

SEEKPRAYSHARE

SISTERS OF ST. BENEDICT OF FERDINAND, INDIANA

VOLUME 14 NUMBER 1 | SPRING 2023



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www.thedome.org | 812.367.1411
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As this issue of *Seek Pray Share* arrives in your mailbox, we are at the midpoint of the Lenten journey from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday. Perhaps the title of this publication offers some guidance for all of us in the remaining weeks of this sacred season.

Seek God in the everyday moments of life...in our interactions with the people around us, in the beauty of nature as she rouses from her winter slumber, and in the opportunities we can find to serve one another.

Pray throughout the day, from the moment we open our eyes to greet each new morning, to the moment we close them in gratitude each evening. Pray for ourselves, for one another, for those in need.

Share the blessings we've been given. Share our time. Share a kind word. Share sorrows and blessings, laughter and tears. Share our talents and our treasure. Above all, share the love we've been shown by the One who embodies love...the very Word made flesh.

And as you read these pages, remember that all the good works we are able to do, all the lives we are able to touch and all the ways we are able to help others begin with the generosity of people like you. You remain in the thoughts and prayers of our community.

Sister Anita Louise Lowe, OSB

Sister Anita Louise Lowe, OSB
Prioress

Be Still and Know...

Come away to the monastery for a retreat.

The Sisters of St. Benedict regularly offer spiritual retreats through our Benedictine Hospitality Center. Guided or structured by our Spiritual Directors, they allow you to step away from the frantic pace of the world to find quiet and focus on your own spiritual journey.

Retreats are offered in a variety of formats, but all are designed to guide you toward a closer walk with God and a deeper spirituality. Both individual and group retreats are available.

If you can't stay for the entire duration of a retreat, feel free to come for as many days as you're able, or schedule a shorter stay on your own time to enjoy the benefits of Benedictine hospitality. Here are some of our upcoming retreats.



Seek God in Silence: Quiet Retreats

Give yourself time to renew and revitalize body, mind and spirit with rest and prayer in a peaceful environment. These Quiet Retreats will open and close with a prayer service. There will be the opportunity for personal reflection, reading, walking and praying daily with the Benedictine community. All meals will be in silence with reflective music. Come away alone for awhile. "Be still and know I am your God." (Psalm 46)

- **May 22 at 7 p.m. through
May 26 at 10 a.m. EST**

Where: Benedictine Hospitality Center
Cost: \$350 (includes meals and overnight accommodations)
Capacity: 11

- **Aug. 11 at 7 p.m. through
Aug. 18 at 10 a.m. EST**

Where: Benedictine Hospitality Center
Cost: \$525 (includes meals and overnight accommodations)
Capacity: 11

Directed Quiet Retreats

Directed retreats offer time alone to be still and listen to God, with spiritual direction to guide you along the way. Participate in week-long directed retreats or arrange for an individual directed retreat, from a single day to eight days.

- **Sept. 8 at 7 p.m. through
Sept. 15 at 10 a.m. EST**
- **Oct. 13 at 7 p.m. through
Oct. 20 at 10 a.m. EST**

Where: Benedictine Hospitality Center
Cost: \$750 (includes meals, overnight accommodations and spiritual direction)
Capacity: 11

Directed Quiet Retreats are led by members of the Spiritual Direction team for the Ferdinand Benedictine community. Your spiritual director is a guide and companion on your journey of seeking God. You will have the opportunity to share your faith journey with another, to pause and see how God has been and is present in your life, and to listen to how God continues to invite you to a deeper relationship.

LEARN MORE

*To find out
more about
all our retreats
and events or
to register, visit
thedome.org
or call
812.367.1411
ext. **7345**
or **2842**.*

Raising the Roof

Living in an historic monastery built in 1867 has a lot of advantages. But the years take their toll — and some Sisters were getting soggy in the process. The 86-year-old slate roof on St. Benedict Hall was failing badly. With every rainfall, buckets lined the floors, and soggy, crumbling ceiling tiles tumbled down. St. Benedict Hall houses the Sisters' residential and dining quarters, as well as Hildegard Health Center, where medically fragile sisters receive expert, compassionate care.

Thanks to the generosity of people like you, we raised sufficient funds to replace the worn out slate roof with more modern materials that should keep the Sisters dry for decades. Here, the old slate is being removed in preparation for the new roof. We are so grateful for the generous support shown by so many of you.





Help Yourself

with our Charitable Gift Annuity.

What if you could enjoy lifetime financial benefits, and support the Sisters in their work at the same time? You can — with a Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana, Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA).

Here's how it works. You transfer cash or other assets to the Sisters. Then you and a spouse or loved one receive payments for the rest of your life.

Payments are fixed when you fund the annuity, and continue until the death of the last annuitant. Payments never change, regardless of changes in interest rates or the economy.

Rates are based on the age(s) of the annuitant(s) and the amount you invest. Sample single life rates are included in the chart at right.

You can invest as little as \$5,000, and all of the sisters' assets guarantee your payments.

Donors age 60 and above are eligible for immediate payment CGAs. Those age 50 or older may invest in a deferred CGA.

As a gift annuitant, you become a member of our St. Hildegard Society, remembered in the Sisters' daily prayers and invited to join us for an annual Mass and dinner on the last Sunday of April.

There are potential tax benefits, too. You may receive a charitable income tax deduction, and part of each payment may be tax free. And if you use appreciated assets like stocks to fund your CGA, you'll avoid paying a capital gains tax on the appreciation. See your tax advisor.

If you'd like to help yourself while supporting the good work and ministries of the Sisters, call 812.367.1411, ext. 2632 or email maoffice@thedome.org for a personalized CGA proposal.

Single Life Gift Annuity Rates*

AGE	RATE	AGE	RATE
60	4.9%	76	6.8%
61	5.0%	77	7.0%
62	5.1%	78	7.2%
63	5.2%	79	7.4%
64	5.3%	80	7.6%
65	5.4%	81	7.8%
66	5.5%	82	8.1%
67	5.6%	83	8.3%
68	5.7%	84	8.5%
69	5.8%	85	8.7%
70	5.9%	86	8.9%
71	6.0%	87	9.1%
72	6.2%	88	9.3%
73	6.3%	89	9.5%
74	6.4%	90+	9.7%
75	6.6%		

* Rates effective January 1, 2023

The Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana are an exempt organization as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, EIN 35-0953517. Your gift is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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A Heart for Care & Prayer

Sister Lisa
Marie Schutz
has made a
ministry of
medicine.



Growing up in Hammond, Indiana, in the northwest corner of the state, Sister Lisa Marie Schutz felt firsthand the balance between home and work, care and career.

Her father was a pipefitter and welder for oil company BP Amoco, and her mother was a homemaker. Her younger sister followed in her mother's footsteps, creating a warm, welcoming home for her family, while her older brother became a mechanic.

Sister Lisa looked for a life that would blend the two in some way. After some searching, she found it.

Like a lot of kids in the suburbs, she recalls, "I rode my bike a lot with the neighborhood kids." She loved being outdoors, and was drawn to all kinds of sports, from basketball and baseball to swimming.

"I started thinking about becoming a Sister when I was in high school," she recalls. She was very involved in her home parish, serving as a Eucharistic minister, working on the parish festival and as a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

But she didn't pursue religious life then. Instead, she attended Purdue University Calumet, majoring in nursing.

She changed her mind — and her career path — to teaching, earning an Associate's degree in Early Childhood Development and then a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Northeastern Illinois University.

But after teaching at several different preschools, she found it wasn't a great fit for her.



She moved back into healthcare, working in home health for two years before earning her Certified Nursing Assistant certificate and transitioning to working in assisted living. She also added a Clinical Medical Assistant Certificate from Vincennes University Jasper Campus to her resumé.

"I really liked that job a lot," she says with a smile, "and worked there for two years before entering Ferdinand. Healthcare has always been an interest for me, and it just stuck with me."

ABOVE

Sister Lisa talks with Sister Mary Beth about the results of a recent checkup.

In her thirties, living on her own, feeling more settled about her career, Sister Lisa revisited the idea of becoming a Sister.

Sister Lisa's parish priest had been her Spiritual Director for four years. She shared with him that she had a renewed interest in a religious vocation.

"We started talking about different communities," she remembers, "and I told him I was more interested in a monastic community. He directed me here to Ferdinand."

She reached out to the vocations director at Monastery Immaculate Conception, and in 2012, began visiting the Sisters at the monastery.



ABOVE

Marian Bartley, RN, Director of Healthcare and Wellness for the Sisters' Community Health Services, reviews patient charts with Sister Lisa.

Over the course of half a dozen visits, she discovered how much she liked the way the Sisters all got along together within the community, and the rich prayer life they all shared.

She also wanted to be involved in ministry, and appreciated how the majority of the Sisters were active in a wide variety of ministries within and outside of the monastery — serving the homeless, teaching, assisting immigrants on a path to citizenship, feeding the hungry, sheltering the abused and so much more. "My work is important, so I really wanted to make sure I could still be in-

involved in ministry."

She entered Monastery Immaculate Conception in March of 2015. While making the adjustment to life as a Sister of St. Benedict, she was indeed able to continue ministering in her area of choice.

She served for a number of years, including through the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic, as a Clinical Assistant at Jasper Primary Care Physicians. Today, she is a Clinical Assistant in Community Health at the monastery, as well as Community Reception Coordinator.

Community Health, located within the monastery, provides a place where the Sisters can come for care with an illness or minor injury, ask questions, and see one of the three physicians who come once a month. Sister Lisa works with the doctors, checks vital signs, organizes medical charts on the computer, assists the doctors with orders and medication and more.

While living away from her hometown and family, in a setting that's more rural than the suburbs where she grew up, took some getting used to, Sister Lisa still sees family several times each year, and enjoys having friends both in and outside the monastery.



She loves the prayer life of the Sisters, and being able to minister to people inside and outside of her community.

Regarding the discernment process, she advises young women who may be considering religious life to "know who you are as a person...your likes and dislikes, interests and career preferences." Sister Lisa seems to have found a rich life where they all come together for her.

Tomorrow's Sisters.

Who's entering religious life now, by the numbers.

The National Religious Vocation Conference completed a study in 2020 to discover who was entering religious life. Some key findings are noted below.

A BIG TAKEAWAY

Women are *twice as likely* to consider a religious vocation if someone encourages them. And if three people encourage them, they're *five times as likely* to consider a call to religious life. Those most likely to encourage a discerner are friends, other religious and parents. Is there a potential Sister in your life you could encourage today?

CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW MEMBERS

3,500+ NEW MEMBERS
PAST 15 YEARS; 200+ PROFESSED MEMBERS PER YEAR

28 AVERAGE AGE AT ENTRANCE

81% WERE EMPLOYED BEFORE ENTRANCE

73% ATTENDED A CATHOLIC SCHOOL
FOR AT LEAST PART OF THEIR EDUCATION

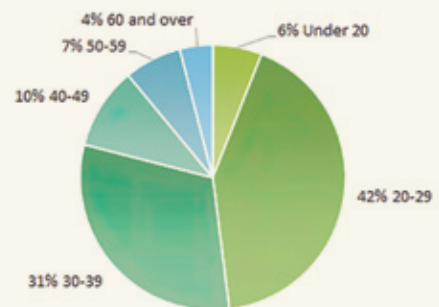
73% GREW UP IN "MIDDLE-CLASS"
HOUSEHOLDS

71% OBTAINED A BACHELOR'S DEGREE
OR MORE BEFORE ENTERING RELIGIOUS LIFE

35% DISCERNED FOR MORE THAN 2 YEARS

34% HAVE A RELATIVE IN RELIGIOUS LIFE

AGE OF THOSE IN INITIAL FORMATION



Do you know
someone who would
make a great Sister?

If you know a young woman who has a heart for God and for service, we hope you'll encourage her to consider whether she's being called to life as a Sister or St. Benedict. She can email Sister Jill Reuber at vocation@thedome.org to chat.



In Memoriam.

God's promise has been fulfilled for our dear Sisters.



Sister Dolorita Libs died at 2:10 p.m. on October 13, 2022, at the monastery. She was 101 years old, and was born Josephine Libs on December 20, 1920, in Floyds Knobs, Indiana, the fourth of eight children of Martin and Caroline (Zimmerman) Libs. She entered the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand in 1937 from St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Parish, making her profession of monastic vows in 1939.

Sister Dolorita earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Education, adding Spanish classes at the University of Evansville and a summer Journalism scholarship at the University of Detroit. She was a teacher at several schools throughout the region, and was a missionary in Coban, Guatemala, for 2 years. She served with St. Joseph Hospital in Huntingburg, IN in pastoral roles, as Director of Activities at Professional Care Nursing Home in Dale, IN, as receptionist at Marian Heights Academy in Ferdinand, and in Supportive Services and Prayer Ministry with the Sisters of St. Benedict in Hildegard Health Center.



Sister Mary Jane Kiesel (formerly Sister Mary Ivan Kiesel), died at 1:56 a.m. on December 4, 2022, at the monastery. She was 81 years old.

Sister Mary Jane Kiesel was born on October 7, 1941, in Haubstadt, Indiana, the seventh of eight children of Leo and Lorine (Martin) Kiesel. She entered the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand in 1959 from Saints Peter and Paul Parish and made her profession of monastic vows in 1961.

Sister Mary Jane earned her Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from St. Benedict College, and took additional courses in Education at Indiana University. She taught elementary students at seven schools throughout the region, then worked in pastoral ministry for St. Mary Parish in Huntingburg, IN and St. Isidore Parish in Bristow, IN. She later served in Pastoral Care with Deaconess Hospital in Evansville, IN through their CPE Residency Program; as an Aide for the Vanderburgh County VNA in Evansville, IN; as a minister to the sick and the Coordinator of the Stephen Ministry Program in St. Joseph Parish in Jasper, IN; and in Supportive Services and Prayer Ministry with the Sisters of St. Benedict in Hildegard Health Center.

Sister Mary Victor Kercher of Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Indiana, died at 9:35 p.m. on Friday, January 20, 2023, at the monastery.



Sister Mary Victor was born Loretta Emma Kercher on March 13, 1926 in Evansville, Indiana, the sixth of ten children of John and Catherine (Beckerle) Kercher. She entered the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand in 1943 from St. Joseph Parish and made her monastic vows in 1945.

Sister Mary Victor earned a Bachelor's degree in Education from St. Benedict College, a Master's degree in Education from Notre Dame University, and a Master's degree in Spanish with a Latin minor from Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. She also earned her Certification for Principalship from Notre Dame. Sister Mary Victor taught elementary students at St. Mary School in Washington; Christ the King School in Indianapolis; and St. Bartholomew School in Columbus, all in Indiana. She taught high school students at Mater Dei High School in Evansville, and was Principal of St. Ferdinand High School in Ferdinand for nine years. She served as a missionary at Monasterio Reina de Paz in Coban, Guatemala, for 14 years. Sister Mary Victor spent a year at the Hope Community Program in Little Falls, MN, and later served as its Director. She was a Spanish teacher at Marian College in Indianapolis; and served in Pastoral Care at St. Agnes Parish in Evansville and at Our Lady of Guadalupe in Milford, also serving as Diocesan Liaison for Hispanic Ministry during that time. She served as Assistant Director of Hispanic Ministry in Dale, Indiana. At the monastery, she was on the Oblate Team and Coordinator of Mission Appeals. Most recently, she served in Prayer Ministry with the Sisters of St. Benedict in Hildegard Health Center. In 2020, she celebrated 75 years as a Sister of St. Benedict.

Memorial contributions in memory of any of these Sisters may be made to the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand.

Perfect Partners

Serving the women residing at Dove House in Jasper.



Last fall, Dove Recovery House for Women opened a new location in Dubois County, at 1480 Knust St. in Jasper. With room for 15 women, it offers a recovery residence for women impacted by substance use disorder. Many of these women are also escaping homelessness, coping with mental health diagnoses, re-entering society after incarceration and re-establishing parenting responsibility.

The Knust Street home was donated by the City of Jasper. Its two stories include an ADA compliant bedroom on the main floor, three double rooms and a dorm room, with ample living space for group programming and gathering, plus a kitchen, laundry room and front porch.

Dove House provides free housing and comprehensive clinical services through a partnership with the Dubois County Community Foundation, which received a \$4.4 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to improve mental health and addiction treatment services in the community.

Since the Dove House in Jasper opened its doors, the Sisters of St. Benedict have opened their hearts, providing a home-cooked meal once a week for the residents. “The ladies love when the Sisters drop off their meals,” says Megan Durlauf, Director of Operations for Dove House, Dubois County, “and it always brings such a smile to their faces!” The process was initiated by Sister Mary Frances Schafer, who manages Special Projects for the Coalition for the Homeless in Louisville, Kentucky. It’s overseen every week by Sister Louise Laroche, our Initial and Ongoing Formation Director who also oversees the Sisters’ Blessings Cabinet.



JOIN US

When you give to the Sisters of St. Benedict, you support this effort and all the good works of the Sisters.

Learn more at thedome.org, or call 812.367.1411.

Praying for Peace

Twenty years ago, on July 24, 2003, The Sisters of St. Benedict in Ferdinand held a dedication and blessing for our new Peace Pole, one of more than 200,000 such symbols installed around the world. Inscribed on the four sides of the pole, in English, Spanish, German and Latin, are the words, “May peace prevail on earth.” This follows the Gospel admonition, “Blessed are the peacemakers,” as well as the Rule of St. Benedict’s call to “seek peace and pursue it,” and the Sisters’ own Mission Statement, in which we agreed to “commit ourselves to be a presence of peace.”

As 2023 began with Pope Francis calling for a World Day of Prayer for Peace, our Peace Pole is a sign to all who visit that they will find peace within the walls of the monastery, and a community committed to spreading peace everywhere we go. We invite you to join us in our constant quest for a more peaceful and gentle world.





Welcome, New Oblates.

Last October, we welcomed three new Oblates of St. Benedict at Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand. Mary Coppinger, Ann Ennis and Charlotte Monconduit all dedicated themselves to joining the Sisters in following the Gospel and the Rule of St. Benedict in their daily lives.

During the Rite of Oblation, Prioress Sister Anita Louise Lowe invited the candidates to make their Oblation. Each stepped up to the ambo, read the Act of Oblation and signed the document. The Prioress presented each with an Oblate pin bearing the cross of St. Benedict as a reminder of the need to take up their cross daily as a follower of Jesus Christ, and their companion pinned it on. The Prioress then presented Certificates of Oblation, accepted the Oblations of the three, and invited other Oblates present to renew their own Oblations.

On the same day, the Sisters welcomed a new Candidate for Oblation, Rick Bath of La Crosse, Wisconsin. The Oblates then joined the Sisters for Morning Prayer and the Eucharistic Liturgy, followed by lunch with the Sisters in the Monastic Dining Room.

To learn more about becoming an Oblate, visit www.thedome.org.

ABOVE

Prioress Sister Anita Louise Lowe addresses Mary Coppinger, accompanied by Sister Joella Kidwell; Ann Ennis, accompanied by Oblate Patti Schroeder; and Charlotte Monconduit, accompanied by Oblate Elaine Baumgart.



Those Sweet Sisters.

There's something to suit every taste at the Sisters' Bakery and Gift Shop.

We know, we know...you gave up sweets for Lent. But Easter is coming, and the Sisters will have plenty of treats waiting for you when it arrives. In the meantime, here are a few more reasons to visit the Gift Shop, either in person or online.

First Communion and Graduation Gifts

You can find something special for all the milestones in a young person's life in the Sisters' Gift Shop. Choose from every type of journal, a big selection of rosaries, a variety of Bibles, St. Christopher items for those young drivers and much more.

Self Care for You

How about a little aromatherapy? Try scented soaps, handmade by the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in a wide range of fragrances, from Tropical Breeze and Sage Meadow to Lavender Lace and Orange Vanilla — with a drop of holy water in each bar. And be sure to try some of the Sisters' Scrub Stuff and candles in lovely scents of their own. See? You're feeling more relaxed already!

Treat Your Co-Workers

Nothing perks up a co-worker — or a breakroom — like something from the bakery. From three flavors of Prayerful Pretzels to any of the Sisters' amazing cookies, all made right here in the monastery bakery, along with our special monastery blend of Needmore Coffee, you'll find a lot of ways to make everyone on your team smile.

Stop by in person, or shop online and we'll deliver everything to your door!



Monastery Angels

Monastery Angels support the Sisters of St. Benedict by committing to an ongoing monthly or quarterly gift.



516 angels

107 women



Members of the Women of the Rule support the Sisters with an annual gift of \$1,000, and decide as a group on the projects that their generosity will fund in the coming year.

Monastery Partners

Monastery Partners support the Sisters of St. Benedict by committing to an ongoing annual gift.



535 partners

673 members



Members of the St. Hildegard Society have included the Sisters in their estate plans, leaving a gift in their will or making the Sisters the beneficiary of an insurance policy, retirement account, etc.

Our Community

With 110 permanent members and 6 in formation, we are the second largest community of Benedictine women in the U.S.



116 sisters

