



The Benedictine Oblate Letter

January, 2018

Dear Oblates and Friends,

Our hearts have been with our oblates and friends who have been associated with our sisters there, some for many years. The farewell mass was celebrated there on Friday, January 19, and the last public mass was celebrated the following Sunday. Now the doors to the chapel are locked. Some of our sisters are already here at Clyde; five more arrive on Tuesday, and the remaining four will follow within a few short weeks. We welcome them with open hearts, but for all of us there is sadness and fear, mixed up with hope and expectation. Transitions are never easy.

Our sisters are leaving the warmth and sunshine of Tucson to endure the frigid weather, grey skies, snow, and ice of a Missouri winter. The weather makes the change more difficult. But last night, as if to prepare us, we experienced a thunderstorm replete with thunder, lightning, and hail. Such storms are expected in July or August, not in January. It was a storm out of season.

The storm reminded us that there is no certainty in life other than Jesus' love and mercy. Friday's Eucharist at Clyde, like that in Tucson, was one of thanksgiving. The young monk who presided, Fr. Etienne Huard, spoke of the Tucson closure and the cross of Christ: "not the cross that stands alone but everything that it represents: it represents a whole community wrapped in a mission, wrapped in complicated and emotionally charged events; wrapped with much hope that ended with death. We will call that event a thanksgiving, a Eucharist." He went on: "The event of the cross did not end on Calvary. It did not end in the tomb. It ended with resurrection into new life. And it must be the same with you. This cross you celebrate and give thanks for must bring new life in each and every one of you."

To conclude his homily, Fr. Etienne quoted from Isaiah 63:7-9:

The loving deeds of the Lord I will recall,
the glorious acts of the Lord,
Because of all the Lord has done for us,
the immense goodness to the house of Israel,
Which he has granted according to his mercy
and his many loving deeds.
He said: "They are indeed my people,
children who are not disloyal."
So he became their savior
in their every affliction.

We give thanks even in time of sorrow and look to the future with hope.

And now the news:

Tucson Oblates

By the time you receive this letter, the January 27 meeting will be just a memory. It was the last meeting that Sr. Kathleen Clare was able to attend. She will be missed, but we know that the group is in capable hands and will surely thrive.

At present, the group is discussing the meaning of community. The reflection questions might be helpful for everyone to consider:

Why would St. Benedict favor community over living as a hermit? What are the theological reasons for community? What does community mean to me? How do I think community benefits my growth as a Christian? Have I ever tried to be a hermit for any period of time? How did that time go for me? How long can I "be with God" before my mind wanders?

Phoenix Central: A Day of Benedictine Renewal has been re-scheduled for February 10, 2018, the Solemnity of Saint Scholastica. It will be held at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Phoenix from 9am to 3pm.

West Phoenix: The West Phoenix group meets in Glendale for a morning of prayer, community, and fellowship on the third Saturday of the month from 9:00 am -12pm. For information call Lisa Hughes at 623-374-2382.

East Valley: The East Valley Oblates meet on the fourth Saturday of the month. The next meeting is on Saturday, February 24. For information call Nancy Kaib 480-883-8025 or Frank Young 480-219-1505.

Sand Springs:

The oblates meet on the first Sunday of the month at 11:30 am in the Bede Building. Visitors are always welcome to attend.

Sheridan, Wyoming:

The group meets on the first Saturday of the month. They enjoy their lively discussions. For information, contact Cel Hope at celhaus@fiberpipe.net. You may also email me at sarah@bspa.us or contact me by phone at 660-944-2221.

Peace,

Sr. Sarah