



The Benedictine Tide

Benedictine Sisters of Florida

Touching Lives through Prayer and Service

Winter 2015

THE ANGELUS



The Angel of the Lord declared to Mary, and she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace...

Behold the handmaid of the Lord, Be it done unto me according to Your word.

Hail Mary, full of grace...

And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelled among us.

Hail Mary, full of grace...

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy
of the promises of Christ.

Pour forth, we beseech You, O Lord, / Your grace into our hearts, / that we to whom
the Incarnation of Christ Your Son / was made known by the message of an angel, /
may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection. / Through
the same Christ Our Lord. AMEN



The Angelus

Do you recognize this picture? A copy hangs in our monastic dining room. It's a 19th century work by the French painter **Jean-Francois Millet**. It depicts a farm-

ing couple, heads bowed in prayer, standing amidst their field at dusk. In the distance you can imagine a church bell calling them to prayer to mark the end of the day.

The name of the painting is derived from the opening words in Latin *Angelus Domini...* the Angelus: "The angel of the Lord declared to Mary."

The Angelus is typically said three times daily, at 6 a.m., noon and 6 p.m., but you can pray it anytime. It is traditionally accompanied by the ringing of a bell in a particular pattern – 3 sets of three followed by nine double rings. The Angelus bell would ring at Abbeys and Monasteries to signal the townspeople that the community was gathering for prayer. Those who could not get to the church for the service were encouraged to stop work and join the praying community in spirit.

The prayer itself reminds us of the Annunciation when the angel **Gabriel** appeared to Mary to announce news of great importance. "The angel of the Lord declared to Mary; and she conceived of the Holy Spirit!" The story continues: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word." "And, the Word was made flesh; and dwelt among us." Especially in a group setting, a *Hail Mary* is said between each verse of the prayer.

Almost nothing is known about the bell we have at the monastery except that it was cast by the Meneely Bell Foundry (Troy, NY) and probably was not on the convent in 1911 when it was rolled up the hill from San Antonio to the shores of Lake Jovita. **Sister Helen** who joined the community in 1930 remembers the bell being in place when she and her group of 8 were charged with ringing the Angelus. The bell traveled with us across the street when we moved to this new house in August 2014. Today it stands on a low pedestal awaiting the day when the new bell tower is constructed and the pealing of the bell will be heard once again throughout the township.

In the good ole days, when in the old building, the bell hung high above the roof in a cupola. The attached chain ran down through a pipe to the interior second floor. It was the novice's task to ring the bell morning, noon and evening. It was a LONG pull and sometimes an overly

ambitious novice would pull too hard and the bell would turn over. When this happened, the poor soul would stand piteously with a pile of chain at her feet. And, no bell would ring. Up we'd climb first to the attic, then out into the cupola, and with help from the handy man, try desperately to quietly turn the bell back into position. Often the community, intent on saying the Angelus, would not notice the bell had stopped ringing midway through the cycle. (And, how the ringer-novice prayed that would happen!)

Once, an overly conscientious novice, wanting to get the ringing of the bell just right, decided to practice ringing the bell mid-afternoon. It happened to be a day when a senior Sister was having serious surgery. And, you need to know, we have a custom of ringing the bell when a Sister dies – one gong for each year of her life span. Pandemonium prevailed for a few minutes for fear that poor **Sister Christine** had died during surgery!

Another time, a Sister with a dubious sense of humor, rang the bell at midnight on New Year's Eve to greet the new year! There are stories, too, about the fire in the bell tower. But, that is for another day and another TIDE.
S. Roberta Bailey

When I entered the convent in 1978, the ringing of the Angelus bell twice a day was joyful. But I soon learned that it was much more important than first I realized. The bell rings in a pattern called the Angelus, a prayer about **Mary**. As a convert from Southern Baptist, scripture



was definitely something to which I was very attuned. Mary held a place of importance in Baptist life, but not the place that she holds in Catholic life. As I continued in my life as a Catholic, I wanted to know more about Mary. The Angelus helped me in this endeavor.

The Angelus is the story of the Annunciation and Mary's acceptance as the Mother of God. Part of the Angelus prayer says that the "Word was made flesh." My Baptist heart was made to pitter-patter upon reading that line. To me it is a reference to the first chapter of **John** where he says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was made flesh, and the Word was God." Jesus is our Word, the center of our faith. The prayer also asks Mary to help us "be made worthy of the promises of Christ." I know that I need help in trying to live up to the promises of Christ and it is good to know that Mary is right there helping me. Hearing the bell daily is a reminder of the importance of Mary in my life and the life of the Church.

S. Dianne Wansley

A Legacy of Dedication to Learning



Sister Mary Dorothy Neuhofer, O.S.B. passed into eternal life with her Lord and Savior on Wednesday, October 14, 2015. Born to **Joseph and Helen (Barthle) Neuhofer** on June 19, 2031, Sister was raised in St. Joseph, FL, the second of eleven children. Sister Dorothy is survived by **Sister Mary Clare** of our community; brothers **Joseph, Paul, Frank, Pat, Mike** and another sister, **Lena Pearson**; sisters-in-law **Margie, Mary Ann, Marcia**; brothers-in-law **Mark Pearson and Pete LaBruzzo**; and many nieces, nephews and cousins. Her brother **Leo** and sister **Trudi LaBruzzo** pre-deceased Sister Dorothy...Trudi on the very same day and month, October 14th of 2014.

Sister Dorothy attended St. Joseph elementary school, staffed by the Benedictine Sisters and Holy Name Academy in St. Leo, FL. She graduated from Barry University, Miami, FL and then earned her Master of Arts in library science from Rosary College (now Dominican University), River Forest, IL. Sister held a Master of Church Administration, Catholic University of America, Washington, DC and a Doctor of Philosophy, library science from Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL.

Joining the Benedictine Sisters in June, 1949, Sister Dorothy faithfully served the community for 65 years in numerous capacities including prioress and archivist. She received numerous honors throughout her life for steadfast devotion to God, her community and to the Benedictine way. As a high school student, *Anna (her given name) Neuhofer* was the delegate sent by Holy Name to attend the Catholic University of American's *Catholic Action in Washington, D.C.* In 5³26, Sister Dorothy was elected the 1st female president of the American Benedictine Academy, a national organization to cultivate and transmit the Benedictine heritage. Sister explained that heritage to be intellectual, spiritual and cultural. She received in 1988 the organization's highest award, Fellow of the American Benedict Academy which recognized scholarly achievement and long-standing contribution to the Academy's purpose. Sister's service also included president of the Catholic Library Association.

After teaching for fifteen years in Florida Catholic schools, Sister Dorothy joined the staff at Saint Leo University. Her academic career of distinction there was as a professor, director of the library, university archivist and the special collections librarian. Recognized as a scholar in the field of Catholic higher education, she (pictured on the right with SLU's President Bill Lennox) was honored by the university August 18th for her five decades of extraordinary work. She loved books and her well-kept rose garden...all for the glory of God.



Sister's doctoral dissertation later to be published as a book, focused on Midwest Benedictine college libraries that illustrate the strong connection between the love of learning and the Benedictine tradition. Her passion for books and education were hallmarks of Sister's life and legacy. She will be greatly missed by her Benedictine Sisters, her many family members and friends.

*The love of learning, the sequestered nooks,
And all the sweet serenity of books.*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The Future is NOW for the Sisters

The Benedictine Sisters of Florida have been in the new Holy Name Monastery since August 17, 2014 – just a little more than a year. You - our friends, family, oblates and academy alumnae - were instrumental in helping to make that possible with the *Recall the Past, Celebrate the Present and Embrace the Future* campaign.

The building of the new monastery, we knew would garner renewed interest in our community and our future. It seems the future we embraced has happened much sooner than anticipated. With many more requests for retreats and women discerning a vocation with us, there is a great need for more rooms to fulfill our mission. The women have been associated with the Sisters as affiliates for the past few years, spending time with them in prayer, retreat experiences, spiritual direction and social interaction in the life of the Community. Their individual decisions to take the next step in their spirituality brings about a profound change in the life of each. Such a decision is a celebration and honors God.

THE FUTURE IS NOW CAMPAIGN and a \$750,000 Match

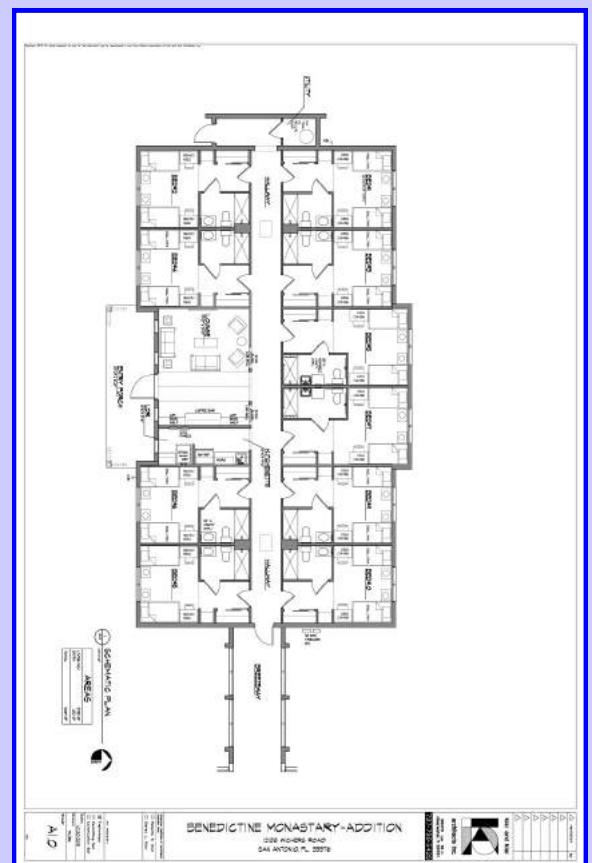
John Picciano, a friend of the community and graduate of Saint Leo University, currently serving on their Board of Trustees, has made a challenge to have us move forward and build the pre-planned additional wing on to the monastery. (This wing was part of the original monastery design, but we thought it would be five or six years before it would be needed.) John expresses great belief in the Benedictine Sisters of Florida, what our mission represents in the world and understands as a successful business entrepreneur that the time is now to embrace the future. John has most graciously agreed to serve as chairman of the campaign. **AND** he has generously kicked-off the campaign with an extraordinary commitment. John will match dollar-for-dollar up to \$750,000 dollars that is raised! The project will cost \$1,650,000 dollars and will comprise a meeting space and ten bedrooms and baths. The twenty additional beds will make it possible to accommodate our growth and large group retreats. Such retreats are a source of income which we have had to turn away this past year.

The Sisters again thank you most heartily for your past campaign support and ask that you also support this important effort for the future. It is a blessing to have John's leadership and commitment to the Benedictine philosophy and way of life. If not demonstrated and preserved by the models of Benedictine women, then by whom? Their vowed life says to others that Christ's message of life is sure, true, universal and available to all. Such a life gives hope to a contemporary society whose secular values all too often produce alienation, injustice, violence and oppression.

PLEASE join the Sisters in meeting the need for more space with a gift or pledge today. Your gift may be paid over three years however convenient for you - monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, or annually. A pledge card is enclosed in the Tide for your use or go to our web-site (**Donate Now** button) and use a credit card to give through PayPal:

www.benedictinesistersoffl.org

Please make checks payable to: **Benedictine Sisters of Florida**
Notation on check: **Future is Now Campaign**
Address: **PO Box 2450, St. Leo, FL 33574**



Laudato Si: An Overview

Stephen Okey, Ph. D. gave an illuminating presentation on October 6th at the monastery on **Pope Francis'** encyclical and his September visit to the United States. Professor Okey and his wife, Paige are from Indiana and after earning a doctorate from Boston College two years ago, he accepted the position at Saint Leo University.

While most people understand *Laudato Si* to primarily address environmental issues and the care of our earth, Dr. Okey posited five key themes to better understand the Papal message:



Dignity of Creation – meaning all species exist for the glory of God and their extinction by human activity is not our right

Relationships /Interdependence - Genesis sets forth humanity's relationships are with God, our neighbor and the earth

The Throwaway Culture – resist consumption absent the capacity to reuse waste and by-products

Technology and the Environment – the tools technology provides are not neutral, but shape our habits and lifestyles reflecting decisions about the kind of society we want to build

Ecological Conversion – as Christians, there is a moral imperative to protect God's handiwork individually and collectively

Discussion also addressed the Pope's visit -its significance and political ramifications. The Pope's purpose is focused on promoting human flourishing, especially for the marginalized in the world. Changing hearts by understanding that we can't ignore our relation to all creation is the way to change our culture.

You can follow Professor Okey's blog: "Daily Theology" – the relevance of theology in everyday life
Twitter: @stephenokey

Sisters Write for Publication

The August 2015 edition of the *Benedictine Coalition for Responsible Investment* was centered on **Pope Francis'** Encyclical regarding the stewardship of the Earth. The organization's mission is to encourage, as the **Rule** of St. Benedict directs, the world to reflect just and equitable distribution of resources for the common good.

Responses from both **Sister Roberta** and **Sister Mary David** were included in the publication. Sister Roberta addressed the Pope's critics who say the pontiff should stick to religion. Sister points out that prayers should be said for those who do not understand or accept the facts eloquently proffered by Francis that all humanity has a moral responsibility to care for the very first gift God gave at creation - the planet Earth.

Sister Mary David's remarks centered on the fact that Pope Francis' *Laudato Si*, is reflective of Benedictine stewardship. She calls for individuals, communities and the world to build peace by reducing resource-driven conflicts. Illustrative of that effort, the Benedictine Sisters of Florida are using aquaponics to help fulfill one of our Corporate Commitments to feed hungers. Aquaponics is the integration of animal and plant cultures to grow safe, chemical-free food...efficiently and responsibly.

News Briefs

Aug. 1st—**Michele Norris** of Tampa Leadership consulting gave the Sisters, affiliates and volunteers a presentation on *Generational Differences and Expectations*.

Sept. 11th— **S. Mary David** vigiled on Hwy 52 with "Pray for Peace" signs

Sept. 20th—the combined choirs from Sacred Heart parish performed for our monthly concert

Oct. 6th—SLU professor **Stephen Okey** gave a talk on the key points of Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato Si."

Oct. 11th—performance by the Bell choir of the Dade City First Presbyterian Church in concert at the Monastery.

Oct. 15-18th—**Srs. Dianne, Mary David and affiliate Jennifer** attended the Northeast Benedictine Formation Conference at the St. Benedict Monastery in Bristow, VA.

Oct. 31st—**S. Donna** was recognized for her 50 years as a Benedictine Sister at the Diocesan Mass and Luncheon honoring Jubilarians in the diocese at St. Jude Cathedral.

Nov. 5th—the Sisters gathered at the Saint Leo Abbey Cemetery to remember the deceased of Holy Name Monastery.

Nov. 6th—*Angels in the Wings* luncheon honored those

Surrounded by the Gifts of Nature

The date of September 1st was named *World Day of Prayer for the Care of the Earth* by **Pope Francis** for an annual observance. The Sisters and some friends participated that evening in the prayer celebration at our Memorial Fountain. The fire and water emanating from the fountain under the blue sky and lush greenery was a perfect setting to thank God for the gifts of nature that surround us. Selections from *Laudato Si* were read with time for silent prayer between each. One such selection was:

Christians are called to an ecological conversion whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or secondary aspect of our Christian experience.
Laudato Si #217

Our celebration included the singing of the *Canticle of the Sun* and concluded with Pope Francis' prayer on the care of the earth. **Dr. Rochelle Ayala** was among the gathering and commented, "As the sun was setting, a light ribbon appeared in the sky above us. While we said the service in Pope Francis' words, a warm gentle breeze brushed our cheeks as though God and Nature were breathing on us...a beautiful celebration."



Sister Helen sends lots of hugs to all the friends and family who sent cards and gifts for her 102nd Birthday! September 28, 2015



Youngest Retreatant To Date

The Sisters had a very special retreatant visitor...five week old **Rosie**. She came with her mom and eight other young women from Christ the King parish in Tampa on August 15th. A day of reflection, "Spiritual Growth," by **Retreat Director S. Mary David Hydro** also included a day of holy leisure and lunch with the Sisters prepared by **S. Donna**. To date, Rosie is our youngest retreatant and was very much "fussed over" by S. Mary David.

There is a time for everything...make time for what will help you grow. Call us for spiritual direction or a retreat at (352) 588-8320.

Oblates—Next Meeting is January 24th

In the Monastery time is balanced - the Angelus bell calls us to prayer and meals. In society today time is so often rushed and noisy. *Time-saving* devices seem to eat up our time. Oblates are those who join themselves with our Community and others. We gather to take time to savor life, reflect, be aware of the present moment and be in God's presence.

You are welcome to join us as we continue our study of S. Joan Chittister's *Illuminated Life: Monastic Wisdom for Seekers of Light*. Our January 24th meeting will focus on "Lectio."

Please **RSVP** by the Wednesday before the meeting.

Pictured on the right with S. Mary David is **Debi Richardson** who was welcomed as a new oblate in September.



From the Vocation Office

The Benedictine Sisters of Florida are committed to living Saint Benedict's vision and Gospel values that are as counter-cultural today as in his day: Community, Prayer, Peace, Justice, Balance and Service.

Are you looking for Community; Prayer together and alone? Maybe you are looking for us. Please join us for:

A Time for Seekers, Dec. 26, 2015—Jan. 1, 2016
Spend any or all of the days at Holy Name Monastery.

Space is limited so claim your time to “listen with the ear of your heart” to what God may say. Reserve today or contact us about dates/times more convenient for your schedule. (352) 588-8320 or vocation@saintleo.edu

The Alliance for International Monasticism

Always reaching out to more fully live her Benedictine commitment, **S. Mary David** attended AIM’s annual meeting in Erie, PA. The organization connects monastic communities in the United States who follow the Rule of St. Benedict to 450 Benedictine and Cistercian communities in Africa, Asia and Latin America. AIM promotes cooperation, spiritual, educational and financial assistance to monasteries in developing countries, enabling them to be centers of life for others. The challenge to attendees was to share Spiritual Vision, Human Solidarity and Global Community with others.

We Cherish Our Volunteers



Sporting a well-manicured beard, **John Roth** explains that he is “in training to be **Santa Claus** this Christmas.” It is just one of his many volunteer jobs, though the others are not as short-lived. John and his wife **Lynn** are long time friends and givers of their time and talents, sometimes together and sometimes on their own. He works part-time as Program Director in Tampa, FL for *Fathers’ Resource and Networking Center* (FRANC), coaching young fathers-to-be. But his Santa routine is strictly as a volunteer for the special needs children at the center.

A faithful Catholic throughout his life, John was educated by the Jesuits. He received a BS from the University of Colorado and a Master of Social Work from University of South Florida. John first met the Benedictine Sisters of Florida in 1968 when he relocated here from Denver, CO. where he was born and raised. Working with Vista Volunteers, an organization focused on social justice issues in East Pasco, was the beginning of an over 40 year friendship. As he puts it, “the Sisters were *always a few steps ahead of everyone else in whatever they did. They were exceptional sources of social change regarding the integration problems on which Vista was focused.*”

Through the years, John and Lynn have volunteered for our Thanksgiving Dinner - working in one of the more labor intensive jobs in the kitchen. Recently John added

another volunteer position to his portfolio working for **Sister Miriam** in the aquaponics garden. He comes once a week or more to help clean the fish tanks, plant seeds, harvest – whatever is needed. John's youngest son, **David** is a Marine Biology major and as it turns out, writing his thesis on aquaponics. “Our family is concerned about humanity’s ability to feed a growing population,” says John. “As always, the Sisters are ahead of the curve.”

The Benedictine spirituality is what continues to attract John. He and Lynn are grateful to the Sisters for sharing it and helping them to raise their sons, David and his older brother **Jon Pierre**.

As you might well guess, the following poem by S. Miriam was inspired by this Prince of a guy and her other aquaponics “worker-bees” doing God’s work.

In Harmony with the Angels

By Sister Miriam Cosgrove

Lizzy, Alex, Jennifer, Jackie and John
Good folks I know and depend upon
Fish to attend to, fresh food to grow
Farming with nobility as best we know

Lettuce, chives, kale and oh, much more
Our plants do brim with life galore
Begun by the Creator and sprouted from seed
To spend time at a market is never a need

Our tilapia are friendly as we see their face
Volunteers take turns and keep a steady pace
To tend earth’s garden out our monastery door
Sharing a luxury free to be grown by any poor

Climate in crisis is changing our globe
In Benedict’s day it was Rome full of woe
I believe aquaponics can provide hope in need
So nature and society replace evil’s greed

Ding-a-ling, ding-a-ling, ding-a-ling, ding, ding
Workers hear our noon Angelus bell clink
In grow beds they toil like monks of old
But pause in praise if they hear that ring
Produce to the kitchen they must bring

Keeping God always in mind and heart
The chimes remind us ever so clearly
To give all the glory to the Divine
Who needs a fiat-response on our part.

Thank You to our Annual Fund 2015-2016 Donors

The following are donors who have made a gift to the Annual Fund as of November 1, 2015.

This year's Annual Fund began July 1, 2015 and closes June 30, 2016.

Your contributions each year make possible the mission of prayer and service to God and His people.

Annual Fund donations are for a charity's programs and ongoing operational expenses.

Capital Campaign donations, on the other hand, fulfill a charity's need for a specific project like a new building, or equipment.

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Call the Advancement Office at (352) 588-8443 or email: hnmdevelopment@saintleo.edu

What is Your Life Plan?

A Life Plan is your map of financial strategies during different phases of life. It may integrate planned gifts when considering how to transfer your estate to the people and organizations you want to benefit from a lifetime of hard work.

In addition to fulfilling charitable goals and acknowledging (financially and spiritually) gratefulness to God, donors may receive tax benefits. Planning for such giving takes many forms and is tailored to meet the needs and goals of the donor.

Do I Need a Will?

Having a will is the most loving thing you can do for your loved ones. Without one, the laws of the state will determine who will receive your assets and who will manage your estate. As a result, the state may not include all of the persons or charities that you would like to benefit.

A will allows you to:

- appoint a guardian for your minor children
- choose a representative to carry out your wishes
- determine the final distribution of your estate assets

If we can be of assistance along with your advisor(s) to start the conversation, contact

Faith Pridmore, CFRE at (352) 588-8443 or email hnmdevelopment@saintleo.edu

Upcoming Calendar

December 6	St. Nicholas Day – Recollection Sunday
December 8	Feast of the Immaculate Conception
December 24	Monastery Schola sings Christmas Eve Mass at Saddlebrook
December 25	Christmas – Mass 10:30 a.m.
December 26-31	Time for Seekers (Live In experience with the Sisters)
December 27	Feast of the Holy Family
December 31	Day of Recollection - evening Prayer Service
January 1	New Years – Solemnity of the Mother of God
January 2	Feast of the Holy Names of Jesus, Mary
January 3	Solemnity of the Epiphany
January 10	Feast of the Baptism of Jesus
February 2	Memorial of St. Blasé (blessing of throats)
February 9	Feast of St. Scholastica
February 10	Ash Wednesday



*New President
Named at
Saint Leo
University*

General William J. Lennox, Jr., the former Superintendent of the United States Military Academy, is the new President of Saint Leo University. Dr. Lennox has served on the university’s board of trustees for the past eight years. He earned his bachelor’s degree in international affairs from West Point, NY and a master’s and Ph.D. in literature from Princeton University. He was first in his class at Fort Leavenworth’s Command and General Officer’s School and completed Harvard’s Senior Service College Fellowship.

Dr. Lennox’s extraordinary career includes a White House Fellowship, as the Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Army, Executive Officer for the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans. He served as the Deputy Commanding General and Assistant Commandant of the U.S. Army Field Artillery Center; the Chief of Staff for III Corps and Fort Hood; the Assistant Chief of Staff, CJ-3 at Combined Forces Command/U.S. Forces Korea; the Deputy Commanding General, Eighth U.S. Army; and Chief of Legislative Liaison. From 2006 to 2012, Dr. Lennox was Senior Vice President at Goodrich Corporation, a Fortune 500 aerospace firm, Washington, DC.

Dr. Lennox and his wife, **Anne**, have three grown sons – **Andrew, Matthew and Jonathan**.

When the announcement was made **President Kirk** said, *“The board could not have made a better choice. I have known Bill Lennox for many years and I am impressed not only with his remarkable leadership skills, but also his genuine commitment to our student-centered Catholic mission, our core values and our vision.”*

A New Venture

The Sisters look forward to continuing their long-standing relationship with Saint Leo and its new leadership. This fall semester, in fact, the university invited an accomplished linguist and musician, **Dr. Vasumathi Badrinathan** from India to teach. “Vasu” is a Fulbright Scholar in Residence at the university and a recognized expert on teaching foreign languages. The Sisters are pleased to have her staying at the monastery and the opportunity to share our

Program which is funded by the United States Dept. of State is to deepen cross-cultural understanding. Such was certainly the case when Vasu gave us a taste of Carnatic music for our concert in November. Carnatic is part of the sacred classical music of southern India. The concert was jointly given by Vasu and the Sisters. It featured Hindu Chants by Dr. Badrinathan and Gregorian Chants from the early Church by the Sisters... a rare opportunity for our audience.



**All are Welcome for Mass and Prayer
Chapel at Holy Name Monastery**

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

Morning Praise and Eucharist 6:30 am
Midday Prayer 11:45 am
Evening Praise 5:30 pm

Wednesday

Morning Praise 6:30 am
Midday Prayer 11:45 am
Evening Praise and Eucharist 5:30 pm

Saturday

Morning Praise and Eucharist 7:30 am
Midday Prayer 11:45 am
Vigil of Sunday 5:15 pm

Sunday

Morning Praise and Eucharist 10:30 am
Evening Praise 5:15 pm

In Memorium

We ask that you remember in your prayers those who have died and their families.

August 15, 2015, **Rosemary Herrmann, former member of the Benedictine Sisters of Florida**

October 3, 2015, **Richard Haven, a former long time employee of the Sisters**

October 14, 2015, **S. Mary Dorothy Neuhofer, OSB**

Holy Name Academy Alum Profile



Michele Gentry, Holy Name Academy Class of 1963, is an ordained minister who lives in Bogota, Colombia with her husband, **Dr. Adoniran Correal**, a noted internist and clinical cardiologist. She was born in Lakeland, FL, the only child of **Jefferson Gentry**, businessman, and **Dixie Gist Gentry**, former lieutenant in the Women's Airforce Service Pilot program, community college instructor and educator at HNA. Michele grew up in San Antonio, Florida, beginning kindergarten as a boarding student at Holy Name Academy and continuing later as a day student. After graduation in 1963, Michele then attended the College of St. Theresa in Winona, Minnesota with a double major in English Lit and Spanish Lit. In 1966, with her B.A. degree and very tired of snow, she enrolled at the University of Florida for graduate studies and received her M.A. in 1969.

Shortly after graduation Michele was hired by the prestigious Javeriana University in Bogotá, Colombia, and worked for several years in that city teaching American Literature, American Civilization and Culture, and English for future ESL teachers.

While working as a university professor, she visited the city of Armenia and experienced a life-changing call to Christ in the Armenia Cumberland Presbyterian Church. She moved to that city and for over 29 years served the Armenian church, mainly in music and Christian Education ministries, as lay leader, Deacon and Elder. During this time the pastor motivated her to pursue seminary studies as a way to improve her Christian Education ministry. Seminary studies in Colombia require five years of concentrated study and Michele received her degree in 2001. Her main calling is as a hospital chaplain, but the pastoral, administrative and educational positions Michele has held along with her outreach to those in need are extraordinary in depth and breath. All this while also raising five children: **Monica** (married and living in Orlando, FL), **Christine** (married and living in San Francisco, CA), **Ana Lucia** (single and living in Cali, Valle, Columbia), **David** (single and living in Armenia), **Daniel** (married and living in Bogota). Michele and Adoniran are also the proud grandparents of, to date, three grandchildren.



This year, 2015, Michele is honored to be elected as Moderator of the 185th General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. In that capacity she serves as the ecclesiastical head of the denomination for one year and as a spiritual representative of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church wherever God leads. As Moderator she is to serve in the Church, listen to the mind, heart and spirit of the denomination, speak with and to the Church, and pray with and for the work of the Spirit in the life of the denomination.

"My daughter asked how I came to be the person I am, doing what I do. So I decided," says Michele, *"to write short sketches about my growing-up years. That is when I began to value even more highly what Holy Name meant to me."* The sketches eventually grew into a book which focused on Michele's grandmother. *"While the book is not about me, I figure prominently as does my experience at Holy Name."*

"I was sent as a boarding student to HNA in 1950 at the age of five because my mother suffered a nervous breakdown and neither my father nor my maternal grandmother was able to take care of me. Neglected in those early years at home, my time at HNM was probably the best thing that could have happened in my life. It was a struggle at first to adapt to the structure, but that was exactly what I needed. The loving care I received from the Sisters and the HNA family probably saved my life. They were very much involved with the girls and it was obvious the Sisters truly cared about us. Having the company of my fellow students was a blessing too because being an only child can be very lonely." Michele attributes her sense of worth and feelings of security and stability as germinating during her time at HNA. She laments the demise of the boarding program and the excellent education provided.

Michele is hopeful her book will be published in early 2016 and the Sisters have been promised a copy!



Holy Name Monastery

PO Box 2450

St. Leo, FL 33574-2450

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 and emotional hungers of the People of God.

Editorial Team

Editors: Sister Roberta Bailey, *Prioress*

Faith Pridmore, CFRE,

Director of Mission Advancement

Writers: Benedictine Sisters

Design and Layout: Faith Pridmore

*May the peace and hope
of Christ's birth
be with you and
your loved ones
now and in all
the days
ahead...*

