



Winter 2023
Vol. 41 No. 1

Holy Angels Echoes

The Olivetan Benedictine Sisters
www.olivben.org

Diamond Jubilees Celebrated



(L-R): Mother Mary Clare, Sr Angeline, Bishop Taylor, Sr Christopher, Sr Mary Beth

On July 11, the feast of St Benedict, the Olivetan Benedictine Sisters celebrated two Diamond Jubilees: the 75 years of religious life of Sr Angeline Massery, and the 70 years of religious life of Sr Christopher Flowers. Bishop Taylor celebrated the Mass along with several diocesan priests.

Sr. Helen Herbstritt, community Liturgist, accompanied the Sisters' choir on the organ. It was a joy to have so many friends and family members present for this wonderful occasion. Join us in our grateful prayers for these Sisters and their witness of fidelity to Jesus in consecrated life!

(Right) Sr Angeline sings the Suscipe (Receive Me, O Lord) with the community after the renewal of vows.



(Above) Sr Christopher signs her renewal of vows on the altar during the Jubilee Mass.

New Novice Invested

On November 1 at Evening Prayer, the Sisters celebrated a joyous occasion. Postulant Nicole Soder was invested as a Novice. Putting on the habit of the Olivetan Sisters, she was given the name Novice David Mary. Mother Mary Clare presented Novice David Mary with the Holy Rule of St Benedict and entrusted her to Sr Glorea, Formation Director. During this ceremony, the Sisters are asked to help with Novice David Mary's formation with their prayers and good example.

During the first year of the Novitiate, known as the Canonical Year, Novice David Mary will focus on continuing study of the Holy Rule, Community History and Charism, and the meaning of Consecrated Life and the Vows. It is a time set aside for more prayer and discernment, where she is more deeply integrated into community life. Please keep Novice David Mary and all those discerning a vocation to Holy Angels in your prayers!



Mother Mary Clare presents Novice David Mary with the Holy Rule during the Rite of Investiture.

Message from the Prioress

Dear Friends in Christ, as I write to you, we have just concluded the Christmas season, and I am still pondering with joy what a blessed time it was for our community. Our rich Christmas liturgies, festive meals, and the generosity of so many of you all helped make the celebration of the Nativity a true gift. As I reflect on the many spiritual and material gifts of Christmas, my thoughts move to a gift that stays with us all year long. In fact, it is a gift that is renewed daily: the gift of Holy Mass.

When all is said and done, one of the most precious parts of the holiday season is spending time with those we love. Conversing and connecting with them leaves our hearts full and we renew our love for one another. Sometimes we may forget that Jesus desires this same kind of quality time with us, but not just a few times a year! Jesus longs to let our hearts be filled with His love, and in a particular way, this happens at Mass. There is conversation: we hear His word spoken to us in the Scriptures, and we respond in prayer. There is connection: Jesus comes to us and we receive Him totally, body and blood, soul and divinity in the Eucharist. Not only is this the source of all grace in our lives, it is a source of a particular grace - a closeness to Him and the greatest opportunity we have to be united with Him in this life. I want to invite you, the next time that you attend Mass, to renew your love for Him and to ask Him for the grace to experience how great is His love for you!



Mother Mary
Clare Bezner, OSB

Gatechetical Sisters of Arogyamatha



(L-R) Sr Sarada Arikotla,
Mother Mary Clare, and Sr
Vijaya Kandlapalli

In July our Sisters welcomed two members of the Gatechetical Sisters of Arogyamatha congregation from the Kadapa diocese, south India. Sr Vijaya Kandlapalli and Sr Sarada Arikotla arrived after spending some time with Sisters from their congregation who are serving in Houston, Texas. Before coming to serve in the US, Sr Vijaya worked in schools as a teacher and principal, and also held the position of Postulant Director. Here in Jonesboro she is a member of our Pastoral Care department at St Bernards. Sr Sarada also taught school, and is currently co-teaching 2nd Grade Religious Education at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church. Sr Sarada also serves in our infirmary and uses her talent as a seamstress. We have enjoyed getting to know them and learning about their culture - in particular their foods, devotions and folk dances!



Srs Vijaya and Sarada sing
a birthday song to Mother
Mary Clare in their native
language.

Sympathy & Prayers

The Sisters extend prayers & sympathy to the following who have lost a loved one recently:

Mother Mary Clare Bezner and family, on the death of her grandfather, Joe Bezner, on November 8.

Sr Virginia and family, on the death of her aunt Margaret (Baltz) Sorg-Rodecap, on November 14.

Sr Glorea Knaggs and family, on the death of her grandmother, Gloria Knaggs, on November 24.

The family of Oblate Kathleen Trolinger, who died December 7.

Holy Angels Echoes

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Our Jubilarians



**Sr Angeline
Massery, OSB**

*There remain these
three: faith, hope,
and love; and
the greatest of these
is love.*

1 Cor. 13:13

Sister Mary Christopher was born in Ripley, Oklahoma - the eldest of 7 children. When she was 8, the family moved to Hubert, Arkansas and she began attending St Michael's School in West Memphis. Shortly after, the family converted to Catholicism, and she began to take an interest in Religious Life.

With the encouragement of her pastor, she attended Holy Angels Academy in Jonesboro, and entered the Novitiate after graduation. She made First Vows in 1952 and Final Vows in 1957. Her 60-year teaching career began at St Andrew's Cathedral School. Sister earned a Bachelor's in Elementary Education and a Master's as a Reading Specialist from Arkansas State University. She also spent many summers assisting at the former Benedictine Manor retirement home in Hot Springs. Since retiring from Catholic education, she has tutored English Language Learners and Sisters in formation in reading and speaking.



**Sr Christopher
Flowers, OSB**

*The Almighty has done
great things for me.*
Luke 1:49

Mission Statement of the Olivetan Benedictine Sisters

We are a community of monastic women who seek God through prayer and work in the Olivetan Benedictine Tradition. Accordingly, we proclaim Jesus Christ and the Gospel message through our service to each other in community, hospitality, health care, education, and other apostolic works.

Get to Know Sr Ann Marie Ferricher



Year I entered religious life: 1979

Hometown: North Little Rock, Arkansas

Feastday: November 21 – Presentation of Mary

Treat I like for my feastday: Good cup of flavored coffee with a pastry

Favorite saints: The Blessed Mother, St Anthony, St Jude

Favorite books to read: Historical novels, nature magazines

Last book read: Courage to Pray

Favorite movie: Dances with Wolves

A precious memory: Being with my family

Favorite quote: "In His will is our peace."

Hobbies or interests: Gardening and crafts of all kinds

A color that makes me happy: pastels

Favorite activity at evening recreation: Being with the Sisters

Dream pilgrimage: The Vatican or Scotland

If I could meet anyone, past or present, it would be: The Blessed Mother or John Denver

Favorite way to pray: Meditation

Hidden Talent: Coloring and printing

Best season of the year: Spring and Fall

Favorite title of Our Lady: Queen of Peace

Special animal: Dogs and Horses

Favorite church: St Anne's

Favorite thing about Holy Angels: Praying with the Sisters

Special Thanks

The Olivetan Benedictine Sisters wish to extend our deepest gratitude to all our benefactors who made contributions during the past year. Whenever attempting to create such a list as this, we run the risk of accidentally omitting a name. If we have done so, please accept our apologies and know that we are very grateful!

Helene Abelman	Martha Decoster	Eugene & Peggy Kleiss	Karyn Rice
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St Bede the Venerable A Saint from Our Tradition

St Bede the Venerable (673-737) was one of the earliest and most influential Benedictine saints. Born only 125 years after St Benedict died, he was educated at the Benedictine monastery of Jarrow in northeast England, where he happily spent the rest of his life. "I always took delight in learning, or teaching, or writing," he wrote, and his many sermons, commentaries, and histories helped establish the Benedictine order's reputation for scholarship.

St Bede is known as the Father of English History, thanks to his *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, but his interests were much broader. The *Historia Ecclesiastica* was the first major work to use the modern B.C. and A.D. dating system centering on the birth of Christ—previously, time had been calculated from the founding of Rome. St Bede also helped settle the controversy over calculating the date of Easter by revising and adopting the Easter tables of Dionysius Exiguus. The Western Church used St Bede's computational methods until the reform of the Gregorian calendar, and most of the Eastern Churches use them even today.

At heart, however, St Bede was a scripture scholar whose interest in history stemmed from his joy at seeing the spread of the Gospel. Up to the very day of his death, he was dictating a commentary on the Gospel of St John. St Bede died immediately after reciting the "Glory Be." He was named a Doctor of the Church in 1899, and many of his writings are still in print.

Special Thanks, continued

Rollie & Sharon Vanderzyl
Trina Visocky
Mary G Vogel
Gloria Wallace
Claude & Nancy Walter
Abby Walterscheid
Carrie Walterscheid
Lillian Walterscheid
Patricia Wamble
William Ward
Lisa Whitehead
Phillip Willett
Mary Beth Williams
Fr Paul Worm
Wilma Wren
Ron & Judy Wurtz
Jean Yarbrough
Cindy Zimmer
James & Dolores Zimmerer

I always
thank my God
as I remember
you in my
prayers.
Philemon 1:4

Oblate Spiritual Days

Twice a year, Oblate Director Sr Mary John hosts a spiritual day - a day of prayer, reflection, and fellowship for our Oblates. This past October, Fr Martin Amaro gave talks on the Eucharistic Revival. This March Br Ambrose, OSB will be our presenter.



Mother Mary Clare and Sr Therese Marie pose with our Oblates at the October Spiritual Day.

You do not have to be an Oblate to attend these days of reflection. If you are interested in attending one of our spiritual days, or the July Oblate retreat, contact Sr Mary John Seyler, OSB, at srmaryjohns@gmail.com

Benedictine Oblates of Holy Angels Convent

Oblates of St. Benedict associate themselves with a Benedictine community in order to strengthen their Baptismal commitment and enrich their Christian way of life. Anyone interested in joining the Oblate program of Holy Angels Convent, please contact Sr. Mary John Seyler, OSB at srmaryjohns@gmail.com.

Activities & Meetings



New Bishop
Sisters Glorea and Maria Christi represented the community in attending the ordination of our dear friend, Bishop Erik Pohlmeier in July. Bishop Pohlmeier, formerly a priest of our diocese, is the new Bishop of the Diocese of St Augustine, Florida.



Taste of Faith
A group of Sisters attended the annual diocesan fundraiser for our seminarians in August. The Taste of Faith dinner supports our seminarian education fund. At left, Sr Thérèse is pictured with seminarian Quinn Thomas, of Blessed Sacrament, Jonesboro.



November Birthday Party
Each month, we celebrate community birthdays. In November, we also combined that party with a celebration of the Saints. One activity involved coloring pictures of Saints to be displayed for the month. Pictured above, Sr Marilyn and Sr Miriam enjoy treats and work on their Saint pictures.



Santa Croce Program
In September, Sr Glorea spent 2 weeks in Rome for the CMSWR Sante Croce Program. With 7 other Religious Sisters, she participated in courses and enjoyed visiting pilgrimage sites in Rome and Assisi.



Seminarians Visit
In November, Fr Jeff Hebert, diocesan vocation director, and a group of seminarians joined us for Vespers, supper, and recreation. The Sisters gave the Seminarians quite a challenge in Skip-bo!



Christmas Joys
The Sisters enjoyed a festive holiday season, complete with beautiful Liturgies, Christmas treats, and gifts provided by generous benefactors. Pictured above, Sisters Lillian Marie, Cecilia, Ann Marie, Christopher, and Virginia partake in some caroling.



Catechists' Dinner
In December, our Sisters enjoyed a special dinner at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church. (L-R) Sr Mary Beth, 4th Grade Catechist; Sr Deborah, 5th Grade Catechist; Sr Thérèse and Sr Sarada, 2nd Grade Catechists.

Vocations Activities



Homeschool Group

A group of homeschool students from Lindsay, Texas, made a visit in July. Pictured at left, Sr Cecilia and Postulant Nicole making decade rosaries with the visitors.



Seek Conference

Sr Cecilia and Sr Maria Christi hosted a vocations booth at the Seek conference in St Louis, Missouri in January.

Is God calling you?

Are you or is someone you know considering a vocation to Religious Life? Contact Sr Cecilia Nguyen, Vocation Director, at Vocations@olivben.org or 870-273-6872.

Get to Know Sr Virginia Baltz



Year I entered religious life: 1955 (15 years), entered Holy Angels in 2002

Hometown: St Louis, Missouri

Feast day: December 8 – Immaculate Conception

Treat I like for my feast day: Any dessert with coconut

Favorite saints: Mary, St Pius X, St Therese the Little Flower, St Cecilia

Hymns I love to sing: Gregorian Chant, Sequences for Easter and Pentecost

Favorite books to read: The Bible

Last book read: Autobiography of St Edith Stein (St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

Favorite Flower: Red Rose

Favorite movie: Sound of Music

A precious memory: Family reunions, ordination of my brother as a missionary priest.

Favorite Bible Verse: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom should I fear?" -Psalm 27:1

Hobbies or interests: Crocheting, listening to classical music or St Louis Cardinals baseball games

A color that makes me happy: red

Favorite activity at evening recreation: Playing Rummikub

Dream pilgrimage: The Holy Land

If I could meet anyone, past or present, it would be: Pope Benedict XVI

Favorite way to pray: Singing the Divine Office

Hidden talent: Quilting

Favorite artist: good icon artists

Favorite pope: St John Paul II, whom I saw 4 times

Best season of the year: Summer

Favorite title of Our Lady: Immaculate Conception

Special animal: Dachshunds and small pet dogs

Favorite church: St Louis Cathedral (new)

Team I cheer for: St Louis Cardinals

Favorite thing about Holy Angels: The Sisters and our prayer life

Formation Studies



Historical Visit

In August, Sr Romana graciously gave Sr Glorea, Sr Sarada, and Postulant Nicole a tour of our roots in Pocahontas. At left, they are pictured at St Paul's Catholic Church. The trip included a stop for prayer at the cemetery, where many of our early Sisters are buried.

Diocesan Pilgrimage

Sr Glorea, Postulant Nicole, Sr Vijaya and Sr Sarada embarked on a pilgrimage to the seat of the diocese in Little Rock. After visiting with Bishop Taylor and touring the diocesan campus, the Sisters visited St Edwards historical parish and the cathedral (at right).





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- *Remember deceased loved ones with memorial gifts to Holy Angels Convent.
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Keep in
touch!



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