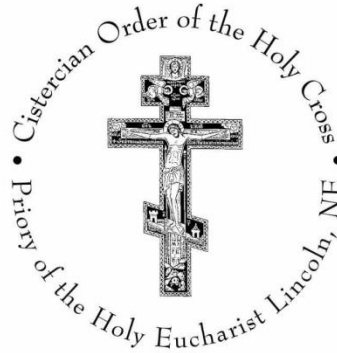


# Obsculta

“Listen with the ear of your heart.”



**Forty-two Years  
Serving the Lord**

**September 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](http://www.CistercianMonks.org)



Greetings, Dear Cistercians and Friends:

I am currently having a period of ill health. Please do pray for me. My ill health signals and inspires me that now is the time to retire from Cistercian offices. Naturally, I will continue a Cistercian lifestyle and be an active member of this wonderful family.

Prior Matthew Pius, OCCO is going to be my successor. We have done the discernment and training. I am filled with pride and love. Prior Matthew Pius, OCCO is more like my son, nepotism at its finest.

February 6-9th, 2024, is the retirement Convocation of passing the crozier and consecrating Prior Matthew Pius a bishop. I do hope that you will join us.

This Obsculta celebrates our uniqueness. You may not know that I have been blessed with frequent mystical experiences. For several years I have been raising my arms in prayer at the opening of the Holy Mass. I wait for the heavens to open and experience God's Grace to descend upon myself and the altar. It is a life-changing experience.

On one occasion, I saw the consecrated host come alive. Many have told me that they have seen Christ stand behind me during the Mass, and He and I move as one. One Sunday, a middle-aged woman, still dressed in her hospital gown, crashed into Mass, seeking her physical healing. On another occasion, a demonically possessed woman sought her freedom. Upon their reception of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, both received their healings.

We have a Good, loving God.

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

A reflection on my Heart Ablation on August 3, 2023  
By Abbot Oscar Joseph, OCCO

Monks and oblates have fancy words for what we might all want to do. We take vows of stability, conversatio, and obedience. Simply put, monks sincerely want to become better persons by following our Good Lord and working hard on seeking change for the better.

Let me share with you my reflections on my ablation for atrial flutter and two focal atrial tachycardia's. Essentially this is a Lectio Divina, meditation and contemplation. I had about 600 people praying for me. They were supporting God's perfect will and produced something of a force to action on everyone, including supporting me in my positive action despite my overwhelming anxiety.

As you read, remember that our language and understanding can only begin to grasp the Eternal so too in what I am about to say. God is a person, a force of action. He is not stagnant but a mover and force, and initiator of change. He knows our needs and actively responds to them. The purpose of prayer is not to call God into action but for us to realize our need for God and to be open to His intervention. We are united with God and each other in spirit and deed. Everything we do is in, with, and through God. In spirit and deed, humans can support, encourage, uplift, and empower each other.

While walking into the operating room, my worst anxiety moment, I spoke, "I am a monk. I feel like I have betrayed God for not trusting Him enough." I felt that my anxiety was a product of my failure. I thought that I must be a fraud. Not true. I am not a fraud. I am submissive to God. I have spent a lifetime speaking out and encouraging others as a Christian Counselor, Abbot General, Divine healer, preacher, or working with the poor. Satan be gone!

Walking into the surgical room in extreme anxiety, I chose the operation. I chose to be controlled by strangers. I chose to trust God and those praying for me. Scripture repeatedly says, "Do not be afraid." I believe that means not to live in an ongoing state of fear. Scripture does not refer to momentary situational fears because of some real or perceived threat. Threatening situations create an adrenaline aid to assist in our call to action. Living in fear ultimately creates depression, loss of hope, and destruction. I learned that we are all called to action. We are called to speak out, question, and seek change for the better. Persons in leadership have a vocation to speak out even louder and create change for the better. Yes, God is in control. He also gives us all the courage to act and do our part.

Jesus was not a pacifist. He battled evil and won. He then gave us tools via the Church to do our part in our day and time. I was bold in my leadership of the medical people. My boldness inspired their spirit into action. People can be inspired into long-term action. Fear and oppression produce short-term action.

My doctor, your prayers inspired by your and my trust and love for God have inspired me to believe that my congestive heart failure will be healed.



## Embracing Change by **Prior Matthew Pius, OCCO+**

A special Thank you to everyone  
for the warm welcome and the  
well wishes!



Some people do not do well with change, but to follow God is to live in a perpetual state of change. Good, bad, or indifferent as we can be almost all people struggle when it comes to embracing change. It's just a fact.

However, a long time ago, I told God that whatever He asked of me, I would do. Those words have led me down some quite interesting roads (to say the least) but what God has taught me repeatedly is that if anything good is to happen sometimes you have to be the one to make the necessary changes to make that good happen and so I have got quite comfortable with ever changing dynamics, choosing a "go with the flow" mentality and adjusting to the changes as needed.

When it finally sank in that I was to be the next Abbot General and Bishop of our beloved Order, I must admit I went to my local Roman Catholic Parish to pray in front of the Blessed Sacrament. I asked questions like why me, and God, are you sure I'm the right guy for this?

And like a flash before my eyes, my entire life had played back in my head showing me all the different situations that had led me to this very specific moment in my life. Then I was reminded of what God told Jeremiah,

*"The word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." "Alas, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am too young." But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD." (Jeremiah 1:4-8)*

Now I know without a doubt that I am doing exactly what God has created me to do since the beginning of time.

I am grateful for all the warm welcomes that I have been receiving, please pray for me!

*Rev. Prior Matthew Pius Hagood, OCCO*

*Will be consecrated to the sacred Episcopate  
and to the  
Office of Abbot General*

*On the 8th day of February 2024*

*2:00 pm at the*

*Saint Francis Retreat Center  
477 Grogan Rd.  
Stoneville, North Carolina*

*Reception following*

*To RSVP by January 15, 2024, email [abbot@bellsouth.net](mailto:abbot@bellsouth.net)  
Or call (402) 480-9835*



## Looking forward to the Future by Prior Matthew Pius, OCCO

When I look ahead of me to what is getting ready to occur in February 2024, I find myself looking most forward to the travel not only to the Consecration but to each and everyone of you, my beloved Cistercians. That means traveling to Canada, Mexico, Central America, South America, and Europe. That also means looking forward to new sights, smells, and experiences that many people will not ever have the opportunity to.

God has given me the greatest gift he could give me, a family that stretches across the world. Our Monks and Oblates are in 11 different countries and God willing we will grow in number during my travels across the world. That excites me! It gives me a reason to hope, and most importantly it allows me to help you grow our Order in your areas of the world. Each one of us being a beacon of light and hope to an ever darkening world in our geographic locations. It's exciting! It's inspiring! It's Divine!

What's the point of becoming a Saint all by yourself?

We should all be reaching out into our communities and bringing in Families that will lead to Men and Women wishing to become Monks and Oblates, or that just want to become holy. Let us remember that in the darkest times in history the Monasteries and their Monks and Nuns are what sustained the people while the Churches were being overrun with nonsense. So, let us be a lighthouse of Christianity.

○ ○ ○ ○

# Join me Please

*I will be consecrated  
to the sacred Episcopate  
and to the  
Office of Abbot General  
2:00 pm at the  
Saint Francis Retreat Center  
477 Grogan Rd.  
Stoneville, North Carolina*

•  
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•  
**FEB  
8  
2024**



*To RSVP by January 15, 2024, email [abbot@bellsouth.net](mailto:abbot@bellsouth.net)  
Or call (402) 480-9835*

# Let us welcome our newest Oblate postulant, Linda Ebersole!!!!

Hello, Friends.



My name is Linda Ebersole. I'm a mother of six children and a grandmother to eleven. I've been married to Chuck Ebersole for forty four years. We live in Berks County, Pennsylvania, in the heart of Pennsylvania Dutch country; we think it is one of the loveliest places on earth! Our traditions feature many dishes you may never have tasted: red beet eggs, Lebanon bologna, shoo fly pie, snitz und knepp, to name just a few!

Chuck and I are both working musicians and retired teachers. I play piano, organ and drums. Chuck is the director of the Ringgold Band. Music has been a great joy to us for many years and was one of the wonderful things we did with our children during their growing up years. Together, Chuck and I participate in our church's ministry of music.

My hobbies are reading, candle making, and rock polishing. I also enjoy hiking, canoeing, swimming, and long walks in the woods.

I serve others as a counselor and a chaplain. It is my privilege to be part of the pastoral team at Penn State Health St. Joseph in nearby Bernville, PA, bringing comfort to patients and their families during times of need and stress. It is humbling to know that serving others in this way is serving our Lord.

I earnestly desire to grow spiritually in community with others and I am very happy to become a part of the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross. I'm looking forward to meeting you at the Convocation!





## Let us welcome our new Oblate postulant, Heath Burchett!!

Greetings to my new Cistercian Family,

My name is Heath Burchett and reside in Cornelius, NC with my nine-year old son, Israel. I have served in many roles within various churches and denominations throughout my years as Supply Pastor, Associate Pastor and Youth Pastor in North Carolina and Florida. I have served as a full-time missionary in Belize serving the poor and am the Founder & Executive Director of Watchmen of The Streets- Habit Missions Ministry, Inc. Homeless Charity founded in 2009, which outreaches to homeless and youth with over 40 faithful volunteer leaders. The Christian non-profit charity serves locally throughout North Carolina and abroad in the countries of Belize and Trinidad.

Through the grace of God and desire to be a life-long learner I have earned six degrees including a Doctor of Sacred Studies Degree through Vintage Bible College & Seminary and Christian Life School of Theology Global.

I enjoy running, art, music, prayerful meditation, nature, travel, reading, hiking, spending time with my son, friends and family, community service and missions to the poorest of the poor.

The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross is the answer to the cry of my heart for becoming who I need to be rather than focusing on the next thing for God. To prayerfully walk in humility, to keep death before my eyes daily and be content in whatever place in life I am at is what I was really searching for. I desire to offer myself more fully to God and to seek His Holy Face in and through all things that spirit may be satisfied.

Thank you beyond words for your warm welcome into this great Cistercian Family. I look forward to meeting each of you and in growing together in, with and through Christ.

Blessings in Christ,

Heath



**REFLECTIONS ON VIDEOS  
BY ABBOT GENERAL  
OSCAR JOSEPH"  
Submitted By Ryan  
"Heath" Postulant for  
Oblature**



These are my reflections on all the videos combined By Abbot General Oscar Joseph. I reflect on the "ORA ET LABORA" rhythm to pray and work which is vital to obtaining the peace I need throughout my day. Rather than the total separation of prayer and work, the two can beautifully flow together in harmony of both soul and spirit. Working with a regular habit of prayer throughout the day brings more balance and focus to God so I can concentrate on prayers previously prayed earlier in the day. I can focus on Lectio Divina of prayers prayed, Scripture read, and listen to the Holy Spirit as I work. It brings me a deeper level of maturity so that I would see my entire life more as a prayer. Since prayer involves communing with God, I can always listen, reflect, petition, intercede and pray in the Spirit.

To truly see the world around me, myself, and people as Christ sees, brings a greater awareness of Him. To understand that He dwells within me and that I was created for Him and good works, I begin to see my life as a living and breathing prayer. When this is achieved, I then enter prayer unceasingly. God is there in our rising and falling asleep, sorrow and joy, sickness or health. Walking with Him and moving as He would have us to move in all things brings a man much joy and peace of heart. The rhythm and life of "ORA ET LABORA" helps one maintain a better or right spirit during work and nonordered prayer times

Am I a perfectionist, a high achiever, or even neither? I aim to be a high achiever while allowing things to be as they are, yet there are certain times or areas of my life where the perfectionist raises his head. I see how when failure comes, or things don't go exactly as I had hoped or orchestrated in my mind, it can leave you with the blow of the feeling that I am not good enough. Then the sense of not measuring up can become depression or even self-loathing. Often for perfectionists, we can be afraid to even try for fear of failure or not measuring up. I have experienced this in my life. It is much better to be a high achiever. Something profound that stood out to me, if I remember correctly, was that Abbot General Oscar Joseph's mother said something to the effect of, "Always shoot for the stars, and if you don't reach the stars, you at least got off the planet." Now, that is a fantastic way to go about life in striving to do our best, growing in humility, and being encouraged that we have gained some knowledge, some ground and can improve next time. It's also an attitude of the heart that rejoices in the good accomplished rather than in failure.



## **More than Meets the Eye**

By  
Jay Van Nostrand, OCCO/Obl

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

During my college years, I worked each summer as an “ice cream man.” That’s right, I had a truck and drove around dispensing all types of frozen treats: hand-dipped cones and cups, popsicles, fudgsicles, creamsicles, Nutty Buddies (or Drumsticks if you prefer), dixie cups, ice cream sandwiches, etc., etc.

The best-selling item was a “Screwball.” A Screwball was a ghastly, multi-colored concoction of ice, sugar, artificial color, artificial flavor and sugar with a bubblegum ball at the bottom. You would feel your teeth start to rot just looking at one. I am a sucker for all kinds of ice cream but I never ate a Screwball. Kids loved them and I would sell dozens and dozens in a typical day.

You might be thinking that this was a nice, low-stress way to spend the summer. Everybody loves the ice cream man, right? But, as with many things, there’s more to the job than meets the eye.

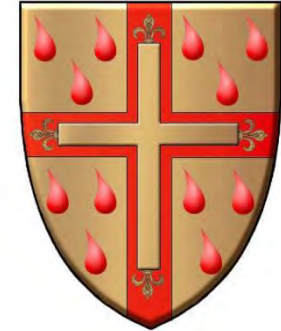
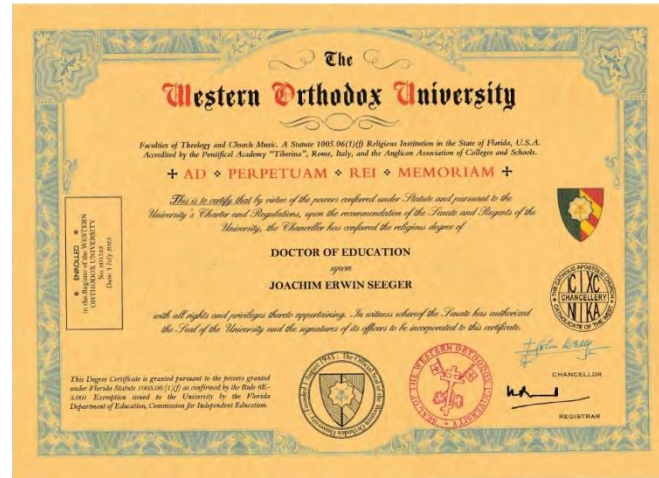
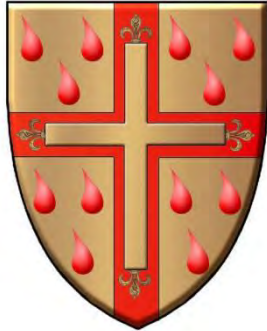
I was paid by commission, roughly 20%. The more I sold, the more I made. So, there was every incentive to hustle and to work long hours. My typical day would start at around 11:15 am with getting my truck loaded and cleaned up. I would be on my assigned route by noon and worked straight through the afternoon taking care to follow a schedule so that I would be at a given location at close to the same time each day. (Thereby helping my customers get in a habit of getting ice cream at a certain time each day.) There would be a break between 5 and 6 when I’d have a chance to get out of the truck and get something to eat. By six I was back on the route (the evening hours were the most lucrative) until 9:30 or 10. Then it was back to the yard, gas up the truck, put out the trash and head home arriving most nights around 11PM. I would do this five or six days per week from the beginning of June through the end of August.

That was a tough routine that didn’t allow much time for fun so you might wonder why I did it. The answer is that I was able to earn enough to cover all of my college expenses (tuition, room and board, books, supplies and other various expenses) without having to work during school year, without taking out any student loans and without getting money from my parents.

Looking back, it was the hardest job I ever had and I missed out on a lot of summertime social and educational opportunities. But that time was when I really learned how to work and I gained immeasurably in terms of independence, self-reliance, self-confidence, a sense of accomplishment and an appreciation for the value of an education. Those qualities stayed with me and helped shape my all of my life choices since that time.

So the next time you hear an ice cream truck come through your neighborhood you might be more alive about what might be going on under the surface.

# Let us congratulate Dr. Joachim E. Seeger, OCCO/OBL on his Doctor of Education



The dissertation deals with individual projects that are intended to improve the living conditions of children and young people in South Africa. Even today, children are often victims of violence, sexual abuse, suffer from insufficient nutrition or personality deficits. A pedagogical approach is based on the principle that children should take responsibility for themselves. A comparison is drawn here with the Children's Republic of Benposta in Colombia, where the focus is on the maturation of the children's personalities. This is followed by explanations of the history of the Children's Republic of Benposta in Spain, which was founded by the Jesuit Jesus Silva Mendez.

The exciting thing about Benposta is that the children's republic and the circus work as a socio-educational program. The educational approach is based on the basic needs of the children and young people and not on valid social norms. The boys and girls are allowed self-management, self-responsibility and self-regulation and children have the same status as adults. Social learning is of great importance. Can Benposta be a future-oriented educational and living model?

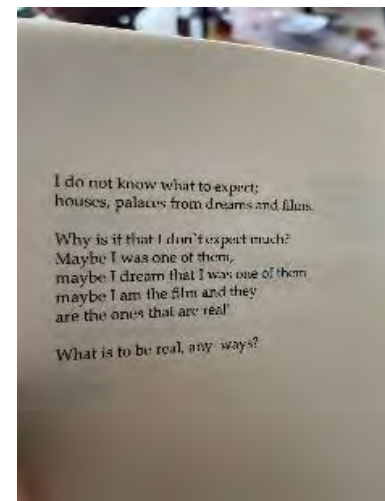
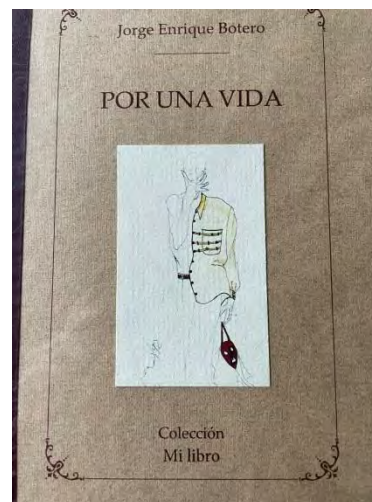
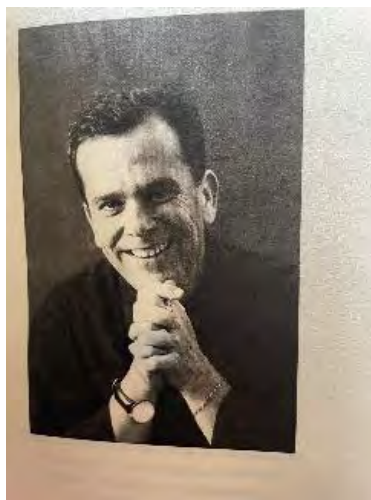
This is followed by a recourse to the historical foundations of reform pedagogy. Numerous exponents of reform pedagogy are treated. When examining the projects presented, differences in the pedagogical concepts became visible, which were reflected above all in a different starting perspective on children and young people and their position in society. Children and young people are cared for inside and outside the facility, but the focus here is on a reactive approach that strives to absorb the physical and psychological consequences of the problematic socio-economic situation in South Africa.

The question ultimately remained unclear as to whether a South African children's republic could develop as successfully as the concept in Colombia or Spain.

## ***Postulant Jorge the poet among us.***

***By Abbot Oscar Joseph, OCCO***

“I designed and produced leather goods . Clothing made from pig skin and other types of skin like snakes, lizards, etc. I designed houses, and furniture. My art or paintings media was more ink, charcoal, pencils, and markers.”



I have been blessed to have many conversations and the opportunity to read some of Jorge's beautifully written material. I suggested to him that his artistry of old has grown into his beautiful Heartfelt soul and is now being delivered in the medium of his poetry, prayer and sacrificial lifestyle. Jorge, has been kind enough to give me permission to share some of material. ENJOY

“I build my heart as my cloister, my body is my monastery.”

“I learned to feel closer and confident with a very living and loving Father Abbot, instead of being afraid of God and feeling very far away from Him. He now (smells like fresh chocolate chip cookies and fresh hot coffee). He is basically HOME, to me.

*The Abbot writes, I have never heard that metaphor. It recalls many fond childhood memories of my grandparents demonstrating their love for us by provided special foods. Tears are coming forth as I write. They are such fond memories of love, comfort and familiarity. It is a kind of Eucharistic Presence.*



## More reflections from Postulant Jorge

“Solitude becomes an arena in which we confront the inner demons and angels.”

“Internet, cell phones, computers, music, sex and TV are used to get out of the possibility of being by ourselves.”

“Respect for Nature and all creatures created by God.  
Respect with oneself, our genetics, our past, present, and future.”

“After respect will result love. A great feeling of love and being loved.  
the community of the Monastery, then, is truly a family of love for others.”

“We live in a very materialistic world and society. We are taught to want but not to be. The more we get the more we want,  
simple.

It's seems that is a no ending road.”

“One of the best moments in my life was when I decided not to want,  
but to find who God wanted me to be.

At that moment it was taken off my back and my mind.

A huge weight was lifted off my heart.

The less world I want, the more I crave God.  
I feel Him more. I can understand Him more.”





**By Postulant Jorge**

**As in all aspects of human life, listening is one of the main and most important talents . Sometimes we are born with such a talent but most of the time one has to educate and develop such a talent.**

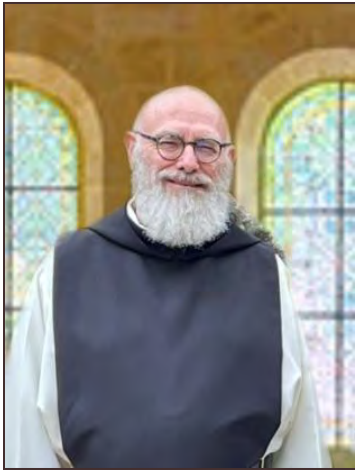
**I believe the lack of being able to listen to others is the main reason why families, society, countries, even communities as our Cistercian Family develop negative feelings and at the end negative results. As we can see everyday on the news or in our own communities and our own families.**

**I see it as riding a horse on my farm. From the moment the horse is taken to be saddled, he is concerned and nervous not knowing totally what is happening. Then as I approach the horse to ride it, I have to make eye contact with him, talk to him and explain that we have a job to do together. I have to grab him by his neck and touch him to release his stress and also mine.**

**The whole time I'm riding I talk to him, caressing his hair to comfort him all the way. I have to listen to him the way he talks back to me, like certain movements of his tail, head, etc. I have to try not only to listen but also to understand and interpret what he is telling me.**

**If I don't do that, our job will be more difficult, frustrating and at the end I may be falling off of him. In that way, next time I need to ride him, he will not let me do so.**

**Exactly as the Abbot, the leader in a company or even a politician. Listening and also paying attention (go hand in hand) leads to a better response and better results.**



## The Monastic Approach to Prayer and Redemption

By: Brother Raphael, OCCO

The theological scaffolding of the life of the spirit is important. More important, as you know, is the inner life it supports and underwrites: the life of prayer, contemplation, and communion in and with the divine presence.

In the monastic tradition, it is all about the transition and transformation of thought into compassion and wisdom, bringing the mind, the understanding, from the head into the heart. The heart is understood to be the true centre of our being. It is where we engage with our whole psycho-physical and spiritual selves, our redeemed, healed and restored nature, where the image of God in us is opened to our awareness and we begin to taste the life that is intended for us from the beginning, the real life that was never born and will not die.

The true purpose of our lives here is to learn to live these mortal lives in the light and awareness of love and wisdom, so as to grow into our full destiny: enjoying, drinking deeply of the goodness, truth, and beauty at the heart and origin of the universe. When we gravitate toward this inner life, we begin to view ourselves and every being with the eyes of wisdom and compassion.







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

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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

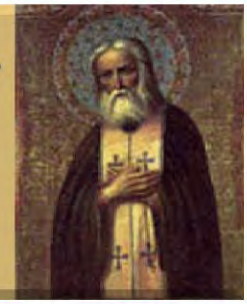
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*and*

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**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.”

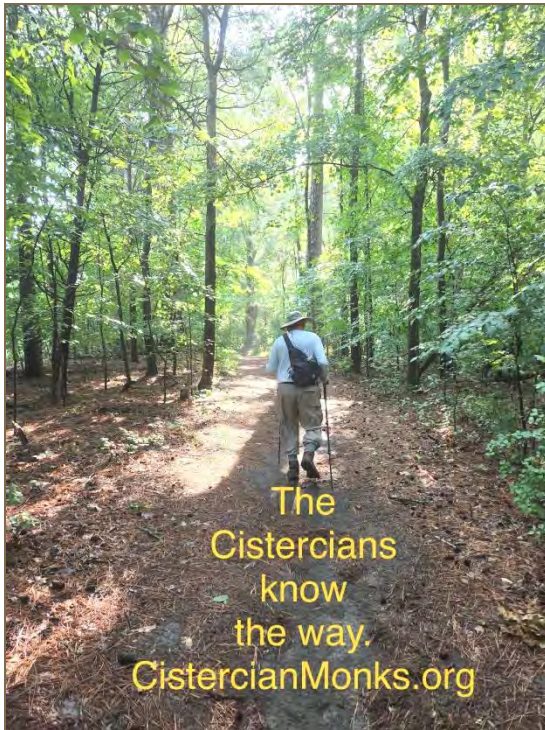
“A wonderful by-product of education at St. Stephen Harding is the relationship one can develop with the personalized focus. Frankly, I want to continue studying as a result and that’s the best compliment I can offer anyone involved with St. Stephen Harding, or any student considering the pursuit of 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



The  
Cistercians  
know  
the way.  
CistercianMonks.org

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

[https://youtube.com/channel/UC8n9vm\\_1zLZ72ylj2RoH2Vg](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.

*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. 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 a 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.”



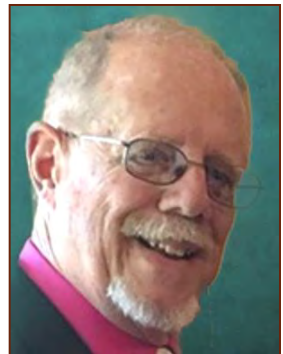
In loving memory of Br. Benedict and our love for the Cistercian Order we have founded

### The “We Got Your Back Program” 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](http://www.CistercianMonks.org)***



**Cistercian Shield Decal / Sticker**

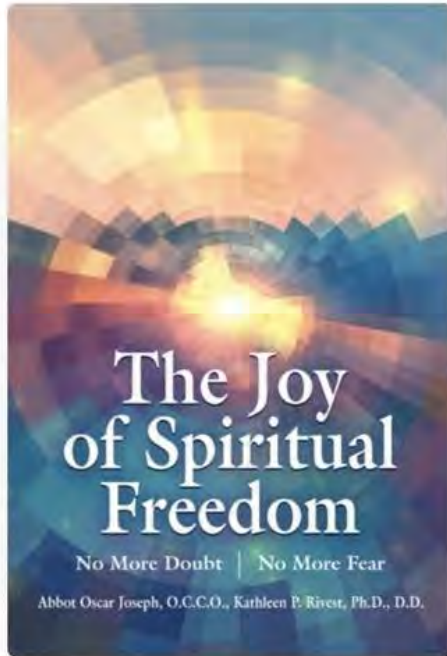
*The Shop is reserved only for our members, oblates, their families, benefactors and friends of the Order. It is not available to the general population.*



**Cistercian Coffee Mug**



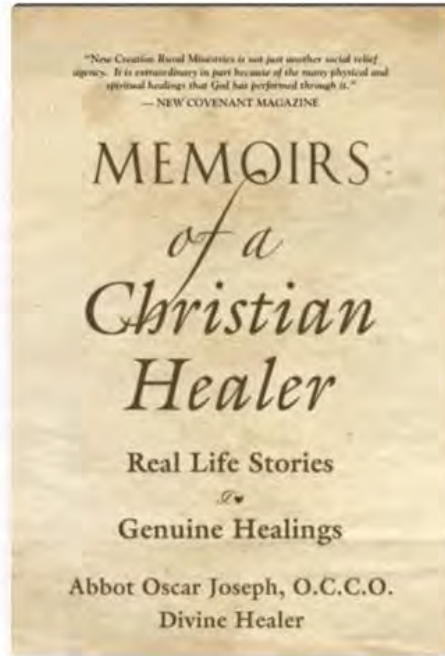
**One option for each cup placed on both sides of cup**



### The Joy of Spiritual Freedom

No More Doubts | No More Fear

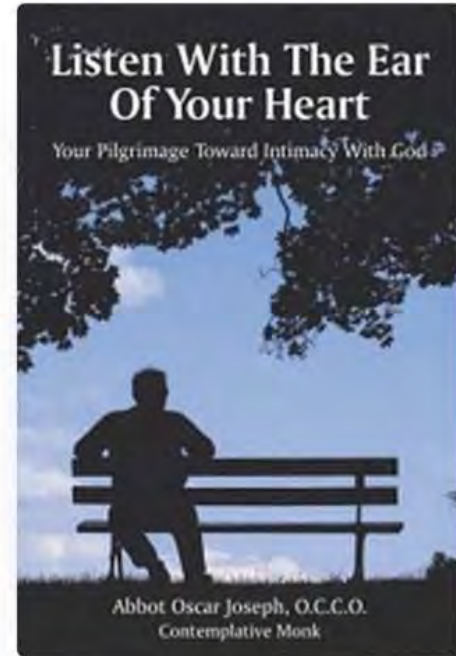
The Joy of Spiritual Freedom is the first of a trilogy that leads and inspires the reader to enter into a joy-filled relationship with a loving God. It is grounded in Biblical wisdom revealing how to remove debilitating doubt and fear. It draws from inspirational letters and case studies that illustrate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

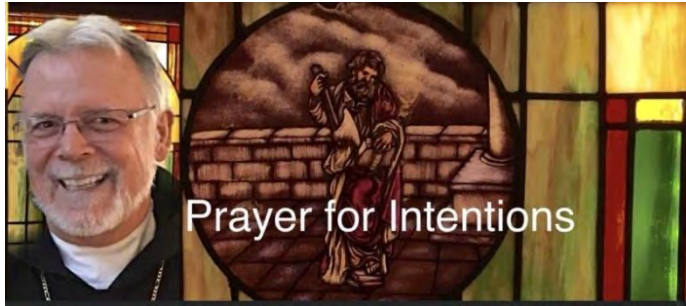
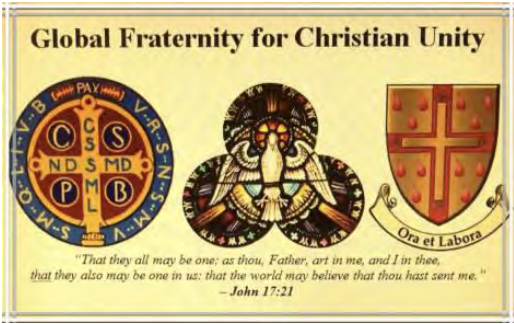


### Listen with the Ear of Your Heart

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](http://www.AbbotOscarJoseph.com)**



A Beacon of Hope  
 @abbotprays

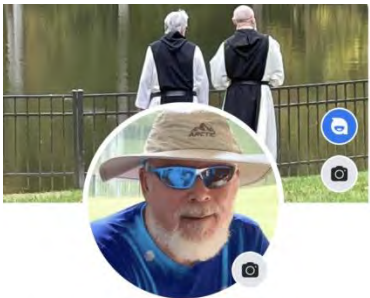
# Come see us on Facebook



The Cistercian Order of  
 the Holy Cross  
 @CistercianMonks



Priory of the Holy  
 Eucharist  
 @HolyEucharistPriory



Abbot Oscar Joseph



Trinity Chapel  
 @TrinityChapelLNK



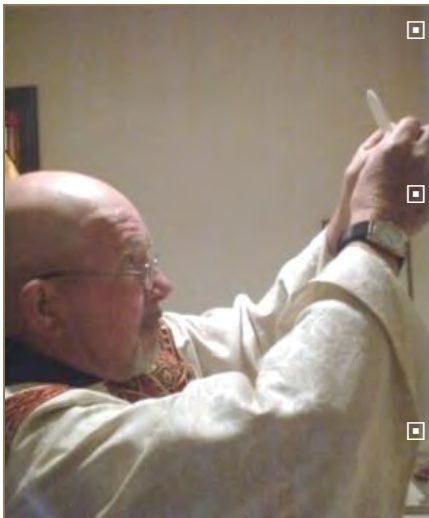
Saint Alberic's Church  
 @StAlbericsChurch



# Monks make great Priests



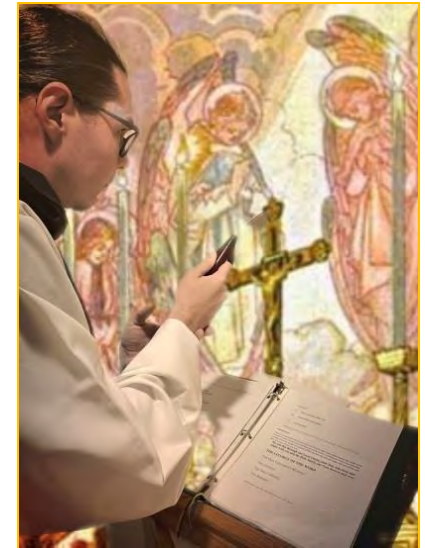
The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross is happy to receive male applicants for Holy Orders, Priests. We would also consider incardination for other rightfully ordained clerics.



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.**



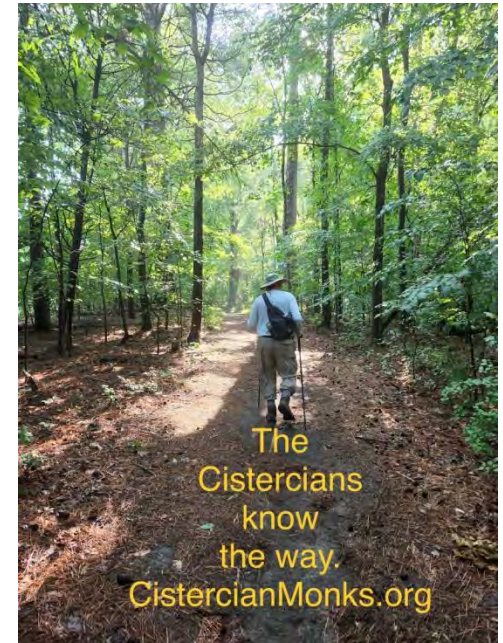
I have a question for you.

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.

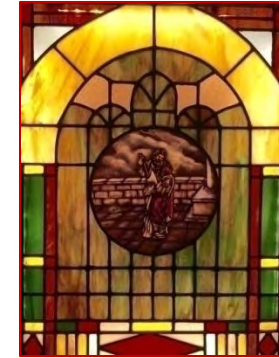
- 1. *Consecrating to a religious life and live outside of a community. ( Living your life at home with a loving family and good employment can make becoming a monk easier than living in a monastery.)***
- 2. *Third order oblate program. ( There is less required with this option. You can begin here if 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*

Passing through Lincoln, Nebraska on a Sunday?



Saint Alberic's Church  
3335 N. 12th Street Lincoln, NE 68521  
Phone: (402) 413-5490

Join Prior Matthew Pius, OCCO and his Parishioners  
every Sunday at 10:30am.

Check out our website for more details:  
[SaintAlberics.weebly.com](http://SaintAlberics.weebly.com)

CISTERCIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY CROSS

CONVOCATION

*Ora et Labora*



We are getting a New  
Abbot General/ Arch-Bishop  
Prior Matthew Pius, OCCO+

St Francis Retreat Center  
477 Grogan Rd., Stoneville, NC

**FEBRUARY 6-9 TH 2024**



We are offering super discounts  
Register today  
[Abbot@bellsouth.net](mailto:Abbot@bellsouth.net)