

# Oblate Newsletter

**Advent 2024**

## Upcoming Events



**Advent Day of  
Reflection  
December 8, 2024  
Presented by  
Sr. Nicole Kunze**

*Come, Lord! Watching, Waiting, and  
Hoping this Advent*

During the Advent season, we prepare ourselves to celebrate Christ's birth. In a series of three talks, Sister Nicole will share her reflections on the actions of watching, waiting and hoping as we await the coming of the Lord.

**Morning Session 10:00 am**

Lunch options — participants may choose to eat with the sisters in the dining room or in silence in the Community Room.

**Eucharistic Liturgy at 11:00 AM** followed by lunch.

**Afternoon Session 1:00-3:00 pm**  
(The retreat will conclude in time for participants to attend the Christmas Concert at the University of Mary.)

Please feel free to invite guests. A link is listed below and posted on our website for those who are not able to join us in person but will join electronically. Copies of slides to be used will also be attached to the email.

The link for remote viewing is :  
[meet.google.com/hpk-wzbr-ecq](https://meet.google.com/hpk-wzbr-ecq)



## News and Milestones

Oblate Jane Greer's poetry was the topic of a glowing review in the August 23 issue of *Our Sunday Visitor*. Author Kenneth Craycraft compares Jane's poetry to such greats as Graham Greene, Francis Thompson, Evelyn Waugh, Francois Mauriac and Flannery O'Connor. He states, "Greer's poetry penetrates as deeply into the crevices of the sinful heart as any story or novel could. And she does it in a poetic style that is as spare in form as it is rich in substance." We congratulate Jane on her poetic accomplishments.

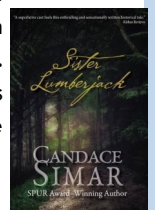
Ministry on the Margins is the first location for recent oblate service projects. Oblates Norma



Rajme, Cindy Weigum, Amanda Botner, Marie Hoff, Audrey Ternes and Kristi Wanner are pictured working at the

ministry's Thursday night food pantry.

Oblate Candace Simar and her husband, Keith, stopped to see us and spend some time working on her next book. They continued on to Hostfest in Minot to promote her latest historical novel, *Sister Lumberjack*, based on a Benedictine sister who ministered in lumber camps in upper Minnesota. Candace has won numerous awards for her 12 books which also include books of poetry.



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BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF ANNUNCIATION MONASTERY

## Largest Formation Cohort



We are delighted to introduce the 2024-2025 Oblate Formation Cohort—and a sponsor or two. From left to right—Becky and Bob Sauter, Julie Dahle, Milissa Price, sponsor David Gray, Gay Gray, Kristi Mahrer, Laura Helbling-Schaff and Alicia Heick who is both a sponsor for Laura and a longtime candidate who will make her final oblation with the cohort. They all are a wonderful group of future oblates who will formalize their candidacy in January.

The formation program is open to future and current oblates desiring to deepen knowledge and practice of Benedictine spirituality. Oblates who have participated find it a good way to enrich and refresh their sense of an oblate community sharing their experiences with the new candidates.

If you know anyone interested in the oblate program or would like to serve as a sponsor, please contact us.

## NDSP Formation Cohort

In the Fall issue, we told you about our oblate formation cohort at the North Dakota State Penitentiary in Bismarck. There are now about seven men who attend some months and four who celebrated the candidacy ritual on Tuesday, December 3 at the weekly Eucharist. We welcome Andrew, Fernando, Jesus, and Travis who join our oblate Paul. Oblates Paul and Rev. Zanne Ness renewed their oblations. It was Paul's 10th anniversary as an Oblate of Annunciation Monastery. Sr. Nicole Kunze, Prioress was present at the Mass to welcome the candidates and receive the oblation renewals of Paul and Zanne. Also present were oblate Loann Hardy, oblate candidate Julie Dahle and Sisters Kathleen Atkinson of Ministry on the Margins and Rosemary DeGracia, Oblate Director.

We are grateful for the support shown our men in the oblate program by the chaplain and administrators of the penitentiary. In November they made it possible for the men to host a volunteer appreciation dinner for ministry volunteers serving the facility. We all received the most gracious Benedictine hospitality of those in the oblate program.

## Final Oblation for Six Oblates



On October 6 we welcomed six new oblates: (from left to right) Amanda Botner, Cyndie Perkerewicz, Linda Rehberg, Patricia Smith, Kate Schon, and Norma Rajme. We also welcome oblate generations—Cyndie is the mother of Amanda and Kate is our first third generation oblate. Her mother Cindy Weigum became an oblate last year; her grandmother, Lorie Seeger, has been an oblate 33 years.

### Condolences

Marge Atkinson, mother of Sr. Kathleen passed into Eternity on November 14. Many of you have been present for retreats given, courses taught and ministry shared by Sister Kathleen Atkinson, and she will present this next Saturday to the formation group. We extend our condolences on the death of her mother.

## A Bit of Oblate History



This photo shows an early group of oblates from Annunciation Priory (now Monastery) and was submitted to us by Shirley Kohler Staiger on the occasion of her final oblation at Priory High. She remembers that they became candidates in their junior year and made final oblation in their senior year. The photo dates from 1962 or 1963.

## An Advent Greeting from the NAABOD Leadership Team

*Listen carefully, my child, to the master's instructions, and attend to them with the ear of your heart.*

What can be heard with the ear of the heart? The smallest of whispers. The tiniest of sighs. The most subtle of sounds. The promise made by the Lord for a land in which all that is done is right and just. Where all people are safe and dwell secure. Where the Lord's justice reigns supreme. The Word of the Lord as prophesied by Jeremiah while he was still imprisoned and very far from that reality.

It is in this season of Advent that we have the most wonderful opportunity to focus on those faint reverberations. Advent is meant to be a time of quiet preparation for and peaceful contemplation of the gift of God's most precious son, come to earth in the most vulnerable of ways. It is meant to allow us to find space in our hearts for him to be born, listening closely for his coming with those same hearts.

No easy task when our planet feels like one described by Jesus in Luke's Gospel, with nations in dismay, perplexed by the roaring of the sea and waves, overwhelmed even just by the anxieties of daily life. The Benedictine world, sheltered as it is, is still no stranger to the tribulations of the greater globe as well as the apprehensions of change and transition within our individual communities.

*But we have, in the beginning of the new liturgical season, the beginning of the Rule to guide our steps. So we must begin to pray most earnestly that our efforts will be brought to perfection. We must get up, rouse ourselves to do the work of truly listening to those whose voices have been silenced by oppression, whose cries have been strangled by rejection, whose pleas have been crushed by humiliation. We must listen to each other, learning how we can uphold and support and accompany each community through change and through action. We must listen, always, with ears of our hearts. Together, then, we will hear our Emmanuel, our God who is truly with us all.*

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