



# Tucson Oblate Newsletter

## March, 2012

**Lenten greetings** and continued good wishes for this season of grace. Just a reminder that this month we celebrate the feast marking the death of **Saint Benedict, March 21**. For our monastery, the big feast is that of the *Solemnity of St. Benedict* on July 11, but some monasteries in the U.S. and abroad celebrate the March feast more solemnly, because so many monks are away from their abbey in the summer months. You are welcome to join us for Vespers of St. Benedict at 4:15 p.m. on Wednesday, March 21 and/or Mass at 5:00 p.m.

Also, **March 9 is the feast of St. Frances of Rome, patroness of Benedictine Oblates**. *In the fifteenth century, Saint Frances of Rome (1384-1440) induced a number of noble Roman women to renounce their worldly and extravagant life for a more perfect Christian life in their homes and the exercise of charity to the poor. They made no vows, nor did they wear a special religious habit, but placed themselves under the spiritual direction of the Olivetan Benedictines. Some years later they began to live a community life but merely promised obedience to the superior whom they had chosen to rule over them, styling themselves Oblates of Saint Benedict. This original Institute of Oblates, founded by Saint Frances, exists in Rome to this day, and the Oblates engage in daily common prayer and acts of charity to the poor and the unfortunate.*

<http://www.saintjohnsabbey.org/oblates/history.html>

### Updates:

Work continues on the installation of the solar panels in the gravel parking lot north of chapel. This part of the parking lot will be closed until the work is finished. The work is anticipated to take another several weeks. The solar panels have been delivered, but it may be a couple of weeks before they are installed.

A sewer line was damaged accidentally during the solar construction and resulted in a flood in the monastery basement, including the Assembly Room where the Oblates meet. Painting and re-carpeting are taking place now. It is not certain how long the work will take, or exactly what the state of the Assembly Room will be at the time of the March Oblate meeting, but the new carpet is down now and I have cancelled a provisional reservation we had for St. Francis Cabrini parish hall. **IF** anything unforeseen develops, those Oblates with email will be notified. If you have not heard anything more about the location of the meeting by a few days before it, count on it being at the monastery. If you do not have email, you can call the monastery (325-6401) or someone who has email, just to check.

Our scheduled speaker for the February meeting, **Greg Foraker**, underwent an emergency appendectomy just the afternoon before, so Sr. Lenora presented on, **“Gathering the Community – Of Bells, Clocks, and Caring.”** [Greg is doing fine now, and sincerely regrets not being able to come. He hopes he may be able to come at another time, but his schedule for the next few months is full].

We considered the use of bells in the time before electricity and the widespread use of clocks and watches. After inviting the group members to name different kinds of bells that have been important in their lives (e.g., bells for recess, bells to summon volunteer firefighters in small towns), we reflected on the importance of bells in monastic life, and in the Rule of Benedict. The keeping of proper time for the daily schedule was (and remains) so important that it is a task of the abbot, to be done personally or delegated.

T.S. Eliot links the concept of time to eternity, and in his long poem, *Ash Wednesday*, offers especially pertinent food for Lenten reflection:

*Suffer us not to mock ourselves with falsehood  
Teach us to care and not to care  
Teach us to sit still  
Even among these rocks,  
Our peace in his will.*

Lent is a good time to look at what is “really real” in our lives. This was reaffirmed by the lines from the Rule of Benedict (translation from the Benedictine Oblate Handbook): ***Therefore we urge that all in the monastery during these holy days of Lent should look carefully at the integrity of their lives and get rid in this holy season of any thoughtless compromises which may have crept in at other times*** (RB Ch. 49). Members of the group were then asked to ponder and discuss what integrity means to them, and what it looks like in people’s lives.

Caring needs to be realistic, and includes accepting limitations—of the caregiver and the object of care. We should not ask more of life than life can give. One element of Benedictine stability is “caring so passionately for what is of real value . . . that we can **let go, when necessary, of anything that has lesser value.**” This would be a good goal for Lent.

### Prayers:

**Sr. Joan Therese Anderson, OSB**, is doing well after her knee surgery, and is grateful for past prayers as well as prayers for continued healing. She gets around with a cane or walker now.

**Oblate Vicky Sutton** is now in hospice care at Catalina Village, 5324 East 1st St., Tucson, AZ 85711. I have not been able to contact her directly, but am sure she would be grateful for cards or other messages. My phone calls to her have not been returned (390-9371) but you are welcome to try.

**Oblate Frank Frisina** needs to stay close to home during his chemotherapy, and is experiencing a lot of pain. Please keep him in prayer too.

**Tucson:** Next meeting Sunday, March 18, 2:00 p.m. at the monastery. Doors open at 1:15 p.m.

**Candidates** meet at 1:30, and **Mila Aroskar** will lead the reflection on *Lectio*, pg. 17 in the folder.

The topic for the March meeting is a bit like the solar installation and assembly room restoration--under construction, We continue with our study of community with **Cynthia O'Sullivan**, one of our new Oblate inquirers, who has been invited to share on the experience of co-housing community living. In some ways this could be seen as midway between living in a monastery and living independently.

**Prescott:** Next meeting Sunday, March 18, 1:30-3:30 p.m., St. Anthony Claret Room of Sacred Heart Parish.

At our February 19 meeting, candidate Robert Nelson reported on the religious conversion which occurs when something happens in your life that changes your outlook on everything. There followed a group discussion of *The Monastery of the Heart*: "Our Interior Life, Prayer and Silence." Silence comforts, heals and restores us and prepares us for prayer. For the March meeting the lesson is from *The Monastery of the Heart*: "Our Community," pages 67-115.

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

**Phoenix Central:** Next meeting Saturday, March 10, 2012, 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 great discussion last month and will be continuing our study of the Prologue of the Holy Rule. Fr. Casey's book does a wonderful job feeding us rich details line-by-line. Come and join us on our journey of the Prologue. 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, March 24 at 9:30 a.m. at St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church in Chandler.

*Nancy Kaib writes:* The East Valley began their study of the Prologue of the Rule of St. Benedict at their February meeting. A very good discussion was had in delving into the insights of Michael Casey, OCSO, in his book, *The Road to Eternal Life*, which we are using as a basic guide to our study. I am excited about this effort we are making to better know St. Benedict's Rule.

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

### Library Corner:

Thanks to Libby Grabert and Theresa Keating for recent donations. Thanks also to those who have come across overdue books and returned them. Please note that, if the next meeting is held at St. Frances Cabrini, books may be returned, but no books will be available to take out. Books due in March will automatically be renewed to April.

**Happy Feast of St. Benedict, and many graces for Holy Week, which may have begun by the time you receive the April letter!**

**Sr. Lenora, OSB**



*Building Community*

Art from "Our Father Benedict" by M. Regina Goberna, OSB, 1983, used with permission of the author.

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