

October 2013



Sister Anita Louise Lowe gave her presentation "An Overview of Benedict and Scholastica," at the September Oblate meeting.

An Overview of Benedict and Scholastica

By Sister Anita Louise Lowe

Benedict and Scholastica

Before we begin to study the Rule of Benedict, it is important to look at the person of Benedict — who he was and the culture in which he lived. With this knowledge in hand, we will be better equipped to understand the Rule and to interpret it for our own time and circumstances. Much of this information I learned during an intensive study of the Rule of Benedict with Sister Aquinata Böckmann. Sister Aquinata is considered a world renowned scholar on the Rule of Benedict, and many of us attending the two month program thought that we were sitting at the feet of the master, listening to years of study and scholarship. In addition, we'll look at some of the stories as found in the Dialogues of Gregory the Great.

Earthing Benedict and Scholastica

Benedict was born in the year 480 in the town of Norcia, north of Rome, and he died at Monte Cassino, located south of Rome, in 547. At the time of Benedict's birth, the Roman Empire was in a period of decline, a decline that started about 100 years earlier with the invasion of the Goths into Italy. Rome was attacked in the year 410 by the Vandals who came from the South, and the city was sacked in 455. Rome was sacked three times during Benedict's lifetime. A period of peace occurred from 493 to 526 under the occupation of the Ostrogoths. However, in 527, Justinian, the emperor of Byzanz (the eastern capital of the Roman Empire — later known as Constantinople) wanted Rome back for the East. War broke out in the year 535 and continued through 553, six years after Benedict's death.

This knowledge alone helps us understand the desire expressed in the Rule for peace, good order, and structure. Benedict sought peace, not just within oneself, but

But 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.

—Rule of St. Benedict
Prologue, v. 49



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within the community and for the world. This history also helps us in dealing with instances in which Benedict uses “war” vocabulary and talks about life as a battle. These images would have been particularly poignant for the monks of Benedict’s day.

Because of the war and political unrest, Benedict’s monasteries were poor, and the monks often had to work in the fields. This affected how they lived and prayed. In a time of war there was also a need to receive the sick, the poor, and the pilgrim. Travel was perilous, and wars brought pestilence, destruction, and devastation.

Looking at the time of Benedict we notice that there is a stringent stratification of society with little movement between the classes. There were nine classes of people in Italy at this time: the miserable, those who are starving; the poor, who have to work hard with their hands in order to earn what is necessary for living; the slaves; the serfs, those who are in bondage, bound to the earth; the farmers, who were despised by the upper classes; the plebes; craftsmen; those who worked a trade; and the aristocracy, who owned the land. Given this social structure, Benedict’s call for there to be no mark of distinction between members in the monastery was revolutionary.

The language of Rome in the first century Common Era was both Latin and Greek. With the fall of the Roman Empire, the Greek language was lost. This meant that much of classic literature could only be read in translation. Benedict studied in Rome and would have learned classical Latin and probably copied the books of Augustine. Jerome’s translation of the Bible from Greek into Latin (the Vulgate) was introduced gradually into Rome during this time. Benedict would have studied three primary areas: Grammar, Rhetoric, and Law. These were the topics necessary for an aristocrat to obtain good administrative positions. Corporal punishment was a standard part of the educational system. So, we should not be surprised to see its continued use in Benedict’s Rule.

Though Benedict fled Rome, he did value education and stressed the need for his monks to read and study. Benedict studied law, Roman law. It’s helpful for us, as Americans who have inherited a British sense of law, to realize the differences between these two systems. Roman or Italian laws can seem contradictory. A law is seen as a developing ideal, not an end



This depiction of St. Benedict’s last visit with St. Scholastica was painted by Sister Gregory Ems, OSB. It hangs in the monastery’s Benedictine Parlor.

product. The Italians are flexible in their giving of laws. Laws are ideals to be striven for and always have exceptions.

The people of Benedict’s day calculated time differently than we do today. Every day — from sunrise to sunset — was composed of 12 hours. And every night was composed of 12 hours. These hours were of equal length; however, the season of the year affected how long an hour actually was. During the summer when the day is long, the hours were longer — perhaps 75 minutes. In the winter, the days are shorter, and, therefore, the hours were shorter — probably about 45 minutes. The relationship of the people to time was quite relaxed. A few days

may mean a couple of months. So, when Benedict calls for the monks to rise shortly after midnight that may mean two hours after midnight. The important task in the monastery was the giving of the signal. The whole day operated according to the bell. One person was in charge of making sure that all happened as it needed to happen.

It’s also helpful to look at what housing conditions were at the time. Most villas had one entrance into a courtyard. From there, one entered the various rooms. The bed was used not just for sleeping but also for reclining at table and for working. The bed often was for more than one person. There were probably three refectories — or dining areas: one for summer, one for winter, and one for spring and fall. Most houses had a garden surrounding them and then a wall or hedge surrounding the garden. This not only kept animals out of the garden but provided protection during a time of war. The stables were located within the walls, but the fields were located outside the walls. In Benedict’s Rule we’ll find his desire to have everything that is necessary located within the walls of the monastery, and in the dormitory, there are individual beds with regulations about what may and may not be kept there.

The Gospels may tell us not to worry about what we are to eat, what we are to drink, and what we are to wear, but we all know how much these three areas consume our daily lives. So, what were the common attitudes toward food, drink, and clothing? The monks in the desert tradition only ate raw foods. They considered cooking to be decadent. They ate herbs, roots, fruit, and dry bread. They only ate the food they could grow, and they had fears that drinking alcohol

would cause the “sexual juices” to rise in the body. Benedict’s monks probably ate “pulmentum.” This is a one dish meal in which everything was cooked in the same pot and had no specific taste. Benedict was an Italian, and that meant two things: he drank wine and he loved bread. Wine and water are staple drinks of an Italian meal, and Italians can’t imagine a meal without bread. There was no stipulation about how much water a monk could drink, but Benedict does limit the amount of wine per day to a “hemina.” While we really don’t know how much that is, Sister Aquinata told us that probably it is the equivalent of 1/3 of a liter—about 11 ounces.

Only the rich in Benedict’s time would have eaten the meat of four-footed animals. Therefore, Benedict reserves this for the very sick. The poor ate chicken and fish. At the time these were seen as equal in creation — one was lifted above the earth into the sky and the other was placed in the sea. Fruits and fresh vegetables were served when they were available. So, the meals Benedict called for in the monastery were simple yet healthy. They were accommodating to various needs and yet bore the mark of discretion.

The common clothing of men at this time was the Roman tunic. It was girded so as not to fall. And, they didn’t wear any type of underwear on a daily basis — only when traveling. Therefore, we can understand that the admonition Benedict gives that the tunic not be too short and also that the young boys not run (when the tunic might fly up) — was about modesty. Benedict was also very practical in that he allows for two tunics so that one could be worn while the other was washed. Monks prior to Benedict only had one tunic which they never washed but simply wore until it fell apart. The tunics were made of wool as sheep were plentiful. Silk and linen would be worn only by the rich as they are luxuries. The monks’ clothing probably was of various colors depending on the color of the sheep’s wool. That helps us understand Benedict’s call not to worry about the color of clothing. Again, Benedict called for simplicity and modesty and did not go into too much detail.

Speaking of modesty, we need to look at attitudes toward the body and see how those influenced Benedict. The Roman baths were both public and common and were considered to be the center of social life. There were not separate baths for men and women. Therefore the early Christians avoided the baths except for the purposes of cleanliness and health. Jerome and Augustine both spoke strongly against Christians



This painting of St. Benedict, by Sister Gregory Ems, hangs in the hallway outside of the monastic dining room.

going to the baths because they were seen as a place of decadence and sexual immorality. Benedict was prudent and disciplined. He allowed baths for the sick and said that the young and strong need the bath less frequently. He also called for the monks to sleep lightly clothed, with a light on, in individual beds, and with elders mixed in with the young. His prohibition against laughter is actually against sexual jokes or laughter against others. Sister Aquinata told us that this is not a prohibition of laughter from the heart but of laughter that is aggressive.

In our attempts to situate Benedict and Scholastica in their time and locale we have considered the political situation, the society and cultural standards, and some of the native customs found in Italy. We now turn to what was happening in the church and in monastic life at the time.

In the church we find that there were still pagan cults practicing in the area until the 6th century. The Christian priests were not highly educated. Popular piety and pilgrimages were important to the people from the fifth to the seventh centuries. Liturgical feasts were just beginning to develop. Regarding forgiveness of sin — light sins were forgiven by the praying of the Our Father. Heavy sins, however, required a person to go to the bishop, publicly confess, and endure public penance. Only then was absolution given. Penance included excommunication — distancing oneself from the community and gradually being brought back into it. The profession of public penance could only happen once in a lifetime, and often the time of penance looked like religious life. An option instead of public penance was to make a vow of conversion, a vow to live a simple and frugal life, either in the midst of one’s family or in a religious community. Or, the penitent could enter a monastery. Priests were not allowed to make public penance nor to take a vow. Their only option was to enter a monastery. This might be why Benedict was not too keen to admit priests to his monasteries...

The Church had 13 popes during Benedict’s lifetime, and two heresies shook the church during this time: Arianism — which avowed that Christ was not of the same essence as God; and Semipelagianism — which did not give enough weight to grace over works. Cassian — one of Benedict’s primary sources — was condemned by the Council of Orange for one text which appeared to weigh works over grace. Benedict, therefore, uses Cassian but does not refer to him by name. And his text, “the good in you comes from God,” opposes any

Semipelagian views. Benedict avoids these heresies by firmly rooting himself and the Rule in the Holy Scriptures. The Psalms, Wisdom literature, and Gospels form the main source for the Rule. Scriptural quotes are not ornamental but provide the skeletal framework for the entire rule.

Monks were viewed as dangerous persons in the time of Benedict. Remember, many of them were in the monastery as part of their public penance for serious sins. Monks were seen as violent persons, and most were uneducated. Many were able to own land and riches, were easily influenced by others, and often wandered from one monastery to another. Benedict, therefore, wrote his rule for those who are stable, the cenobites, and who hold all things in common. Negligent monks were to be corrected. Benedict wrote for a community of sinners and was very down-to-earth. Our task is to uncover the negative qualities of the monks and the remedy provided. Then, we have to consider what the negative qualities of our day are, and what remedy Benedict would provide. In this way the Rule, like the Gospels, becomes a guide for our way of life.

Dialogues of Gregory the Great

Now that we have looked at the situation of life at the time of Benedict, let's turn to the only source — other than the Rule itself — to learn about the life of Benedict and Scholastica: The Dialogues of Gregory the Great. The Dialogues are presumed to be written by Pope St. Gregory the Great in the 6th century. By the 8th century, they were renowned throughout Christendom. However, later Renaissance and Reformation critics challenged the authorship. Today, the controversy continues. However, it is this document that gives us the Life of St. Benedict and includes the story of St. Scholastica.

Gregory, born in 540, became prefect of Rome at the age of 30. He later abandoned his political career and transformed his father's palace on Mount Celio into the Monastery of St. Andrew. Here he became the abbot and led a life of prayer and asceticism. He greatly admired Benedict of Norcia. Gregory was then made a deacon by Pope Benedict I and then became papal nuncio for Pope Pelagius II. After this, he returned to the monastic life before being elected pope himself in 590. He served as pope from 590 to 604. The Dialogues, written in 593 or 594, served several purposes: honoring the memory of the saints of Italy, providing comfort and



This painting of St. Scholastica, by Sister Gregory Ems, hangs in the entrance area of the monastery.

encouragement to the people, confirming God's unfailing protection of the people, and strengthening the people's faith in life after death.

The Dialogues are composed of four books. The first three contain short reports about diverse personalities and the fourth one has a sole theme of death and life after death. Book Two, however, is dedicated solely to one person: Benedict of Norcia. The dialogue was a familiar and popular literary form of the time that allowed stories to vary in length by having a person ask questions of another. Rather than presenting the life of Benedict in chronological order, the Dialogue speaks of Benedict's life according to the question posed.

In the first section of Book Two of Gregory's Dialogues we are introduced to St. Benedict and hear testimonies about his life. We learn about his retreat to the cave in Subiaco and the later construction of 12 monasteries. We hear of the miracles performed by Benedict as well as incidents which led to his departure from that place. The second half of the book treats of Benedict's time in Monte Cassino, including his last miracle.

A number of themes run through the Dialogues. One of these is that of the great temptations: vainglory or pride, the flesh, and rage and hatred. Through the stories of Benedict's struggles with these temptations and his eventual victory over the passions, others were drawn to a life of virtue and conversion. Benedict was brought to another struggle, the second set of themes: the manifestation of the Evil One. Through the stories told about this theme we learn that evil comes in all forms and is at every turn of the road. We, like Benedict, need to be vigilant at all times.

A third theme concerns the prophecies of Benedict. He was able to foretell future events or to describe what someone did in his absence. A fourth theme concerns the miracles performed by St. Benedict. These occur mainly through his fervent prayer. A couple of miracles occur through his own power. And the most famous of the miracles (at least for Benedictine women) is the miracle that took place at the prayer of St. Scholastica. The various miracle stories show us Benedict as a miracle worker who received all from God and who called upon God in fervent prayer. The miracle of the rain either was a moment of God refusing Benedict's prayer or of granting Scholastica's request because of her great love. This story is the only mention we have of Scholastica. Though some have doubted her existence, other scholars

have stated that her mention in the Dialogues and, especially, in a story that shows Benedict in a less-than-favorable light can be taken as enough evidence to prove her existence.

The fifth theme in the Dialogues concerns the visions of Benedict, including the vision of Scholastica's soul ascending to heaven. The most famous of the visions is that in the following chapter in which Benedict sees the world gathered before his eyes into a single ray of light.

The dialogues end with a call to read Benedict's Rule. Gregory says that one can best discover the person of St. Benedict from his Rule, "for his life could not have differed from his teaching."

Some general conclusions that we can draw from the Dialogues include the following:

- a. miracles are signs of God's revelation, of God's working through a person, but miracles are subordinated to virtue,
- b. Benedict is a model of asceticism and of victory over the passions,
- c. the ascetical life doesn't destroy a person; rather it restores the person to his or her true self, and
- d. the journey into solitude doesn't end with oneself but radiates throughout the world

Conclusion

In conclusion, here are the details of the life of Benedict as we can determine them from the Dialogues.

1. Benedict was born in Norcia in 480. Monks lived in the area as hermits who came together for prayer and evangelization. The area has been called the "valley of the monks."
2. Benedict went to Rome to study. He lived in Trestevora. A small cell in the church of San Benedetto is believed to be where he studied and slept.
3. Benedict abandoned his studies and fled to Affile where he lived in solitude within a Christian community. He was admired by the people there which led him to flee for

more solitude.

4. Benedict moved to Sacro Speco in Subiaco. Here in the cave he desired to be unknown by all. After he overcame some of his own temptations, he was able to become a spiritual leader. Eventually, his holiness became known and many came to him for guidance.
5. He next went to the Pastores, the shepherd's grotto, where he received guests and taught them.
6. The monks of Vicovaro asked Benedict to be their abbot. He went, but they didn't like his discipline and tried to poison him. He returned to Subiaco.
7. The first community of Benedictines is found in San Clemente at Villa Nero. Excavations here have found a stove and bench dating from the 6th century. It was from this place that Benedict founded 12 monasteries.
8. Benedict next went to an oratory in what is now called Santa Scholastica. Here a jealous priest tried to kill him, so he moved one final time.
9. Benedict moves to Monte Cassino in 529. The height of the mountain could offer protection to refugees. It was here that he wrote the Rule and that he died in 547.

This background into the life and times of Benedict and Scholastica is important to consider before studying the actual text of the Rule. As Sister Aquinata encouraged us, we need not be afraid to dive into the time of Benedict in order to see what his intention might have been. She said to us: "Keep rubbing the text and breathing on the ashes. Feel free to translate into our times but not on a superficial or literal level." So, as we continue our study of the Rule, may we do so with some insight into the culture and society in which Benedict lived and was formed. May we remember the stories and the themes and see how they can continue to instruct us in our day and in our individual circumstances. The Rule has been a guiding influence for over 1500 years. With careful study and consideration it can become a guiding influence for each of us today, no matter our individual life circumstances.

Change in Oblate Leadership

Sister Barbara Lynn has appointed Sister Brenda Engleman to join Sister Barbara Ann Offerman on the Oblate Leadership Team. Sister Brenda brings many gifts and much experience as she embarks on her new position. (See the article on page 7 that Sister Brenda has written to tell you a bit about herself.)

We thank Sister Kathy Bilskie for her four years of service as a member of the Oblate Leadership Team. We wish her many blessings as she continues her position as administrator of our Hildegard Health Center and also care for her elderly mother.



Sister Kathy



Sister Brenda

Rite of Oblation

We congratulate Judy Powers, Joann Rubeck, Jean Siebelts, and Lynn Steiden, who made their Oblation on Sunday, October 20, 2013, in the monastery church. The Rite of Oblation was held during the sisters' Morning Prayer with Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz, prioress, as presider.

Judy Powers and Jean Siebelts are from St. Charles, Missouri. Joann Rubeck and Lynn Steiden are from Metropolis, Illinois.

Each of the new Oblates completed the year of study with focus on the Holy Rule of St. Benedict and how the values and principles of the Rule can be incorporated into their daily lives as Oblates. Each candidate had a sister companion for discussion and reflection. Sister Mary Claude Croteau accompanied Judy Powers and Jean Siebelts. Sister Agnes Marie Dauby accompanied Joann Rubeck, and Sister Kathy Huber accompanied Lynn Steiden.

After the Rite of Oblation, all Oblates present stood and renewed their Oblation. We congratulate all of them and extend our prayers and good wishes to our tried and true Oblates, and we heartily welcome our four new Oblates.



Top photo: Jean Siebelts, Judy Powers, Joann Rubeck and Lynn Steiden made their Oblation on Sunday, October 20, 2013. Above: All of the Oblates present renewed their Oblation.

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scrippro.com on your computer. The program has no cost for the sisters and your card comes activated for the full amount you requested or ordered. When ordering please indicate merchant, number of cards and denominations desired. We need to receive payment before delivery of cards. Contact Sister Rosa Lee Koch by email (rlkosb@thedome.org) or by phone (812-367-1411, ext. 2658).

Scenes from the August Oblate picnic



Oblates Patti Schroeder (left) and Ruth Goeprich are sharing some conversation while Mary Taber fills in answers on her game sheet at the August picnic.



Inquirers Jan Howard and Jeanne Hack, Oblate Mary Taber, and Sister Kim Mandelkow are enjoying a game at the August picnic.

Sister Brenda Engleman's story

I will share some of my life story with you, so that you can know me better as we journey together through this coming year. Because of the lack of space and time, I will simply lead you through some of the highlights of my life.

I was born in Loogootee, Indiana, and was the youngest of seven children — five boys and two girls. When I was five years old, my father moved us to O'Fallon, Illinois, where he was able to find a better job. My family was non-Catholic, and I grew up attending the Methodist Church. However, several of my close friends were Catholic. So when I was 16 years old, I took instructions from a local priest on my own and was baptized a few months later.

In the late 60s, I moved to Evansville, Indiana, after 14 years of public school education, including two years of college. Sister Mary Charlotte Kavanaugh helped me to get a teaching position at St. Theresa School. At the same time, my sister, Sister Mary Sheila, was principal at Sts. Peter and Paul School in Haubstadt, Indiana. Most of my social life revolved around the sisters. I treasured the times that I was with them. After much prayer and discernment, I decided to join the Ferdinand Benedictines at the end of my first year teaching. I figured if I couldn't fight them, I may as well join them. (Ha!)

Throughout my professional career in education I ministered primarily as a language arts teacher. I loved the students I worked with. Teaching was not just a job to me; I put my whole heart and soul into it. I reached out especially to those students who dealt with various problems in their lives. Eventually, I went back to school and became a school counselor. I then divided my time up teaching and counseling.

When I was in my early 50s, I was asked to be a principal; so I went back to school and secured a principal's license. I served as principal in three different schools. In this position, I worked with children, teachers, and parents alike. Honestly, I enjoyed these years, but they were challenging times also. I tend to be a sensitive, kind-hearted person who wants everyone to be happy. But, as principal, I had to do "the hard stuff" as well.

In addition to serving in the school environment, I worked as pastoral associate in three different parishes. Most recently, I was at St. Celestine and St. Raphael, Dubois, for four years. I have many fond memories of these years. I was heavily involved in every aspect of the two parishes, including visiting the elderly, sick, and dying. As I ministered to others, they, in turn, ministered to me.

I have failed to mention one aspect of my life. I am a musician. I have been singing songs from the Hit Parade since I could stand up and walk. My mother and father both encouraged my music. My father insisted that I take guitar

lessons and learn how to play the "right way." He also sang and played the guitar, but he couldn't read music. Today, I belong to Stillpoint, a group of sister musicians. We have made several CDs of our original music. We also have a flip side. As Monastery Combo, we play dance music, pop, classic country, and yes, a little Elvis and Beatles.

Today, I am living at the monastery full time. I spend my days in development calling donors and thanking them for their gifts to us. I also teach 8th grade religion, tutor, and work one day a month in the gift shop. And yes, I have the honor of serving on the Oblate Leadership Team with Sister Barbara Ann.

I look forward to our journey together. I am excited about getting to know everyone. You will soon learn that I am a people person. I tend to be upbeat and I have a sense of humor. Yet, I have had my ups and downs in life. My parents are both deceased. Of my six siblings, I have only one brother remaining. I miss all of them but I know that they are in heaven cheering me on. Besides, I have 156 Benedictine sisters who make up my family today. I am indeed very grateful to God for walking with me and bringing me to this day.



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Rite of Reception of Oblate Candidates

Oblate Inquirers Caroline Deutsch, Jennifer Kiefer, and Don Stanton took the second step toward becoming an Oblate when they were received as Oblate Candidates. The Rite of Reception of Oblate Candidates was held during Midday Prayer at the beginning of the Oblate meeting on Saturday, September 21, 2013, in St. Gertrude Hall. As Oblate Candidates, Caroline, Jennifer, and Don will pursue a year of study of the Rule of St. Benedict in preparation for Oblation in October 2014. The study focuses on how the values and principles of Benedictine spirituality can be incorporated into their lives as lay men and women.

Each candidate is companioned through the year of study by a professed Sister of St. Benedict. Sister Kathy Huber will companion Caroline Deutsch; Sister Jackie Kissel will companion Jennifer Kiefer; and Sister Helen Jean Kormelink will companion Don Stanton.



Earl Menchhofer and his wife, Pamela Smith, both Oblates, enjoy some refreshments after the September 21 meeting.



Caroline Deutsch, a new candidate, poses with her daughters, Catherine and Emma.



Don Stanton, a new candidate, poses with his wife, Ellen, who is an Oblate.



Jennifer Kiefer, a new candidate, is getting acquainted with her companion, Sister Jackie Kissel.

Oblate Birthdays

November

- 3 — Peg Albertson,
- 4 — Gloria Patnaude and Ellen Stanton,
- 6 — Phyllis Schmits,
- 8 — Marie Roberge,
- 10 — Bob Cadwallader,
- 18 — Denise Marcellais and Mel Schroeder,
- 22 — Lawrie Hamilton,
- 23 — Janet Ziliak,
- 26 — Joann Rubeck,
- 27 — Ruth Ihrig,
- 29 — Patricia Hopf



December

- 4 — Shirley L'Esperance,
- 13 — Lillian Keplin,
- 14 — Dolores Gourneau,
- 27 — Sharon Champagne,
- 28 — Jeanie Jollie

January

- 2 — Kathleen (Murphy) McTiernan,
- 6 — David Richards,
- 13 — Lynn Belli,
- 16 — John Kohl and Jackie Richards,
- 30 — Kathy Knust and Pamela Smith

Pray for the deceased Oblates, Sisters, and relatives:

Raymond Shidler, brother of Sister Elnora Shidler

Sister Michelle Willett

Richard Hester, husband of Oblate Martha Hester

Oblate Susan Roussin, from Belcourt, North Dakota

Mickie Thomas, sister of Sister Mary Alice Schnur

Oblates

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Monastery Moments and Oblate Offerings

November 2

Evening Prayer On this day to honor All Souls, prayer begins in the monastery church at 12 p.m. and concludes with services in the sisters' cemetery

November 16

Solemnity of St. Gertrude This Benedictine saint is the patron of the Federation of St. Gertrude, to which the monastery belongs. Sister Joella Kidwell is president of the Federation.

November 15–17

Christkindlmarkt The town of Ferdinand, including the monastery, celebrates Christkindlmarkt each year. Preparations begin several months prior to the event. All volunteers are welcome to work with the sisters during the preparations and the actual days of celebration.

Simply Divine Bakery at the monastery is already preparing for the November event. To help now or during the Christkindlmarkt weekend, contact Sister Jean Marie Ballard at 812-367-1411, ext. 2620.

The sisters will play hand bells during the opening ceremony Friday evening and at a concert on Sunday afternoon in the monastery church. To assist with set-up for any of the hand bell programs, contact Sister Rose Wildeman at 812-367-1411, ext. 2615.

Sister singers will perform on Sunday afternoon. To assist at the 3 p.m. concert, contact Sister Anita Louise Lowe at 812-367-1411, ext. 2640. Assistance is needed to sell CD's and distribute programs to the public.

If you are not sure where you can best help, please contact Sister Mary Philip Berger at 812-367-1411, ext. 3515.

December 9

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception Bishop Thompson will preside at the feast day liturgy.

December 17–23

Evening Prayer Join the sisters as they sing the "O Antiphons" during Evening Prayer at 5 p.m. (ET)

Christmas Eve

Eucharistic Liturgy will begin at 9:30 p.m. with Mass at 10 p.m. Refreshments are offered after Mass.

Join the sisters as ministers of hospitality before Mass or Eucharistic ministers during Mass. Many volunteers are needed. Contact the liturgy office, Sister Anita Louise, at 812-367-1411, ext. 2640

January 1

Announcement of Julilees On this special feast day, the religious community honors all sisters who will be celebrating a jubilee during 2014. The observance on this day is for religious community members only. The sisters who will be celebrating during the year are: Sister Anita Louise Lowe (25 years), Sisters Karlene Sensmeier, Jeannine Kavanaugh, Ida Otto, and Rebecca Abel (50 years), Sisters Marge Sasse and Brenda Englert (60 years) and Sisters Helen Maurer, Benita Biever and Dolorita Libs (75 years).



Sister Helen



Sister Benita



Sister Dolorita

Oblate Meetings in 2014

Saturday, January 18

2–4 p.m., The Prologue, Presenters: Sisters Rose Wildeman and Anita Louise Lowe

Saturday, February 15

2–4 p.m., The Prologue (continued), Presenters: Sisters Rose and Anita Louise

Sunday, March 16

1–3 p.m., Retreat, Presenter: Sister Karen Joseph

Saturday, April 26

2–4 p.m., Kinds of Monks, Presenters: Sisters Rose and Donna Marie Herr

Sunday, May 18

1–3 p.m., Qualities of the Abbot, Presenter: Sister Jeana Visel (chapters 2 and 64)



Sister Anita Louise



Sister Karlene



Sister Jeannine



Sister Ida



Sister Rebecca



Sister Marge



Sister Brenda



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Monastery Immaculate Conception
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Sisters of St. Benedict Spirituality Ministry

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

- **November 2, 2013** — Exploring the Well of Grief

Loss comes in many forms: the death of a loved one, life-threatening illness, separation of divorce, an accident, unemployment, and the list goes on. We'll explore the grief we are carrying and find a way to safely express it, ritualize it and integrate this universal experience in a way that is particularly our own.

- **November 9, 2013** — Enneagram

This workshop presents the essential components of the Enneagram, a personality theory naming the "9" different types of compulsions developed to cope with our reality as humans.

- **February 8, 2014** — A Transformed Life

Consider your spiritual journey of seeking God and its challenges and blessings of our journey. Examine your attitudes and motivations that affect the way you respond to life situations. There will be an opportunity for quiet time and sharing.

