



# Tucson Oblate Newsletter

## September, 2014



Since this letter goes out so close to Labor Day, I cannot resist quoting one of my favorite passages from St. Benedict's Rule. "He will regard all utensils and goods of the monastery as sacred vessels of the altar" (Ch. 31). Whatever our work may be, we are always using tools. Whether that tool is a pencil, a dish towel, a computer or a broom, it is a tool and can remind us that all work has a sacred dimension. However humbly, by honest work we participate in God's ongoing creation.

At our Tucson deans' meeting in May we decided to focus this year on the two commitments that are unique to Benedictines--**Stability and Conversatio**, which is commonly translated now as "fidelity to monastic life." Our September meeting will be devoted to Stability as Rootedness. After a brief presentation we will break into small groups and share our reflections on what ROOTS mean in our own lives. Just as **stability** is both physical and spiritual, roots can be both physical and spiritual. *Please take some time before the meeting to think about this.*

Oblate Gerald Schlabach in this passage from a much longer essay, suggests how necessary stability is today:

In an obsessively mobile society, one wonders whether Christians can be the body of Christ together at all if we will not slow down, stay longer even if we can't stay put indefinitely, and take something like a vow of stability. Slow down . . . Stay longer — because there is no way to discern God's will together without commitment to sit long together in the first place. A vow of stability — because it is no use discerning appropriate ways to be Christian disciples in our age if we do not embody them through time, testing, and the patience with one another that transform good ideas and intentions into communal practices.

*The complete essay by Oblate Gerald Schlabach is available at:*  
<http://www.geraldschlabach.net/stability-in-the-world-an-oblates-reflections/>

### PRAYERS:

Please keep **Heather Erhart** in your prayers. For those who may not know her, she is one of the two young women who have come from Phoenix to Tucson several times on Oblate renewal days. Both she and her companion, Laurie Zenter, are planning to enter religious communities very soon. Heather just had a serious health complication, but has now been discharged from the hospital following successful brain surgery. She is most grateful for all the prayers.

**TUCSON:** Next meeting Sunday, September 21, 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.

**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)



**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 at which all the Deans and candidates should be present. Inquirers are also welcome. If you have a Benedictine Handbook, please bring it. Come prepared to share briefly what brings you to the Oblates, and what you may know about the Rule and about Benedictines.

More than 20 Oblates, friends, and family members gathered on **Sunday, July 13**, for a slightly belated St. Benedict's Feast Day celebration. Thanks to everyone's contributions, there truly was a pot-luck feast. Smaller tables than usual, and a Benedictine crossword puzzle, added to the enjoyment. Thanks to Isabel Delgado and Sharon Hammond for coordinating, and to all who assisted with set-up and clean-up. Everyone who was asked about doing this again next year was enthusiastic about doing so.

Mary Sheridan is now in China in Qufu, where she expects to be teaching at a university until mid-January. While in Beijing, on arrival in China, she made a trip to the Great Wall. Her comment was "Trying to 'seal the border' doesn't work." Google seems not to work consistently for her in China, so if anyone sends her email, you can use this address in place of or in addition to, her Gmail address ( [msheridanhpu@gmail.com](mailto:msheridanhpu@gmail.com) ) : [msheridan@hpu.edu](mailto:msheridan@hpu.edu)

At the August 17 deans' meeting, mostly about the curriculum Mary Sheridan had prepared for formation, we decided that it would be better for all concerned if experienced Oblates who have been sitting in on formation meetings, would have their own group separately. There will be a paper put out for those interested in some sort of **ongoing formation** beyond the regular meeting input, and we will try to see how best to meet that need. We also discussed mentoring and will share more about that later.

If you have your appointment books for 2015, you might want to mark in the dates for our coming meetings. ***If your forget, remember that ALL the meetings scheduled for this year are on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month.***

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| September 21, 2014                                     |
| October 19, 2014                                       |
| November 16, 2014                                      |
| December 21, 2014                                      |
| January 18, 2015 renewal day                           |
| February 15, 2015                                      |
| March 15, 2015   |
| April 19, 2015   |
| May 17, 2015 renewal day                               |
| July 19, 2015 (tentative date<br>for social gathering) |

I am reluctant to bring this up, but it seems necessary, since up until now the Tucson Oblates have been a more or less self-supporting group, but lately it has become rather "less" than "more." Our "kitty" has become very lean, with scarcely enough to cover postage for those 75 or so Oblate newsletters that are still sent first class. (Over 200 go out by email). We need

to do something about renewal days, as we never know how many to plan on for the noon meal. We estimated badly on the last one and ended up "in the hole."

**PRESCOTT: Next meeting Sunday, September 21, 1:30-3:30 p.m., St. Anthony Claret Room.**

The Lesson is from Michael Casey's book, *The Road to Eternal Life--Reflections on the Prologue of Benedict's Rule*, the Preface through page 12.

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

**PHOENIX CENTRAL: Next meeting, Saturday, September 13, 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.

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

**PHOENIX EAST VALLEY: Next meeting is Saturday, September 27.**

*Nancy Kaib writes:* Two East Valley Oblates are preparing to leave soon for their entrance into religious life. Laurie Zentner is entering a Dominican House in Michigan and Heather Erhart is entering a Benedictine Monastery in CT. Please pray for Heather and her doctors.

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

Again, thanks to our Oblates in the Phoenix area, who have as usual persevered in meeting all through the summer. Praying that the coming "season" for them and for the rest of us will be abundantly blessed as we resume gathering regularly.

***Blessings,***

***Lenora, osb***