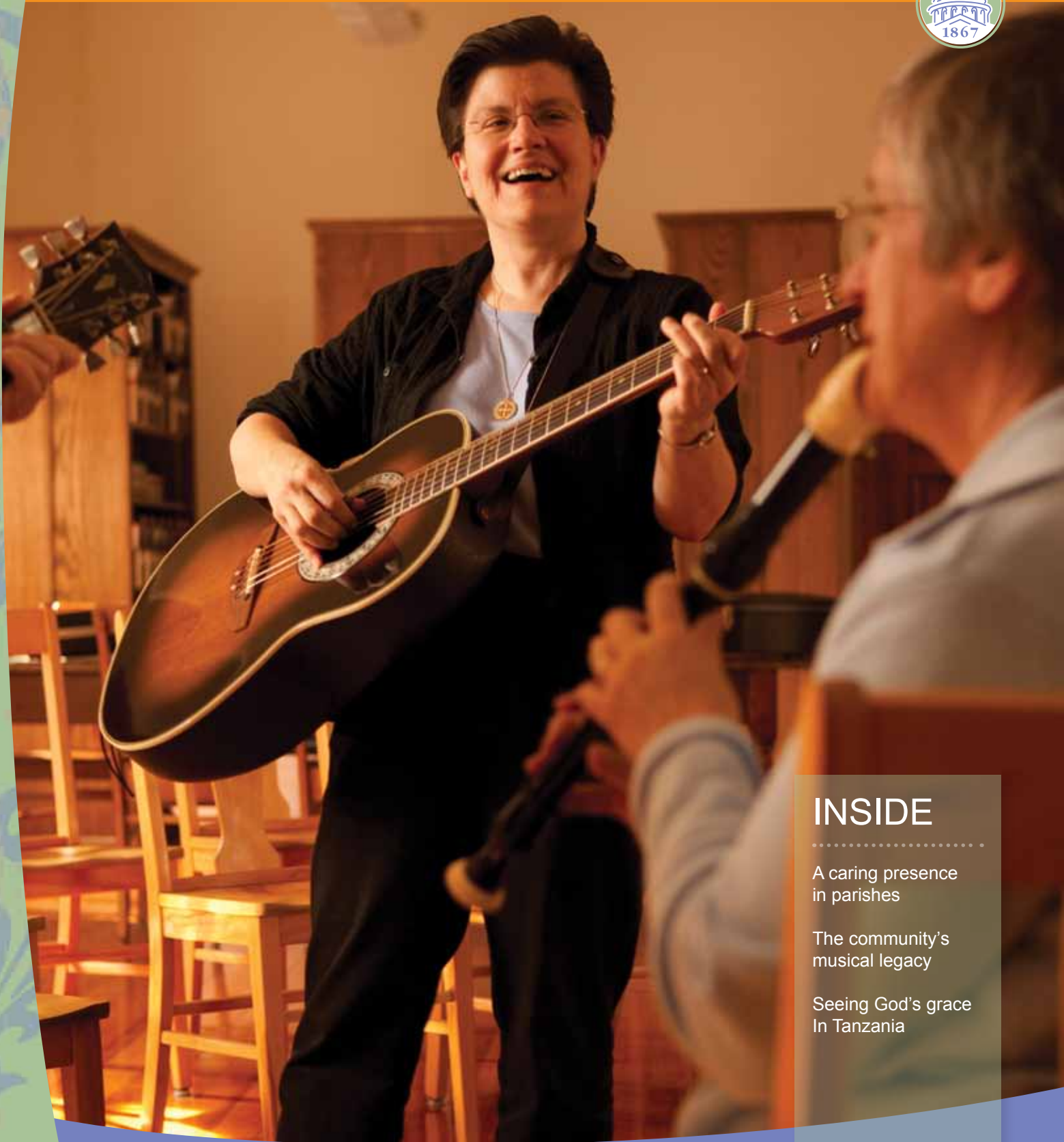


Seek. Pray. Share.

Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 2 SPRING 2010



INSIDE

A caring presence
in parishes

The community's
musical legacy

Seeing God's grace
In Tanzania

Believing in spring



During winter in Southern Indiana, the gray can be all encompassing. There are often more days that are gray than days when the sun shines.

And yet, at those times, I know the sun is still there. I trust that it will shine again. And I know that spring is coming. When the days are overcast, the gift of memory of what spring was like last year sustains me as I wait for the season of “new” life.

That can be true in the seasons of our lives also.

The cycle of life, death, and resurrection plays out in many different ways. We live through that cycle many times — when people we love are sick and dying, when there’s a divorce or separation in the family, when there are other losses of financial security, friendship, or relationship, or when we face our own physical losses.

Since most of us have traveled down that path before, we know how painful going through these losses can be. But at the same time, when we have walked this journey before, we know that the “sun will shine again”!

One gift of memory is when we remember that God’s strength has supported us through the difficult times in the past. And we trust that God will carry us through once more. We trust that God will give us life, joy, and peace once again. This promise of new life sustains us in the dark days.

It’s appropriate that the Church places the Lenten and Easter seasons during the months when winter turns into spring. As we move through these very sacred days, nature provides a very tangible and concrete reminder that God is with us.

In spring, there can be a long time of waiting for signs of life. Think of the buds on the trees. They can be present for a long time before they open up. The timing of when they will burst forth is not ours to control, or even to know.

Truly, life is a “trust walk.” Yes, there are dark times, gray times, in the seasons of our lives. But the sun is still there. The same is true of God. Even though we may not always “feel” God’s presence, we can trust that God is right there — with us! We need to believe that Easter will come, that Jesus will rise, and that new life, hope, and joy will emerge again.

I invite you to reflect on your journey of life. What season of life are you in — spring, summer, fall, or winter? Are you in a time of sorrowing, waiting, grieving, feeling angry? Or in the wonderful time of the gentle exuberance of spring, of new life?

No matter in what season of life you find yourself, my prayer is that you can trust that God is always with you, gracing you and gifting you. God is always present, walking with each of us on our journey. Let us pray for each other as we walk this journey of life! May new life come to you!

Sister Kristine Anne Harpenau OSB

Sister Kristine Anne Harpenau, OSB
Prioress

Seek.Pray.Share.

Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana

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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.

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Sister Kimberly Mandelkow's musical talents enrich and enhance parish liturgies.



A gentle, caring presence

by Sister Paulette Seng

"Some time ago, I was greeting at the church entrance before a 7 a.m. Sunday Mass. A middle-aged woman came in looking very tired and sad. I made a conscious effort to give her a kind smile, a warm greeting, and a few words of encouragement. After our short exchange, she went in and found a place to sit. Something told me she needed a prayer shawl so I picked one out and gave it to her. She then told me her father had died just hours before and that her mother was to have open-heart surgery the next morning. She told me about the final hours of her father's life, how much receiving that prayer shawl meant to her, and how much my smile and gentle words helped her at that moment."
(Sister Kimberly Ann Mandelkow)

A "gentle, caring presence" may not be listed in a job description for a pastoral associate, but it is the hallmark of the ministry of the Sisters of St. Benedict who serve in parish work.

Sister Kim serves as a pastoral associate at two parishes in Southern Indiana — St. Joseph, Princeton, and Blessed Sacrament, Oakland City, where she is also a liturgist and pastoral musician. As a temporary professed sister, Sister Kim has been working in ministries outside the monastery for about three years.

According to her parishioners, "She brings amazing energy and enthusiasm to our community." "She has such a welcoming, caring, and nurturing way." "Her musical talent and her knowledge of Scripture and theology add vitality and unity to our parish."

One of Sister Kim's gifts is recognizing and encouraging the talents of others. "This past Christmas, starting with a handful of singers, I built up a 20-voice, three-part choir and presented a full-length Christmas cantata before Christmas Eve Mass. The cantata, with music, Scripture, and narration, focused on our world's need for hope, peace, joy, and love during these times of unrest and war. I was told afterwards that it brought home the meaning of the Incarnation in our lives today and led people into a deeper experience of the Mass. Every person in the choir said they never thought they'd be able to do something like that."

Seven Ferdinand Benedictine sisters currently serve as pastoral associates in parishes in the Evansville Diocese, and one serves in the Louisville Archdiocese. Four native Peruvian sisters at the mission founded by the Ferdinand Benedictines also do pastoral ministry in parishes in Peru.

When trying to describe a "typical day" for a parish minister, the sisters agreed with Sister Leta Zeller, "There's no such thing as a 'typical' day."

Sister Leta has been ministering at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Poseyville for 20 years. Among her many roles are director of religious education, bookkeeper, secretary, as well as ministry to the sick and dying, sacramental preparation, youth ministry, and the list goes on. "I'm the only staff person, besides the janitor, so I get to do most everything." She ministers to people "from the cradle to the grave," and not only the 800 parishioners, but many others as well.

"It was the winter of 2008 when a snowstorm closed the interstate, stranding people in their vehicles. Our local farmers went out on tractors and rescued them, bringing them to our community center. Our churches pulled together to provide soup, a warm place, and hospitality. It was a long, tiring day, but we were able to do what the highway snow crew could not. I made many phone calls to help people connect with their loved ones. We also provided meals for the men clearing the interstate. We served about 125 people those few days. That event made national news."

Pastoral ministry doesn't usually draw national media coverage — rather, it's the daily, ordinary responsibilities of parish life, made sacred because of the people who are served and who serve.

Sister Ann Marie Howard shares what an ordinary day of her ministry at St. Lawrence Parish in Louisville might include. "Most days begin with Mass and office work. I might visit parishioners in the hospital, work with a parent to plan a Baptism, meet with our religious education team, prepare for a wake service, interview someone about becoming a Catholic...."

She didn't mention activities for seniors, parish missions, recruiting and training volunteers — and her ministry as a "listening presence." "I regularly took Communion to a man who had cancer. I always needed to plan extra time for those visits because his wife would walk out with me to the porch and share her feelings. She, too, needed someone with whom she could talk." Ministry not only to the person who is ill, but also to the family is very important.

At St. Joseph Parish, Jasper — one of the largest parishes in the Evansville Diocese, with more than 4,600 parishioners — Sister Mary Jane Kiesel accompanies many parishioners through the dying process, and their families through the grieving. "Being with families at a death and praying with them is a humbling and beautiful experience — a blessed moment."

When trying to describe a "typical day" for a parish minister, the sisters agreed with Sister Leta Zeller, "There's no such thing as a 'typical' day."



Sister Leta Zeller reviews lessons used in the religious education program that she directs.

"At times, though, I feel helpless. I was conducting a prayer service for a young mother who died. Her daughter, 3 or 4 years old, kept crying out, 'I want my mommy.' There wasn't a dry eye in the funeral home, including my own. All I could say was, 'I think Jesus is crying with us.'"

One of Sister Mary Jane's responsibilities is working with the Stephen Ministry program, a program that prepares lay people to minister to others who are going through a crisis such as the loss of a job, aging, illness, death of a loved one, or divorce.

"I also do a lot of communion calls and visits to hospitals, nursing homes, and homes through the week. Visiting with the seniors in our parish is the favorite part of my ministry. They are very wise people and have a good sense of humor."

In Evansville, Sister Patricia McGuire continues a long tradition of service by Benedictine sisters to St. Benedict Cathedral Parish and its school. Pastor Father Gregory Chamberlain, OSB, shared his gratitude for Sister Patricia and the many other Benedictines who have served there.

"There is an almost 100-year legacy of the Sisters of St. Benedict's selfless service to the people of St. Benedict Parish. Simply her presence here, along with Sister Karlene [Sensmeier] and Sister Judy [Dewig] in the school, is a wonderful witness to all the parishioners and students about the ongoing commitment of the Benedictine sisters of Monastery Immaculate Conception."

Continued

The sisters serve in many diverse ways in parishes. In photos from left, Sisters Jackie Kissel, Teresa Gunter, Jayn Lein, Ann Marie Howard, Mary Jane Kiesel, and Patricia McGuire



After mentioning some of the responsibilities that Sister Patricia has — bereavement ministry, Silver Club, altar servers, Parish Council and committees, health ministry, Legacy Society, Gabriel Project, Catholics Returning Home — Father Gregory continues, “Sister Pat does all of this and more with obvious love, commitment, and competence. I am very grateful to her and to the community at Ferdinand for sharing her talent and commitment to serve others here at St. Benedict Cathedral. Sister Pat is a pastoral associate that any pastor would love to have 10 of.”

About her ministry, Sister Patricia says, “I’m touched by the shut-ins and admire them in their patient suffering. I’m encouraged when I see parents training their children and bringing them to church each week and forming them in the faith. And I’m edified by the older generation in their example of faithfulness, constancy, their work for the poor, and their desire and willingness to be there for those who come after them.”

Recently someone said to Sister Patricia, “Your life is a real witness to the rest of us.” She responded, “I really love what I’m doing.” “It shows,” he said.

The people that Sister Teresa Gunter works with as a youth minister at St. Anthony Parish, Evansville, recognize her also as a witness for them. She has worked with young people for most of her 16 years as a Benedictine sister. “I’m good with the youth. I’m good at accepting them where they are and challenging them to get to that person I know they can be. My greatest passion, as well as challenge, is to help them realize that there is a God and a Church that loves them and needs their gifts and personality and that there are values and morals that will help them in the long run.”

She is especially effective at involving youth. “At one of the parishes where I ministered, the first year I had only four or five young people coming to events. When I left there, I was having 20, 30, or 40 showing up for activities. The challenge is having a program or project that’s more enticing than whatever else is offered.”

Sister Teresa has led hundreds of service projects and is encouraged when she sees the young people “move from taking care of their own needs to seeing the needs of others around them, or around the world.” Recently the youth group started selling T-shirts to raise money for medical supplies for Haiti.

Sister Teresa is also a volunteer firefighter. In that position, she usually ministers to the people involved in the accidents or fires. “They’re scared, worried, traumatized, and I assist them in any way I can, keeping them calm, reassuring them, and helping them understand what’s happening.”

Also ministering at St. Anthony Parish in Evansville is Sister Jackie Kissel, in her 12th year there. She brings to her ministry more than 50 years of commitment to peace and justice issues. “Helping build a more just society is a passion I have.” That’s obvious when she talks about one of her jobs — helping develop the justice ministry of the parish. She is a network organizer for Congregations Acting for Justice and Empowerment (CAJE) in Evansville. “I’m thrilled when someone joins CAJE and helps bring about systemic changes in Evansville. The first major initiative we accomplished was getting a dental clinic to serve people who don’t have dental insurance and can’t afford dental care. It’s been running really well.

“We’re currently working on two other issues: getting affordable housing for the poor and getting the current Metro system to adjust schedules and provide more links to better accommodate those who depend on bus transportation for getting to work. We stay with an initiative until we win — until we reach our goal. And when we do, everybody wins.”

Sister Jackie also coordinates faith formation programs, catechist training, and religious education. Pastoral team member Paula Lattner says, “The Family Faith Formation gatherings are a testament to Sister Jackie’s ability to include everyone — parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren. They all meet together to learn and grow in their faith as a family! They also reach out to our larger parish family with their activities. This ministry is an inspiration for all.”

Pastoral associates extend themselves far beyond their personal service by empowering and training volunteers. Sister Jayn Lein, who brings to her job at St. Ferdinand Parish in Ferdinand professional credentials and experiences as a licensed counselor, a registered nurse, and home health care worker, says, “We’re always developing new ministries to support and meet the needs of the parishioners — from the womb to the tomb. But,” she emphasizes, “it’s our volunteers who help us carry out those ministries. They knit and crochet shawls and afghans for the homebound, sick, or grieving; they take meals to parishioners who are ill or homebound; and volunteers who are ‘sponsor couples’ journey with engaged couples, to name just a few examples. I can see the Spirit working when people learn and grow and then want to serve others.”

Today it’s not uncommon for parishes to have religious and lay people in administrative and pastoral roles. In the early 1960s the Second Vatican Council “opened the windows” for greater lay involvement. Having a desire to serve the Church in areas connected with parish life, religious sisters began ministering in pastoral roles.

Sister Agnes Marie Dauby, along with two Franciscan sisters, became the first religious sisters to serve as pastoral associates in the Evansville Diocese in 1973. She gave 23 years of faithful service to parishes in the diocese.

Another pioneer in parish work was the late Sister Mary Terence Knapp. She was appointed in 1983 by Evansville Bishop Francis Shea to serve as pastoral life coordinator at Holy Name Parish in Bloomfield, Indiana, the first woman to hold that position in the diocese. In recognition of her leadership and 20 years of service as a pastor, she received a special papal award never before given in the diocese. At the time, Bishop Gerald A. Gettelfinger wrote, “The contributions Sister Mary Terence has made to the Diocese of Evansville are of such magnitude that she is most deserving of this distinguished honor.”

The sisters who serve in pastoral ministries today have an untiring commitment to God’s people. They bring impressive credentials and experiences to the myriad responsibilities they have in the parishes. They share their special gifts of encouragement and empowerment, compassion and sensitivity, hospitality and acceptance, genuine care for people, and a deep spirituality. But the greatest gift they have to offer, according to Sister Leta, is their “gift of self and time.”

Sister Mary Jane’s personal mission statement exemplifies that gift. “My mission is to show the face of God through my full attention, listening, and caring presence...and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to be a healing presence for the person I am with at the moment.”



Sister Kathryn Huber wears a striking cloth that she received from the sisters in Tanzania. It has multiple uses: to cover a table, carry an infant or food and goods, spread on the ground, protect one's clothing. The Swahili words are "Life is a blessing."

'The grace of God is everywhere'

by Sister Kathryn Huber

"The grace of God is revealed in your coming to be with us. The grace of God is everywhere." The song was in Swahili that greeted Sister Kathryn Huber last summer, as she visited communities of Benedictine women in Tanzania. But she soon learned the beautiful, welcoming translation of the words. "The song," she observes, "embodies the spirituality of the sisters as they walk and live daily in the presence of God."

From August 10 to September 15, Sister Kathryn and Sister Norma Reiplinger, a Benedictine from St. Mary Monastery in Rock Island, Illinois, were in the eastern African country,

their time there sponsored by AIM USA. AIM (Alliance for International Monasticism) is a world-wide organization of Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries that provides spiritual, educational, formation, and building assistance to monasteries in developing countries to enable them to be centers of life.

Sister Kathryn is president of the board of AIM USA. She has been prioress of the community and president of the Federation of St. Gertrude, and now serves in the sisters' Spirituality Ministry.

Here, Sister Kathryn describes some of the many memorable images from her stay and reflects on her experiences.

It was a great blessing to experience Benedictine life in communities of all African sisters. The African people are hospitable people, and the Benedictine hospitality provided by the Benedictine Sisters in Chipole and Imiliwaha, Tanzania, was unforgettable. It was an additional blessing to experience Benedictine life with an international community, the Missionary Benedictine Sisters in Perimiho. The core Benedictine values of community life, prayer, hospitality, and work were evident.

The sisters welcomed us to their monastery with singing, drumming, and dancing, and they placed garlands around our necks.



A sister displays a tray of bread hot from the wood-fired oven.

The faith of these sisters is tangible. Seeing both the joy and the suffering of the people through the eyes of these sisters was enriching. Their God is a God of love who lives among them, bearing their sufferings, caring for their needs, and giving them hope in the midst of their challenging circumstances. This same kind of compassionate care is evidenced in the sisters' service to the people of Tanzania, which they perform with generosity and faithfulness.

The work of the sisters is especially focused on attending to those persons who are most vulnerable, especially the orphans, the poor, the sick, and youth. Orphanages, schools for girls and orphans, health clinics, and catechesis are among the main ministries of the sisters. The number of children who are orphans has been increasing. AIDS, malaria, and mother mortality are the chief reasons why. I had expected more sadness among the children in the orphanages, but they were smiling in the midst of their plight. This is not to discount the seriousness or the severity of Africa's growing number of orphans. But perhaps this unexpected optimism is crucial to finding solutions.



After I took their photo, the children were eager to see it on the camera screen.



Young girls provided dancing for the sisters' profession ceremony. Drumming is an essential part of the celebration.

One of the grace-filled moments was experiencing the first profession and perpetual profession of about 20 young sisters in Chipole. The Eucharist and the profession rite for each event took four-and-a-half hours on two consecutive days. The families and friends of the newly professed sisters entered fully into the worship service. The rituals incorporated some of the African culture. The singing, drumming, and dancing provided an awesome experience. The celebration continued after the service with more drumming and dancing. It seems each village has its unique dance. In the midst of poverty, struggle, and sickness, the African people know how to celebrate.

The five weeks I spent with Benedictine sisters in Africa have greatly enriched my life. AIM USA promises that the monasteries in developing countries will offer those of us in the United States "global vision, fresh insights into monastic life, cultural diversity, and gospel witness of service to the poor." That truly has been the blessing for me.

NEWS from the Dome

Sisters' collaboration provides a spiritual dimension to healing ministry

"It's a match made in heaven." That's how Pat Evans, patient representative at Memorial Hospital and Health Care Center in Jasper, Indiana, describes the collaboration between the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand and the hospital, sponsored by the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary.

When the hospital established its Lange-Fuhs Cancer Center in 2007 in affiliation with the Indiana University Simon Cancer Center in Indianapolis, president and CEO Ray Snowden contacted Jim Birk, a Jasper resident and board member of the IU Cancer Center, to help plan a program for the Lange-Fuhs Center.

As the program for treating the whole person was being developed, Birk consulted with the Sisters of St. Benedict about providing the spiritual component to the CompleteLife integrative medicine program. And the partnership with the sisters began.

Working with Birk and Cancer Center administrators, Sister Maria Tasto, director of the sisters' Spirituality Ministry, and her team designed a spiritual formation program "to assist the staff in dealing with emotional responses and spiritual questions that illness engenders, and to provide spiritual tools for the patients as they explore their questions and cope with the emotional and spiritual implications of their illness."

The sisters hosted the first one-day in-service retreat for the LFCC staff in December 2008 at Kordes Center in Ferdinand and continued with others in 2009. "The staff minister to each other in their sharing around life and death situations and illnesses," says Sister Maria. Participants say the retreats help them get in touch with their inner feelings and help them deal with the emotions.

Additional retreats are planned through 2014, addressing topics such as living in the present moment, the mystery of suffering and death, prayer, the joy of humor, managing stress, support in the midst of cancer, and more. And plans are underway

to develop and implement the patient/family component of the CompassionateCare program in LFCC. Birk says, "What a wonderful partnership in spiritual ministry to cancer patients, their families, and the whole nursing staff for oncology.

After reporting to the board of the IU Cancer Center in November about the CompleteLife integrative medicine program, Birk shared with the sisters, staff, and nurses: "They really are impressed, and we should all be very proud. But the key thing that makes our program so unique is the collaboration with the Sisters of St. Benedict and the resultant four-year spiritual formation program that we started for the nurses and staff of the Lange-Fuhs Cancer Center. The board could not believe the scope of this program, that it could influence and impact, not only the integrative medicine program, but the direction of the whole hospital. We are so fortunate to have this collaboration. The people at IU certainly recognize this."

A second aspect of the partnership between the sisters and the Jasper hospital is a Mission Integration program developed with and for the executive team of the hospital.

This program is designed basically to "prepare committed leaders who can further the mission and ministry of the hospital, retain the hospital's Catholic identity, and integrate the mission into their areas of responsibility."

Continued



Sister Jennifer Miller, hospice chaplain with Visiting Nurse Association of Southwestern Indiana, talks with Lange-Fuhs Cancer Center staff members before their in-service retreat at Kordes Center. Sister Jennifer presented the retreat, focusing on "end-of-life conversations," as part of the CompleteLife integrative medicine program at Memorial Hospital and Health Care Center.

To achieve those goals, current and aspiring leaders in the health care system of MHHCC will complete a two-year program in spiritual and ministerial formation — designed and presented by the sisters and consisting of a one-and-a-half-day retreat each quarter at Kordes Center.

On January 14, the executive leadership team of the hospital completed the first year of this program. The retreat sessions, consisting of presentation, reflection, and sharing, focused on their personal faith journey and how that impacts their ministry at the hospital. The second year will address the wider context of working and ministering in a Catholic hospital.

At the January retreat, the executive team and sister presenters assessed the program, noting its strengths and areas that could be changed, in anticipation of developing the program for the next level of participation — directors, departments, management.

Hospital CEO Snowden says their dream is beginning to be realized. "I'm really happy we are doing this. I had an idea of what we wanted but didn't know how to get there. I'm delighted with this year's program. We now have a light and path for bringing this to the rest of the organization. The centerpiece of this has been



As the Spirituality Ministry programming team, Sisters Kathryn Huber, Karen Joseph, and Maria Tasto helped develop the spiritual formation program for Memorial Hospital and Health Care Center. They also present retreats and programs for the executive leadership team of the hospital and the Cancer Center staff.

with the Sisters of St. Benedict. It seems that we are very good partners, and I hope we can achieve what we want to achieve."

Pat Evans remarks, "This could end up being a prototype that will be used over and over with other groups. We will be proof of the program's effectiveness in integrating body, mind, and spirit. The sisters are a gold mine that we've found."

Sisters welcome widespread media coverage in recent months

News about the monastery has reached homes and readers in numerous states and several countries the past few months.

The December 2009 issue of *Better Homes and Gardens* featured an article by an editor, telling about a time when he and his wife happened upon the monastery as they passed through Ferdinand over a year ago. His heart-warming story relates how a tour of the monastery, a visit to the gift shop, For Heaven's Sake, and the purchase of a Nativity set contributed to a meaningful Christmas tradition for their family.

Springerle cookies from the monastery's Simply Divine bakery received national and international attention in December. Major newspapers throughout the U.S. and as far away as Taiwan published a *Chicago Tribune* article that mentioned the cookies. As a result, the gift shop and bakery were deluged with orders online and by phone for springerle and other special cookies.

Sister Jean Marie Ballard, manager of the monastery bakery, appeared as a guest on the morning show at the Fox 7 TV station in Evansville. She was invited to talk about the specialty cookies as Indiana Artisan products.

The Sisters of St. Benedict are featured in a new book, *Indiana's Catholic Religious Communities* by Jim Hillman and John Murphy, as part of the Images of America series by Arcadia Publishing Company. With archival photos, including 19 from the Ferdinand monastery and Academy, the book depicts the social impact religious orders have had on Indiana's development. (See the book review on page 20.)



For the latest news, please visit Home@theDome on thedome.org.

Sisters receive new member

"I cannot believe that it has been seven months since I entered Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand! My time here has been nothing short of wonderful, full of peace, joy, love, and learning. As a postulant, I have had many new experiences and have done various jobs around the monastery. I've taken classes — Liturgy of the Hours, The Rule of Benedict, Lectio Divina and Psalms — and have had a Centering Prayer retreat. I have come to know the sisters and what a diverse, loving, and talented group of women they are, with so much wisdom and insight on life. We are all striving for the same thing — to do God's will and help each other along the way. I'm looking forward to the years to come as I continue to journey with the Sisters of St. Benedict here in Ferdinand, Indiana!" — Postulant Alexandra Larsen



The Sisters of St. Benedict received Alexandra Larsen into the monastic community on August 23. She was officially accepted into the postulancy, the first stage of incorporation into the religious community.

Postulant Alex, 29, a native of Madison, Wisconsin, is the daughter of Cliff Larsen and April Bingham. She graduated from Belmont Abbey College in Belmont, North Carolina, in 2003 with a bachelor's degree in educational studies and early childhood. She worked as an infant and early childhood teacher for six-and-a-half years in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, before entering the Ferdinand monastery.

Sisters celebrate special anniversaries of monastic profession

"Our 70th anniversary was a great reminder of fond memories and huge blessings received in those years." — Sister Helen Maurer

Sisters Helen Maurer, Benita Bieber, and Dolorita Libs observed the 70th anniversary of their monastic profession and Sisters Victoria Pohl and Benedicta Clauss marked their 60th anniversary last October. These sisters have served a total of 330 years in ministries in Indiana, Louisiana, Virginia, North Carolina, Italy, and Guatemala.

Sister Helen has been teaching music, from elementary through university level, and doing music ministry for 68 years. She continues to give music lessons and cantors for liturgies at the monastery.

Sister Benita taught school or served as principal for 46 years. She was also director of the sisters in initial formation and worked in other monastery departments. Currently she serves in the ministry of prayer and resides in the monastery's Hildegard Health Center.

Sister Dolorita taught elementary and high school for 32 years and also worked in pastoral and health care. She served as a missionary in Guatemala. Currently she does supportive services and quilting at the monastery.

Sister Victoria served as coordinator of St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry and Emergency Services in Evansville after a 40-year career as a teacher in elementary and high schools and universities. She currently works as mail clerk at the monastery and assists in the Business Office.

Sister Benedicta resides in the monastery's Hildegard Health Center and serves in the ministry of prayer. For 50 years she taught in high schools and universities, including North American College in Rome.



Front: Sisters Benita Bieber, Dolorita Libs, Helen Maurer.
Back: Sisters Victoria Pohl and Benedicta Clauss

Monastery receives Benedictine Oblates and Oblate candidates

Eight men and women committed themselves to a special affiliation with the Ferdinand Benedictine community during ceremonies at the monastery last October and November.

Carolyn and Gary Adler from Evansville, Indiana, and Barbara Gordon from Owensville, Indiana, made their commitment as professed Oblates of St. Benedict. Victor and Linda Begle and Charles and Judy Luebbehusen from Ferdinand, and Pauletta Jeter from Friendswood, Texas, were enrolled as Oblate candidates.

Oblates of St. Benedict are individuals from all walks of life who associate with a Benedictine community in order to enrich their own spiritual lives, using the Rule of Benedict as a guide.

Back row, Linda and Victor Begle, Charles and Judy Luebbehusen; front row, Carolyn and Gary Adler; below top photo, Pauletta Jeter and Barbara Gordon



To learn more about the Oblates of St. Benedict, please visit thedome.org/Oblates.

In memoriam



"Death has silenced her gentle voice. Her life is complete; her song is fulfilled. Yet, her song lives on in the thousands of lives she has touched." — Bishop Gerald A. Gettelfinger, Diocese of Evansville

Sister Geraldine Hedinger died on February 2, 2010, at age 63. She was born on November 6, 1946, in Ferdinand, the oldest of seven children of Joseph and Marie Hedinger. She

entered the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand in 1964 and made her final profession of vows in 1970.

For 22 years, beginning in 1967, she taught and served as principal at schools in Evansville and Posey County. She was also a pastoral associate for seven years. Since 1996, she served as director of Adult Formation for the Diocese of Evansville.

In that role, Sister Geraldine had a profound and widespread influence on individuals and on faith formation in homes, schools, and parishes in the diocese.

Bishop Gettelfinger worked with Sister Geraldine during her 14 years as Adult Formation director. "She was a multi-talented and giant leader in our diocese, one who worked tirelessly in that most critical position of ministry."

Sister Geraldine played guitar and sang with the sisters' music group Stillpoint and also created the script for concerts and parish missions given by the group.

The memories and tributes shared about Sister Geraldine provide a sketch of her life. "She lived simply and authentically, with no pretense." "Hers was a most generous and dedicated life of teaching and modeling the spiritual life." "The light of God's spirit in Geraldine could not be contained." "She was salt of the earth and light of the world." "She enjoyed the simple things in life, such as that first ripe tomato from the garden." "Goodness and joy radiated from her at all times." "Her smile, laugh, and positive spirit was infectious." "She nurtured and empowered people to do more than they believed they could do." "Always a warm, welcoming presence." "I will remember her for many things: her ability to listen, her giggle, her boundless energy, her leadership, and her dedication."

Prioress Sister Kristine Anne Harpenau spoke of Sister Geraldine's "joyful, loving spirit that was all-inclusive. She was a woman of prayer, whose joy and deep, underlying trust and faith came from her relationship with God."

Sister Geraldine is survived by her brothers, Benjy and Joseph Hedinger; her sisters, Carolyn Hamer, Connie Vahling, Christy Hedinger, and Michelle Kroll; nieces and nephews; and members of her religious community.

Be part of our future

by Karen Blesch, CPA, CFP®, Planned Giving Officer



Twenty years ago we created the St. Hildegard Society to honor some of our closest friends, those who have remembered the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand in their will or who have created another type of “planned” gift.

The society is named in honor of St. Hildegard of Bingen, one of the greatest figures of the 12th century. She was a celebrated Benedictine abbess, composer, mystic, author, healer, and preacher.

Each September, near the feast of St. Hildegard, we welcome members of the society to the monastery, to join the sisters for Mass and dinner. At the last gathering on September 20, 2009, Sister Kristine Anne Harpenau, prioress, updated guests on news about the sisters and shared stories about the care being given to our retired sisters.

If you have included the Sisters of St. Benedict in your estate plans, please let us know. In addition to receiving an invitation to next year’s Mass and dinner, you’ll receive other benefits as well, including the most important, the spiritual benefits. St. Hildegard Society members are remembered daily in the sisters’ prayers.

Remembering the Sisters of St. Benedict in your will ensures that our very important work — which we know is close to your heart — will live on after you. Like the couple featured on the following page — two fine people who are members of the St. Hildegard Society — you, too, will continue to look out for us, and what a blessing that will be!

Did you know that most Americans don’t have a will? That’s a sad fact, because it’s so simple to create one. The first step is to find a reputable attorney. You can ask friends, family members, or even your pastor if they can recommend an attorney; word of mouth can often be the best endorsement.

And here’s another bit of advice: Be sure to ask your prospective attorney how much of his or her practice is devoted to estate planning and also what are the fees for basic will creation. Your situation may be more complex, but many attorneys offer a complimentary consultation to give you an idea of what may be involved.



Linda Wenning — a charter member, with her husband, of the St. Hildegard Society — enjoys a conversation with Sister Barbara Catherine Schmitz at the September 20 dinner for those who have included the Sisters of St. Benedict in their estate plans.

You may think you don’t need a will. If you believe that, your family could be in for a very unpleasant surprise.

Passing away without a will (called “intestate”) is an invitation to let the state take over. All the rewards you accumulated through years and years of hard work will be distributed by strangers. But a properly drafted will allows you to name your own executor, distribute assets as you see fit, appoint the right guardian for any minors in your care, and remember the causes that you cherish.

If you already have a will, it’s important that you review it periodically. Small revisions can often be taken care of by creating a codicil, a legal “P.S.” to amend the document and preserve most of its provisions. A codicil could suffice if you are considering adding a bequest to the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana, Inc. That bequest can be a specific amount, a percentage of your estate, or a residual interest after specific bequests have been addressed.

To help you get started with the estate planning process (or to review what you already have in place), we are offering our friends a free copy of the booklet **Tax and Financial Planning Techniques**. Just complete the form inserted into this issue of *Seek. Pray. Share.* or call me directly at 812-367-1411, ext. 2638, and I’ll send a copy today.

We thank God for you each and every day. With you at our side, we are confident of a bright and vibrant future as we continue to reach out to those in need. By supporting the Sisters of St. Benedict, you join us in our efforts and make a real difference in the world. God bless you!



Continuing the good works of the Sisters of St. Benedict

Mary and Melvin are faithful supporters of the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand. When we asked, they were open to the idea of encouraging others to support the sisters as well. But they didn’t want the message to be about them. So, at their request, we’re using just their first names. We think they’re very special people.

Mary was born on the feast of St. Benedict, which was just the beginning of her Benedictine connection. She attended St. Benedict Grade School in Evansville, where she was taught by Benedictine sisters. And she went on to Academy Immaculate Conception (later Marian Heights Academy), the girls high school operated by the Ferdinand Benedictines for 130 years.

Mary cherished the education she received at the Academy, and she credits the Sisters of St. Benedict for helping make her the person she is today.

She says she has seen firsthand the many ways that the sisters have helped people in the area and the good that they accomplish through their ministries.

Mary and her husband Melvin believe that the work of the sisters is important and vital and needs to continue. That belief prompted them, when they were updating their will, to name the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana, Inc., as a beneficiary of their estate.

Now they have the assurance that they will be supporting the sisters’ ministry of caring long after they are gone.

If you, too, would like to see the sisters’ good works continue, you can help make that possible with your planned gift.

You can make a difference by joining ...

SUPPORT the mission and work of the Sisters of St. Benedict through your annual financial commitment.

DEEPEN your own faith life by exploring Benedictine spirituality and values through programs offered for Women of the Rule by the Sisters of St. Benedict.

PARTICIPATE in the mission of the Sisters of St. Benedict by contributing your time and talents through volunteer opportunities.

EXPERIENCE the power of giving together as you make philanthropic decisions with other women who are committed to the same values.

EXPAND the reach of the ministries of the Sisters of St. Benedict as you partner with them in touching the lives of others.



For information, contact Sister Barbara Catherine Schmitz at 812-367-1411, ext. 2649, or barbarac@thedome.org, or visit www.womenoftherule.org.



To learn more about how you can support the work of the Sisters of St. Benedict, please visit thedome.org/supportus.

A legacy of music

by Karen Katafiasz



Members of Stillpoint, a musical group of seven sisters, practice in the monastery church: Sisters Ann Francis Hillenbrand, Mary Frances Schafer, Rose Wildeman, and Karlene Sensmeier.

Spend some time at the monastery and fragments of music will touch your soul: Rich tones of the organ in the monastery church. Harmonizing voices in the upstairs choir room. A few tentative notes in the small rooms used for student lessons. A track on a Ferdinand Benedictine CD playing in the gift shop.

The hill is alive with the sound of music. But it doesn't stop here. For many decades, the Sisters of St. Benedict have been sharing their musical knowledge, skill, and talent in schools and parishes in Southern Indiana and beyond.

There is a legacy of music within the community that has been passed on from older sister to younger over the years. It happens so naturally, you might say without fanfare — unless a sister is learning trumpet, and then a real fanfare is involved!

Postulants often try out different instruments and some begin learning to play; some may take voice lessons. Newer members learn to sing with the community for prayer and Mass. And those who demonstrate a special ability may enter an educational track for music education.

"When I think of our community, music is one of the first things that come to mind," says Sister Anita Louise Lowe, who's director of liturgy as well as a musician and composer.

"If you want to learn an instrument, we'll help you learn. Someone will teach you and you'll be encouraged, not just for yourself but for others. I feel privileged to be part of this legacy that places such emphasis on music."

The musical tradition within the community exists in many ways, through many different individuals. Here are some portraits of just a few of them.

Classroom teacher.

Sister Susan Ann Necas began thinking seriously about being a sister in the eighth grade. Music has been important to her even longer — "all my life."

When she walked in the door of the monastery for the first time, she says, "I felt like I was home." She marvels at how "God called me to this community where music is essential" — a place where, for her, music and religious life come together. Sister Susan Ann celebrated the 25th anniversary of her profession last summer.

Her mother grew up in a large, poor family and didn't have the chance to take music lessons, so she was determined that her daughter and two sons would have music in their lives. Sister Susan Ann's brother Al, 11 years older, led the way — studying piano as a boy, becoming a music teacher after college. When she was a high school freshman, he bought her a used piano so she could practice at home.

Sister Susan Ann entered the monastery in 1982 and during her first year, she says, "I decided to be a music teacher." Sister Theresita Schenk gave her piano and organ lessons and affirmed her goal. After earning a bachelor's degree in music education, she taught music at two parish schools and served as liturgist at one of the parishes. She next spent nine years at Marian Heights Academy until it closed, and is now in her 10th year teaching music at the Washington (Indiana) Catholic schools.

"Every single day is different," Sister Susan Ann says. "I love the variety." She teaches about 240 students from kindergarten through high school, covering general music, music history and theory, band, and choir.

Her "greatest joy" in teaching music is the students: The sophomore in music theory who said, "I get it!" The boy who discovered Gershwin and has gone on to study music at Indiana University. The students in competition who get a gold medal "and their eyes just light up." The senior who told her in a letter how important her music history and theory classes were to him. "That meant the world to me."

Sister Susan Ann clearly sees herself as part of the Ferdinand Benedictines' legacy of music. Sister Theresita taught her and supported her desire to be a music teacher. Sister Mary Karen Hill gave her encouragement. "Sister Mary Karen is the epitome of what it is to call people forth. Because of her, I sometimes play the recorder." Sister Rose Wildeman served as her mentor during her first year of teaching. "A lot of what I do is based on what Sister Rose taught me." And now Sister Susan Ann shares ideas with Sister Catherine Duenne, who's been teaching music in the classroom since 2004.

"Music is my life, my joy," she says.



Sister Susan Ann Necas receives the good wishes of sisters and guests at her silver jubilee on July 18.

Her favorite types of music are classical ("my brother taught me to love it"), Christian, musicals, soundtracks, and vocalists like Josh Groban and Il Divo. But she's recently developed a love for country music, a nod to her late father, who would listen to it so much that "it drove me up the wall," she laughs. Now, during her drive to and from Washington, she'll often turn on country, with the thought "I'll be with you for a while, Dad."

"Music is my life, my joy," she says.

Private instructor.

Sister Mary Karen Hill and Sister Madonna Helmer have been serving in music ministry for an impressive total of 109 years. And when you consider the other two sisters who have been giving private music lessons at the monastery in the last decades, Sister Theresita Schenk and Sister Helen Maurer, the total years of ministry jumps to 246 (more years than the United States has been a nation!). What a wealth of knowledge and experience — classroom teaching, choir and band direction, and individual lessons in a range of instruments — they bring to young, unformed musicians.

Sister Mary Karen currently teaches 10 students, three adults during the day and seven children, who come to the monastery after school for lessons. Her own music lessons began with piano in the sixth grade. Two years later, she started studying organ. She continued both when she attended the Academy, where she also played string bass in the orchestra.



Sister Mary Karen Hill and Sister Madonna Helmer bring their extensive experience in music ministry to the private lessons they offer music students at the monastery.

She finds satisfaction in seeing her students progress and do well in contests. She recalls with delight a sixth-grade boy reassuring her one day, “You’re going to be so surprised and happy about how I’ll play this piece!” Learning music gives students a sense of fulfillment, a sense of their own capability, she says, and they enrich themselves and others too.

At the monastery, Sister Mary Karen plays the organ for liturgies, her favorite instrument. “I pray before every time I play. I need God to guide my fingers, my feet, my eyes, my hearing.” She especially values playing with other musicians, noting how including trumpet, French horn, trombone, clarinet, and timpani for recessionals, for instance, can enrich liturgy. “Other instruments give life,” she says, and “it’s important to give other sisters a chance to play.”

Giving other sisters a chance to play is something that Sister Mary Karen does extremely well, says Sister Susan Ann. “She is always enabling, always calling sisters forth, asking ‘What instrument would you like to play?’ We wouldn’t have all the musicians we do without Sister Mary Karen.”

For Sister Mary Karen, that’s part of the music legacy within the community. She recalls how older sisters guided and encouraged her, and she continues the tradition.

“We’re not going to let the legacy die,” Sister Madonna asserts. “I’m proud to be part of it.”

As a postulant in 1954–55, Sister Madonna was told she was going to be a music teacher. “That was OK with me. I just wanted to be a sister,” she says with a smile.

A parish music minister for 46 years, Sister Mary Louise Uebelhor also enjoys serving as accompanist at the piano.



She started playing piano when she was about five or six, taught by her mother. Piano became her main focus, though she has also played trumpet, French horn, and violin.

Sister Madonna teaches nine students after school hours, often after working in the monastery bakery during the day. “I enjoy being with them. They’re so lively and energetic that I’m energized.” Going into a lesson, she often prays to be able to help a student. Giving individual lessons gives her great satisfaction, she says. And “when parents are happy with their children’s progress, that adds to the picture.”

One especially gratifying moment happened at a state contest, when she had a number of Academy students playing solos, in trios, and in quartets. The judge asked them who was their teacher. “He had high compliments for the way they played their pieces, with dignity and polish.”

“I teach them to listen,” she says. That’s vital to a good performance. “Listen to the blend of instruments, the quality, the pitch, the changes in harmony. Your ear tells you what you’re doing.”

Parish minister.

A pivotal event that shaped Sister Mary Louise Uebelhor’s life as a musician happened the Christmas that her parents bought the family a piano. She was playing some simple carols — she began taking lessons in the third grade — when her parents and their friends spontaneously began singing along. “From then on, I was hooked on being an accompanist, and that’s where I enjoy music the most.”

Sister Mary Louise thinks of her music ministry as beginning in the seventh grade, when she first played the organ at her parish, St. Mary in Huntingburg. Now, some 55 years later, she plays organ and

piano at two parishes — St. Henry (in St. Henry) and St. Mary (in Ireland) — as part of her position of music minister at both places. She also coordinates music for the Masses and services, works with all the music groups, trains new musicians, and plays for funerals and weddings.

Music filled her life growing up. She and her sister sang while doing the dishes, and her mother harmonized with them. Her father sang while he made oil deliveries in his truck. At her parish, she and other students played their instruments at special Masses and processions.

When Sister Mary Louise entered the monastery in 1960 after graduating from the Academy, her music education expanded. “I had great classes in music theory and music lessons on many instruments from our own community members.” And she earned a master’s in music education from Indiana State University.

During 46 years at eight parishes in the Evansville Diocese, she has seen music ministry grow and evolve. A year after she assumed her first ministry position, the American Church began transitioning from Latin to English for liturgy. “It was an exciting time,” she says, and she’s grateful to have been a part of it.

She has “a passion for people participating” at Mass. “I have a lot of patience and am encouraged if just one more person participates every time we pray together.”

She tells how one experience at the end of an Easter Vigil Mass taught her what her priorities should be. She was upset when people began leaving during a special musical piece that she and a brass trio had practiced hard to play. One trumpet player told her “Sister, we don’t play for them. We play for God!” From that, she learned to “keep the praise of God above all other reasons to be involved with Church music.”

As part of the sisters’ musical group Stillpoint, Sister Mary Louise loves her role as accompanist at the piano. “When I hear the other members singing and playing and pouring their hearts and souls into our music, something more than the music is happening. I experience it as that inner ‘still point’ within each of us being united for a greater cause — to praise God through music.”

She is one of four Stillpoint members who have also composed music for the group. (The others are Sisters Rose Wildeman, Brenda Engleman, and Anita Louise Lowe.) Her favorite compositions are “Angel of God” and “The Memorare.” The latter appears on Stillpoint’s newest CD, *Listen*. “When I take time to compose, the melodies and harmonies flow instantly.” She calls composing “a pure gift for which I am forever grateful.”

Liturgist.

As director of liturgy for the Sisters of St. Benedict, Sister Anita Louise Lowe deals with more than music. But she knows that music is an important part of good liturgy.

“Music is a way to use our whole body in our liturgical actions, worship, and prayer. It evokes emotion that helps bring a wholeness to prayer. Whether that’s evoking joy or sorrow or excitement or pleading, music helps to express that.”

She cites the example of chanting the Psalms for the Liturgy of the Hours. “The melody of chant flows according to the text. It’s like the waves of the ocean that keep you moving. There’s a real movement of not just your voice but of your whole being.”

“Music is important every day,” she continues, “but especially for the big moments — professions, jubilees, funerals. Music is the key to giving voice to the celebration.”

Sister Anita’s musical journey began with a toy guitar when she was “really little.” She started guitar lessons in the seventh grade and by the next year was playing for class Masses. As a student at the Academy, she was part of the school’s singing ensemble and studied voice and piano.

In 1987, she graduated from Brescia College (where she had coordinated the music group for liturgies) with a major in — of all things — English, to the disappointment of her former Academy voice teacher, Sister Kathleen Finis.

But once she entered the monastery later that year, she became more immersed in music. Sister Helen invited her to join the monastery Schola, a group of sisters who sing at liturgies, and a group she now directs. She sang on the community’s second recording, *Seasons of Grace*. She helped with music for Academy Masses. For a brief time, Sister Theresita taught her harp.

And, in 1995, she became a member of Stillpoint, an affiliation that’s had great importance in her life. Stillpoint, in their own words, “is a group of Benedictine sisters who share the belief that music can praise God, create community, and touch the human spirit.” They record and perform contemporary religious music that their members have composed, and they also provide days of reflection and parish missions.



Sister Anita Louise Lowe finds that visitors will sometimes stop and listen when she’s practicing the harp in church.



A video of Florence Henderson singing with the Sisters of St. Benedict is available for viewing at www.youtube.com/ferdinandosb.

She values the bond they experience in their performing. “There’s a deep level of sharing ourselves because of what the music is speaking to us.” And the ability “to touch people’s lives with our music and bring a sense of God’s love to them” is awe-inspiring.

The first song she composed for Stillpoint was “O, Lord, You Have Probed Me,” based on Psalm 139 and written in about 10 minutes on the last day of a retreat. “In a real sense, I don’t write the music; God writes the music. I had to get out of the way and let the music come.” That has been the case for nearly all of her compositions.

When Sister Anita became director of liturgy two years ago (after stints in communications and vocations work), she took up the harp again. “I love it,” she says emphatically. The instrument itself is beautiful, probably over 60 years old, and has been played by only two other sisters, the late Sister Mary Robert Palmer and Sister Theresita.

“I’m so grateful for the ability to take lessons and learn.” As with composing, she says, “there are moments when I have to get out of the way and let the harp sing.”

Discography.

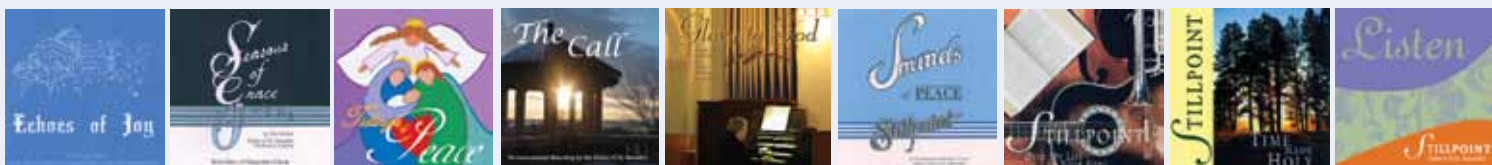
Members of the Ferdinand Benedictine community and Stillpoint have recorded a number of albums over the years. They are available from For Heaven’s Sake, the monastery gift shop (www.forheavensake.org, 812-367-2500).

Community Recordings

- *Echoes of Joy*, 1975, performed by Sisters of St. Benedict and Academy students
- *Seasons of Grace*, 1988, selections of Gregorian chant from Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter seasons, sung by the Schola
- *Tidings of Peace*, 2003, traditional Christmas songs and instrumental music, performed by Sisters of St. Benedict
- *The Call*, 2006, instrumental music for inspiration, healing, comfort, and peace, performed by Sisters of St. Benedict
- *Glory to God*, 2008, organ pieces, including her original composition “Hymn to Hildegard,” performed by Sister Theresita Schenk

Stillpoint Recordings

- *Sounds of Peace*, 1988
- *Open My Life to Your Song*, 1996
- *Time Made Holy*, 2000
- *Listen*, 2010



Legacy.

The musical tradition within the Ferdinand Benedictine community is richer and more diverse than these few pages can capture. There are more outstanding teachers, musicians, composers, and performers, and we hope to share some of their stories in future issues.

There are thousands of former students, too, whose musical worlds have grown because a Ferdinand Benedictine sister was there to challenge and inspire, encourage and applaud. The most well known is Florence Henderson — singer, actress, and popular star of the TV show *The Brady Bunch*.

Florence credits the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand — particularly the late Sisters Gemma Gettelfinger and Mary William Moore, who taught her at St. Bernard School in Rockport, Indiana — as being instrumental in her life. They recognized her musical gift, directed her in the church choir, taught her Gregorian chant, and instilled in her self-confidence, hope, and faith.

A new endowment to promote sacred music will continue the community legacy. Established by the Verkamp Family in honor of Sisters Mary Aquin and Mary Ann Verkamp, the endowment — named after St. Mechtilde of Hackeborn — will be used to provide sacred music concerts and speakers for the public. The first concert will feature Angelus, an ensemble of young women from Mt. Vernon High School who are dedicated to singing sacred music from varied religious traditions and historical periods. It will take place on October 30, 2010, at 7:30 p.m. in the monastery church.

Perspectives

What is the best lesson you learned from a favorite teacher?



“I was an adult participant at a Teens Encounter Christ (TEC) retreat. I told Sister Bonnie, a team member, that it was unfortunate I didn’t experience this level of spiritual enlightenment at an earlier age. I might have made choices differently that would have led to being a better husband, father, and friend. She told me I was wrong, that in order for me to be who I am today, I had to experience the journey of who I was yesterday. Ever since, I have tried to keep looking forward and not backward.”

– Mel Schroeder, Oblate of St. Benedict

“Though he’s not considered a formal teacher, Bishop Gerald Gettelfinger, the head of the Evansville Diocese, is a teacher in many ways. During a homily about five years ago, he said there are three qualities that God uses in relationship with us that we should use with others: hope, consolation (being the shoulder your friend can cry on, helping lift someone who’s down), and encouragement. Those are now inscribed in my heart.”

– Patti Schroeder, Oblate of St. Benedict



“Always use sharp pencils. I had a teacher that would not allow us students to use a pencil that wasn’t sharp. I took away from this the idea to always be sharp/attentive no matter what you are doing. Even the little details can make a difference. To this day, I cannot use a dull pencil.”

– Tammy Angel, kitchen supervisor for the Sisters of St. Benedict



“I learned two lessons from my ninth grade religion teacher, Sister Mary Ann Carla, SND: Your rights stop at the end of your nose. (Translated: My rights should not infringe on the rights of another.) And to be holy is to be Christlike. If I want to be holy, I need to act as Christ did.”

– Sister Briana Craddock, therapist at Seven Counties Services in Louisville, Kentucky



“I was having an organ lesson when Sister Theresita Schenk said, ‘You can get by, but you’re not really playing the music.’ That made me think of how often I do that in life, get by doing the minimum without giving it my best. Working on a project or on building relationships, I ask myself, ‘Am I just getting by or am I really playing the music?’”

– Sister Catherine Duenne, teacher at Notre Dame Academy in Louisville, Kentucky

Book Reviews



***We Get To Carry Each Other: The Gospel According to U2* by Greg Garrett**

I wouldn't say this book has impacted me the most in my life, but while reading it, I had several "hmm" moments. *We Get To Carry Each Other: the Gospel according to U2* blends theology with the history and music of the Irish rock band U2. Garrett provides insight into four questions of theology: What do I believe about God? Who are my companions in belief? How can my belief transform me? How can my belief transform the world? I enjoyed this book. It helped me reflect on my own life, where I am going, and with whom I am really traveling. If you are a fan of U2, an added bonus is that at the beginning of the three chapters — Belief: All Because of You, I Am; Communion: Sometimes You Can't Make It on Your Own; and Social Justice: We Need Love and Peace — Garrett provides a play list of U2's music that complements each chapter. *Westminster John Knox Press, 2009*

Reviewed by Sister Teresa Elizabeth Stutz, associate director of Youth Ministry for the Archdiocese of Louisville

***The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak**

It is 1939 and Adolph Hitler is in control of Germany. There is much poverty and fear. The story centers around the life of a young girl, Liesel Meminger, and her foster parents, kindhearted Hans and gruff Rosa, as they all manage to survive during the Hitler years while Germany moves deeper into war. What makes the story unique is that the narrator is death. Death uses poetry and wonderful images of a life that is dire and filled with fear most of the time, and yet can be managed with love and courage. This book gave me a clearer understanding of how fear and poverty affected how the German people treated the Jews. Any effort to respond to the Jews in a humane way resulted in terrible punishment or death. In acts of defiance, Hans, Rosa, and Liesel are heroic despite their sufferings. *Random House Children's Books, 2006*

Reviewed by Sister Anna Corrine O'Connor, theology teacher at Presentation Academy, Louisville



***Indiana's Catholic Religious Communities* by Jim Hillman and John Murphy**

The Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand are featured in this new book from the Images of America series. With over 200 rare vintage photos, this book tells the remarkable story of the Catholic religious orders that came to the wilderness of Indiana in the 1800s to meet the needs of the early inhabitants. Establishing schools, hospitals, and social service centers, these religious communities had, and continue to have, a tremendous social impact on Indiana's development. The photos capture the heart and soul of that outreach and the humanity of these historical — and very contemporary — religious communities. Monastery archivist Sister Mary Dominic Frederick and two other contributors were singled out in the acknowledgements as "people who have about them an aura of holiness, joy, and fulfillment in their chosen life and who embody the scholarly and joyful spirits of the religious communities." With its images and descriptive narratives, this book provides a captivating and enjoyable experience. The book is available at the monastery gift shop and online at www.forheavensake.org. *Arcadia Publishing, 2009*

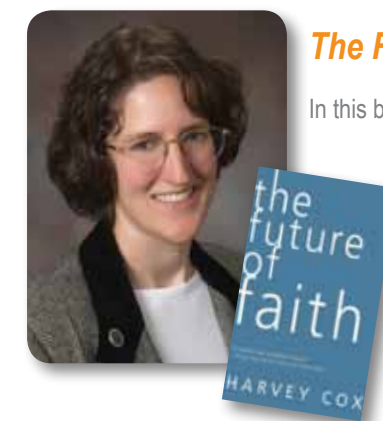
Reviewed by Sister Paulette Seng, communications associate for the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand



***In the Spirit of Happiness* by the monks of New Skete**

Do you look for specific techniques to follow during prayer? Have you read all the how-to books, looking for the right way? After all, there is a right way to swing a golf club; there must be a right way to pray. This book is a journey with the "seeker" as he and the reader face the question, "How serious am I about waking up?" If we do so, we will hear things we do not want to hear and face struggles we would rather avoid. And we will ultimately change. In the authentic spiritual life, there will be struggles. This book is full of challenging wisdom needed for the spiritual journey. It addresses such topics as change, self-knowledge, spiritual mentors, prayer, and sacred reading. Its light-hearted, storytelling style will help us gently open our eyes to wake up with fresh awareness, understanding, and compassion. *Little, Brown and Company, 1999*

Reviewed by Sister Catherine Duenne, teacher at Notre Dame Academy, Louisville



***The Future of Faith* by Harvey Cox**

In this book, Harvard professor Cox explores how in early Christianity, the experience and practice of faith in Jesus were central. Only later did one's beliefs *about* Jesus and the Church come to be seen as more important. Analyzing developments across various denominations of Christianity and drawing parallels from other religions, Cox posits that the future of faith lies in a more global, more loosely organized bottom-up order. While being respectful, this book will challenge Catholics and others with a hierarchical faith background. *Harper Collins, 2009*

Reviewed by Sister Jeana Visel, theology teacher at Our Lady of Providence High School, Clarksville, Indiana

What else have the sisters been reading recently?

A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose, Eckhart Tolle

Gracious Goodness: Living Each Day in the Gifts of the Spirit, Melannie Svoboda, SND

When Crickets Cry, Charles Martin

A Saint on Death Row: Story of Dominique Green, Thomas Cahill

Here's My Heart, Here's My Hand: Living Fully in Friendship with God, William Barry

Led by Faith: Rising from the Ashes of Rwandan Genocide, Immaculée Ilibagiza

Interior Castle, St. Teresa of Avila

The Naked Now: Learning To See as the Mystics See, Richard Rohr

The Power of Pause: Becoming More by Doing Less, Terry Hershey





We'd like to make you a member.

Are you considering remembering the Sisters of St. Benedict in your will? Have you already done so? Either way, we would love to hear from you.

A gift in your will helps our community prepare for the future with confidence. If you have remembered us in your will, we'll enroll you in our St. Hildegard Society. If you haven't yet — and would like some help preparing your will — call us or complete the reply card inserted in this issue. We'll send you our free booklet, ***Tax and Financial Planning Techniques***.

The rewards of membership? Well, they're eternal.

SISTERS
OF ST. BENEDICT
FERDINAND, INDIANA
.....

Seek. Pray. Share.



Contact Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz • barbaral@thedome.org • 888-649-1121, ext. 2648

Calendar of Events

April 13–18	Vocation Workshop: Awakening: A Rebirth of Enthusiasm in Vocations
May 15	Volunteer Appreciation Day
May 16	Spring Music Recitals
May 29–31	Family Weekend at the Monastery
June 5	Silver Jubilee Celebration
June 7–9	Junior High Camp (5th and 6th graders)
June 10–12	Junior High Camp (7th and 8th graders)
June 25–July 1	Come & See Week
June 27	Academy Alumnae Reunion
July 3	Golden Jubilee Celebration
August 23	Dome Golf Classic
October 15–17	Come & See Weekend

Please Join Us!

Upcoming Spiritual Enrichment Programs and Retreats at the Dome

April 10	Compassionate Healing
June 4–11	Centering Prayer Retreat: Intensive and Post-Intensive
June 20–26	Guided Retreat: Conversion of Life and the Transformation of Consciousness in the 21st Century
July 9–16	Directed Retreat
August 28	Compassionate Healing
September 10–17	Directed Retreat
October 9	Mom's and Dad's Family Spirituality

Saturday Morning at the Dome

April 24	Living in the Present Moment
August 21	Managing Your Stress
September 18	Listening and Responding to the Wisdom of Your Body
October 16	Inner Peace: Staying Sane Amidst Turmoil

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