



Tucson Oblate Newsletter

April, 2012

May we all find both challenge and re-joining in the Paschal mysteries we celebrate during Holy Week and Eastertime!

Since the Tucson oblates have been studying community during this past year, it would be interesting to consider the varied manifestations of community in the Gospel accounts of these last days of Jesus' earthly life--from the enthusiastic acclamations by the crowds as Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, to the intimate last meal of Jesus with his friends, followed by the fragmentation of the community on Good Friday. Then came the gradual and sometimes shaky restoration of community as the Resurrection of Jesus grew more widely accepted.

Are not these ups and downs reflected in some ways in our own community experiences?

COMMUNITY AS EXPRESSED IN CO-HOUSING

Oblate inquirer **Cynthia O'Sullivan** and her neighbor **Mechelle Meixner** presented at the March meeting on co-housing. Both are residents of Sonora Co-Housing, one of three such developments in the Tucson area. Sonora Co-Housing has 36 units and more than 80 residents who share five acres. The development was built specifically as co-housing, with landscaping, paths, benches, and a "common house" designed to bring people together.

The common house has a crafts room, common kitchen, meeting and dining space, exercise space, and other amenities shared by all members of the community, so common projects, shared meals, parties, and celebrations are frequent.

In defining co-housing, Mechelle said that this form of intentional community started in Denmark in the 1980s, as a reaction to the loss of village and neighborhood life resulting from urbanization. Co-housing is marked by individual ownership of housing units, but common involvement in maintenance, governance, and activities.

In organizational governance, all members of the co-housing organization have equal voice (i.e.,

there is no hierarchy), and decision-making is by consensus. Committees and teams address various elements of community concern. Mechelle said that a particular benefit to her has been improvement in her communication skills. She has learned to be more open to others' ideas, both verbally and non-verbally, and also to stand up for her own ideas.

In her part of the presentation, Cynthia talked about the ambiance at Sonora Co-housing, and the personal benefits. Friendships form through shared meals, activities, and proximity. Sharing goods with neighbors is frequent, so each family has less need to own. Children seem much more open and trusting of adults than in today's urban neighborhoods. Adults and children find elders a source of wisdom and guidance. Elders, or those who have difficulties or illnesses, have a source of help that is easily within reach. All benefit from multigenerational interaction.

In the question/answer session that followed, there was much interest in the "nuts and bolts" of co-housing, as well as in the problems that could develop. The residents of Sonora Co-Housing were described as diverse in professions, ages, and family composition, but united by a desire for intentional community and, generally, by a lifestyle that supports preservation of the environment and other social concerns.

Members are self-supporting, and pay home owner association dues to support the common elements. Conflicts do emerge over personalities and opinions, but time and effort are taken to work these through. Building consensus is a long and demanding process, and they work hard at it, because community is such a strong priority.

The presentation ended with comments on the similarities and differences between this form of community and monastic community. Monastic community is more structured, but a high level of commitment is needed for both kinds of community. A major difference is the role of the Abbot or superior in resolving conflicts and questions that arise in monastic communities.

TUCSON: Next meeting Sunday, April 15, 2:00 p.m. at the monastery. Doors open at 1:15 p.m.

Candidates meet at 1:30, and Sr. Joan Therese will lead the reflection on *Liturgy of the Hours*, pg. 20 in the folder.

Our Tucson oblate, **Valarie James**, will be the presenter at the April meeting, and her subject will be "**Art, Faith and Community.**" Those not familiar with Valarie's background, may be interested in her website: <http://www.valariejames.com/> where you can see examples of her work. For those who do not access the Internet, here are just a few notes.

Valarie is a classically trained artist and sculptor who has also worked as an art therapist. Currently she teaches sculpture through Pima Community College's Learning Center in Green Valley, and at her studio in Amado, AZ. Since 2004, Valarie has designed and created two large scale public memorials that mark the passing of those who have died in the desert crossing the U.S./Mexico border.

PRESCOTT: Next meeting Sunday, April 15, 1:30-3:30 p.m., St. Anthony Claret Room of Sacred Heart Parish.

The March oblate meeting was cancelled due to heavy snow. For the April meeting the lesson is from *The Monastery of the Heart*: "Our Community," pages 67-115.

For more information, contact Nancy Hinshaw: 928-445-1271.

PHOENIX CENTRAL: Next meeting, Saturday, April 14, 2012, 8:45 a.m. for Inquirers and Candidates, and 9:30 a.m. for all. Mount Claret Retreat Center, 4633 North 54th Street, Phoenix, 85018.

Patty Williams writes: Our Prologue of the Holy Rule discussion in March was inspiring and the readings created a lot of dialogue. We will see a video in April called *Monasticism-Benedict and His Rule*. This video comes from one of the lectures in The Great Courses presentation and is packed with detailed information. Come and join us on our journey of the Prologue. Our meeting room is in the back of the Mount Claret Retreat Center in the Pope John Paul II room.

For more information call Patty Williams: 602-957-1464 or email Benedictine@cox.net.

PHOENIX EAST VALLEY: Next meeting, Saturday, April 28, from 9:00am to noon in Room H at St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church, 3450 W. Ray Rd., Chandler.

The East Valley Oblates met on Saturday, March 24. We discussed verses 4 - 7 of the Prologue. In April we will be co-hosting a talk by Sr. Sarah O'Malley, a Benedictine Sister in Phoenix. She will give a presentation entitled "The Lives of Three Saint Teresas." She will discuss St. Teresa of Avila, St. Therese of Lisieux, and St. Teresa Benedicta (Edith Stein). The presentation will be on Saturday, April 28, from 9:00am to noon in Room H at St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church, 3450 W. Ray Rd., Chandler. Call Nancy Kaib for more information or to register at 480-883-8025. There is no charge--a free will offering is asked for.

For more information contact Nancy Kaib: 480-883-8025 or Frank Young: 480-219-1505.

Library Corner

In case your Lenten (or Spring) housecleaning has unearthed any Oblate library books or other spiritual books you are no longer using, the Oblate library is always happy to welcome them.

Praying that you will be able to enter wholeheartedly into the great Mysteries celebrated during Holy Week, and experience the fullness of Easter joy.

**Blessings,
Sr. Lenora, OSB**

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by M. Regina Goberna, OSB, 1983,
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