



The Benedictine Tide

Benedictine Sisters of Florida

Touching Lives through Prayer and Service

*Winter 2013
Volume 14, No. 3*

Groundbreaking – October 10, 2013



Our New Home in 2014



That in all things God may be glorified.

From the Prioress' Journal

Thursday, October 10, 2013 was an extra special day for the Benedictine Sisters of Florida! Special also, I believe, for the people in the surrounding towns and beyond, in our diocese and in all of central Florida. It isn't every day when a dynamic group breaks ground for a powerhouse of prayer! Ours is the only motherhouse for women religious in all five counties that comprise the Catholic Diocese of St. Petersburg.

Only six of the sixteen members in the present community were around in 1960 for the groundbreaking for the building we now rent from Saint Leo University. The current Holy Name Monastery replaced the wood frame building that had been home for the Sisters since their arrival in 1889. That "convent" as it was then called, was one of three major buildings on our property. Boarding students attending Holy Name Academy for girls lived in the convent with the Sisters. An educational building, St. Scholastica Hall was located east of the convent. St. Benedict's Preparatory School for boys kindergarten – 6 grade was by the tennis courts. There was a scattering of "out" buildings (not outhouses) used for kindergarten, laundry, the academy science/typing lab and the recreation hall fondly called the "rec" where we had the only TV (a black and white – I don't know that it was locked, but it certainly wasn't on very often).

Through the years the Sisters had acquired other parcels of land which held structures that we used for guest

houses, chaplains' residence, Camp Lake Jovita, emergency and overflow academy housing and the academy "home ec" house. Pasture land was used for the riding horses' grazing field and groves thrived right where we are standing. Facility usage changed beginning in the 1970s when we added the ministry of child care in the empty barracks building over by the tennis courts. As the college grew the Sisters stepped up to the plate beginning a ministry of housing and feeding first only women students; then keeping up with the trend of the times our residence halls and Marmion dining facility were opened to "the guys."

Our founding Sisters were risk takers - they had been told in so many words: "Don't come back if it doesn't work out in that mission land down south." That quality must be in our DNA - our Sisters have a history of responding to the call to evolving ministries and the needs of our church and the local community. In 1998, we sold the twin residence halls and the dining hall to the ever-growing college/university. And, here we are today: standing on freshly churned up ground preparing to erect a new monastery. As you might imagine, there were A LOT of challenges to overcome to be ready to break ground for our third home.



S. Roberta Bailey, O.S.B.

Thankfully we have money in the kitty to fund much of the construction costs from the sale of the property across the highway. So we will not have to go into hock up to our eyeballs like we did in the 1960s. We did not have to search far for a buyer or a suitable spot to build. Our fore-mothers had wisely looked out for us. All unbeknown to them, this land was predestined to be a beacon atop another



Many of our friends came to the ground-breaking ceremony. We are so thankful for them.



The Sisters share in digging the first scoops of dirt for their new monastery on Oct. 10, 2013.



A joyous day!

hill set back from Lake Jovita. We will miss the lake view but we will have a retention pond we can call a reflection pool.

Along with all the planning over the past five years, there has been **constant, deliberate and dependable prayer** lifted to God and our favorite saints, our deceased Sisters, relatives and friends to ask blessings on our deliberations, decisions and actions. And, we were not alone in this prayer... hundreds of people, in different languages – some eloquent, some innocently simple – all focused on the one request “help the Sisters make good decisions; help the Sisters have what they need to do what they know You, God, are calling them to do.”

And God has been gracious to us reminding us of the story of Nehemiah when he was asked how he could rebuild the wall around the city of Jerusalem. His answer was simple – and profound: “the gracious hand of God is on us.”

That is the only reason we have been able to break this ground – in spite of all the challenges, despite all odds... and we cannot overlook the fact that the university really wanted to expand westward. It was a win-win for them and for us: they could grow up and over to the next hill and we could down-size to a right-size building with a little room to grow. So the “great work” continues that five pioneer Benedictine women began on March 1, 1889.

As the Sisters broke ground, we remembered the words attributed to Ezra, the priest in the Old Testament: “When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests in their vestments and with trumpets and cymbals, took their places to praise the Lord. They sang: God is good; God’s love endures forever. And all the people gave a great shout.”

So too, the Benedictine Sisters of Florida are going to build a place where God will be worshipped and we will continue building community with each other and with our neighbors. Our space will be more limited than in the current monastery, but we want you to visit us, join us in prayer and liturgy (Mass): enrich our lives and your own in this new place of peace and serenity.

A TIME TO CELEBRATE

September and October saw stellar events at Holy Name Monastery. Sister Helen marked her 100th Birthday on September 28th and the Benedictine Sisters of Florida broke ground on October 10th at the site of where the new monastery will be built. Our Dear Lord and the Prayers of so many have blessed the Sisters and our ministries through the years. We share a common belief that helping others brings us closer to God.

As we approach the 125th Anniversary of the Benedictine Sisters of Florida, we are grateful that we do not stand alone – you walk beside us in all that we do. Thank you for being willing to accompany us both in the past and into our future.

The 125th Anniversary includes our moving into a new home next fall. Please watch for upcoming events in celebration of this hallmark year.

Visit us on the Web:

www.benedictinesistersoffl.org and/or FaceBook

PRAYER IS

A Gift * Sanctifying * Strength * Love * Healing * Gratitude * Meaningful * Enduring

Growing in Prayer -

I used to think, as a child that if God didn't answer my prayer—I was bad or didn't pray the "right way." Later I realized that sometimes God's answer is "No"—not to punish, but in order to give me, not what I'd asked for, but something better. (Looking back at our lives, we can be grateful some of our prayers weren't answered like we'd hoped.) If God's answer was "Not now," it was to have me persist in prayer and so strengthen my faith and trust. Still later I learned that I have to do my part and work with God to bring about a favorable outcome. I can't pray for a new job and not seek it out.

You heard about the man who prayed to win the lottery? He even bargained with God saying if he won he'd give a share to the Church. After weeks of prayer and no win, he whined, "God, why don't you answer my prayer and let me win the lottery?" God replied, "YOU need to do your part and buy a ticket!"

Today I pray in wordless contemplation in the Presence of my Incomparable Friend. I pray the Scriptures like a love letter, lectio divina, listening for what God may be saying to me. Every morning I ask to bring Good News to those hungry for hope; that others starving for a friendly gesture or longing to be accepted; to have open eyes to see the beauty of God in creation, the face of God in the face of every stranger and the right words to offer a hurting friend. I pray to surrender and let God be in control.

Sister Mary David

My Two Fathers -

My favorite prayer is the *Our Father*. It is a prayer that brings me closer to our loving God and my dear dad. I was very young when he died. When I pray the *Our Father*, it makes me happy to know that I have two good and devoted fathers in heaven looking out for me. I know that they both are doing their best to love and care for me in this present life. When things are not going well, my prayer is for my fathers to help me or someone for whom I am praying.

I also pray the *Memorare*, a consoling prayer. I am grateful to Jesus for sharing His loving mother with us and thank him for my dearest mother as well.

Sister Mary Romana

Come to Thee -

As I was musing about what prayer is most meaningful to me, I came upon a letter from a friend, I was taken back to my favorite prayer learned in grade school – *Soul of Christ Sanctify me*.

Soul of Christ Sanctify me

Body of Christ save me

Blood of Christ inebriate me

Water from the side of Christ wash me.

Passion of Christ strengthen me

Oh, good Jesus hear me

Within thy wounds hide me

Suffer that I may never be separated from thee

From the malicious enemy defend me

In the hour of my death call me

And bid me come unto thee

That I praise thee with thy saints and with thy angels forever and ever. Amen.

We were required to memorize it. So as my friend and I trudged the three miles to our little country school house, we tried to learn the prayer by heart. By golly, we both had it memorized by the time we arrived at school. To this day, it is still one of my favorites because it is a source of solace especially at night here at Heritage Park when the nights sometimes are long. Before I ever complete the prayer, I'm in "la-la-land." Cuddled-up, I snooze in comfort and peace lulled by the Angels who pick-up my prayer and end it with a great AMEN!

Sister Helen

God's Mercy -

The Divine Mercy Chaplet has significance for me because our Lord Himself said to Saint Faustine: "Whoever will recite this Chaplet will receive great mercy at the hour of death. Even the most hardened sinner, if he or she recites this Chaplet even once, will receive grace from My infinite mercy. And through the Chaplet, you will obtain anything, if what you ask for is compatible with My will. I want the whole world to know My infinite mercy. I want to give unimaginable graces to those who trust in My mercy."

The message I receive from the Divine Mercy Chaplet is that God loves me as well as others. He wants me to recognize that His mercy is greater than my sins so that I will call upon Him with trust, receive His mercy, and let it flow through me to others. Thus, all God's people will come to share His joy. So by praying the Divine Mercy chaplet, I am pleading for God's Mercy. God wants me to approach Him in prayer constantly, repenting of my sins and asking Him to pour His mercy out upon me and upon the whole world. The more I trust in God, the more I will receive as well as other people for whom I intercede.

Sister Elizabeth Mathai

Sister Helen Lange, OSB - Celebrating 100 Glorious Years!

Her sweet smile and kind eyes reveal the passion of a person whose life's journey has been guided by God. **Sister Helen Lange** celebrated her 100th Birthday on Saturday, September 28, 2013. She was honored with several parties and overwhelmed with love, prayers and gifts.

The celebration began when the social group known as the Leading Ladies to which Sister Helen belongs, surprised her with a party the week before her birthday. Mass



and a party was held on Thursday, Sept. 26, by Heritage Park where Sister Helen lives. Friend,

Kym Hoerr, presented Sister with 100 beautiful roses! On Friday, September 27, over 20 members of the **Lange clan** from Texas and the northeast prepared a wonderful bar-be-cue lunch under a tent on the monastery grounds.



Then the Benedictine Sisters hosted a Reception for Friends and Family at Saint Leo University on Sunday afternoon, September 28th. There were remembrances by many of the attendees – former students, **Guy Moore** and **Valerie Crane**, family members who presented Sister with a framed blessing from Pope Francis, a proclamation from Pasco County read by Commissioner **Pat Mulieri**, Holy Name Academy alums and friends. The message was clearly of how grateful people are for the gift of S. Helen in their lives and in their community. There were cards and stories sent from all over the country about how Sister's influence has had a long lasting effect on people's lives. In **Peter Taylor's** words, "When I started Saint Paul's as a new student late in the school year, Sister Helen was so kind and caring that my fears soon vanished. I know that

I am only one of hundreds of people who Sister gave a foundation that has served us well throughout our lives."

Sister Helen loves hearing from former students, family and friends. She often talks about the joy she had in teaching, running the Elder Hostel Program and in caring for others. She continues her pastoral ministry of others at Heritage Park Rehabilitation facility and feels "it is a privilege and honor when residents and nursing staff ask me to pray with them." S. Helen sends her love and deepest appreciation to everyone who remembered her on this latest milestone in her life. "People are so good," S. Helen commented when hearing from the well-wishers and their generosity. She has been astonished by the entire experience of her 100th and wants all of you to know that your gifts in her honor will be used to help in making the New Holy Monastery a reality.

RECALL
RECALL THE PAST

Celebrate
CELEBRATE THE PRESENT

Embrace
EMBRACE THE FUTURE

**You are Cordially
Invited to the
Recall-Celebrate-
Embrace Gala
Celebration**

In Honor of the
Benedictine Sisters of Florida
125th Anniversary

February 28, 2014

Cocktails and Silent Auction – 5:30 p.m.

Dinner – 6:30 p.m.

\$50 per person

Hosted by Members of the Tampa Bay Golf
and Country Club

Sponsorships Available

For Tickets and Information:

www.benedictinesistersoffl.org

Or call/e-mail us at: (352) 588-8320

hnmdevelopment@saintleo.edu

Space is limited!

NEWS BRIEFS

July 11 - The Sisters were honored to attend the Vow Ceremony of **Brother Sebastian** at St. Leo Abbey.



July 14 - The **St. Mark's Columbiettes** took our "Ray's devoted Sister-Fans" to the Rays baseball game and dinner.



July 30 - He came to us 17 years ago. **Pat Neuhofer** has kept the grounds of Holy Name Monastery in tip-top condition for all those years. Pat retired and while he will be missed, we wish him well!

August 1-6 - The Benedictine Sisters' annual retreat was facilitated by **S. Glenna Smith**, President of the Federation of St. Scholastica. Sister Glenna's focus for the retreat was "Change is Inevitable; Growth is Optional."

August 6-7 - Community Days followed the retreat wherein the Sisters plan their work for the upcoming year. Traditionally, a day of relaxation and fun closes the retreat and planning meetings. This year the Sisters enjoyed a pool party hosted by **Faith Pridmore**. There were even several Sisters along with **Barbara Molloy** who went down the water slide! ☺



August 11-15 - **S. Roberta** attended Prioresses' meetings and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in Orlando.

August 16-18 - A "Come and See" weekend was held at the monastery with six participants.

August 17 - The Sisters were treated with a delicious barbeque lunch by the St. Mark's Columbiettes.



September 7 - The Sisters observed the day of prayer and fasting called for by **Pope Francis** for world peace.

September 10 - We were delighted to hold a reception for local families whose history in many respects parallels that of the Benedictine Sisters of Florida. The purpose of the gathering was to share the Sisters' new monastery building plans and associated fundraising efforts.

September 11 - Several members of the **Herrmann Family** attended Mass in memory of their father, **Joseph Herrmann**.

September 19 - Well, it wasn't cause for a big celebration, but we were certainly happy to see the construction trailer installed at the site where the New Holy Name Monastery will be built!



S. Margaret Mary

September 19 - Congratulations to **S. Margaret Mary** on her election as Vice President of WPLSA (her legal group).

September 19 - S. Roberta is the new chair-person for the SACs Committee at Moore-Mickens and is serving on Saint Leo University's 125th Anniversary Committee



S. Elizabeth

September 20 - **S. Elizabeth** began working at Sacred Heart Child Care Center.

October 10 - The Ground Breaking Ceremony and Reception for the new monastery was held at the building site with over 200 in attendance.

October 11-13 - **S. Eileen** attended the annual council meeting of the Federation of St. Scholastica in Atchison, KS.

October 17 - S. Roberta and Faith Pridmore attended the Dade City Chamber Awards Banquet at Tampa Bay Golf and Country Club.

Leadership Saint Leo

Each year approximately 18 members of the Saint Leo University administrative staff and faculty are selected for a Leadership Saint Leo class. The monthly meetings and presentations give these staff members a closer, more intense look at how the university operates and an opportunity to learn more about the origins and heritage of the university. The Leadership Saint Leo Class met at Holy Name Monastery on July 11, 2013. In the morning **Sister Mary Clare Neuhofer, OSB** gave a presentation on the rich Benedictine heritage of the university and the relationship of their core values with Benedictine values.



Excerpts from The Benedictine Sisters of Florida: Memories of the First Hundred Years

(Continued from Summer 2013 Tide) CHAPTER FIVE, PART 5 MISSIONARIES TO THE PARISH SCHOOLS

Sometimes the pastor was on the opposite end of the miscommunication. Sister Helen recalls a time when she was responsible to bring the cruets with the water and wine to the Church each morning. One morning Sister reached into the ice box and picked up two cruets and proceeded to Church. During Mass she noticed that something was wrong, Father was a bit distressed. When he had returned to the sacristy, he called loudly for Sister Helen. She entered the sacristy a bit hesitantly and Father asked in an accusing tone, "Are you trying to poison me? What is in that cruet?" Looking at it carefully Sister realized that she had brought the vinegar and not a cruet of altar wine. Father survived and so did Sister Helen, with a "different" memory of what it meant to be sacristan.



S. Helen, Silver Jubilee

There were duties other than teaching for the sisters on the missions. They were expected to be available and on call for whatever needed doing, almost anything was appropriate work for the sisters. In the 1980s some of these activities have become assignments for pastoral ministers or parish social service agencies but previously they were the sisters' work. Thus in addition to classroom teaching for at least five hours a day, five days a week, sisters trained altar boys and choirs, played the organ for Masses and other church services, acted as sacristan, taught Sunday school classes and evening and after school catechism classes, presented pageants for parish entertainments, prepared children and adults for reception of the sacraments, cleaned the Church and decorated it for special occasions, visited the sick, assisted the poor, provided private music lessons, and tutored students with special needs.

One of Sister Roseanna's favorite stories of tutoring was of her pupil Simon Rosen, a Jewish boy attending St. Martha's School in Sarasota, Simon's father was deceased and his mother was not able to help him prepare for his Bar Mitzvah. Sister took up the challenge and listened for many after school hours to his recitation, in Hebrew, of his prayers and his Bar Mitzvah speech. Not knowing Hebrew but having good teaching skills, Sister Rosanna would periodically tell Simon to speak more clearly, to slow down and to enunciate carefully. When the time for the ceremony came, Sister was invited and Simon gave a notable performance for which Sister received the gratitude of his mother and the admiration of the synagogue congregation for skills in Hebrew! This good deed was rewarded in kind a few years later when Simon's younger brother Michael assisted his class mates preparing for



Confirmation. Michael spent some hours listening to his fellow students and helping them to memorize answers to the questions they were required to know in order to be confirmed. An excellent student, Michael probably knew more of the catechism than some of the confirmandi.

These "extra-curricular" activities were carried on simultaneously with all the duties of operating a school and maintaining religious community life. There were daily prayers in common, daily Mass, meditation periods and spiritual reading time as well as common meals and recreation in the evening. As the Benedictine life is a communal life, absence from these community exercises as they are called was not considered appropriate except on rare occasions. The added tradition of adapting to the place and of responding to the needs of the people encouraged the sisters to accept these activities as part of what was expected and to embrace the hardships and the sorrows with the same good spirit as they embraced the pleasant and joyful aspects of mission life. One of their guiding principles was that mission life was to be, as far as possible, the same as life at Holy Name. This included some customs not mentioned in the Rule and Constitutions.

Mission ice boxes and refrigerators could be places hiding dangers other than mistaken wine cruets. There are memories of a sister who drank vinegar while thinking she had poured a glass of apple juice; and another of a sister who, thinking it was milk, served a pitcher of cooked starch with the breakfast cereal. The Sister Coifmaker had been preserving the starch for the weekend's coif-making session. It was not that the sisters were not too bright, but rather that "everything" was saved and containers were often put to multiple uses and labels could be misleading. This particular hazard remains one of the idiosyncrasies of Priority living, a part of the heritage. In spite of attempts to label what is put into refrigerators and freezers, not to mention other storage areas, and reserving certain areas for the storage of only certain items, cooks and others still come across mysterious meats and liquids of questionable ancestry secreted away behind the obvious on storage shelves.

When the cook comes to the point of total confusion, the sisters have a Saturday treat known as "Ice Box Review." This is a smorgasbord of items that have surfaced in a search for "something different" to serve, or that are the remains of a quarterly house cleaning in the kitchen. Efforts are made to disguise some offerings and others, we are told, improve with a bit of aging. In refrigerator spaces reserved for personal "treats" or opportunities for "Midnight Raiders," sisters often find packages with strange labels...sometimes special items or gourmet treasures disappear. In these cases the sisters know certainly that it was not one of them, after all community members are responsible adults, good religious, and professional women! The consensus is that these things are the doings of a strange nun who roams the halls and gets into refrigerators, closets and other places when no one else is there.

2013-14 Annual Fund Donors

The following represents donors to our 2013-14 Annual Fund from July 1 to October 31, 2013.

Prayer is the center of our daily lives. It is the foundation on which we begin and end each day. We give thanks to God for you, our dear friends and partners in mission – touching lives through Prayer and Service. Let us continue to lift up our hearts and minds to God for one another and for those less fortunate.

Clara Ines Acero
Dr. Tyson and Kelly Anderson
Anonymous (19)
Deacon Michael and Joan Arno
Dr. Rochelle K. Ayala
Barbara Backus
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Mark and Tammy Barthle
Stella Barthle '50
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Arnold and Charlene Matthiesen
Bernice Matthiesen

Upcoming Events Calendar

December 1 - First Sunday of Advent
Holy Hour at 4:30 p.m.

December 10 - Advent Penance
Service

December 25 - Christmas Mass
at 10:30 a.m.

December 31 - Day of Prayer

January 1 - New Year's Mass
at 10:30 a.m.

January 5 - Epiphany House Blessing

February 28 - 125th Anniversary
of the Benedictine Sisters of Florida

Calling All Alums! Attendees and Grads

**The Sisters love hearing
from you...
the St. Benedict's Prep
School boys too.
Send us your stories, photos
and remembrances
of your days at Holy Name.
It does a heart good to hear
about your lives
and what you are up to.**

2013-14 Annual Fund Donors

Continued from page 8

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Pat and Mary Ann Neuhofer
Robert and Juanita O'Hara
David and Mary Ellen Oellerich
William Olivito
Dr. Susan R. Olson

"People are so good."

Sister Helen

John and Suzanne Ondrovic
Marguerite Orban
Papa Joe's Pizza
Giacomo and Dawn Parisi
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Tribute Gifts

July 1, 2013 to October 31, 2013

In Honor of –

125th Anniversary of the Benedictine
Sisters of Florida
Richard and Althea Backus
Sister Roberta Bailey
Sister Pauline Block
Sister Mary Romana Gomez
Sister Helen Lange's 100th Birthday
Jean MacPherson
Merrit McCardle
Sister Dorothy Neuhofer
Bob and Sue Seiter
The Visconti Family
Sister Dianne Wansley
Sister Macrina Wiederkehr

In Memory of –

Albert Barthle
Keri and Brandon Block
Virginia Ann Block Family
Fremont and Evelyn Bollinger
Rev. Marion Bowman
Timothy Brown
Robert A. Connell
Ralph and Ruby Cooper
Sam and Marjorie Corwin
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Sister Teresa Lavelle
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Angel Martin, Sr.
Sister Rosanna Matthiesen
Sister Rosaria Matthiesen
Mary McCardle
Coy McGovern
Esther Montes deOca
Sister Irma Multer
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Ramon J. Ramos
William E. Redmond
Ray Rieger
Albert and Edna Romey
Ruby Romey
Sidona Lange Taylor
Howard Wansley
Sister Carmen Young
Anna Zeitz

Gifts In Kind

July 1, 2013 to October 31, 2013

John Barthle
Dick Gates
Francis Grief
Louis and Ann ('52) Grieshop
Jonathan and Gerri Jackson
Pat Neuhofer
Barbara Weber

From the Oblate Office –

To share in our prayer life draws people to the Monastery. We receive many hundreds of requests each year, not only from visitors, but by mail, email and phone calls for the Sisters to pray for them. “Where two or more are gathered in MY name,” says Jesus, “there am I in their midst.” He also says, “Ask and you shall receive.” As part of the Oblate Program offered at Holy Name, Oblate members and Volunteers are remembered daily at the Prayer of the Faithful. They often tell us that they have felt our prayers—protecting and strengthening them. The Sisters are grateful that our Oblates and Volunteers have found a home, a family with us—it is the experience of Benedictine Hospitality. As the Rule says, “Christ is to be welcomed in each.”

The Oblate program this year found its direction from the fact that February 28, 2014 marks 125 years of service to God and His people for the Benedictine Sisters of Florida. In viewing our institution, we Recall the Past, Celebrate the Present, Embrace the Future. That future is bright as more people engage in the program. In fact, there was another record number of attendees at our September meeting—30! People are hungry for Community, Prayer and they are finding a Home with us.

Upcoming Oblate meetings and topics you won't want to miss:

Nov. 24, 2013 - Early American Benedictine History

Jan. 26, 2014 - History of Holy Name Monastery Part 1

March 23, 2014 - Later History and Renewal Part 2

May 25, 2014 - The Present and Into the Future

All Christian women and men are welcome. Please RSVP by Wednesday of the preceding week to 352-588-8320.

Our program begins with Sunday Eucharist and Liturgy of the Hours at 10:30 am, dinner with the Sisters, meeting at 1:00 pm with closing prayer at approximately 3:00 pm.

Retreats -

Slowing down, stepping back to look/listen “with the ear of the heart” for God’s presence in our lives, is something we all need from time to time. Taking stock this way, provides a sense of how God has been working with us to guide and bless us. Retreat calls us to be thankful for prayers answered and grateful God gives us not always what we want, but the best for us at a particular time. Gratitude sets us free and helps us feel at home with God.

In the past few months, a number of persons have come for spiritual direction, Desert Days, private retreats and directed retreats (even a 30 day directed retreat). Do you need a retreat and time away? Come find a home with us. We could be an answer to your prayer. Call us at 352-588-8320.

From the Vocation Office -

Women who are discerning a call to religious life, learn that it takes time, work and prayer. To be sure, the spirits have to be tested. The process of discernment involves many questions the seeker needs to ask herself. For example:

- What is my motivation for seeking a religious vocation?
- Can I explore options, be honest, and listen to others?
- Does this call seem to persist or does it vanish if something “better” comes along?

In August, six women attended a *Come and See* weekend and we will be planning another one soon. If you or someone you know is looking for Prayer and Community—the Benedictine Sisters of Florida just might be the answer. We look to all our friends to talk to others about Holy Name Monastery and what we offer.

Visit our web-site: www.benedictinesistersoffl.org and our FaceBook page: Benedictine Sisters of Florida



Dresses Made and Taken to Nicaragua

The mention of Managua, Nicaragua always brings to mind, for me, fond memories of **Sister Carmen Young**. I knew her during my days at the monastery and she later worked with me in the Migrant Education Program for Pasco County Schools. She was very involved in the migrant community in the Dade City area. So when my husband, **Pat** and I learned that the high school youth group from our parish, Our Lady of the Rosary, planned to travel as missionaries to Mustard Seed Communities in Nicaragua this past summer, we asked to go along. The mission serves disabled children who have been abandoned.



Each missionary was expected to seek financial support, supplies for the mission and prayers. In addition to the financial and spiritual support received from the Sisters at Holy Name, they donated some beautiful summer dresses that were made by **Barbara Molloy** and **Sister Pauline**.

The entire time in Nicaragua at this mission was a wonderful experience. The young missionaries worked hard and put their heart and energy into the tasks given to us. It was especially inspiring to see the young teens interact with the disabled children of all ages and disabilities. As one of them related, “This mission trip has put perspective into my life, showing me just how good we all have it because we live in the United States. The precious children we helped were the most powerful part of the mission trip.” Our teens gave me so much hope in the next generation and the future of our church.

One evening while at the orphanage, we attended a dance party for the children. The girls received and wore the new dresses we brought. I wish you could have seen the joy on their faces! They were so proud and delighted.

Tatiana was one of the first children to come to live at Mustard Seed Communities Nicaragua. She arrived at Hogar Belen Managua in 2000 when just an infant. Little is known about her past, aside from the fact that she was abandoned as an infant with a lot of health issues. She has overcome all of her physical health issues and is doing very well now at Hogar Belen Diriamba. – **Jeanette Reilly**

Alum Profile – Tekla Adams Davis, Alum of Holy Name Academy

The Benedictine Sisters were recently delighted and enthralled to be contacted by **Holly Mayotte**, the granddaughter of a former Holy Name Academy student. Holly was researching her family's history and discovered that her grandmother, **Tekla Adams Davis**, possibly attended Holy Name in the early 1900's.

Holly reached out to us and sure enough, the records in our business office confirmed communication from the school that Holly had found in her grandmother's papers. Tekla had attended Holy Name Academy. Holly's research produced the writing of a compelling story imbued with Florida history. She kindly permitted us to share part of the story as the Sisters begin the celebration of our 125th years in Florida.

From Holly Hall Mayotte:

My grandmother, Tekla Adams Davis, was born in Manatee County on November 28, 1898 during a time when this part of Florida was wild and beginning to be settled by the hearty and adventurous. Her father **Alden Joseph Adams** settled there in 1876 from Townsend, Massachusetts and fell for the beauty of the Manatee River and the area that surrounded it. A Civil War veteran, New York Herald foreign correspondent, farmer, a judge and a world traveler who spoke six languages, Tekla's father was known as "the Major." On the Manatee River, he built a Spanish Castle, Villa Zanza, which was copied after a Spanish prince he met during his travels. As young girls Tekla and her sister **Irma** were referred to as the "princesses of Manatee."

I spent many wonderful days with my sweet grandmother listening to her tales and stories of days gone by. Her great love for the beautiful Manatee River was I believe due to the peaceful calm and quiet that the river produces which allows us to best hear God. Tekla's ability to adapt to life in this wild section of the country is probably best attributed to her father Major Adams and the family philosophy to never give up and keep going. As a young girl he had Tekla breaking horses! Whenever the horse would throw her, her papa would say "Trix get back on that horse" and back on she would go. According to grandmother, you never disobeyed the Major. She was such an influence of love and strength in my life, that I named my daughter after her.

A lasting tragedy for my grandmother was the death of her mother, **Maude May Davis Adams**. My grandmother would say how she remembered her mother well even though she was only four when her mother died. Tekla wrote poems about her mother in her later teens. The following excerpt from **The Lights of Bradentown** was written while away at school in Auburndale, Massachusetts in 1913 and reflects the longing of a young girl for the dear love of her mother.

*Madonna of the golden hair
You are not where the lights flare low,
At a lonely grave where the mocking birds sing
And mourners tenderly go*

*You are not dead – you are just away
Where the fringe of Night on its curtain gray
Of opal clouds on Tampa Bay
Has hidden you from my sight.*



Holly Mayotte and her daughter, Tekla. Right: Tekla Adams Davis.

*While we float on the river of dreams tonight
As you fondle me on your knee,
We will watch the lights of Bradentown
From our home at Manatee.*

*And tangle my hair with your fingers white
While kissing my eyelids down,
As the clouds float by, in the luminous sky
From the river at Bradentown.*

At the tender age of 16 another part of Tekla's world would crash when her father Alden Adams died, and now Tekla and her younger sister Irma were left without their dear parents. There was their loving maternal grandmother, **Mary Davis Pillsbury**, whom the girls would visit across the county in Palma Sola.

As the story was told to me, Tekla attended Holy Name Academy because it was "so new and wild" here in Bradenton. This was the frontier and her father wanted his daughter "to have good schooling" and "to also be influenced in a positive way since she was growing 'a little wild!'" As it turned-out, the care from the Sisters was another source of comfort for my grandmother. She attended Holy Name in 1911-12 and then again in 1917 -18, a time when her father's estate was under a lengthy contesting of the will. The so called "fairy tale life" had come to an end, but I never sensed the sad and challenging times my grandmother had endured, because she always displayed pure love. After I had the opportunity to visit with the Sisters this past September, I feel that Tekla must have experienced the love of Christ that the Sisters would have shown to her through the Holy Spirit.

I thank the Benedictine Sisters of Florida for their dedication to show the love of Christ in the many ways they reach out to the community. I am so happy that I had the honor to make this connection with them through my grandmother's life. I join the Sisters in celebrating their 125th Anniversary Year.



Holy Name Monastery

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CORPORATE COMMITMENT

In an effort to address contemporary local needs, we, the Benedictine Sisters of Florida, commit ourselves and our resources to respond with the compassion of Christ to the physical, spiritual, social and emotional hungers of the People of God.

Editorial Team

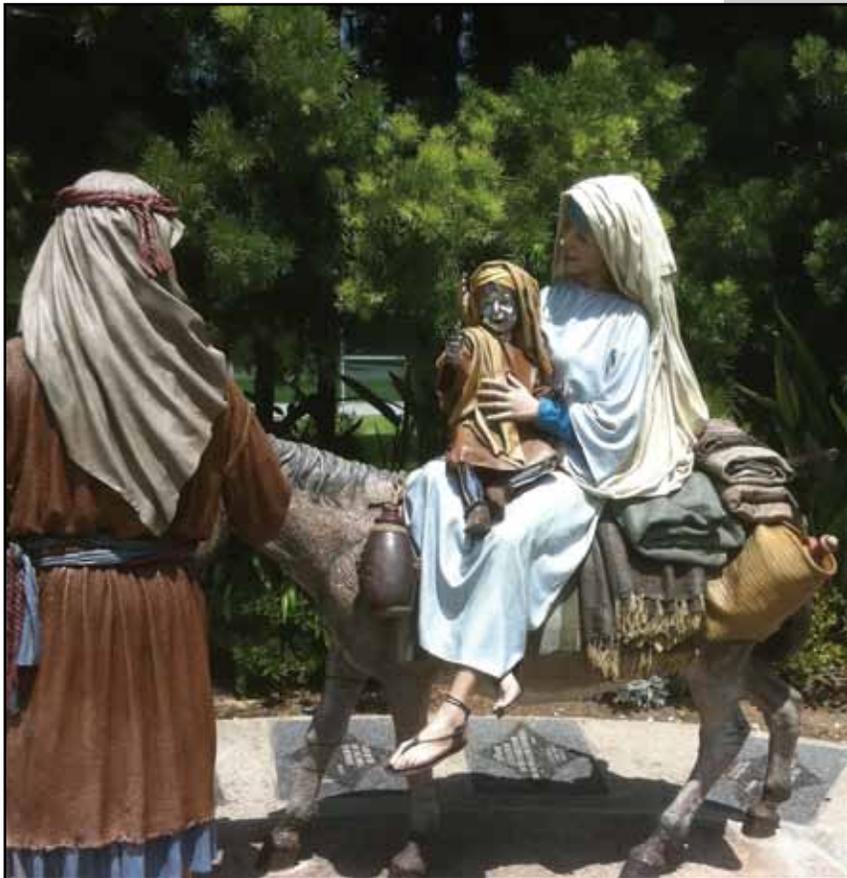
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Statuary at Christ Cathedral, Anaheim, CA

*Babe in arms
Leaving all they'd ever known
for an unplanned journey
What faith!
What trust!
What courage!
What daring!
This Advent season,
may I, too, step into
territory unknown
to meet my God where
people, events, words
and THE Word await me!*

[Verse and photo by Roberta Bailey, O.S.B.]