



Tucson Oblate Newsletter

May, 2015



Since this is probably the last Oblate letter I will be writing to you, I want to express my appreciation for the significant contributions made to them by Mary Sheridan. She has faithfully taken notes and summarized them for the various presentations, so I had merely to "paste" them into the letters. She also prepared the 9-month curriculum currently used for our formation group, and taken notes at deans' meetings so I could share from them for you. In ever so many ways she has been and is, my faithful right hand.

I am also grateful to all have served as deans, helping in many other ways, including determining the content of our meetings and formation program. Keep up the good work with Sr. M. Hope!

For our April meeting we were happy to welcome one of our own oblates, Rev. Rachel Srubas. Rachel asked us to ponder the questions, "How have the practices of Benedictine Oblate life helped us to change in Christ? How has being an Oblate been transformative to us as Christians?"

She continued our theme of *conversatio*, telling us that through monastic practices one becomes more and more like Christ. Monastics make vows, Rachel said, because vows are their best means of growing into Christ-likeness. As Oblates, who make promises but not vows, we do the best we can to put these values into practice as appropriate in our own situations. In either case, *conversatio* is not a one-time promise, but an ongoing process of stability, humble obedience, kindness, prayer, *lectio*, concern for others, hospitality, work, and other monastic practices that have conversion as their fruit.

Rachel identified different ways of looking at *conversatio*, as defined by various authors:

- Fidelity to monastic life (the usual translation). At times we can long for the novel, but discernment often shows us a deeper, richer satisfaction in faithfulness to where God wants us.
- Conversion of life (the more literal translation). Norvene Vest says that *conversatio* is "an ongoing

conversion to God expressed in the whole monastic manner of life" and "a deepened formation of the heart toward virtue and grace."

- Turning around (Terrence Kardong) or away from the dominant values of society (constant acquisition, "trading up," busyness, etc.) towards the monastic way of life. This life includes living in community and communal sharing, praying together several times a day, holy reading, and radical hospitality.
- Conversation with God (Marilyn Wild): In this approach, one listens to God, replies with praise, and puts God's call to social justice into action.
- Constant letting go (Esther de Waal): We recognize that some of our attachments are not healthy, and replace them with those that are more Christ-like.
- Recognition of God's unpredictability, which confronts our own love of coziness and safety (Esther de Waal): We see our idols successively broken and replaced with more accurate ideas of God.
- Facing up to the demands of growth and change
- Growing more deeply into the likeness of Christ
- A call to listen carefully, to love deeply, and to be willing to change as needed (Judith Valente).

Rachel also pointed out that these various approaches can be seen as steps in the spiritual journey. After her presentation, she asked us to share in small groups which of the approaches is most meaningful in our personal lives.

TUCSON: Next meeting **Renewal Day, Sunday, May 17, Schedule follows.**

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(PEACE)

For the May Renewal Day, Mary Sheridan will present on similarities between Confucius's teaching and Benedict's. Confucius was a wisdom figure in ancient China, approximately 1000 years before Benedict. His teachings have been tremendously influential in China, and are still studied and followed today. In the afternoon, Mary will talk about lessons (not necessarily spiritual) learned during her recent 5-month teaching experience in China.

Order for Renewal Day

9:00 a.m. Any who wish are welcome to join with the monastic community for Mass.

10:00 Light breakfast: Coffee, donuts, bagels, etc., downstairs. Some of the Sisters will join us.

10:30 (or as soon as we can start) Welcome, then first presentation by Mary Sheridan.

11:30 Inquirers being enrolled as candidates, and candidates making oblation, meet upstairs with directors. Others have QUIET time for reflection--in chapel, outside, browsing in the library, etc. Some will be setting up for noon meal.

12:00 Midday prayer in Chapel with Community, concluding with enrollments and oblations.

12:30 Lunch downstairs: sandwiches, salads and dessert

1:45 (Approximately) Second presentation by Mary Sheridan.

3:00-3:15 Closing and cleanup.

Volunteers are still needed to bring food: Please call Bette Dickinson, 834-5300 to find out what is most needed. Donation for the meal is \$7.00 to \$8.00 if you are not bringing food. Please let us know if you are coming for the noon meal, so we can plan responsibly and not have too much food left over. Phone before May 13 (520-325-6401) and leave a message, or email: lenora@bspa.us.

We do not have anyone from Tucson who has requested enrollment as a candidate at this time, but **Gina Keating** from Phoenix Central will be here for enrollment.

The following will make their Oblation

Sylvia Aguayo (Tucson)

Carole Ambroziak (Tucson)

Paul Mather (Tucson)

Susan Pease (Phoenix Central)

LIBRARY: *LARGE* book sale on renewal day. NOTICE: Books taken out or renewed in May can be kept until September with no fine. ***Please bring back any overdue books you may have.***

Midsummer Potluck July 19 around 12:30 pm, in the assembly room at the monastery: At the Deans meeting on April 26, we agreed on this date. The monastic community prays Day Hour at 12:00 (about 15-20 minutes long) and you are welcome to join them. Last year's

gathering was small but enjoyable, and those present wanted to do it again. ***Bring something edible to share.*** You will get another notice closer to the meeting, but there will be no formal presentation or formation meeting. It's a time to enjoy one another and get to know each other better. Coffee and juice will be provided. The library will be available too.

PRESCOTT: Next meeting Sunday, May 17, 1:30-3:30 pm in St. Anthony Claret Room.

Shirley Maday writes: There was sharing on Michael Casey's book, *The Road to Eternal Life*, chapters 12 and 13. Chapter 12 spoke of fear of the Lord being the right attitude for approaching God: an attitude of reverence and an awareness of our condition as sinners. Chapter 13 noted that fear of the Lord is an incitement to effort to run with fervor along the road that leads to eternal life. For the next meeting the lesson will be from the same book, pp. 50-58.

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

PHOENIX CENTRAL: Next meeting, Saturday, May 9, 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. We have been enjoying the study by Fr. David Turner, OSB called A Benedictine Moment, a 30-day resource for reflecting on Benedictine values as contained in The Rule of St. Benedict. We are blessed!

For more information call Patty Williams: 602-957-1464 or email Benedictine@cox.net

PHOENIX EAST VALLEY: Next meeting Saturday May 23.

No more news available from the East Valley at this time.

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

Have a wonderful summer, and slow down occasionally to enjoy the leisure that refreshes both body and spirit.

***Blessings,
Lenora, OSB***