



Spiritual Connections

We hope you will find this communication informative.

As a faith-based institution, our signature song is the power of prayer, learning, and reflection.

Our Mission

The Benedictine Sisters of Florida seek God in monastic community, prayer, and ministry. Nourished by the Word of God and our life together, we respond with the compassion of Christ to feed the hungers of the people of God.

We strive to help all those within our realm of influence to develop their fullest human and spiritual potential.

We accomplish our mission by sharing our human and material resources and our Benedictine values.

Benedictine Sisters of Florida

Oblation: One's Best Self in Christ

FEBRUARY 2013

When St. Benedict wrote *The Rule* in the Sixth Century, it was more like a recipe for Christian life. His writings, based on the teachings of Jesus and the teachings of the desert Fathers, are more like a railing or trellis – something to hang onto as we grow in our faith. Although written originally for monks, *The Rule* offers wisdom from which all Christians can benefit. It gives humankind a blueprint of Benedictine spirituality by which to live. The values St. Benedict interpreted from Jesus include prayer, community, stewardship, good works, peace, justice, hospitality, and the love of learning.

Oblates are men and women from all walks of life who embrace Benedictine values. They have associated themselves with a particular Benedictine community in order to enrich their Christian way of life. Although some communities accept live-in Oblates, most reside in their own homes with their families; work at their occupations; and strive for a balanced life embracing Benedictine values. Today there are thousands of Oblates throughout the world receiving spiritual strength and inspiration from their association with Benedictine communities.

The Benedictine Sisters of Florida's Oblate Program was designed and has been directed by *Sister Mary David Hydro* since 1980. It focuses on giving those hungering for more meaning in their lives, the opportunity to discover their true Christian self. The program provides a Community of Sisters and Oblates who are supportive of one another. The education challenges each Oblate to practice what is learned and so grow into one's best self in Christ.

For some the impetus to seek out such a program is the desire to be more connected to their God and their faith while for others, it may be part of the



Pictured: Sister Mary David and Lisa G.T.

the process of re-evaluating their life's path. As Oblate *Margaret Sullivan* relates, "there is a special something about this place – beauty, peace and joy. I knew from my first visit, I had to return. From that first meeting many years ago, I haven't missed a meeting since. The sense of belonging, spirituality, and connection to like-minded people overflows into my daily life...being an Oblate has become a big part of my life."

For *Diana Crowder*, the Oblate program, "has been a lifeline providing a daily reminder of a connection with the life of prayer. Being a part of this congregation of Oblates and the Sisters at Holy Name has enriched my life. I would trade nothing for it."

Oblation is the rite, with Church approval, by which one becomes an **Oblate**. There is a time of preparation guided by a director. The candidate attends meetings for a year, gets to know the community, and applies



The Rule of St. Benedict to his or her daily life. The focus is on moderation, devotion to God and increasing concern for others. If the decision is made that being an Oblate will be a source of spiritual good, then a request to make an **Oblation** is made. Pictured here with Sister Roberta, are two new candidates, Liz Hauer and Mary Mordau, received by the Community on January 27.

Oblates do not take vows, but make *a sincere promise offering oneself freely to the service of God, the Church, and all humankind*. The self is offered which is the actual meaning of the word.

We welcome women and men, 18 years of age and older, to be with us and experience the precepts of St. Benedict to seek God in your life. The relationships and interactions developed promote and stimulate growth for the oblates, the Sisters, and the Church.

Our Oblate Program at Holy Name Monastery meets on the 4th Sunday of January, March, May, September, and November. The schedule begins with Liturgy of the Hours and Eucharist at 10:30am, followed by noon meal with the Sisters and instruction and discussion. Together the Oblates consider questions regarding spirituality and conversion of life and what that might mean in the life of a lay Christian. Currently we are studying Hildegard of Bingen, a Benedictine Abbess, who lived 900 years ago and was recently named *Doctor of the Church* by Pope Benedict XVI.



Please consider joining us! The favor of an RSVP at least one week before the meeting is requested.

Contact Sister Mary David Hydro, OSB at 352-588-8320 or mary.david.hydro@saintleo.edu.

Please note: Our new web-site address is www.benedictinesistersoffl.org