

Good news in the Most Holy Divine Will!

Fr. Elijah John Joseph of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Mother Gabrielle Marie sent this notice, making it easier for the Third Order Benedictine Oblates, with the following guidelines. This community is little, modeled after the Holy Family of Nazareth.

The Benedictine Oblates of Divine Will
From the desk of Fr. Elijah Joseph...

Dearest Brothers and Sisters in Christ and in the Divine Will,

Peace of Christ!

Mother Gabrielle Marie and I are grateful to God and the Blessed Virgin Mary that many of you have expressed an ardent interest in sharing in our charism as Third Order members. To this end, we would like to clarify what we feel it means to be a Benedictine *Oblate* of Divine Will.

The first thing that we would say is that our community is *little*. We see ourselves as and will always strive to be a little family, regardless of our numbers. Our model is the Holy Family of Nazareth. The Holy Family was very hidden and very simple. They did not have great, worldwide apostolates. Rather, they lived daily life with extraordinary love: *divine love*. I like to imagine Mary sewing by the hearth-fire as St. Joseph plays with the Child Jesus on the floor. I imagine, too, the neighbors who probably loved to visit their house and taste Mary's homemade bread. I doubt the neighbors knew that the child playing on the floor was the Eternal Word Incarnate. I'd bet, though, they knew there was amazing love and peace in that holy place.

It seems to us that there are a wide range of oblate communities in the world. Some are highly organized with sophisticated formation programs. Others are much more loosely organized, private, hidden, and personal in nature. They are, in a word: LITTLE. The Benedictine Oblates of Divine Will are more like this second type. In this sense, our oblation is very similar to a simple consecration. Many of you will be familiar with St. Louis Marie De Montfort's *Total Consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary*. While this consecration is powerful, serious, and even life-changing, it also is hidden and simple, and can be done privately without anyone knowing about it.

The main thing that an oblate needs is a fervent desire and commitment to live in God's Most Holy and Divine Will on earth as it is in heaven. To this end they should live a faithful Catholic life, which would include:

- Mass on Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation (daily Mass when possible)
- Regular confession (monthly when possible)
- Faithful and loving obedience to Holy Mother Church in all matters of faith and morals
- Prayerful study of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and Sacred Scripture
- Respect and filial submission to the Pope, Bishops, and Pastors

Additionally, they should:

- Read the Divine Will writings of the Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta for at least one half-hour a day (exceptions to this should be made only when absolutely necessary). Pray the Rosary daily
- Participate in Eucharistic Adoration whenever possible
- Cultivate a fervent devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph as well as to St. Benedict, St. Scholastica, St. Annibale di Francia, and the Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta
- Learn about the Benedictine life, especially the Holy Rule
- BE LITTLE!

Finally, we have a few little suggestions:

- It is helpful to have some guidance when reading the Divine Will writings, either from a priest who reads the Divine Will or is open to it, or someone with some theological training. Remember these are mystical writings and must always be interpreted in the light of the Deposit of Faith and any interpretations that go against it are to be avoided! The Benedictines of Divine Will do not espouse any particular theological interpretation of the Divine Will writings. Instead, we insist only on the fact that the interpretations must be solidly and authentically Catholic.
- As St. Francis so eloquently put it, “Preach always, and if necessary, use words.” Concentrate on living in the Divine Will and leave the teaching to those that are properly trained and called by God to teach it.
- Be humble and charitable, especially to those who, like you, are striving to live in God's Most Holy Will on earth as it is in heaven.

Therefore, with these guidelines in mind, if you would like to consecrate yourself to being a Benedictine Oblate of Divine Will, all we require is that you faithfully live the above practices. Then when you feel ready, read and sign the oblation that is included at the end of this letter in front of the Blessed Sacrament. Every year on the same date your consecration should be renewed. We also suggest that you wear a blessed Benedictine Cross as a sign of your consecration. It does not need to be visible, but it can be if you prefer.

As simple as this may sound, this is what it means to be a Benedictine Oblate of Divine Will! While we cannot offer anyone an elaborate formation program or a formal canonical connection with our community, we can joyfully share the gift of our charism with all those that would like to unite themselves with us spiritually. We also can pray for and with each of you that we may all live more deeply in God's Most Holy and Divine Will, and that the Kingdom of Divine Will in its fullness on earth as it is in heaven may come quickly!

In union with my Bishop, I extend my priestly blessing to all those that faithfully live this little consecration. We entrust this letter to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary and allow Them to do with it what they would want.

With much love,

Fr. Elijah John Joseph of Our Lady of Guadalupe