



Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska

Associated with Sacred Heart Monastery

April 2012

A JOYOUS EASTER: "Our redeemer has risen from the tomb." ALLELUIA!

OBLATE ASSIGNMENT FOR LINCOLN, HASTINGS AND OMAHA:

NEW BOOK FOR APRIL AND MAY! We will be using *The Practice of the Presence of God*, Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection, edited and Paraphrased by Donald E. Demaray. Part I: Conversations, Pgs 3 – 38.

LINCOLN: Sunday, April 15, 2012 and Monday, April 16, 2012 (ONE WEEK LATER BECAUSE OF EASTER): Sheridan Rooms & North Commons on Sunday and Lau Conference room on Monday, Madonna Rehab Hosp: See assignment above. We will look forward to hear Phillip Schoenberger give the reflection on Sunday evening and Tim Fisher on Monday night. Choir Practice at 6:15 pm prior to Sunday meeting.

STEINAUER: Monday, April 30, 2012: *The Oblate Life* by Gervase Holdaway, OSB, Chapters 15 & 16

- Consider the things O'Donnell gives us to watch over "self." pgs 142-143.
- How do transparency and accountability enter into peacemaking? Chpt 16

We will look forward to hearing Brigid giving the reflection with Vic Faesser leading the prayer. Refreshments: Brigid Amos and Vic Faesser

HASTINGS: Saturday, April 21, 2012, St. Michael's Church, Family Room, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. : See assignment above. We will look forward to hearing Carol Barry's reflection. Prayer: Kathy Schroeder

Hastings Cell meeting: Saturday, April 28: Be a Monastic and Not Leave Your Day Job, *The Calling of Oblation*. Juliene Bryan will be the facilitator.

OMAHA: Tuesday, April 10, 2012: New text: *New Cassel Retirement Center*, Lecture Hall, 900 N 90th Street, Omaha, NE, 7-9 pm. See assignment above. We will look forward to hearing Lucille Fortune give the reflection and facilitate.

Cell meeting: Tuesday, April 24, 2012: Be a Monastic and Not Leave Your Day Job, *Conversion and Stability & Five Simple Guidelines for Oblates*, Facilitator: Sister Marlene

TRANSITION PLAN: For those of you in our broader oblate group throughout the country, I will be returning to the monastery permanently later this summer. So I have been meeting with the various chapters to get their input. All are welcome to offer me suggestions as we go along. I hope to announce more at the April Chapter meetings. As we transition to Oblate lay leadership, do let me know if you have any concern about transferring your email to one of our oblate leaders. Do keep us all in your prayers. *Sister Phyllis*

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION MINISTRY FORMATION/TRAINING PROGRAM:

"Listening to the Wisdom of the Heart" is a two-year ecumenical program for men & women, lay & clergy who feel called to spiritual direction ministry. Combining academic and experiential components, the program includes: Distance Learning Modules and Quarterly residencies in a monastic setting. The application process will open in April, 2012, for a new two-year program to begin in September, 2012. Contact Director, Sister Jeanne Ranek OSB or Admin. Ass't, Jo Anne Dickinson. Oblates Steve Liechti and Carol Olson plus Sister Phyllis are graduates of this program. Feel free to visit with them.

SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES (I do encourage you to think seriously of attending these types of events as they broaden/strengthen your spiritual and personal perspective of being a Benedictine Oblate. Let me know if I can be of assistance to you! Sister Phyllis)

- On June 8th-12th there is a weekend retreat at the Benedictine Peace Center . It is "Recognizing God in My Life". The retreat leaders are Sr. Mary Jo Polak, OSB and Sr. Jeanne Ranek, OSB assisted by other trained spiritual directors. Retreat begins at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, June 8 and ends at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 10th. There is a registration fee of \$10. This event is funded by a free-will offering and the support of generous donors to the Benedictine Peace Center. For further information email joanne.dickinson@mtmc.edu or call 605-668-6292
- St. John's University, Collegeville, MN is holding the 27th annual Monastic Institute June 24-28, 2012. The theme is Prayer and Community. The speakers are: Sr. Irene Nowell, OSB, Sr. Genevieve Glen, OSB, Abbot Brendan Freeman, OCSO and Fr. Dale Launderville, OSB. There is a registration fee of

\$250 and room and board is an additional \$315. For more information call 320-363-2612 or email cmaile@csbsju.edu.

- The American Benedictine Academy Convention is August 2-5 at St. Scholastica Monastery, Duluth MN, "Seek Peace and Pursue Life, Monasticism in the Midst of Global Upheaval." Apply before June 30, Registration fee: \$105 and Room & Brd: \$150. Contact Sister Mary: mrochefe@css.edu or 218-723-6505.

From Novice Oblate Kate Sirota: For those Oblates working on their own Rule of Life, the brothers of the Society of St. John the Evangelist (Episcopal) in Cambridge, MA are currently offering a video series with guidance and suggestions for creating one's own Rule. They brothers offer a short video for every day of lent, along with the transcript of a recent sermon at the monastery. The videos are available on their website and also can be subscribed to by e-mail. The link is: <http://ssje.org/lent>.

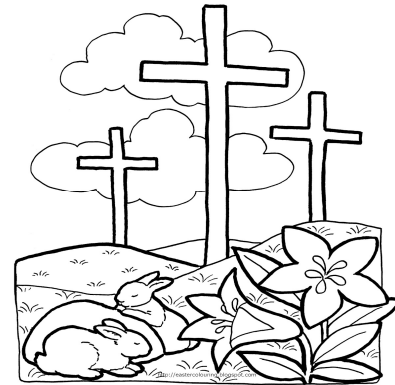
BOOK REPORT: The Human Condition, by Father Thomas Keating

Father Keating is a member of the Cistercian order and the former superior at St. Benedict's Monastery in Snowmass, Colorado. Father Keating describes the spiritual journey as one of self-discovery, since the encounter with God is also an encounter with one's deepest self. As we come closer to God, we encounter the wellspring of our own makeup, the hidden chambers of our personality and behavior. God calls us to live in a real world as mature people. And so, growing in God's grace is a gradual process of stepping into the light, of owning up to ourselves and becoming fully human. To protect ourselves from the pain of living, many people, including many Christians, develop homemade selves where they feel protected. But this behavior is challenged by Christ, who calls people to repent and reclaim their true selves, bestowed on them by their creator.

The practice of contemplative prayer assists in this process and Centering Prayer, which Father Keating developed, aids us in the practice of Contemplation. Centering Prayer has melded elements of Christian mystical tradition into a practice elementary enough for any of us to learn, but which, over time, may help effect a process of spiritual transformation. In Centering Prayer, we commit to two 20 minute periods each day, when we rest in God. We let our surface concerns and problems go, and sink deeply into the river of consciousness itself. In the prayer we are developing the capacity to wait upon God with loving attentiveness.

Thus, we let our individual consciousness (separation from God and other people) go and listen to God's word. By practicing Centering Prayer we are seeking to overcome the human condition, which is to be without the true source of happiness, which is the experience of the presence of God. In addition, we have also lost the key to happiness which is the contemplative dimension of life, the path to the increasing assimilation of enjoyment of God's presence. What many people experience in their lives is a desperate search for happiness where it cannot be found. It was not lost outside ourselves but inside ourselves. That is where we need to look for it.

I practice Centering Prayer for 30 minutes twice a day. I have been centering for about 8-10 years. I am also a member of two groups which meet weekly to practice the prayer. In addition, I am active in the Chicago chapter of Contemplative Outreach. Each year, I hope to attend at least one retreat to add more info to my practice. I believe Centering Prayer has greatly enhanced my life. I am becoming more and more able to listen to the Holy Spirit. I recommend Centering Prayer to all people who want to improve their contact with God. *Oblate Michael Flaherty in Chicago*



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