



OBLATE NEWSLETTER

November 2013

Anticipating Advent



O Come, O Come, Emmanuel acts as a herald call to usher in the Advent Season and a new Liturgical Year.

Advent is a gift of God in our struggle with impatience—we must wait in hope staying in the moment by moment anticipation of Mary as she prepares for Jesus' birth.

To remain cognizant of the Source of our celebration, we gather as Oblates to prepare by dedicating our December gathering as the Advent Retreat. **This retreat will be held from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM on December 8.**

Guests are welcome!!

This year's Advent retreat is presented by Sr. Stephanie Dolyniuk, OSB, titled "Preparing for Advent: Setting the Stage for our Advent Journey."

Sr. Stephanie says:

"One of the best ways to prepare for the very special season is to 'get in touch with ourselves'—with what is going on in our very own hearts. We enter that brief span of time wherein we strive to open our hearts and homes to God's precious coming among us—to discover Emmanuel, the amazing stranger in our midst."



The Gift Shop, featuring items made by various sisters, will be open for your holiday shopping.

Oblate Updates

Final Oblation

New Oblate Candidates

Please welcome candidates Larry Suchy and Candace Simar. Larry's wife, Marilyn, is also transferring her oblation to Annunciation Monastery. She and Larry live in

Bismarck. Candace and her

husband live near Brainerd, MN, and she has spent time on writing retreats here at the monastery. Please pray for Candace and Larry as they continue their discernment and learn more about living the Benedictine Oblate life.

New Email Address

AnnunciationOblates@gmail.com has been setup to

provide news, reminders and prompt response to inquiries. You are always welcome to contact us directly: Sr. Patricia paschaposb@gmail.com or Sr. Rosemary rfdegracia@umary.edu. We hope to increase online offerings for oblates living at a distance.

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BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF ANNUNCIATION MONASTERY

A Message from the Director



Sr. Patricia Schap,
Oblate Director

Blessings to all. Gratefulness is the heart of this time of year. The Thanksgiving Season is a wonderful time to heighten our sensitivity to the blessings and benefits we receive as children of God. John MacArthur writes, "Thanksgiving grabs our attention, shakes the cobwebs

loose and reminds us of all God's most precious gifts." A thankful heart is a defining characteristic of a godly person because it's an expression of God's indwelling presence. St. Paul urges us, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your heart to God." Doing daily lectio with the Scripture and the Rule will help God's Word take root in you and cultivate a grateful heart.

This Thanksgiving, I will join you in GIVING THANKS TO THE LORD, FOR HE IS GOOD, FOR HIS STEADFAST LOVE ENDURES FOREVER. (Psalm 136:1) I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

At this time, please join me in thanking Sister Stephanie for assisting with the

Oblate Program for the past five years. God bless you for your loving service, Sister Stephanie.

Gratefully in Christ,

Sister Patricia Schap, OSB



Sr. Rosemary DeGracia Named Assistant Oblate Director



Sr. Rosemary DeGracia,
Assistant Director

ago—I saw it at once as an opportunity to give back a small part of the gift I had received from God. RCIA ministry was an extension of my own seeking and entry into the Catholic Church in 1974; oblate ministry is a response to the gift of my oblation as an oblate of St. Andrew's Abbey in

When Sr. Nancy Miller asked me to consider serving the community as Assistant Director of Oblates, the decision was not difficult. Her request reminded me of the invitation to serve on our parish RCIA team many years

California in 1998. In both ministries I was privileged to serve in the formation of new members.

Each response was one of immersion into a new depth of the mystery of God. My oblation into the world of the Benedictine Order has brought me to this place as a professed Benedictine Sister. The Benedictine call continues to unfold as I have entered my third year in First Monastic Profession. I firmly believe that the oblate vocation is a witness in the world and is expressed differently by each oblate as he or she lives out the Rule in the circumstances of daily life.

I look forward to working with Sr. Patricia as we continue to provide support for the oblate vocation and make you feel at home in our common community.

I encourage all of you to "share the Good News" of your oblate vocation and invite others to explore. The Advent Retreat is a wonderful time to gift your friends or family with a day of reflection and preparation in Advent—and to introduce them to the oblate community.

The Benedictine Order and Benedict's focus on hospitality—welcoming the Christ in our brothers and sisters—is our common Christian heritage gifted to Catholic and non-Catholic alike. Let us prepare the Way of the Lord!

Remembering Oblate Lynda Larkin 1945-2013



It is very fitting that Lynda's picture from her funeral liturgy is the image of her at the switchboard of Annunciation Monastery where she and Dennis regularly volunteered and generously shared their lives with the sisters. She is greatly missed by family and friends who remember her strong faith and upbeat outlook on life. Dennis and Lynda recently celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary surrounded by their four children; Bridget, Erinn, Lory and Scott, their spouses and children: Chandler, Denzel, Destiny and Liam.

From her obituary: "Lynda was devoted to her family and her faith. She loved spending time with her children and grandchildren, and rescuing any stray animal that wandered across her path. Lynda was inventive in the kitchen; she liked trying new recipes, and created various experimental concoctions. She enjoyed singing in the church choir and was a Eucharistic Minister at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit. She was also an oblate at Annunciation Monastery."

They shall see the Lord face to face and bear his name on their foreheads. The night shall be no more. They will need no light from lamps or the sun, for the Lord God shall give them light, and they shall reign forever. Rev 22:4-5
(from Lynda's funeral liturgy)

The sisters and the oblate community will miss Lynda's gentle laugh and the way she embodied the first word of the Rule of St. Benedict, "Listen." Her listening skills were evidenced by the many who gathered for her wake and funeral to pay tribute to the large role she played in so many lives.

Deceased oblates were remembered in the litany on the eve of All Saints Day, and are included in petitions at Evening Prayer on their death anniversaries.

Annunciation Monastery Hosts NAABOD

The following reflection was submitted by oblate Irene Hoffman, one of several oblates who attended NAABOD representing Annunciation



Monastery: The North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors 2013 Biennial Conference entitled, "Living the Benedictine Charism Faithfully in the World," was a wonderful

opportunity for participants to experience friendship, learning/sharing, and community worship. The speakers included: Sister Thomas Welder, President Emerita of the University of Mary, Father Terrance Kardong from Assumption Abbey, Sister Colleen Maura McGrane, OSB, Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. Sr. Thomas's speech, "The Benedictine Way of Life in the World in Everyday Life," talked about living a balanced, integrated life of prayer, lectio, work, and solitude. She stressed listening, simplicity, patience, compassion, and hospitality. Father Terrance's speech, "Hope without Allusion," concerned the future of

monastic life. Sister Colleen McGrane's speech, "We All Have a Piece of the Wisdom," discussed the effects of technology. Father Paschal presented an informational session on the Oblate World Congress.

The Oblates shared ideas by meeting in small groups and reporting back to the assembly. Also, a panel of six oblates expressed, "Why They Became and Remain Oblates."

Highlights of the conference included a day trip to Assumption Abbey and Sacred Heart Monastery in Richardton, ND, and a banquet at the university with entertainment by Celtic musician Debbie Rodgers.

I nicknamed it the "Eat, Pray, Love" conference after the Julia Roberts' movie title. "Eat" for the wonderful hospitality at the University of Mary, "Pray" for the morning and evening prayers and the Masses. "Love" for the sharing at meals and discussion groups and for the evening socials.

—Irene Hoffman, oblate

Oblates Celebrate the Perpetual Monastic Profession of Sr. Hannah Vanorny

Sharing in the joyous celebration of Sr. Hannah Vanorny's Perpetual Monastic Profession were a number of Annunciation Monastery's oblates. Sr. Hannah joined us for this picture at the November oblate gathering and shared a reflection on her journey and a few highlights of the day. Sr. Hannah made her final profession on October 12 in Our Lady of the Annunciation Chapel in the presence of the sisters, many family members, Bishop Emeritus Zipfel, Abbot Brian and the monks of Assumption Abbey, Msgr. Shea, and many students and friends. Her uncle, Fr. Ed Vanorny, was the celebrant, and her father, Deacon Tom Vanorny



preached the homily which spoke of Sr. Hannah's passion for baking and the parallels between baking ingredients and process and the spiritual journey. Sr. Nancy Miller reflected on Sr. Hannah's dedication to running—in marathons as well as on the path of God's commands (from RB prologue). Sr. Hannah expressed her gratitude to the oblate community for their prayers—not just on this special occasion—but throughout her years in monastic formation.

She said, "It has been a journey, and now I am happy where I am." Two parts of the service were particularly moving for Sr. Hannah: signing her profession document on the altar alongside Sr. Nancy Miller, Prioress, and prostrating before the altar—an act of humility before God—as the prayers signifying her commitment were sung by the sisters. Please continue your prayers for Sr. Hannah as she grows in her new ministry as Vocation Director for Annunciation Monastery.

Oblate Kathy Snider Shares an Update on Ixcán Ministries



Kathy Snider of Mandan says of her ministry in Guatemala: "I live with the people." Ixcán Ministries serves the people of Santiago Ixcán, a small remote village in Guatemala where poverty is the norm rarely broken except when the cardamom crop nets

higher prices. Kathy works tirelessly to develop skills in the indigenous women and promote education—especially for girls, who rarely get the opportunity for schooling. This ministry brings the beautiful local garments and other handcrafted items into the United States. A group established for distribution operates

from Mandan and sets up in-home parties to promote sales of the articles and awareness of the many challenges facing the population. Kathy spends about eight months each year in Guatemala; the remainder of her time is spent in outreach.

There are many social problems to overcome. She lives out the Rule of St. Benedict through hospitality to all people in the village. She also speaks of the people's great faith and the great hope of expanded opportunities for education through a new middle school.

Bismarck/Mandan oblates plan to

host an open-house for product sales as well as to explore funding a scholarship for one girl to attend school for one year. If you would like to assist Kathy in any way, please refer to: www.ixcanministries.org.

