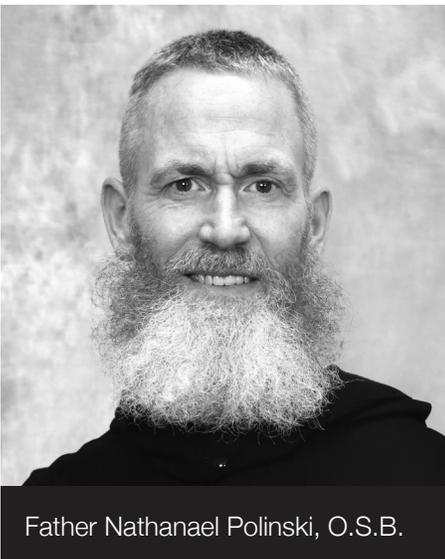
NEWS FROM OBLATE DEANERIES AND GROUPS



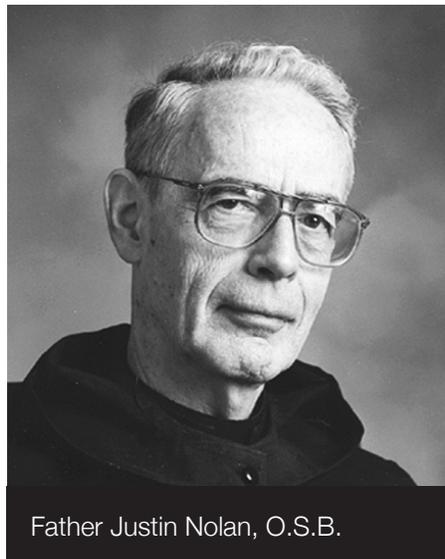
Father Jude Brady, O.S.B.



Father Earl Henry, O.S.B.



Father Nathanael Polinski, O.S.B.



Father Justin Nolan, O.S.B.

OBLATE MEETINGS IN LATROBE AND PRESENTATIONS ON BENEDICTINE SPIRITUALITY

Oblates from all locations are welcome to the monthly meetings of the Latrobe Deanery of Oblates, mostly at 6:30 P.M. and usually in Brownfield 202. The next four meetings will be on February 20, March 13, April 10, and May 15. Those wishing to come for Evening Prayer (usually at 5:00) and supper before the evening meeting should phone Father Donald in advance at (724) 805-2291. The book *A Study Guide for the Rule of Saint Benedict* is currently being discussed. Also, informative presentations on Benedictine spirituality continue to be offered at 3:00 P.M. on the same dates, usually in Brownfield Room 202. All are welcome, and pre-registration is no longer absolutely neces-

sary. The session on February 20 is to be offered by Father Jude Brady (“Obedience”), on March 13 by Father Nathanael Polinski (“Holiness”), on April 10 by Father Earl Henry (“Stability”), and on May 15 by Father Justin Nolan (“Walking with the Lord”). According to the latest policy, those staying for supper have been picking up meals in the college cafeteria and eating in one of the rooms across the hall. (We hope that sometime soon the guest dining room will re-open.)

LATROBE, PA (SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT DEANERY)

Meetings usually on 3rd Sunday of month, 3:00 P.M. presentation in Brownfield 202; 6:45 P.M. discussion on book, in Brownfield 202

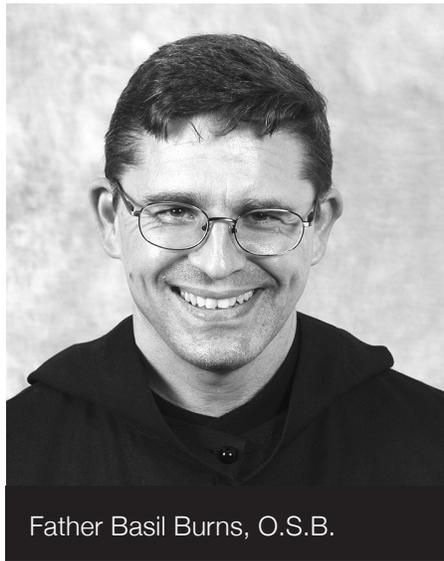
The 3:00 presentation on November 21 was given by a junior monk, Brother Francisco Whittaker, whose topic was “The Eucharist in Benedictine Spirituality.” About 13 people attended in person, and about 12 by Zoom. Brother Francisco began by saying that although Saint Benedict did not explicitly mention the Eucharist often in the *Rule*, he clearly had a very Eucharistic spirituality. The talk covered three main topics: the Liturgy of the Hours, silence, and community meals, all insofar as they were connected with the Holy Eucharist. Regarding the Liturgy of the Hours, each Hour is a preparation for the Eucharist or an expression of thanksgiving for the Eucharist. Brother Francisco noted that the Mass contains the four traditional elements of prayer, and so does the Liturgy of the Hours, the elements being adoration, contrition, thanksgiving, and supplication. Both the Hours and the Mass remind us that Christ is with us always; we are never alone. Brother Francisco, in treating silence and humility, noted that the Eucharistic host is apparently small and unimpressive; Christ continues to come in humility, and we need to silence ourselves to recognize Him, to adore Him, and to rely on Him. In silence we grow in gratitude for the Eucharist, which is the greatest gift that we can receive.

In silent prayer we model Christ in His prayers away from crowds. Finally, Brother Francisco noted that meals are an extension of the Eucharistic meal. Every meal should be an occasion of gratitude to God and for our brothers and sisters in Christ. During meals our thanksgiving from the Mass overflows into our experience of eating with others. Those serving and those dining are to treat everything with reverence since Christ is present. After his presentation Brother Francisco responded to a number of questions.

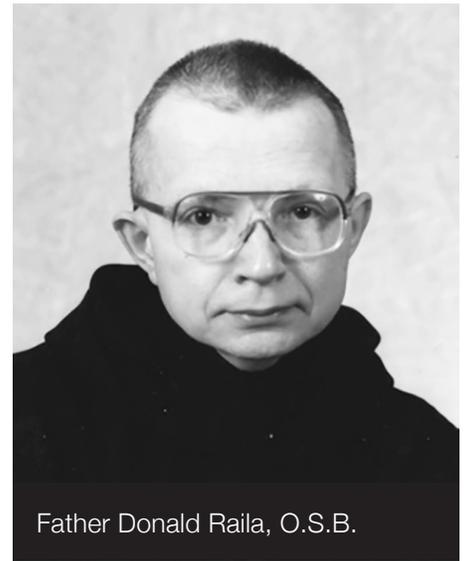
In the evening at 6:30, five Oblates remained to discuss “Silence/Taciturnity” from the book *A Study Guide for the Rule of Saint Benedict* by Abbess Emerita Maria-Thomas Beil, O.S.B., of Saint Walburga Abbey in Colorado. The themes discussed from the *Rule* included silence as a remedy to sin, the connection of silence with humility and obedience, forbidden types of speech, silence in the Bible, silence as a “fruit of the heart,” and prayer in silence. The session ended with the praying of Compline at 7:45.



Brother Francisco Whittaker, O.S.B.



Father Basil Burns, O.S.B.



Father Donald Raila, O.S.B.

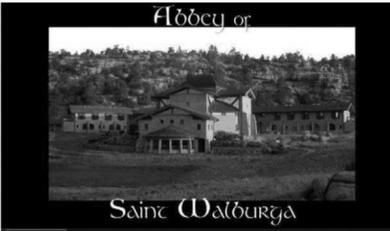
Father Basil Burns gave the presentation on December 19 to about 15 people; it was entitled "Holiness in Benedictine Spirituality." He introduced the topic of holiness by referring to holiness in the Christian tradition, by relating a personal experience of undergoing a series of conversions, by emphasizing that holiness is possible only by grace, and by remarking that we can tell when we observe holiness. Then turning to the *Holy Rule*, Father Basil mentioned that Saint Benedict often uses the word "sanctus" (holy) and challenges monks (and all of us) to become holy in all of our conduct. Blessed Columba Marmion, in his book *Christ, the Ideal of the Monk*, mentions holiness many times and writes of Christ as our divine model of holiness; our part of growing in holiness is to surrender to Christ by faith. Christ, as Saint Benedict tells us, must fill all our activity. The Sarabaites in RB 1 represent the opposite of holiness; they are "full of

themselves." To become holy often involves some loneliness in the process of being abandoned to divine providence and being possessed by the Holy Spirit. Father Basil asserted that it is crucial for the Christian to strive for holiness and that holiness is more than following rules; it is a matter of being "possessed" by Christ. However, for Benedictine monks and Oblates, the way to holiness is to follow the *Rule* in daily life, with the help of grace. The way to holiness involves life as a journey and life as a battle for Christ, our true King. Every day we are called to pray for the intentions of many people; such praying for healing and for the conversion of hardened sinners is also an important part of growth in holiness. We must accept Saint Benedict's challenge ever to "hasten" to the summit, our heavenly home. After his stirring presentation Father Basil responded to a number of questions, including one regarding the salvation of

young children.

At the meeting at 6:30, attended by five Oblates, the group completed a study of silence and began the section of the text on humility. Saint Benedict's concept of humility involves acknowledging God's greatness and our utter human weakness. Humility requires self-emptying and being filled with God; it is the foundation of our spiritual lives. The attendees then reflected on the first three steps of humility before praying Night Prayer at 7:45. We were blessed to have among us an Oblate from Iowa who, despite long affiliation with Saint Vincent, had never before been able to attend an Oblate meeting in Latrobe.

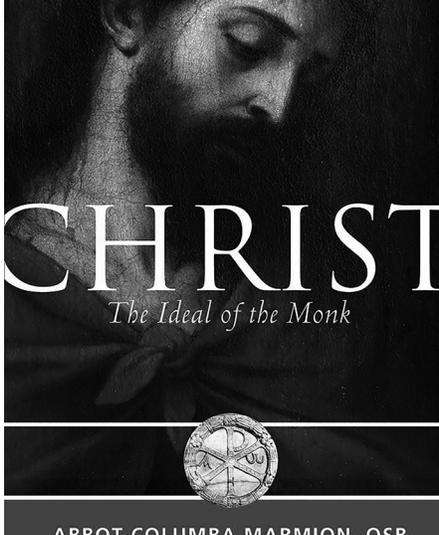
The meeting on January 16 took place amid the beginnings of a snow storm. The 3:00 session was attended by four Oblates and Kim Metzgar of Archabbey Public Relations, who recorded the presentation. Because the scheduled speaker was just



Abbeey of
Saint Walburga

STUDY GUIDE ON THE
RULE OF ST BENEDICT
FOR CHRISTIANS IN THE WORLD
by
Maria-Thomas Beil O.S.B.

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CHRIST
The Ideal of the Monk

ABBOT COLUMBA MARMION, OSB



Dorothy Day

coming out of quarantine, Father Donald gave the presentation, which was about silence in Benedictine spirituality. Father Donald offered reflections on the ninth, tenth, and eleventh steps of humility from RB 7, with references to Scripture and to the book *A Guide to Living in the Truth* by Father Michael Casey, O.C.S.O. The session ended, as usual, with a prayer for Dorothy Day's beatification. Because of the bad weather, there was no additional session that evening.

OBLATE GROUP IN CAMBRIDGE, ONTARIO, CANADA

Meetings on 1st Thurs. mornings at Saint Gregory the Great Church in Cambridge

Oblate Cathy Mayled reported by e-mail on many occasions with prayer intentions. However, because of the persistent threat of Covid, the group has not been meeting in person.

OBLATE GROUP IN TENNESSEE COLONY, TX (MICHAEL UNIT)

There was no report. Apparently, meetings are not yet being held because of the pandemic.

OBLATE GROUP IN ROSHARON, TX (TERRELL UNIT)

Oblate Gilberto reported by mail on December 1. Although Oblate meetings are not yet permitted, a group that prays the Liturgy of Hours together regularly has grown to six or eight participants. It is hoped that "prayer meetings" can be resumed soon.

OBLATE GROUP IN LIVINGSTON, TX (POLUNSKY UNIT)

Oblate Alex reported by mail on November 2, along with a statement of what Oblate commitment means, especially for those who are inquiring. He also wrote on December 24 with Christmas greetings and with an expression of hopes that the group could resume meetings soon, that it could become a deanery, and that the participants could develop a fraternal life.

ANNVILLE, PA (SAINT PLACID DEANERY)

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

Secretary/lay leader Phyllisann Godfrey reported on November 16, December 9, and January 17 & 24. Four Oblates met on November 12 and began their meeting with the "Prayer for Oblates" and a reading from the Rule. There followed a discussion about prayer in general and what forms of prayer each attendee found challenging or especially beneficial. They then moved on to a discussion about the Liturgy of the Hours, its history, and its importance in light of Jesus' command to pray unceasingly. Also considered were the many options available today, including online resources. The group planned to continue to read the book *A Layman's Guide to the Liturgy of the Hours* by Father Timothy Gallagher and to discuss the chapters of that book. The meeting ended with a sharing of light refreshments and the praying of Vespers in the church.

Health problems and family obligations prevented the Oblates from gathering in December. The meeting in January was held on the 16th after being postponed from the previous week because of hazardous weather. Thanks to the expertise of one of the Oblates, the session involved a trial meeting by Zoom, which worked out well for members who were unable to attend in person. The meeting opened with

the "Prayer for Oblates" and a reading from the *Rule*. Then the attendees entered into a discussion on Part 1 of the book mentioned above. They agreed to read Chapters 7 and 8 in Part 2 for the next meeting, scheduled for February 13. The group also discussed *lectio divina* and the value of the online app "AMEN" from the Augustine Institute in assisting with *lectio*. They also mentioned how an online app with audio could assist members in praying Vespers in community since newer members have not had much experience with the Liturgy of the Hours. The meeting adjourned early because a snow storm was beginning; so the attendees prayed Vespers individually at their homes. Zoom meetings will be used until one member recovers from surgery.

BALTIMORE, MD (SAINT WALBURGA DEANERY)

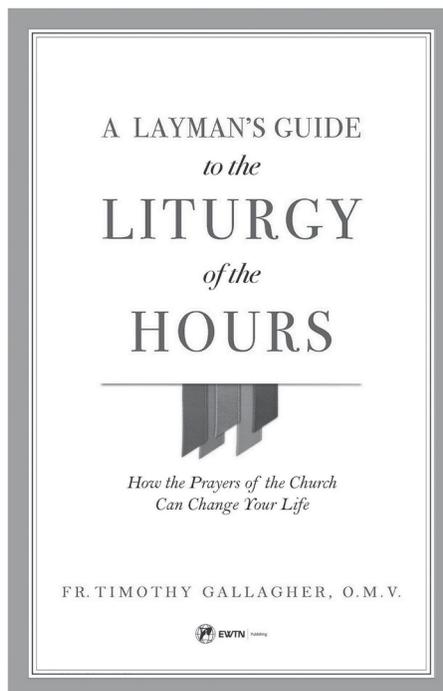
Meetings at 3:00-4:45 on 3rd Sun. of month, parish house, Saint Benedict Church

Moderator Father Paschal Morlino sent an e-mail message on January 7 reminding Oblates of the "Christmas meeting" planned for January 23 and passing on to them information from lay leader Jay Wells about the opportunities offered by the Cyber Deanery.

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

Oblate novice Jeremiah, serving as lay leader and secretary, wrote on December 7 and 27 and on January 10. The meeting on November 20, attended by 15 people, began with the praying of the Office of Readings and a reading of a passage from the *Rule*. Jeremiah reflected on the passage by commenting on the importance of silence for listening to God's voice and, especially in Saint Benedict's day when monks had no private rooms, for showing respect to others. Jeremiah also explained about internal and external distractions and mentioned ways to deal with them. He also recalled a personal experience about the value of practicing silence. He emphasized that silence was not an end in itself but is of value insofar as it leads to God and the doing of His will.

The meeting on December 4 was attended by seven or eight people and again began with the Office of Readings and



a reading of the *Rule*—from RB 53, on hospitality. Jeremiah summed up Benedictine spirituality as “silence, obedience, and service, all underscored by humility.” Benedictines, he said, are known for hospitable service to all; we are called to imitate Christ’s example in extending ourselves to others. Each person whom we encounter comes as an opportunity from God. Loving other people as Christ loved involves making time available for them and actively listening. True love is sacrificial and “takes the extra step.”)

The meeting on December 18, attended by about eleven people, began with the Office of Readings and a reading of a passage from *Rule*, namely Chapter 63 on “Community Rank.” Then Jeremiah gave a reflection on the chapter with a description of novice formation, which includes a process of looking inward, understanding oneself, and overcoming disorders in one’s life—or possibly discerning that Benedictine life is “not for me.” Is one truly called to this way of life, or is one looking only for external influence or perceived benefits? The session ended with Jeremiah’s reference to the three Benedictine vows and a rough explanation of *conversatio morum*. The consideration of the vows was to continue at the next meeting.

The meeting on January 8 was attended by one Oblate, four inquirers, and one other person. Attendance was low probably because of uncertain circumstances. The session began with a brief prayer, followed by a hymn. Then Jeremiah gave some instructions on the use of the breviary, in particular Christian Prayer. Next he offered a lesson from RB 58 (on the vows) and RB 63 (on community rank). He spoke about the required qualities of those who enter the novitiate and the importance of novitiate formation to help men to “find out who we really are.” Jeremiah then gave detailed reflections about the meaning of stability, *conversatio morum*, and obedience, with the remark that “love is what makes obedience possible.” Jeremiah also responded to a number of questions.

**BUTLER, PA
(SAINT HILDEGARD DEANERY)**

Monthly meetings at Saint Fidelis Parish Hall, 6:30 P.M., 4th Thurs. of each month

Lay leader/secretary Joyce Collins reported by e-mail on December 17. We thank

Oblate Ronald Weleski for his years of faithful service as lay leader of the deanery, especially during the difficult time of Covid (which, of course, has not yet ended), and we thank Joyce for her willingness to step into this position.

CYBER DEANERY (SAINT ISIDORE OF SEVILLE DEANERY)

[Those interested in the deanery may contact patrickckenny@att.net.]

Lay leader Patrick Kenny reported by e-mail on December 7. On December 5 the deanery conducted its “trial Zoom meeting,” and it was successful.

The next Zoom meeting occurred on January 2 at 3:00 E.D.T. Sixteen people tuned in to it. After opening prayers, at Patrick’s request Fr. Donald offered some reflections. He spoke about the Solemnity of Epiphany and references in the *Holy Rule* to the presence of God and manifestations of Christ, with the summons to obey Him and honor Him. The meeting then went on to a discussion of the book that had been chosen for group discussion.

**A STATEMENT ON THE
CYBER DEANERY OF
SAINT VINCENT ARCHABBEY**

Lay leader Patrick Kenny wrote the following for this issue of the newsletter in December, 2021.

“Living in Alabama, I am grateful that the Oblate Office of Saint Vincent Archabbey established a cyber deanery for those who are unable to belong to a physically located deanery or attend deanery meetings in person. For many who are too far from Latrobe and have no other deanery in their vicinity, it can be difficult to stay focused on their Benedictine obligations. Having the support of other Oblates can help to keep us energized.

“COVID delivered a new opportunity for the Cyber Deanery to provide support to many more Oblates. When deanery meetings were postponed for reasons of safety, the Cyber Deanery saw many Oblates affiliated with Saint Vincent Archabbey seeking support and community. Starting with just a handful of Oblates before COVID, the Cyber Deanery is now 49 strong and continues to grow.

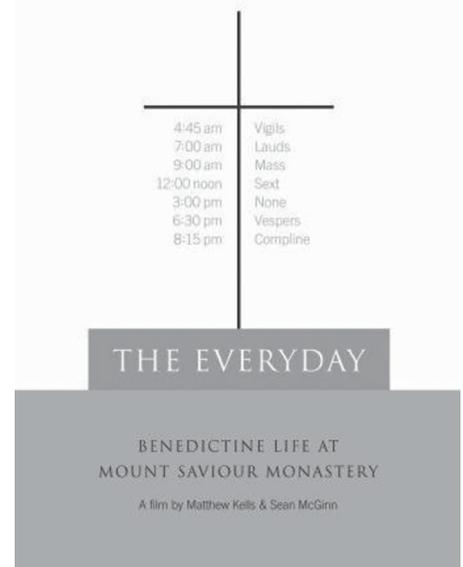
“Oblates can find daily readings of Saint Benedict’s *Holy Rule* with reflections from a Benedictine monk and one of our Oblates affiliated with Saint Vincent. Checking in daily, one can fulfill the recommendation of reading the *Rule* three times within the year. We provide suggestions and links to videos, books, and other spiritual guidance to help in the members’ conversatio. We give Oblates affiliated with Saint Vincent Archabbey a vehicle to share their experiences and reflections.

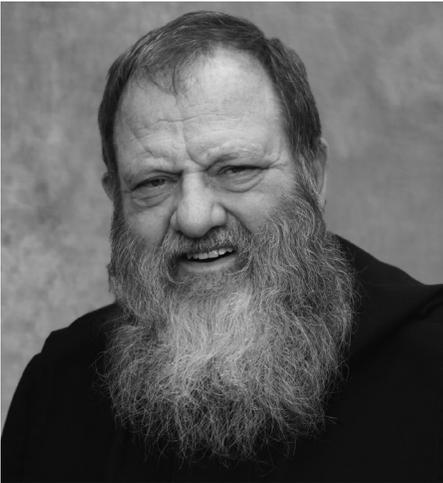
“To join the Cyber Deanery, please feel free to contact Patrick at PatrickCKenny@att.net.”

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

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

Lay leader Robert Hilton reported on November 23 and January 7. The meeting on November 16 was attended by seven people in addition to Father Vic Gournas, moderator of the deanery. After an opening prayer, the group viewed a DVD entitled “The Everyday: Benedictine Life at Mount Saviour,” produced by Mount Saviour Monastery in Pine City, NY. Since the liturgical commemoration for the day was the memorial of Saint Gertrude the Great, Robert distributed a summary of her life to the attendees. The meeting ended with Night Prayer.





Father Thomas Acklin, O.S.B.

The meeting on December 21 was attended by seven people, and it opened with the praying of Vespers. Then the group viewed a DVD presentation on "Holiness and Humility" by Father Thomas Acklin, O.S.B., at the Archabbey. Bob reported that former lay leader James Hough, although he is suffering from a terminal illness, continues to meet with an individual to give him RCIA instructions.

JOHNSTOWN, PA (SAINT JOHN GUALBERT DEANERY)

Meetings on 1st or 2nd Monday of each month, 6:30 P.M., Saint Benedict Church

Lay leader/secretary Kathy Kristofko wrote on December 15 and January 15. The meeting planned for November was canceled because of unforeseen circumstances. The meeting on December 13 began with Evening Prayer in the church. Then the group moved to the Saint John Paul II meeting room for a pre-Christmas social and a discussion of what Oblates can do to strengthen the spiritual lives of people in their own parishes.

The meeting on January 10 was held by Zoom. There was mention of the mission to be held at Saint Benedict Church on March 26-28. The group also made plans to celebrate the Feast of Saint Benedict on July 11 by having a meal together at a restaurant. Then the attendees spent some time communicating with the Oblate novice who attended and who told about the books that she was reading on the *Rule* and Benedictine spirituality. The

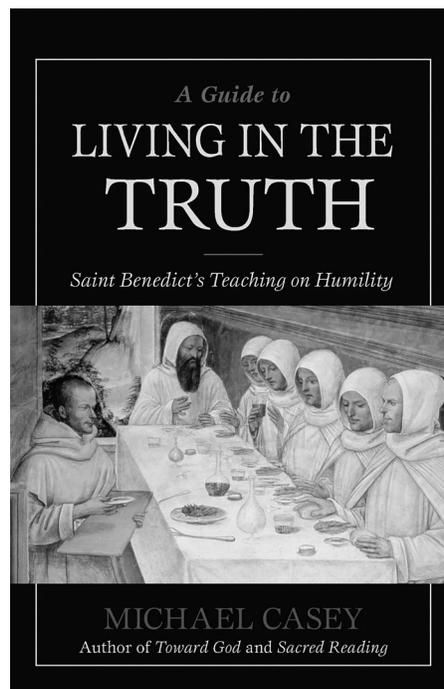
other attendees then offered suggestions about other books, prayers and devotions that might be helpful. They also spoke about the humanness of saints in their struggles with life's stresses so that there is hope for all of us to become saints. Suggestions were also made about journaling and apps that are available for praying the Liturgy of the Hours.

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 December 9 and January 17. The meeting on December 8 was attended by three Oblates while two long-distance Oblates were kept apprised. After an opening prayer, the group continued to discuss the book *A Guide to Living in the Truth* by Father Michael Casey, O.S.C.O. In their consideration of Chapter 9, "Yielding to Others," the attendees mentioned the virtues of respecting one another, of not seeking to be esteemed, and of valuing the wisdom of the young as well as of the elderly. These virtues apply to Oblates in family and community as well as to monks, and we must work on them.

There was no meeting in January, particularly because of one member's illness.



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 reported by phone on December 30. At the meeting on November 25, Father Benjamin Weber, moderator, gave an excellent presentation on scandal.

Father Ben could not be present at the meeting in December. Because of Father Ben's extremely full schedule, there was talk about finding another deanery moderator, perhaps a retired priest.

PENDLETON, IN (SAINT CELESTINE DEANERY)

Monthly meetings in the chapel in Pendleton

Secretary Oblate Frederick reported by mail on November 28 and December 12. The meeting on November 21 occurred after a Liturgy of the Word service and was attended by three Oblates and one inquirer. Oblate Cory gave a presentation on RB 40, entitled "The Proper Amount of Drink.," and his presentation was entitled "Individuality and Personal Goals." He spoke about everything good as a gift from God and the things we can do to respond to that gift. Cory mentioned that abstaining from drink is one way to "earn our reward" in response to God's gift. He also reflected on the term "local conditions," especially situations of deprivation, which can help us to strive for holiness if we embrace them and offer them up out of love for Christ. Cory also referred to the readings for the Office of Readings for the day and to St. Benedict's allowances for monks of his day, which show his compassion for human weakness.

About the same time Oblate Argumedo, in another unit, gave a presentation on obedience based on RB 5: 1-19. He spoke about the need to remember original sin and its consequences as opposed to the prompt obedience called for by St. Benedict as "the first step of humility." Argumedo also referred to Mk 10: 28-30.

On December 9 the group was able to have a Liturgy of the Word service in a chapel for

the second week in a row. On that date, after the liturgy, Fred gave a presentation on RB 56, entitled “The Abbot’s Table.” Five people were in attendance, including three Oblates. Fred focused on the phrase “for the sake of discipline” and, quoting from Heb 12:11, mentioned that the fruit of healthy discipline is growth in righteousness. He also referred to Saint John the Baptist’s response to people’s questions “What should we do?” when they came to him for baptism. The meeting ended with the praying of the “Oblate prayer.”

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

*Memorial Chapel of the Good Shepherd,
10:00 A.M. on Saturdays*

Moderator Father Vincent de Paul Crosby, O.S.B., reported in person on January 17. There had been hope for a meeting in January, but the rise of the Covid pandemic led the deanery to wait until March (conditions permitting) to resume meetings.

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

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

Oblate James Perini, acting lay leader, reported by e-mail on November 9 and January 16. On October 25 five Oblates met with Fr. James Orr, moderator, to discuss the remainder of Chapter 6 of their book for discussion, namely *The Story of a Soul* by Saint Thérèse of Lisieux. Prayers were

requested for those who had lost loved ones recently or who had family members who were very ill.

Lay leader George Ponticello, whose mother, Rita, died on November 14, thanked all the deanery members for their many prayers, words of support, and a beautiful “Serenity Prayer” blanket, which the deanery members gave to George in memory of his mother.

The deanery held its annual Christmas party on December 27, with Father Jim Orr hosting the event at his beautifully decorated rectory. Four Oblates attended, and Father Jim was especially gracious in preparing food that was compatible with the attendees’ dietary needs. The next meeting was planned for January 24, with the intention of discussing Chapters 8 and 9 of *The Story of a Soul*. The goal was to complete the book in February and then move on to another book.

**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, 1:30 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.*

Lay leader Mary Ann Kaufman reported by phone on January 9 and by e-mail on January 21. The meetings on November 7 and December 5 began with Daytime Prayer, “A Prayer for Oblates,” and “Consecration to the Blessed Trinity” by Blessed Columba Marmion. The discussions on the *Rule* were based on the book *The Rule in Bits and Pieces*. The meetings closed

with personal intentions and the “St. Benedict Prayer.” Because of the drastic rise of Covid in the area, no meetings were planned for January or February. The next meeting is planned for March 6.

The meeting on November 7 was led by Oblate novice Christine Raizin and attended by only one other person, an Oblate. The two of them reflected on RB Prol: 9-10, 14-15. 22. The discussion highlighted the importance of being continually open and available to Christ in the present moment, with the use of eyes and ears to discern God’s call and to seek Him at all times. We are to nurture a continual yearning for God, to learn God’s will, and to surrender our hearts to His will with confidence that He will provide.

The meeting on December 5 was led by Mary Ann Kaufman and attended by four others. The group reflected on RB Prol: 21-32 & 33-38, with focus on 25-28, 32, and 35. The discussion highlighted the challenge of RB 25 and “walking without blemish.” We need to realize that we are not yet sinless but that the Lord leads us away from sin and to a knowledge of His forgiveness. Temptations should be quickly “dashed against Christ,” who wins the victory over sin for us. Emphasis was placed on God’s daily patience and our need to “translate” His holy teachings into action.

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

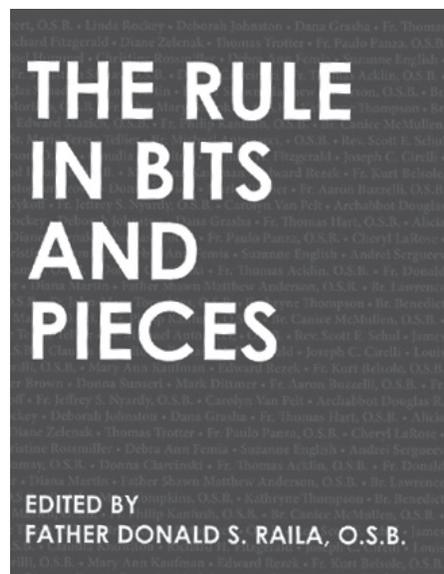
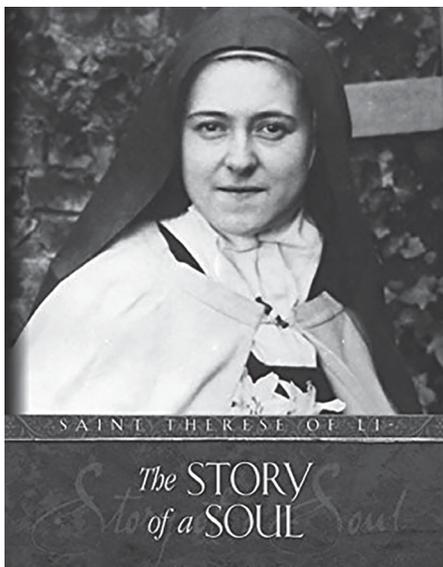
Monthly meetings

There was no report. Apparently, the deanery has not had meetings because of the pandemic.

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

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

Moderator Father Ronald Gatman, O.S.B., reported by e-mail on November 22, with the addition of a reflection by lay leader Michael Williams entitled “Keeping the Balance,” which refers to the crisis associated with the pandemic and related issues and the value of the *Holy Rule* and our prayer lives to help us to maintain balance amid turmoil. Copies of this reflection are available from the Oblate Office.



In September the deanery met on a Sunday to discuss a portion of the Rule and to attend a Mass celebrated by Father Ron. In October the group met for some group *lectio divina* and then came together for a Mass, during which Deacon Doug Delzieth gave a presentation with the assistance of his wife, Renee. On November 21, the Solemnity of Christ the King, the group participated in a discussion of part of the Prologue of the *Rule* led by lay leader Mike Williams, who also offered the reflection mentioned above. The meeting was followed by a Mass.

The first meeting for the new year was planned for January 16, with a full gathering of Oblates for a session of group *lectio divina* and a celebration of Mass followed by supper. Oblates were also to be invited to join in the monastic Vespers.

Plans for the next few months include a discussion of the *Rule* led by Deacon Kevin Knight (a teacher at Benedictine Military School) and Oblate Jackie Kim in February. The session is to be followed by Vespers. In March Father John Paul Heiser, O.S.B., member of the community in Savannah, is to lead the attendees in a session of group *lectio divina*, which will be followed by Mass. In April there is to be a day of recollection, including a presentation by Sister Christine.

SELINGSGROVE, PA (SAINT ANSELM DEANERY)

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

Lay leader/secretary Teresa Warlow reported by e-mail on November 15, December 18, and January 23. The meeting on November 14 began with the “Prayer for Oblates” and continued with an audio presentation of Bishop Robert Barron’s talk on the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, followed by a discussion. The attendees were grateful for Bishop Barron’s Scripture-based points, which can be used in evangelization. The meeting ended with the recitation of Mid-afternoon Prayer.

The meeting planned for December 19 was canceled, probably because of Covid and pre-Christmas activities.

SOMERSET, PA (SAINT JOHN PAUL II DEANERY)

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

Because of the pandemic, meetings are apparently not yet being allowed.

STATE COLLEGE, PA (SAINT JOSEPH DEANERY)

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

Secretary Phyllis Austin reported by e-mail on November 10 and December 20. The meeting on November 8 was attended by moderator Father David Griffin, O.S.B., and seven others. The meeting began with “Oblate prayers” and Vespers. Then lay leader David Nice led a discussion of Chapter 4 of the book that the deanery has been reading and discussing, namely *To Light a Fire on Earth*. The chapter focuses on “truth” and gave the group much material to ponder regarding how we are to seek truth, value truth, and live the truth of our faith. Bishop Barron in his talk criticized “beige Catholicism,” which denotes a watered-down version of the faith and the current state of our secularized culture, which longs for answers which can be found only in Christ. In our efforts to evangelize, we cannot

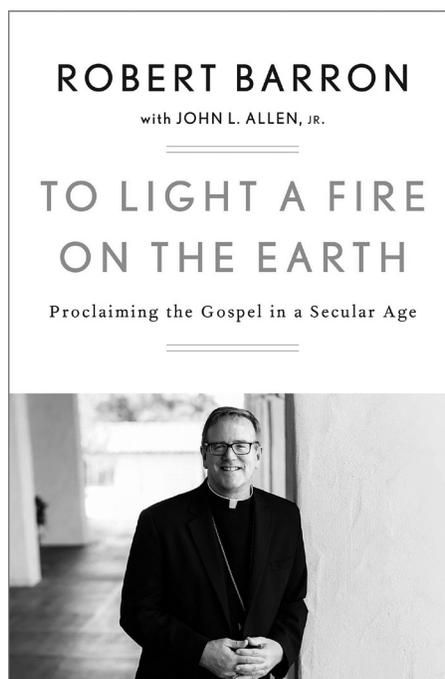
be effective without first understanding the doctrinal content of Catholicism. The meeting ended with a closing prayer, intercessions, and the singing of the Benedictine “Ultima.”

The meeting on December 13, attended by seven people, was led by lay leader David Nice in the absence of Father David, who was hearing confessions at an Advent penance service. After the praying of “Oblate prayers” and Vespers, the group discussed Chapter 5 of the given text, which addresses evangelization. The main point of the chapter is that “evangelization isn’t about a concept or an idea, but about a friendship with Christ that you have, and that you want someone else to have, too.” In the chapter Bishop Barron describes ways in which such a relationship can be shared without watering down doctrine or jettisoning tradition. The idea that all of us are to be evangelists was emphasized. As usual, the meeting ended with a closing prayer, intercessions, and the “Ultima.”

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

Oblate Kenneth wrote on November 17, December 6, and December 20. Meetings are still not allowed, but Kenneth and three others pray Morning Prayer together. Other Oblates in the deanery are reported to be reciting the Divine Office individually or in small groups. A deacon has been holding weekly communion services, and an R.C.I.A. program is available. It might be noted that Kenneth composes a monthly spiritual reflection, with citations from Scripture and often with themes from Benedictine spirituality. These, in edited form, are available from the Oblate Office.

Oblate Anthony wrote on January 14. He expressed the hope that Oblate meetings might resume soon after February 1. Individual Oblates were focusing on the Oblate Formation Booklet, daily readings from the *Rule*, and the Bible. One member of the deanery seemed to be ready for final Oblation, and several inquirers seemed to be ready to be invested as Oblate novices.





Father Dominic Leo, O.S.B.

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 by e-mail on December 2 and January 10 and 13. The meeting on November 10 was attended by nine Oblates and Father Dominic Leo, O.S.B., moderator. After an opening prayer and announcements, the attendees entered into a short discussion about Pope Leo XIII, who composed the prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel. Deacon Kevin Gorman then spoke about the call to be thankful for all that God has given us in preparation for spending eternity with Him. We need to pray to Him to help us to discover our individual purposes in life. The discussion also turned to the presence of Satan, who always tempts us and tries to keep us from praying, often through discouragement. If we turn to God, He will help us to handle the challenges in prayer. The meeting ended with Vespers and a blessing from Father Dominic.

The meeting on December 15 was attended by seven Oblates and Father Mark Wenzinger, O.S.B., newly appointed as a parochial vicar at Saint Gregory Parish. Deacon Kevin Gorman spoke about being prepared for the coming of Christ and not putting off the pursuit of our spiritual journeys. The importance of frequent confession was discussed, and Father Mark noted that it is an act of worship to go to confession. Receiving the Sacrament of Penance is coupled with faith in God's mercy. The meeting

ended with the praying of Vespers and a blessing from Father Mark.

The meeting on January 12 was attended by eleven Oblates and Father Dominic, who opened the meeting with prayer and a reading of the daily passage from the *Rule*. A discussion about the passage followed. There was also some discussion about the first reading from the day's Mass, which involved the call of the prophet Samuel as he learned to listen for God's will and respond, "Here am I, O Lord." Father Dominic mentioned that the joy that we experience during the Christmas Season should move us to work all the harder to fulfill God's will in our lives and, with God's help, to become more detached from the attractions of the world. God never tires of our asking, and He is with us in every challenge at work, in relationships, and in all circumstances. The meeting concluded with the praying of Vespers; it so happened that the psalms prayed addressed the very topics that had been discussed.

WAYNESBURG, PA (SAINT DISMAS DEANERY)

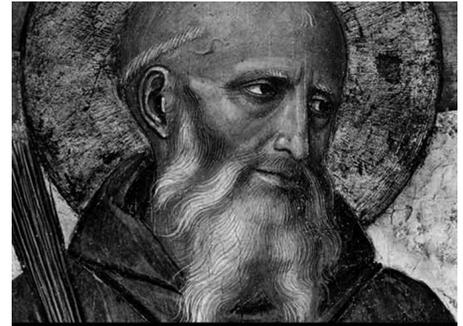
Meetings on 1st Wed. of each month

Apparently there have been no meetings because of the continuing danger from the pandemic.

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

Meetings on 2nd Sundays, 12 P.M., between March & November, former convent at Saint Anne Catholic Church

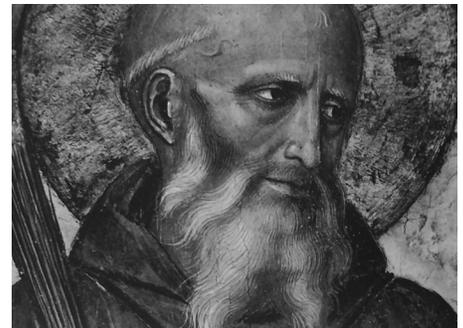
New lay leader Helen Prien reported by phone on January 15. Although only two people, Helen and Larry Hamm, attended the meeting on November 7, they proceeded with the agenda set several months earlier. They prayed Midday Prayer and then discussed Chapter 31 of the *Rule* with reference to Canon G. A. Simon's commentary. They also read from Chapter 8 of *Lessons from Saint Benedict* and reflected on the discussion questions given in the associated *Study Guide*. There has been some effort to publicize the Oblate Program in local parishes. The next meeting was scheduled for March.



DONALD S. RAILA

LESSONS FROM SAINT BENEDICT

FINDING JOY IN DAILY LIFE



DONALD S. RAILA

THE STUDY GUIDE TO LESSONS FROM SAINT BENEDICT

FINDING JOY IN DAILY LIFE

VARIOUS LOCATIONS

On October 31, in the chapel at Waynesburg, PA, Father Malcolm McDonald invested as an Oblate novice. **Shane Sargent** of Waynesburg, PA.

On November 25, **Joanne (Hildegard of Bingen) Hansinger** of Suffolk, VA, officially transferred her Oblation from St. Benedict Monastery in Bristow, VA, to Saint Vincent Archabbey. She had been attending meetings of the Saint Scholastica Deanery in Virginia Beach.

On November 28, at the Chapel of Our Lady of the Rosary in San Quentin, CA, **Geoffrey L. (Jeshurun) Jones** of San Quentin, CA, made his final Oblation in the presence of Father George Williams, S.J.

RESERVATION FORM FOR CELEBRATION OF SAINT BENEDICT DAY ON MARCH 21

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

I plan to attend the dinner for Oblates at Saint Vincent on Monday, March 21, 2022

Number of additional guests: _____

I would like the main menu or vegetarian dish.

(Donations will be accepted at the time of the dinner; checks may be made out to Saint Vincent Archabbey.)

I plan to be invested as an Oblate, Oblate novice on March 21.

On becoming a full Oblate, I plan to take the Oblate name:

(application form required)

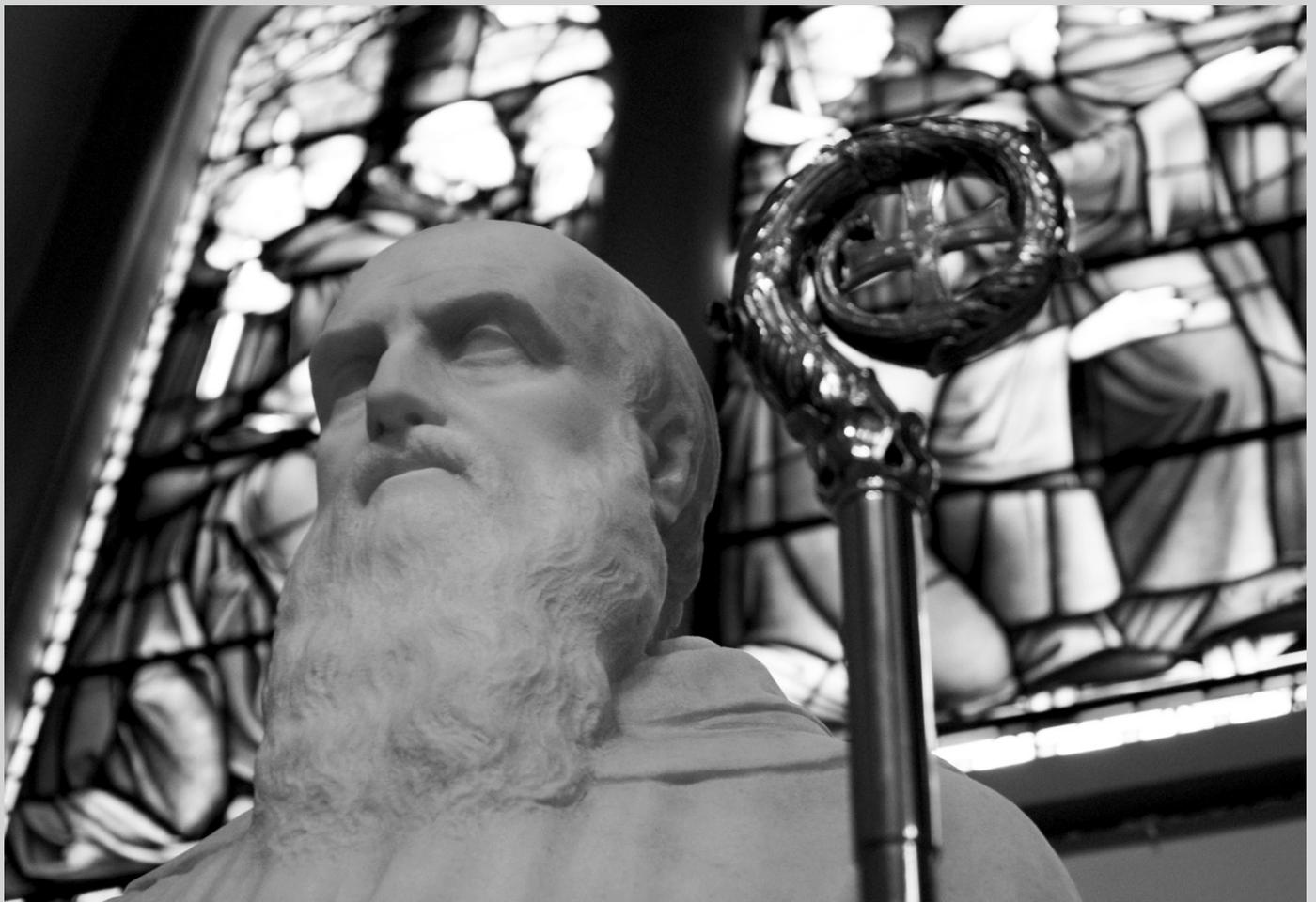
SCHEDULE FOR SOLEMNITY OF SAINT BENEDICT, MONDAY, MARCH 21

4:00 P.M. - Concelebrated Mass in Archabbey Basilica

5:15 P.M. - dinner in the Placid B (1st floor of Placid Hall)

6:15 P.M. - Oblation ceremonies, Archabbey Basilica

7:00 P.M. - Vespers in the nave of the Archabbey Basilica
(with the monastic community)



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

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

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

(September 20, 2020):

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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):

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

(January 17, 2021):

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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):

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Br. Placid Sellers' talk on the vows and vocation

(July 10, 2021):

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

(July 18, 2021):

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Fr. Wulfstan Clough's talk on "the Liturgy of the Hours"

(August 15, 2021):

CD DVD _____ (number)

Fr. Brian Boesel's talk on "Loving One Another in Benedictine Culture"

(September 19, 2021):

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Fr. Philip Kanfush's talk on "Humility & Poverty in Benedictine Spirituality"

(October 17, 2021):

CD DVD _____ (number)

Fr. Boniface Hicks' three conferences on Saint Joseph

(October 30, 2021):

CD (all on one CD) set of 3 DVDs _____ (number)

Br. Francisco Whittaker's talk on the Eucharist in Benedictine spirituality

(November 21, 2021):

CD DVD _____ (number)

Fr. Basil Burns's talk on "Holiness in Benedictine Spirituality"

(December 19, 2021):

CD DVD _____ (number)

Fr. Donald Raila's talk on silence in Benedictine spirituality

(January 16, 2022):

CD DVD _____ (number)

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(Saint Vincent Book Center, 300 Fraser Purchase Rd., Latrobe, PA 15650-2690); or come in person to the Book Center. Please make out checks to SAINT VINCENT ARCHABBEY. N.B.: Those who attend monthly meetings in Latrobe will still be able to order copies of CDs and DVDs at a discounted price.



SAINT VINCENT ARCHABBEY OBLATES
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RENEWAL OF OBLATION

Peace! In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

I, (name), renew my Oblation and offer myself to Almighty God, through the Blessed Virgin Mary and our holy Father Benedict, as an Oblate of Saint Vincent Archabbey, and I promise again, before God and all the saints, to dedicate my life to the service of God and neighbor according to the *Rule* of Saint Benedict, insofar as my state in life permits.

“Sustain me, O Lord, as You have promised, that I may live, and disappoint me not in my hope” (Ps 119:116 & RB 58:21).

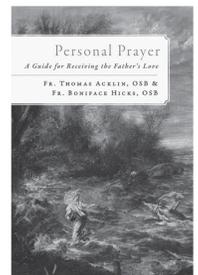
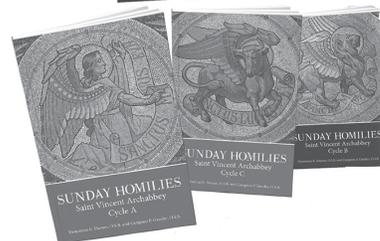
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