

Seek. Pray. Share.

Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana

VOLUME 5 NUMBER 1 FALL 2013



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Reverence for life at heart of all we do



After 10 years of the wise, caring leadership of Sister Kristine Anne Harpenau, I am humbled to be addressing you for the first time as prioress in *Seek.Pray.Share*. Besides looking at that change, this issue tells the story of several sisters who are there for people at highly critical times of their lives.

Sister Jenny Miller navigates with others the challenges faced when they are about to die. Or when their spouse, or a parent, is about to die. Sister Christine Marie Fendel is there when others are too weak to leave the house, or living in a nursing home. Sister Judy Dewig brings her special teaching touch when students struggle to read and are in danger of falling too far behind.

The sisters' reverence for life beats strongly through our every ministry and activity. And it goes far beyond what most see. For instance, our opposition to abortion means more than just supporting that all conceived life is born. We also work to see that children receive a sound education, that all are treated with respect through their lives, and are allowed to die with dignity.

We're concerned with the entire cycle of life, for all people. You can read about a passionate group of our sisters who formed a Social Responsibility Committee long ago to educate our community, and to take action, on injustices they feel we should strive to correct.

So we think all our ministries have a special niche in helping people in need. It's no wonder faces often light up when Benedictine sisters are spotted. We're religious women who follow the spirit of St. Benedict and the Gospels. We're women who live to incorporate those values in all we do. It begins with a warm touch, a genuine smile, and a deep desire to help deliver meaning to others' lives. We live to open those doors.

Yet our sisters are humble about what they do. Sister Jenny says her hospice work isn't really about what she does, that the gift is really the patient. That is the attitude, born in Gospel values, that gives her the unique ability, and courage, to mentor someone about how to die.

To me, such reverence for life is the fruit of our existence together, and our prayer together. It's heartwarming to me that the core values we hold dear are the ones we're determined to live out in all the places we serve.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr. Barbara Lynn Schmitz, OSB". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz, OSB
Prioress



Seek.Pray.Share.

Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana

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Cover: Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz and Bishop Charles Thompson after the July 13 prioress installation ceremony.

Left: A view from the dome as sisters gather in the sanctuary after the election of Sister Barbara Lynn on June 9, 2013.

Top photos: The annual Dome Golf Classic was held on August 19 at the Pete Dye Course in French Lick. Special guest Fuzzy Zoeller, a past Masters and U.S. Open champion, visited with Sister Barbara Lynn before the event began. At bottom, a golfer putts to finish out his game.



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Mission: We, the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana, are monastic women seeking God through the Benedictine tradition of community life, prayer, hospitality, and service to others. By our life and work, we commit ourselves to be a presence of peace as we join our sisters and brothers in the common search for God.



New prioress reflects, looks ahead

by Greg Eckerle

When she realized during the discernment process last June that she was going to be the next prioress of the Sisters of St. Benedict, Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz admits “it took a little while for me to breathe.”

But it didn’t take long for something truly beautiful to engulf her.

“I felt the grace of God,” she says, softly. “I mean, I truly did. It was like God was with me, and I knew it. Never could I have said yes to this without knowing that God called me to it.”

She’s also a bit in awe of the sheer power of the community when it comes together as one to make a critical decision. She termed the excitement level of the sisters as contagious as they settled on a plan to grapple with issues for the next 15 years.

“That’s when you know the fruit of the discernment,” says Sister Barbara Lynn. “There’s an atmosphere in the monastery that says we’re able to face anything if we’re together, if we’re true to the life and we continue to support one another.”

She knows that indomitable spirit runs through the community of 157 sisters.

“This sounds corny, but one of our greatest strengths is we like each other, we CARE for each other. We celebrate our diversity. We have a huge span of ages, from 23 to 96. Sure, we can rub each other a little bit at times, we’re human, but we do love each other. We respect each other in making decisions. It’s a model we hope will impact others, because it’s a wonderful way of living.”

The lifestyle and commitment called to Sister Barbara Lynn, 58, back in 1981. She already had a business administration degree from Memphis State University, a good job, a car, an apartment, and a boyfriend. But something was missing. Her heart was restless. She found the missing piece “when God brought me to the Ferdinand Benedictines.”

And the recent call to her heart rang louder and louder during the prioress discernment process. She kept wondering if it was the right time.

Above: Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand extend their hands in asking a blessing of the Church upon Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz (at right) as she begins her term of prioress. At left is the Most Rev. Charles C. Thompson, Bishop of the Diocese of Evansville.

"I look forward to the next six years of growing in our spiritual life together. I thank you all for your support, and I ask for your prayers."

"All of a sudden every reading I read, and every psalm I prayed, seemed directed at acceptance and surrender, and then, AH!" she said, slapping her hands together, "you realize the spirit will be there to lead you. I truly felt called to accept the position for prioress."

When sisters talked during the discernment of the gifts needed by the next prioress to take the community where it needed to go, Sister Barbara Lynn silently reflected on how the community had helped her develop some of those gifts. As director of Mission Advancement, she saw how people perceived the sisters, and she became more adept at partnering with others. She had been a parish administrator and pastoral associate at Evansville's St. Mary's Parish for five years. She had been a business and financial manager for various entities for 22 years. She had picked up a masters degree in institutional administration from Notre Dame.

Sister Kristine Anne Harpenau, the previous prioress, notes other attributes Sister Barbara Lynn brings. "One of the riches she'll bring is the relationships she's developed in this area. She has a lot of gifts, energy and skills. Probably the biggest piece will be her relational style, and she knows the business end of it very well. She also understands ministry outside the monastery. So she brings a broad perspective. And she's just a warm, loving person, and funny."

Shortly after her installation as prioress on July 13, Sister Barbara Lynn outlined some of the community's top goals.

"We're looking at what we need to do to best prepare us for 15 years from now. For the younger sisters, ones I know will be in ministry for at least the next 10 years, how can we best get them whatever they need to continue succeeding? We want them in positions that are life-giving for them and also tap their strengths.

"We need to make decisions we all can support that will impact our future, whether that's rightsizing our buildings, accepting new members, or even how we approach vocations. We realize we will be a different community size. Women joining communities now are very dynamic, more educated, and more sure about what they're searching for. We must continue educating those sisters, growing our relationship, and we'll build a stronger program for all.

"We need a plan for addressing leadership positions within the community. We're looking at healthcare costs and the best ways to use all our resources. We're looking at how the church is changing, and how we can best respond to the needs of the people.

"A highlight in Spirituality Ministry is our relationship with Jasper's Memorial Hospital and how we hope to expand that program. This could be a way for us to be able to share our life with others in a deeper, more special way. In our Family Scholar House collaboration, we have over 30 young women enrolled in school or applying to go to college, and we're seeing their potential for growth and to raise good families.

"All our different ministries are unique ways that God has called us to serve. We do it from our prayer life and our time together, but we also touch others in a way that God is leading us."

Sister Barbara Lynn also touted Ferdinand as "a beacon of hope for the Benedictine community" nation-wide and also for the areas in which the sisters serve. She cited the community being able to move forward despite the continuing chaos in the world. The Ferdinand Benedictines have been called to change often, as they are now, but their steadfast values will continue. Those values have always pulled them through myriad difficulties.

In his homily at the July 13 prioress installation, Bishop Charles C. Thompson of the Diocese of Evansville struck a similar chord. He talked about what he read on the sisters' web site, www.thedome.org.

"I love these words, that you are a 'tangible sign of enduring faith, presence of peace, a beacon of hope for all God's people



Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz reacts after being declared prioress of the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand in the installation ceremony held in Monastery Immaculate Conception Church on July 13.

spanning three centuries,” said Bishop Thompson. “Those are wonderful words. A tangible sign. You can see this monastery from a long, long way off. And as beautiful as it is, the beauty is within. It’s here, among the lives and the hearts and the souls, the blood, the sweat and the tears of this community, for the sake of God’s people.”

Bishop Thompson also spoke of Sister Barbara Lynn in his homily. He referred to the recent election of Pope Francis, and how he “came out of left field.”

“Sister Barbara Lynn did not come out of left field. The powerful thing here is that we celebrate in the installation mass the fruits of the spirit that this community has listened to . . . listening to that spirit, discerning that spirit, has been the mainstay of this community’s endeavors, this longevity . . . Sister Barbara Lynn knows she doesn’t walk this journey alone, with this community, with the spirit of God, with the love and prayers and the efforts of so many.”

After the installation, Bishop Thompson said, “Sister Barbara Lynn strikes me as a woman of deep faith, strong conviction and collaborative nature. She is quite personable and approachable. I look forward to working with her and watching her grow in this new role. She appears to be very capable and competent. I appreciate her prayerful, compassionate spirit.”

A Benedictine core value that speaks loudly to Sister Barbara Lynn is hospitality. She talks passionately about how each sister brings that hospitality to her ministry.

“That’s the gift, that’s the fruit of our life together and our prayer

together,” she says. “Hospitality is the expression of God’s love. I believe wholeheartedly that all of our ministry flows from the love we have for one another in community. That love and acceptance is shared through our hospitality.”

A key leadership principle for her is to have clear communications from the administration to the sisters to the public. She refers to it as a “bond of trust,” emphasizing that the community stays open and everyone realizes how they’re making a difference.

Strong support for Sister Barbara Lynn will come from her administrative team of Sister Jane Becker, subprioress; Sister Rose Wildeman, monastery coordinator; Sister Mary Francis Williams, administrative coordinator; Sister Jean Marie Ballard, treasurer; a nine-member group of sisters that meets monthly and serves as an advisory council to the prioress, and an external Executive Advisory Committee that meets three times yearly.

During the installation mass, Sister Barbara Lynn told the congregation, “I thank you for what you have taught me about Benedictine life. And I look forward to the next six years of growing in our spiritual life together. I thank you all for your support, and I ask for your prayers.”

Afterward, she expressed what gives her confidence in the sisters’ future.

“We have wonderful partners throughout the country supporting us that believe in what we’re doing, whether that’s volunteers, Oblates, donors, or people attending our programs or being served by our ministries. I feel confident when we listen to the spirit and walk forward together.

“What is most important in our future is that we believe in our call. We have been brought together for God’s purpose. As long as we live out our Benedictine vocation, we will be just fine. I’m happy and excited, and I believe the community is, too.” ■



Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz enjoys visiting with friends at the installation reception on July 14. Pictured: Ruth Stanley, Sister Barbara Lynn, Sister Sylvia Gehlhausen, and Bob Cadwallader.



Sister Kris on 10 years as prioress

by Greg Eckerle

For Sister Kristine Anne Harpenau, the most meaningful moments of her 10 years as prioress mostly revolved around milestones for members of the Ferdinand Benedictine community.

Which meant sharing in the joy of the next step in professions, or savoring the accomplishment of a significant anniversary.

"A most profound event is when newer members take the next step in their progression, from entrance into postulancy, to novitiate, to first profession, then perpetual profession," says Sister Kristine Anne. "Perpetual profession is a huge step, to say I plan to be here for the rest of my life. Each of those steps brings a lot of joy in new membership, and in the new life and gifts they bring. But it also calls each of the other sisters to reaffirm our commitment at some level."

She particularly reveled in the wonderful celebrations of jubilees and various ceremonies. Mostly because it was a time for the community to come together and celebrate its very existence. Much like any far-flung family coming home once more, it's a rare occasion to exult in the unique bond of love that only they

know. It's often a fleeting reunion, as other duties always call, which is why a leader truly cherishes the moment.

For Sister Kris, numerous small things mounted up to continuously renew her commitment as a religious sister.

"Every once in a while there's a big revelation from God, but not very often," she said, chuckling. "I think it's more the praying together three times a day, having meals together, and being with the community in those types of settings.

"One of the greatest gifts of being prioress is that it called me to be faithful in a whole different way. It called for faith every day, to feel I was in the right position at that time in the community's history, and to trust that God was a part of that, and to trust that God will guide and lead. And the community guides and leads, too. That's another of the gifts. The prioress doesn't have to do it all."

Above: Sister Kristine Anne Harpenau visits with Father Ray Brenner of Jasper and Elizabeth Guy of Ferdinand at the installation reception on July 14.

“Her gentle, loving presence touched everyone,” says Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz, the new prioress, smiling.

She leaned heavily on the shining example of the older sisters during her two terms as prioress, from 2003 to 20013. Sister Kris cited the unwavering faithfulness of the senior sisters, noting their prayer, their meals, their involvement in so many monastery activities, and their sheer wisdom.

There's Sister Theresita Schenk, still playing the organ and making it “talk like nobody else can.” There's Sister Helen Maurer, still teaching music. Sister Dolorita Libs, still quilting away. And many others, all wonderful examples of fidelity to the monastic way of life, something to appreciate and follow.

One of the most rewarding parts of her prioress years was the renovation of the monastery church, begun in 2003 and dedicated in 2005.

“It was a wonderful experience to see it unfold,” said Sister Kris. “Though the church had become dilapidated, it was still beautiful. Canvas pieces were hanging and some had to be taken down. The fresh painting and highlighting brought out new details. Installing the Eucharistic Chapel and locating the altar closer to the community were significant moves.”

Other rewards were getting to know the sisters in a whole different way, and becoming more familiar with people who support and appreciate the community. She reflects fondly on all the ways sisters make a difference in people's lives, especially the sense of presence they can bring.

As her prioress years passed, the community core value of stability struck a particular chord with Sister Kris. She notes there's not a lot of stability in today's world, but that the sisters' commitment speaks volumes to people connecting with the community.

“When we make that promise of stability, it's agreeing to be a part of this life. The daily routine is really where the stability is chosen. Getting up for morning prayer, going to mid-day prayer, going to evening prayer, choosing to be at meals with the community, choosing to be with the living group in

the evening. It becomes a way of life, and it becomes a great gift.”

Sister Kris sees another gift for the community in the new life brought by the younger generation of sisters.

“They have a different perspective on monastic life. It's easy to say we've always done it this particular way, but maybe that's not the best way anymore. The younger sisters sometimes have a different way of thinking because their experience has been different. So they bring a new energy. To see their enthusiasm for this life grow, to be faithful to it and love it, calls me to deepen my love for it, too, as we journey with each other.”

Her journey is now on a much-deserved year-long sabbatical. She's living at a Ferdinand Benedictine daughterhouse in Beech Grove, Indiana, but will make occasional trips back to the monastery. She's looking forward to being close to family members in the Indianapolis area, as well as “getting back into pottery.”

Her impact as prioress will be long remembered.

“Her gentle, loving presence touched everyone,” says Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz, the new prioress, smiling. “Sister Kris was strong in leadership, and was certainly a wonderful spiritual leader. She was challenging as well as supportive. Whether you were an older sister facing issues of end of life, she was there, or a younger sister trying to figure it all out, she was there. And she was everywhere in between. It's going to be a challenge to walk behind her, certainly.” ■

Sister Kristine Anne Harpenau visits with Kenny and Patty Weyer of Ferdinand, during the Installation reception on July 14.





Sister Jenny talks away fear of dying

by Greg Eckerle

Sister Jennifer Miller is never lost for words when talking to those about to die.

While some family members can struggle, afraid, agonized, and embarrassed about what to say, Sister Jenny can take charge. And what a relief it is for all those around her.

Joann Schwentker still tears up when she confides how Sister Jenny helped her husband, Jim, before he passed away in 2012. Joann gives her maybe the highest tribute possible for how she aided Jim.

Because Sister Jenny took away his fear of dying.

She's been doing that in her wondrous style for countless others for nine years as the spiritual care coordinator at The John and Betty Charlier Hospice Center in Evansville, Indiana.

"She's always had this big welcoming smile and joy on her face," says Joann. "I felt an immediate connection with her. She was so comforting.

"I told Sister Jenny I was most concerned that Jim's not ready to go. I just didn't want him to go with any fear. Shortly after Jim moved into Charlier, Sister Jenny came in the room, and Jim told her, 'I'm afraid.'"

Joann's voice cracks as she recalls the hurt. "I never heard him say that before. So Sister Jenny worked with him. She was so fabulous to encourage him and to give him strength

Above: Sister Jennifer Miller (left) prays from the heart, adding in personal notes, with hospice patient Eileen Scott. In her follow-up prayer, Eileen said, "Thanks for giving me Jenny, who inspires me to think better thoughts." Sister Jenny hugged and kissed Eileen before leaving, then grabbed a tissue in the hallway to soak up her tears.



Joann Schwentker had the “immediate sense that Sister Jenny cares about you, and is a great encourager.” When talking about how Sister Jenny helped her late husband, Jim, a beautiful bird landed outside Joann’s dining room window. “Maybe that’s Jim,” she said, laughing. “He’s hanging around because he knows what Sister Jenny meant to him.”

to do what had to be done. If he hadn’t had Jenny, it would have been even worse. But it was beautiful in the end.”

Jim hadn’t known Sister Jenny until he moved into Charlier. Yet he trusted her enough to admit he was afraid. And to reach his arms out to her the last time they saw each other.

Joann credits Sister Jenny with providing the spiritual comfort and spiritual leading so sorely needed. “And she helped him overcome his fear. We both got great comfort from her visits.”

Her voice cracks again. The gratitude for Sister Jenny is etched on her face, a look so thankful for what Sister Jenny provided for her husband of 55 years.

“Whenever she came into the room,” said Joann, her voice softening, “she was very present. There were so many times Jim was kind of out of it because of terminal restlessness, but when she would come into the room, he would focus, and he knew she was there. I think he got great comfort from that. I certainly did.

“She always talked so affirmatively to Jim. It made a difference in his mood.” What better testimonial could one give someone who brings such service to your dying spouse?

Sister Jenny functions much like a chaplain, embracing the challenging needs of people about to die, and those of their families. She’s proven to be a comfort and blessing to all.

Lauren Rickelman, Charlier’s development program director, gushes about Sister Jenny’s ability to discuss death with those involved. Lauren has researched society’s reluctance to even say the word “die.” “I’ve witnessed Sister Jenny saying, ‘Are you ready to die? What do we need to talk about? What’s going on in your life, and are you ready to die?’ Often, it’s the first time someone has said the word “die” to the patient.”

Sister Jenny recognizes the need for the patient to know the truth, so they can come to grips with unresolved issues, mending relationships, or setting up forgiveness.

“That is SO very critical in her role,” says Lauren. “I’ve observed her with patients and it’s like you see them going, ‘ahh, finally, someone’s being honest with me and telling me I’m dying.’”



Edmund Higgs said “from day one, you became instant family with Sister Jenny, she’s so genuine with bushels of compassion she freely shared.”

Her style is as impressive as her delicate, meaningful words.

Edmund Higgs, whose wife of 60 years, Hilda, died at Charlier a few months ago, simply said Sister Jenny “was a Godsend.”

“She had the ability to make us realize we had to face it,” says Edmund, a former principal at Evansville Reitz High School. “And you knew through her we could turn to a power that’s greater and find a source of strength you couldn’t find anywhere else.

“Each time she came into the room was special. She came in with an aura, a glow, a positiveness, bouncy, happy, and uplifting. She just emitted warmth. It was a genuinely appreciated service. She reached out to touch the lives of those who needed it, like us. You knew that she was serving her God. That’s her calling. My daughter said Sister Jenny was one who knew how to reach anyone at their spiritual level.”

Edmund talked of the genuine love shown by Sister Jenny, and her big, heartfelt hugs, ones that signified ‘I love you, you’re a fellow child of God.’

His son, Tom, a counselor at Dexter Elementary in Evansville, was initially opposed to his mother being placed in a hospice, “because you know why you’re there.” But Sister Jenny’s voice, and her presence of pureness, brought light to the darkness for Tom.

“I knew it was the right place for my mom to get care and respect,” he said. “Sister Jenny could calm me, inside and out. She was super comforting, a presence of good. She will always be somebody I can never forget.”

Sister Jenny so believes in her ministry she feels people would be lined up to get her job if they knew what it was like.

“I love nothing as much as working with the very sick and dying,” she says. It shows in how animated she becomes when discussing her ministry. She pumps her arms, smiles repeatedly, giggles, and talks as expressively as can be. But her eyes also redden and moisten, and her face becomes pained, when she talks of some of her experiences.

Yet through it all, it’s easy to see why people want her there when the going gets tough.

She even has an uncanny knack for getting comatose patients to respond. “I believe the patient hears. Many times there’s been a response. I can’t explain it. One doctor says, ‘There’s the rest of us, and then there’s Sister Jennifer.’

“If you talk about somebody as though they’re not there, why are they going to respond? I go to the bedside and say, ‘Mary, Mary, do you know you have a whole room full of people who are here because they love you? That’s pretty neat, isn’t it?’ Usually the patient smiles, nods their head, and family members are stunned. And then they know to do the same thing.”

Sister Jenny takes special pride in being that sort of facilitator, showing the family how to do something new for the patient.

One indelible memory was a man that admitted he didn’t know what to say to his dying mother. Sister Jenny suggested he tell her what he enjoyed in life with her, and what he learned from her. He did. After his mom died two days later, he said it was the best two days he ever spent with her.

Patient Eileen Scott said, “I learned from her to place your needs in God’s hands. She turns to God without getting into a tizzy like the rest of us do.”

When patients lament their life has been a zero, that they didn’t make a difference, Sister Jenny is undeterred. She tells them they have “right now” to do something about it.

Charlier often receives feedback from families that Sister Jenny’s help was one of the most spiritual times in their life. When they are questioning many things, and full of angst and worry, she swoops in and makes them feel like they’re so close to God.

“She’s like a superstar,” says Lauren, laughing. “When people identify a person with our agency, it’s Sister Jenny, because she epitomizes caring, compassion, the dignity of life, and spirituality.

“My father-in-law was here, kind of grumpy. Our family credits her with helping him find peace and forgiveness. She brought a special spirituality that meant SO much to all of them.”

Sister Jenny describes her ministry as “helping birth people into God, into the kingdom; it feels more like a birthing than an ending.” Which helps explain her infectious joy that puts everyone at ease.

The opening questions she asks patients are simple enough – What do you do? What’s your passion in life? Would you like

me to pray with you? – but it’s her Benedictine traits of sincere hospitality, caring and true listening that set her apart.

She relishes letting people know before they die how loved they really are, by family, friends, and God. And motivates family members to do likewise. Some say what they hear toward the end makes it the happiest time of their lives.

Sister Jenny reveres and embraces the “vitality of the dying,” confiding that her patients are wonderful role models in teaching her how to live, even though they’re dying.

Lauren cites one of Sister Jenny’s best gifts as discernment, her ability to listen with God’s help to understand who the patient is and the gift they are, and to make that come to life for the patient and the family. “It’s amazing the gift she has for that. She listens and gets at the true person and their soul.”

Sister Jenny says, “I love working with the dying. I don’t like it when we put filters in, thinking we can’t say this or do that, why can’t we just be who we are? The dying throw those filters out. That’s a gift. I’m selfish enough that I want to share that gift.”

Her reputation for compassion preceded her when she walked into Charlier for her job interview nine years ago. When the Charlier nurses saw her walk in, they stood up and clapped. They knew. Just as so many others know now.

Maybe her view on the mystery of death says it best.

“How do we know there’s anything there, has anybody ever come back from the dead to tell us? Just as we went from the womb of the mother to the womb of earth, we move from that to the womb of God.

“Trust it.” ■



A typical scene with Sister Jenny Miller (middle) – enjoying a laugh with fellow Charlier employees, Kim Raider, CNA, left, and Sylvia Dulay, dietician.



Life-givers fuel Sister Christine Marie

By Laura Reckelhoff

Sister Christine Marie Fendel brings a caring touch and infectious smile to each person she visits in nursing homes, the Senior Citizens Center, or at their home. What started as volunteering for St. Ferdinand Parish, in Ferdinand, Indiana, turned into a full-time ministry when Sister Christine became the parish's coordinator of ministry to the homebound and senior citizens.

In her position, Sister Christine Marie coordinates the volunteer schedules for those distributing communion to parishioners who physically cannot come to church. She makes sure someone is at Scenic Hills Care Center to say rosary and do communion services. The part of her job she likes the most is visiting the people.

Sister Christine Marie says, "They are all so special! They are my gasoline. They pray for me so much that they keep me going."

She certainly keeps going. When she visits a location, Sister Christine Marie is genuinely excited and wants to greet and talk to all the residents she possibly can in the amount of time she has available. "They are life-givers, and energize me, especially while I am there," she says.

Since she works for St. Ferdinand Parish, she mainly visits parish parishioners, but everyone she sees on the way gets that warm touch and broad smile. Some people who aren't Catholic ask to join in the prayer services. Sister Christine Marie welcomes them too with open arms.

Anna Faulkenberg, activities director for Scenic Hills Care Center in Ferdinand, says Sister Christine Marie is "phenomenal." "If she is not here, the residents know it. She not only gives spiritual guidance, but friendship to our residents. She comes anytime she is needed, even donates her time on the weekends. Whether Catholic or not, sister is here for every resident in this building."

There are many other places Sister Christine Marie visits, Ferdinand's Senior Citizen apartments, Brookside Village Senior Living, Northwood Retirement Community, The Timbers, St. Charles

Above: Sister Christine Marie (right) listens to 106-year-old Cornelia Allstadt. On one visit, Sister Christine Marie blessed Allstadt, then asked Allstadt to in turn, bless her. Allstadt, upon learning she could bless people, continued to bless nurses and other people she saw that day.

Health Campus, and Memorial Hospital, all in Jasper, and The Waters in Huntingburg, plus the homes of parishioners that are homebound.

Sometimes she meets with someone one-on-one, sometimes a few people are gathered together. During each visit Sister Christine Marie chats for a while, finds out how the person is doing, offers to pray together, and usually gives communion. Hearing the chatter from outside the room, it sounds like a gathering of old friends, with lots to talk about and usually a few laughs. There are also lots of prayers. Of course sister prays with them, and the people ask her to pray for special intentions for their family and others, but sister also asks the people to pray for her. Plus, when she returns to the monastery, Sister Christine Marie asks her fellow sisters to pray for those she visits.

As Sister Christine Marie was leaving a visit with three ladies at Northwood Retirement Community, Rita Brockman gave her a hug and said, "You are lovely. We always enjoy you visiting."

When it becomes evident that a parishioner is nearing death, there is a very special prayer service Sister Christine Marie offers his or her family. She says, "I feel we never thank a person enough for what they have done in their lives. This service thanks the person for the ways they have touched other's lives."

The family members gather around their loved one and Sister Christine Marie first blesses the person's hands and thanks them for everything they have done with their hands over the course of their life. Family members are encouraged to also thank the person for specific things done with their hands, such as thanking a mother for making meals, for doing wash, and for giving hugs. Then sister moves on to bless their feet, ears, eyes, head, and heart. It is a special time to show gratitude.

Sister Christine Marie says, "I consider it an honor, a privilege to serve the elderly and sick. I feel I am called to help make life a bit more meaningful for them until God calls them to their reward. These people have lived life and have much to share. They light up my life."

Aline Weyer's face lit up when she saw Sister Christine Marie at her door early one morning. Weyer was eager to say, "I enjoy her visits and enjoy her company." The two chatted for a while before sister said prayers and gave

communion. As she said goodbye and walked out Weyer's door of her Senior Citizen Center apartment, Sister Christine Marie had three other people waving to her to come visit them too. Everyone was excited to see her.

Sister Christine Marie has some exciting plans for the residents of the Senior Citizen Center apartments. She plans to get a DVD player to show special inspirational movies, and she'd like to start an exercise class for seniors at the complex. "I have the appropriate approvals," she exclaims, "now I have to find people who are interested to participate." With such an infectious positive attitude, she is bound to find people to participate.

Sister Christine Marie reflects, "I believe we are all called to be life-givers for each other. We can be life-givers in our families, places of work, in our church, neighborhood, and in society. The nursing homes are places of great loss and pain, but they can also be places of joy, peace, and resurrection. We can help bring people new hope and new life by our actions and attitudes. I respect each person and try to let them know they are special and loved. It is easy for me to see the light of Christ shine through them."

During a prayer service at Scenic Hills Care Center, Sister Christine Marie told the residents about a saying that hangs in her room at the monastery. It says, "What is life if it is not about helping other people." She then empowered the residents by telling them they can help others as well by smiling at each other, listening to each other, and most of all praying for each other.

Sister Christine Marie ended the service with an inspirational story about looking for the positives in life. She later headed down the hall to be a life-giver to more residents, and to be a life-receiver from them. She often repeated, "They are all so special to me." ■

Sister Christine Marie (kneeling) laughs with (clockwise from left) Rita Brockman, Ida Maffenbeier, and Mary Ann Kippenbrock during one of Sister Christine Marie's visits as St. Ferdinand Parish coordinator of ministry to the homebound and the senior citizens.



NEWS from the Dome

Sisters Jane, Rose appointed

Sister Jane Becker has been appointed subprioress and Sister Rose Wildeman monastery coordinator for the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana.

They were named by Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz, recently elected the next prioress for the community of 157 sisters. All three began their new duties when Sister Barbara Lynn was formally installed on July 13.



Sister Jane, 67, a native of Evansville, entered the monastery in 1963 and made her profession of monastic vows in 1965. She has a PHD in Clinical Psychology from St. Louis University in 1974, a MS degree in Clinical Psychology from St. Louis University in 1972, and a BA degree in Psychology from Ursuline College in 1968.

She recently served as psychologist at St. Luke Center in Louisville, Kentucky. She previously worked as a

psychologist in Jasper, Maryland, St. Meinrad College & School, and at the North American College in Rome, Italy. She was also director of postulants and novices at the monastery and taught at St. Meinrad School of Theology and St. Meinrad College.

Sister Rose, 64, also a native of Evansville, entered the monastery in 1967 and made her profession of monastic vows in 1969. She has a BS degree in Music Education from Oakland City College in 1971 and a MA degree in Music Education from Ball State University in 1981.

She was administration assistant, director of postulants and novices, and music and liturgical assistant for the Sisters of St. Benedict since 2005.

She was previously a music teacher at St. Joseph Parish County in Evansville, at Christ the King in Evansville, and at Sacred Heart School in Vincennes.



Six Ferdinand Benedictines celebrated their 50th anniversary of profession at the monastery on Saturday, August 24. The golden jubilee sisters made their first profession of monastic vows in 1961 and their final profession in 1963. Front row, left to right, are Sisters Anna Marie Brosmer, Elnora Shidler, and Dorothy Graf. Back row are Sisters Mary Judith Fleig, Mary Ann Verkamp, and Mary Philip Berger.

Congress extends IRA charitable rollover

There's good news for seniors who want to make a gift to a favorite charity from their IRA account.

The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012, which was signed January 2, 2013, extends the IRA charitable rollover for 2012 and 2013.

For those persons 70 1/2 years of age or older with IRA accounts, a provision in the law allows them to have gifts of up to \$100,000 directly transferred to charities, such as the Sisters of St. Benedict, without their having to recognize the assets transferred as income.

The benefits to you when you make this type of gift from your IRA are:

- The transfer generates neither taxable income nor a tax deduction, so you will receive the benefit even if you do not itemize your tax deductions.
- The transfer may count against your unsatisfied required minimum distribution.
- You'll make an immediate impact on the ministries of the Sisters of St. Benedict, allowing you to witness the benefits of your generosity.

Simply direct the custodian of your IRA to transfer your gift directly to us to ensure that you will pay no tax on your distribution. Please call our office as well, so that we can ensure proper transfer of your contribution. Regardless of how you handle your tax return, this is a winning strategy because it allows you to avoid declaring income on your IRA charitable rollover distribution.

Only standard IRAs and Roth IRA accounts qualify under this law. Other retirement accounts, such as 401(k), 403(b), SEP, KEOGH, and SIMPLE IRA plans, cannot be used to make an IRA rollover gift.

"We are delighted that the IRA charitable rollover provision has been extended through 2013," said Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz, prioress. "It's a great opportunity for our donors to give to the Sisters of St. Benedict, or any charity, because of the tax savings they realize. It helps them to help us with our ministries, and we are so grateful."

To further assist our donors with tax planning, we are offering our booklet, *Minimizing Your Income Taxes*. Please request your free copy by calling Becki Romans at 888-649-1121, ext. 2632.

Sisters of St. Benedict Spirituality Ministry

Please join us for Benedictine spirituality!

October 12, 2013 **A Feast of Four:
Being Fed by Women Doctors of the Church**

Sister Mary Ann Verkamp, OSB,
Sister Kathryn Huber, OSB,
Sister Teresa Stutz, OSB, and
Sister Jenny Miller

October 19, 2013 **A Day Apart: Rest and Reflection**

October 12, 2013 **Exploring the Well of Grief**

November 9, 2013 **Enneagram**

February 8, 2014 **A Transformed Life**

February 17, 2014 **Compassionate Healing**

Sister Kathryn Huber, OSB
Sister Karlene Sensmeier, OSB
Sister Maria Tasto, OSB
Sister Anita Louise Lowe, OSB,
and Sister Michelle Mohr, OSB
Sister Karen Joseph, OSB

March 1, 2014 **St. Benedict and Lent: A Holy Season**

Personal retreats, lodging for group retreats, and spiritual direction are available by contacting Kordes Center.

The Sisters of St. Benedict Spirituality Ministry holds retreats at Kordes Center, on the spacious, relaxing monastery grounds. It's an ideal place to pray, think, and reflect. Come experience a sincere hospitality and religious environment that's difficult to find elsewhere.



812-367-1411, ext. 2915 • 800-880-2777
www.thedome.org/programs

In memoriam

by Sister Paulette Seng

Sister LaVerne Scheller

November 8, 1918 – March 18, 2013

Sister LaVerne was a teacher and learner throughout her life.

Her 40-year teaching career included 16 years at Earle C. Clements Job Corps in Morganfield, Kentucky, a job special to her. She loved and cared about the men at the job corps center and was very successful in helping them put meaning and purpose into their lives. "One of the best, if not the best teacher there," said one of the sisters.

She kept active in mind and body — learned computer skills in her 70s, joined the Facebook crowd in her late 80s, started line dancing and knitting in her 90s. "I just do not have time to do all I would like to do."

Graced with wisdom, integrity, and perseverance, she was faith-filled and compassionate, especially for the vulnerable.

Sister LaVerne, who saw God in the people she served during her many years of ministry, now sees God face to face.



Sister Michelle Willett

June 26, 1953 – August 2, 2013

Sister Michelle packed a lot of living in her 60 years of life and touched the lives of hundreds of people along the way, sometimes changing their lives dramatically. Upon hearing of her death, a friend said, "Heaven just gained another angel."

What an extraordinary woman she was — "a woman of courage and hope, faith and compassion, one who embraced the unknown believing in possibilities, a woman of surrender and patient endurance." She was generous, bold, enthusiastic, creative, hospitable, faith-filled, and fun-loving.

"A voice and advocate for those who could not speak out for themselves," she unconditionally accepted all and chose to serve the less fortunate as a teacher aide for special needs children, outreach worker at a rural health clinic, supervisor at a group home for adults, teacher at a daycare center, chauffeur for senior sisters with disabilities. Michelle found fulfillment from simply pouring out herself in serving God and others.

Living the past seven years with her body ravished by cancer, chemo, radiation, a paralyzing stroke, she never saw her afflictions as limitations. Rather, she focused her positive energy on reaching out to others, spreading joy (a cheerleader of sorts), and changing lives. "God, you have something in mind for me, please guide me on it," she prayed.

More than once Michelle said: "I'm not a quitter, I'm going to live until I die." Her deep faith in God sustained her through her struggles and brought her joy and peace.

We celebrate Michelle's spirit and the fullness of her life, a life "all used up for God."



Sister Margaret Carolyn Kissel

August 20, 1928 – May 8, 2013

"Do the small things but do it with great love" — words of Blessed Mother Teresa and lived faithfully by Sister Margaret Carolyn. a woman of humility, simplicity, kindness, and loving service.

With great love, care, and compassion, she devoted much of her life helping the poor and less fortunate — for 30 years, teaching students with learning disabilities; sending thousands of care packages to people in need around the world, instructing younger sisters to "fix 30-50 sandwiches for all the hungry that will come to our door today."

She uplifted people's spirits. Family members said, "She made all of us feel so special." "Her presence in our lives made our job as parents much easier." "All experienced the power of her prayer."

She had a joy and buoyancy in spite of struggles and insecurities. Even during her final months of extreme physical pain and total dependence on others, she showed courage, trust, and hope. She believed "it's good to be alive."

In gratitude for her life of love and service, we rejoice.



Sister Johnette Finis

January 23, 1922 – June 20, 2013

A creative and gifted musician, Sister Johnette ministered in schools and parishes for almost 40 years, ever faithful and dedicated to the commitment required: school Masses, classroom music, band and choral practices, music contests, concerts and programs, private music lessons, parish liturgies, funerals, weddings, adult choirs. Students and beginning teachers and musicians she mentored remember her caring ways and her continued interest in them later in their lives.

Sister Johnette's life journey involved "desert experiences," not the actual experience of living in the desert, but her struggles to know herself and how God was at work in her life. Her trust in God helped her break free from fears and insecurities and recognize her own goodness and giftedness, and God's love for her.

Open to God's call to share her gifts as musician, teacher, and caregiver for family members, she ministered with compassion, gratitude for kindnesses, and love.

Sister Johnette praised God through music, and God said to her, "Well done, good and faithful servant."



The full obituaries for these sisters are posted on thedome.org.



Sister Judy high-fives a student after he correctly reads a word.

‘Sister Judy Day’ always a great school day

by Greg Eckerle

Everybody at St. Benedict’s School in Evansville, Indiana, knows about Sister Judy Day.

Better yet, it happens every school day for up to 80 students at the 450-pupil elementary school.

Sister Judy Dewig has been the learning specialist, or resource teacher, for 12 years at the school. She brings her special brand of tutoring to all sorts of students, from those struggling to learn a concept to the brightest kids who may have missed some school time and need to catch up.

The school’s teachers can send their students needing extra help to Sister Judy at designated times each week. It’s amazing how much the kids look forward to going. It’s a tribute to her style – individualized, fun, yet demanding. Students know she will help them. And teachers love having her available to help those in need, while the regular class must forge on to new material.

Lisa Wu, a math teacher for grades 6, 7, and 8, says, “You have no idea how much I owe her for all she does for me. Sometimes I’ll ask a kid, ‘Do you need help today? Do you want to go to Sister Judy?’ ‘Absolutely!’ Or sometimes they’ll say, ‘Do I get to go today? Is it Sister Judy Day?’

“She’s going to work them hard, but they like being with her. She’s very comfortable and secure to be with. Students know they can count on her to explain things. I think it’s the energy she has, the determination. She doesn’t want to see anybody fail.

“I’ll often ask for her teaching suggestions. She’s definitely an asset. Everybody wants Sister Judy. Teachers want students to go to her because they know how helpful she is.”

Lisa has a special place in her heart for the work Sister Judy did with her son, Brandon, now a high school freshman. He hadn’t passed the ISTEP Language Arts test in 5th grade, so he began weekly tutoring sessions with Sister Judy. He passed the next year.

“He respects her,” says Lisa. “As a parent, it’s wonderful to know that. And to know she was available to tutor him to gain his self-confidence in reading and writing. She just kept plugging away. She does that with every kid she works with.”

Brandon readily acknowledges Sister Judy’s help in getting him through lessons easier.

“She made it a lot easier to focus in on what’s right and what’s wrong in the readings,” he says. “She told me how to do things I couldn’t do by myself. It made me feel better.” He attributes his



Sister Judy with Brandon Wu, one of the many students she's helped pass the ISTEP test.

subsequent passing of ISTEP to Sister Judy's help. And they had a lot of laughs, too, during the sessions. Which made all the hard work easier to get through.

Sister Judy builds the fun right into the learning exercises. As a student answers a flash card problem correctly, she'll belt out, "Whew, good job!" Or "You got the power!" "You got it!" "Very good!" Her exclamations are accompanied by high fives, big smiles, and plenty of giggles and laughs from all. Other rewards are stickers and earning a spot on the Wall of Fame.

But going to Sister Judy's tutoring room wasn't always such a delight. She started out in a utility room. Kids were embarrassed to go there, sneaking in, hiding in a corner, then trying to get out before being recognized. But that has long passed, solved by Sister Judy asking teachers to send the gifted students, too, and the quick realization that she could help them understand concepts they missed in the regular class.

It's no wonder children now ask to go to her classroom. They clamor to have a Sister Judy Day.

She normally helps from two to nine students in nine forty-minute periods each day. They can be from grades 1 through 8, and looking for help in English, math, literature, writing, reading, social studies, or religion. She also teaches a regular 8th grade pre-algebra class.

Her smaller-sized tutoring classes permit more one-on-one attention with students. She can spend the time needed to discover misunderstandings. Plus she has the patience and experience gleaned from teaching mentally-handicapped pupils for 30 years in Memphis, Tennessee.

The concept of a learning specialist such as Sister Judy did not exist in any Evansville Catholic school before she arrived. It was the idea of a fellow Sister of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Sister Karlene Sensmeier, the principal at St. Benedict's. Seeing the success of the position, many schools have now followed suit.

"The smartest move I ever made was hiring her, seriously," says Sister Karlene. "We always had kids that needed extra help. I dreamed about how we could get to them before the gap got too big. With her expertise, dedication, and drive, it was a good decision.

"She can delve deeper to figure out what piece the child missed. It's part of the gift she brings. She makes them talk to her about what they're thinking, then figures out the holes she needs to plug. Parents and teachers can't imagine their lives without her, and I can't imagine St. Ben's without her.

"When older kids come to school early so they can have Sister Judy tell them how to do it, that tells you something. She also tutors after school to about 6:00 most days. She has a waiting list. Parents think she hung the moon.

"She really cares for God's people, and making sure you do your best. And she's the epitome of hospitality.

"Her dedication is relentless. She drops everything to take care of a kid. It's her willingness to never give up on a kid. There isn't any way a kid can't succeed if they go to Sister Judy. That's serious."

Sister Judy's passion for working with children needing help was ignited when she was in sixth grade.

"I saw a kid struggling and then they were so happy and excited about learning. I thought that's what I want to do someday, to help such children."

"I saw a kid struggling," she says, "and then they were so happy and excited about learning. I thought that's what I want to do someday, to help such children."

"The most enjoyable part for me is the visible excitement kids show when they're learning. Some come in saying, 'I just can't get this, I'll never understand it, it's too hard.' So I break it down, and we figure out how to learn it. Then the light goes on, the self-esteem goes up, and they're more positive. That's always my goal."

"So the kids feel good. They get better grades, so the parents are happy. And the teachers are happy because it's impossible for them to get to all these students that need special help."

"The kids know what I expect. It's firmness with love. They also realize they're gaining something here."

She can rattle off plenty of success stories.

One girl who couldn't read ended up a high school salutatorian. A couple others who were held back in first grade thanked her later for helping them catch up. And Danielle Schall, who she worked with for years on math, recently made the honor roll for the first time in high school.

Danielle says Sister Judy definitely played a big part in making that happen. "When I took algebra this year I remembered most of it from her. She would go through it step by step and was always smiling and positive. She treated me as an individual and really got to know me. I felt more confident with her help. She's pretty awesome."

Sister Judy credits her Benedictine and prayer life in helping with her ministry.

"I begin all my classes with prayer. I pray spontaneously with the children and let them do it, too. I ask them about their special needs, so we remember those. And I try to recognize the best in each of them and bring that out. I think that happens through seeking God in them."

Kelley Coppens, a second grade teacher, says, "Sister Judy just has a way about her of reaching children individually. She is a special education teacher and has skills to reach children where they need to be reached. She just makes learning fun."


"She's always ready to help you in any way, even at her own sacrifice. That's part of the Benedictine's hard work and dedication to their job. She has given up her lunch period to help me."

"My students are always excited to go to Sister Judy. They like getting that special individual attention. They know when it's Sister Judy Day."

And thankfully that's every day for some eager students at St. Benedict's School. ■

Sister Judy Dewig and some students exult after successfully completing a subtraction exercise.





A welcoming sign to the Ferdinand monastery reflects a key passage from the Rule of Benedict: “Let peace be your quest and aim. Seek peace and pursue it.”

Committee transforms social responsibility into action

by Greg Eckerle



A Peace Pole near the main steps to the monastery is a tangible sign of the sisters' commitment to peace. Each of the languages used has special meaning for the sisters. German is the language of the founding sisters and early settlers in the area; Latin is the language of the Church; and Spanish is the language of many area immigrants, plus the sisters have long worked in Hispanic ministries.

If you've ever been on the Monastery Immaculate Conception grounds, you probably know the feeling of peace that inevitably sweeps over you.

That doesn't happen by chance. The Sisters of St. Benedict have been living peace, and promoting peace, on the sacred grounds since 1867.

To do so is in the Rule of Benedict, and is a key aim of the sister's mission statement.

And two signs on the way to the monastery serve as constant reminders for any unknowing visitors that it's a place of peace. The first, a welcome sign on the drive up the hill, states "Pursue Peace" and "Seek Peace." The second is a Peace Pole near the first set of outside steps. It proclaims "May Peace Prevail On Earth" in four different languages – English, Latin, German, and Spanish.

But the sisters have gone much further than signs. Since the Second Vatican Council in the early 1960s challenged people to greater involvement with social issues, such as serving the poor, working for peace and justice, and upholding the dignity and equality of all people, the community has had a special committee of passionate sisters dedicated to doing just that.

Known by various names over time, the group has been called the Social Responsibility Committee the past 10 years. Their peace initiative is part of the community's deep and long reverence for life. It springs from a life based in Gospel justice and peace, and Jesus' caring for the vulnerable.



Sister Paulette Seng lights a candle in the monastery on the day of an execution in the U.S. to remind all who pass by to pray for all victims and perpetrators of violence. The candle stays lit for a day.

"That's the foundation of our commitment to social justice," says Sister Paulette Seng, the committee's chairperson. "Social justice is simply love in action, showing compassion and solidarity for those in need, and responding to their needs."

She sees a two-pronged approach to social justice work. The first facet is addressing more immediate needs, such as food, shelter, and safety. The second is looking at unjust laws, systems, and structures that contribute to the social injustices — including the factors preventing people from rising out of poverty, from obtaining a decent life with dignity, and from supporting a family.

"We select issues where there's great need and where we might have the greatest impact, and network with other organizations that work with justice issues," says Sister Paulette.

The mission of the Social Responsibility Committee is to educate the community and raise awareness on social issues, and then guide the community into appropriate action. Besides routinely helping the illiterate, the homeless, the hungry, and the sick, the Ferdinand Benedictines have sheltered abused women, and refugees from Vietnam and Central America.

Some of the committee's actions in recent years:

- A monthly public First Friday Hour of Prayer for Peace;
- Special observances of International Earth Day and International Day of Peace;
- Held community workshops and prayer vigils;
- Signed peace statements opposing wars;
- Sponsored presentations by other religions, immigrants, minorities, and homeless;
- Contacted legislators to support laws against abortion and to support other laws that benefit and strengthen families;
- Advocate for just wages for all workers, for programs that assist the poor and single parents, for justice for immigrants and for a comprehensive immigration reform;

- Promoting proper housing, upbringing, and education for children;
- Various environmental efforts to sustain the earth: rain barrels, chemical-free gardening, operating cars with less emissions, composting, recycling;
- Opposition to the death penalty: on an execution day in the U.S., a candle is lit, and the sisters include a prayer petition at Morning Prayer for the person being executed, by name, and "for all victims and perpetrators of violence, for an end to the death penalty, and for a greater respect for all life";
- Efforts to participate in ministries for marginalized people;
- Fostering greater acceptance of cultural differences;

Sister Paulette talks passionately of the moral responsibility she feels as a Christian to respond when she sees an injustice.

"It's so important to understand and accept differences between cultures, religions, and within families, to eliminate hostilities and build peace. There is so much hatred and disrespect. This sometimes leads to war, which never solves the problem," she says, tapping a table for emphasis. "It only generates more hostility, destruction, and loss of life.

"We have the moral responsibility to try to make a difference." ■

The Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand statement regarding the sanctity of life:

The Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana, in alignment with the teaching of the Catholic Church, stand for respect for the life and dignity of each human person, from conception to natural death. We believe human life has value, no matter one's state of development or decline, and regardless of what one has done. We believe abortion is unacceptable under any circumstances, and we work to provide adequate support for women and men facing pregnancy in less-than-ideal situations. We work and pray for the end of poverty and war, and we pray for the abolition of the death penalty. For us, all life matters.

Top 10 items in Archives

By Laura Reckelhoff

The archives and collections department of the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand houses thousands of items and files forever preserving the history, and thus, the story, of the sisters. The following photos show the top 10 most important items, as chosen by Sister Mary Dominic Frederick, archivist, and Sister Mary Philip Berger, archives assistant. Find more pictures and information on the monastery archives and collections, as well as genealogy information on our website www.thedome.org.

1. Sisters' vows and personal records



Each sister, upon making temporary vows, promises stability, obedience, and fidelity to the monastic way of life, according to the Rule of St. Benedict. Copies of the vows are held in the administrative offices until the sister's death. They are then sent to the Archives for perpetual preservation.

2. Deeds



Pictured is a deed signed on August 31, 1857, by Father Joseph Kundek, founder of the town of Ferdinand. All deeds, since the founding of our monastery, are on file in the archives.

3. Monastery building blueprints



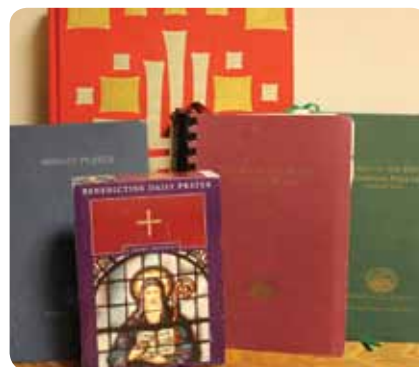
The blueprints pictured are of St. Benedict Hall and are dated September, 1934.

4. Historical documents



A detailed early history of our monastery is preserved through the Chronicles and the Dove, a log of events kept by our sisters. Both the Chronicles, dating from 1867 to 1893, and the Dove, dating from 1903 – 1917, were originally written in German. Sister Dolorosa Hasenour and archives volunteer, Lucia Wood, recently completed the translation of each and the information was put into binders for each deanery of sisters to enjoy.

5. Liturgical books



Going to prayer three times a day, liturgy is an important part of the sisters' lives as sisters.

6. Personal prayer books



Each sister has her own personal prayer books, which are preserved in her files upon her death. Pictured are prayer books dating from 1803 to 1858.

7. Photo albums



Our photo albums house a pictorial history of the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand. Each photo has also been scanned and stored digitally to be sure they are forever preserved.

8. Bible collection



Our collections house 90 bibles in ten different languages. The original collection was a gift from Reverend Gilbert Trible of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. Pictured is the oldest bible in our collection, published in 1728.

9. Paintings and art collection



Many paintings and artwork are housed in our collections and displayed throughout the monastery. A majority of the artwork are works of our sisters, with a majority done by Sister Gregory Ems and Sister Francesca Brogan. There have been lots of very talented sisters that have graced our monastery. Just a small portion of the preserved artwork is pictured.

10. Mission chronicles



Starting in 1951 each of our mission houses submit a yearly synopsis of the happenings and events that occurred. Each of these missionary locations is a vital part of our service to others and these chronicles provide a history of this service.

Perspectives

What are your hopes for our new pope?

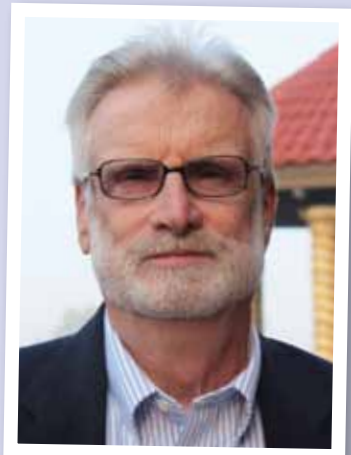


Pope Francis is telling us with his actions that he gets the message of Jesus. Serve the poor. This is a powerful witness to the Church, that we need to be about serving the poor.

— Sister Jean Marie Ballard, monastery treasurer

My hopes for Pope Francis are that in his loving, humble but forceful way, he will be a tireless and effective opponent to the culture of death and a powerful paraclete for the sanctity of all human life.

— Chuck Gillie, Benedictine Oblate, who regularly attends Mass at the monastery

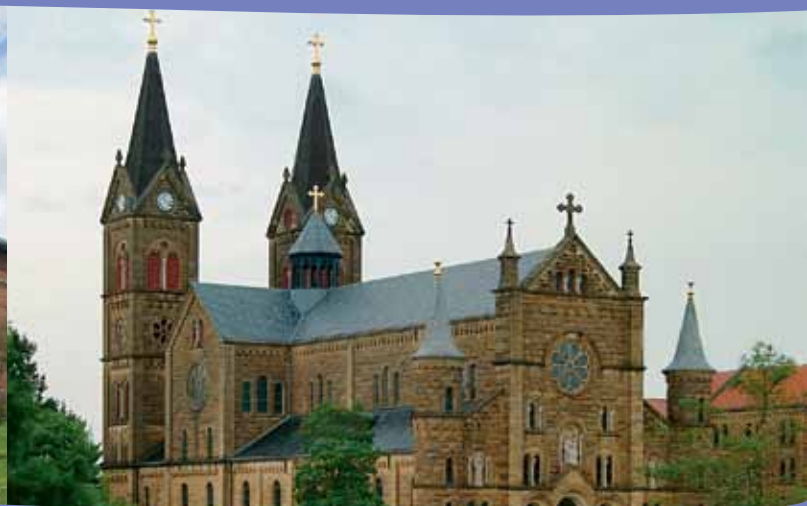


My hopes for Pope Francis are three. First, a hope and a prayer that he remains true to himself, humble, a friend of the poor and open to all. Second, let us hope that his actions retain the trust of the people. We may not understand but we must trust that he is being led by the Holy Spirit. Third, a hope that Pope Francis will give the world hope! The

news media shows us the world in despair. May Pope Francis be countercultural and give us hope for the future...a world at peace!

— Sister Rebecca Abel, library consultant

Pilgrimage for high school youth and young adults Oct. 19



The Benedictine communities of Monastery Immaculate Conception and Saint Meinrad Archabbey are co-sponsoring a pilgrimage for high school youth and young adults on Saturday, October 19.

The event will begin at 1:00 p.m. Eastern time at the Abbey Church of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, Indiana, with a brief prayer. Pilgrims will then walk the six miles of country roads to Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, including a stop at Monte Cassino Shrine for prayer and pilgrimage intentions.

Pilgrims will attend Vespers at 5:00 p.m. Eastern time at Monastery Immaculate Conception Church, followed by a cookout with members of both the men's and women's Benedictine communities.

Youth groups, campus ministry groups, and individuals are welcome. Groups are encouraged to bring a banner or standard to walk with.

Cost is \$7 per pilgrim, payable upon arrival. Please register online at thedome.org/pilgrimage.

SISTERS
OF ST. BENEDICT
FERDINAND, INDIANA
.....
Seek. Pray. Share.

Registration information is available online at thedome.org/pilgrimage • 812-367-1411, ext. 2830

Calendar of Events

2013

October 18–20	Come and See Weekend
October 19	Benedictine Hills Pilgrimage
October 20	Oblation Day
October 27	Diamond Jubilee
November 15	Christkindlmarkt Eve performance
November 16–17	Christkindlmarkt in Ferdinand
November 28	Thanksgiving
December ??	Music students Christmas recital
December 24	Christmas Eve Services in monastery church

2014

January 3–5	Come and See Weekend
January 18	Oblate Meeting
February 15	Oblate Meeting
March 14–16	Come and See Weekend (tentative)
March 16	Oblate Meeting

Introducing Angel Cookies!

Our newest cookie offering from Simply Divine Bakery, and winner of our tasting contest, the Angel Cookie offers a subtle, light flavor with just a hint of an additional taste that makes you want another cookie.

Order online through our gift shop: forheavensake.org.

Read about the latest happenings at Simply Divine, our monastery bakery, on our web site: simplydivinebakery.org.



For more stories about the sisters, visit thedome.org/news.