



Oblate Newsletter

SACRED HEART MONASTERY
Yankton, South Dakota

MARCH 2025

S. Patricia Heirigs, Oblate Director |

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Dear Oblates,

By the time you receive this newsletter, the season of Lent will have started. Lent is a good time to read Chapter 49 in the Holy Rule on "The Observance of Lent." Lent is a time of renewal, a time to return to the Lord, and a time of reconciliation. St. Benedict says, "Lent is a constant turning back to God." Lent is tied to the joys of Easter.

We celebrate several feast days for Saints in March. The Feast of St. Patrick on March 17, St. Joseph is on March 19, and St. Benedict is on March 21. St. Benedict's feast is a remembrance of his death anniversary so we celebrate more festively on July 11. We celebrate these feasts, along with the feast of the Annunciation of the Lord on March 25 in Bishop Marty Memorial Chapel.

Please pray for Pope Francis as he has been in the hospital for over two weeks. His condition is improving but will remain guarded until he is stable for several days. Pray for his return to good health.

As we journey through Lent this year, may the Spirit of St. Benedict be with you.

Sister Patricia Heirigs

Sioux Falls Oblates

After a long, four-year break (starting with Covid), the Sioux Falls Oblates are once again up and running with much energy. Sr. Maribeth Wentzlaff, with the assistance of long-time lay Oblates, Nancy Werner and Mike Ferrell, have gathered the former Oblates together and recruited a few new Oblate candidates to bring the total number to around 25. They have met five times with much energy and deep reflections at the gatherings. They have been exploring Joan Chittister's "The Rule of St. Benedict: a Spirituality for the 21st Century." The hunger for St. Benedict's guidance for today continues to grow in the Sioux Falls area!

UPCOMING MEETINGS - Chapter Room

Sunday, March 16

1:00 P.M. Current Oblates are reading *Strangers to the City* by Michael Casey. **Chapter 12: Holiness**

2:30 P.M. NEW OBLATES will read pp. 47-61, and 65-78 in the book *Reaching for God* by Roberta Werner. Fill out the form "My Personal Rule of Life."

DATE CHANGE FOR OBLATION CEREMONY

Our **Annual Oblation Ceremony** for Novices, final oblation, and renewal of oblation will be on **Sunday, April 13 at 1:00 P.M.** The ceremony will be during our mid-day prayer in Bishop Marty Memorial Chapel. If you are becoming a novice or making Final Oblation, please come at 12:45 P.M. for a short practice.



Message for MMU Oblates

Greetings from the MMU Chapter! It seems to me that no matter how early or how late in the year Lent comes, Ash Wednesday always comes too fast. In Chapter 49 of the Rule St. Benedict says that “the monastic life should always have a Lenten character about it, but there are not many who have the strength for that. Therefore, we urge that all...should look carefully at the integrity of their lives...so as to increase the joy of spiritual longing with which we look forward to the holy time of Easter.” I suggest that is what we should be about every day - being on the journey of transformation asking ourselves the question: “How do we conform our minds and hearts to the mind and heart of the self-emptying Christ?” This takes discipline as Henri Nouwen describes it: “True Christian discipline is the human effort to create the space in which the Spirit of Christ can transform us into his lineage...a growing conformity to the mind and heart of Christ.” I encourage you during this Lenten season to find/make some times in your busy lives to create that space: times of quiet/just being, of reading, of prayer, going for a walk amid the beauty of creation, to make room for the Spirit to transform you into the disciple Jesus calls each of us to be. And, I pray that this Lenten time of discipline and transformation will be filled with grace for you.

May this time of Lent draw you closer to God, each other and all of creation!

Praying for each of you,

Sister Rosemarie Maly

MMU MEETING SCHEDULE

Wed, March 26; Fri, Mar 28;

Sun, Mar 30

Upcoming Opportunities



The Lenten Scripture Study group studying “The Eucharist in Scripture” meets every Wednesday during Lent. The same session is held in the morning from 9:30-11:00 A.M. and in the evening from 7:00-8:30 P.M.

Mount Marty University Theater will present “The Play that Goes Wrong” at Marian Auditorium March 28-30.

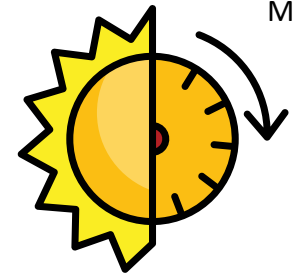


The Benedictine Peace Center will present a Mid-Lent Retreat on Saturday, April 5 from 8:30-11:30 A.M. Led by S. Marielle Frigge, retreatants will explore the imagery of Christ’s descent into hell/Hades as representing the Resurrection of a redeemed community. Her reflections will unwrap the significance of icons for revealing this meaning of the Paschal event. Cost is \$30 and registration is due April 3 at noon.

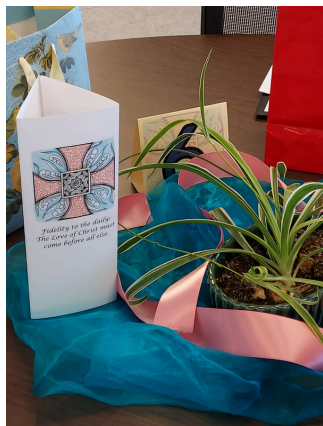
Catholic Sisters Week is March 8-14. We are celebrating ourselves this year with a “Spirit Week” full of daily themes. Included are Family Day, Crazy Hair/Hat Day, Mis-match Day, Sports Day, and Down on the Farm Day. Additionally we will participate in a Crock Pot Luck dinner, Karaoke, and Movie Night.

Space is limited for an annual Triduum Retreat. Join the sisters in silence during the most holy days of the year. Presented by the Benedictine Peace Center, visit YanktonBenedictines.org/triduum for more information.

Daylight Savings
Time begins on
March 9.



Monastery Happenings



Sisters Penny Bingham and Jeanne Weber attended the Conference of Benedictine Prioresses at Atchison, KS in early February.

The Annual Mission Education Program for employees was held on February 11 in our Chapter Room. Sister Bonita gave a presentation of "Our History and Heritage" and Julie Amsberry, Communications Director gave "A Year in Review". S. Bonita also gave an update on the building project.

Recently we have had get togethers with the Mount Marty University students. On January 21, we had game night. The Chapter Room was full of excitement and laughter as the Sisters and students completed with each other.

On February 3, the MMU students hosted a Bingo night for the Sisters. The winners received gift cards to Walmart.

On the Feast of St. Scholastica, the Sisters hosted the MMU prayer partners for Evening Prayer and treats in the Chapter Room afterward.

Catholic Schools Week

During Catholic Schools Week, January 26-February 1, several Sisters recorded videos of their memories of attending or teaching in Catholic Schools. You can see those videos at [YouTube.com/@yanktonbenedictines1726](https://www.youtube.com/@yanktonbenedictines1726)

Some sisters also volunteered to be interviewed by email by the 8th grade students at Cedar Catholic in Hartington, NE.

Students from St. Agnes, Vermillion, SD, St. Rose, Crofton, NE, and Sacred Heart Schools, Yankton, visited the Monastery in the morning and MMU in the afternoon.



Once a month the Sisters are invited to Coffee and Conversation in the Raven Room at MMU.

We are starting to see the beginning of the building project.

The company removing asbestos from the Monastery are already finished with the floors on the west wing. By summer time we'll see the west wing being taken down. We have also cleaned out lots of unused furniture that has been donated to White Swan, a Native American community in need.



Prayer Requests

For a quick healing for Sisters who have had surgery recently, Sisters Jennifer Kehrwald, Joyce Streff, and Phyllis Hunhoff.

For just and honest people in our government who care for the common good.

For peace and justice in the war-torn countries.

For success in our Chapter meetings.

For all the Oblates and their families.



Sister Paulette Larsen, 87, died on Tuesday, January 7. She spent her life of ministry in healthcare as a nurse and massage therapist. She was an empathetic, free-spirited person who enjoyed celebrating life. She was known to dress up in crazy hats or in a clown costume to bring festive cheer.

In Memory

Sister Ramona Fallon, Watertown sister

Sister Judeen Seeberger, Watertown sister

Julie Gergen, Yankton Oblate

Hattie Walloch, former employee

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TBA

News from Nebraska

FRIDAY MORNING PRAYER OFFERED TO PATIENTS AND STAFF AT MADONNA

Nebraska Benedictine Oblates continue to say Liturgy of the Hours (LOTH) or Lauds every Friday morning at 7:30 am., in-person in Madonna's Chapel and via Zoom. In addition, LOTH is being offered to patients at Madonna via closed-circuit TV. Staff are welcome to join us in the Chapel. If you are interested in receiving the Zoom link for LOTH on Friday mornings, please contact Carol Barry at majorcarolb@yahoo.com.



News from Nebraska

RULE OF LIFE

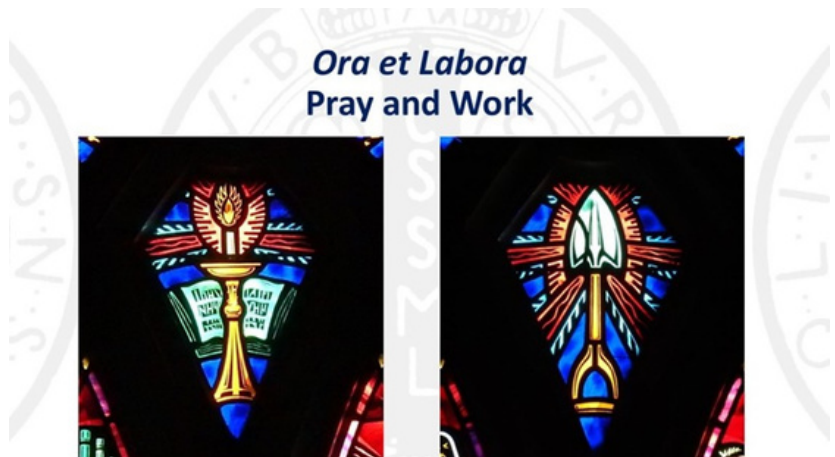
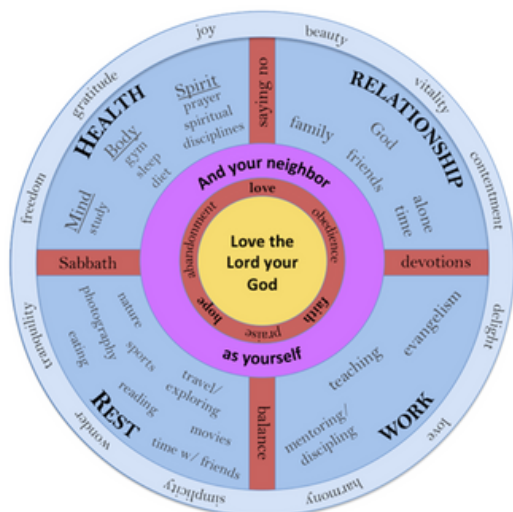
On January 18, 2025 the Nebraska Benedictine Oblates met for a Spiritual Pause on the Rule of Life by Lead Dean Carol Olson. The Saturday morning workshop was held at Madonna – Donlan Conference Center. Carol helped us understand that every Oblate is encouraged to adopt a personal 'Rule of Life.' This is a plan or pattern intended to organize our use of time and energy to assure maximum spiritual nurturance. She suggested we should not be harsh, but be kind to ourselves. The following are Highlights from the Rule of St. Benedict:

1. Prologue, v. 20 – "See how the Lord in his love shows us the way of life."
2. Prologue, v. 46 – "In drawing up its regulations, we hope to set down nothing harsh, nothing burdensome."
3. RB 4:62 – "Do not aspire to be called holy before you really are, but first be holy that you may more truly be called so."
4. RB 7:20 – "And in the Prayer too we ask God that his will be done in us."
5. RB 72:11 – "Let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ."

After discussing various components of a Rule of Life, Oblates spent time in silence and solitude to construct their own personal rule. Oblates then shared portions of what they had developed. It is not too late to develop your own Rule of Life and one of the deans would be happy to meet with you individually to complete your Rule if you so desire. The following questions from the Handbook for Benedictine Oblates will provide further guidance:

- What nurtures me and best enables my responsiveness to God?
- What is toxic about my present way/schedule?
- How faithful am I to my gifts? Do I know my gifts?
- Do I regularly experience opportunity for expression of my gifts?
- What place does thanksgiving have in my life?
- For what do I have real passion/intensity in life?
- Do I find myself growing more deeply in love with Christ?

The graphic and picture of stained-glass windows may help you as you meditate and develop your own Rule of Life.



News from Nebraska

SHORTER CHRISTIAN PRAYER INSTRUCTIONS

Ash Wednesday, March 5, marks the beginning of Lent.

March 9: First Sunday of Lent. 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 pp. 405-428. One week of text is given for the Lenten season. We repeat these daily prayers every week of Lent and continue until Palm Sunday.

April 13: Palm Sunday - Turn to page 429.

April 17: Easter Triduum begins on Holy Thursday - Turn to page 436.

April 20: Easter Sunday - Turn to pp. 464-486.

We remain in Easter season until Pentecost Sunday, June 8 at which time we return to Ordinary time.

Liturgy of the Hours for each day of the year can be found at Universalis.com. Navigate to the link for "Yearly Calendar."

CELL BOOK READINGS



Reading assignments for Cell groups in *Grace: On the Journey to God* by Michael Casey are as follows:

March - Ch 5B *Grace of Temptation* (pp. 63-71)

April - Ch. 6 *Grace of Self-Knowledge* (pp. 72-84)

May - Ch. 7 *Grace of Prayer: Petition* (pp. 85-94)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Chapter meetings for Lincoln and Omaha Oblates at Madonna (Donlan Conf. Center) - Sundays, March 9, April 13, and May 11 all at 7:00 P.M.

We will continue a hybrid approach by meeting in person and on Zoom. Watch for email notifications from Lead Dean Carol Olson.

CHAPTER BOOK READINGS

Reading assignments for Oblates in *Engaging Benedict: What the Rule Can Teach Us Today* by Laura Swan is as follows:

March: Ch. 9 (pp. 123-136) *Hospitality and the Prophetic*

April: Ch. 10A (pp. 137-145) *Justice*

May: Ch. 10B (pp. 146-154) *Justice*

Spiritual Pause*

Saturday, April 12 at 9:30 a.m. - Visio Divina with Illuminations & Icons
Madonna (Donlan Conference Center)

**Spiritual Pauses will be held hybrid (in-person and virtual). We will use the same Zoom link as for the Chapter Gatherings.*

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