



BENEDICTINE SISTERS

SACRED HEART MONASTERY
in CULLMAN, ALABAMA

916 Convent Road NE, Cullman, AL 35055 ~ www.shmon.org ~ (256)734-4622

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Sister Tonette Sperando celebrates 25th Jubilee

Sister Tonette Sperando, O.S.B., a Benedictine Sister of Cullman, celebrated her 25th Jubilee on Saturday, November 18, at Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman. The heart of the celebration was a Jubilee Mass held in the monastery chapel during which Sister Tonette renewed the promises of her Monastic Profession, reaffirming the commitment that she made a quarter-century ago.

Sister Tonette entered the Benedictine Sisters as a Postulant in August, 1990. She made First Monastic Profession in 1992 followed by Perpetual Monastic Profession in 1997. During these twenty-five years, Sister Tonette has ministered with joy, generosity, creativity, and untiring enthusiasm, anchored in prayer and in monastic community.



A native of Birmingham, Sr. Tonette was baptized at the Cathedral of St. Paul where her parents are still parishioners. She was taught by Benedictine Sisters at both the elementary and high school levels. After graduating from John Carroll Catholic High School in Birmingham, Sr. Tonette attended the University of South Alabama where she earned a B.S. in Elementary Education. She later earned a M.A. in Educational Administration from the University of Dayton.

For many years Sister Tonette served in Catholic education. Following several years of classroom teaching, Sister Tonette transitioned into administration, serving as Principal at Sacred Heart School in Cullman, as Curriculum Coordinator at St. Benedict Catholic School in Elberta, and as Principal (K-6) and President (3K-12) of Holy Spirit Catholic Regional School in Tuscaloosa.

In 2005, Sister Tonette was appointed Treasurer of the monastic community as well as Development Director. In the role of Treasurer, Sister Tonette served on the leadership team, assisting in the overall administration of the monastic community. As Development Director, Sister's natural ability to connect with people and strong organizational skills brought an already successful Development Office to a new level of energy and effectiveness as she strengthened existing relationships, forged ties with new friends, and raised support for numerous projects at the monastery.

When the community made the decision to pursue a major renovation of the Monastery and Retreat Center, Sister Tonette was given the additional responsibility of serving as Director of the *Reflect Renew Rejoice* Capital Campaign, which she guided to a successful conclusion

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even as she concurrently assisted the Prioress in overseeing key aspects of the construction and renovation process.

In 2015, Sister Tonette was elected Prioress of the monastic community, a role in which she serves with her characteristic dedication, enthusiasm, and joy. Under her leadership for the past two and a half years, the sisters have extended their previous renovation efforts to include the development and implementation of a Landscape Master Plan for the monastery grounds, have embarked on a Future Planning project and, most importantly, continued their daily fidelity to monastic life. A key aspect of monastic leadership is love for the sisters, and this care is readily evident in Sister Tonette's leadership of the community in the day-to-day living of monastic life.

Love for God and the people of God, along with a fervent desire to bring glory to God, have been Sister Tonette's guiding motivations in her twenty-five years as a professed monastic and in all her ministerial endeavors. Reflecting on her quarter-century of monastic life, Sister Tonette stated, "I am humbled by God's unconditional love and the many blessings received over these past twenty-five years of a professed monastic life. Loving family and friends have nurtured and encouraged me along life's journey. My Benedictine sisters continue to be an inspiration to me as they give witness to living a joyous life grounded in our prayerful expression of love for God and for others. It is with much gratitude to God and to those whose prayer, love and support have encouraged me throughout the years that I celebrate this momentous occasion."

Many family members and friends were present for the Jubilee celebration, including Sister Tonette's parents, Steve and Catherine Sperando; her brother, Michael S. Sperando; and sisters Gina S. Lackey (C.D.) and Sarah S. Burns (Roland), along with their families.

Rev. Joel Martin, O.S.B., a monk of Saint Bernard Abbey, served as Principal Celebrant for the Jubilee Mass. Sister Treva Heinberg, Subprioress, received Sister Tonette's renewal of her Monastic Profession, and Sister Janet Marie Flemming offered a Reflection at the conclusion of Mass. Following the Eucharistic Celebration, a festive luncheon allowed Sisters and guests to visit and share in the joy of the occasion.

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