



MOUNT MICHAEL ABBEY

OBLATES OF SAINT BENEDICT

August 2021

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Letter from Our Oblate Director

Dear Oblates,

St. Benedict's desire for God always remained his single focus in living the monastic life. Benedict lives in awe and reverence of God. God speaks to Benedict, and He responds, "what dear brother and sister is more delightful than this voice of the Lord calling to us."

God hovers over Benedict and He hovers over his monks in a watchful and mindful way with great reverence for the dignity of all humankind. As Benedict is drawn more deeply into God's love, he moves out in compassion and action.

God continues to hover us, breathing life into us, "the vessels of the altar God speaks the word, the invitation to the path of conversion. For each of us our meeting with the Lord may happen at a moment least expected. We are invited into the mystery.

*This is gift
This is blessing*

Be oblates of compassion and action, and live in awe and reverence of God.

Let us hold each other in prayer.

Brother Jerome Kmiecik, OSB
Oblate Director



The Gift of Silence

Since I was a little girl I loved having moments of solitude and silence. Being with others was and is wonderful, but there is something amazingly fulfilling about being quiet and alone with God.

Through the years life kept moving forward and with it came the gift of a loving husband and two amazing children. The moves we made from Italy to Germany to the States brought with them many changes, and yet one constant Presence has been accompanying us all this time: Jesus' living Presence in the Eucharist and His Catholic (universal) Church.

I remember with deep gratitude how every morning, before school, my children and I would stop in the Eucharistic Chapel at St. Stephen's to say "Hi" to our Lord, Lord of our lives and Lord of the whole universe.

In our "pilgrimage" from one Continent to the next, Christ has been present...and then the pandemic happened. Although in its beginnings I considered it as a big, uncertain and isolating moment in my life, I am now realizing how, during this grace-filled time, God has been calling me to re-discover and treasure the gift of silence.

This is the silence where my heart is challenged to stay still and to be present before the Lord, Who is constantly present to me. The silence where my heart is quiet and is listening to His Heart. The silence where my heart surrenders, the silence where two hearts beat as one, growing deeper in love and mercy. The silence where He speaks and I listen as He calls me by name. "I love you", He says, "I have chosen you. You are mine forever". The silence where my ego and my own needs become nothing and where my heart opens to love and to serve others in their needs. The silence where compassion is alive, and another's suffering and tears are mine, too.

The immensely faithful love of God has been with me through it all: moves, pandemic, uncertainty, fears, suffering...It is He, Who calls my wandering heart to conversion, to refocus and to new life.

Through my husband and my children, through old and new friends, through the Benedictine family, through wise and understanding guidance, He creates me anew and I am deeply thankful.

May my daily life constantly testify to His goodness and love.

Blessed Mother Mary, Woman of silence, pray for us.

St. Benedict and St. Scholastica, teachers of silence, pray for us.

Francesca Dammermann
Oblate Dean



Good heavens...We're still looking for you!

In our last pre-pandemic issue we asked our absent oblates; Where Are You? Well, it seems it was easier to identify Waldo than to find those we're looking for.

The fact is, we miss you; those that have not been able to attend our spiritual and fun monthly meetings at Mount Michael. We'd like nothing more than to see those of you who can, participate in our meetings. It's still that "open arms" thing.

To be sure, the virus put a damper on our get-togethers, however be assured we are once again fully active and we would love all of you to be part of it. Our monthly meetings, September through June, are still an oasis of spirituality and interesting conversation with like minded oblates. As you know, we spend time in prayer in the form of Lectio Divina; a wonderful way to deepen one's spirituality. Additionally, we have book discussions and other subjects of interest. Following the meetings, attending vespers prior to leaving Mount Michael is also an option.

Finally, oblates are able to participate in special sessions of Lectio Divina in the guest house at various times during the month.

So, as we said at the beginning of this note, we would like nothing better than to have you back at our gatherings. We think you'll find them stimulating and fun. So please mark your calendars for September 12th; the beginning of the new year. We look forward to seeing you all once again.

Howard Schanzer, Jr.
Oblate Dean



Meeting Dates & Events

Please keep these meeting dates and special events in mind. Oblate meetings are the 2nd Sunday of the month except for the month of May. Since Mother's Day is the second Sunday of the month, an alternate date will be determined.

We will continue to use the book, *HOW to LIVE - What the Rule of Saint Benedict Teaches Us About Happiness, Meaning and Community*, by Judith Valente (ISBN: 978-1-57174-798-3), this year during our Sunday Oblate meetings.

- **SEP 12 - Novice & Oblate Meetings** in the Abbey
 - 1:30 - Novice Meeting
 - 1:30 - Optional Social
 - Located in the Oblate Room in the Abbey
 - Time for conversation
 - Refreshments
 - Look over Oblate resources & books available to borrow
 - 2:30 to 4:00 - Oblate Meeting (*How to Live* chapter 14)
 - 4:15 - Vespers with the Monastic Community in the Chapel
- **SEP 17 - Set Up for Fall Festival**
 - 10 AM - 3 PM
- **SEP 18**
 - **Mount Michael Fall Festival**

- Oblates work the Flea Market during the festival, various times are available for sign up
- 1 -5 PM
- **OCT 10 - Novice & Oblate Meetings** in the Abbey
 - 1:30 - Novice Meeting
 - 1:30 - Optional Social
 - 2:30 to 4:00 - Oblate Meeting (*How to Live* chapter 15)
 - 4:15 - Vespers with the Monastic Community in the Chapel
- **NOV 14 - Novice & Oblate Meetings** in the Abbey
 - 1:30 - Novice Meeting
 - 1:30 - Optional Social
 - 2:30 to 4:00 - Oblate Meeting (*How to Live* chapter 16)
 - 4:15 - Vespers with the Monastic Community in the Chapel
- **DEC 12 - Novice & Oblate Meetings** in the Abbey
 - 1:30 - Novice Meeting
 - 1:30 - Optional Social
 - 2:30 to 4:00 - Oblate Meeting (*How to Live* chapter 17)
 - 4:15 - Vespers with the Monastic Community in the Chapel
- **JAN 9 - Novice & Oblate Meetings** in the Abbey
 - 1:30 - Novice Meeting
 - 1:30 - Optional Social
 - 2:30 to 4:00 - Oblate Meeting (*How to Live* chapter 18)
 - 4:15 - Vespers with the Monastic Community in the Chapel
- **FEB 13 - Novice & Oblate Meetings** in the Abbey
 - 1:30 - Novice Meeting
 - 1:30 - Optional Social
 - 2:30 to 4:00 - Oblate Meeting (*How to Live* chapter 19)
 - 4:15 - Vespers with the Monastic Community in the Chapel
- **MAR 13 - Novice & Oblate Meetings** in the Abbey
 - 1:30 - Novice Meeting
 - 1:30 - Optional Social
 - 2:30 to 4:00 - Oblate Meeting (*How to Live* chapter 20)
 - 4:15 - Vespers with the Monastic Community in the Chapel
- **APR 10 - Novice & Oblate Meetings** in the Abbey
 - 1:30 - Novice Meeting
 - 1:30 - Optional Social
 - 2:30 to 4:00 - Oblate Meeting (*How to Live* chapter 21)
 - 4:15 - Vespers with the Monastic Community in the Chapel
- **MAY Date TBD - Novice & Oblate Meetings dates to be determined due to Mother's Day**



All are welcome to participate and contribute to our Oblate Ministries. Ministry opportunities will be discussed during the September monthly Oblate meeting. Please call Brother Jerome to volunteer. (402-206-2069)

- **Mount Michael Fall Festival** - The annual Mount Michael Fall Festival is on Saturday, September 18, 2021. Oblates assist by setting up for the Festival on Friday, September 17, (10 AM-3 PM). Oblates also staff the Flea Market and Guest House Gift Shop (1-5 PM) the day of the festival September 18. Please sign up to help with this fun event at our next Oblate meeting, or call Brother Jerome. It's a great opportunity for our guests to meet our Benedictine Oblate community.
- **Oblates of Saint Benedict Guest House, Gift Shop & Flea Market Barn** - Oblates are invited to help at the Guest House, Gift Shop and Flea Market Barn, a quiet retreat to refresh soul and body. Days and Times:
 - Thursdays, 10 AM - 3 PM
 - Fridays, 10 AM - 4 PM
 - Saturdays, 9 AM - 3 PM



Contact Information

Mount Michael Abbey Oblates of Saint Benedict

*"Listen carefully, my son, to the master's instructions, and attend to them with the ear of your heart."
(Opening words of the Prologue of The Rule of Saint Benedict)*

Oblate Director

Brother Jerome Kmiecik, OSB - jkmiecik@mountmichael.org

Oblate Deans

Howard Schanzer - hschanz@cox.net

Francesca Dammermann - mdammermann@aol.com

Oblate Ministries

*"All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ..."
(RB 53.1)*

Guest House help

Brother Jerome, OSB - [402-206-2069](tel:402-206-2069), jkmiecik@mountmichael.org

Flea Market help

Brother Jerome Kmiecik, OSB - jkmiecik@mountmichael.org

Oblate Formation mentor oblate novices

Francesca Dammermann - [402-332-2986](tel:402-332-2986), mdammermann@aol.com

Newsletter Editor

Jean Hlavacek - [402-504-4222](tel:402-504-4222), jean.jeweler@gmail.com

Useful Links for Oblates

Mount Michael Oblate Website

<http://www.mountmichael.org/Pages/Oblates>

Daily Liturgy of the Hours

<http://www.universalis.com/Library/index.htm>

International Benedictine Web Portal

<http://www.osb.org>

