



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 2021

A WORD FROM ST. BENEDICT'S RULE

Chapter 49 – Keeping Lent The monastic life is a continuous Lent of fasting toward God's kingdom. But since there aren't many of us who are strong enough to run a marathon every day, we encourage the whole community to set aside the season of Lent as a time to refocus on our goal and strip away anything that is slowing us down in our pursuit. The best way to do this is be diligent about unlearning bad habits and to devote ourselves to prayer with tears – to reading, to soul-searching confession, and to self-denial.

So during these days, we will add to our normal rhythms some extra fasting and time for private prayer so that each of us will have something beyond our usual sacrifice to offer to God *with the joy of the Holy Spirit* (I Thessalonians 1:6c). Each person should choose a fast from some food or drink, or from sleep, or from needless talking, or from idle jokes. Having cast aside these things, each person should rust on toward holy Easter with joy and a renewed longing for the resurrection life.

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

SHORTER CHRISTIAN PRAYER INSTRUCTIONS

Ash Wednesday, February 17, 2021. On the first Sunday of Lent, February 21, 2021, 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 March 28, 2021. At the Reading, turn to page 429. The Easter Triduum begins on Holy Thursday, April 1, 2021 so turn to page 436. On Easter Sunday, April 4, 2021, 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 23, 2021. One resource you might like to check for the Liturgy of the Hours for the current day can be found at universalis.com

REASONS TO HOPE – S. MARY JO POLAK, OSB FROM YANKTON BENEDICTINES; SACRED HEART MONASTERY – PEACE CENTER



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Blessed be the LORD, marvelously he showed to
me
his mercy in a fortified city.
Though I had said in my alarm,
"I am cut off from your eyes."
Yet you heard my voice, my cry for mercy,
when I pleaded with you for help.
Love the LORD, all you who are faithful to him.
The LORD protects the loyal,
but repays the arrogant in full.
Be strong and take heart,
all who hope in the LORD.

Psalms 31:22-25

Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the
soul –
and sings the tunes without the words – and never
stops at all.

Emily Dickinson

Just as despair can come to one only from other
human beings, hope, too,
can be given to one only by other human beings.

Elie Wiesel

Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone
who asks you
for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness
and reverence,
keeping your conscience clear . . .

1 Peter 3:15-16

HAIKU – BENEDICTINE SPIRITUALITY

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.

Fog

*Crispy, fog-white air
Dresses trees and grass with lace;
Silence coats my soul.*

Grace

*Grace is like manna,
Wandering in the wilderness
I only gather.*

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/](https://www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/deans/charlotte-liggett/)

PASSPORT JOURNEY THROUGH THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT:

This passport is intended as a guide for
interacting with the Rule of St. Benedict in a new
and holistic way. Using the idea of passport 'stops'
along a journey, you are invited to stop at any or all
of these as you make your way through the Rule of
St. Benedict. There is no limitation on the amount
of time needed to complete all of these, but if you
like, you can check them off as you go. Mark the
space next to the Benedict Medal stamp at each stop.
The most important thing is to notice how you
arrive at these stops, take time to experience the
essence of each, and to take with you a few
mementos and souvenirs as you continue your
spiritual journey. Consider having a journal just for
this trip and jot down what you noticed at each stop.
You could even take some pictures and make an
album to share with others! Bon Voyage! Please
contact Lead Dean Carol Olson for feedback or
questions about the Passport, using the email listed
at the bottom of the newsletter on page 1.

[https://www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/benedi
ctineoblatepassportjourney/](https://www.nebraskabenedictineoblates.org/benedictineoblatepassportjourney/)

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHAPTER
GATHERING – MAY 9, 2021**

When the deans planned the schedule for the
chapter gathering this year, we had hoped that the
pandemic would have subsided enough to allow for
a spring oblation ceremony. We do have more hope
now that in the future this will come to pass, in light
of several vaccines now available and COVID
infections trending downward. However, there are
two issues preventing us from having an oblation
ceremony in May 2021. First, the sisters are
following health guidelines and limiting their travel

outside of the monastery. Second, Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals' continued restrictions of external groups meeting on campus prevent us from having the ceremony. The deans will continue to work with Oblate Director Sr. Patricia Heirigs in planning an oblation ceremony in the future. We will communicate plans for an oblation ceremony as soon as we know.

The time of pandemic has been one of great loss, significant disruption to our daily lives, and of profound and lasting grief. In light of this, we have a different plan for the May Chapter Gathering. Lincoln Dean Steve Blum will be guiding the Nebraska Oblate community through the spiritual practice of composing a Psalm of Lament. This will be in lieu of Group Lectio Divina, to allow for sufficient time to participate. We will then be using this Psalm of Lament during Vespers that evening. Please join us for this sacred time of coming together as an Oblate community. *There will not be a reading assignment for either the Companion Group or the Oblates.*

JUNE POTLUCK – JUNE 13, 2021

The June potluck will be held via Zoom June 13, 2021 at 4:30 pm. We will hold the potluck to celebrate with the Oblate community and to highlight Benedictine Spirituality. Please plan to enjoy your favorite potluck or picnic foods as we gather. Be prepared to share virtually something that exemplifies or reminds you of Benedictine Spirituality. It could be a poem, scripture verse, an artistic piece or anything you would like to share with the group. Feel free to be creative and share your talents! When we share in this way, it helps everyone to develop a deeper awareness of the influence of St. Benedict and his Rule in our daily lives. We hope to have some of the sisters from Sacred Heart join us virtually as they did last year.

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 402-869-2342 or 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 for the first half of 2021 will be held via Zoom. Please watch for emails 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.

04/11/2021; 7:00 pm – April Chapter Meeting will be held via Zoom and we will have prayer, announcements, Lectio Divina, and discussions.

05/09/2021; 7:00 pm – May Chapter Meeting will be held via Zoom and we will have prayer, announcements, and a reflective activity in writing a Psalm of Lament.

SPIRITUAL PAUSES

Visio Divina – 4/17/2021; Saturday 9:30-11:30 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. Our apologies that we were not able to hold this spiritual pause in March. A Zoom link will be distributed to through email, just as is done for chapter meetings.

Liturgy of the Hours – 4/24/2021; Saturday 9:30-11:00 via Zoom. This spiritual pause will review the mechanics of praying Liturgy of the Hours using the Shorter Christian Prayer. This is an opportunity to get your questions

answered about the liturgical calendar and how it affects our prayers. A Zoom link will be distributed to through email, just as is done for chapter meetings.

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 March 2021 & April 2021:

- ***March*** – Humility Rules by Wetta, OSB - Step #9 "Silence" (pp. 123-133) and Step #10 "Dignity" (pp. 125-145)
- ***April*** – Humility Rules by Wetta, OSB – Step #11 "Discretion" (pp. 147-157), Step #12 "Reverence" (pp. 159-169), and Conclusion (pp. 171-173. Please see information about the May chapter meeting above.

A new Chapter book will be selected and identified for chapter meetings starting September 2021. The deans are currently in the process of reviewing books that will help all of us to understand and apply Benedictine Spirituality.

CELL GROUP BOOK SELECTION

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

The reading assignments are as follows for March, April, and May 2021:

- ***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/>