



# Tucson Oblate Newsletter

## January, 2014

### Happy New Year!



Christmas may be over for most businesses and families, but the mystery of the Incarnation continues. The next day we celebrate feast of Stephen, the proto-martyr, then St. John the Evangelist, the Holy Innocents, and Epiphany--the manifestation of Christ to those living far beyond Judea. Epiphany was the earliest liturgical celebration of Christ's birth, and remains the main Christmas celebration for the Eastern Churches. It is the feast that points most clearly to our part in continuing the Incarnation by the way we live today.

"Epiphany not only discloses the Savior to the world but also calls the world to show forth Christ, to be witnesses to God's true light. The timeless mystery of the Incarnation, God in flesh, leads us forth to show and tell of Christ as God's gift of grace and salvation for all persons. Some call this ongoing epiphany the work of Christmas," from the Presbyterian *Companion to the Book of Common Worship*.

Pope Francis, in his recent exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel (Gaudium Evangelii)*, speaks at length of the necessity to go beyond fine ideas. We are each personally called to be a messenger of the Gospel by our actions. "Realities are greater than ideas. This principle has to do with incarnation of the word and its being put into practice . . . The principle of reality, of a word already made flesh and constantly striving to take flesh anew, is essential to evangelization" (#233). As followers of the Rule of Benedict, which is rooted in the Word of God, we are particularly called to this service.

**While on the subject of Epiphany, I want to invite anyone who can come, to join the monastic community for the 1st Vespers of Epiphany Sunday evening, January 5, at 6:00 p.m. This will be followed immediately by a reception downstairs, an annual celebration of gratitude for our friends and benefactors. That includes all Oblates, Candidates, and inquirers.**

At Tucson's December Oblate meeting, Mary Sheridan presented because Lenora had laryngitis. The presentation was on the "O Antiphons," those Scripture-inspired verses said before and after the *Magnificat* at Vespers from December 17-23 in preparation for Christmas.

The **O Antiphons** date back 1000-1500 years, depending on the source consulted, and are attributed to the Benedictine Order. They are based primarily on titles of the Savior in Isaiah, and are called "O Antiphons" because each begins with "O." According to Sr. Joan Chittister, "For the seven days before Christmas, we recall in these prayers a quality of Christ that must be realized before the presence of Christ can consume the world." In other words, the antiphons don't simply refer to the past, but to work that Christians need to accomplish for the coming of the Kingdom. *The antiphons are as follows:*

Dec. 17 –**O Sapientia** (Wisdom), flowing from the mouth of the Most High; reaching far and wide, disposing of all things sweetly and mightily. Come teach us the way of prudence.

Dec. 18 –**O Adonai**, leader (ruler) of ancient Israel, giving Moses, while in the burning bush, the law on Sinai, come with outstretched arms and teach us.

Dec. 19 – **O** [shoot from the] **Root of Jesse**, standing as protector of the people; silencing rulers, inspiring the people to make supplication. Come, do not delay, deliver us.

Dec. 20 –**O Key of David**, rod and staff of the house of Israel, one who opens and no one closes, the one who closes and no one opens. Come, lead prisoners caught in darkness.

Dec. 21 – **O Oriens** (Dayspring) Sun of Justice, bright eternal light, one who shows the way, the one who sets us free even in darkness and death. Come, disperse the gloomy clouds of night.

Dec. 22 –**O Rex Gentium** (Ruler of Nations), cornerstone of the people, desire of all; from the clay of the earth, by your own hand you have formed us and fashioned us. Come and open our hearts to one another.

Dec. 23 –**O Emmanuel** (God with us), leader and desire of all the nations, you set captives free, comfort the lonely; you feed the poor and the hungry. Come, be born in us, God of Life. These antiphons are also contained in the beloved advent hymn, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel."

The meeting concluded with praying the Sunday Vespers of Advent, along with the recording of that Vespers made by the Sisters in Clyde, Missouri.

**TUCSON: Next Meeting is Renewal Day, Sunday, January 19, 10:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.**

This year's renewal day will focus on the **Third World Congress of Oblates** in Rome, which Phoenix East Valley Oblate **Mike Schroeder** attended as our delegate. Mike will be with us to share the experience, accompanied by videos, slides and whatever high tech enhancements he may have. The schedule is as follows: (If you cannot come for the whole meeting, please come for as much of it as you can!) *Those who wish to join with the monastic community for the 9:00 a.m. Mass are welcome to do so.*

- 10:00 Light breakfast: Coffee, donuts, bagels, etc., in assembly room; Some of the Sisters will join us.
  - 10:30 (or as soon as we can start) Welcome, then presentation by Mike Schroeder
  - 11:30 Oblate candidates being enrolled, and those making oblation, meet with directors; others have QUIET time for reflection: in chapel, outside, browsing in the library, etc.
  - 12:00 Midday prayer in Chapel with community, with enrollments and oblations
  - 12:30 Lunch downstairs: Hot dish; salads and desserts are potluck\* (see below)
  - 1:45 (approximately) Mike Schroeder
- \* Those who were not at the December meeting to sign up, and who plan to be at the renewal day, are invited to bring a salad or dessert, or something for breakfast, as their contribution to the cost of the food. Please call Bette Nienhaus, 834-5300, or email [bjnien12@msn.com](mailto:bjnien12@msn.com) regarding what you can bring. If you do not bring anything, we are grateful for a contribution of \$7.00 or \$8.00.
- Please note: There will be a small BOOK SALE at this renewal day.**

*Rejoice with us! Our Sister Natalia Barela, age 105, went happily to heaven on her Feastday, Christmas morning. She spent many years in the Tucson monastery, until she needed to move to our health care center in Clyde, Missouri.*

**PRESCOTT:** Next Meeting Sunday, January 19, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

*Shirley Maday writes:* On Sunday, December 15, Oblates and their guests met for a Christmas gathering that included prayers, meditation and a delicious potluck

meal. Cards expressing best wishes were addressed to residents of a nearby nursing home. The assignment for the next meeting: Karen Armstrong's book, "The Ninth Step: Concern for Everbody," pages 143-155.

*For more information contact* Nancy Hinshaw: 928-445-1271.

**PHOENIX CENTRAL:** Next meeting, Saturday, January 11, 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 December meeting included prayer and sharing thoughts of thanksgiving with a "blessing cup." We look forward to our new study on Benedictine women in 2014. Everyone is welcome to come on Saturday so please join us.

*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 25.

*Nancy Kaib writes:* The East Valley Oblates met on December 14 as our normal 4th Saturday meeting would be too close to Christmas. We read part of the introduction on novenas that is in the booklet, *Novena to St. Benedict*, published by The Liturgical Press. We encouraged everyone to say a novena to St. Benedict at some point.

The East Valley will meet on our regularly scheduled 4th Saturday in January, January 25. We will begin a study of the book entitled A Guide to Living in the Truth, by Fr. Michael Casey, OCSO.

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

**Library Corner:**

*From Mary Sheridan:* There is an Asian custom, which your loving librarian tries to follow, of trying to get all pending work complete before going into the New Year. Although the January Renewal Day obviously occurs after the start of the year, this would be a good time to look for any Oblate Library books you might have, and place them near the door or in the car so that you won't forget to bring them home.

*Wishing you many blessings in this New Year,*

*Sr. Lenora, osb*

