



Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska

Associated with Sacred Heart Monastery

February 2011

QUESTIONS FOR JANUARY CHAPTER MEETING (The Oblate Life):

Lectio Divina transforms our spiritual inner selves. Are you doing it? If not, why not. Take thoughtful time with this chapter. Choose at least one scripture passage to share and experience the loving embrace of God.

- **LINCOLN CHAPTER:** Sheridan Rooms & North Commons Cafeteria on Sunday and Lancaster Room on Monday, Madonna Rehab Hosp: Sunday, February 13, 2011 or Monday, February 14, 2011: The Oblate Life by Gervase Holdaway, OSB, Chapter 12. Note questions and comments above. We will hear Russ Booton give the reflection on Sunday evening and Charlene Gondring on Monday evening.
- **CHOIR PRACTICE:** 6:15 pm, prior to Sunday Chapter meeting, Feb. 13
- **STEINAUER CHAPTER;** Banquet Room, across from St. Anthony's Church: Monday, January 31, 2011, 7 pm: Psalm 66:1-20. How Marvelous Your Works! Exaggeration; awe; related to Jesus' resurrection and Epiphany?

Psalm 60:1-14. Complaint After Defeat Oracle (vv 8-10); how is God identified with war in the name of religion? Vic will give the reflection and facilitate. Lead Prayer: Don Companion: Alan – 4th Meeting/Session

Monday, February 28, 2011, 7 pm: Psalm 40:1-18. Here I am, Lord. "Right" sacrifice? Curse stated how? Two themes, Psalm 44:1-27. Why Does God Favor Some? Not Us? How tradition "handles" massive suffering? Were questions answered?

- **HASTINGS CHAPTER:** St. Michael's Church, Family Room, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. Saturday, February 12, 2011: The Oblate Life by Gervase Holdaway, OSB, Chapter 12. Note questions and comments above. Reflection/Facilitator: Marta W. Companion: Sister Phyllis, Prayer Leader: Cathy M.

Cell Meeting: Saturday, Feb 26 Psalm 40:1-18. Here I am, Lord. "Right" sacrifice? Curse stated how? Two themes. Psalm 44:1-27. Why Does God Favor

Some? Not Us? How tradition "handles" massive suffering? Were questions answered? Cell Leader: Juliene B.

- **OMAHA CHAPTER:** New Cassel Retirement Center, Lecture Hall, 900 N 90th Street, Omaha, NE, 7-9 pm, Tuesday, February 8, 2011: The Oblate Life by Gervase Holdaway, OSB, Chapter 12. Note questions and comments above. Reflection/facilitator: Charles Luczynski, Companion Leader: Sister Marietta, 5th meeting/session. Cell Meeting: Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2011

RETREAT FOR OBLATES: The next Oblate Retreat is scheduled for February 18th-20th with the topic of Rooted in Love. The theme focuses on Benedictine stability and how it permeates all aspects of our lives. This semi-silent retreat begins the evening of Friday, Feb. 18th and ends the morning of Sunday, Feb. 20th. The cost for a single room, including meals, is \$90; a room with two people is \$140. Reservations can be made by contacting Sr. Joelle Bauer at 1005 W. 8th Street, Yankton, S.D. 57078, jbauer@mtmc.edu, 605-668-6009. There is an answering machine for the telephone number.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SNOW DAYS: should we have 3-4 inches of snow, we will cancel the meeting without notice. The meeting will not be rescheduled. The next month's meeting will occur as scheduled with that month's assignment. Should we have a snowstorm which will be hard to judge, an email will be sent. We have Oblates to contact those without email, however I would suggest that those without email, call someone with email.

ST. SCHOLASTICA FEASTDAY VESPERS at the Newman Center, Wednesday, Feb. 9 (Vigil for Feb 10 feast) at 5:00 pm. Do put this on your calendar so we have another opportunity to celebrate this feastday together as a Benedictine Community.

THEOLOGY INSTITUTE: On Saturday, February 26, Michael Patella, OSB will make a presentation on St. John's Bible at Sacred Heart Monastery, Chapter Room. All are welcome/No admission fee. Registration Requested for Planning Purposes: Email: jeanne.ranek@mtmc.edu or call: 605-668-6024

TRUE IDENTITY by Rev. Deacon John Long (Oblate '96)

In modern literature and comic books, super heroes and other crime fighting characters often have a true identity which is known only to themselves and perhaps a privileged few. Superman's true identity is Clark Kent, the mild mannered reporter. Batman is actually Bruce Wayne, the wealthy bachelor. In fact, almost all the super crime fighters in our modern lore have some sort of true identity. They often use a mask to conceal their face. They know who they really are, but no one else knows.

In some ways, the reverse can be true in real life. Often, people don't really understand who they really are, their true identity. For example, people tend to look at themselves in terms of everyday roles. People commonly identify themselves in terms of their job or profession. They introduce themselves as teacher, accountant, nurse, truck driver, student, mechanic, fisherman, baker, salesperson, clerk, or what have you. "Hello, I'm a (fill in the blank.)" They become what they do. To them, that's their identity. Or they define themselves in terms of a familial relational position. This may be son, daughter, mother, father, grandmother, and so forth. These ways of viewing ourselves can become like the super hero's mask. It hides our true identity, not only from others, but from ourselves in this case.

The fact is, however, none of these occupations or relational positions are one's true identity. As members of the body of Christ, you are a minister. That's who God made you to be. Your job is something that you do, not who you are. Your familial relationship is not who you are. Your true identity is that you are a minister of the body of Christ. You are how Christ continues his work in the world. It is perfectly appropriate and correct that you think of yourself as a minister. If you are not used to seeing yourself in these terms, I suggest you do a little exercise. For the next several mornings, look in the mirror and say it aloud; "I am a minister of God as a member of the body of Christ." Own who you are. When you fully accept your true identity, you will be amazed at what our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ can do through you. It's especially important for Oblates to understand their true identity. You have taken an oblation. Your have dedicated your life to Christ. This is not just a fancy self help project. It's a deep spiritual reality. Oblates need to drop the mask of limited descriptions

and recognize that they are in fact ministers. Not ordained, but ministers none the less.

This recognition is not done as a matter of bragging, or to set one's self on some sort of lofty pedestal. It is Christ crucified and risen we proclaim and ourselves as his servants, as St. Paul pointed out. It's done as a way to bring the light of Christ into the world. As a minister of God in the body of Christ, you are the light of the world. You carry the light of Christ into the darkness of despair. You are the one who visits the sick, clothes the naked, shelters the homeless, feeds the hungry, visits the prisoners, comforts the dying, and lifts up those who morn. You are the one who introduces the hope and promise of Christ into these situations. But you will be most effective if you recognize who you really are, your true identity.

Perhaps you feel unprepared or unworthy to take on this identity. You may feel you need to study more, or pray more, or somehow become more holy before you can really call yourself a minister. If you feel that way, think of when our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ called the fisherman to follow him. He didn't tell Peter, Andrew, James, and John to read the scriptures, pray for a few weeks, and perhaps join a study group and he'd be back later to pick them up when they were more qualified. Not at all. He said, "follow me and I will make you fish for people." And they followed him immediately. It's not by our own efforts that we make ourselves acceptable to Christ. It is by the power and grace of Christ that one is able to carry the light into the world. Our true identity is grounded in him. It is by his mercy and love that we are the light of the world. He calls you just as you are. Your true self is a minister of God as a member of the body of Christ, carrying light into the world. Take off your mask, Oblate, and reveal your true identity.

Sister Phyllis Hunhoff, OSB, Associate Director ♦
Associated with the Benedictine Sisters of Sacred Heart
Monastery, Yankton South Dakota ♦ 5441 Glade Street
♦ Lincoln, NE 68506 ♦ 402-488-6731 ♦ email:
phunhoff74@windstream.net
Website:
<http://sites.google.com/site/nebraskabenedictineoblates/>