



Oblates

Newsletter for Oblates of the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana

January 2017

Silence

Teaching by Sister Mary Ann Verkamp
Oblate Meeting, January 22, 2017

Some people consider silence simply as the absence of sound, just as some people consider peace as the absence of war. There is much more involved. Silence draws us out of our own little world and calls us toward the invisible. Silence is never an end in itself, but opens the door to mystery.

Silence calls us to move beyond the superficial, false self and go deeper. Religious seekers, and hopefully, that's what we are, "hone" in on silence as homing pigeons return to their roost because silence is the origin of authentic speech. The image of pregnancy reflects the idea of speech coming out of silence. The Spirit becomes a midwife who helps bring the word out of the silence.

Silence is never merely the cessation of words, rather it is the pause that holds together...indeed...makes sense of...all other words. Silence is the glue that connects our attitudes and actions. Silence is fullness, not emptiness. Silence is not absence but the awareness of a Presence. Many people don't like silence because it forces us to confront ourselves. In silence, we hear and see things we otherwise wouldn't. Much like we store unnecessary junk in our homes/rooms, we store unnecessary junk in our minds.

Silence opens doors into dark cellars of the heart and reveals things we would rather not know about ourselves. But it is a first step, a very important step on the journey—to allow the silence to speak of these inner conflicts, to bring them into the light of day; then they lose their power over us.

Entering into silence helps us discover our real identity. If I'm never silent, the really important questions will never be heard. What do I really want? Why am I here? In silence we come face to face with many questions about the value of our existence, our commitments, the authenticity of our everyday lives. Our culture is one which is geared in many ways to help us evade any need to face our inner, silent self. In silence, we face the gap

between our false and true self.

Often times when we remove the outer noise we get in touch with the inner noise.

Sometimes, the inner noise sounds like the summertime cicadas. It's important to recognize where the noise is coming from.

In silence, we rid ourselves of non-essentials. In silence, we wait for God. I like to think of God as a sculptor. Each of us is like a block of stone or wood. There is a statue, greatness, a beauty inside each of us but it has to be carved out. It is carved out through silence, listening, humility, and grace.

We will never learn to love silence unless we make an effort to be silent. One learns to be silent by being silent, NOT by reading about it or listening to a conference on silence. Learning to be silent is a process.

Gradually the silence around us becomes a silence within us.

Silence is essential for all who wish to make the journey into the heart of God. Silence gives us the space to go deeper. We stop and ponder: "How did that experience make me feel? What is God saying to me through this experience?"

Silence is a gift. It promises new life. Silence brings you back to the One who is leading you. The goal of silence is to encounter God. It is only by going beyond the exterior silence and quieting the inner chatter that we can reach the place where God dwells and speaks to us.

Benedictine life, Benedictine Oblate life, is a journey into the heart of God. The first step is silence. It is only in silence that we can begin to hear and respond to the voice of God that calls us to be in union with God. This journey into silence is never accomplished once and for all. Our journey begins anew every day. We "listen with the ear of our heart" as Benedict admonishes us. We listen in silence to the "delightful voice of God" who calls us into the kingdom of God's love.



Sister Mary Ann Verkamp leads a presentation on the topic of "Silence".

Oblate Meeting

January 22, 2017



L to R: Oblates Mel Schroeder, Elaine Baumgart, Carol Dunn, Stephanie Smith, Patti Schroeder and Sister Jane Will are sharing why the season of winter draws them into silence.



L to R: Oblates Linda Begle, Vic Begle, Julie Beck, Sister Brenda Engleman, Sister Betty Drewes, Oblate Phyllis Schmits and Sister Shirley Ann Schultheis reflect on finding silence in spring.



(Left) L to R: Pictured are Sister Jane Will, guests, Gary and Debbie Wagner and Candidates Lisa and Bill Muller. Gary and Debbie Wagner are learning about the Oblate program from their friends, Candidates Lisa and Bill Muller and Sister Jane Will.



(Left) Sister Mary Ann Verkamp and Oblate Lynn Belli share a light-hearted moment. Lynn is usually the photographer.



Sister Mary Alice Schnur is meditating on the scrambled letters in an effort to form two words from them.

Oblate Reflections of 2016

Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City

by Oblates Vic and Linda Begle



Oblates Vic and Linda Begle

We embarked on a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City on November 14, 2016. This pilgrimage was lead by Father John Boeglin, pastor in Jasper, Indiana. One of the blessings we received was to be able to witness the Miracle of the Image of Mary on the tilma of Juan Diego. Mary previously appeared to Juan Diego in the year 1531. Also on this trip, we were able to visit a friend of ours, Dafne, and her family. Sometime back, Dafne participated as a team leader in the “One Bread and One Cup” program at St. Meinrad. We felt privileged to have Dafne spend time with us while she was here in Indiana.

Oblates is published four times a year under the leadership of Oblate Director Sister Brenda Engleman.

Send comments to the Oblate Office

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oblates@thedome.org
Sister Brenda: 812-367-1411, ext. 2827

Positive Life Lessons and Memories

by Oblate Caroline Deutsch



Oblate Caroline Deutsch with her daughters

As 2016 progressed, it became clear to me that my energy was to focus on my children. I wanted to be a bridge between the generations by passing on the lessons to my children that I had learned from my parents, grandparents and other elders. Being this bridge has often called me to step back and let my children lead in various projects, excursions, and explorations, while I gently give hints and teach along the way. I have to admit, it is fun to watch them learn and grow. Yes, it takes longer, but the talks and thoughts that have arisen, I hope, are creating positive “life lessons” and/or memories for them to carry forward in their own lives.

We have come to cherish our meals together, to “break bread” and share our thoughts, hopes, fears, and dreams with one another which invariably lead to great laughter. I find myself giving thanks to God each morning for letting me start another day. I don’t even think of good or bad. I am just thankful to have another chance to live on this planet we all call home. Life is the greatest gift of all and we are all in this life together. As I read what I have written, I chuckle. I think that this is what my elders referred to as mellowing; however, wisdom gained from the road of life sounds a little better! May we all find peace in our lives and in our world for 2017!

Illness Becomes a Blessing

by Oblate Richard Huggins



Oblate Richard Huggins

First, I want to say I feel thankful and blessed to have been asked to take part in this opportunity with so many other Oblates out there. I would have to say that my biggest blessing from 2016 was the one year remission of two kinds of cancer. The skin cancer required surgery and radiation. The vocal cord cancer required extensive radiation and chemo. In order to breathe, I had to depend on a tracheotomy tube for 15 months.

Only about one in three persons who have had similar vocal cord cancer ever have the tube removed. I was blessed to be in that small group. I believe that my cancer was a blessing since it made me stop much of what I was doing to refocus my life. I spent more time in reading, prayer and meditation. Somehow I was always able to keep the words of Jesus in the garden in my mind: “Thy will be done” helped me through my healing process.

Through the Eyes of a Child

by Oblate Patti Schroeder



Oblate Patti Schroeder

Through the eyes of a child. This past year some of my happiest moments happened because of my grandson, Carson, and granddaughter, Mia. The first word that I think of when I think of Carson is “encouragement”. He and a classmate received word this past fall that their poems were selected to be read in front of a large audience consisting of grandparents and veterans. On the day of the presentation and before the program began, I talked to Carson. He mentioned how nervous he was. This was the first time his poem had been chosen and he wasn’t comfortable on stage. I was wowed when he read his poem and I later told him that he did a wonderful job while on stage. Carson commented that another classmate whispered to him before they walked on stage about how nervous she was. Carson encouraged her to take a breath after reading each line. He encouraged her to read it slowly, so that others would understand her. In encouraging her, Carson lost his nervousness.

Carson’s big sister, Mia, has never been nervous in front of an audience. She loves to sing and perform on any stage, especially at her church. She is filled with the Holy Spirit as she sings and worships in front of the congregation. People often come up to our daughter, Abbie, after the service is over to tell Abbie that they come to the service when Mia is singing because she inspires them with her faith.

Encouragement and inspiration through the eyes of a child. I couldn’t be prouder of them and am blessed to be their Meemaw Patti.

A Wintry Poem

Sitting here this Sunday morn looking out the windows
Over the white, covered snow grounds.
Catching glimpses of a few birds that dare to take flight
In single digit temperatures outside.

All heat sources are available and are prepared
To keep a comfortable setting inside.
Cups of coffee are already consumed as lunch approaches.
We are all settled into hibernation.
We watch January ever so slowly move toward February.

It is a time to step back and embrace the quiet,
The slowness of the days and search in reflection.
The movement of spring will soon be upon us,
But for now we focus on winter.



In Memoriam

In the name of the Oblates, I want to offer my sincerest sympathy to Greg Eckerle, whose father, Richard Eckerle, died on December 6, 2016, in Jasper, Indiana. Rich was 88 years old. For those who may not know, Greg is the director of communications here in our monastery at Ferdinand. It would take too much time to elaborate on his job description. Certainly, he has helped me many times. Please examine our various magazines like, Seek. Pray. Share and take the time to read his creative, inspiring articles. You will be amazed. Greg, we will keep your father, you and your family in our prayers. Sincerely, *Sister Brenda Engleman*

In Memoriam:

Oblate Ruth Goepfrich’s mother, Stella Lubbers, died on November 22, 2016

Oblate Phyllis Schmits’ husband, Carl, died on December 7, 2016

Robin Dugan’s mother, Carolyn Ficker, died on January 10, 2017

For the Sick:

Oblate Marcia Brown

Oblate Elaine Nolan

Oblate Joann Rubeck

Oblate Don Stanton

In Memory of Sister Wilma Davis



On January 16, we said our final good-bye to a special sister and friend, Sister Wilma Davis. Sister Wilma was 95 years old and was still as keen and sharp as a 50 year-old lady. She never seemed to forget anyone that she knew in her lifetime, past and present.

Sister Wilma did teach here in Indiana; however, she left this area in 1957 to go to Belcourt, North

Dakota, to minister to the Native Americans there. While in the North Dakota area, she served in several positions, some of which I am not sure of. She worked as a classroom teacher and a director of religious education in her local parish. Later, she took on the job of being the director of religious education for the Fargo Diocese.

Sister Wilma also organized the first Oblate group in Belcourt. From what she shared with me, ministering to the Oblates was her pride and joy. When she returned to Ferdinand in 2004, she served on the Oblate team here. Since I became Oblate director of this Ferdinand monastery in 2013, I have had the wonderful opportunity of visiting Belcourt twice. The people of Belcourt loved Sister Wilma and she loved them in return.

There is so much more that I could share about Sister Wilma and how she influenced me personally. I will miss hearing her share her deep wisdom, but I will also miss her humorous stories and heartfelt memories. However, I do believe that her spirit will always be present in our lives. So, I would like to end with a quotation from Joseph Marion, one of Sister Wilma's Oblates from Belcourt.

Joseph said, "We have all been blessed to have Sister Wilma with us so many years. She is like a national treasure to the Belcourt people...a real gift to all of us." Thank you, Joseph.

Rest in peace, Sister Wilma.

Love,

Sister Brenda Engleman



Oblate Julie Beck is giving an update on the Oblate polo shirt project.

Oblate Polo Shirts Update

Presently, we have 41 Oblates who have expressed interest in purchasing an Oblate polo shirt. This note is basically to invite others who may still want to purchase a shirt. If you are not interested, that is certainly all right.

The shirt will be royal blue and white. The Oblate emblem will be white and will include the words Oblates of St. Benedict, Ferdinand, IN. The shirt will be very affordable.

If any Oblate is still interested in ordering an Oblate shirt, fill in the information below and respond by February 27, 2017. We will send out future updates, including sizes and costs, at a later date via email or hard copy.

Oblate Polo Shirt Order Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please send the information on this form to Sister Brenda Engleman via email bengleman@thedome.org or mail a paper copy to Oblate Office, 802 E. 10th St., Ferdinand, IN, 47532. I will give the information to the committee chairperson.



Ferdinand Benedictine Oblates receive **10% off your entire order!** Make sure to let the clerk know you are one of our Oblates!

Messages of Gratitude



Oblate Joann Rubeck

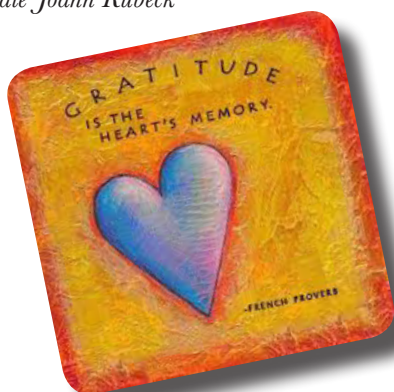
Dear Oblates and Sisters,

As I write this I am full of gratitude for your prayers and kind thoughts. My health continues to be problematic. But this week I am being admitted to Hospice care so I expect good things.

As Oblates, we are asked to live the rule of St. Benedict in whatever state we are. Living the Rule when ill presents unique challenges and opportunities. The church cam is a wonderful way to stay connected to the sisters, and the daily flow of prayer. Watching Oblate meetings on live stream keeps me up to date on topics so skillfully presented. I very much miss the interaction with you and pray for your continued happiness.

God bless you all,

Oblate Joann Rubeck



Oblates Don and Ellen Stanton

Dear Sisters and Oblates,

Gratitude comes easily to me when I think of your kindness. Your daily prayers made the Christmas season a real blessing. While I was hesitant to embrace a new year, your words of encouragement inspired peace within me. It is evident to Don and me that our time at the monastery, seeking God with you in work, study and prayer, prepared us in so many ways for this journey. We know that it has all been in God's plan. The memory of those times helps me make the most of the present moment.

Don doesn't get around on his scooter anymore. He sleeps most of the time. He would be the first to say "thank you" for showing us that we make this journey in the midst of friends and with God's help. We do the best we can because God gives us the best each day. Know that your needs and concerns, whatever they may be, are in our prayers also. We share a heart space.

Love, peace and blessings,

Ellen and Don Stanton, Oblates

Live-streaming access

To access live-streaming during Oblate meetings:

- You need to use Microsoft Windows-based computers to launch Internet Explorer web browser or Google Chrome. You cannot use Apple devices or iPads at this time.
- Go to <http://oblatecam.thedome.org>
- Once it loads, it will launch Microsoft Media Player.
- Adjust the size and volume as you see fit.
- Remember you can only access live streaming during an Oblate meeting.



You are invited to be in touch with the Sisters of St. Benedict in prayer. Use the following link:

<mms://web-srv.thedome.org/churchcam>

You can also download a liturgy schedule from the Oblate page:

thedome.org/oblates

Monastery Moments and Oblate Offerings

Saturday, February 18, 2017

Hospitality in the Holy Rule will be held in St. Gertrude Hall at 1:00 p.m. (ET)
Presenter: Sister Helen Jean Kormelink, OSB

February 24-25, 2017

Brewing with the Spirit: A Monastic Craft Beer Experience will be held at St. Benedict's Brew Works from from 6:00 p.m. (ET) on Friday, February 24 until 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 25. Participants will learn about the history of beer, and will have opportunities to reflect on gospel parables about grain, earth, yeast, and water. Presenters: Vince Luecke and Andy Hedinger

March 3-4, 2017

Brewing with the Spirit: A Monastic Craft Beer Experience will be held at St. Benedict's Brew Works from from 6:00 p.m. (ET) on Friday, March 3 until 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 4. Participants will learn about the history of beer, and will have opportunities to reflect on gospel parables about grain, earth, yeast, and water. Presenters: Vince Luecke and Andy Hedinger

Saturday, March 18, 2017

The Book of Glory: Reflections on John 13-21 will be held in the monastery from 9:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (ET) Registration is at 9:15 a.m. Presenter: Fr. Eugene Hensell, OSB

March 31-April 1, 2017

Healing and Music will be held in Kordes Hall from 7:30 p.m. (ET) on Friday until to 4 p.m. on Saturday. Registration is at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, March 31. Presenter: Ruth Stanley

April 13-16, 2017

Triduum Retreat will be held in Kordes Hall from 3:00 p.m. Thursday to Easter Sunday morning (ET). Come away for a silent retreat during Holy Week. Retreat includes participation in liturgical celebrations with the sisters in the monastery church. Registration is at 2:30 p.m. on Holy Thursday.

Saturday, April 22, 2017

Be Salt...Be Light...Be Fully Alive will be held in St. Gertrude Hall at 1:00 p.m. (ET). Presenter: Sister Karen Joseph, OSB

Saturday, May 20, 2017

Ora et Labora Day for Oblates and other volunteers. Those participating will have opportunities to pray with the sisters and do various kinds of service work around the monastery. Specific details TBA.

Website Update

Dear Oblates,

I know that many of you access our Oblate website quite easily and quite often. However, there may be some of you that haven't examined the website recently. I would encourage you to go to this site occasionally to see all of the helpful information there is for you. Following is the address that will lead you to our website.

www.thedome.org

Once you click onto the above address, you will see many links. If you click on the Oblate link, you will find a wealth of information.

- **Oblate meetings schedule** – Also you will also see the steps to follow to access live streaming.
- **Who are the Oblates?** –If you know someone who is interested in learning more about Oblates, direct them to this link.
- **Liturgy schedule** –You will get a schedule of the monastery Masses and prayer times. We have even listed the psalms that we pray, the music that we sing, the sisters who lead prayer and the priest who presides at the Masses.

The website will be updated within the next two months to make it easier for people to use on mobile devices. While the website will look different, all of the information that you need will still be there.

Sincerely, *Sister Brenda*

Oblate Birthdays

February

7—Lynn Steiden, 11—June Berg, Richard Huggins, and John Wallace, 15—Mary Ann Stoll, 16—Carol Dunn, 18—Caroline Deutsch and Rita Kohl, 21—Linda Selaya, 24—Carolyn Adler, 26—Patti Schroeder, 29—Mary Martha Salas

March

2—JoAnn Desjarlais, 4—Robin Dugan, 12—Scarlett Winters, 15—Shirley Demuth, 17—Patty Allery and Kathy Dixon, 22—Ruth Keethers, 25—Denise Leinenbach, 29—Gary D. Pope

April

4—Sharon Cavanaugh, 7—Judy Bueckert, 28—Shirley Stern, 29—Marcia Brown and Carole Swim, 30—Ron Allery and Leeny Hardesty





SISTERS OF ST. BENEDICT
FERDINAND, INDIANA

Oblates

Monastery Immaculate Conception
802 E. 10th Street • Ferdinand, Indiana 47532-9239

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

“As we progress in this way of life and in faith, we shall run on the path of God’s commandments, our hearts overflowing with inexpressible delight of love.”

—Prologue to the Rule of St. Benedict, verse 49

Share the Joy of Being an Oblate of St. Benedict

We encourage all Oblates and Oblate candidates to share their joy of being an Oblate with others. Talk about your Oblate experiences with your friends, relatives and members of your church. Be on the lookout for persons that might be fine Oblates. Give Oblate brochures to interested persons or invite them to attend an Oblate meeting. We welcome those who want to learn more about the Oblates to contact Sister Brenda Engleman. Contact information can be found on page three of this newsletter.



Bona Opera Form Explanation

Lent begins on March 1 this year which is a little later than last year. Since our newsletter will be sent out at the end of January, I decided to go ahead and invite you to fill out your Bona Opera.

For you who are new to this custom of filling out a Bona Opera form, I offer this explanation. In Benedictine monasteries it is the custom for each monastic to list on a Bona Opera form (Latin for “good works”) good works of prayer, fasting and almsgiving that the monastic chooses to do during Lent. The Bona Opera is submitted to the prioress who blesses it with a signature of approval (as recommended by St. Benedict in Chapter 49 of the Holy Rule).

I invite you, as Oblates, Oblate Candidates, and Inquirers as well, to participate with us in this Benedictine custom. You might want to prayerfully read Chapter 49 before you prepare your Bona Opera form. Remember that you cannot do everything. Perhaps you can choose just one or two things that you feel you need to focus on to deepen your relationship with God and your brothers and sisters.

On your Bona Opera form, it also mentions that you may want to read a book during Lent. You will need to choose your own book from the Oblate or monastic library, or from some other place.

After writing your intentions on the form at the bottom of this page, sign it and place it in an envelope. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope along with your form. Mail it to: Oblate Office, 802 E. 10th Street, Ferdinand, IN 47532-9239. If at all possible, make sure the forms reach me by February 17. I will give them to Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz, who will read, bless, and place them at the altar for Mass on Ash Wednesday, March 1. If I do not receive them before Ash Wednesday, Sister Barbara Lynn will still bless and sign them.

May God bless you on your Lenten journey. *Sister Brenda*

(Please cut off the form below and return it to me.)

Lenten Bona Opera

“During these days of Lent, we will add to the usual measure of our service something by way of private prayer and abstinence from food and drink, so that each of us may offer to God with joy of the Holy Spirit, something beyond the appointed measure. Everyone should make known to the prioress what he/she intends to do, since it ought to be done with her prayer and approval.” (RB 49:6, 8)

As you prepare for Lent, please take time to reflect on this question: At this time in my life, what “good work” or “works” would improve my life?

My Lenten Practice(s) will be:

“During this time of Lent, each one is to receive a book from the library and is to read the whole of it straight through. These books are to be distributed at the beginning of Lent.” (RB 49:15-16)

My Lenten Book will be: _____

I ask your permission and blessing:

Signed (Your name): _____

Prioress Blessing: _____



Benet Hall Apartments

Would you like to live on the peaceful, monastery grounds of the Sisters of St. Benedict in Ferdinand, Indiana? Well, here is a wonderful opportunity that you might want to consider.

Since the late 1960's, sisters lived in Benet Hall. However, recently this facility has undergone major renovation. It now has 15 lovely, one-bedroom and two-bedroom spacious apartments. Presently, seven of the apartments are filled. Eight are waiting for occupants like you to join the other residents. By the way, three of the eight are Oblates. They absolutely love living here in the shadow of the monastery.

Let me give you some specific information about the apartments:

- Each unit offers: stove, refrigerator, microwave, dishwasher, garbage disposal, washer/dryer hook up, cable ready; walk-in showers, smoke alarms for the stove, pull cords in the bedroom and baths for emergency alert to neighbors.
- The monastery campus offers: gift shop, bakery, brewery, church, serene gardens, a beautiful labyrinth and three peaceful shrines.
- See income structure below.

Benet Hall Income Structure

	1 Person	2 People	Rent Amount
30% AMI*	\$14,460	\$16,530	\$350
40% AMI	\$19,280	\$22,040	\$465
50% AMI	\$24,100	\$27,550	\$550
60% AMI	\$28,920	\$33,060	\$650
* Average Median Income			

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL: 812-998-2058