



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 + February 2015

A Word from St. Benedict's Rule

HUMILITY

“Brothers, divine Scripture calls us saying: *Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted* (Luke 14:11; 18:14). In saying this, therefore, it shows us that every exaltation is a kind of pride, which the Prophet indicates he has shunned, saying: *Lord, my heart is not exalted; my eyes are not lifted up and have not walked in the ways of the great nor gone after marvels beyond me* (Psalm 130(131):1). And why? *If I had not a humble spirit, but were exalted instead, then you would treat me like a weaned child on its mother's lap* (Palm 130(131):2).”

Source: RB 7:1-4

Reflection

SMEARED WITH THE PITCH OF CHARITY

Brothers and sisters, I speak to every one of you; I entreat you by the name of Christ, in which every knee shall bow. Remain steadfast in love; unite together in the zeal of your mutual affection against the wiles of our ancient enemy. Let the whole structure of your holy way of life be raised on the foundations of charity; let the whole edifice which you are building from the living stones of virtue be cemented by mortar of a genuine love.

The love of God commanded that the ark which was to hold eight souls during the deluge would be smeared with pitch within and without so that it should be outwardly soothed by communal sweetness and inwardly united in the truth of mutual love. Those who love inwardly, but are outwardly at variance with their neighbors because of the unsuitable harshness of their behavior, have the inner lining of pitch but not the

outer. Those on the other hand who to all outward appearances show themselves kindly and feign friendship but do not possess the reality of friendship in their inmost heart are damnably full of holes inside, while outwardly they are united by the pretenses of the pitch they have smeared. Neither of them shall be saved from shipwreck in the deluge, since neither is protected by a double lining of pitch as the Lord commanded.

But they who are outwardly kindly and also keep their inward love, who show forth the fruit of kindness as well as the branches of the word, and who send down deep roots within, since they love from the bottom of their heart, such are smeared with pitch both within and without because they are joined to their neighbors by a double bond of charity.

You must therefore be lined by the harmony of communal love. This union cannot be one of perfect agreement unless the ark is finished with a cubit; that is to say, unless one is set over the rest as Christ's vicar. Unity brings about agreement among many; it causes the wills of different individuals to be in accord in the bonds of charity and the unanimity of a common spirit.

Source: From the treatise *On the Perfection of Monks*, St. Peter Damian (1007-1072). The feast of St. Peter Damian, Bishop and Doctor, is celebrated on Feb. 21.

Remembrance

THE FEAST OF ST. SCHOLASTICA

We celebrate the feast of St. Scholastica on February 10. Scholastica was the twin sister of St. Benedict. She established numerous monasteries for women. The *Dialogues* of St. Gregory the Great tell two stories of these holy siblings. One

CHAPTERS	DEANS	LOCATIONS
Hastings	Julienne Bryan, julienne.bryan@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	Family Room, St. Michael's Church, Hastings
	Carol Barry, carol.barry@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital
	Steve Blum, steve.blum@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	Sheridan Room (Sunday)
Lincoln	Carol Olson, carol.olson@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	Lancaster 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 Borchner, marcia.borchner@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	Banquet Room, Convent House B&B, Steinauer

describes their last meeting. It was their custom to meet once a year to praise God and discuss sacred subjects. On their last meeting, as night approached, Benedict wanted to return to his monastery. Scholastica asked him to stay and talk until morning. When he refused, she lowered her head and prayed. As she raised her head, a huge thunderstorm began, making it impossible for Benedict to leave. When he asked her what she had done, she replied: "I asked you and you would not listen; so I asked my God and he did listen." Three days later, Benedict was in his cell. Looking up to the sky, he saw his sister's soul leave her body in the form of a dove, and fly up to the secret places of heaven. Rejoicing in her great glory, he thanked almighty God with hymns and words of praise. He then sent his brethren to bring her body to the monastery and lay it in the tomb he had prepared for himself.

Worship

MORNING PRAYER

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

EVENING PRAYER

Those interested are invited to meet for vespers on the fourth Sunday of the month at 7 p.m. in the chapel at Madonna Rehabilitation. Currently, two cell groups meet on that day and join each other in the Chapel at Madonna for Vespers before splitting up for their cell gatherings. If anyone would like to come for group Vespers at that time, please join us!

MONASTERY AND CHAPTER GATHER PETITIONS

If you would like to send your prayer requests to the monastery, please use Sacred Heart Monastery's prayer request form/

On the Web:

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.

On the Web:

www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/contact/.

SHORTER CHRISTIAN PRAYER INSTRUCTIONS

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 18, 2015. The readings for Lent begin on the first Sunday of Lent, February 21, 2015.

On the first Sunday of Lent, we begin Week I with Sunday Evening Prayer I on p. 37 of *Shorter Christian Prayer*. The antiphons for Lent are shown in red. At the Reading, turn to pp. 405–428. One week of texts is given for the Lenten Season.

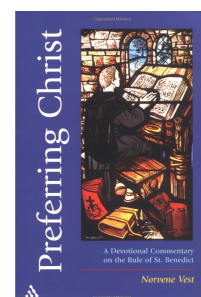
Chapter Gatherings

CHAPTER READINGS

Readings for the monthly chapter meetings come from Norvene Vest's *Preferring Christ*. Since several editions of this book are in print, the references give the chapter and section listings, but not page numbers, which change, depending upon the edition.

- **February:** Chapter 4:39–78
- **March:** Interlude II; Chapters 5–6
- **April:** Chapter 7:1–50
- **May:** Chapter 7:51–70.

On the Web: www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/gatherings/chapter-gathering/



HASTINGS CHAPTER

The general meeting will be Saturday, February 14, 2015, 9:30–11:30 a.m., in the Family Room at St. Michael's Church.

- Reading from *Preferring Christ*: Chapter 4:39–78.
- Facilitator: Juliene Bryan
- Reflection: Susan Janda
- Prayer Leader: Kathy Schroder.

LINCOLN CHAPTER

General Gathering

General gatherings will be held on Sunday, February 8, 2015, 7:00–9:00 p.m., in the Sheridan Room at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, and Monday, February 9, 2015, 7:30–9:00 p.m., in the hospital's Lancaster Room.

- Reading from *Preferring Christ*: Chapter 4:39–78.

Important Change for Lincoln Chapter Gatherings

Over the past two years, the Lincoln Deans have been discussing ways to strengthen our Oblate community by encouraging participation in community prayer, Gatherings, Cell groups, and retreats. When our community was much larger, the Monday Chapter Gathering was added to accommodate those that could not ordinarily attend on Sunday. The Monday Chapter Gathering has a much more informal feel that is quite different from the Sunday Gathering, lacking the beautiful music and chanting, for example, during Vespers.

For many years there was a dedicated, small group of Oblates that normally attended on Mondays. Over the past year, however, attendance at the Monday Gathering has progressively been lower. In his *Rule*, St. Benedict encourages proper utilization of resources and emphasizes community above all. We feel it is more important that our community meet together as one group during our Chapter Gatherings; therefore, beginning this fall, there will only be a Sunday Chapter Gathering.

We apologize to those who may be impacted by this decision, and thank Oblate Charlene Gondring for her many years as facilitator for the Monday meeting. We look forward to seeing each of you at our Sunday Chapter Gatherings!

Carol Olson, Carol Barry, Steve Blum,
Jim Rea, and Mary Schroer, Deans

OMAHA CHAPTER

The Omaha Chapter will gather on Tuesday, February 10, 2015, 7:00–9:00 p.m. at the New Cassel Retirement Center.

- Reading from *Preferring Christ*, beginning with Prologue vv.19–22.

STEINAUER CHAPTER

The general gathering will be held on Monday, February 23, 2015, from 7:00–9:00 p.m., in the Banquet Room at Covenant House across from St. Anthony's Church.

- Reading from *Preferring Christ*: Chapter 4:39–78.

Nebraska Cell Groups

CELL GROUPS

The Nebraska Chapter has a variety of cell groups.

Web: www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/cells/

HASTINGS

Saint Scholastica Cell

- Leader: various individuals
- Meetings: The fourth Saturday of the month beginning at 9:30 a.m. in the library of St. Michael's Church, Hastings.
- This Month: Saturday, February 28, 2015.
- Readings this Month: *Discernment Matters* by Sr. Mary Margaret Funk, OSB. Chapter 1: Eight Afflictive Thoughts—Second Affliction of the Soul: Thoughts of Vainglory; Third Affliction of the Soul: Thoughts of Pride—pp. 47–58.

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.
- This Month: Monday, February 23, 2015.
- Readings this Month: *Discernment Matters* by Sr. Mary Margaret Funk, OSB. Chapter 1: Eight Afflictive Thoughts—Second Affliction of the Soul: Thoughts of Vainglory; Third Affliction of the Soul: Thoughts of Pride—pp. 47–58.

Beginners' Cell

- Leader: Marti Fritzen
- Meetings: Monthly on the fourth Sunday at 7:00 p.m., beginning with Vespers in the Ryan Memorial Chapel at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. The group then moves to the Platte Room for its discussion.
- This Month: February 22, 2015.
- Readings this Month: *Discernment Matters* by Sr. Mary Margaret Funk, OSB. Chapter 1: Eight Afflictive Thoughts—Second Affliction of the Soul: Thoughts of Vainglory; Third Affliction of the Soul: Thoughts of Pride—pp. 47–58.

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.

Pax Christi Cell

- Leader: Lorene Ludy

- Meetings: The fourth Monday from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at Mary Lu Long's house, 1615 Brent Blvd., Lincoln.
- This Month: February 23, 2015.
- Readings this Month: *Discernment Matters* by Sr. Mary Margaret Funk, OSB. Chapter 1: Eight Afflictive Thoughts—Second Affliction of the Soul: Thoughts of Vainglory; Third Affliction of the Soul: Thoughts of Pride—pp. 47–58.

Preferring Christ Cell

- Leaders: Paul Blotkamp and Charlotte Liggett
- Meetings: The fourth Sunday of every month at Madonna, 7:00 p.m.
- This Month: February 22, 2015.
- Readings this Month: *Discernment Matters* by Sr. Mary Margaret Funk, OSB. Chapter 1: Eight Afflictive Thoughts—Second Affliction of the Soul: Thoughts of Vainglory; Third Affliction of the Soul: Thoughts of Pride—pp. 47–58.

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: February 7 and 21, 2015.
- Readings this Month: *Discernment Matters* by Sr. Mary Margaret Funk, OSB. Chapter 1: Eight Afflictive Thoughts—Second Affliction of the Soul: Thoughts of Vainglory; Third Affliction of the Soul: Thoughts of Pride—pp. 47–58.

Hildegard von Bingen Cell

New Members Welcome

To give oblates another option for the fellowship and reflection that cell groups offer, the Lincoln Chapter has added a new cell group. It gathers every other Saturday morning at 8:00 a.m.

The plans for the group's February gatherings are sketched out below. David Frye will serve as the group's leader.

If you have questions or if you would like to become a member of the cell group, please contact him using either of these methods:

cell phone: 402.450.2072

e-mail: davidfrye@windstream.net.

GATHERINGS

Every other Saturday morning.
Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital
5401 South Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

by 8:00 a.m.: Gather in Silence, Ryan Memorial Chapel

8:00 a.m.: Morning Prayer, Chapel

8:10 a.m.: Time for Silent Prayer, Chapel

8:20 a.m.: Gathering, Frontier Room

9:30 a.m.: Breakfast and Fellowship, Cafeteria.

GUIDELINES

- Participation is open to all oblates of the Lincoln Chapter and others who have received permission from the chapter's deans.
- By consensus, the cell may choose to skip a gathering.
- The cell's members respect the trust of others and hold the contents of cell conversations in confidence.

BOOKS

- Text: *Discernment Matters: Listening with the Ear of the Heart*, Mary Margaret Funk, OSB, Collegetown, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2013.
- Sources: *The Rule of St. Benedict* and the Bible.

TOPICS

Feb. 7: ***Lectio Divina* and "Patterns and Practices of the Oblate Life"**

- "Through this love, all that he once performed with dread, he will now begin to observe without effort, as though naturally, from habit ..." (RB 7:68).

Leader for Morning Prayer: Mary Schroer
Group Lectio Divina on RB 7:67–70

Discussion: In this conversation, we will talk about the concrete ways that we have learned to live by the spirit of St. Benedict's *Rule*, sharing the small and large patterns and practices that help us to live the oblate life.

Discussion Leader: David Frye.

Jan. 24: **Discussion of *Discernment Matters***

- Chapter 1: Eight Afflictive Thoughts—Second Affliction of the Soul: Thoughts of Vainglory; Third Affliction of the Soul: Thoughts of Pride—

pp. 47–58.

Leader for Morning Prayer: Subiaco Cell

Discussion Leader: To be Decided on Feb. 7.

Retreats

GIVING UP TO GAIN: A RETREAT IN PREPARATION FOR LENT

- Saint Benedict Center, Schuyler, Nebraska
- Friday, February 13, through Sunday, February 15, 2015.

Fr. Mauritius Wilde, OSB, Ph.D., will present this retreat. The life of Saint Benedict (480–547) was an exciting journey of letting go and giving up. Going through trials and temptations, Benedict learnt to be detached from parents, goods, and his own desires. Step by step he so became able to “dwell by himself” in the presence of God. As we prepare for the Feast of Feasts, we try to empty ourselves in order to receive the fullness of life that Christ has promised us.

Information about Costs and Registration and Updates on Other Retreat Offerings:
www.stbenedictcenter.com or 402.352.8819.

LIVING THE PSALMS

- Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, South Dakota
- Friday evening, February 20, to Sunday morning, February 22, 2015.
- Begin Lent with a time of quiet and reflection.

A semi-quiet retreat with the topic of *Living the Psalms*, is scheduled Feb. 20–22. The retreat theme will focus on three kinds of psalms, as well as some psalms used throughout the Rule. It will invite you to pray the psalms with the events of your lives. The cost for a single room, including meals, is \$120; a room with two people is \$170. The number of participants is limited. Hopefully we will have some Oblates from each chapter who will be able to make this retreat. **This same retreat was offered in the fall of 2011.** Because of my surgeries at that time, the second one in the spring was never repeated. If finances are difficult for you at this time there is a scholarship available for the Yankton Chapter Oblates. Please contact me if you are interested in this.

Sr. Joelle Bauer

Registrations: Reservations can be made by contacting Sr. Joelle Bauer at 1005 W. 8th Street, Yankton, SD, 57078, jbauer@mtmc.edu, 605-668-6009. There is voice mail for the telephone number.

CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER

- Saint Benedict Center, Schuyler, Nebraska
- Saturday, February 27, and Sunday, March 1, 2015.

Father Thomas Leitner, OSB, will present this retreat. Contemplative prayer is the opening of mind and heart—our whole being—to God, the Ultimate Mystery, beyond thoughts, words, and emotions. This retreat, involving breath practice, is for beginners on the contemplative way, as well as for those who have some experience with it.

Information about Costs and Registration and Updates on Other Retreat Offerings:
www.stbenedictcenter.com or 402.352.8819.

LECTIO DIVINA: LISTENING WITH THE EAR OF YOUR HEART

- Sophia Center, Atchison, Kansas
- Wednesday, March 4, through Thursday, March 5, 2015.

Sr. Micaela Randolph, OSB, offers a retreat on *Lectio Divina*, the name our ancestors in the faith gave to the kind of reading that enters the soul, feeds us, inebriates our whole being, and results in holiness and wisdom. This ancient art of prayerfully reading Scripture leads to a contemplative attitude and changes our perspective on life.

Registration, costs, and information for this and other retreat offerings:
www.sophiaspiritualitycenter.org or 913.360.6173.

PODCAST: THE RULE OF BENEDICT

Fr. Mauritius Wilde, OSB, Prior of Christ the King Abbey in Schuyler Nebraska, presents a podcast on the *Rule of Benedict*. It can be found on the Discerning Hearts Web site:

With host Kris McGregor, Fr. Mauritius provides commentary on various verses from chapters of the Rule.

Web: www.discerninghearts.com.

News from Sacred Heart Monastery

MONASTERY WEB SITE INCLUDES SECTION ON OBLATES

The refreshed Web site of Sacred Heart Monastery features an expanded section devoted to oblates. An e-visit would be worth your time.

Web Site: www.yanktonbenedictines.org/oblates/.

General Announcements

SNOW POLICY

It seems timely to restate our snow policy.

1. Should we have at least 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.