

January 2011



Sister Barbara C. Schmitz, Liturgical Environment

## The Liturgical Year: A Journey through the Paschal Mystery

By Sister Anita Louise Lowe

On December 31, millions of people gathered around the world to count down the final seconds of the year 2010 and to welcome in a new year, 2011. On New Year's Eve, we reminisce about the events of the passing year while we hope in the promise a new year will bring. As a church, we also celebrate the passing of one year to the next, but this New Year's Day occurs in late November or early December as we start a new liturgical year on the first Sunday of Advent.

What is this liturgical year? According to liturgical scholar Mark Searle, "The liturgical year is more than a calendar: it is a carousel of sayings and stories, songs and prayers, processions and silences, images and visions, symbols and rituals, feasts and fasts in which the mysterious ways of God are not merely presented but experienced, not merely perused but lived through."

Our celebration of liturgy is intended to help us become more truly who we are: daughters and sons of God, brothers and sisters of Christ. We are created in the image of God and intended to become more and more God-like in our daily lives. The liturgical year helps to facilitate this process by providing the framework for our celebration of the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours.

The heart of our liturgy is the paschal mystery, which is also the source and center of the liturgical year. Through our baptism we share in Christ's life, his death and resurrection, and are given the hope we need to face the struggles of human life. As we journey through the year we remember and make new again Christ's saving work among us. We do not simply commemorate a past event. Rather,

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“While St. Benedict never mentions the liturgical year by name in the Rule, he devotes 13 out of 73 chapters to the topic of prayer. This prayer, the Liturgy of the Hours, is shaped by the liturgical year. By better understanding the structure of the liturgical year, we can enter more deeply into the Liturgy of the Hours and the Eucharist so that ‘our minds [may be] in harmony with our voices.’”

— Sister Anita Louise Lowe, OSB



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the mystery of God is made present once again. In this way, the liturgical year is not linear as is our normal calendar year, but cyclical. As we journey through the feasts and seasons we go deeper into the mystery of God's presence among us and within us, peeling back layer upon layer, becoming more our true selves, the image of God who dwells within us.

If the paschal mystery is the center of the liturgical year, then Sunday can truly be called its heart. The gathering of Christians on Sunday is the oldest liturgical feast, and all other seasons and feasts have evolved out of the Sunday celebration. Each week we celebrate the resurrection of Christ and his continued presence with us, the People of God. We listen to the stories of our ancestors in faith, and we participate in the Eucharist, receiving Christ into our bodies so as to become Christ for the world.

The different seasons of the liturgical year help to focus our attention on various aspects of the paschal mystery and of Christ's life among us. In the season of Advent, we wait for Christ's coming: in the past as a newborn child, in the present within each of us, and in the future when Christ will come again. This season calls us to be patient and awake, noticing the various ways we encounter God in our everyday lives. The season culminates with Christmas and Epiphany, as we rejoice in the manifestation of God among us. The season of Lent is a time of preparation, recalling our baptismal call to become Christ for the world. While it has a penitential character, this penance is not for its own sake but rather to prepare us to be that which we truly are: Christ for one another. This season of preparation leads us to the great feast of Easter which forms the center of the liturgical year. Easter is the ultimate feast of the paschal mystery, and we continue this celebration for 50 days.

These major liturgical seasons are surrounded by "Ordinary Time." Ordinary comes from the word "ordinal," or numbered. The weeks of the year are numbered one through thirty-four and form the time between the two pillars of Christmas and Easter. During this prolonged season we walk through Christ's life on earth without focusing on any particular aspect of the paschal mystery. Instead, we celebrate the fullness of this mystery by following the stories by the evangelists. In Cycle A we listen to Matthew's account of the Gospel, in Cycle B to Mark's, and in Cycle C to Luke's. The Gospel of John is used in Cycle B to supplement the Gospel of Mark, the shortest of the Gospels. John's Gospel is also used for various seasonal readings.

We are also given a cycle of saints' feasts sprinkled throughout the liturgical year. These give us examples of past men and women, who have lived the paschal mystery and are now models for us in our living of that mystery.

As you participate in the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the

Hours this year, I invite you to be attentive to the mystery that is unfolding before you and within you. Use the texts of the various seasons and feasts for your lectio. Allow your heart to be attentive and listening for the voice of God to come to you through the various stories, songs, prayers, images, symbols, and rituals of this liturgical year so that you may truly experience the mystery of God present within you.



**Sister Mary Agnes Sermersheim, sacristan**

## Altar: table of the Lord

**by Sister Mary Agnes Sermersheim**

In the 'General Instruction of the Roman Missal,' Fourth Edition, March 1975, we learn that the altar is referred to as the 'table of the Lord' on which the Eucharist is offered. That it should be of natural stone and the relics of saints should be placed under the altar. The altar should be freestanding to allow ministers to walk around it easily and the presider stands facing the people when celebrating Mass. The altar is to be a focal point on which the attention of the whole congregation centers naturally. At least one cloth should be placed on the altar out of reverence for the celebration of the memorial of the Lord and the banquet that gives us his body and blood. The shape and size should be in keeping with the design of the altar. The cross is to be clearly visible to the people of God and placed on or near the altar. At every liturgical service candles are to be used as a sign of reverence and festiveness. They are to be placed on or around the altar in a way suited to the design of the altar and sanctuary. Everything is to be well balanced and must not interfere with the faithful's clear view of what goes on at the altar. The vessels of the altar are to be made from material that is solid and is regarded as noble in the particular region. The cup is to be made of non-absorbent material. The vessels of the altar hold a place of honor, these are used in presenting, consecrating, and receiving the bread and wine, the body and blood of the Lord.

# Monastery Moments and Oblate Offerings

## February 5

**Ongoing Formation Day: Creating a Viable Community Life** — Members of the religious community of sisters will participate in this day-long event.

## February 20

**Oblate Meeting** — Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz will talk about St. Hildegard of Bingen. The sisters chose St. Hildegard as the patroness of their health care facility. Reservations suggested.

## March 18-20

**Come & See Weekend** — Young women will join the religious community in prayer, work, and relaxation for this weekend.

## March 20

**Oblate Retreat: Benedictine Spirituality for the Frazzled** — Guest presenter Jane Tomaine, author of St. Benedict's Toolbox, will lead the annual retreat for Oblates beginning at 1 p.m. **Reservations are required.** Contact the Oblate Office.

## March 21

**Employee Meeting** — Jane Tomaine will be the presenter for this meeting with monastery employees.

## April 17

**Oblate Meeting** — *Windows Reflect the Light of the Saints* will be the topic presented by Sister Carlita Koch. Learn a new appreciation for beautiful church windows. Reservations suggested.

## May 15

**Oblate Meeting** — Oblates Patti and Mel Schroeder will present St. Frances of Rome, the patroness of Oblates. Reservations suggested.

## May 28

Golden Jubilee — Sisters Dolores Folz, Mary Rose Hasenour, Mary Jane Kiesel, Doris Marie Knebel, Barbara Ann Offerman, Paulette Seng, and Charlene Ann Wheeless will celebrate 50 years of monastic profession with the religious

community and family and friends. Note that Sister Barbara Ann is a member of the Oblate Leadership Team.



Sister Dolores



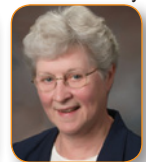
Sister Mary Rose



Sister Mary Jane



Sister Doris Marie



Sister Barbara Ann



Sister Paulette



Sister Charlene Ann

## Getting To Know the Oblates

### Joseph Neesho Migizi Marion

I am Joseph Neesho Migizi (Two Eagle) Marion, a Chippewa Indian living on the Turtle Mountain Indian reservation, Belcourt, North Dakota. I was born and raised in Belcourt, the second oldest in a family of six children. St. Ann's Parish in Belcourt has remained a strong hold for me throughout my life. I attended St. Ann's Catholic School through 5th grade, and then attended St. Paul's Indian Mission School, where my great aunt Bernadette Dauphinais lived.

My parents, grandparents, and great grandparents taught me to love, honor and respect my Catholic faith, the church and all people. I was blessed to have had the Benedictine priests and nuns to guide me in my growing love in God. I have to say attending Catholic school was the best education I could have ever received.

Our family home has always been located just below the hill of St. Ann's Church and school. Many hours were spent on the hill playing and helping out wherever I could. There was always great joy in being with the priests and nuns; some would become life-long friends.

While attending St. Paul's Mission School in South Dakota, I became acquainted with Br. Guy Otto, OSB, who later became Father Ray Otto after his ordination into priesthood. I latched onto him at the young age of twelve and never let go. We had a beautiful friendship that assisted in creating a deeper love in my Catholic faith.

I feel very blessed to be a Benedictine Oblate, enjoying the continuing education following the rule of St. Benedict. Sister Wilma and Sister Maura have so much to do with my becoming an Oblate. They inspired me to follow the will of our Lord.

I have been a hairstylist, business owner, teacher, parish sacristan, altar server coordinator, religious ed instructor, summer camp mentor/board, and St. Ann's Day coordinator.

I have enjoyed all of my parish work, doing so with a heart filled with passion and hunger to grow in faith, keeping in mind the work of St. Benedict. My aunt Phyllis Jollie, a fellow Oblate, keeps me inspired by her dedication and love of God; it is always a blessing to share, learn and grow with family.

I fondly remember and thank all of the Benedictine priests and nuns who have served and loved the Chippewa people of St. Ann's Parish and the community of Belcourt.





## Oblates pitch in for Christmas events

By Greg Eckerle

Several Oblates helped Ferdinand's popular annual Christkindlmarkt event become a little more festive recently.

They eagerly joined in with some sisters to run pre-Christmas activities and the Christmas Eve gathering in St. Gertrude Hall. Oblates worked in the monastery gift shop For Heaven's Sake, the monastery's Simply Divine Bakery, and in various booths during Christkindlmarkt. Among the Oblates helping were Mary Lou Bassler, Lynn Belli, David and Jackie Richards, Denise Leinenbach, and Oblate inquirers Rev. Pam Smith and Rev. Earl Menchhofer. Oblates Mel and Patti Schroeder and Denise welcomed guests into the monastery dining room for refreshments following the Christmas Eve Mass.

Then there was Oblate Ellen Stanton, who led a group that put on quite a puppet show in the monastery crypt.

### Oblate's puppets a kid hit

When Stanton hears the kids singing and clapping in rhythm to the songs in her Christmas puppet show, it's special music to her ears.

Stanton and her husband, Don, drove over six hours from northern Ohio to put on three free 20-minute performances of her "Christmas Around the World" puppet show.

Her husband designed the set, and Ellen made the animal puppets.

Two other Oblates, Mary Cheshire and Patti Schroeder, helped Stanton put on the show, along with Sister Gail, Sister Mary Lee, and Joan Melton.

About 60 adults and children attended the first



Oblate Ellen Stanton (second from left) enjoys the applause after the Christkindlmarkt puppet show in the monastery crypt.

performance, where various puppets decorated a Christmas tree, explaining the origin of each ornament. Religious Christmas songs played throughout, and it wasn't long before the crowd joined in the fun, giggling and singing.

"What's most enjoyable is being back there and hearing the kids, because you know you've connected," said Stanton, who also sang along while working one of the puppets. "It's a lot of fun."

Stanton, 61, also brought puppet shows to the monastery for the last two summer picnics. A design draftsman in the automotive industry, she was "bit by the puppet bug" at a Louisville workshop two years ago.

She likens the religious theme of her show to "a ministry of the Word."

"It's a beautiful experience," said Stanton. "It's great seeing the children enjoying it. The reward is so much more than what I put into it."

She also relishes the kids coming around afterward, checking out how the set is constructed, and putting the puppets on their hands.

Stanton's journey to become an Oblate at Ferdinand was sparked by seeing a brochure at an I-64 rest stop in 2006.

"It changed my life," she said. "It adds so much, and I feel really blessed."

The Stantons enjoy driving to the monthly Oblate meetings.

"The monastery is a very nurturing and creative place. If you think about planting yourself in faith, it provides a rich soil to grow in. Because I know I have a firm foundation here, I'm beginning to cultivate a life that's creative."



Oblate Ellen Stanton (lower right) works a puppet during a show at Christkindlmarkt in the monastery crypt.

## Bona Opera Form

Lent begins this year on March 9. That is about as late as it can be, but it's not too early for us to begin thinking about being ready for it when it does get here. And the Leadership Team would like to take advantage of the winter newsletter as a vehicle for sending the Bona Opera form to each of you in plenty of time.

For those who are new to this custom or for those who would appreciate a refresher on this custom, a bit of explanation may be helpful. In Benedictine monasteries it is the custom for each monastic to list on a Bona Opera form (Latin for good works) the good works of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving that the monastic resolves to do during Lent. The Bona Opera is then submitted to the prioress or the abbot, who blesses it with a signature of approval (as recommended by St. Benedict in Chapter 49 of the Rule).

We invite you as Oblates and Oblate Candidates of Monastery Immaculate Conception to participate with us in this Benedictine custom by preparing your own Bona Opera. A prayerful and reflective reading of Chapter 49 of the Rule of St. Benedict would be a good way to prepare for writing your Bona Opera. Then consider what you feel God is calling you to do this Lent in the areas of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Remember you cannot do everything; choose maybe one thing that you feel you most need to focus on to deepen your relationship with God and with all your brothers and sisters.

You will also notice on the Bona Opera form a space where you can list the name of a book you intend to read during Lent. This practice comes straight from Chapter 48 of St. Benedict's Rule. In that chapter St. Benedict says: "During this time of

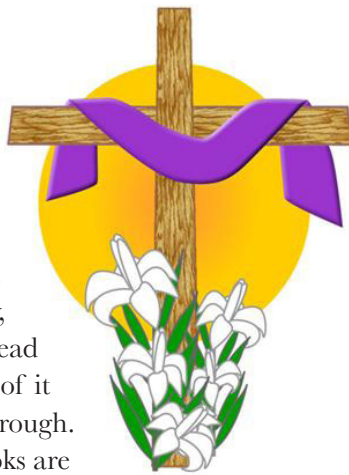
Lent each one is to receive a book from the library, and is to read the whole of it straight through. These books are to be distributed at the beginning of Lent." Now we won't be distributing any books to you, but if you wish, you may choose a spiritual book that you intend to read during Lent. Then you may wish to list that book on your Bona Opera form.

Once you decide, with the help of the Holy Spirit, what you need to do this Lent, we encourage you to write your intention(s) on the Bona Opera form included as a separate sheet with this newsletter. (This is the same form the sisters use.) Sign the form and mail it to: Oblate Office, 802 E 10th Street, Ferdinand, IN 47532-9239.

Please post the envelope so that it reaches the Oblate office by March 2. Sister Kristine Anne Harpenau, OSB, will read and bless your Bona Opera and it will be placed at the altar for Mass on Ash Wednesday. We will then return it to you before the First Sunday of Lent. Then you will have your Bona Opera in hand as a personal reminder of your Lenten offering to God.

*Oblates* is published four times a year by the Oblate Leadership Team:  
Sisters Kathy Bilskie,  
Mary Victor Kercher, and  
Barbara Ann Offerman.

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## Oblate Birthdays

### January

2 – Kathleen (Murphy) McTiernan, 6 – David Richards, 13 – Lynn Belli, 16 – John Kohl and Jackie Richards, 19 – Barbara Gordon, 25 – Susan Roussin, 30 – Kathy Knust



### February

1 – Richard Huggins, 6 – Angela Zaccardelli, 11 – June Berg and John Wallace, 12 – Zelma Peltier and Sister Marilyn Schroering, 15 – Mary Ann Stoll, 18 – Rita Kohl, 20 – Sister Wilma Davis, 24 – Carolyn Adler, 26 – Patti Schroeder, 29 – Mary Martha Salas

### March

2 – Jo Ann Desjarlais and Sister Barbara Ann Offerman, 10 – Beverly Belgarde, 12 – Scarlett Winters, 13 – Sister Mary Victor Kercher, 17 – Patty Allery and Kathy Dixon, 21 – Paula Dumont, 22 – Verna Jeanotte and Ruth Keethers, 25 – Denise Leinenbach, 26 – Sara Manis, 29 – Gary Pope



**Pray for deceased Oblates  
and relatives of  
sisters and Oblates:**

**Judy Osman, sister of Oblate  
Richard Huggins**

**Oblate Lauretta Verkamp**

**Derrin McCabe, son of Oblate  
Carolyn Kohler**

**Hettie Dauby, mother of Sisters  
Agnes Marie and Rosemary Dauby**



SISTERS  
OF ST. BENEDICT  
FERDINAND, INDIANA

*Seek. Pray. Share.*

*Oblates*

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