



Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska

Associated with

Sacred Heart Monastery

January 2008

ASSIGNMENTS ARE THE SAME FOR ALL CHAPTERS:

Wisdom from the Tradition,

Chapter IV, pp. 33-44; RB 71,72; Acts 2:42-46

- **Lincoln Chapter:** Sunday, North Commons Cafeteria and Monday in the Flanagan Room Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. Sunday, January 13, 2008 or Monday, January 14, 2008, 7-9 p.m.
- **Steinauer Chapter:** Banquet Room, across from St. Anthony's Church. Monday, January 7, 2008, 7-9 p.m.
- **Hastings Chapter:** St. Michael's Church, Family Room, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m., Saturday, January 12, 2007.
- **Omaha Chapter:** New Cassel Retirement Center, Lecture Hall, 900 N 90th Street, East Entrance, Omaha, NE Tuesday, January 8, 2008

HAPPY NEW YEAR - RESOLUTIONS! As people enter the New Year they are often full of hope about what the coming twelve months will hold. New Year's resolutions are part and parcel of the season with people hoping to give something up or to develop new and better habits. This hunger for change and a new start provides an excellent opportunity for us. A new year marks a fresh start so it's no wonder we promise to better ourselves by taking care of our bodies, minds and spirits. Why not celebrate the beginning of 2008 with a new enthusiasm for our Benedictine Oblation!

Here are my New Year's resolutions for you (and me):

- Let's put the dates on our calendars for our next Chapter and Cell meetings during 2008 so we have the best attendance ever in 2008. You will find all the dates on our website and I will bring copies to the January meetings.
"Therefore, the monks should have specified periods for manual labor as well as for prayerful reading." (RB 48:1)
- Let's use frequent lectio (2-3x per week) as we prepare for our Chapter meetings so we will more likely grow in a meaningful relationship with God.
"Listen readily to holy reading, and devote yourself often to prayer." (RB 4:53)
- Keep the Liturgy of Hours book handy so we use at least some of it - once or twice a day.

"We believe the Divine Presence is everywhere...but beyond the least doubt we should believe this to be especially true when we celebrate the divine office." (RB19:1-2)

- Attend a retreat or visit SHM this year so you come to know our monastery and more of our Benedictine Sisters.
"Your way of acting should be different from the world's way; the love of Christ must come before all else." (RB 4:20)

RETREAT FOR OBLATES (A note from Sister Joelle): A semi-quiet retreat entitled, "*Welcoming God*" -- is scheduled **Feb. 22nd -24th, 2008**. The retreat will focus on Benedictine hospitality. It will begin the evening of Feb. 22nd and end the morning of Feb. 24th. The cost for a single room including meals is \$90; a room with two people is \$140. The rooms with two beds are limited, as well as the number of participants. Reservations can be made by contacting Sr. Joelle Bauer at 1005 W. 8th Street, Yankton, S.D. 57078, jbauer@mtmc.edu, 605-668-6009. There is an answering machine for the telephone number. Hopefully we will have some Oblates from each chapter who will be able to make this retreat.

OBLATE NOTES from near and far (all from Lincoln unless noted): Thanks to all for sending your notes. It is so good to hear from you.

- **Oblate Fr. Emil Belsky of Salt Lake City, Utah:** After some months of studying foundational material about Benedictine spirituality, here at St. Paul's we are concluding our prayerful reading and discussion of Norvene Vest's *Preferring Christ*. Although we are small in number, we are an enthusiastic group. Because there is a great interest in the practice of sanctifying the day through fixed-hour prayer, after the first of the year we will begin studying and discussing Fr. George Gulver's book *Company of Voices: Daily Prayer and the People of God*. With wishes for a quiet and prayerful season!
- **Oblate Vivian Bowman and husband James of Albuquerque, NM:** We have truly been touched by beauty this year! We both continue to work with the Center for Action and Contemplation. And so a

final quote from its founder, Richard Rohr: "Prayer is sitting in the silence until it silences us, choosing gratitude until we are grateful and praising the Creator until we ourselves are an act of praise."

- Oblate Dorthy Conradt of Steinauer: I would love to be with my fellow oblates but my health is not good. I continue to pray from the Shorter Christian Prayer book. May you be blessed!
- Oblate Nancy Donovan of Silver City, SD: With the completion of 2007, we come to the clearer focus of age, the deep joy of loved ones and the extreme sadness of loss. They are moments of feeling touched by God and of eternity. Within His love, our relationships with family, friends, neighbors and even acquaintances are what give life meaning. I am thankful for the Oblate program.
- Oblate Vic Faesser and wife Irene of Pawnee City: A spirit of generosity seems to come over us each year at this time. We are more inclined to do "random acts of kindness." The challenge is to sustain that spirit beyond the season. A kind word, a smile, a bit of patience, reining in our temper, a bit of walking in the 'other's' shoes, less judgment, less criticism, more encouragement, more understanding. Yes, that is the challenge, isn't it? But we try! We wish you a Merry Christmas and all that is good in 2008.
- Oblate Michael Flaherty of Des Moines: I enjoy reading the newsletter every month and I meet weekly in Des Moines with a Contemplative Outreach group and practice Centering Prayer. I hope to get to Lincoln soon to say hello.
- Oblate Jane Gyhra of St. Joseph, MO: I really miss the Steinauer Oblate group. I am busy getting my Catechetical Certification for this diocese but enjoying the classes very much. Wishing you and all at the monastery a very blessed Christmas!
- Oblates Jim and Cec Kelly: We celebrate the birth of our dear Savior. His love is the best gift of all year through. We keep all in our prayers as well.
- Oblate Francis Knosp: I continue to appreciate the study with my oblate group. Thank you so very much for all your devotion to the Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska.
- Oblate Peggy Loos: I am so grateful for Lincoln's Oblate group. Thank you for the encouragement to Listen and always look to Jesus. I enjoy the newsletter and I loved the last book review.
- Oblates Ebb and Lucy Munden: We are on the West Coast after a stop on the way down in Dallas and a visit with our son and his family for Thanksgiving. We pray that you and all of our Oblate brothers and sisters as well as the Sisters of Yankton are experiencing the blessed awareness of this Advent season and will rejoice in the full joy of Christmas. Grace and Peace.

- Oblate Joanie Perry: I am feeling better each day (after a bit of time in intensive care). God bless you and all!
- Oblate Darla Weisbeck: I share the passion of people growing in God – in Christ's light & love. I am forever grateful and very blessed for my Benedictine family.

NOVENA: The word Novena means "ninth." It is a devotion consisting of prayer said on nine successive days, asking to obtain special graces. The practice of saying novenas is derived from Scripture. After Jesus' Ascension into heaven, he told his disciples to pray together in the upper room and devote themselves to constant prayer (Acts 1:14). His followers prayed together for nine consecutive days, concluding in the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. The following is a powerful prayer to use for those special requests.

Novena to St. Benedict

O glorious St. Benedict, sublime model of all virtues, pure vessel of God's grace! Behold me, humbly kneeling at thy feet. I implore thy loving heart to pray for me before the throne of God. To thee I have recourse in all the dangers which daily surround me. Shield me against my enemies; inspire me to imitate thee in all things. May thy blessing be with me always, so that I may shun whatever God forbids and avoid the occasions of sin.

Graciously obtain for me from God those favors and graces of which I stand so much in need, in the trials, miseries and afflictions of life. Thy heart was always so full of love, compassion, and mercy toward those who were afflicted or troubled in any way. Thou didst never dismiss without consolation and assistance anyone who had recourse to thee. I therefore invoke thy powerful intercession, in the confident hope that thou will hear my prayers and obtain for me the special grace and favor I so earnestly implore (*mention your request*), if it be for the greater glory of God and the welfare of my soul.

Help me, O great St. Benedict, to live and die as a faithful child of God, to be ever submissive to His holy will, and to attain the eternal happiness of heaven. Amen.

Sister Phyllis Hunhoff, OSB, Associate Director ♦
Associated with the Benedictine Sisters of Sacred Heart
Monastery, Yankton South Dakota ♦ 5441 Glade Street
♦ Lincoln, NE 68506 ♦ 402-488-6731 ♦ email:
phunhoff74@windstream.net
website: http://www.geocities.com/lincoln_oblates