

TUCSON OBLATE NEWSLETTER - JANUARY, 2017

Our Holy Father Pope Francis has proclaimed this a Year of Grace. Fr. Michael Hiems says, "Everything on this earth is soaking with grace, is dripping with grace which is God." How different our world would be if we had this broader view of grace and God. These past weeks we have had some beautiful Scripture passages from the book of Isaiah 62:1-5. One that touched me is, "No more shall people call you 'Forsaken,' or your land 'Desolate,' but you shall be called 'My Delight,' and your land 'Espoused.' For the Lord delights in you and makes your land his spouse. As a young man marries a virgin, your Builder shall marry you; and as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride so shall your God rejoice in you." What a wonderful image that our God is so close to each of us, and is beside us all the time. Notice that for the men God is a feminine image, and for women masculine. Let us throughout this New Year delve into this wonderful mystery that God is always in us.

Summary of December presentation

At the Oblate meeting Dec. 18th, Sr. Kathleen Clare presented on Lectio Divina, the highly valued monastic practice of holy reading binding Scripture with prayer. Throughout the Rule, Benedict clearly identifies divine Scripture as God speaking to us. The multiplicity of scriptural quotations in the Rule, the wisdom cited in them for the spiritual journey, and the extensive time prescribed daily and seasonally for holy reading, attest to the intensity of Benedict's conviction that we meet God through the Divine Word and that "the voice of the Holy one calling to us" shows us "the way to life." Lectio Divina is about listening with the ear of our heart to God's word to us, and opening our hearts to receive the illumination of our experiences and understanding. It is about responding in dialogue with God and deepening our relationship with God in intimacy. When practiced regularly, Lectio Divina gradually informs our lives to become more and more the presence of God's love in the world. It is a very private thing, but also a very communal thing because it affects our lives with others. For centuries, this ancient monastic practice was the common way of communing with God, not only for monks but for those outside the monastery as well.

The monk Guligo described Lectio in four stages: Lectio (reading), Meditatio (meditation), Oratio (prayer), and Contemplatio (contemplation). The prayer of holy reading is quite flexible and free flowing, allowing the Holy Spirit to be one's guide. Simple but profound assumptions concerning Scripture are: (1) Scripture is the Word of God, not only the inspired word but the word which expresses God's personal word of salvation to us when we listen in faith. (2) Jesus Christ is the key to the meaning of the Scriptures. (3) The Scriptures are alive because of

the power of the Holy Spirit. (4) Scripture brings us into relationship with a family of believers, the Church. (5) Scripture brings us into a living relationship with the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in an intimate, personal, living relationship with God. And in this union with God, we are partakers in the creative power of God's loving plan for the world.

When we listen to God speaking to us in Scripture, we are among those who "long for life" as Benedict urges in the Prologue, and are nourished and transformed.

ANOUNCEMENTS:

- Please update email and street addresses and phone numbers when these change.
- The Lectio group continues to meet from 10AM to 11AM, every Saturday in the prayer room (off the chapel). All are welcome.
- Before January 15th, Sr. Hope would like to meet with those who feel they are ready to become candidates or to make oblation. Please call or email for an appointment.
- I want to invite any of our oblates from Prescott or Phoenix to come to the renewal day and to stay overnight if they wish. We have 9 beds (4 of them doubles) for guests. Call or email Sr. Hope for further information/reservations.
- The Library will have a book sale; lots of good reading for lectio.

JANUARY 15TH OBLATE MEETING—RENEWAL DAY

William Joseph will present, speaking on "Exploring the wisdom of Thomas Merton and Living differently with purpose and meaning." He will discuss the art of contemplation and the search for that place within us that brings goodness and creativity to the surface. Any change in our society for the better will need to come from within us, through the creative process, towards a true sense of our being in communion with God.

SCHEDULE FOR RENEWAL DAY

9:00 AM – Mass for those who wish to attend.

10:00 AM -- Coffee and scones. We would like to start the presentation as quickly as possible, so if you are not attending Mass, feel free to come a bit early for your breakfast

10:15-11:45 -- First presentation

12:00 noon -- Day Hour in Chapel; John Hill will be making his final oblation

12:30 -- Lunch in the assembly room

1:15-3:00 PM -- Second presentation

3:00-3:15PM – Clean up for those who can stay

I would like to make this more a day of prayer than a social except during meals, so the schedule is a bit tight.

If your last name begins with A-M, please bring a SALAD. If your last name begins with N-Z, please bring DESSERT. We will provide breakfast and the main dish at noon. A donation of \$5.00 would be appreciation for those who can afford that amount.

INQUIRERS' AND CANDIDATES' CLASS.

No inquirers class this day. All attend the renewal day.

PRESCOTT: Shirley Maday reports: Sacred Heart Parish is planning a Peace and Social Justice Retreat on January 21. Bill Lutz arranged for a memorial Mass for deceased Prescott Oblates at the 5:30 p.m. Mass on March 21. Study on Michael Casey's book in Ch. 27 stressed the importance of not judging others but regarding them as members of the Body of Christ.

EAST VALLEY OBLATES: Our next meeting will be on Saturday, January 14th , 9:30 a.m. We will continue our study of Mercy through the DVDs produced by Fr. Michael Gaitley. We will also discuss what we want to study for 2017. For more information call Nancy Kaib at 480-883 8025, or Frank Young at 480-219-1505. Nancy mentioned that St. Andrews now has Saturday morning Mass at 8:30. For those of you who can get there, it would be a great way to prepare for meetings.

PHOENIX CENTRAL: Our January 14th meeting will be 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 in the St. John Paul II room in the back of the parking lot.

May the PEACE and GRACE of Christ be in our Hearts throughout this New Year.

Sr. Hope

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