



Benet Hill Monastery

3190 Benet Lane ∞ Colorado Springs, CO 80921-1509

What do Oblates Do?

Oblates offer themselves to God and to the community with which they affiliate themselves. Other than that oblates live as dedicated Christians according to the Gospels. Each monastery has its own program of formation for oblates. Oblates serve their monasteries in many different capacities, but their primary focus is not so much "doing" but "being." Benedictine practices vary for oblates, but a few seem to be common. One oblate who maintains a very comprehensive oblate web site offers these tips (edited for length) to prospective oblates:

1. Pray the Liturgy of the Hours. Growing out of the desire to pray without ceasing and to have the love for God always flowing from our hearts, Benedictine oblates pray (and many sing) some form of the [Divine Office](#) (also known as the Liturgy of the Hours, or Opus Dei — Work of God) when they visit a monastery or at their home or in a Benedictine gathering with other people.

The Divine Office is prayed between one and seven times a day: at Vigils (after midnight), Lauds (morning), Terce (midmorning), Sext (noon), None (mid-afternoon), Vespers (evening), and Compline (night, last prayer of the day).

2. Engage in *lectio divina* frequently. Slow meditative reading of Scripture lets God speak to your heart and seeks close communion with God. An excellent explanation of this practice can be found at <http://www.benethillmonastery.org/AboutUs/Lectio.html> and <http://www.valyermo.com/ld-art.html>
3. Oblates seek a healthy silence in their lives. Oblates tend to enjoy silence and seek it in their lives. Silence is a fruit of the Liturgy of the Hours.
4. Oblates pursue a monastic lifestyle as their circumstances permit. *Conversatio morum* is as varied as the spirit of each oblate, but in general oblates seek to "unify one's life around the primacy of God." Quote from Pope John Paul II, 7 July 1999.

For more information on *conversatio morum*, which is the most enigmatic Benedictine concept, read a list of quotes from several authors, and learn how this obscure Latin phrase remained unknown to the Benedictine world until it was "rediscovered" by Cuthbert Butler in 1912. For examples of *conversatio morum* see

<http://www.oblatespring.com/oblatespring0202conversatio.htm>

5. Oblates attend regular meetings. Most oblate groups have monthly or quarterly meetings at the monastery itself or in cities and towns where a number of oblates live. Oblate meetings vary widely in their content, but are often well worth the time even if it means spending the night or weekend at the monastery when that is possible.
6. Oblates attend group and private retreats. Most oblate programs recommend that oblates attend at least one retreat per year, and provide opportunities for oblates to have retreats



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geared especially to their needs. Oblates often attend other retreats during the year depending on their circumstances.

Find a monastery with a retreat center near you! There are many convenient locations to serve you better. Find a [monastic retreat](#) at the OSB.org web site.

7. Read the ancient monastic authors. When your current reading list does not contain any books written after 1700 AD, you will have caught the desire that fills many oblates. But, of course, there are many excellent modern authors and you will read them too — perhaps giving first place to those modern authors who write about the ancient ones.
8. Read from the Rule of St. Benedict. When St. Benedict was compiling his Rule, Bible quotes and allusions were his vocabulary, few other works integrate Biblical references more than the Rule of St. Benedict.