



November 2018

Oblate Newsletter

SACRED HEART MONASTERY

Yankton, South Dakota

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Dear Oblates,

Recently I had the privilege, along with Oblate Barb Rezac, of attending the “Oblates for the Future Symposium” at St. Gertrude’s Monastery in Cottonwood, Idaho. There were over 40 monastics and oblates present to help plan the future of Benedictine Oblates.

The symposium had three main goals: naming the current reality between the monastics and oblates, naming and claiming a vision of the future, and the next steps and plans to move into the future.

Sister Mary Forman OSB, prioress of St. Gertrude’s Monastery, gave the keynote address, “Oblates in the Christian History of Religious Life.” She gave an excellent presentation on the history of monastic life throughout the centuries. There have always been adult oblates associated with Benedictine Monasteries from the Middle Ages to the modern years. The current reality is that the aging monastic communities are decreasing in size, and the oblates are increasing in number. On the part of both the monastics and oblates, there is a sense of grief, and it is unclear how to deal with the loss.



Sister Mary Forman, OSB



Dr. Van Leeuwen

The vision for the future of the oblates is that they are called to be more than “friends of the monasteries” but to take oblation as a life commitment to live Benedictine spirituality in all aspects of their lives. To be Benedictine Oblates can be seen as a form of a vocation, in the sense of being a call from God. Oblates will be more involved in the Benedictine Community, living in the world with an emphasis on their relationship with their Benedictine Community.

It seems more monasteries are organizing their oblate groups with a special emphasis on the formation of the oblates. Dr. Charles Van Leeuwen of Belgium spoke of the need for solid formation for the oblates. This formation is not only for initial formation before making oblation but there is a strong emphasis on how oblates continue to live their Benedictine commitment, and how they continue to develop and grow in their spiritual life. Dr. Van Leeuwen said, “The spiritual life is an attitude of mind we must develop. Conversion requires us to grow and change, and requires on-going formation. The credibility of the oblate membership depends on it. The better the formation, the better the oblates are, and the better the community is.”

In most of the monasteries that were represented at the symposium, some form of appointed or elected oblate group shared responsibility with a monastic co-leader. In some cases the oblates took the total leadership of the oblate group; in others, the monastics still had all the leadership roles.

Sister Teresa Jackson, OSB, of St. Gertrude’s Monastery ended the symposium with these words, “Embracing oblates as people with a different, yet vital Benedictine vocation, can allow monastics to see co-workers in the vineyard. Oblates can become the people who take our mission and charism to places we can no longer go. If oblates are seen as having a vocation, then formation matters. If formation matters, then oblates have a stake in the coordination and leadership in their groups.”



Sister Teresa Jackson, OSB

Each monastic community and oblate group present was asked to focus on the next steps they will take in their communities when they return home. The symposium emphasized the need to have shared conversations about the identity and role of Benedictine oblates today. Participants were encouraged to discuss these ideas with other oblates and with members of their monastic community.

A second “Oblates for the Future Symposium” has been planned for September 9-13, 2019. Next year will be focused on Benedictine formation for oblates as well as supporting oblates’ directors in developing a stronger role for oblates in our Benedictine monasteries.

It seems that, as oblates of Sacred Heart Monastery, we will have some things to reflect about in the coming year.

God’s Blessings,
Sister Patricia Heirigs

Oblate Yankton Meetings 2018:

NOVEMBER 18: Read chapters 1 & 2 in “Preferring Christ”

DECEMBER 16: Read chapters 3 & 4 in “Preferring Christ”

Upcoming Opportunities: (Further information listed on website)

■ **St. Gertrude:**

November 16, is the founding date for our Benedictine Monastery and is the feast of St. Gertrude the Great of Helfta, Saxony. St. Gertrude is known as a mystic, spiritual writer, and a saint. She is also known for her great devotion to the Sacred Heart. She is often pictured with Jesus in her heart. “In the heart of Gertrude, you will find Me.” The Mission Committee will host a breakfast for all the Sisters and employees the morning of November 15 in honor of St. Gertrude.

■ **Thanksgiving:**

The Sisters will help prepare the turkeys on November 21, for the Yankton Community Feast. Some of the Sisters will help serve at the Community Feast.

■ **Advent Retreat:**

On Saturday, December 1, 2018, from 9:30 am-noon, Sister Penny Bingham will be the presenter on the topic “The Dance of Darkness and Light,” for the Advent Retreat.

■ **Christmas Vespers:**

The Benedictine Sisters and the Mount Marty College Music Department will present the 36th Annual Vespers performance on Saturday, December 1, at 7 pm, and Sunday, December 2 at 4 pm and 7 pm in Bishop Marty Memorial Chapel. The talented A Cappella Choir of Yankton High School, along with the special musical groups of MMC, will perform. Tickets to Vespers will be available on a first-come, first-served basis on Wednesday, November 14, 2018, at two locations: Sacred Heart Monastery Gift Shop (Open 9:30-12:00 and 1:00-4:00) and Mount Marty College Pages Bookstore (Open 8:00-5:00).

■ **Desert Day:**

On December 15, 2018, the Sisters will be having an Advent Desert Day when they can renew their own spiritual life.

Prayer Requests:

For Sister Phyllis Hunhoff as she recovers from back surgery
For Sister Arthur Schramm as she recovers from her surgery
For all the Sisters in the Care Center
For the newly elected officials as they begin their service to the people of our state and country
For an end to human trafficking
For the many prayer intentions on our Monastic prayer board

Deaths:

Aliene Lemmer – mother of Sister Corinne Lemmer
Father Mel Patton from St. Meinrad's in Indiana. He was our Care Center Chaplain for many years.
Peggy McTague – Sister Barbara McTague's sister-in-law
Frances Milosevic --Sister of Sister Kate Crowley
Father Claude Seeberger – brother of Sister Judeen of Watertown, SD
Phyllis Hunhoff – niece of Sister Phyllis Hunhoff
Father Richard Thell, OSB of Mount Michael Abbey, Elkhorn, NE

Monastery Happenings

More copies of our new study book, "Preferring Christ," have arrived, and I'll bring them to our Oblate meeting this coming Sunday, November 18.

During October the Mission Committee sponsored two big events. The Pumpkin Carving Contest generated much enthusiasm and made a beautiful display in the Activity Room. The three top winners received prizes. October was "Make a Difference Month," and food and paper products were collected throughout the month. The blessing of these items was on October 26, and nine, big boxes were taken to the Yankton Contact Center.

Sister Esther Holzbauer received the "Pioneer in Nursing" award at the South Dakota Nursing Association Convention in Brookings, SD.

Sacred Heart Monastery was recognized at the Presidential Dinner at Mount Marty College with one of the "St. Maurus" awards in recognition of the lifetime gifts that the Monastery has given to MMC.



Sisters Maribeth Wentzlaff and Kathy Burt went to New York City to represent Avera at a recognition dinner and ceremony honoring **Sister Carol Keehan, CEO** of Catholic Health Association for her work in Catholic Health Care. This award was given by the *Commonweal* magazine.

The Oblate Retreat was well attended with twelve participants, who appreciated the presentations given by **Father Valerian Odermann**. His concepts on prayer, along with his sense of humor, were an added feature.



**HAPPY
THANKS-
GIVING!**

**FROM ALL OF
US AT
SACRED HEART
MONASTERY**

Sisters Clarice Korger and Marietta Kerkvliet attended the National Religious Vocation Conference in Buffalo, New York in early November. There were over 300 vocation directors from all over the United States receiving renewed energy for the ministry, sharpen their skills and understanding, and learning networking with friends and collaborators.



Sisters Maribeth Wentzlaff, Sharon Ann Haas, Mary Kay Panowicz, Jeanne Weber, Penny Bingham, and Debra Kolecka participated in a “Charrette,” a gathering of women religious in the area of future health care for the needs of our elderly Sisters.

Sisters Sharon Ann, Peggy Venteicher, and Joyce Streff attended the Avera Ethics Conference in Sioux Falls, SD, on Palliative Care.

The **Administrative Team, Sisters Maribeth Wentzlaff, Sharon Ann Haas, and Mary Kay Panowicz** took part in a Conference for Women in Leadership positions.



Sister Mary Jo Polak had an article, “Listening to One Another Into Being,” published in the Benedictines Fall/Winter magazine.

The concert Flower and Flame, “Tales from an Arabian Night” was attended by many of the Sisters.

Sisters Maribeth Wentzlaff and Patricia Heirigs traveled to Lincoln, NE, on November 11, 2018, for the Lincoln Oblation Ceremony. Erin Caudill and Kathy Williams made their final Oblation. Charlotte Liggett was installed as a new Dean. All the Deans were recognized, with Jim Rea being installed as the new Lead Dean.