



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 + Spring 2020

A WORD FROM ST. BENEDICT'S RULE

Just as there are bad passions that lead us away from God to our own destruction, so too there are good passions that set us on fire to chase after God and the life that's really life. This is the right kind of passion that monastics must foster with fervent love: *They should each try to be the first to show respect to the other* (Romans 12:10b). We're on this road together, and so we must patiently bear with one another's spiritual and physical weaknesses, giving our all to learn to listen carefully to one another. No one should look after himself, but each one should strive to serve the others in everything. To one another, members should show pure love; to God, loving reverence; to leadership, humble love. We should not want anything more than Christ, who can bring us together to the life that lasts forever.

Ch 72: The Rule of Saint Benedict: A Contemporary Paraphrase by Jonathan Wilson-Hargrove

SHORTER CHRISTIAN PRAYER INSTRUCTIONS

On the Monday of the Baptism of the Lord, January 13, 2020, we will switch to Week I on page 42. We will be in Ordinary Time from January 13 until Ash Wednesday, February 26, 2020. On the first Sunday of Lent, March 1, 2020, we begin Week I with Sunday Evening Prayer I on page 37. The antiphons for Sundays in Lent are in red. At the Reading turn to pages 405-428. One week of text is given for the Lenten season. We continue in the Lenten prayers until Palm Sunday April 5, 2020. At the Reading, turn to page 429. The Easter Triduum begins on Holy Thursday, April 9, turn to page 436.

On Easter Sunday, April 12, 2020, we start Week I. During the Easter Season we turn at the Reading to pp. 464-486. We remain in the Easter season until Pentecost Sunday, May 31, 2020. One resource you might like to check for the Liturgy of the Hours for the current day can be found at universalis.com

REFLECTION FROM prioress S. MARIBETH WENTZLAFF, OSB PROVIDED DURING 2019 OBLATION CEREMONY

This year I chose the theme, "Be strong; let your heart take courage" from Psalm 31:24. I often use a children's book to illustrate my theme to the Sisters. This year, I used the book, "The Wall in the Middle of the Book" by Jon Agee. The story starts out with a brick wall dividing the two sides of the book. On the left side is a little boy dressed as a knight. There is a brick that has fallen out of the wall at the top, so he has a ladder and climbs up to put the brick back in – all the while telling us how wonderful life is on his side of the wall. He also tells us that, on the other side of the wall, there lives a great ogre and life is chaos. Something happens and water starts to fill up the left hand side of the page and scary sea creatures start swimming all around the little boy. Lo and behold the ogre reaches over the top of the wall and rescues him. The little boy thanks the ogre, but then realizes that he is supposed to be afraid of him. The ogre laughs and invites the little boy to his side of the wall and shows him that there is nothing to fear.

From that book, I believe that sometimes, we like living in our own little comfort zones and can become complacent. We may not realize that the water is creeping up around us and life is

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trying to swallow us up. During those times, we might have to risk to climb over the wall and face our true fears. That is where we need to be strong and let our hearts take courage. Maybe God is calling us to more. He might be asking us to share the fruits of our being an Oblate or being a Benedictine Sister with total strangers. Whatever it is, we need to be willing to ask God to be with us when he calls us to more and then have the strength and courage to move. So, I am encouraging all of you to join with the focus of the Sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery this year and ask God for strength and courage. We are in this together. Let us continue to pray for each other on this journey. God is calling us to something new.

REFLECTION FROM LEAD DEAN – CAROL OLSON

For one year starting in November 2018, I took a sabbatical from the position of Lead Dean for the Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska affiliated with Sacred Heart Monastery. I want to express my gratitude to Jim Rea for taking the duties as Lead Dean during this time. Many thanks also to Carol Barry, Steve Blum and Charlotte Liggett as they also adapted to this change. I'm truly grateful for their help!

Last year I shared my plan with the Oblates on what I was planning to do with my time away. My original plan was to continue attending the Chapter Gatherings in Lincoln; after reflecting on this, however, I discerned that having time away from the group was helpful for me to refresh my 'usual duties' without worrying about details about the meeting.

Travelling was also part of my plan; I was part of a Benedictine Pilgrimage to Germany, Austria and Switzerland; this was my 3rd tour with Fr. Volker from Christ the King Priory in Schuyler, and my Mom was again able to travel with me. I plan to share my experiences in the future with the Oblates. In March and October I visited the sisters at Sacred Heart Monastery, and led the Oblate Retreat during one of those visits. I cherish my time in Yankton with the sisters; I arrive at peace and leave refreshed, and I encourage you to make a little trip of your own there in 2020. The sisters pray for the Oblates every day and they love to see us!

Spiritually, my plan was to take significant and regular time for Lectio Divina and a type of body prayer that I refer to as "Physio Divina", which I

participated in throughout the year. In the future I plan to share this type of prayer with the Oblates as well. I completed an 8 week Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction class during the sabbatical. This was truly transformational for me, and it dovetailed very nicely with my Centering Prayer practice at that time. I now have more options for ways to connect with the Divine through silent times with either body stillness or body movement, with the benefit of managing stress in my life. I'm amazed at how my Spiritual Direction and Physical Therapist training are merging both in my personal as well as professional life! The sabbatical time allowed me to make a very difficult decision of transferring my membership to a new congregation. During this time, I became the 'new person' at my church, which led to me reflecting at length about how we as Oblates welcome new people to our community. I would like each of you to also think about this and share your ideas with a Dean. I am most grateful for all of your prayers during my sabbatical. It is good to be back to serve all of you as Oblates of Sacred Heart Monastery! Blessings from Carol Olson, Lead Dean of the Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska.

SABBATICAL YEAR FOR STEVE BLUM – DEAN

The Leadership of the Benedictine Oblates of Nebraska (Sister Patricia Heirigs, Oblate Director, and Sister Phyllis Hunhoff, Associate Oblate Director, and the Deans from the Hastings, Lincoln, and Steinauer Chapters) believes that it is important for leaders to take an extended time away from their tasks and responsibilities, in order to reflect on their service, refresh themselves, and return to their duties with new energy and perspective. Beginning in December Lincoln Oblate Steve Blum will be taking a sabbatical year.

A message from Steve:

My goal for my sabbatical year is to delve deeper into the writings of the Christian mystics, with the hope of deepening my faith and my experience of the presence of God in my life. Additionally, I would like to spend some time organizing a "Mystics book club" which I would like to launch to coincide with my anticipated retirement at some point during 2020.

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 email



2019 Oblation Ceremony Sisters and Novitiates: L – R: Karen Moritz, Sr. Patricia Heirigs, Jane Rowan, Sr. MariBeth Wentzlaff, Susy Miller and Sr. Phyllis Hunhoff.

SACRED HEART MONASTERY

Come for a Personal Retreat at the Monastery: The Benedictine Peace Center is designed for silent personal retreats in monastic space, where you can be alone and/or join the Benedictine Sisters for meals and prayer. Your personal retreat may be any length, and you may request a spiritual director. First night is \$50 with added nights \$40. For further options, go to Yankton Benedictines - Retreat Center or contact Sr. Jeanne Ranek: or 605-668-6024.

Come for a Monastic over-night visit:

Suggested arrival at 4 pm. Morning Prayer, Mass and breakfast with further optional opportunities. Lunch and departure. Small donation if possible. Contact Sr. Phyllis Hunhoff at Phyllis.hunhoff@yanktonbenedictines.org or 605-668-6257

MARK YOUR CALENDARS –

Rule of Life Retreat – 3/15/2020; 2:00 pm; Sheridan Room AB. Come to renew or create for the first time your own personal Rule of Life.

April Chapter Meeting – 4/5/2020; 7:00 pm; Sheridan Room (NOTE – Lincoln Chp. Mtg. moved to avoid having our meeting on Easter Sunday.)

Liturgy of the Hours – 4/25/2020; 9:30 am. Room to be announced. Attend to learn the “ins and outs” of Liturgy of the Hours.

Potluck – 6/14/2020; 4:30 pm; Flanagan Room. We'll enjoy good food and then learn about the Benedictine Pilgrimage to Germany presented by Carol Olson.

VISIT TO SEE ST. JOHN'S BIBLE AT JOSLYN MUSEUM

Six Nebraska Benedictine Oblates journeyed to Omaha on December 8, 2019. They enjoyed touring the exhibit and viewing folios of Illuminations of St. John's Bible. St. John's Bible was commissioned by Saint John's Abbey and University and created by Donald Jackson. It is the first illuminated Bible commissioned by a Benedictine monastery in more than 500 years. The illumination pictured here is the front piece to the Gospel of Matthew and depicts the genealogy of Jesus. You will hear more about illuminations at upcoming chapter meetings and newsletters.

