



# Oblates

Newsletter for Oblates of the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana  
July 2015

## On the Spirit of Silence for Oblates

### *Restraint of Speech*

Teaching by Sister Karen Joseph  
Oblate Meeting, May 17, 2015

*Silence is the great teacher, and to learn its lessons you must pay attention to it. There is no substitute for the creative inspiration, knowledge, and stability that come from knowing how to contact your core of inner silence. The great Sufi poet Rumi wrote, "Only let the moving waters calm down, and the sun and moon will be reflected on the surface of your being" — Deepak Chopra*

There are some evenings when our small pond is very still and the moon and the pines reflect perfectly and beautifully on its surface. Such reflection is only possible when the pond is perfectly still. The monastic environment is intended to provide us with the same calming and quieting atmosphere, a time of rejuvenation of the spirit.

### *Be still and know that I am God.*

Benedict gives us clear reasons for practicing silence:

1. To avoid falling into sin
2. Because of the importance of the spirit of silence
  - "Out of esteem for silence"
  - "So important is silence"
3. As an expression of docility to and reverence for God
  - "Speaking and teaching are the teacher's task; the disciple is to be silent and to listen.. (... to the Word of God and the prioress)"

Other than Chapter 6, Benedict has a trilogy on the question of monastic silence in the "Instruments of Good Work":

Vs. 51 To guard one's tongue against evil and

depraved speech

Vs. 52 Not to love much talking

Vs. 53 Not to speak useless words or words that move to laughter

Vs. 51 Corresponds to Chapter 6, "On the Spirit of Silence"

Vs. 52 Epitomizes the 9th degree of humility

Vs. 53 Suggests the 11th degree of humility

While vs. 51 and chapter 6 stress the evil tendencies of the human tongue, vs. 52 and the 9th degree of humility encourage the monastic to talk as little as possible. Verse 53 and the 11th degree of humility obligate the monastic to clothe her speech with qualities reflecting seriousness and gravity of purpose.

Let's take a brief look at each of St. Benedict's reasons for silence.

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Pictured above: (Left) Oblates Judy Luebbehusen, Linda Begle, Vic Begle, and Charlie Luebbehusen visit with presenter, Sister Karen Joseph, at the May 2015 Oblate meeting. (Right) Candidate Jim Goepfrich and Inquirer Shirley Demeuth enjoy the afternoon.

## To Avoid Sin

*“In much speaking you will not avoid sin” (Proverbs 10:19; RB 6:4) and “the tongue holds the key to life and death” (Prov. 18:21; RB 6:5)*

St. Benedict here shows clearly his understanding of our weak human nature. In too much needless chatter, you will not avoid sin! Surely, it is my experience.... is it not yours as well?

St. Benedict emphasizes the psychological and emotional control a monastic possesses who is in full mastery of her tongue. And in control of the emotions, she in turn exercises control over the deepest part of herself, the deeper inner sanctum of the soul. Control of the tongue is truly the key to personal emotional stability (maturity). Have you ever noticed how much calmer, how much more “together,” less fragmented, you feel on renewal days or retreat days? Control of the tongue is the key to personal emotional stability.

St. Benedict also expresses silence to be an effective guardian of peace of soul whenever the monastic has to endure hard and contrary things, even injuries and injustices in obeying superiors or other community members, by encouraging us to hold fast to patience with a silent mind (4th step of humility) at these times.

“Is there anyone here who yearns for life and desires to see good days? If you hear this and your answer is ‘I do,’ God then directs these words to you: “If you desire true and eternal life, keep your tongue free from vicious talk and your lips from all deceit; turn away from evil and do good; let peace be your quest and aim.” (RB Prologue, vss15-17)

And, of course, we all know Benedict’s strong feelings regarding “murmuring,” referred to at least 14 times in the R.B. Often we combat evil thoughts most effectively if we absolutely refuse to allow them to be expressed in words. Judgment can be curbed and smothered by never allowing them the right to be uttered. In the letter of James, we read “The one who holds her tongue in check controls mind and body.” (Jas.3:2 ff) {Holding one’s Tongue=Monastic Instinct to be cultivated.} (Also cf. Psalm 50:20 - 21; James 4:11-12; Eph. 4:29)

Benedict does not teach total silence, that is, the absence of all speech, as he has us encouraging each other gently in



Inquirer Stephanie Smith, Daphanie Hoppes, guest, and Oblate Paulette Campana smile for the camera.

the mornings to be sure that we are all up and ready for the Opus Dei. But his caution is around perhaps the loudness or disruptiveness to the spirit of silence as well as the quality of our conversation. It should not be mean spirited. I noticed an interesting footnote in the RB 1980 when I was preparing this reflection. In verse 8 of Chapter 6, Benedict says, “We absolutely condemn in all places any vulgarity and gossip and talk leading to laughter, and we do not permit a disciple to engage in words of that kind.” The Latin words for the word “absolutely” are “aeterna clausura.” The image in Latin then is that of enclosure. “The mouth is like the door of an inner cloister.” (RB 1980, p. 191) St. Benedict wants the door closed to certain kinds of speech. The Master develops the image more elaborately, allowing for degrees of enclosure.

## The Value of the Spirit of Silence

A second reason given by St. Benedict in Chapter 6 for the practice of silence is the importance of the “spirit of silence.” “Since the spirit of silence is so important permission to speak should rarely be granted.” St. Benedict distinguishes between silence (that is, refraining from speaking) and the “spirit of silence.” Silence itself must be so strictly practiced, the tongue must be so drastically curtailed in its function because, otherwise, it is not possible to have a “spirit of silence.” The one is therefore the means to the other; silence creates a spirit of silence; silentium begets taciturnitas. This taciturnitas is so important in a monastery that permission to speak should rarely be granted even to perfect disciples, even though it be for “good, holy, edifying conversation.”

Taciturnitas is the atmosphere of quiet, the tranquility and stillness of order, peace, and harmony within the walls of the monastic dwelling. Taciturnitas is not silence but the “spirit of silence,” the atmosphere of Benedictine serenity and joyous peace. Silence is the absence of speech; the spirit of silence is obtained when the spatial areas of the Benedictine home are



Oblates Kathy Knust and Mary Tabor pause before Midday Prayer begins.

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bathed in an atmosphere free of all useless noise, confusion, and discordant sounds.

While including freedom or absence of the negative elements of noise and chatter and loud sounds, taciturnitas is a very positive quality of the monastic surroundings, that spirit which disposes a monastery building for true monastic life within its walls. It enables monastics to apply themselves to the pursuit of their goals, purity of heart and pure prayer, in an environment suitable for their attainment. Taciturnitas creates a spirit so that monastics within the monastery may find it desirable, possible, and even easy to “seek God truly” in their work and prayers. It provides the opportunity for the uninterrupted and undistracted quest of God. Taciturnitas is the breath of God’s presence.

Taciturnitas, in a word, is monastic serenity.

Once a monastic understands the nature and necessity of taciturnitas, she will understand also the eleventh degree of humility. For taciturnitas regulates not merely the amount of speech but its manner as well: “When the monastic speaks, she should do so gently and without laughter, humbly and seriously, in few and sensible words, and that she be not noisy in her speech.” It is written, “a wise person is known by the fewness of her words” (RB 7, the 11th degree of humility). The true monastic is she who when she speaks does so gently, with a delicacy respecting God’s presence and the feelings of those around her, humbly, sensibly, and with as few words as possible.”

(Read more on our web site: [www.thedome.org/oblates](http://www.thedome.org/oblates).)

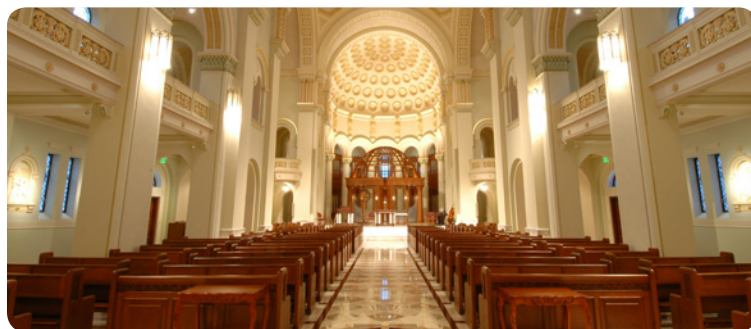
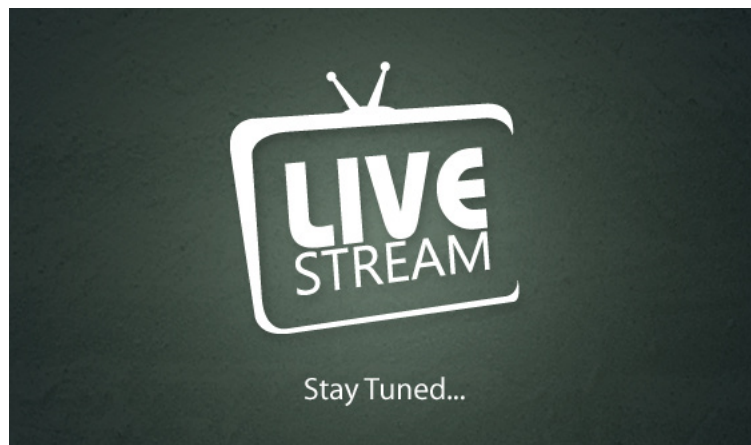
## Corpus Christi Procession

As part of their 175th celebration, St. Ferdinand Parish held a Corpus Christi procession after Mass on June 6. Several Oblates and sisters participated.



## Just Another Reminder

We are planning to have live streaming up and going well by September 19, our next official meeting.



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

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

You can also download a liturgy schedule from the Oblate page: [thedome.org/oblates](http://thedome.org/oblates)

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

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

# You are cordially invited to the Annual Oblate Gathering: Picnic Style

Please mark your calendars for our upcoming picnic! This is an opportune time to have some fun and visit with Oblates and sisters. Hope to see you there!

Monastery Immaculate Conception • Ferdinand, Indiana 47532

## Sunday, August 16, 2015

In the air-conditioned St. Gertrude Hall  
Lunch begins at 11:45 a.m. (ET)

*You may attend Sunday Mass with the sisters at 10:30 a.m.*



Scenes from last year's picnic

*If your last name begins with:*

- A-H** Bring a cold salad.
- I-O** Bring a hot vegetable in a covered dish.
- P-W** Bring a dessert.

*Meat, bread, beverages, and table service provided by the sisters.*

Register using the online reservation, if possible: **[www.thedome.org/oblates](http://www.thedome.org/oblates)**

Email: [bengleman@thedome.org](mailto:bengleman@thedome.org)

Phone: 812-367-1411, ext. 2827



## Oblate Advisory Board

I want to thank our Advisory Board for the time and energy they have shared in the past and now in the present. We have formal meetings four times a year; of course, we communicate at other times. All of them serve on committees and volunteer here at the monastery and also in their own parish and local communities. They are deeply spiritual people and excellent examples to me personally. Actually, I don't believe that I could be an effective Oblate director without their help.

We also have our faithful facilitator, Mel Schroeder, who patiently tries to keep us "on track" at our meetings. Sometimes that is a challenging task! HA!

—Sister Brenda



Oblate Advisory Board: (Back row) Kathy Knust, Theresa Bauer, Lynn Belli and Dave Richards (Front row) Sister Brenda Engleman and Mary Eileen Fritz. Not shown: Jackie Richards

## Oblate Volunteers for the Monastery

An extremely important part of being an Oblate is doing service work. Many of you already involve yourselves in so many parish and church-related ministries. Yet, you still find time to volunteer here at the monastery. We certainly understand that those of you who live at a distance cannot help as much as you may want. Just know that we appreciate your prayer support as well. Thank you so much.



## Monastery Event Hall

**Ferdinand, Indiana**

Host your event on the grounds of the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana.

- Round table seating available for up to 400 guests at the Monastery Event Hall (former Marian Heights Gymnasium).
- Rental fee of \$395 includes full day rental and decorating time the day before your event.
- Contact Laura Reckelhoff at 812-367-1411 ext. 2635 or [reckelhoff@thedome.org](mailto:reckelhoff@thedome.org) to reserve, schedule a visit, or for more information.





## Getting To Know the Oblates

# The Best Years of My Life: Phyllis Claycamp

Told by Phyllis Claycamp; Written by Sister Brenda Engleman

When I first asked Phyllis if she would be willing to share some of her life story, she immediately answered, "I don't have much to say. I have just lived an ordinary life." I tried to convince her otherwise. She finally said yes.

The next day she called and asked me to listen to what she wrote. Actually, I was moved to tears when she told me her heartfelt message. She did indeed have a beautiful story to tell.

Phyllis was born on a farm in central Illinois 87 years ago. She raised three girls and one boy. In 1960, she converted to Catholicism and attended Mass regularly. Along the way, she studied nursing and worked at St. Joseph Hospital in Bloomington, Illinois. Later she served at Old State Hospital and St. Mary's Hospital in Evansville. And guess what? She worked as a security guard for twelve years. She commented to me, "One of the first days on my new job I was having target practice. One of the guys commented that he didn't think this old lady could hit the broad side of a barn. Well, I showed him." I laughed out loud. Apparently, she became an expert markswoman.

However, the "best years of her life" began when she started visiting us sisters on "the hill," especially her son's first grade teacher, Sister Mary Roman. She loved Sister Mary Roman. In 1976, Phyllis met Sister Anna Gramelspacher, who invited her to become an Oblate; as it turned out, she was Sister Anna's first Oblate. Phyllis said that she was so elated and proud to be able to be so close to the sisters. She traveled up here to the monastery quite often to visit with Sister Anna; they spent time talking and praying together in Madonna Hall.

As Phyllis continued to visit our monastery, she felt the Holy Spirit calling her to do something more to help out the sisters. Eventually, she talked with Sister

Dolores Folz and began volunteering in our infirmary (now Hildegard Health Center). She helped the sisters with their personal needs, took them for walks to church and outside. In addition to volunteering in activities, she assisted in the gift shop and at the switchboard. She loved the sisters and they loved her.

Today, Phyllis can't always get up here to Ferdinand, but, thank goodness, she has her computer. She is able to participate daily in Morning Prayer, Mass, Midday Prayer and Evening Prayer. By the way, Charlee, her old pup and good friend, also prays every day with her. Phyllis is looking forward to the time when she can attend Oblate meetings via live streaming.

As I close this story, I want to quote Phyllis' concluding comments:

"Getting to know the sisters over the last years has been the best years of my life. I enjoy experiencing the quiet, peace, and love of the monastery. You all are angels and saints, for sure. I keep listening and asking God to use me as He wants. Surely there's more that I can do. I want to do my best every day and live and praise God. I thank God for leading



Phyllis Claycamp and the late Sister Mary Charlotte Kavanaugh pause for a picture in Hildegard Health Center.

me here to the sisters and helping me become an Oblate."

I am glad that Phyllis agreed to share her inspiring story.

## Visit For Heaven's Sake gift shop

Ferdinand Benedictine Oblates receive

**10% off  
your entire order!**

*Be sure to let the clerk know you are one of our Oblates!*



# Monastery Moments and Oblate Offerings

August 15, 2015

**Mary: A Gift to Many** will be held in Kordes Center from 9:30- 11:30 (ET)  
Presenter: Sister Traci Stutz

August 16, 2015 (Sunday)

**Oblate Picnic** Morning Prayer at 10 a.m. (ET) followed by Mass at 10:30 a.m.

Picnic will be held from 11:45 a.m.–3 p.m. in St. Gertrude Hall.

September 11–18, 2015

**Directed Retreat** will be held in Kordes Center from Friday, September 11, at 7:30 p.m. to Friday, September 18, at 10 a.m. (ET)

*Participants will have the opportunity to meet with a spiritual director as they prefer.*

September 19, 2015 (Saturday)

**Rite of Reception of Oblate Candidates** will be held in St. Gertrude Hall at 1 p.m. (ET) followed by a meeting on Chapter 7, Part 1 "Humility." Presenter: Sister Helen Jean Kormelink

October 18, 2015 (Sunday)

**Rite of Oblation** will be held in the

monastery church at 9:45 a.m. followed by dinner in the monastery dining room. Will have a meeting on Chapter 7, Part 2 "Humility" at 1 p.m. (ET) in St. Gertrude Hall. Presenter: Sister Helen Jean Kormelink

November and December

Service opportunities in the monastery for the Oblates

September 23, 2015

**Annulment in the Catholic Church: Dispel the Myths, Journey toward Healing** Will be held in Kordes Center from 7-9 p.m. (ET) Presenter: Sister Celeste Boda

October 30–31, 2015

**Introduction to Dreams** will be held in Kordes Center from Friday, 7:30 p.m., to Saturday, 4 p.m. (ET) Presenter: Theresa O'Bryan

November 6–7, 2015

**Using Spiritual Practices to Improve Health, Healing and Wholeness** will be held in Kordes Center from Friday, 7:30 p.m., to Saturday, 4 p.m. (ET) Presenter: Ruth Stanley



In memoriam

**Sister Brenda Englert**

**Judy Schuch**, Oblate Vic Begle's sister

For the sick

I recently contacted Jean Siebelts, who is Judy Powers' close friend. Jean reports that Judy is working hard at recovering her strength and independence before she has her next surgery. She certainly appreciates everyone's prayers and support.

Certainly Judy's days get long and tiring for her. I would invite anyone who can to send her a card and let her know you are thinking about her.

Her address is:

**Judy Powers**

Rosewood Care Center of St. Louis County  
11278 Schuetz Road  
St. Louis, MO 63146-4957

Oblate Joann Rubeck recently spent 18 days in the hospital dealing with pneumonia and MRSA. She is now at home, but she counts on your continued prayers. At this time, she is not up to having visitors, but she would love to receive cards.

Her address is:

**Joann Rubeck**

6493 Holtcamp Rd.  
Metropolis, IL 62960

Thank you,  
Sister Brenda

## Oblate Birthdays

August

1—Paulette Campana, 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—Therese 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, 17—Ruth Goepfrich, 25—Shirley Azure, 26—Mary Metz, 30—Gary Adler

October

1—Sharon Bittner and Mary Thale, 5—Martha Hester and Rose Wilkie, 7—Jerome Schmitt, 11—Derrick Dixon, 11—Katherine Tennis and Donella Vondrak, 13—Arleta Weyer, 19—Rev. Gerald McCarthy, 22—Frank William Keller and Madeline Keplin, 1—Adelaide Trapp





## *Oblates*

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

*If you desire true and eternal life, keep your tongue free from vicious talk  
and your lips from all deceit; turn away from evil and do good; let peace be  
your quest and aim.*

—Rule of St. Benedict Prologue, verses 15–15

## 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. Spread the good news among your friends, relatives, and members of your church. Talk with those you think would be fine Oblates and invite them to read this newsletter.

We always welcome those who may want to learn more about the Oblates to contact Sister Brenda Engleman at any time. Contact information can be found on page 3 of this newsletter.

