

## Prayer According to the Holy Rule

Teaching by Sister Jane Will, OSB  
May 15, 2016

According to the Holy Rule of St. Benedict, our life calling and the central theme of the Rule is to seek God. God has planted this holy desire to seek God deep within each of us, and it preoccupies our hearts. We have been created by God, in His image and likeness, and we are made for God in eternal happiness.



Sister Jane Will, OSB

Our God is a personal God, who wants us to “seek and find” him in the daily. God wants to have a personal relationship with us and prayer is tending our relationship with God.

Benedict took great interest in prayer. There are more chapters and references in the Holy Rule of St. Benedict on prayer than any other topic. Benedict views prayer as A WAY OF LIFE. Monastic prayer is about being fully aware of the presence of God in all things.

Early on in the Prologue vs. 4 of the Holy Rule, we read, “First of all, every time you begin a good work, you must pray earnestly to God.” This signals the importance that Benedict places on prayer. So as we awaken to each new day, what is our first good work or prayer of the day? Is it, “Good morning, God!” or, “Good God, morning.” We have many “beginnings” throughout the day when we have a chance to seek and find God in all things.

In the Holy Rule, Benedict emphasized the importance of the Liturgy of the Hours, Lectio Divina and personal prayer. He considered these three essential to praying the Benedictine way.

Even though ideas about prayer are scattered throughout the Holy Rule, Benedict has clustered his descriptions of prayer basically in chapters eight to twenty (8-20). These chapters are full of details for the times of prayer, how many, which psalms and the order in which they are prayed at the Liturgy of the Hours. Benedict refers to the Liturgy of the Hours as the Work of God, the Opus Dei. In chapter 43.3, Benedict exhorts us, “Indeed, nothing is to be preferred to the Work of God.”

As you know our community does not follow the guidelines exactly due to current customs. You, as Oblates, live our Benedictine spirituality in keeping with your chosen way of life. You have many responsibilities, so your how, when and where of prayer will vary according to your individual circumstances.

Praying in your favorite chair with a cup of coffee in the morning is nice. Yet your prayer may be on your drive to work.

In Chapter 19, “How to Pray the Liturgy of the Hours” and Chapter 20, “Reverence at Prayer,” Benedict give us some very practical and special reminders. Seeking God is closely related to seeing and experiencing God in everyone, all events, and circumstances; that is, in all things. As it states in the Rule, Chapter 19.1, “We believe that God is present everywhere and that God sees us in everything.”

In the Holy Rule, Chapter 19.6-7, “Let us consider, then, how we ought to behave in the presence of God and his angels, and let us stand to sing the psalms in such a way that our minds are in harmony with our voices.” This refers not only to our communal prayer. It refers to any time we pray with others. It may be at Mass, prayer groups, prayer services at work, and with your family and friends.

Concerning our reverence at prayer, Chapter 20.1-2 states, “Whenever we *want to ask some favor of* a powerful person, we do it humbly and respectfully, for fear of presumption. How much more important, then, to lay our petitions before the Lord God of all things with the utmost humility and sincere devotion.” And he ends this chapter with something most of us like, “Prayer is to be short, and brief.”

The second important Benedictine way to pray is Lectio Divina. The Holy Rule Chapter 4.55 says, “Listen readily to holy reading.” Benedict refers to this as Lectio Divina. This is our holy reading of scripture or some other spiritual book. Lectio Divina is our slow, reflective reading, taking time to ponder, then asking ourselves what is this scripture saying to me and what is my response, my prayer. Finally in lectio we allow the Word to rest in us and we rest in the Word of God. (*See Sister Jane, p. 2*)



Maggie Self, Sister Jane Will and Oblate Carol Dunn are sharing about the importance of prayer in their lives.

## Prayer

by Oblate Sharon Bittner



Oblate Sharon Bittner visits with her cousin, Sister Linda Bittner.

When "Prayer" was the Oblate meeting topic, I found myself "catching" more of the meaning and blessing of my own conversation with God. Prayer for me is an ongoing weaving of listening to life and a pervasive sense of God in everything. There's my natural bent toward creativity with words and there's just resting in God who IS.

### Listening to Life:

A.S.A.P. Always say a prayer! J.U.M.P. Just unload my problems—(on God). Word plays, puns, double meanings and anagrams are some of the twists that get my attention during prayer. If they are meant to distract me, that plot is foiled because I believe God is A.A.T.—always already there—reaching through to me. So I "go with it." I attend, tend, and intend to "get it" by scanning, associating, connecting mental "pop-ups." Like slips of the tongue and typos, they may grab my funny bone, or just as likely unmask a denial or a motive.

Recently the image I have for raising my awareness is "the person at my elbow." Having a strong inclination toward tunnel vision, just looking at the person physically nearest me helps me see opportunities to give and receive blessings. Emotional closeness and distance also show me ones I need to remember to reach out to, to forgive, to encourage or to appreciate.

### God in Everything:

God is thrumming in my veins, closer to me than my own breath.

God's love for me and power in me are unimaginably amazing.

What is true for me is true for everyone!

All I carry—on my shoulders, my mind, my heart, in my hands can be given over to God's BIGGER shoulders, mind, heart, hands. Trust THAT and ask for guidance and courage to do my part. Many times I just need to get out of the way and watch God at work!

"It ain't over till it's over" ---and God always gets the last word. God is timeless. The Spirit has "been there, done that," for, with and in me---even as it is now being revealed a piece at a time. What is left to do? Rejoice! Rest!

## Prayer is not just something I do

by Oblate Elaine Nolan

Prayer is not just something I do. I consider it a gift from God. Like other people, I only want to turn to God in difficult moments of my life. As an Oblate, I was taught early that lectio strengthens my prayer and it continues to be a very important part of my life today. I thank God for the many blessings that he gives me each and every day.



Oblate Elaine Nolan

As a Catholic, I grew up never thinking about reading the Bible even though Scripture was read to me every day at school. Fortunately, I met an amazing friend who reads and studies the Bible daily. Not only did he encourage me to read it but also to take Bible study classes. At first, I was so lost. I did not understand a word that I read. But, after I surrendered myself to God and the Holy Spirit, a whole new world opened up in my life that I had never before experienced. Now when I read the Bible, I am amazed at all that I understand.

### Sister Jane Will on prayer in the Holy Rule

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A third important aspect to the Benedictine way to pray is our personal daily prayer. Our personal prayer can and does take many forms and includes many people and situations. The Holy Rule has a number of chapters where we pray for various members in many circumstances. We are to add a little extra prayer during Lent. We need to pray where we are when out working, to pray for travelers and those serving us, just to name a few of Benedict's suggestions.

Benedict knew the importance of prayer. He knew that we deepen our relationship and experience of God in prayer, and through prayer we are being transformed daily in our lives. He knew that our desire to SEEK God comes from our deepest self and responding to God in prayer is our life calling.

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

### Send comments to the Oblate Office

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# I Am Truly Blessed

By Candidate Dianne LeDuc



Candidate Dianne LeDuc

After working and struggling with another spiritual program for 33 years, one day I found myself in what I considered to be a spiritual desert. I wasn't growing and somewhere down deep inside I knew that I needed help. I said a half-hearted prayer asking God to hear me. I definitely did not have the concept that he was in me and with me and loved me. I then went on about my business and forgot that day. (Living in the Washington, D.C., metro area does not give you much time to think).

One day an anonymous person pinned a picture of the monastery on my Pinterest board. I had attended Marian Heights Academy 40 years ago as a young teenager. Due to a medical problem, I had to leave that year after the first semester. Actually, I never really had thought about Monastery Immaculate Conception or Sister Anna Marie or Sister Mary Charlotte or Sister Brenda, all of whom had been so significant in my life back then. That day I thought, "I wonder if they are still alive."

I called the monastery and left a message on Sr. Anna Marie's phone and she called me back a couple of hours later. One of the first statements she made was, "I thought you were dead. I have been praying for you for 40 years." (I thought to myself "if she only knew.") She proceeded to tell me that Sister Mary Charlotte and Sister Brenda were very much alive. She even invited me to a directed retreat that they were having at Kordes. I had no clue what this directed retreat thing was but I wanted to go. So I registered for it. I am not sure if I was randomly selected or if I was assigned to Sister Jane Will as my spiritual director. I wasn't sure even what spiritual direction was but I figured that I would try it out.

When I crested the hill for the first time in 40 years, I looked up and saw the monastery rising in the distance. I was so overwhelmed that I had to pull off the road. This castle was just as beautiful as I remembered. I was soon to find out that I still had a great love for this special place.

When I entered the room on the first night, I saw that it was filled with my fellow retreatants. I looked across the room and saw the beautiful "Angel in White," Sister Anna Marie, who had taken care of me in the hospital many years ago. My eyes again welled up with tears. (I thought briefly, "What is this emotional stuff happening to me?") Sister Jane later told me they were liquid prayers.

God in his infinite wisdom selected the perfect spiritual director for me, Sister Jane. I remember at our first meeting I told her that I had no clue what I was supposed to do in spiritual direction. I don't remember much of what I said that day but years of pain, anguish, and shame came pouring out. I felt like the weight that I had been carrying for most of my life was gone. She taught me that I am created by Divine Love. I am sustained by Divine Love. I am surrounded by Divine Love. I am ever growing into Divine Love.

Judy Powers and Jean Seibelts, whom I had also met on retreat, had encouraged me to become an Oblate. A year later I contacted Sister Brenda, who coincidentally was the Oblate director. I asked her if I could be an Oblate. I remember being so afraid that she would tell me "no." But she didn't. Anyway, in September, 2015, I started formation as a candidate. In October of this coming year, I will become an Oblate. Sister Jane also agreed to be my Oblate companion. She has met with me when I am able to come to the monastery or we meet on Facetime. She has certainly guided me out of that spiritual desert where I felt nothing.

When Sister Barbara Lynn put the St. Benedict medal around my neck during the Oblate Candidacy Ceremony back last September, I was filled with so much gratitude. I could not believe that these sisters who were so spiritual, loving and touched by God would allow me to become an Oblate in their community. I truly feel that God has always been with me, even when I didn't think so. I am, beyond all doubt, truly blessed. Does God answer prayers? Yes. I am living proof.



Oblate Sandy Turner and Oblate Marcia Brown are enjoying some down time. In the back, from L to R are Oblate Julie Beck, Oblate Mary Eileen Fritz and Sister Linda Bittner.



# Service Program at the Monastery

by Sister Brenda Engleman



**Kelsey Spindler, Shea Lanaghan and Emily Earhart are resting in My Old Kentucky Home State Park.**

During June and July, we are fortunate to have five young, energetic women volunteering here at the monastery. They are: Kelsey Spindler from Haubstadt, Indiana, Shea Lanaghan and Tory Lanaghan from Millstadt, Illinois, Emily Earhart from Evansville, and Clair Slusser from New Albany, Indiana. All of these young ladies are college students and live downtown in a house just a few blocks from here. Sister Mary Philip Berger is the director of this program and has done a marvelous job in keeping these ladies involved in various interesting projects “on the hill.”

On June 11, Oblate Theresa Bauer and Oblate Candidates Arleta Weyer and Shirley Demuth joined, Kelsey, Shea and Emily as they toured parts of Gethsemane Monastery and visited the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Motherhouse, both close to Bardstown. The women did see Stephen Foster’s Old Kentucky Home, but they did not tour it. You can definitely see from the pictures that they had an enjoyable trip.

**Center right: Oblate Theresa Bauer, Candidates Shirley Demuth and Arleta Weyer are taking a break in My Old Kentucky Home State Park**

**Lower right: Shea Lanaghan, Kelsey Spindler and Emily Earhart savor cool drinks at Talbott’s Tavern in Bardstown, Kentucky.**



**Candidate Arleta Weyer, Emily Earhart, Shea Lanaghan, Kelsey Spindler and Candidate Shirley Demuth are posing for a picture right after attending Midday Prayer with the Trappist Monks.**





# Monastery Moments and Oblate Offerings

July 31, 2016

## Oblate Picnic with Sisters

Details to follow. August 20, 2016

**Founders' Day** – opening of the 150th anniversary of the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana.

September 9–16, 2016

**Directed Retreat** will be held in Kordes Hall. The retreat begins Friday, September 9, at 7:30 p.m. (EDT) and ends Friday, September 16, at 10:00 a.m. Participants will have the opportunity to meet six times with a spiritual director.

Saturday, September 17, 2016

**Reception of Oblate Candidates** will be held in St. Gertrude Hall at 1:00 p.m. (ET) followed by **The Spirituality of the Eucharist**. Presenter: Sister Anita Louise Lowe, OSB

Wednesday, October 6, 2016

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

October 7-9, 2016

**Catholic Women Leadership Conference** will be held at Monastery Immaculate

Conception. For more information, go to the following website: [www.womenofthechurch.org](http://www.womenofthechurch.org).

Sunday, October 16, 2016

**Oblation** will be held during Morning Prayer in the Monastery Church at 9:45 a.m. (ET), followed by Mass at 10:30 a.m. Dinner will be held in the Monastic Dining Room after Mass. Oblate meeting will be held in St. Gertrude Hall from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. **Chapter 58 of The Holy Rule "Procedure for Accepting New Members"**

Presenter: Sister Louise Laroche, OSB

## Sisters celebrate jubilees



Sister Corita Hoffman  
70 years



Sister Mary Carmen  
Spayd  
70 years



Sister Mary Carmel  
Spayd  
70 years



Sister Beata Mehling  
70 years



Sister Joella Kidwell  
60 years



Sister Diane Fischer  
60 years



Sister Madonna  
Helmer  
60 years



Sister Jacqueline  
Shively  
60 years



Sister Helen Jean  
Kormelink  
60 years



Sister Leona  
Schlachter  
60 years



Sister Doris Market  
60 years

In the name of the Oblates, I want to congratulate the sisters who will celebrate their major jubilees on October 30, 2016, in the monastery church:

60 years: Sister Joella Kidwell, Sister Diane Fischer, Sister Madonna Helmer, Sister Jacqueline Shively, Sister Helen Jean Kormelink, Sister Leona Schlachter and Sister Doris Market.

70 years: Sister Corita Hoffman, Sister Mary Carmel Spayd, Sister Mary Carmen Spayd and Sister Beata Mehling.

Thank you, sisters, for your years of service and dedication to our community and the church. You are in our prayers.

Sincerely, Sister Brenda Engleman

# What is your life scripture?

By Oblate Candidate Jeanne Zack



Oblate Candidate  
Jeanne Zack

God communicates with us in many ways. Throughout our lives different sayings, thoughts, maybe conversations with friends and family are some of the ways God

communicates His message. His message might come through a particular song, a scripture reading, during centering prayer or listening to the priest while sharing his homily at Mass. During one particular early Monday morning, the priest asked the congregation, "What is your life scripture?" While thinking, I wondered what my life scripture was. As I was inventorying thoughts of my life journey, the following scripture passage emerged. I paraphrased the scripture to reflect how God was communicating with me through His Word.

"Jeanne, why are you anxious and worried about your life? You worry about

how you will care for yourself. You worry about the bills, food and clothing. I love you and I am revealing to you that life is more important than food, and the body is more important than clothing. Look outside at the birds of the air. They do not sow. Neither do they reap; nor do they gather into barns. And yet I care for them. Jeanne, you are worth much more to me. Why are you so anxious? Observe how the lilies of the field grow. They do not toil nor do they spin and yet they are so beautiful. Even Solomon was not clothed like one of my beautiful lilies. 'Jeanne, I know you need food, clothing and bills paid. But seek me first and I will provide for your needs.'" (Matthew 6:25-29; 33, *New American Standard Bible* (NAS).)

During my life journey many times I have been reminded of the scripture above. God's message is always one of compassionate love, care, and provision. I have found over the years that seeking God first for my needs is important and then comes trusting Him. Just as the priest asked the congregation that early Monday morning, I am asking all of you to think about the same question. What is your life scripture?



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

<http://churchcam.thedome.org>

You can also download a liturgy schedule from the Oblate page:

[thedome.org/oblates](http://thedome.org/oblates)

## In Memoriam:

Betty Jane Richards,  
Oblate Dave Richards' mother,  
died on May 8, 2016

Our thoughts and prayers are with  
you in this time of sorrow.



## Oblate Birthdays

### July

4—Elaine Baumgart, 7—Mary Lou Bassler and Mary Taber, 13—Charles Luebbehusen and Dianne LeDuc, 17—Mary Lamberg, 20—Ed Brown and Sandra Turner

### August

1—Paulette Campana, 2—Daphanie Hoppes, 14—Valerie Scott, 18—Dolores Webber, 19—Mary Agnes Willegal, 20—Mary Etta Kiefer, 21—Judy Luebbehusen, 23—Carolyn Koehler, 27—Therese Walker, 28—Mary Ann Littlefield, 29—Pauletta Adler Jeter

### September

2—Lee Garrity, 6—Barbara Nonte, 9—June Goforth and Brenda Padgett, 12—Vic Begle, 17—Ruth Goepfrich, 25—Shirley Azure, 26—Bill Muller, Jennifer Kieffer, and Mary Metz, 30—Gary Adler

### October

1—Sharon Bittner and Mary Thale, 5—Martha Hester and Rose Wilkie, 7—Jerome Schmitt, 11—Derrick Dixon, 13—Arleta Weyer, 19—Rev. Gerald McCarthy, 20—Don Stanton, 22—Frank William Keller and Madeline Keplin

# **Reservations for Oblate Picnic with the Sisters July 31, 2016**

**Morning Prayer: 10:00 a.m. (ET)**

**Mass: 10:30 a.m.**

**followed by picnic meal in the sisters' dining room**

**Sisters will provide all food and drinks.**

**Entertainment will follow the meal.**

**Short meeting in St. Gertrude's Hall to follow.**



**Please send in reservations by **July 15th** Check if you will attend Morning Prayer and/or Mass. Please indicate the number that will attend the meal.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **will attend Morning Prayer**

\_\_\_\_\_ **will attend Mass**

\_\_\_\_\_ **will attend the meal**

**Name(s)** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**812-367-1411, ext. 2827**

**Mailing Address: 802 E. 10th St., Ferdinand, IN, 47532**

**Hope to see you there!**

***Sister Brenda***



## *Oblates*

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

*“First of all, every time you begin a good work, you must  
pray earnestly to God.”*

*—Rule of St. Benedict Prol. vs. 4*

## 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 2 of this newsletter.

