



The Benedictine Tide

Benedictine Sisters of Florida

Touching Lives Through Prayer and Service

Spring 2026

Are We There Yet?



Are we there yet? Where is “there” and how will we know if we are THERE yet? If we are comfortable in the HERE, we will know we are THERE. THERE – right where God wants us to thrive.

Childhood may be long past for our aging community members but the youthful refrain – oft heard on long family vacation trips - continues: “Are we there yet?”

Lately at the monastery, with some variation, a new refrain rings out: “Are we all moved yet? Did they hang the pictures in my room yet? Where’s the switch for light in my closet? I haven’t found it yet.” The wording may change but the

searching sentiment remains “Are we there yet?”

“Are we there yet? John the evangelist, relates in the Gospel story of the raising of Lazarus. “And Jesus stayed where he was.” Seems a strange detail in the Gospel story. It’s a line I’d heard multiple times. Why did it stand out so boldly to me today? Simple words, packed with meaning, this year in particular. Our Sisters have completed the GRAND MOVE into the space that formerly housed retreatants and other guests.

Jesus was an occasional guest in the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Think of it: We have moved from one HERE to another THERE. We stayed 12 years in one wing of the monastery. Now we, the Sisters, occupy the 9 rooms formerly reserved for guests. That leaves one room for the Nurses’ Station for the 24-hour health care staff. (May God reward them for their attentive and gentle caring.)

The story continues, through the years, as our Sisters have moved from THERE to HERE and from HERE to THERE in three monastic dwellings. It’s a Trinitarian style tale of God’s graciousness. IN THE BEGINNING, our Founders came in 1889 from THERE in Pennsylvania. The story continues to HERE in central FL where the original 3-story structure was moved in 1911 up the hill to the shore of Lake Jovita in Saint Leo FL. That wooden house was replaced in 1961 with our new home: Holy Name Priory and Academy. The next THERE, (or is it HERE?) is our current one-level monastery completed in 2014.

On August 18, 2026, the Benedictine Sisters will celebrate the 12th anniversary of our first night in our current monastery. That night God blessed us at the evening meal with a glorious double rainbow! A DOUBLE rainbow reaching from end to end as far as the eye could see! “Ah” was the united sound at that first meal HERE in our new home. Across the ages rainbows have been recognized as an impressive sign of a promise of spiritual protection. And indeed, that evening our rainbow sign did indeed remind us that we had reached “THERE”! With the help of generous, loyal donors of their time, treasure and toil, we were beginning to settle in HERE, in our 3rd new home. The wording may have changed but the sentiment remained the same, “Lord, yes, it is good for us to be HERE.”

The question hangs in the air: Are we there yet? Where is “there” and how will we know if we are THERE yet? If we are comfortable in the HERE, we will know we are THERE. THERE – right where God wants us to thrive.

Sister Roberta Bailey

Anniversary Ode in Our New Monastery

the 12th anniversary of our first night in our 3rd “New” Home

(S. Roberta Bailey 2015, updated, 8/18/2019 and 8/18/2026)

Every window offers beauty – just look
Every silence echoes peace – ah, oh!
In the hallowed space of newness
Laced with familiarity long-known.

Every sunrise; each glowing sunset
Shouts promises renewed
From the God who's always with us
Ever old; yet ever new.

Thru-the-night lit hallways and
Nurse on duty now that the BIG MOVE
finds us in new living spaces.
What once was guest wing, now Sisters'
bedrooms – considering room for guests.

Life continues an adventure of surprise.
Reminding us daily of others' gifts
Surrounding us with love and prayer.

Ago one hundred thirty-seven years
From Germany to P.A.
Through the wilderness to Florida
Came five stalwart O.S.B.
To settle in the hills of Pasco
the heart of central Florida.

Their first job? Answer the call to
Teach children, boarders and day hops.
High school, grade school
Girls' academy and boys' prep school
Kept the Sisters on their toes
Night and day betwixt

Came 1960s, 70s, 80s, 2026.. beyond ...
the college, now a university, offers
newness: social work, cyber-security,
AI, robotics, nursing, engineering, oodles
more on-line and in Wellness Center gym.

Peace-searchers still knock on the door:
Seeking the peace we cherish.
Reaching out and drawing in
From our surrounding area
And far-flung places;
Both religious and lay folk
Seeking safe, secure, serene
Bed, repast and walking path.

Dining scrumptious meals
And chosen chapel time
Both private and in groups.

Angelus bells and gongs for Sunday liturgy
Thru the neighborhood ring true, calling
“Sisters praying for you” – bow your head
And, call to mind your needs right now.
Eucharist and Prayer Times alone or
Orchestrated to a rhythm
Paced for chant, restful silence and psalm.

'Tis the life of Florida Benedictines
Nestled where orange groves once thrived
Now aquaponics, roses and jacaranda sing
Join the hymn of Sisters' voices in
Joyful praise to the God who assures us:
ALL THINGS work together unto GOOD!

ARE WE THERE YET?

Where's "there"? And when is "yet"?

Well, we know the location of "where". It's heaven, eternal union with God. But for the rest of the question, the "yet", can also expanded to include "how". When do we arrive at heaven? And how do we get there?

I once told an employer my personal understanding of "strategic planning". I explained it's what people do while they're awaiting instructions from the Holy Spirit. The employer was not impressed. Not too long after his retirement, this same man suffered a devastating stroke. I wonder now whether he remembers my definition. I am certain that he did not include the stroke in his personal strategic plan.

We may think we can control the future by planning. We make choices in advance, thinking that we can control what happens to us through logic and force of will. But if we do so without getting down on our knees and asking God what God wants us to do, we will have wasted our time and our energy.

This takes us as back to the first word of the Rule of Benedict: listen. "Listen with the ear of your heart" writes Benedict. The heart does not begin with projections, statistics or marketing strategies. It seeks love. And God is first a God of love. The plans that God fashions for us are meant to do all of us good, to make us happy.

Please note that I have not said that God's plans for us will make us successful. If we accept God's will, we must also accept the risk that we will be judged a failure in the world's eyes. History is full of stories of people who accomplished great things but who also died thinking their life was a failure. My favorite example of that is the artist Vincent Van Gogh.

St. Benedict came from a well-to-do family. I can only imagine what they thought of him when he left university to live alone as a hermit. Where would we now be if he hadn't made that courageous decision and followed God's call?

Sister Eileen Dunbar

**Are We
THERE Yet?**

Are we there yet?

It's a question I asked through the years:

as a kid on the way to see out of state family members or just the ice-cream vendor.

as a student in a Catholic school, taking the bus or counting the days till Christmas.

as a teen meeting deadlines for tests and assignments.

as a novice wondering if I'd make it and make vows.

NOW realizing that life comes to an end and we need to be ready.

I guess all my practicing and my relationship with Christ makes me more settled, patient, ready and discovering God is WIT *me now.

***With me, In me, working Through me**

I just need to be WIT Christ now.

Faith, a love of Christ, gives us courage to look and live the future with Hope.

I guess I don't ask that question anymore—I know we are on the way.

Praise the Lord! Jesus Is the Way, Truth, LIFE.

Sister Mary David Hydro



Starting Over

The early founding sisters of Holy Name Monastery 137 years ago put roots down on this site and employee Cindy Barthle, long-time Pasco resident enjoys roots too. Look closely because these healthy roots are ready to be transplanted to the farm soil, soon to become nurturing food for our table.



Cindy Barthle

Ecclesiastes 3:2 “There is a time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant.”

With winter’s damaging freeze passed, farmers are starting over, uprooting lifeless plants, reseeding spring/summer crops and hoping for a bountiful harvest



Ecclesiastes 3:8 “There is a time

to keep, and a time to cast away.” After the sisters relocated their rooms, discarding and casting away, persistent Sister Mary Romana took needed rest outside.



Sister Mary Romana Gomez

Eternal optimist Sister Miriam hopes the summer season will again produce golden sweet pineapples, known as the symbol of hospitality.

Are we asking our faithful God, “Are we there yet?” Yes, we are, yet waiting for many great and glorious arrivals.

“There is an appointed time

for everything.” Ecclesiastes 3:1



Sister Miriam Cosgrove

Sister Miriam Cosgrove

Are We There Yet?



When I was a young child and we traveled by car from Miami to New York to visit family every summer, I would ask the question, are we there yet?

The answer to this question is not a yes or no – because we are still in the process. Are we working on the question? Yes – everyday we move closer to the answer.

For our community the first move forward was during Vatican II with all the changes in the church and how these affected religious life. Then came the decision to downsize and sell our monastery and build a smaller one in 2014 to fit our needs at that time. It was a big move and a big change for all of us.

Now in 2026 we find ourselves moving again, but to a different part of the monastery in order to be able to meet our needs as we advance in age. We are encouraged to do some serious downsizing. As I get older, I hope, in my heart, this is the last time I have to move.

I realize what is really important in life. It is not things – money – places – but what is my relationship with people I live with – my family – work with – and most important my relationship with God. I need to live my life trying to live up to what I vowed 60 years ago because not until I take my last breath will I be there!

Sister Donna DeWitt

Upcoming Events Calendar

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| April 5 | Easter Sunday |
| Jul 6-10 | Sisters' Annual Retreat |
| July 11 | Summer Feast of St. Benedict |



In Memoriam

Sister Mary Clare Neuhofer, OSB

December 22, 2025

Pat Neuhofer

January 6, 2026

Edmund Zampier

February 5, 2026



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

Heartfelt Thanks to our Donors for Your Support to our Annual Appeal 2025

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.

You Continue to Bless Us and Those We Serve!

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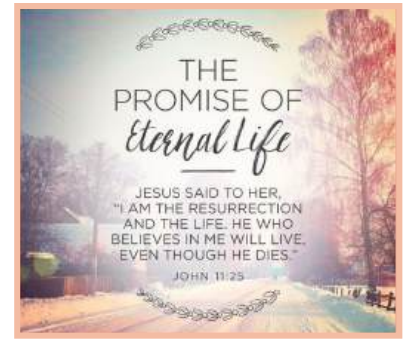
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In an effort to address contemporary local needs, we, the Benedictine Sisters of Florida, commit ourselves and our resources to respond with the compassion of Christ to the hungers of the People of God.

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The Great Gift of Easter is Hope

The resurrection of Jesus Christ



HE IS RISEN!