



Tucson Oblate Newsletter November, 2014

Greetings to all you saints who read this letter on this eve of the Feast of All Saints—or whenever you get to it. With these words St. Paul greeted those to whom he addressed his Letters, and they probably weren't all saints with a halo any more than all the readers of this letter are. November is a month that reminds us to be grateful for our many blessings, and celebrate them of the Feast of Thanksgiving. I suspect many of us waste much of our time complaining about what we do NOT like, and this is a reminder to shift our attention for a while to what we are really GRATEFUL for. Try it!

At our October meeting **Sr. Pascaline Coff**, from our Tucson monastery, gave a moving presentation on stability of heart, and I enclose a couple quotes below.

"Stability implies a settled way of life, with a constancy in prayer and study and work so that contemplation, in the sense of union with God, becomes habitual. But we must ask, that we may receive. How Jesus longs for us to ask so He can prove His truth: "Ask me anything and it will be done." He tells us several times 'Ask the Father in my name and you will have it.' The place of contemplation is the 'cave of the heart,' which we have with us wherever we go, similar to conversion which is not a particular moment of time but a continuous process. Contemplation is really going beyond the limits of space and time -- though a constant space and regular time may assist the process. So Stability is not just for monks and nuns but for everyone in whatever walk of life, as 'that stabilizing of the attitude of mind, going beyond names and forms and realizing the Presence of the divine mystery every moment.

"Even without monastic life we are not dispensed from seeking stability of heart, that attitude is what will lead us to the inner sanctuary and ground our lives on the Rock, Christ. The ultimate end of stability is: '...what God has prepared for those who love him' (I Cor 2:9). And He longs to give some of that even now! Mindfulness of His Presence is available even now. The early Church seemed much more awake to this than our present

reality. St. Augustine prayed: 'You have made us for yourself, O Lord and we shall not rest until we rest in you' (*Confessions*)."

Urgent request #1: If you do not receive a newsletter within a week of the beginning of any month, please let me know, in case your address has changed.

Request #2: The December 21 meeting will be close to Christmas, and I could not change it to an earlier date. I know that will be inconvenient for some, but please do try to come if at all possible. We have a special program planned and would like as many as possible present. There will be more details in the December letter.

TUCSON: Next meeting Sunday, November 16 at 2:00 p.m. Doors open at 1:00 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 (1st door on right from chapel upstairs) at 1:15. Sharon Hammond will lead this group. In preparation for this session, read from the Rule of Benedict: Ch. 1, *The Kinds of Monks*; Ch. 2, *Qualities of the Abbot*; Ch. 3 *Summoning the Brothers for Counsel*; Ch. 34 *Fair Provision for the Needs of All*; and Ch. 69 *No One Should Act as Advocate for Another*.

1. What questions/comments do you have from last time, or from your reading?
2. Questions for discussion:
 - a. Why do you think Benedict began the Rule by describing the different kinds of monks?
 - b. What does Benedict have to say about leadership? About respect for the community? About the balance between the two? How is listening important in both?
 - c. What are the responsibilities of being in any kind of a community? The benefits?
 - d. How can these chapters be implemented in the daily life of an Oblate?

REMINDER: All who have copies of the *Benedictine Handbook (the hard cover red book)* please bring it with you to the meeting. (Have your name in it)

2:00 p.m.: A panel of two Sisters and two Oblates will discuss aspects of Stability. The Sisters are one of the elders of the community, **Sr. Kathleen Gorman**, and our youngest and newest member, **Sr. Maria Victoria Cutaia**. The Oblates will be **George Mairs** and **Kitty Tobin**. **Mila Aroskar** will be moderator.

All present will have opportunities to ask questions and comment. In preparation for the panel discussion you are invited to reflect on the following:

- How does your daily life now reflect the Benedictine concept of "stability," for example: caring over time for an elderly family member or someone with ongoing special needs?

- What changes might you need to make in order to increase "stability" as more central to your own spiritual practices and daily activities?

PRESCOTT: Next meeting **Sunday, November 16, 1:30-3:30 pm**, St. Anthony Claret Room.

Shirley Maday writes: At the October meeting there was sharing on Michael Casey's book, *The Road to Eternal Life*. The themes of the chapters dealt with the labor of obedience and escaping self-will. Oblates are challenged to choose to follow Christ, not the impulses and tendencies of self-will. For the next meeting the Lesson is pages 19-26 of Casey's *The Road to Eternal Life*

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

PHOENIX CENTRAL: Next meeting, **Saturday, November 8, 2014, 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. The yearly Mount Claret fundraising event was a success and our Benedictine group was well represented which included donations (a special thank you to Barbara Daoust, Christina DuBois, Mary Lou Anton, Michele Headrick and Mary Gibson) as well as volunteers (a special thank you to Mike and Madeline Rose who sold all the raffle tickets). We are blessed!

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

PHOENIX EAST VALLEY: Next meeting **Saturday, November 15** (note change to 3rd Saturday for this month)

We will continue our study of Michael Casey's book, *Guide to Living in the Truth: St. Benedict's Teaching on Humility*, Chapter 9.

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

I can't resist sharing one of the somewhat fuzzy photos Mary Sheridan sent me from China, this one in the costume of an ancient Chinese emperor. It was taken in Xi'an, where



she saw the famous array of Terra Cotta warriors. She has now spent half of her teaching time in China, and should be returning before the end of January. When asked if she had any message for the Oblates, Mary wrote:

I have been struck while here by the importance of voting. Chinese people don't have the opportunity to vote. . . . We in the US may feel that our individual vote doesn't count for much, especially if we are on the less-popular side. But our whole network of freedoms is founded, in part, on our ability to talk back to our elected representatives, who ultimately depend on us for their jobs. Because of logistics, I won't be voting this fall. And I'll miss it. But I'll come back with a new appreciation for the opportunity.

Praying that you will be blessed with a grateful heart, this Thanksgiving Day,

Sr. Lenora, OSB

