

Oblate Community of Saint Martin's Abbey

Oblates of Saint Benedict

September 2025

Volume 2 Issue 76

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

Dear Oblates and friends,

This letter comes at a time when so many things seem to need to be done before I take a vacation in Idaho with family and celebrate my one brother-in-law's 90th birthday. I believe in celebrating milestones and in community fashion. I believe Christ calls us especially in community, that being among one another sharing all that is good — people, friendships, faiths and food. It is food I wish to write about.

In today's scriptures for the 17th Monday of the year, we have two lessons, one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament. The one from the Old Testament is about the Hebrew people complaining about the food after getting into the deserts where they get manna and then later quail. They were not satisfied as they recalled the greater variety of food they had while still in Egypt. They believe God has forgotten them, and they want more. This drives poor Moses up the wall/mountain.

In the New Testament, we have followers of Jesus in the thousands, evidently quite some distance from any town, hungry. Jesus knows these people can not hear his message on an empty stomach, so he tells the disciples to give the people some food, but they have little food — five loaves of bread and a few fish — and they believe it will not be enough. Jesus pays little notice to their concern and instructs the people to recline, as the food is blessed and distributed. When the scrapes are collected, they find much remains.

These two stories tell me how important food is. When the physical body is hungry, the mind cannot think right to do right. None of these people got a healthy one-course meal. Can we think and do right on three square meals? Those of you who are familiar with Benedictines know that we do not take a vow of poverty that says to do without, but to do with as little as possible. The former is a Franciscan style. Benedictines are into building on moderation. Now, not all of us are able to do everything in moderation, but that is our personal and community goal.

One last thing about food. Have you noticed how food brings people together? Families used to sit down for most of their meals, and I believe those families were happier and had better communication skills. Today, I am not out there so much, but I hear many families don't eat together, so what does this say about those families that don't dine together?

If you live alone, consider dining with others at least occasionally. Try experimenting by inviting others to your home, maybe not just those you know but those you want to know better or, if you are brave, host a homeless person. These can be rewarding experiences.

May God continue to lead you in His ways.
In St. Benedict I am, Br. Edmund E, OSB



Photo found on needpix.com

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 during Sunday Oblate meetings. The current members are:

Bede Colvin, bede.orthodox@gmail.com

Bene Reece, anforait@yahoo.com

Joshua Roberts, oblate.joshuaroberts@gmail.com

JT Batstone, batstonejt@gmail.com

Patricia McClure, Ravenwings@comcast.net

Ron Fialkowski, ronaldbenny24@gmail.com

JULY COUNCIL MEETING

Outreach is progressing and we are learning a lot about the needs of our Oblates.

Retreat set up and coordination was discussed.

Storage unit will be moved from upper campus to old lower campus.

AUGUST COUNCIL MEETING

Discussion on the logistics, assigning leaders and manning tables for the retreat.

Discussion about moving the storage unit and setting up the in the new space.

Discussion on how the outreach is going and the updating of the files.

Happenings here at St. Martin's campus...

Since Br. Boniface is unable to present a piece in this issue, I want to give you a taste of activity here on the campus.

We pretty much finished a type of bulkhead to support the hill behind the Blessed Sacrament chapel. This reinforces the hill and enables us to walk safely behind the chapel when tending the rose garden. Brother Mark headed up that project.

The Abbey is sponsoring a makeover of the grand staircase in front of Old Main. Completion is not due until about October. Lots of work! The walls of the stairs have had repairs done and will be repainted, lights to be installed to showcase the stairs, and the relief of St. Martin will have some work done around it. Irrigation on the slopes of the hill and on top has been done. There will be grass on top of the hill, and trees and shrubs on the slopes. We are seeking a new statue of the Sacred Heart or maybe commissioning one to be done. You'll hear more as we move through this construction.



A donor is facilitating a moderate stadium for our baseball field. I have not been on site but I see heaps of gravel and soil.

Hard work is being done on the academics as well to improve the quality of Catholic Benedictine education.

Discovering Our God-given Talents by Oblate Mary Randall

In 2009, the Archdiocese of Seattle introduced a process to its 160 plus parishes called Strengthsfinder. It was a tool designed to discover one's five top talent/strengths. Developed by Gallup in conjunction with positive psychology, the Archdiocese of Seattle trained and certified sixty coaches through the combined efforts of the Archdiocese's Stewardship Office and Gallup University.

In our recent Oblate retreat, when the question of the seventh step of Humility arose, I briefly explained in my small group session the meaning of the Strengths process. The question was this: "Have I discovered my specialty or God-given talent(s) that I have been entrusted with to give back to the living whole?"

Since 2009, I have been directly involved with helping people discover their talents and strengths through an online assessment supplied by Gallup, followed by one to one coaching and strengths workshops. I have also been involved with the training of strength coaches with permission from Gallup University as long as they remain within our Catholic communities. Gallup was overwhelmed with our initial needs and gave us permission to certify new coaches.

Once an individual's talents and strengths are identified and understood, these God-given gifts can enrich family life, the workplace environment, and even faith communities. Just imagine, if every Oblate of Saint Martin's Abbey contributed just one thing they loved doing anyway to the life of our Abbey, what would it feel like? Heaven on earth perhaps?

In the Acts of the Apostles St. Paul used all his strengths of single-mindedness, focus, and achiever to kill Christians. However, once he encountered Jesus, his talents of single-mindedness, focus and achiever did not change. What changed were his values. His determination to follow Christ, using his talents full throttle in alignment with God's will, is what changed.

So where are you in the conversion process?

Do you have any idea what your talent/strengths are? Have they ever been identified?

Now you know there is a process to help you discover your "unwrapped" gifts.

Whether you are college age looking for direction, or an employee looking for a job, a career change, or facing "what's next" in retirement, the Strengths process is here to help find answers. It is about discovering an inner joy and peace that this world, with all its falsehoods, cannot provide.

In the Spirit of Saint Benedict,
Mary Randall, Oblate

Like a Mirror by Brother Ramon Newell O.S.B.

How smooth and clear the water
Of the Inlet is.
Like a mirror, it reflects
The trees
The sky
The near by houses.

Be calm, my spirit
Be as the water
Tranquil
Smooth
Calm.

Be at Peace my soul
That you may mirror and reflect
The One who created you.



Image found at needpix.com

TIME by Oblate Kathleen Hystad

The future is closing in on us as we age.

It is saying, "Be aware of time, the hour glass is quickly losing its sand."

It is a joyful and powerful time with more freedom to do what we have put off.

Time whispers, "The hour is getting late."

There is more time to fill the longing within our hearts, to sit in silence with You, Lord.

Contemplating the wonders of You.

As our hearts rest on You minute by minute, they fall more deeply in love.

We can see and feel time creeping closer upon our heels as we embrace St. Benedict's words,

"Keep death ever before your eyes."

There is time to be more fully in God's hands and feet.

Guiding youth with the wisdom we learned as we aged.

Time to cherish more vividly relationships.

Time to surprise the lonely.

To love more fully and deeply.

To pause and see the small joys in life along our journey.

To embrace the wonders of You, Lord, in inexpressible delight and love.

Pondering all You have created — the sky, flowers, people, and stones.

Time to unwrap the precious gift of life to the fullest, cherishing every minute, hour, and day.

Yes, time is slipping away, but it's an enriching and life.

We have time to run while the zest of life is still in us.

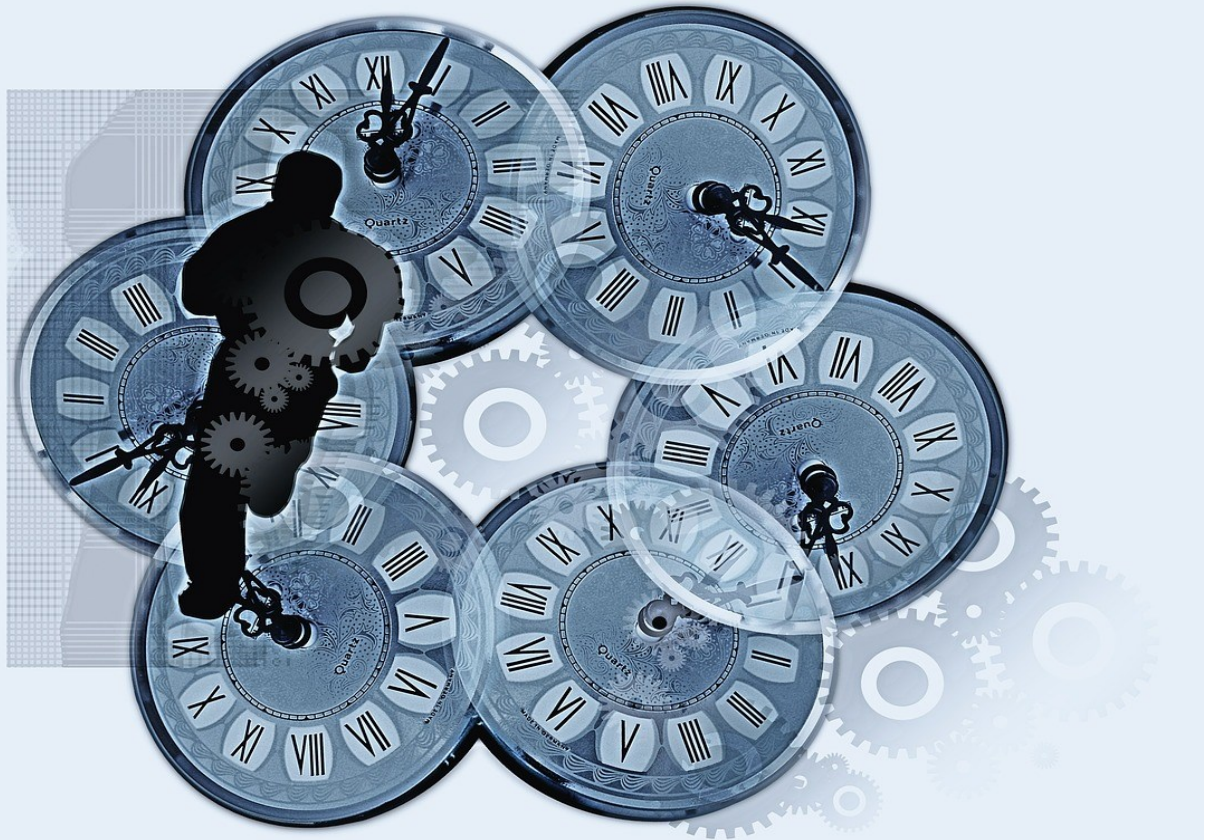


Image found at needpix.com

ON THE BOOK SHELF

Are you aware that we have over 1000 books in our Oblate library just waiting to be read by you?

Consider the books presently in our Oblate Library. Our Librarian Oblate Leilani will help you out. Start by going on the Oblate website for the library, make your selection and let Leilani know, and she will get the book for you. If you wish the book to be shipped to you, we ask that you pay the cost of shipping. Leilani does previews of books that are found in each Newsletter.

Book Reviews by Oblate Leilani Roberts

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

Blessed Hanna Chrzanowska, RN: A Nurse of Mercy By Gosia Brykczyńska

Blessed Hanna lived in the 20th century in Poland and is the first lay registered nurse to be beatified. She was raised a cradle Catholic in a privileged family. She became a nurse and dedicated her life to serving the sick, the homebound, and the marginalized. During and after World War II, she assisted with providing shelter to Jewish children, and she oversaw and provided assistance to war refugees in Krakow while living under communist rule putting herself at great risk. She later went on to develop a strong parish nursing program to provide for the homebound within her local parish. In many of her endeavors, she received support from Fr. Karol Wojtyla who was a close friend of hers. In 1957, she became an oblate of St. Benedict at Tyniec Abbey near Krakow. I highly recommend this book to everyone, but I especially recommend it to nurses, oblates, and single lay people.

Saint Benedict for the Laity By Eric Dean

Eric Dean is a layman, a husband, a father, a Presbyterian minister, and an oblate of St. Benedict. This short book is full of insights on how we can incorporate the Rule into our own lives, whether we are monks or oblates. He provides some details of life during the time that St. Benedict wrote the Rule. His chapter on the Psalms shows us how living the rhythm of the Divine Office throughout the various hours of the day can have physical, mental, and spiritual benefits. He also shows that the Rule can be incorporated into even the most insignificant details of our lives. He discusses the importance and benefits of participating and engaging with one's local monastery.

GOOD WORKS

Please note on your calendars that we have a rummage sale coming up in September. Your participation would be wonderful.

Rosary making is still happening on the first two Saturdays of the month. Excellent opportunity to converse with fellow Oblates and learn a new skill.

Formation continues on Saturdays and Mondays monthly. Conversation, discussions and shared meal is had by all.

November is our annual bazaar... we always need baked goodies, and help with set up. Wonderful outreach to the community.

Participate in our Holy Rule studies on zoom, check page 11 for the dates and time.

Come to Oblate Sunday this September and December.

Join us please at any of these events to support your community and grow spiritually.

Prayer Requests

RIP Oblate Keith Browne.

RIP Oblate Francine Mastini.

Brother Aelred and his needs as he resides in Sequoia senior living facility.

Oblate Lydia Browne health needs.

Oblates David and Anita Blair health needs.

Oblate Lois Archer health needs.

Health of monks, Oblates, family and friends.

Realization of peace where it is sorely needed among people and nations.

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

For sanctity of life.

For Brother Edmund's brother-in-law, Lacy on his 90th birthday.

An event you might be interested in ...



FRIENDS OF THE POOR® WALK/RUN

Join us for a day of giving and goodwill!
Our Friends of the Poor® Walk/Run is an
opportunity to make a tangible
difference in the lives of others.

Walk with us!

Event Name: Friends of the Poor® Walk/Run

Date: September 6, 2025

Time: 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

Location: Saint Michael Parish
1208 11th Ave SE
Olympia, WA 98501



Event Highlights:

Beautiful Scenic Walk Route. Participants will enjoy a pleasant 5K walk along charming nature trails and neighborhood sidewalks. Ideal for all ages and fitness levels.

T-Shirt. Every registered walker who obtains \$100 or more in pledges receives a commemorative T-shirt featuring the event's logo as a keepsake to show their support for helping the poor and wear proudly during the walk.

Thank-you Lunch for All Participants. After the walk, join us for refreshments and a delicious, complimentary lunch, served in a festive outdoor setting to celebrate everyone's efforts and foster community spirit.

Fundraiser Powered by:



Scan the QR code
for more information:



More information can be seen at:

fopwalkrun.org

olyfriendsofthepoor@gmail.com

OBLATE COMMUNITY SUNDAY SEPT 14TH

We will meet in the Abbey church at 3:00pm for a talk on The Rule of Benedict and Innovation in Religious Life 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.

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. Also lots of discussions on how to apply the Rule in our lives. So please come and join us.

Attendance for Oblate events: Each edition of the newsletter carries events for the year. Please take note of these and put them on your calendar when the Newsletter arrives. This past July conference and picnic was poorly attended. I often hear that you want more teachings, but so much good teaching is missed. Those attending can attest to the value of the conferences, community, and activities engaged in by themselves.

This year's silent retreat on humility went well. A couple of monks told me they heard folks say how pleased they were to attend and spend the time with others who are on a similar path. Sister Raphaela was happy to be back and made a very good impression by materials she shared. Next year, after his ordination to the priesthood, I am planning our Brother Damien-Joseph to be the prime speaker on the steps 10 thru 12 of humility. Again, this will be in early August. Put it on your calendars.

OBLATE COMMUNITY CALENDAR 2025

August

25th Formation meeting at 10:30am - 1:30pm guest dining room. Topic: Introduction to Lectio Divina

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

September

6th Annual Rummage Sale

5th Oblate Council meeting 9:00 am Zoom.

13th Rosary Making 1:30pm –3:30pm guest dining room.

14th *Oblate Community Sunday 3:00pm -6:30pm with Investing and Oblations, Evening Prayer with the monks. Topic: Rule of Benedict and Innovation in Religious Life.*

27th Formation meeting at 3:30pm - 6:30pm guest dining room. Topic: Oblation Promises

29th Formation meeting at 10:30am - 1:30pm guest dining room.

October

3rd Oblate Council meeting 9:00am Zoom.

4th Rosary Making 1:30pm –3:30pm guest dining room.

5th Holy Rule Study 1:30pm - 2:30pm Zoom.

11th Rosary Making 1:30pm –3:30pm guest dining room.

25th Formation meeting at 3:30 pm - 6:30 pm guest dining room. Topic: Prayer and Spirituality.

27th Formation meeting at 10:30am - 1:30pm guest dining room.

November

1st Rosary Making 1:30pm –3:30pm guest dining room.

2nd Holy Rule Study 1:30 pm - 2:30 pm Zoom.

7th Oblate Council meeting 9:00 am Zoom.

8th Rosary Making 1:30pm –3:30pm guest dining room.

20th Bazaar set up

21st-22nd Bazaar.

24th Formation meeting at 10:30am - 1:30pm guest dining room. Topic: Hospitality, Humility, Charity, and Service.

29th Formation meeting at 3:30pm - 6:30pm guest dining room.

December

6th Rosary Making 1:30pm –3:30pm guest dining room.

13th Rosary Making 1:30pm –3:30pm guest dining room.

5th Oblate Council meeting 9:00am Zoom.

14th Oblate Community Sunday 1:30pm - 3:30pm Abbey Church.

TBA Formation meeting at 3:30pm- 6:30pm guest dining room. Topic: Spiritual Friendships.

TBA Formation meeting at 10:30am - 1:30pm in the guest

*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>