

Oblate Benedictine



Saint Meinrad



Left to right, Oblate Novices Daniel Pierce Sr. and Georgiana Sullivan, who were invested, and Oblate Carol Devine, who renewed her 50th anniversary oblation, receive the sign of peace from Oblate Jane Mossimino during the New York Oblate Retreat, August 30-September 1, 2013.

The Eucharist, Confession and the *Rule*



William Henrick

The *Rule of St. Benedict* mentions the Eucharist (as “Holy Communion”) in only two places. In Chapter 38, the context is providing food for the reader of the week to sustain his strength after the Eucharistic fast. And in Chapter 63, it is mentioned only in

passing with respect to order in the community.

Also, the *Rule* does not specifically mention the sacrament of Penance. Nevertheless, in the way that the *Rule* provides a blueprint for a comprehensive way of life, it furnishes a rich context for appreciating both sacraments.

Consider first the Eucharist. The monastic way of life is, anchorites apart, a life in common – one of stable community. Stability and community are twins, both within and

beyond monasteries, and in both contexts the stability achieved is not static.

Within an abbey, particularly, stability is the product of a living communion in which the monks provide “consolation” for each other (Chapter 1). They are to serve as mutually supportive companions on their spiritual journeys through life.

This picture discloses a cluster of cognate meanings of a life lived in common: community, communion and communication. They are closely related in the notion of companionship. The word “companion” comes from the Latin *cum panis*, “with bread,” and the most important bread in the community is Holy Communion received at Mass each morning. Participation in that Communion both anchors and supports community life.

As a personal impression, I would say it is exactly during that participation in Mass at

Continued on p. 2

A POINT TO PONDER FROM *The Rule*

“First of all, every time you begin a good work you must pray to Him most earnestly to bring it to perfection.”

*Rule of St. Benedict,
Prologue, Verse 4*

As oblates, we are asked to pray when doing even the most menial tasks, such as washing dishes, doing laundry, preparing a meal or vacuuming the rugs. Each may be considered a good work, especially in a familial sense. Making the sign of the cross and saying a blessing before eating can be said to be a good work.

There are myriad opportunities to pray before undertaking a good work. We should do this without hesitation, for in doing good works we grow ever closer to God.

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Editor: Mary Jeanne Schumacher

Designer: Tammy Schuetter

Oblate Directors: Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB and Fr. Joseph Cox, OSB

Send changes of address and comments to The Editor, Development Office, Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad, IN 47577, (812) 357-6817, fax (812) 357-6325 or email oblates@saintmeinrad.org www.saintmeinrad.org

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continued from p. 1

Saint Meinrad that the unity and cohesiveness of the community seem most visible, particularly the Eucharistic part of the celebration when the monks are gathered around the altar. There they seem much more One than when they are half-hidden in the choir during the Divine Office. It would be interesting to know whether the monks themselves share this perception.

On a related matter, in ordinary parish life, receiving Communion tends to be an exclusively private affair, with no special reflection on being part of the parish community. When monks receive Communion, I wonder whether the experience also includes the self-consciousness of functioning as part of the community.

The sacrament of Penance, although not mentioned in the *Rule*, has far more explicit textual support than the Eucharist. St. Benedict is clear about the need for and benefits of confessing one's sins.

Now, the Saint Meinrad oblate program happily includes many non-Catholic as well as Catholic oblates. Such membership gives strong evidence of the great need in our society for the *Rule's* sane balance of prayer and work.

However, my reason for mentioning non-Catholic oblates here is that everything in the *Rule* about confession is consistent with the theology of at least all major Protestant denominations. That is because St. Benedict relies solely on Scriptural descriptions of the individual believer's relationship with God.

For example, in the *Prologue*, he describes the person who finds favor with God as “he who walks without sin, who acts with justice” Then he concludes, “[He who] hath taken hold of his evil thoughts in the very beginning and dashed them against the Rock, which is Christ.” Likewise in the *Prologue*, he quotes St. Paul (Rom. 2:4), “Dost thou not know that the goodness of God is meant to lead thee to repentance?”

Further, in Chapter 7 we read, “The fifth degree of humility is not to conceal from one's Abbot the evil thoughts that beset one's heart, nor the sins committed in secret, but to manifest them in humble confession.” And for that confession St. Benedict quotes Psalm 105:1, “Confess to the Lord, for He is good, and His mercy endures forever.” And 31:5, “I said, ‘I will confess against myself my iniquities to the Lord’; and Thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my heart.”

In addition, the *Rule* does not stop at merely advising confession of one's sins. As an eminently practical document, it provides a guide for examining one's conscience. One such passage is the first text from the *Prologue* cited above. Also, Chapter 2 tells us, “Only for one reason we are distinguished in His sight: namely, if we are found to be eminent in good works and in humility.” And what are those “good works”? Chapter 4, “The Instruments of Good Works,” provides a voluminous list.

If this interpretation of the *Rule* is correct, then we can be confident that it provides a productive context for understanding the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, and therewith spiritual enrichment for those who do so.

*William Hamrick, oblate
St. Louis, MO*



Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, oblate director, receives the oblation of Rev. Brian Loging. Rev. Msgr. Thomas Smith, center, was also invested as an oblate.

We have to... get up and go back into the city

The reading from the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 14:19-28) tells us that the local Jews stoned St. Paul and dragged him out of the city, leaving him for dead. Then, it tells us that he got up and went back into the city. Period.

The text doesn't really seem to make too much of this event. But, when you think about it, it would seem more reasonable if the story had said that St. Paul got up, got out of there as soon as he could, went back to tent-making and never mentioned the name of Jesus again.

The man, after all, had just been stoned and left for dead! The same Paul who (as he tells us elsewhere – 2 Cor. 11:25-26) had been three times beaten with rods, three times shipwrecked, once adrift at sea, threatened by his own people, threatened by Gentiles and threatened by bandits.

But each time, as it were, St. Paul just gets up, and “goes back into the city.” He just gets back to what he is supposed to be about.

All of these adventures of St. Paul – and of all of the first disciples in the Book of

Acts – are, of course, *not* just a recounting of history. This is not *just* the account of what happened to *them*. It is meant to be *our* story, the pattern of *our* discipleship.

Today, this story about St. Paul reminds us that when we feel beaten down by life's events or even feel beaten down by our own people, when we feel shipwrecked by our own failures or sins or mistakes, when we feel threatened by temptation or anxiety or an unknown future – like St. Paul, in our own way, we just have to get up and “go back into the city.”

We need to go back “into our city” just as it is. We just have to get up and get on with what we are supposed to be about.

Because like St. Paul, we, too, have met the risen Lord along the way. We, too, have received the call to give witness to Him in our living and acting and speaking in our own world of today. And, like him, we are nourished by the Word of God and the sacred Body and Blood of the Lord at the Eucharist.

*Fr. Mark O'Keefe, OSB, monk
Saint Meinrad Archabbey*



Left to right, Lt. Col. Redmond Raux, General Patrick Mordente who made his oblation and Fr. Aidan Logan, OCSO. The priests received Patrick's oblation at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, on November 21, 2013.

OBLATES *In their own words*



*Oblate Rev. Mr. John Huether
Jasper, IN*

“To me, being an oblate means making a public commitment to daily prayer, the Divine Office in particular. We try to draw closer to God through his holy Word, the Scripture, and also we try to find ways to apply the Rule of St. Benedict to our daily lives.”



Profile: Br. William Sprauer



Br. William Sprauer

Q. *Can you tell us about your background?*

I was born in Piqua, Ohio, which is a little town just north of Dayton. My parents were

Karen and Timothy Sprauer. I lived in Piqua for most of my life and I went to a small elementary school called Nicklin Elementary not very far from my home.

I was sort of a teacher's pet growing up. All of my teachers said that I talked too much. In fact, this is also what they say in the monastery: that I talk too much. I have fond memories of elementary school and I really enjoyed my elementary school years. I had some great teachers.

The one teacher that I liked very much was my fourth grade teacher. I still see her quite often when I return home. She is a member of my hometown parish. She still remembers me when I go to Mass when I am there.

I was baptized in the Lutheran church when I was about 1 year old. I was not a Catholic growing up during my formative years and I did not attend church during those years. I was mostly involved with martial arts, in particular karate and taekwondo, for a number of years.

My instructor was a Christian and there was a lot of Christian influence to his teaching. It taught me to really value hard work. If you are in school, you do school work; and if at work, you do (work) work.

I had a babysitter from the time I was an infant until I was somewhere in grade school. She was very devout and a spiritual influence. She was an Evangelical Christian and I think a lot

of it rubbed off on me. I went to secular junior high and secondary high schools. I went to Wilder Junior High and Piqua High School. Piqua is a Shawnee name.

In high school, I played ice hockey. After taekwondo, I really got into ice hockey. I had started martial arts in the second or third grade. In martial arts, I got a junior black belt because I was too young for the adult black belt. Both belts were identical in certification requirements.

I continued to play hockey in high school on a club basis. When I was 16, I applied for a job at a hardware store not far from my home and I stopped playing ice hockey. I went to Ohio University in Athens. I studied computer science and got a BS degree in that. I worked for five years in software development.

Q. *Were you influenced by role models in the secular world? Were there also role models from the religious sector?*

Not really. I cannot think of any role models with the exception of my parents, my martial arts instructor, my babysitter and my fourth grade teacher. Sad to say, the church and religion were not a large part of my life during these early years. I did have a girlfriend when I was a student at Ohio University. She was a Catholic and I often attended Mass with her. I was seriously thinking ahead that if I were to marry her, I would like to become a Catholic.

She graduated and I was still in school and we grew further apart. I think it was when I graduated and was employed that I heard about the *Rule of St. Benedict*. I bought a copy and read it and this was even before my conversion. You might say that St. Benedict was an influence. I went through the RCIA program and became a Catholic in 2008.

Q. *Did anything or anyone influence you to converting to Catholicism? Did anything or anyone influence you in entering a monastic community?*

I think that one thread of influence was martial arts. It is similar to being a monk. There is self-discipline, self-initiative, dedication, obedience and respect. In martial arts, all of these things are taught or are byproducts of this activity. I find many of these things in the monastic life. I think of it as a cultural kind of influence. There are words, definitions, concepts that are similar in both cultures. Certainly, the *Rule of St. Benedict* kindled my interest in the monastic community.

Q. *Why did you choose Saint Meinrad Archabbey? What was so special about the Saint Meinrad community? Did you consider any other monastic houses?*

Before I came to Saint Meinrad, I had visited only three communities: Saint Meinrad, of course, and St. Andrew Abbey in Cleveland, Ohio, and a Franciscan community. I am pretty sure that after visiting the Franciscan community, I wanted the monastic life. The Franciscan community was not a monastery.

The Franciscans do all kinds of work, such as parish work, educational work, psychological work, etc. They have a formation house in Cincinnati, Ohio. I stayed there. It wasn't quite what I was looking for. What I envisioned was a larger community somewhere in the countryside. Saint Meinrad monastery was the first of the three that I visited.

Q. *What about the physical entity of Saint Meinrad Archabbey? Were you impressed by its size?*

Yes, I was very impressed. I remember when I first stepped out of the guest house I thought, "This is the middle of nowhere. This is amazing." I

remember when my Dad visited me at the monastery, he could not stop talking about the church.

Q. *Did the monastic community live up to your expectations? Were you surprised by the diversity among the monks and their respective interests and activities?*

I was amazed at the talent that the various monks exhibited. It was exciting to rub elbows with the monks who have achieved so much: Fr. Cyprian Davis, who is a renowned author, and Fr. Columba Kelly, who has accomplished so much with liturgical music and chant. There is Fr. Harry Hagan, whose poetry and hymn writing has been most impressive. There are just too many monks with such diverse talent to mention them all here.

Q. *What are some of your long-range goals with regard to your tenure as a monk? Do you have any aspirations to the priesthood at this time? Is there a specific work activity that you would like to devote your monastic career to?*

I am not sure what my long-range goals are. I know there are brothers here who make meaningful contributions to the community without being ordained priests. I think of Br. Dominic, who does a variety of different activities. He delivers the mail and washes and services the monastery cars in the motor pool and he also works in the infirmary.

I also think of Br. Martin, who is perhaps one of the finest liturgical artists to be found anywhere in the world. Also Br. John Mark, who has psychology as his major interest and creative crafts such as pottery as a secondary interest. There is Br. Maurus, who has done a variety of things such as the Abbey Press, retreat director and a host for many pilgrimages.

They are not ordained priests and yet these brothers are exemplary in their contributions to the monastic community. Whether or not I am

interested in the priesthood is much too early for me to discern. I would hope that my computer science background would be a concentration for the work portion of my monastic life. However, this is for the abbot to decide.

*Thomas J. Rillo, oblate
Bloomington, IN*

Online Resources available to oblates

Saint Meinrad's oblates are invited to take advantage of an online formation program that includes reading communities and Bible studies.

The Saint Meinrad Online Lay Formation Program is offering six online, noncredit formation opportunities during 2014. The pressure is low, because these are not academic courses for credit.

The books chosen are interesting and highly readable, and the quality of reflection and sharing is very high. Since all offerings are online, there is no need for travel. The fee includes the cost of the book.

Online Reading Communities

In a reading community, the participants read a book together on a theological topic and then discuss the contents online using the Saint Meinrad Moodle platform. Books are selected on the basis of reliable authorship, readability and relevance to Christian life.

Reading Community I: *Pleading, Cursing, Praising: Conversing with God through the Psalms* by Irene Nowell (The Liturgical Press, 2013, 94 pages). Dates: February 2-April 19, 2014. Registration deadline: January 15. Fee \$40.

Reading Community II: *The Sermon on the Mount: The Perfect Measure of the Christian Life* by Frank J. Matera (The Liturgical Press, 2013, 121 pages). Dates: April 27-July 26, 2014. Registration deadline: April 12. Fee \$40.

Reading Community III: *The Eucharist: What Do We Believe?* by Fainche Ryan (The Columba Press, 2012, 92 pages). Dates: August 17-October 18, 2014. Registration deadline: August 5. Fee \$40.

Reading Community IV: *Chasing Mystery: A Catholic Biblical Theology* by Carey Walsh (The Liturgical Press, 2012, 164 pages). Dates: October 27-December 20, 2014. Registration deadline: October 15. Fee \$40.

Online Bible Studies

The online Bible studies function much like reading communities, except that participants use a book from the Collegetown Bible Commentary series to guide their study and sharing together. The fee covers the cost of the Commentary.

Bible Study I: First and Second Corinthians. Dates: March 9-June 28, 2014. Registration deadline: February 16. Fee \$40.

Bible Study II: The Book of Exodus. Dates: September 21-December 13, 2014. Registration deadline: September 1. Fee \$40.

For more information, contact Br. Zachary Wilberding, OSB, coordinator of lay formation, at (812) 357-6803. ♦

VOLUNTEERS APPRECIATED

Nic Alford, Novice Dane DeDecker, OSB, Ruth Engs, Fr. Cletus Miller, OSB, Mike Reffett, Pat Reckolhoff, Tom and Joan Rillo, Dennis Shelton and Vicki Taylor were among the recent volunteers in the Oblate Office. ♦

Reflections on the Third World Congress of Benedictine Oblates

Oblates Jennie Latta and Janis Dopp represented the Oblate Community of Saint Meinrad Archabbey at the Third World Congress of Benedictine Oblates, held in Rome October 3-10, 2013. In these articles, they offer their perspectives of the experience.

Gaining new understanding of Benedictine life's significance



Jennie Latta

I was privileged and fortunate to serve as a delegate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey to the Third World Congress of Benedictine Oblates. There

were 156 delegates representing 28 countries from five continents. The United States delegation consisted of 38 oblates led by Fr. Paschal Morlino, OSB, of St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, PA.

The theme of the Congress was “*Obsculta* – The Oblate Listening in the World.” Plenary addresses were given by Abbot Primate Notker Wolf, OSB; Romina Urbanetti, coordinator for the Italian Benedictine Oblates; Abbot Alcuin Nyirenda, OSB, of Hanga Abbey, Tanzania; Sr. Mary John Mananzan, OSB, former prioress of St. Scholastica’s Priory, Manila, Philippines; and Fr. Michael Casey, OCSO, author and monk of Tarawarra Abbey, Victoria, Australia.

Some of their texts are available at www.benedictine-oblates.org/2013/testi-en.php

Of special note at this Congress was the large delegation from Africa (19 people), bringing a new and challenging perspective to the oblates

from Europe and the Americas. Oblation for the African oblates is a distinct calling involving a visible life of service.

We learned that the African oblates tend to make their oblations as married couples and to incorporate Benedictine spirituality in the lives of their children. Because the African oblates wear distinctive habits, they are known in their parishes and serve as role models for Christian families.

Each delegate was assigned to a working group, which was asked to consider four topics: (1) *The Rule*; (2) The Relationship of the Oblate to the Monastery; (3) Living Our Oblation and (4) *Obsculta* (Listening).

My group consisted of 21 English speakers from Australia, England, Ghana, Nigeria, the Philippines and Slovakia. Our group developed the following summary of our findings:

The members of this group unanimously believe that oblation is a vocation – a unique calling within the Church and to the world. We believe that living the life of oblation gives structure to our formation in Christian service. We agree that the practice of *lectio divina* develops in us new skills for listening to the Word of God and the needs of the world. We agree that cultivation of silence is essential to the process of listening, but also that silence itself can be part of our gift to the world. As one of our members reminded us, “Silence speaks.” From those of our group who are part of the Monastery without Walls, we were reminded that listening is being attentive, and that being attentive is love – love that is so needed in our world today.

The delegates made trips to St. Peter Square for the Sunday Angelus address of Pope Francis; to the Sacra Speco (sacred cave) at the Monastery of St. Benedict in Subiaco, where St. Benedict lived as a hermit before founding his first monastery; to Sant’Anselmo, the primatial abbey of the Order of St. Benedict; and to Monte Cassino, where St. Benedict wrote his holy *Rule* and where he died.

It was at Monte Cassino that I came to a new understanding of the importance of the gift of the Benedictine life to the world. St. Benedict made his foundation at Monte Cassino on the site of a temple to Apollo. He first smashed the statue of Apollo and destroyed the altar before establishing his cell.

Despite the sacks of the Lombards in 581, the Saracens in 884, Napoleon in 1799, destruction by earthquake in 1321, and suppression in 1866, the abbey represented a place of great magnificence and cultural significance. On February 13, 1944, however, the abbey was almost destroyed by American-led air raids as the result of intelligence suggesting that German troops were hiding there.

One of the few parts of the monastery to survive was St. Benedict’s cell, which was located in the oldest, Roman part. In the small shrine that is there now, a fresco depicts St. Benedict weeping over the future destruction of his monastery by the Lombards.

It is painted in such a way that St. Benedict is also looking toward a painting of the future destruction of his monastery in the 20th century. The painting depicts the monks processing out of the Pax gate after the Allied bombing. (Although many of the Italian civilians who had taken

refuge in the abbey were killed, none of the monks was killed.)

I was able to sit with the painting for a long time. What I saw was the emergence of life and culture from the ruins of the monastery. The preservation of Christian life and culture has been the consistent gift of Benedictines to the world for the past 1,500 years.

I thought particularly about the role of the Benedictine oblate in this context. It is not hard to see the various “ruins” around us – poverty, consumerism, violence, despair. Benedictine oblates – those who “listen with the ear of the heart” to the world – are those who can return Benedictine life and culture to their world.

The painting helped me to put into perspective all that we had heard and experienced in the Congress. It helped me to better understand the possibilities for Benedictine life “in the world.”

*Jennie Latta, oblate
Memphis, TN*

Finding a deeper meaning to *lectio divina*



Janis Dopp

In a recent Midday Prayer opening hymn in the Archabbey Church, we sang, “May mind and tongue made strong in love, your praise throughout the world proclaim.” I had just returned to the United States after attending the Third Oblate World Congress in Rome, and the words of the hymn were a touching reminder of the spirit and the mission of the Congress for the 156 men and women from around the world who were there representing the various oblate communities of their monasteries.

This Congress, which is held every four years, developed the theme that has run throughout these worldwide

gatherings: that we have a real vocation as Benedictine Oblates in the world that we must take seriously, and that this vocation is a call to surrender to God’s will, to be totally present to the here and now, and to attend to the reformation of our lives in such a way that we truly become servants of the people of God.

In this Congress, the message was refined by considering this vocation as the fruit of the spiritual practice of *lectio divina*, which helps us to hear God’s voice calling us to this selfless enlightenment. Living our oblation means moving from our initial self-offering to the necessary self-emptying that allows God to use us to “make the Gospel of Jesus more concrete in every sphere of life.”

The two keynote speakers, Sr. Mary John Mananzan, OSB, and Fr. Michael Casey, OCSO, approached the theme of “Listening” with the intent of moving us beyond the run-of-the-mill idea that listening is a passive practice to a place where the active engagement of listening is the force behind the movement of a person into an enlightened recognition and response to the voice of God speaking deeply within him.

In her talk “*Obsculta: The Oblate Listening in the World*,” Sr. Mary John looked at the four traditional steps of *lectio divina* (*lectio, meditatio, oratio* and *contemplatio*) as the “*ora*” aspect of this spiritual practice. Then she moved into the “*labora*” of *lectio divina*, which she called *actio*. *Actio* is when we take what we have read, reflected and prayed upon and allow God to move us out of our protective solitude into a state of mindfulness that makes us totally present to the here and now.

We are able to focus on “the other.” We can more clearly hear the cry of people in need. We are awakened to the cry of Mother Earth and respond to the global ecological crisis. When we enter into the silence of the mind

and heart, we allow ourselves to totally surrender to God’s will and take that leap of faith that pulls us into active ministry.

She quoted Pope Francis, who has said that, “The greatest task of the Church today is to heal wounds.” If our oblation is to be taken as a serious vocation, we are tied to the needs of the Church and the people of God. We need to recognize the many and diverse ways that people and the earth are in need and then respond to those needs. Our prayerful listening gives us the strength and the grace that we need to respond.

It was precisely this grace that Fr. Michael focused on in his presentation, “The Word Became Text and Dwelt Among Us.” Just as God chose to limit Himself by becoming a human being and taking on our mortal nature, He further limited Himself by becoming the written Word of Scripture.

In *lectio divina*, which he called “the heart and soul of Benedictine spirituality,” the oblate becomes the recipient of a salvific act: “The Word becomes flesh within us.” He said that, considered in this way, “There is a quasi-sacramental aspect to *lectio divina* that goes beyond what we invest in it in terms of effort, ingenuity or industry.”

But just as Eucharist is a sacrament that demands our commitment to a life lived with and for Christ, Fr. Michael said, “*Lectio divina* is a dread-filled struggle with the absolute demands that the Gospel brings.” Our complacency is “endangered,” and we are called to “demolish the wall of self-security with which we protect ourselves from the challenges of the Kingdom.” Ultimately, “the function of (*lectio divina*) must be the reformation of our lives.”

As oblates gathered in “working groups” to discuss the primary themes

Continued on p. 11



Dr. James and Mrs. Vicki Albright accepted the office of chapter co-coordinators for the Columbus, OH, Area Chapter.

New Chapter Co-Coordinators

The new chapter co-coordinators for the Columbus, OH, Area Chapter are Dr. James Albright and Mrs. Vicki Albright. They accepted the office on October 3, 2013. A debt of gratitude is owed to Msgr. Robert Noon for his help in overseeing the chapter for several years.

New secretary joins Oblate Office



Carol Troesch

Carol Troesch is a recent addition to the Oblate Office as a part-time executive secretary. She replaces Sarah Fisher. Carol grew up in St. Meinrad and attended elementary schools there. She went to high school at Heritage Hills and then matriculated at the University of Evansville and earned a bachelor's degree in communications.

Carol's first job while still in high school was with the Archabbey and her main responsibility was operating the switchboard and handling all telephone calls leaving or entering the monastery. Carol is married to Marvin Troesch

and they have two children, Emily, a freshman at University of Southern Indiana, and Logan, a sophomore at Heritage Hills High School.

While still in high school, Carol worked with the Abbey Press Christian Catalog. She left Abbey Press in 1995 to concentrate on raising her two children. During this time, she did free-lance writing, much of it with the local newspaper. In 2000, she returned to the Archabbey, where she worked in the Office of Group Accommodations. She left this position in 2011 to care for her father, who was very ill.

On October 7, she accepted the position in the Oblate Office. When she is not working in the Oblate Office, she is compiling her newspaper articles into a book format. Carol brings a wealth of experience to her duties. She recently started Inkspot Productions LLC, which focuses on public relations and event planning.

*Tom Rillo, oblate
Bloomington, IN*

Finance Committee reviews fiscal year results

The Oblate Finance Committee met October 18 to review financial results for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2013. Gift-giving continued to be strong and covered the normal operating expenses and additional printing and mailing costs. Normal expenses include those for the office, seasonal pamphlet printing and travel.

The additional printing expenses were incurred for publication of two books. A second printing of the *Liturgy of the Hours* edition was necessitated by having sold all 2,000 of the first printing. The book, *An Updated History of the Benedictine Oblate Community of Saint Meinrad Archabbey 1995-2012*, was prepared and mailed to all oblates at no cost to them.

Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, expressed great appreciation for the loyalty and financial commitment of the oblates for the good of the oblate community.

*Mike Reffett
Evansville, IN*

Oblate Council members make plans to visit chapters

The Oblate Council gathered at Saint Meinrad on October 19 for its 27th meeting. Janis Dopp chaired the meeting. Present on the Hill were Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, Gail Chambers, Janis Dopp, Al Kovacs, Mike Reffett, Dennis Skelton and Bill Wilson. Joining the group by phone was Chris Topa. Michelle Reffett acted as secretary. Jennie Latta and Pat Phillips were absent.

The meeting was opened with prayer by Fr. Meinrad followed by unison reading of the Statement of Purpose of the Oblate Council. Bill Wilson from Huntington, WV, was welcomed as a new member of the Council.

Mike Reffett and Fr. Meinrad reported on accomplishments by the oblate community and Council, which had been initiated since the July 2009 Meeting of Chapter Coordinators and Representatives (MCR). Some of those noted were: newsletter reports regularly from chapters, developing novice mentoring in chapters with a new mentoring booklet in process, planning for the 2014 Meeting of Chapter Coordinators and Representatives, a new format for the oblate newsletter, and scheduling Oblate Council member visits to each chapter. Ongoing concern for development of youth and young adult oblates was discussed.

Janis shared generally about her experience attending the Third World Congress of Benedictine Oblates in Rome in October. She and Jennie Latta were the representatives from Saint Meinrad. The theme of the

Congress was “listening.” Close to 150 delegates from across the world were in attendance.

Fr. Meinrad reported on a variety of topics. He reported the resignation of Oblate Council member John Pelletier and expressed appreciation for his service. Carol Troesch has been employed as the new administrative assistant in the Oblate Office. Appreciation was expressed to Sarah Fisher for her work as she moves to another department at Saint Meinrad.

Work continues in the audio-visual library to transfer material from cassette to MP3 format; updates were shared on Fr. Meinrad’s travel to various chapters. A revised “Expectations of Chapters” will be discussed at MCR 2014. The Council celebrated with Fr. Meinrad the positive financial stability of the oblate community and the 1,200+ oblates in the community.

He also shared his appreciation for the good work done to update the oblate brochure, the development of a new resource, “Saints and Seasons,” and the active role played by the oblates in the community. As a sign of remembrance of deceased oblates, a Mass will be said in memory of each deceased oblate. A future article in the newsletter will explain about “End Matters for Benedictine Oblates.”

Schedules and plans were confirmed by Oblate Council members to visit chapters in 2014. A council member will be present along with one of the monks. At the visit, the Oblate Council member will share briefly about the work of the Council and general information about the Saint Meinrad oblate community.

In appreciation for the monks of Saint Meinrad, the Council asked Fr. Meinrad to discuss with Archabbot Justin about providing for a special cheese and dessert event as a gift to



Oblates Margit Sanders of Vine Grove, KY, and Robert Hess of Louisville, KY, celebrated the 25th anniversary of their oblations during the Epiphany Party 2013.

the monks from the oblates on the Feast of St. Meinrad (January 21).

Fr. Meinrad closed the meeting with a prayer and blessing. The next meeting of the Oblate Council will be April 5, 2014.

*William (Bill) H. Wilson, oblate
Huntington, WV*

Mark Bernard Schipper ordained

Oblate Mark Bernard Schipper of the Indianapolis Chapter was ordained a permanent deacon on September 14, 2013. The ordination took place at the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Lafayette, IN.

Carol Devine celebrates 50 years

Congratulations are extended to Carol Devine as she celebrates 50 years as an oblate. She was invested on November 21, 1963, in New York, NY, and is a member of the Farmingdale, NY, Chapter.

Oblate Tim Mattingly marries Jayne Sims

Congratulations are extended to oblate Tim Mattingly on his marriage to

Jayne Sims on September 20, 2013. A reception was held at the Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guest House and Retreat Center in October.

Oblate Michael Edwards marries Jennifer Kunkler

Congratulations are extended to oblate Michael Edwards on his marriage to Jennifer Kunkler on October 12, 2013. A reception followed at the Perry County 4-H Fairgrounds.

James Anzelmo secures new position

The Catholic Foundation has hired oblate James Anzelmo as vice president of development. Before joining the foundation, he was a staff attorney for the 10th Ohio District Court of Appeals. James has been an oblate since 2007 and is a member of the chapter in Columbus, OH.

Two oblates celebrate 25 years

Oblates Margit Sanders of Vine Grove, KY, and Robert Hess of Louisville, KY, celebrated the 25th anniversary of their oblations. Congratulations on your faithfulness as oblates. ♦

OBLATIONS

August 18, 2013 – Mrs. Tammy Phoebe Becht of Floyds Knobs, IN.

September 7, 2013 – Rev. Brian John of the Cross Logging of Manheim, PA.

September 13, 2013 – Deacon Gregory Daniel Clodi of Kankakee, IL.

October 5, 2013 – Mrs. Catherine Gertrude Moriarty and Mrs. Elaine Mary Margaret Magdelene Zimmer, both of Columbus, IN.

October 29, 2013 – John Edward Anselm Manzo of New Albany, IN.

November 6, 2013 – Michael Patrick Edwards of St. Meinrad.

November 17, 2013 – Mr. Kevin Thomas Maloney of Louisville, KY.

November 19, 2013 - Mr. Steven John Henry Newman Borchert of Portage, MI.

November 21, 2013 – Mr. Patrick Martin Mordente of Scott Air Force Base, IL.

November 24, 2013 – Mrs. Paula Theresa Benedicta of the Cross Yerke of Cincinnati, OH. ♦

INVESTITURES

August 16, 2013 – Mr. Joseph McKeon and Mrs. Barbara McKeon, both of Cape Girardeau, MO.

September 1, 2013 – Mr. Daniel Pierce Sr. of North Massapequa, NY; Ms. Georgiana Sullivan of Deer Park, NY.

September 3, 2013 – Mr. Jim Daily of Atoka, TN.

September 7, 2013 – Rev. Msgr. Thomas Smith of Lancaster, PA.

September 10, 2013 – Mrs. Catherine Osborne of Wasilla, AK.

September 12, 2013 – Mr. Matt Pflederer of Paoli, IN.

September 14, 2013 – Mrs. Theresa Miller of Brownsburg, IN.

September 22, 2013 – Ms. Ursula Hassel of Cincinnati, OH; Mrs. Lori Walsh of Bethel, OH.

September 23, 2013 – Dr. Maria Ranola of Evansville, IN; Deacon Brian Wideman of Neenah, WI.

October 2, 2013 – Mrs. Catherine Worley of Danville, OH.

October 5, 2013 – Mr. Phillip D. Ford, Lebanon IN; Mr. Brian T. Garrett, Evansville, IN.

October 7, 2013 – Mr. Andre Munoz Jr., Corpus Christi, TX.

October 18, 2013 – Mrs. Connie Thompson, Louisville, KY.

October 19, 2013 – Dr. Lanny Hollis, Brooklyn, OH; Mr. David Kelker Jr. and Mrs. Catherine Kelker, both of Fort Wayne, IN.

October 27, 2013 – Mr. Brandon M. Hunt of Branchville, IN.

October 31, 2013 – Mrs. Kathryn Holmstrom of Crawfordsville, IN.

November 2, 2013 – Mrs. Candida Mackell of Findlay, OH.

November 4, 2013 – Mr. Francis Shivone of Fort Worth, TX.

November 18, 2013 – Mr. Jay Loucks of LaPorte, IN.

November 21, 2013 – Mrs. Debbie Voges of Tell City, IN.

November 24, 2013 – Mrs. Mary Louise Reed and Mr. Peyton Reed, both of Williamsburg, OH. ♦

DEATHS

March 23, 2013 – Mr. Christopher Catlett of Mechanicsville, VA.

November 5, 2013 – Mrs. Mary McCoy of Louisville, KY.

November 6, 2013 – Deacon Gary Lane of Charleston, WV.

As of November 2, 2013, when an oblate dies, the monastery will have a Mass offered for that oblate. ♦

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 10-20, 2014: Br. Maurus Zoeller, OSB, is hosting a pilgrimage to England and Scotland. The trip will highlight old cathedrals, castles, old monasteries, pageantry, drama, good food and fellowship. The group will also travel to Edinburgh and the ancient city of York. Three nights and two full days will be spent in London.

November 3-14, 2014: Br. Maurus Zoeller, OSB, is hosting a pilgrimage to Poland and Eastern Europe. This trip will include visits to Warsaw, Krakow, Jasna Gora Monastery in Czestochowa, Wadowice, birthplace of Pope John Paul II; Budapest, Vienna and Prague. For information on either pilgrimage, contact Br. Maurus at (812) 357-6674 or mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu.

March 19-21, 2014: The March Oblate Retreat will have Fr. Vincent Tobin, OSB, as the retreat presenter on “Christ in the Cloister: Shaped by Word and Sacrament.”

April 19, 2014: The Day of Recollection for the Louisville, KY, area oblates will be held. Br. Zachary Wilberding, OSB, will present “From Our Hands to Our Hearts: Praying the Rosary.”

May 17, 2014: The Day of Recollection for the Ohio oblates will be held in the Cincinnati area. Fr. Noël Mueller, OSB, will be the presenter on “Our Commitment to Christ: Living the Sacraments and the *Rule*.”

June 9-12, 2014: Oblate Study Days will take place at Saint Meinrad Archabbey. Fr. Brendan Moss, OSB, will speak on “The Presence of God in the Life of the Oblate.” ♦

Luminous Mysteries

Some reflections about the rosary



William Hamrick

Editor's note: In this third article in a series, oblate William Hamrick offers some reflections on the Luminous Mysteries of the rosary. These mysteries were codified by Pope John Paul II. They point to events in Jesus' lifetime that shed particular light on His nature and mission.

The Baptism in the Jordan: This is the first theophany. I think about that light shining from heaven, the Holy Spirit descending in the shape of a dove and the Father's voice recognizing Jesus as the Son of God, and I wonder why there were disputes afterward about what the voice said.

Did God really speak so indistinctly that only a few could hear Him? Were the confused and the unbelieving simply not paying attention? But how could you not pay attention to light and a dove taking shape out of it? That's very puzzling.

The Marriage Feast at Cana: I know of a seminary rector who once refused permission to a seminarian to attend his (the seminarian's) sister's wedding. The student pointed to this event at which Jesus performed His first miracle as evidence that God really valued marriage. The rector's answer was, "It wasn't one of His better miracles." (!)

When I reflect on this miracle, I also think about the charming interaction between Jesus and His Mother. Jesus is unwilling because it is not yet time to begin the public ministry, and she has no hesitation about outing Him. She wins.

The Proclamation of the Kingdom and the Call to Repentance: When I think about this mystery, I try to contemplate the tremendous fact of God entering history as flesh and blood as the inauguration of the last phase of our salvation.

This also means that time, in a Christian sense, is eschatological – a process aimed toward the end and completion of all things. The call to repentance reminds us of Jesus' multiple warnings about not being caught unprepared.

The Transfiguration: This is the second theophany, and it takes place as Jesus is on His final trip to Jerusalem. The three apostles learn to see things with new eyes, to literally consider Jesus in a new light, and the final intelligibility of what they saw will become clear after the Resurrection.

This is a great lesson for us as well, as it encourages us to keep our eyes open to seeing people differently from the ways in which we are used to doing, and also to be very hesitant about judging them.

The Eucharist: I like to think about this mystery because it's the most important sacrament in my life. It is the Real Presence of Christ within us – the organic unity with Him as the Vine and us as the branches.

I also reflect on the people I see receiving Communion at Sunday Mass, and I wonder if many of them really understand what they are receiving. Their behavior often seems indifferent – very sloppy signs of the cross – and sometimes downright careless, if not irreverent.

However, Jesus did not say, "This is a representation of my Body," "This is

an analogy of my Body," or "This is a metaphor for my Body." Rather, He said, "This *is* my Body." It is our precious, irreplaceable gift and, at the end of our lives, the only food for the longest journey in the world.

William Hamrick, oblate
St. Louis, MO

Continued from p. 7

of the Congress, a genuine sense of and respect for the depth of what we were working with rose to the surface. There was a deepening realization that, while hearing is a function of the ear, listening is a function of the heart. It is no wonder that St. Benedict begins his *Rule* with the admonition, "Listen carefully, my son, to the master's instructions, and attend to them with the ear of your heart."

Abbot Primate Notker Wolf, OSB, closed the final session with words of wisdom and challenge. "You must show that you are interested, not in yourself, but in the whole human family ... to be an oblate is a vocation. We must listen with our ears and our hearts every day; with our whole existence We must think globally and enrich each other. We must look for the future on an international level."

Janis Dopp, oblate
Bloomington, IN



Left to right, Oblate Msgr. Robert Noon and Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, concelebrate Mass during the Columbus, OH, Chapter Meeting on October 24, 2013.

Reading Room

Vogt, Brandon. *The Church and New Media: Blogging Converts, Online Activists, and Bishops Who Tweet*. Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 2011.



We are experiencing the biggest communication shift since the invention of the printing press. How can Christians harness these new communication tools to reach out to individuals and groups in their communities, as well as in the world?

The author is a writer and speaker who blogs about theology, technology and social justice. Brandon Vogt is a mechanical engineer and heads his parish's social justice commission and teaches in the adult formation program.

Imagine cardinals and bishops who blog, surf the Internet, send text messages and write emails as a part of their communication activities. At the 43rd World Communications Day, Pope Benedict XVI called us to evangelize the "digital continent."

Contributors to the book include Fr. Robert Barron, Jennifer Fulwiler, Lisa Hendey, Fr. Dwight Longenecker,

Thomas Peters, Mark Shea and Matt Warner. Endorsements for *The Church and New Media* come from archbishops, cardinals, clergy, authors and other individuals who work for Christian enlightenment.

The Church cannot change its response to the Gutenberg printing press, the radio or television. They are fixed in history. But at the onset of this digital revolution, the Church's response is wide open. This digital revolution spans all demographics and all spheres of the Church.

The Church was quick to adopt digital technology. The Vatican created a website in 1995, making available many Church documents. There is no doubt that the efficient facilitation of parish administrative functions through digital programming will never be considered a passing fad. The digital age and the Church are married in terms of day-by-day operational procedures.

Oblates live in the digital age and it would be remiss if they did not take advantage of all it has to offer in terms of spiritual growth. This is a great book for oblates to acquire; it is only one of a small number that have addressed specifically the Church and new media.

*Thomas J. Rillo, oblate
Bloomington, IN*