



# Oblate Newsletter

SACRED HEART MONASTERY

Yankton, South Dakota

MAY 2025

S. Patricia Heirigs, Oblate Director |

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Dear Oblates,

As we pray for Pope Francis, we look forward with hope, for our new Pope whom the Cardinals will elect as they gather in conclave on May 7, 2025. Our prayers are offered for the new Pope, also.

On Palm Sunday, April 13, and the evening of Tuesday, April 22, we held Oblation Ceremonies. We had 21 people become novices and 10 make final oblation. It was so heartwarming to see so many women and men willing to become Oblates and share in the Benedictine life. Let us continue to pray for each other as we journey in the way of St. Benedict.

This is our last newsletter until September. Take some time this summer to read, relax and to pray for our country and for each other as we journey with St. Benedict.

God's Blessings, *Sister Patricia Heirigs*

## UPCOMING MEETING - Chapter Room

**Sunday, May 18 - All SHM groups together**

**1:00 P.M.**

We will discuss Chapter 13 in *Strangers to the City* by Michael Casey on "Perseverance". Perhaps the Oblate novices who are joining can share some event in their lives where they practiced perseverance.

*This is our last meeting until September.*



## Message for MMU Oblates

Dear MMU Oblates – Happy Easter! Christ is risen! During this Easter season we have an abundance of signs of new life around us – greening grass, budding trees and flowers, blossoming fruit trees, baby animals, etc. These multiple signs of life help us to appreciate the gift of creation and the wonders of our earth and all creatures that are part of our community here on earth.

Care for creation was a significant part of Pope Francis' legacy, so I chose to reflect on St. Benedict's teaching in this regard. Though it doesn't explicitly state "care of creation", **the Rule of Benedict does encourage a responsible and attentive approach to caring for the natural world.** There are several places in the RB that call us to take care of the resources that are ours and be responsible stewards of them; I want to focus on three chapters. I encourage you to reread Chap. 31, "Let them regard all the vessels and goods of monastery as if they were the sacred vessels of the altar"; Chap. 32; and Chap. 33, "When we begin to accumulate, we begin to forget our common responsibility for the planet and all its peoples." (Joan Chittister – A LITTLE RULE FOR BEGINNERS). There are likely other places as well; these Chaps are a good place to start.

In closing, I want to share this quote, attributed to Pope Francis, "Rivers do not drink their own water; trees do not eat their own fruit; the sun does not shine on itself, and flowers do not spread their fragrance for themselves. Living for others is a rule of nature. We are all born to help each other. No matter how difficult it is...life is good when you are happy, but much better when others are happy because of you."

Then, don't be surprised if you hear from me over the summer, so watch your email, just in case. I hope that the summer months afford you time for relaxation and renewal.

Blessings in the spirit of St. Benedict, *Sister Rosemarie Maly*



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## Upcoming Opportunities

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**Talks by Benedictine Liturgists.** The American Benedictine Academy (ABA) is offering four free presentations by monks/nuns who were scheduled to present at the 2024 cancelled convention. You can register at [HTTPS://AMERICANBENEDICTINE.ORG/SPRING-LITURGY-SPEAKER-SERIES/](https://americanbenedictine.org/spring-liturgy-speaker-series/).

- May 17 Sr. Cecilia Dwyer, "How Liturgy of the Hours Helps Build and Sustain Community"
- June 14 Dr. J.J. Wright, "New Musical Approaches to the Liturgy"

**Lectio Online:** Every Friday morning S. Doris Oberembt hosts an online Lectio Divina. Her international group discusses the Sunday gospel for the following Sunday. Just send your email to S. Doris at [doberembt@yanktonbenedictines.org](mailto:doberembt@yanktonbenedictines.org) and you can join her.

Nine Benedictine Sisters from across the United States will travel to Eagle Pass, Texas for two weeks in May. They will be serving at Caridad de Corazon, a mission of hospitality, sponsored by the Benedictine Sisters of Boerne, Tx. **Ss. Kathy Burt and Carmy Luke** will represent our Benedictine community.



Mount Marty University will have **Baccalaureate and graduation** services on May 2-3.

# Monastery Happenings

**Sister Carmy Luke** accompanied the Mission Scholars from MMU on their Pilgrimage to Italy during Spring Break. Besides visiting many churches in Rome and walking through the Jubilee doors, they visited St. Benedict's historical places. The Mission Scholars shared with the Sisters their pilgrimage experience on April 1 in the Chapter Room. It was a good experience to witness the enthusiasm and youthful spirit of these young people.

On March 30, all eight living groups had an **Open House** for the Sisters. We walked through the Monastery visiting the group rooms to enjoy how each group manages in a smaller space.

The seven council members of the **Monastic Congregation** met at our monastery for a week to discuss and plan future events of the Congregation.

The Sisters received a letter of grateful thanks from the **White Swan Native American** group that lives near Lake Andes, SD. In 2019, severe flooding occurred and many families lost everything. Our Sisters donated our excess furniture to this relief effort.



Several Sisters attended the Yankton High Schools Theater's preview performance on April 7. It was a musical, "**Honk, Jr.**" based on the story of the Ugly Duckling. The singing and performance were enjoyed by all.

Members of the firm assisting Mount Marty University were on Campus April 22 and 23. They are assisting the University in selecting a new President as **Dr. Marc Long is retiring** at the end of 2025.



S. Carmy

**Sister Marielle Frigge** was the presenter for the Mid-Lent Retreat on April 5th. Her theme was "Insights into the Paschal Mystery from the Easter Christian Tradition." Several sisters attended this retreat.



The **Easter Triduum** was celebrated with our usual solemnity and song. At the Easter Vigil the computer broke down so we were unable to watch the slides during some of the Old Testament readings.

Avera Sacred Heart Hospital (ASHH) Regional President and CEO, **Doug Ekeren** has announced his retirement on May 1, 2025. ASHH will lose a visionary leader in the field of health care. Doug Ekeren's legacy of mission, service, and values will live on. Three times in the last six years, ASHH has been named among Top 20 hospitals in the United States. Taking the reigns is Victoria Hanson, originally from Dell Rapids, SD.

The **construction project** of our new monastery continues on schedule. Most of the asbestos from the west wing has been removed. During Chapter days the Sisters saw a preview of how our new monastery will look when it is finished.



## Prayer Requests

- For our new Pope whom the Cardinals will elect in the coming days.
- For peace and justice in war-torn countries.
- For just and honest people in our government who care for the common good.
- For recovery for S. Kathryn Easley's and S. Mary Jo Polak's recent surgeries.
- For all the Oblates and their families.

## In Memory

- Pope Francis
- Marge Lubbers – Sister of S. Kathleen Courtney



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## News from Nebraska

### OBLATES HAVING FUN

The following two pictures were taken at the **North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors (NAABOD)** meeting Summer 2024. Can you guess who is hanging out as St. Benedict?



# News from Nebraska

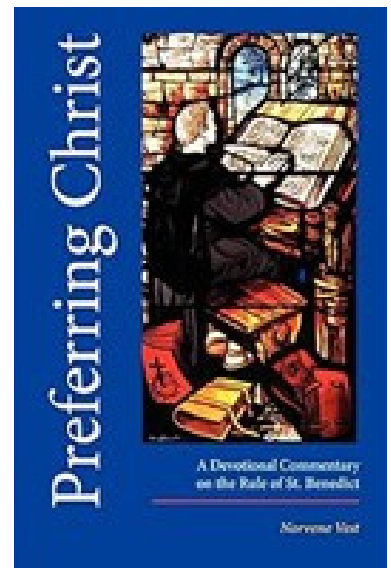
## NAABOD COMMITTEE WORK

Monastic life (and therefore, Oblate life) in the USA has been changing in the past few decades. Many monasteries have either down-sized their facilities or have closed entirely. More monasteries are using a religious-and-Oblate team for leadership, while some groups are entirely Oblate-led. Considering the impact that these situations are having on Oblates affiliated with those monasteries, a group has been formed to address this issue and other concerns from both the monastic and Oblate perspective. Carol Olson, the Lead Dean for the Nebraska Oblates affiliated with Sacred Heart Monastery, is currently serving on a committee for the North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors (NAABOD). Committee members include professed religious and Oblates from across the country. The committee has been tasked with assisting monastics and Oblates through this difficult and challenging time. The Nebraska Oblates have been Oblate-led with the support of the Oblate Director at Sacred Heart for many years without a monastic presence in Nebraska. Sharing this experience with this committee has helped to guide their discussions and consider all perspectives when giving guidance to monasteries and their Oblates. Please keep this committee in your prayers as they work to assure a future presence for Benedictine Oblates.

*Lead Dean, Carol Olson*

## NEW CHAPTER BOOK

A new book has been selected, which we will read and discuss during our chapter meetings over the next three years. The book is *Preferring Christ: A Devotional Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict* by Norvene Vest. It is available through Amazon and as an ebook. This book is new and old at the same time. As a chapter, we read through this book 2014-2017. However, it is always good to read again and will help us all find ways to make the Holy Rule applicable in our own lives. **The reading assignment for September will be the Forward and Introduction.** Reading assignments for October-December will be provided in an upcoming newsletter.



## REFLECTIONS AT CHAPTER MEETINGS

This coming year again, we will ask Oblates to offer their own Reflections at our chapter meetings. The Reflections will be centered around the Oblate Prayer. We will have a sign-up sheet at our May meeting and deans are available to help if desired.

## VISIO DIVINA

On April 12, 2024 a Spiritual Pause was held for Nebraska Benedictine Oblates by Charlene Gondring and Charlotte Liggett. Three illuminations from St. John's Bible were viewed and contemplation used to discuss those illuminations. Icons and how they are written were reviewed and each Oblate was invited to pray privately with an Icon. Thoughts and insights were shared.



# News from Nebraska

## SHORTER CHRISTIAN PRAYER INSTRUCTIONS

**April 20-June 8: Easter Season** - Turn to pp. 464-486. *We remain in Easter season until Pentecost Sunday, June 8.*

**June 8: Pentecost Sunday** - Turn to pp. 489-498 for prayers that day only.

**June 9: Ordinary Time** - We will be in Week 2 in the Shorter Christian Prayer book. We remain in Ordinary Time until Advent (Sunday, November 30).

**Liturgy of the Hours** for each day of the year can be found at Universalis.com. Navigate to the link for "Yearly Calendar." This site also provides information to help you know what Week I, II, III, or IV we are following and special days in the different Season like Solemnities or Feasts.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**May Chapter Group Meeting - May 11 at 7:00 P.M.** at Madonna in the Donlan Conference Center; Vespers in Madonna Chapel.

**Annual Oblation Ceremony - June 8 at 3:00 P.M.** at Madonna in the Donlan Conference Center. All Oblates of Nebraska are invited to this ceremony for New Oblation and Renewal Oblation followed by fellowship and reception. Some of the sisters from Sacred Heart Monastery will be able to join us. As in the past we will conduct a book exchange, so please bring spiritually enriching books that you would like to offer and pick up any that you would like to read. **Please make plans to join us for an afternoon of fellowship and connection.**

**Summer Film Opportunity - July 19 from 9:00 A.M. - 12:00 noon** at Madonna in the Donlan Conference Center. View together *Into Great Silence*. This is a documentary of Grande Chartreuse monastery, part of the Carthusian order. A German filmmaker, Philip Groning lived in the monks' quarters for six months and filmed the monks during daily prayers, tasks, rituals, and rare outdoor excursions.

## CELL BOOK READINGS



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

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

## CHAPTER BOOK READINGS

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

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

## NEBRASKA BENEDICTINE OBLATE - DECEASED

Jim Rea passed away April 27, 2025. Jim became an Oblate in 2005, was an NBO Dean, took an active part in Friday morning Lauds at Madonna, and was part of the Cell Group, Hildegard of Bingen. Jim will be missed by many.

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