



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 + **March 2015**

A Word from St. Benedict's Rule

A CONTINUOUS LENT

"The life of a monk ought to be a continuous Lent. Since few, however, have the strength for this, we urge the entire community during these days of Lent to keep its manner of life most pure and to wash away in this holy season the negligences of other times. This we can do in a fitting manner by refusing to indulge evil habits, and by devoting ourselves to prayer with tears, to reading, to compunction of heart and self-denial."

Source: RB 49:1-4

Reflection

THE CARPENTER'S TOOLS

Someone has imagined the Carpenter's tools holding a conference. Brother Hammer presided. Several suggested he leave the meeting because he was too noisy. Replied the Hammer, "If I have to leave this shop, Brother Screw must go also. You have to turn him around again and again to get him to accomplish anything."

Brother Screw then spoke up, "If you wish, I'll leave, but Brother Plane must leave too. All his work is on the surface. His efforts have no depth."

To this Brother Plane responded, "Brother Rule will also have to withdraw, for he is always measuring folks as though he were the only one who is right."

Brother Rule then complained against Brother Sandpaper: "You ought to leave too because you're so rough and always rubbing people the wrong way."

In the midst of all this discussion in walked the Carpenter of Nazareth. He had arrived to start His day's work. Putting on His apron, He went to the

bench to make a pulpit from which to proclaim the Gospel. He employed the hammer, screw, plane, rule, sandpaper, and all the other tools. After the day's work when the pulpit was finished, Brother Saw arose and remarked: "Brethren, I observe that all of us are workers together with the Lord."

God is a God of variety. In nature, what a diversity of animals! Every snowflake is different, every fingerprint, every face. Likewise, God is a God of variety in His church. What a diversity of gifts He has bestowed on believers to equip them for service!

"You Are Needed!"

Source: Anonymous

Remembrance

THE SOLEMNITY OF ST. BENEDICT

The Church celebrates the Solemnity of St. Benedict on Saturday, March 21, 2015. We remember the holy man's death on this day.

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.

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	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

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

Lent began on Ash Wednesday, February 18, 2015. The readings for Lent began on the first Sunday of Lent, February 21, 2015.

On the first Sunday of Lent, Evening Prayer moved to Week I with Sunday Evening Prayer I on p. 37 of *Shorter Christian Prayer*. The antiphons for Lent are shown in red. At the Reading, turn to pp. 405–428. One week of texts is given for the Lenten Season.

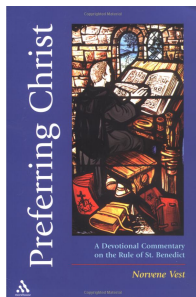
Chapter Gatherings

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.

- **March:** Interlude II; Chapters 5–6
- **April:** Chapter 7:1–50
- **May:** Chapter 7:51–70.

Web: www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/gatherings/chapter-gathering/



HASTINGS CHAPTER

The general meeting will be Saturday, March 14, 2015, 9:30–11:30 a.m., in the Family Room at St. Michael's Church.

- Reading from *Preferring Christ*: Interlude II and Chapters 5–6
- Facilitator: Susan Janda
- Reflection: Jim Hoffman
- Prayer Leader: Gerry Kuhn.

LINCOLN CHAPTER

General Gathering

General gatherings will be held on Sunday, March 8, 2015, 7:00–9:00 p.m., in the Sheridan Room at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, and Monday, March 9, 2015, 7:00–9:00 p.m., in the hospital's Lancaster Room.

Sr. Mildred Busch, Pastoral Administrative Assistant at St. Michael's Church and School in Lincoln, will give a talk about living by St. Benedict's *Rule* in the consecrated life. This talk helps the chapter to mark 2015 as a Year dedicated to Consecrated Life, as proclaimed by Pope Francis. Sr. Mildred is a member of the community of religious at Sacred Heart Monastery.

NOTE: Daylight Savings Time begins *early* on this day. Please remember to set your clock ahead.

- Reading from *Preferring Christ*: Interlude II; Chapters 5–6.

OMAHA CHAPTER

The Omaha Chapter will gather on Tuesday, March 10, 2015, 7:00–9:00 p.m. at the New Cassel Retirement Center.

- Reading from *Preferring Christ*, beginning with Prologue vv.29–34, p. 11, following Vespers.

STEINAUER CHAPTER

The general gathering will be held on Monday, March 30, 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*: Interlude II; Chapters 5–6.

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 9:30 a.m. in the library of St. Michael's Church, Hastings.
- This Month: Saturday, March 28, 2015.
- Readings this Month: *Discernment Matters* by Sr. Mary Margaret Funk, OSB. Chapter 1: Benefits of Passing through Each Thought;

Chapter 2: Antidotes—Rooting Out Afflictions and Tools of Prayer—
Observance, Practice, and *Praxis*, pp. 58–71.

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, March 23, 2015.
- Readings this Month: *Discernment Matters* by Sr. Mary Margaret Funk, OSB. Chapter 1: Benefits of Passing through Each Thought; Chapter 2: Antidotes—Rooting Out Afflictions and Tools of Prayer—
Observance, Practice, and *Praxis*, pp. 58–71.

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: March 22, 2015.
- Readings this Month: *Discernment Matters* by Sr. Mary Margaret Funk, OSB. Chapter 1: Benefits of Passing through Each Thought; Chapter 2: Antidotes—Rooting Out Afflictions and Tools of Prayer—
Observance, Practice, and *Praxis*, pp. 58–71.

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: March 23, 2015.
- Readings this Month: *Discernment Matters* by Sr. Mary Margaret Funk, OSB. Chapter 1: Benefits of Passing through Each Thought; Chapter 2: Antidotes—Rooting Out Afflictions and Tools of Prayer—
Observance, Practice, and *Praxis*, pp. 58–71.

Preferring Christ Cell

- Leaders: Paul Blotkamp and Charlotte Liggett
- Meetings: The fourth Sunday of every month at Madonna, 7:00 p.m.
- This Month: March 22, 2015.
- Readings this Month: *Discernment Matters* by Sr. Mary Margaret Funk, OSB. Chapter 1: Benefits of Passing through Each Thought; Chapter 2: Antidotes—Rooting Out Afflictions and Tools of Prayer—
Observance, Practice, and *Praxis*, pp. 58–71.

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: March 7 and 21, 2015.
- Readings this Month: *Discernment Matters* by Sr. Mary Margaret Funk, OSB. Chapter 1: Benefits of Passing through Each Thought; Chapter 2: Antidotes—Rooting Out Afflictions and Tools of Prayer—
Observance, Practice, and *Praxis*, pp. 58–71.

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 February 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

8:15 a.m.: Time for Silent Prayer, Chapel
8:25 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

March 7: ***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)

Morning Prayer: Steve Blum, Leader

Group *Lectio Divina*: RB Prol. 39–44, Carol Brewer, Leader

Discussion: The initial formation of novices 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.

Discussion Leader: David Frye.

March 21: **Discussion of *Discernment Matters***

- Chapter 1: Benefits of Passing through Each Thought; Chapter 2: Antidotes—Rooting Out Afflictions and Tools of Prayer—Observance, Practice, and *Praxis*, pp. 58–71.

Leader for Morning Prayer: Subiaco Cell

Discussion Leader: To be decided on March 7.

Retreats

SPIRITUAL PAUSE RETREAT:

SEEING WITH THE EYES OF THE HEART

- Serenity Acres, Bennet, Nebraska

- Saturday, April 25, 2015, 12:30–3:30 p.m.

Lincoln Oblates Charlene Gondring and Charlotte Liggett will present this contemplative workshop, which will focus on what we receive from God through our visual sense.



Contemplative photography, iconography, and the use of other visual cues will be discussed. Icons are considered windows to holiness and spirituality and thus these ancient images have much to teach us. Using contemplative practices, participants will be encouraged to receive and “see” sacred messages of beauty, love, compassion, and truth that God offers to us. Participants will be encouraged to journal, use cameras or cell phones, and to just be with the images. Materials will be available for participants to exercise their perceptual awareness and become more acutely aware of visual “messages.” Using the knowledge of iconography and the writings of Christine Valter Paintner, we will practice *visio divina* to *see with the eyes of the heart*.

SCRIPTURES

- Psalm 19: 1–2—“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.”
- Ephesians 1:18—“I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.”

SECTIONS

- I. Introduction & Contemplative Photography—Charlotte
- II. Icons & Praying with Icons—Charlene
- III. Visio Divina (Use of Visual Stations)—All
- IV. Reflecting—All

VISUAL STATIONS

1. Icons and candles in a darkened room
2. Loaf of bread in the kitchen
3. St. John's Bible in prayer room (downstairs)
4. Photographs for journaling
5. Outdoors.

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

Registration: contact Charlotte Liggett, cmliggett2010@aol.com, or Charlene Gondring, cgondring@msn.com, 402.489.4621.

Web:

www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/gatherings/retreats/

CONTEMPLATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY—THE PLAY OF SHADOW AND LIGHT

- St. Benedict Center, Schuyler, Nebraska
- Saturday, March 21, 2015, 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
- Presenter: Rita Otis

Shadows and light are intricately woven together in our day-to-day lives of sight and in our psyches as well. Although we usually gravitate to the light, shadows bring beauty and interest to our world and can be rich subjects for photography. Bringing the openness of contemplative photography, we invite the shadow to play, be photographed, and speak its beauty. Please bring your own camera, laptop computer to upload your pictures, and paper for journaling.

Registration: www.saintbenedictcenter.com.

"HAVE I BEEN WITH YOU ..."

—PRAYER THAT HEALS MODERN HEARTS

- St. Benedict Center, Schuyler, Nebraska
- Saturday, April 25, 2015, 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
- Presenter: Fr. Paul Hoelsing

The current American culture can affect our beliefs about prayer. Individualism, Consumerism, Pragmatism, and Materialism are a few of the infectious elements that can hinder a real relationship with God. Take a day to learn about Jesus' longing to be with you—in everything—and

receive healing around the attitudes that can seriously falsify our life of prayer. Learn the questions Jesus asks to free us for more of his abundant and consoling Risen Life.

Registration: www.saintbenedictcenter.com.

MERTON & ANTHONY DeMELLO: LIVING IN GOD'S PRESENCE

- Sophia Center, Atchison, Kansas
- 7:00 p.m., Friday, March 13, through 2:00 p.m., Sunday, March 15, 2015.
- Presenters: Sr. Scheila Carroll, OSB and Sr. Gabrielle Kocour, OSB.

These two spiritual writers call us, as St. Benedict does, to a greater awareness of the Divine Presence, as our desire for God is an answer to the desire of God. Reflections, stories, silence, and listening will awaken us to a deeper inner life on our pilgrimage to God.

Registration, costs, and information for this and other retreat offerings:

www.sophiaspiritualitycenter.org or 913.360.6173.

A SPIRITUALITY OF IMPERFECTION

- Sophia Center, Atchison, Kansas
- 7:00 p.m., Friday, March 27, through 4:00 p.m., Sunday, March 28, 2015.
- Presenter: Sr. Melissa Letts, OSB, MA.

We strive for perfection. We are perfectionists. Scripture says, "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." Yet we usually come up short. Twelve-step recovery people have learned the gift of a spirituality of imperfection, a gift that leads to freedom.

Registration, costs, and information for this and other retreat offerings:

www.sophiaspiritualitycenter.org or 913.360.6173.

PODCAST: THE RULE OF BENEDICT

Fr. Mauritius Wilde, OSB, Prior of Christ the King Priory in Schuyler Nebraska, presents a podcast on the *Rule of Benedict*. With host Kris McGregor, Fr. Mauritius provides commentary on various verses from chapters of the Rule.

Web: www.discerninghearts.com.

News from Sacred Heart Monastery

ST. JOHN'S BIBLE ON DISPLAY

The St. John's Bible will be on display at the Mount Marty College library through December 2015. This is an opportunity to see selected volumes of this handwritten work of art. Copies of

two volumes of the Bible, The Pentateuch and Gospels and Acts, have been lent to the library. The library is located in the newer St. Scholastica Learning Center building along the west side of campus, the building with the beautiful windows facing west. At least one volume will be on display under glass in the MMC Library during regular hours:

- Monday through Thursday 7:30 a.m.–10:00 p.m.
- Friday 7:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
- Saturday 1:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m.
- Sunday 1:00–10:00 p.m.

Web Site: www.yanktonbenedictines.org/.

LENT AND ITS DISCIPLINES

Now we are fast approaching the season of Lent. This is a penitential season that invites us to assess our lives, recognizing the powerful hand of God at work within. When we think of Lent we often consider it a time for prayer, fasting and almsgiving as we journey with hope to celebrate Easter New Life and Resurrection. Prior to Lent and throughout Lent perhaps we can reflect on each of the directives.

Prayer: What is my prayer life like in my life? How can I enrich it during these days of Lent? Jesus frequently escaped from daily life to be alone in prayer. In silence and solitude he spent time with God. In our busy, scheduled lives as followers of Christ perhaps we need to escape from “business as usual” and find a quiet space to renew ourselves. St. Benedict suggests we spend time during Lent to read one book from Scripture.

Fasting: We usually think of fasting as eating less than a usual amount of food and abstinence meaning not eating meat. Ed Hays says in *A Lenten Hobo Honeymoon*, “Jesus proclaimed that blessed are those who hunger—who hunger not for meat or food but for holiness and justice. Consider fasting from apathy, the condition of a lukewarm heart, a zombie soul moving robot-like through religious and family duties. Apathy is a creeping sluggishness of the spirit that comes upon us with the passage of time. Fast to cultivate only a hunger for holiness. Abstinence means more than absenting yourself from a good steak; it implies absenting yourself from injustice. See if you are presently supporting some form of injustice, even if only by your silent support. Cultivate a healthy diet of concern for the poor and needy or those

suffering oppression.” I invite you to be creative in deciding how you can fast during Lent.

Almsgiving: This is usually giving a monetary donation for something. There are other ways to give alms to those in need. Jesus said that love of God and love of neighbor are the same. How do I give the alms of kindness toward those in need? Am I generous with my time listening to those who beg for someone to pay attention? Do I give my voice to raise concern for injustice, publicly speak out for the needs of the poor, the homeless, those caught in human trafficking, etc.? To I support and vote for candidates who promise to assist those in poverty? These are a few ideas –what are yours that you can do? In closing I suggest you take time to read RB 49, “The Observance of Lent.”

Source: Sr. Joelle Bauer, Oblate Director,
Oblate Newsletter, February 2015.

YOU ARE INVITED ...

The Benedictine Sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery invite you to an open house expressing our gratitude during this Year of Consecrated Life. It will be held Sunday, March 15, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. There will be tours of Bishop Marty Chapel, the Sisters Dining Room, and Bishop Marty’s house, as well as time to visit with the sisters over home-baked cookies in their Chapter room. You are also invited to join the Sisters for Sunday Vespers at 4:00 p.m. in Bishop Marty Chapel.

General Announcements

SNOW POLICY

It seems timely to restate our snow policy.

1. Should we have at least 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, we will send an e-mail. For those without e-mail, please call someone with e-mail. Always 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.