

# Oblate Benedictine



Saint Meinrad



Oblates prepare to receive the Sacrament of the Sick during the Oblate Day of Recollection on July 17. Sixty-one oblates attended the annual Day of Recollection.

## Conference focuses on nurturing Benedictine spirituality



Janis Dopp

Oblate directors and oblates from all over North America gathered at Subiaco Abbey in Arkansas from July 11-14, 2015, for the biennial conference of the North American Association of

Benedictine Oblate Directors (NAABOD).

The conference theme was “Nurturing Benedictine Spirituality: From Theory to Practice.” Four keynote speakers crafted presentations that moved from vision to empowerment, giving attendees not just something to think about, but also a challenge to understand oblation as a call to prophetic commitment.

Fr. Jerome Kodell, OSB, a monk and former abbot of Subiaco Abbey, gave the first keynote presentation. He said that

monasteries are bridges in the world, offering insight and practices for developing an inner awareness, a contemplative gaze, on the eternal presence of God within each of us. Oblates are people who are drawn into these daily practices to prepare themselves to cross the bridge into the world, sharing an understanding of this inner timelessness. By learning and practicing *lectio divina*, we begin to see the world the way that God sees it.

The second keynote presentation was given by Sr. Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB, a sister of St. Scholastica in Fort Smith, Arkansas. She said preparing for the spiritual life should be no different than preparing for the Olympics – you have to practice daily! Benedictine spirituality offers practices that teach us how to bring a sense of balance into our lives that will allow us to discover an inner depth in the midst of a world that is all about speed, immediacy and instant gratification.

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# A POINT TO PONDER FROM *The Rule*

“Are you hastening to  
your heavenly home?  
Then with Christ’s  
help, keep this little  
rule we have written  
for beginners.”

*Rule of St. Benedict Chapter 73:8*

This is the beginning of St. Benedict’s epilogue. It is written quite simply and St. Benedict points out that the monastic life is meant to lead us to heaven. Our journey to God must take place with Christ and in Christ. Monastic oblation is merely something we do to prepare for the journey.

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She outlined three practices that are essential to plumbing our inner core: living awake, learning to live more simply and *lectio divina*. The practice of living awake teaches us to be mindful of the present moment and to be aware that each day calls us to a specific, beautiful task. The practice of learning to live more simply is about recognizing what it is that limits us from experiencing true freedom and letting go of it.

And the practice of *lectio divina* allows us to keep vigil with the Word of God, but also invites us to lean toward the good in others and to recapture the joy in whatever work we may find ourselves doing. These practices keep us from becoming rigid or congealing, opening our eyes to the surprises that each day brings.

Rev. Dr. Jane Tomaine, an ordained minister of the Episcopal Church, directed her keynote presentation toward raising our awareness of how we must face the challenges of our lives in order to stay open to transformation and change. She said that to live more freely, to be open to God’s life within us and to strip away the obstacles that get in the way of our transformation, we must confront whatever is keeping us from drawing closer to God.

The monastic tradition stresses the need for self-awareness, for recognizing what we can’t control, and what there is in our lives that stands between us and the freedom that comes with God’s unconditional love and grace. The monastic tradition also teaches us to cope with our fears by living in the present moment and remaining focused on our objective through daily techniques or practices.

The conference presentations culminated in a call to action by Sr. Karen Joseph, OSB, from Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Indiana. She said Benedictine life is about building

the reign of God on earth. We are called to solid Christian witness in the way we handle the everyday matters of our lives, truly being salt for the earth and light for the world.

As salt, we are called to add life, zest and energy to our communities and to help preserve Gospel values by the way we act. As light, we are called to reveal our God – the God of the Gospels – to make God tangible and real.

Christianity is a lifestyle that demands that we put our theory into practice. We begin to do that when we believe that we have something to offer and open the door to the future. Quoting Bernard of Clairvaux, Sr. Karen said, “The way you live is an excellent way to prophesy.” This means that we must renew our prophetic commitment to be salt and light, to be a reservoir of hope for the world, to be fully alive.

At each NAABOD conference, a business meeting for the oblate directors is held. Directors have been meeting in one fashion or another since 1942. In 1995, Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, proposed that oblates be included in the 1997 gathering of NAABOD and he offered to host the assembly at Saint Meinrad. His proposal was accepted, and every conference since then has had to determine if the oblates would be in attendance at the following gathering.

In 2013, Fr. Meinrad proposed to amend the constitution to ensure that oblates would always be included at the conferences. His amendment, which was distributed to all of the directors in January 2014, passed unanimously at this NAABOD business meeting. Oblates from all over North America are grateful for Fr. Meinrad’s unwavering belief in the importance of our presence at such official and formative gatherings.

*Janis Dopp, oblate  
Bloomington, IN*

# Oblate Council learns about recent projects

The Oblate Council gathered at Saint Meinrad Archabbey on July 18, 2015. Present at the meeting were Fr. Luke Waugh, OSB; Janis Dopp, Al Kovacs, Chris Topa, Dennis Skelton, Ron DeMarco, Jennie Latta and Michelle Blalock. The meeting opened with prayer by Fr. Luke, followed by the reading of the Statement of Purpose of the Oblate Council.

It was reported that the chapter coordinators' email group had been established and responses are slowly growing. It seems to be well received and offers a good opportunity to share thoughts and insights.

Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB; Janis Dopp and Jennie Latta attended the North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors (NAABOD) conference at Subiaco Abbey in Arkansas. Janis shared that it was an excellent conference. The theme was "Nurturing Benedictine Spirituality: From Theory to Practice."

Keynote speakers were Fr. Jerome Kodell, OSB; Sr. Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB; Rev. Dr. Jane Tomaine and Sr. Karen Joseph, OSB. Articles regarding the talks will be shared in future editions of the newsletter. Fr. Meinrad's amendment to the NAABOD Constitution was unanimously approved. The amendment provides the opportunity for oblate delegates to attend every NAABOD meeting.

Dennis reported on the status of the Words of Witness interviews. The Council discussed what would be the best use of these interviews. These brief video interviews with oblates are occasionally posted on the Saint Meinrad Facebook page. All of them can be found on the oblate web page.

The opportunity to speak with participants at the "One Bread, One Cup" summer conferences about the vocation of a Benedictine oblate proved to be a rewarding experience. Janis Dopp also spoke with the college interns, who seemed enthusiastic to receive more information.

The third edition of the *Chapter Coordinator's Handbook* has been produced and distributed to the coordinators, Finance Committee members and Council members. The handbook includes a Quick Start Guide. This tool seems to be helpful for easy access and a quick overview to the handbook.

Br. John Mark Falkenhain, OSB, joined the meeting to discuss opportunities to involve and encourage growth in prayer with others. Also shared were thoughts on how to expose our communities to the Benedictine Oblate vocation.

Other topics and business were discussed by the Council. The meeting closed with prayer. The next meeting will be October 16, 2015.

*Michelle Blalock, oblate  
Ferdinand, IN*



*Attending the July Conference of the North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors were, from left, Janis Dopp, Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, and Jennie Latta.*

## OBLATES *In their own words*



*Oblate Dr. Paul Reichardt  
Crestview Hills, KY*

"There is a sense of peace at Saint Meinrad monastery. Here is a place, holy ground if you will, where people are really living out the life that all Christians are striving to live. But they do it with such dedication, with such a commitment and with such integrity, I would say that really it becomes an inspiration. And it is the very source of peace I think that most people long for."



# Pope Francis' encyclical asks for environmental stewardship



Thomas J. Rillo

Many popes in the past have issued encyclicals. Encyclicals are letters to the clergy and laity of the Church that are to be taken as very

authoritative. In May 2015, Pope Francis released a sweeping and historical encyclical titled *Laudato Si'* or *Praise Be*.

The Pope took the title from the opening lines of *Canticle of the Sun*, St. Francis of Assisi's song of praise to God for all of His creation. The Pope chose the name because he considers St. Francis to be an excellent example of how we should care for all animals and the environment that sustains them.

Pope Francis' 184-page encyclical is a major contribution to how we think about the broad area of ecology, not just concern for the environment. The encyclical has been received with high enthusiasm from many people, but also has received criticism from others who claim the Church should not concern itself with scientific matters. The Pope's encyclical represents a concern stemming from the human heart and he challenges us to change how we think with regard to society and the environment.

The encyclical addresses issues of inequality in the distribution of resources, food waste, exploitation of natural resources and the impact this has on the lives of people and their health. The most vulnerable people are the world's poorest people, who are often dislocated and held in no regard, according to Pope Francis.

He also highlights the crisis that climate change has caused. He puts most of the responsibility on fossil fuels and human activity. He also warns of the unprecedented destruction of ecosystems that will have serious outcomes for all humans. He points out that industrial countries are largely responsible and thus should assist Third World countries in confronting the climate change crisis.

This encyclical has not been without its critics. Some say the Pope is getting involved in issues that should not concern the Church, because they deal with science and not religion. The Pope sees the encyclical as something different. He sees it as a call to action.

He says that environmental degradation is not just an economic or political issue, but an anthropological issue. The encyclical is not a theological treatise or a technical paper on environmental issues. It is a letter that shows how concern for human beings, poverty, development and the environment are interrelated.

Pope Francis is not the first pope to be concerned about the environment, but he has courageously gone a lot further with his stance on environmental exploitation. No pope has ever made a stronger statement against harming animals in a document as authoritative as an encyclical.

The Pope rejects the notion that, as humans created in God's image and given dominion over the earth, we have absolute dominance over all

## LAUDATO SI'

ON THE CARE OF  
OUR COMMON HOME



## POPE FRANCIS



ENCYCLICAL LETTER

creatures. What is really meant is stewardship, or care, for all of earth's creatures. Pope Francis tirelessly pursues the need to educate the young about environmental degradation and to become environmentally literate citizens.

When you remove the encyclical from the context of the Catholic Church doctrine and do away with some of the Christian terminology, the encyclical appears as something emanating from environmentalists and scientists who are concerned about what man's practical inventiveness is doing to earth. It is basically a plea for action and the Pope uses blunt language to describe what human activity has done in terms of environmental degradation.

He states that it is simply a situation where greed exceeds need. The encyclical will provide an opening

whereby political boundaries can be crossed and the environmental issues can be addressed. The encyclical is a wake-up call. The Pope feels it is not too late to rectify the wounds of environmental exploitation. We have the wherewithal to make sweeping changes that can clean up what the Pope refers to as filth deposited by irresponsible human activity.

What distinguishes the encyclical is its emphasis on the need to place humanity as the recipient of environmental stewardship and the elimination of airborne toxic materials that are the cause of climate change.

Pope Francis is a new voice in the climate change issue. He represents what the Church does best, that is, to place the sanctity of human life first and foremost. His statements are ethical, moral and spiritual. He is a global influence guiding 1.2 billion Catholics. He is also respected by many other faiths in the world.

The Pope can inspire an environmental awareness, articulation and action on the part of the world citizenry. He can initially do this with his encyclical on environment and climate change.

*Thomas J. Rillo, oblate  
Bloomington, IN*

## A look back: 97 years ago this season

**The Oblate, Nov. 1918  
Vol. 1 No. 11**

November 12 was the day set for Fr. Benno's [Gerber] golden jubilee as a priest. It was indeed a grand celebration, the only drawback being the fact that visitors were debarred on account of the [influenza] epidemic.

On the evening of the 11th, after supper, the whole monastery repaired to the chapter room where the Rt. Rev. Abbot in the name of all congratulated Fr. Benno (former Rector of the College), calling attention to the good example in fidelity which he had given, both in his spiritual duties and in the labors which were laud upon him. Fr. Benno responded with a short and interesting speech, saying that, as one of his confreres had remarked on a similar occasion, he never knew before that he was such a good fellow.

After Fr. Benno had thanked everyone, especially for their kind wishes and promises of prayers, the orchestra intoned the "Star-Spangled Banner," and just as the audience rose to its feet and began to sing, "Old Glory" came fluttering down from between the scenes on stage unfolding itself before the gaze of the singers;

applause was mixed with music, it came from the heart too, because besides being the great day of Fr. Benno, it happened also to be the day so long awaited – the day of peace, the day of victory.

*[Editor's note: It was to be the end of the war to end all wars. Sadly, not true. Pray for peace.] ♦*



*Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, invests Susan Lang with the scapular of St. Benedict as she becomes a novice oblate. Next to Susan is her husband John Lang, who was ordained the day before as a permanent deacon at the same parish, St. Peter in Biggleswade, United Kingdom.*



*Turvey Abbey is home to a small group of Benedictine brothers and nuns. They have separate quarters, but gather in the chapel to pray the Liturgy of the Hours and attend Mass. The abbey is a former English manor. Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, received permission to go to England to attend an ordination and investiture ceremony of his cousins.*

# Third edition of Chapter Coordinator's Handbook is published



Ruth Engs

Ten years ago, the second edition of the *Handbook for Chapter Coordinators* was published.

However, chapter coordinators and the Oblate Council realized

the handbook needed to be updated. In creating this third edition, input was gathered from the chapter coordinators and representatives from throughout the country.

Oblate Dennis Skelton coordinated the project and Oblate Council members examined suggestions and compiled the new information. The content was finalized November 4, 2014, and the resulting work has been substantially reorganized. Sections 1 through 5 briefly mention topics, with referral to more details in Section 6.

Section 6, "Resources," has been expanded to include detailed information, resources and examples that chapter coordinators and other chapter leaders can use. A short summary of each section is given.

## Section 1: Oblate Chapters of Saint Meinrad

Section 1 contains the philosophy of the oblate community, mission statement, oblate's personal rule of life, and brief guidelines for chapters and their coordinators. New material for chapter coordinators includes specifics on the principles of leadership, preparing for Meetings of Chapter Coordinators and Representatives, and requirements of forming a new chapter or conditions for dissolving a chapter.

## Section 2: Meetings and Special Events

Basic principles of preparing and running a chapter meeting are

discussed. Suggestions for administering special events are detailed. These include Day of Recollection,

commemoration of death of oblate or oblate family member, and praying *lectio divina*. An outline for holding an Epiphany party, investitures and oblations, anniversaries as an oblate, and feast days are included. In addition, oblate events and activities at Saint Meinrad are listed.

## Section 3: Chapter Life

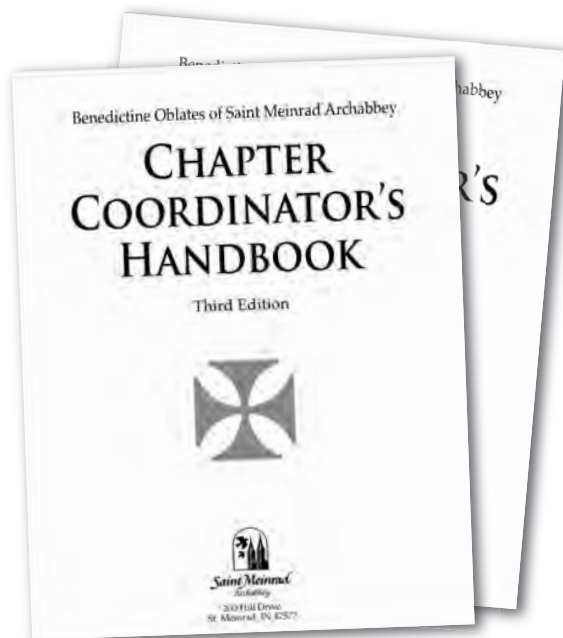
This section summarizes various activities that can take place within a chapter. These include expectations of chapters, individual oblate formation including spiritual direction, and community formation and fellowship. Oblate Office resources such as the library, DVDs, reading lists, and Epiphany script and costumes are mentioned.

## Section 4: Communications

Guidelines and standards for meeting minutes, recruitment of members, sharing information by mail, email or other methods between chapter coordinators and chapter members, or coordinators with oblate director are discussed. Communication-related customs and courtesies, such as not using the Saint Meinrad logo without permission and not using OSB, Obl after one's name, are pointed out.

## Section 5: Finance

The shortest section in the handbook is on financial responsibility. It mentions the responsibility of the chapter to cover a monk's travel expenses to chapter meetings and that donations to the chapter or Saint Meinrad's oblate program for the Lenten *bona opera* or November oblate renewal are voluntary, yet encouraged.



## Section 6: Resources

This most substantial section of the new handbook makes up over half of the volume. Section 6 is subdivided into sections that give detailed information first outlined in the first five sections. It is packed full of rituals, scripts, prayers, examples of *lectio divina*, chapter survey sheets, meeting reminders, minutes and renewal of oblation. It contains detailed descriptions of responsibilities of mentors, spiritual directors, examples of DVDs with discussion guides, and conference topics.

Samples of chapter newsletters, recruitment letters, budget information and finance questionnaires are found. Lists of chapters, meeting places, chapter coordinators and other useful information are forthcoming in this section. To sum up, this new handbook is a comprehensive resource for chapter coordinators and other oblates.

Ruth Engs, oblate  
Bloomington, IN

# Voices from the Past

*Editor's note: This condensed message by Fr. Blaise Hettich, OSB, associate oblate director from 1957-59, appeared in the December 1957 issue of the Oblate Newsletter.*

During these days of preparation for Christmas, we need to think about the central fact of this feast so that we won't get lost in the decorations around the edges. In the middle of the whirl of shopping, partying and sentimentalizing, the hub of all our activities should be Christ. It's His birthday we are celebrating. We ought to study Him not only as the Babe of Bethlehem, but rather as the God-Man.

The birthdays of great men are commemorated because of what those men were and what they did. The "prettiness" of Christmas, or even of the Child Jesus, means nothing without the great interior reality of what He is. Jesus is unique because He is God made man, and this is the mystery we must think about today.

Underneath the surface of our usual view of Christ, there are hidden

treasures and marvels beyond imagining. What a wealth of meaning there is in the very name of Christ! Some of the Fathers of the early Church saw in the name of Christ, "the Anointed," a symbol of his unique character.

Let us recall that when Moses made Aaron high priest of Israel, he poured oil over his head. The people saw this as a sign of God's power coming upon the priest. Likewise, the prophet Samuel poured oil on the head of David to show that God had chosen him as king. To the Jews, "the Anointed" meant the great King and Priest who would be sent from God to be their leader.

"Messiah," a Hebrew word, and "Christ," a Greek word, both mean "the Anointed." When the Son of God became a human being, He

remained God. The divine in Christ "anointed" the human.

Christ came to give us a share in the life of God. So it is fitting that we should be anointed with holy oils at our birth into God-Life (Baptism), at our growing up in Christ (Confirmation) and at our entrance into eternity (Extreme Unction). Truly, we are Christians, the anointed people of God.

As oblates of St. Benedict, we have resolved to spend our lives seeking God. We find Him in Christ, our King, our Priest, the only One appointed and anointed by God to make us holy and happy.

May God bless you this Christmas with "the oil of gladness," so that the life and love of Christ may strengthen your hearts. ♦



*On July 12, attendees of the North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors went on an excursion to Magazine Mountain in Arkansas. From left, Fr. John Martin Shimkus, OSB, oblate director of St. Benedict Monastery in Oxford, MI, and Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, enjoyed the view, but protected their faces from the sun.*



*Janna Rutledge and Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, following Janna's final oblation on August 17.*

# OBLATE NEWS

## New executive secretary begins work in Oblate Office



*Marcia Werne*

Marcia Werne is the new executive secretary in the Oblate Office at Saint Meinrad Archabbey. She brings a background in education, with a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in elementary education from Indiana State University in Terre Haute, IN.

She taught in several capacities during her career. She was an elementary school teacher, an adult education instructor, and a youth educator for Purdue University Extension in Spencer County. Marcia retired from the USDA Farm Service Agency in Dubois County at the end of May and began as a co-worker in Guest Services in June before transferring to the Oblate Office.

She feels that the executive secretary's position is ideal for her because she thrives on change and challenges. Each day in the Oblate Office is filled with a variety of different tasks and the opportunity to meet new people.

## Oblates learn about 'Oblation as a Vocation'

Br. John Mark Falkenhain, OSB, was the speaker at this summer's Oblate Study Days at Saint Meinrad Archabbey. His topic was "Oblation as a Vocation." Here are some reflections from his talks.

At Baptism, each of us begins our journey to our common vocation, to become the "goodest, most Christ-like" person we can be. Along the way, some are called to the vocation of being a monk, priest or other religious; others to the vocation of

marriage or the single life. But for all, the goal of our vocation is to lead us to the Lord.

Being an oblate does not change our primary vocation. Instead, it adds another layer, informs our life and provides an additional aspect to our vocation as married or single person. Living the oblate vocation faithfully changes us and improves our lives as we continue toward our ultimate goal of being the most Christ-like person we can be.

Vowed monastic life embraces stability, obedience and fidelity to the monastic way of life. As an oblate, adopting a monastic way of life helps us to become the best person we can be. Stability grounds us. We make a commitment to this place, to this group of people, to our spouse, and stability helps us to persevere and be obedient rather than to give up and flee when challenges arise.

Christ is the model of obedience. Perfection "like the Father" is about



*Br. Maurus Zoeller, OSB, and Fr. Luke Waugh, OSB, offer the sign of peace to the new oblates.*



*Br. John Mark Falkenhain, OSB, speaks about "Oblation as a Vocation" during the Oblate Study Days.*



perfect love. It is this kind of love that makes obedience possible.

When we say “yes” to one way of life (being a monk, married or single person), we say “no” to something else. Although limiting in one sense, it also frees us to go much deeper into what we have chosen. Stability enables us to delve deeper where we are. Persevering in our vocation is holiness. Each path, if lived faithfully, leads us to the same place – closer to God.

In discernment, we try to find out as much as we can about the choice we need to make. It is at least equally important to contemplate about ourselves, including “scrubbing our souls” in Reconciliation. Self-knowledge, self-acceptance and self-giving are essential for human formation.

Before we can give ourselves away, we need to know ourselves and accept or “own” what we know about ourselves, even if we don’t approve of it all. Humility is living in the radical truth of who we are. Discernment involves growing in the knowledge and acceptance of who we are as creatures of God.

The goal of discernment is not certainty; it is risk readiness. We do what we can to be ready to take on risk, and then we leave the rest to Providence. What is important for each of us to discern at this time in our lives? What have we come to know and accept about ourselves? What have we had to learn to love about our vocation?

Br. John Mark posed this question, “What is the one thing that everyone can do that will get us into heaven?” Love is the answer! If we see each day of our lives as providing endless opportunities to love God and others,



*Oblates from the Bronx Chapter enjoyed lunch on the feast of St. Benedict. Fr. Thomas D’Angelo, center, gave the homily on St. Benedict at Mass.*

then there would be no room for questioning the meaning or purpose of our lives.

In a sharing opportunity with some of the novice monks, the oblates asked what we can do for them. They asked us to keep them in prayer, to take what we learn from them and bring it out to the community, to remain examples of perseverance, to witness to them that what they do here is important, and to continue to form and sustain our oblate communities.

Each day, let us consider who the people are in our lives that we are supposed to love. If, at the end of the day, we loved as we should have, then ours is a vocation being well lived.

*Candee Mackell, oblate  
Kettering, OH*

### **Bronx Chapter celebrates Feast of St. Benedict**

The Bronx, NY, Oblate Chapter held its annual celebration of the Feast of St. Benedict on July 11 at the Corpus Christi monastery. This beautiful monastery, which is the oldest Dominican monastery in the United

States, provided a spiritual and serene setting for Fr. Thomas D’Angelo to lead 17 oblates and friends of the Bronx community, as well as the Dominican sisters, in prayer and reflection on the life of St. Benedict and his influence in our lives.

In his sermon, Fr. Thomas emphasized how our lives at times parallel the life of St. Benedict. He reminded us that this great saint lived in a time of turmoil and change and that he suffered from rejection, isolation and difficulty finding work or sorting out his purpose. After Mass, we gathered for fellowship and lunch and were later joined by some of the sisters for a lively discussion.

*Therese Hollwitz, oblate  
Larchmont, NY*

### **Oblates speak at youth conferences**

“One Bread, One Cup” is a five-day liturgical leadership conference focusing on the Word, Sacrament and Mission of the Roman Catholic Church for high school youth groups and their campus and youth ministers. Conferences focus on community building, leadership development,

catechesis, liturgical and spiritual formation, and theological reflection.

There are opportunities for personal and liturgical prayer, active charity and vocational discernment, as well as opportunities for fellowship and fun. Participants come to appreciate the Benedictine balance of prayer, work and recreation while living and participating in an intentional Christian community.

This summer, Saint Meinrad oblates spoke on "Oblation as a Vocation" to the participants of all three conferences, numbering 100 students, 40 adults and 21 college interns each. Oblate Janis Dopp spoke to the interns, while oblates Michelle Blalock, Tammy Becht and Mike Reffett spoke to the students and adults. All were well received and pleased with the response of the participants, who were full of questions following the talks.

## INVESTITURES

May 14, 2015 – **Carolyn Hill** of St. Meinrad, IN

May 27, 2015 – **Rev. Philip De Jonge** of Kentwood, MI

May 30, 2015 – **Rita Coxhead** of Louisville, KY; **Patricia Hicks** of Franklin, KY; **Bryan Miller** of Cincinnati, OH; and **Margaret Winans** of Carmel, IN

June 5, 2015 – **Lori Hurst** of Greenfield, IN

June 21, 2015 – **Susan Lang** of Sandy, Bedfordshire, United Kingdom

June 29, 2015 – **Catherine Funkhouser** of Richmond, IN

July 17, 2015 – **Lawrence McCrobie** of Elizabethtown, KY

July 31, 2015 – **John Roche** of Berea, KY

August 1, 2015 – **Robert Bruce Browning** of Harrodsburg, KY; **James Lafser** of Versailles, KY; **Timothy Stout** of Georgetown, KY; and **Stephen Hester, John Hinkel, Ken Rayfield** and **Dr. Alfred Wiemann**, all of Lexington, KY

August 2, 2015 – **Ronald R. Lewis** of Branchville, IN ♦

## OBLATIONS

May 13, 2015 – **Dale Mary Smith** of St. Louis, MO

June 4, 2015 – **Deanne Lucy Holshouser** of Edwardsville, IL

June 5, 2015 – **Kimberly Scholastica Arguijo-Flores** of Muncie, IN

June 9, 2015 – **Dr. Bradley Paul Bede Spaulding** of Wabash, IN

June 10, 2015 – **Ronald Henry Foppe** of Jamestown, IL

June 13, 2015 – **Louis Patrick Raineri** of Cuba, MO

June 16, 2015 – **Constance Teresa Feagans** and **Louis Francis Feagans**, both of Martinsville, IN; and **Jean Margaret of Scotland Jackson** of Parkersburg, WV

June 18, 2015 – **Melissa James Pollio** of Wilmington, DE

July 12, 2015 – **Richard Columba Mills** of Jackson, MI

July 17, 2015 – **Mariann Mechtilde Niznak** of Kalamazoo, MI

July 25, 2015 – **Craig Steven Cassian Farmer** and **Margaret Rose Brigid Farmer**, both of Johnson City, TN

July 29, 2015 – **Rebecca Therese Archer-Inskeep** of Indianapolis, IN; and **Robert Aidan Fulton** of Hamlin, WV

August 9, 2015 – **Nancy Teresa Bartkowski** of Portage, MI

August 11, 2015 – **Kaylene Frances of Rome Mongeau** of Bullard, TX

August 17, 2015 – **Janna Cecilia Anne Rutledge** of West Des Moines, IA ♦

## TRANSFER OF OBLATION

April 16, 2015 – **Michael Anselm Flanagan** of Sioux City, IA, transferred his oblation from Blue Cloud Abbey in Marvin, SD. ♦

## ANNIVERSARIES

On Saturday, July 18, 2015, oblates **James and Rita Merk** celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary at St. Bernadette Church in Lancaster, OH. They have been the coordinators of the Lancaster, OH, Oblate Chapter for many years. Congratulations to them! ♦



*Rita and James Merk celebrate 60 years of marriage.*

## DEATHS

February 15, 2015 – **Joseph Wright** of Oxford, OH

May 22, 2015 – **Rev. Dr. William Caple** of Lexington, KY

May 23, 2015 – **Shirley Jones** of Toledo, OH

June 10, 2015 – **Helen Miller** of Evansville, IN

June 17, 2015 – **James Spicer** of Lowell, IN

July 12, 2015 – **Bernard Kenney** of Georgetown, OH

July 20, 2015 – **Anna M. Heeke** of Tell City, IN

August 1, 2015 – **Donald Orth** of Indianapolis, IN

August 2, 2015 – **Betty “Maxine” Eidson** of Evansville, IN ♦

### UPCOMING EVENTS

*(Rooms will be available only in the Guest House for the December Oblate Retreat, the March 2016 Oblate Retreat and the 2016 Oblate Study Days. The monks have moved into St. Anselm Hall while extensive repairs are under way in the monastery. And former guest rooms in St. Bede Hall are being used for seminarians. We appreciate your patience during this project.)*

**November 29, 2015** – The New York oblates will have a Day of Recollection with Br. Francis Wagner, OSB. The topic will be “The Oblate’s Call to Prayer, Holy Reading and Recollection.”

**December 11-13, 2015** – The December Retreat at the Archabbey will have Fr. Harry Hagan, OSB, speaking on “People Called in the Bible.”

**March 20-22, 2016** – The March Oblate Retreat will have Fr. Bede Cisco, OSB, as the presenter. The title of his retreat will be “Expanding the Heart: A Monastic Miscellany.”

**April 16, 2016** – The Day of Recollection for the Louisville, KY, area oblates will be held. Fr. Jeremy King, OSB, will be the presenter. The theme will be “Music and the Oblate.”

**May 21, 2016** – The Day of Recollection for the Ohio oblates will be held in the Dayton, OH, area and will feature Fr. Adrian Burke, OSB, speaking on “Let Them Prefer Nothing Whatever to Christ.”

**June 13-16, 2016** – The Oblate Study Days will feature Fr. Adrian Burke, OSB, as the presenter. The topic of the study days is “The Benedictine Way to a Spirituality of Imperfection.”

**July 11, 2016** – The Day of Recollection at Saint Meinrad Archabbey will have Fr. Barnabas Gillespie, OSB, as the presenter. The title of his retreat will be “Reverence in Prayer: Should we be Concerned with Department or Disposition, or Both?” ♦

### VOLUNTEERS APPRECIATED

Recent volunteers in the Oblate Office included Sandra Duffee, Mike Edwards, Dennis Skelton, Novice Tony

Wolniakowski, OSB; Pat Reckelhoff, Novice Thomas Fish, OSB; Br. Lorenzo Peñalosa, OSB; Novice Timothy Herrmann, OSB; Novice Jinu Thomas, OSB; Novice Peter Szidik, OSB; Novice Jonathan Blaize, OSB; Mike Reffett and Janis Dopp. ♦

## BLOOMINGTON OBLATE CHAPTER MEETINGS

The meeting dates for the Bloomington Oblate Chapter were inadvertently left off the last newsletter. The Oblate Office apologizes for the error. Here are the dates for the meetings:

2015	2016
September 3	January 7
October 1	February 4
November 5	April 7
	May 5



*Novice Tony Wolniakowski, center, holds a cake in appreciation for his three months of work in the Oblate Office. Celebrating with him are, from left, standing, Fr. Thomas Gricoski, socius; Novice Thomas Fish, Br. Lorenzo Peñalosa, Br. John Mark Falkenhain, novice and junior master; Novice Jonathan Baize and Novice Peter Szidik. Seated are Novice Timothy Herrmann, Novice Tony and Novice Jinu Thomas. All of the novices have worked in the oblate office.*



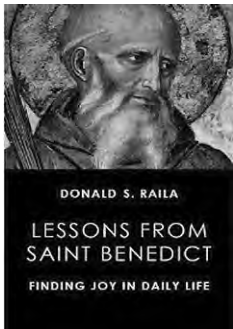
200 Hill Drive  
St. Meinrad, IN 47577

*Return service requested*

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## Reading Room

Raila, Donald S. *Lessons from Saint Benedict: Finding Joy in Daily Life*. Augusta, MO: Sacred Winds Press, 2011.



Fr. Donald S. Raila, OSB, is a Benedictine monk of St. Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, PA. He has been director of oblates since 1988. Since that time, he has written quarterly letters to oblates and friends on St. Benedict and his *Rule*. This book features 26 of those letters.

This book distills the most important elements of the *Rule of St. Benedict* in a way that is understandable by contemporary lay individuals such as oblates. The author presents the elements of the *Rule* as being manageable in daily life and providing order for our secular life as well as our spiritual life.

Fr. Donald has been writing these essays for over 23 years. He knows oblates and he knows what guidance they need on their journey to grow closer to God. He gives us

spiritual encouragement and guidance for persevering on this journey. With the *Rule* and the Gospels as guides, Fr. Donald says we can learn to visualize God's graces in every aspect of our lives.

He provides examples from his own life, both serious and lighthearted ones. By doing so, he shows us how we can renew and strengthen our spirituality through the labors of daily secular life and find joy in even its most mundane aspects.

Many of us have found dryness in prayers at some time in our lives. Many of us have struggled with stability even outside our oblation. We have jumped from one church to another because we claimed we were not being fed. These and other issues are addressed in Fr. Donald's essays. For this author, the *Rule of St. Benedict* is not so much a set of rules as it is a book of Christian wisdom for individuals living in community.

*Thomas J. Rillo, oblate  
Bloomington, IN*