



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 + February 2016

A Word from St. Benedict's Rule

THOUGHTS IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

"The Prophet indicates this to us when he shows that our thoughts are always present to God, saying: God searches hearts and minds (Ps 7:10); again he says: the Lord knows the thoughts of men (Ps 93[94]:11; likewise, From afar you know my thoughts (Ps 138[19]:3); and, The thought of man shall give you praise (Ps 75[76]:11). That he may take care to avoid sinful thoughts, the virtuous brother must always say to himself: I shall be blameless in his sight if I guard myself from my own wickedness (Ps 17[18]:25)."

Source: The Rule of Benedict, RB 7:14-18

Celebration

THE FEAST OF ST. SCHOLASTICA



St. Scholastica

We celebrate the feast of St. Scholastica on February 10. Scholastica was the twin sister of St. Benedict. She established numerous monasteries for women. *The Dialogues* of St. Gregory the Great tell two stories of these holy siblings. One describes their last annual meeting. It was their custom to meet once a year to praise God and discuss sacred subjects. On their last meeting, as night

approached, Benedict wanted to return to his monastery. Scholastica asked him to stay and talk until morning. When he refused, she lowered her head and prayed. As she raised her head, a huge thunderstorm began, making it impossible for

Benedict to leave. According to *The Dialogues*, when he asked her what she had done, she replied: "I asked you and you would not listen; so I asked my God and he did listen." Three days later, Benedict was in his cell. Looking up to the sky, he saw his sister's soul leave her body in the form of a dove, and fly up to the secret places of heaven. Rejoicing in her great glory, he thanked almighty God with hymns and words of praise. He then sent his brethren to bring her body to the monastery and lay it in the tomb he had prepared for himself.

A Word from the Wise

PRAYER IS THE LIGHT OF THE SPIRIT

Prayer and converse with God is a supreme good; it is a partnership and union with God. As the eyes of the body are enlightened when they see light, so our spirit when it is intent on God, is illumined by his infinite light. I do not mean the prayer of outward observance but prayer from the heart, not confined to fixed times or periods but continuous throughout the day and night.



St. John Chrysostom

Our spirit should be quick to reach out toward God, not only when it is engaged in meditation; at other times also, when it is carrying out its duties, caring for the needy, performing works of charity, giving generously in the service of others, our spirit should long for God and call him to mind, so that these works may be seasoned with the salt of

CHAPTERS	DEANS	LOCATIONS
Hastings	Julienne Bryan, julienne.bryan@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	Family Room, St. Michael's Church, Hastings
	Carol Barry, majorcarolb@yahoo.com	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	
Steinauer	Marcia Borchert, marcia.borchert@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	Banquet Room, Convent House B&B, Steinauer

God's love, and so make a palatable offering to the Lord of the universe. Throughout the whole of our lives we may enjoy the benefit that comes from prayer if we devote a great deal of time to it.
St. John Chrysostom, bishop (A.D. 347–407), from *The Christian Way of Life*

Sacred Heart Monastery News

DEAR OBLATES,

Our dear Sister Eileen O'Connor went home to God very peacefully yesterday morning. Thank you for your prayers, and we ask you to continue praying for Sister Eileen, her family and us, her Benedictine family.

Sister Eileen's Wake Services will be on Friday, January 29, 2016, at 7:00 pm.

Her Funeral Mass will be Saturday, January, 30, 2016 at 10:30 am. Both of these will be in Bishop Marty Memorial Chapel, Yankton, SD.

She will be greatly missed.

God's Blessings,

Sister Patricia Heirigs, OSB, Oblate Director

NOTE: Sr. Eileen was Mount Marty College's Associate Oblate Director

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.

Some Lincoln oblates 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 two Saturdays—February 6 and 20**. Please consider adding this prayer office to your spiritual life.

Oblates also will gather on the fifth Sunday of this month—**February—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.

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 begins on Ash Wednesday, February 10, 2016. The readings for Lent begin on the first Sunday of Lent, February 14, 2016.

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

Chapter Gatherings

HASTINGS

The Chapter Gathering will be Saturday, February 13, 2016, 9:30–11:30 a.m., in the Family Room at St. Michael's Church.

The discussion turns to Norvene Vest's *Preferring Christ*, "Disciplines of the Community," Chapters 21–30.

- *Facilitator:* Juliene Bryan Weir
- *Reflection:* Susan Janda
- *Prayer Leader:* Kathy Schroder.

LINCOLN

The Chapter Gathering will be held on Sunday, February 14, 2016, in the Sheridan Room at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital at 7:00 p.m. The chapter will reflect on and discuss Chapters 21–30, "Disciplines of the Community," from *Preferring Christ* by Norvene Vest.

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 or carol.olson@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org, if you would like to be put on a list for ride sharing.

STEINAUER

The Chapter Gathering will be held on Monday, February 29, 2016, from 7:00–9:00 p.m., in the Banquet Room at Covenant House across from St. Anthony's Church. The chapter's reading is

Chapters 21–30, “Disciplines of the Community,” 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 small group meetings are considered supplemental 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. The new Omaha cell group started its gatherings in January 2016.

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 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

- **January:** Chapter 3—“Three Examples of Discernment”: pp. 139–158.

Full Schedule: www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/cells/

GRAND ISLAND CELL GROUP

Brother Lawrence Cell

This cell meets Monday, February 22, 2016, 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, February 27, 2016, 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: February 28, 2016
- 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: February 6 and 20, 2016
- February 6: **Discernment Matters**
Morning Prayer: Steve Blum, leader
Group *Lectio Divina*: Mark 14:32–38, “... not what I will ...,” Marianne Guenther, leader.
Discussion: *Discernment Matters*, Jim Rea, leader.
- February 20: **The Shape of Our Cell’s Common Rule**
Morning Prayer: member of the Subiaco Cell Group
Lectio Divina: 1 Corinthians 10:23–33, “... do everything for the glory of God ...,” Carol Brewer, leader.
Discussion: Taking stock of our life together as a cell group, David Frye, leader.

Pax Christi Cell

- Leader: Lorene Ludy
- Meetings: The *fifth* Monday (this month only) from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at Mary Lu Long’s house, 1615 Brent Blvd., Lincoln. *In addition, January’s meeting is moved to February 1, 2016.*
- This month: February 29, 2016.

Preferring Christ Cell

- Leaders: Charlotte Liggett
- Meetings: The fourth Sunday of every month at Madonna, 7:00 p.m.
- This month: February 28, 2016.

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: February 6 and 20, 2016.

OMAHA CELL GROUP

- Leader: Phil Kelley
- Meetings: Fourth Tuesday of each month 7:00–9:00 p.m. at the New Cassel Retirement Center.
- This month: February 23, 2016.

News from Sacred Heart Monastery

SPIRITUAL FORMATION PROGRAM

We are happy to announce that the application process for the 2016–2018 Spiritual Direction Ministry Formation Program is beginning soon. If you are discerning a call to companioning others in their spiritual journey, please send a note of inquiry to me at the address below. Also, if you know of someone who might benefit from this program, please forward the information to them.

Thank you!

*In peace,
S. Jeanne Ranek*

Benedictine Peace Center
1005 W 8th St.
Yankton SD 57078
605.668.6292 • jeanneranek@mtmc.edu.

NOTE: Oblates Steve Blum, Charlotte Liggett, and Carol Olson can share their experiences in this program as they have undergone formation to become spiritual directors.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: OBLATES' RETREAT

- *Forms of Prayer*, April 22–24, 2016.
- More details to follow.

Retreats

"KEEP THIS LITTLE RULE"—SHAPING A PERSONAL RULE FOR THE OBLATE LIFE

- Saturday, March 12, 2016, 12 noon–3:00 p.m.
- Serenity Acres, Bennet, Nebraska
- Presenters: Mary Schroer and David Frye, oblates.

Our oblate handbook suggests that one of the ways an oblate can grow in his or her practice of the oblate life is to create a personal rule that helps to focus one's practice of Christian discipleship.

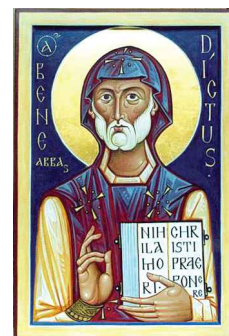
The presenters have been working together for over a year to shape and refine their own personal rules. This experience will yield some guidance and suggestions to share to build upon the basic material included in the handbook.

The retreat will offer resources and ample time for retreatants to pray for guidance and to begin crafting—or refining—their own personal rules.

The retreat will begin with Midday Prayer and end with Evening Prayer.

Registration: There is no cost to register. Please send an e-mail to one of the leaders to let them know you are interested:

davidfrye@windstream.net
mary.schroer@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org.



LECTIO DIVINA: LISTENING WITH THE EAR OF THE HEART

- Sophia Spirituality Center, Atchison, Kansas
- Saturday, February 13, 2016, 10:00 a.m.–Sunday, February 14, 2016, 2:00 p.m.
- Presenter: Sr. Micaela Randolph, OSB.
- Fee: \$115 with \$20 deposit.
- Registration Deadline: February 1, 2016.

Lectio Divina is what our ancestors in the faith named the kind of reading that enters the soul, feeds us, inebriates our whole being, and results in holiness and wisdom. This ancient art of prayerfully reading Scripture leads to a contemplative attitude and changes our perspective on life. Come and experience a time of sharing, silence, solitude, and reflection.

Details and Registration: www.sophiaspiritualitycenter.org.

WALKING THROUGH LENT IN GOD'S MERCY

- Sophia Spirituality Center, Atchison, Kansas
- Thursdays: February 18, 25 and March 3, 10, 10:00 a.m.–11:30 a.m.
- Presenter: Mary Elizabeth Schweiger, OSB
- Fee: \$75 with \$20 deposit.
- Registration Deadline: January 20, 2016.

This four-week series will explore the ideas and values of Pope Francis's Jubilee Year of God's Mercy. Taking time to be with the Scriptures, Pope Francis's words, Church teachings, and our life experience, we will delve into the meaning of mercy through prayer, DVDs, discussion, and time alone.

Details and Registration: www.sophiaspiritualitycenter.org.

SILENT: A TASTE OF CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER

- St. Benedict Center, Christ the King Priory, Schuyler, Nebraska
- 7:30 p.m., Friday, February 19, 2016 through 1:00 p.m., Sunday, February 21, 2016.
- Presenter: Fr. Thomas Leitner, OSB.
- Regular Registration Fee (Single): \$198.83.

"As my prayer became increasingly devout and interior, there was less and less I had to say. Finally I became completely still" (S. Kierkegaard).

Contemplative prayer is the opening of mind and heart—our whole being—to God, the Ultimate Mystery, beyond thoughts, words, and emotions. This retreat, involving breath practice, is for beginners on the contemplative way. Please bring loose fitting clothing of neutral colors.

Details: www.stbenedictcenter.com.

FINDING GOD IN TROUBLED TIMES: SCRIPTURAL APPROACHES

- St. Benedict Center, Christ the King Priory, Schuyler, Nebraska
- 7:30 p.m., Friday, February 26, 2016 through 4:45 p.m., Saturday, February 27, 2016.
- Presenter: Fr. Richard Hauser, SJ, PhD.
- Regular Registration Fee (Single): \$109.54
- Regular Registration Fee (Double): \$101.94.

Where is God in suffering? Does Scripture present God as cause of suffering or as help in suffering?

During this Lenten workshop participants are invited to reflect on their faith and how suffering hurts or enhances relationship with God and with Jesus. Participants are encouraged to prepare for workshop by reflecting on Fr. Hauser's book, *Finding God in Troubled Times* (Loyola Press).

Details: www.stbenedictcenter.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.

CENTERING PRAYER RETREAT

- Knowles Mercy Spirituality Center, 2304 Campanile Rd., Waterloo, Nebraska 68069 (1 mile west of 264th and West Center Road.)
- 8:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m., Thursday, March 31.
- Resource: *Open Mind Open Heart*, Thomas Keating (Please bring your own copy or purchase one by adding \$16 to your fee).
- Facilitator: Don Bredthauer, retired Methodist pastor and certified spiritual director
- Cost: \$30, which includes lunch.

Centering Prayer is a response to the invitation to "Be still and know ... God" (Psalm 46:10). It is a way to give our consent to the presence and transforming grace of the Divine Indwelling in silence beyond thoughts, words, and emotions. Grounded in the contemplative heritage of the Christian tradition, our intention in Centering Prayer is to consent with open mind and heart to the Divine Mystery that sustains all creation. This introduction will include a brief overview of the contemplative tradition, the method of Centering Prayer, how to let go of thoughts, and the effects of a deepening relationship with God in our daily lives.

Facilitator Don Bredthauer, a retired Methodist Pastor and a Certified Spiritual Director, has practiced Centering Prayer since 1989. He regularly facilitates retreats and classes on prayer for which he was commissioned in 1995 by Thomas Keating and Contemplative Outreach.

General Announcements

Snow Policy

It seems timely to restate our snow policy.

1. Should we have 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, an e-mail will be sent. For those without e-mail, please call someone with e-mail.

In all cases, use your best judgment: Be Safe!