

# *The Review*

*of Benet Hill Monastery*



VOLUME 59, NUMBER 1 / 3190 BENET LANE, COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO 80921-1509 / Spring 2021



*accepting grief....*

*offering hope....*

# Message from the Prioress

By [Sister Clare Carr, OSB, Prioress](#)



*"The highest tribute to the dead is not grief, but gratitude."*

*-Thornton Wilder*

Dear Friends and Families,

This is the liturgical season for Lent, a time of reflection and renewal. Lent literally means springtime.

Yet, it is so hard to find the freshness of spring in the losses and struggles of this past year. In this [Review](#) you will find many articles with heart moving insights on the impact of Covid-19. It has felt like death is all around us with so many stories of loss and grief. We experience tear-filled days of remembering our dear ones and days sifting through memories and mementos of our lost loved ones.

At times we cling to those memories, fearful of losing their voice, their smiles, their laughter, their humor, their touches, their dreams, and the dreams we shared with them.

And yet those memories come to us in quiet moments, or during holidays and special occasions. An emptiness can hollow us out, but even in the pain and loss, they are still with us. In the least expected times, our breath can be taken away and replaced with a sob.

With each loss, we grieve all the losses in our lives and I find consolation in the belief that I will be rejoined with loved ones in the next life. I have been so blessed and grateful as I long to see spring blossoms again with the promise of new life and the coming of hope with an ending of this pandemic.

Blessings,

## How did they know?

## Future of Benet Hill

These past two years have been like no other. And yet, we continue to dream of a future full of hope and hospitality. At the monastery we are putting our dreams together with the trust that we will continue to be a Benedictine presence in Colorado and around the world into the next 100 years.

We have hired a consultant team, Third Sector Group, to help us construct a strategy for that future. And we have created a Futuring Team to engage the wisdom of our friends and families in dialogue as we move toward this vision.

We believe in the power of community and we trust that our future is one filled with hope. Thank you to all who are participating on the team and all who will be invited into our future planning.

*How Did They Know?  
(from The Cosmic Dance by Joyce Rupp)*

*How did they know  
It was time to push up  
Through the long-wintered soil?*

*How did they know  
It was the moment to resurrect  
While thick layers of stubborn ice  
Still flat pressed by the bleak ground?*

*But the tulips knew.  
They came, rising strongly,  
A day after the ice died.*

*There is a hope-filled place in me  
That also knows when to rise.*

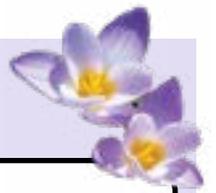
***In deepest sympathy we remember our dear sisters and their families who have lost loved ones.***

[Sister Ana Cloughly, OSB](#) for the loss of her aunt, Cheryl Milward.

The Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery for the loss of two dear friends,  
Toni Lohman and  
Art Cipoletti.



# “Movement” Through Grief



By Sister Marilyn Carpenter, OSB



It's all about movement. Grief is buried in our bodies, our hearts, our minds, our souls. There are many skills that can help us grieve, but there is one essential skill for the process of healing, and that is MOVEMENT!

We all have experienced both loss and trauma in our lives, especially this year. We are all in grief whether we want to admit it or not. We all deal with grief in our own way or it deals with us. One sure and guaranteed way to move from loss through grief and bereavement into healing is through movement: move your eyes by reading, move your hands by writing, drawing, coloring or keeping a journal...not on the computer, but in your own handwriting. Pick up your phone and call or write a note to someone and connect today.

If anyone wishes to chat, call me at 719-429-7500 or add your name to a possible upcoming grief movement group at the monastery.

A very wise woman once said to me, **“Your hand will draw or write what the mouth can't speak.”** I always share this with persons who are grieving and it's amazing how this practice opens their hearts, their souls, and their spirits.

Move your feet by walking, practicing yoga, dancing, or any rhythmic movement either indoors or outside in nature. Move your lips by speaking to someone or by singing. And if you play an instrument, use it to make music for yourself or others.

Yes, we were created to move, to get the juices flowing through our body systems and thus to balance those systems and bring us back into harmony with ourselves. Is there pain involved? Of course. Yet, it is only by embracing our pain, our sorrow, our sadness, our anger, our loneliness, our grief and bringing it out and into movement that we will reach new levels of healing, hope and understanding. I wish you happy movement today and every day, just one step at a time, one note at a time and one phone call at a time.

**“Darkness deserves gratitude. It is the alleluia point at which we learn to understand that all growth does not take place in the sunlight.”** -Joan Chittister

By Sister Mary Colleen Schwarz, OSB, Vocation Director

The global pandemic has created a new reality for us marked with grief and loss. As a religious sister, I constantly remind and discipline myself to embrace compassion for self and others in this grief struggle.

Worship services, concerts, meetings, workshops, retreats, travel plans, funerals, visiting the sick and dying, have been canceled or gone virtual in the wake of the pandemic. It has forced us to process both individual and collective grief in the face of an uncertain future which we are powerless to control.

Grief is a normal response to loss, but the Covid-19 pandemic has upended many aspects of the normal grieving process. Even if you have not yet experienced a direct loss, do not assume that you are not experiencing grief. In grief, we can feel shock, anxiety, sadness, powerlessness, anger, or helplessness. What we remember is that all these feelings are normal. We have no clear pathway to feeling grounded again because of the uncertain nature of the pandemic's timetable.

In the absence of normal human contact our grief takes longer to integrate into our lives and the losses lie heavy on our hearts. We have learned to value again, the importance of simple things (stories, laughter, hugs, meals), and how important they are. Much of our grieving includes a change in lifestyle, loss of attachments, loss of identity, loss of job, loss of relationships, and loss of group gatherings, which creates doubt and struggle.

**“There are no shortcuts to any place worth going.”** -Beverly Sills

Today I am struggling with my own suffering and I see written in my opening sentence that I believe in self-compassion. Aligning my beliefs with my day-to-day reality is a challenge and an effort. I find it hard to live with my anger and grief. How am I compassionate with myself when my feelings are so strong? And yet, when I can face myself, I melt into a deep invitation of loving tenderness. This tenderness is a catalyst encouraging me to love others in their suffering.

This tenderness overwhelms me and I feel powerless; the only way I can be in this space is to hand over my ever-wanting control to God.

This is my pathway of being transformed so I can be with others in their suffering. This seems the only way. By learning how to be with myself, I contemplate being with others. Self-compassion seems such a struggle for me at times. Life is always awakening to accept that God breaks into my heart and soul through the cracks and is teaching me about self-compassion.

I believe we can begin to see ourselves and all of life differently. Struggle reshapes us to love ourselves, allowing God to be God, letting go of control, and accepting all the faith and goodness of God that lives in and amidst our lives. If I commit to becoming who I am to be, I undergo a metamorphosis of my soul that empowers me to become fully human.

If we all endure and stay in the struggle, we can emerge transformed.



# Visitation 2021



## Coping with Grief, Anxiety and COVID Restrictions

By [Sister Jan Ginzkey, OSB, Assistant Prioress](#)



L to R: [Sisters Anne Shepard, OSB](#) and [Lynn McKenzie, OSB](#),

Benet Hill Monastery is a member of the Federation of St. Scholastica. The Federation utilizes a visitation process to assist a member monastery in reviewing its fidelity to the purpose of seeking God through communal life and prayer and ministry. The Visitation is a pastoral as well as a canonical responsibility of the Federation.

Benet Hill has completed over a year of self-study in preparing for our visitation. In November 2019, Sisters [Therese O'Grady](#),

[Mary Glenn](#) and [Susan Matarrese](#) were appointed our visitation team, responsible for creating a report for the visitors. This was a time for the entire community to review the goals set four years ago and honestly analyze our community's profile and finances.

The report incorporates the recommendations from the two previous visitations, our vision, ministry and charism statements, updated policies and Monastic Norms. Minutes from council and community meetings as well as summaries from all departments, committees and task forces are included. We also included information about Sanctuary of Peace and our Land Ethic. The visitation team gathered and organized all the materials into three ring binders for the visitors and the community. Our visitors are Sister Lynn McKenzie, OSB, President of the Federation of St. Scholastica and Sister Anne Shepard, OSB from Atchison, KS.



By [Deb Kinnan, LPC, Director of Grief Support & Volunteer Services, Pikes Peak Hospice & Palliative Care](#)

With the length and breadth of this pandemic, it seems the whole world is in a grief process. If you haven't had the virus or lost someone to it, you probably know someone who has. Not to mention the secondary losses related to the pandemic. There is loss of employment due to closures or working overtime because co-workers are sick. There's the anxiety of so much being out of our control. When will this end? Why won't they wear a mask – the Asymptomatic carriers? And little treatment once you have it.

One of the more difficult aspects of loss at this time is the inability to do the things that help us move through grief. Spending time with our loved ones through their end-of-life journey has been affected by social isolation and the inability to travel. Visiting someone in the hospital or a facility is restricted. Sharing memories at family gatherings, funerals, visitations and graveside services has been unavailable or limited. The comfort and connection we experience being with others at these rituals has been lost.

If you have lost a loved one in these unusual times, it is still important to find ways to mourn and adjust to loss. What makes those rituals useful is that they bring us together to share our sorrow, celebrate our loved one's life, and comfort each other. While we may not have a traditional family event, we can still reach out and stay connected. Virtual connections, by phone, video and many online resources have provided the support many need to journey through grief. Memorials online have brought family members from across the country together. Virtual support groups can connect you to others experiencing loss and needing support.

Know too, feeling sad and out of sorts is the natural, normal response to the awful but unavoidable experience of loss. Do not feel bad about feeling sad - you are mourning. Your world has changed with the loss of your loved one and this takes some getting used to. Know that you won't feel this bad forever. Reaching out and being with others, even with masks, social distancing or technology will help you along the journey.

If you feel you could use more support adjusting, don't hesitate to seek out professional help. Counseling can help you through grief, anxiety and stress reactions of our current situation. Support is available from the Center for Grief and Loss at Pikes Peak Hospice & Palliative Care. Every year, our grief center serves more than a thousand people experiencing loss. Our compassionate, experienced counselors are ready to help.

**For Support and more Information – contact Pikes Peak Hospice and Palliative Care at (719) 633-3400 and [www.pikespeakhospice.org](http://www.pikespeakhospice.org)**

## Prioress Election

By [Sister Clare Carr, OSB, Prioress](#)



In June of 2021, we will again be electing a new prioress. The criteria for choosing a prioress is that she be a wise teacher, a compassionate listener, and a servant to her sisters. She is to be temperate and merciful, always letting "mercy triumph over judgement... so that she too may win mercy", RB 64. She is to be discerning and moderate, always aware of her own frailties and capacity to sin- "to miss the mark." She is to allow her sisters to speak their wisdom and she is urged to listen. She is one among her sisters, knowing that she wants to hear from the old as well as the young. She is to inspire the strong and encourage the weak.

Just writing these words challenges me as we look toward 2021. *I know that the Lord will lead us and I ask you to pray with us as we discern our future leadership.*

## Columbarium

In 2019, our community decided to expand St. Benedict Cemetery with a [Columbarium Garden](#). The first phase of our project is complete. We now have two attractive walls with a capacity of 68 niches. We are taking formal requests from anyone associated with Benet Hill and wanting to be buried on these holy grounds within our sacred forest. If interested, please go to our website and see 'Columbarium' listed as the first item on our drop down menu under the 'About Us' tab. All the documents are available on this page. <https://benethillmonastery.org/columbarium/>



For more information, call [Sister MT Summers](#) at 719-355-1616. Please note that we have more details available upon inquiry.

# Oblates Plan for the Future

By [Sister MT Summers, OSB, Oblate Director](#)

A year ago, pre-Covid, the Oblate Advisory Team (OAT) announced their envisioning of covenant groups to revitalize, refresh and invigorate the [Oblate Program](#). During months of planning we met with oblates, sisters and the [Monastic Council](#) to schedule the "Covenant Fair" for March 21, the Feast of St. Benedict. Then Covid hit and all was shut down. It was so disappointing for everyone.

The pandemic offered the OAT team time for further reflection and this pause, though difficult, was fruitful. With a mandate from the prioress, the council, and the oblate directors, it was ascertained that it was time to move toward oblate leadership in the Oblate Program. This meant that sisters serving as directors would become more a liaison and a bridge between the community of sisters and the oblate community. The Oblate Advisory Team then began the holy task of discerning a new model of leadership for the Oblate Program.

The OAT team under the leadership of Sisters [Marilyn](#) and [Marie Therese](#), followed the same discernment model used for choosing a prioress. This communal discernment was a process designed to help come to a decision on who would serve in the leadership role of our Oblate Program. This process required freedom, options, and a commitment to the common good of the whole community. It also required openness to the Spirit and a willingness to listen, hear and respond appropriately and with flexibility. Participants shared all available data and insights before forming a definite judgment and decision. All were reminded: *From Upon This Tradition, "With A Listening Heart"* a Federation Statement on the *Rule of Discernment*, from p. 150-151; *"Key to communal discernment is the understanding that no one comes into this process to 'win.' The very validity of a discernment process is found in the unanimity of the acceptance of the discerned decision. We all win because the voice of the Spirit has been heard, interpreted by the wisdom of all and accepted by all members."* The role, job description, attitudes, values, skills, and virtues for this position as a shepherd and shepherdess was defined as part of this discerning process.



We discerned for three different days (totaling eight hours) in communal prayer, discernment, listening and sharing before deciding who would be in these positions. We are happy to announce three Co-Directors that have been blessed by the [Monastic Council](#); (photo L to R) Jesse Brown, Ellen Haroutunian, and Jerry O'Hare. Congratulations! These three will be working closely with Sisters [Marilyn](#) and [Marie Therese](#) so they can assume their role in July of 2021.



## People are Resilient

By [Annika Hildebrand, Health Care & Reception](#)



The COVID pandemic has affected people in ways that we, as a society never imagined. I am a college student and because of the pandemic restrictions I have had to continue my education virtually. Online learning has been a process for students and teachers alike. Both groups have had to adapt to communicating via computer. Teachers have had to learn how to teach and communicate their message remotely, which can be difficult, especially if the students are hands-on learners. That is where I have issues.

I do not process and retain information visually through lecture format. I found myself a year behind because I could not keep up and at that point, I still had two years to go. I had to make a decision, "Do I continue on the current path and

take on another year and try to pay for it?" or "Do I go in a different direction?" I chose to transition into a yearlong cosmetology program. I started taking classes in the fall and have loved every minute. It has been a long time since I have felt comfortable in a learning environment, but I truly feel confident with the direction I have chosen.

I was diagnosed with COVID-19 in early December and that made it difficult for me to pay my bills without working. The pandemic has made me realize how difficult it is to stay financially stable and attend school full time. You never know if or when you can become infected or are in close contact with someone who is COVID positive which could cause loss of time at work. These uncertainties have made me realize I need stability until I finish school. I am lucky enough to have parents that are willing to allow me to live with them until my schooling is completed. This summer I will be moving back home. This will be difficult, but I will be able to pay off my student loans and can commute when I have to for classes.

The most important thing I have learned during this pandemic is that people are resilient. They haven't let everything that has occurred this year get them down. They keep moving forward and keep things as positive as they can in these difficult times.

"When you get into a tight place and everything goes against you, till it seems as though you could not hold on a minute longer, never give up then, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn." -Harriet Beecher Stowe

# Sisters Reflect on Grief and Hope

Compiled By Gina Berger, Communications Director



There have been moments of grief and loss for me during this last year of the pandemic. I cannot dwell on any of it for too long. I need to recall that yesterday is in the past and I can only learn from what it taught me. Tomorrow is in the future and I can only dream of what it might be. Today is NOW. **"The only time we have is right now, and our only goal today is to learn how to love better. The only way you can learn how to love better is to experience love now. Right here in the present."** -The 12 Keys to Spiritual Vitality, Richard P. Johnson, PH.D

-Sister Helen Zecha, OSB



This quote from an unknown source images my Covid journey for me. "The sea calls us to remember our own rhythms. I have known times of high energy, as the high tides; tumultuous emotions in feeling tossed about with the chaos of uncertainty these unusual times offer and the low tides of waning energy, focus and motivation. I cope best when I go to gratitude as my anchor; Divine Providence."

-Sister Susan Matarrese, OSB



It was March 7, 2020 when we received the word, **"We needed to close the monastery immediately."** The COVID-19 virus had become the center of our lives.

Our schola (sisters and wonderful musicians) were in the midst of music practice in preparation for Holy Week and the Sacred Triduum which would culminate on Easter. **NOT THIS YEAR!** First, it was hard to believe and second, the loss of sharing this sacred time with our beloved Sunday Assembly was very difficult to accept. We had become a special 'community of believers'.

During the year, we were able to keep in touch with the Sunday Assembly by having special Drive-Thrus to greet everyone in their cars and share "bread" baked by our wonderful 'bread bakers.' We also

kept in touch with couples and families through phone calls, e-mails, and special visits (with precautions) at times. Yet, it has been hard!

Recently, I was introduced to a different kind of breath prayer that has really touched me. Osheta Moore, author of *Shalom Sistas*, has written an article called "Jesus Gets our Grief" and writes **"Lent is an invitation to converse with grief in all its expressions."** I have used a form of the breath prayer over the years, but Osheta's expressions spoke to me in their simplicity which involves a short, five- to seven- syllable prayer. A few examples are **"Loving God, bless our assembly," "Wounded Healer, protect the sick," "Nurturing Mother, gentle our hearts."**

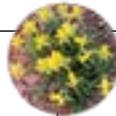
-Sister Anne Stedman, OSB



Grief  
Haunts me,  
A burden  
I cannot shake,  
Darkness has descended  
Upon my weakened heart.  
When will this torment end?  
I desperately miss  
My friends,  
My family,  
My love.  
I miss their life lifting voice,  
Their sparkling smiles,  
Their arms around my waist.

I want to yell  
And scream  
Enough!  
Give me back  
My life  
You cruel, cruel COVID.  
Give me back my life!  
  
Ah, yes, God speaks  
And sprinkles Hope.  
The light has begun  
To break the clouds  
Of despair.  
We come to life again,  
In God's abounding love.

-Sister Evangeline Salazar, OSB



One of the sisters had a holiday greeting card on display in our shared work area with a photo of a happy smiling couple. It was entitled **"Happy 2020!"** In March of 2020, the card that I was so charmed by, was still there. When I realized the implications and full magnitude of Covid-19, I was swept by grief and horror. I went to the smiling card and wondered if the couple would be alive the following year and how oblivious we all were at Christmastime 2019.

As we move through this period of Lent, my emotions evoke tender and hopeful movement to the mystery of Easter. And...that the smiling couple are well.

-Sister Margaret Meaney, OSB



I lost my dear friend, Fr. Art Schute in December. I miss him every day. He was a good friend and some of our Sunday Community would have known him. I find myself talking to him when I walk or in my morning prayer. It is still hard to believe that he is gone. It has been so hard being locked down. I have a brother who I used to see about once a month and now I have only seen him three times this year. Hard!!

- Sister Clare Carr, OSB

HOPE creeps in on tip toes to look at the loss, deaths, and devastation of the past months. She looks upon this pandemic and grieves with all those who mourn over their lost loved ones.

She grieves and cries...but wait... she sees an ever so thin sliver of Light... Could it be that, so fatigued of saying farewell endlessly, we see NEW LIFE, LOVE and LIGHT in our new dawn.

God is with us. YES, always YES!

-Sister Rose Ann Barmann, OSB



continued on p. 7

# National Catholic Sisters Week



By Gina Berger, Communications Director



National Catholic Sisters Week is an annual event from March 8-14th honoring religious women who minister all over the world. Last year it occurred just as we shut down for Covid-19. This year, we were fortunate enough to honor the Sisters of Benet Hill with an afternoon "tea" (using precautions).

Many of the staff at Benet Hill organized the "tea" for Thursday, March 11th so the sisters could relax, enjoy each other's company, and munch on goodies and drink punch (no tea!). The sisters answered these two questions during their time together: What is one of your favorite childhood memories? and What I find most rewarding about being a woman religious is... They also wore hats to add to the fun.

We will be posting some of the video replies to the second question very soon on our Facebook page. Please look for these posts!



L to R: Sisters [Olive Therese Geiger, MT Summers](#) and [Anne Madeleine Brost](#)



L to R: Sisters [Mary John Thomas](#) and [Naomi Rosenberger](#)



Sister [Elizabeth Cogan](#)



L to R: Sisters [Anne Stedman](#) and [Mary Colleen Schwarz](#)



## More Sister Quotes on Grief and Hope



**Grief:** I grieve over the deaths due to the coronavirus that keep mounting from 400,000 then to 500,000. Also, many have died alone- with no one to hold their hand or comfort them. It seemed there was no cure in sight no matter how hard we prayed at Community prayer or in our hour of individual prayer.

Then we experienced the loss of our Sisters Josie and Diane. In spite of having our Vigil Service for them, there is still no closure of burial for us or their families.

**Hope:** The Gospel for February 14th says, "If you wish, you can make me clean" (or well) and Jesus answered, "I do will it. Be made clean." Shortly after this Gospel, people started to have access to a vaccine and a way to eventually end this pandemic. The way back to a regular way of life still seems far off! We continue in prayer and support for those who are still suffering from the virus or who have lost loved ones.

-[Sister Mary Jane Vigil, OSB](#)



I offer my deepest sympathy and prayers for the losses of family members and friends recently and during this past year. May you be filled with serene HOPE.

-[Sister Mary John Thomas, OSB](#)

"The best way out is always through."  
-Robert Frost

Eckhart Tolle's words help me with grief, setbacks and challenges: "To offer no resistance to life is to be in a state of grace, ease and lightness. This state is then no longer dependent upon things being in a certain way, good or bad." With all the challenges of Covid, each death, each setback- I have received an invitation to lean into my grief and I move into conscious inner work to etch these words into my heart and to choose my attitude, thoughts, words and behavior. I discover hope and peace.

-[Sister MT Summers, OSB](#)



This year of covid and a request for reflections on grief and loss, set me thinking. First of all, Centering Prayer retreats and class had to be cancelled or held on Zoom, less than satisfactory. My weekly Centering Prayer group at Benedicta's had to be cancelled and never resumed again. Meeting face to face with directees for spiritual direction is relegated to phone conversations. I lost two lifetime friends this past fall who have moved onto the healing life of eternity. And three of our sisters joined the choirs of angels and Benedictines in heaven. I have gone from reading novels to reading BIBLE TODAY and Scripture! And most of all, I miss personal contact with my nieces and nephews in the Denver area. I am constantly grateful for living covid-free along with my sisters in community.

-[Sister Therese O'Grady, OSB](#)



# Moving Through Grief



By Kathy Hodson-Mueller, Class of '79



My grief came crashing in. Anger, denial, regret- I was rambling to anyone who would listen-and more angry because of the circumstances. I methodically sorted through 77 years of belongings sobbing and clinging to every single piece of love that I found from her to me, and from me to her. I dropped to my knees for fear of losing someone else I love dearly. Begging God for our collective suffering to end!

Acceptance? I'm not sure. Knowing that your precious loved ones, and now my mom are in heaven with all of those that she loved, all of those that I have loved, all of those that loved her, and with the ONE that loves ALL OF US- our great God; knowing this helps. My tears are still falling like Niagara Falls and I have long talks with friends and close family hugs. There are angels on earth who have surrounded me and my family with prayers; prayers that came from those we don't know and prayers from other faith traditions. I am grateful for my church family and pastors who constantly called and prayed for us throughout our experience, the loving, professional healthcare workers who took care of Mom- helping us every step of the way, and for daily messages from heaven that my loved ones are together again.

How do you move through grief? One day at a time, with each waking moment you make a choice to believe in love, believe there is hope for the future, and believe that God has you wrapped in his loving arms. Absorbing every tear, while he eases your pain, understanding every fear. Giving you HIS GRACE, so you can remember your loved ones and laugh again.

Five weeks after the death of my mom, Shirley (Donaldson) Hodson-May, Sister Lucile called to check in and asked me to write this article on grief. My mom died dramatically and quickly from Covid-19. She was diagnosed with the virus on Dec. 22, 2020 and died on Jan. 11, 2021. She was healthy and had no comorbidities! Another friend, Marie Carew Meintz, was losing her mom and I have known and loved Mom Carew and her family for more than 46 years. She passed away on Saturday, February 20th. On Feb. 2nd, my dear friend, Carolyn, lost her husband of nearly 50 years. This was a triple heart-break in six weeks time.

I cannot talk about moving through grief without sharing my losses. I have lost my beloved grandparents, my mom's parents, my in-laws, my dad, and my uncle on Sept. 12, 2001. I have also lost my step-dad, many clients and friends- I delivered eulogies for several of them. On February 2, 2007 I lost a beloved son-in-law, Jay Hillard, to brain cancer. He was only 27 years old and this left my daughter, Jacqueline, a young widow with a 20-month-old; my sweet granddaughter, Jailynn Rose, now 15.

We have all heard about the seven stages of grief, and I have experienced them all. However, losing my mother at age 77 to Covid was the most heart wrenching loss of my life. I was blessed to be able to coordinate her home healthcare and spend time with her, as did my daughter, Danielle. On January 2, 2021, my mother was admitted to the hospital and I was fortunate enough to be able to visit her in the ICU-Covid Unit three times. My sister, brother and daughter were given the opportunity to see her also. She was allowed one person with her when they took her off the ventilator, and that was me! I prayed over her, named her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. I sang songs to her, I recited Bible verses to her, I stroked her head, and then cried like a starving baby as I watched her take her last seven breaths on earth.

I miss you Mom  
I'll love you forever, as long as I'm living, my mom you will be.  
With a heavy heart that is full of hope!



**In deepest sympathy we remember our dear alumnae  
and their families who have  
lost loved ones.**

Kathy Hodson Mueller, Class of '79 on the loss  
of her mother, Shirley Hodson May.

Marie Crew Meintz, Class of '79, on the loss of  
her mother, Marie Crew.

Linda McCann Richardson, Class of '68 on the  
loss of her parents, Gerald and Rita McCann.

Shannon Dewire Van Sickler, Class of '76 on  
the loss of her father, Tom Dewire.

For the loss of Laura Spencer, Class of '81

For the loss of Theresa Jenkins Meyen,  
Class of '76

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and  
peace as you trust, so that you may overflow with  
hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." -Romans 15:13*

Much gratitude to all the sisters and staff who  
contribute photos, articles and proofreading/editing for each  
edition of [The Review](#).



# Candle of Hope

By Gina Berger, Communications Director

This last year has been a year of loss and a year of grace for me. My father died in February 2020 and in April I got sick with Covid-19 for one month and dealt with lingering symptoms for an additional three months. Some of my dear friends have lost parents to the virus or other illnesses. Many others I know have been dealing with job losses, mental health crises, abusive relationships, children developing psychological problems from being isolated, families unable to pay bills or buy groceries, and various other problems. The recent political climate in our country has also taken a toll on so many relationships with divisive, tiresome rhetoric that offers no clear solutions.

This universal grief of being isolated and only seeing friends, family and co-workers on Zoom or talking on the phone has impacted me emotionally and spiritually. It is easy enough to go down the road of despair when isolated, but when other losses are piled on top of it, it seems impossible and more traumatic. When you cannot comfort a loved one who is dying in the hospital-how do you cope with that? How do you cope with your own grief when you cannot travel to support and be supported by your family? There are no words of comfort. There is only silence.

I have asked myself in the midst of all that I have experienced and felt these long months of 2020 and into 2021, *“What am I to do when God seems distant and I feel so helpless?”* I still don’t know the answer to that question. The only real conclusion I have made is that God is mystery. Life is mystery. Our troubles are mystery. Grace is mystery. I know for sure that grace has lifted me through many situations in the past year and yet I am acutely aware of the numerous sufferings of those around me.

The pandemic isolation has profoundly impacted my prayer practices and how I think about prayer. I am overwhelmed by all the troubles, tears, fears, grief and frustrations that plague all of us. God can hold all of this and I cannot. I can still offer my prayers and TRUST in God to offer the same grace I have been given. God can provide all that is needed and required to those who navigate their own losses and are seeking some center of hope in their lives.

Someone told me about keeping a candle lit to remind them of their prayers and persons who are impressed upon their heart each day. I have decided to use a candle as well- It is battery operated, but it gets the job done. I also started using index cards to write down all the prayer requests from others and I add a few of my own when prompted by the Spirit. These cards and the candle are in my prayer space and I entrust all they contain to God every day. I keep the candle going, because it is a path to my healing and my part of holding with God all the suffering in the world.



I pray that we all can find our own way of connecting outwardly during isolation. And that we find the patience and capacity to take the time to listen to each other- be it a stranger, neighbor, friend, or family member- and that the connections we make in our relationships foster love to help heal this broken world.



# Sanctuary of Peace

By Vincent Crowder, Property & Building Manager

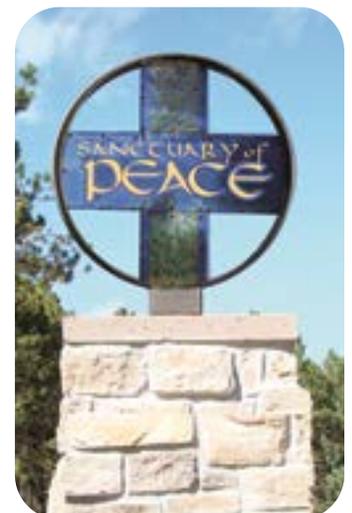


As I write this, it is an early snowy morning that finds me snug in the little hermitage nestled in the woods on the monastery property, about a couple hundred yards from the entrance to the Sanctuary of Peace. A quick glimpse outside reveals the absolute PEACE that the Sanctuary of Peace will one day become, with new homes.

It has been two-and-a-half months since the county approved our project. I have been running non-stop from meeting to meeting with designers, engineers, builders of all sorts, and also with many folks who are yearning for a place of peace to get away from the rush of everyday life in the world today. While planning the next steps that lead to groundbreaking day for our project, I must say that I have had an abundance of opportunities to practice patience. The folks in the construction world are running ragged with demands for their time and services.

I persevere, and on most days continue making progress, albeit painfully slowly! I share this with you not as an excuse, but simply as an explanation that will hopefully help you to remain patient as we wait together for our new homes in the Sanctuary of Peace.

If you have questions, please know that you are welcome to contact me at any time. My number at the monastery is 719-355-1639 and my email is [vcrowder@benethillmonastery.org](mailto:vcrowder@benethillmonastery.org). You can also reach me on my cell at 720-839-0752.



# Mission Advancement

By Ruth Roland, Director of Mission Advancement

## Legacy Gifts



*"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." -Isaiah 40:31*

Father Arthur B. Schute's story was included in our 2019 Gratitude Report as a friend of 25+ years who included the sisters in his will. Father Schute died unexpectedly in December at the age of 78; we join with his family and friends in grieving his loss. In remembering him, [Sister Clare](#) shared, *"There was a dearness about him, but he also had this mischievous grin and New Jersey accent."* She recalled that Father Schute had polio as a child, and felt called, first to be a doctor, but ultimately to become a priest. *"Whenever I am at Eucharist, I will remember him, he so loved being a priest."*

Father Schute also delighted in being a philanthropist. About his final gift plan, he wrote *"Keep the spirit of the Benet Hill Benedictines alive and always reaching out to others, especially the poor and marginalized, and providing spiritual care and growth to the community of Colorado Springs and its environs."*

If you'd like to learn more about leaving assets to the monastery as part of your [legacy giving](#), please call Ruth Roland at 719-355-1633.

## St. Scholastica Giving Circle

By Michelle Maksimowicz, Ph.d.

I first connected with the monastery when my spiritual advisor suggested that I would feel at home with the Sisters of Benet Hill. I soon discovered that the Rule of Benedict, with its vision of being Christ in the greater community, was a match for the direction my spiritual life was moving. After attending [Sunday Mass](#) for a while, spending time in retreat on the grounds, and meditating while walking the [labyrinth](#), I decided to support the mission of the good sisters through donations. I signed up for the [St. Scholastica Giving Circle](#) to make a recurring monthly gift which makes it easy. Nine years later, I'm more involved than ever in their mission and in helping [Sister Rose Ann](#) launch [Bakhita Mountain Home](#) as a separate 501(c)3 organization to help adult victims of human trafficking.

To join the [St. Scholastica Giving Circle](#) to support the mission of Benet Hill Monastery, contact Ruth Roland at [rroland@benethillmonastery.org](mailto:rroland@benethillmonastery.org) or call 719-355-1633. To learn more about Bakhita Mountain Home, visit <https://bakhitamountainhome.org>.



## Sisters Elizabeth and Kathleen Cogan Connect on Zoom

*"To visit with Kathleen on Zoom is great. So much life and meaning is added to our conversation when I can see her facial expressions, especially her eyes. I love to see Kathleen's face light up when other sisters and employees pop in to say hello. She misses everybody."* – Sister [Elizabeth Cogan, OSB](#) Note: Sister [Kathleen Cogan OSB](#) moved to St. Francis Nursing Center last year, joining Sister Charlotte Redpath OSB, who also needs a higher level of skilled nursing care.



We are incredibly grateful to everyone who made gifts last year to bring High Speed Internet to the monastery. Thanks to you, the Cogan sisters can see each other once a week on Zoom. Thanks to you, our employees and sisters are a thousand times more effective at accomplishing the daily work of their hands. Stay tuned: we are exploring ways to expand our online ministries! If you have ideas, please contact [Ruth Roland](#).



# Benet Hill Academy Alumnae



## Left: Honoring the Class of 1981 (40 years):

Jules Aguirre Irwin, Liseann Andersen, Brenda Jean Bailey Maicco, Patricia Brewer Denton, Elizabeth Brown (deceased), Julie Conklin Bouchard, Deborah Cook Hendrix, Carla Cummings, Patricia Dwyer Phillips, Cynthia Gallaher, Tamara Goudeau, Tem Gray Brenna, Michele Haddock Pring, Tammy Harlow Martinez, Tish Hartwick Taylor, Karla Marie Heard-Price (deceased), Marie Claudette Heim Brac, Cynthia Lindeman Vestuti, Stella Louder Goniea, Maralee McDowell Fortarel, Karan Jo McGrath Negrete, Terri McGrath, Jeanne McQuisten Moyer, Sharon Milner Johnson, Suzann Negro, Michelle Patterson Noyes, Anna Lisa Perez Green (deceased), Laura Spencer (deceased), Doreen Sanchez, Jacqueline Singleton Skaggs, Lynn Szczutowski Neiss, Jay White, Karen Zacharias

BENET HILL ACADEMY ALUMNAE ANNUAL REUNION 2021: JULY 17 (12:00 p.m.) JULY 18 (10:10 a.m.) Honoring the Class of 1970 & 1971 (50 yrs.) and the Class of 1980 & 1981 (40 yrs.) **The weekend is for all classes. Family and Friends are WELCOME.** Arrival for the Saturday gathering is between 11:30-12:00. Sunday's event is 10:00. Venue: Benet Hill Monastery, 3190 Benet Lane, Colorado Springs Co., 80921  
Call or e-mail Sister Lucile to confirm your attendance: 719-633-0655; E-mail: slucy@benethillmonastery.org

*Class of 1970 (50 years) and Class of 1980 (40 years) was canceled in 2020 due to Covid-19. See the names listed in the Summer 2020 Review: <https://benethillmonastery.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Summer-2020-Review-2-FINAL.pdf>*

## Right: Honoring the Class of 1971 (50 years):

Eleanor Addington Knight, Lillian Alderman, Dorothy Bell, Denise Biondi, Patricia Carter Wagener, Theresa Cruz Paulino, Eileen Delaney Seiter, Cheryl Dingwell Keckritz, Diane Ehrig Bowles, Diana Erpelding Plank, Pamela Foltz Morris, Marybeth Fredes Zurcher, Maria Theresa Garnica Abdulgaseem, Mary Ellen Gilbert Koch, Carol Grimes Willett, Carol Hansen, Nancy Hedemark Nay, Theresa Holloway Rooney, Pamela Johnson, Bette Layman, Mary Ellen Lohman Simmons, Linda Martin, Mary McGrath Novak, Elizabeth McMillan Parker, Nancy Oberwetter Eichman, Phyllis Phillippy Donnally, Victoria Routhie McPherson, Mary Shields Frazier, Mary Anne Truitt Chaulk, Donelle Tyma



Mary Anne Truitt Chaulk  
(no photo)



## Spiritual Direction Ministry

- ♥ [Spiritual Direction](#) is a ministry of Benet Hill Monastery.
- ♥ Spiritual Directors are available to journey with you.
- ♥ **We do this on site, online, and by phone.**



**Contact:** [Sister Therese O'Grady, OSB](mailto:stherese@benethillmonastery.org)  
[stherese@benethillmonastery.org](mailto:stherese@benethillmonastery.org)  
Phone: 719- 473-8764

*"One step in discernment in spiritual direction: Look back in my memory: See how God has made Himself present to me throughout my life. See how God has healed brokenness, given freedom where I was 'unfree', allowed me to accept myself – the emotive forces within me.*

*Clarify my intentions and desires: look deeply into my HEART : What have really been the DEEPEST desires which have caught up my whole person – at the deepest level, shaped the pattern of my ongoing sacred history. Then talk about this with a [spiritual director](#) to help me with this." -[Sister Therese O'Grady, OSB](#)*

# Easter HOPE!



*Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery*  
3190 Benet Lane  
Colorado Springs, CO 80921-1509

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The Review is published three times per year by Benet Hill Monastery of Colorado Springs, Inc., 3190 Benet Lane, Colorado Springs, CO 80921  
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**CONTRIBUTORS** - Sisters and staff of Benet Hill Monastery, students, alumnae and friends.

## *Sisters' Thrift & Boutique: Pure Gift*

8674 N. Union Blvd.  
Next to Safeway

Phone: 719-282-0316

By Linda Madden, Boutique Volunteer



My odyssey with the pandemic began with intensity. On March 11, 2020, I was exposed to the COVID-19 virus at a rehearsal of the Colorado Springs Chorale, long before most people had any idea what was ahead. Forced into quarantine, I alerted the boutique managers that I would miss two of my shifts but planned to return as soon as I had my "get out of jail free card." That was not to be.

Though I was healthy, the shop was compelled to close on March 17th. As the scope of this tragedy became more palpable, I lamented my losses: my passionate avocation of choral singing, worship and fellowship with my church family, my gym and yoga studio and hiking group, concerts and classes, friendship gatherings, flights to be with

my scattered family, and Tuesdays at *Sisters' Thrift & Boutique*. Most of these things are still on hiatus, but since the shop's re-opening, I have joyfully served to help keep it functioning. Sometimes it feels a little risky, I'll admit, but the delight of having somewhere to go and something worthy to do is intoxicating during this long season of fear and disorientation. The crew on my shift keeps me focused on hope with lots of laughter. I count it as pure gift to be a [volunteer](#) at *Sisters' Thrift & Boutique*.

**Thank you for supporting our boutique!**  
**We look forward to seeing all of our customers.**

"The very least you can do in your life is figure out what you hope for. And the most you can do is live inside that hope. Not admire it from a distance but live right in it, under its roof." -Barbara Kingsolver

### **Store Hours:**

**Mon. - Fri.: 10:00 am - 5:30 pm**  
**Saturdays: 10:00am - 4:00 pm**



**Benet Hill Monastery \* 3190 Benet Ln. \* Colorado Springs, CO 80921\* PH:719-633-0655**  
**The Monastery is situated in the woodland setting of the Black Forest**  
**located in northeast Colorado Springs, off Highway 83.**