

## **Becoming an Oblate**

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The usual steps by which a person becomes an oblate at the Monastery of the Ascension are the following:

1. People who indicate an interest in becoming oblates are sent several brochures by the oblate director.
2. If they wish to explore the program further they are encouraged to become acquainted with the oblates and the monastery by attending an oblate meeting and/or retreat.
3. Those who decide they wish to become oblates then become oblate candidates ("novices") for a year. Candidacy begins with a little ceremony which is usually held at Saturday Vespers during one of the oblate retreats. During their year of candidacy oblates are asked to pray some of the liturgy of hours, study the Rule of St. Benedict and try to apply it in their lives and, if possible, attend some oblate meetings.
4. If, after a year the candidates wish to make oblation, they write out their oblation form and then read it at the oblation ceremony which is usually held at Sunday Mass, after the sermon, during an oblate retreat at the monastery.

When they become candidates, oblates receive a copy of the Rule of Benedict or a commentary on it, along with a simple medal of St. Benedict. At oblation they receive another, more ornate medal of St. Benedict.

At oblation, candidates pledge to follow the monastic profession of stability, obedience and monastic living (*conversatio morum*) according to their vocation. This threefold pledge or profession is best thought of as a global commitment to remain faithful to the way of life outlined in the Rule of Benedict and lived at the Monastery of the Ascension according to one's state in life. Stability ties one to the monastic community of monks and oblates, *conversatio* implies a simple, chaste lifestyle and obedience for the oblate means seeking and fulfilling the will of God with the help of the monastic community of monks and oblates.

The texts for the ceremonies of candidacy and oblation are included elsewhere in the manual.

Oblates need not be Catholics. Members of other Christian churches are welcome to become members of the oblate community.