

# Oblate Community of Saint Martin's Abbey

Oblates of Saint Benedict

September 2024

Volume 2

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

Dear Oblates, friends, and family,

Does God have mixed emotions? The simple answer is no. God is not human, though he made us and knows us well. The Old Testament has much to say about God's wrath. I believe many human emotions were attributed to God, since there was no other way of explaining their perceptions of outcomes or directions given by prophets. There had to be a very good reason for going to war with other cultures or tribes. God said .... This worked out to their advantage much of the time.

So, when we read the Old Testament, keep in mind that God worked with humankind as a means to His love. Read on and dive into the New Testament to find who God really is. Through prayer, we will find the God who Jesus says he is. Spend time with Him as you would a very special friend. The apostles and evangelist continue to convey this message of our Loving Father that He is.

Yes, I know there are examples such as Jesus driving the money changers out of the Temple. We perceive Jesus was angry, but was he really? Scripture says it was the consuming love of His Father that brought Him to this action.

Julian of Norwich says He was never angry, nor ever shall He be, for He is God: He is good, He is life; He is truth; He is Love; He is Peace. His power, His wisdom, His Love, and His unity do not allow Him to be angry. This is against His character and power to be angry, and against His character of His wisdom and His goodness. He is nothing but goodness. Our soul is one with Him, who is unchangeable goodness, and between God and our soul, there is neither anger nor forgiveness, as He sees it. For our soul is so completely one in God by His own goodness that there can be absolutely nothing at all separating God and soul. To this understanding, the soul was led by love and drawn by power ... That it is thus — our good Lord showed truly by His great goodness.

So, the next time the thought of an unjust or angry god comes before you reflect upon the unflinching love God has for all His creation, and that means you, me, and all else. Speak tenderly to your God and know He will answer your prayers in His time and manner. Be His companion in all your comings and goings.

In His Love I am, Br. Edmund E., OSB

## *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 on Sunday Oblate meetings. The current members are:

Bede Colvin, [bede.orthodox@gmail.com](mailto:bede.orthodox@gmail.com)

Bene Reece, [anforait@yahoo.com](mailto:anforait@yahoo.com)

Ellen Borland, [ejboblbsb@yahoo.com](mailto:ejboblbsb@yahoo.com)

Joshua Roberts, [oblate.joshuaroberts@gmail.com](mailto:oblate.joshuaroberts@gmail.com)

JT Batstone, [batstonejt@gmail.com](mailto:batstonejt@gmail.com)

Patricia McClure, [Ravenwings@comcast.net](mailto:Ravenwings@comcast.net)

Ron Fialkowski, [ronaldbenny24@gmail.com](mailto:ronaldbenny24@gmail.com)

### **JULY COUNCIL MEETING**

We discussed set up for our annual picnic on Sunday July 14.

We discussed set up and progress on the retreat on August 10. How to meet the requests of the those participating and whether or not we are packing too much into the day.

Ellen and Bede attended the NAABOD conference in Nebraska and will formulate a presentation of what they learned.

### **AUGUST COUNCIL MEETING**

Retreat: We cemented the details for the silent retreat on August 10. Josh will send out instructions and a notice that the café is closed so bring a lunch. We expect about 50 participants.

Oblate information for the public will be on September 8th with invitation to join us at our Oblate meeting on the Sunday September 15. This will be a table outside of the Abbey church after Mass to peak interest in the program.

We have been asked to pray for vocation to the Abbey. A year long rosary novena more information will be forthcoming.

Oblate house: Thinking will begin on what that could mean as a way of supporting the monks and assuring that the Benedictine life style and influence does not die out. Thoughts and possibly questionnaires on the topic are in the future.

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

Years ago, when I visited Italy during a Holy Week break from my theological studies in Madrid, I quickly confirmed that it was a place of beautiful art and architecture, and a wonderful cuisine developed over centuries. Communication, however, could be a problem, and I was quickly disabused of the thought that my Spanish fluency would “get me through.” Get through I did, however, and even ended up sharing a table with two Italians in a popular restaurant during the Noon hour.

More recently, our subprior, **BROTHER RAMON NEWELL**, spent three weeks in Rome enrolled in the Monastic Summer Studium, located at San Anselmo, Rome’s Benedictine college and residence. Many of our monks have studied in Rome at one time or another. The late **FATHER LUKE O’DONNELL** as well as our current Vocations Director **FATHER PAUL WECKERT** have enjoyed sabbaticals there, and **FATHER GEORGE SEIDEL** and **ABBOT MARION NGUYEN** both have done extensive theological studies there.



**BROTHER RAMON** was in Rome for the entire month of July. It was his second visit to Rome, having first visited the Eternal City with the late **FATHER THADDAEUS ARLEDGE** during an anniversary trip to Europe some years back.

**BROTHER RAMON’S** class consisted of eight students from different points on the globe; their three instructors all were Benedictines. They studied

Saint Benedict of Nursia as a model for contemporary spiritual life; the Rule of Benedict today, monastic tradition and contemporary culture; and liturgy and monastic life, a sacramental study of the Mass.

Most summer institutes include more than lectures and readings. The 2024 summer “Studium” included excursions to Rome’s historic churches, including Saint Peter’s, as well as to Subiaco, Rome’s Tiber River, and other points of interest. Attending the “Studium” afforded **BROTHER RAMON** the possibility of deepening his knowledge as well as seeing things from a different perspective. He also was able to meet and interact with fellow Benedictines from all over the world.

## From the Hill continued

En route back to the Abbey, enriched by his Roman experience, **BROTHER RAMON** had an “adventure” at J.F.K. Airport, New York. Due to delays and many canceled flights, our confrere ended up spending several days and nights at J.F.K. Undiscouraged, he found the experience an opportunity to strengthen his faith and trust in God, as well as an opportunity to meet and be of service to others.

Welcome back, **BROTHER RAMON**, and happy 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

**BROTHER DAMIEN-JOSEPH RAPPUHN** is a student at Mt. Angel Seminary, Oregon, and has spent this summer working in a Eugene, Oregon, hospital learning about pastoral care as part of his program at Mt. Angel. He writes that he has found the experience exceptionally enriching. ...Much work is being done on Lambert Lodge, the Abbey’s retreat on the Sound, this summer. Fortunately, in early July there was a window of time when it was available for our use and so we all enjoyed a wonderful Independence Day there. It was a lovely day. **PRIOR NICOLAUS WILSON** and **BROTHER PACHOMIUS HAMOR** prepared a wonderful picnic lunch of sausage, hot dogs and hamburgers and all the trimmings. **ABBOT MARION** prepared an appetizer of fresh clams, and a friend had donated a block of “Cougar Gold” cheese to add to the mix. The day was so lovely that most of us stayed on the patio most of the time ... On the 11th of July, we celebrated the feast of Saint Benedict of Nursia. Our newly arrived university president, his wife and four of his children joined us for our evening meal. Both President Bill Brownsberger and his wife have theological degrees from Rome... Early in August, there was a high school and university reunion weekend and the monks joined our alums one morning in the Father Alfred J. Hulscher Courtyard for a coffee with the monks’ visit.

A great, though sometimes very hot, summer is coming to an end. Savor the last days of summer as fall, another blessed season, prepares her entrance!

## He Leadth Me by Oblate Mary Randall

Some of you may recognize this title, but for those of you who don't let me explain. A Catholic priest in the process of beautification is Father Walter Ciszek, SJ.

Born in Pennsylvania, Father Ciszek joined the Jesuit Order in the 1920s and while still a novice, heard a letter written by Pope Pius XI in 1929. It was read aloud by his novice master inviting seminarians, especially Jesuits to be trained in Rome to be missionaries to Russia. As he listened to the Pope's letter, Father Ciszek felt a call from God to minister to the Russian people.

He was sent to Rome, along with other Jesuits, to train for this Russian mission. But before his dream to go to Russia came true, he was sent to Albertyn, Poland, to minister to The Oriental rite mission staffed by Jesuits. When Hitler invaded Poland in 1939, Father Ciszek happened to be in the area of Poland that Russia invaded. Prior to Germany's invasion, Russia and Germany had agreed to divide Poland between their two countries. Father Ciszek was living in a part of Poland assigned to Russia.

When the Jesuit Order decided to close the mission in Albertyn, Poland, another Jesuit trained alongside Father Ciszek in Rome encouraged his brother Jesuit to join him in carrying out their dream to minister to the Russian people. The plan was for both of them to join as enlisted polish citizens since the Russian government was taking polish workers to the motherland to build up their country's industrial needs. However, the Russian government knew Father Ciszek was a Catholic priest. Upon his arrest, the Communists sent him to a prison in Moscow, where he lived in isolation for the next five years. He was classified as a political prisoner. But his life only got worse. After spending five years in isolation, Father Ciszek was then sentenced to the Siberian labor camps for fifteen years.

While in Moscow, Father Ciszek knew he could expect three meals a day, and a bed with sheets and blankets. And even though he experienced acute loneliness, he was somewhat safe. Even with a constant barrage of repetitive questions by communist interrogators, his spirit was never broken.

However, the Siberian labor camps proved to be a harder life for him. Father Ciszek's companions changed from intellectual political prisoners to hard core thugs. These thugs had their own sense of values being sent to Siberia for high crimes. Beating people to death for more food or clothing was an everyday occurrence, and priests were the most vulnerable population because of their ethical values. They were also assigned to the lowest and hardest work by the Communist guards because of their love of God in this atheistic country.

Despite his long years in the labor camps, Father Ciszek never gave up on his teaching about God and His loving mercy. What he learned in his Russian experience was how God existed within the faith of the people. As underground as the faith in God was, there were people in Russia who knew intuitively that God existed despite the constant Russian rhetoric to the contrary. Father Ciszek witnessed how one Catholic community, in particular, stood up in the face of government officials demanding a Catholic priest minister to them.

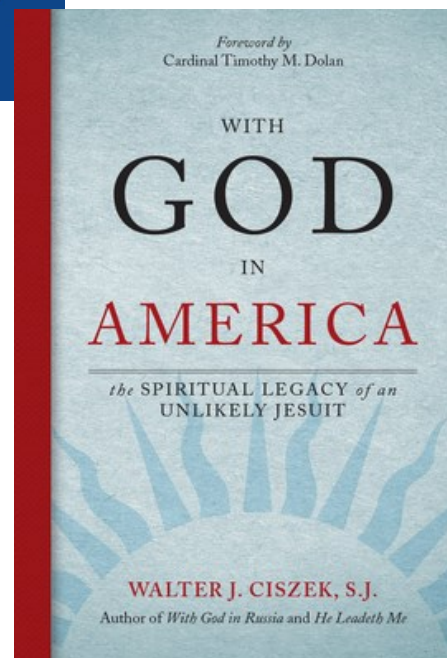
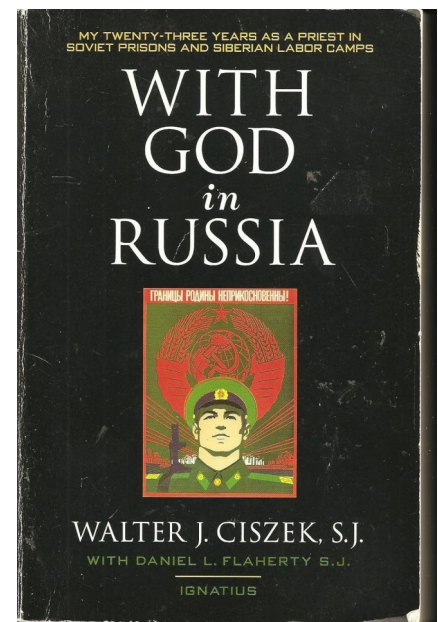
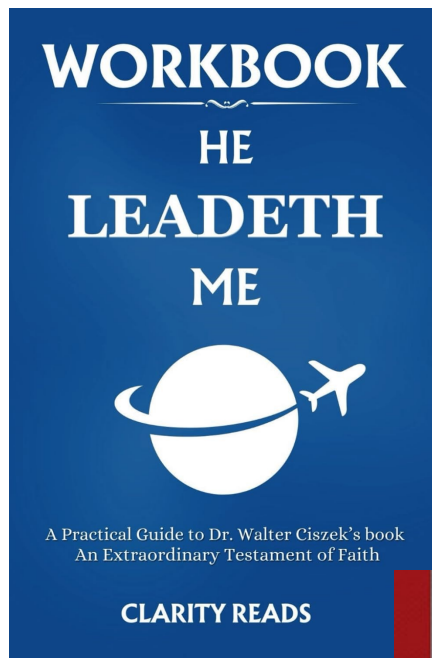
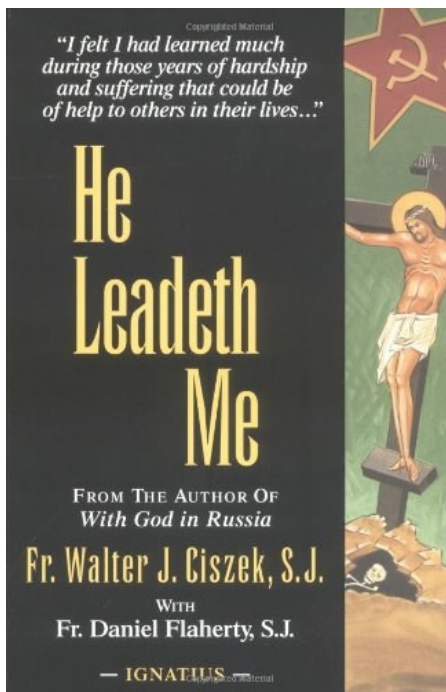
## He Leadth Me by Oblate Mary Randall continued

When Father Ciszek was finally released from the Siberian labor camps, he was not given freedom from the country of Russia. Instead, he was assigned to several cities where he was constantly observed by the communist leaders. Instead of working in a priestly role, he was forced to work as a day laborer, ministering covertly. Yet, he was amazed at the faith of the Russian people whom he served. His life in the Moscow prison, coupled with his years in the Siberian labor camps, served as stepping stones in teaching him humility. His willingness to serve these underground Christian communities never diminished. In his youth, he thought he was bringing God to a godless country. What he learned was that God was already there.

His book entitled “He Leadeth Me” is a page turner. It also gives rise to meditative and contemplative insights within the framework of Lectio Divina. It is a read that sheds light on God’s deeper plan for us.

In the Spirit of Saint Benedict, Mary Randall, Oblate

Books by Father Ciszek:





## *The Divine Paradox by Brother Ramon Newell*

By plummeting to the deep profound depths of our being,  
We rise to the sublime heights of heaven.

By being a servant,  
We become a leader.

By being humble,  
We're exulted.

By being weak,  
We become strong.

By being simple,  
We become wise.

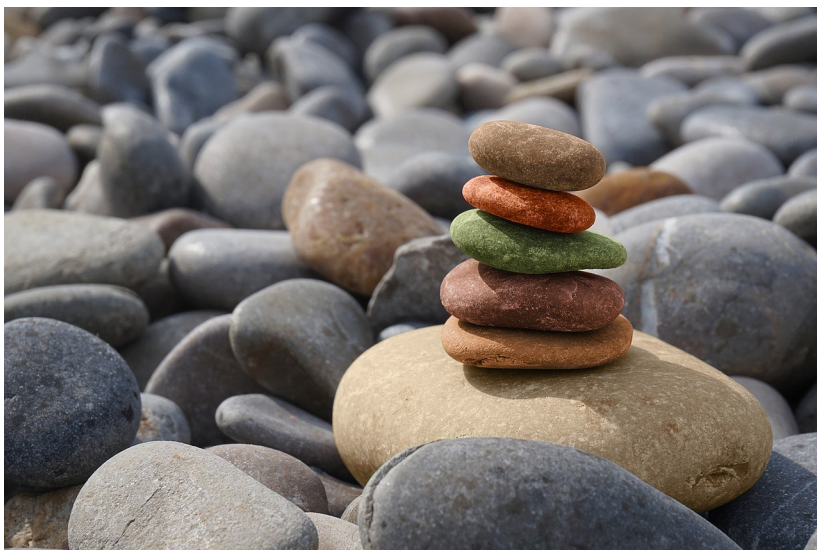


Image found at [needpix.com](http://needpix.com)

## OBLATE COMMUNITY SUNDAY SEPT 15TH

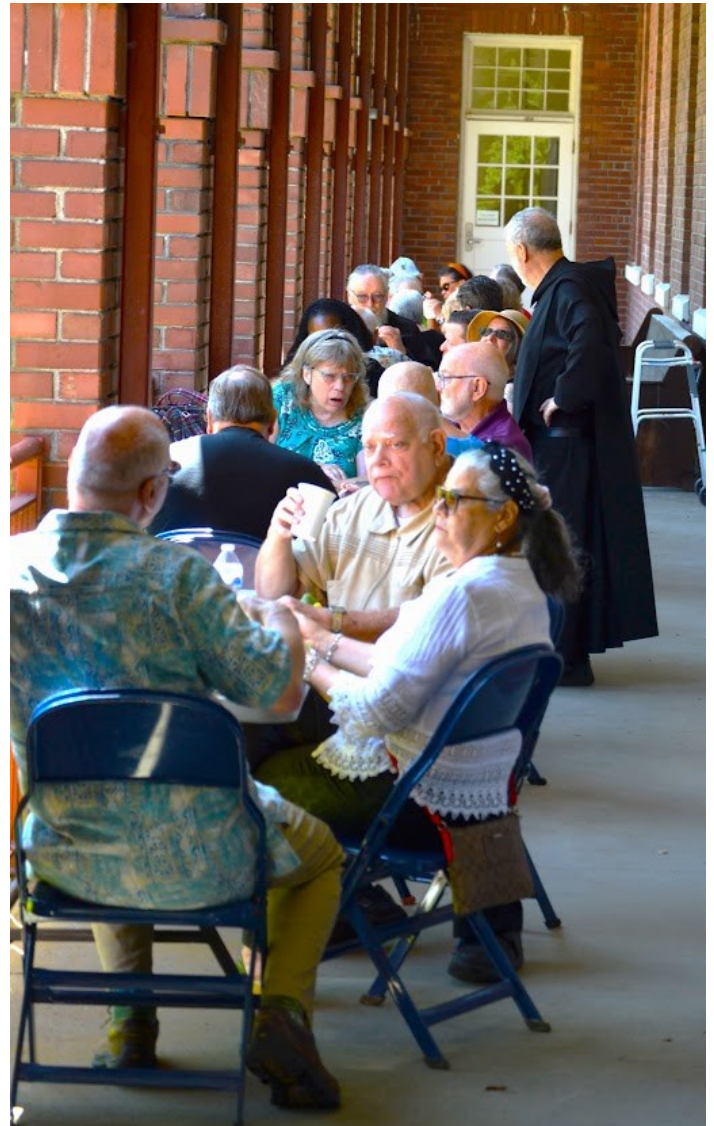
We will meet in the Abbey church at 3:00pm for a talk on the monks in Trinidad and the Bahamas by Dr. Ramon Luzarraga, followed by evening prayer, investitures, oblations, and a social, please join us.

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

Hopefully the office will be open between Mass and the Conference for you to purchase religious items, shirts, and jackets. Also, it would be a good time to check the books we have in the library.



The formation meetings are not just for those interested and novices but for anyone wishing to know more about their commitment of being an Oblate. It is an opportunity to become more involved in the promises we made to be a part of the Oblates and assist the monastic community.



A heart-felt tThanks to all Oblates that really participate in the Oblate activities. You make the difference in our community. Please keep walking with us. Those of you that never shown up I beg you to come experience the life well lived with your fellow Oblates in Christ and St. Benedict.



## GOOD WORKS



Look what is growing in the garden at St. Placid Priory that our Oblates helped make possible.

Check out the new work parties on the community calendar.

Have items for the Rummage sale? Now is the time to bring them to the Abbey. Contact Br. Edmund and he will direct you to where you can drop off your items.

Help needed to cut, split, and stack firewood. Saturday mornings. If you can help contact Br. Edmund.

Email: [br\\_edmund@stmartin.edu](mailto:br_edmund@stmartin.edu)

Phone: 360 - 438- 4457



## *Prayer Requests*

For vocations to the monastic life especially here at St. Martin's Abbey

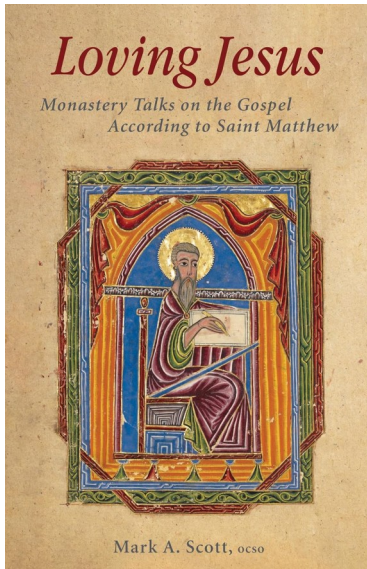
For Brother Edmund's brother Tom ... continued healing

For Brother Edmund's sister Maragret ... successful surgery

Ann Munson ... successful surgery

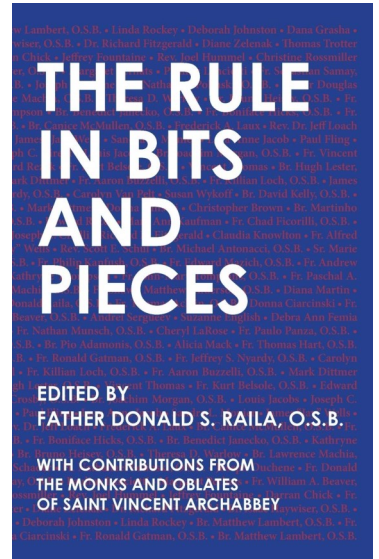
Oblate Patricia McClure... successful cancer treatment

## ON THE BOOK SHELF



*Loving Jesus: Monastery Talks on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* by Mark A. Scott, OCSO

*The Rule in Bits and Pieces* by Fr. Donald S. Raila, OSB



## Book Reviews by Oblate Leilani Roberts

### *Witness to Hope*

By George Weigel

George Weigel's biography on St. John Paul II begins with his birth in Poland in 1920 and his early years in which he experienced significant losses, the Nazi occupation of Poland, and the call to a priestly vocation. It follows him as he becomes bishop, archbishop, cardinal, and pope. Weigel writes of the major events that influenced Karol Wojtyla, and later Pope John Paul II, as well the influence that he had on those around him and on the entire world. *Witness to Hope* is an engaging book about one of the most remarkable and influential saints of our time!

### *No Man is an Island*

By Thomas Merton

This classic book is a collection of some of Thomas Merton's writings on the spiritual life and includes reflections on love, hope, sacrifice, solitude, silence, mercy, and more. His writing is both sublime and practical. It is a book to be read slowly and intentionally; to be savored and meditated upon. In fact, would be most appropriate for lectio divina.

Our oblate library is full of wonderful books just waiting to be read by you! It is available to browse online at <https://www.librarycat.org/lib/OblateLibrary>. You can even put a hold on books to pick up at the next oblate meeting. You will need to email the librarian for initial access by clicking on the "Ask the Librarian" link at the bottom of the Oblate Library page or by emailing directly to [OblateLibrary@gmail.com](mailto:OblateLibrary@gmail.com)

# OBLATE COMMUNITY CALENDAR 2024

## August

**26th** Formation meeting at 10:30am - 1:30pm guest dining room.

**31st** Formation meeting at 3:30pm - 6:30pm guest dining room.

## September

**6th** Oblate Council meeting 9:00am Zoom.

**7th** Rummage sale 9:00am - 3:00pm

**7th** Headstone cleaning 1:30-3:30 cemetery

**14th** Rosary Making 1:30pm –3:30pm guest dining room.

**15th** Oblate Community Sunday 3:00pm talk on monks in Trinidad and the Bahamas by Dr. Ramon Luzarraga. Investing and Oblations, Evening Prayer with the monks.

**28th** Formation meeting at 3:30pm - 6:30pm guest dining room.

**30th** Formation meeting at 10:30am - 1:30pm guest dining room.

## October

**4th** Oblate Council meeting 9:00am Zoom.

**5th** Rosary Making 1:30pm –3:30pm guest dining room.

**6th** Holy Rule Study 1:30pm - 2:00pm Zoom.

**12th** Rosary Making 1:30pm –3:30pm guest dining room.

**19th** Lambert Lodge brush cleaning 1:30 –3:30 Lodge

**26th** Formation meeting at 3:30pm - 6:30pm guest dining room.

**28th** Formation meeting at 10:30 m - 1:30pm guest dining room.

## November

**2nd** Rosary Making 1:30pm –3:30pm guest dining room.

**8th** Oblate Council meeting 9:00am Zoom.

**9th** Rosary Making 1:30pm –3:30pm guest dining room.

**10th** Holy Rule Study 1:30pm - 2:00pm Zoom.

**16th** Lambert Lodge interior cleaning 1:30-3:30 lodge

**21st** Noon set up for the Bazaar.

**22nd – 23rd** Bazaar.

**25th** Formation meeting at 10:30am - 1:30pm guest dining room.

**30th** Formation meeting at 3:30pm - 6:30pm guest dining room.

## December

**7th** Rosary Making 1:30pm –3:30pm guest dining room.

**7th** Exterior Abbey Church 1:30 - 3:30 bell tower

**13th** Oblate Council meeting 9:00 m Zoom.

**14th** Formation meeting at 3:30pm - 6:30pm guest dining room.

**15th** Oblate Community Sunday 1:30pm - 3:30pm Abbey Church.

**16th** Formation meeting at 10:30am - 1:30pm guest dining room.

*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.**

We can be found on the web at <https://stmartinsabbey.org>