



*Saint Meinrad*

# Benedictine Oblate

WINTER 2007

VOLUME 13:1

◆ ONGOING FORMATION FOR SAINT MEINRAD OBLATES ◆

## FROM THE RULE:

**“Your way of acting  
should be different  
from the world’s way;  
the love of Christ  
must come before  
all else.”**

*Chapter 4:20-21*

## A letter from the Oblate Director

Dear Oblate,

I am so pleased to send you this special issue of information to help you in planning your ongoing formation as an oblate. As you know, study and prayer are essential to your vocation as a Benedictine Oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey. But you may be wondering where to start, or how best to take the next steps in your spiritual journey.

That’s where this guide comes in. It offers a variety of information to help you actively plan your ongoing formation and to evaluate how well you’re doing. In addition, there are numerous resources to assist you along the way.

Inside, you’ll find information to help you develop your personal plan of ongoing formation.

In particular, please take time to read thoroughly the “Ongoing Formation Plan” on page 4. You may even want to read it a second time. Next, think carefully about each point, reflect on it and consider how you might carry it out.

Then take time to work through the “Oblate Life—A Personal Evaluation” (page 2). Your ongoing formation will certainly lead to personal and spiritual enrichment. At the same time, it will be an act of love for Jesus Christ and for St. Benedict.

Without thoughtful reflection and communion with Christ, your oblate life would

be lacking in true Benedictine spirituality. Your desire to seek God as an oblate must translate itself into a committed pursuit to know God and to deepen your relationship with Him. My hope is that you will grow closer to God, and that this love of God will carry through in your whole life.

God’s blessings on you as you use this plan to deepen your spiritual life as an oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey.

Sincerely in St. Benedict,

*Fr. Meinrad Brune, O.S.B.*

Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB  
Director of Benedictine Oblates

## Table of Contents

- ◆ Oblate Life—A Personal Evaluation, p. 2
- ◆ Resources Available on Request, p. 2
- ◆ The Necessary Relationship of an Oblate to the Monastery, p. 3
- ◆ The Ongoing Formation Process of Benedictine Oblates of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, p. 3
- ◆ Ongoing Formation Plan, p. 4
- ◆ Ongoing Formation Themes, p. 4
- ◆ Online Resources, p. 5
- ◆ Being A Benedictine Oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, p. 6
- ◆ Some Thoughts On “Duties of An Oblate,” p. 7
- ◆ List of Articles on the Oblates’ Promises and Duties, p. 8



## Resources available on request from the Oblate Office

### Oblate Library

The books and audio tapes in the Oblate Library are available to be checked out by all oblates. Oblates may check out books and tapes and take them home, but they are to be returned within four weeks. Oblates are always welcome to visit the Oblate Office and see the listing of our books and tapes or browse the shelves.

### Oblate Supplies and Information

The Oblate Office has brochures and

other items for those who want more information about our oblate community. We also have the following items available on request:

- Blessed Medals of St. Benedict (with brochure explaining the medal)
- Blessed Scapulars (if yours has worn out)
- Oblate Pins
- Oblate Brochures
- Oblate Retreat Schedules
- Oblate Chapter Meetings Schedule

- Saint Meinrad Retreat Schedules (weekend and midweek)

### Distribution of the Psalms

The Distribution of Psalms for Recitation of the Divine Office at Saint Meinrad Archabbey is a pamphlet containing the order for reciting the Divine Office for a four-week cycle and a listing of the Psalms for Morning Office, Noon Office, Evening Office and Compline.

The monks use the Psalms from the *Grail Psalter* (available for purchase at Saint Meinrad at The Scholar Shop or Abbey Press Gift Shop).

### Special Booklets

Two special booklets relating to the duties of an oblate have been reprinted and are available:

- “The Sacraments: God’s Gifts—with Strings Attached!” by Fr. Kurt Stasiak, OSB.
- “The Presence of God through Benedictine Spirituality” by Fr. Adrian Burke, OSB. ♦

## Oblate life—A personal evaluation

To see how well you are fulfilling your vocation as an oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, reflect on and ask yourself the following questions. These questions are for your personal consideration and evaluation, so that you may see how you are growing as an oblate. The oblate directors are convinced that, if you sincerely reflect on these questions, you can only deepen your relationship with God. And in doing so, you are truly growing in Benedictine spirituality as an oblate.

1. *What have I done during the past year to continue ongoing formation as an oblate?*

2. *What do I plan to do during the coming year?*

3. *How well do I see myself living the oblate promises:*

*Rate yourself on a scale of 1 - 5, with 1 as “needing improvement” and 5 as “doing well.”*

Stability of Heart?	1	2	3	4	5
Fidelity to the Spirit of the Monastic Life?	1	2	3	4	5
Obedience to the Will of God?	1	2	3	4	5

4. *How well do I see myself fulfilling the oblate duties:*

Praying the Liturgy of the Hours?	1	2	3	4	5
Reading from the <i>Rule of St. Benedict</i> ?	1	2	3	4	5
Daily practice of <i>lectio divina</i> ?	1	2	3	4	5
Participating in the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation or in my own faith tradition of church and prayer?	1	2	3	4	5
Attentiveness to God’s presence in my ordinary, daily life?	1	2	3	4	5

5. *In what ways can I offer my time, talent and treasure to the oblate community of Saint Meinrad Archabbey?*

6. *If I need to improve in any of these areas, what do I plan to do?*

## Pray for Vocations

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

**Editor:** Mary Jeanne Schumacher

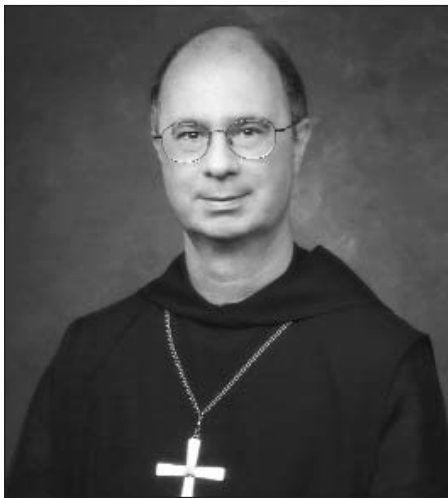
**Designer:** Jo R. Bishop

**Oblate Directors:** Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB  
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 e-mail [oblates@saintmeinrad.edu](mailto:oblates@saintmeinrad.edu)*

© 2007, Saint Meinrad Archabbey

## The necessary relationship of an oblate to the monastery



ARCHABBOT JUSTIN

Every monastery that sponsors an oblate community develops its own particular “style.” In a spirit of Benedictine autonomy, by which each house establishes its own character while each remains authentically Benedictine, our oblate community likewise is unique to our Archabbey. It is important for every oblate to recognize that his or her Benedictine Oblate life takes its inspiration from Saint Meinrad Archabbey.

The oblate community at Saint Meinrad Archabbey is modeled on the image of the household. The Oblate Director extends the relationship between the abbot of the monastery and the oblates. Many oblates are privileged to live out their oblation in a local chapter. In a chapter, they come together to pray and to deepen their Benedictine spirituality.

Although membership in a chapter is not required of an oblate, participation can strengthen the experience of the values of Benedictine life that oblates seek to make their own. Oblates who are unable to take an active part in a local chapter may visit the monastery for yearly or semi-annual retreats or to attend oblate events scheduled at Saint Meinrad.

When the need arises, individual oblates might rightly call upon the oblate director for spiritual guidance. Such contacts can include prayer requests, advice for living a more satisfying personal life, or requests for a spiritual director. The oblate community grows out of the spiritual relationship, rather than a strict partnership, with the Archabbey.

The director is a monk of the Archabbey, appointed directly by the archabbot, and so he exercises an authority that is an extension of that of the archabbot. In a sense, he is an “official” of the monastery, like the prior, with responsibility for the oblates associated with the monastery. While the *Rule of St. Benedict* does not directly speak of an oblate director, it is a legitimate development of its authority, extending the relevance of this sixth-century *Rule* into our own 21st-century lives.

An oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey sees herself or himself necessarily as one linked to our monastery, even while each remains simultaneously a member of an even larger family. One’s first oblation associates the oblate in a special way with Saint Meinrad Archabbey. All the relationships in the oblate community—to the local oblate chapter, to the oblate director, and to the archabbot of Saint Meinrad—derive from our common spiritual resource, the *Rule of St. Benedict*. Our holy father St. Benedict is spiritual father to us all, monks and oblates alike.

A faithful oblate of Saint Meinrad looks to the Archabbey for the necessary means of living out the oblation in the particular circumstances of his or her own life.

+ Justin DuVall, OSB

Archabbot Justin DuVall, OSB

## The ongoing formation process

### Mailings

- Ongoing Formation Packet
- Oblate Life - A Personal Evaluation
- Oblation Renewal Letter
- *Bona Opera* Letter
- Christmas Letter
- Oblate Anniversary
- Special Mailings

### Publications

- Quarterly Newsletter
- Special Booklets
- Post Cards for Retreats
- Saint Meinrad Newsletter
- Other Publications

### Activities

- Oblate Retreats
- Days of Recollection
- Oblate Study Weeks
- Saint Meinrad Retreats
- Special Dinners
- Special Meetings
- Special Prayers for Oblates

### Chapters

- Chapter Meetings
- Chapter Histories
- Chapter Web Sites
- Chapter Retreats
- Chapter Days of Recollection
- Special Chapter Events
- Meeting of Coordinators and Representatives

### Resources

- *Benedictine Oblate Companion*
- *The Benedictine Oblates of Saint Meinrad Archabbey: A Brief History*
- *Words of Witness: What It Means To Be an Oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey*
- *Rule of St. Benedict*
- Readings from the *Rule* Schedule
- Oblate Book Library
- Oblate Media Library
- Oblate Web Site
- Oblate Online Discussion Forum

### Other

- Prayer Requests on Community Bulletin Board
- Oblate Commemoration (at the death of an oblate)

# Ongoing formation plan offers ten steps to a stronger vocation

The whole purpose of ongoing formation for an oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey is to deepen your relationship with God and help you have a better understanding of Benedictine spirituality. In so doing, you will become aware of your vocation as a Benedictine oblate.

## 1) Stop!

Be willing to stop and set time aside for prayer. Begin by asking the presence of the Holy Spirit to help you during this special time dedicated to God. In this time alone with God, you are improving yourself and trying to find a way to serve God more effectively.

## 2) Identify your personal strengths.

Do not hesitate in recognizing the strengths God has given you. You will arrive at understanding these strengths by asking such questions as:

- a) What do I do well?
- b) What do I enjoy doing?
- c) When and where has God's grace touched me most deeply?

## Ongoing formation themes of the year

*Note: The themes begin with the Oblate Study Week in June.*

### Vocation

2006-2007 Oblation as a Vocation

### Oblate Promises

2007-2008 Stability of Heart  
 2008-2009 Fidelity to the Spirit of the Monastic Life  
 2009-2010 Obedience to the Will of God

### Oblate Duties

2010-2011 Liturgy of the Hours  
 2011-2012 *Rule of St. Benedict*  
 2012-2013 *Lectio Divina*  
 2013-2014 Sacraments (Church)  
 2014-2015 Presence of God

### Vocation

2015-2016 Oblation as a Vocation

## 3) Listen to all aspects of the oblate program.

The whole process of the oblate program, such as the directors, *Benedictine Oblate Companion*, chapter meetings, retreats, individual sessions and printed materials (the *Benedictine Oblate* newsletter, *Oblate History*, *Words of Witness*, etc.), creates an effective way of getting across the essential aspects of ongoing oblate formation.

- a) Am I reading and reflecting on these materials?
- b) How well am I listening to the oblate directors?

## 4) Pray for your needs as an oblate.

St. Benedict stresses the need for prayer in deepening your spiritual life. He also points out the need for balance and moderation in your life. Therefore, be patient with yourself and allow for a prayerful solution to the needs that surface in living your Benedictine spirituality.

- a) Am I able to identify real needs in my spiritual life?
- b) How can the oblate community help me in meeting these needs?

## 5) Live your oblate promises.

In the Rite of Final Oblation, each oblate makes this promise: "I promise before God and all the Saints as my state in life permits, *Stability of Heart, Fidelity to the Spirit of the Monastic Life, and Obedience to the Will of God as an Oblate of the Venerable Monastery of Saint Meinrad.*"

A good way to evaluate your ongoing formation is to answer the following questions:

- a) *Stability of Heart.* Monks and oblates commit themselves to the monastic family they are joining. It's because of our commitment and perseverance, our stability of heart, that we shall be saved. Clearly, it is our free choice to associate with the values of

the Benedictine life, i.e., constant striving to respond to God's call, poverty of spirit, and obedience to the movements of the Holy Spirit. These values make stability of heart possible. The sense of purpose, of guided meaning in life, is the first fruit of stability.

*How is the promise of Stability of Heart that I made assisting me in living the oblate life?*

- b) *Fidelity to the Spirit of the Monastic Life.* When we strive for proper balance in the elements in our spiritual life, then we make progress in our fidelity to the monastic way of life.

Each oblate has to adapt the values of the *Rule* to the particular circumstances of his or her daily life. Duties to family, to work, to the parish and to social obligations cannot and should not be forgotten. Rather, they should be undertaken as works of love done in the spirit of the *Rule*.

*How is the promise of Fidelity to the Spirit of Monastic Life that I made assisting me in living the oblate life?*

- c) *Obedience to the Will of God.*

Obedience, or active listening, is not a project we take up. Rather, it is a way of being in the world. God's will is not a puzzle to be solved, but a mystery to be lived! For the Benedictine monk, nun or oblate, listening and living are achieved through an attitude of contemplation. Contemplation is nothing more and nothing less than "listening with the ear of the heart" to the joy of discovery of God in every aspect of our lives, as we are invited by St. Benedict.

*How is the promise of Obedience to the Will of God that I made assisting me in living the oblate life?*

## 6) Fulfill your oblate duties.

A good way to evaluate your ongoing formation is to see how faithful you are in carrying out the five duties that are expected of you as an oblate of

Saint Meinrad Archabbey. By being faithful to these duties, you will be able to clarify directions for your ongoing formation.

- a) *Liturgy of the Hours*. How faithfully am I praying the Liturgy of the Hours? (At times in your schedule, you may not be able to pray a particular hour. But has this become a habit?)
- b) *Rule of St. Benedict*. How faithfully am I reading the *Rule of St. Benedict*? (St. Benedict in the *Rule* lays down the basic Gospel teachings that we must follow to learn the love of Christ.)
- c) *Lectio Divina*. Am I faithful in my daily practice of *lectio divina*? (Sacred Scripture is the basic source for *lectio divina*, but other spiritual readings may also be used.)
- d) *Sacraments (Church)*. Am I faithfully participating in the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation?



*Taking time for prayer is essential for both monks and oblates.*

Am I faithful in participating in church and prayer of my own faith tradition? (The Benedictine way of life is one of community. Church participation helps us to have an experience of community, which then carries over to the larger community of oblates and monks.)

e) *Presence of God*. Am I experiencing the presence of God in my daily life? (The presence of God works two ways in your life—you seeking God, but also God seeking you.)

#### 7) Use the resources.

A very important part of ongoing formation is to make use of the resources available to you.

- a) Am I aware of the resources of Benedictine spirituality that are available to me as an oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey?
- b) Am I making use of these resources and activities?

#### 8) Make a choice; make a commitment.

By using the “Oblate Life—A Personal Evaluation” found in this guide on page 2, consider what will be helpful for your ongoing formation and make a commitment to do it. Be realistic and selective. Try to anticipate obstacles as you make your choices. Be willing to write down your commitment(s). Recognize that ongoing formation is “ongoing.” You will not be able to cover every need—nor should you try to do it during a single year. At the same time, be open and eager to permit yourself ways to grow as a more dedicated oblate. (Note: The “Oblate Life—A Personal Evaluation” will be sent to you annually to use in evaluating your ongoing formation.)

#### 9) Be accountable.

St. Benedict is very clear in his *Rule* that the abbot will be held accountable for his office as shepherd of the monks. That same admonition can be applied to the oblate director with regard to accountability concerning ongoing formation of the oblates. One

way that might be helpful to you in accountability is to share your commitment(s) with a spiritual director.

#### 10) Look ahead.

Always realize that, if you are faithful to this plan, ongoing formation will become an important habit deeply rooted in your life. Ask yourself: Where do I want to be a year from now concerning my ongoing formation as a Benedictine Oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey? ♦

### Online resources

#### Saint Meinrad Web Links

Saint Meinrad Benedictine Oblates:  
[www.saintmeinrad.edu/monastery\\_oblates.aspx](http://www.saintmeinrad.edu/monastery_oblates.aspx)

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Online Oblate Discussion Forum:  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SaintMeinradOblates>

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Web Site:  
[www.saintmeinrad.edu](http://www.saintmeinrad.edu)

Cincinnati Chapter Web Site:  
[www.cincinnatioblates.org](http://www.cincinnatioblates.org)

#### Other Sites of Interest

[www.osb.org](http://www.osb.org)

*Offers general information on the Order of St. Benedict, and online versions of the Rule of St. Benedict, Liturgy of the Hours and daily Mass readings and Psalms.*

Oblate Forum:  
[www.oblateforum.org](http://www.oblateforum.org)

Online Oblate Chapter of Yankton, SD:  
[www.yanktonbenedictines.org/oblates\\_booc\\_intro.html](http://www.yanktonbenedictines.org/oblates_booc_intro.html)

New American Bible online:  
[www.usccb.org/nab/bible](http://www.usccb.org/nab/bible)

Hymns online:  
[www.cyberhymnal.org](http://www.cyberhymnal.org) ♦

## Being a Benedictine Oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey

Oblates of St. Benedict are Christian women and men who yearn for a spiritual life deeply rooted in God, and who choose to attach themselves to a specific Benedictine community and strive to live the spirit of the *Rule of St. Benedict* in response to this yearning.

The word “oblate” comes from the Latin *oblatus*—an offering, someone or something that is given. In Benedict’s day, young children were offered to monasteries, where they were educated and introduced to Benedictine life. Often these “oblates” became full members of that monastic community as adults.

Over time, other adults asked to be associated with a particular monastic community; they were also called oblates even though they continued to live their lives outside the monastic walls. Therefore, oblates have a long history.

### Common Threads

Many women and men feel comfortable adopting the oblate way of life. What are the common threads that hold all these individuals together over the centuries? What draws people to consider becoming oblates today?

- The first common thread is the one that drew Benedict to live the kind of life he did, which drew followers to him and his way of life, and which has drawn women and men to become monastics and oblates since Benedict’s time. To truly seek God was Benedict’s primary intention: this was done in a life lived in moderation, with a balance of prayer and work, and—after he had followers—lived in a stable community of like-minded individuals.

- Some other common threads include moderation, balance, stability, mutual-ity, prayer, work, study and service. Finally, the common threads include two mottos that are known to represent Benedictines: *Ora et Labora* (pray and work) and *Pax* (peace).

- Oblates include in their prayers the well-being of Saint Meinrad Archabbey and the other oblates, and they acknowledge that the monks and oblates share the commitment of lives focused on the Gospel teachings of Jesus and the wisdom of Benedict’s *Rule*.

- To be an oblate is a vocation, a response to a call; their presence and witness of living the life are a reciprocal blessing to Saint Meinrad Archabbey. It is a worthy outreach as well that oblates carry monastic values into the world by applying the teaching of Scripture and the *Rule* in their daily lives.

- Oblates feel called to commit themselves to the principles central to Benedictine spirituality: the desire to seek God daily, the intention to live a balanced day, which includes prayer and sacred reading. Peace and hospitality are central, too, as are mutual respect, love and service for others. The *Rule* says for oblates, no less than for monks, that “all are to be welcomed as Christ.” For oblates, this is lived out from their own place in the world, and to the best of their ability as their state in life permits.

*(Parts of the above sections were adapted with permission from Phyllis Thompson, an oblate of Annunciation Monastery in Bismarck, ND.)*

### The Promises Made by an Oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey

- Stability of heart
- Fidelity to the spirit of the monastic life
- Obedience to the will of God

### The Duties of Being an Oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey

- The oblate should pray daily the Liturgy of the Hours.
- The oblate should read from the *Rule of St. Benedict* each day.
- The oblate should practice *lectio divina* each day.

- The oblate should participate frequently in the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation. (If the oblate is not Roman Catholic, he or she should participate in the church and prayer of his or her own faith tradition.)
- The oblate should be attentive to God’s presence in ordinary, daily life.

### What the Monastery Expects of the Oblates\*

- Oblates are committed to their monastery, its values, its culture and its prayer.
- Oblates are expected to keep the spirit of St. Benedict alive by the way in which they live:
  - Keep faithful to their promises made at oblation
  - Annually renew their oblation
  - Send in their *Bona Opera* (Lenten Good Works)
  - Pray the Liturgy of the Hours
  - Do *lectio divina* regularly
  - Attend retreats
  - Maintain fidelity to one’s Christian tradition
- Oblates are persons whose lives are shaped by Benedictine spirituality. They follow the *Rule of St. Benedict* in their daily lives as far as their station in life permits.
- Oblates are representatives of the monastery “in the world.”
- The oblates pray for the monastery, the monastic community and other oblates.

(\*Permission granted for use by the President for the North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors, November 2006.) ♦



Oblates are always welcome to join the monks in prayer in the Archabbey Church.

## Some thoughts on ‘Duties of an Oblate’

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

When a person becomes an oblate novice, he or she is handed a list titled “Duties of an Oblate.” One could imagine prospective oblates having various reactions to this. Seeing these duties spelled out in black and white could be reassuring for some, namely, those who are most comfortable when things are clear and definite. The more specific are the requirements for living their lives, the less likely they are to make mistakes. So they immediately welcome this list of duties.

For others, however, the word “duties” has an ominous ring to it. “Duty,” for them, implies having to do something you are not inclined to do. Duty would appear to involve a loss of freedom and a denial of choice. As they consider undertaking these “Duties of an Oblate,” such persons might wonder if they are being called upon to renounce the “glorious freedom” of the children of God, which Paul recommended to the Romans. (Rom. 8:21)

### A Healthier Approach

The first reaction above could easily be springing from a sense of insecurity, while the second would seem based on a misunderstanding of the nature of our gift of freedom. It seems clear that neither of these reactions would be appropriate for anyone considering the life of an oblate. So what, then, would be an appropriate, healthy way to approach these “duties”? I believe the answer lies in the *Rule of St. Benedict*, and it has to do with Benedict’s vision of the meaning of obedience.

When the *Rule of St. Benedict* speaks of receiving new members into the monastery, it says, “The concern must be whether the novice truly seeks God...” (RB 58:17). Our desire for

God is what brought us to the monastery asking to be accepted as oblates. In the course of our formation, we learn how obedience channels the sometimes vague and general desire for God into a way of living that gradually leads us to God. Following the “Duties of an Oblate” is an important component of our life of obedience as oblates.

But if in approaching these “duties” we are to avoid the pitfalls of insecurity on the one hand and an inadequate notion of freedom on the other, we need to have a genuine and realistic notion of obedience. I found the insights of two Benedictine women helpful in this regard. One is a nun, Joan Chittister, and the other an oblate, Norvene Vest. Both are deeply grounded in the *Rule of St. Benedict*.

### Obedience vs. Control

Joan Chittister points out how certain individuals might shy away from obedience as unhealthy or unnatural. They want to maintain control of their lives. But she goes on to say that “no one really has control of his or her own life. We’re all limited by something. The difference is that some people decide what they will allow to control them and some people simply find themselves controlled by the whims and fancies of life.” (*Wisdom Distilled from the Daily*, p. 134)

The two kinds of people we discussed earlier are both controlled, whether they realize it or not. One is controlled by insecurity; the other by a notion of freedom, which is much more limited than the broader, more cosmic notion found in Paul’s letter to the Romans. And it is not as if they simply decided to be controlled. Both insecurity and an urge for freedom as undisciplined choice are impulses planted deep in the human psyche, usually early in life.

In speaking of obedience, which is, or should be, our motivation for accepting the “Duties of an Oblate,” the *Rule of St. Benedict* invites us to decide what will control our lives. Those who commit themselves to following the *Rule* choose to live in a way that will lead them to God. (RB Prologue 2)

They do this because a desire for God is the controlling factor of their life. (RB Prologue 15-16) We asked to become oblates because in some way we desired God. The “Duties of Oblates,” far from being simply a remedy for insecurity or an obstacle to our freedom, offers us an effective way to pursue our desire for God.

### Another Perspective

The second Benedictine woman, Norvene Vest, offers a useful distinction that touches on the issues of insecurity and freedom. She points out a difference between compliance and obedience. “Compliance is a cringing and sluggish response to a demand which reacts to it as though the command and the master were alien things, unrelated to oneself. Obedience is a response given freely and gladly, a response involving love...” (*Preferring Christ*, p. 50).

The motivation of the insecure person for obeying is not love, but security. The person who fears loss of freedom yet, for whatever reason, undertakes the life of an oblate in spite of this, will find himself or herself being compliant rather than obedient.

This is not to say that such persons are hopeless cases regarding the oblate vocation. The *Rule of St. Benedict* was “written for beginners,” (RB 73:8) and many of us remain beginners for a long time.

see *Some thoughts*, p. 8

---

## List of articles on the oblates' promises and duties

*Note: The Benedictine Oblate Companion has several articles relating to the promises and duties of an oblate. It is referred to as Companion in this list. The special booklets are available on request, if you do not have them.*

### **Promises of an Oblate**

The Nature of the Promises Made at Final Oblation

Article by Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB  
(*Companion* - pp. 59-62)

The Vow of Stability

Article by Fr. Hilary Ottensmeyer, OSB (*Companion* - pp. 63-66)

Fidelity to the Monastic Way of Life

Article by Fr. Justin DuVall, OSB  
(*Companion* - pp. 67-71)

Obedience to the Will of God

Article by Fr. Gueric DeBona, OSB  
(*Companion* - pp. 73-75)

### **Duties of an Oblate**

Duties of an Oblate

Article by Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB  
(*Companion* - p. 29)

Liturgy of the Hours

Article by Fr. Austin Newberry, OSB  
(*Companion* - pp. 43-46)

*The Rule of St. Benedict*

Article by Fr. Austin Newberry, OSB  
(*Companion* - pp. 33-35)

*Lectio Divina*

Article by Fr. Austin Newberry, OSB  
(*Companion* - pp. 47-50)

Sacraments (Church)

“The Sacraments: God’s Gifts—with Strings Attached!”

Special Booklet by Fr. Kurt Stasiak, OSB - Published December 2005

Presence of God

“The Presence of God through Benedictine Spirituality”

Special Booklet by Fr. Adrian Burke, OSB - Published December 1997 ♦

---

### **Some thoughts from p. 7**

But the important thing is that, as we go along in life, we learn to identify who we really are at any given time, what forces may be controlling us, and to maintain and strengthen our desire to seek God. Faith and perseverance will help us to recognize more and more clearly how commitment to the spirit of the *Rule* and the “Duties of an Oblate” can be our means of dealing with “the hardships and difficulties that will lead us to God.” (RB 58:8)

Chittister, Joan, OSB, *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily: Living the Rule of St. Benedict Today* (H&R, 1990)

Vest, Norvene, *Preferring Christ: A Devotional Commentary and Workbook on the Rule of St. Benedict* (Trabuco Canyon, CA: Source Books CA, 1990) ♦



Saint Meinrad  
Archabbey

**Benedictine  
Oblate** NEWSLETTER

200 Hill Drive  
St. Meinrad, IN 47577

*Return service requested*

Presorted First-Class Mail U.S. Postage Paid St. Meinrad, IN Permit No. 1
---