

Volume XLX
No. 1, Summer 2026

Reflections

of the Benedictine Sisters



*"Our Lady of Light" painting
by Sister Margaret Mary Johnson, OSB (1957)*



Welcome from Sister Jane



Dear Family and Friends,

Spring has been a rich season of love and growth.

Each year we relive and celebrate the great mystery of our God, revealed in the life of Jesus Christ and continued through the great gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. With each passing year, these mysteries are invited to seep more deeply into our souls, nurturing the steady growth of our life here on earth.

Every day is filled with awe and wonder here at the monastery as we witness the gradual unfolding of spring into summer. New flowers bloom, birds return, and trees flourish, drawing us into the ever-changing and growing life of our planet.

We also shared in the excitement of the journey around the moon by Artemis II, as its astronauts beheld both the beauty of Earth and new perspectives of the moon. We live in a universe of unending wonder, one that continually reveals more of the glory of our God.

Some of us have been following the live cam of the baby eagles born to parents Jackie and Shadow at Big Bear Lake. Sandy and Luna emerge from their shells as fragile, downy creatures, unable even to stand, and slowly grow into the strong and majestic eagles of the next generation. Watching the parents feed and care for them is a quiet yet profound testament to the beauty of creation.

“Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure... There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature – the assurance that dawn comes after night and spring after winter.” - Rachel Carson, Ecologist

“Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.”
- Anonymous

May we be amazed and astonished by the simple, wonderful world we live in every day.

Be assured of our daily prayers for all of your intentions and we count on yours as we live our lives in the peace of Christ.

Sister Jane



Sister Margaret Mary Johnson

Sister Margaret Mary (Mary Elizabeth) Johnson was born in Portland, Oregon, on November 18, 1916. Her parents were Albert and Blanche Rinehart Johnson. In January 1934, she joined the Benedictine Sisters at Queen of Angels Monastery and made her religious profession on August 25, 1936. She died on October 18, 2000.

Sister Margaret spent 45 years of her religious life in a classroom. She spent time teaching in Mount Angel, Portland, Silverton, Shaw, Oregon City, and British Columbia. She earned her bachelor's degree from Mt. Angel College, a master's degree in Sociology from St. Louis University and a doctorate in Education from Columbia University in New York.

In 1975, she took on the task of gathering and organizing the archives of the sisters. As archivist and historian, she served on the Archdiocesan Historical Commission. In 1978, she began work at Sacred Heart Parish, visiting the elderly and shut-ins in east Portland, and she retired in 1999.

Always eager to learn, she began to study Spanish. She spent seven weeks with Benedictine Sisters in Mexico City in 1987. Thus, she was able to teach English as a second language to priests and seminarians from Mexico.

Sister Margaret was one of the Monastery's many unsung artists. In her eighties, she quietly and diligently pursued her artistic interests for several decades. Her work was extraordinary for the diversity of mediums she has used - oil paints, pastels, carvings in wood and soap, drawing with charcoal - as well as its quality and range of subjects.



Sister Margaret Mary Johnson (1999)



"Mary, Star of the Sea" (1948)

Throughout her ministries, she continued her favorite hobbies, including painting in oils and playing the piano.



"The Beauty of the Pacific Ocean" (1953)



Montecassino 1500 Years Later

The Abbey of Montecassino is a Benedictine monastery on a rocky hill southeast of Rome, the birthplace of Western Benedictine monasticism, having been established by Benedict of Norcia himself around 529. It was for the community of Monte Cassino that the Rule of Saint Benedict was composed. Over the 1,500 years, the community has made significant contributions to European culture. Montecassino itself was born out of a pilgrimage lived in hope by Saint Benedict and some of his disciples, after they were forced to leave Subiaco. It was the end of a long journey that began in Norcia, the birthplace of St. Benedict and St. Scholastica. The abbey is still a popular pilgrimage site.

Only July 11, 2025, the Abbey of Montecassino began preparations for the 1,500th Anniversary of its foundation. The celebration will take place in 2029. The initial plans call for a four-stage journey; peace, faith and hope, memory and future, and culture. The monks are hoping they will welcome many visitors to the abbey during this holy year.



Abbot Primate Jeremias Schröder, OSB, said that he is very happy to celebrate the year 2029 as a jubilee across the entire Benedictine family, not only for Benedictines, but for oblates and lay Benedictines, seekers and pilgrims, the wider Church, young people, ecumenical friends, interreligious partners, and political and cultural leaders. He continued to say “The 1,500th recurrence of that year is a cause for celebration for that monastery which in Italian we often refer to as the ‘archicenobio’, the mother of all monasteries of our whole order.” He is encouraging all monasteries, congregations, regions and countries to organize their own jubilee activities, because the jubilee is not just for Benedictines in Italy. The jubilee is expected to leave a legacy behind for future generations as well as create a much stronger Benedictine family.

The subtitle of the Benedictine Jubilee is “Places of Hope Since 529”. Places refers to the monasteries. Abbot Primate Jeremias said that “St. Benedict wrote his Rule as a document of hope.” The entire Rule is an offer of hope to live a life that brings us closer to God.

Benedictine Sisters and Oblates of Queen of Angels Monastery are looking forward to celebrating this important anniversary. In our turbulent time, we wish to stir up hope in our hearts - and in those we meet - so that we may bring to the world a spirituality of humility, peace, resilience and respect for the dignity of all people.

“Just as Benedict’s disciples support him in his Paschal passage, we, the monks of Montecassino, ask for the support of the entire Benedictine family as we journey toward the great Jubilee of 2029, a journey that this Holy Year must teach us to live in hope.”

- Luca Antonio Fallica, OSB, Abbot of Montecassino.

Coffee Cake Corner

In December, during the holiday baking time, Susan Beyer (pictured right with her husband Paul) of Mount Angel made several batches of the Morning Coffee Cake using Sister Immaculata's recipe. Instead of the Barley Malt Powder, she substituted Nestle - Carnation Malted Milk, which worked fine. The coffee cakes were enjoyed by the Beyer family during the holiday season.



Mandi Beyer Bolduc (pictured below), daughter of Paul and Sue Beyer, cuts the Morning Coffee Cake, for Easter Sunday Brunch. Mandi's Mom Sue made the Coffee Cake and it was delicious as always.



You can make Sister Immaculata's famous coffee cake 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.



Sr Marilyn Schwab Lecture

Save the Date! June 25, 2026

The Benedictine Sisters and the Mt. Angel Health and Rehabilitation Center will sponsor this year's symposium on Thursday, June 25, 2026 from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. in the Community Room at Orchard House. The theme of the symposium is "Navigating Long Term Care/Learning about Resources to Assist Your Family." All are welcome to attend this free event to assist them in navigating health care for their loved ones.

Please contact the Orchard House for more information and to register by calling (503) 845-2544.





Oblate Update

The oblates and the sisters joined together on Sunday, May 17 for Morning Praise in the Community Room of Orchard House. After prayer, they enjoyed refreshments and visiting. They posed for this group photo! In the afternoon, the oblates discussed monastic spirituality and its importance in their lives.



Mark your calendar now and come to the information meeting. This is an opportunity to learn what an oblate is and how you can become one. Join us Saturday, August 8, from 10:00 a.m. to noon, in the Monastery Chapter Room. To attend, please RSVP to Nancy Hendricks by calling (503) 932-3344.

Interested in becoming an Oblate?

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



Trees of the Monastery

The Oblates of Queen of Angels Monastery took on the project of counting the monastery trees under the leadership of Gay Gomez and Nancy Hendricks. An astounding 1,615 trees were found! Eleven oblates and sisters helped with the count, with the campus divided into neighborhoods to assist in the accuracy. The counting project is leading to the publication of a tree guide for visitors.

Watch for news of its availability. Meanwhile, visit the monastery grounds and check on the 1,615 trees!





Caritas Award



Sr. Donna Marie accepting the Caritas Award

At the St. Joseph the Worker Fundraising Dinner, held on May 3, 2026, Josh Graves, CEO of Catholic Community Services, presented the Caritas Award to the late Sister Angela Meister. The award was given in gratitude of her many years of service to Mission Benedict and St. Joseph Shelter.

The Caritas Award was received by Sister Donna Marie Chartraw on behalf of Sister Angela Meister, who died on February 28, 2026.



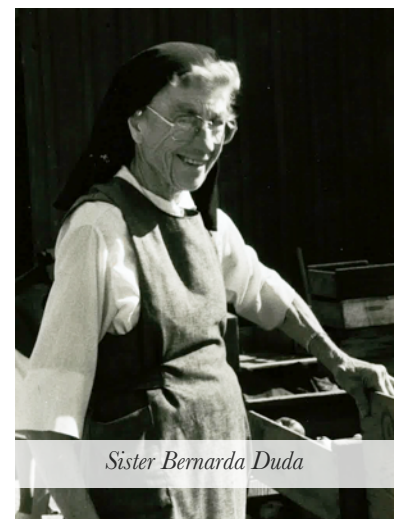
Sister Angela Meister (2013)



145th Century Club

As Benedictine Sisters, we believe the land is a gift from a loving God, one entrusted to us as a sacred responsibility. Throughout our history, it has sustained us in profound ways, even providing the clay used to form the bricks of our monastery. Building and sustaining monastic life on these grounds has always been a communal effort, shaped by the dedication of many sisters over time. Its continued flourishing is both a responsibility and a calling humbly carried forward.

However, these days that responsibility falls on its new care takers, Catholic Community Services. Knowing that the land is being tended to and taken care of allows us to focus on the task of providing housing and care for each of our sisters. This continues to be substantial, particularly in these uncertain economic times. Even so, we move forward with prayerful hearts and a spirit of hope, trusting in the generosity of those who share in our mission.



Sister Bernarda Duda

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our annual Century Club Appeal. We are still hoping to hit our \$50,000 goal for this important campaign. If you would like to support the sisters' 145th Century Club Appeal, you may return the included remit envelope (simply include the words 'Century Club' in the notes) or you can donate online at www.benedictine-srs.org/centuryclub.



Queen of Angels Painting

The Queen of Angels painting by Sister Protasia Schindler, OSB, was painted for the 1912 chapel. The painting had been in the third floor Artisans Room in the south wing since the renovation of the monastery after the 1993 Mt. Angel earthquake. After the monastery was transferred to Catholic Community Services, the sisters explored where the painting should be relocated.

In 2025, the Benedictine Sisters and Catholic Community Services decided that the Queen of Angels painting should be hung in the 1998 Queen of Angels Chapel. An effort to permanently mount the painting to the west wall of the chapel was undertaken by Fred and Mary Vandecoevering, parishioners of St. Mary Parish, Mt. Angel.

Thank you to Fred and Mary Vandecoevering, Dina Redding, Keenan Foraker, Doug Furlow, and Brent Smith for hanging the painting in the chapel. It is quite stunning! And quite a feat!

If you would like to see the painting in the Queen of Angels Chapel, you can RSVP to the regularly scheduled Tour of the Ministries of the Monastery, held on the 4th Thursday of each month. To RSVP or to set up a special visit, contact Mona Hayes, mhayes@ccsvw.org.

We hope you are able to visit and see the new beautiful, historic painting!





Shalom at the Monastery - Retreat Ministry

The Shalom at the Monastery office can still be found on the 2nd floor of the main monastery building at 840 South Main Street.

Shalom at the Monastery

The Benedictine Sisters have long been committed to nourishing the growth of all who are on the spiritual journey. For over seventy-five years, this commitment has taken the form of an active program of retreats and related activities, now gathered under

the name Shalom at the Monastery. Every era poses its own unique challenges for those who seek to love and serve God and one's neighbor as oneself. Shalom's current offerings -- which can be found on the Sisters' website www.benedictine-srs.org/events -- are designed with that need in mind.



Sister Jill Aigner

Sisters Gregory Kelly and Benigna Schlatter began guiding the very first retreatants - women who came to the Monastery for five-day stays during July and August - in 1934 and continued for twenty years. In the '70s, Sisters Eileen Kraemer, Maureen Niedermeyer, Julianne Janes, Antoinette Traeger, Mechtilde Fennimore, and Gemma Piennett expanded the retreat curriculum. With Sister Jill Aigner as administrator, highlights included day, overnight and longer-form retreats, for both individuals and groups, as well as spiritual direction training and sabbatical programs.

Reorganized and given the name Shalom at the Monastery in 2017 and now under the direction of Sister Dorothy Jean Beyer, the retreat ministry continues its vibrancy. Women and men are served by day retreats and workshops on a variety of topics, ongoing formation for spiritual companions, one-on-one spiritual direction and several recurring monthly programs.

Sister Dorothy Jean noted, "St. Benedict through his Rule encouraged his followers to lifelong learning of the spiritual life, study of the Scriptures, and on-going spiritual formation. Shalom at the Monastery, the retreat ministry of the Benedictine Sisters, continues this Benedictine tradition today. We, Benedictine Sisters, are very grateful for this sacred mission of providing spiritual sustenance to all who come to the monastery.



Shalom 2026-2027 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.

 ***Accepting the Call to Be a Messenger of Hope (in-person and Zoom)*** led by Oblate Susan Black

June 20, 2026

9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

\$45 in-person / \$25 via Zoom

 ***Service of the Seasons*** led by Gay Gomez, PhD

June 27, October 10, and November 28, 2026

1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

\$20 each

 ***Monastic Women: Finding and Using Our Voices*** led by Oblate Susan Black

August 15, 2026

9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

\$45

 ***Noticing Awe and Wonder: A Contemplative Art and Prayer Retreat (Soul Collage)*** led by Val Hornburg

October 24, 2026

10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

\$50

 ***Hospitality as Sacred Art*** led by Oblate Nancy Hendricks

November 14, 2026

10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

\$25

 **Behold Your Mother: a Retreat on Mary** led by Oblate Susan Black
& Sister Dorothy Jean Beyer, OSB

January 9, 2027
9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
\$45

 **Eco-spirituality: How We Relate to Our Home from the Cosmic to the Microscopic**
led by Oblate Nancy Hendricks

April 24, 2027
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
\$25



Shalom Workshops

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

**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

Meet Our Presenters

Nancy Hendricks, MA, OblSB, received her master's degree in Pastoral Ministry from the University of Portland. She now spends time presenting retreats, being active with the QAM oblate community as its coordinator, creating a 2-acre peace garden with her husband, and spending time with her family.

Oblate **Susan Black**, leader of Shalom at the Monastery retreats and the Creative/Spiritual Life Circle discussion group. Her art and writing have been published in 'Catholic Artist Connection,' *Benedictines* and other publications. Susan is an artist and a writer. Check out www.BlackStarStudio.me to learn more about her.

Val Hornburg is a Spiritual Director, retreat leader, SoulCollage® and Labyrinth facilitator specializing in Creative Prayer and Expression. Val says, "Trained as a facilitator in 2008, I have been practicing SoulCollage® ever since."

Gay Gomez, PhD., is a retired professor of geography, an occasional retreat presenter and naturalist guide.



Remembering Sister Angela



Sister Angela Meister, O.S.B., a member of Queen of Angels Monastery, died on February 28, 2026, at 10:30 p.m. at Mt. Angel Health and Rehabilitation Center, Mt. Angel, Oregon. She was 90 years old and was to have celebrated her 25th Jubilee of Monastic Profession on April 22, 2026.

Sr. Angela was born on May 24, 1935, in Westport, Connecticut, to William Schomburg and Emily Kitchen Schomburg. William Schomburg, her brother, was born four years later. She was baptized at the Church of the Assumption in Westport on June 6, 1935. Sister Angela attended public schools in Connecticut as a child. She continued her education at the College of New Rochelle, New York and received a degree from Trenton State College, New Jersey in 1970. In 1955 she married Richard Meister and their daughter, Eva, was born in 1958. The family lived in New Jersey and Maine. She later divorced. She worked for the Maine Department of Human Services as an adoption case worker in the

1980's. From 1990 – 1991, she was a volunteer in the Peace Corp in Jamaica, then at Covenant House in New York City and Anchorage, Alaska. Later, she came to Mt. Angel and became a volunteer with the Benedictine Sisters. She asked to enter the community in 1996. She professed her vows on April 22, 2001, keeping the name of Sr. Angela.

Sr. Angela was a joy to be around and made friends easily. She was very generous with her time and talents, serving in a variety of ministries during her community life. She started volunteering at St. Joseph Shelter and Mission Benedict in 1997 and served as Coordinator of Mission Benedict for 13 years. She visited women in prison and served in parish ministries. She helped tend the Monastery's beautiful grounds and was known for her skill at decorating the dining room and the chapel with flowers. She was the procurator for housekeeping needs for the sisters.

An exceptionally talented artist, Sr. Angela honed her skills by taking courses in iconography. She eventually wrote 25+ icons that graced the Monastery and inspired sisters



Icons by Sister Angela

and visitors alike. Much of her work is now included in the Queen of Angels Legacy Collection at Mount Angel Abbey. She painted the Stations of the Cross that line the Monastery's walkway to the cemetery and another set displayed in the interior of the Monastery building. The outdoor stations were refurbished before her death in 2025 so that her legacy would be preserved. In addition to the visual arts, Sister Angela was interested in poetry and other forms of writing and shared her work locally. She regarded her creativity as a gift to be shared with others for inspiration and enjoyment.

Sister Angela wrote this about herself: "Who is Angela? She is God's special creation. A child of nature placed in a certain time and place in which to grow toward the light. All of her needs and wants are taken care of. She is blessed."

Sister Angela was preceded in death by her parents; her brother, William Schomburg; and her daughter, Eva Karkas, who is buried in the monastery cemetery. She is survived by grandchildren, great grandchildren and other relatives, and by her monastic community of Benedictine Sisters.





 *Keeping Up with the Sisters*



Top Row (left to right): Sr. Dorothy Jean Beyer, Sr. Donna Marie Chartraw, Sr. Rebecca Pirkel, Sr. Joseph Fennimore

Second Row: Sr. Alice Ann Schaefer, Sr. Joan Pokorny, Sr. Dorothy Rausch, Sr. Judith Bloxham

Third Row: Sr. Marietta Schindler, Sr. Miriam Hendrickson, Sr. Regina Rausch, Sr. René Foster

Bottom Row: Sr. Susan Casey, Sr. Maureen Niedermeyer, Sr. Christine Rausch, Sr. Dorothy Pulkka (died Sunday, May 24, 2026)



Other Ways to Support the Sisters

By Michael Trevino, Director of Mission Advancement

There are several tax-efficient ways to support the sisters while aligning your giving with broader financial plans. One popular option is a Donor-Advised Fund (DAF), which allows individuals to make a charitable contribution, receive an immediate tax deduction, and then recommend grants to their favorite nonprofits over time (like the sisters' annual Retirement Appeal). DAFs are especially appealing for donors who want to simplify recordkeeping, bunch charitable contributions in high-income years, or involve family members in ongoing philanthropy.



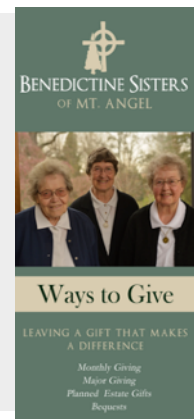
For those age 70½ or older, Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) from an IRA (or sometimes Required Minimum Distributions, or RMDs) offer another powerful giving strategy. You can transfer funds directly from their IRA to a nonprofit, potentially reducing taxable income while satisfying RMD requirements. Additionally, naming a nonprofit as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy is a meaningful way to create a lasting legacy.

These are just a couple of ways you can support the life and legacy of the Benedictine Sisters. See the infographic below on how you can request a copy of our “Ways to Give” brochure. As always, the simplest way to support the sisters is through your continued gift of prayer. Thank you for supporting the Benedictine Sisters of Mt. Angel!

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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“Care for creation, is truly a vocation for every human being, a commitment to be carried out within creation itself, without ever forgetting that we are creatures among creatures and not creators.” - Pope Leo XIV