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THE SAINT VINCENT OBLATE NEWS

Saint Vincent Archabbey

300 Fraser Purchase Road, Latrobe, PA 15650-2690



August - October, 2015

724-805-2291

Volume 67, Number 3

e-mail address: svaoblates@email.stvincent.edu ; web site: <http://www.svaoblates.org>*Please note registration forms for Oblate Day and for the October day of recollection on the colored flier.

AUTHORITY IN THE *RULE* OF SAINT BENEDICT: HUMBLE, TRUSTING, READY TO SERVE, EAGER TO CONSULT

Dear Oblates, Oblate novices, and Friends,

An auspicious time to reflect on authority - and obedience

At our monthly meetings in Latrobe, we have been studying the *Rule* according to the commentary by Dom Paul Delatte, O.S.B. We recently have been discussing Chapters 2 and 3, which deal with the authority of the abbot, his need to take counsel, the responsibility of the monks to obey, and their duty to offer advice when appropriate. On July 13 the Church celebrated the memorial of St. Henry, who as Emperor Henry II (1014-1024) used his authority in a remarkable way to promote the welfare of the Church instead of his own selfish interests. The co-patron of Oblates, he established monasteries and dioceses and cooperated with the Pope in encouraging reforms. Also, on July 13 our Diocese of Greensburg welcomed a new chief shepherd, Bishop Edward Malesic, the new authority whom we must honor and with whom we are to cooperate. His episcopal motto, "Serve the Lord with gladness" (Ps 100:2), provides a reminder that Church authority, above all, is called to imitate Christ in seeking to serve rather than to be served. In any case, for all the above reasons it might do us well to ponder the topic of authority as treated in the *Rule*.

Insights from Sister Margaret Malone

In her book *Living in the House of God: Monastic Essays* (Cistercian Publications, 2014), Sister Margaret Malone, S.G.S., entitles her fourth chapter "Authority: A Service of Love" (pages 45-52). In that chapter she examines "the texts of the *Rule* which deal with the abbot and any other member of the community who has a special role of service" (p. 46). As Christ Himself taught again and again and as He showed by washing His apostles' feet, Christian authority is demonstrated in humble, loving service and not in self-exaltation and domination. Sister Margaret shows how the *Rule* summons every official in the monastery to manifest the qualities of love, care, humility, wisdom, and fear of the Lord. The abbot and other superiors are to act in a spirit of service, to be mindful and reflective of God's judgment, to be aware of their own frailty, and to discern wisely by taking counsel with others as any given decision may warrant.

In Chapter 6 of the same book, entitled "Taking Counsel," Sister Margaret states that Saint Benedict "understood that the Spirit resides in every member of the community, and that wisdom is to be sought from all, including the youngest member. Faith in this guiding Spirit is the important dimension here" (p. 64). All members of the community should have "listening

hearts" so that the abbot's decisions really do come about with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The author also lists three obstacles to the process of taking counsel: (1) "the need or desire to come to a decision too quickly" (p. 69); (2) a "feeling of inertia and alienation," which prevents people from offering advice (p. 69); and (3) a feeling among members that "the asking of advice is simply a token *pro forma* procedure after the decision has already been reached" (p. 70). How demoralizing it can be if one is consulted again and again but without the decision-maker's really listening or being affected by the opinions expressed!

Authority as humble

Commenting on Chapter 2 of the *Rule*, Dom Paul Delatte reminds us of the very heavy responsibility taken on by the abbot. "The abbatial authority," he writes, "has its source in God" (p. 36). The monk-abbot relationship is not a mere "social contract." Here we have "the supernatural order, where power has no other end than to rule souls and sanctify them" (p. 36). Since "the Abbot is the deputy and the understudy of the Lord" (p. 36), he must conform himself to Christ and treat his flock as Christ would. God works on this earth by choosing gifted but humble, weak people to govern us; "He expresses Himself and comes to us under the humblest forms: in the Creation, in the Incarnation, in the Holy Eucharist, in His priests" (p. 36). All the more do disciples need to stir up faith to obey the abbot with wholeheartedness and cheerfulness. "The Abbot is a human creature like us, frail like us, perhaps more weak than we. He has his own temperament and his own habits; but let us not stop at the exterior, recognizing as we should that God is in him, believing that he is Christ" (p. 37).

St. Benedict specifies that other officials are also to use their authority with humility. He warns that the deans are not to be "puffed up with any pride" (21:5); if pride is observed in them, they are to be reprovved or even "removed from office" (21:5) if they do not respond to admonishments. The same applies to the prior (21:7, 65:18). Of the cellarer, St. Benedict says, "Above all, let him be humble" (31:13), and among other qualities, he is not to be proud (31:1). The porter is to respond to visitors "with all the gentleness that comes from the fear of God" (66:4), which implies a humble submission to God at the moment of a visitor's appearance. The guest master, along with other monks, is to address guests with "all humility" (53:6). Finally, priests of the monastery must be especially on

guard against pride. A priest should “not make any exceptions for himself but rather give everyone else an example of humility” (60:5). Of course, as the twelve steps of humility assert, all monks (and all Christians) are to strive to grow in humility, but it is especially urgent that officials be humble in order to serve as good examples and to lead others to grow in humility, which is essential for progress toward eternal life.

Authority as trusting

We all have probably had to deal with authorities who have been suspicious and controlling. They leave little or no room for others to take initiative and seem not even to leave ultimate control to God. Thus can tyranny be born! St. Benedict specifies that the abbot is not to be “excitable, anxious, extreme, obstinate, jealous or oversuspicious” (64:16). If he has these defects, he “is never at rest” (64:16), and he is likely to pass on his anxiety to those under his care. Abbots in St. Benedict’s day, and also these days, must often have felt frustrated over the many demands placed on them, with the need to “[serve] a variety of temperaments” (2:31) and the necessity of dealing with “fleeting and temporal things of this world” (2:33). An abbot must trust that God will provide the resources that he needs (2:35); if he seeks first the Kingdom of God, all other things will be given to him (cf. 2:35 & Mt 6:33). He “must constantly reflect that he will have to give an account of all his decisions and actions” (63:3). The cellarer is also to be a man who trusts. He is not to be “excitable” (31:1) but rather “God-fearing” (31:2). He is to trust in the abbot’s judgments and thus “keep to his orders” (31:5) and “do everything with moderation and according to the abbot’s orders” (31:12). The infirmarian is called to have faith that he really serves Christ in the person of the sick (36: 1-3) and to trust that serving ailing monks, no matter how demanding they may be, will “[lead] to a greater reward” (36:5), which is not likely to be gained in this life. He must, like other officials, be “God-fearing” (36:7). The porter also is to trust that it is God who comes to him in the persons of those whom he greets (66:3).

Authority as eager to serve

A natural extension of humility and trust is eagerness to serve. If indeed one listens to God’s call in family and community and if one seeks to imitate Christ, then one will be ready to serve, whether one feels like it or not. The abbot is to serve by “reproving, entreating, [and] rebuking” (2:23); he is to stretch himself out to accept “a difficult and demanding burden” (2:31) of “directing souls and serving a variety of temperaments” (2:31); he has undertaken not just administrative tasks but “the care of souls” (2:36), every one of whom is precious to God. The cellarer is to serve by providing “the brothers their allotted amount of food without any pride of delay” (31:16) and is to “offer a kind word in reply” (31:13) when a requested item is not available. Those who “serve the sick” (36:10) are truly to serve and not to neglect those entrusted to them. The word

“serve” is used six times in the ten verses of Chapter 36, on “the sick brothers.” So that they may serve more calmly and cheerfully, the cellarer (31:17) and the guest master (53: 18-26) are to be given extra help when it is needed. (The same holds for kitchen servers, as mentioned in 35: 3-4 and 53:18.) It seems that all interactions in the monastic community are to be characterized by loving, sacrificial service in the name of Christ.

Authority as ready to seek counsel

An important aspect of humility is readiness to seek advice from others. Only God is all-powerful and all-knowing; and in Christ even God manifested humility when He “looked down from His holy height; from heaven He beheld the earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoners, to release those doomed to die” (Ps 102: 20-21). If a superior is to understand the situation of the people whom He serves, he must listen to them and try to enter into their needs and problems. He must allow them to participate in the community’s advancement toward the Kingdom of God. Chapter 3 of the *Rule* specifies, “As often as anything important is to be done in the monastery, the abbot shall call the whole community together....; and after hearing the advice of the brothers, let him ponder it and follow what he judges the wiser course” (3:2). In the end, however, “the decision is ... the abbot’s to make, so that ... all may obey” (3:5). The abbot or other superior must be careful not to make whimsical or ego-centered decisions but to “settle everything with foresight and fairness” (3:6). Furthermore, newcomers have a special role in offering advice, since “the Lord often reveals what is better to the younger” (3:3).

As an abbot himself, Dom Paul Delatte comments that the abbot is “obliged to seek the truth laboriously, obliged to discover the best practical solutions, and liable to make mistakes. Therefore, condescending to this weakness, St. Benedict gives him counselors, whose function it is, not to share his power, to control, or on occasion to check him, but only to enlighten and support him, and so discreetly to prevent mistakes or abuses” (p. 56). The monks, on the other hand, must obey cheerfully after a decision has been made. If one’s advice wins little or no acceptance, he “should rejoice that a wiser course is followed, or at least have the good manners not to argue bitterly and obstinately for your notion” (p. 58). Some people who are not inclined to “open resistance” when they do not get their way tend to show their “baffled self-will ... in secret murmurings. A monk can be in no worse state than this” (p. 59).

If we look back at our lives, all of us can be grateful for the times when we have been given good advice, especially when the suggestions led us to choose what turned out to be God’s will. Back in 1977, when I was visiting another religious community before I entered St. Vincent, the vocation director showed me great personal concern during my final talk with him. He asked me how my vocational search was going and

listened carefully to what I shared with him. Finally, he gently told me, "We could probably accept you to come here, but I really think that your heart is at St. Vincent." That thoughtfully given insight was just one piece of input, but it was especially significant and memorable because it came from an authority who really cared.

Over the years just about every new project in the Oblate Program was undertaken because of someone's carefully offered suggestion. Our annual Oblate Day in September was the idea of another monk, who at the time was moderator of a deanery. The annual October day of recollection came about at the urging of a particular Oblate who felt that there was such a need. The idea for the book *The Rule in Bits and Pieces* came from another Oblate, although a similar idea had been put forth by the Archabbot some years before (when it seems that conditions were not yet ripe). The initial motivation for *Lessons for Saint Benedict* arose from the son of Oblates who was beginning his own publishing company. The weekly prayer chain was likewise the idea of an Oblate. At this time I can't remember how the *Directory*, the prayer-partner program, and the mentoring program began, but I don't think they were my ideas. I must be grateful for such an abundance of thoughtful, Spirit-filled advice. As I grow older, I find myself more and more inclined to resist any new development; so all the more do I need to listen to others who coax me, prod me, and persuade me to undertake what I initially do not want to do.

Conclusion: the blessing of good authority and cheerful obedience: paths to salvation

Dealing with superiors, dealing with people under our guidance, being trusting and humble, seeking to serve, and welcoming advice are ultimately about eternal salvation. Benedictine spirituality is, in the end, concerned with welcoming Christ to "bring us all together to everlasting life" (*RB* 72:12). Obedience to superiors as well as to other brothers and sisters in Christ is the way "that we go to God" (71:2). Ideally, we obey not just to get things done or out of fear of punishment but out of love for Christ. For an abbot or other superior, trust and humility in dealing with others are essential because the practice of these virtues

concerns his eternal salvation and the salvation of those he is called to serve. The abbot needs to "realize that on judgment day he will surely have to submit a reckoning to the Lord for all their souls - and indeed for his own as well" (2:39). "While helping others to amend by his warnings, he achieves the amendment of his own faults" (2:40). Therefore, the abbot is to make as his goal "profit for the monks, not preeminence for himself" (64:8), "so that when he has ministered well he will hear from the Lord" the invitation to receive an eternal reward (64:21). Making decisions with counsel is also a dimension of our eternal destiny since "beyond any doubt ... he [the abbot] will have to give an account of all his judgments to God, the most just of judges" (3:11).

Only a few of us have the positions of abbot, other religious superior, or supervisor over others. Quite a few more are parents or teachers. All of us, however, exert influence over others, sometimes profoundly, through example, prayer, and fraternal advice. Let us heed the Gospel mandate given to us not to let concern for possessions, power, or position to govern our hearts. Rather, let us become more and more concerned about others' genuine needs, about their eternal salvation, and about our own. Let us ever more greatly trust in God's way of dealing with us (often through other people), seek to practice humility and obedience in all our dealings, welcome opportunities to serve in small, unobtrusive ways, and rejoice in occasions when others' suggestions challenge us, directly or indirectly, to embrace more wholeheartedly our crosses and our particular vocations. May we, then, become families and communities that form houses of God in which "no one [is] disquieted or distressed" (*RB* 31:15) and in which we help one another to hasten "on to the perfection of monastic [and Christian] life" (73:2).

In the peace of Christ and Saint Benedict,

Fr. Donald S. Raila, O.S.B.,
Director of Oblates

New Questionnaire/Survey to Be Sent Soon to All Deaneries

During the Assembly of Deanery Representatives in June, the group pondered the possibility of having an annual questionnaire/survey for all the deaneries to encourage deaneries to follow appropriate standards at meetings and to help the deaneries to express any special needs. A tentative questionnaire is to be discussed at the Oblate Board of Advisors meeting on August 7, and soon thereafter it is hoped that the document will be sent to a representative of each deanery (by e-mail whenever possible). Please respond to this questionnaire as soon as it is conveniently possible so that the Oblate Office may better assist and coordinate the activities of the various deaneries. Thank you!

Dear Oblates and Friends of Saint Vincent,

In September of 2015, Pope Francis will arrive for a pastoral visit to the United States. He is scheduled to go to Washington, D.C., New York City, and Philadelphia, where he will celebrate Mass in conjunction with the 2015 World Meeting of Families.

In a recent audience, Pope Francis said that "this is the great mission of the family: to make room for Jesus." As we prepare to welcome Pope Francis on his first visit to the United States, he invites us to reflect on what we do concretely to strengthen the bonds of love in the context of our own families. For example, are we as patient or as forgiving as we should be in our interactions with members of our family?

Let us pray for all families, that God's grace may be a source of strength and consolation at all times.

Sincerely in Christ,

+Douglas R. Nowicki, O.S.B.
Archabbot

OBLATE DAY 2015 - September 27, 2015

All Oblates, Oblate novices, and their guests are welcome to attend Oblate Day on Sunday, September 27, from 9:00 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. The guest speaker will be Fr. Boniface Hicks, O.S.B., the program manager of radio station WAOB. See the registration form on the insert, and send in a completed form before Monday, September 21, if you plan to attend. Note that Mass will be offered in Mary, Mother of Wisdom Chapel at 10:30 A.M. Those who would like overnight accommodations should notify Fr. Donald in advance since guest rooms are limited. **(Actually, as of August 6, all guest rooms have been taken for that weekend. Those desiring accommodations near the Archabbey can contact the Bishop Connare Center (724-834-7350) or Wingate by Wyndham Latrobe (724-539-1494) or another near-by hotel.)** Be sure to indicate if you plan to be received as an Oblate novice or Oblate; if so, a completed application form is required. Please also try to register on time; it becomes very difficult for the person receiving and processing registrations when large numbers contact her at the last minute.

OBLATE DAY OF RECOLLECTION - October 17, 2015

A day of recollection for Oblates, Oblate novices, and other interested persons will be held at the Archabbey on Saturday, October 17, from 8:30 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. Checking-in will be on the first floor of Leander Hall from 8:30 to 9:00 A.M. The day will include conferences by Fr. Robert Keffer, O.S.B.; an opportunity for confession; Midday Prayer and Evening Prayer with the monastic community; and lunch and supper. The cost will be \$34.00 (or \$27.00 without supper); one may send a check with the registration form or pay on arrival. Those who cannot pay the full price can request a discount. Please send the registration form [see the flier] to the Oblate Office by Mon., Oct. 12. **As in the case of Oblate Day, all guest rooms for the weekend have been taken.**

RETREAT, May 29-31

Some 25 people, mostly Oblates and Oblate novices, attended this year's regular retreat on Benedictine spirituality, entitled "The Corpse Revived [on the parable of the Prodigal Son]." It was directed by Fr. Jeffrey Nyardy, O.S.B. At ceremonies in St. Gregory Chapel on May 30 at 10:15 and then at 7:20, Fr. Donald received the following:

Oblates: **Jerome Kebbell** of Virginia Beach, VA
Patrick C. (Michael) Kenny of Daphne, AL
Cynthia M. Lucero of Virginia Beach, VA.

Also, all the Oblates present renewed their Oblation. Both Jerry and Cindy belong to the St. Scholastica Deanery in Virginia Beach.

OTHER RETREATS

On Saturday morning, June 20, during the silent retreat directed by Fr. Edward Mazich,

Carol J. (Faustina) Haile of Reading, PA, made her final Oblation in the presence of Fr. Donald and the other retreatants. Over half of the 26 people on that retreat were Oblates or Oblate novices. The other Oblates present at the ceremony renewed their Oblation.

ON THE BROCHURE FOR SUMMER RETREATS: Let us know if you wish to receive mailings!

Oblates are no longer automatically on the Retreat Program's mailing list. If you wish to be on the retreat mailing list and receive the annual retreat brochure, please contact the Oblate Office or the Retreat Office. Br. Hugh, the Director of Retreats, can be phoned at 724-805-2139.

PRAYER CHAINS IN LATROBE AREA CONTINUE; NEW MEMBERS ARE WELCOME

The phone and e-mail prayer chains for Oblates in the Latrobe/Greensburg/Ligonier/Jeannette areas, which began in 2009, have continued faithfully each Tuesday evening (at 6:30 P.M. for the phone chain). The process begins with requests made to the Oblate Office. Those interested in submitting prayer requests may phone the Oblate Office at 724-805-2291. Those in the Latrobe area interested in joining the phone prayer chain may contact the Oblate Office. Those interested in the e-mail prayer chain may contact macherubini@comcast.net.

JULY 11 – COMMEMORATION OF FEAST OF ST. BENEDICT

Oblates and their guests, some 45 people, participated in the Archabbey's celebration of the Feast of St. Benedict, Patriarch of Western Monasticism. Some of the Oblates arrived on July 9 or 10 and thus were able to witness the first profession at Evening Prayer on July 10 of Br. George DeFazio. At the concelebrated Mass at 10:00 on July 11, Archabbot Douglas, the principal celebrant and homilist, received the solemn profession of vows of Br. Raphael Quesada and Br. Matthew Nguyen.

At 2:00 in St. Gregory Chapel, Br. Joachim Morgan, O.S.B., who professed solemn vows last year, gave a very personal, engaging presentation about the Benedictine vows and his own vocation. He linked each of the vows with dimensions of the spiritual journey.

During Oblation ceremonies at 2:40 in St. Gregory Chapel, Fr. Donald received the following:

Oblate novice: **Donna L. Fellows** of Johnstown, PA
Oblates: **Robert J. (Columba) Cooke, Jr.**, of Westover, WV
Janelle (Catherine of Alexandria) Giunta of Apollo, PA
Maria (Gertrude of Helfta) Hoshaw of Johnstown, PA
Deborah (Cecilia) Weaver of South Park, PA .

Janelle is a 2012 graduate of St. Vincent College..

After the investitures the following Oblate jubilarians were honored: Pamela Johnson – 30 years, Leila Yeckley – 30 years, Richard Wolf - 25 years, Kevin Capp - 5 years, Julie Feight - 5 years, and Celeste Pileggi - 5 years. Also other jubilarians who contacted the Oblate Office were honored *in absentia* by being sent a certificate in the mail. Some Oblates joined the monastic community and other guests for Vespers at 5:00, and some stayed for supper in Placid Dining Room B. (N.B.: There were 86 Oblate jubilarians this year, all of whom received a letter of invitation from the Oblate Office. Of course, most could not attend.)

THIRD ASSEMBLY OF DEANERY REPRESENTATIVES – meeting on Saturday, June 6

Representatives of seven deaneries gathered together on June 5-7 to hear two reflections by Fr. Thomas Hart on. The deaneries/groups represented were Baltimore, Butler, Latrobe, Morgantown, Pittsburgh, Selinsgrove, and State College. Besides Fr. Donald and the speakers, eighteen people, including one observer, attended. At 7:00 P.M. on July 11, Fr. Donald gave a brief overview of the sessions to come and led the group in the praying of Compline after a social. At 9:30 A.M. on July 12, Fr. Thomas gave a presentation on the supreme importance of maintaining a close relationship with the Lord, strengthened by the practices of prayer, fasting, and works of mercy. At 1:30 P.M. Fr. Thomas gave a presentation on what we can learn from the contemplative orders, especially in terms of a radical love for Christ. At 3:30 P.M. the group met with Fr. Donald to summarize what had been gleaned from the earlier sessions. Finally, the group participated in a holy hour with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at 7:00 P.M. in St. Gregory Chapel. Before Benediction the group prayed Compline. **Minutes of the proceedings were taken and typed up by Oblate Phyllis Austin** (and edited by Fr. Donald) **and are available from the Oblate Office.**

OBLATE BOARD OF ADVISORS – meeting on June 26

The Oblate Board of Advisors met at the Archabbey on Friday, June 26. The topics discussed were: the bibliography of Benedictine books for the Oblate website, the next Assembly of Deanery Representatives (in 2017), the compilation of a list of suggestions for those mentoring inmates, the hope for reports and materials from the NAABOD meeting in July, the prudence of having certain limitations on the Oblate *Directory*, a tentative brochure for first-time Oblate visitors, and possible need for new members of the Board of Advisors. The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Friday, August 7, at 6:30 P.M. in Brownfield 203.

N.A.A.B.O.D. CONFERENCE AT SUBIACO ABBEY, JULY 10-15, 2015

The 2015 meeting of the North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors took place at Subiaco Abbey in Subiaco Arkansas. Oblates Mary Ann Kaufman of Pittsburgh, PA, and Cynthia Ruff of Toledo, OH, attended as our representatives, and materials and reports from them should be available soon.

OBLATE LIBRARY

Oblates and Oblate novices are always welcome to borrow books from the Oblate Library in person or by mail. You may contact Fr. Donald for a list of books that are in the library. If you borrow a book when you are personally present, please make sure to sign a card, and please do not keep books out for more than six months. (On a number of occasions Oblates have kept books for over a year, and sometimes even over two years.) Note that most issues of the *American Benedictine Review* from the late 1960's are available in the library.

RECOMMENDED READING

The following recommended books are in the Oblate Library:

- Pope Francis, *On Care for Our Common Home* ("Laudate Si" - encyclical letter) (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2015)
- Alan Schreck, *Your Life in the Holy Spirit: What every Catholic should know and experience* (Ijamsville, MD: The Word Among Us Press, 1995)

OBLATE LOGO CLOTHING & APPAREL ITEMS FOR PURCHASE

Oblate Bill Gibson of Wheeling, WV, has been coordinating this project. Oblates are welcome to shop online by going to web site <http://www.stbenedict.qbstores.com>. Following instructions, they are asked on this "St. Vincent Oblate Logo Store" to provide basic information to create a personal account and to make purchases. Purchases are paid for online via credit card. If anyone would like more information about this, he or she may ask for a flier from the Oblate Office or may contact the e-mail address wmsgibson@comcast.net (with the subject line "SVA Oblate Store").

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION FOR VOCATIONS

Eucharistic adoration is being held every Sunday from 1:00 to 3:00 P.M. in St. Gregory Chapel. Oblates are encouraged to attend and pray for vocations to the religious life and the priesthood.

Also, there is Eucharistic adoration every Friday in St. Gregory Chapel from 8:30 A.M. to 3:45 P.M., with the Divine Mercy Chaplet prayed at 3:00 and Benediction at 3:30 P.M. As part of an effort to make sure that there are people praying in the chapel at every hour or half-hour, if you would like to be on a list of regular adorers or of substitutes, please phone the Oblate Office at 724-805-2291.

OBLATE MEETINGS IN LATROBE

Oblates from all locations are welcome to the monthly meetings of the Latrobe Deanery of Oblates at 6:45 P.M. in Brownfield Room 202 on Sundays. The next four meetings will be on August 16, September 20, October 18, and November 15. Also, presentations on Benedictine spirituality are given in the same room at 3:00 P.M. on the same days. The presentations in August, September, and October are to be given, respectively, by Fr. Edward Mazich, Oblate Nicholas Parrendo, and Br. Mark Liatti. Those wishing to pray Vespers with the monks at 5:00 and then to have supper in the guest refectory should phone Fr. Donald (724-805-2291) a day or so in advance.

MENTORING PROGRAM AND PRAYER-PARTNER PROGRAM

The Mentoring Program for guiding inquirers and Oblate novices in Benedictine spirituality is in need of volunteers to serve as mentors. If you would like to mentor in this way or if you are an inquirer or an Oblate novice who would like to have an Oblate mentor, please contact 305makaufman@gmail.com. Those who offer to be mentors receive a booklet of guidelines. Also, if you would like to have another Oblate or Oblate novice as a prayer-partner, please contact Oblate John Hudock, who is now in charge of the Prayer-Partner Program, at jshudock@verizon.net. If you would like to have a monk as a prayer-partner, please contact Fr. Donald or Br. Joachim at the Oblate Office. **Also, if you are a mentor and would like guidance and support from other mentors, please contact the Oblate Office.**

OBLATE GROUP IN CAMBRIDGE, ONTARIO, CANADA

Oblate Cathy Mayled reported by e-mail on May 30, June 27, and July 25. The meeting on May 28, attended by six people, began with prayer and continued with a study of the *Rule*, Chapter 4: 48-50. It ended with the praying of Compline.

The meeting on June 25, attended by five people, opened with prayer and continued with a study of *RB* 4: 51-58. Again, the meeting ended with Compline. The meeting on July 23, also attended by five people, opened with prayer and continued with a discussion of *RB* 4: 59-73. The meeting ended with Compline. Some members of the group are looking forward to coming to the Archabbey for Oblate Day in September.

OBLATE GROUP IN MORGANTOWN, WV

Oblate Pauline Lanciotti reported by phone on August 4 that the group hoped to resume meetings in September, now that there is a new Benedictine pastoral staff at St. John's University Parish.

ECUMENICAL OBLATE GROUP IN PHILADELPHIA, PA

Fr. Vincent de Paul Crosby, O.S.B., reported on August 5. At the meeting on June 6, the group began with Morning Prayer according to the Roman Rite. The topic for reflection was "reverence." Fr. Vincent de Paul had invited Fr. Tim Steves, rector of Saint Mary's, to co-present with him. Fr. Tim spoke first about the meaning and importance of sacred things and sacred places in our lives. Fr. Vincent de Paul then showed how St. Benedict treated this subject in the *Holy Rule* and pointed out the ways in which reverence toward persons, places, and things is an essential aspect of Benedictine spirituality. The attendees enthusiastically shared their thoughts on this subject. The meeting ended with prayer and a hymn, followed by the sharing of lunch. The next meeting was planned for September 12 at 10:00 A.M. at Saint Mary's Church, 630 E. Cathedral Rd., Philadelphia, PA 19128.

NEWS FROM OBLATE DEANERIES

Albion, PA (St. Paul Deanery) -- *monthly meetings at chapel in Albion*

Deacon Ralph DeCecco, moderator, reported on July 27. The group met on July 26 to pray the Liturgy of the Hours, to read and reflect on the passage from *RB* 46 for the day, to discuss the future of the deanery, and to close with the "Prayer of Humility." The meeting was cut short because of a death in the community. Two inquirers attended the meeting, and the next meeting was scheduled for August 23.

Annville, PA (St. Placid Deanery) -- *meetings at 3 P.M. on 4th Sunday of each month, St. Paul the Apostle Church, Annville*

Lay leader/secretary Mary Ann Bingeman reported by e-mail on May 24. The meeting on May 24 was attended by Fr. Job, moderator, and seven others. It began with Vespers in the sanctuary of the church, followed by a brief social. Copies of the *Oblate Formation Booklet* were distributed as a guide for the group's study of the *Rule*. Various parts of the *Rule* were read, and it was mentioned that St. Benedict had the clear vision of seeing what was important. The *Rule* is divided between "spiritual doctrine" and "regulations for community living." The Prologue, it was asserted, is an invitation to the reader to renew his or her Christian

commitment, and like the whole *Rule* it speaks to all Christians. It summons us to a persistent, life-long listening to the voice of God. Then the Prologue was read, and at one point Fr. Job asked the group to give thought as to how the Oblates could evangelize in the community, their places of work, and their parishes, especially by good works. At the end of the meeting there was some discussion about the new pastors assigned in the Harrisburg Diocese. Fr. Job asked the group to study Chapters 4 to 7 of the *Rule* and to continue to read the formation booklet. The meeting ended with a prayer.

Baltimore, MD (St. Walburga Deanery) -- meetings at 3:00-4:30 on 3rd Sun. of month, parish house, St. Benedict Church

Secretary Jay Wells sent a report by e-mail on June 7. Eleven people besides Fr. Paschal, moderator, attended the meeting on April 12. Fr. Paschal began with a short presentation on Easter, the Resurrection, and the word "alleluia." He also gave information about the forthcoming Assembly of Deanery Representatives at the Archabbey on June 5-7. (Two members of the deanery ended up attending.) Copies of the book *The Little Rule and the Little Way* by Fr. Dwight Longenecker were made available for the purpose of discussions beginning at the next meeting. The meeting ended about 4:20 P.M. so that some refreshments could be enjoyed as recommended at the previous meeting. At 5:00 the group met to sing Vespers in the church. No meeting was planned for May because of scheduling conflicts.

On June 7, the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, Oblates joined parishioners of St. Benedict Church in attending Eucharistic adoration from 3:00 to 5:00, at which time they prayed Vespers, which ended with benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. No meetings were scheduled for July or August.

Butler, PA (St. Hildegard Deanery) -- monthly meetings at St. Fidelis Parish Hall, generally the 3rd Thurs. of month

Lay leader Ethel Galli wrote on June 20. The meeting on April 23 began with the praying of the Divine Office and continued with a study of Chapter 3 of *Lessons from Saint Benedict*, with the help of the study guide to the book. The lesson involved resting in the present moment and thus preparing for eternity.

At the meeting on May 28, Chapter 4 of the same book was discussed, with emphasis on the Good Shepherd's kindness, which we are called to imitate.

On June Sister Elizabeth Matz, O.S.B., of the Benedictine Sisters of Bakerstown led an afternoon of reflection for the group. She focused her presentations on the Year of Mercy and the meaning of mercy. The event ended with prayer and light refreshments.

Carrolltown, PA (Sacred Heart Deanery) There was no report.

Cyber Deanery

Lay leader/secretary David Hicks reported by phone on August 11. Currently 38 people belong to the deanery. Most recently there has been some discussion about people's favorite breviaries.

Johnstown, PA (St. John Gualbert Deanery) -- meetings on 2nd Monday of each month, 6:30 P.M., St. Benedict Church

Lay leader Carl Motter wrote on May 12 and June 11. The meeting on May 11 began, as usual, with Evening Prayer. The group then viewed a video entitled "The Hidden Life," which was a story of the life of the Sisters of Saint Mary in Greenwich, NY. (It is the oldest community of nuns in the U.S.) The video included references to the practice of *lectio divina* and views of the sisters' chapel, named after St. Scholastica. After the viewing the group discussed several ways to communicate about the Oblate Program to more people in the Johnstown area.

At the meeting on June 7, the Oblates gathered for Evening Prayer during the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. At that time also twelve Oblates renewed their Oblation.

Latrobe, PA (St. Gregory the Great Deanery) -- meetings usually on 3rd Sunday of month, 6:45 P.M., Brownfield 202

On May 17 some ten people gathered to discuss the end of Chapter 1 and the beginning of Chapter 2 of the *Rule* with the assistance of the commentary by Dom Paul Delatte, O.S.B. Regarding Chapter 1, there were some reflections on the meaning of Gyrovagues and on the reasons why cenobites are considered the strongest kind of monks. Then there was some discussion on the role of the abbot in the monastery, on the abbot's taking the place of Christ, and on how abbots relate to bishops. Also, earlier in the meeting, when Fr. Donald asked how the deanery might implement suggestions from last summer's talk on the New Evangelization, one Oblate novice offered to have group *lectio divina* sessions in his home. It was also suggested that we already evangelize by having C.D.'s and D.V.D.'s available from the 3:00 presentations. The meeting ended, as usual, with the praying of Compline at 8:20 P.M. in the Archabbey Basilica.

After the 3:00 session on May 17, Oblation ceremonies were held in the basilica at 4:20 P.M. Fr. Donald received the following:

Oblates: **James (Francis) Mullooly** of Triadelphia, WV,
Stephen R. (Hyacinth) Studnicki of Latrobe, PA
Oblate novices: **Matthew Goldinger** of Freeport, PA
Robert T. Hammerlee of Venus, PA
Robert D. Kefferstan of Morgantown, WV.

Jim Mullooly is a nephew of deceased Oblate Francis Mullooly. Matt Goldinger is the husband of Oblate novice Mary Goldinger. Steve Studnicki is an alumnus of St. Vincent College. In attendance besides the Oblates who came for the monthly meeting were Steve's wife, Nora, Robert Hammerlee's wife, Karen, and Matt's wife, Mary.

Some twelve people gathered for a continued discussion of Chapter 2 of the *Rule* on June 14. Among the topics covered in the reflections on *RB 2: 4-26* were the abbot's responsibility to help the monks to obey Christ, the abbot's call to teach by both words and example, his task of treating all the monks with equal love, and his need to discern the needs of each individual monk in determining how to deal with the varying characters in the monastery. Applications to parents, teachers, and other authorities were mentioned in the discussion.

Some 15 people attended the meeting on July 19, during which the remaining verses of Chapter 2 were discussed. Among the topics considered were the need for everyone (including authorities) to be corrected at times, the call of the abbot to treat each

monk as an individual with particular needs, the responsibility of monks not to be a burden to their abbot, the importance of avoiding over-concern with temporal matters as opposed to the salvation of souls, and the blessing of having genuinely “good souls” to give encouragement to abbots (and other superiors). New blessed scapulars and new vocational brochures were distributed to those who wanted them.

Lessons in Latrobe at 3:00 P.M. before regular Oblate meetings at 6:45 P.M.

On May 15 Br. Matthew Hershey, a junior monk, addressed a classroom of some 42 people on the topic of poverty and simplicity in Benedictine spirituality. He began with an opening prayer from Teilhard de Chardin and then stated that our practice of poverty must be grounded in Christ and should involve patient trust in God’s care for us. Referring to a quote from Blessed Columba Marmion, Br. Matthew asserted that our journey to God requires a growing freedom from obstacles so that the Kingdom of God may rule in our hearts. Since God comes to those who are poor in spirit, we must strip away lesser attachments in order to make room for Him. Br. Matthew then gave an example of the younger monks’ having a cook-out with newly caught fish to point out that great joy can be experienced in simple things. Referring to a talk by Fr. Sebastian on silence, he reminded the group of the connection between silence and simplicity; the most important things, he said, are simple and short, and “when God speaks, we need to be silent.” The purpose of simplicity is to open ourselves to the ever-abiding presence of God. We need to focus on His presence here and now, wherever we are, and not worry about having a great “religious experience.” We need to remember that we cannot impress God with our achievements and good qualities. We encounter Him best in our poverty, and our identity is based on who God has called us to be. If we possess God, we have everything, and so we can live in patient trust and joy as children of God - just as little children recognize the giftedness of life.

On June 14 Fr. Jean-Luc Zadroga addressed some 25 people on the topic of obedience in Benedictine spirituality. He began by reading all of *RB* 5 (on obedience) and *RB* 7: 31-34 (the second and third steps of humility). He asserted that St. Benedict really sets high standards for us; but he assures us that God’s help is always available to move us toward his high goal. Fr. Jean-Luc then referred to examples of remarkable obedience in Scripture and in the Catholic tradition as well as Scriptural examples of flagrant disobedience, which also contain lessons for us. Ultimately, Christ is our prime example of obedience, especially in His acceptance of the Cross out of love for us. All of us are plagued with some degree of defiance of God, even though the process of restoration to harmony with God’s will began at our baptism. We need constantly to struggle to practice obedience in order to attain a right relationship with God. We can take heart that the reward of obedience will be the capacity to “run on the path of God’s commandments with the unspeakable sweetness of love” (*RB* Prol: 49).

On July 19 Br. Matthew Lambert, who was ordained a deacon last April, gave a presentation on silence in the *Rule*. The main source for his talk was a book on silence by Dom Ambrose Wathen, O.S.B. Br. Matthew noted that it was interesting that the *Rule* mentions silence only in terms of not talking. However, when one links Chapter 6 (explicitly on silence) with other chapters of the *Rule*, it becomes clear that silence is intended to enhance one’s relationship with God. When one examines the “spiritual doctrine” in Chapters 4 to 7, one finds four purposes for silence: for silence in itself (which really means silence for the sake of seeking God), for the avoidance of sin, for listening, and for obedience. The standards set by the principles laid out in these four chapters seem very demanding. When one looks at the “disciplinary section” of the *Rule* (Chapters 42-57), however, one sees that these strict principles are adapted to the reality of everyday life. In sum, in the *Rule* with respect to silence (and other values), there is both strictness and moderation. Monks (and Oblates) should indeed avoid excessive talk and idle jesting; on the other hand, for the sake of charity and recognition of people’s weaknesses, there is need in the monastery for good conversation and even appropriate humor. Oblates should adapt these norms to their particular situations. (The one place where talk is absolutely forbidden is the oratory.)

Niagara Area, Ontario, Canada (St. Henry/St. Gertrude Deanery) -- meetings on last Monday of each month, meeting room of St. Thomas Aquinas Church, St. Catharines, Ont.

Lay leader Brian Chisholm reported by phone on July 11 and 13. A meeting was scheduled in May, but only three people came. They prayed together and then adjourned. There are problems with gathering people for meetings because of aging and ailments on the one hand and busyness on the other hand. Also, moderator Fr. John Vickers is being reassigned to the University of Notre Dame; so Brian is searching for a new moderator. Brian and Roy McKenzie were able to renew their Oblation with Fr Vickers on July 11.

Palmyra, PA (Holy Spirit Deanery) – monthly meetings on Sundays at Holy Spirit Catholic Church, Palmyra

Secretary/lay leader Gabriele Terrill reported by e-mail on May 22 and July 22. The meeting on May 17 was attended by Fr. James Podlesny, moderator, and seven others. After Evening Prayer in the church, the group discussed the topic “The Meaning of Oblate Life and Values for Oblates Living by the *Rule* of St. Benedict.” It was emphasized the *Rule* is centered on Christ and that the ordinary Christian can accept the *Rule* as a time-tested aid to living a virtuous Christian life, with the particular themes of good order in life, the setting of priorities, the potential holiness of every element of the day, and the omnipresence of God. There was also some explanation by Fr. Jim about the *Rule of the Master*. Furthermore, Fr. Jim talked about how to read the *Rule*. Among the Benedictine values discussed were “seeking God above all else,” prayer and work in a balanced life, the three promises, silence, and humility. The group was glad to welcome a new inquirer. They planned for a picnic on June 14.

The meeting on July 19 was attended by Fr. Jim and seven others. It began with Evening Prayer in the church. Then the group worked to schedule meetings from September, 2015, through July, 2016. Next, Fr. Jim spoke about the Gospel about the multiplication of loaves and fish, with emphasis on Jesus’ invitation to the apostles to “come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.” The phrase reminds how important it is to rest after doing God’s work. Benedictines especially have a calling to take time out to pray, in contrast with the trend in today’s society to work all the time. Prayer is also very much connected with having compassion for others, just as Jesus’ heart was moved with pity for the vast crowd. There was also some talk about the desert fathers, their solitude, and their works of charity. Fr. Jim read some sayings from the desert fathers from the book *Seeking God*. There was also some discussion about Christ as the “Lamb of God,” and Fr. Jim recommended the book *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist* by Brent Peter as a way better to understand the Eucharist. The meeting ended with a prayer. The

next meeting was scheduled for September 20.

Pendleton, IN (St. Celestine Deanery) – *monthly meetings in the chapel in Pendleton*

Secretary/lay leader Frederick Laux reported on May 3, June 7, and July 12. The meeting on April 30 was preceded by the celebration of Mass. In attendance at the meeting were two Oblates, one Oblate novice, and seven inquirers. Deacon John Etter, moderator, opened with the Regina Coeli. Oblate novice Dean Everett gave a presentation on the good zeal of monks from Chapter 72 of the *Rule*. He spoke about the necessity of love of neighbor and that principle that we are our brothers' keepers. The theme of love of neighbor was tied in with Rev 2:10 and the prayer "Thy will be done" from the Lord's Prayer. Good zeal, he said, is a part of active involvement in one's community, which needs to be built up in love. This theme also appears in the D.V.D. series by Fr. Robert Barron, which many of the group have been viewing during a Catholic Studies class. Deacon John closed the meeting with a Glory Be.

The meeting on June 4 followed a communion service led by Deacon John and began with a praying of the Angelus. Ten people were in attendance, including two Oblates and one Oblate novice. Oblate Curtis Kennedy then gave a presentation on humility, with emphasis on Christ's humility in taking on our human nature. Curt also stressed the importance of trying gradually to conform our thoughts to God's thoughts, with reference to *RB* 7: 13-18 and Isaiah 55, and he addressed the connection between obedience and humility. The meeting ended with a Glory Be and a blessing.

On July 9 in the chapel at Pendleton,

Dean A. (Peter Damian) Everett of Pendleton, IN,

made his final Oblation in the presence of Rev. Sean Pogue.

The meeting on July 2 (postponed from June 25) was attended by two Oblates, eleven inquirers, one volunteer, and Deacon John, who opened the meeting with the Angelus. Then Fred led the Oblate prayer and gave a presentation on prayer, which coincided with the section of Fr. Barron's series on Catholicism that some of the group were studying. Fred mentioned that prayer brings us closer to God and helps us to love God and others more. (Contemplative prayer is especially helpful, he mentioned.) The Divine Office, to which St. Benedict devotes Chapters 8 to 20 of the *Rule*, is an important part of the Church's liturgy in which all are invited to participate. Christians should avoid lukewarmness both in private prayer and in community prayer. Deacon John closed the meeting with a Glory Be and a blessing.

Pittsburgh, PA (St. Peter Deanery) -- *meetings on 2nd or 3rd Wed., St. Peter Church.*

Oblate George Ponticello reported by e-mail on May 25, June 10, June 28, and July 28. The proposed field trip to St. Emma Monastery in Greensburg was postponed to August 2. The meeting on April 29 was attended by thirteen people, including moderator Fr. Vincent and one inquirer. After the praying of Evening Prayer in the church, the group discussed Chapter 21 of the book *Lessons from Saint Benedict*.

The group enjoyed a picnic on July 22. After Evening Prayer at St. Peter Church, they set up the picnic in the park across the street from the church. The fifteen attendees included three guests, one of whom was the nine-week-old baby daughter, Lucy, of Oblate Greg Null. Lucy received much attention!

Rosharon, TX (St. Bede Deanery) -- *meetings on Mondays*

There was no report.

St. Marys, PA (St. Maurus Deanery) -- *meetings on Thurs. before 1st Fri. of month, 7:00 P.M. at Queen of the World Church*

Secretary Peggi Gabler reported on May 12, June 13, and July 9. The meeting on May 7, attended by eight people, began with the praying of Evening Prayer and of the "Benedictine prayer." Fr. Alfred Patterson, moderator, was unable to be present. Peggi read the minutes of the meeting in November, 2014, and two letters from Fr. Donald. There was mention of those who were ill and who had died, with requests for prayer. Comments were made about a recent book by John Schlimm on the memoirs of Sister Augustine, O.S.B. Next, the Prologue of the *Rule*, verses 39-44, was read, with some reflections on the need to ask for God's grace now if wish to attain salvation. The meeting closed with the praying of the "Oblate prayer."

At the meeting on June 4, the group of five Oblates prayed Evening Prayer and then the Oblate prayer. The minutes of the last meeting were read. Then the group read and discussed the sixth step of humility, *RB* 7: 49-50, and also discussed the challenges of Catholic education in today's world. The meeting ended with the "Benedictine prayer."

The meeting on July 2 was attended by Fr. Alfred and six Oblates, who renewed their Oblation. The meeting opened with the "Benedictine prayer" and the reading of the minutes from June. Fr. Alfred then spoke briefly about the retreat given by Bishop Donald Troutman to the monks of the Archabbey during June. One Oblate spoke about the success of the women's Cursillo held at the Elk County Catholic High School in June. There was also some discussion about the very disappointing decision by the Supreme Court about marriage, and Fr. Alfred gave the Catholic Church's position. Next there was a reading of *RB* 25: 1-6 and a discussion about monks' in St. Benedict's day being isolated from the community because of serious faults. The meeting ended with the Oblate prayer, a blessing from Fr. Alfred, and the scheduling of the next meeting for August 6.

Saint Vincent College – *monthly meetings to begin in September, in Mary, Mother of Wisdom Chapel*

There was no report. It is hoped that activities will resume after the fall semester begins in August.

Savannah, GA (St. Katharine Drexel Deanery) -- *special monthly events at Sunday Vespers at Benedictine Priory*

Moderator Fr. Ronald Gatman, O.S.B., and three of the Oblates visited the Archabbey from July 2 to 5. There was no report.

Selingsgrove, PA (St. Anselm Deanery) – *monthly meetings at 2 P.M. on 2nd Sundays at St. Pius X Church in Selingsgrove*

Acting secretary Bonnie Morgan reported on June 21 and July 25. Three people attended the meeting on June 21. Bonnie reported on the Assembly of Deanery Representatives on June 5-7, with emphasis on Fr. Thomas Hart's two presentations. She

also distributed a handout regarding the Year of Consecrated Life, a tentative questionnaire for Oblate deaneries, and a list of suggestions about Oblate meetings; these were to be discussed at future meetings. One attendee suggested having copies of the two basic Oblate pamphlets placed in the narthexes of churches and posting the dates of Oblate meetings in local parish bulletins. The group then prayed Daytime Prayer and planned at the next meeting on July 19 to continue to discuss humility and to read from a commentary on the *Rule*.

The meeting on July 19 was attended by five Oblates and one Oblate novice. There was some sharing of thoughts by Oblates who had attended retreats and conferences at the Archabbey. Reprints of the section of Delatte's *Commentary* on humility were distributed for discussion at the next meeting, scheduled for August 9. The meeting closed with the praying of Mid-afternoon Prayer.

Somerset, PA (St. John Paul II Deanery) – meetings on 2nd & 4th Tuesdays, 6:30 -8:15, chapel annex

Co-lay leader Steward Steckley reported on June 2 and July 11. The meeting on May 12 was attended by five Oblates, six Oblate novices, and Fr. James Dugan, moderator. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, Oblate Bo Fadden gave a talk on Chapter 71 of the *Rule* (on mutual obedience). Bo quoted from several other parts of the *Rule* dealing with obedience and incorporated several passages from the New Testament, particularly Ephesians. The meeting ended with the praying of Compline.

The meeting on May 26 was attended by four Oblates, three Oblate novices, one inquirer, and Fr. Dugan. After an opening prayer and a reading from the *Rule*, there was a question-and-answer session on the *Rule*. Many questions were raised, particularly on *RB* 4: 31-54. Steward said that the *Rule*, especially as applied to Oblates, does not prohibit happiness but does rather condemn the needless drawing of attention to oneself (as can easily happen with laughter and loud talking). Also, boisterous behavior goes against the practice of humility. The meeting once again ended with the praying of Compline.

A meeting scheduled for early June was cancelled. The meeting on June 23 was attended by five Oblates, six Oblate novices, two inquirers, and Fr. Dugan. After an opening prayer and a reading of the section of the *Rule* for the day, Oblate Michael Reichert gave a presentation on the Prologue of the *Rule*. He called the Prologue a "spiritual pep-talk" and emphasized the call to prayer, faith, and good works; the importance of listening as part of obedience; and the necessity of humility as giving glory to God. The group was glad to welcome back Oblate novice Ron Bergman, who had been away because of cancer and chemotherapy treatments.

Southern Pines, NC (St. Ephrem the Syrian Deanery) – monthly meetings on 2nd Thurs. of month

Lay leader/secretary Laura Lowder reported by e-mail on June 16, June 18 and July 10. There was no meeting in June because of the excessive heat. In May only two members attended. They prayed Vespers and discussed in detail some ideas for making known the Oblate Program in the area. On June 18 Laura had an encouraging meeting with Fr. Andrew McNair of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Southern Pines. There were hopes expressed to have the Oblate group lead special programs in the parish and to have Br. Joachim come to speak about the Oblate Program some time in August.

Three people, including an inquirer, attended the meeting on July 9. The group discussed the first three paragraphs of the Prologue and continued for two hours. There were hopes to promote the Oblate Program at St. Anthony of Padua Parish the weekend of July 11-12 and to make a presentation at a Monday-evening faith-formation series at Sacred Heart Church.

State College, PA (St. Joseph Deanery) -- meetings on 2nd Monday of each month, Our Lady of Victory Church, Activity Center.

Secretary Kay Tittmann reported on May 13 and June 1. The meeting on May 11 was attended by nine Oblates, three Oblate novices, and four inquirers. After the praying of Evening Prayer, Fr. David Griffin, O.S.B., invested three people as Oblate novices:

Donald G. Nagel, Sr., of Bellefonte, PA

David A. Nice of Houtzdale, PA

Lisa R. Philippe of State College, PA .

The group then enjoyed some light snacks. Next they returned to their discussion of the book *The Road to Eternal Life* by Fr. Michael Casey, O.C.S.O. They covered verses 38-42 of the Prologue of the *Rule*, of which the book is a set of reflections. Fr. David urged the Oblates to complete the book on their own. The themes that emerged in the discussion were the seeking of God's will as the way to more abundant life, the need to seek advice to put God's will into practice, and the ongoing choice between heaven and hell. Since it was close to Fr. David's birthday, the Oblates surprised him with a birthday cake, a card, and the gift of a Mass offered for his intentions. The meeting ended with a prayer, the singing of the "Ultima," and the voicing of prayer intentions. The group also made plans for an end-of-year Mass and celebration scheduled for Saturday, May 30.

On May 30 the deanery held an end-of-year celebration, which consisted of breakfast in the parish's social hall. There was much positive feedback about the change from having the meal in a restaurant.

Virginia Beach, VA (St. Scholastica Deanery) -- meetings on 1st Wed., 7 P.M., Assembly Room, St. Gregory the Great School

Lay leader/secretary Delina Pauls wrote on May 25. At the meeting on May 6, since there was no moderator present, Dee gave a talk about prayer and led a discussion about how each attendee prayed and what particular prayer meant the most to him or her. Dee emphasized the importance of praying in thanksgiving and of regarding prayer as a conversation with God. Then Fr. Joseph Adams, O.S.B., a parochial vicar at St. Gregory Church, came to receive the final Oblation of

Bernard (Anselm) Bannin of Virginia Beach, VA.

Also, two members of the deanery made their final Oblation at the Archabbey on May 30, during the "Oblate retreat."

Williamsport, PA (Saints Martha, Mary, and Lazarus Deanery) -- meetings on 2nd Sunday of each month, 2 P.M., St. Anne Church

Lay leader/secretary Sue Wykoff reported by e-mail on June 17 and by phone on August 4. There was no meeting in April since the second Sunday was Divine Mercy Sunday and some members wished to attend Divine Mercy devotions. There was no meeting in May because of a car accident and lack of transportation. The meeting on June 14 was attended by eight people, including one inquirer. The group prayed the "Te Deum" together and then watched a video of Fr. Robert Keffer's talk on holiness and Benedictine spirituality. There was no discussion since the room was very warm and the attendees became sleepy. The meeting closed with a

praying of the Angelus.

The subsequent meeting was held on July 26, close to the feast of Saints Martha, Mary, and Lazarus (July 29). Seven people attended. The Office of Readings was prayed, and the theme of the discussion was hospitality. The group reflected on a chapter of *Lessons from Saint Benedict*, with the help of the accompanying study guide. The meeting closed with a special prayer for the deanery and the praying of the Angelus.

Various Locations

On May 16, at the chapel in Buford, GA, Rev. John Fallon, pastor of Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Atlanta, GA, invested, **Charles E. "C-Jay" Tarwater** of Buford, GA, as an Oblate novice.

On June 4, in a chapel in Tennessee Colony, TX, Fr. Arthur Kirwin, O.P., invested as Oblate novices:

Raymond Bingham of Tennessee Colony, TX
Antonio Esquivel of Tennessee Colony, TX
Raymond F. Pallone, Jr., of Tennessee Colony, TX
Mariano Juarez Rosales of Tennessee Colony, TX
Jimmy L. Tennison of Tennessee Colony, TX
Alejandro Torres of Tennessee Colony, TX .

The ceremony was performed in the context of a weekly Christian Meditation Group.

On June 10, during a Mass in the chapel at Tennessee Colony attended by over 100 people, Fr. Arthur Kirwin invested **Kenneth H. Kerr III** of Tennessee Colony, TX

as an Oblate novice.

On July 6 in St. Gregory Chapel at the Archabbey, **George R. "Jack" (Francis) Dukes** of Snellville, GA, made his final Oblation. Archabbot Douglas, Fr. Maximilian, Br. Canice, Br. Lawrence, and Br. Matthew Hershey were all present as well as Fr. Donald, who received Jack's final Oblation.

SICK & INFIRM MONKS

The following monks of the Archabbey have been hospitalized or otherwise especially ill during the past three months and could use our prayers: Br. Anthony Kirsch (recovering well from hip-replacement surgery), Br. Stephen Nazaruk, Fr. Jacques Daley, Br. James Cartwright, Fr. Lee Yoakam, Fr. Luke Policicchio, Fr. Paul Rubadue, Fr. Paulo Panza, and Fr. Nathan Munsch (recovering well from rotator-cuff surgery).

DECEASED MONKS

Fr. Cuthbert Jack, 64, died on May 29, and Fr. Blane Resko, 85, died on August 7. Please pray for the repose of their souls.

SOME SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Oblates and all their guests are always welcome to pray the Liturgy of the Hours with the monastic community. If large numbers are coming, it is good to notify the Oblate Office in advance so that there will be sufficient booklets for all the guests. Please note the importance of praying with the monastic community. If you are a guest and do not know the community's pace, please do not recite or sing until you know the right pace. During one retreat this summer, some of the retreatants sang loudly and erratically, and the result was chaotic! If you have a good voice, please be especially careful to sing at a moderate tone and in synchronization with others so that we may sing together and with reverence. Thank you!
2. Thanks to Oblate Lawrence Cuda, Oblate novice Bill Iglesias, and employee Kim Metzgar (in Archabbey/Seminary Public Relations), we have a bibliography of Benedictine books listed on the Oblate website. Please feel free to consult this very exhaustive list, which has taken several years to compile.
3. If anyone needs a ride for Oblate Day, for the Oblate day of recollection, and/or for monthly Oblate meetings in Latrobe, please contact the Oblate Office. We have a list of volunteer drivers.
4. If any Oblate would like to read a thorough treatment of silence in the *Rule*, a book that might be recommended is *Silence: The Meaning of Silence in the Rule of St. Benedict*, by Fr. Ambrose Wathen, O.S.B. (Cistercian Publications, Inc., 1973). Originally presented as a doctoral dissertation at St. Paul University in Ottawa, the work is academic and somewhat dry but very thorough. Although the book is out of print, there is a copy in the Oblate Library.

Order Form for C.D.'s & D.V.D.'s of Presentations in Latrobe
(See past newsletters or phone Book Center for previous presentations.)

Br. Étienne's talk on *lectio divina* (February 16, 2014):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Killian's talk on *conversatio morum* (March 16, 2014):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Br. Canice's talk on the Holy Eucharist (June 22, 2014):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Thomas Hart's talk on work (July 20, 2014):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Robert Keffer's talk on silence (August 17, 2014):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Br. Thomas Sanders' talk on the Liturgy of the Hours (September 21, 2014):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. William Beaver's talk on hospitality (October 19, 2014):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Br. Lawrence's talk on poverty and simplicity in Benedictine spirituality (December 21, 2014):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Br. Hugh's talk on holiness and Benedictine spirituality (January 18, 2015):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Wulfstan's talk on prayer in Benedictine spirituality (February 15, 2015):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Justin Matro's talk on hospitality in Benedictine spirituality (March 15, 2015):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Br. Ignatius' talk on *lectio divina* (April 19, 2015):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Br. Matthew Hershey's talk on poverty & simplicity in Benedictine spirituality (May 17, 2015):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Jean-Luc's talk on obedience in Benedictine spirituality (June 14, 2015):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Matthew Lambert's talk on silence in Benedictine spirituality (July 19, 2015):

C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Please enclose \$6.00 per D.V.D. and \$3.50 per C.D. (Add 6% Pa. sales tax before shipping cost; then add \$4.95 for postage & handling per order.)

Enclosed is _____ for my order of _____ C.D.'s and _____ D.V.D.'s.

Name _____

Address _____

I will pick up my order _____ Please mail my order to me _____ (Remember to include 6% tax & \$4.95 for postage per order.)

Please order from Saint Vincent Book Center over the phone at 724-805-2557 or online at www.stvincent.bkstr.com, or by mail (St. Vincent Book Center, 300 Fraser Purchase Rd., Latrobe, PA 15650-2690); or come in person to the Book Center. Please make out checks to ST. VINCENT ARCHABBEY. N.B.: Those who attend monthly meetings in Latrobe will still be able to order copies of recent presentations at a discounted price.

SCHEDULE FOR OBLATE DAY, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2015

- 9:00 A.M. - 10:20 - Registration & get-together, Faculty Dining Room (Placid A) (no registration during Mass)
- 10:30 A.M. - Mass for participants, Mary, Mother of Wisdom Chapel (college chapel in Carey Center)
- 11:40 A.M. - Midday Prayer, Placid Hall, Room A
- 11:55 A.M. - Lunch, Placid Hall, Room B
- 1:00 P.M. - Basilica Gift Shop open (also all morning)
- 1:45 P.M. - Oblation ceremonies, basilica
- 2:15 P.M. - Confessions, basilica
- 3:00 P.M. - Social with the monastic community, Assembly Room
- 3:45 P.M. - Presentation by Fr. Boniface, O.S.B., Assembly Room
- 5:00 P.M. - Evening Prayer with the monastic community, basilica
- 5:35 P.M. - Supper, Placid Hall, Room B
- 6:45 P.M. - Departure.

Registration Form for Oblate Day, Sunday, September 27, 2015

Name _____ Phone _____
Address _____

- I plan to attend Oblate Day on Sept. 27 at St. Vincent.
- (number of reservations) for lunch at \$5.50 each (money enclosed).
- (number of reservations) for supper at \$6.50 each (money enclosed).
- Total amount enclosed: \$ _____ (Please make checks payable to St. Vincent Archabbey; **if you are an overnight guest, please make out a separate check for the two meals.**)
- I plan to be received as an Oblate (application required before September 21);
I wish to take _____ as an Oblate name.
- I wish to be received as an Oblate novice (application required before September 21).
- I would like overnight accommodations for _____ Sept. 26, _____ Sept. 27. (Please contact Fr. Donald well in advance.)

[As of Aug. 4, all guest rooms have been taken. You may reserve a room at the Bishop Connare Center on Route 30; phone 724-834-7350.]

Please send this form to the Oblate Office by September 19; please mark on envelope "September event."

Schedule for Oblate Day of Recollection, Saturday, October 17, 2015, Fr. Robert Keffer, O.C.S.O.

- 8:30 A.M. Registration, Leander Hall
- 9:00 A.M. First conference, St. Gregory Chapel
- 9:30-10:10 Confessions, Leander parlor and near-by office
- 10:15 A.M. Mass, St. Gregory Chapel
- 11:30 A.M. Midday Prayer, St. Gregory Chapel
- 11:45 A.M. Lunch, Placid Dining Room B
- 1:00 P.M. Second conference, St. Gregory Chapel
- 1:30 P.M. Oblation ceremonies, St. Gregory Chapel
- 3:30 P.M. Third conference, St. Gregory Chapel
- 5:00 P.M. Evening Prayer, St. Gregory Chapel
- 5:35 P.M. Supper, Placid Dining Room B

Registration Form for Oblate Day of Recollection, Saturday, October 17, 2015

Name _____ Phone _____
Address _____

- I plan to attend Oblate day of recollection on Oct. 17 at St. Vincent.
- Enclosed is the fee of \$34.00 (or \$27.00 for only one meal). (Please make checks payable to St. Vincent Archabbey; please make out separate checks for the day of recollection and Oblate Day if you are attending both. If you are an overnight guest, please make out a separate check for the additional time stayed. Thank you!)
- I would like overnight accommodations for _____ Oct. 16, _____ Oct. 17 (Please contact Fr. Donald well in advance.)

[As of Aug. 4, all guest rooms have been taken. You may reserve a room at the Bishop Connare Center on Route 30; phone 724-834-7350.]

Please send this form to the Oblate Office by September 19; please mark on envelope "October event."

Form for those in Latrobe/ Greensburg/ Ligonier/ Jeannette area interested in phone prayer chain

I would like to be part of the prayer chain that meets by phone about 6:30 P.M. every Tuesday to pray for the needs of the Oblate community and others who ask for our prayers. My information is as follows:

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ e-mail address _____

Please send this information to the Oblate Office.