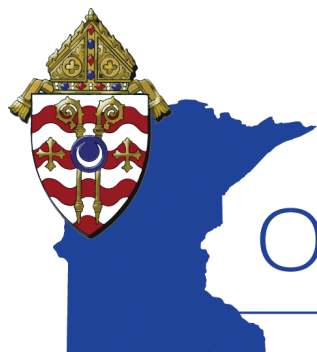




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OUR NORTHLAND DIOCESE

Official Publication of the Diocese of Crookston since 1946

Vol. 77, No. 5

www.crookston.org/ond

May 17, 2023



The Mount Saint Benedict Foundation Board pictured with Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens and Sister Jane Becker, OSB. Back row, left to right: Sister Kathy Kuchar, Heidi Whiting, Jack Robertson, Sister Myra Schmieg, Sister Anita Whalen, Sister Denise Schonhardt (Photos credit: Janelle C. Gergen/OND)

Sisters of Mount Saint Benedict transfer endowment fund to CCF

By Mary Kay McPartlin

On March 8, the Mount Saint Benedict Foundation established the Mount Saint Benedict Endowment Fund with the Diocese of Crookston Catholic Community Foundation (CCF) for management and disbursement of grants. The Mount Saint Benedict Foundation is a separate entity that will dissolve this summer and a major portion of their funds will become an endowment fund within the CCF. The Mount St. Benedict Endowment Fund holds the past donations of hundreds of generous people who contributed to the Foundation for the purposes endorsed by the Sisters.

The endowment fund will accept donations from individuals and organizations who support



Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens and Sister Jane Becker, OSB, sign the documents authorizing the Mount Saint Benedict Endowment Fund to be managed by the Diocese of Crookston Catholic Community Foundation.

the traditional work of the Sisters of Saint Benedict of Crookston. As the women in this Benedictine community grow older, it is

important that their work of supporting people in need continue.

ENDOWMENT: Continued on Page 5

Serra Ministry established in Diocese of Crookston

By Barb Schmitz

April 29 was a beautiful day for vocations in the Diocese of Crookston when the Serra Ministry of the Diocese of Crookston was officially chartered, coinciding with the 60th anniversary of the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. The Serra Ministry encourages a culture of vocations within a diocese. Forty people from 17 parishes across the diocese gathered at the Pastoral Center in Crookston and were inducted as charter members.

Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens, Vocation Director Father Matt Schmitz and representatives from Serra International were on hand to assist in the charter and to welcome new members (called Serrans). The Diocese of Crookston charter joins over 18,000 active Serrans in 36 countries around the world in the ministry of promoting, fostering and preserving vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Father Schmitz and Judy Cozzens — Bishop Cozzens' mother and past United States president of Serra International — have worked tirelessly for the past year to establish a group of people with a heart for vocations. Members are willing to dedicate their time, talent and prayer for vocations to the priesthood and religious life in the Diocese of Crookston.

Meeting monthly via Zoom, the group collaborates on ways in which they can promote vocations in their parishes and across the diocese. They've purchased books about vocations for religious education programs and

SERRA: Continued on Page 6

A Letter from the Sisters of Mount Saint Benedict Monastery



In Giving, We Receive

By Reathel Giannonatti, JD

Office of Stewardship and Development

In this issue of OND you can read the good news story of the Mount Saint Benedict Foundation gift to the Diocese of Crookston Catholic Community Foundation (CCF). The endowed gift of approximately seven million dollars is a donor-advised fund to be managed by the CCF. The interest generated from the Mount Saint Benedict Fund Endowment (MSBE fund) will be used to support ministries traditionally and historically supported by the Sisters. Along with the very carefully drafted legal document creating the MSBE Fund burse was a “love letter” of support from Sister Jane Becker and the Sisters of Saint Benedict. Here is the heart of the letter:

From: The Sisters of Mount Saint Benedict Monastery, Crookston, Minnesota

To: All present and future persons who manage the Mount Saint Benedict Endowment Fund

Our warmest greetings and hearty thanks!

We write this letter to affirm our trust in you, to express our gratitude and prayerful support for you and to tell you something of our intentions, hopes and concerns for the Mount Saint Benedict Endowment Fund. ...

We Sisters of Mount Saint Benedict Monastery entrust to the Catholic Community Foundation the Mount Saint Benedict Endowment Fund. The Mount Saint Benedict Endowment Fund (MSBE Fund) originated with the now dissolved (as of July 1, 2023) Mount Saint Benedict Foundation to carry on one of its major purposes, namely, to support the traditional ministries of the Sisters of Mount Saint Benedict Monastery. The Mount Saint Benedict Endowment Fund holds the past and future donations of hundreds of generous people who contributed for the purposes endorsed by the sisters. We intend it to serve as part of our legacy for future generations. ...

In addition to the stated criteria, are the hopes that have inspired and energized the ministries of

“We have built, owned, staffed, and underwritten Catholic nursing homes and several Catholic hospitals, music studios, a dental practice, Mount Saint Benedict Academy, a center for children and families and Mount Saint Benedict Center. In addition, our sisters have shared their interest, talent and involvement in organizations and initiatives that promote peace and justice, culture, and the arts, use and care of the land.”

Mount Saint Benedict Monastery. We commend to you the same hopes as you manage and share from the MSBE Fund.

- We hope the MSBE Fund will offer direct support for gospel-inspired endeavors to begin and to thrive.
- We hope it will honor and explore diversity, community, stability, hospitality — all Benedictine values.
- We hope it will be used to contribute in ways that benefit the total well-being of people.
- We specifically hope that it will promote the dignity and agency of women.
- We hope especially that it will respond to the needs of the stranger and the underserved in our population.
- We hope that the fund will grow with continued donations and with good investment management.

Our Benedictine community was established in Crookston over 100 years ago in response to the request of its first bishop and we have responded in many ways to the needs of the church in the Crookston diocese. Our sisters have taught and administered in Catholic schools, supported parish life with musicians, catechists, pastoral administrators, and assistants. ...

We have initiated, expanded, and invested in ministries not directly sponsored or perhaps envisioned by local Church leadership. For example, we have built, owned, staffed, and underwritten Catholic nursing homes and several Catholic hospitals, music studios, a dental practice, Mount Saint Benedict Academy, a center for children and families and Mount Saint Benedict Center. In addition, our sisters have shared their interest, talent and involvement in organizations and initiatives that promote peace and justice, culture, and the arts, use and care of the land. ...

Historically, Mount Saint Benedict Monastery has tried to build up the Reign of God mainly through the prayer, attention, and labor of the sisters themselves. We see that we cannot continue to show up in person as we once did. We are happy that by grants from the Mount Saint Benedict Endowment Fund, we can assist and encourage others to do God’s work for years to come.

As you manage and direct Mount Saint Benedict Endowment Fund, know that our prayers, whether from earth or in heaven, are for you — that in all things God may be glorified!

Blessings,
Sister Jane Becker, OSB
Administrator,
Mount Saint Benedict Monastery

Sister Jane Becker, OSB, from Ferdinand, Indiana, Interim Administrator for the MSB Sisters, has completed her service in the Diocese of Crookston. We are all in her debt for the extraordinary grace in which she managed so many enormous transitions and the successful partnership between The Diocese of Crookston and the Sisters of Mount Saint Benedict Monastery. Sister Jane and the Sisters of Saint Benedict have always been, and will continue to be a blessing to Catholics here and beyond our region.



CCF Executive Director Reathel Giannonatti and Sister Myra Schmiege sign documents authorizing the Mount Saint Benedict Endowment Fund to be managed by the Diocese of Crookston Catholic Community Foundation.

ENDOWMENT: Cont. from Page 1

This endowment fund is a way to continue their work even when the sisters are unable to bestow the grants themselves.

“These sisters are just so smart and caring. I’ve learned so much walking with them and watching these women trust in what tomorrow brings,” said Heidi Whiting, director of Mount Saint Benedict Foundation. “I am in awe watching them go through so much change and continue to hold so much trust. We have a needing, hurting world. The Benedictines always respond to the needs of this world and the foundation was one way of responding to those needs.”

“We had discussions about various options, and this seemed the one best for us,” said Sister Anita Whalen about the future of the endowment fund. “Benedictine Sisters try to use the diversity of our talents in a united way.”

The sisters have been committed to community with the goal of bringing about God’s word through simple and generous acts, Whiting believes. She has witnessed many lives that were changed by the care of the sisters at Mount Saint Benedict.

“Benedictine life is centered in community life,” said Whiting. “The sisters have been such a presence in this community for over 100 years and have made such a profound difference. They listen with the ear of the heart. They see the need and they respond.”

The relationship the sisters have with the Diocese of Crookston has been an important focus for the order, but

their work does not just happen within the diocese.

“We’ve always been very supportive of diocesan efforts here,” Sister Anita said. “We have also served in locations and endeavors beyond this diocese. The Diocese of Crookston has always been first for us but not the only place we have put our efforts. We see ourselves ready to complement rather than be compelled by a diocesan focus.”

The distribution of grants from the Mount Saint Benedict Endowment Fund is meant to reflect the sisters’ priorities in ministry. “We hope the fund will be used in endeavors similar to those in which we have invested our efforts in the past,” Sister Anita said.

Sister Anita explained that the sisters hope the fund continues to support education, healthcare and Catholic faith formation, to provide resources for the underserved, to welcome the stranger and to promote the dignity of women.

Grants may be given to support work whose benefits extend beyond the Catholic community.

“We tried to write criteria for these grants that would guide but not constrain,” said Sister Anita.

The goal for this major decision by the sisters is to seamlessly continue the disbursement of grants even though the sisters are no longer operating the fund.

Whiting believes the focus of simple and loving service exhibited by the sisters of Mount Saint Benedict is needed in a world that often is in chaos. “The sisters,” she said “are committed to the belief that in all things God may be glorified.”

“We have also served in locations and endeavors beyond this diocese. ... We see ourselves ready to complement rather than be compelled by a diocesan focus.”

- Sister Anita