



Saint Meinrad

NEWSLETTER FOR BENEDICTINE OBLATES OF SAINT MEINRAD

# Benedictine Oblate

FALL 2008

VOLUME 14:4

## FROM THE RULE:

“Obedience is a blessing to be shown by all, not only to the abbot but also to one another as brothers, since we know that it is by this way of obedience that we go to God.”

Chapter 71, Verses 1-2

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## New oblate video, ‘Seeking God in Everyday Life,’ is ready for viewing

A new video about the Benedictine Oblates of Saint Meinrad has been produced by Andrew B. Rawls, PhD, of Louisville, KY, in collaboration with Saint Meinrad Archabbey. Andy is a retired director of media services with 32 years’ experience at Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville.

Interest in the project was piqued by oblate Dennis Skelton of Louisville, a former student, colleague and friend of Andy. Realizing the need for an oblate video that could serve to both inform and recruit potential oblates and aware of Andy’s expertise in faith-centered video production, Dennis arranged for a meeting with Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB.

Dennis, Andy and Fr. Meinrad met for the first time on February 16, 2006, to discuss the feasibility of an oblate video. Fifteen questions were formulated to elicit responses about the experience of being an oblate. From the outset, there was a commitment to age, gender, racial, ethnic and geographical diversity of the oblate respondents.

Fr. Meinrad selected a broad base of oblates for possible interviews, including married couples, singles, Roman Catholics and non-Catholic oblates. Seventy oblates agreed to participate, and all were interviewed. This resulted in 20 hours of videotape and a transcript of 202 pages.

The final script evolved from the responses to the questions: What is an oblate? What does it mean to be an oblate? What does an oblate do? The last section of the video explains how to become an oblate.

Dennis provided editing advice to assure that precise language was used to define the oblate experience. Throughout the process of transcript editing, Fr. Meinrad was an integral part. Archabbot Justin DuVall, OSB, lent his support and encouragement as well.

According to Andy, the image of oblate life in the video will encourage others to learn more about the *Rule of St. Benedict* and how affiliation to Saint Meinrad Archabbey contributes to spiritual growth. The goals of the video are inspiration, information and invitation.

Inspiration provides motivation to individuals to grow spiritually, to come closer to God and to prefer nothing to Christ. Information is offered on how monastic affiliation can provide spiritual resources that will help individuals on a journey toward God. Invitation is for individuals who may want to become Benedictine Oblates of Saint Meinrad.

see New, p. 2

## New from p. 1

The DVD will be a part of a package mailed to those inquiring about the oblate community of Saint Meinrad Archabbey. This fall, it will be mailed to all oblates, oblate novices and friends and they will be encouraged to show the DVD in their respective parishes. Oblate chapters also will be encouraged to use the DVD as a promotional tool for potential oblate membership.

On August 18, a celebration commemorating the completion of the video was held in the Guest House lounge. Fr. Meinrad gave an overview of the historical background of the video. Archabbot Justin commented on the significance of the video to the continued growth of the oblate program.

Mary Jeanne Schumacher, director of communications for Saint Meinrad Archabbey, commented on the importance of the video. Andy spoke from his perspective as producer. The

video was shown, followed by a blessing from the archabbot. A brief reception followed.

The DVD is a beautiful audio and pictorial presentation with excellent media techniques applied. Congratulations are extended to all who had a role in its production.

Special acknowledgements are given to Andy Rawls, Mary Jeanne Schumacher, Dennis Skelton and Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, members of the video development committee.

*Thomas J. Rillo, oblate  
Bloomington, IN*



*Archabbot Justin DuVall, OSB, talks with, from left, Andy Rawls, Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, Mary Jeanne Schumacher and Dennis Skelton.*

## A POINT TO PONDER FROM THE RULE

**“Obedience is a blessing to be shown by all, not only to the abbot but also to one another as brothers, since we know that it is by this way of obedience that we go to God.”**

*Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 71, Verses 1-2*

Obedience is a precursor to the vow of fidelity to the monastic way of life. Obedience is a dynamic vow that targets conversion as a resulting outcome. It is all about hearing with the ear of the heart.

As oblates, we make a promise of obedience when we accept the duties and responsibilities of oblation. It is through this obedience that conversion becomes a reality in our secular lives. Obedience is not always easy and can be harsh and intimidating at times. Metanoia, or change of heart, is always preceded by obedience or fidelity to vows.

The discipline of obedience in the monastic life can be difficult at first. However, the resultant conversion can fuel our spiritual journey to God. Mutual obedience is the key to this particular rule. Not only should obedience be vertical, that is from the top (the abbot), but also horizontal, from monk to monk or oblate to oblate.

*Benedictine Oblate* is published four times a year by Saint Meinrad Archabbey.

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INSTITUTES & OBLATIONS

April 18, 2008, Investiture—*Ms. Sandra King* of Memphis, TN.

May 2, 2008, Oblations—*Rev. Mr. Joseph Dominic Riss* and *Mrs. Deborah Marie-Rose Riss*, both of Yorktown, VA.

May 4, 2008, Investiture—*Dr. Kenneth Dilger* of Evansville, IN.

May 10, 2008, Oblations—*Mr. Thomas Boniface McKiernan* and *Mr. John Daniel Schaffner*, both of Indianapolis, IN.

May 16, 2008, Investiture—*Mrs. Bonnie Berry* of Bethel, OH.

May 17, 2008, Investiture—*Mr. Aaron Johnson* of Westville, IL.

May 17, 2008, Oblation—*Miss Norma Teresa Jordan* of Dayton, OH.

May 18, 2008, Investiture—*Mr. R. William Montgomery, Jr.* of Louisville, KY.

May 25, 2008, Investiture—*Mr. Dennis Perry* of Salem, OH.

June 1, 2008, Investiture—*Mr. John Sanders* of Campbellsville, KY.

June 9, 2008, Investiture—*Mr. Stephen Bay* of Milford, OH.

June 15, 2008, Oblation—*Mrs. Gloria Varner* of Muncie, IN.

June 15, 2008, Investitures—*Mrs. Rita Denney* and *Mr. Louis Denney*, both of Muncie, IN.

June 18, 2008, Oblations—*Mr. John Bernard Huether* of Jasper, IN; *Mr. John Phillip Pelletier* of Mt. Pleasant, NC; *Miss Stephanie Magdalene Scheller* of Evansville, IN; and *Mrs. Carol Martha Sniadecki* of Anderson, IN.

June 22, 2008, Oblation—*Mr. Mike Anselm Head* of Owensboro, KY.

June 22, 2008, Investiture—*Mr. Scott Allen* of Evansville, IN.

June 25, 2008, Investitures—*Mrs. Cynthia Ann Boener* of Argos, IN, and *Mrs. Nancy Loriaux* of Bedford, IN.

June 28, 2008, Investiture—*Mrs. Kativa Leal* of Westfield, IN.

July 5, 2008, Investiture—*Mrs. Mary Dufour* of Rogers, AR.

July 8, 2008, Investiture—*Ms. Rosalie Jacques* of Morphett Vale, South Australia.

July 11, 2008, Investitures—*Ms. Jo Kostka* of Plattsmouth, NE, and *Mrs. Carolyn Linton* of Louisville, KY.

July 11, 2008, Oblations—*Ms. Jennifer Lynn Scholastica Hawke* of Indianapolis, IN; *Mr. Thomas Thomas the Apostle Rose* of Owensboro, KY, and *Ms. Adrienne Frances Strickland* of Asheville, NC.

August 4, 2008, Investiture—*Ms. Saundra Duffee* of Jeffersonville, IN.

August 10, 2008, Investiture—*Ms. Catherine Diaz* of Decatur, IL.

August 11, 2008, Investiture—*Mr. Brian Beckett* of Waynesville, OH.

August 12, 2008, Investiture—*Mr. Paul Tedesco* of Red Oak, TX.

August 14, 2008, Oblation—*Mr. Franklin St. Thomas More Walsh* of Sun City, AZ.

August 20, 2008, Oblation—*Mr. Dennis John of the Cross Gorcoff* of Massillon, OH.

August 21, 2008, Investitures—*Mr. James Ulm* of Spring City, TN, and *Mr. Mark Van Lummel* of Granger, IN. ♦

DEATHS

*Dr. Richard Arnett* of Blacklick, OH, died on April 15, 2008.

*Mrs. Martha Welch* of Fort Dodge, IA, died on May 14, 2008.

*Rev. William Martin* of Sherwood, OH, died on May 17, 2008.

*Ms. Lore Chen* of Bronx, NY, died on June 14, 2008.

*Mr. Raymond Hoehn, Sr.* of New Salisbury, IN, died on July 24, 2008. ♦

HAPPENINGS

**Dec. 29-Jan. 2**—Oblates Paul and Irene Muhs annually book this time slot for a family retreat at St. Gabriel's Spiritual Center for Youth, located not far from their home in Farmingdale,

*see Oblate News, p. 4*



*Andy Rawls is eager to see how the oblate video looks on the kiosk at the Guest House and Retreat Center.*

### Oblate News from p. 3

NY. Their five children and spouses, 20 grandchildren, a few other relatives and close friends use this opportunity to grow deeper in the Catholic faith. The whole family can be involved with a variety of faith-filled activities and observe others who give witness to Christ through ministry. They have rung in the last three New Years with their loved ones there.

**April 18, 2008**—Oblate Novice Brooke and Tom Whitten, Noblesville, IN, became proud parents of twin girls named Annamarie Paige and Sophia Grace.

**May 16, 2008**—The Ohio day of recollection, attended by about 30 oblates from the Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton and Reynoldsburg chapters, was hosted this year by the Cincinnati Oblate Chapter. At the Milford Spiritual Center, oblates enjoyed three conferences by Fr. Joseph Cox, OSB, who reminded us of various definitions of prayer (basically a lifting of hearts and minds to God) and expounded on various forms of prayer (blessing, adoration, petition, intercessory, thanksgiving and praise). He said the Eucharist was God's favorite form of prayer, followed by the Divine Office and *lectio divina*.

Prayer expression, said Fr. Joseph, can be vocal, meditative or contemplative. He suggested that, instead of repeatedly telling God what we want, we might ask God what He desires of us. Prayer need not be wordy, but can be simply a sincere desire for God—a time set aside when we are just present to God. The aim of prayer is to enter into a conversation with God, and often we pray the most when we say the least.

Stating that prayer is a battle until the last breath, Fr. Joseph explained various obstacles to prayer and offered suggestions for improving our prayer lives. He reminded us that St. Benedict taught that prayers should be short

and pure. We can pray any time during the day, and he suggested that we erect an altar to God in our hearts.

The sacrament of Reconciliation was also available, and the day concluded following Vespers and Mass.

*Patricia Dorn, oblate  
Cincinnati, OH*

**June 7, 2008**—The Louisville day of recollection, organized by oblate George Thompson with help from oblate Robert Hess, was attended by 17 oblates and Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, oblate director. Fr. Vincent Tobin, OSB, presenter of "Pray with the Liturgy of the Hours," explained the development of the *Liturgy of the Hours* and that it is the prayer book of the Church, ancient and modern.

He gave reflections on the adaptability of the psalms to any personal or ecclesial situation. He pointed out that, in praying the *Liturgy of the Hours*, speed kills—we need to pray slowly and reflectively. He explained how to pray the Liturgy of the Hours, using the *Christian Prayer* of one volume.

**June 7, 2008**—Fr. Simeon Daly, OSB, Br. Terence Griffin, OSB, and oblate Ruth Engs held a book signing at Borders Bookstore in Bloomington,

IN. They enjoyed interacting with various people, including some Bloomington oblates. The book, *Conversations in the Abbey: Senior Monks Reflect on Their Lives*, is an oral history of 11 senior monks of the Archabbey, along with three historical essays on the work of the abbey.

The publication recently received a lot of publicity, including a news release by Indiana University and an author interview with "Active for Life," the IU electronic health newsletter. Links to these IU Web sites and a link to the Scholar Shop at Saint Meinrad Archabbey, where the book can be ordered, are found on the Engs Web site: <http://www.indiana.edu/~engs/monk/index.html>.

*Prof. Ruth Engs, oblate  
Bloomington, IN*

**June 16-19, 2008**—About 45 members of the oblate community, from as far away as New York City and as nearby as Santa Claus, IN, convened at Saint Meinrad Archabbey for what has become an annual experience—oblate study days. The oblates prayed the Divine Office and attended Mass each day with the monastic community in the Archabbey Church. Fr. Vincent Tobin, OSB, was the celebrant and



*Oblates visit the pottery workshop and watch Br. Martin Erspamer, OSB, and Br. John Mark Falkenhain, OSB, at work, during the oblate study days.*

homilist for the week, and his prayerful reflections added a great deal to our time together.

The topic was “Arts & Crafts and Conversion,” presented by Br. John Mark Falkenhain, OSB, and Br. Martin Erspamer, OSB. The men, artists in their own right, shared with oblates their love of the creative arts and the monastic work of contemplation. Oblates were introduced to what real contemplation is about—the ability to see one’s reality in a new way.

Through drawing and pottery making, the oblates were exposed to the power of creative art to aid us in seeing the extraordinary in what might seem the ordinary environment of our lives. Both men shared far more than simple lecture notes—they shared time and much personality, making a connection with every oblate present.

The workshops had two memorable exercises. All oblates were challenged by Br. Martin to draw a self-portrait (resulting in something less than museum-quality images), which helped us to learn how complicated really seeing something can be.

The trip to the pottery workshops shared by Br. John Mark and Br. Martin was both a fun experience and a learning experience for those who knew little about pottery. We were able to see clay in the hands of a potter. These experiences challenged the oblates to see that creative art has the power to open wider our contemplative side.

Socially, the oblate community rarely has trouble having a good time, and this time was no exception. The high point was Wednesday night’s social—a birthday party complete with cake, ice cream and birthday hat for Br. John Mark. The oblates connected and reconnected in a real testimony to Benedictine hospitality. Br. Maurus Zoeller, OSB, proved once again to be a marvelous monk by making every oblate feel welcome.

The oblates went home refreshed,

renewed and enthused by the new dimensions brought to their experience of Benedictine spirituality by Br. John Mark and Br. Martin. We certainly will have much fuel for prayer and reflection over the coming days. Next year’s oblate study days are set for June 15-18. Fr. Brendan Moss, OSB, will present “Obedience and How an Oblate Lives It.”

*Fr. Thomas D’Angelo, oblate  
Bronx, NY*

**June 16-19, 2008**—Throughout the oblate study days, Br. John Mark and Br. Martin led us to look at the way “the arts are windows into understanding God and ourselves.” The arts became the “chink-hole” for looking at conversion as it is lived out in the monastery and in the world.

Here are some paraphrased bits of wisdom that we can hold onto throughout this year of studying the promise of “conversion of heart” that we make at our oblation.

1. Vows (or promises) do not exist for their own sake. They exist for the sake of conversion.

2. Obedience is about placing somebody else’s needs and demands above our own.

3. Obedience leads us to conversion when the people to whom we are vowed get in our face and demand that we change, to become better than we are.

4. Stability comes in when obedience is really tough. When the going gets tough, the tough stay put—and that means staying after you have exhausted all of your distractions.

5. We have to recognize the inner buzzing ugliness in ourselves, knowing ourselves entirely as God knows us, and then loving ourselves in our entirety as God loves us.

6. The formation of a monk is designed to help him become more and more human, less afraid, more tolerant of others and of himself. There is less and less of a need to be perfect.

We find Christ even in the dark and the ugly—at the very core of humanity. Life experiences often drive us to our inner core. Art has the capacity to do the same thing, showing us something of the Divine and something of ourselves as well.

7. Art challenges us to move outside our comfort zone and become more tolerant.

8. Never underestimate the power an image has to transform our lives.

9. Art is about authenticity and telling the truth about what we see and what we are.

10. We need to be OK with failure.

11. Vision or inspiration comes when we open ourselves up to divine influence. It is as shocking as being lost in the woods.

12. Art and monastic life are very similar. They both require openness, the expansion of our hearts and minds, especially to ideas that are not our own. It is about obedience and discipline, stability and gratitude.

13. There is a lack of self-consciousness in doing art or craft. We are open to seeing something in a different way. This makes it possible to turn what we are doing into a prayer. What becomes precious is not the object produced, but the knowledge that comes from producing it.

14. The way we work with the materials of our art or craft is the way we should interact with people, being gentle and coaxing rather than using brute force. With clay and with people, we have to know when to push and when not to.

15. Art is all about making us see ordinary things in an extraordinary way.

16. When we take the risk to move inward and do the internal work, grace flows out. We can’t give ourselves away until we know ourselves and can, therefore, give ourselves away freely.

*see Oblate News, p. 6*

## Oblate News from p. 5

17. Art is both product and process. It is a pathway. It is participation in the ongoing act of creation. It is work done with love.

*Janis Dopp, oblate  
Bloomington, IN*

**June 27, 2008**—Oblates Deacon Jim and Carolyn MacDougall of Muncie, IN, serve in prison ministry at Pendleton Reformatory. The Catholic inmates whom they serve are praying for an increase in vocations to the monastery and have provided wonderful reflections on St. Benedict and the evils of abortion.

**June 28, 2008**—The Honorable Marc R. Kellams, oblate from Bloomington, IN, was ordained to the permanent diaconate for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. May God's blessings be upon him in his ministry.

**June 30, 2008**—Andrew B. Rawls, from Louisville, KY, presented to Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, oblate director, the master copy of the DVD titled "Seeking God in Everyday Life—Benedictine Oblates of Saint Meinrad Archabbey." The ten-minute DVD will be sent to all the oblates with the renewal card during October.

**July 11, 2008**—Fifty-six oblates attended the day of recollection on the Feast of St. Benedict. Fr. Gabriel Hodges, OSB, led the conferences on



*Andy Rawls presents Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, the master copy of the new oblate video.*

"Experiencing God in the Quotidian (everyday) Activities of Our Lives." He began by sharing stories about his hobbies of beer and soap making (many participants will never look at beer and soap in the same way). He then moved into a more serious look at the ordinary and the extraordinary in our everyday lives.

Fr. Gabriel suggested the importance of simplicity in our lives, asserting that we often suffer from *acedia* (spiritual boredom). But, said Fr. Gabriel, ordinary activities often allow us the freedom for contemplation. Even baking bread can be a spiritual activity, if we allow it to be.

For our meditation, Fr. Gabriel suggested that we look at the ordinary activities we find most compatible with contemplation. If we do not have any, he suggested that we ask ourselves: why not?

Building on this idea, Fr. Gabriel talked about re-creation and recreation, saying that cell phones, fax machines and other technological aids, originally designed to save us time, have actually added to our workaholicism. But, said Fr. Gabriel, "When God finished with creation, He relaxed, and so should we, by cooperating with God in His creative acts."

He suggested that we "re-find" the lost arts, that we "re-find" our sense of awe, wonder and giftedness, and that we again become generative by taking something tangible and creating. Even more than simply creating, we need to remember that to be really creative or generative, our activity must be communal, and thus we will participate in God's nurturing process.

Most importantly, suggested Fr. Gabriel, we need to get comfortable with the person God wants us to be. He then asked us to think about our own lives and how we see ourselves in our lives. Do we see creation or re-creation?

*Cathy Byers, oblate novice  
Nineveh, IN*

**July 11, 2008**—The Bronx-Westchester Chapter of the New York oblates celebrated the Feast of St. Benedict with the Eucharist and a festive luncheon at Corpus Christi Monastery in the Bronx. Celebrant for the liturgy was Fr. Tom D'Angelo, a New York oblate since 1995. The monastery is occupied by the Dominican Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, who pray for each of the priests who study at St. Joseph Seminary in Yonkers, NY. Fr. Tom has been associated with them for about 25 years.

Before Mass, Fr. Tom provided a private conference for the Sisters of Corpus Christi on *lectio divina*. The sisters were gracious hosts to the eight oblates who attended. The luncheon consisted of pizza (a real "New York" staple), salad and ice cream. The pizza was supplied by Louie Ljuno, a friend of the sisters and the oblates. The sisters graciously prepared the bulk of the lunch for oblates.

During his homily, Fr. Tom encouraged the oblates and sisters to look to the example of St. Benedict, who put nothing ahead of knowing Jesus and His word. The liturgy was made more beautiful by the sisters, who chanted the liturgy of the feast with Fr. Tom.

*Fr. Thomas D'Angelo, oblate  
Bronx, NY*

**July 16, 2008**—Oblate Jerry Maillet of Indianapolis reported that 31 Vincentians—benefactors, food pantry volunteers and sisters of Our Lady of Grace Monastery—attended the St. Vincent de Paul Chapel dedication at the food pantry. Rev. J.G. Riedman, pastor, Holy Spirit Parish, presided and preached at the blessing.

Following the reading and a brief homily, he sprinkled holy water throughout the chapel, including the altar, the crucifix and the statues that were donated by the sisters of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove. The 24-seat chapel provides space for private prayer and meditation. Volunteers are asked to visit the chapel to pray to bring their work to

perfection and to help them see Christ's image in the poor.

**July 19, 2008**—The Oblate Council met with Fr. Eugene Hensell, OSB, to discuss the Meeting of Chapter Coordinators and Representatives (MCR 2009), which is scheduled for July 17-19, 2009. The topic will be "Looking to the Future: Shared Leadership" and Fr. Eugene will be the primary presenter and director of this conference. A lively and productive discussion took place, providing much material for use in preparing for the conference.

Oblate Jennie Latta and Br. Karl Cothorn, OSB, provided an update on the new Liturgy of the Hours book, which will have a four-week cycle, contain a format similar to the handouts used in the Archabbey Church and include artwork. Cost, book title and other issues related to this project were discussed.

Oblate Gail Chambers and Vincent Cothorn (brother of Br. Karl) presented the results of a questionnaire, designed by oblate Albert Kovacs and prepared for mailing to 120 young oblates by Gail Chambers. The response rate of 20 percent was good, and the information will be used to improve the outreach to and retention of young adults as oblates. Updates and reports were also received on the customary and ritual book, the oblate video and oblate finances.

Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, reported on information about the oblate community that will be provided to the 2008 visitation committee that is coming to Saint Meinrad Archabbey. He reported that Saint Meinrad was selected at the regional directors' meeting to send a delegate to the World Congress of Benedictine Oblates 2009, and oblate Janis Dopp, chair of the Oblate Council, has been selected as delegate.

He also reported that oblate Steven Zubel, due to his increased diaconate responsibilities, will be leaving the

Oblate Council after being a member since its beginning in October 2004.

Fr. Meinrad expressed appreciation for Steve's fine work for the past five years. Oblate Jerry Campbell of Chillicothe, OH, will fill this vacancy; he is a member of the Oblate Finance Committee. Also, Albert Kovacs has accepted membership on the Oblate Council. He represents the younger oblates of Saint Meinrad.

**July 26, 2008**—Oblate Eydie Hill and Steven Rhea Tyer were united in holy matrimony at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Cordova, TN.

**August 16, 2008**—Oblate Novice Marilyn and Earl Fuhs of Jasper, IN, celebrated their golden wedding anniversary at Precious Blood Parish in Jasper. ♦

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**November 30, 2008**—A day of recollection for New York oblates will be held at St. Ignatius Retreat House in Manhasset, NY, with Br. Thomas Gricoski, OSB, presenting "Fidelity to the Monastic Way of Life."

**December 12-14, 2008**—The oblate retreat at Saint Meinrad Archabbey will have the talents of Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, Fr. Joseph Cox, OSB, Fr. Brendan Moss, OSB, and Br. Thomas Gricoski, OSB, presenting "*Conversatio*: With the Instruments of Good Works." Oblate Tom Yost, New Albany, IN, will present an acoustical guitar concert of contemporary Church music from the 1960s to the present on Saturday evening, December 13.

**February 21, 2009**—A day of recollection for Louisville, KY, area oblates will be held at the Sisters of the Poor Home in Louisville with Fr. Brendan Moss, OSB, presenting on *lectio divina*.

**March 20-22, 2009**—Fr. Prior Tobias Colgan, OSB, will lead the oblate retreat on "Fidelity to the Monastic Way of Life." A concert by classical pianist Diane Rivera, an oblate from

Bloomington, IN, will be presented on the evening of March 21.

**May 16, 2009**—A day of recollection for the Ohio oblates will be held at the Shrine of the Little Flower in Columbus, OH, with Fr. Brendan Moss, OSB, presenting "Fidelity to the Monastic Way of Life."

**June 15-18, 2009**—Oblate Study Days at Saint Meinrad Archabbey will be on "Obedience and How an Oblate Lives It" by Fr. Brendan Moss, OSB. He will explore the Benedictine approach to obedience. Sessions will include discussion, prayer and time for interaction among the oblates.

**July 10, 2009**—A day of recollection for the oblates will be held at Saint Meinrad Archabbey. Fr. Vincent Tobin, OSB, is the presenter, and his topic will be announced later. Included will be Mass, three conferences, quiet time for prayer, lunch and the sacrament of Reconciliation.

**November 9-18, 2009**—A Holy Land Pilgrimage, visiting Haifa, Tiberias, Nazareth, Bethlehem and Jerusalem, will be hosted by Br. Maurus Zoeller, OSB. The tour includes round-trip airfare from New York, accommodations in first-class hotels, breakfast and dinner daily, services of English-speaking guides, comprehensive sightseeing throughout, flight insurance, service charges and local taxes. A deposit of \$400, made out to Nawas International and sent to Br. Maurus, will hold your place. Contact Br. Maurus at Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 100 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad, IN 47577; (812) 357-6674 or mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu.

Recent volunteers in the Oblate Office have been Monina Abrera, Cathey Byers, Jerry Campbell, Gail Chambers, Vincent Cothorn, Fr. Thomas D'Angelo, Janis Dopp, Howard Dotterweich, Ray Emsweller, Jennie Latta, Tom Lehr, Michael Luckett, Jerry Maillet, Thomas and Joan Rillo, Stephanie Scheller, Dennis Skelton, Joe Waugh and Yvonne Weaver. ♦



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## Reading Room

*The Work of Our Hands: The Art of Martin Erspamer, OSB* (Pastoral Press, 2007) features the liturgical art of Br. Martin, a monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey. The book contains 44 full-color plates covering a lifetime of liturgical art.

Mere words cannot fully capture the beauty of the book. The photos show Br. Martin's paintings, ceramics, and such church furniture as altars, ambos, reliquaries and processional crosses. His visual art includes drawings and paintings, as well as woodcuts and handcrafted amberlith film.

Br. Martin, formerly Steve Erspamer, is a well-known liturgical artist. From 2005 to 2007, his art was featured on the covers of 18 missals published by OCP of Portland, OR. Thousands of parishes throughout the United States have used his clip art in their Sunday bulletins.

The book's foreword was written by Saint Meinrad Archabbot Justin DuVall, OSB. He comments that the work presented in the book purports "the ancient bloodline of art as experience of the transcendent."

In the preface, Fr. Guerric DeBona, OSB, a Saint Meinrad monk, writes that the transcendent in

Br. Martin's work reveres the God who is both beyond and before us. God is both holy mysterious and mysteriously present in the community of love. Fr. Guerric says that Br. Martin's work points us back to the liturgy.

The captions to the artwork were written by Br. Martin, and they explain the inspiration behind and the symbols within each creative work. Many of his creations were inspired by medieval and gothic figures that he experienced firsthand in Europe.

It was fortunate for Saint Meinrad that Br. Martin was invited to do the triptych of St. Meinrad the martyr as part of the Archabbey Church renovation. Eight years later, he asked his superiors for a transfer of his vows from the Marianist order to Saint Meinrad.

Oblates will enjoy reading this book and meditating on the beauty they see within it. It is not a book that is meant to be shelved, but rather kept out to share with others who enter the oblate's home.

*Thomas J. Rillo, oblate  
Bloomington, IN*