



The participants in the 2014 Meeting of Chapter Coordinators and Representatives and Delegates pose for a photo on the Archabbey Church steps on June 15.

## 2014 MCR learns about praying, singing psalms



Bill Wilson

The 2014 Meeting of Chapter Coordinators and Representatives (MCR 2014) was held at Saint Meinrad Archabbey on June 13-15 with 76 participants present, representing 17 chapters and 12 states.

From its beginnings in 1998, the meeting has been held every five years at Saint Meinrad. A meeting of coordinators only was held in 1999. It expanded to include chapter representatives in 2004 and 2009. The 2014 meeting expanded further to include delegates from other geographical areas of the country not affiliated with a chapter.

The purpose of MCR 2014 was:

- Spiritual enrichment for chapter coordinators and representatives through

conferences presented by Fr. Harry Hagan, OSB, on “Praying the Psalms” and Fr. Jeremy King, OSB, on “Singing the Psalms.”

- Review and action on the draft sections of the new *Chapter Coordinator’s Handbook, 3rd Edition*.

Oblate Council members served the community by planning, hosting and assisting with details of the weekend experience. Under the direction of Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, director of Benedictine Oblates of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, leadership for the weekend was provided by Janis Dopp, Oblate Council chairperson; Mike Reffett, MCR 2014 coordinator; along with members Dennis Skelton, Michele Reffett and George Thompson.

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The meeting began with Vespers on Friday evening and a welcome by Janis Dopp, Fr. Meinrad and Mike Reffett. Archabbot Justin DuVall, OSB, also welcomed the group. He thanked the oblate community for its support and prayers for the monastery. He expressed appreciation for the Benedictine life lived by the oblates. Throughout the weekend, participants prayed the Liturgy of Hours together and joined the monks for daily Mass.

Conferences presented by Fr. Harry and Fr. Jeremy centered on the significant prayer life of monks, oblates and the entire Church in praying the psalms. Fr. Harry reminded participants that “the psalms are other people’s prayers” that have become ours and belong to the whole Church.

Sharing meaning on praying the psalms as a way of remembering, he helped participants to see ways to relate to the written text. Fr. Harry specifically taught about psalms of praise and psalms of petition. In a session on how Scripture is interpreted, he summarized the life of prayer through the writings of John Cassian.

Fr. Jeremy assisted the participants in “Singing the Psalms” as he explained the English translation of psalms into texts for singing and reciting. He led the participants through the techniques and skills of reciting in prayer the various psalm texts. A highlight of his presentation was hearing and learning the Saint Meinrad Psalm Tones.

Participants were reminded of the Saint Meinrad Archabbey website, where they can find the eight psalm tones and continue learning. Both Fr. Harry and Fr. Jeremy reminded the oblates of the words of St. Augustine: “Those who sing the psalms pray twice.”

A business meeting of the assembly was held on the closing day. Jennie

Latta and Chris Topa, from the Oblate Council, facilitated a presentation summarizing the discussions from the previous day’s small-group sessions. Each small group discussed assigned sections of the *Chapter Coordinator’s Handbook*, ways to improve chapter life and participation, and visioning for the future.

Some common themes from the discussions were: inviting others to become oblates (recruitment), cultivating new chapter leadership, use of website and social media, reaffirmation of Benedictine values in carrying out chapter business, reaching out as chapters to other Christians for membership, examining the format of chapter meetings and financial matters of chapters.

The mission statement for chapters of Benedictine Oblates of Saint Meinrad Archabbey was reaffirmed by the coordinators, and chapter members were encouraged to read it together at chapter meetings:

We, Benedictine Oblates of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, are Christians united by the holy *Rule of St. Benedict*. We come together in Chapters to support one another and strengthen our spiritual life through prayer, liturgical celebration, instruction, and fellowship in Christ, so that in all things God may be glorified (*RB 57:9*).

The chapter coordinators unanimously approved changes to the Guidelines for Chapters of Benedictine Oblates of Saint Meinrad Archabbey. These two additions were approved:

- A yearly chapter conference should be held at which members can freely discuss items of concern for future planning.
- An oblate can terminate chapter membership and remain an oblate. If a membership is involuntarily terminated, that will be done by the Oblate Director

in consultation with the chapter coordinator.

Concerns about chapter finances and expenses in the Guidelines were referred to the Oblate Finance Council for further review and discussion.

In his closing reflection, Fr. Meinrad shared his appreciation for the oblate community. “The health and influence of Saint Meinrad Archabbey are greatly enhanced by the presence in the world of our oblate community, who bring the grace of Christ and the wisdom of St. Benedict to all they are and do. We, Father Abbot Justin and the monks of Saint Meinrad, extend to you our gratitude.”

He invited the participants to join him in a silent *lectio* on “Monastic Spirituality” from the words of St. Benedict in the *Rule*:

1. Listen ... to the Word of God ... to one another.
2. Humility – Seek not what is better for you, but what is better for another.
3. Speech – Guard your lips from harmful or deceptive speech.
4. Helpfulness – Anticipate the needs of others.
5. Patience – Bear patiently with one another’s weaknesses of body, mind or character.
6. Reverence – Treat all things as vessels of the altar.
7. Respect – Maintain an attitude of deep respect, love and awe for each person.
8. Prefer nothing whatever to Christ.

Fr. Meinrad closed the meeting on Holy Trinity Sunday by giving a blessing, reminding them that the archabbot blesses all the monks when they leave the monastery: “May the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you now and forever.”

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

## New publication offers a look at Monk Life



The Vocations Office is happy to announce our new quarterly electronic publication *Monk Life*, featuring articles on various aspects of the monastic life, written exclusively by the monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey.

Through this publication, we hope to reach out to young men discerning a possible religious vocation by sharing our stories about how living under the

guidance of the *Rule of St. Benedict* brings us closer to Christ. We hope to provide our readers with insight into the life, prayer and works of our monastic community and perhaps even stir within some of our readers the desire to take on this way of life as their own.

The monastery's vocation director, Br. John Mark Falkenhain, OSB, remarks: "In each issue, we hope to introduce you to one or two or more of our monks, to highlight some of the ways we are laboring to serve the Church around us, and to share some of the insights, perceptions, and experiences of God that grow out of our unique perspective as monks living in the United States in the 21st century."

While the intended audience is young men interested in a possible monastic vocation, other demographics might also enjoy reading what it is like living, working and praying in a Benedictine monastery.

Find the latest issue of *Monk Life* online at: [www.saintmeinrad.org/monk-life/](http://www.saintmeinrad.org/monk-life/) ♦



Br. Francis Wagner, OSB, invests Melanie and Stephen Kincaid as oblate novices during the Evansville Oblate Chapter meeting on April 6.

## A POINT TO PONDER FROM *The Rule*

*"We believe that the Divine Presence is everywhere ...."*

*Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 19:1*

An oblate is to be attentive to God's presence in his or her ordinary daily life. The first verse of Chapter 19 of the *Rule of St. Benedict* concludes with a quote from Proverbs 15:3: "... that in every place the eyes of the Lord are watching the good and the wicked."

The thought of God watching us all the time can be both intimidating and a source of consolation. The *Rule* holds forth this reassuring image of an ever-watchful God to underscore the truth that God is always present to us. We are being saved even before we become aware of God's saving presence in our lives.

Recognizing the importance of living in God's presence, St. Benedict tells us to walk always in the presence of God, remembering His mercy, saving help and justice. This art of living in God's presence keeps us from sin and helps us persevere in good works.

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# Eucharist: A path to gratitude

This article is based on a retreat by Fr. Raymond Studzinski, OSB, to the New York Oblates, August 30-September 1, 2013.



Jane Massimino

The *Rule of St. Benedict* directs us to live a life of gratitude, which is the meaning of “Eucharist.” We are called to live with love, inclusiveness

and gratitude.

We need to recognize and understand how much we are “gifted”; this is the antidote to envy and jealousy. Every person is called and gifted, and all gifts further the reign of God. All are responsible to know and develop our gifts; using them gives meaning to life. We discover our gifts in relationship to one another.

To say of our giftedness, “Oh, it’s nothing,” is to dismiss the gift with a misplaced notion of humility. True humility acknowledges the gift and its source. Gifts don’t have to be spectacular. They can be ordinary, such as listening, warmth or compassion. Discounting our gifts by saying, “Everybody has them,” is also misplaced humility.

Envy is the tendency to desire another’s gifts, which keeps us from discovering and developing our own. We are gifted to serve and to accept the responsibility that comes with the gift.

## Looking Back with Gratitude

Aging is a time for taking care of unfinished business and for remembering what God has done and is doing in us. Psychologist Erik Erikson, in his work on life cycles,

explored the challenge of old age (integrity vs. despair and disgust). Do we believe that life has been worthwhile? Those who achieve integrity accept life with the people who were part of it.

Your parents were a gift – be grateful for who they were, even with their weaknesses. Illness or crises can be gifts when they cause one’s life to take a different turn. In Eudora Welty’s novel, *The Optimist’s Daughter*, an elderly woman recalls her life and is able to acknowledge with gratitude the gift her life has been.

In the Eucharist, we remember the dying and rising of Jesus made present. Recalling our own life, we recognize God’s presence as a fellow traveler.

## The Eucharistic Table

Who did Jesus eat with? He dined with friends, with respected members of the Jewish community, and with sinners, tax collectors and the marginalized. We must be ready to welcome those for whom there is no room at any other table. We must become vulnerable and inclusive.

Try to resist a “fast food” mentality – avoid rushing in and rushing out. The meal we share implicates us in each other’s lives. Jesus practiced table fellowship: with Martha, Mary and Lazarus; when he fed the 5,000; at Cana and post-Resurrection, by cooking breakfast for the apostles by the Sea of Galilee (John 21:10-14). The Eucharistic meal involves us with each other and asks that we live in openness to others and to God.

“Do this in memory of me.” When we gather as equals at the Eucharistic table, we leave behind the tendency to group or rank according to status. All are servants, and there is no head table with a guest of honor but *one table* where all are welcome. When Jesus washed the disciples’ feet at the Last Supper, all distinctions were shattered. We are a church of equals.

## Be Generous to All

Sharing Eucharist inspires us to become lavish lovers of God. While at the home of Simon the leper, a woman approaches Jesus with a jar of expensive ointment and pours it on his head. The disciples question the practicality of this gesture, but Jesus says, “... wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her” (Matt. 26:6-13).

This is the true meaning of Eucharist: to break out of our self-centeredness and be truly generous. To live the Eucharist is to live with radical openness to all, to be a servant to all and to make present the abundant love of God for all.

When we leave the Eucharistic celebration, we should leave even hungrier for God and others. It should leave us wanting to end starvation of any kind. The Eucharist provides a passion for unity. We are Christ’s body in the world. We should resolve to become more fully what we eat and drink.

Jane Massimino, oblate  
Farmingdale, NY

# Photo highlights from the 2014 MCR



*Fr. Harry Hagan, OSB, speaks on "Praying the Psalms" with the oblate chapter coordinators, representatives and delegates who attended the 2014 MCR, a gathering that is held every five years.*



*Fr. Jeremy King, OSB, choirmaster of the monastery, spoke to the oblates on "Singing the Psalms."*



*Oblates Maureen Reichardt, Jennie Latta and Chris Topa listen attentively to the speaker.*



*Ron DeMarco was one of the 80+ oblates who attended the 2014 MCR at Saint Meinrad.*



*Rosemary Conrad, co-coordinator of Cincinnati Oblate Chapter, leads a discussion group.*



*Chris Topa follows along as the speaker explains how to pray and sing the psalms.*

# Vespers with Mom



*Stephen Drees*

My mother was raised Presbyterian and converted to Catholicism upon her marriage to my father. And like many converts, my mother took her already-strong Christian faith and lived it seriously as a Catholic.

She was not a doctrinaire and was less concerned with dogma than in living her faith through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. When I think of my mother, two things come to mind – love and mercy. Because her style of faith was quite similar to his in tone and action, I believe she would have loved our new Holy Father, Pope Francis.

If this sounds like a eulogy, it isn't; but I am talking about my mother in the past tense. You see, over five years ago she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and the inevitable has slowly but gradually come to pass. My mother has lost all recognition of me and my four siblings, spouses and grandchildren.

She no longer recognizes her sister, in-laws and former close friends. My mother has been slowly but gradually slipping away for years and now she is all but gone. But every now and then, we get a moment – a small glimmer of who she really is and was.

I think it was providential that my oblate vocation took hold over these same five years. I had early hints of interest in lay monasticism many years before, but concurrent to my mother's decline is when I came to embrace the

Benedictine path – and at Saint Meinrad Archabbey specifically.

As my mother went into decline, I retreated into prayer. Not for some miracle to relieve her of this cross, as I know there is no cure. Rather, I prayed that my family and I would be able to accept this heavy yoke, hold on tightly together and remain a united family. I also prayed that my mother would be able to make it to the end of her journey with some semblance of personal dignity intact.

What does one do for someone who brought you into the world, has known you longer than anyone else, loved you more than anyone else and done more for you than anyone except God Himself? Years ago, I would have been stumped about what to do. I ultimately came to the conclusion that all I could do was pray.

So pray I did in my daily Benedictine rhythm – Lauds, Vespers and Compline, day after day. Over the past few years, whenever I'm with my mother, I typically recite the Divine Office to her. As my mother lives nine hours away and no longer can travel, my time with her is infrequent – so these times are increasingly few and precious.

Last August my mother came to visit us and we all knew it would likely be her last time here. One of my sisters was her traveling companion. During her stay, there was a glimmer of Mom here and there, but for the most part she did not really know who we were. The last night she was with us, before she went to sleep we all went into the bedroom to tuck her in. The family gathered around her on the bed. It was very quiet and still. And then I prayed Vespers.

God come to "our" assistance,  
Lord make haste to help "us."  
Glory to the Father and the Son  
and the Holy Spirit  
As it was in the beginning, is  
now and will be forever,  
Amen.  
Alleluia....

To my knowledge, my mother never visited a monastery or went on a retreat to one. And like most lay Catholics, she had never prayed the Divine Office. But she listened very carefully and peacefully. And as I recited the psalms, antiphons and prayers, she instinctively knew when to say Amen – right on cue.

I was certain that she could not ascertain the specific words or meaning of this ancient prayer ritual, but I do believe that on some level she had been given the grace of knowing that something sacred was happening to her and to us. I felt a strong presence in the room. It was as if for just an instant she was given the gift of understanding just how much she is loved by us, by many others and, most importantly, by the Almighty.

I concluded Vespers and then made the sign of the cross with holy water on her forehead. We all hugged and kissed her and said good night. As we left the room, I turned and took one more very long look at her as she gazed back at me smiling. She told me she loved me. I told her I loved her as my eyes welled up with tears, and I closed the door.

It was at that moment that I harkened back to my original prayer of family unity and personal dignity for my mother. And it occurred to me that despite the many twists and turns in her difficult journey – and likely more to come before it's over – my prayer had already been answered.

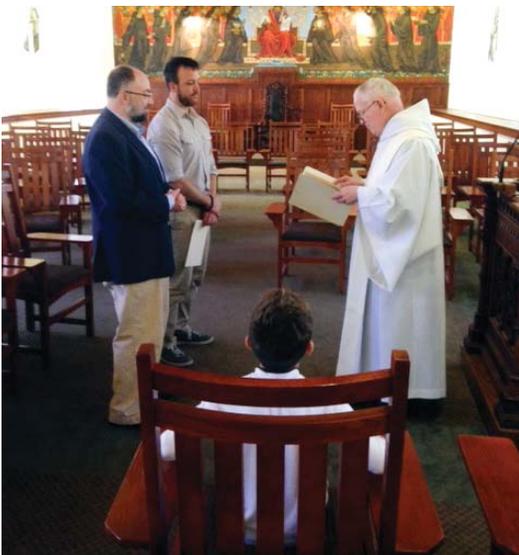
*Stephen Drees, oblate  
Mason, OH*



*Mike Reffett, co-coordinator of the Evansville Chapter, participates in the Alumni Day of Service in Evansville, IN, on March 15.*



*Deacon Scott Woods, of the Diocese of Toledo, and Jeffery Anselm Oelker, of Fishers, IN, listen to the prayer during the oblation ceremony.*



*Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, receives the oblation of Ted Castronova of Bloomington, IN, and R.J. Powell, of Johnson City, TN, in the Chapter Room.*



*Oblates gathered to discuss a potential chapter for Kalamazoo, MI. The meeting took place on April 13 at St. Catherine Parish in Portage, MI. From left, back row, are Steven Borchert, Brian Hirt, Nancy Bartkowski, Rick Mills and Charles McKelvey; front row, Peter Schaeffer, Mary Dannis and Tim Hardigan.*



*Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, congratulates three oblate novices who made oblation and five who were invested as oblate novices.*



*Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, holds a birthday cake in honor of his 80th birthday on April 14.*

## Chamber music becomes occasion of prayer

As a musician and an oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, it was my joy and privilege to perform for the Saint Meinrad community at their cultural series on March 23, 2014. Joining me in a program of classical music was my chamber music partner, cellist John Winninger.

We both reside in Bloomington, we each have been professionally connected to Indiana University and we belong to the same Bloomington parish of St. Charles Borromeo. We have rehearsed and performed together for 20 years.

The repertoire for cello and piano covers four major periods in music history, and the program we selected drew from three of those periods. We opened with a set of four short pieces making up a Sinfonia by the Baroque composer Pergolesi, an Italian in the early 18th century.

Then came a Romantic period piece by Gabriel Faure, a famous French composer and teacher in the latter half of the 19th century. What followed were large-scale sonatas by Haydn and Brahms, the first from the Classical period and the Brahms from the late Romantic era.

John and I were delighted to perform in the relatively new Gallery space. With two sides of the room looking out into inner courtyards, one is aware of nature and of light while simultaneously enjoying being in a large drawing room, quite ideal for playing and hearing chamber music.

Twice in the 1990s, John and I had presented programs in the former St. Bede Theater, that imposing space with a large stage in St. Bede Hall. But given the size of the audience for

the Saint Meinrad concerts and the fact that we present chamber music, the Gallery is a more suitable setting for a more intimate form of concert.

Chamber music is thus named as it originated as musician friends playing music together in one another's homes or in the salon of a wealthy person. To play it in a chamber, a music room or a living room fulfills chamber music's purpose and origins.

We gave this same program several times at my home in Bloomington in the weeks before the Saint Meinrad date. In those weeks of preparation, part of my prayer had been "Please, Lord, perfect the good work you have begun in us."

By that, I did not mean I was praying that we would play perfectly, but that we were relying on God's help in the whole process. From my readings in Benedictine spirituality, I was aware of this prayer and it arose naturally in me during the last weeks of individual practice and rehearsals.

As I pray the Liturgy of the Hours, I often meet, in the psalms, phrases that have to do with praising God by singing or playing an instrument. From Psalm 104 is one such example among many: "I will sing to the Lord all my life, make music to my God while I live." I am so thankful for these personal expressions from the psalmist; they echo very much the thanks in my heart to our marvelous God.

*Diane Rivera, oblate  
Bloomington, IN*

## Committee reviews financial status

The Oblate Finance Committee met on April 4 to review financial results for the six months ending December 31, 2013. Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, oblate director, expressed awe and

appreciation that active gift-giving has continued during challenging economic times. The gift revenue covers normal operating expenses and recent additional printing and mailing costs.

The additional printing costs include printing the quarterly newsletter in color and producing a Points to Ponder booklet that was mailed during the Christmas season. It was noted that nearly 3,300 books have been sold during the past five years. Fr. Meinrad shared his gratification that many oblates' spiritual lives have been enriched by the publications.

*Mike Reffett, oblate  
Evansville, IN*

## Oblate Council prepares for June coordinators meeting

The Oblate Council gathered at the Saint Meinrad Oblate Office on April 5, 2014. Janis Dopp chaired the meeting. Present on the Hill were Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, Janis Dopp, Al Kovacs, Jennie Latta, Pat Phillips, Dennis Skelton and Bill Wilson. Joining the group by phone was Chris Topa. Jennie Latta acted as secretary. Gail Chambers and Mike Reffett were absent.

Welcome was extended to members of the Oblate Finance Committee who were present: Maureen Reichardt, George Thompson and Barbara Phillips.

Two celebrations were shared – Jennie Latta's completion of her PhD and Fr. Meinrad's 80th birthday (remembered with a chant form of "Happy Birthday" sung by the group).

Assignments for the upcoming June meeting of chapter coordinators and representatives were discussed. Janis Dopp thanked the planning

committee and chairman Mike Reffett for their work. Discussion was held about plans to record the conferences to be given by Fr. Harry Hagan, OSB, and Fr. Jeremy King, OSB, and provide DVDs of the conferences to all oblates in the community. There was much excitement about having the opportunity to capture clips and quotes from oblates on video to enhance our community video collections.

Fr. Meinrad discussed the providing of spiritual direction in the oblate community. There has been an increase in requests from oblates for spiritual direction by the monks. The council recommended that an upcoming issue of the newsletter focus on spiritual direction, as it fits well with the year's theme: the presence of God in the life of the oblate.

Fr. Meinrad reported that the Haubstadt Oblate Chapter would close and he would be present on April 6 for the final meeting. He thanked the council members for their ongoing visits to chapters to share about the work of the Oblate Council. Much discussion was held about the development of new chapters, the sustaining of current chapters and visits by a monk from Saint Meinrad.

Bill Wilson, Jennie Latta and Al Kovacs will serve as a task group to offer recommendations and review the guidelines. Fr. Meinrad reported that Janis Dopp had been asked to serve on the international advisory council for the next World Congress of Oblates. Janis and the council are excited about Saint Meinrad Archabbey's contribution and input into the planning.

A "Role of Oblates Appreciation" chart was shared with the council

(developed in 1984 by the Congress of Benedictine Abbots at Rome). This will be included in the packet for new oblates and will be included in a future issue of the oblate newsletter.

Pat Phillips reported from the Finance Committee that the finances of the oblate community are in a healthy position. Appreciation was shared by all for the support given by oblates. It was reported that, as a result of the oblate page on the Saint Meinrad website, we receive lots of requests for information. It was recommended that Fr. Meinrad consider posting his talk about the vocation of the oblate to the website.

Jennie Latta reported that she continues the work of developing a new book, *Saints and Seasons*. Discussion was held on two new helpful resources for chapters in the future – a Chapter Coordinator's Corner in the newsletter to provide ideas and matters that have been used in other chapters; and a *Chapter Coordinator's Handbook*, 3rd edition, with possible availability in digital format.

The next meeting of the Oblate Council will be June 15, 2014, immediately following the Meeting of Chapter Coordinators & Representatives.

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

### **Oblate director celebrates birthday**

During the meeting of the Oblate Council, Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, director of Benedictine Oblates, was treated with a beautiful birthday cake in celebration of his upcoming 80th birthday. The council members sang "Happy Birthday" in Gregorian chant. Fr. Meinrad expressed gratitude to all the oblates who sent cards and best wishes.

### **Haubstadt Oblate Chapter holds final meeting**

April 6, 2014 was the last meeting of the Haubstadt, IN, Oblate Chapter due to decline in the number of oblates who could attend the meetings. Six oblates were present for the meeting with Director of Benedictine Oblates Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB.

The oblate chapter began in 1979. Oblate Pamela Betz was the last chapter coordinator, serving since August 1999. We thank her for her many years of service to the chapter. Several of the oblates are planning to attend the Evansville Oblate Chapter meetings.

### **Ohio Day of Recollection focuses on sacraments**

On Saturday, May 17, the Cincinnati Oblate Chapter hosted the 2014 Ohio Day of Recollection at the Milford Spiritual Center near Cincinnati. About 30 oblates from the Cincinnati, Dayton and Columbus chapters attended. Fr. Noël Mueller, OSB, delivered two conferences on "Our Commitment to Christ: Living the Sacraments in the *Rule*." Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, was present with the oblates as they studied, prayed and celebrated Eucharist together.

### **Rosary enjoys a long tradition**

Saint Meinrad monk Br. Zachary Wilberding, OSB, joined the meeting of oblates of Louisville, KY, and Southern Indiana for a day of recollection at the Sisters of the Poor in Louisville on April 19 to share his love of the rosary. Br. Zachary briefly covered the importance of the rosary in the Church, how this form of prayer developed and various methods of enriching our prayer life through the use of the rosary.

Br. Zachary informed us that Catholics are not the only ones praying the rosary. An Internet search revealed various rosary prayers for Episcopalians, Anglicans, Orthodox and Lutherans. Lutherans use the same rosary beads as Catholics; however, they say different prayers while reciting the rosary. The other denominations use various numbers of beads and prayers for their meditation. Br. Zachary emphasized that prayer is a gift from God and we should use the rosary as an instrument of conversion.

Praying with beads has been used for many centuries. Buddhists and Hindus both use beads to pray. In the early Church, those who could read would pray the 150 psalms. Many of the faithful could not read or, because of the need to perform manual labor, were unable to pray the psalms.

These people began the habit of praying the Our Father 150 times. In the 1200s, the Cistercians, with a great love and devotion to Mary, substituted the Hail Mary for the Our Father. Br. Zachary pointed out that Jesus is at the center of the Hail Mary and we always see Mary pointing to Jesus.

The Catholic rosary for many years consisted of three sets of five mysteries: the Joyful Mysteries, the Sorrowful Mysteries and the Glorious Mysteries. Pope John Paul II added the Luminous Mysteries, which consist of the Baptism in the Jordan, the wedding at Cana, the proclamation of the Kingdom, the Transfiguration and the institution of the Eucharist.

Br. Zachary stressed that any episode in Jesus' life is a mystery and can be used for meditation. You can pray the parables, the healing mysteries, the kingdom of God mysteries; you can even mix mysteries. Go where the Spirit leads you.

Father M. Basil Pennington, in his book *Praying by Hand*, stresses that praying the rosary in a literal, a meditative or a contemplative way are all worthy forms of prayer. Using the meditative approach, visualize the scene, be there, be one of the characters, ask questions, ask yourself what virtue this mystery calls you to. In the contemplative approach, no words or visuals are necessary. It is enough to hold the beads and be in God's presence.

Br. Zachary left us with a humorous story from his prison ministry. There was a tent revival set up at the prison and Br. Zachary was manning the Catholic section. One of the inmates came up to keep Br. Zachary company and told him that he had brought his weapon! Br. Zachary was concerned until the inmate stated, "Padre Pio says you shouldn't go anywhere without your rosary!"

*Lance Schortmann, oblate  
Louisville, KY*

### **Oblate marks 62nd anniversary**

On April 27, Mary Ann Petra Backes-Ciulla of Fairport, NY, renewed her oblate promises. Mary Ann made her first oblation with Oblate Director Fr. Walter Sullivan, OSB, in Rochester, NY, which had a very active chapter at that time. Congratulations and blessings upon Mary Ann.

### **Oblate earns master's degree**

Oblate Michael Perigo of Indianapolis, IN, received his Master of Arts degree from Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology on May 10. We congratulate him on this honor.

### **Couple celebrates anniversary**

Congratulations to oblate Jim Spicer and his wife, Sandy, on their 50th wedding anniversary on June 8. They

are from Lowell, IN. We offer our prayers and best wishes.

### **Jerry Maillet prepares manual**

Oblate Jerry Maillet from Indianapolis has put together a three-ring binder for conference members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. The manual is thorough and includes helpful pictures. The manual's five sections are Introduction, Home Visitation, Tools for Good Works, Outside Referrals, and Prayer. Congratulations to Jerry for his excellent work on this manual.

### **Jared Bryson receives his Doctor of Ministry**

Oblate Jared Bryson of Fort Smith, AR, successfully completed his Doctor of Ministry in Christian spirituality at Washington Theological Union. His thesis project was "Contemplation in Action: Executive Formation and Servant Leadership in Catholic Health Care." Congratulations! ♦

## **OBLATIONS**

February 13, 2014 – *Ms. Kimberly Mary Magdalene Hile* of Grandview, IN

February 23, 2014 – *Mr. Scott Gregory Alt* of Loveland, OH

March 20, 2014 – *Mrs. Beverly Therese Himsel* of Jasper, IN; *Mr. Jeffrey Anselm Oelker* of Fishers, IN; and *Rev. Mr. Scott Gregory Woods* of St. Meinrad, IN

March 21, 2014 – *Mrs. Audra Julian Colette Douglas* of Evansville, IN

March 22, 2014 – *Mrs. Maria del Pilar Clara Arroyo* of South Bend, IN

April 10, 2014 – *Mr. Jerry John Thomas Blair* of Leitchfield, KY

April 20, 2014 – *Mr. Richard Cyprian Tomsick* of Richmond Heights, OH

April 27, 2014 – *Mr. Mark Barnabas Caldwell-Reiss* of Southgate, KY

May 15, 2014 – *Mr. Peter Aelred Davies* of Jeffersonville, IN ♦

### **TRANSFER OF OBLATION to Saint Meinrad Archabbey**

January 7, 2014 – *Mr. Robert Benedict Killelea* of Canton, MS

March 27, 2014 – *Miss Cynthia Rose Felch* of South Bend, IN ♦

### **INVESTITURES**

February 16, 2014 – *Mr. Alvin Cassidy* and *Ms. Karen Cassidy*, both of Louisville, KY

February 23, 2014 – *Mrs. Georgia Ann Spaeth* of Cincinnati, OH

February 26, 2014 – *Mrs. Ruby Jean Jackson* of Parkersburg, WV

March 13, 2014 – *Mr. Edward Neal Jackson* of Loogootee, IN

March 20, 2014 – *Mr. Richard Barrett* of West Liberty, OH; *Rev. Robert Fulton* of Hamlin, WV; *Mrs. Sharon Hopf* and *Mrs. Marlene Schmitt*, both of Jasper, IN; and *Mrs. Sandy Seckinger* of St. Meinrad, IN

March 25, 2014 – *Mrs. Constance Feagans* and *Mr. Louis Feagans*, both of Martinsville, IN

April 4, 2014 – *Mr. Rockford Patrick* of West Harrison, IN

April 6, 2014 – *Mrs. Melanie Kincaid* and *Mr. Steve Kincaid*, both of Evansville, IN

April 13, 2014 – *Ms. Nancy Bartkowski* of Portage, MI; and *Mr. Rick Mills* of Jackson, MI

April 14, 2014 – *Dr. Dale Edwyna Smith* of St. Louis, MO

May 1, 2014 – *Mrs. Ginger Thomas* of Camby, IN; and *Ms. Crystal White* of Bloomington, IN

May 7, 2014 – *Mr. Bradley Spaulding* of Wabash, IN

May 10, 2014 – *Mr. Larry Hembree* of Greenfield, IN; and *Mr. Richard Toumey* of Indianapolis, IN

May 15, 2014 – *Mrs. Deanne Holsbouser* of Edwardsville, IL, and *Mrs. Tara Sheringer* of Brownsburg, IN ♦

### **DEATHS**

February 25, 2014 – *Mr. Edward Mertz Jr.* of Louisville, KY

March 3, 2014 – *Mr. John (Mike) Tyl* of Evansville, IN

March 6, 2014 – *Mrs. Leona Schwartz* of Tell City, IN

March 18, 2014 – *Mr. Robert Dale Hess* of Louisville, KY

April 1, 2014 – *Mrs. Audrey Borschel* of Fishers, IN

April 18, 2014 – *Mrs. Lois D'Antonio* of Farmingdale, NY

April 20, 2014 – *Mrs. Catherine Brown* of St. Meinrad, IN

May 3, 2014 – *Mr. Donald Taylor* of Evansville, IN ♦

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**August 29-31, 2014:** The New York oblates will celebrate their annual Labor Day weekend retreat with Fr. Adrian Burke, OSB, speaking on “Clothed in the New Self: ‘Christ is All and in All.’” The conferences will be reflections about how we encounter God in the ordinary and how to cultivate an increased awareness to the presence of God as the basis for the “new self” we are called to become by grace and our own human freedom.

**September 6, 2014:** The Lancaster, PA, Day of Recollection in the Amish country will have Fr. Adrian Burke, OSB speaking on “Clothed in the New Self: ‘Christ is All and in All.’”

The conferences will be reflections about how we encounter God in the ordinary and how to cultivate an increased awareness to the presence of God as the basis for the “new self” we are called to become by grace and our own human freedom.

**November 30, 2014:** The Day of Recollection for New York oblates will have Fr. Denis Robinson, OSB, as the presenter on “Discipleship in Motion.”

**December 12-14, 2014:** The Oblate Retreat at Saint Meinrad Archabbey is scheduled to have Fr. Columba Kelly, OSB, as the presenter on “Some Tools for Experiencing the Presence of God in the Daily Life of a Benedictine Oblate.” ♦

### **VOLUNTEERS APPRECIATED**

Recent volunteers in the Oblate Office were: Steve Bailey, Novice Dane DeDecker, OSB, Mike Reffett, Michele Reffett, George Thompson, Mike Edwards, Edward Castranova, Dennis Skelton, Candidate John Avery and Candidate Charles Peñalosa. ♦



*Pam Betz holds a ceramic dish given to her in appreciation for 15 years as coordinator of the Haubstadt Oblate Chapter.*



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## Reading Room

Lefebvre, Georges, OSB. *God Present*. Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press Inc., 1979.

This book is not a recent publication, but it is the most definitive book that could be found where the entire book focuses on the presence of God. It was originally published in France under the title of *Dieu present*.

Fr. Lefebvre's small and simple book is replete with a vision of peace that is attained in the presence of God. He contends that God dwells within each of us in the center of our being. He has always been present to us both in word and sign and with His creation. God wants to draw us into a union with Him.

The author has taken both our history and our prayer as a faith-filled response to this call. It is a response that translates belief into prayer. Recognizing the interdependence of those two aspects provides an enriching experience for the reader.

Fr. Lefebvre has developed his insights into two sections. The first section is a lucid and significant theology of

God's indwelling presence in human history, in the personage of Christ, in the community of believers and in the individual Christian. The second section conveys this theology beyond the point of discussion to individual prayer.

The writer's insights are found throughout the book. In the chapter titled "Living a Presence," for example, the author states that when we struggle upward by our own efforts, God seems to withdraw from us. When we simply open ourselves to God's grace, we will find that God is near and His love draws us into an intimate union with Him.

This book is ideal for individuals and small prayer groups that are seeking God's presence in the ordinary events and activities of life. The Eucharist is the sign that enables us to live our faith in the presence of God. It emphasizes that, even in our humblest prayer, we are in the presence of God. Although published in 1979, the book still conveys theological ideals that are apropos to our modern-day life.

*Thomas J. Rillo, oblate  
Bloomington, IN*