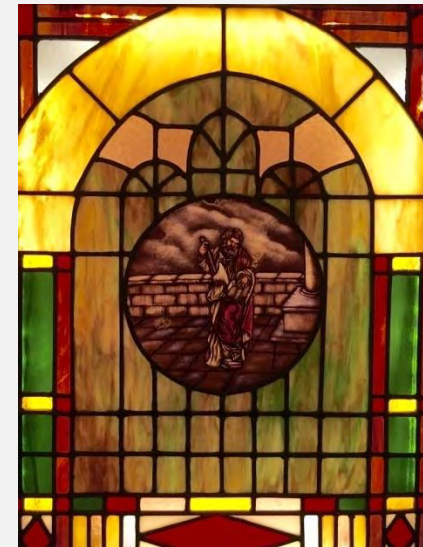




# Obsculta

"Listen with the ears of your heart"

December 2018



*"Indeed, our affiliation with the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross has brought tremendous spiritual blessings to us and our dear ones. The Cistercian habit has become an effective and visible sign of the healing and reconciling presence of our Lord, Jesus."*

*"The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross serves God in a variety of ministries throughout the world. Our union with each other, developed through common prayer also unites us to Jesus Christ, whom we ultimately serve with joy."*

**"Persevere in prayer. Gratitude will open our souls to the unity of God, self, and others. Gratitude moves us from limitations and fear to expansion and love."**

**Member of the Independent Anglican Church, Canada Synod**

The quarterly newsletter of

The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross, Common Observance

*Worldwide Membership of Monks Living Inside and Outside of a Monastery*

Founded 1981

1606 Briar Lake Circle Winston-Salem, NC 27103 336 918-0975

[www.CistercianMonks.org](http://www.CistercianMonks.org)

# News From The Abbot General



Of Special  
Interest In  
This  
Obsculta



Greetings Cistercians and Friends:

These past months have been filled with many blessings.

We have come together to give some financial support to Br. Benedict's widow. We will continue to give her emotional and spiritual support.

Br. Camillus, OCCO visited the Abbot General at the Holy Cross Monastery in Winston Salem, NC. We had a wonderful weekend in discussion, lots of great eats, and prayer. Br. Camillus, OCCO took his Novice Vows. Lance and Karen Key hosted us during a fantastic cook out.

I was rather brave, for an old man, who will be 72 this December 13<sup>th</sup>, and drove all by myself eight hours through the mountains to Cleveland, OH to meet with +David Smith and his wonderful congregation.

+David took his Novice Vows and has become +Br. Isaac Simon, OCCO. He and his congregation were gracious hosts .

- Br. Camillus, OCCO takes Novice Vows
- Br. Isaac Simon, OCCO takes Novice Vows
- Memorial to Br. Benedict, OCCO
- Michelle Melohusky on Gratitude
- Abbot General on Prayer
- Independent Anglican Church
- Global Fraternity for Christian Unity
- Who we are and what we do.
- Looking for more Priests
- Stephen Harding Seminary/College
- New Prayer for the Order
- Contact us

# Brother Camillus, OCCO becomes a member of the Cistercians

## No Ordinary Vows

By Br. Camillus, OCCO

My personal journey from being an Oblate, to Postulant, and now to Novice has been incredible. One can surely not stay still and walk a path with the Almighty.

My prayer life has certainly got a lot more meaningful on the path and many lessons were, and are still are to be, learned.

Lessons like being charitable to those who offend me were a real hard concept for me to embrace at first but it's begun to bear fruit.

Also lessons about double checking direction and staying on the trail. Our compasses and time pieces help us not to lose our way. I was reminded of that when I turned right instead of left on the way to the Monastery in Winston Salam, NC. The Abbot was kind and patient enough to stay up until 1:00 AM when I finally arrived six hours later than expected.

I shared many meals with the Abbot. One restaurant near Wake Forrest University was a place called the "Silo" that gleamed with unmatched hospitality and good eats as well as conversations that I still seem to be processing.

Being not of this world our journey sparked interest in visiting the South East Center for Contemporary Art. The "art" was a bit of a creepy/kooky view of this world.

After that we dined at Tre Nonne. A wonderful Italian restaurant that served us so much wonderful food I required a "to go box". I entered their establishment as a friend and exited with a smile, happy belly, and a feeling that felt like family.

Sharing prayer times and quiet reflection time at the monastery prepared me for the reception of my Novice vows.

Mr. and Mrs. Lance Key, Lance is a member of The Abbot's Council, joined us for the reception of my vows and "out of this world" Holy Eucharist. They later hosted us for a cook out. Their generosity helped me to feel right at ease. Their support and celebratory presence will be forever appreciated.

There are exceedingly good reasons to choose the contemplative path. The blessings that I gleaned are even now only partially being realized.

I am grateful for our Order and humbled to be a small component of our continuing legacy to spirit and truth.





# +Brother Isaac Simon, OCCO becomes a member of the Cistercians



+Brother Isaac Simon, OCCO  
Saint Stephen Community Church:

How can I sufficiently say thank you to such a wonderful giving group and inspired individuals?

From the moment of my first greeting to our final farewell I was honored, humbled, and encouraged in my service to our Lord and to you His faithful servants.

Celebrating the Holy Eucharist, giving His Body and Blood to you and, passing my blessings onto Br. Isaac Simon, OCCO was more than inspiring .

Congratulations to +Brother Isaac Simon, OCCO for becoming a Novice member of the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross.

Thank you for the wonderfully delicious and more than anyone could eat heartfelt preparations.

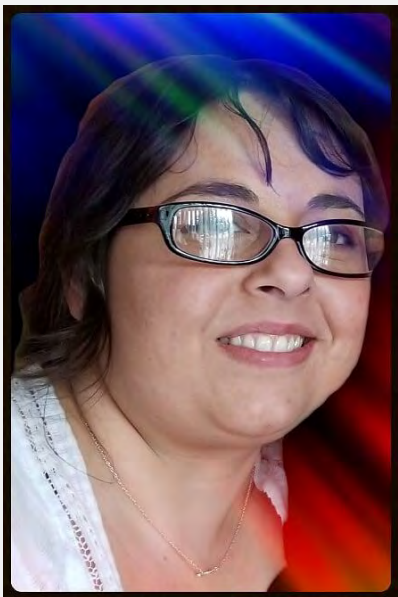
Kathleen and I thank you for the wonderful afghans held perfectly in the arms of a loving basket.

Please be assured of my constant prayers and willingness to be your servant.

Abbot Oscar Joseph, OCCO



## Br. Benedict, OCCO



Br. Benedict, OCCO is still with me. Every day I think about him and grieve his loss. I suspect that I will always grieve his loss. Even writing these words brings tears to my eyes.

Br. Benedict's mother-in-law Oblate Janice Ariza sent me this picture of Br. Benedict's grave marker. I was overwhelmed with sorrow and remembered many of our conversations throughout the many years.

Br. Benedict, OCCO had patiently waited many years to take his vows. He trusted me to know the exact right time. I remember being compelled by the Holy Spirit to receive his life vows on May 20, 2018. I also remember that the evil one tried to stop it from happening. It was an awful experience for both of us. But grace pulled us through and we had a wonderful ceremony with some of his family present.

None of us would have expected that he would die just a few months later.

The grave maker reminded me of the impact that the Cistercian Order can have on our faithful members. We are indeed doing an important thing and indeed our Good Lord has graced us. Thank you Br. Benedict, OCCO for reminding me.

A number of our Cistercian members have gifted Alexis with \$989.12. We will continue to give her and her family emotional and spiritual support.

**I have declared that September 13 will be Memorial Day for our Br. Benedict, OCCO.**





# Gratitude

By Michelle Melohusky, member Abbot's Council

Many of us recently sat around a table filled with our favorite traditional Thanksgiving foods surrounded by family and friends, grateful for all of it. We are grateful, we are appreciative, we are thankful. But what happens the next day, the next week, the next month, the next year? Are we still grateful? How many of us wake up each and every day grateful for the day? For the hot cup of coffee? For our job? For our family? For our busy and hectic life? For the obstacles given us? Why do we need to continue to be grateful?

I am divorced, remarried; mother of 3 - ages 14, 13, and 10, and an 8th grade teacher. I was diagnosed with Stage 3 breast cancer when my youngest was 18 months. Yet here I am, living my best life because I am grateful. I am grateful each day to wake up and go to work. I am grateful to have a job that allows me to make a difference in the lives of young people.

My children are busy- soccer, wrestling, dance, cheer, robotics club, drama club, chorus, band, honors programs. I could look at the calendar each day and feel overwhelmed at the schedule. Instead, I look at the schedule and feel grateful that they each have activities they like to do and the opportunity to do it. I enjoy the time spent in the car driving here, there, and everywhere. Some of our best conversations happen in the car.

I am grateful for my husband. His love and support makes each day better. Our relationship continues to thrive because we are grateful for each other.

My health is something that could have left me very sour. The cancer journey took me years to clean up and recover. However, I learned a lot about myself, my strength, my courage, my GRATITUDE. Yes, gratitude. I am grateful for family's love and support, for the best doctors, for a positive attitude, for time- each day I wake up is a blessing. This year, I ran not one, but two marathons. I am grateful.

Gratitude can change your perspective on your day, your stress, your health, your relationships. Challenge yourself to walk up tomorrow and be grateful, really grateful. Say the words out loud, "I am grateful for\_\_\_\_\_." Then do it again the next day and next, until it becomes a habit. Notice the positive changes.



Dave  
the Iron Man

Michelle  
the Marathoner

Dad, yup the Abbot,  
the Ultra Runner.



Prayer by ++Abbot General Oscar Joseph, OCCO

All too often I hear people complain about dryness in prayer. They complain from an erroneous belief that prayer was intended to always be filling and meaningful. St. John of the Cross calls this spiritual gluttony.

I remember reading a letter between St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross. She was encouraging him to join her on a trip to see the latest “fad” in miracles. He responded that there were enough miracles in his garden so he would not go.

Let me assure you that prayer is mostly an act of obedience and a joyful giving of our time to the Lord.

When I pray I am giving my gift, self oblation of time, to my Creator. He is not obliged to respond in any way.

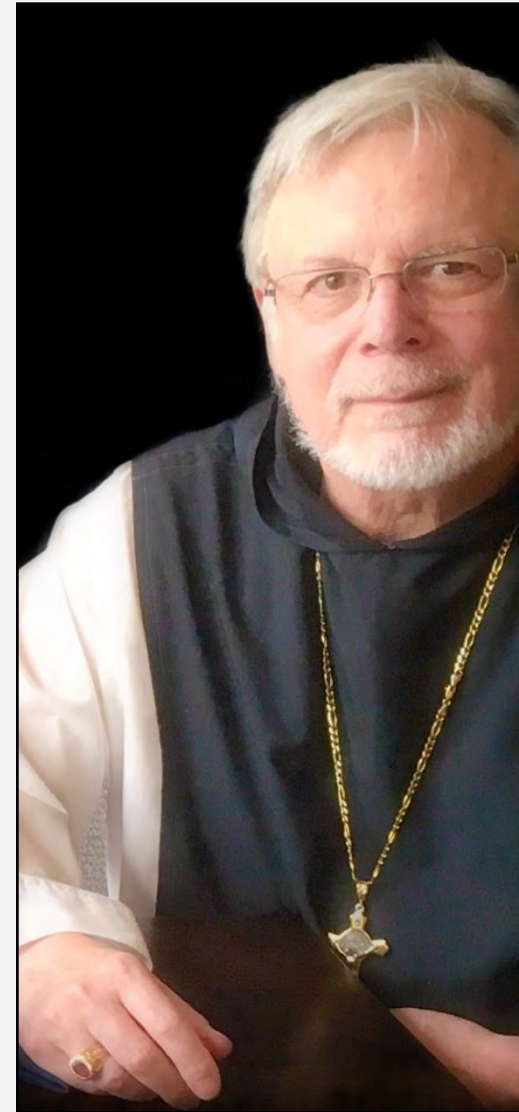
When He does respond it is mostly through an enlightenment or a better understanding.

I used to go to Him for emotional encouragement. His response was that it was my job and I should go for a run.

Frankly, I find God the most during the Eucharist. I saw the bread actually turn into flesh. Frequently I feel joined with the saints. I also become one with the Lord when I pray with others.

He often directs my prayers and brings healing. Br. Brendan, OCCO reported that I had transcended on one prayerful occasion.

So dear ones, prayer can be very exciting at times. God will create those moments. Meanwhile we simply do The Work of God.





## The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross are Proud Members of The Independent Anglican Church, Canada Synod

We are the **Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross, Common Observance**, an independent dispersed religious order within the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and an autonomous member of the Independent Anglican Church -Canada Synod.

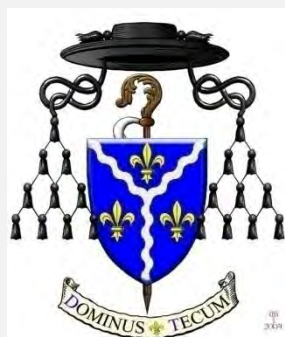
**“The Independent Anglican Church, Canada Synod** are proud to be traditional Anglicans. Who follow, "where the saints have trod", the old, familiar path; the path that leads, in order and dignity, to warmth and tolerance.

“The discipline and public worship of the Church are, most properly, Catholic. Our adherents will experience a spread of services and style stretching gloriously all the way from Anglo-Catholic to (Low) Evangelical. Most of our congregations would be described as being Broad Church, following a via media.”





## A message from the Archbishop Oscar Joseph, OCCO



People of prayer have always been the spiritual fiber holding together the Church.

We are pleased to sponsor The Global Fraternity for Christian Unity whose purpose is to pray and work (Ora et Labora) so: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." John 1

**1024 members.**

**Every two weeks we have a topic for discussion.**

**Members are from all over the world.**

**New: Prayer for Intentions. A place were you can ask for us to pray for your needs.**

Prayer for Petitions is a place where people can list their personal petitions and find spiritual support for the same.. Prayers for political, social or anything other than sincerely personal needs are not welcomed.

**Has 945 members.**

***Join today on FaceBook***

We, The Cistercians of the Holy Cross, are embedded icons, living sacramentals; who sustain, grace, and hold together the fiber of our communities. Our martyrdom is conversatio, stability, and obedience. We live in and are influenced by the heretic nature of our culture. However, while clothed in our holy habits we become sacred icons. When people gaze upon us they look into their hope and see reflected back the Source of all Hope. We become sacred signs, living sacramentals.

The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross is a contemplative Order that is also active in ministering to the world.

## We are icons of hope in our communities.

We pray for the world and individual intentions.

We pray for the living and the dead.

We are counselors, medical professionals, law enforcement, executives, ministers, educators, and consultants.

We conduct seminars, chapter meetings, healing services, conduct Bible studies, administer the sacraments, visit the sick, jail ministry, hospice, go to hospitals, nursing homes; and give alms, medical aid, food and comfort to the poor and suffering.

We conduct retreats for teens, motor cyclists, and local parishes.

We provide training and education for others to minister to The Kingdom of God by way of our College/Seminary.

We also provide Spiritual Direction to individuals

We develop monks and oblates. We ordain priests and deacons.

*"Your ministry has meant a lot to me. The Prayer Retreat I attended this spring was a great blessing to me. I had come to a time in my life when I felt cut-off in my prayers, wondering if I was "saying it right" so to speak. I learned that there is no "right", if it is in your heart (whether it is original words or written words) it is your personal prayer. So now I have those talks with God thru out the day (pray without ceasing)."*





**The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross, Common Observance** is an independent dispersed contemplative Religious Order that consists of laymen and women, single or married and male Diocesan clergy, from Anglican, Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Old Catholic traditions who live in the world as well as in monasteries or hermitages.

Our Cistercian roots date back to the eleventh century.

We live the Cistercian charism in our love of solitude, contemplation, work, and study as well as living under the Rule of St. Benedict, our Constitution and vows of Conversatio, Stability, and Obedience.

Our purpose is to:

- a) seek perfection.
- b) praise and worship God

Our work is to:

- a) produce educational materials.
- b) host retreats.
- c) found autonomous religious communities.
- d) prayerfully intercede for those in need and for peace in the world.
- e) perform works of charity, pastoral ministry and mission work

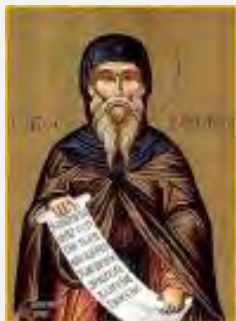


**The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross is 37 years old. We are one of the oldest Religious Orders of our kind.**

We are an independent dispersed religious order within the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and an autonomous member of the Independent Anglican Church - Canada Synod.

Our monks and oblates give sacrificially to their communities.

Additionally the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross operates The St. Stephen Harding Theological College and Seminary and Saint Seraphim School of Orthodox Theology. They currently have 5 Certified Degree Granting Academic Institutes and provides education for a worldwide student body and several Diocesan jurisdictions.



Martyrs and monks have always been the spiritual fiber holding together the Church Catholic.

**Br. Columcille, OCCO** writes, *"I believe Cistercians, and all contemplatives to be the heart of the Church. Our intentions, made perfect through the Holy Spirit, support all of the apostolic work around the world. Perhaps the stars would fall from the sky were it not for men and women dedicated to a life of prayer and sacrifice. We are a part of something holy, and are being made holy in the process."*

We, the Cistercians of the Holy Cross, are embedded icons, living sacramentals; who sustain, grace, and hold together the fiber of our communities.



# Monks can also be deacons and priests



## *Deacon Monks can*

- Develop local faith communities
- Do religious services
- Preach
- Baptize
- Marry
- Bury

## *Priest Monks can also*

- Celebrate the Holy Eucharist
- Hear confessions
- Give The Sacrament of the Sick



**The Memorial Day for our dear Br. Paul, OCCO is June 24th. He was a true blessing to our Order.**

- The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross is happy to receive male applicants for Holy Orders, e.g., Priest, Deacon. We would also consider incardination for other rightfully ordained clerics.

- While there are traditional qualifications for ordination/incardination, the principal interest is discerning a true vocation and developing Priests or Deacons who are fruitful ministers. Therefore, educational requirements may be individually tailored.

- We celebrate valid apostolic lines of succession, the seven sacraments and liturgical worship consistent with the historical churches. While some practices may differ, e.g., married clergy, we adhere to the dogmas constituted by true apostolic teaching.

- If you are interested in ordination or incardination, complete the application found on our website and forward it to the Abbot General. His office will then contact you.

# Daily Prayer for the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross.

C. Let us pray

C. Our help is in the name of the Lord,

R. *Who made heaven and earth.*

C. Holy Lord, Holy Mighty One,

R. *Incline your ear towards us.*

C. St. Benedict, Father of our Order

R. *Pray for us.*

C. Mother Mary, Queen of Heaven

R. *Pray for us.*

C. All the Angels and Saints

R. *Pray for us.*

All. O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we give you praise and thanks.

May we respond to Your call in charity and courage and grow in numbers and holiness.

Bless our Abbot General Oscar Joseph with good health, growth in wisdom and grace. Help him to see the world as you do.

May our Beloved Order be blessed with leaders, both monks and clerics, who will carry forward our charism.

May our Beloved Order be blessed with the material and financial resources necessary to fulfill its mission.

We ask you, Lord, to bless us with a residential monastery in Winston-Salem where we can live as brothers and host others in a spirit of hospitality as taught by our Father, Benedict.

Holy Father Benedict help us to bring a contemplative balance to everyday matters, to cultivate the daily disciplines of work and prayer, to persevere in our vows of obedience, stability and daily conversion.

We pray for all those who have requested our prayers particularly members of our Order and those who are in union with us.

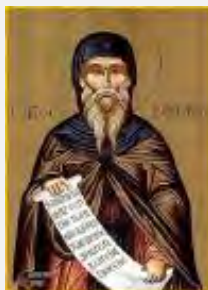
We pray also for those who may have given up hope or have forgotten to pray for themselves.

**We pray that at all times and under every circumstance that every holy action, prayer, Liturgy, joy and even suffering that we experience is perpetually offered as a prayer for each of us, our intentions and the intentions of others. Let it be known that when you pray we all pray. AMEN.**

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever.

Amen.

**Please pray this prayer every day.  
The Abbot has proclaimed this to be our  
new daily prayer. Please join him daily to  
pray this together.**



# CISTERCIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY CROSS, COMMON OBSERVANCE



## **We serve men and women, clerical or lay, married or single by:**

- \*Helping them grow in perfection through the use of the Rule of St. Benedict, our Constitution and Manual, and community life.*
- \*Consecrating to a first or second order religious life those who want to live either in community or outside community.*
- \*Third order oblate program.*
- \*Validating and assisting those already living the religious life but not living in a formal community.*
- \*Supporting men with a call to the diaconate and priesthood through ordination, incardination.*

*The Cistercian charism is a refuge for ardent lovers of God. The adherence to the Holy Rule of St. Benedict and focus on contemplating God in prayer is a precious balm on hearts aching for closer union with the Lord. The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross is an opportunity for men or women to become a true monk or nun in this revered tradition."*

*For more information contact  
Abbot@bellsouth.net*