

Joy in Living the Gospel

Women Religious in the Diocese of Covington

Fall 2025

from Sister Marla Monahan, SND, Vicar for Religious

United in Prayer This prayer for peace occurs every other month at 6:00 pm in Covington's Main Strasse at the Bell Tower. The next date is Tuesday, November 4. Future dates: January 20, March 24, May 5 in 2026. All are welcome. The prayer is live-streamed if you can't be there in person.

Jubilees of 50, 60, and 70 years will be celebrated on Saturday, October 4 at noon, with a luncheon at the Charleston Room, St. Charles Community, 600 Farrell Drive, Covington. The Jubilarians and superiors will gather with Bishop Iffert to celebrate.

National Migration Week 2025 September 22–28, 2025

For over 40 years, the Catholic Church in the United States has celebrated National Migration Week (NMW), which has traditionally culminated with the Holy See's [World Day of Migrants and Refugees](#) (WDMR), a day commemorated by the Universal Church since 1914. Pope Francis chose "**Migrants, missionaries of hope**" for this year's theme. The Diocese of Covington will celebrate with a Prayer Service on Friday, September 26 at 7:00 pm at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption. All are welcome.

CDP

The Kentucky CDPs have had a very full and life-giving summer! We hosted a month-long international program offered by our General Leadership Team for Sisters from Madagascar, France, and Ecuador along with two CDPs from Texas, Sisters Anita Brenek and Kate



*"LOOK TO THE PAST WITH GRATITUDE... LIVE THE PRESENT WITH PASSION...
EMBRACE THE FUTURE WITH HOPE..."*

~POPE FRANCIS



Fitzgerald, and three from our Kentucky Province, Sisters Cindy Fehrenbach, Mary Carol Henggeler, and Judith Riese. Sharing in our common spirituality, the Sisters in the program prayed, reflected, and conversed together.

They spent time with many

Sisters and Associates, and they also visited some of our ministries as well as some of the places that reflect deep injustices in our country and our region. The Sisters had opportunities to reflect together on the ways our charism and mission invite us to respond to God's call to care for others, particularly the most vulnerable.



After the international gathering, we hosted an international leadership meeting, with Sisters from our General Leadership and our



provinces in Europe, Madagascar, and the US. The time together was fruitful; they discussed the pressing issues in our



congregation and prayed and shared together. They also took time to enjoy each other's company and explore some of the sites right here in Kentucky and

Cincinnati. We are blessed with diversity in our unity, and all that we shared together was multilingual, multicultural, and deeply meaningful.

We also held our provincial Summer Assembly, gathering Sisters to reflect on our hopes for the future and all that is deeply important to us in our life of Providence. Our conversations were rich, and we knew the presence of the Spirit with us in our sharing.



Our time together culminated with a beautiful celebration of our Jubilarians: Sisters Armella Pietrowski and Jackie Schack celebrating 70 years, and Sisters Marie Rose Messingschlager, Janet Carr, and Madonna Marie Kling celebrating 60 years. What a joyous and meaningful time together as sisters!

OSB

On June 3, we celebrated Founders' Day, honoring the three sisters who came from Erie, PA, 166 years ago to establish St. Walburg Monastery in Covington. The day was filled with gratitude for the courageous and visionary women who built our community, as well as pride in the tradition they began.



At our Annual Employee Recognition Dinner on June 19, we had the privilege of honoring two remarkable individuals. For 20 years, Maureen Smain has faithfully served as our kitchen manager, while Tony Jarman has served for 45 years in the maintenance department. Both embody the Benedictine values of St. Walburg Monastery.



Our Annual Oblate Ice Cream Social was held on June 21. The fun began with a concert by The Hills of Kentucky Dulcimer Group—a special treat made possible by four members who are also part of our oblate family. We then enjoyed ice cream and bingo together. In all, 14 oblates, 4 guests, and about 20 sisters joined the celebration. Everyone walked away with prizes and fond memories of the day.

The Serra Club for Vocations, Northern Kentucky hosted its annual Picnic for Women Religious at Devou Golf & Event Center, providing an opportunity for sisters to engage with Serra Club members and fellow women religious. The event featured delicious food and entertaining games, with Sr. Barbara emerging as a winner on two occasions. For the sisters who were not able to attend the picnic, they did not miss out; picnic food, including brats, baked beans, and even strawberry shortcake, was served.



Back by popular demand, the sisters once again hosted **Pies for a Purpose** with a festive Red, White, and Blue Pie Sale. In less than 24 hours, 75 pies were sold, raising \$1,000 to benefit Fiesta NKY. The event brought together sisters, oblates, and volunteers in a meaningful community effort. We look forward to gathering again for the Thanksgiving Pie Sale!

This summer, the sisters enjoyed the company of Villa students Maddie and Nathaniel, who generously volunteered their time and talents—Maddie brought joy through card games, while Nathaniel delighted everyone with his delicious baked goods. Adding to the fun, Sr. Grace Schmursal, CDP, coordinated our Monday gatherings with engaging and creative activities that kept spirits high throughout the hot summer.



SJW

Sister Philomena Marie is a second year Novice as of August 15th. Since she has completed her canonical year, she will spend some time working with the sisters at St. Joseph Academy in Walton, and Taylor Manor Nursing home in the Lexington Diocese. One of her fall projects is to help out at All Saints Parish Religious Education Program on Sunday mornings. She will be working with the second grade students in preparation for their First Holy Communion. She will not be responsible for teaching the class but will supplement the class with lessons on religious life. Although she is a pharmacist, she also helped with sacramental preparations at her parish back home. She is looking forward to helping out at All Saints.



Sr. Philomena with student Philomena



Sr. Mary Faustina and Sr. Therese Marie

Four of the Sisters will be attending the National Catholic Youth Conference this coming November. It will be held in Indianapolis again this year. The conference is for high school students from around the country. They anticipate about 20,000 students to attend. The highlight of the conference will be a live video chat with Pope Leo. Several students will be chosen to ask Pope Leo questions on behalf of the whole conference. We will have a vocational booth at the conference. We have attended in the past and have had many good conversations about religious life.

SND



Father Mark Keene and the Parish of St. Agnes invited the SNDs to come to the Pentecost Mass on June 8 during which the tabernacle which we donated to the Parish was re-blessed. The parish wanted to thank the sisters for the many items donated to them and to thank the sisters for the service provided to the parish over the years. Over 138 sisters have ministered at St. Agnes since their beginning. Many

sisters were present and enjoyed a delightful brunch with family, friends, and parishioners.

We said good-bye to our dear Sr. Marie Sand on June 21, 2025. Sr. Marie served God's people in Kentucky and Ohio as she ministered at St. Aloysius Orphanage and the Diocesan Catholic Children's Home. She also ministered at various convents and schools in the Diocese of Covington including St. Leo School in Versailles, KY. In 2014, she returned to St. Joseph Heights, where she sewed clothing for the Sisters of Notre Dame mission in Uganda and crocheted items for our Fourth of July Festival. Sr. Marie always served joyfully through small acts of love and dedication to her sisters and the wider community. She was a quiet presence and will be missed.



On June 15th, 2025, we celebrated our Covington Jubilarians. The liturgy took place in Notre Dame Academy's Chapel followed by a luncheon in NDA's Alumnae Hall. This year's Jubilarians are the following:

Jubilee of Joy – 75:

Sr. Mary Ruth Riehle

Jubilee of Grace – 70:

Sr. M. Ruth Agnes Delaney

Sr. Mary Magdelyn Strittholt



Iron Jubilee – 65:

Sr. Mary Carol Baglan
Sr. Ann Marie Pflum
Sr. Mary Juanelle Thiel

Diamond Jubilee – 60:

Sr. Mary Patricia Bruemmer
Sr. Mary Margaret Droege
Sr. Bernamarie Lauer
Sr. Margaret Mary Mouch
Sr. Mary Kristel Noehring

Golden Jubilee – 50:

Sr. Pamela Mae Geiger



Students from Notre Dame schools across the U.S. participated in the SND USA National Sponsorship and Network Office's Rural Healthcare Student Experience in Morehead, KY. Hosted by [UK St. Claire](#), they shadowed medical professionals, visited home health patients, volunteered at local service organizations, and practiced hands-on skills in a clinical lab. Beyond healthcare, they bonded over shared meals, games, and Mass. Sister Judine Lambert who ministers at UK St. Claire facilitated the program.



In July, we came together for a national gathering. This was the first time for all sisters to come together since becoming one province (a bit less than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the province were in attendance). It was a time to experience who and what we have become over the past five years. As we experience the realities of our collective aging and the ending of the institutional form of religious life, we looked forward to celebrating a final vows profession and first vows celebration in August.

With the deconstruction of the Heights, Sr. Margaret Droege, our archivist, asked that the cornerstones be removed before they could be damaged. On August 12, we received the cornerstones for 1926, 1958, and 1980.





John Renacker used a saw and several other tools to free the boxes within the first two cornerstones. The 1980 stone was smaller and had no container in it. The contents of these cornerstones will be cleaned and kept in the archives along with the contents of the cornerstone of the chapel at the Fifth Street Notre Dame Academy.

CP

Our Passionist Sisters continue to remember our world, Church, and us in their prayer.



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OF THE
SACRED PASSION
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Thank you to our Newsletter contributors: Sister Shauna Bankemper, SND, Sister Leslie Keener, CDP, Becky Motley for OSB, Mother Christina Marie Murray, SJW.