

Benedictines

Journal of the Benedictine Monastery of the Good Shepherd

Rio Grande City, TX 78582



Dear Friends!

Recently we had a little phone conversation where the Dad spoke of the joy of being with their children around the Thanksgiving table. The most important thing to him was that their children were going to Mass and to Confession. Their involvement with God in the Church Family was a great relief to his wife and himself. He knew that was the ultimate way to encounter the Lord and have a family life of peace, order and growth in holiness.

We hope that you and your family will have a blessed Advent season and Christmas as you celebrate the birth of Jesus and make Him the center of your lives. May the Holy Family continue to inspire you to grow in love for God, your family and your friends.

Be assured of our prayers and we ask for yours as we navigate into new waters with Jesus as our Guide!

May the Prince of Peace be with you!

Your Benedictine Sisters

**“The future of the world and of the Church passes through the family”
-- Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* #75.**



ADVENT, A TIME OF BLESSING AND WAITING

A Message from Fr. Larry Weiseler, Monastery Chaplain

Mary--as she waits to see the blessing of her Son alive in this world, and John the Baptist--preparing the way, are the **two ways** of Advent. *We await in hope and we prepare.*

We don't want to be like the couple celebrating their marriage with something missing because they couldn't wait, and now there is something missing at the heart of their celebration.

With all of the-out-of-place music, (it isn't Christmas yet), and all the parties and the trees already up and decorated, it is difficult to keep one's heart in the hope of that which is still to come. John the Baptist's discipline is necessary. Denial is necessary just as it is for the couple waiting for that great day.

“No” to letting our heart being caught up in that **which is not yet**. “Yes” to waiting with Mary and Joseph for **THAT** day. Hope is a very great blessing.

And--- let's do that waiting in hope as a family, and then enjoy a Christmas that will never be forgotten.

HOSPITALITY

St. Benedict's words, "**Guests are never lacking at the monastery!**" remain ever true. Many individuals and groups have continued to come to the monastery to be refreshed in the Holy Spirit. We've welcomed ACTS retreatants, which are the most common of groups, Rachel's Vineyard, a post-abortion retreat, and one-day retreats for Confirmation, First Communion, RCIA, parish and school staffs.

The number of "Desert Days", when individuals come for solitude and prayer at our casita has increased substantially. Our count for retreats in the last year has now reached thirty-nine. We are so grateful that we can offer a place apart to seek the Lord!



IMPROVEMENTS

At last we can offer more secure and smoother areas for our guests to walk and to park. We have laid \$25,000 worth of cement for this to happen. It is a relief to know that you all our guests can get around much easier.

Another major improvement is that of a new drain field for the septic system. With the ever growing number of overnight guests and water usage it was necessary for this advancement. We thank Jorge Perez, engineer in McAllen, for the extensive drawings and advice he has offered as he continues his pro-bono work for the monastery. We are grateful to Kikio Perez, the contractor of the project, who worked at a discount and encouraged his subcontractors to do the same.



We are grateful, too, for Bud Curwick's expertise in advising and supervising the project without cost to us. We were able to take on this \$53,000 project, thanks to YOU!

SPECIAL HAPPENINGS

+ The Brownsville Diocese has a new Bishop. Bishop Daniel Flores, a south Texas native, is a man on the move reaching out to the many people with various needs. We were able to participate in Vespers which took place in the Brownsville Cathedral and the glorious installation Eucharist at the San Juan Basilica on February 2nd, 2010.



+Bishop Hoepfner, from our home diocese of Crookston, Minnesota, made his way to South Texas after a commitment he had in Corpus Christi, Texas. We had a wonderful meal with him after he celebrated Mass in Rio Grande City.

+ We honored Ruben F. Solis Jr. with the 2010 Good Shepherd Award for his many years of pro-bono service for the monastery. Now he has offered to be the pro-bono contractor for our retreat building, for which we are currently raising funds.

+ We have received an upstairs suite to use for the KSGS radio station, pro-bono from Billy and Rosario Pope. Thank you, Billy and Rosario!



+ Sister Fran went to South Carolina to visit with her family in the beautiful Smoky Mountains and continued on to our founding monastery in Crookston.

+Sister Nancy spent time this summer with her large family and especially her 96 years young mother in East Grand Forks, Minnesota. She also attended the National Respect Life Conference for Diocesan Directors in Houston.

2010 PAISANO FESTIVAL CELEBRATION WELCOME TO OUR NEXT PAISANO FESTIVAL MARCH 5, 2011



EVER BEEN ON RETREAT AT THE MONASTERY?

By Becky Gonzales, Lay Oblate

“He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30) If you have ever been on an overnight retreat at the monastery, you may agree that the first question that comes to your mind upon arriving at the door is, “*what am I doing here?*” By the time we make it through that door, dragging our belongings behind us, we may be feeling haggard, anxious, rushed--not to mention emotionally-drained (after having left things and people behind). *And we don't know just quite what to expect at the retreat.* So even though the surroundings of the monastery look very peaceful and inviting, we may be “at war” on the inside.

But God works in mysterious ways! It is when the retreat starts to flow that we begin to unwind. Gradually we notice that something bigger than ourselves is taking place. We begin to stop thinking so much about ourselves. The retreat itself becomes secondary, or it starts to become “second nature.” It is as we become smaller, that we are then able to relax and open up our hearts and minds to whatever God has in store for us. We could easily say that it is in *surrendering* to the Lord that we are filled. And by the time the retreat is over, things seem very different. As one man said, after having returned from an ACTS retreat, “*I never really wanted to go on retreat in the first place, but when it was over---I didn't want to leave the monastery!*” It is with this in mind that a poem was written by Oblate Virginia Hittner, lay associate, after the 2010 oblate retreat:

TIRED / RETIRED → INSPIRED (BY THE HOLY TRINITY)



TIRED / RETIRED—INSPIRED

(BY The Holy Trinity)

RETREAT

Retreat

Retreat

Retreat

Retreat

Retreat

Retreat

Terrain-peaceful

Relaxed

Inspired

Nourished

Involved

Triune GOD

Yearning

RACHEL'S VINEYARD RETREAT

HEALING AFTER ABORTION

For men and women who still suffer with emotional and spiritual pain of a past abortion.

Here at the monastery is a safe place to renew, rebuild and restore your heart

Come and lay your burden down, and know the joy of the Lord!

Upcoming Retreat Dates

March 25-27, 2011

September 23-25, 2011

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER CALL

Phyllis Young at 956-541-2720

or 956-639-4144

email: young.phil@sbcglobal.net

MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE, AND I KNOW THEM, AND THEY FOLLOW ME

NOVENA PRAYER FOR CONVERSION FROM CONTRACEPTION

Heavenly Father, "From whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name." (Eph.3:15) Grant conversion of heart to our world: our society, our families and especially to our own hearts regarding the sin of contraception.

We believe, beyond a doubt, what the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church teaches about this moral evil. And we wish to be a light to the nations to make the truth known wherever this evil practice and ideology has taken root.

Call us to be faithful to your command to "Be fruitful and multiply!" so that we may advance the civilization of life and love that you wish to create for the human family.

Bring to conversion those who, in public or private, lead others into the sin of contraception and who erroneously teach that it prevents abortion. Help us all to be purified of the lies and distortions of the culture of death by obedience to the truth and bring us all to the fullness of truth through the guidance of your Church.

We ask this through the intercession of the Immaculate Mary, in whose fertile womb your Blessed Son found his home on earth. Amen.

Human Life International

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON NATURAL PLANNING PLEASE CONTACT:

Mrs. Willy Kopecky: NFP Office 956-969-3079 or Residence 956-968-7142 (English)

Olga Lydia Mendez: 956-971-0837 (English and Spanish)

A BOOK ABOUT TO BE RELEASED IN JANUARY 2011

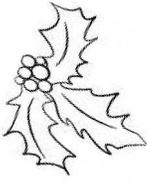
unPlanned by Abby Johnson

The amazing true story of the former Planned Parenthood leader

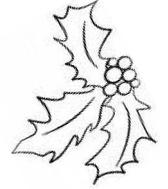
who now fights for life and women in crisis.

To read the first chapter and view videos of a special message from Abby,

visit www.UnplannedTheBook.com



The “SUPER SIX”



Written by an eye witness, the delighted
Grandmother, Therese Perez, of Corpus Christi

Nearly nine months ago, we received the good news that my son Jason and his wife Angie were expecting their sixth child.

When Jason called to say that Dominic had finally arrived, perfect and weighing in at 7 lbs. and 8 ozs., I could hear over the phone the newborn baby crying in the background and I started to cry. In that profound moment of listening to the miracle of a baby’s first breaths, I was surrounded by Dominic’s three brothers and two sisters, James, Lindsay, Nathan and Meagan, and Kevin, ranging in age from 10 years old down to 4. They were all clamoring for the phone, wanting to talk to their dad about their newborn baby brother. As the cell phone was passed from one to the other, the children were asking their dad rapid fire questions.

“What color is his hair?” “How much does he weigh?” “Why is he crying?” “Where’s mommy?” “Can we come and see him?”

I ended the phone call from Jason with directions to the hospital room and that I was bringing all five of the newborn baby Dominic’s siblings up to see him. The kitchen was filled with ecstatic children, jumping (literally) for joy at the news that they had a new baby brother. Suddenly one of the five shouted, “Group hug! Group hug!” They huddled, the older children forming a circle of arms around the younger, smaller ones.

“We used to be the ‘Fabulous Five’.” “We’re now the ‘Super Six’ one of the kids shouted.” “Yea, the ‘Super Six!’” they all chimed in.

During the trip to the hospital, the children filled the van with excited chatter about who weighed what at birth, what mommy had said about how they looked when they were born and that Kevin was no longer the only one born at a different hospital than the first four.

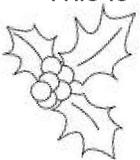
I was relieved that my son met us in the hospital parking lot. The children burst from the car like helium balloons. I don’t think I could have kept five very happy children from running ahead of me to see their new baby brother Dominic.

Together we all went up the elevator, passed the security doors and into their mother’s room. Angie was holding Dominic. The children surrounded their mother to get an up close look and touch the baby brother they had been waiting for so many long months.

They were in awe. Nathan, the third oldest, sat in the chair next to his mom’s bed. He looked at his new baby brother, put his face into Angie’s pillow and began to sob.

“What’s wrong Nate?” Angie asked.

“This is all so beautiful,” said 7 year old Nathan, through his tears of joy.



Nathan is right! This is all so beautiful! LIFE!



TEXAS, TAMALES, AND NEW OBLATES



In Oct 2010, Fr. Paschal, pastor of St. Benedict's Church in Baltimore for the past 26 years, was featured in an article, "*Spiritual Warfare on the Streets of Baltimore —Meet the Urban Monk*" by Thomas Basil (can be seen online-- at *New Oxford Review*).

Fr. Paschal adopted the inner city church after a decision was made to shut it down.

For us Benedictine Lay Oblates, the yearly Fall Retreat is the highlight of ongoing spiritual formation. This year 20 candidates were enrolled in the new formation class, which takes 2 years and is also available in Spanish. During retreat, all Oblates renew their Benedictine promises to God.

In October our retreat master was Fr. Paschal Morlino, a Benedictine monk who has built housing for hundreds of senior citizens in Baltimore. We were blessed with Fr. Paschal's conference theme of *Lectio Divina*, Latin for Holy Reading--a Benedictine practice. For meditation, Fr. Paschal alternated his talks with the "Scriptural Rosary." The Rosary was prayed in 3 languages by the multi-cultural lay oblates present—in English, Spanish and Filipino. Other devotions included the Liturgy of the Hours, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, Benediction, and an opportunity for confession. Celebrating his 50th jubilee as a priest, Fr. Paschal was serenaded at Mass with the traditional singing of *Las Mañanitas*.

This being his first—and short--trip to Texas, Fr. Paschal had enough time to tour the Basilica and eat at a Mexican restaurant. After the retreat, he expressed a desire to see the Rio Grande River. He was driven to nearby Roma, where he gazed intently, as if in prayer, across the river. Behind us, a fall festival was in full swing at the Catholic Church a block away. Knowing what it is like to run a parish, Fr. Paschal walked over to the festival, met Fr. Phillion, sampled Tex-Mex food, and chatted with ACTS volunteers. At the festival's finale he was treated to the classy performance of the high school mariachi band, including violinist Samantha, a young Oblate who had been at the retreat earlier in the day.

(For more on Oblate Program, see monastery website).
Contributed by Becky Gonzales

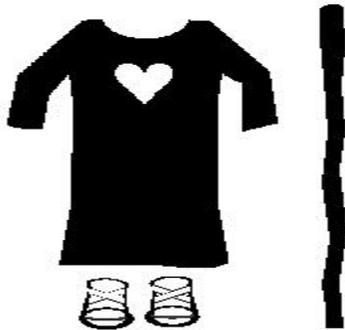


**"As we progress in this way of life and in faith,
We shall run on the path of God's commandments,
Our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love."**

Rule of Benedict Prologue 49

ARE YOU BEING CALLED?

We are most happy to announce that on December 27th – 31st we will be having discernment days for single women 18-55 yrs old. Our time together will allow the Holy Spirit to help in the guidance needed for knowing if the Benedictine Monastery is likely to be their future home, where we can grow in His love and service. Fr. Matthew Habiger, OSB, Fr. Daniel McCaffrey and Dr. Marty Garza will also be with us, as speakers to share our vision. Do you sense a nudging from the Holy Spirit? **“BE NOT AFRAID”**, says the Lord Jesus! Respond and contact us soon! 956-486-2680



Take nothing for the journey but...

GUESTS

We are grateful that we are able to welcome you to this “oasis” as many people call the Good Shepherd’s Monastery. It is most helpful for us that you call ahead in order that we may better receive you.

TUESDAYS

We have set Tuesdays aside for our internal needs, therefore we do not have guests on that day. You are welcome to leave a message on the voice mail should you need to contact us.



Urgent call to courageous women!



THE CALL—CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER, COMMUNAL LIFE AND HEROIC ACTION!

Join the Benedictine Sisters of South Texas as we enter into a new dimension of our pro-life apostolate. We have been awakened to the serious consequences and the evil of contraception and sterilization and see the need for valiant women to come to the defense of our sisters and brothers in the fight against the culture of death.

St. Benedict did so in the 6th century and now we are called to do the same in the 21st century. Rule of St. Benedict... “do battle for the true King, Christ the Lord.”

The Ultimate Battle: The Culture of Life vs. the Culture of Death!

Armed with the truths presented in the Bible, *Humanae Vitae* and the Theology of the Body we will articulate these powerful truths to our younger generation and encourage them to embrace the richness of the Church’s teachings on sexuality and married love.

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Fr. Matthew Habiger, OSB, PhD, St. Benedict’s Abbey Atchison, KS and Fr. Daniel McCaffrey, STD., Archdiocese of Oklahoma City will assist us with the formation of our candidates for this special dimension of our pro-life apostolate. [www.nfpoutreach.org](http://www.nfpoutreach.org) (Natural Family Planning)

Dr. Martha M. Garza, MD, OB-GYN/RE, San Antonio, will direct the medical formation.

*If you have a fire within you to take on this challenge please call:*

Sister Nancy Boushey, OSB Benedictine Monastery of the Good Shepherd  
Rio Grande City, TX 78582 · (956) 486-2680  
[sanbenito@granderiver.net](mailto:sanbenito@granderiver.net) · [www.starrcountybenedictines.org](http://www.starrcountybenedictines.org)

**We hold you and your needs in our hearts throughout the day as we surrender you to our Good Shepherd’s care!**

**OUR HORARIUM WEEKDAYS**

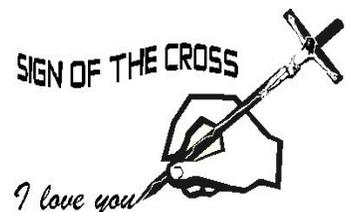
- 6:15 Lectio Divina before the Blessed Sacrament
- 7:00 Lauds
- 8:00 Eucharist  
Quiet time for personal prayer  
and exercise
- 10:00 Work
- 12:15 Noon prayer
- 3:00 Mid-day prayer and Chaplet of Divine Mercy or Rosary
- 5:30 Vespers
- 6:15 Evening meal  
Community recreation
- 7:30 Compline (closing prayer)

**SUNDAY** This schedule varies

**THANK YOU!**

Each one of you is a most precious little stone in God’s work here. We thank you for your dedication to Him and for your love, friendship and support in the many and varied ways that you show your love for Jesus, our Good Shepherd. Know that you are dear to our hearts and that you are remembered in our prayers throughout the day.

*With gratitude in the Lord,  
The Good Shepherd’s Handmaidens*





## TARDEADA GUADALUPANA at the Monastery

Saturday December 11, 2010

♪ Festive Open-house Fundraiser with food, music & tour ♪



*Honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe and helping to build a new retreat house for the service of the Lord. Come celebrate and see the plans for a new dormitory of 30 rooms, a new gift shop, and an amphitheater.*

Hourly Prayer: 1 p.m. Rosary Procession, 2 p.m. Songs of Praise in Maria's Courtyard  
3 p.m. Divine Mercy Chaplet in the Upper Room 4 p.m. Eucharist

*You are invited to participate by giving a free-will donation and by purchasing: Brisket sandwiches, antojitos, drinks & desserts; Onsite gift shop with religious articles.*

*¿No estoy yo aquí que soy tu Madre?* – "Am I not here, who am your Mother?"  
Words of Our Lady of Guadalupe to San Juan Diego

Directions: Go 2 miles west of Rio Grande City to Hospital Road FM 3167.  
Go north on FM 3167 past hospital. Drive 6 miles until you see a big white cross on the left, where you turn into Monastery Lane. Phone: 956-486-2680;  
[www.starrcountybeneditines.org](http://www.starrcountybeneditines.org)    [sanbenito@granderiver.net](mailto:sanbenito@granderiver.net)



*Come celebrate  
our Mother's  
love for us!*



**Benedictine Sisters  
Of the Good Shepherd  
P.O. Box 1501  
Rio Grande City, TX 78582  
Web: [starrcountybeneditines.org](http://starrcountybeneditines.org)**

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