



Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska

Living by the Spirit of The Rule of St. Benedict + Associated with Sacred Heart Monastery
www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org + info@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org + **November 2013**

Living with *The Rule of St. Benedict*

VISITING GRACIOUSLY

From *The Rule* of our Holy Father Benedict:
“The concern must be whether the novice truly seeks God and whether he shows eagerness for the Work of God, for obedience and for trials. The novice should be clearly told all the hardships and difficulties that will lead him to God. ... When he is to be received, he comes before the whole community in the oratory and promises stability, fidelity to monastic life, and obedience.”
—RB 58:7–8, 17.

Oblation Ceremony

NEBRASKA OBLATES GATHER FOR WORSHIP

Let us join those who have heard God’s call to share in the Benedictine way of Life by making their Final Oblation and welcome those who are making their Initial Oblation.

The oblation ceremony will be held on Sunday, November 10, at 2:00 p.m., in the James E. Ryan Chapel at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. We will celebrate Vespers, First Oblation for new members, Final Oblation for Novice Oblates, and Renewal of Oblation for current members. A reception will follow in the North Commons. Friends and family are invited to attend.

Sr. Phyllis Hunhoff, Sr. Penny Bingham, and Sr. Joelle Bauer will be coming from Sacred Heart Monastery for the ceremony.

If you’re making your initial or final oblation, and are unable to attend the oblation ceremony, please let one of the deans know. We’ll arrange a ceremony before a General Assembly Gathering, or individually, as needed.

Becoming a Novice

IMPORTANT REMINDER FOR NEW MEMBERS

At a special session on Saturday, November 2, 9:30–11:30 a.m. in the Lancaster Room at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, Oblate Marcia Straatmeyer will demonstrate how to use *Shorter Christian Prayer*, our chapter’s book for the Divine Office. We will also give an orientation to the Oblation Ceremony. Plan to be there. Have you been using *Shorter Christian Prayer*, but still sometimes fell unsure if you are using it effectively? This is an opportunity to get a refresher course.

Leadership Update

SACRED HEART MONASTERY NAMES NEW DEAN, LEAD DEAN

Steven Blum was invited to join the Lincoln Deans group following a time of collaborative discernment with Sacred Heart Monastery. He is replacing Steve Liechti, whose last official function will be the Master of Ceremonies at the Oblate Ceremony, November 10. The sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery selected Carol Olson as the new Lead Dean. Sr. Phyllis Hunhoff will install her, along with Steve Blum, at the Oblation Ceremony.

After much prayer and reflection, Steve and his wife, Rebecca, made the decision to leave Lincoln by the end of November or mid December.

“We will be traveling around, staying with family and friends for the next several months. Two of Rebecca’s children need some extra support from us,” Steve said. “Being a part of the Lincoln Deans has been a highlight for me. The group was so synchronistic and supportive. I will miss them! I will miss all of you! Thank you for your prayers and support. God Bless You All.”

—Steve Liechti, Lincoln Dean

CHAPTERS	DEANS	LOCATIONS
Hastings	Juliene Bryan, juliene.bryan@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	Family Room, St. Michael’s Church, Hastings
	Carol Barry, carol.barry@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital
	Steve Liechti, steve.liechti@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	Sheridan Room (Sunday)
Lincoln	Carol Olson, carol.olson@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	Nemaha Room (Monday)
	Jim Rea, jim.rea@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	5401 South St.
	Mary Schroer, mary.schroer@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	Lincoln
Omaha	Rod Dolton, rod.dolton@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	New Cassel Retirement Ctr. Lecture Hall, Omaha
Steinauer	Marcia Borchert, marcia.borchert@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	Banquet Room, Convent House B&B, Steinauer

Worship

LITURGICAL YEAR CALENDARS

The “Year of Grace” liturgical year calendars for 2013–2014 will be available for a \$1.00 donation at the Oblation Ceremony. Look for them on the table outside of the Chapel.

MORNING PRAYER

Oblates gather every Friday morning at 7:30 in the chapel at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, 5401 South St., Lincoln, Nebraska, to pray Morning Prayer. Everyone is welcome.

FEAST OF ST. MECHTILDE

Tuesday, November 19, 2013, we will have Vespers at 5:30 p.m. in the chapel at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. This evening’s vespers celebrates the life of St. Mechtilde, Benedictine. She was born in 1240 or 1241 and died in the monastery of Helfta, November 19, 1298. In 1261, God committed to her care a child of five who, in later generations, became known as St. Gertrude the Great. Gifted with a beautiful voice, St. Mechtilde also possessed a special talent for rendering the solemn and sacred music over which she presided. Mechtilde was a mystic, teacher of St. Gertrude, a great writer, and a musician.

The Lincoln Chapter offers Vespers monthly, marking the lives of other memorable Benedictines. Here is the schedule for the rest of 2013:

- Sunday, December 29: Thomas Becket.

Chapter Gatherings

HASTINGS CHAPTER

The general meeting will be Saturday, November 9, 2013, 9:30–11:30 a.m., in the Family Room at St. Michael’s Church.

Read Chapters 5 and 6 of *Conversation with Saint Benedict: the Rule in Today’s World* by Terrence G. Kardong: “The Idolatry of Security” and “Work,” pp. 40–56.

- Facilitator: Sharon Connor
- Companion Leader: Leland Ostdieck
- Prayer Leader: Juliene Bryan
- Reflection: Kathy Schroeder.

HASTINGS CELL

Hastings Cell gathering (St. Scholastica Cell): Saturday, November 23, 9:30 a.m., in the Library at St. Michael’s Church.

Read Chapter 7, “Compassion,” pp. 88–97, from *Cherish Christ Above All* by Demetrius Dumm, OSB. Facilitator: Susan Janda.

Grand Island Cell gathering (Brother Lawrence Cell): Monday, November 25, 2013. The assignment is the same as for the Hastings Cell. Facilitator: Gerry Kuhn. The meeting is held at First Christian Church 2400 W. 14th St., Grand Island, 4:30–5:30 p.m.

LINCOLN CHAPTER

In November, the Lincoln Chapter will not have a general meeting, but will gather for the Oblation Ceremony.

Cell gatherings: Read Chapter 7, “Compassion,” pp. 88–97, from *Cherish Christ Above All* by Demetrius Dumm, OSB.

New Lincoln Cell Group—Charlotte Liggett and Paul Blotkamp will hold their cell meeting Sunday, September 29, 2013, at 7:00 p.m. Meet outside of the Sheridan Room at Madonna. The first meeting will discuss what day, time, and place to meet for the remainder of the year. The focus for reflection comes from *Preferring Christ* by Norvene Vest, Chapter 8.

OMAHA CHAPTER

In November, the Omaha Chapter will not have a general meeting, but will gather in Lincoln for the Oblation Ceremony.

The November Cell meeting will be held Tuesday, November 27, 2013, 7:00–9:00 p.m., at the New Cassel Retirement Center. Read Chapter 7, “Compassion,” pp. 77–87, from *Cherish Christ Above All* by Demetrius Dumm, OSB.

STEINAUER CHAPTER

In November, the Steinauer Chapter will not have a general meeting, but will gather in Lincoln for the Oblation Ceremony.

General Announcements

SNOW POLICY

It seems timely to restate our snow policy.

1. Should we have three to four 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.
2. Should we have a snowstorm that seems hard to judge, an e-mail will be sent. For those

without e-mail, please call someone with e-mail. In all cases, use your best judgment: Be Safe!

CHANGE OF E-MAIL ADDRESSES

When you update your e-mail address, please send a message to:

info@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org.

This will assure that you continue to receive notices about the release of newsletters and other important chapter messages.

Benedictine Pilgrimage

VISIT GERMANY, AUSTRIA AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC

On behalf of Father Volker, from the Benedictine Mission House in Schuyler, Nebraska, we would like to extend to the Nebraska Oblates the invitation to join us on a pilgrimage to Europe in July 2014! We will explore Benedict's influence on various areas in Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic. The tour is sixteen days long; cost is \$4498 per person, double occupancy. Included are airfare, most meals, exciting stops at many churches and monasteries, and priceless memories. Carol Olson and her mother attended the last pilgrimage in 2008, and highly recommend the tour. Please see Carol for details or e-mail her:

carol.olson@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org.

Prayer Requests

MONASTERY AND CHAPTER GATHER PETITIONS

If you would like to send your prayer requests to the monastery, the Web address for Sacred Heart Monastery's prayer requests is: www.yanktonbenedictines.org/PrayerRequest.php.

You may also send petitions to Marcia Straatmeyer at mstraat@neb.rr.com or by using the Prayer Request option on the chapter's Web site: www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/contact/.

Reflection

WHAT IS A CELL GROUP AND HOW DO I FIT IN?

As Benedictine oblates, we know that we share in communal prayer whether we're at the monastery, with other oblates, or praying alone in our room. We participate in the community's prayer life wherever we are. Many of us meet monthly for general assembly gatherings, meeting in community to learn and share. Cell groups are an extension of that community.

We are objects of love, carrying Christ back to one another, in all of our encounters. The cell group is an opportunity to enhance the transformative potential of the individual in community. Our presence is a gift. We don't know what the Spirit is calling us to bring to the group or to an individual in the group.

A good question to ask as you contemplate your place in your cell group is this: What is my commitment to the group and to God? A small group is a place where blockages to grace are challenged hospitably, a place where surface comments are seen as invitations to "go deeper," a place where insights are celebrated and sorrows and challenges are accepted in light of God's ever-expanding mystery. Members can bring experiences of *lectio*, contemplation, and personal life experiences to the cell group.

Although a part of the experience is sharing insights on a selected reading, a cell group is not a book club. It can also be instrumental to meeting people from the larger group. There are cell groups in each Nebraska Chapter. The Hastings Chapter has cell groups in both Hastings and Grand Island. The Lincoln Chapter has four cell groups to choose from. Every group is as unique, as the individual members. Find one that fits you best. Remember, you bring your gifts of the Spirit to your oblate group!

Nebraska Cell Groups

INTRODUCTION

Cell group readings for 2013–2014 come from *Cherish Christ Above All: The Bible in the Rule of Benedict*, Demetrius Dumm, OSB, Latrobe, Penn.: Saint Vincent Archabbey Publications, 2002.

HASTINGS

Saint Scholastica Cell

- Leader: various individuals
- Meetings: The last Saturday of the month beginning at 9:30 a.m. in the library of St. Michael's Church, Hastings.

Brother Lawrence Cell

- Leader: various individuals
- Meets the fourth Monday of the month, 4:30–5:30 p.m. at First Christian Church, 2400 West 14th St., Grand Island, Nebraska.

LINCOLN

Pax Christi Cell

- Leaders: Carol Olson and Lorene Ludy
- Meetings: The fourth Monday from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at Mary Lu Long's house, 1615 Brent Blvd., Lincoln.

Beginners' Cell

- Leader: Marti Fritzen
- Meetings: Monthly on the fourth Sunday at 7:00 p.m. in the Lancaster Room at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. The Rule of Benedict (RB 73:8) says that the rule is for beginners; we are all beginners and all are welcome to this cell.

Subiaco Cell

- Leader: Tim Fisher
- Meetings: Every other Saturday beginning at 8:00 a.m. with Morning Prayer in the chapel at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. Then this cell for men moves to a designated room for conversation. This month's meetings are November 2, 16, and 30.

Preferring Christ Cell

- Leaders: Paul Blotkamp and Charlotte Liggett
- Meetings: The fourth Sunday of every month at Madonna. The assignments are from *Preferring Christ* by Norvene Vest.

OMAHA

Omaha Cell

- Leaders: Various individuals
- Meetings: Monthly on the second Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. at New Castle Retirement Center.

News

FACILITATOR AND NOVICE RETREATS

On Saturday, October 28, retreats were held at Serenity Acres, the retreat house in Bennett, Nebraska.

The morning session was a meeting of cell leaders and covered instruction for group facilitators.

In the afternoon, enquirers and novices met to learn more about Benedictine Oblates.



Cell Leader Retreat Participants: *Left to Right*—Jim Rea, Steve Liechti, Carol Olson, Lorene Ludy, Marti Fritzen, and Tim Fisher.



Enquirer and Novice Retreat Participants: *Left to Right*—Marianne Guenther, Donna Harrison, Day Hefner, Matt Gibilisco, Gina Love Aguilar, and Phyllis Spence.