



Leaven

Vol. 37, Issue 1
Summer, 2019

St. Walburg Monastery • Covington, Kentucky



*Goodbye
To Our Giant
Stately Oaks*



*“With towering high-rise canopies,
and rooted deep,
you appeared as staunch sentinels
enclosing the way”*

Sr. Sharon Portwood



From Our Prioress . . .

For more than five years we have been working to sell acreage on the west end of our property. This decision came about as the community realized that our financial resources were not sufficient to care for our retirement needs and support our mission. Recently the sale became a reality. We are grateful and relieved that the sale of land to **Ashley Developers** has finally taken place.



We are particularly appreciative of all who have aided us in this endeavor: **NRRO** (National Religious Retirement Office), our consultants, **Plante Moran**, the staff of **PDS** (Planning and Development Services of Kenton County), members of the **Villa Hills City Council** who were in office at the time, **Gerry Dusing** and **Beverly Storm**, our attorneys for the project, and all our friends. We look forward to seeing the **Sanctuary Village** project developed by Ashley enhance the city of Villa Hills.

And now. . . about the trees!

“I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree” (**Joyce Kilmer**). Our pin oak trees at the entrance to the Monastery building were wonderful and majestic to behold! In recent years their branches became weaker and were unable to lift their “leafy arms to pray”. Weather and age created dangerous situations as branches kept falling. While I am writing this the trees are coming down – one branch at a time, one tree at a time. It is sad – it is necessary. As the psalmist says “Our lives last seventy years or, if we are strong, eighty years.” (Psalm 90; 10) The eight oak trees lived even a few years beyond their expected eighty. For many, the trees were one of our treasures. . . and so we say good-bye to them and await new trees to be planted in the fall.

Wishing everyone a continued blessed summer.

Sr. Aileen Bankemper, Prioress

LEAVEN

Vol. 37, Issue I

Summer, 2019

Srs. Deborah Harmeling
and Margaret Mary
Gough, editors.

Pictures:

Holly Springer, Srs. Cathy
Bauer, Mary Tewes, Mary
Catherine Wenstrup,
Deborah Harmeling
Mary Rose Mission’s
website, Villa Madonna
Academy

Sr. Rita Brink: An Ending and a Beginning

For the past 6 1/2 years **Sr. Rita Brink** has been working with the Sisters of **St. Joseph Monastery** in St. Mary, PA. Her ministry has been as the administrator of this, the first Benedictine women's community in the U.S; it was founded in 1852. In 2012, at the request of the councils of St. Joseph Monastery and the **Federation of St. Scholastica**, Sr. Rita became administrator at the monastery as they dealt with some major questions. See picture below for her blessing by **Sr. Glenna Smith**, then president of the Federation of St. Scholastica.

It was 2014, after much discernment, when community members decided to sell the land and buildings, and its members transfer to other Benedictine communities. (The land and buildings were eventually transferred to the ownership of the local parish.) Sr. Rita would oversee the thousands of details involved in this project, a difficult and delicate assignment. She would help the 17 sisters through the personal challenges of moving and would coordinate with the various groups involved in the closing.



Their great appreciation grew from the fact that in 1852 the first sisters, destitute financially but rich in faith, came to a 10-year old hamlet in the middle of nowhere and helped "build and save" a struggling settlement. In 2014 & '15, out of gratitude and respect, descendants

These groups ranged from the St. Scholastica Federation and **St. Vincent Archabbey**, an historic Benedictine community of men in Latrobe, PA, to the realtors, townspeople, parishioners and many other volunteer workers.

Sr. Rita heaped praise on one significant group of volunteers who, out of respect for the gift the monastic community had been to their town, worked tirelessly on major and minor tasks.

Continued on next page

The Chronicles

by Sr. Andrea Collopy, OSB

Nov. 28 When **Sr. Rita Brink** returned this time from her responsibilities in Pennsylvania, she reported very good news! The property and buildings of **St. Joseph Monastery**, St. Mary's, PA have been sold to **St. Mary Parish** which has been sharing some of the buildings and facilities. Finalization of the sale will occur on Dec. 31. This will be a long-awaited event. Sr. Rita has been working on this for several long years.

Dec. 1 & 2-9 **Sr. Dorothy Schuette** requested prayer support from the community on Dec. 1 as she conducted a retreat day at **the Hyde Park Community United Methodist Church** in Cincinnati. On Dec. 2-9 Sr. Dorothy conducted a directed retreat for four participants at **the Jesuit Retreat Center** in Milford, OH.

Dec. 2- 4 **Sr. Mary Catherine Wenstrup** left for **St. Scholastica Monastery**, Chicago, where she facilitated the process for the community's development of direction statements in preparation for their upcoming election.

Dec. 5 Earlier (Oct. 28 to Nov. 2), **Sr. Cathy Bauer** participated in NETWORK's **Nuns on a Bus** trip from Washington, D. C. to West Palm Beach, FL. Today, Sr. Cathy gave a presentation with vivid pictures of the places and persons involved in the trip. The autographed bus, its internal conveniences and the ten religious women and four Network staff were the focus of today's presentation. Vivid scenes from Virginia, North and South

Carolina, Georgia and Florida moved the adventure from beginning to end. Sr. Cathy's explanation of what was happening was most informative and interesting.

Dec. 8 Oblate **Vickie Cimprich** gave a presentation this afternoon in the Infirmary Lounge. Sisters, Oblates and other interested persons were present. The presentation was entitled *Poetry's Prayer and Work*, primarily a reading and explanation of her poetry. Her poetry concerns Catholicism in the KY mountain area and an ancient creek adjacent to part of Sheltower Trace in Lee County, Ky. Vickie lived in the area for a short time and has returned for over 20 years for private retreats. Mountain experiences and reference to actual places inundate her poetry. Frequent reference is made to wildlife and growth, as well as to the importance of the Shaker religion, immigrants, Africa, and the Catholic presence in the Ky. mountain areas

Dec. 12—18 **Srs. Mary Catherine Wenstrup** and **Christa Kreinbrink** left for St. Mary's, PA to assist **Sr. Rita Brink** in clearing files and other chores to finalize the task of closing the monastery.

It's not surprising that so much is happening at St. Walburg Monastery as Christmas quickly approaches. A tree trimming party was held on the afternoon of Dec. 15. On Dec. 18 music students from VMA, NDA and St. Pius X School directed by **Sr. Mary Carol Hellmann**, entertained with Christmas music in the lower level.

Sr. Rita Brink: An Ending and a Beginning (cont')

of that town's original pioneers volunteered literally countless weeks and months clearing out chicken coops, barns, sheds, and the 88,000 sq. ft. main building with its numerous nooks, attics, and storage spaces. It didn't end there. These contemporary volunteers organized all the finds, researched values, and decided the best way to disseminate the 160-year collection of articles.

Even before this long, complex process was over, the parish and townspeople organized a prayer service to honor and recognize the St. Joseph Monastery community. (See picture of St. Joseph



Monastery below left.) In Feb., 2014 about 1000 people participated to celebrate the role and impact of the sisters on the town of St. Mary and its residents.

Finally, after 6 ½ years of Pennsylvania living sprinkled with periodic trips

back to KY, Rita bid her final good-byes to St. Mary friends and co-workers and arrived home to stay on Feb. 22, 2019. It wasn't long after that she put her antenna up to see what kinds of ministries in Northern Kentucky could utilize her skills developed over the years as teacher, principal, prioress, and in other areas of ministry. She saw an ad in the *Messenger*, the **Diocese of Covington's** newsletter, for a kitchen manager several nights a week, inquired, and was hired by **Mary Rose Mission** (see right) in Florence.



Mary Rose Mission is a non-profit organization started in Cincinnati by a group of volunteers who wanted to serve those in need. In 2013 they completed renovations on a building at Main and Shelby Ave. in Florence, KY, and opened a commercial kitchen to serve the hungry. They began serving evening meals two days a week; now they serve nightly.

Continued on next page

Sr. Rita Brink: An Ending and a Beginning (cont')

Sr. Rita was hired by the Mary Rose administration to be a certified kitchen manager two nights a week. This meant she would supervise operations during meal time, for which she needed state certification. She took the class and received her certificate. She also trained to be a dining room manager, which includes overseeing greeters, servers, dish washers, and the clean-up process to prepare for the next day's guests. Among the many volunteers who carry out these aspects of hospitality are four St. Walburg sisters. **Srs. Andrea Collopy, Cathy Bauer, and Rosemary McCormack** volunteer one day a month; **Sr. Joan Fraenzle** serves there once a week.

Sr. Rita may have even more ministry changes in her future. In late July she will attend a workshop on advancement and development issues within Benedictine communities. This will deepen and expand her background in a field that is not entirely new, as many past ministries involved her with development, public relations, and related fields. The workshop will enable her to participate more extensively as the St. Walburg community expands its vision in this important arena.

It seems ending her work in St. Mary's, PA, has led Sr. Rita to more beginnings than one.

Sr. Colleen Winston, OSB

Silent Directed Retreat for Men and Women

At St. Walburg Monastery Guest House

November 8-10

Retreatants will have private rooms at the Guest House and enjoy spiritual direction each of the three days in an environment of silence and beauty. This opportunity offers the retreatant the experience of praying the Liturgy of the Hours (Divine Office) with the monastic choir at the monastery.

Fee: \$175

Register with **Sr. Dorothy Schuette** at

dorothysosb@gmail.com or call **859-739-7520**.

As Advent progresses, the wreath with its candles sheds light in the chapel and celebrations continue around the monastery. **The Employee Christmas party** was held in the lower level on the 21st. On Dec. 22 we welcomed the **Small Family** from VMA singing Christmas carols.

Dec. 25 **Mary Lou Aldridge**, a long-time member of our infirmary staff, lost her dear husband, **Bob**, on Christmas Day. His funeral was celebrated on December 30.

Dec. 28 **Sr. Helen Hergott** died late today having suffered a stroke earlier. She had been a resident at **Madonna Manor** previous to her stroke, but returned to the monastery shortly before her death. Her Vigil was celebrated in the monastery chapel on Jan. 3 with her funeral Mass following on Jan. 4.

Jan. 1 The feast of Mary, Mother of God was a beautiful and joyous celebration. Prayer partners were drawn for the coming year. The annual Limburger cheese party, compliments of our Chef **Maureen Smain**, was held in the afternoon. Other snacks were available for those who had little appreciation for limburger!

Jan. 8 **Srs. Cathy Bauer, Rosemary McCormack** and **Andrea Collopy** continue their monthly Tuesday visit to **Mary Rose Mission** to serve the needy and homeless. **Sr. Joan Fraenzle** volunteers there almost every Friday.

Jan. 28 – 31 The annual visits of VMA Elementary School students occurred this week. In the mornings kindergarten and 1st thru 5th grades enjoyed games and conversation

with the Sisters in the monastery refectory. A number of Junior High and High School students visited on Thursday, attending Noon Day Prayer in the monastery chapel. They brought their lunch to visit with the sisters in the dining room.

Feb. 8 A large number from the **Girls Challenge Group** from **Blessed Sacrament School** came to our Monastery to play Valentine Bingo. The afternoon, complete with refreshments, was a real treat for the visitors and for the welcoming Benedictine Sisters.

Feb. 8-9 **Sr. Aileen**, along with **Sr. Kathy McNany** from **Immanuel Monastery** in Baltimore, MD, facilitated the process of forming direction statements at Monastery of the Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, IN.

Feb. 9 The annual **Villa-Rama** fund raiser for the benefit of Villa Madonna Academy was held at the Airport Marriot and called **An Evening in Paris**. **Maureen Smain**, our chef, was a big winner of \$1,000 in gift certificates. The Fund-A-Need this year was to fund materials for student and faculty safety, and this goal of \$20,000 was achieved.

Feb. 20-26 **Sr. Aileen** attended the **Conference of Benedictine Prioresses**. This year was a joint meeting with the Abbots. **Abbot Primate Gregory Polan** and **Sr. Susan Hutchins** were presenters on the topic of hope.

Feb. 23 **Sr. Rita Brink** returned home to St. Walburg Monastery today after having served as administrator at St. Joseph Monastery, St. Marys, PA for a little over

Sr. Kimberly Porter's New Position at Restructured Beech Acres

For the past ten years **Sister Kimberly Porter, OSB**, has worked at **Beech Acres Parenting Center** in Cincinnati. The agency recently restructured to bring increased focus to addressing the needs of children and their families today. Sr. Kimberly and her co-workers experience the wrenching that change often brings, as well as the opportunity to serve families directly within their communities.

Sr. Kimberly did not know Beech Acres under its original name, the **General Protestant Orphan Home**, founded in 1849. The orphanage developed into a residential care program which closed in 1989, and then replaced it by a foster care program and a variety of social services. Adapting to changing needs during the 170 years of its life, the agency ultimately centered on a core value: What is most important to a child's life is the quality of parenting.

A licensed professional clinical counselor and registered play therapist, Sr. Kimberly began to work at Beech Acres as a therapist in the behavioral health program. Sr. Kimberly's position evolved into clinical supervision, as she became increasingly skilled at assisting other therapists to achieve their goals.



While this was a natural progression, she missed working as a therapist—the coaching of parents, the sand trays, finger puppets and myriad ways children are invited to express the hard parts of life.

The restructuring that Beech Acres is undertaking brings change to the agency and to those who work within it. It was not a new idea that to support a child's needs, the agency had to engage the family and pay attention to those factors which put stress on family, school and community relationships. Sr. Kimberly is very clear about that. She is now a manager in a newly named program, **Beyond the Classroom**. She

Continued on next page

Sr. Kimberly Porter's New Position at Restructured Beech Acres (cont')

will spend much of her time in a number of schools, coordinating with Beech Acres personnel within the school, as well as other partners who can effect needed change within "the system".



Sr. Kimberly sees coherence between her life as a Benedictine and her ministry at Beech Acres. She was welcomed within the agency from the day she began there, and now pays that hospitality forward. In the restructuring she experienced the encouragement all were given to express their opinions, as St. Benedict admonishes the community to let even the youngest have a say. Sr. Kimberly says her work helps her to live out what she has professed. It leads her to practice *listening* in diverse ways. The integration of her life/work provides stability from which she carries out Beech Acres' mission of *Inspiring and equipping today's parents, families and communities to raise capable, caring, contributing children.*

Sr. Christa Kreinbrink, OSB

Welcome, Eileen O'Connell

On July 23 the community will welcome **Eileen O'Connell** who seeks to reenter the monastery. Eileen is no stranger to the community. Currently, she lives across the street from us and is and has been for 24 years a "senior" member on the theology faculty of Villa Madonna Academy.

Having previously made a canonical novitiate, Eileen's program for reentry calls for a period of reintegration before she makes profession for three years. That will be followed by perpetual profession.

Eileen has a BS in Marketing and a MA in Theology from St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota.



six years. Sr. Rita facilitated the closing of the monastery, assisting the Benedictine Sisters there in relocating to other monasteries and selling the building and property. It was a tremendous task well done and all here at St. Walburg are grateful to have her home again.

Feb. 24 Don Barth and his family sponsored their annual Ice Cream Social today in the monastery dining room. The community and guests enjoyed the plentiful treats. **Sr. Mary Tewes** taught Don in the second grade.

Mar. 1-3 Srs. Dorothy Schuette and Cathy Bauer conducted a silent directed retreat for eight participants who stayed at the Guest House during this time. The group joined the monastery community for prayers and some meals.

Mar. 4 Sr. Justina Franxman died early this morning having been a resident of the infirmary for several years. Her death was peaceful and a bit of a surprise. Her service to God and community was an example to all.

In mid-March **Sr. Lynn McKenzie**, President of the **Federation of St. Scholastica**, sent a thank you letter to the community of St. Walburg Monastery for the valued services of **Sr. Rita Brink** in her years as a valued administrator at St. Joseph Monastery in St Marys, PA. Sr. Lynn indicated her heartfelt gratitude to this community for encouraging Sr. Rita with service to the federation and to St. Joseph Monastery.

March 16 This morning **Polly Stringer**, a professional photographer and former VMA parent, took pictures of all the sisters. The last time this occurred was in 2009.

Look for our new pictures on our website (www.stwalburg.org)!

March 23 Today **Sr. Alice Gerde-**
man, CDP, Provincial Superior of
the Sisters of Divine Providence
gave a presentation entitled *Lent: a
Justice and Peace Journey Toward
Life* as part of the Center of Spiritu-
ality. Twenty-five guests and many
sisters attended. In her presentation
Sr. Alice used the Passion and Death
of Jesus and the life of St. Oscar
Romero for personal and group shar-
ing.

Sr. Dorothy lead a retreat day at **St.
Monica and St. George Parish** in
Cincinnati. There were twenty-five
participants.

March 25-26 **Srs. Aileen
Bankemper** and **Nancy Korden-**
brock participated in the Region Six
meeting of the Leadership Confer-
ence of Women Religious.

Mar. 28-30 **Sr. Cathy Bauer** at-
tended the **Catholic Volunteer Net-**
work Formation Program held in
Washington, D.C. The focus was on
developing a volunteer program.

Apr. 2-7 **Srs. Mary Catherine
Wenstrup** and **Kimberly Porter**
traveled to Bristow, VA, to assist in
the process for election of Prioress.
On their return they announced that
Sr. Johanna Burley had been elect-
ed prioress.

Apr. 4-7 **Srs. Aileen Bankemper**,
prioress, and **Nancy Kordenbrock**,
subprioress, attended the LCWR
New Leader Workshop at the **Center
for Development in Ministry** in
Mundelein, IL.

Apr. 10 A welcome communica-
tion from **Sr. Aileen Bankemper**,
prioress, appeared on our bulletin

Sister Helen Hergott 1936-2018

Born June 7, 1936 Yosemite, California
Entered St. Walburg Monastery August 15, 1954
Received Habit July 2, 1955
Made First Profession August 24, 1956
Died December 27, 2018

Sister Helen Hergott was born in Yosemite, California on June 7, 1936 to **H. Stanley and Esther Bramlage Hergott**. She was the oldest of three daughters. After the death of her mother, her father married **Gabriella Blau**, who brought her two sons and one daughter into the blended family.

Helen graduated from **St. Henry High School** in 1954 and entered St. Walburg Monastery that August. She became a novice in 1955 and was known as Sister Stanislaus. First profession followed in 1956 and perpetual profession in 1959. Sr. Helen celebrated her silver jubilee in 1981, golden in 2006 and diamond in 2016.

Like many of the Benedictine Sisters, Sr. Helen began teaching years before completing a college education. After many summers and weekend courses at **Villa Madonna College** she was awarded a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education in 1965. An experienced elementary and religious educator by that time, Sr. Helen continued her education at **Xavier University**, from which she received a Masters in Education in 1975 as a reading specialist.

Sr. Helen taught primary and intermediate grades at diocesan elementary schools in Northern Kentucky from 1956 until 1967. She taught at St. Ann's in Manchester KY from 1967 to 1976, and cherished the years she spent there. Returning to Northern Kentucky she spent ten more years teaching until becoming an elementary consultant from 1986 to 2001 at the Department of Catholic Education.

From 2002-2004 Sr. Helen studied Pastoral Chaplaincy at



Sister Helen Hergott 1936-2018 (cont')

Christ Hospital. She then served as a chaplain at **St. Elizabeth Healthcare** until 2011 when she retired.

Helen liked people. Her eyes sparkled upon meeting new or old friends. Helen was welcoming, gracious and warm. She laughed easily. Her health declined in the last few years, but not her agility. She challenged the community to keep up with her, until for her safety she was moved to the Memory Care Unit at **Madonna Manor**. She had a stroke and died peacefully on December 27, 2018. Helen is survived by her sister **Ruth McGoron** and brother, **Jack Blau**, many nieces and nephews, friends and her Benedictine community. Vigil service was held the evening of January 2 and the Mass of Christian Burial on Thursday, January 3, with interment following at St. Walburg Cemetery. Memorials may be made to: Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery, 2500 Amsterdam Rd., Villa Hills, KY 41017.

St. Walburg Monastery's Youngest Donors:

St. Francis Seraph School

Thursday, May 23, **Sr. Sharon Portwood** attended Eucharist at **St. Francis Seraph School** in Cincinnati, Ohio. The 8th grade graduation followed. (Sr. Sharon had taught many years at St. Francis until her retirement last year.) She was greatly surprised after Mass when **Mr. Mabry**, principal, called her up to the front of church. When she was presented with a check for \$500 from a student-run penny war, she was overwhelmed! The children were delighted and expressed their appreciation with applause. She later learned that the fifth grade class (her former second-grade religion students) was in charge. One of the girls told her she had gotten up really early to get to school during the "war" to count the pennies and silver, along with some other students.

The next week Sr. Sharon delivered a beautiful thank-you card, made by **Sr. Emmanuel**, and took it personally to available classes. The kindergarten class was especially delightful.

Sr. Sharon doesn't know from where the idea for the war came, but these children (and their families, as well as the staff), will live on in her heart and prayer. After all, they are probably the community's youngest benefactors!



boards today. **Eileen O'Connell** has requested to re-enter this Benedictine community. Eileen spent Holy Week with the community. She will officially join the community in July.

Apr. 18-21 We celebrated these beautiful days of Holy Week with services and appropriate silence when recalling the passion and death of Jesus Christ. Many friends and relatives celebrated these holy days with the community.

Apr. 22 A Memorial Mass was celebrated in our chapel today for **Barbara Reinders, VMA '64**. Barbara died February 13. Many relatives and friends of Barbara attended the liturgy.

Apr. 26-27 **Srs. Mary Tewes** and **Sharon Portwood** attended a two-day retreat, *The Spirituality of Saving Our Planet* sponsored by the Tri-State Conference of Associate (Oblate) Leadership at Providence Sisters' St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Terra Haute, IN. A business meeting, retreat conferences on the environment, and an Earth-Day Craft Festival were all included. The event was attended by Associate/Oblate Leadership from seven religious communities.

May 4 Our Annual Corporation Meeting was held this afternoon with an absorbing agenda. After Evening Prayer the community held its annual Derby Day party and watched the running of the Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs. The disqualification of the first horse caused quite a stir at Churchill Downs and, of course, at our Derby Party.

May 6-9 **Sr. Cathy Bauer** attended

the NRVC Lake Erie/Ohio Religion Conference entitled *How to create a vocation contact plan and manage it*. The conference was held at the Trina Spirituality & Conference Center, Sylvania, Ohio. Twenty-four vocation directors attended.

May 8 Today **Sr. Kathleen Ryan** and a group of seniors took the Colonial Heights bus on a trip to Maysville, Ky. For an hour and a half they were tied up in traffic on I-275 and used the time to laugh, tease and tell stories. Although they were over an hour late, the staff at DeSha's Restaurant welcomed them with southern hospitality and very good food. After lunch they had a guided tour of the city's historical sites. The return trip was shorter with a good flow of traffic.

May 19 Villa Madonna Academy alumni celebrated the reunion of the classes of 1969 and 1994 at the alumni brunch today. A large group of alumni celebrated the occasion by attending Eucharist with the Benedictine Sisters in the monastery chapel. **Laura Haskamp** was honored for her 25 years of service to the Academy as an elementary school teacher.

Mid-May The ending of the school year will mean that the Infirmary and Kitchen will lose quite a few of their high school aides who have served faithfully for many years—**Anna Eisner, Abby Bezold, Lexie Lund, Olivia Martini, Emily O'Connell & Frank Stoddard** from VMA; **Emily Egbers, Emma Sheely & Samantha Wichmann** from Notre Dame Academy; **Conner Furnish** from

Sister Justina Franxman 1928-2019

Born April 23, 1923 in Newport, Kentucky
Entered St. Walburg Monastery September 8, 1948
Received Habit June 30, 1949
First Profession August 24, 1950
Died March 4, 2019

Sister Justina Franxman was born on April 23, 1928 and adopted by **J. Herman** and **Elizabeth Gripshover Franxman** in October of 1929. Mary Louise gained three brothers upon her adoption. She cherished the years she worked in the family grocery with her parents and brothers.

Mary entered St. Walburg Monastery in 1948. She became a novice in 1949 and received the name Sister Justina. First profession followed in 1950 and perpetual profession in 1953. Sr. Justina celebrated her silver jubilee in 1975, golden in 2000 and diamond in 2010.

Between 1950 and 1963 Sr. Justina taught elementary grades at St. John's Orphanage and at Villa Madonna Academy, and served as principal. By 1962 she completed work for her BA in Elementary Education at Villa Madonna College. In the next year her teaching took a different course when she was appointed Novice Director. For the next fifteen years Sr. Justina taught and mentored the newest members of the community, postulants, novices and scholastics, as part of the Formation Team. During this time she finished her work for an MA in Theology from **St. John's University** in Collegeville, MN. She continued to teach at VMA and served as subprioress before her election as prioress of St. Walburg Monastery in 1978.

Sr. Justina brought her own unique gifts to the office of prioress. She knew how to lead, to laugh, to worry, and to welcome. After two terms she went to Oregon to study spiritual direction and served in that ministry (and in others) at home until her retirement and move to the infirmary in 2014.



Sister Justina Franxman 1928-2019 (cont')

One of the joys of Justina's life was her discovery of her birth family in 2006. She learned that she was the daughter of **Margaret Wiesman**, and that she had living relatives nearby. This reunion was a source of warmth and wonder for her. The sharing of stories and photos enhanced her experience of family. She was welcomed, and she welcomed in return.

Sr. Justina's death was unexpected and peaceful in the wee hours of March 4, 2019. She is survived by her sisters-in-law **Marilyn Franxman, Patricia Jung**, several generations of numerous nieces and nephews, friends and her Benedictine community. The vigil service was held Sunday evening, March 10, 2019 and Mass of Christian Burial on Monday, March 11, 2019. Interment followed in St. Walburg Cemetery. Memorials may be made to: Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery, 2500 Amsterdam Rd., Villa Hills, KY 41017.

A Grant for Security from SOAR (Support Our Aging Religious)

Last year when we experienced a theft of money and the gold rings of our deceased sisters, we realized that we needed to add some kind of security to the monastery. We looked at all the doors leading in or out of the monastery and made some changes to how they were locked or unlocked. We also realized that we needed a camera security system at various points inside and outside the monastery.

We applied to an organization called **Support Our Aging Religious (SOAR)** for a grant to fund the installation of a video surveillance system. We received the grant that funds the 16 cameras plus the installation!

Support Our Aging Religious, Inc. (SOAR!) is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization which raises funds and provides grants to help Catholic religious congregations in the United States care for their elderly and infirm members. These grants address practical immediate needs such as renovations for accessibility, automatic doors, hospital beds and assistive devices. This assistance ensures the safety, peace of mind, and dignity of aging and infirm sisters, brothers and priests. It was founded in 1986 and depends upon the donations of others. We are most grateful to the organization and will remember the staff and donors in our prayers. For more information see: <https://soar-usa.org/about/>.

Covington Catholic. They will be attending various colleges and universities throughout the country.

May 31-June 5 Sr. Aileen Bankemper facilitated the election of prioress at the **Monastery of the Immaculate Conception**, Ferdinand, IN.

June 10 Those familiar with the eight pin oaks fronting St. Walburg Monastery will see a new picture after this day. The trees have become a concern because of falling branches and will be cut down today. The remnants will be hauled away and used for fuel elsewhere. New trees will be planted in the fall.

June 21 Bishop Roger Foy and the **Serra Club** sponsored the annual picnic for religious of the Diocese of Covington today at Summit Hills Country Club. Many sisters from the communities were present. Each sister received a bag of useful gifts and special gifts were given to sisters for their service within the diocese. The picnic lunch was delicious and deeply appreciated. Bingo, games and social mingling made up the rest of the afternoon.

June 22 The Benedictine Oblates of St. Walburg Monastery hosted the annual Ice Cream Social this afternoon. The celebration was held in the monastery dining room. The party began with the dulcimer group. Then the Oblates served the sisters ice cream followed by bingo with multiple prizes for all. We are grateful to our Benedictine Oblates.

June 27-July 3 Sr. Aileen gave a workshop and facilitated a process with **Sr. Kathy Huber** at **St. Walburga Monastery**, Elizabeth, NJ.

Thank You to Our 2018 Community Donors

This list represents those who made donations to the community
from Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2018



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**Sr. Charles Wolking and all
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**All my deceased Benedictine
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We make every effort to keep our listings of donors error free. If you find any mistakes, please accept our apologies and contact Sr. Deborah Harmeling, OSB (859-331-6771 or sdhosb@yahoo.com) about corrections.

*Reflections from the School
for the Lord's Service*



We have had a community blog entitled *Reflections from the School for the Lord's Service* since September 22, 2011. The address is <http://stwalburg.blogspot.com/>. We add a new post every Wednesday, and sixteen sisters contribute posts. If you haven't visited our blog, please join our readers from the United States and all over the world, including Russia, Malaysia, France, the United Kingdom, Indonesia, India, the Netherlands, Japan, Italy and the Philippines to read the thoughts and reflections of our community members.

To the Oaks



Hail, giant stately survivors,
Weathering frigid winds and humid heat,
lavishly popping kernels of acorns on the walk be-
neath,
(as everyone knows who has crunched through them)
Urging life to upspring into the future.

You were young'uns, yourselves,
eighty years or so ago.
You out-sized your neighbors.

With towering high-rise canopies, and rooted deep,
You appeared as staunch sentinels enclosing the way.

You always had room for more inhabitants,
from the hidden, least noticed, down-deep creature
to the most melodious bird or roguish squirrel.
You urged life to upspring into the future.

Your presence welcomed Sunday visiting relatives and friends –
children played under you, crisscrossing your leafy, shadowed patterns.
You witnessed laughter, joy and, sometimes, tears.
Many a soul intuitively sensed your strength, stability, awesomeness,
And, hopefully, left refreshed.

You will be remembered (not just in Sr. Mary's album).
In the ground nurtured by your deepest-down strands,
young'uns (Oaks? We don't yet know) will grow...
green and full and vibrant with life –
the new Guardians of the monastery way –
inviting all who enter here, to seek peace and pursue it.
That in all things God may be glorified!

Sr. Sharon Portwood
6/12/19





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SAVE THE DATE

The Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery invite you to join us

for a Morning of Reflection entitled

Meeting Teresa of Avila

Presented by Sr. Deborah Harmeling, OSB

Saturday, October 26, 2019

9:30 am—Noon

Lower Level of Monastery

Call Sr. Deborah Harmeling at 859-331-6771

or email sdhosb@yahoo.com for reservations.

\$20 fee includes snacks and materials.

If you wish to stay for lunch, please add \$6.

