



LEAVEN

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from the PRIORRESS



Your word is near,
O Lord our God,
your grace is near.
Come to us, then, with
mildness and power.

Do not let us be deaf to you,
but make us receptive and open
to Jesus Christ your son
who will come to look for us and save
today and every day, for ever and ever.

Huib Oosterhuis, Your Word Is Near

This simple, lovely, straightforward Advent prayer speaks of a coming Savior who is even looking for us! One who comes in mildness and power. It is not often that you hear the word mildness associated with power. The use of these two words together invites quiet receptivity, recognizing the power of Jesus to move us and change our lives.

Our reception of God is more horizontal than Jesus and me. In an Advent letter several years ago, Pope Francis calls us to engage with loving concern with our sisters and brothers: “Advent invites us to a commitment to vigilance, looking beyond ourselves, expanding our mind and heart in order to open ourselves up to the needs of people . . . the desire for a new world. It is the desire of many people tormented by hunger, by injustice and by war.”

My mind immediately goes to the ongoing wars in Gaza, Lebanon, Ukraine, Sudan and other areas of intense fighting. One wonders how much Christ, the reconciler, the light of the world and messenger of peace distraught that his words fall too frequently on deaf ears. I keep hoping and praying that deep in our consciousness we all know war is not the answer and we’ll continue to put in all the necessary effort to peacefully work out differences.

Richard Rohr has such a way of looking at things with different lenses; He writes: “We can think of Advent as God waiting for us to wake up! You know, as if we’re asleep in the manger, not Jesus!” What needs to be awakened in me in order that I am more receptive to the ongoing coming of God in my life and the life of the world? How can God’s mildness and power continue to work in all of us?

This Christmas we pray that we will not be deaf to you, O God. Help us to be receptive and open to you and your people as you continue to come in mildness and power.

Sr. Aileen Bankemper, OSB



The Benedictine Sisters are deeply grateful for the support provided by our benefactors. You are remembered whenever the community gathers for prayer. For purposes of donations, bequests, and annuities, our legal title is:

St. Walburg Monastery of Benedictine Sisters of Covington, Kentucky

www.stwalburg.org
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**THIS IS THE SECOND OF A SERIES OF
THREE ARTICLES COMMEMORATING
THE 165 YEARS OF
ST. WALBURG MONASTERY HISTORY
1914-1969**

by: Sr. Deborah Harmeling

- 1910** When the first World War broke out in 1914 it was an anxious time for the sisters of St. Walburg Monastery. Both German-born sisters and American-born sisters had close relatives in Germany, some of whom were in the fighting. Anti-German sentiment was prevalent. When the United States entered the war, the sisters who had not yet gained American citizenship were considered “enemy aliens.”
- 1916** Monastery Chapter voted to transfer the novitiate to Villa Madonna.
- 1918** Flu epidemic. Sisters sent to various areas of Covington and the mountains of Eastern Kentucky to care for the sick. None of the sisters had training in health care.
- 1921** Villa Madonna College, a Normal School for training teachers under the direction of Sister Domitilla Thuener, opened at Villa Madonna.
- 1926** Mother Walburga elected for the 11th time. That year, nine sisters sent to Notre Dame University for summer school in advanced studies.
- 1928** Bishop Howard informed the community that he wished Villa Madonna College to be a diocesan teachers’ college. (November 28) Mother Walburga Saelinger died. First to be buried in new cemetery at Villa Madonna. Sister Margaret Hugenberg elected 3rd prioress.
- 1929** First mention in Council minutes of suggestion to adopt the Divine Office in place of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was not until 1938 that the sisters began to pray the Divine Office. Villa Madonna College became a diocesan college under Bishop Howard. Three religious communities in the diocese shared administration and teaching functions.



1928: Mother Margaret Hugenberg



Villa Madonna College and Academy bus



1928: New cemetery on property





1937: St. Walburg Monastery, 2500 Amsterdam Road



Latin Divine Office



1937: Flood in the school yard at St. Benedict, Covington



1946: Established St. Joseph Hospital in the former Colonial Poultry Farm in Florence, Colorado

- 1931** Community Chapter voted to close St. Walburg Academy in Covington. Stone entrance pillars erected at entrance to Villa Madonna grounds. Sister Lioba Holz elected the 4th prioress.
- 1932** Community Council voted to transfer the Motherhouse to Villa Madonna. Preparatory school opened for high school students interested in religious life.
- 1934** Community Diamond Jubilee (75) years, Mass of Thanksgiving in the Covington cathedral. Community newsletter, *Inter Nos*, established to keep the sisters informed of life on missions and record progress in building and financing the new motherhouse at Villa Madonna.
- 1935** Chapter voted to build new monastery at Villa Madonna.
- 1936** Bishop Howard gave the community permission to recite the Latin Divine Office instead of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary “in so far as it will not interfere with teaching.” Bishop Howard gave permission to build new monastery. Groundbreaking that same year.
- 1937** Villa Madonna became Red Cross flood relief station. New building, St. Walburg Monastery, on Amsterdam Road, dedicated. Sister Lioba received written permission from Bishop Howard for the community to join the Congregation of St. Scholastica and to adopt the organization’s constitution on trial basis for three years.
- 1938** Community began praying the Divine Office in June. Chapter decided that the 15 decade rosary beads were not part of the Benedictine habit. Community sponsored first retreat for women.
- 1945** Bishop Mulloy asked sisters to undertake hospital work in Hazard, Kentucky. He thought that hospital work would give the community more income than teaching. Mother Domitilla and Sister Lioba visited Duluth, Minnesota to learn about hospital work. Three sisters sent to study and train.
- 1946** Community received permission from Rome to undertake hospital work for 10 years. Chapter voted to accept St. Joseph Hospital in Florence, Colorado. Two sisters sent to transform Colonial Poultry Farms into St. Joseph Hospital.



- 1947** Chapter voted to accept Bishop Mulloy's request to staff hospital in Hazard, Kentucky.
- 1949** Chapter voted to accept and staff Sante Fe Hospital in La Junta, Colorado.
- 1955** Sister Hilda Obermeier elected 6th prioress.
- 1956** Sister Hilda received permission from Rome to borrow one million dollars to build new Villa Madonna Academy building.
- 1958** Chapter voted to staff Estill County Hospital in Irvine, Kentucky. New Villa Madonna building dedicated.
- 1959** February 25, Feast of St. Walburg, Community celebrated Pioneer Day, opening day for centennial celebration. Marcum and Wallace Hospital opened in Estill County, Irvine, Kentucky. Opening planned for September 10, but a baby was born on the 9th.
- 1961** Sister Benedict Bunning elected 7th prioress. Community membership at its peak of 271 members.
- 1962** Chapter voted to say Divine Office in English
- 1963** Villa Madonna Preparatory School discontinued.
- 1964** Community began praying the Divine Office in English. Madonna Manor opened.
- 1965** Four sisters left for Pomata, Peru to serve the Altiplano Indians in Diocese of Juli until 1971.
- 1967** Farming discontinued on monastery property.
- 1968** Groundbreaking for new infirmary wing. Barn and playground areas used for inner city children summer camp.
- 1969** Community held Summer Renewal Program to study and implement changes suggested by Vatican II. Over 50 sisters chose to return to their baptismal names. First motherhouse and St. Walburg Academy buildings in Covington razed. Portion of monastery land leased for \$1 a year to the city of Villa Hills for ball fields.



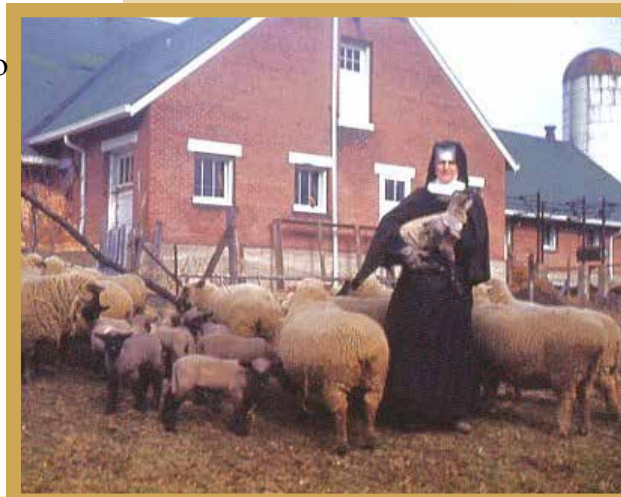
1955: Mother Hilda Obermeier



1964: Madonna Manor



1965: Four sisters missioned to Peru (Back: Srs. Stephanie Manning, Janine Walther, Annita Schirmer; front: Sr. Nicholas Jones)



1967: Farming discontinued on the monastery property





REFLECTIONS ON CIB EXPERIENCES

by: Sr. Aileen Bankemper

It is now five years since I have had the privilege and opportunity of becoming a CIB Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum delegate. As written in the CIB website Benedictine women “have come to recognize and appreciate our unity in the Rule of St. Benedict and in the Benedictine tradition that has flowered in countries and cultures throughout the world. The CIB has enabled us to experience in profound and concrete ways the rich expression of the Benedictine charism manifested in the lives of our communities.” The first two years that I was a delegate were during Covid and the delegates met via Zoom beginning at 9:00 am Rome time, 3:00 am Eastern in the USA! Despite hazy memories, one that has stood out is how the CIB might become an equal branch with our Benedictine

brothers. The thoughts and plans began to germinate, grow and continue to gain support among ourselves and with our brother abbots. One main goal is that Benedictine women would have their own juridic voice and influence at the Vatican. Other areas of consideration include strengthening and giving more visibility to the CIB. Worldwide there are over 13,500 Benedictine women. Through our bondedness, connection, and support there are so many possibilities of continued impact wherever we are serving.

The recent meeting in Assisi clarified and moved forward what we have been endeavoring to accomplish through the CIB. I’m delighted that for the past three years most have been able to meet in person! For me, the contacts, connections and collaboration experienced through my participation are invaluable. There is so much to gain from the interactions with one another especially when important topics and structural changes are in the making. I am so grateful for the opportunities to meet, discuss and work together with all these remarkable women. There is a wonderful spirit of care and cooperation with the desire to strengthen the CIB.





I can only imagine how helpful it would be to have a full-time moderator. Continuing to perform this type of service as an “elected volunteer” is not helpful in moving forward the goals and dreams of the CIB. Having time and visibility among the communities of women is necessary. In addition, changing the structure to involve the presidents of Benedictine federations and congregations as delegates would widen the circle for more Benedictine monasteries to participate more fully. With change there come challenges. However, it is my belief that our united commitment to Benedictine values will keep us moving forward.



THANKSGIVING PIE SALE

Thank you to everyone who supported our Thanksgiving Pie Sale! With your enthusiasm and generosity, we sold 100 pies in under 24 hours and added 23 more, totaling 123 pies. Your contributions will greatly benefit Parish Kitchen and help us serve those in need. We truly appreciate your support in making a positive difference in our community!



Many sisters were involved in the project, including apple peelers, crust crimpers, and pie assemblers. It was a wonderful community event for us, bringing everyone together for a meaningful cause. We are grateful for your involvement and look forward to future opportunities to collaborate and support our community.



WISH LIST

Thank you to the many donors who responded to our Wish List for park benches. We are thrilled to announce that we will be purchasing these benches and having them ready for spring. They will be a wonderful addition to our beautiful campus. The grounds of St. Walburg Monastery are cherished by our sisters and the numerous walkers from the area who come to exercise or seek a peaceful retreat.

We warmly invite you to partner with the monastery by donating toward this effort to enrich and enhance the lives of the sisters and our guests. Your generous support is greatly appreciated and will contribute to creating a welcoming environment for all.





IN MEMORIAM

SR. DENISE GOUGH

1929-2024



Sister Denise Gough was born May 10, 1929 to Frank M. Gough and Catherine P. Volkering and given the name Anne Marie. Anne Marie was the sixth of thirteen children, seven brothers and five sisters. Her youngest brother died shortly after birth.

Anne Marie entered St. Walburg Monastery in 1952, became a novice in 1953 and received the name Denise. First profession followed in 1954, perpetual in 1957, silver jubilee in 1979, golden in 2004, 60th in 2014, and 70th in 2024.

Sister Denise studied nursing at St. Elizabeth School of Nursing, graduating in 1957. For the next nine years she served as staff nurse at Mount Mary Hospital, Hazard, KY, St. Joseph Hospital in Florence, CO, and at Madonna Manor. In 1966 Sr. Denise trained in anesthesia at St. Cloud Hospital in St. Cloud, MN and then worked as a nurse anesthetist at St. Joseph Hospital, Florence, CO. She moved to Morehead, KY in 1975 to work as nurse anesthetist at St. Claire Regional Medical Center and retired from there over thirty years later in 2006. Denise described her work in the operating room: "I take them under and bring them back up."

After retirement Sister Denise continued to live in Morehead, KY with Sr. Rosemary McCormack and their dog Lucy. She cared for house and yard, purchased food, and contracted for repairs and improvements. The new asphalt driveway and roof replacement added value to the house.

Denise and Rosemary welcomed guests to their home, most often sisters from St. Walburg's. They loved company, taking them out to eat and enjoying a good card game with a background of country music and lots of laughter. Saturday night card games continued after they moved to the monastery in 2014. Relocating to Villa Hills made it easier to visit family and enjoy nieces and nephews and their children.

Sister Denise's health began to fail in the past year. She died peacefully in the presence of her community on Sunday, August 25, 2024. She is preceded in death by her parents Francis and Catherine Volkering Gough, her brothers: Edward, Francis, Jr., Robert, Raymond, William, James and Joseph and her sisters Mary Ellen Webb, Sr. Margaret Mary Gough, Kathleen and Eileen Gough. She is survived by her sister Sr. Stella Gough, OSB and many nieces and nephews, friends and her Benedictine community.

Vigil service was held the evening of August 29. Mass of Christian Burial followed on Friday, August 30, 2024 with interment in St. Walburg Cemetery.



SEEKING GOD AS AN OBLATE

by: Sr. Dorothy Schuette

The oblates of St. Walburg Monastery gathered for their annual retreat November 8-10. Sr. Dorothy led them with the theme, Carrying Wisdom Across the Threshold. Eight oblates were able to attend in person; oblate Laura Tenzel joined us via zoom. We found the psalms to be especially insightful in dealing with the challenges we surfaced and shared in our time together.



Jessie Lamantia, Carol Leonhart and Kathleen Rosing

Oblates share the basic values of Benedictine life.

- SEEK** God in community and prayer
- REFLECT** daily on God's Word
- REVERENCE** all life
- PRACTICE** in the work of their local Church
- PRAY** for the community; oblates are included in the sisters' daily prayer
- GATHER** for ongoing formation in Benedictine Spirituality

The weekend climaxed with the ceremony of Oblation Renewal at Noonday Prayer on Sunday with the sisters community. Along with the eleven who were present at St. Walburg's, 26 additional oblates renewed their oblation at home to pray and live according to the Rule of St. Benedict as befits their lives. The below photo marks the occasion.

Our monthly gatherings at 9:30-11:30 AM on second Saturdays have been enriched with participation in a five-part webinar on "Listening with the Ear of the Heart" presented by the Center for Benedictine Life in Cottonwood, ID, for oblate formation. Anyone interested is welcome. For information on Benedictine Oblates, call 859-331-6324.



Seated: Gayle Underdown, Carol Leonhart, Jessie Lamantia and Joan Breetz. Standing: Sr. Mary Tewes, Judy Ten Eyck, Louise Jewett, Tom Scally, Mary Jo Rehtin, Margie Hardebeck, Joan McAlonan, Kathleen Rosing and Sr. Dorothy Schuette



CHRONICLES

by: Sr. Mary Tewes

July-August: All three floors of Guest House guests can keep their cool in summer months with the completion of air conditioning on the second floor.

July-August: Sr. Cathy led three Seek Retreat days for students of St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs, KY.

Aug. 12-17: Sr. Aileen attended the National LCWR Assembly in Orlando, FL. Focus: "Our Time is Holy: Who Then Shall We Be?" The community here was welcome to share in the two keynote presentations via Zoom by Fr. Brian Massingale, and Sr. Maricarmen Bracamontes, OSB, from Torreón, Mexico.

Aug. 19-22: Sr. Rita drove to Pittsburgh, PA for a visit, and brought back a gift for our tables: basket-woven lazy susans created by one of their sisters.

Aug. 25: Sr. Denise Gough died at age 95 in the infirmary, surrounded by Sr. Stella Gough and sisters.

Aug. 26: The demolition of St. Joseph House began with step one, removal of asbestos.



Sr. Cathy enjoyed talking with students about the Benedictine way of life at Archbishop Carroll High School.



Demolition of St. Joseph House.

Sept. 1-20: Sr. Aileen traveled to Italy for two meetings of Benedictines: First to Assisi for the CIB gathering of Benedictine delegates from around the world, then to San Anselmo in Rome for the meeting with the Congress of Abbots. The sisters also visited with Argentine Benedictine sisters who live at the Vatican. Sr. Aileen also met unwillingly with COVID during her final week in Rome.

Sept. 17-18: Sr. Rita met with subprioresses from Ferdinand and Beechgrove in Ferdinand, IN.

Sept. 24: Sr. Cathy went to Bishop Carroll High School in Dayton, OH and shared her display on Benedictine life and St. Walburg Monastery.

Sept. 27: Sr. Aileen attended the meeting of the local religious superiors with Bishop John Iffert.

Sept. 27-30: Sr. Kimberly facilitated a retreat for a group of sisters at St. Benedict Monastery in St. Joseph, MN on aspects of the Rule of St. Benedict.



Sr. Kimberly Porter at retreat at St. Benedict Monastery.

Sept. 28: Fall Spirituality Day: Preparing for Election Day: "Global Crises & the Consistent Ethic of Life," led by Fr. Kenneth Overberg, SJ. Fifty participants added to the lively discussion.

October: More of Sr. Emmanuel's posters and Christmas cards for sale: a big hit for holiday shoppers. See order form on email and website.

Sept. 30-Oct. 4: Sr. Nancy attended the annual RCRI Treasurers' Meeting in Orlando, FL.

Oct. 4: Calling all apple peelers in preparation for pie baking for the Villa Craft Fair. Sr. Nancy is the pie baker working to get them ready. A sellout.



Fr. Kenneth Overberg, SJ spoke to nearly 50 participants on September 28.



Oct. 5: 10:30 am: Madonna Manor celebrated its 60th Anniversary with a Mass, Bishop John Iffert presiding, and reception afterwards. Sr. Benedict Bunning, OSB had the vision to build Madonna Manor in 1964.

Oct. 8: Book study/discussion organized by Sr. Rita using Michael Casey, OSB's book, Coenobium.

Oct. 10: Angie Robinson's last day here as one of the infirmary nurses. We will miss her energetic service. She will be followed by Krysti Trevor.

Oct. 11: Sr. Cathy led the Seek Retreat for Students of Mary Queen of Heaven Parish in Erlanger, KY.



60th Anniversary Mass at Madonna Manor. L-R Linda Thomas, Srs. Mary Peter Youtsey, Mary Tewes, Colleen Winston, Bishop Iffert, Sr. Nancy Surma, OSF, Srs. Mary Rabe, Dorothy Schuette and Deacon Barry Henry.

Oct. 12: Celebration for the 2024 jubilarians with Bishop John Iffert was held at the Metropolitan Club in Covington. Four sisters celebrated 70 years: Sisters Rosemary McCormick, Denise Gough, Martha Walther and Ann Middendorf. Sr. Denise has since died.

Oct. 13: The Campbell County K of C sponsored the annual picnic for the women religious of Northern KY at the Campbell County grounds. Good weather encouraged a great turnout. We were hosted in great style by the Knights and their wives.

Oct. 15: Eighteen TMU students spent the morning in service activities with Sr. Cathy: washing cars, gardening, cleaning, etc. We are grateful for their willing service.

Oct. 19: Community meeting included a process for remembering St. Joseph House. Demolition began a week later, with many eyes at monastery windows watching the CAT in action.



Students from Thomas More University

Oct. 23-24: Sisters Aileen and Rita Brink attended Region 6 LCWR meeting at Mt. St. Joseph.

Oct. 26: Many sisters traveled to Beech Grove, IN for a "family reunion" picnic day with the sisters from Ferdinand, IN, our daughter and granddaughter houses. The group of 135 sisters shared games, food and an all-around good time.

Nov. 8-10: Oblate Retreat/Renewal Weekend: Sr. Dorothy Schuette led the retreat for oblates who participated in person or by Zoom. On Sunday, eleven gathered for the Noonday Prayer/Renewal of Oblation followed by dinner.

Nov. 11: Sr. Aileen shared the story/photos of her trip to Italy in September for the meetings of Benedictine prioresses and abbots. She brought home to share with community a bottle of Limoncello made by Benedictine monks.



Srs. Kathleen and Emmanuel enjoyed Monday activities with Sr. Grace, CDP



FAMILY REUNION

by: Sr. Rita Brink

*If you want to touch the past,
touch a rock.
If you want to touch the present,
touch a flower.
If you want to touch the future,
touch a life.*
Author Unknown

Family reunions, a standing tradition, celebrates family, strengthens relationships, builds support, and invests in the future.

Three Benedictine communities, St. Walburg Monastery, Monastery Immaculate Conception, Ferdinand, IN, a daughter house of St. Walburg Monastery, and Our Lady of Grace Monastery, Beech Grove, IN, a daughter house of Ferdinand, and granddaughter house of St. Walburg Monastery, gathered for a family reunion.

The day offered opportunities for many sisters to reconnect with individuals they had interacted with in the past through academic endeavors, committee work, ministry, or workshops. Meeting individuals anew abounded throughout the day in our shared prayer, activities, conversation and a shared meal.



The three communities already work together, supporting one another while keeping a close eye on future opportunities of collaboration and support. As we aim to touch the future our working together helps assure our Benedictine presence witnessing Christ alive in all lives. The day was truly a celebration of joy and life.



We the Benedictine Sisters of
St. Walburg Monastery, faithful to our
monastic profession, seek God in
community, prayer and work.



VILLA MADONNA ACADEMY

by: Sr. Nancy Kordenbrock

The school year is in full swing for everyone at Villa Madonna Academy. Combining academics, athletics and service provides many opportunities for student growth.

Villa has been named an AP Honor Roll Platinum Member. Villa offers 22 AP courses. Over 85% of graduating seniors took AP courses, many taking as many as five through their high school years. Several current students earned the AP Capstone Award which honors those who do extended research in their area of interest.

Sports play an important part in most students' life. Several teams have done very well this season. The girls' soccer team was conference champions again this year. The volleyball team was runners-up in the district and went on to regionals. The high school cross country boys team won the regional championship and the girls were runners-up. Several runners were also medalists. The 6th grade girls' volleyball team won their league championship as well.



Service is an important part of Villa's programs. Beginning in the earliest grades service learning activities open the students to the many ways they can serve others. The second graders read to the Montessori children. The fourth graders collected supplies and decorated bags for the Faith Community Pharmacy. The elementary student council has sponsored a bingo for the sisters at the monastery which everyone enjoys.

The high school recently held a service fair to introduce the students to the many agencies in our area that provide various services to those in need. For many years the high school has been involved with the Big Sisters Big Brothers program. The BIGS program as it is called offers one-on-one mentoring to elementary students at a local public school. Even the Flag Football League is doing their part, conducting a food drive for the Food Pantry.



Montessori Visit

by: Sr. Nancy Kordenbrock

The Villa Madonna Montessori students put on a delightful performance today, charming the sisters with a spirited selection of Halloween songs. Each tune was met with enthusiastic applause, as the sisters appreciated the students' hard work and talent. The performance not only showcased the students' talents but also brought warmth and joy to our community.





SR. EMMANUEL'S ART

Don't miss out!

We're excited to announce a limited collection of signed art prints by Sr. Emmanuel, now available for purchase. These unique pieces make for special gifts. We also offer beautifully designed note cards and Christmas cards that reflect her artistic flair.

Perfect for holiday gifting or sending greetings, these exclusive items celebrate the season's spirit. Visit the online gallery at <https://www.stwalburg.org/art-gallery/>.



St. Walburg Monastery

Item	Description	Quantity	Suggested Donation	Amount
	11" x 14" print signed by Sr. Emmanuel Note cards: (set of 10) 4 1/4" x 5 1/2" blank		\$50 \$10	
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	11" x 14" print signed by Sr. Emmanuel Note cards: (set of 10) 4 1/4" x 5 1/2" blank		\$50 \$10	
	"Light of the World" Christmas card: (set of 10) 5" x 7"		\$10	
	"Hope for the World" Christmas card: (set of 10) 5" x 7"		\$10	
	"The Divine Grace" Christmas card: (set of 10) 5" x 7"		\$10	
	"Savior Comes" Christmas card: (set of 10) 5" x 7"		\$10	
	"Madonna and Child" by Frank Duveneck Note card: (set of 6) 5" x 7" blank		\$10	
	"Swirls" Note card: (set of 6 - 2 of each design) 5" x 7" blank		\$10	
	"Blue Wave" Note card: (set of 10) 4 1/4" x 5 1/2" blank		\$10	

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 2500 Amsterdam Road
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Questions?
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Thank you for your support!

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No, I will not pick up and would like item(s) to be mailed to address to the right (shipping \$5/item.)

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Lectio Divina

"Divine Reading"

Tuesday evenings during Advent

December 3

December 10

December 17

7:30 PM

Monastery Chapel

For more information,
call Sr. Mary Tewes at 859-331-6324 or
email marytewes@gmail.com

THE CENTER OF SPIRITUALITY
WELCOMES

Sr. Tonette Sperando, OSB

Hospitality

A Gospel Way of Living

Saturday, March 22

9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Lower Level of Monastery

