



Oblate Newsletter

SACRED HEART MONASTERY

Yankton, South Dakota

SEPTEMBER 2025

S. Sharon Ann Haas, Oblate Director | shaas@yanktonbenedictines.org
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Dear Oblates,

I have been your Oblate Director for the past ten years. It has been a pleasure to get to know so many of you and to be a part of your spiritual journey. I have enjoyed being a part of your lives and praying with you and for you. I will continue to write the Oblate Newsletter for the next year, but Sister Sharon Ann Haas will be the new Oblate Director. She will offer her wisdom and new insights into our Benedictine way of life. I hope to see you at different times and may even join you at your meetings occasionally. Let us keep each other in prayer.

Sister Patricia Heirigs

Greetings to all of the Oblates of Sacred Heart Monastery.

September always seems to have some new beginnings. S. Patricia has been serving as the Oblate Director of Sacred Heart Monastery for over 10 years. We owe her deep gratitude for her role in further developing our Oblate Program and for her love and attentiveness to this ministry. I have been recently appointed to continue this ministry as the Oblate Director. I look forward to working with the various oblate directors and to continue this important ministry for Sacred Heart Monastery. S. Patricia will be my mentor and assisting me with the oblate newsletter.

God's blessings to each of you! Thank you for your commitment to this Monastic Way of Life.

Peace and grace to you, *Sister Sharon Ann Haas*

UPCOMING MEETING - Chapter Room

1:00 P.M. - Read the Intro and Chap 1 in the book *Saint Benedict's Wisdom* by Luigi Gioia.

NEW OBLATES

2:30 P.M. - Read the Intro and Chpts 1-2 in the book *Reaching for God*.



S. Sharon Ann traveled this summer with a group of 12 Mount Marty students, 3 faculty, one administrator, and Fr. Adam to Germany and Switzerland. The group was able to visit Maria Rickenbach, Switzerland, where our sisters came from. She presented a picture of St. Scholastica, painted by Yankton Benedictin, S. Kathleen Hickenbotham to Mother Jacinta.

S. Maribeth Wentzlaff has been directing the Sioux Falls Oblates this past year. The group brings a lot of energy and interest in learning about the Rule of Benedict and ways to apply it to their personal and professional lives. They have been meeting every month, including the summer months. The oblats are currently discussing Joan Chittister's book, *A Spirituality for the 21st Century*.

Message for MMU Oblates

Happy September, MMU oblates!

As I thought about the beginning of another school year, the book, ALWAYS WE BEGIN AGAIN: The Benedictine Way of Living by John McQuiston II came to my mind. In the second chapter of his reflections on the Rule of St. Benedict, "Each Day", McQuiston describes the Benedictine attitude with which we are encouraged to begin every day. I share it here:

At the beginning of each day, after we open our eyes to receive the light of that day,

As we listen to the voices and sounds that surround us,

*We must resolve to treat each hour as the rarest of gifts, and be grateful
for the consciousness that allows us to experience it,
recalling in thanks that our awareness is a present
from we know not where, or how or why.*

*When we rise from sleep let us rise for the joy
of the true Work that we will be about this day,
and considerately cheer one another on.
Life will always provide matters for concern.
Each day, however, brings with it reasons for joy.
Every day carries the potential
to bring the experience of heaven;
have the courage to expect good things from it.
Be gentle with this life,
and use the light of life
to live fully in your time.*

SEPTEMBER MEETINGS

Tuesday, Sept. 16 at 12:00 P.M.

Wednesday, Sept. 17 at 4:00 P.M.

Friday, Sept. 19 at 3:00 P.M.

Sunday, Sept. 21 at 3:00 P.M.

What a blessing these insights are, and what a blessing it is that we have the chance to begin anew every day; to strive to live with awareness and consciousness so that we can grow into living fully in our time, and support one another in our efforts!

May God bless our year through the intercession of St. Benedict! Much peace, *Sister Rosemarie Mafy*

Upcoming Opportunities

September 18: Naomi Project Town Hall

The sisters will be hosting Jordan Bruxvoort, Director of the Naomi Project out of Sioux Falls, SD. He will discuss how the group is combatting human trafficking in the workplace by training to identify the indicators of labor trafficking.

September 26-27: Five Steps to a Vibrant Christian Spirituality Retreat in Rapid City, SD

St. Martin Monastery Oblates invite you to attend a retreat at Terra Sancta Retreat Center led by Fr. Tom Hillenbrand. Find out more at terrasancta.org/benedictine2025

October 9: Benedictine Lecture Series

The Retreat Center is hosting a presentation by Father John Klassen on the topic "Deep Listening: Obedience and Humility in the Rule of Benedict". The presentation is open to Sisters and Oblates of Sacred Heart Monastery. It will be held in our Chapter Room at 7:00 P.M. I hope that some of you can join us.



Monastery Happenings

We had **four separate Oblate ceremonies** this summer in which 24 people became Benedictine Oblate Novices and 10 people made their Benedictine Final Oblation. It was one of our largest enrollments of Oblates in recent years. Next year promises to have more people deciding to follow St. Benedict as his Oblates.

The Sisters attended their **annual community retreat** from June 15-21. Father Meinrad Miller from Atchison, Kansas reflected with them on the "Prologue of the Rule: Clothed with Faith and Good Works." Father's talks were short but thought-provoking, even though the monastery walls were coming down at the same time.

S. Penny Bingham, SHM Prioress along with MMU President Marc Long, ObSB, and Barb Rezac, ObSB, attended the **Association of Benedictine Colleges and Universities** in Manchester, NH from June 23-26. The group is committed to promoting and sustaining the value of a Benedictine education.

S. Carmy Luke participated in the **Youth in Theology and Ministry Conference** at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota. It involved working with high school students and college age counselors. In September, S. Carmy will attend the **National Religious Vocation coordinator's** meeting in Chicago.

During the week of **St. Benedict's feast**, we had several fun gatherings. We had Root Beer floats with our staff, an employee recognition luncheon honoring a combined **90 years of** service, and a morning coffee break provided by the Mission Committee. Our friends from Avera Sacred Heart Hospital treated us to an ice cream social.



On August 19, **Ss. Mildred Busch and Lynn Osika**, who work in our Archives saw the culmination of months of hard work organizing our archival documents. A moving group from Sioux Falls picked up a lot of our archives for transport to the Women Religious Archives Collaborative (WRAC) in Cleveland, Ohio, where a legacy center will become a permanent home for the archives in an effort to preserve the legacy of women religious throughout the United States.



SISTERS IN MISSION

Ss. Carmy Luke and Kathy Burt traveled to Eagle Pass, Texas in May to help Sister Ursula and her Benedictine Community. They worked in schools, orphanages, and homes for disabled persons. They were able to witness the need for helpers in the missionary fields.

S. Sharon Ann Haas traveled with the Mount Marty University group to Germany and Switzerland for three weeks in May. Besides visiting our sisters at Maria Rickenbach in Switzerland, they helped the Sisters around the monastery garden. (*see pics on p. 1*)

Three sisters gave retreats to other Benedictine Communities; **S. Mary Jo Polak** to the community in Elizabeth, New Jersey. **S. Jeanne Ranek** to the community in Pittsburgh, and **S. Jeanne Weber** to the community in Duluth.

S. Kathleen Courtney and her team of **Ss. Marietta Kerkvliet and Barbara McTague** shared their "Called by Name" confirmation retreat with students from Nebraska. It was their 109th and final retreat they have given.

On September 1, 2025, we celebrated the **25th Anniversary of Avera Health**, a combined ministry and legacy of the Benedictine and Presentation sisters in catholic health ministry.



Ss. Sharon Ann Haas, Jeanne Ranek, and Mary Jo Polak attended the Association of Benedictine Retreat Centers conference at Schuyler, Nebraska the last week in August.

Jubilee Summer

On July 27 we celebrated the **75th Anniversary** of the dedication of our **Bishop Marty Memorial Chapel** with Bishop Kettler filling in for Bishop DeGrood who has been sick for several months.



Ss. Candyce Chrystal and Joyce Feterl celebrated 50 years of profession on June 28 with the Benedictine community and with their families.

On July 19, the community celebrated 340 years of monastic profession honoring five Diamond Jubilarians. **Ss. Doris Oberembt and Marcine Quintus** (75 years), **S. Marita Kolbeck** (70 years), and **Ss. Marielle Frigge and Janice Mayer** (60 years).



*L to R: Ss. Janice, Doris, Marita, Marielle
Missing is S. Marcine*



MOUNT MARTY UNIVERSITY (MMU)

The sisters **welcomed the freshman** MMU students and their families to our Chapter Room with a treat of ice cream bars. There are over 150 freshmen at MMU this year.

On September 11, the Sisters and MMU students will enjoy an annual tradition of having **s'mores** together.

Another tradition: **Game Night** with MMU students and staff in our Chapter Room on September 30.

Prayer Requests

For Pope Leo's understanding and love of the poor.
For S. Marcine to recover from her stroke.
For all the Sisters suffering from colds.
For all the prayer requests on our Prayer Board.
For the hungry people in Gaza and Ukraine.
For wisdom and understanding for those who make, execute, and judge our laws.
For all the oblates and their families.

In Memory

S. Delores Rush
S. Imelda Haag from Watertown, SD
John Simon – brother-in-law of S. Doris Oberembt
Cyril Haag, cousin of S. Doris Oberembt

CONTACTS

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TBA

News from Nebraska

JUNE OBLATION CEREMONY

On Sunday, June 8, 2025, the Nebraska Benedictine Oblates met at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital to welcome Judy Reid into Initial Oblation. We also honored Sr. Pat Heirigs, who is still involved with Oblates but is stepping back from being the Oblate Director. We sincerely thank Sr. Pat for all her years of carefully shepherding the Nebraska Benedictine Oblates and wish her well going forward.

Three sisters from Sacred Heart Monastery (SHM) in Yankton, SD, joined us for our Oblation Ceremony. We were honored to have **Sr. Penny Bingham, Prioress of SHM, Sr. Sharon Ann Haas, Oblate Director, and Sr. Pat Heirigs**. All current Oblates attending the Oblation Ceremony were invited to renew their commitment to Benedictine spirituality and SHM. Family and friends of all Oblates joined us for the ceremony and reception. After saying Vespers together in the Chapel, we adjourned to the Donlan Conference Room and enjoyed a book exchange, refreshments, and fellowship.



Sr. Pat Heirigs



*Sr. Penny Bingham
and Judy Reid*

HAVING A LITTLE FUN



Carol Olson, Lead Dean, created a fun way for Oblates to have just a sense of what it might have been like to be St. Benedict. Pictured on the left are two Nebraska Benedictine Oblates, **Carol Barry and Tim Adams**, posing as St. Benedict, just for fun.



Oblates and Sisters during Vespers.

HASTINGS CHAPTER CLOSURE

The Nebraska Benedictine Oblate leadership would like to extend a very sincere Thank You to **Juliene Bryan, Dean of the Hastings Chapter**, as she steps down from leading the chapter since it opened. Juliene is a wise and steady leader, and we are so grateful for her dedication and service. We wish her well as she tends to her health, and we invite everyone to keep her in prayer. As a result of this transition, the Hastings Chapter is now closed. **We invite any Oblates** that live in the Hastings area to join the Lincoln Chapter via Zoom for our Chapter Gatherings, periodic Spiritual Pauses, and weekly Friday morning prayer. There is one Cell in Lincoln that meets via Zoom and would also welcome new participants. Please contact a Nebraska Dean to get connected!

INVITATION TO ALL OBLATES OF SACRED HEART

The Nebraska Oblates would like to extend an invitation to all of the **Oblates of Sacred Heart** in participating in events of the Nebraska Oblates! You are welcome to join us via Zoom for our Chapter Gatherings, Friday Morning Prayer, and Spiritual Pauses. Keep an eye out for upcoming events in the newsletters and contact one of the Nebraska Deans for more information or to get connected! See contact info at the bottom of the next page.

SHORTER CHRISTIAN PRAYER INSTRUCTIONS

We are currently in Ordinary Time and will remain in Ordinary Time until the beginning of Advent, which happens **November 30, 2025**. Sunday, **September 7, 2025** is the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time we are in Psalm Week 3. Sunday, November 30, 2025 will be the first Sunday in Advent and that week we will be in Psalm Week 1.

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

SAVE THE DATE

All meetings are in Lincoln at Madonna in the Donlan Conference Room. Meetings are in-person and via Zoom
Chapter Meetings:

Sundays @ 7:00pm: Sept 14, Oct 12, Nov 16, Dec 14

Spiritual Pauses:

Sat, Oct 18 at 9:30 A.M.- Topic: Lectio Divina

Sat, Dec 13 at 9:30 A.M.- Topic: Liturgy of the Hours

Additional Spiritual Pauses Dates TBD

- Commitment to a Monastic Way of Life
- Visio Divina

Several oblates have volunteered to present reflections based on the Oblates' Prayer. If you are willing to volunteer contact Carol Olson, Carol Barry, or Charlotte Liggett.

PLAN TO VISIT SACRED HEART MONASTERY IN YANKTON, SD

A distinct advantage of being a Nebraska Benedictine Oblate is having the opportunity to meet and visit with the sisters at Sacred Heart Monastery (SHM). In order to welcome visitors, The Peace Center is available to Oblates, which then allows us to say prayers and dine with the Sisters. The Peace Center offers monastic space where Oblates can go for solitude, prayer, and spiritual refreshment. If interested in a short retreat, please feel free to call the Peace Center at 605-668-6292 or access the Center through email at <https://www.yanktonbenedictines.org/retreat-center/>

CELL BOOK READINGS

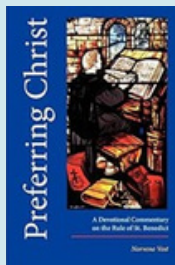


Reading assignments for *Grace: On the Journey to God* by Michael Casey are as follows:

September - Ch. 8, pp 95-102 *The Grace of Prayer: Dedication*

October - Cp. 8, pp 103-109 *The Grace of Prayer: Dedication*

CHAPTER BOOK READINGS



For our NBO chapter meetings we are reading and discussing *Preferring Christ: A Devotional Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict* by Norvene Vest.

Reading Assignments:

September: Forward and Introduction, pp. xi-xx

October: Prologue, pp. 2-16

November: Interlude I, Ch. 1-2, pp 17-38

Each month **discussions at chapter meetings** regarding selected readings will be based on the following three questions:

1. What spoke to you in the assigned Rule reading? (No Rule readings for September)
2. How does this reading affect your life today?
3. What stood out to you from the comments written by Norvene Vest?

CONTACTS

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