



## **TUCSON OBLATE NEWSLETTER** **SEPTEMBER 2017**

**PLEASE--IF YOU DON'T READ ANYTHING ELSE IN THIS NEWSLETTER, READ THIS:**

- **THE NEXT MEETING IS SEPTEMBER 17 AT 2 PM.**
- **COME TO THE MONASTERY.**
- **YOU WILL BE TRANSPORTED FROM THE MONASTERY TO ST. PHILIP'S, AND BACK TO THE MONASTERY.**

**PLEASE COME!**

**"WHAT DO YOU SEEK?"** In his Rule, Ch. 58, Benedict does not make it easy for the one who asks to enter monastic life. "*Test the spirits,*" the Rule says. The novice, "*should be clearly told all the hardships and difficulties that will lead to God*" -- for trials are

sure to come. Hardships and difficulties are inevitably part of the journey to which we commit. Choosing to live our lives with purpose and perseverance fosters internal fortitude and a deepening of our faith and trust in God's fidelity to us. We are changed, transformed, and led to see the world differently than we ever did before.

Knowing and believing that the *One Whom We Seek* is guiding and strengthening us, we grow into an ever greater love and unity with God and all others, building up a true Christian bond with those around us. The response during our rituals for Candidates, and for those making Oblation, clearly lays the foundation for this bonding with God and all others: "*I seek to serve God through the Oblate way of life. I seek to serve God as an Oblate of St. Benedict.*" May our continuing study of the Rule, and our lives as Christians and Oblates, inspire us as we move forward to work zealously with others for the good of all creation and the glory of God. "*What is more delightful than this voice of the Holy One calling to us? See how God's love shows us the way of life.*" (RB Prologue)

**SEPTEMBER MEETING:** Our September meeting will mark the transition of the Oblates' meeting place, from the Benedictine Monastery to St. Philip's-in-the-Hills Episcopal Church at River & Campbell. The meeting will start at the monastery at 2:00 p.m. on Sept. 17. Sr. Sarah Schwartzberg, Congregational Oblate Director, plans to be present for the transition. After a blessing ritual lasting until around 2:30, we will proceed with our move to St. Philip's. (Transportation will be provided, and you will be returned to the monastery when the meeting is over.) St. Philip's clergy will welcome us when we arrive there. We will have refreshments, and brief tours of St. Philip's campus will be available.

**Beginning in October** all monthly meetings will take place entirely at St. Philip's. Transportation will be on one's own, but if anyone is in need of a ride, we can help. Contact Sr. Kathleen Clare at the monastery (325-6401).

**Memory Book:** We are asking all our Oblates to write a parting prayer or memory relating to your experience as a Benedictine Oblate here in Tucson. Our Oblate dean Sharon Hammond will be gathering your responses and preparing a booklet to be given as a parting gift to our group. Please send your responses by September 10<sup>th</sup> so she has time to put the booklet together. You may send your responses to her directly at: Sharon Hammond, 960 E Foothills Dr., Tucson 85718-4717 or email to her at [tucsonoblates@gmail.com](mailto:tucsonoblates@gmail.com)

**JULY ICE CREAM SOCIAL:** In addition to plenty of ice cream and toppings, there was much information consumed at the Social on July 16. The importance of keeping perspective during this time of transition was noted. We remember who we are as Oblates, what holds us together, and what/who we are seeking. As Benedictines, our spirituality is based on Gospel values that have proven themselves over the 1500 years since Benedict's time, through many times of crisis and change.

**New meeting location:** In seeking a new space for Oblate meetings as the monastery prepares for closure, St. Philip's Church warmly welcomed us, offering space that was more than adequate for both regular meetings and inquirer/candidate sessions. St. Philip's also has kitchen space, plenty of parking, and handicapped accessibility. In addition, St. Philip's has an appreciation of contemplative prayer, lectio, and the rhythm of monastic life. For these reasons the decision was made to accept the generous offer of hospitality to our Oblates. Our designated meeting room at St. Philip's is the east side of the parish hall, known as Murphey Gallery. The entire hall is a large space divided by partition. We will have the half with the kitchen. This hall is located at the front of the church, across from the main sanctuary. There are triple entrance doors on each side of the building. Handicapped parking is available directly outside the doors on the east side.

Results of the survey, which had been sent out with the June Newsletter, were presented:

- Most of those who responded planned to attend meetings this year.
- Most did not anticipate having trouble getting to St. Philip's.
- Most people preferred a combination of a book to study and speakers at Oblate meetings.
- Most wanted prayer and social time at the meetings.
- Most felt "renewed" by Renewal Days.
- Many will pray for the transition, and others offered various kinds of help—including "baking delicious cookies"!

Regarding the Oblate Library, Mary Sheridan and Ellen Duax, Oblate and librarian at St. Philip's, are working to transfer as many books as possible to St. Phillip's. The library there will be open to all.

Sharon Hammond, who will be attending the International Oblate Congress in Rome in November along with William Joseph, shared that all attendees have been asked to bring a "slide" or poster representing their Oblate group. She received a number of good suggestions and offers of help.

#### NEWS:

- We regret to announce the passing of two remarkable Oblate women. Ann Fallon, an Oblate for 29 years, passed into eternal life on July 10 at the age of 99. She was a talented artist, bright and interested in life almost to the end, and loved by all. Carol Seaman-Craig passed into eternal life on August 17, after living her entire adult life in social and spiritual outreach. She was one of the founding members of the Prescott Chapter 38 years ago. Her love of God and faith were an influence in the spiritual lives of all who have known her. A Mass will be offered for each.
- An invitation to Oblates: William Joseph will present "The Art of Contemplation, Living Differently with Purpose and Meaning," a series of presentations exploring the spiritual wisdom of Thomas Merton. Presentations will be held in the West Gallery at St. Philip's (the same place Oblate meetings will be held) on each of the Wednesdays of September, 6:00 - 8:00 PM. The series begins September 6<sup>th</sup>. There is no cost to attend.
- Lectio Group: For information concerning meetings contact Kevan Perry at [himalayanraven@yahoo.com](mailto:himalayanraven@yahoo.com) or Sr. Kathleen Clare.
- Ellen Duax conveyed information and welcome from St. Philip's Episcopal Church: The clergy of St. Philip's are very enthusiastic about hosting the Oblates. They would like you to know that the facilities, services, and events/ classes at St. Philip's are available for the use of Oblates and visitors. One does not have to be a parishioner to partake of these. There are serene indoor and outdoor common spaces for contemplation, reflection and prayer. Off the main sanctuary is a small chapel, and an even more intimate baptistery space off the chapel. The library is one of the treasures of the church. It's cozy and inviting, and you are welcome to sit and read anytime, or fill out a registration card to check out materials from the 7000-item collection. It already has a couple of shelves of Benedictine materials. This will be growing in the near future as books are incorporated from the Oblate Library. For lots of information, see the Church website: <http://www.stphilipstucson.org>

#### CHAPTER NEWS:

- Phoenix Central celebrated 19 years of praying together as oblates, thanks to Mary Gibson who started the group in August of 1998. A lot of heart was put into getting us together and keeping us together. Thank you, Mary! The Phoenix group meets at Mount Claret Retreat Center, 4633 N. 54<sup>th</sup> St. Phoenix, 85018. Our meeting room is in the St. John Paul II room in the back of the parking lot. For information call Patty Williams 602-957-1464.
- East Valley: For more information on meetings call Nancy Kaib 480-883-8025 or Frank Young 480-219-1505.

I have heard from many of you that the closing of the Monastery and this transition are very difficult. Our prayers are with you as God calls us to these new directions. Please pray for us as well ... and send us your parting prayers or memories of your Oblate life here at the monastery . . . soon!

*Sr. Kathleen Clare OSB*

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