

## Guidelines for Oblate and Sister (Community) Mentors and Oblate Candidates of St. Placid Priory

Thank you for choosing to discern about becoming an Oblate Candidate or for agreeing to be a mentor/sponsor for a new oblate candidate in the oblate formation program. Mentor, 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.

See the **Arc** for an overview of the story to be an Oblate

### Goals

For the Oblate Candidate this next year or longer 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 book on Benedictine spirituality and the Rule such as Esther de Waal's [A Life-Giving Way: A Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict](#) or Joan Chittister's [Spirituality for the 21st Century](#). Eventually we will have a library with the Rule of Benedict on vimeo.
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**
3. an ability to demonstrate that they are an active, appropriate member of the St. Placid's community, both oblate and cenobitic. This goal should be met if the Oblate Candidate participates regularly in oblate and community gatherings and demonstrates appropriate boundaries, participates actively and demonstrates respect for all people.

### 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 via Skype , Zoom, a phone call or in person. We know how busy everybody is and how difficult it can be to make schedules work, so please just do the best you can to make this a priority.

- **First meeting for Oblate Candidates and Mentors:** The first meeting might be a good time for mentors to share your faith stories, and how you as an Oblate mentor came to the oblate program or a Sister mentor entered St. Placid Priory, what it is 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 how often to meet, what you want to study (see guide), tools for reflection, etc.

- **Invite Oblate Candidate, Oblate Mentor and Sister Mentor to meet.**
- **Discuss relationship between Sister and Oblate Mentors with the Candidates and decide what sources might be used by Sister and Oblate mentors in meetings.**
- This year we recommend Esther de Waal's [A Life-Giving Way: A Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict](#) **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 does with the Oblate Candidate.**
- **Christine Valters Paintner's [Earth: Our Original Monastery--7 sessions for Everyone](#)**

- **Future meetings done separately with Sister or Oblate Mentors and Oblate Candidates:** The discussion can focus on the book/reflection articles you are reading and how the insights of the book and Benedictine spirituality apply to everyday life. The mentors can share with the Oblate Candidate how they have learned to integrate the Rule and Benedictine spirituality into their everyday life. The mentors will focus on how this works for him or her at home and the Community mentor as it is lived in a community setting.

- **Oblate mentors, kindly invite them to read an article by the Conference of American Benedictine Prioresses Upon This Tradition. V. With a Listening Heart (under Oblate Home, Oblate Candidate in [www.stplacid.org](http://www.stplacid.org)).  
<https://www.stplacid.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Conference-of-American-Benedictine-Prioresses-Upon-this-Tradition.pdf>**
- **Mentors, suggest a plan or assignment for the next meeting**
- **Mentors, 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: Oblate Candidates and mentors , 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 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 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 community? (see Oblate handbook for possibilities)**

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

2. **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, lectio, an examen, 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 incorporating 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.

3. **Sharing:** During your time together you will probably want to primarily focus on the book or a reflection the Oblate Candidate has written 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!)

- What it means to be part of a Benedictine community and an Oblate community?

- What are the positive aspect 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, liturgy of the hours...  
**Liturgy of the Hours sources examples: Give Us This Day, Liturgy of the Hours books, People's Companion to the Breviary; Psalms and Canticles said at St. Placid** <https://www.stplacid.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/LOH-for-Oblates.pdf>
  - Are you active in your local faith community?
4. **Signs of Growth, Commitment:** Mentors and Oblate Candidates, as you journey together, 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 program primarily as a spiritual exercise rather than simply a social group?
  - 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 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 incorporate service into their daily life (through work, Church, volunteer activity, etc.)

**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 your needs, personality and lifestyle. Draw on your own experience of what is and is not helpful. Share from your heart and your own 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 novice in this journey! We deeply appreciate 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 Sister Anna-Camille Wooden and Sister Raphaela Cady

**Formation Team reviewed Oblate Candidate 2019 (revised to include Mentors - May 10, 2020)**