



Saint Meinrad

NEWSLETTER FOR BENEDICTINE OBLATES OF SAINT MEINRAD

Benedictine Oblate

SUMMER 2008

VOLUME 14:3

FROM THE RULE:

“If there are skilled workers in the monastery, let them practice their craft with all humility and with the abbot’s permission.”

Chapter 57, Verses 1-3

INSIDE

- ◆ Investitures & Oblations
- ◆ Happenings
- ◆ Deaths
- ◆ Reading Room
- ◆ Upcoming Events
- ◆ Busy Culture

A reflection for oblates on fidelity to the spirit of monastic life

For the Benedictine monk, nun or oblate, entering the monastery or making one’s oblation does not mean that achieving holiness is a “done deal.” Monastic profession and oblation are a beginning, not a conclusion.

And what the monk, nun or oblate is beginning is an education. St. Benedict says as much in the *Rule*: “...we must establish a school of the Lord’s service.”(Prologue 45) That is what St. Benedict had in mind, and that is what we are called to, “a school of the Lord’s service.”

Our teachers in this school are Jesus, who calls us to live in the spirit of the Gospel, and St. Benedict, who provides a wise and sure pattern for doing this. Benedictines commit themselves to the pursuit of this ideal through the vow or promise of fidelity to the monastic way of life. It is clear that all do not live out this commitment in the same way.

For example, oblates do not normally live together in a monastery, share common meals every day, pray the Liturgy of the Hours in common or need the Abbot’s permission to “give, receive, or retain anything as (their) own.” (RB 33:2-3) Nor are oblates provided with a half bottle of wine a day! (RB 40:3)

But what we do have in common, whether professed monks and nuns or oblates, is our

dedication to the spirit of the monastic life. We share a pursuit of holiness by means of Benedictine spirituality. So the clearer our view of what Benedictine spirituality is, the more authentic our commitment will be.

During these coming months, we oblates of Saint Meinrad Archabbey will be encouraged to take fidelity to the spirit of the monastic life as a theme for our thought and study. It is something we all are committed to, and learning to understand and appreciate it more and more is a significant part of our education.

Fidelity is something to be nurtured or else it will weaken and fade away. This nurture is provided for us largely by the duties we undertake as oblates. It might be helpful, then, to revisit those duties.

We begin with the Liturgy of the Hours, which helps to keep us in the presence of God throughout the day. Our *Benedictine Oblate Companion* reminds us that “the purpose of praying the Liturgy of the Hours several times a day, day after day, is to encounter God.” (p. 44)

St. Benedict considered this type of prayer so important that he devoted 12 chapters to it near the beginning of the *Rule*. (RB 8-19) It also serves to unite us in spirit with the rest of the monastic family, both monks and nuns in choir and other oblates

see A reflection, p. 2

A reflection from p. 1

in their various locations who are engaged in this prayer as well.

Our reading from the *Rule of St. Benedict* each day connects us with the source of Benedictine spirituality. Because the *Rule* shows signs of the sixth-century culture in which it was written, our daily reading might be enriched by picking up one or the other of the modern commentaries such as Sr. Joan Chittister's *The Rule of Benedict: Insights for the Ages*. This book provides a reading from and commentary on the *Rule* arranged for each day of the year and is, in my opinion, a fine contemporary guide in our pursuit of fidelity to the monastic way of life.

As our reading of the *Rule* educates us in the spirit of the monastic way of life, *lectio divina*, or reflective, prayerful reading of the Bible or other good spiritual books, puts us in personal touch with the spirit of Jesus. We read a passage, reflect on its personal meaning to us, talk with God about it, and

become quietly receptive to what God might have to say to us.

This leads us to becoming open and accessible to the purpose and action of God within us. This availability to God is fundamental to the monastic spirit. (Prologue 8-13)

Regular celebration of the sacraments, especially Eucharist and Reconciliation (if the oblate is not Roman Catholic, he/she will be faithful to his/her beliefs concerning church and prayer), not only strengthens and renews us spiritually in the company of the Christian community, but gradually builds in us an attitude of worship.

The sacraments involve an experience of the transforming presence of God at various moments of our life and also move us toward veneration of this presence. St. Benedict described this as keeping the fear of God always before our eyes. (RB 7:10)

Attention to the presence of God in our daily life rounds out our duties. Being aware of this presence every second is,

of course, an unrealistic goal for us and even for professed religious. However, our living among the demands and distractions of daily life is punctuated by the regular and conscious turning to God involved in our other duties as oblates. This makes it possible to carry the presence of God at least in the back of our mind all the time.

Fulfilling these obligations, as St. Benedict infers, is our means of "dwelling in God's tent" (Prologue 39) and, we might add, of pursuing our ideal of fidelity to the monastic life.

*Fr. Bernard Head, oblate
St. Mary of the Woods, IN*

Reflection Questions

1. Why is oblation a beginning, not a conclusion?
2. Who are the teachers in St. Benedict's "school of the Lord's service"?
3. What do monks and oblates have in common?
4. How do we nurture fidelity to the monastic way of life?
5. When and where do the oblates live out the five duties that they undertake when they made their oblation?
6. How would you express each duty of an oblate in just one sentence?

A POINT TO PONDER FROM THE RULE

"If there are skilled workers in the monastery, let them practice their craft with all humility and with the abbot's permission."

Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 57, Verses 1-3

Monasteries are typically full of skilled individuals, and those skilled individuals are usually proud of their skills. This is a normal phenomenon and nothing to be ashamed of.

Benedict wants his artists and craftsmen to be humble. However, pride and humility should not be exclusive of one another. If the artwork or other creative item inspires the beholder to a conversion experience, then pride is acceptable when accompanied by humility.

If the art or craft product affects the emotional and psychological characteristics, resulting in metanoia or change of heart, then it can be said that conversion has been initiated. Artists and high-level craftsmen should be encouraged to emphasize the spirituality contained in their work. It is within the framework of spirituality that conversion can grow and flourish.

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INSTITUTES & OBLATIONS

February 15, 2008, Investiture—*Mr. Jay Rush* of Shelbyville, IN.

February 23, 2008, Investiture—*Mr. Neil Galbraith* of Ann Arbor, MI.

February 28, 2008, Oblations—*Mrs. Mary Kathryn Francesca Dorsey* of West Chester, PA, *Mrs. Nancy Francis Lips* and *Mr. George Joseph Lips*, both of Lancaster, PA.

February 28, 2008, Investiture—*Mr. Albert Meier* of Lancaster, PA.

March 1, 2008, Oblations—*Ms. Lorraine Scholastica Kraft* of Copiague, NY, *Mrs. Patricia Bernadette Nicholes* and *Ms. Edith Mary Pellicano*, both of Farmingdale, NY.

March 7, 2008, Investitures—*Mrs. Cynthia Crisler* and *Bryan, Noah* and *Abigail Crisler*, all of Portland, IN.

March 22, 2008, Investitures—*Mr. John Aasmundstad* of Indianapolis, IN, and *Mr. David Ruecker* of Ballwin, MO.

March 23, 2008, Investitures—*Mrs. Catherine Byers* of Nineveh, IN, and *Mrs. Joan Hilton* of Cincinnati, OH.

March 29, 2008, Oblation—*Mr. Richard Francis Peters* of Lowell, IN.

March 29, 2008, Investitures—*Mrs. Lisa Holt* of Greenwood, IN, and *Ms. Patricia Linder* of Kokomo, IN.

March 30, 2008, Oblation—*Mr. Steven Augustine Frueh* of Lexington, KY.

April 1, 2008, Oblation—*Mrs. Deborah Mary Miller* of Muncie, IN.

April 1, 2008, Investitures—*Ms. Lillian Pratt* of Lewisville, TX, and *Mr. Scott Schwinghammer* of Jasper, IN.

April 10, 2008, Investiture—*Rev. Mark McDaniel* of Bedford, IN.

April 11, 2008, Oblation—*Mr. Richard Benedict Johnson* of Muncie, IN.

April 12, 2008, Oblation—*Mr. Steven Paul Seitz* of Indianapolis, IN.

April 19, 2008, Investitures—*Dr. Eddy Koonce* and *Mrs. Judy Koonce* of Jackson, TN.

April 24, 2008, Oblation—*Mr. Tim Michael Joseph Ryan* of Somerset, OH.

April 26, 2008, Oblation—*Mr. Paul David Benedict Abshear* of Dayton, OH. ♦

DEATHS

Mr. Carl Marshall of Indianapolis, IN, died on March 19, 2008.

Mrs. Rimiko Jackson of Madison, IN, died on April 1, 2008. ♦

HAPPENINGS

March 1, 2008—Oblate Thomas J. Rillo of Bloomington, IN, has written a book called *Deepening Faith through Poetry*. It is a collection of spiritual poems inspired by fellow St. Charles Borromeo parishioners, monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, and a variety of other memories, situations and experiences. His poetry is a portrait of ongoing conversion into a stronger faith life fueled by participation in Cursillo and becoming a Benedictine oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey. This book delves

into the spiritual lives and situations represented in eight sections, and it can serve as a tool of evangelization to encourage others on their journey to God. The book may be purchased from the Oblate Office for \$8.95 plus shipping expenses (to benefit the Oblate Office) or online from www.lulu.com/Deepening Faith/.

March 3-13, 2008—Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, and Br. Maurus Zoeller, OSB, accompanied a group of 89 people, 11 of whom were oblates, on a trip to the Holy Land.

March 19, 2008—Oblate Charles McKelvy of Harbert, MI, wrote a newspaper article about silence—its lack and his appreciation for it—citing his retreat experiences as an oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey. His article in the May/June 2008 issue of *Birds & Blooms* describes a rare encounter with a tired Blackburnian warbler that visited him on his fishing pole while he was fishing in Lake Michigan.

March 31–April 2, 2008—The oblate retreat “Stability: The Beginning or the End?” with Fr. Cyprian Davis, OSB, at Saint Meinrad Archabbey began with a Pontifical Mass celebrating the

see *Oblate News*, p. 6



Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, met with sisters of the Benedictine monastery Santa Maria of Poffabro, Italy, in Capernaum while on a tour of the Holy Land.

'I'm just so busy!' What's really behind our busy culture?

As the due date for this reflection loomed on the horizon, I wondered, "What shall my excuse be? Fr. Meinrad, I'm just so busy right now that I can't possibly write the promised piece for the oblate newsletter—you know, that article I said I would write when I was ranting one day about the busyness of our culture!"

Time out! Was I really going to justify missing a deadline for a reflection on busyness because I'm...well, busy?!

I admit it! Despite my pontificating at times about the seemingly overextended nature of so many people's lives these days, I, too, get tangled up in the trappings of busyness. But regardless of my own inability to fend off the busyness nemesis as regularly as I would like, I am greatly concerned about the reasons for and ramifications of the high value our society seems to place on busyness.

"How are you?" "Busy!" "I haven't seen you for awhile." "Yeah, I've just been so busy!" "Could you...?" "Don't bother me. I'm really busy right now."

Have you ever been party to these kinds of exchanges? They seem all too commonplace in our constantly-in-motion culture. I sometimes wonder what is really being said when we announce that we are busy. Busy, of course, is a relative term, and at times, we really are occupied with the many people and activities that are part of our daily lives. At the same time, busyness seems to have become an obsession—a new hobby, of sorts—and is, perhaps, a symptom of something that calls for serious reflection.

Consider the first of the exchanges mentioned above. We ask someone or someone asks us, "How are you?" "Busy." That doesn't really answer the question. To say "busy" can deflect the truer issue—about one's well-being (or lack of)—and have the effect of keeping the other at a distance.

We can easily dodge deeper conversations—and even relationships—with

the "busy" answer. And when we hear it from another, we might actually hear between the words: "I don't want to talk about how I really am (maybe because I don't really know)" or "I don't care to get to know you" or "I don't want to be bothered with you right now." The "I'm busy" declaration, whether intentional or unintentional, can be stinging, hurting the one on the

receiving end and working against our relationships.

Perhaps the "I'm really busy" badge disguises deeper human longings—like the fundamental need to know that we matter, that our lives matter. Or maybe this slogan masks wounds, ones we might not even be able to name, let alone attend to their healing.

Or does extending ourselves beyond reason mean we find it hard to admit that we have limitations? Or could it be a means of avoiding the demands inherent in relationships—with God, with others and with creation? Maybe the harried, hurried pace provides an excuse for not taking enough time for stillness, for prayerful reflection and introspection, for being present to and available for others.

The *Rule of St. Benedict* offers needed wisdom to our restless and overly busy world. Two underlying values of the *Rule* come immediately to mind, although many more can be named. I think first of stillness—likely because of the familiar words of the Prologue: "Listen carefully...to the master's instructions, and attend to them with the ear of your heart."

It seems to me that such deep listening calls for stillness, inner and outer,

The *Rule of St. Benedict* offers needed wisdom to our restless and overly busy world.



A visitor strolls on the grounds of Saint Meinrad.

a disposition that allows us to be attentive to the movements of the Spirit in our own lives and in the world in which we live. Busyness can get in the way of careful listening.

Stillness can be fostered by devoting ourselves often to prayer and by loving fasting (Chapter 4). Prayer can lead to stillness of mind and heart, provided we pause and become conscious of the Gracious Mystery who permeates our existence.

“Love fasting,” says St. Benedict. Might we consider fasting from busyness, from our multi-tasking, harried and hurried ways? Such times of fasting, I believe, will also lead to a discipline of stillness.

The second value of the *Rule* that I find striking when I consider the challenge of busyness is presence—the capacity to be present, really present, to the Sacred Presence, to other people and to the created world. I find in my own life that when I am in “busy” mode, thinking I am tending to many things, I am in fact attending to nothing and, worse, nobody. In effect, I lapse into being self-focused, when the Christian life calls us to be other-centered.

Consider, for example, Chapter 53 on the reception of guests: “All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ...” A stance of busyness undermines our ability to receive others as Christ, whether the other is a “guest” or someone intimately involved in our lives. Simply put, receiving others as Christ requires our presence.

My reflections on busyness and the instruction offered in the *Rule* merely touch the surface. I invite you to continue these reflections and suggest some questions you might consider. What do you find in the *Rule* that might help us discover new insights

into our busyness and offer pathways to a way of life, a way of being, that is less focused on busyness?

I sometimes wonder how the world might be different if there was a mandatory collective pause each day—five minutes, perhaps. In what ways might the world be better off if everyone took a few minutes to step back from the hectic pace, to be still and reflect?

What about in your life? If you already take those pauses from the busyness of life, what do these times of stillness mean for you? If you don’t regularly take “time out,” how might daily life change for you if you did?

*Anne Koester, oblate
Alexandria, VA*

Anne Koester is associate director of the Georgetown Center for Liturgy, Washington, DC, and the author of Sunday Mass: Our Role and Why It Matters (Liturgical Press, 2007).

Reflection Questions

1. What is really being said when we announce that we are busy?
2. How does the “I’m busy” declaration deflect the truer issue?
3. Why might the term “I’m really busy” disguise deeper human longings?
4. What are the two underlying values of the *Rule* that offer wisdom to our restless and overly busy world?
5. Reflect carefully on the five questions in the article that the author asks us to consider.



Matthew Kovacs, son of oblates Albert and Irene Kovacs, helped in serving at Mass at St. Michael’s Church in Indianapolis.



Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, and Br. Maurus Zoeller, OSB, with the 11 oblates who were on the Holy Land Pilgrimage.

Oblate News from p. 3

Solemnity of St. Benedict. Two retreatants were invested as oblate novices and one made final oblation.

Referring to the psalms, the *Rule of St. Benedict* and readings from spiritual writers, Fr. Cyprian offered a deeper understanding of the promise of stability—the guiding principle of the Benedictine way of life. It is a vow and promise not characteristic of any other order.

Stability is not a restlessness of spirit, the inability to control our thoughts, discontent or a lack of inner peace. Our promise calls us to live a life of order and peace, being faithful to God, our friends, family and associates. It encourages us to complete everyday tasks, to keep our promises, and to be accountable for our actions, thoughts and emotions.

Stability means being dependable, responsible and standing firm in what we believe; to be focused and stable in an unfocused, unstable world; to practice openness, tolerance and gentleness; and to live a life of discipline in an age that lacks discipline. *Lectio divina*, unique to Benedictines, helps us to integrate these disciplines into our lives.

Suggestions by Fr. Cyprian include disciplining ourselves by emptying our minds of unnecessary thoughts to become more attuned to the present moment and to listen to God's voice in the silence of our hearts. He suggested Chapter 4, "The Tools for Good Works," for specific ideas that will help us grow in stability.

Verses 20 and 21 tell us that our way of acting should be different from the world's, that love of Christ must come before all else; verses 46 and 47 say we should yearn for everlasting life with holy desire and day by day remind ourselves that we are going to die; and verse 72 cautions us to never lose hope in God's mercy.

If we put Christ first, live a life that is focused on eternity and always remem-

ber that God loves us and is merciful, our life will be Christ-centered and stable. These lines offer us guidelines to live by and the hope, discipline and inner peace so lacking in our world today.

Marianna Neal, oblate
Fairborn, OH

Spring 2008—Sister Lenore Paschke, prioress of Mount Saint Benedict Monastery (MN), discussed in *The Crookston Benedictine* an article by Raymond Studzinski, OSB, in *Monastic Liturgy Forum Newsletter*, that extends the common concept of Benedictine hospitality beyond welcoming strangers by sharing meals, praying and entertaining, to include the "unexpected guests" of illness and aging.

To welcome these "guests" is to open ourselves to being robbed of valuable things and treasured skills and to leave behind old attitudes to embrace new ways of thinking and acting. The hospitality of elders might include welcoming others to minister and relate to them, to learn from them. A dying to self by elders promotes an acceptance for receiving life favorably with openness and generosity and welcoming and embracing what life presents to you—a sharing in the death of Christ and participation in resurrection every minute.

April 2008—Oblates of Lancaster, PA, are selling white vinyl decals for car windows printed with the words "Oblate of St. Benedict." They cost \$6.50 each, paid by check/money order to Sharon Ogden, PO Box 190, Silver Spring, PA 17575.

April 4, 2008—The Oblate Finance Committee reviewed the current financial statement, which reported a deficit of \$2,630 for the eight months ending February 29. It was also reported that Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, and oblate Jerry Campbell met with Cecelia Hamilton of the Business Office to discuss the effects of recent changes in the accounting system on the reporting of the oblate finances.

April 5, 2008—The Oblate Council met and reviewed a draft of the oblate video, "Seeking God in Everyday Life." The members were pleased with the quality and progress of this project, which is expected to be ready by this fall. The Council received an update on the oblate communications strategies. Oblate Chris Topa is preparing a document to cover permission requests to reprint intellectual property. An ongoing discussion regarding the viability of certain chapters that are currently experiencing falling membership was conducted.

The Oblate Council also discussed the chapter evaluation process, the regional oblate directors meeting, preparations for the 2009 meeting of the chapter coordinators and the status of various ongoing projects of the Council. Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, reported that the upcoming monastery visitation by monks outside Saint Meinrad Archabbey will include reference to the oblate program for the first time.

April 9, 2008—In his address to the general audience in St. Peter's Square in Rome, Pope Benedict XVI spoke about St. Benedict, the father of Western monasticism and the patron saint of his papacy. He called the second book of the *Dialogues* by Pope Gregory the Great the most important source of information about the life of St. Benedict.

After his death barely 50 years earlier, St. Benedict was remembered by many, and he represented a real person who demonstrated how abandonment of oneself to God can permit reaching the heights of contemplation. He depicts St. Benedict as a model of human life ascending toward the peak of perfection. He tells of the many miracles performed by the saint and relates that God's warning, helping and even punishing intervenes in real situations in the lives of all of us.

He credits St. Benedict's work and his *Rule* with reviving a new spiritual and cultural unity after the collapse of the

Roman Empire. The Benedictine order at Monte Cassino monastery and his *Rule* were his legacy that bore fruit all over the world in subsequent centuries, and continues to do so today.

Gregory tells of Benedict's immersion in an atmosphere of prayer, without ever losing sight of the duties of everyday life and one's necessities. He left behind a thriving spiritual family and a *Rule*, which invites us to search for God in prayer, obedience and humility while attending faithfully to daily duties and to those in need.

In 1964, Pope Paul VI proclaimed St. Benedict the Patron of Europe, recognizing the role that his teaching and his disciples had played in shaping Europe's spiritual life and culture.

April 12, 2008—"The world is their cloister," an article by James Roberts in *Tablet*, the international Catholic weekly from London, England, reports a sharp rise in the number of oblates across the English-speaking world. The numbers seeking oblate affiliation with an abbey may be fueled by the light of the Holy Spirit, but also by the Internet, which has a growing number of Web sites with an oblate focus.

Now people may search abbey Web sites to learn of ambience, character, prayer, promises to be made and a host of other factors that will determine "what feels right" or "works for" the individual seeking an oblate "home."

Scott Knitter, an oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, spoke of the "gentle commitment" of living the five duties of Saint Meinrad Archabbey oblation.

Regardless of the variety of choices, the desire for oblation is increasing in surprising numbers and in a variety of places and far outnumbers those who profess vows. "Laity hunger for a depth of experience and spirituality that is not offered or available in a typical parish," the article states.

April 15, 2008—Congratulations to oblate Chris Topa and his wife Belinda

on the birth of their 9 lb., 3 oz. baby girl, Ellyn Marie.

May 6, 2008—Condolences to Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, on the death of his brother, Bob, in Dayton, OH.

May 31, 2008—Oblate Robert Kepshire was ordained to the permanent diaconate in Savannah, GA. Congratulations and blessings.

June 7, 2008—Oblates Gerald and Georgianna Kassman from Kettering, OH, celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. Prayers and congratulations to them on this special occasion. ♦

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 23-26, 2008—A national committee meeting of oblate directors will prepare for the selection of monasteries that will be permitted to send representatives to the World Congress of Oblates in Rome in October 2009.

August 29-September 1, 2008—The Labor Day Retreat for New York oblates will feature Fr. Harry Hagan, OSB, most recently novice and junior master of the monastery, presenting "Overview of Things in the *Rule*."

September 6, 2008—A day of recollection for Lancaster, PA, oblates will be held with Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, presenting "Change of Lifestyle: Attempting It with Small, Realizable Activities."

October 31-November 10, 2008—A pilgrimage to Lisbon, Fatima, Santiago de Compostela, Salamanca, Madrid and Lourdes is being lead by Br. Maurus Zoeller, OSB. This tour will include round-trip airfare from New York, accommodations at first class/select hotels, most meals, services of a professional tour director, comprehensive sightseeing, \$100,000 flight insurance policy, hotel service charges and local taxes. For a brochure or more information, call (812) 357-6674 or e-mail: mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu.

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.

March 20-22, 2009—Fr. Prior Tobias Colgan, OSB, will lead the oblate retreat on the theme of "Fidelity to the Monastic Way of Life." There will be a concert by classical concert pianist Diane Rivera, an oblate from Bloomington, IN, on the evening of March 21.

Recent volunteers in the Oblate Office have been Cathey Byers, Jerry Campbell, Ruth Engs, Barbara Krick, Tom Lehr, Mary Joy Phillips, Phil Potaczek, Joan and Tom Rillo, and Dennis Skelton. ♦

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Reading Room

Oblates of Saint Meinrad Archabbey are aware of a rich and ancient prayer tradition that guides the contemporary practices of prayer that have grown out of monastic theology. A book published last fall, *The Tradition of Catholic Prayer* (The Monks of Saint Meinrad, edited by Fr. Harry Hagan, OSB, and Br. Christian Raab, OSB, The Liturgical Press, 2007), helps us to see the comprehensive history and theological reflection on prayer in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

The book is primarily the brainchild of Fr. Harry and Br. Christian, who coordinated the writing efforts of 13 of their fellow monks. Many of us know the monk authors as a result of attending retreats, spiritual direction or other social interaction.

In the introduction, Archabbot Justin DuVall, OSB, stipulates that this is not “a how-to book,” but rather “a from-where book” that takes a look at the great tradition in Catholicism that has been formed over many centuries by the prayer life of individuals.

The first seven chapters follow the historical development of prayer. Fr. Harry opens with a chapter on prayer

in the Old Testament that includes many prayers and many ways to pray—prayers that are vibrant and insistent, full of expectations of what is yet to come.

Fr. Cyprian Davis’ chapter, “Prayer as Battle,” takes a monastic viewpoint, also related to the greater tradition. Oblates will identify their own prayer life with the individuals included in chapter seven, “Ordinary Life and Contemplative: Prayer in the Modern Period,” by Fr. Harry, Br. Christian and Br. Thomas Gricoski, OSB.

The second part of the book examines the practices of liturgical prayer. Oblates will particularly relate to chapters on the liturgical year and the Liturgy of the Hours. Fr. Kurt Stasiak’s chapter, “The Eucharist: The Prayer and Work of the People of God,” explains the importance of corporate prayer as it forges us together and to Christ.

In the third section, the authors look at “scenic landscapes” along the road of Catholic tradition, with chapters on *lectio divina* and prayer and conversion. Readers will come away with an enlightened sense of prayer as a significant part of Catholic formation and growth.

*Thomas J. Rillo, oblate
Bloomington, IN*