

Tucson Oblates -- March, 2016 Newsletter

March this year will be a rich month of Feasts and Easter. On March 21st is the Feast of St Benedict; we remember his death. From the Life of St. Benedict: "Benedict had foretold the day of death to his disciples. Six days before he died he gave orders for his tomb to be opened. Almost immediately he was seized with a violent fever that rapidly wasted his remaining energy. Each day his condition grew worse until finally on the sixth day he had his disciples carry him into the chapel, where he received the Body and Blood of our Lord to gain strength for his approaching end. Then supporting his weakened body on the arms of his brethren and as he prayed, breathed his last."

"Two Monks on the same day had this revelation. They both saw a magnificent road covered with rich carpeting and glittering with thousands of lights. From his monastery it stretched eastward in a straight line until it reached up into heaven and there in the brightness stood a man of majestic appearance, who asked them 'do you know who passed this way?' . . . This is the road taken by blessed Benedict, the Lord's beloved when he went to heaven."

Benedict lived in a time when the world was warring, uncivilized, barbaric and tumultuous. He brought moderation and balance into his world, along with wholeness in seeking God, seeing Christ in the stranger and the earth: "All things were to be treated as Sacred Vessels of the Altar." Benedict saw the light of the Risen Lord penetrate the world and was ready for his final communion in death--being united with his God, Body and Spirit, one with all of us and creation.

On Easter morning when Jesus said to Mary Magdalen, "Do not touch me," she had not yet integrated the fact that he had been glorified, that he is risen. Jesus sent her to the community of his brothers and sisters, which is in a mysterious way, his glorified body. The beautiful mystery of the Resurrection is that Jesus lives in us. He continues to rise in us. We continue the mystery of the resurrection by letting Jesus rise in us, by our lives. Jesus gives to all the world, His love, His forgiveness, His Mercy. It is for us to also give to the world love, forgiveness and mercy. We do this by our lives, our prayer and the most powerful prayer of our Church, the Eucharist. We are the Body of Christ in our World.

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FEBRUARY MEETING

At the February meeting, Mary Sheridan presented on Chapter 4 of *Laudato Si'*. Building on his framework to date, in this chapter Pope Francis talks about how everything that exists is part of a complex system, and how this insight should lead us to strive for the common good. This is reflected in the title of the chapter, "Integral Ecology," with the word "integral" suggesting oneness or unity. In suggesting that "everything is interconnected," Francis gives examples of time and space (Einstein's theory of relativity), all elements of creation down to subatomic particles, and the commonalities between human DNA and that of animals. He reminds us that the environment is not something "out there," or a setting in which we live. Rather, we are an integral part of the environment, and engage in 2-way relationships with it.

Francis says that there are no simple solutions to the crisis we are facing. Rather, solutions will be complex, multifactorial, multidisciplinary, system-based, and research-based. He says, "It is essential to seek comprehensive solutions which consider the interactions within natural systems themselves and with social systems. We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature." (Par. 139) He reminds us that each organism has been created by God, and that it is important to preserve and strengthen both social institutions and human cultures (particularly Native American cultures).

Francis acknowledges that some environments are noisy, chaotic, or dirty, and applauds those who try to make the best of them. He asks us to accept our bodies as gifts from God, and opposes denying the differences between males and females. He wants us to consider the common good, which he defines as, "The sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfilment." (Par. 156) He states that the common good includes respect for all, and in particular respect for families and the preferential option for the poor. He closes the chapter by telling us that we

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have not only a responsibility to the present, but to future generations: we must leave them a world which allows them to achieve the common good.

OBLATE NEWS

We have several who have inquired about the Oblate Program so as you see strangers in your midst, you are seeing Christ to welcome among us. They are Cathy Howard, Joan Manson, Marth Yaeger, Virginia Richerson and Kevan & Ann Perry. We not only welcome them but hope to get to know them.

There are several who would like to email one another, after our dialogues from the talks. A list was put out and it will also be put out in March, as many were missing at February's meeting.

Sr. Kathleen Clare will start a Lectio group, and several have already signed up. The list will be put out again for those who were not present for the last meeting. Hopefully after Easter it can start.

TUCSON MARCH MEETING APRIL 20TH

Our next meeting will be **Sunday March 20, 2016** Doors open at 12:45 for inquirers, candidates and anyone else who would like to come early, use the library or visit with others. We are privileged to have Katie Hirschboeck from the University of Arizona. She is a climate scientist, especially studying how ecological events are reflected in tree rings. She also works for the Diocese. Feel free to bring a friend to the talk if you wish.

INQUIRERS AND CANDIDATES: Your class will start at 1:00.p.m. and finish at 1:45 to join the others in the basement for the 2 p.m. general session. Sister Hope, her assistant Sr. Kathleen Clare, and the Deans (Bette Dickinson, Sharon Hammond, Mary Sheridan, and Jessie Zander), would like to meet with all the inquirers. This will be an opportunity for the group to can get to know us, and for us to learn how we can best help you to discern your vocation as Oblates.

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FROM THE LIBRARIAN: Some of you have books out, and have had them for a long time. Don't forget that you incur a fine of \$1/month that a book is overdue. Most important, please bring the books back so others can enjoy them.

PRESCOTT: Shirley Mayday reports that she and Nancy Hinshaw attended the third annual Benedictine Day of Prayer and sharing. The presenter was Anne Hannigan and they listened to a DVD talk by Sr. Joan Chittister. Continued study for March: The Road to Eternal Life, Ch. 20 pp. 72-74 by Michael Casey, and Laudato Si' Study Guide, Session Four, pp 30-34. The next meeting will be March 20th 2016 from 1:30-3:30 p.m. at St. Anthony Claret Room.

EAST VALLEY OBLATES: Met on Feb 24th, and Toni presented her thoughts on Mercy. They will continue their study on the Year of Mercy at the next meeting. For more Information call Nancy Kaib 480-883 8025 or Frank Young 480-219-1505

PHOENIX CENTRAL: For information call Patty Williams 602-957-1464. The Phoenix group continues discussing the Year of Mercy with Michele Headrick presenting the lesson on an invitation to love, kindness, generosity and an opportunity to encounter the incredible mercy of God. They 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 St. Patrick, St. Joseph and St. Benedict lead you all deeper into the Mysteries we celebrate this month.

Blessings,

Sr. Hope