



The Benedictine Tide

Benedictine Sisters of Florida

Touching Lives Through Prayer and Service

Winter Tide 2022

*Three Kings came riding from far away,
Melchior and Gaspar and Baltasar;
Three Wise Men out of the East were they,
And they travelled by night and they slept by day,
For their guide was a beautiful, wonderful star....*



Three Kings

HAPPY THREE KINGS DAY!

The three men had come long distances, each with his eyes to the sky. Was that bright light a star or a planet? It didn't matter which, it led them to each other. They compared information they had gleaned along the way and decided to travel onward together. Matthew, the evangelist, picks up the story from there. "Behold, Magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the new born King of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage."

As youngsters that part of the Nativity account added an element of excitement to the long days of Advent. Our family Nativity scene was set up in the living room on the eve of the First Sunday of Advent. Mary and Joseph were stationed on the other side of the room waiting for the census call to appear in Bethlehem. The Three Kings were scattered on windowsills in the "far east" of the dining room. Each day one of us four siblings had the privilege of moving Jesus' mom and dad a step closer to the crib scene. The Wise Men were moved along the "sand of the desert" toward each other. By the third week of Advent, the Kings were traveling together following the star that would lead them on the Epiphany journey to the Babe in the manger.

As long as I can remember (and that's a long time) our community customs have included a House Blessing at the close of the day on the solemnity of the Epiphany. Each year we walk in solemn procession to "the ends of the earth" of our home. We pray: "Peace to this house and all who enter here!" ALL respond: "**AMEN!**" as Holy Water is sprinkled in each living space, office, and guest room. We pray that only goodness and peace may follow us wherever we go. The procession ends in the chapel where we will sing solemn Evening Prayer (Vespers). As we file to our places the community echoes the words of the Prioress. "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the



House of God! How lovely is your dwelling place, O God of Hosts! My soul yearns and pines for the place where God dwells!" We'll close our prayer with our customary plea that binds us to all our Sisters living and deceased: "May the divine assistance remain always with us. And, with our absent Sisters. AMEN!"

The star that guided the Magi to Jesus didn't say anything to them. It was a natural sign. With their gaze focused on "the light" they were able to discern the meaning and follow where the star led. Are we ready to follow the "Star of our Lives: Jesus"? Let us ponder the words of St. Paul in one of the Epiphany readings: "The mystery was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed to us." AMEN

Sister Roberta Bailey

The journey of the Kings/Magi to find Jesus the king of the Jews.

"We saw his star as it came up in the east, and we have come to do him homage." (Mt 2:2)

The Kings journeyed to find Jesus Christ the King of the Jews, to worship Him and offer Him the kingly gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. This journey can inspire us to reflect on our journey to encounter Christ in our lives.

The feast of the Epiphany commemorates the journey of the kings/magi to find Christ and present Him with their gifts along with the star which is especially important for leading the way. They had to search diligently for Jesus the Lord; it was not easy for them to locate Him. After completing their journey led by the star, the kings are filled with overwhelming joy when it stops over Jesus the Lord. Like these Kings, if we are willing to seek God where the Holy Spirit leads us, we will find Him in our journey of life, *"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart"*.



(Jeremiah 29:13).

When they found Jesus Christ, they worshipped Him with great awe and adoration and offered Him the kingly gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh in recognition of the true identity of the newborn King, Christ the Lord. Their willingness to follow the star, not knowing precisely where it would lead them, reminds us to be open and attentive to aspects in life that can lead us to a divine encounter.

Sister Elizabeth Mathai

“Epiphany”



The star calls and they follow
they seek and they find
in the unexpected place and poor tiny child
the Prince of Peace
they empty their treasures
before him
giving all that they have
they worship the God-with-us
and go home
empty handed but with hearts filled
they go back a different way—
the Jesus way
you, too
must come to his side
let go your pride
and if you do
life is changed
and never the same after that journey

Sister Mary David Hydro

From Near and Far!

We have had the pleasure of offering retreats again this year and many taking advantage of them. Whether it be a spiritual or directed retreat, we are delighted to have them. Annie and her mom Anabella win the prize for coming the farthest - **Guatemala** - for a directed retreat!!



Bringing Their Gifts of Time, Talent and Treasure



Another inspiring aquaculture week of training was completed here at the monastery in October with nine persons attending. Phil Reasons, Aquasol International President was the lead instructor and Hans Geissler did an expert presentation on building an aquaponic system.



Richard Bon, St. Leo Security and friend did the honors again by teaching everyone how to clean the tilapia. He has for many

years gifted our aquaculture system with his extraordinary talent and time. He is truly a great friend and treasure to the monastery. Thank you, Richard.

Then, the fish feast was prepared by Angie Leach, the monastery's creative, gracious and gifted chef. All will agree that Angie is a true treasure, recently widowed after Shawn's passing. Pictured with Angie is our aquaculture training instructor, Phil Reasons, who always shares his countless gifts in many ways. Thank you, Angie. Thank you, Phil.



The entire week helped those attending learn exactly how to create and maintain their own sustainable

systems in their home state. As always, it was a sheer joy to have such life-giving classes and get to know more extended family members and fishy friends!



When the Sisters think "gifts," the generous likes of the **Columbiettes** and the **Knights of Columbus** from St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church in New Tampa come to mind. In the photo are a few of the lovely ladies who brought gifts and donations for their "Christmas in July" luncheon for the Sisters. Thank you all.

Sister Miriam Cosgrove



Calendar of Upcoming Events

November 27th	First Sunday of Advent
November 29th	Giving Tuesday
December 8th	Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception
December 25th	Christmas
December 30th	Feast of the Holy Family
December 31st	Day of Prayer
January 1st	Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
January 6th	Solemnity of the Epiphany
January 8th	Feast of the Baptism of our Lord
February 22nd	ASH Wednesday-beginning of Lent
April 9th	Easter

Giving Tuesday What a Success!

Giving Tuesday happened November 29th and was a success because of you!

Thanks to our generous friends, donors and change-makers for helping us create hope. Your generous action on Giving Tuesday raised **\$48,769!** You



GIVING TUESDAY

made our goal happen plus we met our match!

Many thanks to our dear friend, **John Picciano**, who pledged to match every dollar raised for the Sisters on Giving Tuesday up to \$35,000.

We are grateful to everyone who made a gift on Giving Tuesday. With your thoughtfulness and sharing, you have not only made the match possible, but also gifted us with your respect and appreciation for the many years of prayer and service the Benedictine Sisters of Florida have given to countless others over the years.

The funds will provide financial resources to address the needs of those seeking peace, spiritual guidance, and a model framework for living as those we serve face their own challenges. In addition, your donations help us with newer members of our community, care for our elder Sisters and the needs of the monastery. We look hopefully with you to the future when we can continue programs and the work we began 133 years ago.

**Thank you for your alliance with our mission this
Giving Tuesday!**

Shawls by Sister Jerome

Crafted
with



**Love and
Prayers**

Sister Jerome Leavy was introduced to the Florida Benedictines while attending Holy Family School in North Miami, Florida. She entered our community in 1958. She was awarded a Master's Degree from Notre Dame University and a PhD in education from the University of South Florida. Sister taught in schools staffed by our Sisters in Jacksonville Beach, Sarasota, North Miami and was principal of Saint Anthony School in San Antonio, Florida.

Several years ago **Sister Jerome** suffered a stroke that left her partially paralyzed on the right side and language impaired. Her hard fought battle to regain some control over her life has been valiant.

Sister resides at Concordia Village Assisted Living in Tampa and is proud to contribute her artistry for our mission work.

One of Sister Jerome's loves is crocheting and her ability to again create items is a blessing. Her lovely afghans (approx. 36" X 36") are available at the monastery and offered at a minimum donation of \$20 to the Benedictine Sisters of Florida.

**A light, a star is
Key - Come, see Epiphany
Lay down the gift of
Self as He did for you and
You'll be a light, a bright star.**

by Sister Mary David

Holiday Music

To begin with, it's important to understand that I'm a boomer, that is, a baby boomer, one the many children born during the time immediately after WWII. For those of you who grew up then, I am sure you will also remember some of my Christmas music favorites. All of this music can be found on YouTube.



While getting ready for school in the morning, the radio was always on. Ray Conniff's 1962 album "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" was a favorite of the radio DJ. Hearing that album now sends me back to that wonderful time when Santa was real and I was eagerly counting the days until Christmas. My favorite songs then are still my favorites now: "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" and "Count Your Blessings (Instead of Sheep)".

My second favorite is the soundtrack of the 1965 television special "A Charlie Brown Christmas" from jazz musician and composer Vince Guaraldi. My personal favorites are "Linus and Lucy" and "Christmas Time Is Here".

The children's opera "Amahl and the Night Visitors" is also a great favorite of mine. The one act opera tells the story of a poor widow and her crippled son who receive three mysterious guests late at night. The composer Gian Carlo Menotti balances his beautiful music with an ability to make the story understandable and accessible for both children and grownups alike.

I would like to make one more recommendation, this one more recent. If you have not discovered the Christmas CDs done by the a cappella singing group Pentatonix, I encourage you to check them out. Their rendition of "The Little Drummer Boy" is one the most moving and powerful I have ever heard.

Don't forget that the Christmas season in the Roman Catholic Church does not end until the Feast of the Baptism of Jesus (January 8, 2023). Feel free to listen to all of your holiday favorites until then and even beyond. Jesus remains with us always both in word and sacrament. Let the joy of the Christmas season remain in your heart throughout the new year!

Sister Eileen Dunbar



Papal Knight Investiture Ceremony

On Sunday, November 20, members of the Saint Leo University community and the public gathered in the Wellness Center to attend the investiture ceremony for Rabbi A. James Rudin, who was honored with the Papal Knighthood of the Order of St. Gregory the Great.

Rabbi Rudin, co-founder of Saint Leo University's Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies, was presented with the honor by the Most Reverend Mark O'Connell, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Boston, who represented Pope Francis during the ceremony. Rudin was honored for his work in building bridges of mutual respect, knowledge, and understanding between Christians and Jews.



Rabbi Rudin receiving Papal Knighthood of the Order of St. Gregory the Great.

The ceremony marked only the third time in history that a pope has awarded an American rabbi this honor.

Sister Roberta Bailey made a presentation on the history of the Benedictine Sisters of Florida along with Abbot Isaac Camacho who spoke of the history of the Abbey. Dr. Ed Dadez also presented on the history of Saint Leo University.



Sister Roberta Bailey shares history of Benedictine Sister of Florida and Saint Leo University

Ties That Bind



Sr. Roberta Bailey, O.S.B., Prioress, Benedictine Sisters of Florida, presents Rabbi Rudin with a tree of life artwork that she said represents the relationship between the Rabbi and Saint Leo University. "The twisting roots and intertwined leaves in the image remind us of the history we share. Thank you for your friendship and your efforts to deepen the ties that bind us."



In Memorium:

Clara Wansley - September 19, 2022 (S. Dianne's mother)

Paul Herrmann - September 21, 2022

Marshal Pridmore - October 19, 2022

Margaret Salomon - October 23, 2022

Glen Greenfelder - October 29, 2022

Javier Tello Duran - November 27, 2022 (S. Mary Romana's grandnephew)

Need to Unplug?

The Retreat Center at Holy Name Monastery is a lovely, peaceful place for a time away from the our fast-paced world!

Rushing is at the center of life. Anxiety, stress, and strained relationships overwhelm us. The Sisters warmly welcome all who seek time to be still, to reflect, to just be. Come and find yourself renewed, find a renewed perspective, find a renewal of your values and priorities.



Whether you are looking for a directed retreat or just want to be on your own, we are here to accommodate with traditional Benedictine Hospitality.

To schedule your individual or group retreat, contact **Sister Mary Clare** at (352) 588-8320 or email at: maryclareneu@gmail.com



Greetings from Mwanza Tanzania

We would like to wish you a happy and holy Advent. May our Lord Jesus protect you and give you his grace and blessings. Also we would like to thank you again for your support. With the donations we have gotten we have started to construct the foundation for the classrooms. We hope we will get more donations in order to finish the classroom. We have attached the photos of building the foundation. May God bless you. We promise our prayer.

Love Sister Winny



Laying the foundation in Tanzania for new kindergarten.



Thanks to all our donors who made this a reality for Sister Winny!



From Joy Carol - one of our retreatants

How blessed I have felt to be able to come to the convent of the Benedictine Sisters of Florida in St. Leo Florida. The sisters have been incredibly hospitable, loving, and inspirational. I believe I have been here now four times - stopped of course during the Covid pandemic. Each time I come here I feel closer to the Sisters and to the presence of God.

I live in a retirement community in Penney Farms, Florida - almost 2 1/2 or 3 hours northeast of St Leo. I moved to Florida from New York City after I was diagnosed with a rare, fatal illness, called paraneoplastic syndrome. I made that move in 2013 in order to be close to Mayo Clinic.

No one in New York City was able to diagnose what was wrong with me when I started falling everywhere. So I was fortunate to finally be diagnosed and then treated by Mayo Clinic. They have saved my life.

Now that I am in Florida, I needed a place to fill my soul with meaning and inspiration. I started looking for monasteries and convents that might be close to the Jacksonville area and almost accidentally came across the Benedictine Sisters of Florida in St Leo. Because of my illness, I am slightly disabled. I am so grateful that the convent here is completely disabled friendly. I can get everywhere on one floor, and there are buttons to push to open the big doors for me. And I can easily get to the chapel. I am so appreciative of the inspiration and sacredness of this place. It has been a God gift for me.



Thank you to my dear Benedictine Sisters of Florida. I am so grateful to you. May God bless your work.

CELEBRATE
Advent
Preparing Our Hearts for Jesus

Advent reminds us of the child's game of Hide and Seek.

We'd rush to hide hoping not to be discovered.

Ready or Not - here I come!

He comes!

Some will try to hide from his punishing justice, hoping in vain to escape discovery.

But others of us rush out of the shadows to ensure we're

sought out, found.

We do not fear - we rejoice that finally the One for whom we've waited, longed for is coming.

He too, has been waiting - longing to find faith on earth, peace and love among peoples.

There should have been trust, care, and sharing instead of suspicion, fear, violence, injustice and war - but now it is too late. The game has begun - Ready or not - Here I come!

Sister Mary David Hydro

Diocesan Vocation Summit

The following are edited notes that I took during the Diocesan Vocation Summit at Bethany Retreat Center in Lutz, Florida on September 24, 2022. I hope you find my notes informative.

Holy Name Monastery community friend and affiliate Angie Chatfield, Sr. Marietta, Sr. Elizabeth are here with me.

Father Chuck Dornquast, Director of Vocations for the Diocese of St. Petersburg, opens the summit. Jasmine Pujol, his coordinator, is here to check people in. The topic is how vocations can be nurtured and encouraged in a parish setting

Sam Alzheimer, President of Vianney Vocations in Valdosta, Georgia, is the featured speaker. He speaks about the "Vianney Vocations" website and materials. He tells us "Jesus is the Vocation Director". But it's hard to hear the call these days. We (vocation directors, youth ministers, Directors of Religious Education, etc.) amplify the call, but we are not the call's author. How do we become effective amplifiers of the call? First, we need to set a spiritual foundation.



We need to ask ourselves, are we giving all of our life for the rest of our life to God? We need to be doing that ourselves before we can ask someone else to do it. It's a big ask. We need to create a culture of vocations. What is our current culture? Statistics can help answer that question. Catholic population has grown 44% since 1965 in the US. Number of sisters has declined (minus 121,000) since 1970. We've accepted that reality more than we should. Sisters have become like unicorns. You can see pictures of unicorns, but if you haven't seen one, is it real? We have to "repropose" religious life. For every 100 priests who die or retire, 30 are ordained. 500 priests are ordained yearly in the US. Seminaries are full because so many of them have been closed. The number of Catholic marriages in 2021 is only a quarter of the number in 1970. Marriage has to be included in the vocation conversation. 20% of parishes currently don't have a resident priest. The Diocese of St. Petersburg has more active priests than parishes (a good thing). Many dioceses don't have that. Jesus is a very bad

mathematician. He leaves the 99 and goes after the one. We should do the same thing, regardless of the numbers. Sam cites four signs of hope: 1. Vibrant youth movements (in Florida FOCUS and St. Paul Outreach). If we are the stump of Jesse vocationally speaking, a shoot is coming. 2. Strong "vocation culture" in places, e.g. diocese of Wichita KS. You can't recreate positive results overnight. Students are asked every year "what are my gifts? What should I give back to the parish?" 3. Much healthier seminaries. 4. Enthusiastic young priests. What is the cure for the vocation crisis? The problem is lack of discipleship. The solution is a culture of discipleship. A vocation is the specific way we live as disciples of Jesus. It's a permanent commitment and includes marriage, priesthood, consecrated life, and single life. Vocation is one's primary mission in life. Show me a saint who wasn't in their correct vocation. This is the place God puts us to go towards heaven. Sam cites Father Timothy Gallagher's book "Discerning the Will of God". Go to Jesus first. Renew your commitment to basic Christian life. Open your heart to every possibility. St. Ignatius calls this "holy indifference".

Sam then speaks about things parish can do, practical ways to foster vocations. Realistically speaking, not every single thing you want to do is do-able. We're not in a position to do everything. Check out dospvocations.org. Pray for vocations. Teach vocations. Make vocations a priority in youth ministry. Start groups (gender separate) for those who are discerning a religious vocation. Invite! Start a parish vocation committee. Read the book "Hundredfold" Rhonda Gruenewald. Meet with your pastor. Plan small, realistic projects. Coordinate efforts around annual events WDPV (World Day of Prayer for Vocations April 30 2023) and NVAW (National Vocation Awareness Week Nov 1-6). Prioritize people-to-people initiatives. Start a Holy Hour for vocations. There is a link between Eucharistic adoration and vocations. Students need to be taught how to discern God's will for them. Aside from the decision to follow Jesus, your vocation decision is the most important decision you will make in your life. Do Zoom meetings where students can interact with seminarians/priests/sisters (who get the questions in advance). Use Youth Ministry to bring kids to Jesus. Guide them to ask "Jesus, what do you want me to do with my life?" Have two vocation-themed nights a year. Sam suggests "Highways and Halos", a 4 night series available on Lifeteen.com. The aspect of service can unlock a vocation. Don't forget that Bright Futures Scholars are required to do service in Florida.

Sister Eileen Dunbar



Benedictine Sisters of Florida
Touching Lives through Prayer and Service

Commemorative Bricks
An Enduring Reflection of Love

You can now honor a loved one, celebrate a special day, remember your departed loved one(s) or simply inscribe a message on a brick at Holy Name Monastery. The bricks will lead to and surround the statue of the Blessed Mother at the front of the property. Your gifts will help toward the maintenance and beauty of the monastery grounds and gardens which provide quiet contemplation for all our visitors.

Space is limited so **reserve** your brick(s) today in honor, remembrance or celebration of those you love in this place of peace. Each brick is 8" X 4" with up to 3 lines of text; maximum of 13 characters per line.

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Brick Donation - \$120

A Donation of \$120 for each brick can be made by check or credit card:

_____ Check (made payable to Benedictine Sisters of Florida and mailed to: PO Box 2450, St. Leo, FL 33574)

_____ Online via PayPal or credit card at our web-site: www.benedictinesistersoffl.org

_____ We accept Visa or MasterCard – To order by credit card, call us at (352) 588-8443

Fit your message for an engraved brick in the spaces below – maximum 3 lines, 13 characters on each line (including each letter, space and punctuation):

Return this form with payment method by mail to the address below. The form is also online for submission and payment of your order. If you have any questions, contact Cheryl Chadick at the phone or email address below:

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CORPORATE COMMITMENT

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

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*Praise His name for
He is a living God,
He was born to save us all.*

*Merry Christmas and a blessed
Happy New Year!*

