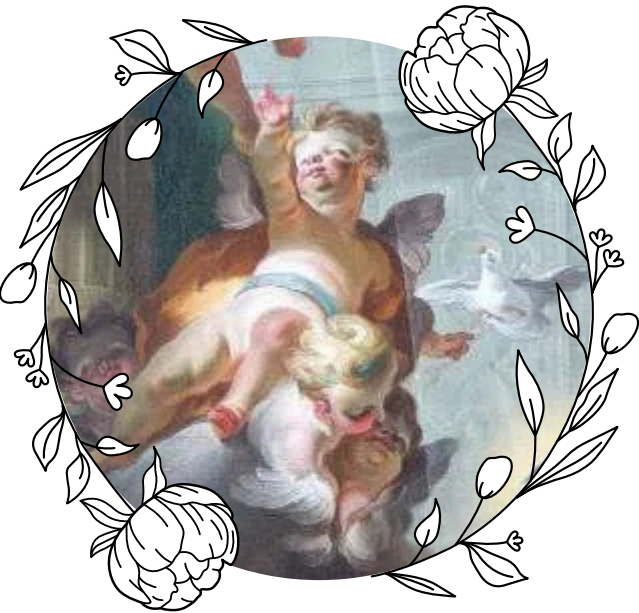


THE CECILIAN

A NEWSLETTER TO HONOR ST. CECILIA, VIRGIN AND MARTYR
AND A CHRONICLE OF MICHAELA SASSE'S DISCERNMENT AS A CONSECRATED VIRGIN LIVING IN THE WORLD

ISSUE NO. 1 | FEBRUARY 10, 2026 | FEAST DAY OF ST. SCHOLASTICA



Happy Feast Day of St. Scholastica! Thank you for your willingness to read my newsletter and for your prayer and accompaniment thus far. While in prayer, I asked the Lord what I should title this newsletter, and it struck me that I would like to honor St. Cecilia. This newsletter is written in thanksgiving for the role she has played in my discernment journey, and to give thanks to the many beautiful people I met while attending St. Cecilia Catholic Church who I now consider family.

I have lived in WaKeeney for one week, and quite simply, I love it. I have been able to reconnect with several friends from Fort Hays State University, including my best friend of twelve years, Katie Laflamme. It is such a gift to be near her and her family. She told me recently they are expecting their fourth child, and her due date is my birthday, August 22nd!

It has been enjoyable for me to work part-time as an optometrist and to have more time to focus on discipleship. Fr. Andy Hammeke, chaplain of the FHSU Comeau Catholic Campus Center, called me last week. He is facilitating a men's discernment group for those discerning the priesthood, and nearly 30 men are part of this group! During Lent, I will facilitate a women's discernment group for young women discerning consecrated life. It is truly a dream come true for me to walk with women in this way. Bishop Vincke called me last week simply to "check in," and I am immensely grateful for his spiritual fatherhood, which is an image of the Father's providential care in my own life.

When I see patients (I am still an optometrist!), I now have considerably more time with them, which is also such a gift. Gone are the days of twenty minute exams, and if I desire to spend an hour with a patient, I can! The day I began patient care was February 2nd, which is the World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life.

On February 9th, I attended Mass at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Ellis, which is about twenty minutes from WaKeeney. After Mass, I felt prompted to talk to the woman who had served as the lector. Turns out, she is the mom of a friend of mine I'd had while at FHSU. We spoke for nearly an hour and exchanged contact information. Later that morning, she texted me the following, "I was hanging out sheets and thinking of our conversation this morning. I reflected, 'We never know what the Holy Spirit has in store for us!' And then when I looked up, I saw an image of a dove in the clouds." Of course, we were excited to celebrate the Feast Day of St. Scholastica today, as when her soul departed from this life, St. Benedict saw his dear sister flying to heaven in the form of a dove!

PRAYER INTENTIONS

- Priests of the Salina Diocese as they partake in Clergy Renewal Days. There are not enough priests to cover parishes when this occurs, so many laity (myself included) will be without daily Mass for the next three days. Pray for more vocations to priesthood and religious life!
- FHSU students as they participate in discernment groups. Let me know if you would like to donate to FHSU!
- My best friend Katie throughout her pregnancy and all expectant mothers.
- Those estranged from or who have difficult relationships with their parents.
- Individuals who have fallen away from the faith, or who have never encountered the love of Jesus in a deeply transformative way.

ST. SCHOLASTICA

Virgin

Twins often share the same interests and ideas with an equal intensity. Therefore, it is no surprise that Scholastica and her twin brother, Benedict, established religious communities within a few miles from each other.

Born in 480 of wealthy parents, Saints Scholastica and Benedict were brought up together until he left central Italy for Rome to continue his studies.

Little is known of Scholastica's early life. She founded a religious community for women near Monte Casino at Plombariola, five miles from where her brother governed a monastery. The twins visited each other once a year in a farmhouse because Scholastica was not permitted inside the monastery. They spent these times discussing spiritual matters.

According to the Dialogues of St. Gregory the Great, the brother and sister spent their last day together in prayer and conversation. Scholastica sensed her death was close at hand and she begged Benedict to stay with her until the next day.

He refused her request because he did not want to spend a night outside the monastery, thus breaking his own Rule. Scholastica asked God to let her brother remain and a severe thunderstorm broke out, preventing Benedict and his monks from returning to the abbey.

Benedict cried out, "God forgive you, Sister. What have you done?" Saint Scholastica replied, "I asked a favor of you and you refused. I asked it of God and he granted it."

Brother and sister parted the next morning after their long discussion. Three days later, Benedict was praying in his monastery and saw the soul of his sister rising heavenward in the form of a white dove. Benedict then announced the death of his sister to the monks and later buried her in the tomb he had prepared for himself.

REFLECTION

Saints Scholastica and Benedict gave themselves totally to God and gave top priority to deepening their friendship with him through prayer. They sacrificed some of the opportunities they would have had to be together as brother and sister in order to better fulfill their vocation to the religious life. In coming closer to Christ, however, they found they were also closer to each other. In joining a religious community, they did not forget or forsake their family but rather found more brothers and sisters.

