



Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska

Associated with Sacred Heart Monastery

March 2012

"Let's make Lent count!"

OBLATE ASSIGNMENT FOR LINCOLN, HASTINGS AND OMAHA: The Oblate Life by Gervase Holdaway, OSB, Chapter 34, Health and Sickness, Chapter 35, Doors: One Man's Story of Retirement, Chapter 36 Again and Death and Appendix # 4, The Medal of St. Benedict.

NEW BOOK FOR APRIL AND MAY!

We will be finishing our text and will be using The Practice of the Presence of God, Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection for April and May - edited and Paraphrased by Donald E. Demaray (**BE SURE IT IS THIS EDITION**).

LINCOLN: Sunday, March 11, 2012 or Monday, March 12, 2012: Sheridan Rooms & North Commons on Sunday and Lau Conference room on Monday, Madonna Rehab Hosp: See assignment above. We will look forward to hear Oblate Lou Ann Green give the reflection on Sunday and Oblate Nancy Childs on Monday. **Choir Practice at 6:15 pm prior to Sunday meeting.**

STEINAUER: Monday, March 26, 2012, The Oblate Life by Gervase Holdaway, OSB, Chapters 13 & 14, Have you been a victim of negative silence? Can you move negative silence to a positive silence "we call God?" pg 123. Reflect on one of the scripture quotes pg 125 and solitude. Tickle talks about the "work" of prayer and that prayer should reflect a balance among the various divisions. What do these divisions mean for you? Reflection/facilitator: Kristi Meyer, Prayer: Marcia Borchert, Refreshments: Kristi Meyer and Marcia Borchert

HASTINGS: Saturday, March 10, 2012, St. Michael's Church, Family Room, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. See assignment above. Reflection/facilitator: Robin Stroot, Companion: Carol Barry, Prayer: Jerry Kuhn

Cell meeting: Saturday, March 31, Be a Monastic and Not Leave Your Day Job, The Origins of the Oblates. Facilitator: Jeanette Nordhues

OMAHA CHAPTER: New Cassel Retirement Center, Lecture Hall, 900 N 90th Street, Omaha, NE, 7-9 pm, **Tuesday, March 13, 2012.** See assignment above. We will welcome Oblate George Rood for the

reflection/facilitator. **Cell meeting: Tuesday, March 27, 2012, Be a Monastic and Not Leave Your Day Job,** The Calling to Oblation, Facilitator: Kathy Burke

FORGIVENESS/HEALING CONFERENCE:

Saturday morning, March 31 from 9 – 12 noon, Madonna North Commons and Sheridan Rooms. This is a retreat conference that Sister Phyllis gave in Chandler, AZ. **BRING YOUR HOLY RULE!** We will look at elements involved in forgiveness such as:

- I have been hurt.
- How do I heal?
- Where/When does forgiveness begin?
- What has happened to my self esteem?
- Where is God in this picture?
- What does St. Benedict say in the rule?

SEVERAL IMPORTANT ISSUES: Recently there has been an increased activity of **chain emails** and I would like to alert you again about such activity. There are many websites on email etiquette if you wish to know more. A "Chain email" is *any* email that suggests to the recipient that it be forwarded to "all your friends and relatives" or anything similar, thus forming a chain between the author of the email and each recipient. Such emails are often hoaxes – carrying computer viruses. Just delete the letters as soon as you receive them. Secondly, as you have known, as Benedictine Oblates, we do not enter into discussions that are divisive. This is an election year and of course we will be finding this kind of **political divisiveness**. This is not the kind of information that we as Benedictine Oblates aspire to. If one aspires to this kind of political activism, then it should be outside of the Benedictine Oblates. Simply read RB 64:17. The words of the Apostle concerning the showing of mutual respect are repeatedly quoted and interpreted by St. Benedict. He speaks twice as often of respect as of love, but the display of esteem and respect towards the person of the other must be a 'mutual one. St. Augustine addresses all as 'brothers' without differentiation arising out of social origin. Let us see Christ in each other and give respect for who we are. Sister Phyllis

MARCH BOOK REPORT by Oblate Chuck Luczynski, Omaha Chapter

I chose the expanded edition of *The Fathers of the Church* by Mike Aquilina for my report. The author looks at the dawn of the age of the Fathers by quoting St.

Luke the Evangelist writing about the early Christians: “Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul” (Acts 4:32). That single line, according to the author, illumines the history of the first six Christian centuries. As the heirs to the Apostles, the leaders and teachers of the early church, *i.e.*, the Fathers of the Church were intensely concerned with preserving the unity and integrity of the “company of those who believed.”

The Fathers of the Church are a select group of early Christian teachers, around 100 in number, depending on the list you consult. The Catholic Church, including the Orthodox Churches and other churches of the East, has long revered them and given them a privileged place of doctrinal authority. The author states that St. Vincent of Lérins in the 5th century established four criteria for selecting the Fathers of the Church: (1) Orthodox doctrine; (2) Holiness of life; (3) Church approval; and (4) Antiquity.

He goes on to state the age of the Fathers, often called the Patristic Era, stretched from the middle of the 1st century to the 8th concluding with the death of St. John of Damascus. Some of the earliest Fathers were disciples of the Apostles themselves, and the teaching of these men – called the Apostolic Fathers – has always received special veneration within the Church. Their witness is invaluable, because these Fathers were nearest to the Apostles, who were, in turn, nearest to Jesus Christ. Thus, the Apostolic Fathers are sometimes called the “first echo” of the Apostles. But even beyond the first echo, the Church considers the Patristic Era in general to be a time of extraordinary graces for the expression and development of Christian doctrine.

When St. Irenaeus of Lyons, at the end of the second century, speaks of “the Fathers,” he is referring not only to the Apostles and Apostolic Fathers, but also to the patriarchs and prophets of ancient Israel. Gradually, however, “Fathers of the Church” came precisely to mean only those Christian teachers who were designated as Fathers by long tradition.

The author also includes writings from the Mothers of the Church. However, he points out that we possess very few writings for the Mothers. This is probably due to the fact that in bible times women have fewer educational opportunities than men. He does have a nice section of writings for St. Perpetua, St. Syncretica and Egeria the Pilgrim.

“WATERING THE GARDEN” By Fr. Art Faesser, St. Patrick’s, Sidney, NE, A Sun Telegraph article for 2-18-12

That’s not something we think about in the midst of winter, is it? Not in western Nebraska at least. The hoses were all put away for the season several months ago.

“Watering the Garden” was an image used by Fr. Simeon Gallagher OFM Cap during a recent retreat at St. Patrick’s Parish. It’s an image that fits in well with Gallagher’s overall theme of “Relationships”. Relationships thrive and deepen when things like commitment, healthy communication and reconciliation are part of the equation.

But what specifically is “watering the garden” about? Simply, it’s about nurturing growth – growth in our relationships as well as personal growth. It’s the kind of growth we can expect when we engage in the beauty and opportunities that life invites us to encounter: reading, listening to beautiful music, taking a walk, watching a classic movie, taking time for prayer and reflection and the list goes on.

The community of Israel watered the garden when they spent 40 years in the desert following their departure from their life of slavery in Egypt and before entering the Promised Land. During those years of desert wandering, God forged them into his own chosen people. In the successes and failures of their ongoing relationship with God, the growth which results from watering the garden happened for Israel.

Jesus watered the garden when he withdrew to the desert for 40 days to fast and pray at the outset of his public ministry. In this communion with his Father and our Father, he became resolute in the mission for which he came into the world.

This coming Wednesday is Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the 40 days of Lent 2012. These weeks invite us to accept the invitation to ongoing conversion in our own lives. Submitted by Oblate Vic Faesser, Steinauer Chapter, brother to Fr. Art Faesser

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