



SPRING 2025

Tidings

BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF

ANNUNCIATION MONASTERY



We joyfully invite you to join us for the celebration
of the perpetual monastic profession of

Sister Marena Hoogland

Friday, July 11, 2025

1:30 p.m.

Eucharistic Liturgy

Our Lady of the Annunciation Chapel

Benedictine Center for Servant Leadership

University of Mary

Reception to follow at Annunciation Monastery

All are welcome!





MESSAGE FROM THE Prioress

In September, I had the wonderful opportunity to participate in two international Benedictine meetings in Italy. I spent a week in Assisi attending the *Communio Internationalis Benedictarum* Conference. This group, known as the CIB, brings Benedictine Sisters together from around the world to acknowledge our shared tradition in the Rule of Benedict and celebrate our rich diversity.

Thirty-five sisters gathered from Sweden, Poland, South Korea, Australia, Brazil, India, Germany, Belgium, Argentina and several other countries. This was my second conference, so there were many familiar faces. Events like this make me regret that I do not speak any languages besides English. We have translators and many Sisters do speak some English.

My favorite times during the week were the meals. This wasn't just because the pasta was magnificent! While sharing a meal, it provided us with opportunities to share about our communities, our ministries, and our challenges. We had leaders of large congregations, though most of us were abbesses or prioresses of communities with less than 40 sisters. Our fidelity to the Rule of Benedict and the people of our regions was evident as we shared our stories with each other.

The next two weeks I stayed in Rome and attended the Congress of Abbots meeting at the Collegio Sant' Anselmo on the Aventine Hill.



Statue of St. Benedict in Subiaco



Monastery in Subiaco

This abbey is the headquarters of the Benedictine Confederation and where the Abbot Primate, the head of the Benedictine Order, resides. A gathering of 225 abbots, congregation presidents, and priors assembled to hear reflections, reports, and elect a new Abbot Primate.

The highlight was visiting Subiaco, the town where a young Benedict made his home after leaving the busy city of Rome. Benedict lived as a hermit in a cave, depending on a local monk for food and contact with the world. Eventually, Benedict's holy life attracted disciples, and he left the cave to establish monasteries that became the foundation of the Benedictine Order. I valued having time in the *Sacro Speco*, Benedict's holy cave, to pray for our community and give thanks for the Benedictine women whose shoulders I stand on.

I reflected on my time in Subiaco as we recently celebrated the 140th anniversary of St. Alexius Medical Center. To trace our Benedictine story from Italy, to Germany, then to the United States through Pennsylvania and Minnesota, makes me realize that God has blessed us tremendously over all these years. Every Benedictine community around the world continues to seek God while collaborating with others to serve the needs of the people of this region. I invite you to celebrate Sister Marena Hoogland's perpetual monastic profession with our community on July 11.

Sister Nicole Kunze

Sister Nicole Kunze, O.S.B. Receives Honorary Degree from Saint Vincent College

Congratulations to our prioress, Sister Nicole Kunze, on being conferred an honorary doctoral degree from Saint Vincent College at the College's Founders' Day Honors Convocation. Sister Nicole also delivered the reflection for the event.

Sister Nicole Kunze, O.S.B., PhD, delivered the annual Saint Vincent College Founders' Day reflection on Nov. 21 at the Saint Vincent Archabbey Basilica, Latrobe, PA. The theme of her address was the Benedictine core value of hospitality.

"We need to offer hospitality and receive hospitality with an open heart," Sister Nicole said. "We need to open our hearts to gently love those we meet and allow them to love us. ... We need to offer hospitality with open hands. We need to be willing to do what needs to be done to serve the guest."

Sister Nicole became a member of Annunciation Monastery in 1996. She was elected as the ninth prioress of Annunciation Monastery in May 2016 and was re-elected to a six-year term in March 2020.

Sister Nicole grew up near Valley City, N.D., and became acquainted with the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery while she was a student at the University of Mary. She received a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Mary and a doctorate in chemical education from the University of Northern Colorado. At her graduation, she received a citation for outstanding dissertation.

Prior to attending graduate school, Sister Nicole taught chemistry and biology for five years at St. Mary's Central High School in Bismarck. She was an associate professor of chemistry for 10 years at the University of Mary and in 2011 received the University of Mary Regents' Award for Teaching Faculty.

"Sister Nicole won that award in part because she has focused on helping students achieve their goals," Father Paul said. "Her approach is based in the rule of Saint Benedict, which emphasizes, in her words, 'the value of respect for persons and letting all be received as Christ. In any classroom, that means meeting students where they're at and helping them get where they're going.'"

Press release (in part) courtesy: Saint Vincent College Marketing and Communications

Congratulations!



Father Paul Taylor, O.S.B., C'87, S'91, (left) president of Saint Vincent College, conferred honorary degrees to Sister Nicole Kunze, O.S.B., PhD (center) and William G. Laird, C'69 (right) during the College's Founders' Day Honors Convocation.

Stepping Stone Ministries Offers Medical Respite Care for the Homeless

In the tradition of the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery, a new ministry will help address the needs of the day—care of the sick and shelter for the homeless.

Sister Idelle Badt follows in the footsteps of the visionary sisters who came before her. With a passion for helping others, she completed an internship for her Master of Social Work degree at Ministry on the Margins, a ministry started by Sister Kathleen Atkinson that offers a multitude of services including an overnight coffee house, food pantry, opportunities for fellowship, and connecting people to mentors who can assist them in moving forward in positive ways. While at her internship, Sister Idelle witnessed individuals who came to the ministry with health conditions like untreated diabetes, heart failure, broken bones, and frostbite. “They would ultimately end up in the emergency room only to be treated and discharged back out into the cold because they had no home to return to for recovery,” explained Sister Idelle. The harsh reality of the homeless being discharged back to the streets haunted her. She wondered how someone with diabetes could manage without refrigeration to store their insulin, or how an individual would tolerate chemotherapy treatments while sleeping on the streets.

Sister Idelle, Sister Kathleen, and other concerned individuals in the community felt it was critical to serve others as Christ by helping those in need while decreasing the financial burden on hospitals and freeing up hospital resources. Thus was born the dream to start a medical respite facility to house, treat, and mentor homeless individuals who are recovering from surgery or other health issues. The result of this dream is Stepping Stone Ministries.

Stepping Stone Ministries was well on its way to opening in the sisters’ former convent last fall. It was off to a rocky start to say the least. The building suffered frozen pipes and water damage in the spring of 2024 and a fire last fall which rendered the building uninhabitable.

This devastating turn of events made Sister Idelle wonder if she should give up this dream. Before a week had even passed, an outpouring of support from the community gave the ministry another chance. A new location was found at the former Railway Credit Union building at 112 S. 24th St., in Bismarck.



Martha Reichert, Sister Idelle Badt, and Craig Schaff are working with contractors and on business plans to ensure that everything is ready for the ministry to open this summer.

Sister Idelle and Martha Reichert, licensed clinical social worker and program director for Stepping Stone Ministries, put their faith in God first and started over in the new location with the help of Craig Schaff who volunteers his expertise in business and accounting.

Reichert, a long-time employee in Catholic healthcare, felt God was calling her to do something that would have a deep social impact. She says, “In the end, what really matters is how we care for each other. The streets are not a place for healing.” After his retirement as chief financial officer at Mid Dakota Clinic for over 25 years, Schaff wanted to be of service to others. He shared that his experience with the indigent population in the health industry was troubling and he saw needs not being met. When Schaff learned about the plans for Stepping Stone Ministries, he knew he had something of value to offer. A conversation with Reichert led him to volunteer to help with the business aspects of the ministry. It was a perfect fit. This devoted team is working with contractors to ensure the renovations to the building are sufficient to house eight individuals, with restroom and laundry facilities, a kitchen and living space, office space, and a garage.

Sister Idelle addresses some questions from the civic community:

»» Will Stepping Stone Ministries attract homeless individuals to Bismarck?

No. We are not a homeless shelter. Individuals with acute medical conditions have to qualify and be directly discharged to us through a discharge planning process. We have the capacity to house eight clients at a time. Our strict admission criteria was developed with our partners so we can offer care safely to our clients.

»» What benefit does this ministry offer the community?

Our hope is to reduce the cycle of homeless individuals returning to the hospital emergency rooms as their primary place to receive medical care. This should offer a financial benefit for hospitals as these patients will not occupy hospital beds and will free up hospital staff and resources. A typical hospital stay can cost a hospital \$2,000 to \$2,500 per day. Often people are discharged home where they continue to receive home health care services or physical/occupational therapy in their homes. Since our clients do not have a home to return to for recovery, we will offer these services by giving University of Mary School of Health Sciences students a hands-on opportunity to gain real life experience as they serve our clients. University of Mary social work students are very involved. Even the computer science students will have a place in this ministry.

»» Is there a security concern having Stepping Stone Ministries in the area?

If anything, this ministry will add security. We will transport clients to and from appointments and offer a secure environment for them to recover. A security fence will surround the ministry, and the building is reinforced with locks and surveillance cameras inside and outside the building. In fact, nobody will even see our clients because of the privacy and security it offers. We will not allow entry to anyone who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Our clients cannot come and go without one of our staff accompanying them.

»» What is the average length of stay for a client in a medical respite facility?

An average length of stay is 45 days. We may have some clients who are with us for only a few days, depending on their needs. There may be others who stay longer, for instance, if they are receiving chemotherapy treatments over a longer period of time. Once a client is ready to be discharged from



Sisters and invited guests attended a blessing/prayer service on January 31 at the new Stepping Stone Ministries location at 112 S. 24th St., Bismarck.

Stepping Stone Ministries, we will have worked with them to develop a plan of where they would like to go. We will have resources available if the client needs help with permanent housing, help with recovery, and assistance with daily living such as how to apply for jobs, pay bills, budget, cook and clean. We want to help set them up for success and will have a plan in place to follow up with these individuals.

»» How is Stepping Stone Ministries funded?

It is funded through private donations and grants. We hope to have four to seven paid staff and volunteers to offer support and help with programming. A part-time nurse from Public Health will provide care to the clients. We have a board of directors and an advisory board to provide oversight and expertise.

»» What is the mission of Stepping Stone Ministries?

We believe in the dignity of all persons. This ministry fits into the mission of Jesus by serving the most vulnerable among us. We are called to care for the sick. We know this is holy work. In chapter 36, verses 1-4 in the Rule of St. Benedict, it says, "Care of the sick must rank above and before all else, so that they may truly be served as Christ, for he said: *I was sick and you visited me.*" (Matt: 25:36)

We are grateful for the encouragement and prayerful support of the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery who have served the needs of the people in this region and beyond for over 147 years. We also pray in gratitude for the community leaders, students, and volunteers who have devoted their time, talent, and resources to make this dream a reality.

*The target for the opening of Stepping Stone Ministries is August 10. For more information, contact Sister Idelle Badt at 701-255-1520 or: www.steppingstoneministries.com

Live-In Students Share in the Life of the Sisters

Ariel Arriaga, Rachel Mazourek, Amelia Gold, and Mary Brett, lived with the sisters while attending the University of Mary.



Meet Ariel Celesté Arriaga of Hutto, TX

- Major in Mechanical Engineering
- Minor in Physics

How did you hear about the monastery student live-in program? One morning, I was hanging out with Sister Denise after mass when she asked me if I was all signed up for the next semester. This was in Spring 2024. At the time I had no solid ground in sight for a future semester. For all I knew, I was about to pack up and go home because I couldn't afford to continue my studies. I shared this with her, and she lit up, telling me about the opportunity to live here. At that very moment Sister Idelle happened to come upstairs and joined us, and I learned that she had considered inviting me to live with them when we first met, but didn't want to freak me out. This made me laugh, and I had a perpetual smile on my face as we set up the next steps.

What surprised you about living with the sisters? I feel most folks, including myself, imagine monastic life as rigid and bounding. In my time here, I learned it is far more freeing than one could possibly expect. Also, the sisters are very fast. They are faster than me.

What do you like best about living at the monastery with the sisters? I really love how welcome I am, as I am. I have not felt so secure since I was a small child. It is truly a safe haven, a sanctuary, I am surrounded by such loving people.

How have the sisters supported and encouraged you as a student? Oh, how have they not? The opportunity to live here is one that met a critical need in my life. If not for the sisters, I would be back home working day in and day out in Texas, saving up to try again. In being offered a home, I was offered my senior year. The timing was perfect. It was overjoying, and I have always a sisterhood to be met with. It was slightly daunting in the beginning, as I was used to figuring out how to get by on my own, and generally I prefer to be more secretive anyway. Suddenly I wasn't alone anymore, and people would notice shifts and subtleties in my demeanor, often checking in, offering their time and

encouragement, or a blessing in passing. I was often shocked when people noticed, but during times of being overwhelmed, it was like an aloe that soothes a burn. Good listeners *are* like healers. Being held in the hearts of others, and holding them in your own, really allows for all to bloom.

Do you feel your faith has grown since living here? If so, in what ways? It is difficult for me to tell whether my faith has grown. It is true that I have learned much and grown, however, I feel the more accurate description is that my faith has become unmasked. I see deeper into my own heart, and briefly sometimes into others. This has mostly been saddening, in a pure way. I can only marvel.



Meet Rachel Mazourek of Rice Lake, WI

- Major in Nursing

How did you hear about the monastery student live-in program? I'm friends with one of the students who lived here before me. My friend, Rachel Lang, and I came to a game night to spend time with the sisters. That night I said, "I would love to live here," and Sister Idelle said, "You can!"

What surprised you about living with the sisters? How fun-spirited they are, they're not afraid to joke with each other and us students. The sisters welcome strangers as friends. I felt that even before I moved in. They are a beautiful example of hospitality.

What do you like best about living at the monastery with the sisters? How it feels like home.

How have the sisters supported and encouraged you as a student? As a nursing student, I have the sisters who were nurses to lean on and all the sisters, not just the ones who were nurses, to encourage me in my studies and future career.

Do you feel your faith has grown since living here? If so, in what ways? Prayer is such an important part of these women's lives, and I feel honored to have a place not just in their chapel but also at their table and in their lives.



Meet Amelia Gold of Woodbury, MN

- Double Major in Communication and Catholic Studies

How did you hear about the monastery student live-in program? I first heard about it through Sister Idelle. She told me about the students living here when they first started the program. I told her I might be interested in my senior year. But when the opportunity to move in a semester early came up, it seemed like the perfect timing.

What surprised you about living with the sisters? I was most surprised by how much fun the sisters had. Even just having dinner with them on a Wednesday night is a blast. We have gone to the St. Mary's Carnival with Sister Marena, enjoyed delicious new meals with Sister Idelle, and enjoyed nights playing games or watching movies with the sisters.

What do you like best about living at the monastery with the sisters? I like how peaceful it is here. I have found a great amount of peace and comfort in the routine and quietness. I love being able to have community at my fingertips; there is always someone around for when I am feeling social, but I also love being able to go to my room and rest or enjoy the sunset from our student community room.

How have the sisters supported and encouraged you as a student? The sisters are the most supportive people ever! Every morning at breakfast they ask me about my classes and are interested in knowing what I am learning. They ask about my projects or how my presentations went. Often it is their encouragement and reminders that get me to do my work.

Do you feel your faith has grown since living here? If so, in what ways? My faith has definitely grown since coming here. Having a room to myself with an amazing rocking chair has created a great spot for me to pray before bed. Joining the sisters for prayer in the chapel has shown me a great discipline in prayer I have never had before, especially 6:45 am morning prayer.



Meet Mary Brett of Rapid City, SD

- Major in Nursing

How did you hear about the monastery student live-in program? I was talking to Sister Idelle and she mentioned it, asking if I would like to live there!

What surprised you about living with the sisters? How much fun everyone has. I was surprised to see how many inside jokes there were. It is like living with a giant family who all seek God and I love it!

What do you like best about living at the monastery with the sisters? I love the community that I experience here. Everyone is so supportive of everyone else, and so willing to help. I also love that everything is centered around prayer. I am unable to make prayers every day, but it is truly special when I can.

How have the sisters supported and encouraged you as a student? The sisters have constantly supported me; they are always asking about my classes and what I learned that day. I love to talk about what I learn, and they are always willing to listen. When I have an exam coming up, they always pray for me. It is truly special knowing that the sisters are supporting me.

Do you feel your faith has grown since living here? If so, in what ways? My faith has grown since living here. There is no way that it couldn't, being surrounded by the sisters. I think I have grown to know God more as a loving Father who is always there for me. Saying prayers with the sisters in chapel has been a beautiful experience that I treasure.

Fourteenth Annual Sponsorship Formation Event Carries Mission Forward



Sister Teresa Maya



Sister Nicole Kunze



On May 8, our sisters hosted the Fourteenth Annual Sponsorship Formation event which brings leaders from our sponsored ministries—CHI St. Alexius Health, University of Mary, Ministry on the Margins—with Stepping Stone Ministries, for a day of learning and sharing. Event speaker, Sister Teresa Maya, CCVI, led this inspirational day. Her powerful message of hope and unity through synodal listening and responding was made even more meaningful as we joined the world in watching the announcement of our new Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV. It was a day that will live in our memories forever.



All were waiting and watching for the announcement of the new Pope.



SISTER HILDEGARDE URLACHER:

Decades of Sharing Time and Talent

As Sister Hildegarde celebrated her 90th birthday on April 17, she recalled the journey leading her to become a Benedictine Sister of Annunciation Monastery. She grew up on a farmstead in Hettinger County and attended St. Helens Church. At the age of 14, she felt drawn to an article on religious life in the Dakota Catholic Action, a publication of the Diocese of Bismarck. She wrote a letter to Mother Decora Kaliher of Annunciation Priory and expressed her desire to learn more. She was surprised to receive a prompt response from Mother Decora. She tucked the letter away, but the idea of becoming a sister never left her mind. Hildegarde observed the sisters who came to teach vacation Bible school. She said, “I was impressed by their joy and sense of humor. In 1953 I joined the religious community.”

Sister Hildegarde is primarily a self-taught artist. She did take a pottery class and felt at peace at the potter’s wheel. She made countless wood plaques for the monastery gift shop. When Lloyd Everson, president of the Northern National Life Insurance Company, commissioned Sister Hildegarde to make a large plaque displaying its corporate philosophy, she painstakingly cut letters in calligraphy from wood with a jigsaw and glued them to the plaque. She even remembers there were 80 “o’s” on the plaque. Each “o” required her to remove the blade from the jigsaw and re-insert the blade into the machine.

Using a process called “Dip and Drape,” Sister Hildegarde created figures of several of the sisters which captured their interests, distinct mannerisms and clothing. She made marionettes of the cast of the Lawrence Welk Show that were used for dozens of shows in schools. She calls a large dollhouse she made a labor of love. She carefully curated and fashioned intricate furniture and other household fixtures from treasures she found. The dollhouse even has a stone fireplace—a replica of the one the sisters had in their former community room.



Sister Hildegarde Urlacher blesses others with her talents in woodworking, pottery, art, decorating, baking and cooking.





Sister Hildegarde made "Dip and Drape" figures of several of the sisters in community.



The marionette cast of the Lawrence Welk show



Sister Hildegarde's ministries include working in the kitchen, the laundry, and in the garden. "My greatest joy was gardening. I marvel watching things grow from seeds to harvesting and canning. I loved working in our garden and enjoyed the beauty of nature. One day I discovered a little fawn in the weeds beside my garden! God is full of surprises."

Sister Hildegarde is known for her homemade apple pie, Christmas bread, and Thanksgiving stuffing. She continues to help in the kitchen, set tables, and decorate the monastery display cases.

When Sister Hildegarde reflects on her years as a Benedictine sister, she says, "I learned to know and love the sisters who were, and are, deeply committed to prayer and to a deep faith that is lived out every day. I appreciate the pace we use in our liturgies and prayer. It's a calming way to start the day."



Sister Hildegarde's dollhouse features realistic rooms and working lights.



Sister Hildegarde is pictured with a plaque that was commissioned by the Northern National Life Insurance Company.

60th Jubilee!

Sister Rosanne Zastoupil

60 Years of Serving God and the Church



On July 13, Sister Rosanne Zastoupil will celebrate her 60th Jubilee in a private ceremony with the monastic community. This jubilee stands as a remarkable testament to the power of faith, dedication, and a lifelong commitment to serving others.

Born and raised on a farm southwest of Dickinson, Sister Rosanne grew up in a close-knit family. She is the youngest of nine children, seven of which were “very protective brothers.”

She learned the values of hard work and perseverance while growing up on the farmstead. The children would help milk the cows and tend to the chickens and pigs. Her mother sold milk and eggs to buy food and clothing for the family. She fondly recalls her early years in a one-room country schoolhouse. She once imagined becoming a nurse or maybe even a flight attendant, a career she felt was quite glamorous at the time. Instead, her path led her to a life deeply rooted in prayer, community and service.

She pursued her education at the University of Mary, earning a bachelor of science in business education in 1968, followed by a minor in accounting in 1973 and a master’s in management in 1996. Her dedication and leadership were recognized with the Heritage of Servant Leadership Award in 2008 and the Presidential Leadership Award in 2013.

Sister Rosanne served at the University of Mary for 41 years in roles ranging from financial aid to accounting, and payroll and benefits. “I really miss the contact and relationships with students,” she admits. She cherished her interactions with students and was there for students who needed guidance or a listening ear.

While she is “retired,” her spirit of service remains strong. As subprioress of Annunciation Monastery, she is available to the sisters 24/7. Sister Rosanne is the canonical treasurer for Annunciation Monastery, overseeing its financial affairs and serves on the boards of CHI St. Alexius Health and the University of Mary. She is on the monastic council, and chairs the monastery finance council.



*“It is a gift to live in community as we grow together in faith on our journey to God.
We strive to reflect Christ’s love through mutual care, humility, and service.
The path of monastic life isn’t always easy, but its richness lies in the daily
offering of self for the good of others and for the glory of God.”*

At the heart of her vocation is an unwavering commitment to the Benedictine way of life. “My God, my prayer life, and my Benedictine sisters are my support,” she says with gratitude.

As Sister Rosanne celebrates her 60th Jubilee, we honor her steadfast service, quiet strength, and faithful devotion to God and others.

St. Alexius – A celebration of 140 years of healing ministry!



Sisters gather at the Pro-Cathedral of St. Mary.

May 6, 2025 marked the 140th anniversary of St. Alexius Hospital. A public celebration was held to honor the commitment and healing mission of all who have served, past and present. The day began with a Mass of Thanksgiving, celebrated by Most Reverend Bishop David Kagan, Bishop of Bismarck, at Pro-Cathedral of St. Mary, Bismarck.

A flag-raising was held, followed by a program and archival display in Boniface Hall. Attendees shared memories, lunch, and a birthday cake and cupcakes. Sister Nancy Miller coordinated this celebration with members of the 140th anniversary committee.



Sister Nancy Miller

Special thanks to all who planned and participated in this beautiful celebration of 140 years of commitment to “let all be received as Christ.” The mission continues and God’s blessings abound.



Sisters Nancy Miller and Nicole Kunze help raise the anniversary flag.



The Knights of Columbus were present at Mass and the flag-raising ceremony.



St. Alexius employees serve birthday cake and cupcakes.



Reed Reyman (center), CEO of CHI St. Alexius Health amid the crowd gathered for the flag-raising.



CHI St. Alexius staff dressed in vintage attire at the archival display.



Attendees enjoyed viewing medical equipment from the past. Of particular interest was this iron lung.



Bishop David D. Kagan presided at the Mass of Thanksgiving. Lt. to rt.: Father John Paul Gardner, Father Anthony Baker, Monsignor James Shea, Bishop David Kagan, Monsignor Gene Lindemann, and Very Reverend Jared Johnson.

In Loving Memory

Sister Ruth Margaret Karabensh, OSB

Sister Ruth Margaret was the seventh of ten children born to Charles and Catherine (Rothschiller) Karabensh. The family moved from Milwaukee, WI, to rural Mandan, ND, when she was a young child.

Beautifully articulate, Sister Ruth Margaret enjoyed people and the friends she made in the sponsored institutions and convents of the community—Priory High, Mary College, St. Alexius and Garrison Memorial Hospitals, and San Raphael Mission, Tucson, AZ. With friendly warmth, she exuded hospitality at the priory and monastery switchboard for over 40 years.

Sister Ruth Margaret trusted in God's abiding care, especially as ministered through angels. She made the ministry of prayer a special focus, commenting, "Though I was not educated, I always felt I could pray." Generously contributing to the environment and atmosphere of making community "homey," Sister Ruth Margaret was attentive to plants, floral arrangements, and table centerpieces.

Her friendly and outgoing personality added warmth to the hospitality she extended in her competent service at the priory and monastery switchboard for over 40 years.



**Sister Ruth Margaret
Karabensh, OSB**

Born: September 30, 1929

Professed: July 11, 1951

Died: November 1, 2024

Sister Gerard Wald, OSB

Sister Gerard was the youngest of ten children born to Stanislaus and Catherine (Bosch) Wald who farmed near Napoleon, ND.

Energetic and dedicated to personal growth and learning, as well as in enthusiastic and hospitable service to others, Sister Gerard loved activities with students, friends, the monastic community, and her family. Her family's celebration of her 60th anniversary of monastic profession last summer gave her joy for months after the celebration.

Sister Gerard's service at St. Alexius included working in the printing department, in nursing, and staff and patient/family education. For over 34 years of service at the University of Mary, she led the volunteer program for nearly 20 years, advised for SPURS (student volunteers), coordinated adult outreach and worked with the adult learner, transfer students, and students who needed support in adjusting to university life. She loved being at student events—music, athletics, theater, and in the residence halls.

She was active in the local Saint Serra Vocations Apostolate, and, served her sisters in monastery health care.



Sister Gerard Wald, OSB

Born: December 15, 1942

Professed: July 11, 1964

Died: December 29, 2024

Sister Andre Hushka, OSB

Sister Andre, born to Andrew and Eva (Walter) Hushka, farmers near New Hradec, ND, was a warmly caring “second oldest” of her eight siblings.

Loving and lovable, and a prayerful and generous member of Annunciation Monastery, Sister Andre was dearly loved by her family and many friends. Kindnesses to Sister Andre often received a return of “God reward you,” and a pat on the cheek. Those pats, as well as bumping foreheads, continued to be her way of showing affection to others. She had been in residence at St. Vincent’s Care Center memory care for the past three years.

Sister Andre’s care-filled service included laundry, housekeeping, sacristy service, and friend-making at St. Alexius Hospital, convents in Mandan, Flasher, and Dickinson, Garrison Memorial Hospital, the University of Mary, and Annunciation Monastery. A highlight in her life was her service for 20 years at the Bishop’s Residence in Bismarck with her friend, Sister Reinhardt.

Sister Andre traveled to several European countries, the Holy Land, and Mexico’s Our Lady of Guadalupe Basilica. Specially devoted to Mary, Sister Andre regularly participated in Marian conferences and traveled to shrines of Mary and other saints.



Sister Andre Hushka, OSB

Born: August 5, 1932

Professed: July 11, 1952

Died: March 23, 2025

Sister Joseph Dukart, OSB

Sister Joseph, born to Joseph and Barbara (Keller) Dukart, grew up in Dickinson, ND, in loving relationship with eight siblings. “Minnie” loved the Sisters at St. Joseph’s School there and subsequently joined Annunciation Monastery.

A licensed practical nurse, Sister Joseph’s infectious joyful spirit and generous kindness characterized her care of patients and sisters. In her readiness “to have fun,” others knew the gift of life’s lightheartedness. St. Alexius and Garrison Memorial Hospital colleagues and patients loved Sister Joseph’s company and remembered her with gratitude as did the sisters in her care in the monastery health center. Always ready to be helpful, Sister Joseph assisted in housekeeping, in the kitchen, in driving and doing errands, and at switchboard. She has been in residence in the memory care unit at St. Vincent’s Care Center since July 2024.

A joy for Sister Joseph was to invite other Sisters to join her at her sister Bridget’s Montana cabin or at her sister Mary’s Minneapolis home. Her readiness to give to others came not only in service but in sharing snacks and in giving away items she thought others would like.

Sister Joseph loved God in her Benedictine life and enjoyed the gift of creation experienced at the lake in Garrison or in caring for trees on the monastery’s lowlands.



Sister Joseph Dukart, OSB

Born: May 10, 1932

Professed: July 11, 1952

Died: May 18, 2025

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For more information, contact Jill Ackerman, director of mission advancement, (701) 355-8907 or: jill@annunciationmonastery.org

RB 72 Retreat

We are excited to open registration for our RB 72 Retreat, a three-day retreat for girls entering 8th grade in the '25-'26 school year. RB 72 comes from Chapter 72 of the Rule of Saint Benedict, in which monastics are instructed to “prefer nothing whatever to Christ.” During the retreat, participants will join the sisters for prayer and Mass, complete a service project, have opportunities to hang out with friends, and learn more about what it means to prefer nothing above Christ.



“Let them prefer nothing to Christ.”

RB 72 Retreat

What: A retreat for girls entering 8th Grade

When: July 31-August 2, 2025

Where: Annunciation Monastery Bismarck, ND

For more information, contact Sister Marena
701-255-1520
marena@annunciationmonastery.org



Retreat Dates:

Thursday, July 31 - Saturday, August 2.

Scan the QR code to register for the event.

Registration closes on July 21, or once the retreat has reached capacity.