



The Benedictine Tide

Benedictine Sisters of Florida

Touching Lives through Prayer and Service

Winter 2020

At this Most Joyous Season of Christmas We Celebrate Our Blessed Mother

Theotokos
God Bearer—Mary, Mother, Virgin
We honor you but know that it is true
we are Theotokos too.

Be our Mother, model.
Teach us the song your son loved to hear
“Yes” to the seasons of waiting and
fulfillment.
“Yes” to the tear of sorrow and joy.

Jesus take root in us
Word of God be enfleshed in us.
Come to fullness
Come to birth
We'll share you with the world
be your presence on the earth
We'll be like Mary,
Theotokos.

Sister Mary David, Hydro, OSB



Lovely Lady Dressed in Blue

It's 7 p.m. on a Sunday evening. The dishes are done and it's time for **"Life is Worth Living."** For those readers who grew up in the 1950s, reading the name of that show will strike a memory chord. It was almost a part of our Sunday religion to gather in front of the little black and white TV screen, even if the view was mostly wavy lines and the sound was distorted unless someone held the antenna just right. It was time to tune in to **Fulton J. Sheen's "Life is Worth Living!"**

Sheen would share tips for graceful living and his great devotion to our Blessed Mother. He'd sometimes tell his listeners if they were friends of Jesus' Mother when they reached the pearly gates they ought not be surprised to hear Christ say: "I've heard my Mother speak of you."



One of the rhyming prayers – along with the Guardian Angel Prayer – that became part of children's bedtime repertoire (and still sticks in this 80-year old brain) was Sheen's oft quoted "Lovely Lady Dressed in Blue."

Much of what we know about Mary is found in the Gospel by the Evangelist Luke. That's where we learn about Mary's actions after the announcement of Jesus' birth by the angel Gabriel. It's that last line in the story that is striking ... **(Then the angel departed from her.)** What Mary did next kept the ball rolling. God, the director said "Action!" Mary eagerly goes dancing over the hills - well, maybe not quite "dancing" as the journey was 50-70 miles. How many noticed this young girl, unescorted, obviously destination-certain? Gasping for breath she bound into the home of her cousin, **Elizabeth**, eager to share her news. She needed someone else to hear what she'd been told. She stopped short when she saw Elizabeth's "baby bump." God was up to something big here! Elizabeth was way beyond her child-bearing years.

The story is quite simple: an encounter between two pregnant women (cousins), the first one is already experiencing the movement of the child in her womb. The baby moves, more than "moves" – the baby **"LEAPS"** when Mary calls out to Elizabeth. Maybe she says something like: "Elizabeth, wait till I tell you what happened to me the other day!" Many of you are mothers. Can't you see Elizabeth grabbing her middle – "Whew! that wasn't an ordinary kick – "my child just leaped!" Elizabeth is the "amazed saint." Her attitude is summarized in her question, *"Why am I so favored?"* Here is humble

amazement at being able to participate directly in God's plan. All who have a role in God's plan should share this wonder. Blessings emerge from God's ability to bring his promises to completion. In order to share those benefits, we must be confident, like Mary and Elizabeth, that God does what He says. The first sign of such faith in Mary was her willingness to let God use her.

Turn the pages ahead 30 years to Jesus' public ministry. Those years must have taken a great toll on Mary. When Jesus was still a babe in arms, Simeon had predicted that a sword of sorrow would pierce Mary's soul. One such occasion was when Jesus' relatives were convinced he was out of his mind. Not a very pleasant experience for any family, no matter how holy.

The saddest moment of all came when Mary watched her son die on the cross. What kept the family together and sane throughout all those trials and crosses? The answer is 'Love for each other and God' - Jesus' love for Mary and Mary's love for Jesus, and the love of both of them for God the Father.

Devotion to Mary is a heart-connection ... a non-threatening, she-understands-me sort of relationship. Stories of her miraculous appearances to people "just like us" fill us with awe and a desire for closeness to Mary. We marvel at the believer's relationship with Mary that naturally blends with their relationship with her Son, Jesus. We trust her motherly instincts. We plead with her to "hold open the back door of heaven" of us.

It's hard for an individual to explain in human words what a relationship with Mary means. It's hard to imagine how Mary – a young teenage girl from a small village, must have felt when an angel appeared. Had angels come to her before, so she was not surprised or startled? I think it was her child-like faith, her reliance on God's presence in her life that made her wonder, but not fear.

During the upcoming Advent season – which is fast approaching - we'll experience what I'll call "fractured attention." You know, it's like viewing life through a Kaleidoscope. It changes just when you think you've got a good focus. At this writing, we have high hopes for a COVID vaccine, but we plan like we may still be on high alert.

May God bless each of you, and your families and loved ones. Walk with Mary this Advent. Ponder with her what is happening in our world. Something **IS** happening. Let us, take Mary's hand and as the saying goes: *"Go with the flow."*

Sister Roberta Bailey

Our Lady of Fatima

My connection to the **Blessed Mother** has its roots early in life. My birthday and baptism are in May and my first Profession of Vows was made on the Feast Day of the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

Our Blessed Mother's first apparition at Fatima was in the month of May and her message highlights many central truths and devotions of my Catholic faith: the Holy Trinity, the Holy Eucharist, penance, repentance, the Holy Rosary, and sacrifices for the conversion of sinners. Her promise to assist at the hour of death with the graces necessary for salvation has always resonated deeply with me.

The highlighted devotions and practices are an integral part of my family's daily living. They were well imbued within me when I became a member of the Missionaries of Charity, founded by **St. Mother Theresa** of Calcutta who was greatly devoted to the Blessed Mother. In every convent of the Order, there is a grotto of Our Lady of Fatima. Each day after night prayer the Community sings a hymn of Mary.



May 13, 1917 was the day of the first Fatima apparition and on the very same day in 1981, **Saint John Paul II** survived an attempt on his

life in St. Peter's Square. John Paul credited his survival to the intervention of Our Lady of Fatima. The assassin's bullet that narrowly missed killing the pope now is inserted in a crown of Our Lady housed at the Fatima shrine.

Our Lady assured **Lucia**, (one of the children who witnessed Mary's appearance): "my Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God."

Sister Elizabeth Mathai

A Case for Mary, Untier of Knots

In early July **Sister Roberta** handed me a letter from Sister Jerome's cardiologist explaining she would have to find another doctor. They would not schedule her because she did not have Part B Medicare.

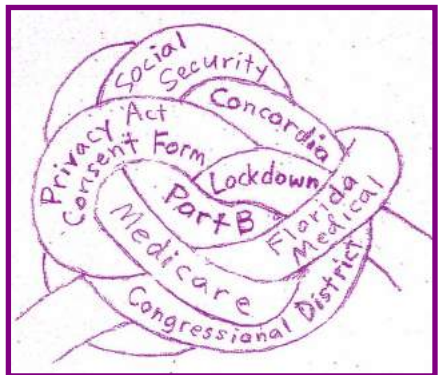
With some research advice by an Advocate for the Elderly, I called and left messages with the cardiologist's staff, asking him to continue to care for **Sister Jerome** while we

worked on getting her back on Part B. In the meantime, I learned of a webpage that offers help with federal agencies, such as Medicare. First, a signed Privacy Act Consent Form was needed. Only Sister Jerome's signature would be accepted though Sister Roberta is her legal Health Care Surrogate.

Sister Jerome was in "Assisted Living" and the facility was in lockdown, allowing no visitors. I was able to speak with the Resident Care Coordinator who kindly took time out of her schedule to get Sister Jerome's signature and send it in. We received an automated email saying a case manager would contact us in a few days. We never heard from them despite my many calls and emails.

I called the Florida agency **SHINE** (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Elders) and talked to one of their volunteers. He advised, "somebody has to get with her and call Social Security."

There was no one at the assisted living facility who was able to do this.



Drawing by Kathleen

We then tried a call to our congressional office. A live person answered assuring me that I would hear from someone in a few days. Weeks passed with no word. Then, very late on a Friday afternoon, we received a call from the Case Intake Manager. She was eager to help us, especially when she learned that Sister Jerome and Sister Roberta were Benedictine Sisters. She confided that she had once hoped to become a Maryknoll Sister. Yes, their Privacy Act Consent Form would be mailed and that they would accept Sister Roberta's signature.

With our conversation almost concluded, the case manager asked me for Sister Jerome's address. As I gave her the Tampa address, I began to have a sinking feeling. "She's not in your congressional district," were the next words I heard. "But we are," I replied weakly. "It all seems so hopeless," I added.

There was a long hesitation ... I think that was when the grace of **Mary, Untier of Knots**, came down upon us. The intake manager then said, "I'll have the case manager take care of it." Four days later we were notified by email that Sister Jerome's new Medicare card with Part B coverage was in the mail. **Volunteer Dr. Kathleen Daye**



THANKSGIVING OUTREACH 2020

For the first time in 26 years, the Benedictine Sisters of Florida were not able to hold our annual Thanksgiving Dinner. Covid eliminated that particular out-reach to those alone or unable to prepare the traditional meal of thanks. We were, however, thrilled to participate in a collaborative effort this year to provide Thanksgiving Baskets for those in need!

The Sisters began what has become a joyous ministry very small in the beginning, in their monastery dining room, to provide a holiday meal for a handful of Saint Leo College International Students. Within three years the Sisters moved the event to Marmion Cafeteria and extended an invitation to the public to join them for dinner. They gathered a crew of volunteers that grew over the years. In 1998, the Sisters sold Marmion Cafeteria to Saint Leo and the **Saint Anthony Women's Club** jumped on the bandwagon and have continued for 16 years to provide all the desserts for the dinner. **Saint Anthony School children** also got involved by making table centerpieces and place mats.

When it became apparent that the dinner was not viable this year, a collaboration formed with First Presbyterian Church of Dade City, **Pastor Cheryl Duke**. **Father Ed Lamb** of Saint Mark's parish originated the basket idea. The Knights of Columbus from that parish jumped in with \$1,520 and gift cards and the Sisters donated \$1,305 from their monthly personal allowances! The Saint Leo University Social Service Club, faculty advisor **Dr. Veronika Ospina-Kammerer**, always raises funds for our Thanksgiving outreach and this year was no different. This project with many volunteers, the monetary donations, and supermarket gift cards extend our mission to "feed the hungry of the people of God."



The Knights of Columbus and Columbiettes from St. Mark's are always delivering special gifts for the Sisters and helping with our ministries.

We greatly missed the gathering this year and look forward to a future when we can once again welcome our guests to bow their heads over a holiday meal and give thanks to God for all the gifts He provides.



Luminaries of Love

Benedictine Sisters of Florida

Invite you to
honor your loved one(s) with our

Luminaries of Love.

Give a gift of gratitude ...

Give a gift of remembrance ...

Give a gift just because

Give a gift to your family ...

*The Sisters will place the individual, couple or family's name
on a lit Luminary and display them on the circular drive at Holy Name Monastery on*

Christmas Eve

***It is our prayer that this will be a connection of the heart for you.
Funds raised will help us respond to needs in the community and
provide gifts to the elderly at Heritage Park.***

Order your Luminary or Luminaries:

Online at www.benedictinesistersoffl.org

Click on the **Donate Now** button.

Questions? Contact

Faith Pridmore (941) 586-3112 or Cheryl Chadick (813) 838-7452

\$5.00 minimum donation

Benedictine Sisters of Florida

PO Box 2450 * 12138 Wichers Rd, St. Leo, FL 33574-2450

The Benedictine Sisters are Zooming!



**S. Mary David leading the
Oblate Zoom Meeting**

The first ever event, an Oblation on Zoom, took place on Sunday, October 25, 2020 at Holy Name Monastery! **John Corbett** and **Luella Wilson** made their Oblation in the "Zoom" presence of thirteen fellow Oblates, three sisters and Oblate Director, **Sister Mary David Hydro**. It was so good for all to see familiar faces.

Our last Oblate Meeting was held in January, Covid-19 then appeared and we had to lock-down. It was at that time that John and Luella petitioned to make Oblation. They have been patiently waiting until we could meet again. A "new," refurbished computer for Sister Mary made a virtual gathering possible!

Sister comments highlighted that "in these troubled times our Benedictine values are needed more than ever. They call us to live our faith; to welcome and respect the dignity of each person; to create community; to practice justice; and to build peace. They call us to listen with the ear and the heart to all around us, especially the suffering and those who are oppressed."

The Oblates decided that the **next meeting would be on Sunday, November 22nd at 3:00 pm**. We will continue the study of **Joan Chittister's Spirituality for the 21st Century**.

Oblate Karen Humphries sends out the invitation, reminder and link. She is our techie whose talents we are grateful to have!

In Fond Memory

Monsignor George Cummings

August 8, 2020—Age 102

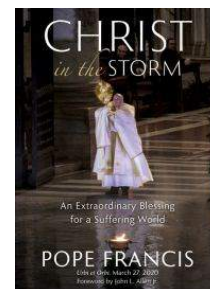
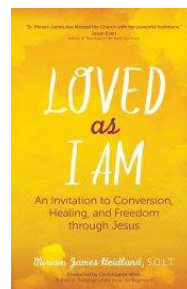
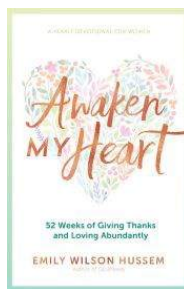
From the Advancement Office

Christmas festivities may be somewhat different this year as families plan smaller gatherings. Highlights of the unwrapping of gifts may happen through Zoom or by Phone FaceTime. Regardless of your plans, it is always a time of joy, celebration and renewal. Jesus' birth brings the world an opportunity to begin anew with hope and the values we hold dear - peace, love, compassion and heartfelt gratitude.



**Meaningful
Christmas
Gift
Giving**

We found a wonderful resource for Christmas gifts we thought you would find particularly meaningful. The Ave Maria Press has made possible a special giving program to help Catholic organizations suffering considerable losses in donations due to Covid. You can shop for your loved ones **AND** Ave Maria will donate **30%** to a charity you hold dear. There is something for every age in the Ave Maria Press's offerings. Just a few samples you might want to give to a certain someone at Christmas:



Simply go to: **[Avemariapress.com/fundraiser](https://avemariapress.com/fundraiser)**

Use code: **HOLYNAME**

Shipping: **FREE**

**30% of your purchase amount is donated to the
Benedictine Sisters of Florida**

(You must use our code typed in all caps.)

The Sisters also receive donations from Amazon Smile. Any purchases you make, they will give a percentage of their profits to the Benedictine Sisters of Florida.

[http://smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)

Let the Shopping Begin!

GivingTuesday is December 1st
Our Goal is \$20,000
24-Hour Online Giving



At the heart of why donors give is the collaboration with a charity that inspires them in helping to make a better world. We know bringing about change and hope is what drives our donors. We know and are grateful that your passion to stand up for goodness matches the mis-

sion and vision of the Benedictine Sisters of Florida. And making a gift is much more about your passion than it is making a financial gift.

Funds raised on **GivingTuesday** are instrumental in the Sisters' efforts to change the world for those seeking meaning, justice, peace and love. While covid has changed how the Sisters have reached out, shown their love and listened, their efforts to let others know they care and are praying for them continue. To be of service now through acts of love as simple as a phone call to check-in, a brief note by email or a special prayer upon request can be profound. The Sisters long for the day when we can again celebrate Mass with you, make room at their table for you and invite you back to Holy Name.

2019 Drawing Was a Big Hit!

Last year's drawing was a big hit so we are keeping it going for GivingTuesday 2020. You could win a 3-night stay with delicious meals for two (you, friends or family) at our lovely Retreat Center. Click on the pop-up box; provide information, submit and you're in the drawing. Details and dates that are not available are on the site. Due to covid—scheduling for the stay will only take place **AFTER** the Sisters determine it is safe to have guests.

Please help continue to bring about change through your participation in **GivingTuesday on December 1st.**

- Go to our website: www.benedictinesistersoffl.org
- Time: From 12:00 AM to midnight
- Click on the DONATE NOW button, fill-out the form, submit

***Note:** a donation is not necessary to be eligible for the drawing.

CARES Act and a NEW
Charitable Tax Deduction



The CARES Act signed into law on March 27, 2020 is an opportunity for taxpayers who do not itemize to receive a tax benefit when making a donation to charity.

Non-itemizers may deduct up to \$300 per taxpayer (\$600 for a married couple) in annual charitable contributions. This is particularly beneficial to people who take the standard deduction when filing their taxes (in other words for taxpayers who do not itemize their deductions).

Calculating the deduction is easy! The amount of the donation is subtracted from your gross income. The adjusted gross income (AGI) is reduced, and thereby reducing your taxable income. The contributions must be cash gifts to a public charity such as the Benedictine Sisters of Florida (cannot be made to a donor advised fund, certain supporting organizations or certain private foundations.)

Appreciated securities are another easy way to make a charitable gift for those whose stock market wins have set them up for the potential of high capital gains. When you transfer ownership of long-term holdings to charity, you receive a charitable deduction for their full market value—and you incur no capital gains tax (subject to IRS deduction limits).

NOTE: For those 70 and 1/2 you probably know that the **IRS has suspended for 2020 your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD).** Folks who are fortunate to have not needed their RMD, have donated it to charity in the past and received a tax deduction. Since the distribution from your retirement plan is not required in 2020, the new CARES Act law is worth considering in giving to charities close to your heart.

As always we encourage you to contact your tax advisor to find out how your gift can be most advantageous to you and to the Benedictine Sisters of Florida. Please contact Faith Pridmore, CFRE if we can be of assistance:
hnmdevelopment@saintleo.edu or (941) 586-3112

Nothing brings you peace like the triumph of principles.

Ralph Waldo Emerson



Holy Name Monastery

PO Box 2450

12138 Wichers Road

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,

Director of Mission Advancement

Writers: Benedictine Sisters

Web Master: Cheryl Chadick

May this Christmas Bring You



the gift of the Blessed Mother's enduring Love,
the blessing of the Hope Her Son brings
and the truth of God's Sweet Peace