



Oblates

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

Chapter Seven of the Holy Rule

Humility

In his Holy Rule, Benedict commands that we construct a ladder of humility. He says that the sides of the ladder are the body and the soul. The rungs of the ladder are the various steps or degrees of humility which Benedict encourages the monks to ascend. This is not an original thought with Benedict but is found in earlier writings on monastic life. However, Benedict's genius was to put the practice of humility in the context of community. In this summary, I have tried to make some adaptations to the life we live today.

For example, the First Step is translated—"Keep the fear of the Lord always before one's eyes." Modern translators have used the word "awe" to replace "fear". And Sister Joan Chittister goes even further, suggesting the wording, "Be ever mindful of the Lord."

In the Second and Third Steps, we are reminded not to love our own will but to submit to a superior in obedience. We don't all have religious superiors, but we all have people to whom we are accountable. Perhaps it is another family member, an employer or just the many laws, rules and regulations to which we are subject.

The Fourth Step is to persevere in this obedience. We are urged to be patient when the self-will gets in the way or when we are told to do something hard.

These first four steps address our interior disposition. Then having adjusted our attitude, we are given instructions about our exterior behavior.

Step Five tells us to confess our evil actions and even our evil thoughts. Step Six admonishes us to be content with the lowest, or least desirable place, task, or possession. Step

Teaching by Sister Helen Jean Kormelink
Oblate Meeting, September 19, 2015



Sister Helen Jean speaks to the Oblates about humility in the Rule of Saint Benedict.

Seven tells us to believe we are inferior to others. This step tells us to order our relationships; that is, let God be God, give others their due and put ourselves in last place.

Step Eight says to follow the common rule and example of superiors. It has been described as the "Go with the flow" step. Good advice if we have discerned that we are flowing in the right direction and with the right people.

Step Nine, Ten and Eleven further address outward behaviors. "Control our mouth" might be a simple way to summarize them. Be silent unless we are asked a question. Laugh appropriately. When we do speak, do so humbly.

Step Twelve combines the interior and exterior. The instruction is, "To be humble of heart and manifest it."

Benedict completes his exhortations on humility by saying that having ascended all these degrees of humility, we will arrive at that love of Christ which will cast out fear and that we will, then, naturally and by habit, be able to live by those precepts we have been taught.

The blessing I wish for you is that practicing these steps of humility may bring you to that high place at the top of the ladder where you may, in the words of Sister Joan Chittister, "humbly know that you are made for greatness; you are made for God."



Oblate Jeanne Zack, Sister Betty Drewes, and Oblate Marcia Stroud listen attentively to Sister Helen Jean's presentation.

Reflections on the Annual Oblate Picnic

Togetherness, Friendship and Fun

By Candidate Stephanie Smith

The typical heat and humidity of a mid-August day in Ferdinand was offset by the cooling breeze that blew across the happy picnickers. Even though the breeze came from the vents of air-conditioners in the assembly room of the Monastery Immaculate Conception, the atmosphere was representative of the beautiful expanse of the open grounds and lovely scenery. Sister Mary Lee's displays of sunflowers and zinnias adorned checkered tablecloths where we all sat eating and eating and eating from a buffet provided by the Oblates, their families, and the sisters. Don't forget the fresh-baked loaves of bread, courtesy of Sister Barbara Lynn, prioress.



Along with the food to refresh our bodies, the tone of togetherness, friendship, and fun was a refresher for the spirit. Much laughter was heard as we played games organized by Oblates Theresa Bauer and Lynn Belli. The lucky winners of the Holy Rule Bingo received a variety of prizes. We also enjoyed the creativity exhibited by our fellow Oblates, sisters and friends who, table by table, crafted a story of desert island survival using odd items that we each chose to bring. Although it will be a challenge for the 2016 picnic to surpass this year's event, I have no doubt that it will happen.

Above: Sister Geneva Stumler, Sister Shirley Ann Schultheis and Oblate Phyllis Claycamp are cherishing their time together.

Top Right: Oblates and guests are planning skits for the entire group in attendance.

Center Right: Oblate Lynn Belli is explaining her original "Holy Rule Bingo" game to the group.

Bottom Right: Oblates Theresa Bauer and Carolyn Kohler are giving the photographer one of their best smiles. Sister Mary Victor Kercher is in the background.



Continued on page 3.



Sister Jolinda Naas, Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz, prioress, and Oblate Bridget Tierney are waiting patiently to get their food.



L to R In the foreground, Oblate Ellen Stanton, Sister Linda Bittner and Candidate Shirley Demuth are enjoying sharing creative ideas.



Sister Maura Beckman and Oblate Mel Schroeder are taking a moment to chat.



Mary Bolk, guest, Candidate Stephanie Smith, Oblate Sharon Bittner and Sister Linda Bittner certainly are generous with their smiles.

Picnic Is Like a Large Family Reunion

By Oblate Don Stanton

The annual Oblate picnic is like a large family reunion. Oblates, Benedictine sisters and guests gather together with friends we haven't seen for months or even years. It is a special time to relax, to have fun and to enjoy a very tasty, homemade meal. In addition, we take time to pray and share the Scriptures with one another. I always look forward to the picnic every year.



Sister Mary Victor Kercher and Oblate Denise Leinenbach are spending quality time with one another.

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
Sister Brenda: 812-367-1411, ext. 2827

North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors

2015 Conference

NAABOD Conference Was Awesome Experience

By Oblate Kathy Knust



Oblate Kathy Knust paused to check her conference schedule for the day.

The North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors (NAABOD) 2015 Biennial Meeting and Conference, Nurturing Benedictine Spirituality from Theory to Practice, was an awesome experience. Approximately 70 Oblate Directors and Oblates representing approximately 40 different monasteries attended the conference. Among those attendees were Sister Brenda Engleman and Sister Karen Joseph from Monastery of the Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand along with Oblates Theresa Bauer and Kathy Knust.

We traveled to Jonesboro, Arkansas, the first day and spent the night with the sisters at Holy Angels Convent in their unique building in the shape of a Benedictine Cross. We experienced true Benedictine hospitality there.

We continued our journey to Subiaco, Arkansas, the next day where the conference was hosted by Father Mark Stengel and the monks, staff and Oblates of Subiaco Abbey. The conference had four keynote addresses presented by:

- Father Jerome Kodell, Subiaco Abbey, Subiaco, Arkansas –Writer, spiritual speaker and former Abbot
- Sister Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB, St. Scholastica Monastery, Fort Smith, Arkansas – Spiritual writer, speaker, retreat director

- Sister Karen Joseph, OSB, Monastery Immaculate Conception, Ferdinand, Indiana – Spiritual speaker and retreat director
- Dr. Jane Tomaine, Episcopal Priest, Mountainside, New Jersey, Spiritual writer and retreat director

During the conference we visited Mount Magazine (the highest point in Arkansas), St. Scholastica Monastery, Fort Smith, Arkansas, the POST Winery, and St. Mary's Church in Altus, Arkansas.

To be so immersed in Benedictine spirituality for a whole week was incredible. Praying the office and attending Mass daily with the monastics and Oblates was very inspiring. Food and banquets were also amazing.

One message from the conference is that the world is hungry for Benedictine spirituality. It was noted that there are now more Benedictine Oblates than Benedictine monastics. Our challenge will be working together to spread the message of Benedictine spirituality.



Oblate Kathy Knust, Oblate Theresa Bauer, Sister Karen Joseph, and Sister Brenda Engleman gathered for a picture in front of Subiaco Benedictine Abbey Church.

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Sister Karen Joseph posed for a picture with Sister Bonita Gacnik, the president of NAABOD.



Sister Brenda stopped for a photo opportunity overlooking the Ozark Mountains.



Oblate Theresa Bauer enjoyed playing the organ in the Abbey Church.

Sister Macrina Wiederkehr, Sister Karen Joseph and Dr. Jane Tomaine were 3 of the 4 presenters at the conference.



Speaker Encourages Us To: “Be Light, Be Salt, Be Fully Alive!”

By Oblate Theresa Bauer

When Sister Brenda presented the possibility of going to the NAABOD conference in Subiaco, AR, my hand bolted up—I definitely wanted to go. And what an experience it was! To be totally immersed in the Benedictine atmosphere turned out to be a fantastic week with fellow Oblates from everywhere.

The first leg of our journey west took us to an overnight stay with the Olivetan Benedictines of Holy Angels Convent in Jonesboro, Arkansas. The Benedictine hospitality was evident in their smiling faces as they showed us around their lovely building (built in the shape of a Benedictine cross!). They included us in their prayers and meals, and even introduced us to Mr. and Mrs. Peacock and their newly hatched chick in one of the courtyards.

The next day we traveled to Subiaco Monastery where the conference was held. The local Oblates were wonderful about showing everyone around between dorms and meeting rooms—and kept us well hydrated in the 106 degree heat. We met Oblates from all over the states. I was happy to meet one from a monastery in Idaho who knows one of

my college buddies who is now an Oblate of their monastery. Oblates is turning out to be a good way to track down long-lost friends.

The conference topic was about putting into daily practice what we learn from our study of the Holy Rule. There were four keynote speakers including Sister Karen Joseph. Just for the record, Sister Karen brought the house down with her presentation, “Be Light, Be Salt, Be Fully Alive!”

In addition to meetings and discussions, we toured various interesting places, including a wine-tasting at Post Winery and dinner at St. Scholastica Monastery in Fort Smith.

Very unexpectedly, I became the conference musician. No one else signed up for the ministry, so I played for morning and evening prayers and for the daily Mass—the best way I know how to pray. The big thrill was playing for Sunday Mass in the monastery church. They have a very nice pipe organ that was fun to play. Next time, however, I’ll be sure to take my organ shoes and some music along, just in case.

I hope every Oblate can take part in this Benedictine experience at least once. I, for one, came home fired up and excited to be part of this Benedictine Oblate life.



Bob Vaal, monastery technology director, happily prepares to set up the camera for live-streaming of the Oblate meeting.

Live Streaming Update

I sent the following message out on October 19th to all of the Oblates, but I am repeating it in this newsletter.

I want you to know that live streaming is now up and running. We successfully live-streamed our October 18th meeting and presentation. We are soooo happy and excited. I give the entire credit to our monastery technology person, Bob Vaal. Yes, we did indeed have some glitches during our last 3 meetings, but Bob kept investigating and never gave up. This seems like a dream come true.

Sister Helen Jean Kormelink gave two outstanding presentations on "Humility" – one on September 19th and one on October 18th. As soon as possible, these presentations will be placed on the Oblate website for those who would like to view them.

We are really trying to stay in contact with those of you

who are at a distance and/or unable to be here. Once more I am listing information and the steps to get into the oblatecam.

You cannot get into the oblate-cam until we connect it at our meeting. It is NOT like the churchcam.

- 1. You need to use Microsoft Windows-based computers to launch Internet Explorer web browser or Google Chrome. You cannot use Apple devices or i-pads at this time.**
- 2. Go to website <http://oblatecam.thedome.org>**
- 3. Once it loads it will launch Microsoft Media Player.**
- 4. Adjust the size and volume as you see fit.**

Good luck to all of you.

Sister Brenda



Oblate Mel Schroeder, technology assistant, carefully takes down the live-streaming equipment.

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**

Rite of Reception of Candidates and Transfer of Oblation



L to R: Candidates Shirley Demuth, Dianne Le Duc, Stephanie Smith, Arleta Weyer, Marcia Stroud and Jeanne Zack participate in the Rite of Reception of Candidates. Their companions are standing behind them.

Rite of Reception of Candidates

On Saturday, September 19, at 1:00, in St. Gertrude's Hall, we had the Rite of Reception for Candidates during Midday Prayer. Our prioress, Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz, led this ceremony. We are happy to announce that we received 6 women as candidates: Shirley Demuth, Dianne LeDuc, Stephanie Smith, Marcia Stroud, Arleta Weyer and Jeanne Zack. These candidates received a Benedictine medal, the Holy Rule of St. Benedict, the book, *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily*, by Sister Joan Chittister, and a study guide. The candidates will each have a sister companion who will journey with them during their year of study and formation. Shirley's companion is Sister Maura Beckman; Dianne's companion is Sister Jane Will; Stephanie's companion is Sister Linda Bittner and Arleta's companion is Sister Eileen Reckelhoff. Both Marcia and Jeanne have Sister Betty Drewes as their companion. Please remember these women, candidates and companions, in your prayers. Thank you.



Oblate Elaine Nolan transfers her Oblation from Our Lady of Grace to Monastery Immaculate Conception..

Welcome to Ferdinand

Elaine Nolan became an Oblate of the Monastery Immaculate Conception on Saturday, September 19. Elaine transferred her Oblation from Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove. We are pleased to have you join us, Elaine.



Above: Oblate Elaine Nolan proudly displays the certificate that signifies that she is an Oblate of Monastery Immaculate Conception.

Left: Sr. Barbara Lynn Schmitz, prioress, blesses Candidate Stephanie Smith. Sr. Brenda Engleman is on the right.

Four Candidates Make Their Final Oblation

October 18, 2015



Candidates listen as Sr. Barbara Lynn Schmitz, prioress, invites them to make their Oblation.
Front Row (L to R): Carol Dunn, Shirley France, James Goepfrich and Don Stanton
Back Row: Companions: Sister Jane Will, Sister Kathryn Huber, Sister Maura Beckman, Sister Helen Jean Kormelink

On October 18, 2015, Candidates Carol Dunn, Shirley France, Jim Goepfrich and Don Stanton made their Oblation in the Monastery Church during Morning Prayer. Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz, prioress, officiated at this ceremony.

The candidates spent a year studying the *Holy Rule* and the Benedictine way of life under the guidance of their companions. Carol's companion was Sister Jane Will; Shirley's companion was Sister Kathryn Huber. Jim's companion was Sister Maura Beckman; and Don's companion was Sister Helen Jean Kormelink.

After making their Oblation individually, they received a Benedictine pin and a framed certificate of Oblation. Sister Barbara Lynn accepted their Oblation and admitted them into spiritual union and affiliation with our Benedictine community here at Ferdinand, IN.



Carol Dunn signs her Oblation document.



Sister Helen Jean attaches an Oblate pin to Don Stanton's collar.



James Goepfrich receives his Oblation certificate from Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz and Sister Maura Beckman.

Left: Shirley France reads her Oblate promises while Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz and Sister Kathryn Huber prayerfully listen.

Oblate Meeting

October 18, 2015



New Oblate Shirley France and Ellen Stanton are getting better acquainted with one another.



Sister Jane Will visits with new Oblate Carol Dunn.

“

...After ascending all these steps of humility, we will quickly arrive at the perfect love of God which casts out fear.

—Rule of St. Benedict 7:67

”



Guests Stephen France, Sally and Mike Halas are cherishing their first visit to the monastery.



Oblates Mary Eileen Fritz and Paulette Campana are sharing stories with each other.

Getting To Know the Oblates

Jean Siebelts' Oblate Journey

by Jean Siebelts



Jean Siebelts

My Oblate journey began in September, 2011, 5 months after my husband died. My good friend, Judy Powers, walked with me during the final four weeks of my husband's life and was a great support to me. As it happened, Judy had been attending September retreats at Kordes in Ferdinand for many years. So she invited me to come with her this particular year to participate in a silent, directed retreat. I guess she thought it would be good for me. That was the first time that I had ever been to Ferdinand.

In one short week, I experienced the true power of God's love, compassion and beauty. Several sisters that I met lifted me up in a way that only they could. The sister who was the most instrumental in my journey and open to receiving and listening to the Holy Spirit was Sister Anna Marie Brosmer.

She took me under her wing that week and shared true Benedictine hospitality and friendship with me.

At the end of this week's retreat, Judy expressed her desire to be part of this community in some special way.

However, she did not know what she needed to do. Well, me being me, I asked questions and was directed to Sister Mary Victor who was the Oblate director at that time. After a delightful meeting with Sister, we both walked away knowing that we wanted to be Oblates.

We discerned for several months and were received as candidates the following September, in 2012. We began our yearlong study of St. Benedict's Holy Rule with Sister Mary Claude. Together, Judy and I made our Oblation in October, 2013.

When I say out loud that I am, in a small way, part of the sisters' lives, I get goose bumps. Working with this community and feeling as if I belong are gifts that just keep on giving to me.

With the help of many sisters, Judy and I were able to create a short retreat for women of our parish. So now we bring a group of parishioners over to Kordes for a silent retreat on an annual basis. It is wonderful to hear these

women share the joy and love they felt while being among the sisters of this community.

Finally, I thank God everyday for the new life and energy I have received from these faith-filled sisters. I also pray that I can continue to be a vital member of the Oblate community.



Oblate Mary Lou Bassler (right) and Sister Mary Beth Maier greet each other at a recent Oblate meeting.

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

November 6–7, 2015

Using Spiritual Practices to Improve Health, Healing, and Wholeness

will be held in Kordes Center from Friday, November 6, at 7:30 p.m. to Saturday, November 7 at 4 p.m. (ET) Presenter: Ruth Stanley

November 18–20, 2015

Christkindmarkt For service opportunities email Sister Mary Philip at mpberger@thedome.org or contact her at (812) 367-1411.

December 5, 2015

Revelations of Divine Love: Praying with Julian of Norwich will be held in Kordes Center from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (ET).

December 12, 2015

On Staying at Table: Being Faithful Amidst Life's Difficulties will be held in Kordes Center from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. (ET) Presenter: Sister Karen Joseph

January 4–6, 2016

Reading the Bible as Story will be held in St. Gertrude's Hall from 7 to 8:15 p.m. (ET) both evenings. Presenter: Father Eugene Hensell, OSB, from St. Meinrad Archabbey.

December and January

Service opportunities in the monastery for the Oblates

January 16, 2016

Introduction to Centering Prayer will be held in Kordes Center from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. (ET) Presenters will be Sister Kathy Bilski and Sister Celeste Boda. Centering prayer is a quiet, reflective prayer form, grounded on Christian Tradition.

January 17, 2016 (Sunday)

Chapter 72 of The Holy Rule "The Good Zeal of Monks" will be held in St. Gertrude's Hall from 1:00 -3:00 p.m. (ET) Presenter: Sister Betty Drewes

January 23, 2016 (Saturday)

Confirmation Retreat will be held in Kordes Center from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. (ET). Presenter: Sister Traci Stutz

February 20, 2016 (Saturday)

Day of Reflection will be held in St. Gertrude's Hall from 9:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (ET) Presenter: Father Eugene Hensell, OSB, from St. Meinrad Archabbey.

Rest in Peace, Katherine



Oblate Katherine Tennis passed away on September 17 at the age of

95 years. She had been an Oblate for 50 + years, first at St. Meinrad and then here at Ferdinand. After spending 5 of her early years studying as a Sister of St. Benedict, she left to return home in 1941. In 1945, she married Irvin Tennis and together they raised 11 children on a Holstein and grain farm in Wabash County, IL.

To say that Katherine was a dedicated, energetic lady is an understatement. In addition to spending time with her dear family, she was an avid gardener, seamstress, baker, cook and quilter. In her SPARE time, among other parish ministries, she played the church organ and directed the choir for over 40 years. She also shared her generous spirit in countless school and civic organizations.

Her favorite prayer was The Prayer of St. Francis, which she chose to live by each and every day of her life. Unfortunately, I never met Katherine, but I attended her funeral and heard her children and relatives praise her so lovingly. I feel certain that today she is enjoying that beautiful peace that she longed for in her life.

Sincerely, Sister Brenda



Oblate Birthdays

November

3—Peg Albertson, 4—Ellen Stanton, 6—Phyllis Schmits, 8—Marie Roberge, 10—Bob Cadwallader, 18—Mel Schroeder, 22—Lawrie Hamilton, 23—Janet Ziliak, 27—Ruth Ihrig, 29—Patricia Hopf

December

7—Elaine Nolan, 13—Lillian Keplin, 14—Dolores Gourneay, 20—Stephanie Smith, 26—Marcia Stroud, 28—Jeanie Jollie

January

2—Kathleen Murphy McTiernan, 6—David Richards, 13—Lynn M. Belli, 16—John Kohl and Jackie Richards, 26—Joann Rubeck, 30—Kathy Knust and Rev. Pamela Gale Smith

In Memoriam

Vic Begle's brother, Gene
Jim Goepfrich's brother, Steve

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.

Share the Joy of Being an Oblate of St. Benedict

We encourage all Oblates and Oblate candidates to share their joy of being an Oblate with others. Talk about your Oblate experiences with your friends, relatives and members of your church. Be on the lookout for persons that might be fine Oblates. Give Oblate brochures to interested persons or invite them to attend an Oblate meeting. We welcome those who want to learn more about the Oblates to contact Sister Brenda Engleman. Contact information can be found on page three of this newsletter.



Sister Maura Beckman, Oblate Carol Dunn, and Oblate Reverend Pamela Smith listen to Sister Helen Jean's presentation on Humility at a recent Oblate meeting.