



# 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 + **September 2014**

## Greetings

### WELCOME BACK!

The new year of oblate gatherings and newsletters has begun. We look forward to study, prayer, and community as oblates of St. Benedict.

## A Word from the Rule

### TOOLS FOR THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

"Seeking his workman in a multitude of people, the Lord calls out to him and lifts his voice again: *Is there anyone here who yearns for life and desires to see good days?* (Ps 33(34):13) If you hear this and your answer is 'I do,' God then directs these words to you: *If you desire true and eternal life, keep your tongue from vicious talk and your lips from all deceit; turn away from evil and do good; let peace be your quest and aim* (Ps 33(34):14–15). Once you have done this, *my eyes will be upon you and my ears will listen for your prayer; and even before you ask me, I will say to you: Here I am* (Isa 58:9). What, dear brothers, is more delightful than this voice of the Lord calling to us: See how the Lord in his love shows us the way of life."

Source: RB Prol. 14–20.

## 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.

### EVENING PRAYER

Those interested are invited to meet for vespers on the fourth Sunday of the month at 7

p.m. in the chapel at Madonna Rehabilitation. Currently, two cell groups meet on that day and join each other in the Chapel at Madonna for Vespers before splitting up for their cell gatherings. If anyone would like to come for group Vespers at that time, please join us!

## Chapter News

### BENEDICTINE OBLATE ORIENTATION

Please take note of the orientation information for your chapter and share with your friends. Do you know someone who would be interested? Send them to the Chapter's Web site for more information.

## Hastings

Orientation will be held on Saturday, August 23, 2014, from 9:30–11:30 a.m. in the Family Room at St. Michael's Church. For more information, contact Juliene Bryan, Dean, Hastings Chapter, wjbryan@gtmc.net.

## Lincoln

Benedictine Oblate Orientation will be held at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, 5401 South Street, at 7:00 p.m., Sunday, August 24, in Sheridan Rooms A and B. For additional information, call Jim Rea, Dean, Lincoln Chapter, 402.423.8694, or visit the chapter's Web site for more information.

## Omaha

Benedictine Oblate Orientation will be held on Tuesday, September 9, 2014, at the New Cassel Retirement Center, First Floor Lecture Hall. For more information contact Rod Dolton, Dean, Omaha Chapter, rdolton@cox.net.

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

## Steinauer

Orientation for Steinauer will be Monday, August 25, 7:00 p.m., in the Banquet Room at the Convent House Bed & Breakfast. For more information, contact Marcia Borchert, Dean, Steinauer Chapter, db92140@windstream.net.

## Chapter Gatherings

### INTRODUCTION

The Chapters will be discussing *Preferring Christ: A Devotional Commentary on the Rule of Saint Benedict*, by Norvene Vest, starting in September. This text provides a foundational understanding of the Rule of St. Benedict. As an Oblate herself, Norvene guides us in applying the Rule to our individual lives. In order for us to go deep into understanding the Rule in this way, we will be studying this book for the next three years.

Some of you may have an older copy that also doubled as a workbook; the new version does not include the space for writing, but the chapters are divided up in the same way, so you would not have to purchase a new book.

This book is considered a “classic” in learning about the Rule in order to live as Oblates of St. Benedict, and we are excited to begin to study it again.

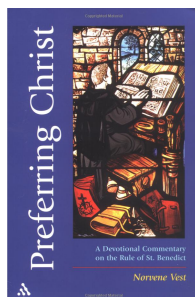
*We will share our Lectio experiences about this book at our Chapter gatherings; all are welcome to participate, whether you are an Inquirer, a Novice, or you have made your Final Oblation in affiliation with Sacred Heart Monastery.*

Assignments may vary for individual Chapters. Contact your Chapter Dean if any questions.

### CHAPTER READINGS

Readings come from Norvene Vest's *Preferring Christ*.

- **September:** No reading
- **October:** Introduction and Prologue
- **November:** Oblation Ceremony, no readings or discussion
- **December:** Interlude I; Chapters 1–2
- **January:** Chapter 3 and Chapter 4:1–38
- **February:** Chapter 4:39–78
- **March:** Interlude II; Chapters 5–6
- **April:** Chapter 7:1–50



- **May:** Chapter 7:51–70.

**Web:** [www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/gatherings/chapter-gathering/](http://www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/gatherings/chapter-gathering/)

### HASTINGS CHAPTER

The general meeting will be Saturday, September 13, 2014, 9:30–11:30 a.m., in the Family Room at St. Michael's Church.

### Hastings' St. Scholastica Cell

Hastings Cell gathering (St. Scholastica Cell): Saturday, September 27, 2014, 9:30 a.m., in the Library at St. Michael's Church.

### Grand Island's Brother Lawrence Cell

Grand Island Cell gathering (Brother Lawrence Cell): Monday, September 29, 2014, 4:30–5:30 p.m., First Christian Church 2400 W. 14th St., Grand Island.

### LINCOLN CHAPTER

General gatherings will be held on Sunday, September 14, 2014, 7:00–9:00 p.m. and Monday, September 15, 2014, at the same time. There are no assigned readings for the September gathering.

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

### OMAHA CHAPTER

The Omaha Chapter will gather on Tuesday, September 9, 2014, 7:00–9:00 p.m. at the New Cassel Retirement Center. The gathering will also serve as Oblates' Orientation.

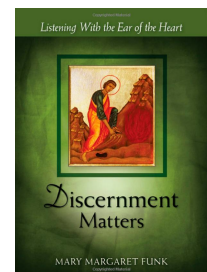
### STEINAUER CHAPTER

The general gathering will be held on Sunday, September 29, 2014, from 7:00–9:00 p.m., in the Banquet Room at Covenant House across from St. Anthony's Church.

## Nebraska Cell Groups

### INTRODUCTION

Oblates who participate in cell groups will begin a two-year study, 2014–2016, from *Discernment Matters: Listening with the Ear of the Heart*, Mary Margaret Funk, OSB, Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2013. A part



of “The Matters Series,” this book provides a background of John Cassian’s “Eight Thoughts” (Cassian had a significant influence on Benedict and his Rule) as well as a brief history into spiritual practices that benefit the Discernment process, and the Discernment process itself.

Discernment comes from a word meaning to “sift out”; it is a way of listening to one’s inner self as well as God’s voice as heard in daily life, our relationships, and our activities. It is very helpful to understand this process as a Benedictine Oblate, especially as we ask the deep questions in our lives: “What is God calling me to do? What do I really want? How can I live as an Oblate?” It may help us in other areas as well.

Join us as we learn more about this essential process.

*Cell groups are reserved for those who have made their Final Oblation in affiliation with Sacred Heart Monastery, unless other arrangements have been made. Please see Carol Olson, Lead Dean, for more information.*

#### READINGS

#### September 2014

Iconographer’s Preface and Introduction, pp. ix–xxxiii

#### October

Chapter 1 (Discernment and the Holy Spirit): pp. 1–13

#### November

Chapter 1, Eight Afflictive Thoughts—food and sex: pp. 13–27

#### December

Chapter 1, Eight Afflictive Thoughts, cont.—things and anger: pp. 27–37

#### January 2014

Chapter 1, Eight Afflictive Thoughts, cont.—dejection and acedia: pp. 37–47

#### February

Chapter 1, Eight Afflictive Thoughts, cont.—vainglory and pride: pp. 47–58

#### March

Chapter 1, Benefits of Passing Through Each Thought; Chapter 2 (Tools for the Interior Journey), Rooting Out Afflictions and Tools of Prayer: observance, practice, and praxis: pp. 58–71

#### April

Chapter 2, cont.—Seven Practices that Become Prayer and the Practice of the Presence: As Taught by Brother Lawrence: pp. 71–80

#### May

Chapter 2, cont.—The Practice of Self-Abandonment to the Present Moment and the Practice of the Cloud of Unknowing: pp. 80–91.  
**Web:** [www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/cells/](http://www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/cells/)

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

##### 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.

##### 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.

### 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.

### 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 **September 6 and 20**.

### 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

#### 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. Francis of Assisi's Mystical Journey: Joyful Fool for Christ, Lover of All Creation presented by Sr. Sheila Carroll, OSB, on Saturday, October 4, 2014, 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. St. Francis invites us to grow in holiness by embracing simplicity and poverty. This practical mystic tells us who we really are and who we can become, if only we realize the gift of God within us and respond in concrete actions.

Walk in his footsteps and spend this day with talks, prayer, and a DVD, and perhaps gain insight into Pope Francis's model for ministry. You can e-mail the monastery at [sophia@mountosb.org](mailto:sophia@mountosb.org) or check out their 2014 retreat offerings online.

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

### 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, PhD. 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).

### SPIRITUAL PAUSE RETREAT

Charlene Gondring and Charlotte Liggett, Lincoln Oblates, will present a retreat, "Visio Divina: Seeing with Eyes of the Heart." The retreat will be on September 20, 2014, from 12:30-3:30 p.m. at Serenity Acres. This contemplative workshop will focus on what we receive from God through our visual senses. Participants will discuss contemplative photography, iconography, and the use of other visual cues.

Serenity Acres is south of Highway 2. Take the Bennet exit and then take the third right (Cottonwood Street) to 15101 Bennet Road on the left.

**RSVP:** Charlotte Liggett, [cmliggett2010@aol.com](mailto:cmliggett2010@aol.com). Charlene Gondring, [cgondring@msn.com](mailto:cgondring@msn.com), or Charlene, 402.489.4621.

### FALL OBLATES' RETREAT AT SACRED HEART MONASTERY

Mark your calendars! Just to let you know that we will have a fall Oblate retreat October 31 through November 2, 2014, at the monastery. This will be the same retreat as directed by Sister Mary Jo in May. More information will be provided at a later date.

## The Wider Community

### *OBLAGES GATHER FOR INSPIRATION AND FELLOWSHIP*



Sr. Phyllis Hunhoff, Sacred Heart Monastery, Sr. Celine Schock, Immaculata Monastery, and Carol Olson, Lead Dean of the Lincoln Chapter.

At last summer's national meeting of North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors (NAABOD), a suggestion arose 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.

On Sunday, August 10, 2014, Benedictine oblates from across Nebraska met at Immaculata Monastery in Norfolk, Nebraska. Over fifty oblates affiliated with various monasteries attended, including several from the Omaha and Lincoln Chapters of Sacred Heart Monastery. The theme was "Living as a Benedictine Oblate in Today's World."

Oblates attending represented various monasteries: St. Michael's Abbey, Omaha; Christ the King Priory, Schuyler; Immaculata Monastery, Norfolk; and Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, south Dakota.

Carol Olson, Lead Dean of the Lincoln Chapter, gave a presentation on "Oblates in a Digital World." Oblate Diana Gaspar spoke on "Balance of Prayer and Work as an Oblate." A panel discussion on "How Do I Live my Life as an Oblate?" included David Frye, Lincoln Oblate.

### *VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AT SACRED HEART MONASTERY*

Sister Phyllis has extended an invitation to the Nebraska Oblates to volunteer for service projects at Sacred Heart Monastery! Opportunities may

include helping in the garden for grape and rhubarb harvests, assisting with items in the gift shop, and other tasks. More information will follow. This would be a great way to help our monastery and get to know the sisters better.

### *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.