

## **Eligibility**

Aspiring oblates should be: baptised and confirmed Catholics in good standing aged 18 or more. Christians of other denominations may seek to be enrolled as Associates of the Abbey.

More generally, potential oblates will be attracted to the Office, the Rule, and committed to a life nourished by personal prayer and regular reception of the Sacraments.

## **Oblation: General Expectations**

- To pray Morning and Evening Prayer daily.
- Attend Mass regularly and reflect prayerfully on the Sunday Gospel for each week.
- Pray daily for the Monastic Community and its works and for their fellow Oblates
- Make an annual retreat – where possible, at the Abbey.
- Renew their Oblation annually – by correspondence or in person.

## **Probation**

Aspirants should meet the Oblate Master to discuss their interest. Signs of serious intent would include an attraction to the Office, the Rule, and a commitment to personal prayer and regular reception of the Sacraments.

A three-month period of reflection will precede a formal written request to be clothed as a Novice. The Oblate Master will obtain references from a Parish Priest, Chaplain or other reliable source. The Novitiate will last 12 months. There should be at least one overnight stay at the Abbey during this period.

## ***Clothing:***

This simple ceremony will take place outside Mass, and includes: a reading from s. 58 of the Rule, a brief dialogue between Abbot (or Superior) and the Candidate, and concludes with the handing of a copy of the Rule to the novice Oblate and the words:

*Accept the holy Rule of our father St Benedict. Listen carefully to the Master's instruction, and follow them with the ear of your heart.*

Before the expiry of the Novitiate, Novices write a brief reflection for the Oblate Master on their position as regards Oblation. The OM will decide whether to recommend to Fr Abbot that Oblation takes place. Novices should make a 1-2 day retreat before their Commitment.

**Commitment:**

This takes place within Conventual Mass. The Oblate reads the text of the Promise aloud. It is placed on the altar and Fr Abbot signs it. It remains on the altar. Fr Abbot and the Oblate Master sign the Certificate which is retained by the Oblate.

Fr Abbot gives the Medal of St. Benedict with the blessing:

*O Lord, author of all goodness and bountiful dispenser of all blessings, we humbly pray that you will bless and sanctify this medal which your servant is about to accept as a sign of oblation to you. May your Oblate, being numbered among the followers of our holy father Benedict, be thus recognised as dedicated to you, through Christ our Lord.*

**End of Oblation:**

An Oblate may end their Oblation at any time by writing to the Oblate Master. The Abbey may also revoke the oblation of one whose statements, actions or way of life contradict their Commitment and could bring the Abbey into disrepute.

An Oblate affiliated to another monastic community may seek to transfer Oblation to Ampleforth. Permission of the Oblate Master of the original monastery should first be sought, and the Oblate should submit to the Oblate Master of Ampleforth: (1) a copy of a letter of permission signed by his counterpart from the other monastery and (2) a copy of his or her certificate of Oblation.

**Associates:**

Associates are invited to fulfil those steps listed above as General Expectations for Oblates – including the recitation of Morning and Evening Prayer according to the tradition of their own ecclesial body. They are however, required to pray daily for the Monastic Community and fellow-Associates and Oblates.

Aspiring Associates, also, have a three-month period of reflection before seeking to be enrolled. This may be done by the Abbot or his delegate, and will take place at Midday Office. Association may be terminated by either party under the same conditions as for Oblates.