



BENEDICTINE SISTERS

SACRED HEART MONASTERY
in CULLMAN, ALABAMA

July 9, 2018

For Immediate Release

Benedictine Sister Michelle St. Marie makes Perpetual Monastic Profession

“To seek God together”: these words were the immediate response of Sister Michelle St. Marie, O.S.B., when asked what drew her to the community of Benedictine Sisters at Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman. She saw within the balanced life of prayer and work in monastic community a way in which her desire for God could be expressed and nurtured. Her exploration of this life and initial formation in it over the past seven years culminated on July 7, 2018, with her perpetual monastic profession. With this profession, Sister Michelle made a permanent commitment to monastic life within the community of Benedictine Sisters at Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman.

The Eucharistic Celebration, during which Rite of Perpetual Monastic Profession was celebrated, was held at Sacred Heart Monastery Chapel. Rev. John O’Donnell, O.S.B. presided over the Eucharistic Celebration and offered the homily. Sister Tonette Sperando, O.S.B., Prioress of the monastic community, led the Rite of Perpetual Monastic Profession and received Sister Michelle’s vows. Joining the monastic community for the celebration were Sister Michelle Renee’s sisters Paulette Haynes and Annie Scarborough along with their families, Oblates of the monastery, and friends.

Sister’s journey to Sacred Heart began in Warren, Ohio, where she was born to Jeremy and Joan St. Marie. Baptized at St. Pius X Catholic Church, Sister Michelle attended local Catholic and public schools. During her teenage years, her family relocated to Clinton, Mississippi, where she completed high school.

A desire to help others led Sister Michelle to study occupational therapy at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson. After graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in this field, she began a career as a pediatric occupational therapist, working for nearly twenty years with seriously ill and injured children at Blair Batson Children’s Hospital at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. During her years in Mississippi, Sister Michelle was an active parishioner at Holy Savior Catholic Church in Clinton, where she served as an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist.

Sister Michelle’s connection with the Benedictine Sisters traces back to her high school years when she attended a vocation retreat at the monastery. Her continuing remembrance of this retreat and a deepening sense of God’s call led her back to Sacred Heart, at first for retreats and eventually for vocation discernment. In November 2011, Sister Michelle entered Sacred Heart Monastery as a postulant. The following year she was formally received into the community as a novice, receiving the religious name of Sister Michelle Renee St. Marie.

Sister Michelle Renee's first two years in the monastery as a postulant and novice were spent immersed in community life, the common work of the monastery, and study of scripture, liturgy, monastic history and Benedictine spirituality. After completing her novitiate, Sister began ministry in the Cullman area as an occupational therapist, making home and school visits to children in need of rehabilitation or therapy services. After two years, Sister transitioned to ministry in Birmingham, serving at United Ability in the Hand-in-Hand Early Learning Program and living in community with other Benedictine Sisters in Birmingham. Currently, Sister Michelle Renee remains in this ministry, working with young children from two to five years of age and also mentoring Occupational Therapy students.

Within the monastic community, Sister Michelle Renee serves on the Peace and Justice, Wellness, and Vocation committees. She has also served on the Liturgy Committee and is active in Pax Christi Birmingham. She finds great joy in monastic life, stating that "shared prayer and work draw me closer to God and to my Sisters." Through her perpetual profession, she looks forward to a lifetime of seeking God within monastic community.

####

Benedictine Sisters of Cullman, Alabama
916 Convent Rd.
Cullman, AL 35055
(256) 734-4622
www.shmon.org
Contact: Sr. Elisabeth Meadows, OSB