



# 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 + **October 2014**

## A Word from the Rule

### HUMBLE PRAYER

“The ninth step of humility is that a monk controls his tongue and remains silent, not speaking unless asked a question, for Scripture warns, *In a flood of words you will not avoid sinning* (Prov 10:19), and, *A talkative man goes about aimlessly on earth* (Ps 139[140]:12).”

Source: RB 7:56–58.

## 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!

### MONASTERY AND CHAPTER GATHER PETITIONS

If you would like to send your prayer requests to the monastery, please use Sacred Heart Monastery’s prayer request form/

#### On the Web:

www.yanktonbenedictines.org/PrayerRequest.php.

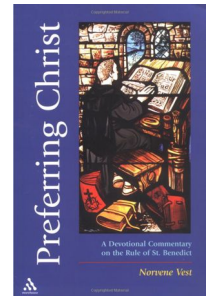
You may also send petitions to Marcia Straatmeyer at mstraat@neb.rr.com or by using the Prayer Request option on the chapter’s Web site.  
**On the Web:** www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/contact/.

## Chapter Gatherings

### CHAPTER READINGS

Readings for the monthly chapter meetings come from Norvene Vest’s *Preferring Christ*.

- **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.



**On the Web:** www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/gatherings/chapter-gathering/

### HASTINGS CHAPTER

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

- Facilitator: Robin Stroot
- Reflection: Ethel Weir
- Prayer Leader: Robin Stroot
- Reading from *Preferring Christ*: Introduction and Prologue.

| CHAPTERS         | DEANS   | LOCATIONS   |
|------------------|---|---|
| <b>Hastings</b>  | <i>Julienne 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 Blum</i> , steve.blum@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org           | <i>Sheridan Room (Sunday)</i>                         |
| <b>Lincoln</b>   | <i>Carol Olson</i> , carol.olson@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org         | <i>Nemaha Room (Monday)</i>                           |
|                  | <i>Jim Rea</i> , jim.rea@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org                 | <i>5401 South St.</i>                                 |
|                  | <i>Mary Schroer</i> , mary.schroer@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org       | <i>Lincoln</i>  |
| <b>Omaha</b>     | <i>Rod Dolton</i> , rod.dolton@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org           | <i>New Cassel Retirement Ctr. Lecture Hall, Omaha</i> |
| <b>Steinauer</b> | <i>Marcia Borchner</i> , marcia.borchner@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org | <i>Banquet Room, Convent House B&amp;B, Steinauer</i> |

**Hastings' St. Scholastica Cell**

Hastings Cell gathering (St. Scholastica Cell): Saturday, October 25, 2014, 9:30 a.m., in the Library at St. Michael's Church.

- Reading from *Discernment Matters*: Chapter 1 (Discernment and the Holy Spirit): pp. 1–13.

**Grand Island's Brother Lawrence Cell**

Grand Island Cell gathering (Brother Lawrence Cell): Monday, October 27, 2014, 4:30–5:30 p.m., First Christian Church 2400 W. 14th St., Grand Island. See the reading listed under Hastings.

**LINCOLN CHAPTER****Welcoming Inquirers**

We have several new inquirers in the Lincoln Chapter, discerning their call to become oblates. Please introduce yourselves to them and welcome them with Benedictine hospitality. They doubtless have the same questions we all had when we came to our first meetings!

**General Gathering**

General gatherings will be held on Sunday, October 12, 2014, 7:00–9:00 p.m. and Monday, October 13, 2014, at the same time.

- Reading from *Preferring Christ*: Introduction and Prologue.

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

The cell gatherings will read Chapter 1 (Discernment and the Holy Spirit), pp. 1–13, from *Discernment Matters* by Sr. Mary Margaret Funk.

**OMAHA CHAPTER**

The Omaha Chapter will gather on Tuesday, October 14, 2014, 7:00–9:00 p.m. at the New Cassel Retirement Center.

- Reading from *Preferring Christ*: Introduction and Prologue.

**STEINAUER CHAPTER**

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

- Reading from *Preferring Christ*: Introduction and Prologue.

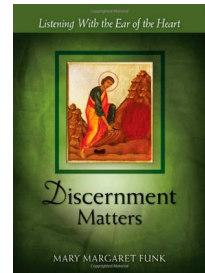
**Nebraska Cell Groups****INTRODUCTION**

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****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.

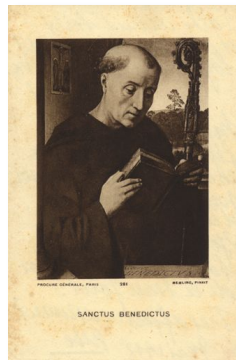
#### Preferring Christ Cell

- 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 **October 4 and 18.**

### LINCOLN OFFERS NEW CELL GROUP



Sanctus Benedictus,  
Holy Card,  
France, c. 1930s.

To give oblates another  
option for the fellowship and  
reflection that cell groups  
offer, the Lincoln Chapter is  
adding a new cell group. It  
will gather, beginning  
November 1, every other  
Saturday morning at 8:00 a.m.

The plans for the group's  
first several months are  
sketched out below. David  
Frye will serve as the group's  
leader. If you have questions  
or if you would like to become  
a member of the cell group,

please contact him using either of these methods:

**cell phone:** 402.450.2072

**e-mail:** [davidfrye@windstream.net](mailto:davidfrye@windstream.net).

### GATHERINGS

Every other Saturday morning, beginning Nov. 1.  
Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital  
5401 South Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

before 8:00 a.m.: Gather in Silence

8:00 a.m.: Morning Prayer, Ryan Memorial Chapel

8:10 a.m.: Time of Silent Prayer, Ryan Memorial  
Chapel

8:20 a.m.: Gathering, \_\_\_\_\_ Room

9:30 a.m.: Breakfast and Fellowship, Cafeteria

**GUIDELINES**

- Participation is open to all oblates of the Lincoln Chapter and others who have received permission from the chapter's deans.
- By consensus, the cell may choose to skip a gathering.
- The cell's members respect the trust of others and hold the contents of cell conversations in confidence.
- Members will select a name for the cell.

**BOOKS**

- Text: *Discernment Matters: Listening with the Ear of the Heart*, Mary Margaret Funk, OSB, Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2013.
- Sources: *The Rule of St. Benedict* and the Bible.

**TOPICS****Nov. 1: Personal Introductions and Discussion of Discernment Matters**

- Iconographer's Preface and Introduction: pp. ix–xxxiii; Chapter 1 (Discernment and the Holy Spirit); pp. 1–13  
Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

**Nov. 15: Lectio Divina and "Treasures from Your Shelf"**

*"... nothing less than the tools for the cultivation of virtues ..."* (RB 73:6).

- Leader for Morning Prayer: \_\_\_\_\_
- Group Lectio Divina  
Reading: RB 73  
Leader: \_\_\_\_\_
- We bring the most inspiring and influential book or books in our collections of resources for our lives as oblates and share how they have helped to guide us on our journeys to our "heavenly home."

**Nov. 29: Discussion of Discernment Matters**

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

**Dec. 13: Lectio Divina and "Patterns and Practices of the Oblate Life"**

*"Through this love, all that he once performed with dread, he will now begin to observe without effort, as though naturally, from habit ..."* (RB 7:68).

- Leader for Morning Prayer: \_\_\_\_\_
- Group Lectio Divina  
Reading: RB 7: 67–70  
Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

- In this conversation, we will talk about the concrete ways that we have learned to live by the spirit of the Rule, sharing the small and large patterns and practices that help us to live the oblate life.

**Dec. 27: Discussion of Discernment Matters**

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

**Jan. 10: Lectio Divina and "Drafting a Personal Rule"**

*"We must, then, prepare our hearts and bodies for the battle of holy obedience to his instructions"* (RB Prol. 40)

- Leader for Morning Prayer: \_\_\_\_\_
- Group Lectio Divina  
Reading: RB Prol. 39–44  
Leader: \_\_\_\_\_
- The initial formation of novices in our chapter includes the discipline of drafting a personal rule to help the novice apply the Rule to his or her life. In today's discussion, we will return to this suggestion and talk about how we might apply this discipline to our continuing oblate life.

**Jan. 24: Discussion of Discernment Matters**

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

**Feb. 7: Lectio Divina and "Living by The Rule"**

*"But as we progress in this way of life and in faith, we shall run on the path of God's commandments, our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love"* (RB Prol. 49)

- Leader for Morning Prayer: \_\_\_\_\_
- Group Lectio Divina  
Reading: RB Prol. 45–50  
Leader: \_\_\_\_\_
- With a few months of shared experiences in our cell, we will talk about the direction and focus of our cell gatherings as we prepare for Lent.

**Retreats****MATTERS OF THE HEART**

There is another Oblate Retreat scheduled for **October 31 to November 2, 2014**, at Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, South Dakota. This retreat, entitled "Matters of the Heart," will be a repeat of the one that was offered this past May. Sr. Mary Jo

will be the retreat director. The retreat will explore the themes that St. Benedict uses when describing the heart of a monk. It will begin the evening of October 31 and end the morning of November 2. Registration is between 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Friday, followed by Evening Prayer with the sisters and then by supper. The cost for a single room, including meals, is \$120; a room with two people is \$170. Reservations can be made by contacting Sr. Joelle Bauer, 1005 W. 8th Street, Yankton, S.D. 57078, jbauer@mtmc.edu, 605.668.6009. The brochure can be downloaded from the Yankton Benedictines web site under "Oblate News and Events".

**On the Web:** <http://yanktonbenedictines.org>.

#### **AWAKENING THE MYSTIC WITHIN**

The St. Benedict Center at Christ the King Priory in Schuyler, Nebraska, has many retreat offerings. Among these is "Awakening the Mystic Within," set for Saturday, **October 11, 2014**, 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. The presenter is Fr. Joseph Nassal. Is mysticism something beyond our reach? This retreat explores how we can honor the mystic within by becoming aware of the love that God has kindled in our hearts.

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

#### **ILLUMINATING THE WORD: THE ADVENT READINGS**

The Sophia Center at Mount St. Scholastica in Atchison, Kansas, offers many retreat opportunities. On Thursday, **November 13, 2014**, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Sr. Irene Nowell will present "Illuminating the Word: The Advent Readings." It will offer a meditative analysis of the readings for the four Sundays of Advent, using appropriate illuminations from the Saint John's Bible. For more information and to find other retreat offerings, visit the Sophia Center on the Web.

**On the Web:** <http://www.mountosb.org/ministries/sophia-spirituality-center>.

#### **The Wider Community**

##### **FR. MICHAEL CASEY'S "TOOLS OF THE SPIRITUAL CRAFT"**

On September 5–6, 2014, a number of Lincoln Chapter oblates gathered at the St. Benedict Center in Schuyler, Nebraska, to hear Fr. Michael Casey's presentation on chapter four of the *Rule of St. Benedict*. Oblates attending included: Paul Blotkamp, Steve Blum, Tim Fisher, David Frye, Charlene Gondring, Ken Johnson, Charlotte Liggett,

Jim Rea, and Phip Ross. Several sisters from Sacred Heart Monastery also were present. Fr. Casey's conferences on Friday evening and Saturday focused on the often-neglected chapter of the *Rule* that lays out seventy-four tools for Christian living. He also explores these tools in his new book, *Seventy-four Tools for Good Living*.



**Fr. Michael Casey, OCSO**

#### **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 becoming a Benedictine Oblate? You are always welcome to bring a guest to the Chapter meetings. You or your friend can also contact a dean for information on becoming a part of the oblate life.

#### **Reflection**

##### **AN EXCERPT FROM MARKINGS**

I don't know Who-or what-put the question, I don't know when it was put. I don't even remember answering. But at some moment I did answer *Yes* to Someone—or Something—and from that hour I was certain that existence is meaningful and that, therefore, my life, in self-surrender, had a goal.

From that moment I have known what it means "not to look back," and "to take no thought for the morrow."

Led by the Ariadne's thread of my answer through the labyrinth of Life, I came to a time and place where I realized that the Way leads to a triumph which is a catastrophe, and to a catastrophe which is a triumph, that the price for committing one's life would be reproach, and that the only elevation possible to man lies in the

depths of humiliation. After that the word “courage” lost its meaning, since nothing could be taken from me.

As I continued along the Way, I learned, set by step, word by word, that behind every saying in the Gospels stands *one* man and *one* man’s experience. Also behind the prayer that the cup might pass from him and his promise to drink it. Also behind each of the words from the Cross.

**Source:** Dag Hammarskjöld (1905–1961), Whitsunday 1961, *Markings*.