

Benedictine Sisters of Pittsburgh

Benedictines

Monastic Women with Discerning Hearts

St. Benedict Monastery

2025

Bakerstown, Pennsylvania

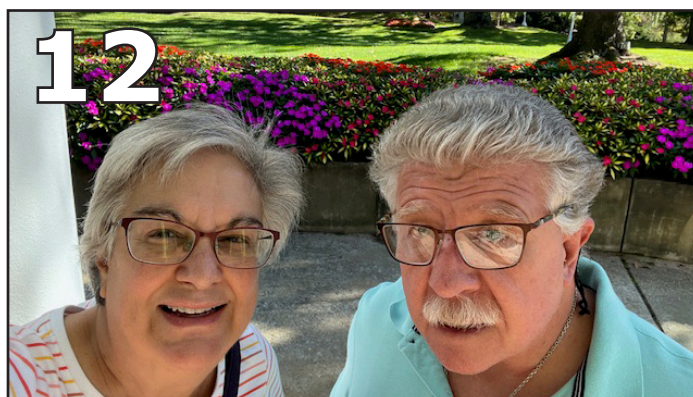
Enjoying
a Summer
Afternoon



Throwback
Thursday
Page 14

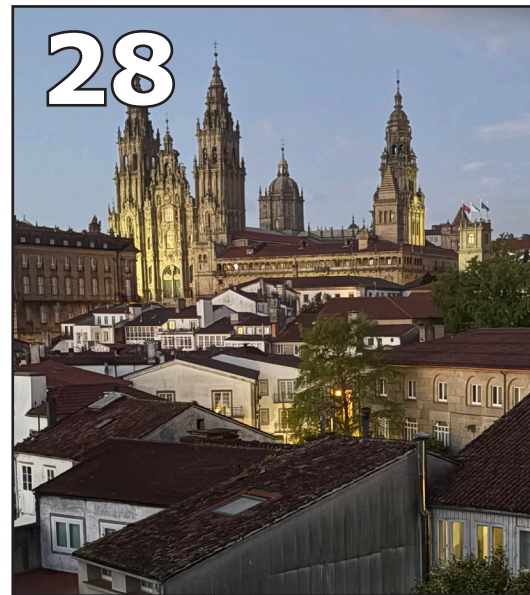
(L to R) Sister Rosalyn Soller, Sister Benita DeMatteis, Sister Judith Ann Criner, and Sister Karen Brink, Prioress

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“The first principle of Benedictinism, too, is to do what must be done with special care and special zeal so that doing it can change our consciousness and carve our souls into the kind of beauty that comes from simple things.... God is most of all to be found in doing common things with uncommon conscientiousness.”

-Joan Chittester, OSB,
The Rule of Benedict:
Insight for the Ages

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and Instagram

**We are the Benedictine
Sisters of Pittsburgh,
continuing over 150
years of seeking God
in Community,
Prayer and Ministry.**

July 2025

Dear Family and Friends,

Thank You!

As I write this our community is preparing to celebrate the 155th anniversary of our founding on August 29, 1870.

There are days when I wish I had been one of our three founding Sisters who traveled by covered wagon from Saint Marys, PA, to Johnstown, PA, to begin a new foundation of Benedictine Sisters in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. How motivated these three Benedictine women must have been, how brave, how excited!

But since I couldn't be one of them I believe that all of the four hundred plus women who entered our community have been motivated, brave and excited as they, too, embarked on their monastic journey of seeking God.

I also sometimes wish I had known all those individuals whose paths crossed those hundreds of Pittsburgh Benedictines over the years! Their stories, their lives, their hopes, their dreams, their disappointments, and their joys make up their individual lives. And because you are reading this newsletter, somewhere along the line our lives have crossed, either in person or by print.

In the name of each Benedictine Sister who has ever crossed someone's path, and particularly your path, I would like to say **THANK YOU**. We wouldn't be who we are without you, and what a loss that would be...but instead the crossing of our paths has been a blessing as we move forward. Our community is blessed because of you and for that we are grateful.

And so, as we celebrate the beauty of 155 years, know that you are in our thoughts, our hearts, and, most importantly in our prayer.

For being *YOU*, **THANKS!**

Blessings,



OSB, Prioress



BITS & PIECES

Sisters Outreach Project: Packing Kits for the Homeless



Left to Right: Sister Lucille Snyder, Sister Rosalyn Soller, and Sister Mary Agnes Gmuer

Living out "Ora et Labora"

By Pat Beczak McCarthy, SBA '61

As a graduate of St. Benedict Academy, with two sisters who are also SBA alums, my family is forever grateful for our relationship with the Benedictine Sisters. I want to share the amazing accomplishments of my sister, Christine Brannan King, class of '71.

Christine has had a fulfilling family life as the mother of three children, and a demanding, successful career as an executive for Lockheed Martin. She attributes her engineering career choice to the guidance and encouragement of the Sisters at St. Benedict Academy.

In retirement, Chris continues to live out the motto Ora et Labora, spending endless hours developing and managing the New Neighbors Interfaith Alliance (nnia-maryland.org). This organization brings together volunteers from various faith communities to assist newly arrived refugees and immigrants.

In recognition, Chris was honored as Volunteer of the Year in Montgomery County, Maryland in a ceremony attended by the Lt. Governor and state senators. I know that Chris would greatly appreciate your prayers for the people that her organization serves.

Peace Pole on the grounds of the St. Benedict Monastery



EVERY VALLEY

By Sister Barbara Helder

“Every valley shall be filled in, and every mountain and hill be made low.” – Isaiah 40:4

These words speak to me of a leveling, a balancing-out, an equality that is so needed in our world. Not a sameness, but a fairness – which generates understanding and respect for people. Not an interchangeableness, but a recognition of the richness in diversity, an equity which would provide all people opportunities for a good quality of life – with basic needs like nourishing food, clean water, affordable housing, fair wages, balanced education, fair treatment, freedom from fear and hatred, from violence and abuse, a chance for children to grow to adulthood believing that any of their dreams are possible.

These words speak to me of a sharing of wealth among people, a reaching out to those who need to be lifted out of poverty, joblessness, bullying, hunger, medical needs they can't afford. These words speak of forbearance, acceptance, forgiveness, reverence and harmony between races, nationalities, ethnicities and religions. This is the world I visualize when the Readings speak of justice and righteousness and Isaiah speaks of filling valleys and leveling hills.

Isaiah was one of God's messengers. Messengers are not a main character; their purpose is to point to someone or something. Messengers don't speak for themselves but carry the message of others. They aren't always accepted but they do their job because the message is important.

We have messengers in our lives, people who pave the way for us. They preserve the good by

making sacrifices for those who follow. I'm thinking of our Founding Sisters who struggled in an unknown land. Lived a harsh life so our community could not only rise but continue for generations.

I'm thinking of grandparents and parents, the people (or person) who cared. The messengers who want better things for their children and their children's children.

“What sort of persons ought you to be,” Peter asked us, “conducting yourselves in holiness and devotion, waiting for the promised new heavens, and new earth in which righteousness dwells?”

Today's society is desperately in need of people who can show us “a different way of being that will change the world.” The reality of the vision I pictured in our own corner of the world, living as people of expectation and peace, witnessing to others that we believe Emmanuel, “God-with-us” is already in our midst. We can help to prepare the way for those who live after us.



Responding to the Unknown

By Sister Bridget Reilly

The Benedictine Sisters of Pittsburgh have a history of responding to the unknown. It started in 1852 when three Benedictine Sisters from Eichstatt Bavaria answered the call to teach German children in Saint Marys, Pennsylvania. The Sisters had no vision of their coming hardships nor the unpreparedness awaiting them. Despite the challenges they faced, they were not deterred from their mission and the community grew.

Eighteen years after the foundation of Saint Joseph Convent in Saint Marys, Sister Adelgunda Feldmann left to establish a ministry in the mountains of Cambria County. Founded in Carrolltown, the Motherhouse was part of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, and we became the Benedictine Sisters of Pittsburgh. Our ministry in education continued. By 1872, there were 500 children attending schools established by the Sisters.

In the summer of 1887, with limited funds, Mother Adelgunda moved several of the Sisters into a small house in Allegheny City (Pittsburgh). A mansion was later bought, renovated, and became Saint Mary's Convent. The top floor became home for the Sisters, including those living in Carrolltown, and the bottom Saint Benedict Academy for Girls. Carrolltown became a mission and home for the Novitiates. Following accreditation by the State of Pennsylvania, Saint Benedict Academy for Girls was formally opened in 1889. Sisters not teaching in the Academy, taught children in the area's parishes. Through many challenges, the Sisters responded with prayer and determination. Despite the conditions of their world being so difficult, dedicated women continued to enter religious life.

Land had been purchased in Ross Township to build a motherhouse large enough to accommodate the increasing numbers of Sisters and students. The building was not completely built when a fire occurred in Saint Mary's Convent.

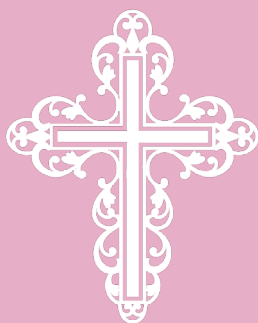
Sisters were separated; some went to nearby missions, and others to Carrolltown. A lack of funding turned the plan for a U-shaped building into an L-shaped structure. In 1927 the Sisters and Novices moved into the new Mount Saint Mary Convent. The Academy occupied the first two floors of the left wing. As the Academy grew larger, a building was built behind the Motherhouse. The Sisters were soon asked to tighten their belts so the Academy could be completed.

When Vatican II concluded, the life of simplicity and sameness was changed and the Sisters again walked together into the unknown. Many changes took place - in ministries, dress, and prayer. We saw ourselves differently, asked new questions, and sought new ways to respond to the needs of people. It was exciting and threatening.

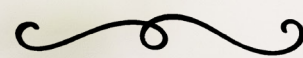
Today, we find ourselves in a comparable situation. As we age, our Community becomes smaller. To meet the new, we sold our monastery in Ross Township that held as many as 200 sisters and built a smaller monastery in Bakerstown (St. Benedict Monastery) that accommodates 40. Thirty-one of us are living and praying together. We are still dealing with the unknown and are looking to the future with the Holy Spirit as our guide. We hired Mary Jo Nelson, OLVM, of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, and KEB Consultants, a management consulting firm with a specialty in servicing communities of women religious, to help us with our efforts. The Monastic Council had an in-person meeting and a zoom meeting with KEB to begin planning. We are looking forward to our future meetings.

Yes, our sisters want to live out their lives at St Benedict Monastery. We do not know what the future holds, however the Spirit has guided us for almost 155 years and will, we do not doubt, continue to guide us if we "listen with the ear of our hearts."

2025 Jubilarians



Sister
Corinee
Moeller



70th Jubilee



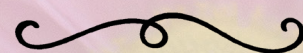
Sister
Evelyn
Dettling



70th Jubilee

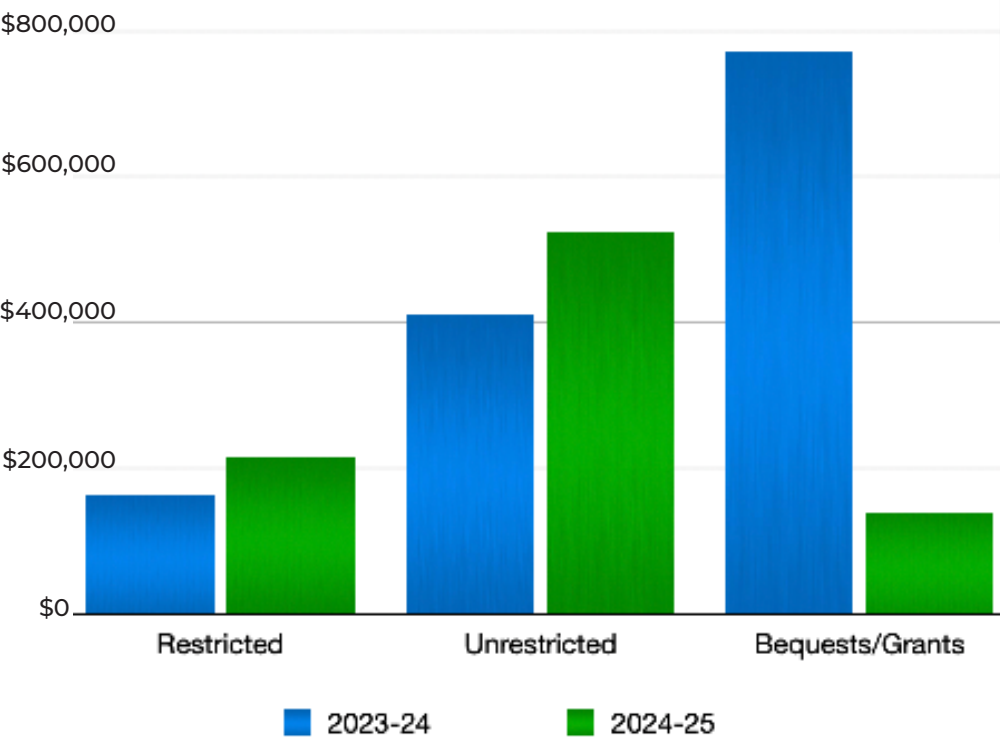


Sister
Karen
Brink



60th Jubilee

Source of Funding

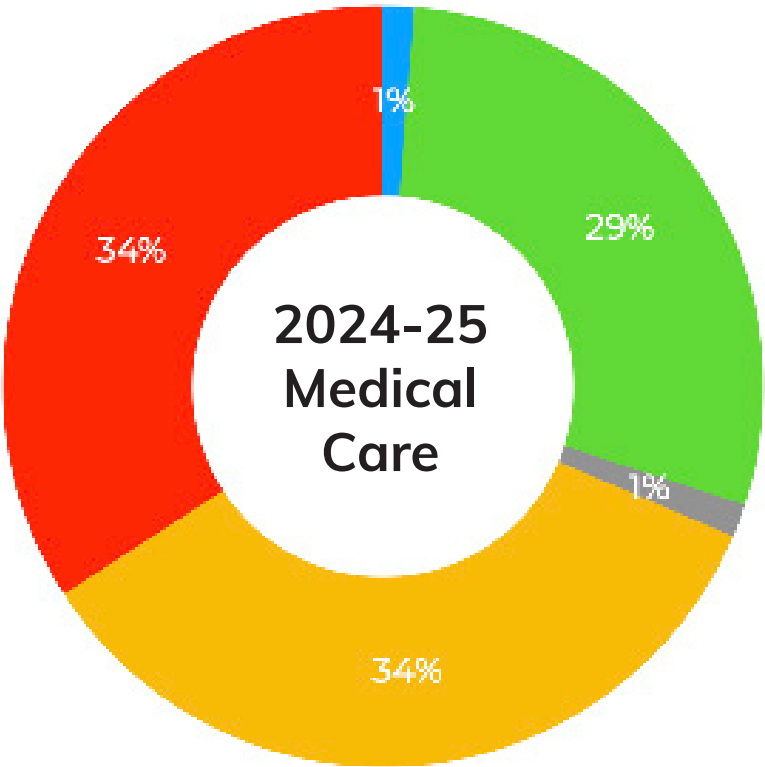


ANNUAL REPORT 2024

By Sister Michael Mack,
Treasurer



We are the
Benedictine
Sisters of Pittsburgh,
continuing over 150
years of seeking
God in Community,
Prayer and Ministry



- Nurses Station computers
- Nurses Station call system
- Health history software for the community
- Medical Care and supplies
- Essentials

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Visit our website osbpgh.org,
for more information on all events.



August Food Drive

to benefit the
Lighthouse Foundation

(for more information see page 16)

Advent Spiritual Spa December 6



Annual New Year's Eve Peace Vigil

*Mark your
calendars for
December 31

*Presentation, Peace Concert & Refreshments
*More details to come on our website in December



Epiphany Open House January 2026

Join us at the monastery for some
fellowship and tasty treats to
celebrate the season!

Details will be posted on our website in December.





Pittsburgh Magazine's
givebig
PITTSBURGH

presented by

GBU  **Life**[®]

JOIN OUR GIVING DAY!

Support us and give back on December 2, 2025 | 12 a.m. to 12 a.m.

Details to come on our website and social media starting in October. For more information about GiveBig Pittsburgh, go to GiveBigPittsburgh.com. If you have any questions or want to be part of the match pool, call the Benedictine Sisters of Pittsburgh's Office of Community Advancement at 724-502-2599.

My Friend, Sister Bridget



Angel and Dennis Boles

By Dennis Boles

I've known Sister Bridget for 35 years as a teacher, a confidant, and a guide. We first met through a mutual friend, Ray Naar. We'd meet to discuss life events and to support each other.

Once, I was struggling with "the full catastrophe" of wife, children, house, mortgage, car and a job. Sister Bridget would faithfully bring me the want ads and would have circled in red the appropriate jobs for me to apply. You see I was out of work. She helped to support me emotionally during this difficult time.

While being a great friend to me, she also taught me to deepen my faith in God through scripture. Sister Bridget mentored me about

my family issues in vexing times, served as a pastoral counselor on matters of faith and prayer. She taught me to persevere, have faith through difficult moments, and she listened to my eternal lament.

She has always been there for me and my family.

Now we meet periodically for lunch and always have lively discussions. My wife and I have both come to know Sister Bridget a bit better. Additionally, Liz Tamburri has rounded out our group with humor and candor. In short, Sister Bridget has been a source of empathy for my wife and me, as well as a great friend over the years. The time has flown by.

Easter 2025



Sr. Dolores Conley & Veronica DeAlmeida



Dave Tamburri & Fr. Leroy DiPietro



Nancy Koslosky & Deacon Bob Koslosky



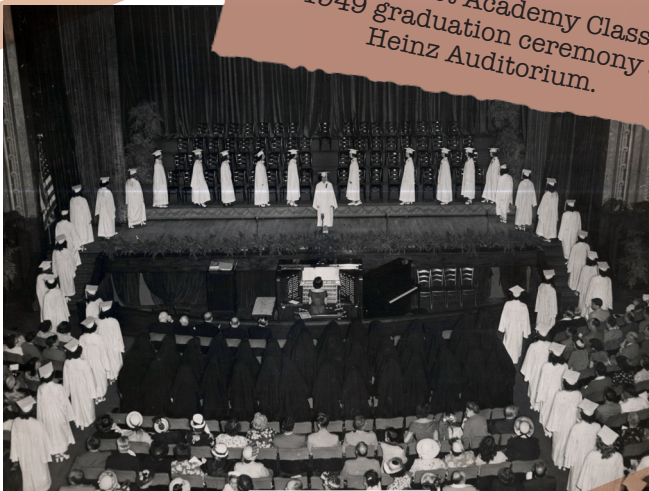
Front Row, L to R:
Sr. Roberta Campbell,
Cynthia Koledo DeAlmeida,
Barb Matera. **Back Row:**
William Caballero

THROWBACK THURSDAY

Join us on Facebook or Instagram for our popular "Throwback Thursday" series which features photos from our archives each week. You may see some people and places that you haven't seen for a while!

Don't miss these priceless memories!

St. Benedict Academy Class of 1949 graduation ceremony at Heinz Auditorium.



Sr. Roberta Campbell



Sr. Evelyn Dettling



Sr. Scholastica Strittmatter in the early 1900s and celebrating her 103rd birthday in 1974 with Sr. Helen Marie Hierholzer.



Sr. Paula Gerek practices her putting.



Teaching in the 1950s.



Sr. Christine Makowski



Srs. Perpetua Stupy and Ebba Bacik try to stay warm during a natural gas shortage in the winter of 1977.



Feast of Creation

By Sister Michelle Farabaugh

The community celebrated the Feast of Creation, April 22nd, known around the world as Earth Day. The Sisters decided it was time to further our understanding, interest, and involvement in the oneness of all creation. We created means by which all of us, as well as our friends and supporters, would be able to reflect on the wonders of creation while increasing our commitment to work toward greater understanding of the intimate connections among all creatures – animals, plants, the universe, and humans.

Among the concrete actions we took were –

The design of our April 22nd prayers.

Using the theme of creation, we included the offering of a hydrangea bush (subsequently planted outside the monastery.) As we embraced the living plant, we invited the Sisters to reflect on the life surrounding us, the life outdoors. At our afternoon Vesper prayer, we called upon each of us to ponder the wonders of creation as we viewed and meditated through a specially created visual praising the beauty that we enjoy each day in our natural surroundings.

Education. We made multiple educational pieces about the connectedness among all creations, the critical status of climate change manifested in the ever-increasing occurrences of catastrophic events, as well as the shortage of food supplies leading to poverty and illness experienced in many parts of the world, including our United States. As part of this understanding, we requested our Food Service to serve meatless meals on this day.

Designating April as “CLEAN OUT MONTH.”

We encouraged every Sister to complete an inventory of her belongings and donate any unnecessary items to a special collection benefiting Life Pittsburgh and shoppers at Goodwill.

Additionally, Sister Evelyn made the Creation Feast the topic for the Oblates for their regular monthly meeting in April.

Gifts. Finally, to spread understanding of our goal to our neighbors and visitors, we distributed packets of seeds to everyone who visited our monastery. We encouraged them to plant them as a way of growing in our awareness of the gifts, the blessings, and the benefits we receive all day, and everyday from the world around us.

WE CAN HELP THE LIGHTHOUSE FOUNDATION TOGETHER

During the month of August the Sisters will be hosting a food drive on behalf of the Lighthouse Foundation. In the past many of the Sisters volunteered at the Foundation. Today, more than ever, the service needs food for families.

With a team of 17, the Lighthouse provides transitional housing, a food pantry, whole life ministries, an annual Christmas toy drive, and a car connection program to individuals and families in Allegheny County and Northern Butler.

Each week Lighthouse Foundation provides food for over 250 families – last year nearly one million dollars worth of food was distributed.

Beginning August 1, a box will be available in the front entry of St. Benedict Monastery for donations of can and box foods – non-perishable please. The food will be collected weekly and transported to Lighthouse Foundation.

Your contribution will make all of the difference.



Sister Karen Brink, Sister Judith Ann Criner, Sister Georgine Schweers, & Sister Corinne Moeller volunteering in 2018.

Pope Leo XIV approves Mass for the Care of Creation

In July, carrying forward the work of Pope Francis, Pope Leo XIV approved a new Mass titled, "Mass for the Care of Creation." In his message Pope Leo called for a Day of Prayer on September 1, 2025, on behalf of "the evidence in various parts of the world that our earth is being ravaged."

This Mass dedicated to taking care of creation "calls us to be faithful stewards of what God has entrusted to us, not only in daily choices and public policies, but also in our prayer, our worship, and our way of living in the world." This Mass can now "increase our gratitude" and also "invites us to respond with care and love" to the issues of today. "In a world where the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters are the first to suffer the devastating effects of climate change, deforestation and pollution, care for creation becomes an expression of our faith and humanity." "The cry of the earth and the cry of the poor are one and the danger of a superficial ecology" is to believe that the only "problems to be solved are ecological ones" and that this can be done "at the expense of the people."



Readings featured in this Mass are "very rich and offer several insights." From the Old Testament, for example, a reading from the Book of Wisdom (13,1-9) is included, which highlights the importance of seeing God through his creation. For the Responsorial Psalm, certain verses are listed from Psalm 18, which highlights how "the heavens declare the glory of God," and Psalm 103, which states "Bless the Lord, all his creatures." For the New Testament, a reading from St. Paul's letter to the Colossians (1,15-20) was selected that affirms that Christ "is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in Him were created all things in heaven and on earth." Lastly, two passages from the Gospel of Matthew are suggested. In the first (6,24-34) Christ invites to "look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, yet your heavenly Father feeds them." The second (8,23-27) features the moment when Jesus calms a storm while on a boat with His disciples. The prayers in the Mass also reflect the importance of caring for creation, for example by stating "while we wait for new heavens and a new earth, let us learn to live in harmony with all creatures."



SISTER SISTER

Same Calling, Different Personalities

***By Sister Corinne Moeller and
Sister Irene Moeller***



Born in Chicago, Illinois, both Sr. Corinne and Sr. Irene developed very different personalities. Sr. Corinne's interests centered on books: information, biography, religion, science, arts and crafts. Sr. Irene was interested in meeting people, caring for the sick, religion, sewing and assisting in household chores.

When the family moved to Pittsburgh in 1946, Sr. Corinne introduced Sr. Irene to the public library. Grade school summers were spent walking to the library and experiencing adventures of every kind within the pages of books.

Corinne felt the call to religious life when she made her First Holy Communion at age 7.

Irene realized her religious vocation when she was in 7th and 8th grade. Both sisters attended St. Benedict Academy for high school where they were attracted by the example of their Benedictine teachers.

As a professed Benedictine Sister, Corinne taught primary and intermediate classes and library science to grades 1 -8. She was moderator for the Pius X Book Club for 5th and 6th grades in the Greensburg and Pittsburgh Dioceses. In 1979, our Community opened

a mission in Neon, Kentucky, where Sr. Evelyn Dettling, Sr. Corinne, Sr. Maura Ubinger and Shelly Farabaugh offered social outreach services in union with groups of Mennonite, Presbyterian, Lutheran and Catholic churches. Corinne worked with the Letcher County Emergency Food Bank. During two floods in the Neon and Whitesburg areas, she aided people applying for FEMA and Red Cross emergency assistance.

Sr. Irene's ministries centered on Religion, Home Economics, First Aid and English at St. Benedict Academy. In 1968, she was asked to become a licensed practical nurse as more of our Sisters began to have healthcare needs. In 1994, Sr. Irene became the parish social minister at St. Teresa of Avila Parish. She is currently sacristan at St. Benedict Monastery assisted by Sr. Corinne and Sr. Dolores Conley.

"Living with each other in our Benedictine Community and checking in on our youngest sister, Madelyn, and her husband, Al Kline, has been a spiritual fruitful, growth-filled experience as we pray together, share together, and work together in our variety of open-ended ministries. We are also graced with 30 other Benedictine Sisters which whom we live and share Benedict's motto: "Ora et Labor" (Pray and Work)," the sisters agree.

SISTER SISTER

Double “L” MICHELLE: *My Sister-sister*

By Sister Michele (Shelly) Farabaugh

When I went into Latin class as a senior at St. Benedict Academy, I had an interesting experience: my sister was my teacher. On the first day of class, she wrote her name on the board: Sr. Michelle. I did not know her well at that time except for monthly visits to the monastery with my parents. Michelle, 14 years older than me, went to the convent when I was two and I did not get to know her until we lived in the same town as adults in the 1970s.

Then, when I returned to the Community in 1996, we were sisters, friends and Sisters.

The fact that we both had the same first name – Michelle and Michele – was a good reason for humor. My favorite response to people who look confused about it: “We had a lot of kids and ran out of names so we started over again.” One time we were flying somewhere and the airline had one seat for the two of us. Since our last name is the same, we learned to be careful. I usually use the nickname “Shelly” so that she can be Michelle (with her two Ls). Since we are both social workers, our employment at the same facilities posed challenges to computerized systems at times.

Now fully retired, Michelle keeps very busy with internal work at the monastery including as a musician. We enjoy it when we must go somewhere together and get to catch up. I like to tease her about having to take a forklift to the library to pick up the 10 to 15 books she orders and reads every three weeks.

And what about the other eight children? For several years now we get together on a Zoom call every two weeks. The topics have been amazing. The older



ones have stories about growing up in Carrolltown and times with our parents early in their marriage. The younger children grew up in Bedford, PA, where the family moved in 1951. Michelle, now the oldest after our sister, Donna, died in 2023, will break into the 90's this October and only three of us are left in the 70s.

Having a sister and a friend in Community is delightful for me. She has been a good adviser as I grew in the “School of the Lord’s Service.” If you know the love of a dear sister; you may understand how Double “L” Michelle is a gem in my life.

My Oblate Heart



By Barbara Szalai, Oblate

It has been a long day! There were many problems to tackle, and I am exhausted. Finally, I enter the peaceful surroundings of my cozy home.

I feed my dog, Jessa, feeling guilty that I left her alone all day. Of course, she increases my guilt by giving me extra love, as I sit on my porch and relieve my throbbing feet by putting on those old slippers that I love to wear when I am “home for good.”

While I am fixing my supper, the phone rings and I hope it is a sales call that I can easily ignore. But it is my neighbor who has been waiting all day for me. She needs her medications picked up at the pharmacy before it closes in an hour, and she is too dizzy to drive.

I want to tell her that I’m fixing dinner and that it has been a difficult day, but she adds, “I am down to

one pill, and they make me feel so much better.” It is then that my Oblate heart beats faster and overrides my tiredness. This is God’s work. “What you do for the least of your sisters or brothers, you do for me.” (Matthew 25:40)

Every day provides opportunities to practice Benedictine values. Have I become a “superhero” who puts on a cape and answers every call? By no means, but I have become someone who tries, even when it is hard, to put God and others first.

I remind myself daily that I have opened my heart and let God’s light in. I feel God’s hand on my shoulder, as if to say, “I will take away your weariness and give you the strength to serve me through others. I have made you mine, a Benedictine Oblate.”

(In memory of my dog, Jessa, who passed in 2024)

Sister Mom

"I wanted to live with a group of good women who were doing good things in the world." As a convert soon after Vatican II, I had been an active member of my parish and had worked with a priest to give charismatic retreats. As my children grew up and became independent, I moved to the Pittsburgh area to study for my doctorate. Missing my faith community I entered into Spiritual Direction. One day as we were talking about my interest in social justice, my director pointed out that I had a calling. She didn't say "calling to religious life" but that was where my mind went. I was sure it was not possible as a divorced woman and mother of 6 children, so I didn't say anything. It took a while before I sheepishly admitted my fantasy. But instead of laughing, she took my dream seriously and suggested I make inquiries. That process took me to the Benedictine Sisters of Pittsburgh and their vocation director, Sr. Judith Nero. At first I thought I would be an Oblate, but then I dared to ask if the community might accept me as a "Sister Mom." Becoming a nun at midlife is not new in the history of religious life. There have been other sister moms such as Sister Elizabeth Ann Seton, Sister Jane Frances de Chantal and Sister Louise de Marillac.

Sr. Judith encouraged me to make a formal request. It has been over 20 years now, and I am still thankful to be a member of the Community. My ministry became Life Coaching. First as an independent ministry, then as the co-founder of a coach training program at Duquesne University and then as a co-founder, along with Sr. Evelyn and Sr. Roberta, of the Leadership and Life Coach Training Program for Women in Faith-Based Ministry (BenCo). We are now starting our 5th cohort of students who are from all over the US and from other countries, Zambia, South Africa, Peru, the Philippines, and Canada to name a few. As I look back over the years, I am still grateful to live with a group of good women who are dedicated to doing good for the world.

By Sister Susan Merrie English (below)



Sister Elizabeth Ann Seton

FLAWED YET INVALUABLE

By Sister Roberta Campbell

Recently we conducted a Lenten retreat for Women, and I was quite taken by the theme, “Cup of Life.” Each session dealt with the various aspects of what that theme meant: the full cup (blessing), the cup of surrender (transformation), the flawed cup (mercy).

As I reflected on the “flawed” cup, I couldn’t help but think of how basic this is to our own spiritual growth. We are all flawed, given our history going back to the garden of Eden. That is not a comfortable reality because the normal reaction for most of us is to dispose of anything that is chipped or broken. Contrary to this practice, in Japan, when a piece of pottery is broken, it is not immediately thrown away. The Japanese potter repairs the broken pottery using a process known as Kintsukuroi which literally means “golden repair.” The artist fills each crack with powdered gold and resin.

This repair method celebrates each fact’s unique history by emphasizing its fractures instead of hiding or disguising them. Often, Kintsukuroi makes the repaired piece more invaluable than the original, revitalizing it with new life.

As we listen to or watch the news and see the overt oppression that is occurring in society through outrageous laws and practices, we can easily adopt the attitude of despair or hopelessness. However, I believe that the practice of “golden repair” occurs when we ask for mercy in our own personal brokenness or when we use our voice to encourage discussion and action regarding what we want our country to be for others—our children, immigrants, the

elderly. Thus, it is that God repairs us and makes us useful in the best of ways! “God shines through the cracks of broken people!” (Anita Krizzan)

As we look at what is happening in our society, it takes some time to reflect on the following:

- » Where do you experience brokenness in your own life, in your relationships, in your world?
- » What in your life and in our society is in need of mercy and forgiveness?
- » What are the greatest blessings in your life?

Just remember that God always sees us as persons who are invaluable regardless of how society measures our worth— people made in God’s likeness in spite of being flawed.



Important Numbers to Remember

American Civil Liberties Union of PA: 215-592-1513

Immigrant Defense Project: 212-725-6422

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-7233

StrongHearts Native Helpline: 1-844-762-8483

National Food Bank: 866-348-6479

Elderly Hotline: 800-677-1116

National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800-658-4673

LGBTQ+ helpline: TheTrevorProject.org

Suicide Prevention: dial 988 or 800 273-8255



*Lynn and her mom, Shirley Bundy Williamson
(SBA '51) Mothers Day 2025.*

A Vision I Couldn't Imagine

By Lynn Williamson Sevick, SBA '74

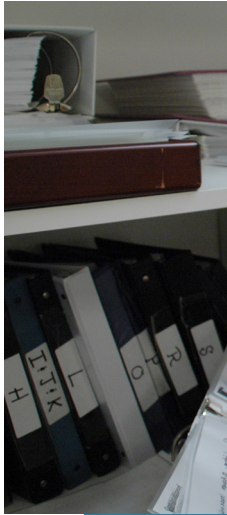
It was springtime in 1970, a month before my 8th grade graduation and three months before my 14th birthday. My mother called me into the kitchen as she stood looking in a mirror above the kitchen sink, combing her hair. She called me in to tell me that she took a part-time job. She would work 4:00 to 11:30 three evenings a week and I was to watch my siblings on those days until my dad got home from work. I remember her saying, in so many words, "I am doing this for your future. This is the only way we can afford to send you to St. Benedict's." I remember thinking, "My future? What? I just want to go to the baseball field to see the cute boys play baseball." At the time, that was about as far as I could see into my future.

Lucky for me, my mother had a vision I couldn't imagine in 1970. And I do believe my years at SBA shaped my future in ways I only realize today, 50 years after high school graduation. Many of my classmates cried at graduation, but not me. I was ready to get a job, buy myself some nice clothes, maybe even a car, get married and start my own family. Those things did happen, and every once in a while, during those busy years, I would think back to my years at SBA, the Sisters and lay teachers who helped jumpstart my life and life choices. They instilled a work ethic that I didn't appreciate at the time. I would say to people, mostly joking, that the Sisters taught us to have a servant's heart.

I began to realize, though, that it was true. Our teachers and mentors taught by example that a servant's heart would make for a brighter future, and for that I am eternally grateful.

"Lucky for me, my mother had a vision I couldn't imagine in 1970."

The Sisters Live by the Rule Every Day



Clockwise: Sister Florence Lynch;
Sister Jeanne Ubinger; Sister Michael
Mack; and Sister Judith Nero



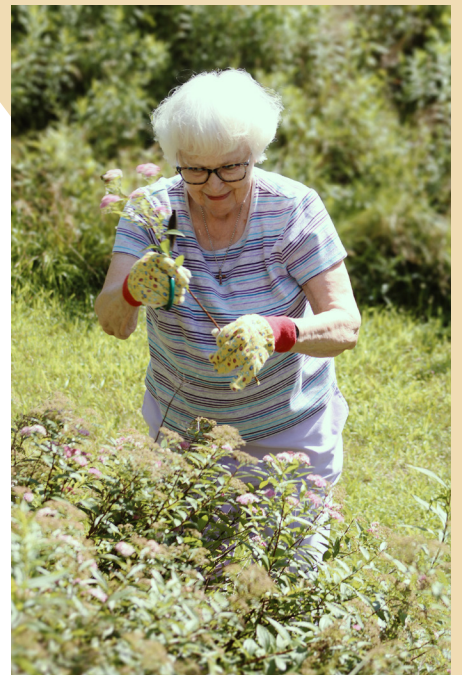


Top: Sister Mary James Dippold

Middle: Gift Shop at St. Benedict Monastery

Bottom Ceter: Sister Evelyn Dettling

Bottom Right: Sister Dolores Conley



Top to Bottom: Sister Florence Lynch, Sister Jeanne Ubinger and Sister Anne Lazar; Sister Roberta Campbell; Sister Joann Hothersall; Sister Rosalyn Soller

Meet our Kitchen Staff



Bob Burke has been working for John Marshall at St. Benedict Monastery for seven years. With a future desire to be a Master Chef Bob finds working for the Sisters far more rewarding than cooking in restaurants. “Except for my dad and brother, I grew up in a family of women. The Sisters are easy to work with. Right now, we prepare their big meal in the afternoon and soups and sandwiches or something light in the evening.” It seems to be working out well for everyone. The Sisters like the change, and Bob has more time to plan and prepare his infamous homemade soups.

Work in the kitchen never stops. It’s not uncommon for Bob to switch hats from cook to server when needed. His work ranges from full meal preparation, to making homemade soups, preparing lighter evening and weekend meals, setting plans and cold bar trays for the next day, making food lists, picking up and stocking food that is delivered throughout the week, and preparing for brunch. On his own time Bob loves to walk, often exceeding his 10,000 step/day goal, especially to and through Richland Township Community Park. Bob also has a garden at his home with tomatoes, peppers (though only one pepper this year,) radishes, green beans, strawberries, zucchini, cucumbers – to say nothing of the cherry trees he and his family planted last year.

Maria Machiarola has been a chef for 35 years – her experience includes restaurants, catering, and private chef. Prior to her time with John Marshall, Maria was a former art director and graphic designer. When the bottom fell out of the economy she was forced to change careers.

Today Maria shares her home with Cuddles, an eight-year-old brown tabby she rescued from the Save Our Strays organization in West View, PA. She also tends to her garden. The biggest disappointment being tomatoes so far.

“I love being in my home, taking care of it. What can I say, I turned into my mother!”

When asked about her employer, John Marshall Catering, Maria said, “It’s a wonderful position. John doesn’t micromanage. He expects you to do your job. And, I am free to do just that. As for the Sisters... I always say this is my sanctuary. When my car tires hit the grounds of the monastery, I immediately feel peaceful. The Sisters are kind, sweet, and often funny.”





Oblates of the Benedictine Sisters of Pittsburgh



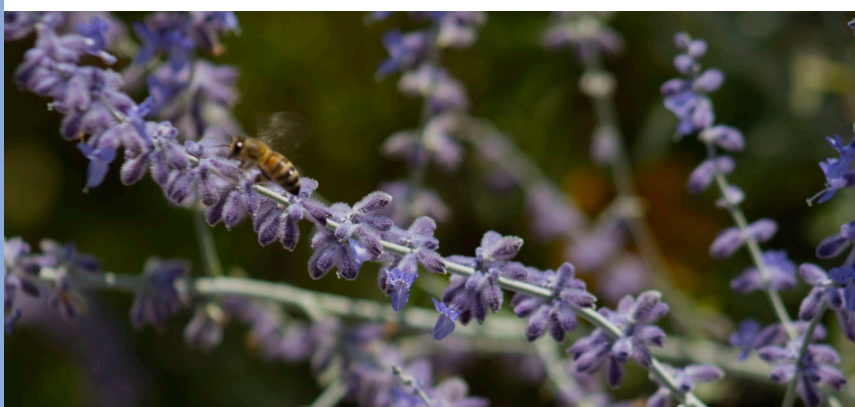
Benedictine Oblates renewing their oblation

Top Left to Right: Colleen McGrath, Cynthia Olshavsky, Barbara Szalai, Pat Serafini, Don Todorowski, Norma Todorowski, Nancy Strosio Haney, Joyce Stewart

Bottom Left to Right: Bernadine Cimprich, Barbara Walls, Virginia Cook, Patricia O'Connor, Barbara Matera, Anne Plant



Led into Vespers by Sister Joann Hothersall, Sister Corinne Moeller, and Sister Evelyn Dettling celebrated their 70th anniversary of monastic profession as Benedictine Sisters of Pittsburgh. Their gentle ceremony was reflective of the personalities of two gifted, loving, and faith-filled Benedictine women.



Walking the Camino

By Liz Tamburri



In May I walked the Portuguese path of The Camino do Santiago (the Way of St James.)

I began the seventy-seven mile walk in the walled city of Valenca, Portugal. On day one I made my way through the Medieval city into the darkest tunnel I ever walked through and across the outside of a bridge sixty-three feet above the Minho River. By the end of the day, I had finished my first 400 ft. ascent, and was fourteen miles into Galicia, Spain.

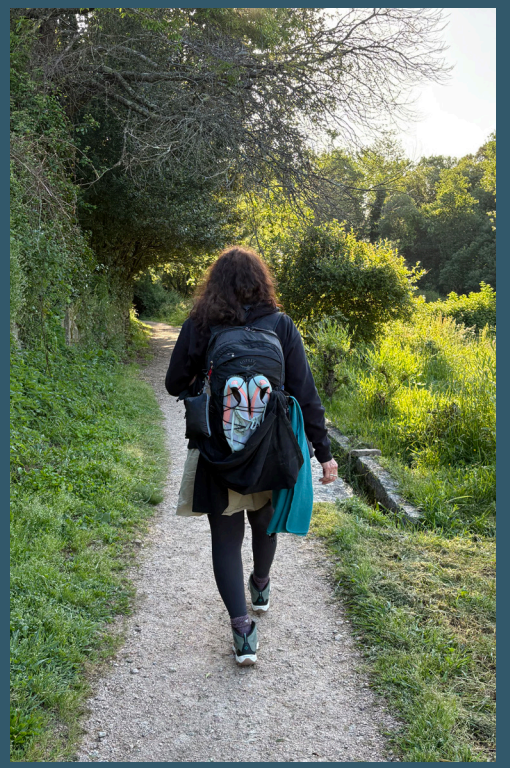
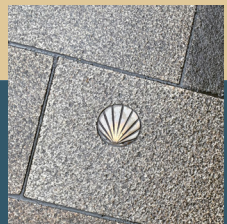
During the five-day trek (and one day of rest) I asked myself many times why I was there. There were times when I wasn't certain my body would be able to finish. Along the way, I passed fellow pilgrims with severe blisters, sprained and broken ankles, and exhaustion who would not finish.

My son and granddaughters phoned me at midnight (US time) on Mother's Day. It was perfect timing. By then I was sore and mentally weary. Their laughter was the sweetest sound. After we hung up, I fell asleep feeling better. Newly inspired, the first miles in the morning were a breeze. It was early afternoon before I saw another pilgrim on the path.

Walking in and out of the forest, I found myself behind a Ukrainian woman in a blue khustka. Speaking in rudimentary English she was telling the man walking with her about the war. I listened as long as I could, but they moved on. Having found my pace, I didn't rush to keep up. Some hours later, I reached the peak of the day's summit. Relieved to know I would be walking downhill the rest of the day, I was glad to spot a small cafe. With a latte, chocolate croissant and banana, I made my way to a wooden bench and table facing the window. My son, daughter-in-law, granddaughters, my family, the Sisters, and those who rest in my heart came to mind. I was feeling blessed when the woman in the Khustka entered my thoughts. After her, the mothers in Ukraine...then Gaza...Israel...the mothers of Mexico. I don't know when it began but at some point, I realized I was crying...My son will never again have to give me a card or gift to "honor" me, to remind me of how fortunate I am... the blessings I have.

Along the way, experienced pilgrims told me what one takes from the Camino is different for everyone. For one moment I felt the beating of the hearts of mothers in another part of the world. I have never known anything more beautiful and simultaneously heartbreaking.

Now, I pray for peace every day.





In Loving Memory

1951 - 2024

Sr. Beth Carrender

Sister Beth Carrender, a beloved member of the Benedictine Sisters of Pittsburgh, peacefully passed away on November 30, 2024, leaving a legacy of faith, service, and compassion.

Born in 1951 in Lexington, Missouri, Beth was the second of four children to Floyd and Theadora Carrender. She is survived by her siblings, Chuck, Paula Kay, and Kent (Vicki) as well as her nephew, Trent, who cherished her deeply.

Beth's lifelong journey of love and service began in 1972 when she joined the Franciscan Sisters in Missouri. In 1980, she transferred to the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity and, in 1990, transferred her vows to the Benedictine Sisters of Pittsburgh.

A gifted scholar, Sister Beth earned her master's degree in Formative Spirituality from Duquesne University. She poured her knowledge and love of God into her work as the Vocation Director for the Benedictine Community. Her ministry further extended across many areas and roles, including service at Nativity, St. Killian, St. Catherine of Sweden, and St. Andrew Parishes.

In 1997, Sister Beth followed her calling to Neon, Kentucky, where she became the Pastoral Assistant at Jesus of the Mountains Parish in Phelps. Her passion for nurturing and enabling others shone as she worked as a Recruitment and Certification Specialist for foster parents in Hazard and Phelps, KY.

She was an active leader in the community, servicing advisory councils and initiatives dedicated to education, child welfare, and combating drug addiction.

In 2014, Sister Beth embraced a new role as Learning Center Coordinator for The Salvation Army Service Center, continuing her tireless efforts to uplift and support.

Sister Beth had a love of people, a heart for ministry and her life was a testament to selfless service, compassion, and unwavering faith. She will be remembered by her family, her many friends and her Benedictine Community for her kind spirit, her commitment to building relationships and her enduring dedication to spreading the gospel. May Sister Beth rest in the peace of God's loving embrace.

Thank you

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, “Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?” Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It’s not just in some of us; it is in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

-Marianne Williamson

Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of a Course in Miracles

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LIVE MORE ABUNDANTLY EXPERIENCE BENEDICTINE MONASTIC COMMUNITY

IMMIGRATION STATEMENT

We, the Community of the Benedictine Sisters of Pittsburgh, endorse the following statement of the Conference of Benedictine Prioresses:

In the spirit of the Gospel and the inspiration of Saint Benedict, we as members of the Conference of Benedictine Prioresses, representing more than 1100 sisters, commit ourselves to Christ-like hospitality. Therefore, we call upon our leaders, especially governors, state legislators, members of the United States Congress, and our president to reconsider proposed immigration policies and to work toward solutions that uphold the dignity and rights of all people. We urge them to create pathways to citizenship for immigrants, provide humane treatment for those in detention, and ensure that immigrant families are not torn apart. In addition, we commit ourselves to work with other organizations who are advocating and caring for migrant peoples.

As Benedictine sisters, we are inspired by the life and teachings of Saint Benedict. In the sixth century time when he lived, travelers and pilgrims were often met with violence on the road and sought refuge in his monasteries. Benedict was inspired by the Gospel of Jesus Christ to receive all who came seeking refuge. He modeled his life on that of Christ who received the poor, the lame, the outcast, and the stranger.

For centuries, men and women have continued to be inspired by Saint Benedict's example of Christ-like hospitality and his teaching that all people who present themselves are to be received as if that person were Christ. Saint Benedict quoted Jesus who said, "I was a stranger, and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35). May we and all people, in our time, do the same.