



# Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska

*Living by the Spirit of The Rule of St. Benedict + Associated with Sacred Heart Monastery*  
[www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org](http://www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org) + [info@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org](mailto:info@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org) + **January 2018**

## **A Word from St. Benedict's Rule**

The clothing distributed to the brothers should vary according to local conditions and climate, because more is needed in cold regions and less in warmer. This is left to the abbot's discretion. We believe that for each monk a cowl and tunic will suffice in temperate regions; in winter a woolen cowl is necessary, in summer a thinner or worn one; also a scapular for work, and footwear--both sandals and shoes.

Source: *The Rule of Benedict*, Chapter 55, v1-6

## **The Incarnation**

Then He summoned an archangel, Saint Gabriel: and when he came, sent him forth to find a maiden, Mary was her name.

Only through her consenting love could the mystery be preferred that the Trinity in human flesh might cloth the Word.

Though the three Persons worked the wonder it only happened in the One. So was the Word made incarnation in Mary's womb, a son.

So He who only had a Father now had a Mother, undefiled, though not as ordinary maids had she conceived the Child.

By Mary, and with her own flesh He was clothed in His own frame: Both Son of God and Son of Man together had one name.  
St. John of the Cross

## **Thank you!**

Thank you to all that renewed their Oblation either in person or by mail! Please accept our invitation to any Oblates that haven't attended a Chapter Gathering recently to consider returning. Our Oblate community is enriched by the sharing that occurs during our meetings, especially about how we each live out the Rule of Benedict. We

never know just how much what we say and share is welcomed by others and helpful to their faith journey. But if an Oblate isn't present when we meet, then that opportunity is lost. You are welcome to join us! Whether you are able to attend meetings or not, our Benedictine Oblate community is joined together whenever and where ever we are as we pray morning and evening prayer. May our Lord bless you throughout the year!

## **Welcome**

Steinauer oblate Kristin Blecha made her final oblation at the Chapter meeting on November 29, 2017. Welcome Kristin!

Lincoln oblate Michael Chaffee made his final oblation on December 10, 2017 at the Lincoln Chapter meeting.



Lead Dean Carol Olson, and Lincoln Oblate Michael Chaffee

## **Meet the Sisters**

I believe that God always calls us to be our best self, our true self, and that knowing who we are and what works with our personalities, gifts and talents is part of discerning one's vocation. God gave me a bit of musical talent, and used that as a way to nurture my vocation to religious life. I grew up on a farm north of Lincoln, Nebraska, and we belonged to St. Mary's Parish in Davey. My parents were active in the parish and were in the choir. I started playing the organ for our CCD Masses while

CHAPTERS	DEANS	LOCATIONS
Hastings	Julienne Bryan, <a href="mailto:julienne.bryan@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org">julienne.bryan@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org</a>	St. Cecilia's Health Ministry Building, Hastings
	Carol Barry, <a href="mailto:majorcarolb@yahoo.com">majorcarolb@yahoo.com</a>	Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital
	Steve Blum, <a href="mailto:steve.blum@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org">steve.blum@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org</a>	Sheridan Room
Lincoln	Carol Olson, <a href="mailto:carol.olson@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org">carol.olson@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org</a>	5401 South St.
	Jim Rea, <a href="mailto:jim.rea@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org">jim.rea@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org</a>	Lincoln
	Mary Schroer, <a href="mailto:mary.schroer@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org">mary.schroer@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org</a>	
Steinauer	Marcia Borchert, <a href="mailto:marcia.borchert@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org">marcia.borchert@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org</a>	Banquet Room, Convent House B&B, Steinauer

in grade school, and graduated to being the main organist while in high school. In the pre-Vatican II era when girls couldn't serve or read in church, I had no doubt that I had something to contribute to God's people.



Sr. Mary Jo Polak

I attended Bishop Neumann High School and, since I was thinking about being a music teacher, joined the band to expand my experience. Our marching band in those years always received Superior ratings, and we had a great director. Before a marching contest, I remember feeling the desire within my fellow students to work together, play in harmony, and please our music instructor. Somehow, that connected me with a lifelong desire to be part of a community with a greater purpose.

I was pretty quiet and studious in high school, so going on to college at the University of Nebraska as a music major forced me to perform and talk in front of large groups. I also enjoyed activities at the Newman Center and made life-long friendships there. After 3 years of teaching, I wanted to get my Master's degree; I was offered a graduate assistantship in the fine arts education program at Truman State University in Missouri. So off I went, fully intending to return to Nebraska in a year and meet a nice Catholic boy. My first weekend in Missouri, I introduced myself to the pastor and mentioned that I was an organist. The next weekend he tapped me on the shoulder as I sat in the pew, and asked me to play for that very Mass – which ended up being a two year commitment! Graduate school was a time of spiritual growth for me, and I began a serious discernment about entering a religious community. One evening I was visiting some sisters who worked in a neighboring town. At

evening prayer, they played “Be Not Afraid” which was a new song back in the 1970's. The line, “Come follow me” hit me like a ton of bricks, and I said “yes” to God that night.

So, I both graduated in August of 1977 and entered Our Lady of Peace Monastery in Columbia, Missouri. I transferred to Sacred Heart Monastery here in Yankton in 2010, and yes, I am still playing the organ in praise of our God. The Benedictine way of life is a simple Biblical spirituality, with community life and liturgical prayer as anchors. My family, my small country parish, and my experiences with music have prepared my heart to love the Benedictine way. Our monastic tradition has much to give a world that is hungering for meaning and peace.

#### 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. Please consider adding this prayer office to your spiritual life.

##### MONASTERY AND CHAPTER GATHER PRAYER 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.

### **Annual Reflection - Benedictine Oblate Personal Rule of Life**

Spend a few hours in reflection on your personal Rule of Life for the up-coming year. Haven't developed one yet? Come and take the first steps in the company of others. Questions welcomed. Bring a journal, pen, your Personal Rule of Life and Shorter Christian Prayer book. Personal Rule examples and reflective questions will be provided. The retreat will be offered at Serenity Acres in Bennett, NE, in the afternoon 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm on Sunday, January 28th, 2018, on developing/updating a Rule of Life for yourself. There is no cost to the retreat. Please RSVP to mschroer7@yahoo.com.

### **Save the Date**

On Sunday, April 22, 2018, there will be a retreat at Serenity Acres on St. Scholastica. The retreat will be offered by Carol Olson and Bill and Lylaine Abbot and the topic is St. Scholastica. The retreat will include St. Scholastica's history and asks the question: "How can Scholastica impact our spiritual life?" They will do this by focusing on how artists showed Scholastica's personal character through their art, as well as looking more closely to the relationship between her and Benedict, based on her story as authored by Gregory the Great. Details to follow.

### **Upcoming Events**

Sr. Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB will be speaking at the St. Benedict Center in Schuyler Nebraska in September 2018. Sr. Wiederkehr is the author of our current cell book, *Seven Sacred Pauses*.

A regional oblate meeting is planned for August 2018 at Immaculata Monastery in Norfolk Nebraska. More details will follow.

### **Chapter Gatherings**

Readings are from *Seven Sacred Pauses: Living Mindfully Through the Hours of the Day* by Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB. December Reading Assignment: Chapter 3: The Blessing Hour; chants p. 185-186.

### **HASTINGS**

The Hastings Gathering will be held on Saturday, January 13, 2018 at 9:30-11:30 am, at

St. Cecilia's Health Ministry Building, 415 N. Kansas, Hastings, NE. Oblate Handbook Assignment Lesson #4.

### **LINCOLN**

The Lincoln gathering will be held on Sunday, January 14, 2018, at 7:00 pm in the Sheridan Room at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital.

### **STEINAUER**

The Steinauer gathering will be held on Monday, January 29, 2018, 7:00-9:00 pm in the Banquet Room, Convent House B&B, Steinauer.

### **Cell Groups**

**Text:** *New Seeds of Contemplation*, Thomas Merton, November reading: Chapters 10-12.

Cell Groups-Oblates are encouraged to further their oblate experience by joining a cell group. Following are the available cell groups, including meeting dates, time, and location.

### **Hastings Cell Group**

Saint Scholastica Cell

Leader: Lee Ostdiek

Meetings: The cell groups meets this month on Saturday, January 27, 2018 beginning at 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 am at the St. Cecilia's Health Ministry Building, 415 N Kansas Ave.

### **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.

### **HILDEGARD VON BINGEN CELL**

Leader: Carol Roettmer Brewer

**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 members of this cell then gather in a room for *lectio divina* and conversation on a topic or the reading. Following this, members may gather in the cafeteria for breakfast and fellowship. Details: Find out [more](#).

#### **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.

#### **PREFERRING CHRIST CELL**

*DUE TO CHARLOTTE LIGGETT'S CONTINUED ABSENCE TO CARE FOR HER MOTHER, THE PREFERRING CHRIST CELL WILL MEET WITH THE BEGINNERS CELL. THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE MONTH AT 7:00 PM, MEET IN THE CHAPEL FOR VESPERS PRIOR TO THE MEETING.*

Omaha Cell Group

#### **ST. GERTRUDE 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.

#### **Shorter Christian Prayer Instructions**

We are in the Christmas Season from Christmas until the Baptism of the Lord on January 8, 2018. During the Christmas Season, for weekdays after Christmas, see pp.392-395. The Magnificat Antiphon and concluding prayers for the Epiphany of the Lord, Sunday January 7, 2018 can be found on pp. 397-398. The Antiphons and Concluding Prayer for the Baptism of the Lord, January 8, may be found on pp. 403-404. On the Monday of the Baptism of the Lord, January 8, 2018, we will switch to Week I on page 54. We will be in ordinary time from January 8 until Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2018.

#### **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.

#### **St. Benedict Center Schuyler Nebraska**

A Taste of Contemplative Prayer February 23-25, 2018 presented by Fr Thomas Leitner OSB.

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 journey.

Contact: 1123 Road I Schuyler NE 68661,  
<http://www.stbenedictcenter.com>, (402)-352-2177

#### **Sophia Spirituality Center, Atchison KS**

A JOURNAL FOR THE JOURNEY

Tuesday, January 23 | 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Sister Thomasita Homan, OSB

Would you like to try different approaches for your own private journaling? Come and spend a day learning reflective methods of journaling based on Scripture, the Rule of Benedict, and life experiences. You don't need to be a proficient writer. Personal writings are shared only if the writer chooses to do so.

[sophia@mountosb.org](mailto:sophia@mountosb.org) | 913.360.6173

#### **Snow Cancellation 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.