



Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska

January 2003

Peace

ASSIGNMENTS

LINCOLN CHAPTER, Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital
Sunday, January 12, 2003, 7-9 p.m. North Commons or
Monday, January 13, 2003, 7-9 p.m., Flanagan Room. Text:
Preferring Christ, Chapter 7, Humility, plus Interlude III,
Pages 64-70

ASHLAND/GREENWOOD CHAPTER,

- **Thursday, January 2, 2003**, 7-9 p.m., Ashland, CCD Center. Lectio: *Living in Community*. Write down how you can apply *Living in Community* in your Life over the next year.
- **Thursday, January 16, 2003**, 7-9 p.m., Greenwood, St. Joseph Church Hall. Lectio: *Simplification of Life*. Write down how you can apply *Simplification of Life* into your life over the next year. Complete Suggestion A or B.

HASTINGS CHAPTER, Family Room, St. Michael's Church **Saturday, January 18, 2003**, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. Lessons: The Hours & Eucharist. Respond in writing to the question "Why am I here?" Anne Johnson, Oblate, to lead Group Lectio.

STEINAUER CHAPTER, Banquet Room across from St. Anthony's Church

- **Monday, January 6, 2003**, 7-9 p.m., Lectio: *The Place of Monasticism in the Modern World*, Sacred Heart Monastery Family Tree and the Daily Office.
- **Monday, January 20, 2003**, 7-9 p.m., Review the section of the Handbook on *Living in Community*. Write down how you can apply *Living in Community* in your Life over the next year.

WELCOME TO Elizabeth Rude and Johanna Schwerdtle who will be joining the Lincoln Oblate Community. Elizabeth has moved to Lincoln from Oklahoma and Johanna is a native of Germany who now lives in Bennet, NE.

RETREAT SIGN-UP AND PAYMENT: At each of our January Chapter meetings I will be asking for your confirmation and payment for the retreat at Conception Abbey, the weekend after Easter April 25, 26 & 27. It begins Friday at 5:15 p.m., concluding Sunday after 11:30 dinner. Single rooms are \$85 and double rooms for each are \$75. (This donation includes all costs for meals and conferences.). The check can be made to the Benedictine Oblates. Father Adam Ryan, OSB, monk of Conception Abbey, will present

the retreat, entitled, "The Labor of Obedience in the Rule of St. Benedict and the New Testament."

If you are unable to attend our retreat, you may join the Conception Oblates on the weekend of March 7-9, 2003. Father Adam will also be giving the retreat with the same topic. You will need to make application directly to Conception Abbey, 660-944-2823 or www.conceptionabbey.org.

SHM BENEDICTINE PEACE CENTER EVENTS – Call 605-668-6000 or email.

- "Praying the Psalms" Feb. 7—9. \$135.
lweires@mtcm.edu
- "Dreams & the Spiritual Journey" Feb. 14—16. \$135.
janek@mtmc.edu
- "Honoring My Gifts" Feb. 21—23. \$135.
kcourtney@mtmc.edu
- "Inner Garden Retreat" Mar. 7-9, \$135.
kcourtney@mtmc.edu

SHM AND NEBRASKA OBLATE WEBSITES

UPDATED: Do take the time to go to www.yanktonbenedictines.org to review the materials. The Lectio readings have also been updates. Thank you, Teresa Harms, Oblate, for keeping us current and beautiful.

FRIDAY MORNING PRAYER WITH THE

OBLATES: We invite you to join us to say Morning Prayer in the Madonna Chapel every Friday morning at 7:30 a.m. It is a good way for you to learn to say the Divine Office. Some extend their time with a little breakfast in the Madonna Commons Cafeteria following prayer.

OBLATE NOTES:

- Greetings from Cape Girardeau, MO: We pray that 2003 is full of blessings and love for each of you. Please pray for us and know that you are in our prayers. The Jordans: Steve, Carla, Oblates, Beau, Mick and Lilly.
- From Paradise, MI: In mid-July I will be done with my 2-year novitiate. I attended my sister's wedding in Nebraska in November and stopped by to see you but you were out of town. In peace of the Christ Child, Sister Jane Gyhra (former Oblate of Steinauer)
- From Northfield, MN: We are making our adjustments to our new home but still miss many things in Lincoln including the Oblate program. We have been in touch

with St. Paul's monastery and plan to join their Oblates. We wish you a wonderful holiday season. Judy and Jim Dawson, Oblates.

- From Eden Prairie, MN: Steve Linney, Oblate, shared the "Linney's 2002 Top Ten Events." Among them were a visit to Graceland, house hunting without success, a variety of retreats, Steve's summer camp counseling at a Bible Camp, two weeks in England, their 30th wedding anniversary and the best is yet to come.
- From Hastings: I just wanted you to know how much I have been enjoying the Oblate group. Making my initial Oblation was a real thrill. I really appreciate the Benedictine spirit of hospitality. Wendy Keele, Oblate Novice
- From JoAnn Krumwiede, Oblate: What a wonderful year for me to experience suffering and blessings and prayerfully learn to be better for it. Love to all, always!

MONASTERY REFLECTIONS, "Christmas 2002," by Sister Phyllis

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." At 7:45 p.m. December 24, 2002, we stood in statio, quietly receiving our lighted candles in readiness for the opening of the Christmas solemnity. The organ, trumpet and oboe sprang into the announcement and the one hundred ten monastic women began to move slowing past the warbling water font and the massive crib set into the newly decorated chapel singing *"Silent night, holy night....heavenly hosts sing Alleluia....Christ the Savior is born!"*

It has been 37 years since I last celebrated Christmas at the monastery - fulfilling a ministry which caused a number of us to remain at the local chapel to provide liturgical meaning for those severely disabled and chronically ill. Today, the professional pastoral staff easily, "prepare the way."

We processed up the aisle, reverencing (bowing) to the altar and to one another and then to our places. *"O sing a new song to the Lord, sing to God, all the earth. O Sing and bless God's name."* (Ps 96 sung to Mode 8, Blue Cloud Abbey) Evening Prayer had begun.

This day, holy, let the bells ring!

This day holy, all must sing!

Born is the Child who will save us from death and sin:

Open wide your hearts, God will enter in!

My heart swelled in grateful appreciation to the glory of God! How blessed I am to be a member of this monastic community. How nourished we are to bring God's message to those in far away places. Looking back I remembered Christmas eve in 1978 at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. Frank walked in our door, dirty, unshaven, dingy clothing and said he needed a place to stay because he had been evicted from his room. We quickly considered who might take him; the City Mission, Veteran's Home - there must be someone who will take him. Wait!! Why them? In no time the staff had him bathed, shaved, fed and ready for Christmas Eve Vigil Service. "Sister," they said, "he had two trays of food." Within 10 days at Madonna, Frank had been diagnosed with a life threatening illness and died in our midst. Christ had come to us!

"Take heart, my people, and have no fear, this Child who's now in our midst is he for whom we have waited long to wipe away every tear." (O Let the Wilderness, R. Horn)

Sister Jacquelyn blessed us and we went quietly to our rooms.

Merry Christmas was repeated many times as we entered the refectory for breakfast. *"Arise, arise, shine out! For your light has come. Alleluia, Alleluia!"* It is truly community when we find our Sisters so welcoming. We catch up on the news over meals, spend time with our infirm and seek out those in our living group. Today is Christmas and the tables are artfully decorated, there are colored balls hanging from the corridor ceiling, decorated trees are about and we see various crèche, gifts to Sisters from various countries. Particular talent shines in quilted Christmas hangings, individually crocheted snowflakes and hand painted ornaments on the trees. Decorating at the monastery happens just a day or two before the feast. Advent season is lived fully.

"Gloria, Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, Gloria, alleluia, alleluia." (Jacques Berthier, Taize) And so we sing Morning Prayer.

Holy Mass followed! Our liturgist and committee are helping us unfold this great mystery. The gifts that have been received are shared. The organists, our instrumentalists, music written by our Sister artists, liturgical dancers, all combine to touch us in splendid ways. For me, I often had to keep the gift of tears in check. People of the city and surrounding countryside came to share in this monastic experience in the Bishop Marty Memorial Chapel as has been done in our Benedictine history for several centuries.

In summer of 2001, the monastery had a photo sitting for all of our Sisters lined up on the steps in front of the altar. At 2 p.m., all of the Sisters gathered in the Chapter Room. After ice cream Santa's and Christmas cookies, to our surprise, we each received this picture hand framed by one of our workmen. What a treasure!

As this Christmas Day, 2002 continued to unfold dinner/a feast was served. After Sister Jacquelyn let the prayer, two of our pianists played duets of Christmas music with unique variations. Throughout this day, I talked to God about those special people in my life. This day was for them: our Sisters, the Oblates, co-workers, families and friends.

Evening Prayer ends the day!

*"Of the Father's love begotten, ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega, He the source the ending he,
Of the things that are, that have been, and that future years
shall see, Evermore and evermore! Amen."*

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