

MISSION INTENTIONS

FEBRUARY 2021 - 2022

We give thanks for the mission and courage of religious sisters and consecrated women, and pray they may continue to look for new solutions to today's challenges.

Country Focus: The Netherlands

As in many countries, the Catholic Church in the Netherlands is facing the growing challenges of secularization, and its effect on the Catholic faithful. But these challenges are being met by thousands of women religious who are faithfully serving the Dutch population. Many orders are active in the Netherlands, ministering and bearing witness to God in a variety of ways. The Sisters of Charity lend their voice and energy to refugee projects. The Servants of the Lord offer a chapel for prayer and Eucharistic Adoration in The Hague. The Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia provide catechesis and sacramental preparation for elementary-aged children.



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Leading to Knowledge of the Faith

One of the primary duties of women religious is to be missionaries in the world. Through their example, women religious serve as true signs of Christ to all those they meet. Women religious can live this missionary life in a variety of ways. As Saint John Paul II wrote in *Vita Consecrata*:

“Men and women Religious completely devoted to contemplation are in a special way an image of Christ praying on the mountain. Consecrated persons engaged in the active life manifest Christ...in his healing of the sick and the suffering, in his solicitude for youth and his goodness to all...” (no. 32).

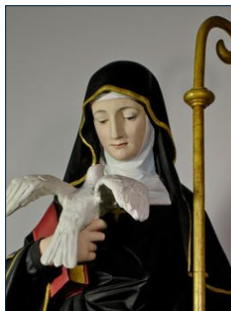
Saint Spotlight

Saint Scholastica

We don't know much about Saint Scholastica, the patron saint of cloistered nuns, but we do know that she loved God with all her heart and devoted herself to the Lord from a very early age.

Saint Scholastica was born around 480 to a wealthy family who lived in Nursia, Italy. She was the twin sister of Saint Benedict, who is regarded as the father of monasticism. When Saint Benedict established his monastery at Monte Cassino, Saint Scholastica followed him and started a religious community for women in Plombariola, about five miles away. She served as the abbess at Plombariola for many years.

Even though they lived very close to one another, Saints Scholastica and Benedict could only visit each other once a year because of the rules of their



communities. They would meet at a house in between Monte Cassino and Plombariola, where they would spend the day in prayer and conversation. According to the *Dialogues of St. Gregory the Great*, on their last meeting, Saint Scholastica, sensing her death, asked her brother to stay with her until the next day. This was an unusual request, because Saint Benedict's Rule did not allow him to spend nights outside the monastery. When he said no, Saint Scholastica started to pray, and soon a storm began. It was so severe that Saint Benedict could not leave, allowing the twins to spend more time together.

Three days later, Saint Scholastica died. We remember her each year on her feast day, February 10.

Formation for Life in Christ

How do women religious serve in your parish or school? There are many different ways women religious serve the Church and their communities, including: by providing for the homeless and hungry, teaching in parish faith formation programs or Catholic schools, and working in the field of health care.

Women called to religious life dedicate their lives completely to God. Rooted in the Sacrament of Baptism, religious life is a way to deepen one's baptismal call. When a woman enters religious life, she makes vows, or promises, that help guide her ever closer to Christ. These vows include chastity, poverty and obedience.

The vow of chastity is a promise women religious make so that their relationship with Jesus is always the most important relationship in their lives. The vow of poverty is a promise to live a simple life and not focus on material things. The vow of obedience is a promise to always listen and respond to God's will.

For some, these vows might seem like a sacrifice. But in reality, these vows free a woman so that she can

answer her call to religious life. Her vow of chastity frees her to give herself totally to Christ. Her vow of poverty frees her to be able to go wherever she is called, and allows her to focus on her ministry and relationships. The vow of obedience frees her to do the will of God, and serve the Church and her community.

In this month's video, we will meet Sister Lisa Maurer, O.S.B., a Benedictine Sister at St. Scholastica Monastery in Duluth, MN. Sister Lisa has been a member of the monastery since 2007, and uses her gifts in a variety of ways, including as an assistant football coach at the College of St. Scholastica. As you listen to Sister Lisa share her story, think about how she bears witness to Christ in her life. How can you follow Sister Lisa's and Saint Scholastica's example and serve God in your life?



Community at St Scholastica Monastery

Introduction to Community Life

Abundant Hope: Sister Lisa Maurer, O.S.B. >>



Sister Lisa Maurer, O.S.B.

- ✦ What can you learn from women religious about living in community?
- ✦ How do women religious live out their call to be missionary disciples?
- ✦ How can you follow the example of women religious in your daily life?

Celebrating the Mystery

When we are baptized, we are unified with Christ and promise to carry out His mission in the world. While women religious carry out this commitment in a special way, all baptized Catholics are called to be Christ's witnesses in the world. This call means that we strive to imitate Christ's example in all of our thoughts, words, and actions. It leads us to acts of charity, like feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, being good stewards of God's creation, and working to make the world a more just place for all. How will you respond to your baptismal call to serve the Kingdom of God?

Teaching Prayer: Liturgy of the Hours

The Liturgy of the Hours guides us in mediating on the mystery of Christ, by reflecting on the Scriptures, especially the Psalms and Gospels. Prayed at five different times of day, they begin with the Office of Readings, followed by Morning Prayer, Daytime Prayer, Evening Prayer and Night Prayer. [Click here](#) to pray the Liturgy of the Hours.



CENTER for MISSION

Society for the Propagation of the Faith / St. Paul and Minneapolis