



## Breaking Custom Nuns

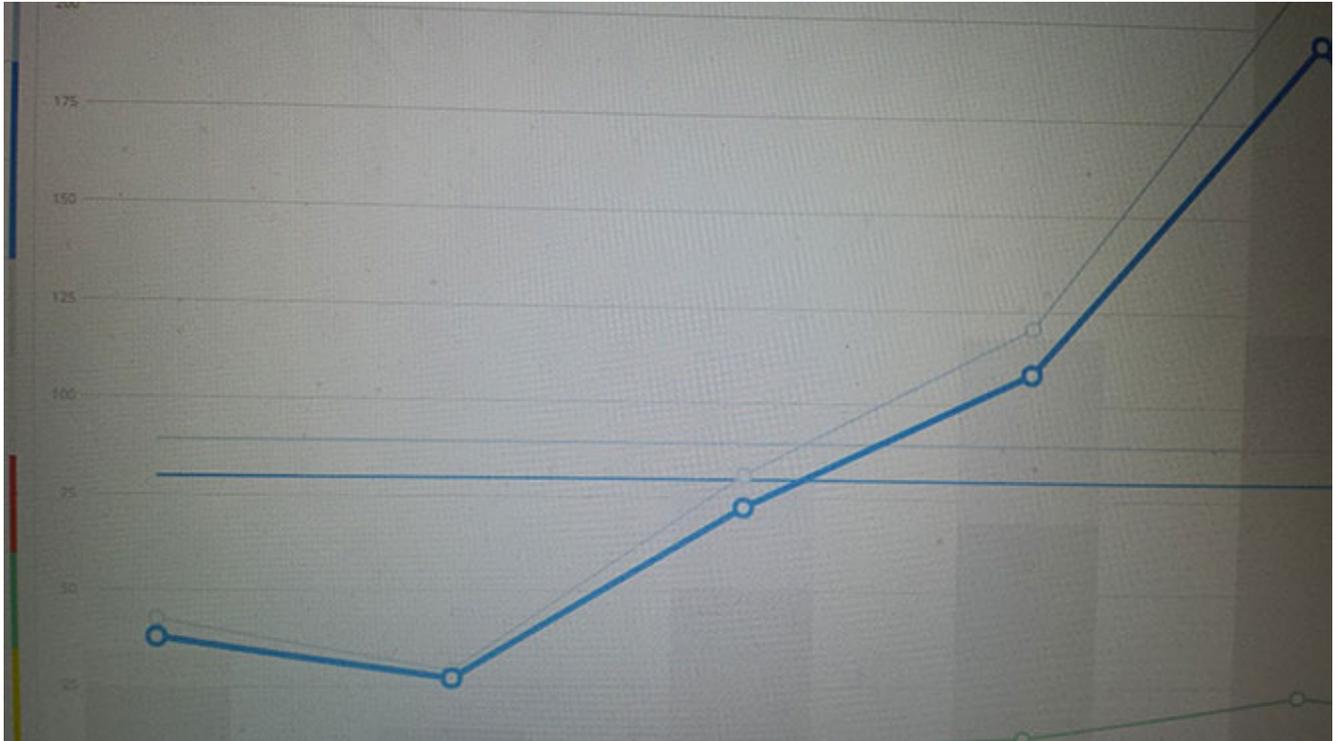
Our Sunday work rule in Sistah-ville is this: If you must work on Sunday, do something creative or, at the very least, out of the ordinary.

As I write this, I realize I've spent seven hours breaking our Sunday rule by attempting to answer the ga-zillion messages we've gotten on [Facebook](#). With one [viral video](#) getting over twenty million views in the span of three days, our phones, emails, social media messaging platforms are BLOWING UP.

We have lots of rules here at the abbey, and like any religion worth its salt, we have lots of breakage. Turns out, I'm the worst. But what do you expect from a nun who has her origins

in anarchist activism?

Twenty Thousand [Website Visitors](#) in one day?



Twenty Million views on a thirty-second news clip... WTH?

Since it is extraordinarily daunting, this massive attention we are currently getting, I put aside my rule-breaking correspondence chores to do something more creative – to take up quill and hemp to paint pictures with words.

If you scroll the [thousands of comments](#) under the twenty-million-viewed news-clip, you will quickly see that people are going ape-shit over the fact that we call ourselves nuns. Actually, we were very used to calling ourselves Sisters, but the media called us nuns and we shrugged and went 'ok – but make it 'the weed nuns', and thus, it came to be.

As women who feel called to their professions, called by the medicine, to the medicine, we are actually delighted that the public is going ape-shit over the habit, with not one word of malice toward the cannabis plant. We are Mother Nature's best decoys, it turns out. They are too busy hating on us (on our clothes, actually) to notice that they are actually defending the [cannabis plant](#) as medicine!

I think Mother Goddess smiles upon us every day, and says "You go girls!".



## **Controversy Gets the Conversation Going**

The media loves to distort things, and they like to leave much

unsaid so as to [coax emotional responses](#) from the public. And it works! But the Sisters and Brothers of this order are convinced that the conversation needs to be held, loud, and public, and often. The Cannabis plant has, against science and truth, been maligned and lied about for seventy-five years and the lights have now gone on, and it is time for everyone to know, for everyone to see. So we try to bury our indignation, when our earnings are over-stated or our mission is made to look greedy and capitalistic, because their spin is getting the conversation going.



## **We Are Not Catholic Nuns**

You don't have to look far to learn that we are not affiliated with any contemporary, and especially, any male-founded or male-run religions. We are clear about that everywhere we go, everywhere we are asked, it's at the top of the discussion forum on our website, at the top of the frequently asked questions. We ARE NOT CATHOLIC NUNS.

## **We stand accused of 'fakery'**

First of all, it is no badge of honor to be associated as a cleric with the Catholic church these days. They have much to atone for, and they know it. So why would I want to pretend to be part of that group? I don't. We don't. Wearing the Uniform gives us the burden of explaining where-ever we go that we are not Catholic nuns, but we do that, because we don't want to mislead anyone and yet, it is time for a new age order of nuns. The people miss them.

Second, the only time some stranger person has gotten angry with me is when he thought we WERE connected to the Catholic church and that poor young Sister Darcy has been forced to take a celibacy vow for life. He stepped in front of our path and stopped us, as we walked down the street in Oakland.

His head turned this way and that as he first looked at Sister Darcy, then looked at me, looked at her, looked at me, anger bubbling in his veins, thoughts of pedophile priests ruling the roost, and submissive nuns walking the boys to their victimhood (I imagined). If his eyes could shoot arrows, they would have killed me. Before he could utter a word however, I did what I always do and said, "We are not Catholic nuns. In fact, we are a women-founded, women run, independent order of activist nuns."

I had him at the first short sentence. His whole body relaxed as my words registered in his brain. The tirade he stored up in his head floated away into the west coast sunlight. He smiled, nodded, bowed respectfully, and allowed us to pass.



## **The Choice of Uniform was Deliberate**

The transition from Sister Occupy (Fall, 2011) to where we are today is an interesting tale too long to tell here, but it definitely represents a journey towards a calling, towards the plant, towards the clearing of the fog, the dispelling of information, toward the shaming of those lawmakers who shame the plant medicine.

In that journey, the ultimate decision was to abandon the Marion uniform that is so tightly associated with the Catholic church, in favor of something more in alignment with our political views – blue jean skirts best representing the ‘cannabis is agriculture’ movement. We wear white blouses and white head coverings in order to set ourselves far apart from the Catholic sisters who have never, to our knowledge, worn such a combination.

Our spiritual and medicine-making beliefs are based on getting in touch and staying in touch with our ancient wisdom, our ancient mothers and their practices.

We make medicine by moon cycle, as they did.

We wear clothes that announce who we are to our tribal members, wherever we go, as a way of honoring them, as did our ancient mothers.

We wear robes that represent devotion and connection to our order, as our ancient mothers did.

Nothing about our choice of clothes has anything to do with the Catholics, but everything to do with culture. We could have chosen for our clothing, the clothing of the ancient mothers of this land, in which case, we would have worn skins and beads and looked like Native Americans. Or, we could choose to wear clothes more similar to those of our Northern European ancestors. We knew someone would be offended, and chose to risk offending the Catholics over risking offending the Native Americans. After all, the Catholics gained Native Americans to their culture by criminalizing their own native cultural practices, and gained lands by slaughtering whole tribes, so, the Catholics can take this perceived slight – on the chin.



We wear very formal clothing to honor the plant that has been so dishonored this past century. We wear very formal clothing in solidarity with our Muslim sisters who have privatized their sexuality by covering themselves entirely, as we do not believe that they should be the only culture on the planet wearing clothes our ancient mothers wore, to be modest, to be chaste, to announce which tribe they belong to, to honor their people via regalia. All other religious cultures have gone modern or incognito. Being alone in this makes Muslim women targets of discrimination.

## **Spiritual, Not Religious**

We believe in and promote religions of one. What Sister Darcy and I do in our prayers is not 'religion'. What we do is practice our trade, our gift, our calling, and we practice it in silence, prayer, and meditation. We practice it with all our thoughts, with heart and soul, maximizing the healing powers through words, prayers, thoughts, hands, and elements

of Mother Earth. It's not a religion; it is our work, it is our sustenance, and it is our calling.

We stand accused of standing behind religion for tax favors!

We are NOT a non-profit, because that would put us in the same category as the NFL, which is CLEARLY for profit.

We are NOT a religion, because that would put us squarely in the same category of those who have been justifying ravaging mother earth and her children without missing a moment of a nights' sleep, those who use the Bible to judge instead of help the poor... no thanks, religion hasn't worked out so well for the planet, why would we want to be that?

We are a one hundred percent woman owned LLC and we pay all taxes just like any other legitimate business and to do otherwise would be against our own principals as we are trying to make tax dollars for these crummy little valley towns that need capital desperately – that need tax money to build things for the children to do (to build alternatives to meth)!

## **A New Age Order of Activist Anarchist Nuns**

The Catholic nun is going extinct in this country. I know, because I did a little research during my Sister Occupy years, and although the church is very non-transparent about this and all things (in a long-standing tradition), what I learned was that the nuns are going extinct. There were 350,000 of them in

America when I was growing up, there are now less than 40,000.

The average age of an American nun is somewhere around 85 years old, the average age of a new recruit? 78. They die at the rate of 10,000 per year and without recruiting young nuns, they are destined for extinction. I believe some lost their housing to pedophile suits, so that could have contributed to the thinning of the ranks, as well.

Even with the convents that are alive and well and have women under seventy-eight under the roof, the women don't wear ancient garb. They wear modern versions. They abandoned the robes and we 'occupied' them. And though Sister Occupy once wore black, [Sisters of the Valley](#) wear blue (blue jean skirts) and white or purple and white.

Purple is the significant color of the order because it is the color of suffering, the color of the occupy movement, and the color that you get when you melt together the colors of our bi-polar two party system.



## What is a nun?

According to most dictionary definitions, a nun is defined as a woman who lives with other women in devotion to their work or prayer, they work together, live together, pray together and take vows.

Nothing in any dictionary I saw said you had to be Catholic to be a nun.

For the record, the first Catholic nun, after whom all Catholic nuns came, was Saint Scholastica. She founded her order in the 800's. But at that time, the Beguines were the popular cultural equivalent and pre-cursors to the nuns of Catholicism.

The Beguines were women owned, women run, clusters of houses around which hemp was farmed and all the women worked in the farming and textile industry together. They lived together, in the sense of housing proximity. They worked together in a spiritual environment. They dressed in garb that identified their enclave. They did commerce (textiles). They were all allowed to hold private property. They were empowered.

The women owned all the property, the Brothers lived among them but made no significant decisions about the operations, and owned no property. The Beguines did not take life-time vows. They could leave and return, without barrier or stigma.

I believe that Saint Scholastica's first order was built on the dream of being them, but different. My theory is that she wanted to be a Beguine, but her parents were Christians and the Beguines were self-empowered and probably not Christians. Saint Scholastica formed her own version, connected to Catholicism, and added celibacy as a new twist on an old custom.

Submission to a male-run hierarchy, with no female empowerment at the helm, that was probably considered heretical in those times. If Saint Scholastica had social media to deal with, she would have been sick from the trolls and haters. Or maybe not. Maybe she would have smiled and said, 'love me, hate me, just keep talking about me', so that she, too, could fulfill her dream of expanding the order into something big and global, which, actually, she did!

A heck of a lot of nuns educated a heck of a lot of kids – planet-wide, in their time. A heck of a lot of nuns served in many healing professions, as well, in their time. I salute

them for their service.

We emulate a standard of excellence in serving our customers. But when we have to deal with hard decisions, we don't say 'what would the Catholic nuns have done? What would Catholic sisters do?'. No, we ask, 'what would our ancient mothers do?' and we believe those to be the Beguines.

We emulate a certain system and order to things. Are we emulating the Catholic nuns who emulated the Beguines? Or are we emulating the Beguines?

We don't believe that celibacy is required to be a spiritual and devoted woman. We do take a vow of chastity and that is to privatize our sexuality in clothes and manner. There is an element of celibacy to [our practices](#), as we are celibate during the medicine making moon cycles, but that is a custom, not a vow.

## **We take six vows for life:**

1. **Devotion** – We promise before Godfather and Goddess Mother to devote all of the days of our lives to the growing, making and distribution of plant-based medicines and to promoting the benefits of plant-based medicines and plant-based diets for Mother Earth and her people.
2. **Obedience** – to the Moon Cycles and planting cycles, to the goals of the Sisterhood
3. **Activism** – to dedicate time each week to progressive activist causes that best benefit the economic conditions of the poor surrounding us

4. **Ecology** – to honor mother earth in all we do, to do no harm during medicine making periods
5. **Chastity** – dress and behave to honor the work we do, to honor our ancestors and our people
6. **Simplicity** – a life of living simply (one car, one bedroom, one house, one TV set) – we do not believe it is necessary, with the wise, just, and ample distribution and use of Mother Earth's gifts, for anyone to live in poverty. As activists, we fight for the \$15 minimum wage and work hard to create honorable jobs for the local people.

## Offensive Things

If you are still offended by the co-opting of the 'nun' look that the Catholics copied from the Beguines and then, decades ago, tossed to the trash bins, hear this (please):

There is much about society that offends us...

Citizens United, for starters. The fact that we are re-fighting old fights or fights that are unquestionably already answered in the public consciousness. Equal rights and equal pay for women and minorities and the LGBT community – fighting that in this day and age is offensive!

Not yet having socialized medicine for everyone. Trump. Sending our boys off to wars that we orchestrate for profit. Denying even bothering to explain what happened on 9/11. The two-party system, the electoral college, the federal reserve. The rigged economic system, operated by and for a few uber-

rich. Profit on health care... profit on burials... profit on tuition... politicians who work hard to make sure government gets broken or stays broken, and then stand up and shout, 'hey, you're broken!'... all this and more, offends us.



Here's the Thing:

We are [humble medicine-making women](#) who have not yet realized any profit from this venture. Any monies made are re-invested in bigger batches and hiring more people who have given up on looking for work. We reach for and employ the terminally unemployed.

We are working to shed light across the planet on the urgent need for all of us to save ourselves and save the planet by changing how we live and how we consume.

We promote plant-based diets, plant-based medicine, and a return to ancient ways.

We believe that the path toward a new way of living in harmony with each other and mother earth is lined with economic security, economic security that brings good health to the people naturally, economic security brought to the people via the [cannabis plant](#), the hemp plant, and commerce in those exciting new (old) industries.

We are not your normal nuns. We are, however, on a mission from God.

For the Sisters' music video playlist, ["inside and outside the abbey"](#), click here.