



Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska

Living by the Spirit of The Rule of St. Benedict + Associated with Sacred Heart Monastery
www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org + info@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org + March 2013

Greetings

GOD'S BLESSINGS AS WE PREPARE FOR LENT

From the *Rule* of our Holy Father Benedict: "The life of a monk ought to be a continuous Lent. Since few, however, have the strength for this, we urge the entire community during these days of Lent to keep its manner of life most pure and to wash away in this holy season the negligences of other times" (RB 49:1-3).

Coming this Month

CHAPTER GATHERINGS

Hastings Chapter: Saturday, March 9, 2013, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Chapter 5 of *A Blessed Life* by Wil Derske: "The Daily Study: In Contact with Nurturing Sources," pp. 65-73. The facilitator is Leland Ostdiek; the companion leader is Juliene Bryan; the reflection is by Juliene Bryan; and the prayer leader is Gerri Kuhn. The meeting is held in the Family Room of St. Michael's Church.

Cell: There will be no cell meeting in March due to the Easter Celebration.

Lincoln Chapter: Sunday, March 10, 2013, and Monday, March 11, 2013, at 7:00 p.m. Chapter 4 of *A Blessed Life* by Wil Derske: "A Benedictine View of Our Daily Work," pp. 51-64. Carol Olson will give a reflection. The Sunday meeting will be in the Sheridan Room at Madonna, while the Monday meeting will be in the Nemaha Room.

Cell meetings: From *Cherish Christ Above All* by Demetrius Dumm, O.S.B., Chapter 4, "Christ, in Whom We Are Loved," pp. 44-50.

Omaha Chapter: Tuesday, March 12, 2013, 7:00-9:00 p.m. General meeting assignment is from *A Blessed Life* by Wil Derske, Chapter 5, pp. 65-73. The facilitator is Lucile Fortune and the companion group leaders are Philip Kelley and Sr. Marlene.

Cell meeting is Tuesday, March 26, 7:00-9:00 p.m. *Cherish Christ Above All* by Demetrius Dumm, O.S.B., Chapter 3, pp. 38-43. The facilitator will be Ann Cole.

Meetings are held at New Cassel Retirement Center, lecture hall (first floor).

Steinauer Chapter: Monday, March 25, 2013, at the banquet room at Convent B&B across from St. Michael's Church from 7:00-9:00 p.m. *The Oblate Life*, Chapter 35, "Doors: One Man's Story of Retirement," Chapter 36, "Again and Death," and Appendix #3, "The Medal of St. Benedict." The prayer leader is Vic Faeser and the reflection is by facilitator Marilyn Neukirch.

Prayer Requests

MONASTERY AND CHAPTER GATHER PETITIONS

If you would like to send your prayer requests to the monastery, the Web address for Sacred Heart Monastery's prayer requests is: www.yanktonbenedictines.org/PrayerRequest.php.

You can also continue to send requests to Marcia Straatmeyer at mstraat@neb.rr.com or by using the Prayer Request on the chapter's Web site: www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/contact/.

CHAPTERS	DEANS	LOCATIONS
Hastings	<i>Juliene Bryan</i> , juliene.bryan@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	<i>Family Room, St. Michael's Church, Hastings</i>
	<i>Carol Barry</i> , carol.barry@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	<i>Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital</i>
	<i>Steve Liechti</i> , steve.liechti@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	<i>Sheridan Room (Sunday)</i>
Lincoln	<i>Carol Olson</i> , carol.olson@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	<i>Lancaster Room (Monday)</i>
	<i>Jim Rea</i> , jim.rea@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	5401 South St.
	<i>Mary Schroer</i> , mary.schroer@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	Lincoln
Omaha	<i>Rod Dolton</i> , rod.dolton@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	<i>New Cassel Retirement Ctr. Lecture Hall, Omaha</i>
Steinauer	<i>Marcia Borchert</i> , marcia.borchert@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	<i>Banquet Room, Convent House B&B, Steinauer</i>

The Divine Office

MORNING PRAYER IN LINCOLN

Every Friday at 7:30 a.m. a group of oblates say Morning Prayer in the Chapel at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, Lincoln. It has become a wonderful tradition and is another opportunity to build community and strong friendships with our Benedictine brothers and sisters. Some stay for a snack in the cafeteria after Morning Prayer. The coordinator of Friday morning prayer is Paul Blotkamp.

NEW TIME FOR EVENING PRAYER IN LINCOLN

The starting time for Evening Prayer each Thursday is now 5:45 p.m. in the Chapel at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. We hope this new time will allow more oblates to gather for corporate prayer.

Using Shorter Christian Prayer

INSTRUCTIONS FOR HOLY WEEK THROUGH THE EASTER SEASON

Palm Sunday, March 24, starts on p. 111, with Saturday Week II, Evening Prayer I. Note the Lent, Passion (Palm) Sunday antiphons. At the reading, turn to p. 429.

For Holy Week, Monday Morning Prayer through Thursday Morning Prayer, continue with Week II, pp. 128–166. Note that there are special antiphons for Holy Week.

On Holy Thursday, Evening Prayer begins on Thursday, Week II (page 166) and continues on p. 436 at the reading.

The Easter Triduum continues with Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Morning and Evening Prayers can be found on p. 438 for Good Friday and p. 447 for Holy Saturday.

Easter Sunday prayer offices begin on p. 457. Turn to Week I, p. 43, for the psalms and canticle. We begin Week I on Easter Sunday.

From the Monday after Easter until Pentecost (the Easter Season) we follow the prayers for the day, turning to pp. 464–486 at the reading. For example, the Monday after Easter, begin on p. 54, Monday, Week I, then turn to p. 469 at the reading. There are special antiphons during the Easter season.

Mark Your Calendar

NEBRASKA CHAPTER POTLUCK

Mark Your Calendars for the June 9, 2013, potluck. In addition to our annual potluck, we will celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Nebraska Oblates.

Retreats

SATURDAY RETREAT: "EMBODIED PRAYER"

Carol Olson, Spiritual Director, will present a retreat entitled "Embodied Prayer" from 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. on March 16, 2013, at Serenity House in Bennet, Nebraska.

Would you like to experience other forms of prayer besides sitting and folding your hands? Together we will explore the relationship between prayer expressions and movement. Wear comfortable clothing, as we will practice prayer in various movements and postures. All are welcome regardless of physical abilities.

Please RSVP by March 13 to:

carol.olson@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org.

CENTERING PRAYER RETREAT

Submitted by Jim Potter, Lincoln Oblate.

Contemplative Outreach of Central Iowa presents a Centering Prayer Day of Enrichment and 8-day Intensive/Post-Intensive Retreat.

Contemplative Outreach of Central Iowa invites you to register for either:

Saturday, April 6, 2013

Begins with a Day of Enrichment with Fr. Carl Arico. \$75.00, includes meals and snacks.

Saturday, April 6–Saturday, April 13

An 8-Day Intensive and Post-Intensive Retreat (which includes the Saturday Enrichment Day). \$575, which includes all meals and private room lodging.

The Intensive/Post-Intensive retreat is 12 Step-supported.

Location: Enjoy the wildlife, trails, and beauty on this 157-acre rural retreat center, Creighton University Retreat Center near Griswold, Iowa.

Retreat Director: Fr. Carl Arico is a founding member, and Vice President of Contemplative Outreach. Known for his humor and down-to-earth treatment of contemplative ideas, Fr. Arico has taught Centering Prayer since 1978. He has traveled nationally and internationally to

present workshops and retreats. He has authored and co-authored several books including *Living Our Priesthood Today* (with Basil Pennington) and *Taste of Silence*.

Retreat requirements: If you are new to Centering Prayer, or have no Centering Prayer experience, please consider the Day of Enrichment. Participants for the 8-day retreat should have a regular, daily practice of Centering Prayer for at least one year. Previous experience in a shorter (3–5 day) silent retreat is highly recommended. The Intensive retreat will take place in silence, but include several opportunities throughout the day to see instructional videos and participate in optional discussion. The Post-Intensive retreat will take place in complete silence. Participation in an Intensive retreat is a prerequisite for the Post-Intensive retreat.

For more information, contact Paul Witmer at Paul.Witmer@CenterIowa.org or 515.240.1653. More information is online at centeriowa.org/events/april-retreat-2013.

Deadline for registration is March 22, 2013.

Important Events

NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF OBLATE DIRECTORS

This association will be meeting July 12–17, 2013, at Annunciation Monastery, Bismarck, North Dakota. This year the Nebraska Oblates may send two oblates to this meeting. The cost of registration is \$360 for single occupancy and \$285 for double occupancy. You will need to cover this cost as well as your travel expenses. If you are interested, please contact Sr. Phyllis, phyllis.hunhoff@mtmc.edu, 605.668.6000, to obtain a program and an application. You can see more at www.naabod.org.

WORLD CONGRESS OF OBLATES

The Congress will again be meeting in Rome October 4–10, 2013. Its last meeting was in 2009. Each member monastery is allowed to send one oblate. We do not have the cost of registration at this time. You will need to cover this cost as well as your travel expenses. This is an exceptional opportunity for an oblate, so if you are interested, please contact Sr. Phyllis, phyllis.hunhoff@mtmc.edu, 605.668.6000. To learn

more, see Oblates Carol Olson and Marti Fritzen who attended the first Congress in Rome in 2005. Also see: www.benedictine-oblates.org.

Snow Policy

WHEN “THE WEATHER OUTSIDE IS FRIGHTFUL ...!”

Here is our chapter’s snow policy.

1. Should we have three to four inches of snow, we will cancel the meeting without notice. The meeting will not be rescheduled. The next month’s meeting will occur as scheduled with that month’s assignment.
2. Should we have a snowstorm that seems hard to judge, an e-mail will be sent. For those without e-mail, please call someone with e-mail. In all cases, use your best judgment: Be Safe!

Reflection

FINDING THE THIN PLACES, BY RUSS BOOTON

There have been times in my life—recently—when I have needed to get away to connect with God. These are times when I have encountered too much stress, distraction, and perhaps have been guilty of some lack of discipline. So I have begun to notice and seek thin places—places where the human and the divine seem to be closer than other places. My favorite places are the Sunken Gardens at 27th and Normal Blvd., and the Maxwell Arboretum on the East Campus of UNL. I also enjoy praying at Christ the King Chapel, which of course is a bit more convenient in the middle of winter.

It seems that to regain balance I must regularly schedule some time in these places—preferably at times when I will be relatively alone. Ultimately it is the silence I seek, and God in the silence.

I’m not entirely happy with myself that this seems to be necessary. I would like to think that I could find God any time, anywhere—at least within my home. Sometimes this is indeed the case. Sometimes this just is not possible.

So I go out, and find those “thin” places. And I find Him in the whisper of the wind in the leaves, or the beauty of the flowers, but always in the context of silence.

I asked on Facebook if anyone knew such places—“thin” places—in Lincoln, Nebraska. I got quite a response. They listed other church centers and retreat centers, Pioneers Park, the bike trials, Spring Creek Prairie—even a drainage ditch was a place where God could be found. When the conversation was done, it seemed that Lincoln was a place of great holiness. And so it is.

Jacob, when he found his thin place at Bethel (the ladder with angels ascending and descending), said, “Surely, the Lord is here, and I knew it not.” Perhaps that is Lincoln as well. Tonight as I write this, I hear sirens rush past our home—the noise of trauma, crisis, and pain. There is and will be a lot of that in our lives, and in our city. But whether we can recognize it or not, God is here as well.

My prayer and hope is that I will continually recover and maintain the discipline of finding silent moments and silent places to hear God, or at least sense His presence. And then I hope to bring that into the traumas, crises, and pain of my life and those with whom I live, work, and worship.

The Season of Lent

LIVING IN THE “JOYFUL SEASON”

We may be surprised to hear that the Church’s liturgy reminds us that Lent is meant to be a “joyful season.” The season of Lent finds its meaning and origin in Easter, the annual celebration of our Lord’s resurrection and our salvation. With the whole Church, we reexamine our priorities, leaving sin and self behind and intensifying our love and service of God and our neighbor. The joy of this time of preparation is all about the surprise of new life coming from what may have appeared dead—just as fresh buds break through each spring on trees that seemed dead during the long winter. Let us be united in our readiness to celebrate the great feast with our Risen Lord.

OBLATE LIFE

PERSONAL EVALUATION AS A LENTEN EXERCISE

To see how well you are fulfilling your vocation as an oblate, reflect on and ask yourself the following questions. These questions are for

your personal consideration and evaluation, so that you may see how you are growing as an oblate. If you sincerely reflect on these questions, you can only deepen your relationship with God. And in doing so, you are truly growing in Benedictine spirituality as an oblate.

1. What have I done during the past year to continue ongoing formation as an oblate?
2. What do I plan to do during the coming year?
3. How well do I see myself living the oblate promises? (Rate yourself on a scale of 1–5, with 1 as “needing improvement” and 5 as “doing well.”)
 - Stability of heart? 1 2 3 4 5
 - Fidelity to the spirit of the monastic life? 1 2 3 4 5
 - Obedience to the will of God? 1 2 3 4 5
4. How well do I see myself fulfilling the oblate duties?
 - Praying the Liturgy of the Hours? 1 2 3 4 5
 - Reading from the *Rule of St. Benedict*? 1 2 3 4 5
 - Daily practice of *Lectio Divina*? 1 2 3 4 5
5. Am I participating in the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation in my own faith tradition of church and prayer? 1 2 3 4 5
 - Attentiveness to God’s presence in my ordinary, daily life? 1 2 3 4 5
6. If I need to improve in any of these areas, what do I plan to do?

The Feast of St. Benedict

FATHER OF MONASTICISM AND PATRON OF EUROPE

Many Benedictines throughout the world celebrate this as the major feast of St. Benedict, commemorating the day of his death. According to tradition, when St. Benedict was dying, he asked to be carried to the monastery church. There, supported by two of the monks, he stood with arms upheld and made his final offering. Because this feast occurs in Lent, other Benedictines, including our monastery, observe March 21 as a lesser feast, and on July 11 celebrate the *Solemnity of St. Benedict*.