



H O R I Z O N S

Vol. 54 No. 1

SAINT SCHOLASTICA MONASTERY, Fort Smith, AR

March 2025

Simply Benedictine

Message from the Prioress

Hope is the only bee that makes honey without flowers.

Robert Green Ingersoll



Having hope in our lives is not only important but vital to our identity as sons and daughters of God. People who suffer from a lack of hope carry a very heavy burden and, without question, often need others to help lift that weight from their lives. The world is a tension of both burden and blessing. How might we become the bee of hope for someone without a flower blooming in their lives so that the honey they need to taste can be created?

The process of making honey is quite an art. Two years ago, I had the opportunity to encounter a beekeeper from Louisiana. I watched as he demonstrated the process of nurturing honey from the bee hive to extraction to the cultivating of the final sweet treat we could later enjoy at the dining table. As I thought about Robert Ingersoll's words, I was in awe of the spirituality of not just honey but of the tiny buzzing creature that lives its sole purpose of creating honey.

As we enter the season of Lent, the sacredness of the Triduum, and the celebration of Easter, I still think about the bee. As we take this season of Lent to review and renew our relationship with God and others in our lives, do we take notice of how important we are to God?

This is the year of Jubilee, with the focus, as declared by Pope Francis, on hope. How are we actively living this call to be hope for one another? How might we become as determined as the bee looking for the nectar and therefore supporting the hope and future of the hive? Every hope matters just as every bee builds the comb with the knowledge of creating something sweet for all. Every blossom that the bee encounters and pollinates causes the honey to taste a particular way. The importance of the bee builds on so much more than just the community of the hive and the life of the queen within. These tiny insects are responsible for over eighty percent of the needed pollination of trees, fruits, vegetables, and nuts. We, like the bee, matter to the world and how we express our purpose of hope to a world that hungers for it. What if we did not have the hope of even the littlest bee? Hope is more than just being positive about what we value. It is said that 'hope is a verb with its shirt-sleeves rolled up.' How are we rolling up our sleeves to be hope for those who have their sense of hope dimmed? Do we live hope with the heart we have been given? What do you hope for? Better still, What might God be hoping for you? Hope is not without struggle. We can set it down, become distracted, and even lose the hope we hold, but if we are like the bee actively seeking that which brings a sense of purpose, even if there is not a flower in our path from which we can draw, we can make hope the honey to which we fill the jars of the lives of others and yes even for ourselves.

I invite us to take time to treasure the various ways hope comes into our lives. Let us fill our pockets with possibilities of hope so that the world sees us as the bee-keepers of our lives who bring the blessing of honey harvesting. Remember, like the bee, our purpose is to live hope, just as hope is the only bee that makes honey without flowers.

Sister Kimberly Prohaska, O.S.B., Prioress

Girls' Education Matters (G.E.M)

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Created over a decade ago, G.E.M aids girls and women in Esquipulas, Guatemala, as they attend school from elementary age on into college years.

We humbly thank all of the 2024 donors to the Guatemalan scholarship program.

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In Loving Memory

Oblate Regina Pender

**January 1, 1942 - December 25,
2024**

Regina 'Gina' Pender, 82, of Canyon, Texas, passed away on December 25, 2024. She was born on January 1, 1942, in Houston to Frank and Elizabeth (Cross) Cronan. She graduated from Irvin High School in El Paso in 1960 and married Charles Edwin 'Bud' Pender in Houston on August 29, 1964. They moved to Umbarger, Texas, and were married for almost 60 years before he preceded her in death on March 22, 2024.

After raising her family, Gina returned to school and received her Bachelor of Education from West Texas State University (now WTAMU) in 1991. She taught at Aikman Elementary School in Hereford, Texas, for 16 years and had an immense love for her students and coworkers.

Gina was a devout Catholic and a member of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Umbarger. She was also a member of Christian Mothers, the Legion of Mary, and an Oblate of St. Benedict. She made her oblation in 1983 at St. Benedict Monastery in Canyon, Texas, and she was dedicated to ministering those who were poor or less fortunate.

Gina is preceded in death by her husband; her parents; her sister, Colleen Whaling; and her brother, Patrick Cronan.

She is survived by her brother, Michael Cronan and wife, Marilyn; and her six children; Sam Pender; Regina Kern and husband, Francis; Bridget Gervasi and husband, Terry; Meridith Preston and husband, Scott; Jamie Pender, and David Pender; twelve grandchildren; and five great grandchildren.

The Funeral Mass was celebrated on January 3, 2025 at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Umbarger.

Oblate Mark Shea

**November 11, 1946 -
January 7, 2025**

Mark G. Shea of Paris, Arkansas died at his home in Paris on January 7, 2025, at the age of 78. He was born November 11, 1946, in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Mark was truly a blessed man. His passion for helping others has left a legacy of people whose lives were positively changed by his presence. He was a deacon in the Diocese of Boston and served as a deacon in Swansea, Massachusetts.

He spent several years as a missionary in Samoa, teaching at the seminary there. He moved to Paris, Arkansas, over twenty years ago and worked at Subiaco Abbey for several years. After being a Third Order Franciscan for many years, he began attending Oblate meetings at St. Scholastica Monastery in Fort Smith. He made oblation as a Benedictine Oblate on May 19, 2024.

Mark is survived by a brother, Bill Shea; four sons, Jeremy, Jon, Ben, and Tim Shea; his friends, Sister Judith Weaver and the Stengel family; and many other friends.

There was a funeral Mass for Mark in Ratcliff, Arkansas, his parish church, on January 13, 2025, with Rev. Reginald Udouj, OSB presiding. A memorial service was held on February 23, 2025, at St. Dominic Church in Swansea, Massachusetts. Mark donated his body to science. When the remains are returned to the family, there will be a funeral and Irish wake.

HESYCHIA HOUSE OF PRAYER BENEFACTORS IN 2024

The Sisters at Hesychia House of Prayer thank each of their benefactors and volunteers for your generous support. You are remembered in our love and prayers. Benefactors and volunteers listed here supported Hesychia House of Prayer during the year 2024.

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Stability and Wisdom Figures *By Sister Laura Cathcart*



Wisdom by Stephen Man-Fai Cheng

How would you define the Benedictine Virtue of Stability? How would you describe Wisdom? Are these two concepts related in any way?

These are some of the questions that the Oblates of St. Scholastica Monastery have been discussing with the Sisters and each other recently. There are many diverse answers to these questions. Here are some of the sharings presented to us to ponder.

For some, the image of stability that comes to mind is that of a lighthouse, providing a safe harbor in good weather or bad; a stately old tree that has worn the test of many seasons, yet faithfully year after year gives life. An image of stability for some was that of family.

Stability can also be action. It is being grounded, rooted in one place, daily lived in the ordinariness of life; yet it is also dynamic in that stability transcends place and time.

Wherever one goes, one takes St. Scholastica Monastery. This, too, is stability. "Once a Scho-girl, always a Scho-girl" - a motto of stability that many alumnae of St. Scholastica proudly proclaim. As Oblates of St. Scholastica Monastery, we enrich our relationship with God and each other by studying St. Benedict's view of stability. In Chapter 58, verses 9 and 17, stability is presented as a key element of monastic life. So how does this pertain to us as Oblates in the world?

As bearers of the Benedictine way of life, stability calls each of us to live lives of accountability, to be actively engaged, and to be evangelizers of the truth that God is faithful. How exactly then does an Oblate come to know, develop, and live this promise of stability? Stability is enlivened, and inner growth (stability of the heart) plants deep roots through studying scripture and the Rule of St. Benedict, being faithful to daily prayer time, and listening to the wisdom of the Sisters: sharing in their stories, attending community activities such as Social Justice Awareness presentations, participating with the Sisters in the community retreat, visiting the Sisters, volunteering around the community, and knowing the history of the Sisters of St. Scholastica and praying for them by name. in a world that feels very chaotic to many, Oblates are seen as wisdom figures,

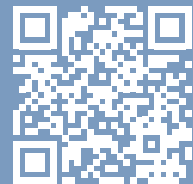
St. Scholastica Oblates

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 men and women are welcome to join our Oblate program.

If you have any interest in our program, visit our Oblate section on the St. Scholastica website:
www.stsscho.org.

To learn more about our program and make any inquiries, please email us at:
oblates@stsscho.org



people who are grounded in faith, hope, and love. Oblates have long been supporters of this community in many ways. In addition to volunteering and sharing their resources, they have many times, by their very presence, been beacons for the Sisters and encouragers for them in their vocations, thus reciprocators of wisdom and stability for the Sisters.

Much like the gentleman in the painting on the previous page, Oblates are the bearers of the scroll. In that scroll lies the stability of the Rule and also the stability and wisdom of the Sisters of St. Scholastica. In that scroll, too, lies new, unwritten pages on which old traditions will be transformed and new traditions will be made.

Around the Monastery

Trinity Junior High Earth Club Plants Tree on Monastery Grounds

On November 21, 2024, under the direction of Mr. John Casey, students from the Trinity Junior High Earth Club planted an apple tree on the monastery grounds. Many of the Sisters were gathered to watch the planting and then blessed the club members before the students departed.



Sisters Madeline Clifton and Rosalie Ruesewald stand next to employee and Oblate Joyce Jones to watch the tree planting.



Earth Club students dig a hole for the new apple tree.

2024 Bake Sale

On December 14, 2024, the Sisters held their annual bake sale at the monastery. Some Sisters work through the year preparing for the sale. Sister Maria DeAngeli raises and dries herbs to sell and to use in seasoned oils and vinegars. Sister Madeline Bariola tends her fig trees and cans fig preserves. Both work for months baking breads, fruit cakes, and cookies and canning jellies, preserves, pickled vegetables, and other things.

As time for the sale grows closer, all the Sisters make their specialties and help decorate, package, and price the items. Arranged baskets and homemade crafts are on sale along with the baked, cooked, and canned goods, resulting in a beautiful display of breads, cookies, candies, jellies, and many other goodies.

Thank you to the Alumnae, Oblates, and friends of the monastery who support us through their contributed goods, volunteer work, and purchases.



Feast of St. Scholastica 2025

On February 10, 2025, St. Scholastica Monastery celebrated the feast of St. Scholastica. The celebration began with morning prayers. Local clergy and religious were guests of the Sisters in the evening for Vespers, Mass, and dinner.



(Top left) Oblate Maryanne Meyerriecks and Sister Mary Sarto Gaffney converse with Sisters Dolores Vincent Bauer and Rosalie Reusewald before dinner.



(Top right) Deacon Brad Brown, Father Joseph Chan, and Father John Antony preside at Mass.



(Bottom right) Dominican Sisters and a guest from Barling pose with Sister Barbara Bock.

Vocation Corner

New Affiliate



Discerner Juanita Rios' interest in St. Scholastica Monastery and the Benedictine charism began with a visit. " 'Let's see where God takes me,' was what I was thinking as I was invited by Sister Siena to visit St Scholastica Monastery in Fort Smith, Arkansas," said Juanita. "During my first visit, it was a very busy and joyous holiday season in December of 2023. I witnessed the Sisters' friendship and love toward each other extended to me. I didn't realize it, but when I returned home here in Missouri, I felt so empty, so sad and actually missed all the Sisters and felt as if I had left a piece of my heart at the monastery."

Juanita visited the community for a second time, October 15 – 18, 2024.

"When I returned for the second visit in October 2024, Sister Kimberly said 'welcome home' and it truly felt like home," Juanita said. "Prior to her second visit, she had expressed to me her desire to be an Affiliate of our community", said Sister Siena Fisk. Affiliates are women who decide to seriously consider entering the community after several visits.

Juanita returned for her third visit December 10 – 18, 2024. "I decided to affiliate with the Benedictine Sisters at St. Scholastica Monastery because I feel like I'm home and free to be myself, pray, live for the Lord, and share in living out the charism of Ora et Labora with all the lovely Sisters, hopefully, my new family."

She was formally accepted as an Affiliate by the St. Scholastica community during Vespers on December 15, 2024.



Council of Benedictine Prioresses: Statement Regarding Immigration

Sister Kimberly Prohaska participated in the Conference of Benedictine Prioresses that met in Atchison, Kansas from January 27 to February 4, 2025. The Prioresses adopted a Statement on Immigration on February 2. The Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery endorse and support this statement. We share it with you.

In the spirit of the Gospel and the inspiration of St. Benedict we, as members of the Conference of Benedictine Prioresses (CBP), representing more than 1100 sisters, commit ourselves to Christ-like hospitality. Therefore, we call upon our leaders, especially governors, state legislators, members of the United States Congress, and our president to reconsider proposed immigration policies and to work towards solutions that uphold the dignity and rights of all people. We urge them to create pathways to citizenship for immigrants, provide humane treatment for those in detention, and ensure that immigrant families are not torn apart. In addition, we commit ourselves to work with other organizations who are advocating and caring for migrant peoples.

As Benedictine sisters, we are inspired by the life and teachings of St. Benedict. In the sixth century time when he lived, travelers and pilgrims were often met with violence on the road and sought refuge in his monasteries. Benedict was inspired by the Gospel of Jesus Christ to receive all who came seeking refuge. He modeled his life on that of Christ who received the poor, the lame, the outcast, and the stranger.

St. Benedict quoted Jesus who said, "I was a stranger, and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35). For centuries, men and women have continued to be inspired by St. Benedict's example of Christ-like hospitality and his teaching that all people who present themselves are to be received as Christ. May we and all people, in our time, do the same.



SEEK25 by Sister Siena Fisk



Sister Siena with Sister Maria Victoria Cutaia, OSB, from Clyde, MO, Sister Jill Reuber, OSB, from Ferdinand, IN, and Novice Amberina Uhlík from Clyde, MO, at the SEEK25 conference.

In December, I began preparations for the SEEK25 event scheduled for January 1-5, 2025, in Salt Lake City, Utah. Our community was one of this event's sponsors. I shared a booth with the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration from Clyde, Missouri.

SEEK is a major annual 5-day conference that invites primarily college students from across the country to deepen their Catholic faith, encounter Christ, and to grow in fellowship with others via daily Mass, adoration, dynamic Catholic speakers, lively entertainment, and more.

Having a shared booth in this conference gave me an excellent opportunity to interact and to be a presence as a Religious Sister and representative of our community. I was able to engage and connect not only with young women but with young men as well. Being present at these kinds of events is essential in informing/educating the youth about Benedictines and our charisms, and in promoting vocations to religious life.

HONOR ROLL OF BENEFACTORS FOR 2024

The Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery thank each of our benefactors and volunteers for your generous support. You are remembered in our love and prayers. On the second Tuesday of each month, a Mass is offered for you and your intentions. Benefactors and volunteers listed here supported the Monastery during the year 2024.

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St. Scholastica Monastery
1315 S. Albert Pike Ave.
Fort Smith AR 72903
Telephone: 479-459-8484
E-mail: elise@stscho.org

News Briefs

January 1-5, 2025: Sister Siena Fisk participated in the annual Seek event for Catholic young adults in Salt Lake City, Utah.

January 27-February 4, 2025: Sister Kimberly Prohaska attended the Conference of Benedictine Prioresses in Atchison, Kansas.

January 28, 2025: Sisters Dolores Vincent Bauer and Siena Fisk visited St. John's School in Russellville for Catholic Schools Week.

February 8, 2025: Sisters Madeline Bariola and Kimberly Prohaska attended the Consecrated Life Day celebration at Holy Souls Church in Little Rock.

February 9, 2025: Sisters Leona Marie Selig, Madeline Bariola, Dolores Vincent Bauer, and Kimberly Prohaska attended the celebration of the renovation of St. Scholastica Church in New Blaine.

February 22, 2025: Several of the Sisters attended the Mardi Gras celebration at Columbus Acres in Fort Smith.

February 23, 2025: Several Sisters went to a spaghetti dinner at Immaculate Conception Parish in Fort Smith as guests of Pat and Christine Wheeler.

February 28, 2025: Dr. Lori Boyd from the Center for Hearing and Balance in Fort Smith gave a presentation for the Sisters on ways to better communicate with people with hearing loss.

March 14-15, 2025: Sister Siena Fisk will participate in the Discernment Retreat for Women in Little Rock.

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