



# Tucson Oblate Newsletter

## April, 2013

### Writing on the threshold of Holy Week,

I am praying that these solemn days will bring you many graces, and above all, a most joyous Easter celebration. At the March Oblate meeting, we continued our theme of “Benedictine Heritage” by watching the selection on “Monks and Hermits: New forms of Monasticism” from the Catholic history series by Great Courses. In his presentation, Professor William Cook talked about reform movements stemming from Benedictinism, including the Camaldolese, Cistercians, Trappists, and Carthusians.

Dr. Cook suggested that over the centuries, there was tension between the original Rule and the ways in which it was (or was not) being kept. Some monasteries became rich, comfortable, or too dependent on outside forces such as kings and benefactors. Reform movements grew out of a desire to keep the Rule more strictly, and sometimes out of a desire for a more eremitical (solitary) life. They also had to contend with contemporary political and social forces and sometimes suffered the same fate as their predecessors.

Following the video, Mary Sheridan discussed how the tension between the “charism of the founder” and the “signs of the times” was addressed by Vatican Council II in its documents on religious life. *Perfectae Caritatis*, the Decree on Renewal of Religious Life (1965), asked religious orders to remember the purposes for which they were founded, and adapt their way of life to current conditions. This decree led to changes in nuns' habits, in ministries, and in prayer language from Latin to the vernacular.

Using the situation of a woman begging outside a church, we were then invited to consider how the Rule of Benedict and the “signs of the times” would apply. Participants quickly identified Benedictine hospitality and the Instruments of Good Works (Ch. 4 of RB) as applying to this situation. We also considered the risks of being “conned,” the possibility that the woman was addicted to drugs or alcohol, the current economic situation, and the availability or non-availability of community resources. (St. Vincent de Paul was particularly mentioned because of the personal experience of one of the members.) In the

end, most of us endorsed a “compromise” solution of referring the woman to an agency, or providing in-kind help such as gift certificates for food, rather than giving her money.

### Good News for all in our Oblate Community

Many of you have heard the news by now, but for those who haven't, **Mike Schroeder**, from our East Valley Oblates, will represent us all in Rome October 4-10 at the third **World Congress of Oblates**. All this happened very fast, as there was a mixup regarding informing us if we were eligible to send a delegate. Just 50 are chosen by lottery from Oblate groups in the USA, with the balance coming from the rest of the world. When I finally received the information, the deadline for registration was already past, so I pleaded for an extension, and asked the one person who had very much wanted to go to the last Congress. Patty Williams went instead, having been an Oblate longer, and I promised Mike we'd take him under consideration for the next Congress. Mike's enthusiastic participation in the 2009 National meeting at St. Vincent's Archabbey was outstanding.

The Tucson Oblates had been saving funds over the past years for such an occasion, and there wasn't time to contact all of them. Tucson covered the \$1400 registration and participation, and it's up to Mike to come up with the travel expenses. We hope that some of you will be able to help, since with four teenagers to feed, clothe and educate, Mike does not have much to spare! With all his technological experience, Mike is well qualified to represent us, and to come back and share the experience with all of us on his return. Some Tucson Oblates will remember Mike for staying after Oblate renewal days to help clean up, though he had a long trip home ahead of him.

**TUCSON: Next meeting Sunday, April 21, at 2:00 p.m. - Doors open at 1:00 p.m. (new time)**

*Candidates and inquirers meet upstairs in the PRAYER ROOM at 1:15—15 minutes earlier, at their request.* Theresa Keating will lead the sharing. The assignment for the April meeting is to read the following chapters from *A Life-giving Way*:

- Chapter 27: How Solicitous the Abbot Should Be for the Excommunicated
- Chapter 34: Whether All Should Receive in Equal Measure What Is Necessary
- Chapter 35: On the Weekly Servers in the Kitchen
- Chapter 36: On the Sick
- Chapter 37: On Old Men and Children
- Chapter 68: Assignment of Impossible Tasks
- Chapter 72: Good Zeal and Wicked Zeal

 **PLEASE NOTE:** *At this meeting we will put out papers for you to sign if you hope to make your Oblation or be enrolled as a candidate on May 19. Please phone me (Lenora) soon if you have questions (325-6401)*

**AT THE 2:00 MEETING**, we will show the video, "*Medieval Mysticism*" from the *Great Courses* series. This includes a practical definition of **mysticism**, which was widespread among the early monks of the desert. It flourished in monastic communities especially after the works of Pseudo-Dionysius, an early Greek-speaking monk, became common in Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries after the 9th century. Sts. Bernard and Aelred of Rievault are two of the better known mystics, along with Sts. Hildegard and Gertrude. Mysticism was by no means limited to those following the Rule of Benedict. There were famous Franciscan, Dominican, and Carmelite mystics as well. This lecture provides historical background for the interest in mysticism that is current in our time.

**PRESCOTT:** Next meeting Sunday, April 21, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

*Shirley Maday writes:* After discussion, those present agreed to allocate \$100.00 from the treasury and additional donations to be raised at the April 21 meeting, to help with Mike Schroeder's expenses for the Congress in Rome.

There was a sharing on "The First Step: Learn about Compassion" of Karen Armstrong's book— from the survival mode (old brain) to the development of a higher level of functioning (new brain) that allowed for a compassionate response in interacting

with others. The assignment for the next meeting is pages 65 through 74 of *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*.

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

**PHOENIX CENTRAL:** Next meeting, Saturday, April 13, 2013, 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:* Please join us in our continued study of the Prologue of the Holy Rule. Karen will be presenting the lessons in April (Chapters 28-29). Everyone is welcome to come so please join us. 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](mailto:Benedictine@cox.net)

**PHOENIX EAST VALLEY:** Next meeting, Saturday, April 27 at 9:30 at St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church.

For more information call Nancy Kaib, 480-883-8025 or Frank Young, 480-219-1505.

## Library Corner

We have ordered a copy of *A Rhythm of Life: The Monastic Way*, by Brother Victor-Antoine d'Avila-Latourette. The publisher, Liguori Press, describes it as follows. "From the origins of Benedictine tradition to our everyday lives, *A Rhythm of Life: The Monastic Way* traces and reflects upon a way of life that is both simple and inspiring. Brother Victor-Antoine highlights the many traditions, both daily and yearly, that bring us back to a prayerful life that often escapes us in our busy day-to-day lives. The wisdom of the monastic life, inspired by St. Benedict, inspires us to apply those traditions and values as we are guided by reflection through the varying seasons." Br. Victor-Antoine is the author of other popular books on monastic life, and we expect to receive it in time for the April Oblate meeting.



**Have a very joyful Easter!**  
Love, Lenora, osb

Artwork from *Our Father*,  
St. Benedict, with permission

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