Benedictine Oblates

Sacred Heart Monastery
916 Convent Road NE
Cullman, Alabama 35055

Dear Inquirer,

Thank you for your inquiry regarding the Oblate way of life and affiliation with our Benedictine monastery. We have welcomed men and women of all Christian faiths since 1980. We currently have over 60 Oblates in several southeastern States. The Oblates meet here at Sacred Heart Monastery for their annual retreat the second weekend of October. At this time, there is a ceremony in which new members are enrolled as candidates for a period of one year, candidates make final oblation commitment, and existing Oblates renew their commitment.

During the retreat weekend, there is a featured retreat director to provide a program relative to Benedictine life, study of the Rule of St. Benedict, and other topics related to Benedictine values that assist the Oblate in living the Benedictine way of life in the world. The Oblates, candidates, and inquirers join the Sisters in praying the Liturgy of the Hours, celebrating Eucharist, and sharing meals. There are also groups of Oblates in various geographic areas that meet regularly for prayer and study.

Benedictine Oblates are Christian men and women who yearn for a spiritual life deeply rooted in God. The ongoing study of *The Rule of St. Benedict* enables one to find balance and fulfillment in life by incorporating its values and the teachings of the Gospel to everyday life.

Oblates are affiliated with a particular monastery and share a spiritual union with the monastic community, bonded in prayer and commitment as permitted by their state in life. The word *oblate* is derived from the Latin word, *oblatus*, which means someone who is offered up or dedicated to something. The Benedictine Oblate is a person whose life becomes a generous oblation or offering of self to God, according to *The Rule of St. Benedict.* They truly seek God, have a reverence for prayer (both private and daily praying of the Liturgy of the Hours), a love of holy reading, an experience of labor as holy, and an attitude of silence. The Oblate strives wholeheartedly to be attentive to God's presence in ordinary, daily life.

If you are interested in becoming affiliated with our monastery as a Benedictine Oblate, we invite you to tell us a little about yourself. Please respond in writing to me regarding these three areas:

- ***your involvement in a faith community***
- ***your prayer life***
- ***why you feel called to the Oblate way of life***

After you have submitted the above, I will arrange a time for you to visit the monastery and will meet with you to discern your readiness to enter the inquiry process. If you are ready to begin the inquiry process, you are invited to join the other Oblates as an inquirer at the annual retreat weekend. The following year you will be enrolled as a candidate and begin the study of the Rule in preparation for final oblation the following year.

We hope you will join us in our journey of seeking God and praying and working together "*that in all things God may be glorified."* (from the *Rule of St. Benedict*) You are in my prayers as you begin your discernment and I look forward to meeting you. I invite you to enter our website for news and blogs about us. There is also an Oblate section with resource links. www.shmon.org Please contact me should you have any further questions. I have also enclosed a brochure with a little more information.

Lovingly in St. Benedict,

Sister Sara Aiden Burress, O.S.B.
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Sacred Heart Monastery
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