



Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska

OBLATE ASSIGNMENTS

- **LINCOLN CHAPTER**, Madonna
Sun., May 16, 2004 7-9 p.m. North Commons
Mon., May 17, 2004, 7-9 p.m. Flanagan Room
Text: Preferring Christ, Chapters 67-73 pages
164-172 plus "An Afterword."
- **ASHLAND/GREENWOOD CHAPTER**,
Ashland, CCD Center
Thursday, May 6, 2004, 7-9 p.m., Seeking God,
Chapter III, Listening
- **HASTINGS CHAPTER**, St. Michael's
Church, Family Room
Saturday, May 8, 2004, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Preferring Christ, Chapter 7, Humility,
(conclusion) plus Interlude III, pages 61-70
- **STEINAUER CHAPTER**, Banquet Hall,
across from St. Anthony's Church
Monday, May 3, 2004, 7-9p.m. Preferring
Christ, Chapter 67, p.164 to the end of book
Monday, May 17, 2004, 7-9p.m. Review Rule
of Life
- **OMAHA CHAPTER**, All Saints Episcopal
Church, 9302 Blondo, Omaha,
Easter Tuesday, May 11, 2004, 7:30-9:30 p.m.
Preferring Christ, Chapter 3, Summoning the
Brothers for Counsel and the beginning of
Chapter 4, The Instruments of Good Works,
pages 26-31
Tuesday, May 25, 2004, 7:30-9:30 p.m.
Preferring Christ, Chapter 4, Instruments of
Good Works, continued, pages 32-38

POT LUCK GATHERING, Sunday, June 13,
2004 for all Nebraska Chapters (Novices, Oblates
and Families) starting at 6 p.m. in the Madonna
North Commons. Details will come in the June
newsletter.

2004 ANNUAL OBLATE RETREAT:

Opening Saturday, July 17 and closing Sunday, July
18 to be held at Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton,
SD. You should all have had Sister Ann Kessler's
notes regarding the details for the retreat either
through email or included with postal newsletter. If
not, contact Sister Phyllis.

PLAN FOR SUMMER READING: The
books will be at the May meetings so you can plan
for some reading for the summer. I do enjoy seeing
the books coming and going. Oblates are good
readers. It may also be a good time to review your
books to see if you have any that may need to be
returned.

OBLATE NOTES

- Dear S. Phyllis: Yes you are correct that I am
updating Preferring Christ -- a new edition will
be out this fall by Morehouse Publishing. It is
fundamentally the same, with a new and
updated intro, and a few minor changes
throughout. I really like the new cover and the
way the book looks; it will not have the spaces
for the reader to write, but assumes that one will
work with a journal alongside. I'm so pleased
that the Formation Manual continues to work
well for you, and deeply honored to be one of
the speakers at the Oblate Congress in Rome in
2005. Thanks for keeping in touch and shalom,
Norvene Vest (Oblate and author of Preferring
Christ)
- Congratulations to Joanie Perry, Oblate, and
husband Ed, on their 50th Wedding Anniversary
which they will be celebrating in June.
- Sister: A belated special thanks for your visit to
our home and for allowing Rich to complete the
Oblate Ceremony. He speaks of it -- treasures
the pin and wanted to be sure I wrote a note.
Please keep us both in your prayers and stop by
again if it is convenient for you. Marilyn (wife
of Richard Gerritson, Oblate, Hastings)

- Mary and John Schere, Oblates: We joined the Benedictine Community here at St. David (AZ) for Holy Week and then for two more days after that. I wish you could see the church and the entire grounds. There is a meditation garden with a pond, a little lake, very unusual Stations of the Cross, a wonderful library, a gift shop, a thrift store, retreat accommodations, showers, laundry and social hall for the RV camp ground users, a bird walk along the river and then the monastery with rooms and whatever else for monks. We are heading toward Nebraska slowly. We will see you sometime this summer we hope. Love and peace!
- Another website: If you wish to use the web to say the Divine Office you can go to:
<http://www.liturgyhours.org>.

BOOK REVIEW: THE SHATTERED LANTERN: REDISCOVERING A FELT PRESENCE OF GOD, By Ronald Rolheiser

When I was asked to review this book, I had read the first section and been intrigued, but had laid it aside for a time, which unfortunately became extended. Upon re-reading the book, I realized this was not a once-a-time read, but a book I wanted to study in depth. I hope to share enough about it that you also will be intrigued and choose to check it out of the Oblate library. (I promise to return it!)

The title and theme of the book comes from a scenario presented by the philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, in his book, *The Gay Science*. Over a hundred years ago, a madman rushed into a crowded market square at high noon with a lighted lantern, shouts angrily, "God is dead! And we are His murderers!" and shatters the lantern. Using this scenario, our author examines the problem of unbelief among believers. Why do we find ourselves praying like Peter in the Gospels: "Lord, I believe, but help my unbelief!" Why is God seemingly so close at one time, and missing at other times? Is there help for this problem?

As I read Part 1, I resonated closely with what was said. The author shows examples of how our culture has changed from one of assuming God is real to one of agnosticism and atheism, and how this affects our spiritual life. He then details these influences, concluding that while God is present to

us, we are not present to Him. We need to exercise our "contemplative muscles". He then defines contemplation and explains what it can do. I was surprised to find that I have been involved in contemplation, but needed to grow in it, to get more exercise!

In Part 2 of the book, the author discusses three contemplative traditions within Western Christian thought. The Mystical Tradition includes such persons as Julian of Norwich, John of the Cross, and Thomas Merton. The Protestant Contemplative Tradition includes Luther, Calvin, Karl Barth, and Gustavo Gutierrez. The Philosophical Tradition of Theism includes Descartes, Kant, Paul Tillich, and Langdon Gilkey among others. He discusses these traditions in detail, and at times was a bit challenging. I found the section on Protestant Tradition easier to understand, perhaps because of my Methodist and Episcopal background. The Philosophical Tradition explained agnosticism and atheism in a way I could better understand. This whole part of the book helped me to understand more about contemplation. One of the things I realized in reading the book is that wherever we are in our spiritual journey, we can relate somewhere and move on from there.

In Part 3, our author moves us from the theoretical to the practical, as he gives us some contemporary spiritual exercises. He lays out some specific disciplines that can help us be more open to God. His explanation of the differences between meditation and contemplation was especially helpful, as I had not realized they differed.

I strongly recommend this book to anyone who wants to strengthen his or her spiritual walk, learn more about contemplation, and walk in purity of heart. Jesus promised that if we have purity of heart, we shall see God. Rolheiser gives us some understanding and tools to help us to "Rediscover a Felt Presence of God." Kathryn Robson, Oblate, Lincoln

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