Sacraments are vital to an oblate’s life

When men and women commit themselves to a life of oblation, they embark on a journey of formation, where they strive each day to develop an enduring relationship with God by living lives that lead them to love and care for all people.

This formation is approached systematically through daily prayer; an ever-deepening understanding for the way the Rule of St. Benedict guides one’s daily responses; and a commitment to a community’s observances of its religious rituals and practices that are believed to lead one closer to an experience of the sacred.

So, it is no surprise that one of the five duties of an oblate is to “participate frequently in the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation. (If the oblate is not Roman Catholic, then he or she should participate in the church and prayer of his or her own faith tradition.)” [Benedictine Oblate Companion]

This attention to one’s sacramental or communal prayer life is an important way of reminding the oblate that he or she is never on the journey to God alone. We experience our oblation in the midst of our communities of faith and, therefore, we are continually strengthened by the ways our communities of faith live out their creedal desire to know, love and serve God in the world.

No matter which Christian tradition you call home, there are ways of participating in that community that give new meaning to your life. In the Roman Catholic tradition, the sacraments allow us to experience the world as redeemed and to recognize that we play a role in the redemption of God’s creation.

Sacraments are not simply steps along the way. They are the way we walk. When we are baptized, it is not a once-and-done ritual

Continued on p. 2
moment in our lives. We become baptized people who experience the reality and challenges of that baptismal call on a daily basis. It is not merely a passive act of being baptized. It is an active reality of being a baptized person in the world.

Through our commitment to this active reality of the sacraments, we allow the possibility that any aspect of our daily life, no matter how mundane, can become an avenue of the sacred, a moment in time where we can experience God’s love for us and, in turn, allow for the possibility of falling in love with God.

Becoming aware of sinfulness and doing something about it are intrinsic to the monastic journey. St. Benedict wanted his monks to develop humility, the art of obedience, and the cultivation of good works as ways of living in harmony with one another and, thereby, building a firm foundation for eternal life.

Living a virtuous life in this world leads one on the path to heaven. But, we need help along the way. Benedict tells us, “The Lord waits for us daily to translate into action...his holy teachings. Therefore our life span has been lengthened by way of a truce, that we may amend our misdeeds” (Prologue 36).

In the Roman Catholic tradition, the call to constantly reconcile ourselves with our brothers and sisters through the sacrament of Reconciliation is a means of recognizing our sinfulness, amending our lives and, thus, becoming a reconciling man or woman of God in the world. To confess our sins keeps us aware that we must “love not (our) own will nor take pleasure in the satisfaction of (our) desires” (Chapter 7:31).

And, the act of confession mirrors St. Benedict’s admonition “that a man does not conceal from his abbot any sinful thoughts entering his heart, or any wrongs committed in secret, but rather confesses them humbly” (Chapter 7:44). Reconciliation helps us to develop a respect for obedience and humility as we seek to follow the precepts of our faith traditions instead of our own whims.

In like manner, the sacrament of the Eucharist feeds the core of what it means to be an oblate. Sharing a meal where we not only consume the Body and Blood of Christ, but also become the Body and Blood of Christ in the world, has the power to restore us. This demanding challenge to change our lives in the redemptive light of the cross is a self-sacrificial surrender.

We are agreeing to live our lives for the good of others rather than just for our own good. Communion is the nourishment we need to prosper in obedience and humility, giving us the grace to develop the virtues of patience and respect for all. The Rule tells us: “No one is to pursue what he judges better for himself, but instead, what he judges better for someone else” (Chapter 72:7).

The sacraments confer grace, making possible a movement from ambiguity to real commitment, from self-satisfaction to a realization of the needs of others, from sinfulness to reconciliation, from selfishness to love. It is Christ who confers this grace. “Let (us) prefer nothing whatever to Christ, and may he bring us all together to everlasting life” (Chapter 72:11-12).

Janis Dopp, oblate
Bloomington, IN

Reflection Questions

What do we mean when we claim to be Christian?

The sacraments effect a change in us if we are ready to accept that change. How have the sacraments changed your life?

How can the Rule of St. Benedict help us to live our Christian identity more fully?

PRAY FOR VOCATIONS

Benedictine Oblate is published four times a year by Saint Meinrad Archabbey.
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
©2013, Saint Meinrad Archabbey
Newsletter gets a new look

This issue of the *Benedictine Oblate* newsletter begins a new era. For the first time in many years, the newsletter has been redesigned. And for the first time, it is being published in full color.

Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, and the communications staff at Saint Meinrad Archabbey have discussed the changes for some time.

Several design ideas were considered and the one you’re now holding is the winning version. The goals of the redesign were to present a more vibrant newsletter – better reflecting the oblate community itself – and to provide a more organized layout that readers will find easier to use.

A special thanks to Tammy Schuetter for her creative design work and Krista Hall for her photography talent – both are essential to the success of the newsletter.

Also, thanks to the Oblate Council members who reviewed the designs and offered their suggestions and input.

We hope you enjoy the new look!

*Mary Jeanne Schumacher, editor  Benedictine Oblate newsletter*

---

Prison: Finding support for a life of conversion

In 10 years of prison ministry, a surprising number of incarcerated offenders tell me that prison has been their “monastery.” Prison stopped them from a destructive way of living, but it provided something more.

By God’s grace, in some cases, prison provided time to review their life and to get in touch with resources that would support them in a life of conversion, a life of seeking God. Resources included books, especially the Holy Bible, and people who would support them in their life of conversion.

This is quite similar to the Benedictine program of life. Men in prison work and they pray. They read sacred Scripture and try to take it into their hearts in a prayerful manner. They live with other people who can be very difficult and who offer the opportunity to practice Gospel virtues.

Recently, in my ministry at the Branchville Correctional Facility, I have met two men who have had this kind of experience in prison. Robert Stepp and Daniel Anderson are working hard to turn their lives around through faith.

*Continued on p. 5*
St. Lambert of Maastricht
Feast: September 17

St. Lambert was born around the year 636 to a noble family in Maastricht, the Netherlands. In 669, he succeeded his uncle, St. Theodard, as bishop of Tongres-Maastricht. Four years later, he was banished because of a local revolution and retired to the Abbey of Stavelot, where he remained for seven years.

In 682, Lambert was reinstated as bishop, only to be assassinated in 705 while defending the rights of the Church in a political controversy. St. Lambert was venerated as a martyr immediately following his murder. His tomb in Liege, Belgium, was a popular place of pilgrimage for centuries.

Although little else is known of the life of St. Lambert, a story celebrating his meekness was included in a number of early biographies: Shortly after his arrival at Stavelot, he accidentally made a noise that disturbed the community during the night silence. The abbot ordered whoever made the noise to kneel before the image of Christ Crucified in the monastery garden. Lambert humbly accepted the penance and, despite the winter’s cold, remained kneeling in the snow throughout the night.

Rather than try to justify his fault or use his episcopal rank as a way to avoid the penance, he manifested a gentleness of spirit in imitation of Jesus, who is “meek and humble of heart” (Matthew 11:29). This event is commemorated in the window dedicated to the meek in the Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln at Saint Meinrad Archabbey.

In the Prologue of the Rule, St. Benedict reminds us that those who have given themselves completely to Christ “fear the Lord and do not become elated over their good deeds; they judge it is the Lord’s power, not their own, that brings about the good in them. They praise the Lord working in them” (vv. 29-30).

Although St. Benedict does not explicitly speak of meekness in the Rule, he would most certainly have approved of St. Lambert’s simplicity, docility and gentleness, which are the qualities of those who are meek.

Reflection Questions
What associations do I have with the word “meekness”?  
Who are the people in my life who have a gentle and simple spirit?  
What can I learn from them and from saints like Lambert of Maastricht?  

Left to right, oblate novices Jane Ann Reinitz and Beverly Himsel; oblates Caryn Mucci, Mary Shanley, and Elizabeth Borho pose after their investiture and oblation ceremonies.

Left to right, oblates Mildred Rutherford, Sandra Borho and oblate prospect Brenda Martin from the Tell City Oblate Chapter attend Mass in the Archabbey Church on March 21st.
Brief history, future plans for Meeting of Chapter Coordinators and Representatives

The first meeting of the oblate coordinators and two representatives from each chapter took place in 1998. Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, asked the participants to formulate a mission statement for chapters of Benedictine oblates of Saint Meinrad Archabbey.

They accomplished their task, coming up with a beautiful mission statement. Fr. Meinrad said that we would live with the mission statement for one year. Only the coordinators would meet on June 4-6, 1999, to assess the success of the mission statement and approve it.

At that time, the coordinators felt they needed a chapter coordinator’s handbook. The task force completed this project by June 17, 1999. A copy of the draft was sent to all the coordinators for their input. After receiving helpful suggestions and changes, it was issued one year later.

This first handbook contained the mission statement, guidelines for the coordinators, examples of activities of the chapters, a list of chapters and a list of coordinators. Fr. Meinrad told the committee that it would meet every five years for evaluation and possible revisions of the handbook. The next meeting would be in 2004.

From this meeting, the second edition of the handbook was developed. It was printed in January 2005. Also in the 2004 meeting, the coordinators and representatives again approved the mission statement. Fr. Meinrad announced at this meeting that he would appoint an oblate council and an oblate finance committee.

In 2009, the topic of the meeting was leadership and Fr. Eugene Hensell, OSB, was the presenter. As a result of this meeting, mentoring articles for novices, the Benedictine Oblate Novice Companion, the Benedictine Oblate Companion 2nd Edition and the characteristics of a strong oblate chapter were developed.

The topic for the Meeting of Chapter Coordinators and Representatives on June 13-14, 2014, will be “Praying and Singing the Psalms” and it will be presented by two monks of Saint Meinrad.

The purpose of the meeting of Chapter Coordinators and Representatives (MCR) will be to:

1. provide a weekend of spiritual enrichment
2. review and approve the Mission Statement for Chapters
3. review and approve the Guidelines for Chapters
4. review a draft of the Chapter Coordinator’s Handbook 3rd Edition
5. assess future needs of chapters (vision statement).

A major thrust will be to review a draft of the Chapter Coordinator’s Handbook. Fr. Meinrad has invited members of the Oblate Council and the Oblate Finance Committee to be present at the meeting. Some members of these two groups are also chapter coordinators. The oblate directors will depend on the knowledge, expertise and experience of the participants.

Thomas J. Rillo, oblate
Bloomingon, IN

Robert is a convert to Catholicism, which he embraced after concluding that it was the “oldest of the Christian Churches.” Dan is a long-term Catholic whose faith has been renewed in prison. Both men have seen their faith journey in prison as a type of monastic experience.

This realization has led them to seek admission to the oblate program of Saint Meinrad Archabbey. Robert and Daniel were invested as oblate novices on February 3. They are eagerly completing the lessons of the Oblate Novice Manual and praying for monks, nuns and oblates around the world. They hope to focus their life of conversion in prison through the Rule of St. Benedict, which leads to a new kind of freedom that can’t be taken away.

Br. Zachary Wilberding, OSB, monk
Saint Meinrad Archabbey

continued from p. 3
Joyful Mysteries
Some thoughts about the rosary

The section on prayer in the Catechism of the Catholic Church refers to two ways of achieving silence so that we can listen efficiently to God’s Word: the rosary and lectio divina. According to the Catechism, “Christian prayer tries above all to meditate on the mysteries of Christ, as in lectio divina or the Rosary.”

It is here that we can see that the rosary and lectio divina are highly recommended as avenues leading one to grow closer to God and to His Son.

The rosary is one of my favorite prayers, but what has proved most challenging about it is the difficulty of maintaining concentration on the mystery or event commemorated in each decade. It is too easy to lose focus and recite mechanically the individual prayers, especially the Hail Marys, while my attention goes elsewhere.

This division of mental labor occurs in many areas of life. For example, it enables us to think about various things while mechanically driving on straight, boring interstate highways. It is what makes it possible for pianists to play repetitive bass lines with their left hands while concentrating on melodies with their right hands. However, this mental agility disrupts the very purpose of prayer.

I’ve found that having two or three main things to think about while praying a particular decade helps to solve this problem, because they sharpen attention and exclude distractions. This list is necessarily personal because it contains only my impressions and perceptions, and I readily admit that others may have much better thoughts to propose. Nonetheless, what follows is what has made my own experience of the rosary richer and more peaceful.

The Joyful Mysteries

The Annunciation: I think of Mary as a teenage girl, suddenly and without warning accosted by the Archangel Gabriel. She must have been stupefied and afraid.

And yet, while the angel waited for her free permission to be “space for the uncontained God,” as the Eastern Orthodox liturgy puts it, she asks only how it is possible. Then she gives her simple and total consent: “Be it done unto me according to your word.” What faith and courage!

The Visitation: In making this journey, Mary exhibits great charity. It cannot have been easy for her to make the trip (On foot? Riding a donkey? Was Joseph at her side?). Too, when Mary gave her assent at the Annunciation, she must have known, or at least suspected, that as an unmarried mother, she was certain to be criticized severely in her village.

It’s no stretch to imagine that she was treated harshly. So it must have been a relief for her to get out of town to visit Elizabeth who, she knew, wouldn’t judge her.

The Nativity: It is one thing to contemplate the birth of Christ in December as we approach the feast itself. At that time, we think only of the event. However, in, say, high summer, it is perhaps more difficult to contemplate the full meaning of the mystery.

It helps at such times to think about the connection of the Nativity with the rest of the story – about how the wood of the Cross is already inscribed in the wood of the cradle, and the eventual Resurrection.

I also think of how the infant is being laid in the feed trough – the “manger,” from the French mangeoire. “Manger” means “to eat,” which prefigures the Eucharist of the Last Supper that offers us His Body and Blood.

The Presentation in the Temple: The Annunciation teaches us about Mary’s faith and courage, the Visitation displays her abundant charity, and the Nativity underscores God’s love for us. This event is simpler, but its significance is profound. It is a question of the considerable irony of the infleshed God submitting to the law of which He/They is/are the author.

Finding Jesus in the Temple: In contemplating this event, I think about Mary and Joseph’s panic in discovering that Jesus was missing, their frantic search for Him and, finally, what happened when they found Him placidly teaching the elders in the temple. Any parent who has ever lost a child in, for instance, a shopping center, can sympathize with the choking panic experienced by the parents.

I also think of His mother’s reaction when they found Him. Far from being docile, she clearly expressed her exasperation. Perhaps she felt the beginning of Simeon’s prophecy that a sword would pierce her soul.

I also wonder about Jesus’s emerging self-consciousness as the Messiah. What did He know and when did He know that He had to be tending His “Father’s business”? And then He docilely returned from Jerusalem to small-town Nazareth to be “submissive” to them. Was He knowingly biding His time? Did He have a plan?

William Hamrick, oblate
St. Louis, MO
Oblate Council learns of possible new chapters

The Oblate Council met at Saint Meinrad on April 20. Present at the meeting were Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, Dennis Skelton, Al Kovacs, Pat Phillips, Jennie Latta, Chris Topa, who acted as secretary, and Janis Dopp, chair. Gail Chambers and Mike Reffett were absent, but Mike participated in part of the meeting by telephone.

Fr. Meinrad reported that John Pelletier has withdrawn from service on the Council for personal reasons. The meeting was opened with prayer by Fr. Meinrad. The customary reading of the Statement of Purpose of the Oblate Council was delayed to permit Mike Reffett to make a financial report, which was strong and reflected the generosity of the oblates.

Janis Dopp and Dennis Skelton reported on their attendance at the meeting of the Midwest Woodlands Region of the National Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors. Eleven of the 18 member communities were able to send representatives. Consideration was given to establishing a Midwest Regional Congress, but the idea was tabled in favor of inviting some of the smaller communities to send representatives to an oblate chapter meeting.

As a result, representatives from the St. Walburg Oblate Community visited the Cincinnati Chapter of the Saint Meinrad Oblate Community and were warmly received. It is hoped that more of these visits will occur, laying the foundation for a future Midwest Regional Congress.

The Council heard a report from Fr. Meinrad on a number of topics of interest. Much work has been done in the oblate library, including cataloging books, rearranging the shelving, and transferring VHS tapes of prior conferences to DVD format. Additional work remains to be done to convert audio tapes of prior conferences to MP3 format. It is hoped that eventually some of these audio recordings will be made available through the oblate web page.

Fr. Meinrad also reported that there is interest in establishing oblate chapters in Kalamazoo and St. Louis. The oblate community continues to grow. Of special note is the response to the oblate web page. There have been 63 inquiries since September, and twice as many of these came through the web page than through email or postal mail.

Of these 63, 21 applied to become oblate novices. There are now almost 1,200 active oblates and novices in the Saint Meinrad Oblate Community. Response to the call for Renewal of Promises and for Bona Operas was very strong, with over 500 oblates responding.

A second edition of the Liturgy of the Hours for Benedictine Oblates has been printed. Response to this book from the Saint Meinrad Oblate Community and from other oblate communities has been very strong because of its ease of use and “Saint Meinrad feel.” Plans are under way to supplement the book with liturgies for the Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter seasons and liturgies for the principal Benedictine saints.

Plans continue to unfold for the 2014 Meeting of Chapter Coordinators and Representatives. Fr. Jeremy King, OSB, and Fr. Harry Hagan, OSB, will be the presenters on the theme, “Praying and Singing the Psalms.” At that meeting, Fr. Jeremy will give additional training on singing the psalms for the chapter coordinators and representatives to take back to their chapters. More information will be provided to chapter coordinators later this year.

Al and Irene Kovacs will accompany Fr. Meinrad to the biennial meeting of NAABOD at Annunciation Monastery in Bismarck, ND, in July. Chris Topa and Mike and Michelle Reffett will be delegates to the Third World Congress of Benedictine Oblates in Rome in September. The next meeting of the Oblate Council will be July 20.

Jennie D. Latta, oblate
Memphis, TN

Finance Committee

The Oblate Finance Committee met April 19 to review financial results for the six months that ended December 31, 2012. Generous gift-giving (renewals and other gifts) slightly offset the oblate community expenses.

Expenses covered by gift revenue included office staff, printing and travel. The printing expenses included publication and mailing costs of An Updated History of the Benedictine Oblate Community of Saint Meinrad Archabbey 1995-2012. This book was issued at no cost to the oblates. Other printing costs included the seasonal spiritual pamphlets sent to the oblates.

The Committee noted the many activities and services overseen and undertaken by Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, and the Oblate Office. Without the positive gift giving, some of the Oblate Office and staff activities could not be accomplished.

Fr. Meinrad expressed great appreciation for the oblates and their continuing support of our oblate community.

Mike Reffett
Evansville, IN
Sacraments: Visible signs of Christian life
The topic of the Oblate Study Days in June 2012 was “The Sacraments: Means of Grace, Ways of Life,” attended by 45 oblates. The presenter was Fr. Prior Kurt Stasiak, OSB, who teaches sacramental theology in Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology.

He pointed out that there are seven sacraments, seven being a symbolic number for the Catholic faith, a symbol of perfection, although theologians have disagreed through the years about the exact number of sacraments.

Fr. Prior defined the sacraments as visible signs of Christian life. They are doors to the sacred that lead to hidden treasures. The sacraments do not merely tell us something about our faith; they also make our faith more real to us. They are the visible verbs of Christian life, the instruments through which we become holy. He explained that we do not receive the sacraments and then walk away. Rather, we celebrate the sacraments so that we can walk in a different way.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son was the basis of the second conference: A Case Study on Grace. Although it is a parable that many of us know well, Fr. Prior suggested that the oblates listen again for the way relationships are treated and expressed. The parable is about our relationship with God and about grace, and the interaction between the prodigal son and his father demonstrates this.

In conference three, Fr. Prior discussed the sacrament of Baptism, using the human experience of adoption as his example: our adoption of Christ as our savior is undertaken at the initiative of another, exemplifying grace. Adoption itself is an extraordinary act and represents redemption.

Through adoption of the sacrament of Baptism, we are delivered from original sin while being delivered into a relationship with Christ. Baptism also enables us to adopt a new family: the Church. The essential character that remains intact through the sacrament of Baptism is freedom of will, even though adoption is irrevocable, and the understanding and appreciation of that grace happen through conversion.

As for the sacrament of Reconciliation, Fr. Prior stated that the sacrament is a call to accountability through which we take account of our life and our responsibilities. It is a realization of God’s forgiveness. It is a return to grace.

The Eucharist was the focus of the last conference. According to Fr. Prior, the Eucharist can be called the sacrament of perfection in two ways. First, it is the sacrament that completes Christian initiation. Secondly, Eucharist is the pinnacle of all Christian life: thanksgiving and praise to the Father, the sacrificial memorial of Christ and His Body, and the presence of Christ by the power of His Word and His Spirit.

Fr. Prior also touched upon the other sacraments: Anointing the Sick, Matrimony, Holy Orders and Confirmation, concluding by reiterating that the sacraments are true treasures of the Church. They are not sacred parentheses in the lives of individual Christians or of the Church. Rather, they are the visible verbs of Christian life, prayer and work.

Thomas J. Rillo, oblate
Bloomington, IN

Novice promoted to brigadier general
Oblate Novice Colonel Patrick X. Mordente was promoted to brigadier general in the U.S. Air Force on May 22, at the Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. He and his family are now in Germany, where he is commanding the 86 Airlift Wing and Ramstein Air Base.

Oblate added to Wall of Excellence
Oblate Jack Sederstrand of Dayton, OH, was added to the Wall of Excellence for Volunteers at Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton on April 26. A news item about the honor reports: Jack spends every Thursday afternoon delivering Holy Communion and quality care to patients, families and staff. In June 2012, he also became a member of the Volunteer Board. Jack has been a committed and dedicated volunteer for many years. His compassion and his quiet demeanor and gentle approach are evident as he goes about his task with humility and grace.

Hospitality offered by the Cincinnati Chapter
On Sunday, February 24, the Cincinnati Chapter hosted oblates from St. Walburg Monastery in Covington, KY. Four of their oblates, along with their Director of Benedictine Oblates, joined the Cincinnati Oblates at their regular chapter meeting. The Saint Meinrad Archabbey oblates welcomed them as part of the family and with St. Benedict’s hospitality.

They were present for Vespers, group lectio divina and a conference given by
Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, oblate director of Saint Meinrad Archabbeey. There was some discussion after the conference, followed by a social period. Sr. Mary Tewes, OSB, oblate director of St. Walburg Monastery, invited the Cincinnati Oblates to attend an ice cream social on Saturday, June 22.

Fr. Adrian talks on Lectio Divina and spiritual work
Sixty-four conference participants braved unusually cold weather and came to Saint Meinrad Archabbey for the March 20-22 Oblate Retreat. Fr. Adrian Burke, OSB, was the conference presenter on “Lectio Divina and Spiritual Work: Praying and Progress.” Archabbot Justin DuVall, OSB, opened the retreat with a warm and encouraging welcome.

In the first conference, Fr. Adrian defined lectio as sitting at the feet of Jesus and listening to Him teach us about ourselves. It is getting to know Jesus in a more intimate way. It is an encounter with Jesus through the Scriptures.

Fr. Adrian pointed out that lectio divina could be done in the two parts of the Eucharist: the Bread and the Wine (as the presence of Jesus) and the Proclamation of the Word through the Gospel readings. The Scripture is proclaimed and the Gospel is preached. We can do lectio divina in groups when in Church although here the stages of lectio are accomplished in each individual mind. Lectio divina is also a form of praying.

Fr. Adrian recommended John’s Gospel (8:31-38) as an excellent Scriptural reading for lectio divina. He suggested morning as a good time to do lectio divina. We can then carry the Word of God with us for the rest of the day. We read the passage and then we chew on it throughout the day.

In the second conference, Fr. Adrian began with an analysis of literacy and technology. He stated that the average American does not read a lot. We lose the faculty of imagination. Much of reading is for information, and this is not spiritual reading.

Fr. Adrian advocates reading the text out loud and giving voice to Christ. Digital reading is weakening our imagination. We need to appropriate our spirituality, our faith, and what Fr. Adrian called sacramental imagination. Sacramental imagination is an intellectual faculty that is necessary for spiritual growth.

In conference three, Fr. Adrian talked about the Rule of St. Benedict, especially Chapter 48, “The Daily Manual Labor.” Benedict set specific times for work and prayer. When the harvest was over, the schedule allowed for increased prayer and less labor. Sacred reading was increased during the winter season.

Fr. Adrian said to let the Holy Spirit guide your lectio divina. You choose the scriptural reading and the Holy Spirit will guide and assist you to a fuller understanding. We can begin to see relationships in the Scriptures. We can place ourselves in the Bible readings and identify with the characters. We can make a connection that is beyond just reading about what happened. To achieve a sense of the text is both important and vital to lectio divina.

In the fourth conference, Fr. Adrian talked about his own method for lectio divina. At his morning lectio divina, he writes on a notepad the text or the words that he carries with him for the entire day. He frequently will say the text or words as the day goes by.

The example that he gave for his lectio divina that day was the letter of St. Paul where he mentions the thorn in his side. The words he chose to remember were: thorn, side, assault.

Fr. Adrian suggested the Book of Numbers as a good place to begin. There is a continuum in the Book of Numbers that correlates with the continuum of lectio divina. He said we should use our imaginations to enter into the text. We should know the sense of the story. We should spend some time with the Holy Spirit, as listening is also a form of prayer. We should keep a part of the reading with us for the whole day.

John Campbell celebrates 70 years as oblate
Congratulations are extended to oblate John Campbell, 88, of the Greater Cincinnati Oblate Chapter. John, who is also known as Br. Patrick to many Cincinnati oblates, has been an oblate of Saint Meinrad since 1943. Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, was at the celebration commemorating John’s birthday as well as his 70th anniversary of oblation.

Br. Martin gives day of reflection
Oblates from the Louisville, KY, Madison, IN, and Hazard, KY, areas came together for a day of reflection on April 20 led by Br. Martin.
Erspamer, OSB. Fr. Noël Mueller, OSB, presided at midday prayer and Mass for the group.

Br. Martin encouraged us to pay attention to the details around us, as God can often be found in these little things. He said the purpose of art in church is to teach; the whole of Christology is present in images, especially the images of Advent and Christmas. These teaching images are present all over the world and were created from the early days of Christianity through the current day.

He used the image of a tree, with its roots in the earth and its branches reaching to heaven, to illustrate how art teaches us and how these images evolve over the ages. Br. Martin showed several images representing the Tree in the Garden of Eden, the Jesse Tree and the Tree of the Cross. He guided us to recognize symbols used in various artworks that add to the meaning of the piece.

In addition to the presentation, participants were given opportunities to get to know one another. St. Stephen Martyr Church graciously allowed us the use of their church and a meeting room for the event. And in the spirit of Benedictine spirituality, the attendees assisted by providing food, setting up or cleaning, and assisting chapter coordinator George Thompson.

Carolyn Holman, oblate
Louisville, KY

Muncie chapter coordinators step down
Deacon James and Carolyn MacDougall, co-coordinators of the Muncie Oblate Chapter, stepped down from those positions on February 25 due to his health issues. They began their work on October 21, 2005. We are grateful for their good service and work for the oblates of the Muncie, IN, area.

Oblates become parents
Bloomington Chapter Oblate Novice Chris Elam and his wife Emily became parents of a son, Felix Basil, on April 10.

Congratulations to Fr. Rod Hurst, an Episcopalian priest and oblate novice, and his wife Carolyn on the birth of a son on April 23. He was named Ian Anselm Christian.

Doctor of Divinity degree bestowed upon an oblate
Rev. William Wilson of Huntington, WV, was conferred an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from his college, West Virginia Wesleyan College, on May 4.

Seeking after Peace written by Catherine Byers
Oblate Catherine Byers is the author of a new booklet in the Notes from a Monastery, The Sacred Way Every Day series. In “Seeking after Peace,” she discusses Benedict’s call to search inwardly for peace and pursue it outwardly. She writes: “Most of us want to make sense of our lives, to understand its meaning, direction, and purpose – to find peace. The journey, however, begins within our individual hearts.”

INVESTITURES

February 1, 2013 – Mrs. Kimberly Argujo-Flores of Muncie, IN.

February 9, 2013 – Mr. Gerald Hyndman and Mrs. Joan Hyndman of Noblesville, IN.

February 10, 2013 – Mr. Robert Stepp and Mr. Daniel Anderson of Branchville, IN.

February 24, 2013 – Mr. Scott Alt of Loveland, OH.

February 28, 2013 – Mrs. Charlotte Lombardi of Columbus, OH.


March 16, 2013 – Mr. Brian Finet of Monticello, IL; Mrs. Adele Horne of New Albany, IN.

March 21, 2013 – Miss Jane Ann Reinitz of Evansville, IN; Mrs. Beverly Himsel of Jasper, IN.

March 31, 2013 – Mr. Rick Tomsick and Mrs. Mary Lou Tomsick of Richmond Heights, OH.

April 6, 2013 – Mr. William Grant of Evansville, IN.

April 13, 2013 – Mr. Mark McDermott of Indianapolis, IN; Rev. David Ellis of Noblesville, IN.

April 28, 2013 – Rev. Mark Caldwell-Reiss of Southgate, KY; Mrs. Mary Louise Holton of Hamersville, OH.

May 2, 2013 – Dr. Edward Castronova and Mrs. Jane Reinhart, both of Bloomington, IN.

May 9, 2013 – Pastor Cherrie Wilkerson of Golconda, IL.

May 11, 2013 – Mr. Rich Lively of Brownsburg, IN; and Ms. Annette Calloway of Indianapolis, IN.

DEATHS

Mr. John Charles Desmarais of Auburn, KY, died on August 14, 2012.

Mr. Jacinto Calli of Lancaster, PA, died on February 6, 2013.

Mr. Raymond Emsweller of Dublin, OH, died on February 11, 2013.

Deacon James MacDougall of Muncie, IN, died on February 28, 2013.

Mrs. Perline Schaefer of Ferdinand, IN, died on March 17, 2013.

Mr. Donald Kathman of Burlington, KY, died on April 10, 2013.

Mr. Jim Geiss of Evansville, IN, died on May 7, 2013.

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 30-September 2, 2013: The New York oblates will celebrate their annual Labor Day weekend retreat with Fr. Raymond Studzinski, OSB. The title of the retreat will be: “The Role of Sacraments and Sacramental Living in Benedictine Spirituality.”

September 7, 2013: The Lancaster, PA, Day of Recollection in the Amish country will have Br. Martin Ersypamer, OSB, giving a presentation on “The Sacraments.”

November 11-21, 2013: Benedictine pilgrimage to Italy hosted by Br. Maurus Zoeller. For details, call Br. Maurus at (812) 357-6674 or email: mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu. Pilgrims will visit Venice, Florence, Assisi, Norcia, Subiaco and Rome.

December 1, 2013: The Day of Recollection for New York oblates will have Fr. Noël Mueller, OSB, as the presenter of “Our Commitment to Christ: Living the Sacraments and the Rule.”

December 13-15, 2013: The Oblate Retreat at Saint Meinrad is scheduled to have Fr. Eugene Hensell, OSB, as the presenter of “The Infancy Narratives of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.”

ONLINE STORE

Visit the Scholar Shop’s online store http://store.saintmeinrad.edu Books, Saint Meinrad logo shirts, hats, jackets, hoodies and more.

VOLUNTEERS APPRECIATED

Recent volunteers were Cathey Byers, Candidate Dane De Decker, OSB, Janis Dopp, Albert Frabutt, Melanie Isaacson, Marie Kobos, Albert Kovacs, Jennie Latta, Jerry and Mary Mailet, Tim Mattingly, Mike and Michele Reffett, Tom and Joan Rillo, Pat and Barbara Phillips, Cathy Russell, Dennis Skelton, George Thompson and Chris Topa.

Mary Goedert of Evansville, IN, observes during the Ritual of Oblation on March 21, 2013.

On March 21, 2013, Jerry and Mary Maillet celebrated their seventh wedding anniversary with a cake at Saint Meinrad.

A new book by Archbishop Emeritus Daniel Buechlein, OSB, demonstrates the prayer life of a Benedictine monk and his fidelity to his vows. In *Surprised by Grace* (Criterion Press Inc., 2012), Archbishop Daniel shares his memories and reflections after 25 years as bishop and archbishop. He now lives at the monastery at Saint Meinrad.

Of great interest will be the archbishop’s courage and deep faith as he accepts the news of his cancer. He tells the story of Bryan Rush, a sixth grader who wrote to the archbishop when he was first diagnosed with cancer in 2008.

Bryan wrote: “The definition of courage is hard to memorize. But luckily for everyone it’s easy to describe. It is the ability to move forward when times are dark. The times you give it all you got, even though you are weary. So remember dear archbishop, that even though times are bad you still have the grace of God, so always stay glad.”

Archbishop Daniel recalls that he was touched by Bryan’s message. “In many ways, this young man has helped me to accept the fact that my cancer was God’s gift. Bryan’s call to courage underscored what I knew I needed to do. His insight provided a fine stimulus for me to remember that Easter comes by way of the cross. There is no other way.”

The most compelling and poignant part of the book is the first chapter, “Aloneness,” where the archbishop describes his stroke and struggles to realize that he is not damaged goods and that he is a monk, a priest and a bishop who seeks God.

The archbishop’s courage and obedience to the will of God can teach us a great deal as we confront our own issues. The archbishop emphasizes the importance of God’s grace in his ministerial life. His courageous perspective is certainly one for all of us to emulate.

Thomas J. Rillo, oblate  
Bloomington, IN