



# Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska

Associated with Sacred Heart Monastery

March 2009

## ASSIGNMENTS:

**Lincoln Chapter:** Sun, North Commons Cafeteria or Mon in the Lancaster Room, Madonna Rehab Hosp, Sunday, March 8, 2009 or Monday, March 9, 2009: Desiring Life, Norvene Vest, PROLOGUE: Desire as Problem and Promise pgs 1-9. Also read the Prologue of the Rule of St. Benedict (small red book) pgs 15-19. NOTE: For those of you who were unable to hear Oblate Steve Liechti, he will again present on MONDAY, Mar. 9 at 7 p.m. in the Lancaster Room. His reflection is entitled: Interactive Christology. You will enjoy hearing it.

**Steinauer Chapter:** Banquet Room, across from St. Anthony's Church Monday, March 2, 2009, 7-9p.m: Desiring Life by Norvene Vest: PROLOGUE: Desire as Problem and Promise pgs 1-9. Also read the Prologue of the Rule of St. Benedict (small red book) pgs 15-19.

**Hastings Chapter:** St. Michael's Church, Family Room, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. SPECIAL MAKE UP MEETING SAT. FEB. 28: The Path of Life, Chapter 8, The Eucharist, pgs.103-121. RB 38, 1 Cor: 23-34. We will have the new texts for our March Chapter meeting. REGULAR MEETING: Saturday, March 14, 2009: Desiring Life by Norvene Vest: PROLOGUE: Desire as Problem and Promise pgs 1-9. Also read the Prologue of the Rule of St. Benedict (small red book) pgs 15-19.

**Omaha Chapter:** New Cassel Retirement Center, Lecture Hall, 900 N 90th Street, East Entrance, Omaha, NE, Tuesday, March 10, 2009: Desiring Life by Norvene Vest: PROLOGUE: Desire as Problem and Promise pgs 1-9. Also read the Prologue of the Rule of St. Benedict (small red book) pgs 15-19.

**PRAY FOR RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS!**

## THE FEAST OF ST. BENEDICT AND

**VESPERS:** Saturday, March 21 is the Feast of St Benedict, remembering the day of his death. We will plan an anticipatory Vespers on Friday evening, March 20 in the Madonna Chapel at 7 p.m. There will be special leaflets so you do not have to bring your Christian Prayer books.

**THE PASSING OF ST. BENEDICT:** Saint Benedict's feast day is kept on both March 21st and July 11th each year. The March date is usually attached to the transitus (death) of Saint Benedict, while the July date commemorates Benedict as founder and patron saint of Western monasticism. Most monks and nuns observe March 21st as a liturgical "Feast," and July 11th as a liturgical "Solemnity." The story is told that Benedict instructed his monks to prepare his grave six days before his death, and after receiving the Body and Blood of our Lord, died on his feet, being held up by several monks, in the original chapel at Monte Cassino. The death of Saint Benedict came in AD 547.

**THEOLOGY INSTITUTE:** "St. Paul's Mission and Theology of Church:" March 28, 2009, 9:00 a.m. to Noon, Chapter Room, Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, South Dakota. Father Dennis Hamm, PhD, a Jesuit priest since 1970, is professor of theology at Creighton University, where he taught Scripture for 33 years and most recently is at the Tantur Ecumenical Institute, Jerusalem, Israel (2001-2002). Father Hamm has published widely in scholarly journals. There is no cost for the presentation. Advance registration is requested: [jeanne.ranek@mtmc.edu](mailto:jeanne.ranek@mtmc.edu). (605-668-6292) Do let Sister Phyllis know if you are planning to attend so we can car pool.

## SPECIAL PILGRIMAGE TO CONCEPTION ABBEY AND CLYDE MONASTERIES:

Saturday, August 8, 2009, we have the opportunity to visit these two monasteries. We will leave from the Madonna front entrance (car pooling) at 7:30 a.m. arriving at Conception Abbey at 10 a.m. We will have a tour (1 hour), Mass in the Abbey Basilica with the Benedictine monks and lunch (tour and lunch - \$10).

Then we will drive the short distance to the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, Clyde MO for a tour. After that we will return home. You will need to SIGN-UP for this and we will do this at the next several meetings as they will need an exact count for lunch. Please do sign up, knowing that you may have changes in your life before then. I believe you will enjoy this little pilgrimage.

**OBLATE CHOIR:** Meeting, Sunday, Mar. 8 at 6:15 p.m. All are welcome to come.

**HISTORY OF THE OBLATES:** (Oblates comes from the word oblation or offering to God)

What we know about Benedict comes from the writings of Gregory the Great. From him we understand that Benedict received associates into the monastery from the very beginning. Lay men and women came to the monastery often for several reasons, namely for alms and for spiritual guidance. This we still do today at Sacred Heart Monastery. Through the Benedictine Peace Center with its many spiritual opportunities as well as the Oblate program itself sharing Benedictine spirituality with many in many countries. The monastery is always ready for those who come to our doors for alms and food. Particular charitable organizations as well as needy persons come for financial assistance. The monastery kitchen prepares food boxes/containers for those who come to the door on a regular basis.

In the year 1091, Abbot William gave Oblates a more precise status. He established definite rules for two types of Oblates, the interns who lived in the monastery and the externs or those who lived in the world, so to speak, but were affiliated with a monastery. Even in those early years, a large number of the faithful consecrated themselves to God and to the Order of Benedict.

In the fifteenth century, Saint Frances of Rome (1384-1440) induced a number of noble Roman women to renounce their worldly and extravagant life for a more perfect Christian life in their homes and the exercise of charity to the poor. They made no vows, nor did they wear a special religious habit, but placed themselves under the spiritual direction of the Olivetan Benedictines. Some years later they began to live a community life but merely promised obedience to the superior whom they had chosen to rule over them, styling themselves Oblates of Saint Benedict. This original Institute of Oblates, founded by Saint Frances, exists in Rome to this day, and the Oblates engage in daily common prayer and acts of charity to the poor and

the unfortunate. It is therefore proper that Saint Frances of Rome has been made the heavenly patroness of the Oblates of Saint Benedict. We celebrate her feast annually on March 9. (St. John's Abbey)

The final canonical status of the Oblates was established in 1898, just a little more than 100 years ago. About that time, the Sacred Congregation issued a decree officially approving the statutes and Rules for the Oblates of St. Benedict. This is still in use throughout the world – and are the Guidelines for Oblates (can be found in the our Formation Handbook).

The Vatican II Council made it clear that the laity should exercise a very active role in the Church's mission to the world. Oblates are in a favored position for carrying out this admonition.

We have seen a renewal of the Oblate movement in the last 10 to 15 years. Dorothy Day who died in 1980 and the founder of Friendship Houses for the poor was a modern day Oblate. Recent great writers such as Brian Taylor, Kathleen Norris and Norvene Vest, all who are Oblates, brought visibility to Benedictine spirituality and have spread the good news.

### FEASTS IN MARCH:

- March 9, Frances of Rome, patroness of Benedictine Oblates
- March 17, St. Patrick
- March 19, St. Joseph
- March 21, The Passing of Our Holy Father St. Benedict
- March 25, The Annunciation of the Lord

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