

Oblate Benedictine



Saint Meinrad



Oblates enjoy the Study Days on "The Presence of God in the Life of an Oblate," presented by Fr. Brendan Moss, OSB, on June 9-12.

Seeking the Presence of God each day



Thomas J. Rillo

Benedictine monks and oblates share a common denominator. They both seek to know the presence of God and to grow closer to Him. The presence of God is manifested in all things, both natural and humanly generated. The

listening heart is a prerequisite to hearing the voice of God.

Silence is important in hearing the voice of God for He often speaks to us in a soft whisper. An important quote to remember: "I never learned anything when I was busy talking."

God's presence is easily discernible during the seasons of the year. His creations in cadence with the seasons are diverse and often miraculous. St. Benedict believed that monks grew closer to God through the ordinary tasks

of the day and not necessarily through the extraordinary. Benedict also believed that the presence of God was in the rituals and prayers that the monks offer every day and night.

Benedict also postulated that the God who reveals Himself through the Scriptures is a God that is definitely present. God is not in some far-off place where He is unattainable and unapproachable. God's presence is discerned everywhere and in every situation, from war-torn battlefields to natural catastrophes.

God's physical presence cannot be discerned by our eyes or by our touch. The way to know of God's presence is to see it or feel it through His creations. They are manifested in all things around us. The presence of God is also revealed in the history of Israel and the people of God.

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A POINT TO PONDER FROM *The Rule*

“Every time you begin a good work, you need to pray to him most earnestly to bring it to perfection.”

Rule of St. Benedict Prologue Verse 4

Although Benedict does not explicitly express the concept of the presence of God in his *Rule*, he does imply it in many instances. This is especially true in the Prologue of the *Rule*.

A monk or oblate who prays for the presence of God is also in the presence of God. The monastic individuals who seek God have already experienced God's presence to some degree.

This verse in the Prologue reminds us that we are the ones to find God first; we are not to expect that God will always find us first. This is especially true when we start a good work that God is always present in our daily lives.

Benedict also implies that we should realize that the motivation to do a good work comes from God and, in doing so, we acknowledge the presence of God in our lives.

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God reveals Himself as a personal God through the covenant of love and grace He made with His chosen people. It can be ascertained from the Old Testament that the historical Israelites knew of God's presence. God revealed Himself in the historical events that are depicted in the Old Testament.

We also learn that God's presence is revealed through the life and death of Jesus Christ. The revelation of God in Christ is not God alone, but God in communion with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Three in one and one in three is the Trinitarian communion and Jesus reveals this and hereby reveals the presence of God. Our communion with God calls us to have unconditional humility in His presence.

God's presence is also revealed in the sacraments. It was through Jesus that

God entered the world. His love gave us the formative sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation. Of these, we most often experience the presence of God in the Eucharist.

To seek God and enter into His presence is the main reason why monks live the monastic life. A visit to a Benedictine monastery will give a sense of what the monks are about and that God is present among them. It is reflected in their work, their zeal, their prayer and their music.

God is also present in each of us, monk or oblate. He dwells within each of us, in the very center of our being. We do not have to travel afar to seek God's presence. God's presence sustains life and is, in fact, life itself.

*Thomas J. Rillo, oblate
Bloomington, IN*

Women in the Word: The Grandmothers of Jesus



Br. Zachary Wilberding

Jesus. I have noticed that when this passage comes up as a Sunday reading, priests often remark: “Oh no, that again. How am I going to preach on a bunch of names?”

It is interesting to note that five names in this genealogy belong to women: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, the wife of Uriah (Bathsheba), and Mary, the wife of Joseph. Mary, of course, is the mother of Jesus and we have heard much about her

An interesting place to begin looking at women in the Bible is the first chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, verses 1-17. This is called the genealogy, or family tree, of

all our lives. But what about those other women, those four grandmothers of Jesus?

We meet Tamar in the Book of Genesis, chapter 38. Here we learn that Judah, the son of Jacob and great-grandson of Abraham, has had three sons. In chapter 37, Judah persuaded his brothers to sell their brother Joseph to a passing caravan rather than kill him. After all, what profit would there be in killing him?

So in chapter 38, Judah gets a wife named Tamar for his firstborn son. Unfortunately, the young man died without children and custom demanded that the second son, Onan, have a child with his brother's widow to create an heir. Onan saw no profit in this and did not cooperate. For this the Lord struck him down.

Judah promises Tamar that he will give his youngest son to her when he grows up so

that she can bear a son, which is her right. Jacob stalls on this for years and finally Tamar takes things into her own hands and disguises herself as a prostitute.

Judah, not recognizing her, makes use of her services and leaves his staff and seal with her as a pledge of later payment. This encounter does indeed leave Tamar with child.

Hearing of this scandal, Judah proposes that she be burned alive for her harlotry. As Tamar was being brought out for burning, she held up Judah's staff and seal and said: "It was the owner of these who made me pregnant." With that, Judah cancelled the execution and Tamar had twins, one of whom was Perez, who is mentioned in the genealogy.

Rahab is a prostitute who appears in the Book of Joshua. As the Israelites prepare to enter the Promised Land opposite Jericho, they send out spies to reconnoiter. Rahab, who lives in Jericho, gives the spies shelter, hides them from the authorities and helps them to escape. In exchange they swear that she and her family will be spared when the Israelites invade Jericho.

She does all of this because she is convinced that the Israelites' God will help them. She says: "The Lord your God is indeed God in heaven above and on earth below." Rahab has become a convert to belief in the one true God of Israel.

Ruth is a non-Israelite, a Moabite, and she has a book of the Bible named after her. An Israelite family from Bethlehem had fled to Moab because of a famine. Ruth married their son, but he, his brother and his father all died.

Naomi, the mother of the family, decided to return to Bethlehem and Ruth insisted on returning with her. Two widows with no male relations were virtually alone and unprotected in that culture.

In Bethlehem, Ruth meets a man of property named Boaz. Her mother-in-law encourages a relationship and gets Ruth to doll herself up and meet Boaz one evening at the threshing floor and "observe the place where he lies; then, go and uncover his feet and lie down; and he will tell you what to do." To uncover the feet has distinctly intimate connotations. A lady does not go to the threshing floor and uncover a gentleman's feet.

Finally, we meet Bathsheba in the First Book of Samuel. King David happens to see her bathing and desires her. He invites her to the palace and they have a relationship, which leaves her pregnant.

Unfortunately, she is already married to one of David's soldiers. David manages to arrange for the husband, Uriah, to be killed in the line of duty. He then marries Bathsheba, who gives birth to a son who will become King Solomon.

So with these four women we have an amateur prostitute, a professional prostitute, an adulteress and a woman who is intimate with a man not yet her husband.

But Tamar is passionate for justice, Rahab proclaims the one true God

and paves the way for Israel to enter its land, Ruth starts a family that leads to the birth of King David, and Bathsheba gives birth to the great King Solomon.

And all have a hand in generating the family that will eventually receive the Word of God Incarnate, Jesus Christ, into its membership. Surely, these women, with all their imperfections and mistakes, show us that God can use anyone to advance the cause of salvation.

There is a saying that God writes straight with crooked lines. These clever, passionate, devoted women are some of those crooked lines and so are we. St. Ephrem the Syrian, a fourth-century Doctor of the Church, was so impressed by the part that Tamar, Ruth and Rahab played in salvation history that he wrote a hymn about them.

So, the bad news is that we are imperfect. The good news is that God uses imperfect people to bring about our salvation. He can use us. We need to let Him work with us. And these grandmothers of Jesus can be a reminder of this.

*Br. Zachary Wilberding, OSB, monk
Saint Meinrad Archabbey*



Some oblates take time for socializing during the Study Days.

Study Days focus on the presence of God

Editor's note: This is a two-part series. The second part will appear in the next issue.



Cathey Byers

The weather was cool and dreary as 67 participants from 11 states as far away as Florida, Texas, Kansas and North Carolina gathered for the annual Oblate Study Days, held June 9-12 at Saint Meinrad.

We were warmly welcomed by Archabbot Justin DuVall's blessing, led by Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune's customary charming smile and humor, warmed by Br. Maurus Zoeller's hospitality, challenged by Fr. Brendan Moss' conferences and embraced by our fellow oblates.

Fr. Brendan began by reminding us that, as oblates, our *raison d'être* is quintessential. We must take ownership of our faith, following the example of Benedict, who "sought to please God alone."

Benedictine life is an "invitation to listen." Moreover, community is essential in Benedictine life and we are "alone together." We are on a personal journey, but we cannot do it alone. We have each other and we have the *Rule*, which is our "how-to" guide.

Fr. Brendan talked about three critical things to be aware of: 1) The *Rule* allows us to benefit from our past, which is important in understanding ourselves in relationship to following the way of St. Benedict; 2) We must attend to the present and its needs; and 3) we must look to the future, never being content with the status quo or existing to protect what has gone before.

We must listen "with the ear of the heart" and make prayer the basis of our lives, because with habitual prayer comes freedom. According to Fr. Brendan, with prayer the grace is in the doing, not in the outcome. Moreover, work is a way of contributing to society. "Work is prayer and prayer is work," and through the Benedictine life we become truly ourselves.

Fr. Brendan maintained that different charisms express different realities, but all are necessary to the witness of the Church. Prayer is encountering God so, for Benedictines, the Divine Office is the center of their lives, with all else flowing from it and leading back to it.

The Liturgy of the Hours is the bridge between the monastery and the outside world. The 150 psalms of the Hours include the entirety of human emotion, and they express the spectrum of our humanity. The psalms are the centerpiece of the *Opus Dei*, but included also are readings, hymns and prayer.

As Fr. Brendan said, the Liturgy of the Hours is about rhythm, and he urged us to slow down and find our own rhythm, but to be aware that our prayer is an encounter with God, and the Hours express the reality of our longing for God, as well as our joys and sufferings. The Hours take us out of ourselves and put us in contact with the past and the future, so that the present becomes clearer and the future possible.

According to Fr. Brendan, when we participate in sacred actions, we are united with God. Just as Jesus grew up with the psalms and the prayers of the Jews, we, too, are part of the school of prayer, and the Liturgy of the Hours is food for our journey. They are something we grow into and get comfortable with, not with an all-or-nothing attitude, but with the intent of developing the habit of prayer, perhaps one hour a day at morning, evening and compline.

Integral in this practice is the understanding that Scripture is central



Oblates Joe and Trish Lamont and David Moebs were among the participants during the June Study Days.



From left, Christian Meyer, Gerald Hyndman, Joan Hyndman, Charlotte Lombardi and Jane Reinhardt participate in the oblation ceremony in the Archabbey Church during the Study Days.

to Benedictines. As Fr. Brendan said, if we want to know the heart of God, then we must turn to the Word. He reminded us that the first word in the *Rule* is “listen,” and “listening” underlies the Benedictine belief that the Word of God is a dynamic, living Word that continues to teach us, no matter our vocation.

Our listening to God happens in the context of relationship and dialogue. Through *lectio divina* (holy reading), we can open ourselves to God’s voice and allow the Word to touch and awaken our hearts. Fr. Brendan suggested that we get a good Bible, one that is comfortable to hold and to read, and then open ourselves to an encounter with God, perhaps resulting in a desire to be known and loved by God, who wants to walk humbly with us.

Lectio divina is quite hard, he said. If we truly want to be transformed by the Word of God, we are never done or at rest, for complacency is the enemy of conversion. It is necessary not only to hear, but also to converse. In *lectio*, we need to spend a reasonable amount of time with a text, reading it aloud more than once and stopping at a word or phrase that speaks to us.

Next is reflection, as long or as short as need be, resting in the quiet and letting God speak to us. Finally is reverence, realizing that the words are directed to God and are not about us. As Fr. Brendan noted, there is no right or wrong way of doing *lectio*, because we are placing ourselves in the presence of God. We are in process, and this God who speaks to us is life-changing if we allow it and understand that it is all about relationship.

Cathey Byers, oblate
Nineveh, IN



Oblate Stephen Borchert takes notes during Fr. Brendan Moss’, OSB, presentation during the Study Days.



Oblate Carole Mattingly reads from the Rule of St. Benedict during the oblation ceremony held during the Study Days.



Oblates listen closely to a conference by Fr. Brendan Moss, OSB.

Hospitality:

An oblate's baptismal mission

As Christians, baptism grants each of us the right and duty to actively participate in the mission of the Church. Pope Francis addressed the following to all the faithful in his recent apostolic exhortation: “Before all else, the Gospel invites us to respond to the God of love who saves us, to see God in others and to go forth from ourselves to seek the good of others. Under no circumstance can this invitation be obscured!” (*Evangelii Gaudium* 39).

There are many ways to take action on this call. As Benedictine Oblates, we choose to live life according to a distinct framework of spiritual disciplines. One of these disciplines in particular comes from Chapter 53 of the *Rule*, which describes Benedictine hospitality.

The majority of the *Rule* concerns itself with helping people seek God in the context of an enclosed community. And yet St. Benedict realized that interaction with the wider world would undoubtedly be a facet of a monk's life and so he laid down some guidelines about how best to do that. This chapter contains some of the most succinct advice on how to live out our calling to participate in the mission of the Church.

I see five lessons that this chapter can teach us about how to live out our baptismal calling. The first is an exhortation to examine our motives. “All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ” (RB 53.1). Our world today has a fascination with awards and recognition and titles. Even in Church circles, much emphasis is placed on lay ministry and the titles associated with such service.

But Benedict had a different focus: his is a service motivated entirely by recognizing Christ's presence in others. He didn't want the porter to answer the door because that was his job title; rather, he wanted the porter to answer the door because Christ was on the other side of it.

As oblates, Benedict desires us to have a hospitable heart for the person in the next office or next door because they are, for us, Christ. Pope Francis expressed this in a wonderfully delightful way: “God's word teaches that our brothers and sisters are the prolongation of the incarnation for each of us” (*Evangelii Gaudium* 179).

A second lesson drawn from this chapter is the universal scope of our service: “Proper honor must be shown to *all*” (RB 53.2). Benedict instructed his monks to welcome everyone who came to the monastery – not just the agreeable people or the ones who could pay or the ones who had something to give back.

As oblates, we meet people every day who need our welcome. They are not just the people we *want* to welcome; we should extend hospitality to everyone who comes across our path.

The third lesson is that interactions with people call for a priority of love. As soon as a guest is announced – as soon as a person crosses the threshold – the monks are to meet that person “with all the courtesy of love” (RB 53.3). We must love others as a central part of living out our baptismal mission; for, after all, God is love (1 John 4:8).

The fourth lesson is about the place of prayer in our lives. Even as oblates who pray regularly, we can still be challenged by this. Once a guest is greeted in love, the first action of the monks is to sit and pray with their guest, to mindfully enter the presence of God together (RB 53.4).

Many times we tell people we will pray for them, and most of us certainly follow through on that. But hear what Benedict is saying: when you meet someone, the first thing to do is to pray *with* that person. These are challenging words indeed.

The last lesson from this chapter is about the necessity of practical service. Once we have welcomed everyone who comes into our lives with love and prayer and treat them as Christ, the *Rule* then instructs us to perform practical service: wash their hands and feet, feed them, teach them (RB 53.9-13). This last lesson complements all the others and is a vital element in a life of hospitality.

Each one of us shares in a mission that proceeds from our baptism. As oblates, we respond to that mission by engaging in a life of prayer. But Benedict's chapter on hospitality reminds us that this prayer life must have an outward expression in loving all those around us as we love Christ. In so doing, we participate in the mission of the Church in a spirit of Benedictine hospitality.

*Kelly Sollinger, oblate
Columbus, OH*





Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, and Fr. Julian Peters, OSB, offer Mass in the Guest House Chapel during the Day of Recollection on July 11.



Archabbot Justin DuVall, OSB, welcomes the oblates attending the Day of Recollection on July 11.



Jane Ann Reinitz makes her oblation on July 11, during the Day of Recollection at Saint Meinrad.



Fr. Julian Peters, OSB, anoints oblate Racine O'Connell during the Day of Recollection. Her son, oblate Jim O'Connell, stands behind her.



Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, Oliver Ogden and Sharon Ogden enjoy the social during the Study Days.



Fr. Brendan Moss, OSB, was the presenter during the Study Days June 9-12.



Fr. Julian Peters, OSB, gives a homily for the Anointing of the Sick on July 11.



Sharon Apple gives the sign of peace to Jane Ann Reinitz, who just made her oblation.



Oblate Caryn Mucci enjoys the humor of Fr. Brendan Moss, OSB, during the Study Days.

Oblate Day of Recollection at Saint Meinrad

On July 11, 2014, the Day of Recollection was held at Saint Meinrad. We were graced with a lovely day and the grace-filled presence of Fr. Julian Peters, OSB. We explored together the ongoing mystery of “The Art of Living in the Presence of God.”

As we open ourselves to follow God’s vision for our lives, we ask what we are to do with opportunities presented to us. We are encouraged to celebrate life by doing what we can with what we have. We are remembered by our smiles that recognize God in others and by being at peace with whom we say we are.

We are reminded that nothing will happen today that we and Jesus cannot handle together, as we live in His loving Presence and walk humbly with God.

Jane Ann Reinitz made her final oblation during Midday Prayer. Each of us left the Day of Recollection strengthened to take Saint Meinrad’s peace and wholeness with us and to share our willingness to live life open to God’s loving Spirit in each of our circumstances.

*Susan Anderson, oblate
Cincinnati, OH*

Bloomington Oblate updates retreat recordings

Edward (Ted) Castronova, an oblate from Bloomington, IN, generously donated his time to transfer cassette tapes of past oblate retreats to CDs. He spent five days at Saint Meinrad Archabbey working on the project.

Ted is a faculty member of the new Media School at Indiana University –



Ted Castronova recently transferred retreat recordings to CDs.

a recent merger of the School of Journalism, Department of Telecommunications and the Department of Communication and Culture.

Ted holds a BS degree (1985) from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. and master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Wisconsin (1991).

Before coming to Indiana University, he taught for four years at Cal State Fullerton and at the University of Rochester in New York. He is a native of Michigan.

Interview with Ted Castronova

Q. How did you get involved with this project of transferring old cassette tapes to CDs?

A. I volunteered to do some work for my parish, St. Charles Borromeo Church in Bloomington.

Janis Dopp, director of religious education for the parish, suggested that I transfer old VHS tapes to CDs and that the format would make them more accessible in the parish library.

This I did, and then Janis suggested to Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, that I could do the same thing for the cassette tapes in the oblate library. I was happy to do it.

Q. When did you become a Benedictine oblate?

A. I became an oblate in May 2014. I am a convert to Catholicism. I searched out other denominations and I decided that being a Catholic would be perfect for me. My wife is a Catholic and it seemed a very good thing for us to be a complete Catholic family.

Q. Were there other influences in your decision to become a Catholic?

A. I was greatly influenced early on by reading books by C.S. Lewis, specifically, *Mere Christianity*. I was also impacted by the writings of Tolkien, in particular *Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

Q. I understand that you made a personal donation of the transferred CDs. Is this true?

A. Yes it is. I wanted to do something for the monastic community that has significantly impacted my spiritual life. I assumed the cost of the tapes transferal to CDs. Benedictine oblation is the pathway to my growing closer to God.

*Thomas Rillo, oblate
Bloomington, IN*

OBLATIONS

May 17, 2014 – **Mr. Joseph Michael Carcione Jr.** of White Plains, NY

May 18, 2014 – **Dr. Edward Columba Castronova** of Bloomington, IN, and **Mr. Robert John Chrysostom Powell** of Johnson City, TN

May 25, 2014 – **Fr. Rod Anselm Hurst** of Carlsbad, NM

June 10, 2014 – **Mr. Gerald Peter Hyndman** and **Mrs. Joan Marcella Hyndman**, both of Noblesville, IN; **Mrs. Charlotte Anne Mary Lombardi** of Columbus, OH; **Mr. Christian Paul Meyer** of Greenfield, IN; and **Mrs. Jane Stephen Reinhart** of Bloomington, IN



Candidates John Avery, OSB, left, and Charles Peñalosa, OSB, were surprised with cakes in appreciation for their three months of working in the Oblate Office.

June 15, 2014 – Mr. Marc Mikesell and Mr. Robert Stepp II, both of Branchville, IN

June 17, 2014 – Mr. Jerry John Paul II Hancock and Mrs. Jewel John Vianney Hancock, both of Seymour, IN

July 8, 2014 – Mr. George Thomas Aquinas Hubbard of Charleston, SC

July 11, 2014 – Miss Jane Ann Frances de Chantal Reinitz of Evansville, IN

July 12, 2014 – Mr. Scott Francis Keeler of Portage, MI

August 1, 2014 – Mr. Mainerd Paul Sorensen of Cincinnati, OH ♦

INVESTITURES

May 7, 2014 – Mrs. Kaylene Mongeau of Bullard, TX

May 17, 2014 – Mrs. Florence Baney and Mr. Ken Baney, both of Bronx, NY

May 19, 2014 – Mrs. Megan Ewell and Mr. Ronald Ewell, both of Burlington, KY

May 21, 2014 – Mrs. Rebecca Archer-Inskeep of Indianapolis, IN

May 24, 2014 – Mrs. Carole Foppe and Mr. Ronald Foppe, both of Jamestown, IL

June 8, 2014 – Mr. Louis Raineri of Cuba, MO

June 20, 2014 – Mrs. Melissa Pollio of New Castle, DE

June 24, 2014 – Mr. Franklin Zane Dobbins of Huntsville, AL

June 27, 2014 – Ms. Maryann Niznak of Kalamazoo, MI

July 9, 2014 – Mrs. Kathy Hull of Findlay, OH

July 20, 2014 – Mr. Von Erick Sandoval of Berne, IL

July 21, 2014 – Ms. Maureen Sundick of Farmingdale Hills, MI

July 25, 2014 – Mr. Michael Checkley of Bimini, Bahamas

July 27, 2014 – Ms. Deborah Lytell of Bristol, IN

July 28, 2014 – Mr. Adrian Brooks of Cheadle, United Kingdom, and Deacon John Lyons of Middletown, OH

August 11, 2014 – Mrs. Clintina Simms of Fairfield Glade, TN, and Ms. Janna Rutledge of West Des Moines, IA

August 16, 2014 – Mrs. Kerri Baunach, Mrs. Michelle Jackson, Mr. Gregory Jackson, Mrs. Beth O'Sullivan, Mr. Brendan O'Sullivan, Mrs. Kristin Tucker and Mr. Mark Tucker, all of Lexington, KY; Mr. Benjamin Seta and Mrs. Stephanie Seta, both of Georgetown, KY ♦

DEATHS

June 10, 2014 – Mrs. Rita Vernia of New Albany, IN

June 26, 2014 – Ms. Raffaele (Rae) Noto of Farmingdale, NY

June 29, 2014 – Ms. Mary Joy Phillips of Hamersville, OH

July 16, 2014 - Mr. Jeffrey Emitt of Crossville, TN

July 18, 2014 - Mr. John Bower of Capitola, CA ♦

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 30, 2014: The day of recollection for New York oblates will have Fr. Denis Robinson, OSB, as the presenter on "Discipleship in Motion."

December 12-14, 2014: The Oblate Advent Retreat will feature Fr. Columba Kelly, OSB, as the presenter. His topic will be "Some Tools for Experiencing the Presence of God in the Daily Life of a Benedictine Oblate."

March 20-22, 2015: The March Oblate Retreat will have Fr. Mark O'Keefe, OSB, as the retreat presenter. The title of the retreat will be "The Presence of God."

April 18, 2015: The day of recollection for the Louisville, KY, area oblates will be held. Fr. Noël Mueller, OSB, will be the presenter on "Power of Presence: Practicing the Presence of God."



Very Rev. Norman P. Carroll, VF, pastor of oblate novice Melissa Pollio, attended her investiture as an oblate novice on June 20 in the Chapter Room.

May 16, 2015: The day of recollection for the Ohio oblates will be held in the Columbus area. Br. Martin Erspamer, OSB, will be the presenter. The title of the conferences is “Living in the Presence of God, An Oblate’s Lifelong Work.”

June 15-18, 2015: The Oblate Study Days will take place at Saint Meinrad Archabbey. Br. John Mark Falkenhain, OSB, will speak on “Oblation as a Vocation.” ♦

VOLUNTEERS APPRECIATED

Recent volunteers in the Oblate Office were: Candidate John Avery, Ted Castronova, Mike Edwards, Ruth Engs, Candidate Charles Peñalosa, George Thompson, Melanie Isaacson, Pat Reckelhoff, Tom and Joan Rillo, Dennis Skelton, Chris Topa, and Mike and Michele Reffett. ♦



Pictured are the oblates who attended the Ohio Day of Recollection. Fr. Noël Mueller, OSB, gave conferences on “Our Commitment of Christ: Living the Sacraments in the Rule.”



Oblate novice Louis Raineri of Cuba, MO, made his investiture at Saint Meinrad. His wife and two sons attended the ceremony.



Five couples from Lexington, KY, were invested as oblate novices at Christ the King Cathedral. Their children were present for the ritual. A pitch-in luncheon followed.



Oblate Pam Betz prays in the Guest House Chapel during the Day of Recollection on July 11.



Five oblates receive instructions during the ceremony of oblation in the Archabbey Church on June 10.

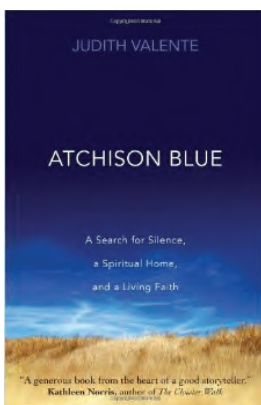


200 Hill Drive
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Return service requested

Reading Room

Valente, Judith. *Atchison Blue: A Search for Silence, a Spiritual Home, and a Living Faith*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Sorin Books, 2013.



Kathleen Norris, author of *The Cloister Walk*, referred to this book as “a generous book from the heart of a great storyteller.” The author of *Atchison Blue* is Judith Valente, who covers the religious beat for PBS-TV’s national program, “Religion and Ethics Newsweekly.”

She became an oblate in 2013 after arriving at Mount St.

Scholastica Monastery in Atchison, KS. She first came to the monastery to teach a course on poetry and the soul.

She found herself instead in the position of a student taking lessons from the Benedictine sisters in the healing nature of silence, the cultivation of mindful living habits, and the reality of conversion as a lifelong process.

Oblates will be reminded of their own journey to oblation. It is the story of a busy professional who yearned for a more contemplative life and found fulfillment of that through her oblation. Her book is a guide for those who struggle for silence in the midst of a chaotic and noisy world.

Of significant import is the emphasis that Valente places in the first chapter: “Finding Light.” *Atchison Blue* refers to the special color of the chapel windows at Mount St. Scholastica Monastery. In her prayers of discernment, Valente was impacted by the beauty of the windows.

The author spent many weeks with the sisters attempting to understand the Benedictine monastic way of life. Valente has used her spiritual deficiencies to open up the aspects of her spiritual limitations. Oblates will find this self-examination to be both refreshing and familiar.

In the book, she makes a case for the necessity of Benedictine wisdom in our time. She has also created a beautiful portrait of the sisters of Mount St. Scholastica and the joy that silence and simplicity bring to their lives.

*Thomas J. Rillo, oblate
Bloomington, IN*