



**2012 WaterSmart Business Program**  
*Recognized for Wise Water Management*  
**Benedictine Monastery**



Also known as the [Benedictine Sanctuary of Perpetual Adoration](#), this charming and unique parcel and building are located on seven acres in the heart of Tucson.

One would expect to find holy water at the monastery. Here, one would also find that water, in general, is treated with reverence for the finite resource that it is.

Inside and outside water use at the Benedictine Monastery is looked after by the sisters who reside at the property. Over time, they have become well-versed on water and energy efficiency.

Additional assistance is provided by volunteers from the community who are experts in landscaping and building. Though the area is mostly desert-adaptive, the sisters are considering alternatives to the small lawns surrounding the monastery. There are also several larger trees on the grounds.

A portion of the irrigation system has been upgraded, thanks to a donation from Rain Bird and other corporations. The remainder will be addressed in time, as funding permits. Meanwhile, watering is done with attention and care to how much is used. A well, a 2,800-gallon rain catchment tank, and a 1,300-gallon gray water tank provide water for outdoor use.



*2,800 gallon rain catchment tank 1*



*1945 Irrigation Well Bladder Tank*

A walk-through of the monastery is similar to a step back in time. The building was dedicated in 1940 and contains 87,000 square feet. There are 6 drinking fountains, 23 showers, 60 sinks, 25 toilets, a commercial kitchen, 3 washing machines, 1 chiller, 1 boiler, and 1 cooling tower. The monastery has 30 residents and an average of 400 visitors a week.

During the WaterSmart Business (WSB) visit, Tucson Water staff learned that water use, indoors and outdoors, is monitored carefully and consistently. The sisters learn how to address challenges – funding limitations, old fixtures, accessibility, etc. – and pass their knowledge and experience on to those who follow. Tucson Water staff offered additional suggestions and some items (aerators, showerheads, publications) to further aid efforts in water conservation and efficiency.



*These older sinks do not have aerators; instead the inlet valves are adjusted to achieve lower, efficient flow.*



*As the trees grew, the drip irrigation lines were repositioned further out to supply the expanding root system.*

The Benedictine Monastery is neither the typical utility commercial customer nor likely to be able to fully implement a Water Management Plan under WSB. But the sisters represent what so many residents feel: water is precious to life in a desert.