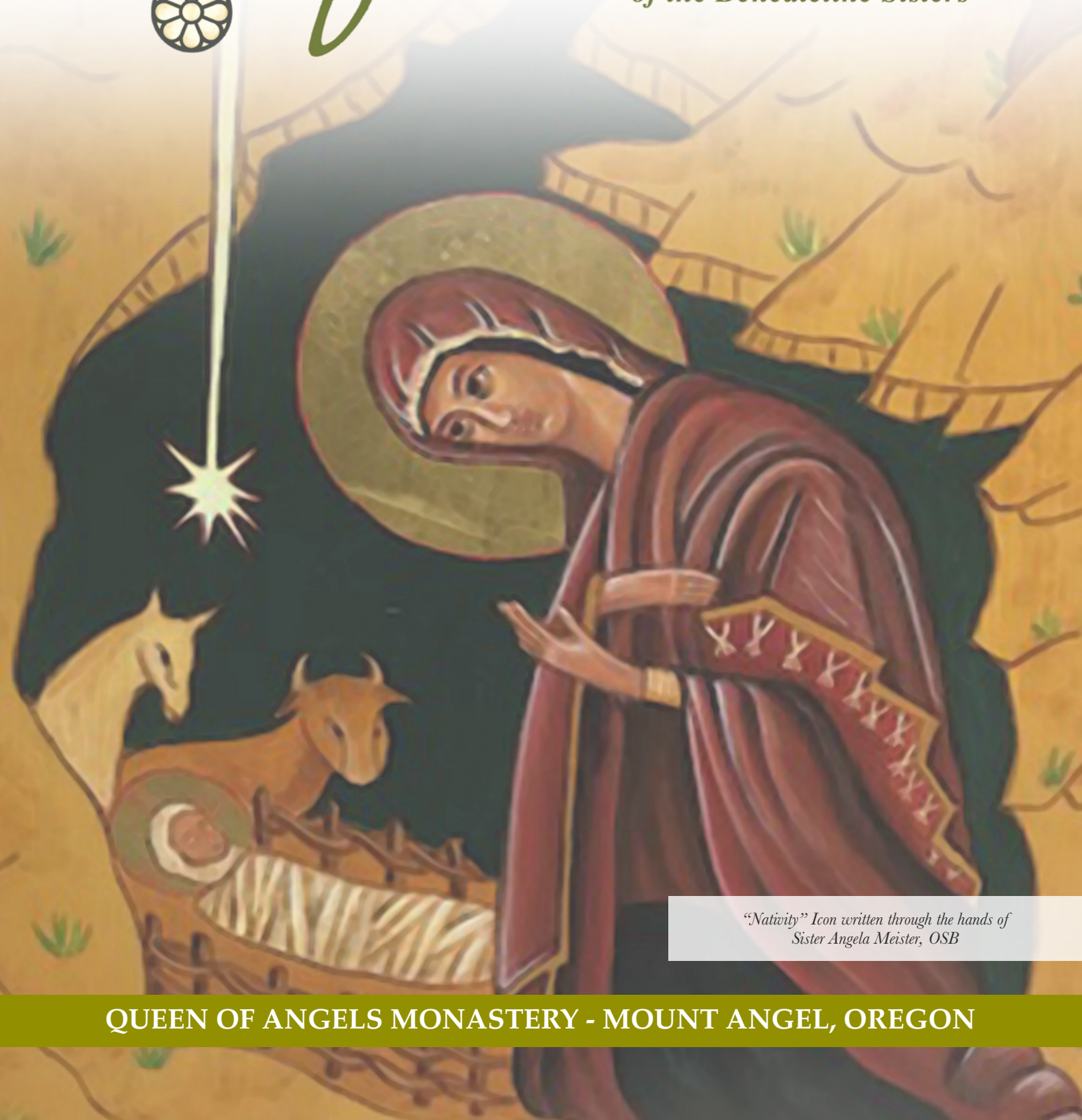


Volume XLIX
No. 2, Winter 2025

Reflections



of the Benedictine Sisters



*"Nativity" Icon written through the hands of
Sister Angela Meister, OSB*

QUEEN OF ANGELS MONASTERY - MOUNT ANGEL, OREGON



Welcome from Sister Jane



Dear Family and Friends,

It is with great grace and blessing that we once again welcome the coming of the Lord: Christmas 2025. We approach with awe and wonder the mystery of Jesus, Mary and Joseph and all that surround the Christmas story. It is an ever new adventure into the life that our God offers us every day.

How did our God pick that time and that place to break into our earthly existence and shed light on our human family? How do we experience our God breaking into our lives every day with the care and compassion we need to live our lives in hope and joy?

Can we get to that place in spite of living in a world where anxiety and uncertainty seem to be our daily condition?

The “tender compassion of our God” (Luke 1:78) is with us. And we are called to pass this gift on to all those we encounter each day: a smile, a word of encouragement, a kind gesture, a prayer.

We need a solid, stable core of faith. We are blessed to be called to deepen this mystery at the core of our being every day, every season. Take time to pause and settle for a time with your heart.

Get in touch with the God of the nativity and the God of your daily yearning and be grateful for your faith and pass on this peace to all you will meet this day.

It is Christmas.

Light the Candles.

They have more right to exist than all the darkness.

Christmas! Christmas that lasts forever.

- Karl Rahner, SJ

May the grace of God, the realization that we are blessed and deeply loved, be with you each day of this Christmas season and throughout the coming year!

Sister Jane Hibbard, SNJM

Pastoral Administrator

Benedictine Sisters of Mt. Angel



Sisters Celebrate Jubilees



Sister Maureen Niedermeyer - 70th Jubilee

Sister Maureen (Ann) was born on September 8, 1935, in Portland, Oregon, to Joseph and Hazel Niedermeyer. She has a brother, Paul, and a sister, Phyllis. She attended Sacred Heart Church and Grade School in Portland. She graduated from St. Mary's Academy, Portland in 1953. Influenced by the Benedictine Sisters, she entered the monastic community and professed her vows on July 11, 1956, taking the name of Sister Maureen.

Sister Maureen has served in a variety of ministries, including the retreat ministry at Shalom Prayer Center; grade school teacher in Woodburn, Portland, Silverton, and Albany; high school teacher in Mt. Angel, Salem, and Stayton; pastoral associate at St. Paul Parish in Silverton; chaplain at Providence Medical Center and Providence Elder Place in

Portland for 22 years; director of music at St. Mary's Parish in Mt. Angel for 4 years and St. Paul's Parish in Silverton for 12 years. She continues to accompany the sisters at liturgies with organ, harp, and piano.

Sister Maureen is a gifted musician, beginning piano lessons at age 6 and organ lessons at age 10 with the Benedictine Sisters at Sacred Heart School, and then at St. Mary's Academy. Her music education continued at Marylhurst College, University of Portland and the University of Oregon where she received a BA and MA in Music. When she was 60, she began 10 years of harp lessons with Marion Fouse so she could play for the sick and dying at Providence Medical Center. From 1986 until 1998 she was a member of the Portland Symphonic Choir.

Sister Maureen reflected on her jubilee: "I want to sing to God with joy and thanksgiving for these 70 years of Benedictine life".

Sister Joseph Fennimore - 70th Jubilee

Sister Joseph was born in Silverton, Oregon, to Roy and Marie Fennimore. Sister Joseph had six sisters (Ann, Flora, Rose, Virginia, Dorothy & Dolores) and four brothers (Dennis, Gene, Leroy, & Vincent). Sister Joseph attended St. Mary's Church in Mt. Angel as a child and attended schools at Thomas Grade School, St. Mary's Grade School, and Mt. Angel Academy.

Influenced by the prayer life of the Benedictine Sisters, she asked to enter the religious community and professed her vows on July 11, 1954, taking the name of Sister M. Joseph.





Jubilees Held on July 12, 2026

Sister Joseph received her Bachelor's Degree in Education from Mt Angel College and her Master's Degree in Religious Education from Seattle University. Sister Joseph has served in a variety of ministries during her community life, including that of parochial elementary teacher in St. John's, Oregon City; St. Mary's, Mt. Angel; Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Albany, as well as Religious Education Coordinator in Mt. Angel, Sublimity, Albany and Silverton. She served as sub-prioress of Queen of Angels Monastery, formation director, and chaplain at Providence Benedictine Nursing Center. Sister Joseph had the gift of organization. She started and developed religious education programs in several parishes.

Reflecting on her 70th Jubilee, Sister Joseph said, "I am thankful to God for all that has been given to me the past 70 years as a Benedictine sister. May God help me to see more and more that all I have is gift, gift from a loving Creator."



Sister Angela Meister - 25th Jubilee

Sister Angela was born on May 24, 1935 in Westport, Connecticut, to William and Emily Schomburg. She was baptized at the Church of the Assumption in Westport in June 6, 1935, and attended public schools in Connecticut. She received a degree from Trenton State College, New Jersey, in 1970. She married Richard Meister in 1955 and lived in New Jersey and Maine. She had a daughter, Eva in 1958. She later divorced and she worked for the state of Maine as an adoption caseworker.

She was a Benedictine Sisters' volunteer and then asked to enter the community in 1996. She professed her vows on April 22, 2001, keeping the name of Sister Angela.

Sister Angela has served in a variety of ministries during her community life. She served as a Coordinator of Mission Benedict for 13 years. She visited women in prison and served in parish ministries. She helped in keeping the monastery grounds beautiful. She added the beauty of flowers in the monastery dining room and chapel. She was the procurator for housekeeping needs for the sisters.

Sister Angela is an exceptionally talented painter and iconographer of icons, which can be seen in the monastery. She honed her iconographic skills by taking courses in iconography. She painted the Stations of the Cross for the monastery's walkway to the cemetery and for the second floor of the center wing of the monastery.

When asked about her 25th Jubilee, Sister Angela said, "I am blessed by being a Benedictine sister for 25 years. My years have been filled with tremendous blessings."

Jubilees Continued



Sister Susan Casey - 50th Jubilee

Sister Susan was born in Seattle, Washington to Thomas Michael and Dorothy Marie (Fischer) Casey. Her brothers are Michael John, Timothy Lee, John Thomas, Jerome Stephen and Mark Joseph. Her sisters are Patricia Alanna (Casey O'Neill) and Molly Kathleen. She attended St. Anne Church in Seattle as a child and attended schools in Seattle. She continued her education at Seattle University with a degree in Education in 1973 and St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri with a degree in Food Service Management in 1981. Influenced by the prayer and community life of the Benedictine Sisters, Sister Susan asked to enter the religious community and professed her vows on July 11, 1976, taking the name of Sister Susan.

Sister Susan has served in a variety of ministries during her community life, including being a teacher, 1973 – 1975; a cook at the Benedictine Nursing Center, 1978 – 1981. She did retreat work at Bethlehem Retreat Center, Nanaimo, British Columbia, from 1985-1988. She worked in the kitchen and office at St. Joseph Shelter, from 1992-2001. From 2002-2011, Sister Susan helped in the kitchen, office and grounds of the Monastery and served as lector at Eucharist. She graduated the Spiritual Direction Training program at Shalom Prayer Center in 2014.

Sister Susan is an exceptional photographer, especially taking photos of nature around the monastery. From 2012 – 2021, she took pictures for the Shalom Prayer Center and the monastery. She enjoyed making photo cards out of her beautiful photos. Her cards were featured at the Monastery Gift Shop.

“I am so thankful to God for my 50 years of monastic profession as a Benedictine sister,” said Sr. Susan when reflecting on her 50th Jubilee. “God has been so good to me.”





Visitors from Switzerland

On July 9, 2025, Erwin Röthlin, the great-nephew of Sister (Frances) Franziska Romana Blättler, and his son Jonas, from Udligenswil, Switzerland, came to learn more about their relative, who joined the Benedictine Sisters in 1893.

Born on May 20, 1873, in Kerns, Switzerland, Josephine (her baptismal name) at an early age decided to become a religious and in the summer of 1893, she, with three other young ladies, decided to go to a convent in America. She entered the Convent Queen of Angels in Mt. Angel as a postulant that August. Sister Franziska Romana led the Benedictine life of work and prayer with much devotion.



Her great nephew Erwin had discovered a box of photos and letters from her time and was eager to share what he found and learn about her experience in Mt. Angel. As a gift of gratitude, Erwin and Jonas presented Sister Dorothy Jean Beyer with a Swiss knife.



Special Bricks, Special Story

There are bricks that line the flower beds in the back of the chapel and hospitality center. Visitors often wonder about the history of the bricks and how there came to be names on them.

The bricks recognized the donors to the Appeal of Angels Capital Campaign that reached its goal to renovate the Queen of Angels Monastery and Shalom Prayer Center after the 1993 earthquake.

The names stand as witness to the many generous donors that made the renovation of the sisters' home possible. The sisters, for their part, as they walk the sidewalk alongside of the bricks, give thanks to these dear friends and say a prayer for them.





Coffee Cake Corner

Erin Shields-Pett in Bath, England, writes:

"I just want to share that I made these lovely coffee cakes to share here in Bath, England.

To begin, we had a bit of confusion as the idea of a coffee cake without coffee as an ingredient needed an explanation. To be fair, we have tea cakes that don't have tea as an ingredient!

At teatime I served the cake to my friends who very much enjoyed it. Everyone took pieces home to their husbands. Thank you for this lovely recipe which I will be making many times."

You can make Sister Immaculata's famous buttermilk coffee cakes right at home!

Visit www.benedictine-srs.org/coffeecakes for the full list of ingredients and recipe. Be sure to send in your story and photos to info@benedictine-srs.org so they can be featured in the next Coffee Cake Corner.



Oregon Catholic Historical Society

The Oregon Catholic Historical Society will host a presentation at Queen of Angels Monastery on **Saturday, April 11, 2026**. The topic will be **"The History and Legacy of Oregon's Benedictine Women."** The free presentation will be held in person but will also be available via Zoom for those who cannot attend.



**OREGON
CATHOLIC
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

The panel will consist of the Benedictine Sisters, a member of the Oblate community, and staff from Catholic Community Services. The event will not include lunch, but Mount Angel is home to several good restaurants, including several with a Bavarian flair.

Registration opens at 9:30 a.m., and the presentation begins at 10:00 a.m. If you have questions, or would like a copy of the Zoom link, please contact Ed Langois at edwardlangois1@gmail.com.



Sisters and Oblate Art Exhibit

On December 6, the Benedictine Sisters and the Oblates joined together and held an art exhibit during the CCS-sponsored "Merriment at the Monastery." There was such a variety of paintings, music, calligraphy, photography, poetry, stained glass, and other mediums.

Sister Therese Marie Albrich's artwork was featured. Here we share one of her poems:

FORGET-ME-NOT

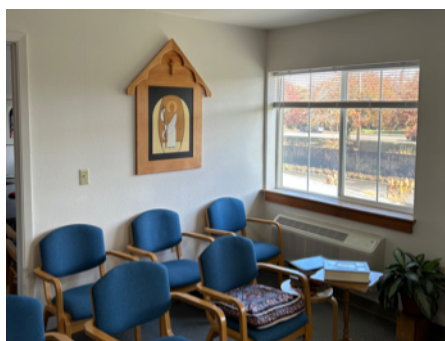
*Neath wild bowers,
Mid wild flowers,
My steps were one with thought
In carefree air
I frolicked there,
When lo! at certain spot
The sun aslant
Lit up a plant,
Beloved For-get-not! (March 24, 1934)*



Mother Bernardine Award

On October 15, the Mother Bernardine Wachter award was presented to two longtime friends of the sisters. Fred and Mary Vandecoevering joined the sisters for a special reception where they were honored for their outstanding support of the sisters and their ministries over many years.

Most recently, Fred worked on the restoration of Sister Angela's "Way of the Cross" plaques which is on the pathway to the cemetery at Queen of Angels Monastery. At his award reception, he presented the sisters with a special gift. The "15th Station" now hangs in the sisters' chapel at Orchard House.



The Mother Bernardine Wachter Award honors individuals who embody the leadership, courage, generosity, and perseverance of the Benedictine Sisters' foundress, Mother Bernardine. This recognition celebrates those whose lives reflect her spirit of faith, service, and dedication to others. Fred and Mary exemplify these qualities through their remarkable work, unwavering support, and genuine friendship with the Sisters, continuing Mother Bernardine's legacy in both word and deed.

Reflections



Sister Jeanne's Final Visit



The Monastic Congregation of St. Gertrude is one of three women's Monastic Congregations in the United states. It has 14 member monasteries. A "Canonical Visitation" is held every few years to review the life of the monastic community. Sister Jeanne Weber made her final visit as the president of our Monastic Congregation from October 19-23, as a new president will be elected in June, 2026.

During that time she visited with the sisters individually, attended a meeting of the Board of Trustees and experienced the life of our community. We are grateful for her time with us and for the affirmation of our life.



WRAC Set to Open in 2027

So the Stories Can be Told

One of the major concerns and responsibilities of our Monastic Community is the careful keeping of our archives, the history of our community over the past 143 years. Many religious communities have decided to come together to support and eventually move their archives to the **Women Religious Archives Collaborative (WRAC)** Heritage Center in Cleveland, Ohio.



WRAC broke ground in August, 2025, and hope to complete the Heritage Center in Spring 2027. It is an "independent repository for Catholic Sisters' archival collections, offering a rich resource for research and celebration of the contributions of Catholic Sisters." Over 75 religious communities are supporting the project and will move their archives when the building is complete. The Benedictine Sisters will eventually move their archives to the WRAC building. We will always have access to all of our data.

"You can't adequately tell the history of the United States without including the contributions of Catholic Sisters," Susan Durkin, OSU, Executive Director, WRAC.

To learn more, visit <https://archivescollaborative.org>.





Shalom 2026 Retreats

To register for any of the retreats listed below, call Sr. Dorothy Jean Beyer at (503) 845-2556 or send a check payable to Benedictine Sisters, Attn: Sister Dorothy Jean, 840 S. Main St., Mt. Angel, OR 97362, at least three days before the retreat.

Please include your phone number and email address.

For full descriptions and details on all of our upcoming retreats, visit www.benedictine-srs.org/events.


Scholarships are available!

All retreats in the Chapter Room, except those via Zoom.


 ***Living In-Between: Thriving Amid Personal and Global Uncertainty*** presented by
Oblate Susan Black
January 10, 2026
9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
\$45

 ***Can I Be a Saint?*** presented by *Nancy Hendricks and Mary Blankenship*
January 31, 2026
1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
\$25

 ***The Gospel Mysticism of Ruth Burrows: Going to God with Empty Hands*** led by
Father Stephen Coffey, OSB Cam.
February 13-14, 2026
\$85
via Zoom

 ***Making Our Way with Jesus to the Cross*** led by *Oblate Susan Black*
March 14, 2026
9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
\$45


 ***Service of the Seasons*** led by *Gay Gomez, Ph.D*
March 28, June 27, October 10, and November 28, 2026
1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
\$20 each

 ***Sabbath as Sacred Time and as a Form of Resistance*** led by *Nancy Hendricks*
April 25, 2026
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
\$30

 **World Labyrinth Day: Taking Steps Together for Peace** led by Sister Dorothy Jean Beyer
May 2, 2026
1:00 p.m.
Outdoor Labyrinth, West End of Chesteron Academy

 **Aging: The Open Door to the Rest of Your Life** led by Oblate Susan Black
May 9, 2026
9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
\$25
Via Zoom

 **Accepting the Call to Be a Messenger of Hope** led by Oblate Susan Black
June 20, 2026
9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
\$45

 **Eco-spirituality: How We Relate to Our Home from the Cosmic to the Microscopic** led by Nancy Hendricks
July 18, 2026
1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
\$25

 **Monastic Women: Finding Our Voice** led by Susan Black
August 15, 2026
9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
\$45



Shalom Workshops

Contact Sr. Dorothy Jean at (503) 845-2556 to learn more about any of our monthly sessions.

Ongoing Formation for Spiritual Companions (via Zoom)

2nd Friday, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
September – May

Book Talk (Bernardine Room)

3rd Saturday, 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
September – June

Prayer of the Heart (Chapel)

3rd Monday, 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.
All Year

The Creative-Spiritual Life Circle (via Zoom)

3rd Saturday, 1:15 – 2:30 p.m.
September – May



An Update from CCS

Catholic Community Services continues to make a meaningful impact at Queen of Angels Monastery and throughout the Mount Angel community. Mission Benedict recently relocated from its space across Main Street to the monastery's former carpentry shop, allowing for expanded services including system navigation and emergency assistance. In September, the spirit of service was on full display when 35 volunteers from Mount Angel Abbey & Seminary harvested an astonishing 1,245 pounds of fruit at the monastery. CCS has also renovated two stick-built homes on the monastery grounds, doubling the service capacity of the Father Taaffe Program, which provides transitional and crisis support for mothers ages 12 to 22. One of the most heartening signs of these growing ministries can be seen each day as school buses pull into the monastery driveway to pick up the young children who now call Queen of Angels home through the St. Joseph Family Shelter. **To support these ministries, visit ccswv.org/ministries-at-the-monastery**



Catholic Community Services



Oblates Celebrate 50 Years



The term "Oblate" means "an offering of oneself" and the practice of associating with a Benedictine monastery dates back to at least the 9th century. Oblates seek God daily through study, prayer, conversion of life, and works of charity, justice and peace. The Oblates of Queen of Angels Monastery are celebrating a special milestone this year - 50 years of dedication to the Benedictine way of life.

The group attends regular Oblate gatherings at Queen of Angels Monastery. Through their study of the Rule of Benedict and their practice of lectio divina (prayerful reflection on the Word of God in Scripture and other spiritual texts), Oblates receive spiritual strength and inspiration.

If you are interested in joining the Oblates of Queen of Angels, visit www.benedictine-srs.org/oblates to learn more, or call (503) 845-2556.

Reflections



We Celebrate Founders Day

The year 1901 was a year of great change for our community. Not only was it the dawn of a new century, but the end of an important chapter. On June 3, our foundress, Mother Bernardine Wachter, passed away. Mother (then Sister) Agatha Hess, Mother Bernardine's former assistant, was elected the community's prioress on July 16. She was born in 1865 in the town of Engelberg, Switzerland, and was one of four Hess sisters to join the early monastic community.

Over the next 30 years, most of the time (1901-1916, 1925-1931), she led our community through times of great challenges and great growth. Mother Agatha oversaw the construction of the North (1903) and South Wing (1912) additions, which included a new chapel, plus the large academy building (1912) and many other material improvements. She was a beloved leader who guided the community through the impact of World War 1 and the Great Depression. Mother Agatha, known for her motherly kindness and wise administration, passed away in 1937. She, who outstandingly helped to establish Benedictine monastic life in the Northwest, is remembered as one of the cornerstones of Queen of Angels Monastery.

Today, our community once again faces a world marked by division, economic instability, and uncertainty. Thanks to the dedication and vision of our early sisters - especially Mother Agatha Hess - we stand on a strong foundation built through their prayer and service. Though our numbers are smaller now, our mission remains steadfast: to pray for our world and support it through our continued spiritual work.

We can only continue this work through the generosity of family and friends like you. Thanks to a generous matching grant from the Larry & Jeanette Epping Family Foundation, all one-time gifts — including virtual table sponsorships — were matched dollar-for-dollar, and new or renewed monthly donations, double-matched for the first 12 months. It isn't too late to support this great event. You can visit www.benedictine-srs.org/foundersday to make a gift online or use the included remit envelope; include a note of "Founder's Day" on the check to ensure it is matched.

Thank you to all of our virtual Sponsors!

Joanne Kraemer
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Jim Berchtold

Roger and Susan Frank
Jim & Judy Schaecher
Margaret Mylet
Paul & Susan Beyer
Margie Courtney



Honoring our Retired Sisters

For generations, the Benedictine Sisters of Mt. Angel have quietly and faithfully shaped countless lives by teaching children, tending to the sick and dying, and by welcoming countless souls searching for peace and guidance. Now, in their later years, these humble women who have given everything to others need your help. Each year, we come together to honor their unwavering faith and return the love they have so freely given. We do this by honoring the story and legacy of one of our sisters.

This year, we honor Sister Marietta Schindler, OSB.



Shirley Schindler grew up in Woodburn, Oregon. She is one of five children of Fred and Jeanette Schindler. She attended St. Luke School and Mt. Angel Academy, which provided a lot of contact with the Benedictine Sisters during her formative years. After graduating from Mt. Angel Academy in 1961, she entered the sisters' community, and, in 1963, professed first vows where she took the name Sister Marietta. She later earned her bachelor's degree in education from Mt. Angel College, and her master's degree in education from Oregon College of Education (now Western Oregon University).

Sister Marietta served as a teacher at St. Mary School in Albany for 13 years and spent the last 4 years also serving as the principal. In 1978, she returned to Mt. Angel to serve as assistant prioress to Sister Marilyn Schwab. She then served one and two years, respectively, teaching at St. Mary Public School in Mt. Angel and St. Paul Catholic School in St. Paul, Oregon. She also spent five summers (1973-77) working as assistant to the director of the summer school program at Mount Angel Seminary.



In 1984 Sister Marietta began a new ministry of parish work at Our Lady of the Valley Parish in La Grande, Oregon. This challenging but rewarding work found her responsible for adult education, RCIA, campus ministry, and visiting the sick.

In 1991 Sister Marietta was called to return home to Queen of Angels Monastery to serve as vocation director and volunteer coordinator. Two years later, she became community treasurer as well. For 22 years, she continued her work in those three positions, while also serving on the sisters' monastic council throughout this period.

Sister Marietta is an exceptional crocheter, crocheting 100s of prayer shawls that were sold in the Monastery Gift Shop and given away to family and friends. She is also an avid photographer, making 100s of photo cards, which were always cherished by those who received them.

You can make a year-end gift in support of our 2025 Retirement Appeal. We hope to raise \$100,000 for the sisters' retirement needs and care. With the support of the Richard and Joanna Kreitzberg Fund, the first \$20,000 will be matched – dollar-for-dollar. Visit www.benedictine-srs.org/retirement to make a gift.



The Society of St Gertrude

By Michael Trevino, Development Director

The Society of St. Gertrude comprises friends and family members who have included the Benedictine Sisters in their final will or estate plans. Including the Benedictine Sisters in your estate plans is a profound way to ensure that your faith and values continue to make a difference beyond your lifetime. A planned gift, such as a bequest in your will or trust, provides important support for the sisters' life of prayer and service. Your generosity helps sustain their monastic community, care for aging members, and allows for their mission of peace and compassion to flourish well into the future. By remembering the Benedictine Sisters in your legacy, you create a living testament to your faith, one that will continue to bless others in to the future. It's a gift of enduring hope, rooted in love and gratitude, that helps carry forward the spirit of Benedictine charism. We would like to thank the friends and family members who have joined the Society of St. Gertrude this year:



John Brockamp
Geraldine Lauby
Martin Hilgers
Genevieve Wilson Barnhart
Walter Hart
Joan Foster

If you have left a gift to the Benedictine Sisters, please ensure the correct name, address and tax identification number is used to ensure your gift makes it to the sisters.

Benedictine Sisters of Mt. Angel
840 S. Main St.
Mount Angel, OR 97362
Federal Tax ID # 93-0387331

If you would like more information on leaving a legacy gift to the sisters, or if you'd like to receive a free copy of "Ways to Give: How You Can Support the Benedictine Sisters", please call our Mission Advancement Office at (503) 845-2556 or email info@benedictine-srs.org.



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*“So that in all things God
may be glorified.”*

*Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 57,
"The Artisans of the Monastery"*

*Watercolor painting by
Sister Therese Marie Albrich
1911 - 2002*