

Our Ministry of Teaching

PRACTICING LENT ANY TIME

Presentation by Sister Maura Beckman

My own experience of Lent as a child was begun each year with instruction from my grade school teachers, the Sisters of Providence, on how to keep the forty days of Lent. I was advised to choose some form of penance to be practiced during those days, to make up for my sinfulness of other times. Usually I gave up candy and tried to get along with my siblings. Of course, movies and dances were forbidden activities during Lent.

It was rare that I was able to keep the resolutions that I made all throughout Lent. However, I was encouraged to begin again with renewed energy. Forty days seemed like a long time to me! I was not fond of Lent.

My early days in the community had some similarity to those past practices. Maybe the resolutions were a bit more sophisticated; however, fidelity was not much more successful. Church law required a serious fast each day of Lent. Perhaps there were a few shortcuts to be taken by leaving Sundays out of the count since the other days of the week totaled 40 days!

Lent today is more a time of choosing a practice that will aid us in drawing closer to God and will also benefit others. I reflect on where I find difficulty in daily life, in relationships, in work and in prayer. Putting my thought in writing a Bona Opera and submitting it to the prioress helps to impress the practice firmly in my mind. It will be done with a blessing and also will provide a written document that I can review.

We encourage Oblates to adapt the Rule to their life circumstances. Oblates promise to live the Gospel message more fully and to apply the teachings of the Rule to their families, their workplaces, their civic and social activities.

Knowing ourselves as Oblates and what works for us can give direction to how we might plan a practice of Lent Any Time. Whatever we do, we need to follow Benedict's suggestion to "do all things in moderation."

These are summaries of the hour-long presentations given during the Oblate meetings.

To see all of the presentations, go to:

www.thedome.org/get-involved/oblates



Left to Right: Oblate Theresa Bauer, Sister Helen Jean Kormelink and Sister Maura Beckman after giving their presentations.

PRACTICING LENT ANY TIME

Reflection by Sister Helen Jean Kormelink

The simple mentioning of LENT can cause many of us to drift back to our childhood practices. If we were to ask other people what they think when they first hear, "Practicing Lent Anytime", they might respond the following way, "Oh, good. Not now!" Many of us just want to put off the "giving up" of things we like. Some of us even dread to think about Lent, believing that it is just something to endure.

Maybe many thought, "Doesn't Benedict say, 'It would be good to practice Lent year around?'" Over the years there have been a variety of times for the different kinds of practices that we have come to call LENT. Throughout history, the early church considered that the preparation for Easter should include some period of fasting. The length varied. Some fasted 2 days, 4 days or 40 days. However, Lent, the 40 days before Easter, has become the traditional period for prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Today this Lenten period begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with the Holy Saturday Vigil Service. The receiving of ashes has become an extremely important way to begin the Lenten practices.

In early times, it was only those preparing to enter the church who fasted. This Lenten practice continues to be an important time for preparing candidates to enter the church on Holy Saturday. Fasting was generalized to

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Candidate Jim Weyer smiles during the Oblate meeting as he prepares to journey with his companion, Sister Mary Philip Berger, during this coming year.

mean any kind of giving up---food, drink, candy, desserts, movies, alcohol, and so on.

Then prayer and almsgiving were added to the penances. Today we encourage doing “good works” like visiting the sick and elderly. Many of us may have participated in the Rice Bowl activity by not eating candy and ice cream and then donating the money that we saved to the poor.

In closing, we see that Lent has been celebrated at many times and in many ways in various churches. We hope that our readers learn that Lent can be a holy time for us to grow closer to God.

BENEDICTINE HOSPITALITY

By Oblate Theresa Bauer

When I sat down to prepare this presentation, I started Googling the word “hospitality.” The first definition that popped up states, “The friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers.” Benedict points out saying, “Great concern is to be shown in receiving poor people and pilgrims, because in them, Christ is received.” (Joan Chittister, *The Rule of St. Benedict, a Spirituality for the 21st Century*).

For us to be present and welcoming of others, Jane Tomaine has a “AAA” idea. First, we must be AVAILABLE or approachable by others. Secondly, we must be ATTENTIVE and really listen to the other with all graciousness of heart. Lastly, we must be ACCEPTING of the other whether a well-known, prominent person or an unknown poor person.

One of the biggest parts of Benedictine Hospitality, of course, is keeping the balance between presence to others and tending to our own needs. We still need that “time away” to pray and to refresh ourselves just as Jesus

did when he left the crowds to go and pray. How can we love others if we do not spend time with the One who loves us and will show us the way?

One practice of Hospitality is to follow the recommendation of Henri Nouwen to “create a welcoming place around ourselves” where others may enter, be themselves, and discover who they are. People will feel our caring, love, and acceptance. They will come away feeling an affirmation of their self-worth and revitalization of their energy (Jane Tomaine, *St. Benedict’s Toolbox*).

And then there are the “Hospitality Challenges.” These are the people who really challenge our ability to be Available, Attentive, and Accepting. The real Christian mind should never be swayed by negative things. These people are the ones that we are to receive with open hearts, hands, and minds. They are the ones to whom Jesus gave most of his attention.

In *St. Benedict’s Toolbox*, Jane Tomaine discusses the question of Hospitality and justice. What are we personally doing to help the poor, suffering people of the world? Are we contributing to national outreach programs? Are we supporting such church organizations as St. Vincent de Paul Society and local community efforts to help people in need?

Both scientific and theological studies have come to the conclusion that all life on earth is interconnected. Early Benedictines indicated that care of the earth is essential. We must extend Hospitality to our companion creatures who add to our lives. We need to support agencies that keep our planet clean and our animals healthy. This is all part of Hospitality toward the greatest gift God gave us: life on a beautiful planet.



Sister Barbara Ann Offerman will certainly enjoy mentoring new Candidate Mary Bolk during this coming year.

An Update from Belcourt, North Dakota

Dear Ferdinand Oblates,

Many of our Oblates have been ill and we ask for your prayers. Lillian Keplin has congestive heart failure and was in the hospital. She came home for a while but had a relapse. Also, I now need to take insulin twice a day for my diabetes.

At this time, my husband, Dave, and I are in Tucson, AZ, visiting some friends. Since it was -13 degrees recently in Belcourt, I am glad that we are here in Arizona.

Presently, we are beginning to study *St. Benedict's Toolbox* by Jane Tomaine. We thank you for suggesting this book and assuring us that we would enjoy it. We certainly appreciate your prayers.

Gratefully,

Phyllis Jollie

Belcourt Oblate Director



In the name of the Ferdinand Benedictine Sisters and Oblates, let us offer our sympathy to the family and friends of Oblate Dolores Gourneau who died on March 9 of a massive heart attack. She is survived by two daughters and one son.

Her husband, Sylvester, preceded her in death.

According to her friends, Dolores was a faithful, caring loving person and attended regular Oblate meetings. She loved quilting and doing other crafts. One of her favorite pastimes was repairing her house.

May Dolores Rest In Peace.

Playing Musical Rooms

Oblate Dianne LeDuc helped Sister Brenda pack up some of her many boxes during the past few days. Her normal room is in the middle of the much needed renovation that is taking place throughout various areas of the monastery. Once her new office is complete, Sister Brenda will be moving into a newly remodeled space on the third floor (the same room where she began her ministry with the Oblates in 2014).

Until then, she has been temporarily relocated to an older music practice room on the first floor. Even with the dust and paint, she is still working hard as Oblate Director.



Left to right:
Jim Weyer,
Karen Lance,
Martha Esparza,
Fatima Chan
and Mary Bolk
are preparing
to be received
as new Oblate
Candidates.
Missing are
Tonya Brothers-
Bridge and
Kathleen
Johnson.



Rite of Reception of Oblate Candidates

Our newest Inquirers become Candidates.

On Saturday, February 16, 2019, at 1:00 p.m. (ET), we celebrated the Rite of Reception of Candidates during Midday Prayer in St. Gertrude's Hall. Since our prioress, Sister Barbara Lynn, was unable to attend this ceremony, Sister Brenda Engleman, Oblate Director, officiated. We were pleased to announce that seven Inquirers who were to be received as Candidates. However, because of inclement weather, only five Inquirers were able to be present for the ceremony on February 16. The two others were received on March 23

During the ceremony, these Candidates received a Benedictine medal and chain, a copy of the *Holy Rule of St. Benedict*, the book *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily*, by Sr. Joan Chittister, and a study guide.

As in past years, the Candidates each have a sister companion who will journey with them during their year of study and formation.

Our Candidates are:

Mary Bolk is from Westfied, IN. Her companion is Sister Barbara Ann Offerman.

Tonya Brothers-Bridge, shares time in Ferdinand, IN and Muncie, IN. Her companion is Sister Kathy Huber.

Fatima Chan is from China and lives in Evansville. Her companion is Sister Kathy Bilskie.

Martha Esparza is from Evansville, IN. Her companion is Sister Ann Marie Howard.

Kathleen Johnson is from Lake St. Louis, Mo. Her companion is Sister Betty Drewes.

Karen Lance is from Newburgh, IN. Her companion is Sister Helen Jean Kormelink.

Jim Weyer is from Ferdinand, IN. His companion is Sister Mary Philip Berger.

Please remember these Candidates and companions in your prayers. Thank you so much for your support of them.



Left to right: Sister Kathy Huber, companion to Tonya Brothers-Bridge, Kathleen Johnson and Sister Betty Drewes, her companion. Sister Brenda officiated a special service on March 23, for Tonya and Kathleen so they could be received as Oblate Candidates.

So Happy Together

Oblate Carolyn Kohler and Evan Mower become engaged
By Carolyn Kohler

I met Evan Mower 37 years ago working in the film industry. He is a multi-media producer and I am an Art Director in the television business. We definitely had much in common.

Thirty two years ago, my daughter, Alexandra, was baptized in South Pasadena, and I asked Evan to be her Godfather.

Recently, in 2018, Evan came to visit me just prior to my mother's passing away. I was extremely stressed out, to say the least. He stayed two weeks and helped me deal with all the people who were in my home, including hospice, caretakers, family and friends. Evan had such an incredibly calming effect on me and I was able to see another side of him that I never had seen before.

I have been single for nearly 20 years. Evan was divorced about 12 years ago. We both think God brought us together because we needed one another. It's been ten months since he came to visit my mother and me and our relationship has been amazing. He's been here twice, and I've been to his home in Hawaii twice. On Sunday, January 6, he asked me to marry him.

At this time, we have not decided on a date. Because he has to move from Hawaii to Palm Springs, we are thinking our wedding will be in the late summer or early fall.



Evan and Carolyn

Some Cheerful Greeters

Faithful Monastery Greeters Serve Every Sunday Morning
By Sister Brenda Engleman

Throughout this last year, several Oblates have become involved in Sunday ministries here at Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand. As in most churches, they serve as readers, gift bearers and greeters. Some have already become Eucharistic ministers.

Let us recognize three Oblates who faithfully serve as greeters almost every Sunday morning, in good weather and in bad: Deb Stemle, Pat Stemle and Julie Beck. Occasionally, the Stemles bring their grandson, Becket, to help out.

Share the Joy of Being an Oblate of St. Benedict

We encourage all Oblates and Oblate Candidates to be on the lookout for persons who would make fine Oblates. Share your own personal experiences with your friends. Give Oblate brochures to any interested persons and invite them to an Oblate meeting. Contact information can be found on the back cover.

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

Download the Liturgy Schedule at:

thedome.org/oblates



Pat Stemle, Lydia Peter, Kyle Peter, Ashley Peter (our Human Resource Director), Julie Beck, and Deb Stemle.



Oblate Birthdays

Mar. 4 — Deb Stemle; Robin Dugan	May 6 — Linda Doyle
Mar. 12 — Scarlett Winters	May 8 — Mary Eileen Fritz
Mar. 15 — Shirley Demuth	May 10 — Phyllis Claycamp
Mar. 17 — Kathy Dixon; Patty Allery	May 16 — Kathleen Johnson
Mar. 22 — Ruth Keethers	May 17 — Shirley France
Mar. 25 — Denise Leinenbach	May 20 — Sharon Kilpatrick
	May 21 — Jean Siebelts
Apr. 4 — Sharon Cavanaugh	May 23 — Bridget Tierney
Apr. 7 — Judy Bueckert; Lillian Keplin	May 26 — Jim Weyer
Apr. 14 — Elaine Robertson	May 27 — Julie Beck
Apr. 28 — Shirley Stern	May 28 — Linda Begle
Apr. 29 — Marcia Brown; Carole Swim	May 31 — Gail Trottier
Apr. 30 — Ron Allery; Leeny Hardesty	

Prayer Corner

In Memoriam:

Oblate Jennifer Kieffer's father,
Paul Malther,
who died on December 9, 2018

Oblate Paula Dumont's husband and
Oblate Christy Dumont's father,
David Dumont,
who died on February 3, 2019

Oblate Pat Hopf's sister,
Jennie Wells,
who died on February 22, 2019

For the Sick:

Oblate Elaine Nolan
Oblate Ruth Goepfrich
Oblate Jim Goepfrich
Oblate Sandy Turner
Oblate Mary Metz
Candidate Karen Lance
Oblate Jennifer Kieffer
Reverend Earl Menchhofer

Monastery Moments and Oblate Offerings

Sunday, May 19, 2019

Chapter 12, "*Living in the Present Moment*" Presenters: Oblates
Linda Selaya & Shirley France

Sunday, August 18, 2019

Oblate Picnic - Oblates are invited for Mass at 10:30 in Monastery Church.
Picnic will be in Gertrude's Hall. Details to be announced later.

Saturday, September 21, 2019

Rite of Reception of Candidates in St. Gertrude's Hall as part of Midday Prayer.
During this ceremony, the Inquirers are received as Candidates. The
prioress officiates.

Chapter 72, "*The Good Zeal of Monastics*" based on "Spirituality for the 21st
Century, the Holy Rule of St. Benedict" by Sister Joan Chittister.
Presenter: Sister Betty Drewes

Sunday, October 20, 2019

Rite of Oblation will be at 9:45 a.m. in the Monastery Church during Morning
Prayer. After Mass, the Oblates and families are invited to join the sisters
for dinner in the dining room.

**Oblate meetings are always held from 1:00 to 3:00 ET.
For questions or concerns, email Sr. Brenda:
bengleman@thedome.org
Or call: 812-367-1411 ext. 2827**

SISTERS
OF ST. BENEDICT
FERDINAND, INDIANA

Seek. Pray. Share.

Oblates

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Let all guests who arrive be received like Christ.

— *Matthew 25:35*

Oblates is published four times a year
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Sister Brenda Engleman.

Send comments to the Oblate Office
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