

Guidelines for Oblate Mentors of St. Placid Priory

Thank you for agreeing to be a mentor for a new oblate candidate in the oblate program. Your gift of time, experience, wisdom and most importantly of yourself, are deeply appreciated. This next year or so are primarily a time for the Oblate Candidate to explore more deeply what it means to be an Oblate of the Monastery of St. Placid and to explore whether they are called to this **life-long** commitment.

Goals

The Oblate Candidate this next year, or as long as the Oblate Candidates needs, has three major goals. During this time of discernment the Oblate Candidate should come to the point where they have:

1. a basic understanding of Benedictine spirituality and familiarity with the Rule of Benedict. This goal should be met through the study of books on Benedictine spirituality and the Rule.
2. an ability to incorporate Benedictine spirituality and values into daily life. This goal should be met if the Oblate Candidate is able to identify core Benedictine values and regularly evaluate his/her life as to whether or not he/she is incorporating those values in his/her everyday life.
 - **Benedictine Oblates Values Chart (have) (Zoom class on Benedictine Values) (in process)**
 - **Benedictine History Chart (S Lucy)**
3. an ability to demonstrate that they are an active member of the St. Placid's community, both as an Oblate Candidate and in their connection with St. Placid. This goal would be met if the Oblate Candidate participates regularly in Oblate Formation sessions, in community gatherings and in service to the St. Placid Community and/or in other areas of service depending on their location.

Specific Tasks:

1. **Meeting together:** As you journey with the Oblate Candidate we hope that you will be able to meet in person once a month or via Skype/Zoom or a phone call. We know how busy everybody is and how difficult it can be to make schedules work, so please do the best you can to make this a priority.

- **First meeting:** The first meeting might be a good time to share your faith stories, how you came to the Oblate Formation program, what is it about Benedictine spirituality that you find nourishing and challenging, and how you understand discernment. The Oblate Candidate may want to talk about their hopes for the process. At this first meeting you can then set some goals for the next year in terms of monthly meetings, what you want to study, tools for reflection, etc.

- **Invite Oblate Candidate, Oblate Mentor and Sister Mentor to meet for the first meeting. This may happen in person, such as Sept. 8th, via Zoom or Skype, or phone.**
- **Discuss the relationship between Sister and Oblate Mentors with the Candidates and decide what sources might be used for your meetings.**
- **This year we recommend Judith Valente's How to Live: What the Rule of St. Benedict Teaches Us about Happiness, Meaning and Community be done with the Oblate mentor. If another source would be better, please use it, but be clear what the Sister Mentor and Oblate Mentor do with the Oblate Candidate.**
- **Briefly review #2 Sign of Growth.**

Subsequent meetings: In the next meetings the discussion can focus on the book/reflections about the reading and how the insights of the book and their reflections on Benedictine spirituality apply to their daily life. The mentor is asked to share with the Oblate Candidate how they have learned to integrate the Rule and Benedictine spirituality into their everyday life.

- **Kindly invite them to read an article by the Conference of American Benedictine Prioresses Upon This Tradition. V. With a Listening Heart (under Essential Readings called “With a Listening Heart.”)**
- **See Oblate Candidate in www.stplacid.org.--”Guidelines for Oblate Mentors.**
- **Suggest a plan or assignment for next meeting or invite them to do so.**
- **Ask a question such as “What the Oblate Candidate has done since the last meeting to be an active, supportive part of the community e.g. prayer, attending meetings, helping with specific tasks?”**

2. Signs of Growth, Commitment: As you journey with the Oblate Candidate there are certain signs of maturity and commitment to watch for. These include:

- Is there a commitment to grow spiritually and to go in depth in learning Benedictine spirituality? Is the Oblate Candidate willing to go move more deeply into their faith journey, to be challenged and grow?

– Does the Oblate Candidate demonstrate appropriate behavior and attitudes? Do they demonstrate respect and openness to all people? Do they demonstrate appropriate social boundaries e.g. not intrusive, able to understand limits? Are they able to be supportive of others and not be focused just on themselves?

– Do they see participation in the Oblate formation program primarily as a spiritual exercise rather than simply a social group or one that nourishes only them?

– Do they demonstrate a high level of commitment and participation? Do they regularly attend meetings and their sessions with you? Have they made the Oblate formation program a priority in their life?

– Do they demonstrate an ability to be part of a diverse group? (e.g. appropriate behavior and attitude towards other members, acceptance of beliefs different from one’s own, ability and willingness to respect and tolerate people one has difficulty with.)

- Do they demonstrate a willingness and commitment to be involved in their oblate group as well as the monastery?

-Do they understand that a long term commitment is a way of life and an explanation of the 3 promises: Obedience, Stability, and Conversion of Life? (can be dealt with at any session).

-Do the Oblate Candidates participate in the ministry and/or financial support of the St. Placid Community? (see Oblate handbook for possibilities)

- Do they incorporate service into their daily life (through work, Church, volunteer activity, etc.)

3. Daily Life: In between the meetings you may want to pick a particular value or topic from your reading to be your focus during the month. Focus on how you integrate that value in your daily life. Tools for doing this could include journaling, daily exam, further reading on the topic, discussion, etc. The important thing is to specify exactly what values you are going to focus on and how you are going to evaluate how you are incorporate them into your life. For example “This month I am going to focus on hospitality and I will do some additional reading and each night I will write down how I have lived or not lived this value in my life.” By having some specific accountability for how you are going to do this it is more likely that it will actually happen.

- **??Liturgy of the Hours sources: (in process—Liturgy Committee, copyrights)**

- **Is there a way the Liturgy of the Hours' book of the community might be shared with Oblates in any stage or recorded in some way?**
 - **Can the monthly Scripture readings be put on the website? (S Raphaela)**
 - **Can the Evening Praise readings be put on the website? (Liturgy Committee)**
2. **3. Sharing:** During your time together you will probably want to primarily focus on the book or reflection paper and how the Oblate Candidate has been doing in incorporating Benedictine values into everyday life. In addition, it would be good to also discuss these topics (and always remember, these are suggestions and guidelines, not mandates!)
- 3.
- What does it mean to you to be part of a Benedictine and an Oblate community?
 - What are the positive aspects and the challenges of living the Benedictine way of life?
 - What the Oblate Candidate has done since the last meeting to be an active, supportive part of the community e.g. prayer, attending meetings, helping with specific tasks?
 - Where do you feel you need to grow in incorporating Benedictine values, are there areas that are easy? difficult?
 - Do you have an active prayer life?
 - Do you try to pray with Scripture, lectio...?
 - Are you active in your local faith community?

Summary: These are simply guidelines and suggestions. Always be flexible in determining what is going to work best for you and the person you are accompanying. Do what works best for you given their needs, personality and lifestyle. Draw on their own experience of what is and is not helpful. Let them share from their hearts and their own life. Kindly model for them a sharing of your heart and how you live your Benedictine life. There is no right or wrong way to do this; there is simply the commitment to seek God in community according to the Gospel and the Rule of Benedict.

Thank you for the great gift of your time, presence and commitment in journeying with a Oblate Candidate in this journey! We deeply appreciate your presence to them and your service. Please know that the Oblate coordinators are here to help and support you in any way we can.

Blessings,
Lucy Wynkoop, OSB and Novice Camille Wooden

Oblate Formation Team 2019-2020 (July 7, 2019)

Revisions suggested by the Oblate Formation Team are high-lighted.