



# Tucson Oblate Newsletter

## September, 2012

### Welcome to another Oblate season!

I hope that you have all survived the summer's challenges and managed to get some time away from the usual routine. In any case you have my prayers that the months ahead will be fruitful for all of us. As you will see below, an overall theme for the first part of our year is *compassion*. In the next couple months, as our politicians trade insults and try to exploit every vulnerable point in their opposition, it is good to see what Benedict has to say about compassion. Personal attacks are bad enough, but when whole groups of people are attacked, it is even worse. Benedict is concerned with the vulnerabilities of both the individual and the community.

In *The Gift of Saint Benedict*, Verna Holyhead, SGS, writes: "Compassion is the deep, gut wrenching response to and embracing of the situation of another. As a radical critique of blind legalism, cynical indifference, or established subservience, it is a work of justice, which announces that another's dignity or hurt is to be taken seriously. And it is woven into the whole fabric and all seasons of a Benedictine community's life."

Compassion is one of the characteristics that distinguish the Rule of Benedict from earlier religious Rules and is one reason his Rule has survived over 1500 years. Almost all monastic scholars today believe that Benedict borrowed extensively from the Rule of the Master, but made significant changes and omitted many of the Master's sterner directives. I invite you to follow up on some of the Chapters below, and see how many more you can find.

- Ch. 27 The Superior's Care for the Excommunicated
- Ch. 31 The Qualities Required by the Cellarer
- Ch. 36: The Care of the Sick
- Ch. 37: Care for the Elderly and the Young
- Ch. 53: The Reception of Guests
- Ch. 64: The Election of the Abbot

Verna Holyhead concludes her brief reflection on Compassion in the Rule with these words: "Perhaps there is no better summary of a compassionate response than the way in which the porter is to greet

visitors and the poor." Not only is the porter to answer promptly, but he should do so "with all the gentleness that comes from the warmth of love" (Ch. 66).

### Summary of Tucson Oblate Deans Meeting

The Tucson Oblate Deans held their summer planning meeting on July 28. Sr. Lenora Black, Mila Aroskar, Bette Dickinson, Theresa Keating, and Mary Sheridan were present. Mary has been newly appointed as a dean. Deans assist the director in planning for the coming year and in evaluating the needs/wishes of the Oblate group. They are available to Oblates who may have questions/suggestions, and take turns leading formation classes—especially this coming year, while Sr. Joan Therese is less available due to prolonged medical treatment. (Sr. Joan Therese's ankle is healing slowly without surgery, but she still cannot be on her feet.)

All meetings this year will be held on the third Sunday of the month. *We decided to move the Renewal Day from December to January, as the third Sunday in December is difficult for many because of closeness to Christmas.*

We reviewed the suggestions given for the coming year, as well as feedback on the programs last year. We decided to have two themes this year: **COMPASSION** for the Fall, and **THE BENEDICTINE LEGACY** for the Spring.

We also decided that Oblate Formation classes this year will use the book, *A Life-Giving Way: A Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict* by Esther de Waal. It presents more of the text of the Rule, and is used by many Oblate groups. *Several used books will be available to formation candidates to purchase for \$10.00 or less.*

The number of people inquiring about Oblation is a bit down. It's not clear whether this is a local vs. national trend, perhaps related to the economy. We wondered whether the group is welcoming enough to newcomers. *Please be alert to those who are new, so they will feel at home.*

**TUCSON:** Next Meeting Sunday, September 16, 2:00 p.m (Doors open at 1:15 p.m. so anyone can come then and browse in the library).

**1:30: Inquirers, Candidates and Deans** (*no others*) meet at 1:30 for introductory sharing. Please try to be there promptly, so we can start on time.

**Candidates and Inquirers:** Reflect on why you are interested in Oblation and what it means to you-- what are your hopes for this Benedictine journey, and your questions?

**During this session, Deans share with candidates:**

What the Rule of Benedict is, a short history of monasticism and the Benedictine Order worldwide, and also a brief introduction to the BSPAs and their presence in Tucson.

What Oblation has meant to *them* personally, with focus on the RB as central to Oblation and to their Oblate life.

**Books:** Those who want to keep a copy of *A Life-giving Way* can pay for it, while those who don't want to keep it (at this time) can borrow a library copy. (you can always buy later.)

**2:00: Oblate Laurie Olsen,** who will be leaving soon after the meeting for a year of volunteer work in Haiti, will share a slide presentation of her two-week experience in Haiti in preparation for the year's stay.

**PRESCOTT:** Next meeting Sunday September 16, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. in the St. Anthony Mary Claret room in the lower level of Sacred Heart Parish.

*Nancy Hinshaw writes:* Our chapter did meet on July 15th for a brief time of spirituality in honor of St. Benedict's feast day that month and a potluck at Joan Terwilliger's home. The Prescott Chapter begins meeting again on September 16. Our members are continuing to study *The Monastery of the Heart* by Joan Chittister and will discuss the section titled, "Our Promise," pages 145--165. We welcome visitors.

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

**PHOENIX CENTRAL:** Next meeting, Saturday, September 8, 2012, 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 are continuing our study of the Holy Rule and the discussions have been wonderful. Please come and join us! Our meeting room is in the back of the Mount Claret Retreat Center in the Pope John Paul II room.

*For more information* call Patty Williams: 602-957-1464 or email [Benedictine@cox.net](mailto:Benedictine@cox.net).

**PHOENIX EAST VALLEY:** Next meeting Saturday, September 22

*Nancy Kaib writes:* We met on August 25 and continued our discussion of the Prologue using the book titled *The Road to Eternal Life* by Fr. Michael Casey. Our next meeting is Saturday, September 22. We also discussed our October 27 Annual Retreat Day and what we might do for the day. Our retreat will be held with the Phoenix Central Group.

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

**Enjoy a refreshing Labor Day!**

**Blessings, Sr. Lenora, OSB**

Art from "Our Father Benedict" by M. Regina Goberna, OSB, 1983, used with permission of the author.



"As for those who are sick or too frail for demanding work . . . The superior should show understanding concern for their limitations" (Ch. 48 The Daily Manual Labor).

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