Sacraments...
Are they missing from the Rule?

A sacrament is defined as a visible sign of an inward grace. The Catholic tradition has seven sacraments: Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Reconciliation, Matrimony, Holy Orders, Anointing of the Sick.

They are a constant in the life of the devout Catholic, and yet St. Benedict does not mention the word “sacrament” in the Rule. Rev. Timothy Fry argues that Benedict wrote his Rule primarily for monks, but “its sound principles for working together and living together have proved relevant to people of all classes of society through fifteen hundred years” (The Rule of St. Benedict in English, The Liturgical Press, p. 9).

Moreover, he says, “Benedict’s Rule offered definitive direction and established an ordered way of life that gave security and stability” (p. 11). How could it be relevant, however, if the sacraments, the very basis of the Catholic religion, are never mentioned? Or are they mentioned, over and over again in terms of life in community, but not by the specific names that we call them?

Benedict begins in the Prologue by reminding us to “see how the Lord in his love shows us the way to life” (Prologue 20). We are called to be “clothed…with faith and good works,” to “set out on this way, with the Gospel for our guide, that we may deserve to see him who has called us to his kingdom” (Prologue 21).

In other words, those who follow the Rule are called by Benedict to be sacrament, to be outward visible signs of inward grace. We are to act differently from the world, putting the love of Christ before all else (4:20-21), by placing our hope in God alone (4:41), listening to holy reading and devoting ourselves often to prayer (4:55-56) and,

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finally, never losing hope in God’s mercy (4:74).

We are to live in humility and obedience, doing not our own will, but the will of God (5:13). We are to erect a ladder of our lives on earth with our body and soul as the sides and the steps of humility and discipline (7:8-9). It is through ascending these steps of humility and discipline that we will arrive at that “perfect love of God which casts out fear,” and we will be cleansed of our vices and sins (7:67, 70).

Moreover, Benedict underscores the importance of prayer by specifically designating Psalms to be read during the different hours and the manner of celebrating the Office during different seasons. He reminds us to consider “how we are to behave in the presence of God and his angels,” making our minds in harmony with our voices (19:6-7), praying “with the utmost humility and sincere devotion” because, as Benedict says, “God regards our purity of heart and tears of compunction, not our many words” (22:2-3).

Surely, in these words Benedict is talking about both Eucharist, the central act of worship in the Roman Catholic Church, but also what Jeffery D. Von Lehman refers to as a “concrete encounter of the community with Jesus,” and Reconciliation, the action of God who uses the sacrament to reconcile us to Himself by restoring sanctity in our souls.

Perhaps Benedict also refers to Baptism, a rebirth to a new and supernatural life as we are received into the community by doing the will of God, and Confirmation, reflecting maturity and a coming of age whose effect is to give strength of faith.

All of these sacramental characteristics are repeated in Chapter 53, when Benedict discusses the reception of guests, who are to be welcomed as Christ. The monks are to show “all humility” to a guest and every kindness, and “great care and concern are to be shown in receiving poor people and pilgrims” (53:6; 15), recalling the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.

Reading further into the Rule, Benedict describes the qualifications of the deans (21), the monastery cellarer (31), the reader for the week (38), the artisans (57), the priests (62), the abbot and the prior (64, 65), and the porter (66). All of them are called by the abbot or by each other to be what they are and to do what they do.

All of these people are clearly called and have a vocation to the assignment they have been given within the community, and thus their call is sacramental, similar to the sacraments of Marriage, a lifelong union symbolizing the divine union between Christ and His Church, and Holy Orders, the continuation of Christ’s priesthood through apostolic ministry.

And finally, in Chapter 36, Benedict addresses the issue of the sick brothers, reminding us that “care of the sick must rank above and before all else so that they may truly be served as Christ,” being patiently borne with and suffering no neglect (36:1; 5-6). In the same way, the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick brings spiritual and even physical strength during an illness and conveys graces and imparts gifts of strengthening against anxiety, discouragement and temptation.

Thus, as Scott P. Richert says, “When we participate [in the sacraments] worthily, each provides us with graces – with the life of God in our soul. In worship, we give to God what we owe Him; in the sacraments, He gives us the graces to live a truly human life.”

So it is with Benedict in the holy Rule. Although Benedict never mentions the word “sacrament,” the Rule is filled with the idea of sacrament, in order that the monks show to each other “the pure love of brothers; to God, loving fear; to their abbot, unfeigned and humble love.”

Through the sacraments, we Christians are outward signs to each other of an inward grace. And through living the Rule of
Benedict, the monks – and others who follow the Rule – remain in right relationship not only with each other and their fellow humankind, but also with God.

Catherine Byers, oblate
Nineveh, IN

Reflection Questions

St. Benedict wrote the Rule almost 1,500 years ago. In what ways is it still valuable for Benedictines?

Although St. Benedict never mentions the word “sacrament,” how are those who follow the Rule called to be sacrament?

What is the importance of prayer for Benedictines?

What are some of the qualifications for various positions in the monastery, and how do they apply to us today? ◆


Oblates of Saint Meinrad Archabbey gathered on June 12 for the annual study days, which were led by Fr. Eugene Hensell, OSB. Archabbot Justin DuVall, OSB, Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, and Br. Maurus Zoeller, OSB, also welcomed the oblates at the first conference.

The focus of Fr. Eugene’s conferences was the Gospel of Luke. As Fr. Eugene explained, all the Gospels are different, but the author of Luke’s Gospel gave the world a Jesus to love, portraying Him as open and merciful – the way we want to encounter Jesus.

Essentially, when reading Luke, we have to ask ourselves: What does Luke tell us about being a follower of Jesus? And if we decide to follow Him, what are we called to do? The answers to those questions involve a serious commitment, and once that commitment has been made, there is no turning back.


Luke, in writing his Gospel, doesn’t know exactly what happened during the time of Jesus. He had Mark’s Gospel from which to draw and he had collections of sayings of Jesus, miracle stories and other stories handed down for years. However, the parables and other stories that he wrote were not factual, biographically or historically.

Fr. Eugene said Luke’s purpose was theological; the Gospel of Luke is a document of faith. It is the story of what the first followers of Jesus came to believe about Jesus, and it provides the reader with the opportunity to make some choices about what he or she believes. It is a story of inclusion and compassion, and it challenges the reader to also be inclusive and compassionate.

We have to ask if we are ready to take that risk. Luke’s Jesus is always accessible to the people (witness the Sermon on the Plain). Luke’s Jesus is always about repentance and forgiveness. Luke’s Jesus is not victorious, as we generally understand victory. Luke’s Jesus has no theory of prayer; Luke simply shows Jesus praying. And so, according to Fr. Eugene, we should read Luke as a novel and then ask ourselves if this is the One we choose to follow.

Studying Luke was not the only activity the oblates engaged in. Benedictine hospitality was overflowing. One evening Katelyn Walker (pianist and vocalist) and Tom Yost (guitarist and vocalist) performed music from their Year of Faith Concert, “I Will Praise Your Name: A Collection of Psalms.”

Another evening, Fr. Noël Mueller, OSB, showed the movie, “The Ultimate Gift.” There were final oblations and renewals of oblations. It was a week of fellowship and sharing, and the days and nights flew by as the oblates listened, studied, talked and prayed.

Catherine Byers, oblate
Nineveh, IN

“Being an oblate has enriched my life spiritually. I have received an inner peace and an experience of the love that Jesus has for us. Also the oblate life has helped me to focus on prayer rather than the distractions that come my way.”

Oblate Ms. Angelina Cipriani Guarini
Farmingdale, NY
Saint Meinrad represented at national directors meeting

Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, represented the Saint Meinrad Oblate Community at the biennial conference of the North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors (NAABOD). Annunciation Monastery hosted the conference on the campus of the University of Mary, Bismarck, ND, on July 12-17. Fr. Meinrad was accompanied and assisted by oblates Albert and Irene Kovacs.

The participants were welcomed by Annunciation’s prioress, Sr. Nancy Miller, OSB, and by the University of Mary president, Monsignor James Shea. The conference fittingly began in earnest on the feast of St. Henry, patron of Benedictine oblates.

The conference featured three key presentations and a panel discussion. It also included daily liturgies, business meetings, and visits to Annunciation Monastery on campus, Sacred Heart Monastery and Assumption Abbey, both in Richardton, ND.

The theme for the conference was “Living the Benedictine Charism Faithfully in the World.” Each of the three presenters pointed out one or more ways in which the oblate’s “way of acting should be different from the world’s way” (RB 4:20).

Sr. Thomas Welder, OSB, encouraged oblates to hold on to their work in the world, but to enter the “monastic heart” of selfless love and live lives “that place a higher value on relationship and community than on productivity.”

The practice of listening is at the heart of this way of life. Quoting Aquinata Bockmann, Sr. Welder explained, “The heart that receives the Word of God also receives the life of God and so can expand to become God’s dwelling (Perspectives on the Rule of Saint Benedict).” We listen to God’s word in Scripture and we listen to others in hospitality.

Monks and oblates also receive God’s word as it is distilled in the Rule of St. Benedict. The Rule calls us to practice the virtues of simplicity, patience and compassion. Sr. Welder’s extended remarks on these virtues will be presented in an upcoming issue of this newsletter.

Fr. Terrence Kardong, OSB, focused his presentation of the virtue of Christian hope. The world’s common response to seemingly intractable problems is to cover despair with distraction and self-indulgence or to generate false optimism by asserting control over the future. Benedictines might be tempted to give up hope as western civilization, which they helped build and Christianize, becomes less Christian and monasteries become less full.

Fr. Terrence pointed toward a better way. First, he noted that there is never cause for despair, because Christian hope has God for its object. Our hope is in God and His promises. Christians are called to live in a way that manifests hope (cf. 1 Pet. 3:15). Fr. Terrence explained, “I can act hopefully because Jesus died for my sins and rose from the dead.”

St. Benedict paves the way for hopeful living when he admonishes his followers against self-will. “We have to place our hope in the future that God wants for us,” said Fr. Terrence, and not in the future that we want for ourselves.

Christian hope frees us from self-centered despair to build up God’s kingdom. We don’t try to force God. Instead, we do our best to discern and carry out His will. We remain always hopeful because the future belongs to God, and He desires our salvation.

Sr. Coleen McGrane, OSB, explained how monks and oblates should treat modern communication tools and social media differently than the world treats them. As commonly used (or abused), these tools negatively impact Benedictine practices of mindfulness, hospitality and community. They can hinder our ability to know and love God and our neighbor.

While acknowledging their obvious benefits, Sr. Coleen suggested that modern methods of communication should be guided and tempered by the wisdom of St. Benedict. Sr. Coleen’s insights will be explored further in an upcoming issue of this newsletter.
Profile:
Br. James Jensen

Q. Can you tell us about your background?

I grew up in Iowa City and my parents were committed to taking my brothers and me to church every Sunday. I attended parochial elementary schools and a parochial secondary school. I was influenced by really good teachers and also my parish priest, who visited the schools often.

He attended extracurricular activities including athletic events. He definitely was a strong influence in the beginning of my spiritual development. My parents also were an influence on me.

The Catholic education and Catholic parents undoubtedly influence what I might later identify as spirituality. I attended the University of Iowa in Iowa City. My course of studies involved a concentration in accounting. This led to certification as a CPA.

Q. Did you participate in any extracurricular activities during your secondary school years? Did any of these activities influence you to enter the religious or monastic life?

I always enjoyed playing golf. I was on my high school golf team and would play frequently. I used to think that if I could be a professional golfer and be a priest, I would be very happy. Of course, it was just an unrealistic dream. So I resign myself to be a monk who plays recreational golf occasionally.

Q. Why did you choose Saint Meinrad Archabbey as a place you would like to live a life as a monk? Did you consider other monastic communities?

I was a CPA for five years and I was never completely satisfied. I was happy with my professional life as an accountant, but I thought there was something missing in my whole life. I do not mean that I was unhappy with it. I felt that there was something more that was calling me. I guess my Catholic upbringing was still a strong part of me.

I visited Saint Meinrad Archabbey during a vocational interest session. Fr. Anthony Vinson was the vocational director at that time and he is from Iowa as well. I applied for a sabbatical from the accounting firm I was working for. My supervisor found out that it was available and she was able to inform me about it.

With a sabbatical, if I did not like being in a monastic community, then I would not have completely closed the door with my employer in Iowa. I discerned and decided to enter the community. I did vocational-type retreats with my home diocese and a few other religious communities, but I did not seriously consider any other monastic houses.

Q. What were some of your impressions and reaction to Saint Meinrad Archabbey as a physical entity and as a spiritual entity?

I find it hard to differentiate between the physical and the spiritual entities of Saint Meinrad Archabbey. The architecture of the buildings speaks of the spirituality of both the monks who built some of the buildings, including the church, and the buildings themselves. It is hard to imagine that such a place is located deep within the rural landscape.

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Sorrowful Mysteries
Some reflections about the rosary

Editor's note: In this second article in a series, oblate William Hamrick of St. Louis, MO, offers some reflections on the Sorrowful Mysteries of the rosary.

As a general comment, I do not have many problems focusing on these events because of the sheer horror of the Passion. It is more a question of having the courage to face them honestly with full recognition of what Jesus was willing to endure for our sake.

One of the early Church Fathers once stated correctly that no matter how bad things get in our lives, they can't possibly be as bad as what God suffered for us. The "Golden Rule" prescribes that we love our neighbors as ourselves, but surely St. Athanasius was right to say that God loves us more than He loves Himself.

The Agony in the Garden: Could there be a more dramatic contrast between Jesus in such a state of dread that He sweated blood or perspiration as thick as blood, and His most trusted apostles who couldn't stay awake with Him? I can't imagine the depths of that agonizing terror. I wonder what He thought of the impending sacrifice if even His closest disciples couldn't stay awake.

The Scourging: It's only one brief sentence in Scripture: "Pilate had Jesus scourged." But never was a horrible event so under-described. Chained or tied to a pillar or pole, stripped, and beaten, whipped, bloodied and bruised all over His body: and that was just the overture to the Crucifixion.

The Crowning with Thorns: This is another case of irony as the King of the Universe is mockingly crowned with force and sharpness sufficient to tear into His scalp and make blood flow.

Carrying the Cross: It's a wonder that Jesus was even able to carry it for a while by Himself and no mystery why He stumbled and needed help. But this event is symbolic of something else. We who are weakened by sinfulness and sometimes weighed down, and even crushed, by burdens of various kinds still have our crosses to bear and the challenge to perseveré to the end.

The Crucifixion: When we speak of some pain being "excruciating," we are referring to the Cross (Latin: crucis, crucifix). Yet, I don't think any of us can really imagine what it must feel like to have nails driven through our hands and feet — on top of all that previous suffering.

Correlativey, none of us can grasp fully the depth of God's love for us. It's also hard for me to conceive the depth of His Mother's suffering as the sword fully penetrated her soul.

It's enough to remember the verse from Stabat Mater that says, "Who is the man who would not weep/To see the Mother of Christ in such suffering?" (Quis est homo qui non fleret/Matrem Christi si videret/In tanto supplicio?)

I hope that I will not be placed in some small office and do nothing but accounting. I can contribute my skill to the operation of the monastic community; however, I feel that I must grow in other areas as well.

Q. Does Saint Meinrad Archabbey meet your expectations? Were you surprised by the diversity among the monks and their respective interests?

No, I was not surprised because I gleaned this from my earlier visits to the monastery. I met various monks and was able to learn of some of the activities that they were involved in. I also realize that my accounting background is a skill that I bring to the monastic community.

Q. What are some of your long-range goals? For example, do you have any aspirations for the priesthood? Is there a specific work activity that you would like to devote your monastic career to?

I have given much thought to the priesthood at this time. I see monks who are quite happy being brothers and not priests. Br. John Mark is a good example of a monk who is content to work in the area of psychology and do pottery as a creative sideline. Br. Martin is another example of a liturgical artist who is applying his gifts for the needs of the Church and the community here at Saint Meinrad.

As far as my own interests in a work activity, I will have to wait and see what will evolve. At this point, I have ideas about my labora part of being a monk. The final decision rests with the abbot, of course.

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I feel that the rhythm of the prayer life, the prayers and psalms in choir, are especially a spiritual entity that is so apparent. The balance of ora et labora emphasized by St. Benedict in the Rule is so applicable to the rhythm of life that the monks lead. Of course, the monastery grounds and landscape are so beautiful and a peaceful spiritual sense of being is always possible.

PRAY FOR VOCATIONS

Thomas J. Rillo, oblate
Bloomington, IN
Oblate works in pro-life ministries

Pro-life ministries have many facets. The deacon formation classes in the Archdiocese of Louisville, which I participated in with my husband Charlie some 20 years ago, changed me. I began to explore more deeply the issues of social justice and to develop new understandings. This has been a constant through the years with continuing formation and education as well as lived experiences.

About two years ago, I became an oblate novice and started another new path. Through this experience and oblation, I have changed some patterns that have made my prayer life more intentional and my ministry more fruitful. Prayer and work! I was habitually “good” on work, but rather short on prayer.

Taking time each day to reflect on God’s presence in my life is making a difference not only to me, but to others. I am working to “listen with the ear of my heart.” The unity of spirit with the monks at Saint Meinrad and the oblates is part of the power of God at work. We are in this together!

Three years ago, I was invited to become a council member of St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in New Albany, IN. After some discernment, I decided to drop some activities and focus more on this outreach. As my spiritual director says, “pruning.”

Pro-life ministry provided at St. Elizabeth’s (stelizabethcatholiccharities.org) involves 10 ministries, including pregnancy services, adoption services, counseling, CASA and supported living for developmentally delayed adults.

Being on the council at St. Elizabeth’s has been more than occupying a seat at meetings. We are all using our talent and treasure to continue the good work in a time of cutbacks and economic challenge. The Catholic Charities prayer says it well: “Give us the courage to speak your words of life, peace, love, mercy and human solidarity.”

Fran Brown, oblate
Louisville, KY

Ohio oblates learn about conversing with God

“Conversing with God in Scripture” was the topic of the conferences by Fr. Columba Kelly, OSB, for the day of recollection of the Ohio oblates. The Dayton Oblate Chapter hosted the day at the Transfiguration Spiritual Center – The Lange Estate at Ludlow Falls, OH, on May 18.

Father recommended the book with the same title by Stephen J. Binz. We come to understand how to read and reflect on Scripture in ways to enable us to hear God talking to us in our thoughts and hearts. Father showed us how to converse with God in prayer and explained the elements, characteristics and benefits of lectio divina.

There were 30 oblates present for the day, which included Liturgy of the Hours, time for confessions, dinner and the Holy Eucharist. Oblate Patricia O’Malley, coordinator of the Dayton Chapter, organized the day.
Oblate leads day of recollection on listening, responding

James O’Connell, an oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey and retired guidance counselor from Paoli, IN, was the presenter for the Oblate Day of Recollection on July 11. His reflection, “A Little Bit of Something and a Lot of Nothing,” focused on the art of listening and responding to God’s call in our lives.

About 40 oblates from Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio and Illinois participated in the day, which began with a welcome from Archabbot Justin DuVall, OSB, and Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB.

“Practice makes permanent” was one of the themes introduced by Mr. O’Connell. He emphasized that by learning about and being aware of ourselves in body, thought and spirit, we can enhance our relationship with God and others.

Questions during the day included: How do we listen to God and to others? Are we really listening? What do we hear? Am I listening to my body? Do I focus on myself (not others) so I can become my true self?

“How can I grow if I don’t know?” was a question meant to show that learning is crucial if we are going to improve relationships and enhance our spiritual well-being. Mr. O’Connell said this journey begins by looking within and analyzing how, when and whether listening occurs.

He offered tips on how to listen and respond to others: have a dialogue rather than a monologue, let others finish their statements, stop interrupting and debating. He also shared that “my thoughts will get me into trouble” when spending too much time alone, and working with others is a crucial component in discovering and exploring our faith.

Another idea presented was “experiencing God in the present.” Mr. O’Connell asked participants to visualize standing before God, experiencing Him in the present, not in the past or future. He suggested that to realize who we really are, we need to look critically at who we listen to and trust. In addition, identifying what makes each of us “come alive” can be important to new awareness.

The day also included prayer, poetry and music guided by Mr. O’Connell. Between conferences, oblates were invited to the Guest House Chapel for Mass and Midday Prayer and to the Archabbey Church for Vespers. The sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick were offered during the day. Oblates also witnessed two investitures (George Hubbard, Jeff Wilson) and two oblations (Beverly Martinez, John Rayapati).

Columbus, Lancaster chapters celebrate feast of St. Benedict

The Columbus and Lancaster, OH, chapters gathered on July 11, the feast of St. Benedict, to celebrate Mass and pray Vespers together. However, we wanted to pray the liturgy along with the monks, even from a distance.

Oblate Director Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, supplied us with the liturgy for Second Vespers for the Solemnity of Our Holy Father Benedict and all Benedictine Saints for our use.

A small group of oblates met to go over the music for the occasion. The beautiful opening and closing verses for the Second Vespers are, fittingly for the occasion, a more ornate chant than the chant in the liturgy book; however, we learned them fairly quickly. We decided that for this occasion we’d also sing Saint Meinrad’s “Our Father” and “Salve Regina.”

The designated hymn was too complex for us to do this year, so we chose a simpler hymn. The small group of us also decided that...
sometime in the near future we'd like to gather to learn the hymns in our liturgy books, especially the chants, and also the St. Meinrad psalm tones.

Singing parts of the liturgy was new to some of us, but on July 11 we managed to muddle through. I'm sure if we continue to work at it, a little at a time, it will become less “bumpy.”

Following Vespers, Msgr. Robert Noon, co-coordinator of the Columbus Chapter, presided at Mass. Then we discussed matters affecting the future of our chapters. We ended with refreshments that included lasagna (because St. Benedict lived in what is today called Italy) and a celebratory cake.

Though attendance at the July 11 gathering was small, we would like to do it again next year and perhaps even celebrate on March 21 as well.

Ann Smith, oblate Gahanna, OH

Bronx chapter coordinator steps down

Carmen Flores, co-coordinator of the Bronx, NY, Oblate Chapter, stepped down from this position on July 11 due to retirement from her work and moving away from New York. She has held the position since September 2, 2007. We appreciate her good work and service for the oblates of the Bronx area.

Oblates enjoy St. Walburg social

June 22 was a beautiful, sunny day – a perfect day for ice cream! At the invitation of the oblates of St. Walburg Monastery, eight Cincinnati oblates headed to their monastery in Covington, KY, for their annual ice cream social.

Showing true Benedictine hospitality, the sisters of St. Walburg and their oblates went out of their way to welcome us. We were not only entertained by the music of their oblate band and treated to ice cream sundaes and sodas, but enjoyed several light-hearted games of the great Catholic “sport” of Bingo.

At the conclusion of the social, we were given a tour of St. Walburg Monastery by Sr. Victoria, ending with a visit to Sr. Emmanuel’s art studio. During the tour, Sr. Victoria had pointed out two stunning stained glass windows Sr. Emmanuel had designed for the monastery. Therefore, we were delighted to meet the artist herself and admire some of her artwork that was displayed in her studio.

Patricia Dorn, oblate Cincinnati, OH

Bronx oblates celebrate feasts of St. Benedict, St. Henry

The oblates of the Bronx Chapter took the occasion of the feast of St. Henry, the patron saint of Benedictine oblates, to celebrate the feast of Our Holy Father St. Benedict on July 13. About 12 oblates met at Corpus Christi Monastery in Hunts Point of the Bronx to celebrate at Mass with the Dominican Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, who generously hosted us.

We also used this day to say farewell and thanks to Carmen Flores, our coordinator who is moving to Florida to be with her family there. Carmen has served as coordinator since 2007, when George and Virginia McLoughlin finished their service. Thank you, Carmen, and may St. Benedict protect you in all you do.

The position of coordinator will be shouldered by Theresa Horowitz, Remie Cabanilla and Fr. Tom D’Angelo. Fr. Tom presided at Mass with the oblates on the feast day.

Indianapolis oblates Al and Irene Kovacs joined Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, at the July conference of oblate directors.

There was a luncheon at the monastery following Mass. The oblates enjoyed pizza, sandwiches and fruit, all the gift of the sisters. Many thanks to Sr. Maria Pia and the other sisters of Corpus Christi Monastery.

Fr. Thomas D’Angelo, oblate Bronx, NY

Oblate Council learns about NAABOD meeting

The Oblate Council gathered on the Hill for its 26th meeting on July 20. Present were Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, Dennis Skelton, Al Kovacs, Pat Phillips, Jennie Latta, Chris Topa, Mike Reffett and Janis Dopp, chair. Michelle Reffett acted as secretary. Gail Chambers was absent. The meeting opened with prayer offered by Fr. Meinrad followed by the reading of the Statement of Purpose of the Oblate Council.

Al Kovacs reported on his attendance at the meeting of the North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors (NAABOD) at Annunciation Monastery in Bismarck, ND. He plans to write a series of articles for the oblate newsletter about
Fr. Meinrad reported that work continues in the oblate library, including cataloging books, rearranging shelves and transferring VHS to DVD format. Additional work remains to be done to convert audio tapes to MP3 format. It is hoped some of these recordings will be made available through the oblate web page.

He also reported that the oblates in Kalamazoo continue to meet faithfully and hope to become a chapter soon. A number of monks are now going to the various chapter meetings, including Fr. Meinrad, Fr. Joseph Cox, Fr. Brendan Moss, Br. Francis Wagner, Br. Pederu Fonseka, Novice Bradley Jensen and Novice Matthew Sprauer.

Fifty-two oblates attended the recent Oblate Study Days with Fr. Eugene Hensell, OSB, making the presentations. Forty-one attended the Day of Recollection led by oblate Jim O’Connell on July 11.

Plans continue to unfold for the 2014 Meeting of Chapter Coordinators and Representatives. Frs. Jeremy King, OSB, and Harry Hagan, OSB, have committed to 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.

Since the last Oblate Council meeting, a link has been added to the oblate web page that leads directly to audio recordings of the St. Meinrad Psalm Tones. The Council hopes this will encourage more singing of the Psalms in private prayer and at chapter meetings. As part of the business of the meeting, the chapter coordinators and representatives will be asked to review and comment on sections of the revised Chapter Coordinators Handbook. The chapter coordinators will receive additional information about the meeting in August.

In the new year, members of the Oblate Council will accompany Fr. Meinrad to the chapter meetings to introduce themselves and explain the work of the Council. The next meeting of the Council will be October 19.

Jennie D. Latta, oblate
Memphis, TN

Oblate book would be ideal Christmas gift

Looking ahead to Christmas, we have copies available of the book, Prayers and Rituals for Benedictine Oblates. This beautiful volume has prayers for every occasion in the home. The second half of the book features the life of a saint for each day of the year. This book would be a beautiful Christmas gift for a family member or good friend.

For Saint Meinrad oblates, we are offering the book at $15 a copy, which includes shipping and handling. You may order these books at this
discounted price only through the Oblate Office. Please make the check payable to Saint Meinrad Archabbey and mail it to Oblate Office, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad, IN 47577.

Novice lesson booklet available
The Oblate Office has gathered the oblate novice lessons into a booklet called *Oblate Novice Lessons for Study and Reflection*. A novice lesson is provided monthly during the oblate's novitiate year; therefore, recent oblates have received these lessons.

However, if you made your oblation before the novice lessons were developed or would otherwise like them, the booklet is available at no charge upon request. Please call or email the Oblate Office with your mailing address and it will be sent to you: (812) 357-6817 or oblates@saintmeinrad.org.

OBLATIONS
May 18, 2013 – Mr. Ron Francis DeMarco of Cincinnati, OH.
May 28, 2013 – Ms. Ellen Aleydis Naylor of Laughlin, NV.
June 4, 2013 – Ms. Jean Kateri Bybee of Onalaska, TX.
June 12, 2013 – Mr. James Paul Durham of Evansville, IN; Mr. Scott Aiden Swiontek of Avon, IN.
June 24, 2013 – Mr. Wayde Francis Reed of St. Charles, MO.
July 11, 2013 – Mr. John Placid Rayapati of Monticello, IL; Ms. Beverly Teresita Martinez of Greenwood, IN.◆

INVESTITURES
May 11, 2013 – Ms. Annette Calloway of Indianapolis, IN; Mr. Richard Lively of Brownsburg, IN.
May 16, 2013 – Dr. Rick Bateman of Kingsport, TN; Mr. R.J. Powell of Johnson City, TN.
May 22, 2013 – Mr. Paul and Mrs. Sarah Wyar, both of Catawba, VA.
June 12, 2013 – Mr. Christian Meyer of Greenfield, IN; Mr. Michael Huguelet of Orland Park, IL.
July 5, 2013 – Mr. Robert Lamprecht of Griffith, IN.
July 8, 2013 – Rev. Danny Jones of Wakarusa, IN.
July 11, 2013 – Mr. George Hubbard of Charleston, SC; Mr. Jeffrey Wilson of Batesville, IN.
July 12, 2013 – Mr. Scott Keeler of Portage, MI.
July 24, 2013 – Mr. Ron Germann of Carbondale, IL.◆

DEATHS
Fr. Clemens Hut of Tempe, AZ, died on July 1, 2013.
Mr. Arthur Woodall of Huntingburg, IN, died on July 7, 2013.
Mrs. Margaret Brumleve of Bloomington, IN, died on July 13, 2013.◆

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

March 19-21, 2014: The March Oblate Retreat will have Fr. Vincent Tobin, OSB, as the retreat presenter. The title of the retreat is “Christ in the Cloister: Shaped by Word and Sacrament.”
April 19, 2014: The day of recollection for the Louisville, KY, area oblates will be held. Br. Zachary Wilberding, OSB, will be the presenter on “From Our Hands to Our Hearts: Praying the Rosary.”
May 17, 2014: The day of recollection for the Ohio Oblates will be held in the Cincinnati area, with Fr. Noël Mueller, OSB, as the presenter. The title of the conferences is “Our Commitment to Christ: Living the Sacraments and the Rule.”
June 9-12, 2014: The March Oblate Retreat will have Fr. Brendan Moss, OSB, on the topic of “The Presence of God in the Life of the Oblate.”◆

VOLUNTEERS APPRECIATED
Nic Alford, Marilyn Becker, Debbie Burden, Janis Dopp, Ruth Engs, Melanie Isaacs, Barbara Krick, Tim Mattingly, Tom and Joan Rillo, Laura Roberts, Dennis Skelton, Chris Topa and Yvonne Weaver were recent volunteers in the Oblate Office.◆

EMAIL ADDRESSES NEEDED
Note: We are in the process of updating email addresses for all oblate records. If you currently have a preferred email address that you would like to have included in your oblate record so that we may occasionally contact you by email, please email the Oblate Office with: your name and preferred email address.
Send to: oblates@saintmeinrad.org◆
Fr. Kurt’s book on sacramental theology is part of Catholic Basics: A Pastoral Ministry Series. In June 2012, Father used the book as a basic reference in preparation for an Oblate Study Days retreat on the sacraments held at Saint Meinrad Archabbey.

Father Kurt is the prior of the archabbey and teaches sacramental theology in the Seminary and School of Theology. His book is an introduction to the history, theology and pastoral practice of the Church’s liturgy and the sacraments. The book was developed for the reader who has not had the opportunity to study in a formal and systematic program of sacramental theology.

Chapter 1 includes two fundamental principles of the liturgy and the sacraments: they are the work of the Church and the work of God. The next three chapters focus on some of the important teachings of the Church on the sacraments.

Chapter 3 examines the sacraments as visible signs of what the Church teaches and how they confer grace as a gift to us. Chapter 4 discusses the institution of the sacraments by Christ and presents a history of the early development of each of the seven sacraments. It also discusses what the Church has thought about the sacraments and how it approached the sacraments throughout history.

Chapter 5 deals primarily with the sacrament of Baptism, the first sacrament that Christians encounter. Chapter 6 outlines the history and theology of the Eucharist, that is, the summit of Christian life. The last chapter briefly discusses the last five sacraments of the Church. It places a special emphasis on the theological and pastoral aspects of Reconciliation and Confirmation.

Fr. Kurt believes his book is not an exhaustive study of the sacraments, but rather a primer for those who want to learn more about them. He recommends other sources for further study and reflection.

The most significant part of this book is how it helps the reader understand what the Church thinks about the sacraments and, more importantly, why.

Thomas J. Rillo, oblate
Bloomington, IN