



HORIZONS

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Inside this issue:

*In Loving Memory:
Sister Miriam Hoffman, OSB*

2024 Jubilarians

Around the Monastery

*Journey to Oblation:
Mary Burns*

*The Art Appreciator:
Sister Madeline Clifton*

GEM: Meet Yaqueline

The Hesychia Holy Place



Simply Benedictine

Message from the Prioress



We had the privilege of having the Abbot of Subiaco Abbey as our retreat director this summer. The theme of the retreat was Simplicity in Monastic Life. Simplicity is a treasured value for us as we strive to be women who are ‘Simply Benedictine’.

Father Abbot Elijah Owens began the retreat with the Shaker song “Simple Gifts.” The tune was not widely known before American composer Aaron Copeland used it to score choreographer Martha Graham’s 1944 ballet Appalachian Spring.

Abbot Elijah explored with us the deep waters of simplicity, delving into the theology and the spiritual meaning around simplicity. The experience of our time was both heady and heartfelt. We invited our Oblates to join us for the retreat experience, including days of input and desert days of quiet and solitude.

We jumped from the edge of the waters of simplicity, wading deeper into what simplicity means. We learned about Skopos (steps toward a goal) and Telos (the goal). Of course, there were other fascinating lessons to learn as we began to tread the water of simplicity, such as logismoi (distracting thoughts). It was at this point that I wished I were both Greek and scholar.

Abbot Elijah engaged us in the various ways simplicity impacts our lives, especially if we learn to focus on the divine, as in the poem, “The Hound of Heaven” by Francis Thompson, who reminds us that God’s love pursues us as we also pursue God. We need to remember God never ceases watching out for us despite the human distractions that can pull us away from him as pesky logismoi can often do! Moving toward God no matter how cluttered or busy life can become, and being in relationship with God is the vocation we are asked to participate in to achieve holiness and love.

As Abbot Elijah said to us, we, in our careful living out of simplicity, are to live for love and forget the platonic! We are to love not only others but ourselves, too. We are to be drawn internally and eternally to God as master artisans, professional dancers, or world-renowned music composers are drawn to their craft.

What is our craft, then? To be seekers of God who are drawn like magnets to great love. Simply put, we are to persevere daily in the ascetic life, and the discipline we practice is our prayer life. If you pray, you are a practicing ascetic pursuing the hound of heaven who also pursues us. Swat away the logismoi, and live dedication daily because life really is just a simple gift.

*’Tis the gift to be simple, ’tis the gift to be free,
’Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
’Twill be in the valley of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gain’d,
To bow and to bend we will not be asham’d,
To turn, turn will be our delight,
Till by turning, turning we come round right.*

Sister Kimberly Rose Prohaska, O.S.B., Prioress

Message from the Office of Mission Advancement

With gratitude for your generous support of our community, we continue to make improvements on our grounds. We feel Sister Pierre Vorster's spirit alive among us as we work on some projects dear to her heart.

Sister Pierre planted many trees in her years as supervisor of the grounds. Since her death in March 2023, we have lost about a dozen trees to windstorms. Our grounds workers, Armando Gonzales and Lisa Johnson, quickly and efficiently cut up the fallen trees and cleared the debris. The next step will be to replace the trees. We hope to plant two hardy, native trees for each one lost.

Another project in the is the addition of a columbarium in our cemetery. In the last few years, some of our Sisters have chosen to be cremated. Presently the cremains are buried in our cemetery. We have decided to build a columbarium for the cremains of the Sisters already buried and of those who will choose cremation in the future. A part of the columbarium will also be available to the public. The project also includes making the sidewalks at the entrance to the cemetery and those around the crucifix handicap accessible. The landscaping will also be updated. Construction has begun.

Plans are also underway to replace the signs at the entrances to the monastery. The St. Scholastica Alumnae Association has graciously volunteered to help with this project. Our grounds workers will do the landscaping around the signs when installed.

For many years, our two greenhouses have been a great help to the Sisters who have taken care of our grounds. As the greenhouses age, they often need repairs. They continue to serve our Sisters now who love to garden. Their work adds to the beauty of our grounds and provides plants and flowers to beautify the inside of our monastery.

Recently I noticed a paragraph in Sister Louise Sharum's history of our community, *Write the Vision Down*, that shows that the beauty of our surroundings has been important to our Sisters from the beginning of the community. In 1879, a few months after moving into the four-room log cabin in Shoal Creek, the Sisters looked for a place to start a garden to add a little variety to their diet of cornbread, beans, and molasses.

There was an old rotting stump near the house that gave promise of being an especially fertile spot, and two of the sisters stood deliberating one day as to what to plant there when Sister Josepha came upon the scene. Without a moment's hesitation she declared that the spot had to be for something beautiful; flowers must be planted there. And so they were. That summer the old stump was transformed into a blossoming bed of zinnias.

We continue that tradition of making our grounds beautiful. They provide a good environment for prayer and reflection and for table conversation. At our meals, we often share or hear about the first sighting of a jonquil in the spring, the rescue of the monastery cat from high in a tree, the rare sighting of a fox that lives on our grounds, the number and size of baby geese in the geese families, a new species of bird that shows up at our bird feeders, and many other ordinary wonders.

We join the earth in praising God.

--Sister Elise Forst, OGB



In Loving Memory

Sister Miriam Hoffman, OSB **April 11, 1932–July 10, 2024**



Sister Miriam Hoffman, age 92, a member of St. Scholastica Monastery, died July 10, 2024, at Chapel Ridge Health & Rehab in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Sister Miriam, born April 11, 1932, in Altus, Arkansas, to Paul and Gertrude (Koerdt) Hoffman, was named Lucille Marie. She was the fifth child of seven born to the Hoffman

family. Sister Miriam entered St. Scholastica Monastery as a candidate on August 29, 1947. Following her novitiate in 1948, Sister Miriam made her first profession on June 24, 1950, and her final profession on June 24, 1953.

Sister Miriam was gifted in hospitality, nurturing both body and soul in the culinary fields. Sister Miriam served in the dietary departments of two hospitals: in Dermott, Arkansas, for four years and in Morrilton, Arkansas, for thirty-eight years. In 1994, she served as the monastery dietary manager for the second time until her retirement in 2012. She served in this role for a total of twenty years. She attended Fontbonne College in Clayton, Missouri, in dietetics and food service.

As long as she was able, Sister Miriam enjoyed cooking, sewing, and creating various arts and crafts. She was an excellent mathematician. She loved to read the local newspapers where she ministered. She was a hard worker and made tasks seem effortless. She was known for creating beautiful jubilee cakes, tasty grape pies, wonderful cinnamon rolls, and a unique bread made with Mr. Dunn's abundant long, skinny green beans. Sister Miriam was a gentle and approachable person with a hearty sense of humor.

She truly knew what it meant to live Benedictine hospitality. She was dedicated to her family, faithfully keeping in touch with family and friends through letter-writing and telephone calls.

The Sisters at St. Scholastica Monastery thank Sister Miriam's caregivers at St. Scholastica Monastery Infirmary and Chapel Ridge Health & Rehab for their loving care.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her siblings: Hermina and husband, Dr. David Cheairs; her brother Paul and his wife, Grace Hoffman; her brothers Raymond, William, and Charles; and her youngest sister, Jane Rose, and her husband, Thomas McHale. She is survived by her many beloved nieces and nephews, friends, and members of her Benedictine family.

A Vespers Service was July 18, 2023, at 7:30 p.m. The Mass for Christian Burial was July 19, 2023, at 10:30 a.m., with Fr. Joseph Chan, monastery chaplain, presider. Both services were at St. Scholastica Monastery Chapel, with burial in St. Scholastica Cemetery under the direction of Edwards Funeral Home of Fort Smith. Memorials may be made to St. Scholastica Monastery Continuing Care Fund, 1315 S. Albert Pike, Fort Smith, AR 72903.



Sonja Tiffin, Vi Cessna, Terri Ehrlich, Sr. Miriam, and Sue Burton, making cinnamon rolls.

Sisters Guest Speakers at Local Events

The Sisters have long engaged with the local community. During this spring they were called upon as guest speakers for two events in Fort Smith.

Sister Cecelia Brickell spoke to the West River Valley National Council of Catholic Women at their meeting after Mass at St. Boniface Catholic Church on April 9, 2024. Her topic was on “Simplicity as a Pathway Closer to God”.

On April 18, Sister Laura Cathcart gave a presentation at an event at Fort Smith Brewing Co. called “Sips with a Sis”. The focus of her talk was on encountering Jesus. She told stories about her own life experiences and encounters. She said about the event, “I tried to share how God reaches out to us through the ordinary events of daily life and I hoped to encourage them to seek God in all things (as St. Benedict would say).”

Both presentations were well-attended, and the Sisters were happy they can share insights from their lives as Benedictines.



Sister Laura Cathcart addressing guests, oblates, and Sisters at “Sips with a Sis”.

Jubilarians: Sisters Celebrate 70 Years

On Monday, June 24, the monastic community honored its jubilarians for 2024. Sister Madeline Bariola and Sister Rosalie Ruesewald were honored for seventy years of monastic profession. Bishop Anthony Taylor celebrated the Jubilee Mass on June 24 at 10:30 a.m.



From left to right: Father Joseph Chan, Sister Madeline Bariola, Sister Rosalie Ruesewald, and Bishop Anthony Taylor.

St. Scholastica Monastery's

Sister Madeline Bariola's 70th Jubilee



Sister Madeline Bariola, OSB

Magdalena Teresa Bariola was born in the Italian town of Lake Village near the border between Louisiana and Arkansas. Her grandparents were immigrants from Italy who came to America to work the cotton fields on a plantation. Her parents, Julius and Catherine Bariola, raised her and her siblings in the Catholic faith. The large farming family may have been poor, but their table was always full of good food and the warmth of family.

She and her siblings attended St. Mary's Catholic School where the Sisters of St. Scholastica taught. Her memories of the Sisters are of their kindness and the extra time she spent with them after school helping with various chores, building strong bonds outside of schoolwork. Her teacher, Sister Annunciata would say, "Pray to the Holy Spirit to help you choose the path God has for you." She listened to this wisdom and prayed often about God's path for her life. One day, after school, her teacher asked her about her plans for high school, and Madeline calmly responded, "I'm going to the convent." The words poured out of her mouth before she even knew what she was saying. The

words were a complete surprise to her. She'd never even thought of pursuing a vocation in religious life. Still a little in shock, she knew she needed to discuss this momentous decision with her parents. She first spoke with her mother, and then her father. Her parents told her they would support her if this was the life she desired.

In 1950, at fourteen years old, she made the trip to Fort Smith. She remembers, being from the flat delta region, her awe of the mountains. She said the tallest things she'd seen during her childhood were the pecan trees.

Due to her young age, it took her seven years, instead of the usual six, to be old enough to make perpetual profession. During those years, she remembers classes in the novitiate and the academy and working hard to help around the convent. She also remembers playing ball with the other novices.

On June 24, 1957, she made her perpetual vows. She is remembered by many as Sister Philip, the name given to her when she became a novice, although she is now known as Sister Madeline.

Her mission life began with cooking, first in Morrilton, Arkansas, and then at Subiaco Abbey. "The mission that stole my heart was St. Joseph's Orphanage in North Little Rock," said Sister Madeline. She loved the children there as she would have loved her own. Her mission work at St. Joseph's Orphanage spanned twenty-eight years, and many of the children she cared for are still in touch with her as they go about healthy and successful lives.

In 1998, she returned to the monastery in Fort Smith to work in the Center with retreatants. These days, Sister Madeline can be seen in the gardens often – pulling weeds and sometimes chasing away geese. She believes the beauty of the monastery grounds is a ministry to both the Sisters at the monastery and their guests. She also enjoys making Christmas ornaments, embroidery, and spending time in the evenings with the other Sisters working puzzles or playing various games. Her life as a Benedictine Sister has always been full of love, even if the events were not always to her liking, and filled with many rewards. "My vocation has been a journey filled with hard work and one touched by many lives."

Jubilarians for 2024

Sister Rosalie Ruesewald's 70th Jubilee

Rosalie Ruesewald was born to Fred and Rose Ruesewald December 12, 1930. From the beginning of her life, she was surrounded by the influence of those in religious life. She heard of great aunts who were Franciscan Sisters in Bavaria; the Benedictine Sisters of Holy Angels Convent in Jonesboro taught in grade school; and she attended the Holy Angels boarding school for high school.

Although Rosalie had considered religious life in high school, she did not pursue her vocation until her junior year of college. While attending the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, a priest said, out of the blue, "Did you know you were meant to be a saint?" She experienced it as a jolt, but tried to act nonchalant and answered something like, "Oh, yes, I knew that." But his words had a lasting impact. How does one become a saint? She decided to make a move and visit St. Scholastica in Fort Smith. She applied to enter the convent the next August, but she panicked and also applied to work in Washington D.C. with the F.B.I., where her sister worked. Both places accepted her, but she knew she was running from the call of her life.



Sister Rosalie Ruesewald, OSB

Her mother was thrilled she had chosen to enter, but her father was reticent. They both accompanied her to the convent in August of 1951, after a tumultuous summer. Rosalie took the name Sister Mary Luke when she became a novice on June 24, 1952, and made final profession in 1957.

Sister Mary Luke began her mission work as a teacher. She taught elementary grades in Charleston, Arkansas, and at St. Boniface in Fort Smith. After graduating from Mount St. Scholastica in Atchison, Kansas, she taught at St. Scholastica Academy for about ten years, during which time Vatican II took place. After the Council, Sister Mary Luke and many other Sisters returned to their baptismal names. Sister Mary Luke became Sister Rosalie. In 1968, after the closure of the Academy, Sister Rosalie taught at Alamo Catholic High in Amarillo, Texas, then worked in campus ministry in Canyon, Texas. She was also vocation director and director of Oblates for a few years. It was her work in social justice that has left her with both a deepening of faith and understanding.

Memorable events Sister Rosalie treasured throughout her years of mission work were peace and nonviolence workshops. For an extended time, she has been the monastery's Social Awareness Committee director, where she could continue to focus on these issues. One of the most impactful occurrences in her life was her attendance of the beatification of Franz Jagerstatter – the young martyr who was executed for his refusal to fight in Hitler's army – in Linz, Austria, with Oblate Kathy Jarvis.

Ten years ago, Sister Rosalie was involved in the origins of the monastery's Girls' Education Matters scholarship program for impoverished girls in Guatemala. She finds its challenges and joys invigorating as the program continues to evolve.

Sister Rosalie has treasured moments with her fellow Sisters, and she continues to support the volunteers who work in social justice within and outside of the monastery. When she looks back over her years as a Benedictine, she says she must gratefully say, "Only by the grace of God!"

If you would like to hear more about the Sisters' vocations stories, visit www.stscho.org's Vocation Stories section to listen to their interviews.

Around the Monastery

April 20, St. Scholastica Monastery hosted a confirmation retreat for the Immaculate Conception Youth Group from Poteau, Oklahoma. Sister Cecelia Brickell opened the retreat with a brief talk and a prayer before students spent their Saturday learning and growing in their Catholic faith.

Sisters Host Confirmation Retreat

Students are welcomed by Sister Cecelia Brickell before opening prayer.



Employee Anniversaries

On May 9, 2024, the Sisters of St. Scholastica hosted their annual Employee Appreciation Dinner for employees who celebrated anniversaries with the monastery. Congratulations to Cathy Blankenship in health care and Ed McBee in maintenance for five years of dedicated service.



*Sister Barbara Bock and
Cathy Blankenship.*



Ed McBee

2024 Oblations

The oblate program grew this year with four oblations. On May 12 and May 19, 2024, St. Scholastica Monastery celebrated the oblation of enrollees to the Oblate Program. Under direction of Sister Laura Cathcart, OSB, and oblate mentors Sister Hilary Decker and Sister Maria DeAngeli, the program is for those who have an interest in living out monastic values and deepening their connection with God. Congratulations to our newest Oblates of St. Scholastica Monastery.



Catherine Goetz poses with her certification of oblation on May 12, 2024.



(From left to right) Sister Hilary Decker, Mark Shea Prioress, Sister Kimberly Prohaska, Terry Baker, Bill Baker, Oblate Director Sister Laura Cathcart, and Sister Maria Goretti DeAngeli, May 19, 2024

Annual Employee Picnic

On June 1, 2024, the Sisters and employees with some family members gathered for the annual picnic on the monastery grounds. The Knights of Columbus cooked and served food while the Sisters and their guests played bocce, cornhole, and other games. Thank you to all who attended, and a special thank you to the Knights of Columbus for their service and to their chaplain, Father Joseph Chan.



Sisters with employees and their families enjoying a picnic together.



Four of the Knights of Columbus grilled hamburgers, hot dogs, and served food. (Mark Urban, Robert Collins, Gary Barker, and Matt Hutchinson)

Sister Marcella Schmalz Celebrates 104 Years

On July 5, 2024, the Sisters and friends of the monastery gathered at Chapel Ridge in Fort Smith to celebrate Sister Marcella's 104th birthday.



Sister Marcella laughs with guests at her birthday party.

Journey to Oblation: Mary Burns



My path to oblation has been a life-long journey, beginning with my Baptism in the small basement church of Subiaco Abbey in May of 1946. I was baptized by one of the monks just a few days after my mother gave birth and then was returned to the hospital to be with my mother until she was discharged. It was a custom to baptize newborn infants in those days. My family lived just a short way from the abbey, to the south and down the hill. It was the first sight and last sight for me each day of my childhood. I felt like I was the luckiest kid in the world to live there.

My siblings and I were taught by the Sisters from St. Scholastica at our little four-room schoolhouse west of the abbey. We went to daily Mass and had good, solid catechism classes each day. There were three Sisters: one for the “little room”; one for the “middle room”; one for the “big room”. Sister Vivian Luyet taught me five out of eight grades, and she later taught my children and was their principal at St. Boniface Catholic School in Fort Smith.

We often talked about vocations in our family. My dad spent a short time in Subiaco Seminary as a novice, but he left shortly before World War II. My older brother, Bill, spent four years of high school and two years of college in the Scholastic program at the abbey and St. Benedict's in Culman, Alabama.

He left the seminary after his second year of college. Two of my aunts, my mother's sisters, were part of the community of St. Scholastica, Sister Rose Ashour and Sister Kathleen Ashour. I also felt like I had a vocation to religious life and went through two years of the aspirancy program at St. Scholastica in my first two years of high school, from 1960 to 1962. This program was for high school girls who attended classes with the day students and boarders at the academy, but we lived apart upstairs in the yellow brick building that is still standing. We went to daily Mass with the Sisters and prayed Morning Prayer and compline with them. I loved the Gregorian chant and the rhythm of the psalms.

After I recovered from a “near fatal” case of homesickness, I enjoyed the time with other girls and our interaction with the Sisters. We worked the garden, helped clean the chapel and Fr. Milan's house, and helped with the dishes; I learned “ora et labora”.

Sister Irene Verkamp was our prefect and Sister Rosalie Ruesewald was our assistant prefect. They had their hands full! I absorbed so much of the Benedictine way of life; it became a part of me and my way of living. I made lifelong friends with girls and the Sisters.

I decided to leave the aspirancy and became a “day student” for my junior and senior years. I was only fourteen when I came to St. Scholastica and was still immature. What I lacked in my maturity, I made up for with enthusiasm and hard work! I “lived out” with a family, like many of the girls. We babysat and were companions for our room and board. The family I lived with resided just a few blocks down South Albert Pike, and I walked to and from school each day.

I graduated in 1964, and in 1965 I married the boy with whom I went to senior prom.

Twenty years later, I found myself somewhat beat up by life: a failed marriage, a single mom to three teenagers and one preteen, new to the job market and recovering from addiction/alcoholism. It was a rough time and my faith was beat up as well. But it was through the 12 Step Program that I began to feel the love of God again and a tug back to my roots. Life to get better. I met John, and we were married in 1990. He's also a "Benedictine Boy", having gone to St. Boniface and a year at Subiaco. I went through diaconate formation with him and learned so much. Some of our teachers were from St. Meinrad's in Indiana and also from Subiaco.

During the 90s, I became active in the St. Scholastica Academy Alumnae Association and helped with reunions and projects, volunteered at the gift shop, and attended retreats at the Center. It was during this time I felt like such a part of the monastery, and I wanted more. I joined the Oblate program when Sister Magdalen Stanton was the director. I made my oblation on May 18, 2023. I was 57 years old. Sister Cabrini Schmitz was prioress, and I remember she asked me, "Mary, what took you so long?"

It was just the right time. . .

The Art Appreciator: Sister Madeline Clifton

After a long day at St. Edward's as a chaplain, her head aching, Sister Madeline Clifton would return to the monastery and sit in front of one of her favorite paintings. The scene was of Jesus: the background is the dark, rich blue of a nighttime sky as he prays. As she sat, she took in the details of the painting, and she sometimes prayed, sometimes simply gazed at Jesus.

Jesus suffered. He understood her suffering, and through the insight Sister Madeline gleaned while she spent time with God those nights in front of the painting, an understanding of the importance of art took firm root in her as well.

Sister Madeline's "extra special sensitive" nature and her chronic headaches often brought a disturbance of her inner peace alongside her physical pain. But her love of literature and art brought her solace. She often visited the library to check out books, and her art education grew. Sister Madeline enjoyed sacred art, but she also enjoyed art glorifying the mundane, but crucial, task of caring for children, or she enjoyed the art of women simply reading the paper and drinking tea. She pored over books that offered her history and beauty, like that of artist Mary Cassatt. She identified with both the art containing religious subjects and the art that reflected daily life.

As she cultivated this love of art, she became a true art appreciator, seeing the Creator in the creative works she studied. Her reflections on art informed her spirituality, and her ability to connect with others and help them with their own sufferings, cares, or triumphs deepened.

Years after she retired from her days at the hospital, Sister Madeline still meditates on the many beautiful works of art displayed in the monastery—most of them painted or created by sisters who have passed away. What Sister Madeline wants others to realize and know is that art offers peace and meditation. It offers beauty and comfort. Most importantly, God can speak to our spirits through the inspired art of his children.



Sister Madeline Clifton gazes at Jesus in the "The Mount of Olives".

Meet Yaqueline, G.E.M. “Pioneer” and Future R.N.

By Kathy Jarvis

Fifteen Arkansans traveled to Guatemala in 2013, the first year of St. Scholastica’s scholarship program in Esquipulas, the educational collaboration the Benedictine Sisters set up with the Benedictine monks who run an excellent K-12 co-ed school - Colegio San Benito. Some of us were from Fort Smith parishes, others from Sacred Heart of Charleston, and one from St. Thomas in Fayetteville. We were high school and college students and adults, ranging in age from 16 to 60. On that first visit, we stayed in the guesthouse of the Benedictine monks, a wonderful experience. A few of us had a working knowledge of Spanish and several monks were on the same level with their English. Communication lines were open and we learned a great deal about the history, the people and the city of Esquipulas from them.

The following day, we visited the families of the scholarship recipients, all of whom were selected by Padre Hugo Lopez, OSB, and G.E.M. coordinator (volunteer) Gloria Portillo. We stopped by the house of fourth grader Yaqueline, one of the 11 “pioneers” of the Girls’ Education Matters (G.E.M.) scholarship program, and met her three younger siblings, her mom and her dad. Her family was different from most of the others, in that there was a father present. I remember meeting her Dad and riding in the little 3-wheel “tuk-tuk” he rented and drove around the city to earn a living.

Their tiny home was very humble but exuded abundant warmth and family unity. It was a lovely visit. The following year, Yaqueline’s world broke apart, with her dad, in his early 40s, suffering a fatal heart attack.

Now it was up to Mom, a woman who was only allowed to study up to 5th grade, to take care of the family single-handedly. Although Yaqueline, the eldest, had to take on more responsibility at home, she never neglected her schoolwork and rose to the top of her class. Yaqueline graduated from primary, junior high, and high school as the top student. I was thrilled to be present at her high school graduation and witness her carrying the flag, the honor reserved for the valedictorian. Yaqueline has been so grateful to the Sisters who started the G.E.M. program and to all the supporters. She acknowledges that university studies would have been impossible without her G. E.M. scholarship.



When asked about her professional goals, she said, “ I remember that since my childhood, I have kept in mind my aspiration to become a professional in the field of health...I have wanted to contribute to people’s well-being.” Now in her third year of nursing school (4 years to become an RN) she has had the opportunity to train in three different hospital settings and to apply that training in remote villages. Speaking of the case of a woman in one of those villages experiencing severe postpartum pains requiring medical attention and care, she commented, “What struck me about this case were two things. One of them was that we still live in a time where women do not have the right to give their opinion,

although we have made progress in some aspects regarding women’s rights. In this case, the patient’s husband prohibited her from leaving the house despite the pain she was experiencing. We were informed of the patient’s situation thanks to a neighbor. The second thing that struck me was the great work that nursing represents. At that time I believed that nursing functions were limited. However, I realized that this is not the case. Sometimes we have to be a substitute for doctors.” She added, “I have been able to realize how important emotional support and patience is towards patients because they are going through difficult times . . .” Yaqueline opined, “During all the internships that I have carried out, I have realized that most hospitals and health centers (in Guatemala) do not have the necessary resources and personnel for quality care of patients...with the corruption that exists in the country, the budget for the health area is limited.”

But Yaqueline is determined to serve people of limited means, hoping to specialize in either the surgical or gynecological nursing fields.

It has amazed us how Yaqueline has been able to do her nurse's training, hold down a job at McDonald's, and still perform her "social work", a requirement for all the scholarship recipients. Yaqueline has been a cheerful volunteer at the nursing home and the Church-sponsored Center for Migrants. Padre Hugo Lopez at each Colegio San Benito 12th grade graduation tells the students to remember they have received this excellent Catholic education in order to serve others. Soon to be a professional nurse, Yaqueline has heard that message loud and clear. Her dad would be extremely proud of her.



Save the date for the 2024

Fiesta of Solidarity!

Saturday, September 21, at Christ the King!

Celebrate G.E.M with us and enjoy delicious food, a silent auction, music by the Subiaco Jazz Band, folkloric dancing, and more!

The Hesychia Holy Place

On June 21, 2024, Prioress Kimberly Prohaska blessed the old dairy barn on the property of the original St. Scholastica Monastery in New Blaine, Arkansas. The site is now known as Hesychia House of Prayer, a place of peace and contemplation with hermitages available for overnight stays or extended stays for those seeking a quiet place of prayer and the pursuit of God. The Hesychia House of Prayer Team consists of Sister Lisa Elaine Atkins, RSM, Director, and Sister Anita DeSalvo, RSM, Assisted Director, and the Founder, Sister Louise Sharum, OSB and Michael DeSalvo, the Farm Manager.



Sister Kimberly Prohaska, OSB, blesses "The Hesychia Holy Place".

The rustic beauty of the "Holy Place" adds to the charm of Hesychia House of Prayer, and the surrounding pastoral atmosphere is intentional. In the early 60s the sisters made the decision to keep beef cattle. To this day, they have fifty head of cattle. They help maintain the 300 acres, and the Sisters sell the young bulls to offset some of the costs for the Hesychia ministries. The cows provide a beautiful, peaceful environment for the retreatants: "Every hermitage is close to the pastures, so retreatants can see the cows, hear them chewing the cud, mooing . . . all these sounds soothe the central nervous system, and enhance the calming atmosphere. It not only calms the exterior, but the interior. The cows help us to get centered within ourselves, to be aware of God within and to find God externally as well. We slow down, and we hear, and we listen to God within ourselves and within the world around us. St. Benedict stressed the importance of taking the time out of our busy lives to listen to God. And that's what Hesychia helps us do - to encounter the Holy One in solitude, quiet and in the beauty of creation," said Sister Lisa.



Hesychia cow in front of the Holy Place.

slow down, and we hear, and we listen to God within ourselves and within the world around us. St. Benedict stressed the importance of taking the time out of our busy lives to listen to God. And that's what Hesychia helps us do - to encounter the Holy One in solitude, quiet and in the beauty of creation," said Sister Lisa.

Since the Sisters' arrival at Shoal Creek (New Blaine) in 1879, they have had various ministries to meet the needs of the time. In the late 70s, Sister Louise and the Sisters began to discern the need for the house of prayer. In 1981 it became a reality. Guests now have the opportunity to stay in one of the four hermitages on site, and the Sisters of Hesychia are available upon request to offer spiritual direction – to walk with people on their journey into the heart of God. Aside from the pastures and the hermitages, the Sisters of Hesychia have expanded the different areas of the property for spiritual encounters, like the addition of hiking trails, where markers bearing scripture were placed on trees, a chapel that is open during daylight hours to be in the quiet where Jesus is present in the tabernacle, with Mass twice during the week, and now, “The Hesychia Holy Place”.



The rock barn, originally built as a dairy barn in 1908, has served many purposes over the years. The Hesychia Sisters sought to repurpose the building after the 116-year-old barn fell into a state of disrepair; the old metal roof had become twisted and dangerous during storm season and the interior two stories of the barn needed attention. They

contacted the Knights of Columbus in Scranton, and the Knights generously donated time and effort to remove the old roof and the rotting second floor of the barn. They cleared all the flotsam and jetsam the years had accumulated in the barn.

Now that the old dairy barn was newly cleaned out, the Sisters felt prompted by God to do something beautiful for God with this structure. Annie Woody, friend and oblate, heard the Sisters as they discussed possible ways that God might be giving them ideas as a space whereby retreatants might encounter the Holy. The four of them prayed and discerned.

The Sisters applied for the Sr. Teresa Kelone RSM grant, provided by her family, and were generously awarded the \$4,600.00 grant to restore the dairy barn into a new sacred space.

They were able to then purchase gravel for safe footing, offer a commission to Annie Woody to paint seven murals on the walls, and pay for paints, supplies, and tables and chairs for retreatants to sit awhile to experience the surrounding beauty and the murals which invite guests to “an encounter with the Holy.”



Artist Annie Woody next to one of seven murals she painted for the interior of “The Holy Place”.

Sister Lisa said, “The funding provided by the Sr. Teresa Kelone RSM grant also allowed for additions that extend the natural beauty of the area – a solar-powered fountain and carefully-selected wind chimes: The Quaker-made wind chimes have a deep sound that resonates within us, to call us to return to the God that is always present, waiting for us, yearning for us.” The Sisters thought, “What do we call this place?” Soon it became apparent that the name would be “The Hesychia Holy Place.”

Sister Lisa said, “We are so grateful for the Scranton Knights of Columbus, Sister Teresa Kelone, RSM, Annie Woody and her husband, Dewey, and for all those who made donations to make this project successful. This beautiful Hesychia Holy Place would not be a reality without the generosity of our volunteers and benefactors.”

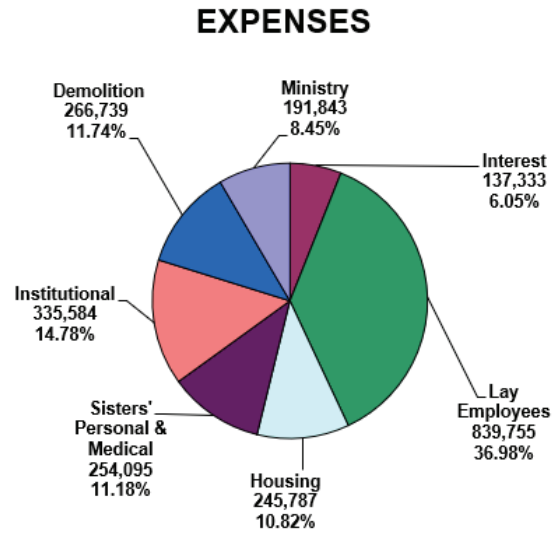
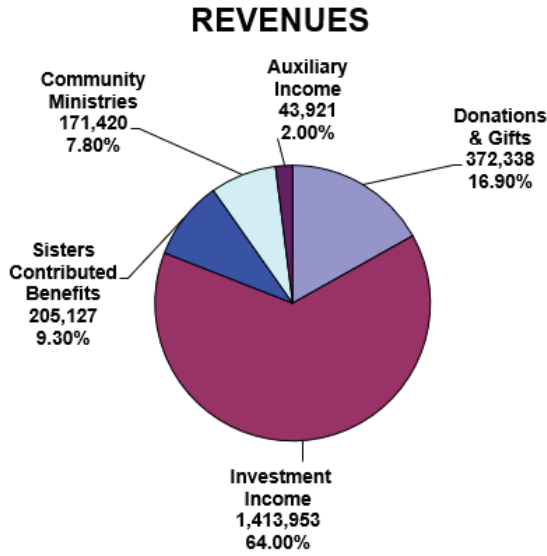
No matter the season, the Sisters of Hesychia invite any adult with a heart open to God to join them and seek the Holy on retreat at Hesychia.

To learn more about The Hesychia House of Prayer or to book your stay, visit: <https://seek-theholy.org/>.



Please check us out and follow us on Facebook and Instagram: @Hesychiahouseofprayer.

ANNUAL REPORT September 1, 2022- August 31, 2023



Total Revenues, Gains, and Other Support	\$2,206,759
Total Expenses	<u>\$2,271,136</u>
Net Change in Assets	<u>(\$67,377)</u>

Our mission: Seeking God in our life together and enlivened by daily prayer, we, the Benedictine Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery in Fort Smith, Arkansas, respond to the needs of the people of God in a spirit of hospitality, simplicity, and reverence for one another and all creation.

Charism Statement (excerpt): We, the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, have responded to a call to seek God by a total gift of self in a religious community of celibate women, who make profession to live the Gospel according to the Rule of Benedict, the norms of the Federation of St. Gertrude, and the norms of the Monastery. By professing stability and fidelity to the monastic way of life, we promise to be faithful to our Benedictine tradition of prayer, work, and leisure, and to be a Christian community where persons are revered in their uniqueness and diversity.

We invite you to visit the monastery gift shop! The monastery gift shop is small, but it has a variety of religious items for sale, including products crafted or grown by our Sisters! We carry many different spiritual reading materials for both children and adults. We also have information and t-shirts for Hesychia House Of Prayer.



Monday, Wednesday, and Friday
9:30 AM - 3:30 PM

Saturday
12:30 PM - 3:00 PM
Closed the second Saturday of the month

479-242-2501
giftshop@stscho.org



Orders and payments can be arranged over the phone.

News Briefs

March 12: The RCIA group from Immaculate Conception Church in Fort Smith joined the Sisters for Evening Praise, a brief presentation on the community's history, and refreshments.

April 11: Father Cassian Elkins, OSB from Subiaco Abbey gave presentations on the Eucharist to the Sisters on Spring Community Day.

April 15-19: Sisters Kimberly Prohaska, Maria DeAngeli, and Siena Fisk attended the North American Benedictine Vocation Formation Conference Symposium in Schuyler, Nebraska.

April 23: Sister Siena Fisk participated in Fifth Grade Vocation Day in Little Rock.

May 1-2: Sister Siena Fisk joined sessions for the National Religious Vocation Conference Virtual Area Meeting.

May 2-5: Sister Laura Cathcart led some of the Oblates in a retreat at Hesychia House of Prayer in New Blaine.

May 15: Sisters Kimberly Prohaska and Siena Fisk participated in Fifth Grade Vocation Day in Subiaco.

May 19-21: Sister Kimberly Prohaska attended the Leadership Conference of Women Religious regional HUB meeting in St. Louis, Missouri.

June 8: Oblate Jay McDaniel and three friends led the Sisters and guests in a singalong.

June 3-8: Sister Siena Fisk and the Sisters hosted a vocation discernment retreat for those interested in religious life.

June 9-15: The Sisters were on their annual community retreat, led by Abbot Elijah Owens, OSB from Subiaco Abbey.

June 24-July 13: Sister Siena Fisk attended the Benedictine Spirituality Workshop and Retreat in Atchison, Kansas and the 55 & Under Meeting in Yankton, South Dakota.

July 4-9: Sister Laura Cathcart and Oblate Katie Shields attended the National Benedictine Oblate Conference in Schuyler, Nebraska.

July 15-22: Sister Siena Fisk attended a vocation director training workshop in Leavenworth, Kansas.

Cover art photo of painting by Sister Stanislaus courtesy of Terra Harmon Photography.

St. Scholastica Monastery

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ST. SCHOLASTICA MONASTERY

AS OF JUNE 2024, WE CONCLUDED
THE USE OF OUR P.O. BOX ADDRESS.

PLEASE USE THE MONASTERY'S
PHYSICAL ADDRESS FOR ANY
CORRESPONDENCE:

1315 S. ALBERT PIKE AVENUE
FORT SMITH AR 72903

THANK YOU!



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Horizons

July 2024

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Anyone is welcome to be on the mailing list at no charge.

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