



The Benedictine Tide

# Benedictine Sisters of Florida

Touching Lives through Prayer and Service

Summer 2019

Listen with the ear of your heart.

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Every time you begin  
a good work, you  
must pray to God  
most earnestly to  
bring it to perfection.

LISTEN

Saint

Benedict

WHAT IS MORE  
DELIGHTFUL THAN  
THIS VOICE OF THE  
HOLY ONE  
CALLING  
TO US?

Harbor neither hatred nor  
jealousy of anyone and do  
nothing out of envy.

*And let them first  
pray together so  
they may associate  
in peace.*

PEACE

*Prefer nothing whatever to Christ*

*Prayer is not something that is done to us or on us.*

*It is meant to engage us wholly...*

*our minds, our bodies, and our souls. It is not a passive exercise.*

*It is the work of God in us, and it demands our full attention.*

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**Your way of acting  
should be different  
from the world's way.**

The love of Christ must  
come before all else.

*Lessons from the  
School of the  
Lord's Service*

It is more right to be  
able to deal with the diffi-  
cult things in life and grow  
from them than it is to  
have things work out well  
all the time and learn  
nothing at all.

PRAY

# *Lessons from the School of the Lord's Service*

Community Retreat—June 6—11, 2019

## *Lessons from the School of the Lord's Service*



**Father John Shimkus, O.S.B.,** the director for our retreat this summer, is a monk of St. Benedict Monastery, Oxford, Michigan. Trained in spiritual direction and formation, Father John participates in his monastery's formation committee, conducts both private and conference retreats and serves as a spiritual director, primarily for permanent deacons and those in training for this ministry. He also serves as his community's oblate director, financial administrator and music director.

In considering the theme for the Benedictine Sisters' Retreat, I asked **Sister Roberta** what the Sisters would think might be of service to them. The collection of ideas she offered suggested to me a community-oriented approach, perhaps highlighting the great benefits and also the challenges of living together and seeking God together in the monastery. Not surprisingly, the many teachings that St. Benedict offers in this area came to mind and also his description of the monastery as "a school of the Lord's service" (Rule of Benedict Prologue 45), a place where we learn not only to live together in relative peace, but to really see the sacredness of communal living. Community well-lived makes Jesus present here and now, and also "leads us all together to everlasting life" (Rule of Benedict 72:11).

As the days of the retreat progressed, I became more aware of the somewhat diverse lifestyles of the Sisters and their guests. Many of their lives were not centered on monastic living, but on apostolic ministry or various family situations. So I began to more clearly affirm the holiness of each and every vocation; that the way each person is being led constitutes the "Lord's School" for them; that the same lessons can be taught by different kinds of community experiences; and that the most important factor is our faithfulness to the call of a God who is always and everywhere faithful to us!

**Fr. John**



Monte Cassino, Italy  
Saint Benedict's Monastery

All is well with my soul. These days of retreat are a vivid renewal of our purpose for this unique Christian journey we live here. One's whole life flashed through memory, mind and soul when gently and realistically guided by the Holy Spirit operative in our director's being and stirring within ourselves. God's presence becomes more real, a foretaste of heaven's joys. May others also come here to be so blest.

**Sister Miriam Cosgrove**

Our retreat at Holy Name was spiritually sensational! Retreats are necessary for all of us. We come together in whatever way we find ourselves – we walk together towards Christ and all the Kingdom. We walk alone and listen to the invitations for us personally from the Spirit. We are fed on so many levels ... spiritually, emotionally, soulfully and physically. Thank you to all who play a part in my walk, my journey!

**Sister Tracey Adams**

The simple, yet challenging lessons from the "School of the Lord's Service" was a review of topics we're all living and learning from Scripture, the Rule of Benedict and Benedictine values—humility, hospitality, peace, good zeal. Father John's conferences were fundamentally a reflective unfolding in that they helped us all to grow deeper and more aware. The balance of input, reflection, prayer together and alone, added to a retreat that went by far too quickly.

**Sister Mary David Hydro**

For me, our retreat was a time of renewal and refreshment. The conferences gave me a lot to think about and often a new way of looking at things. I appreciated John's touches of humor. The last day of the retreat was the feast of Saint Barnabas. Father referred to him as the

## *Lessons* (Con't from Page 2)

patron saint of “second fiddles” since when Barnabas is mentioned in the New Testament, it is almost always in conjunction with Saint Paul who is the dominant figure. But there is always a need for the second fiddles who are no less great than a “first fiddle.”

**Sister Mary Clare Neuhofer**

A great sense of renewal was mine after our Summer Retreat. The highlight for me was Father John's explanation of “The 12 Steps of the Ladder of Humility.” A prime example is Jesus' humble washing of the disciples' feet - the work of the lowliest of servants (John:13:1ff). To climb the Ladder of Humility we need to: have awareness of God's presence within us; surrender one's will; be obedient to God; be patient and steadfast; have self-knowledge; confess our wrongs; be content; accept what and who we are; avoid individualism; embrace the spirit of silence; moderate laughter; be humble in speech. Climbing that Ladder means we are climbing down to earth and humbling the self. It is then that Total Transformation takes place within us and we unite with God.

**Sister Elizabeth Mathai**

**We were pleased to have Sisters from other Orders and some of our Oblates join us for the retreat. Below are a few who shared thoughts on the experience:**

*Very eye opening to be introduced to the Rule of St. Benedict! All in all the retreat was a ten!*

**Anonymous**

*My experience at Holy Name proved a wonderful blessing. That I am one hundred minus thirteen years speaks for itself as I prepare for peacefully awaiting God's call to Eternity while missioning in Tampa in the midst of children who have been traumatized and deeply wounded. I felt I needed to know more about empowering children and to be transformed. Thus, a time away was needed in an atmosphere of LISTENING to God. I'm grateful to all the Sisters, each a “pearl of great price” for everyone coming here.*

**Sister Catherine Poirier, CSC**

*Since I am not a Benedictine, the topic was new, but I learned much – very applicable to my life. I will share with my community.*

**Anonymous**

*I thank the Benedictine Sisters of Florida for this special retreat with Father John. I have been a guest for many, many years and they are my extended family. The time spent is a treasure that brings much joy. I'm leaving with fond love and memories until we meet again. God bless you all.*

**Oblate Jo Shine**



**Retreat 2019 Attendees with Father John**



## Chamber Member of the Year



Chamber President, Dr. Randy Stovall, and David West  
with Sister Roberta Bailey

**Sister Roberta Bailey, OSB**, Prioress of the Benedictine Sisters of Florida, was named Chamber Member of the Year at their annual banquet on June 6th. Sister has been on the Greater Dade City Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors for ten years. She has served as past treasurer and now chairs the education committee, which honors students with *Citizen of the Month* awards and awards four college scholarships to deserving Pasco High School seniors.

The Chamber also honored at their June 18th meeting, six non-profit organizations in our community. Valued for their exceptional work that connects and makes a difference in the lives of others, the Benedictine Sisters of Florida were one of the six honored. Along with our institution the Friends of Hugh Embry Library, the Amelia Foundation, Eckert Connects, the Dade City Symphony, and the Dade City Police Foundation each were presented with a \$500 gift by the Chamber's Executive Director, **John Moors**, pictured below with Sister Roberta.



## By the Grace of God

Another year of schooling for a wonderful group of four-year olds ended in early June. With God's grace, it is my privilege to help them grow to become what God wants them to be.

My VPK children had never been to school before they were entrusted to me. *Listening with the ear of their little hearts* as Saint Benedictine teaches, is my approach and this class followed exceedingly well! Sharing during center time and helping each other with clean-up became routine. Some of the boys were good builders utilizing the blocks, magna tiles, and Legos in the classroom.

Some excelled in art and everyone liked dramatic play. Becoming very good listeners made them good learners. So much so that on their last assessment, it indicated they are all exceeding expectations for kindergarten on the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screen! Such was a great way to end our year together... I'm so proud of them. Their smiles, love and affection are missed, but now that August is here, I anxiously await meeting my new little *challenges* God sends me.

Sister Elizabeth Mathai

## Gun Violence Awareness The Month of June

The Benedictine Sisters of Florida and friends prayed about and wore orange on June 7th. It is the color that **Hadiya Pendleton's** friends wore in her honor when she was shot and killed in Chicago at the age of 15. It is now the defining color of the gun violence prevention movement.



The National Gun Violence Awareness Day is the first Friday in June. Support it next year by wearing orange and praying for a future free of gun violence.



The Sisters celebrated Earth Day, April 22nd, at sunset with a prayer service by our fountain and fire. Our Corporate Commitment to “feed hungers” is related to Earth Day given the fact that global warming and food insecurity are connected. Lack of care for the earth affects the poor and causes hunger. The Rule of Benedict tells us to treat all as a gift from God. The earth is that gift and is to be cared for and shared with all. Lack of care and support for others is what causes war and violence; so Earth Day is also related to Peace and Justice.

At the closing of our vigil, we signed petitions to our Senators regarding support of the Green New Deal and other important legislation that moves the United States in the direction of renewable energy.

Poetry is God’s Language.  
May our words and life  
Give glory thru  
Daring faith, trust, and service  
And bring beauty to all Now.

Let us walk in all  
Trust and know God works  
Thru us IF we will.

Read God’s poetry  
The beauty of trees  
The warmth of a breeze ...  
Beauty and sound all around  
Is God’s Poetry and love.  
Surprise!  
See, Believe!



Sister Mary David

## *A Retreatant’s Story*

*Peaceful. Welcoming. A restful environment.* These are just some of the words to describe Holy Name Monastery and the Benedictine Sisters of Florida when reflecting on my experiences during a private retreat there. Upon arriving, I immediately noticed the utter stillness and calm of the place which was perfect for my troubled

soul. I was not in a very good place emotionally in my life. There had been several loved ones pass away during 2018, and the most recent one was my Grandma Rita. My parents did their best, but it became apparent something deeper was needed. It seemed that I was in the midst of a spiritual desolation, a term whose meaning was not understood until finding myself dealing with it.

A good friend of mine, suggested a retreat. I found Holy Name Monastery on Google and made a reservation. What to expect or what to get out of a retreat was a guessing game. It turned out to be a Holy Spirit-led immersion experience into the Benedictine way of life. I jumped in with both feet: Liturgy of the Hours at 6:30 am and at other times throughout the day; meals with the Sisters; Sisters' Sunday Family Night; gardened with **Sister Mary Romana**; volunteered at Daystar Thrift/Food Bank; filled in as a receptionist; stuffed envelopes; attended an Oblate meeting; watched my first baseball game (the Sisters are big fans of the Rays); and listened to their stories. It was especially thrilling to make 105 Origami butterflies for **Sister Helen’s** 105th birthday!

Despite the flurry of activity, it had a very calming effect on me. I was able to gather my thoughts and at the same time quiet my mind. This first retreat experience set the bar very high for other retreats in my future.

Most importantly, I found God’s presence palpable in that place and with each of the Sisters. To again practice my Catholic religion with confession and communion after some ten years was a blessing.

Friendships that will last for years to come were made on that visit. Sister Mary Romana gave me some mementos so as not to forget the Sisters and my renewed faith in God. One was a prayer card with the picture of **St. Francis of Assisi**. It included his “Prayer for Peace,” which begins “Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace...” This was my Grandma’s favorite prayer. For me, Sister’s gift was a clear sign from my dearly missed Grandma that she was still watching over me from heaven and it was through her intercession that I found Holy Name.



My departure was one of reconciliation with my faith. Peace, rest, and renewal along with the amazing, loving, and supportive women at Holy Name strengthened my journey towards wholeness. Their continued prayers keep me on that journey.

**Maria Gaffud**-Oct. 2018

## Advancing the Mission

At the heart of the work the Benedictine Sisters of Florida are able to do is collaborating with donors who are inspired and driven to help others. The Sisters understand that making an impactful gift is much more about a donor's passion that they share with us than a financial gift.

### Giving Tuesday—Dec. 3, 2019

#### *A Loss and An Opportunity!*

The Community Foundation of Tampa Bay is no longer conducting the May GiveDay Tampa Bay 24-hour online fundraising event. This is a huge loss for us and the many other non-profits who greatly benefitted. And the donors found it to be a fun way to support missions for which they care.

However, the Benedictine Sisters of Florida WILL participate this December in the annual **Giving Tuesday** event. This is a national effort which works much the same way. Our goal is to raise \$25,000 which is the approximate amount (sometimes more and sometimes less) our loyal supporters donated each year during GiveDay Tampa Bay. To make it more fun, we're having a drawing.

#### You Could Win!

To be eligible to win a **3-night stay** with meals for two at the "Inn at Holy Name," enter at our website during the 24-hour event on December 3, 2019 anytime after midnight to 11:59 pm: [www.benedictinesistersoffl.org](http://www.benedictinesistersoffl.org)

A pop-up window will appear; click on it and fill-out the needed information and submit.

The stay could make a great gift for your winter visitors!

(\***Note:** Some dates for a stay may not be available such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Holy Week.)

#### **Drawing at Holy Name Monastery**

**12138 Wichers Rd, St. Leo, FL 33574**

**December 4, 2019 at 11:00 am**

A donation is NOT required to be eligible.

Not necessary to be present to win.

#### How do I Make a Donation on Giving Tuesday?

It's easy. Go to the website, click on the "Donate Now" button, fill-out the form and indicate the amount you want to donate. You can also mail a check to: BSOF at PO Box 2450, St. Leo, FL 33574. Mailed checks **MUST** be received by us **no later than November 29th.**

The **Season of Giving** is considered to be for many, the holidays. We see it as a time for giving back in gratitude for our blessings. The Benedictine Sisters give thanks for our friends and supporters as you stand by us and trust in our mission.



As we approach the last quarter of 2019, we hope you are able to give in any amount so that we can continue our unique way of life of prayer and service; help those in need; provide spiritual guidance; engage others in the values that St. Benedict wrote about based on the life Jesus lived; and share Benedictine hospitality.

How fortunate that we are able to collaborate and partner with you so that together we can make what we want to see happen in the world come to life. Whether at this time of year or throughout, *the joy of giving is the joy of living*. It is a love that is powerful, letting "the light" shine in for those served.

### *Service in the Community*



**Faith Pridmore**, CFRE, Director of Mission Advancement for the Benedictine Sisters of Florida, has been invited to the Board of Directors of the Heritage Arts Center Association (HACA). The non-profit gives young performers an opportunity to share their talent onstage before a panel of professional judges. Founded 37 years ago by **Barbara Friedman** and daughter **Dr. Becky Groomes**, both accomplished artists in their own right, *Spotlight on Talent* gives individuals and groups through 12<sup>th</sup> grade audition and performance opportunities. Monetary prizes are awarded including a \$1,000 scholarship to a graduating high school senior.

With her 20-year professional performing career and executive leadership of dance organizations, Faith is delighted to serve. "Seeing these hard-working and talented youngsters living their dreams is pure joy."



## *Karen Humphreys*

### **Oblate and Supporter**

A cradle Catholic, **Karen Humphreys'** early life was immersed in all the things Catholics were supposed to do, most especially the sacraments. "Becoming a nun," explains Karen, "was an early aspiration, but would not come to be. I am blessed today though to have become an Oblate at Holy Name Monastery!"

Karen's parents, **Elaine and Robert Humphreys**, and her sister **Joan** all lived in Eris, Pennsylvania. Her mother (pictured to Karen's right) worked as a dental



hygienist and then later as a gemologist. She specialized in diamonds and that career enabled Elaine and Bob to put their girls through college. Joan became an architect with her own business in New York City and has one son.

Karen studied abroad in her junior year of college in Paris and would eventually become fluent in French. Her career was in international business which gave her opportunities to travel. Employed by Fisher-price, Fruit of the Loom, and Closet Maid, she traveled to 47 countries including six continents. "My travels to Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Latin America," says Karen, "elevated my early Spanish education to fluency."

Probably one of her most interesting trips was starting in Russia in 1989 which was still very atheist. "You could feel that with the people. My next stop was Israel and the feeling was exactly the opposite—the state is their religion and vice versa. The exposure to people of such differing cultures, languages, and religions has helped my humanity. I didn't realize it as the experiences were lived, but I came to believe that God was instilling in me love for Him through the diverse projections of Himself. "

God does work His many ways in our lives. During her working years, Karen was laid off several times. "It caused me to depend on the Lord for decisions to move forward. One such instance was the offer of a position in Gainesville for which I didn't feel qualified. God helped me through that challenging decision and the job ended up being fun and very rewarding, both professionally and

financially. I also found a wonderful parish there, Queen of Peace, which brought me closer to God.

Karen's Spiritual Director at the time suggested she consider a 3<sup>rd</sup> Order. After some research, it was the Benedictine Sisters of Florida at Holy Name Monastery she would visit. "One of the initial impressions that highly impressed me was the Sisters' involvement in the community and dedication to people of all religions and backgrounds. It is awe inspiring to realize how they have surrendered to their humble and giving way of life."

As she became involved in the Oblate Program, Karen knew she found a place to fulfill her spiritual needs. She sees it as not only cherished spiritual time, but educational as well. "We read and discuss principles and values together. The **Rule of Saint Benedict** has brought such enlightenment to me. His thoughts about prayer and work—that work is prayer; living a balanced life with simplicity, humility and with God's help—have affected me greatly. Being around the Sisters and seeing their loving outreach to others has helped me grow closer to God."

"While I don't make it to all the Oblate meetings, I try. The peace and kinship felt when there is palpable. For all that they give and do, I am moved gratefully to support the Sisters."

### *Upcoming Events Calendar*

<b>August 2—3</b>	<b>Sisters Summer Planning Days</b>
<b>August 15</b>	<b>Feast of the Assumption</b>
<b>September 8</b>	<b>Music at the Monastery</b>
<b>October 13</b>	<b>Diocesan Jubilee Celebration</b> <b>S. Roberta is 60-Year Jubilarian</b>
<b>November 1</b>	<b>All Saints Day</b> <b>Angels in the Wings Luncheon</b> <b>(RSVP required)</b>
<b>November 2</b>	<b>All Souls Day</b> <b>HNA Alumnae Mass/Meal 4 pm</b> <b>(RSVP required to St. Leo University)</b>
<b>November 10</b>	<b>Concert with the Friendship Singers</b>
<b>November 28</b>	<b>Community Thanksgiving Meal</b>
<b>December 8</b>	<b>Feast of the Immaculate Conception</b>

### *In Memorium*

**Elizabeth Hamilton Herring—December 27, 2018,**  
Holy Name Academy Class of 1959



*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 hungers of the People of God.

### **Editorial Team**

Editors: Sister Roberta Bailey, *Prioress*  
Faith Pridmore, CFRE,  
*Dir. of Mission Advancement*

Writers: Benedictine Sisters

Design and Layout: Faith Pridmore

Web Master: Cheryl Chadick

## *Angels in the Wings Legacy Society*

**Luncheon—November 1, 2019**

**Noon to 1:30 pm**

**This special luncheon honors supporters  
for their remembrance of the  
Benedictine Sisters of Florida in their estate plans.**

**It is also an opportunity to provide information  
helpful to those thinking about their planning.**

**Special Guest Speaker, Jamie E. Tomlin, CFP  
BT Retirement & Wealth Management**

*"Practical Planning for You, Your Family  
and Charity"*

(The luncheon and presentation are complimentary.)

**RSVP to Faith Pridmore: (352) 588-8443 or  
hnmdevelopment@saintleo.edu**



**Have you viewed our videos on  
YouTube?**

Please take a look and pass them on to friends who might find them of interest. Subjects include "Come for a Retreat," "Our Ministries," "Iconography," and "Saint Benedict." We have received good feedback so help spread the word!

Our next video will be:

"A Day in the Life of a Sister" and should be on YouTube in August.

Check-out our website for concert and other event details:

**[www.benedictinesistersoffl.org](http://www.benedictinesistersoffl.org)**