



# BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF PERPETUAL ADORATION

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## Benedictine Sisters celebrate summer jubilees



**Tucson Prioress Sister Ramona Varela (center) joins Sister Carmela Rall (left) and Sister Pascaline Coff on the day of their 60th jubilees. The Sisters also honored Sister Cecilia Rose Sprekelmeyer (right photo) on her Golden Jubilee.**

**CLYDE, Mo.** – It was a summer of jubilee celebrations as the Congregation honored three Benedictine Sisters for their monastic professions.

Sisters Mary Carmela Rall, OSB and Mary Pascaline Coff, OSB celebrated 60 years of vowed religious life, and Sister Mary Cecilia Rose Sprekelmeyer was honored for her golden jubilee. Celebrations were held at the Tucson, Ariz., monastery on Sunday Solemnities in June: the Trinity Sunday and Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ.

“All the Sisters in the community contributed in so many ways to make these joyful days perfect in every way,” Tucson Prioress Sister Ramona Varela, OSB said. “Friends and relatives arrived from all over the United States. One relative said it was the best family reunion they’ve ever had. The joy of it all made our hearts wonderfully full.”

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## **Sister Mary Carmela Rall**

As a teen, religious life was not a priority for Ruth Eileen Rall from Upper Sandusky, Ohio. Even though she had spent most of her youth educated in Catholic schools, the young woman held a love for something different - art.

"I had always wanted to be an artist," she said. "But God has designs, and when I was at my worst he called me to follow him as a contemplative."

She entered the Benedictine Sisters in 1950 and made her First Monastic Profession on Sept. 15, 1951, becoming Sister Mary Carmela. It was at the Sisters' monastery in Mundelein, Ill., that she finally realized a dream come true - crafting paintings and artwork for cards. That eventually led to an opportunity to create stained glass windows, and in 1999

something happened that changed her life forever.

"I had the privilege of making an icon painting retreat," she said. "It brought together my artistic endeavors and my spirituality, my prayer."

Since then, she has created beautiful iconic works for people around the nation. She remains true to her commitment to God and to her community through humble service according to the Rule of Benedict.

"The most wonderful thing I've learned over the years is how to pray, how to have a real relationship with God," she said. "To believe that God is real, here with us, with me, in me and working through me in everything I do. Most of all, to believe in the presence of Christ in the Eucharist."

Her 60th jubilee "was a perfect day receiving my vows in the presence of all the lay people at Mass and my Sisters," Sister Mary Carmela said. "I wouldn't trade anything for the wonderful community life of a Benedictine and the prayer ministry we offer the Church. It is my greatest gift! I am most grateful to all who have influenced, encouraged and blessed me all these 60 years."



## **Sister Mary Pascaline Coff**

Margaret Mary Coff often stopped in at a church when making her way across her home town of St. Louis. Her favorite spot? One where the Blessed Sacrament was exposed daily. So it came as no surprise she was drawn to a community that shared her appreciation and devotion.

She entered the Benedictine Sisters in 1949 and made her First Monastic Profession on May 20, 1951. She became Sister Mary Pascaline in honor of Christ's Pasch.

"Monastic life was a surprise gift that unfolded over the years," she said. "I have loved its focus on inner and outer transformation and the call to the breakthrough to ever deeper levels of consciousness."

It was that focus that led to a calling within a calling - learning more about interreligious monastic dialogue. Her studies took her to the far

reaches of globe, including India, Korea, Japan and the Philippines. In 1976, she enjoyed a year studying Eastern spirituality and became a student of the late Father Bede Griffiths, a priest in southern Indian whose ashram was a learning center for those interested in monastic dialogue.

So in 1980, Sister Mary Pascaline, armed with the knowledge that people of all faiths crave a place to escape the craziness of life to renew the spirit and the body, received permission to co-found the Sisters' Forest of Peace Osage+Monastery in Sand Springs, Okla. The monastery served as a retreat-like oasis of prayer and restful refreshment for people around the world. The Sisters transferred ownership to a private group in 2007, and Sister Mary Pascaline now lives at the Tucson monastery where she celebrated her special day.

"It was a profound joy to celebrate my jubilee and the liturgy of the Holy Trinity on this anniversary of our first and final vows so many years ago," she said. "I am and shall be eternally grateful for the Lord's call to me to adore him and witness to his unbelievable gift of Eucharist in this blessed community of Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration."



### **Sister Mary Cecilia Rose Sprekelmeyer**

The tall and stately Mary Cecilia often introduced herself as the "long-stemmed rose from Texas." So it seemed fitting to bestow the name of Sister Mary Cecilia Rose when she made her First Monastic Profession on Sept. 12, 1961.

But before that wonderful day, she had packed a lifetime worth of experiences in her young life. She attended Catholic schools, and her varied interests led to training and showing Dachshunds, working for a Jewish newspaper, working as a professional model and as a secretary.

However, it was a sincere devotion to the Eucharist that helped her realize a calling to religious life. When a friend who was discerning her own calling to another community shared a Benedictine Sisters' booklet on Eucharistic Adoration, something clicked with Cecilia. She knew her devotion to the Eucharist would be at home there.

Throughout the years, Sister Mary Cecilia Rose has lived at several of the Sisters' monasteries including those in Clyde, Mo., St. Louis, Tucson, Mundelein, Ill. and San Diego. Her jobs have been varied, working as a manager and bookkeeper of the altar bread department, leading retreats, handling maintenance along with driving and shopping duties. It was as librarian of the Clyde community for over 20 years where she really made an impact - introducing the filing of books electronically. Today she calls the Tucson monastery home and enjoyed her jubilee immensely.

"My heart sang for joy at all the love that was present - or should I say - the Love of God that was there," she said. "How grateful I am for our Congregation and that it has been my life all these years."

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