



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 + January 2015

A Word from the Rule

ENTERING THE COMMUNITY

"The abbot must know that anyone undertaking the charge of souls must be ready to account for them. Whatever the number of brothers he has in his care, let him realize that on judgment day he will surely have to submit a reckoning to the Lord for all their souls—and indeed for his own as well. In this way, while always fearful of the future examination of the shepherd about the sheep entrusted to him and careful about the state of others' accounts, he becomes concerned also about his own, and while helping others to amend by his warnings, he achieves the amendment of his own faults."

Source: RB 2:37–40

A Message from the Lead Dean

JOURNEYING WITH THE RULE

In the fall of 2014, our Oblate community embarked on a three-year journey of focused attention and study of the Rule of St. Benedict, via *Preferring Christ* by Norvene Vest. As Benedictines, we are taught to use *Lectio Divina* for our spiritual reading. We respond to our inner attraction to a word or phrase, slowly and patiently reflect on it, and then integrate it prayerfully into our daily lives. What may seem to be an insignificant word becomes full of Divine Wisdom as it percolates through our mind, body, and soul. The Holy Spirit is at work in each of us as we learn how to live the Rule! When we gather together in community, our intention is not to discuss *Preferring Christ* like a book club where we dissect what the author (Vest) thinks about the section of the Rule we are studying, although we may consider her helpful

insights as points of reference. Instead, we share examples of how the Rule touches *our* lives in our faith discussions. With prayerful attention we listen to and learn from one another. There is no end to this journey; it is a lifelong process of an Oblate to be formed by and embody the Rule of St. Benedict. An iceberg has its greater portion underwater and only a small amount is visible above the water. Perhaps we can think of this larger part of the iceberg as the time we spend in personal *Lectio*. The tip is the part that we share with other Oblates when we gather together. May God bless each of you on your journey through the Rule of St. Benedict!

Carol Olson, Lead Dean

Reflection

FROM SERMONS ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS BY ST. BERNARD

We read in the Gospel that when the Lord spoke of people eating his flesh, some said: "This is a hard saying," and went about with him no more. But when his own disciples were asked whether they too would go away, they answered: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

The situation has not changed, brothers and sisters. To some it is evident that the words of Jesus are spirit and life, and so they follow him; others find his words too hard and seek some wretched consolation elsewhere. Yet Wisdom cries out in the streets, that is, in the broad and spacious way that leads to death, and call back those who walk there.

God says: "For forty years I was with this generation and I was forced to declare: This people has a straying ear." In another psalm we read: "God

CHAPTERS	DEANS	LOCATIONS
Hastings	Julienne Bryan, julienne.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	Lancaster 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

spoke once." Once because always His speaking is a single, unbroken, continuous, and unending act.

God calls sinners back to their own consciences and accuses them of their sin, which is all the greater, since God dwells with them and speaks to them, doing what he had told his prophets to do:

"Speak to the heart of Jerusalem."

Brothers and sisters, the prophets gave us salutary advice: If today we hear God's voice, let us not harden our hearts. Gospel and prophets here speak almost the same language, for the Lord says: "My sheep hear my voice"; and holy David had said before him: "His people and the sheep he pastures, if today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Listen, finally, to Habakkuk, who does not soften the Lord's warning but reflects carefully upon it: "I shall keep watch and mount the ramparts to see what he says to me and what answer I shall give to his charge." We, too, brothers and sisters, must watch, for now is the time of battle.

Worship

ANNUAL OBLATION CEREMONY

The annual Oblation Ceremony was held on Sunday, November 23, 2014, in the James C. Ryan Memorial Chapter at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, Lincoln. We welcomed three new oblates and eight novices during Vespers. Many oblates, family, and friends attended both the ceremony and the reception afterwards.



Tanna Skarniak, Hasting Chapter, Gina Love-Aguilar, Omaha Chapter, and Marianne Guenther, Lincoln Chapter, made their final oblations.



Carol Olson, Lead Dean of the Lincoln Chapter, and Sr. Penny Bingham, prioress of Sacred Heart Monastery, lead the ceremony.



Eight novices made their initial oblations.



Phyllis Spence, Lincoln Chapter, made her final oblation.

Let us extend our Benedictine hospitality and give a warm welcome to our new members!

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/.

SHORTER CHRISTIAN PRAYER INSTRUCTIONS

We are in the Christmas Season from Christmas until the Baptism of the Lord on January 11, 2015. The Magnificat antiphons and concluding prayers for the Epiphany of the Lord, January 4, can be found on p. 397–398. During the weekdays after Epiphany, January 5–10, turn to pp. 399–402 at the Reading.

The Magnificat antiphons and concluding prayers for the Baptism of the Lord, January 11, 2015, can be found on pp. 403–404.

On the Monday, after the Baptism of the Lord, January 12, 2015, we begin Ordinary Time with Week I on p. 54. We will follow the four-week Psalter throughout Ordinary Time until Ash Wednesday on February 18, 2015.

Chapter Gatherings

CHAPTER READINGS

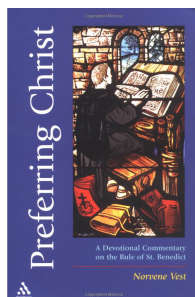
Readings for the monthly chapter meetings come from Norvene Vest's *Preferring Christ*. Since several editions of this book are in print, the references give the chapter and section listings, but not page numbers, which change, depending upon the edition.

- **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, January 10, 2015, 9:30–11:30 a.m., in the Family Room at St. Michael's Church.



- Reading from *Preferring Christ*: Chapter 3 and Chapter 4:1–38.
- Facilitator: Sharon Connor
- Reflection: Robin Stroot
- Prayer Leader: Susan Janda.

LINCOLN CHAPTER

General Gathering

General gatherings will be held on Sunday, January 11, 2015, 7:00–9:00 p.m., in the Sheridan Room at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, and Monday, January 12, 2015, in the hospital's Lancaster Room, at the same time.

- Reading from *Preferring Christ*: Chapter 3 and Chapter 4:1–38

OMAHA CHAPTER

The Omaha Chapter will gather on Tuesday, January 13, 2015, 7:00–9:00 p.m. at the New Cassel Retirement Center.

- Reading from *Preferring Christ*, continuing where the chapter left off in December.

STEINAUER CHAPTER

The general gathering will be held on Monday, January 26, 2015, from 7:00–9:00 p.m., in the Banquet Room at Covenant House across from St. Anthony's Church.

- Reading from *Preferring Christ*: Chapter 3 and Chapter 4:1–38

Nebraska Cell Groups

CELL GROUPS

The Nebraska Chapter has a variety of cell groups.

Web: www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/cells/

HASTINGS

Saint Scholastica Cell

- Leader: various individuals
- Meetings: The fourth Saturday of the month beginning at 9:00 a.m. in the library of St. Michael's Church, Hastings.
- This Month: Saturday, January 24, 2015.
- Readings this Month: *Discernment Matters* by Sr. Mary Margaret Funk, OSB. Chapter 1: Eight Afflictive Thoughts—First Affliction of the Mind: Thoughts of Anger; Second Affliction of the Mind: Thoughts of

Dejection, The Hinge Affliction of the Mind: Acedia, pp. 32–47.

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: Monday, January 26, 2015.
- Reading this Month: *Discernment Matters* by Sr. Mary Margaret Funk, OSB. Chapter 1: Eight Afflictive Thoughts—First Affliction of the Mind: Thoughts of Anger; Second Affliction of the Mind: Thoughts of Dejection, The Hinge Affliction of the Mind: Acedia, pp. 32–47.

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: January 25
- Reading this Month: *Discernment Matters*, Chapter 1: Eight Afflictive Thoughts, cont.—dejection and acedia: pp. 37–47.

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: January 26
- Reading this Month: *Discernment Matters*, Chapter 1: Eight Afflictive Thoughts, cont.—dejection and acedia: pp. 37–47.

Preferring Christ Cell

- Leaders: Paul Blotkamp and Charlotte Liggett
- Meetings: The fourth Sunday of every month at Madonna, 7:00 p.m.
- This Month: January 25

- Reading this Month: *Discernment Matters*, Chapter 1: Eight Afflictive Thoughts, cont.—dejection and acedia: pp. 37–47.

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: January 10 and 24
- Readings this Month: *Discernment Matters*, Chapter 1: Eight Afflictive Thoughts, cont.—dejection and acedia: pp. 37–47.

Hildegard von Bingen Cell

New Members Welcome

To give oblates another option for the fellowship and reflection that cell groups offer, the Lincoln Chapter has added a new cell group. It gathers every other Saturday morning at 8:00 a.m.

The plans for the group's January gatherings 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.

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.

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

Jan. 10: **Discussion of *Discernment Matters***

- Chapter 1, Eight Afflictive Thoughts—things and anger: pp. 27–37
Leader for Morning Prayer: David Frye
Discussion Leader: Mary Schroer

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

- Chapter 1, Eight Afflictive Thoughts—dejection and acedia: pp. 27–37
Leader for Morning Prayer: Subiaco Cell
Discussion Leader: To be Decided

Retreats

DISCERNMENT RETREAT II

- Christ the King Priory, Schuyler, Nebraska
- Friday, January 23, through Sunday, January 25, 2015.

This retreat for women will help you, at any stage of your life, to learn the fine art of listening and responding deeply to God's call in your life. The retreat is led by Teresa Monaghan of the Secular Institute of the Apostolic Oblates, Father Thomas Leitner, OSB, and a team of consecrated and lay women who will present and invite you to apply many useful "tools for discernment."

Information about Costs and Registration and Updates on Other Retreat Offerings: www.stbenedictcenter.com.

LECTIO

- Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, South Dakota
- Friday, February 20, to Sunday, February 22, 2015.
- Begin Lent with a time of quiet and reflection.

Watch for Info: www.yanktonbenedictines.org.

PODCAST: THE RULE OF BENEDICT

Fr. Mauritius Wilde, OSB, Prior of Christ the King Abbey in Schuyler Nebraska, presents a podcast on the *Rule of Benedict*. It can be found on the Discerning Hearts Web site:

With host Kris McGregor, Fr. Mauritius provides commentary on various verses from chapters of the Rule.

Web: www.discerninghearts.com.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

An Oblate Leadership Training session is set for January 31, 2015. It will be in the Flanagan Room at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, Lincoln. Mary Reece, MS, PLMHP, will present training on Group Dynamics and Carol Olson will present on Group *Lectio Divina*. Lunch will be provided at noon and the training will be from 12:30–2:30 p.m. It is open to all Oblates but is especially for those Oblates who facilitate group discussion at the Chapter meetings as well as Oblate Cell Leaders. Please RSVP to Carol Olson by January 24, 2015.

Carol Olson: carol.olson@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org.

News from Sacred Heart Monastery

A NOTE FROM SR. PHYLLIS

Dear Oblates:

We will be celebrating the Eucharistic Liturgy for all of you and your loved ones December 21, 25, and 28, 2014, and monthly in 2015.

My love and prayers for each of you.

Sister Phyllis Hunhoff, OSB.

MONASTERY WEB SITE INCLUDES SECTION ON OBLATES

The refreshed Web site of Sacred Heart Monastery features an expanded section devoted to oblates. An e-visit would be worth your time.

Web Site: www.yanktonbenedictines.org/oblates/.

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.