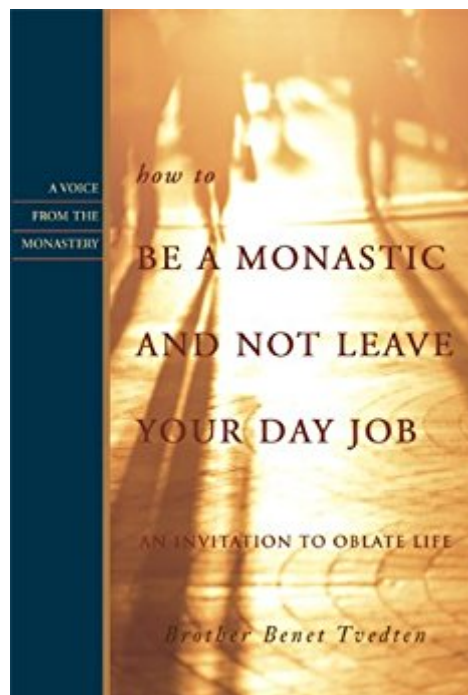


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How To Be A Monastic And Not Leave Your Day Job: An Invitation To Oblate Life (Voices From The Monastery)



Synopsis

Dorothy Day was an oblate while she lived in the heart of New York City. So was the French poet, Paul Claudel. Kathleen Norris is an oblate, and so was Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia, the first woman in Europe to earn a Ph.D. What connects them all? There are at least ten thousand oblates in the United States today (no one knows for sure how many), and each of them is connected in meaningful ways to a monastery or abbey. Most oblates are ordinary lay people from various Christian traditions. They are linked together by common appreciation for the Rule of St. Benedict. Originally written for monks, the principles in the Rule may be applied by everyone else---and in today's hectic, changing world, being an oblate offers a rich spiritual connection to the stability and wisdom of monastic life. This essential guide explains how people who live and work in "the world" are still invited to balance work with prayer, cultivate interdependence with others, practice hospitality, and otherwise practice their spirituality like monks.

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Customer Reviews

It seems like the fad of the day is for aspiring Christian authors to visit monasteries and write about their experiences. It is almost as if the very surroundings of a cloister will rub off and increase one's spiritual depth. But something about the call of the monastery is more than just a fad. An increasing number of people are adopting monastic spirituality for themselves. According to Br. Tvedten there are currently an estimated 24,155 Oblates of St. Benedict in the world. I am among their number. This almost equals the 25,255 vowed Benedictine men and women. The invitation to Oblate life is being answered by many people today. This book was written for them. This easy to read book offers an excellent introduction to the vocation of the Oblate. The book is straight forward, respectful and unpretentious. Oblates who read this book will come away with a warm inspirational glow that their calling is appreciated. Those who are interested in lay monasticism will learn enough from this volume to understand what the movement is all about. Several have commented that this little book (111 pages) is aimed more at those interested in formal ties with a monastic community than those who wish to practice Benedictine spirituality on their own. There is a reason for this, private Benedictine monastic spirituality is an oxymoron. To be Benedictine is to be part of community. This is even true of Benedictine hermits. One may be a contemplative or a mystic alone. One might pattern a personal devotional life after Benedict's Rule. One might even create a private prayer chapel. But these are not the same thing. I played around the edge of monasteries for years before I realized I had to take the plunge or forever be on the outside peeking through the windows.

In North America there is growing interest in Benedictine (i.e. Christian monastic) spirituality. How DO you become a monastic and not leave your day job? Brother Benet's answer is the answer that some 10,000 lay Catholics and Protestants in the U.S. have come up with: namely, become an oblate. Benet explains that to become an oblate is to have a special relationship with a particular Benedictine community, and to try to practice what Saint Benedict taught. That particular monastery becomes the person's "monastic home." Benet explains that the appeal of becoming an oblate includes the prayerful support of a monastic community, a deepening spiritual renewal, and the appeal of Benedictine values including a structured prayer life. Brother Benet is the oblate director of Blue Cloud Abbey. He extends an invitation to become an oblate to any person (man or woman) who is drawn to monastic spirituality but who doesn't want to take vows as a monk. The new oblate joins a host of other Christians discovering this way to deepen their spiritual lives and Christian journey. As Benet says: "This book attempts to explain the calling of an oblate." But rather than a left-brained analytical one-two-three Do-It-Yourself book like we're all used to, Br. Benet weaves a tapestry of anecdotes, historical notes, stories, and descriptions that give one an intuitive feel for the depth and

breadth of oblate life, tradition, commitment, values, and milieu. His writing makes an enjoyable read, is often humorous, though is admittedly a bit disjointed at times. Those wanting to skip right to the "How to" part of becoming an oblate can head directly to Part Three - "Becoming an Oblate."

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