



## Tucson Oblate Newsletter

### March 2015

**Now that Lent** is launched, perhaps it is time to look at the direction in which we are heading. Do we have a goal for Lent? Do we need to adjust our course at all? To do this, we have first to LISTEN--that wonderful first word of St. Benedict's Rule. However, we will hear only if we believe that God *does* speak to us, and if we are ready to be challenged by what we hear.

Listening is hard work and it takes time. It may mean interrupting our busy life when it is inconvenient, but there is another way to look at it. Think of how a mother can be going about her work while her young child is in another room. While she is not constantly thinking about the child, she is alert to any sound that might indicate that the child needs her. To use the monastic word, she is VIGILant--waiting for that sound.

St. Bonaventure believed that everything in creation is a word of God, God speaking to us. It is up to us to keep our eyes and ears open for their message. Furthermore, each of us is meant to be a word of God to those around us. What kind of word do I want to be, keeping in mind that it is my *actions* that speak more clearly than the sounds that come out of my mouth?

**At the February meeting, Sr. Gladys** continued her discussion of using Scripture to better understand the Rule. In this session, she helped us look at parallels between specific sections of the Rule and various parts of the Bible. In doing this, however, she cautioned that various translations of each document might mean that the words are not exactly the same. However, the meaning is the same and we should look for that.

For example, vs. 10 of the Prologue quotes Psalm 95 (94 in some numberings):7-8, "Today if you hear [God's] words, harden not your hearts." Looking at the whole Psalm gives us a fuller context; we are called to the worship of God, our creator, and we are cautioned to remember the time when the Israelites fell into false worship and incurred God's anger. Heb. 3:7-15 repeats the same wording and story, adding reasons that we should not "harden our hearts." We should, for example, not become hardened by sin. We are to be partners with Christ "if only we hold the beginning of the reality firm until the end" (v.14). In addition, Ezechiel 33:11 and 17-20 speaks of what happens if the sinner is hard of heart. Those who turn away from God and sin shall die, but those who turn away from sin and back to God shall live.

Ch. 19 of the Rule discusses the "discipline of psalmody" or, in some translations, the "manner in which the Office should be said." This follows chapters giving instructions for saying the Office, and can be interpreted as applying to prayer in general. It quotes Ps. 2:11 about "fear" of the Lord, which Sr. Gladys said properly refers to an attitude of awe. It also quotes Ps. 46 about praying "wisely," and contains the often-quoted advice that "our mind should be in harmony with our voice." A look at Ps. 2 tells us more about the fear of God: it speaks of God's power, and how we should be ready to accept correction from God. Pss. 46, 47, 138, 150, and others describe reasons we should pray, and remind us of who God is.

Ch. 72 of the Rule speaks of the qualities of the cellarer--the person who has charge of and distributes the goods of the monastery. Sr. Gladys asked us to review the qualities of the first deacons (Acts 6). Many of these qualities are the same as those desired in the cellarer, since both are to care for others. Other sections of the Old and New Testaments describe these virtues--humility, wisdom, and especially the over-arching virtue of love.

When asked her method for finding these parallels, Sr. Gladys said that it came from long reading of Scripture. She advised us to begin reading, especially with the shorter parts of the Bible and those that particularly appeal to us. She suggested that we not try to start from Genesis and read straight through, as we are likely to become bogged down.

For those not as familiar with Scripture, a Bible "concordance" would be a help. A concordance is a book that lists words and where they can be found throughout the Bible. Concordances are available free on the internet, or for purchase in bookstores that stock religious books.

**TUCSON:** (*Watch out--the 3rd Sunday comes early again this month!*) **Next meeting Sunday, March 15, at 2:00 p.m. Doors open at 1:00** for inquirers, candidates and anyone else who would like to come early, use the library, and/or visit with others.

*[Please note, I wasn't aware of the change to use the topic of Lent for the formation group in February when I wrote the last letter, so this is the same assignment as given then. Please accept my apologies]*

**1:15: Oblate candidates and inquirers** meet in prayer room (1st door on right from chapel upstairs). Sr. Joan Therese will lead the group. In preparation for this session, read from the Rule of Benedict: Chapter 7 on Humility

1. What questions/comments do you have from last time, or from your reading?
2. Questions for Discussion:
  - a. What do you understand about humility? Is the metaphor of the ladder meaningful?
  - b. How do you reconcile Benedict's views of being "lower than a worm" with modern understandings of self-esteem?
  - c. How does humility apply in lay life? Is it a help or hindrance? (e.g., self-promotion as a means of getting ahead in the workplace.)

**2:00: Sr. Dawn Annette Mills, OSB**, is our presenter for this meeting. As many of you know, she was Oblate Director of the Tucson Chapter from 1992 to 2001, when I became Director. After being Prioress in Tucson while she was Oblate Director, Sr. Dawn Annette moved to Clyde, where she served on the General Council, until elected Prioress General. She knows we have been discussing the monastic vows of Stability and *Conversatio*, so she may talk about these, but whatever her subject, I'm sure she will be very interesting.

**Bible Study:** An enthusiastic group has gathered at the monastery for Bible study lead by Sr. Gladys Noreen, and you are welcome to join them. They meet **every Thursday afternoon at 3:30**. Come to the front door of the monastery.

**Announcement:** We were informed about the "Co-Workers of the Vineyard" workshop sponsored by the Catholic Diocese of Tucson, to be held at the Tucson Convention Center on March 5-7. Various speakers, workshops, and video presentations will be given in English and Spanish. More information can be found at <http://coworkers.diocesetucson.org/>. Registration is \$45 for all three days. Those under 18 can register free if registering with a paying adult.

**PRESCOTT:** Next meeting Sunday, March 15, 1:30-3:30 p.m., St. Anthony Claret Room

*Shirley Maday writes:* At the February 15 meeting there was sharing on Michael Casey's book, "The Road to Eternal Life," chapters 8 and 9. Casey stated that in

response to the Scripture directive, "Now is the hour to rise from sleep." God wants us to "open our eyes and to listen to the call that can make the difference between a life that is half-asleep and one that is fully alive and on the move."

Susan Stokes asked for prayers in her current fight against cancer. The lesson next month will be on Michael Casey's book, pp. 36-43.

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

**PHOENIX CENTRAL:** Next meeting, Saturday, March 14, 2015, 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:* Please join us for a morning of prayer, community, God stories and study which will include Lenten discussions. We are blessed!

*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 28.

*Nancy Kaib writes:* In March we will begin a series of meetings with different Benedictine topics. The *Great Courses* entitled *The Catholic Church: A History*, has several DVDs that are pertinent such as one that discusses the establishment of the Cistercians. We also will begin to inform ourselves on what different monasteries are doing to affect the world we live in. We will try to learn more about a different monastery every month.

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

After Psalm 1, in his excellent new book, "The Psalms: Songs of Faith and Praise", Abbot Gregory Polan, OSB, prays: "...*enliven your word within us that it may be our constant source of strength, our vision for the living, and our hope for peace. Make us a people founded on your word, so that we may become living words in the likeness of our Lord, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.*"

**Blessings,  
Lenora, OSB**



