

TUCSON OBLATE NEWS LETTER

MARCH 2017

Lent is a time of growth into Christ Jesus. As disciples, we want to live as Jesus did, in love, compassion and forgiveness. I would encourage you to read Chapter 49 of the Rule on the Observance of Lent. In the Rule, Benedict is interested in freedom. This Chapter was composed many years after he formed community life. His whole community was visioned in Sacred Space looking toward Easter. During Lent, Benedict urges each one to choose something which they can do freely and joyfully. It is freeing oneself for something more important, something that should be central all year round. The issue about freedom is not what we need to free ourselves *from* but rather what we want to be free *for*. Benedict's Lent cuts back on food, talk, etc. so that we can be free to do what we should be doing every day: looking forward to Holy Easter. Easter means accepting joyfully the daily experience of peace as well as the warfare that takes place within ourselves, of transformation and resurrection as well as death. We all know that prayer and sacred reading that help us to go within, to be transformed into Christ. It is in the human mind and heart that we find God.

Notice in the daily readings at Mass, the Divine Office how often we listen to words like "Rend your hearts, not your garments Return to the Lord your God who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, rich in kindness." (Joel 2:12-18) "I have called you by name, you are mine. . . . You are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you Do not fear, I am with you." (Is: 43: 1-8.) "I have loved you with an everlasting love." (Jeremiah 31:3) The Scriptures are rich to ponder, to illuminate our intellect and re-make our hearts to BE in the Heart of God. Lent is the time for us to "Be still and know that I am God." (Ps: 46:10)

SUMMARY OF FEBRUARY PRESENTATION

Oblate Dean Jessie Zander presented on "Forgiveness" at our February meeting. She began by saying that forgiveness is a "conundrum" and that it is difficult for everyone. In the Creed, we proclaim our belief in a God of forgiveness. Perhaps forgiveness is the last thing mentioned in the Creed because it is the last thing learned in life. Perhaps none of us can understand the forgiveness of God until we ourselves have learned to forgive.

Benedictine spirituality is about caring for the people you live with, loving the people you don't, and loving God more than yourself. It depends on listening for the voice of God everywhere in life, especially in one another and daily rededication. This often means forgiveness.

Forgiveness itself is complex. But even extraordinary expressions of forgiveness do not suggest acceptance, nor do they imply "forgive and forget." All the complexities and contradictions that accompany anger and grief must be considered. Forgiveness occurs when we don't need to hold a grudge anymore, when we are strong enough to be independent of whatever, whoever it was that so ruthlessly uncovered the need in

us. To forgive someone is not to say that what they did to you is all right. It simply says that what they did to you cannot, in the end, destroy you.

It's one thing to forgive for the sake of civility; it is another to forgive from the heart. The heart urges us to go beyond the hurt to the place where freedom lies and learning happens, and trust that life is possible again.

To withhold forgiveness means that we adore the past. But it is the present that demands the best of us. Forgiveness is the gift that says two things. First, that I am just as weak as everyone else in the human race, and I know it. Second, my inner life is too rich to be destroyed by anything outside of it.

Beware of premature forgiveness, the kind that absolves another person without taking the time to examine what the bitterness is saying to our own souls about our own needs and expectations. The anger, the hurt, the bitterness that we carry from the past does little to harm the one who harmed us. It harms only ourselves. It is acid poured on our own souls eating away at the peace in us. Forgiveness does not ignore responsibility; actions have consequences. But forgiveness does not tolerate vengeance. Forgiveness frees me from the burden of anger.

The first step of healing then is to find new joy for myself to tide me through the terror of abandonment. It is time to get a life instead of mourning one. The second step of healing is to find new ideas in which to live. Whatever we needed before the break point, we must now find someplace else. The third step to healing is to entrust ourselves to someone else just when we think we cannot trust anyone or anything at all. The final healing step is a matter of time itself. To honor the fact that time is a healer that comes slowly, bringing new life and new wisdom in its wake. Healing is the process of refusing to be wounded!

ANNOUNCEMENTS: April Meeting will be on the second Sunday, the 9th, (Palm Sunday) since Easter is on the third Sunday. Mark your calendars!

- Lenten books are in the library. Benedict said we are to read a spiritual book all the way through during Lent.
- Please update email and street addresses and phone numbers when these change.
- If you don't receive the newsletter by the 8th day of the month, please contact Sr. Hope or Mary Sheridan so we can get you a copy.
- The Lectio group meets from 10 a.m. to 11a.m. every Saturday in the prayer room (off the Chapel). All are Welcome

MARCH 19TH OBLATE MEETING

Our next meeting will be March 19th at 2 p.m. Doors will open at 12:45 for inquirers, candidates and anyone else who would like to come early to use the library or visit with others. Sister Gladys Noreen, OSB will give a presentation on the spirituality of the Divine Office, also known as the Work of God

Inquirers' and Candidates' Class

The class will start at 1:00 p.m. and finish at 1:45 to join the others in the basement. It is held in the Prayer Room, on the right side as you enter the Chapel. Sister Kathleen Clare will talk about LENT. Please read Chapter 49 in the Rule. Questions for discussion are:

- What ideas do you have about Lent? For example, do you remember “giving up” something in childhood? Does sadness seem holier than happiness?
- What, if anything, have you done in past Lents that has been beneficial?

PRESCOTT OBLATE NEWS: Shirley Maday reports their next meeting will be March 19th, 1:30-3:30 p.m., at St. Anthony Claret Room. There will be a Memorial Mass for the deceased Prescott oblates on March 21st at 5:30 p.m. The study of *The Road to Eternal Life*, will continue, Ch. 29 pp.104-107.

EAST VALLEY OBLATE NEWS: This group is using the *Study Guide for the Rule of St. Benedict* by Sr. Maria Thomas Beil, OSB. They started out with wonderful questions for their study and dialogue. 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, in the St. John Paul II room in the back off the parking lot.

May God's abundant grace flow through each of you during this Lent. We celebrate St. Benedict's death on March 21, also St. Patrick (March 17); and St. Joseph (March 19). May they bestow on us wisdom and understanding as we bow to the Christ within each of us.

Sr. Hope

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