



Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska

Associated with Sacred Heart Monastery

March 2010

ASSIGNMENTS:

Lincoln Chapter: Sheridan Rooms & North Commons Cafeteria on Sunday and Lancaster Room on Monday, Madonna Rehab Hosp: Sunday, March 14 or Monday, March 15: Desiring Life by Norvene Vest, Chapter 5, Living with Wisdom and Virtue, pgs 115-133, Questions for Reflection # 1 page 170

Steinauer Chapter: Banquet Room, across from St. Anthony's Church, Monday, March 1, 2010: Ps. 139 (Hymn/meditative), Ps. 6 (Individual lament), Ps. 27 (Confidence)

Hastings Chapter: St. Michael's Church, Family Room, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. Saturday, March 13, 2010: Desiring Life by Norvene Vest, Chapter 5, Living with Wisdom and Virtue, pgs 115-133, Questions for Reflection # 1 page 170 Facilitator: Lee Ostdiek, Companion leader: Sister Phyllis

Omaha Chapter: New Cassel Retirement Center, Lecture Hall, 900 N 90th Street, Omaha, NE, Tuesday, March 9, 2010: Desiring Life by Norvene Vest, Chapter 5, Living with Wisdom and Virtue, pgs 115-133, Questions for Reflection # 1 page 170

DO PLAN TO COME: *"The Psalms: Primer for Prayer,"* another beautiful opportunity to learn about the psalms from an international speaker! Sister Irene Nowell, OSB, a Benedictine of Mount St. Scholastica in Atchison, Kansas, will be with us Saturday, March 20, 2010 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon in the Sheridan Rooms at Madonna. She holds a bachelor's degree in music from Mount St. Scholastica College, a master's degree in theology from St. John's University, and a doctorate in biblical studies from Catholic University. There will be a \$10 fee.

OTHER BENEDICTINE EVENTS:

- The Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, SD Theology Institute entitled "Empire and Gospel" will be Saturday, March 27, 2010 presented by Sister Shawn Carruth OSB, Ph.D. from 9:00 am

to Noon in the Sacred Heart Monastery Chapter Room. There is no Admission fee. Email:

jeanne.ranek@mtmc.edu or call: 605-668-6292

- The 25 Annual Monastic Institute at St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota will be held *June 27 to July 1, 2010 on Benedictine Spirituality.* Contact Cindy Maile at 320-363-2612 or cmaile@csbsju.edu. See the website at: <http://www1.csbsju.edu/sot/events/MonasticInstitute.htm>.

FEASTDAYS:

- March 21: ST BENEDICT: We will plan for Vespers at 6:30 pm in the Madonna Chapel.
- March 9: Frances of Rome, patroness of Benedictine Oblates
- March 17: St. Patrick
- March 19: St. Joseph
- March 25: Annunciation of the Lord

LENTEN REFLECTION 2010

from our Prioress, Sister Jennifer Kehrwald
Sacred Heart Monastery

St. Benedict begins his Rule with "Listen carefully, my child, to my instructions and attend to them with the ear of your heart." As Advent is a special season of waiting, Lent is a special season of listening.

The Gospel stories tell us that Jesus is the master listener. He listens to the Spirit drawing him into the desert where he experiences the unconditional love of the Father and comes to know that his Father will sustain him at all times with whatever he needs. In this time alone with the persons of the Father and Spirit, Jesus grows in the awareness of oneness with God. Although Jesus is always aware of living in God's presence we see Him again and again delving deeper into this presence through silence and solitude.

It is the anointing of the Spirit (God's presence descending upon Jesus) that announces Jesus' active ministry. It is with God's spirit that Jesus is able to

teach and heal. It is with the insight of the Spirit that Jesus comes to know that his life path must lead to Jerusalem where he will face the consequences of being who he is. What is going to happen in Jerusalem is part of the plan of God.

It is with deep compassion learned from the Father that Jesus speaks to His followers the night before his arrest and death. Jesus spends his time assuring his followers that although he must go, and although they cannot follow him, they will not be left orphaned. "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God and trust in me." (Jn 14:1) He knows that their self understanding as his disciples and their direction in following him are tied intimately into their personal relationship with him. Who are they if Jesus is gone? Where will they go?

What will hold them together? Jesus promises them, "I shall ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever." (Jn14:16) At the Last supper, on the night before he dies, before he is handed over to his enemies Jesus hands himself over to his friends. It is this memory that will take his disciples through the dark place of loss and sadness. It is this particular community with whom he shares the Last Supper, it is this community who will abandon him and it is this community he is pledged to lead after the Resurrection.

What is perhaps most difficult about listening either for ourselves or with others is the waiting, especially if the waiting involves emotional or physical pain. This was true for Jesus and his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane. As Jesus struggles to accept and discern his Father's will, he asks his disciples to wait with him and pray, to wait as a community. Jesus' desire is to escape, to make a quick exit, to avoid the misery of staying in place and facing the time ahead. So he prays imploring his Father to spare him and he asks his disciples to help him find an answer to his predicament. But as Mark notes, "They could find no answer for him". (Mk14:40) Not only do the disciples not watch and wait with Jesus, they do not watch and wait with one another. Instead the disciples sleep. They cannot handle the painful reality before them and they choose not to pay attention; so ignoring the reality, they choose to sleep.

In his prayer Jesus turns away from thoughts of escape and turns to consent; he chooses to be where

he is, in the painful place of waiting. Jesus does what his disciples do not do; he pays attention to his real situation.

Sometimes living in the awareness of our reality causes us to feel exposed and vulnerable and unsure of God's presence. That certainly was true for Jesus after his arrest. Now, instead of being the doer he becomes the person to whom things are done, instead of making things happen, things now happen to him. The Passion of Jesus is that distinct phase of his life into which he entered when he was handed over to wait upon and receive the decisions of others, to become an object in their hands. Some examples of the Gospel language are...Jesus is handed over, he is arrested and led away, he is condemned as deserving death, he is flogged, he is rejected in favor of Barabbas, he is mocked as a king, he is crucified.

The reality of living out experiences over which he had no control is not reserved to Jesus alone. We experience this many times in our lives – the loss of a job, loss of a loved one, experience of disease or disability, an accident, or 9/11. During these times we become figures of passion. During these times we discover that being a figure of passion is not degrading; that vulnerability is an essential element of being human. We learn that waiting and listening are expressions of our own need and a sign of our caring; we wait because what we await matters to us, and while we wait for the Lord we discover a God who waits with us. It is from the God who waits with us that we learn compassion. This Lenten season let us enter into listening so deep that our heart and God's heart become one.

Sister Phyllis Hunhoff, OSB, Associate Director ♦
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