

# Benedictine Prayer in the Time of COVID-19

O Holy Father Benedict and Holy Mother Scholastica,

We ask you to intercede for our world as we face the danger of the coronavirus. May we have your faith to remain strong, your love to give to our hurting and frightened world, and your fidelity to the monastic way of life with which we have been entrusted. Knowing we are your followers, imperfect though we are, we call on your strong advocacy before God's throne, asking for protection and deliverance from this dread disease. We ask this of you, faithful founders of our way of life, who live in full union with the God who loves us and wants only our good.

AMEN

~by Lynn McKenzie, OSB

The Sisters pray this every day.



The sentiment in the last phrase of the prayer on the cover of this TIDE has been my "life line" throughout the pandemic: "the God who loves us and wants only our good." Sometimes in life all that seemingly sustains us is that "head knowledge" that we are made and are upheld by our loving God who is fully aware of what's happening and why. And, suddenly you realize it's not just "head knowledge". That's the very sentiment that's striking a melody in your heart. How wonderful it is to believe in

and cherish a friendship with our all-loving God who love us and wants only our good.

At this writing, the **reported** deaths from COVID and complications of the virulent virus is approaching 1,000,000. One



cannot help but wonder "What is God telling us?" To question is not to doubt. The psalmist asks: "Oh Lord why do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in our times of trouble?" (Ps 101) As youngsters we learned the catechism answer to: "Why did God make you?" We could parrot: "God made me to know Him, to love Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in the next." But, that answer may be little solace when a loved one is dying and family or community members are prohibited from customary gatherings, from giving blessings and holding hands and whispering, "I love you. God be with you. Go in peace! I'll be okay."



At times like this, we cling tenaciously to the rope swinging us out over unknown waters. We trust and pray that the rope is securely anchored to that big branch overhead. We swing,

arching over the waters below. Is this the time to let go? If I hesitate a moment too long, I'll crash into the other bank or be slammed back where I started. Do I dare let go now and plunge into the dark waters below? An answer seen on a plaque comes to mind: "Sometimes, you just have to take the leap, and build your wings on the way down."

Soaring through the air or floating in an unaccustomed sea, there is unexpected beauty surrounding us. HOPE is what propels us to the surface and sets us gently on firm footing. The 90-year-old naturalist Jane Goodall, in *The Book of Hope*, was asked how she can be writing of hope if she is aware of what is going on in the world. She writes that on many days she feels depressed, days when it seems that the efforts, the struggles, and the sacrifices of many people fighting for social and environmental justice, fighting prejudice and racism and greed, are fighting a losing battle. But, she writes: "Without hope, all is lost!"

"Hope", writes the poet Emily Dickinson, "is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul, and sings the tune without the words, and never stops at all."



We hear stories of miraculous healing and recovery; of forgiveness and charitable outreach; of return to prayer and family-togetherness. And, I am left to ponder: "Why does it take God shaking us to our roots to recognize the good and the goodness available to us each and every day?"

I invite you to join our community, holding each other with firm gentleness as we pray for each other with the sentiments of Psalm 18:

"I love you, O God, my strength. It is in you that I place my trust. I call on you that I may be safe from all fear and worry. You listened and heard my plea. You clothed me with strength; you upheld me, guided me with care. I praise you among all the peoples; proclaim your name throughout the land. I will sing psalms and give you glory, for you have shown great love and mercy to your beloved."

May the glory of Easter fill your heart with firm hope and much joy!

**Sister Roberta Bailey** 

I have always been interested in miraculous healings, especially those that have occurred at Lourdes, France. One of the first cures was Marie Moreau, who suffered an inflammation of the eyes that had taken virtually all of her sight. She had been forced to abandon her studies at the university as a result. Her father went to the grotto at Lourdes to collect water from the spring there and

brought it home. On November 4, 1858, the family began a novena. That same evening Marie soaked a bandage in the water and tied it over her eyes. When she awoke the next morning she removed the bandage. Her vision had been restored during the night.

I also have experienced a healing of the eyes. During a routine eye examination the doctor asked me if there had been problems with retinal disease in my family. When I told him yes, he examined the retinas carefully and told me I had a number of tears (precursor to



detachment). Some of them were very old, the doctor said solemnly. I was fortunate that he had caught them in time. After a series of laser treatments, the retinas were stable and the danger had passed.

The healing I experienced was much more complicated than Marie's. Mine involved hundreds of years of medical advances, the training of an ophthalmologist (thank you Dr. Benthien!), his willingness to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and the expert care I received at the Eppendorfer Clinic. I liken my healing to the gentle, daily reminder from God that "everything's going to be OK". Marie's was more of a shout from the most high God, an effort to startle people out of their daily routines and remind them "I'm still here!"

In my mind, both healings were miraculous. Some miracles just take a bit longer than others, that's all.

Sister Eileen Dunbar

When we speak of "healing" we most often think of bodily ailments: cancer, covid...maybe mental disorders (stress, fear, anxiety...). There is healing needed even more by the spirit. A person is body, mind and spirit. We need care for the total person. So what healing does your spirit need? Have you abandoned your relationship to God or do you take it for granted? You need to feed it regularly. Try *lectio divina*, reading scripture verses like a love-letter, over and over--listening to what God might be saying to you. Take time (make time) for quiet and solitude: unplug, take a walk in nature and look for love-

notes from God, clouds sun-kissed, little flowers... things you'd never see if you don't take time to notice. Share with others--a priest, a spiritual director, prayer group, those family and friends who care for your spiritual healing and whose health and healing you desire.

Note: Sometimes bodily injury, illness, surgery...can be a source for spiritual healing. Remember, God is **WIT** you (**W**ith you, **I**n you, working **T**hrough you)

Work with Him!

Health, healing to you in body, mind, spirit. We are praying for you.

**Sister Mary David Hydro** 

As a doctor, people sometimes ask me whether there are any cases that are particularly memorable. I always think of Mrs. T. By the grace of God, even though I did not understand what was going on, I made the right move and she was cured – overnight!

Mrs. T was brought to the hospital from a nursing home because of her unmanageable agitation. All afternoon on the day she was admitted, she cried out, "Nurse, nurse!" in a loud, pleading voice. Mrs. T could not tell us what she wanted. Our nursing staff offered everything she could possibly be wanting, to no avail.

When I came in the next morning, she was still yelling, "Nurse, nurse!" When I learned that she had not stopped crying out all night long, my face turned red with shame that we had been unable to relieve her distress, and my awareness of the mounting tension on the ward.

I had to do something. All the usual tranquilizers had been tried prior to admission, so there wasn't much hope of finding the "right medication" to order. Therefore, I decided to pick one to discontinue -- Tegretol.

When I came to the ward the following morning, Mrs. T was sitting inside the nurses' station, having a snack and chatting with the staff. This was unheard of, but it shows the compassion of our

experienced staff for this frail, elderly woman with no "psychiatric history" who had just awakened from a drug -induced delirium. Tegretol turned out to be the entire

Mrs. T was brought back to her nursing home, but we still held the case conference we had already planned. No one had seen a case like it, or known of such an effect from Tegretol.

I found it most remarkable that Mrs. T was cured by taking something away.

Are there difficulties in our own lives that might be contributing to distress, although we are unaware of the connection? Couldn't we just try giving them up and see what happens? Social media? Evening news? Competitions? Waiting for somebody else to do it?

**Kathleen Daye (Postulant)** 

Ever wonder if Adam was watching as Eve went out on a limb to reach the apple? No apples grow in our yard, but papayas do, nice big juicy ones at that. The day Randelle Niski visited the monastery grounds she eyed a ripe papaya and offered to climb the worn-thin ladder to reach it. But watchful Sister Miriam had concerns about our guest's footing on the aged and precarious wooden



Randelle had a suggestion, "Do you mind if I buy you another ladder?" Of course not, affirmative. Sometime later Randelle and her

husband Ray made the special delivery with a new light—weight, serviceable, safe ladder that would have made Eve envious.

Sister Miriam Cosgrove

# Are you looking for a Family?

Are you discerning a vocational call to religious life? Would you like to receive invitations to our "Seekers" events and retreats? Would you like to arrange a visit with the Sisters at Holy Name?

At this time, for the safety of the Sister and all our guests, we are receiving visitors who have been fully vaccinated.

- To arrange a day-visit, please contact S. Eileen Dunbar, at: <u>dunbareileen9@gmail.com</u> or (352) 588-8320.
- To schedule an overnight visit, contact S. Mary Clare Neuhofer at: <u>maryclareneu@gmail.com</u> or (352) 588-7188

God's blessings be with you.

### From the Oblate Office

In Chapter 49 of the Rule of **St. Benedict** we're told, "We urge that during Lent we conduct our lives with the greatest possible purity." Our longing for a deeper life with Christ is real. We ask

Christ to correct us when we go astray and bring us back to Him. As we commit ourselves to a life of purity, Jesus gives us strength and power to maintain it always.



Our Oblates, knowing support from the Benedictine Sisters of Florida and fellow Oblates, experience this. When we put faith and trust in Jesus, we are transformed by the renewing of mind and body.

The Oblates continue with the second year study of **Joan Chittister's** Radical Spirit: 12 Ways to Live a Free and Authentic Life. The book which is based on Benedict's 12 steps of Humility. It is helping us to be aware and experience this new life. This new life comes when we focus on the positive rather than the negative. Are you called to be-come New with us? It is a process—try it with us soon!

We've had Zoom meetings for 2 years due to Covid. The good thing about it is that we do get to see each other. Oblates at a distance can join us (Iris in WA wins the prize for longest distance!) It does save Oblates travel time and money but they miss Mass with the Sisters and sharing in Sunday dinner.

We keep saying, "Maybe next time" but then a variant emerges, or we realize our limit to number of visitors would not allow the 30-40 Oblates who would wish to come, so we Zoom again.

It surely is different to have an Oblation or accept a candidate by Zoom. When we are back to in-person again we'll have to celebrate!

Let Jesus lead you to a life of purity!

Our next Oblate meeting is March 27 by Zoom.

Following are the dates of rest of this year's meetings:

May 22nd

Sept 25th

**November 27th** 

Join Us!

# Retirement - both an End and a Beginning



It was with many conflicting emotions that I announced my decision to the Benedictine Sisters of Florida that it was time for my retirement. I guess, for everyone, retirement represents an end and a beginning and definitely change.

Working with and for the Sisters has been purpose-driven and educational. Raising friends and funds for any non-profit organization doing good work requires purpose and knowledge. But in those very first couple of years at Holy Name Monastery, I would only have a small inkling of what I would come to understand and how it would change me.

For instance, before actually experiencing it over time, understanding that to stop in the middle of whatever you are doing several times a day, each and every day is, in and of itself, an extraordinary feat. Like clockwork the Sisters passed my office on their way to chapel for prayer ... prayer for you,

prayer for me, prayer for the world. Can you think of stronger and greater commitment, faith, belief and grace it takes to give such a timeless gift to humankind?

Experiencing their prayer life in this way was a change in my fundamental understanding of Benedictine monastics. Aligning with these women of substance whose lives were centered on giving, humbles you and changes you. It made me realize that in my role to help bring people to the Sisters and their mission, I had to be far more thoughtfully aware. As the Sisters modeled St. Benedict's teachings in The Rule, Benedictine philosophy and its a way of living, a way to be and a way to give, resonated with me. My understanding grew of why those who come to Holy Name Monastery for a retreat, for Mass, for spiritual direction or for the Oblate Program return. It continues to grow.

"A privilege and honor" doesn't fully express how I feel about working for the Sisters these past twelve years. Their influence in strengthening my faith and belief; their authenticity; their love of God and His children are beyond my words to express. Simply said, I am forever grateful for the changes in me through my close relationship with all that the Sisters are.

In addition, my deep appreciation goes to the many dear and generous people I've come to know. Your devotion and love for the Sisters is exceptional. Many have told their stories and allowed us to share them in our communications. Going forward, my prayer is that all of you who support the Sisters and their work will share your unique story about why you support the Sisters, why you came to do so and how it has made a difference in your life. In so doing you help others who need what the Benedictine way can provide through the Benedictine Sisters of Florida.

As announced in this publication, Cheryl Chadick and Sister Eileen Dunbar will team to continue building on what friends, donors and benefactors have made possible with the Sisters in the past. I have every confidence that you will continue to be at their sides giving generously as you have in the past. It is my hope as well that more of you will consider learning more about the Benedictine way which, be assured, will bring you closer to God and His everlasting PEACE.

My new beginning as a retiree is more focused now on family and especially my seven sweet grandchildren. I know my influence on them is far more God and Benedictine-centered because of the Benedictine Sisters of Florida.

Respectively,

Faith Pridmore, CFRE March 1, 2022

fmpridmore@gmail.com

(941) 586-3112

### To New Beginnings!



Sister Eileen Dunbar, OSB, has joined the staff of the Advancement Office at Holy Name Monastery.

A member of the Benedictine Sisters of Florida, Sr. Eileen entered Holy Name Monastery in 1996, made temporary vows in 1998 and her perpetual profession (final vows) in 2001. Sr. Eileen's interests and professional experience are reflected in her academic credentials. She holds a BS in Music Education from the University of Akron, Ohio, a Bachelor of Music in Voice from Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio, and an MA in German from Middlebury College, Vermont.

Before coming to Holy Name Sr. Eileen worked as a music teacher both at home and abroad. Her stays included Jefferson Local Schools in Ashtabula County, Ohio, the Stavanger American School in Stavanger, Norway, the Canadian Academy in Kobe, Japan, and the Hamburg International School in Hamburg, Germany. Sr. Eileen has also worked as a Data Analyst at Saint Leo University since 1998.

It was during her travels that Sr. Eileen began to sense the next direction in her life. She was attracted to monastic sites and always made a point of visiting them. Upon returning to the US she began visiting religious communities and, with the help of the sisters at Holy Name, determined that God was calling her to Benedictine life.

Sister Eileen is active in community ministry as a cantor, keyboardist, and liturgist. She also serves as the community historian.

She has moved to part-time status in her job at Saint Leo University as a Data Analyst where she has worked since 1998. She looks forward to working with Cheryl Chadick and Sr. Roberta in her new role at Holy Name Monastery.

It has been a privilege and honor for me, Cheryl Chadick, to work with Faith Pridmore for the past seven years! I have had the benefit of learning much about the non-profit world from her. I have deep appreciation for her and her family. I hope that she enjoys her retirement and grandkids. We are all going to miss her!

I am now looking forward to the future and working with Sr. Eileen in the Advancement Office! We will strive to keep up the excellence that Faith has set by example.

Should you have any need to contact the Advancement Office, please feel free to do so. You can reach us at (352) 588-8443 or email us at <a href="mailto:check@saintleo.edu">check@saintleo.edu</a> or <a href="mailto:hmmdevelopment@saintleo.edu">hmmdevelopment@saintleo.edu</a>.

# Upcoming Events Calendar

April 10 Palm Sunday April 14 **Holy Thursday** April 15 **Good Friday** April 16 Holy Saturday April 17 **Easter Sunday May 26 Oblate Sunday** July 24-29 Sisters' Annual Retreat Fr. Patrick Bolan. O.S.B. July 11 Summer Feast of St. Benedict

# In Memoriam

Marjorie "Cay" Corwin—November 15, 2021
Marlene Storch Sumner—February 2, 2022
Holy Name Academy Class of 1952
Martha Copenhaver, Oblate—February 8, 2022
Felicita Finney—February 10, 2022





### Are you looking for:

- A retreat opportunity?
- A location for your sabbatical?
- A relaxing vacation from the hectic world in which we live?
- A place to just be?

### Fill Your Spirit!

Give yourself the gift of time away in quiet reflection; time away to concentrate on what you know is important; time to connect with your deeper self; time to just enjoy yourself!

New experiences, surroundings and people often inspire us in unexpected ways. The Benedictine Sisters of Florida strive to create an inviting space for all our guests.

### You are Welcome Here!

# Happy 80th Birthday Carol Woodard from

Marcia Burgess

Mona P. Charbonneau

Frances Chmura

**David Spine and Orthopedics** 

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In the beautiful rolling hills of Pasco County, FL, step into the quiet calm of our sunlit home -

### Holy Name Monastery.

Tucked away from the rest of the world, you'll find your own comfortable place to recharge...a sanctuary from the bustle of everyday life.

You will be refreshed by hospitality in true Benedictine style. Time is yours to structure! Your stay includes a variety of amenities and opportunities:

- Guest rooms each with private bath
- Stroll/exercise along our prayer path
- Relax, reflect and enjoy nature's beauty
- Daily monastic prayer and Euchurist

### **RESERVE YOUR STAY TODAY!**

# For retreat scheduling, contact Sister Mary Clare:

(352) 588-8320 or

email: Maryclareneu@gmail.com

Luther and Joyce Lovely Lourdes Milan Rocky Milliman Dewey Mitchell

# In-Kind Gifts

In-kind gifts are also vital to non-profit organizations as services, equipment, lawn swing and sewing machine, etc. can be very costly. Your generosity in giving or providing items and/or services helps to keep us "in the black."

Divya T. Aradhya
Don and Diane Brown
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Janet Rodriguez Collura
Kathleen Daye
Wendy Lynn Fulcomer
Dr. Jeffrey and Alicia Senese
Robert and Beatrice Walters
Linda Whitman

Thank. You!

# Bless You for Your Support to our Annual Appeal 2021

Each of the following friends and supporters made a difference in our ability to "make ends meet", reach out to others, and PRAY for you, your loved ones, the community and the world. Many people are dealing with pain, loneliness, and feel broken. Through the simplicity of prayer and "listening with the ear of the heart", we strive to bring light into the darkness. We do so in the spirit of Jesus Christ, living our lives through Him, in Him and for Him. We could not do it without you ...

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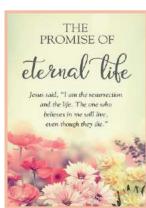
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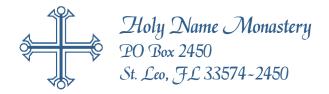
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