



Oblate Newsletter

SACRED HEART MONASTERY

Yankton, South Dakota

MAY 2026

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Dear Oblates,

I find springtime to be such a wonderful awakening to new life around us. I would like to share this poem from an anonymous author.

May sunny days gently nudge your heart towards fresh hope.
May rainy days splash your pace with contentment.
May the smell of flowers wake up your winter soul.
May spring's dance remind you to celebrate life.

Graduations, First Communions, and Mother's Day celebrations are occurring and speak of gratitude and new life ahead. We recently journeyed with two of our Sisters as they prepared to enter eternal life. S. Norma Norton died on April 17, and S. Kate Crowley died on April 29th. Their deaths are such a reminder of the fragileness of life on this earth and the newness and fullness of life in eternity. S. Norma and S. Kate have been a blessing to our community.

As most of you know, we had a beautiful Oblation Ceremony on Sunday, April 19th, which was incorporated into the noon prayer with the Sisters. We had an additional oblation ceremony on Wednesday, April 22, at evening prayer for some who were unable to attend on Sunday. We are blessed to have 18 oblats make their profession as Oblate Novices and 18 make their Final Oblation. Those making oblation are from Yankton, Sioux Falls, and Mount Marty University. Let us hold them in prayer as they commit themselves to this Benedictine Way of Life. Oblates that were present also renewed their oblation.

I hope all of you will have a wonderful summer, with time to relax and enjoy time with family and friends. Know of my prayers and the prayers of the Sisters for each of you.

In the spirit of Benedict,

Sister Sharon Ann Haas

Sr. Sharon Ann Haas, Oblate Director

Novice Oblates



Final Oblation



The next meeting for the Yankton Oblates is on **Sunday, May 17th at 1:00 pm in the Monastery Chapter Room**. Both the new oblats and the regular oblats will meet together.

Assignment: *Saint Benedict's Wisdom* by Luigi Gioia, Chapter VII on Simplicity and Prayer.

I will send a copy of the chapter to the new oblats.

Message for MMU Oblates

Dear MMU Oblates – First, I want to congratulate all of you who made your first oblation (became novices), your final oblation, or renewed your oblation on April 19; and those of you who weren't able to make your oblation this year because of conflicts, I anticipate next year with you.

Then, this weekend we celebrated with our graduates, both undergrad and graduate students – all of this in the middle of the Easter season. There is a reason why graduation is called commencement – for our graduates, it's the beginning of a new season in their lives with new adventures. It's also a beginning for all of us, and a chance to pause and take time to reflect on where we've come from and where we are going in the next season of our lives.

In his commencement address on Saturday, Dr. Mick Gibbs reminded us that a meaningful life begins with listening, the simple and demanding invitation with which St. Benedict begins the Rule: Listen...Carefully...with the ear of your heart. Listen in a way that changes how you see the person in front of you. We are called to show up and care for the person right in front of us at any given moment on any given day.

The Scripture readings for this past Sunday challenge us to show up and care for those in our society and in our communities who are neglected, overlooked, or falling through the cracks to ensure that no one feels disconnected or forgotten. These could be the very people who are right in front of us today.

I encourage you to find some time this summer to reflect on how you respond to persons in need. Are they an interruption in your day, or are they your purpose?

Have a blessed summer! Find some time to relax; I'll be in touch in August with meeting plans for next year.

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

Upcoming Opportunities

June 6 - We will celebrate the **Golden Jubilee** of S. Sarah Schultz and the **Silver Jubilee** of S. Carmela Luke.

August 6 - We will celebrate the **Diamond Jubilees** of S. Louise Marie Goettertz (70 years), S. Kathryn Easley, S. Jennifer Kehrwald, S. Joyce Streff, S. Marietta Kerkvliet, and S. Margo Tschetter (60 years).



💎 S. Louise Marie



💎 S. Kathryn Easley



💎 S. Jennifer Kehrwald



💎 S. Joyce Streff



💎 S. Marietta Kerkvliet



💎 S. Margo Tschetter



👉 S. Sarah Schultz



👉 S. Carmy Luke

Monastery Happenings

Several **Catholic Elementary Schools** have visited the Monastery and Mount Marty University this spring. They toured the chapel, attended Mass, and one group participated in a group meditation.

March 17
7th & 8th Grade
St. Rose School, Crofton, NE

April 9
5th Grade
St. Mary, O'Neill, NE

April 17
2nd Grade
Crofton, NE

April 20
2nd Grade
Osmond, NE

During Lent, **S. Mary Jo Polak** led a one-day retreat for the women of the area parishes around O'Neill, NE. Her theme was "Lenten Journey into the Heart."

On Good Friday, the Sisters were able to walk through the **new monastery construction**. The walls of the individual rooms are up, and the insulation is being installed in the bedrooms. The brick is being installed on the outside of the monastery.

Some Sisters will soon be moving into new bedrooms as Phase 1 of the Monastery Construction project wraps up. The kitchen, dining room, a new small chapel, and many other rooms will be ready by the end of November 2026. The rest of the Sisters will be living in Marty House, our Guest Rooms, or the Peace Center, until Phase 2 is completed in November 2027.

S. Jeanne Ranek led the current group of 30 Avera executives in the "Leaders in Ministry Program" at the Broomtree Retreat Center near Irene, SD. The topic was learning about fundamental theology and learning skills for discernment of which the group had a practicum in order to experience discernment with a real Avera decision.

The Lutheran Women's Clergy Retreat was held in the monastery Peace Center. Trish Underberg led the retreat and, along with the participants, expressed their gratitude for the community's hospitality.

The Sisters watched the **Year in Review** video at their Chapter Meeting on April 18. The video was created for the employees' Mission Day in February. It showed much of the progress of our new monastery.



Mount Marty University (MMU) planted a tree near the flagpole east of the Field House on **April 22, Earth Day**.

S. Patricia Ann Toscano and Carmy Luke sang in the Pops Concert at Mount Marty University on the evening of April 25 in Marian Auditorium.

On Sunday, April 26, the **MMU Band** presented their Band Concert for the end of the school year in Marian Auditorium.



The **MMU Baccalaureate Services** were part of the Mass celebrated on May 1 in Bishop Marty Memorial Chapel. Saturday, May 2, was **Graduation Day at MMU**. We were honored to have **Dr. Michael "Mick" Gibbs**, a Sioux Falls Oblate, give the MMU commencement address, focusing on the values of humility and small acts of service.

MONASTERY HAPPENINGS CONT.

S. Carol Jean VanDenHemel was named the Omaha Archdiocesan Secondary Educator of the Year. This is a great honor that will be celebrated with a presentation dinner on September 24, 2026.

The fifth grade of Sacred Heart School in Yankton will enjoy their **Pen Pal Picnic** with their Sister Pen Pal on Friday, May 8 in the Chapter Room of the Monastery.

The **MMU Board of Trustees** will meet on May 14-15 at the University.

The **Sisters' annual retreat** will be from June 15-21 in the Chapter Room. Sister Nancy Bauer from St. Ben's in St. Joseph, Minnesota, is giving the retreat. The theme is "A Special Family in Christ: Relationships in a Monastic Community According to the Rule of St. Benedict."



Prayer Requests

- For the many sisters who have been ill.
- For all the sisters recovering from recent surgeries.
- For all prayer requests on the Prayer Board.
- For our government and all involved in the peace negotiations with Iran. Help them find an end to the war.
- For a safe and healthy summer for our Oblates and their families.

In Memory

- Ed Mayer, brother of S. Janice Mayer
- Susan Curran, sister of Sister Mary Carole Curran.
- S. Norma Norton
- S. Kathleen Crowley
- S. Sandra Meek, Watertown, SD
- Gary Bates, former employee.



S. Norma Norton, 95, died on Friday, April 17, 2026. S. Norma quit school at 16 to help care for her family after her father died. She worked her way up in the financial field until she joined SHM in 1983.



S. Kate Crowley, 93, died on the Feast of St. Catherine of Siena, her patron saint, Wednesday, April 29, 2026. She was a nurse from Canada, who became very interested in end of life/hospice care, and she was instrumental in the formation of the Avera Health System.

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TBA

News from Nebraska

VISIO DIVINA

March 12, 2026 the Lincoln chapter held a **Spiritual Pause** entitled Visio Divina. Various images from St. John's Bible and Icons were reviewed, pondered, and prayed with. Visio divina helps us:

- 1) find God in our everyday lives;
- 2) approach the divine with adoration and worship;
- 3) gladden our hearts with beautiful images;
- 4) experience a sense of joy, peace, and love; and
- 5) pray.

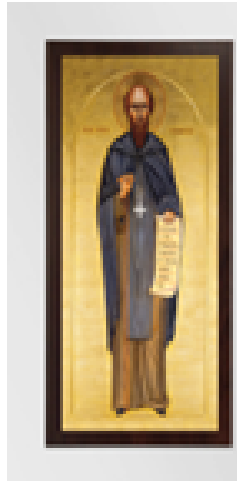
The following images are some of the illuminations and icons we used for meditation during this Spiritual Pause:



Baptism of Jesus
(St. John's Bible)



Suffering Servant
(St. John's Bible)



St. Benedict (Icon)



Resurrected Jesus (Icon)

BENEDICTINE MOVIE DAY

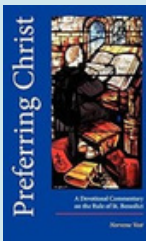
We are planning an exciting opportunity for this summer. On **Saturday, July 18, 2026 at 9:30 am** in the Donlan Conference Center at Madonna. All local Oblates and guests are welcome! We have especially invited Oblates from Christ the King Priory in Schuyler to join us. We will enjoy watching *Vision: The Life of Hildegard of Bingen* and having a light lunch together. You will want to put this on your calendar to enjoy a movie and fellowship. Please RSVP using the QR on the right.



REFLECTIONS AT CHAPTER MEETINGS

Special thanks for offering Reflections on the Oblate Prayer in March – **Marcia Claussen**, and in April – **Mara Fritts**. And we will appreciate **Tim Adams** providing the Reflection during our May chapter meeting. Oblates will be encouraged to offer Reflections again this next year and we will have a sign-up sheet at our May meeting for that purpose.

CHAPTER BOOK READINGS



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

Reading Assignments:
May: Ch 7 (vs. 51-70)

CELL BOOK READINGS



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

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

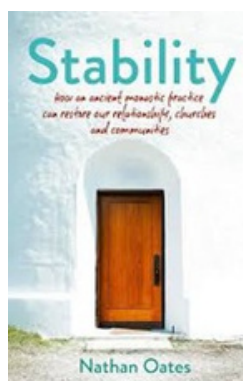
News from Nebraska

SHORTER CHRISTIAN PRAYER INSTRUCTIONS

We are in the **Easter Season**, which started April 5, 2026, with Easter Sunday and concludes May 24, 2026, with **Pentecost Sunday**. During this time, we turn to pp. 464-486 in the Reading for the specific prayer or day of the week.

On **Pentecost Sunday**, we turn to pp. 489-498 for prayers just that day. After Pentecost Sunday, on Monday, May 25, 2026, we return to **Ordinary Time**, and we will be in Week 4 in the Shorter Christian Prayer.

One resource you might like to check for the **Liturgy of the Hours** is universalis.com. This site provides information which will help you know what Week I, II, III, or IV, that we are following and special days in the different seasons, solemnities, or Feasts.



Our next **Cell Book** will be *Stability: How an ancient monastic practice can restore our relationships, churches, and communities* by Nathan Oates. This author draws on his experiences of raising a family, pastoring a church, and spending time with monks to help us understand how to embrace the value of stability. With Benedictine spirituality he explains how we can choose to press deeper into the source of life and our own true passion. Reading assignments will be made available at a later day before cell groups start again in September 2026.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **May Chapter Group Meeting – May 11, 2026; 7:00 pm** at Madonna in the Donlan Conference Center; Vespers in Madonna Chapel. Reading assignment: Preferring Christ – Chp. 7 (vs 51-70).
- **June Chapter Annual Group Meeting – June 14, 2026; 1:30 pm** at Madonna in the Donlan Conference Center. This is a ceremony for New Oblation and Renewal Oblation followed by fellowship and reception. We anticipate Srs. Sharon Ann and Patricia 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 renewed commitment to oblation, fellowship, and connection.
- **Benedictine Movie Day (Summer Film Opportunity) - July 18, 2026; 9:30 am – 12:00 noon;** Madonna in the Donlan Conference Center – view *Vision: The Life of Hildegard of Bingen*.
- **Lincoln Chapter Oblate Informational session: Aug 30th, 7pm,** Donlan conference center at Madonna. This is an excellent opportunity to invite a friend or neighbor to explore Benedictine Oblation. Benedictine spirituality encourages us to be balanced, hospitable, and prayerful. And these are all things desperately needed in today's world. Please find someone you think might enjoy being an Oblate and bring them to this meeting.

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