

# Year One Syllabus

## Unit 1

### Beginning Your Formation

#### Welcome and Overview

**Welcome** to Year One of the formation program of the Oblates of the Community of St. Mary, Southern Province. You have now met your fellow brothers and sisters for the first time and have experienced the powerful experience of sharing the Divine Office as a corporate body. It is our prayer that your joy will be heightened as your journey in Christ continues.

Now your work begins. Religious life is about “listening” and “becoming” all that we can be today. This process of “listening” and “becoming” is what formation is about. We read and hear the words of Benedict: “Listen carefully, my son, to the MENTOR’s instructions, and attend to them with the ear of your heart. This is advice from a father who loves you; welcome it, and faithfully put it into practice.”

These words from Benedict welcome us to a holy experience, an opportunity to deepen in awareness of the sacredness that God has sown into life itself. Benedict and Mary both speak to us over the centuries. The intent and focus of Benedict’s words remain unchanged. They invite us into holy obedience, a daily practice of listening to the will of God in our lives. They ask us to be open to the work of the Holy Spirit and be willing to place our desires, expectations, and wants aside for a greater goal, that of ultimate unification with our God and our neighbor.

## **READ-ME-FIRST!**

### 1. Required books for this Semester

(See “Readings” for details)

*Prayer and Temperament—Different Prayer Forms for Different Personality types*

*The Benedictine Way.*

*Monastic Practices*

*Life-giving Way: A Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict, and: The Rule of Benedict: Insight for the Ages*

*Seeking Life: The Baptismal Invitation of the Rule of Benedict.*

*Entering the Household of God: Taking Baptism Seriously in a Post-Christian Society.*

### 1. Setting Priorities

In this formation process, you are asked to establish priorities, priorities that will nurture and enhance our quest of a greater goal, that of ultimate unification with our Creator. These priorities are embedded in our Baptismal vows. They are the foundation whose cornerstone is Christ; whose interconnectedness is reliant on the mortar of our faith, prayer and work. These priorities, which are spelled out in the Baptismal Rite, ultimately ask us to place Christ above all else because of love.

Our response to love is prompted by Jesus, because he first loved us and gave himself totally for us. Our recognition of this begins with how we approach life and its responsibilities. Is life and its responsibilities seen as duties, chores, burdens or obligations? Or are they seen in the light of God’s overall plan; venues to a greater understanding of who we are, who we need to be, and what we need to become. In hope of the latter we begin all

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activities with prayer and end them with prayer. We ask God to be present in our decisions and to bless our efforts as they evolve. At the end of our effort, we thank God for his presence, compassion, blessing and love. Our faithfulness to this practice will reflect on how we approach and respond to life.

Our response to God's love as Religious is the same as any Christian with the addition of exercises unique to our tradition as Religious. As with any exercise, the purpose is to strengthen and give aid to selective body parts in order to reach a particular goal. Not unlike this practice, our goal of ultimate unification with the Holy One is aided by a series of repetitive spiritual exercises. Beside our desire for corporate and individual prayer and work, we prioritize our life and time to include: reading formation materials, preparing reflective papers, lectio divina, meditation, and contemplation.

In the final analysis, your formation program is not just about studying, prayer, and meditation. It is about practicing and living the Rule of St. Benedict. You have to create, reset and reorder your priorities so that the prayer, meditation, and study that you have agreed to do are near the top of your priority list. And you cannot do that in a vacuum. You have to do it with your partner and family, and you have to look at your professional life and learn to set limits on what you can and cannot do at your job. The words that are used or come to mind from the Rule are **Love, Listening, Humility, and Balance**. You have to approach your partner and family in **Love** and **Humility** and explain to them what you have to do every day and the implications of this work on them. You have to **listen** to their **love** for you and their concerns about what you are about to do. Is your partner worried about you over-working and getting sick? Is your family concerned or even angry because this will mean even less time for them? In **love**, you must **listen** and talk about the commitment. And, in talking through all this 'stuff' and strike a **balance** so you can plan and structure your life in such a way that you can do your prayers, meditation and study without distraction or guilt. Finally, understand that this is not a one shot deal. Your priorities and plan have to be reviewed regularly. People's personal or job situations change and your plan has to be reviewed constantly. You have to listen to your family to see if the old concerns have been resolved or if new problems have developed and deal with them. So creating and maintaining priorities and plans is a continuing process – not unlike living the Rule.

### 1. Planning

**Background.** Our life is centered on the four prayer services called The Divine Office. Morning Prayer, Noon Office, Evening Prayer, and Compline are prayed six days a week. These Offices require about 2 hours each day at the Abbey, where Monastic Breviary is used exclusively. Your experience may vary greatly and require less time to meet this commitment. On Sunday we only pray Evening Prayer.

The second most important hallmark of Benedictine life is the practice of lectio divina, meditation and contemplation. This important private reading and prayer discipline is practiced Monday through Saturday. Once again, our experience indicates that a minimum, 30 minutes a day is devoted to the practice of this important prayer activity.

How we meet our obligation to the Offices and Lectio is not set in stone. The Companions of St. Luke ~ Benedictine while honoring our past traditions, has eyes that look to the future of Religious Life. We need to adapt to our times and often think "out of the box" when developing frameworks to meet our obligations. Outside of our corporate worship life, which centers around the Monastic Breviary, other sources may be used to meet our private Office obligation. These may include shorten versions of the Office, listening to tapes or CDs of the Offices by monastic communities. Lectio Divina (sacred reading) has a listening component. Here again, tapes and CDs may be used to initiate our hearing before delving into our reflection.

The other part of Benedictine life is study. For postulants of CSL, study time is used to:

- . Read the Rule of St. Benedict, our customary, and assigned books.
- . Writing reflection papers on the books read and on your meditation/contemplation/lectio divina.
- . Completing necessary reports.

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Study and reading habits vary widely between individuals. Some people are able to read, learn and inwardly digest formation material quickly and create reflection papers easily. Others need more time. Determine the amount of time you need to study based on how you learn best. Later in this manual you will find your study syllabus and Weekly report guide. Using these tools, you will determine how much time you need to allocate to study. Your Formation MENTOR does not care about how much time is spent, but rather the quality of the time spent. Have you completed the readings within the schedule? Have you written concise and effective reflection papers? Are you faithful in submitting the weekly reports on a timely basis? These points are what interest your Formation MENTOR. So, when creating your plan, you have to allocate sufficient time to do quality work. Once again, your Formation MENTOR is there to help. If you are struggling or have questions contact him/her. (S)he is your primary resource for help and support

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Study Syllabus Month	Study Assignment
December	<p>Complete the Day Planner and send it to your Formation Mentor by January 1st.</p> <p>Read Introduction to Formation and Chapter 1.</p> <p>Begin reading <i>Prayer and Temperament</i>.</p> <p>Begin your journal.</p> <p>Begin saying the Divine Office daily.</p> <p>After you have completed the <i>Lectio Divina</i> section of the formation manual (in Readings), begin the practice of <i>Lectio Divina</i></p> <p>Begin reading the Customary daily and the Rule of St. Mary weekly.</p> <p>Submit weekly reports at the end of the month.</p>
January	<p>Finish reading <i>Prayer and Temperament</i>.</p> <p>Complete Reflection paper #1.</p> <p>Begin reading <i>The Oblate Life</i>.</p> <p>Submit weekly reports.</p>
February	<p>Finish reading <i>The Oblate Life</i>.</p> <p>Complete Reflection paper #2.</p> <p>Begin <i>Benedict in the World</i></p> <p>Submit weekly reports.</p>
March	<p>Finish <i>Benedict in the World</i>.</p> <p>Complete reflection paper #3 .</p> <p>Begin <i>Monastic Practices</i></p> <p>Submit weekly reports.</p>

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April	<p>Finish <i>Monastic Practices</i></p> <p>Complete reflection paper #4</p> <p>Begin <i>Life-giving Way: A Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict</i> or <i>The Rule of Benedict: Insight for the Ages</i> for daily reflections (no paper). Submit 4 reflections based on the Rule readings. (See Forms)</p> <p>Submit weekly reports.</p>
May	<p>Continue daily reflections with the above text.</p> <p>Submit 4 reflections based on the Rule readings. (See Forms)</p> <p>Submit weekly reports.</p>
Summer Period (June-August): You may choose <b>one month</b> when you take a vacation from whatever requirements you would like.	
June	<p>Continue with daily reflections.</p> <p>Submit 4 reflections based on the Rule readings. (See Forms)</p> <p>Begin <i>Seeking Life: The Baptismal Invitation of the Rule of Benedict</i>.</p> <p>Submit weekly reports.</p>
July	<p>Finish <i>Seeking Life: The Baptismal Invitation of the Rule of Benedict</i>.</p> <p>Complete Reflection paper #5</p> <p>Submit weekly reports.</p>

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August	<p>Begin <i>A Theology of Worship</i></p> <p>Submit weekly reports.</p>
September	<p>Finish <i>A Theology of Worship</i></p> <p>Complete Reflection paper #6</p> <p>Submit weekly reports.</p>
October	<p>Begin Year One Project.</p> <p>Submit weekly reports.</p>
November	<p>Finish the Year One Project by October 15.</p> <p>Complete Mutual Review of your work with your Formation Mentor.</p> <p>Submit the petition to continue into next year's program.</p> <p>Submit final weekly reports.</p>

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### 1. THE DAY PLANNER

~ *An Explanation*

The “Day Planner” is a vital tool to constructing a day around the many responsibilities and obligations of life. These responsibilities and obligations have far reaching implications and at times can complicate our desire for a structured life. In an effort to minimize these realities, it is of utmost importance to sit down with family members and friends and work together to establish a rhythm and routine that will support an intentional living of our baptismal vows. Our efforts to achieve this goal will be enhanced by sensitivity to the needs of those around us and compromise.

The “Day Planner” is a natural response to the vows we have taken at baptism. At the heart of the baptismal vows is a wanting or desire to live a life of “conversion.” This conversion requires of us to evaluate and discern what it means to live a life of intention. Conversion means having to make some tough decisions about how we are now going to structure our day. The intent of our decisions is not about frustrating our life or making our relationships harder, but about promoting balance and supporting a lifestyle that is both affirming and loving.

The “Day Planner” is divided into days. As we look carefully at our responsibilities and obligations, each day may need to vary to support these activities. As best as possible, try to establish prayer times, *Lectio Divina*, and study time on a repetitive basis. This will serve three purposes. One is to promote a sense of rhythm and routine. Two is to promulgate a time of expectation or purpose for the day and three is to make those around us aware of the need for independent prayer, reflection and study.

Once the times have been set for prayer, *Lectio Divina* and study, prayerfully consider them as normative. Every effort should be made to be faithful to the routine. Faithful adherence to the routine will build a sense of accomplishment, grounding and balance to the day. Our faithfulness to the routine has added benefits. It allows the “soul” to anticipate a regular regiment of nurturing, so crucial to its overall health and well being. So, this process of establishing a routine is not so much about us, as it is about caring and loving the breath of God that sparked us into being.

From time to time there will be “circumstances” that will intersect our routine. These are to be expected. Adjust the routine as needed. Frequent intersections will eventually undermine the purpose of the routine and only frustrate our desire and the nurturing of the soul. Therefore, we may need to reevaluate the “Day Planner” on a monthly basis, if not more to minimize these effects.

It will be the Formation MENTOR’s responsibility to work with you on a monthly basis to establish a lasting and productive routine. A copy of the “Day Planner” is to be given to the Formation MENTOR and the Superior. Any changes should be forwarded to the Formation MENTOR and Superior. So, have on hand a number of duplicates for this reason.

A Day planner form is available elsewhere in your formation material. A completed Day planner is included here so you may see how this tool is to be completed. Please plan to complete your Day planner within December 15th and submit it to your Formation MENTOR.

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### **DAY PLANNER ~ LIVING AN INTENTIONAL LIFE OF PRAYER (Example)**

Enter a time of day for each of the Divine Offices, Lectio Divina, and study.  
The rhythm of the day is to be constructed with the support of family and friends.



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Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>5:00 AM</b>		Lectio	Lectio	Lectio	Lectio	Lectio	Lectio
<b>5:30</b>		Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer
<b>6:00</b>		Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
<b>7:00</b>	Breakfast	Study	Study	Study	Study	Study	Study
<b>8:00</b>							
<b>9:00</b>	St. Paul's Church						
<b>10:00</b>							
<b>11:00</b>							
<b>12:00 N</b>	Lunch	Noon Office	Noon Office	Noon Office	Noon Office	Noon Office	Noon Office
<b>1:00 PM</b>	Study	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
<b>2:00</b>	Letters	Study					
<b>3:00</b>							
<b>4:00</b>	Sunday Dinner						
<b>5:00</b>	Evening Prayer	Evening Prayer	Evening Prayer	Evening Prayer	Evening Prayer	Evening Prayer	Evening Prayer
<b>6:00</b>	Evening Prayer	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner
<b>7:00</b>							



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### Journals

A journal is a daily diary of your thoughts, insights, feelings and impressions developed as you do each of the various activities that make up your Postulant formation. Though not required as part of your prayer and study, journaling can help you focus, develop insights and realize implications of what is discerned as the Holy Spirit works through you as you do *Opus Dei* daily.

Practically, journaling is a tool. It will be a resource for your weekly report. If you record in the journal after Lectio Divina, you may find that the insights discerned may be more focused. Finally, the journal can be used to record your reactions to the books assigned to be read, which will help you as you write your reflection papers.

**NOTE:** If you elect not to create and use a daily journal, decide what methodology will help you retain the information from the various learning activities during Postulancy and use it continuously during formation

#### Using a Journal

1. Buy a notebook that is large enough for you to write comfortably whether you are at a desk or sitting at your prayer space.
2. Write spontaneously. Don't worry about spelling and it need only be legible enough so you can read it. What is important are the thoughts you have, the impact you've discerned and insights discovered.
3. Make an entry every day and date it. Enter the topic each time you record in the journal. For example, Morning Prayer – Epistle; Lectio Divina – Psalm 29.
4. Make entries as soon as thoughts and ideas occur to you. Don't wait until another time and try and reconstruct your thoughts. You will lose too much.
5. Use the journal to complete your weekly report, and reflection papers on the assigned readings

Remember, your journal is just that – *Your Journal*. Your Formation MENTOR will not collect it nor read it unless you want him/her to do so.

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### 7. Customary and St. Mary's Rule

**Formation Objective:** Demonstrate his/her understanding of the Customary and the Constitution. Postulants are required to read a segment of the Customary and the Constitution daily as part of their study time. The Customary is the collective experiences and wisdom gathered by its members over the years. The Customary and Constitution reflect living and breathing documents of a Benedictine experience rooted in our Baptismal Vows and articulated through the wisdom of St. Benedict.

While the vocation to Religious Life isn't new, our journey into the third millennium is. It is made new by our times and the experiences we share as a Community searching to express itself within a timeless spirituality.

The Rule of St. Benedict is the source upon which our Community is based. Recognizing that no Benedictine Order is fully able to meet all its guidance as written in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, the Companions of St. Luke seeks and desires to embrace the Rule's spiritual direction and injunctions.

The Customary of the Companions of St. Luke should not be looked at as a separate rule, but as an explanation of how the Rule of St. Benedict can be applied to contemporary life. In as much that it is an extension of the Rule, every effort should be made to be faithful to its direction.

**October 2010 Notes:** The customary has not been reviewed or updated for many years. It will be reviewed and changed during 2011. Your Formation MENTOR will Identify the important or relevant sections of this document for you to read daily, until the new customary is released.

The Constitution defines the structure of the community, defines the rules under which we operate, and describes the authority we live under. It also outlines the relationship between members and the relationship between CSL and the general church.

**October 2010 Notes:** The constitution was updated during the October 2010 convocation and is included in your formation manual. Amendments also received first approval. Second approval will occur later in 2010 or early 2011. You will receive a complete updated constitution by e-mail after that second vote.

**The Customary is found in chapter 7.**

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### Readings

**Formation Objectives:** Read assigned books and write a reflection paper on each. Understand the impact and implications of living as an Oblate.

Critical aspects of your formation are the books you are asked to read and reflect upon. In the Year One, you are expected to read six books and write a reflection paper on each. We ask members to do additional reading beyond the Rule, the Customary and Constitution, and the Formation Manual, because the books chosen are selected to enhance, and add depth and substance to your formation. This extra dimension offers deeper understanding and results in a deeper love of the Divine Office, the psalms, and *Lectio Divina* than can be developed by simply using these tools of prayer. They teach what it means to be a monastic in the world and to be an auxiliary member of a religious community. Readings answer the ‘why’ and many of these other sources answer the ‘how’. The books are listed below. Detailed information on these books is provided in the Oblate Booklist.

*Prayer and Temperament—Different Prayer Forms for Different Personality types*- Chester Michael & Marie Norrisey (Prayer Unit)

*The Oblate Life* - ed. Gervase Holdaway (*Benedictine Unit*)

*Benedict in the World* - ed. Linda Kulzer, Roberta Bondi (*Benedictine Unit*)

*Monastic Practices* - Charles Cummings, OCSO (Benedictine Unit)

*Life-giving Way: A Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict* - Esther deWaal **or** *The Rule of Benedict: Insight for the Ages* - Sr. Joan Chittister  
(**Daily reflection on the Rule only, no paper**)

*Seeking Life: The Baptismal Invitation of the Rule of Benedict* - Esther deWaal (Baptism Unit)

*A Theology of Worship* - Louis Weil

### Reflection Papers on the Readings

Your reflection papers are the primary source from which your Formation Mentor and will gauge your spiritual growth. The readings have been selected to help you develop a meaningful and regular prayer life, and understanding of the Rule, and understanding of what it means to be Benedictine Oblate. Therefore, it is important to approach your readings, not just as an intellectual exercise or for content, but for spiritual insight into Religious Life and practice. Your reflection papers should describe what significant knowledge you acquired and how you felt about the book. What resonated within you? What disturbed and challenged you? What insights came to you as you read? What are the implications on your life by what was said?

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To help you further in this exercise, questions for the readings are included below. These are offered as a guide to focus your thoughts and prayers as you write your paper.

### *Length of paper*

The length of the reflection paper is not as important as its content. The paper needs to address the question(s) appropriate to each book.

### **Focus Questions for your reflection Paper on the Readings**

*Book #1 Prayer and Temperament – Different Prayer Forms for Different Personality Types*

1. Read and determine which of the four basic temperaments you belong to, using Appendix I found on page 121. From these four basic types are sixteen possible combinations.
2. Using Appendix II starting on page 127, read about your select Prayer Type.
3. Having identified your “spiritual temperament” now read through the remaining pages of the book.

Reflection paper: What is your “spiritual temperament” type, and how did this book help you to understand yourself?

*Book #2 The Oblate Life* - ed. Gervase Holdaway

1. Dom Gervase offers guidance for lifelong spiritual formation in the Rule of Saint Benedict by drawing deeply on the wisdom of monastics and oblates from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. The viewpoints and experiences vary according to the writer. Which writers appealed to you? Which writers did not? Why?
2. What insights and questions did this book raise for you concerning an Oblate commitment?
3. Which sections did you resonant with and why?

*Book #3 Benedict in the World* - ed. Linda Kulzer, Roberta Bondi (*Benedictine Unit*)  
Same questions as in #2.

*Book #3 Monastic Practices*- Charles Cummings, OCSO

Brother Cummings has written an excellent book on various aspects of Religious life founded on the Rule of St. Benedict. As you read through the book mark those sites that speak most intimately to you.

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Reflection paper: What aspect or custom of Religious life spoke to you above all others? Why this one and not the others.

*Book #4: Life-giving Way: A Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict* - Esther deWaal **or** *The Rule of Benedict: Insight for the Ages* - Sr. Joan Chittister  
(Used for daily reflection only, no paper)

*Book #5: Seeking Life: The Baptismal Invitation of the Rule of Benedict* - Esther deWaal

This book is a wonderful tool for meditation on Easter, baptism, and Benedictine monasticism. De Waal reflects on various phrases of the Prologue in conjunction with baptism.

1. What new information about the rite of baptism did you learn?
2. What new connections did you recognize and what new insights did you have about those connections?
3. How implications do these insights have for your life as a Christian and you life as an Oblate? Are there practices that you might adopt in your life to live out this invitation?

*Book #6: A Theology of Worship* - Louis Weil

*A Theology of Worship* introduces us to the theology of baptism as the defining sacrament. Weil invites the laity to claim their true baptismal role and serve alongside the ordained as ministers.

Reflection Paper: Apply the questions used in Book #5 and say what was different in what you learned, what insights you had, and what implications these insights have for your life as a Christian and an Oblate.

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# Rule of St. Benedict

## A Rule for Living and for Life

### Introduction and Overview

The study of the Rule of St. Benedict is a life-long process. The goal during Postulancy is to move from a secular, material life to a spiritual, religious life, where everything you do is centered on Christ. The study of Benedictine Spirituality begins with learning the basic tenets of the Rule by reading of a chapter or segment of a chapter of the Rule daily. It is best that you purchase a copy of the Rule with a commentary. It is strongly suggested that you use a Rule/commentary written by either Ester DeWaal or Joan Chittister. You will use Norvene Vest during your novitiate, so you should use a different author for Postulancy. See the Benedictine Study section of the Book List (Chapter 6).

### Instructions for Study of the Rule

#### Formation Objectives of this Unit

Demonstrate a basic understanding of The Rule of St. Benedict.

Demonstrate that the principles from the Rule of St. Benedict are being incorporated into in daily life.

Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between Benedictine vows and Baptismal vows.

#### Work related to the Rule to be completed during Postulancy

1. Read the sermon by The Archbishop of Canterbury ([Shaping Holy Lives' Conference on Benedictine Spirituality](#)), found elsewhere in this chapter. It provides important background to religious life and the importance of Benedictine religious life to the church as a whole. Please read this six page article as soon as you return from convocation.
2. Begin reading a chapter of the Rule with a commentary every day. Some chapters are rather lengthy and will require two – three days to complete.
3. Jot down insights and/or implications on your spiritual life from your reading in your journal. Use these notes for your weekly report.

#### Optional work to enhance your understanding of Benedictine Vows.

The book *'The Benedictine Toolbox; the Nuts and Bolts of Daily Benedictine Living'* (see the CSL book list, Chapter 6), is no longer a required text for Postulancy. However, if you have not read the book as an Aspirant or Candidate for vowed life in CSL, it is strongly recommended that you purchase the book and read the chapters listed below to enhance your understanding of Benedictine vows and the relationship of these vows to your Baptismal vows. Discuss this option with your Formation MENTOR before deciding to do this work and decide together if a reflection paper or another activity is to be completed and when.

Chapter	Chapter Title
Intro	Introduction
3	Stability
4	Obedience
5	Conversion of Life



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## Tying It All Together

### *First Year Project*

**Formation Objective:** Complete the Postulant Project

**Background:** To understand that: “the living out of ones’ religious vocation “is living out our baptismal vows in the most intense expression available. But what does the phrase ‘Living out our Baptismal Vows’ mean to you? The purpose of this exercise is to challenge you to think in a deeper, personal way about this question. It is critical for you to understand the relationship between Baptismal vows and the Benedictine Vows as you move from Postulant to Novice.

**Instructions:**

Read the following Material.

1. *Seeking Life: The Baptismal Invitation of the Rule of Benedict.* (See the Book list (Baptism Unit) for complete information)
2. *Entering the Household of God: Taking Baptism Seriously in a Post-Christian Society.* (See the Book list (Baptism Unit) for complete information), This book is an easy read, but very important since it discusses the importance of Baptism in relation to Christian community. Note: do not worry about the story questions or the group activities
3. The Catechism on Baptism, Pages 858–859 of the BCP.
4. The Customary, (Vowed Life).

Write a reflection paper of no more than 4 typed pages discussing how the meaning and implications of the Baptismal Vows as practiced by Benedictines has changed you. Answer these questions in your paper:

- . Describe how you see the relationship between the Benedictine vows of Conversion of life, Obedience, and Stability and your Baptismal vows.
- . Have you been brought closer to Christ by this deeper understanding of Baptism? How?
- . Have your relationships with your religious brother and sisters, co-workers, church members, and strangers been changed by what you have learned? How?

When thinking on these questions think in terms of what you have done and are doing that changed you, not what you ought to do.

You may start this project as early as the third or fourth month of your Postulancy. The essay must be turned in to the Formation MENTOR no later than **April 15.**

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# Tell Us How you are Doing

## Reports

### Reporting Responsibilities

**Formation Objective:** Complete required reports and send them in to the Formation MENTOR at the end of each week.

As a Postulant you are to submit the following reports to your formation MENTOR:

1. Postulant Week in Review report, sent by Tuesday of the following week.
2. Reflection Papers are written upon completion of a reading and sent to your Formation MENTOR with your Postulant Week in Review report.

Instructions for the reflection papers are provided elsewhere in this formation chapter.

<p><b><i>The Week in Review</i></b></p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p>	<p>In a monastery environment, the postulant's formation is under the direct supervision of the Abbot and the MENTOR. They are able to supervise the postulant's learning and spiritual growth. They make sure that the Rule is read and studied daily, that daily prayer and lectio divina/meditation/contemplation are practiced and meet with the postulant to discuss insights, implications and other reflections on what was discerned from this work.</p> <p>Since CSL is not primarily a residential order and our members are spread across the country, it is not possible for the Abbot or Formation MENTOR to exercise the level of supervision traditionally known to resident Religious. The form called the "Postulant Week in Review" is designed to chart your formation progress and encourage you to develop a rhythm and routine within your day. It also provides the Abbot with the information he needs to provide the level of support and supervision that is required of him by the Rule.</p>
<p><b>How often do I complete the form?</b></p>	<p>It is suggested that you chart your progress using the reporting form as you complete part or all of a requirement. Submit the forms weekly to the Formation MENTOR. The Formation MENTOR should receive this weekly report by <u>Tuesday of the following week</u>. The "Postulant Week In Review" is a self-contained reporting form requiring no other documents other than the prescribed book reflection. It is a daily report that is submitted weekly. Completing a portion of this report every day will save you time and provide you with a clear picture of your progress.</p>

## Year One Syllabus

<b>Where do I get the Form?</b>	The form is provided in a separate folder (FORMS) that is included in the Formation Manual CD
<b>What should I Report?</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Please refer to the sample report on the next page.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enter your Name and Week Ending date. Our Week runs from Sunday to Saturday.</li> <li>2. During the first month of Year One, you are required to read Chapter 1 of your Formation Manual. After you have done this, confirm in your report that you have completed the reading and you generally understand the content. <b>IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU DIRECT QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS TO YOUR FORMATION MENTOR QUICKLY.</b> If you have not been able to complete this reading within the first month of Year One, please explain why.</li> <li>3. Report the book you are reading from the Oblate Booklist. Set dates when you expect to finish and when you will complete the reflection paper. If you need to change them, indicate that change on the report.</li> <li>4. Check off the Offices completed each day.</li> <li>5. You are required to read a portion from the Customary each day, Monday through Saturday. Record what you read each day.</li> <li>6. After you read a segment of the Rule of St. Mary's for the week, record what segment you read.</li> <li>7. You are required to do <i>lectio divina</i> on the Psalms, Monday through Saturday. Record the Psalm and verse used for <i>lectio divina</i> each day, followed by information requested about the meditation and contemplation sections for the day.</li> <li>8. If you have any problems, concerns, or questions about your formation, explain them at the end of the report.</li> </ol>

### YEAR ONE WEEK IN REVIEW- Sample Report

Name:   DORIS JANE   Week Ending:   11/18/2006  

<b>Readings</b> I have read Formation Chapter 1 and understand its content. ( <u>First Month Only</u> )	<u>YES</u> NO, Explain here:
Current book being read from syllabus:	<i>Prayer and Temperament</i>
Proposed completion date:	12/1/06
Proposed completion date for Refection paper:	12/11/06
Are you on target? If not explain here:	No. Hospitalization

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### Divine Offices

Mark with an "X" each service of the Divine Office performed each day. Morning Prayer, Noon Office and Compline are optional on Sunday.

	Morning Prayer	Noon Office	Evening Prayer	Compline
<b>Sunday</b>	X			
<b>Monday</b>		X	X	
<b>Tuesday</b>	X			
<b>Wednesday</b>	X			
<b>Thursday</b>			X	X
<b>Friday</b>	X			
<b>Saturday</b>	X	X	X	

What difficulties are you experiencing saying the Offices? I had to make a day trip on Wednesday. No opportunity to do Morning Prayer/Noon Office.

### Study

	Customary	Constitution
<u>Instructions:</u>	<i>Enter segment studied. When reading the Customary, see it as a living document made for our time.</i>	<i>Enter segment read. When reading the Constitution, view it as building blocks to an ordered living organism.</i>
<u>Frequency:</u>	Daily	Weekly
<b>Sunday</b>	Free	Free
<b>Monday</b>	<i>A life built on Tradition</i>	<i>Nature and Polity</i>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<i>Community</i>	
<b>Wednesday</b>	<i>Nature and Office of the Superior</i>	
	<b>Thursday</b>	<i>Chastity and Celibacy</i>
	<b>Friday</b>	<i>Our Work</i>
	<b>Saturday</b>	<i>Vowed Life</i>

### Reading of the Rule of St. Benedict

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<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Read</b>
<b>Monday</b>	Prefix
<b>Tuesday</b>	Prefix
<b>Wednesday</b>	Prefix
<b>Thursday</b>	Chapter 1
<b>Friday</b>	Chapter 2
<b>Saturday</b>	Chapter 3

Are there questions related to your study of the Rule? No

### **Lectio Divina – Reading and listening to the Sacred Word**

*A minimum of 30 minutes should be devoted to Lectio Divina and Contemplation per day.*

*Use a Psalm each day. Enter the Psalm and the verse that you used for Lectio Divina and enter the word or phrase that you focused on.*

<i>Source of Lectio Divina</i>		<i>Word or words Reflected Upon</i>
<b>Sunday</b>	Free	Free
<b>Monday</b>	<i>Psalm 145, vss.8</i>	<i>"...gracious and full of compassion..."</i>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<i>Psalm 104 vss.25</i>	<i>"Yonder is the Sea..."</i>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<i>Psalm 33, vss.13</i>	<i>"The Lord looks down from Heaven..."</i>
<b>Thursday</b>	<i>Psalm 30 vss.1</i>	<i>"I will exalt you, O Lord, because you have lifted me up"</i>
<b>Friday</b>	<i>Psalm 138 vss.7</i>	<i>"Though the Lord be high, he cares for the lowly"</i>
<b>Sat</b>	<i>Psalm 29 vss.12</i>	<i>"the Lord shall give strength to his people ..."</i>

### **Meditation – Reflection made personal**

*Using the word or phrase of each day above, what primary question or application of the Psalms was made known to you in your prayer and reflection?*

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<b>Monday</b>	God's faithful and unlimited love.
<b>Tuesday</b>	God's serenity
<b>Wednesday</b>	God is looking over us
<b>Thursday</b>	God has saved me
<b>Friday</b>	I give thanks for God cares for the poor and lowly.
<b>Saturday</b>	I have been strengthened to change my life.

### Contemplation - Waiting on the Spirit

*Integrating the "personal applications" from the past week, what new grace or insight was learnt from your silent wait on the Holy Spirit? Enter your response below, and it need not be long, but reflective of your encounter with the Holy.*

As I struggle with my daily problems and challenges it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that I am alone and I have to deal with these things alone, that solutions can only be found by own efforts. The psalms that I prayed with this week have shown me the fallacy of this self-centered thinking. Most importantly they showed me, once again, that God does love me and cares what happens to me and if I am willing to listen and hear, He will lead me to good solutions.

**Do you have comments or concerns about your formation?** I am having trouble meeting my Day Plan. Please call me