



*Sisters of*  
**Benet Hill  
Monastery**

# *The Review*

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A New Story © Mary Southard, CSJ  
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**Strengthening the web of life**  
*by sharing our*  
**spiritual journeys**

# Letter

from the prioress



Dear Friends,

Years ago, I was on a retreat in Idaho. While resting on a rock, my eyes were drawn to a mesmerizing activity. An ambitious spider was spinning a “web of shimmering beauty” between two stems of fall flowers that had lost their foliage. I was intrigued as I rested and watched. I learned later that a spider building a web first creates a bridge-line across the top of two points. After securing several anchor points, it creates a central hub. From there, the spider starts spiraling outward from the center. The spider then rests before adding the sticky silk to capture its sustenance for life. After all is complete, the spider simply waits and responds to what life brings to its web.

When I read this lovely poem by Robert T. Weston (next page), this story from my spiritual journey came back to me. At the time I observed the spider spinning the web, I was turning 50 years of age, a half century of life. Now I am at another half century juncture as I celebrate my 50th Anniversary (Jubilee) in professed vowed life. Both then and now, I see the web as an apt metaphor for what tethers us to the Divine Energy that is God. God as an active verb in the Universe, God that is love. This web is anchored in the distant stars of the Cosmic Christ who was present as the creative force at the beginning of all time and continues to evolve in all creation as the unending, uncontainable, unimaginable love of God in action. Dr. Brian Swimme refers to the star that exploded and brought forth our universe as “a primary revelation of love at the cosmological level, a divine giveaway, that holds nothing back.”

The story of my spiritual journey is probably not too different from many others. There is a bridge line, anchors, a central hub, and experiences of rest and sustenance. I had a loving, conservative, pre-Vatican II upbringing as a child. The call to adapt from what I knew as a child came in my teen years from the progressive Bishop Charles Buswell of the Diocese of Pueblo. Bishop Buswell was on fire with the Vatican II documents. When I entered the

novitiate, I was taught and encouraged to align myself with the Vatican II teachings. From the mid-1960’s onward, I was invited to let go of my engrained thinking and to embrace the present moment and movement of the Spirit. I was guided by wise mentors to open my mind and heart to new theological teachings. I learned our tradition of Catholic Social Teachings that became a guide in the deepening work of justice in my daily life. I embraced the call to live in right relationship with all creation. All of the steps in my spiritual journey continue to emanate from the central hub of my life that is God’s love.

The wonderful painting on the cover “A New Story” by Mary Southard, CSJ, beautifully depicts Divine Love bursting out of the cosmos to reach a group of people gathered around a campfire. I see these people in the image gathered as a community, sharing deep, vulnerable stories of their spiritual journeys. In this edition of *The Review*, Sister Mary Colleen Schwarz writes about the process of spiritual integration through the sharing of stories in a safe community. You will also find stories of the spiritual journeys of 2024 Graduates from the Benedictine Spiritual Training and Certification Program (Global Online). Sister Mary Colleen Schwarz, Dana Cossey, and their team of mentor companions guide students around the world in expanding their perspectives and spiritual practices. You will read the story of the formation of a new oblate, Ryan Bell, ObIOSB, and of other lives that connect with Benet Hill Monastery through the web of life. I am especially grateful for our employees and volunteers who have added to our monastery’s story with their knowledge, experience, service, hospitality and many kindnesses.

On August 18, Sister Therese O’Grady and I celebrated our 70th and 50th jubilees. At Eucharist, we publicly renewed our vowed commitment and then we “stretched our eager hands” in the song *Suscipe*, asking God to sustain us. I pray that all of us may be sustained with hope in these times. May we not forget that we are anchored with God’s enduring love as we pray and act for justice, and deepen and strengthen our relationship with the Divine Holy One.

Sister Marie Therese “MT” Summers, OSB Prioress

## *The Web of Life*

There is a living web that runs through us  
to all the universe

linking us each with each and through all life  
on to the distant stars.

Each knows a little corner of the world, and lives  
as if this were his all.

We no more see the farther reaches of the threads  
than we see of the future, yet they’re there.

Touch but one thread, no matter which;  
the thoughtful eye may trace to distant lands  
its firm continuing strand, yet lose its filaments  
as they reach out,  
but find at last it coming back to him from whom it led.

We move as in a fog, aware of self  
but only dimly conscious of the rest  
as they are close to us in sight or feeling.

New objects loom up for a time, fade in and out;  
then, sometimes, as we look on unawares, the fog lifts  
and then there’s the web in shimmering beauty,  
reaching past all horizons. We catch our breath;  
stretch out our eager hands, and then  
in comes the fog again, and we go on,  
feeling a little foolish, doubting what we had seen.

The hands were right. The web is real.

Our folly is that we so soon forget.

Source: Robert T. Weston from “*Becoming: A Spiritual Guide for Navigating Adulthood.*”



# Jubilee Sunday 2024

It has been a few years since the Sisters of Benet Hill planned and hosted a big party, but Jubilee Sunday August 18 proved that it's still possible! With Sister Therese O'Grady celebrating her 70th Jubilee and Prioress Sister Marie Therese "MT" Summers celebrating her 50th Jubilee this year, we knew that a large number of their family members and friends would be attending. We also knew that the number of regular attendees at Sunday worship continues to grow. We needed a plan for additional seats in the chapel and for parking cars, and courtesy shuttles for people unable to walk from their cars to the monastery. We mobilized a mighty team of sisters, employees, and volunteers to make the weekend meaningful, safe and fun for the O'Grady and Summers families, sisters, friends, and a growing Sunday assembly. After all, it's not every Sunday that we honor and celebrate a combined 120 years of vowed service to God and God's people! Thank you to all who attended, volunteered, and sent well wishes to Sisters Therese and MT.



## The Spiritual Practice of Story-telling

Sister Mary Colleen Schwarz, OSB



*Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect.*

- Chief Seattle, 1854

The spirituality of St. Benedict is one thread within the web of life. For those who find and pull on this thread, it offers a way of living a faith-filled life through work, prayer, learning and living in community. This is not a spirituality that requires departure from everyday life; rather, it is a way of being that fully engages in the holiness that permeates our daily existence. This path is a call to follow Christ in all that we do.

The online Benedictine Spiritual Director Training & Certification program serves students around the world. It is firmly anchored in Benedictine values. Students find that these Benedictine values create a path toward a rhythm of life that illuminates the importance of accepting and listening in love. This includes listening to the story of the other and honoring our authentic self through continued exploration toward our own spiritual integration.

The spiritual journey calls us to holistic healing and personal holiness. Spiritual integration is about living the discoveries and gifts you have attained, not just thinking about them. It is easy to be philosophical and think deep thoughts, but to embody what you have realized is a whole different matter! In essence, spiritual integration is a movement from head to heart and from conceptual to practical. It is self-actualization.

In the program, we guide students in the process of self-discovery to uncover their spiritual story and to listen to their inner voice of wisdom. When the

students begin sharing their stories, they begin to connect on a deeper level with themselves, their spirituality, loved ones and community. Sharing spiritual stories isn't just a recounting of events – it is a spiritual practice!

As students tell their stories, we are bound together in compassionate listening. Learning to listen is to be present in the moment. This is true both in our relationship with the Divine and one another. Listening is a necessary skill and an art in spiritual direction; mastering this skill is an integral part of the program.

Learning to listen deeply and to share our spiritual story benefits our lives too. Story-sharing is a way of opening ourselves up to the truth within, allowing us to be seen fully and completely. It honors the sacred connection that can flow from sharing a piece of ourselves with others. What moves us, calls us to action and connects us is our stories! Telling our stories leads to spiritual integration and opens our heart to live the grace moments within the web of life. We begin to see that all things are bound together in compassionate love and radical acceptance.

The 2024 Graduates of the Benedictine Spiritual Director Training & Certification program are each one thread in the web of life called to the sacred ministry of spiritual direction. May their gifts offer hope and a healing balm to human suffering.

# 2024 Benedictine Spiritual Director Graduates

Nicole Bertolini Martin, OblOSB,  
Companion to students

Nature teaches us, through her seasons and cycles, the path of transformation and growth. In a similar way, the Benedictine Spiritual Director Training & Certification program guides students in the spiritual transformation necessary for becoming skilled spiritual directors.

Throughout our lives we are raised to multitask. To be able to juggle many things at once is often praised. We think with our minds, react with our minds, and seek to find solutions to problems. We may have spent our whole lives thinking and accomplishing. We may have been fed by these accomplishments. Yet, there is more.

The transition to living from one's heart is a holy invitation. Students begin to learn how to quiet their minds and hear God saying again, "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth. Do you not perceive it?" (Is 43:19)

Students are invited to embrace their belovedness before they can listen to another's search for their own. New hearts are developed that can hold the tension between suffering that exists in the world and genuine gratitude for the present moment. Students

begin to see what was held in high regard, such as problem solving and multitasking so often feed the ego. Honoring the sacred space of what emerges in the present moment - that is the treasure.

During the two-year program, we teach Benedictine values. By incorporating Benedictine values such as holy listening and hospitality, students and their unique stories are tenderly held. The classes are structured in such a way that models spiritual direction. Students grow in ways the intellect could never achieve by listening to others' journeys and heart wisdom. They navigate new paths of discovery, authentic selfhood, belovedness, and growth. The students are invited to discover God's will for them as spiritual directors: to hold all who they will encounter in the future as tenderly as they were held in their classes. They will be able to welcome all guests as Christ.

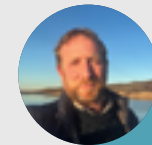
Imagine! When we learn to cultivate and nurture the Divine that dwells within, we naturally are attracted to the Divine which dwells in the other. We begin to see others as gifts, not problems to be solved. Rather, we begin to see others as sacred vessels to be celebrated.



# 2024 Graduates



**Pat Bandy** (New Jersey)



**G.L. (Chip) Bradish** (Massachusetts)

*"The intensive readings have represented many perspectives and challenged me to think of concepts about God and the Mystery more openly, more positively."*



**Marby Brown** (California)

*"I grew in courage and confidence - not that I can do this work on my own, but confidence that God has called me to this work, and through sacred and thorough training, I can be a vessel for others to listen to the invitation of the Divine in their everyday lives."*



**George Bryan** (Australia)

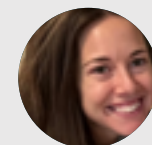


**Liv Cataldo** (Colorado)

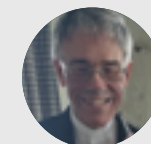
*"I was met with unconditional love, permission, and so much safety through each part of this stretching and revealing journey, ultimately bringing deeper healing than I ever knew I even needed."*



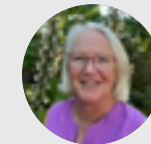
**Stacy Colwell** (Colorado)



**Keri Cook Assante** (Colorado)



**Bernard Charles Driver**  
(New Zealand)

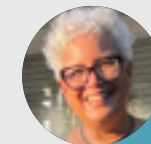


**Lori Finn** (Colorado)



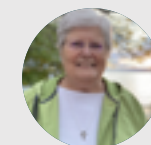
**Lory Hess** (Switzerland)

*"In silence, we open ourselves to the healing impulses concealed by the noise we have created to cover up those things we don't want to hear. And in the light of an accepting heart, even those things start to take their place in the whole."*

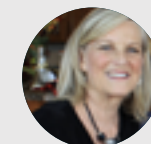


**Susan Hookong-Taylor** (Canada)

*"This program has given me a heart of compassion, opening my eyes to the loving way in which Spirit embraces me and my life story. In turn, I am empowered to extend that loving compassion to my directees and embrace their stories with gentleness, kindness, humility and awe."*

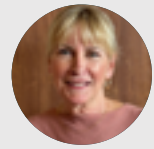


**Sister Jane Hotstream, RSM**  
(Louisiana)

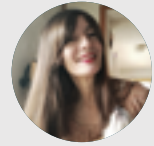


**Mary Kubida** (Colorado)

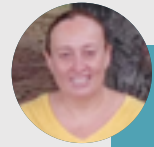
# 2024 Graduates, continued



**Theresa Martella** (Colorado)



**Jennifer Mulson** (Colorado)



**Annie Reyes** (Guatemala)

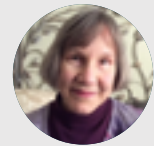
*"This program helped me dive deep into my soul to embrace all of me. I have discovered that becoming a great spiritual director is about a heart encounter with God, others and myself."*



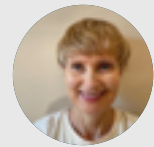
**Theresa Rogers** (Arkansas)



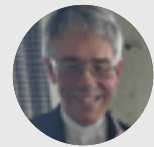
**Denise Shannon** (Colorado)



**Darlene Staffelbach** (Oregon)



**Priscilla Thornton** (South Dakota)



**Toni Williams-Sanchez**  
(Republic of Panama)



**Father Edmond Woon** (Malaysia)

*"We do not have courses on spiritual direction in our part of the world and when I saw this course was offered online, I immediately signed up....Listening to the sharings of others, I am also learning to sense the movements of the Holy Spirit in the lives of others."*



**Liz Zinke** (Texas)



*Learn more about the Benedictine Spiritual Director Training*

# Benet Hill Oblates and Oblate Novices



**Standing (left to right)** Patrick Thomas, Wylie Walker, Linda Land-Closson, Sharon Friedman, Ryan Bell, Beatrice Babbitt, Marilyn Paradis, Nicole Bertolini Martin  
**Seated (left to right)** Sister MT Summers, Prioress, Ellen Haroutunian, Jerry O'Hare, Jesse Brown (Oblate Co-Directors)



**Standing (left to right)** Tyler Hill, Raechal Friess, Cynthia Kramer, Brandon Smith  
**Seated (left to right)** Ann Gardner, Jennifer Kincheloe, Krista Dias, Pam Kestner

**O**n Sunday, July 14th, the sisters warmly welcomed new oblates and oblate novices into the Benet Hill Community. After a lovely, meaningful liturgy of oblation, the oblates, oblate novices, and their families joined the sisters for a delicious meal in the dining room.

Oblates of St. Benedict offer themselves for service to God and others. By integrating prayer and work, they manifest Christ's presence in the world through their own families, friends, and work relationships. The oblates also form a community among themselves and the sisters.

**The Benedictine values that professed Benedictines (like the Sisters of Benet Hill) and Benedictine Oblates follow in their daily life include:**

*Prayer  
Community  
Stability  
Obedience  
Conversatio*

*(the way of formation and transformation)*

*Discipline  
Humility  
Love of Christ and neighbor  
Care of Creation  
Hospitality*

*In following these values, those who follow the Benedictine way seek to live so that in all things God may be glorified.*



*Learn more about Benet Hill oblates*

# Looking Back on a Year of Benedictine Growth: A Reflection on the Oblate Program

Ryan Bell, ObIOSB



Of the billions of texts composed since humans gained use of the written word, very few have been preserved with care. Even fewer have gained notoriety and prestige. The most essential of those have become ensconced in human history as profound, seminal works. The Rule of Benedict is among those eminently important and rare texts. While it serves a noble purpose as a historical tool for understanding early monastic communities, and while it instructs its readers on healthy and whole communal living, its real value is in its status as a wisdom text. Whether one reads a word, a phrase, a chapter, or its entirety, the Rule speaks volumes to those who heed the words of St. Benedict and “listen with the ear of the heart.” Unpacking and gleaning wisdom from such texts takes a lifetime, and one’s study of the Rule is confirmed in their daily interactions with the world.

My study of the Rule of Benedict has been immensely enhanced by such daily interactions, both within the wider world and also within the beloved community that is Benet Hill Monastery. Over the past year, as I have journeyed through becoming an oblate novice, there have been many facets of the experience that have stood out to me as “graced” experiences, some as plain as day and others subtle, thanks in large part to the wisdom of the Rule as displayed by the sisters, the oblates, and my fellow novices. Three themes from the past year have continued to manifest themselves in my daily life and in my relationship with Benet Hill, themes which have their source in the experience of being an oblate novice at the monastery. First, the hospitality shown by the monastery’s caretakers—sisters, employees, and oblates alike—imprinted upon me not just in classes on Benedictine hospitality, but also in

the daily lives of those teaching and surrounding me. Second, I have come to recognize the importance of Benedictine values of community in forming a force for good in the world and supporting positive change and one another. Lastly, becoming an oblate novice has re-awakened my desire to live a life of action grounded in contemplation, an unexpected but welcome gift that continues to impact my life and that of those around me.

Chapter 53 of the Rule of Benedict begins with a famous line in Benedictine communities: “All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ.” I will refrain from plumbing the phrase for a deeper meaning, as that has been done by people far more qualified to speak on the subject than I am. That being said, this is the element in the Rule that I saw resonating most strongly in the lives of the sisters and oblates of Benet Hill Monastery. From the moment one steps into the building, one is treated with respect, interest, and kindness. I would often linger at the reception desk, talking to the porter or one of the talented volunteer receptionists. A long, kind look; an intentional question; an enlightening discussion; and before I knew it, I was late again to my oblate classes because of these interactions. Yet, the leaders of the classes showed abundant hospitality by being patient with me and my delayed arrival. Judgement, punishment, and retaliation—three elements common in my daily life as an often tardy student—were never shown towards me. Because of this welcoming stance within the monastery, I have seen concrete effects outside of Benet Hill in my own life. Reflecting on the hospitality of the sisters and oblates, I have begun to institute hospitable practices towards those I meet, and

especially those I struggle to interact with. A smile, a kind word, a genuine interest in someone’s life, is still difficult for me to show to everyone. However, I have begun to treat those I disagree with, and those I have trouble relating to, the same hospitality that members of the Benet Hill community have shown me. In so doing, I hope that I am incrementally moving towards the Rule’s exhortation to see Christ in those I welcome.

In some ways, the virtue of hospitality that I have gained an appreciation for this past year is the precursor to another important fruit of my time as an oblate novice: understanding the importance of community. Community pervades everything at the monastery, even beyond the communal living of the sisters. The 18th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew reminds us that “where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst.” The oblate formation program rested on understanding the presence of the divine in those gathered, whether in the classroom, in small breakout groups, or while breaking bread in the dining room. The most moving, compelling, and sometimes awe-inspiring interactions between oblates, the novices, and the sisters occurred often when we least expected it. An oblate instructor would share a story of their own struggles with a passage in the Rule, prompting a novice to share their own concerns. A conversation at lunch would reveal shared past experiences between sisters and novices, including those who had never met each other before. I recall my delight at learning that Sister Deb and I shared an admiration for Raymond Hunthausen, a churchman at the forefront of the nuclear arms abolition movement in the 1970s. Similarly, hearing sisters share about their work at former schools, from the Cathedral Parochial School in Pueblo to St. Cajetan’s in Denver, made me realize how much that shared

stories enhanced the sense of community already so pervasive at Benet Hill.

In my own life outside the monastery, I have begun to share from the heart like we do within the monastery. Vulnerability, emotional connection, and true honesty have

become increasingly important in my relationships with friends and family, a change I attribute in large part to my time spent at the beloved community that is Benet Hill.

Lastly, the oblate program at Benet Hill Monastery has borne unexpected fruit. The writings we discussed in class, the long lunch breaks, the extended period of time for personal and communal reflection, and the patient witness of the sisters has led me to re-integrate contemplative practices into my daily life. At the beginning of my time in the oblate program, I was intent on segregating the two halves of my life from one another: what happened in college stayed in Denver, and what happened at the Monastery stayed in Black Forest. I was sure that the peace and warmth I experienced at Benet Hill could never be transferred into my daily life. Instead, I was confident that my becoming an oblate would allow me to access a peaceful place (Benet Hill) where I could practice contemplation and ensure calm from a busy life. However, the classes and experiences that unpacked the Rule every time I came to Benet Hill made me realize that any distinction between my life as a student and my life as an oblate novice was a fallacy. In order to fully become a student of the Rule and of the Benedictine tradition, I was being called to surrender myself to an integration of both halves into a whole that was greater than its parts. That, above all else, is the lesson I have gleaned from my time as an oblate novice. Showing hospitality cannot stop when exiting the monastery. Valuing community cannot end the moment I turn northward onto US 83. I cannot see Christ only in those I encounter at Benet Hill, as Christ-filled as they may be. The next step of the oblate program, beyond staying intimately involved at Benet Hill, is taking the lessons I learned out “onto the streets” by virtue of my daily life. I do not expect a smooth transition or an easy ride. However, the oblate program taught me that progress, no matter how inchoate, is progress, nonetheless. Living in community, in this case the global community, takes work. But, as Theodore Roosevelt said, one must “work hard at work worth doing” in order to have a life of meaning and contribution to the world. In my view, undertaking the oblate program at Benet Hill Monastery has been work, but it has above and beyond been work eminently worth doing.



# Nurturing our connections

Sally Rothstein,  
Director of Operations and Retreats



When we receive inquiries from prospective retreatants, in and among the many tasks of coordinating their stay, there's a special knowing that guests will soon be turning onto Benet Lane and into the re-connection they are gifting themselves. Indeed, the spirit of place that is Benet Hill Monastery – ever-present spirit, sacred forest, embracing community – is a special gift of nurturing re-connection, being and becoming.

Taking intentional time to re-connect helps us remember our wholeness. Living from our whole selves releases us to embrace and illuminate our contributions as a unique strand among infinite unique strands, together creating the unending weaving within All That Is.

Many retreatants this summer have gifted their stories of being and becoming over a meal, after a labyrinth meditation, with a spiritual companion, or along a path among the trees. A wonderfully common experience that emerged is one of listening for and praying into yet-known possibilities. Several participants in a weekend labyrinth retreat remarked how hearing others' stories was integral to their own spiritual growth. We know this, don't we? We hear from the wisdom guides across time who speak to the power and necessity of sharing our stories as healing and connecting. When we share our stories, we strengthen the magnificent web of All That Is.

In mid-July, a particular retreat inquiry arrived that gifted me the delightful experience of a divine surprise. A special young woman named Christina, the daughter of my college friend and one of three siblings I've had the pleasure and honor of knowing their entire lives, was registering for the August retreat to be led by Sister Jan. She wanted to learn more about the Ute people's use of trees for specific spiritual, medicinal and way-finding purposes. I was so warmed by our paths crossing in this way through our retreat ministry and for knowing that she would be sharing her dear spirit with Sister Jan, other participants, and the forest. And then I was blessed with a second wave of delight when I realized her roommate would be the dear daughter, Karalee, of yet another college friend. I have long-time meaningful connections with these young people and they hold very particular places in my heart. In that moment I felt the peace of the web of All That Is evolving through the next generations' nurturing connections. This magnificent web is indeed a living, breathing, expanding tapestry of all creation.

The spirit of place that is Benet Hill Monastery awaits. You're welcome to retreat, wander the paths and labyrinth, breathe and lean into the trees and community. Remember. Re-connect. Delight.



**An important note:** As we continue to evolve as a monastery, we have the opportunity and responsibility to integrate advancements that facilitate our ongoing grounding in Benedictine values. To this end, we're embracing a new partnership with Retreat Guru, a software technology company and system to help us manage our retreat ministry. Over the next few months,

we're transitioning to a more meaningful way of engaging retreatants, booking our lodging as effectively as possible, and collecting and organizing important information to help us make more informed decisions to welcome our guests. Much of this will happen behind the scenes; however, we also want you to anticipate experiencing our evolution as you explore retreating to Benet Hill Monastery!

# Transforming Grace: the Work of Transformative Justice

God of silence and God of all sound, help me to listen.  
Help me to do the deep listening to the sounds of my soul,  
waiting to hear your soft voice calling me deeper into you.  
Give me attentive ears that begin to separate the noise from the sounds that are you;  
you who have been speaking to me and through me my whole life,  
for so long that you can seem like background noise.  
Today help me hear you anew.

-Author Unknown, Xavier University



*Benet Hill Monastery Weekly Prayer Schedule. Pray with the sisters!*



*Ecumenical Prayer Service for Creation Day, September 1, 2024*

As the national election cycle continues to deepen divisions in our country, the sisters continue the slow work of transformative justice with a renewed focus on the transformative work of contemplative prayer. A firm believer in the efficacy of prayer, Sister Therese O'Grady has been known to exclaim to Centering Prayer groups, "Friends, we are saving the world!"

Oblates, retreatants, and guests are always invited to pray with the sisters during their daily schedule of Liturgy of the Hours. Guests are also welcome

to pray with the sisters in person or in spirit on Wednesdays at 4pm as they gather to pray for peace and justice in places experiencing violence and war. The sisters also participate in virtual events hosted by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, the Sisters of St. Francis of Clinton, Iowa Franciscan Peace Center, Season of Creation, and others. Watch for opportunities to participate in future events by signing up for our e-newsletters. We've also provided QR codes so that you may watch recordings of some of the recent gatherings recommended by the Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery.



*Hiroshima-Nagasaki Prayer Service, August 6, 2024*



*Resource sheet for those interested in nuclear disarmament*



*Who Then Shall We Be? A Contemplative Prayer for the World, August 16, 2024*



*Join religious women around the country in contemplative prayer during the National Election*



# Using social media to tell the story of Benet Hill

Ruth Roland,  
Director of Mission Advancement

**M**erriam-Webster defines social media as “forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos).” Did you know that online communities on social media have been around since 1997? Love it or hate it, social media and its impact on how we communicate, connect, and share information is here to stay!

So, what do religious women like the Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery, who live by Benedictine values that are 1,500 years old, do with social media? Obviously, we’re not tossing the Rule of Benedict just to jump on X (formerly Twitter) due to the values mismatch with X allowing adult content. However, we are thoughtfully evaluating each connection opportunity on social media in the context of our vision to be a contemporary Benedictine monastic presence for the world. Like the Rule of Benedict, social media is our reality and we can’t ignore it.

This summer, we hired a wonderfully talented Social Media Communication Specialist, Mauricio Martinez Garcia, to guide us in creating guidelines and clear and visually appealing content, expanding our story online on new platforms, and in maintaining a consistent message across the internet. We are thrilled to have Mauricio as part of the staff team with his skills, insights, energy, and background in TV and journalism.

*Below are ways that you can currently stay connected with the Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery.*

**1** If you’re not receiving our newsletters, sign up today so that we may stay in touch. We only print 2 – 3 publications each year due to budget constraints, but we create several e-newsletters each month with ways to engage in the work of the sisters and oblates.

- > Website: [benethillmonastery.org](http://benethillmonastery.org)
- > Sign up for the e-newsletter on our website at the bottom of any page

**2** Please follow us on the social media platforms that you use, and like and share our posts!



**f** We have a new page! Search for Benet Hill Monastery

We also have a page for Sisters Thrift and Boutique



@benetmonastery and @sistersthiftboutique2



subscribe to our channel @sistersofbenethillmonaster3212



Watch the short video “Take a walk through Sisters’ Thrift and Boutique.”



Learn about Culturally Modified Trees.



Benet Hill Monastery

**3** Stay tuned for new developments!

# Volunteering at Benet Hill

**T**he sisters are grateful for all the wonderful folks who offer their time and skills as volunteers at the monastery and Sisters’ Thrift & Boutique. We appreciate each and every one of you! We’re sharing images of just a few lovely folks on this page as a big thank you!

Sister Clare Carr, Assistant Prioress and Sally Rothstein, Director of Operations and Retreats, have been revising our volunteer handbook and application, and working on a plan to better orient, train and support new and current volunteers. We’ll be sharing more about all this soon; in the meantime, you can find volunteer information on the website through the QR codes below.



*Volunteer Form for Benet Hill Monastery*



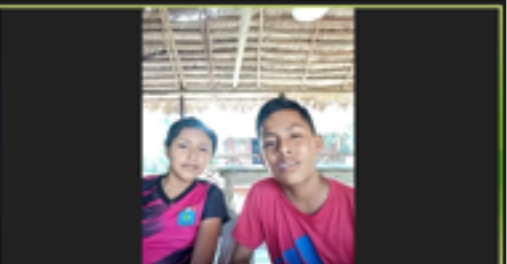
*Volunteer at Sisters’ Thrift & Boutique by calling, emailing, or stopping by the store*





# Community Stories

**B**irthday celebrations, a wild turkey family, double rainbows, picking wild raspberries, the 59th anniversary of the founding of Benet Hill, learning about the Amazon rainforest in Peru and meeting young, hardworking entrepreneurs who live there, and painting with friends in the garden. All of this and more is part of the monastery's story. We hope to see you soon!



# Benet Hill Academy Alumnae Reunion

We pray for those who have lost loved ones

Compiled by Sister Lucile Hartmann, OSB

On the weekend of July 19 – 21, the sisters welcomed back their former students for the annual reunion weekend at Benet Hill Monastery. The retired educators were thrilled to see still familiar faces and to hear stories of families, careers, loves, and even losses. It was truly wonderful to have so many alumnae sitting together at Sunday worship. Thank you to all the alumnae who helped to plan the reunion and attended!

Next up is the Benet Hill Academy Class of 1975 reunion on the weekend of July 18 – 20, 2025. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend.

Do we have your current email and phone number? We want to stay in touch with you! Email Ruth Roland, Director of Mission Advancement, at [rroland@benethillmonastery.org](mailto:rroland@benethillmonastery.org). Thank you!



**Classes of 1971 & 1972**  
*Back row (left to right)* Pam Martinez, Carol Hansen  
*Seated (left to right)* Terry Taucer-Samson, Leigh (Sugar) Terbush



**Class of 1973**  
*Back row (left to right)* Letha Robison, Cynthia Parsons, Grace Hansen  
*Seated (left to right)* Mary Beth Netherton, Janice Smith



**Class of 1974**  
*Back row (left to right)* Claudia Klein, Ann Rosenow, Lisa Fray, Lindy Wiseman, Mary Ellen Burton  
*Middle row (left to right)* Anne McMullen, Terry Graves, Rachel Osborn, Susie Winkelblech, Margaret (Peggy) Carey, Michele Moore  
*Seated row (left to right)* Antoinette Gomez, Chris Delaney, Lori Yeager, Denise O'Donnell, Martha (Marnie) Van Pelt



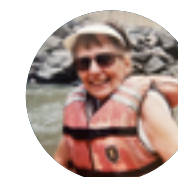
**Sister Mary Colleen Schwarz, OSB and the Schwarz family**  
**Sister-in-law, Joleen Schwarz**  
*"I am deeply grateful for Joleen's loving and dedicated care of my brother Ken. She was a woman of deep faith, prayer, and loved Jesus with all her heart."*



**Sister Mary Jane Vigil, OSB and the Vigil and Sandoval families**  
**Cousin, Renee Sandoval**  
*"She was a court stenographer and light to her family."*



**Anne (Elbert) McMullen, BHA '74 and the Elbert and McMullen families**  
**Mother, Doris Elbert**



**Suzy Mallory, BHA '76 and the Mallory family**  
**Mother, Rosemary Mallory**



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



**Marie (Carew) Meintz, BHA '79 and the Carew family**  
**Brother, John Carew**

**Vickie (Rowe) Heffner, BHA '75 and the Heffner family**  
**Husband, James Heffner**



Explore memorial service and columbarium options at Benet Hill Monastery.



Sisters of  
**Benet Hill  
Monastery**

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# *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*

