

April 2013



Presenter Sister Anita Louise Lowe explains the Liturgy of the Hours at the April Oblate meeting.

Monastic Liturgy of the Hours/ Roman Liturgy of the Hours

By Sister Anita Louise Lowe

The fourth century was the most important era for the development of Christian prayer. With the end of Christian persecutions, Christianity becomes the official religion of the empire. After being persecuted for proclaiming Christianity, now there was persecution of those who refused to become Christians. It was no longer necessary to hide to pray with other believers; rather the Christian community could gather openly and publicly.

What occurs in the prayer of the church is evolution, not starting over or creating a new form of prayer, but building on what went before in the prayer-life of the gathered Christian community. The development of the Liturgy of the Hours can be categorized by the terms, Cathedral and Monastic. These are not chronological stages following one another, but distinct types of prayer that evolved in separate areas by different communities of people.

As we step back in the lives of the 4th century Christians, I want to introduce you to a woman named, Egeria. It is believed that she was a nun in the 4th century who made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in order to experience the prayer that was happening there. At this point in history the Bishop's church was the center of all liturgical life. In her journal Egeria describes the prayer as well as details of the participants and ceremony. For our purposes we will look at characteristics of the cathedral prayer at this time.

The Cathedral Prayer was characterized by symbol and ceremony (light, incense, processions), by chant (responsories, antiphons, hymns), and by diversity of

“We believe that the divine presence is everywhere and that in every place the eyes of the Lord are watching the good and the wicked. But beyond the least doubt we should believe this to be especially true when we celebrate the divine office.”

—Rule of St. Benedict
Chapter 19, 1–2



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ministries (bishop, presbyter, deacon, reader, and psalmist). The prayer consisted of psalmody, a litany, a prayer of blessing and dismissal for catechumens and for penitents, a litany of the faithful, a collect, a prayer of blessing, and the dismissal.

While the Cathedral Prayer developed in the more populated areas, the monks in the desert were developing a somewhat different prayer. At about the same time Egeria was journeying through the Holy Land observing the prayer, we find John Cassian doing his research and journeys through Lower Egypt. We find that the monks gathered at morning and evening. They prayed 12 psalms and then listened to two readings. Each psalm was recited by one person while the rest sat. After each psalm, the monks all stood in silence, prostrated, and stood again in silence. Then, the leader improvised a collect.

As we look at the development of prayer in the cathedral and monastic prayer, we can observe sharp contrasts between the styles of praying in the areas of participation, ministers of worship, contents of prayer, and orientation.

In the Cathedral tradition, the whole congregation participates, the prayer is led by a deacon or cantor with the congregation responding, all sang hymns and psalms together, and intercessions expressed common concerns. The Monastic tradition, however, is fundamentally an individual activity, i.e., one person recites the psalm while all listen.

In the Cathedral tradition, the bishop or priest presides over the prayer, intercessions are led by a deacon, and psalms are led by an appointed cantor. The Monastic tradition had no permanently designated leaders; rather, each individual has the duty and the right to recite the psalms and read the scripture.

In the Cathedral tradition, there are a limited number of psalms and canticles suited to the time of day. The prayer is one of praise of God and of participating in the prayer of Christ, continually offering praise and thanksgiving on behalf of all creation, interceding for the salvation of the world. It is a prayer for others, not just the participants. The “heart” of Monastic prayer is that of meditation while listening to the psalms and scriptures being read; there is a continuous recitation of the psalms in groups of twelve.

In the Cathedral tradition, externals are important, e.g., ritual lighting of the lamps at evening prayer. Words and actions go together, and when the prayer is over, all leave to live out the prayer in their lives. In the Monastic tradition,

externals are dispensable; various postures are mentioned, but there is no ritual lighting of the lamps. When the Office is completed the prayer continues as the monks sit weaving rugs and baskets or doing other manual tasks.

The underlying reality in the early evolution of the prayer we call Liturgy of the Hours is the admonition to “pray unceasingly” and “whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.” (I Cor.10:31)

Liturgy of the Hours in the Rule of St. Benedict

Benedict had firsthand knowledge of the Roman style of Cathedral prayer. He lived and studied in Rome as a young man. He also knew of the prayer of the monastics in the desert from his study of the writings of Cassian. Another major influence upon Benedict as he set up his monasteries and wrote his Rule was that of the Master. The Divine Office as given in the Rule of the Master is three times longer than what Benedict will proscribe. Both the Roman Cathedral Office and that of the Rule of the Master called for 300

psalms per week — in other words, the entire psalter was to be prayed twice a week. Benedict called for 150 in a week, a reasonable number for the monks of his day.

Benedict devoted 13 of his 73 chapters to prayer. And, these chapters are placed toward the beginning of the Rule, right after the introductory chapters, showing their importance. Benedict’s main innovation was his crafting of the

Office. However, he did introduce a few new concepts: He wanted Psalm 66 to begin Lauds (Morning Prayer), and he inserted the call to prayer into the day hours. Benedict created an Office that used both selected and consecutive psalms, and he introduced the Our Father as an element to be prayed aloud.

Three major elements in Benedict’s liturgy are rooted in tradition: the use of psalms, readings from the Old and New Testament, and prayer. To these, Benedict adds a fourth element: music in the form of responsories, hymns, and versicles.

While the structure and ordering of the Office in the Rule is important, more important are the principles which underlie this structure. As Benedict so wisely stated in Chapter 18: If anyone finds this arrangement to be displeasing, then, feel free to make a different arrangement.

Let’s look in depth at two major principles of prayer as given by Benedict: the importance of the entire person and the whole community and the use of Holy Scripture and the entire Psalter.



Benedict was not only concerned with the structure of prayer. He was attentive to those who celebrate the liturgy. He wanted them to be prepared and well disposed. He shortened the Office, divided some of the psalms, and emphasized gestures in order to prevent fatigue. He called for there to be time to attend to basic human needs. And, he wanted the monks to be active participants in the liturgy — not passive spectators.

Benedict also was concerned that the liturgy be beautiful. He appreciated music and poetry. He called for singing to be both dignified and beautiful. Benedict's concern for the individual and community is also found in the provisions made for adaptation. A larger community could add solemnity to the Office; whereas a smaller one would necessarily call for simplification. He allowed for the monks to pray not only in the oratory but in the fields — if their situation called for them to be at work.

The Psalms and other books of Scripture were the foundation of Benedict's liturgy. Their use in the liturgy provided for continued use at times of *lectio*. Benedict called for silent prayer at the end of the psalms, and he envisioned this quiet prayer continuing throughout the monk's day.

In examining these chapters of the Rule, we notice a sense of Benedict's theology and spirituality, especially regarding dialogue, praise and petition, and unceasing prayer. The Office is structured as a dialogue of God with human beings: the psalms prepare us to listen; God speaks in the readings; we follow these elements with our own meditating; and then we pray — we call on God directly. The dialogue of the liturgy can teach us how to listen to God and how to speak to God in daily life and in our private prayer.

In the desert, the Divine Office was casual — the monks worked while listening to the psalms. For Benedict, though, the whole Office was a solemn praise of God. There was a balance between praise of God and petition for needs.

All Christians are called to “pray without ceasing.” For some, this call is fulfilled through many times of formal prayer. For others, formal prayer times punctuate the day in order to remind us that all of life — with its work and interactions — is prayer. Benedict called for us to be aware that we are always in God's presence. Especially when we are gathered for communal prayer we recall God's angels surrounding us, God's presence in each one of us. So, the

Liturgy of the Hours helps us to live in God's presence and helps keep us focused on that presence throughout the day and throughout our lives.

“May our hearts be in harmony with voices.” This verse from Chapter 19 of the Rule is one of the most important phrases from all of Benedict's writing on prayer. Our hearts, our minds, are to be in harmony with our voices, with what we say or sing. And, what do we say? We say the words of the Psalms, the words of Scripture. We say the Our Father, seeking reconciliation with one another. We say, “O God, come to my assistance...” — acknowledging our need for God's presence in our lives. This whole prayer, then, changes me. I open myself to be transformed by it. If I allow my heart to be in harmony with my voice, then I can become my truest self, intimately united to God and to one another, recognizing God's presence both within me and in each person I meet.

Liturgy of the Hours Today

As we end our session we ask the question: What does prayer in the parish church look like and how do monastics pray at this point in history?

Some of the same distinctions are present. In a parish the leader of the prayer would be a priest, deacon, or member of the parish team. Psalms would be led or sung by a member of the parish who has been trained and assigned to be a

reader or cantor. The reading would be proclaimed by a member of the parish who is part of the regular reading schedule. However, in a monastic community all members who are able are expected and privileged to take part in being a prayer leader, reader, or intoner of the psalms.

In a parish the psalms would be chosen to fit the time of day and would be few in number, while the monastic community has assigned psalms and over a period of time prays the entire psalter. The attention to silent meditation differs in both groups also. The parish community might pray or sing the

psalms a bit faster than monastic communities and would have very brief periods for reflection. However, you know from your own experience of praying with the community of Ferdinand that we pray at a moderately slow pace, pausing for reflection after each psalm as well as a longer time for meditation following the reading.

Both styles of prayer, however, have at their heart the desire to fulfill the call to pray without ceasing, to be attentive to God's presence in our lives, and to offer prayers of praise and petition to God.



Oblates in Active Roles

Oblates are getting more involved in preparations and follow-up for the regular meetings. Four distinct groups of Oblates are working to help the meetings run smoothly as they offer hospitality to other Oblates. More help is needed so duties can be shared without burdening any person. An experienced person will work with you so that you know what needs to be done. Listed are the four areas of ministry and the Oblate to contact to volunteer your assistance.

1. Meeting preparation — send email reminders of meeting dates and times. Receive reservations and notify sisters of meal count and other appropriate Oblate volunteers of count for room set-up. To volunteer, contact Mary Eileen Fritz at raymary@psci.net or 812-367-1502.
2. Mass materials (day of the meeting) — receive reservations count. Whenever Morning Prayer and Mass are part of the schedule, gather prayer books and Mass books before Oblates and other guests arrive. Work with the sister who is hospitality minister to distribute books before prayer and Mass. Put books away after Mass. Two or three people will work at each meeting. To volunteer,

contact Patti Schroeder at Pattischroeder@hotmail.com or 812-357-5667 or Lynn Steiden at blackpawstable@gmail.com or 618-524-3514.

3. Meeting logistics — prepare mid-day prayer. Prior to the start of the meeting, set up registration table and see that room is arranged appropriately. Identify prayer leader, intoner, and reader for mid-day prayer. Introduce prayer at beginning of meeting. Help clean up room after meeting. Two or three Oblates are needed at each meeting. To volunteer, contact Theresa Bauer at tabauer@insightbb.com or 812-738-9676 or Mel Schroeder at Mel.Schroeder@nationalofficefurniture.com or 812-357-5667.
4. Refreshments/room clean-up — set up the refreshment table and provide refreshments at the meeting; usually 3 or 4 people will do this at each meeting. Identify persons who will provide set up and refreshments at the next meeting. Clean up after each meeting. To volunteer, contact Judy Luebbehusen at cjLueb@psci.net or 812-367-2891 or Linda Begle at begleva@yahoo.com or 812-367-1670.



Scenes from the March
Oblate retreat.



Membership Changes on Oblate Advisory Board

Oblates Theresa Bauer, Jackie Richards, and David Richards are the new members of the Oblate Advisory Board. At the May meeting of the board they will be welcomed and receive a special blessing. Also at the May meeting Oblates Marcia Brown, Patti Schroeder, and Mel Schroeder will receive a special blessing as they bring to completion their two three-year terms on the board. They have used their gifts very generously, and we are most grateful to them for their service.

The other Oblates currently serving on the board are Lynn Belli, Mary Eileen Fritz, and Kathy Knust. Oblate Ruth Goepfrich is facilitator for the board.

We are grateful to all of these Oblates for their generous service.



New Oblate Advisory Board members: Jackie Richards, David Richards, and Theresa Bauer.

Hope @ the Dome Youth Rally

Help us spread the word!
Saturday, July 6, 2013



High school youth are invited to an outdoor extravaganza of prayer, service, and celebration at Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Indiana, hosted by the Sisters of St. Benedict.

What is this "Youth Rally?"
Find out as details are released at thedome.org/hope.



Visit For Heaven's Sake gift shop

Ferdinand Benedictine Oblates receive

10% off
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Become a pen pal/prayer partner

Oblate Mary Taber has gathered the names, emails and mailing addresses of some of the Belcourt Oblates who would like to have a contact among the Ferdinand Oblates. Mary wants to be sure that all Oblates have the opportunity to join this connection. If you want to be a pen pal/prayer partner, please contact Mary Tabor at 402 N. Van Buren, #204, Huntingburg, Indiana 47542, or 812-684-0088.

Let Mary know if you want the contact to be through email or USPS mail. Provide her with your name and either email address or mailing address. Mary will coordinate the

responses so that Ferdinand Oblates are connecting with Belcourt Oblates and vice versa. Please respond to Mary by May 24.



**Pray for the deceased Oblates,
Sisters, and relatives:**

Loretta Robertson, *sister of Sister Mary Andre' Gettelfinger*

Kenneth Market, *brother of Sister Doris Market*

Rosemary Maier, *sister of Sister Helen Maurer*

Oblate Sara Manis

Sherman Gehlhausen, *brother of Sister Sylvia Gehlhausen*

Margaret Loring, *sister of Sister Maria Tasto*

Sister Laverne Scheller, OSB

Oblate Birthdays

May

6—Linda Doyle, 7—Rita Langer, Barbara Poitra, 8—Mary Eileen Fritz, 10—Phyllis Claycamp, Debbi Vickers, 20—Sharon Kilpatrick, 21—Jean Siebels, 23—Bridget Tierney, 27—Julie Beck, 28—Linda Begle, 31—Gail Trottier



June

7—James Werner, 8—Marlis Mahrer, 12—Karen Rexing, 15—Bernadette Heeke, Phyllis Jollie, 16—Earl Menchhofer, 20—Dayna Barlow, Joseph Marion, 21—Theresa Bauer, Anne Howerton, 24—Brenda DeMotte, 30—Marilyn Becker

July

4—Elaine Baumgart, 7—Mary Lou Bassler, Mary Taber, 9—Chihoko Wake, 11—Martha Schmitt, 12—Zella Kueneman, 13—Charles Luebbehusen, 17—Mary Lamberg, 20—Ed Brown, Sandy Turner, 30—Judith Kissel, Carolyn Werner



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

<mms://smtp.thedome.org/churchcam>

Oblates

is published four times a year by the Oblate Leadership Team: Sisters Kathy Bilskie and Barbara Ann Offerman.

Send comments to the Oblate Office

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Monastery Moments and Oblate Offerings

May 18

Volunteer Appreciation Day This celebration will honor the women and men who have assisted the sisters with various activities and ministries this past year. Invitations will be sent.

June 4–9

Discernment and Election of Prioress The religious community will gather for a sacred time of discernment and the election of a prioress. The term of office will be six years. Join your prayers with the sisters to see the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

June 15–22

Religious Community Retreat Many of the sisters will be participating in a retreat during this week. Sisters who cannot attend this retreat will choose another

time to participate in a different retreat.

June 17–19

Camp Marian Summer camp 2013 is for girls who will have just completed 5th – 8th grade. Held on the monastery grounds, there will be prayer, games, crafts, swimming, archery, and more. The cost is \$45. For more information, email vocations@thedome.org.

June 29–30

Academy Alumnae Weekend Former Academy students are invited to join the sisters for a weekend of sharing memories and fun. Reservations required.

July 6

Hope @ the Dome Youth Rally High school youth are invited to an outdoor extravaganza of prayer, service, and

celebration at Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Indiana, hosted by the Sisters of St. Benedict. More information can be found on our web site: thedome.org/hope.

July 13

Installation of New Prioress More information will be released at a later date



Oblates Meetings

Mark your calendars for the 2013-2014 Oblate gatherings. At the October 2012 meeting, some Oblates inquired about having meetings on days other than Sunday. This inquiry came at a time when the religious community was also looking to make changes in scheduling some events. Please note that not all meetings are on Sunday. Sunday meetings will still include an opportunity to attend Morning Prayer, Mass, noon meal, and the meeting.

At another recent meeting, Oblates who were present decided on a focus for upcoming presentations. This focus will be the Holy Rule of St. Benedict. Leadership team members Sisters Barbara Ann Offerman and Kathy Bilskie then invited other members of the religious community to help define how the Rule could be presented. These sisters included Sisters Rose Wildeman, Karen Joseph, Dolores Folz,

Ann Francis Hillenbrand, Joella Kidwell, and Jane Will.

The “Spirituality of the Rule” will be the theme of Oblate presentations from the end of 2013 into early 2016. The emphasis will be on the Prologue, chapters 1 through 7, and chapters 72 and 73. Presenters will be announced later.

2013 schedule

August 18, Sunday

- annual indoor picnic and celebration, immediately after Mass

September 21, Saturday

- Rite of Reception of New Oblate Candidates (precedes the presentation)
- 2-4 p.m.
- Overview of Benedict/Scholastica

October 20, Sunday

- Morning Prayer 9:45 a.m. with Rite

of Oblation, Mass, Dinner

- (no meeting)

2014 schedule

January 18, Saturday

- 2-4 p.m.
- Prologue of the Rule

February 15, Saturday

- 2-4 p.m.
- Prologue (continued)

March 16, Sunday

- 1-3 p.m.
- Retreat

April 26, Saturday

- 2:00-4:00 p.m.
- Chapter 1, The Kinds of Monks

May 18, Sunday

- 1-3 p.m.
- Chap. 2 & 64, Qualities of an Abbot
- (Prioress) and Election of Prioress

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Oblates

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Sisters of St. Benedict Spirituality Ministry

The sisters' Spirituality Ministry offers a buffet of nourishing, enriching, and tasty food for your soul and spirit. Check out these three upcoming programs, and invite a friend to join you at Kordes Center on the hill. For more information visit the sisters' website at thedome.org/programs or phone 812-367-1411, ext 2915.

- **June 12–14, 2013** — Understanding Jesus in the Light of Modern Christian Scholarship: the Challenge of Christology today

Thanks to the inter-disciplinary wisdom of modern scholarship, we understand Christian discipleship in a whole new light. This new understanding impinges on every aspect of our Christian lives, posing new understandings and fresh challenges for daily life. In this workshop we'll explore the new wisdom and its possible impact on daily living.

- **June 21–28, 2013** — Directed Retreat

Experience the Biblical Psalms in a new way — as a dialogue with God about your deepest feelings and emotions.

- **July 14–21, 2013** — Intensive and Post-Intensive Centering Prayer Retreats

The Intensive Centering Prayer Retreat provides an opportunity to be immersed in the practice of Centering Prayer as taught by Contemplative Outreach. The Intensive Retreat features Parts I, II, III of the "Spiritual Journey" videotape series by Father Thomas Keating. Prior Centering Prayer practice is required. The Post Intensive Centering Prayer Retreat provides an opportunity for intensive Centering Prayer, solitude, and silence in community. A prerequisite is the Intensive Centering Prayer Retreat.

