

Oblate Benedictine

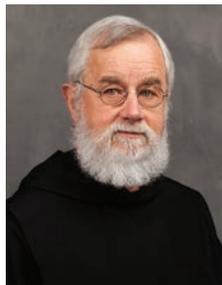


Saint Meinrad



Oblates walk to the Guest House after attending Mass in the Archabbey Church.

Vocation: Hear the call to Benedictine Oblation



Fr. Eugene Hensell, OSB

There is an abundance of material available defining and describing what a Benedictine Oblate is and what he or she does. Generally speaking, oblation is understood as the self-offering of one's life to God in association with a Benedictine monastery. While programs differ, they all share a common dynamic of a true offering that brings about true belonging to a monastic community.

At various times, I have encouraged both men and women to investigate the possibility of becoming a Benedictine Oblate. Quite often, these people will ask me, "How will I know whether or not I should become an oblate?" I have found that a difficult question to answer in any simple, objective manner.

The reason for this is that becoming an oblate is not the same as joining a church study club or a social organization. In fact, the initiative does not really come from the person himself or herself. It all begins with a call understood somehow to originate with God.

This call is real, but at the same time it is mysterious. It can raise as many questions as it provides answers. While many people have experienced this call, it is not a one-size-fits-all experience.

The place I go to get help in thinking and praying about the notion of "call" or "vocation" is the Gospel of Mark 1:16-20, where Jesus calls his first disciples. A careful reading of that story raises some important questions. Simon, Andrew, James and John are at work fishing. There is nothing unusual in that. All of a sudden, Jesus passes by them

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A POINT TO PONDER FROM *The Rule*

“Whether (the monk) is at the Divine Office, in the oratory, in the monastery, in the garden, on a journey, in the field or anywhere at all, whether sitting, walking or standing, let his head be bowed and his eyes directed downward.”

Rule of St. Benedict Chapter 7:62-64

To become a steward of God’s creation, one must first have a humble stance. A deep sense of humility will distinguish between one who loves and cares for the God-given resources of the earth and one who exploits them for personal gain.

The twelfth step of humility from the *Rule of St. Benedict* speaks to this humble stance. The Benedictine value of humility is the best source to establishing the human place in the cosmos. Humility presents a posture that is required in our moment of critical environmental degradation.

It is a humble and wholly human monastic individual, whether monk or oblate, standing in a reverent bow – in the monastery, the home, the Church, the workplace – with eyes focused attentively on the earth. Humility is the precursor to environmental stewardship.

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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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on the shore. There is no indication that they had ever seen Jesus before this moment or heard him preach or teach. He was a stranger.

Without any introduction or small talk, Jesus immediately calls these four fishermen with the invitation to follow him and he will make them fish for people. What makes this scene even stranger yet is that all four fishermen immediately leave their boats and follow Jesus.

Zebedee, the father of James and John, is left in the boat together with the hired hands wondering what just happened. Notice that none of the four fishermen asked Jesus any questions, such as: Who are you? Where did you come from and where are you going? What kind of bait is required for fishing for people? Why did you pick us?

Anyone who would have witnessed this event would have been scandalized by the action of the four fishermen who apparently left the family business to follow someone totally unknown to do something about which they know nothing. Such action would have been considered shameful and irresponsible. Why would these fishermen do such a thing? Why would Mark tell such a scandalous story?

I think there are several reasons for this. First, Mark wants to get our attention and this story succeeds in doing that. Second, Mark wants us to know that the call to follow Jesus is not necessarily something logical, rational and well thought out. The response of these fishermen to the call of Jesus comes straight from the heart and not from the brain. It is a response rooted in faith and not based on certitude.

In fact, outside the realm of faith, their response appears to be totally irresponsible. It is not easily understandable or explainable. They respond to the person of Jesus as if He

were a big magnet whose power goes directly to the hearts of these fishermen and they are drawn to him, no questions asked.

Now, notice how St. Benedict begins his rule. “Listen, O my children, to the teachings of your master, and turn to them with the ear of your heart.” Key here is the image of “the ear of your heart.” That is a wonderful image that captures the inner dynamic of a call to serve God, also referred to as a vocation.

That is precisely how Jesus called his first disciples and I am suggesting that this is the mysterious process involved in being called to become a Benedictine Oblate. It is a call *of* the heart and *to* the heart. It stems from faith rather than certitude. It does not answer a lot of our questions and thus can appear unreasonable and illogical.

In many cases, we cannot explain why we feel so strongly about responding to this call. All we know is that it is powerfully drawing us like a magnet and that we have to respond according to the dictates of our heart.

Many things can lead up to our call to be a Benedictine Oblate. We visit a monastery and we are attracted to the liturgy. We read the *Rule of St. Benedict* and we find it solid and practical. We meet other oblates and we have a sense of community and a feeling of belonging. These experiences often give a sense of having found something important for which we have been searching for a long time.

Still, none of this accurately captures the call itself. Becoming a Benedictine Oblate is responding to a call of the heart. It is a call to offer oneself in service to God through an association with a monastic community governed by the *Rule of St. Benedict* and an abbot or prioress. We might not be able to explain to others why we are doing such a thing, but in our hearts we believe it is the right thing to do.

*Fr. Eugene Hensell, OSB, monk
Saint Meinrad Archabbey*

A voice from the past

Editor's note: This is a condensed article by Fr. Gerard Ellspermann, OSB, associate oblate director from 1951-58, oblate director from 1961-69, and again from 1980-92. It appeared in a 1960s issue of the Oblate Newsletter.

Now think back! Just how many talks have you ever heard on hope? On faith and charity, yes, there have been many, but hope – very, very few. And yet hope plays a most important part in our spiritual life and needs to be stressed in our times when a lack of goal and loss of confidence and courage cause so many problems.

In a chapter entitled “The Instruments of God’s Works,” St. Benedict includes three short sayings that demand attention. He exhorts us 1) “to put one’s hope in God,” 2) “to desire eternal life with all spiritual longing,” and 3) “never to despair of God’s mercy.”

First of all, what is hope? It is a theological virtue because God is the direct object of this virtue, just as with faith and charity. The goal of our hope, the object of our expectation, is no less than God Himself, who is our supreme Good and our eternal Happiness.

Hope makes us desire God as our highest Good. But further, we hope for every

means that may lead us on to Him, i.e., grace and the forgiveness of our sins.

Here is God’s scheme for us; here is his desire; here is his plan. He has planted deep in our hearts an insatiable desire of Him, a hunger and thirst for Him that can only be satisfied when we possess Him in heaven.

What is the motive for our hope? The motive is God, for hope is founded on God’s revealed goodness and power. We hope because God is infinitely powerful and because nothing is difficult to Him. We hope because He is a loving Father, who is merciful and keeps his promise.

One can understand why St. Benedict would have us “put our hope in God.” He would have us view ourselves in our twofold relation to Him as creature and as child. He is our Creator, powerful, omnipotent, Lord of all. This “Lord God of all things” we must beseech “with all humility and purity of devotion.”

This is you, my dear oblates, whom St. Benedict addresses when he says, “If you will have true and everlasting life... turn away from evil and do good; seek after peace and pursue it. And when you have done these things, My eyes shall be upon you and My ears open to your prayers; and before you call upon Me, I will say, ‘Behold, here I am.’” ♦

Oblate novice learns to refocus priorities



Kerri Baunach

working mother of three, this has not been an easy task. I have personally

In August 2014, I was invested as a novice oblate. In the months since my investiture, I have worked to incorporate the various obligations of an oblate into my day. As a

grown in many ways and have identified my challenge areas.

I have learned a lot about Benedictine spirituality through the novice lessons and from reading the *Rule of St. Benedict*. I like the schedule the monks provide for reading the *Rule* in small chunks each day. This alone has taught me to slow down and reflect more deeply on the meaning behind the words, not just in the *Rule*, but in all my spiritual reading.

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OBLATES *In their own words*



*Oblate Mark Van Lummel
Granger, IN*

“Since becoming an oblate, I’ve focused more on perseverance. Praying the Liturgy of the Hours is a daily thing, and I find that if I miss a time, something is missing in the day. I think the greatest blessing for me is that the Liturgy of the Hours puts me in community with everyone who prays them. It is like the communion of the saints.

Also, most of my spiritual life before I became an oblate had been academic – a kind of religion in the head, mostly. The regular time of prayer is becoming more important than the head knowledge I had from seminary and college. It puts the head knowledge in perspective.

I think knowing things rationally is important, but if it’s not part of your life, it doesn’t tend to center you. When things get tough, there isn’t something you can hold on to, which I think the Liturgy of the Hours and being an oblate really helps with.”

You can learn the 4th psalm tone



Ann Smith

We know we should sing the psalms, yet we don't. They are, after all, songs and not poems. Many of us are afraid to sing in front of other people, afraid of being vulnerable. Or maybe we think the psalm tones in the back of our liturgy book look confusing.

As simply and as non-technically as possible, I am going to teach you to sing Psalm 90, which is sung every night at Compline. Psalm 90 is a lullaby, promising us that the Lord will protect us from all the things that go bump in the night. It is sung to the 4th psalm tone.

Find psalm tone 4 on page 414 of *Liturgy of the Hours for Benedictine Oblates*. There are four bars. Each bar begins with one outlined square followed by two or three solid black squares, the last of which is followed by a black dot. In each bar, the outlined square is the reciting note.

The last solid square, the one with the dot, is the final note, and the one or two solid squares in between are the preparatory notes that lead us from the reciting note to the final note. The dot tells us that the last word accent is sung on that note. It and any other extra syllables or words should be sung more softly and slowly than the notes that came before.

Now look at Psalm 90 on page 400-401. Each line of this psalm has three accent marks and, except for the last one, each stanza has four lines. (4 lines to the stanza, 4 bars to the psalm tone, one bar for each line. We'll deal with the last stanza later.)

When I'm figuring out which note to sing to which word or syllable of a psalm, I've learned it's easier if I work each line *backwards*. The final note of the bar is sung on the final accented syllable (and any syllables or words that come after it) of each line.

Then either one or two preparatory notes are sung on the one or two syllables *immediately preceding* the final note, one note per syllable. The rest of the line is sung on the reciting note.

Using italics to show the preparatory notes and bold to show the final note, this is what the first stanza of Psalm 90 looks like:

He who dwells in the shelter of *the*
Most High
And abides in the shade of the *Al-*
mighty
Says to the *Lord*: "*My refuge,*
My stronghold, my God in *whom I*
trust!"

At this point, you will need a way to play some notes. You could use a piano, pitch pipe or any musical instrument available to you. The notes for the first bar of tone 4 are **A, E, G, A**. Pick the notes out on the piano, (or whatever) and hum it. Or sing "la la la la." Let the notes flow.

If you have trouble with this, try swaying gently as you sing. Now hum or sing it again and slightly stress and lengthen the first and last notes. Don't worry if it takes you a few tries to get it.

For bar 2 the notes are **B, G, A**. Hum or "la" these notes, several times, slightly stressing and lengthening the first and last notes.

The bar 3 notes are **C, B, A, B**. Do the hum or "la."

The notes for bar 4 are **A, G, A, E**. Do the hum or "la."

Now, put them together, taking a breath at the end of each bar. You have just sung (or hummed) the 4th psalm tone. Repeat it several times until you are comfortable with the melody.

Next we put the text and music together. Line 1 of the text is sung to bar 1 of the tone. Line 2 sung to bar 2, and so on.

The reciting note of bar 1 is **A**, the preparatory notes are **E** and **G** and the final note is **A**.

Or to describe it another way:

A He who dwells in the shelter of
E *the*
G *Most*
A **High** (Remember to hold this note a little longer.)

Line 2 sung to bar 2:

B and abides in the shade of the
G *Al-*
A **mighty**
(remember to hold the **-ty**)

Line 3 and bar 3:

C says to the
B *Lord*:
A "*My*
B **refuge**, (hold the **-fuge**).

Line 4 and bar 4:

A my stronghold, my God in
G *whom*
A *I*
E **trust!**"

Continue through the psalm this way until you come to the last stanza, which has only two lines. When a stanza has two lines, we sing them to bars 1 and 4. (If a stanza has three lines, we sing them to bars 1, 2 and 4. If a stanza has six lines, we sing them to the expanded tones on page 415. And for five lines, we sing the

expanded tone omitting the bar marked “5-liner.”)

Now your adventure with the psalm tones is beginning. Look through your liturgy book and find other psalms that use the 4th tone and try them out. You may even become adventurous and try the expanded tone on page 415. Or try one of the other psalm tones.

If you have computer access, go to www.saintmeinrad.org and click on The Monastery. Then on the left side of the page, click on Liturgical Music, then click on Downloads, then Other. Scroll down to number 5, Modal Psalm Tones, and click on Modern Notation to find the psalm tones in what will probably be a more familiar look.

Or scroll down to the bottom to number 16, Psalm Tone Demonstrations, to hear each of the psalm tones sung. When you feel confident enough, invite another oblate over and teach him or her Psalm 90 sung to the 4th tone.

And, finally, if you still think you simply cannot do this, remember the words of St. Benedict: “What is not possible to us by nature, let us ask the Lord to supply by the help of his grace.”

*Ann Smith, oblate
Gahanna, OH*



Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, invested Joseph Krivos, who is a senior at the University of Notre Dame and a candidate for the Holy Cross Fathers. The ceremony was held in the Chapter Room of the monastery.

Oblate pin can serve as ‘gentle’ witness



Ron DeMarco

As I sat down at our church prayer group meeting, a friend pointed to the oblate pin on my jacket and asked, “What’s that?” I answered, “I’m a Benedictine Oblate.” Puzzled, he looked at me and replied, “You’re a what?” His inquiry opened the door for a wonderful dialog and gave me the opportunity to explain to him who we are as Christ-centered oblates of St. Benedict.

I shared with him that Benedictine Oblates are Christian men and women who yearn for a spiritual life deeply rooted in God. The name “oblate” signifies one whose life becomes a generous oblation or offering of self to God.

“So how do you do this, and what does it bring to you?” he asked. Well, I responded, our church prayer group meeting just now was special, wasn’t it? Yet we leave this meeting and may tend to lose some spiritual momentum as we go back into our everyday life.

Yet, for me, when I became affiliated with the Benedictine monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in their oblate program, I became bonded with the monastic community in daily prayer and serving God. We share a spiritual union and human friendship.

Oblates join the monks in the practice of our faith through the

Rule of St. Benedict, which applies the teachings of Jesus in the gospels to our daily life. Our spiritual momentum stays high as we daily practice our duties as oblates and extend Benedictine values into our family life, work and social obligations. As a result, we have many opportunities for turning the ordinary Christian life into something spiritually extraordinary. Hence we can truly live the “Christ life” to the fullest.

The exchange I just described with my prayer group friend is an experience I might have anywhere when wearing my oblate pin. Other oblates have mentioned similar experiences while wearing the medal of St. Benedict on a chain around their neck, attached to one’s rosary or placed in their car or home.

Our religious articles are intended to remind us of God and to stir up in us a ready willingness and desire to serve God and our neighbor. If, in wearing them, they become a vehicle to someone that kindles an interest to learn more about our faith and being a Benedictine Oblate, isn’t that serving our neighbor?

A “gentle” way to witness. Not pushy, because we need only speak about it if we are asked. And just as importantly, if we are not asked, wearing our medal or pin remains a constant reminder to us in silent prayer of our dignity as followers of Christ.

*Ron DeMarco, oblate
Cincinnati, OH*

Lent Retreat focuses on ‘The Presence of God’



Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, gives information to the newly invested oblate novice, Betty Ueding, on March 21.

About 65 oblates of Saint Meinrad Archabbey attended the March 20-22 Lenten retreat. These special days were filled with prayer, study and celebration.

The retreat coincided with the Solemnity of the Passing of Our Holy Father St. Benedict on Saturday, March 21. The oblates joined the monastic community, students and guests for a beautiful Mass of celebration.

There were other opportunities to pray together with the monks at Vigils and Lauds, Mass, Noon Prayer, Vespers and Compline. For many, these were high points of the oblate time together and a reminder that the Benedictine life is one of “*ora et labora*.”

The conferences, a way of working together (*labora*), were led by Fr. Mark O’Keefe, OSB, with the general theme of “The Presence of God.” Each session with Fr. Mark highlighted an aspect of what it means to be aware of

the presence of the hidden God, a “mysticism” of the ordinary, of the everyday.

The initial session introduced the concept of this awareness of God. The rest of the conferences dealt with “The Awareness of God’s Presence Within Us” (“God dwells deep within each one of us”), “The Presence of Christ in the Eucharist” (“The school of the Eucharist is a school of becoming more attentive to the presence of God”), “The Presence of God in Suffering” (“Mature faith comes in the awareness of the cross and Christ’s witness to us of surrender, trust, acceptance and hope”) and “The Presence of God in the Ordinary Events of Daily Life” (St. Theresa of Avila teaches us that “the Lord walks among the pots and pans”).

Fr. Mark brought a rich personal sense of God’s presence in sessions that were enlightening, fresh and filled with humor. The oblates especially appreciated some added meditations on joy, gratitude and hope.

Special for the oblates was the opportunity to participate in the investiture of one oblate novice and the oblation of eight men and women. There was also the celebration and renewal of oblation of an oblate on his 25th anniversary. These prayerful moments are a visible sign of the community of oblates and their spiritual connection to Saint Meinrad.

Br. Maurus Zoeller, OSB, was a most gracious host for our times of refreshment. What a witness to Benedictine hospitality!

Prayer and work, community, fidelity and hospitality are all at the heart of the oblate vocation. Each time of retreat together strengthens these values and the bonds between us.

*David Brindle, oblate
Muncie, IN*



Fr. Mark O’Keefe, OSB, gives a conference to the oblate retreatants on March 21.



From left: Sandy Seckinger, Pam Mathias, Sherie Berg, Richard Barrett and Neal Jackson make their oblation in the Guest House Chapel on March 21. Three others who made their oblation are not pictured.



John Ferguson and Rosemary Stockbauer drove through 11 inches of snow to oblates Oliver and Sharon Ogden's home to be invested as oblate novices right before Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, (right) left for the airport in Harrisburg, PA. The oblate chapter meeting the night before was cancelled due to the snowstorm. The investiture ceremony took place in East Petersburg, PA, on March 6, 2015.



Br. William Sprauer, OSB, invested Monica Siemer as an oblate novice during the oblate chapter meeting in Columbus, OH, on February 26, 2015.

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I'm growing spiritually, but I have a long way to go. Don't we all? To aid my growth, I have reset some priorities in my life and have learned to focus on the things that truly matter (namely, God and family). While I still have a tremendous amount of work ahead of me, the small changes I have made so far have been extremely helpful and will continue to be important as I meet the challenges I face.

Prayer has always been my biggest challenge. I am buoyed by the thought of praying in communion with the monks of the monastery and with all the oblates. Although I can't see everyone, I love knowing that we are all connected.

Technology is helping me to overcome my challenges. I have found an app that alerts me to read the day's Gospel passage and I have started downloading podcasts of the Liturgy of the Hours with which to pray. These things have aided me in my desire to pray more frequently and to pray better.

No matter how successful I am in following the obligations of an oblate, I am always reminding myself that none of it matters unless I'm growing closer to Christ. Prayer, spiritual reading, the *Rule of St. Benedict* and my novice lessons are all useless unless Christ is at the center.

I pray that between now and when I become an oblate, I will continue to remember to keep Christ in the center of all that I do. Please pray for me and all novice oblates as we continue on our journey of discernment.

*Kerri Baunach, oblate novice
Lexington, KY*

Day of Recollection focuses on discipleship



Tracy Andres

This fall's Day of Recollection in the New York/New Jersey and Connecticut region included a visit from Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, and the

president-rector of Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology, Fr. Denis Robinson, OSB. His two conferences challenged us to find both the humor and the profundity of being a disciple of Jesus Christ by more deeply living out our oblate calling.

This deeper call to oblate relationship started with an introduction by Fr. Denis on the conditions and context of Roman Catholic dioceses in the U.S., today and over the past 60 years. Decreases in number of priests, decreases in Catholic schools, increases in the number of permanent deacons, and decreases in parish populations and church attendance, in spite of offering more Masses, have created "emptier churches whose people and financial resources cannot be sustained well over time."

Instead of being pessimistic, Fr. Denis suggested that true revitalization was at hand and would require being attentive to a number of issues:

- 1) What is a church going to do to help people become and sustain themselves as adults in today's world (i.e., Bible study, faith formation, mentorship/accompaniment)?
- 2) How is the Church to offer true and authentic Catholic education that does not continuously cave in to an agenda of secular culture?

- 3) What is a parish willing to do to be open to the concerns and gifts of Hispanics, the fastest-growing group in the American Roman Catholic Church today?
- 4) What is a parish willing to do to authentically reach out and help the poor and marginalized – those who are considered an "embarrassment" to others, no matter what the current political and social climate might be?

Fr. Denis' second conference then asked us to learn something from Pope Francis, through his apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*:

- 1) Acknowledge that there is a problem, that the Church Universal is indeed sick.
- 2) Faithfully embrace that while the Church is sick, it cannot be "killed" by any human being or institution. However, the quality of its survival and thriving is impacted by human will and agency.
- 3) The parish family is the contributing, "building block" gift to the Church – not a bureaucracy or an ecclesial organization or an individual, charismatic personality.
- 4) Jesus Christ is the divine gift of "identity, energy, guidance and foundation" of the Church, not a theoretical idea or money.

Also, while the two challenges of new religious movements and moral and dogmatic relativism, as well as the temptations of Gnosticism (knowing better and more than others) and Neoplatonism (feeling more superior or better than others) cause a diminishment or disappearance of Christian discipleship in the human heart, Benedictine spiritual tradition offers at least two (if not more) "balms of Gilead" to these trials.

It brings healthy doses of both humility and a willingness to physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually participate as individuals and as a family community in the spirit as offerings – oblations – to the true source and summit of not just Christian discipleship, but of Christian life: Jesus Christ Our Lord and Savior.

Fr. Denis' homily at the Eucharist celebration before lunch helped everyone to acknowledge that the Advent season calls us to embrace what it means to be awake not only to the upcoming festivities and joy of Christmas, but to the lack of perfection in ourselves and the world – the sinfulness, coldness and gloom, and the ever-possible moment when all of what we are and know will go through a period of final judgment and destruction.

But of instead of complaining, whining or panicking, we have before us and with us Jesus Christ, a righteous and merciful Judge, who wants us to have the courage to go through a holy cleansing so that we can be more free to pray, preach, give, appreciate, respect and love.

As always, deep gratitude to all who make it possible for these visitations from the Archabbey, with special thanks to all of the confreres who take the time out of their busy schedules to be with us incarnationally.

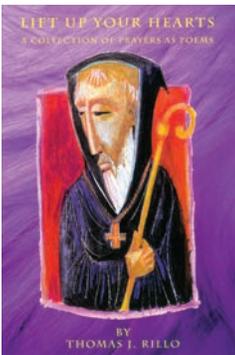
Tracy Andres, oblate
Bronx, NY

Oblate Fr. Hilary Meny celebrates 100th birthday

Both Archbishop Joseph Tobin, CSsR, of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and Bishop Charles Thompson of the Diocese of Evansville visited Fr. Hilary Meny on his 100th birthday. Fr. Meny

has been an oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey for 83 years. He was invested by Fr. Stephen Thuis, OSB, on June 7, 1931, and he made his oblation on June 12, 1932. He took the oblate name Vincent. We wish him many blessings and graces on this special celebration.

New poetry book for sale



Oblate Thomas Rillo of Bloomington, IN, has written a new poetry book, "Lift Up Your Hearts: A Collection of Prayers as Poems." A copy of the book can

be purchased from the Oblate Office for \$10. He is donating the money from the sale of his book to the oblate ministry.

Morning Lauds prayed daily in parish

Oblate Jerome Woehler from Haubstadt, IN, writes that SS. Peter and Paul Parish has been praying morning lauds since March 1, 2011. They are still going strong. It is prayed every morning before Mass, rosary or Communion. Also, Jerry is active in the Cursillo Movement in the Diocese of Evansville.

Oblate writes reflection booklet

Oblate Deacon William Sweet of the Diocese of Owensboro recently assembled a 15-day reflection and meditation booklet based on Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium*. In the booklet, he provides the reader with an opportunity for *lectio divina*, meditation, prayer, written reflection and additional spiritual resources. He titled his booklet "Growing into Discipleship: Reflections on *Evangelii Gaudium* "The Joy of the Gospel.""

Oliver Ogden is adoration coordinator

Oliver Ogden, chapter coordinator for the Lancaster, PA, Oblate Chapter, is also the coordinator of the 24-hour perpetual adoration at St. Joseph's Church in Lancaster. The Adoration Chapel is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for adoration.

Perpetual adoration at St. Joseph's is in its 18th year and involves 237 committed souls. St. Joseph's is the only 24/7 perpetual adoration chapel in the Lancaster Deanery. The program was instituted by the late Msgr. Thomas Smith, church pastor for 22 years, after he visited a perpetual adoration chapel in Ohio. He considered it a highlight of his ministry. Oliver has been the adoration coordinator for nine years.

Online book communities are offered

Oblates are welcome to join the online book community offered through the Lay Degree Program and facilitated by Br. Zachary Wilberding, OSB.

The next selection is *A Banqueter's Guide to the All-Night Soup Kitchen of the Kingdom of God* by Patrick T.

McCormick. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2004, 147 pages.

McCormick teaches Christian ethics at Gonzaga University. In this book, he explores how the Eucharist teaches us justice through the metaphors of bread, table, body and sacrifice.

The dates are June 21-August 22, 2015. The deadline for registration is June 7.

The second selection is *Walking with Mary: A Biblical Journey from Nazareth to the Cross* by Edward Sri. New York: Image, 2013, 170 pages.

From the book jacket: "In *Walking with Mary*, Edward Sri looks at the key passages in the Bible concerning Mary and offers insight into the Blessed Mother's faith and devotion that we can apply to our daily lives. We follow her step-by-step through the New Testament account of her life, reflecting on what the Scriptures tell us about how she responded to the dramatic events unfolding around her."

The dates are September 6-November 7, 2015. Deadline for registration is August 15.



Candidates Timothy Herrmann, OSB, and Thomas Fish, OSB, were honored with a special cake and party in appreciation for their three months of working in the Oblate Office.

To register, enter Saint Meinrad Online Reading Communities in your browser and click on register now. The fee for each online reading community is \$40, which covers the cost of the book and administrative expenses. The book will be mailed to you after you register. ♦

INVESTITURES

October 22, 2014 – **Jaime Chunda** of Leonardtown, MD

November 13, 2014 – **Fr. Yossi Sarid** of Las Cruces, NM

December 13, 2014 – **Robert Colquett** of Louisville, KY; **Judy Herzog** and **Norman Herzog**, both of Cannelton, IN

December 27, 2014 – **Ryan Walker** of Fort Wayne, IN

December 30, 2014 – **Dr. Steven Coates** of Bethany Beach, DE

January 2, 2015 – **Mary Preetha Valentine** of San Francisco, CA

January 8, 2015 – **Sue Doorlay** of Bloomington, IN

February 3, 2015 – **John Das** of New Philadelphia, OH

February 6, 2015 – **Sally Ann Beale** of Muncie, IN

February 7, 2015 – **Julianna Horton** of Louisville, KY

February 10, 2015 – **Samuel Hipps** of Farragut, TN

February 13, 2015 – **Christine Hoffer** and **Paul Hoffer**, both of New Franklin, OH

February 18, 2015 – **Chad Meister** of Granger, IN

February 22, 2015 – **Carmen (Karin) Mendoza** of Bethel, OH

February 26, 2015 – **Monica Siemer** of Columbus, OH

March 6, 2015 – **John Ferguson** and **Rosemary Stockbauer**, both of Lancaster, PA ♦

OBLATIONS

December 13, 2014 – **Catherine Scholastica Clare Osborne** of Wasilla, AK; **Shirley Lynn Francis Casebolt** of Tell City, IN; **Timothy Tarcisius Elder** of Corydon, IN; **Brian Curtis Augustine Finet** of Monticello, IL; **Teresa Gabriella Ippoliti** of St. Meinrad, IN; **Catherine Anne Kelker** and **David Paul Kelker Jr.**, both of Fort Wayne, IN; **Mary Louise Anne Reed** and **Peyton John Fisher Reed**, both of Williamsburg, OH

December 15, 2014 – **Tonya Kaitlyn Scholastica Castagna** of Roanoke, VA

January 8, 2015 – **Deepak Benedict Frank** of Columbus, IN

January 31, 2015 – **Richard Maurus Lively** of Brownsburg, IN ♦

DEATHS

July 28, 2012 – **Mrs. Dolores Rogers** of Zanesville, OH

August 28, 2013 – **Ms. Maeve Carr** of Woodside, NY

November 12, 2014 – **Mr. Charles Vernia** of New Albany, IN

November 21, 2014 – **Mr. Charles Campbell** of Jasper, IN

December 19, 2014 – **Mr. Alvin Bynum** of Indianapolis, IN

December 22, 2014 – **Mr. Edmund Sullivan** of Evansville, IN

January 13, 2015 – **Ms. Frances Lux** of Tulsa, OK

February 25, 2015 – **Ms. Mary Galloway** of Monticello, IN. Mary was 99 and a half years old. ♦

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 16, 2015: The Day of Recollection for the Ohio Oblates will be held in the Columbus, OH, area. Br. Martin Erspamer, OSB, will be the presenter on “Living in the Presence of God: An Oblate’s Lifelong Work.”



The planning committee for the 2016 Regional Meeting of the Midwest Woodlands Region of Benedictine Monasteries was held on March 13 and 14. From left are Cindy Neville, oblate of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, IN; Gail Michalack, oblate of St. Walburg Monastery in Covington, KY; Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, of Saint Meinrad Archabbey; Janis Dopp (chair), oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey; Sr. Brenda Engleman, OSB, oblate director at Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, IN; and Kathy Caudill, oblate of St. Scholastica Monastery in Chicago, IL. The Regional Meeting will be held at Saint Meinrad in October 2016. There are 16 Benedictine monasteries in the region.

June 15-18, 2015: Saint Meinrad Study Days will take place at the Archabbey. Br. John Mark Falkenhain, OSB, will speak on “Oblation as a Vocation.”

July 17, 2015: The Day of Recollection at Saint Meinrad Archabbey will feature Br. William Sprauer, OSB, speaking on “Seeing Clearly: Challenging Our Perceptions of God and Reality.”

September 4-6, 2015: The New York oblates will celebrate their annual Labor Day weekend retreat with Br. Martin Erspamer, OSB. The topic will be “Oblation as a Vocation.”

September 12, 2015: The Lancaster, PA, Day of Recollection in the Amish country will have Br. Martin Erspamer, OSB. He will speak on “Oblation as a Vocation.” ♦

VOLUNTEERS APPRECIATED

Recent volunteers in the Oblate Office were Mike Edwards, Novice Thomas Fish, OSB, Novice Timothy Herrmann, OSB, Novice Jinu Thomas, OSB, Novice Peter Szidik, OSB, Novice Jonathan Blaize, OSB, Novice Charles Peñalosa, OSB, Gerry Maillet, Mary Maillet, Dennis Skelton, Suzy Kalmar, Mike Reffett. ♦



Oblate James Lambert enjoyed the Epiphany Celebration during the Evansville Chapter meeting on January 4, 2015.



Oblate Lance Schortmann and his wife Jeanette of Louisville, KY, hosted the Epiphany Party for the Louisville Chapter. The three kings were chosen by finding a Hershey Kiss in a cupcake. From left are Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB; oblate novice Robert Colquett, Br. Andre DeDecker, OSB; oblate Kevin Maloney, oblate novice Karen Cassidy, and shepherd Hank Gnadinger.

Oblate life: Annual personal evaluation

To see how well you are fulfilling your vocation as an oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, reflect on the following questions. These questions are for your personal consideration and evaluation, so that you may see how you are growing as an oblate. The oblate directors are convinced that if you sincerely reflect on these questions, you can only deepen your relationship with God. And in doing so, you are truly growing in Benedictine spirituality as an oblate.

1. What have I done during the past year to continue ongoing formation as an oblate?
2. What do I plan to do during the coming year?
3. How well do I see myself living the oblate promises: (Rate yourself on a scale of 1–5, with 1 as “needing improvement” and 5 as “doing well.”)
 - Stability of heart? 1 2 3 4 5
 - Fidelity to the spirit of the monastic life? 1 2 3 4 5
 - Obedience to the will of God? 1 2 3 4 5
4. How well do I see myself fulfilling the oblate duties:
 - Praying the Liturgy of the Hours? 1 2 3 4 5
 - Reading from the *Rule of St. Benedict*? 1 2 3 4 5
 - Daily practice of *lectio divina*? 1 2 3 4 5
 - Participating in the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation or in my own faith tradition of church and prayer? 1 2 3 4 5
 - Attentiveness to God’s presence in my ordinary, daily life? 1 2 3 4 5
5. In what ways can I offer my time, talent and treasure to the services of the Oblate Community of Saint Meinrad Archabbey?
6. If I need to improve in any of these areas, what do I plan to do?



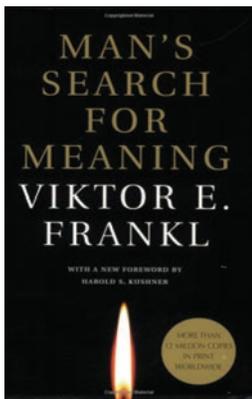
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Reading Room

Frankl, Viktor E. *Man's Search for Meaning*. Boston, Mass: Beacon Press, 2006.



Imagine sitting at home with your loved ones when the door flies open and officials with weapons tear you from your chairs and march you outside to waiting vehicles to take you away. You are separated from your family, whom you will never see again.

This highly readable book is written by a famous Austrian psychiatrist who survived

Auschwitz and the loss of his wife and daughter. It is divided into two parts. The first part is about his experiences in Auschwitz, and the second is a brief explanation of his therapeutic procedure, logotherapy.

In both sections, Dr. Frankl explores the question of why some survive the camp while others do not. In a

straightforward way, he relates his experiences and those of others. He found that survival did not depend on physical strength, intelligence or other usually mentioned human attributes.

It seemed that if one believed there was some meaning to his or her existence, that belief could carry them through the horrific ordeal. According to Frankl, "... this striving to find meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force in humans."

The last sentence in the book is filled with faith and a deep belief in God. "We have come to know Man as he really is. After all, man is that being who invented the gas chambers of Auschwitz; however, he is also that being who entered those gas chambers upright with the Lord's Prayer or the Shema Yisrael on his lips."

This book will make a difference in how you view life.

*Mike Edwards, oblate
Evanston, IN*