



Oblate Newsletter

SACRED HEART MONASTERY

Yankton, South Dakota

MARCH 2026

S. Sharon Ann Haas, Oblate Director | shaas@yanktonbenedictines.org
(605) 668-6079 | <https://yanktonbenedictines.org/oblates/>

We're already into the Lenten Season. It's always a time for me to reflect on my life and ways that I might grow closer to Christ. St. Benedict, in his chapter on Lent, says that the life of a monk should be a continuous Lent. That could sound a bit ominous, but in fact our lives should daily be turned to Christ. Lent is a sacred time of turning away from that which takes us away from Christ and a turning towards that which brings us closer to Christ.

Our Holy Father Pope Leo XIV, in his Lenten message, reminds us that the time of Lent invites us to place the mystery of God back in the center of our lives. He encourages us to ask for the grace of a Lent that leads us to greater attentiveness to God and to the least among us.

In a recent community meeting, S. Marielle Frigge spoke to us about the paschal mystery. Many of us, including myself, have thought of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday as separate happenings. S. Marielle explained that the term Pascha, refers to the whole movement from one event to the other, not as separate entities. This gives a new depth to our understanding and appreciation of these holy days.

Since our last Newsletter, we journeyed with S. Eileen Neville and S. Carol Baumert as they prepared to enter eternal life. May they rest in peace. We ask you to remember them in your prayers.

May this Lent be grace-filled and may the peace and joy of the Risen Christ be with you and your families.

God's blessings be with you,

Sister Sharon Ann Haas

UPCOMING MEETING - Chapter Room

Sunday, March 15, 2026

YANKTON OBLATES

1:00-2:00 P.M.- Discuss Ch. VI (Chastity) in the book *Saint Benedict's Wisdom* by Luigi Gioia.

YANKTON BEGINNING OBLATES

2:30-4:00 P.M. - Review p. 30-78 in the book *Reaching for God*. Discuss "My Commitment to the Benedictine Way of Life" (My Personal Rule of Life)

Reminder: The April 19 meeting for all is at 1:00 p.m. This is the Oblation Ceremony for those requesting to become a novice oblate and those requesting final oblation. Your family is invited to attend along with all Sacred Heart Monastery Oblates.



Message for MMU Oblates

Greetings to MMU Oblates! It doesn't seem possible that we're already into the second full week of Lent. For my message to you this month, I want to share a few thoughts from Carolyn Townes, OFS with Catholic Women Preach, from her reflections for Ash Wednesday.

In the words of the prophet Joel, our God calls each of us to "return to me with your whole heart" (Ch. 2:12). This is "a call to return to what is deepest and truest in us." Carolyn goes on to remind us that "Lent is about awakening; it is about clearing away whatever keeps us numb or distracted." She says: "This is what returning looks like. No grand gestures. Just one heart softening toward another...Just one reminder that we belong to each other, even in the dust."

The ashes we received on Ash Wednesday "remind us that life is fragile -- and because it is fragile, it is so very precious." My prayer for each of us during this Lenten season is that "the ashes we received (on Ash Wednesday) awaken in us a holy tenderness. May they strengthen our resolve to honor the sacredness of every life -- not only in prayer, but in practice. Not only in lament, but in the daily work of building a world where peace is possible, where justice is lived, where love is the shape of our choices."

May Lent be for each of you a season of grace and blessing! I am praying with and for you.

May the Peace of St. Benedict be with you!

Sister Rosemarie Maly

MARCH MMU MEETINGS

Friday, Mar. 20 @ 3:00pm

Sunday, Mar. 22 @ 3:00pm

Tuesday, Mar. 24 @ Noon

Wednesday, Mar. 25 @ Noon



Upcoming Opportunities

March 8: Daylight Savings Time - Be sure to set your clocks an hour forward on the eve of March 8.

March 13: There will be a joint concert between Mount Marty University (MMU) and the University of Sioux Falls Concert Chorale at 7:00 p.m. in Bishop Marty Memorial Chapel.

March 14-15: Finding the Sacred in Every Day – A spiritual retreat for young women ages 18-45. Contact S. Carmy Luke for details. Shmyankton.vocationdirector@gmail.com or call 605-668-6092.

March 19: The Mount Marty Choral Union Concert will be held in Bishop Marty Memorial Chapel at 7:00 p.m.

March 28: Desert Day

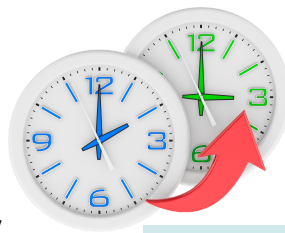
March 29: Palm Sunday

Apr 2-5 – Register for the Triduum Retreat at Sacred Heart Monastery. Immerse yourself in extended time of quiet, prayerful silence, and rich liturgical celebration of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ. Learn more at YanktonBenedictines.org/triduum.

April 25: MMU Pops Concert at 7:00 p.m. in Marian Auditorium.

April 26: MMU Band concert at 4:00 p.m. in Marian Auditorium.

May 2: MMU Commencement.



March 8-14: Catholic Sisters Week

March Feast Days

March 17: St. Patrick

March 19: St. Joseph

March 21: St. Benedict

March 25: Annunciation



Monastery Happenings

The New Year of 2026 ushered in many events between the Monastery and Mount Marty University (MMU).

On January 15, MMU Student Government sponsored a night of **bingo with the students and Sisters** in the Chapter Room.

On January 29, Students had a **game night with the Sisters**. They played games together and enjoyed snacks.

An evening of prayer was celebrated by both Sisters and students on the **Feast of St. Scholastica**, February 10. After prayers in Bishop Marty Memorial Chapel, root beer floats were enjoyed in the Chapter Room.

During **Catholic Schools Week** (Jan 26-30), students from East/West Catholic and St. Rose's from Crofton, NE visited MMU and the Monastery. Several Sisters helped S. Carmy with the activities centered on "community."

Coffee and Conversation is held once a month during the spring at MMU. Sisters are invited to join the students. They met together on January 14 and February 6.

Every month, the Sisters have a **Community Night** during which a talk is given on a specific subject. On January 13, S. Doris Oberembt spoke about "Service" to the community. On February 24 S. Marielle Frigge's talk was titled "A Paschal Christ at the Heart of the Rule", and on March 17 S. Jeanne Weber will speak about "Forgiveness."

Ss. Penny Bingham and Jeanne Weber traveled to Baltimore to attend the **Conference of Benedictine Prioresses** from January 28 to February 3. The theme of the conference was "New Paths Forward." Among many topics, one of importance was a proposed Benedictine Collaborative Services in which they discussed ways our monasteries might share services needed, starting with financial services.



MONASTERY HAPPENINGS CONT.

Tuesday evening, February 17 was the yearly celebration of **Mardi Gras** in our Chapter Room. This year we had special entertainment by Bill Miller from MMU who presented a magic show for the sisters. He asked S. Penny to be his assistant. It was another first experience for our Mardi Gras Party.

The Mardi Gras decorations were created by a former employee.



February 18 was **Ash Wednesday**. MMU and the monastery had the Eucharistic celebration together in Bishop Marty Memorial Chapel. It was so good to see the chapel nearly full and hear the young voices singing together.

Amy Miner, a retired Yankton teacher, brought her work with the Ability Building Services (ABS) to our Chapter Room on February 24. ABS caters to adults with disabilities, and Amy has been teaching theater, music, and **stop motion animation** there for about 3 years. She showed the sisters three short movies her classes have produced and a sneak peek of their latest film using Claymation techniques.

Prayer Requests

- For S. Norma Norton as she suffers from cancer.
- For S. Anna Dangel as she heals from hip surgery.
- For all the Sisters who have had recent surgeries.
- For peace and justice, especially in Ukraine, Gaza, and Iran.
- For all the prayer requests on our prayer board.
- For all the Oblates and their families.

In Memory

- Sister Eileen Neville
- Sister Carol Baumert
- Jim Feterl, brother of S. Joyce
- Clarence Hauger, brother-in-law of S. Anna Dangel



S. Eileen Neville, 95, died on January 26, 2026. She spent her professional life in the work of Academia, teaching French and English at Mount Marty.



S. Carol Baumert, 82, died on February 4, 2026. She was a lifelong advocate for the poor. She served in the Peace Corps, taught in several schools, and founded a soup kitchen in Lincoln, NE called Stone Soup.

CONTACTS

Yankton

S. Sharon Ann Haas
shaas@yanktonbenedictines.org

Mount Marty University

S. Rosemarie Maly
Rosemarie.Maly2@mountmarty.edu

Online

S. Bonita Gacnik
Bonita.Gacnik@yanktonbenedictines.org

Sioux Falls

S. Maribeth Wentzlaff
MWentzlaff@yanktonbenedictines.org

Sacred Heart Monastery
1005 West 8th Street
Yankton, SD

TBA

News from Nebraska

THOUGHTS ABOUT LENT

The following excerpt is taken from *Pilgrim Road: A Benedictine Journey through Lent* by Albert Holtz, OSB.

Our God is, after all, in the business of breaking chains. We believe that the Word became flesh, suffered, died, and rose again to free us from the chains of sin and death. We are no longer slaves to evil, doubt, and despair, because the Lord has loosed our bonds...As I watch the wall of San Juan de los Reyes glow in the afternoon sun, it easily becomes the wall of my own abbey church. The rusting Moslem leg irons suddenly belong not to anonymous slaves, but to me and my brother monks back home. The broken shackles become souvenirs of temptations we've overcome, trophies of little triumphs over vices, the tally of the times Jesus' saving power has set one of us free.

PRAYER-CENTERED REFLECTIONS AT CHAPTER GATHERINGS

Several different Oblates have volunteered to present the Reflection at our chapter Gatherings. This year all reflections are centered on the Oblate Prayer. "Thank you's" for Reflections given by **Ginny Adams** in January and **David Weyhrauch** in February.

NEBRASKA BENEDICTINE OBLATES - DECEASED

- Jim Potter passed away 2-6-2026
- Shirley Wenzel passed away 2-17-2026

These long-term Nebraska Benedictine Oblates, both from the Lincoln chapter, will be missed. Please pray for them and their families.

FRIDAY MORNING PRAYERS 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 a.m., 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. We would be delighted to have more Oblates join us Friday morning as we also enjoy good conversation and fellowship at breakfast in the Madonna cafeteria.



Friday morning prayer group: Maryann Guenther, Charlotte Liggett, Barb Michaels, Carol Barry, and David Weyhrauch (Mary Shada also present – not pictured).

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Chapter Gatherings:

2nd Sunday of each month @ 7:00pm:

March 8, April 15, May 10

All meetings are in Lincoln at Madonna in the Donlan Conference Room.

Meetings are in-person and via Zoom.

*After our meeting we will adjourn to the Chapel for Vespers. Please **watch for email notifications** from Lead Dean Carol Olson.*

March 21 at 9:30 a.m. - One final Spiritual Pause will be offered - Visio Divina with Illuminations & Icons at Madonna – Donlan Conference Center. The Pause will be hybrid, offered in-person and virtually. Zoom links will be sent via email prior to the Spiritual Pause.

July (date and time TBA) - Summer Movie – we will gather on a Saturday morning to view *Vision*, a film about the life of **Hildegard von Bingen**. This is an inspirational depiction of Hildegard's life, filmed in some original medieval cloisters of the German countryside. Watch your newsletter for an exact July date.

News from Nebraska

SHORTER CHRISTIAN PRAYER INSTRUCTIONS

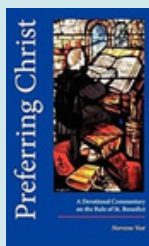
Ash Wednesday, February 18, marked the beginning of Lent. On the **first Sunday of Lent**, which was February 22, 2026, we began Week I with Sunday Evening Prayer I on page 37.

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 repeat these daily prayers every week of Lent. We continue in the Lenten prayers until **Palm Sunday**, March 29, 2026. At the Reading, turn to page 429.

The **Easter Triduum** begins on Holy Thursday, April 2, 2026, so turn to page 436. On Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026, we start again with 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 24, 2026.

After Pentecost Sunday we will return to Ordinary time. One resource you might like to check for the **Liturgy of the Hours** for the current day can be found at universalis.com.

CHAPTER BOOK READINGS



Preferring Christ: A Devotional Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict by Norvene Vest.

Reading Assignments:

March: Interlude II, Ch. 5-6

April: Ch. 7 (vs 1-50)

May: Ch 7 (vs. 51-70)

CELL BOOK READINGS



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

March - Ch. 13 (p. 160-173) *Grace of Silence*

April - Ch. 14 (p. 174-187) *Grace of Community*

May - Ch. 14 (p. 187-190) *Grace of Community*, & Ch. 15 (191-200) *Grace of Communion*

COMMITMENT TO A MONASTIC WAY OF LIFE - SPIRITUAL PAUSE

On January 17, 2026 the Nebraska Benedictine Oblates gathered for a Spiritual Pause at Madonna, both in-person and virtually. During this spiritual pause, the Oblates considered and meditated on the following two questions:

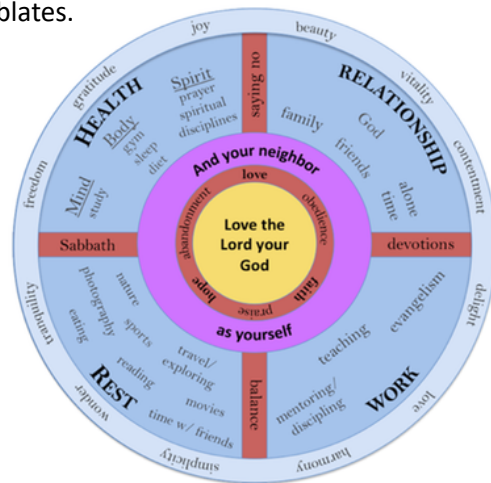
- What does living a Monastic Life mean to you?
- How has being a Benedictine Oblate impacted your life?

Comments and thoughts were offered by Lead Dean, Carol Olson from the Rule of St. Benedict (RB) and her own experiences as an Oblate. First, we find in the Prologue of the RB, *In drawing up its regulations, we hope to set down nothing harsh, nothing burdensome*; and RB 72:11 states, *Let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ*. These important statements from RB can help us as Oblates learn how to live a Monastic Life.

The following practices and reminders were also shared. These help tremendously as we attempt to live a Monastic Life in everyday life.

- Prayer and Lectio Divina
- Grace and Growth
- Association with the sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery in Yankton, SD

Finally, Carol shared the following graphic as a way of thinking about and praying for and through different aspects of our lives as Oblates.



Rule of Life
Spring 2013

Brian Carrier

CONTACTS

Lincoln	Carol Barry - majorcarolb@yahoo.com	Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, Donlan Conference Room 5401 South Street Lincoln, NE
	Charlotte Liggett - cmliggett2010@aol.com	
	Carol Olson - carol.olson@nebraskabenedictineoblates.org	
Steinauer	Marcia Borchert	Banquet Room Convent House B&B Steinauer, NE
	db92140@windstream.net	