

Oblate Benedictine



Saint Meinrad



Rose Ann Cavins of Evansville, IN, made her oblation as an oblate of Saint Meinrad on December 15, 2018.

Awakening: A call to move deeper into the oblate life

“In what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.” –Mark 13:37

St. Benedict lived in a time that was wrought with violence, greed and the struggle for power. He saw corruption in the systemic decay of institutions that left people bereft of human kindness.

His response was to remove himself completely from the corruption and insidiousness plaguing his world. His awakening to the desire to seek God drew him into the desert and away from the usual routines and influences that were hardening his heart.

From his desert experience and the awakening it afforded him, others noticed and sought his wisdom. Benedict developed small communities of followers. He taught that pride is the basic flaw in the human system and that humility must be the cornerstone of society, of civilization and of the social order. He based his rule of life on 12 principles of humility that historians say saved western civilization.

As oblates, we have committed ourselves to living in this awakening through the *Rule* offered by St. Benedict. By choosing to live our lives based on those same life principles, we also choose to “keep awake” and turn upside down the ways of society.

Given the invitation to move into a different level of faith and being, our oblation is an awakening that calls us to let go of darkness and evil influences and, in doing so, to move deeper into the promises made in Baptism. We do renounce sin and reject the lure of evil.

Awakening brings with it the process of *metanoia* (a change of heart and mind). Heed Benedict’s call for humility to heal ourselves and our world. Keep awake and *Obsculta inclina aurem cordis tui* – “Listen by inclining the ear of your heart.”

*Kathleen Polansky, oblate
New Salisbury, IN*

A POINT TO PONDER FROM *The Rule*

“Let peace be your quest and aim.”

Rule of St. Benedict, Prologue 17

The watchword for Benedictines is peace. As this text says, it is the quest and aim of our life. We have to work for peace, both internally and externally. If we assume that peace just happens, we are “peace-hoppers.” We must awaken to the times and places that call for peace and mediation.

St. Benedict wants us to exercise effort in creating the basis for true peace. We must bring into all our relationships an effort that makes for harmony, blessing and love. We must seek peace not only with those with whom we live, but also peace within our very selves!

When we have that peace, we can enter into the mystery of God, who is eternal peace. The first step is awakening to what is in conflict, discord or chaos so that our intervention does not add to it, but is a means for resolution and reconciliation.

Benedictine Oblate is published four times a year by Saint Meinrad Archabbey.

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We should listen with care



Archabbot Kurt Stasiak, OSB

One memory I have of first grade was the teacher asking us to write (probably print!) a short paragraph on our two favorite seasons. One favorite was winter, because it brought snow and Santa

Claus. But my most favorite was summer, with its days full of swimming and baseball.

Asked to choose my favorite seasons now, some 60+ years later? Well, snow and Santa Claus don't excite me much anymore and, while I still like swimming and baseball, I don't really spend a lot of time with either. Ironically, I'd have to say my favorite seasons now are the “other two” – spring and fall. Perhaps later I can write about fall. Here, a few thoughts about spring.

Spring brings us through the last few weeks of winter, and perhaps we can see there a parallel in the Church's liturgical year as through March and early April we make our way through Lent. We move slowly. (Lent is a long season!) And we move carefully. (There are those Lenten penances we've taken on.)

We're aiming for Easter, of course, the ultimate spring, the grand awakening to the best of what God has to offer us: the pledge of eternal life, made visible through the resurrection and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We've gone through this change of seasons before, of course. And so, let me ask the question: how can we “wake up” to what the Lord offers us *this* spring, *this* Easter, *this* year?

Let me simply refer to the very first word of St. Benedict's *Rule for Monks*: listen.

We need to listen – carefully, patiently. Remember the prophet Elijah. He was expecting to hear the Lord's voice in a mighty thunderstorm or in a fierce wind. Instead, the Lord spoke to him in a gentle breeze, a whisper.

The sounds of spring, the sounds of awakening, of new life emerging, can be all around us—in church and in community, in family and in friends, and even at work and business. Spring is a gentle season, and we like to be woken up gently, slowly. Let us take care to listen with care.

*Archabbot Kurt Stasiak, OSB
Saint Meinrad Archabbey*

From the Desk of the Director *Awaken to life's possibilities*



Janis Dopp

Every day of my life I am confronted with choices too numerous to count. Should I stay in bed longer or get up? Laundry or shopping? Exercise or

relaxation? Compassion or impatience? The list is endless and relentless. But,

awakening is becoming aware and choosing the better path with each choice that confronts me.

We awaken *from* a state where we are less aware or unaware: we wake from sleep. We move from a total lack of engagement to a state of being on the verge of engaging with everything! We coax ourselves out of that lethargy that marks the first moments of wakefulness: the space between where we want to remain

unaware and the place where we become fully cognizant.

It is the moment when the potential of the day that stretches out before us can be hoodwinked by the desire to stay under the covers where it is warm and dark and safe.

I find it interesting that the possibilities of the daylight hours and what they can offer always win out for me. Awakening to the day can be intoxicating. What will happen that is totally unexpected? How can I use the hours to create something new? What choices will I confront and what will I choose? Will I stay awake all day or will I slip into a dull apathy?

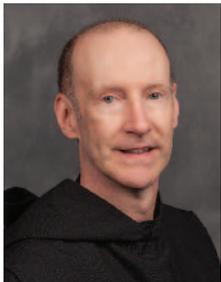
In his Prologue, St. Benedict says, "Let us get up then, at long last, for the

Scriptures rouse us when they say: It is high time for us to arise from sleep." St. Benedict knew that, even in our waking hours, we can still be sound asleep. And his urgent words are there to remind us that there is no time to waste.

And, what are we to do when we are awakened from our nonchalance? We are to "open our eyes to the light that comes from God, and our ears to the voice from heaven that every day calls out this charge: If you hear his voice today, do not harden your hearts." With eyes and ears that are open and a heart that is pliable and ready to respond to God's voice, let's wake up to all of life's wonderful and challenging possibilities.

*Janis Dopp
Oblate Director*

Musings from the Chaplain



Fr. Joseph Cox, OSB

In some cultures, death is occasionally referred to as "sleep." This seems to be a good analogy for the plant world. When a seed is planted, it is as if it is buried.

A hole (grave) is dug, and the seed is "interred." The seed rests, sleeps, dies.

Eventually by what appears to be a miracle, it awakens and comes to life. The seed erupts and forces a shoot upward, upward, upward until it breaks through the sarcophagus of soil and reaches the light.

This time of year, evidence of new life is lavish all around us. Trees, bushes and plants that just a few months ago appeared to be frozen and lifeless have given birth and are now gloriously arrayed with spectacular torrents of leaves and flowers.

The cycle of death to life that has been occurring for millions of years continues now. The world of nature gives to us endless evidence that after death there will be a great awakening. Of course, the greatest awakening was when Jesus Christ rose from the dead and abolished death for all of us.

We will follow Him in death, but we also have the hope of resurrection to life. As St. Paul said to the Ephesians, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." All of us will die and be "planted." But since we have been incorporated into Christ through our Baptism, we will also share in his resurrection. It will be an awakening like no other.

*Fr. Joseph Cox, OSB
Oblate Chaplain*

OBLATES

In their own words



*Oblate Cathey Byers
Bradenton, FL*

"What I have gotten from Saint Meinrad is beyond anything that I can even express. It was a gift that awakened me to a deeper connection of Benedictine spirituality and connected me to the oblate community. I began this way of life when my life was in utter chaos and through it found friendships, stability, and a relationship with God through prayer that affects every decision I make."



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Notes for Novices: *Awakening in the present*



Br. Stanley Rother Wagner, OSB

If you are like me, the first thing that came to mind when hearing or reading “Awakening” was Penny Marshall’s 1990 movie of the same name.

Awakening means something different to us Benedictines, though.

I was having a discussion with Br. Kolbe on the morning before four of our confreres made their solemn vows. He reminded me to enjoy the moment at hand so I would not miss anything. I replied that Benedict’s *Rule* is about recognizing how God is not a distant deity, but a living

Presence among us even now. This is our “awakening,” seeing God in the people around us, the strangers we encounter, and even ourselves.

The Rule helps us to awaken in the present to God and his timeless love for us.

Br. Stanley Rother Wagner, OSB
Oblate Novice Mentor

Notes from Novices: *A time to listen to God*



Charles Thatcher

In the summer of 1981, a young man knocked hesitantly on the door of a Benedictine guest house in Germany, unsure of what

he would find. Having recently survived, by God’s grace, a years-long crisis of faith, he was just looking for a peaceful place to clear his head and, he hoped, to learn to pray again.

Through many centuries and throughout the world, countless people have arrived at monastery doors, each seeking something – food and shelter, a brief respite from a noisy world, spiritual counsel. History tells us that some even come with evil intentions, like the men who murdered Meinrad in his hermitage. Every one of them has a story – the one I told is my own. I think most pilgrims arrive with a common desire: to search for God.

Two years after my first encounter with monasticism, I knocked on the doors of Saint Meinrad, seeking admission into the community. I was invested as a novice and a year later

professed simple vows. From the beginning, it was clear that knowledge of the *Rule of Benedict* was essential, as was continually revisiting it.

Far from being an archaic document, its spirit permeated every aspect of community life. And while there were no perfect monks (perhaps Fr. Theodore Heck was the exception!), I could see that living the *Rule* could bring about real change in self-awareness, concern for others and conforming oneself to Christ.

After four years I chose to leave the monastery, but in truth it never left me, and now, many years later, I am in a second Saint Meinrad novitiate, this time in preparation for oblation. The seed of vocation planted long ago continues to put forth shoots. Praying the daily Office, doing *lectio*, and reading the *Rule* are strengthening me as I run the race. And the sense of belonging to the wider community of Saint Meinrad grounds me as I continue to seek God.

While the words of the *Rule* are familiar, I read them with new eyes. This is partly due to having grown older. The tone of urgency I hear in Benedict’s words resonates more

loudly. Keeping death daily before my eyes doesn’t seem quite so grim.

I can appreciate the value of talking less and listening more, of not being a complainer, of responding to others’ needs without being asked, of being ready to assent to a task I’d rather not do. I am all too aware of how much I don’t know and can’t do, so the steps of humility seem easier to climb.

I tend to pray and read with my heart more than my head. But the *Rule* is coming alive for me in new ways, mainly because I read it as a layperson working to incorporate Benedictine values into my life. May God bring this work to perfection!

Charles Thatcher, oblate novice
Winter Springs, FL

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Spiritual Awakening: Moving toward our potential



Thomas H. Hubert

Upon waking the other day – or actually after I had fully awakened and had that first cup of coffee – it occurred to me that waking up early in the morning has an analogue in the spiritual life.

That is, the daily experience of waking is a process. It may not take more than a few to several seconds, but for me it occurs in small steps or stages. I hear the alarm go off or, if I wake without it, I become aware that I am awake (and alive) and more or less ready to get up and start the day. I also realize that the world is still here, at least that fragment of it that I can see in a dim light.

My wife and I greet each other with a “good morning.” Then I turn on the bedside lamp, throw back the covers and bound onto the floor. Or not. Sometimes I may just gently roll out and let my feet find the floor. (And on rare occasions – very rare! – I may even fall back asleep, thus putting the process on hold.)

Spiritual awakening is a process, too. Or better yet, a pilgrimage that involves steps. Some straight ahead, some crooked and winding, and some even backwards.

Over the years, I have realized that spiritual growth is, in part, a matter of becoming more and more aware each day of many facets of human existence and their interconnectedness: my own gifts and failings, other people and their gifts

and needs, the beauty, wonder, joys, and also sorrows of human existence, as well as its potential for tragedy.

To grow as an “intellectual soul incarnate” (Marion Montgomery following Aquinas) is to become more and more awake to one’s life, one’s role in the world, of the preciousness of other people in one’s life, and of God’s providential plan for each of us.

Sometimes, to be sure, we fall asleep, spiritually speaking. At least, I know I do. Put otherwise, we may become obtuse, smug, self-satisfied, self-absorbed, lazy, indifferent, irritable and out of touch with our inmost life (*the life that is true life*, I Tim. 6:12), and God’s call to us. Or worse.

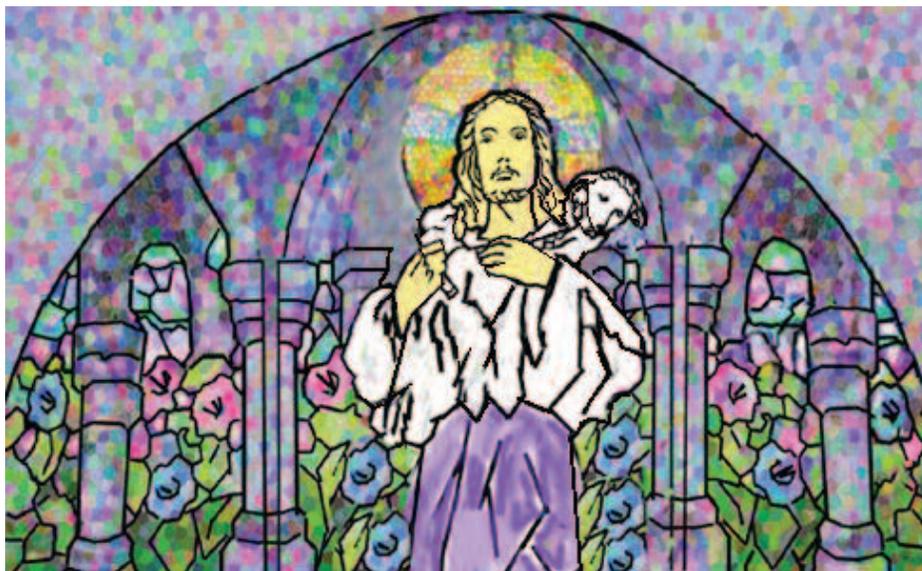
We may even fall into serious sin. But by the grace of God, an awakening is always possible. It may take only a word from a friend or spouse (blunt or soft), a passage in a book we’re reading, the delightful antics of a young child or seeing intensely a

beautiful scene in nature. And a *metanoia* occurs. We turn. We are again awake to what is true and good.

Lent can be a special time of awakening, a time in which we make a deliberate effort to draw closer to God and to conform ourselves to his will for us. May each of us aim to be fully awake to the great gifts available to us in our tradition – not least is Scripture and spiritual writings, prayer and the sacraments (and especially in this season, reconciliation).

May we be fully awake to the wonders of creation, to the even greater wonders of the Creator and Redeemer as we make our journey through this grace-filled season. And thus may we be ever more fully awake – when it comes – to the great feast of light we call Easter.

Thomas H. Hubert, oblate
Zionsville, IN



Artwork of Jesus as The Good Shepherd by Melanie Isaacson, Bloomington, IN.

My Spiritual Awakening



Thomas J. Rillo

Spiritual awakening ignites a change of awareness. One looks at the world through the eyes of the Holy Spirit, letting go of the self. It is a

willingness to forgo ideas formed by our ego and allow the vision of the Holy Spirit to connect us with the energy of God's unconditional love. This love gets shrouded by our ego.

Most often, spiritual awakening is a gradual lifetime opening to God. Yet at times, it can happen suddenly. In my situation, it was both gradual and sudden. I would like to share with you a few experiences that were catalysts for the sublimation of my ego, opening my heart to let in a new spiritual awareness and the ability to see life with new eyes.

My first experience occurred when I was in high school. It was during the Great Depression and young people in school also had full-time or part-time work. I had a job delivering ice to individual homes and large businesses that used 100-pound blocks of ice for air conditioning.

I drove a truck to make the deliveries. My truck's doors were removed so that I could make quick exits and speed up the delivery time. While rounding a curve in the road at a speed that was not conducive to the thousand pounds of ice in the back of the truck, the ice shifted. This caused the vehicle to skid and I was thrown out onto the road.

A vehicle coming toward me narrowly missed driving over me. I was 17 at the time. I knew intuitively that the Lord had spared me that day.

Attending Mass at my church the following Sunday, I noticed everything became more vivid. I saw my faith in a much clearer light. I was spiritually awakening.

The second experience happened when I was an undergraduate. A required English class assignment was to attend the Broadway production of the play "Mr. Roberts." Five of us were driving home when we were broadsided on my side of the car by a New York City taxi cab. Thankfully, no one was injured. Through that experience, God awakened my consciousness and I asked Him, "Am I not doing enough in your name?"

Another experience, not drastic or shocking, occurred when I was a graduate student at Seton Hall University in New Jersey. I was beckoned to the university president's office. Father Fleming, the university president, had been a priest at my hometown church where I had been an altar boy.

He told me that he wanted me to take a course that was not on my degree curriculum. When I explained this to him, he said, "You take it and you will not be sorry." It turned out that Bishop Fulton Sheen was to be a guest speaker for three class sessions. Taking a front seat, I felt the power of Bishop Sheen's charismatic words hitting me like a ton of bricks. Every word ignited my soul. It was an experience that heightened my awakening to a level greater than ever before.

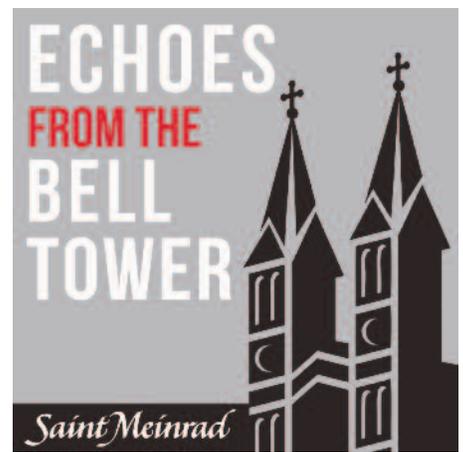
It is never necessary to wait for something earth-shattering to happen in our lives for us to shift our awareness and become more spiritually awakened and spiritually focused. We can, through prayer and meditation, open ourselves to God. It takes practice

and persistence to see the world not as ourself, but as God sees it.

To do this, we must learn humility. We invite our ego to step aside so that the competitive nature within, the need for recognition and limelight, the need to dominate, criticize or prejudice, gives way to unconditional love. We experience a shifting awareness of what is happening around us. Our perception grows as we awaken to the world as God sees it.

An openness to God's nudging brings us into that deeper relationship with God and with creation. Oblation for me has been another example of the continuance of spiritual growth. The positive effect of spiritual awakening is strong through the interaction with the monks and fellow oblates. I am blessed by escaping the Rip Van Winkle stage of my spiritual awakening.

*Thomas J. Rillo, oblate
Bloomington, IN*



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Awakening to the new awareness of our lives

The Busy Benedictine is an occasional column about trying to be like a monk when you're working and taking care of kids.



Edward Castronova

Sometimes it's hard to wake up. Just ask a teenager. How many times have we dragged ours out of his bed and into the car to get to school on time? Or the

beagle, for whom sleep is a career choice, a skill to be perfected.

Sometimes we wake up without wanting to. I dream about sports. In my dreams – only in my dreams – I'm making the big play. To execute, I give it my all. At the great moment, when the utmost effort is needed, I

heroically reach for the ball or puck or birdie or whatever it is I'm using to demonstrate my athletic prowess, and shout in triumph, "Ha ha!"

At which point, my wife leaps out of bed, because my suddenly outstretched arm has knocked the lamp off the nightstand. "What are you yelling about?!"

Waking up like this is enlightening. I learn important things, such as, I am not Ty Cobb. Nina learns that she married a crazy man. The old perspective is washed away and new awareness comes in its wake. Not a new happiness, necessarily, but a new

awareness: things that I thought were thus and such, are not.

Sometimes waking up triggers immense relief. We wake out of a nightmare and thank God it wasn't true. The boat isn't sinking. We are not falling. The lost child is found. Thank God we are not lost, falling, sinking.

No, a strong hand comes to save us, a shepherd who comes looking for us and won't stop until we are found and brought home. When we awake to that, it is a relief beyond all others.

*Edward (Ted) Castronova, oblate
Bloomington, IN*



Top: Evelyn Diaz-Fey and Joseph Fey talk with Archabbot Kurt Stasiak, OSB, after the oblation and investiture ceremony in December.

Bottom: On December 15, 2018, 19 people were invested as oblate novices and 17 made their final oblations as Benedictine Oblates of Saint Meinrad.

Prayer for the Intercession of Servant of God Dorothy Day

God our Creator,
Your servant Dorothy Day exemplified the Catholic faith by her conversion, life of prayer and voluntary poverty, works of mercy, and witness to the justice and peace of the Gospel.
May her life inspire people to turn to Christ as their savior and guide, to see his face in the world's poor and to raise their voices for the justice of God's kingdom. We pray that you grant the favors we ask through her intercession so that her goodness and holiness may be more widely recognized and one day the Church may proclaim her Saint.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

In loving memory of Fr. Thomas D'Angelo

Editor's note: Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, wrote this reflection of Fr. Thomas D'Angelo shortly after his death last June. It was accidentally left out of a previous issue of the newsletter.

I have never experienced a funeral Mass where Cardinal Timothy Dolan presided, three other bishops and 60 priests concelebrated, and 15 vested permanent deacons were present. In addition, the Church of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus in the Bronx, NY, was filled with relatives, friends and oblates. This was the Mass of Resurrection for Fr. Thomas D'Angelo, who died on June 21, 2018.

Fr. Tom was a close and loyal friend. I met him for the first time in 1994 at Saint Meinrad. He had become an oblate under Fr. Michael Keene, OSB, the oblate director at that time. When I became the oblate director a year later, I got to know Fr. Tom very well.

He would pick me up at the airport when I would fly to New York for oblate work. Then he invited me – and maybe this was a mistake on his part – to come for a vacation and stay at his parish. I think he was surprised, for he hosted me for the next seven summer vacations and offered wonderful Benedictine hospitality.

While I was there on vacation, almost every morning we would go to a New York diner for a large and tasty breakfast. We had interesting discussions and conversation. When we returned to the parish, Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Elmsford, NY, Fr. Tom faithfully fulfilled his pastoral ministries.

Fr. Tom did wonderful work as the pastor of his parish. At the same time, he had a strong love of and dedication to the oblates in the New York area. The people loved him. Yet he still made time to take me on visits of historical sites.

One time during an oblate trip to New York, we went to an Italian restaurant. Rose Ranno, Dennis Skelton, Fr. Tom and I were present for that dinner. The waiter put us in a second large dining room, and we were the only ones in that room. Shortly after, a large family came in and was seated three tables away near the piano.

The piano player came in, stopped at our table and talked to us. He enjoyed talking to Fr. Tom, who asked him to play some special songs. When the piano player started playing the songs, Fr. Tom began – very loudly – to sing. Waiters and people in the other dining rooms looked in and enjoyed the musical program.

I told Fr. Tom that he should stop singing. Eventually, the father of the family seated nearby came over to our table. I told Fr. Tom that he was going to ask him to stop singing. The man said to Fr. Tom, “I don't know who you are, but I'm giving you this \$20, for I like your singing better than the man who is playing the piano.”

Fr. Tom was a big help to me at Saint Meinrad. He would come to Saint Meinrad for retreats and always spend time working in the Oblate Office for me. He referred to me as the “OSB, Old Slave Brune, Master of Work.” He would write letters and articles for the newsletter and other publications.

Above all, he would meet the oblates and guests with a joyful presence. Everyone was always happy to see him. During those visits at Saint Meinrad, every evening he liked to sit on the porch of the guest house and smoke his cigar. Many people would stop and join in the conversations.

We say farewell to Fr. Tom with a heart full of gratitude to our good and gracious God for allowing Fr. Tom to serve, love and enjoy the monks, oblates and others he met on the Hill. And lastly to me, Fr. Tom was a special friend, oblate and fellow priest confrere. I am so grateful.

*Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB
Saint Meinrad Archabbey*



Fr. Thomas D'Angelo, left, celebrates an anniversary with Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, center, and Fr. Edward Linton, OSB.

Dear Abbey:

Have questions? We have answers!

Do you have questions for Abbey? If so, submit them to boylex3@hotmail.com.

Dear Abbey,

I know it's spring and I should be joyful and full of hope during this blessed time of Lent, but I'm really not, and I don't want to sound as if I'm complaining or whining. I am a rather recent oblate; I made my oblation three years ago. I am part of a most amazing chapter, a truly caring and special community.

Yet, when I'm at the chapter meetings, I feel alone, almost invisible. I'm not seeking to be seen or noticed, necessarily, but I do want to feel connected. I've noticed that some of the chapter members seem to have specific roles or seem to just know what to do. How can I, too, be of service to my oblate chapter community? What can I do to offer my help?

Sincerely Seeking

Dear SS,

You are being heard. I would first suggest you continue to search your heart to discern what really is going on within. Chapter 7 of the *Rule* is a good place to begin to try to understand our inner self. Spend some time praying about humility and see where God leads you. The second step of humility teaches us that "we love not our own will nor take pleasure in the satisfaction of our desires."

The fourth step teaches that "our hearts quietly embrace suffering and endure it without weakening or seeking escape." The sixth step goes on to teach us to be "content with the lowest and most menial treatment, and regard ourselves as a poor and worthless worker." And chapter seven says "we are inferior to all and of less value."

But then you come back around to the first step of humility, "keep the reverence of God always before our eyes and never forget it" Ps. 36:2 and "God searches hearts and minds" Ps. 7:10.

If, after prayerful reflection, you know you are called to contribute to the chapter in some way, here are some concrete suggestions:

1. Ask your coordinator if there are any tasks or particular needs of the chapter that fit your interests or skills.
2. Just do it. Think of something tangible you would like to do: bake something special for the meeting; set up a St. Benedict space with a statue, Bible and copy of the *Rule* at your meeting; bring flowers; send a card or write a note to one chapter member per week or month; lead your chapter in the dedicated Benedictine Oblates of St. Meinrad prayer devotion for the canonization of Dorothy Day; offer to lead a small group discussion in person or over email.

We are all called to do good works and further God's kingdom here on earth. Abbey is sure that if you ask your chapter coordinator about how you can contribute to the chapter, you will not only be received with genuine care, but you will also hear a big sigh of relief. There are so many details that help chapters be the best that they can be. Your gifts will be gratefully received.

In Benedict,
Abbey

Retreat outlines oblates' work in the world



Ted Castronova

Fr. Denis Robinson, OSB, president-rector of Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology, gave a retreat on “Being Benedictine in a World Turned

Upside Down.” The retreat, held December 14-16, was an important one for oblats, because he spoke practically about the vocation of being Benedictine in the world today.

We normally hear of this in rather abstract terms – we know well that it is important to take the light of the Lord and our holy patron St. Benedict into the dark corners of everyday existence. But why is it important, exactly, and why now? And what does it mean, practically speaking?

Fr. Denis was direct. The oblate community, he said, is not a “monk fan club” or a Wednesday Bible Study group. Oblation, he said, is a genuine religious vocation. It has a specific task at its heart. That task is to drink deeply of the values of this Archabbey and then communicate them directly to the world through our behavior. We have our *ora*, Fr. Denis said, but we also have our specific *labora*: to be the outside presence of Saint Meinrad Archabbey.

Fr. Denis emphasized that this outside presence is to be expressed in daily activities of life. We’re not called to do different things, or great things, or loud things. Rather we are called to do the small things according to the spirit of this place. In doing so, he said, we are not underlings of the monastery, but partners. The monks are the vintners, and we take the bottles to the city.

Oblates have vowed themselves to this house. This house, it turns out, expects us to carry some of the load. “You are the prophets of this time,” said the rector. “The oblats will rebuild the Church.”

How can this be? Fr. Denis reviewed the sad trends since Vatican II. As bishops and priests have lost their influence on our lives (for whatever reason – he went into a lot of them), the job of enacting the Church of Jesus Christ has fallen on parents. The location of “church,” for most people, is no longer the diocese or the parish. For most people, the church is now in the home.

The Domestic Church was once the core of the faith, and Fr. Denis suggested that it has become so again. If the Church is to be rebuilt, it will have to start in our homes. And homes, he emphasized, are the special place of the oblats. The oblate’s oratory, refectory, cell and workplace are in the home. Our monastery is right there in our house.

Fr. Denis urged us to “sacralize” these homes of ours, and everything that happens in or near them. Not figuratively, but literally. Bring ritual into daily life. Bless things: Bless the day, the spouse, the child, the work, the neighbor, the night, and everything in between. As we walk from bed to table to door and back, think of it as a procession.

Look to the *Rule* for guidance. It will tell us how a Benedictine family should feel. We are called to apply the *Rule* to the *domus*. This work has become terribly important for the whole Church, Fr. Denis argued, and no one is in a better position to do it than the oblats.

Is this pressure? You bet! Apparently, the monks don’t think of us primarily as donors. They expect us to do some religious work. We have a job to do, which means there’s some pressure to do it right. Or at least well. Or at least give it a good, honest effort.

*Edward (Ted) Castronova, oblate
Bloomington, IN*

Oblate receives national catechetical honor

Oblate Lawrence McCrobie, founder of OneStepCloserCatholic.org was one of three persons to receive honorable mention for the National Catechist Award. He was one of 100 people nominated for the award. He also has been selected to coordinate the North Central Lieutenancy of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem.

Pray for the canonization of Dorothy Day

If canonized, Servant of God Dorothy Day will be the first oblate to reach sainthood in more than 400 years. The last one was St. Frances of Rome in 1608.

The Benedictine Oblates are now officially part of the prayer network committed to praying for the canonization of Dorothy Day. Our prayer dedication is the first Thursday of every month. (See the prayer on P.7.)

Visit the website for background information, a special Benedictines page and the prayer calendar. You can find it at <http://dorothydayasaint.info/index.html>.

INVESTITURES

December 15, 2018 – Christopher Collins of Independence, KY; Jeff Davenport and Richard Schuster, both of Indianapolis, IN; Edward L.

Johnson of Nashville, TN; **Jennifer Kappler** of Fisherville, KY; **Greg Karn** and **Mary Karn**, both of Hermitage, TN; **Michael King** of Johnson City, TN; **Kenneth Kosovich** of Kirtland, OH; **Michael E. McCarron** of Morton, IL; **Beverly Okey** and **William Okey**, both of Newburgh, IN; **Kathy Peters** and **Vicki Lynn Pettus**, both of Frankfort, KY; **John P. Tobin Jr.** and **Tracie Tobin**, both of Pittsburgh, PA; **Alan Wakefield** of New Buffalo, MI; **Matthew Whisman** of Louisville, KY; **Christopher Wise** of Eldorado, IL ♦

OBLATIONS

December 15, 2018 – **Nicholas Barron** of Leopold, IN; **David Booram** and **Robert Pallikan**, both of Indianapolis, IN; **Rose Ann Cavins** of Evansville, IN; **Evelyn Diaz-Fey** and **Joseph Fey**, both of Port Orange, FL; **Joseph Farrell** of Brandenburg, KY; **Jeff Frazee** of St. Ann, MO; **Maureen Gahan** of Bloomington, IN; **Floriana Huczek** of Poseyville, IN; **Jodi L. Knapp** of Washington, IL; **Rev. John Leedy** of Austin, TX; **Ninfa Paredes** of Wildomar, CA; **Walt Schmitteckert** of Dayton, OH; **Eunice Taylor** of Utica, KY; **Dr. Kimberly Weber** of Heyworth, IL; **Christopher Williams** of Hobart, IN

December 25, 2018 – **Robert Branson** of Branchville, IN ♦

DEATHS

Barbara Ebright, of Monroe, MI, August 19, 2018

Michael Morow, of Indianapolis, IN, September 13, 2018

Marie Agnes Schroeder, of Bradford, IN, December 1, 2018

Lydia Daggett Laneville, of Laurinburg, NC, January 9, 2019

Patricia (Pat) Linder, of Kokomo, IN, January 12, 2019

Samuel J. Ajamie, of Indianapolis, IN, February 12, 2019 ♦

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 5, 2019: Finance Committee meeting

April 6, 2019: Oblate Council meeting

April 27, 2019: Louisville Day of Recollection

June 8, 2019: Rites of Investiture and Oblation

June 10-13, 2019: Oblate Study Days: “Chant and Sacred Music” presented by Br. John Mark Falkenhain, OSB

June 21-23, 2019: MCC 2019

June 23, 2019: Oblate Council meeting

July 11, 2019: St. Benedict Day of Recollection presented by Fr. Adrian Burke, OSB ♦

VOLUNTEERS APPRECIATED

Recent volunteers in the Oblate Office were Br. Stanley Wagner, OSB, Ann Smith, Mary Campanelli, Fr. Mateo Zamora, OSB, Ted Castronova, Novice Dennis Reyes, OSB, Br. Kolbe Wolniakowski, OSB, Kathleen Polansky, Becky Boyle and Marie Kobos. ♦

Oblate life: Annual personal evaluation

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

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

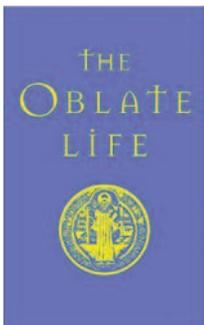


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Reading Room



The Oblate Life edited by Gervase Holdaway, OSB (Liturgical Press, 2008)

Oblates of Saint Meinrad Archabbey have five duties:

1. Pray the Liturgy of Hours daily.
2. Read from the *Rule of St. Benedict*.
3. Practice *lectio divina* each day.
4. Participate in our Christian

Church and prayers.

5. Be attentive to God's presence in ordinary life.

Recently, I visited the Saint Meinrad bookstore wanting some reading material for my *lectio divina*. After looking through the shelves, I came across *The Oblate Life* edited by Gervase Holdaway, OSB. The book caught my attention and awakened in me a desire to learn more. It outlined in three parts what the life of an oblate is all about.

The first part describes the Benedictine family through the life of St. Benedict, the origin of the oblate movement, discernment of the call, and the foundations of oblate life and spirituality.

The second part contains essays about oblate life in the world, the church and the home. It speaks of friendships and relationships, health and sickness, retirement years, aging and death.

The last part presents resources for oblates.

The book is a collection of personal essays written by 33 oblates of different Christian traditions who are committed to the *Rule*. Among the authors are two of my favorites, Kathleen Norris and Esther de Waal.

*Bob Killelea, oblate
Canton, MS*