



Shirley Galey (second from left) made her oblation during the December Oblate Retreat at St. Meinrad on December 12. Also in attendance were her two sons and her daughter-in-law.

An oblate's vocation is both gift and mystery



Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB

A man wrote to me and told me that, for several years, he seemed to have this call of looking at the process of becoming an oblate, but he put it off. Then suddenly he realized he could no longer put it off.

There is only one way to get wet: get into the water and accept the invitation of becoming an oblate. In 1984, the abbots throughout the world met in the World Congress and declared that oblates are persons who have responded to a vocation – a call. Oblates are reciprocal blessings to monastic communities. They carry monastic values into the world in their daily witness.

The word “oblate” comes from the Latin *oblatus* – an offering, someone or something that is given. Oblates of St. Benedict are Christian women and men who yearn for a spiritual life deeply rooted in God. They

choose to attach themselves to a specific Benedictine community and strive to live the spirit of St. Benedict's *Rule* in response to this yearning. They offer themselves to God.

Your vocation as an oblate springs up “in response to a particular gift which accompanies the Father's call.” St. Paul writes that “the gracious gifts of God and His calling, are irrevocable” (Romans 11:29).

Our fidelity to his calling finds its strength daily in God's unwavering fidelity to his promise. “The search for God is never finished, but God is always present” (D61). We do not run the way of God's commands alone, but join with one another and with the many others who have become oblates before us.

Oblation is a mystery. Mystery is the revelation of God's secrets – these secrets were primarily concerned with the plan of salvation, which God realizes in human

Continued on p. 2

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

The Prologue to the *Rule* is the cornerstone to all that the aspiring monk and oblate must adhere to in their vocations. St. Benedict emphasizes the importance of a complete focus on seeking God in all things. Obedience, humility and silence are accepted both by the novice monk and the novice oblate. The vocation then is all that a monk or oblate does to seek God always and to prefer nothing to the love of Christ.

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Editor: Mary Jeanne Schumacher

Designer: Tammy Schuetter

Oblate Directors: Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB and Fr. Joseph Cox, OSB

Send changes of address and comments to
The Editor, Development Office,
Saint Meinrad Archabbey,
200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad, IN 47577,
(812) 357-6817, fax (812) 357-6325
or email oblates@saintmeinrad.org
www.saintmeinrad.org

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continued from p. 1

history and which comprises the object of revelation.

The mystery in question is the coming of the kingdom conformable to God’s plan. Entrance into the mystery is not a matter of human intelligence; it is a gift of God. Mystery denotes nothing less than the object of the Gospel: the realization of salvation by the death and resurrection of Christ.

The *Rule of St. Benedict* is based completely on the life of Jesus Christ and refers to his death and resurrection. And the oblate is called to be part of the mystery of Jesus Christ, living the Benedictine tradition, living Benedictine spirituality. This is the oblate’s call, God’s gift.

Oblation as a Vocation – An Overall View

When a person decides to become a Benedictine oblate, it is usually not done on the spur of the moment, nor should it be. For most oblates, this decision is the result of a process that unfolds over a period of time. It is helpful to look at this process to appreciate more fully the action of God in our lives and to renew our response to God’s call to oblation with joy and enthusiasm.

Fr. Bernard Head, an oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, wrote about the process to be an oblate in the Summer 2006 issue of the *Benedictine Oblate*. He wrote about four features that all vocational experiences have in common.

First, God’s love reaches out and chooses the individual.

A vocation is not our idea – it is God’s. At a particular time and place, this possibility occurred to us. It may have been through reading, by meeting another oblate, by a visit to a monastery or via the Internet. However we became aware of the oblates, we believe that it was not an accident, but a result of God’s Providence.

The second feature common to vocational experiences is a sense of assurance that God will be faithful to those who endeavor to answer God’s call.

When we first heard the call to be oblates, it may have seemed like this was something for other people – those who were holier, more committed, more “religious” than we are. But gradually we began to see that, if this is really God’s call, then God will enable us to accept it and to live the life to which He calls us. So the second response to our reflection might be trust in Providence.

Third, this call from God invites a decision based on faith and obedience.

The oblate vocation involves personal dedication to the Benedictine ideal as embodied in the *Rule of St. Benedict*. It is our way of being a disciple of Jesus, and we embrace it because we believe this is the particular pattern of Christian life to which God is calling us.

Fourth, the vocational process is an openness to personal growth and transformation.

It is a call to adopt a new approach to life. This means, in the case of oblates, a call gradually to understand and follow St. Benedict’s admonition, “Your way of acting should be different from the world’s way” (RB 4:8). The call to live as an oblate does not require us to scorn ordinary life or to separate ourselves from human society. But it does mean consistently attempting to seek God in the people and events of our daily life (RB 58:7).

It would seem proper to conclude that oblation is indeed a vocation. Oblates are called by God in love and assured by God that following this call in faith and obedience will lead them to personal growth and transformation.

*Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB
Director of Benedictine Oblates*

New Evangelization begins with contemplative gaze



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

The first keynote speaker was Fr. Jerome Kodell, OSB, of Subiaco Abbey. He addressed his remarks to the New Evangelization, which, he noted, begins with the contemplative gaze. The contemplative gaze is the gaze of the heart, which seeks Jesus and must know Him first, before opening itself to the world.

Within each of us is an intersection between time and the timeless. The timeless in the heart is the knowledge of God. Fr. Jerome noted that Jesus invited the Twelve to be with Him before sending them out into the world. Pope Emeritus Benedict and Pope Francis likewise have emphasized the need to engage in contemplation, to turn the gaze inward, before turning it out upon the world.

In an interesting turn, Fr. Jerome suggested that *lectio divina* (“divine reading”) may be seen as divine *seeing*. *Lectio*, he said, is the practice of coming to see the world as God sees it. Becoming a saint is not so much doing things better as it is gaining the divine perspective.

Fr. Jerome spoke to the religious in the group, noting that monks and nuns

remain the guardians of the gift of contemplative prayer. Turning to the oblates, he encouraged them to provide a bridge between the monasteries and the world – to bring this gift of contemplative prayer into the world. Fr. Jerome emphasized that the gift of contemplative prayer is not only for Catholics, but for everyone, and that the life of contemplation begins for each of us right where we are.

Fr. Jerome also offered some practical suggestions. He suggested that, unlike theology, the life of contemplation is not knowledge *about* God, but knowledge *of* God. As with other relationships, we come to know God only through spending time with Him. Thus, each day we must make the effort to put God first. If only for minutes at a time, we must continually turn our gaze toward Him.

Jennie Latta, oblate
Memphis, TN



Oblate Jennie Latta peruses a *Liturgy of the Hours* book in the Oblate Library.

OBLATES *In their own words*



Oblate Carole Mattingly
Corydon, IN

“Being an oblate has changed my everyday life, because I start out with the Liturgy of the Hours right away, early in the morning. That is the first thing that I do. I pray. It has made my life very stable, and I have become more intimate with God.

Being an oblate has helped me to be more friendly with all people. I have learned to go out and reach out to new people at church and in the community. The greatest blessing of the oblate community is that whenever I need prayers, I can just call or contact someone here and they are ready to help.”

Caregiver recalls the virtues of oblation



Thomas J. Rillo

Nothing ever prepared me for the rigors and trials of total caregiving. In my golden years, I have been given a challenge by God to express my love and care

for someone who is undergoing memory loss. It is physically and mentally stressful.

I have had to adjust to living a life that has completely changed from what it once was. I have had to give up many activities that I dearly loved. Proclaiming the readings for Mass as a lector was a hard one to give up. My volunteer work at the YMCA, where I was a physical rehabilitative trainer for seniors, was another.

My traveling on pilgrimages with my wife was especially difficult to curtail. My writing for the *Benedictine Oblate* newsletter was also hard to accept, although I continue doing so from afar. Most social life became nonexistent.

Now the question is: how have I retained my sanity through the repetitive caregiving tasks that I do each and every day 24/7? First is my love for my spouse and equally my love of God and his son Jesus. My faith journey had to be strengthened. I had to decrease in order to increase.

My marriage is a contract or a spiritual covenant. "For better or worse, till death do you part" are powerful words that imply an unwavering commitment. This has not changed in its implicit application toward the challenges of total caregiving. It is one of the most challenging commitments I have ever had to do. My faith in God and my

subsequent prayer life, augmented by my Benedictine oblation, have been a saving grace.

My prayers ask God to give me the patience that I need in my caregiving responsibilities. This is where the vow of humility has helped me to achieve a level of patience that I was previously not endowed with.

The vow of silence has helped me to sustain the gentleness involved in listening. That my spouse was saying "I cannot remember" had to be heard. Obedience to the basic rules of caring for someone with memory loss emanated from my Benedictine oblation and the acceptance of the vow of obedience.

The Liturgy of the Hours or Divine Office has been a healing grace. My wife and I once read through it together. I now pray the Liturgy of the Hours by praying it aloud to her or just by myself when she is sleeping. Excessive sleeping is characteristic of the disease of memory loss.

My Benedictine oblation and my writing for the Saint Meinrad Archabbey oblate community have augmented newfound time to be creative. The loss of a beautiful mind has been heartbreaking. This has been one of the most difficult things to accept. Stepping up my prayer life and my faith journey has helped a great deal.

The change in my lifestyle has been difficult to accept. The only constant has been my prayer life, where the routine rituals dovetail nicely with my caregiving routine. This is where oblation has been so valuable in keeping me on course in caregiving.

God has shown me that love for another person and the care of that person are gifts from Him. It has been

said often that to give one's life for another person is the highest expression of love. Essentially, this can be also said of the caregiving for a loved one. It is a fine example of the highest level of love.

As a Benedictine oblate, I find that it is very natural to apply humility to my caregiving situation. The promises of silence and obedience have been equally of value. I open each day with saying: "O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall proclaim your praise." I know that He is testing my marriage covenant each and every day. He is also testing my covenant to Benedictine oblation and its inherent spirituality.

*Thomas J. Rillo, oblate
Bloomington, IN*



Oblate Michelle Blalock, co-coordinator of the St. Meinrad Oblate Chapter, listens to a fellow oblate.

Smugmug

*For more photos of
Saint Meinrad events, visit:*

<http://saint-meinrad.smugmug.com>

A look back: 72 Years Ago

The bombing of Monte Cassino

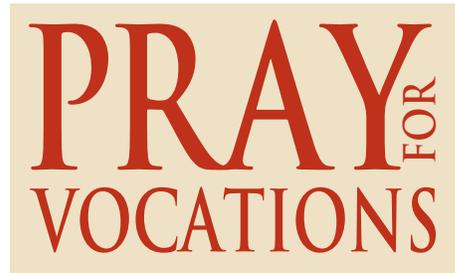
March 21 will be the glorious feast of our Holy Father St. Benedict. This year will be a sad feast for us. When we think of the tomb where his blessed relics repose, we shall sadly recall that it is buried under the ruins of Monte Cassino. Some of the very markers that date back to the time of St. Benedict have been so destroyed that we have no hope of restoring them.

If the Abbey of St. Benedict is destroyed, we, his historical children, must assure him that his holy *Rule* still lives. Our Benedictine lives must be

the indestructible monument to St. Benedict. His glory must be that his work and spirit still lives and influences people's lives.

We must make Benedict a living figure of this day, and not a famous remembrance of the past. On his feast day, let us promise him that, through our Benedictine lives, many shall know that the fire he enkindled on Monte Cassino still burns on this earth.

*Michael Edwards, oblate
Evanston, IN*



Photos, clockwise from top left: Oblate Mike Reffett read from sacred Scripture during the ceremony of making Andrew and Malinda Rawls honorary oblates. This honor was bestowed on them for all the video-media work they have performed for the oblate community and its programs.

Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, poses for a photo with oblate Christian Meyer and his wife Amy.

Oblates Jim and Rita Merk attended the investiture of Beverly Winner as an oblate novice.

Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, and oblate Msgr. Robert Noon pose for a picture after Mass at the Lancaster, OH, Oblate Chapter.



Benedictine spirituality informs the idea of sustainability



Robert Siebenaller

Each of us has a purpose. A friend concluded that mine was being a sustainable architect, an officious title that suggested I was on the front lines battling

climate change, deforestation, desertification and rising sea levels.

It is true; the profession of architecture has taken aim at these impending global catastrophes by supporting a sustainability agenda that focuses on three design principles: the conservation of energy, the conservation of water and the creation of healthy environments.

These principles, documented in a quantifiable rating system, were achievable. While we celebrated the achievement of changing the way that we design, we struggled with finding the inspiration to change ourselves.

What good is it to work, live or visit a sustainable building if we are not living sustainably day by day? And this is where my passion for sustainability blazed: to help each person discover that the answer to living sustainably was in his or her heart, “in here,” not “out there.”

It was not until I pledged to observe stability of heart, fidelity to the monastic way of life and obedience to the will of God as a Benedictine oblate that I awoke to a language of sustainability that sustains the person by touching the heart. The holy *Rule* illustrates a way to reach people by practicing St. Benedict’s spiritual wisdom of hospitality, stewardship,

stability and humility. I practice this wisdom as an architect.

Hospitality sustains the person by welcoming them to community. They are welcomed as a unique mystery of life and invited to leave their fingerprints, to imprint the design with their ideas, values and passions. Their lives are welcomed as a gift and asked to be shared as a gift.

Stewardship sustains the person by responsibly managing their God-given gifts. Together we seek efficiency and beauty while considering the impact of the building socially, economically and environmentally. Early in their architectural education, students are christened “Stewards of the Environment,” an identity that inspires responsible decision-making throughout their career.

Stability sustains the person mentally, physically and spiritually by assimilating them into a multi-disciplined design team of individuals seeking the realization of a common goal. This is a process of community building where the design professionals gather together to seek a synergistic solution that relies on one discipline to strengthen another.

Humility sustains the person by helping them to ascertain their divine mission and vision in architectural form as they build in harmony with creation. With a vocation rooted in a service profession, an architect is responsible for meeting the client’s needs, as well as the needs of the public, protecting their health, safety and welfare.

Sustainability is rooted in spirituality. Sustainability seeks for us to be in relationship with nature and the order

of the universe, and architectural design is concerned with the meaningful imposition of order.

They have mutually beneficial goals, but they are considerate of creation before the Creator. An authentic relationship with creation offers praise and thanksgiving to God first and care of each other second. This is living sustainably.

Each of us has a purpose, and I find mine in the Collect of Week Four, Monday Lauds in the *Liturgy of the Hours for Benedictine Oblates of Saint Meinrad Archabbey*.

Lord God,
who entrusted the earth to men
to till and care for it,
and made the sun to serve their needs:
give us grace this day to work
faithfully for your glory
and for our neighbor’s good.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ
your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever. Amen.

Robert Siebenaller, oblate
Toledo, OH



Andrew Kosegi and Bridget Kosegi were invested as oblate novices in the Archabbey Church by Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB.

Voices from the Past

Editor's note: The following is from an article that appeared in a 1925 issue of the oblate newsletter, as written by Fr. Henry Brenner, OSB. Oblate Michael Edwards of Evanston, IN, condensed the original article.

Pride, the firstborn of the devil, has, in turn, three children. The first is presumption, the second is ambition and the third is vainglory.

Pride being defined as “an excessive love of our own superiority,” it follows that presumption, ambition and vainglory all draw their own conclusions from this parent principle. The principle, as we see from the definition, is inordinate self-exaltation. Let us examine each of these three children of pride in turn.

Presumption advises a man to go beyond his real power or ability, or at least to risk doing so. What is it but presumption, even in natural life, to make debts without weighing well one's assets? Such a foolish person presumes, either on his own abilities, possessions or the like, or he presumes on the good will or possessions of others.

In the spiritual life, presumption follows the same lines. A presumptuous soul goes ahead without thinking, doing this and that regardless of the possibility of injustice or lack of charity. It supposes of God what is not true, or what is at the most very doubtful. Such are those people who say: “Oh, we'll all get to heaven; don't fear.” To suppose that God will treat the good in the same manner as the bad is surely presuming, for it overthrows the idea of justice.

Ambition is an inordinate longing after positions of influence and honor. By it, a man lifts himself above his fellows by force, or at least tries to. This force may be in the form of source, as such, as in the case of a tyrant who compels everyone to do his bidding without the least hesitance, no matter how unreasonable the demands may be.

This force may possess the form of intrigue and mental trickery, by which a man, casting all conscience and justice aside, aims at placing himself above others. This is often the ambition that generates office-seekers unworthy of the public confidence. Of such, Shakespeare said: “They would circumvent God.” For divine laws are to them as non-existing; their own wishes and passions are the only laws they acknowledge.

Vainglory is more personal and widespread than presumption or ambition, because it requires the least ability. Any person may be vainglorious, often by reason of a merely ordinary aptness for something, since in this pride he imagines himself very extraordinary.

Thus there are people who imagine that everybody is looking at them, admiring their figure, their looks, their ways. However, the truth is that no

one pays any attention to them. When a person is vain enough to seek praise for good deeds, then such vanity is not only displeasing to God – it is also contemptuous to man himself. No one loves a boaster. ♦



From left are oblate novice Floyd Wiley and his wife oblate Pastor Carol Wiley and oblate novice Lisa Naffziger with her parents Robbie Carver and oblate Duane Carver. They all attended the investiture of the oblate novices.



Oblate Ann Frances of Rome Geraty of St. Louis, MO, (center) is surrounded by her friends, oblates and oblate novices.

Br. Martin speaks at New York oblate retreat

On September 4-6, 2015, Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, director of the Saint Meinrad oblate community, and Br. Martin Erspamer, OSB, monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, joined participants from New York, Connecticut, New Jersey and Florida at the annual New York oblate retreat held at the Mariandale Retreat Center in Ossining, NY.

Br. Martin was this year's retreat master. He is a well-known liturgical artist, whose art has been featured on the cover of *Give Us This Day*. He used art, humor and experiences in his monastic life to inspire and guide participants in living more fully in the presence of God.

This year the participants observed the ritual of investiture of oblate novices Fred Gervat and Marie Devine, as well as the promises of oblation by Florence and Ken Baney.

Oblate Council discusses new ideas for the oblate community

The Oblate Council gathered at Saint Meinrad for its 33rd meeting on October 16, 2015. Janis Dopp chaired the meeting. Also present were Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, Al Kovacs, Pat Phillips, Michelle Blalock, Jennie Latta, Ron DeMarco, Dennis Skelton and Mike Reffett. Michele Reffett served as secretary.

The meeting opened with prayer by Fr. Meinrad, followed by a unison reading of the Oblate Council Statement of Purpose.

Planning for the Meeting of Chapter Coordinators (MCC 2017) to be held in 2017 is well under way. Jennie Latta reported that the MCC 2017 theme will be "Taking Benedictine Spirituality to the World." Sr. Karen



The New York oblates posed for a picture after the closing Mass of their annual retreat, during which two were invested as oblate novices and two oblate novices made their oblation.

Joseph, OSB, has agreed to be the keynote speaker on Friday night of the conference.

Jennie suggested that possibly Chapter 3 of the *Rule*, "The Calling of Brothers and Sisters to Counsel," would be appropriate to the theme of the conference. The conference general structure will include three sessions. Ron DeMarco, Jennie Latta and Al Kovacs will be facilitators. After each session, the chapter coordinators will have the chance to participate in small group discussions.

Mike Reffett and Pat Phillips reported from the Finance Committee that the finances of the oblate community are in a very healthy position. This is due, in part, to record-setting gift giving through renewals and *Bona Opera*. The average gift amount has increased from prior years.

Fr. Meinrad expressed that he is pleased with the response of chapter coordinators in utilizing the coordinators' email group to communicate with each other.

He also expressed his excitement over newly produced car decals and oblate pins that he will take with him when going to chapter meetings. The decals

will sell for \$4 apiece and the pins are \$10. For more information, see story on page 9.

Fr. Meinrad then commented that Fr. Mark O'Keefe's recent article was sent out to all "One Bread, One Cup" attendees. It was an expensive mailing. He also explained that there are no future oblate presentations planned, unless they are requested from a "One Bread, One Cup" representative.

Fr. Meinrad noted that next year's oblate chapter meeting dates have been published in the oblate newsletter. The Bloomington Chapter dates were inadvertently omitted. They will be published in the next newsletter.

The Saint Meinrad Alumni Office contacted Fr. Meinrad to ask for permission to access the names and addresses of oblate members. They wish to include them in future invitations to take part in the annual Saint Meinrad Day of Service. The Council and Fr. Meinrad agreed to release the information to the Alumni Office. Jennie and Janis discussed the idea of "service" as being consistent with who we are as oblates.

Work on the new Facebook page for oblates was discussed by Al Kovacs.



Archabbot Justin DuVall, OSB, talks with oblates Andy Rawls and Jennie Latta.



The oblate pin, window cling and car magnet can be purchased from the Oblate Office.

He reported that Chris Topa has developed a Facebook page for oblates. It is presently a hidden, private page, and Fr. Meinrad will have the Saint Meinrad Communications Office review the page before it is made public. When made public, Al and Chris will monitor the content.

Janis Dopp reported on a pilot program of using oblates to lead the Liturgy of the Hours in selected parishes. The idea occurred after Br. John Mark Falkenhain, OSB, discussed ideas on how to interest future oblates to join the oblate program. He suggested that we think

about “what do oblates offer?” Oblates leading the prayers of the Liturgy of the Hours in parishes could be a successful way of having others see what oblates do. If this program is successful, it will be a template for other oblate chapter parishes that wish to participate.

The meeting closed with praying The Lord’s Prayer and a blessing by Fr. Meinrad. The next meeting is scheduled for April 23, 2016.

*Ronald (Ron) G. DeMarco, oblate
Cincinnati, OH*

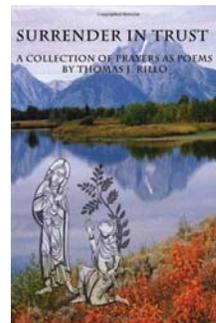
Decals and oblate pins available

Two types of car decals are now available from the Oblate Office. The decal with the Archabbey Church picture is magnetic; the other is a vinyl decal for a car’s back window. They are \$4 each.

The decals were suggested by Clyde Dorn of the Cincinnati Oblate Chapter. The Oblate Council was pleased with the suggestion from the Dorns. The Dorns are also the ones who suggested the idea of an oblate pin.

Fr. Donald Walpole, OSB, (now deceased) of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, designed the pin and it was approved by 100 oblates who were on retreat at Saint Meinrad several years ago. The cost of the oblate pin is \$10. You can order decals and pins from the Oblate Office. Handling/shipping will be added to the cost of the items.

Oblate publishes sixth book



Thomas J. Rillo, an oblate from Bloomington, IN, has written and published a sixth book of poems as prayers. *Surrender in Trust: A*

Collection of Prayers as Poems contains over 100 spiritual poems.

The book’s artwork was created by Br. Martin Erspamer, OSB, a monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey and a long-time friend of the oblate community.

All proceeds from the sale of the books will be donated to the oblate community of Saint Meinrad Archabbey. The book may be purchased directly from the author

through the Benedictine Oblate Office or at oblate and other retreats. Rillo's six books represent over 600 spiritual poems written by the poet.

Retreat examines parables of the Lord

Members of the Oblate Council and Oblate Finance Committee gathered for a time of retreat with Archabbot Justin DuVall, OSB, on October 13 and 14. He led three conferences that highlighted the parables of the Lord.

Participants were invited to read the passage, take time for silent reflection, listen to Archabbot Justin's comments and then share their thoughts. Over the course of the weekend, we read and discussed the parables of the buried treasure and the pearl (Matt. 13:44-46), the parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matt. 20:1-16), and the enacted parable of the feeding of the five thousand (Matt. 14:13-21).

In each case, Archabbot Justin encouraged us to avoid reading the parables as fables or allegories and to focus instead on the dynamism of the story. They tell us something about what the kingdom of heaven is like. For example, the parables of the buried treasure and the pearl, when read together, show that some of us may stumble upon the kingdom, while others actively seek it.

In each case, the kingdom is found to be worth more than all that we have. Put another way, the kingdom of heaven is available now to all who are willing to give their whole selves to it.

The parable of the workers in the vineyard is a different, darker story, but it tells us something about what the kingdom of heaven is like. For example, attaining the kingdom is not a matter of "justice," as we know it. Rather, just as we discovered in the parables of the buried treasure and the

pearl, the kingdom of heaven is available to all, whether we were born into the Church or happened upon it later in life.

This parable occurs within two "inversions." Jesus' encounter with the rich young man ends with the comment, "[M]any who are first will be last, and the last will be first." That is the first inversion. The second occurs at the end of the parable of the workers in the vineyard, where Jesus summarizes, "Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last." The parable in between thus emphasizes how unexpected the way of the kingdom is.

Even more surprising, perhaps, was Archabbot Justin's choice for the final reading. In fact, the reader asked whether she was reading the correct passage. We don't usually think of the story of the feeding of the five thousand as a parable, because it is presented as a historical event. Archabbot Justin suggested that it is, in fact, an "enacted parable."

Just as Jesus should be seen as the author of the other parables, He is clearly the author of the action in the story of the feeding. Archabbot Justin suggested that the action was not that of a feeding (providing food to animals or perhaps the hungry). Rather, this is a banquet. We know this, because the men and women were invited to recline. This is an anticipation of the heavenly banquet, where there will always be more than enough.

Although the story is often interpreted as an anticipation of the Eucharist, Archabbot Justin pointed out that, in fact, the Eucharist is an anticipation of the heavenly banquet. There we will not encounter the Real Presence under the species of bread and wine, but we will see the Lord as He is, in his gloriously resurrected body.

He also pointed out that this is the second of two banquet stories that appear in Matthew 14. The first is a banquet that occurred in the palace of Herod. This is the banquet that resulted in the beheading of John the Baptist. It was in response to the death of John that Jesus went to a deserted place by himself. Despite his need to be alone with his sorrow, the people followed Him.

Moved with pity for them, the Lord put aside his own needs, cured their sick and invited them to join his banquet. Archabbot Justin noted that the two banquets could not be more different: the earthly banquet of Herod versus the heavenly banquet of the Lord. The question implicit in the stories is clear: which will you choose?

*Jennie Latta, oblate
Memphis, TN*

Benedictine oblate investiture is parish event

On November 1, All Saints Day, Beverly Winner was invested as a Benedictine oblate by Fr. Ted Machnik, pastor of St. Joseph's Parish in Circleville, OH.

Following the homily, Fr. Ted invited Beverly Winner, Dr. and Mrs. James Merk and Mario Parise, a Benedictine brother from St. Andrew Abbey in Cleveland, OH, to witness the ceremony. Fr. Ted announced that the parish was blessed to now have a Benedictine oblate in their community.

After the Mass, a reception was held for Beverly and all the parishioners were invited.

*Dr. James and Rita Merk, oblates
Lancaster, OH*

OBLATIONS

August 22, 2015 – Jane Mary Magdalen Moyer of Fremont, OH;

and **Linda Frances of Rome Spohr** of Herkimer, NY

September 6, 2015 – **Kenneth Thomas Baney** and **Florence Lucy Baney**, both of Bronx, NY

September 19, 2015 – **Clintina Marjorie Cecilia Irmina Adela Cooper Simms** of Fairfield Glade, TN

September 23, 2015 – **Deacon John Andre Lyons** of Middletown, OH

September 24, 2015 – **Megan Rose Bernadette Ewell** and **Ronald Raphael Francis Ewell**, both of Burlington, KY

September 26, 2015 – **Ann Frances of Rome Geraty** of St. Louis, MO

October 24, 2015 – **Judith Ann Line Davis-Fuller** of Greenfield, IN; **Barbara John Paul McKeon** and **Daniel Joseph Oliver Plunket McKeon**, both of Cape Girardeau, MO

November 8, 2015 – **Timothy Francis Hardigan** of Portage, MI ♦

HONORARY OBLATIONS

October 18, 2015 – **Andrew Rawls** and **Malinda Rawls**, both of Holly Hill, FL ♦

INVESTITURES

June 12, 2015 – **Francisco J. Gamboa Felix** of Zacatecas, Zacatecas, Mexico

August 29, 2015 – **Grace Wiemann** of Lexington, KY

September 3, 2015 – **Elizabeth “Betsy” Osborne**, **Dr. Alejandra Spir-Haddad** and **Dorothyann Strange**, all of Bloomington, IN

September 6, 2015 – **Marie Devine** of Kings Park, NY; **Fred Gervat** of Pelham, NY

September 14, 2015 – **Charmaine Wawrzyniec** of Carleton, MI

September 16, 2015 – **John Wilson** and **Sandra “Sandy” Wilson**, both of St. Meinrad, IN

September 28, 2015 – **Jacqueline Willetta Henderson** of Tallahassee, FL

October 1, 2015 – **Susan Campbell** and **Suzanne McConnell**, both of Bloomington, IN

October 4, 2015 – **Jay VanHoosier** of Newburgh, IN

October 7, 2015 – **Jeff Pace** of Columbus, IN

October 10, 2015 – **Andrew Kosegi** and **Bridget Kosegi**, both of Greenwood, IN

October 14, 2015 – **Scott McKee** of Greens Fork, IN

October 21, 2015 – **Daniel Bashore** of Indianapolis, IN

October 22, 2015 – **John Kuhns** of Columbus, OH

October 24, 2015 – **Sarah Wuestefeld** of Greenfield, IN

October 28, 2015 – **Lisa Naffziger** and **Floyd Wiley**, both of New Castle, IN

November 1, 2015 – **Beverly Winner** of Circleville, OH

November 13, 2015 – **Jonathon Bradford** of Elizabethtown, KY; **Corey French** of Carmel, IN ♦

ANNIVERSARIES

On Saturday, July 18, 2015, oblates **James and Rita Merk** celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary at St. Bernadette Church in Lancaster, OH. They have been the coordinators of the Lancaster, OH, Oblate Chapter for many years. ♦

DEATHS

October 5, 2015 – **Lawrence Joseph Humkey** of Peewee Valley, KY.

October 12, 2015 – **Kathy Dorsey** of West Chester, PA

October 16, 2015 – **Mary Selma Steidle** of Villa Hills, KY

October 18, 2015 – **Deacon Leonard William Baltes** of Dayton, OH

November 5, 2015 – **Elizabeth A. “Bettye” Becker** of Mt. Vernon, IN ♦

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 20-22, 2016 – The March Oblate Retreat will have Fr. Bede Cisco, OSB, as the presenter. The title of his retreat will be “Expanding the Heart: A Monastic Miscellany.”

April 16, 2016 – The Day of Recollection for the Louisville, KY, area oblates will be held. Fr. Jeremy King, OSB, will be the presenter. The title will be announced later.

May 21, 2016 – The Day of Recollection for the Ohio Oblates will be held in the Dayton area. Fr. Adrian Burke, OSB, will present “Let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ.”

June 13-16, 2016 – Saint Meinrad Study Days will be held at the Archabbey. Fr. Adrian Burke, OSB, will be the presenter on “Let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ.”

July 11, 2016 – Saint Meinrad Day of Recollection will have Fr. Barnabas Gillespie, OSB, as the presenter. His topic is “Reverence in Prayer: Should We be Concerned with Deportment or Disposition, or Both?” ♦

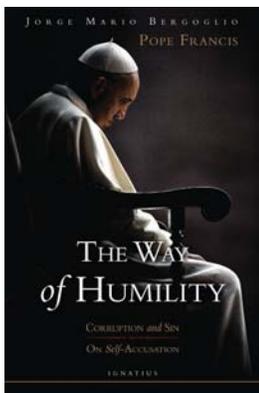
VOLUNTEERS APPRECIATED

Recent volunteers in the Oblate Office were Sandra Duffee, Mike Edwards, Dennis Skelton, Novice Tony Wolniakowski, OSB, Novice Thomas Fish, OSB, Br. Lorenzo Peñalosa, OSB, Novice Timothy Herrmann, OSB, Mike Reffett, Michele Reffett, Mary Maillet, Jerry Maillet, Vicki Taylor, Janis Dopp, Pat Linder, Steve Hulst, Jim Hulst, Francis Shivone, Mike Baxter and Candidate Joshua Leeuw. ♦



Reading Room

The Way of Humility by Jorge Mario Bergoglio; translated by Helena Scott, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2013.



In this short collection of meditations written by Pope Francis when he was Cardinal Archbishop of Buenos Aires, the Pope reflects on sin and corruption and the remedy for sin – self-accusation. The book is divided into two sections, “Corruption and Sin” and “On Self-Accusation.” Drawing on Scripture and the teachings of Christ, Francis describes

corruption and differentiates it from sin, recognizing that while we are all sinners, we do not all necessarily have a corrupt heart.

Francis begins by suggesting that to understand corruption, one must first recognize that “while corruption is a state that is intrinsically connected to sin, it is distinct from it.” Then he discusses the connection between a corrupt heart and the way a corrupt person

acts, and finally he describes the forms of corruption Jesus had to face in his time.

In “On Self-Accusation,” inspired by the writings of St. Dorotheus of Gaza, Francis describes the practice of self-accusation and argues that it was our Lord himself, by taking up the self-abasement of the cross and becoming burdened with our guilt, who justifies our personal practice of self-accusation.

It is always, says Francis, an act of humility, but the person who accuses himself makes room for God’s mercy to enter and is a person who will by necessity come close to others. The ideas contained in these reflections seem so simple, so ordinary, so obvious, and yet are so profound.

Understood properly, these words can lead one to recognize and accept that we are all sinners, and yet we are not all corrupt, and so we can choose to live in a human community that is based in hope, reality, recognition and respect for each other as children of God.

*Catherine Byers, oblate
Nineveh, IN*