



HORIZONS

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Message from the Prioress



Sister Kimberly Prohaska, Prioress

As we concluded our annual community retreat this spring with Sister Melannic Svoboda, SND, I began thinking of tasks for the summer season, which is knocking on our door.

During our retreat, we were encouraged to try a thank-you dialogue with something. This was a creative way to connect with the blessings all around us and to listen to what that something would say to us if it could communicate back to us.

The coming of summer brought to mind the image of a canning jar. I recalled that I had been enamored with the canning jar image for some time. After we moved into our now three-year-old monastery, we purchased table mats for the monastery dining room with a word on each jar that reads, Home Sweet Home. Later, I was looking for something for one of the walls in my room. I happily found a canvas painting with Mason jars that fit perfectly. I am, again, thinking about Mason jars and wondering how they came about.

Apparently, in 1806 during the Napoleonic War, a French cook named Nicolas Appert developed a heat-based form of canning with wax as a sealing point to preserve food for the French Navy. For the first type of bottles used,

Champagne bottles, the sealing process did not manage well. Historically most forms of preserving food were done by a soaking, smoking, or salting process.

Later, John Landis Mason, a native of New Jersey, developed the method of using

jars with a rubber band ring about the lip of the jar to allow an air-tight seal when accompanied by a screw top lid. Mason invented this on November 30, 1858.

During WWII, the need to conserve food became the norm. War rations went in tins to the military, and mass production of Mason jars began with Ball Corporation in the twentieth century, making Mason jars a household name in the U.S.A. Many people of previous generations may recall that jars of every eatable thing, from tomatoes and okra to jams, would find a place on the family table. Why this fascinating focus on Mason jars?

They are a staple of what has been and what we see them morphing into. Mason jars are more than garden memories. They are containers of continual change and renewal. They were leaving a green footprint before it was a popular and needed thing to do. They are a source of serving all kinds of needs today. They are decorative table settings, a place to put things, like pencils, flowers, spare coins, iced tea, or anything ordinary or special.

As we wonder where the past has led us and where the future is taking us, is it not unsurprising that Mason jars might be part of the picture? As we face uncertainty or experience new moments in life, we might look to the Mason jar's simplicity to discover what we are being called to be emptied of or filled with. What is the purpose of the various Mason jars we have on the shelves of our lives? What new admiration for the Mason jar might there be for us right now? Mason jars have much to teach us, for they are both something old and new. Like Benedictine life, they have never gone out of style. We have seen many changes and face an unfilled tomorrow. Like the Mason jar, we, the Sisters of St. Scholastica, will continue to be filled with whatever God brings us in all its Mason jar forms, to be bathed, steamed, topped, tasted, tried, dried, decorated, cleaned, redesigned, emptied, capped and uncapped, opened and even sipped from in order to meet the needs for whatever God asks us to do for ourselves and others. We enjoy what is, always remembering the saying, *everything goes better in a Mason jar*.

—Sister Kimberly R. Prohaska, OSB

Message from the Office of Mission Advancement

As I am writing this reflection, we are ending the Easter season and preparing for Pentecost. At Mass we have been hearing selections from the Gospel of John. Jesus gives us a new commandment: “that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (John 13:34). This love for one another is the evidence needed so that all will know that you are my disciples. Jesus knew from his own experience on this earth that he was giving us a challenging commandment, one that would be difficult to live out. As an aid to us, he promises to give us his Spirit (Advocate, Helper, Support, Strength, Comforter) to be with us forever.

The day after Pentecost, the liturgical year moves into Ordinary Time, that long stretch of time before a new liturgical year begins with Advent. The Church gives us these months to live out Jesus’ commandment with the help of the Spirit, who is our Advocate, Helper, Support, Strength, and Comforter. These other names for the Spirit give us consolation and assurance that we don’t have to depend on our own limited abilities to carry out the commandment to love one another. The names also specify the ways we show our love. We help others; we advocate for them; we support them; we strengthen them; we comfort them.

As we strive to love others, we feel the effects of others’ love. As we give love, we also receive love. Love comes back to us. We Sisters experience the love of you, our Oblates, Alumnae, benefactors, volunteers, and friends. You are our Advocates, Helpers, Support, Strength, and Comforters. Your love encourages and enables us to continue and deepen our love for others.

We thank you.

--Sister Elise Forst, OSB



Sister Elise Forst

Our mission: Seeking God in our life together and enlivened by daily prayer, we, the Benedictine Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery in Fort Smith, Arkansas, respond to the needs of the people of God in a spirit of hospitality, simplicity, and reverence for one another and all creation.

Charism Statement (excerpt): We, the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, have responded to a call to seek God by a total gift of self in a religious community of celibate women, who make profession to live the Gospel according to the Rule of Benedict, the norms of the Federation of St. Gertrude, and the norms of the Monastery. By professing stability and fidelity to the monastic way of life, we promise to be faithful to our Benedictine tradition of prayer, work, and leisure, and to be a Christian community where persons are revered in their uniqueness and diversity.

In Loving Memory

Sister Pierre Vorster

March 18, 1922 - March 22, 2023

Sister Pierre Vorster, OSB, age 101, a member of St. Scholastica Monastery, died at Mercy Hospital in Fort Smith, after a brief illness on March 22, 2023. Catherine Marie Vorster was born on March 18, 1922, in Subiaco, Arkansas, to Dan and Agatha Kruse Vorster. She was dedicated to her family and loved them deeply. She grew up in the shadow of Subiaco Abbey. Before entering St. Scholastica Monastery, she developed a love for politics and history, both of which she attributed to her father.

After completing her elementary grades at St. Benedict School in Subiaco, Catherine entered the monastery on September 2, 1937, and became a novice on June 24, 1938, when she took the name, Sister Mary Pierre. On June 24, 1940, she made her first profession, and in 1943 she made her perpetual profession as a member of St. Scholastica Monastery.

Sister Pierre earned her degree in biology and chemistry education in 1962 from Mount Saint Scholastica in Atchison, Kansas. She completed her Masters in Education Administration with a minor in biology from Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska in 1968.

A dedicated teacher for thirty-two years, she taught at St. Scholastica in Shoal Creek, Holy Redeemer in Clarksville, St. Augustine in Dardanelle, St. Edward in Little Rock, St. Boniface, St. John, and St. Anne in Fort Smith, St. Mary in Hattiesville, Arkansas, and St. Pius X in Moberly, Missouri. She was an excellent teacher, projecting a formidable, no-nonsense attitude. Beneath the strong exterior was a tender, compassionate heart. During her time as an educator she earned many awards. In 1956, she received the Pelican Award, a Catholic Boy Scout award, from the Bishop of Little Rock, and later the first Marian Award for Girl Scouts. In 1969, she received the Ruth Thomas Audubon Scholarship. She earned recognition as the Outstanding Biology Teacher in Arkansas in 1971. In 1972, she was awarded the Dogwood Medal of Honor and in 1973, the Citation Plaque for her contribution to education in history, citizenship, and love of country.



Sister Pierre was also involved in many public issues outside the field of education, especially in areas of the environment, conservation, and elder care. She was appointed to serve on the Governor's Advisory Council for the Elderly under three different governors, Bill Clinton, Jim Guy Tucker, and Mike Huckabee. She worked tirelessly for the needs of the elderly and was recognized for her efforts. She was a member of the Arkansas Oklahoma River Compact Commission from 1980-1992. Other awards included the Public Awareness Award, Outstanding Volunteer Award for Adult and Adult Services, Capital Citations from the State of Arkansas, and induction into the Arkansas Senior Hall of Fame. In 1995, she received the first ever Annual Arkansas Volunteer of the Year Award, now known as the Sister Pierre Vorster Volunteer Award. She received the President's Call to Service award begun by President George W. Bush. She was active in the Audubon Society, Western Arkansas Area Agency on Aging, and Project Compassion.

She served her monastic community as director of St. Scholastica Education Center, activity director for the Monastery Infirmary, editor of the monastery publication *Horizons*, and for twenty-five years as supervisor of the monastery grounds. She loved nature and history and enjoyed playing cards, dominoes, and 'Five-Up'. She took delight in an occasional Arby's roast beef sandwich and a scoop of peppermint ice cream. She was proud of her German heritage and family. Her hometown in Subiaco, all of Logan County, and the community of St. Scholastica were dear to her. No one matched her style and ability. She has truly been a pillar of St. Scholastica Monastery, rooted both here and at Subiaco Abbey.

She was preceded in death by her parents, and her siblings, Joseph Daniel Vorster, William August Vorster, Frank Bernard Vorster, and Mary Ann Altenhofel. She is survived by her sister, Bridget Weisenfels; sister-in-law, Martha Vorster; many beloved nieces and nephews; great nephews and nieces; and the members of her Benedictine community.



Oblate Kathy Furstenberg

June 22, 1949 - February 12, 2023

Katherine (Kathy) Francis Meyers Furstenberg, 73, died on February 12, 2023, in Fort Smith, Arkansas. She was born on June 22, 1949, in Fort Smith to William and Bernadine Meyers. She was involved in religious education at Immaculate Conception Church in Fort Smith. Kathy made her oblation May 16, 2010, in Fort Smith.

She is preceded in death by her parents. She is survived by her husband, John, also an Oblate; her daughter, Carrie Canady (James); one granddaughter, one great granddaughter; her brother, William J. "B.J." Meyers (Peggy); two sisters, Mary Ann Wilson (Duane) and Ginny Sue Marlin (Roger); and several nieces and nephews.

Oblate Mitzi Bardrick

June 13, 1930 - April 12, 2023

Catherine Frances (Mitzi) Bardrick, 92, of College Station, Texas, formerly of Fort Smith, Arkansas, died on April 12, 2023, at her home in College Station.

Mitzi was born June 13, 1930, to Louis and Frances Bender of Fort Smith. After graduating from St. Scholastica Academy, Mitzi married Thomas Elmer "T.E." Bardrick of Fort Smith. Mitzi and her husband were active members of St. Boniface Church. Mitzi made oblation in Fort Smith on December 15, 1985.

Mitzi is preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Tom; her brothers, Louis Bender, James Bender, Bob Bender, and Eugene Bender; her sister, Mary Helen Bradney; and her great grandson. She is survived by her daughters, Suzanne (Pat) Gallagher and Carrie Slatton-Hodges (Jay Hodges); her sons, Michael Bardrick (Michele) and Christopher Bardrick; her eight grandchildren; and twelve great-grandchildren.

St. Scholastica Monastery's

On Saturday, July 8, the monastic community honored its jubilarians for 2023. Sister Adrian Wewers was honored for seventy five years of monastic profession and Sister Elise Forst for sixty years. Sisters Maria DeAngeli and Leona Marie Selig privately celebrated seventy years. Bishop Anthony Taylor celebrated the Jubilee Mass on July 8 at 10:30 a.m., which was followed by a dinner for Sister Adrian's invited guests.

Sister Adrian Wewers' 75th Jubilee



Sister Adrian Wewers, OSB

Sister Adrian Wewers knew at a young age that the desire of her heart was to help others: "My one desire was to know God better and to help other people in need." Hedwig Ann was born in Morrison's Bluff, Arkansas, on November 25, 1928 to William and Anna Lensing Wewers. After her mother's death in childbirth, her father married Stephanie Seiter, with whom he had nine children. Hedwig spent her childhood on the family farm, where she learned the value of hard work and the need for daily prayer from her parents. Every day, the children of the Wewers family prayed the "Hail Mary" three times. During this prayer time, they were directed to ask for guidance from God about their future paths. It must have been through this consistent prayer that the Holy Spirit prompted Hedwig's Aunt Sister Benita Wewers to send the young girl a picture of the Sacred Heart. Even as a seventh grader, Hedwig studied and cherished this picture, and she expressed to her parents her growing desire to follow in her aunt's footsteps as a Sister. The encouragement of her parents, the Benedictine Sisters who taught her, and the example of her aunt's life all contributed to forming this desire in her heart. About a year passed, but the daily

prayer life Hedwig practiced kept the desire to be a religious alive in her heart.

On September 5, 1945, Hedwig entered St. Scholastica Convent in Fort Smith and became a novice on June 24, 1946, taking the name Sister Adrian. She made her profession of perpetual vows on June 24, 1952. Sister Adrian's desire to help those in need did not culminate in a career in healthcare, as she had first desired, but in elementary education. She received her degree in elementary education from St. Mary College in Leavenworth, Kansas. Sister Adrian taught primary grades in Arkansas, Missouri, and Texas for the next 40 years. She said the most challenging and joyful part of teaching was preparing her students for the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. She ended her teaching career by teaching preschool for two years in the daycare at St. Joseph's Home in North Little Rock. Sister Adrian loved her students, and her students loved her.

In 1997, Sister Adrian came to live at St. Scholastica Monastery in Fort Smith where she drove Sisters to their appointments or helped wherever needed. When she celebrated her 60th Jubilee in 2008, she said, "My greatest happiness is attending daily Mass in our chapel and three times daily praying the Psalms with the Sisters. . . . I feel great contentment in having persevered in the life God called me to live in his service."

Jubilarians for 2023

Sister Elise Forst's 60th Jubilee

Clara Mae Forst was born in her grandmother's home in Prairie View, Arkansas, on May 28, 1943. Her father, Fred Forst, was stationed at Camp Robinson in North Little Rock. Soon after her birth, she and her mother, Clara Forst, joined him in North Little Rock. In 1945, the family of four, including her brother who was born during their years in North Little Rock, moved to a house her father had built on a small farm near Subiaco. In the following years, the family welcomed eight more children.

Clara Mae attended elementary school in Subiaco where Sisters from St. Scholastica Monastery taught. Sister Vivian Luyet, her teacher in the third, fourth, and fifth grades, was influential in her life. Her admiration for her teachers led to her decision to enter St. Scholastica Academy as an aspirant. Aspirants were academy students with an interest in religious life. They lived together, attending classes at the Academy and praying some each day with the Sisters.

In 1960 as a senior, Clara Mae decided to enter St. Scholastica as a candidate. She became a novice on June 24, 1961, and received the name Sister Elise.



Sister Elise Forst, OSB

After making temporary profession on June 24, 1963, she taught elementary grades in Stuttgart for two years and in Paris for one year. From 1965 to 1969, Sister Elise attended college at Westark Community College (UAFS), then at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri. The years during and after the Second Vatican Council were exciting years of change in society, in the Church, and in religious communities. The changes led many of the younger Sisters to decide to leave the community. It was a hard time to discern about making perpetual profession. Feeling that St. Scholastica was where she was called to be, Sister Elise made perpetual profession in 1968.

After graduation from Lincoln University, she taught for two years at St. Edward School in Little Rock, then earned a Masters in School Psychology from State College of Arkansas (University of Central Arkansas) in Conway. After working as an educational examiner in the Fort Smith Public Schools for three years, Sister Elise began serving within the community in various ministries, including renewal coordinator, subprioress, formation director, prioress, and development director. At the present time, she is serving in the Mission Advancement Office and as director of temporary professed.

Reflecting on her sixty years of monastic profession, Sister Elise said, "I thank God for all the experiences that have led me to where I am now. God has abundantly blessed me with a wonderful community and family."

**If you would like to hear more about the Sisters' vocations stories, visit www.stscho.org's Vocation Stories section to listen to their interviews.*

Around the Monastery

Formation in the Ministry of Spiritual Direction Graduates

On May 6, 2023, Karen Hauskey, Renee Hearon, Raina Marciano, Cherry Schwulst, and Patricia Stengel graduated from the Ministry of Spiritual Direction program in the Chapel at St. Scholastica Monastery. This graduation ceremony marks the end of the program, which was begun by Sister Rachel Dietz in 2009. Alice Nahas led the program after Sister Rachel's death in 2021. A total of 34 have graduated from the program.



Alice Nahas (left) and Prioress Kimberly Prohaska (right) lift their hands in blessing over the graduates.



Graduates of the program proudly hold their certifications. From left to right: Cherry Schwulst, Karen Hauskey, Pat Stengel, Renee Hearon, and Raina Marciano.

St. Scholastica Employees Celebrate Milestone Anniversaries

On May 11, 2023, the Benedictine Sisters of St. Scholastica hosted their Employee Appreciation Dinner for employees who celebrated anniversaries with the monastery. Congratulations to Janie Brown (25 years) and Shay Dotson (10 years), and Mike DeSalvo (10 years). Thank you for your years of love and dedication.



From left to right: Employees Shay Dotson and Janie Brown in the Housekeeping Department hold their certificates of recognition at the annual Employee Appreciation Dinner.



Employee Mike DeSalvo celebrated ten years with St. Scholastica Monastery, serving in maintenance at Hesychia House of Prayer in New Blaine, Arkansas.

Oblate Program Sees Oblation and New Enrollees

On May 21, 2023, St. Scholastica Monastery welcomed new enrollees to the Oblate Program and one new Oblate. The program, led by Sister Hilary Decker and Sister Maria DeAngeli, is for those who have an interest in living out monastic values and deepening their connection with God. Welcome to the program, William (Bill) and Theresa Baker, Cher Horwedel, and Joyce Jones. Congratulations to Oblate Katie Shields on making her oblation.



From left to right: Sister Hilary Decker, Cher Horwedel, Bill and Theresa Baker, Joyce Jones, and Sister Maria DeAngeli.



From left to right: Sister Hilary Decker with Katie Shields and Sister Maria DeAngeli.

The Oblate Program of St. Scholastica Monastery

Oblates study topics on the Holy Rule of St. Benedict that we, Benedictines, follow. Participation in the Oblate Program allows lay people the opportunity to seek God through prayer, achieve a greater attentiveness to the Word of God, learn a balance of prayer, work, and holy leisure, and many other spiritually enriching aspects of the Benedictine lifestyle. Both women and men are welcome to join our Oblate program.

In the 1970s, the Oblate Program was reorganized by Sister Columba Walter and Sister Antonia Lutz. It flourished in the following years, and we now have about 200 enrolled, with members in both the United States and in England. We meet on the third Sunday from September to May, in person and via Zoom. There are no meetings in the summer.

During last year's season of meetings, Oblates read Sister Joan Chittister's book, titled *Twelve Steps to Inner Peace: Humility Revisited*. We listened to guest speakers present on different spiritual truths related to the themes of the book. The next book we will read, ponder, and discuss is *Radical Hospitality: Benedict's Way of Love* by Lonni Collins Pratt and Father Daniel Holman, O.S.B.

If you have an interest in our program, visit our Oblate section on the St. Scholastica website: www.stscho.org. To learn more about our Oblate Program and make any inquiries, please email us at oblates@st.scho.org.

An Oblate's Reflection: Dr. Linda Boen



As a recipient of a national award and local awards for the recovery of seriously mentally ill veterans from the Department of Veterans Affairs, there has been no honor more beloved than the day Sister Louise Sharum, OSB, then prioress, blessed me on that St. Scholastica sanctuary altar as an Oblate of St. Benedict in 1987. From that altar and on to Hesychia House of Prayer, then Sister Mary Adams led me to dear Sister Ethel Marie Sonnier, OSB, and a lifelong journey into the mystics of the church. The Hesychia Sisters taught me to sing and pray “in the Spirit,” high on the “nars” and warm rocks of Lake Dardanelle. There, too, we danced with butterflies in the fields and found the “Tree-full of Angels” Sr. Macrina wrote about. Many years have passed since those days and so have many dear sisters. But the whispering call to “dance, paint, and sing” with the Holy Spirit remains central in my life and at a Catholic Charismatic Mass attended each week here in Fresno, California.

The Benedictine way of life, too, for ordinary people as myself, continues this glorious life journey. I am honored to serve now at Alliant International University as a Clinical Counseling Professor after the Veterans Affairs service era.

But never a day passes that I do not remember the Sisters of St. Scholastica and especially Hesychia...those days dancing in the woods with the butterflies with Sisters Andrea and Ethel in large linen shirts fluffing and laughing in the wind...those nearby rock cliffs at Lake Dardanelle and watching birds fly effortlessly on the wind and wondering if one could live effortlessly like that...Sr. Ethel whispering soft sounds in the spirit...and, yes, we were always late getting back to supper! But that way of life remains... Years later and still dancing, my memoir called *Dancing and Painting with the Light*, is a story filled with treasures from my life as an Oblate and lifelong love from the Sisters of St. Scholastica, Fort Smith, Arkansas.

Thank you dear Sisters here, and those transcended into heaven, for sharing a taste of heaven on earth...I will see you again...

Thank you for teaching me to look with that eye of contemplation, to listen, laugh, dance, paint, and expect a miracle every day in His glorious sanctuary of life, and for sharing that glorious Benedictine way of life with just an ordinary gal like me.



A Reflection on My Border Experience at Eagle Pass, Texas: Sister Siena

The news about refugees from different countries crossing the border from Mexico into the United States has been in the news for years now. Visiting and helping the migrants as well as better understanding their plight has long been my desire. The opportunity came in January 2023 when I, together with Novice Dorothy Herring of Mount St. Scholastica, Atchison, Kansas, were sent on mission to Caridad de Corazón (Charity of the Heart), an organization under the auspices of Sister Ursula Herrera, OSB.

Novice Dorothy and I helped at the migrant shelter, Mission Border Help, doing tasks like serving food to the refugees, sorting donated clothes and shoes, as well as distributing them to those in need of better clothing and footwear.

My firsthand experience as a volunteer helping the refugees and listening to Sister Ursula's stories affirmed for me that the asylum seekers come in search of safety from persecution, torture, and sometimes death in their homeland.

Scripture reminds us that Jesus, too, was a refugee: "So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, left that night for Egypt" (Matt 2:14). As a Benedictine, I am to follow the Holy Rule of St. Benedict's, "All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, for he himself will say, 'I was a stranger and you welcomed me'" (RB53:1). Furthermore, RB53:1 states, "Great care and concern are to be shown in receiving poor people and pilgrims because in them more particularly Christ is received".

Aside from working at the shelter, we had the opportunity to experience the different border ministries that Sister Ursula is involved in. Being housed in the Mission House allowed us to meet missionaries from other Christian denominations who help the poor on both sides of the border.



especially on the smiling, happy faces of the orphans we visited in Mexico. Seeing this has shown me that there is hope in unity. They are an inspiration for true discipleship whom I strive to emulate.



Novice Dorothy Herring, Adrian (seated), Cesar (standing), and Sister Siena at an orphanage in Piedras Negras, Mexico. (Photo courtesy of Novice Dorothy Herring)

The photograph that I took at the Mexican border shows the U.S. and Mexico clutching hands. As I reflect on the photo, it not only represents the relationship between two countries, but the relationship Caridad de Corazón has with other non-profit Christian organizations. It was touching and refreshing to see how these different organizations work in union with one common goal of serving God by helping those who are marginalized and most in need. "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matt 25:40). I truly admire the selfless dedication Sister Ursula and the missionaries have for those they serve and their genuine love and concern for them. Their love is reciprocal and shown

G.E.M. Celebrates 10 Years of Changing Lives

Origins

For the Girls' Education Matters scholarship, program 2023 marks ten years of mission work in education and empowerment for the women of Guatemala. The story of the life-changing program began a few years before G.E.M.'s inception in 2013. It began with a pilgrimage.

In July of 2011, Bishop Anthony Taylor led a delegation of ten Arkansans to Santiago Atitlan in Guatemala to commemorate the assassination of Father Stanley Rother (now Blessed Stanley Rother). Father Jerome Kodell, the then abbot of Subiaco, and Oblate Kathy Jarvis were on the pilgrimage and remember Bishop Taylor's words, "I predict this pilgrimage will change your life."

During the first trip to Guatemala, Sister Kimberly Prohaska and Jennifer Verkamp later joined Kathy, and the group traveled together from Guatemala City to a Benedictine monastery in eastern Guatemala. Unknowingly following the guidance of the Holy Spirit, this casual trip to visit fellow Benedictine monks opened an unforeseen pathway of collaboration. The following year, Sister Rosalie Ruesewald, Jennifer Verkamp and Kathy met with Padre Hugo Lopez, OSB, superintendent of Colegio San Benito (K-12 co-ed school administered by the Benedictine monks). In their discussion, an idea arose -- the possibility of a scholarship program.

Upon returning from Guatemala, Sister Rosalie presented the idea of a scholarship program to the Saint Scholastica community, the Girls' Education Matters program. After careful consideration, the Sisters agreed to begin with a small pilot project which included eleven students, some of whom lived at the local Franciscan orphanage, and others from single-parent families. The goal at that time was to help them graduate from San Benito's high school.

The shift was organic, but it was soon realized that the current program was not enough to effectively alter the lives of the girls struggling to escape poverty. The G.E.M. program needed to follow the girls through more years of school with career guidance and support. Now, ten years later, twenty-nine girls attend San Benito for primary, middle school and high school.

Seventeen San Benito G. E. M. graduates are now engaged in university studies, pursuing careers in medicine, law, nursing, physical/occupational therapy, business administration, and information technology. Upon graduation from high school, Guatemalan students immediately enter a career path in their university studies. With the exception of the medical fields, the majority of the G.E.M. university students work full-time (fifty hours) during the week and attend classes only on weekends. Their graduations require more time.

The Sisters of the convent at Shoal Creek invested their lives in education. They served Christ and others as they taught. This legacy of education continues in the work of St. Scholastica Monastery and her partners as they sponsor the girls and women of G.E.M.



G.E.M. Stories of Success

I don't believe in charity. I believe in solidarity. Charity is so vertical. It goes from the top to the bottom. Solidarity is horizontal. It respects the other person. I have a lot to learn from other people.

Eduardo Galeano, Uruguayan writer



Marielos was our first graduate in the scholarship program. Due to the pandemic, Marielos has been in medical school for eight years, but she will graduate in August from medical school as Doctora Marielos Ramos Yus. She can be seen in these photos tending to her grandmother, who never had the chance to attend school, and delivering twins (above on left). For students like Marielos, the idea of attending medical school or law school was tantamount to entering a fairy tale. G.E.M. created the opportunity for the impossible to become possible.



Cecilia graduated from Colegio San Benito in 2016 and recently from university. She now works as she pursues her Masters in physical therapy. Her mother (first photo, middle) stands on her feet ten hours a day, six days a week, as she sells fruits and vegetables in the public market to provide for her two children. She is known as a “luchadora”, a fighter, and she has passed on this fighting spirit to Cecilia.



Maria Concepcion & Andrea were sisters we met in the orphanage. They were placed there at a young age. Maria graduated San Benito in 2017 and began work at the coffee cooperative while pursuing university studies. She recently graduated and is studying for her Masters degree in management. Andrea is in 9th grade at San Benito, and she plans to follow in her role model's footsteps.

Mirna entered San Benito in her high school years and is now in her second year of university, which she attends on the weekends. Majoring in business. Mirna works six days a week with her mother, head of the family to six children, as she walks around the public market selling horchata drink, lemonade, and snacks.



The Sisters of St. Scholastica are doing something very special for the girls in Esquipulas [who] are blocked on all sides. What they need is for someone to open the door for them . . . and that is what the Sisters are doing. They have given them the key to open a door so they can walk out to other life possibilities.

Father Jerome Kodell, OSB



Yaqueline was first introduced to us when she was in primary school. She went on to be a top student at Colegio San Benito in sixth grade, junior high, and high school. She is now in her second year of nursing school and working at McDonald's to help her widowed mom, another luchadora, to care for her two younger siblings.



Yesenia comes from a home of nine children, all the responsibility of a single mother raising her children in the most humble of homes. She is in her second year of law school in order to become "a voice for the voiceless."

Our G.E.M. Partners
We could not do this alone!



Subiaco
Sacred Heart Church, Charleston
Saint Bartholomew Episcopal Church
Christ the King Church and School
Immaculate Conception Church and School
Saint Boniface Church
Trinity Catholic School
Saint Joseph Catholic School,
Anderson, South Carolina

Extraordinary Volunteers

I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.

Saint Teresa of Calcutta

Father Mark Stengel



It is so gratifying to see these young ladies blossom into their full potential. They have so much to offer - and they are eager to serve.

... Seeing Jesus in each one of the students has made my faith stronger and has given me a purpose, knowing that we can make a difference, one girl at a time.

Jose Luis Galvan



I fell in love with the program and with the kids. I was able to see Jesus in every face and every need, and I would like to continue to help in whatever way I can.

Haymee Giulliani



It's a blessing to be part of this partnership in Benedictine education. My educator's heart is so happy to have worked with these young ladies and to continue to support them in prayer.

Maria Cabrera, RN



My trips to see these beautiful and intelligent girls keep my humanity and heart open. I am so proud to be a supporter of this noble scholarship program for young women in Esquipulas.

Sister Judith Timmerman



Jennifer Verkamp-Ruthven



The Guatemala program has been life-changing. It allowed me to meet people that I wouldn't have had the opportunity to meet and learn from. God truly has worked through this program, as I can personally say it has put me on a path in life I never could have planned, and I am most grateful.

*Solidarity:
We are one family in Christ.*



*Save the date!
It's a Fiesta of Solidarity!
Join us on September 30th, 2023,
at Christ the King Catholic Church
as we celebrate 10 years of the G.E.M.
Scholarship Program.
Food - Fun - Solidarity*



Please Help Us Celebrate Girls' Education Matters! Become a G.E.M. Sponsor!

Gold - \$1,000 (Sponsor two students for one year.)

Silver - \$500 (Sponsor one student for one year.)

100% of all donations made for scholarships goes to providing education. For more information:

479.739.1999

News Briefs

March 3-8, 2023: Sisters Kimberly Prohaska attended the Conference of Benedictine Prioresses assembly in Cullman, Alabama.

April 26, 2023: Sisters Kimberly Prohaska and Siena Fisk participated in Fifth Grade Vocation Day at Good Counsel Parish in Little Rock.

May 21-28, 2023: Sister Melannie Svoboda, SND from Chardon, Ohio led the community retreat.

May 23-25, 2023: Ravi Thiagarajan, Chief Financial Officer, attended the Resource Center for Religious Institutes Board meeting in Boston, Massachusetts.

June 10-18, 2023: Sisters Kimberly Prohaska, Regina Schroeder, and Judith Timmerman were delegates to the Federation of St. Gertrude Chapter in Beech Grove, Indiana.

July 9-16, 2023: Sister Siena Fisk will attend the Orientation Program for New Vocation Directors in Leavenworth, Kansas.

July 21-24, 2023: Sister Siena Fisk will attend the Benedictine Sisters 55 and Under gathering in Norfolk, Nebraska.

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Cover Image: St. Scholastica Monastery chapel stained glass window "St. Perpetua"

We invite you to visit the monastery gift shop! The monastery gift shop is small, but it has a variety of religious items for sale, including products crafted or grown by our sisters! We carry many different spiritual reading materials for both children and adults. We also have information and t-shirts for Hesychia House Of Prayer.



Monday, Wednesday, and Friday

9:30 AM - 3:30 PM

Saturday

12:30 PM - 3:00 PM

Closed the second Saturday of the month

479-242-2501

giftshop@stscho.org



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Horizons

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Anyone is welcome to be on the mailing list at no charge.

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