



Oblates

MOUNT MICHAEL ABBEY OBLATES



September 2017

Volume 1, Issue 3

Fall Festival September 17th

Sign up to help in
the Flea Market
Call Br. Jerome at
402-206-2069

Oblate Meetings Second Sunday of month

September 10

3:00 Meeting
(Topic: Lectio)
4:30 Social
5:15 Vespers

October 8

3:00 Meeting
(Topic: Benedictine
Blessings)
5:15 Oblation of Novices
at Vespers followed
by Social in Abbey.

November 12

3:00 Meeting
(Topic: Psalms)
4:30 Social
5:15 Vespers

December 10

Advent Retreat
1:00 to 3:00
Christmas Social
3:00 to 4:00
Vespers 5:15

January 14, 2018

1:30 Meeting
3:00 Social
5:15 Vespers

from Oblate Director, *Brother Jerome, OSB*

Dear Oblates,

In Exodus, Moses stands in awe and wonder as a voice comes from the fire, "Do not come closer—take off your shoes—the place on which you are standing is Holy Ground." Where you stand as Oblates is Holy Ground because the holiness is within you.

We are called as Oblates to take off all that keeps us from encountering the Holy. When we become burning bush, we are able to live in harmony with our brothers and sisters, the environment, the universe and with God. Take off your shoes, so that you will be able to melt into God, so that the spark within you will become consuming flame.

Believe and trust that the seed of God which lay dormant sleeping within us, will awaken by the WORD and will grow and flower into Christ. Trust that the WORD will achieve the end for which God sends it—to nourish and give bread to His People.

Pray the prayer given by Jesus. Pray the words that heal and forgive and give thanks and gratitude. Keep praying, for if we pray long enough we cease to pray and become the prayer.

"Fall in love"—stay in love and it will decide everything. St. Benedict invites us to run on that path of love, the way to eternal life.

Enter the abode where Jesus has prepared a place for us, the Holy Ground of your life.

Peace and Blessings,

—*Brother Jerome*

Lectio Fourth Saturday

8:00 Morning Prayer and
Eucharist at the Chapel
Lectio at the Guest House
9:00 A.M.

Saturdays

September 23
October 28
November 25
December 30 (5th Sat.)
January 27, 2018

Tai Chi/Lectio

Saturday September 30th
9:30 A.M. Chapel

If there is interest in this program,
more times will be scheduled.



Advent Lectio/Lunch at the Guest House

Food for soul and body

11:00 Lectio
12:00 Soup/salad lunch
Saturday December 9th
Friday December 15th
Thursday December 21st

Note: Seating is limited to 18, so
reservations are required; this series is
open to the Public.

Mount Michael Student Oblates—May 21, 2017

Below are the responses of three of our new student Oblates to these questions:

1. How did you become interested in becoming an Oblate?
2. What is personally enriching in Oblate spirituality?
3. Any dreams, visions, hopes, ideas, etc., you have about the Mount Michael student Oblate program?

Patrick Fayad:

My interest in oblation started in chapel last year when we prayed the vocational prayer and we said “as monks and oblates of this house.” I then looked up what oblates were on the Mount Michael website and was interested because it could also give me insight into monastic life as a student. This year I came to the first meeting of the youth group: Men of Benedict (it was led by Br. August last year) and Fr. John and Br. Jerome explained more to us about what oblates were and said that if we wanted, we could become oblates. I instantly knew I wanted to become an oblate and stuck with it.

I love being able to come to our group’s meetings and pray with Fr. John, Br. Jerome, my classmates, and every so often the monastic community. I especially love praying vespers. The whole community singing in prayer is beautiful. I also really like *lectio* because with school stressing me out it’s the best way to relax and calm down.

I hope to attract many of my classmates to the school’s oblate group. I hope that I can not only get very religious people to join but also those who aren’t as active in their faith. I also hope to attract “cool kids” because then many more will want to join (ice cream works every time). Being an oblate would help a lot of these classmates cherish and stick with their faith at the time that they normally wouldn’t.



Left to Right: Drew Goddard '17, Riley Goddard '19, Cole McNally '20, Abbot Michael, Patrick Fayad '19, James Crotty '19, Andrew Nigro '18

Oblate Book Discussion

Group meets in Guest House Sept 23, 10 A.M.

We will discuss Chapter Three of "*Humility Matters*" by M.M. Funk. (ISBN # 978-0-8146-3513)

This book walks us through the ancient monastic tradition of four renunciations.

Chapter Three calls us to renounce our self-made thoughts of God, so that we can know God as God.

You are welcome to join in at any time.

Riley Goddard:

I sort of just went to the first meeting. This was when I learned that oblates were even a thing. Whenever we would say the vocation prayer on Monday morning and we would get to the part where we say, “monks and oblates,” I always thought I was saying monasenablés, and it was a weird foreign word.

I find *lectio* to be a great way to at least let God say His two cents to me. I often don’t give Him time to respond to me in my prayers.

I hope that the student oblate program becomes a regularity of Mount Michael.

Jimmy Crotty:

My path to becoming an oblate started when Brother Jerome and Father John had the first Men of Benedict meeting of the year in September. Brother Jerome and Father John were taking the program in a new direction, so instead of just showing the students monastic life, we could really become involved. The end goal for the year was to become an oblate of Mount Michael abbey. And so, over the next eight months, five other students and I prayed *lectio divina*, sang vespers with the monks, and learned the Rule of Benedict to a greater degree. Around the start of May, Brother Jerome asked us if we were going to take oblation at the end of the year. Tentatively I said yes. I didn’t really have a reason as to why I said yes other than I thought it would be cool to be an oblate. I took my oblation with the other five students and took the name Romanus. It didn’t really sink in as to how I was now a part of the community until Brother Jerome called me Brother Romanus.

When we started the program, I was of the understanding that being an oblate is kind of being tacked on to the monastery. But when Brother Jerome called me Brother Romanus, the scales fell from my eyes. It hit me that being an oblate really means that you are a member of the community, monk or not, catholic or not. It’s like being a brother or sister of the abbey. This was the thing for me that made me very satisfied in my yes. Being a part of the community and being like a brother to the abbey was a glorious thing to me. I hope that there are many more oblates in the future, and that some of them even become monks of the abbey. God bless all!



Oblate-sponsored Pilgrimage to Conception Abbey and the Monastery at Clyde, MO

Lectio—by John Main, OSB

Preparation for prayer

Lectio (spiritual reading) prepares us for the mystery of God. We have to be clear that it prepares us. The movement itself is accomplished by the redemptive love of Jesus.

The monk is not trying to possess what he studies but uses his study to help him respond to the presence of God in his word. A loving reading and reflection upon the word of Scripture is, in Benedict's vision, essential in forming the monk as a man of prayer.

St. Benedict saw *lectio* as an integral part of our Christian living. Why? Not because it made us better conversationalists or helped us pass exams. The purpose of *lectio* in the monastery is not the acquisition of knowledge. It is important to emphasize this because we have been trained to regard all education as the amassing of knowledge as a form of power.

Lectio is the great preparation for prayer that each monk builds into his life. It is also built into the corporate community life in the form of community *lectio*—what we know as the Divine Office.

STUDY

- Is an "I-it" relationship
- May be purely intellectual, cerebral, gratifying only a part of our self and unrelated to the rest of life.
- May be merely an accumulation of facts; but it may also be a deep search for meaning, oriented toward the up-building of life and its integration
- It involves analysis and distinction; it may or may not lead to synthesis.
- Is a 'heady' masculine type of activity
- Works the text over and pursues it
- Is a process of critical, systematic inquiry and theorizing; demands verification and judgment regarding truth

LECTIO DIVINA

- Is an "I-Thou" relationship communicating with a friend who is present
- Is prayer, engaging affectivity as well as intellect; it touches the whole person and relates to our deeper needs and to every aspect of life.
- Is contact with the Word hidden in the word; it leads to reconciliation, forgiveness, healing; it is therapeutic, integrating and sanctifying—thus establishing us in peace.
- It merges us, bonds us with God, helps us to become one will and one spirit with Him
- Is a more intuitive, feminine type of activity
- Listens and waits on the Lord to give
- Is non-critical and is a cultivation of receptivity and docility, of openness and surrender to Truth and Love revealing

Infinite expansion of spirit
"Above all, know from your own heart, from your own experience, that you were created for infinite expansion of spirit. Every act of faith is a step into the infinite expansion of God."

John Main, "The Modern Spirituality Series," 1987, page 92

“A Special and Unique Way of Reading”—by Macrina Wiederkehr

There is a quote from Benedictine Abbot Marmion that has become a guide for me as I spend time in Divine Reading each day. He says,

Read under the eye of God
Until your heart is touched,
Then give yourself up to love.

This is a special and unique way of reading. It is a slow, reflective reading, reading with a longing to be touched, healed, and transformed by the Word. It is not at all, then, a hurried reading. It is quality reading rather than quantity. Just as when you sit down at the dinner table, you do not necessarily eat everything on the table, so too, when you approach the table of the Scriptures, you are not there to cover territory.

Nutritionists tell us that to get full benefit from the food we eat, we should chew slowly. In other words, eat contemplatively. The same is true of the good of the Scriptures. To be fully nourished by the richness hidden in these words you must hover over them slowly and reverently as one who is certain of finding a treasure. Your search for the treasure, though, is not a desperate, hurried, frantic search. Rather, you search calmly and with assurance. You will find the treasure. You will be fed. You will be transformed.

Remembering that we are reading under the eye of God is an immense help for our distracted hearts. We are naturally distracted creatures. We do not yet own the undivided hearts we yearn for. Remembering that we are reading under the eye of God can help us remain open to the possibility of that divine eye guiding us in our reading. If we accept the loving gaze of that eye, it will indeed hover over us as we read. It will penetrate us, heal us, and open our eyes to the truth. It will embrace us. It will look down upon us. It will look out from within us. It will read through us and we will be changed by its unfailing gaze in our direction.

We do not always realize what a radical suggestion it is for us to read to be formed and transformed rather than to gather information. We are

information seekers. We love to cover territory. It is not easy for us to stop reading when the heart is touched; we are a people who like to get finished. *Lectio* offers us a new way to read. Read with a vulnerable heart. Expect to be blessed in the reading. Read as one awake, one waiting for the beloved. Read with reverence.

We are naturally reverent beings, but much of our natural reverence has been torn away from us because we have been born into a world that hurries. There is not time to be reverent with the earth or with each other. We are all hurrying into progress. And for all our hurrying we lose sight of our true nature a little more each day. This is precisely why we need to believe in the eye of God hovering over us. We are not alone. There is One with us who wants to give us back our reverence. There is One with us who wants to give us back the gift of time.

Read the Scriptures, then, with reverence, giving up the lie that you don't have time. Read under the eye of God. Read as one who has nothing but time.

Before you read, you may wish to pray:

All-Seeing One,
Above me, around me, within me.
Be my seeing as I read these sacred words.
Look down upon me
Look out from within me
Look all around me
See through my eyes
Hear through my ears
Feel through my heart
Touch me where I need to be touched;
and when my heart is touched,
give me the grace to lay down this Holy Book
and ask significant questions:
Why has my heart been touched?
How am I to be changed through this touch?
All-Seeing One
I need to change
I need to look a little more like You...

Mount Michael Oblates

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*Listen, Child of God, to
the guidance of your
teacher. Attend to the
message you hear and
make sure that it
pierces to your heart.*

*(Opening words of the Prologue
to the Rule of St. Benedict)*

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www.mountmichael.org



Oblate Opportunities for Ministry*



Visit Oblates in care facilities or homebound

Francesa Dammermann-402-332-2986
mdammermann@aol.com

Hospitality:

Provide refreshments after Oblate meetings

Benita Habib—402-238-6496
habibstnt@juno.com

Work in Guest House

Brother Jerome-402-206-2069

Staff Flea Market

Rita Wolfe-402-926-2282

Abbey:

Help with special events, provide transportation as needed for aging members of the monastic community; assist with Monastic Community Sunday meal—**Brother Jerome-402-206-2069**

Ongoing Formation: Mentor an oblate novice.

Jean Hillavacek—jean.jeweler@gmail.com

Francesa Dammermann at 402-332-2986
mdammermann@aol.com

Submit Oblate related articles for the Michaelleen or Oblate Newsletter and **Prayer Ministry**

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** There will be time for discussion of ministries for various needs of the Monastic Community; sign-up sheets will be available at our monthly meetings*