



Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska

Associated with Sacred Heart Monastery

November 2009

There will be no General Assembly Chapter meetings in November; however the Cells will be meeting.

OBLATION CEREMONY: Let us join those who have heard God's call to share in the Benedictine Way of Life – making their Initial Oblation. And let us Congratulate those who are making their Final Oblation – a witness to a major commitment in their lives

Sunday, November: 8, 2009: 2 p.m. in the Madonna Chapel with Vespers, First Oblation for new members, Final Oblation for Novice Oblates and Renewal of Oblation. Reception will follow in North Commons; Family & Friends are invited to attend. The Liturgical Calendar will be on the table outside the chapel for you (\$1).

AN OBLATION TESTIMONY: It's hard to believe it's been over a year since I first started down the path to becoming a Benedictine Oblate. In that time, I have learned a lot about the riches of the Benedictine tradition and how the Rule of St. Benedict helps to shape me so that I have a more peaceful, focused, and giving life of faith. This year as a novice has helped me find a way to begin to adapt to living according to the spirit of that Rule. Each day I discover new ways to live - with an attention to sufficiency in my relations to possessions, stability in my relations with others, and obedience in my relation to God. In many ways, this year feels like it has been preparation and that I am just now beginning to glimpse the wisdom in this way of living. One of the things I'm most grateful for is how much richer preparing to become an Oblate has made my experience in returning to the practice of the ordained ministry as the interim pastor at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Beatrice. On Sunday, Nov. 8, at the end of this one-year time as a novice, I will make what is called my final oblation, or my public promise to live according to the spirit of the Rule of St. Benedict. Please pray for me as this day approaches, asking God to strengthen my commitment to this path. Thank you for your thoughts, prayers, and support. *Blessings, Oblate Novice, David M. Frye*

PLEASE NOTE: One of the ways David explored what his commitment means to him was to spend time each day for a month reading a portion of the Rule and then writing about it. He put his reflections together on his blog at <http://www.WideSky.biz/blog/ruminations/>. It is recommended reading. Below is an excerpt:

On the Altar

In the second half of Chapter 58, Saint Benedict describes the liturgy in which a man becomes a monk. The ceremony in which I made a promise to enter a year's time as a novice oblate contains some of the elements in this liturgy. I signed my name to a written promise and placed it on the altar in the chapel of Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. In the Rule, Saint Benedict writes: He should make his promise in a written petition.... Then the novice makes his mark on it and personally lays it on the altar. When he has deposited it, the novice himself immediately begins this verse: "Receive me, Lord, according to your promise and I will live. Do not disappoint me in my hope" [Psalm 118:116] (RB 58:19a,20b).

The verse from the Psalm says to me that God promises to receive our self-offerings and that our living truly flows from his acceptance of that gift. Then when I speak the words of the Psalm, I call on God to keep that promise, so that "in my hope"—that is, in my faith and trust in God and his promises—I do not know disappointment.

In some ways, this commitment is no different from the one made by any baptized person who embraces the path of discipleship that flows from the baptismal waters. Nor is it really any different from the commitment I made at my ordination. But the oblate's promise does have a focus and intensity to it, a discipline to under gird it, and a community dedicated to supporting it.

My thoughts have been turning lately to how I will serve in the role of pastor in a parish. While much of the routine of this ministry does not vary from place to place or over time, I am not the same person I was fifteen years ago. In particular, I was not a novice oblate then, and did not have this tradition's foundation and routine and discipline to call me to ask myself daily, "How can I give myself in service?" I still find myself not wanting to ask that question, or asking it begrudgingly, or giving

half-hearted answers. But sometimes, I find myself saying, "Receive me, Lord!" And when I do, he does, and then something good comes of my oblation. I am reminded of Saint Benedict's word of comfort in the Prologue to his Rule: But as we progress in the monastic life and in faith, our hearts will swell with the unspeakable sweetness of love, enabling us to race along the way of God's commandments (RB Prol. 49). This is my prayer, that I will progress in the baptismal, pastoral, and oblate's life and in faith, so that I will grow more loving of God and of those whom he places in my life, both family and friends.

PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR:

- "A Benedictine Visit to Tanzania". Sister Joyce Feterl, OSB of our monastery will be here Saturday, December 5 at 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. to tell us of the unprecedented work of our monastery in Africa. She will give a short history of Sacred Heart Monastery's missionary work, a summary of the places visited, show touching pictures of the Benedictine Sisters and their ministries and some time for questions. Sister Mildred Busch, Procurator asked her to accompany her to Tanzania as an extra set of eyes and ears to observe how our monastery can further assist the Sisters beyond offering them education. The monastery regularly has two Sisters from Tanzania, educating them at our college, Mount Marty College. Sister Joyce graduated from MMC, taught elementary physical education and later received an MBA from the University of Sioux Falls. More recently she has worked in the business office for the Sioux Falls Catholic School system and now at MMC.
- From Novice David Schmidt: New York Times Bestselling Author and world renowned Catholic Speaker, Matthew Kelly will be visiting Cathedral of the Risen Christ Tuesday, November 10, 2009 at 7pm. Matthew Kelly awakens our hearts and minds with a vision that sets us free to celebrate ourselves as unique individuals. "God's dream for us is that we become the best-version-of-ourselves. It is in pursuing this dream that we find lasting happiness in a changing world." DO NOT MISS the opportunity to hear one of the most sought after speakers of our time.

THE MONK: Novice Scott Taylor (Hastings): At Schuyler the past few days - as I sat at morning prayers with the monks sitting in front of me, I couldn't help pondering....here's a simple poem I wrote and am happy to share with you.

The Monk

What is he thinking,
this man dressed all in black
hooded, robed in deep offering?

Prayers to the one God
all knowing seeing
what he cannot see.
What is he praying?
Saying softly to God
this man robed blackly?

Come, come quick Lord
of all! Come into my heart
and light me up - make this day
an offering to you in glory!

Or maybe be still and merciful
for I am naught but a sinner
simple minded and selfish
at heart.

Then pray for me, too,
man dressed all in black,
pray your hooded and robed
offering for us all.

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