

# Oblate Benedictine



Saint Meinrad



*Oblates in the Guest House Chapel applaud during the investitures of oblate novices and for oblate novices making their oblation.*

## The Psalms punctuate our days with God's presence



*Br. Francis Wagner*

Each sentence is comprised of the same words. However, a single punctuation mark – in this case, a comma – dramatically changes the meaning of the second sentence (with much less catastrophic consequences for Uncle Larry).

Punctuation, then, supplies necessary structure and meaning by interrupting the flow of words in a sentence. Such pauses point the way toward understanding.

In a similar way, our regular praying of the psalms as Benedictine monks and oblates (or

Punctuation can make a world of difference in our understanding of written communication. Consider, for example, the following sentences: “Let’s eat Uncle Larry!” and “Let’s eat, Uncle Larry!”

for that matter, as Christians) is a grace-filled gift to keep us centered and headed in the right direction. The Divine Office literally punctuates – or interrupts – the flow of the hours of the day to supply them with the structure and meaning that otherwise risk being lost amid our other activities and concerns.

The Liturgy of the Hours, like a well-placed comma, helps us to pause and recall God’s abiding presence in every facet of our lives. As St. Benedict writes in his *Rule*, “We believe that the divine presence is everywhere.... But beyond the least doubt we should believe this to be especially true when we celebrate the divine office” (19:1, 2).

With this in mind, we monks at Saint Meinrad Archabbey come together five times a day for the Divine Office and Mass. We spend at least two hours every day in church – and more on Sundays and feast

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days. Sometimes, it seems as though we've just finished praying one of the hours of the Divine Office when it's time to go back to church for yet another!

On a number of occasions, visitors and guests have asked me: "How do you monks ever get anything done when you have to be back in church every few hours?"

Well, I won't tell you it's easy, because it's not. Those living outside the monastery can also identify with the substantial effort required to juggle the daily demands of work, home and family life.

However, whatever our specific vocation as Christians may be, the key to living this mystery rests in constantly asking, "Where is God in all this?" If we seek the Author of Life, whose Word has come among us in Spirit and truth, then we will find him not only in the composition as a whole, but in all its parts – chapters, paragraphs, sentences, phrases, words, syllables and letters, as it were.

None of this makes any sense, or is even possible, without the abiding presence of Christ, who tells His disciples: "Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

To enter into this abiding presence, Jesus encourages us to *pray always* (Luke 18:1). Additionally, he urges us to *pray with one another*: "Where two or three are gathered, there I am among them" (Matthew 18:20).

We know from several New Testament passages that the early disciples were faithful to regular communal prayer. For example: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42).

Over time, this practice developed into what we now call the Liturgy of the Hours, which has been adopted as the prayer of the Christian Church. And what were the early Christians praying when they came together? Principally, they prayed the psalms – the ancient Hebrew songs of praise, petition, thanksgiving and lament.

As a faithful Jew, Jesus prayed the psalms regularly. He quotes them often in the gospels, and points to Himself as the fulfillment of all that is expressed by the psalms – and the rest of the Old Testament (Luke 24:44). This is why, when we pray the psalms in the Liturgy of the Hours (either alone or in a group), we do so not merely for ourselves, but as the Body of Christ interceding for the entire world (cf. *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*, No. 108).

In the psalms, we enter into conversation not only with Christ, but *as Christ* with God the Father through the Holy Spirit. As St. Augustine wrote, in the psalms we find the voice of Christ, who "prays for us and in us and who is prayed to by us.... Let us recognize our voice in him and his voice in us."

In this way, the Word becomes flesh in a very distinct and mysterious way. God is truly present. So, it may be said that Christ's presence in the Divine Office periodically punctuates – or interrupts – the flow of the day to provide our lives with the divine understanding, direction and meaning that might otherwise be overlooked.

Praying the psalms pulls us back to the center of our being, makes us pause and remember that God is God – and we are not. And while it may be difficult to find time to pray amid our other daily concerns, or to pull ourselves away from them, it is also true that all these seemingly disparate and unrelenting activities are given their *true* meaning and direction through regular prayer.

As far as living in a monastery goes, we monks are able to accomplish whatever we do not *in spite* of the daily "interruptions" of the Divine Office, but *because* of them.

Every chapter of our lives – every paragraph, sentence and word – flows from the breath of the Author of Life, "in whom we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). So, when we seek God above all things, all the rest finds its proper order and rhythm, just like in a well-crafted sentence – no matter how fragmented things may appear at any particular moment.

And when we prefer nothing to the Work of God (c.f. *Rule* 43:3) by praying the psalms, it is God *who works on us*, sanctifying our days, writing straight on crooked lines and guiding us toward the exclamation point of eternal life.

*Br. Francis Wagner, OSB, monk  
Saint Meinrad Archabbey*



*Matthew Pflederer of Paoli, IN, (center) poses with his parents following his oblation on Nov. 1, 2014.*

**PRAY FOR VOCATIONS**

# A POINT TO PONDER FROM *The Rule*

“Therefore we intend to  
start a school for the  
Lord’s service.”

*Rule of St. Benedict,  
Prologue, Verse 45*

It is clear that God is present for those who live in a monastery and for oblates who live outside the monastery. “For the Lord’s service” implies that He is real and present.

The Latin word *schola* is interpreted as something beyond an academic institution. It is, first and foremost, a community of individuals whose common denominator is that they all seek God. In acknowledging this, they realize that He is present in their lives.

To grow closer to God is the major objective of those who are monks or oblates and live and pray under the guidance and direction of the *Rule*. You cannot seek someone who does not exist in the mind and soul.

To seek God and know of His presence is the main reason for living the spiritual life in a monastic community. In the praying of psalms and the Divine Office, God is ever present as the receptor who hears them.

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*A meeting of the oblates of the Tell City Chapter, which Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, attended.*



*From left, Ms. Joyce Vogerl and Mrs. Carol Hopf, both of the Jasper Chapter, were invested as oblate novices on October 10, 2014, by Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB.*



*From left, new oblate novices Robert Colquett, Norman Herzog and Judy Herzog receive a book from Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB.*

# The Polar Vortex



Nick Dellacave

This past winter arguably was one of the most difficult and longest-running weather epics we've seen in quite some time. With all

the news and noise about weather and challenges to families and kids in school, I find it appropriate to speak about how this phenomenon was a beautiful opportunity to reconnect to Benedictine spirituality and prayer.

Being a rather young man at 33, becoming an oblate of Saint Meinrad was a somewhat delicate process of juggling life, time and my family life, which has grown and changed considerably since my oblation in 2012. Prayer, time for reflection and just simple sounds of silence can all seem impossible in our daily lives, which zip along at light speed, particularly with a new and growing family.

I also travel for a living so I am on the go quite a bit, and my oblation is truly dedicated to finding moments of peace to slow down and appreciate the small stuff, even when that can be a challenge.

But in all the hustle and bustle, God reached out in the most unusual of ways and afforded me some time courtesy of the Polar Vortex. I don't mean to make light of high energy bills and frigid temperatures, but the deep "freeze" left me and many others with some cabin fever.

The solution: finally, some time for prayer and reflection! The business of life never ceases. And with a four-month-old, sleep is in short supply, to boot. However, being figuratively trapped at home gave me an extreme

enthusiasm for some time spent in prayer.

To that end, Saint Meinrad does a fabulous job of enriching oblate life with many tools to assist us in our journey through faith. Books, websites and social media have really branched out in the past year and given us, now more than ever, no excuse not to squeeze in even the smallest amount of time each day to give appreciation and gratitude to God and to live out our spirituality in the best way our life circumstances permit.

While it may sound like a shameless plug, the Honor Your Inner Monk app has practically saved me! This may be the "light" version of our oblate Liturgy of the Hours, but with a family, no sleep, a job with travel, time is not only a premium but short in supply when found.

The app has practically revolutionized my ability to keep in rhythm during the day, and has assisted in grounding me back into reality. With seemingly

unending features, I can literally pray on the go and feel my connection blossom even in the shortest amounts of time, despite my current life situation.

If you haven't taken the time to download the app or can commiserate with my circumstances in your own way, here is a beautiful way to spend some time with the Lord.

The Polar Vortex may have afforded some quality time at home and given us some time spent together as a family, but it also reignited my oblation. It's given me the unique chance to reconnect, to keep the rhythm and to reflect on time (although short) well spent.

*Editor's note: You can find the free Honor Your Inner Monk prayer app (for Android and iPhone) at this link: [www.honoryourinnermonk.org](http://www.honoryourinnermonk.org).*

*Nick Dellacave, oblate  
Cincinnati, OH*



*A blanket of snow adds a peaceful stillness to the Archabbey grounds.*

# Care for the Poor



Br. William Sprauer

As a junior monk, one of my responsibilities includes heading down to the kitchen just after lunch and helping box up and distribute food for local

men, women and families who need assistance from the monastery. It's easy to think that poverty is a "big city problem," but the reality is, even in rural southern Indiana there are people in need. As monks and oblates, we are called to meet those needs.

In the chapter titled "The Tools for Good Works," St. Benedict commissions the monks, as part of their monastic observance, to "relieve the lot of the poor" (RB 4:14). This directive, occurring early in the *Rule*, appears to be ordered toward the physical needs of the poor, that is, food, clothing, etc.

But as we see in Chapter 53, "The Reception of Guests," St. Benedict tells his monks that "great care and concern are to be shown in receiving poor people and pilgrims, because in them more particularly Christ is received" (RB 53:15). This second, and seemingly more important, directive takes the original commission to "relieve the lot of the poor" to a whole new level.

St. Benedict recognizes that we must not only feed and clothe the poor, but also speak to them, listen to them, empathize with their troubles and concerns. In other words, we must meet not only their physical needs, but their *emotional* needs as well. We must recognize the poor as human beings, as worthwhile, lovable children

of God, "because in them more particularly Christ is received."

Our beloved martyr St. Meinrad certainly exemplified this monastic ideal of receiving the poor and pilgrims. He received, and even celebrated the Eucharist with, the very men who would later rob and beat him to death. He still welcomed them as Christ, even though he *knew* it meant sacrificing his life.

At Saint Meinrad Archabbey, we carry out this tradition of receiving the poor. Our almoner, Br. Raban, with the help of the novices and junior monks, packages and distributes food boxes to local needy families on a daily basis. Br. James and I often joke that Br. Raban "doesn't do anything but sit with them and talk" while we are "doing all the work," that is, packaging the food.

The reality is, Br. Raban has the most important task in receiving the poor,

namely *listening* to them and *engaging* them. Br. Raban truly exemplifies St. Benedict's directive that "great care and concern are to be shown in receiving poor people."

Our Benedictine charism of hospitality is without borders when it comes to social or economic classes. We are called to receive everyone in the name of Christ who comes to our door. St. Benedict especially commissions his monks to see Christ in the poor, but more importantly, will they see Christ in us? Will we have the strength to have "great care and concern" for the poor, as is asked of us?

It is easy to get wrapped up in the relative security of the cloister, but tending to the needs of the local poor truly pulls us out of that security and puts us on the "front lines" of our faith.

Br. William Sprauer, OSB, monk  
Saint Meinrad Archabbey



Br. William Sprauer, OSB, (left) and Br. André DeDecker, OSB, fill food boxes to be given to local families.

# The Presence of God

*Editor's note: This is the second part of a two-part article on the Oblate Study Days held at Saint Meinrad in June 2014. Fr. Brendan Moss, OSB, gave conferences on "The Presence of God in the Life of an Oblate."*



Cathey Byers

In thinking about relationship, the Benedictine realizes that all are created in the image of God, and there is a spiritual connection

among everyone and everything. Thus we are seeking God in the horizontal, loving people as they need to be loved, recognizing that Christ dwells in them.

Fr. Brendan maintained that, as Esther de Waal said, there should be no illusions about the tensions in the art of loving, and no illusions about the heart of love itself. In community life, we are called to witness to love, but also to receive it.

Benedict makes the radical statement that *every person matters*. In de Waal's words, "Everyone is sacred and each person has a right to develop to his full potential." That's what Benedictine life is all about: to grow into the person that God calls you to be. Each of us must meet Jesus as we are and allow Jesus to reveal Himself.

Probably the greatest factor in promoting healing and growth is forgiveness, of each other and of ourselves. De Waal said, "Until we forgive, we cannot be free." This does not mean that we must forget, but we cannot cut ourselves off from each other.

Rather, Christ calls us to a life of connectedness with each other. The balance between community and individuality is delicate, Fr. Brendan

said, especially in a society that promotes "number one," but relationship demands give-and-take – and sacrifice.

According to Fr. Brendan, there is always room for the individual in the midst of Benedictine life. We all need different things, and the community exists for the growth of the individuals who make it up. The community is "alone together."

What *is* needed, however, is a sense of direction. We need to recognize that God has a dream for each of us and pray that we know *who* we are and *whose* we are. The reality is that we are Christians, and we belong to God.

When we recognize who we are, then we can ask ourselves the ultimate question: where are we going? The answer, de Waal says, is that we are on a journey of discovery, searching for how to be human today, tomorrow and for the rest of our lives.

Because God recognizes the potential in us, oblates are gifted with *conversatio*, the vow of continued conversion. To be Benedictine is to be faithful to that vow and, in doing so, as Archabbot Lambert Reilly, OSB, has said, the bad can become good, the good can become better, and the better – better yet.

Accepting ourselves and refusing to run from ourselves is the essence of the vow of stability. In *conversatio*, we respond completely and integrally to the word of Christ. We make a commitment to become a totally new person.

Benedict will not allow us to evade change. Maturity comes only by confronting what has to be confronted within each of us. So, for Benedictines, there is a healthy self-interest. Our goal is Christ, and we attain our goal by our continuing struggle to know ourselves.

But Benedictine spirituality is not about the mind. As Benedict says in the Prologue to the *Rule*, we must listen with the ear of the heart. We have been invited to the table of the Lord, and we must give ourselves the privilege of prayer. It does not matter where (it's not about the trappings) – or when (all time belongs to God). We have been invited to evangelization.

In Catholic social teaching, preferential attention is given to the poor. But Muslims, Jews and Christians – all are a part of our community. We are united by Christ Jesus, and we are one in God. Our spirituality is one that is charged with living an ordinary life extraordinarily. To live this life, we already have all that we need.

Cathey Byers, oblate  
Nineveh, IN

## **VOLUNTEERS APPRECIATED**

Among the recent volunteers assisting in the Oblate Office were Mike Edwards, Ruth Engs, Candidate Thomas Fish, OSB, Candidate Timothy Herrmann, OSB, Melanie Isaacson, Jerry Maillet, Nicholas and Linda McCarroll, Wayne Moore, Novice Charles Peñalosa, OSB, Mike Perigo, Pat Reckelhoff, Mike Reffett, Dennis Skelton, George Thompson and Yvonne Weaver. ♦

# A Voice from the Past

*Editor's note: This is a condensation of a message written by Fr. Walter Sullivan, OSB, oblate director from 1941-58. It appeared in the 1948 Spring issue of the Oblate Newsletter.*

Our Lent is the Passion of Jesus. Think of it. In fact, this is the meaning of Lent; it is even the meaning of Christianity. Until Christ suffers something of His bitter passion in each member of His Body – of which I am one – it is not truly finished.

As a matter of fact, were it not for the act of faith that reveals the suffering of Christ in our brethren and ourselves, Lent would be quite a stupid season, a silly interruption of a program of unalloyed pleasure. But Lent is the Christian's Passion.

Nor is the Passion of each member of our Lord's Body less real because it is unbloody and without the outward violence of martyrdom. It is not necessary for a member of Christ's body to become a human torch like

Joan of Arc, or to face the headsman like Thomas Moore, to share in the Passion of our Lord.

It is only necessary to be patient in the daily vicissitudes and trials of our state of life. It is with this thought that St. Benedict ends the Prologue of his *Rule*: "Never departing from God's guidance, but preserving until death in His teaching we may by patience share in the suffering of Christ."

In nothing does the Christian require more patience than by living with himself and accepting his own limitations. As a matter of fact, patience with oneself is a requisite for true peace of soul and true piety. While the knowledge of God and of oneself is the first requirement for interior peace, a secondary requirement is the patience to behold

our own infirmity and corruption without anger and irritation.

Lent will be profitable for us if we attempt at least to bear patiently the daily demands of our state of life; it will be profitable for eternity if we learn to bear with ourselves without discouragement. After all, we shall have to live with ourselves for a long time; and without patience that springs from humility, we cannot achieve peace. ♦

## Smugmug

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

<http://saintmeinrad.smugmug.com>



*Oblate Tom Yost in prayer.*



*From left, oblate novice Clintina Sims, oblate Kelly Sollinger, Rachele Ranola and Dr. Maria Ranola, who made her oblation on October 11, 2014, pose with Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB.*

## Lancaster, PA, oblates hold Day of Recollection

On Saturday, September 6, 2014, the weather may have been hot, humid and muggy on the outside, but inside the Msgr. Thomas Smith Hall at St. Joseph's Church in Lancaster, PA, the atmosphere was awe-inspiring and spiritual.

Fr. Adrian Burke, OSB, of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, started the day with Mass in the chapel, followed by a full day of inspirational conferences on how we encounter God in the ordinary and how to cultivate an increased awareness of the presence of God.

We had our largest group ever – 35 registrants. Everyone was inspired by Fr. Adrian's love of the Lord and words from his heart. In addition, we enjoyed a delightful lunch, time in the adoration chapel, reconciliation and fellowship.

*Sharon Ogden, oblate  
East Petersburg, PA*

## Deacon encourages balance of faith, profession

During the Red Mass for lawyers at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne, IN, on September 24, 2014, oblate Deacon Marc Kellams addressed the topic of "The Balance of Faith and Profession."

Deacon Kellams has been a member of the bar for 36 years and was ordained to the diaconate in 2008. He spoke about the role of the deacon being one of service. This service is influenced by personal experience as well as a response to God's call.

Deacon Kellams said that "our public self and our private self [are] dual personalities in the body of one person." Each of these selves informs the other on how to act. The

interaction between them influences and changes personal identity. Although Catholic identity might not be on display, it is still present in the background.

*Novice Thomas Fish, OSB, monk  
Saint Meinrad Archabbey*

## Oblate part of retreat team

Oblate Christian McNamara and his wife, Mary, of Tampa, FL, are part of a retreat team for Contemplative Aging at Mepkin Abbey, a Trappist monastery in Moncks Corner, SC. To date, they have given seven four-day sessions. Further information about these retreats, and the 2015 schedule, can be found at [www.mepkinabbey.org](http://www.mepkinabbey.org) under "Book a retreat."

## Oblate receives top award

Oblate Jerry Maillet, oblate from Indianapolis, IN, received the Top Hat Award on October 5, 2014, from the St. Vincent de Paul Society for his service to the poor. This award was given during a breakfast meeting for the members of the society.

## Finance Committee reviews fiscal year

The Oblate Finance Committee met October 17 to review financial results for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2014. Gift revenue and retreat income offset the annual operating expenses.

Printing expenses included the change to color for the oblate newsletter and the *Points to Ponder* booklet that was mailed during the 2013 Christmas season. Costs for the Meeting of Chapter Coordinators and Representatives were also reflected in the year's operating expenses. These costs included rooms and meals. Attendees pay their travel costs.

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 reviews MCR meeting

The Oblate Council gathered on the Hill on October 18 to discuss the results of the Meeting of Chapter Coordinators and Representatives (MCR) and to receive a report from the Finance Committee. Present at the meeting were Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB; Janis Dopp, chair; Dennis Skelton, Mike Reffett, Pat Phillips, Jennie Latta and Chris Topa (by telephone). The meeting was opened with prayer by Janis Dopp, followed by a reading of the Statement of Purpose of the Oblate Council.

The Mission and Guidelines for Oblate Chapters were reviewed at MCR 2014. Suggestions for revision were made by small groups of coordinators and representatives. There were no substantive changes to either document, but some clarification was given with regard to oblates who desire to change their affiliation from one monastery to another. The reapproved Mission and Guidelines will be sent to all participants in MCR 2014, as well as to chapter coordinators who were unable to attend.

The theme of many of the comments heard at MCR 2014 was the desire for increased communication, both within chapters and among oblates. Many of the small groups asked about the use of social media. In the short term, chapter coordinators will be encouraged to provide contact information to all oblates in their chapters who desire to be included.

In addition, steps are being taken to explore the creation of a Facebook

page and group for the Saint Meinrad oblates. Two monk candidates will be made available to Fr. Meinrad in the near term who may be helpful in getting this project off the ground.

Another frequently heard comment was the need for chapter coordinators to get together to share ideas and experiences. Tentative plans for such a meeting have been made for 2017. A task force was appointed to plan this event.

The Finance Committee provided a thorough and informative report. The generosity of the oblates continues to provide support for the many programs of the oblate community, and the Finance Committee acts as an excellent steward of the oblate community's resources. The Council expressed its gratitude to the Finance Committee and to the oblate community.

Fr. Meinrad, Janis Dopp and Al Kovacs recently represented Saint Meinrad at the meeting of Oblate Directors for the Midwest Woodlands Region. Much of the discussion at that meeting centered on the need for leadership development, a theme that coincides with Saint Meinrad's work. Fr. Meinrad offered to host a regional meeting at Saint Meinrad in 2016, where the theme will be leadership. Janis will serve as chair of the planning committee for that meeting.

In other news, Fr. Meinrad announced that Saint Meinrad will be represented at the North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors at Subiaco Abbey next summer. The conference theme is "Nurturing Benedictine Spirituality: From Theory to Practice."

Fr. Meinrad announced that the theme for the coming year of oblate conferences will be "Oblation as a



*From left, oblate Sharon Essner, oblate novice Barb McKeon and oblate Tim Essner at their display at the parish ministry fair.*

Vocation." Br. John Mark Falkenhain, OSB, will kick off these presentations with the Study Days next summer.

The next scheduled meeting of the Oblate Council is April 25, 2015.

*Jennie D. Latta, oblate  
Memphis, TN*

### **Oblates participate in parish Ministry Fair**

St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Cape Girardeau, MO, held a Ministry Fair on October 25-26, 2014. More than 30 ministries displayed information about their apostolates. Oblates Jim and Sharon Essner and oblate novice Barb McKeon prepared a display about what it means to be a Benedictine Oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey.

A display board, along with brochures and the oblate DVD provided by the Oblate Office, were conversation starters. Free candy and a prize drawing added to the fun.

The readings for that day coincided with Benedictine spirituality. The

reading from Exodus, similar to Chapter 53 of the *Rule*, describes how "All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ." 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10 speaks of receiving the Word with joy from the Holy Spirit. *Lectio divina* helps us to move toward this goal.

The fair took place after the Saturday evening and Sunday morning Masses. Approximately 300 people attended. For many of the attendees, this was their first encounter with oblate spirituality and Saint Meinrad Archabbey. We pray that these encounters planted seeds of interest and spiritual curiosity that will lead others to explore the Benedictine way of life.

*Sharon Essner, oblate  
Cape Girardeau, MO*

### **New content updates oblate website**

When I arrived on the Hill to begin my candidacy, I was anxious about what my work assignment would be for these three months of candidacy. I soon found out I would be working in the Oblate Office with Fr. Meinrad, Carol Troesch and a slew of awesome



The oblate web pages have been updated at [www.saintmeinrad.org/oblates](http://www.saintmeinrad.org/oblates).

volunteers. One task I excitedly accepted was updating the oblate portion of the Saint Meinrad website.

I had a little background in maintaining a website due to my work on the Saint Meinrad Alumni website when I served as alumni director here at Saint Meinrad from 2011 to 2014. Through my interaction with some oblates over the years, conversations with Fr. Meinrad and thoroughly reading through the oblate website, I had a decent idea of the language and activities of oblates.

Thus, I set to work on updating the website, and here's an overview of some updates I made based on feedback from the Oblate Council and our Communications staff:

- Updated various photos on the oblate webpages
- Added photos of monks who give presentations at chapter meetings
- Provided names and email addresses of chapter coordinators for folks to easily contact the coordinators
- Added a bibliography resource page with descriptions of each

book, which may be helpful to oblates and their spirituality

- Updated the book on the book review page
- Added links to various albums of photos taken at oblate events on and off the Hill
- Created an “Advisory Groups” menu item that hosts the Oblate Council and Oblate Finance Committee pages. Each page contains photos of the individuals on these advisory groups as well as an overview of the groups’ responsibilities.

Novice Timothy Herrmann, OSB, monk  
Saint Meinrad Archabbey

### Oblates featured in annual report



Mike and Michele Reffett

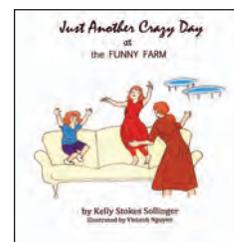
Oblates from the Evansville, IN, Chapter, Mike and Michele Reffett, were featured in *A Future Full of Hope: Saint Meinrad Report of Stewardship 2014*. When reflecting on his journey toward becoming an oblate, Mike stated that, “The balance that’s sought in ... life – both prayer and work – ... appealed to me.” For Michele, the oblate program was a way to find “more direction” in her prayer life; “Saint Meinrad offered a lot of spiritual opportunities.”

Both Mike and Michele help with coordinating various oblate events.

They are also the coordinators of the Evansville Chapter. The oblate program has helped Mike and Michele find a spiritual community to share many friendships. The growth and joy they have experienced with the oblates has been a great gift to them both.

Novice Thomas Fish, OSB, monk  
Saint Meinrad Archabbey

### New books highlight family, small-town life



Kelly Solinger, an oblate from Columbus, OH, recently wrote a book, *Just Another Crazy Day at the Funny*

*Farm*, based on the funny quips she posted on Facebook about her children. This is a cute book filled with joyful insights from her two small children.



Oblate Office Executive Secretary Carol (Ubelhor) Troesch recently published *Pieces of My Small-Town Heart*, a compilation of her slice-of-life

columns and essays. In her book, she captures the essence of life, love and loss in small-town America, a place where friends and family matter most.

The book is available directly from the author, as well as in local bookstores and gift shops, and on amazon.com. One reviewer wrote that her book “touches our hearts, eliciting forgotten moments and memories of our own, and reaffirms what we believe is good and decent in all of us.”

### Oblate uses new medical device

Oblate Lori Wallhauser of Cincinnati, OH, is learning to use her limbs again through a new device known as the EKSO bionic exoskeleton at the Daniel Drake Center. This device helps patients move their legs at the desired gait with the aid of a therapist.

### Oblate elected Alumni Board president

On October 20, the Saint Meinrad Alumni Board elected oblate Ann Tully of Indianapolis, IN, to serve the Alumni Association as its president. She earned her master's degree from the School of Theology in 2003. ♦

## OBLATIONS

September 6, 2014 – **Msgr. Thomas Smith** of Lancaster, PA, was planning to make his oblation on this date, but he died on August 31. Msgr. Smith did so much for the oblates of the Lancaster, PA, area. The chapter met at St. Joseph Parish, where he was the pastor. He hosted the Saint Meinrad visiting monks at his rectory. Because of his concern and love for the Benedictine Oblates, Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, made him an honorary oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey posthumously on September 6, 2014.

September 13, 2014 – **Ms. Annette Monaca Calloway** of Indianapolis, IN, and **Rev. David Basil Ellis** of Noblesville, IN

September 30, 2014 – **Deacon Brian Vincent Giles Wideman** of Appleton, WI

October 4, 2014 – **Mr. Brian St. Teresa of Avila Garrett** of Evansville, IN, and **Ms. Jean Hildegard Roberson** of Mishawaka, IN

October 10, 2014 – **Mrs. Katherine Monica Guthrie**, **Mr. Ross Ignatius Guthrie** and **Mr. Jon Irenaeus Jones**, all of Jackson, TN; and **Mrs. LuCinda Mary Jones** of Jasper, IN

October 11, 2014 – **Mr. Phillip Brendan Ford** of Lebanon, IN; **Dr. Maria Carmen Francesca Ranola** of Evansville, IN; and **Mr. Victor John Pfister** of Whitestown, IN

October 18, 2014 – **Dr. Gary Bernard Ryan** of Gettysburg, PA

November 1, 2014 – **Mrs. Candida Gertrude the Great Mackell** of Kettering, OH, and **Mr. Matthew Anthony Pflederer** of Paoli, IN

November 2, 2014 – **Ms. Jacqueline Theresa Notter** of Evansville, IN

November 7, 2014 – **Mr. Frances Placidus Shivone** of Fort Worth, TX ♦

## INSTITUTES

August 22, 2014 – **Mrs. Judith Fuller** and **Mrs. Henry Etta “Penny” Jackson**, both of Greenfield, IN

August 31, 2014 – **Mrs. Marcia Leclerc** of Somers, CT, and **Mr. Reuben Tupas** of New York, NY

September 4, 2014 – **Mrs. Nina Castronova** of Bloomington, IN

September 7, 2014 – **Mrs. Martha Dilger** of Evansville, IN

September 15, 2014 – **Rev. Richard Schnelle** of Louisville, KY

October 4, 2014 – **Mr. Sean Holmes** of Grand Rapids, MI

October 8, 2014 – **Mr. Joe Gallion** and **Mrs. Kerri Gallion**, both of Sumner, IL

October 10, 2014 – **Mrs. Carol Hopf** and **Ms. Joyce Voegerl**, both of Jasper, IN; and **Mrs. Carrie Jones** of Jackson, TN

October 16, 2014 – **Mrs. Shirley Gale** of Tell City, IN

October 18, 2014 – **Mr. Edward Lukes** of Cleves, OH

October 20, 2014 – **Mr. Christopher Wolanski** of Cameron, NC

October 22, 2014 – **Mr. Jaime Chunda** of Fort Dix, NJ, and **Ms. Irma Pina** of Pearland, TX

November 7, 2014 – **Ms. Karen Maynard** of Indianapolis, IN ♦

## DEATHS

August 31, 2014 – **Msgr. Thomas Smith** of Lancaster, PA

October 27, 2014 – **Mrs. Donna Lunsford** of Amelia, OH ♦

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**March 20-22, 2015:** The March Oblate Retreat will have Fr. Mark O’Keefe, OSB, as the retreat presenter on the topic of “The Presence of God.”

**April 18, 2015:** The Day of Recollection for the Louisville, KY, area oblates will be held. Fr. Noël Mueller, OSB, will be the presenter on “Power of Presence: Practicing the Presence of God.”

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

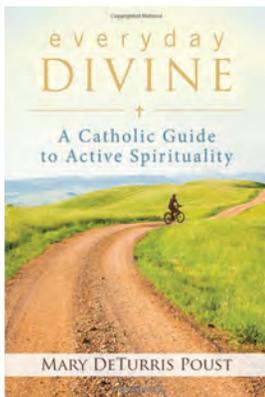
**June 15-18, 2015:** The Oblate Study Days at Saint Meinrad Archabbey will feature Br. John Mark Falkenhain, OSB, speaking on “Oblation as a Vocation.”

**July 17, 2015:** The Day of Recollection at Saint Meinrad Archabbey will have oblate Fr. Thomas D’Angelo from Bronx, NY, as the presenter. His topic will be “Oblation as a Vocation.” ♦

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## Reading Room

DeTurrís Poust, Mary. *Everyday Divine: A Catholic Guide to Active Spirituality*. New York, NY: Alpha Books, 2012.



This book is a most pragmatic and basic book on prayer written by a work-at-home author who is both a wife and a mother of three. She is also an award-winning journalist, columnist, author and public speaker whose work has appeared in many Catholic and secular publications.

She describes her workspace as a home basement surrounded by the accouterments of daily family life. She had to find a way to make prayer a part of her everyday actions. The result of her success in accomplishing this goal is reflected in the pages of this book.

The author's overriding thesis is that we do not have to make time to discover the divine in life. The book demonstrates how to transform the actions of busy days in ways that incorporate prayer and spirituality while achieving the responsibilities of daily life.

She has applied her research of both ancient traditions and modern thinking. She has coordinated suggestions, exercises, personal stories, prayers, and the experience and wisdom of holy men and women throughout the centuries.

What makes this book such a wonderful guide to finding time to achieve the divine in daily life is that it's written for the ordinary spiritual soul trying to find time for God. Her notes for the journey apply to all who walk the journey of faith.

For example, she relates an experience of biking through a rundown neighborhood that was doing renovations to abandoned houses to the Resurrection. Her observations and understanding were a form of prayer for the poverty-stricken, the homeless and the hungry.

Prayer can be done in many of our ordinary and sometimes-mundane activities such as driving, dishwashing, food preparation, commuting, physical exercise and much more.

This book is illuminating and definitely a guide for oblates and others who want to increase prayer time.

*Thomas J. Rillo, oblate  
Bloomington, IN*