



Oblate Elizabeth Ann Theresa Wourms of Beavercreek, OH, (left) receives the sign of peace from Elaine Zimmer after making her oblation on March 21, 2016.

Pursuing the Christian life of virtue, becoming morally good



Fr. Mark O'Keefe, OSB

Who among us, as monks and oblates, does not want to be a morally good person? We know that the path to the holiness to which we are called requires us to become good people. But what, more precisely, does

that mean? What does it mean to be a morally good person?

Perhaps our immediate response would be that a good person does good things and avoids bad things. As Catholics in particular, we might add that being good includes obeying the commandments and the moral teaching of the Church. And all of that is profoundly true.

But the deeper challenge for us is not simply doing the right thing occasionally or every once in a while. Rather, a truly good person

does the good consistently and reliably. In fact, a morally bad person can do the good on occasion.

A virtue is the abiding tendency to do the good in a habitual way in some area of our life, for example, telling the truth (honesty), living a balanced and ordered life (temperance), knowing the truth of who and what we are before God and others (humility) and making good decisions (prudence or “discretion, the mother of virtues,” as St. Benedict says).

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) defines virtues as “habitual dispositions” that lead us reliably to do the good. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* speaks of them as “firm attitudes, stable dispositions, habitual perfections ... that govern our actions, order our passions, and guide our conduct according to reason and faith” (CCC, 1804; see the *Catechism*, paragraphs 1803-45 for an overview of the virtues).

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A POINT TO PONDER FROM *The Rule*

“Listen carefully, my son,
to the master’s instructions
and attend to them with
the ear of your heart.”

Rule of St. Benedict, Prologue: 1

Oblation is similar to the vows taken by the aspiring monk at his solemn profession. In the Prologue, St. Benedict lays the groundwork for monasticism as a vocation. This is also true for the oblate who aspires to a spiritual life in accordance with the *Rule*.

St. Benedict emphasizes the importance of a complete focus on seeking God in all things. When the oblate promises obedience, stability of heart, and fidelity to the monastic way of life, these promises will prevail throughout the tenure of one’s Benedictine affiliation. The vocation, then, is all that a Benedictine oblate does to seek God always and to prefer nothing to the love of Christ.

Benedictine Oblate is published four times a year by Saint Meinrad Archabbey.

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Drawing on earlier theologians such as St. Augustine (354-430) and classical Greek philosophy, Aquinas focused his moral teaching on the so-called “cardinal” virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude (or courage) and temperance. The word “cardinal” comes from a Greek word meaning “hinge,” and all other virtues are related to these four “hinge” virtues.

The cardinal virtues are “moral” virtues in that they guide our moral living. They can also be called “acquired” virtues because we build them up by our decisions and actions over time. I become honest, for example, by telling the truth in one situation after another, resisting the temptation to tell “little white lies,” and picking myself up and starting again when I fall into the temptation to lie.

Little by little, over time (with the help of grace), I build up the virtue of honesty. And once I have it, it makes it easier to tell the truth reliably. Without it, I am more likely to find it difficult to tell an inconvenient or difficult truth or easier to fall into the sin of lying.

Traditionally speaking, virtues bring “ease, smoothness, and promptitude” in doing the good – that is, having acquired a virtue, I now have an abiding tendency that makes it easier to do the good, without having to struggle interiorly or delay in acting while I force myself to do the good.

Sadly, there are also vices that are habitual dispositions to the bad. We build those up one decision at a time, too. And once we have them, they make it easier for us to do evil and harder for us to resist temptation. For example, if I have built up the vice of gluttony in myself over time, I will find it increasingly difficult to avoid the temptation to overeat and will be much more likely to fall into excess.

Most of us, at any point in our lives, are a mixed bag of virtues in various degrees of development, as well as a few vices,

some stronger in us than others. Together, our particular mix of virtues and vices can be called our “moral character.” Our goal, with the help of grace, is to develop an ever better character that can make us more truly “good” people.

The cardinal and other moral virtues seek to make us better human beings. In that sense, on their own, they can be called “natural” virtues. We strive to acquire them so that we can become, at a natural human level, more authentically human.

Obviously, you don’t have to be a Christian to acquire such natural virtues. Surely, we all know people without faith who are truly good human beings at this natural level. But we know, with the eyes of faith, that we cannot really become fully ourselves apart from God and our ultimate fulfillment in union with God. Only God is the true fulfillment of the human person.

And this more complete human development requires “supernatural” or “infused” virtues. These, we don’t build up ourselves, but we receive them from God in grace. Most notably, these are the theological virtues of faith, hope and love (charity). God has to give us the ability to know Him (faith), to expect union with Him (hope) and to enter into a mutual, self-giving friendship with Him (charity).

The truly good moral life of the Christian, therefore, involves the constant effort (with God’s help) to weaken and eliminate any vices that we might have and to grow in our virtues by doing the right, one time after another. But more, the “good” life for a Christian is a life in which we accept and embrace the theological virtues. They are a divine gift that we must choose to accept and exercise in our daily lives.

In all of this great journey, it is Christ who is our example – together with the Virgin Mary and the saints – and our constant help to arrive at the goodness that is the foundation of the holiness for which we must all aspire.

*Fr. Mark O’Keefe, monk
Saint Meinrad Archabbey*

Conference speaker focuses on the role of *conversatio*



Jennie Latta

Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, Janis Dopp and Jennie Latta attended the biennial conference of the North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors at

Subiaco Abbey in Arkansas, July 10-15, 2015.

The conference theme was “Nurturing Benedictine Spirituality: From Theory to Practice.” The conference included a series of keynote speeches, time for personal reflection, liturgies and lots of Benedictine hospitality.

Rev. Dr. Jane Tomaine, a priest of the Episcopal Church and author of *St. Benedict’s Tool Box*, spoke about the individual’s role in the practice of *conversatio*, which means allowing ourselves to be transformed. She invited us to share with the person next to us what we are wrestling with at the time.

After this exercise, Dr. Tomaine asked us to consider how fear (of not being in control), falling (the result of preoccupation and not being in the present moment), and forgetting (neglecting what you’ve learned) might be a part of that wrestling. She suggested that we envision abandoning ourselves to God.

Specifically, she asked us to imagine what would be different if we were to abandon whatever we are wrestling with. She asked how the *Rule of St. Benedict* might help us keep that vision alive, and she suggested that we name one specific step that we could take to move from wrestling to abandonment.

Dr. Tomaine closed her presentation with the final words of the Prologue to the *Rule*: “What can be sweeter to us, dear ones, than this voice of the Lord inviting us? Behold, in His loving kindness, the Lord shows us the way of life.”

Jennie Latta, oblate
Memphis, TN



Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, Oblate Connie Bernadette Thompson and Oblate George Thompson pose for a photo on March 19, 2016, after Connie made her oblation.

OBLATES *In their own words*



Oblate Pat Dorn
Cincinnati, OH

“I think it’s important to participate in an oblate chapter because it connects you with others who share the same spirituality. You are connected; you are a family. Families are important, even in the spiritual life. That’s what the oblates are to me: a big family.”



Choosing an oblate name is rooted in tradition



Kathleen Polansky

When making our oblation, we are asked to choose a name that has religious meaning to us and add it to our moniker. I have been thinking about how

biblical and packed with intention this opportunity is. Choosing a name is a serious decision.

My first thoughts are of the commandments received by Moses in the desert. In those, we are given the command that we “shall not take the name of God in vain.” The sacredness of the name of God is to be revered and preserved, to be above the mundane and ordinary of life. The name of God identifies the one who has authority over all.

That name is believed to be so holy and set apart that many Jews, even in our modern day, will not dare to speak it aloud lest it appear that we have knowledge and understanding that would imply a false sense of mastery over God. The meaning of biblical names reflects who each person is summoned to be by God. To call someone by name is to have knowledge over that person.

To name someone or something is to have dominion over what is named. In the account of creation in Genesis 2, God first creates Adam, who then gives names to all the animals, reflecting the dominion that God has given humanity over creation. Even today, naming reflects this care over someone, as we name our children and even our pets. The authority or dominion we have been given is from God, who has authority over all.

In the Tower of Babel story, we see this authority turned upside down when the people choose to “make a name for themselves.” The decision was to take over God’s authority and assume control. Chaos and alienation are brought about by this action.

When we read about Abram in Genesis 12, God promises that Abram’s name will be great. This promise is not because Abram has taken dominion over his life, but because Abram lives in faith, in utter and complete trust in God’s authority over his life. Abram is tried and tested and each time his faith, his trust in God, is proven to be authentic.

God then gives Abram the name Abraham, signifying he will be not only the great father, but also the father of many nations that carry God’s covenant to the world. God made this covenant with Abraham and made his name great. It was not by his own devices that Abraham’s name is changed, but rather it is through Abraham’s trust in God’s dominion over him that he is made great.

Abraham’s descendants bring us to the birth of Jesus, who is understood to be

the kenotic mystery. He is the one who emptied himself of his own divinity.

“Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness... Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth ...” (Phil 2:6-7a, 9-10).

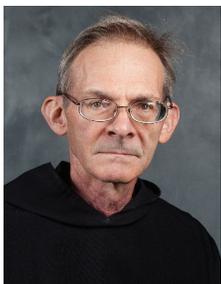
Jesus gave himself fully in absolute trust in God. In the name of Jesus, we are called to live and find our identity. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we are baptized, confirmed and blessed. It is in taking the name of one who has gone before us and proven his or her faith that we, as oblates, choose to honor and grow in our faith, our trust, that it is in God’s will, God’s authority, we will choose to live.

*Kathleen Polansky, oblate
New Salisbury, IN*



Fr. Luke Waugh, OSB, received the oblation of Oblate John Jerome Ferguson and Oblate Rosemarie Ava Stockbauer of Lancaster, PA.

Reflecting on the sacrament of Reconciliation



Fr. Guy Mansini

“Oh my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended thee, and I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of heaven and fear the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend thee, my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love.”

I dread the loss of heaven and fear the pains of hell. I hardly imagine the loss of heaven, except as the Lord gives us to imagine it: it's missing out on the party, it's not being at the wedding reception. But I easily imagine the pains of hell. That's vivid. And so it is easy to be sorry under that title.

But sorrow because my sins offend God – that is another thing. That's another class of sorrow. Do I really detest my sins because they offend the one who is deserving of all my love? The logic should make it easy. But it isn't. For one thing, why didn't I detest my sins for that reason a little earlier – so that I wouldn't have done them?

Fear of loss and dread of pain regard me; contrition and sorrow over offending Love Itself regards God. My own self-regard is the default position – always on, hard to escape unless we flip the switch. But how do I flip the switch? How do I know I am really regarding God? I don't feel it. What does it feel like? Does it have a feel? What does it look like?

True sorrow for sin requires that I know what sin really is, which is to know what God really is. How can I know these things? True sorrow for sin requires that I love God above all things and as He is. Since true sorrow

regards God just as He is, and just as He loves me, it requires charity.

But were I full of charity, and had I been full of charity, there would be nothing to confess. Were charity kept full and strong, I wouldn't need to repent. And if I need charity to repent, repentance is impossible. As C.S. Lewis says: Only a bad man needs to repent, but only a good man can repent.

Sin puts us in a place that we can't get out of on our own. This isn't arbitrary, but is its own necessary consequence. Interiorly, in our mind, in our affections, it immobilizes us: we need release, but we cannot make the right moves that would release us. We don't feel sorry, we just feel bad. If we were sorry, really sorry, before God, we would be on the way up and out and back to the light.

What we need is a kind of jumpstart. We need a spark from someone who can show us true sorrow, whose moves we can imitate. It would have to be someone who really knew man and what was in man so that nobody had to tell him. And it would have to be

someone who knew the Glory – and could see the infinite abyss between the Glory and the hard heart. And it would have to be someone whose charity was so great that it could measure that abyss.

And then, moved by charity, and loving God, and loving us, and knowing sin, such a man would have such a sorrow as would move the angels, could they weep. It would be such a sorrow that, did it find bodily expression, would sustain a suffering that extended from the crown of the head to the extremities of hands and feet. It would be a suffering so acute that, did we see it, it would pierce our hearts because the heart of the man was pierced. Ecce.

Now the sacrament of penance opens up a space where we can connect with such a sorrow, such a contrition, the contrition we absolutely have to have to worthily ask forgiveness for our sins. The EMT grabs the paddles: “Charge. Clear. Shock!” Cardiac arrest wants a defibrillator. That's the sacrament.

*Fr. Guy Mansini, OSB, monk
Saint Meinrad Archabbey*



The Oblate Finance Committee: l to r front row – Maureen Reichardt, Barbara Phillips and Marie Kobos; l to r back row – Peter Manninen, George Thompson, Fr. Meinrad, OSB, Patrick Phillips and Mike Reffett.

Voices from the Past

Editor's note: This is a condensed version of an article written by Fr. Walter Sullivan, OSB, in July 1946. Oblate Michael Edwards of Evanston, IN, condensed the original article.

It is noteworthy that St. Benedict's first step toward the monastic vocation was a flight from the world. It is recorded that he ran away from the corrupt public schools of Rome to escape from the companionship of worldly and frivolous school-fellows and the empty distractions of a big city.

According to the standards of modern psychology, this flight from the city would have marked Benedict as a moral weakling and an anti-social fanatic, because he seemed to be running away from life and reality. But when we stop to consider what modern thinkers mean by life and reality, we realize that St. Benedict was not running away from life, but from artificiality and dissipation.

For what do modern thinkers mean by life? They usually mean the world of excitement and the din that men create around them when they are supposed to be living.

They mean shouts and cries, the roar of traffic, bright lights blazing from neon signs, exchange of gossip, the blare of radios running on endlessly from morning till night, a rushing to and fro with much noise and fuss, a bedlam of nervous activity in which recollection is utterly destroyed, reverence forgotten and thinking impossible. In short, an existence in which mind and heart are made desolate through daily dissipation.

St. Benedict fled from the city of Rome to the wild vastness of Subiaco not to escape life, as some choose to believe, but to seek the source of life – God. He did what every good general has done in the course of military

history: he retreated from the enemy's frontline – not to run from the fight, but to take up a better and more secure position.

Soon or later, every Christian, regardless of their state of life, will discover that, without regular periods of prayerful solitude and recollection, a spiritual life is not only difficult, but even impossible. Those who live in an environment tainted with secularism and worldliness, must, if they wish to remain spiritually robust, introduce into their daily, weekly, monthly and yearly life periods of solitude and prayer.

As a matter of fact, an annual retreat will afford the Christian the same spiritual advantage that the professional religious enjoys, a going away for a while to take up a stronger spiritual position against the blitzkrieg of the world, the flesh and the devil. ♦

Fr. Kurt Stasiak, OSB, elected tenth archabbot



Archabbot Kurt Stasiak, OSB

The Right Reverend Kurt Stasiak, OSB, was elected archabbot of Saint Meinrad Archabbey by the Benedictine monks of the community on June 2, 2016.

He becomes the 10th abbot and seventh archabbot in the community's 162-year history, succeeding Archabbot Justin DuVall, OSB, who announced in January that he would resign the position upon the new abbot's election. He had served as abbot since December 31, 2004.

Archabbot Kurt, 63, has served as prior of Saint Meinrad Archabbey since July 9, 2010. The prior is the second in leadership in the monastery. He had also been serving as the monastery's master of ceremonies.

Born in Rüdeshheim, Germany, on October 9, 1952, Archabbot Kurt professed vows as a Benedictine monk on August 15, 1975, and was ordained a priest on April 27, 1980.

He received a Bachelor of Science in biology from Saint Meinrad College in 1974 and a Master of Divinity in 1980 from Saint Meinrad School of Theology.

He later earned a licentiate (1986) and a doctorate (1993) in sacramental theology from Pontifical Athenaeum of Sant' Anselmo, Rome.

From 1978-81, Archabbot Kurt served as administrative assistant to the

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president-rector. In 1980 he was appointed associate spiritual director for Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology for three years.

From 1986-90, he taught sacramental theology in the School and was assistant to the novice/junior master in the monastery. Also during that time, he served as secretary to the archabbot (1986-89) and as vocation director for the monastery (1986-90 and 1992-98).

Archabbot Kurt taught sacramental/liturgical theology in the Seminary and School of Theology from 1986-2016. For 10 years, he also served as the director of spiritual formation. Other assignments have included provost-vice rector of the School of Theology (2005-08) and chair of the Archabbey Church Renovation Committee (1993-97).

He is the author of four books, most recently *From Sinners to Saints: A Guide to Understanding the Sacrament of Reconciliation*. He also has written numerous articles and book reviews. ♦

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Left to right: Fr. Meinrad, OSB, Chris Baunach, Oblate Kerri Baunach holding Silas Baunach, Oblate Kristy Tucker holding Mikey Tucker, Oblate Mark Tucker holding Joey Tucker; in front l to r Ethan Baunach and Peter Baunach. Kerri, Kristy and Mark made their oblation on April 2, 2016.



The ordination of 8 permanent deacons, 1 oblate and 7 oblate novices on June 4, 2016, at the Cathedral of Christ the King Lexington, KY, was held. Bishop John Stowe, O.F.M. Conv., Bishop of the Diocese of Lexington, KY, ordained them. Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, and Fr. Tobias Colgan, OSB are with the group.



The happy group of oblates attended the Ohio Oblates' Day of Recollection at the Bergamo Retreat Center in Beavercreek, OH, on May 21, 2016.

Louisville chapter learns about chant

Fr. Jeremy King, OSB, choirmaster for Saint Meinrad Archabbey, gave a Day of Reflection on April 16 for the Louisville Oblate Chapter on “Music and the Oblate.” He began with a brief overview of the evolution of chant throughout the world.

As chant was shared between different areas, a discussion arose as to which was more important – the text to be sung or the music to be used? Most hold that the text is the most important and the music can be changed. Fr. Jeremy told us that Saint Meinrad’s Fr. Columba Kelly, OSB, is widely recognized for his translations, which honor the text.

Fr. Jeremy discussed the Liturgy of the Hours and which parts should be sung. The Psalms were songs of the Hebrew people and the Early Church and should be sung, as should the Gospel canticles of Zechariah, Mary and Simeon. Also, there are canticles in Paul’s letters and Revelation, which should be sung as well. The readings and other parts of the Hour are recited. Also, Vigils (Office of Readings) and Compline can be recited.

Then he explained the eight St. Meinrad Psalm Tones and gave examples of where each tone could be used. Fr. Jeremy encouraged those present not to stress over the Office when praying it alone. If you can’t sing the tones, do what works for you.

It’s important to focus on the prayers and connecting with God. Don’t worry about being perfect. When praying the Office with the monks, at chapter meetings or in a group, it is important to be in union with the group. When everyone “does their own thing” in a group, chaos can be the result.

Those attending enjoyed the day, and practiced singing by wishing Fr. Meinrad a happy birthday.

*Carolyn Holmann, oblate
Louisville, KY*

Committee reviews finances of Oblate Office



Mike Reffett

The Oblate Finance Committee met April 22 to review financial results for the six months ending December 31, 2015. Although renewal gifts

dropped somewhat from the previous year, revenues again covered expenses. Expenses included Oblate Office staff, travel, printing and postage.

Mike Reffett explained the Business Office changes in reporting endowments, including endowment investment gains and losses.

Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, expressed his great appreciation for the financial support of the oblates.

*Mike Reffett, oblate
Evansville, IN*

Oblate Council hears plans for 2017 meeting



Bill Wilson

The Oblate Council gathered at the Archabbey Guest House for its 34th meeting on April 23, 2016. Janis Dopp chaired the meeting.

Present on the Hill were Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, Michelle Blalock, Ron DeMarco, Janis

Dopp, Al Kovacs, Pat Phillips, Mike Reffett, Dennis Skelton, Chris Topa and Bill Wilson.

Chris Topa served as secretary. Gail Chambers and Jennie Latta were unable to be present. The meeting was opened with prayer by Fr. Meinrad followed by unison reading of the Statement of Purpose of the Oblate Council.

Various committee and task force reports were given:

- Financial reports were presented by Mike Reffett; appreciation was shared for the support of the oblates and the good work done by Mike and the Finance Council members. The report was positive, and appreciation was expressed for communication and assistance from the Archabbey Business Office during some changes in accounting procedures in their office.
- Pat Phillips presented a recommendation from the Oblate Finance Council regarding a gift from the oblate community to Archabbot Justin DuVall, OSB, as he resigns as abbot. Fr. Meinrad will present the gift to Fr. Abbot before he leaves on June 2. Members of the Council expressed many words of appreciation for Archabbot Justin’s support and counsel to the oblate community.
- Mike Reffett shared an update on the action steps and implementation of goals and plans from “Looking to the Future: Leadership”; discussion included appreciation from the Council for Sharon Ogden’s coordination of the chapter coordinators’ email feedback and discussions. She will be asked to do a summary of the feedback. Appreciation was

expressed for the coordinators and how important it is to listen to their feedback.

- Dennis Skelton reported that he continues to work on a handbook for the Oblate Council, which will help to provide ongoing continuity in the council's work.
- Discussion continued on improving communication within the oblate community. Issues surfaced about the logistics and administration of various platforms, i.e., social media, pictorial directory, etc. Further input will be given and continued discussion through the Meeting of Chapter Coordinators in 2017.
- Al Kovacs reported for the Meeting of Chapter Coordinators 2017 Task Force that the meeting will be for chapter coordinators only on June 25, 2017, which will facilitate fellowship, communication and sharing of ideas. The theme will be "On the Good Zeal of the Chapter," based on Chapter 72 of the *Rule*. The keynote speaker will be Sr. Karen Joseph on "Bringing Benedictine Spirituality to the World." Workshop sessions will include improving recruitment and retention of oblates, enhancing communication within the chapter and between chapters, and building community.

Fr. Meinrad reported on a variety of topics:

- A successful March 2016 oblate retreat was reported.
- Election process of the new archabbot is taking place currently; the election will be June 2; Fr. Meinrad serves on the election and blessing task force.

- Oblate Study Days has a waiting list due to limited accommodations in the Guest House (because of construction work in the monastery).
- A necrology of oblates has been completed and will be kept current; appreciation was expressed to Novice Tony, Brother Jean and Novice Joshua, who worked on this project. Fr. Meinrad shared that there are over 4,000 names of oblates going back to the 1890s. The necrology will be maintained in the Oblate Office and Saint Meinrad Archives, and will be placed in the St. Meinrad Shrine in the Archabbey Church.
- A policy has been established throughout Saint Meinrad Archabbey regarding Record Retention and Destruction. The Oblate Office developed its policy working with the Archabbey Human Resources office. Guidelines will be implemented as staff and volunteers go through oblate files for appropriate retention and document removal.
- Appreciation was received from Archabbot Justin regarding the gift of \$30,000 from the oblate community for the infirmary renovation.

Janis Dopp reported that the next World Congress of Benedictine Oblates will be held in November 2017. Janis is working on the planning team with oblate leaders from across the world. The theme will be "A Way Forward: The Benedictine Community in Movement."

Speakers, discussions and workshops will focus on the oblate communities being active to serve in their

monasteries and the individual life of the oblate. Council members discussed our understanding of service, as interpreted by Archabbot Justin, Fr. Meinrad and our community policies.

Specific discussion centered on the place of service in chapters. The Oblate Council saw the need to examine our current understanding as we experience prospective oblates asking about opportunities to serve. The Council affirmed the invitation of the Saint Meinrad Office of Alumni Relations for oblates to join in the Saint Meinrad Day of Service, held in March. Fr. Meinrad indicated there was a positive response among oblates.

The Council concluded the meeting in a general discussion around several matters and issues:

- Involvement of oblates offering to pray the Liturgy of the Hours and Office of the Dead in their local parish settings.
- Mentoring new chapter coordinators when there are transitions being planned for coordinators.
- Service growing out of our Benedictine values – formation in the values, leading to deeper prayer, which leads to serve. Fr. Meinrad reminded us to not lose the importance of the Benedictine spirituality of prayer and conversion, a deeper relationship with God.

Fr. Meinrad and Janis Dopp shared the invitation brochure for a regional conference for oblate directors and future oblate leaders of the Midwest Woodlands Region (18 monastic communities). Saint Meinrad Archabbey will host this conference October 2-4, 2016.

Conference presenters will include Rev. Dr. William Wilson from our oblate community on the theme of the conference, “The Gift of Shared Leadership,” Br. Simon Herrmann, OSB, from Saint Meinrad on how the Prologue from the *Rule of St. Benedict* sheds light on developing leaders in the Church, especially oblates, and Dawn Rowley, an executive coach looking at personal values on how you live and lead.

The meeting included praying the Noon Office and closed with a blessing by Fr. Meinrad.

The next meeting of the Oblate Council will be July 9, 2016.

*William (Bill) H. Wilson, oblate
Huntington, WV*

Oblate elected subprior of Order of St. Luke

Oblate Mick Laflin of Oblong, IL, was elected as the subprior (vice president) of the Illinois Great River Chapter of the Order of St. Luke within the United Methodist Church.

Couple celebrates 50th anniversary

Oblate Mary Jo Lowe and her husband, Tom, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on April 23 at St. Agnes Church in Nashville, IN, with a Mass and renewal of the marriage vows. They live in Nineveh, IN. God’s blessings be upon them!

Oblate honored with nursing award

Oblate Patricia O’Malley of Beaver Creek, OH, received the Premier Nursing Recognition Award for her Premier System Support at the hospital in Dayton, OH, on May 4. She was a 2016 Lifetime Achievement Honoree for her research in nursing on a local, regional and national level. Congratulations on this great honor.

Oblate writes first book

Oblate Edward Andercheck of Chesapeake Beach, MD, completed his first book, *Phoenix of the Clergy*. His book might call for church leaders to revisit the diaconate. Congratulations on your written work!

Oblate couple receives master’s degrees

Oblates Deacon Richard and Cherie Zoldak graduated on May 14 from Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology with their Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology degrees. They thank their fellow oblates for all their prayers during their years of study.

In addition, they gave a retreat for married couples, “Benedictine Spirituality as Lived in Marriage,” in March and it was well received. There were 16 couples who attended, ranging from two to 50+ years of marriage. Congratulations to Rich and Cherie!

Oblates welcome to join online reading groups

Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology is offering several online reading communities during 2016. Online reading communities offer people a chance to read and discuss a book on a Christian theme and discuss it with others online. There are no tests or long papers, and these activities do not carry academic credit. Two upcoming programs are described below.

July 24-October 1, 2016

Book: *Mercy in the City: How to Feed the Hungry, Give Drink to the Thirsty, Visit the Imprisoned, and Keep Your Day Job* by Kerry Weber. Chicago: Loyola Press, 2014, 149 pages.

The book is described as “... frequently humorous but always

authentic story of exploring the challenges and rewards that accompany a lay Catholic trying to practice the Works of Mercy in a 24/7 city of eight million people.”

October 2-December 24, 2016

Book: *New Collegeville Bible Commentary: The Gospel According to Luke* by Michael F. Patella. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005, 158 pages.

During this Holy Year of Mercy, it is appropriate to do a close reading of Luke, often called the gospel of mercy, with the help of this excellent commentary. The scriptural text and the commentary appear together on each page of the book, making for easy study.

To register, visit www.saintmeinrad.edu/continuing-formation/online-reading-group/online-reading-community/. The \$40 cost includes the price of the book.

INVESTITURES

February 25, 2016 – **Rev. Ronald L. Hooker** and **Mary Frances Hooker**, both of Columbus, OH

March 3, 2016 – **Nora Frey** and **Lorraine Ruiz**, both of New Providence, PA

March 5, 2016 – **Evelyn Googe** of Farmingdale, NY

March 19, 2016 – **Bernard F. Powers** of Owensboro, KY

March 30, 2016 – **Kimberly D. McDaniel** of Louisville, KY

April 6, 2016 – **Dr. Nicholas A. Barron** of Newburgh, IN

April 8, 2016 – **Samuel Negrete** of Maricopa, AZ

April 9, 2016 – **Bradley S. McDivitt** of Indianapolis, IN

May 5, 2016 – **Thomas C. Morone** of Columbus, IN

May 6, 2016 – **Janice Rose Barnes** of Muncie, IN

May 8, 2016 – **Michael E. Nolen** of Springfield, VA

May 14, 2016 – **Phyllis Friesen** of Noblesville, IN, and **Arturo E. Mondello** of Indianapolis, IN

May 15, 2016 – **Dan Sheets** of Mishawaka, IN

May 21, 2016 – **Gilbert West** of Bronx, NY ♦

OBLATIONS

March 3, 2016 – **John Jerome Ferguson** and **Rosemarie Ava Stockbauer**, both of Lancaster, PA

March 19, 2016 – **Connie Bernadette Thompson** of Louisville, KY

March 21, 2016 – **Robert John Robert of Molesme Dickson** of Sweetwater, TN; **Stephen Michael Paul Kinkaid** of Evansville, IN; **Dr. Elizabeth Ann Therese Wourms** of Beaver Creek, OH

April 2, 2016 – **Kerri Gertrude Baunach**, **Kristin Therese Tucker** and **Mark Andrew Tucker**, all of Lexington, KY

April 9, 2016 – **HenryEtta Marie Jackson** of Greenfield, IN

April 24, 2016 – **Dr. Carmen Irene Scholastica Reyes Mendoza** of Bethel, OH

May 15, 2016 – **Robert Craig Augustine Sherrod** of Louisville, KY ♦

DEATHS

December 9, 2015 – **Hildegard Copeland** of Rockville, IN

February 8, 2016 – **Donald T. Schmitt** of Columbia, CT

February 20, 2016 – **Mildred Graves** of Tell City, IN

March 12, 2016 – **Grace Ragonese** of Crown Point, IN

April 8, 2016 – **Mary Anne Arnett** of Canal Winchester, OH

May 8, 2016 – **John E. Ringle Jr.** of Jeffersonville, IN

May 19, 2016 – **Mary Louise Jones** of Indianapolis, IN ♦

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 2-4, 2016 – The New York oblates will hold their annual Labor Day weekend retreat with Br. Zachary Wilberding, OSB. The title will be: “Let Silence Speak.”

September 10, 2016 – The Lancaster, PA, Day of Recollection in the Amish country will have Fr. Barnabas Gillespie, OSB, as the presenter on “Preserving the Tradition – Enhancing the Practice: Living the Monastic Life with the Awareness of the Past and a Recommitment to Spiritual Growth in the Present.”

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.”

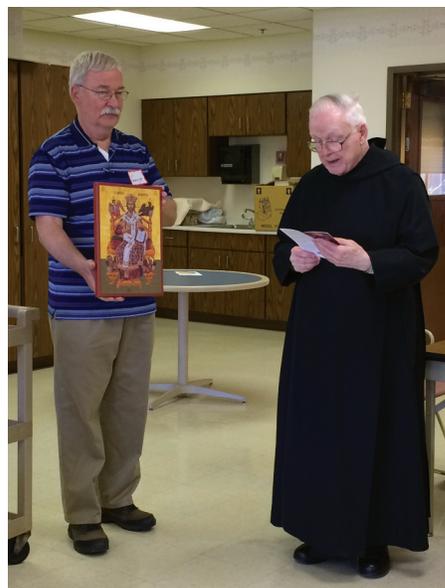
December 9-11, 2016 – The December Retreat at Saint Meinrad Archabbey will feature Fr. Adrian Burke, OSB. The title of his retreat will be “Descending God, Rising Lord, Ascending Christ – Incarnation and the New Creation.” ♦

VOLUNTEERS APPRECIATED

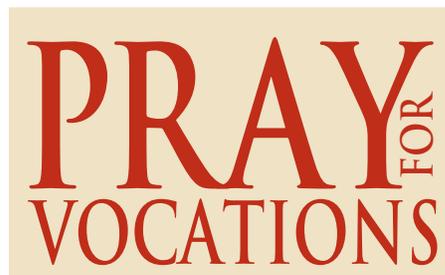
George Thompson, Barbara Krick, Sandra Duffee, Mike Edwards, Dennis Skelton, Mike Reffett, Marie Kobos, Novice Tony Wolniakowski, OSB, and Novice Joshua Leeuw, OSB, were among those who volunteered recently in the Oblate Office. ♦



Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, Oblate Director, celebrated his 82nd birthday on April 14, 2016.



Oblate George Thompson holds an Icon of Christ the King given as a gift for the Byzantine Chapel while Fr. Meinrad, OSB, blesses it. The Icon was a gift of Oblate Kevin Maloney. The ceremony was held during the Louisville, KY, day of reflection on April 16, 2016.





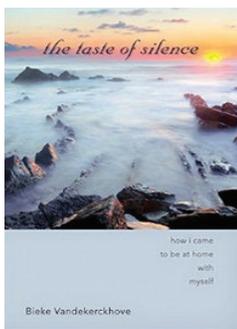
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Reading Room

Vandekerckhove, Bieke. *The Taste of Silence: How I Came to Be at Home with Myself*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 156 pages.



Every so often, a story comes along of how an individual facing adversity comes to a wall and breaks through it. This is such a narrative, both poignant and compelling. It is the story told by a woman, a psychology student, who at age 19 was afflicted with ALS, commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

She became paralyzed from the pelvis up. Three years later, her disease went into remission and, though she is partially paralyzed, she has lived with ALS for 20 years.

She asked herself: how do you live when confronted with just a small particle of quality in your life? Circumstances led her down two avenues. One led to Benedictine

spirituality and the other to Zen meditation and the Zen masters.

In the 27 short chapters written at various stages of her life, the author shares her search for meaning and strength for her painful, but illuminating, journey. Along this journey she shares the insights she has gleaned from scholars, artists, researchers, poets, and great contemplatives and thinkers.

In the book, she demonstrates that you can embrace two approaches of contemplation and silence and achieve rewards from each. This book has great value for those who are facing a wall in their journey through life.

The author's experiences prove that Benedictine spirituality can be a healing grace. Many of us have had to face an impenetrable wall. Contemplative prayer and meditation can bring down that wall – helping us to endure the winter of our life and move forward to the hope inherent in spring.

*Thomas J. Rillo, oblate
Bloomington, IN*