

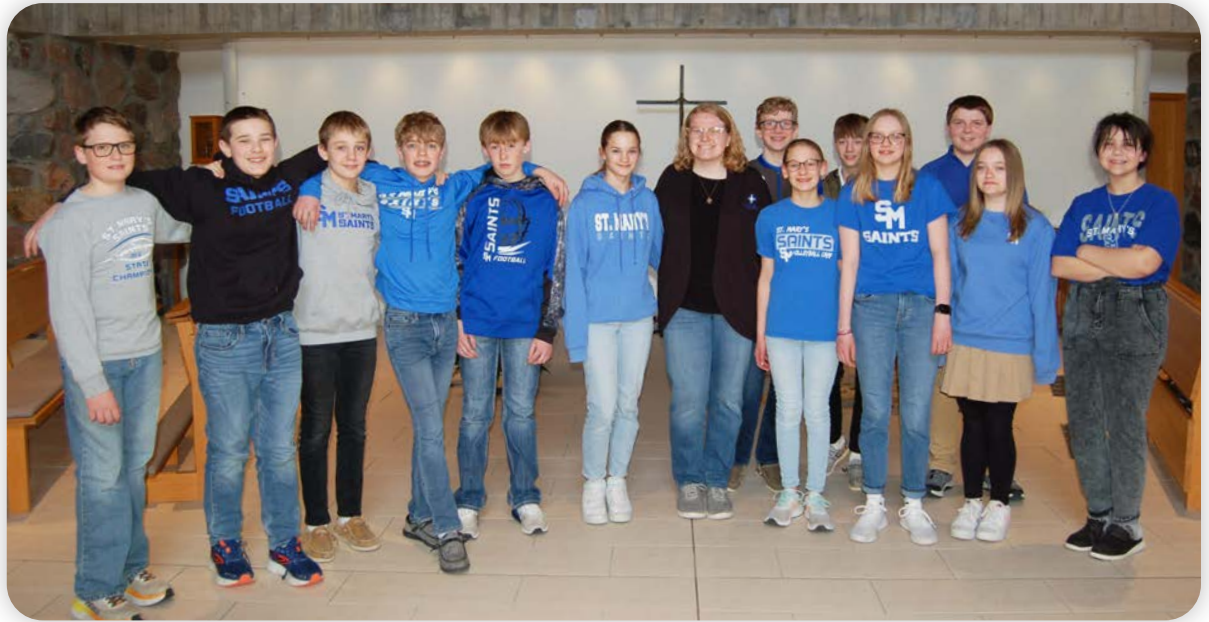
Tidings

BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF

ANNUNCIATION MONASTERY

SUMMER 2023

www.annunciationmonastery.org



Sister Marena Hoogland brought her beloved students to the monastery to have a tour and enjoy refreshments and activities with the sisters.

“Love the children first, and then teach them...”

~ Saint Mother Théodore Guérin

Q & A With Sister Marena Hoogland

Q: Have you always wanted to become a teacher?

A: When I completed my associate degree, I was studying elementary education but didn't feel my heart was in it. I've always been good at math and I enjoy it. When I was away from school, I really missed doing math. I chose teaching because it fits well with my monastic lifestyle. I also come from a big family, so I'm good with kids. I feel very passionate about women in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) fields. As a woman, I feel it is part of my responsibility to show women they can be in STEM. So, when I put all of those things together, the rest fell into place.

Story continues on pages 3&4



MESSAGE FROM THE

Prioress

When I think about one of the gifts of being a Benedictine sister, community is one of the first ones to come to mind. I dearly love the women in my community and am grateful for how they have helped me grow into the person I am today. I particularly think of the sisters' interest and prayers while I was away in Colorado attending graduate school. They didn't understand the chemical reactions I was working on, but they cared about me and all the research I was doing. When I think of the challenges of being a Benedictine sister, community is one of the first ones to come to mind. Living with a group of women from a variety of ages and backgrounds can have its challenges, but the blessings far outnumber them.

Chapter 72 of the Rule of Saint Benedict provides a summary of what makes community life in the monastery possible. In this chapter, Benedict presents the idea that in the community, we are all equals. It is Benedict's take on the greatest commandment: love of God and love of neighbor. There is no hierarchy. By showing honor or respect to each other, it is a community of mutuality. I believe you are a child of God and I honor you. You do the same in return. We support each other in patience and pursue what we judge better for the other, not for ourselves. We are all in this together.

One can wonder how a group of women from different backgrounds, different cultures, different ages, different education levels, different work

ethics, and different ideas about important things such as liturgy, theology, and the proper way to clean a bathtub can come together to form a monastic community. One must remember that the members of a monastic community are not together by accident. Each has responded to a call from God to join this particular group in a common search for God. This diversity is a blessing to the community.

In community, we celebrate accomplishments together. In this issue, Sister Marena Hoogland will share her experience as a first-year math teacher at St. Mary's Academy. Our sisters, particularly those who taught, enjoyed hearing Sister Marena's stories and offering her some sage advice. Our monastic community has been praying for Sister Idelle Badt, who recently earned her master's degree in social work from the University of Kentucky. She continues to serve where the needs arise, both here and in the civic community.

We support each other through the challenging times. With the recent passing of Sister Rita Miller, we supported one another in celebrating the life of a dear woman who always had a positive outlook on every aspect of life. Community means something different to each sister and several sisters will share their perspective on community life in these pages.

Our community is more than just the sisters who are professed members. We include the

women and men who serve at our sponsored ministries and at the monastery. In May, we had an enriching Sponsorship Formation Day with Father Charles Bouchard and Lori Ashmore-Ruppel of the Catholic Health Association. Leaders from our sponsored ministries, the Sponsorship Council, and the sisters gathered and reflected on preaching the Gospel through our ministry on sponsorship. Our community includes the oblates and monastery volunteers and all of you receiving this publication. We are blessed by the presence of guests at our liturgies and meals. Each and every one of you is an important part of our Benedictine community.

In the final verse of Chapter 72 – “Let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ and may he

bring us all together to everlasting life” – we receive Benedict’s summary of the rule and of the monastic life. I appreciate how it is *all together* (emphasis added) we go to everlasting life. We do it as a group, all together. It isn’t my own journey. I am as responsible for you as you are for me. This unconditional love and support we give are important whether we are talking about our monastic community, a family, or any other group of individuals who care for each other. May God give us the grace and strength we need to live this out in our lives today.

Sister Nicole Kunze

Q: Is teaching different than you expected it to be?

What surprises you about teaching?

A: What has surprised me most is how much I absolutely love it. I knew teaching would be OK, and I could do it well. I figured there would be a couple kids who would stand out. But I absolutely love every one of my students. Seriously, even after two days of teaching, I felt so connected to these kids, and I said I would literally die for each of these students. I was so excited to see what happens for them in the future. I said the third day, I am so excited to see you – and I truly was.

I thought I would like teaching, but I never thought I’d love it as much as I do. I teach seventh grade math and sixth grade science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). The students and I work on projects that introduce them to balancing scales, the engineering of skyscrapers, computer coding, and topics like genetically modified organisms (GMOs). They are learning about the world they are living in and I hope it helps them think about how they can make a positive impact on the future.

Q: What is the most rewarding thing that has happened thus far?

A: I’m so blessed to be beginning my teaching career at Light of Christ Schools. Our school has a healthy culture of helping each other grow and become better educators. To be in that environment, and have supportive mentors, is such a blessing. Just getting to know these students is the highlight of everything. They are such good kids with good hearts. I feel privileged to know them and get to be a part of their lives. They are funny and creative. If a day feels like it didn’t go well with classroom



Sister Marena enjoys visiting with Sister JoAnn Krebsbach, a teacher for 48 years.

behaviors or my teaching, I can always find a few moments that are positive. Every day is so unexpected. It's been like a lesson of God's providence for me. I never would have chosen to teach middle school; I thought I'd probably be a high school teacher. I had heard you'd either love or hate teaching middle school. So, when this opportunity presented itself, it turned into something so much better than anything I would ever have picked for myself. God's plans are greater than our plans. It's a lesson I have to remind myself of constantly. It has just been one of the best experiences of my life.

Q: Have your students taught YOU anything?

A: I like to say they give me opportunities to grow in patience every day. I say it with humor, but it's the truth. There are times when teaching is challenging, for sure. But I just love being with them and hearing about their experiences and witnessing their growth through the year. I love the quote, "Love the children first, and then teach them," by Saint Mother Théodore Guérin. Sometimes I feel I could be clearer, but I know the loving the kids part is there, so I know I will grow as an educator.

Q: Is it fun sharing teaching experiences with other sisters who were teachers?

A: Yes, it's nice to talk to people who have gone through similar experiences. My teaching schedule requires I miss some of the activities we have in community and former teachers understand that.

Q: Math can be a difficult subject for a lot of people. What advice do you have for a student who does not feel confident with math?

A: I think there is a stereotype that there are math people and there are "not math" people. I believe we all have the ability to learn math. Just like any other skill, we need to practice it. Some have to practice more than others. Going in with a growth mindset and knowing that you have the ability to learn is half the battle. If you shut yourself down before you even try, it will be harder to keep moving forward. Knowing that you can do math is the most important factor in being able to do math. I actually struggled with algebra in eighth grade. Just because you struggle in one area, doesn't mean you can't overcome it. It teaches you perseverance.

Congratulations!

Sister Idelle Badt recently earned a master's degree in social work. She selected the University of Kentucky as Kentucky has a high poverty level, which will be similar to the population she hopes to serve in Bismarck.



Sister Melissa Cote Places First in 5K



Congratulations to Sister Melissa Cote

on placing first (second year of placing first in the female championship) in the 9th Annual North Dakota Long Term Care Association 5K Fun Run. Sister Nicole Kunze, prioress, also participated in the event.

This event was started by monastery employee Kirk Greff after a health scare emergency ten years ago when he was running up the hill to the University of Mary. Kirk continues to coordinate this event today out of gratitude to those who helped save his life and to encourage a healthy lifestyle.

The Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery are one of the sponsors of this event. Funds raised go directly to nursing scholarships for individuals interested in careers in long term care.





Sister Nancy Gunderson was one of the sister artists who offered art for the exhibit. She unveiled her Joan of Arc quilt and explained the paper-piecing process she followed to create it. Sister Nancy shared about Benedictine history and about the sister artists, past and present, whose work was featured.

The Artisans of Annunciation Monastery

“that in all things God may be glorified.”

Rule of St. Benedict, Prologue

The celebration of the sisters’ 75th anniversary of becoming an independent monastic community concluded with a Benedictine art exhibition at the Bismarck Arts & Galleries Association (BAGA) on January 6, 2023.

The sisters live according to the Rule of St. Benedict, a guide to daily living, which is entered around God and community. Artisans of the monastery are encouraged to practice their craft with all humility, and with permission from the monastery superior. St. Benedict reminds members that the artist creates to glorify God and bless others rather than for personal attention or making a profit.

The art exhibition showcased the sisters’ art through the years. From paintings to pottery, from art quilts to dip and drape figures and an antique doll house, there was something for everyone to enjoy.

Sister Nancy Gunderson was the artist speaker who lead guests through a brief history of the significance of art to the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery through the decades and unveiled her art quilt, Joan of Arc. Many of these pieces had not been seen by the public as they are stored in the monastery archives, a trove of artistic treasures. Thank you to the sister artists, archivist, volunteers, and Oblates of Annunciation Monastery, for making this art exhibition a success.



Prioress Sister Nicole Kunze welcomes guests to the artist reception.



Benedictine Oblate Daniel Barr, and other oblates, offered their musical gifts during the reception.



Sister Renee Zastoupil enjoyed viewing the art collection.



Sister Hildegard's pottery, dip and drape pieces, and doll house drew much interest.

Monastic Life

Living in Community

Our sisters share some of their thoughts on what it means to live in community.



Sister Denise Ressler: Living in Community requires a complete giving of oneself from the heart which in turn gives one the sense of belonging no matter the circumstances.”

Sister Nancy Miller: “Community is important to me because I am seeking God with a group of people desiring to walk the journey to God together. Community is a place where I am supported and where I support others. Community is a place where I am also challenged to grow beyond myself. It is a blessing to be able to live in this particular community! All of us offer unique and wonderful gifts to one another and to the world!”



Sister Agatha Muggli: “In a multitude of ways, living in this community has invited me to stretch beyond the limits I’d be inclined to allow by myself. Because of simply living in community and with years of practice, I sometimes receive others more inclusively, think more broadly, and act more generously; but I still need more practice. May Christ lead us all to everlasting life.”

Sister Mariah Dietz: “Community means so many things: it means standing together at Eucharist – knowing that we are one people with a loving God. It means sitting at table sharing our hopes and dreams, learning to understand another’s viewpoint...staying even when it is uncomfortable and we are not in agreement. Community means taking the Rule of Benedict to heart: loving the juniors, honoring the seniors, caring for the sick, serving one another, welcoming guests, etc. It means learning about who we are and who we are becoming day by day.”



Sister Rosemary DeGracia: “Benedictine community becomes God’s glue which holds us together with enough elasticity to allow us to be who God designs us to be.”

Sister Eleanor Stockert: “Community means a lot to me because we pray liturgy together and eat family style. I enjoy living in community and welcoming new members.”



Sister Rosanne Zastoupil: “Community life gives me the opportunity to serve my Lord with others. My sisters’ witness to prayer, Eucharist, and lectio gives me the encouragement to remain faithful to the monastic way of life.”

Sisters Hold Twelfth Annual Sponsorship Formation Event



Lt. to rt. (standing): Sisters Nicole Kunze, Melissa Cote, Renee Zastoupil, Gerard Wald, Idelle Badt, Nancy Miller, JoAnn Krebsbach, Rosanne Zastoupil, Janet Zander, Agatha Muggli. Lt. to rt. (seated): Sisters Kathleen Atkinson, Nancy Gunderson, Susan Lardy; Father Charles Bouchard, Lori Ashmore-Ruppel; and Sisters Madelyn Louttit, Rosemary DeGracia, Mariah Dietz.

We were honored to have Father Charles Bouchard and Lori Ashmore-Ruppel from the Catholic Health Association present to leaders from our sponsored ministries at our Twelfth Annual Sponsorship Formation Event on May 11.

Thank you to all of you from CHI St. Alexius Health, the University of Mary, and Ministry on the Margins, who took time out of your busy schedules to spend the day learning and sharing with one another. Conversation and reflection centered around Catholic Identity, social teaching and preaching the Gospel through sponsored ministries.

We keep all of you in our prayers of gratitude. We thank you for bringing mission and ministry to life in your workplace as we strive to be a sacramental presence in our world. We pray we can make God's grace tangible through our care for others.



Sister Agatha Muggli Celebrates 60th Anniversary of Monastic Profession



Sister Agatha Muggli will celebrate the 60th anniversary of monastic profession as a Benedictine Sister of Annunciation Monastery on July 11, 2023, in a private ceremony with her monastic community.

She is grateful to have grown up on a farm near Miles City, Mont., surrounded by a loving family. She is the youngest of ten children born to the late Joseph and Barbara (Schmidt) Muggli. Life on the farm gave her a deep appreciation of the outdoors. From a young age, she loved to walk and explore the land and search for wildflowers. Her appreciation for life and growth as gifts from God laid the foundation that would eventually serve her well as a Benedictine Sister of Annunciation Monastery.

The Muggli family worked hard on the farm, but Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation were days of relaxation. Mass was an absolute while afternoons were filled with fun and family. In her youth, she had never considered becoming a sister or a teacher. It was quite the contrary. She believed those were two vocations she would not choose! Over time, that belief was softened by God's gentle nudging. Fleeting thoughts of religious life became more frequent and resulted in her contacting the Sisters of Annunciation Monastery to explore the idea of becoming a sister. "It felt like this is where I should be," Sister Agatha recalls. "I decided to become a Benedictine Sister of Annunciation Monastery (then Priory) sort of on the recommendation of my cousin, Eunice, and her husband, Chick Swenson, who raved about 'the beautiful priory on the hill.' They had given the sisters the first 25 acres of land on this site." She marvels at the growth that happened on this hill and appreciates the strong connection between the sisters and the University of Mary.

Sister Agatha made first monastic profession on July 11, 1963. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the College of St. Scholastica, Duluth, Minn. Sister Agatha says she always enjoyed music. Her mother encouraged her to practice piano faithfully and her father sometimes sang Stephen Foster songs in the home. She learned to play the organ during her time in college. She says she "learned music by teaching piano." She taught music and piano at Cathedral in Bismarck, and at St. Joseph's and Christ the King in Mandan.



“I am grateful for the many opportunities I’ve been given as a member of this community. My life has been opened to God, myself and my sisters, the Benedictine way, and the wide world with its glories and its great concerns.”

In 1971, then prioress Sister Kathryn Zimmer urged Sister Agatha to obtain a master’s degree in Fundamental Catholic Spirituality from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pa. This prepared her to guide women in the beginning stages of becoming members of the monastery. She worked in initial formation at Annunciation Monastery prior to serving in the University of Mary placement office. In 1992, she was asked to serve as subprioress for the monastery, serving in this capacity for eight years, under the leadership of prioresses Sister Susan Lardy and Sister Susan Berger.

In 2000, Sister Agatha became full-time initial formation director at Annunciation Monastery. She is novice director and chair of the Initial Formation committee at Annunciation Monastery. She is devoted to her work as liturgist, musician, and organist for the sisters and is the resident caretaker of the beautiful plants throughout the monastery. She has served as councilor and vice president of the Federation of St. Benedict, was an active member of the American Benedictine Formation Conference, is on the University of Mary board of trustees, and serves on the Mission Effectiveness committee at CHI St. Alexius Health.

SNAPSHOTS



The Sisters sponsored, hosted, and served a warm meal at The Dream Center in Bismarck—a community nonprofit that serves free meals each day for those in need of food and fellowship. We joined University of Mary students and other volunteers who received all as Christ this evening.



Sister Nicole Kunze welcomed visitors to the Annunciation Monastery booth at the annual Vocations Jamboree at the University of Mary Lumen Vitae University Center in March.



Sisters JoAnn Krebsbach and Idelle Badt work at the Crow's Nest cafeteria at the University of Mary weekly to get to know students and staff and extend Benedictine hospitality.



In Loving Memory



Sister Rita Miller, OSB

Born: April 29, 1929

Professed: July 11, 1949

Died: May 15, 2023

**Mass of Christian Burial:
May 18, 2023**

**“Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: Rejoice!
Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near.”**

Philippians 4:4-5

Sister Rita Miller viewed her life as a “journey of growth” and believed that to experience God’s love, one “must be willing to give freely and willingly of yourself.”

Sister Rita’s ministry was primarily in healthcare and hospitality at St. Alexius. She was night supervisor prior to receiving training in physical therapy at Northwestern University, Evanston, IL. She returned to work at St. Alexius as a physical therapist for 25 years. She served as director of the monastery health center, and again at St. Alexius in nursing for 12 years. She offered prayer and support to patients and families as chaplain of Home Health and Hospice at St. Alexius for seven years. She concluded her hospital ministry as hospitality hostess where she extended her gift of making all feel received as Christ.

With a lifelong devotion to serving others, Sister Rita will be remembered for her prayer support and loving kindness. Her warm smile and hearty laugh endeared her to all who knew her. She said she loved every ‘job’ she had. Sister Rita cherished time with her family and her religious community.

We rejoice, knowing that Sister Rita now rests in the loving embrace of God.



Sister Rita exemplified Benedictine hospitality wherever she served.

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JOY!

Pure joy exuded from this enthusiastic group of eighth grade mission volunteers from St. Dominic School, Northfield, Minn. Students, staff, and volunteers demonstrated the love of Jesus as they served at Ministry on the Margins and other local nonprofits in May. The sisters hosted this group at the monastery during their time in Bismarck. We are so grateful for their enthusiastic work and serving hearts! Thank you. Thank you.