



# Tucson Oblate Newsletter

## September 2013

"From work comes a person's dignity," said Pope Francis recently in Brazil, and I believe St. Benedict would agree with him. With Labor Day occurring as we begin a new Oblate season, it is good to reflect on the significance of work in our own life. Benedictine Abbots from all over the World, meeting in 1967 in Rome, said this about work: "A monk, subject to the universal obligation to work like other Christians . . . makes of it an extension of the creative work of God, a personal contribution to the realization of the plan of providence, a means of developing his human powers."

Seeing our work as participating in God's ongoing creation certainly gives it a dignity, and should heighten our concern for all who are out of work. Sr. Joan Chittister, in her commentary on the Rule of Benedict writes: "Work and prayer are opposite sides of the great coin of a life that is both holy and useful, immersed in God and dedicated to the transcendent in the human. It is labor's transfiguration of the commonplace, the transformation of the ordinary that makes co-creators of us all."

### Planning for the year

On August 3 our Tucson Oblate deans met to plan for this coming Oblate season. Current deans are Bette Dickinson, Dic Ford, Sharon Hammond, and Mary Sheridan. Sr. Joan Therese will also be a Tucson dean, now that she is doing so well physically.

### Meetings:

The theme for 2013-14 will be "A Day in the Life of an Oblate," focusing on the various practical aspects of an Oblate's daily life—prayer, work, leisure, family, social justice, etc. The first meeting, September 15, will serve as an introduction to this theme. Specific topics for each meeting are being worked out. Currently we have topics for September and October, and for the January renewal day, **Mike Schroeder** of the East Valley deanery, who is our delegate to the coming World Congress of Oblates, will be with us to share his experience of the worldwide Oblate community.

**Inquirers and Candidates:** We decided not to use the Esther de Waal book this year, but simply to work from the text of the Rule. If candidates and inquirers already have a copy of the Rule, they may use it. Otherwise, copies are available for purchase or to borrow from the library. Candidates and Inquirers will meet from 1:15 to 1:55 in the prayer room. Report to the Assembly Room in the basement below the chapel to sign in first, unless

you are running late, and receive directions to the first session.

**Welcoming:** The deans felt that there was a need to be more welcoming, especially to those who are new, and to reach out to those who can't attend meetings. For example, we have some who are home-bound and would appreciate a phone call from time to time. The deans also offered to be available before the meetings, to answer questions either about the Rule or about practicalities such as praying the Office, or to be available for welcoming while Sr. Lenora is involved with others who are arriving. This will begin in September. Any Oblate who is interested in being part of the welcoming ministry should contact Sr. Lenora.

**Meeting dates for the coming year:** All are the 3rd Sunday of the month except for December and April.

Sept. 15	Feb. 16
Oct. 20	Mar. 16
Nov. 17	<b>Apr. 13</b> (Palm Sunday)
<b>Dec. 8</b>	May 18 ( <b>Renewal Day</b> )
Jan. 19, 2014	<b>(Renewal Day)</b>

**Summer gathering:** This year several Oblates asked whether it was possible for there to be some meetings over the summer. This has not been done in the past because many are not in town. On the spur of the moment, Sr. Lenora hosted a gathering on July 11, the feast of St. Benedict, and there was a good turnout. The deans agreed that this was a good idea, and that **an informal pot luck brunch will be held after 9:00 a.m. monastery Mass on July 11th.** Those who don't come in time for Mass, can join in downstairs after Mass.

**PRAYERS ARE ASKED FOR:** **Joan Marcoux**, an Oblate of the Tucson monastery for 40 years. She has been ill and home-bound for the last 20 years, and is now in very severe pain. She is diabetic, losing her eyesight, and has had multiple serious cancer surgeries. She might appreciate a phone call if someone has time (325-2554).

**Invitation:** Sr. Ramona Varela, prioress of the Tucson monastery, is celebrating her Golden Jubilee of monastic profession, on Thursday, September 12. The Jubilee Mass, with Mariachi, will be at 10:00 a.m. and a reception will follow in the Assembly Room downstairs.

**TUCSON: Next Meeting Sunday, September 15, 2:00 p.m.** (Doors open at 1:00 p.m. for Inquirers, candidates and anyone who would like to come early to browse the library or meet other Oblates.)

**Oblate candidates and inquirers meet at 1:15 in the prayer room.** Try to come early enough to sign in downstairs in the Assembly Room and get directions, if you need them, to the prayer room upstairs. [it is the first door to the right, inside the chapel, and there will be a sign on the door].

1. All available deans attend to meet the candidates/inquirers
2. Questions for discussion:
  - a. Review why candidates/inquirers are interested in Oblation and what it means to them.
  - b. What do they know about the RB (Rule of Benedict)? Oblation? Monasticism and the Benedictine Order worldwide? The BSPAs and their presence in Tucson?
3. The deans can fill in misconceptions, share what Oblation has meant to them, discuss the RB as central to Oblation and to the Oblate's life, the limits of the RB texts we are using and the usefulness of commentaries on the Rule.
4. Distribution of copies of the Rule. Those who want to keep the book (small red copy is \$3.00) can pay for it, while those who don't want to keep it (at this time) can borrow a library copy. (They can always buy later.)

**2:00 Oblate meeting for all. Sr. Lenora and Sr. Joan Therese** will share briefly what a day in the life of those living inside the monastery looks like. Then we will break into small groups and share on similarities and differences between living inside and living outside the monastery. Each small group will be asked to agree on (and write down) three areas about which they would like more information in a panel discussion next month, when four Oblate panelists will focus on how they put their Oblate commitment into practice. If you have specific questions about life in the monastery, there will be time for a brief Q&A after the small group session, and Sisters Lenora and Joan Therese will try to answer them.

#### **TUCSON LIBRARY CORNER:**

We have received a number of good books over the summer. They will be on display at the September meeting. Don't forget that books borrowed in May are due in September. Thanks to those who have made a special effort to return their books over the summer, or who have donated books and other materials.

Candidates and Inquirers: Although you are not required to do any reading beyond the text of the Rule this year, there are many good commentaries which can be very helpful as we try to adapt the Rule to our lay lives. See Mary in the library or ask other Oblates for suggestions.

Don't forget: The library has many current books on spirituality and prayer. However, we also have a good collection of classics and books—old and new—on monasticism. Some of these are hard to find elsewhere.

**PRESCOTT: next meeting Sunday, September 8, 1:30-3:30 pm, St. Anthony Mary Claret room, lower level, Sacred Heart Parish.** We will continue with Karen Armstrong's *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life* and a reading from *The Rule of St. Benedict*.

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

**PHOENIX CENTRAL: Next meeting, Saturday, September 14, 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 of Benedictine leadership and management has introduced us to the "management secrets that have endured for fifteen centuries." *The Benedictine Rule of Leadership* by Craig and Oliver Galbraith applies to business as well as personal management and leadership. Everyone is welcome to come so please join us.

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 28,** at St. Andrew the Apostle Church

*Nancy Kaib writes:* The East Valley Benedictine Oblates held our August meeting on the 24th. We completed our study of St. Hildegard of Bingen. We even 'performed' her play - reading through it. It gave us a bit of feel for her approach to teaching the Gospel message to others.

Our September meeting will be on Saturday, September 28. We will have presentations on three Benedictine women: St. Frances of Rome, St. Scholastica, and Bl. Maria Aveodata Pisani.

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

**With thanks to our Phoenix deaneries who have persevered in meeting all during the summer, and hoping for a good turnout in Tucson September 15,**

*Peace,*

*Lenora, ogb*

Benedictine Monastery ♦ 800 N. Country Club Rd. ♦ Tucson, AZ, 85716-4583 ♦ (520) 325-6401 ♦ email: [lenora@bspa.us](mailto:lenora@bspa.us) or [benpubctr@bspa.tuccoxmail.com](mailto:benpubctr@bspa.tuccoxmail.com) ♦ <http://www.tucsonmonastery.com> ♦ Please note email addresses