

May 2014



Sister Anita Louise Lowe and Sister Rose Wildeman shared in the presentation on February 15.

## The Prologue of the Holy Rule of St. Benedict, Part II

By Sisters Anita Louise Lowe and Rose Wildeman

### Prologue 21-22 as Nucleus

In January we talked about the chiasmic structure of the entire Prologue as well as the chiasms that exist in various sections of the text, and that verses 21-22 form the nucleus of the whole Prologue. As a refresher, let me review what a chiasm is. A chiasm is a writing style that uses a repetition pattern for clarification and emphasis. Chiasms are structured in a repeating A-B-C ... C'-B'-A' pattern. With a chiasm, we find a repetition of similar ideas in the reverse sequence. The importance of the chiasmic structure is found in its hidden emphasis, the central point.

Remember that the entire Prologue has a chiasmic structure. The A and A' sections talk about listening, obeying precepts, service, and running. The B and B' sections are an introduction and a conclusion to the two psalms (33 and 14). And the C and C' sections are explanations of those two psalms. We discover the way to life and the way to dwell in God's tent. The center, then, of the entire Prologue is found in verses 21 and 22: we are to walk God's paths in order to see Him who has called us.

Verse 21 is actually a chiasm in and of itself. The central point is "let us set out on this way, with the Gospel for our guide." What does this mean? What is the Gospel of which Benedict is speaking? It is probably all of Scripture but particularly the Beatitudes and the other teachings of Jesus. These are to be our guide on the path to God. Notice, also, that there is not only one path. The word is plural which indicates that there can be multiple paths to God. The Gospel then becomes the guide that shows us how to proceed along whichever path we are on, similar to following someone's footsteps in the snow. Without that path to guide us we may not be sure which way to go.

“We must, then,  
prepare our hearts  
and bodies for  
the battle of holy  
obedience to  
God's instructions.  
What is not possible  
to us by nature,  
let us ask the  
Holy One  
to supply by the help  
of grace.”

—Rule of St. Benedict  
Prologue



Monastery Immaculate Conception  
802 E. 10th Street  
Ferdinand, Indiana 47532-9239  
812-367-1411, ext. 2827/2829  
[www.thedome.org/oblates](http://www.thedome.org/oblates)  
[oblates@thedome.org](mailto:oblates@thedome.org)

Notice also the phrase, “that we may obtain to see Him...” This can also be translated as being made worthy. Does that sound familiar? This is liturgical language indicating that God is at work in us. We don’t make ourselves worthy just as we cannot obtain to see God on our own. God is the one who makes us worthy, who allows us to see him. Our task is to make ourselves available and to respond to the voice of God.

### Prologue 23-35

A. Comparison with Ps. 14/15 — Let’s now look to the next verses, 23-35. When we look to the text we notice that the majority of the scriptural passages are quotes from Psalm 14 or 15 (depending on which tradition of numbering the psalms you are following). Benedict uses Scripture, here the Book of Psalms, as the basis for his message. In the psalms we have a dialogue: God speaks to us and we speak to God. By using the text of the psalm, Benedict explains it to us.

In verses 25 and following we have God’s reply to the question of who will dwell in God’s tent. What we find is a list of virtues, ten to be exact. These virtues highlight the Decalogue of the New Testament, the Sermon on the Mount.

There are two virtues given in verse 25: truth and justice. Benedict also uses this text to speak of a major quality of monastic life: stability. The monk is founded on rock, rooted in the rock, in Christ. This stability in Christ is juxtaposed with the other major monastic quality, that of being on pilgrimage.

B. Chiastic Structure — If we look at this section we also notice that it is a chiasm. We have the question asked in verse 23: Who will dwell in your tent, O God? And in verse 33 we hear the final answer: the wise person whose house is built on rock.

In verse 25 we have a list of five virtues: walk without blemish, just in all dealings, speak truth from the heart, not wronged another, and not listened to slanders. And in verse 29-32, we have five more virtues: reverence God, not elated over own good deeds, judge it is God’s strength, praise the Holy One, and boast in God alone. Thus, the center of this section is verse 28. Who will dwell in God’s tent? The one who dashes temptations and wicked promptings against Christ. The source of this thought is from Psalm 137: 9. This is one of the cursing psalms and the verse that causes most people to avoid praying it: “Happy shall they be who take your little ones and dash them against the rock!” For Benedict, the little ones are the temptations and thoughts, the children of the Devil. These temptations, no matter how small, are to be dashed against the Rock, against Christ. Later on, Benedict will insist upon the monastic revealing thoughts to the abbot, even those that seem insignificant.

Benedict realizes that these “young” thoughts, these small temptations, if left to themselves, will grow and lead the disciple astray. They must be dashed against Christ so that they can be transformed into virtuous thoughts and virtuous living.

C. Compared with previous section and Ps. 33 —

Remember that this section of the Prologue is C’. It corresponds to C: verses 14-20. In those verses we were given an explanation of Psalm 33. Here, it’s Psalm 15. In C, we had God seeking and crying out. Here it is God who shows us the way to the tent. Both have at their core the maxim to “keep the tongue from deceit, to not do evil.” And, then, the end of C tells us that it is God who shows us the way to life. Here in C’, God waits for us.

### Prologue 36-44

A. Dynamism — Next, I would like to speak a bit about verses 36-44. Notice that that first part again is a small chiasm. The nucleus in verse 37-38 is about how God wants us to repent, to turn back and live. Verse 36 and 39 which are on either side of the nucleus are about the instructions we have received for dwelling in God’s tent. There is a real dynamism here. By that I mean that we are to be pilgrims on the journey yet, we are also to live in God’s tent. That is, we are to be on the move, but also be at home in God’s tent. Seems impossible, doesn’t it? Well, think of pilgrims who carry their tent and sleeping bag with them as they travel. At the end of the day, they can pitch their tent and get some rest. They are able to be on the move and also stay in one place when they need to do so. We are on a similar journey as well. Maybe we aren’t carrying our tent and sleeping bag with us, but we are on a journey. Sometimes, like the nucleus of this section, we must turn back (repent) in order to live. This journey can go forwards and backwards. Whichever way this journey takes us, it is helping us to grow in knowledge and deepen our relationship with God. We are often on the move, but we can spend some “tent” time in prayer and reflection before, after or even during our busy day. We are being pilgrims on the move as well as being stationary in our home (our tent). We are probably not covering a lot of miles on this journey, but we are moving nonetheless. The important part is that we take time to be still each day. We need to take time to pray, reflect and do our lectio, our “tent” time.

B. Tense Change — As we move into verses 40 to 44, notice that there is a change in tense. Back in verse 36 it says that “our lifespan has been lengthened.” In verse 39, it says “we have asked God...” and “we have heard the instructions.” These are all things in the past. Beginning in verse 40, the tense changes to what we must do now and in the future. “We must prepare our hearts and bodies for the battle of holy obedience to God’s instructions.” Verse 41 says: “let

us ask the Holy One to supply the help of grace.” In verses 42-43 Benedict continues by saying things like: “if we wish to reach eternal life...while there is still time...while we are in this body and have time to accomplish all these things...” Verse 44 says that “we must run and do now what will profit us forever.”

C. Urgency — Benedict gives a real sense of urgency in these verses. He uses the word “run” four times in the Prologue. This is an allusion to John 12:35. In the Gospel of John, however, Jesus says: “Walk while you have the light so that the darkness may not overtake you.” In verse 44, Benedict changes the verb from “walk” to “run.” He is telling us to run on our journey in order to get to our eternal home, our heavenly reward. Benedict encourages us to move quickly, don’t dilly-dally, get moving. There is an urgency in his choice of words as he encourages us to “run” on the journey to our eternal reward. He wants us to get a move on, but not to forget to be still.

### Prologue 45-50

A. In January we asked that you compare Prologue 45-50 with two Gospel passages: Matthew 7: 13-14 and Matthew 11: 28-30. Let’s look at these passages. What similarities do you see in Benedict’s text? What does he change or add?

B. Benedict’s addition to the Rule of the Master.

Verse 44 could be the end of the prologue. Benedict tell us that “we must run and do now what will profit us forever.” However, Benedict goes on to tell us concretely how we are to run.

If we compare the end of the Benedict’s prologue with that of the Rule of the Master, we see that verses 46-49 are Benedict’s insertion into the Master’s conclusion. In studying these verses we find that they are a corrective to the Master’s concept of “school.” The Master sees the school as harsh and difficult, an imposed martyrdom, a way to suppress the self through penance and humiliations. Benedict, however, states that he hopes to set down nothing harsh or burdensome. Benedict acknowledges that difficulties are an inevitable part of life, but they are not sought out, not intentionally imposed. Here we find evidence of Benedict’s moderation and balance. He stands in between strictness and laxity.

Benedict admits that the way is narrow but encourages the monastic not to flee immediately or be daunted by fear. Benedict is compassionate to the newcomer and strives to offer encouragement for continuing on the path. The way may not become any less narrow, but our progress on the way leads to an expanded heart so that the way becomes less burdensome and difficult. We cannot expand our hearts, but God can. As we progress on our spiritual journey, God works on us, and our hearts

become dwelling places for Christ, for the Spirit. God, in a sense, becomes the engine for our running, the driving force of our lives. Therefore, if we persevere, we will be able to “run the way of God’s commandments.”

Love turns labor into joy and delight. Love makes difficulty lighter for us. And this love is God’s love acting within us, giving us a foretaste of heaven here and now.

C. School of the Lord’s Service — Let’s look at the term “school of the Lord’s service.” What did this mean for Benedict? What does it mean for us? We have already noted that Benedict saw the concept of the monastery as school differently than did the Master. What do you think of when you think of being in school? Is it a place of preparation? Does “real life” only occur after one is finished with school?

In both the Master and Benedict, the teacher in this school is Christ and the abbot is Christ’s representative. The Latin word for school is “scola” and implies a place of leisure, a place where one practices and learns a specific service — thus a “scola cantorum” is a place reserved for singers. That’s the origins of our calling the choir a schola. Scola can also refer to a group of people pursuing similar goals. From the fourth century we find the term applied to the military and to the church. In monastic literature, scola designates the place of the monastery as well as the community gathered there. Cassian saw the monastery as a school of cenobites preparing for the eremitical life, life as a hermit.

The Master saw the monastery as a scola within the scola of the church — a place that builds upon baptism and leads to a sharing in Christ’s passion and, eventually, into Christ’s reign. Benedict, however, as we noted above, corrects the Master’s concept. Benedict sees that the scola includes the place of the monastery, the exercises and learnings, the Sacred Scriptures, and the teachings of Christ.

The Prologue ends with an eschatological view of the kingdom of God. Eternal life is the goal for every Christian, and, therefore, for the monastic. But if we look at the chiasmic structure of these final verses we note that the core is verse 49: “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 the inexpressible delight of love.” Benedict’s monastery is not a place of competition, as schools often are. Rather, the only competition for Benedict is that in virtue, humility, and love. He calls us to strive to outdo one another in love and in mutual obedience. And he reminds us that if we persevere, God will work in us, expanding our hearts, allowing love to overflow. Love is the central goal of the entire Christian life. And love is the hallmark of Benedict’s monasticism.

## Full Circle with Boniface

By Oblate Lynn Steiden

My favorite childhood Christmas memory is cuddling next to my beloved grandmother on Christmas Eve at St. Boniface Church in Louisville, Kentucky, singing Christmas carols in German. The music and words in another language were special to me, since she had taught me the words in German. I remember sitting and staring at the statue of St. Boniface on the high altar. I knew nothing of him, but as a small child, I knew he was a friend. I named my guardian angel after him. I thought he was a Franciscan as the monastery connected to it was Franciscan. Little did I know!

Zoom forward to the summer of 1962 when I had the most wonderful summer of my life in Strobl, Austria, at a 10-week summer school program at the University of Vienna. I made many friends with the other 50 students and the faculty. I remember sitting on the dock on Lake Wolfgangsee, looking at the clear waters, the blue skies, and the mountains behind the tiny village of St. Wolfgang across the lake. I knew again there was something special about this spiritual place. Who was St. Wolfgang, I asked?

While in Austria, one wonderful old professor used to take me and my three roommates to Salzburg and show us the city, museums, and secret places. One of the places he took us to was the Monastery of Nonnberg and he told many stories of the man, St. Rupert, who founded the city of Salzburg out of the Roman ruins and founded the monastery. There was a spiritual draw to this city that exists even stronger today.

In the early 1980's, I returned to Austria and found a village south of Salzburg which had a wonderful charm to it and I have returned every two years there to find peace, not realizing that St. Rupert had sent hundreds of monks south through the Salzach Valley and down the Salz River. Why should I? I did not know that the Benedictine spirituality and culture were common bonds. Austria is truly under old Benedictine influence. It is neutral, against war, like Switzerland; it's a socialized democracy; it's very clean. They recycle and use a lot of solar energy as well as wind and water for electricity. The towns are spotless and the people friendly and hospitable. Their greeting is not hello, but rather "Gruss Gott," meaning God be with you. There is little crime and violence. They hang on to their traditions and one feels comfortable wherever you go. Sounds a little Benedictine, does it not?

In January of 2012, I was awakened in my sleep and one word came to my mind. That word was Benedict. I had no idea who Benedict was. I knew he was a saint. I quickly found



Lynn Steiden (right) listens to inspirational words from Sister Joan Chittister (left). Sister Joan is a renowned speaker and writer of Benedictine religious life and spirituality.

out about him and discovered The Dome. Now I know it was the Boniface connection that drove me to the Rule and the Benedictine way of life. Now I am a very happy Oblate and was driven this past summer to re-visit Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, so that I could better understand what this strong draw inside me had been about.

Along with my friend Ann, we first went to Fulda. Tired after an eight hour flight to Frankfurt and a two hour car ride to Fulda, we decided to rest first. Unable to sleep, as I realized where I was, I left the room and headed straight for the cathedral. Fulda is a small, beautiful medieval town, and I knew I was in the right place when I hit Boniface Platz, the town square, and there he was, a large statue, in a simple habit, a cross raised in his right hand and the bible clutched to his heart. I walked as fast as I could across the old cobbled streets to the cathedral.

I knew his tomb was underneath the high altar and as it was late afternoon, there were few tourists and none of them were downstairs. I scurried down the stairs and knelt at the communion rail and openly wept as I realized that here was my guardian angel, the saint that had led me to a new relationship with God through St. Benedict and the Rule's gentle way of life. I sat in one of the pews, thanking God over and over for bringing me here to this holy place.

Ann and I returned the next day and with her looking out, I went over the communion rail and knelt at the altar with my hands on the tomb. More tears of gratitude. More of a feeling that I was "home," that I had made the circle of Christmas as a child to the tomb of the saint who would guide me to where God wanted me to be, a child of the

Rule. We then visited the huge museum that is connected to the Church. What treasures! His walking stick, his mitre and bishop attire that did not look very used, along with many of his writings and personal belongings. There were so many treasures, but the one thing that stuck out were the huge paintings of his martyrdom, with ones of Benedict and Scholastica on either side.

The next day we went back to the cathedral for a final goodbye and then sought out the Benedictine abbey that was nearby. All of the abbeys in Austria and Germany are cloistered, but there was a friendly English speaking novice in the gift shop after visiting the abbey's ancient church. We struck up a conversation with her and as we were leaving she asked us to pray for new postulants. I remember that Rachel at Ferdinand had asked that we pray for 13 new postulants, so we struck a deal that we would pray for each other, the 13 and 13; 13 for Fulda and 13 for Ferdinand. Sister Regina and Rachel are now pen pals! Sister Regina was astounded that our sisters were out in the world teaching, caring for the poor and sick and she could not fathom ever leaving the monastery. We talked about the need for both in today's troubled world and she agreed.

While Boniface was the first missionary to ask for women to accompany him in his work of spreading the gospels, St. Rupert also called for women to accompany him to what is now Salzburg, which at that time was a destroyed ancient Roman ruin. It became the current city and district of Salzburg. Rupert rebuilt the city by mining salt or "salz" in German, a very desired commodity at that time. Salzburg flourished with the salt mining and over time turned into one of the most thriving cities in Europe. It became the city of Mozart, many educational and musical institutes, museums of fine art work, and St. Peter's monastery, which is still active today. There are other beautiful churches there worth looking at — the cathedral, which is at the end of a huge town square, and the Franciscan church.

Rupert instructed to found an abbey there, Nonnberg, carved out of the side of the large hill starting at the base of St. Peter's Monastery grounds. There are no visitors allowed except in the ancient church, but the climb to see it is worth it. The view at the top is spectacular, looking into the Salzach Valley and the base of the Alps. To the south is the Salzkammergut area, the home of St. Wolfgang.

St. Wolfgang was from northern Austria, the tutor of St. Henry, who would become the patron saint of Benedictine Oblates. He was sent to the famous monastery of Einselden, from which St. Meinrad was founded. Upon returning he was made Bishop of Ratisbon, Germany, and was greatly beloved by his people. Refusing to become a part of political disputes, he gave up his office of bishop and set out to Austria

to the Salzkammergut area. After checking on the monastery in Mondsee, he traveled further south to what is now Wolfgangsee. Looking for a place to build his hermitage, he waded out into the water and threw his axe into what was then a forested area. It was there he built his hermitage. Several years later, a hunter recognized him and told the neighboring villages that he had found Wolfgang. They forced him to return against the locals' protests, and he died on the way back to Germany, in Popping, Austria. After he left, his axe was preserved and placed in the church and is still there today. Many miracles have been recorded in his name.

After several days of rest in St. Johann, we journeyed back into Germany to Eichstatt. For me it was truly amazing and beyond words. Here was where Boniface summoned his niece, St. Walburga, to found the abbey. She was also made abbess and abbot over the men's monastery! Her tomb is on the bottom floor and rises three stories. During several months of the year, water and oil seep from her tomb and have been the source of many miracles. For three floors the walls are covered with hundreds, maybe thousands of letters of gratitude as well as crutches, bandages, drawings of the miracles and even farm implements, including a horse's tooth from a farmer, all ways of thanking Walburga for miracles that happened through her intercession. A very kind sister spent an hour with us telling us the history of the monastery, including the hiding of Jews inside the monastery when the Nazis used part of their buildings as a hospital. Boniface would have loved that!

My circle was complete even though we visited other places. From St. Boniface Church in Louisville to Fulda where Boniface is buried, to Salzburg, to Wolfgangsee to Eichstatt, where Boniface sent his niece in the 8th century; to my room where I was called to The Dome, where the nuns came from Eichstatt. This was my Boniface, Benedictine, Dome long circle, now complete. It has taken me 65 years to make it since I first encountered Boniface on that cold Christmas night when I was seven cuddled next to my grandmother. Were all the bumps and problems in life worth getting here? You bet. I am an Oblate of St. Benedict and thank God many times during the day for it. But most of all, besides God, I want to thank the sisters of the Dome for their hospitality, joy, prayers, counseling and friendship. Without the reception I received when I came, it would have never happened.

*Oblates* is published four times a year by the Oblate Leadership Team: Sisters Barbara Ann Offerman and Brenda Engleman.

Send comments to the Oblate Office  
Monastery Immaculate Conception  
802 E. 10th Street • Ferdinand, IN 47532  
812-367-1411, ext. 2827/2829 • [oblates@thedome.org](mailto:oblates@thedome.org)

# Oblates from two monasteries gather for retreat and good times

On the weekend of March 15 and 16, the Benedictine sisters at Ferdinand hosted 21 Oblates and their director, Sister Antoinette Purcell, from Beech Grove, Indiana. The guests arrived on Saturday afternoon and departed on Sunday afternoon.

The Ferdinand Oblates joined the Beech Grove Oblates on Sunday for Morning Prayer, Mass and dinner. At dinner, the two groups, with little encouragement, mingled with one another and definitely made some new friends.

On Sunday afternoon, all of the Oblates and several sisters gathered in St. Gertrude Hall to participate in a very uplifting retreat entitled, "St. Benedict and Lent." Sister Karen Joseph led the retreat.

The collage of pictures on this page, without a doubt, reflects the positive energy and upbeat mood of the day.



Pictured above are Sister Brenda Engleman, Sister Antoinette Purcell and Sister Barbara Ann Offerman. Sisters Brenda and Barbara make up the Oblate Leadership Team from Ferdinand. Sister Antoinette is the Director of Oblates from Beech Grove.



# Monastery Moments and Oblate Offerings

**May 3**

**A Day Apart: Rest and Reflection** will be held in Kordes Center from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**May 18**

**Oblate Meeting** Sister Jeana Visel will lead a presentation on Chapters 2 and 4 of The Holy Rule entitled "The Qualities of the Abbot" from 1 to 3 p.m. Will be held in St. Gertrude Hall

**June 1-8**

**Centering Prayer Retreat: Intensive and Post- Intensive** will be held at Kordes Center. Begins on June 1 at 7 p.m. and ends on June 8 at 10 a.m.

**June 14-21**

**Guided Retreat: Making Life Happen to You** will be held at Kordes Center. Begins on June 14 at 7 p.m. and ends on June 21 at 10 a.m.

## Share the Joy of Being an Oblate of St. Benedict

All Oblates and Oblate Candidates are encouraged to share the joy of being an Oblate with others. Share the good news with your friends, relatives, and members of your church. Talk with those you think would be good Oblates; invite them to accompany you to meetings. Share with them the Oblate newsletter.

If each of you would bring a guest to the next meeting, we would fill St. Gertrude Hall with Oblate joy!

By the way, we have one more Oblate gathering for this season — Sunday, May 18. Sister Jeana Visel will present Chapters 2 and 64 of the Holy Rule on the "Qualities of the Abbot."

**June 21**

**Silver Jubilee** Sister Anita Louise Lowe will celebrate her 25th Jubilee at 1 p.m. in the monastery church.



**June 21-28**

**On the Hill Conference Retreat: Abide With Me** will be held in St. Gertrude Hall. Begins on June 21 at 7 p.m. and ends on June 28 at 10 a.m.

**June 28-29**

**Academy Alumnae Reunion** will be held this weekend.

**July 12-19**

**Directed Retreat** will be held in Kordes Center. Begins on July 12 at 7 p.m. and ends on July 19 at 1 p.m.

**NOTE: For all Spirituality Ministry offerings held at Kordes Center, call 812-367-1411, ext. 2915 for more information. See also [www.thedome.org/programs](http://www.thedome.org/programs).**



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](http://www.thedome.org/oblates)

## 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 Trotter



**June**

6—Jeanne Zack, 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

**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

Pray for the deceased relatives of Oblates and sisters:

**Dorothy Schmitz**, mother of Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz

**Lawrence Shidler**, brother of Sister Elnora Shidler

**Robert Leinenbach**, father of Oblate Denise Leinenbach

**Norma Lee (Baehl) Goedde**, sister of Sister Mary Leah Baehl

**Mary Lou Lampert**, mother of Oblate Mary Taber

# SISTERS OF ST. BENEDICT FERDINAND, INDIANA

*Seek. Pray. Share.*

## *Oblates*

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

## St. Benedict and Lent

On March 16, Sister Karen Joseph gave an inspiring retreat entitled, “St. Benedict and Lent.” Oblates from Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, Indiana, and Oblates and sisters from Monastery Immaculate Conception here in Ferdinand were participants in the retreat.

Sister Karen began the retreat by saying, “Lent is about a new beginning, about moving more deeply into the meaning of our lives. It’s about learning how to love as Christ loved. That’s the bottom line. According to St. Benedict, Lent is a time to make a renewed effort to be the person we really want to be. It’s about struggling to bring out the best in ourselves... a time to say, ‘I’m sorry. Let’s begin again.’” Sister Karen continues to say that Lent is not meant to be a sad season. We are to seek God in the present moment, to savor life and all of God’s good gifts to us.

During her reflections, Sister Karen shared quite honestly about her own struggles, especially with personal relationships. Those in attendance were touched by her openness and sincerity. She further commented, “We nuns are not perfect.



Sister Karen poses with Ferdinand Oblates (left to right) Charlie Luebbehusen, Judy Luebbehusen, Linda Begle and Vic Begle.

Far from it! We’re working at improving ourselves like everyone else.” Sister Karen ended by sharing one of her favorite quotes, “Joy is the most infallible sign of the presence of God. My friends, let’s be that infallible sign to one another. Lent is a time to be vulnerable.”