



## *The Benedictine Oblate Letter*

*November, 2016*

Dear Oblates and Friends,

November is an in-between month. The trees are nearly bare, although some leaves still cling to the branches. Already there is a hint of winter in the air. It's a month of feasts: All Saints, All Souls, Thanksgiving. This Congregation celebrates the Dedication of our Chapels on November 15. Benedictines celebrate the Feast of St. Gertrude on November 16, and that of St. Mechtilde on November 19. On November 20, we celebrate the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. All this comes shortly before the First Sunday of Advent, November 27 this year.

The Feast of Christ the King is one of my favorites. I love the solemn majesty of the day's liturgy. The readings emphasize the cosmic Christ and his lordship over all creation. The same theme is found in the Prologue to the Rule. Saint Benedict, inviting us to respond to the Lord's invitation, says, "To you my words are now addressed, whoever you may be, who are renouncing your own will to do battle under the Lord Christ, the true King, and are taking up the strong, bright weapons of obedience."

Pope Pius XI instituted the Feast of Christ the King in 1925, when he promulgated his encyclical, *Quas Primas*. He explained its meaning and applied it to daily life:

If to Christ our Lord is given all power in heaven and on earth; if all men, purchased by his precious blood, are by a new right subjected to his dominion; if this power embraces all men, it must be clear that not one of our faculties is exempt from his empire. He must reign in our minds, which should assent with perfect submission and firm belief to revealed truths and to the doctrines of Christ. He must reign in our wills, which should obey the laws and precepts of God. He must reign in our hearts, which should spurn natural desires and love God above all things, and cleave to him alone. He must reign in our bodies and in our members, which should serve as instruments for the interior sanctification of our souls, or to use the words of the Apostle Paul, *as instruments of justice unto God*. (#33, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_11121925\\_quas-primas.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_11121925_quas-primas.html))

Back in those days, the feast was celebrated on the last Sunday of October, so that it would come just before All Saints. In 1969, Pope Paul VI moved it to the final Sunday of the liturgical year.

This year, the Feast of Christ the King will also mark the end of the Jubilee Year of Mercy. In his Bull of Indiction, *Misericordiae Vultus*, Pope Francis wrote:

The Jubilee year will close with the liturgical Solemnity of Christ the King on 20 November 2016. On that day, as we seal the Holy Door, we shall be filled, above all, with a sense of gratitude and thanksgiving to the Most Holy Trinity for having granted us an extraordinary time of grace. We will entrust the life of the Church, all humanity, and the entire cosmos to the Lordship of Christ, asking him to pour out his mercy upon us like the morning dew, so that everyone may work together to build a brighter future. How much I desire that the year to come will be steeped in mercy, so that we can go out to every man and woman, bringing the goodness and tenderness of God! May the balm of mercy reach everyone, both believers and those far away, as a sign that the Kingdom of God is already present in our midst! ([w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_letters/documents/papa-francesco\\_bolla\\_20150411\\_misericordiae-vultus.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco_bolla_20150411_misericordiae-vultus.html))

The last Sunday of the liturgical year challenges us to receive the Lord's mercy and to extend it to the entire world.

***And now the news:***

***Tucson oblates:*** By now most of you have heard that we will be closing our Tucson monastery within the next two years. We need to consolidate our resources and personnel as we plan for the future. The Tucson sisters will be going to our monastery in Clyde. The people of Tucson will always remain in the hearts and prayers of the sisters. Our oblate groups there will continue. I hope to visit with our Tucson oblates before too long.

***Clyde oblates:*** The next Clyde weekend is scheduled for March 24-26, 2017, during Lent. The theme is *Images of God in Scripture and in the Rule of Benedict*.

***Saint Louis area oblates:*** The Saint Louis group has been discussing *The Rule of Benedict: A Spirituality for the 21st Century* by Sr. Joan Chittister, OSB. They have also been doing group *lectio* following *Accepting the Embrace of God: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina*, "Lectio Divina Shared in Community" by Fr. Luke Dysinger, O.S.B. Meetings are held on the third Saturday of the month from 1:30 - 3:00 p.m. at St. Rose Philippine Duchesne School, Room 1 (accessible from Door 1 at the east

end of the school).

*Sand Springs* oblates are continuing their discussion of Joan Chittister's book, *In the Heart of the Temple*. I will be offering a mini-retreat there for all oblates and friends on May 5-7, 2017.

*Sheridan, Wyoming*, oblates meet monthly and have welcomed a new inquirer.

*The International Congress of Benedictine Oblates* will meet Nov. 4-10, 2017, in Rome. The theme is *A Way Forward: the Benedictine Community in Movement*. This is all the information I have; hopefully more information will be forthcoming. If anyone is interested, let me know.

Peace,

Sister Sarah