



# 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 + **May 2014**

## A Word from the Rule

### THE LIFE OF HUMILITY

“Brothers, divine Scripture calls to us saying; *Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted* (Luke 14:11, 18:14). In saying this, therefore, it shows us that every exaltation is a kind of pride, which the Prophet indicates he has shunned, saying: *Lord, my heart is not exalted; my eyes are not lifted up and I have not walked in the ways of the great nor gone after marvels beyond me* (Ps 130(131):1). And why? *If I had not a humble spirit, but were exalted instead, then you would treat me like a weaned child in its mother's lap* (Ps 130(131):2). Accordingly, brothers, if we want to reach the highest summit of humility, if we desire to attain speedily that exaltation in heaven to which we climb by the humility of this present life, then by our ascending actions we must set up that ladder on which Jacob in a dream saw *angels descending and ascending* (Gen 28:12).”

Source: RB 7:1–6.

## Reflection

### ON HUMILITY

Jesus calls us to His rest, and meekness is His method. The meek man cares not at all who is greater than he, for he has long ago decided that the esteem of the world is not worth the effort. He develops toward himself a kindly sense of humor, and learns to say, “Oh, so you have been overlooked? They have placed someone else before you? They have whispered that you are pretty small stuff after all? And now, you feel hurt because the world is saying about you the very things you have been saying about yourself? Only

yesterday you were telling God that you were nothing, a mere worm of the dust. Where is your consistency? Come on, humble yourself, and cease to care what men think.”

The meek man is not a human mouse afflicted with a sense of his own inferiority. Rather he may be in his moral life as bold as a lion and as strong as Samson; but he has stopped being fooled about himself. He has accepted God’s estimate of his own life. He knows he is as weak and helpless as God has declared him to be, but paradoxically, he knows at the same time that he is in the sight of God of more importance than angels. In himself, nothing; in God, everything.

Source: *The Pursuit of God* by A.W. Tozer (1897–1945)

## Worship

### MORNING PRAYER

Oblates gather every Friday morning at 7:30 in the Ryan Memorial Chapel at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, 5401 South St., Lincoln, Nebraska, to pray Morning Prayer. Everyone is welcome.

### FEAST OF ST. PACHOMIUS (A.D. 292–348)

At 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 15, 2014, those who can attend may gather in the Ryan Memorial Chapel at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, Lincoln, for Vespers, to commemorate the feast of St. Pachomius.

St. Pachomius was born about 292 in Egypt and entered the army at the age of twenty-two. He formed a favorable impression of Christians after being stationed in Thebes and noticing there the kindness of the Christians toward the soldiers. Upon discharge from the army, he converted to

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

Christianity and was baptized. He became a disciple of the anchorite Palemon and then became a monk. With Palemon, he led a life of austerity and dedication to God, combining manual labor with unceasing prayer. Later, Pachomius felt called to build a monastery on the banks of the Nile. In a short time some one hundred monks joined him and Pachomius organized them by principles of community living. So many desired to join his way of life that he was obliged to establish ten other monasteries for men and two nunneries for women. Before his death in 346, there were seven thousand monks in his houses, and his Order lasted in the East until the eleventh century. St. Pachomius was the first monk to organize hermits into groups and write down a Rule for them. Both St. Basil and St. Benedict drew from his Rule in setting forth their own more famous ones. St. Pachomius may be said to have founded Christian monasticism as we know it today.

#### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR SHORTER CHRISTIAN PRAYER FROM PENTECOST THROUGH ORDINARY TIME**

Pentecost is celebrated on Sunday, June 8, 2014. We begin the celebration of Pentecost with Evening prayer I on p. 489.

On the Monday after Pentecost, June 9, we begin on Week II, p. 128. We will follow the four-week Psalter throughout Ordinary time, until Advent begins on November 30. The Antiphons and Concluding Prayers for Sundays in Ordinary time can be found on pp. 504ff.

#### **Chapter Gatherings**

##### **MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE POTLUCK DINNER**

On Sunday, June 8, 2014, all oblates of the Nebraska Chapters are invited to celebrate the end of another year of oblate gatherings. We will meet at 4:30 p.m. in the Chapel at Madonna in Lincoln. We will begin the celebration with Vespers in the Chapel, then move to the Sheridan Room for our annual potluck. Paper products and drinks will be provided. Please bring a salad, vegetable, desert, or main dish to share. Family members are welcome! Sr. Phyllis will be joining us for the festivities.

##### **HASTINGS CHAPTER**

The general meeting will be Saturday, May 10, 2014, 9:30–11:30 a.m., in the Family Room at St. Michael's Church.

Read Chapter 17 from *Conversation with Saint Benedict: the Rule in Today's World* by Terrence G. Kardong: "Channel Surfing," pp. 137–146.

- Facilitator: Juliene Bryan
- Companion Leader: Robin Stroot
- Prayer Leader: Juliene Bryan
- Reflection: Sharon Connor.

##### **HASTINGS' ST. SCHOLASTICA CELL**

Hastings Cell gathering (St. Scholastica Cell): Saturday, May 24, 2014, 9:30 a.m., in the Library at St. Michael's Church.

Read Chapter 11, "Mystical Intimations," pp. 148–155, from *Cherish Christ Above All* by Demetrius Dumm, OSB.

- Facilitator: Susan Janda.

##### **GRAND ISLAND'S BROTHER LAWRENCE CELL**

Grand Island Cell gathering (Brother Lawrence Cell): Monday, May 26, 2014, 4:30–5:30 p.m., First Christian Church 2400 W. 14th St., Grand Island.

Read Chapter 11, "Mystical Intimations," pp. 148–155, from *Cherish Christ Above All* by Demetrius Dumm, OSB.

- Facilitator: Gerry Kuhn.

##### **LINCOLN CHAPTER**

General gatherings will be held on Sunday, May 18, 2014, 7:00–9:00 p.m. and Monday, May 19, 2014, at the same time. Read Chapters 15 and 16 (pp. 121–136), "Zeal, Good and Bad," and "Hierarchy," from *Conversation with St. Benedict: the Rule in Today's World*, by Terrence G. Kardong, OSB.

The Sunday gathering is held in the Sheridan Room at Madonna, while the Monday gathering is held in the Nemaha Room.

Cell gatherings: Read Chapter 11, "Mystical Intimations," pp. 148–155, from *Cherish Christ Above All*, by Demetrius Dumm, OSB.

##### **OMAHA CHAPTER**

*General Meeting:* The Omaha Chapter will gather on Tuesday, May 13, 2014 (Fourth Week fo Easter), 7:00–9:00 p.m. at the New Cassel Retirement Center. The reading will cover Chapters 15 and 16 (pp. 121–136), "Zeal, Good and Bad" and "Hierarchy," from *Conversation with St. Benedict: the Rule in Today's World*, by Terrence G. Kardong, OSB. The reading assignment completes the book review. Prior to group breakout, the

reflection will cover "The Rule of St. Benedict," pp. 3–4, in the Monastic Tradition tab of our Oblate Handbook.

The cell gathering will be held on Tuesday, May 27, 2014 (Sixth Week of Easter), 7:00–9:00 p.m. at the New Cassel Retirement Center. This is our last gathering until our first fall meeting on Tuesday, September 9. We will complete our two-year review of *Cherish Christ Above All*, by Demetrius Dumm, OSB. Our Cell reading assignment will cover Chapter 11, "Mystical Intimations," pp. 148–155. Before beginning our review of Chapter 11, our reflection from the Oblate Handbook will cover "The Early Monastic Tradition," pp. 4–5, to the beginning of the paragraph, "St. Basil's Rule," within the Monastic Tradition tab of our Oblate Handbook.

*Oblate Retreat for New Members:* Prior to our final cell gathering during the Sixth Week of Easter, three of our Oblates will be traveling to Sacred Heart Monastery to participate in the Oblate Retreat, May 16–18. This Easter Season is also a period of celebration for our group with the addition of three new inquirers/members: **Gina Love-Aguilar** of Omaha, **Kimberly Greave** of Earling, Iowa, and most recently, **Pamela S. Debban** of Council Bluffs, Iowa. Welcome!

#### STEINAUER CHAPTER

The general gathering will be held on Sunday, May 18, 2014, from 7:00–9:00 p.m., in the Banquet Room across from St. Anthony's Church.

Read Chapters 11 through 14 of *Conversation with Saint Benedict: the Rule in Today's World* by Terrence G. Kardong—"The Cell Phone and the Monk," "Table Reading," "Competition," and "The Prior of the Monastery" (pp. 89–120).

### Nebraska Cell Groups

#### INTRODUCTION

Cell group readings for 2013–2014 come from *Cherish Christ Above All: The Bible in the Rule of Benedict*, Demetrius Dumm, OSB, Latrobe, Penn.: Saint Vincent Archabbey Publications, 2002.

The Nebraska Chapter has a variety of cell groups:

#### HASTINGS

##### Saint Scholastica Cell

- Leader: various individuals

- Meetings: The fourth Saturday of the month beginning at 9:30 a.m. in the library of St. Michael's Church, Hastings.

##### Brother Lawrence Cell

- Leader: various individuals
- Meets the fourth Monday of the month, 4:30–5:30 p.m. at First Christian Church, 2400 West 14th St., Grand Island, Nebraska.

#### LINCOLN

##### Pax Christi Cell

- Leader: Lorene Ludy
- Meetings: The fourth Monday from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at Mary Lu Long's house, 1615 Brent Blvd., Lincoln.

##### Beginners' Cell

- Leader: Marti Fritzen
- Meetings: Monthly on the fourth Sunday at 7:00 p.m. in the Lancaster Room at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. The Rule of Benedict (RB 73:8) says that the rule is for beginners; we are all beginners and all are welcome to this cell.

##### Subiaco Cell

- Leader: Tim Fisher
- Meetings: Every other Saturday beginning at 8:00 a.m. with Morning Prayer in the chapel at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. Then this cell for men moves to a designated room for conversation. This month's meetings are May 3, 17, and 31.
- Beginning in June, the cell will reflect on *The Road to Eternal Life* by Fr. Michael Casey, OCSO.

##### Preferring Christ Cell

- Leaders: Paul Blotkamp and Charlotte Liggett
- Meetings: The fourth Sunday of every month at Madonna. The assignments are from *Preferring Christ* by Norvene Vest.

#### OMAHA

##### Omaha Cell

- Leaders: Various individuals
- Meetings: Monthly on the second Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. at New Castle Retirement Center.

## General Announcements

### CHANGE OF E-MAIL ADDRESSES

When you update your e-mail address, please send a message to:

[info@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org](mailto:info@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org).

This will assure that you continue to receive notices about the release of newsletters and other important chapter messages.

### 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](http://www.yanktonbenedictines.org/PrayerRequest.php).

You may also send petitions to Marcia Straatmeyer at [mstraat@neb.rr.com](mailto:mstraat@neb.rr.com) or by using the Prayer Request option on the chapter's Web site:

[www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/contact/](http://www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/contact/).

## Retreats

### OBLATES' RETREAT AT SACRED HEART MONASTERY

Sr. Mary Jo Polak, OSB, will offer a semi-silent retreat, "Matters of the Heart in *The Rule of St. Benedict*," from **Friday, May 16, 2014, to Sunday May 18, 2014**. The retreat brochure states, "Sometimes we think of Benedict as the Rule-giver, a wise but strict Father figure. With a closer look, we see how often Benedict talks about matters of the heart and the right attitude of our hearts to be good monastics."

To register, contact S. Joelle Bauer:

[jbauer@mtmc.edu](mailto:jbauer@mtmc.edu)

605.668.6009

Sacred Heart Monastery

1005 W. 8th St.

Yankton, SD 57078.

The cost for a single room, meals, and the retreat is \$120, double room \$170, payable upon check-in at the retreat. Contact a dean to find out about carpooling possibilities.

### OBLATE INSTITUTE

The Sophia Center of the Benedictine Sisters of Mount. St. Scholastica in Atchison, Kansas, has some retreat offerings that may be of interest to oblates. On **July 17-20, 2014**, they will hold their seventh annual Oblate Institute. Speaker Kathleen Norris's theme will be "Discovering the Desert: St. Benedict's Sources." You can check their 2014 retreat offerings on the Web:

**On the Web:** [www.mountosb.org/ministries/scheduled-retreat-opportunities](http://www.mountosb.org/ministries/scheduled-retreat-opportunities).

### SPIRITUAL PAUSE RETREAT REQUEST

In the past year, several of the Benedictine Oblate Deans have led retreats of various topics at Serenity Acres in Bennett, Nebraska. We would like to expand the opportunities to lead future retreats to all of the Oblates. The Lincoln Deans are aware of Oblates with gifts and talents for sharing their spirituality, practices, and experiences with others. If you are interested in leading a retreat, or if you have suggestions for a future retreat, please contact Carol Olson, Lead Dean:

402-486-0864

[carol.olson@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org](mailto:carol.olson@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org).

### RETREAT ON CHAPTER FOUR OF BENEDICT'S RULE

The St. Benedict Center of Christ the King Priory in Schuyler, Nebraska, is offering a retreat **September 5-6, 2014**. The retreat begins on Friday at 7:30 p.m. and ends on Saturday at 4:00 p.m. The retreat, "Tools of the Spiritual Craft," will be presented by Fr. Michael Casey, OCSO, Ph.D. The program description says:

At the end of the Prologue of his Rule, Saint Benedict speaks about making progress in faith and good living. What he probably means is advancing in faith through good living. In his much-neglected fourth chapter *On the Implements of Good Works*, he lists seventy-four means by which we can upgrade the quality of our life and our faith. In these days together, we will discuss some aspects of Benedict's program of practical good living in the light of contemporary experience.

Check the Web site for registration and costs. St. Benedict's Center has several retreats offered each month that you might want to check out.

**On the Web:** [www.stbenedictcenter.com](http://www.stbenedictcenter.com).

## Sacred Heart Monastery

### GATHERING OF BENEDICTINE OBLATES

At the National Meeting of North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors (NAABOD), there was a suggestion to have a day of sharing with other Oblates within our region. The Benedictine Sisters at Immaculata Monastery in Norfolk offered to host a gathering. It is scheduled for August 10, 2014, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The day is in the "planning stages," with the title, "Living as a Benedictine Oblate in Today's World." It will be a day for oblates, with a few talks given

by oblates from our different areas, group sharing and interaction and learning about each other's practices in living the Benedictine Way of Life. Since the day is still in the planning stage, the planners are hopeful each community of Oblates would be a part of the day by sharing people who will serve as a speaker, being part of a panel, or providing an icebreaker. If you are willing to do any of these tasks, please let me know. Thank you for considering this ministry.

—Sister Joelle Bauer, Oblate Director

#### **PRAYER IS CENTRAL TO THE BENEDICTINE LIFE**

When, how, why and where do the Yankton Benedictines pray? These are frequent questions asked by visitors and others.

In his Rule, St. Benedict says, "Nothing is to be preferred to the Work of God." By this he means that the prayer life of the community is their most important activity as members of a monastery. They gather in the chapel in the morning and evening to pray the Liturgy of the Hours, which consists of hymns, psalms, readings and petitions. Noon Prayer and Compline, night prayer, are prayed together in the living groups.

Eucharist is central in the life of the community.

Every sister spends time each day in *lectio*, which is a prayerful, reflective reading of Sacred Scripture. Sisters also have devotional prayer that they pray individually or with others. For some sisters, especially those in the Care Center, prayer is their special ministry and they are often referred to as the "powerhouse" of prayer.

A special prayer board lists many requests for prayer, some of which come via the monastery website.

Prayer partners are another aspect of the prayer life of the community. Sisters draw one another's names every August and pray for their partner during the year. College students and faculty who wish to have a Sister prayer partner are paired with a sister who prays for them and invites them to prayer and social events. Many long-lasting friendships have grown out of these partnerships.

The sisters pray for the needs of the diocese, its parishes and its seminarians, and for parishes in their hometowns. The sponsored institutions and all who work in them are remembered in prayer on a regular basis. The needs of the broader world,

especially the poor, are also part of the community's daily prayer.

Several sisters minister as spiritual directors. S. Jeanne Ranek directs a two-year program that trains spiritual directors of all faiths. The presence of these groups in the monastery is an enriching experience.

Those who are looking for a place and time of quiet are frequent guests in the Peace Center, a retreat space within the monastery. Groups and individuals of all faiths come to share prayer with the sisters, receive spiritual direction, and enjoy the quiet and the beauty of the monastery grounds and the nearby Lewis and Clarke Lake area.

—From the Monastery Web Site:  
[www.yanktonbenedictines.org](http://www.yanktonbenedictines.org)

#### **BRING A FRIEND**

Do you know someone who may be interested in the Benedictine Oblate program? You are always welcome to bring a guest to the Chapter meetings. You or your friend can also contact a Dean for information on what we do, and for information on joining.