

BENEDICTINE VOICE

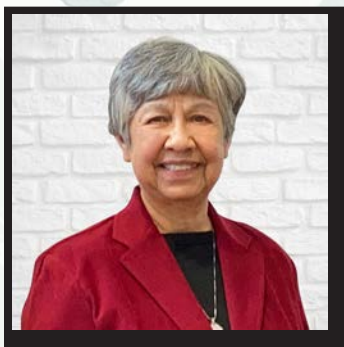
Benedictine Sisters of Boerne, Texas

Summer 2022

*Spirit
of
Hospitality*



REFLECTION FROM THE prioress



Let Us Love One Another

As I reflect on the past three months since I was installed as Prioress, many wonderful things have taken place. We celebrated Catholic Sisters Week in

March with festivities that highlighted our 60 years in Boerne. We unveiled our St. Scholastica life-size bronze statue at the end of March and we welcomed six new Oblates on May 15th.

And then the unthinkable happened on May 24th in Uvalde, TX. Nineteen children and two brave teachers lost their lives at the hand of a crazed 18-year-old gunman, who also died. The entire community, including children, families, and first responders, are scarred forever with memories from that fatal day.

Since that day, more mass shootings have occurred. In San Antonio, a young man was shot recently while sitting in a car waiting for his cousin. People are targeted because of their color, race, or beliefs. Leaders from Russia feel they have a right to utterly destroy lives and cities in Ukraine to be able to claim it. This list goes on and on.

During this pandemic time, a certain civility went out the window. The American value of individualism gave permission to men and women to fight on the planes with flight attendants over mask mandates.

The common good held no meaning to some. Many died of Covid and left families to fend for themselves because they refused to take the vaccine.

In our own ministries here in Boerne, individuals and groups have turned away because of restrictions that were put in place for the good of the whole. The value of individualism has risen to unprecedented heights.

During the Easter Season, I was drawn to the reading from the Acts of the Apostles. These ancestors of ours, filled with God's Spirit, went about putting into practice all the Lord had taught them while he was with them. And even after the resurrection they still had lessons to learn. They came to understand that no one would be denied entrance into God's fold. God's Spirit made this quite clear in Acts 15:7-21. In another reading from the Gospel of John, they heard the new commandment, "Love one another as I have loved you..." John 13:34-35. The scriptures inform us of a way to encounter one another in our daily life.

The Apostles had much to learn about the meaning of the new commandment and we, in our day, still have much to learn about what it means to "love one another as I love you."

Pope Francis reads the signs of the times and sends us letters addressing these "signs." In his Encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, he calls us to learn to encounter one another; he reminds us that we are all brothers and sisters" and that each and every person has indelible "human dignity," and so much more.

What happened in Uvalde and all around our nation has left me numb. I pray that we can love one another as Jesus loves us. And I pray that we, as a nation under God, will rise to address the complexity of these issues so that all will have the opportunity to live in a peaceful and just society.

May God bless you and your families ~

Sister Bernadine Reyes, OSB

Mission Statement

We 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.

2022 None's Ball

We wish to thank all who have supported this year's None's Ball No-show Event. Your generosity is helping to ensure our Sisters continue to age with dignity while providing them the best possible care and quality of life.

To date, over \$50,000 has been received! There's still time to make your tax-deductible gift online or mail to:

Benedictine Sisters • 2022 None's Ball
216 W. Highland Dr. • Boerne, TX 78006

TRANSITIONS OF LEADERSHIP

Blessed With Servant Hearts

2021-2022 has brought several leadership changes to the Boerne Benedictine community. Sister Sylvia Ahr, OSB was appointed Administrator in April 2021 after Sister Frances Briseño, OSB, then Prioress, suffered a stroke in March 2021.

On November 21, 2021, the Sisters elected Sister Bernadine Reyes, OSB as Prioress. She previously held the position from 2001-2018. Sister Elaine Fischer, OSB of Mt. St. Scholastica Monastery in Atchison, Kansas served as the election discernment facilitator.

Sister Lynn McKenzie, OSB of the Benedictine Sisters of Cullman, Alabama and President of the Federation of St. Scholastica, presided at the canonical election. Both Sisters Lynn and Elaine joined the community in thanking Sister Frances for her leadership.

On the morning of February 26, 2022 Sister Sylvia was acknowledged for her service as Administrator. In the afternoon, Sister Bernadine was installed as Prioress and will serve in this role through 2026.



At the November election - seated l-r: Sisters Antoinette Van Galen, OSB, Mary Louise Hernandez, OSB, Mary Agnes Zinni, OSB, Victoria Anne Olivares, OSB

Standing l-r: Sisters Lynn McKenzie, OSB, Bernadine Reyes, OSB, Sylvia Ahr, OSB, Frances Briseño OSB, Michael Brandt, OSB, Chon Nguyen, OSB, Bernice Lindsey, OSB, Ursula Herrera, OSB, Kathleen Higgins, OSB, Elaine Fischer, OSB, and Susan Mika, OSB. (photo provided by Sister Susan)



Photo left: Sister Sylvia Ahr, OSB receives a beautiful bouquet of roses in gratitude for her leadership as Administrator.



Photo right: Sister Sylvia Ahr, OSB hands Sister Bernadine Reyes, OSB a copy of the Rule of St. Benedict as a symbol of leadership transition.



Sister Chon Nguyen, OSB leads the community in a blessing over newly installed Prioress, Sister Bernadine Reyes, OSB.



(2nd from left) Sister Bernadine Reyes, OSB with Council members (l-r), Sisters Sylvia Ahr, OSB, Susan Mika, OSB, and Ursula Herrera, OSB.

SIXTY YEARS IN BOERNE

2022 Catholic Sisters Week Was Full of Celebrations

The Benedictine Sisters celebrated this year's Catholic Sisters Week (March 8-14) with a City Proclamation from Mayor Tim Handren and a Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. Both of these events brought an awareness of Catholic Sisters Week to the Boerne community as well as commemorating the Sisters' Sixty Years in Boerne!

Catholic Sisters Week, an international celebration, shines a light on the spirituality, mission, and community building of women religious.



Sister Bernadine Reyes, OSB accepts Mayor Tim Handren's Proclamation (read full proclamation on right)



Sisters, Co-ministers, and members of the Greater Boerne Chamber of Commerce join Chamber President, Kim Blohm, Sister Bernadine Reyes, OSB, and Mayor Tim Handren for the Ribbon Cutting. (photo courtesy of Robert Taylor, Digital Managing Editor - City of Boerne)

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, since their arrival in Texas in 1919, the Benedictine Sisters have faithfully served thousands of men, women, and children through their numerous ministries in the areas of spirituality and hospitality, education, peace and justice, health care, and pastoral care; and

WHEREAS, in 1962, they moved their Motherhouse from San Antonio to Boerne, Texas and the new St. Scholastica Monastery, completed in 2016, serves as a monastic model to the greater community, reflecting Benedictine values of prayer, community, hospitality, spirituality, and work; and

WHEREAS, St. Albert Boarding School, High School, Grade School, Early Learning Center and Head Start program, as well as Children's Inn, a home for medically fragile children, were all operated by the Benedictine Sisters on the Benedictine grounds; and

WHEREAS, a Hispanic Outreach Program was introduced by the Benedictine Sisters to learn and address the important issues faced by Boerne's Hispanic population, including education, faith, health, and immigration; and

WHEREAS, in addition to pastoral parish ministry, jail ministry, contemplative outreach, and spirituality ministries, the Sisters continue to collaborate with nonprofit organizations, businesses, and civic entities within the community and offer Benedictine ministries including the Omega Retreat Center, the Health and Wholeness Center, and the Sisters' Attic Thrift Store; and

WHEREAS, in the year 2022, the Benedictine Sisters commemorate sixty years in Boerne, Texas.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Tim Handren, Mayor of the City of Boerne, Texas do hereby proclaim March 8th - 14th, 2022, to be Catholic Sisters Week in Boerne, Texas and ask our citizens to recognize the Benedictine Sisters' dedicated oblates, committed staff, faithful volunteers, and loyal supporters, as they continue to build an extraordinary legacy in Boerne and beyond.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of Boerne, Texas to be affixed on this the 10th day of March, 2022.

Tim Handren, Mayor
City of Boerne, Texas

Congratulations to Our 2022 Jubilarians



*Sister Victoria Anne
Olivares, OSB*

60 Years



*Sister Mary Louise
Hernández, OSB*

45 Years



A Jubilee Mass will be livestreamed on our Facebook page, Sunday, August 28th at 11:00 am.



Sisters Attend Novice and Director Institute

Sisters Ursula Herrera, OSB and Chon Nguyen, OSB attended the 2022 Novice and Director Institute (NADI) at Mount St. Scholastica in Atchison, KS, May 17-28, 2022.

The Institute was led by Co-Directors, Sister Mary Colleen Schwarz, OSB from Benet Hill Monastery in Colorado Springs, CO, and Sister Patricia Seipel, OSB from Mount St. Scholastica.

"It was wonderful spending time with other Novices," said Sister Chon. We shared our experiences in Religious Life, and we learned more about the Benedictine monastic way of life and living the Rule of Benedict." She was grateful Sister Ursula was there to support her during the entire Institute.

Photo above provided by Sr. Ursula (l-r): Sister Maria Goretti De Angeli, OSB from St. Scholastica Monastery - Ft. Smith AR, Sister Chon Nguyen, OSB, Trisha Burns, Novice from St. Placid Priory - Lacey, Washington, Sister Patricia Seipel, OSB, Sister Colleen Schwarz, OSB, Sister Ursula Herrera, OSB, and Sister Siena Fisk, OSB from St. Scholastica Monastery - Ft. Smith AR.



**LAUDATO SI'
ACTION PLATFORM**

The Laudato Si' Action Platform creates a space for the universal Church to learn and grow together by taking "decisive action, here and now" to care for each other and the home we share.

Sr. Susan Mika, OSB, Director of our Corporate Responsibility ministry, facilitated several discussions and planning meetings with the Sisters earlier this year to develop the following Laudato Si' commitment statement:

We, the Congregation of Benedictine Sisters, a monastic community of women, are located in south central Texas. Our mission calls us 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.

Together, with our faithful Oblates and co-ministers, we joyfully accept the invitation to join the integral ecological journey of the Laudato Si' Action Platform and support its goals listed below:

- Response to the Cry of the Earth • Response to the Cry of the Poor • Ecological Economics
- Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles • Ecological Education • Ecological Spirituality
- Community Resilience and Empowerment

Adopted 4/23/2022

THE MAKING OF THE STATUE

It began as a dream for Sister Antoinette Van Galen, OSB to have a life-size bronze statue of the Benedictine Sisters' Patroness, St. Scholastica. After a bold request to her former Sacred Heart School student, Charles T. Barrett, Jr., Sister Antoinette's dream unfolded into a reality over the course of fifteen months. Without hesitation Mr. Barrett and wife, Melissa, agreed to commission the statue and when sculptor, Trace Guthrie, said "yes", the project was underway in early 2021.

With input from the Sisters, Trace drew several images of Scholastica. The one chosen by the Sisters was made into a clay model replica that was brought to the Monastery. After a few suggested changes were made, a 6 foot figure was constructed, using a specialized sculptor's clay.

The life-size sculpture was approved by the Sisters and taken to Stevens Art Foundry in Bulverde, Texas in the fall of 2021. There, under the direction of proprietor, Larry Stevens, the bronzing process began.

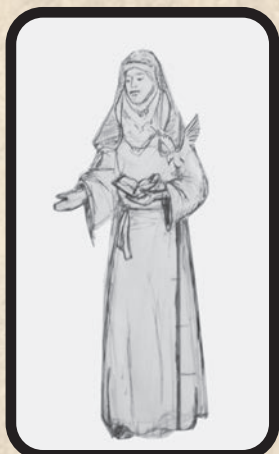
A life-size rubber mold was made, then molten wax was poured into the mold to duplicate the original sculpture.

The wax was then sliced in sections. A fireproof mold was built around each section by dipping it in a ceramic material and sand. When dried, each piece was put in a furnace to burn the wax completely out of the forms.

A high-grade bronze was melted at approximately 2100 degrees Fahrenheit and poured into each section through a funnel that was prepared in the wax before creating the fireproof mold. After they cooled, the molds were cracked off of the piece and each piece was cleaned by sandblasting.

Then came the welding; each section was welded with brass rods and power tools were used to put back any slight detail that was lost along the weld line. The whole piece was re-sandblasted to give it an even texture.

The last step was to put the patina (coloring) on to the piece by heating it with a large torch and applying different chemicals to give it the desired finish.



The selected image of St. Scholastica



Sculptor, Trace Guthrie, brings a model for the Sisters to see and suggested changes are made.



Sr. Sylvia Ahr, OSB, Christi Abbott (Executive Assistant to Mr. Barrett), & Sr. Antoinette Van Galen, OSB with Trace and life-size sculpture.



Larry Stevens with the wax mold



Larry Stevens and his crew pouring bronze



Ready for sandblasting, then patina

THE UNVEILING OF THE STATUE



Melissa and Charles T. Barrett, Jr. with the statue they commissioned in honor of Sister Antoinette Van Galen, OSB

It was a beautiful day in March when a small group gathered at the Monastery for the long-anticipated unveiling of the St. Scholastica statue. What had been a dream of Sister Antoinette Van Galen, OSB, had finally come true! Sister Bernadine Reyes, OSB, welcomed everyone and introduced Charles T. Barrett, Jr. - Sacred Heart School Alumnus, Friend, and Benefactor who addressed those present (Charles and his wife, Melissa, commissioned the statue in honor of Sister Antoinette). Following Charles, Sister Antoinette offered words of gratitude, then Larry Stevens, owner of Stevens Art Foundry, spoke briefly, and finally, sculptor, Trace Guthrie, talked about how much the project meant to him.

It was then time to unveil the bronze beauty. Melissa and Charles, along with Sisters Bernadine and Antoinette, did the honors. One could hear the joy expressed from all present. Sister Bernadine commented, "This representation of our Patroness now completes our St. Scholastica Monastery."

At the reception that followed, Trace presented Sister Bernadine with the small model that was used to create the life-size statue. He appropriately named it "Spirit of Hospitality".



(l-r) Bronze artisan, Larry Stevens, Jamie Guthrie, and sculptor, Trace Guthrie, take a moment to pose with the statue

"This representation of our Patroness now completes our St. Scholastica Monastery."

The Benedictine Sisters are eternally grateful to Melissa and Charles T. Barrett, Jr. for their generous hearts; to Trace Guthrie for his vision and incredible talent; to Larry Stevens for his vast bronze artisan skills and knowledge; and to Jaime and Juan, of our maintenance department, who helped prepare the location for the statue and helped secure it in place.



Sister Antoinette Van Galen, OSB (middle) is surrounded by Sacred Heart School Alumni - Anna and Bob Elizondo, Charles T. Barrett, Jr. and Betty Garza (Charles' sister).



Sculptor, Trace Guthrie, presents Sister Bernadine Reyes, OSB with the small model of St. Scholastica he named "Spirit of Hospitality."

Socially Responsible Investment Coalition Turns Forty!

Sister Susan Mika, OSB represented the Benedictine Sisters at the April 27, 2022 Socially Responsible Investment Coalition's (SRIC) Annual gathering in San Antonio, Texas. One of several speakers, she addressed the in-person and virtual audiences about Climate and Environmental Justice.

The event, *SRIC @ 40: (Still) Looking for the Promised Land*, marked four decades of the nonprofit organization's advocacy for workers' rights and safety, food safety and sustainability, water stewardship and sustainability, human rights, health, climate change, clean energy, corporate governance, and financial practices and risk.



*The event, held at the Whitley Theological Center, was well attended.
(Courtesy photo)*

SRIC's Executive Director, Anna Falkenberg, said the most important thing to know about the organization is, "We have a tradition of 40 years of shareholder advocacy as a Coalition of Investors, inspired by faith and committed to action, who believe that, in addition to creating wealth, our shareholder investments can be used to change destructive corporate behavior." She added, "For me, the Promised Land in today's world would be a global community where unity prevails and mutual support and benefit would be the motivator for all corporate and governmental decisions."

The Benedictine Sisters were among the founding members honored at the event. Others included: Congregation of Divine Providence; Missionary Catechists of Divine Providence; School Sisters of Notre Dame; Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio; Oblates of Mary Immaculate; Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; Society of St. Teresa of Jesus; Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Houston; and The Congregation of the Holy Spirit, Providence of the United States.

"We stand on the shoulders of these bold Congregational Leaders," commented Faulkenberg, "who in the beginning raised their prophetic voices to address apartheid in South Africa using their power as shareholders in companies to advocate for divestment. And they have never stopped raising their voices to insure justice and peace through corporate responsibility. Their courage in speaking truth to power has created a movement, today led by the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR), a coalition of over 300 global institutional investors representing more than \$4 trillion in managed assets. We still value their commitment and need their wisdom and vision as we move into our future." To learn more about SRIC visit <https://srlic-south.org> or email afalkenberg@srlic-south.org.



Courtesy photo: (2nd from left) Anna Falkenberg, Executive Director with SRIC Executive Board members (l-r) Esther Ng, Sister Patricia Reagan - Congregation of Divine Providence, and Sister Susan Mika, OSB, - Benedictine Sisters of Boerne

Benedictine Voice is designed for our Benedictine Family, Friends, & Benefactors.

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Benedictine Sisters Welcome Six New Oblates!



Congratulations to the following individuals who recently completed the Oblate Initial Formation Program and made their Oblation:

- Mary Jo Baker, ObOSB
- Susan Damon, ObOSB
- Michael Guerra, ObOSB
- Mary Olivia Patiño, ObOSB
- Alexandra Pfeiffer, ObOSB
- Mary Wisniewski, ObOSB

The Benedictine Sisters wish to thank the 2021-2022 Oblate Leadership Team for their dedication and willingness to serve:

- Emilie Rogers, ObOSB
- Jan Davis, ObOSB
- Bill Howden, ObOSB
- Nan Neff, ObOSB
- Sister Antoinette Van Galen, OSB
- Sister Michael Brandt, OSB

For more information about our Oblate Program please email: boernebenedictineoblates@gmail.com



Sister Bernadine Reyes, OSB (front center) with new Oblates and members of the Oblate Leadership Team. (Front row l-r) Mary Olivia Patiño, Sister Antoinette Van Galen, OSB (Leadership Team), Jan Davis (Leadership Team and Leader of Initial Formation) and Susan Damon. (Back row l-r) Alexandra Pfeiffer, Mary Jo Baker, Michael Guerra, Mary Wisniewski, and Emilie Rogers (Leadership Team Chair). Leadership Team members not pictured: Sister Michael Brandt, OSB, Nan Neff, and Bill Howden.

A Call to Rise and Run

by Dr. Jan Davis, ObOSB

Benedictine Spirituality is an active lifestyle, not only of “ora et labora” (pray and work). In the Rule Prologue, Benedict advises followers to “rise, open our eyes, hear with attentive ears, and run while you have the light of life.” I followed Benedict’s advice to rise and run to work with the Sisters in the Initial Formation program.

Ongoing Formation, the monthly gathering of Oblates for learning and reflection, prayer and fellowship, had moved online in the fall of 2020, because of the pandemic. In order to expand the opportunity for those wanting to learn more about Benedictine life and explore the possibility of becoming Oblates, we tried a new experiment. With the blessing of the Sisters and the Oblate Leadership Team, I volunteered to organize our first-ever, lay-lead Initial Formation program online, starting in January of this year.

Of the 19 Inquirers, about a third did not choose to continue at this time, a third expressed a desire for further understanding of the Rule, and six candidates made their Oblation in a ceremony at the monastery on May 15.

The inquiring, growth, and oblation of the Initiates was a beautiful witness to their assent to the call to live in the love of God, made simple by the traditions of Benedictine Spirituality. I felt each one deepen their desire for a relationship with God during Formation and glow with peace and joy during Oblation.

It was an honor to work with the Sisters, especially Sisters Antoinette, Michael, Susan, and our Prioress, Sister Bernadine. Here, in this community, “Ora et Labora” is a special blessing.



Courtesy photo

Congratulations Gloria!

For the past twenty-five years, Gloria Martinez has faithfully served the Benedictine Sisters in the area of housekeeping. She currently works at the Boerne ministries. **Thank you, Gloria, for your dedication and loyalty!**

photo left: Sister Bernadine Reyes, OSB recently presented Gloria with a certificate of appreciation for her years of service.

Omega Retreat Center is Now Open in Boerne, Texas



Omega welcomes overnight guests ages 18 and older.

We invite you to schedule a tour through our Retreat Center's Office to come and take in the beauty of Omega. One 45 - minute tour is allotted per retreat team and should be scheduled a minimum of two weeks in advance of your retreat.

Please contact us for current rates, capacity, or for any questions you may have.

Omega Retreat Center
316 W. Highland Dr. • Boerne, TX 78006
omegaretreatcenter@gmail.com
830-816-8470

Health and Wholeness Center Partners With Local Nonprofit to Provide Back to School Clothes for 80 Area Students



Courtesy photo: (2nd from left) Annie Walther is all smiles as members from the HWC help support the project. (l-r) Connie Bien, Eleanor Hestilow, Lucy Rumeschneider, and Willie Hayes.

Annie Walther, manager of our Health and Wholeness Center (HWC), didn't hesitate to answer the call from Hill Country Daily Bread (HCDB) to help provide back to school clothing for students in need. She picked up 80 bags that needed to be filled by early July! "I think this is a fabulous opportunity for our very large group to help others - not just our own program! The members have such big hearts, and I knew they would eagerly jump in."

Debi Watson, Community Partner Outreach Coordinator at HCDB, was thrilled. "Thank you for the generosity of the Benedictine Sisters and the HWC in providing clothing for 80 children for the new school year! With 24% of Kendall County students living in poverty, school officials report that if children don't have clothes, they will often stay home from school. Your support allows them to fulfill their God-given potential. We are so grateful for this partnership!"

Holy Angels Cemetery Receives New Fence and Signage



Prior to leaving her role as the Benedictine Community's Administrator, Sister Sylvia Ahr, OSB had a long list of "to-dos" she wanted completed. One of these included securing a fence around Holy Angels Cemetery on the Sisters' grounds. When the fence was completed, there seemed to be something missing.

Thanks to an anonymous donor and the talent of local U.S. Army Veteran and current First Responder, Brett Humphus, owner of Fission 911 Plasma CNC Art & Metal Works in Boerne, a beautiful metal sign was created. It now adorns the cemetery gate, and Sister Sylvia was able to check off another completed project.

photo left: Brett Humphus and Sister Sylvia at the entrance to Holy Angels Cemetery.

Benedictine Sisters' Website Managers Retire

For the past eleven years, we have relied on two website wizards, Vangie Bazan and Susan Klein of Sister Creek Studios, to help manage our website content, updates, and licenses. They worked closely with our Office of Mission Advancement to ensure our website reflected our Benedictine values and stories.

We are grateful to Vangie and Susan for their commitment to the Benedictine Sisters for so many years and we wish them much happiness as they begin a new chapter called "Retirement"!

photo right (l-r) Sister Sylvia Ahr, OSB, Vangie Bazan, Susan Klein, and Sister Bernadine Reyes, OSB.



Plan a Gift Today That Will Make A Difference in the Future

Have the Benedictine Sisters or their ministries touched your life? If so, would you consider leaving a Legacy Gift that will make a difference in the future? We will honor your priorities and wishes for any planned giving you choose to establish. There are opportunities to support the general needs of our Sisters, the Sisters' retirement needs, and our Ministries: Caridad de Corazón, Corporate Responsibility, Health and Wholeness, Omega Retreat Center, and Sisters' Attic Thrift Shop.

Our legal title is Benedictine Sisters (Congregation of Benedictine Sisters). We are a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. For more info, contact your estate planner, attorney, or Sister Sylvia Ahr, OSB, Treasurer, at 830.816.8504.

Congregation of Benedictine Sisters

216 West Highland Dr.

Boerne, TX 78006

Ph: 830.816.8504

www.boernebenedictines.org

FIND US ON:



"Children are the seed for peace or violence in the future, depending on how they are cared for and stimulated. Thus, their family and community environment must be sown to grow a fairer and more fraternal world, a world to serve life and hope."

- Zilda Arns

