



TUCSON OBLATE NEWSLETTER

MAY 2017

The beauty of this Easter Season includes the readings that we are called daily in the Mass to reflect on. "We are to put on the mind and heart of God." We are transformed from death to life. We do not fear death; that is why Benedict tells us in the Rule "to keep death daily before our eyes." The Risen Christ appeared first to Mary his Mother, then Mary Magdalen. In her preoccupation she did not recognize that Jesus had ascended to the Father. Jesus glorified on the cross had indeed gone to the Father. Jesus redirects her to the community of his brothers and sisters which is, in a mysterious way, his glorified body. Mary as the first apostle of the Resurrection announced, "I have seen the Lord." In the Resurrection, mortal flesh has become a glorified body. Jesus is now pointing Mary Magdalen to his presence in the community, where she will encounter him in a new way, a new mode of being present, which is in us.

The first gift to the disciples and the believers is peace and forgiveness, the Church as community not as a hierarchical institution. This is the foundational symbolic expression of the risen Jesus. The Church is the Body. In John's Gospel, community means the ongoing bodily presence of Jesus in the world. Jesus's followers are to live by his Spirit, which he breathed upon them, to carry on his mission of receiving those whom He gives them and holding them fast in the community. May the Spirit fill our hearts and minds with the courage and grace to bring to the world Jesus' LOVE and FORGIVENESS, for we are now His body.

NEWS:

- New Leadership: Sister Mary Hope will be transferring to the Motherhouse in Clyde, MO at the end of May. Sister Kathleen Clare will be the Oblate Director, with help from Mary Sheridan. William Joseph and Kitty Tobin are our new deans. Continuing Deans are, Betty Dickinson, Sharon Hammond, Mary Sheridan, and Jessie Zander. You can approach any of them to talk about how you see the future of the Oblates. As the body of Christ in the world and the sons and daughters of St. Benedict, you are all so important to our Congregation and the Church.
- The Lectio group will not meet during the summer months. It will begin again in September, meeting at the home of Kevan Perry (himalayanraven@yahoo.com). More information later.
- If we find a new meeting place in time, the September Oblate meeting may be at another place than the Monastery. This will help us get accustomed to the new place, and also help the Sister as they downsize.
- The Oblates contributed to a scholarship fund established in honor of Oblate Jessie Zander. We received a thank you card from her.
- Eight Phoenix Oblates will be coming for retreat at the Monastery on the last weekend in May. Please pray for them.
- July Ice Cream Social: We plan to have an ice cream social in July to celebrate the Feast of St. Benedict. We would like to use that time to discuss two things. (1) Your ideas and preferences for how the Tucson Oblate Chapter will continue after the Monastery is closed. Several people are exploring churches where we might be able to meet. If you have an idea of place, please let us know. There is strong leadership among the Oblates, which I appreciate. Our other Oblate chapters in Phoenix, St. Louis, Sand Springs, and Wyoming have done well with lay leadership, and I know you will do well and grow. (2) Sharon and William, who are going to Rome, also need to do a project for the Oblate Congress about our Chapter and would like to get feedback and ideas from those who attend the meeting. So this will be more of a meeting with ice cream than a social. We need your ideas, so please come.
- After four years of study, 11 weekends a year, Oblate Sharon Hammond will be commissioned a Lay Ecclesiastical Minister on June 4th, in a Mass at 3 PM at the Cathedral. Congratulations!

- Thanks to Oblate Isabel Delgado and husband Raul for all their work helping to organize the Sisters' successful Yard Sale on May 6.

REQUESTS:

- If anyone has a video camera to donate, loan, or bring to Oblate meetings, please let us know—and bring it to Renewal Day. This would help us put meetings on the Benedictine Sisters' website.
- If some would like to donate to help Sharon and William on their Rome trip you can make a check or cash to Benedictine Oblates and mail it here. We will see that the amount gets divided and given to each one.

MAY 21st OBLATE RENEWAL DAY 10:00 TO about 3:30 p.m.

The Theme is "Framing Today's issues in light of the Gospel and the Rule of Benedict." Schedule:

- Mass at 9:00 a.m. for those who wish to attend: After Mass will be a time of silence until the program starts at 10:15. Please come after mass for coffee, juice, and rolls. Music will be playing to promote a time of reflection. Those not attending Mass can come any time before 10:15.
- 10:15 Morning presentations start
- 12:00 Day Hour in Chapel. Dori Swalec will make her final Oblation. We may have two entering Candidacy.
- 12:20 Lunch:
 - Last names beginning with A-O, please bring salads.
 - Last names beginning with P-Z please bring desserts.
 - The sisters will supply chicken salad and drinks.
- 1:30 - 3:30 Afternoon presentations

PRESCOTT OBLATE CHAPTER--SAD NEWS: Shirley Maday reports that the three remaining members of the Chapter discussed their situation. "There was agreement that low attendance at monthly meetings, despite publicity in the parish bulletin, did not warrant scheduling future Oblate meetings. The consensus reached was to disband the Chapter with the April 30th meeting and to donate the remaining Chapter funds to the Benedictine Sisters." There will be a final get-together in honor of St. Benedict's feast in July.

EAST VALLEY OBLATE NEWS:

April's meeting resulted in a good discussion on conversion. In May, **the date for the meeting is changed to May 20th** because some of the group will be on retreat the 4th Saturday at the Monastery in Tucson. In June, we will meet on the regular 4th Saturday. We will study the 4th part of the Chapter on "Seek Peace and Pursue it," pages 13-15. 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, 85018. Our meeting room is in the St. John

Paul II room in the back of the parking lot. This group is also studying the Rule of Benedict by Maria-Thomas Beil, OSB.

SUMMARY OF APRIL PRESENTATION

Note: this presentation was audio recorded and is available at: <http://www.benedictineoblates.com/downloads/EndofLifeChoices.mp3>

Sharon Hammond gave an interesting and useful presentation on end of life decisions, including the Christian perspective. She began by reminding us that all will go back to God, it's just a matter of time. The Rule of Benedict, Ch. 4, tells us that we should "keep death always before our eyes." Jesus said that he is going ahead of us to prepare a place for us (John 14:3), and will come back to get us. So there is reason for us to be hopeful and trust in God.

Sharon focused on 2 documents that help us prepare for the end. The first is a Medical Power of Attorney, which specifies who can make medical decisions for you if you are unable to make them for yourself (e.g., you are in a coma). The second is a Living Will, which reflects your values and preferences regarding certain types of medical care (e.g., would you want to be put on a respirator to keep you alive?). Having these documents completed while you are healthy and of sound mind helps ensure the quality of your final days. It keeps your family and medical caretakers from having to guess at what you would have wanted, or having to go by default state regulations. Many people delay doing these documents out of fear. But having them completed, and discussing them with your family/friends is a gift that you give to them. Following your wishes is a gift that they give to you.

Before specifying final wishes, it is important to think about what life means to us. To do this, we can start with Christian values. According to the Church, human life is sacred from conception through natural death. Life is a gift from God; we are stewards of our lives, not owners. Death is a beginning, not an end.

One Church principle is "ordinary vs. extraordinary treatment." One cannot choose death (e.g., euthanasia, assisted suicide), but one is not required to use every treatment or intervention that is possible. We must accept treatments that provide a reasonable hope of benefit without excessive burden. "Excessive burden" depends on context. Factors such as cost, side effects, distance to care, pain, and emotional consequences can be considered. Each judgment is unique. It is a moral, not medical judgment. In discerning, we should pray, seek advice, and gather information. Scripture, pastors, and spiritual directors are also helpful. Above all, one should listen to what God is saying through these means.

In creating a Medical Power of Attorney, designate people (a primary decision-maker and an alternate) who know and will carry out your wishes, who are comfortable asking questions of medical personnel, and who will be available when needed. Ask the people's permission, and communicate your decision to your friends/family members/primary health care provider. (Your decisions affect those around you.) In Arizona, the document needs to be witnessed, but not notarized.

Things to think about for a Living Will include:

- Food and water: The Church says caregivers are obliged to provide these, including by "medically assisted" means such as feeding tubes, unless these would be excessively burdensome.
- Pain: Keeping patients as free from pain as possible is part of our obligation to love our neighbors. It is permissible to use pain medications that could shorten life, as long as the intent is to relieve pain.
- Religious observances: if you want communion, chaplain visits, to be on the parish list of the sick, etc., these can be specified.
- CPR: Do you want this, which can include a breathing tube, medications, and shock to restart or normalize the heart?
- Blood products?
- Dialysis for kidney failure?

- Chemotherapy for cancer?
- Hospice care, where the focus will be on “comfort care,” not curing illness?
- Autopsy? (Required by law in some cases.)
- Funeral: Do you want a Mass? Note that the Church does not forbid cremation, but prefers that there is a Mass with the body present, followed by the cremation. Ashes should be buried, not scattered.

If you create these documents, then later change your mind, you can always change the documents. Note that the documents may be state-specific, so they may need to be changed if you move.

Sharon emphasized that she is not a lawyer, and was presenting this information from a nursing perspective. She also said that more resources are available on the AZ Attorney General’s website, <https://www.azag.gov/seniors/life-care-planning>. An advance directives form is also available from the Phoenix Diocese website, http://dphx.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Advance-Medical-Directive-2012_05_21.pdf

May the Spirit breathe on all of us as we journey into the Heart of God.

Sr. Hope

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