



Tucson Oblate Newsletter

April, 2014



PLEASE NOTE: *This letter is early for a couple of reasons: first, our April meeting is early - April 13 (Palm Sunday); second, for unknown reasons many of those on the email list did NOT receive the March letter. Therefore, those of you living in Tucson, Green Valley, and Sierra Vista will soon receive a copy sent by first-class mail, as well as this email. Please read carefully the pink slip enclosed in that letter. If you have questions about this, email me or phone (520-325-6401).*

Are you still "looking forward to holy Easter with joy and spiritual longing?" Mid-Lent is a good time to ask the question, and it's never too late to renew our intentions if we've meandered off the path. Especially that "joy of the Holy Spirit" that St. Benedict says should spur us on.

The Cycle of Grace: Living in Sacred Balance

For our March meeting, we had a most interesting presentation by **Jerry Haas**, "The Cycle of Grace: Living in Sacred Balance." As mentioned in the March Newsletter, Jerry is a Methodist minister who was, for many years, in leadership with The Upper Room ministries.

Jerry began by describing how he and a colleague, Trevor Hudson, developed the "Cycle of Grace" model. Observing how mission workers in India were going quickly from enthusiastic and idealistic to burned out and cynical, they turned to the Scriptures and asked how it was that Jesus kept from burning out. The Gospels suggest that Jesus was able to draw on his experience of grace, but in a particular way. From this, a four-stage model was developed, the "Cycle of Grace."

The first stage of the model, "**acceptance**," is the recognition of God's love. For Jesus, this occurred especially at his baptism, when he heard the Father say, "This is my beloved son . . ." In our lives, this is the recognition that God loves and accepts us in spite of our faults.

The second stage of the model, "**sustenance**," asks how Jesus was able to maintain his relationship with his Abba. In the Gospels we can see many ways that Jesus took care of himself—seeking, for example, times for solitude, prayer, rest, exercise (walking), nature, friends, religious services (at the synagogue), and so on. Such practices not only help us achieve balance, but help us accept God's love.

The third stage of the model moves from the "input" of the first two stages to the "output" of discipleship. This stage is "**significance**," shown in the Gospels through Jesus' "I am" statements. Jesus knew who he was and gave to others of himself. People responded to him as a person and recognized that he "taught with authority." He was able to communicate love to others not just because of what he did, but because of who he was.

The fourth stage of the model is "**fruitfulness**" or "achievement." In this stage, a person accomplishes things. In Jesus' case, we see people healed and changed, a new religious approach communicated, and the foundations laid (through transformation of the apostles) for the Church.

Jerry cautioned us that many people live the "Cycle of Works" instead of the "Cycle of Grace." For these people, the cycle works in reverse—they believe that if they accomplish works, great or small, they will become "somebody," and then God will love them. These are the people at high risk for burnout.

Jerry brought copies of his book, *The Cycle of Grace: Living in Sacred Balance* (Hudson and Haas, Nashville: Upper Room, 2012), and we also have a copy in the Oblate Library. The book is best used with the Cycle of Grace videos, the first of which is online at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0X6m_itTrsU

There were many missing from the March meeting, some because of undelivered email newsletters, and others because of illness. I hope you are all feeling much better now, are duly informed about the meeting, and that we will have the joy of seeing you at the April meeting.

TUCSON: Next meeting Sunday, April 13, at 2:00 p.m. Doors open at 1:00 for inquirers, candidates and anyone else who would like to come early, use the library, and/or visit with others.

1:15: Oblate candidates and inquirers meet in prayer room at 1:15. Dic Ford will lead the sharing on Ch. 58 The Procedure for Receiving Brothers, Ch. 72 The Good Zeal of Monks, and Ch. 73 This Rule only the Beginning.

1. What questions/comments have you from last time, or from your reading?
2. Questions for Discussion:
 - a. If you have been Candidate at least a year—do you feel ready to move forward with "good zeal" to

Oblation in May? If an Inquirer, do you feel ready to move into Candidacy with "good zeal" in May?

b. How do you understand stability? *Conversatio*? How can you apply these to your daily life?

c. Why is "good zeal" so important for monastic community life?

d. Has your life and/or spiritual practice changed over these months of studying the RB?

3. Reflecting on the Benedictine vows, especially *conversatio* and its definitions, how do they apply to lay life?



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 18. Please phone me (Lenora) soon if you have questions (325-6401)*

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2:00: Tucson Oblate Laurie Olson will be our presenter. when asked for a brief summary of her sharing with us, she offered the following:

How many times have we heard that Haiti is "the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere"? But what does that look like and feel like to someone born into privilege and raised in the most powerful country in the world? And how does Benedictine spirituality inform that experience and help to integrate that experience into daily life back in the States?

Laurie spent 5 months volunteering in Gros Morne, Haiti, and will share her experiences.

PRESCOTT: Next Meeting, Sunday, April 13, 1:30-3:30 p.m., **St. Elizabeth Seton Room**, Sacred Heart Church.

Shirley Maday writes: At our March meeting we shared on the Eleventh Step - Recognition - of Karen Armstrong's book. We noted that during this step, we should overcome a self-protective tendency to keep suffering at bay and try to become more sensitive to the pain in our world. By reaching out to others in their pain we are leaving our egotistic selves behind.

With the completion of reading Karen Armstrong's book in April, the group will begin a study of Michael Casey's book, *The Road to Eternal Life:—Reflections on the Prologue of Benedict's Rule*.

Note changes for the next meeting, April 13, 1:30-3:30 p.m., St. Elizabeth Seton Room. The assignment is from Karen Armstrong's *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*, "The Twelfth Step: Love Your Enemies," pages 177-190.

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

PHOENIX CENTRAL: Next meeting, Saturday, April 12, 2014, 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 meeting in April will include prayers, *Lectio* and a Lenten discussion. Please join those of us who will be at Mount Claret for prayer and community.

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

PHOENIX EAST VALLEY: Next Meeting Saturday, April 26

Nancy Kaib writes: We attended the First Annual Day of Prayer at the Diocesan Center in place of our March meeting. It was very well attended, some 120 people there, which was more than anticipated for the first such event. Many lay groups associated with religious congregations were represented. We were seated at tables with varying groups so that we could share with each other the differences and similarities of our groups.

The date for the East Valley Benedictine Oblates April meeting is Saturday, April 26. We will be having a day retreat that day. Plans for that are in process but generally it is planned to include a lot of quiet, meditative time.

For more information, contact Nancy Kaib: 480-883-8025.

PRAVERS: Please keep Tucson Oblate Mayola McCrary in your prayers, as she will have surgery April 23.

Tucson Library Corner

Many thanks to all who have been returning overdue library books. May they inspire borrowers who still have overdue books to return theirs. Keep in mind that you can drop books off at the monastery gift shop or renew books by contacting Mary Sheridan:

email: msherdanhpu@gmail.com

phone: (520) 445-4585 [this is a Skype phone, so there are slight delays in the answering system].

With sincere best wishes that you experience an Easter celebration filled with joy,

Lenora, osb

