



St. Scholastica Priory, 271 North Main Street, PO Box 606, Petersham, MA 01366



Mother Mary Clare Vincent, OSB
Foundress of St Scholastica Priory
Born Cambridge, MA July 18, 1925
1st Religious consecration April 9, 1949
Benedictine vows September 8, 1981
Elected First Prioress September 8, 1984
Died in Petersham, MA January 2, 2016



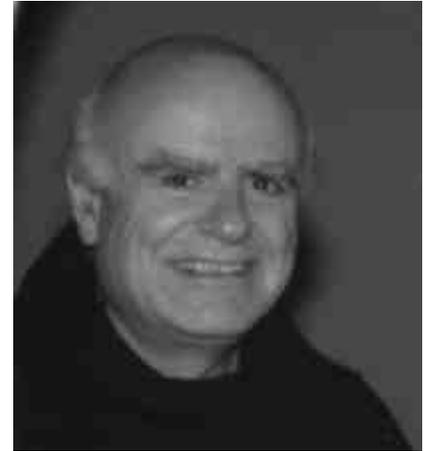
Sr Mary Herbert Walsh, OSB
Born Alpine, IN Oct 31, 1915
1st Benedictine vows Oct 13, 1931
Ferdinand, Indiana
Solemn vows Feb 10, 1991
Died in Petersham, MA July 30, 2014

FINALLY ALL TOGETHER

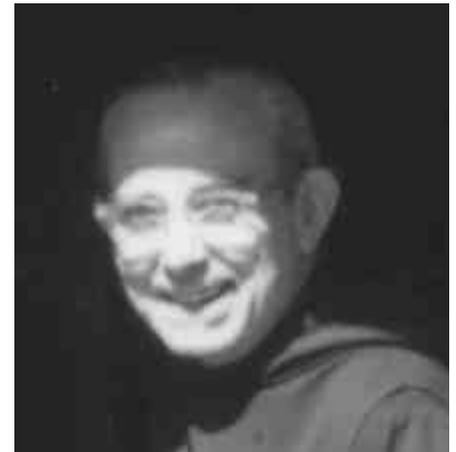
I remember witnessing the vows of one of the monks here at St Mary's Monastery. The presiding abbot asked a question of the junior just before the ceremony: "Are you ready to die here?" I have to tell you I still remember my inner response, "What?!"

St Benedict does say in Chapter 58 (On the procedure of receiving brothers), "One newly arriving to this way of life is not to be granted an easy entrance." But isn't talking about death on the day you make your vows forever to God and the community a little too much? Maybe not. Isn't there a well-known phrase in the traditional marriage vow that says, "Until death do us part?" A few verses further in that same chapter, St Benedict continues, "If he promises perseverance in his stability ... if, having deliberated within himself, he promises to keep everything ... he is to be received into the community knowing that the law of the Rule establishes that from that day he is no longer free to depart from the monastery nor remove his neck from beneath the yoke of the Rule which after such prolonged deliberation he was free to either refuse or to accept. The one being received is to make in the oratory before all a promise of his stability, his faithfulness to the way of life, and obedience. This is done before God and his saints" (RB 58:9ff). And so begins the committed life of a nun or monk in the "school of the Lord's service" (RB Prol 45).

In the Prologue of the Rule, just following his speaking of the "school" of the Lord he speaks about graduation day. Graduation is not about some career within the monastery, the Church or the surrounding town. "Graduate" comes from the Latin "gradus" which means "step". Isn't taking steps walking? It is that forward movement to which St Benedict invites us when we are just beginning in the way, "advancing in the way of life and faith" so that "our hearts open wide, and we run with unspeakable sweetness of love on the path of God's commandments. So that, never departing from his guidance, but persevering in his teaching in the monastery until death, we may by patience participate in the passion of Christ; that we may deserve also to be partakers of his kingdom. Amen" (RB Prol 49-50). I guess asking that question of the newly



Father Cyril Karam, OSB
Founder of St Mary's Monastery
Born Beirut, Lebanon March 28, 1926
1st religious consecration Jan 1, 1949
Benedictine vows Sept 8, 1981
Superior of St Mary's Sept 19, 1986
Died in Petersham, MA Feb 27, 1990



Br Stanislaus Ribera-Faig, OSB
Born Barcelona, Spain Dec 23, 1919
1st religious consecration Jan 1, 1949
Benedictine vows Sept 8, 1981
Part of the founding community
Died in Petersham, MA June 25, 1989



Sr Virginia Walsh, OSB
 Born Alpine, IN April 1, 1911
 1st Benedictine vows June 13, 1929
 Ferdinand, Indiana
 Solemn vows Feb 10, 1991
 Died in Tickfaw, LA June 19, 1997

professed, "are you ready to die here" wasn't actually shocking. It was simply asking what St Benedict states several times in his Rule. He wants us heading in the direction of eternity from the start, actually saying in RB 4:46-47, "to desire eternal life with all spiritual ardent yearning, to daily keep death before one's eyes."

St Scholastica Priory and St Mary's Monastery moved to Petersham in 1985. From the first day of our arrival we planned to have here a cemetery for our brothers and sisters who "persevered through patience," preferring nothing to the love of Christ" (RB 4:21), and who died in the monastery. Finally this is happening! On September 26th, the remains of eight nuns and two monks will be interred in our new cemetery. It is placed in the area where first church stood, just behind the grey cloister gates. In the spring, a twelve-foot cross will be erected in the midst of the graves.

The six sisters who died at our daughter house in Louisiana, Our Lady Queen Monastery, will be among the ten be buried here. All of these sisters, including our own Sr Mary Herbert, had lived as active Benedictine sisters for many years prior to their life in Tickfaw, LA. Our Lady Queen Monastery had roots from 1970, but the actual monastery complex was finally built in 1984. These sisters wanted to join a Benedictine congregation characterized by a simple monastic life, and that is what brought them to us. In 1990 they became a daughter house of St Scholastica Priory, and they all made solemn vows. Mother Mary Clare visited them many times over those years. God's sweet touch is shown in that the Tickfaw sisters moved into their newly built monastery on Antioch Road on September 26th, 1984, and on that very day in this year of our Lord 2017 they will be interred here in our new cemetery at St Scholastica's.

Mother Mary Clare Vincent led our community in the 1970s to the Benedictine family. Our move to Petersham flowed out of the permission we received from Rome to make solemn vows and elect our first prioress, who was, of course, Mother Mary Clare. Her love of God, faith, teaching, welcoming smile and courage brought us to where we are today.

Fr Cyril Karam founded St Mary's Monastery in 1985 with the help of Br Stanislaus Ribera Faig, with whom he had lived religious life for many years in Still River, Massachusetts. His great wisdom of mind and soul led his community to become a daughter house of Pluscarden Abbey, Scotland. Only God knew that this would be vital to St. Mary's existence when Br Stanislaus died in 1989 and Fr Cyril only eight months later.

These three pillars of our communities are buried in the Petersham Town Cemetery. A fourth pillar is also buried there: Sr Mary Herbert Walsh, who with heroic enthusiasm chose to move here from Louisiana, and died here only months short of her ninety-ninth birthday in 2014. All four will be moved here on the 26th of September.

May our sisters and brothers who have persevered in "his teaching in the monastery until death" and who are now "partakers of His kingdom." (RB Prol 50) pray for us!
 MMEK



Sr Marion Walsh, OSB
 Born Bentonville, IN July 20, 1922
 1st Benedictine vows June 10, 1940
 Ferdinand, Indiana
 Solemn vows Feb 10, 1991
 Died in Tickfaw, LA July 18, 1999



Sr Mary Fredric Turner, OSB
 Born Smithsville, KY Jan 14, 1924
 1st Benedictine vows June 4, 1944
 Ferdinand, Indiana
 Solemn vows Aug 22, 1992
 Died in Tickfaw, LA Oct 10, 2003



Sr Gertrude Lamendola, OSB
 Born Baton Rouge, LA March 9, 1917
 1st Benedictine vows Feb 15, 1934
 Fort Smith Arkansas
 Solemn vows Aug 22, 1992
 Died in Tickfaw, LA Dec 4, 2004



Sr Mary Patrice Lynn, OSB
 Born Haubstadt, IN March 22, 1922
 1st Benedictine vows Aug 10, 1942
 Ferdinand, Indiana
 Solemn vows Feb 10, 1991
 Died in Tickfaw, LA June 19, 2004



Sr Mary Boniface Dewig, OSB
 Born Evansville, IN Aug 9, 1928
 1st Benedictine vows June 9, 1947
 Ferdinand, Indiana
 Solemn vows Aug 22, 1992
 Died in Tickfaw, LA June 8, 2005

HAPPENINGS

Since our last newsletter we've had joyful times, sorrowful times and everything in between!



In May, the twin communities had the blessing of hearing a powerful witness from Afroz Emami, a persecuted Christian from Iran. Her story has been featured in *The Voice of the Martyrs*, *Christian Farmers Outreach* and other publications, and while on retreat here in Petersham she graciously shared her experience with us as well. Needless to say, we were incredibly inspired by her love for Christ, and it was an excellent reminder to pray for all who are courageously giving their lives for the faith throughout the world.



At the end of that month, on May 29th, Sr. Mary Paula lost her mother, Marjorie Wenzel. And on June 22nd, Marjorie Kloss--Mother Mary Elizabeth & Sr. Mary Angela's mom--also passed away, surrounded by much of her family. We thank God for these two beautiful women who gave their most prized possessions to our community--their daughters!



Our second Monastic Experience Weekend of the year was held on June 9-11. Three lovely women--one of whom is now our happy postulant, Elena--came to learn more about our monastic way of life. We remember them and all of our Monastic Weekend participants in our prayers as they continue to discern God's will in their lives.



We had our annual retreat from June 23-30th, which was led by Fr. Ephrem Arcement from St. Joseph Abbey in Louisiana. It was his first preached retreat, yet he delivered it like a well-seasoned veteran! It was a great blessing to have him with us.



Sr. Mary Frances had the opportunity to travel to England and Scotland from July 5-21 to attend a conference on Gregorian Chant at St. Cecilia's Abbey in Ryde, on the Isle of Wight, England. She enjoyed being in the midst of fellow musicians and having a chance to share expertise. While she was in the UK, she was also able to spend a few days with the sisters at Stanbrook Abbey, who helped form our own Benedictine monastery in the 80's, as well as to have some time with our brothers at Pluscarden.



On July 22nd, the twin communities celebrated the 25th anniversary of Br. Jerome's vows as a Diocesan Hermit--the official start of his consecrated religious life. Abbot Anselm, visiting from Pluscarden, presided at Mass and received Br. Jerome's heartfelt renewal of his oblation promises. Long-time friends came to join the celebration, and our postulants even bestowed on him a hand-

made crown and scepter at dinner to mark the occasion!



August saw the repainting of the interior of our monastic church. While the painters were hard at work, the two communities toggled back and forth between the sisters' house chapel and the large church to ensure the Mass and Divine Office schedules continued uninterrupted!



To round out the summer events and to kick off a series of scholarly lectures to be given to our twin communities, John Zaleski came on August 27th to share his research and knowledge of Islam. It was an enriching evening for all, and a very good beginning of our growth in awareness of this faith tradition.



As we enter into the contemplative season of autumn, we thank God for all of you and remind you that your beloved dead will be receiving a novena of Masses in November.

The Benedictine Bulletin is published by the nuns of St. Scholastica Priory. Contact us to receive a copy or an address change: www.stscholasticapriory.org Facebook: St Scholastica Priory e-mail sspriory@aol.com

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Under thy protection we seek refuge,
O Holy Mother of God;



In our needs, despise not our petitions,



We want to introduce you to our postulants and ask you to pray for them! They are praying for you!

Our senior postulant, Vivian Webster, has a particular love for walking in the woods, and enjoys exploring our many acres of woodlands. On her travels one day, she discovered blueberry bushes! So in the month of July we had plenty of berries--including those generously donated by friends--to bless our kitchen. Vivian will be clothed as a novice soon!

Elena Ainley entered as a postulant on July 1st! She had a beautiful send-off by her parents, two siblings and a few friends, who came to share a meal with the sisters on that blessed day. One month later, on August 1st, our third postulant, Kathryn Gagnon, came to join our community. She was already an oblate of St. Scholastica Priory and a regular Sunday Mass attendant, so she feels right at home in the midst of us!

Every year on August 22nd, we honor Our Lady, Queen of Heaven in a special way, as patron of Our Lady Queen Monastery in Tickfaw, Louisiana. This year Vivian, Elena and Kate were given the task of decorating our statue of Our Lady outside the church for our annual candlelit hymn sung after Compline. Sr. Maria Isabel, our Junior and resident events photographer, was happy to capture the festivities on camera. *Sub tuum* above is the oldest prayer to Mary.

Our deepest thanks are for those who have so lovingly cared for our little cemetery in Tickfaw since 2009, when the community moved to Massachusetts. The former monastery is now a beautiful place for retreats, called *Our Lady of the Way Spiritual Life Center*. Go for a retreat! <http://www.ourladyoftheway.org>

And our heartfelt thanks also to Greg Hill of McKneely's Funeral Home, who did everything necessary to bring our sisters from the cemetery there to Petersham. We are so grateful.