



# Tucson Oblate Newsletter

## January, 2013

**May this New Year be truly blessed for each one of you!** I pray that starting off the year with our renewal day, may bring blessings for the rest of the year.

At Tucson's December Oblate meeting we considered "**Compassion: Mindfulness and Action.**" Using Karen Armstrong's 5th and 6th *steps to a compassionate life*—Mindfulness and Action—we also incorporated material from *Seven Sacred Pauses*, by Benedictine Sister Macrina Wiederkehr.

Wiederkehr describes mindfulness as "the art of living awake and ready to embrace the gift of the present moment." An essential part of Benedictine spirituality is using these pauses, especially through the Liturgy of the Hours, to focus on the present moment, the sacredness of time, and the presence of God.

The pauses included after each of the psalms, or perhaps sections of a longer psalm, are a way to give those praying time to personalize and to internalize the prayer, reading, or action, before rushing on to the next thing. For most of us, there are more things to be done than there is time to do them. Even so, we can add brief pauses to our day, to remember *what* we are doing, *why* we are doing it, and *for whom*.

Reflecting on what we are doing, then *choosing* what we will do, is one way of connecting mindfulness and action. For example, stopping to reflect on our words or actions beforehand could avoid long-term damage to another person, or even be the beginning of a deeper positive relationship.

On the other hand, a careless or unkind word can continue to fester and perhaps contaminate a valued relationship. Words have consequences, and we may find that we can make better choices. Even *one* such intentional, aware, positive word or action a day can be the beginning of a habit. It may feel strange at first, or "inauthentic," because negative feelings usually don't just vanish. They hang around and come back to haunt us, but we can choose NOT to act on them.

Mindfulness does not so much take a *quantity* of time away from action, but rather enhances the *quality* of action. Gibran suggests that "our work is our love made visible." Monastic spirituality reminds us that we are co-creators with God, and our attitude to our work will determine to what degree it is truly

"love made visible."

St. Benedict reminds us in Chapter 7 of the Rule that "God is always present to our very thoughts when he says: God searches the hearts and thoughts of men and women." God's searching of our hearts and thoughts should not make us fearful. Rather, it should remind and encourage us that our loving Father is always present to help us, as we seek the best way to respond to our Christian calling, to live more mindfully in the divine Presence.

**TUCSON: Next meeting is our RENEWAL DAY, Sunday, January 20.** If you cannot come for the whole day, please come for whatever time you can. The Assembly Room will be open from about 8:35 a.m. to 8:55 a.m. in case you have food to leave downstairs.

- 9:00 a.m. *Any who wish are welcome to join with the monastic community for Mass.*
- 10:00 Light breakfast: Coffee, donuts, bagels, etc., downstairs. Some of the Sisters will join us.
- 10:30 (or as soon as we can start) Welcome, then presentation by Mary Sheridan, who will summarize Karen Armstrong's *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life* and relate the steps to the Rule of Benedict.
- 11:30 **Inquirers being enrolled as candidates, and candidates making oblation**, meet upstairs with directors. Others have QUIET time for reflection: in chapel, outside, browsing in the library, etc. Some will be setting up for noon meal.
- 12:00 **Midday prayer in Chapel with Community, concluding with enrollments and oblations.**
- 12:30 Lunch downstairs: Hot dish, potluck for salads and dessert
- 1:45 (approximately) Interactive session with Sr. Lenora: Practical ideas regarding ways to cultivate and express compassion, drawing on personal experience, the Rule of Benedict, and Armstrong's insights on Compassion.
- 3:00-3:15 Closing and cleanup.

**Preparation for those participating in the afternoon session: Please think about positive personal experiences of compassion and how they have affected your life. How could a wider practice of compassion affect life in our society locally and globally?**

*The following candidates have expressed their desire to go ahead with Oblation at this time:*

**Maureen O'Malley, Amy Cormode, Chris Asaro, Helen Waring, and Lance Waring.**

*These inquirers will be enrolled as Candidates:*

**Barbara Isaacson, Kellyanne Hale, and Mayola McCrary.** (Kitty Tobin and Kathy Norgard are eligible, but will be out of town).

There are also three women from the Phoenix deaneries: **Lisa Hughes** and **Christina Travaini** (Central), and **Debbie Zimmer** (East Valley).

There may be others from Phoenix, and if anyone in the Tucson area has been missed, please let me know *right away*.

We will also have a ritual of *Transfer* for **Rachel Chowniac**, from Albuquerque.

*Prayers* are asked for Tucson Oblate **Libby Grabert**, that she may have a good consultation and successful surgery for serious melanoma on her toe.

Members of the Tucson deanery of Oblates may be interested to know that they are making a donation to the Tucson monastic community, helping to pay for a fitness machine that will be beneficial for ALL the Sisters who care to use it, regardless of age.

Sr. Ramona experienced the benefit of one of these machines on her home visit, and wanted us all to have the same opportunity. It is modeled on a machine used by the astronauts in space, so perhaps the most "spacy" ones among us will benefit the most! Anyone who is curious can look it up on the Internet at: [http://www.amazon.com/Confidence-Vibration-Platform-Fitness-Machine/dp/B00367HXF4/ref=cm\\_cr\\_pr\\_product\\_top](http://www.amazon.com/Confidence-Vibration-Platform-Fitness-Machine/dp/B00367HXF4/ref=cm_cr_pr_product_top)

*Pray that we will be able to put it together correctly when it arrives. The idea of exercising while standing still, appeals to me.*



### **Tucson meetings in 2013**

[all are 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays]

**February 17**

**March 17**

**April 21**

**May 19 – Renewal Day**

*From February through May our Tucson meetings will focus on our Benedictine Heritage.*

**PRESCOTT:** Next meeting is **Sunday, January 20 at 1:30 p.m.**, in the St. Anthony Claret Room.

The December 16 meeting opened with a pot-luck meal, followed by the reading of the Sunday Office. Angie Lawson led a discussion on Peace and the Epilogue from *The Monastery of the Heart*. Members shared where they found peace: adoration, prayer, being present in the moment and knowing that God is in charge, faith in God's compassion, the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and participating in the celebration of the Eucharist.

The January 20 meeting will feature a video presentation on the life of Hildegard of Bingen, who, Joan Terwilliger said, was a pastor, a poet, a composer and teacher, seeing herself as a "feather on the breath of God."

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

**PHOENIX CENTRAL:** Next meeting, **Saturday, January 12, 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:* We had a wonderful joint meeting with the East Valley Oblate group for our annual Christmas party, and look forward to the January 20 Renewal Day in Tucson.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> we will continue our study of the Holy Rule and will also talk about a personal evaluation of our Oblate life. Please come and 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, January 26.**

*Nancy Kaib writes:* At this January meeting we will continue to work with our book on the Prologue and talk about plans for the new year.

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

**May 2013 see a decrease in violence in our own country and throughout the world.**

*Love,  
Lenora, osb*