



# 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 2017

## A Word from St. Benedict's Rule

### TIMES FOR SILENCE AND LISTENING

Let us follow the Prophet's counsel: *I said, I have resolved to keep watch over my ways that I may never sin with my tongue. I have put a guard on my mouth. I was silent and was humbled, and I refrained even from good words* (Ps 38[39]:2-3). Here the Prophet indicates that there are times when good words are to be left unsaid out of esteem for silence. For all the more reason, then, should evil speech be curbed so that punishment for sin may be avoided. Indeed, so important is silence that permission to speak should seldom be granted even to mature disciples, no matter how good or holy or constructive their talk, because it is written: *In a flood of words you will not avoid sin* (Prov 10:19); and elsewhere, *The tongue holds the key to life and death* (Prov 18:21). Speaking and teaching are the master's task; the disciple is to be silent and listen.

Source: *The Rule of Benedict*, RB 6:1-6

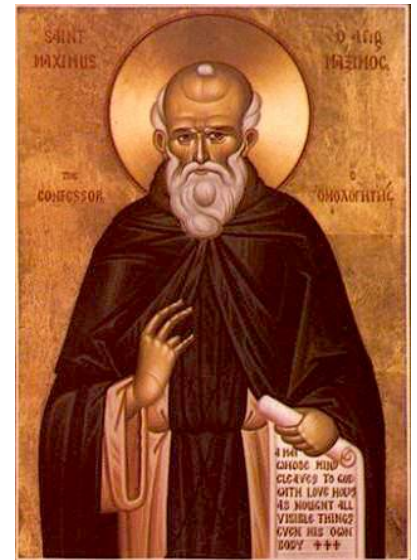
## Reflection

### THE GIFT OF CONTEMPLATION

Sometimes when a farmer is looking for a suitable spot to which to transplant a tree, he unexpectedly comes across a treasure. Something similar may happen to the seeker after God. If he is humble and unaffected, and if his soul, after the example of the blessed Jacob (cf Gen. 27:11), is sleek, and not hirsute with materiality, then God may grant him the contemplation of divine wisdom even though he has not labored for it. But if the Father then asks him how he came by this knowledge, saying to him "What is this you have found so quickly, my son?" he should reply, as Jacob did, "It is what the Lord God has granted to me" (Gen. 27:20. LXX). We should realize in such a

case that what he has found is a spiritual treasure; for the devoted seeker after God is a spiritual farmer who transplants, as if it were a tree, his contemplation of visible and sensory things to the field of noetic realities; and in so doing he find a treasure—the revelation by grace of the wisdom in created things.

From *The Philokalia*, par. 17, Saint Maximus the Confessor—abbot, mystic, and doctor of the Church (AD c. 580-662)



St. Maximus the Confessor

## News from Sacred Heart Monastery

### ELECTION OF A PRIORRESS

Dear Oblates,

I am pleased to announce the good news that we have elected a new Prioress. Sister Maribeth Wentzlaff has been elected the fourteenth prioress of Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, South Dakota. Sister Maribeth has been the Campus Minister at Mount Marty College for several years and is very involved in many activities. Her installation will be on June 3, 2017. Thank you for many prayers and we ask that you continue your prayers for Sister Maribeth as she prepares for this new role as prioress.

God's Blessings, *Sister Patricia Heirigs*

CHAPTERS	DEANS	LOCATIONS
Hastings	<i>Julienne Bryan</i> , julienne.bryan@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	<i>Family Room, St. Michael's Church, Hastings</i>
	<i>Carol Barry</i> , majorcarolb@yahoo.com	<i>Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital</i>
	<i>Steve Blum</i> , steve.blum@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	<i>Sheridan Room</i>
Lincoln	<i>Carol Olson</i> , carol.olson@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	<i>5401 South St.</i>
	<i>Jim Rea</i> , jim.rea@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	<i>Lincoln</i>
	<i>Mary Schroer</i> , mary.schroer@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	
Steinauer	<i>Marcia Borchert</i> , marcia.borchert@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	<i>Banquet Room, Convent House B&amp;B, Steinauer</i>

**SR. MARIBETH WENTZLAFF ELECTED Prioress of SHM**

*NOTE: The following excerpt from the personal profile written by Sr. Maribeth Wentzlaff is taken from the "Meet Our Sisters" section of the Sacred Heart Monastery Web site.*



My favorite part of Benedictine life is the concept "one plus one equals three."

When there are at least two, you always come out with something greater than you would have on your own. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. When we put our Sisters together, we are way more than what we could accomplish on our own. I think that is so neat because as Sisters we go together, seeking God together.

My favorite part of the Rule, out of many parts, is chapter 4, "The Tools of Good Works." St. Benedict says that our way of acting should be different than the world's way of acting. We don't need to give into commercialism and all the greatest and latest technology out there. Benedictines believe there is room for so much more. If we don't stand for something, we will fall for anything. I teach a course called Wisdom of Benedict to the freshmen, and pinpoint ten hallmarks of Benedict's values, through the book *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily* by S. Joan Chittister. I approach my classes with a focus on the question, "Where are we with topic x?" For example, if we talk about prayer we ask the following questions, "What does prayer mean to you? How do you pray? How does this action or behavior mirror for or against how Benedict calls us to pray?" It is often a juxtaposed topic to what they are facing in their culture today, and all the topics we cover are amazing—stability, giftedness, community, hospitality, and silence—are all those hallmarks of being Benedictine. Another one of my favorite parts of the Rule is "to anticipate another's needs before others ask us."

What do I find most challenging? Benedictine balance is a very hard thing for me. As much as I do not want my work and ministry to take over my life, often it does because of the different needs of the college and students and other events. In a busy day, I have to stop and ask, where have I really stopped today and shut down to be able to focus on prayer with God? One way I can focus best is when I can fish. This disconnecting allows me to

listen to the cardinals, watch the pheasants fly over the river, and watch the water. I am then mindful and present.

What does living in community do for me? It gives me a reality check that "I'm not all that and a bag of chips." This can come in many various scenarios thinking that I know the best way to do something. Community has helped me to reach out to others in small ways—even if it is just passing the salt around table in the refectory before they ask for it.

What keeps me committed to this life? I visualize an image that reminds me of and portrays this life. Every day when we are giving ourselves to other people, we are like a pitcher of water; we constantly pour out our pitcher all the time, and when we do that, we can deplete ourselves. This vocation for me is not depleting my pitcher because we are blessed with ways to refill it: community time together, pinochle together, meals and prayer together. When we are fulfilled in our vocation, then the pitcher will constantly refill itself so we are further able to give more. Vocation is a daily commitment. It is an everyday "Yes" to God. Every day is a new challenge, and we say to God "OK, God, let me be your ears and your hands and your arms and feet today to those around us who need us, in whatever way is needed, and to do so joyfully."

*Sister Maribeth Wentzlaff*

**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](http://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 three Saturdays—April 1, 15, and 29**. 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, April 23.**

#### 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](http://www.yanktonbenedictines.org/PrayerRequest.php).

You may also send petitions to Marcia Straatmeyer at [mstraat@neb.rr.com](mailto:mstraat@neb.rr.com) or by using the Prayer Request option on the chapter's Web site.

**On the Web:** [www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/contact/](http://www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/contact/).

#### SHORTER CHRISTIAN PRAYER INSTRUCTION

We continue in the Lenten prayers until Palm Sunday April 9, 2017. Evening Prayer, Saturday, April 9, for Palm Sunday can be found on p. 111, Week II of the Psalter. At the Reading, turn to p. 429. On Holy Thursday, April 13, begin on p. 160. At the Reading turn to pp. 436–456 during the Easter Triduum, Holy Thursday through Holy Saturday. On Easter Sunday, April 16, 2017, start on p. 457. On Easter Sunday, we begin Week I. During the Easter Season, we will turn at the Reading to pp. 469–486.

#### 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 April reading covers Interlude IX and chapters 67–70.

##### HASTINGS

The Hastings gathering will be held on Saturday, April 8, 2017, 9:30–11:30 a.m., in the St. Cecilia's Health Ministry Building, 415 N. Kansas, Hastings.

- *Facilitator:* Jeanette Nordhues
- *Reflection:* Greg Burke
- *Prayer Leader:* Robin Stroot
- *Companion Leader:* Leland Ostdiek, Oblate Handbook Lesson #7, Robin Stroot.

#### LINCOLN

The Lincoln gathering will be held on Sunday, April 9, 2017, 7:00–9:00 p.m., in the Sheridan Room at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. The reflection will be a reading, "A Life of Virtue: Once Again Amongst Men and Women." This piece, written by Dale Schroeder, Lincoln Oblate, is dedicated the Nebraska Benedictine Oblates.

The evening ends with Evening Prayer in the Ryan Memorial Chapel.

#### STEINAUER

The Steinauer gathering will be held on Monday, April 24, 2017, 7:00–9:00 p.m., in the Banquet Room, Convent House B&B, Steinauer, 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, OblSB, 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. April's discussions focus on Chapter 7, "The Practice of Embracing the Unknown," pp. 109–124. **Cell Details:** [www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/cells](http://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, April 24.

#### 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. Cecilia's Health Ministry Building, 415 N. Kansas, Hastings.
- This Month: Saturday, April 22.

**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, April 23.

***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, April 1, 15, and 29.

***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: April 18.

***Preferring Christ Cell***

*Please Note: The Preferring Christ Cell will be temporarily merging with the Beginners' Cell because of the extended absence of Charlotte Liggett, Preferring Christ's leader. Please keep Charlotte and her mother in your prayers as her mother nears the end of life.*

- 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: April 23.

**Omaha Cell Group**

- Leader: Phil Kelley
- Meetings: Monthly on the fourth Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. at the New Cassel Retirement Center, 900 N. 90th St., Omaha. 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, April 25.

**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 oblates. 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:** Jesus—The Image of God's Mercy

**Dates:** Saturday, April 22, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Leader:** Fr. Anselm Gruen, OSB, PhD.

**Details:** This retreat will offer an encounter with Jesus, who is "the face of God's mercy" (Pope Francis).

**Registration:** 402.352.2177

**Web:** [www.stbenedictcenter.com](http://www.stbenedictcenter.com).

**SOPHIA SPIRITUALITY CENTER, ATCHISON, KANSAS**

**Topic:** *Enneagram Workshop*

**Date:** Friday, April 28, 7:00 p.m. to Sunday, April 30, 4:00 p.m.

**Leader:** Sr. Therese Elias, OSB.

**Topic:** *Growing with God—A Gardener's and Plant-Lover's Retreat*

**Date:** Friday, May 5, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Leader:** Sr. Judith Sutera, OSB.

**Contact:** Sophia Spirituality Center, 913.360.6173

**Web:** [www.sophiaspiritualitycenter.org](http://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](http://www.mountosb.org/ministries/scheduled-retreat-opportunities).