



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 + **November 2014**

A Word from the Rule

A SCHOOL FOR THE LORD'S SERVICE

"Therefore we intend to establish a school for the Lord's service. In drawing up its regulations, we hope to set down nothing harsh, nothing burdensome. The good of all concerned, however, may prompt us to a little strictness in order to amend faults and to safeguard love. Do not be daunted immediately by fear and run away from the road that leads to salvation. It is bound to be narrow at the outset. 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."

Source: RB Prol. 45-49

Worship

OBLATION CEREMONY: NOTE THE CHANGE OF DATE!

The Oblation ceremony will be held on **Sunday, November 23, 2014**, at 2:00 p.m., instead of the usual second Sunday of November. Let us join those who have heard God's call to share in the Benedictine way of Life by making their Final Oblation and welcome those who are making their Initial Oblation.

The Oblation ceremony will be held in the James E. Ryan Chapel at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital in Lincoln. We will celebrate Vespers, First Oblation for new members, Final Oblation for Novice Oblates, and Renewal of Oblation for current members. A reception will follow in the North Commons. Friends and family are invited to attend.

Sr. Phyllis Hunhoff, Sr. Penny Bingham, and Sr. Joelle Bauer will be coming from Sacred Heart Monastery for the ceremony.

If you are making your initial or final oblation and are unable to attend the Oblation ceremony, please let one of the deans know. We'll arrange a ceremony before a Chapter meeting, or individually, as needed.

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/.

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 Blum</i> , steve.blum@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	<i>Sheridan Room (Sunday)</i>
Lincoln	<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>
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>

INTRODUCTION TO THE DIVINE OFFICE

A special session will be held on **Saturday, November 1, 2014**, 9:30–11:30 a.m. in the Lancaster Room at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. Lincoln Oblate Marcia Straatmeyer will demonstrate how to use *Shorter Christian Prayer*, our chapter's book for the Divine Office. We will also give an orientation to the Oblation ceremony.

Please plan to come to this session if you are unfamiliar with how to use *Shorter Christian Prayer*. Have you been using *Shorter Christian Prayer*, but still sometimes feel unsure if you are using it effectively? This is an opportunity to get a refresher course.

LITURGICAL YEAR CALENDARS

The "Year of Grace" liturgical calendars for 2014–2015 will be available for a \$1.00 donation at the Oblation ceremony. Look for them on the table outside the Chapel.

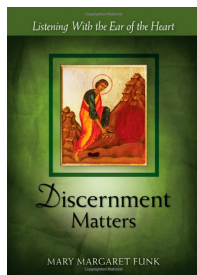
Chapter Gatherings**A RESPITE**

In November, none of the Nebraska chapters will be having a general meeting, but instead will gather at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital for the Oblation Ceremony on **Sunday, November 23, 2014**, at 2:00 p.m.

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.

CELL GROUP READINGS FOR 2014**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

Web: www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/cells/

CELL GROUPS

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.
- This Month: November 22
- Readings: *Discernment Matters*, pp. 13–27, but including "Thoughts of Things," pp. 27–32 as well.

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.
- This Month: November 24
- Reading this Month: *Discernment Matters*, pp. 13–27, but including "Thoughts of Things," pp. 27–32 as well.

Lincoln

Beginners' Cell

- Leader: Marti Fritzen
- Meetings: Monthly on the fourth Sunday at 7:00 p.m., beginning with Vespers in the Ryan Memorial Chapel at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. The group then moves to the Platte Room for its discussion.
- This Month: November 23
- Reading this Month: *Discernment Matters*, pp. 13–27.

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.
- This Month: November 24
- Reading this Month: *Discernment Matters*, pp. 13–27.

Preferring Christ Cell

- Leaders: Paul Blotkamp and Charlotte Liggett
- Meetings: The fourth Sunday of every month at Madonna, 7:00 p.m.
- This Month: November 23
- Reading this Month: *Discernment Matters*, pp. 13–27.

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: November 1, 15, and 29
- Readings this Month: *Discernment Matters*, pp. 13–27.

LINCOLN OFFERS NEW CELL GROUP

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.

GATHERINGS

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

by 8:00 a.m.: Gather in Silence, Ryan Memorial Chapel

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

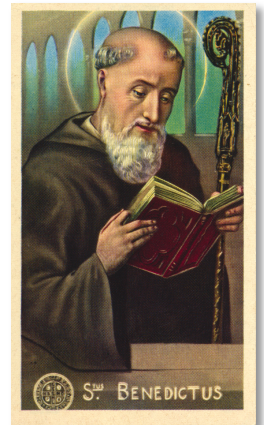
8:10 a.m.: Time for Silent Prayer, Chapel

8:20 a.m.: Gathering, Frontier 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.



Sanctus Benedictus,
Holy Card, Italy.

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: David Frye

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 are spaces available for the 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. For one person from the Yankton area Oblate Chapter, a partial grant is available for those who may need assistance paying.

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”.

There is also one scholarship available for an oblate from any of the Nebraska chapters. If you are interested, please contact Carol Barry, Lincoln Dean, 402.488.8221.

We hope several oblates will be able to attend.

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

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>.

Reflection**SACRED LEISURE**

A beautiful part of our Oblate experience, at least for our group in Omaha is our "Oblate Prayer," which until this season has always opened our meetings. This year, the prayer will end our meetings, since Vespers will rightfully take first precedence and begin our meetings henceforth. Over time though, the Oblate Prayer personally has become almost a perfect summary of what I, at least now, sense in my journey as St. Benedict's vision described in the Rule. One part of the little prayer that has really caught more and more of my own attention, especially in these last several years since retirement, is the petition within, that we all might be models of "... **sacred leisure** ...," one of four Christian challenges presented.

At first, as a retired father of five and grandfather of soon-to-be nine grandchildren, just the idea of "leisure" in this crazy, mixed-up world, from my point of view, can become a cloudy concept. And as one fortunate enough to live in a country well provided for, at least materially, in my attempts to seek Christ, when "leisure" becomes "sacred leisure," the cloudiness can become even more opaque. Distinguishing the difference can be a major day-to-day preoccupation in trying to keep focused on Christ.

Crazy, mixed up world?? Really? Maybe even that is not right. After all, isn't our country a material utopia for those of us lucky enough to be born in relative comfort here? Maybe it is not the world that is crazy and mixed up. Maybe, as a committed Christian who has a tendency to think too much, maybe the crazy and mixed up part is me, not the world!

So, which position is right? Well, at least in our commercialized, media-driven society, "leisure" seems far and away to be the overarching focus that takes precedence over the even remotely positioned contender, which arguably might be "work." Actually, maybe a better fit yet is "marketing leisure." After all, if we are anything, we are a consumer society, and as such, the universal compulsion to sell goods and services seems to be to market virtually everything in a way that will assure perfect happiness. So, if marketing happiness is the driver and the world is not crazy and mixed up, but I am with my outmoded even obscure Christian concepts, then I really have some major problems (crazy and mixed up indeed!).

For whatever reason, on the conscious level, if I turn on the TV for instance (actually, you can take any mode of marketing you choose, for the focus is universal), I immediately must deal with an almost obsessive media preoccupation with the "birds and bees." And I also wonder: is all this "birds and bees" stuff an overt or a covert effort to get my attention—in its assertion to guarantee pure bliss and happiness if I buy? Or is it both? This discussion could get very interesting very fast, especially for a Christian, and even white-hot for young Christian couples committed to passing on such an absurd frame of reference as the Christian faith to their children!

Well, in trying to figure out if the world is crazy or mixed up, or if it is me, I am already in way over my head, with no clue as to how to get out or even make sense of it. So "leisure" is a huge issue in my world, and as a committed Christian, "sacred leisure" is by far and away a major preoccupation. So, what do I do? The only thing I can do, like one constantly getting terrified and sometimes even injured by big lions, I can only run back again and again not only to the Rule, not only to the example of St. Benedict and the enormous treasury of all the other saints, but to Our Lord Himself. St. Teresa of Avila said in *Interior Castles* that the lions of this world waiting to devour us are real and prolific. And even if it is almost impossible to avoid them, especially in today's crazy and mixed up world, we are always promised victory if we persevere in our prayers. Well, I guess I am truly the one who is crazy and mixed up. I don't know how St. Teresa got involved in this, and there certainly are no lions roaming around!

Rod Dolton, Omaha Dean

General Announcements

SNOW POLICY

It seems timely to restate our 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!

CHANGE OF E-MAIL ADDRESSES

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

info@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org.

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

Thanksgiving

JUST IN TIME

A pair of wild turkeys make their way across the grounds at Sacred Heart Monastery. Thanks to Carol Barry for sharing the photograph.

