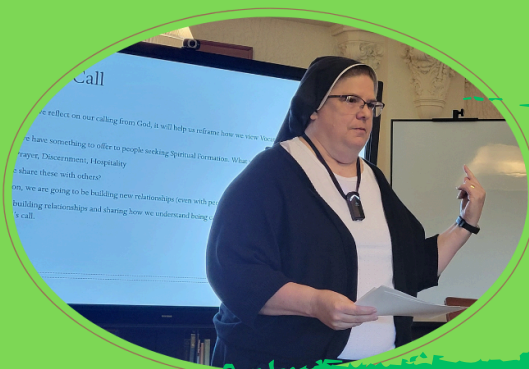




Monastery Minute.



THE BENEDICTINE SISTERS
ST. JOSEPH MONASTERY | TULSA, OK



A LETTER FROM OUR PRIORESS



First, I want to thank you for the love, support, and prayers so many of you have expressed as I took office as Prioress. This means so much to me.

In our last newsletter we shared with you our thoughts and experience of discernment which is integral to the life of any Christian. For our own spiritual formation this year, the sisters will be studying and praying about our call from God. This focus emerged during our community retreat with Kathleen Cahalan who invited us to consider how God's call is not a one-time event, but something that unfolds over the course of a lifetime.

Using Cahalan's book, *The Stories We Live*, we will study together to explore not only how God calls us, but what God calls us to become.

Through our prayerful discernment, we are convinced of our shared call from God to live our Benedictine monastic life in a new way, and in a new place. We are stepping forward in faith and allowing God to lead us.

In his book, *Faith is a Journey*, Pope Francis urges us to ask ourselves, "How am I doing on this Christian journey? Standing still, gone astray, wandering around, stopping at the things I like?" Or are we, as Jesus says, following Him as "the way?"

Our faith is not static; it is a faith in motion - a "journey faith" that calls us to keep moving individually and together facing the same direction, following Jesus. It is a faith that calls us to live in relationship with Jesus. Yes, it is founded on certain truths of our tradition, but we cannot stop and rest on the truths of our faith. We must set out on the journey and allow our call from God to unfold each day, one situation at a time.

In the coming months, we will have more information about our future and look forward to sharing more about what lies ahead.

Until then, please continue to hold us in your prayer, as we hold you in ours.

With deep gratitude,

Sister Julia Marie



Sisters with Kathleen
Cahalan during
retreat, March 2025.

SISTER JULIA MARIE ROY, OSB, INSTALLED AS PRIORESS

By Jessica Lowe-Betts, Contributing Writer Senior Vice President, Schnake Turnbo Frank

The Benedictine Sisters of St. Joseph Monastery in Tulsa celebrated the installation of their new prioress, Sister Julia Marie Roy, OSB, in a joyful ceremony on July 1, 2025, in the monastery's Marian Chapel.

Sister Julia Marie was elected through a process of prayerful discernment and succeeds Sister Marie Therese Long, OSB, who served as prioress for the past six years.

"It has been my honor to serve as prioress to my Sisters in community," said Sr. Marie Therese Long. "I am confident that Sister Julia Marie will lead with wisdom, compassion, and deep faith as the community continues its mission of prayer, hospitality, and service."

A member of the Benedictine community since 1979, Sister Julia Marie has devoted much of her ministry to education and spiritual formation. She is a graduate of the University of Tulsa and St. John's University in Minnesota. Her service includes teaching at Monte Cassino School, directing mission integration, and leading formation programs within the monastery.

"I am honored to serve as prioress during such a significant moment in the life of our community," said Sr. Julia Marie. "With God's grace and the support of my Sisters, I step into this role with deep gratitude. As we prepare for our relocation and celebrating the 100th anniversary of St. Joseph Monastery, I am filled with hope and inspired by the journey of prayer, unity, and faith that lies ahead."

The Sisters ask for continued prayers as Sr. Julia Marie begins her leadership as prioress.



Sister Julia Marie with Bishop David Konderla prior to the Mass of Installation.

Photo credit: Daniel McCay



Sister Julia Marie giving her statement of gratitude at the Mass of Installation.

Photo credit: Daniel McCay



Sister Julia Marie after she received the Rule of St Benedict as the sign of authority in the monastic community.

Photo credit: Daniel McCay

LIVING OUR CALL TOGETHER

JULY COMMUNITY DAYS

Each July, we meet for two days of meetings. During this time, each sister receives a blessing from the Prioress for the coming year of ministry. This year, each sister received a copy of Kathleen Cahalan's book which we will study together throughout the year.



One session of our meetings included architect Mark Nelson presenting initial information about plans for our new monastery.



VISIT WITH BILL AND NANCY KEEL

In early July, we had the delightful surprise of a visit from Bill and Nancy Keel of Lawrence, Kansas. Nancy is a niece of Mother Placida Stulz, OSB (1876 - 1939). Mother Placida served as our Prioress from 1909 - 1915. Our sisters' families are our family forever!

Nancy and Bill Keel



Mother Placida

AT THE BORDER

SISTER LUCY'S JOURNEY OF PRESENCE, FAITH, AND HUMAN DIGNITY

By Jessica Lowe-Betts, Contributing Writer Senior Vice President, Schnake Turnbo Frank

When Sister Lucy Fitzmorris first heard about the opportunity to travel to the U.S. - Mexico border, it wasn't just another service trip. It was a chance to see, firsthand, the faces behind the headlines - the families, children, and aid workers living out a complex and deeply human story.

The trip was organized through the "55 and Under" group, an initiative supported by Benedictine communities across the country to encourage collaboration and engagement with pressing justice issues. One of the projects that stood out was a proposal to serve at the border alongside Sister Ursula, who has spent decades working in Eagle Pass, Texas.

"My community had studied immigration before, but I knew I needed to experience it," Sister Lucy said. "I wanted to see the people, walk where they walk, and understand more deeply what this call to justice really looks like."

Nine Benedictine sisters from six monasteries made the trip together. Their backgrounds were diverse, but their mission was united: to serve with humility, learn with open hearts, and accompany those they met wherever that path might lead.



Sister Lucy Marie and her companions



*Arriving at the airport in San Antonio;
a three-hour drive on to Eagle Pass*

Joy and Desperation

Each day brought new encounters. One of the most touching moments came at a home for migrant mothers and their children. "The first day, we realized the boys loved soccer," Sister Lucy recalled. "So, we came back with a ball and sidewalk chalk and suddenly the place came alive."

While the sisters played with the children, mothers sat nearby, watching with quiet smiles and doing arts and crafts with Sr. Ursula. One young mom, noticing her son struggling to score, jumped into the game to help. "You could tell she was having fun, just being a kid again," Sister Lucy said. "That joy she demonstrated stayed with me."

At a nearby home for those with physical and mental disabilities, Sister Lucy witnessed another deeply human moment. One man, who had lived and worked in the U.S. for many years before being forced to return to Mexico had suffered a debilitating stroke. Without any family to care for him, he was forced to move many miles away from home to seek a place where he could live and be cared for. “Sister Gabby, who just happened to be from the same region in Mexico as him, began singing songs from their home towns. His whole face lit up,” she said. “That sense of memory and belonging - it was so powerful.”



A pick-up soccer match in session

A Hospitality that Transcends Walls

Physically, the conditions were stark. “We brought our own water. Many places had no air conditioning. There were military patrols in the streets and walls around every house,” Sister Lucy described. Yet amid it all, they were met with an overwhelming spirit of hospitality.

“Everywhere we served, we broke bread with people. We were welcomed into their lives, even when they had so little. That’s where I saw God, in the love of community.” She shared a moment that encapsulated this sacred hospitality. After a long, sweltering day, the sisters were invited into the home of an elderly couple. “They had this big table set for Sunday dinners. They pulled up chairs for us and welcomed us like family,” Sister Lucy said. “There was a child’s drawing in their kitchen that read, ‘The best days are days with Grandma.’ And you could feel the love, the presence of God.

The Faith That Moves Us

The journey also reshaped Sister Lucy’s understanding of the Gospel call to love the stranger and care for the vulnerable. “So much of what I saw reaffirmed the dignity of the human person,” she said. “Yes, our backgrounds were different. I come from a stable, middle-class family, but kids are kids. They want to be loved. Adults want to be heard. We all long to be seen.”

“It’s amazing how far a smile and your time can go. You don’t have to do big things. Sometimes just being with someone is enough.”

Despite language barriers - only two sisters in the group were fluent in Spanish - connection was constant. “It’s amazing how far a smile and your time can go,” she reflected. “You don’t have to do big things. Sometimes just being with someone is enough.”

The sisters also witnessed the harsh contrast between access and restriction. “Eagle Pass and its neighboring town across the river are really just one community split by a border. Imagine if your friends and family lived on the other side of the Arkansas River and couldn’t ever visit you, even though you were just a few minutes apart. That’s life at the border.”

Listening, Learning, Accompanying

When asked how the experience had changed her, Sister Lucy was clear: “We’re not as far away from these issues as we think. Migrants aren’t only at the border—they’re in our neighborhoods, our churches, our schools.”

She encourages others to start small: “Go to a Spanish Mass. Make a friend whose life looks different than yours. Listen to what our bishops are saying. And don’t be afraid to speak up for others.”

Above all, Sister Lucy’s time at the border reminded her of what it means to live with true hospitality. “We had no distractions - no phones, no outside commitments. Just the people in front of us. That’s what it means to accompany someone. That’s what it takes to build peace.”

Her journey wasn’t just about serving others. It was about being changed by them. It was a sacred invitation to slow down, show up, and live the Gospel.



Sister Lucy painting a home for the disabled



Artwork on display at the home for disabled

ART SALE

You’re invited to a special sale featuring the beautiful and inspiring artwork of Sr. Eugenia Brown, OSB (1924 - 2019). In addition to her ministries as teacher and catechist, Sister Eugenia was a talented watercolorist. Her pieces reflect years of creativity, prayer, and devotion—each one a treasure.

Thursday - Friday, September 18 & 19: 8:00 am - 2:30 pm
Saturday, September 20: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Stop by to browse, celebrate Sr. Eugenia’s legacy, and take home a meaningful piece of her artistry!





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LOOKING AHEAD

With grateful hearts, we are happy to share some exciting news! We have acquired property and are beginning to plan for our future relocation. We trust in God's providence and grace to guide us each step of the way, and finding property so quickly reminds us that it is truly by God's divine will that we have been brought to this point.

As our plans evolve, we will keep you informed and look forward to sharing more details when the time is right. Please keep us in your prayers as we continue this journey together.



*Sister Marie Therese and her council
reviewing the site survey of the new
property with attorney Michael Joyce.
May, 2025.*