

Oblate Benedictine



Saint Meinrad



From left, Donna Hardy, Jerry Gorup, Sharon Gorup, Ruby Jackson and Larry Jackson enjoy remarks by Br. John Mark Falkenhain, OSB, during Oblate Study Days, June 15-18.

My Oblate Vocation: It begins with a call



Stephen Drees, oblate

In its divine genius, the Church offers varied ways for people to live out their Christian vocation. The ordained, religious and laity all have unique roles.

Priests administer the sacraments. Religious brothers and sisters – monks and nuns – are prayer warriors who also typically have apostolates as teachers, writers, chaplains, missionaries, spiritual and retreat directors, and others.

The vast majority of Christians are not ordained or religious; they are married or single living in the world. Because the early monastics were not ordained clergy, from the beginning the Benedictines have always been comfortable collaborating with the laity and embracing their role within the Body of Christ.

The oblate vocation is a “middle way” for the laity to live in the world, but with the spiritual support and guidance of an ancient religious order and rule rooted in relationship with a specific monastery.

While each vocation is as unique as the person, there are typically three marks of an authentic vocation – the call, the discernment and the response. My call came three distinct times over a number of years.

The first call came as a whisper nearly 20 years ago as I read an article in a travel magazine about monasteries and people who visit them. For reasons I could not explain then, the idea sounded interesting and appealing to me. I added it to my bucket list, but didn't give it much more thought.

The second call came 10 years ago when I was invited by some men in my parish to

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A POINT TO PONDER FROM *The Rule*

“Hour by hour keep careful watch over all you do, aware that God’s gaze is upon you wherever you may be. As soon as wrongful thoughts come into your heart, dash them against Christ and disclose them to your spiritual father.”

Rule of St. Benedict Chapter 4:48-49

St. Benedict reminds us to always be aware of God’s presence in our lives. The image of God’s presence urges us to reveal our evil thoughts in reconciliation, which can be interpreted as the rock of Christ. This is the least lovely reference and yet it is a highly effective one. The consciousness of God’s presence demands of us a change of heart that implies an increase in Christ and a decrease in ourselves.

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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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join them on a weekend retreat to the Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani. One friend was so insistent and said, “You have to go. I can just see you there.” Clearly, he saw or sensed something I still did not.

I did go on that weekend retreat and it began an annual tradition for me. It also began to draw me into reading and studying about monastic spirituality and learning how to pray the Liturgy of the Hours.

Five years ago, the third call came in a spiritual direction session with a monk at Gethsemani. I inquired if there was a way for the laity to become more involved in their monastic community. I was told the Cistercians don’t have a formal means to connect to the order or the abbey, but the Benedictines do and was encouraged to contact Saint Meinrad Archabbey.

I visited Saint Meinrad, learned about the oblate vocation and soon after began my novitiate. I was now in full-fledged discernment and, over the course of 18 months, I continued to read and study, particularly about the *Rule of St. Benedict*. I settled into praying Lauds, Vespers and Compline daily.

When I made my final oblation in the Archabbey Church, it was my definitive response to a call to embrace a vocation that began many years earlier. Although at the time it felt like the end of a long journey, I quickly learned it was just the beginning.

Every oblate vocation has elements that are similar and communal, but also very individual and personal. I refer to my oblate vocation as my “Little Apostolate.” I try my best to perform the daily spiritual disciplines of personal and liturgical prayer, reading part of the *Rule of St. Benedict* and *lectio divina*.

I am involved in parish ministries and I am also engaged in reading and study,

writing, speaking, catechesis, apologetics, ecumenical dialogue and outreach. I participate in a local oblate chapter and I visit the Hill when I can. One of the monks graciously serves as my spiritual director and has become a good friend and confidant.

Perhaps the most personally gratifying part of my vocation is serving as a bridge between the monastery and the outside world – bringing them into contact and relationship with each other. It’s a role well suited for a lay person like me who is engaged in both the religious and secular realms.

My oblate vocation has become a way for me to take my disparate spiritual activities and pull them together into a rhythm of prayer and work that enables me to serve the Church and the world as only I can.

God has a real knack of using broken vessels to do His will. All we have to do is listen for His call – as St. Benedict encourages – and answer Him with a humble and enthusiastic “yes.” I, for one, am blessed that I did.

*Stephen Drees, oblate
Mason, OH*



Br. Martin Erspamer, OSB, was the presenter during the Day of Reflection for the oblates of Ohio, held at Columbus.

A voice from the past

Editor's note: This article is a condensation of an article from the October 1970 Oblate Newsletter.

According to our study of the Catechism, we know that the fifth commandment forbids killing souls as well as bodies. Sins of scandal are as deadly to man's spiritual self as nitroglycerin is to the physical body. But there are some thoughts for us to weigh regarding the killing of the body.

Some spiritual writers and ascetical teachers have used so many condemnatory names for our bodies that we think of them mainly as handicaps on our course to heaven. But the fact is, without the body, we would not be.

We cannot merit a single grace without that sacred temple of the Holy Spirit, and when we go into eternity, it will be in the faithful companionship of that body. Christ chose to redeem us in a human body. He places His greatest creation – the human soul – in a human body. We are obliged to love and respect these bodies.

As Christians, we are aware of the need to subdue the body and all its members. Yet the body is a gift of God, noble, precious in its own right. St. Paul gives such contrasting texts as: "If you live according to the flesh you shall die" and "He that soweth in the flesh shall reap corruption, but he that soweth in the

spirit shall reap corruption, but he that soweth in the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting."

History of people and nations, as well as individuals, shows that mankind has always struggled to free the spirit from the flesh. But we do not expect ever to read of an age, nor do we expect science to bring us to an age, when man was or will be master of all his powers.

Men have tried both methods to have personal peace. They have tried to forget or kill or crush the soul to silence conscience, to deny spiritual values, and have tried to bring the body from bondage into freedom; they have failed. Others have tried to crush the body, to starve it to death, to beat it into insensibility so that the soul could be free; and they, too, have failed. Both are unnatural.

The body, however rebellious, is an integral part of man's nature. He must be saved body and soul or he cannot be saved at all. In His life on earth, our Lord refused to deal with man merely as a spiritual being.

He even gave us His Body and Blood for our heavenly food. We dare not, then, indulge the body too much, nor ill-treat it. Heathen asceticism wanted to get rid of the body as an enemy to be hated; Christian asceticism wants to train it for its glorious life in heaven. ♦

OBLATES *In their own words*



*Oblate Mary Ann McMullen
Dayton, OH*

"The oblate life has changed my life in that I am more grounded. I feel that I have more peace and direction and I'm on the right path. I feel like I have a definite path to follow and I know where it's going.

Being an oblate impacted me to pursue my religion further than I would have without it, to delve deeper. It has improved my relationship in every respect.

The chapter is almost like a second family and I look forward to going to the meetings.... When one of the monks is coming, we meet them for lunch.

Oblate life, in general, not just the chapter, has grounded me. I feel so much more solid. I feel much more able to deal with whatever life is throwing at me, because I have that path and that direction to fall back on."



New oblates gather around the altar where they signed their oblation charts and placed them on the altar.

Sharing the Wealth: About Our Chapters

A brief history of the Indianapolis Oblate Chapter



Mike Burns

The Indianapolis Oblate Chapter is the fifth oldest chapter and was established in the 1940s. The first entry for the chapter was an investiture of a husband and wife, parents of one of the monks of Saint Meinrad.

Fr. Bernadine Shine, OSB, was director of oblates from 1940-45. In *The Oblate Letter* of January 1942, you could order *The Daily Companion for Oblates*, newly published, for 15 cents postpaid.

1946 showed the Indianapolis Chapter met quarterly at St. John's and that the group started in February that year. There was a conference followed by investitures, oblations, a business meeting and, lastly, a social for the members and guests.

There was always an effort to recruit new members and it's worth noting that 11 men made their investiture in March 1947. At the same time, a chairman and vice-chairman were appointed to the group. In 1948, a secretary and treasurer were added. The meetings were moved to the Catholic Community Center in Indianapolis.

In 1949, the men outnumbered the women for the first time since the war began. There were notes of several oblates who were killed in action during that period. That same year, the meetings were held at St. Mary's Church and Catholic Community Center in the city. An Advent Day of Recollection was also held that year.

Fr. Walter Sullivan, OSB, was director of oblates from 1945-58. The chapter still met quarterly in 1950 and also scheduled an Advent Day of Recollection at Marian College.

In November 1952, a Married Couples Group started. The meetings were held in private homes on the second Saturday evening from September to November inclusive.

The next five years saw a decline in chapter meeting attendance, and the Advent Day of Recollection was not held. It resumed in 1959. Mr. Fred Fries and Mrs. Mary Kune were very active as president and secretary for many years.

Fr. Paschal Boland, OSB, director of oblates from 1959-61, worked closely with Mary updating records and organizing the chapter. Again, a push was on to increase membership and attendance at meetings. Beech Grove was used as a location for the Advent Day of Recollection during this period. In October 1964, Archabbot Ignatius Esser, OSB, attended and spoke at the meeting, and it was well attended.

December 1964 saw the loss of Mr. Al Woederman, who was very active in the chapter. Archabbot Bonaventure Knaebel, OSB, and Fr. Paschal Boland, OSB, attended and led the Office of the Dead at the funeral home. Mary Kune passed away in January 1968 and was noted as a person who helped spearhead the Indianapolis Chapter.

Attendance at chapter meetings during the winter meetings of 1976-77 averaged about 12 oblates. It was noted that several years had passed without a Day of Recollection and it

would be resumed by the chapter and would include the Married Couples Group. Fr. Jerome Palmer, OSB, director of oblates from 1969-80, would conduct the exercise and celebrate Mass at St. Mary's Church.

1986 marked the passing of Denis White of the Married Couples Group. He was praised for his love of Church and enthusiasm of the oblate cause. His wife Helen passed away in 1989 and was co-coordinator of the Married Couples Group, arranging meetings, contacting members and entertaining members at her home. Fr. Michael Keene, OSB, was director of oblates from 1992-95.

Fr. Michael Keene, OSB, celebrated a solemn feast day Mass at St. John's Church Downtown in July 1996. Eleven oblates were present for the Mass, reflection and lunch provided by the pastor.

Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, oblate director since 1995, offered Mass in the private home of one of our oblates followed by a conference, investitures and social in November 1997. There was a period that meetings were held in private homes, but it is difficult to determine when that started. Meetings, going forward, were to be held in the chapel at the former convent at St. Therese of the Little Flower.

February 1998 saw the completion of the revised *Oblate Companion*. There were over 3,000 assembled by many of the oblates. Jerry Maillet, an oblate from Indianapolis, put the tabs in the last manual.

May 1998 saw the retirement of Chapter Coordinator Bernice Davey. She was recognized for her years of service. The new and current

coordinators, Pat and Barbra Phillips, volunteered to take over her duties.

The oblate program continued to grow not only on the local level, but also nationally. As of September 2000, there were 989 oblates and novices. That same year, the oblate pins were made available.

The Indianapolis Chapter had grown so much that it had to find a new meeting place! Having met on the second Saturday of most winter months at Little Flower Parish Center since January 1977, the group had more than doubled from the 15 members who first gathered there.

The first meeting held at Holy Spirit was May 12, 2001, and was attended by 37 of the 105 oblates on the rolls. Mass was celebrated in the chapel, with a conference and reception in the Parish Center located in the lower level. This location has worked so well it has continued to be used through 2015.

Meetings are currently held at 7:30 p.m. on the second Saturday of the

month, with breaks in the summer, along with Easter and Advent retreats. Mass is celebrated, followed by a conference and reception. We currently average 25 to 35 attendees and have always been blessed to have a priest/monk present for our meetings.

Several events were conducted for the spiritual growth of the oblates over the years. Fr. Noah Casey, OSB, conducted a three-evening reflection on the *Rule of St. Benedict*. Mass was celebrated, followed by dinner and presentations in July 2002.

In October 2003, Archabbot Lambert Reilly, OSB, gave a presentation on Mother Teresa and her humility and dedication to God at Our Lady of Grace Monastery, Beech Grove. One of the many high points of our year is the Epiphany Party. Fellowship, prayer, music and great food make this one of the better attended meetings of the year.

Fall of 2007 began a round of chapter evaluations. Indianapolis was selected as one of four that were the first to participate. Many improvements in

organization and communication were suggested and implemented. Also at this time, a Vision Statement was approved clarifying the relationship between the oblate community and the monastery and to substantiate the role of the abbot in making final decisions regarding the oblate community.

Several new materials were also made available. *The Liturgy of the Hours for Benedictine Oblates* was published in 2009, followed by *Prayers and Rituals for Benedictine Oblates* in 2010 and *Spirituality for Benedictine Oblates* in 2011. This set was beautifully done and was well received by our community.

So many monks and oblates have come forward to volunteer their time and talent to keep the Indianapolis Oblate Chapter vibrant and growing. Through this, they are brought into union with the spirituality of Saint Meinrad and grow in zeal for Christ. As St. Benedict taught, "That in all things, may God be glorified."

*Mike Burns, oblate
Indianapolis, IN*



From left, Missouri oblates Karen Joy Pitts, Dale Smith, Sharon Essner and William Hamrick were present for the oblation of Dale Smith, followed by lunch with Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB.



Oblates Peggy Fortier from Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, and Yvonne Weaver from Lowell, IN, enjoy Easter Sunday together at Saint Meinrad.

After 15 years, oblate makes first visit to Saint Meinrad



Peggy Fortier

This year during Holy Week, I made my first-ever visit to Saint Meinrad Archabbey. The visit was a long time coming, 15 years to be exact.

I made my final oblation as an Oblate of St. Benedict on February 1, 2000, at St. Joseph's Church, in Lancaster, PA. But, less than four years later, I retired and moved to Nova Scotia, where I had lived at one time and where my younger son and his wife make their home.

There are no Benedictine monasteries or oblate chapters in Atlantic Canada, but discernment had convinced me that this move was part of God's plan for me. Most of what is required of an oblate was part of my life before I became one, and I saw no reason why

those things and the few introduced by my becoming an oblate could not, with God's help, continue.

One important thing – regular interaction with fellow oblates – would, however, be missing. Thanks to the oblate newsletter and other mailings from Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, and the Oblate Office, and the monastery website, I did feel connected to both Saint Meinrad and the oblates.

Nonetheless, in recent years, I began to wonder, when it became time to renew my oblation, if making that commitment still made sense. Fortunately, I always concluded that it did.

Although I had always been actively involved in the celebration of the Triduum liturgies in whatever parish I belonged to, I felt the need this year to do something different. Before I

knew it, I had signed up for the Holy Week retreat at Saint Meinrad and made the necessary travel arrangements.

It turned out to be a truly memorable time that I will always cherish. Everything – the beauty of monastery church and grounds; the inspiring liturgies; the thought-provoking conferences given by Fr. Colman Grabert, OSB; the hospitality offered by Fr. Meinrad, Br. Maurus Zoeller, OSB, and all the staff; and (after so long) the opportunity to meet and pray with other oblates – was all I had hoped for and more.

I don't know if I will ever be able to make the trip to Saint Meinrad again, but I do know that I will never again hesitate to renew my oblation. God does lead you where you need to go.

*Peggy Fortier, oblate
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia*



A group of oblates from Ohio attended the Day of Reflection at St. Therese's Retreat Center in Columbus, OH.



Oblate Tara Monica Sheringer is with her daughter Julia, who attended her mother's oblation at the Indianapolis Oblate Chapter meeting.

Benedictine spirituality: A saving grace



Thomas J. Rillo

I am a retired university professor whose professional life spanned 46 years. It wasn't until my Benedictine oblation that I became

cognizant of the limitations academia placed upon my spirituality.

I was an athlete participating at both the secondary school and collegiate levels. Success was based on competitive achievement and, consequently, the value of winning had a high priority in my life. The same competitiveness existed in the collegiate academic world. To achieve tenure, one had to do research and write articles and books in one's field of scholastic endeavor.

Every professor at every college and university in the entire country also had to be productive in research and published material to be deemed professionally successful. Even at this level, competition was a basic requirement. Imagine the proliferation of redundant material. In this competitive mode, Benedictine values such as humility, obedience and silence were considered weaknesses.

I continued to progress in my vocation as a teacher and academic scholar for many years. This was a disillusionment that nurtured a value system that was contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ. We placed a value on *increasing* in order to *increase* rather than to *decrease* in order to *increase*.

At this juncture of my life, I believed in Jesus Christ, but the question broached by Jesus – “Do you love me?” – remained unaddressed. If one truly believed in Jesus with a

wholehearted commitment, then the question was easy to answer.

By loving Jesus, you seriously attempt to imitate him at all costs. God could ask the same question, and until we can honestly answer yes, the *metanoia* in our life does not happen.

It was not until the first year of my retirement that a spiritual change began to manifest itself in my life. Someone handed me a copy of the *Rule of St. Benedict* and, upon reading it, I began to question my basically inert spirituality.

The year before, my wife began her investiture of oblation at Saint Meinrad Archabbey. Devoid of a competitive nature, she had no problem embracing the values inherent in Benedictine spirituality. I, however, had a more difficult time making the adjustment.

Years and years of a career based on competitive values were definite obstacles. Whether in athletics, coaching athletics or academic success, these values were deeply etched in my mind and heart. I decided, with the encouragement of other oblates, to become an oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey. This occurred during the second year of Fr. Meinrad Brune's assignment as oblate director.

After my novitiate, I was invited by Fr. Meinrad to work as a volunteer in the Oblate Office. Basically, the assignments given to me were to develop articles, write book reviews, do interviews with monks and oblates, occasional pamphlets, and contribute to the “A Point to Ponder” column.

It was through writing for the oblate newsletter that I began to understand a little more fully the basic tenets of Benedictine spirituality. As an oblate, I

read the *Rule of St. Benedict* following a prescribed daily schedule and also the Liturgy of the Hours. The readings from the *Rule* contributed to my development as a Benedictine oblate. I practiced *lectio divina* to focus my attention on the minute details of both Scripture and the holy *Rule*.

I opened both my mind and my heart to God and began to listen to His voice. I had learned to be silent, which, as a professor, was never one of my strong points. “Be quiet and know that I am God” had a profound influence on my acquiring the value of silence. I heard His voice and it said write about spirituality and evangelize others.

The psalmists were an inspiration to me and spiritual poetry became an outlet for the swelling of God's gift to me. I heard God say that what you do with that gift is your gift back to me. I began to write poems that reflected many aspects and values of spirituality.

My association with the monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey has also been a stepping stone in my growing closer to God. They have been excellent role models for me. I consider many of them my friends and I appreciate their support and counsel.

Although my life as a Catholic and my experience in parish ministries have stood me in adequate stead, I needed more. I needed more to make me a true believer in the Lord and an imitator of Jesus Christ and to desire nothing more than Jesus in my life. I needed this spiritual lifeline to be thrown into the waters that, at times, have been a muddled spiritual life. Benedictine spirituality has indeed been a saving grace. And that grace has been a gift from God.

Thomas J. Rillo, oblate
Bloomington, IN

Planning begins for leadership conference in 2016

In the fall of 2014, representatives from the monasteries in the Midwest Woodlands Region met at Our Lady of Grace Monastery at Beech Grove, IN, to discuss ways that the various communities of Benedictine Oblates could benefit from shared experiences and resources.

From that discussion emerged a consensus that one of the growing concerns for the future was the need to develop good leadership among the oblates who might possibly play key roles in the ongoing life of oblate communities, as the size of monastic communities diminishes and the availability of monks to staff oblate offices diminishes along with it.

After discussion and with the support of the oblate directors, the decision was made to offer an introductory conference on leadership. Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, the director of oblates at Saint Meinrad Archabbey, offered to host the conference at Saint Meinrad.

The planning committee for the proposed conference met at Saint Meinrad March 13-14, 2015. The committee is made up of representatives from Our Lady of Grace Monastery, St. Walburg Monastery in Covington, KY; Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, IN; Saint Scholastica Monastery in Chicago and Saint Meinrad Archabbey.

The conference will be held October 2-4, 2016, with the theme of "The Gift of Shared Leadership." The keynote address will be given by Rev. Dr. William Wilson. This conference is designed to be the first in a series of conferences to address the need for shared leadership between monasteries and their oblates and the many practical facets of skilled leadership,

such as formation, communication, service, mentoring and volunteer development.

*Janis Dopp, oblate
Bloomington, IN*

Day of Recollection focuses on God's presence

The oblates of the Louisville Chapter met on April 18 at St. Joseph's Home for the Aged to attend the Day of Recollection. The presenter was Fr. Noël Mueller, OSB. Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, joined us as well. We gathered and enjoyed coffee and conversation. Twenty-two oblates attended.

After praying Lauds, Fr. Noël began the first conference with a reference to Luke 24, the account of the two men on the road to Emmaus. In the Eucharist, Christ is present in the assembly, the person of the priest, the word we share, and in the bread and wine.

Hopefully, we are aware of the presence of God daily. We heard examples of God's presence in hospital ministry and grief, a gift of sympathy without words.

One example for us is Brother Lawrence and his book, *The Practice of the Presence of God*. Quotes from Brother Lawrence illustrated how this can take place in daily life, and the need for persevering when obstacles arise. Our motivation is acting for the love of God.

Another example is St. Therese, who taught that we should have a childlike focus and totally attentive love in our prayer life. Instead of the peace of God, she was convinced that God is merciful love. Her "little way" puts holiness within the reach of ordinary people. She trusted in God's providence, even in great suffering.

After Mass and lunch, the third conference continued with the example of St. Benedict. Joy can be a theme of all three saints. St. Benedict believed that the divine presence is everywhere. Rather than a life of pride and disobedience (the fall in Genesis), St. Benedict spoke of humility and obedience.

Prayer is the practice that leads to mindfulness of the divine presence. Benedictine prayer is rooted in the psalms and other scriptures, where the power of the presence of God transforms us gradually and consistently. Prayer every moment is a lifetime work.

*Ted McGill, oblate
Louisville, KY*

Finance Committee reviews year-end results

The Oblate Finance Committee met April 24 to review financial results for the six months ended December 31, 2014. Gift revenue and retreat income continued to adequately cover operating expenses.

Besides the normal staff, travel, printing and postage expenses, two DVDs were produced and distributed. The DVDs are "The Presence of God in the Life of an Oblate" by Fr. Brendan Moss, OSB, and "Praying and Singing the Psalms," which contains talks by Benedictine Fathers Harry Hagan and Jeremy King during the 2014 Meeting of Chapter Coordinators and Representatives.

Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, commented that the oblates' generosity is one of many reasons he feels very blessed.

*Mike Reffett, oblate
Evansville, IN*

Oblate Council adds new members

The Oblate Council gathered at Saint Meinrad for its 31st meeting on April 25, 2015. Janis Dopp chaired the meeting. Also present on the Hill were Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, Michelle Blalock, Ron DeMarco, Al Kovacs, Jennie Latta, Pat Phillips, Mike Reffett, Dennis Skelton and Bill Wilson. Michele Reffett served as secretary.

Welcome was extended to the new members of the Council, Michelle Blalock of Ferdinand, IN, and Ron DeMarco of Cincinnati. Gail Chambers of Memphis, TN, and Chris Topa of Howell, MI, were unable to attend. 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, which included the following work:

- A “Quick Start Guide” to the third edition of the *Chapter Coordinator’s Handbook* is being developed (to be available by July 2015). Janis Dopp reported the guide will be laminated and included in the handbook’s front pocket.
- Early planning has begun for the chapter coordinators meeting in 2017 (MCC 2017). Jennie Latta reported that the format will be a retreat with a keynote speaker and sharing sessions among the coordinators.
- Mike Reffett shared an update on the action steps and implementation of goals and plans from “Looking to the Future: Leadership.” The Council celebrated the accomplishments of the oblate community, its chapters, and the Oblate Council and Oblate Finance Committee

since the 2012 Meeting of Chapter Coordinators and Representatives.

- Development of information records on routine action and tasks of the Oblate Office, Council and Finance Committee that would be helpful for “continuity of leadership” was discussed by Mike Reffett and the Council. Various persons with responsibilities were identified to develop a list of actions, documents or file locations for their specific oblate community responsibilities.

Pat Phillips and Mike Reffett reported from the Finance Committee that the finances of the oblate community are in a very healthy position. Appreciation was shared by all for the support given by oblates. Mike reported that the Business Office of the Archabbey has been very helpful.

Fr. Meinrad reported on the good return of the questionnaire from coordinators, which will be useful for planning the 2017 MCC (Meeting of Chapter Coordinators). Ron DeMarco will be following up with a phone call to coordinators who responded for further feedback.

Fr. Meinrad reported that chapter histories have been completed by the Bloomington, Evansville, Indianapolis, Lancaster, PA, and Louisville chapters. He said the monks were moving from the monastery to St. Anselm Hall for 14 months beginning May 25, due to major repair work in the monastery. Housing for retreats and meetings will be limited to the Guest House, which will impact registrations for oblate events.

He expressed appreciation for the help the novices have been giving him in the Oblate Office. Appreciation was extended for developing the “Words of Witness” interviews that will be put on the website and used in future oblate newsletters.

He announced that the theme for this year in the oblate community will be “Oblation as a Vocation.” Fr. Meinrad, Janis Dopp and Jennie Latta will attend the national meeting of Benedictine Oblate Directors at Subiaco monastery in Arkansas in July.

Janis Dopp reported that Saint Meinrad will host the Midwest Woodlands Region of Oblates in October 2016. The theme of the regional meeting will be “The Gift of



Pictured are the oblates who attended the Indianapolis Oblate Chapter meeting on May 9, 2015. Br. Francis Wagner, OSB, gave the conference and Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, offered the Mass.



The oblates of the Bloomington Oblate Chapter posed for a group picture on May 7, 2015.

Shared Leadership,” looking at the future of leadership in oblate communities.

Positive feedback has been received by the Oblate Office about the renewal gift of the Psalms DVD and handouts to the oblates. Some chapters are using this during chapter meetings. Discussion was held about the possibilities of developing a Facebook page.

The Monastery Vocations Office has approached the Council about some future possibilities to create interest in Benedictine spirituality and the oblate life on a college campus. It was reported that there is some interest from the “One Bread, One Cup” program to have some oblate presence and information about the Saint Meinrad oblate community presented during the summer youth conferences.

The Oblate Council guidelines were reviewed and some changes were made, which included increasing the maximum number of members to 12, editing the meeting purpose and changing the term limit of the chairperson.

The meeting closed with praying The Lord’s Prayer and a blessing by Fr. Meinrad. The next meeting will be July 18, 2015.

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

INVESTITURES

November 23, 2014 – **Phillip Wawrzyniec** of Carleton, MI

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

March 11, 2015 – **Joseph Krivos** of Notre Dame, IN

March 21, 2015 – **Betty Ueding** of Jeffersonville, IN

March 30, 2015 – **Kyle Sibrel** of Newburgh, IN

March 31, 2015 – **Matthew Potter** and **Sherry Sopha-Potter** of Cheyenne, WY

April 11, 2015 – **Catherine Matthews** of Indianapolis, IN, and **Ninfa Paredes** of Wildomar, CA

April 22, 2015 – **Victoria Catt** of Washington, IN

April 28, 2015 – **Milton Hale Jr.** of Palm Coast, FL

April 29, 2015 – **Robert Medsker** of Sullivan, IN

April 30, 2015 – **Chad Dieselberg** of Madison, AL

May 2, 2015 – **Michael Gavin** of Warsaw, IN

May 3, 2015 – **Barbara Kammerlohr** of Henderson, KY

May 7, 2015 – **Becky Boyle** of Bloomington, IN

May 8, 2015 – **Michael Ware** of Terre Haute, IN ♦

OBLATIONS

January 20, 2015 – **Michael John of the Cross Laflin** of Oblong, IL

March 7, 2015 – **Daniel Pio Pierce Sr.** of North Massapequa, NY

March 21, 2015 – **Richard Paul Barrett** of West Liberty, OH; **Sherie Hildegard Berg** of Indianapolis, IN; **Alvin Joseph Cassidy** of Louisville, KY; **Karen Hildegard Cassidy** of Louisville, KY; **Edward Neal Thomas Jackson** of Loogootee, IN; **Pam Therese Mathias** of Jasper, IN; **Sandra Maurus Seckinger** of St. Meinrad, IN; and **Deborah Faustina Voges** of Tell City, IN

April 11, 2015 – **Dawn Rose Condra** of Indianapolis, IN

April 17, 2015 – **Lanny Gregory Hollis** of Brooklyn, OH

April 25, 2015 – **Rockford Meinrad Patrick** of West Harrison, IN

May 7, 2015 – **Ginger Barnabas Thomas** of Camby, IN; and **Crystal Teresa White** of Bloomington, IN

May 9, 2015 – **Tara Monica Gertrude Sheringer** of Brownsburg, IN; and **Richard Thomas Aquinas Toumey** of Indianapolis, IN ♦

TRANSFER OF OBLATIONS

April 16, 2015 – **Michael Anselm Flanagan** of Sioux City, IA, transferred his oblation from Blue Cloud Abbey in Marvin, SD.

ANNIVERSARIES

March 21, 2015 – **David Anselm Brindle** of Muncie, IN, celebrated his 25th anniversary.

DEATHS

February 3, 2015 – **Mary Kathryn (Kitty) Gilles** of Evansville, IN

March 27, 2015 – **Joseph Allain** of Brooklyn, NY

April 23, 2015 – **Fr. Michael Clifford** of Menominee, MI

April 28, 2015 – **Robert Ferguson** of Indianapolis, IN

May 3, 2015 – **Richard (Dick) Notter** of Evansville, IN

May 5, 2015 – **Miriam Axe** of Lancaster, PA ♦

UPCOMING EVENTS

(Extensive repairs are under way in the monastery, and the monks have moved to St. Anselm Hall for the duration of the 14-month project. Guest rooms will be available only in the Guest House for the December 2015 Oblate Retreat, the March 2016 Oblate Retreat and the 2016 Oblate Study Days. Please be patient with us during the time of major construction. Thank you.)

July 17, 2015 – Saint Meinrad Day of Recollection 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 “Living in the Presence of God: An Oblate’s Lifelong Work.”

September 12, 2015 – The Lancaster, PA, Day of Recollection in the Amish country will be held with Br. Martin Erspamer, OSB, speaking on “Living in the Presence of God: An Oblate’s Lifelong Work.”

November 29, 2015 – The New York oblates will have their Day of Recollection with Br. Francis Wagner, OSB. The topic will be “The Oblate’s Call to Prayer, Holy Reading and Recollection.”

December 11-13, 2015 – The Saint Meinrad December Retreat will feature Fr. Harry Hagan, OSB. The title of his retreat will be “People Called in the Bible.” ♦



Richard Toumey made his oblation at the Indianapolis Oblate Chapter meeting on May 9. His wife, Sharon Hilmes, witnessed his oblation.

VOLUNTEERS APPRECIATED

Recent volunteers in the Oblate Office were Melanie Isaacson, George Thompson, Dennis Skelton, Mike Reffett, Mike Burns, Michael Edwards, Pat Reckelhoff, Novice John Avery, OSB, Novice Charles Peñalosa, OSB, Novice Timothy Herrmann, OSB, Novice Jinu Thomas, OSB, Novice Peter Szidik, OSB, Novice Jonathan Blaize, OSB, and Novice Thomas Fish, OSB, Candidate Tony Wolniakowski, Jerry and Mary Maillet and Sandra Duffee. ♦



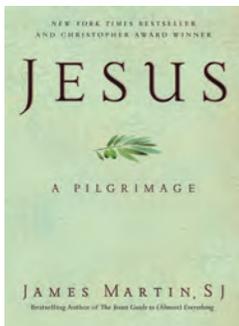
Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, and Fr. Noël Mueller, OSB, were present for the Louisville Oblate Day of Recollection on Saturday, April 18. Fr. Noël presented the confessions.



The St. Meinrad Oblate Chapter met on Thursday, May 14, 2015. Fr. Luke Waugh, OSB, gave the conference.

Reading Room

Martin, S.J., James. *Jesus: A Pilgrimage*. New York, NY: HarperOne, 2014.



“Who is Jesus? Why another book on this first-century Jewish man?” Fr. James Martin poses these questions in the introduction to this delightfully perceptive book.

The Jesuit priest, commentator and best-selling author invites the reader to accompany him on a journey to “meet the Jesus I have studied, the Jesus I follow, and the

Jesus I met in the Holy Land,” while at the same time encouraging one’s own gospel-driven discovery.

Do not be put off by the length of *Jesus* (526 pages; 465 without the notes, index, etc.). No tough, dry read, this book is both tender and flavorful – one most readers should be able to savor and digest easily. It lends itself to meditation and, in that regard, is one of those books likely to prompt a desire for “seconds” – repeated readings and review.

As he and a Jesuit companion travel through the Holy Land, Fr. Martin examines the life of Jesus by proceeding sequentially through the gospels – offering historical, theological and personal perspective along the way. This pilgrimage through the fully human, fully divine mystery who is Christ, he notes, is “something not to be solved, but to be pondered.”

To do this, he accompanies the reader on a prayerful journey to places like Bethlehem, Nazareth, Capernaum, the Sea of Galilee, Tabgha, Jericho, Jerusalem, Golgotha, Emmaus and Tiberias – to name just a few destinations. Along the way, Fr. Martin provides a nice blend of travel narrative, Scripture study and spiritual reflection.

The result is a descriptive, informed and insightful encounter with not only the Jesus of yesterday, but of today and forever (cf. Hebrews 13:8). Through him, with him and in him, we – as God’s pilgrim people – are invited to discover what is truly human and divine in us all. To that end, *Jesus: A Pilgrimage* is certainly worth the trip.

Br. Francis Wagner, OSB, monk
Saint Meinrad Archabbey