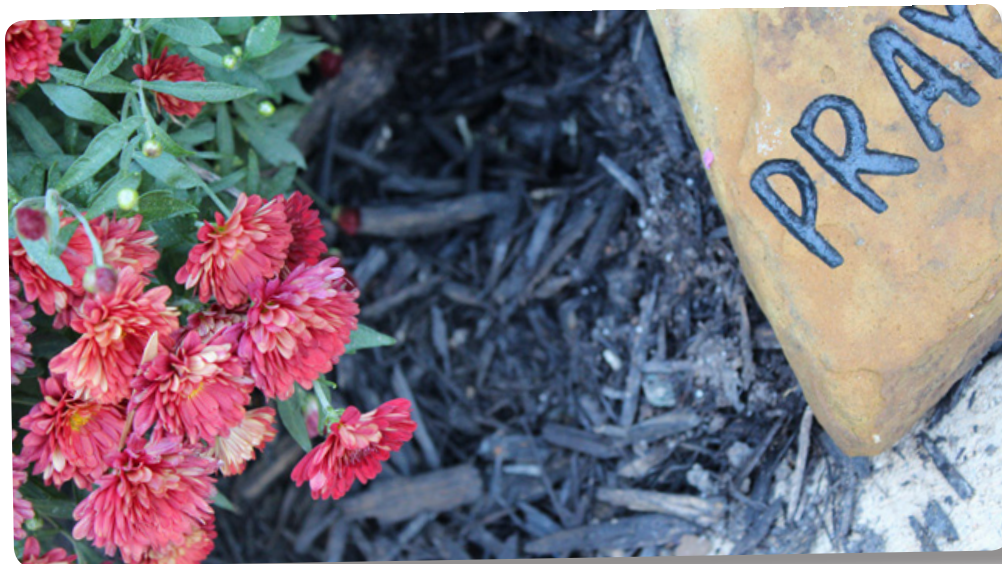


July 2012



## Royal Psalms

By Sister Michelle Mohr



In his book, "Praying the Psalms," Walter Bruggemann poses two considerations when we pray the psalms. The first consideration is: What do we find in the psalms that is already there, and the second is: What do we bring to the psalms out of our own lives.

The royal psalms, our topic today, are categorized according to their subject matter of kingship. Specifically the royal psalms deal with the spiritual role of kings in the worship of God.

### The Royal Psalms

Psalms 2, Psalm 18, Psalm 20, Psalm 21, Psalm 45, Psalm 72, Psalm 101, Psalm 110, Psalm 132, Psalm 144

Each of these psalms makes explicit references to the subject, the king. Although it is possible that other psalms which do not mention the king directly, may have been written for royalty, e. g. Psalm 22, they are not labeled royal psalms.

In the book of Samuel we have the account of the people going to Samuel and demanding him to appoint a king to rule over them. Samuel was getting older and was handing the power of the Judge over to his sons. However, the sons did not follow in the ways of their father but "turned aside after gain; they took bribes and perverted justice." (I Samuel 8:3) After much prayer from Samuel's lips and much grumbling from the people, God told Samuel: "Listen to their voice and set a king over them." (I Samuel 8:22)

Continued on page 2.

*First of all, every time you begin a good work, you must pray to God most earnestly to bring it to perfection.... 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 4, 41

## A recipe for success

"Begin with a prayer, live and work in God's presence, His grace will strengthen you, and God will be glorified in all things."



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Who were these kings? Some are more familiar to us than others because of the Old Testament readings at Liturgy. Some kings were good, some bad, and some labeled the worst by historians. Saul was anointed by Samuel as the first king of Israel. The successor to Saul was David of whom we know from various Bible stories. King David created a strong, unified monarchy, defeating enemies and creating secure boundaries for the people. The follower to David's reign as king was Solomon, known for his great gift of wisdom. Solomon's rule was noted as a period of peace and prosperity. Roboam, Solomon's son, taxed the people heavily and created impossible burdens for the people. Some people rebelled and the country was split into two kingdoms.

The adage, "God's ways are not our ways," certainly holds true in the case of kingship in Israel. The people desired someone who could protect their nation, keep them safe and prosperous. They wanted to be like other nations while God seemed to be choosing and anointing someone who would be God's representative, a leader and model in living the covenant.

The royal psalms bring before our attention the image of Israel's king, the image of a ruler chosen and blessed by God, on whose behalf they pray for peace, and who knows himself to be strengthened by the divine promises. In these psalms we read how the people regarded the kingship as being a religious vocation and responsibility. Being the elected of God, the king enjoys the special favour of God, and is to give a tangible shape to and realize the union of God with God's people.

### Psalm 2, vs. 1-3

Why are the nations in an uproar; why do peoples murmur in vain? The rulers of the land plot rebellion; against God and the Anointed One they say:

"Let us free ourselves from their yoke; let us break the cords that bind us." Enthroned in heaven, God is laughing and derides their evil plans, then God speaks to them in anger, with words that fill them with terror: "I myself have anointed my king on Zion, my holy mountain."



### Psalm 72, vs. 1-3, 12-19

O God, endow the King with your judgment, the royal son with your saving justice, to govern your people with fairness, and bring justice to the poor.

May the mountains yield peace for the people, and the hills bring forth justice. The poor will be saved from distress, and the needy who are helpless. There will be compassion for the weak, protection for the lives of the poor. The oppressed will be saved from the violence, for their blood is precious.

Long life to your anointed one, to whom gold from Sheba is given, in whose name will be unceasing prayer, and blessings invoked at all times.

May grain be abundant in the land, waving on the tops of the hills, crops rich and fruitful, as in Lebanon. May those who live in the cities, flourish like grass on the earth.

May the anointed one reign forever, and endure as long as the sun. May all people be blest in that name, and all nations proclaim these blessings.

O God of Israel, may you be blest; you alone do wondrous things. Blest forever be your glorious Name! Let your glory fill the earth! Amen. Amen.

The royal psalms have preserved for us the highlights of the religious and national experience of Israel, bringing us songs in which a strong faith is alive in God's presence among the people in the figure of the king. The liturgical aspect of these songs is concerned with the Israelite king as he reigned on earth. One who is praised and extolled on the day of his accession to the throne, on the day of his wedding feast, and on the day of his going forth to battle.

### Psalm 45

My heart overflows with noble words; to the king I address my song; my tongue is ready like the pen of a scribe.

You surpass others in beauty; your words are endowed with grace; you are blessed by God forever.

Great warrior, in majesty and glory, ride forth with your sword and conquer, for the cause of justice and truth. God chose you from among your companions and anointed you with the oil of gladness; your robes are fragrant with aloes and myrrh.

In ivory palaces, stringed music brings you joy; royal daughters are attendants in your court. On your right stands the queen in gold of Ophir. Clothed in splendor, she is led to the king, with maiden companions in her train.

They follow with joy and exultation as she enters the royal palace.

However, the rest of the story indicates that the royalty of Israel fell in ruins. The kings proved faithless to their mission as representatives of God by taking to themselves the powers



that belonged to God who had endowed the kings. They forgot their call and were not mindful of their mission.

As I pondered the various authors regarding psalmody, together with various Old Testament passages viewing the desire of the people for a king, as well as their joy and elation at the presence and the actions of the king, I was aware of my own feelings and attitudes about our national leaders of today. I get excited and hopeful when I see a candidate who has the welfare of all the people in mind, a person who radiates hope, justice, and peace. However, our leaders are human and also are affected by greed, power, and egocentric motives.

We have reflected on the psalms from the standpoint of what they are and what they contain. Do these majestic psalms have a place in the life of Christians today? What about the consideration placed before us by Bruggeman who asks: "What do we bring to the psalms out of our own lives?" He suggests that what we bring to the Psalter in order to pray is a candid openness to the extremities in our own lives and in the lives of our companions. This stance recognizes the depths of despair and death as well as the utter joy and sheer gift of all of life. In praying the psalms we say the words but we need to let our minds and hearts grasp a deeper meaning. It is important to spend quiet time, alone time with the psalms letting the Spirit open these words with new meaning and understanding.

### **Psalm 20**

May God hear you in the day of trouble. May the name of Jacob's God protect you, may God send you help from the sanctuary and give you support from Zion.

May God remember all your offerings and look with favor upon your sacrifice. May God fulfill your heart's desire and give success to all your plans.

May we shout for joy at your victory and triumph in the name of our God. May the Most High answer your prayers. Now, O God, I know for certain that you come to the aid of your anointed, that you answer from your holy heaven, with saving deeds of your right hand.

Some trust in chariots or horses, but our trust is in your Name. They will collapse and fall down but we shall rise and stand firm.

Send your saving help, O God; give answer when we call.

### **Psalm 144, vs. 1-2**

Blessed be God, my rock, who prepares me for battle, who trains my hands for war.

God, you are my strength, my fortress, my stronghold and



my refuge, my shield in whom I trust; you put nations under my power.

### **Psalm 21**

Your power, God, rejoices your anointed one, who is glad because of your salvation, whose heart's desires you have granted, whose prayer you did not refuse.

Whom you met with the blessings of good things, on whose head you set a crown of pure gold, who asked you for life and received it, length of days forever and ever.

Whose honor is great with your saving help, with the majesty and splendor you bestowed, with blessings that will last forever, and gladness with the joy of your presence.

Those who trust in you will never be shaken, because of your loving kindness, O God. Your hand will reach all your enemies, your right hand will find those who hate you. Like an oven of fire, at your appearing, they will be consumed by your wrath. Their ostentatiousness on earth will disappear; their malicious plans will never succeed.

In your strength, O God, be exalted; we shall sing and praise your power.

Perhaps, our call is to continue praying these psalms for our leaders while reminding ourselves that God is our true and faithful leader. God is the one we are to follow unreservedly and praise wholeheartedly.

The more we pray the psalms the more we discover nuances that touch us personally. The royal psalms indicate the call of the king to be a sign of God's presence among the people as well as showing us attributes of a ruler and the relationship with the people. We, too, are called to be God's presence among the people. We have been anointed through Baptism and Confirmation so too it can be said of us in the words of Psalm 45, "God chose you and anointed you with the oil of gladness."

Psalm 72 invites us to act with fairness, justice and peace. We are to save those in distress, help the needy, have compassion for the weak and save the oppressed from violence. Furthermore, we are to honor all as precious.

Today we have reflected on various aspects of the royal psalms. I believe that studying any aspect of a psalm or group of psalms broadens our knowledge and understanding of all the psalmody. I encourage each of us to pray with the psalms or parts of a psalm letting your imagination and the inspiration of the Spirit to walk with you and to guide you.

*"Praying the Psalms," Walter Brueggemann, Copyright 1982 by Saint Mary's Press, Terrace Heights, Winona, Minnesota 55987, pg 27.*

# Wisdom Literature / Wisdom Psalms

By Sister Mary Victor Kercher



In our study of the psalms we have found prayers of praise, thanksgiving, lament, and royalty in relation to one's relationship to God and others, in dealing with the ups and downs and in-betweens of life.

We surely want to be known as people of wisdom. Wisdom is a gift each one of us wants to have, to develop. We can say that wisdom is the art of learning about how to be a person who is successful in life, the search for meaning in life, and the mastery of life as we know it from experience and faith. It includes exploring the unknown and problems of life... sickness, suffering, and death, to discern the inner qualities and relationships, to have insight, and good sense in resolving problems. Today we want to talk about this gift and what the psalms teach us about Wisdom.

Wisdom literature in the Bible is not exclusive to the Psalms. The Book of Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs (Solomon), the Book of Wisdom, the Book of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), as well as the Psalms are included in the category of Wisdom Literature in Scripture.

In the Book of Proverbs Chapter 9, v.1ff., we read "Wisdom has built her house..." The chapter continues with the invitation to enter and eat at her table and describes two types of persons who may respond. Chapter six of the Book of Wisdom strongly encourages us: "the desire for Wisdom leads up to a kingdom... honor wisdom that you may reign forever."



(Ch.6 v 20f)

Wisdom literature in the Bible came from a movement among the Oriental people in order to gather, preserve and express in concise language the results of human experience as a way to understand and solve the problems of life. The wisdom literature was rather a matter of good judgment and practical reflection of good conduct in affairs of life and behavior in life. Those who cultivated wisdom were known as sages or learned wise men, skilled in government, served as counselors to rulers, and instructors to the people. They reflected on the human experiences and guided the people to understand and resolve basic problems and preserve unity and peace and good will. The result of this reflection was wisdom, as knowledge of the real values in life. These formularies or teachings from oral traditions made their way into the Old Testament as Wisdom literature.

In Israel the movement toward Wisdom was identified with God's will and His purpose for mankind.

The people of Israel identified wisdom with God's Law. They equated wisdom with the Law, which for them was the embodiment of God's will. Just a word about "LAW." The Hebrew word "Torah" is used to designate law. It means "instruction." Law and legalism do not have the similar connotations

in the Old Testament. Law was not to be taken as a burden, but rather a cause for rejoicing. Law is not just a code to be obeyed, and love was to

be its fulfillment.

Law was not to constrict, but to liberate.

In the psalms, law has a wide meaning. It includes all of God's revelation, or God's word. A restricted sense of law is found in the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. These books, called the Pentateuch, are also known as the "Law" or "Torah."

Wisdom Psalms are included in the category Didactic psalms, or teaching psalms. These psalms often use the term law in some aspect of the teaching concerning the relationship of the creature to the Creator.

Law (knowing God's will) is not a burden, love is the fulfillment of the law (God's will). Wisdom concerns itself with the problems of life, origin, destiny, search for happiness, suffering, of good and evil conduct, death, and the state after death.

Wisdom psalms also address the thorny problem of retribution. The psalmists did not enjoy the full insights of the New Testament revelation. However, they did teach that the good are rewarded and the wicked punished. However, often the just suffered while the evil prospered. Their response to this problem was the assurance that God would intervene at some time and ultimately evil would be punished.

We can say that the Wisdom psalms deal with life's mysteries, teaching the congregation about itself and God. To name some of the wisdom psalms, I signal out Psalms 1, 32, 34, 37, 49, 73, 91, 112, 119, 127, 128, 133, 139, 150. The following psalms were printed on the handout. The comments that follow are just a beginning of wisdom reflected in





life and behavior and the rewards for the faithful.

Psalm 1 — Two ways of living. True happiness.

“Happy the wise person, who takes delight in God’s law...like a tree planted beside flowing water.”

“Not so the wicked...like winnowed chaff...no room among those who are just.”

N.B. Psalm 1 is a good introduction. It outlines the good and evil choices possible and the consequences of each. The remaining psalms remind us of challenges, successes, setbacks, advances, the present and our need to rely on God, His mercy, His forgiveness, the rewards of fidelity and good works, and God’s loving presence in good and not so good experiences in life. A note on Psalm 150 comes later.

Psalm 32 — The joy of being forgiven. We have our faults, our sins. Happy those who admit their offense, for sin is blotted out. The blessedness of being forgiven. God says, “I will show you the way, I will keep my eye on you... Don’t be without reason, don’t be like the horse or mule.”

Psalm 49 — The vanity of worldly riches. Wealth cannot save anyone from death, for the good there is hope for blessedness after death. Don’t envy the unjust rich who die and leave their wealth. God will save the just.

Psalm 91 — Security under God’s

protection. Declare your trust in the Lord: He will free you from the snare of the hunter, from pestilence, shelter you like a nesting bird, protect you as a shield. No harm will come to you. That is just a few, gentle ways that God will protect you.

God reminds us, “You are bound to me in love so I will save you, protect you, when you call I will answer.”

Psalm 112 — The blessings of the just. A special list of the affirmations praising the virtue of the God-fearing, just person. Could we say that the just person acts as God acts? Note that “generosity” is included in praising the just. Generosity in the original Hebrew means “Justice” and later acquired the meaning of “liberality, alms-giving.”

Psalm 128 — The happy home of the just. A Song celebrating the blessings of family life. Count the blessings of one who fears God and follows the way of the Lord.

Psalm 133 — The blessings of unity. How good it is when people dwell as one, in unity. Just as incense, a sweet fragrance, pleases us, so God is pleased when God’s people gather in unity.

Psalm 150 — A final song of praise. We begin in Psalm 1 with a description of the two types of people. The closing psalm is one grand hymn of praise and thanks for the wonder of God and His attention to mankind through the ups and downs and in-betweens of our life

here and the rewards of those who are faithful and generous in our love of God’s will, God’s law.

**A SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDY.** Check out the other psalms, especially Psalm 119. It is the longest psalm. Psalm 119 is made up of 22 sections. Each section has 8 verses, making a total of 176 verses. The psalm is one of praise of God’s law. The psalmist uses eight synonyms: law, statutes, commands, ordinances, decrees, precepts, word and promise. Keep in mind that LAW is not always to be taken as a burden, but rather as a reason to rejoice. Law was understood as God’s will. Love is the fulfillment of God’s will, God’s love. Wisdom builds a house and leads to a kingdom.



### Pray for the deceased relatives of Sisters and Oblates:

**Sister Martha Marie Tempel**

**Betty Becker**, mother of Sister Jane Becker

**Clarence Rexing**, father of Sister Rose Mary Rexing

**Magdalen Weinzapfel**, mother of Sister Agnes Weinzapfel

**Katie Dewig**, sister of Sister Marilyn Market

**Vici Trapp**, daughter of Oblate Phyllis Claycamp

**Gertrude Dippel**, mother of Sister Jennifer Dippel (deceased) and Oblate Jackie Richards and mother-in-law of Oblate David Richards

**Linda Dimon**, daughter of Oblate Pat Dimon

# Calendar of Oblate Meetings

August 2012 – May 2013

The Sisters of St. Benedict welcome Oblates, Oblate Candidates, and Inquirers (individuals with interest in membership in the Oblate community).

Oblate meetings are scheduled for 1 p.m. Eastern time in St. Gertrude Hall.

Morning Prayer — 10 a.m.

Mass — 10:30 a.m.

Meal — after Mass in the monastery dining room

*Reservations for the meal are made to the Oblate office by Tuesday before the Oblate meeting.*

## August 19, 2012

Oblates all together for fun, food, and friendship. Special time — 11:45 a.m. Eastern (See reservation sheet.)

## September 23, 2012

Reception of Oblate Candidates 1 p.m. Eastern

Presentation: Liturgy of the Hours, the History, the Why for celebrating the Liturgy of the Hours, the Development of the Liturgy of the Hours.

Presentations will be made by Sister Anita Louise and members of the liturgy team.

## October 21, 2012

Oblation Day — Ritual for Oblation and renewal of Oblation during Sunday morning prayer with the sisters.

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

**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

Oblate Meeting — 1 p.m. Eastern

N.B. The meeting is an opportunity to welcome the new Oblates. The new Oblates and as many Oblates as possible will be part of a special Oblate community project. During the May meeting of the Oblate Advisory Board the project was discussed. Before moving ahead the Advisory Board determined that all Oblates be aware of the project. During the meeting details of the project will be explained. Your ideas and wisdom will be helpful in helping the project move forward as a benefit for the Oblate Community of the Sisters of St. Benedict, Ferdinand, Indiana.

## November/December 2012

Opportunities for Oblate volunteer service with the sisters during monastery events are available. An occasion to get to know the sisters and share in some of the ministries of the Benedictine Sisters in Ferdinand, Indiana.

## January 20, 2013

The Liturgy of the Hours: Monastic Practice / Roman Practice.

## February 17, 2013

The History of the Liturgy of the Hours of the Sisters of St. Benedict, Ferdinand, Indiana

## March 17, 2013

Retreat for Oblate Community — 1–4 p.m. TBA

## April 21 2013

The Liturgy of the Hours in daily life, Part I

## May 19, 2013

The Liturgy of the Hours in the life of the Oblate, Part II

# Oblate Birthdays

## August

1—Paulette Campana, 4—Sister Kathy Bilskie, 5—Olivia Adler, 9—Craig Howerton, 10—Evelyn Berube, 14—Valerie Scott, 18—Dolores Webber, 19—Mary Agnes Willegal, 20—Mary Etta Kiefer, 21—Judy Luebbehusen, 23—Carolyn Kohler, 27—Theresa Walker, 29—Pauletta Adler Jeter



## September

2—Lee Garrity, 6—Barbara Nonte, 8—Christy Dumont, 9—June Goforth and Brenda Padgett, 12—Victor Begle, 15—Gloria Hasler, 18—Jane Ann Breen, 25—Shirley Azure and Sheila Walker, 26—Mary Metz, 30—Gary Adler

## October

1—Mary Thale and Sharon Bittner, 5—Martha Hester and Rose Wilkie, 7—Jerome Schmitt, 11—Derrick Dixon, Clarice Kroll, Katherine Tennis, and Donella Vondrak, 19—Rev. Gerald McCarthy, 22—Madeline Keplin, 23—Frank Keller, 31—Adelaide Trapp



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

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



# Monastery Moments and Oblate Offerings

July 28

**Missioning of Religious Community Members** During a ritual for the religious community only, sisters will participate in a ceremony of prayer and blessing for themselves and their various ministries.

August 1

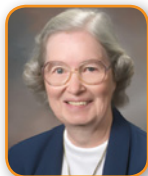
**Meeting of Oblate Advisory Board**  
6:45 p.m., Room 200 South Tower.

August 4

**Golden Jubilee Celebration** Four sisters will celebrate their Jubilee: Sisters Mary Louise Uebelhor, Christine Marie Fendel, Norma Fultz, and Patricia Ann McGuire.



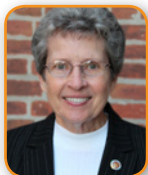
Sister Mary Louise



Sister Norma



Sister Patricia Ann



Sister Christine Marie

August 19

**Oblate Picnic** Oblates, candidates, and inquirers are invited to the annual gathering in St. Gertrude Hall. Picnic-style meal begins shortly after the regular monastery Sunday Mass. Meat and drinks provided by the sisters. All other participants bring a salad, vegetable, or dessert to serve 12 people. Reservations required.

August 27

**10th Dome Classic Golf Tournament**  
The golf event allows women and men to come and enjoy themselves while

raising money for the monastery. For more information, contact Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz and the Mission Advancement Office.

September 8

**Women of the Rule Banquet** Donors who are members of Women of the Rule celebrate at their annual banquet and award funding to some of the sisters' projects.

September 16

**Hildegard Dinner** This dinner honors members of the St. Hildegard Society who have named the sisters in their wills, life insurance policies, or other estate planning.

September 23

**Oblate Meeting and Reception of Oblate Candidates** There will be a brief Rite of Reception for those people requesting to become Oblate Candidates for 2012-2013. After this ritual, Sisters Michelle Mohr and Anita Louise Lowe will offer the first of this year's series about the Liturgy of the Hours. Their topic is *Liturgy of the Hours: Why, History, Development*. Morning prayer in the monastery church is at 10 a.m. (ET) with Mass at 10:30 a.m. The meeting begins at 1 p.m.

Reservations required for all or part of the activities.

October 17-21

**A Benedictine Conversation** Benedictine women leaders discern possible responses to our call for authenticity in monastic practices.

October 21

**Rite of Oblation and Renewal of Oblation** Oblate Candidates will profess their Oblation during Morning Prayer in the monastery church. All other Oblates will renew their profession. Prayer will be at 9:45 a.m. Mass is at 10:30 a.m. with

dinner to follow. There will be a meeting at 1 p.m. to share and plan for the future. Don't miss the opportunity to contribute to the growth of the Oblate program. Reservations required.

October 27

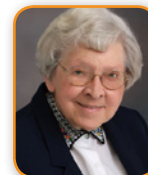
**Sacred Music Concert** Join the sisters for this annual celebration of sacred music at 7:30 p.m. in the monastery church. No fee. Donations accepted.

October 28

**Diamond Jubilee Celebration** Several sisters will celebrate the anniversary of their monastic profession. This celebration is for the religious community only.

70 years – Sister Mary Alice Schnur, Sister Mary Kenneth Scheessele, Sister Johnette Finis, Sister Sylvia Gehlhausen

60 years – Sister Maura Beckman, Sister Vera Kloeck, Sister Mary Benet Goodrum, Sister Mary Roman Dall, Sister Mary Claude Croteau



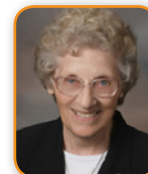
Sister Mary Alice



Sister Mary Kenneth



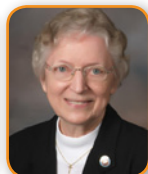
Sister Johnette



Sister Sylvia



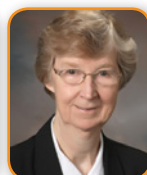
Sister Maura



Sister Vera



Sister Mary Benet



Sister Mary Roman



Sister Mary Claude

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## Around the Summer Social



**Pictured: Oblates seen and unseen made the Summer Social a success.**

### **Thank you!**

Thanks to all the Oblates who shared their gifts and talents in any way toward the THEME BASKET BOOTH for the Social. We received many compliments on the quality and attractiveness of the baskets. God's blessings on all who participated.

—Sister Jolinda Naas