



*Sisters of*  
**Benet Hill  
Monastery**

# *The Review*

Volume 62, No.1  
Spring/Summer 2023

***“Our greatest  
fulfillment lies in  
giving ourselves  
to others.”***

**-Henri Nouwen**

Yellow Flowers, credit given to Sister Mary Colleen Schwarz OSB

Introducing  
***Living in Liminal Space***



# Letter

from the prioress

Dear Friends,

At this time of year, I am struck by how nature steps out of winter and moves into spring. The snow around the monastery at 7,000 feet does not want to let go, yet the warmer days melt it into nurturing water to bring green grasses and spring flowers. Nature seems to be negotiating the in-between of seasons.

We too are negotiating the many in-between seasons of our lives. Here at the monastery, we faced this profound reality in the deaths of our Sisters Olive Therese Geiger, Mary John Thomas, and Mary Glenn as they negotiated letting go of life and crossing that threshold into death that holds the promise of new life and resurrection.

In April, we were blessed to begin an innovative Older Adult Wellness Program with faculty and students from the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. They have completed their assessments of our physical, emotional, and cognitive health and wellbeing. We presently find ourselves in an in-between time as an interprofessional team reviews these findings and develops individualized wellness plans for each sister and recommendations for in-person programs to address specific health and wellness needs. We are grateful to SOAR! (Support Our Aging Religious) for providing a generous grant for this unique collaboration with the university.

As a community, we are in an in-between space between our bold decision to approve a Strategic Vision Framework that points the way for our charism, values, and mission to live on at Benet Lane and the reality of our aging. Our Bridging to the Future Plan certainly is guiding our actions and development plan, yet we too prayerfully realize that we are negotiating our aging while standing strong in our faith and decisions.

This harkens me back to my reflection at the Easter Vigil where I pondered questions around Jesus' three days in the tomb.

- Was Jesus negotiating with a mysterious consciousness between the death that consumed his physical body and the magnetic pull of a new mystery of life?
- Did Jesus need to re-align himself with the Cosmic Christ that was in his DNA from the beginning of time? Did he need time to re-center with the Divine Love that was the eternal part of his soul and spirit energy?
- Did Jesus need time to renew his oneness with the Divine Love of the Creator? Did Jesus need Abiding Time?

As we move through spring into summer, I invite you to re-align, renew, and respond to the Divine Love of our God. Let us abide in God's love as God abides in us. There is no in-between time with the Divine One: God is always present! May this Abiding Time with God give us strength to embrace the in-between times that are part of our humanity.

Abundant blessings of abiding with the Divine One,



Sister Marie Therese "MT" Summers, OSB  
Prioress



## Sister Olive Therese Geiger, OSB

November 9, 1932-November 29, 2022

Sister Olive Therese died peacefully in her sleep November 28, 2022. She was born in McCook, Nebraska on November 9, 1932, to William Geiger and Eve Cecola Eibert Geiger. She is preceded in death by her parents, sister, Sister Eucharist Geiger O.P., and her brothers William, Robert, and James Geiger. She is survived by her brothers, Paul, Gerald, and Fr. Bernard Geiger O.F.M. Conv.

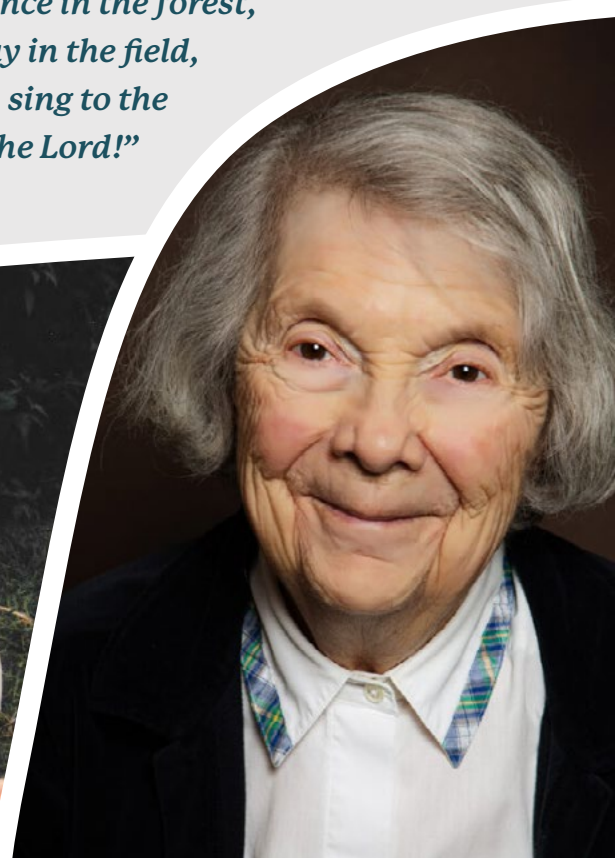
When Sister Olive Therese was thirteen, she heard God's call to religious life. She entered Mount Saint Scholastica Monastery in Atchison, Kansas in 1951 and studied to become an educator. She earned a BA in Music Education from Mt. St. Scholastica College, Atchison, Kansas and a BA in Religious Studies for Adults from Regis University in Denver, Colorado. Sister Olive Therese taught in schools in Kansas, Nebraska, and Colorado. She also taught individual music classes, was a Pastoral Administrator, Liturgical Music Director (she played both the organ and the piano), Director of Religious Education and a Spiritual Director. Most of all, Sister Olive's deepest desire was to live a life of contemplation like her patron St. Therese of Lisieux.

Sister Olive Therese knew much suffering, pain, and illness in her life because of an accident when she was hit by an automobile while walking. Because of this,

she requested a dispensation of vows in 1970. She moved to Lafayette, Colorado, bought a small house, taught music and was a receptionist at a doctor's office. Ten years later, while sweeping her kitchen floor, she heard Jesus tell her it was time to return to religious life. She entered Benet Hill Monastery in 1980 where she continued her life of contemplation and pastoral ministry.

In her later years, Sister Olive took great delight in the beauty of our pine forest home with all its animal life. She would often express her gratitude to God for being able to live, work and pray in such a beautiful place which enriched her contemplation. The words to Marty Haugen's Canticum of the Sun are so fitting to sum up Sister Olive's life

*"The heavens are telling the glory of God,  
And all creation is shouting for joy!  
Come, dance in the forest,  
come, play in the field,  
And sing, sing to the  
glory of the Lord!"*





# Sister Mary John Thomas, OSB

November 9, 1932-November 28, 2022



**S**ister Mary John Thomas died on February 26, 2023. With rosary in hand and peace radiating from her face, she gave her last breath to her Beloved God, a breath that sang praise to her faithful God for 90 years of life.

She was born in Kansas City, Kansas on September 11, 1932, and given the name Dolores Margaret, the eldest of three other siblings. She is preceded in death by her father, John Anthony Thomas and mother, Elizabeth Margaret Purduski and her younger brother, John Thomas Jr. She is survived by her sisters Janet Tlusik and Mary Ann Thomas of Kansas City. She was deeply loved and will be missed by her family, sisters from Benet Hill, friends, priests, former students, parishioners, and ministry colleagues at parishes in Colorado and Kansas.

She was greatly influenced by her parents and Grandmother Helen with their living example of dedication to faith, family, and hard work. She and her siblings attended St. Anthony's Catholic School, staffed by the Benedictine Sisters of Atchison, Kansas. Her call to become a sister and love of the Blessed Sacrament began forming early. After high school she worked for one year as a secretary and then joined Mount Saint



*"Give me nothing more than your love and grace. These alone, O God, are enough for me." (2 Corinthians 9)*

Scholastica Convent in 1951. She made first profession in 1952 and her perpetual profession in 1956. She ministered as a teacher at Sacred Heart Cathedral School in Pueblo, Colorado, St. Joseph School in Monte Vista, Colorado, St. Pius X in Mission, Kansas, St. Cajetan School in Denver, Colorado, and Holy Trinity School in Colorado Springs, Colorado. She served in pastoral ministry at St. Vincent De Paul Parish in Denver and Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Lakewood, Colorado. Her ministry fulfilled her two strongest passions: teaching children and caring for the elderly.

Four major milestones marked her journey as a Benedictine. She was called by her community to serve as Prioress from 1975 to 1983 and was forever grateful for her growth as a monastic woman during this time. Her Golden Jubilee in 2002 filled her with joy as her mother, siblings, and family members celebrated her rich journey covering fifty years of faith and cherished relationships. In her ministry, she felt privileged to have been a part of so many lives filled with joy, grief, pain, healing, suffering, and blessing. These living "reflections of God" were examples of fidelity to church through volunteering, fidelity to marriage through loving relationships, and fidelity to God through an unending desire to grow in faith. Finally, a few months prior to her retirement in 2009, she was asked to lead the team planning the move to the new monastery in Black Forest. It was an enormous undertaking, but she once quipped, "God's grace, lots of humility, and a healthy sense of humor got me through it." After the move, she directed the growing retreat ministry and supervised food services.

Up to the last year of her life, she served the community and guests with hospitality, prayer, and a welcoming smile. After a heart attack on Thanksgiving Day in 2022, she decided to come home to her community to die with the assistance of hospice. She had a final Zoom call with her beloved family in Kansas and then entered the final act of surrender to her God.

# Sister Mary Glenn, OSB

September 21, 1943 – April 27, 2023



*"The water that I shall give will turn into a spring inside her, welling up to eternal life." John 4:14*

**S**ister Mary Glenn died peacefully in the afternoon, surrounded by four of her Benedictine Sisters. Mary Margaret Glenn was born in Port Angeles, Washington. Water, and all of nature, have always been Mary's sure source of Divine Life.

Mary grew up in Port Angeles with her parents, Lucile Weers and James Bernard Glenn, and her sisters, Patricia Lucile Glenn and Bridget Ann (Glenn) Armstrong. Mary attended Queen of Angels Grade School in Port Angeles and Holy Name Academy High School in Seattle. Every other Friday afternoon during high school, Mary, her sister Pat, and their friend Patty Whyham ran down Queen Ann Hill in Seattle to catch the ferry to ride across Puget Sound to return home.

Mary moved away from the ocean to Mount Angel College in Mt. Angel, Oregon. She graduated in 1965 with a BA in sociology. On Ash Wednesday in 1965, she entered the Visitation Monastery in Tacoma, Washington on the shore of Puget Sound and made final profession in December 1969.

She moved to western Colorado in 1971 with Sister Anne Madeleine Brost to start a new Visitation monastery with a more contemplative lifestyle. They built the new community in Whitewater, Colorado, on Kannah Creek. Mary exchanged the ocean waters for a mountain-desert creek.

In 1978, when the Visitation Order did not accept the new community, it became an independent religious community under the Bishop of Pueblo, Charles Buswell. They lived a simple lifestyle and offered retreats and hospitality to local groups. Together they cared for the land and the creek, their home, and one another.

In 2006, the Whitewater sisters thought it wise to connect with a larger group of religious women and were accepted by the Benedictine Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery in Colorado Springs. Mary exchanged the Kannah Creek waters for the pine trees of the Black

Forest and twenty-eight Benedictine Sisters when she and Sister Anne Madeleine moved from Whitewater to Benet Hill Monastery in 2019. In August 2021, Sister Mary accepted the position of Assistant Prioress of Benet Hill Monastery. She endeavored to model Christ to her community and others through a loving presence and compassionate listening. She was an avid reader and bread baker and loved to walk the monastery grounds being nourished by God's beauty.

In March 2023, she was diagnosed with stage four bladder cancer and chose to let it take its course without trying to prolong her days on this planet. Eternal Life was welling up in her. Hospice supported her to a peaceful and quiet death. She will be deeply missed by her sisters, Patricia and Bridget, brother-in-law Jerry Armstrong, nephews Alex, Taylor and David Smithburg, Curt Armstrong, and their families. She will also be missed by her Benedictine Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery, especially Sister Anne Madeleine Brost, her companion member at the Whitewater Community, and many friends in Colorado and Washington.





# Bridging to the Future

## Strategic Priority #1

Create a technology infrastructure to support Benet Hill Monastery's work

**B**uilding infrastructure doesn't usually happen in the spotlight. Sometimes, it's one step forward and two steps backward as one problem is solved but two more appear. Working with information technology takes patience, skill, and problem-solving. That's why we'd like to highlight the ongoing work of our technology problem-solvers, Regina Allor, Information Technology Coordinator; Sister Mary Colleen Schwarz, Director of Technology; and Bea Babbitt, volunteer.



Leading the daily technology vanguard are Regina and Sister Mary Colleen.

Regina seamlessly moves from helping a sister set up a new smartphone to coordinating with a vendor about adding wireless network connections, making "fix or replace and recycle" decisions on aging hardware, and ordering, preparing, and setting up hardware. In just a few hours one morning, she logged two miles of steps and stairs! Sister Mary Colleen has been focused on sound issues, upgrading mics in the oratory and chapel, and investigating technology options for those wearing hearing devices. Regina and Sister Mary Colleen seek out the best and safest technological solutions at the lowest price, consulting with David Ferris of Sensible Systems as needed.



A recent example of their dedication was taking on the request to livestream Sister Mary John's funeral when professional services weren't available from the funeral home. Regina spent hours researching

and preparing an iPad with the necessary software and hardware and selecting photos and music for the livestream before the service started. The livestreaming of the vigil went smoothly, but problems popped up the next day before the funeral. Disappointed, Regina had to record the funeral service rather than livestream. Later that day, we sent the video link to 4,000 email subscribers and posted it on our website. That video of Sister Mary John's funeral on the monastery's YouTube channel is the most-watched video in our history! Regina and Sister Mary Colleen learned from this experience and have purchased a subscription to a software service to do more livestreaming. One step forward.

Last year, Bea Babbitt began volunteering several days each month. With a rich background in statistics and education, Bea is another problem solver who is up for all challenges. Bea enjoys helping sisters one-on-one with their technology struggles. Sometimes, it's a smartphone and other times it may be a desktop, laptop, Kindle, or iPad. Bea is infinitely patient and happy to offer her time and knowledge of technology to supplement the work of Regina and Sister Mary Colleen. Thank you, Regina, Sister Mary Colleen, and Bea!



**Interested in volunteering your information technology skills?**

**Contact Sister Mary Colleen at [smarycolleen@benethillmonastery.org](mailto:smarycolleen@benethillmonastery.org)**

## Strategic Priority #2

Share Monastery Leadership

Sister MT Summers first heard about communities of religious women hiring a Director of Operations as a staff position at a recent Prioress meeting. This new position relieves prioresses and other professed leaders of the day-to-day responsibilities of managing departments such as healthcare, food service, facility maintenance, human resources, volunteer coordination, and retreat facilities. Prioresses who have hired staff into this position spoke of having more time and energy for their sisters, liturgy, prayer, and all the other ministry needed to continue a community's charism and mission. On the flight home, Sister MT felt God beginning to gently nudge her to consider this possibility for Benet Hill.

A few weeks later, a mutual friend introduced Sister MT to Sally Rothstein, a woman with extensive managerial experience in organizations as varied as USAA, Pikes Peak Hospice & Palliative Care, Memorial Health System, Verus Global, Project Angel Heart, and Pikes Peak Threshold Singers. Unknown to Sister MT, Sally was already deeply connected to Benet Hill through dear friends. That was the start of a series of thoughtful conversations exploring possibilities which led to an invitation for Sally to serve as Director of Operations to help streamline operations and future growth at Benet Hill.



Sally explains, "Saying 'YES!' to the opportunity to join Benet Hill Monastery's mission and community as Director of Operations was as natural as the sacred surrounding forest! My experience here is already full of rich connections and learning." Sally's abilities to cultivate passion for moving an organization's mission forward are well-known in Colorado Springs. She nurtures passion for mission-based work in organizations by making collective and individual capacity and fulfillment central to her work. In other words, Sally knows that mission moves forward at the speed of relationships!

Many may recognize her as the leader of a singing group that companioned people at life's thresholds in the community, including while in care at Pikes Peak Hospice & Palliative Care. Sally also brings to us extensive experience in program development, volunteer engagement, training, development, leading and building a regional presence and service delivery, community building, and leadership development facilitation. Sally writes, "I am truly honored to be partnering with the minds and hearts that comprise this inspiring, intentional, and heart- and wisdom-filled team and community." Welcome Sally!

**Connect with Sally by introducing yourself when visiting Benet Hill Monday – Friday, emailing [srothstein@benethillmonastery.org](mailto:srothstein@benethillmonastery.org), connecting on LinkedIn, or calling 719.355.1624**



# Strategic Priority #3

Practice intentional inclusivity and support social and environmental justice

By Kathy Bell and  
Sue Cox, Oblates

On Earth Day, the Care of Creation Covenant Group hosted a retreat led by Sister Jan Ginzkey. The purpose was to explore the interconnections between the first two goals of the Laudato Si' Action Platform (Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor) and to honor the indigenous people who lived in the forests. Sister Jan shared about the rich and tragic history of the Ute people and their origin in the Shining (Rocky) Mountains, specifically Tava (Pikes Peak). Sister Jan shared what she has learned about culturally modified trees. The Ute had no written language and used modified trees to share information with other tribal members by bending trees in various shapes and directions. There are a number of these

wonderful trees on the monastery grounds. Sister Jan provided a list of ways to identify a Ponderosa that may have been culturally modified as opposed to a tree that was misshapen by Mother Nature. After the classroom portion of the presentation, everyone headed out of doors with their boots and winter coats and hats! It was a magical meander through the Black Forest and an opportunity to use their imaginations to try to understand the messages that were meant for someone long ago.

The Care of Creation Covenant Group has joined the Ignatian Solidarity Network and their Education for Justice programs. They also follow various organizations such as Kairos Center, Franciscan Action Network, Interfaith Power and Light Network, and others. The members are trying hard to remain well-informed and aware of both problems and solutions.

*Interested in a future retreat on this topic or joining the Care of Creation Covenant Group? Contact Sister Jan [sjan@benethillmonastery.org](mailto:sjan@benethillmonastery.org).*

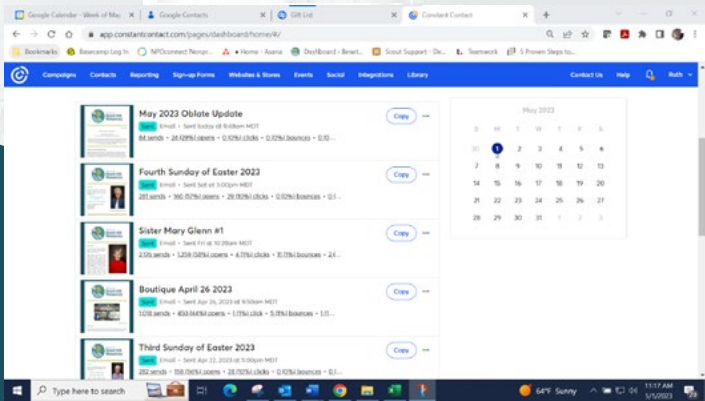
# Strategic Priority #4

Steward Resources

Kudos to Jesse Brown of the Oblate Advisory & Action Team who has learned to use the monastery's email platform, Constant Contact, to increase the frequency and quality of communication with Benet Hill oblates.

*Thank you, Jesse!*

*Are you a Benet Hill oblate but not receiving the oblate emails? Send your contact information to [oblates@benethillmonastery.org](mailto:oblates@benethillmonastery.org)*



# Strategic Priority #5

Strengthen daily operations to support future growth



Last year, when the Monastic Council selected this strategic priority on which to focus its efforts for the next 3 – 6 months, we couldn't imagine the number of challenges waiting just around the corner. God has been present at every moment, but these past months have been hard!

We introduced our new Director of Operations, Sally Rothstein, on Page 6. She is a key element to strengthen daily operations. However, a primary factor that causes recurring hiccups in smooth daily operations is the health needs of our sisters. Due to the realities of our healthcare system, it has been difficult to gain a holistic and comprehensive picture of what each sister needs. In late summer, Sister MT turned to her friend Dr. Sarah Qualls, founder of the Aging Center at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs (UCCS), for counsel. Overnight, Sarah became a trusted resource, listening ear, and community advocate for the sisters.

Thanks to Sarah, a multidisciplinary UCCS team of faculty and students from health sciences, nursing, psychology, and social work, and a generous grant from the SOAR! Foundation, Benet Hill has become an incubator for an innovative Older Adult Wellness Model! Students, under supervision of faculty, have conducted individual assessments of each sister to understand

their strengths and challenges related to their physical, emotional, and cognitive health and wellbeing. An interprofessional team of faculty and students is reviewing these findings and developing individualized wellness plans for each sister. The plans will be discussed with each sister and will include integrated recommendations for promoting physical, cognitive, and mental health wellness, and specific behavior strategies to reduce risks for new or exacerbations in existing medical conditions. This fall, students will deliver in-person programs to address needs identified in the assessments.

Students enjoyed learning the stories of the sisters, and were amazed by their accomplishments, interests, and overall health. One team confidentially reported that Sister Mary Jane Vigil could hold a plank longer than they could! The sisters, retired educators all, enjoyed mentoring the nervous students.

For the university, research data obtained from Benet Hill will be used to further develop, present, and publish the Older Adult Wellness Model and clinical educational experience. For Benet Hill, participating in the development of this model provides the community with an opportunity to define what "eldering" will look like for each sister.

*"Eldering is about changing your perspective so you can experience growing older in a way that allows you to have the rest of your life be the best of your life – filled with love, health, happiness, and creative self-expression. It's about living fully to the end."*

-Sister MT



*Read the UCCS Press Release*



## Strategic Priority #6

### Transition to 21st Century Monasticism

Communities of religious women in the U.S. are innovating in new and exciting ways to continue their charism and mission into the 21st century. The Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery are part of this evolving transformation.

To further this strategic priority, Sisters Therese O'Grady and Susan Matarrese attended the spring conference at the Center for Contemplative Living in Denver. The conference was entitled *What does Centering Prayer have to Offer the 21st Century?* with featured speakers Rory McEntee and Adam Bucko. McEntee serves as Executive Director of the Foundation for New Monasticism in New Mexico. Bucko, an ordained priest in the Episcopal Church, serves as the Director of the Center for Spiritual Imagination in New York City. The men co-authored the book *The New Monasticism, an Interspiritual Manifesto for Contemplative Living*.

Sisters Therese and Susan are natural choices to focus on 21st Century Monasticism as they have taught, led, and practiced Centering Prayer for many years and desire to live contemplatively each day. This type of spiritual practice resonates deeply with younger generations of spiritual seekers. The Springtide Research Center reported in November 2022 that 68% of the young people they surveyed identified as religious, and 77% claimed to be spiritual even as they are skeptical of traditional religious institutions. Many Gen Zers resonate with parts and pieces of different religious and spiritual traditions and can see themselves fitting in with them. In other words, Gen Zers may be leading the way in interspirituality.

The conference speakers spoke about the term "interspirituality," a word originally coined by Brother Wayne Teasdale in his 1999 book *The Mystic Heart*. Teasdale writes "the mystical life of the next thousand years and beyond will...be contemplative, interspiritual, socially engaged, environmentally responsible, holistic, engaging of other media, and cosmically open..." McAntee and Bucko write in their book, "The inter in interspirituality...means that through all the diverse

forms of spiritual experience and insight we can evolve a higher view. We need this higher view; its cultivation and attainment are the tasks before us."

The speakers were greatly influenced by and attended some of the Snowmass Interspiritual Conferences begun by Thomas Keating. Keating invited spiritual leaders and friends from various world religions who had been in dialogue for many years to share their varied spiritualities, practices, and deepening journeys. At these conferences the document, Eight Points of Agreement, was developed to provide a basis for dialogue among world religions. McAntee and Bucko incorporate this document along with the Benedictine traditions from the Rule of St. Benedict in their writing.

Thomas Keating's reflection in his afterword for the book *The New Monasticism* sums up this evolving transformation: "The new monasticism values the spiritual goals and traditions of the world's religions and respects and welcomes those who wish to persevere in them, but they are free to develop new practices in the light of global and cultural development."

The adventure of unfolding the mystery of God's plan for 21st Century Monasticism continues.

**Interested in learning more about Centering Prayer or evolving spirituality trends? Contact Sister Therese or Susan at [stherese@benethillmonastery.org](mailto:stherese@benethillmonastery.org)**



## Spiritual Direction Ministry: A Guided Walk for Life

By Sarah Groh

Spiritual direction cracks open the secret place that God inhabits, asking me questions like "who are you?" and "who do you say I am?" This was my experience as I worked with Sister Mary Colleen and with other spiritual directors throughout my professional work as a church musician. At the age of 12, I heard my name audibly as I left my house one cloudy Sunday afternoon. That secret place within me, reserved only for my relationship with God, began to glow, and I knew I was being called to a life that followed and trusted God. Since then, I have found the most comfortable place to be in the choir loft. Starting at the age of 4, I saved a seat right next to my mom, who played the organ and directed the choir each week. I knew no other way to be in church and participate in worship than by wearing a robe and overlooking the congregation from above. In college, I was recruited to choose the hymns for an Episcopal church and sing in the choir with my three other college friends. From there, I began directing choirs, choosing offertories, playing the piano for praise bands, teaching voice lessons, and singing for about 300 weddings and memorials. In all of this, God has opened and closed doors, introduced me to helpful and hurtful people, and directed my path every step of the way.

I feel at home in the quietness of Benet Hill and enjoy the spiritual space necessary to answer the tough faith questions of life. Having a spiritual director listen and ask the questions that sit just below the surface has been a gift. And when I finally answer those questions, I always find the steps needed to continue carving out this human life, the life God has always meant for me to live.

I love being a part of Benet Hill and am thankful for the inquisitive invitations from Sister MT to direct the Schola for Palm Sunday, Triduum, and Pentecost. It is my hope that I can be a resource to her and the liturgy team, as I continue to listen to the stillness of my next steps. Thank you all for your kind support. I am here to serve, continue listening, and humbly walk with God.



*Read more about Sarah and her work as a musician and entrepreneur*





By Rebecca (Rivka) Rothstein

## Retreat Ministry:

Perfectly welcomed exactly as you are

Benet Hill was recommended to me by a spiritual mentor as a place where I, someone to whom spiritual practice is deeply important but who doesn't adhere to a specific religious doctrine, could seek refuge and community. To be honest, I was skeptical in that assumption. But because I felt I needed a bit of a kick start in my practice, I ventured to check out Benet Hill for a personal retreat.

I am accustomed to being pointedly asked how it is that I follow God and Christ, and being gently lectured on why the question-asker's version of religion is the way for me as well. I was aware that I might experience a similar agenda at Benet Hill. However, I was so very pleasantly surprised to find quite the opposite; it was, in fact, not at all the case. I felt perfectly welcomed exactly as I am, perfectly welcomed to use my time there however I might choose, and perfectly invited to seek God however it is that I might seek Him.

My time at Benet Hill was replenishing and filled with ease. The sisters so beautifully walked the delicate balance of being accommodating and available while also respecting that my time there was my own. I attended their Sunday mass and again felt welcomed and at ease. The rest of my time I spent on my own. I felt no pressure from the sisters to attend their prayers or practice their ways.

I did, however, choose to have a spiritual direction session. Sister Therese exemplified the same warm openness I felt from the institution itself. She came to the session without an agenda of her own and was there only to support and guide me, whatever that might mean. In fact, at one point, she even asked me "Rivka, who is your God?" Never have I been asked that question by someone in the religious realm, and certainly not by a nun! Her clear belief in God as a loving, infinite, and vast being rather than a picky, finite, and specific one touched me so deeply.

Benet Hill offers warm refuge for the soul, no matter where on one's journey one might be, or how that journey might look. If you are seeking, they have open arms for you. I feel I could return at any time, and I look forward to when I do so again!



*As often happens at Benet Hill Monastery, a little bit of spiritual kismet happened. Rivka is the niece of Sally Rothstein, our new Director of Operations; however, neither knew that the other had connected with Benet Hill until they swapped stories at a recent brunch date. God is good!*

## Benedictine Spiritual Director Training & Certification Ministry

Learning the Art of Holy Listening

By Dr. Katherine Greiner, PhD  
Associate Professor - Theology  
Carroll College, Helena, MT

The Benedictine Spiritual Direction Program has transformed my spiritual and vocational journey. It has opened my heart to the movement of the Holy Spirit in a way that my theological studies, as important as they are, never did.

Through this program I have found a community of fellow seekers who long to call attention to the Holy One's movement in our lives and in our world and to help others do the same. I continue to learn to discern how the Holy Spirit speaks to and through me in unique ways and how to help others name and claim God's presence in the unique unfolding of their own lives. The program has prepared me to be a compassionate spiritual director, grounded in self-awareness and Holy presence.

Sister Mary Colleen and Dana Cossey both teach and model

how to be spiritual companions in the Benedictine tradition, with open hearts and open ears. They create sacred space for us to listen, learn, and be transformed as they teach us to listen to others' stories. They hold us accountable and hold us steady as we learn the sacred art of holy listening. I am profoundly grateful for all that I have learned and discovered in and through this program.



*Learn more about the Benedictine Spiritual Director Training & Certification program*



*Learn more about the retreat ministry at Benet Hill*



A recent graduate sent Sister Mary Colleen this photo of a new "tat" he got to celebrate being certified as a Benedictine Spiritual Director. Getting a tattoo isn't a requirement to graduate, but Sister Mary Colleen loved receiving this photo!





# Holy Week at the Monastery



Sisters invited the Benet Hill community, the surrounding cities, and our global network of friends to celebrate Catholic Sisters Week (March 8 – 14) by “Stuffing a Truck” with food supplies needed locally, by Westside Cares, or their own local foodbank. Wow! You helped the sisters stuff not one, but FOUR trucks for Westside Care. Thank you to everyone who contributed food or cash donations – together, our gifts supplied multiple food pantries!

On March 21, students who attended St. Cajetan School in Denver turned out in force to remember Sister Mary John Thomas and honor other sisters who taught at their neighborhood school. It was so wonderful to see you all, share a meal, and to hear you sing the school song once again.

*Thank you, St. Cajetan Alums!*



Preparations for Holy Week began during Lent with the Liturgy Team. Notably, they found a new smoke-free, indoor fire method for the Easter Vigil! The Schola Choir was reborn under the expert leadership of Sarah Groh, practicing on Sundays after worship and sharing brunch with the sisters. Marybeth Ulrich, a new Schola member, shared the photo below from Easter Sunday and wrote about Schola, “I especially enjoyed getting to know my second-row buddies Sisters Clare and Annie better!.”

As Holy Week began, the sisters dyed eggs, prepared the Chapel environment multiple times for each part of the Triduum, rehearsed liturgy, created and printed worship aids, and filled the Chapel with chairs for Easter Sunday. The sisters were delighted to welcome so many new and old faces during the week, especially Father Jeff Cooper on Holy Thursday, dear friends from Leadville, Alan and Eileen Johnson, and Bishop Hanifen for Easter Sunday, who led us in shouting “Alleluia! Yeah God!”







# Benet Hill Academy Reunion Weekend for Classes of '73 and '83

The Sisters of Benet Hill invite the Classes of '73 and '83 Alumnae and their family members to attend the Reunion Weekend scheduled July 22 – 23, 2023 at the monastery. Wow! Where did these 50 and 40 years go? The sisters would love to see you and hear all about your careers, families, faith journeys, and memories of your time at Benet Hill Academy!

*The picnic is Saturday at 12pm and mass is Sunday at 10:15am followed by Sister Lucy's melt-in-your-mouth cinnamon buns and coffee, tea, or juice.*

Send your RSVP by July 14, 2023 to Sister Lucy at [SLucy@benethillmonastery.org](mailto:SLucy@benethillmonastery.org). Or you may call her at (719) 355-1618

*Seventy-three*



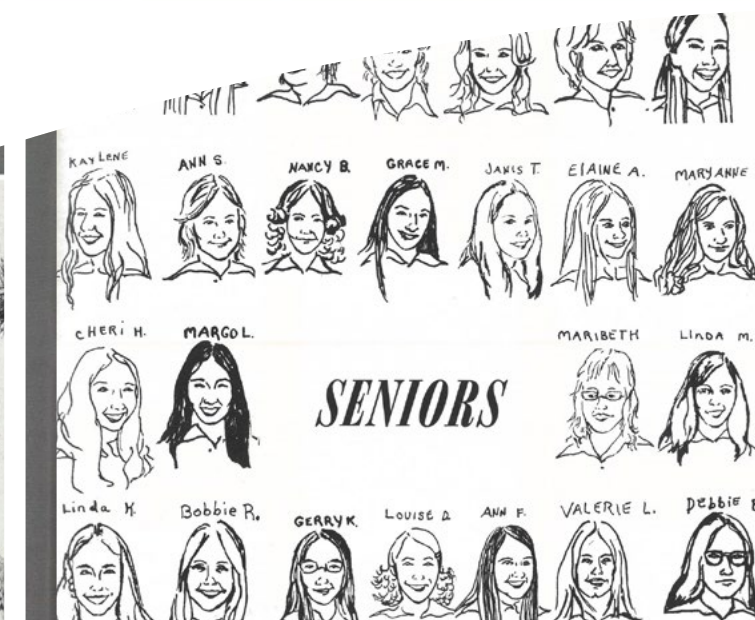
Photo by Ed Rinehart

*Reflections*

**Benet Hill Academy**

**Colorado Springs, Colorado**

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# We pray for those who have lost loved ones

Compiled by  
Sister Lucile Hartmann, OSB



**Sister Mary Colleen Schwarz, OSB and the Schwarz Family Brother, Ken Schwarz**

"He called shortly before he died and said, 'Sis, take care of yourself.' He was my big brother till the end."



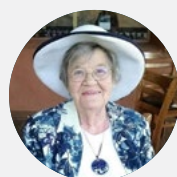
**Ann (Krack) Wellnitz BHA '70 and Mary (Krack) Zine BHA '72 Mother, Donna Krack. A funeral mass was held at Benet Hill Monastery, April 1, 2023**



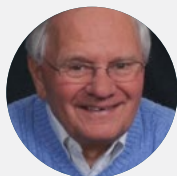
**Coco (Kruse) Klinkenberg BHA '72 Mother, Jeanne Kruse**

**Sister Lucile Hartmann, OSB and the Hartmann and Schreiner Families First Cousin, Hilda Schreiner**

"My cousin Hilda and my sister Agnes were married to brothers, Toot and Charles Schreiner. After her husband died, Hilda and I travelled together, going on a wonderful cruise to Alaska."



**Dorothea (Alfonsin) Watkins BHA '66 (deceased) and Trudie (Alfonsin) Layton BHA '70 Mother, Elfriede (Alfonsin) Goeben**



**Diane (Godec) Belger BHA '72 Father, Beverly "Bev" Godec**

**Abbott Family  
Melissa Abbott BHA '81**

**Patrice (Broe) Couche BHA '80  
Mother, Katie Broe**

**McDougal Family  
Susan McDougal BHA '72**

**Patricia (Brewer) Denton BHA '81  
Mother, Erika Brewer**



*Explore memorial service and columbarium options at Benet Hill Monastery*

# We invite you to receive... breathe...give...breathe...repeat...

## Receive

- » Walk the forested grounds and linger at prayer sites
- » Allow us to pray with you
- » Worship in Our Lady of Peace Chapel, Sundays at 10:15 AM
- » Make a contemplative retreat (Guided retreats available)
- » Inquire about mental health or grief counseling
- » Journey with a Benedictine Spiritual Director
- » Explore the Online Benedictine Spiritual Director Training & Certification Program

[benethillmonastery.org](https://benethillmonastery.org)

## Give

- » Use the enclosed envelope to mail your gift
- » Securely give online at [benethillmonastery.org](https://benethillmonastery.org) including gifts in memory or honor of a sister, family member, or friend
- » Recommend a grant from a Donor Advised Fund
- » Include the Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery in your Required Minimum Distribution and reduce your taxable income by making a Qualified Charitable Distribution
- » Inquire about making a bequest through your will or transferring appreciated shares of stock or mutual funds: Ruth Roland at [rroland@benethillmonastery.org](mailto:rroland@benethillmonastery.org), or call (719) 355-1633



# Breathe







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**Benet Hill  
Monastery**

# *The Review*

For there is still a vision  
for the appointed time;  
it speaks of the end,  
and does not lie.  
If it seems to tarry,  
wait for it;  
It will surely come,  
it will not delay.

*Habakkuk 2:3*