

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, Rule of St. Mary's, 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, hopefully, 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?

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.

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.