



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 + **September 2015**

A Word from St. Benedict's Rule

FAULTS AND CORRECTION

“What, dear brothers, is more delightful than this voice of the Lord calling to us? See how the Lord in his love shows us the way of life. Clothed then with faith and the performance of good works, let us set out on this way, with the Gospel for our guide, that we may deserve to see *him who has called us to his kingdom* (1 Thessalonians 2:12).”

Source: **RB Prol. 19–21**

NEW OBLATE ORIENTATION

Lincoln: Orientation for those interested in the oblate program will be held on Sunday, August 23, 2015, at 7:00 pm in the Sheridan Room at Madonna.

Omaha: Orientation for those interested in the oblate program will take place at the September meeting, Tuesday, September 8, 2015, 7:00–9:00 p.m., at the New Cassel Retirement Center.

Sacred Heart Monastery News

OBLATE RETREAT: VISIO DIVINA—PRAYING WITH YOUR EYES
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2 TO SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4

A Message from Sr. Mary Jo Polak

Dear Nebraska Oblates,
While we have the St. John's Bible on campus at Mount Marty College this year, we want to share with you the experience of praying with the lovely Illuminations of the Bible, and to expand our horizons on “Praying With Our Eyes.” We have access to the professional digital copies of the

illuminations, and will be able to use them in our prayer sessions.

Here is a rough schedule for the weekend. As always, there is the opportunity for celebrating Liturgy of the Hours and Mass with the Benedictine Sisters.

Friday evening—PowerPoint and Reflection

Review of and sharing our experiences of *lectio divina*; expanding our concept of the “text” we read from to include what we see, hear, and experience. Shared *lectio/visio* experience with Scriptures and the Illumination from the St. John's Bible.

Saturday morning—PowerPoint and Reflections

View art as symbol, art as related to Creation and to the Incarnation. Shared *lectio/visio* experience with Scriptures and the Illumination from the St. John's Bible.

Saturday afternoon—Free time for a nature walk and lectio on life

Although final arrangements have not been made, you may be able to see Heritage edition of the St. John's Bible, and possibly get a “sneak preview” of the gallery showing of ten illuminations from the Bible, which will be on display at Bede Art Gallery, opening October 5.

Saturday afternoon presentation—PowerPoint and Reflection

Consider the place of beauty in bringing us to God and in the New Evangelization. Shared *lectio/visio* experience with Scriptures and the Illumination from the St. John's Bible.

CHAPTERS	DEANS	LOCATIONS
Hastings	<i>Julienne Bryan</i> , julienne.bryan@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	<i>Family Room, St. Michael's Church, Hastings</i>
	<i>Carol Barry</i> , carol.barry@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	<i>Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital</i>
	<i>Steve Blum</i> , steve.blum@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	<i>Sheridan Room</i>
Lincoln	<i>Carol Olson</i> , carol.olson@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	<i>5401 South St.</i>
	<i>Jim Rea</i> , jim.rea@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	<i>Lincoln</i>
	<i>Mary Schroer</i> , mary.schroer@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	
Omaha	<i>Rod Dolton</i> , rod.dolton@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	<i>New Cassel Retirement Ctr. Lecture Hall, Omaha</i>
Steinauer	<i>Marcia Borchner</i> , marcia.borchner@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	<i>Banquet Room, Convent House B&B, Steinauer</i>

Saturday evening—Shared lectio/visio experience with Sunday Scriptures and art

Sunday morning—Conclusion and taking it home!
I do hope that you can join us!

Details

- Single room, meals, retreat: \$120
 - 2-person room, meals, retreat: \$170.
- This retreat will begin Friday evening, 5:15 p.m., with Vespers in the Peace Chapel and concludes following Sunday Brunch, which is served at 11:15 a.m.

Scholarship

There is a scholarship available to cover the cost for a Nebraska Oblate. Contact Carol Olson, Lead Dean, if you are interested.

Registration

Please register by September 25.

Sr. Mary Jo Polak, OSB
Benedictine Peace Center
Sacred Heart Monastery
1005 W. 8th St.
Yankton, SD 57078-3389
w: www.yanktonbenedictines.org/center/
p: 605.668.6292
e: BenedictinePeaceCtr@mtmc.edu

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.

OPPORTUNITY FOR MORNING PRAYER

Two of the Lincoln cell groups begin their gatherings in the Ryan Memorial Chapel with Morning Prayer. Everyone is invited to pray with them. This month, Morning Prayer will be held on two Saturdays—September 5 and 19—beginning at 8:00 a.m. Please consider adding this prayer office to your spiritual life.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SHORTER CHRISTIAN PRAYER

We continue in Ordinary Time until Advent. Sunday, September 6, 2015, we are in Week III of *Shorter Christian Prayer*. Week III begins on p. 187 with Evening Prayer for Saturday night, September

5. The Cantic Antiphons and Concluding Prayers are on pp. 527–528.

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/.

Chapter Gatherings

HASTINGS

The general meeting will be Saturday, September 12, 2015, 9:30–11:30 a.m., in the Family Room at St. Michael's Church.

Orientation for those interested in the oblate program will be at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, August 29, 2015, in the library at St. Michael's Church.

Chapter reading assignment: *Lectio Divina—Review Interlude I and Interlude II from Preferring Christ* by Norvene Vest.

- *Facilitator:* Juliene Bryan
- *Reflection:* Leland Ostdiek
- *Prayer Leader:* Jim Hoffman.

LINCOLN

The Chapter Gathering will be held on Sunday, September 13, 2015, in the Sheridan Room at Madonna at 7:00 p.m. Sr. Phyllis Hunhoff will be joining us via Skype for the first part of the meeting! There is no reading assignment for the September gathering.

Inquirers and Novices will gather with the chapter until the end of the Skype call with Sr. Phyllis, then they will meet with Mary Schroer, Dean, before returning to the chapel for Evening Prayer.

LINCOLN CHAPTER RIDE-SHARING

Do you need a ride in order to get to the Lincoln Chapter gatherings? Are you able to give someone a ride? We'd like to match you up! Contact Carol Olson, Lead Dean,

402.486.0864, if you would like to be put on a list for ride sharing.

OMAHA

The Omaha Chapter will gather on Tuesday, September 8, 2015, 7:00–9:00 p.m., at the New Cassel Retirement Center. There is no reading assignment for the September gathering.

STEINAUER

The general gathering will be held on Monday, September 28, 2015, from 7:00–9:00 p.m., in the Banquet Room at Covenant House across from St. Anthony's Church. There is no reading assignment for the September gathering.

Cell Groups

READING FROM DISCERNMENT MATTERS

All of the cell groups across Nebraska share the same readings for reflection from September through May.

Discernment Matters: Listening with the Ear of the Heart, Sr. Mary Margaret Funk

- **September:** Chapter 2, cont.—“The Practice of Recollection,” pp. 91-102.
- **October:** Chapter 2, cont.—“The Practice of Colloquy and *The Little Way* of Térésè of Lisieux,” pp. 102–118.

Full Schedule: www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/cells/

GRAND ISLAND CELL GROUP

Brother Lawrence Cell

This cell meets Monday, September 28, 2015, 4:30–5:30 p.m. at the First Christian Church, 2400 W 14th St. Grand Island.

HASTINGS CELL GROUP

St. Scholastica Cell

This cell meets Saturday, September 26, 2015, 9:30–10:30 a.m. in the Library at St. Michael's Church.

LINCOLN CELL GROUPS

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: September 27, 2015.
- Readings this month: See above.

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.

Hildegard von Bingen Cell

- Leader: David Frye
- Meetings: Every other Saturday beginning at 8:00 a.m. with Morning Prayer in the chapel at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital.
- This Month: September 5 and 19, 2015.
- September 5: **The Practice of Recollection**
Morning Prayer: Member of the Subiaco Cell Group *Lectio Divina*: RB 53:1–7, “The Reception of Guests,” Leader to be named.
Discussion: *Discernment Matters*, pp. 91–102, Leader to be named.
- September 19: **The Life of St. Benedict**
Morning Prayer: Member of the Hildegard von Bingen Cell
Group *Lectio Divina*: RB 73:1–9, “A Beginning of Perfection,” Leader to be named.
Discussion: “The Life of St. Benedict Reflected in Postage Stamps,” David Frye, Leader.

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: September 28, 2015.
- Readings this month: See above.

Preferring Christ Cell

- Leaders: Paul Blotkamp and Charlotte Liggett
- Meetings: The fourth Sunday of every month at Madonna, 7:00 p.m.
- This month: September 27, 2015.
- Readings this month: See above.

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: September 5 and 19, 2015.

Retreats**GET OUT OF THE BOAT!**

- Saturday, September 26, 2015—10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Saint Benedict Center, Schuyler, Nebraska.
Get Out of the Boat! (Mt. 14:22–33) Do you have the courage to get out of your little boat and learn what God is asking of you? Jesus says, “Come!” Do we have the courage to leave the security of our little boat and respond to his call? What holds us back? What gives us the boldness to “walk on water?” Through prayer, reflection, listening, and sharing our stories, we will learn what God is asking of us each day of our lives. Please bring your Bible. The presentation is by Sr. Mary Ann Schmeiding.

Details and Registration: www.saintbenedictcenter.com

GROWING WITH GOD: A PLANT-LOVERS’ RETREAT

- Mount St. Scholastica, Atchison, Kansas
- 9:30 a.m.–3:00 p.m., Saturday, September 12, 2015.
- Presenter: Sr. Judith Sutera, OSB
Benedictines, with their commitment to a place, have always had a special relationship with the earth that is around them. Sr. Judith Sutera, author of *The Vinedresser’s Notebook* (Abingdon Press), will reflect on how one can learn much about life and the love of God from what grows in the earth and how it is tended.

Details: Registration due by Sept. 3.

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 Priory in Schuyler Nebraska, presents a podcast on the *Rule of Benedict*. With host Kris McGregor, Fr. Mauritius provides commentary on various verses from chapters of the Rule.

Web: www.discerninghearts.com.

Biennial NAABOD Gathering**IMPRESSIONS FROM A PARTICIPANT**

by Carol Olson, Lead Dean

I had the privilege of attending the North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors (NAABOD), held at Subiaco, Arkansas, July 10–15. There were around seventy Oblate Directors and Oblates present from many monasteries, including one from Jamaica! Our days

were structured around prayer, quiet time, presentations, and discussion. The Subiaco campus is quite beautiful, and is also the location of a boys’ boarding school for grades 7–12; it rests on a hill with a water tower boasting the same name, looking over farmland and hills in the distance.

There were four keynote speakers on the topic of “Nurturing Benedictine Spirituality: From Theory to Practice.” Fr. Jerome Kodell, OSB, of Subiaco presented on “Monasticism and the New Evangelism.” He refers to Pope Benedict’s synod in 2012 on the New Evangelism, especially the presentation given by Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams: “To be contemplative as Christ is contemplative is to be open to all the fullness that the Father wishes to pour into our hearts. With our minds made still and ready to receive, with our self-generated fantasies about God and ourselves reduced to silence, we are at last at the point where we may begin to grow.” Fr. Jerome goes on to expand on our need for contemplative time in our daily lives. He shared a poem from T.S. Eliot that



was written during an air raid in London in WWII, and says that: “All of us are called to know the timeless within us and the time outside. For most of us, it is the ‘unattended moment.’” When we go into our hearts of prayer, Gregory of Nyssa tells of a “dazzling darkness.” We all should see the mystery,

keep gazing at the mystery of God, as it helps our understanding. It is like being in a cave—at first you can’t see, but then your eyes adjust as you stay in the dark. Finally, he shared that “Society tells us to look for the key outside—we need to look inside instead.”

Sr. Macrina Wiederkehr, St. Scholastica, Fort Smith, Arkansas, began her keynote asking us to imagine ourselves in a cave at Subiaco, Italy, and to ask God to transform us into a “*Sacro Speco*” (St. Benedict’s cave). She spoke of how Oblates have



been a catalyst for the professed religious inside the monastery to take a closer look at their lives. Using poetry throughout her keynote, she highlighted several practices that she recommends:

- 1) Living awake, mindful of the present moment. She asks, "What is the beautiful task I am called to do today?"
- 2) Living simply, but "don't make a god of it!"
- 3) Lectio Divina. Each day, we need to enter our own cave (*Sacro Speco*), and guard against it becoming isolated but to let it become prayer.

Sr. Macrina spoke of the sacred nature of work; what kind of spirit do we bring to our work, even the jobs that seem too small for our soul? Finally, she addresses a concern that many are sad due to declining members of monastic communities; sisters and monks are getting older and dying. She shared from author Gail Godwin that "death is not the enemy, age is not the enemy. They are inevitable; we ought to fear the kind of death that happens in life." In this type of death, we become solid and congealed like jelly, with no more surprises. "There are two kinds of people—one that congeals, one that always transforms. Don't congeal!"

NOTE: Carol's reflections on the NAABOD meeting will continue in the October issue.