



# H O R I Z O N S

Vol. 55 No. 1

SAINT SCHOLASTICA MONASTERY, Fort Smith, AR

March 2026

*Simply Benedictine*

# Message from the Prioress

*Giving is an expression of gratitude for our blessings.*

— *Laura Arrillaga-Andreessen*



Most of us know about the Ides of March. Historically, it is a warning to beware and links itself to the time of Julius Caesar and his death in 44 BC. It is a turning point, bringing the focus to the season of spring, arising out of a notion of bad luck becoming the possibility of an ending which is really a new start, like a new year or new day that we have not yet experienced. In Anne of Green Gables, author Lucy Maud Montgomery wrote, “It’s nice to think that tomorrow is fresh with no mistakes in it.” I recall the response of Anne’s teacher, Miss Stacey, “There are no mistakes in it yet.”

Every day, we are given an opportunity to be grateful. Every moment we live, we are called to do better today than the day before. Looking back at our past, I begin to understand not only where God has been, but also where God is leading and asking us to go. The Ides of March calls us to reflection. Gratitude partners with trust in what we are meant to not only do but to become. We are both blessing beneficiaries and blessing bestowers. It’s lovely to know that we are capable of so much!

Generosity has shown itself to us in quiet and unassuming ways. We do not ask for or control the breaths we take. We never know when we lay ourselves to rest from the experience of the day, if we might find our eyes fluttering open to greet the newness of another day. We pray that God will help us to let go of the mistakes we made, hoping not to make any more errors. Everything we have is the result of a bestower of blessings, with the mistakes they made or didn’t make.

“Thank you” is two small words that declare so much. Living in the essence of the words thank you is living in the life that I believe God wants for all creation. We all have times of want and times of abundance. We all live in a world that, at times, can be less than friendly. Such times call us to reach for that which helps us to know ourselves as God wants us to know ourselves.

The custom of writing a thank-you note for a kindness someone shows is probably considered old school, but it expresses much more than just receiving a note of recognition. As convenient as it is to shoot an email or a text with a grateful emoji, a written note has its place in the modern view of things. There is special value in a handwritten note of loving gratitude to another. The writer understands the gift bestowed is never a mistake or a blemish, but a blessing.

As we look for a new start in the season of the Ides of March freshly pressed upon the heart, we, the Sisters of St. Scholastica, take this moment to express our gratitude for the blessing you have been to us. For all who have connected with the community in any way, we are deeply aware of all that has been bestowed upon us. For every gift, for every moment, for every thoughtful gesture, we are truly blessed. We pray that all of us will have a happy and blustery March and a joyous Easter. May it be a time for a new start, full of gratitude, for all who bestow and bless.

—*Sister Kimberly Prohaska, OSB, Prioress*

# Girls' Education Matters (G.E.M)

## Donor List

*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 2025 donors to the Guatemalan scholarship program.*

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# *In Loving Memory*

## **Oblate Ann Andrus February 24, 1941 - December 1, 2024**

Margaret Ann Shackelford Andrus passed away on December 1, 2024 in Monticello, Arkansas. Ann Andrus was born on February 24, 1941, in Monroe, Louisiana, to John and Marvine Wright Shackelford.

She married Charles Elmer Andrus, Jr. on January 10, 1964. Ann was a faithful member of First Assembly of God Church in Warren, Arkansas. She served on the alumni board at Ouachita Baptist University for 10 years. Ann made oblation on October 15, 1994, in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

She is preceded in death by her parents, John and Marvine Shackelford; and her son, Charles Lindsey Andrus.

Ann is survived by her husband, Charles Elmer Andrus, Jr.; her son, Chris Andrus; and her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held at 10:00 a.m. on December 4, 2024, at First Assembly of God Church in Warren, Arkansas.



## **Oblate Linda Lee Nichols September 16, 1959 - December 24, 2025**

Linda Lee Hoskinson was born September 16, 1959, in Omaha, Nebraska, to Francis LeRoy Hoskinson and Ellabelle "Ellie" Edna (Inman) Hoskinson. She passed away on December 24, 2025.

In 1979 she attended the Military Education Program at St. Leo College, St. Leo, Florida. In 1988, she obtained a masters degree in counseling and human development. After her years in the navy, she worked as a stenographer for the Veterans Affairs Hospital in Fayetteville.

In 2017, she completed the Little Rock Theology course offered through St. Gregory University, Shawnee, Oklahoma.

Linda was a long-time parishioner of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Fayetteville. She was a regular participant in bible studies, discussion groups, and OCIA in parishes of St. Joseph's in Fayetteville and St. Raphael's in Springdale. Linda made oblation May 21, 2006, in Fort Smith.

She is survived by her husband, Robert, his daughter, a granddaughter, and her brother, Mike Hoskinson, and nieces.

A visitation was held from 5-7 p.m. on December 29, 2025, at Beard's Funeral Chapel. A rosary was held at St Joseph's Catholic Church in Fayetteville, Arkansas, on December 30, 2025, at 9:30 a.m., followed by the funeral mass at 10:00 a.m. celebrated by Fr. Jason Tyler. Interment followed in the Fayetteville National Cemetery.

# HESYCHIA HOUSE OF PRAYER BENEFACTORS IN 2025

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 2025.

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*Sisters Anita DeSalvo, RSM, Louise Sharum, OSB, and Lisa Atkins, RSM*

# *Oblates of St. Scholastica Monastery* By Oblate Terry Baker

In the age of fast paced technology, never-ending changes and stresses, of broken relationships and society's constant clamor, there is a place of refuge. There is a place of quiet prayer, reflection, leisure, and work. The place I speak of is St. Scholastica Monastery in Fort Smith, Arkansas. This Benedictine monastery is a place that not only offers women a place to practice their religious vocation, but also equally important, a place for the laity to join them in living out the Rule of Benedict. This rule written by St. Benedict over 1500 years ago continues to offer a plan for living that is equally relevant today. Today, men and women of faith seeking to grow their spiritual lives and make sense of this world join the Sisters of St. Scholastica by becoming Oblates. Just as the Sisters have practiced a balance of prayer, work, and leisure, so too, do the men and women Oblates learn from them to do the same.

This past year, the Oblates have focused on the promise of obedience. What does obedience mean? How do I as a married woman practice this virtue? Learning the true meaning of obedience, humility, and strength can be a challenge. Learning to listen to God, I have found, is really what this is about. God, of course, hasn't sent me a text; instead my husband and I listened to our Oblate Directors and became willing to assist in changes that will hopefully move us forward. No longer will we sit and wait to be fed, rather we (all Oblates) will take responsibility for our Oblate "vocation".

In 2025-2026 I have found myself in the new role of Oblate coordinator, working with the directors to plan our Oblate Sundays. A formal document of behavior expectations has been implemented. Individual ministries have been formed with each group determining what topic they will study or what activity they will engage in. An Oblate directory is being created along with a pictorial that will be able to be updated and will become part of the archives at St. Scholastica. Oblates assist the monastery with hospitality, pray daily for vocations, follow the Liturgy of the Hours, and join the Sisters in adoration, Mass, and other activities.

Driving onto the grounds of the monastery, Oblates are encouraged to leave the world at the curb and enter into the monastic rhythm that has sustained and nourished so many men and women over the centuries. This year we have also looked forward to growing our program and preparing for the future. We are encouraged to invite others looking for spiritual renewal to join us. We have an obligation to leave the next generation a vibrant and flourishing Oblate program. May God bless the work of our hands.

## *St. Scholastica Oblates*

*Oblates study topics on the Holy Rule of St. Benedict that we Benedictines follow.*

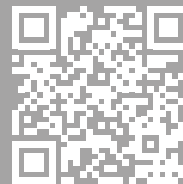
*Participation in the Oblate Program allows lay people the opportunity to seek God through prayer, achieve a greater attentiveness to the Word of God, learn a balance of prayer, work, and holy leisure, and many other spiritually enriching aspects of the Benedictine lifestyle. Both men and women are welcome to join our Oblate program.*

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

*[www.stscho.org](http://www.stscho.org).*

*To learn more about our program and make any inquiries, please email us at:*

*[oblates@stscho.org](mailto:oblates@stscho.org)*



# Around the Monastery



Cathy Blankenship

## ***Bake Sale***

December 13, 2025, a line formed outside the monastery doors as people waited for the annual bake sale to begin. Patrons shopped for homemade breads, jams, jellies, candies, crafts, and other items lovingly created by Sisters and friends of the monastery. Oblates and volunteers joined the Sisters in keeping tables full and helping customers with purchases. The day was successful, and the Sisters would like to thank all those who shopped at the bake sale and volunteered their time and talents in the preparation for and during the bake sale helping make this a wonderful success.

## ***St. Scholastica Alumnae Peggy Konert Book Reading***

Alumna Peggy Konert visited the monastery to discuss her book *The Holy Ghost and a Shine of Coal*, January 10, 2026. Inspired by stories and her own experiences, Konert writes the story of young June Ellen in a coming of age story centered around the girl's life in Paris, Arkansas, and the relationship between the coal mine integral to both the life and death of all dependent on the mines. Her writing is reminiscent of the voice and humor of Harper Lee. Alumnae of St. Scholastica Academy, Oblates, and the Sisters filled the room where Konert re-connected with her science teacher, Sister Rosalie Ruesewald, and chatted with former schoolmates of the academy before she spoke on the process of writing her publication and then read excerpts from her book. The book is available in the gift shop and on Amazon.





*Sister Leona Marie Selig and Sister Hilary Decker*

### *Feast of St. Scholastica Tea*

The Sisters celebrated the feast of St. Scholastica on February 10, 2026, with a new tradition – a tea party! Special guests Mike Jones, his wife Nan, and their cousin and granddaughter attended a beautifully decorated tea. Jones and his wife gifted tea cups to the Sisters for Christmas in honor of the years he worked with Sister Madeline Clifton during her time as chaplain at St. Edward's Mercy Medical Center.

*The jonquils on the monastery grounds  
welcome the spring.*





# *The Bells of St. Scholastica*

Throughout the centuries, bells have rung from churches to call believers to worship. Monasteries and convents, too, called religious to worship and prayer with the crisp sounds of bells. On January 19, 1896, in Shoal Creek, Arkansas, the Benedict, the Mary Joseph, and the St. Scholastica were baptized by Bishop Fitzgerald. Inscribed in Latin on the Benedict are the words, “Laudate dominum omnes gentes; Laedae eum omnea populs”; “Praise the Lord all you nations; praise him all your people.” For 79 years, the bells of St. Scholastica lent their voices to this holy summons.

Mother Meinrada Lex, the first prioress of St. Scholastica Convent in Shoal Creek, Arkansas, ordered the bells from Henry Stuckstede Foundry in St. Louis for \$450. After Bishop Fitzgerald baptized the three bells, they took their places in the wooden bell tower of the original, quadrangular convent. The first sound of the bells was heard to herald the risen Lord for the Easter Alleluia.

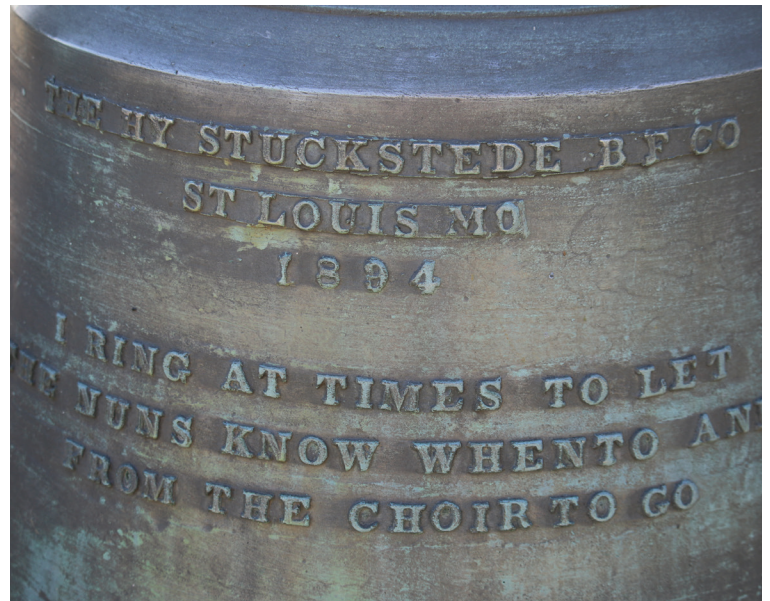
Then, on November 26, 1928, the bells were removed from Shoal Creek and made a journey to Fort Smith to the new St. Scholastica Convent. Benedict, Scholastica, and Mary Joseph were installed in the new chapel wing on the roof of the tower. They sounded over the six-story Gothic revival convent on June 12, 1929, to celebrate the dedication of the chapel wing.

The toll the swinging of the bells took on the tower accumulated over the years, and in 2008, after a few attempts to increase the longevity of their use, two severe storms finally silenced the bells. Both the bells and the building suffered damage during the high winds of the storm.

The bells were removed and placed on a concrete slab. They have rested on the monastery grounds for seventeen years.

Now, as the Sisters and a special Task Force Committee work with plans to landscape the area where the former monastery stood, the bells have become an important feature of the development of the area. Sister Regina Schroeder has designed several ways to display the bells and pay homage to the history of both convent and monastery.

In the near future, the bells of St. Scholastica will fulfill a new role in the sacred space created on the monastery grounds, silently reminding those who see them to heed the call to worship.



# HONOR ROLL OF BENEFACTORS FOR 2025

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. 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 2025.

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Telephone: 479-459-8484  
E-mail: [elise@stscho.org](mailto:elise@stscho.org)



# News Briefs

December 1, 2025: The Bordertown Belles danced for the Sisters.

December 4, 2025: Christ the King School Choir sang for the Sisters.

December 10, 2025: St. Boniface Adult Choir sang for the Sisters.

December 16, 2025: The Sisters and employees enjoyed the Employee Christmas Party at Midland Family Bowl.

December 17, 2025: Trinity Catholic School Choir sang for the Sisters.

January 1-5, 2026: Vocation Director Sister Siena Fisk staffed a booth at Seek26 in Columbus, Ohio.

January 29-February 3, 2026: Prioress Sister Kimberly Prohaska virtually attended the Conference of Benedictine Prioresses meeting in Baltimore, Maryland.

February 7, 2026: Sisters Kimberly Prohaska, Madeline Bariola, and Hilary Decker attended the Trinity Catholic School fundraiser at Hardscrabble Country Club.

March 4-8, 2026: Sister Siena will attend the Benedictine Tech Ministry Conference in Rock Island, Illinois.

March 14, 2026: Youth from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Spiro, Oklahoma, will make a retreat at the Monastery.

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