

# Oblate Benedictine



Saint Meinrad



*Oblates listen to a conference being given by Fr. Adrian Burke, OSB, during the June 2016 Oblate Study Days.*

## ‘You are salt! You are light! Live it!’

*(This is the final report on the biennial conference of the North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors at Subiaco Abbey in Arkansas.)*



*Jennie Latta*

The final speaker for the 2015 conference of NAABOD was Sr. Karen Joseph, OSB, of the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, IN. She has held a number of leadership positions at the community, regional, national and international levels. “You are salt! You are light! Live it!” was her theme.

In this generation (and in every generation), Sr. Karen said, we are consumed with worry. Each generation has its own demands, but it is possible to live with hope and joy. This is what being a follower of Christ is all about. We are to be followers of Christ *living* as followers of Christ! Living in families; living in communities; living simply and with joy!

We get from theory to practice by living the life that our Lord taught us to live through his life and his teachings, especially the Sermon on the Mount. What the world needs now are solid Christian witnesses. The Lord has given us his example. We are to live the life He showed us as a gift to the world today. Benedictine spirituality is countercultural. Stability, service, worship – all are blessings to be had and shared.

To be a witness, of course, is to be a martyr. The cost of the Christian life is everything. We must be ready to give all. Just as the Lord taught us, we are to be salt; we are to be light. We must be about building the Kingdom of God on earth. Salt, Sr. Karen said, is nothing if it is not used. Inside the salt shaker, it does nothing. But when taken up and used, it is a powerful preservative that can delay even death and a seasoning that gives flavor to our food.

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# A POINT TO PONDER FROM *The Rule*

“However, the abbot should be concerned about the measurements of these garments that they not be too short but fitted to the wearers.”

*Rule of St. Benedict Chapter 55:8*

Just as the abbot’s concern is that the monks’ garments are “fitted to the wearers,” so must he be sensitive to the way his treatment of the brothers fits their individual personalities.

Are we aware that our words and actions weave a kind of “garment” for the individuals with whom we interact in our families, our workplaces, our parishes? The *Rule* challenges us to become more sensitive to the way our words and actions can be properly fitted to those around us as they strive to realize the moral and spiritual potential that is God’s gift to them.

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We must ask ourselves how we are carrying out our mission to be salt for the world. Do we bring life to our communities and families, or doom and gloom? Salt, if not protected, can lose its effectiveness and flavor. Are we taking time to keep our salt fresh?

Sr. Karen reminded the participants that they are also called to be light. We must keep our light burning bright. A candle consumes itself in giving light to the house. Life, too, consists of dying. We are to give our lives for the light of the world. At its worst, community deprives

its members of their needed light. We need to be careful to preserve the light of those in our communities, just as hands are cupped around a candle flame to protect it.

The Gospel, she said, must be our passion. Moderation is not mediocrity. The *Rule of St. Benedict* calls us to make the Gospel our guide and thus the source of our good zeal. We bring about the Kingdom as we reveal who God is – a God of compassion, mercy and love.

Jennie Latta, oblate  
Memphis, TN

## Applying Benedictine spirituality in the secular world



Thomas J. Rillo

Most Benedictine oblates spend a major portion of their conscious hours in the secular world. Whether it is in the home with accompanying responsibilities or in the workplace, the challenges are basically the same.

Daily decisions have to be made and applying the basic tenets of the *Rule of St. Benedict* to these decisions is of paramount importance. For example, the instruction to treat everyone you meet as if he or she was Jesus Christ is not always easy. But to live by the *Rule* is what oblates are expected to do by the ritual of oblation.

Spirituality in the secular world, and particularly in the workplace, is a growing area of interest and many people are experiencing a new spirituality. For example, a group of men who made a Cursillo retreat have been meeting in a small prayer group for over 30 years. They are employees of Eli Lilly

in Indianapolis, IN. Their meeting room has a large glass partition and employees see them at prayer and lunch every week.

Another Cursillo group meets weekly at the Crane Naval Depot west of Bloomington, IN. Benedictine Oblate Chapter meetings are another example of how oblates can come together for spiritual growth after leaving their workplace. Whether in the workplace or beyond it, opportunities for evangelization prevail. All of this goes on despite the fact that humanity still embodies the concepts of fighting for survival, greed, and accumulating wealth and prosperity for self rather than for the common good.

The *Rule of St. Benedict* has an inherent thread that contradicts this materialism. This inherent thread is that we must decrease in order to increase. We see this clearly when we read about obedience, silence and humility. Benedict devotes the largest chapter in the *Rule* to humility.

Humility is seen by many to be a sign of weakness, especially in the workplace. Benedictine oblates must practice spirituality by bringing an awareness of

God to every action and at every moment to everyone they meet. This awareness of God must be present in all aspects of the secular vocation.

Benedictine spirituality can bring healing to the workplace, the home, the community and the world. It is applied through an oblate's adherence to the challenge of growing closer to God by living a life that shares the love of neighbor preceded by a love of God and His Son Jesus. Oblates live by a basic spiritual axiom: To prefer nothing to Christ. All else is secondary.

The quest for materialistic gain is considered a hallmark of success. Our social and economic structures reflect this. Incorporating spirituality into a workplace or a home can be like trying to fit a shoe on a foot that is several sizes larger than the shoe. Our action is to share our love with others and to energize them to love God by example. We pour out our love by exhibiting a positive energy rather than a negative energy.

As oblates, we can offer a prayer of thanksgiving in a restaurant reverently and without shame. As Catholics, we can make the sign of the cross before and after the blessing. The ritual of making the sign of the cross when passing a church is an overt demonstration of spiritual love. This ritual is seldom observed in modern times. Excusing oneself from a social event or meeting to attend church is another example of spiritual priority.

Praying in the home as a family unit is another example of setting a spiritual priority. Praying the rosary is a prayer ritual that can solidify a family and should be introduced when children are young.

There may come a time when the priority of spirituality exceeds that of tenure in the workplace. This takes courage and fortitude and the faith that God will provide. Benedictine oblation provides the spiritual ammunition to

make changes when changes can be beneficial to the individual and to friends, family members and associates.

Social and economic structures are in a stage of transformation. We see this every day on our computers and television sets. When changes are dramatic, our spirituality can smooth out the transition. During this transition, many challenges will arise and confront us. If our faith is strong and our journey to God is secure, then we can use our gifts to meet the challenges.

One of the challenges is to maintain peace and love in a world that is increasingly unpredictable and threatens our day-by-day survival. The faith that is generated by Benedictine spirituality and by living the *Rule of St. Benedict* can steer us through the rapids of an ever-changing, turbulent world. To paraphrase St. Francis, we can become instruments of God's love and be instruments of change in the secular world.

*Thomas J. Rillo, oblate  
Bloomington, IN*



*Oblate Frank Paul Gregory Palmer, left, made his oblation before Rev. Thomas P. Thorne at the Church of the Assumption in Westport, CT, on June 25, 2016.*

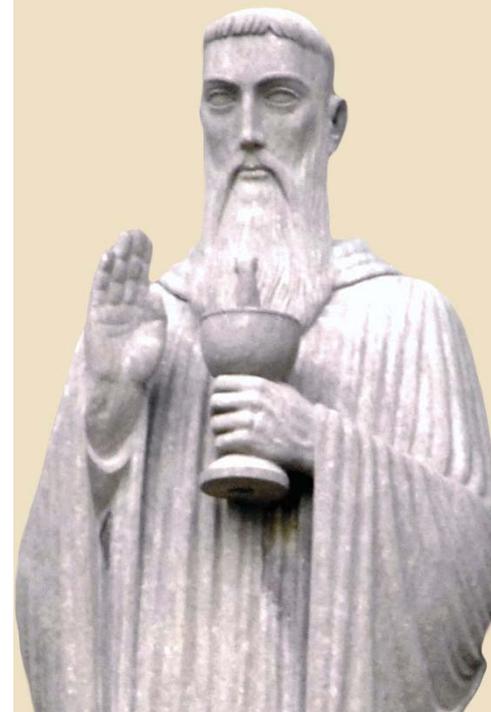
# OBLATES

*In their own words*



*Oblate Walter Linz  
Temple, TX*

“Being an oblate fits into my everyday life by providing me balance, providing me tools to use, to work with others, to bring monastic values, not just for me, but into my community, to strengthen bonds, both at work and at home, and within my parish.”



# Reflection on a cold winter's night



Thomas Patrick Nolan

For some reason, known and yet unknown, I struggle through the winter months. I love the holy season that arrives each year with the first Sunday of

Advent and continues through Christmas, Epiphany and the Baptism of our Lord.

Students of worship and liturgy call this time the Cycle of Light. It is a season of watching and waiting, a season of longing for the one true Light who shines in our darkness. It is a season of hope, a season of deeply moving worship – the kind of worship that connects our innermost longings with God's own.

And yet, this time can also be a time of shadows – of haunting memories and hidden hurts. The long nights, the bitter cold, the burden of perfection so deeply desired but so far beyond our reach, seem only to make the darkness deeper.

For some of us, the “dawn from on high,” announced at the birth of John the Baptist, seems far away. A distant dream. Yes, there is joy in this season. There is much joy. But for some of us, it is painted on a background of sorrowful hues that bleed through the brighter feelings.

At this time of the year, I am drawn to solitude, a brief time of holy respite. The *place* to which I am drawn is the monastery of my oblation, Saint Meinrad Archabbey in southern Indiana. I try to make a brief retreat there three or four times each year. Over these past 14 years, Saint Meinrad has become my “spiritual home.”

This holy house is filled with Benedictine warmth and hospitality. It is a place where peace is almost palpable – where love is deep. Long-suffering is a word we once used to describe it. It is steadfast and stable, and yet so highly valued. And this is so because people are prized by the monks and oblates of this place. As St. Benedict says, “All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, for he himself will say: I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (RB 53.1). Perhaps that is why prayer comes so naturally, so readily when “on the hill.”

But it is not always easy. There are times when prayer is more like a struggle, as it surely was for Jacob at the Jabbok. Prayer can be like a wrestling match. At least, it is for me at times, especially during this time of year. And often when this happens, the peace, the discernment, the healing or the clarity I am so determined to find does not come. Until I surrender, until I stop trying so hard to make it come.

More than a year ago, I was back at Saint Meinrad in the thick of Advent. It was dark, so terribly dark. The shadows were long. The hurts and scars were bleeding through. I felt, in fact, I was nearly convinced that I was utterly incompetent. Unfit for ministry. “There must be something wrong with me. I am not whole. I am a nobody, a failure, worthless.” These were the voices speaking so convincingly to me.

It was late. Very late. Everyone in the guest house was asleep. But I could not sleep. All of these thoughts and feelings were too loud, too near the surface. So I went to the chapel to pray and plead with God to help – to change me, recreate me somehow. People have makeovers. People

“reinvent themselves,” or think they do. So I went to the chapel to plead with God in the middle of the night to make me over. To fix me. To heal me. To make me more like Jesus.

At night, the chapel is lit by a single candle, the sanctuary lamp that is a symbol, a sign, of God's presence. It was quiet. There was no sound.

There is a crucifix on the wall near the altar. A beautiful thing it is. A simple thing. A cross of beautiful wood. And on the cross hangs the corpus, the body of Jesus. The body looks like antique bronze, all of one color. And Jesus' head is laid to one side. The arms are straight and his fingers are together and pointing down, toward you, as if He is giving you a blessing from the cross.

In the middle of the night, I sat there in the candlelight with my eyes focused on the corpus, on Jesus. And I had a dream. It was quiet and late. I must have nodded off. But...

Oh, do you know? Twenty-five hundred years ago, it was common for people who worshiped pagan gods to carve the name of their god into the palms of their hands. The throbbing pain reminded them of their devotion to their god. They hoped that somehow it would earn their god's attention – that their pagan god would see just how far they were willing to go for him or her, and then reward them.

But, as I was saying, I was there in the chapel. Crying. And the only thing I could hear were my thoughts – my voice – saying over and over to the Christ on the crucifix, “I did this to you. I hurt *you* every time I hurt someone else. *I* did this to you. *I* drove the nails in your hands and feet. *I* put you on the cross. *I* did this to you. *I* did this to *you*.”

By that time, my eyes were so full of tears that I couldn't even see the crucifix anymore. All I could see was the candlelight through my tears. And through the prism of my tears, it looked something like a golden haze.

"I did this to you. I did this to you!"

And then He came down from the cross. He walked to where I was sitting, held out his hands, his wounded, throbbing, bleeding hands. "No," he said. "I did this... for you."

It was a dream. I think it was a dream. But there was something in his hand.

It looked like a name. It looked – dare I say it? – it looked like my name.

"I did this for you."

Oh, I saw another name there. There was another name in his hands. Do you know the name? It was you. Your name is there.

*"In the tender compassion of our God, the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet in the way of peace."*

*Thomas Patrick Nolan, oblate  
Huntington, WV*

## A look back: 55 years ago

In the fall of 1961, Fr. Gerard Ellspermann, OSB, was named director of oblates. Here is a portion of his first letter:

The Oblate family of St. Meinrad Archabbey is a very large one. Over 1500 Oblates, scattered over many of the fifty states, are joined to the monks in a close bond of mutual prayer and sacrifice.

In late August you received a special letter from Father Paschal, O.S.B., who has been given an important post as Novice master and Instructor of the Brothers. The pleasant duty of Director of Oblates was given to me. Father Aurelius, O.S.B. will continue to give his assistance in this important work. Together we hope to be able to continue the good work done by Fathers Stephen, Bernardine, Raban, Cyril, and especially Father Walter.

Father Walter was much interested in the paradoxes of life. He read Chesterton and enjoyed him. May I begin then this new series of letters with a quote from Chesterton?

"The world will never starve for a want of wonders, but only for want of wonder." Chesterton mused that "none of us think enough of those things on which the eye rests." How few of us think of and thank God for all the truths of Faith that the ear hears and the mind receives.

*(Fr. Gerard served as director from October 1961-1969 and from October 1980 to November 1992. He was an associate from January 1951-1958 and from November 1992 to May 1995 – a total of about 30 years.) ♦*



*Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, prays over the three new oblates. From left are Victoria Teresa Catt, Elizabeth Faustina Ueding and Lawrence Jude McCrobie, who made their oblation on July 11 during the Day of Recollection at Saint Meinrad.*



*Oblates pray noonday prayer during the Day of Recollection at Saint Meinrad on July 11.*



*Photos, beginning at top left: Oblate Steven Borchert from Portage, MI, takes notes during Fr. Adrian Burke's, OSB, conference during the June Study Days.*

*Fr. Adrian Burke, OSB, gives one of his conferences during the Oblate Study Days in June.*

*Dr. Barbara Hildegard Kammerlohr receives the sign of peace from Sharon Gorup after Barbara's oblation during the Oblate Study Days.*

*At the closing Mass of the 76th New York Oblate Retreat on September 4, three oblate novices made their oblation and seven were invested as oblate novices.*

*Six permanent deacons from the Diocese of Lexington, KY, made their oblations after completing the novitiate year. The wife of one of the deacons also made her oblation.*

# Voices from the Past

*Editor's note: The following is from an article that appeared in the Christmas 1951 issue of the oblate newsletter, as written by Fr. Walter Sullivan, OSB. Oblate Michael Edwards of Evanston, IN, condensed the original article.*

Amidst the frills and sweet sentiment that have been associated with the Babe of Bethlehem, we may forget the prophecy of Simeon to Our Lady: "Behold this Child is destined for the fall and rise of many."

This child whose birthday we celebrate on Christmas is not the Prince of Sweetness, but the Prince of Peace, whose coming is a call to arms, and a challenge to the stoutest heart. But, mysterious as it may seem, this Little One who looks so helpless in his crib, is the true and only source of strength in the warfare that is Christian life.

The struggle between what is weak in us and what is strong in us is a necessary element of Christian life on earth. If there were no weakness, there could be no spiritual maturity in people. Our Lord says plainly to St.

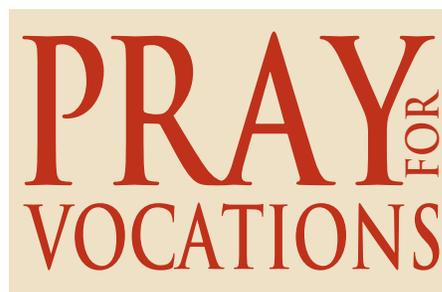
Paul (2 Cor. 12), "Strength is made perfect in weakness." The apostle, recognizing the reserve power of grace in his soul, says a startling thing to us, "I will glory in my weakness that the strength of Christ may dwell in me."

St. Benedict speaks forcibly of this life-long conflict between self-indulgence and the life of Christ in us when he says in the last part of the Prologue to the holy *Rule*, "We must prepare our hearts and bodies to do battle under holy obedience to God's command. Let us ask God to give us Grace (strength) for anything which our nature finds almost impossible. A person, counting merely on his strength without seeking sincerely and perseveringly help from God, will remain miserably disillusioned."

Once we realize the wisdom of St. Benedict's words, we hold the key to

immediate victory over every grave temptation. There is no greater cause of optimism than the tremendous truth revealed to us in the mystery of Christmas, this Child who is born for us in Bethlehem is the Wisdom from on high.

Best news of all, He has come to save us from our despair and from ever losing hope. His grace is ours for the asking in every crisis of our life if, trampling pride and selfishness underfoot, we ask him for help. ♦



*Oblate Novice Mary Shanley receives the Rule of St. Benedict from Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, during the investiture ceremony at the New York Oblate Retreat.*



*Oblate Novice Thomas Morone and his wife Becky listen to a conference given by Fr. Barnabas Gillespie, OSB, during the Day of Recollection on July 11.*

## Oblate writes two new books



Thomas Rillo, an oblate from Bloomington, IN, has written his seventh poetry book, *God Calls Us*. It is a collection of 125 spiritual poems that can be read as prayers. The book's illustrations are by Saint Meinrad's Br. Martin Erspamer, OSB.

The books are available for purchase through the Oblate Office, as well as at the December and March oblate retreats. Cost is \$10 per copy. All proceeds go to the Saint Meinrad Oblate Community. Personalized inscriptions are available when the author is present at the sales.

In addition, he has written *An Oblate's Commentaries on Benedictine Spirituality*, which is available for \$10. To purchase a book, send your request and check to: Saint Meinrad Archabbey, Oblate Office, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad, IN 47577.

### "Let Them Prefer Nothing Whatsoever to Christ"



Jane Witzman

Fr. Adrian Burke, OSB, led the Oblate Study Days on the topic of "Let Them Prefer Nothing Whatsoever to Christ," in June 2016. He

challenged us to live our lives as intentional Christians, ordered to

God, imitating Christ who descended to humanity to show us who God is and who we are.

The first and consistent call is that of surrender, surrendering to God and his work in us, a willingness to conform our will to God's so we can become more like him. Our personal trainer in the spiritual life is the Holy Spirit; when we cooperate, we are reformed.

Fr. Adrian emphasized Chapter 7 of the *Rule* and the working of the ladder of humility as a centerpiece and lifelong structure of the Benedictine life. Step 1 speaks of keeping the fear of God always before your eyes. This refers to respect for and awe of God, who God is and what He does, never forgetting He is always present. We are never apart from God.

Step 2 is about surrendering one's will to God, conforming our will to God's through obedience. The other steps focus on discovering our true selves, respecting others and minding our speech. It is a deep refining process, a challenge, as we let go of what separates us from God and embrace truth and God's vision for us.

The need for solitude (Chapter 6) emphasizes our need to connect with and remain connected to God. Real relationship with God can be found in that silence, as God draws you to forget all else and be present to and with Him. A life of deep prayer, of listening to God, enhances our knowledge of God and our true purpose and mission.

To be receptive to what God has for us in this moment, this day, we must prepare to pray so we can attend to what the Holy Spirit may reveal to us. Do we have a daily discipline of prayer? Is God our real focus? Are we really present in prayer? What is God's

vision for us? Do we keep our home and mental environment peaceful?

What do we fill our minds with? Do we practice discernment of our actions, what we watch or listen to? Do we allow God into every area of our lives? Do we cultivate interior silence? Do we take time in our daily lives for contemplation? "Be still and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10).

We are not only to witness to the kingdom of God; we are to live in it now. We are to participate in the divine love of God, both receiving and sharing. Fr. Adrian pointed to three dynamics that assist us.

These dyads, essential to one another, are humility (obedience), silence (solitude) and community (service). Necessary to practicing these is getting out of God's way so He can do his work through us, giving our "yes" to God. Our true selves are meant for this, to live our mission in concert with God.

Jane Witzman, oblate  
Crestview, FL

### Book shares tradition with Quakers



David Brindle

A number of years ago, Saint Meinrad played host to a Quaker Monastic Forum. Men and women Benedictines met for three days with Quakers, members of The

Religious Society of Friends, to share experiences, study the traditions and pray together.

One of the realizations was that the underlying spirituality of both groups was similar in many ways and that key words used to describe their spiritual understandings were the same (silence,

peace, integrity, presence of Christ among them, etc.). There was also the discovery that both shared many classics of spiritual literature.

One of the books known in both traditions is *A Testament of Devotion* by Thomas R. Kelly, published in 1941 and in print since then. It is a book worthy of inclusion on an oblate's bookshelf. The volume is a collection of Kelly's writings after an extraordinary personal experience of coming into the Divine Presence in 1938 following a period of great inner doubt and turmoil. In a lecture at a Germantown Friends Meeting, he said, in part:

To you in this room who are seekers, young and old who have toiled all night and caught nothing, but who want to launch out into the deeps and let down your nets for a draught, I want to speak as simply, as tenderly, as clearly as I can. For God can be found... There is a Divine Center into which your life can slip, a new and absolute orientation in God....

The essays indicate not only the topics for meditation, but clear deep understandings of them: "The Light Within," "Holy Obedience," "The Blessed Community," "The Eternal Now and Social Concern," and "The Simplification of Life."

Also of great value is "A Biographical Memoir," written by Douglas Steere, another giant in spiritual literature who served as an observer at the Second Vatican Council. Particularly powerful for the oblate and anyone called into communities of Christ's disciples are reflections like:

Holy Fellowship reaches behind... intellectual frames to the immediacy of experience in God and seeks contact in this fountain

head of real, dynamic connectedness. Theological quarrels arise out of differences in assumptions. But Holy Fellowship, freely tolerant of these important yet more superficial clarifications, lives in the Center and rejoices in the unity of His love.

Like many others in past decades, you will find yourself turning again and again to this book and the connection to a great soul within The Blessed Community. Look for this little gem in bookstores and online. The best editions are the early ones, rather than "updated" versions, and can be found at reasonable prices on Amazon and used book sites.

*David Brindle, oblate  
Muncie, IN*

### **Oblate Council learns about successful Study Days**



*Michelle Blalock*

The Oblate Council gathered at Saint Meinrad Archabbey on July 9, 2016. Present were Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB; Janis Dopp, Jennie Latta, Dennis Skelton, Bill Wilson, Ron DeMarco, Mike Reffett, Pat Phillips, Al Kovacs and Michelle Blalock.

At the opening of our meeting, we were welcomed by and prayed with Fr. Archabbot Kurt Stasiak, OSB. We followed with the reading of the Statement of Purpose of the Oblate Council.

There was brief discussion regarding the recent election of Archabbot Kurt and the new appointment of Fr. John McMullen as prior.

It was shared that Fr. Adrian Burke, OSB, gave exceptional conferences at the Oblate Study Days. More than 50 participants attended the event, which was noted as a great success.

The theme for the year 2016-17 will be "Benedictine Spirituality."

Fr. Meinrad noted that the Benedictine medal bumper stickers have sold well. Plans to purchase more are under way to provide for future availability.

The Midwest Woodlands Regional Meeting is quickly approaching. This event will focus on leadership development and will be hosted at Saint Meinrad.

Also discussed was the World Congress 2017. The theme is "The Way Forward: The Benedictine Community in Movement." Many decisions have been made to help this conference come together.

Other topics and business were discussed by the Council. The meeting closed with prayer. The next meeting will be October 15.

*Michelle Blalock, oblate  
Ferdinand, IN*

### **Oblate chapter coordinators discuss concerns**



*Ron DeMarco*

In early 2015, the question arose: what if the oblate chapters had an opportunity to share ideas and general questions that all the chapters could see and comment on? Sharon Ogden, coordinator for the Lancaster, PA, chapter, volunteered to implement a

forum just for that purpose. With the support of Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, Sharon started the Oblate Coordinators Discussion Group in February 2015. She emailed all chapter coordinators, letting them know that she would be hosting an email-type forum and that any coordinator could participate in the discussion group. Questions sent to Sharon would be posted in an email for the discussion group to respond to.

Questions have ranged from the frequency of meetings and methods of notification about chapter meetings, to recruitment methods for new oblates, what to do when no monk is available for the next meeting, and how to plan for the future leadership of oblate chapters.

Since February 2015, nine questions have been posted, with 10 of the oblate chapters participating in the discussion group. One example is the question posted to the group in April: "How do you communicate with your group (e.g., email, phone, letters, and post cards)? Also, do you communicate with other Oblate Group Leaders? If so, how do you do that? Do you do any other kind of correspondence? Do you send birthday or get well cards to your Oblates in your group?"

Sharon said she was moved by what came back from coordinators' comments to this question. "The replies showed that there is a wonderful, close-knit relationship that most chapters have among their members. They keep in close touch through emails, they phone each other during the month, they send birthday cards for member birthdays, and they even watch over each other by preparing and bringing meals to a sick member." She said chapter members

form a caring, family-like community of oblates.

Since the middle of last year, Fr. Meinrad and the Oblate Council have been receiving Sharon's group emails with the questions and comments from the chapter coordinators. On behalf of Fr. Meinrad and the Oblate Council, we thank all of you who participate in these emails. As you air your concerns and questions among yourselves, we get a chance to see them and to be aware of them so that we may assist you if you need our help in any way.

We also thank Sharon for her time and good work in hosting the discussion group emails. Sharon welcomes all the chapter coordinators to participate. If you are not already on the group email list, simply email Sharon at [seojogden2@aol.com](mailto:seojogden2@aol.com).

*Ron DeMarco, oblate  
Oblate Council member  
Cincinnati, OH*

## INVESTITURES

June 2, 2016 – **Dr. Michael Lee Seretny** of West Lafayette, IN

June 8, 2016 – **Geryl Lyn Wright** of Oakland City, IN

June 13, 2016 – **Rev. Dr. Janet M. Cottrell** and **Dr. Kenneth W. Cottrell**, both of Lexington, KY

June 29, 2016 – **Timothy Tallent** of Louisville, KY

July 11, 2016 – **Shirley Fessell** of Elizabeth, IN; **Janice Rausch** of Oakland City, IN

July 12, 2016 – **Craig Mortell** of Carmel, IN

July 21, 2016 – **Constance A. Cleemput** of Ottawa, OH

August 9, 2016 – **Diane Helcher** of Lawrenceburg, IN

August 13, 2016 – **Patricia Kerr** of Ada, MI ♦

## OBLATIONS

June 4, 2016 – **Rita Blessed Itala Mela Coxhead** of Cox's Creek, KY; **Patricia Kay Maria-Gabrielle Sgheddu Hicks** of Franklin, KY

June 14, 2016 – **Dr. Barbara Hildegard Kammerlohr** of Henderson, KY

June 19, 2016 – **Deacon David Philip Neri Bohnenstiehl** of Collinsville, IL

June 23, 2016 – **Margaret Maria Luisa Prosperi Winans** of Carmel, IN

June 24, 2016 – **Theresa Joan Martha Miller** of Brownsburg, IN

June 25, 2016 – **Frank Paul Gregory Palmer** of Wilton, CT

July 11, 2016 – **Victoria Teresa Catt** of Washington, IN; **Lawrence Jude McCrobie** of Elizabethtown, KY; **Elizabeth Faustina Ueding** of Jeffersonville, IN

July 19, 2016 – **Rebecah Adela Boyle** of Bloomington, IN

July 27, 2016 – **R. Zachary Moses Karanovich** of Indianapolis, IN

August 6, 2016 – **Deacon Robert Bruce Benedict Browning** of Harrodsburg, KY; **Deacon John Cassian Roche** of Berea, KY; **Deacon Stephen Michael Hester**, **Deacon John Paul Hinkel**, **Deacon Kenneth Lawrence Rayfield**, **Deacon Dr. Alfred Thomas More Wiemann** and **Grace Scholastica Wiemann**, all of Lexington, KY

August 16, 2016 – **Jay Thomas VanHoosier** of Newburgh, IN ♦

## TRANSFER OF OBLATION

May 25, 2016 – **Michael Maurus Morrow** of Indianapolis, IN, transferred from St. Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, PA ♦

## RENEWAL OF OBLATION

August 16, 2016 – **Darcy Bede Troville** of Seymour, IN ♦

## ANNIVERSARY OF OBLATION

July 11, 2016 – **Deacon Dr. William Sweet** of Crofton, KY, celebrated his 15th anniversary of oblation

July 25, 2016 – **Rev. Rodger Hunter Hall** of Alexandria, VA, celebrated his 35th anniversary of oblation ♦

## DEATHS

July 8, 2016 – **Mary Strayer** of Indianapolis, IN

August 8, 2016 – **Irene M. Bettag** of St. Meinrad, IN ♦

## ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to **Pastor Carol Wiley** and her husband, **Floyd Wiley**, who recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

Congratulations to **Peyton and Mary Louise Reed** of Williamsburg, OH, who will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on November 26. ♦

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**November 27, 2016** – The New York oblates will have their Day of Recollection with Fr. Vincent Tobin, OSB. The topic will be “Shaped by Every Word that Comes from the Mouth of God.”

**December 9-11, 2016** – The Saint Meinrad December Retreat will have Fr. Adrian Burke, OSB. The title of his retreat will be “Descending God,

Rising Lord, Ascending Christ – Incarnation and the New Creation.”

**March 20-22, 2017** – The March Oblate Retreat will have Fr. Eugene Hensell, OSB, as the presenter on “The Way of the Cross According to the Gospel of Matthew.”

**April 8, 2017** – The Day of Recollection for the Louisville, KY, area oblates will be held with Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, as the presenter. The title is: “St. Therese of Lisieux and the *Rule of St. Benedict.*”

**May 20, 2017-** The Day of Recollection for the Ohio Oblates will be held in the Cincinnati area. Br. Francis Wagner, OSB, will be the presenter on “The Heart of Benedictine Spirituality.”

**June 12-15, 2017** – Saint Meinrad Study Days will take place at the Archabbey. Fr. Eugene Hensell, OSB, will be the presenter on “The Challenges of Community Life According to the Thought of St. Paul.”

**July 11, 2017** – Saint Meinrad Day of Recollection will have Fr. Denis Quinkert, OSB, as the presenter. His topic is “Daily Living of the Benedictine Stability of Heart.” ♦

## VOLUNTEERS APPRECIATED

Assisting in the Oblate Office recently were Novices Tony Wolniakowski, OSB, and Joshua Leeuw, OSB, Yvonne Weaver, Dennis Skelton, Suzy Kalmar, Sandra Duffee, Jack Sederstrand and Ted Castronova and his sons, Malcolm and Luca.

Oblates who assisted the monks with their move back to the monastery were George Thompson, Ed Karas, Robert “Bubba” Colquett and Jay VanHoosier. ♦

## OBLATE DECALS STILL AVAILABLE

Oblate decals are available for \$5 each (includes postage).

Please phone or email the Oblate Office, 812-357-6817 or [oblates@saintmeinrad.edu](mailto:oblates@saintmeinrad.edu), to place an order.



Oblates Pastor Carol Wiley and Floyd Wiley are pictured with their 60th wedding anniversary cake.



200 Hill Drive  
St. Meinrad, IN 47577

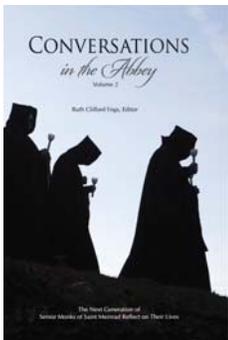
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## Reading Room

Engs, Ruth C. *Conversations in the Abbey: The Next Generation of Monks Reflect on Their Lives*. St. Meinrad, IN. Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 2016.



It is a privilege and an honor to review this second volume of *Conversations in the Abbey*. Ruth C. Engs was a colleague of the reviewer for many years at Indiana University. In her first book, *Conversations in the Abbey: Senior Monks of St. Meinrad Reflect on their Lives* (2008), she allowed the monks to speak for themselves.

In this sequel, she focuses on those who were young monks at the time of Vatican II. They were around to see the changes that were made in the monastery, the Church and society. Many of them participated in the reforms that were made.

Many oblates of Saint Meinrad Archabbey will recognize the monks in this volume. They have interacted with them in retreats, in spiritual direction and at conferences given at chapter meetings. Through a series of well-

formulated interview questions, Engs offers the reader a realistic portrayal of life as a monk in community. She includes the early influences experienced as to why they became monks.

The readers are given access to the intimate details of monasticism as a vocation, as well as responses to questions about early childhood, family life, early education, and why monasticism was chosen as a way of life. Some reflections are laced with good humor, especially during the novitiate period.

Some of the monks had assignments away from the monastery, such as teaching in Peru or running a beef farm in Tennessee. Some worked in the monastery printing operation, bakery, kitchen, etc. Other monks were assigned pastoral work in communities close to the monastery or in parishes in other states.

The book provides an intimate view of what it means to commit oneself totally to God and to prefer nothing but Christ. Engs has let the monks speak freely and without restraint and this is why this book so valuable.

*Thomas J. Rillo, oblate  
Bloomington, IN*