



The Benedictine Tide

Benedictine Sisters of Florida

Touching Lives Through Prayer and Service

Winter Tide 2023



PEACE

PEACE

Peace in the world has many different meanings. Peace among nations is where people try to live together in harmony. At this moment in the world, some places have war, violence, and peace is hard to establish because of different ways of looking at things.

We are now approaching the season of Advent, preparing for the feast of Christmas. Christmas celebrates the coming of the Prince of Peace. Do we listen in prayer, opening our hearts to hear the angels singing, "Peace on earth to men who do God's will"? True peace comes from our inner selves. Listen in prayer to God. During Communion, after the Eucharistic prayer (the great prayer of Thanksgiving), we ask for the gift of eternal peace. "Peace I leave you, peace I give you. Deliver us, Lord, from every evil. Give peace in our day that we will be free from all stress. Lord, give us the gift of peace." This gift is received when we accept the Living Bread, Jesus Christ, in Holy Communion.



Another form of peace is the peace of mind and soul we pray for on behalf of the dying. As a priest, I have been given the gift of being at the bedside of many who were dying. The final prayers speak of departing in peace. "Go forth faithful Christian, live in peace this day." After reciting this prayer, many of the faithful tell me they have received the gift of great peace.

When I first encountered this peace, I didn't really understand. My first year of ordination, I was asked to help out as chaplain at the University Hospital in Dublin. On the Sunday afternoon after Christmas, I was called for a young boy of 16, Joseph, to administer the final prayers of Reconciliation, Anointing, the Viaticum, and Holy Communion. When I first saw him, he looked well, so I gave him only Holy Communion and did not anoint him. The nurse reminded me that I should anoint him because he was going to die.

When I went back in to see him, the young boy said to me, "The nurse sent you in to anoint me because I'm going to die." I said, "No, she said that you are very sick, and she said you're not going to die." "You're lying to me, Father; don't lie to me," Joseph said. So, I answered "Yes," and anointed him and recited the final prayers. He was at peace. He reminded me not to lie about dying.

The night I went to his room, his sisters, brothers, mother, and father were there. The eldest sister was very angry with God, and she gave me all her anger. I didn't know how to respond to it. I was searching for a response when I was called to the ER. Before I left, I requested we say the final prayers for Joseph. We prayed the Litany for the Dying and I prayed the final prayer—"Go forth faithful Christian, live in peace this day."

On the way to the ER, I noted to myself, "God, I didn't handle that girl very well. I didn't know how to respond to her anger."

It was the worst night at the ER. Three teenagers arrived dead from a car accident, and a fourth was very badly injured. After meeting the parents and relatives of the accident victims, I returned to Joseph's room. The bed was made; the boy had passed away.

The nurse on duty told me Joseph's mother was waiting to speak to me. She wanted to thank me for the great work I did with her children. I didn't understand - I thought that I had not helped them. However, the mother explained that when we prayed, the children became very calm and peaceful. When I had left the room, the father said, "Let's say goodbye to Joseph," and they all did. After the father said his goodbye, Joseph passed peacefully.

The girl who had given me all the anger said, "Wasn't that priest wonderful? He gave me the gift of peace to say

goodbye.”

It took me many years to understand this, because most of my work was teaching young people in high school. It was only when I went to parish life, praying for the dead and praying with the dying, that I understood the meaning of “Go forth, live in peace this day.” Many people would thank me - “Father, I am at peace.” At the funeral Mass we always finish with the prayers “Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and may they rest in peace.”

May all who read this be given the gift of Christmas peace. “Glory to God in the Highest and peace on Earth.”

Father John McEvoy



FORGIVENESS NOT VENGEANCE

I was browsing YouTube and I stumbled upon a video with the name “Vengeance Story”. Upon closer examination, I discovered many more videos in that same category. Many of us may remember the Biblical quote: “Vengeance is mine, says the Lord. I will repay.” (Deuteronomy 32:35) But the popularity of these “vengeance videos” says that we are not always ready to take that quote to heart.

Acceptance of a wrong committed against us without committing an act of retribution is not the way in our competitive, individualistic society. “I’m not going to let her get away with *that*”, is a common response. Not getting payback flies in the face of fairness, does it not? Failing to respond to an offense against us with an act of retribution may also communicate that we are weak, vulnerable, perhaps even afraid. And we can’t allow someone to believe *that* about us.

However, if our self-worth is grounded in God’s love for us, is not God’s judgment of us what really matters? Remember that Jesus endured His passion and death without uttering a word of complaint or lashing out in anger or violence. He even begged His Father to forgive them.

Jesus calls on us to do that same. If we want peace in our world, we must allow hurts (both real and imagined) to go unanswered. But even that is not enough. We must also forgive. Then, and only then does peace has a chance in our world.

Sister Eileen Dunbar



Peaceful Connections



As a child, my sister Marge and I enjoyed playing a simple duet on our piano called, "Heart and Soul." There were no words to it but the catchy title and melody struck a chord in my imagination. Today with chaos reigning in all parts of our world, few people have relaxing space to sit at a piano for personal quality time but seek other satisfying moments.

Recently, Dances for Universal Peace members came to pray and dance to Aramaic, Hebrew, Sanskrit, and English peace hymns. Several sisters joined the meditative dance. Kathleen Daye had arranged this opportunity and the group's visit.

Our aquaculture fish farm offers many peaceful opportunities to nature lovers who visit and share their stories. One visitor will come for peace of mind and share a burden. Another seeks to serve a worthy cause planting vegetable seedlings. One comes to be with community. University volunteers work and hang out here with their friends in an informal peaceful atmosphere. Each of them finds what they come for because **Christ's peace** is the heart and soul of this sacred place of Holy Name Monastery.

Sister Miriam Cosgrove



Advent is part of ADVENTure - literally.

For the Christian, Advent helps us remember and celebrate the coming of Christ - past, present, future. That's an enlightening Adventure.

Christ came in the past - promised and birthed as a babe; He grew and taught of our Father God. He lived and died for us. He promised to come again in the future on the last day. He's present WIT* us now (WIT* - with us, in us, working through us)

Though Advent seems the same old preparation for Christmas, each Advent is really different, because we are different - the past year's experiences - good and bad affect us. We have hopefully more self-knowledge, wisdom and love of God.

The Adventure Advent opens us to is to live the spirit of Christmas all year - with the peace of Christ in our hearts and welcoming His light and sharing it with others needing kindness and care (You know *we all are in need!!*)

Think about it! Will your Advent be an Adventure?

Sister Mary David Hydro

Calendar of Upcoming Events

December 3	First Sunday of Advent
December 8	Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception
December 25	Christmas
December 30	Feast of the Holy Family
December 31	Day of Prayer
January 1	Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
January 7	Solemnity of the Epiphany
January 8	Feast of the Baptism of our Lord
February 14	ASH Wednesday-beginning of Lent
April 9	Easter

Giving Tuesday What a Success!

Giving Tuesday happened November 28th 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 **\$44,898!** You made our goal happen plus we met our match!



GIVING TUESDAY

Many thanks to our dear friend, **John Picciano**, who pledged to match every dollar raised for the Sisters on Giving Tuesday up to \$37,500.

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 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 134 years ago.

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

PEACE is a Benedictine Value

Peace is a Benedictine value. In the 5th Century St. Benedict gathered persons of different ages, backgrounds, statuses and they formed a community that proved peace possible and desirable. We do the same today. Making and sharing the Benedictine value of Peace is a ministry.

My involvement with peace/justice grew from my Benedictine vocation and took varied shapes:

Standing on the highway with signs urging making/sharing peace and ending violence.

Teaching a class on Peace at Saint Leo University and sharing the value with Oblates

Giving my "widow's mite" to groups that work to care for poor, hungry...

Writing letters to the editor re: injustice and need for Peace

Peace is more than no violence. It is cultivating non-violence—an unending process that we practice always in all ways.

Non-violence = listening, accepting, speaking, living Truth, not yelling, judging, using force or excluding.

Non-violence leads to a Peace that negative words/acts never will.

Peace = right relationships with God, others and the world

Peace in our hearts ---> Peace in our world

Peace making is essential to the Gospel.

A song that comes to mind is "**Let peace Begin with Me**" Truly it could be our theme song for peace needs to be cultivated and shared by each one of us. That is the only way Peace will take root in society and grow. ***That in all things God may be glorified.***

Sister Mary David Hydro



PEACE BEGINS WITHIN US

Peace can and does begin within us, but only when we live our lives centered in God who is dwelling within us. God is not out there somewhere. In Jesus, in the Christ Child, the prophecy of Isaiah has been fulfilled. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. This is the good news of this season; a promise to give us hope, peace and joy. According to the gospel of John, Jesus is both God's Word and God's presence who has come to dwell among us. So, what else could the angels possibly herald on the night of Jesus's birth except the proclamation that peace has come to earth?

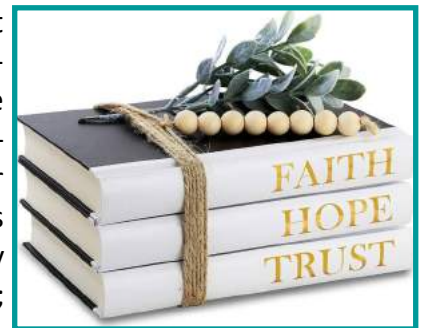


The peace which Jesus brings is not for our own self-fulfillment. There can be no peace in the heart of humanity who seek peace for themselves alone. To find true peace, peace in Christ we must desire others to have peace as well as ourselves, and we must be willing to sacrifice something of our own peace in order that others may have peace.

Sr. Joan Chittister, OSB, writes that Peace is the fruit of Benedictine spirituality through conscious contemplative living. Peace is a disarmed heart. Be soft with others and you will have peace in your own heart, the Rule implies. Be simple in your needs and you will have peace in your heart, the Rule directs. Be humble in what you demand of life, and you will have peace in your heart, the Rule counsels. Stop the wars within yourself and you will have peace, the Rule teaches. It is the ability to walk lightly-without rancor and greed and jealousy and selfishness that leads to Benedictine peace. (Sr. Joan Chittister, OSB, *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily Living the Rule of St. Benedict today*)

To experience God's peace in our lives, we must be willing to be an agent of his peace to the world around us. Only with God and in God we will be able to move forward to love and to heal, to fight for just relationships and foster peace within us, around us and in the world.

Despite dismal conditions in the world and the personal challenges that come into every life, peace within can be a reality. We can be calm and serene regardless of the swirling turmoil all about us, if we have faith, hope and trust in Jesus Christ who calmed the storm-tossed sea. Attaining harmony within ourselves depends upon our relationship with Jesus Christ, and our willingness to emulate him by living the principles He has given us. He has extended to us an invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. 11:28-30.)



Let us take the time to enter into God's presence this Advent season and to hear God's Word; to spend time in silence, listening for God's voice; to take time to read Scripture to hear God's voice who will guide and instruct us, to have peace within us and to be a channel of peace to the world around us.

Sister Elizabeth Mathai

Peaceful Sister Hyacintha

How can a delightful one-week guest from another Benedictine community perk up a hot and humid August in Florida? How? By welcoming the charming Sister Hyacintha Nepala, native of Namibia, Africa



and introducing her to aquaponic farming at Holy Name Monastery. Having arrived shortly after her graduation from Benedictine University in Lisle, Illinois with degrees in Biology and Food Nutrition, Sister came with a desire to learn our scientific sustainable method of growing food through a grant from Alliance for International Monasticism.

Naturally inquisitive, Sister Hyacintha digested every new learning experience with enthusiasm and ease, starting with a golf cart tour of our campus as first on the agenda. "What's that hanging on those trees?" (Spanish moss!) Next by way of a dry-run



introduction, Sister Miriam gave her an Aquasol International student training manual from previous aquaponics classes. Our "friendly" tilapia, especially when being fed, changed a dry-run lesson into an exciting and endearing task complete with Sister Hyacintha's laughter and giggles. Hungry fish faithfully entertain newcomer guests! It's their greeting of PEACE to you!

With the introductions complete, Sister Hyacintha began learning aquaponic methods for two days from Phil Reasons, President of Aquasol International and from Lauren R. Manders who has taught fish farming in New Orleans for years and traveled abroad starting aquaponics systems in other countries.

After Sister Hyacintha's visit to Phil Reasons' creative farm and research center in Dade City, Phil continued the training explaining types of systems which could be introduced in her native country. The reasons for having sustainable aquaculture farming are so many—food security, poverty, and can be summarized in one comment Sister made about commercialized food, "Food in the states is tasting good, but is destroying our body." Amen to that! And we welcome others to come for a wonderful and fun week of valuable peaceful experiences.

Sister Miriam Cosgrove



A youth Group from St. Paul Catholic Church in Tampa visited the monastery while doing a summer service day at Saint Leo University.

In Memorium:

Beatrice Walters - July 18, 2023

Joseph Neuhofer - July 29, 2023 (S. Mary Clare's brother)

Carol Woodard - September 17, 2023

Mary Cannon ('64) Cabot - October 4, 2023

Jimmy (James) Gant - November 12, 2023

Hjalma Johnson - November 22, 2023



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) 588-7188 or email at: maryclareneu@gmail.com



Shawls by Sister Jerome

Crafted
with



Love and
Prayers

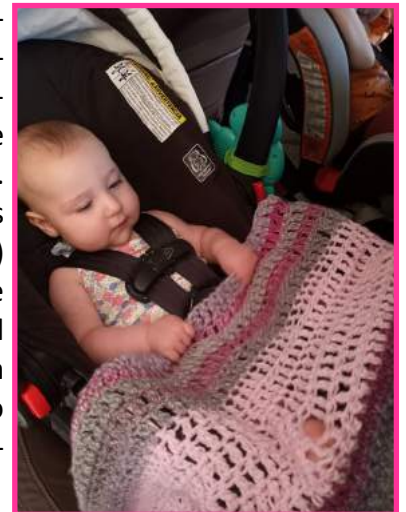


Sister Jerome Leavy was introduced to the Florida Benedictines while attending Holy Family School in North Miami, Florida. She entered our community in 1958. She was awarded a Master's Degree from Notre Dame University and a PhD in education from the University of South Florida. Sister taught in schools 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 shawls (approx. 36" X 36") are available at the monastery and offered at a minimum donation of \$20 to the Benedictine Sisters of Florida.





Stories from our retreatants

In March 2023 I will complete 21 years in full time Christian missionary service through the global sports ministry Athletes in Action. Our ministry allows for and strongly encourages staff members to take a one month sabbatical every seven years. Unfortunately for my own well-being, I had not taken any sabbatical time - ever.

I came to Holy Name Monastery with the purpose of initiating my sabbatical season in an environment that would allow for and support a period of solitude and silence. I hoped for space to rest and slow down...a place to calm myself both internally and externally.

With the Benedictine Sisters of Florida, I found exactly what I was looking for and experienced more than I knew I needed.

Coming from a Protestant tradition, I had never participated in the practices of the liturgical customs of the Faithful in the ways demonstrated by the Sisters each day. I found the rhythms of their work and worship to be so helpful and exactly what I needed. At the monastery, it was allowed that my "work" was to rest and my worship was centered on the Eternal Truths from Scripture of our Triune God. To be immersed in the Holy Word, three times each day through recitation, singing, and meditation, truly served as my "daily bread" and an incredible remembrance of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

On a purely human level, I was so impressed by the excellence demonstrated in so many ways including the initial communication, accommodations, the quality and variety of food, the numerous facility amenities, and most of all, the God-honoring warmth I experienced through the Sisters and associates. The Christian love extended through their hospitality and thoughtfulness truly blessed me in ways words fail to express. Their lives of devotion, also committed in full time service, was inspiring and deeply impactful to me as I considered their faithfulness and consistency over many decades.

I am indebted to them, and our Great and Loving God, for His mercy and grace to lead me to Holy Name Monastery and the Benedictine Sisters of Florida.

Kevin Sides



I was blessed to make a directed retreat at the Monastery of the Benedictine Sisters. Leaving the city behind, I could feel the peace and tranquility of the Monastery even as I approached the driveway. During the first session with my director, I already felt God speaking to me through her words. The next day I was able to partake of the sacrament of reconciliation with Fr. John McEvoy, their new chaplain. Joining the Sisters at Mass, reciting the Liturgy of Hours with them and seeing how the Sisters carry out their daily

functions was truly inspirational. In addition to the spiritual aspect of this beautiful monastery the grounds are peaceful and quiet - I was rewarded with double rainbows the first night and a beautiful sunset the next. The accommodations were very comfortable and the food was delicious. I am very thankful for my weekend at the monastery and I look forward to returning there as soon as I can.

Jennifer Brown





Luminaries of Love

Benedictine Sisters of Florida

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to honor your loved one(s) with our

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Give a gift of remembrance ...

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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 of the be a connection of the heart for you.
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Put the names to be placed on the Luminaries in **Dedicated To** box.
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Questions? Contact

Cheryl Chadick (813) 838-7452

\$5.00 minimum donation

Benedictine Sisters of Florida

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Listening Heart Circle

Become a Member
Benefit Yourself and Our Cause

What is the Listening Heart Circle?

This special group of people is dedicated to an ongoing role in our mission. They spread their donations throughout the year providing **twofold benefits**:

1. **Helps you** as a donor keep your budget in line. For as little as \$5.00 or \$10.00 a month, you can make a real difference!
Example: You would like to give \$100 but that isn't in the monthly budget. Perhaps \$8.34/month is doable.
2. **Helps the Sisters** because by spreading your donations over the year, you provide predictable income for the mission and the ability to plan efficiently for expected/unexpected needs.

Your membership in this circle, inspired by St. Benedict's words in the Rule, *"Listen carefully to the instructions of the Lord and attend to them with the ear of your heart,"* includes an annual lovely luncheon honoring you and your monthly commitment.

How do I Join?

- **You can** support the Sisters' "Greatest Needs," or a program such as Outreach, Hospitality, Aquaponics, Vocations, Health-care, or Retirement.
- **You can** choose a specific amount (\$5, \$10, \$25, etc.)
- **You can** cancel, pause, or change the amount any time
- **It's Easy:**
 - Go to our website at: www.benedictinesistersoffl.org
 - Click on the "DONATE NOW" button at top of page
 - Fill-out the form
 - Your gift is sent automatically monthly, quarterly, semi-annually or annually hassle free



Holy Name Monastery

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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 hunger of the People of God.

Editorial Team

Editors: Sister Roberta Bailey, *Prioress*
S. Eileen Dunbar and Development Staff
Writers: Benedictine Sisters
Web Master: Cheryl Chadick

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

*Merry Christmas and a blessed
Happy New Year!*

