



Lisle Benedictine Women

Vol. 49 No. 1

Sacred Heart Monastery

June 2026



photo credit: Tom Shiigalis

Message from the Prioress...

Ordinary time in the Church year can be anything but ordinary.

VSB resident Tom Shilgalis often enjoys taking sunrise photos looking from his window when the clouds are pretty, and the photo featured on our cover is one of his favorites. The crucifix hanging in his window was given to him many years ago when Tom participated in a Cursillo retreat weekend. Thank you, Tom! This is an awesome photo!



The crucifix, no doubt present in our homes, is a constant reminder of an opportunity to stay in touch with our rootedness in Christ Jesus who came into our world to share Himself, to challenge us to believe in and partake of his gift of the Eucharist, where we can receive his body and blood and find ongoing nourishment to grow and live out our life with a joy-filled giving Spirit.

Speaking of joy-filled life, you will read in this issue of celebration moments: our international student Sister Alberta graduating from BenU and the Jubilee celebration of Sister Karen's 60 years of vowed monastic life. We had planned a celebration for two sisters with 75 years of monastic profession on June 13; however, Sister DePaul died a few days short of that momentous occasion. Sister Margaret Mary was in rare alert form that day, enjoying conversation and interaction with about 30 friends and family. More details in our next issue!

For our Sisters' annual retreat, Sister Mary Jo Polak, OSB presented on the "cor" (Latin for heart) mentioned 31 times in Benedict's Rule, and challenged us to engage in serious reflection of how we are living that "cor" teaching and how we can improve.

We also engage monthly in "Wisdom Circle conversations", prefaced with meals like pizza or chicken wings, and then sharing happenings and suggestions for making our lives informed, exciting and prayerful. All this provides for ongoing meaningful conversations as our numbers decrease but our lives remain energized.

In July, my dear friend Renata and I will drive to Warren, Ohio and Pittsburgh, PA to bring our Sisters Barbara Pavlik and Marion Dobos to Lisle for a visit. They are members of our community, having received their formation in Lisle, but are of the Byzantine rite. It has been a long time since they've been to Lisle.

Our next issue will also cover The Lisle Woman's Club and day-long experience of touring select gardens in Lisle - where our Grotto and Peace Garden were featured. During the garden tour, some participants were intrigued by the opportunity of having a tribute brick planted along the edge of our Grotto's fence. (*see photo*)

You may order tribute bricks for you or your loved ones for a small donation. Contact me by email (mbratrsovsky@shmlisle.org) or mail:

Sister Mary Bratrsovsky, OSB
1910 Maple Ave
Lisle, IL 60532

If interested, please submit your order by the end of July, and indicate whether the person whose name is to be inscribed on the brick is living or deceased.



May the Risen Christ continue to energize your life!

Sister Mary Bratrsovsky, O.S.B.

Congratulations and blessings!



Photo credit: Dick Lamb

Sister Karen Nykiel, OSB Celebrating 60 years!

Sister Karen Nykiel celebrated 60 years as a professed Benedictine Sister on May 16, 2026 at a festive Holy Mass and luncheon in her honor.

Sister Karen has been a polio victim since infancy and has gone through the rigors of life-saving hospitalizations and surgeries. Early on in her young life, strengthened by God's grace, she chose to serve God and humanity. Investing her intellectual and leadership skills, she has focused on peace and justice issues her entire religious life. Educated with a degree in Chemistry and Physics, she taught those subjects at College of DuPage for several years. She received another Master's degree in Comparative Ethics and taught World Religions at Benedictine University, after serving as administrator of Queen of Peace Center (now Villa St. Benedict). Along with teaching and administrative assignments, she has been involved in Benedictine peace rallies, and has served as president of Pax Christi - Illinois,

treasurer of Rotary Club and member of the Benedictine Sisters Council. Presently she is the director of the Benedictine Oblates, frequent speaker for Villa St. Benedict residents, and Chair of the Peace and Justice Committee. Her mission is to continue to support human rights, non-violence and anti-war solutions, issues of gender, race and economic equality, and climate change consciousness. Her advice to all of us earthlings: Be hopeful. Go back to the Gospel and follow God's way to arrive at eternal joy!

Congratulations, Sister Alberta Khwela!

In May, Sister Alberta graduated from Benedictine University with a Master of Science in Business Analytics. She'll be applying for a one-year internship, where she will perfect those business analysis skills. Before returning to her community in South Africa, she also plans to complete a PhD in organizational development or administration.

Sister Alberta wishes to express her sincere gratitude to the Sisters, residents and friends who have been supporting her as she pursues her educational goals.



May She Rest in the Peace of the Lord



Sr. Jo Anne Form, OSB
October 11, 1939 – January 24, 2026

By Sister Christine Kouba, OSB

Sister Jo Anne Form was born on October 11, 1939 to Josephine and Carl Form and was baptized on February 2, 1940 at St. Patrick's Cathedral in Fort Worth, Texas. She was the second of four daughters: Carlene, Jo Anne, Frances and Mary.

Her early childhood years were lived in Lake Brownwood, Texas, but by the time she entered fifth grade, the family had moved to Fort Worth, becoming parishioners of St. Thomas parish where Lisle Benedictine Sisters resided and taught. As a fifth grader, Jo Anne was very inspired by Sister Helen Marie Kucera (at that time called Sister Benigna) whom she lovingly trusted as her teacher and as a kind friend. A few months later, Carl Form, the girls' father and an independent plumber, died of a cerebral hemorrhage, leaving the daughters fatherless and their mother a widow who needed to raise her four darling daughters alone.

In recent years, Sister Jo Anne would often recall how providential it was to be at St. Thomas School at the time of her father's sudden death. Not only was it the first time Jo Anne came in contact with religious sisters, but it was also an opportunity for her mother

to form enduring friendships with the Benedictine Sisters. After all, her mother needed support with her daughters and the Sisters at St. Thomas needed her mother to be their nurse. Mother Form (as they called her) offered herself to help other Benedictine Sisters in Fort Worth as well and became an "on call service nurse" for all four of the small Benedictine communities in Fort Worth: at St. George, St. Peter and St. Paul parishes, plus St. Thomas. The Sisters at St. Thomas would help Mother Form by keeping her daughters occupied after school if she ran late picking them up after her work in the hospital.

Appreciating the welcoming, caring spirit of the Benedictine Sisters, Jo Anne was excited when the Sisters invited her to attend Sacred Heart Academy in Lisle as an eighth grader in 1954. She arrived in overwhelming readiness to study in the boarding school environment and after 8th grade continued her high school studies there. During those years she became an aspirant as she began to think seriously about becoming a religious sister.

In 1957, she graduated from Sacred Heart Academy and planned to enter the convent as a postulant. She spent another year in faithful observance of study, prayer and work according to the Rule of St. Benedict in the Novitiate. Following her journey of faith in God, she made her first vows in 1958. Three years later, in 1961, she finalized her Benedictine commitment of the vows of Stability, Conversion of Life and Obedience.



After her profession of vows, she began her college level studies, receiving her B.A. degree in Education from Loyola University in Chicago and later her M.A. in Elementary School Guidance from Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, Texas. Through the years she taught in several parochial schools staffed by the Benedictine Sisters: St. Vitus, Our Lady of the Mount and Our Lady of Lourdes schools in the Chicago Archdiocese; St. James, St. Scholastica, and St. Irene schools in the Joliet Diocese and St. Paul in

the Fort Worth Diocese. She also was principal at Our Lady of Lourdes School on Chicago's West Side for several years. Her life at Our Lady of Lourdes blossomed as she worked under the leadership of Father Michael Dempsey, who was involved intimately with the African-American issues of poverty and inequality. He later became an auxiliary bishop of Chicago but remained pastor there. Sister Jo Anne and the other Sisters were deeply influenced by his kindly ways and worked with his cause of charity.

Throughout her religious life, Sister Jo Anne involved herself enthusiastically in art and music, and when technology came into use, became an expert by teaching herself computer innovations through the years. She played guitar and liked to sing, and in some schools where she taught, she had great success as the children's choir director. She contributed so much wherever she was stationed, in the schools where she taught or in her retirement years at the monastery. She was known for her calligraphy script, using her talent to write formal invitations. With an eye for perfect design and color, she made beautiful liturgical banners for the chapel and bulletin board arrangements, and everything she created was artistically professional. She also helped the other Sisters with her creative endeavors. She made several different kinds of all-occasion cards for special events, making sure they were unique to the persons who would receive them.

Perhaps her finest contribution for the Sisters was creating booklets for the daily horarium of the Divine Office of prayer, composed for the entire seasonal

church year cycle. The Sisters had been using three books daily in order to piece together the Propers of the day. For two years, Sister Jo Anne carefully researched the church season of worship as well as the Bible to prepare the proper inclusion of Psalms, Responses and Antiphons related to the feast or the ordinary of each day. Her work has been a most worthy and appreciated accomplishment. It is so convenient to pick up one booklet that contains the full Liturgy for that prayer period of the Divine Office. The Sisters are very grateful to Sister Jo Anne for this timely gift.

Sister Jo Anne Form has now laid down her active life of prayer and work to become a member of the ever-joyful life for those who praise God in eternity. She died in the stillness of an early morning call from God on Saturday, January 24, 2026. She had been treated by the attentive staff at St. Patrick's Residence and received comfort care from Residential Hospice in Naperville since November of 2025. The Lisle Benedictine Sisters and Villa St. Benedict communities will miss her presence, even her unique, Texas accent!

The Vespers Wake Service was held on Tuesday, February 3rd and the Mass of Christian Burial on Wednesday, February 4th, 2026, both at Sacred Heart Chapel. Burial took place at the St. Scholastica Cemetery on the Villa St. Benedict grounds in Lisle.



May She Rest in the Peace of the Lord



Sr. DePaul Stava, OSB
October 19, 1930 – June 3, 2026

By Sister Christine Kouba, OSB

Sister DePaul Stava, OSB, was born on October 19, 1930 in Chicago, Illinois. She was baptized “Therese” on November 8, 1930 at St. Procopius Church in Chicago’s Pilsen area where the Benedictine Fathers of Lisle served the parish at that time.

Therese’s mother was Helen Blaha Stava, a single mother. She already had two older children: Emily and Joseph. With the birth of Therese, she was overcome by the economic downturn of the Depression along with an unstable job and poor health, making her incapable of helping her three children thrive. At three years old, with the intervention of Catholic Charities, Therese and her brother Joseph, who was a few years older, were placed in St. Joseph’s Orphanage operated by the Benedictines in Lisle, and Emily, who was the oldest, was taken to be cared for by a related family.

As a three-year-old, Therese was attended to along with the other pre-school children in the orphanage to receive more intimate attention. Both she and her brother Joseph adapted very well at the orphanage, each joining their own playmates. They both blended

into the established program of the day, learning Christian disciplined behaviors from the other orphans around them. Though the two were living in different dorms and cared for by different Benedictine Sisters, Joseph took on the responsibility to check on his little sister often. When Therese grew older she too would look out for him, to share family closeness whenever they could. Their mother’s presence was welcomed every month.

The Benedictine Sisters not only cared for the orphans, they were also their teachers. One of the Benedictine priests from St. Procopius Abbey was always the House Father or Director, and during Therese’s life there Father Vincent Novotny, OSB was in charge of the orphanage. Therese was very fond of him. He worked hard at planning and providing the best opportunities for the orphans’ growth and development, sharing his heart with all of them.

The elementary school years for Therese were at St. Joseph Orphanage. From first through eighth grade, Therese learned the same subjects as students would in any Catholic School. For high school, she was able to walk across the field to Sacred Heart Academy, a boarding school for girls, becoming one of the few day students. She made more new friends there and really loved and wanted to be like Sister Charlotte Vesely, OSB, who was a joyful person, inspiring her and eventually helping her arrange for her convent entrance. When Therese graduated from Sacred Heart Academy in June of 1949, she made plans to enter Sacred Heart Convent as a postulant. Before summer was over, along with other St. Joseph Orphanage caregivers and children, she had a wonderful vacation at Pistakee Bay Camp in McHenry, Illinois, managed by the Viatorian Brothers, with plenty of play-filled camp activities.



The day of entry into her new life came as scheduled, on August 15, 1949. She was received by the

Benedictine Sisters and joyously welcomed by the other postulants, some of whom had been her classmates at Sacred Heart Academy. After a year as postulants, learning the initial ways and requirements of Benedictine life, they became novices together in June of 1950. It was at that reception that Therese received her religious name: Sister DePaul. The prioress that year wanted to name each of the six novices for a significant person in their lives. For Therese Stava she chose Father Vincent Novotny as her significant person, whose patron was St. Vincent de Paul. Sister DePaul felt honored to receive that name as she had great respect for Father Vincent as her spiritual father. After completing her canonical novitiate year in 1951, she made her first vows of Obedience, Stability and Conversion of Life, and later completed her commitment promise in 1954 when she made her final vows.

With her new name, Sister DePaul felt ready to prepare for her college education and her community ministries. She received her B.S. degree in elementary education from DePaul University, qualifying her for teaching any grade in the Benedictine Sisters' parochial school network. This was an exciting time for her as she was game for new adventures. She always treasured her friends, students and activities in all the parish schools.

From childhood she was trained to be organized. She kept a picture album and a significant stamp collection which she developed through the years.



She learned to play the harmonica, and had a natural ease in telling jokes. Thus, she surprised her students with an amusing approach for learning. For 42 years she was sent to teach at the following schools: St. Joan of Arc in Lisle, St. Vitus in Chicago, Holy Trinity in Haugen, Wisconsin, SS. Peter and Paul in Warren, Ohio, Holy Mount in Cicero, and Our Lady of Lourdes in Chicago - where she spent 22 years as a teacher and four of those years as an assistant to the principal. She came back to Sacred Heart Monastery in 1993, when Lourdes school closed. She then offered herself to be a helper at Villa St. Benedict until she had serious difficulty walking due to complications after previous knee surgeries.

On June 24, 2021, she was moved to St. Patrick's Residence in Naperville for nursing care, where she immediately made friends telling jokes, playing cards, being present at Mass and feeling at home.

The Benedictine Sisters are grateful to the Carmelite Sisters and the staff at St. Patrick's as well as Angel Grace Hospice staff for their loving care of Sister DePaul there. She died on June 3rd, 2026. The wake service was June 4th and the Mass of Christian Burial June 5th at Sacred Heart Monastery Chapel, followed by burial here at St Scholastica Cemetery.



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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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With grateful thanks

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.

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

Here and There . . .

Mother's Day blessings

VSF staff and friends gather to help the Sisters distribute roses to the women at Villa St. Benedict for Mother's Day.



Blessing of a Crimson Maple Tree

Resident Nancy Riley made arrangements with the Foundation to plant a Crimson Maple tree on the grounds of Villa St. Benedict. The planting and blessing ceremony took place April 29th.

Nancy adds the first shovel full of dirt and sprinkles holy water on her tree.



Blessings ...

The Sisters hosted their traditional celebration with employees and non-resident volunteers. Here are some happy memories from February 15th!





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.

The Sisters have certainly felt enriched and uplifted by your love and support in 2025.

We are ever grateful, and say, Thank You.

Judy Arcy
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Our Byzantine Sisters

- Sr. Barbara Pavlik, OSB

Benedictine Sisters of the Byzantine Rite *formerly Queen of Heaven Convent* *Now Members of Sacred Heart Monastery*

ALL SAINTS DAY ... in June?

Greetings from Warren, Ohio! This may seem a strange topic to choose for an article for the June LBW newsletter. However, the reason should surface by the end of this article.

Everyone knows the Roman Church celebrates the Feast of All Saints on November 1st. Invariably, someone will ask if I celebrate this feast. (Aha! A moment of education!) I tell them that November 1st is not the feast of All Saints in the Byzantine Church. The Byzantine Church has its own liturgical calendar of feasts. The major feasts, such as the Annunciation, Easter, Christmas, Pentecost, etc. are celebrated on the same day as the Roman Church, and are called by the same name. Other feasts may be celebrated on the same day, celebrate the same event, but have different names. For example: The Roman Church calls December 8th "The Immaculate Conception". The Byzantine Church calls that same feast, "The Conception of Anna". Other minor feasts may be remembered at a different time, and even the calendar of saints of the Eastern Church differs from the Roman Church.

The Byzantine Church celebrates "All Saints Day" on the First Sunday after Pentecost. Father John Zeyack, in his book "Good News from The East" captures the spirit of the feast and the reason for its placement on the liturgical calendar of the Eastern Church.

Father begins by describing the life of St. Ignatius of Loyola. He grew up in a wealthy family and as an adult, became a soldier. He was seriously wounded in battle, and in his long period of recovery he began reading the Bible and started to pray. One verse captured him: "*What does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?*" After serious reflection, he examined his life: "Where am I going? What am I doing with my life? Am I saving or losing my soul?" His whole life changed. He became a real "soldier of Christ", and even started a Religious Order that is still very relevant today.

Mother Theresa once said, "The greatest loss, the greatest failure is not to become a saint." Father Zeyack says that he does not see anybody in a great hurry to become a saint today. We are distracted by so many things and we get so busy that we lose sight of what God wants us to do. *God made us for a purpose. God gave each of us a calling and a mission. He wants eternal happiness for each one of us, to share His life ... and for us to live forever with Him.* (Reminds me of the old Baltimore Catechism's first question: "Why did God make me?" Answer: "God made me to know Him, to love Him and to serve Him and to be happy with Him in heaven.")

Father Zeyack then talks about God's creation of the world and the creation of man and woman. After each of God's creations, God said "It is good," God acknowledged the goodness and beauty of everything. Then He made Adam and Eve in His own image and likeness. God also made us in His image and likeness, with the ability to recognize and reflect, and to bless God in return, to acknowledge His blessing and His goodness.

By our nature we are called to be thankful, grateful people, people who bless and acknowledge the goodness we have received. We are called to bless, to thank and to acknowledge the God of Goodness.

We all know about the sin of Adam and Eve, their loss of paradise, and how *Jesus came to restore all creation and humanity back to God*. This is what we believe and celebrate ... that God sent His Holy Spirit through His Son Jesus to fill us with life and blessings. But He wants us to acknowledge His blessings, His goodness, His love for us. He wants us to put Jesus first in our lives – before anyone else – and then we get more than we ever expected. That is God's plan! That is God's purpose! That is what He wants us to do! But, we get so busy, so involved in our present needs, that we forget why we are here. We forget all about God.

Jesus says, "Whoever acknowledges Me before men, I will acknowledge before My Father in Heaven ... whoever has given up home, brothers and sisters, father or mother, wife or children, or property for My sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit everlasting life." Whatever we give up, however large or small, God will bless us even more! Father Zeyack goes on to say that is why we celebrate Pentecost – the gift of the Holy Spirit that moves us into action, into service, into worship and into the fruits of the Spirit in our lives.

St. Paul warns the Christians in Galatia (and us) that when we forget about God and live for ourselves, "it is obvious what proceeds ... lewd conduct, idolatry, hostility, bickering, outbursts of rage, dissensions, factions, drunkenness, orgies and the like." But when we act for Jesus Christ in His Spirit, this is what we receive: love, peace, joy, patient endurance, kindness, generosity, faith, mildness, and chastity ... Against these, there is no law ... Since we live by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's lead."

The Epistle to the Hebrews sets before us the goal of sanctity. The Saints worked wonders and were faithful to God in every age; **THEY FULFILLED GOD'S PURPOSE!** Now it is our turn to become saints – to live in Christ! Let's all become saints! That is God's purpose for us!

Many Prayers from "a saint in the making".

(Step #1: Put away your cell phone!)



... and more blessings



The Sisters hosted their traditional High Tea luncheon on April 11th for Villa St. Benedict residents who volunteer their time and talents at Sacred Heart Monastery. Enjoy some images from that lovely gathering!





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, or send a note to Benedictine Sisters attn.: SHA Alumnae, 1910 Maple Ave, Lisle, IL 60532.

Homecoming is planned for Saturday, October 17th at Villa St. Benedict. Invitations will be mailed in September.

Villa St. Benedict

- Joe Kellogg, Executive Director

A Milestone Moment at Villa St. Benedict

We are pleased to share a moment of deep gratitude and celebration for the Villa St. Benedict community. Our campus has reached an all-time high census, a meaningful milestone that reflects the trust placed in us by residents, families, and the broader community.



This achievement represents more than a number; it reflects our mission in action. Each resident who calls Villa St. Benedict home entrusts us with their life story and shares in a commitment to living with dignity, compassion, and respect.

Since its founding, the vision of the Benedictine Sisters of the Sacred Heart has guided all that we do. Their mission to create a welcoming, faith-centered community where older adults are honored, supported, and known, continues to shape daily life on our campus. The Sisters understood the sacredness of aging and believed deeply in creating environments where seniors could live with meaning, connection, and peace.

Today, that vision is carried forward by a dedicated team of associates and volunteers who serve with hospitality, stewardship, and

genuine care. This commitment is reflected in the meaningful relationships formed and in our focus on supporting the whole person, body, mind, and spirit.

Reaching this milestone invites reflection and gratitude. We are thankful for the Sisters whose courage and foresight established this ministry; for the residents who enrich our community with their wisdom and presence; for the families who place their trust in us; and for our staff, whose daily efforts bring our mission to life.



As Villa St. Benedict continues to grow, we remain grounded in the values that have sustained us for generations. Our commitment to serving older adults now and in the future remains strong, faithful, and hope-filled.

We are honored to continue this important work together.



Villa St. Benedict

Photo credits:
Emily Turner, Marketing Coordinator

Come and Be Oblates of St. Benedict

Are you searching for more on your spiritual journey? Is your workload or busyness in competition with your relationship with God? Have you found some distance between you and Church?

Consider becoming an Oblate, sustained by the way of life presented in the Rule of Benedict.

Oblates are men and women, married or single, who hunger for a deeper experience of God. Join others in prayer, Lectio Divina, and work in the context of an extended Community.

To date we have had 40+ women and men make an Oblation (a Promise) to Sacred Heart Monastery. We meet once a month to socialize, reflect on Lectio Divina, and share the values taught in the Rule of Benedict and how these values have enhanced our lives.

Oblates volunteer to assist here at the Monastery with garden work, as drivers, praying with us at Lauds and/or Vespers, and in our Eucharistic ministries. Needless to say, they also share in the needs of their local communities.

See for yourself how your spiritual life can include a new depth and comradeship as you continue to journey through life.

Sister Karen Nykiel, O.S.B.
630-632-2216
knykiel@shmlisle.org





Lisle Benedictine Women

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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.