

# Joy in Living the Gospel

## Women Religious in the Diocese of Covington

Summer 2026

**from Sister Marla Monahan, SND, Vicar for Religious**

**United in Prayer** This prayer for peace, sponsored by our women religious vocation directors, occurs every other month at 6:00 pm in Covington's Main Strasse at the Bell Tower. Future dates: September 15, November 10. All are welcome. The prayer is live streamed.

**Picnic for Women Religious** The picnic is scheduled for Friday, June 19, at Summit Hills Country Club from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. Please register by June 8 by clicking on the link below. Include your community initials. This will be the name printed on your nametag. Click [here](#) to RSVP or email [mmonahan@covdio.org](mailto:mmonahan@covdio.org)

### OSB



We are pleased to share that Sr. Aileen Bankemper has been re-elected and has accepted the call to serve as prioress for the next four years. We give thanks for Sr. Aileen's continued willingness to lead our community with faith, wisdom, and Benedictine hospitality. Sr. Aileen has served as prioress since 2018, and this new term marks her third term in leadership.



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

*~POPE FRANCIS*



Sr. Kathleen Ryan passed away on Thursday, April 23, 2026. Born December 12, 1937, she entered St. Walburg Monastery in 1956 and faithfully lived her Benedictine vocation for nearly 70 years. Sr. Kathleen served as an educator in the Diocese of Covington and beyond for over three decades, and later as a Director of Religious Education in parish ministry. Known for her kindness, deep relationships, and joyful spirit, she remained active in ministry even in retirement, always serving others with generosity and care. She is survived by her siblings, extended family, friends, and her Benedictine community. Vigil and funeral services were held at St. Walburg Monastery.

We celebrated a wonderful evening at VillaRama, Villa Madonna Academy's largest fundraiser. The Benedictine Sisters, who founded the school in 1904, were in attendance and proud to support this special event. So grateful for a great night filled with community, fun, and giving back to our school.



At 97 years young, Sr. Emmanuel is still creating... still imagining, still bringing beauty to life. She reminds us that creativity doesn't retire... it deepens.



We are blessed to have Sr. Grace, CDP, coordinate our Monday activities. Some of our sisters spent the morning coloring Easter eggs...each one as beautiful as the next. Sr. Grace Schmersal keeps our Monday activities full of connection and joy.

## SJW

Our Fish Fry was a success. We couldn't do it without all our volunteers who spent hours helping to cook, serve, take orders and clean up afterwards. We owe a great big thank you to everyone who came out to support St. Joseph Academy.



*Hoot or Harriet?*

We discovered that we have a family of Great Horned Owls on our property. All the sisters have been enjoying seeing pictures of the owl family. A professional photographer heard about the owls and asked if he could take pictures for a calendar. We have all turned into bird watchers. Our little family of great horned owls picked a tree that made it easy to see them. The sisters even named the owls: Momma Owl, Daddy Owl, and the two children Hoot and Harriet.

Mother Mary Christina and Sister Mary Faustina went to a Formators Workshop sponsored by the CMSWR. The workshop was held at the St. Augustine Institute in St. Louis. The beautiful campus is situated on the Missouri river.



During the breaks, everyone enjoyed walking on the paths through the woods to the river. The workshop focused on women as daughters, friends, brides and mothers and how women in formation might view those various roles. The talks were both informative and uplifting. It was a relaxing spiritual retreat for the sisters.

## SND

### March 3, 2026 - Congratulations to Sister Mary Lynette Shelton on being



recognized at Notre Dame Academy's annual **Women Making a Difference** event. This award honors those whose lives and work truly embody what it means to make a difference. For more than fifty years, Sister Mary Lynette has faithfully served through education and community outreach. Sister Lynette a 1959 NDA Graduate was recognized along with Donna Bloemer (1987) and Christine Dunn Whelan (1990).

### March 17 St. Patrick Celebration – The sisters celebrated the day together with a



festive St. Patrick's Day special lunch at Lourdes Hall, filled with plenty of Irish spirit. March Birthdays were also celebrated –

Sr. Judith Averbeck (March 15) and Sr. Patricia Sweeney (March 17).

**March 19 Lenten Project** - Each year, our sisters participate in an outreach project to support those in need by collecting toiletries and other small items. This year, the sisters, some Associates and staff gathered in Lourdes Hall on March 19 and filled approximately 20 bags, which were distributed throughout the area.



**March 25 - The Announcement of the New Provincial for SND USA** The feast of the Annunciation is the patronal feast day for the Sisters of Notre Dame. This year's feast was especially memorable because of the announcement of our new provincial – **Sr. Mary Dianne Rumschlag**. On March 8, the sisters submitted suggestions for a provincial that were sent to Sr. Mary Ann Culpert, our superior general, who with the consent of her council appointed Sr. Mary Dianne as our provincial for a term of six years. During the past 10 years, Sister has ministered at Guardian Catholic School in Jacksonville. Sr. Dianne and her team will be installed on July 5, 2026.



**March 28 The Annual SND Women's Retreat - "Women of Faith"** was held this year at St. Walburg Monastery from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The presentations were given by Sr. Mary Evelyn Reinke and Jenn Ledonne, the Director of Youth Ministry for St. Mary's parish in Alexandria. Time for prayer, reflection, discussions and Liturgy of the Hours with the Benedictine sisters were all part of the day. Approximately 43 women attended the retreat along with the six team members.

**March 28 Regional Meeting in Covington** - During the Regional Meeting in Covington, Sr. Margaret Gorman, the Leadership Team, and Jenniffer Deckard, our Chief Finance Officer, met on Saturday, March 28. They shared with the sisters updates on province statistics, properties, finances, regional happenings, and some of the current challenges the province is facing. On Sunday, March 29, Sr. Margaret and the leadership team held an Open House at St. Charles Lodge for an informal gathering. All were invited to stop in, visit, and enjoy some snacks together. It was a nice time to share and/or ask questions on topics from the gathering the day before.



**Tea Party at Lourdes Hall on April 23 - Thanks to the thoughtfulness, hard work, and attention to every little detail of Chef Dan Gifford and Denise Marinocci, activities director, for the tea party that was held at Lourdes**



Hall. It was truly special! From the beautiful setup to the delicious food including homemade ice cream, it was clear how much everyone put into the event and was made to feel included and celebrated. We are so grateful to Dan and Denise for their time and generosity.

**Celebrating Derby Day in Style - Fabulous hats, delicious food, lots of laughter**



and a toy horse race that brought out everyone's competitive spirit was enjoyed on Derby Day. This year we celebrated this cherished Kentucky tradition at St. Charles' Charlie's Club.



## CDP

Good things have been happening for the Sisters of Divine Providence! The month of May began with some very festive celebrations. On Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, we enjoyed a Kentucky Derby party with our Associates. While we did not "party all night," as the picture suggests, we certainly had a wonderful time!



The next day, we celebrated the feast of our founder, Blessed Jean Martin Moye, with Mass followed by coffee and donuts. It was a joy to give thanks for our founder, our first sisters, and the Mission of Providence they entrusted to us.

Sr. Lynn Stenken was honored at the Diocesan Catechetical Leadership Awards with the Sister Ann Adele Fritz, SND Catechetical Leader Award. Her pastor, Monsignor Gerry Reinersman, several Saints Peter and Paul catechists and parish council members, and members of our leadership team joined in celebrating this special recognition.



We've had some opportunities to stand together and raise our voices for peace and justice. In March, many of us held signs, and several marched in Cincinnati's No Kings rally. In May, Sr. Mary Agnes Cashman and Sr. Virginia Patrick joined more than 1,000 people in Selma, Alabama for the first leg of All Roads Lead to the South's National Day of Action for Voting Rights, protesting a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision. We trust in God's providence as we work to bring about God's kingdom.





In May, we celebrated the Oaks Evening of Gratitude, a wonderful yet bittersweet finale to our annual fundraising event. A total of 165 people attended, including former Development Board members, generous benefactors, CDPs, and staff who helped make this event a success year after year. We are truly blessed!

## CP

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



**MONASTERY**  
OF THE  
**SACRED PASSION**  
ERLANGER, KY



*Thank you to our Newsletter contributors: Sister Shauna Bankemper, SND, Sister Leslie Keener, CDP, Becky Motley for OSB, Mother Mary Christina Murray, SJW.*