



# LEAVEN

Volume 39 Issue 2

Summer 2021







# Leaven Changes Hands

By Sr. Christa Kreinbrink

"After each issue I felt like I'd given birth to a child." Sr. Deborah Harmeling describes her experience of *Leaven* editorship in this way, knowing the comparison wouldn't actually hold up. Editor since 2003, Deborah looked back on the changes she had "birthed":

- employed a mailing service. In prior years sisters sorted ZIP codes by hand and delivered *Leaven* to the bulk mail unit of USPS. No fond memories.
- used matte paper to enhance photos, appearance, feel. Always partially recycled.
- added a donations envelope to make giving easier. Some felt uncomfortable with this change; in time it seemed normal practice.

Deborah grew the mailing list from 1000 to 4200 subscribers. She automated the list and used a service to update it according to current postal service addresses. Before the mailing is sent out the list is corrected, thus cutting the cost of Return Service Requested by the post office.

Deborah's favorite issue features the 2009 Sesquicentennial. She recalls the work it took to feature the history of St. Walburg Monastery and find photos that adequately represented 150 years. She is grateful to Sr. Andrea Collopy for writing the Chronicles for so many years, and to Sr. Mary Tewes for taking over the work of being alert to what is significant, interesting or even just amusing. New editor Sr. Eileen O'Connell will make changes of her own. Sr. Deborah welcomes the fresh skill and perspective she brings.

Deborah is a librarian by training and experience. Her next horizon is the archives of the community. Although each discipline uses its own style of organizing data, Deborah intends to use whatever will give access to information in the most straightforward way. A couple years ago she was asked to provide a list of all the principals who had served a certain parish school since its founding. The difficulty of locating the information in our archives made her aware of the need to find the tools to make data available more easily. This will be her first task.

St. Benedict says "every time you begin a new work, pray to God most earnestly to bring it to perfection." [Prol. 4] For both Deborah and Eileen, we ask God's blessing.



*The Benedictine Sisters are deeply grateful for the support provided by our benefactors. You are remembered whenever the community gathers for prayer. For purposes of donations, bequests, and annuities, our legal title is St. Walburg Monastery of Benedictine Sisters of Covington, Kentucky.*

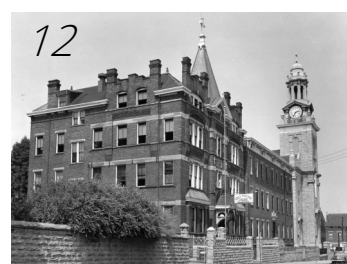
## LEAVEN SUMMER 2021 VOLUME 39 ISSUE 2

*Published three times a year for the friends of St. Walburg Monastery*

*Editor: Sr. Eileen O'Connell*

*Contributors: Srs. Aileen Bankemper, Christa Kreinbrink, Deborah Harmeling, Dorothy Schuette, Mary Tewes, and Nancy Kordenbrock.*

*Pictures: Srs. Eileen O'Connell, Emmanuel Pieper, Mary Tewes, and Cathy Bauer; Mrs. Amy Holtzman; The Messenger.*



13



**On the cover:** This statue of Mary and Jesus was donated to the community by Fr. Charles Persy, a diocesan priest from Pittsburgh, and a relative of Sr. Vincentia. He taught at Villa Madonna College in the 1920's. The statue is on the hillside above the Ohio River. Hill slippage tilted the statue on its original pedestal until 1937 when new stonework and a new lower pedestal replaced the worn, cracking pillar.



# from the Prioress

Summer greetings to everyone,

Some normalcy is resuming at the Monastery. Sunday, the Fourth of July we welcomed guests to our liturgies. Sixteen months without guests is a long time. A sense of gratitude that many ordinary events are beginning to occur; receiving guests, visiting family, friends, meeting in person rather than Zoom, shopping, eating in restaurants. Indeed, we are grateful that much of the ordinary can resume. In paraphrasing the words of Pope St. John the XXIII, the occasion of opening up provides the opportunity to open the windows and let in a renewed spirit!

Recently, the community was afforded a wonderful opportunity. The Federation of St. Scholastica, of which we are a member, held its Pre-Chapter meeting in June. Covid-19 was not even beginning to be tamed when the planning committee met via Zoom more than a year ago. When the time came for a decision to be made as to how the meeting would be held the rate of transmission of the virus was decreasing, but not enough to allow for an in-person meeting. It was determined that a virtual meeting would have to suffice. Though this decision was disappointing for the delegates, it did present a silver lining. It allowed for all sisters from the seventeen member monasteries, and not just the delegates, to be present; something that has never happened.

Next year the Federation celebrates its centennial. As part of the planning, the committee invited the past Presidents of the Federation to speak about their time in office. Many of us knew these women and were reminded of the strength and bonds we have with our sister monasteries because of the influence of these sisters. We were privileged to hear each speak of her experience as President. Each spoke with grace and candor. Each experienced significant challenges during her tenure that she bore courageously. Each contributed to the growth and influence of the Federation and each of them continues to contribute her gift to the growth and depth of Benedictine life. In the afternoon we heard from younger, newer members of Benedictine houses. Their commitment and love of Benedictine life give hope for the future.

Reasons for gratitude and thanksgiving appear everywhere.  
Sister Aileen Bankemper, OSB  
Prioress

“Open the windows and let in a renewed Spirit!”



# The Chronicles

By Sr. Mary Tewes, OSB

**March-May: Sr. Kimberly Porter** facilitated direction-settings or elections this spring, some rescheduled because of the pandemic. She traveled to Beech Grove, IN, Cullman, AL, Pittsburgh, PA and Elizabeth, NJ. **Sr. Aileen Bankemper** facilitated in Cullman, AL as well.

**March 6: Lenten Morning of Reflection: Rev. Del Staigers** of the Cincinnati archdiocese spoke with over fifty sisters and guests by Zoom on "Indifference as a Virtue in the Spiritual Life."

**March 13:** The Oblates began a virtual book study of *Radical Spirit* by Sr. Joan Chittister, OSB.

**March 18: Tim Reese** of PeeWee's Place stopped in at supertime to tell us how many local people contributed to the fund he began when most of the sisters had Covid. PeeWee's Place delivered many, many meals to St. Walburg's, funded by the generosity of Villa Hills and Crescent Springs residents.

**March 22: Book Study** begins of *Strangers to the City* by monastic writer, Michael Casey, a Cistercian monk of Tarrawarra Abbey in Victoria, Australia. Fifteen Sisters participated in the weekly discussions.



Tim "PeeWee" Reese

**March 22: Infirmary Roof** replacement begins. It's easy to tell where the men are working, especially when they remove a hall skylight and say Hi to the unsuspecting sister below.

**March 25: Poetry Night** hosted by Srs. **Kimberly Porter** and **Rita Brink**.

**Lent and Easter Season:** The sisters gave reflections on the gospel reading at the Saturday evening Liturgy of the Hours, live-streamed by **Sr. Eileen O'Connell**. Reflectors were: **Sisters Aileen Bankemper, Christa, Colleen, Dorothy, Nancy, Eileen, Deborah, Mary Tewes, Kathleen, Kimberly and Rita Brink.**

**April 3: Easter Vigil:** The paschal candle was lit from the fire pit in the courtyard. It had been years since we used an actual wood fire, having resorted to smokeless salt fire indoors so as to avoid triggering the fire alarm.

**April 21:** We woke to a late-April snowfall. Many took photos before the three inches of heavy, wet snow melted by noon.

**April 26-27: Sr. Aileen** participated in the **LCWR-Region 6 Spring Meeting** virtually.

**May 1: Monastery Corporation Meeting.** Treasurer **Sr. Nancy Kordenbrock** presents all the figures and facts. We Kentuckians observed **Derby Day** later in the day, complete with (very) small-stakes betting. Perhaps we could add a fancy hat competition next year.

**May 5:** Nurses from the NKY Health Department came to administer our **2<sup>nd</sup> Covid-19 vaccine.**

**May 9: The Monastery Garden Restaurant** opened once again, with menus by sister chefs. The Garden Restaurant gave sisters an opportunity to "go out" to dinner during stay-at-home times.

**May 15-21: Sr. Aileen Bankemper** traveled to Ferdinand, IN, to prepare for and chair the annual Conference of Benedictine Prioresses (CBP) and Retreat, virtually. Participating communities from all over North America numbered 47.





**May 18: Madonna Manor** celebrated **Ground Blessing** for Phase II of the new Independent Living. **Sr. Christa Kreinbrink**, our Building and Grounds Director, spoke representing St. Walburg Monastery. Bishop Roger Foys blessed ground for this next section of brownstones, to be located east of the VMA tennis courts.

**May 19:** The weather has finally warmed enough for the **17-year Brood X cicadas** to rise from the ground, where they have been maturing by feeding on roots all this time. The VMA students and the Canada Geese have been gathering them each day all over our lawns.

**May 23: Pentecost Sunday, Sr. Rita Brink** traveled to St. Gertrude Monastery in Delaware to give their community retreat.

**May 30: Rite of Burial** for the three sisters who died during Covid-19 pandemic: **Srs. Charles Wolking, Rita Bilz and Margaret Mary Gough**. Families of the sisters and community gathered in the cemetery for the service on the cold, windy day.



*Sr. Aileen Bankemper leads the Rite of Burial.*

**June 4:** Diocese of Covington published the annual catechists' awards which recognize exemplary parish and school catechists. **Sr. Eileen O'Connell** received a plaque naming her one of the "Outstanding High School Catechists."

**June 6: Sr. Aileen Bankemper** updated the COVID protocol

for the community. Since we are all fully vaccinated, changes were named in visiting, eating out, and shopping. Liturgies will be open to guests beginning in July; the monastery will have weekday Masses on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Oblates may join us for the community retreat in July and for meals in the dining room beginning in August. Keeping a mask in one's pocket was also advised.

**June 16-18: St. Scholastica Federation pre-chapter** held virtually this year offered several open sessions in which non-delegate community members could participate. Monastery delegates were **Srs. Aileen Bankemper, Nancy Kordenbrock, Rita Brink. Sr. Kimberly Porter** attended as a council member of the Federation.

**June 30: Poetry Night** hosted by **Srs. Kimberly Porter and Rita Brink**.

**July 4:** Guests are welcome to again attend liturgies.



*Srs. Rita Brink, Nancy Kordenbrock, Aileen Bankemper, and Kimberly Porter*

# TRANSFORM OUR FUTURE; TREASURE OUR TRADITION

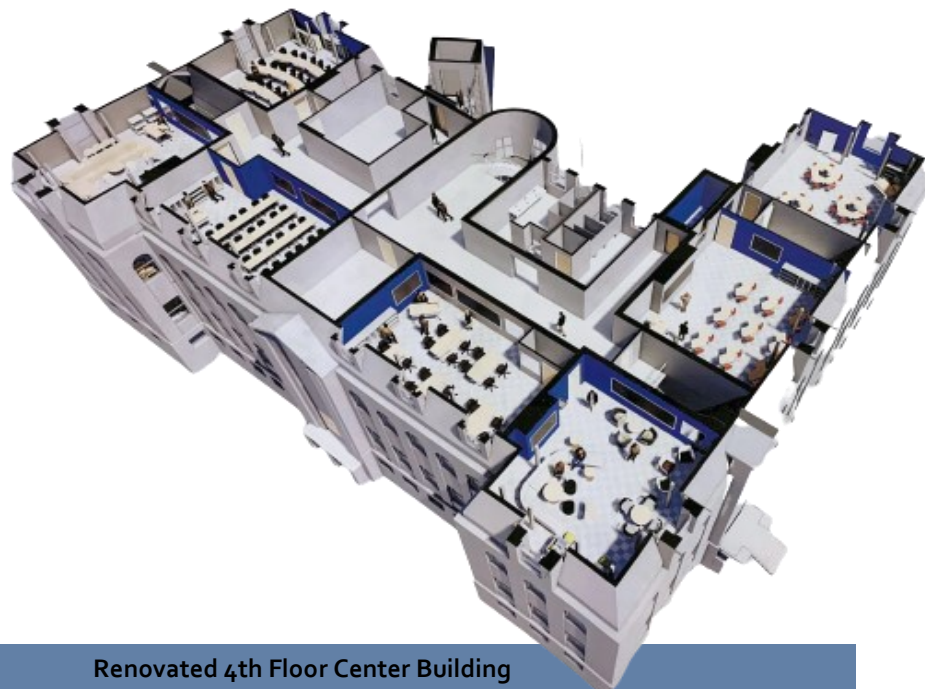
By Sr. Nancy Kordenbrock

This motto summarizes the capital campaign currently underway at Villa Madonna Academy. The goal of the campaign is to renovate the Center building to accommodate the Villa Montessori program and grades K-6 of the elementary school. All floors of the building will be transformed and an elevator will be added to permit better access for the handicapped. The first floor of the yellow building will be converted into a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) wing. Other funds will be added to endowments for operations, faculty and athletics.

The monetary goal of the campaign is \$5.6 million. Since the campaign began in the fall of 2019 over \$2.7 million has been raised toward the goal. The Covid pandemic slowed the project somewhat but it is now in full swing again, reaching out to alumni, parents, friends and businesses to help us make this amazing project a reality.

The community of St. Walburg is excited about this outstanding project and supported it with a lead donation of \$500,000. The donation is our way of acknowledging our pride in all that the faculty and students have done to carry forward the vision of our founding Benedictine Sisters when they began the school 115 years ago.

The diagrams below give an idea of the scope of the project, including the STEM wing as well as one of the floor plans for the Center building. If you have any questions about the project please contact Pamela McQueen, executive director.



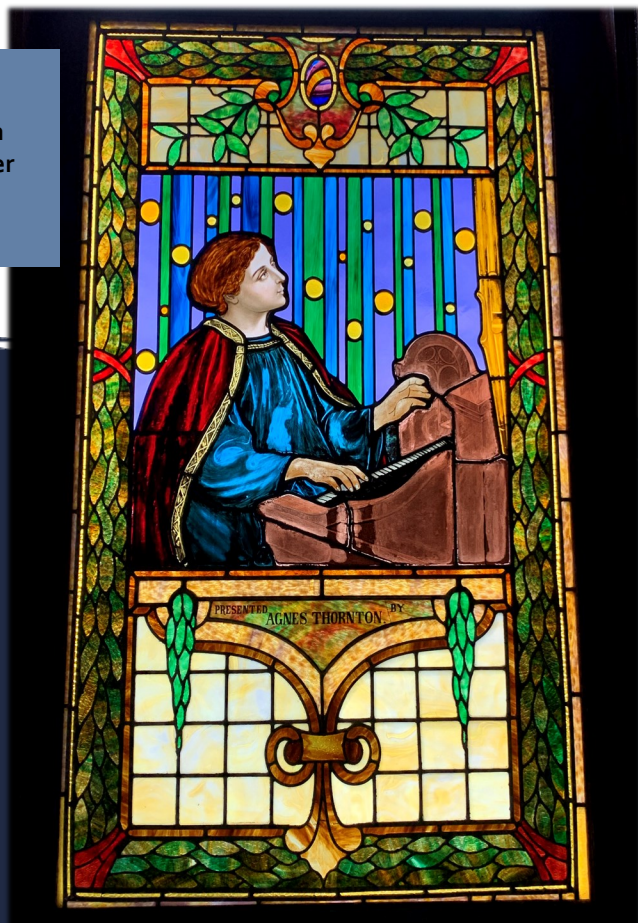
Renovated 4th Floor Center Building





The grandfather clock, donated by the women's summer retreat group in 1916, still keeps time!

Stained-glass window, main staircase Center building



St. Benedict dorm after years of damage will become two new 4th grade classrooms.





# 75 YEARS

## SR. ANDREA COLLOPY

Ruth Collopy, the oldest of eight Collopy children entered St. Walburg Monastery in 1944 and received the name Sister Mary Andrea when she became a novice. It has now been 75 years since she made her first profession according to the Rule of St. Benedict. Throughout her life she has been an educator. She began her career at St. Benedict's Commercial School on 16<sup>th</sup> Street in Covington and moved from there to serve at Villa Madonna Academy for over 40 years, teaching religion, Latin, English and social studies, being dorm mother for boarding students and Alumni Coordinator. Her good nature and patience were only surpassed by her genuine love for and affirmation of those in her charge. She is still amazing at facial recognition and memories of antics at school when former students come to call. For several years she was on the Crescent Springs Volunteer Emergency Life Squad and always had her red jumpsuit and keys to the car parked out front.



Hundreds of pairs became gifts for sisters' families and friends, prizes at charity fund-raisers and decorations as warranted by the occasion. Since its inception, Sr. Andrea lovingly shared the comings and goings of community members with the readers of Leaven, "passing on the pen" to Sr. Mary Tewes just this last year.

As the oldest sister in our community at 95 years, Sr. Andrea continues to be a model of a life dedicated to God through presence and service and to others. She remains wholehearted in her prayer, "What do you want of me, Lord?"



Volunteering for the Crescent Springs Life Squad in the 1970's.

Her wisdom and gentleness were qualities that Sr. Andrea especially employed in the two decades she served the community in roles of Subprioress and House Coordinator. Following her retirement from classroom teaching Sr. Andrea could be found around the monastery wherever helping hands were needed: washing windows, slicing apples for pies, washing dishes, helping in the community laundry. Even when she was in charge of answering the community telephone and welcoming people at the front door Sr. Andrea kept busy crocheting. Her specialty was making baby shoes—sandals, boots, saddles, Mary Janes, and more.



Flowers and cards—95+—to help celebrate 95 years!



**1946**

Major shortages in jobs and housing for those returning from war, around the world the baby boom started as couples married and had children; shortages of food and materials continued.



**1950's**

The Korean War begins. Elizabeth II becomes the Queen of England. Ellis Island ceases to be a point of immigration into the U.S. when it officially closes. Alaska and Hawaii are admitted as the 49th and 50th states in the U.S.



**1960's**

The Vietnam War, Civil Rights Protests, the assassinations of U.S. President John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Cuban Missile Crisis. Finally ended on a good note when the first man landed on the moon.



**1970's**

Boeing 747 debuts. Walt Disney World opens in Florida. 26th amendment—voting age now 18. Watergate and massive inflation rock the world. Secretariat wins Triple Crown. Digital technology booms. Paul VI, JP I, JP II.





## SR. DAVID RUSCHMANN

Sr. David Ruschmann is third from youngest of eleven children in her family. She graduated from High School at 18 years of age and entered St. Walburg Monastery in 1944. As she tells it, "I always knew I'd be coming." She had three older sisters who were already religious: Clara, a Sister of Divine Providence, and Benedictine Sisters Joseph and Agnes. David says that she "went to talk with the CDPs and they were nice, but I didn't feel it was right for me. After visiting with Mother Domitilla Thuener at the Villa, I had a dream and felt physically compelled to get up right then and go to the Benedictines."

After her formation years in religious life Sr. David was assigned to teach 7<sup>th</sup> Grade at Holy Cross. She "kind of enjoyed it", but didn't feel like it's

where she belonged. She talked to a couple of sisters who were nurses and that settled it for her. After getting her RN diploma Sr. David also trained as a Nurse Anesthetist and was assigned to Santa Fe Hospital in La Junta and then St. Joseph Hospital in Florence, Colorado where she served as Anesthetist and Director of Nursing for over seventeen years. Upon her return to Kentucky she assumed a similar role at Estill County Hospital for fifteen years and then



Preparing a donation for the residents of Eastern Kentucky.

worked in related medical areas in rural Kentucky until 2006. After retiring from her administrative duties at ECH she joined Sr. Andrew Hellmann and a medical team of fellow Kentuckians who traveled to various parts of the world to offer their healing expertise to those who had no access to services on their own. These trips took her to Africa and to South and Central America.

In reflecting on her ministry of health care Sr. David says, "One of the

# JUBILEE

Articles by Sr. Dorothy Schuette



Sr. David can often be found playing cards in the lounge.

strengths of being in the hospital with patients near death is that it ages you; you grow old. I could support the elderly and the sick after I became familiar with the conditions and loss." Speaking from her own experience of being partially blind and rather hard of hearing, Sr. David mused, "I hope that the reality that I'm in now is good (grounded). I'm tempted to think, 'This can't be real. It's too simple. Sometimes I have my best moments when I'm sitting there with the Lord. It gives me hope for happiness and eternal life for myself, family, the community and everyone. I really enjoy life. I am more grateful for my vocation than ever before.'"



### 1990's

*The World Wide Web and personal computers change life forever. Apartheid ends in South Africa while the Gulf War begins. We met Harry Potter, Dolly the Sheep, Google, and Beanie Babies.*

### 2000's

*The Human Genome Project gives great hope for the health profession. Changes in technology make the world smaller. Wikipedia, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter enter. Peanuts exits. Hurricane Katrina.*

### 2010's

*I-pads are a game-changer. Malaysia MH370 missing. Earthquake hits Haiti. Malala youngest recipient of Nobel Peace Prize. Will & Kate. Uber and Airbnb are popular. Ice Bucket Challenge raises millions for ALS. Cubbies win!*

# 60 YEARS

# JUBILEE

## SR. COLLEEN WINSTON

Sister Colleen Winston celebrates 60 years as a professed Benedictine. She is a woman of many interests which have taken her in many directions over these years. The major themes in her life are music and media. These currents began at home with parents who introduced her to both loves; a mother who loved music and played the piano by ear and a father who worked at the local movie theater and shared his talent for photography with his daughter. These themes were played in major chords as Colleen, then Barbara, made money for college by playing the organ at local parish churches before she entered the community and after entering St. Walburg Monastery, gradually becoming more and more involved in providing the musical accompaniment for community liturgies. Her creativity and efforts at excellence continue to challenge and give us direction. She began composing music soon after she entered and learned to play guitar. Her music is



used in Benedictine monasteries around the country. Colleen has shared her creative talents beyond our monastery by her passion to call people into communion. This came to a climax as she founded the Monastic Liturgy Forum in 1988 and assisted in its merger with another organization to become the Monastic Worship Forum which exists today to support Benedictine musicians and liturgists around the country.

The theme of media in the service of communion has two major movements: Colleen's position as Communication Director for the Diocese of Covington under Bishop William A. Hughes and her ministry of presence to other seekers initiated through Mannafold. When the diocese had fifty-seven counties Colleen recalls the joys she shared in "taking the diocesan administration into remote areas, letting the people throughout Eastern Kentucky know that their bishop cared for them, listened to them." She enjoyed promoting the broader view of church and improving the channels of communication in various ways among all the parishes and pastors. Colleen has also contributed as a professional journalist and photographer to regional and national publications. Photography continues to be a major hobby.

Sharing remembrances of her fourteen years of ministry through the small house of prayer by the lake named Mannafold, brings joy to her face. Colleen reports that she came to such deep insights from the fruitful conversations there and friendships developed over the years. A variety of people came for a variety of reasons to participate in these ecumenical offerings.



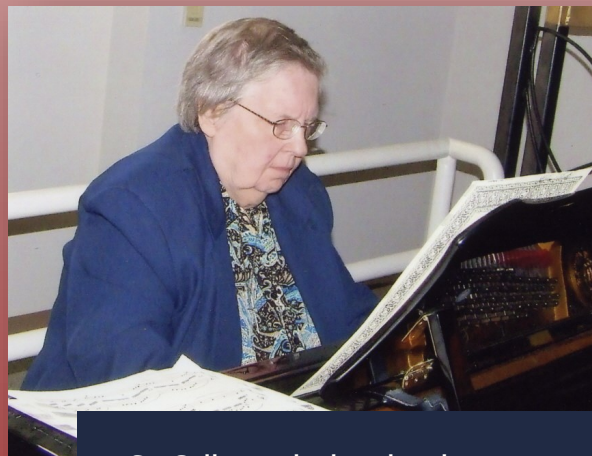
These were times (1974-1988) following the Second Vatican Council and people were coming to understand themselves in new ways as the faithful and gifted people of God. During this time Colleen enjoyed working with Sisters Renee Rust, Lois Elaine Krouse, Justina Franxman and Wendeline Burkhard. Men also came to Mannafold, but women were especially experiencing new awakening and awareness. And so, along with Mary Brown, Colleen initiated a local group, WomanGift to enhance the role of women in the Catholic Church. Colleen also remembers that some of the early Mannafold guests, in getting acquainted with the charism of Benedictines,

Sr. Colleen with Sr. Margaret Mary Gough and Mrs. Bertha Higdon



became the first oblates of our community.

When asked what gives her hope, Sr. Colleen responded, "There are so many signs of people with a bigger vision. My hope is that more and more groups collaborate to bring about the future to which our faith calls us, one of communion that bonds us with God and each other."



Sr. Colleen playing the piano at a community liturgy.



# WISDOM, WITNESS, WAY FORWARD

By Sr. Nancy Kordenbrock

The pre-chapter of the federation of St. Scholastica was held remotely from June 16-18. Sixty-one delegates participated from eighteen monasteries in the US and Mexico. Sisters in all the member monasteries were able for the first time to see the presentations via technology.

Sr. Lynn McKenzie of Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman, Alabama, opened the day with her presidential address. She focused on the future as a time of transformation, a time of uncertainty and a time of trust. While the future is always unknown, faith in God and each other forms the basis of trust. Whatever the number of monasteries and members, “some will be enough to manifest God to the world.”

*“Some will be enough to manifest God to the world.”*



**Sr. Addie Walker, SSND**

The committee preparing for the Centennial celebration of the federation in June, 2022, presented their goals and plans. The goals can be summarized as: Wisdom—history informs the future; Witness—what we stand for; Way Forward—what we offer the world. Many activities are planned, to be announced in the coming months.

The afternoon session featured Sr. Addie Lorraine Walker, SSND, who spoke on anti-racism. It would be impossible to convey all that she shared, but some significant ideas will have to suffice.

We are one human race, all connected in God’s image. Ethnic and racial categories are human constructs that have led to divisions of our one human race.

She differentiated prejudice and racism. Prejudice is pre-judging someone usually without adequate information about them. Discrimination is oppression based on prejudice. Racism, however, is a system of advantage for some based on race, and oppression for others based on race. Racism is unconscious white supremacy based on prejudice.

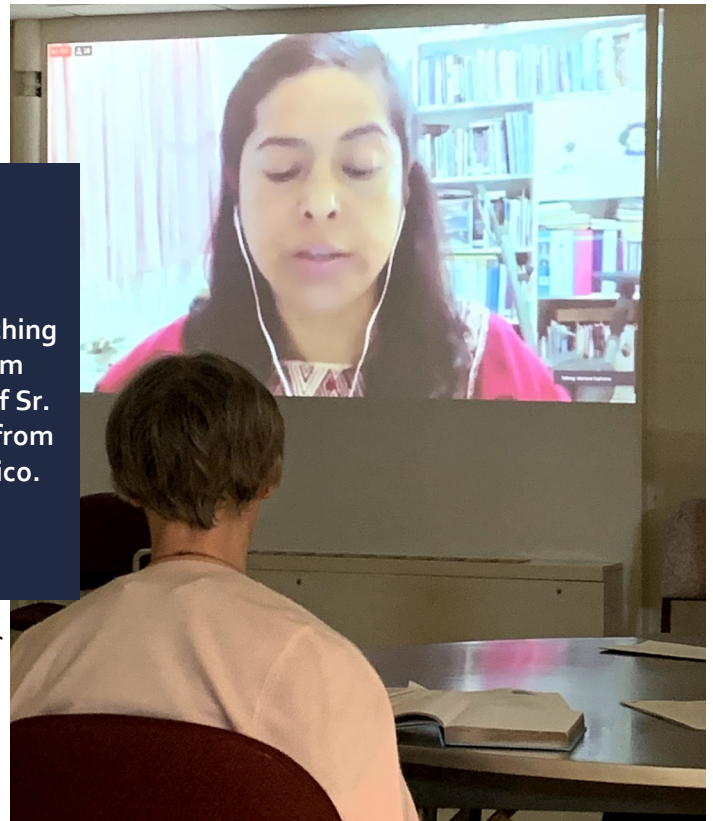
As Pope Francis writes, “We cannot close our eyes to any form of discrimination while pretending to value every human life.” The Rule of Benedict calls us to radical hospitality, making space for everyone, being inclusive.

In conclusion, Sr. Addie said, “If you are not working against racism, you are maintaining racism.”

The second day focused on the past and the future. Four past presidents of the Federation shared their remembrance of the many issues faced by the Federation in the past 50 years. Work to define our Benedictine identity in modern times and make it truly alive required the thoughtful collaboration of all the member monasteries. Their talks reminded all of us of the blessings we have received through the work of all our communities in the days since Vatican II and its mandate to honor and live our Benedictine charism.

Four newer members of communities presented their vision of Benedictine life in the present and future. Their hope-filled presentations emphasized their belief in the relevance of our charism today and its meaning as we move forward. They inspired us by their prayerful and thoughtful understanding of what Benedictine life is—a life of seeking God in community in service to others. Their appreciation of what has been and their enthusiasm for what will be was incredibly inspiring.

**Sr. Sharon Portwood watching the livestream presentation of Sr. Mariana Oliva from Torreon, Mexico.**



# FROM THE ARCHIVES

By Sr. Deborah Harmeling

This year (2021) Thomas More University (previously Thomas More/Villa Madonna College) is celebrating its centenary. In 1921 the Benedictine Sisters established the college at Villa Madonna Academy in order to educate sisters to be able to teach in our schools.

In our archives we recently found Sr. Irmina Saelinger's notes on the beginnings of the college from 1921-1938. Sr. Irmina was involved in the project and reality of the college from the very start until she retired as registrar in 1969 and was appointed the Director of TMC's Institutional Research until 1974.

Sr. Irmina's notes are a source of information about the establishment of the college with an early charter from the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The notes include the transition to a diocesan college and ongoing struggles to achieve accreditation as a four-year Senior College, affiliation with Catholic University of America and membership in the Kentucky Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

In 1923 the Sisters of Notre Dame and the Sisters of Divine Providence made it clear that they wanted their sisters to attend a Normal School (a two-year school specifically for the training of teachers) even though the Benedictine Sisters had an accredited four-year Junior College. This was the situation when Bishop appointed Fr. Michael Leick to establish a committee of the three superiors to deal with the idea of a diocesan college.

The committee faced issues of the location of the college, the need for a 2-year or 4-yr college, the need for financial support, the need for a library, the need for teachers from the three communities certified to teach in the subject areas, the need for a new name for the college, the need to define who the college would serve, and not the least, Bishop Howard's style of management.

Bishop Howard stated that he would not tell the sisters what to do. At every step in the decision-making when the sisters would ask Fr. Leick to inform the bishop about the decision. Bishop Howard would then write to each superior asking her what she thought should be done at each juncture. On person commented in pencil on Sr. Irmina's notes that "Bishop Howard was not helpful." In another thesis on this transition period, the writer suggests that Bishop Howard did not want to be fiscally responsible for the college even though in 1934 he wrote to all the pastors who had teachers from each community, asking them to pay \$10 extra per sister per year to help the college's finances.

Sr. Irmina's notes could be the basis of a suspenseful novel or a study of three religious communities with different priorities working with the Diocese of Covington to establish a college that would eventually become a university. It's a fascinating but exhausting read.

Because this the first article in a series of ongoing articles about the monastery's archives, I may go into more detail about some of the questions later.

This bus was used to transport students and faculty from the end of the streetcar line in Ft. Mitchell to college and academy classes at Villa Madonna Academy. In this 1920's photo, Ben Noll, father of Sr. Thomas, drives the REO bus that was donated by Sr. Evelyn Elsaesser's father.





# Madonna Manor Groundbreaking

By Sr. Eileen O'Connell

May 18 marked the beginning of a "closer" relationship with the residents of Madonna Manor, owned by CHI Living Communities. Bishop Foys blessed the ground for the future location, near the red barn and tennis courts, of two new brownstones that will house forty-eight new residences. Administrators of CHI, Villa Hills, and St. Walburg Monastery attended the ceremony.

Sr. Christa Kreinbrink spoke about Madonna Manor being rooted in faith. "The [St. Walburg] monastery and [Madonna] Manor

share the same values — family, community, stewardship, hospitality. We have collaborated. We have worked together as the Manor passed through Benedictine hands, Franciscan sponsorship and now CSI. We are neighbors... As you continue to dig to expand your homes don't be surprised if you turn up a Benedictine medal now and

then. We had a habit of sticking those in the ground. You may find your ground twice blessed."

Sr. Christa Kreinbrink (far left) participating in the groundbreaking.



## welcome

After over fifteen months with no visitors, the sisters joyfully welcomed back some familiar faces on the Fourth of July. Guests are again welcome to attend liturgies at the monastery.

*Top Left: Sr. Mary Rabe and Jim Lockhart.*

*Bottom left: Pamela Winston with Sr. Sharon Portwood.*



*Srs. Aileen Bankemper and Nancy Kordenbrock with Nanette Polito*



*Sr. Mary Tewes and Margie Maschmeyer*



# High School Catechist of the Year!

By Sr. Rita Brink

Sr. Eileen O'Connell, an energetic, innovative teacher of religion received Diocesan recognition as one of this year's award-winning High School Catechists. A graduate of Blessed Sacrament Elementary, Villa Madonna Academy High School, and NKU with a degree in marketing, Eileen joined St. Walburg Monastery in 1991. Becoming a teacher of religion at Villa Madonna Academy, Eileen pursued a degree in Theology from St. John's University, Collegeville, MN. Her innovative approach to teaching involves multiple curriculums while providing challenging opportunities for students to discover deeper insights into their faith as they learn to value God's presence in daily living. Congratulations, Sister Eileen!



Sr. Joan Fraenzle with  
student volunteers and  
Oblate Joan McLanon



## Seeking Volunteers

Do you like to garden? Paint? Visit in the infirmary? Have another interest you would like to share? The monastery always welcomes volunteers to help with a myriad of tasks. If interested in that or our new live-in program, contact Sr. Cathy Bauer by email ([bauerosb@yahoo.com](mailto:bauerosb@yahoo.com)) or at 859-331-6324. More details about the live-in program are below.

Single Catholic women are invited to volunteer to serve and experience the Benedictine tradition by living within our community and joining us in prayer, work, and leisure.

- ✚ Live together with the Sisters and participate in the monastic daily life.
- ✚ Share your gifts and talents and discover new ones by serving in healthcare, education, retreat planning, music ministry, culinary arts, website/computer assistance, horticulture, and more.
- ✚ Individualized schedule arranged with the volunteer for her live-in experience.



# Who Are Benedictine Oblates?

Oblates are Christian women and men of all lifestyles and ages, who experience the call of God to strengthen their baptismal commitment through Benedictine spirituality. They are bonded together to “seek God” according to the vision of St. Benedict. The St. Walburg Monastery Oblate program began in 1986 when the Benedictine Sisters invited friends and benefactors to share in the prayer life of the monastery and to spread the spirit of St. Benedict.

The Benedictine Oblates seek God through a life based on hospitality, peace, moderation, balance in prayer, work and play, and meeting God in the ordinariness of daily life. Basically, oblates are “carriers of the charism” along with the vowed members. Our Sisters and our oblates companion one another, listen to one another’s wisdom and so become even a stronger part of the tradition – both of us - than we can ever be alone.

Oblates and sisters have come together in prayer, lectio divina and various activities as individuals and as groups. One tradition the oblates started several years ago was to host an annual ice cream social at the monastery. In recent years, this party also included a dulcimer concert featuring some of our oblates and their buddies. This very popular June event was cancelled both in 2020 and 2021 due to Covid precautions, but we are looking for ways to celebrate together sometime this summer or fall. In addition to the oblates’ relationships with the sisters, there have been many meaningful friendships formed and strengthened by their association with each other. Here many oblates have found companions with whom to share their deepest values and hopes. “Here,” one woman told me, “I belong.” Persons who may be interested in exploring an oblate relationship with us, are invited to contact Sr. Mary Tewes at 859-331-6324 or [marytewes@gmail.com](mailto:marytewes@gmail.com).



Sr. David enjoying the dulcimer concert by Gail and Dick Michalack.



Oblates Jamie Leslie, Laura Tenzel, and Louise Jewett



Oblates Mary Jo Rechtin, Louise Jewett, Margie Hardebeck, Jessie Lamantia, and Tom Scally

## SILENT RETREAT OFFERED

Silent Directed Retreat for Women and Men will be held at St. Walburg Monastery Guest House on the weekend of October 8-10, 2021. Retreatants are invited to join the monastic choir for Liturgy of the Hours. Lodging will be at the monastery’s Guest House. Each retreatant will have a private room and enjoy individual spiritual direction on all three days. The number of retreatants is limited to 6 persons. The fee of \$185 is due with registration. Our Spiritual Directors are Benedictine Srs. Cathy Bauer and Dorothy Schuette. For information, contact Sr. Dorothy at 859-443-8515 or [dorothysosb@gmail.com](mailto:dorothysosb@gmail.com)



St. Walburg Monastery  
2500 Amsterdam Road  
Villa Hills, KY 41017-5316

Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
CINCINNATI, OH  
PERMIT #1611

## SAVE THE DATE

Welcome back to the Monastery and  
join us for a Morning of Reflection entitled

### **The Communion of Saints: We're All in This Together**

Presented by **Emily Besl**, Coordinator of RCIA, Faith Formation for Adults  
at Saint Veronica's Parish, Archdiocese of Cincinnati, adjunct faculty member,  
Theology Department Xavier University

Saturday, October 30, 2021

9:30 am—Noon

Lower Level of Monastery

*Call Sr. Deborah Harmeling at 859-331-6324  
or email [sdhosb@yahoo.com](mailto:sdhosb@yahoo.com) for reservations  
or to get the live-stream link.  
\$20 for snacks and materials;  
free will donation for live-stream link.*

