



Tucson Oblate Newsletter October, 2013

Letting go

OCTOBER is the month when visitors head for New England to enjoy the brief but colorful foliage season before the hardwood trees start **letting go** of their gloriously colored leaves. Appropriately timed, a new book came into my hands bearing the title, *Faith Can Give Us WINGS: The Art of Letting go*, by our Abbot Primate Notker Wolf, OSB, who leads Benedictines throughout the world. Here are a few seasonal quotes:

"The capacity to let go is a great art because it allows us to let things simply be as they are. When we live into this truth, we come to realize that we don't have to accomplish everything that needs to be done. The responsibility for the world is not mine; and it is not necessary for me to be able to explain everything."

Earlier in the book he somewhat qualifies the above: "Don't get me wrong; the world needs people who don't just think about themselves but take responsibility for their families, their jobs, and the world around them," but there is a danger that we can be motivated by a desire "for the affirmation we receive for investing ourselves in others' lives and work."

Abbot Wolf describes the temptation to settle down. "Perhaps we've made the nest extremely comfortable and have become rather portly so that we no longer fit very well. That's when we know we've stayed too long and that widening the nest again isn't going to work." If so, we need to be nudged out of the nest, stretch out our wings, and fly. It is faith that will give us our wings and strengthen them as we risk flying. (pp. 8, 184)

News

Mike Schroeder, our delegate for the World Congress of Oblates, leaves for Rome on October 1, and will return on October 18. He will be most grateful for our prayers, and we look forward to his return. He will be sharing the experience as only Mike can, with all of us during the year. Tucson will welcome him for our renewal day January 19.

Praying for Beatification of Dorothy Day: As you may know, Dorothy Day was a Benedictine Oblate of St. Procopius Abbey, and first steps have been taken to toward her beatification and eventual canonization. The Oblates of St. Procopius Abbey have started a prayer program inviting Oblate chapters as well as individual

Oblates, to pick one day a month when they would pray for this intention. They have a calendar on the Internet and you can see the details at <http://www.dorothydayasaint.org/> and <http://dorothydayasaint.org/prayer-calendar.html> You may want to discuss this in your groups.

Tucson Oblates are off to a good start, with 46 present at the September 15 meeting. As background for our theme for the year, "An Oblate's Day," Sisters Lenora and Joan Therese talked about daily life in the monastery. Sisters are responsible to get themselves up and to breakfast and prayer. Silence is kept except for urgent speaking until after morning prayer (the norm in the monastery is to strive for quiet at all times). The day begins with two periods of prayer—Vigils which is meditative, and Lauds which is sung.

After Lauds, and breakfast for those who have not eaten earlier, the day's work begins. Sisters structure their work and personal prayer according to community and personal needs. Jobs and departments in the monastery include making liturgical vestments, answering correspondence, cooking, cleaning, answering the phone and door, planning liturgy, etc.

Sisters take periods of adoration, *lectio divina*, and private prayer, and also have various assignments such as caring for a certain part of the monastery, taking turns for reading in chapel, serving at table, preparing meals or helping at the reception room.

"Day hour" (noon prayer) ends the morning's work. Most days, this is in the Prayer Room, and includes time for sharing and reflection on the Gospel for the day's Mass. Dinner follows—the main meal of the day. There is talking during dinner and supper (except for brief reading during supper), since there is formal community recreation only on Sunday evenings. Sisters and any guests eat at round tables for five or six, and choose where they want to sit. Supper is a lighter meal.

One Saturday a month is "free day," and one evening per week is "free evening" when Sisters have more choice in their activities. There is often a video on Wednesday evenings. Sisters may also take monthly "hermit days," two weeks of vacation, and make an 8-day retreat yearly.

The community engages in its own charitable activities. Currently it pays for monthly bus passes for the poor, enabling them to go to appointments and food programs, and to look for work. The monastery also donates

to charities such as the Casa Maria Catholic Worker House that serve those in need.

Twenty-four women reside in the monastery, including a live-in volunteer and a Dominican Sister who works for the Diocese. The community is aging, with over half the members having celebrated their golden jubilees. However, there are new members, who receive most of their formation at Clyde but may visit Tucson as part of their discernment process.

Following this presentation, small groups were formed to discuss differences between monastic life and Oblate life. Group members identified, for example, the difference between a life structured around periods of prayer and a life in which it can be difficult to find times for prayer. Groups were also asked to come up with questions which members of next month's panel on Oblate life can address.

TUCSON: Next meeting Sunday, October 20 at 2:00 p.m. Doors open at 1:00 p.m. for inquirers, candidates and anyone else who would like to come early, sign in, use the library, and/or visit with others.

1:15 - Oblate candidates and inquirers meet in prayer room, Mary Sheridan will lead.

Preparation: For the October meeting read the Preface and Prologue of the Rule.

- What questions/comments do you have from last time, or from your reading?
- Questions for discussion:
 - * What does Benedict say about listening in the Prologue?
 - * What role does listening hold in our lives? What are some examples of times when listening made a difference, or failure to listen caused problems?
 - * What is the difference between *hearing* and *listening*?
 - * What has your experience been in listening to God?

2:00 p.m. - Panel discussion on what daily Oblate life looks like for each of four Oblates: Jesse Zander, Sharon Hammond, Donna Hudgel, and Dic Ford. Mila Aroskar will be the moderator.

After 35-40 minutes of sharing by the panel, there will be time for Q&A.

Notes from the Library Corner: Our thanks go to Ob-

lates Rose Natividad and Eugenia Taylor for donating books to the library. **A reminder to return overdue books** so others too will have a chance to read them. To renew them call the monastery (325-6401) and leave a message for Mary Sheridan if you can't get to a meeting or drop them off at the monastery office.

PRESCOTT: Next meeting Sunday, October 20, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Shirley Maday writes: There was sharing on the units of Karen Armstrong's book on *empathy* and *mindfulness*. It was noted that the suffering we have experienced in our own life can help us to appreciate the depths of other people's unhappiness and be sensitive to their pain. We can then reach out to somebody who needs a helping hand or a friendly word. In this step, we were reminded of times in our life when somebody went out of his or her way to help us. Mindfulness is needed to give us more control over our minds so that we can reverse negative tendencies to develop new ones.

For the next meeting the assignment is Karen Armstrong's Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life, the Seventh Step: "How Little We Know," pages 116-130.

For more information, call Nancy Hinshaw: 928-445-127

PHOENIX CENTRAL: Next meeting, Saturday, October 12, 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: Our study on Benedictine leadership has finally concluded. We will be starting a new study of extraordinary Benedictine women which Karen will lead. Everyone is welcome to come so please join us.

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

PHOENIX EAST VALLEY: Next meeting, Saturday, October 26, at St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church.

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

***Blessings to all of you,
Sr. Lenora, OSB***

