



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 2017

A Word from St. Benedict's Rule

HUMILITY'S SEVENTH STEP

The seventh step of humility is that a man not only admits with his tongue but is also convinced in his heart that he is inferior to all and of less value, humbling himself and saying with the Prophet: *I am truly a worm, not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people* (Ps 21[22]:7). *I was exalted, then I was humbled and overwhelmed with confusion* (Ps 87[88]:16). And again, *It is a blessing that you have humbled me so that I can learn your commandments* (Ps 118[119]: 71,73).

Source: *The Rule of Benedict*, RB 7:51-54

Reflection

CELEBRATING THE COMING OF SALVATION

Through the tribe of Judah, kings, princes and rulers sprang from him. Nor are his other tribes without their honor, for God promised Abraham: You descendants shall be as the stars of heaven. It is obvious, therefore, that none of these owed their honor and exaltation to themselves, or to their own labors, or to their deeds of virtue. No; they owed everything to God's will. So likewise with us, who by his will are called in Christ Jesus. We are not justified by our wisdom, intelligence, piety, or by any action of ours, however holy, but by faith, the one means by which God has justified from the beginning. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen. What must we do then, brothers? Give up good works? Stop practicing Christian love? God forbid! We must be ready and eager for every opportunity to do good, and put our whole heart into it. Even the Creator and Lord of the universe rejoices in his works. By his supreme power he set the heavens in their place; by his infinite wisdom he gave them their order. We must recognize, therefore, that all upright men have been graced by

good works, and that even the Lord himself took delight in the glory his works gave him. This should inspire us with a resolute determination to do his will and make us put our whole strength into the work of living a Christian life.

Source: From a letter to the Corinthians by Saint Clement I, pope (d. A.D. 100?)



Source: *The Lives and Times of the Popes* by Chevalier Artaud de Montor, New York: The Catholic Publication Society of America, 1911. It was originally published in 1842.

News from Sacred Heart Monastery

ELECTION OF A PRIORESS

In March, we Sisters will be electing a new Prioress as Sister Penny will complete her six-year term as our spiritual leader. This is a very important and holy election as the Sister elected will be the one who guides us for the next six years. Enclosed with this newsletter is a special prayer that we are asking all our Oblates to pray several times a week so that the Holy Spirit may help us in

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

our choice of our next prioress. Thank you for your prayers.

PRAYER FOR THE ELECTION OF PRIORESS

God of all Faithfulness, we ask you to enlighten the minds and hearts of all the Sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery as they prepare to elect the next prioress. May they select a member of the community who is best able to lead the monastery into the future in the Benedictine way of life according to Your will. This we ask in Christ's name and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

MONASTERY NEWSLETTERS

To view the full Oblate Newsletter and for online copies of the Yankton Benedictines Newsletter go to the Sacred Heart Monastery Web site and select "Recent News"—Newsletter.

Web site: www.yanktonbenedictines.org.

SAVE THE DATE

The 2017 oblate retreats at Sacred Heart Monastery will be held on April 7–9 and October 27–29, 2017. Details will follow!

MEET THE SISTERS OF SACRED HEART MONASTERY: SISTER BONITA GACNIK

"My goal in life has always been to be fully human and fully alive"—these words of Sister Bonita Gacnik describe the busy, active, and energetic life of this Benedictine sister and professor of mathematics and computer science.

As a Benedictine and a teacher, S. Bonita feels she has a special opportunity to model Catholic, Benedictine values in the classroom and to mentor future leaders of society. As an educator, "I have the opportunity to help students realize their potential, their giftedness and broaden their vision for themselves and expand their views of the world."

S. Bonita was 36 when she entered the Monastery. She owned her own home, was active in her parish and well established professionally. Knowing the challenges a professional woman faces in deciding to choose monastic life, she feels a special call to work with other professional women



S. Bonita Gacnik

discerning a call to religious life. "I came to Sacred Heart Monastery," she says, "because I felt a call to religious life. I continue to believe it is as a Benedictine that I have the opportunity to realize my full potential as a human being."

S. Bonita knows what it means to work for what is important. Her family had a paper route when she was in grade and high school. Moneys earned were used to pay tuition for the four in her family to attend parochial school. In college, she worked in dietary at Colorado State Hospital, 20-30 hours a week. After graduating from Southern CO State College, Pueblo, she worked for 14 years in Scientific Computing doing software design, development and consulting at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, CO. Since entering the Monastery in 1984 she has earned master's degrees in mathematics and computer science, an Education Specialist Degree in Computing Technology in Education, and a Ph.D. in Computing Technology in Education. She has been on the faculty of Mount Marty College since 1989.



Sister Bonita with some of her students in East Africa.

S. Bonita has had the opportunity to serve in East Africa three times (2009, 2010, and 2013). Her two recent African adventures were sponsored by the Sisters Leadership Development Initiative, a special project of the African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC). ASEC's mission is to facilitate educational opportunities for women religious in Africa which will enable them to enhance and expand access to educational, healthcare, social and spiritual services for the people they serve. She has taught classes in technology and web design. Of her African experiences, she

comments, “I believe that those who have been trained and educated by ASEC are the future of their congregations, their apostolates, the Church, and their countries. Technology skills enhance and enrich the gifts of any leader. My African experiences have touched my spirit and have given me a love for the sisters of East Africa and a passion for this ministry. Given the opportunity, I am ready and eager to return to Africa to continue this apostolate.”

S. Bonita has a great love of the elderly, nurtured by her work in the Monastery Care Center. She has always had one of the residents as a “buddy.”

She loves nature, sports, and handyman-type projects. She enjoys golfing, bike riding, rose gardening, working in photography, and feeding birds and squirrels.

Note: Sister Bonita developed and leads the Online Oblate Chapter of Sacred Heart Monastery.

Source: www.yanktonbenedictines.org.

Worship Notes

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 4 and 18**. Please consider adding this prayer office to your spiritual life.

Also, Lincoln oblates gather in the Ryan Memorial Chapel for Evening Prayer on the fourth Sunday each month at 7:00 p.m. This month, they will pray **Evening Prayer on 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, February 26**.

MONASTERY AND CHAPTER GATHER PETITIONS

If you would like to send your prayer requests to the monastery, please use Sacred Heart Monastery’s prayer submission 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 INSTRUCTION

Please note that the instructions in the January newsletter were incorrect. We started Week I on January 9, 2017. Our apologies for the inaccuracy. We will continue in ordinary time until Ash Wednesday, March 1, 2017.

FEAST OF ST. SCHOLASTICA

The feast of St. Scholastica is on February 10, 2017. St. Scholastica was the twin sister of St. Benedict. She founded numerous monasteries for women.

Chapter Gatherings

READINGS

The readings for 2016–2017 come from *Preferring Christ: A Devotional Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict* by Norvene Vest. The February reading covers chapters 61–63.

HASTINGS

The Hastings gathering will be held on Saturday, February 11, 2017, at 9:30–11:30 a.m., in the St. Cecilia’s Health Ministry Building, 415 N. Kansas, Hastings.

- *Facilitator:* Sharon Connor
- *Reflection:* Susan Janda
- *Prayer Leader:* Kathy Schroeder
- *Companion Leader:* Leland Ostdiek, Oblate Handbook Lesson #5.

LINCOLN

The Lincoln gathering will be held on Sunday, February 12, 2017, at 7:00–9:00 p.m. in the Sheridan Room at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. The evening ends with Evening Prayer in the Ryan Memorial Chapel.

STEINAUER

The Steinauer gathering will be held on Sunday, February 27, 2017, 7:00–9:00 p.m., in the Banquet Room, Convent House B&B, Steinauer. This location is across the street from St. Anthony’s Church.

Cell Groups

CELL GROUP READINGS: 2016–2017

Text: *The Soul of a Pilgrim: Eight Practices for the Journey Within*, Christine Valters Painter, ObISB, Sorin Books, 2015. The cell groups will

discuss this book from the fall of 2016 through the spring of 2017. All cell groups across Nebraska except Lincoln's Pax Christi Cell will read the same text. February's discussions focus on Chapter 5, "The Practice of Being Uncomfortable," pp. 81–96.
Cell Details: www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/cells

Cell Group Gatherings

Oblates are encouraged to further their oblate experience by joining a cell group. Following are the available cell groups for 2016–2017. Listings include meeting dates, times, and locations.

Grand Island Cell Group

Brother Lawrence Cell

- Leader: Jeanette Nordhues
- Meetings: The fourth Monday of the month, 4:30–5:30 p.m., in the home of Joan Hopkins, 1611 W. Charles St., Grand Island.
- This Month: Monday, February 27.

Hastings Cell Group

Saint Scholastica Cell

- Leader: Lee Ostdiek
- Meetings: The fourth Saturday of the month beginning at 9:30 a.m. in the Library at St. Cecelia's Health Ministry Building, 415 N. Kansas, Hastings.
- This Month: Saturday, February 25.

Lincoln Cell Groups

Beginners' Cell

- Leader: Marti Fritzen
- Meetings: Monthly on the fourth Sunday at 7:00 p.m., beginning with Vespers in the chapel at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. Then the group goes to the Platte Room for its gathering.
- 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.
- This Month: Sunday, February 26.

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. Following a time for quiet reflection, the cell then gathers in **Sheridan Room B** (the room where you pick up your name tags at the chapter gathering) for

lectio divina and conversation on a topic or the reading. Following this, members may gather in the cafeteria for fellowship.

- This Month: Saturdays, February 4 and 18.

Pax Christi Cell

- Leader: Lorene Ludy
- Meetings: Monthly on the third Tuesday from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at Mary Lu Long's house, 1615 Brent Blvd., Lincoln.
- This Month: February 21.

Preferring Christ Cell

- Leader: Charlotte Liggett
- Meetings: Monthly on the fourth Sunday at 7:00 p.m., beginning with Vespers in the chapel at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital.
- This Month: February 26.

Omaha Cell

- Leader: Phil Kelley
- Meetings: Monthly on the fourth Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. at the New Cassel Retirement Center. Members take turn serving as facilitators for the cell's gatherings. This cell will reflect on readings from *Preferring Christ: A Devotional Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict* by Norvene Vest.
- This Month: Tuesday, February 28.

General Announcements

SNOW AND CHAPTER GATHERINGS

It's that time of year again! If we should have three to four inches of snow, we will cancel the chapter gathering without notice. The meeting will not be rescheduled. The next month's meeting will occur as scheduled with that month's assignment. 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.

Area Retreat Offerings

OVERVIEW

We are fortunate to have several monasteries in our area that provide retreat opportunities. We will continue to call your attention to retreats that may be of interest to our oblats. Please visit each monastery's Website for more information on these and other opportunities for retreat offerings.

For the convenience of the approximately 20 percent of our members who do not have Internet access, we have provided the address and phone number for each monastery.

ST. BENEDICT CENTER, SCHUYLER, NEBRASKA

Topic: *Ora et Labora: How to Find Balance in Our Lives*

Dates: Friday, February 24, 7:30 p.m. to Sunday, February 26, 1:00 p.m.

Leader: Fr. Mauritius Wilde, OSB, PhD.

Details: Saint Benedict is the master of balance. He teaches us *discretion*—not too little, not too much of anything, without being mediocre. He encourages us to go with the flow of each day's and night's natural rhythms, of summer and winter, of hunger and satisfaction, of sleeping and being awake, of praying and working (*ora et labora*). This allows us to conquer exaggerations of any kind. The retreat is a great opportunity to reflect on our way of life.

Contact: 1123 Road I Schuyler NE 68661, (402)-352-2177

Web: www.stbenedictcenter.com.

Topic: *Jesus: The Image of God's Mercy*

Date: April 22, 2017

Leader: Fr. Anselm Gruen, OSB, will be coming from Germany to give this retreat.

Contact: 1123 Road I Schuyler NE 68661, (402)-352-2177

Web: www.stbenedictcenter.com.

SOPHIA SPIRITUALITY CENTER, ATCHISON, KANSAS

Topic: *Lent with Saint Benedict*

Date: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Friday, March 3, 2017

Leader: Sr. Judith Sutera, OSB.

Details: Lent is the only liturgical season to which St. Benedict devotes a whole chapter of his rule. The author of the book *Lenten Wisdom from St. Benedict* (Liguori Press) guides retreatants to consider the challenges and joys of a Benedictine approach to the season.

Contact: Sophia Spirituality Center, 913.360.6173

Web: www.sophiaspiritualitycenter.org.

Topic: *Tenth Monastic Institute for Oblates: "Steps to Good Living"*

Dates: July 20–23, 2017

Leader: Fr. Meinrad Miller, OSB.

Contact: Sophia Spirituality Center, 913.360.6173

Web: www.mountosb.org/ministries/scheduled-retreat-opportunities.

Benedictine Events

NAABOD CONFERENCE

The National Association of Benedictine Oblates (NAABOD) conference will focus on *Benedictine Values and Practices: Tools for Living, Tools for Life*, July 14–19, 2017, at St. Scholastica College, Duluth, Minnesota. Sacred Heart Monastery may invite two oblates to participate. If you are interested, contact lead dean Carol Olson.

INTERNATIONAL OBLATES' CONFERENCE

The Fourth International Congress of Benedictine Oblates will meet in Rome in November 2017. If you are interested in learning more about this event, please contact any of the deans.

Overview:

www.anselmianum.com/programmi/2017/congressus_oblati/english/welcome.php.

E-mail Notice

ATTENTION: AOL.COM USERS

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Our current and past newsletters are always available on our Web site at www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/news/.