



## Tucson Oblate Letter ~ April, 2016

After Jesus washed the apostles' feet on Holy Thursday, He said to them "Believe in me, Believe in my Mercy, Believe in my Forgiveness, Believe in my Love, A LOVE even to Death," A love that is so abundant that I am always with you; be not afraid, you are mine.

I would like ALL of you to ponder these next words of Pope France from *Laudato Si'*, Paragraph 236 in Chapter six. Do Lectio with this paragraph over and over again before our next meeting.

"It is in the Eucharist that all that has been created finds its great exaltation. Grace, which tends to manifest itself tangibly, found unsurpassable expression when God himself became man and gave himself as food for his creatures. The Lord, in the culmination of the mystery of the Incarnation, chose to reach our intimate depths through a fragment of matter. He comes not from above, but from within, he comes that we might find him in this world of ours. In the Eucharist, fullness is already achieved; it is the living center of the universe, the overflowing core of love and of inexhaustible life. Joined to the incarnate Son, present in the Eucharist, the whole cosmos gives thanks to God. Indeed the Eucharist is itself an act of cosmic love; "Yes, cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated on the altar of the world." The Eucharist joins heaven and earth; it embraces and penetrates all creation. The world which came forth from God's hands returns to him in blessed and undivided adoration; in the bread of the Eucharist, creation is projected toward divinization, toward the holy wedding feast, toward unification with the Creator himself." Thus, the Eucharist is also a source of light and motivation for our concerns for the environment, directing us to be stewards of all creation.

### MARCH OBLATE MEETING:

#### Announcements:

- Please update email and street addresses when these change.
- Sign-up for the exchange of emails if you want to participate.
- The Lectio group that Sr. Kathleen Clare is starting will have its first meeting on Saturday, April 23rd, 10 AM, in the prayer room (off the chapel).

#### Presentation:

Dr. Katie Hirschboeck was introduced not only as a climate scientist, but also as a "Catholic Climate Ambassador" (one who gives talks about Catholic doctrine and environment), and as an Oblate of Santa Rita Abbey. She began her presentation on Ch. 5 of *Laudato Si* by saying

that the whole Encyclical is “radical.” She then presented 5 definitions of “radical”: coming from root causes (versus just symptoms), growing from a stem that lies beneath the surface, fundamental, unusual or extreme, and favoring extreme change. The Encyclical reflects each of these.

In reviewing the Encyclical leading up to Ch. 5, she asked, “what do we find when we look below the surface” of our ecological challenges? Pope Francis’s answer is that everything is interconnected. These interconnections include human and divine, all creation, climate, and the common good. She said that “concern for the earth is deeply rooted in our faith,” and that *Laudato Si* is exciting because it “presents science from a religious perspective.” It is especially pertinent because, while we have known about climate change for a long time, only recently have we been able to see it in weather patterns, photographs, etc. “The earth,” Katie said, “is more vulnerable than we thought.” And when the earth deteriorates, the poorest and most vulnerable are the most affected.

After laying out his framework, in Ch. 5 Pope Francis turns to what individuals can do to address the environmental crisis. The most central message Francis gives is “dialogue.” The international and local communities must be involved in constructing a plan that will lead to new policies, openness, and transparency. Technological progress, politics, and “business as usual” cannot solve these problems because their roots are in the ways people think about progress and success. Katie cited the Paris Agreements, though flawed, as landmark accords moving in the right direction.

Pope Francis calls for decreased use of fossil fuels and increased use of renewable sources of power. In the short term, while waiting for these to develop, we must conserve, recycle, and use other means of harm reduction.

One place that individuals can make a real difference is in being part of public pressure. Katie felt that water—scarce, indispensable, a fundamental right—should be a major concern to desert-dwellers. It is not easy to oppose growth, change ideas about “progress,” or speak up for plants and animals. But we can get involved politically, support nonprofits, and vote. She counseled, “Don’t give up!” Our actions may have a “ripple effect” that we are not aware of.

Katie said that, although some scientists feel that it is too late to avert disaster, she believes that there is room for hope. So does Pope Francis. The problems may seem overwhelming, but she believes that individual acts make a difference.

## APRIL 17 OBLATE MEETING

Our next meeting will be April 17th At 2 p.m. Doors will open at 12:45 for inquirers, candidates and anyone else who would like to come early to use the library or visit with others. Sr. Hope will give reflections on Chapter 6 of *Laudato Si*’.

### Inquirers' and Candidates' Class

The class will start at 1:00 PM and finish at 1:45 to join the others in the basement. It is held in the Prayer Room, on the right side as you enter the Chapel. Mary Sheridan will lead the discussion on Humility. Please read Ch. 7 on Humility in the Rule to prepare for this class. Questions and Discussion topics are:

- What are your ideas about humility? Is the metaphor of the ladder meaningful?
- How do you reconcile Benedict's "lower than a worm" with modern understandings of self-esteem?
- How does humility apply in your life? Is it a help or hindrance? {E.g. self-promotion as a means of getting ahead in the work place.}

PRESCOTT OBLATE NEWS: Shirley Maday reports that Bethany Forbes decided to make the commitment to become a Candidate. Sharing on Michael Casey's book, Ch. 20, we discussed how, in his kindness, the Lord is showing us the road of life and how the spiritual journey leads us beyond comfortable limits. St. Benedict wants us to recognize that even now Christ is pointing out to us the way we should go. Next meeting: April 17th 1:30-3:30 p.m. at St. Anthony Claret Room. Read: The Road to Eternal Life, Ch. 21 pp.75-77, and Laudato Si' Study Guide, Session 5, pp. 35-40.

EAST VALLEY OBLATE NEWS: We continue our yearlong study on the Year of Mercy, and Toni presented her thoughts in March. For more Information on meetings call Nancy Kaib 480-883 8025 or Frank Young 480-219-1505 Nancy mentioned that St. Andrews now has Saturday morning Mass at 8:30 a.m.--a great way to prepare for the Saturday meetings, for those who can.

PHOENIX CENTRAL OBLATE NEWS: For information call Patty Williams 602-957-1464. The Phoenix group continues discussing the Year of Mercy with Mary Gibson presenting the lesson on an invitation to love, kindness, generosity and an opportunity to encounter the incredible mercy of God. We meet at Mount Claret Retreat Center, 4633 N. 54th St. Phoenix, 85018. Our meeting room is the St. John Paul II room in the back of the parking lot.

Jesus is Risen! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. May this month be filled with the Light of Christ for all of you, in you and around you.

Sr. Hope

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