



# Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska

Associated with Sacred Heart Monastery

November 2008

**OBLATION CEREMONY:** Sunday, November 9, 2008, 2 p.m. in the Madonna Chapel. Reception following in the Madonna North Commons. Family and Friends are invited to attend.

It is with great joy that we the Benedictine Sisters and all of our Oblates welcome those of you who will be making their Initial and Final Oblations. This is a very special time in your lives. St. Benedict says, "he/she comes before the whole community in the oratory...in the presence of God and his saints...writes out his/her document...and lays it on the altar." And finally says, "Receive me O Lord as you have promised and I shall live; do not disappoint me in my hope." RB58:21 We will have a special feature this year. Oblate Rev. Duncan Miller will play the recorder.

## LET US PRAY:

Lord, in your mercy,  
Open our minds to your Light,  
Open our ears to your Voice, and to the Word that we might know paths of Life,  
Open our hearts to your grace, that we might have the Faith, the Hope, and the  
Love to walk those paths,  
Open our hands to others that help might be given as needed,  
Open our souls to your Life, that we might have Life.

Philip Schoeneberger, Lincoln Oblate, prepared this prayer for his Cell group:

**DECEMBER ASSIGNMENTS FOR THOSE READING STRANGERS TO THE CITY:** For Lincoln and Steinauer Oblates who are reading this text, the assignment for December is Chapter 11 entitled "Contemplation." In addition to studying this chapter, I do want to encourage you to re-read Chapter 10 on "Christ." It should be helpful as you begin your study on Chapter 11.

## RETREAT FOR OBLATES

The Oblate retreat, *Pursuing Harmony* with an emphasis on Benedictine balance, **will be held February 20th-22<sup>nd</sup>**. There will be additional

information about the retreat in the December Newsletter. You are welcome to sign up now. Contact Sister Joelle Bauer at 605-668-6009 or email [jbauer@mtmc.edu](mailto:jbauer@mtmc.edu).

**BENEDICTINE CENTER:** Kathleen Norris, a Benedictine Oblate of Assumption Abbey in Richardton, North Dakota, is the award-winning poet, writer, and author of *The New York Times* bestsellers, *The Cloister Walk*; *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography*; *Amazing Grace: A Vocabulary of Faith*; and *The Virgin of Bennington*. Exploring the spiritual life, her work is at once intimate and historical, rich in poetry and meditations, brimming with exasperation and reverence, deeply grounded in both nature and spirit, sometimes funny, often provocative, and always important. June 5 (7:30 pm) to June 6 (4:30 pm) at St. Benedict Center, Schuyler. Fee is \$60 (or \$55 if registered before 4/30/09). Contact: 402-352-8819 or [www.StBenedictCenter.com](http://www.StBenedictCenter.com).

Submitted by Vic Faesser, Steinauer Oblate

## LITURGY OF THE HOURS ASSISTANCE:

There are a number of you who have expressed concern and have even become overwhelmed in trying to say the Liturgy of the Hours using the Shorter Christian Prayer book. Oblates Tim Fisher and Paul Blotkamp have offered their assistance (to be a buddy) to anyone who would like assistance. They want to have everyone experience the importance and meaningfulness they experience in saying the Divine Office. You may call or email them. For Tim Fisher, 421- 3211, [timfisher@windstream.net](mailto:timfisher@windstream.net) and for Paul Blotkamp, 483-0480, [pblot@windstream.net](mailto:pblot@windstream.net).

**LITURGICAL CALENDAR:** The annual liturgical calendar, "This Year of Grace" will be available at the Oblation Ceremony again this year (\$1) featuring artist Tracy Walker.

**CHORAL GROUP:** A small group of Lincoln Oblates met who are interested in bringing more opportunities for music within our Oblate community. If any of you are interested and willing to join a choral group, we would be delighted to hear from you. It is possible that we would meet occasionally prior to the Sunday night General Assembly meetings. Just let me/Sister Phyllis know via 488-6731 or [phunhoff74@windstream.net](mailto:phunhoff74@windstream.net).

**BENEDICTINE COMMUNITY:** *The following quotes from our readings give us a beautiful sense of community. I ask you to read them thoughtfully and consider coming regularly to Chapter and Cell meetings. If you put the dates on your calendar for the year and give them priority as you make further decisions as to your time, it is more likely that you will be able to be an important and visible member of our Benedictine community. Sister Phyllis*

Participation is an essential component of effective community; without it morale declines, tasks are less efficiently performed and the quality of relationships is degraded. Before any participation occurs, however, there must be a willingness to participate, to take part in community activities and discussions. Taking part means exactly what it says: taking a part of the action—not nothing and not the whole. It means being involved in a corporate enterprise, claiming for oneself no more than a measure of the totality. In our text, *Strangers to the City*, Chapter 8 on Mutuality

Community consists of an intentional coming together to seek unity in the Lord. As children of God, we long for union. The way we receive the first fruits of union is to intend unity. To intend is to lean toward, to orient oneself in the direction of, to be predisposed in favor of. To intend is to choose to be committed to others, in the awareness that our life with others penetrates to the core of our receptiveness to God. It is no accident that the two great commandments are always given together. If we say we love God and do not love our neighbor, we are liars (I John). We consciously and continuously choose to be committed to each other in the conviction that it is the best way to be united to God's own life.

There are three aspects of this work of community toward our personal salvation. Our commitments to others in community necessarily include all three

aspects. (1) Community provides support, an environment in which we can receive essential nurture to have confidence in and act upon each unique call into life. We do not perceive Christ growing in ourselves nearly so well as others see it in us, and we need each other's care in order to see and act in fidelity to the child of God we each are uniquely to be come. (2) Community provides challenge, an environment in which we are confronted with implacable differences of others, giving opportunity for refining the basic aspects of ourselves in the crucible of common life. (3) Community provides for service, opportunities to care for others and to know that one's care is important to others. It gives a place in which to express the fruit of Christ's love as it ripens in our hearts.

So we commit ourselves to community in order to find our full humanness as beings who become whole in ongoing relationships of support, of challenge, and of service. Expressing all three aspects of our humanity provides a stable base, enabling us to intend unity in community. We seek to be for and with one another primarily as and because Christ mutually dwells in us. We commit this intention to each other in the sight of God. Our Handbook, *Living in Community*

#### **YAHOO GROUPS FOR EMAIL**

**COMMUNICATION:** If you are getting this newsletter as a paper version and you have email, you may consider trying to join our yahoo group. This will help us to keep our expenses down. This group is a "subscription" so you will need to sign up – the moderator is unable to add you without your permission. If you have question contact Teresa at [teresamharms@yahoo.com](mailto:teresamharms@yahoo.com).

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