

# Tidings

BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF

ANNUNCIATION MONASTERY

SUMMER 2019

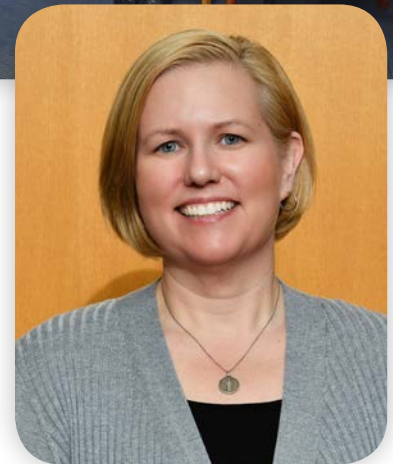
## *"This is Where I Belong"*

*Sister Idelle Badt Makes Perpetual Monastic Profession*



*Photo credit: Deacon Joe Krupinsky*

The sacred promises that have been uttered by Benedictines for centuries will be prayerfully expressed, the bells will ring, and music will flow at the public celebration marking Sister Idelle Badt's perpetual monastic profession on June 22 at 1:30 p.m. in Our Lady of the Annunciation Chapel, Benedictine Center for Servant Leadership. All are welcome to attend. A reception will follow at Annunciation Monastery.



*Sister Idelle Badt*

*Story continues on page 3*



MESSAGE FROM THE

# Prioress

“Monastic life is a decision, a direction in life, that happens long before we enter and continues every day thereafter as long as we live.” Joan Chittister, OSB, from *A Little Rule for Beginners*, p. 116.

During the summer, I listen to many Minnesota Twins baseball games on the radio. When a young man makes his professional debut, it is a reward for a lifetime of perfecting his talents. He probably has been playing baseball most of his life, starting as a youngster through high school, college, and some years in the minor leagues before receiving his big break. If he intends to stay in the big leagues, he will need to continue developing his skills.

I believe there are some similarities between the life of a professional athlete and the life of a Benedictine sister. The journey starts long before one signs a contract or a profession document. Both require a “training” process, where you learn from more experienced people and develop the necessary skills through practice. Learning to hit a fastball or pray the Liturgy of the Hours doesn’t happen overnight. Acquiring and practicing the various skills is a work that continues throughout one’s career (as an athlete) or lifetime (of one’s monastic profession).

On June 22, our monastic community will celebrate with Sister Idelle Badt as she makes her perpetual monastic profession. Certainly, it is a big day for her and for our community. Sister Idelle will publicly profess her promises of obedience, stability, and fidelity to the monastic way of life for a lifetime. But, it is one day on a journey that started many years ago and will continue on each day for the rest of her life. Sister Idelle has done much to prepare for this day and knows that there is much more to come as she lives the Benedictine way of life as a Sister of Annunciation Monastery. We invite you to join us for the celebration.

In this issue of *Tidings*, Sister Gerard Wald shares about her service to the community through healthcare, and Marena Hoogland, novice, shares on her experience in the Benedictine Volunteers program and how it led to her decision to discern monastic life with our community. In the various photos and updates, you can see how our daily decision to live the Benedictine way of life impacts our local community.

Your continued support will help us carry our cherished values of prayer, community and service into a vibrant future.

*Sister Nicole Kunge*

Originally from Savage, MT, Sister Idelle is the daughter of Clydette Boyer (Williston, ND) and Robert Badt (Tonto Basin, AZ).

With a heart for helping others, especially the elderly, Sister Idelle served as a grant administrator at the Trenton Indian Service Area, near Williston, ND. She also worked as director of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) for Richland County Health Department. While she found these positions challenging and fulfilling, Sister Idelle still felt a void that only God could fill and she started exploring God's call in her life with greater intention.



Her exploration led her to Annunciation Monastery, where she immediately felt at home. The unfulfilled void was now filled with the richness of Benedictine spirituality and monastic life with the sisters. This started her journey to become a Benedictine Sister of Annunciation Monastery. Sister Idelle made her first monastic profession on August 16, 2015.

With a degree in voice from Dickinson State University, and a degree in social work from the University of Mary, Sister Idelle wondered how she could best use her gifts. While on retreat, she envisioned herself at the bedside of the sick. Having blessed some of the elder sisters at the monastery by sitting with them, singing to them and helping them go to God, Sister Idelle felt a level of comfort with the process of dying and death.

It wasn't long after that realization when an opportunity arose to serve as pastoral care associate at the Church of Corpus Christi, which allows her to combine her gifts of caring for others, her love of Scripture and music, and her degree in social work.

"Often when someone dies, family members don't know where to start. I try to meet with people who are sick, and their families, so they know what to expect and pre-plan. It is important to get to know the person and their family so I can offer the support and encouragement they want or need. The last best gift you can give someone is a good death." She says the favorite part of her ministry is going to daily Mass and getting to know the people in the pews. Sister Idelle makes hospital visits and delivers communion to homes.

At Annunciation Monastery, Sister Idelle loves to spend time with the elders in community, hear their stories, and help with their needs. She also enjoys time outdoors in the monastery garden.

As she reflects on the journey from her first visit to the monastery, to perpetual monastic profession, Sister Idelle says with confidence, "I have no regrets, whatsoever, about my decision to become a Benedictine Sister of Annunciation Monastery. I just can't imagine my life anywhere else or doing anything else. This is where I belong, with my monastic community—and I am so grateful!"



# Gratitude and Service, a Way of Life

Sister Gerard Wald credits her positive attitude and faith largely to her upbringing on a farm near Napoleon, ND. “Coming from a big family, you learn all kinds of life skills. There were eleven of us. My parents were poor and we struggled to make ends meet. In those days, I think everyone struggled. We were church-going and never missed Mass. Faith was simple but deep and we knew right from wrong and how to be faithful to God.”

That faith foundation laid the groundwork for Sister Gerard’s life as a Benedictine Sister and as a nurse. A spark was ignited in sixth grade, when she was introduced to science at her small country school. “I loved science and anything to do with medicine. I was, and still am, curious about health and how to take care of others.”

As a teenager, she learned firsthand what it is like to be a caregiver. When her mother became very ill with pancreatic cancer, Sister Gerard took care of her. This challenging and emotional experience is what she now calls a gift from God. “I’m very comfortable being around those who are dying. I think it’s my gift. My positive attitude gets me through a lot in life. My medical background gives me the understanding, and my faith gives me the grace to deal with the process of suffering and dying.”

That’s not to say Sister Gerard hasn’t experienced challenging losses in her own life. Her mother passed away the spring before Sister Gerard came to the monastery. She has lost many family members in the short span of a few years. She says, “I’ve been blessed with good health so maybe that is why I’m here—to help others. Our family is very close, so we support each other through the hard times as well as the good times.”



*Sister Gerard takes Sister JoAnn’s blood pressure.*



Sister Gerard says her calm demeanor comes naturally. Her secret? Gratitude. “The key is to count your blessings, whatever those blessings are in your life. Living gratefully and believing that God is with us through every circumstance, gives us the strength to remember God is good!”

When asked if she ever worries, Sister Gerard admits, “I worry sometimes – about our monastic community and how we will carry the Benedictine charism into the future.

*Sister Gerard gives Sister Joseph her annual flu shot.*

I worry a lot about our country and where it's heading because it affects the world. I feel helpless, especially at this point in our history. I pray for the leadership of our country and of the world. My hope is that Jesus, our servant leader, could become the model for leaders. Serving with a heart of justice, compassion and love would enrich people with a sense of gratitude and joy."

Life balance is another important piece of staying positive, says Sister Gerard. She enjoys time in private prayer, reading, and playing games. Without fail, Sister Gerard exercises daily, a routine she has maintained since she graduated from graduate school in 1980. When the weather hit a frigid -31 degrees, she went to the University of Mary fitness center to exercise in the dark early morning hours. She believes it is particularly important to practice self-care when caring for others. "Take time to deepen your faith and read the Scriptures, get enough sleep and eat a moderate and healthy diet. Just like it takes commitment to exercise, you absolutely have to nourish your faith!"

Sister Gerard enjoys her dual role as a sister/member of the monastic community and nurse. "It is sometimes necessary to treat the infirm sisters as patients, as well as my community members. As people age, their needs increase and I treat them as individuals and with respect. My goal is to keep our sisters as independent as possible. My philosophy in nursing is to foster independence." Sister Gerard believes that each day is an opportunity to remain close to God. She frequently reflects on the Scriptures that sustain her:

*"In you, Lord my God, I put my trust."* Psalm 25 (NIV)

*"I am with you always."* Matthew 28:20 (NIV)

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## *Congratulations to New Graduate Sister Agnes Nguyen*

Sister Agnes Nguyen, a member of the Sisters Adorers of the Holy Cross, Portland, OR, graduated from the University of Mary on April 27, 2019.

Sister Agnes lived at Annunciation Monastery during her schooling and is grateful for the help of Sister Claire Schmitt, who tutored Sister Agnes and helped her with the language barrier. Sister Agnes is originally from Vietnam.

Sister Agnes' mother traveled from Columbus, OH, to attend her graduation ceremony.



*New graduate, Sister Agnes Nguyen, and her mother stand beside Sister Claire Schmitt, who tutored Sister Agnes.*

# BENEDICTINE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

## Serve the World. Discern Your Call.



By Marena Hoogland, novice at Annunciation Monastery

Prior to joining Benedictine Volunteers, I had limited contact with religious sisters. In my youth, our religious education class visited a convent each year, and as a college student, a few Franciscan sisters would occasionally attend Mass. Benedictine Volunteers provides women like myself the chance to meet and work with Benedictine Sisters and the unique opportunity to become completely immersed in the monastic rhythm of life of the sisters, including daily Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, meals, and community recreation.

Coming from north central Wisconsin, it is amazing how everything fell into place that I would end up at a monastery in North Dakota. I attended college in Green Bay, WI, close to De Pere, WI, where St. Norbert's Abbey is located. The Norbertines founded the Norbertine Volunteer Community in 2008. Their volunteers would come to our campus each year to share their experiences. Discussions with the Norbertine volunteers directed me to the Catholic Volunteer Network, where I was able to search the hundreds of volunteer programs that exist.

While browsing, I stumbled upon Benedictine Volunteers. Many things appealed to me concerning the program: the small size, the variety of volunteer opportunities, participating in the monastic rhythm of life. The largest draw for me was the focus on discernment and spiritual direction, an element I found unique to the Benedictine Volunteers. After corresponding with the program director for nearly over a year, I sent in my application. Finally, in March of 2017, I began my six-month placement with the Benedictine Volunteers program.

Living with the Sisters of Annunciation Monastery was like nothing I'd ever experienced. The rhythm of each day includes Liturgy of the Hours, Mass, meals, community time, and service placements, and allows time for prayer and reflection. In everything the sisters say and do, they live by example and demonstrate the motto of the Order of Saint Benedict: ora et labora, pray and work.

As my time as a Benedictine Volunteer was coming to close, I found it more and more difficult to think about leaving this place, this lifestyle, and these sisters. After much prayer, discernment, and support from site co-coordinators, Sisters Hannah Vanorny and JoAnn Krebsbach, I applied to become an affiliate of Annunciation Monastery in September 2017. Since that time, I have completed the postulancy, and entered the novitiate, the second formal step of formation.

My experience with the Benedictine Volunteers program was so positive that I now help coordinate the program.



Since its inception in 2014, nine women have passed through the doors of Benedictine Volunteers. Many have gone on to continue their education, while others have returned to the workforce. A beautiful aspect of the program is the way it is tailored to each individual. Volunteers participate in a Discernment Program that is interwoven into their time of service including *lectio divina*, weekly discernment meetings, spiritual direction, and other spiritual enrichment opportunities. At the end of their time of service, volunteers have a clearer sense of God's call in their lives and the social, organizational, and spiritual tools to go forth in living their life's purpose.

Benedictine Volunteers continues to grow and evolve in order to provide the best possible support for our volunteers and those they serve. This collaborative program offers volunteer experiences at our monastic community in North Dakota and in Boerne, Texas. Volunteer opportunities range from teacher's aide to orphanage assistance, from liturgical ministries to poverty alleviation, and everything in between. Service commitments last from two weeks to two years, depending on what works for each woman.

We are excited to continue this program and see where the Lord takes it. For more information about the Benedictine Volunteers family, visit [benedictinevolunteers.com](http://benedictinevolunteers.com) or call program director, Sister JoAnn Krebsbach at 701.255.1520.

## Always a Bookworm!

By Sister Hannah Vanorny

When I was ten, I entered a reading contest at our small-town library. The idea was to read thirty books during the summer, write all of the titles down, bring the list into the library, and receive a prize. I read thirty books in a week and a half and excitedly brought my list of titles to the librarian.

I still remember my disappointment when the astonished librarian confessed that she did not have any prizes yet – she had assumed it would take most kids much of the summer to read thirty books.

I have always loved to read, so when I saw a job opening at the Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library this past summer, I decided to apply. I got the job and now I get to work four days a week at a place filled with books! Not just regular print books like I grew up with though...the library offers audio books, movies, digital books, board games, art prints, video games, and fishing poles to check out. It offers computers for patrons to use, study rooms for them to work in, fun programs for children and adults, and a friendly atmosphere for everyone. I am a Reference Associate, meaning I work at the central Information Desk, answer all kinds of questions, find books and authors, and assist people with their faxing, copying, and printing needs. The Bismarck library is a very busy and exciting place and I am never bored at my job! And, best of all, I get to work at a place where I am surrounded by books.





*Our sisters and novices gathered with speaker, Judith Valente (front row, center), at our tenth annual Sponsorship Formation Event. Valente shared her inspirational message, "Stirring the Ashes: Reclaiming a Sense of Balance, Hope & Sacredness in Our Work."*

## Tenth Annual Sponsorship Event

We Sisters of Annunciation Monastery are committed to striving with others to further Jesus' mission of healing and teaching in our sponsored institutions. One of the ways we do this is through our annual Sponsorship Formation Event which was held on May 9, 2019.

Those in attendance are board members, administration and staff, who serve at the sponsored ministries of the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery: University of Mary, CHI St. Alexius Health Bismarck/Garrison, and other affiliated hospitals and clinics, as well as the leadership team of Ministry on the Margins. Through conversation and sharing from the unique perspectives of healthcare, education and social justice, attendees come together to advance the mission of the sisters.





# Welcome Members of the Sponsorship Council

**A**nunciation Monastery's corporate ministry of sponsorship is exercised through the Sponsorship Council. The role of the council is to ensure that the Benedictine values and legacy are integrated into the mission and culture of our sponsored institutions: CHI St. Alexius Health, in Bismarck and Garrison, and the University of Mary.

The council held its first meeting on January 29. We pray for our Sponsorship Council, the employees and associates of our sponsored institutions, and those served at these institutions.



*Our sisters welcome first lay members, Keith Horner of CHI St. Alexius Health, and Jeannine Saabye, University of Mary to the Sponsorship Council. Pictured (L to R): Keith Horner, Sister Nancy Miller, Sister Nicole Kunze, Sister Agatha Muggli, Jeannine Saabye, Sister Rosemary DeGracia, and Sister Thomas Welder*

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## CHI St. Alexius Health Pastoral Visitation

Most Reverend David D. Kagan, Bishop of Bismarck, made his annual pastoral visitation to CHI St. Alexius Health on May 16, 2019. It was a gift to attend Mass and hear how the healing mission of Jesus is carried out at CHI St. Alexius Health every day.



*Bishop David D. Kagan celebrated Mass during his annual pastoral visitation.*

*Photo: Deacon Joe Krupinsky*



*Andy Santos, Vice President of Mission Integration, and Kurt Schley, President and CEO of CHI St. Alexius Health, and Sister Nicole Kunze, Prioress, offered remarks at the luncheon following Eucharistic Liturgy.*



## *Dandelion*

By Sister Gemma Peters

A simple wildflower  
renegade for beauty,  
paying no heed  
to the proper place  
or acceptable way  
to spread your glory.

At first golden,  
then white fluff  
blowing in the wind  
spreading seeds.  
They root and grow  
in any crack  
or roadside.

Ah, like a vice  
begun looking “good”  
then spreads out  
of control and  
hard to up-root.

Alert me, my God,  
to what may  
seem  
appealing at first  
and later cause  
for regret.

Oh, dandelion,  
thanks for wisdom  
learned today.





# The “Story of the Sisters” Geocache Project



*Monastery archivist, Sister Denise Ressler, and University of Mary graduate, Christopher Jorritsma, worked together on his Geocache Project.*

By Christopher Jorritsma

During the fall 2018 semester, I took a course called “Introduction to Public History”, which explored how history is presented to the general public. For our final project, we had to present some aspect of the history of the University of Mary in a way that would make it accessible to the public. After thinking about what to do for the project, I came up with the idea to place five geocaches at locations significant to the history of the Benedictine Sisters in and around Bismarck. Geocaching is a global scavenger hunt that is played around the world. Players hide containers or “geocaches” in various locations and post the GPS coordinates online. Other players or “geocachers” use their smartphone or

a GPS receiver to navigate to the coordinates and search for the geocache. Once they find it, they log their find in the physical log book inside the container and online.

After researching the history of the monastery with the help of Sister Denise Ressler, monastery archivist, I created five geocaches in my “Story of the Sisters” geocache series:

- Geocache number one is placed in Arrowhead Plaza near St. Mary’s High School and covers the sisters’ arrival and how they founded St. Mary’s School.
- Geocache number two is placed near CHI St. Alexius Health and covers the sisters’ founding of St. Alexius Hospital.
- Geocache number three is placed near the C.B. Little home and covers how the sisters became an independent monastic community.
- Geocache number four is placed on the University of Mary campus and covers the planning of construction of the original Annunciation Priory.
- Geocache number five is placed in the rock labyrinth outside of Annunciation Monastery and covers the construction of the new monastery and the sisters’ move from the original priory.



## University of Mary Professor Passes Along Benedictine Values and Recipe

University of Mary professor Rich Cleary is known for his delicious chocolate chip cookies. Before the semester ended, there was one more important lesson to teach. Cleary brought his students over to visit with the sisters, make and eat cookies!



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*Congratulations*  
to all of the Hidden  
Hometown Heroes who  
were recognized for their  
work in The Bismarck  
Magazine. Thanks to  
sponsors Scheels and  
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Sister Kathleen  
Atkinson, founder  
of Ministry on  
the Margins, was  
nominated as one  
of the top six Hidden  
Hometown Heroes for  
her dedicated service to  
those in need at Ministry  
on the Margins.

## UPDATE *from Ministry on the Margins*

This year, we are happy to report \$22,000 was raised for Ministry on the Margins on Giving Hearts Day, February 14, 2019. Your gifts will go toward the numerous services offered through Ministry on the Margins, including prison ministry, hospitality, meals, fellowship, clothing and a food pantry which serves over 800 people each week!

Thank you to the generous volunteers and donors who make it possible to serve those who are living on the margins.

