



# The *Transfiguration* Quarterly

**Vol. 78 No. 3**

**Fall 2025**

**Benignitas—Simplicitas—Hilaritas  
Kindness—Simplicity—Joy**



Almighty God, we thank you for making the earth fruitful, so that it might produce what is needed for life: Bless those who work in the fields; give us seasonable weather; and grant that we may all share the fruits of the earth, rejoicing in your goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

## **Our Mission**

Inspired by our enduring faith in the love of Jesus Christ, we improve the lives of youth and adults in our community by nourishing the body, mind, and soul.

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Faith Lang, Oblate CT  
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## Letter from our Sister Superior, Sister Diana Doncaster

Dear Friends; our CT family,

I recently received the book; *Eleanor Roosevelt's Nightly Prayer: The Religious Life of the First Lady of the World*. Unlike the majority of biographies about her, which ignore the fact that she was a woman of faith, this book by Donn Mitchell delves into how her formation in the Episcopal Church shaped her into the strong, compassionate activist that she was. This is her nightly prayer, named in the title:



Our Father, who has set a restlessness in our hearts and made us all seekers after that which we can never fully find, forbid us to be satisfied with what we make of life.

Draw us from base content and set our eyes on far off goals.

Keep us at tasks too hard for us that we may be driven to Thee for strength.

Deliver us from fretfulness and self-pitying; make us sure of the good we cannot see and of the hidden good in the world.

Open our eyes to simple beauty all around us and our hearts to the loveliness men hide from us because we do not try to understand them.

Save us from ourselves and show us a vision of the world made new.

Much of the wisdom of this prayer is its clear-eyed awareness that we want to be satisfied with ourselves and our lives as they are, and that we need to be challenged to move beyond that comfort; even beyond what we think is possible.

There is essential hope in the prayer that there is good in the world, even though we are having a hard time seeing it.

The final plea that God will “save us from ourselves and show us a vision of the world made new” is also a reminder that we have an important role in God’s healing of our part of the world.

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Jeremiah 29:11

Eleanor Roosevelt’s prayer is a reminder that we have the responsibility to be part of Christ’s presence in the world here and now. It is Jesus who gives us the strength to love and serve in the midst of the chaos.

That is what we continue to try to do. Our love and service are, first and foremost, grounded in intensive prayer, just as Eleanor Roosevelt’s was. Then we pay attention to what we can do; trying to be attentive to whatever nudges the Holy Spirit might be giving us.



Part of our ministry seems to be the ministry of encouragement. One small way we are carrying that out is by making God’s Eyes. They go into the boxes of food given out by Food for the Soul with a note explaining that they symbolize that God sees and knows the struggles of those who need help just to eat.

In this we are partnering with the Bethany School students, who are also making these simple ornaments – carrying on a tradition which dates back at least to the 15<sup>th</sup> century in what is now western Mexico. The Huichol and Tepehuan peoples saw them as symbols of protection – all the more as the conquistadores from Spain invaded and enslaved them. As we make each God’s Eye, we are praying for the protection of those who will receive them, those who are hungry, those who are at risk from the unconstitutional violence which is infecting our country.

With Eleanor Roosevelt, we pray for a vision of the world made new and do what we can toward living into that vision.

Many blessings, **Sr. Diana**

**Father Tom Fehr**, Chaplain, is on sabbatical leave until after the Thanksgiving holiday. We are praying for traveling mercies and a time of rest and renewal for Father Tom.

The Lord said: "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." Exodus 33:14



## My Spiritual Path to Becoming an Oblate



What a blessing to have been in a long relationship with the Sisters of The Community of the Transfiguration since 1984. I became an Associate in 1986 after attending frequent silent retreats twice a year and visiting the Mother House whenever possible. Every time I visited the Mother House I just felt like I was home and always welcomed with open arms from the Sisters and Associates. I loved spending time at the branch houses in California in Ferndale with Sisters Alice and Teresa and then Eureka with Sisters Alice, Teresa, Lydia, and Diana. I remember seeing a sign that hung on the wall that made me smile, *Benignitas Simplicitas Hilaritas* meaning Kindness Simplicity Joy.

After years as an Associate, I talked with Sisters Teresa and Alice about adding Oblates to the community. I explained that I felt a calling to make a deeper commitment in my prayer life, studies, and service to the community. Sister Teresa said that she would bring the idea to the community when she went for a visit to the Mother House. Shortly after, Sister Teresa phoned to inform us that in May, I and two other colleagues would be giving a presentation on why the community should consider including Oblates.

In May 1995, two of us Associates were able to make the trip and present our speech. I was the last to make my request. I remember a large group of Sisters sitting in a semi-circle; some kind faces, others looked strict, but all eyes were fixed on me. I took a deep breath and presented my speech checking my notes now and then. At one point, I do not recall exactly what I said as the Holy Spirit guided me, but I ended with Mother Eva's

words: Perseverance is less a difficult virtue and more a joyful necessity for a loving heart.

It took 2–3 years for the Oblates to become established. In 2004, the first four Oblates were received and made their Oblate Promises. Choosing to become an Oblate was a profound and deeply personal decision. My decision to pursue the path of becoming an Oblate was and is motivated by a commitment to spiritual growth, a strong appreciation for community, and a focus on service and contemplation. I became California's first Oblate on September 25, 2011. What a truly unforgettable day.

One of the primary motivations for becoming an Oblate was my yearning for a deeper connection with God. While my faith has always been important to me since childhood, I felt called to integrate prayer and spiritual discipline into my everyday life in a more intentional way. The Oblate path offers a framework of prayer, reflection, and sacramental living that supports this desire for spiritual growth.



Another compelling reason I became an Oblate was the sense of belonging it offered. Oblates are part of a wider spirituality, united not only by shared values and practices, but also by mutual support and encouragement. My husband was ill for 10 years, the last five years were the hardest.

The Sisters, Oblates and Associates continually prayed for my husband, me, and my adult children. About one week before my husband's death he said, "If it wasn't for the Sisters and all who prayed for me, I truly believe I wouldn't have lasted this long, please tell everyone thank you." A week later, on July 18, 2004, my husband went home to be with our Lord. It was not long after his death that I received a prayer shawl from the Sisters with a note that said every stitch was a prayer. The prayer shawl ministry had grown over years of dedicated knitting. Wrapped in that shawl, I felt comforted by the prayers as I mourned my husband and best friend of 40 years. Who prays for you and your family for years and years? The Community of Transfiguration! I have consistently received significant support, which is still ongoing. My community of Sisters, Oblates and Associates,

both lay and monastic, have enriched my spiritual journey and given me a place where I feel safe and at home.

The Oblate tradition is deeply rooted in the values of service, hospitality, kindness, simplicity, joy, and care for others. What inspired me was putting faith into action: helping those who need it, being open to newcomers, and encouraging peace in everyday life. St. Benedict's call to "listen with the ear of the heart" resonates with me, shaping how I engage with both my faith community and the broader world.

Through my own Rule of Life which I review yearly and make changes as needed, the Rule of St. Benedict and the example of monastic life, I have learned the importance of balance between work, rest, prayer and action. Being an Oblate helps me to anchor my life with meaning and purpose, aligning my daily routines with spiritual values that guide my decisions and relationships. And most importantly keeping balance in my life.

Becoming an Oblate has been a transformative step in my spiritual journey. It is a commitment not only to personal growth, but also to community, service, and the ongoing search for God in the rhythms of everyday life. As life goes on and the years fly by, it is so clear to me that God, my faith, love, and prayer is the heart of who I am and because we live in this crazy world we must remember to share the light of the Transfiguration out into the world. I am grateful for the path that led me here and for the opportunity to gain experience ever more faithfully in the company of the Sisters, Oblates and The Community of the Transfiguration. It has been my pleasure to share part of my life and journey in becoming an Oblate of The Community of the Transfiguration. Peace, love, and joy.

**Ginny Pankoski, C.T. Oblate**

## **Letter to the Associates**

Dear Associates,  
Greetings in the name of our Lord. I pray that you are enjoying blessings and grace in your life. Our recent Associates retreat was inspiring, and we received good ideas to enrich our prayer life.





We have wonderful associates all over the country, as well as in Canada and Puerto Rico. There is a thriving group of Associates in Ponce, Puerto Rico.

Our Sisters worked there beginning in 1945. Many women and a few men became Associates. Now there are about 20 active Associates, even though the Sisters returned to the Mother House in Cincinnati in 1984. They meet regularly and have two quiet days a year. One of the Associates sends messages by e-mail and occasionally sends pictures to keep me informed. The ongoing work of the Associates there is a tribute to the Sisters, who served in Ponce.

We also have a group of Associates who meet on Zoom on the fourth Thursday of each month (unless there is a conflict with a civic holiday such as Thanksgiving Day). If you want to join these monthly meetings, please let me know. I hope other regional groups of Associates could join together to meet in person or visit on Zoom. Let me know if you would be willing to try to form a group and I will give you information.

I can do all things through him who strengthens me.  
Philippians 4:13.

Please mark your calendars for the two Associates Retreats scheduled for May 1-3, 2026 and October 2-4, 2026. Let me know if you have any questions about annual dues or other concerns. You are a vital part of our community. God bless you.

**Sr. Jacqueline**

## **The Thriving Associates in Northern California**

The Associates of the Community of the Transfiguration have a long tradition here in Northern California. When the Sisters came to live in California in 1980, a climate was created for many to hear about the community and meet the Sisters. They landed in Ferndale and eventually in Eureka in the late 1990's. A small, but mighty group formed around the community here. Sisters Alice, Teresa and Lydia travelled up and down the coast leading retreats, and workshops sharing the Community's unique American blend of Kindness, Simplicity and Joy. Sister Diana would come later to live at Transfiguration House.



A small group of Associates gathered around the Sisters sharing weekly Eucharist at the Sisters' home. We would then enjoy a meal prepared by Sister Alice or Sister Diana. Great fellowship flourished as the Sisters shared their lives, ministry and faith with the growing group of Associates. Activities would include traveling together at the end of September each year to St. Dorothy's Rest, west of Santa Rosa for the fall retreat.

There was also a spring retreat in Auburn. The group would join with Associates from Santa Rosa for a rich, spirit-filled weekend with retreat leaders from around the country. There were also Quiet Days (known also as the Meditation group) that the Sisters hosted once a month for women of the north coast. It was attended by women from the community, who were Christian, Buddhist, Quaker, or of no particular faith. On the lighter side, there would be fun times joining for Oscar watching parties complete in costumes, as well as viewing royal events from the United Kingdom.

These days, there are 14 local Associates, including three aspirants. Our community consists of clergy, as well as lay persons active in ministry. While COVID suspended our in-person meetings for some years, we met on Zoom to keep in contact. The group began meeting in person last year on several occasions and this year we have begun meeting monthly again.



We meet in each other's homes for Eucharist and a shared meal. The women who have become interested in becoming Associates have energized our group with their enthusiasm for the Community and a deeper spiritual life. We have started adding short spiritual talks. The Associates will be hosting an Advent Quiet Day in the tradition of the Sisters at Christ Episcopal Church in Eureka in December. It is open to both men and women.



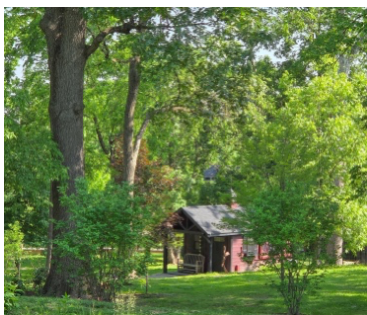
We had a wonderful visit and shared time together with Sister Jacqueline (center) and Oblate Toni (far right) in July 2024. They were kept very busy. Even though the Sisters physical presence ended in 2017, their influence in living a Christ-centered life has not ended and it is our desire to continue to grow in love as an Associate community reflecting the light of Christ's Transfiguration and drawing others to know, love and worship God. If you are ever visiting on the northern coast of California, the Associates would love to meet with you.  
**Stephanie Schultz**, Oblate, CT

## Transfiguration Spirituality Center



In the spirit of Kindness, Simplicity and Joy, hospitality has always been a significant ministry at all houses of the Community. Guests at the Transfiguration Spirituality Center and convent can now spend time at the newly refurbished cabin on our north campus property.

It's a peaceful place to sit and read, journal, or just rest and enjoy the beauty of the surrounding nature and hear the birds sing, watch the leaves flicker in the wind, and hear the steady flow of water from the stream running through the property that is landscaped with native plants. You might even see a deer quietly



nibbling on some grass. All are welcome in the name of Christ to a peaceful place apart to rest, reflect and pray.

Interested in making future arrangements to stay at the Transfiguration Spirituality Center? Information is found at this link:

<https://ctsisters.org/ministries/transfiguration-spirituality-center/>

**Faith Lang**, TSC Guest Services Manager and Oblate CT

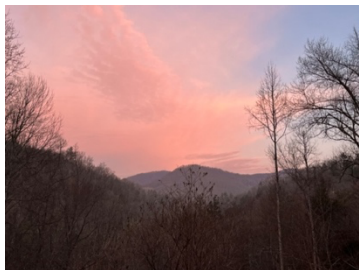
### **A Prayer for Quiet Confidence**

O God of peace, who hast taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be our strength:

By the might of thy Spirit lift us, we pray thee, to thy presence, where we may be still and know that thou art God: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 832,

### **Ministry at Bat Cave, North Carolina**



All the leaves are gone from the trees, now on the ground enriching the soil throughout the Hickory Nut Gorge. The salamanders have climbed down and are back in their crags and crevices in the rocks and boulders. The bears, too, have retreated to the upper caves.

The extreme beauty of the colors this Autumn was often breathtaking, and everyone seemed to not remember last year's at all. The stark beauty brings VISION—as we now can see across to

neighbors' homes and the shape of the mountain range. There is a quiet approaching that hints of winter on its way. I have been using the woodstove often and give thanks for being able to use this natural resource here.

Our "Firewood Ministry" at Church is bustling. This ministry is for anyone in our community who needs this service. In fact, we have gone above and beyond when we have supplies and can help. It represents much hard work and a true labor of love.



Tom Scott with Dixon Bridgers after a day of cutting wood.



Mattie Decker and Father John Roberts at The Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration, Bat Cave

Our Rector, Father John Roberts, has been the steady and loving presence at the center of our Bat Cave Ministries. Together with our vestry, and others, he has crafted a brilliant "Hope Center" which slowly is coming into being.

Remarkably, we have been recipient of a generous grant from Christ Church, Charlotte, NC and these funds have made it possible for us to have our ministries centered in one place. We will be able to have a whole house generator for Saylor House, our former rectory which after the storm last September, became a place of refuge for many volunteers who came to help in the restoration phase.

The Hope Center will be a small building next to this, which will provide a place to house all of our Ministries: a laundry center open 24/7 access for anyone in the gorge, storage for all

emergency supplies, and all firewood ministry supplies. Now that we have a whole house generator, we will have power and Internet service, that will also be available for the community use.

All Souls Counseling from Asheville will be here providing counseling services two days a week in Saylor House (the former Rectory). For those of you who have visited, you know how welcoming this place is with a fireplace and sitting area and a room that will be set up for the counseling sessions. As Father John described this “coming together”, “we will be able to minister to Spirit, Body, and Mind.”

I will be hosting “Sunday Night at the Sisters” hopefully beginning in January, along with plans for fulfilling the Sisters’ wishes that their beautiful Retreat House be available for respite and spiritual renewal. Our roads have a very long way to go before they are repaired or finished. The Department of Transportation is working hard to rebuild the land for the road. No one can venture a timeline; but access for residents is possible, though slow. Our thought is that there could be carpooling from the church.

Our caretakers, Craig and Michelle Aubert, are now fully engaged with the Bat Cave Fire Station. Thanks to “Betty” the Polaris that the Sisters provided, Craig and Michelle have been able to traverse wherever there is need for delivering food, or other resources, and have truly helped hundreds this year. Thanks to them, our drive stays clear of fallen limbs, and their watchful eye on any needs at the retreat house or hermitage.

They, and I, have met so many people we might never have known before this year’s experiences. I continue to be amazed by the working of God’s love to melt barriers of judgment and calm concerns, open up possibilities for a sense of community in ways no one might have imagined. We’ve a long way to go, just as the roads have; but we’ve begun, and there’s no turning back.

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever.  
Psalm 136:1

Honestly, the enormity of our circumstances this year, as well as the world’s increasing angst, seem to be revealing a pervasive sense of humility, and awe in us all, regardless of denomination or political party.

I close with gratitude for your prayers for our community, and all communities. We are learning how to love one another.

**Mattie Decker**, Oblate CT, Director of the Bat Cave ministry, Mindfulness Instructor and a Nature and Forest Therapy Guide.

## **Food for the Soul Ministry**

Food for the Soul (FFTS) is a food rescue, kitchen, and pantry, designed to stop food waste and eliminate hunger by creating access to nutritious food for people experiencing food insecurity.



Since 2020, Food for the Soul has experienced incredible growth and impacted the community in unimaginable ways. It has become an essential part of the community, providing food distribution through hot meals, pantry boxes, education and monthly self-select food pantries. Community meals are one of many initiatives FFTS provides. These meals offer free lunches to the community across Cincinnati and close partners. Receiving partners and organizations of these hot meals are St. Monica Recreation Center, Talbert House, Haven House for Men, City Gospel Mission, YWCA Domestic Violence Shelter, and Phil's Place.

At Self-Select Pantries once a month FFTS hosts free shopping experiences for the community. It distributes about 10,000 pounds of food, hygiene products, clothing, shoes, and household items.

### **A Prayer For Families Facing Hunger**

God of sustenance, who fed your people in the wilderness and satisfied the hungry with good things, hear the cries of families increasingly fearing the loss of assistance. Parents fear their children may go hungry, and communities brace for needs that they cannot meet alone. Strengthen all who advocate for food security and move the hearts of leaders to act with compassion and urgency. Sustain our church to be a voice for justice and a source of comfort for those in need. We ask this through Jesus, the Bread of Life, who feeds the world in love. Amen.

Food for the Soul offers healthy cooking nutritional classes for the community. There have been more than 40 graduates. FFTS also offers a workforce development program for their



kitchen staff. Through a partnership with the Freestore Foodbank, FFTS sends their kitchen staff to get a free 10-week culinary art education in the Cincinnati Cooks program.

In the fiscal year of July 2023–June 2024, FFTS reached a new record of rescuing over 200,000 pounds of food in one year. This shines a light on the dedication FFTS has in pouring its love on the community.

Through partnerships forged with local and non-profit organizations, FFTS rescued over 550,000 pounds of food between 2020–2024 that equates to over 458,000 meals to the community. To meet these growing needs and expanded work, FFTS is under construction remodeling their existing kitchen. Although this milestone is big, the journey is not over!

**Mary Knight**, Director, Food for the Soul

## Sharing the Good News of the Community of the Transfiguration



Sr. Carina and CT Oblate Terry Noble serving at a booth at the convention of the Diocese of Southern Ohio. Please let the Sisters know if you want to staff a booth at your diocesan convention. There are many wonderful CT pamphlets that you can use to let others know about the many wonderful ministries of the Community of the Transfiguration.

## Be Still and Know Genesis 42

Angel Strong-in-Capacity-for-Righteousness-and-Upholder-of-Perfection-in-Everything approached the High Heavenly Altar, holding a box, beautifully wrapped and beribboned. Scrupe heaved it onto the altar and waited for it to burn. It didn't. Scrupe shoveled hot burning coals on the package. They went out.



“Is there something you need to talk about, My friend?” came the Voice of Love. “Why won’t my offering burn?” “Why do *you* think that is?” Scrupe stayed silent.”

“Why did you wrap it so carefully? To hide it? To get rid of something you aren’t ready to face?” Scrupe drooped. There was silence in Heaven. Finally, confession came. “I’m mad at Jacob and his sons including Joseph.”

Scrupe continued pouring out frustration. “Jacob set up this whole mess with favoritism – or maybe it was Laben tricking Jacob into marrying Leah, so he had to work an extra seven years for Rachel. But they spoiled Joseph who got obnoxious. But that was no excuse for Leah’s sons to sell him as a slave. I get that he’s angry with his brothers and wants them to suffer, but I hate what he’s doing and that Jacob keeps playing favorites.”

“You are still trying to evade the truth. I cannot receive what you won’t offer.” Scrupe paced among the twelve pearly gates. After eons, the pacing stopped, then started again, then the angel stood trembling before the Throne of Grace.

“Are you ready to unwrap your anger and look at it truthfully?” Scrupe slowly, reluctantly untied the bow and eased the ribbon off the box. Shaking, angelic hands removed the paper, lifted the lid ... and shame-filled anger poured out.

“Ahhhh, finally. Thank you for admitting that you are angry at Me.”

“Please, please, please forgive me for being angry at you.”

“No.” Scrupe’s jaw dropped. “No? But...but You Are the One Who forgives!”

“You need forgiveness for pretending that you aren’t angry with Me and for lying by trying to paper it over.” Scrupe fell down before the Throne.

“Let the truth come out”, urged inexorable grace.

“I *am* soooo mad at You. You give free will that they use to hurt each other and things get uglier. Others read the stories and think that, because Abraham and his descendants treated each other this



way, and their actions are enshrined in scripture, You approve. You just let it happen!”

“Yes, many read the stories as having Our approval instead of looking for Us in hard questions. They don’t ask Me for deeper Truth. They seek easy answers, trying to hide from what distresses them. They refuse the joy of wrestling with the Mystery, of seeking more of Me in the midst of unknowing.”

Scrupe squirmed in considerable discomfort, unwilling to look up. “Scrupe, be still, and know that I AM.” Scrupe stopped squirming. “Look at Me.” Scrupe’s eyes opened.

“There is no shame, no sin, in being angry at Me, especially in response to the suffering you grieve. I Create all that is, giving Our creatures much freedom of conscience and action. I knit together Holy Complexity, Mystery, Wonder, Challenge, and Costly Love. I give birth to humans and angels and so many others you don’t know about yet. There are consequences which I take into Myself for Creating such Reality instead of mechanical perfection. Those consequences include your anger and the pain of your refusal to trust Me with it.”

Tears of true repentance flowed down Scrupe’s face. Reaching for the anger, shame, and cover-up, Scrupe wove them into a wreath of truth, and placed it on the altar where it burst into flame, emitting a pleasing aroma of honest sacrifice.

“Remember Scrupe, I AM with you always, to the end of the ages and beyond.”

© 2025 **Sister Diana Doncaster**, C.T. and the Society of the Transfiguration



### **Calendar of Upcoming Events**

May 1-3, 2026: Associates Retreat

October 2-4, 2026: Associates Retreat

## **Further Information and Resources**

### **Community of the Transfiguration**

495 Albion Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45246  
513-771-5291. Website: [www.ctsisters.org](http://www.ctsisters.org)



### **Transfiguration Spirituality Center**

469 Albion Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45246-4653  
[retreats@ctsisters.org](mailto:retreats@ctsisters.org) (Also on Facebook)

### **Transfiguration North Carolina**

P.O. Box 115, Bat Cave, NC 28710  
513-771-2171  
<https://ctsisters.org/ministries/transfiguration-north-carolina/>

### **Food for the Soul CT Ministry**

469 Albion Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45246-4653  
[www.foodforthesoul.org](http://www.foodforthesoul.org)  
Email: [mknight@ctsisters.org](mailto:mknight@ctsisters.org)

### **St. Monica's Recreation Center**

10022 Chester Road, Cincinnati, OH 45215-1505  
Phone: (513) 771-7806  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/p/St-Monicas-Recreation-Center-100063481002860/>

### **Bethany School**

555 Albion Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45246-4649  
Website: [www.bethanyschool.org](http://www.bethanyschool.org)  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BethanySchoolOH>

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