



Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska

Associated with Sacred Heart Monastery

January 2012

A blessed and holy Christmas season to all of you! Read the following reflection from Oblate Marcia Borchers which gives us the true meaning of Christmas.

GOD'S WORD COMES ALIVE: Many times in years past I had heard the phrase "God's Word is alive." I have heard The Word at Mass throughout my life and through my feeble attempts to read the Bible from time to time. But it never seemed to really "come alive" for me until I joined the Oblates. That first glimpse of the power of Lectio Divina is what moved me to join the group. But as most of us know, it takes time to learn the art of Holy Reading. So, in the beginning stages of my Oblate life, The Word was coming alive for me by praying the Liturgy of the Hours.

From the very first Psalm that I read, I was amazed at how it pertained to my life that day. How it was just what I needed to hear. God was speaking to me here and now. He, The Word, was alive! And He continues to speak and be there for me with just the right words. Sometimes it is to comfort me and sometimes it is to challenge me. The comforting words are easy to draw in, but I sometimes fight the challenging ones. When I need help I might read, "To my words give ear, O Lord, give heed to my groaning." Psalm 5 from Monday, Week I Morning Prayer. When I am in need of mercy and forgiveness I might read, "Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness. In your compassion blot out my offense! O wash me more and more from my guilt and cleanse me from my sin." (Psalm 51 from Friday, Week IV Morning Prayer.) And when I want to change people, He tells me He is in control – "I will lead the blind on their journey; by paths unknown I will guide them. I will turn darkness into light before them and make crooked ways straight." (Canticle from Isaiah 42 from Monday, Week IV Morning Prayer). And so I must trust in His love – "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, not future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Reading from Romans from Wednesday, Week II Morning Prayer). And at last I can praise Him – "Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord. Praise and exalt him above all forever." (Canticle from Daniel 3 from Sunday, Week I Morning Prayer).

My prayer for all my fellow Oblates this Christmas season is that God's Word comes alive!!! Oblate Marcia Borchers, Steinauer Chapter

OBLATE ASSIGNMENT FOR LINCOLN, HASTINGS AND OMAHA: The Oblate Life by Gervase Holdaway, OSB, Chapter 28, Benedictine Oblates and Interreligious Dialogue, Chapter 29, Marriage and the Family & Chapter 30, the Single Oblate.

- Within the "areas of dialogue" where might you be taking part?
- What are the Benedictine values/charisms that the author finds important for family/spouses?

Lincoln: Sunday, January 8 or Monday, January 9: Sheridan Rooms & North Commons on Sunday and Sheridan Rooms on Monday, Madonna Rehab Hosp: See assignment and questions above. We will look forward to hear Oblate David Schmidt give the reflection on Sunday and Oblate Cathy Mohnike on Monday. Choir Practice at 6:15 pm prior to meeting.

Steinauer: Monday, January 30, 2012, The Oblate Life by Gervase Holdaway, OSB, Chapters 10 & 11, - Reflect upon: "Punctuating the day with self-generated excerpts from our liturgical memories is a wonderfully liberating experience." pg 86, Read RB 43 & 50, - In praying the psalms with Jesus, how are you going to respond to the proclamation of God's rule? (pg 104) We will hear Alan Tramp give the reflection and Paul Duryea will do prayer. Refreshments: Alan Tramp and Paul Duryea

Hastings: St. Michael's Church, Family Room, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. Saturday, January 14, 2012: See assignment above. Juliene Bryan will give the reflection and facilitate. Companion: Jeanette Nordhues and Prayer: Robin Stroot Cell meeting: Saturday, January 28, 2012, Be a Monastic and Not Leave Your Day Job by Brother Benet Tveden, Part Two: Benedictine Values for Daily Living, Climbing the Ladder, Benedictine Ways of Behaving

Omaha: New Cassel Retirement Center, Lecture Hall, 900 N 90th Street, Omaha, NE, 7-9 pm, Tuesday, January 10, 2012. See assignment above. We will hear

Chris Neville give the reflection and facilitate. Prayer: orienting to the Shorter Christian Prayer book. Cell Meeting: Tuesday, Feb. 28, 2012, Be a Monastic and Not Leave Your Day Job, Part Three: Being an Oblate and Origins of Oblates, Facilitator: Phil Kelley

SNOW POLICY:

1. Should we have 3-4 inches of snow, we will cancel the meeting without notice. The meeting will not be rescheduled. The next months meeting will occur as scheduled with that month's assignment.
2. Should we have a snowstorm which will be hard to judge, an email will be sent. For those without email: please call someone with email.

COME AND GREET: As you may know, Oblates Deb Miller and Jim Potter are on leave from their stint in Southeast Asia and will be in Lincoln over the holidays. The Oblate group is planning a gathering for folks to have a chance to see them and hear about their adventures. We will gather for Vespers, Thursday, January 5 in the Chapel at Madonna at 7 PM and then adjourn to the north commons for refreshments and time to catch up with them. We hope that you will be able to join us for all or part of the evening. Oblate Social Committee

YOU ARE INVITED: to attend Saturday evening Great Vespers at the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation, 63 and X Street in Lincoln, Saturday, January 21, 2012. where one of our own Oblates, Joel Davies, acts as a cantor. The Eastern Christian church is the second largest Christian denomination with approximately 250,000 million members around the world. This is a chance for us to experience a sample of this style of worship which is very different from the western style vesper services most of us use.

Vespers begins at 5:30 and lasts about 40 minutes. We will meet at the church. The church is located just north of the Cotner and Vine intersection, behind the fire station. Turn west on X Street and you will see the church on your left at the end of the block. Turn left at the intersection and left again into the parking lot. Enter the Church through the south door which faces the parking lot. If you have questions, please call Charlene Gondring at (402) 489-4621 or Sr. Phyllis.

DATE CHANGES (necessitated by new monastery events)

- JUNE POT LUCK is now scheduled for Sunday, June 17 at 5 pm at Madonna. You will receive more information from the Oblate Social Committee.

- FORGIVENESS/HEALING conference is now scheduled for Saturday morning, March 31 from 9 – 12 noon at Madonna.

CHRISTMAS 2011

By Oblate Ken Johnson

When 2011 came on the scene, we didn't realize it would be so lean and mean,
Where work opportunities for some would be scarce with a few jobs at the top, more at the bottom, and few in between.

Here in Nebraska the economy has done pretty well,
And now Christmas can come on the scene with its story to tell.

Personally I have been greatly blessed, with good health and adequate retirement income to meet what I need,
So for the most part, I'm able to just sit back and watch T.V. or read.

With all the strife and trouble around this old globe,
We are very fortunate in the U.S. to only have the matter of unrest by the protestors about Wall Street which hopefully will not explode.

We received our first measurable snowfall so it looks the way some think it should,

It's not my choice but will take it and call it good.

Shoppers are out in mass and traffic's a mess.
I'm glad I don't have much shopping to do, so I'm lucky I guess.

A few more people show up in church pews at this time of year.

Hoping to hear the words that bring thoughts of glad tidings and good cheer.

While the Christmas story doesn't change, it's the same each year.

The retelling revives old memories that help to dispel fear.

As long as our physical and mental health remain in tact,
And our families are doing well we have to be most thankful for this fact.

So let Christmas come with all it's Glory,

We're ready to again hear the unchanging story.

**MAY THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS REST ON YOU
THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.**

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