

Presentation
for
St Placid Priory Oblate Community Meeting
April 11, 2021

A Brief Introduction
to the
2021/22 Oblate Formation Program:

Racial Healing & The Rule of St Benedict

Oblate Formation Program 2021/22

Meets from 12:30 to 3:00 PM on most Second Sundays of the month,
September through June (no meetings in December)

This presentation was organized by members of the Racial Healing Program Team (see page 5)

Today's Presentation Outline

- What
- Who
- Why
- How
- A Couple of New Optional Formation Components
 - Optional Summer Recommendations
 - Optional Oblate Kickoff Retreat
- What's Next / May Meeting
- A Personal Story
- Questions

What

Our Program Title: *Racial Healing & The Rule of St Benedict*

Devote the year to exploring and reflecting on faith and racial healing in the context of a contemplative life guided by The Rule of St. Benedict.

Our Oblate meetings will be structured around a modified version of a program developed by JustFaith Ministries (JFM) at <https://justfaith.org/> -- *Faith and Racial Healing: Embracing, Truth, Justice and Restoration*. While we will draw heavily from the JFM content, our program differs by virtue of our unique approach to integrate The Rule of St. Benedict as a core source of healing wisdom.

More on “What”

Program goals outlined in the JFM materials:

- Learn about the history of racial injustice in the U.S., so that we might better understand and more effectively eradicate modern-day racial injustice
- Learn how faith communities responded to racial injustice in the past, so that we might learn from their mistakes and successes
- Learn from the faith and spiritual wisdom of those who endured injustice and stood for freedom
- Develop practical tools for seeking racial justice in our local communities our nation

Our unique spiritual formation contribution:

- The Rule of St. Benedict
 - Benedict is clear in the Prologue: “Do not be daunted immediately by fear and run away from the road that leads to salvation. It is bound to be narrow at the outset.”
 - And, as Sister Lucy told me in an interview about The Rule, St. Benedict calls us to:
 - Listen with our hearts
 - Rise up
 - Act justly
 - Speak the truth with candor
 - From the Prologue through The Good Zeal of Monks, with our formation program centered on racial healing, we begin again...

Who

The Racial Healing Program Team working in conjunction with Oblate Formation Team

Program Team

More than half dozen of our oblates have facilitated and/or participated in one or all three of JFM 8-week modules on Faith and Racial Justice, including:

Anna Peterson
Brian Peterson
Bonnie Westmark
Susan Johnson
Barbara Williams
Kathy Androes-Downes
Linda Fredericks
Marilyn Freeman

Oblate Formation Team:

Sister Lucy Wynkoop
Sister Anna-Camille
Sister Raphaela
Tess Sutton
Laura Tenisci
Don Cairns
Kathy Androes-Downes
Marilyn Freeman

Why

Racial Healing & The Rule of St Benedict was recently voted by our Oblates the top program choice for 2021/22.

How

Seven sessions, beginning in September

Two books plus *The Rule of St. Benedict**

Each monthly meeting will include:

Opening prayer

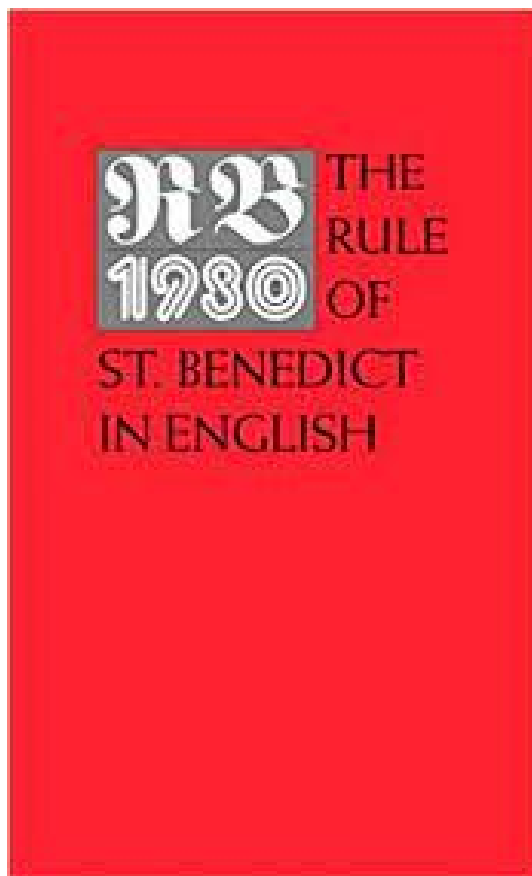
Lectio divina

Large group time

Silent reflection time

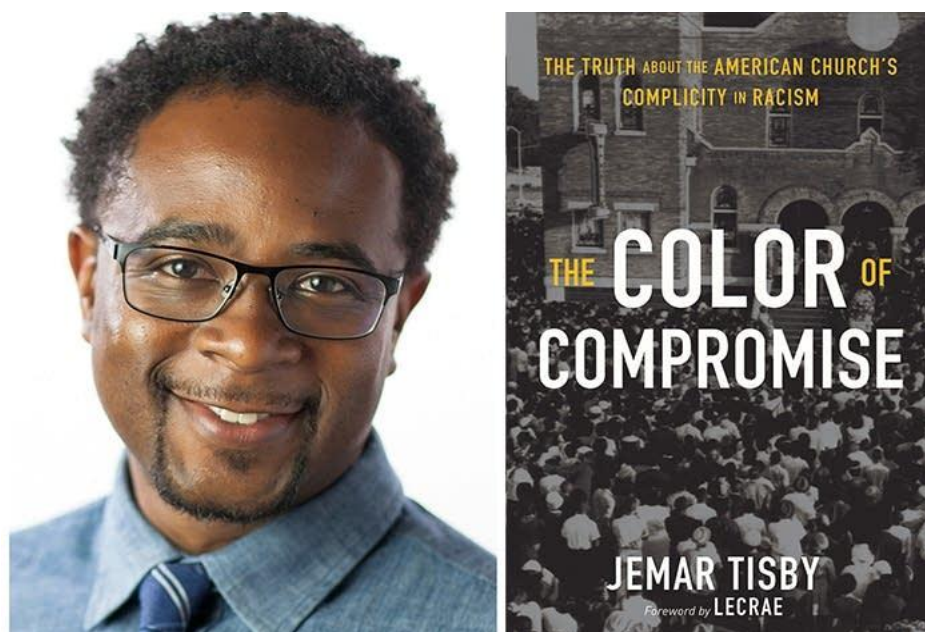
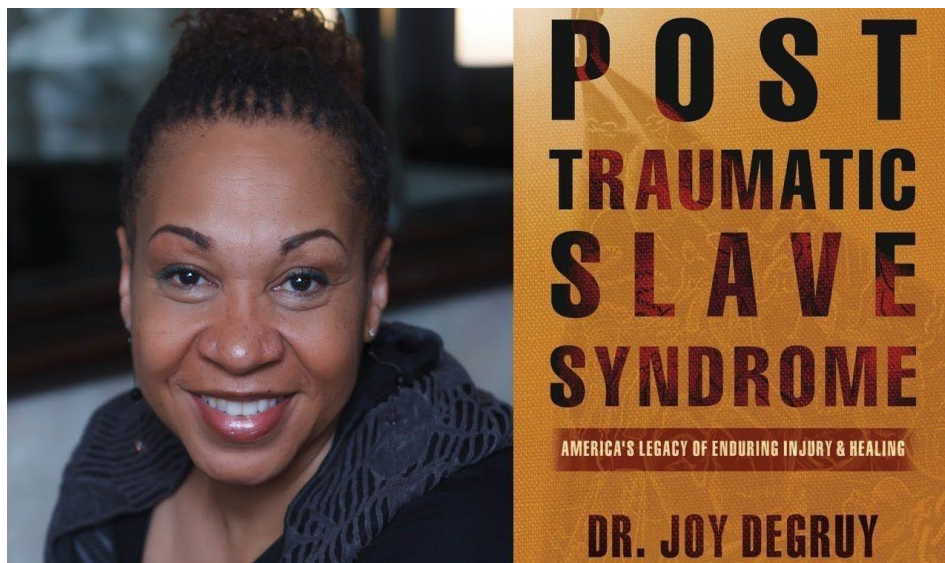
Breakout groups reflecting
on the RSB

Closing prayer



More on “How”

* Two required books



Note: *Racial Healing & The Rule of St Benedict* is adapted from JustFaith Ministries *Faith and Racial Healing: Embracing Truth, Justice and Restoration*

More on “How”

Ways of Being and Learning Together

(Community of Trust Guidelines from JFM & congruent with the Rule of Benedict)

Give and receive welcome. People learn best in hospitable spaces. In this community, we support each other’s learning by giving and receiving welcome.

Be as fully present as possible. Be here with your doubts, fears, and failings, as well as your convictions, joys, and successes, your listening as well as your speaking. Listen intently in order to fully understand different points of view. Honor the space between “no longer” and “not yet.”

What is offered in our community is by invitation, not demand. Share what your soul calls for, and know that you do it with our support. Commit to ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to speak. Invite others to speak before speaking again.

Speak your truth in ways that respect other people’s truth. Our views of reality may differ, but speaking one’s truth in our community does not mean interpreting, correcting, or debating what others say. Knowing that we are each created uniquely, and have different backgrounds, experiences, and views, we commit to honoring differences, knowing they add to the richness of the community’s experience.

No fixing, saving, advising, or correcting. This is one of the hardest guidelines for those of us who like to “help.” But it is vital to welcoming the soul, to making space for the inner teacher.

When the going gets tough, turn to wonder. If you feel judgmental or defensive, ask yourself:

- “I wonder what brought her to this belief?”
- “I wonder what he’s feeling right now?”
- “I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself?”

Set aside judgment to listen to others — and to yourself — more deeply.

More on “How”**Ways of Being and Learning Together (continued)**

Attend to your own inner teacher. We learn from others, of course. But as we explore prayer, readings, questions and silence, as well as engage with people both inside and outside our community, we have a special opportunity to learn from within. So pay close attention to your own reactions and responses, which are your most important teacher.

Trust and learn from the silence. Silence is a gift in our noisy world and a way of knowing in itself. Treat silence as a member of the group. After someone has spoken, take time to reflect without immediately filling the space with words.

Observe deep confidentiality. Our community of trust depends on knowing that whatever we say will remain with the people to whom we choose to say it — whether in small groups or in the large circle — and will never be passed on to others without our explicit permission.

Know that it's possible.... To leave a meeting of our community with whatever it was you needed when you arrived and that the seeds planted here can keep growing in the days ahead.

A Couple of New Optional Formation Components

Optional Oblate retreat – to kick off our Oblate season

Saturday prior to our September Oblate meeting

A day-long gathering

Discuss and reflect on summer reading and viewing

Large Group Discussions

Breakout groups too

Optional summer recommended readings and screenings

To be announced at our May meeting

What's Next

This document will be emailed to Oblates.

May Meeting

Present Oblate calendar with program information
Present recommendations for summer reading and screenings
Present more info on the optional kick-off retreat

Now, from the heart: A Personal Sharing

Bonnie Westmark & Her Dear Sophia



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Questions

