

## OBLATE CANDIDACY PROCESS

### I. Oblate Formation Timeline and Process

#### Definitions

##### Inquirer:

Meets monthly with Formation team and a Benedictine sister for book study and dialogue about the basic elements of Benedictine spirituality. By June 1 of the inquiry year, the Inquirer makes a request via the Formation team to become an Oblate Candidate. Inquirers are received into their Candidacy in the Fall, on the same day that Candidates make Oblation.

##### Candidate:

Candidacy is a time to go deeper into the understanding of Benedictine spirituality and the application of the Rule of Benedict to one's life. It is the time to think about making a commitment to the Oblates and Sisters of Queen of Angels Monastery. Candidates are assigned a mentor by mid-August. The Oblate Council is developing a packet of materials for Candidates and Mentors. The Mentor initiates contact and plans for monthly meetings for the period of September through May of the candidacy year.

##### End of formal Formation period for Candidates:

By May, the Candidate and Mentor will have discussed the Candidate's readiness for Oblation, and the Candidate requests to become an Oblate. By June 1, the Candidate will make a written request to the Mentor, who will forward the request to the Oblate Council. The letter should include a very short autobiographical statement, as well as the Candidate's current mailing address. The statement serves as an introduction to members of the monastic community of QAM who may not have had an opportunity to get to know the Candidate.

##### Note:

An Inquirer or Candidate need not be bound by the single season timeline for each phase of Formation, but may choose, if it appears appropriate, to extend the Inquiry or Candidacy. Candidates should do this in the letter referenced above. OBLATE FORMATION QUESTIONS

### II. Oblate Candidate Formation Questions

The structure with which the Candidate works with a mentor during the Candidacy year is a series of twenty-five questions. These questions are more than an intellectual exercise. Rather, they are a scaffolding within which the Candidate is invited to open the doors of the heart to admit a deeper level of spiritual awareness and practice in the context of the Rule of Benedict.

Together, the Candidate and Mentor consider how the questions will be approached. There is no one right way to do it. Some candidates proceed through the questions in a linear way. Others group the questions together based on how they appear to be related. Some questions may require lengthy consideration, wrestling and response. Some may seem very straightforward. Each person must find his/her own way. The goal is to arrive at a deeper understanding of Benedictine life, how it fits with one's own journey and how one will approach it going forward.

**The questions are grouped into the following topics:**

**Introduction to the Rule:**

How might the Rule be a guide for us in life

**Prayer and Introduction to Divine Office**

What is the role of prayer in our live and how might the Divine Office be part of that

**Work, Ordinary Life, and Material Things**

Integration of our daily lives with Benedictine practice

**Balance**

Integrating mind, body, spirit and the Benedictine promises

**The Many Faces of Christ**

How do I encounter Christ in others and respond

**Stability**

Maintaining the centrality of our beliefs and practices in a changing world

**Conversion**

How do we create a life-long openness to change and growth

**Obedience**

Developing and maintaining true “Listening with the ear of the heart” and responding

**Life Decision**

Is this for me?

**III. Role of Formation Coordinators**

The Formation Team currently consists of two members of the Oblate Council. Referrals for new Inquirers are forwarded to them;

- Before the pandemic, the coordinators have facilitated a half-day orientation for potential Inquirers during the summer. This practice may resume at some point;
- Coordinators keep a current roster of Inquirers and their contact information;
- During the meeting season, September through May, the Coordinators conduct monthly Inquirer meetings on Oblate Sunday, along with a Benedictine sister.
- Coordinators work with the Oblate Council to match Inquirers becoming Candidates with a Mentor, taking into account wherever possible geography, interests and experiences;
- Coordinators may be contacted by a Candidate or Mentor with questions or concerns. The Formation Team may consult with the Oblate Coordinator or the Oblate Council as well.

**IV. Mentor Training and Next Steps in Becoming a Mentor**

In order to begin developing additional resources for mentoring candidates, a training session offering information about the qualities of a Mentor and the art of mentoring was presented to interested members of the Oblate community in Spring, 2022. The training may be offered again at intervals in the future. For Oblates considering becoming a mentor, here are the next steps.

- Prayer and discernment: Is this something I could do? If “yes,” is now the time?
- Do you need more information before making a decision? Contact the
- Make a decision whether you want to become a Mentor.
- Notify the Oblate Coordinator by the end of May of your decision to go forward. Oblates who decide to join a list of available mentors will receive a packet of information during the summer
- Mentors will be assigned to candidates at the end of the summer