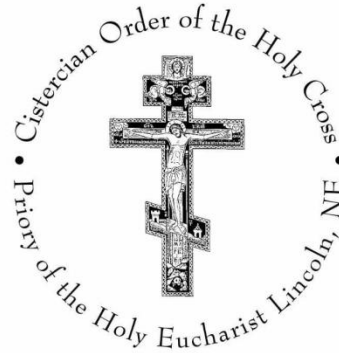


Obsculta

“Listen with the ear of your heart.”



**Forty-two Years
Serving the Lord**

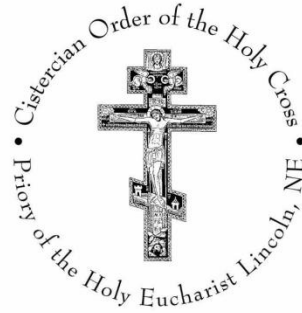
March 2023

“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. Gentleness will lead others to God’s eternal intent of true joy and freedom.”

The quarterly newsletter of
The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross, Common Observance
Worldwide Membership of Monks Living Outside of a Monastery
Founded 1981

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

www.CistercianMonks.org



This past year we have been graced to develop a large number of education opportunities. In addition to new formation programs for Postulants, Oblates, and those seeking Spiritual Direction

Monthly Mentorship

New Education Materials

Inquirers have two videos introducing them to the Cistercians.

Available to the Oblates, Postulants, and Novices

Video Series on Spiritual Development

Our Cistercian history now has 206 pages. We also have 85 Obscultas. WOW!!!



Additional Information on:

The Value of a Dispersed Religious Order
The Call to Holiness

How to Improve Your Prayer Life with a printed and video presentation

The Process of Utilizing Vows/Promises
Insights into Interpreting the Rule of St. Benedict

A New Daily Prayer for the Order with printed and two video presentations

One doesn't enter the religious state because he is holy but because he wants to become holy.



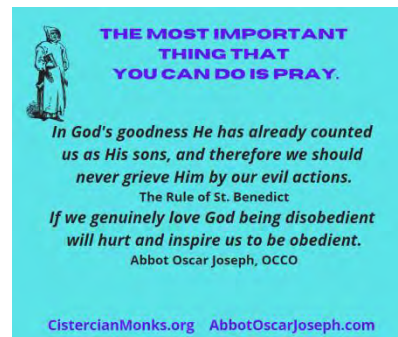
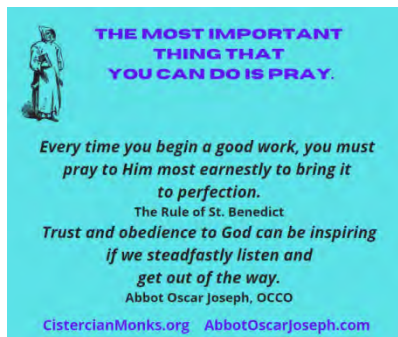
***Born from this chair,
my love for each of you,
and the inspiration of
the Holy Spirit.***



We have a new daily prayer which is both personalized for your Cistercian spiritual growth and prayers for our wonderful Religious Order.

These prayers were inspired from the mission statement given to us by God, the Holy Rule, and our mutual desire to support each other.

The prayer is presented in three fashions. The first can be quickly printed from pdf, The second is a video presentation with a musical background. The third version is a similar video but your Abbot is video taped with it so you can take turns in praying each individual prayer together. The videos are suited to be played on your cell phone or PC.



There is an additional printed and video selection with musical background to reflect on the Holy Rule. This is also suitable for your cell phone or PC.

If you have not yet received your copies contact me and I will send them to you. They are available to every one.



Our Abbot writes on, praying without ceasing.



This is the Holy Spot that our Cistercian Order, as we know it, was born through an infusion of the Holy Spirit. Since that time, May 2001, I have prayed over 11,000 hours and heard from God nearly every day.

Recently, on this very spot, God had inspired me to write something that interested me and hopefully will also inspire you. Let us begin at the beginning.

Forty years ago, we old folks can legitimately say, "back in the day," a thirty-year-old troubled lady, let's call her Jane, asked me to help her heal her conscience. From her point of view, the whole world rejected her. Wherever she went, people looked at her like she was weird. She had even been thrown off the city bus because the passengers feared her. She said, "All I was doing was praying."

She explained that she was compelled to earn God's pleasure and acceptance by strictly following His word in Scripture. She put all of herself into "praying without ceasing." She believed that the best prayer was praying in tongues. So day and night, awake or asleep, she prayed in tongues. The city bus riders thought she was crazy. Yes, she was praying rather loudly.

I bring up this story because many Christians do the same thing. They misread Scripture and often go to unrealistic extremes to be obedient. They then feel guilty and ashamed for failing to obey God's Word. Consequently, their "fear of the Lord" actually ruined their lives.

I remember asking her to look at prayer as an interior attitude that played out in action, not just running her mouth. If she were to live her life utilizing the Fruits of the Holy Spirit, she would be praying unceasingly. She hung on to that, and eventually, she developed a happier life and acquired some friends.

Praying unceasingly is not an act of prayer but a state of prayer in which I yearn for and seek to realize His Holy Presence in all of my life. As I live, in, with, and through my Lord, I simultaneously live the Fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Abbot Oscar Joseph, OCCO has written an extensive paper on "Praying Unceasingly, Problems and Solutions". Get your free copy at: www.AbbotOscarJoseph.com.



**Praying Unceasingly
Problems and Solutions
by Abbot Oscar Joseph, OCCO**

Contents

1. The most important thing that you will ever do
2. The Real God is a God of love
3. Important Scriptures to remember
4. What is prayer?
5. Types of prayer
6. Lectio Divina
7. Why we should pray
8. List of Prayer books and Apps
9. What do I expect from prayer?
10. I want to see things as God sees things.
11. Dryness in prayer
12. God's love and our lack of trust
13. Biblical reasons for unanswered prayers
14. Prayer concerns
15. Spiritual direction
16. Reconciliation/Confession
17. Pray without ceasing
18. A Rule of Life
19. The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross

**Praying is the most important thing you can do.
download your *free* Pdf version at:
www.AbbotOscarJoseph.com**



Prior Matthew Pius, OCCO+: and I have been extremely busy developing the Cistercian Order.

We know that you want to grow in understanding and application of the Holy Rule and develop your spiritual life further. To that end, we have developed **three Spiritual Direction models**:

Tithing members are eligible to participate for free, others including non members have a modest fee.

1.This program will help you to understand and discover **a practical everyday use of the Rule of St. Benedict**. It has some easy-to-read and exciting books.

2.The topics for this Spiritual Direction will assist you in **your relationship with a loving and merciful God**. We will look at the real meaning of joy and freedom unleashed from the lies given to us and the blocks we have created, which have formed a mistaken idea that God wants to punish and test us. We will use the book *The Joy of Spiritual Freedom* and its *Companion booklet*. Both can be found at www.AbbotOscarJoseph.com .

3.Spiritual Direction will assist you in **your personal prayer life**, remove any obstacles you might have toward an intimate relationship with God, and teach you how to do Lectio Divina. We will use Listen with the *Ear of Your Heart*, *Your Pilgrimage Toward Intimacy with God*, and its *Companion booklet*. The *Companion booklet* is free online: www.AbbotOscarJoseph.com.

**Contact the Abbot General for more information:
Abbot@bellsouth.net**



Our work and leisure can be prayer that brings God closer to us and to our communities.

Brother Fernando Rivas (Elias) OCCO

How to make work and prayer walk hand in hand? Ora et labora, pray and work is the motto attributed to the Order of Saint Benedict but it is good to clarify that the fathers of the church already practiced the continuous prayer of the Lord, although they lived withdrawn in the desert. When the prayer is continuous sanctification or theosis occurs. Saint Benedict resumes continuous prayer but includes the mandate to work. The monk not only prays but contemplates and works. Therefore, prayer must be an intimate moment with God and different from liturgical prayer.

Saint Benedict explains that idleness is the enemy of the soul. If our leisure activities enrich the soul, we fall not into the ideal opportunity that evil wants upon us. The presence of the Holy Spirit (Theosis), Lectio Divina and work therefore places us as workers in the Lord's vineyard. In my particular case, interpreting spiritual songs internally has helped me a lot at work, also achieving a full presence of the name of God without distractions during the time I dedicate to work. I try to teach others to do the same.





Obstacles to Prayer

By
Jay Van Nostrand, OCCO/Obl

*We are grateful to
Oblate Jay
for his service
to our wonderful
Religious Order.*

For several weeks over the end of last year and through January I lost focus in my spiritual journey. I found it difficult to concentrate and it seemed that the slightest interruption would lead me astray and I had trouble returning to prayer, meditation and contemplation. I felt that I was walking through mud.

Feeling first surprised and then frustrated, I then began to feel guilty. Why was I having trouble doing something as seemingly simple as devoting my full attention to prayer and study for some relatively brief period of time? I've been retired from my career for a year and a half. Surely, I thought at the time, I would have all the time I could ever want to do all the things, including broadening and deepening my spiritual formation, that I ever wanted to do.

Fortunately, one of the great blessings of our Order is that we have spiritual mentors and guides that we can go to with questions and problems and with whom we can discuss situations that are mysteries to us. By doing so, I have been able to grasp two important truths about our spiritual journeys.

The first truth is that my path toward growing closer to God and becoming who He wants me to be and doing what He wants me to do is not a broad, sunlit avenue with gradual rises and falls and gentle curves. I will encounter dark places and obstacles. Some of them will be of my own making, some of them will out of merely living life in this world and some of them will be put in my path by the Adversary.

The second truth is that distractions of various kinds are my companions on my journey. Rather than treating them as roadblocks, I can take them in stride, be gracious with myself as I handle them, and prayerfully and patiently return to my walk.

This season of Lent will be a perfect opportunity to honor these truths in my daily walk.



***“Be still and know that I am God.”
by
Prior Matthew Pius, OCCO+***



Getting out of the Desert by Prior Matthew Pius, OCCO+

The hardest part of prayer is praying when you feel like you're in the desert. Too often people immediately say, "God must not be hearing my prayers," and that's often when they feel like God is distant. As a Young Monk, I often felt like I was perpetually stuck in the desert state of prayer. Even now there are times when I feel I'm stuck in the desert except now I know how to handle those times.

The problem is we forget that prayer is not just a whim of the spirit but a time totally set aside for prayer and intimacy with God. It is something as Monks, Oblates, and Laypeople alike are asked to do and in the 21st Century people, myself included, forget that sometimes prayer is not about us, it's about God. Open any prayer book for the Daily Office and you'll find regimented Prayer Times and the Holy Ancient Prayers of the Church, almost all of the prayers are of supplication and thanksgiving to God for what He has already done for us before our feet hit the floor in the morning.

So do remember that prayer is about God first, those who have asked for our prayers and things that others need second, and our private needs last. You might just be surprised how quickly that type of prayer brings you out of the desert and into an Oasis.

Have a blessed Lent!



The Fear of Our Lord, by +Br. Raphael, OCCO

An excellent reflection for Lent.

In our recent monthly online meeting, Father Abbot Oscar Joseph and I began a discussion of Ch. 7 in the Rule, on the 12 degrees, or steps, of humility. Our conversation plunged immediately into the deep end with the first degree of humility, “that a man keep the fear of God before his eyes, altogether shunning forgetfulness” (Trans. of Dom Justin McCann). We were both, I think, struck with how unfamiliar this all-important teaching of the Old and New Testaments is in the spiritual climate of our times, collectively resistant as it has become, even in orthodox Christian circles, to the foundational principle: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom” (NRSV, Prov. 9:10). Surely, this is one of the many instances of the distance of the Holy Rule from the prevailing attitudes of current spiritual culture (not to mention its natural opposition to secular understanding). The Rule, of course, is steeped in Scripture and has remained, for reasons we have ourselves recognized, one of the most concise guides to how its teachings are to be understood in the midst of everyday life, whether inside or out of a cloister.

Dom Oscar asked me, “What did I make of “the fear of the Lord”? I take this opportunity to pass the ball along to you, my brothers and sisters of the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross. What role should the fear of the Lord play in our understanding of the spiritual life? As we approach the Lenten Season, it has been for me a question that calls to mind the perplexity I always feel in annual approach to the penitential season. I confess that I do not eagerly embrace fasting and other acts of renunciation. But I find myself encouraged, the opposite of repelled, by the peculiar kind of fear that God inspires. We are necessarily exposed before him in all our mortality and imperfection. Can we bear His gaze? This is the origin of our fear, that we are utterly naked before Him and also before ourselves. And it is in this unbearable honesty, and the judgment that is inseparable from it, that we recall to mind the love of God and the salvation He bestows through his Son, “who humbled himself and became obedient . . . to death on a cross” (Phil. 2:8). May our fearsome God and the mercy of his Son, be within you, dear brothers and sisters, in this Lenten Season.



Taking In and Giving Out By Janice, OCCO/Obl



Lent has a very special place in my year. I fill each day with the dive for simplicity and clearing out the cobwebs. The perfect placement in time encourages me to move into a newness. There are Scriptures of mercy being new every morning and the impossible is possible with God at the center of our day. After the calm coldness of January, I can sweep the walkway of debris and prepare for the promise of warm spring days coming up. The season has a natural inclination of its own to devote time for changes to take place.

My task is to breathe in the deepness of all that God has for me, and then to give out that depth I receive to those I encounter. It is truly like breathing which is an involuntary action. The question I ask myself is how shallow is that undertaking at present. How do I focus on the fathomless ocean of love that is available and freely given to take?

I imagine wiping a chalkboard clean and beginning each day of Lent with my arms open ready to receive and to listen to what God is saying to me. A prayer of gratefulness and appreciation for all that Jesus has done, is still doing and will continue doing is heart fully lifted up. Each day is filled with a form of service to the Lord. It is sometimes practical like giving a bag of food to a family, running an errand for a friend, or sending a card to a loved one. Lent is a time for me to do what really matters to God.

Lenten reflection by Abbot Oscar Joseph, OCCO

In the spirit of using Lent as a conversatio opportunity I was inspired to transform our most fearful event into a motivation for leading a joy filled life.

“Remember to keep death before your eyes daily

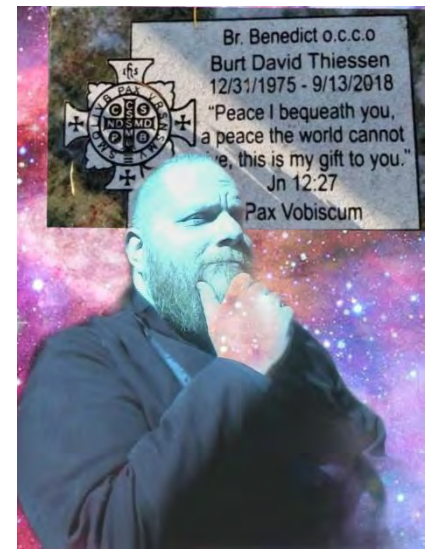
*Notice our grave markers. My joy is prayer, work,
and my God given tasks.*

Br. Benedict's joy was in giving peace to others.



**I have already consecrated my marker
and visit it from time to time.**

By the Grace of God
The Most Rev.
Oscar Joseph, O.C.C.O.
Abbot General
Cistercian Order of
the Holy Cross
Ora et Labora
Michael Williams
Dec 13, 1946



**At the moment of his death
his family and medical staff
felt Angels in his room.**

Br. Benedict often said, "Miracles are always happening because God loves you. He's got your back."

Br. Benedict was a life professed Cistercian monk who went on to heaven on September 13, 2018.

He was an exceptionally holy monk whom the Abbot loved dearly. Br. Benedict was humorous, captivating and a dear lover of our Lord.

His wife, Alexis, describes Br. Benedict as *"a deeply devoted man, not only to God but to his family, friends and any stranger who needed prayer or a friendly conversation. He had a gift for making anyone feel like family. He could see people's hearts and never held a grudge."*

In loving memory of Br. Benedict and our love for the Cistercian Order we have founded the **"We Got Your Back Program"**.

"Remember to keep death before your eyes daily." St Benedict is reminding us to live life to the fullest. Self indulgence, the modern definition of living to the fullest, ultimately leads to an earlier death. St. Benedict defines the fullest in the Holy Rule.

1. "LISTEN, MY SON."

Silence allows us to reflect on ourselves and to be more attentive to others, it helps us be more peaceful, and it puts us in God's presence.

2. WORK HELPS US KEEP A HEALTHY MIND.

"Idleness is the enemy of the soul," Benedict writes. He mandated that his monks divide their time between work, reading, and prayer, in such a way that they developed a balanced body, mind, and soul.

“Remember to keep death before your eyes daily

3. TRANSFORM EVERY TASK INTO PRAYER.

For St. Benedict, every task participates in the creative work of God and the sufferings of Christ. Work should be considered as a service to others and as a form of prayer.

4. OUR DAYS SHOULD FOLLOW A RHYTHM.

The Holy Rule imposes a time for everything: prayer, work, reading, reflection ... There is a beginning and end time for each task.

5. BE ATTENTIVE TO OTHERS.

For St. Benedict, respect must characterize all our relationships with other people. “Let all be received as Christ,” he said, speaking of visitors, “especially the poor and travelers.” If we are all attentive and considerate to each other—even to our enemies—we will contribute to building a world that reflects God’s love.

6. PRACTICE DISCIPLINE.

Forcing ourselves to follow a well-designed schedule actually frees us from slavery to our impulses.

7. READ OFTEN TO FEED YOUR MIND AND SOUL.

Reading good books can give us fresh ideas, make us more empathetic, broaden our mind, and teach us wisdom from the past and the present.

8. UNDERSTAND AND RESPECT YOUR OWN PRIORITIES.

For monks, the highest priority is to seek God, especially in prayer. Everything in the Rule is organized around this principle; St. Benedict repeats over and over, in slightly different formulations, “Let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ.” We need to know what our own priorities are, and respect those priorities in the way we use our time.

9. MAKE PEACE WITH OTHERS.

In various ways and circumstances, St. Benedict urges his monks to apologize whenever they may have offended others. He reminds them of the injunction from Holy Scripture to “seek after peace and pursue it” and, “in case of discord with anyone, to make peace before the setting of the sun.” This helps us grow in goodness, as well as contributing to the stability of the community.

10. LIVE EACH DAY AS IF IT WERE YOUR LAST.

The holy abbot told his monks to “keep death before your eyes daily.” This helps us remember our priorities and focus on the essentials.

St. Benedict’s insight into humanity continues to be valuable today. We can be happier, better people, with God’s help.





The St. Stephen Harding Theological College and Seminary
and
The St. Seraphim School of Orthodox Theology



St. Stephen Harding Theological College and Seminary
welcomes students to a wide variety of degrees,
programs, and continuing educational opportunities.
Check our section at the Cistercian website or
www.StephenHarding.College for more information
and Application.

Off Campus Study Programs, Something for Everyone
Students may enroll at any time.

You choose the Programs and Courses that best meet
Your goals.

Continuing Education, CE
Certificate of Studies and Advanced Studies, CS/CAS.
Bachelor of Theology, Th.B.
Master of Theology, Th.M.
Doctor of Theology, Th.D.
Honorary Doctorates D.D. or LL.D.

Saint Stephen Harding Theological College and Seminary
is a Religious Order affiliated educational institution under
the authority of The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross, a 501
non-profit corporation. Our degrees are classified as
ecclesiastically accredited.

“Indeed, it has been a great, fruitful experience to have studied at St. Stephen Harding Theological College and Seminary. I had finally attained one of my dreams, to have a theology doctorate, and I had done it thanks to the guidance and encouragement of the Abbot.”

“A wonderful by-product of education at St. Stephen Harding is the relationship one can develop with the personalized focus. Frankly, I want to continue studying as a result and that’s the best compliment I can offer anyone involved with St. Stephen Harding, or any student considering the pursuit of a degree. Bravo! Rev Oscar Joseph, may God continue to bless your endeavors and seminary – they have certainly blessed me!”

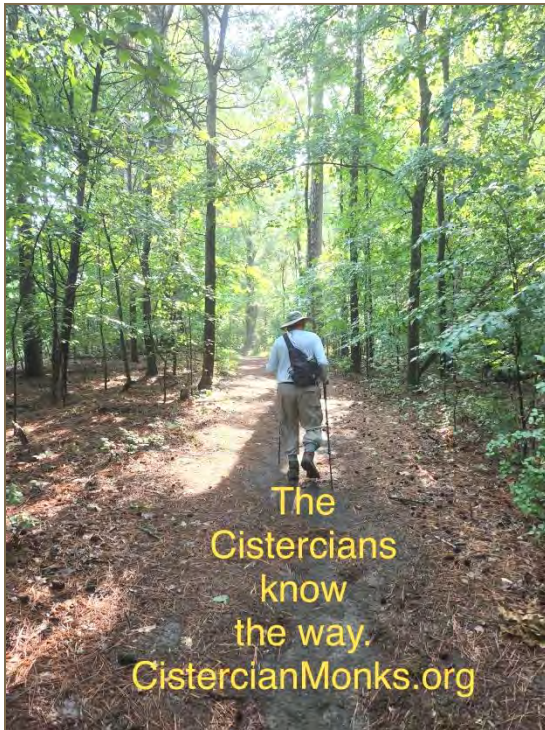
“I am lead to boast about the education received as well as ‘free’ insight offered from the Abbot. I must admit, I wasn’t sure I could pull this off – a Master’s degree while juggling so many other things in life, but thanks to his gentle, always humorous guidance, I was able to realize a long term ambition.”



Spiritual Joy

How to live and maintain a joy filled prayer life.

By Abbot Oscar Joseph, OCCO



<https://vimeo.com/showcase/9316848>

https://youtube.com/channel/UC8n9vm_1zLZ72ylj2RoH2Vg

A short video series

Welcome to the Cistercian Order

What is a Monk?

Where do we go from here?

(How to Maintain a Prayerful Life)

The Rule of St. Benedict

Habit of Prayers

Protecting your vocation

Perfectionism

(Gold Medal Monk)

Lectio Divina

(Praying the Scriptures)

Building Courage and Charity through Humility

Stability

Obedience

Conversatio





The “We Got Your Back Program” was inspired by Br. Benedict, OCCO.

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In loving memory of Br. Benedict and our love for the Cistercian Order we have founded

The “We Got Your Back Program”

Four areas of support

Spiritual Support
Enrichment Support
Making Life Easier Support
Financial Support



These are Your Volunteers





Cistercian Oxford Long Sleeve Button-up Shirt (Men & Ladies Fit)



Cistercian Polo Shirt (Men & Ladies Fit)



Cistercian Fitted V-Neck Shirt (Men & Ladies Fit)



Cistercian Unisex 1/4 Zip Sweatshirt

The Cistercian Shop is open and doing business.

Find it on our website:

www.CistercianMonks.org



Cistercian Shield Decal / Sticker

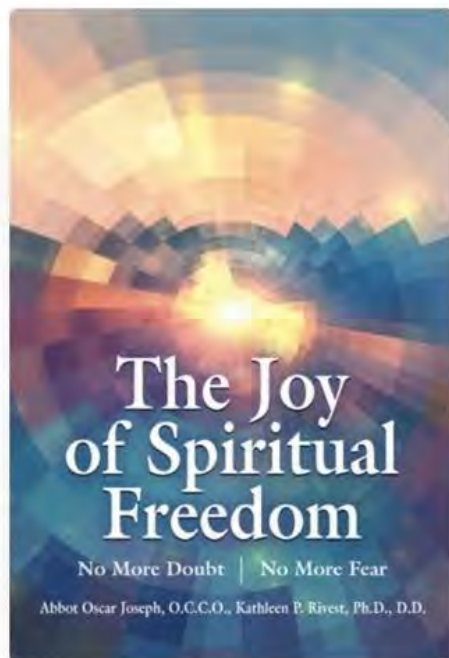
The Shop is reserved only for our members, oblates, their families, benefactors and friends of the Order. It is not available to the general population.



Cistercian Coffee Mug



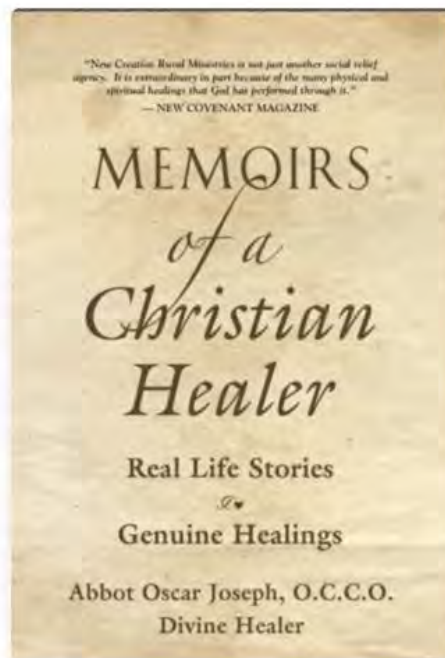
One option for each cup placed on both sides of cup



The Joy of Spiritual Freedom

No More Doubts | No More Fear

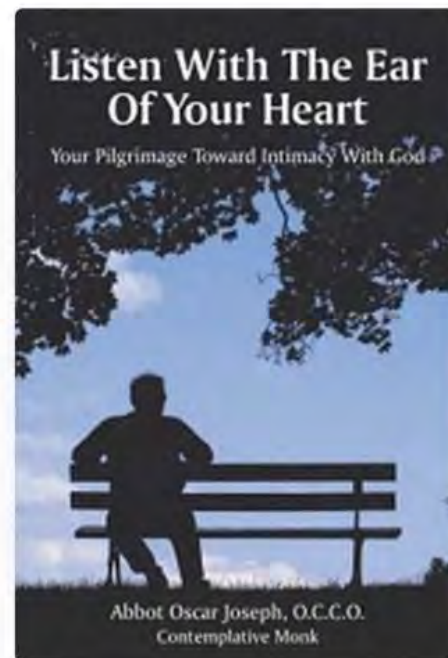
The Joy of Spiritual Freedom is the first of a trilogy that leads and inspires the reader to enter into a joy-filled relationship with a loving God. It is grounded in Biblical wisdom revealing how to remove debilitating doubt and fear. It draws from inspirational letters and case studies that illustrate the Gospel path toward freedom.



Memoirs of a Christian Healer

Real Life Stories | Genuine Healings

Memoirs of a Christian Healer chronicles the miraculous works of God. You will experience the joy of victory and the sorrow of human weakness. Incorporated within the many stories the Abbot includes reflective lessons on the Healing Ministry. The many stories are of real people and genuine healings.

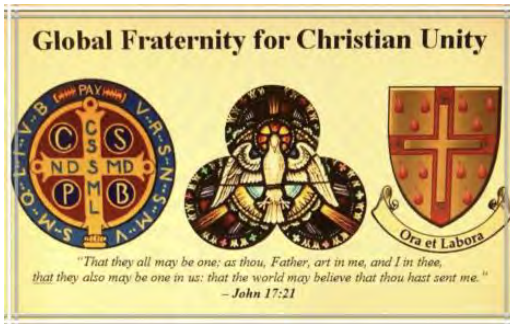


Listen with the Ear of Your Heart

Your Pilgrimage Toward Intimacy with God

God created you to yearn for intimacy with Him. Listen with the Ear of Your Heart presents a dynamic pilgrimage utilizing Scripture, the teachings of the Church Fathers, The Rule of St. Benedict, prayer, meditation and contemplation.

**For more information and the FREE Companion books go to:
www.AbbotOscarJoseph.com**



A Beacon of Hope
@abbotprays

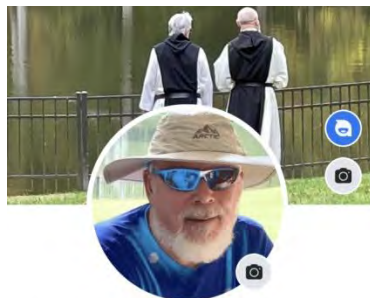
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the Holy Cross
@CistercianMonks



Priory of the Holy
Eucharist
@HolyEucharistPriory



Abbot Oscar Joseph



Trinity Chapel
@TrinityChapelLNK



Saint Alberic's Church
@StAlbericsChurch

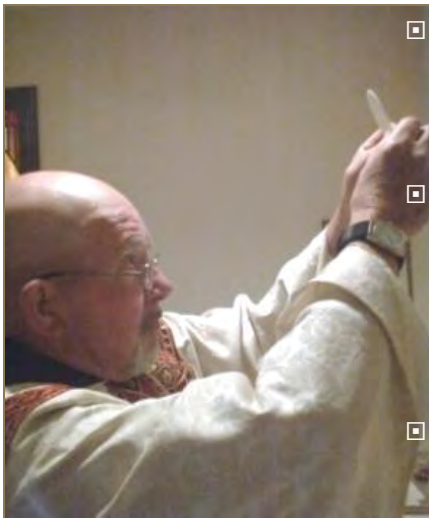




Monks make great Priests



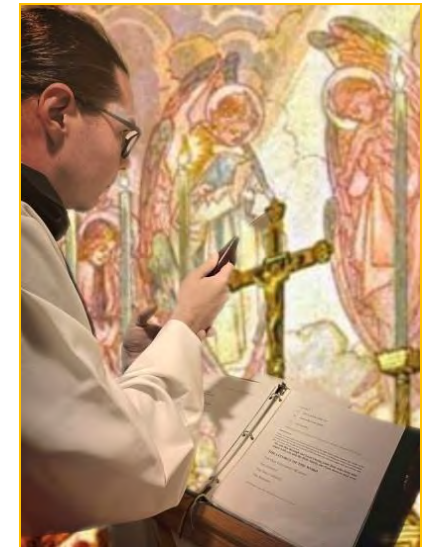
The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross is happy to receive male applicants for Holy Orders, Priests. We would also consider incardination for other rightfully ordained clerics.



While we require the traditional qualifications for ordination/incardination, the educational requirements may be individually tailored.

We celebrate valid apostolic lines of succession, the seven sacraments and liturgical worship consistent with the historical churches. We adhere to 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.



From The Abbot:

Rather than list the qualities of the Cistercian Charism and discuss what we can do for you I am listing below some comments from members on what we have done for them.

“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.”

“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.”

“There were certain things that prayer, study, and scriptural research have convinced me are required in my own path. It was important for me that the order be contemplative, and that it adhered to the traditional orthodox teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I was not interested in joining an order that was too easy, or that bent over too far to be politically amenable. It was important to me that I would be well guided along the way.”

“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.”

“When I joined the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross, the first thing that changed was my prayer life. Before, it was a life-less obligation, a burden my wife and I committed ourselves to pray at least the Morning and Evening Prayers and whenever time allows, to pray the other offices as well. This helped us to become more prayerful, teaching us to offer everything to God each day; referring to Him even the mundane things of our daily life. I started seeing myself opening more and more to my wife in terms of communication, becoming more forgiving and affirming. My relationship with the Lord started improving tremendously. Whereas before, obeying God is a duty, now it is a joy.”

Suspicious Signs of a Call to Contemplative Religious Life

**Desire to grow in union with God through prayer. Love of God that manifests itself in a desire to give one's life to Him. Desire to live simply. The wish to live life with less stress and more order. Generosity. Ability to listen to others and accept direction when needed. Desire to worship God
In all the moments of life.**



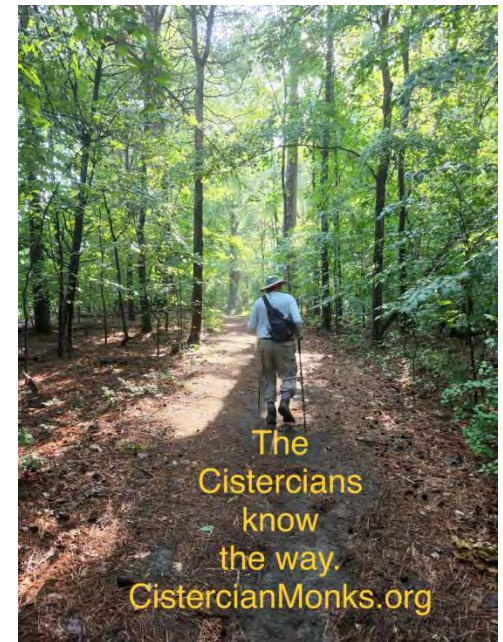
I have a
question
for you.

Come
hike with
me.



Do you
want more
of God

and less
of
stress?



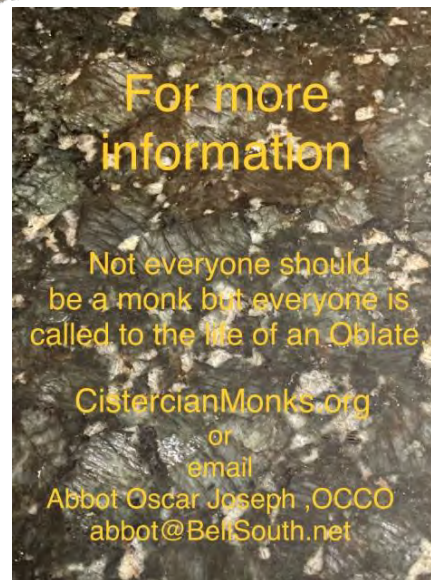
The
Cistercians
know
the way.
CistercianMonks.org



The journey
is
joy
filled.

We will
help you.

CistercianMonks.org



For more
information

Not everyone should
be a monk but everyone is
called to the life of an Oblate

CistercianMonks.org

or
email

Abbot Oscar Joseph ,OCCO
abbot@BellSouth.net



Email me
NOW
You can be a
Monk or an
Oblate

Abbot@BellSouth.Net

Abbot Oscar Joseph,OCCO

Attention Seekers

One fashion or another, we are all seekers. We seek safety, security, love, and community. It is easy enough to know when what seek has been achieved. Seeking a Godly life and doing His perfect seems fraught with confusion and often despair. That need not be the case.

Scripture and tradition are filled with direction. Essentially, God calls each of us to seek perfection and holiness. Unfortunately, we make it difficult to understand and practice because we fill the journey with unrealistic expectations.

Some of us want God to speak directly to us. Others wish to receive a level of peace and certainty. And most want the short easy road to perfection and holiness. Let us use common sense and reason.

Scripture is clear. God wants every one of us to seek perfection and holiness. It is reasonable that He would provide the grace to empower us and a methodology whereby plain folks can achieve the seemingly impossible. We can conclude that our role is to cooperate with God's grace.

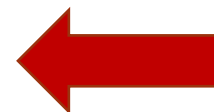
We use the Holy Rule of Saint Benedict to aid in developing a lifestyle that sets the stage for our Godly cooperation. We can teach you how to do the same.

Read the information and listen to the videos. It all makes perfect sense. For more information go to our website. If you want to join, the application is on the website. Blessings.

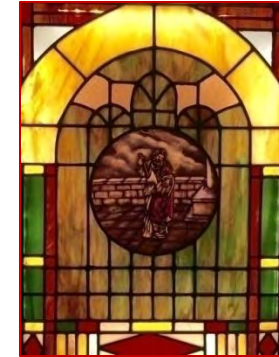
1. ***Consecrating to a religious life and live outside of a community. (Living your life at home with a loving family and good employment can make becoming a monk easier than living in a monastery.)***
2. ***Third order oblate program. (There is less required with this option. You can begin here if you like and move up to monk formation later.)***
3. ***Supporting men with a call to the diaconate and priesthood through ordination, or incardination. (Men, single or married can be ordained. Ask the Abbot for more information.)***
4. ***Associates: Religious communities (residential or dispersed), jurisdictions, parishes, small or home based communities, or individual(s) who desire to be under our Abbatial and Episcopal oversight and be autonomous. (Visitors) Requirements can be flexible and dependent upon a group's or an individual's application.***



<https://youtube.com/shorts/VHGkyyT5d>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KEgDX7eh1xQ>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y28MRtRBx8o>



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, Manual and community life."*

1. *Consecrating to a religious life and live outside of a community*
2. *Third order oblate program.*
3. *Supporting men with a call to the diaconate and priesthood through ordination, or incardination*
4. *Associates: Religious communities (residential or dispersed), jurisdictions, parishes, small or home based communities. or individual(s) who desire to be under our Abbatial and Episcopal oversight and be autonomous. (Visitors) Requirements can be flexible and dependent upon a group's or an individual's application.*

"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."

One doesn't enter the religious state because he is holy but because he wants to become holy.

*For more information contact
Abbot@bellsouth.net*