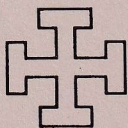


BECOMING AN OBLATE

The first step in becoming an oblate is to contact the monastery in Montreal. Oblate membership begins with a year's novitiate during which the oblate becomes more familiar with the Rule of St. Benedict, the monastic tradition this has inspired as well as the place meditation has occupied in the tradition. But essentially the oblate formation is a spiritual one: a deepening of the commitment to the way of meditation through the support and encouragement of the community sharing this same commitment and priority.

At the end of the oblate novitiate final oblation may be made at the monastery. In the case of people living far away the oblate novice may begin his/her year *in absentia*. But final oblations, which may be made any time after the end of the novitiate year, are normally made in person at one of the regular oblate meetings. Suggestions for spiritual reading are made from time to time at these meetings and an oblate newsletter is sent out after each meeting to keep those who could not be present in touch with the Community.



THE BENEDICTINE PRIORY

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THE OBLATE COMMUNITY



BENEDICTINE PRIORY OF MONTREAL

OBLATE COMMUNITY THE BENEDICTINE PRIORY

BENEDICTINE OBLATES

Monks form the core of a monastery. But since the beginnings of monasticism, the monastic family has always been an extended one. It has included lay people who live and work in the world but are nevertheless an integral part of the monastic community. These men and women are called oblates.

An oblate lives out his or her life in union and fellowship with the monastery. Oblates find an inspiration for their lives in the spirit and tradition of the Rule of St. Benedict. And they find fellowship and encouragement on their own spiritual path by sharing in the way this Rule is lived by their monastery. Persons becoming oblates would be looking for a way of deepening the meaning and range of their life. They would be looking for a way in which family, work, relationships can all be centred more deeply in the Mystery of Christ. And to this end they have begun the pilgrimage of meditation.

This pilgrimage is one that requires a personal commitment but it is one that we make in fellowship with the support and encouragement of others. This is the essential nature and purpose of the Oblate Community of the Benedictine Priory of Montreal.

THE BENEDICTINE PRIORY

The Benedictine Priory is a contemplative monastery in the city. It shares its spiritual tradition as freely as it can with others by means of its meditation groups meeting regularly at the monastery, its publications, occasional lectures or retreats given by the monks outside the monastery and with its guests.

The life and work of the Priory revolves around the community's commitment to meditation. Its essential work is the communication of this tradition as a contemporary reality to men and women of our own day.

Oblates of the community share this commitment and share also in the work of communicating this message. Many, for example, run meditation groups in different parts of the world. Others lead retreats or give talks on meditation. But essentially the oblates' participation in the life and work of the monastery is by his or her own personal commitment to meditation, as a daily reality. In this way they and those to whom they communicate this tradition find great encouragement from being part of a larger spiritual community.

BEING AN OBLATE

Oblates do not take vows but they do undertake to orient their life on the Rule of St. Benedict in a spirit of compassion, order and moderation. Wherever it is lived the Benedictine life is committed to inner and outer harmony—a synthesis of prayer, work and study in a spirit of love and service to our fellow men and women.

The Rule is a spiritual document of great practicality. The oblate approaches his or her own spiritual life in a practical way. Oblates set aside a period of about half an hour each morning and each evening for meditation, in the Benedictine tradition of "pure prayer". They would also read a short extract from the Rule each day seeing how the spirit of the Rule applies to their own particular lives. Many whose circumstances permit read a part of the Divine Office each day.

Regular oblate meetings are held at the monastery in Montreal, and also in Ottawa and Toronto. And a list of meditation groups run by oblates around the world is available in a booklet published by the Priory called "Meditation Groups."