



Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska

May 2003

OBLATE ASSIGNMENTS

- **LINCOLN CHAPTER**, Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital
Sunday, May 18, 2003, 7-9 p.m. North Commons
Monday, May 19, 2003, 7-9 p.m. Flanagan Room
Text: Preferring Christ, Disciplines of Community, Chapters 21-26, pages 88-93
- **ASHLAND/GREENWOOD CHAPTER**,
Thursday, May 15, 2003, St. Joseph Church Hall,
7-9 p.m. Lectio: Personal Rule of Life. Draft a Rule of Life for yourself for the next year.
- **HASTINGS CHAPTER**, St. Michael's Church,
Family Room
Saturday, May 10, 2003, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Respond in writing "Am I willing to commit to ongoing conversion?" Lectio from Handbook: Simplification of Life section in the Handbook
Write down how you can apply Simplification of Life into your life next year. Complete Suggestion A or B.
- **STEINAUER CHAPTER**, Banquet Hall, across from St. Anthony's Church
Monday, May 5, 2003, 7-9 p.m. Review the section of the handbook on Personal Rule of Life. Draft a Rule of Life for yourself for the next year.
Monday, May 19, 2003, 7-9 p.m. Finalize your Personal Rule of Life. Preferring Christ, Chapter 34, Distribution of Necessities and Chapter 35, Weekly Servers in the Kitchen, pages 104, 105 & 106.

POTLUCK GATHERING FOR ALL CHAPTERS

At the request of a number of Oblates, the Oblate Potluck scheduled for Sunday, June 8, 2003 will be for ALL Chapters. Oblates are asking to come together to get acquainted and to know Oblates of other Chapters. This will be held in the North Commons of Madonna at 6 p.m. Coffee, Tea, water and paper products will be provided. Bring your Office books and we will end with Vespers.

SOLEMNITY OF THE FEAST OF ST. BENEDICT:

We will celebrate the feast which is Friday, July 11, 2003. You are all invited to join us for Morning and Evening Prayer that day. Morning Prayer will be at 7:30

a.m. and Evening Prayer will be at 7:30 p.m. both in the Madonna Chapel. Please bring your office books.

JULY ONE-DAY SUMMER RETREAT: "Honoring My Gifts – The People, Places & Poetry In My Life" will be a one-day retreat using scripture, reflection and creative expression, presented by Sister Kathleen Courtney, OSB of Sacred Heart Monastery on Saturday, July 19 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.. It will be held at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital in the North Commons/Sheridan Rooms. It will cost \$20 per person. Lunch will be available in the Madonna Cafeteria. Sister Kathleen has been very well received at the monastery retreats and also at the Schuyler Retreat Center. Please let LouAnn Green, Obl. OSB know if you are interested by calling 489-5083 or email (with RETREAT in the subject line) LAGowan@aol.com.

AUGUST PRESENTATION ON SPIRITUAL

DIRECTION: Saturday, August 16, 2003, 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., in the Madonna Flanagan Room, Nancy Koley of the Knowles Mercy Center in Omaha will orient us to Spiritual Direction. A Spiritual Director is one who is certified or degreed in Spiritual Direction. We have not spent time on this topic so it should be of particular importance to a number of you. Nancy will come with ideas on when spiritual direction might be important to us, how to select a spiritual director for ourselves, etc. After her talk, she will assist those of us who wish in obtaining a personal spiritual director.

CONCEPTION ABBEY RETREAT REFLECTIONS:

Carol Barry, Obl. OSB, Lincoln Chapter: The weekend retreat at Conception Abbey was a wonderful experience, both relaxing and invigorating. Father Adam Ryan was an excellent retreat master. His topic was "Obedience", and he made several interesting points in a series of good-natured but no nonsense talks. Fr. Adam pointed out that the very idea of being obedient is counter cultural, but that practicing this discipline is a necessary part of our spiritual growth. He introduced the concept of "available reality" which he described as accepting reality as it is presented to us, and letting God into all aspects of our lives. Fr. Adam made numerous

references to Scripture and the Rule of Benedict to emphasize the importance of obedience and its role in active listening. He debunked the myth that obedience reflects a passive, lazy or inactive attitude towards life. True obedience to God is the opposite of passive. It reflects an active engagement in life, in listening to the word and will of God with the intention of following it. Fr Adam's description of obedience is not for the lazy or faint-hearted. I also enjoyed his observation that 2000 years of spiritual teaching and 100 years of psychotherapy can be summed up as "accept the unacceptable". The message I got was that it's too easy to be distracted, to sit back and let the culture/media tell me what is real and important. It takes conscious focus on God as the center of my life in order to move on and grow. Like obedience, that isn't always easy, but it is necessary.

One of my favorite parts of the retreat was the opportunity to be present as the monks came together six times a day to praise God. Listening to the monks praying in unison, chanting the psalms was beautiful and seemed so natural. I was even able to make it to the 6:00 AM Vigil prayers, thanks to the natural country alarm clock of birdsong (early, loud, and insistent). I wish everyone could have shared this time away. To leave everyday responsibilities, catch your breath, and be absorbed into a different sense of time marked by regular community prayer was a real blessing.

Patty Williams, OBL. OSB, Phoenix, AZ Chapter: Obedience. It seemed like such a simple word until I heard Father Adam. When I visualize God the Father standing obediently waiting for my yes or no, my obedience or disobedience, I am reminded yet again how much he loves me. Being obedient will be a progressive journey for me so that one day I may return to the loving Father from which I came.

Wendy Keele, OBL., OSB, Hastings Chapter writes: Father Adam's image of God as a 3-year-old keeps coming back to me. My youngest, Joe, will be three in July and he is definitely unpredictable so I really appreciated what Father Adam was saying. I'm also seeing Joe in a different light, the thought that I'm being obedient to God when I'm caring for him makes the job seem even more valuable.

HOLY FAMILY SHRINE: As you are traveling on I-80 to Omaha, you will notice a beautiful church structure high on a hill to the left as you are traveling east. This shrine opened last summer and is a most beautiful place to visit for contemplation and peace of soul. It was built as a chapel for travelers on the road. To reach the shrine, take I-80 EXIT 432 South on Highway 31 and go West on Pflug Road.

UNL OBLATE PROGRAM: It is my intent to begin an Oblate program at UNL this fall. If there are some of

you who know the campus and may have had experience with young adults and would like to assist in this development, I would be most grateful. Please let me know. I would expect that we would meet during the summer to plan. Thank you very much. Sister Phyllis

OBLATE NOTES:

- Charlena Genia, Obl. OSB., writes, "Thank you for the retreat. It was so wonderful." and adds this from Maya Angelou, "*When we cast our bread upon the waters, we can presume that someone downstream whose face we may never see will benefit from our action.*"
- We need your continuing prayers for: Roxy Root, Novice Oblate, who is critically ill at Bergan Mercy Hospital in Omaha.
- Ruth Ploof, OBL., OSB., asks prayers for an injured soldier who went to school with her son. His name is Alan and is an army medic that was shot in the stomach. He was very seriously ill but is slowly improving.
- Sheila Weiss, OBL., OSB, thanks you for your prayers. After many surgeries, she feels now that she is on the road to recovery.

SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD, May 29

*O Son of God resurrected,
Why do we seek your face
In the skies?*

*You come to us on every shore
Of humanity.*

*Heaven I where you descend,
You give living water to your people,
Living Love,
And you draw us like a stream
Into your current.*

*The joy promised to our thirst,
How shall we seize it in both hands
Before the evening?*

*In partaking of your Supper
And of your cross.*

*You will return to transfigure
The world eager to be reborn
In your light.
You are the glory of your Father,
God revealed*

(La Liturgie des Heures)

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