

OblateNews

Newsletter for the Oblates of Saint Benedict's Monastery | April 2017



Letter to Oblates from Laureen Virnig, OSB

Several months ago I attended a webinar, "Mindfulness: A Window into the Sacredness of the Present Moment" presented by Benjamin R. Williams of Southdown, Ontario. He described mindfulness as 'acknowledging the truth of what is.' It is living in the moment and being

present to what is happening in the moment. My experience tells me little children *live in the moment* more than adults do. That insight became apparent to me about eight years ago when I was trying to get from our house to the place I was going in a timely way with a three-year-old in tow. As we were walking he stopped and pointed to the sky. When I urged him to keep moving, he excitedly said, "Look!" I looked up and asked, "At what?" He said, "contrails." I looked. I had missed the jet that apparently had whizzed across the sky earlier. In a recent conversation with a woman whose husband is in the early stages of dementia she described him as living more in the moment than in his earlier years. When Jesus says, "Unless you become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven..." (Matt 18:3), might this be one of the practices Jesus applauds?

Mindfulness programs seem to be springing up for all ages of life. We hear about eating mindfully in order to be aware of one's eating habits and appreciate the taste. Mindful schools have opened to offer help for teachers to reduce toxic stress, increase job satisfaction, cope with emotions and then to teach this practice to students. There is a *Mindful* magazine which gives practices for contentment posing the question: Is mindfulness the future of therapy?

Benedict may not have used the word, mindfulness, but the practice is present throughout the *Rule*. In the rite of reception of an oblate candidate, a portion of the prologue to the *Rule* is read that begins with the question, "Is there anyone who yearns

for life and desires to see good days? (Ps 34:13). If you hear this and your answer is, 'I do,' God then directs these words to you: 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" (Ps 34:14-15). This section ends with a call to mindfulness: "What dear ones, is more delightful than this voice of the Lord calling to us? See how the Lord in love shows us the way of life" (RB Prol 19-20).

Gratefulness leads to mindfulness. Brother David Steindl-Rast, OSB, describes gratefulness as being the same as mindfulness and prayerfulness; like any other spiritual practice – it must be practiced. He says, "Practice giving thanks for first things, for beginnings. When you wake in the morning, before you even open your eyes, give thanks for the gift of sight. Give thanks for your first cup of tea or coffee – let all your senses come alive or wake up. Continue to mark out the little beginnings of each day – as you open your bedroom door and move into the rest of your house or as you open your front door and walk outside or as you put the key in your car ignition to begin your commute to work. But also mark the endings of your day – when you arrive home and close your front door behind you or when you shut down your computer. (Too many people do not shut down their computer or log off from work – it tends to go on and on with no end or renewed beginning!). Start with things that are easy. You don't start playing the piano with a piece by Chopin; you begin with scales and chords!"

From Brother David Steindl-Rast: Some Thoughts on Gratefulness. *Prodigal Kiwi(s) Blog* for February 2, 2017

May our practice of mindfulness draw us closer to the One who is ever mindful of us!

Laureen Virnig, OSB

Laureen Virnig, OSB

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From the Desk of the Prioress *Michaela Hedican, OSB*



This homily was given on the Feast of St. Benedict, March 21, 2017

In many ways, the American diet of these last forty years has enhanced the strong individualism and extensive entitlement that are prevalent in our world today. A good portion of Americans has grown up on the burgers and the by-line from Burger King – “Have it Your Way.” Then there is the message from McDonalds, “You Deserve a Break Today.” Our Gospel for this feast

would indicate that a sense of entitlement and individualism have been around for a long time. Burger King and McDonalds did not invent these realities - they capitalized on them. Peter’s statement, “Look, we have left everything and followed you” and his question, “What then will we have?” could fall from the lips of any one of us. It seems to be part of the human condition. Even if we are willing to forgo certain things, we want to be certain that we will get something for our effort. We want something that will counterbalance what we feel we have given up. As human beings, we want it our way and we are clear about what we believe we deserve.

Not everyone sees it that way, however. The author, Joyce Rupp, OSM, tells the story of one of her friends who is an avid swimmer in British Columbia. Joyce noted a scrape on her friend’s arm, to which her friend replied, “I get some every summer from the sharp-edged barnacles on the rocks.” The friend went on to tell Joyce that when her grandson started swimming with her she told him he was bound to get these cuts. One day he called across the water in a proud voice: “I got one, Grandma!” The grandson obviously accepted this pain as part of the price for a free-spirited frolic in the ocean. He was not counting the cost. He was proud of the price he paid. We know that eventually Peter was also willing to pay a high price for following Jesus.

Benedict seems to have had a similar attitude of not counting the cost and he challenges us to a comparable mindset. He tells

us the way will be narrow but our hearts will expand if we persevere and we will share in the kingdom. (Pro. 49-50)

Then again, it may not be about giving things up in the first place. The reading from Proverbs places before us today where Benedict put his emphasis.

It is about accepting God’s words; treasuring God’s commandments; crying out for insight; inclining our hearts to understanding; it is about seeking and searching for wisdom.

For Benedict it is about receiving what God has to offer. The Prologue of the *Rule* points to this stance. Benedict tells us, it is because of God’s goodness that God counts us as God’s own. With God’s good gifts that are in us, we are to obey God. (Pro. 5-6) We do not become God’s own by what we give up nor do we get God’s gifts by being good – the gifts are already ours. We simply need to engage them.

To be clear, it is not an automatic engagement. As the reading to the Ephesians tells us, we need to keep alert in order to see the good that calls us to action. We need to be alert to the forces of evil that we may not succumb. Benedict’s words; “Your way of acting should be different from the world’s way; the love of Christ must come before all else,” (RB 4: 20-21) says it all.

Now this is not to say Benedict wouldn’t look kindly on our frequenting Burger King or McDonalds. I enjoy having a Jr. Whopper now and then myself. Benedict would want us however, to remember not what we have given up, or how we want things our way, but rather what we have been given. In the end we deserve above all else to give God glory.

As we move, now, to the table of the Eucharist, let us be mindful of the words shared with you on this day in 2014, let us – “Sit,” “Stay,” “Sip” and “Savor” the message of our readings that nourish and nurture us through the Word of everlasting life.

Michaela Hedican, OSB, Prioress



The Year of Mercy – It’s Not Over

A room filled with oblates, candidates, inquirers and sisters gathered on Sunday, January 15, to hear a presentation on “The Year of Mercy – It’s Not Over,” given by Sister Michaela Hedican, prioress. She began by telling us we are not in a year of mercy anymore; we are in a life of mercy.

Mercy is connected to the French word *merci* (thanks); mercy is always connected to gratitude. We thank God we are in the presence of our merciful Savior, the loving Lord, who lavishes mercy upon us.

In this year of mercy many wonderful stories came out about mercy. One story shared was that of a woman who forgave the man who murdered her only son and her husband. Her request for justice was that the murderer become her son so she can pour out on him the love she still has.

Another was of Fr. Tom Lapsley, an Anglican priest active in the anti-apartheid movement, who when he opened his mail one day, a letter bomb exploded resulting in him losing both arms and an eye. He considers himself a victor over evil, hatred and death and today operates a trauma center in South Africa for victims of violence.

The children’s book, *Even if I Did Something Awful*, written by Barbara Shook Hazen, was read to the group. The mother in this story explains merciful forgiveness and unconditional love to her daughter, along with the reality that there are consequences for our actions. This book captures the spirit of the Old Testament where we see mercy as integral to who God is; God is mercy. Amidst some harsh things, the Old Testament tells of the tender mercy of God who is supportive of who we are and reverent in honoring us. God

(Continued on p. 3 - Year of Mercy)



Grace and Humility as Keys to Self-Compassion

Tracy Rittmueller, Obl. Cand., Sauk Rapids, Minn.

Opening her presentation on “Self Compassion and Humility” for the March 19 Oblate Sunday, Becky Van Ness, OblSB, smilingly admonished us not to treat the learning of self-compassion as if it were another project in self-improvement.

My response was self-deprecating laughter. Yes, that’s me all right—always striving to get it right, to quickly, efficiently, master the objective or attain the goal. But how, then, will I improve if I don’t make a project of self-compassion. I can’t even imagine another way to learn.

I am an oblate candidate, so new to Benedictine spirituality that I’m like a toddler careening merrily down a beautiful, woodland path. The sparkling stream catches my attention, and I rush to chase the sunlight glinting off ripples. “But dear,” a wiser companion shows me—not by talking but by modeling, “we don’t tread into water wearing our socks and shoes!” I see a pretty flower and stoop to pick it. “Yes, it’s pretty,” I’m shown. “But that’s an endangered Lady Slipper. If we pick it, soon there will be no more pink flowers for anyone else to admire, and we’ll harm the ecosystem.”

What you’re reading now is a drastic rewrite that hardly resembles the first way I wrote this story. I finished the first version, emailed it, and experienced satisfaction when I hit send. It was nicely polished, exactly the kind of writing I know certain editors like to see from me.

But then, listening to my heart, I heard realized my first attempt wasn’t Benedictine. It was suited for a secular, intellectual journal of nonfiction like *Brevity*, and not for *The Oblate News*. I had written in the voice I’ve cultivated to please contemporary editors of literary journals. And that voice is not my authentic voice.

I have so very much to learn about the Benedictine life, including how to use—not misuse or falsify—my God-given, unique voice.

On Oblate Sunday, I learned almost as much about Benedictine spirituality from the way Becky Van Ness presented her material, as from the information she shared. She didn’t just talk-talk-talk. She broke frequently, allowing us to dialogue and process our impressions with a partner.

During one of those partner-exchanges, I said, without quite knowing what I meant or where it came from, “I feel like I’ve been handed a key to self-compassion.” “A key?” my listening-partner asked, inviting me to deeper contemplation.

And after a few days I was given an expanded image. I purposely use the word given, because I didn’t work for it. Instead, it simply came to me like an unexpected guest. Grace arrived with a small piece of metal in her hand and gently said, “Follow me down.”

And I knew that as I journey *down*, Grace will stay with me, cutting incisions in the metal, one little notch for each rung we descend on the ladder, which she calls humility. And then, after we reach the ground there will be a door leading out of my habitual way of thinking about how to get where God is inviting me to go. Grace, working through *humility*, will fashion a key to unlock the door to self-compassion.

It is impossible to earn or achieve spiritual growth. Instead, by humbly practicing a Benedictine way of life, God’s grace, through those practices, will work on me the way nutrients, warmth, light, and water work together to transform a seed into a sapling into a tree. And now I can imagine another way to learn, a way that isn’t about me or my perfectionistic striving. It’s a process of accepting, with gratitude, *God’s love, God’s power, and God’s timing*, because God is the maker of all things, including me.

Year of Mercy *(continued from p. 2)*

journeys with us through the consequences of the choices we make, and God always will. References to an angry and punishing God in the Old Testament need to be set in context of the Middle East culture. Before Christ, writers attempted to explain evil and suffering by attributing it to divine wrath as a way to make sense out of it.

In 2007 before Pope Francis came on the scene and called for a year of mercy, a book came out by Fr. James Keenan, SJ; it was *Works of Mercy – The Heart of Catholicism*. He wrote, “Mercy is the willingness to enter into the chaos of another.” In a special publication dedicated to this year of mercy called by Pope Francis was an article entitled, “Mercy – Another Name for God.” The focus of the article by this Jesuit author was the parable of the Good Samaritan. The author identifies four elements that are part of the parable of the good Samaritan, that are part of our being called people of mercy to be the face of mercy for others today: 1) contemplative seeing – to see what’s going on, to see it with the eyes of Christ; 2) an affective response- that there is feeling that moves us; 3) practical service of another (words are easy); 4) engaging another to sustain the good work.

When we relate this to our experience as Benedictines, as followers of the way of Benedict, we know that Benedict does speak about mercy, but it is mostly applied to the abbot or prioress. The greatest call for mercy is in the life of the abbot, and in the prioress in a women’s community. Benedict’s sees this as an example of how the leader is to lead, basically through example more than by words (words are easy). He also lays out for us in RB 4 ways that we are all called to be merciful, ways that apply in whatever our setting is, whether a student, a family, living alone – it applies to all of us. In Chapter 4 of the *Rule Benedict* starts out the tools of good works basically with the corporal works of mercy. He then goes on to say, “You are to go to help the troubled and console the sorrowing; you are never to act in anger or nurse a grudge (feed it, pamper it, make sure it has everything it needs); never give a hollow greeting of peace and never turn away from someone who needs your love.”

Benedict gives us ways in which following the *Rule* is to be a life of mercy. In the end, he tells us to place all our hope in being able to do this in God and never lose hope in God’s mercy.

Meet Sister Susan Rudolph, OSB, Prioress-Elect

Mary Reuter, OSB

What is it for God to take over, undergird, permeate a community and to call it to a renewed heart and unfamiliar horizons? We, members of Saint Benedict's Monastery, can tell you . . . or can we?

It's challenging to put into words what we experienced as a community gathered in our discernment-election chapters in fall 2016, January and February 2017. We met to discern how God is calling us to live our charism as Benedictines of St. Joseph, Minnesota and in what ways we are to serve in ministry particularly during the next six years. Words to describe our experience fail us. Yet, we know that the presence of the Holy Spirit was palpable.

Through our discernment, Sister Susan Rudolph emerged as the woman we were to call forth into leadership in our community at this time in our history and faith journey together. No campaigning! No party system at work! No rallies! The Spirit didn't need these strategies to indicate who God's choice is to hold the place of Christ in our midst as prioress (RB 2:2). God made it clear who is to walk with us as leader as we continue to discern God's on-going call to seek God and to collaborate with others for the sake of God's reign of love.

S. Susan is familiar to the St. Cloud area. She grew up in St. Cloud and participated in St. Augustine Parish and School. She is one of thirteen children and the daughter of parents, Stephen and Gertrude Rudolph, who guided their family as together they lived their faith.

S. Susan has served in various parishes: Sacred Heart in Sauk Rapids, St. Boniface in Cold Spring and St. Augustine's in St. Cloud. Many alumnae of the College of Saint Benedict know S. Susan's service to them as she served fourteen years as Director of Housing and Staff Resident, roles that involved many responsibilities beyond room selection.

When women begin their incorporation into a Benedictine community, it is important that a wise "senior . . . look over them with careful attention" and discern whether or not they sincerely

seek God in all aspects of their life (RB 58: 6-7). S. Susan served as one of these wise seniors for members in initial formation for several years.

The name, S. Susan, became a household word at Saint Benedict's Senior Community where she



served as Director of Pastoral Care for twenty-one years. When she left in winter 2016, she took with her many memories and friends. She also left a legacy of her philosophy and programs of care to serve the needs and hopes of our elderly people.

What does a Prioress-elect do during the time between election and installation as prioress (on June 4, 2017)? One challenge is to keep up with our current prioress, Sister Michaela, as she moves from place to place so S. Susan can glean insights of orientation. As S. Susan says, "I am participating in the Michaela Academy." She also holds as an objective to become more familiar with projects, issues and our relationships with the broader community. Serving as a leader in these areas is different from participating as a community member. To help her become more grounded in her faith and personal perspective, S. Susan will give some days to retreat where the Spirit can find her without the daily influx of tasks and concerns.

The election of our new prioress was part of a community experience of discernment. Standing on the ground of our charism and mission we agreed on direction statements to guide us through the next six years. God has broken into our lives and stirred possibilities of new perceptions and choices. God has given us a leader to continue the wise shepherding we have experienced in the past. We trust that God will continue to move us from vision to action for the sake of our community and the world.

What is an Oblate?

Lynda Gradert, OblSB Minneapolis, Minn.

What is an oblate? When someone asks me what my weekend plans are and I'm going to the Monastery for an event I always pause because I know I'll have to answer that question. It's not that I want to be a secret oblate. It's just a tough question because I want to say so much. Yet I know I have only 15-30 seconds to answer before I see the questioner's eyes glaze over.

So what is an oblate?

My latest answer: Someone who wants to be part a supportive community, exploring/living in a way that brings us closer to God and each other. There, that was about 7 seconds, I have 8 to spare.

That answer is the tip of the iceberg and doesn't address why I'm still an oblate.

I became an oblate when I graduated from the College of St. Benedict in 1987. I wanted to maintain a relationship with the sisters I had come to know and love during my time at college. My oblate practice has ebbed and flowed since then.

Inquirers often ask 'how much time does it take to be an oblate?' It depends how much time you have and how much time you want to give. There have been years when I didn't devote much

time to my practice. Now I meet regularly with others, study the Rule of St. Benedict and pray *Lectio Divina*.

Another Benedictine practice I've been exploring is hospitality. Being an oblate guides how I respond to my life and others. How do I respond to my friends and family? My co-workers? How do I respond to the person holding the cardboard sign on the street corner? How do I respond to God's voice calling me to a fuller life?

All of these practices are as important to me as getting a good night sleep. They help me show up, hear God's voice and respond (hopefully kindly) to all the people and events in my life.

We are having an event on May 20, 9:30-11 at Rosamond A at St. Benedict's Monastery for those wanting to know more about what an oblate is and how to become one. Oblates will share how they live their oblate journey and S. Laureen Virnig, OSB, will answer questions about the process of becoming an oblate. There will be plenty of time for questions and delicious scones and coffee. If you came to the event last October and would like to come again, please do. To register please email oblatesbm@csbsju.edu or call 320-363-7144 by May 17. I hope to see you!

Self-compassion and Humility

“Self-compassion is a spiritual discipline rooted in Benedictine humility and Trinitarian theology.” This was an opening statement by Oblate Becky Van Ness to the Oblate Sunday gathering on March 19. In her presentation, *Self-Compassion and Humility*, she said self-compassion is of one piece with our relationship with God and with each other. The 4th step of humility in the Rule of Benedict is to be at ease with our humanity; it is to allow ourselves to be human and fall short of high expectations, just as we would compassionately allow another to be less than perfect.

The steps of self-compassion are, first of all, to notice my distress about not being good enough or not measuring up. Then, to remind myself that I am humus, of the earth; I am finite like all other human beings. The last step is to offer kindness in the way I relate to myself with words, images, or gestures that will help.

We might look at it as different parts of self in relation to each other. The “self inside” feels not ‘good enough.’ The “observer” self steps back and notices ‘I don’t feel so good’ about myself right now. The “comforter” self offers a gesture or word that helps and eases me into being human.

Using the Rublev icon, the theology of Blessed Trinity expresses the mystery that God is in relationship within God. God is defined by love. Out of the energy of love that is in God is an energy that is poured forth in all of creation. We are made in the image of God. We, too, can be more harmonious in relationship in ourselves and can have a love that spills out on others. Self-compassion is a way we can be in better relationship with God and each other.

One of the leading researchers in the field of self-compassion is Dr. Kristin Neff. In a brief video Dr. Neff said self-compassion involves treating ourselves like we would treat a friend when we’re suffering because of mistakes we’ve made. Often we are harsher on ourselves than on persons we don’t like very much. Imperfection is part of the common shared human experience. Often when people fail or struggle in their lives, there is a subconscious assumption everybody is doing well and something has gone wrong with us.



A supportive and encouraging approach is helpful in our learning from failure rather than being afraid of it. People who are self-compassionate are more giving, more caring, less controlling, less aggressive. If I can meet some of my own needs for love, acceptance, validation, support, I have more to give to others.

Self-compassion helps with anxiety and stress by allowing feelings to get worked through more quickly. Self-compassion recognizes the shared human condition; life is difficult for everyone. If self-compassion helps you give more to another and helps others be happy, it is not selfish.

Self-compassion is different from self-esteem. In order to feel self-esteem one is constantly in a state of social comparison. Am I better than this person? Is this person better than me? A problem with self-esteem is that it is contingent on success; we feel good when we succeed. What happens when we fail? Self-compassion steps in when you need it most which is precisely when you fail. It is not an evaluation of self-worth; it is a way of treating yourself kindly.

Humility, from the Benedictine viewpoint, adds to our understanding of self-compassion. It arises out of grace, out of our relationship with God. “Humility is acceptance of our status as human beings, dust from dust, but redeemed and ennobled by the Son of God. Hence, humility is truth. One who is humble does not need to resort to deception to bolster his self-esteem; nor does he need to compete or envy others. The humble person accepts both her gifts and her limitations. This self-acceptance is expressed particularly in acceptance, forgiveness and patience for others and in readiness to serve others and God. To serve here means to be at their disposal, to be ready to perform any task on their behalf.” (Text taken from “Humility by Fr. Hugh Feiss, OSB <http://www.idahomonks.org/sect802.htm>).

Some ways to offer self-compassion are:

- Consider how you’d treat someone else. What would you say to that person?
- Be attentive to your language. If you wouldn’t say the same statements to someone you care about, then you’re being too hard on yourself.
- Comfort yourself with a physical gesture. Kind physical gestures have an immediate effect on our bodies such as putting your hands over your heart or simply holding your arm.
- Use compassionate phrases to help you to stay in experience, such as, “This is a tough time”; “How can I be kind to myself in this moment?”
- Imagine a safe place. Think of what a person or figure who is an ideal source of compassion would say to comfort you.
- Pause for a minute and look at the loving gaze of God looking at you.



Mindfulness: A Benedictine Practice

Gae Skager, B.S., R.N., OblSB, Minneapolis, Minn.

Paying attention and truly being present in the moment can be so rewarding. When we are busy and actively doing so many things, we are not always acutely aware of happenings around us. Living more consciously can help us to enjoy the simplicity of being. The concept of mindfulness was something which I learned about from a book called *The Path of Emancipation: Talks from a 21 day Mindfulness Retreat* by Buddhist Monk Thich Nhat Hanh. Now I live with Benedictine mindfulness each day.

One way to be mindful is by observing the environment as seasons change from winter to spring. Notice little changes such as tree buds swelling and plants greening, birds migrating, a fish momentarily jumping out of the water and the ripple of the water as it settles itself again, and a bumblebee flying from flower to flower. Take time to actively listen to a friend. Watch a baby crawl across the floor. See a happy dog wagging her tail. Observe people interacting in your church community. Be extra attentive to the immediate world encompassing you from time to time.

The practice of mindfulness has greatly helped me adapt to the physical changes with my ALS diagnosis. My motor nerves are slowly deteriorating and I am losing control of my ability to move my muscles. I cannot get up from my power wheelchair and walk smoothly across the room anymore. My body lacks the coordination now. So instead, I must plan my walking with the assistance of another person.

First we need to have the proper tools available, including my transfer belt and walker. I plan for the distance and approach to my destination and communicate with my caregiver where I will need to pivot and turn my feet and the walker to safely sit again. My hands need to grip the walker in the appropriate location. My caregiver has to be synchronized with my movements and the advancement of the walker so that I maintain enough balance to not topple us both down to the floor. My caregiver needs to be

positioned safely to support me and protect her/his own back muscles. I lean forward to prevent myself from falling, yet not have too much weight forward as we shift the walker to the next position.

My foot steps are very slow and deliberate. My knees sometimes take a moment to release from a locked position to move forward and then need to lock in place again before we move the walker. My feet have to be separated enough to give me a stable base to not fall. My feet need to be under my hips and not too far forward or back. The walker is ahead of me, while not being too close or too far forward. If my caregiver says, "Hurry!" I may lock up my muscles in panic and not be able to move forward right away.

I walk 10 feet and I am exhausted from the effort! This takes great concentration and mindfulness in planning and actualizing a transfer. Yet I am very grateful that my muscles are still strong enough to support my weight and I do not yet need to be lifted by man or machine! I am very appreciative of the patience and willingness of my caregivers to attentively assist my movement.

My Benedictine oblate practice includes seeking God through daily spiritual reading, centering prayer and mindfulness meditation. We each need to learn and practice to be more aware of our breathing, relaxing our bodies and minds, becoming more conscious of our intentions and personal energy, moving and sitting mindfully, eating mindfully, and opening our hearts more to God and to one another. There is worth to being truly present. Our perspective may change dramatically if we simply stop and really see God's miracles surrounding us in every moment. We then may feel gratitude for the grace and blessings of today being fully alive.

Some other resources which I recommend on mindfulness:

Beauty: The Invisible Embrace by John O'Donohue

Coming to Our Senses: Healing Ourselves and the World through Mindfulness by Jon Kabat-Zinn

Running with Expanding Heart: Meeting God in Everyday Life by Mary Reuter, OSB

Prayer Intentions

Please remember the following in your prayers:

- + Harold Taylor, husband of Theresa Kustritz Taylor, OblSB, died January 11, 2017
- + Dan Dieser, son of Paul Dieser, OblSB, died February 2017
- + Helen Gareri, OblSB, died February 21, 2017
- + Mary Martin Hickner, OblSB, died February 23, 2017
- + Michelle Lynn Pettitt, daughter of Geri Backes Pettitt, OblSB, died February 27, 2017
- + Tom Morrow, son of Marie Morrow, OblSB, died March 19, 2017
- + Truman Lofte, father of Sally Lofte, OblSB, died March 24, 2017
- + Larry Goodspeed, husband of Elna Goodspeed, OblSB, died March 30, 2017
- + Mary George Ortmann, OSB, died April 1, 2017
- + Ethel Petersen, mother of Sharon Pelant, OblSB, died April 1, 2017
- + Verence Ramler, OSB, died April 3, 2017
- + Alice Miller, mother of Denise Stachnik, OblSB, died April 15, 2017
- + Elizabeth Barringer, OblSB, died April 15, 2017

For oblates Mary Donahue, Phillippa Lindquist and Florianna Theisen who are receiving treatment for cancer.

If you would like a prayer intention included, please contact us: lvirnig@csbsju.edu or (320) 363-7144. You may also write: Oblate Director, 104 Chapel Lane, St. Joseph, MN 56374.

Oblate E-Directory

An Oblate E-Directory on EXCEL will be printed for oblates who complete this form. Included will be the names of oblates who made their commitment to Saint Benedict's Monastery or officially transferred to Saint Benedict's Monastery. Also included will be the names of persons who made an oblate commitment in Sacred Heart Chapel prior to September 1962 for Saint John's Abbey and consider themselves Oblates of Saint Benedict's Monastery; the date of their final oblation needs to be included. Candidates who are **actively in the process of becoming oblates** will be included.

The names of all oblates who return this information **by June 1, 2017**, will be included in the directory. All information on this sheet will be included in the directory, in addition to the date of final commitment. **Items marked with ** are required.** You may include as much or as little other information as you like. This information may be sent through e-mail or US Postal Service.

**Last name		**First name		Maiden name (optional)	
Street		**City		** State Zip	
**Birthday: Month / Day		Phone		E-mail address	
**Date of final oblate commitment:					
		Month	Day	Year	

Return to: Oblate Director Saint Benedict's Monastery St Joseph, MN 56374 or lvirnig@csbsju.edu

For those requiring a paper copy, donations toward printing and mailing would be gratefully accepted.

Happy Birthday!

June	14 Jacqueline Zbaracki	July	24 Lila McDermott	11 Camilla Weber
1 Martha Fairley	Treva Fendrick	1 Bernadette Stein	25 Heather Klason	Missy Holbrook
Joan Krause	16 Ann Erickson	Marcy Casper	26 Patricia Hackert	13 Rosemary Franzese
2 Margaret Schwob	Janice LaVine	2 Janet Schleper	27 Jana Preble	14 Patricia Mische
Jan Hier	19 Shirley Batchelder	Rosemary O'Keefe-Ebnet	Marilyn Schmit	19 Bonnie Kucala
3 Elizabeth Birnstihl	Betty Nystrom	4 Rosemary Brever	28 Carol Sisterman	Linda Hutchinson
Julie Kelvie	Lynn Valek	5 Janet Waldbillig	30 Mary Novak	20 Annamarie
5 Kate Maxwell	20 Sharon Kelly	6 Judith Christenson	31 Dawn Tholke	Jeannie Weber
6 Frances Baron	21 Kathrine Mauser	Mary Stackpool	Joe Fitzgerald	Marilyn Lalum
Marlene Jansen	22 Marie James	7 Janice Kaylor	August	21 Vivian Rowe
8 Karen Kruse	Patricia Giesen	9 Elaine Willenbring	1 Deborah O	22 Sandra Winans-Berkow
9 Barbara McGinnis	Anna Klein	Lana Faber	2 Douglas Coy	24 Debra Parker
Mary Berry	23 Pat Cicharz	10 Joseph Holtermann	3 Jim Fairley	25 Joan Walkowiak
Carol Klaus	Barbara Thomes	12 Kevin Kluesner	Sharon McVary	Barbara Adams
10 Charlotte Donovan	26 Nanette Dagon	13 Bonnie Maruri	Orlando Rivera	26 Leann Enninga
Bernadette Reardon	Theresa Taylor	William Sullivan	4 Jenni Lilledahl	27 Ricarda Kelso
Liz Keenan	27 Lorryayne Traut	13 Steven Heymans	Megan Boyle	Theresa Stergios
Peggy Sietsema	28 Marjorie Brutger	15 ReJean Schulte	LaVonne O'Connor	28 Mary Lou Fuhry
LeMay Bechtold	Mary Buley	16 Wayne Landry	8 Kathryn Roos	Dewey Kramer
11 Denise Stachnik	29 Agnes Flynn	18 Georgia Goodell	9 Mary Alice Tomporowski	Eileen McCormick
Tammy McGee	30 Laura Wuertz	21 Karen Phillips	Bernard Franta	29 Geraldine Idzerda
12 Elna Goodspeed		22 Gae Skager	10 Ann Marie Barta	DiAnn Vinck
13 Karen Roertgen		Lorraine Matusak	Matthew Stergios	30 Bernadine St. Pierre
		23 Marge Blenkush	11 Peggy Kelley	

If you would like your birthday added to the list or if the date is incorrect, please contact lvirnig@csbsju.edu or call (320) 363-7144. You may also write: Oblate Director, 104 Chapel Lane, St. Joseph, MN 56374.

Oblate Office

104 Chapel Lane, St. Joseph, MN 56374-0220
Telephone: (320) 363-7144 • www.sbm.osb.org



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Upcoming Oblate Events

Oblate Sunday: May 21, 2017

PRAYING WITH ICONS

Presenter: Elna Goodspeed, OblSB
1:15- 2:30 p.m.

Iconographer, Elna Goodspeed says "writing" icons has led her to a deeper faith. She will bring icons and explain the symbolism. Prayer and study are integral parts of the process of "writing" icons.

The schedule for all oblate Sundays is: 10:30 a.m. Eucharist followed by brunch. The presentation takes place from 1:15 -2:30 p.m. in Rosamond A.

If you plan to be at the monastery for brunch, please call (320) 363-7144 or e-mail Oblate Office at lvirnig@csbsju.edu by **Thursday, May 18, 2017.**

OBLATE RENEWAL DAY : September 16, 2017

*The Divine Presence is Everywhere:
Fostering and Nurturing Awareness*

Presenter: Joseph Feders, OSB
9:00 am – 3:45 pm

Oblate Sunday: November 19, 2017

Presenter: Mara Faulkner, OSB
1:15-2:30 p.m.
Topic: to be announced.

EMAIL NOTICE

If you have e-mail and have not been receiving messages from the Oblate Office, it is likely that we do not have your current e-mail address. If you wish to receive messages, please send your current e-address.



Oblate Inquirers

Persons who have been inquiring about becoming oblates and are seriously considering becoming an oblate candidate, please contact **Sister Laureen** at lvirnig@csbsju.edu or call **(320)-363-7144** or write to Oblate Director, 104 Chapel Lane, St. Joseph, MN 56374