



BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF CHICAGO

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Benedictine Sister's reelection rooted in service to those in need

On Saturday, April 27, 2019, the Benedictine Sisters of Chicago reelected Sister Judith Murphy, OSB to serve a second term as the monastery's 16th Prioress for the next four years.

Sister Judith is an example of servant leadership, while being rooted in principles of collaboration and diversity. Born and raised in Chicago, Sister Judith graduated from St. Scholastica High School Chicago in 1960. After graduation, she entered the Benedictine Sisters of Chicago; when she received the Benedictine habit, she was also given the name Sister Lawrence and made her first profession of vows in 1962. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish with a concentration in Elementary and Secondary Education from Mundelein College and subsequently earned her MEd degree in Educational Administration and Supervision from Loyola University of Chicago.

After living and teaching in Colorado for seven years, Sister Judith returned to Chicago and then served at St. Scholastica as teacher, dean, principal, and president. In the mid-1990s she was asked by the Jesuits to help create Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago. The innovative program was both college preparatory and work internship. The work program allowed students to earn a major portion of the cost of their high school education while working in professional offices primarily in downtown Chicago. This program assists families for whom tuition would be prohibitive. The CR network has grown to 35 schools across the country and is still growing. Sister Judith served as principal until 2001; she was later invited to be a Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Latino Studies at University of Notre Dame. She returned and worked with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) as part of the Chicago High School Redesign Initiative, founded to create smaller, better-serving high schools in CPS. Prior to her first term as Prioress, she served as Consultant for Board Formation in the Chicago Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools. There, she helped develop school boards in support of stronger Catholic schools.

“As a religious community of women, the Benedictine Sisters have responded to the call of Vatican II to attend to the needs of people-as part of the church in the modern world. Pope Francis would say, to be part of the ‘Field Hospital’ serving as we are able, where there is need. And as Benedict taught, to live a life of Prayer and Work in Community,” reflected Sister Judith Murphy, OSB, the reelected prioress.

The Benedictine Sisters of Chicago are a monastic group of 32 women embracing the Rule of Saint Benedict, composed in the sixth century but very adaptable to contemporary times. The sisters' home is St. Scholastica Monastery in the Rogers Park/West Ridge area of Chicago. They are one of the oldest religious communities of women in the city, dating back to 1861. They have educated hundreds of thousands of students in metropolitan Chicago and Colorado.

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