



# Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska

Associated with Sacred Heart Monastery

NOVEMBER 2011

## A HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO ALL

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

## THE OBLATION CEREMONY

“Some thoughts about the Act of Oblation”

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.

The Act of Oblation is a self-offering to God, recognized by the Church (cf. the Code of Canon Law, can. 303; 677 §2) whereby individual Christians establish a bond of intimate union with a particular Benedictine community. The act of oblation is a true offering, and brings about a true belonging, though it is different in nature from that bond which unites a monk to his community.

Sunday, November: 13, 2011: 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 act of oblation has the character of a firm commitment to God, although it is not in the nature of a vow. It is not intended to be a burdensome obligation, but rather a stimulus and help to the oblate in his or her following of Christ. Should it therefore happen that for good reason an oblate becomes unable to fulfill the exterior practices recommended for oblates, the oblate commitment can still be kept, so long as the desire for conversion of life and spiritual union with the community remains.

## 2011 INITIAL OBLATION:

**LINCOLN:** Ginny Adams, Amaechi Izeogu, Chris Jacobsen, Larry Kunc, Lorene Ludy, Sally McKee, David F. Michel, Kirk Newland, Kate Maattala Sirota, Clifford Stockmyer, Dori Umphreys, Donna Washburn and Laurie Young

**HASTINGS:** Susan Janda

**OMAHA:** Jeanne Weaver

## 2011 FINAL OBLATION:

**LINCOLN:** Steve Blum, Joel Davies, Gary Harrington, Dale Schroeder and Vincent Murphy

**STEINAUER:** Marilyn Neukirch

**HASTINGS:** Sharon Connor

**OMAHA:** Anne Rapczynski and Kathy Burke

**2011 RENEWAL OF OBLATION:** All Oblates Oblation is made with the intention that it should be for life. Consequently, it is made once and for all. Nevertheless, oblates can laudably express their “perseverance in stability” (HR 58:9) by frequently renewing their commitment in their hearts. In addition, just as monks formally make an annual renewal of their vows, so oblates are encouraged formally to renew their oblation annually and so strengthen their sense of dedication.

Then, with the monks and other oblates, they “hasten to reach the heavenly homeland”, conscious always that they are among the “beginners” (HR 73:8) whom St. Benedict addresses as a “loving father” (Prol. 1). Confident in the sureness of his teaching, which over so many centuries has led so many people to God, they determine to “make progress in this way of life and in faith, running on the path of God’s commandments with hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love” (Prol. 49).

**DEATH NOTICE:** Let us remember the repose of the soul of Oblate John, “Jack” Robson and also remember Oblate Kathryn Robson and all of their family during this time of loss.

## OBLATE NOTES:

- Let us keep Oblate Marva Wasser in our prayers as she is very ill and has requested our prayers.
- Social for Oblates Deb Miller and Jim Potter: There will be a special event to meet and greet Jim Potter and Deb Miller on Thursday evening, January 5 at 7 PM in the North Commons at Madonna. Deb and Jim will be visiting with family and friends across the country during a short trip home. We are thrilled that they are making time to see their Oblate family. We will have Vespers in the chapel and then visit over refreshments.

This evening will be the first event hosted by our new Social Committee. Current members of the committee are: Judy Smith, Catherine Hornig, Lou Ann Green and Pat Shafer. Others are welcome to join us in planning other opportunities for Oblates to gather informally for fellowship.

- Oblate Michael Flaherty visits from Chicago: Michael spent a few days visiting his Oblate friends in Lincoln. He joined the Oblates at Friday Morning Prayer and also paid a visit to the Newman Center/St Thomas Aquinas where he valued saying the Liturgy of the Hours. His son has been accepted for residency at the Stanford Medical Center, his daughter is finishing her PhD. They may return to California where they have a home.

**FEBRUARY OBLATE RETREAT:** Friday afternoon, February 24 through Sunday noon, February 26. This is the first weekend in Lent and a good preparation for it.

**OBLATE CONFERENCE ON FORGIVENESS:** After much preparation and understanding of the magnitude of “Forgiveness” and presenting this for the Oblates of Phoenix and Chandler, I will be presenting this for our Nebraska Oblates during Lent, Saturday, March 24, 2012 from 9 am to 12 noon. We will look at the major elements of forgiveness, contemplative healing and how St. Benedict, himself had to forgive, how he encourages others to forgive and how he, himself mentors others through forgiveness and healing. There is no expected cost. Sister Phyllis

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNAL MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER:** Since I found several of you who did not know about saying the Liturgy of the Hours, here are the times we say it together. Friday mornings: Morning Prayer at the Madonna Chapel at 7:30 am followed by coffee in the Madonna Cafeteria (optional). Wednesday afternoons, Evening Prayer, at the Newman Center Chapel (16th and Q) at 5:10 pm. It is always such a blessing to be able to say it together and it is a great way to become acquainted with the Liturgy of the Hours. Always bring your Shorter Christian Prayer.

**NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF BENEDICTINE OBLATE DIRECTORS** newsletter is available at [www.naabod.org](http://www.naabod.org) if you are interested. Also if you are interested in the talks given at the last meeting of the North American Association of Benedictine Oblates which was held at St. Meinrad Archabbey, see: [http://www.saintmeinrad.edu/ene/benedictine\\_oblate/fall\\_11.pdf](http://www.saintmeinrad.edu/ene/benedictine_oblate/fall_11.pdf) and go to “St. Meinrad hosts conference of Oblate Directors.” The conference theme was “Embracing Creation with Reverence and Hospitality: Listening to the Scripture and the Rule Speak.” Three lectures about land stewardship and sustainability and how they relate to Benedictine spirituality were presented.

## THANKSGIVING

From At Home with St. Benedict: Monastery Talk  
By Mark A Scott, OCSO  
St Benedict doesn’t have a lot to say about Thanksgiving, at least not in an explicit way. Instead, I think Benedict does something more helpful and meaningful. His Rule defines a space and especially puts us in all kinds of relationships. In my own experience if I live in the space called a monastery and the monastic tradition and if I give myself to the relationships that our life puts there for me, then to the degree that I am awake and not too self centered, I will discover on my own, and with little effort, hundreds of motives each day for thanks.

As far as I know, St. Benedict uses a phrase like “give thanks” only twice in the Rule. The motives for thanks in each case are similar to one another and unusual from our point of view, hence these two places in the Rule might tell us something about St. Benedict. They might also tell us something about ourselves as Benedictines. The first place is in Chapter 34. It is about distribution of goods. Benedict says, “Let him who needs less, thank God and not be saddened” (v 3). For Benedict having simple needs is a motive of thanks. But I think the real motive is my ability to know what my needs are and to distinguish my needs from my wants and desires. I am not defined by what I have; I am defined by the graciousness of the love that supplies my needs. But maybe the biggest motive for thanks here is that I am not sad or jealous because someone else has more or better than I. Thanksgiving is the true estimation and acceptance of myself as loved and provided for and the ability to rejoice in the good fortune of another. In Chapter 40 on the amount of drink, Benedict says something similar. If you are in a place where there’s only a little wine – or grape juice or coffee – or maybe none at all – “bless God, and don’t complain...don’t complain” (v8). Again, thanksgiving is connected with quantity but not big quantities, as in our modern culture, but small quantities, or even a lack. And just as in Chapter 34, where thanksgiving was opposed to sadness, here, thanksgiving is opposed to complaint. How freeing it is to give thanks when we need little. And what do we really need? The place Benedict designs for us and the relationships he puts us into are the Giver of all good gifts, whose gift of Himself for us is the best of all gifts. (Book report by Sister Phyllis)

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