



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 + **April 2015**

A Word from St. Benedict's Rule

PRAYING ON THE ROAD

"Brothers who work so far away that they cannot return to the oratory at the proper time—and the abbot determines that is the case—are to perform the Work of God where they are, and kneel out of reverence for God. So too, those who have been sent on a journey are not to omit the prescribed hours but to observe them as best they can, not neglecting their measure of service."

Source: RB 50:1–4

Reflection

BENEDICT'S FILTER

During our February meeting in Omaha, our Group Lectio reflection focused on Verses 23–28 of St. Benedict's Prologue using Norvene Vest's *Preferring Christ* as our guide:

"... Lord, who shall dwell in your tent, or who shall rest upon your holy mountain ...?"

"One who has brought the malignant devil to naught, casting him out of the sight of his heart with all his suggestions; and has taken hold of his bad thoughts, while they were still young, and dashed them down upon Christ (Ps 15:4, 137:9)."

Wow! For us moderns today, when we really lean back and think about what is being said, this verse by the Father of our Order seems to be loaded! Benedict points out the need for our ancient Christian discipline of controlling not only our temptations, but also our thoughts. And, if this is so, where does St. Benedict even force us to go in this holy, holy process of achieving the goal?

Today, through our modern sciences, most notably for this—our modern science of human

psychology—we stand more enlightened than at any other time in human history regarding our normal default patterns of human behavior. When stepping back, these "default behavior patterns" that we are so intensely defining today, seem to be driven by all kinds of mental "filters." In turn, these filters seem to form our perceptions, which in turn (again!!) seem to be the basis for accepting or rejecting all the thoughts that are constantly popping into our heads from our world!

Sounds like some pretty deep water! However, after we read this and take a moment to catch our breath, we might easily see where this idea of "mental filters" and "thought control" can be rapidly confirmed in the world around us. For instance, as a modern, true-blooded American, one obvious manifestation of even calculated use of mental filters to manipulate our perceptions, and win over, i.e., "control" our thoughts, can be found in modern merchandise marketing techniques used in myriad forms by today's media.

Anyway!! For our purposes, let's simply think of one filter, possibly the most fundamental filter that our God has created within each of us as human beings—beginning not only at birth, but even before within the womb—our primeval need to feel safe. The need to feel safe seems to overshadow all our human encounters with others. Is the encounter friendly or hostile? Are we "safe" or "unsafe"? Everything else in our behavior, immediate and even long term, seems to cascade from our critical need for safety and how it is met (beginning incredibly with biochemistry within our mother's womb all the way through our lifelong social connectedness with community).

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

“SAFE” seems to be *the* most profound driver in our lives.

What does any of this have to do with Benedict and this ancient Christian discipline of “conquering temptation and thought control?” Where in the world did he leave us in our need to feel safe? After all, aren’t all of us followers of Christ today more orphaned than ever in this world? If we do in fact have this profound human need to feel safe in our relationships and in the world (And we do!), does Christ empower us to satisfy this need? In this world “red in tooth and claw,” is His empowerment universal, or are there unfortunate exceptions? Do we really need to resist the dragons of temptation and bad thought as Benedict states, to feel safe? And if so, is this apparent struggle to achieve safety through Christ instantaneous or a process? All these questions! I emphatically submit the affirmative! Our Lord’s empowerment is (has to be!) universal, without exceptions. To me, our marching orders even yet today are exactly the same as those St. Benedict pointed to and actually left us with when we were orphaned in his final moment on earth—Jesus Christ, the true Source of our power not only to control our thoughts, but transform and ground all our filters in safety, affirmation, and love—the Rock of Christ—this is where Benedict took us, where he left us. And ending, Our Lord has the power to begin this sacred process exactly where He finds us at any moment or in any circumstance in our lives. All we really have to do is ask Him with a sincere heart and *hang on* for dear life—forevermore!

Sincerely,

Rod Dolton

Dean, Omaha Chapter

Sacred Heart Monastery News

TRIDUUM RETREAT: APRIL 2–5, 2015

Come, enter the silence and experience the rich liturgies of Holy Week with the monastic community of the Benedictine Sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, South Dakota. This retreat begins Holy Thursday afternoon and ends on Easter Sunday. Conferences on the meaning and symbolism of each day and liturgical event are optional.

For more information:

www.yanktonbenedictines.org/center-events.

Registration: BenedictinePeaceCtr@mtmc.edu or 605.668.6292.

MONASTERY HERITAGE

Information on the heritage of Sacred Heart Monastery and the Benedictines Sisters can be found on the monastery Web site. Go to yanktonbenedictines.org and then choose the “Who We Are” tab and “Our History” to get started. You might want to look at more; there is a lot on our website now.

On the Web: www.yanktonbenedictines.org

SACRED HEART HOSTS GATHERING

The annual gathering for the subprioresses and house coordinators of women’s monasteries was hosted by the sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton. The theme of the conference was “All God’s Children Got a Place in the Choir: Tools for Working with Each and Every One.” Presenters were Yankton Sisters Jeanne Ranek and Mary Jo Polak. Sessions reviewed the enneagram and dynamics of community life, as well as challenges faced by administrators in working with various personalities. Fifteen sisters were present from thirteen monasteries.

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/.

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.

NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR MORNING PRAYER

Two of the Lincoln cell groups begin their gatherings in the Ryan Memorial Chapel with Morning Prayer. Everyone is invited to pray with them. This month, Morning Prayer will be held on two Saturdays—April 4 and April 18—beginning at 8:00 a.m. Please consider adding this prayer office to your spiritual life.

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:**PALM SUNDAY TO PENTECOST**

Evening Prayer I for Palm Sunday, March 29, 2015, can be found in *Shorter Christian Prayer*, p. 122. At the Reading, go to p. 429. Note the antiphons for Palm Sunday. For the Easter Triduum, Thursday's prayers begin on p. 166. For Evening Prayer, turn to p. 436 at the Reading. Note the antiphons for Holy Week. Good Friday and Holy Saturday prayers are on pp. 438–456.

We start Week I on Easter Sunday, April 5, 2015, on p. 43. We will use the Easter antiphons throughout the Easter Season. At the Reading, turn to p. 457. From Easter Monday onward, turn to pp. 464–486 at the Reading.

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.

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

- Reading from *Preferring Christ*: Ch. 7:1–50
- Facilitator: Susan Janda
- Reflection: Greg Burke
- Prayer Leader: Ethel Weir.

LINCOLN CHAPTER**General Gathering**

General gatherings will be held on Sunday, April 12, 2015, 7:00–9:00 p.m., in the Sheridan Room at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, and Monday, April 13, 2015, 7:00–9:00 p.m., in the hospital's Lancaster Room.

Fr. Tom Hillenbrand, Christ the King Priory, Schuyler, Nebraska, 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.

- Reading from *Preferring Christ*: Ch. 7:1–50.

OMAHA CHAPTER

The Omaha Chapter will gather on Tuesday, April 14, 2015, 7:00–9:00 p.m. at the New Cassel Retirement Center.

- The Reading is from *Preferring Christ*. The Omaha Chapter discussion will begin in Chapter 1, p. 20, following Group Lectio and Vespers.

STEINAUER CHAPTER

The general gathering will be held on Monday, April 27, 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*: Ch. 7:1–50.

Nebraska Cell Groups**CELL GROUPS**

The Nebraska Chapter has a variety of cell groups.

Web: www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/cells/

READING FOR APRIL

Reading this Month: *Discernment Matters* by Sr. Mary Margaret Funk, OSB. Chapter 2: Seven Practices that Become Prayer, The Practice of the Presence: As Taught by Brother Lawrence, pp. 71–80.

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, April 25, 2015.
- Reading this Month: See above.

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: See above.

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: April 26, 2015.
- Readings this Month: See above.

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: April 27, 2015.
- Readings this Month: See above.

Preferring Christ Cell

- Leaders: Paul Blotkamp and Charlotte Liggett
- Meetings: The fourth Sunday of every month at Madonna, 7:00 p.m.
- This Month: April 26, 2015.
- Readings this Month: See above.

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: April 4 and 18, 2015.
- Readings this Month: See above.

Hildegard von Bingen Cell

- Leader: David Frye
- Meetings: Every other Saturday beginning at 8:00 a.m. with Morning Prayer in the chapel at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital.
- This Month: April 4 and April 18, 2015.
- April 4: **Lectio Divina** and "Appealing to God for a Clear Conscience"
"For Christ also suffered for sins once the righteous for the sake of the unrighteous, that he might lead you to God." (1 Peter 3:18a, NAB)
Morning Prayer: Marianne Guenther, Leader
Group Lectio Divina: 1 Peter 3:18–22, David Frye, Leader
Discussion: We will reflect on the how God's grace, proclaimed in the passage from 1 Peter, comes alive in our lives, especially at Easter.
- April 18: **Discussion of Discernment Matters**
- Reading: See Above
Leader for Morning Prayer: Subiaco Cell
Discussion Leader: To be decided on April 4.

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/

“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.

EIGHTH ANNUAL OBLATE INSTITUTE:

THE PSALMS BELONG TO YOU

- Mount St. Scholastica, Atchison, Kansas
- 6:00 p.m., Thursday, July 16, through 12:30 p.m., Sunday, July 19, 2015.
- Presenter: Sr. Irene Nowell, OSB

At this annual event, Benedictine oblates from across the country have an opportunity to hear prominent speakers and to share the experience of Benedictine spirituality in everyday life.

This year’s speaker, Sr. Irene Nowell, OSB, is a Benedictine sister of Mount St. Scholastica, a renowned scholar, and an engaging speaker. She served on the translation team of the revised Old Testament of the New American Bible and the Committee on Illuminations and Texts for the Saint John’s Bible. She is the author of *Numbers; Sing a New Song: The Psalms in the Sunday Lectionary*, and several other books, the latest of which is *Pleading, Cursing and Praising: Conversing with God Through the Psalms*. Her presentations will include: telling your story, crying out your pain, giving thanks to God, and singing your praise.

Details: 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.

Office for the Dead

PRAYER SERVICE AVAILABLE FOR DECEASED OBLATES

Many of you may not be aware that there is a prayer service available for deceased Benedictine oblates. It is a simple and beautiful service and can be offered at the funeral, the visitation, before the rosary, or privately as the oblate and his or her family request. If you are interested in having this service performed for you, please notify a dean and let your loved ones know of your choice. We recommend that you have your wishes for this service on file, if possible. Please complete the form below and return it to any dean or mail it to the chapter.

Nebraska Benedictine Oblates
2843 S. 42nd St.
Lincoln, NE 68506.

The order of the service follows the form.

I, _____, a Benedictine oblate of Sacred Heart Monastery in Yankton, South Dakota, wish to have the oblate prayer service performed at the time of my death.

Signature

Date

OBLATE PRAYER SERVICE:

SACRED HEART MONASTERY, NEBRASKA CHAPTERS

"You broke the Reign of Death, O Lord"

Body and coffin or remains are sprinkled with Holy Water. A scapular of St. Benedict is placed on left shoulder or around remains. Copy of Oblation is placed on or in the coffin or given to the family.

Leader: From the Rule of St. Benedict (Ch. 7)

"The fourth degree of humility is that when obedience to God's will becomes difficult ... one's heart quietly embraces suffering and endures it without weakening or seeking escape." For scripture says: "Anyone who perseveres to the end will be saved (Matt 10:22)", and again, "Be brave of heart and rely on the Lord (Ps 26:14)".

Antiphon: (All)

Lord, your love is eternal: do not forsake the work of your hands.

PSALM 138 (All)

I thank you, Lord, with all my heart,
You have heard the words of my mouth.
In the presence of the angels I will bless you.
I will adore before your holy temple.

I thank you for your faithfulness and love
Which excel all we ever knew of you.
On the day I called you answered;
You increased the strength of my soul.

All rulers on earth shall thank you
When they hear the words of your mouth.
They shall sing of the ways of the Lord:
"How great is the glory of the Lord."

The Lord is high, yet looks on the lowly
And knows the haughty from afar.
Though I walk in the midst of affliction
You give me life and frustrate my foes.

You stretch out your hand and save me,
Your hand will do all things for me.
Your love, O Lord, is eternal,
Discard not the work of your hands.

All honor to God, the Giver of Life,
To Christ, the Risen One,
And to the Spirit, Bond of Love,
Glory and praise forever. Amen

Antiphon: (All)

Lord, your love is eternal: do not forsake the work of your hands.

LEADER: _____, an Oblate of St. Benedict, a devoted Christian, was admitted into spiritual union and affiliation with the Benedictine community of Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, South Dakota, so she/he might share in the spiritual life, prayers, and good works of this community.

Oblates proclaim and practice the Christian virtues of faith, hope and divine love, by believing, hoping and trusting in God and loving God and others in thought, word and deed.
On behalf of Sacred Heart Monastery, and all of our Oblates, we commend _____ into the hands of God.

ALL: May her/his soul and all the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen

General Announcements

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.

CHAPTER NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE EXPANDS

Lucy Kahler, an oblate in the Lincoln Chapter, shared copies of the chapter's newsletter from 2002 through 2005, enabling us to expand the archive on the Web site. If you go to the site and then to the News page, you can see the list of back issues.

Thanks, Lucy, for your generous assistance!

We still need to fill in some gaps. If you have any old issues for those missing months, please contact David Frye, the Web Porter.

On the Web: www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/news/

Back Issue Info: info@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org

The Wonders of God's Creation

SANDHILL CRANES ON THE PLATTE

Carol Olson, Lead Dean, shared several photographs she made of the annual Sandhill Crane migration on the Platte River. They speak eloquently of the beauty of God's handiwork!

