



Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska

Associated with Sacred Heart Monastery

May 2007

ASSIGNMENTS

Lincoln Chapter:

Sunday Chapter: north Commons 7-9 p.m. Monday Chapter meetings: Flanagan Room 7-9 p.m. .

Sunday, May 20, 2007 and Monday, May 21, 2007, (Week Later):

Text: Strangers to the City by Michael Casey, Chapter 6, Dispossession

Also read: RB 51, 53, 54; Acts 21:37-22:5

Steinauer Chapter:

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

Text: Strangers to the City by Michael Casey, Chapter 6, Dispossession

Also read: RB 22, 51, 53, 54; Acts 21: 37—22: 5.

Hastings Chapter:

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

Saturday, May 19, 2007: (ONE WEEK LATER)

Text: Path of Life, Chapter 7, Prayer, pg. 88-102

Also read: RB 20

Omaha Chapter:

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

Tuesday, May 8, 2007: General Assembly

Text: Path of Life, Chapter 7, Prayer, pg. 88-102

Also read: RB 20

Note: chapter schedule for both Lincoln and Hastings! Meetings are one week later because of Mother's this year.

SUMMER FOCUS: We will have one more newsletter for June which will tell of any planned events for the summer. In the meantime, I encourage you to visit Sacred Heart Monastery for a "Personal Retreat" possibly sharing a ride with another. As you begin your Oblate journey or continue in your Oblate journey, we want you to become acquainted with our/your monastery.

WORD OF INSPIRATION -- COMMUNITY: The word community has many connotations, some positive, some negative. Community can make us think of a safe togetherness, shared meals, common goals, and joyful celebrations. It also can call forth images of sectarian exclusivity, in-group language, self-satisfied isolation, and

romantic naiveté. However, community is first of all a quality of the heart. It grows from the spiritual knowledge that we are alive not for ourselves but for one another. Community is the fruit of our capacity to make the interests of others more important than our own (see Philippians 2:4). The question, therefore, is not "How can we make community?" but "How can we develop and nurture giving hearts?" *Henri Nouwen: Bread for the Journey-submitted by Oblate John Maher*

STRENGTHENING OUR OBLATE

COMMUNITY: Recently many of you completed a questionnaire to get a sense of your ability to integrate the various Benedictine charisms (values) and practices into your lives. We can never lose sight of the continuing formation it requires to deepen our relationship with God. As I mentioned in my reflection during the recent Chapter meetings, St. Gregory the Great says, "There can be a spiritual forgetfulness. Remembrance of important experiences is critical for a vibrant Christian life, entrusting ourselves to God for the stages of our journey which lies ahead." Now I would like you to tell me other specifics to strengthen our Oblate community. You can answer all or some of the questions - responding to this newsletter via email or you can answer them when you come to the chapter meeting. All of you can respond from far and wide. I will need your name after these questions.

1. What is your present involvement with the Oblates?
2. How could you see yourself more involved with the Oblates?
3. What are some of your strengths/skills that you could share?
4. What might we be doing that you think would be helpful?

Thank you so much! Sister Phyllis

ST. JOHN'S ABBEY/ST. BENEDICT'S MONASTERY SESQUICENTENNIAL

CELEBRATION: Go to <http://www.saintjohns150.org/community> and click on St. Benedict's Monastery Sesquicentennial to learn about a special event: "Community – the Art of Living Together", a conference beginning Sunday, June 10 to Wednesday, June 13, 2007. It says, "Community is not a thing to be grasped. It is a flowering, an unfolding, a surprise, and we want to explore many different ways people prepare for, recognize, nurture and celebrate the gift of community. Contact Terri Barreiro – tbarreiro@csbsju.edu – 320-363-2374.

THE ABBEY OF CLUNY: In the spring issue of The Abbey Banner, a magazine of St. John's Abbey, Eric Hollas, OSB, reviews the recent book, Cluny, In Search of God's Lost Empire by Edwin Mullins. The Abbey of Cluny, in east central France, was founded in 909. The Benedictine order was a keystone to the stability that European society achieved in the 11th century, and partly owing to the stricter adherence to a reformed Benedictine rule, Cluny became the acknowledged leader of western monasticism from the later 10th century.

Hollas relates in the review: "Within the Benedictine family, Cluny emphasized a liturgical life that edged out even a minimal amount of manual labor. The chanting of the Psalms echoed within its immense church through most of the day, and rich vestments and vessels complemented magnificent sculpture and imposing architecture. These were the very things that roused the ire of the reforming Cistercian Abbot, Bernard of Clairvaux."

The fast-growing community at Cluny demanded buildings on a large scale. In building the third and final church at Cluny, the monastery constructed the largest building in Europe before the rebuilding of St. Peter's in Rome in the 16th century.

From Hollas, "Today all that remains of Cluny's great church is a single tower and one is left to ponder the causes leading to its destruction in the aftermath of the French Revolution. As an "empire" it declined because it could not sustain the succession of gifted leaders. Revenues dried up as donations went elsewhere and new orders came along to break the vocational monopoly of the Benedictine centuries. Perhaps Cluny's biggest achievement had nothing to do with empire. When Abbot Berno founded Cluny, Europe was newly baptized, but its soul was only nominally Christian. process By the time of St. Francis, three hundred years later, Europe had become deeply Christian, with biblical values that animated it at every turn. The abbots and monks of Cluny contributed enormously to this and today the ruined tower of the abbey church stands as mute and yet eloquent testimony to the power of spiritual ideals in forging a new culture."

TRIBUTES AND SPECIAL VERSES is the collection of tributes to family and friends by Oblate Ken Johnson which have been written over a number of years for his own enjoyment. It is now available from Ken at klj@inebraska.com or 402-489-1044 for \$10. A limited number are available. He wrote the following after the Virginia Tech tragedy.

HELP US TO UNDERSTAND

With all the violence and unrest that surrounds us today,
We are left brokenhearted and speechless with nothing to say.

Explanations seem futile and fail to offer reasons why,
So many people have to suffer and some have to die.

What do we do and what can we say,
We can only turn to God, and simply kneel and pray.

Prayer may not give answers to the questions we ask,
But it can help start the healing process and begin the
acceptance task.

We are imperfect people who walk on this earth,
And keep in mind men have been killing each other since long
before our birth.

Each tragedy makes us realize that we have a long way to go,
Before we can figure out how to get along with each other and
keep our emotions and anger in tow.

We will have to accept the fact that we will probably never
understand or know the reasons why,
And we will probably still be debating the issues of our human
failings on the day that we die.

Major tragedies and disasters happen around the world,
But when they happen close to home it causes our nerves to
become unfurled.

Only God, in His infinite wisdom can possibly know,
Which way we should turn and which way we should go.

We can't or shouldn't blame God for the human failings or
disasters that occur,
But ask His help in finding healing when we can't go back and
restore things the way they were.

We ask you, Lord, please let us know,
If there is some way we should be helping and which way we
should go.

But we also ask you in our own feeble way,
If we get it all wrong help us to stay out of the way.

So, God, we would simply ask your help in finding our way,
Towards accepting the unacceptable and help our hurt to go
away.

You don't have to give us answers or show which way we
should go,
Just be there for us, is all we need to know.

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