



**June 13, 2021 – Pentecost 3 (B)**

**Meet Our Religious Communities: The Community of St. Mary, Southern Province**

**What do Sisters do all day? What are your ministries?**

Our mission statement is “We endeavor to say a fervent ‘yes’ to God by responding to the temporal and spiritual needs of our society through daily worship and prayer, the nurture of spiritual growth and the practice of responsible stewardship.”

Our rhythm of life is guided by the Daily Office, the Episcopal services of Morning Prayer, Noon Office (Midday Prayer), Evening Prayer, and Compline (Night Prayer), all of which can be found within the Book of Common Prayer. From that grounding rhythm, we have a variety of ministries. We preach, teach, and lead adult forums at Episcopal churches both in state and out of state (and, since the pandemic started, online). We also lead retreats both here at the convent as well as at other parishes. Some of the Sisters are spiritual directors. We work in our Organic Prayer garden and make jams and jellies from the fruit of our harvest. We have Organic Prayer Program interns, college students and recent college graduates who either live alongside us for a summer or a year learning about Benedictine monasticism in our intentional community. We instruct them in the Rule of St. Benedict, teach them chant, train them to work in chapel, instruct them in organic gardening, and guide them in their garden work and appreciation of the sacramentality of nature. We work with them to develop contemplative prayer services on a topic of nature to encourage them to dive deeper and see the connection between caring for the body, the soul, and the earth. We offer a regular *Ora et Labora* program series that involve topics ranging from quiet days to lectures on such wide topics including spirituality, yoga, nutrition, gardening, and herbs.

**Do you take vows?**

We take the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. The vow of obedience means committing ourselves to live in accordance with our rule, constitution, and customary and to listen for God’s voice in all of life. The vow of poverty involves setting aside personal property, holding all Community possessions in common, placing all our trust and hope in God’s care for us as well as making space for others, their opinions, and their ways of being. This involves living a life of simplicity and frugality. The vow of chastity encompasses living a life of celibacy together in Community and striving to live in right relationship with God and others. Our governing documents guide us in applying Benedictine values to our life and ministry. One lives in Community and tests her vocation for a minimum of five years before making a lifetime commitment.

**How can I get involved with the Community of St. Mary, Southern Province?**

There are a variety of ways to get involved with us. You can join us for worship, stay with us in our guest accommodations for a retreat and get to know us, come to volunteer in our garden, or join us in more formal ways as an Organic Prayer Program intern, an Associate, an Oblate, or explore if you have a vocation to Religious Life. Associates are men and women, lay and ordained, who wish to commit themselves to a Rule of Life and friendship with the Community. Oblates are also men and women, lay and ordained, who also commit themselves to a Rule of Life but also commit to keeping the Daily Office and have a two year formation program with our prioress. Oblates live as lay extensions of the Community and live in the world, following an interpretation of the Benedictine Rule and the values it expresses that is consistent with their life situation.

Those interested in exploring a call to Religious Life need to reach out to our prioress. Many people of faith do not know that The Episcopal Church has men



and women monastics, so please share this information! Contact us if you want a Sister to come preach, teach, or lead a retreat at your church. Check us out online at [www.communityofstmarysouth.org](http://www.communityofstmarysouth.org) or on Facebook at Community of St. Mary, Southern Province and on Instagram at [@stmarsyconvent](https://www.instagram.com/stmarsyconvent).

Published by the Office of Formation of The Episcopal Church, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017

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