



# Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska

*Associated with Sacred Heart Monastery*

February 2007

## ASSIGNMENTS

### **Lincoln Chapter:**

Sunday, January 14, 2007, Sheridan rooms and Monday, January 15, 2007. Flanagan rooms:

Text: *Strangers to the City* by Michael Casey, Chapter 3, Leisure. Also read: RB 6, 31 & 68; Ecclesiastes 3:1-13

### **Steinauer Chapter:**

Banquet Room, across from St. Anthony's Church Monday, Feb. 5, 2007, 7-9p.m.

Text: *Strangers to the City* by Michael Casey, Chapter 3, Leisure. Also read: RB 6, 31 & 68; Ecclesiastes 3:1-13

### **Hastings Chapter:**

St. Michael's Church, Family Room, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. Saturday, February 10, 2007:

Text: *Path of Life*, Chapter 4, Obedience, pg. 42-57. Also read: RB 5 & 71

### **Omaha Chapter:**

All Saints Episcopal Church, 9302 Blondo, Omaha NE 68134, Rite 13, Classroom.

Tuesday, February 13, 2007: General Assembly

Text: *Path of Life*, Chapter 4, Obedience, pg. 42-57. Also read: RB 5 & 71

**SNOW POLICY:** 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. For those without email: in Lincoln, please call the switch board at Madonna 489-7102 or call someone with email at home. In Hastings, Omaha and Steinauer, please call someone with email at home.

## LAST CHANCE - FEBRUARY OBLATE RETREAT AT SHM:

"Reverencing God's Sacred Vessels" The retreat begins Friday, Feb. 23, at 5:15 p.m. with Vespers followed by supper and an opening conference at 7:15 p.m. It ends Sunday, Feb. 25 after the 11:15 a. m. brunch. Single room, meals and retreat (\$90); 2-person room, meals, retreat (\$140 or \$70 each). Contact Sister Joelle Bauer for a reservation at 605-668-6009 or jbauer@mtmc.edu. Sunday afternoon at 1 p.m., Dan Deffenbaugh will review his book, *Learning the Language of the Fields*. S. Phyllis will coordinate rides.

## OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR VISITING SACRED HEART MONASTERY:

- Theology Institute: Saturday, March 24, 2007, 9:00 a.m.—Noon, Topic: "Leisure," Presenter: Brother Benet Tvedten, OSB, Author & Retreat Leader, Blue Cloud Abbey, Marvin, SD. \$25 per night, \$3 for breakfast., \$5 for lunch and \$7 for evening meal. No admission fee. Call S. Jeanne Ranek, at 605-668-6292
- Contemplative Retreat: May 27—30, 2007, A silent, guided Christian contemplative retreat. Retreat Leader, Sister Corin Kraus, OSB. who lives at Haus der Stille, a Benedictine Prayer Center in southern Germany. She has been a student of Sister Ludwigin Fabian, in Christian contemplation and Zen for 12 years. This silent retreat includes—12-14 daily meditation periods of 20-25 minutes, Guidance in the practice of sitting prayer, posture and breathing, Daily conference on the Christian contemplative path, Time for walks, rest and just being, Eucharist celebration (optional). Registration is limited. Cost: \$200, includes retreat fee, room and meals. A \$25 non-refundable deposit confirms your registration.

Mail to Benedictine Peace Center, 1005 West 8th Street, Yankton, SD 57078. Sister Andree Mechtenberg, OSB, Coordinator, amechtenberg@mtmc.edu (605) 668-6121  
Individual Personal Retreats at SHM Peace Center:  
Sometimes we need to "COME AWAY FOR AWHILE AND REST" as Jesus often did when he went up the mountain to pray and reflect. Your retreat can be as brief as part of a day or it may extend to a week or even

a month. Trained spiritual directors are available. Choose to journey in solitude or request the companionship and guidance of a spiritual director who will meet with you daily. Select dates and decide whether you prefer a private or directed retreat. To reserve a room, contact our Hospitality Coordinator, Sister Joelle Bauer, [jbauer@mtmc.edu](mailto:jbauer@mtmc.edu) or (605) 668-6009. If you wish to meet with a spiritual director during your retreat, contact the Peace Center director, Sister Jeanne Ranek [jranek@mtmc.edu](mailto:jranek@mtmc.edu) or (605) 668-6292. Single room \$25 per night; meals \$15 per day; spiritual direction for resident retreatants \$20 per hour.

### **THE MONASTERY** by Carol Olson, Oblate

My view of Monasteries has changed over the years. When I was growing up, the word rarely, if ever entered my conversations. I really didn't know what it was or what went on there. As a Lutheran, the concept of a Monastery was something foreign to me. When I attended Catholic high school in the 80's, there weren't very many sisters there anymore, and I didn't hear much about monasteries or what order the sisters were.

Even when I became an Oblate, the idea of a Monastery and monks/nuns were only concepts, generic things I heard about at the Oblate meetings. I think I really didn't understand that their life was what I was trying to emulate.

When I was learning about the "Oblate life", I was given a list of Benedictine charisms, which I readily agreed to as essential to a balanced and God-glorifying life. But when I first learned them, they seemed to be just a list, separate and distinct in terms. But that was because I had never really seen it in action before on a larger scale! Finally, in 2004, after being an Oblate for about 7 years, I finally made a retreat at Sacred Heart Monastery, and was completely bowled over by the observation of those charisms in action. Yes, I expected the sisters to be really nice, but to see how every single sister there really lives out each of those charisms is something that I now see entirely differently.

For the next Cell meeting we are discussing the presentation by Alcuin Nyirenda, "The Monastery as the School of an Oblate". Just reading the first paragraph for me was an eye-opener. I even felt a pang of guilt, as I have only in the past 2 years discovered just how much the Monastery has guided me as an Oblate! I even wonder how much I have missed over those years that I wasn't able to attend (snow storm), or didn't think that visiting the Monastery so far away was beneficial.

In the second paragraph, Fr. Nyirenda asks "what does the oblate expect from the monastery when he/she

aspires to participate in its way of life?" I think I now have two answers to that question. One answer is based on not having first-hand observation of a monastery in action—that is something like this: "Well, I really don't need to go to the monastery to make any difference in my Oblate life. I can see from the fine examples of the sisters at Madonna and Sister Phyllis what the Benedictine charisms mean." That may be true, but the thing that is lacking is seeing an entire community singing praises to God in morning and evening prayer, with all of those lilting women's voices calling to God in unison, and sometimes even in harmony! Besides, it is such a long way and I have so much to do. Even more reason to do like Jesus and "come away to a deserted place" and pray.

My other answer is based on visiting the Monastery for a 4th time now: This is my second spiritual home. First is my congregation/church, Grace Lutheran. I now consider Sacred Heart Monastery to be my other spiritual home, where I can go for 2 nights, spend most of my time alone with God, as well as participate in the sisters' praise of God in their several-times-daily services. This place is so quiet, yet so full of energy and peace, that I immediately lose all sense of worries or anxiety when I arrive. I can see now how each of those Benedictine charisms is fulfilled in a large community, where everyone has 'bought in' to this system of placing God first in one's life. It has shown me specifically and succinctly what the ideal of Benedictine community life is all about.

I hereby challenge all of those Oblates who have not taken the opportunity to attend a retreat at Sacred Heart Monastery to do so at their most convenient opportunity. I request that you to take time for a walk in the monastery's cemetery and see how the sisters are even buried in choirs, and watch Benedict and Scholastica seemingly engage in discussion even though they are cast in bronze. I suspect that you will adore the beauty of the bluffs towering over the Missouri River and the Great Plains and the physical beauty of the monastery chapel itself.

Sacred Heart Monastery is a beacon to all of those weary travelers present today, also known as human beings in this culture of busyness, consumerism and affluenza. As an Oblate of St. Benedict, please consider a trip to this most special place.

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