



Tucson Oblate Newsletter November, 2013

On this Feast of All Saints, greetings to all the saints in and around Tucson, Prescott, Phoenix, Chandler and Green Valley!

If St. Paul could write to “to the saints who are in Ephesus,” I should be able to address the saints, and saints-in-training in our Oblate communities. Happy Feast! We are told that the saints endlessly praise God, so it is no wonder that one of the topics that came up in our September meeting as a subject for further sharing was the Liturgy of the Hours, the prayer at the center of St. Benedict's Rule.

Praying the Liturgy of the Hours daily with a monastic community is not possible for most Oblates, but there are many other ways of praying the Hours--ways that will vary widely from one person to the next. Time is God's incredibly precious gift to us, and too easily we take it for granted. All time is sacred, and the purpose of the Liturgy of the Hours is to keep reminding us of that.

In *Seven Sacred Pauses* Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB, describes this prayer as a “guide for those who would like to move through their day with greater mindfulness . . . Living mindfully is the art of living awake and ready to embrace the gift of the present moment.”

At the Tucson Oblate meeting in October, a lively panel of Oblates responded to some of the questions generated by the group at the September meeting. Panel members were **Dic Ford**, a volunteer at San Xavier Mission School; **Sharon Hammond**, a nurse who works at the VA Hospital; **Donna Hudgel**, who works at a funeral home; and **Jessie Zander**, a retired teacher and community volunteer. **Mila Aroskar** served as moderator.

Question 1: How do you apply the Rule and Benedictine principles to your daily life? The panel members talked about the importance of prayer, but also the necessity of scheduling it into one's life. Early morning works for Jessie, Donna, and Sharon, as well as thanking God throughout the day. Donna also said that she prays before working with families, and takes a “quiet day” regularly. Sharon tries to start every week with an intention related to whatever she feels she needs to work on that week. Dic quoted advice given him that he has found helpful: don't “beat yourself up” if you miss saying the Liturgy of the Hours, and remember that work with people is also a form of prayer.

Question 2: What changes have occurred in your life because of becoming familiar with the Rule of Benedict? Dic spoke of reading the Church Fathers.

Jessie said that coming to the monastery for quiet was the beginning of her contact with the Oblate program, and believes that she is better able to listen because she is now more contemplative and less busy. Sharon also spoke of “listening with the ear of your heart” as important in her work. Donna agreed that now she is a better listener to herself, others, and God.

Question 3: How do you experience community, and how does being an Oblate contribute to communities that you belong to? Jessie described growing up in a small town, where community meant always being welcomed, and contrasted it with Tucson, where community is harder to get in touch with. For her, community is her immediate neighbors. She visits shut-ins, and shares a meal with them or takes them for a walk, and also makes phone calls or sends cards to those who will appreciate them. She also defined community as being part of organizations where one can make a difference by one's presence or perhaps one's financial support.

Dic talked about the slow process of becoming part of a Native community, but also the rewards of having been “adopted” by the San Xavier school community. Donna pointed out that we are all members of many communities, and always feels blessed when people let her into their lives. Sharon said that the Rule taught her to be more compassionate, and feels blessed when people share part of their journey with her.

Responding to this discussion of community, Katharine Nutt said that she believes there has never been a time when community is as important as it is now, when people in groups are more likely to be interacting with their own electronic devices than with one another.

Mila had also asked each of the panelists to come up with a “single thought,” and hinted that the group would be asked what these thoughts were at the November meeting. Dic said, “Don't be afraid of prayer. It doesn't hurt. Do what works for you.” Donna said that previously she prayed because she felt that she had to do it, but now prays because she wants to do it. Sharon said simply, “Thank you for sharing God's love with others.” And Jessie said, “My alleluia always, no matter the time or place.” Mila also had a single thought, quoting from *Monastery of the Heart*:

**“Becoming a monastic is the work of a lifetime.
We start over every day.”**

TUCSON: Next meeting Sunday, November 17 at 2:00 p.m. Doors open at 1:00 p.m. for inquirers, candidates and anyone else who would like to come early, use the library, and/or visit with others.

1:15 - Oblate candidates and inquirers meet in prayer room with Sharon Hammond as leader. They should read Ch. 2 Qualities of the Abbot, Ch. 3 Summoning the Brothers for Counsel, Ch. 5 Obedience, and Ch. 6 Restraint of Speech. Be ready to discuss the following:

1. What does Benedict have to say about leadership? About obedience? About the balance between the two? How is listening important in both?
2. How can these chapters be implemented in the daily life of an Oblate?
3. How did Benedict feel about grumbling? What problems can grumbling cause in the monastery? In family and work life?
4. Why is silence important in the life of the monastery? Does it have a role in the life of an Oblate?

2:00 - Meeting for all: Mary Sheridan will give a Power Point presentation on the **Liturgy of the Hours**—some of it from a presentation she gave to the Oblates three years ago, and some of it new. We will also incorporate the praying of one of the “Little Hours” from the Liturgy of the Hours, so you will have the experience of praying it with the group. There will be time at the end for questions. By way of preparation for this meeting, please bring any **questions** you have, or have heard others voice, about the Liturgy of the Hours. Also, *if you have versions of the Liturgy of the Hours that you use, could you bring them to show others, so they could become acquainted with them?* You don't need to bring the *Benedictine Handbook*, as we will have copies of that on display.

PRESCOTT: Next meeting Sunday, November 17, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Shirley Maday writes: There was a sharing on the seventh step of Karen Armstrong's book, on “how little we know.” The purpose of this step is to recognize and appreciate the unknown and unknowable, to become sensitive to over-confident assertions of certainty in ourselves and other people, and to make ourselves aware of the mystery of each person we encounter each day.

Next meeting's assignment is to read in Karen Armstrong's *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*: “The Eighth Step: How Should We Speak to One Another,” p. 131 ff.

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

PHOENIX CENTRAL: Next meeting, Saturday, November 9, 2013, 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: We viewed a video in October called Monks and Hermits-New Forms of Monasticism and will start our study on Benedictine women in November. Mount Claret had their annual auction in October which we offered to volunteer at and we also donated a basket full of Benedictine items (which was sold immediately!). Everyone is welcome to come on Saturday so please join us.

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

PHOENIX EAST VALLEY: Next meeting Saturday, November 16.

Nancy Kaib writes: We will meet with the Phoenix Oblates at the *Benedictine University at Mesa* on Saturday, November 16. The University will host our meeting and include a tour of their facility as well as telling us about their plans for establishing an Oblate group at the University. At the meeting Mike Schroeder will be able to present his power point program on his trip to Rome for the International Congress for Benedictine Oblates. The meeting will begin at 9:30am with Morning Prayer, followed by the program. All are welcome.

For more information contact Nancy Kaib, 480-883-8025, Patty Williams, 602-957-1464 or Frank Young, 480-219-1505.

WORLD CONGRESS OF OBLATES

On Facebook, you can see many of Mike's Rome pictures on his Facebook page. **Michael Schroeder**

The World Congress website is <http://www.benedictine-oblates.org/2013/index-en.htm>

Good video of the visit to Subiaco on youtube: <http://www.benedictine-oblates.org/2013/index-en.htm>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_JA1Agxjfo&feature=youtu.be

PLEASE PARTICIPATE in this brief, painless survey if you are an Oblate. Dr. Julia Upton, a theology professor at St. John's University, invites Oblates: "I am engaged in a research project on Oblates for the American Benedictine Academy. The theme for the convention to be held this coming summer is 'Benedictine Monasticism: The Past Receiving the Future.' To that end I have been charged to survey oblates around the country . . . so that we have more than anecdotal evidence with which to continue the conversation between tradition and new expressions of the Benedictine charism." Go to <http://irsurveys.stjohns.edu/S11/AmericanBenedictine/AmericanBenedictine.asp?PI=9rc7-1hxf-g5w?>

Happy Thanksgiving!

Love, Lenora, os6

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