



# LEAVEN

Volume 39 Issue 3  
Winter 2021





## From the PRIORRESS

### Leaven

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, Mary Rabe, Mary Tewes, Nancy Kordenbrock, and Rita Brink

Pictures: Srs. Cathy Bauer, Eileen O'Connell, Mary Tewes, Ms. Linda Thomas, Mrs. Amy Holtzman, Thomas More University

**On the cover:** This statue of St. Benedict graces the wall garden behind the monastery.

*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.**

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*“For while gentle silence enveloped all things, and night in its swift course was now half gone, thy all-powerful word leaped from heaven.”*

*Wisdom 18:14*

These ancient words stir one's spirit with gratitude and appreciation for an all-caring God who lived among us, taught us how to live, and promised to be with us until the end of time. Are we not fortunate that God knows our humanness and our need for God to relate to us with human understanding?

One of the many miracles of Christmas is for us to open our eyes to the mysteries that reveal the presence of the incarnate Christ today. We are to grow into Christ by loving deeds and words. Richard Rohr expresses this succinctly in order *“that God's heart be made available and active on this earth.”* Christ's presence and grace creates caring relationships. As a community we have known the deepening of relationships and our hearts have expanded with gratitude. The pandemic has been a serious reminder of the mystery and the fragility of life. As is true for so many, this was one of the most challenging years that the community has known. Illness and death did not escape us. We experienced *God's heart being made available* to us through an outpouring of love and support. Our prayer life has been strengthened. We continue to pray for those who have blessed our lives in so many ways and for the many needs of the world today.

The collect for the Christmas Day Mass confirms Christ's abiding presence with these words: *“We pray, that we may share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity.”* May our lives be filled with Christ's abundant love that our actions manifest his love for the sake of the world.

Sister Aileen Bankemper, OSB  
Prioress

\*Richard Rohr, *The Universal Christ*, p. 201



# meet the sisters

By Sr. Rita Brink

Is there anyone here who yearns for life and desires to see good days? (Prologue Rule of Benedict)

Sr. Mary Peter's response was and is a resounding YES, I do!

Born April 20, 1929, Sister Mary Peter Youtsey grew up in Edgewood, KY. She attended Beechwood School until transferring to Villa Madonna Academy for grade four. Upon graduation from Dixie Heights High School she attended the University of Kentucky, completing a bachelor's degree in Education.

At an early age Sister Mary Peter expressed interest in becoming a Catholic. Her dream was realized on December 10, 1949 while a student at the University of Kentucky. She was a frequent attendee at the early morning mass at St. Peter's Parish in Lexington where she was baptized.

A second dream came to fruition on New Year's Eve in 1950 when Sister Mary Peter entered St. Walburg Monastery as a postulant. A hunger she felt for a while; a decision came quickly, one she has never questioned or regretted. She made the decision to enter the monastery December 29, 1950 and forty-eight hours later walked through the front door. Now, 25,900 days later, Sister Mary Peter knows she answered the right call.

Sister Mary Peter over a span of fifty-four years served in the field of education as classroom teacher, Montessori instructor, trainer, and administrator. "Little children are a delight to work with," she says, "they know how to express the joy of learning while exploring the world around them." Their energy, excitement and sense of awe only heighten the joy of having the privilege of mentoring them into a life of wonder.

Retiring in 2004 Sister Mary Peter enjoys the benefits of commu-

## SR. MARY PETER YOUTSEY



nity, interacting with the sisters, having additional time for prayer, staying in contact with friends made over the years, reading and reading to others. Her time in American Samoa is a cherished memory from her days in active ministry. This experience extended into seven months of giving Montessori training, while she learned and experienced the differences and richness of a new culture. Her years in ministry have been rich with blessings as she now sits back and enjoys life anew.

*"You are brave going to an unknown place. But you are taking God with you so there really is nothing to fear. Nevertheless, I take my hat off to you."*

—Sr. Amelia Wolking on Sr. Mary Peter traveling to American Samoa



American Samoa,  
1987



# The Chronicles

by Sr. Mary Tewes

**July 13: A New Bishop was announced for the Diocese of Covington, John Iffert** of Belleville, Ill. He will replace Bishop Roger Foys, who submitted his retirement last summer, after being bishop for 19 years. Installation Sept. 30.

**July 25: Retreat with Fr. Joseph Feders, OSB** from St. John's Collegeville, MN, was live-streamed. Theme for the week, *"Woven on God's Loom: Tapestries of Grace."* Some oblates participated in person and helped with phone duty.

**July 31: 75th Jubilee for Sisters Andrea Collopy and David Ruschmann; 60<sup>th</sup> Jubilee for Sisters Rita Brink, Mary Rabe, Andrea Vasquez and Colleen Winston.**

**Summer improvements: Infirmery windows** were replaced by Gilkey Window Co. for energy savings, retaining the cool in summer and the heat in winter. **LED Lighting** was installed throughout the monastery and infirmery as part of the Duke Energy Small Business Energy Saver Program. **Automatic doors** were installed in the monastery ground level to facilitate movement of sisters with rollators, wheelchairs and other challenges. **Tuckpointing** continues on the monastery buildings.

**July 30 thru Aug. 14: Sanctuary Village Home Fest**, exhibiting some of the new homes. Quite a new look for St. Walburg's former property.

**Virtual Meetings abound: August--Sr. Mary Tewes** participated virtually in the Tri-State [KOI] Associate/Oblate Directors quarterly meeting. **Sr. Aileen** participated in the virtual **National LCWR Meeting**, with 900 other women

religious. She found the theme hopeful: "Creating Space for Our Future." **Srs. Nancy Kordenbrock, Kimberly Porter, Rita Brink, and Eileen**

**O'Connell** participated in the virtual Visitor Training Workshop for the Federation of St. Scholastica. **Sr. Aileen Bankemper** served on the planning committee and was a presenter. **September: Sr. Aileen B.** participated virtually in the **CIB, The International Conference of Benedictine**

**August 3-6: Sisters Aileen and Rita Brink** visited Mount St. Benedict Monastery in Erie PA, Sr. Aileen to conduct a workshop, then both to visit with **Sr. Laura Vallimont**, who lives in Erie.

**Summer Guests: Sr. Tonette Sperando, OSB** from Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman, AL, spent some time at Cottage 7 as part of a sabbatical. **Sr. Marla Monahan, SND** spent her sabbatical at Cottage 7 also. **August 25: Bishop Roger Foys of Covington** visited the monastery with **Bishop-Elect John Iffert** to be introduced to the sisters and join us for lunch.

**August 8: Sr. Cathy Bauer** is organizing volunteers for service here at the monastery: visiting in the infirmery, helping in the gardens, painting, or other interests. She has also initiated a **Live-in-Program** for single Catholic women, to experience the Benedictine tradition by living within the community and joining us in prayer, work and leisure.

**August 10-11: Sr. Cathy Bauer** conducted the Seek Retreat for the 8th graders of St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs, KY.



**August 10: K & V Cultural Resource Management** brought artifacts found on our property during their study for Ashley Commercial Group and ultimately the Army Corps of Engineers. The two archaeologists, **Jeannine Kreinbrink** and **Doug VonStrohe** explained their work and findings in word and picture. The study was required for the sale of the 85 western acres of the property for the Sanctuary Village development.

**August 12: Villa Madonna** school year begins, masked.

**August 17: Sr. Aileen** participated in the quarterly meeting with the religious superiors of the Diocese of Covington who took the occasion to thank Bishop Foys for his 19 years of support with a donation to the Parish Kitchen.

**August 29: Maureen Smain** prepared a crab leg dinner for seafood lovers. Lots of work for the seafood lovers, but no complaints! Those who ate the alternate meal had no complaints either.

**Sept. 11-14: Thomas More University** centennial. Sept. 12 Mass at the cathedral honored the college's beginning by St. Walburg Monastery, later joined by the Sisters of Notre Dame and the Congregation of Divine Providence. At the Monday convocation Sr. Aileen reviewed the founding of this institution in its earliest days.

**Service Projects: Allie Gardner**, a student from Mt. Notre Dame High School in Reading, OH came with her mother and friend for a Saturday afternoon crafts and games, complete with prizes for everyone. Allie is Sr. Aileen's grand-niece. **Mt. Notre Dame** sponsored a day of service at the monastery, working principally at the cemetery. Eleven **Thomas More University** students and faculty did service projects around the monastery.



Bishop John Iffert and  
Cardinal Blase Cupich

**Sept. & Oct.: Sr. Cathy Bauer** conducted a Seek Retreat for the 8<sup>th</sup> graders of Mary Queen of Heaven School, St. Pius X and St. Henry Parish Schools.

**Sept. 30:** The new bishop of Covington, **John C. Iffert**, was installed as the 11<sup>th</sup> Bishop of the Diocese of Covington, KY. Several sisters participated.

**Oct. 3:** The K of C of Campbell Co. sponsored a picnic day for the sisters of the diocese. Bad weather made for a small group.

**Oct. 14-17: Visitation** for St. Walburg Monastery takes place every six years. Three sisters served as visitators from Atchison, KS, Torreon, Mexico, and Cullman, AL. They were here to listen and make recommendations for future work.

**Oct. 28: Sr. Rose Rauen (92)** died after a long stay in the infirmary. We celebrated her life and death in story, prayer and Eucharist. A number of her family were able to participate.

**Oct. 31: Halloween Party.** Theme: "Noah's Ark." This brought forth much creativity in costumes, some great games and a table full of treats for all.

**Nov. 6:** A variety of trees from **Sr. Mariana Kirk's** tree plot were transplanted to designated spots within the grounds by **John Martini**, his associates, and our men.

**Nov. 10: Srs. Kimberly Porter** and **Rita Brink** hosted **Poetry Night** for a number of sisters.

**Nov. 13:** The **Benedictine Oblates** celebrated the renewal of their oblations. New candidate **Kathleen Rosing** made her first oblation. Eight oblates participated in a weekend retreat on stability at the Guest House led by **Sr. Dorothy Schuette**.

**Nov. 14-17: Sr. Aileen Bankemper** traveled to Clyde, Missouri to facilitate a workshop for the **Sisters of Perpetual Adoration**.





Sr. Nancy Kordenbrock with VMA juniors sisters, Erin, Molly, and Meghan O'Connell

# vma regatta



by Sr. Mary Rabe



Partners Aidan McGraw and Drew Moellering race to the finish.

As you may know, St. Walburg Monastery and Villa Madonna Academy were built on farmland so we are blessed with ponds. We have the advantage of enjoying their beauty and the peace and joy they bring. As a science teacher, I was thrilled to have this resource. The study of its plants, animals, and microscopic creatures is a gift. Art and Literature classes and an outdoor classroom facing the pond add to the curriculum at VMA. Photos of days gone by attest to its use for ice skating, cutting blocks of ice in the pre-refrigeration days, and game activity.

If you asked a student today what activity is associated with the pond, the first response is likely to be the Regatta held on October 1. This annual event started 5 years ago. The challenge is to build a two-person boat using only cardboard, duct tape and two dowels and, then in the shortest amount of time, complete a path that encircles the two fountains. Pairs in Engineering Design class are required to participate. Happily, this year each one reached the finish line intact. Then follows an Open Competition for grades 7 through 12. With great energy, ten pairs ran down the hill and entered the water. With greater or less success they navigated the course. (Some participants enjoyed the swim! The spectators were entertained by the successes and failures.) Winners get their names added to the trophy, a large oar that hangs in the school hall.

This year the event was coupled with the tradition of Senior Picnic, an event in which the classes compete in fun activities. The students wear a t-shirt of the grade level color and have a class flag to add spirit to the day. Cheering for the entries was loud and abundant. It takes on the spirit of a regatta.

In summation of the boating event, Mr. Mark Wolff, high school science teacher and director of the project, and rightfully proud of the event, concludes, "Archimedes rules."





# craft fair

On October 9, Villa Madonna was able to host its craft show for the first time in two years. It was obvious that everyone was thrilled to be out and about, as well as looking for the perfect gift, decoration and culinary treat. The attendance was incredible and the variety of crafts for sale was also exceptional. As many patrons and vendors said, "We needed this!"

by Sr. Nancy Kordenbrock

We returned to our usual task of providing items for the bake sale. Besides lemon poppy seed bread, monster cookies and cinnamon rolls, we made apple pies. Sisters Joan, Kathleen, Cathy and Mary Catherine were the chief bakers of everything but the apple pies. The apple pie baking was a community effort beginning with an apple peeling party. Then Sr. Nancy began the assembly line, slicing the apples, making the filling and topping, and producing the final product. Thanks are due to our kitchen staff for their help throughout the day. Many hands made light work!

Srs. Eileen and Nancy spent the day of the show itself connecting with the 50+ alumni in attendance. It is always a delight to see former students, classmates and fellow alumni.

We look forward to next year's show. Maybe our knitters, crochet artists and wood workers will have a booth.

Left side (from the front): Srs. Dorothy Schuette and Christa Kreinbrink  
Right side (from the front): Srs. Barbara Woeste, Mary Catherine Wenstrup, and Mary Tewes

Sr. Nancy Kordenbrock



# meet bishop iffert



by Sr. Nancy Kordenbrock

On August 25, we were honored to welcome Bishop-elect John Iffert to lunch with us. He was accompanied by Bishop Roger Foys and several priests of the diocese. Before his consecration on September 30 he was visiting various religious women's communities as well as Thomas More University and St. Elizabeth Healthcare that day.

We enjoyed meeting him and getting to experience his warmth and humor.

He took time to speak with each of the sisters both in the monastery and the infirmary. And, for the record, he enjoys chicken salad, wild rice soup and brownies!

We look forward to working with him for the people of our diocese. As promised we pray for him as our shepherd, knowing that it can be a most challenging task. May the Spirit guide him in all that he does.

Above: Sr. Aileen Bankemper, Bishop Iffert, and Sr. Emmanuel Pieper

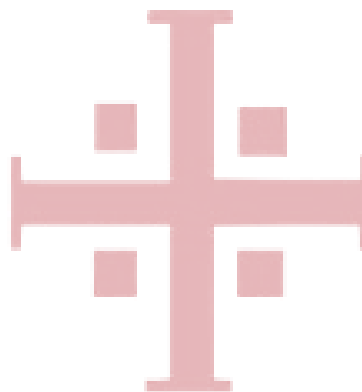




# in memoriam



## sr. rose rauen



Sister Rose Rauen, OSB was born on January 27, 1929 to Lawrence and Rose Gripshover Rauen and named Anne Elizabeth. She was the second of three daughters. Rose Mary Gray died in 1971 and Ruth Richardson died this past summer.



Anne Elizabeth entered St. Walburg Monastery in 1947, became a novice the following year and was given the religious name Sister Rose. Her first profession occurred in 1949 and perpetual profession in 1952. She celebrated her Silver Jubilee in 1974, golden in 1999, diamond in 2009. Her higher education included a B.S from Villa Madonna College, a M.S. and a Ph.D. from St. Louis University and an M.A. in Religion from the Athenaeum of Ohio.

Sister Rose taught math and science at St. Henry High School for several years until she began graduate study in math at St. Louis University. After receiving her Ph.D., she taught in the math department of Villa Madonna College/

Thomas More College from 1963 to 1981 and served as chair from 1966-72. In her last few years at TMC she studied in the Lay Pastoral Ministry program at the Athenaeum while she continued to teach.

Sr. Rose became adept at serving in two ministries at once. She became treasurer of St. Walburg Monastery in 1982. From then until 1991 she also worked in the diocesan programs of RENEW and in Ongoing Renewal and Evangelization, and later became a pastoral Associate at St. Agnes Parish. Her years as treasurer spanned 32 years, from 1982 to 2014.

Rose had a keen sense of humor and a twinkle in her eye. Even in a disagreement or when faced with the report of an overbudget expense she was quick to resume a sisterly tone. She finished the daily paper with a look at the comics. Rose and her housemates hosted many a New Year's Eve and Derby Day party at St. Mary's. Following supper there was always a card game. She enjoyed travel, whether to a cabin at Edisto Beach, SC, or an annual treasurers' meeting, both with old friends. She moved to the infirmary in 2014 after her retirement as treasurer.

Rose was devoted to her family. She is survived by many nieces and nephews, friends and her Benedictine community. After a period of declining health she died peacefully on October 28, 2021.

Vigil service was held at St. Walburg Monastery on November 2 at 7:00 p.m.; Mass of Christian Burial November 3 at 5:00 p.m.; burial on November 4 in St. Walburg Cemetery.





***From the Benedictine Oblates  
of St. Walburg Monastery Oblation  
and Renewal Ceremony***

**O God, through the Rule of St. Benedict you  
invite us to seek you  
in prayer, work and community.  
You call us to practice peace,  
hospitality and stewardship.  
May this rite of oblation lead the oblates and  
members of St. Walburg Monastery  
to prefer nothing to the love of Christ.  
May he give light to our journey and bring us  
all together to life everlasting.**

# benedictine oblates

By Sr. Mary Tewes

The Benedictine Oblates met monthly on Zoom from March through September, discussing the book, *Radical Spirit: 12 Ways to Live a Free and Authentic Life*” by Sr. Joan Chittister, OSB. Her book reflects on the 12 Steps of Humility from The Holy Rule of St. Benedict. A Zoom meeting allowed the group to hear all the others’ thoughts, rather than just those at one’s table in-person.

November 12-13 the oblates participated in a Retreat on “Stability,” one of the three promises that Benedictines profess. Sr. Dorothy Schuette facilitated these reflections. On Saturday evening many joined in the Evening Prayer and Oblation Renewal Ritual in person, and others by live-streaming. One of the candidates for oblation, Kathleen Rosing, made her first oblation at this time. She was accompanied by her husband, Mark. They are active members of Mother of God Parish in Covington.

Kathleen shared with us why she wants to be a Benedictine Oblate: “I am drawn to the charism of St. Benedict and wish to join my spiritual journey with the Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery as well as the Oblates. Stability, fidelity, moderation and continual conversion were important to Benedict. I strive to uphold these virtues as well. Wholeness has been something I have worked toward during my middle-aged life and I see this as something that the Rule also promotes. I feel that being an Oblate is the right step for me at this time in my life.”

Oblates have been participating in many ways: Joan McAlonan and Jessie Lamantia took phone duty during the July retreat. Martha Arlinghaus created a “Santa” during the retreat. Gayle Underdown serves as nurse in our infirmary twice a week. Jessie Lamantia, Joan McAlonan & Jamie Leslie participated in the Visitation process for the community in October. We are grateful for their presence and service.

Contact Sr. Mary Tewes ([marytewes@gmail.com](mailto:marytewes@gmail.com)) for more information.



Above: Mark and Kathleen Rosing  
Below: Gayle Underdown



Jessie Lamantia, Joan McAlonan, and Jamie Leslie. Below: Martha Arlinghaus



# volunteers

## THOMAS MORE UNIVERSITY AND MT. NOTRE DAME STUDENTS HELP AT THE MONASTERY

by Sr. Eileen O'Connell

Tuesday, September 14, was TMU's inaugural Saints Serve – a day of service in the community. Throughout the 100 years that Villa Madonna College/ Thomas More College, now University, has been in existence, service to the community has been an integral part of the mission. Students have always been encouraged to give of their time and talents for the good of all as they are challenged to examine the ultimate meaning of life, their place in the world, and their responsibility to others. On this day, normal campus activities were cancelled but it became a “day on, rather than day off” as the entire University community was involved with projects located both on and off campus. More than 1,200 Saints partnered with agencies and non-profits in the local region to provide much needed support including St. Walburg Monastery!

As part of her senior capstone project, Mt. Notre Dame High School's Allie Gardner chose to work with the sisters at St. Walburg Monastery. “I chose to work with St. Walburg because I have such a strong connection to the convent. I grew up staying the night and visiting my aunt, Sr. Aileen Bankemper. I have always loved interacting with the sisters, playing games, and just talking. This was the perfect chance for me to be with them even more! I would recommend to anyone who comes to have an open heart because you will fall in love with the people and the place.” Allie organized a game day for the sisters and, with the help of family and friends, spent another Saturday sprucing up the monastery cemetery. Many thanks to Allie and all of our volunteers!



TMU students weeding and mulching on the side of the infirmary

Back row: Sr. Cathy Bauer, Karen Gardner, and Rick Gardner. Middle row: Allie Gardner, Claire Connell, and Anna Richards  
Sitting: Mike and Anne Marie Cors



Allie Gardner cleaning the headstone of Sr. Hildegard Rothan who died in 1936.



# CIB virtual conference

by Sr. Aileen Bankemper

What is the CIB? Following a consultation process with all the monasteries of Benedictine Women around the world, at a November, 2001 meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, the decision was made to use the name *Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum* (CIB) to designate all communities of Benedictine women recognized by the Abbot Primate as such and enlisted in the Benedictine catalogue. This was the culmination of a development taking place since the Second Vatican Council—it started a new era for Benedictine Women. The CIB delegates represent the 19 regions of the world and over 13,700 Benedictine women and meet annually.

Because of my position as Chair of the Benedictine Prioresses in North America, I became a delegate in 2020. This year we were scheduled to meet in Rome from September 4-7. Instead, we met virtually and on Roman time! This meant the conference began for

me at 3:00 am EDT. (It was not as difficult as I thought it would be.) I wondered how these meetings would go since there were a number of languages and interpreters involved.

During our time together, the approximately thirty-five delegates prayed together, listened to presentations, had breakout sessions, shared deeply and met as a full assembly. The central question formulated was: Do we want to create a process of re-organizing the CIB in a way that allows Benedictine women a fuller voice with the Vatican? This change would help provide more opportunities for support and collaboration with one another throughout the world. It was a privilege to be involved in this experience.

I was surprised that even in those early hours, using the Zoom platform, I found it easier to hear, pay attention and learn, than when I am attending an in-person conference. I loved the opportunity to experience the diversity of culture, background, dress and expressions of monastic life shared by the



delegates. The glitches with interpreters were minimal. I did miss, however, the opportunities to get to know one another on an informal basis as Zooming has its limits.

My sense of hope for the future of Benedictine life was strengthened. Being in relationship and a part of a global sisterhood is a real treasure.

Photo by [NASA](#) on [Unsplash](#)

The spring issue of LEAVEN highlighted a number of major building projects enhancing the lives of the sisters and implementing good stewardship of the buildings. Among those projects were a new roof and new windows in the infirmary wing, and automatic doors throughout the monastery. This issue of LEAVEN highlights a wish list of items upgrading the living space of our sisters residing in the infirmary.

*You are invited to partner with the monastery by donating toward these items as efforts continue to enrich and enhance the sisters' lives and retirement years. Your support is greatly appreciated. Blessings on you and your family.*

## ▼ Lift Chair

Several lift chairs assisting those with limited dexterity. (\$600-\$1000)



## ▼ Glider Rockers

Comes with an optional handle lock for extra stability when standing and sitting. (\$200-\$300)

## ▼ Dining Tables and Chairs

New tables and chairs in the infirmary dining room enhancing the ambiance, comfort, and enjoyment of dining.



# wish list

## ▼ Mattresses



New mattresses replacing 20+ year old mattresses. (\$500)

## ▼ Televisions

Flat screen TV's equipped with sharper imagery replacing older and smaller monitors. (\$250-\$300)



# canonical visitation

by Sr. Rita Brink

Beginning in September 2020 through September 2021, the community engaged in a self-study examining the authenticity of its lived experience of monastic life as interpreted by its community norms and the Rule of St. Benedict.



Above: Sr. Stella Gough and Sr. Elaine Fischer  
Below: Srs. Patricia Henry, Elaine Fischer, and Lynn McKenzie

*“We commend you as a community—we see how you express your genuine care and loving concern for each other.”*



Srs. Christa Kreinbrink, Kimberly Porter, Denise Gough, and Cathy Bauer

In October 2021, a team of visitors spent three days with the community validating the results of the community’s self-study. Our visitors were Sr. Lynn McKenzie from Cullman, AL; Sr. Elaine Fischer from Atchison, KS; and, Sr. Patricia Henry from Torreon, Coahuila, Mexico. A canonical visitation is a requirement of canon law occurring once every six years.

Srs. Mary Peter Youtsey and Patricia Henry





# THOMAS MORE UNIVERSITY

## 1921 • 100 • 2021

### CENTENNIAL

The following was provided by Thomas More University.

Sept. 12, 1921, marked the official date when the Sisters of St. Benedict welcomed seven young women entering the convent to classes at Villa Madonna College with the goal of preparing them for teacher certification. Present day Sept. 12 began with Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption in Covington, the original “chapel” for important occasions when the University was located in downtown Covington. Bishop Roger J. Foys, D.D., who also served as Thomas More’s chancellor for 19 years, was the celebrant.

An assembling of the entire University community took place outdoors on Monday, Sept. 13, 2021, on the lawn facing Mary, Seat of Wisdom Chapel. The 2021 Academic Convocation marked the start of the new school year and gave a glimpse at plans for the future of Thomas More. Over 80 faculty members as well as the Board of Trustees and administration, in full regalia, processed to start the event. This special convocation celebrated the rich tradition of Thomas More’s history and mission inspired by the Catholic Intellectual Tradition and marked a new beginning for today’s students as they assess their opportunities to grow in knowledge, abilities, and friendships while they become the critical thinkers, persons of integrity, and servant leaders the world needs. It was a beautiful ceremony, with members of the Thomas More community making up a large contingent. All those present to celebrate the

More, 100 years has gone by in the blink of an eye. The vision and hard work of the religious who began this small teachers college in the early 1920s in a single classroom at Villa Madonna Academy has certainly been fruitful for the Northern Kentucky/ Greater Cincinnati area. It is the solid foundation that now has a university built upon it, a university that is focused on student success and innovation – the same goals that were present from the beginning. Looking forward to the next century, we are thankful and we recognize that Thomas More must continue to be the destination for students who want a life of ‘more.’

Mass gave thanks for the many blessings God has bestowed on the University and to pray for His continued grace in the future.

Four days of celebration is just a start, but what a great beginning it has been! The question does arise, is 100 years really such a long time? It seems for Thomas

Sr. Aileen Bankemper, Fr. Jordan Hainsey, and Bishop Roger Foys



*“For dreams and hopes to flourish, there must be a willingness to dialogue, listen, compromise and change. There are also times of letting go in order for growth and increased opportunities. We need faith, plenty of hard work, hope, and commitment to the time and energy required. Above all, we need to recognize the primacy of love to create a truly Catholic University.” Sr. Aileen Bankemper*

1921	vs	2021
One President, Four Faculty Members, Four Students		One President, 14:1 Student to Faculty Ratio, 2000+ Students
Education Major		42 Academic Majors and 4 Graduate Programs
(1923) Tuition: \$80 Board and Laundry: \$320 Lab fee for science class: \$5		Tuition: \$33,060 Room/Board: \$9688 (laundry not included!) Fees: \$1700
Dancing Lessons: \$20 Physical Training (obligatory): \$5		More than \$20 million in scholarships and grants is awarded annually

## from the archives

by Sr. Deborah Harmeling

According to Sr. Irmina Saelinger’s notes, Villa Madonna College first opened in September, 1921 with a Benedictine Dean or President, four faculty members (none of whom was a Benedictine) and 4 students. The freshman class consisted of two Benedictine postulants (Srs. Thomasine Mann and Felicitas Weberding) and two graduates from the Academy of Notre Dame of Providence in Newport who became Benedictine postulants (Srs. Constance Woepkenberg and Lillian Goeke.). There is no mention in the archives as to the tuition at that time.

In September, 1928 after a whole summer of negotiations with Fr. Michael Leick, the Sisters of Divine Providence, the Sisters of Notre Dame, the Benedictine Sisters and Bishop Howard, it was decided that within the College there would also be a Normal School for educating sisters to be teachers. To finance the school, which was relocated to spaces at St. Walburg Academy on 12th St.

in Covington, the tuition of \$75 per semester, \$5.00 per semester hour was charged to each and the remaining expenses would be equally apportioned among the three communities The full four year program was offered for lay students at Villa Madonna. There was a total of nine teachers. Enrollment in the Normal School was sixteen sisters.





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## SAVE THE DATE

### Join us for a Lenten Morning of Reflection **Lent Again!**

**Last Year Was So Good Do I Have to Do it Again?**

Presented by **Sr. Cathy Anne Lepore , OSB.**

Member of Our Lady of Grace Monastery, Beech Grove, Indiana.

**Saturday, March 26, 2022**

**9:30 am—11:45 am**

Lower Level of Monastery

*Email or call Sr. Deborah Harmeling at  
sdhosb@yahoo.com or 859-331-6324  
for reservations.*

**\$20.00 fee includes snacks and materials.**

