

# Benedictine Voice



Benedictine Sisters of Boerne, Texas

Summer 2018



*"For I know well the plans  
I have in mind for you..."*





## Finding Ourselves in a Spirit Soaked Zone

I am both humbled and honored to have been elected Prioress at this moment in the history of my community and religious life. One of my favorite scriptures is Jeremiah 29: 11-14 where God promises us a future full of hope. I have walked

with this scripture for years and know for a fact that the future has always held both hope and blessing for me. So I enter this moment of our community's history with anticipation for the future God has waiting for me personally and for the community.

I was especially touched that I was installed into this position on Pentecost. Using Dan Watson's words of finding ourselves in a "Spirit soaked zone", I invited the community to be aware it is a mighty wind that moves the apostles to preach at Pentecost, and it is a mighty wind that moves our community at this time. It gives life, it cries out in our hearts; it is the source of charisms and of special powers! It is a movement toward that future full of hope!

The leadership team and I agree that these next five years will be filled with a new energy that will both ready us for the Spirit's surprises, but also will gift us with a realistic view of our own future in terms of our aging and our legacy.

It is an exciting time because we live in a Spirit soaked zone! It is a time of visioning for the "New" that God will provide. It is a time to embrace the invitation that the God of the future gives to us. We need to stop looking at the past and steady our gaze on the horizon. We need to muster that good zeal that St. Benedict talks about in Chapter 72 of the Rule. "Let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ." Joan Chittister states: "Good zeal provides the foundation for the spirituality of the long haul". So it is with this good zeal that we begin a new chapter in our history.

We were fortunate to have Sr. Teresa Maya, President of LCWR come and speak to the community. I found her words both freeing and challenging as I reflected on my new role. She said generally Religious should quit using the words aging, diminishment, old, completion, and transition, and gravitate to a new mantra of leaven, potential, and transformation. Being leaven, finding our potential at this moment in history, and transforming our way of life in ways that will carry the legacy of what has been to what will be - these are spirit soaked words that invite this community, as well as all of you, to a privileged threshold into the future.

With Joy,

*Sister Frances Briseño, OSB*  
Sister Frances Briseño, OSB  
Prioress

The front cover photo was taken by Sister Susan Mika, OSB at the new Leadership Installation in May. The ring of ivy represents growth and new life, by-products of the seeds planted by our foundress, Mother Lidwina Weber, OSB, that germinated over the years in the fields of education, health care, spirituality, human equality, justice and peace; The Rule - it has been a tradition in the Sisters' Community that all former Prioresses partake in the passing of the Rule of Benedict to their respective successors; and the circle of candles which represents each new member of the Leadership Team, and a vision of shared leadership for the future.

*... plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope.” Jeremiah 29:11*



*(l-r) Sisters Susan Mika, OSB, Michael Brandt, OSB, Frances Briseño, OSB, Sylvia Ahr, OSB, and Ursula Herrera, OSB*

## Leadership Team 2018-2023

The Benedictine Sisters embarked on a new chapter in their compelling history on May 19th. The Community celebrated their new leadership with a morning prayer service. Sr. Frances Briseño was installed as Prioress, a position she previously held from 1992-1996. Family, staff, Oblates, and friends joined the Sisters in the afternoon for a blessing and reception at St. Scholastica Monastery. *(see photos page 7)*

Sister Frances, originally from Comfort, Texas, joined the Benedictine Sisters in 1967. She holds an MA in Marriage and Family Therapy and Christian Spirituality, and she is a certified Spiritual Director. Sister has served in numerous ministries in the Archdiocese of San Antonio during the past four decades including education, Co-Director of RENEW, retreat ministry, parish ministry, and jail ministry.

Joining Sister Frances in leadership roles on the Sisters' Council through 2023 are: Sister Sylvia Ahr, OSB, Treasurer; Sister Michael Brandt, OSB, Sub-Prioress and Director of Benedictine Ministries; Sister Ursula Herrera, OSB, RN for Maverick County Hospital District and Director of the Sisters' Caridad de Corazón ministry in Eagle Pass, TX.; and Sister Susan Mika, OSB, Director of the Benedictine Coalition for Responsible Investment.

The community is grateful to Sister Bernadine Reyes, OSB who faithfully served as Prioress for the past 17 years.



# MILESTONES

## 2018 Jubilarians -

### 140 Years Combined Religious Life

Sisters Mary Rose Goertz, OSB and Mechtilde Goertz, OSB are celebrating their 70th Jubilees this year! They were among the 'special year' Jubilarians in the Archdiocese of San Antonio who were honored by Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller MSPS on April 3rd. A Mass and dinner were held to celebrate the lives of these remarkable men and women who have served God so faithfully. CONGRATULATIONS SISTERS MARY ROSE & MECHTILDE!

### 17 Years of Faithful Leadership

Sisters and staff gathered on May 9th to thank Sister Bernadine Reyes, OSB for her 17 years as Prioress. Sister is enjoying a well deserved Sabbatical for the next several months. Our very best wishes to her for rest, renewal, and relaxation! GRACIAS POR TODO!

### 25 Years of Faithful Service

Our Supervisor of Facilities and Grounds, Chadd Lassitter, recently received recognition for his 25 years of faithful service to the Benedictine Sisters. WAY TO GO, CHADD!



Above clockwise: Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller MSPS, Sr. Mary Rose Goertz, OSB and Sr. Mechtilde Goertz, OSB.



Sr. Sylvia Ahr, OSB presents Chadd Lassitter with a gift of gratitude for his 25 years of dedicated service.



Thank you for everything, Sr. Bernadine! Enjoy your Sabbatical - Vaya con Dios!

## MISSION STATEMENT

We, the Boerne Benedictines, are called to seek God in community and to respond in ministry through sharing our spirituality and addressing the needs of the people we serve, especially the poor.

**"OUR DAYS ARE HAPPIER  
WHEN WE GIVE PEOPLE A  
BIT OF OUR HEART RATHER  
THAN A PIECE OF OUR MIND"  
AUTHOR UNKNOWN**

## With Our Sincere Gratitude

Thank you to the following grantors for their support to our work and to our mission:

Scanlan Foundation  
\$2,500 for the Omega Retreat Center

LCWR Region 12 Border Fund  
\$2,000 for Caridad de Corazón Border Ministry

Marietta K. Randall Foundation Trust,  
Broadway Bank Trustee  
\$1,500 for the Sisters' Archival Project

Kenedy Memorial Foundation  
\$500 for 2017 Event

## 2018 Summer Sweepstakes

**GRAND PRIZE  
\$1,000 VISA GIFT CARD**

### Other Great Prizes!

\$500 Visa Gift Card

\$250 Visa Gift Card

\$100 Visa Gift Card (2)

\$50 Visa Gift Card

(Gift cards purchased through Frost Bank Boerne)

**Tickets: \$5 each,  
\$25 for 6, \$50 for 12**

**Drawing will be held on  
Tuesday, September 4th**

**Need not be present to win!  
Deadline to submit tickets:  
Friday, August 31, 2018**

**If you would like to purchase  
more tickets, please call  
830.816.8504**

## LEAVING A LEGACY

PLEASE CONSIDER REMEMBERING THE BENEDICTINE SISTERS IN YOUR LEGACY PLANNING. THERE ARE MANY WAYS THAT YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF THE SISTERS AS WELL AS THE THOUSANDS WHO BENEFIT FROM THEIR PROGRAMS AND MINISTRIES.

OUR LEGAL TITLE IS BENEDICTINE SISTERS  
(CONGREGATION OF BENEDICTINE SISTERS),  
AND WE ARE A 501(C)3 CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION.

FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT YOUR ESTATE PLANNER,  
ATTORNEY, OR SR. SYLVIA AHR, OSB, TREASURER  
AT 830.816.8504.



## 2018 None's Ball Update

Our sincere appreciation to all who have supported this year's None's Ball. To date, over \$26,000 has been received for the Sisters' retirement needs. Donations are still being accepted in person, by mail, or on-line at [www.boernebenedictines.org](http://www.boernebenedictines.org)



# EVENTS

## 2018 FEAST OF ST. BENEDICT SPAGHETTI DINNER & SILENT AUCTION

We wish to thank our event Sponsors, Underwriters, Friends, Silent Auction Donors, volunteers, and all who attended our March 21st event! Together, with your help, nearly \$17,000 was raised for the Sisters' needs! God Bless You!

### SPONSORS

#### Venezia

Gertrude Mika  
Karnes 6 J Minerals, LP -  
Fabian and Gladys Janysek  
Vision Source Boerne

#### Napoli

Casias Construction  
Cow Creek Taxidermy &  
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Dr. Edward and Twyla Benson  
Fred and Mary Lou Valentino

#### Underwriters

Anonymous  
Frost Bank Boerne  
Harriet Payne  
Kenedy Memorial Foundation  
St. Peter's Knights of Columbus,  
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Sandra Custom Homes

#### Friends of the Benedictines

Alamo Mailing  
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Bear Moon Bakery & Cafe  
Benedictine Oblates  
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Boy Scout Troop #18  
Carrie Zapata  
Comal Golf and Battery  
Girl Scouts of Kendall County  
Hill Country Weekly  
Kioblassa Provision Co.  
Mayfield Paper Company  
Mike Brady  
Omega Retreat Center  
Peggy Raley  
Sisters' Attic  
St. Peter's Parish  
Sysco Central Texas  
Walmart Boerne



(l-r) Sr. Kathleen Higgins, OSB, Sandra Kioblassa of Kioblassa Provision, Co., and Sr. Mary Lou Hernandez, OSB.



Above - Kathy Harbaugh gets some help from volunteer, Anthony McGrady, to carry all her silent auction items! Below - Dub Smothers and Crystal Villanueva share a hug at the event.



### SILENT AUCTION DONORS

A Little Nature Store  
The Benedictine Sisters  
Beth Dewey  
Bill Miller Bar-B-Q  
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Boudro's Texas Bistro  
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The Buckhorn Golf Course  
Buckhorn Museum and Café  
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Cindy Ogle, LMT  
El Rio Mexican Restaurant  
Epicure Gourmet Market  
Friends of the Benedictines  
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Girl Scouts of Southwest Texas  
Grey Moss Inn  
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Merrie Graves  
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Pixie  
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Robert Shinn  
Roberto & Robin Ann Dominguez  
Sarah Hewitt  
Sea World San Antonio  
Serendipity on Main  
Silo Elevated Cuisine & Bar  
Solange Designs  
Très Bella  
Tina Vroman  
Walmart Boerne  
The Wash Tub  
Will and Anne Brunet



(Continued from page 3)

## Leadership Blessing

Family, Oblates, Friends and staff join in the blessing of the new Leadership on May 19th.

Below, Sr. Bernice Lindsey, OSB visits with Msgr. John Wagner during the reception.

Below, right, (l-r) Sr. Victoria Anne Olivares, OSB, Sr. Esther Guerrero, MCDP and Sr. Patricia Connolly, DC enjoy the festivities.



Above, newly installed Prioress, Sr. Frances Briseño (front row, 2nd from right), is surrounded by family members. Right, Sr. Susan Mika, OSB with her mom, Gertrude Mika.



"WE BELIEVE THAT THE DIVINE PRESENCE IS EVERYWHERE." RULE OF BENEDICT 19:1



# MINISTRIES

## Listening to God's First Language: Silence



*Omega's Contemplative Outreach Centering Prayer Group - (l-r) Colleen Housley, Arleen Skwara, Robin Ann Dominguez, Mary Hancock, Sr. Mary Agnes Zinni, OSB, Elizabeth Nolen, Barbara Ballard, Pattye Spezia, and Michelle Hansen. (Not pictured: Bill Walker)*

Sister Mary Agnes Zinni, OSB has been a part of Contemplative Outreach San Antonio (COSA) since it first began in 2002. She is a commissioned presenter and facilitator for centering prayer, and a member of the COSA Servant Leadership Team.

COSA is a local chapter of Contemplative Outreach, a worldwide spiritual network of individuals and faith communities committed to living the contemplative dimension of the Gospel in everyday life through the practice of Centering Prayer. COSA's purpose is to nurture the spiritual growth of Centering Prayer participants in the San Antonio/Hill Country community, to provide workshops in the method of Centering Prayer and Lectio Divina, and to offer retreats and resources to deepen our relationship with God. (<http://cosa-contemplativeoutreach.org>)

Sister Mary Agnes remembers when the first COSA meetings were held at the Ecumenical Center in San Antonio, Texas, then moved to the grounds of the Benedictine Omega Retreat Center from 2003 - 2013. In 2014, COSA opened its office at the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio.

In 2002, Sister began a Contemplative Outreach Centering Prayer group in Boerne. "Centering Prayer is about silent time with God," says Sister Mary Agnes. "Fr. Thomas Keating, co-founder of Contemplative Outreach, said, 'Silence is God's first language, and it's a very difficult language to learn.' It is our goal to help those who partake in Centering Prayer to 'Be still and know that I am God' (Psalm 4:10)."

Now in its 16th year, the prayer group still meets once a week at Omega to: view Fr. Thomas Keating's DVD teachings on the Spiritual Journey of consenting to the Divine Presence and action within us; to share 20 minutes of Centering Prayer in Silence; and to conclude with faith sharing by participants. It is just one of 20 such groups around the San Antonio area that is associated with COSA .

If you are interested in knowing more about this ministry, please contact Sister Mary Agnes at 830.816.8504 or to learn more about contemplative prayer visit: <https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org>



## Efforts of Benedictine CRI Continue to Make Progress



The Benedictine Sisters of Boerne are one of 21 Benedictine Communities that comprise the Benedictine Coalition for Responsible Investment (CRI). The coalition's mission is recognizing the directive from the Rule of St. Benedict that distribution should be made to each according to need. The Benedictine CRI works to build a world in which corporate policies and practices reflect just and equitable distribution of resources for the common good. There were 266 shareholder resolutions filed for the 2018 Proxy Season. A recent resolution filed with Home Depot proved favorable for the coalition's tireless efforts. Sister Susan Mika, OSB, Executive Director of Benedictine CRI, recently released the following update:

### Home Depot Vote - The Highest Ever

"We have been filing resolutions with Home Depot for over 17 years, asking them to release their EEO-1 data which they collect each year because they are a government contractor. This is a profile of their workforce in nine different categories. Over the years, we have met with executives and told them 'we don't know if you are the best or the worst because we have not seen the data.' Lyn Conley from Atlanta represented us at the annual shareholders' meeting. The company posted the final voting results on the Securities and Exchange (SEC) website: our resolution received 48.3%. This is the highest vote we have received at this company ever. Last year's vote was 33% which had been the highest." Home Depot's CEO, Craig Menear, commented that the board would take into account the result of the shareholder vote. For the complete story visit:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/atlanta/news/2018/05/17/shareholder-proposal-on-diversity-reportreceives.html>

## Benedictines Welcome Young Women on Vocation Pilgrimage

On May 16th, the *2018 Women's Vocation Pilgrimage* made stops in San Antonio and Boerne to visit the Benedictine Sisters. This annual event, a part of Austin's University Catholic Center, gives young women an opportunity to learn, firsthand, more about the different women Religious communities in the Archdiocese of San Antonio.

Five young women spent time in the morning with Sister Susan Mika, OSB learning about her work in the areas of Corporate Responsibility and Social Justice. In the afternoon, they were welcomed to St. Scholastica Monastery where they spent time getting to know the Sisters, their history, and more about their ministries. "We were delighted to host the young women," said Sr. Bernadine Reyes, OSB. "Their enthusiasm brings such joy, and we wish them a 'listening heart' as they continue their vocational discernment."



(l-r) Mallory McKee, Brittany Kippes, Xiang Truong, Sophia Bibb, and Katie Morrison at St. Scholastica Monastery, Boerne.

# WHO ARE BENEDICTINE OBLATES

**O**blates of St. Benedict are Christian women and men who associate themselves with a Benedictine community in order to enrich their Christian way of life.

Oblates do not take on new religious practices. As individuals and as members of a body, they grow in love of God, neighbor and self. With the Rule of St. Benedict as their guide, Oblates adopt values that are part of the very fabric of Christian Spirituality, simply seeking to deepen their faith and to lead enriched Christian lives according to the Scriptures. Through association with a Benedictine community, Oblates receive help and guidance in living a full Christian life.

Our Oblate candidates participate in a one year formation process consisting of faith sharing and prayer, and classes designed to enhance their knowledge of Benedictine spirituality.

After this formation process is completed, our Oblate candidates make a commitment in the presence of our community to:

- Share spiritual and social life
- Integrate prayer and work to manifest Christ's presence in society
- Join the community on special occasions for prayer, liturgy, meals and celebrations.

**M**embership is open to Christian women and men, single or married, of wholesome character and emotional stability who, inspired by Benedictine spirituality, are willing to commit oneself:

- To grow in understanding of faith in order to live the Gospel values more deeply.
- To share in Benedictine community through prayer and ministry while remaining in her/his chosen way of life.
- To grow in knowledge of the Boerne Benedictine Sisters' mission and heritage.
- To live the charism of Benedictine spirituality and extend those gifts for service promoting the reign of God.



*Sr. Frances Briseño, OSB (left) and Director of the Oblate Program, Sr. Antoinette Van Galen, OSB (second from right), with new Oblates Kathy and Oscar Hannig, Shirley Fenton, and Shirley Melcher (front). (Not pictured: Susan Markworth).*

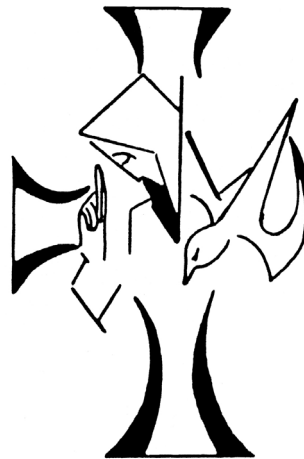
## *What draws you to the Benedictine Way of Life?*

*"The Rule helps to center me and ground me in what is really important. It helps me focus on the things that really matter."*

*Susan Markworth, ObOSB*

*"To be closer to God, that is why I became an Oblate."*

*Shirley Melcher, ObOSB*



We are grateful to the 133 Oblates who journey with us. If you are interested in knowing more about our program, please visit our website or call 830.816.8504.



## IN MEMORIAM

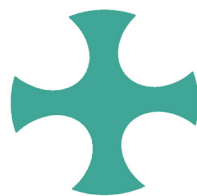
"For me, seeking God is primary and should be uppermost in the minds of those who wish to live the monastic way of life. If God is not the foundation of our life, the most important element is missing. The primary focus of Cenobitic life is living all aspects of the way Christ would have us live."

*An excerpt from Sr. Lucille Goertz, OSB's journal from her trip to Rome, 1980.*

Sister Lucille (Mary Aloysia) Goertz, OSB  
December 13, 1925 - April 22, 2018



Perpetual Profession  
December 15, 1946



Sister Lucille faithfully sought God in her work and prayer. She lived the Benedictine way of life with courage, compassion, and conviction, always true to God and to her community. Her grace-filled leadership taught us life-long values and so much more.

Her memory is ever present, reminding each of us to live simplistically and purposefully, act justly, love unconditionally, and respect all of human kind.

## A Move to the Monastery

Sister Germaine Marie Sutton, OSB moved into St. Scholastica Monastery in April. For the past 14 years, she has lived in Eagle Pass, TX. In 2015, due to health reasons, Sister retired from a stellar 52 year teaching ministry.



In addition to asking for prayers, she says she is adapting well to her new environment. Welcome home, Sister!

*Above, Sr. Germaine prepares for daily prayer with the community.*

## New Staff On-Board

Native Texan, Steve D'Ortona, joined our Facilities & Grounds Department in April.



A Veteran of the United States Navy, Steve's service tours took him to San Diego and Guam.

Thus far, he is enjoying his work. Among his favorite hobbies are reading and music. Learning to play the guitar is on his bucket list. Welcome to the "Hill", Steve!

We remember our beloved family and friends who have gone before us. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon them. And may the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

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Ph: 830.816.8504  
[www.boernebenedictines.org](http://www.boernebenedictines.org)

Find us on:



### Ministries in Texas including Boerne, Eagle Pass, & San Antonio

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#### Sisters' Council

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Prioress

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Sub-Prioress

Sister Sylvia Ahr, OSB  
Councilor

Sister Ursula Herrera, OSB  
Councilor

Sister Susan Mika, OSB  
Councilor

### Keep in Touch

We would like to hear from you! We are  
continually updating our database. Please send us  
your updated information if it is incorrect on the  
mailing label.

**Save the Date**  
*10th Annual*  
**SONGWRITERS**  
*at the Ridge*

**September 22, 2018**  
CROWN RIDGE BANQUET HALL  
6909 CAMP BULLIS RD.  
DOORS OPEN 5:30 PM  
DINNER, CONCERT, & LIVE AUCTION

**SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE**  
**TICKETS ON SALE JULY 2**  
\$75 EACH  
MUST BE PURCHASED IN ADVANCE  
**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
830.816.8470  
[SONGWRITERSATTHERIDGE.ORG](http://SONGWRITERSATTHERIDGE.ORG)

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