



Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska

Associated with Sacred Heart Monastery

April 2010

ASSIGNMENTS:

Lincoln Chapter: *Sheridan Rooms & North Commons Cafeteria on Sunday and Lancaster Room on Monday, Madonna Rehab Hosp:* Sunday, April 11 or Monday April 12: Desiring Life by Norvene Vest, Chapter 6, Benedict and Ethics, pgs 135-146, Questions for Reflection # 2, page 170

Steinauer Chapter: Banquet Room, across from St. Anthony's Church,
Monday, April 5, 2010: Psalm 113 (Hymn/Praise), Psalm 80 (Individual lament), Psalm 11:10-12 (Confidence)

Hastings Chapter: *St. Michael's Church, Family Room,* 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. Saturday, April 10, 2010: Desiring Life by Norvene Vest, Chapter 6, Benedict and Ethics, pgs 135-146, Questions for Reflection # 2, page 170, Facilitator: Mary Anna Fertig, Companion leader: Sister Phyllis

Omaha Chapter: *New Cassel Retirement Center, Lecture Hall, 900 N 90th Street, Omaha, NE, Tuesday,* April 13, 2010: Desiring Life by Norvene Vest, Chapter 6, Benedict and Ethics, pgs 135-146, Questions for Reflection # 2, page 170

NEW BOOK FOR FALL: We will be using The Oblate Life by Gervase Holdaway, OSB. We will be signing up for the book at our April meetings - if you wish me to purchase it for you. It costs \$29.95 but I can get it for \$24.00. I will ask that you pay for it as you sign up. You may choose to get a used book on the web if you wish. If anyone feels they cannot afford the book, please see me and we will make some stipends available. It is likely that we will use this book for two years. Thank you! Sister Phyllis

BLESSINGS OF THE SEEDS: I invite all of my Oblate friends to join me at Spring Creek Prairie, 3 miles south of Denton for a blessing of the seeds event, April 18, 2:30 to sunset! www.springcreekprairie.org (11700 SW 100th) Take Denton Road West through Denton. Turn left on SW 98th and South 3 miles on the left. Bring a few seeds you plan to sow or samplings of already started plants for a Blessing during Vespers Liturgy at 4:00 pm (bring Shorter Christian Prayer). AND invite all of your "green thumb" friends who

would like to participate. Bring drinks for yourself and some food item to share with group. No RSVP. Just come on down! For those who may not know, Spring Creek is owned by the Audubon Society. Most of this area has never been tilled and offers unique plant and wildlife. Many trails! Come with walking shoes. Oblate Steve Liechti

OBLATE NEWS: Jim Potter and Deb Miller will be moving to Malaysia in late September, where Jim will be a professor at Taylor's University College architecture program in Petaling Jaya (near Kuala Lumpur). Jim has signed a two-year contract, and Deb will look for freelance and volunteer work. They expect to be back for visits and hope to keep in touch via e-mail and a blog.

CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH of Central Iowa is having a Centering Prayer Weekend Retreat, April 9-11, at Wesley Woods Camp and Retreat Center, Indianola, Iowa. For further information or questions about this retreat, please contact Paul Witmer at paulwitmer@msn.com or Paul Witmer Covenant Christian Church alternate e-mail: pwitmer@covenant-christian.org or call 515-276-3781

AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR OBLATES:

Sophia Center, Atchison, KS, July 15-18
The Benedictine Sisters of Mount St. Scholastica will host Dan Ward, OSB, who will lead participants in reflections on "Listening with the Ear of the Heart." This institute is specifically for lay persons, offering resources and networking for the ongoing formation of oblates from across the country (Limited to 50). Contact: micaela@mountosb.org.

EIGHT DAY SILENT RETREAT: Last spring I participated in Creighton University's 8-day silent retreat at Creighton's Retreat Center near Griswold, Iowa about 50 miles east of Omaha. It was an incredible spiritual experience. Each person is assigned to a spiritual director. The retreat center is surrounded by farms and is in a densely wooded area. The cabins are modern and comfortable and the food is delicious. There is a Mass each day just for the retreatants, and they all are invited to participate. This year's retreat days are June 3-12 and the price is \$500 which includes fees, room and board, and a ride to and from the

Creighton campus to the retreat center. You can contact Maureen Crouchley at CSP@creighton.edu for reservation information or go to www.creighton.edu. Click on the A-Z index at the top of the home page - click on "S" - click on Spirituality (Christian) and then to go 2010 Retreat. I am happy to talk to anyone who is interested in it. Oblate Marti Fritzen

SECOND WORLD OBLATE CONGRESS

MEETS IN ROME: Following the success of the world gathering of oblates in 2005, a second congress was held in Rome October 2-10, 2009. A limited number of oblates were selected from throughout the world, with each national or regional entity being given a designated number of spots. 220 people attended the congress, representing about 30 countries and five major language groups.

Abbot Primate Notker Wolf, in his invitation, explained his vision of the conference, "I should like once more to emphasize that this congress is not an attempt to centralize the various oblate groups. The intention is, rather, to emphasize their close connections with their individual monasteries. But I am sure, too, that we are enriched by meeting and exchanging views with people from other countries and continents. This is the purpose of the conferences and discussion-groups."

Participants had abundant opportunities to be enriched by the conference. This year's theme was "The Religious Challenges of Today: The Benedictine Answer." Presentations and speakers included: "The Contemplative Oblate Today," Laurence Freeman OSB (Christ the King Priory, Cockfosters, England); "Personal Relations and Communion," Mother Máire Hickey OSB (Dinklage Abbey, Germany, currently administrator of Kylemore Abbey, Ireland); and "Mission and Interreligious Dialogue," Msgr. Andrew V. Tanya-anan, (Undersecretary of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue).

Following the presentation on interreligious dialogue, a day was devoted to exploring "The Religious Challenges of Today" with a panel representing some of the world's major religions. These included Swamini Hamsananda Ghiri, a Hindu nun and vice-president of the Italian Union of Hindus, and Lisa Palmieri Billig, representative of the American Jewish Committee in Italy, correspondent for the Jerusalem Post and vice-president of the European section of Religions for Peace for 27 years. The Muslim faith was represented by Adnane Mokrani, a Sunni Tunisian, who teaches Islamic Studies in Rome at the Gregorian University and at the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies, and Shahrzad Houshmand, who is an Iranian Shi'ite and also teaches Islamic Studies at the Gregorian University.

Buddhist insights were provided by Ajahn Chandapalo, abbot of the Monastery of Santacittarama of Frasso Sabino (Rieti, Italy). William Skudlarek, OSB, a monk of St John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minn., who is Secretary-General of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue, was also on the panel.

According to the planners in their statement before the Congress, "The Congress will have five main elements. The primary emphasis will be on the celebration of the liturgy and prayer. To help us articulate and address the pressing religious challenges of today, three conferences will provide material for reflection, approaching the subject from the points of view of contemplation, communion and mission. An important contribution will also be made by the testimony of three lay oblates. Given the theme of the Congress, a central role will be played by the panel discussion to which participants from the Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist traditions will be invited. An expert on the current kaleidoscope of "emerging religions" will also be invited. Discussion groups, organized according to language, will give the opportunity to respond to and deepen the impulses and suggestions arising from these interventions."

The liturgies included examples of prayer styles from all the continents represented at the event. Visits to Monte Cassino and the participation of Pope Benedict and Abbot Primate Notker also affirmed the importance of the gathering. The oblate panel was comprised of speakers from Viet Nam, Brazil, Nigeria, and the United States, included Lavern Hayworth, oblate of Mount Angel Abbey (St. Benedict, Ore.) who was also the coordinator for attendees from the United States. As with any such meeting, the conversation, creative thinking and sharing of a common spirit will bear fruit throughout the world and energize those who attended and all their communities. More details, photos and texts of some of the major presentations are available at the congress website: www.benedictine-oblates.org. (Taken from the Am. Monastic Newsletter, 2-10)

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