



# Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska

February 2004

## OBLATE ASSIGNMENTS

**LINCOLN CHAPTER**, Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital

Sunday, Feb. 8, 2004 7-9 p.m. North Commons

Monday, Feb 9, 2004, 7-9 p.m. Flanagan Room

Text: Preferring Christ, Chapters 56-58 plus Interlude VIII, pages 137-145

**ASHLAND/GREENWOOD CHAPTER**, Ashland, CCD Center

Thursday, Feb. 5, 2004, 7-9 p.m.

Seeking God, Chapters 1 & 2, Benedict and The Invitation, Use Study Guide

Thursday, Feb 19, 2004, 7-9 p.m.

Seeking God, Chapter 3, Listening using Study Guide

**HASTINGS CHAPTER**, St. Michael's Church, Family Room

Saturday, Feb. 14, 2004, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Preferring Christ, Finish Chapter 4, The Instruments of Good

Works and Interlude II, pages 36-46.

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

Monday, Feb 2, 2004 7-9 p.m.

Preferring Christ, Interlude VIII, p.139 thru Chapter 60, p.147

Monday, Feb. 16, 2004 7-9 p.m.

Seeking God, Read Chapter 7, review questions

**OMAHA CHAPTER**, All Saints Episcopal Church, 9302 Blondo, Omaha,

Tuesday, Feb. 10, 2004, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Preferring Christ, Prologue, pages 9-13

Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2004, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Preferring Christ, Interlude I, Chapter 1, The Various Kinds of Monks, pages 15-18

## UPDATES ON EVENTS:

- **LENTEN RETREAT:** Sister Teresa, OSB of St. Scholastica Monastery in Atchison will direct a one-day retreat (9 a.m.-3 p.m.), Saturday, March 28, 2004 in the Agee Conference Room (Research and Education entrance) at Madonna. She will present on two mystics, Julian of Norwich and Thomas Merton. Lou Ann Green,

Oblate is asking that you send your \$20 registration to her by March 1st - to 5020 Claire, Lincoln, NE 68516. Check can be made to Benedictine Oblates.

- **ANNUAL OBLATE RETREAT:** In appreciation to Sister Ann Kessler, our annual retreat will be at Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, Sat. and Sun. July 17-18, 2004. It is entitled, "Living the Benedictine Rule Outside the Monastery: Focus on RB4" and will be directed by Fr. Justin, OSB. Registration brochures are available and you may send your registration anytime soon. The overall cost will be \$80 with an additional \$20 for those arriving Friday evening. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to visit our monastery.

**UNL STUDENT OBLATE GROUP:** The organization meeting will be held Sunday, February 1, from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Nebraska Union. We will meet the first and third Sunday of each month. Should you know of students who may have an interest please do give them this information.

## RETREATS AT ST. BENEDICT CENTER, Schuyler, NE - (submitted by Gretchen Naugle)

- **On February 6 - 8, 2004**, a weekend retreat entitled, "Discernment Retreat," will be presented by Teresa Monaghan, AO. The retreat begins on Friday at 7:30 p.m. and ends on Sunday after lunch. The program fee is \$50. The costs for room and board are additional. Register by calling Saint Benedict Center (402) 352-8819. Are you searching for meaning, trying to make good decisions, making an important life choice in the next year, choosing a marriage partner, changing jobs, going back to school or considering vowed life as an option for your future? This kind of retreat will offer you the tools to help you discern daily life choices in a prayerful manner.
- **On February 27 - 29, 2004**, a weekend retreat entitled, "A Taste of Contemplative Prayer" will be presented by Fr. Thomas Leitner, OSB. The retreat begins on Friday at 7:30 p.m. and ends on Sunday after lunch. The program fee is \$50. The

costs for room and board are additional. Register by calling Saint Benedict Center (402) 352-8819. "The only true joy on earth is to escape from the prison of our own false self, and enter by love into union with the Life Who dwells and sings within the essence of every creature and in the core of our own souls" (T. Merton). This weekend is for beginners on the contemplative way. Please bring clothing in neutral colors.

Phone: 402-352-8819, Fax: 402-352-8884, Email: benedict.center@alltel.net

## OBLATE NEWS:

- Lucy and Ebb Munden, Oblates: We celebrated Christmas through New Years with our son Michael and his family on Ono Island. One highlight of our visit was a wonderful sail on the Gulf. We sailed along the coast until we reached a condominium named "Eden" in Florida. Our grandson, David, was at the helm much of the way. One of our gifts for our grandchildren, ages 16 and 10, the 11th in a series of books we have written for them over the years, is "Ten Million Stars: David and Caroline, Rockwall and Ono Island, November 2002 - August 2003." The title comes from the poem, "Ten Million Stars" by Nancy Wood:

*Inside each raindrop swims the sun.*

*Inside each flower breathes the moon.*

*Inside me dwells ten million stars.*

*One for each of my ancestors:*

*The elk, the raven, the mouse, the man,*

*The flower, the coyote, the lion, the fish.*

*Ten million different stars am I,*

*But only one spirit, connecting all.*

- Lou Ann Green, Oblate: Thanks to all of you for your prayers for my daughter Monica. She was very ill with toxic shock syndrome. She was released from the hospital and is now at home, where she is improving daily.

## "FINDING A SENSE OF AWE"

*Pat Ashworth meets Esther de Waal, an article (excerpts) in the CHURCH TIMES of England about her new book. Submitted by Father Emil Belsky, Novice Oblate, Omaha*

A brisk circuit with Esther de Waal around the lake at the Nottingham University campus is no substitute for a ramble in the Welsh Border country in which she lives. It serves, however to illustrate the nature of breathing space that she seeks to convey in *Lost in Wonder*. The book is a guide intended as "gentle support" for rediscovering the spiritual art of attentiveness. Finding a

sense of awe in the midst of daily life can be done as much at home or here in a city (in a place that holds happy memories for her of bringing up four boys) as in a monastery or on a retreat.

The Way of Benedict is at the heart of the experience – Esther de Waal's first book on the subject, *Seeking God* has become a classic, and she won the Templeton UK award in 1991 for making Benedictine spirituality accessible to lay men and women.

"You have to learn to live with yourself and live with other people, handle the tools of daily life, and find space for God – that's really the bottom line," she reflects. "It's glorious – it comes out of Benedict's own experience and is nothing theoretical. He is my touchstone; he has given me my survival kit."

Her new book is not prescriptive: she would like readers to approach it in their own terms and for their individual needs. "There are two ends of the spectrum – people who are overworked and stressed and under pressure, and people whose lives are empty and who just haven't got enough to do. I hope it will bring what they need in terms of recovering time for themselves – silence, light, lingering, reading poetry, just looking. How you see the world and then how you pray – that, in the end, is what it's about."

De Waal emphasizes that she can write about something only after she has lived it. *Lost in Wonder* is partly "about attempting to bring enough energy and structure into my life to make it fruitful and creative, and to be at home with myself in the situation where I find myself."

Does she always achieve it, I ask? "Oh, no!" she says, almost with horror. "It slips away from you, sometimes into desolation and despair. There's always a struggle, but gradually, gradually by the grace of God and the mercy of God, new things emerge, and emerge with conviction." It is important not to be escapist, she emphasizes, whether it is an escape into an imagined Celtic world or a medieval cloister, declaring firmly:

"That really won't do. This has got to be available where we are."

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