



TUCSON OBLATE NEWS LETTER
February 2017

Rule of Benedict 19:1 “We believe that the divine presence is everywhere” There is much inside us and in our culture that separated us from the God within us. Benedict reminds us that God is everywhere. God wants to heal us, to guide us, to become one with us, which means we need to act and live as Jesus did, with compassionate Hearts and with the energy of love to change our world. Teilhard used to say “that we must summon and harness the power of love - the powers of an all-transforming spiritual energy-as we have harness the powers of wind and water, of atoms and genes in order to build a future worth living, a future which will extend rather than diminish our capacity of being human.” Karl Rahner said “Unless we all become mystics we will not survive.” William Joseph’s talk was on transformation of our inner and outer self. That is mysticism finding God within us and in our world.

JANUARY RENEWAL DAY:

At our Renewal Day in January, Oblate William Joseph gave an extensive and intense presentation on “Merton’s Wisdom”—i.e. contemplation and contemplative transformation. The following is adapted from his summary:

The heart is the center of our human “being,” not the mind. This inward “sacred space” determines who we really are. We could call this (as Merton does) our “true self.” There our deepest thoughts, intentions, and decisions find their source and connect with the Source of our being. Too often, however, we fail to relate to our hidden center, and so live and die in an outward “false self,” not knowing who we really are. This is life’s tragedy.

The idea of “true self” and “false self” is important. The false self is marked by self-importance and the seeking of things associated with it: comfort, addictions, speed, power, possessions, convenience, pleasure, knowledge/intellectualism, certainty, superficiality. It is a place of illusions and inner starvation. In contrast, the true self is marked by humility, detachment, silence, simplicity, conscience, ambiguity, gratitude, obscurity, and the like. It is a place of contentment, wisdom, contemplation, and prayer. When we are our true selves, we are one with God, in our true home.

Living a spiritual life in the true self requires a conversion, a *metanoia*, a complete change of heart. We wait patiently in our sacred space, present in the moment, expecting that new things will happen to us. These new things are beyond our imagination and predictions, a radical stance toward life that is the opposite of a world preoccupied with power and control. In this stance, we see what everyone sees, but from God’s standpoint. Our behavior changes.

Our task in contemplation is not to make the spiritual life happen, but to see where it is already happening (that is, in the sacred space). God is doing the acting; we just need to be open to it. Our final journey home (into the sacred space here and after) becomes an Exodus in which we leave the world willingly for full communion with God. The contemplative life is thus an action of returning, a “homecoming.”

The Crucified Jesus is the ultimate contemplative story, where total aloneness and full acceptance touch each other. In that complete emptiness, all was fulfilled. It is the greatest transformation story of our lives. It teaches us that our attention should be on relationship, that meaning comes from being and not having, that new relationships can come out of nothingness.

In an “infused” contemplative state, we know that something is different about us, something has happened in our life. We feel taken over by an unknown reality (God) that is beyond pursuit, ownership, journeying, achieving, pleasure, or bliss. There is nothing in the way—so we are free to be our true selves and allow God to come in.

The ultimate formula for tackling the world’s problems today is simply this: if we want to change the world, first change ourselves. If we want to gain anything in the world, we must first let it go and surrender it to God. If we want to find God in the world, we must seek God first in ourselves. This sacred space is where

time intersects with eternity. Jesus became human not to enslave us to history, but to free us from it. Our task is now, when we cast time and space into the eternity of God. The great cycles of history will unfold as they are meant to, if we surrender our grasp of them and leave God free to act through us.

ANOUNCEMENTS:

- Please update email and street addresses and phone numbers when these change. We continue to get returned envelopes and “bounced” emails.
- The Lectio group meets from 10AM to 11AM every Saturday in the prayer room (off the chapel). All are welcome.
- Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, is March 1st. There are Lenten (and other) books in the Library which can make Lectio Divina a rich experience. Mary Sheridan will be glad to help you.
- If the Newsletter is not received by the 6th day of the month, please contact Sr. Hope or Mary Sheridan (msherdanhpu@gmail.com) so we can get you a copy.

FEBRUARY 19TH OBLATE MEETING

Our next meeting will be Feb. 19th at 2 p.m. The doors open at 12:50 p.m. for inquirers, candidates and anyone else who would like to come early to use the library or visit with others. Jessie Zander will be our presenter on Forgiveness.

INQUIRERS' AND CANDIDATES' CLASS

This class will begin at 1:00 p.m. and finish at 1:45 to join the others in the assembly room. The class is in the prayer room on the right side as you enter the Chapel. Sr. Gladys Noreen will talk about The Tools of Good Works /Humility.

Read in advance: RB. Ch. 4 The Tools of Good Works, Ch. 6 Restraint of Speech, and Ch. 7 Humility

Questions for discussion 1. What does Benedict's famous statement, “let nothing come before the love of Christ” mean in daily life? 2. Why do you think Benedict doesn't seem to like laughter, how should we interpret this in daily life today?

CHAPTERS

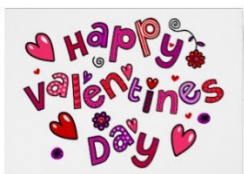
PRESCOTT: Shirley Maday reports: There was a discussion about scheduling future Prescott Oblate meetings. To allow more time for input It was suggested to skip the Feb. Meeting. So the next meeting will be held on March 19th prior to the Memorial Mass for deceased Prescott oblates on March 21st at 5:30 p.m. Study: Casey's book Ch. 29, pp.104-107.

EAST VALLEY OBLATES January completed our study and discussion on Mercy, and on what we will be studying for the coming year. This group is looking at the “Study Guide for the Rule of St. Benedict with Reflections for Oblates and All who seek God,” by Abbess Emerita Maia-Thomas Beil, OSB, Abbey of St Walburga, but a final decision has not been made. For more information call Nancy Kaib 480-883 8025 or Frank Young 480-219-1505.

PHOENIX CENTRAL: Next meeting Saturday, February 18th, at 9:30 a.m. Inquirers and Candidates meet at 8:45 a.m. for lessons (all are invited). Please join us as we celebrate a morning of prayer and community. For information call Patty Williams 602-957-1464. We meet at Mount Claret Retreat Center, 4633 N. 54th St. Phoenix, 85018. Our meeting room is in the St. John Paul II room in the back of the parking lot.

As we prepare for Lent, let us pray for the grace to transform our world into the energy of Love.

Sr. Hope



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