



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 + Winter 2020

A WORD FROM ST. BENEDICT'S RULE

Chapter 5 – Listening The first step of humility is to listen without delay. When we love Christ more than anything else, this becomes our natural reflex. Our reasons for listening may vary – we listen because of the promise we've made to God, or because we dread the hell of only listening to ourselves, or simply because we want to know the glory of the life that's really life. But whatever our immediate reason, listening without delay means we do what we're asked as quickly as if it were a direct request from God.

It is love that compels good listeners in their pursuit of real life. This is why they're always eager to follow the way about which our Lord said: *Narrow is the road...that leads to life* (Matthew 7:14a). They don't live by their own best judgments, listening to the people they like and doing the things that seem best to them. Instead, they let the wisdom of a community and its leadership shape their decisions.

But here is a word of caution: good listening only pleases God and builds up a community when we do what we're asked without rolling our eyes or dragging our feet. Half-hearted obedience won't cut it, even if we end up doing what we were asked to do at first. The key is to see that when we listen to our sisters and brothers, we're listening to Jesus, who said himself: *Whoever listens to you, listens to me* (Luke 10:16a). And then, we're not only to

listen, but also to listen gladly, *for God loves a cheerful giver* (I Corinthians 9:7c).

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

SHORTER CHRISTIAN PRAYER INSTRUCTIONS

Advent marks the beginning of the Liturgical Year. Sunday, November 29, 2020 is the first Sunday of Advent. We begin with Evening Prayer 1 on Saturday night, page 37. At the Reading turn to page 356. Weekdays in Advent are on pages 358-376, and are repeated each week during Advent. One resource you might like to check for the Liturgy of the Hours for the current day can be found at universalis.com

THE O ANTIPHONS

The final eight days of Advent are accentuated by the "O" statements that lead to the eight days of the Christmas octave. They are called the O Antiphons because they each begin with the letter O and address Jesus with a traditional title primarily from the prophecies of Isaiah and Micah. The O Antiphons may be read at Evening Prayer, December 17th – December 23rd, before the Cantic of Mary. The O Antiphons end December 23rd because evening prayer on December 24th is the beginning of the Christmas vigil. If you are interested in using the O Antiphons you can find

CONTACT

Hastings	<i>Julienne Bryan</i> , julienne.bryan@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org <i>Carol Barry</i> , majorcarolb@yahoo.com <i>Steve Blum</i> , steveblum77@gmail.com	St. Cecilia's Guadalupe Center 415 N Kansas Hastings
Lincoln	<i>Jim Rea</i> , James13048@gmail.com <i>Charlotte Liggett</i> , cmlliggett2010@aol.com <i>Carol Olson</i> , carol.olson@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, Sheridan Room, 5401 South St, Lincoln
Steinauer	<i>Marcia Borchert</i> , marcia.borchert@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	Banquet Room, Convent House B&B, Steinauer

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them at this link - <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/prayers/the-antiphons-of-advent>

LITURGICAL CALENDAR

The Liturgical Calendar is an excellent resource to use for understanding the different periods of the Church year. In the past Carol Barry has graciously procured these calendars and brought them to a chapter meeting. Because we are only meeting via Zoom, Carol has provided information for us to procure our own calendars. Please go to Liturgy Training Publications (LTP) and find the calendar that best meets your needs. LTP can be found at the following link -

<https://www.ltp.org/search/index?searchQuery=Liturgical%20Calendar>

HAIKU BY SR. PENNY BINGHAM, OSB FROM YANKTON BENEDECTINES; SACRED HEART MONASTERY – PEACE CENTER

Haiku is a Japanese form of poetry, that in its very simplicity appeals to the Benedictine way of life. Haiku can be thought of as using just a few words to open a little window to view the larger world. The following Haiku, accompanied with a scripture passage, have been offered to us by Penny Bingham, OSB from the Sacred Heart Monastery Peace Center.

Morning Haiku – November 4, 2020

*Frosted blades of grass
Sparkle bright, until the sun
Melts their brief beauty.*

Frost and chill, bless the Lord! Praise God and give thanks forever. Sun and warmth, bless the Lord! Praise God and give thanks forever. (Dan. 3:66,69 paraphrased)

Morning Haiku – November 5, 2020

*Bare necessities
Branches stripped of greening leaves.
Waiting, Sabbath rest.*

It is vain for you to rise early, or put off your rest...for he gives to his beloved in sleep. (Psa. 127:20)

Haiku contains 5 syllables in the first line, 7 in the second line, and 5 in the third and last line. If you enjoy writing Haiku and would like to submit your contributions for consideration to be printed in our Spring newsletter, please send your original poetry to me using the following link, I will review your contributions with the other deans - <https://www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/deans/charlotte-liggett/>

CONGRATULATIONS TO NEW OBLATES

Congratulations to Susy Miller, Karen Moritz, and Janie Rowan; three Benedictine Oblate Novices who made their Final Oblation at the November 8, 2020 Nebraska Benedictine Oblate chapter meeting. Susy Miller is actively engaged as a Development Officer at Nebraska Wesleyan University. Karen Moritz is the Senior Pastor at First Christian Church in Lincoln, NE. And Janie Rowan is a retired mother and homemaker in Lincoln, NE. Please join us in welcoming with warm hearts and open arms these oblates into the Nebraska Benedictine Oblate chapter.

DEANS PARTICIPATING IN SABBATICAL YEAR

Each of the Deans will take a year of sabbatical, rotating over a five-year period. Only one Dean is scheduled to be on sabbatical at a time. Steve Blum has returned from being on sabbatical this past year and Jim Rea will be on sabbatical November 2020 through October 2021. The sabbatical is a time for each of the Deans to engage in personal reflection and potentially engage in a spiritual retreat.

ACCESSING SPIRITUAL HELP FROM SACRED HEART MONASTERY PEACE CENTER DURING COVID PANDEMIC

The sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery Peace Center have opportunities for us to cope with the pandemic, replenish our spirits, and grow into a richer relationship with God. Join an online interactive group to deepen your spiritual experience during this time of social distancing because of the coronavirus. Saturday, December 5, 2020; 9:30-11:30 am the Peace Center is offering an **Online Advent Retreat – The Winter of the Spirit**. In these days of COVID-19 darkness, how can the

hope of Advent speak to us? You may access more information about this retreat and register for it by using the following link

<https://yanktonbenedictines.org/retreats-online-group/>

OBLATION CEREMONY – CHANGE

Each year we conduct a special Oblation Ceremony to welcome novices and new members, and reaffirm our vows as Nebraska Benedictine Oblates associated with Sacred Heart Monastery in Yankton, SD. In the past this ceremony has occurred in November. However, the Oblation Ceremony is being moved on a permanent basis to the spring of each year. Thus, the Oblation Ceremony for this coming year will be held either in April or May of 2021. Please watch this newsletter for an exact date and time for our next Oblation Ceremony.

BENEDICTINE OBLATE INFORMATION

As Benedictine Oblates we have many opportunities to live out the Holy Rule in our daily lives. Our commitment to the Benedictine way of life becomes evident as we worship, serve our communities in various ways, and live a life of peace and love. If you have a friend or family member interested in being a Benedictine Oblate, please invite them to contact one of the deans as listed below in the following communities:

In Lincoln – Interested parties contact Lead Dean, Carol Olson, at 402-486-0864 or carol.olson@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org.

In Steinauer – Interested parties contact Marcia Borchert at db92140@windstream.net

In Hastings – Interested parties contact Juliene Bryan at 402-982-4674 or wjbryan@gtmc.net

MARK YOUR CALENDARS –

ZOOM Events – Chapter meetings have been held via Zoom for the last few months. These meetings have been spiritual and fruitful. All Nebraska Benedictine Oblate chapter meetings continuing in 2020 and 2021 will be held via Zoom. Please watch for emails from Jim Rea providing the **link** to participate and a **password** which is now

required to enter the meeting. A password is being used to assure privacy for the participants.

12/13/2020; 7:00 pm – December Chapter Meeting will be held via Zoom and we will have prayer, announcements, Lectio Divina, and discussions.

01/10/2021; 7:00 pm – January Chapter Meeting will be held via Zoom and we will have prayer, announcements, Lectio Divina, and discussions.

02/14/2021; 7:00 pm – February Chapter Meeting will be held via Zoom and we will have prayer, announcements, Lectio Divina, and discussions.

03/14/2021; 7:00 pm – March Chapter Meeting will be held via Zoom and we will have prayer, announcements, Lectio Divina, and discussions.

SPECIAL RETREATS

Rule of Life – 01/09/2021; Saturday 9:30-12:00 via Zoom with pre-work suggested prior to the Retreat. The Rule of Life is a plan or pattern intended to organize your use of time and energy to assure maximum spiritual nurturance.

Visio Divina – 3/13/2021; Saturday 9:30-12:00 via Zoom. Visio Divina is holy gazing at Icons or religious art in an order to deepen one's understanding of God and his creation.

CELL GROUP MEMBERSHIP

All Benedictine Oblates are invited and encouraged to join a cell group. If you are not already part of a cell group, please select one of the following as both are welcoming new participants:

- **Pax Christi** lead by Lorene Ludy will meet via Zoom 3rd Tuesday of every month 4:00-5:30 pm starting in September. Please email loreneludy@gmail.com
- **Beginner's Cell** lead by Barb Michael will meet via Zoom 3rd Sunday of every month 7:00-8:30 pm starting in September. Please email babsie0626@gmail.com

CHAPTER BOOK SELECTION

Humility Rules: Saint Benedict's Twelve Step Guide to Genuine Self-Esteem

The reading assignments are as follows for December, 2020 – April (or May), 2021:

- **December** – Humility Rules Wetta, OSB – Step #3 “Obedience” (pp. 51-65) and Step #4 “Perseverance” (pp. 63-73)
- **January** – Humility Rules by Wetta, OSB – Step #5 “Repentance” (pp. 75-85) and Step #6 “Serenity” (pp. 87-97)
- **February** – Humility Rules by Wetta, OSB - Step #7 “Self-Abasement” (pp.99-109) and Step #8 “Prudence” (pp. 111-121)
- **March** – Humility Rules by Wetta, OSB - Step #9 “Silence” (pp. 123-133) and Step #10 “Dignity” (pp. 125-145)
- **April or May** – Humility Rules by Wetta, OSB – Step #11 “Discretion” (pp. 147-157), Step #12 “Reverence” (pp. 159-169), and Conclusion (pp. 171-173).

CELL GROUP BOOK SELECTION

The Forgotten Desert Mothers: The Sayings, Lives, and Stories of Early Christian Women.

- **December** – The Forgotten Desert Mothers by Swan – Chp. 2 “Desert Spirituality” (pp. 20-31)
- **January** – The Forgotten Desert Mothers by Swan – Chp. 3 “The Sayings of the Desert Mothers” up to Amma Syncletia (pp. 32-43)
- **February** – The Forgotten Desert Mothers by Swan - Chp. 3 “The Sayings of the Desert Mothers” starting with Amma Syncletica (pp. 43-64)
- **March** – The Forgotten Desert Mothers by Swan – Chp. 3 “The Sayings of the Desert Mothers” starting with Amma Theodora (pp. 64-70)

- **April** – The Forgotten Desert Mothers by Swan – Chp. 4 – “Bright Stars in Desert Sky: Lesser Known Desert Mothers” reading through Eugenia of Alexandria (pp. 71-82)
- **May** – The Forgotten Desert Mothers by Swan – Chp. 4 – “Bright Stars in Desert Sky: Lesser Known Desert Mothers” starting with Euphrasia the Elder and Euphrasia the Younger through Mastridia of Jerusalem (pp. 82-94)

The remainder of The Forgotten Desert Mothers will be read during our 2021-2022 Oblate year. Reading assignments for that year will be in the Fall 2021 Newsletter.

SACRED HEART MONASTERY

Due to safety precautions for COVID-19, Sacred Heart Monastery is not receiving guests until further notice. Know of our prayers for victims, their families, and care givers.

The Peace Center is offering reflections during the COVID-19 pandemic, hoping that it will unite us in faith and hope and strengthen our love for all God's people. The staff of the Benedictine Peace Center will add reflections during this period of the pandemic. You can find their page as follows:

<https://yanktonbenedictines.org/center-reflections-during-covid-19/>

SPIRITUAL PAUSE

<https://www.nebraskabenedictineoblate.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/RuleofLifeSpiritualPause.pdf>