



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 + July 2015

A Word from St. Benedict's Rule

LABORERS FOR THE LORD

“And the Lord, seeking his laborer in the multitude to whom He thus cries out, says again, ‘Who is the one who will have life, and desires to see good days’ (Ps. 33[34]:13)? And if, hearing Him, you answer, ‘I am the one,’ God says to you, ‘If you will have true and everlasting life, keep your tongue from evil and your lips that they speak no guile. Turn away from evil and do good; seek after peace and pursue it’ (Ps. 33[34]:14–15). And when you have done these things, My eyes shall be upon you and My ears open to your prayers; and before you call upon Me, I will say to you, ‘Behold, here I am’” (Ps. 33[34]:16; Is. 65:24; 58:9).

What can be sweeter to us, dear ones, than this voice of the Lord inviting us? Behold, in His loving kindness the Lord shows us the way of life.”

Source: *RB Prologue*

Reflection

BENEDICTINE “CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME”

On June 18, Pope Francis released his latest encyclical letter, *Laudato si'*, which focuses on “care for our common home.” In the course of exploring how the treasures of the Christian faith call us to live as good stewards of God’s gift of this world, Pope Francis reminds us all of one of the contributions that St. Benedict—and the communities that aspire to live by his Rule—makes to the guidance we receive from the Tradition. He writes,

We can also look to the great tradition of monasticism. Originally, it was a kind of flight from the world, an escape from the decadence of the cities. The monks sought the desert, convinced that

it was the best place for encountering the presence of God. Later, Saint Benedict of Norcia proposed that his monks live in community, combining prayer and spiritual reading with manual labour (*ora et labora*). Seeing manual labour as spiritually meaningful proved revolutionary. Personal growth and sanctification came to be sought in the interplay of recollection and work. This way of experiencing work makes us more protective and respectful of the environment; it imbues our relationship to the world with a healthy sobriety (§126).

As oblates, we most likely don’t have the option to flee from the world or to escape the decadence of our common life. Instead, we find ourselves called to live amid the best and the most brazen of things modern culture offers each day.

Even so, we can find ways to cultivate a community with fellow Christians that embodies the balance, stability, and depth that come from the rhythms of practicing the disciplines that comprise a life of *ora et labora*. Praying is participating in the *opus Dei*, the work of God, just as surely as working in our vocations is a form of praying to God on behalf of others and of our world.

I think that’s what Pope Francis guides us to see when he writes that we can seek “personal growth and sanctification” through the entwining of “recollection and work.” If we are doing this faithfully, then we will be lifting up the world and all of our brothers and sisters in prayer. At the same time, we will find ourselves singing in our hearts, along with Saint Francis, “*Laudato si', mi Signore! Praise to you, my Lord!*” (§1). With such praises on our lips and prayers in our hearts, we will find that God encounters us amid the brilliance

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 Borchner, marcia.borchner@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	Banquet Room, Convent House B&B, Steinauer

and the shadows of the modern world through our daily rhythms of prayer and work just as surely as He did our forebears who retreated to the desert or to the cave in the mountain above Subiaco.

—David M. Frye, Oblate, Lincoln Chapter

A Message from the Lead Dean

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

I would like to encourage each and every Benedictine oblate of Sacred Heart Monastery to take time every year (or more often) to visit the sisters in Yankton. They truly love to connect with “their” oblates and would love a visit from you. I confess that I waited until six years after my Final Oblation before I went on retreat at Sacred Heart. Since that first powerful experience, I make sure I return at least once per year, but prefer more often if I can. Each time I visit, I observe Benedictine “community” in action—hospitality to guests and each other, service and worship together—and I experience a profound sense of peace as soon as I arrive. No other place is like that for me personally. Getting to know the sisters better with each return is a joy.

Learning about their activities through their Facebook page, newsletter, and Web site helps me to stay connected with them when I am not there. Please call Sister Phyllis (605-668-6092) or e-mail her at phyllis.hunhoff@mtmc.edu if you would like to visit outside of a scheduled retreat. Please note that the next Oblate retreat is scheduled for October 2–4 (See the next article for details).

Over the next year I plan to visit each Nebraska Chapter during its gathering in order to get to know the Oblates in our area better, share in faith-filled discussion, and pray with you. When I visit, feel free to share with me any suggestions, concerns, or praise that you have for our Oblate community, especially relating to living the Oblate life and staying connected to Sacred Heart Monastery. Please see my e-mail address at the bottom of the newsletter page or on the Nebraska Benedictine Oblates’ Web site if you want to share with me before then.

Blessings to each of you this summer! May you find time for holy leisure, time outdoors with nature, and time for prayer each day. Let’s pledge to keep each other in prayer, including the Sisters at Sacred Heart!

—Carol Olson, Lead Dean

Sacred Heart Monastery News

MARK YOUR RETREAT CALENDAR

Mark your calendars!

Sacred Heart Monastery has announced that there will be an oblate retreat on Friday, October 2, 2015, through Sunday, October 4, 2015. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

Sacred Heart monastery will host a retreat, “*Visio Divina*—Praying with Your Eyes,” on Saturday, October 31, 2015.

More information will be provided when available. Check out the monastery’s Web site and consider “liking” the monastery’s Facebook page. You can also see what’s new on the Nebraska Oblates’ Web site. Also check out our Facebook page.

SACRED HEART MONASTERY

- www.yanktonbenedictines.org/center-events
- www.facebook.com/shmvocation

NEBRASKA BENEDICTINE OBLATES

- www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org
- www.facebook.com/pages/Nebraska-Oblates/141213635898090

Corporate Prayer

ST. BENEDICT’S FEAST DAY

The Feast of St. Benedict is celebrated on July 11. The Lincoln Chapter will be observing St. Benedict’s Feast Day at Friday Morning Prayer in the Madonna Chapel at 7:30 a.m. on July 10, 2015.

The Subiaco Cell and the Hildegard von Bingen Cell also will gather at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 11, to observe St. Benedict’s Feast Day with Morning Prayer.

Everyone is invited to come to these times of prayer.

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/.

Chapter Update

ORIENTATION FOR INQUIRERS TO THE OBLATE PROGRAM

It will soon be time for each of the chapters of the Nebraska Benedictine Oblates to hold an orientation meeting for those who may be interested in the program. If you have family or friends who might be interested in being an oblate, please invite them to attend an orientation to learn more.

The Lincoln Chapter's Benedictine Oblate Orientation will be held Sunday, August, 24, 7:00 p.m., at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, 5401 South Street, Lincoln, Nebraska, in the Sheridan Rooms A and B. For additional information, call Jim Rea, Lincoln Oblate Dean at 402.423.8694 or contact him by e-mail.

The Omaha Chapter orientation meeting will be on Tuesday, September 8, in the first-floor lecture hall at New Cassel Retirement Center, at 7:00–9:00 pm.

For information on orientation for the Steinauer and Hastings Nebraska Chapters please contact the appropriate chapter dean.

Lincoln Cell Groups

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: July 11 and 25, 2015.

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: July 11 and 25, 2015.

July 11: "Learning to Pray: A Journey through Benedict's Chapter on Humility" Part 1

- Morning Prayer: Memorial of St. Benedict, Abbot, leader, a member of the Subiaco Cell
- Group *Lectio Divina*: RB 7:10–13, "The first step of humility ...," Mary Schroer, leader
- Discussion: "Learning to Pray: A Journey through Benedict's Chapter on Humility," by

Manuela Scheiba, OSB, Introduction and Steps 1–3, pp. 118–123, David Frye, leader.

July 25: "Learning to Pray: A Journey through Benedict's Chapter on Humility" Part 2

- Morning Prayer: Leader, a member of the Hildegard von Bingen Cell, to be determined
- Group *Lectio Divina*: RB 7:35–38, "The fourth step of humility ...," Mary Schroer, leader
- Discussion: "Learning to Pray: A Journey through Benedict's Chapter on Humility," by Manuela Scheiba, OSB, Steps 4–7, pp. 123–131, leader to be determined.

August 8: "Learning to Pray: A Journey through Benedict's Chapter on Humility" Part 3

- Details to follow.

Inspiration

EXPLORATIONS IN CREATIVE PRAYER

"A community that embraces the ideal of leisure gives its members room to breathe. It is a gift of time and space. Time for oneself; time for one another; time to listen, encourage, and support; time to step back and discern, to assess the quality of actions; time to develop culture and ritual and good liturgy. Space for people

to grow, space for different gifts, space for the stranger, space to pass through crises."

This passage comes from *Strangers to the City* by Michael Casey. The stained-glass window rests above the choir loft at the Sacred Heart Monastery's chapel. This moment of inspiration appeared on the Nebraska Oblates' Facebook page. Like us!

If you have ideas of images or quotes to share on our Facebook page, please notify a dean.

