SISTER ANNELLA GUILD

EASTER & CENTENNIAL SPECIAL | 2026

NEWSLETTER

of the Sister Annella Guild

In Memory
100 YEARS
1926–2026



President's Greeting

I watched a movie about the Passion of Christ. In truth, I watched most of it. I closed my eyes during the scourging at the pillar and a few other scenes. I didn't want to see the horror of it; my stomach couldn't handle the horror of it. Is it enough just to know that it happened, or would my faith be stronger or more complete to have an image of it in my head?

Saint Rita asked the Lord for a favor. She asked to know the experience of just one of the thorns that pierced his head. The Lord granted her this favor. One thorn was sent from heaven to pierce her flesh and the bone of her skull. The pain was so acute and intense that she fainted. Saint Rita didn't want to know the pain of the whole crown of thorns: She asked God for the favor of experiencing the smallest portion of it.

In her suffering, Servant of God Mary Annella experienced acute and intense pain for two years and more. Her pain included thorns growing in her body from the inside out. When one of her confreres, a Benedictine sister visiting from the convent in Moorhead, saw one of her thorns, she referred to it as the "Thorn of Saint Rita." Servant of God Mary Annella did not ask for the favor of just one thorn. Without asking, God gave her the whole crown.

We hear about the crown of thorns in the Passion Readings on Palm Sunday and Good Friday. Is it enough to hear about them? We don't need a movie to give us these images. The lives of the saints show us not only the pain that Jesus endured for us, but also how we should carry our own pain. Our pain, united to Jesus, is for the redemption of the world.

Early in the morning, some women found the tomb empty. They would soon realize that Jesus Christ rose from the tomb, from his suffering, pain, and death. *Our Lord is alive!*

As we renew our Easter faith, let us give thanks to God for our Servant of God Mary Annella, whose 100th anniversary of death will be commemorated this summer. She is an image for us of the suffering Christ. If we cannot stand to look at him in his passion, we can look at her, our sweet Annella. She can show us the way through suffering, even to heaven.



A blessed Easter to all,



Monsignor David Baumgartner, JCL
President and Episcopal Delegate

Postulator Update
A Spiritual Cause Kept on Track by the Church's Legal System

As we continue with the Cause of the Servant of God Annella Zervas, OSB, it is encouraging to see steady progress in the public's devotion to her and the Church's formal process.

The Sister Annella Guild is at the heart of this work. Guided by the Board of Directors, the Guild shares Sister Annella's story and helps others encounter Christ more deeply through her. We continue to hear from people returning to God in prayer and the sacramental life of the Church. Don't miss our blog post about a Texas family whose connection to Sister Annella has been especially powerful.

On the canonical side, the Tribunal has traveled to Duluth and Saint Cloud and will be completing interviews in the Crookston territory.

The Historical Commission has been researching archival materials and uncovering sources that shed more light on Sister Annella. A review has begun of an unpublished biography with additional details about Sister Annella, particularly her suffering during her sickliest years.

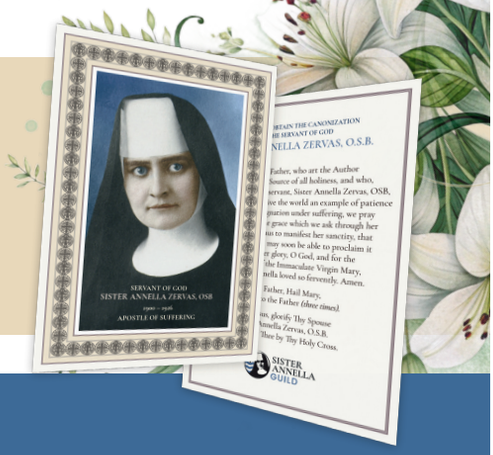
We remain confident that God is at work in *all of this.* Thank you for your continued prayers and support,



Amanda Zurface, JCL
Diocesan Postulator

Join Us in Prayer

Find the prayer for canonization at **sisterannella.org/prayer-downloads**.



FEATURED BLOG

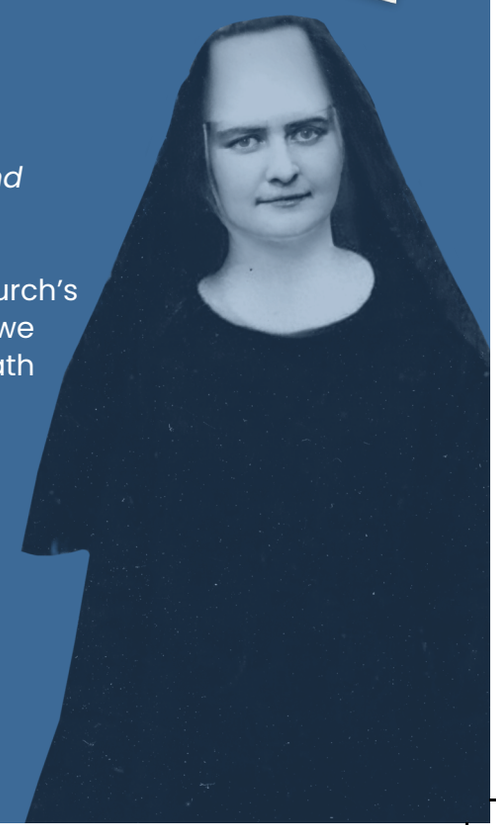
Sister Annella: "What Do I Do With My Pain?"
A Lenten Reflection as We Journey Toward Easter

This month, the Guild focused on a question: *What do the Church and Sister Annella invite us to do with our pain?*

During our March 4 webinar, attendees were guided through the Church's teaching on suffering and the mystery of Christ's Passion. Together, we reflected on how trials united to Jesus become redemptive and a path to holiness.

This month's blog feature and the accompanying webinar are for anyone who wants to sit with a topic that is not always easy to understand or accept. Yet, as we embrace these final weeks of Lent, we continue toward Easter with hope.

Read more at sisterannella.org/news-blog.



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Recollection Day for Guild Members

May 31 | 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM | Saint Joseph Catholic Church, Saint Joseph, MN
A day for Guild members to enter more deeply into prayer and intimacy with the Lord, following the example Sister Annella strove to live each day. Learn more at sisterannella.org/recollection-day.



Servant of God Annella Centennial Commemoration

August 8 | 3:45 PM to 9:00 PM | Saint Francis de Sales Catholic Church, Moorhead, MN
A centennial commemoration of the death of the Servant of God Annella Zervas, OSB, including the celebration of the Holy Mass, the dedication of a monument at the Zervas family gravesite, and a reception. RSVP today at sisterannella.org/centennial-celebration-day.



Pilgrimage to Rome, Italy

November 15-24, 2026 | Rome, Italy
A Centennial Celebration Pilgrimage to Rome, Italy, to deepen our relationship with God and the Catholic Church and to visit Benedictine holy sites so we may grow in appreciation of the charism cherished by Servant of God Annella Zervas, OSB, which guided her in her journey of holiness. Save your spot at sisterannella.org/rome-pilgrimage.



Happy Birthday, Sister Annella!

Sister Annella was born on Palm Sunday, April 7, 1900. She was baptized a week later on Easter Monday.

1926–2026: Centennial Commemoration of Servant of God Annella Zervas, OSB

In 2026, we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the death of Servant of God Annella Zervas, OSB.

A native of Moorhead, Minnesota, Sister Annella is buried in Saint Joseph, Minnesota, at Saint Benedict's Monastery Cemetery, where her Benedictine community is located. Her family is buried at Saint Joseph Catholic Cemetery in Moorhead.

To make the Zervas family gravesite a welcoming place for pilgrims to visit and pray, we are raising funds to:

- Erect and bless a Centennial Monument, honoring the family who gave the Church their daughter
- Restore and clean the Zervas family headstones
- Improve visibility and accessibility at the gravesite

Support the Centennial Initiative: Your gift honors Sister Annella and her family—and strengthens ongoing efforts to share her story and advance her cause for canonization.

A donation card is enclosed.
Thank you for your generosity.



Centennial Monument Blessing

August 8 | 3:45 PM | Saint Joseph Catholic Cemetery, Moorhead, MN | Learn more at sisterannella.org/centennial-celebration-day.



Shop the Sister Annella Guild Store

Are you looking for meaningful gifts to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the passing of Servant of God Annella Zervas, OSB? Or do you want to fill Easter baskets with mementos inspired by her rich story of faith, including a special Easter egg and a holy card? We have all this and more in the Sister Annella Guild store.

Visit us at **store.sisterannella.org** or call (218) 281-1735

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