



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 + **October 2015**

A Word from St. Benedict's Rule

THE ELECTION OF AN ABBOT

"Therefore, drawing on this and other examples of discretion, the mother of virtues, he must so arrange everything that the strong have something to yearn for and the weak nothing to run from. He must, above all, keep this rule in every particular, so that when he has ministered well he will hear from the Lord what that good servant heard who gave his fellow servants grain at the proper time: *I tell you solemnly, he said, he sets him over all his possessions* (Matthew 24:47)."

Source: *The Rule of Benedict*, RB 64:19–22

WELCOMING INQUIRERS

We have several new inquirers in the Nebraska Oblate Chapters discerning their call to be oblates. Please introduce yourselves to them and welcome with Benedictine hospitality. They doubtless have the same questions we all had when we came to our first gatherings of oblates.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

The Oblation Ceremony will be held on Sunday, November 8, 2015, at 2:00 p.m.

Let us join those who have heard God's call to share in the Benedictine way of Life by making their Final Oblation and welcome those who are making their Initial Oblation. The Oblation ceremony will be held in the James E. Ryan Chapel at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital in Lincoln. We will celebrate Vespers, First Oblation for new members, Final Oblation for Novice Oblates, and

Renewal of Oblation for current members. A reception will follow in the North Commons.

Friends and family are invited to attend. Sr. Phyllis Hunhoff, Sr. Penny Bingham, and Sr. Patricia Heirigs will be coming from Sacred Heart Monastery for the ceremony.

Sacred Heart Monastery News

MONASTERY ANNOUNCES NEW OBLATE DIRECTOR

Dear Oblates:

Greetings to you on this beautiful August day. Fall is nudging on the horizon with cooler days, brightness of sky and touches of changing color in the leaves. With fall, a variety of changes do occur. As our Oblate meetings begin again in September, there will be a change of your Oblate Director. In Ecclesiastes: Chapter 3:1&6 we hear: "There is an appointed time for everything, a time for every matter under the heavens—A time to seek and a time to lose, a time to keep and a time to 'let go'." I am "letting go" of being our community's Oblate Director. Sr. Patricia Heirigs will be with you now and into the future. It is good to have the opportunity for new/different insights into Benedictine values. She will bring her wisdom of those to you and she will also learn from you. Thank you for allowing me to share your life and spiritual journey these last ten years. I will miss you, but will see you at various times. Let us continue to hold each other in prayer, God bless and have a good year!

Sr. Joelle

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
Lincoln	Carol Olson, carol.olson@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	5401 South St.
	Jim Rea, jim.rea@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	Lincoln
	Mary Schroer, mary.schroer@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	
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

A WELCOME FROM SR. PATRICIA

Let me introduce myself as your new Oblate Director. I grew up on a farm about 30 miles north of Yankton near Turkey Ridge, and attended a one-room country grade school. I graduated from Mount Marty High School and College. During my entire monastic life, I have been involved in education, both as a teacher and principal in several Catholic Elementary Schools.



Sr. Patricia

Most of my years were in Nebraska; the last place was in Lincoln where I was principal at North American Martyrs' School and from where I retired last year. When Sister Penny asked me to be Oblate Director, I did a discernment process to see if this was a good fit for all of us concerned. It seems the Holy Spirit thought it was! I look forward to meeting you and hope to see many of you at our first Oblate meeting here at the Monastery on Sunday, September 20, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. God's Blessings,

Sr. Patricia Heirigs

These announcements come from the August 2015 Oblates' Newsletter.

More information: <http://yanktonbenedictines.org/oblates/>

OBLATE RETREAT: VISIO DIVINA—PRAYING WITH YOUR EYES FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2 TO SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4

A Message from Sr. Mary Jo Polak

Dear Nebraska Oblates,
While we have the St. John's Bible on campus at Mount Marty College this year, we want to share with you the experience of praying with the lovely Illuminations of the Bible, and to expand our horizons on "Praying With Our Eyes." We have access to the professional digital copies of the illuminations, and will be able to use them in our prayer sessions.
Here is a rough schedule for the weekend. As always, there is the opportunity for celebrating Liturgy of the Hours and Mass with the Benedictine Sisters.

Friday evening—PowerPoint and Reflection

Review of and sharing our experiences of *lectio divina*; expanding our concept of the "text" we read from to include what we see, hear, and experience.

Shared lectio/visio experience with Scriptures and the Illumination from the St. John's Bible.

Saturday morning—PowerPoint and Reflections

View art as symbol, art as related to Creation and to the Incarnation. Shared lectio/visio experience with Scriptures and the Illumination from the St. John's Bible.

Saturday afternoon—Free time for a nature walk and lectio on life

Although final arrangements have not been made, you may be able to see Heritage edition of the St. John's Bible, and possibly get a "sneak preview" of the gallery showing of ten illuminations from the Bible, which will be on display at Bede Art Gallery, opening October 5.

Saturday afternoon presentation—PowerPoint and Reflection

Consider the place of beauty in bringing us to God and in the New Evangelization. Shared lectio/visio experience with Scriptures and the Illumination from the St. John's Bible.

Saturday evening—Shared lectio/visio experience with Sunday Scriptures and art

Sunday morning—Conclusion and taking it home!
I do hope that you can join us!

Details

- Single room, meals, retreat: \$120
- 2-person room, meals, retreat: \$170.

This retreat will begin Friday evening, 5:15 p.m., with Vespers in the Peace Chapel and concludes following Sunday Brunch, which is served at 11:15 a.m.

Scholarship

There is a scholarship available to cover the cost for a Nebraska Oblate. Contact Carol Olson, Lead Dean, if you are interested.

Registration

Please register by September 25.

Sr. Mary Jo Polak, OSB
Benedictine Peace Center
Sacred Heart Monastery
1005 W. 8th St.
Yankton, SD 57078-3389

w: www.yanktonbenedictines.org/center/
p: 605.668.6292
e: BenedictinePeaceCtr@mtmc.edu.

Worship

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRAYING THE DIVINE OFFICE

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.

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 at **8:00 a.m. on three Saturdays—October 3, 17, and 31**. Please consider adding this prayer office to your spiritual life.

Two cell groups begin their gatherings on the fourth Sunday of the month—**October 25—at 7:00 p.m.** in the Ryan Memorial Chapel by praying **Evening Prayer** together. Everyone is invited to share this time for praying the Divine Office.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SHORTER CHRISTIAN PRAYER

We continue in Ordinary Time until Advent. Sunday, Sunday, October 4, 2015, we are in Week III of *Shorter Christian Prayer*. This week begins on p. 187 with Evening Prayer for Saturday night, October 3. The Cantic Antiphons and Concluding Prayers are on pp. 527–528.

INTRODUCTION TO THE DIVINE OFFICE

A special session will be held on Saturday, November 7, 2015, 9:30–11:30 a.m. in the Lancaster Room at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. Lincoln Oblate Marcia Straatmeyer will demonstrate how to use *Shorter Christian Prayer*, our chapter's book for the Divine Office. We will also give an orientation to the Oblation ceremony.

Please plan to come to this session if you are unfamiliar with how to use *Shorter Christian Prayer*. Have you been using *Shorter Christian Prayer*, but still sometimes feel unsure if you are using it effectively? This is an opportunity to get a refresher course. We will also have instruction for the November 8, 2015 Oblation Ceremony.

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 Gatherings

HASTINGS

The general meeting will be Saturday, October 10, 2015, 9:30–11:30 a.m., in the Family Room at St. Michael's Church.

Orientation for those interested in the oblate program will be at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, August 29, 2015, in the library at St. Michael's Church.

Chapter reading assignment: Interlude III and Chapters 8–11 from *Preferring Christ* by Norvene Vest.

- *Facilitator*: Robin Stroot
- *Reflection*: Sharon Connor
- *Prayer Leader*: Greg Burke.

LINCOLN

The Chapter Gathering will be held on Sunday, October 11, 2015, in the Sheridan Room at Madonna at 7:00 p.m. The chapter reading assignment is Interlude III and Chapters 8–11 from *Preferring Christ* by Norvene Vest. Inquirers will gather with the Lincoln Chapter for the first part of the evening, then gather with Mary Schroer for their own discussion of the Oblates' Handbook.

Following the discussions, everyone will gather in the Ryan Memorial Chapel for Evening Prayer.

LINCOLN CHAPTER RIDE-SHARING

Do you need a ride in order to get to the Lincoln Chapter gatherings? Are you able to give someone a ride? We'd like to match you up! Contact Carol Olson, Lead Dean, 402.486.0864, if you would like to be put on a list for ride sharing.

OMAHA

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

Cassel Retirement Center. The chapter reading assignment is Interlude III and Chapters 8–11 from *Preferring Christ* by Norvene Vest.

STEINAUER

The general gathering will be held on Monday, October 25, 2015, from 7:00–9:00 p.m., in the Banquet Room at Covenant House across from St. Anthony’s Church. The chapter reading assignment is Interlude III and Chapters 8–11 from *Preferring Christ* by Norvene Vest.

Consider Joining a Cell

Have you considered joining a cell group? The Hastings and Lincoln Chapters offer cell groups, small groups of oblates that meet monthly for study and fellowship. These gatherings are in addition to the monthly chapter gatherings. The small group format enables us to support one another in our spiritual journey as Benedictine Oblates. The Nebraska Cell groups are currently studying *Discernment Matters* by Sr. Mary Margaret Funk.

Please see the listings of cell groups below. The Hastings Chapter has cell groups in both Hastings and Grand Island. The Lincoln Chapter offers various cell groups, meeting at different times and days.

Cell groups are reserved for those who have made their Final Oblation in affiliation with Sacred Heart Monastery, unless other arrangements have been made. Please see Carol Olson, Lead Dean, for more information.

Cell Groups

READING FROM DISCERNMENT MATTERS

All of the cell groups across Nebraska—except Lincoln’s Subiaco Cell—share the same plan of scheduled readings for reflection from September through May.

Discernment Matters: Listening with the Ear of the Heart, Sr. Mary Margaret Funk

- **October:** Chapter 2, cont.—“The Practice of Colloquy and *The Little Way* of Térésè of Lisieux,” pp. 102–118.
- **November:** Chapter 2, cont.—The Jesus Prayer/Prayer of the Heart: pp. 118–125

Full Schedule: www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/cells/

GRAND ISLAND CELL GROUP

Brother Lawrence Cell

This cell meets Monday, October 26, 2015,
4:30–5:30 p.m. at the First Christian Church, 2400
W 14th St., Grand Island.

HASTINGS CELL GROUP

St. Scholastica Cell

This cell meets Saturday, October 24, 2015,
9:30-10:30 a.m. in the Library at St. Michael's
Church.

LINCOLN CELL GROUPS

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: October 25, 2015.

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.

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: October 3 and 17, 2015.
- Retreat: Most cell members will be at the St. Benedict Center, Schuyler, on October 30–31.
- October 3: ***The Practice of Colloquy***
Morning Prayer: Member of the Subiaco Cell Group *Lectio Divina*: RB 19:1–7, “... our minds are in harmony with our voices ...,” Carol Brewer, Leader.
Discussion: *Discernment Matters*, Mary Schroer, Leader.
- October 17: **“Gossip, Slander, and Complaining ...”**
Morning Prayer: Member of this cell Group *Lectio Divina*: RB 34:1–7, “... no word or sign of the evil of grumbling ...,” Leader to be named.
Discussion: “Gossip, Slander, and Complaining: The Control of the Tongue in Early Christian Monastic Literature,” Steve Blum, Leader.
October 31: No cell gathering in Lincoln.

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: October 26, 2015.

Preferring Christ Cell

- Leaders: Paul Blotkamp and Charlotte Liggett
- Meetings: The fourth Sunday of every month at Madonna, 7:00 p.m.
- This month: October 25, 2015.

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: October 3, 17, and 31, 2015.

Biennial NAABOD Gathering**IMPRESSIONS FROM A PARTICIPANT: PART II**

NOTE: Lead Dean Carol Olson attended the biennial gathering of the North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors (NAABOD), held in Subiaco, Arkansas, July 10–15, 2015. This is the conclusion of her "Impressions from a Participant." The first half appeared in the September newsletter.

by Carol Olson, Lead Dean

Rev. Jane Tomaine, author of *St. Benedict's Toolbox*, also gave a keynote, and presented each monastery representative attending the conference with a free updated copy of the book! Her presentation was based on one of the obligations of an Oblate: "to accept the need for ongoing conversion, be open to formation and transformation." And more specifically, from an unknown author:

Put down your wrestling
Abandon yourself to God
Allow yourself to be transformed.

She shares that we often have a fear of not being in control, falling away from our goal, which is the result of preoccupation and not being in the present moment, and forgetting, or neglecting what we've learned and our resources. The Rule of Benedict is the main source of our teaching about

life, as well as our leaders, other Oblates, nature, and animals (she has nine cats!). This learning we do is not just for ourselves, of course, but we share it with others in our daily lives. Note: she shared some resources on this topic that I may use for a retreat at Serenity Acres. Watch upcoming newsletters for more information!

Finally, Sr. Karen Joseph, from the Monastery of the Immaculate Conception, Ferdinand, Indiana, gave a very stirring last keynote to the group. Using the Sermon on the Mount as a backdrop for her speech, she shared with us that we "are" the light of the world (not we "may be" or we "could be"), and that we are called to be both salt and light. Salt doesn't become salt if it is just sitting in the shaker; it has to be used to give flavor. A candle consumes itself to give life—it dies for us as it gives light. To spare the candle from sacrificing itself means there is no light. And, there's no fire if there is no air around it—the community at its worst squelches the lights of others' gifts and their light goes out. Sr. Karen challenged us in asking: "Do I add life, zest, and flavor to the people of God? Do I preserve the Gospel values by how I speak or act? Does my presence bring energy to those around me? Am I life giving? What deprives me of air to keep my light burning?" Our task as God's salt and light is to serve all and everyone. Not one area of our life should be unaffected by it!

As I reflect on these presentations, I'm continually reminded of how important it is as a Benedictine Oblate to make space and time in my day for a contemplative practice, including *Lectio Divina*, to open my heart to God. Perhaps this next year you can make a commitment to do that too along with me! Let us hold each other up in prayer and service together as we begin again this fall.

Retreats**FALL 2015 THEOLOGY INSTITUTE—CARE OF THE EARTH: A BIBLICAL VIEW**

- Saturday, October 10, 2015—9:00 a.m. to noon
- Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, South Dakota
- Presenter: Dianne Bergant, CSA.

Pope Francis's recent encyclical, *Laudato si'* (On Care for Our Common Home), stirred religious and political interest even before its May 2015 publication. It continues to generate much discussion. The 2015–2016 Theology Institutes will offer insight into matters of care for creation

and human responsibility in such care, featuring biblical views on October 10, 2015, and perspectives from moral theology on April 9, 2016.

The institute will be held in Sacred Heart Monastery's Chapter Room. All are welcome; there is no admission fee.

Details and Registration: mfrigge@mtmc.edu or 605.668.6000.

DOROTHY DAY: WOMAN OF THE GOSPEL

- Sophia Center, Mount St. Scholastica, Atchison, Kansas
- 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m., Thursday, October 15, 2015.
- Presenter: Sr. Barbara McCracken.

Get to know Dorothy Day and her lifelong growth in holiness. She is best known as the co-founder of the Catholic Worker, a lay movement that is still a force for peace and social justice today. She has been called the most interesting woman of the twentieth century. Efforts to have her declared a saint are underway.

The day will include time for reflection and discussion.

Love and ever more love is the only solution to every problem that comes up.

—Dorothy Day

Costs and information for this and other retreat offerings:
www.sophiaspiritualitycenter.org, sophia@mountosb.org, or 913.360.6173.

THOMAS MERTON AND PROVEN SPIRITUAL TOOLS OF THE MONASTIC TRADITION

- St. Benedict Center, Schuyler, Nebraska
- 7:30 p.m., Friday, October 30, through 4:00 p.m., Saturday, October 31, 2015.
- Presenter: Sr. Mary Margaret "Meg" Funk, OSB, author of *Discernment Matters*.

We will pause in our journey to celebrate Thomas Merton's legacy and how teachings from the monastic tradition are thriving today. Thomas Merton's 100th birthday would have been in 2015. Friday night will be a tribute to Thomas Merton focusing on his book, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*. On Saturday, we will retrieve, reclaim, and re-appropriate the desert contemplative tradition. Thoughts matter! We will be introduced to Sr. Meg's *Matter* series. Finally, we will ponder Thomas Merton's wisdom: What would he do

today in 2015? Sr. Meg will facilitate a lively audience response to her presentations. The retreat concludes on Saturday with Mass.

Details and Registration: www.saintbenedictcenter.com.

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.