



FOR THE GLORY OF GOD  
*Valley of Our Lady Monastery*

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROJECT

**1. What is Valley of Our Lady Monastery's campaign For the Glory of God?**

The campaign seeks to raise \$18 million to construct a new monastery for the sisters of *Valley of Our Lady*. To expedite their move, the sisters have planned a phased approach to reach their ultimate goal.

**2. Why do the sisters need a new monastery? What are the project's priorities?**

In 1957, six Cistercian sisters from Switzerland came with their Abbot General's blessing and at the request of Bishop William O'Connor to the Diocese of Madison. They took up residence in the summer home of an early governor of Wisconsin and since then have done their best to maintain, expand, and creatively reconfigure their surroundings. Never intended to be a permanent monastery and showing the inevitable effects of time and the elements, however, the buildings are not just worn out and ill-suited to their contemplative monastic life – they are increasingly unsafe and unhealthy.

The project's main priority is to move the sisters to a healthy and safe environment as quickly as possible. To this end, the sisters need to raise \$10-12 million for Phase 1, which will provide the following: sufficient living quarters with room for growth; an altar bread workshop where they can continue to work to support themselves; and a temporary chapel and guest quarters. Phase 2 will complete the building with a beautiful church and guesthouse.

**3. What's wrong with the current monastery? Can't it just be remodeled?**

Over the years, the physical conditions of the sisters' surroundings have worsened and are becoming increasingly dangerous. In the past several years alone, a number of electrical, mechanical, and other elements have required repairs and major expenditures, totaling more than \$100,000.

Several years ago, a professional contractor evaluated the buildings and determined that given the literally crumbling nature of the current buildings and the growing list of failing infrastructure systems, further repair and reconstruction is not an advisable or sound financial decision.

**4. How will this campaign impact the sister's annual income and donations?**

The sisters will benefit from a new, well-configured altar bread workshop that allows for more efficient operation and expanded capacity for them to continue supporting themselves financially. Additionally, as with most campaigns, this effort could be an exciting endeavor that re-engages and increases the support of donors in a way that is positive for ongoing assistance for the sisters after the campaign concludes.

**5. Are you concerned about approaching the same potential donors as in the past?**

Past giving is a key indicator of a donor's interest and investment. Although the project has been in progress for a number of years, it has been quite some time since Valley of Our Lady had a campaign directed toward raising funds for it. Those who have previously given to the sisters' efforts to construct a new monastery know that their gifts have provided the sisters with the solid foundation needed to continue moving forward on their quest for a new home.

**6. How have funds previously raised for the new monastery been allocated?**

The sisters conscientiously respect the wishes of their donors, so as the project and campaign progress, they will keep their supporters updated. Funds previously raised for the effort to build a new monastery

have been used to purchase the new building site; to pay for consultant services, including architectural fees to design the sisters' vision of their new monastery, contractor fees and feasibility study costs; and to build the strong financial reserves necessary to embark on such a significant project. All funds previously raised for the new monastery have gone and will continue to go directly to their intended purpose.

**7. How can I make a gift to the campaign?**

The sisters at Valley of Our Lady gratefully accept one-time gifts, multi-year pledges (with a pledge period of up to 5 years), planned gifts, or approved gifts of stocks and securities. Additional information on Simple Gift Options is also available.

Because of their cloistered, contemplative life, the sisters are relying on the help of their friends and their professional fundraising consultant, Paul Merline from McDonald Schaefer, to a higher extent than is the case for most campaigns. It is also a gift to them if others help them spread the word, and if they also do as much as they can to help the sisters maintain their cloistered life of prayer during the time of the campaign.

**8. How will donors be recognized?**

The sisters pray daily for all of their supporters and remember their deceased benefactors. Additionally, a central donor recognition book will be available for viewing by visitors to the new monastery.

**9. Who are the architects and builders for the project?**

Architect: Kevin Clark, Clark Architects Collaborative 3 (Lincoln, NE)

Sustainability Architect: Lou Host-Jablonski, Design Coalition (Madison, WI)

General Contractor: Eric Schmidt, C.G. Schmidt (Madison, WI)

**10. What will happen to our gift if the campaign does not reach its goal?**

We are confident that with God's help and our combined efforts the campaign will be successful. If the campaign does not reach its full goal, however, the project will not be completed in the way it is planned now. Your gift will still support the overall project, but details will have to be scaled according to the new budget, or the sisters will have to cover other costs through alternative means.

**11. How will donors to this campaign and the public benefit from the new monastery?**

Most importantly, all people will benefit from the new monastery because it will be a place of prayer, where the sisters can continue to praise God and intercede for His people, a much-needed vocation today.

More tangibly, the monastery will make the following available to visitors, oblates, friends and families:

- A beautiful church where visitors will be able to experience God's presence, attend Mass and appreciate the richness of the liturgy and Gregorian chant
- Guest confessionals
- Private retreat opportunities
- The peaceful and quiet environment of the monastery

**12. Why are the needs of the sisters and their project important? Why should I consider helping?**

Ultimately, the only good motivation for any action is the love of God; only by His invitation and grace will you find it in your heart to help the sisters. On a practical level, however, we can also consider how fundamental prayer is to the health of the entire Body of Christ, for it is through a deep relationship and conversation with God that many graces flow out upon the world.

Although the sisters are devoted to prayer, they are real human beings with real physical needs. Their current buildings do not and cannot sufficiently meet these needs. Furthermore, precisely because they have been called to prayer, they have vowed to live in a way radically dependent upon God alone. They sustain themselves, but they do not accumulate wealth. They therefore trust in God and the generosity of those who, through their opportunities and work in the world, have greater material riches than they.