



Praise the Lord, O my soul.
(Ps 146)

Oblate Fund Donations

Donations are being accepted for the Oblate fund to help meet our Oblate expenses: Oblate newsletters, meetings and supplies. Donations can be made to: St. Peter's Abbey Oblate Fund. Our address is: St. Peter's Abbey, Box 10, Muenster, SK, S0K-2Y0. Please let us know if you wish to receive a tax receipt for your donation.

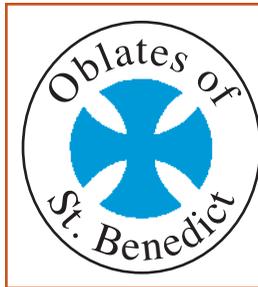


Oblate Day Agenda — July 8, 2017

- 7:30 a.m. Lauds
- 10:40 a.m. Noon Hour Prayer
- 11:00 a.m. Eucharist
- Noon Lunch with the Monks
- Meeting in Jerome Assembly Hall
- 1:00 p.m. Welcome and Prayer by Oblate Director Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB
- 1:05 p.m. "Spiritual Care and the Rule of St. Benedict" by Jacqueline Saretsky, chaplaincy coordinator, Diocese of Saskatoon
- 2:00 p.m. Break – Coffee
- 3:00 p.m. Vespers

2017 Oblate Days – July 8, October 21

The articles and photos of the Oblate news have been submitted by Paul Paproski, OSB, Oblate director.



Lectio divina brings meaning to life experiences and biblical traditions

There are two methods of reading scripture and they may bring very different understandings of a text, Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA, PhD, said to the Oblates in a video presentation at the March 18 Oblate gathering. The first approach to reading scripture is scholarly, Sr. Dianne, scripture scholar, said, and it has the purpose of focusing on the meaning of a text. Students of scripture strive to enter the world of a biblical passage to

determine its literal meaning (intentions of the author). Biblical scholars study scripture by examining literary forms, languages of the past, historical realities, social and political cultures in which scripture was written. The other approach to scripture is *lectio divina* (spiritual or divine reading) and it has the simple goal of

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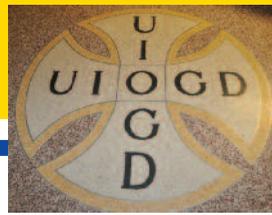


VESPERS IN CEMETERY – The Benedictines celebrated Vespers in the monastic cemetery, May 9, at the annual community retreat.

"Listen carefully to the master's instructions and attend to them with the ear of your heart."
(Beginning of the Rule of St. Benedict)

“Ut In Omnibus Glorificetur Deus.”

“That in all things may God be glorified.” (1 Peter 4:11)



prayer. *Lectio divina* is not about study; it is about people using scripture to help them deal with life, Sr. Dianne remarked. Our image of God is formed by life experiences and how we understand our biblical and church traditions.

Participants in *lectio divina* meditate on a biblical text, she commented. Prayerful reading of scripture has the goal of opening oneself to letting a passage speak in personal ways. Questions may be asked such as: What does this passage say to me or how does it speak to my issues? The meaning of scripture may unfold in a manner that deepens the understanding of our relationship with God and others, Sr. Dianne commented.

Lectio divina was first practiced by monks and its formal practice has been credited to Benedictines. There are four steps to *lectio divina*: 1, reading (*lectio*); 2, meditation (*meditatio*); 3, prayer (*oratio*); and 4, contemplation (*contemplatio*). These four steps may not happen in the order outlined.

How does one begin *lectio divina*? she asked. Begin by reflecting on a passage of scripture in a prayerful, quiet way. Read the text a few times without analyzing the words. Meditate on the text. An example of *lectio divina* is the story of the 10 lepers in Luke 17:11-19. Meditate on the healing that has taken place. Questions may be asked: What healings do I need? How have I been healed in the past? What does healing mean to me? What are my needs? What are my struggles? I may have issues of trust, wanting to trust God more so that I will continue to trust in God regardless of what happens.

Sr. Dianne has friends with cancer and she prays for their healing. The Gospel story of the 10 lepers speaks of God’s concern for the sick, she said. Sr. Dianne prays that her friends will be open to strength and acceptance. She prays for herself, asking that she accepts whatever happens and that she can help her friends in their struggles and pains. After reading scripture and meditating on it, Sr. Dianne prays for everyone to

whom the text speaks.

A revelation may occur when praying over scripture, Sr. Dianne remarked. A revelation is God speaking to us. “Step back” and allow yourself to be inspired or feel inspired in a new way. Prayers centered on physical healing may come to be understood, not as physical healing, but healing of acceptance which is another kind of healing. The four steps outlined for *lectio divina* lead people into a deeper understanding of how scripture touches lives.

SPIRITUAL READING – Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB takes advantage of the good weather to do spiritual reading on the east lawn of the abbey.

Lectio divina is not in the category of liturgy, Sr. Dianne remarked. *Lectio divina* is a form of personal prayer. However, people may do *lectio divina* in a group setting (communal prayer). A passage of scripture is read in a group setting where a leader may direct the meditation. Questions may be asked such as: Who in your life needs healing? Participants may share their thoughts. Spontaneous prayer may occur. The occasion invites everyone to sit back, reflect and open themselves to inspiration.

An advantage of practicing *lectio divina* in a group setting is that prayer can inspire everyone in new ways. The sharing of insights and prayer may make people realize that they have agendas and yet they can still be open to God regardless of feelings. Group settings may



“Ora et Labora”

“Prayer and Work” (Benedictine Motto)

challenge the way people understand their past and they may come to see reality differently. *Lectio divina* opens people to deepening their lives more than reforming their lives, she commented.

Reflecting on Psalm 23, Sr. Dianne said she has faced difficulties and her struggles come to mind as she meditates on the psalm. The first verse, “The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want,” speaks of the lord as being gentle and to trust in God. Sr. Dianne is sometimes afraid of suffering and of dying. Even though her religious tradition speaks of dying, she is not ready to accept that reality.

The next line of the psalm, “In green pastures he gives me rest,” brings images of many possibilities in life. Life does not promise longevity, but richness in meaning, she remarked. “He leads me beside still waters,” expresses confidence in a God who can calm water. A caring God who is a shepherd will be with us in all kinds of circumstances. “He refreshes my soul,” speaks of a God who can lift us up when we are down. When I am struck down, then I can discover God if I can really trust.

“Do I want this healing for my sake or do I want what God wants, and not just what God wants, but what God wants for me?” Sr. Dianne asked. The psalm continues, “Even though I walk through the dark valley, I fear no evil; for you are at my side.” I may be suffering from health issues, and it seems everything is working against me. This is a dark valley. The psalm continues, “With your rod and your staff that give me courage.” I can be confident God is with me

to ward off evil, Sr. Dianne said. The rod and staff offer assurance of solace. The enemies may not be people around me. The enemy may be the illness within.

The psalm continues, “You anoint my head with oil.” Holy oil is used for special celebrations. It speaks of gratitude, not for an illness, but for a caring God. Faith in a personal God means each of us is not facing the dark valley alone. “I am grateful that I am not alone,” she remarked. “And I shall dwell in the house of the lord all my life long,” the psalm continues, offering reassurance that God is near.

“I am with God because God is with me. I take these themes and I interpret them within the context of where I find my life at this time,” Sr. Dianne said. “The illness I am suffering does not bring anger and resentment, but closer to a loving, benevolent God. I have lived well, I hope to die well,” she concluded.



DIGNITY QUILT – Oblate Pat Lyster of Abernethy, presents Oblate Edgar Neudorf of Saskatoon a Dignity Quilt, to be used as a pall at St. Ann’s Senior Citizen’s Village, Saskatoon. Edgar is the director of Mission and Spiritual Care at St. Ann’s.