



# Framework Regulations for the Oblates of the monastery Nütschau<sup>1</sup>

## Basics:

Oblation is an expression of a call of men and women to the spiritual life by the rule and the example of Saint Benedict,

- to a life outside the monastery,
- to in a permanent relationship with a particular Benedictine monastic community,
- with the aim of achieving the Benedictine attitudes (*stabilitas, conversatio morum, oboedientia*) in lived every-day-life<sup>2</sup>

## Admission to the probation year:

Oblation is preceded by a year of probation, in which both the candidate and the monastic community, represented by its Oblate director, examine the seriousness of the vocation and suitability to life as an Oblate.

- The candidate makes a formal request in writing for admission to the probation year, and explains his / her motivation.
- The probation period always begins on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent (*Gaudete*).
- The probation period comprises
  - at least six meetings with the Oblates Director on issues of the Rule,
  - at least one attendance of an oblate meeting,
  - at least one attendance of a retreat,
  - and the recommendation to receive the Sacrament of Penance before the oblation.

After one year it is possible to take the Oblation if the Oblates Director and the Prior agree. If during this period the above conditions are not met or if there are other concerns, the probation period is extended.

## He who makes the Oblation, enters into the following obligations:

"We commit ourselves for our whole life, 'trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit ... to follow Christ and to live the Gospel in the spirit of the Rule of Saint Benedict'."

It is canonically possible that this promise can be dissolved from both sides.

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<sup>1</sup> The Rome 1888 approved statutes, designed by Godehard Heigl, determine the nature of Oblation starting from the Benedictine vow of "*conversio morum*" (Albert Altenähr OSB, Kornelimünster). See also the "Articles" as printed in the "Handbook for Benedictine Oblates" (1990).

<sup>2</sup> Sr. Cecilia Bonn OSB writes about the significance "*conversio morum*" for the understanding of Oblates: "If an Oblate wants to integrate the vow of enduring conversion in his life, then he will ... gradually in the flexibility of obedience develop the willingness to constant change and constant new beginning - as a counterweight to a misunderstood stability which can mislead to rigidity and stubbornness. He remains stable along the way and using the 'Exercise of being in the Moment' faces the demands of growth and maturation."

The obligation of oblation forms, in the words of the Statute of the Beuronese Manual of Oblates, a permanent spiritual bond with the respective monastery: "There is a lively exchange between the monastic community and the Oblates through prayer and sacrifice, mutual assistance and challenge." Daily exertion of this requirement rests entirely on the conscience of the individual, specifically corresponding to the respective opportunities and living conditions, the professional, marital and family responsibilities.

In any case **the tasks of the Oblates** comprise the following

- Praying of the Liturgy of the Hours of the monks, usually Lauds, Midday, Vesper and Compline but at least Lauds and Vespers (mindful of RB43, 3, RB19 and RB50),
- regularly and carefully reading in the Scriptures and the Rule of St. Benedict (RB48 and RB73),
- maintaining regular contact with the monastery: through visits, e.g. through attendance of Oblate meetings, or -given compelling impediments- through oral or written communication,
- supporting of the monastery by prayer and if possible through practical help
- maintaining contact with other Oblates especially if they get sick or needy (RB 36)
- seeking to honor God in one's work and in one's dealings with friends, fellow men and strangers,
- endeavor to deal carefully and mindfully with all that is created, especially with nature,
- in accordance with the intentions of the St. Benedict to practice hospitality (RB 53), both in personal and in social and political life,
- live the Christian faith visibly in the family and work environment (e.g. RB7, RB31 and RB48).

#### **Renewal of the obligation of Oblation:**

The Oblation is renewed annually (insofar as the religious annually renew their vows), usually as part of an Oblate meeting. It can also be renewed outside of a meeting. If a trip to the monastery Nütschau is not possible, the renewal of the promise can also be done in writing. Both require the consultation with the Oblates Rector.

If no renewal of Oblation takes place in two consecutive years, we assume that the Oblate has discharged himself/herself of the obligation of Oblation.