



THE SAINT VINCENT OBLATE NEWS

Saint Vincent Archabbey

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Please note flier with form for registration for July 11.

EVANGELIZING IN A "BENEDICTINE" WAY: THE GOOD EXAMPLE OF ABBOTS, CELLARERS, AND OTHERS

Dear Oblates, Oblate novices, and Friends,

Are monks and Oblates called to evangelize? As in the case of all Christians, yes, we are called to evangelize (and, of course, first to be evangelized)!

Concern for others' salvation in the Rule

According to the *Rule* of St. Benedict, the abbot of the monastery should be the community's chief evangelizer. In Chapter 2, St. Benedict asserts that "everything he teaches and commands should, like the leaven of divine justice, permeate the minds of his disciples" (*RB* 2:5). That is, he is to bring the word of God into the monks' hearts and minds in a radical, all-embracing way through all that he says and does. Whether or not his "flock" of monks responds well, "he may say to the Lord [at the time of judgment]: 'I have not hidden your justice in my heart; I have proclaimed your truth and your salvation'" (2:9; Ps 40:11). The abbot is to lead both by word and by example, but "he must point out to them [the monks] all that is good and holy more by example than by words" (2:12). (What benefit is it for a leader to proclaim Christ in speech while he contradicts what he preaches in his behavior?) The purpose of the abbot's leadership is the "burden" of "directing souls and serving a variety of temperaments" (2:31). He is in every possible way to guide the monks both to salvation on earth and also, ultimately, to the fullness of life in heaven. In order to do this, the abbot himself needs to be evangelized. He must "seek first the kingdom of God and his justice" (2:35), be "fearful of the future examination" (2:34) of his ministry as shepherd, and thus also be concerned about the state of his own soul (2:39).

St. Benedict insists that other officials of the monastery also witness to Christian faith by their good example. The deans must be "chosen for virtuous living and wise teaching" (21:4). The cellarer is to be "like a father to the whole community" (31:2), and he is to "offer a kind word" (31:13) when he does not have the goods requested. Amid his demanding responsibilities, he is to "keep watch over his own soul" (31:8). The porter, too, is to bring visitors closer to Christ as they come through the gate of the monastery grounds. When the traveler poses a question, the porter must "provide a prompt answer with the warmth of love" (66:4). The prior, too, whom St. Benedict warns at length against possible abuse of his authority, must realize that "the more he is set above the rest, the more he should be concerned to keep what the rule commands" (65:17).

Suggestions from Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium*

In his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis reminds us that we all have a daily mandate to bring the Gospel to others. In #127 of that document, the Holy Father states, "Today, as the Church seeks to experience a profound missionary renewal, there is a kind of preaching which falls to each of us as a daily responsibility. It has to do with bringing the Gospel to the people we meet, whether they be our neighbours or complete strangers. This is the informal preaching which takes place in the middle of a conversation,

something along the lines of what a missionary does when visiting a home. Being a disciple means being constantly ready to bring the love of Jesus to others, and this can happen unexpectedly and in any place: on the street, in a city square, during work, on a journey."

Good Witness in the Old Testament

Recently in my doing *lectio* on 1 and 2 Kings, I have come to realize, with some amazement, the strong witness provided by the least likely of people during these ancient times. We would expect the great prophets Elijah and Elisha to be powerful in their proclamation of the primacy of God, and indeed they are. However, we also have other "unsung heroes" who beautifully cooperate with God's graces to enable Him to do great things. In 1 Kings 18, a man named Obadiah (not the prophetic author of the Book of Obadiah), the vizier of King Ahab of Samaria, is asked by Elijah to tell Ahab, "Elijah is here" (1 Kgs 18:7). Obadiah then puts up a big protest since he fears that Ahab will kill him. Nonetheless, Elijah perseveres in his request; so Obadiah overcomes his fears and finally "went to Ahab and informed him" (18:16). This encounter leads to Elijah's victory over the false prophets. In 1 Kings 20, a nameless prophet speaks the word of the Lord and gives Ahab courage to defeat a huge army of Arameans with a very small army of Israelites (1 Kgs 20: 28-30). In 2 Kings 4:42, an anonymous man brings to Elisha twenty barley loaves to help to feed a hundred men. Although the loaves are clearly insufficient, Elisha multiplies them so that "when they had eaten, there was some left over" (2 Kgs 4:44). In the story of Naaman and Elisha, it is a little Israelite slave girl who tells Naaman's wife about "the prophet in Samaria" (2 Kgs 5: 7-8), and it is a nameless servant of Naaman who persuades the general to listen to Elisha's advice (to wash in the Jordan) when he begins to turn around in anger and to give up on seeking healing. Perhaps the most remarkably effective response to God's word occurs in the story of Elisha and the blinded Aramean troops. Through Elisha's prayers, his servant first sees Elisha protected by a huge force of "horses and fiery chariots" (5:17). Then, again through his prayers, the troops become blind, and Elisha leads them to Samaria and to the presence of King Ahab. When the king asks Elisha if he should kill the enemy troops, he instead tells the king to "serve them bread and water. Let them eat and drink and then go back to their master" (6:22). In response, instead of providing just bread and water, Ahab "spread a great feast for them," and "when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away" (6:23). This beautiful anticipation of Christ's command to "love your enemies" (Mt 5:44, Lk 6:27) is a notable exception to the spirit of vengeance and treachery that prevailed in the Near East in that era (and perhaps still does prevail). Elisha, King Ahab, and the captive Aramean troops all cooperate with God's graces to bring about this blessed outcome. Finally, at the end of 2 Kings, after the Israelites have been largely exiled to Babylon, a new king of Babylon, Evilmerodach, releases King Jehoiachin of Judah from prison, welcomes him to eat at his royal table, and gives him a

perpetual allowance for the rest of his life. That is one more noteworthy act of graciousness coming from an unlikely ruler! In sum, we see in the Old Testament some amazing and yet often nameless witnesses of God's power and love.

Among the Jewish people, witness was explicitly demanded of each generation to pass on the terms of the covenant with God to subsequent generations. The Lord commanded Moses to tell the people, "Take to heart these words which I enjoin on you today. Drill them into your children. Speak of them at home and abroad, whether you are busy or at rest" (Deut 6:6-7). In Deut 4:9 Moses exhorts the people to teach their sacred tradition "to your children and to your children's children." Near the end of the book of Deuteronomy, Moses likewise appeals to the people, "Take to heart all the warning which I have now given you and which you must impress on your children, that you may carry out carefully every word of this law" (Deut 32:46). The Israelites were not known for proclaiming the deeds of their God beyond their own people, and yet there are some references, in particular in Isaiah and the Book of Psalms, to God's calling His people to proclaim His goodness to all the world. In Isaiah 49, the second "Servant Song" begins with the words, "Hear me, O coastlands, listen, O distant peoples ..." (Is 49:1). Psalm 67 proclaims, "So may your way be known upon earth; among all nations, your salvation" (Ps 67:3). Psalm 68 likewise calls for the revelation of God to foreign nations: "Let nobles come from Egypt; let Ethiopia extend its hands to God. You kingdoms of the earth, sing to God, chant praise to the Lord" (Ps 68:32-33). Most especially, in a prophecy foretelling the journey of the Magi, Psalm 72 predicts, "All kings shall pay him homage, all nations shall serve him [the ideal future king; the Messiah]" (Ps 72: 11). Thus even in the Old Testament there is the notion of believers' striving to welcome all the earth to join them in praising the God who loves and saves all people.

Good Witness in the New Testament

Of course, real evangelization does not take place until after the coming of Christ, and particularly after His Death and Resurrection, since the Paschal mystery is the central content of the "Good News" which is proclaimed when Christians evangelize. The New Testament offers us a host of people, sometimes unnamed, who cooperate with God's plan in Christ, and thus also proclaim Christ in powerful ways, even before the first Good Friday and Easter Sunday. At the beginning of Our Lord's life, the Magi are moved to offer their precious gifts (and to offer themselves) to the Messiah-King and then heed God's message in a dream not to return to King Herod. The "different route" that they take after leaving Nazareth is a symbol of the new way that is to be followed by all who have deeply encountered the humble God-made-Man. We also have the unnamed shepherds, who respond to the angel's message and, after visiting the Infant, give an amazing report to the people of their region. At the end of Our Lord's earthly life, we see Joseph of Arimathea, who is bold enough to approach Pontius Pilate for the body of Jesus and is generous enough to lay it "in his own new tomb" (Mt 27: 60). It is edifying, too, to read about the boy who brings to Jesus "five barley loaves and a couple of dried fish" (Jn 6:9) so that He can multiply them to feed a crowd of five thousand men. May we with similar generosity surrender our possessions and our lives to Our Lord so that He can put them to use for His marvelous divine purposes! During this Easter Season, we hear in particular about the strong witness of St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Mary Magdalene, and the disciples on the road to Emmaus (after Our Lord draws them out of their discouragement). Both in prison and out of prison, both to large crowds and to individuals, the Apostles have the courage to proclaim Christ and to defy the young Church's opponents with charity, with patience, and with amazing zeal.

Our evangelizing today

How, then, can we – in a Benedictine way, for us who are Oblates or monks - become better evangelizers? Many of us probably never considered ourselves to have a call to evangelize. Growing up as Roman Catholic in the 1950's and 1960's, I don't think I even heard the word "evangelization" until I went to college (in 1967) or perhaps even much later. At the time of receiving Confirmation, we fifth-graders were told that we were to be "soldiers for Christ," and the sisters who taught us C.C.D. mentioned the importance of seeking to convert other people; however, it was difficult to see ourselves as part of an effort of evangelization. Perhaps part of the reason was that just about everyone seemed to have some sort of faith. In my classes in grade school all the pupils were apparently practicing Protestants, Catholics, or Jews. Once in a while, one would hear about "lapsed Catholics," but they were a rare species, and even rarer were "atheists," although we heard about the existence of such people. Up to the fifth or sixth grade, we even began each day with a prayer, "Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence on Thee, and we beg Thy blessing upon us, our parents, our teachers, our school, and our country. Amen."

These days are very different. The "culture of death" is prevalent. Large numbers of people, perhaps a majority, are practical atheists or agnostics. We Christians might be tempted to throw up our hands in frustration over the growing trend of unbelief and the official approval of acts of immorality by legislation and court decisions. These are sad times for us believers. However, the Church urges us to look to the early Christians, who were a leaven to a largely decadent world and who, with their radiant and joyful faith, transformed that world with the values of the Gospel. We, too, must do what we can to live our faith boldly and to proclaim our faith openly, even if that means suffering. We must seek to draw others to Christ, especially by showing them Christ-centered kindness. How, practically, are we to do this?

Again in *Evangelii Gaudium*, #128, Pope Francis gives an example of a possible encounter with another person who "speaks and shares his or her joys, hopes, and concerns for loved ones, or so many other heartfelt needs." The Christian listener must be "respectful and gentle" and then, if appropriate, "bring up God's word" or relate a story dealing with the personal love of God. "The message has to be shared humbly," and the witness must be "always willing to learn more." One must be guided by the Holy Spirit. "At times the message can be presented directly, at times by way of a personal witness or gesture." "If the circumstances are right," the encounter "could end with a brief prayer related to the concerns which the person may have expressed." It is important that the persons being evangelized "have an experience of being listened to and understood," with assurance "that their particular situation has been placed before God, and that God's word really speaks to their lives."

In his exhortation the Holy Father goes on to speak about the gifts of the Holy Spirit that tend to build up the Church, the need for reconciliation of diversity with the help of the Holy Spirit, and the need to proclaim the Gospel to professional, scientific, and academic circles. Theologians and Catholic scholars have a special role in evangelizing a whole culture. Then Pope Francis writes many words urging priests to evangelize effectively through better homilies. In reference to theologians, he asserts, "They must always remember that the Church and theology exist to evangelize, and not to be content with a desk-bound theology" (# 134).

Suggestions for Oblates and monks

We who are Oblates or monks all have an important part in the "New Evangelization." Like the abbot and other officials of the monastery in the *Holy Rule*, we must first give high priority

to our own lives of prayer lest we have nothing to give to others. We must really be engaged in practicing *lectio divina*, in praying the Divine Office, and in listening to the Lord in the circumstances of daily life. We need also to nurture the virtue and the skill of listening with genuine personal concern when we encounter other people and to avoid treating them as mere extensions of our needs. If we listen with love and recognize each person as a gift from God, we shall care enough to desire that the person come to know Christ or to know Him more deeply. As we wish ourselves to grow in living the Gospel and in encountering Christ often, so we should wish for others. When we learn truly to listen to the Holy Spirit and to the person we encounter, we shall better know how to respond with a message of hope that addresses the other's actual needs and desires.

Although the *Rule* says nothing about evangelizing outside the monastery, there is much said about mutual interactions within the community that open the way for all involved to "prefer nothing whatever to Christ" in a deeper way. These examples from the *Rule* remind us that the first place to evangelize is within the home. How we treat one another on a daily basis, what we say to one another, how we eat together (or not together), how we serve one another in little ways, and how we pray together all can have a big effect on our spiritual journeys. We are all called, in family and community, to proclaim Christ to one another in word and deed so that He may rule our hearts and minds and mold us into "one body, one spirit in Christ" (Eucharistic Prayer III).

Beyond this daily, domestic evangelizing, we do have resources for evangelizing others whom we meet in various other contexts. Bishop David A. Zubik of the Diocese of Pittsburgh has written an excellent pastoral letter entitled "The Church Evangelizing" (see www.ChurchEvangelizing.com) with some very practical suggestions. The end of the letter describes "eight building blocks of the New Evangelization," and they are as follows. (1) Practice hospitality (especially during church services). (2) Know the faith. (Too many Catholics are "clueless about the sacraments . . . , the virtues, and even about Who Jesus is and what He came to earth to do for us.") (3) Speak up. (It is sometimes appropriate to speak

about our faith in circles of people!) (4) Give corrections. (There are times when we are called to challenge others who are misinformed or who are not living their faith.) (5) Be loyal. (We need to "support [one] another in our growth to holiness.") (6) Stay in touch. (E.g., persevere in caring for needy friends.) (7) Remember the poor. (We should "think of people whom we may shun" for various reasons and remember that we are called to be Christ to them.) (8) Be encouraging. (As Jesus Himself told stories which encouraged "others to do and to be their best," we must do this even with people who "have felt uncomfortable with us, judged by us or abandoned by us.")

Summary: Go and proclaim!

In the revised *Roman Missal* of 2011, two of the dismissal formulas at the end of Mass are, "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life" and "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord." Thus our departure from the church is only the beginning of a great and ever-renewed effort to live the Gospel and to proclaim the Gospel. The *Rule* of St. Benedict challenges us to live a life of an intense preference for Christ always and everywhere; i.e., we must constantly evangelize ourselves. It also urges us to give good example to others in family and community; that is, we are continually to evangelize those with whom we live and work. Finally, the Scriptures and the documents of the Church call on us all to make every effort to bring the Gospel to others around us, wherever we may be. The Easter Season gives us more reason than ever to be evangelizers. Let us heed Our Lord's words right before His ascension: "Thus it is written that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things" (Lk 24:47-48). Yes, we are all called to be bold, joyful, and zealous witnesses!

Your brother in Christ and Saint Benedict,

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

A MESSAGE FROM ARCHABBOT DOUGLAS

April 30, 2014

Dear Oblates and Friends of Saint Vincent,

The Easter Season is a time for us to reflect upon our connectedness to Christ. We recall the words of Jesus to his disciples, "I am the vine. You are the branches." Through our baptism, we are intimately connected to God through our Risen Savior. As Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI once said, "All of us are limbs of Christ." We become an extension of his personal presence in the world.

To help us grow in this process of connectedness to Christ, he has given us the gift of the Eucharist, his own body and blood, so that we can increasingly become more imbued with the spirit and attitude of Christ – an extension of his presence in the world.

May this season of Resurrection grace be a time for renewed faith and openness to the ongoing action of God in our lives through the Holy Spirit.

In the Risen Lord,

Archabbot Douglas, O.S.B.

RETREATS OF POSSIBLE INTEREST, May 16-18, May 23-25, and June 6-8

It may not be too late to register for this year's retreats. The retreat on Benedictine spirituality is to be held on May 16-18, 2014, and

Fr. Warren will be the retreat master. The silent retreat will take place on Memorial Day weekend, May 23-25, 2014 and will be directed by Fr. Wulfstan. Registration (and all other special arrangements) should be done through the St. Vincent Retreat Program, and not through the Oblate Office. Also of possible interest to Oblates is a retreat weekend with spiritual direction available, also from May 23 to 25, with Fr. Aaron being the retreat master. **Oblates are no longer automatically placed on the Retreat Program's mailing list; so if you would like to receive retreat brochures, please contact Br. Hugh at the Retreat Office at 724-805-2139 or hugh.lester@email.stvincent.edu. You may also wish to see the retreat website at www.saintvincentretreats.org.**

OBLATE DAY 2013 ON SEPTEMBER 28; DAY OF RECOLLECTION ON OCTOBER 11

This year's Oblate Day will be Sunday, September 28; the speaker is yet to be chosen. The fall day of recollection is scheduled for Saturday, October 11, and Fr. Jeremiah Lange is to be the retreat master.

TALKS PRESENTED TO LATROBE DEANERY AVAILABLE ON C.D.'s AND D.V.D.'s

Thanks to Fr. Andrew, talks given at Oblate meetings in Latrobe (when the presenter is willing and when someone is able to videotape) are available to those who desire to have C.D.'s or D.V.D.'s. Orders will be taken only by St. Vincent College Book Center unless one attends monthly meetings in Latrobe (where orders will still be taken for recent presentations). Please see the order form on the flier attached to this newsletter.

SOLEMNITY OF ST. BENEDICT AT THE ARCHABBEY, FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 2014

A number of Oblates and their guests, some 50 people, joined the extended Benedictine community for the annual celebration of the Passing of Our Holy Father Benedict, Abbot. At the concelebrated Mass at 4:00 P.M., Fr. Prior Earl Henry presided and preached about the complementary dimensions of St. Benedict and St. Francis and also of Pope Benedict and Pope Francis. (It was Archabbot Douglas' homily, but he was ill with a bad cold and had lost his voice.)

After dinner, Oblation ceremonies were held at 6:15 P.M. in the Archabbey Basilica, during which Fr. Donald received the following:

Oblate: **Carolyn (Joanna) Macha** of Latrobe, PA
Oblate novices: **Steven J. Kurdziel** of Shaker Heights, OH
Richard F. McCormack of Sewickley PA
Brandon Ocampo of Bloomfield, NJ
Allen Sant of Mount Vernon, OH
Peter Santiago of Elizabeth, NJ
Thomas N. Trocchio of Cooperstown, PA
Karen Vogliano of Carnegie, PA.

Brandon, Allen, and Peter are students at St. Vincent College, and Thomas is an ordination-track student for the Diocese of Erie at St. Vincent Seminary. Among those present for the ceremony were the spouses of Steven, Richard, and Karen.

Next the group prayed Vespers with the monks at 7:00 P.M. in St. Gregory Chapel. After that they enjoyed a social in Placid Dining Room B.

FEAST OF ST. BENEDICT AND CELEBRATION OF JUBILEES OF OBLATION, JULY 11

All Oblates, Oblate novices, and their guests are welcome to attend the festive Mass for the Feast of St. Benedict at the Archabbey Basilica at 10:00 A.M. on Friday, July 11. The Mass should include the profession of solemn vows by several of the monks. Oblates are invited to stay for lunch and for a meeting at 2:00, for Evening Prayer at 5:00, and for supper. If you are coming for Mass, lunch, or supper, please fill out the form on the insert and send it to Nancy Premoshis by July 4. (Even if you are coming only for Mass, it is good for the sacristans to know how many pews to reserve for the Oblates.) The meeting at 2:00 will include a reflection by Br. Matthew Lambert on monastic vows and then the eighth annual ceremony to honor Oblates who this year celebrate 5, 15, 20, 25, 30, 40, 50, 55, or 60 or more years of Oblation. There will be time for photographs after the jubilarian ceremonies.

Those needing overnight room reservations should call Fr. Donald at the Oblate Office (724-805-2291).

NOVICES TO PROFESS FIRST VOWS ON THURSDAY, JULY 10, 5:00 P.M.

Oblates are welcome to attend the ceremony for the profession of first vows at Evening Prayer in the Archabbey Basilica on Thursday, July 10. Those wishing to stay for supper should contact Fr. Donald.

DONATIONS OF SHORTER CHRISTIAN PRAYER DESIRED FOR DESERT PRISON MINISTRY

Oblate Ken Craven of Sparta, TN, who ministers to prisoners via the foundation called Desert Prison Ministry, reports that many inmates would like to pray the Divine Office but do not have breviaries. If you have copies of *Shorter Christian Prayer* that you no longer need, please send them to the Oblate Office. Donations to purchase new copies will also be accepted. Ken has been trying to strengthen inmates in the Catholic faith and, if they are interested, to introduce them to Benedictine spirituality and the Oblate Program. As of April 2, three copies were donated, and twelve copies were purchased with donations, which amounted to \$151.28 from the March 16 meeting in Latrobe and from the celebration on March 21. Thank you!

PHONE PRAYER CHAIN AND E-MAIL PRAYER CHAIN:

Oblates in the Latrobe/Greensburg/Jeanette area have had a prayer chain by telephone facilitated by Oblate Anthony Sunseri since 2009, and later there was begun a prayer chain that transmits intentions by e-mail facilitated by Oblate Maryann Cherubini. If any Oblate or Oblate novice in the area would like to join the weekly prayer chain by phone, please contact **Anthony Sunseri at (724) 832-0868** or (by e-mail) at ajsdsms@verizon.net. If you wish to be a part of a weekly e-mail prayer chain, please contact **Maryann Cherubini at macherubini@comcast.net** or (by phone) at **(724) 837-3142**.

ITEMS AVAILABLE FROM THE OBLATE OFFICE

- (1) pamphlet "God's Love for You" with message of evangelization – free
- (2) booklet *St. Benedict for Busy Parents* – \$.40 each
- (3) booklet of Oblates' reflections on verses of the *Rule* – free or with donation for postage

- (4) booklet of the histories of Oblate deaneries – free or with donation for postage
- (5) cards with colored picture of St. Benedict and with prayer for a happy death; also St. Benedict & St. Scholastica cards from the sesquimillennium celebration in 1980.
- (6) copies of the book *Lessons from Saint Benedict* (from Oblate newsletters), \$12.00 each if picked up at Oblate Office
- (7) copies of the book *Study Guide to Lessons from Saint Benedict*, \$10.50 each if picked up at Oblate Office

SECOND ASSEMBLY OF DEANERY REPRESENTATIVES TO BE HELD AT ARCHABBEY, JULY 11-13

Each deanery affiliated with the St. Vincent Oblate Program is invited to send one or two delegates to the Archabbey from Friday, July 11, to Sunday, July 13, for the second weekend meeting of deanery representatives. (Oblates from near-by deaneries who do not wish to stay overnight may choose to come on Saturday only. All the essential events occur on Saturday.) Each deanery should decide which one or two Oblates will be attending. **To register, reply to the form sent out in March by the Oblate Office.**

OBLATES RECEIVE 10% DISCOUNT AT BASILICA GIFT SHOP

If you are shopping at the Basilica Gift Shop and are an Oblate or an Oblate novice, mention your affiliation with the Oblate community to the volunteers at the shop, and you will receive a 10% discount on your purchases.

OBLATE FORMATION BOOKLET HAS BEEN REPRINTED BY SOTINA PUBLISHING

The *Oblate Formation Booklet* has been slightly revised from the 2002 edition, and Sotina Publishing Co., which published *Lessons from Saint Benedict*, has reprinted the book. As of April 2, \$851.00 had been donated from Oblates to help with the cost of the revised book. The old *Oblate Formation Booklet* is still generally valid, and there are still well over 100 copies available; these will continue to be given out to Oblate novices until they run out. However, if anyone would like a copy of the revised version, they can be picked up at the Oblate Office. The suggested donation is \$6.00 per copy, but those who already donated need not pay further. **This is a reminder, too, that all Oblate novices and Oblates should have a copy of the *Oblate Formation Booklet* and review it regularly.**

BOOK OF REFLECTIONS ON RULE ALMOST READY

The book entitled *The Rule in Bits and Pieces: with Contributions by Monks and Oblates of Saint Vincent Archabbey* is essentially complete. We are grateful to all the Oblates who submitted reflections. After all the reflections were completed and edited, Abbot Jerome Kodell, O.S.B., of Subiaco Abbey in Arkansas agreed to write a foreword. Sotina Publishing Co. is ready to publish the book. More information about its availability will appear in the next newsletter.

CONTACTING PEOPLE IN LATROBE/GREENSBURG/JEANNETTE AREAS FOR FUNERALS & OTHER EVENTS

Whenever an Oblate or spouse dies in the Latrobe area, local Oblates gather for a wake service whenever possible. Oblates and Oblate novices who have requested to be notified by e-mail or by phone will be notified by Fr. Donald via Mary Ann Kaufman (for e-mail) or via Cheryl Matta (by phone). If you are not on these lists and would like to be, please contact the Oblate Office. These people are also contacted about other events of significance regarding the Archabbey and local Oblates.

RENEWALS OF OBLATION

Fr. Donald and Br. Joachim are grateful for the many Oblates (over 100) who have renewed their Oblation by using the form in the last newsletter. If you have not recently been in contact with the Oblate Office or your local deanery and have not renewed your Oblation at St. Vincent during the past year, please renew your Oblation privately and send in the renewal form.

ADORATION FOR VOCATIONS

Oblates in the Latrobe/Greensburg area are welcome to participate in Eucharistic adoration in St. Gregory Chapel every Sunday from 1:00 to 3:00 P.M. to pray for vocations to the religious life and the priesthood, especially for vocations to St. Vincent Archabbey. Oblates are encouraged to participate especially on those Sundays of Oblate meetings.

RECOMMENDED READING (volumes available in the Oblate Library)

- Johann Christoph Arnold, *Why Forgive?* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000, 2005)

NEW (OR NEWLY DISCOVERED) BOOKS ON BENEDICTINE SPIRITUALITY

- Enzo Bianchi, *Echoes of the Word: A New Kind of Monk on the Meaning of Human Life* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2013)
- Basil Cardinal Hume, O.S.B., *Footprints of the Northern Saints* (London: Dartman, Longman and Todd Ltd, 1996 [2002 reprint])

OBLATE BOARD OF ADVISORS

The Oblate Board of Advisors met at the Archabbey on Friday, April 11. They discussed various issues, including the forthcoming Assembly of Deanery Representatives, communication with Pakistan and Vietnam, the desirability of contacting those who have been Oblate novices for over three years, the need for someone to take over the Prayer-Partner Program, and the need to revive the local phone chain to inform Oblates of wake services and funerals. The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Friday, June 13, at 6:30 P.M. in Brownfield 203. Note that input from all the deaneries is always welcome.

Definition of an Oblate Deanery Affiliated with Saint Vincent Archabbey (as discussed at the last O.B.A. meeting)

An "Oblate deanery" is a group of at least four Oblates/Oblate novices (with at least one full Oblate) affiliated with St. Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, and engaging in meetings on a monthly or semi-monthly basis at least six times per year. Each deanery should have at least a moderator (a Benedictine monk or a Catholic priest or permanent deacon from a diocese or another religious order) and/or a lay leader and/or a secretary. The meetings should generally

focus on the *Rule* of St. Benedict and the values of Benedictine spirituality. It is recommended that each meeting begin or end with the praying of the Liturgy of the Hours. The secretary or other deanery member should send a report to the Director of Oblates (by letter, e-mail, or phone) soon after each meeting. Each deanery should stay in regular contact with the Archabbey, especially concerning Oblations, investitures, and new inquirers, and encourage members to visit the Archabbey whenever possible. The deanery should also seek to make the Oblate Program known to other Christians in the area so that those who are called to the vocation of being Oblates of St. Benedict may be able to respond.

NAABOD MEETING IN 2015: JULY 10-15, SUBIACO ABBEY IN SUBIACO, ARKANSAS

Subiaco Abbey in Arkansas will host the 2015 NAABOD meeting. Each monastery may send two Oblates to attend the conference. According to NAABOD's regulations, "the Oblates who are selected to attend ... should be those who show or have already demonstrated leadership within the monastery's or abbey's oblate organization." If you have been active in your deanery and would like to attend the 2015 conference, please contact Fr. Donald at the Oblate Office. The first two eligible volunteers will be those chosen.

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 mentor in this way or if you are an inquirer or an Oblate novice who would like to have an Oblate mentor, please contact Mary Ann Kaufman at 412-302-8501 or 305makaufman@gmail.com. Those who offer to be mentors receive a booklet of guidelines. Also, if you would like to have another Oblate (novice) as a prayer-partner, please contact Oblate John Hudock, who is now in charge of the Prayer-Partner Program, at 724-834-1718 or 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.

OBLATE MEETINGS AND CLASSES IN LATROBE

All Oblates and their guests are welcome to attend monthly meetings of the Latrobe (St. Gregory the Great) Deanery, held at 6:45 P.M. on Sundays in Brownfield 202 at St. Vincent. All are also invited to the classes on Benedictine spirituality that begin in the same place at 3:00 P.M. The next four sessions will be held on May 18, June 22, July 20, and August 17. (Note the change to the fourth Sunday in June to avoid meeting on Father's Day.) Those wishing to be present for Vespers and supper should phone Fr. Donald (724-805-2291) in advance.

THOSE WHO CANNOT DRIVE TO MEETINGS IN LATROBE

Those who would like to have a ride to meetings in Latrobe are urged to sign up for the Oblate *Directory* and to mention their specific needs. Oblate Deborah Johnston will try to find someone to drive you to monthly meetings.

OBLATE GROUP IN CAMBRIDGE, ONTARIO, CANADA

Oblate Cathy Mayled reported by e-mail on February 28 and April 26 and by regular mail on March 31. Eight people attended the meeting on January 23. After an opening prayer the group discussed the topic "nature" and the scheduling of renewals of Oblation on March 25.

On March 25 a group of seven met for Mass with Fr. Mervin, which included the renewal of Oblation for the five Oblates present. At the meeting that followed, the group began a study a study of the *Rule* with the book *Preferring Christ* by Norvene Vest. They discussed the first three sections of the Prologue.

Five people attended the meeting on April 24, which began with Mass. Then the group continued to discuss the Prologue, verses 14-28, from *Preferring Christ*. The meeting was closed with the praying of Compline.

ECUMENICAL OBLATE GROUP IN PHILADELPHIA, PA - semi-monthly meetings on Saturdays at 10:00 A.M.

Fr. Vincent de Paul Crosby, O.S.B., reported on April 30. The meeting on February 1 began with Morning Prayer according to the Roman Rite. The topic for reflection was "Authority and Obedience," based on some reading material that Fr. Vincent de Paul had sent out before the meeting. After his brief presentation on the nature of obedience and authority in monastic life, there was a profitable exchange on the way these are experienced in everyday life. The meeting ended with Noon Prayer from the *Book of Common Prayer*, and then the participants enjoyed lunch together.

The meeting on April 5 began and ended as usual. The topic for reflection, again based on reading material already sent out, was "Asceticism: the Value of Self-denial and Self-restraint." Fr. Vincent de Paul first spoke briefly about the place of asceticism in monastic life. The group then enjoyed a very profitable faith-based reflection with insights from the Gospel and the *Holy Rule*.

The next meeting will be on June 7 at Saint Mary's (Episcopalian) Church, 630 E. Cathedral Rd., Philadelphia, PA 19128.

OBLATE GROUP IN MORGANTOWN, WV

Oblate Pauline Lanciotti reported by e-mail on February 19 and March 19. Three Oblates and four inquirers joined Fr. John Peck, moderator, for the meeting on February 19. After the praying of Compline, Fr. John invited those who had attended a presentation by Archbishop Rino Fisichella at the Archabbey on the previous day to share their thoughts about it. Then the group discussed *RB* 49 concerning Lent. The discussion included the following: St. Benedict's use of the word joy twice in the chapter (and his mandate to avoid gloominess), the role of love in sacrifices that are made, and the call to follow the culture of the Gospel rather than the secular culture. The meeting ended with the final prayer of Compline and a blessing. (*continued*)

The meeting on March 19 was moderated by Fr. Jeremiah and was attended by five Oblates/Oblate novices and three inquirers. After the praying of Evening Prayer for the Solemnity of St. Joseph, the group discussed *RB* 6 on the "Restraint of Speech." Among the points of discussion were that fact that God is communicating to us at all times, so that cultivating silence is essential to establishing a dialogue with Him. We must first hear His voice and then learn how to listen. We can learn gradually to eliminate external environmental noise as much as we can and then to cultivate internal silence by seeking to eliminate distracting thoughts and feelings. We must also be judicious about our conversations with others, whether face-to-face or via other media. Cultivating regular periods of prayerful silence in our lives will help us more readily to discern when and to what degree we should speak and to learn to listen better for God's voice as well as to "listen with the ear of the heart" to others.

OBLATE GROUP IN ROSHARON, TEXAS

Oblate novice William Tkacik reported on March 24, and Oblate novice William Barbe Bishop reported on March 19. The Oblate novices continue to meet formally each month on a Saturday morning after the Catholic service. There was no meeting in February because of a widespread virus. The meeting on March 22, attended by 10 of the 11 Oblate novices, began with Morning Prayer and continued with a discussion on stability and silence and on the importance of Lent. The group then prayed the Litany of St. Benedict. Bill Tkacik spoke up about the liturgical needs of the Catholic community at Rosharon. The meeting closed with the Oblate prayer.

VISIT TO OBLATE NOVICES AND WOMEN'S GROUP IN McMURRAY, PA

Fr. Donald and Fr. Fred traveled to St. Benedict the Abbot Church on February 27 so that Fr. Donald could give a presentation on the *Rule* of St. Benedict and the Oblate Program at the monthly meeting of the "Women of St. Benedict." There are six Oblate novices from the parish, all invested last July 11. After Fr. Donald's presentation the Oblate novices and one inquirer met with him about the possibility of forming a deanery and having regular meetings.

On April 24 at noon, a meeting was held at St. Benedict the Abbot for those interested in the Benedictine Oblate life. Parishioners from neighboring parishes, namely St. Louise de Marillac and St. Thomas More, had also been invited.

NEWS FROM OBLATE DEANERIES

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

Deacon Ralph DeCecco, moderator, reported on February 24, March 29, and April 27. The meeting on February 22 was attended by Deacon Ralph, his wife Janet, and five others. After praying Midmorning Prayer, the group participated in the presentation of three lessons: on the history of St. Vincent de Paul and of St. Benedict, on the passage from the *Rule* for the day (*RB* 18:7-11), and on four guidelines for Oblates (spiritual life, patience, virtues, and community). The meeting ended, as usual, with the praying of the Litany of Humility.

At the meeting on March 29, Deacon Ralph joined eight others for Midmorning Prayer and a lesson on Psalm 51 given by Oblate John Simpson. The group prayed the psalm together and broke it down into parts, with questions about King David's begging for mercy (possibly because of confrontation), about Nathan's motive for challenging David, and about Bathsheba's being a victim. Then the group continued with *lectio* on the *Rule*, Chapter 48: 10-21. The meeting closed with the Litany of Humility.

On April 6 at St. Dismas Chapel in Mercer, with some 30 people attending, Deacon Ralph invested

Justin Schnur of Mercer, PA,

as an Oblate novice.

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

Secretary Mary Ann Bingeman reported by e-mail on February 23, and Oblate Philip Reemes reported on April 6. The meeting on February 23 was attended by fourteen people, including Fr. Job, moderator. The meeting began with Vespers in the church, during which

Deborah A. (Mary) Lanni of Middleton, PA,

made her final Oblation in the presence of Fr. Job and the others who were present. A brief social followed. Then Fr. Job led a discussion about *RB* 49 and Lent, the practices of which are at the core of monastic life. He suggested that each Oblate read a book from cover to cover during Lent. He also reminded the group about the regulations on fasting and abstinence for Catholics. After a reading of *RB* 49, Fr. Job suggested that Oblates make known to him or to their spiritual directors what practices they were choosing for Lent. The meeting ended with a prayer and a blessing from Fr. Job.

The meeting on March 23, attended by Fr. Job and eight others, began with Evening Prayer. Then Fr. Job spoke about the recent installation of Bishop Gainer as the new bishop of the Diocese of Harrisburg. He emphasized the parts of the liturgy. Next, the group turned to a discussion on the liturgies of Holy Week and the Paschal Triduum, and Fr. Job explained the various aspects of the liturgies. He urged all to attend the Easter Vigil if at all possible. The group agreed not to meet during April because of Easter.

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

Secretary Jay Wells sent reports by e-mail on February 24, March 17, and April 28. On February 23, fourteen people joined Fr. Paschal Morlino, moderator, for a monthly meeting. They continued a discussion from the book *Sacred Reading* by Fr. Michael Casey, O.C.S.O., this time covering pages 23 to 29. Then the attendees turned in to Fr. Paschal envelopes with descriptions of their Lenten penances. The envelopes were to be placed on the altar in the church. The intercession of St. Walburga (whose feast is February 25) was sought for the sick among the deanery and their families and friends. Then the schedule of summer retreats at the Archabbey was announced. At the end of the meeting the group adjourned to the church for Vespers at 5:00.

Fourteen people attended the meeting on March 17, along with Fr. Paschal, who began by speaking about the Transfiguration of Our Lord and how our lives should be transfigured. He also mentioned some highlights of Pope Francis' most recent Angelus address, which involved statements about listening to Jesus, reading a little of the Gospel daily, and sharing the Gospel with others. Then the group continued a discussion of *Sacred Reading*; this time they covered "compunction," on pages 29 to 31. They also considered sending Oblates to the assembly of deanery representatives in July. During the praying of Vespers in the church at 5:00, Fr. Paschal invested

Marie Hoshaw of Baltimore, MD,

as an Oblate novice. Marie was hoping soon to move to Johnstown, PA, and then to join the deanery there.

Thirteen people attended the meeting on April 27, including Fr. Paschal and one inquirer. Pages from *Sacred Reading* were distributed for discussion at the next meeting. Then Fr. Paschal handed out copies of an article "Why Be a Benedictine Oblate?" by Fr. Mark Stengel, O.S.B., from Subiaco Abbey, and there was some discussion. Next Fr. Paschal led the group in a meditation from John 20 focused on St. Mary Magdalene's encounter with the risen Christ and her mission. Then the group received another article, "Lectio Divina: What Is It for?" by Abbot Jerome Kodell, O.S.B., for reading at home. The next meeting was scheduled for May 25, and there were to be no meetings in June, July, or August. The group then proceeded to pray Vespers in the church at 5:00.

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

Lay leader Ethel Galli wrote on April 1. The meeting on February 27 began with Evening Prayer and continued with a presentation on

the Biblical background of the Passion of Christ given by master-catechist Tootie Betras. The talk was followed by a reading of *RB* 7: 9-13 and a discussion. The meeting closed with prayer.

At the meeting on March 27, after Evening Prayer, the group continued a study of humility from the *Rule*. In the discussion on verses 14 to 22, it was mentioned how important it is not to give in to self-will but to pray that God's will be done in us. Then a booklet entitled "Prayer: A Conversation with God," by Archabbot Lambert Reilly, O.S.B., was read and discussed. The meeting ended with prayer, refreshments, and fellowship.

Carrolltown, PA (Sacred Heart Deanery) -- monthly meetings in St. Benedict Church or meeting room,

There was no report.

Charleston, SC -- monthly meetings at Pauline Books and Media on King St., second Saturday of each month

There was no report.

Chincoteague, VA (Our Lady of Guadalupe Deanery) -- monthly meetings at St. Andrew Church.

There was no report.

Cyber Deanery

Lay leader David Hicks reported by phone on April 30. There were several new members as of the end of Lent. The group continued to discuss *Lessons from St. Benedict* and were covering Chapter 14 as of the end of April. There were fewer postings than usual during Lent.

Frackville, PA (St. Dismas Deanery) -- monthly meetings at chapel in Frackville, every Wed., 6:00-7:30

Oblate Daniel Lopez, Sr., reported on March 6. The former lay leader/secretary Richard Walter was no longer available, but Oblate meetings were still being held every Wednesday from 6:00 to 7:30 P.M. The group was looking for someone to take on the roles of lay leader and secretary.

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 March 13. The meeting scheduled for February had to be cancelled because of bad weather. Deacon Michael Russo, moderator, led the meeting on March 13. After the praying of Vespers, the group had a discussion about *lectio divina*. Deacon Michael emphasized that *lectio* entails entering a relationship with God and recognizing that one is in the presence of the God who loves him. *Lectio* fosters conversation with God.

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

Despite a persistent snow fall, some eight people gathered for the meeting on February 16. The group discussed the end of Chapter 6 and the beginning of Chapter 7 of *Cherish Christ above All*, including the topics trust as illuminating the future, the role of humor, the need for authorities to show compassion, the call to imitate the Good Shepherd, the essential role of fairness, the practice of gentleness, and solicitude for sinners. The session ended a bit earlier than usual with the singing of Compline in the classroom.

The session on March 16 began with a presentation by Oblate Joyce Collins about her participation in the World Congress of Oblates in October, 2013. She felt honored to have been chosen to introduce the main speakers and learned much from the theme of "listening." Joyce said that she was also fascinated at meeting so many people from so many parts of the world. Prayerful reflection helped her to overcome prejudices against those who seemed to have disagreeable habits. All in all, the Congress was a grace-filled experience for Joyce, and she is now on the planning team for the 2017 meeting. A planning session will be held later this year, possibly in Europe. The group then continued a discussion of Chapter 7 of *Cherish Christ*, with the themes "solicitude for sinners," "compassion for strangers," and "education with a heart." Some plans were also made for the celebration on March 21.

Some 15 people attended the meeting on April 13. The group continued a discussion on Chapter 7, "Compassion," from Fr. Demetrius' book, with themes of personal integrity, putting spiritual welfare first, and the need for authority to show compassion. The discussion continued into Chapter 8, "Discipline," with the themes of the need for discipline to serve love and the proper role of law. The group also spoke about the need for a phone list for contacting people when Oblates or family members die, and they reviewed the custom of the Latrobe Deanery to conduct a wake service at the funeral home when an Oblate or a spouse dies.

Lessons in Latrobe at 3:00 P.M. before Oblate Meetings

Br. Étienne Houard from Conception Abbey gave a presentation on *lectio divina* to a group of some 16 people on February 16. The turnout was substantial considering the steady snow fall outside. Br. Étienne used a video presentation, largely with scenes of snow, to depict the process of *lectio* as looking at the "bigger picture" and then looking at small details of a given Scripture passage. He noted that we should focus on a word or phrase that catches our attention and spend valuable time with the text. We need not to be bound by a rigid method but should rather let the Holy Spirit "breathe." Our goal should be uniting ourselves with Christ, whether or not we "get something" from the text. Br. Étienne demonstrated how from a seemingly dry passage about a census in Numbers he once gained the insight about God's marvelous care for each individual person. He also distributed texts from Mark 4 and Philippians 1 for the group to spend 10 minutes practicing *lectio* in silence.

On March 16, Fr. Killian gave a presentation on *conversatio morum* to about 30 people. Beginning with a reading from the section of *RB* 58 which includes *conversatio* and translates it as "fidelity to monastic life," he mentioned that it is a broad term that deserves study. *Conversatio* includes poverty and chastity and more. Fr. Killian then quoted the explanations of *conversatio* from various Benedictine websites. In a sense, *conversatio morum* summarizes the other vows along with the monastic practices given in the *Rule*. Next, he reflected on the Lenten practices of almsgiving and fasting as a part of *conversatio* for Oblates. Regarding almsgiving, he noted, in quoting Pope Francis, that giving is not truly sacrificial unless "it hurts." Regarding fasting, one should avoid the attitudes of pride and "just getting through it." Instead, one should fast joyfully, and one can offer one's fasting for particular intentions. (Young people seem to be doing this more frequently these days.) Finally, Fr. Killian responded to a number of questions.

On April 13, Br. Benedict gave a presentation to some 25 people on prayer in Benedictine spirituality with emphasis on the psalms. Praying the psalms is at the heart of Benedictine spirituality, he said. The psalms are meant to transport and transform us. The

Prologue of the *Rule* quotes from psalms many times, and Psalm 95, the lead psalm at Vigils, is quoted in an especially emphatic way. We are not to “harden our hearts.” Here “heart” refers not to emotions but to a quality of mind and will that is to be surrendered to God. Br. Benedict also cited a number of noteworthy facts: the psalms are at the center of the Bible; Ps 78:38 (speaking of God’s mercy) is at the center of the Book of Psalms; the Hebrew letter “ayn,” found in Ps 40:14, can refer to the tear of God (so He is with us in our misery). Some 60 psalms are laments, and we could summarize their theme as “help!” However, the Book of Psalms ends with five psalms of praise, which could be summarized with the word “alleluia!” Because Fr. Andrew’s camera was broken, Br. Benedict’s talk was not taped. However, a one-page written summary is available, and many of the themes of the talk are also found in his book *The Psalms: The Heartbeat of Life and Worship* (Collegetown, MN: Liturgical Press). Also highly recommended is Fr. Demetrius’ book *Praying the Scriptures*.

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

Lay leader Brian Chisholm reported by phone on February 14 and April 21. Fr. John Vickers, C.S.C., moderator, led the meeting on January 26 from 2:00 to 4:30. Six people attended. Fr. Vickers led a discussion of Chapters 1 and 2 of the *Rule*, with reference to the *Rule of the Master*. The weekly adoration on Thursday, sponsored by the Oblates, continues with good attendance.

Twelve people joined Fr. Vickers for the meeting on March 23. He led a discussion of Chapter 3 and the beginning of Chapter 4 of the *Rule*.

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

Secretary Frederick Laux reported on April 28. The new deanery met for the first time on March 27 after Fr. Sean Pogue had celebrated Mass – on Divine Mercy Sunday. Attending were two Oblates, one Oblate novice, and 11 inquirers. Deacon John Etter opened the meeting with the recitation of the Angelus. Then the group discussed Chapters 34-40 of the *Rule*, with emphasis on St. Benedict’s admonition against grumbling. They also discussed the views on this section of the *Rule* expressed in some commentaries. The meeting ended with a praying of the “Glory Be.” (continued)

The meeting on April 24 was attended by two Oblates, one Oblate novice, and 13 inquirers. Deacon John Etter opened the meeting with the recitation of the Regina Coeli. Then the group discussed Chapters 48-54 of the *Rule*, with focus on the topics of work and *lectio divina* and the notion that the main task of a Benedictine is to seek union with God. They also discussed the theme of “joy in Lent,” with mention that St. Benedict uses the word *gaudium* only twice, both times in *RB* 49. Also, the group considered the importance of hospitality, the topic of *RB* 53. The meeting ended with the “Glory Be.”

Pittsburgh, PA (St. Peter Deanery) -- meetings on 3rd Wed. or Thurs., St. Peter Church, North Side.

Oblate George Ponticello reported by e-mail on March 26 and April 15 and 27. The meeting on February 17 was attended by eight people, including two young guests, the children of one of the attendees. The group discussed Chapter 11 of *Lessons from Saint Benedict*.

The meeting on March 20 was attended by eight people. After Evening Prayer the group had a lively discussion on Chapter 12 (“Casting Out Fear”) from the same book.

The meeting for April was planned for April 30, with the day changed to Wednesday. They were to discuss Chapter 13.

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 wrote on April 7. Eight Oblates gathered for their first meeting of the year on April 3. Fr. Thomas More, moderator, was not able to attend because of confessions at St. Mary’s Church. After the prayer of St. Benedict, the minutes of the November meeting were read as well as the latest letter from Fr. Donald. Then they read and discussed *RB* 52: 1-5. Next Oblate Mary Lynn Nicklas reported on her attendance at the Third World Congress of Oblates, which occurred last October 1-12. The theme of the congress was “Oblates Listening in the World.” (N.B.: Sets of reports on the congress are available in the Oblate Office.) The meeting ended with the “Oblate prayer” and the scheduling of the next meeting for May 1.

Saint Vincent College – monthly meetings during school year in Campus Ministry Conference Room

Moderator Fr. Killian Loch reported by e-mail on February 20. A meeting was held on February 20 at 9:00 P.M. in the Campus Ministry Conference Room for those interested in the Oblate Program. After an opening prayer led by Fr. Killian, postulant Brian DeFazio offered a reflection on the Prologue of the *Rule*. Then Oblate Sean Croquette, a senior at the college, gave a teaching on how to live as an Oblate. Next, Br. Joachim added some remarks about the Oblate Program. Three students attended the meeting. Fr. Killian then led a closing prayer.

As mentioned on page 4 above, three students of the college were invested as Oblate novices amid a group of seven on March 21.

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

Moderator Fr. Ronald Gatman reported by mail on February 21 and April 28, and by e-mail on April 10. The meeting on January 26 involved a discussion on the *Rule* from 2:00 to 3:00, followed by Vespers. During Vespers Fr. Mark Van Alstine, a diocesan priest who studied at St. Vincent Seminary, gave a presentation. A covered-dish supper followed Vespers.

The Oblate community met on February 23 for group *lectio divina* at 2:00, followed by Sunday Mass at 3:00 and then supper.

The meeting on March 23 involved a discussion on Chapter 49 of the *Rule* (on Lent) at 3:00 followed by Vespers, during which Sr. Johanna Maguire, R.S.M., gave a presentation on Pope Francis and his agenda. She challenged the listeners to carry out the evangelization envisioned by the Holy Father. Sr. Johanna used to teach at the Benedictine prep school.

On April 27 there was an annual Oblate day of recollection from 2:00 to 5:00, including a Mass celebrated by Fr. Ronald. The day included time for *lectio*, quiet time, the opportunity for confession, and a presentation by Dr. William Furey, a doctor of psychology. During the Mass at the Benedictine Priory Chapel,

Charles W. (Francis) Medlock of Savannah, GA, and
Francine (Marie) Ware of Savannah, GA,

made their final Oblation in the presence of Fr. Ronald and the other Oblates gathered there.

In May the Oblate Council was to meet to discuss possible events for the coming academic year.

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

Secretary/co-lay leader Pastor Doug Schader reported on March 20. The meeting planned for February was cancelled because of bad weather. Four people attended the meeting on March 9 and shared thoughts based on the article in the February newsletter, "The Importance of Little Things." The group also talked about having another retreat this year and about the possibility of involving the deanery in an ongoing mission. The meeting ended with the praying of Vespers.

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

Lay leader/secretary Steward Steckley wrote on February 14, March 1, and April 2. Attending the meeting on February 11 were Fr. James Dugan, moderator, one Oblate, seven Oblate novices, and six inquirers. After opening prayers, there was a brief discussion about the feasts of Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Scholastica. Then Steward presented Part 2 of a talk on "You shall love your neighbor as you love yourself." He focused on Chapter 4 of the *Rule* and the 8th, 9th, and 10th Commandments. Scriptural passages from Sirach and Titus were quoted regarding the behavior of older men and younger men and the need to avoid foul language. Oblate Lora Jacobs added a quote from *RB* 6. The meeting ended with the praying of Compline.

The meeting on February 25 was attended by Fr. Dugan and twelve others. Steward opened the meeting with a prayer by Oblate novice Michael Reichert and then spoke briefly about the feast of the Chair of St. Peter and read a letter from Fr. Donald. Inquirer Jeffery Hahn then gave a talk on the meaning of Lent, with focus on its history and the practices of fasting, prayer, almsgiving, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and the Stations of the Cross. He also mentioned that, as recommended in *RB* 49, Oblates should strive to live a continuous Lent.

On March 11, in his office, Fr. Dugan invested

Jeffery Alan Hahn, Jr., of Somerset, PA,

as an Oblate novice. Oblate novices Steward Steckley and Joseph Siebor were also present. (continued)

At the meeting on March 11, Oblate novice Robert Fadden gave a talk on what it means to be a good shepherd. He also listed some qualities of a bad shepherd and gave some guidelines on how to tell the difference.

The meeting on March 25 was attended by nine Oblate novices and two inquirers. The meeting began with the recitation of the Nicene Creed and continued with Steward's giving a talk on the Solemnity of the Annunciation, including an explanation of the Incarnation, the two natures of Christ, the various heresies of the first centuries of Christianity, and the Councils of Nicea, Ephesus, and Chalcedon. The meeting closed with the praying of Compline for Sundays and Solemnities II.

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

Lay leader Laura Lowder reported by e-mail on March 29 and April 13. Because of a three-day snowfall, very unusual for the area, the meeting scheduled for February had to be cancelled. In January and March two people attended the meetings, which included the praying of the Divine Office, the reading of the day's portion of the *Rule*, and talk about the spiritual life and events in the community and in the Church at large.

The meeting in April was attended by four people, including Oblate Elsie Kunik, who was gratefully welcomed back after many months of illness. The group prayed the Divine Office and discussed the day's section of the *Rule*. At the next meeting it was hoped that the group would discuss the possibility of traveling to the Archabbey during the summer.

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

Secretary Kay Tittmann reported by e-mail on February 11 and April 16. The meeting on February 10 began with Evening Prayer led by Fr. David, moderator. Seven others, including one inquirer, were in attendance. The group continued a discussion based on *Lessons from Saint Benedict*. They covered Chapters 15 about conducting oneself with patience, 16 about placing hope in God alone, and 17 about losing everything for the sake of finding Christ. The meeting closed with prayer, the singing of the "Ultima," and the voicing of prayer intentions. Finally, letters in thanksgiving for donations were read.

Instead of a meeting in March, Oblates were urged to attend one of a series of lectures on the Passion of Christ on March 10 by Fr. Neil Dadey, pastor of Our Lady of Victory Parish. Fr. David was away with college students on a mission to poor children in Mexico.

The meeting on April 14 began with a prayer led by Fr. David. Attending were seven Oblates, three Oblate novices, and two inquirers. The group continued to discuss *Lessons from Saint Benedict*, Chapters 18 through 22. The topics covered were giving glory to God by becoming instruments of salvation in our weakness, dying to self-will, remaining steadfast in Christ and not yielding to instant gratification, and heeding the call to hospitality. Because it was the beginning of Holy Week, the meeting ended with the praying of a version of the Way of the Cross from the Missionaries of Charity. Fr. David then shared about his trip to Mexico with college students and showed pictures of native children on the bicycles that the deanery's donations had purchased. With regard to the recent death of longstanding Oblate Katherine Young, the group decided to have three Masses offered for her and to collect money in her honor to be donated to the Oblate Program; a total sum of \$250.00 was sent to the Oblate Office.

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

Lay leader Delina Pauls wrote on March 17 and April 8. Because of icy roads, the turnout at the meeting on February 5 was small. Still, Fr. Lee, moderator, led a discussion about attending a retreat at the Archabbey and about the coming of Lent. Suggestions about "doing more" were made, such as reading the Bible and attending adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. During the meeting Fr. Lee invested

Bernard A.J. Bannin of Virginia Beach, VA,

as an Oblate novice. After the praying of Night Prayer and the voicing of intercessions, the group enjoyed a social.

The meeting on March 12 involved the viewing of a video of retreat talks at the Archabbey given by Fr. Michael Casey, O.C.S.O. The discussion was focused on *RB* 4 and the need to deny oneself to follow Christ. There was considerable discussion about self-denial.

At the meeting on April 2, there was very good attendance, which included one inquirer. Fr. Lee continued to speak about the "Instruments of Good Works" from *RB 4*, and the first ten were covered. Plans were made for Oblates who wished to attend the forthcoming "mission," and Fr. Lee expressed the desire to have a van for those who would like to travel together. Also, it was mentioned that Oblate Nancy Chrabot is communicating by e-mail from Fr. Lee to all Oblates who have e-mail, and Dee continues to contact those who do not have e-mail. One member was asked to put a poster in the parish's Commons Area about the Oblate Program.

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 on April 5. Six people attended the meeting on February 9, which began with Evening Prayer and continued with a viewing of Fr. Robert Roche's presentation on *lectio divina*. The group also discussed a trip to the Archabbey planned for April 5. The meeting closed with a praying of the Angelus.

The meeting on March 9, attended by seven people, opened with a prayer and continued with a viewing of Sandra Monier's presentation on the Eucharist. Then the group discussed how the Eucharist can be brought to others and considered the Lenten practices described in *RB 49*. Plans for the trip on April 5 were solidified. The meeting ended with the Angelus.

On April 5, four people from the Williamsport deanery, including two inquirers, came to the Archabbey for Midday Prayer, lunch, tours, and Evening Prayer. For three of the visitors it was their first time at St. Vincent. There was no meeting in April.

Various Locations

On March 21, **Michele Reintjes** of Jacksonville, NC, made her final Oblation in the presence of Rev. Jeffrey Bowker at Infant of Prague Church in Jacksonville. Michele is the sister of Oblate David Reintjes of Jacksonville.

DECEASED MONK

In the February newsletter Fr. Donald forgot to report the death of Fr. Demetrius Dumm on November 17. He was 90 years old. The Latrobe Deanery has been using Fr. Demetrius' book *Cherish Christ above All* for its monthly discussions, and some seven or eight years ago Fr. Demetrius gave a presentation to the deanery on his last book, *So We Do Not Lose Hope*.

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: Archabbot Paul Maher, Br. Leo Monahan, Fr. Jacques Daley, Fr. Thomas Acklin, and Fr. Paul Rubadue.

SOME SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. This summer, from June 14 to 28, the annual Juniors' Summer School for Benedictine junior monks (that is, monks in temporary vows) in the U.S. will be held at St. Vincent Archabbey for the first time. Please pray for the success of this gathering.

2. Fr. Jean-Luc Zadroga asks for all the Oblates' prayers for his cousin Holly Thomas in Denver and for her unborn baby girl. Holly has been having a very difficult pregnancy and requires some special procedures to keep her and the baby healthy.

3. The monks of Newark Abbey in New Jersey are electing an abbot from May 9 to 10. Although the election will be over by the time this newsletter is mailed out, please pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance of the abbey, which is a member of the American Cassinese Congregation.

4. The monks of the Archabbey will be on retreat from June 9 to 13. Please pray for the fruitfulness of this retreat. On Thursday, June 12, at 4:00, the annual Jubilarian Mass will be celebrated in the Archabbey Basilica. Among the jubilarian monks who will be honored is Fr. Noel Rothrauff, who will be celebrating 60 years as a priest. Oblates are welcome to attend the Mass. Those wishing to stay for supper should contact the Oblate Office.

5. Note: If you would like copies of the current *Oblate Formation Booklet* for yourself or for your deanery, please request as many as you would like from the Oblate Office. We need to make room for the new, revised formation booklet!

Reservation for Feast of St. Benedict on July 11, 2014

Name & Phone _____

___ I plan to come to St. Vincent for ___ lunch, ___ supper along with ___ guests;
I enclose _____ (\$5.50 for lunch, \$6.50 for supper, per person).

___ I plan to come only for 10:00 A.M. Mass on July 11.

___ I hope to be invested as an ___ Oblate, ___ Oblate novice on July 11. (If becoming a full Oblate, I choose _____ as an Oblate name. **An application form is required.**)

___ I am a jubilarian Oblate and hope to be present to receive a certificate. (Please contact Fr. Donald.)

Please send this form and a check made out to **ST. VINCENT ARCHABBEY** for meals before July 4 to:

Ms. Nancy Premoshis, 3021-2 Williamsburg Lane, Latrobe, PA 15650 (phone: 724-837-6647).

If you would like overnight accommodations, please phone Fr. Donald at 742-805-2291. Please also contact Fr. Donald if you plan to be invested as an Oblate novice or to make your final Oblation on July 11.

Schedule for Oblates, Feast of St. Benedict, July 11, 2014

- 10:00 A.M. Mass, Basilica
- 12:00 P.M. Dinner, Placid B (1st floor, Placid Hall)
(approximate)
- 2:00 P.M. Conference by Br. Matthew Lambert & Oblation ceremonies (investitures, Oblations, honoring of jubilarians), St. Gregory Chapel
- 5:00 P.M. Evening Prayer, Basilica choir area
- 5:40 P.M. Supper, Placid B (1st floor, Placid Hall)

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. Joachim's talk on work in Benedictine spirituality (December 16, 2012):
C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Robert Keffer's talk on holiness and Benedictine spirituality (January 20, 2013):
C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Fr. Alfred's talk on poverty & simplicity in Benedictine spirituality (February 17, 2013):
C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Br. Hugh's talk on *conversatio morum* (March 17, 2013):
C.D. _____ (number) D.V.D. _____ (number)

Br. John Paul's talk on *lectio divina* in Benedictine spirituality (April 21, 2013):

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

Fr. Sebastian's talk on silence in Benedictine spirituality (May 19, 2013):

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

Fr. Chad's talk on St. Benedict & his *Rule* (June 23, 2013):

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

Sandra Monier's talk on the Eucharist in Benedictine spirituality (July 21, 2013):

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

Liz Hart's talk work in Benedictine spirituality (August 18, 2013):

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

Fr. John Peck's talk on hospitality in Benedictine spirituality (September 15, 2013):

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

Fr. Wulfstan's talk on obedience in Benedictine spirituality (October 20, 2013):

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

Fr. Thomas Acklin's talk on *lectio divina* (November 17, 2013):

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

Fr. Jean-Luc's talk on the Liturgy of the Hours (December 15, 2013):

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

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)

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 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 ARCHABBAY. N.B.: Those who attend monthly meetings in Latrobe will still be able to order copies of recent presentations at a discounted price.