



# Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska

Associated with Sacred Heart Monastery

November 2012

## **HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO ALL:**

There will be no General Assembly Chapter meetings in November due to the Oblation Ceremony. The cells will be meeting.

**OBLATION CEREMONY:** Let us join those who have heard God's call to share in the Benedictine way of Life by making their Final Oblation, and welcome those who are making their Initial Oblation. Sr. Phyllis Hunhoff, Sr. Penny Bingham, and Sr. Joelle Bauer will be coming from Sacred Heart Monastery for the ceremony.

The oblation ceremony will be held on Sunday, November 11, at 2:00 PM in the James E Ryan Chapel at Madonna. We will have Vespers, First Oblation for new members, Final Oblation for Novice Oblates, and Renewal of Oblation. A Reception will follow in the North Commons: Friends and family are invited to attend.

If you're making your initial or final oblation, and are unable to attend the oblation ceremony, please let one of the Deans know. We'll have a ceremony before December Vespers, or individually, as needed.

**LITURGICAL YEAR CALENDARS:** The "Year of Grace" liturgical year calendars for 2012-2013 will be available at the oblation ceremony, on the table outside of the Chapel.

## **REFLECTION-Benedictines at Heart**

Our little band of Omaha Benedictine Oblates was informed by our counterparts in Lincoln charged with the newsletter that our turn has come to provide a reflection for our November issue. When I personally became involved with the Oblates through Sister Marietta Kerkvliet OSB, our Religious Education Director for our parish in 2004, Benedictines were at that time completely unknown to me. Through Sister however, I learned that a part of Oblate formation involved learning Morning and Evening Prayer, something as a Catholic I had long

wondered about, and eventually realized would be wonderful to learn. So, I accepted to attend a General Omaha Chapter meeting that fall. I became immediately suspicious however. The meeting was held in the basement of All Saints Episcopal Church in Omaha! Upon arriving, my disquiet did not improve for in attendance in addition to Sister Marietta and Sister Phyllis Hunhoff OSB, our Oblate Director, was an Episcopal priest (!) and members of other denominations! There were a number of others from All Saints! A Lutheran and even an Assembly of God practitioner were also present! This at first completely unnerved me and my anxiety was evident as it was very difficult to speak during the introductions. The terror was compounded as I by nature am struck with paralyzing fright any time I am before a group trying to speak! I survived that first meeting however and determined to persevere. Both Sister Marietta and Sister Phyllis were rocks of reassurance, and I did want to learn Morning and Evening Prayer!

As the year continued and exposure to the Rule unfolded through formation; and as I began to allow myself to truly listen to this little community of incredible Christians, the anxiety began to subside and the glow of our shared Faith began to overtake the darkness! I began to realize these beautiful Christians, Catholic and Protestant, were and are all just like me – we are all seeking Christ! And we are all in this together (Sirach)! None of us are theologians. We have the wonderful opportunity of allowing the Love of God to diffuse itself as we all focus on what we are truly gathered for, to learn and be profoundly influenced by the wisdom of Benedict in our quest for our Savior. We are Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, Baptist, and in the past, Lutheran and Assembly of God, all charitably bound, fulfilling in this little way Our Lord's great mandate to love one another, the mark and gift of the Holy Spirit, and of our ancient Faith.

This year we are methodically reviewing our "Handbook of Benedictine Oblates" so wonderfully

provided by our Director, Sister Phyllis and the Sacred Heart Monastery; and presently the “Guidelines for Oblates of Saint Benedict” contained within: “They foster the ecumenical spirit... and foster the spirit of universal brotherhood in God our Father...” A, 8: Guidelines for Oblates of Saint Benedict - a wellspring for hospitality, the effects of the Holy Spirit in each of us through Our Lord’s Mystical Body – That in All Things God May Be Glorified!

*Rod Dolton, Dean  
Benedictine Oblate  
Omaha Chapter*

### **IMPORTANT REMINDER FOR NEW**

**MEMBERS:** There will be a special session on Saturday, November 3, 9:30-11:30 AM in the Lancaster room. Marcia Straatmeyer will give training on using the Shorter Christian Prayer book. We will also give an orientation to the Oblation Ceremony. Plan to be there. Have you been using the SCP book, but still sometimes fell unsure if you are using it properly? This is an opportunity to get a refresher course.

### **CELL GROUP ASSIGNMENTS**

**Hastings:** There will be no cell meeting in November due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

**Lincoln:** Cherish Christ Above All by Demetrius Dumm, O.S.B Chapter 1, pages 8-18.

**Omaha:** Cherish Christ Above all by Demetrius Dumm, O.S.B. November 27, 2013, Chapter 2, pages 19-24. Facilitator Mary Gittings.

**GIVE US YOUR IDEAS:** As events come to your attention that you would like to see in the Newsletter, please let us know. This could be retreat opportunities that you come across, items of interests about individual oblates, or items related to Benedictine Spirituality.

**HOW ARE WE DOING?** We welcome your feedback! You can always come and talk to us, or contact us by email or phone. As a community, the Nebraska Oblates are undergoing a year of transition, due to Sr. Phyllis’ return to the monastery. Change can be challenging, and we need your ideas. We want your oblate experience to

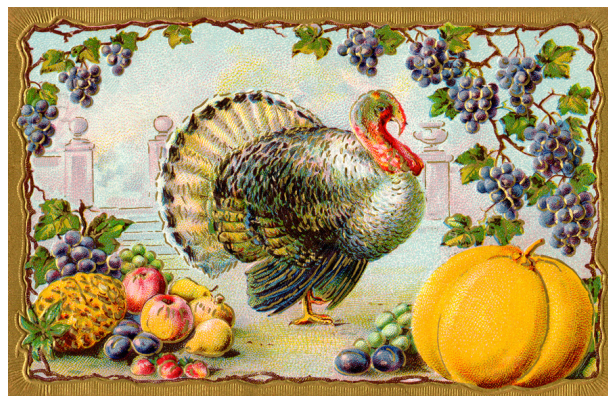
be joyful and rewarding to your spiritual journey. What changes would you like to see? What are we doing right?

**COMING SOON:** The Lincoln Chapter is planning day retreats next year. Times and dates are up in the air, but here’s a preview. We are contemplating Saturday retreats on Lectio Divina, Centering prayer, and Thomas Merton on Humility (based on CD’s of his lectures at Gethsemane). Do you have ideas for one day retreats? Let one of the Deans know.

### **LINCOLN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**VESPERS:** Lincoln Chapter-Beginning with the December Chapter meeting, we will be using the Shorter Christian Prayer book for Vespers. Vespers from the SCP book is a beautiful prayer, but can be intimidating to those not yet accustomed to its’ use. Let’s show hospitality by helping each other in using the SCP book. Our goal is to enjoy a prayerful experience when we come together.

**WE MISS YOU:** Haven’t been to an oblate meeting in awhile? Rejoin us anytime! Sometimes life events keep us away from attending meetings. Of course, we are always together in our daily prayer. If you haven’t been to a meeting for awhile, we welcome you back whenever you can come. If transportation is a problem, contact one of the Deans and we’ll see if we can arrange a ride for you.



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