

Duties of an Oblate

The oblate is committed to seeking God in every aspect of everyday life. Here are the practices/observances we ask of our Oblates in order to assist them in living into their commitment:

- ✚ To pray some form of Daily Office
- ✚ To read from the *Rule of Saint Benedict* each day.
- ✚ To practice *lectio divina* each day. This meditative reading from the Scriptures or other spiritual writings expands the oblate's love, knowledge and appreciation of the spiritual way of life.
- ✚ To participate frequently in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist
- ✚ To observe a discipline of abstinence from meat at meals on the Fridays of Lent.
- ✚ To be attentive to God's presence in his or her ordinary life.
- ✚ To stay in contact with the monastic community.

Oblate Novices receive a copy of the *Oblate Formation Manual* that outlines more fully the spiritual foundation and purpose of the duties listed above, and an extensive suggested reading list. In addition to working through this manual, each oblate novice is asked to make at least one weekend retreat/visit to the monastery during the novitiate period.

For more information about becoming an oblate of Saint Joseph's Monastery:

SAINT JOSEPH'S MONASTERY

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OBLATES OF SAINT BENEDICT



AN EPISCOPAL
BENEDICTINE COMMUNITY

About Saint Joseph's Monastery

Saint Joseph's Monastery is a Benedictine monastery in the Episcopal Church, founded in 2001. The community is rooted in The Rule of Saint Benedict and the disciplines and spirituality that it promotes. We live a traditional life in community.

The first work and duty of the monks is to maintain a life of consistent and regular prayer. Our ministry to the Church is first and foremost to be a community of prayer and contemplative presence through regular liturgical and intercessory prayer, study to inform and enrich, and work to support ourselves and serve others. This life is one of disciplined moderation and conversion of life- a commitment to life-long spiritual growth in community. Active work outside the monastery for the Church or community flows from our contemplative prayer life.

What is an Oblate?

The Benedictine Oblates of Saint Joseph's Monastery are Christian men and women who share a spiritual bond with the monks of Saint Joseph's Monastery as a special part of our community. Their affiliation and partnership spreads Benedictine spirituality into the secular world and provides a strong foundation and support for individual spiritual growth. They are bonded in prayer, love and commitment, becoming partners in the prayer and works of the monastery.

To make 'Oblation' is to offer oneself to God's service in a particular way with a particular community. Oblates seek to offer

themselves more fully to Christ and to the Church by following the wisdom of the Rule of Saint Benedict. Although written over 1500 years ago as a guide to living in monastic communities, Saint Benedict's Rule applies the teachings of Jesus, as found in the Gospels, to everyday life. The Oblation, unlike the vows taken by religious who live the celibate life in community, expresses the spirit of the monastic life in a way that is appropriate for men and women living in the world.

Oblates do not take vows or live in a monastery. They continue to live in the world while striving eagerly to live out the values of the Gospel. On the other hand, they do make promises to seek God more intensely through the principles of the Rule of Saint Benedict in partnership with the monks of Saint Joseph's Monastery. Oblates may be single or married lay people or secular clergy who are not affiliated with any other Religious Community. Whatever their state in life, through their promise to live according to the spirit of the Rule, they commit themselves to seek God above all things and to prefer Christ to all else in the ordinary circumstances of their lives. This commitment is meant not only to enhance their personal spirituality but also to help them become better witnesses of Christ by word and example in the midst of the secular world.

Unlike members of 'third orders' or 'associates', Oblates do not adhere to a distinct rule of their own, but rather promise to "dedicate themselves to the service of God and neighbor according

to the Rule of Saint Benedict, insofar as their state in life permits" (ceremony of Oblation). This promise involves a personal commitment to nurture the specific values contained in the Rule and to make some time in one's schedule for the Daily Office and Lectio Divina (Holy Reading of Scripture).

Becoming an Oblate

A Christian lay person or ordained minister who discerns God's call to Oblation should contact the Superior of the monastery and include his/her full name, address and telephone number, and a few sentences describing their interest. After further reflection and the completion of a simple application form, the person may be received as an Oblate novice or "Beginner" at the monastery. The time of Oblate novitiate is one year or more of intensive reflection on the *Rule of Saint Benedict* and efforts to live out Benedictine values. At the conclusion of the novitiate period, the Oblate novice who discerns a call to make a lifelong commitment as a full Oblate of Saint Benedict may petition to make final Oblation and become a permanent member of the monastic family.

