OBLATE RULE OF THE CAMALDOLESE BENEDICTINES

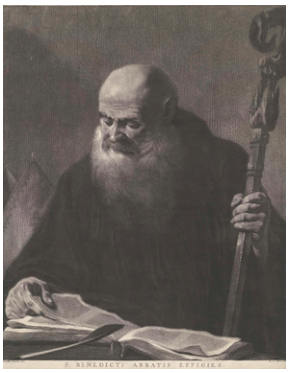
INTRODUCTION TO THE RULE FOR CAMALDOLESE BENEDICTINE OBLATES

(Adapted from the Camaldolese Constitutions)

Long before the coming of Christ, humanity's quest for the absolute gave rise in various religious traditions to expressions of monastic life. The many different forms of monastic and ascetical life throughout the centuries bear witness to the divine destiny of the human person and to the presence of the spirit in the hearts of all who seek to know what is true and ultimately real. There is a monastic dimension in every human life which the monk witnesses to and affirms, just as every Christian call witnesses to that dimension present interiorly in every other Christian.

In the early church, ascetics and virgins followed the Spirit's call to a more intense life of prayer. During the third and fourth centuries, with the exodus to the desert, Christian monasticism began to take on those forms of community life and solitude which would determine its later development. This tradition, at its best, always deeply esteemed marriage and single life in the world as ways to holiness in rich complementarity to monasticism.

Saint Benedict (c. 547), as author of the rule for monks, has always been considered the western church's lawgiver and master of monastic living. Saint Romuald (c. 1027) and his disciples (Camaldolese monks, nuns and oblates) also profess this rule.


Saint Benedict (c. 480 - 547 AD)

The Rule of Saint Benedict is a synthesis of Christian spirituality including key elements of scripture and the fruit of the first centuries of monastic experience. Drawing on the directives, norms, and precepts found in the gospel, the rule wisely blends them with the historical and cultural context of its time. Thus, the rule of Saint Benedict unites the purity of timeless teachings, and the characteristics of the author's own holiness and prudence with spiritual and juridical elements that are linked to his time and so are subject to modification as they are reinterpreted for each age.

Saint Romuald (c. 952 - 1027)

Saint Romuald lived and worked during the late 10th and early 11th centuries. He fully realized in his own life the spirit of the Rule, and he wisely reinterpreted it, emphasizing the solitude of the hermitage. Saint Romuald wanted the hermitage to be characterized by a greater simplicity and more intense penitential and contemplative practice. Therefore, he freely adapted some juridical and material structures of the cenobitic (communal) and eremitic (hermit) life as they were lived before him, in order to respond to the spiritual needs of his contemporaries and to the "voice of the Holy Spirit who presided over his conscience." (from Life of Blessed Romuald by St. Peter Damian, #53). The Camaldolese hermitage is a special fruit of Saint Romuald's broad and varied monastic experience as reformer and founder. The hermitage retains elements of cenobitic living, at the same time offering the possibility of greater solitude and freedom in the inner life.

The Camaldolese Congregation (of the Order of Saint Benedict) takes its name from the Holy Hermitage of Camaldoli, (Italy) founded by Saint Romuald. Quite early on, in the 11th and 12th centuries, the congregation was formed with the founding or aggregation of the other hermitages and monasteries. Today these include, besides New Camaldoli, Incarnation Monastery, Monastery of the Risen Christ, and Transfiguration Monastery, several ancient houses in Italy, and foundations in India, Germany, and Brazil. There are Camaldolese nuns in the United States, Italy, France, and Tanzania. Our congregation looks to Saints Benedict and Romuald with filial devotion and regards our holy teachers' doctrines and spirit as perennially valid. Today as in the past, the Holy Hermitage of Camaldoli is considered to be the head and mother of the congregation. For each age the Rule of Saint Benedict is interpreted by the Camaldolese Constitutions and the entire Camaldolese tradition.

Holy Hermitage, Camaldoli, Italy

St. Catherine Monastery, Karatu, Tanzania

In both the hermitages and monasteries which characterize Camaldoli's life, the monks attend to the contemplative life above all else, which is seeking and communing with God in a very deep way throughout one's daily life by a sharing in the paschal mystery of Christ.

New Camaldoli, Big Sur, California

New Camaldoli Hermitage, Big Sur, was founded from the Holy Hermitage of Camaldoli, Italy, in 1958. Incarnation Monastery in Berkeley, the second of three Camaldolese houses in the United States, was founded in 1979 with an ecumenical bond with the Holy Cross monks of the Anglican Communion. Incarnation Monastery also serves as the House of Studies for New Camaldoli. Monastery of the Risen Christ, formerly a monastery of the Olivetan Benedictine Congregation, became affiliated with the Camaldolese Congregation on November 20, 2013, after a three-year period of discernment. The three houses of Camaldolese monks maintain a covenant of friendship with the Camaldolese nuns of Transfiguration Monastery in Windsor, New York. Transfiguration is a member of the Camaldolese Congregation of Nuns of the Order of St. Benedict.

Incarnation Monastery, Berkeley, California

Monastery of the Risen Christ, San Luis Obispo, CA

Transfiguration Monastery, Windsor, New York

Camaldolese Benedictine oblates are a group of Christians who experience an attraction of the Holy Spirit to deep prayer and experience a bond of friendship with our monastic community and its long spiritual tradition. In fact, friendship is an important value cherished by the Camaldolese family and therefore encouraged between monks and with those living outside our houses. Oblates are extended members of the Camaldolese Benedictine family, seeking to share, in their own special way, in its way of living the Christian life. To this end, the Rule of Saint Benedict, the Camaldolese Constitutions and the rich and ancient Camaldolese tradition want to be adapted to the life of oblates living their own Christian vocation. For both monks and oblates, the heart of our life is the seeking of God, the following of Christ's twofold command of love in the natural rhythms of daily life. Scripture, Liturgy of the Eucharist and the Hours, silence, solitude, deep interior prayer of quiet, work, shared life with others—these are the means which enable us to seek and find God with a pure heart. The oblate faces the challenge of setting up his or her own structure of life animated by key elements of the Camaldolese charism in order to live and grow in the life of Christ. Of course, active participation in the local Christian community remains important for rootedness in the Christian life. Oblate spirituality seeks above all else a loving union with God through a full, prayerful life: a life which is at the same time both deeply interior and outwardly expansive in love and service of neighbor. It is a spirituality which is particularly nurtured through solitude and silence as well as through community.

The rule for oblates attempts to take the principal elements of the Camaldolese charism and apply them in general to the life of oblates without many of the structures of life at the New Camaldoli Hermitage. It is up to each oblate, according to the circumstances of their life, to set up their own structures for living these basic elements of Camaldolese spirituality, which are rooted simply in the Christian gospel.

RULE FOR CAMALDOLESE BENEDICTINE OBLATES

PRAYER

God the father has chosen us in the Son and has predestined us to be adopted children of God. For with the Son, we have died and have been raised up in baptism, so that we might receive "a spirit of adoption" through which we cry out, 'Abba' (that is, 'Father')" (Romans 8:15). It is God's spirit who enables us to persevere in steadfastness of faith and who inwardly strengthens us, so that in Christ we may stand in confidence before God.

Nourished by the body and blood of Christ and transformed into him, we live in the hope that God's loving

plan for us will be fulfilled. Consecrated by the Holy Spirit, who forms us into a spiritual temple and a holy priesthood, we are called to offer our lives to God as a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable through Christ. Thus, we become true worshippers, and we exercise fully our priestly role, united in the church's sacraments to Christ's own offering of his life to God.

As sincere seekers of God (RB 58.7), we approach God as sons and daughters. We center our lives on the encounter with God which finds expressions in forms of prayer handed down in early Christian, patristic, and monastic traditions. Ultimately, our prayer seeks to become the very prayer of the Holy Spirit within our hearts.

A. Liturgy of the Eucharist

"The Liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the church is directed; at the same time, it is the fountain from which all her power flows" (Vatican II Constitution on Liturgy). The paschal mystery of Christ is made present and effective for our salvation in the celebration of the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the center of the life of the church because from it the church is born, lives and continues to grow until she is ready to meet her bridegroom Christ as he comes in glory.

The Eucharistic Offering at New Camaldoli Hermitage

The sharing in God's life and the unity of God's people are in fact given fiting expression and a mysterious realization in the Eucharist, in which the church, made one with the sacrifice of Christ, offers herself to God. In the Eucharist the church receives an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and enjoys a foretaste of the perfect communion with the blessed Trinity which will be hers in the age to come.

The life of the oblate should be oriented in such a way that it is a preparation for, and an extension of, the eucharistic action. The Eucharist should be celebrated at least once a week and in as full, conscious and active a way as possible. Thus, by God's gift the oblate may attain that total inner openness to God's action which the spiritual masters have called mystical experience or contemplation.

B. Liturgy of the Hours

As Camaldolese Benedictines, we have always considered the celebration of the praise of God to be a fundamental element in our life. In the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, the Church offers her sacrifice of praise to the Father, and she thanks God for the salvation that comes to her in Christ. In the Hours, as in the Eucharist, Christ is acting out His priestly role and bringing to completion the covenant of love that unites the bride to her bridegroom.

According to Christian tradition, the purpose of the Liturgy of the Hours is the sanctification of the entire day. Hence it is necessary that the celebration of the various Hours (Vigils, Lauds, Vespers, Compline, etc.) correspond as closely as possible to their proper time of day. Special importance should be given to Lauds (at daybreak) and Vespers (at sunset), the principal moments of the Liturgy of the Hours. Though we are aware of time pressures for so many, these two hours are recommended for oblates if possible. Each element of the Hours—the psalms, hymns, scripture, silence, prayers—is to have its proper place in the celebration. The Hours are enhanced when prayed slowly and reverently and when accompanied by scripture study and a deeper understanding of the psalms.

C. Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina (divine or holy reading) is a principal practice of our spirituality. True to its biblical origins, the monastic life seeks above all a listening heart wherein God's Word—God's self-communication—is made manifest in Christ, in the Scriptures, in the human heart and in the heart of the cosmos. Lectio Divina is a method of approaching scripture in order to listen to the depths, seeking to encounter Christ, the Word, through the power of the Holy Spirit, hidden in the words of the text. Ultimately it can be said that the goal of lectio is an ever-expanding capacity to listen with the heart to the Word of God in all of life's situations, leading to a more constant awareness of God's presence. It is a listening as communion not so much for a particular message but for the nearness of the living God. It

is therefore a listening that leads to a new way of seeing. In this sense the faithful practice of lectio undergirds our entire life of prayer, work, and communion with others.

The traditional method for Lectio Divina is fourfold:

1. Lectio: The repeated reading of the text until certain words and phrases call for attention. Sometimes footnotes in a good study bible (for example, the Jerusalem Bible) as well as cross references help here. This stage has often been compared to taking in food, as the first "eating" of the word of scripture.

2. Meditatio: The further "chewing" or ruminating on key words and phrases. One stays as long as one is so attracted to a word or phrase. At this stage the heart of the text for the reader should begin to emerge.

3. Oratio: These key words and phrases of the text eventually lead the person to prayer inspired by the text and a growing awareness of God's presence in Christ by the Spirit. This is the deep tasting of the text.

4. Contemplatio: Eventually the particular words of the text lead the reader beyond words to a silent awareness of God's presence—simply an abiding or communing with God. This is the savoring of the sweetness of the Lord

Lectio is also enhanced when an oblate does scripture study and learns to consult good commentaries to support his or her reading. In this way the subtle nuances of a text will be more available to the reader. The oblate should try to do Lectio as often as possible but at least once a week in preparation for Sunday Liturgy, using the readings for that Sunday.

D. Interior Prayer

Personal participation in the liturgy and the regular practice of Lectio are reflected in one's interior prayer, flowing up from the depths of the heart under the influence of the Holy Spirit. This "secret" prayer, the fruit of repentance and purity of heart, is taught by the Gospel and recommended by Saint Benedict, Cassian, and the desert tradition. The atmosphere of silence, in which God speaks, is indispensable for this practice. Silence permeates it and nourishes it, and when an oblate is faithful to this prayer (Jesus Prayer/Centering Prayer/ Christian Meditation, etc.) it becomes a constant reality in his or her relationship with God as a son or daughter. It is recommended that this prayer be offered twice a day, morning and evening, for 10 or 20 minutes or more, when possible. This prayer gradually becomes expansive, embracing more and more of our day and ourselves as we become aware of God's continual abiding presence, even at work, during traffic jams and those brief moments of pause interspersing our day. Be attentive and open to the voice of the spirit, knowing that prayer is her gift. Continually ask for this grace; and as you long to take part in the Church's mystical marriage with her spouse the lamb, allow the Spirit to draw you into the silent state of the heart called quies or hesychia (rest, stillness), there to experience your own mystical union with God. It is important to model your whole spiritual life on the mystery of Christ, following the Church on her journey through the annual liturgical cycle. Find the best way of entering into and celebrating as intensely as possible the principal seasons of the Christian year—Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter.

ASCETICISM/DISCIPLINE

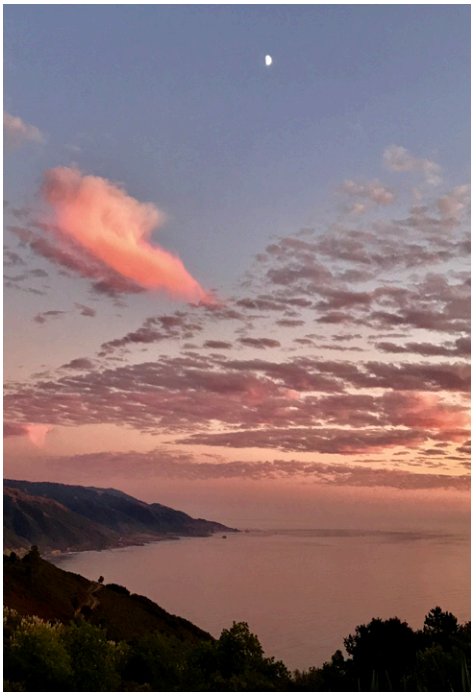
The church shares in the mystery of Christ - Her Lord- which is a mystery of death and resurrection. Sealed by the spirit, "the pledge of our inheritance," the church longs for the fulfillment of God's Kingdom as she awaits "our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and savior Jesus Christ." (Ephesians 1:4; Titus 2:13). Monks and oblates humbly welcome the word that has taken root in them, with its power to save, and they strive to be continually converted by that word and to be doers of the word not merely listeners. All Christians strive to follow the poor, chaste and obedient Christ according to the particular circumstances of their lives. This means lives that are marked by simplicity, sharing, chaste loving and continual surrender to God's desire for them and the world. Oblates seek to undertake those ascetic disciplines necessary for their life in the world as extended members of New Camaldoli, Incarnation Monastery, Monastery of the Risen Christ, and Transfiguration Monastery. The

> According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:
>
> Ephesians 1:4

daily dying to selfishness, to control, to possessiveness, to addictions and anything else that hinders the oblate's transformation in Christ is the basic asceticism. A life of moderation, integration, focus, wholeness, and depth must be sought through whatever practices help in this regard (i.e. fasting/retreats/good spiritual reading/spiritual direction). Moderating the use of television, media, alcohol, etc., would also be helpful forms of asceticism.

WORK

A great deal of our lives is spent in work. For our spirituality, work is more than earning a living. It is a means of developing our human faculties, continuing the work of God the creator, and contributing to the fulfillment of the plan of Divine Providence. Sometimes work also entails some suffering and to this extent it is for us a participation in the redemption of humanity through the mystery of the cross. Work develops our skills and talents as well as offering a means through which we can contribute to the betterment of society. Work also enables us to acquire material goods and thereby to share with those less fortunate than us. Work can also be an expression of God's beauty and loving care for this earth. Oblates should seek to make their work an integral part of their spirituality, uniting themselves with God, who in Christ, is working in the world in order to bring all things into unity. Work is also a necessary part of our Christian dignity expressing outwardly in doing our very being as sons and daughters of a loving creator God. Work does not define who we are but rather gives expression in an incarnational way to who we are as well as mysteriously expanding our very being in God.



SILENCE AND SOLITUDE

Silence and solitude have privileged places in the Camaldolese Benedictine tradition. The encounter with God in silence and solitude is distinctive of our tradition. An apt image of such an encounter with God is the desert or wildeness, where one is stripped of everything but that alone which is truly necessary. Oblates find the Hermitage at Big Sur to be in many ways a desert/wilderness experience of silence and solitude supported by community. While this might remain hard to duplicate precisely oblates should nevertheless cherish such silence and solitude, seeking creative ways of finding them in their daily lives. It is especially important to seek for silence and solitude of the heart, which can be found everywhere if one has learned how to remain in vital contact with the depths. Of course, oblates should periodically spend time away on retreat, especially at the Hermitage, Incarnation Monastery, Monastery of the Risen Christ, or Transfiguration Monastery, if possible.

> "We too are called to withdraw at certain intervals into deeper silence and aloneness with God... to be alone with Him — not with our books, thoughts, and memories but completely stripped of everything — to dwell lovingly in His presence, silent, empty, expectant, and motionless"
>
> – Thomas Merton

OTHER INFORMATION FOR OBLATES

1. Postulancy

There is a three-month Postulancy period wherein the prospective Oblate Novice has regular contact with the Oblate Chaplain. During this time, the Postulant begins a period of self-reflection while studying some of the core documents of our tradition, such as the Rule of St. Benedict, the Oblate Rule and other texts. The Postulant will consider, through prayer and consultation with the Oblate Chaplain, if the spirit of Camaldolese Benedictine spirituality is life-giving for them. If, after the end of the initial three-month period of discernment, and with the approval of the oblate , the Postulant may begin the Oblate Novitiate.

2. Novitiate

The Oblate Novitiate is a twelve-month period of study and reflection during which the Oblate Novice continues to live according to the Oblate Rule of Life, studies the Rule of St. Benedict, the Camaldolese Oblate Handbook, and other documents, and seeks the Lord in prayer and discernment. The Oblate Novice is received into the

Novitiate by the Oblate Chaplain or his designee in an informal ceremony with the conferral of a blessed Jubilee Medal of St. Benedict, and the Rule of St. Benedict. This ceremony would ordinarily take place at one of the Camaldolese monasteries. However, in order to accommodate those not able to come to any of the Camaldolese houses, the ceremony may take place at a local monastery or church.

After the Novice is received, the Oblate Chaplain will assign an Oblate Peer Mentor to the Novice, in consultation with the Oblate Formation Team. The Novice and Peer Mentor will meet regularly, at least once monthly, via telephone, video conference, or in person, and continue the spiritual formation of the Novice. The Peer Mentor does not provide formal spiritual direction, but rather acts as a companion for the Novice as she or he seeks to integrate Camaldolese Benedictine spirituality into their daily lives. The Peer Mentor and Novice will reflect on the Benedictine charisms of hospitality, community and witness of God's loving presence. The Peer Mentor will attempt to act as a reflector of the core values of Camaldolese life to the Novice, thus acting as a witness of the gospel within the Camaldolese framework.

After a period of one year, or longer if desired, the Peer Mentor will inquire if the Oblate Novice seeks oblation. If the answer is affirmative the Peer Mentor will contact the Oblate Coordinator to advise that the Oblate Novice has completed his/her mentorship. The Peer Mentor, Oblate Coordinator and the Oblate Chaplain will discuss the Oblate Novice's progress in formation to determine if oblation should proceed. The Oblate Novice will then be advised by the Peer Mentor to contact the Oblate Chaplain to request oblation.

The Oblate Novice and Oblate Chaplain will agree on a date for the oblation ceremony using the Rite of Oblation as promulgated by the Camaldolese communities. The ceremony, though ordinarily taking place at one of the Camaldolese houses, can take place at a local monastery or church to accommodate the needs of the Oblate Novice should travel to a Camaldolese house be a physical or financial burden. The Oblate Chaplain will work with the Oblate Novice to designate an alternative site and a designated minister (e.g. Pastor, Religious, etc.) to receive the Oblate Novice on behalf of the Camaldolese congregation. At the ceremony the Oblate Novice will sign the oblation document and will receive the Camaldolese medallion, with the ancient symbol of our Congregation (See Appendix C). The oblation document will be kept on file with the Oblate Chaplain.

Once received, the oblate is put on our mailing list for our quarterly newsletter along with recommended resources. Those letters, besides providing a meditation on some aspect of our spirituality also keep the oblate informed about life at the Hermitage and other houses. Special events for oblates are also announced in the newsletter.

The oblate is asked to write or meet at least once yearly with the Oblate Chaplain as a means of keeping contact and letting him know how one is doing in living the oblate rule. If for any reason an oblate wishes to discontinue this relationship with us, we would appreciate being notified so that the oblate can be placed on inactive status.

Oblates are continually remembered in the prayer of the Camaldolese community and of course always welcome at any of our houses. When we are notified of the death of an oblate, the Eucharist is offered as soon as possible for the deceased in the Camaldolese community to which the oblate is affiliated.

Oblates are encouraged to adapt their rule of life to the particular circumstances of their lives in consultation with the Oblate Chaplain.

PRAYERS

Heavenly Father, you have bound us together, monks and oblates, in the love of your Son Jesus Christ. Bless us in the prayer and work which you have given us to do, so that by the strength of your spirit we may contribute to the advancement of your Kingdom, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Heavenly Father, you so filled your servant St. Romuald with your creative spirit that he became a powerful force in your church for the renewal of Christian solitary and communal life. Fill us with the same Spirit, so that we may live, whether in solitude or community, intent upon your service and praise. This we ask through Christ our Lord. Amen.

APPENDIX A

RITE OF BECOMING AN OBLATE NOVICE

Prior: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit Amen.

V. Lord have mercy.
R. Christ have mercy.
V. Lord have mercy.

Let us pray:

We ask you, O God, to forgive us our sins. May the merits and intercession of Mary, the virgin mother of your son, our Lord, and the patronage of our Holy Fathers Romuald and Benedict help us. This we ask through the same Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Prior: What do you seek?

Novice: I seek to serve God through the Camaldolese oblate way of life as an Oblate Novice of New Camaldoli Hermitage (Incarnation Monastery, Monastery of the Risen Christ or Transfiguration Monastery).

Prior: Let us pray.

Ever-living God, we ask you to send your spirit on this Oblate Novice who desires to associate him self/herself with the monastic community of New Camaldoli Hermitage (Incarnation Monastery, Monastery of the Risen Christ or Transfiguration Monastery). Strengthen his/her intention and bring it to perfection through holiness of life. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prior: [Gives a copy of the Rule of St. Benedict to the Oblate Novice]

Accept the Rule of St. Benedict, written in the spirit of the Gospels. Let it be your guide in life as a Christian and a disciple of St. Romuald. May it guide you in the way of Christ to live the first Camaldolese good. May your concern for the needs of others continuously grow as you empty yourself to build up a true Christian bond with those around you: the strong and the weak, the wise, and the unwise, the healthy and the sick, the rich and the poor, the secure and the insecure, those well-cared for and those who are neglected, the young and the aged, those placed over you and those under your care.

May your study of this Rule inspire you to work with good zeal for others where you are, for the good of humanity that in all things God may be glorified.

Novice: Amen.

Prior: [Gives a copy of the Pre-Blessed Medal of St. Benedict to the Oblate Novice]

Receive this medal with its Cross of St. Benedict and be reminded of the need to take up your cross daily and follow the true King, Christ our Lord, and thus learn to share with patience in the sufferings of Christ that you may one day share in His heavenly kingdom.

Novice: Amen.

Prior: May God bless and guide you in your striving to be a faithful witness of Christ according to the spirit of his Rule,

Novice: Amen.

Prior: May God's grace protect you always and may you be a sign of God's love for all people.

RITE OF OBLATION OF A CAMALDOLESE OBLATE

[The oblate approaches the Prior].

Prior: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of your love.
V. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.
R. And you will renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray:

O God, you have filled the hearts of your faithful with the light of your Holy Spirit; grant to us by the same spirit to know what is right, and always to rejoice in his consolation.

Raise up, O Lord, in your church, the spirit which animated our Holy Fathers Romuald and Benedict, so that, filled with that same Spirit, we may strive to love what they loved, and to practice what they taught. This we ask, through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Promises:

Prior: Dear _____, as all those baptized in Christ, you are a temple of the Holy Spirit offered freely to the Father. Do you want your life to become an ever more perfect and total oblation to the Father, in the offering of the unique and perfect sacrifice of Christ?

Oblate: Yes, I do.

Prior: Dear _____, do you wish to witness in the world, through the conduct of your life, the dignity of the human person, regenerated in the Paschal mystery of Christ?

Oblate: Yes, I do.

All in the assembly respond:

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Prior: May the Lord bring to fulfillment with His grace your plan of life. And now I invite you to read the charter of your oblation.

[Oblate reads the following]:

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

I,_____, offer myself to Almighty God in love, in the community of [New Camaldoli Hermitage, Incarnation Monastery, Monastery of the Risen Christ, or Transfiguration Monastery], and promise to Him, before the Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Comfort, our Holy Fathers Benedict and Romuald and all the saints, to live ever more in conformity with the requirements of my baptismal consecration, according to the spirit of the Rule of St. Benedict and the Camaldolese Oblate Rule of this monastery. In faith, I have written in my own hand this charter of oblation and signed in the year of the Lord _____, day _____ of the month of _____.

[Having read the Charter of Oblation, it is signed on the altar and remains on the altar throughout the Eucharist. The charter is then turned over to the Prior for safekeeping in the archives of the monastery].

[Oblate receives the Camaldolese medallion from the Prior].

Formal Acceptance of New Oblates:

As God's representative, I now accept your oblation and admit you into the spiritual union and affiliation with the Camaldolese community of [New Camaldoli Hermitage, Incarnation Monastery, Monastery of the Risen Christ or Transfiguration Monastery], as an oblate(s) and adopted son [son(s), daughter(s)], of our Holy Fathers Romuald and Benedict, and gives you the privilege of sharing in the prayers and good works of the community.

May God strengthen you in your faith. May you persevere in your holy resolution to serve God and humanity in accord with the spirit of the rule of Saint Benedict, as your state in life permits. And may God reward you, according to his promises, with the vision of His glory for all eternity.

R. Amen.

[Monks and oblates greet the new oblate].

[The Prior invites everyone to share the sign of peace].

APPENDIX B

THE BRIEF RULE OF ST. ROMUALD

Sit in your cell as in paradise.
Put the whole world behind you and forget it.
Watch your thoughts like a good fisherman watching for fish,
The path you must follow is in the Psalms – never leave it.

If you have just come to the monastery,
And in spite of your goodwill, you cannot accomplish what you want,
Take every opportunity you can to sing the Psalms in your heart
And to understand them with your mind.

And if your mind wanders as you read, do not give up;
Hurry back and apply your mind to the words once more.

Realize above all that you are in God's presence,
And stand there with the attitude of one who stands before the Emperor.
Empty yourself complete and sit waiting, content with the grace of God,
Like the chick who tastes nothing and eats nothing but what his mother brings him.

APPENDIX C

The Camaldolese emblem, which in its own way sums up our spirituality, is very ancient, predating our order. It can be found, in interesting variations, in the Ravenna church mosaics, in the catacombs of Rome, and even non-Christian art. It thus has an “archetypal” depth and power. The Camaldolese form includes the chalice and cross at the center representing Christ in our midst, especially in his paschal and eucharistic presence. The peacocks, ancient symbols of eternal life, represent the community of faith being nourished from the life of Christ. In their twofold presence they can represent the solitary and communal dimensions of Camaldolese monasticism (the hermitage and cenobium), and they can also stand for the monk and the oblate united in the one nourishing experience of Christ. Other variations of the emblem include our motto: “I am yours, you are mine,” which sums up the Biblical experience of covenant bondedness with God, also in its culminating image of spousal love, expressed in the Canticle of Canticles and experienced by contemplatives down through the ages. The motto is presented in the three languages of Greek, Latin and English to express the universality of God’s call to union in love.

The emblem in its simpler form is represented in the oblate medallion and can thus be an ongoing reminder of our call to union with Christ and thus with one another, in the bonding love of his life poured out for all.

By Incarnation oblate,Susan McGinnis.