SISTER ANNELLA GUILD

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL | 2025

NEWSLETTER

of the Sister Annella Guild

President's Greeting

Imagine what Christmas 1926 was like for the Zervas family. It was a Sunday. Their beloved Sister Annella had died four months earlier. The house was filled with memories of her life and death. And now they faced the first Christmas without her. In the worst of her suffering, Sister Annella was consoled by the reception of the Eucharist. No doubt Hubert and Emma Zervas remembered this as they approached the communion rail.

What is the "first" Christmas in your life? For me, it was in 2001, after my dad's death. We did everything we normally did at Christmas, but without Dad everything was different. Grief runs deep. It seems to run extra deep at Christmas.

A custom in my family was for Dad to sing "Silent Night" in German. I can imagine this in the Zervas home. Hubert immigrated to the United States from Germany at the age of 19. There may have been German, French and English carols sung around their tree.



This is a beautiful picture of a teenage Anna (Sister Annella) sitting in the family living room. The Christmas tree is in the foreground. Anna is barely visible in the background, focused on something or someone we cannot see.

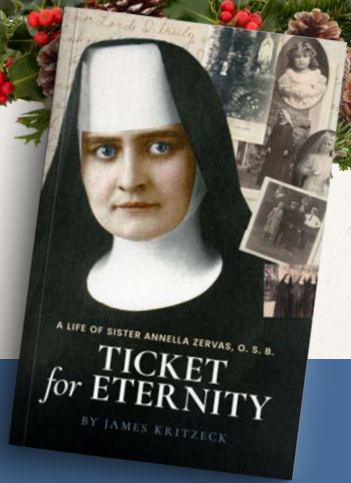
This Christmas we can focus on the miracle of the birth of Jesus. We know that the wood of his crib foreshadows the wood of his cross. This does not diminish our joy at his birth. With the cross in the background, we have a place to put our sadness, especially if this is a "first" Christmas.

Servant of God Annella Zervas reminds us that suffering itself is a gift from God.

On behalf of the Sister Annella Zervas, OSB Guild,
I wish you a very Merry Christmas.



Monsignor David Baumgartner, JCL
President and Episcopal Delegate



Step into the Advent and Christmas seasons with Sister Annella.
Meditate on the themes she and her family cherished by praying with *Ticket for Eternity*, especially pages 24, 40–41, 48, 50, 54, 61, and 87.

What Happens Now That the Cause Has Opened?
Inside the First Phase of the Cause

Now that the Opening Mass has taken place, the cause for Sister Annella's canonization has officially begun. What does this mean?

The diocesan phase of the cause is now underway as of October 2025. During this stage, the life of the Servant of God Annella Zervas is carefully and thoroughly examined through interrogatories (formal interviews) and a detailed review of her letters, papers, and historical documents.

A Historical Commission has been appointed, composed of experts who are researching archives throughout Minnesota. In addition, the Guild is receiving and documenting reports of favors believed to have been received through her intercession.

We anticipate that this first phase of gathering and organizing the initial body of information will continue through June 2026.



Amanda Zurface, JCL
Diocesan Postulator

FEATURED BLOG

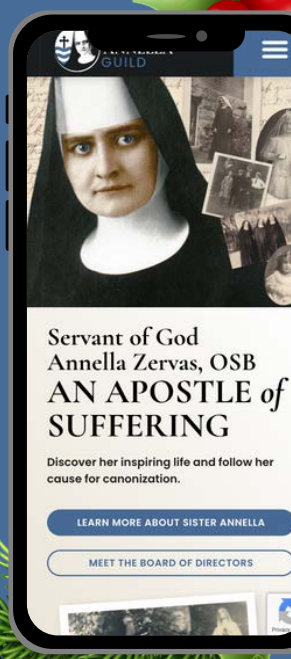
Honoring the Early Digital Mission
Mike Peterson's Story

Meet Mike Peterson—one of the earliest champions of sharing the story of the Servant of God Annella Zervas **online**. Long before the Guild was formed, Mike helped lay the digital foundation by creating her first website and faithfully stewarding the Facebook page after Fr. Dan Tracy launched it in the early years.

His dedication ensured that Sister Annella's witness reached hearts far beyond Minnesota, planting the seeds of devotion that continue to grow today. The Guild is deeply grateful for Mike's generosity in gifting both the original website and the Facebook page to the Guild for the next season of stewardship. Today, he continues to serve as an integral member of the Sister Annella Guild Communications Committee.

In this month's featured blog, you'll read Mike's story, learn how the digital mission began, and explore the expanding resources now available through the Sister Annella Guild website.

Read more at sisterannella.org/news-blog.



EVENTS & HAPPENINGS



A Look Back at the Opening Mass

for the Cause of Canonization of the Servant of God Annella Zervas, OSB, October 9, 2025, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Crookston, Minnesota

→ Watch the entire Opening Mass



Prior to the Opening Mass, a concert featuring musicians and singers from parishes in the Fargo (North Dakota) and Moorhead (Minnesota) area was held as a tribute to Sister Annella's love of music.

Enjoy the organ recital



Most Reverend Bishop Andrew Cozzens, Bishop of the Diocese of Crookston, delivered his homily on the Gospel of Suffering at the Opening Mass.

Listen to Bishop Cozzens' homily



Monsignor Robert Sarno, canonical consultant for the Guild, formally announced for the first time that Sister Annella Zervas is now recognized as a Servant of God during the Opening Session of the Cause for Canonization, which took place at the end of the Opening Mass.

Witness the historical moment

YouTube SUBSCRIBE

Never miss a video: Subscribe to our channel **youtube.com/@SisterAnnellaGuild**



Save the Date:
The Recollection Day for Guild Members will take place on May 31, 2026

Mark your calendar! The Recollection Day for Guild Members will take place Sunday, May 31, at the Church of St. Joseph in St. Joseph, Minnesota. More information will be available soon.

Interested in becoming a Guild Member (paid member with exclusive benefits)? Send in your request with the card and enclosed envelope, or sign up online at **sisterannella.org/join**.

FEATURED STORE PRODUCT

Sister Annella Christmas Bundle

Our new Sister Annella Christmas Bundle is for the ultimate Sister Annella devotee.

Each bundle includes:

- 1 copy of *Ticket for Eternity*
- 1 Litany of Suffering
- 1 Novena to St. Benedict
- 1 Sister Annella Prayer Card
- 1 Sister Annella Relic Prayer Card
- 1 Holy Medal Necklace

Order the bundle online at **store.sisterannella.org** or by mail using the donor card included with this newsletter.





Invite the Guild to Your Event

Want to bring the Guild booth to your next event? Request it here: **sisterannella.org/StarterKit**.