



# *Lisle Benedictine Women*

Vol. 44 No. 1

Sacred Heart Monastery

June 2021

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*From Ashes and Death ...*



*to New Life and Resurrection!*

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# Message from the Prioress...



## *BLOOMING WHERE WE ARE PLANTED*

Dear Friends,

Has the experience of the lockdown and the paschal mystery this year led you to **abide more firmly in God's love?**

While there remains a threat of variants of the virus returning, and some parts of the world see the death toll of the virus accelerating, we in America are experiencing lockdown conditions of the pandemic being lessened, and life both economically and physically are budding. Our sisters and employees have been vaccinated. We encourage all to participate in this behavior to help reduce the spread of possible further viruses, to protect our lives and the lives of all people.

The cover page of this LBW shows the artwork of the Phoenix, whose story tells of the mother phoenix ripping open her breast to give her body as food for her young ones. Like Jesus, the phoenix gave her life that her offspring might live. Those who come to our Chapel have this artwork placed onto the altar just below our tabernacle to remind us to be Christ-like and to bloom with life-giving activities.

In the sacred readings of the Easter season, Jesus constantly invites us to abide, to remain in his love, to love one another. Why? Jesus says, "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy might be complete." (John 15:10) Who does not want complete joy?

Can this joy be complete if we experience our world troubled with much discord in politics, religion, values, and human behaviors? Readings from the Acts of the Apostles, proclaimed during the Easter season, inform us that serious struggles existed among the leadership in the church as well as in politics, yet the community of believers grew. How were struggles resolved? We learn in Acts Chapter 15 that leadership gathered factions together, prayed and called upon the Holy Spirit, and then came to a discerned decision and promulgated it. What can and what should we put into practice as we continue to grow as a people and a nation?

Are we not a privileged people to have had the person, the story, the mystery of Christ be planted in our world over 2,000 years ago? Has not our life been significantly enhanced by God gifting us with His Son, who gave his life so that we can have our sins expiated and attain heaven where our joy will be complete?

Know that Jesus did not leave us orphans, rather, He gifted us with the Holy Spirit; the many fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit are ours!

May this Holy Spirit continue to help us to love one another and to blossom where we are planted!

*Sister Mary Bratsovsky, O.S.B.*



# May She Rest in the Peace of the Lord



**Sister Josephine Kallus, OSB**  
December 15, 1923 – December 20, 2020

*Excerpts from Reflection written by Sister Christine Kouba, OSB, and read by Sister Mary Bratrsovsky, OSB, at the wake service December 23, 2020:*

Sister Josephine Kallus was born on December 15, 1923 in Hostyn, Texas to Cecelia and Robert Kallus. Her baptismal name was Adela. In her growing up years, she joined her eight sisters and three brothers on their family farm milking dairy cows, raising vegetables and picking cotton in the flaming, summer heat of Texas. She attended the Hostyn grade school taught by the Incarnate Word Sisters where she learned about the Catholic faith, as well as imbibing the family's faith life in her Catholic home. Her faith would always give her joy and would play an important role in her life's decisions.

After high school, she attended the Alamo Beauty College in San Antonio and then secured a hairdressing job at a famous hotel in San Antonio. During her working years there, she developed acute pain in one of her legs for which she needed surgery. While lying in bed recuperating for twenty-one days, she felt her recovery was not very promising. She then prayed for Blessed Mother Mary to intercede for a cure for her and promised that if she would be able to get up again, she would dedicate her life to the Lord's service. Through her earnest prayer, her cure was granted and she began to pursue a religious vocation as she had promised to do.

It so happened that she had two sisters, Sister Mary Andrea and Sister Mary Agnes, who already were Benedictine Sisters in Lisle, Illinois, and it was natural to correspond with them about her intention. Interestingly, she had two younger sisters at home in Hostyn who were also pursuing religious life and they too, were corresponding with their Lisle sisters unbeknownst to her. In 1944, all three sisters decided to follow the Lord's call together, yet knowing the loss to their parents would be a sacrifice. Their parents were surprised but willingly gave them a blessing, and their enthused daughters left their home arriving in Lisle to join Sisters Mary Andrea and Mary Agnes. After their postulancy, the three sisters were named Sisters Josephine, Virginia and Angelica making a total of five Kallus Sisters in our Benedictine Community. Of course, the Kallus parents were proud of their five daughters and their father jokingly said: "I guess if all my daughters

enter religious life, I will have to enter too.”

Sister Josephine made her first profession as a Benedictine in 1946 and through the next 74 years remained a cheerful giver, knowing that “God loves a cheerful giver.” In her early years in community, since she was an excellent cook, she was sent to St. Procopius College kitchen and later to cook in parish convents where our Sisters were teaching. These school missions included Lisle, Chicago, Joliet, Cicero and Wisconsin. She always enjoyed cooking wherever she went and loved doing things for others to make them happy.

With the changes of Vatican II, starting in the 70’s and beyond, our hospitality became more open and Sister Josephine was needed at the monastery as a chauffeur, driving Sisters to various appointments and to do the shopping. She was a thrifty and cheerful shopper, looking for sales and saving coupons in order to be a good steward. She also became the hairdresser for the Sisters and some friends, rediscovering the skills of her profession from years back, giving shampoos, haircuts and perms. On special occasions, she lent a helping hand in the kitchen preparing delicacies with an artful presentation.

Her manual labor of love was well balanced with attendance at prayer. Being forever mindful of time, she made sure nothing superseded the Eucharist or Divine Office. In fact, she was at prayer way ahead of time both for Mass and Divine Office. The rosary was the prayer she never omitted either, always thanking God for wonderful people and praying for the intentions she held in her heart and for those who requested her help in

prayer. Since she gave bountifully in glorifying God, God made every grace abundant in her.

Her retirement years were well spent. She kept the beauty shop in order, helped the new hairstylist in every way she could, called her many friends, worked on puzzles, participated in exercise activities in the Villa, and on and on.



Then, the day came for her to move to St. Patrick’s Residence in Naperville. We hated to see her leave us, but for the sake of her safety, we knew she needed to be watched more carefully to prevent falling. With her loving capacity to adjust to a new environment, we found her thriving at St. Patrick’s, making friends, pushing herself around in her wheelchair, spreading joy and peace to those she met and encouraging them to pray the rosary with her in the afternoon. When some of us Sisters would visit her before Covid restrictions or call her during the

pandemic, she would always end by saying, "I love you and tell all the Sisters that I love them and am praying for all of them."

The Carmelite Sisters there took special notice of her outgoing and engaging ways and dearly loved her. Sister Raphael, pastoral minister at St. Patrick's, spent hours with her as she was dying, praying with her and staying by her side knowing she would soon be with the Lord. We are grateful to Sister Raphael who felt it was an honor to be with Sister Josephine as she was dying and to all the Carmelite Sisters at St. Patrick's who embody the loving kindness of Jesus in their grace filled ways while giving care to elderly patients. May God's blessings be upon them always! We will always be your grateful friends.



*The five Kallus Sisters in our community: Angelica, Josephine, Mary Agnes, Virginia (L-R standing) and Andrea (seated)*

*The Kallus Sisters with family members*

## *Reflecting on the Pandemic*

Abbot Primate Gregory Polan, OSB, who heads the Benedictine Confederation, asked Benedictine communities throughout the world to reflect on and share what the pandemic has taught us. We found this exercise to be fruitful and reminded ourselves to recognize the good, don't judge the other, and pray.



Our response to Abbot Primate Gregory:

“Thanks for your circular letter and the invitation to reflect on the pandemic. We sisters at Lisle had an inspirational day and send you our reflections.

*What have we Learned from this Pandemic?*

To be patient -By FAITH we learned that Jesus was patient in suffering for us. We too had to learn to be patient.

Not to despair- With HOPE we learned that God loves us and gives us the grace of hope teaching us never to despair. God lived with us in our limitations even with Covid.

To help one another- With CHARITY we became aware of so many people suffering. In the monastery we were well taken care of. However, as human beings we learned we are all connected with each other and we needed to think of others who were deprived of the basic needs to survive.

*What is the good that we have found hidden in the sadness of these times?*

God is always with us and wants us to pray and trust in God. By the grace of God, our scientists worked hard to develop a vaccine that would protect us from the contagion of Covid. As a nation, we elected a president who cared about overcoming the effects of this dreaded disease and planned to spread hope in the government by increasing the manufacturing of the vaccine to cover everybody.

That our resources have been overused and need to be saved. In our restraint of sheltering in place, we began to drive our cars less and saved a lot of gasoline, we shopped less finding we didn't need to buy as much, and we traveled less in visiting our friends and relatives but used technology such as Zoom to connect with family and conduct meetings.

*What are some of the paths forward that we have considered as we look to the future?*

To emphasize recycling and avoid using items such as plastics, which are not biodegradable as well as being aware of climate change and our responsibilities. To be open to new ways of practicing our faith and evangelizing.

To cooperate in working to eliminate inequality due to white supremacy, racism, misogyny and to have equal respect for the religion of others.”



**Sister Rosalie Marie Major, OSB**  
b. 9/26/1917 d. 5/16/2021



Our dear Sister Rosalie Marie Major was welcomed peacefully into her Savior's arms on May 16, 2021. Our tribute to Sister Rosalie will be included in the December issue of the LBW newsletter.



One of last year's changes for the Sisters was moving the location of Divine Office prayers from the Chapel. Our Chapter Room offers easier access and more intimacy.



Our International Sisters use their talents to beautifully decorate our liturgical spaces.

*Pictured on right is Sister Hyacintha*



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## Oblates of St. Benedict

Oblates are women and men, married or single, who hunger for a deeper experience of God. Guided by the Rule of Benedict they find their lives enriched as they join others in prayer, *lectio* and work in the context of an extended community.

Our Oblates meet on the third Sunday of each month at 2:30pm. For more information, please contact Sister Karen Nykiel, OSB at 630-632-2216 or at [knykiel@shmlisle.org](mailto:knykiel@shmlisle.org)



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*Words and lists cannot express adequately how very grateful the  
Sisters are for all our friends who give so freely to us.  
We are especially blessed by the generosity shown by Villa St.  
Benedict residents for our Chapel Flower Fund.*



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*We gratefully hold all our donors and friends  
in our hearts and in our prayers*

We sincerely regret any omission or errors in our acknowledgements, and have also done our best to honor our friends' wishes to give anonymously with such generosity. Please call the Development Office (630.725.6013) with any questions or corrections.

We plan to resume our offerings of spirituality programs — Tuesday Night with the Sisters, classes and presentations — when it is determined safe to do so.



## PLANNED GIVING

Benefits of making a Planned Gift, which include wills, bequests, life insurance and other estate plans:

- Provide a lasting tribute that offers ongoing support for the Benedictine Sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery.
- Make a gift today without spending current income or retirement resources.
- Realize income tax and future estate tax advantages while providing for your heirs.
- Become a partner in ministry with the Benedictine Sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery.
- Be remembered in the prayers of the Sisters each day.

The Sisters thank you for considering a bequest to the Benedictine Sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery.

By virtue of our listing in the Official Catholic Directory, the Treasury of the United States has ruled that contributions to the Sisters fully qualify for federal income, estate and gift tax deduction purposes as provided within the law.

The legal title of our monastic community is:  
Benedictine Sisters of the Sacred Heart  
Our FEIN is 36-2169170

Persons interested in making special gifts or bequests are asked to contact:

Development Office  
Sacred Heart Monastery  
1910 Maple Ave. Lisle, IL 60532  
630 725-6013

[development@shmlisle.org](mailto:development@shmlisle.org)



On May 7th, a group of 2nd-grade and 6th-grade students from St. James visited Sacred Heart Monastery. After a visit to our Chapel, the students pulled weeds around the Grotto and then prayed the Glorious Mysteries of the rosary there.





While access to Sacred Heart Chapel is still restricted, you may join us for Sunday Mass on-line: livestream at 10:00am or view the video later. Available on our chaplain Father Becket's Facebook page at [facebook.com/fr.becket](https://facebook.com/fr.becket)



## *Volunteers at Sacred Heart Monastery*

*The Sisters are blessed with many friends who volunteer time and talents to assist us on our Board, and with our chapel and monastery needs. In spite of physical distancing and suspension of ministries, the Sisters have certainly felt enriched and uplifted by your love and support in 2020. We are ever grateful, and say, Thank You.*

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# Queen of Heaven Monastery

Warren, Ohio

## **Sister Agnes Knapik**

**July 10, 1936 — April 7, 2021 (age 84)**

Sister Agnes Helen Knapik, OSB, 84, passed away Wednesday morning April 7 at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Youngstown.

Sister Agnes was born July 10, 1936 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, the daughter of Stephen and Mary (Kunak) Knapik.

Sister entered into formation in religious life at Sacred Heart Monastery in Lisle in Illinois September 8, 1960. She made her Final Profession into the Order of Saint Benedict August 20, 1967 at Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Warren.



From 1965 to 2005, Sister Agnes taught at Saints Peter and Paul in Warren. Sister held many positions within the Byzantine Benedictine Sisters at Queen of Heaven Monastery, including formation director, vocations director, director of the Oblates of St. Benedict, secretary and the Prioress of Queen of Heaven Monastery from 1981 to 1989.

For a short period, Sister served as the Safe Environment Director for the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh. She also served in religious education roles at St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church in Hermitage and St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Youngstown.

In addition to her many positions within her community, Sister Agnes graduated with a master's degree from Fordham University in New York. Sister Agnes was a Hospice of the Valley volunteer at Hillside Hospital and was a frequent volunteer for the St. Vincent DePaul Meals Program. Sister enjoyed visiting art galleries and reading cookbooks. She had a love for the outdoors and liked to explore. She loved to walk in nature and in large cities, taking in the beauty that was around her.

For the last six months of her life, Sister resided at Villa Maria Healthcare Center in Pennsylvania.

Sister Agnes will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved her. Sister Agnes is survived by her biological sister, Mary Douglas; nieces Joanne (Vasco) Jeronimo, Terri Douglas and Dianne Lamb; great-nieces and great-nephew Melissa (Braedon) Matthews, Lindsay Anderson, Alex Lamb and Jordan Lamb; and grand-nephew Edison Anderson.

A Liturgical Paschal service was held for Sister Agnes on April 10, 2021 at Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Warren with the Very Rev. Richard Lambert and the Rev. Kevin Marks presiding. Sisters Mary Bratrsovsky, Helen Jilek and Christine Kouba traveled from Lisle to attend the service.



## *Here and There*

Each year nursing students from Lewis University participate in a service project to assist Sister Mary in our Lady of Lourdes Grotto at Sacred Heart Monastery. This group helped with spring clean-up at the end of March.



*Blossom  
where you  
are planted*



### **Sacred Heart Academy Alumnae**

We are searching for all of our Alumnae. If you received this issue of the LBW, but did not receive the March *Echo*, or invitations to our last October Homecoming, you are on our mailing list, but not coded as a Sacred Heart Academy alumna.

Please help us update our records by contacting Beth Hemzacek at [ehemzacek@shmlisle.org](mailto:ehemzacek@shmlisle.org), or send a note to Benedictine Sisters attn.: SHA Alumnae 1910 Maple Ave Lisle, IL 60532.

Homecoming is planned for Saturday, October 16th at Villa St. Benedict. Invitations will be mailed in September.

# Villa St. Benedict

Kathy DiCristina

It may seem unusual to reflect on this past year, dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic, and remember it with gratitude... but that's exactly how I will remember it. Even though it was a year filled with enormous challenges and heartache, I recognize that as a community, Villa St. Benedict remained steadfast in our collective efforts to keep everyone safe, and by the grace of God, keep Covid-19 out!!

I am grateful to our amazing staff, the residents, and family members who had to make tremendous sacrifices yet continued



to support one another along the way. We had to make difficult decisions, follow various new protocols, and adhere to restrictive measures which seemed to change almost daily. However, in the end our hard work and sacrifice paid off. After what seemed like endless months filled with uncertainty, we secured the Pfizer vaccine through our partnership with Walgreens to get vaccines in the arms of residents, staff, the Sisters and VSB local board members. As a community, we stood stronger together and for that I am forever grateful.



Kathy DiCristina, Amy Pruette (Walgreens Pharmacy Lead) and Kathy Benjamin received tulips from the residents in appreciation for hosting the on-site vaccine clinics.





To honor those lost in Benedictine Living communities over the past twelve months and to bring all together in fellowship and community, a virtual Benedictine Remembrance and Renewal Memorial Service was held on March 23, 2021. This date marked one year from when skilled nursing communities were closed to visitors. March is also the month when spring returns and we celebrate the Feast Day of St. Benedict, providing the perfect time for us to pause, reflect and remember what we have been through this last year and what we have to look forward to as a faith community caring for our residents.

The service was funded by The Benedictine Foundation and is available for on-line viewing at <https://youtu.be/Mqcgty0RTzg>



Benedictine Remembrance and Renewal Memorial Service



*Lisle Benedictine Women*

Sacred Heart Monastery  
1910 Maple Avenue  
Lisle, IL 60532-2164  
(630) 725-6000  
[www.shmlisle.org](http://www.shmlisle.org)

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Corporate Mission of the Benedictine Sisters of the Sacred Heart is Hospitality. Directed by the Gospel and the spirit of the Rule of Saint Benedict, the mission is based on a commitment to use time, talent and resources of the Community for those in need.

We, the Benedictine Sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery, Lisle, Illinois, proclaim hospitality to be our corporate commitment. This mandate, found in the Hebrew scriptures, the Gospels, and reiterated by Benedict to be the cornerstone for our interaction with one another (Rule of Benedict, Chapter 72) and our reception of strangers & guests (RB 53), is our particular corporate response to the needs of this 21st century.

We are proclaiming our commitment to hospitality as one significant way of being

counter-cultural in the midst of global fear and mistrust. We are determined to create an environment of non-violence among ourselves that will allow our own members to experience gentle warmth and reverence for the gift each is to the community. We will create an atmosphere in which the stranger will be recognized as a guest - received as Christ Himself - the gift of God among us.

We are willing to risk and model that strangers, coming together as friends, can nourish one another in the prayerful atmosphere of cenobitic community, can share resources, can host and reverence the other as sacred. In the act of "opening our door" to the other, we in fact open our hearts - emptying ourselves of ourselves. This will be our gift to those "who knock." With open hands, we receive the gift they are to us.