



TUCSON OBLATE NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2017

From the Gospel of St. John:

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you... as the Father has sent me, so I send you" . . . When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

These words of the resurrected Jesus who appeared before the fear-filled disciples on that ancient day of Pentecost, are of great comfort to us who live in this world with its troubled times. We, like the disciples, can be overcome with anxiety about the unknown, and be tempted to retreat into what seems the safety of withdrawal. Jesus appeared before those fearful disciples in that locked room in his resurrected body, the body that had experienced suffering and death and that had been raised to life by the power of his Father. Jesus conferred his Peace, the Peace of the Risen Christ upon them, and bestowed on them the gift of the Holy Spirit. The disciples were empowered, afraid no longer, eager to go where the Spirit led.

The Holy Spirit, given to us, is God's way of staying close to us, just as Jesus' physical presence had been for his followers. The Spirit is our advocate, our guide, our inspiration and our strength, and the fulfillment of the promise of Jesus, *I will be with you always*.

As we enter into this time of transition with the future closing of the Tucson monastery, we know with certainty the presence of *God with us* as Oblates of the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. The closing of the monastery is a time of sadness for the Sisters, and for our Oblates, but in this time of preparation to re-locate to a new meeting site, we know with sureness that the Holy Spirit will continue to draw us in love of God and one another, and strengthen us in our focus and unity.

Saint Benedict in his Rule, clearly wrote for the encouragement, guidance, and support of those desiring a spiritual path of life in seeking God. The Rule has proven to be relevant through centuries of Christian tradition, not only to monastics, but also for people of all classes of society throughout the world for more than 1500 years. Benedictine Oblates dedicated to this life-giving way to unity with God and one another have found a treasure to cherish their whole life long, a way of seeking the God who is seeking us. We keep one another in prayer as we move forward together.

NEWS:

New Meeting Location: We are pleased to announce that St. Philip's in the Hills Church has made a generous offer of space for our future Oblate meetings. The Oblate Deans, Sr. Hope, and I have investigated a number of possibilities. Nowhere else did we receive such a warm welcome, and nowhere else were there such appropriate rooms for general and candidate/inquirer meetings. St.

Philip's already has a library with a good selection of Benedictine-related books (thanks to Oblate Dean Nelson), and they are eager to make a home for books from our library as well. The church is on Campbell just north of River Rd., and has generous parking.

Any change of meeting place for a long-established group is difficult, but this is already familiar territory to a number of our Oblates. We believe that this will be an excellent location for our meetings, and will start meeting there in the fall. Further details will be available at the July social, and in the September Newsletter. We will continue to meet on the 3rd Sunday at 1PM for candidates and inquirers, and 2PM for the larger meeting.

July Ice Cream Social: We will have an ice cream social here at the monastery on Sunday July 16, 2:00- 3:30 PM to celebrate the Feast of St. Benedict. As we did last year, if each one attending the social will bring one small container of your favorite ice cream or frozen dessert, we will have a feast of sharing to the delight of everyone. Also, as Sr. Hope had indicated in her May newsletter, we would like to use this time to discuss two things. (1) A sharing of your thoughts and questions regarding the new Tucson Oblate meeting location beginning in the fall. (2) Sharon and William, who are going to the Oblate Congress in Rome, also need to do a project about our Chapter and would like to briefly address that with those who attend the meeting.

Survey: Our preparing for the closing of the Monastery and lay leadership of the Oblates is a good time for us to evaluate some aspects of what we have been doing. So we are enclosing a brief survey, and would appreciate your filling it out and returning it to us. You don't have to give your name unless you wish to be removed from the mailing list.

Lectio Group: For information concerning meetings of Lectio group this summer contact Kevan Perry (himalayanraven@yahoo.com) or contact monastery at 325-6401.

Retreat: Seven Phoenix Oblates participated in a retreat weekend here at the monastery with input from William and Sharon.

LAST VALLEY OBLATE NEWS: In June we will meet on the regular 4th Saturday. We will study the 4th part of the Chapter on "Seek Peace and Pursue it," pages 13-15. For more information on meetings call Nancy Kaib 480-883-8025 or Frank Young 480-219-1505.

PHOENIX CENTRAL OBLATE NEWS: For information call Patty Williams 602-957-1464. The Phoenix group meets 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. We will continue our study of the Rule of Benedict by Maria-Thomas Beil, OSB.

WEST SIDE OBLATE NEWS—NEW CHAPTER IN PHOENIX: Lisa Hughes has been an Oblate with the Phoenix Central group, and recently started a new group in West Phoenix. Their first meeting was last month and she had quite a turnout. They meet for a morning of prayer, study, community and fellowship. Children are included. They meet at 19204 N. 70TH Ave. Glendale 85308 on the 3rd Saturday of the month from 9-12. (In August it will be the 2nd Saturday of the month) For information call Lisa at [623-374-2382](tel:623-374-2382).

Sr. Hope: Sr. Hope is doing well at our monastery in Clyde. We are so grateful to her for the dedication she has shown to our Tucson Oblates these past years. Keep her in your prayers.

Request: Does anyone have access to a bus, 9-passenger van, limo, RV or similar? If so, please let Sr. Kathleen Clare know. Thanks.

Summary of May Renewal Day (We are working on getting this linked to the Benedictine Sisters webpage.)

Reflecting the Oblate directors and deans' concerns about current events, the May Renewal Day offered several talks on the theme "Framing Today's Issues in Light of the Gospel and the Rule of Benedict." Mary Sheridan began by saying that many religious traditions believe that change has to start with oneself, and can spread from there.

After describing how much she had enjoyed working with the Oblates, Sr. Hope spoke about our individual "woundedness" and need for healing. She said that the Rule of Benedict is for weak people just like us, people who seek God, who know that Jesus saved us by his love and mercy. We are all wounded, and need to place our wounds on the cross with Jesus. If he could forgive those who crucified him, denied him, and doubted him, he will assuredly forgive us. Our world is wounded, and needs the power of love to heal greed, selfishness, and secularism. Sr. Hope concluded, "When we reflect, and deepen our awareness, when we sit in prayer, the very highest form of human energy is brought into play, a human energy that is nothing other than love at the core of one's being. It is precisely this that builds the earth."

William Joseph said that, going beyond the issues of the day, we must reevaluate our purpose in conversing with others, as well as our role on the planet. "It is not I who lives but Christ who lives in me." We must be able to absorb that statement and make it work for us in our lives and interactions with others. Contemplatives are to be artists who are able to create a space for goodness and creativity to arise on its own. In conversation with others, we are to allow that space to occur so the intuition within us, the Christ voice, can speak out. Authentic dialogue includes detachment, the voice within, discernment, and prayer to be the ground in which our interactions will be fruitful. This will lead to the spontaneous moments within to arise, leading to goodwill among us all. The fertile ground for authentic dialogue to occur is in connection, openness, insight, nothingness, harmony, engagement, responsiveness, energy, knowing, compassion, and empathy. We then are able to develop an intimacy at the soul level which leads to the goodwill of others. (William presented a handout of "55 creative ways to dialogue with another." If anyone wants a copy, please contact Mary Sheridan.)

After Day Hour, at which Doris Swalec made oblation, Sharon Hammond presented on "We are All Wounded. Tools of Good Works and Benedictine Spirituality." We were asked to consider, "What does Benedictine Spirituality mean to you?" We could express this meaning in pictures, music, journaling, or through song. We celebrated Oblate creativity: clay creatively formed into a dove (for the Holy Spirit), and a heart with a long braid representing us connected to God, a song, poetry, and pictures. It was a blessing to see the richness of our group's spirituality. As Benedictines, we strive for conversion of life. We strive for a practical spirituality combining our prayer and work, faithfully fulfilling our vocation in life. We are people of prayer and Christian virtue. As Oblates, we embrace a spirit of community. We have good zeal. We see the face of God in all. How do we deal with troubled times? We seek stability in our Benedictine traditions.

We live the Rule of Benedict. We turn to each other, our community for support. We stay out of judgment! Sharon also gave a summer challenge: Make a goal for the summer to discern more on how you can make a difference. Keep it simple, but specific, measurable, action oriented, and realistic. She challenged us to report back at the September meeting.

Sr. Kathleen Clare concluded the day by leading us in a brief, simplified Lectio Divina exercise using verses from Ps. 139.

May God bless us in these days of journey. Let us keep one another in prayer as we move forward.

Sr. Kathleen Clare

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SURVEY

Dear Friend of the Oblate Program,

As we plan for the closing of the Monastery and the transfer of the Oblate program to another location and to the Deans' leadership, we have several questions about what would be most helpful to you. We would appreciate your answering the following. Please return to Sr. Kathleen Clare at the monastery before our July 16 Ice Cream Social.

1. Do you plan to attend meetings this coming fall?

Yes

Not sure

No **If no, you need not answer any more questions, but we would appreciate knowing why you are not attending. You may write this on the back. This will help us plan.

**If no, do you still want to be on the mailing list?

Yes

No

2. If the meeting moves to the area of Campbell and River, will this be hard for you to get to?

Yes

Not sure

No

3. Some Oblate programs choose a book and study it, discussing it at meetings. Other Oblate programs present speakers. Which would you prefer after the monastery closes?

A book

Speakers

A mixture

Something else

We would be happy to consider any meeting suggestions. Please write them on the back.

4. Should prayer from the Divine Office, like Vespers, be included in meetings?

Yes
 No

5. Should more food and social time be included in meetings?

Yes
 No

6. Do you, personally, feel “renewed” by the Renewal Days?

Yes
 No **What would make them more helpful?

7. As an Oblate, how can you help with this transition?

MAIL TO: Sr. Kathleen Clare, Benedictine Monastery, 800 N. Country Club Rd., Tucson, AZ 85716
OR save and email as an attachment to: tucsonoblates@gmail.com
OR place in the collection or offerings box in chapel.