

Oblate Community of Saint Martin's Abbey

Oblates of Saint Benedict

Sept 2023

Volume 2 Issue 66

A LETTER FROM THE OBLATE DIRECTOR — BROTHER EDMUND EBBERS, OSB

Dear Oblates and Friends of St. Martin's Abbey:

This month I would like to take up Chapter 32, "The Tools and Possessions of the Monastery".

This chapter of the Holy Rule is most concerned about the care of possessions of the monastery. All things are not possessions of any individual monk but for all. The proper treatment of all things is important because material items are sacraments, transparent to the Divine. The words found to describe a weakening of the spirit are "slovenly or negligent." Tools are to be collected after work and put back in their proper place and any damage done is to be reported. There should be a common place for storage of tools. Negligence in using tools or hoarding them is contrary to the rule's instruction. We all want to have the proper tool or equipment when needed and not have to repair or hunt down a tool. In St. Benedict's day, I am sure tools were hard to come by and could not be found in a local market. Today there are tools and equipment for everything under the sun. Here at the Abbey, we believe in maintenance. Sometimes replacing something is cheaper than repairing it. None-the-less care must be taken to use tools with respect and for their intended use.

We consider motor vehicles and bicycles tools for sacred use, treating them for whatever use is to be seen in the light of the Divine. When something does not seem right with the vehicle, we should report it to the person appointed to remedy the problem. We must not hide our faults but bring them forward so that they be corrected and humble us.

It takes cognitive awareness to see the Divine in material items. Speeding through life creates many mistakes and the opportunity for learning is missed. The Divine is in the smallness and quiet of life. Take the time to be in the moment and with the Divine.

In St. Benedict I am,

Bro. Edmund E., O.S.B.

Oblate Council's Corner

Current council members are open and ready to listen to your concerns and suggestions. They can be reached via email or at Sunday Oblate meetings. The current members are

Joshua Roberts, oblate.joshuaroberts@gmail.com

Bede Colvin, bede.orthodox@gmail.com

JT Batstone, batstonejt@gmail.com

Bene Reece, breece@saintmichaelparish.org

Patricia McClure, Ravenwings@comcast.net

JULY COUNCIL MEETING

We had brief discussions on these topics:

- Adding a new council member.
- Finding a better design for scapulars.
- Discussed how to get Oblates to send in renewals.
- Discussed having a special renewal ceremony on an Oblate Sunday.
- Making contact with Oblates by phone or email on a regular basis.

Ceremony of investiture and oblation looked at discussion on how to update our current rite while keeping it brief but meaningful.

The ceremony will also be published in a booklet form for the use during the ceremony.

The rite will also be in the manual once it is finalized and approved by the Abbot.

AUGUST COUNCIL MEETING

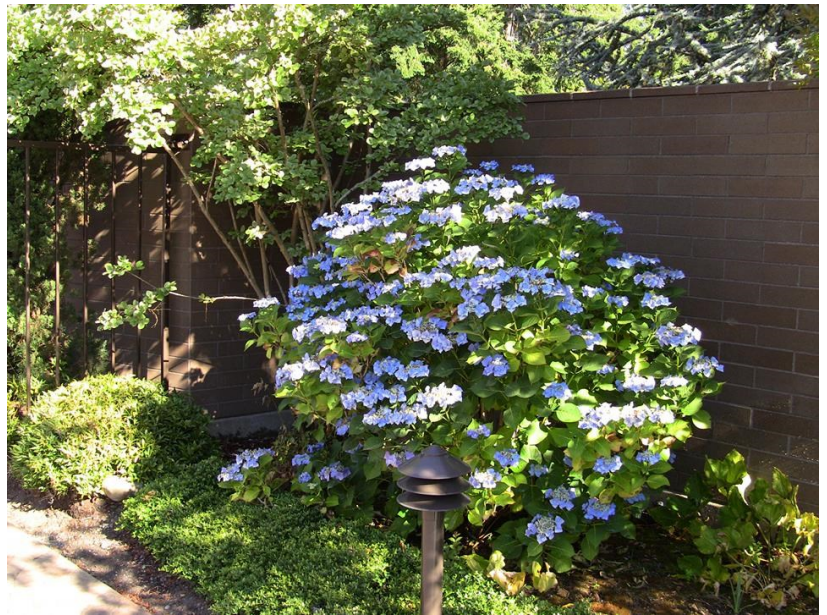
We discussed the following:

- Discussion and reviewing of the rite of investiture.
- Finalized the events for the retreat, assigning discussion leaders and schedule.
- Finalized the rummage sale event, assigning tasks and finding volunteers.
- How the formation group is progressing and how pleased we are with everyone's growth.

From The Hill - Boniface V. Lazzari, O.S.B.

On one of my many visits to the abbess and Benedictine nuns at the monastery of San Pelayo, in Northern Spain, I learned a new Spanish word when I happened into a picture-framing shop. “Paspartu” is the cardboard or cloth mat that can be placed inside the picture frame. Anxious to use my new “find,” I inserted it into a conversation with my dear friend Sor Esther. She reacted with a smile: “I bet you thought that was a word I wouldn’t know!” Of course, she knew the word, though for me it was a bit exotic, having been coined from two French words. Though a native speaker of English, I still continue learning new words, even in my native English. While reading about a noted neurologist, some of whose works I’d read, I learned that he also was a “pteridologist” (new word for me!), a student of ferns. At present, in our monastic refectory, we are listening to a book about grace, about words and about reading. New words need to be learned and used. In our reading of Saint Benedict’s Rule, the reading, understanding and savoring of even a few lines can take time and work. I love the walnuts which hang on traditional German Christmas trees: it can be difficult to extract the meat of the nut from the hard shell. Symbolically, the meat represents God’s word, which we must work tirelessly in order to understand.

While the monks at home were enjoying the many blooming hydrangeas around the campus, our junior monks were in Alabama, amidst flowering magnolia trees. **BROTHERS PASCAL-DAVID, PACHOMIOUS HAMOR,** and **THERIE PASCUA** were at St. Bernard Abbey to attend the annual gathering of junior Benedictine monks. They attended classes related to the religious life and had the opportunity to interact with others like themselves who were just beginning a life as Benedictines ... **FATHER KILIAN MALVEY** also



spent time in the deep South this summer. He attended a seminar on Flannery O’Conner, the Southern Catholic writer. He also was afforded the opportunity to visit with his younger brother, formerly *Father Sean* of Saint Martin’s, who lives near the O’Conner home ...

From the Hill continued

ABBOT MARION NGUYN, FATHER PAUL WECKERT, BROTHER DAMIEN- JOSEPH RAPPUHN, and BROTHER THERIE were among the presenters at “Ignite Your Torch,” the annual gathering for high schoolers in Portland, Oregon ...The monks enjoyed a glorious 4th of July at Lambert Lodge on the Sound. **BROTHERS DAMIEN- JOSEPH, PACHOMIUS and THERIE** were responsible for the delicious food we enjoyed. Lunch included **BROTHER PACHOMIUS’** famous house-made ice cream and music on the lodge piano played by **FATHER GEORGE SEIDEL**.

BROTHER LUKE DEVINE is spending part of this summer preparing for his 2023-2024 academic sabbatical in Germany and the eastern part of the United States. This summer, **BROTHER LUKE** collaborated with this writer in hanging a number of works from the Abbey’s art collection of Pacific Northwest Art in the monastery, in the Saint Raphael Center, and in the offices of the University’s new C.F.O. Along with **BROTHER MARK BONNEVILLE**, the three Abbey juniors and an Abbey guest, **BROTHER LUKE** made a day’s outing to Mt. St. Helen.

Both **ABBOT MARION** and **PRIOR NICOLAUS WILSON** were able to spend time with their respective families this summer. **ABBOT EMERITUS NEAL ROTH** traveled to Montana to spend his birthday in the company of his sister, and **FATHER PETER TYNAN** spent time visiting his family in the Mid-west.

God’s blessings on you for a safe and renewing summer!

Blessed Are the Merciful by Oblate Mary Randall

I have been reading a book entitled “Christ in Dachau” by Father John M. Lenz that inspired me to write this article.

In 1941, The Vatican made a deal with Hitler that all arrested Roman Catholic priests be sent to one concentration camp. That death camp was Dachau. The reasoning behind this deal was to unite them in their shared vocation as priests and religious brothers. More than 1200 priests and religious brothers lived in this camp, with only two hundred of them surviving this living hell.

Despite their incredible horrific treatment from the SS and the other prison guards, these priests miraculously stayed united, exhibiting great courage, patience and love towards their fellow prisoners and their enemies.

Never in the world’s history were 1000 Catholic priests gathered together in this suffering hell united to each other by their priestly vocation. No other labor or death camp existing at this time had a chapel in the center of their camp, except for Dachau. Christ became visibly present to them. He was in their midst, placed within the tabernacle once they built the chapel.

“In the tabernacle in the chapel, Bethlehem and Golgatha were wonderfully fused in the person of Jesus Christ... We his priests, knelt together with the shepherds and the angels at His crib, just as we stood together with Mary and John under His cross. And our prayers for His faithful, for His Church reached Him with a new fervor, a new urgency.” - Fr. Lenz

Over 1000 priests clad in their thin prison garb and shaven heads attended that first Mass on January 22, 1941. Many of the priests present had not said or attended Mass since their arrest in 1933. Tears of joy filled the chapel as songs of praise reached heaven. “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”

Shortly after that, the Polish priests, who numbered six hundred, were ousted from the chapel by the German SS. They remained barred from the chapel until December 1944. Yet they knew Christ was present to them in the tabernacle, sometimes just feet away from where they worked. They were reminded often how their other fellow priests were united with them in their vocation to love and serve others. Oh, the brotherhood of love and prayer that united them in their daily suffering. While most of the 1000 priests and religious brothers died of starvation, some were executed while others were injected with chemical poisons.

Despite the daily question of who might die or live another day, a daily prayer of hope rose to Mary, “Our Lady of Dachau” and to Our Lord Jesus. They pleaded with both to give them courage and strength to endure what they were subjected to. Whether it was a rosary ring or physical fingers used as rosary beads, prayers unceasingly rose from the gardens they tilled, or the other areas they worked in this concentration camp of hell.

Blessed Are the Merciful by Oblate Mary Randall continued

Priests and religious brothers were encouraged by the two bishops and one Benedictine Abbot who were imprisoned with them. No one was treated better than another due to rank or race except for the Poles, who were treated more harshly. As one priest, Father Georg Schelling declared after the war was over and he was released from Dachau, "I wish every priest could spend just one day in a concentration camp. Not seven long years like I had! One single day would suffice to give every priest the best retreat of his life."

Fr. Lenz said well what Fr. Schelling was alluding to. "It was a hard school, but the best school of all... we had to make decisions for ourselves, hard decisions which were often tests of heart as well as spirit, and for each one of us our conscience was our only guide."

At times, nationalities became an issue, especially as more and more priests came to Dachau from 20 different countries as the war dragged on. Impatience and anger grew to boiling points, especially towards the German priests who at one point numbered three hundred. But tempers tamed as the wisdom of older priests and monks reminded them of their shared vocation as priests, with their common values and love for Christ. They were constantly reminded of their shared role in facing their enemies with Christ's mercy and love.

Imagine the agony these priests faced not being able to anoint the death and dying. Imagine hearing a confession of a fellow priest or a lay person knowing you would die if caught. Of course, there were some lay informers who betrayed their confessors. These priests became instant martyrs for the role they served in administering mercy, even if it meant death over life.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

"For all the priests and religious brothers of Dachau who demonstrated their deep love for Christ and His dear Mother Mary, may they rest in eternal peace." Amen.

In the Spirit of Learning,

Mary Randall, Oblate

Developing gentleness as a partner to mercy by Oblate Jeanine Kavanaugh

Blessed are the merciful for they will obtain mercy. This sounds a bit like ‘what comes around goes around’ and yet it means so much more than that. It’s a way of life, a way of being.

Thinking about this, I admit that I consider myself ‘merciful’ and yet my faults often prove otherwise. What I mean is, I need to monitor and be aware of when I’m critical and judgmental. Not to someone’s face probably, but in my self-talk where I make some kind of assessment. It’s not my business. It’s God’s call, and no one appointed me judge and jury.

I wonder if cultivating gentleness is a way toward more mercifulness. In our culture, where we’re encouraged to be assertive, we do not give the trait of gentleness the same emphasis. Assertiveness conjures up competitiveness as gentleness conjures up humility and courtesy. Being gentle is not as much a part of my way of being as I would like. I’m more outspoken but am working at becoming gentler. How to do this is a challenge.



The imagery of the mustard seed being the smallest of seeds but growing to be the largest bush might be a template for cultivating a desired trait like gentleness. Starting out small, with an awareness of when one is gentle, working on patience, kindness, disarming criticism, and defensiveness might help gentleness to blossom like the mustard bush.

A reflective or self-examination question which is sometimes helpful is to ask at the end of each day: how did gentleness show itself today? In the morning ask: how will gentleness show itself today in my behavior? Say, “Thank you Holy Spirit,” when you realize you’ve been gentler in any situation with others and with yourself so that breathing gentleness in and out becomes a prayer.

Image found at [needpix.com](https://www.needpix.com)

Blessed Are the Merciful by Oblate Kathleen Hystad



Image found at needpix.com

What does it mean to be blessed when we are merciful?

Blessed means joyful and or happy. Therefore, I suggest we are blessed when we are merciful in our forgiveness and our compassion to a person who has harmed us or that we perceive has done us harm.

In our going to the person showing hospitality of the heart with the intent to extend compassion and mercy, not seeking punishment of someone and listening with the ear of our hearts with God's mercy for us being our guide.

We are blessed in our joy of right relationship with God and happy in knowing His mercy for us.

Rather than nursing an unforgiving grudge, hurt and or anger within our minds, hearts and spirits and hardening our hearts towards another.

We are unburdened from carrying this and we are blessed in our joyful connection to God's mercy and compassion for us as we reflect His mercy to others.

Clouds by Brother Ramon Newell O.S.B.

Little child looking up at the sky

What do you see?

Do the clouds mean something to you?

I see a bird

A horse,

A train,

A castle,

An angel flying by.

Middle aged person looking up at the sky

What do you see?

I see cold weather,

Rain,

Work delay,

Travel delay.

Old spiritual one looking up at the sky

What do you see?

HOME!



Image found at needpix.com

MANAGING NEGATIVE INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS BY FR. PETER TYNAN O.S.B.

According to a 2020 study in Nature Magazine, most people will have over 6,000 intrusive thoughts a day. Assuming you are awake for 16 hours a day, that means you have 6 ½ unwanted thoughts a minute. No wonder it is so hard to pay attention.

Not all these thoughts are harmless. Saint Ignatius of Loyola advised that we keep track of our thoughts since some are from ‘the Evil Spirit’ and others from the ‘the Good Spirit.’ He then set out a whole means for discerning good spirits from bad ones. Which involves imagining where this thought will take us and whether it is ultimately for the greater glory of God.

We are Benedictines, however, and we also have our own methods for creating a state of mindfulness where we can discern our thoughts. From the Desert Fathers and Mothers, we are taught that our intrusive thoughts either originate from demons who want to pull us down to their level or from angels who want us to raise ourselves up to heavenly things. For this reason, we need to patiently train our minds to be attentive and guard ourselves from evil suggestions while being open to those of grace.

The Desert tradition also understood the process where an evil thought leads to sin and good thought leads to blessing. The process consists of five stages. The first stage is initial awareness of a thought. Seeing how we have over six thoughts a minute, it is natural that many thoughts will simply come and go. If we are aware and keep a close guard over our thoughts, then when an evil thought appears in our consciousness, we simply let it flow away with all the rest of the less-than-useful thoughts.

Unfortunately, it is often the case that we latch onto these wicked and unwanted thoughts. This is the second stage. Here, like Eve in the Garden of Eden, we engage the tempting snake in dialogue. We use our imaginations and make sandcastles of conceit where these thoughts seem to make perfect sense. In them, we find pleasure, power, and desire.

Now comes the third stage of struggle. We have bought into a fantasy that if we embrace the wicked thought, it will bring us happiness. Yet, at this stage, we still know what we desire is wrong. So far, we have not sinned, but we have made it truly difficult for ourselves not to give in. If only we had let the thought go, and not built it into a fantasy that must be battled with.

The fourth stage is sin in thought. We have given up on the struggle and decided it is better to sin. It is still possible to end the process here, though it is very difficult. Many will simply continue on and act on the thought that started it all. This is the final stage, the committing of the sin in action.

This process can be used, surprisingly, in taking a good thought and bringing it to fruition. We recognize it is good. Next, we imagine how it can be carried out. Then deal with and set aside our fears. Followed by a firm conviction to do the right thing. And finally, we act. It all begins with discernment.

If you want to learn more about this process, I suggest reading Evagrius of Pontus’ *Praktikos* or for something more modern Tomáš Špidlík’s *The Art of Purifying the Heart*.

OBLATE COMMUNITY SUNDAY SEPT 3RD

Join us in the Abbey church at 3:00pm for a talk St. Ambrose of Milan by Brother Bede.

At 5p.m. is evening prayer with investiture, oblations, and a social.

Guests are always welcome. If you know of someone interested in the Oblates bring them along or let them know they are welcome.

OBLATE COMMUNITY CALENDAR 2023

Oblate Sundays

December 3, Mass 11:00 a.m. Oblate meeting 1:30 p.m. Deacon Dan Terry. Exploration of 3rd Order Franciscans in relation to Oblates of St. Benedict.

Other Oblate events

September 9 – 15 Congress of Oblates in Rome

November 16, set up for Bazaar

November 17- 18 Oblate Bazaar / fund raiser for Oblate funds

Study of the Rule at 1:30

October 8, Holy Rule Study

November 5, Holy Rule Study

Oblate Council meetings at 9:00

September 1, Council meeting

October 6, Council meeting

November 3, Council meeting

December 1, Council meeting

Formation meetings in the guest dining room.

Last Monday of the month at 11:00 a.m.

Evening instruction last Saturday of each month at 3:30

September 25

October 30

November 27

December 18

September 30

October 28

November 25

December 16

Rosary Making

Every Saturday at 1:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the guest dining room.

Study the Rule of Saint Benedict

All oblates and friends are invited to come and journey with Br. Edmund and other oblates in discovering the importance of the Holy Rule and how it guides and influences our journey in life. We walk through the Study Guide by Abbess Emerita Mother Maria-Thomas Beil, OSB. This a Zoom meeting so it comes to you in your home. Be not afraid. Join us at anytime since we send out the section of the Rule we are studying ahead of time so you can prepare and reflect on what you have discovered. All ideas are welcomed. Come and share the treasures you hold in your heart

October 2nd at 1:30 p.m.

November 6th at 1:30 p.m.

GOOD WORKS

Rosary Makers:

Come and join the Rosary Makers on Saturdays at 1:30 p.m. We supply materials – you supply the hands and brains. We are nearing the end of the Ukraine rosaries but the work goes on for another cause and then another after that. Come and enjoy the fun and community.

Calling for volunteers to help at the Rummage sale.

Helpers are needed for the Rummage sale August 29. Set up and take down tables, laying out items early the 29th and clean up on closing. If you can help please get a hold of Brother Edmund.

Email: Br. Edmund Email: br_edmund@stmartin.edu

Phone: 360 - 438- 4457

Prayer Requests

For the ill

For the homeless of which we have many.

For the unborn and children.

For those isolated and without companionship.

For an end to the war between Ukraine and Russia.

Oblate Joshua Roberts wishes to express his thanks for prayers and please keep them coming.

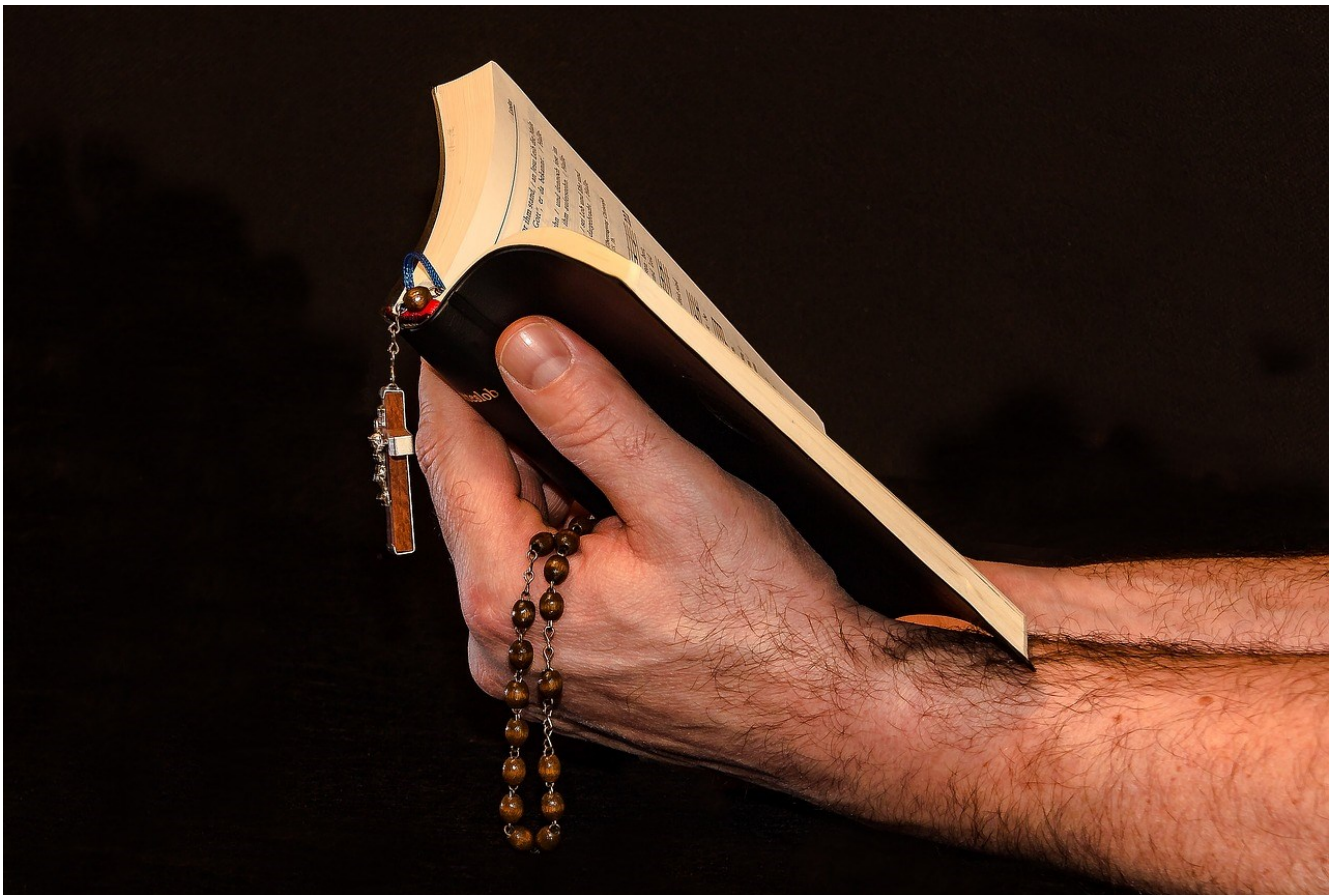


Image found at needpix.com



ON THE BOOK SHELF

Eucharistic Church, Eucharistic Formation edited by Dcn. Owen Cummings.

Loving Jesus, Monastery Talks on the Gospel according to St. Matthew by Mark Scott, OCSO.

Navigating The Interior Life, Spiritual Direction and the journey to God by Daniel Burke and Fr. John Bartunek.

BOOK REVIEWS BY OBLATE LEILANI ROBERTS

Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska: Divine Mercy in My Soul

By Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska

Known as the Apostle of The Divine Mercy, St. Faustina writes of her personal and mystical experiences during her short life. She was a simple, uneducated nun who lived in the early 1900's in Poland and although she experienced many trials, she never stopped trusting in the Divine Mercy of the Lord. Through this humble and obedient sister, Jesus shared His message of love and mercy for all souls. This book will nourish your soul and inspire you to trust in the unfathomable gift of Divine Mercy that Jesus wishes to pour down on you. Truly, I cannot recommend this book enough!

How to Live

By Judith Valente

How to Live takes the Rule of St. Benedict and shows how it is applicable to modern day life of those living and working in the secular world. Judith Valente takes topics such as "The Times for Saying Alleluia," "Humility," and "The Sleeping Arrangements of The Monks" and demonstrates how the advice given to monks in the 400's can still be applicable to those of us living in the third millennium. Her writing is engaging, thought-provoking, and useful. At the end of each chapter, there are reflection questions which could be used for personal journaling or for a group study. So far, this is one of my favorite books written about the Rule!

ROSARIES FOR UKRAINE

This mission project for Ukraine could not have been done without the support of so many!

THANK YOU to all who have given of their financial treasure to help purchase the supplies as well as to all of those who have put together kits and continue to make rosaries! It has been such a blessing to see the grace and joy this mission project has brought to our community. Many of the participants in this project have been homebound parishioners who have experienced much joy in being included in this very special ministry. The main goal for this project is to promote prayers of peace through the intercession of Mary...thank you all for your prayers! A special **THANK YOU** to the Holy Cross Rosary Guild in North Carolina who's team have also contributed hundreds of rosaries to be included in this mission project!



Overall, the response and outpouring of support for this project has been an overwhelming blessing to witness and I really can't thank you all enough! We have met our goal. The rosaries are ready for Abbot Marion Nguyen, OSB to bless them. When that is scheduled we will notify you.

*Saint Martin's Abbey
5000 Abbey Way S.E.
Lacey, WA 98503*

Return Service Requested

St. Martin's Abbey Oblates are people who earnestly seek a deeper spiritual life rooted in God according to the Holy Rule of St. Benedict. The Oblate lives and works in the secular world guided by the wisdom of Benedictine life.