

# Seek. Pray. Share.

Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 1 FALL 2009



## INSIDE

.....  
Moving forward with a  
new logo, new look

Sisters' ministries  
change lives

News from the Dome

# You may have noticed something different



When you received this publication in the mail, maybe you wondered who it was from – until you saw our name.

The Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana, have a new look – a new logo, new colors, a new visual identity!

We officially launched our new look on August 20, 142 years after four Benedictine sisters from Covington, Kentucky, came to Ferdinand and founded Monastery Immaculate Conception. This newly designed publication – with a new name – now brings our new look to you and to thousands of our other friends and supporters.

The time is appropriate for a new look because we are in a new place as a community.

As Benedictines, we are on a continuing journey. And when we are journeying, it's important to stop every so often and assess where we are, where we want to go, and how we are going to get there.

Our recent strategic planning has given us the opportunity to do just that – to consider where we want to go in terms of our community life, vocations, ministry, and facilities and to plan what we need to do to get there. We describe our strategic plan and the direction we are heading in these words: renew, revitalize, and reach out.

At the same time, even as we are in a new place and even as we move our strategic plan forward, as Benedictines we have a real stability. We remain rooted and grounded in our history, in who we are as Benedictine women, in our Benedictine values, and in the Benedictine life itself.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sr. Kristine Anne Harpenau OSB". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid.

Sister Kristine Anne Harpenau, OSB  
Prioress

We want to ensure, as much as we can, that this Benedictine community will remain here to be present and to minister in this specific area of Southern Indiana for decades and even centuries to come.

You may have noticed that part of our new visual identity is a new tagline: *Seek. Pray. Share.* Seeking, praying, and sharing are three values and actions that are integral to Benedictine life. They also are words that are contained, either literally or implicitly, in our community's mission statement.

We seek God in all facets of life – the good, the difficult, the beautiful, the peaceful. Whatever we are experiencing in life, God is with us, even if at times we have to very actively seek God and strive to see how God is present to us.

Praying is at the heart of our life as Benedictine women. We pray together three times each day, and from our prayer springs forth our life in God and one another and our ministry.

As Christians and as Benedictine women, we are called to share with others what we have, the spiritual riches that we have been given, our gifts, and our resources.

These words – seek, pray, share – provide a quick snapshot of what our life as Benedictine women is all about. They describe us well. And that's why they seem so appropriate as the new name for our revitalized publication.

We value the many ways that you have been seeking, praying, and sharing with us over the years. And as we acknowledge this new place to which we have come, we ask you to pray for us as we pray for you each day. We look forward to continuing the journey with you!





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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.



# Seek. Pray. Share.

Sister Jane Will, subprioress;  
Sister Kristine Anne Harpenau,  
prioress; Sister Betty Drewes,  
monastery coordinator

*"Seek. Pray. Share." Three simple words! Three words that describe the essence of who we, the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana, are. Here, we explore how they describe our Benedictine community and life so clearly.*

## Seek.

by Sister Kristine Anne Harpenau, OSB

All of us are natural seekers. It is part of our nature as human beings. We are born into this world curious, inquisitive, and seeking. We yearn for more of what we think will make us happy. We seek what we "think" will satisfy us. We seek what we hope will give our lives meaning. Yet at times, we find ourselves dissatisfied and yearning for "more."

There is a hunger deep within each of us for something, or rather for some *one*, who will fill us and truly satisfy us. We are made for God and thus, we are always seeking our God! This "homing instinct" for God is fundamental to our human nature: the God who created us, the God who is our "home," the God who can truly satisfy us.

In the Prologue of his Rule, St. Benedict writes: "Seeking workers in a multitude of people, God calls out, 'Is there anyone here who yearns for life and longs to see good days?'" As Benedictine women, we have heard God's call and responded to the call to live the Benedictine way of life. Each day we seek the God who loved us into being.

As Benedictine women, we seek God through our thrice-daily prayer. Each day, we come together morning, noon, and

evening to praise God and to pray for our families, friends, those who support us, and for the needs of the world. We seek God by listening to the Word of God in Scripture and in the happenings of our world and our daily lives.

As Benedictine women, we seek God in community. We seek God in the daily-ness of life as we pray, eat, and live together. We seek God in the sister we enjoy and in the sister who gets on our nerves. We trust that God is with us in joy, in sorrow, in struggle, and in the beauty and enjoyment of life! We seek the God who is in the midst of life as it is each day!

As Benedictine women, we seek God in the people who are part of our lives: those we minister to and with, the stranger, the guest, our families and friends. God is within each person. We seek – and find – Christ in each person we meet!

As Benedictine women, we trust that God is always with us. We trust that the God we seek seeks us first and always. God is everywhere if we have "the eyes to see – and to seek." Seek God together with us! Let us praise this God who loves us so passionately!





From left: Visitors enjoy stopping at the Lourdes Shrine on Grotto Hill to light a candle. Sister Christine Kempf, director of Tourism, welcomes a young guest. Sisters pray three times each day in the monastery church.

## Pray.

by Sister Jane Will, OSB

Prayer is at the heart of who we Ferdinand Benedictine Sisters are and all that we do each day. We gather together daily in our church to pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the traditional prayer of the universal Church, each morning, noon, and evening. Our prayer also consists of the reflective reading of the Scriptures. The celebration of the Eucharist, as well as individual prayer, completes the pattern of the Benedictine daily prayer life.

Today there seems to be an ever-increasing desire for deeper prayer experiences. We can feel this within ourselves and see it in others. People are longing for a more intimate and personal relationship with God, which is nurtured through a life of prayer.

To pray is to make ourselves aware of God's loving presence and to return this love with our whole being. As we pray, a transformation takes place within us, and our personal relationship with God grows. Prayer is God's gift to us. God has planted in our hearts a genuine hunger and thirst for prayer. God invites us to become aware of his loving, abiding presence in the core of our very being. God is present, loving life into us, sustaining us, and working in, and through, us.

As in any vibrant relationship, spending time with and communicating with the other is very important. God longs to communicate with us. God speaks to us continually through others, through all of creation, through our daily events and circumstances, and through Holy Scripture. As we listen, we learn more about the God who loves us with a creative, providential, forgiving, and healing love. In prayer, we are invited to converse with God: to share our hopes, frustrations, anxieties, joys, and temptations. And God lovingly accepts us and all we bring to him.

St. Benedict placed high value on praying: "Let nothing be preferred to the work of the Lord." We sisters recognize that the rich tradition of praying in community, as well as alone, is a sustaining force for us in our personal lives. We strive to develop an attitude of prayerfulness and to open ourselves to God's presence in every experience of life. Our gathering together daily to pray is the recurring sign of the community's unity with God, self, and others.

## Share.

by Sister Betty Drewes, OSB

St. Benedict, with the Gospel as his guide, shares with us a vision of peace, harmony, and balance in the Holy Rule. The Rule of Benedict states: "Let all serve one another in love." This, too, is the goal and desire of the Ferdinand Benedictines. We commit ourselves to share our way of living in community to create a stronger bond of faith, love, and support. As we reach out in ministry and service, we touch the lives of others in unique and unexpected ways.

One of the greatest values of Ferdinand Benedictines is to share our welcoming spirit of hospitality. "Be the first to show respect to the other" as stated in the Rule of Benedict. Through our hospitality, we open our doors to welcome everyone as Christ. We reach out with our hands to serve those in need. We expand our hearts with compassion to care for those hurting. And we extend our lives to touch others who may be needing unconditional acceptance, seeking comfort, or searching for peace.


Grounded in our Benedictine way of life, we strive to share graciously and generously our presence, prayers, gifts, facilities, resources, dreams, and hopes with all those to whom we minister and with all those whose lives we touch.

We invite you, in turn, to share in our lives and Benedictine commitment. You can do so by praying with us and for us, by volunteering your time and talents here at the Ferdinand monastery or in your community, by becoming an Oblate with the Ferdinand Benedictines, and by supporting us or your favorite charity with financial assistance.

Join with our sisters as we reach out to all who want to discover God in their everyday lives and enhance their own spiritual journeys. Together, we can spread the Benedictine spirit in our local communities, our workplaces, our Church, our nation, and our world. And together we will know "the inexpressible delight of love" that Benedict speaks of in the Rule, "so that in all things God may be glorified."



To learn more about how you can support the work of the Sisters of St. Benedict, please visit [thedome.org/supportus](http://thedome.org/supportus).



Sister Karen Durliat (right) joins a mother and son who use the services of the Guadalupe Center.

# A common language of hope

by Karen Katafiasz

Sister Karen Durliat was just a child in Custar, Ohio, when “a seed was planted.”

She saw her Hispanic classmates at their small rural school struggling with challenges she didn’t have. “They were behind the rest of us in learning to write and read. Someone explained to me how they followed their families around – who were seasonal workers – so they kept changing schools. I realized how hard a life that would be if I had to do that.”

Today, Sister Karen is dedicated to improving the lives of Hispanic people in Southern Indiana and easing their struggles.

She is director of Hispanic Ministry for the Diocese of Evansville, appointed to that post by Bishop Gerald A. Gettelfinger in September 2008, after serving as associate director since 2001.

The ministry, based at the Guadalupe Center in Huntingburg, is wide ranging. It includes Spanish Masses, sacramental preparation, the liturgical rites of Quinceañera (for girls on their 15th birthday) and Presentation (a blessing at church for infants or three-year-olds, depending on the family tradition), classes in faith and leadership formation, and retreats.

While the ministry’s main emphasis is helping the Hispanic community grow in the Catholic faith, staff members also work to “respond to the needs of the whole person,” Sister Karen says. “We provide English classes, immigration assistance, translation and transportation services, health services, tax preparation, and counseling – sometimes partnering with other organizations to do so.”

Spanish-speaking people began coming to the Evansville area as seasonal farm workers, largely from Mexico. Newer immigrants have been from other countries in Central and South America as well. In more recent years, many have stayed and taken permanent jobs, especially with poultry and woodworking companies.

Sister Karen never planned to be where she is. Like many Ferdinand Benedictines, she began her ministry in education. It was during 20 years of teaching in religion classes about justice and the preferential option for the poor that the seed planted in childhood germinated.

"I felt called to serve the poor directly," she says. But even then, she admits, "I was never sure what that service would look like, and I never dreamt that it would mean learning Spanish and serving the Hispanic community."

Then, in 1997, the opportunity arose to live at the sisters' dependent monastery in Guatemala. She spent two and a half years there. Her appreciation and affection for the people and their culture grew.

She speaks movingly of "experiencing those who have so little being so generous, people who have suffered so much yet have such a joy and celebration of life. In many ways, the culture reminded me of rural values that I grew up with – the importance of family and time together, of ritual, and of popular religious piety."

And significantly, in Guatemala she also learned "what it meant to live in a country with limited language skills and little knowledge of its customs."

What happened next was what Sister Karen calls "one of those wonderful coincidences of life." At the same time that she was being immersed in the Hispanic culture, the Evansville Diocese was expanding ministry to the area's growing Hispanic population.

Another Ferdinand Benedictine, Sister Mary Victor Kercher, had been a pioneer in the diocese's Hispanic ministry. Bishop Francis Shea had appointed her liaison for Hispanic ministry in 1979, after she returned from the sisters' mission in Guatemala. She served until 1989, then in 1996 became associate director of the Spanish-Speaking Apostolate. Father Eugene Heerdink, also considered a pioneer in Hispanic ministry, was director.

Sister Karen succeeded Sister Mary Victor as associate director in 2001, then became director when Father Heerdink retired last year.

Today, other Ferdinand Benedictine Sisters serve at the Guadalupe Center with Sister Karen. Sister Mary Judith Fleig has been a staff member since 2001. She coordinates the English as a Second Language (ESL) program, translates at a counseling center, and visits Spanish-speaking patients in the hospital. Apart from her work for the diocese, she also provides translation for the Dubois County Circuit and Superior Courts.

*In Guatemala, she learned "what it meant to live in a country with limited language skills and little knowledge of its customs."*



Sister Mary Victor Kercher was a pioneer in Hispanic ministry. Though "gently retired," she continues to offer support when needed.

Sister Joan Scheller became associate director of Hispanic Ministry for the diocese in March. Her focus is adult formation and immigration advocacy, and she also translates, makes hospital visits, facilitates meetings, and provides other services. And Sister Mary Philip Berger teaches in the ESL program.

For the Ferdinand Benedictines, ministry to the Hispanic people and other immigrant groups is a link to the community's roots. The Sisters of St. Benedict came to Ferdinand in 1867 to teach the children of German-speaking settlers.

"The Rule of St. Benedict does not prescribe a certain ministry, only that we meet the needs of the area," Sister Karen says. "German immigrants in Ferdinand needed teachers who spoke their language. Now the new immigrants to our area need ministers who can speak their language, help them to adjust to living in a country with a different language and customs, and help to pass on their faith to their children."

The Ferdinand Benedictine community has been well suited for Hispanic ministry, Sister Karen explains. In the 1960s, the community responded to Pope John XXIII's call to send religious to Latin America and eventually established dependent monasteries in Peru and Guatemala. Because of that history, "we have some gifts to share with these new immigrants that many priests, religious, and lay leaders in our diocese do not have," she says. In fact, six of the sisters now serving at the Guadalupe Center or teaching at an ESL program in Dale, Indiana, collectively spent 91 years ministering in Guatemala and Peru.

*Continued*



*"We have gifts to share with these new immigrants that many...do not have."*

There also seems to be a natural fit between Benedictine values and the Hispanic culture. Consider hospitality, for instance. In his Rule, St. Benedict writes that guests should be welcomed as Christ. Sister Karen has experienced this deep level of hospitality from the Hispanic people. "When I visit families they are so gracious and giving."

Both groups value what Hispanics call "misa, mesa, musa" (liturgy, table, music), and both, Sister Karen says, "have a down-to-earth spirituality that finds God in the everyday and the ordinary."

These shared values sustain Sister Karen through the difficult and challenging moments. The most "special times," she says, are when the Benedictine community participates in events to support the Hispanic community. She recalls a "Way of the Cross for Immigrant Rights" held at the monastery a few years ago. "It was very much a blessing to literally walk with the people who are carrying a big cross and to know that my Benedictine community is there supporting me as I support this community."

The Benedictine practice of *lectio*, the prayerful reading of Scripture, also sustains her in her work. "So many Scripture passages speak of journey, being a pilgrim, leaving all behind, meeting Christ in the stranger, sharing from our need and not our abundance. I see all these passages coming alive in the people I serve."

Sister Karen has some clear ideas about what would improve lives in the Hispanic community. "I want to see comprehensive immigration reform. The system is broken – no one seems to deny that."

She expresses particular concern for immigrant children. "There are young people who have lived practically their whole lives in the States, but have no pathway to legal status because their parents came without documents, or didn't follow the steps needed to keep them current, or were defrauded, believing the papers that they paid for were valid work permits. They could become such contributors to our communities if given the chance."

She also has suggestions for how those outside the Hispanic community can help dispel the fears and prejudices that exist. "Remind others of our roots as Christians, that we are

all brothers and sisters united in Christ. Remind others of our immigrant roots. Somewhere in our ancestral lineage, our families were helped to adjust to a new language and way of life. We need to share a little more equally so all have what they need as fellow human beings."

"At the very least," she continues, "invite others to stop name calling, using such terms as 'illegals' to refer to people. And, calling someone an 'alien' surely makes them far too different from us. We need to look at our commonalities, not our differences."

What are Sister Karen's long-range goals for Hispanic ministry? "Parishes that are inclusive and welcoming, more bilingual parish leaders, more faith formation in Spanish."

She tells of one event that embodies her hopes for the future. The Hispanic community in Washington, Indiana, was moving from St. Mary Parish to what was then St. Simon (now called Our Lady of Hope).

"We at the Guadalupe Center were asked if we could end our last Mass at St. Mary's with a procession with the statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe to the new worship space. The parish agreed, and the pastor, Father Gordon Mann, and some parishioners accompanied the Hispanic community in procession. Others rang the bells as we neared the church. Some stood in welcome as we entered, while still others offered refreshments after a prayer service. It was such a sign of hospitality – receiving the immigrants as a blessing. In fact, one English-speaking parishioner said to some Spanish-speakers as we entered, 'We need you.' It was a blessing to hear someone who understood this!"



Sister Joan Scheller feels "humbled and privileged" to work with the Hispanic community.





Sisters Marilyn Market, Linda Bittner, Marge Sasse, Mary Philip Berger, Mary Alice Schnur



Sister Mary Judith Fleig coordinates the ESL program at the Guadalupe Center.

# Breaking down language barriers

by Karen Katafiasz

Immigrants in the United States need to know English to successfully become part of their communities. For many immigrants in Southern Indiana, the path to English fluency has been walked with a Sister of St. Benedict.

Ferdinand Benedictine sisters have been teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to adult learners at two area sites: the recently renamed Adult Center for Education, or ACE, Academy (formerly North Spencer Alternative Education Center) in Dale, Indiana, and the Guadalupe Center in Huntingburg, Indiana.

Sister Linda Bittner is coordinator of the ESL program in Dale, where she has served since 2000. She calls it a "happy privilege" to work with the adults who arrive with varying degrees of English – and varying levels of formal education – from a number of countries. Most are from El Salvador, Mexico, and Japan, but over the years, students have come from countries as diverse as China, India, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, the Philippines, and Niger, West Africa, in addition to Latin America. "Our own little United Nations!" she says.

The goal is to help the students acquire conversational English and vocabulary for daily living and the workplace. The academy also offers a GED program for students who want to earn their high school diploma.

Sister Linda can list 15 Ferdinand Benedictines who have served in some capacity at the Dale academy in recent years. Currently, four sisters teach there in addition to herself: Sister Marilyn Market, Sister Marge Sasse, Sister Mary Alice Schnur, and Sister Mary Philip Berger. They, and the sisters who teach ESL at the Guadalupe Center, speak with warmth and enthusiasm of the students they have known and the satisfaction that their work brings.

Sister Marilyn will be starting her 10th year of teaching at Dale. She is pleased to "still be able to help those in need" – people like Telio who works hard to support his teenage sister, or Maria, for whom Sister Marilyn was able to find medicine when her finger became badly infected from an injury at work.

Sister Marge, who has taught all ESL levels, most recently the highest, remembers Carlos, an elderly man who never had the opportunity to attend school. "He really wanted to learn," she says. She felt affirmed when he called her "my teacher."

After spending 31 years at the sisters' mission in Guatemala, Sister Mary Alice was delighted to find a teaching position in Dale when she returned to Ferdinand at the end of 2007. "This was a welcome opportunity to keep in touch with the Spanish language and the Hispanic community I had come to love." Even after all these years, she recalls "how isolated and lonely I felt when I was thrown into a Spanish-speaking community without communication skills." It is "a joy," she says, "to see students' eyes light up" when she responds to them in their native language.

For Sister Mary Philip, who also teaches ESL classes at the Guadalupe Center, the work is "very fulfilling and energizing." She sees "a rapid growth in their ability to communicate in English. It is amazing to see them grow in understanding."

"I love my work," says Sister Mary Judith Fleig, who coordinates the ESL program at the Guadalupe Center and provides translation services. "I feel like a voice for those who do not have a voice. Many of the problems facing the Hispanic people are huge and I cannot solve them, but I can be present to them with a listening ear and compassion." Spending her days with the Hispanic community, she adds, makes her feel "very connected to Latin America," where she ministered for 26 years at the sisters' Guatemala mission.

For Sister Linda, helping adults learn English brings mutual blessings. "It's a matter of walking side by side, hand in hand, face to face, eye to eye. I feel that ESL learners are there as certainly for me as I am there for them. It is all gift."

"We are all one," she adds. "And the more we see our oneness, the less we see the artificial divisions of color, race, and language."

# Building empowerment

by Kelly Rusk

"It's impossible to do any good work without resources," says Sister Jane Michele McClure. As development director for Habitat for Humanity of Evansville, her priority is gaining those resources: raising funds to carry out Habitat's mission to "build safe, decent, and affordable houses with low-income families in partnership with God's people in need."

And build they have. "Here in our Evansville community, we've built 355 homes since 1984. Many of them in the last five years – we've really gained momentum over our 25 years."

Sister Jane Michele joined the Sisters of St. Benedict's development office as the community's communications director after teaching high school English at Mater Dei in Evansville for more than a dozen years. "That's when I found my true calling. The idea of gathering people together and mobilizing them to focus on a critical need in society – whether it's education or the sisters' work in the community or poverty and homelessness – is very exciting and enlivening. To be in a position to invite people to be part of something that matters is wonderful."

*"They're ambitious and willing to work for it. They have a positive view of the future. Being a homeowner has a lot to do with that."*

She served as development director for Evansville's Catholic high schools before joining the Habitat team five years ago. "I saw an ad in the paper and just went for it," she recalled. "I felt like I knew something about Habitat – you'd be hard-pressed to find someone who doesn't know the name. It's just so good. People have warm, positive feelings about the ministry."

Now, it's Sister Jane Michele's role to help others get to know Habitat and bring them together to financially support Habitat's work. "I'm really only limited by my own imagination. And time – there's never enough time to

accomplish everything that I want to accomplish." While her primary responsibility is financial resources, she works closely with Habitat's community relations director and their volunteer coordinator. "Money comes last," she says. "The first thing is involvement and education – knowledge of what Habitat is all about."

She also works closely with area churches and houses of worship and their Habitat volunteer groups. "That's been an interesting, rewarding, and fun part of my job – to work with so many groups! I speak at a lot of different churches, the Hindu temple. It's a wonderful way to help break down barriers that might exist. Really contributing to lofty goals like world peace often starts in the backyard with people from different backgrounds getting to know each other for the first time."

Jobsite visits are another highlight for Sister Jane Michele. "We have groups of regular volunteers – the Tuesday group, the Wednesday group. A group of retired volunteers, most of whom are over 75! It's inspiring."

When families are selected by Habitat, what Sister Jane Michele sees is empowerment. "Many families have lived in generational poverty. They have a chance to build some capital for the first time. It is very rewarding to meet with families who have had their homes for some time – 10 years or more – to see where they are in their lives. They've worked through challenges. Many have better-paying jobs. They're community leaders. They have a better quality of life. They're ambitious and willing to work for it. They have a positive view of the future. Being a homeowner has a lot to do with that."

She tells the story of the woman who owns the very first house that Lutherans for Habitat built. Today, her son is a policeman and her daughter is in medical school. "If you ask them, they'll talk about the great effect that having that home had on them. It came at a critical time in their development, when rooms of their own and a quiet place to study made all the difference for them."

*Continued*





*"As a sister, here at Habitat, I'm in a unique position to be in direct service to people. I have a great opportunity to make the world a better place."*



*"Homeownership is still the American dream."*

Habitat volunteers raise a wall at an Evansville building site.

"Homeownership is still the American dream," she says. "We always say that what Habitat offers is a hand up, not a handout. We don't give away houses. Our partner families buy their homes with zero-interest mortgages – it's 'Jesus economics.' And they have to put in 300 hours of sweat equity – they work to help build houses for other families before work begins on their own."

A major undertaking for Habitat over the next several years is the upcoming Glenwood Community Development Initiative. "It's been in planning stages for the past 18 months. We're working with the neighborhood to transform the community of about 600 structures in the inner city. We're working with residents, schools, the police, and a number of local groups and foundations. Working holistically to transform this area. To be a part of this, to contribute to this is important," says Sister Jane Michele.

Habitat of Evansville's work reaches far beyond the city, or even state, borders. The organization has two partner countries. "Every time we build a house in Evansville," Sister Jane Michele explains, "we tithe on that house and send money to build a house in Jordan or in Botswana. We've built

homes for 287 families in the Middle East and Africa through our partner program. That's a cool thing. And something that many people don't know about Habitat."

Sister Jane Michele sums up her work with a memory of a beloved teacher: "At our last board meeting, several members were reflecting on Brother Eugene Phillipp, who recently passed away. He taught at Memorial High School for 48 years. He was probably one of the most outstanding teachers I've ever been associated with. When you asked him why he became a brother, the only answer he ever gave was 'to make the world a better place.' As a sister, here at Habitat, I'm in a unique position to be in direct service to people. I have a great opportunity to make the world a better place. Many people don't have that chance. We all find meaning in many ways, but all our staff here consider ourselves fortunate that the way we put bread on our tables is by helping other people."

If you'd like to learn more about, or get involved with, the work of Habitat for Humanity of Evansville (or any Habitat chapter), please visit [habitat.org](http://habitat.org).





# The House of Bread and Peace

by Kelly Rusk

"Our goal at the House of Bread and Peace is to have women leave in better shape than when they came in," says Sister Joanna Trainer.

The House of Bread and Peace was the first women's shelter in Evansville, Indiana, founded by Sister Joanna in 1984. "This was new," she remembers. "People asked, 'A shelter for women?' We didn't know how it was going to go. But we opened, and welcomed a few ladies from the first.

"After a couple of years, homelessness really seemed to be escalating. We saw more women, more women with children, women with drug or alcohol problems. We wanted to give them not just a place to sleep, but a home. We wanted to give them all the love and care we could to help them get back on their feet.

"It goes back to the Gospel: 'For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited me in; naked, and you clothed me,'" said Sister Joanna. "That's what we do."

Sister Joanna served as the shelter's director for 21 years. "I lived there with the ladies. They are so talented – at everything from cooking to art and poetry." Residents are responsible for daily chores such as cleaning and cooking. They are expected to work on their personal goals and build stable foundations in preparation for moving to independent housing.

Nearly 25 years later, the House has been home to countless women and children. The House outgrew its original structure and moved to its current location in 2001, where it has been home to more than 600 residents. The staff partners with other community organizations to provide services such as health checkups from the ECHO Community Health Center and nutrition classes sponsored by the local Purdue University extension office.

In fall 2008, the Women's Fund of Vanderburgh County, Indiana, awarded the House of Bread and Peace a grant of \$45,000, in recognition and support of their work to help "heal the wounds of homelessness." The grant will enable the shelter to make improvements to the building, and purchase needed appliances so that they can accept larger quantities of donated food. The House was also recognized for its business and organizational leadership by Leadership Evansville.

Sister Joanna, too, has been honored recently. She received the 2009 Heroes Award from the Evansville Red Cross for changing the lives of the women with whom she worked. Catholic Charities of Evansville also recognized Sister Joanna with its 2009 Mother Teresa Service Award, paying tribute to her service to Evansville's homeless community.

Not long ago, a former resident traveled to Monastery Immaculate Conception to see Sister Joanna. "She brought me a gift, a beautiful candle, and thanked me for the House of Bread and Peace. She credited the House with helping her get sober, and she'd been sober then for three years."

One donation in support of the shelter stands out especially for Sister Joanna. "A young woman came to the house with a check for \$500," she recalled. "And she said, 'If you hadn't picked me up that night and brought me here, I don't know what would have happened to me.'" The young woman was a former resident.

"To see them get their lives back together again, to get jobs, their own homes, to see them take care of themselves – that is the greatest joy," Sister Joanna says of her ladies.



To learn more about how you can support the work of the Sisters of St. Benedict, please visit [thedome.org/supportus](http://thedome.org/supportus).

# NEWS from the Dome

## Sisters Welcome Partnership with New Philanthropy Group

Women of the Rule, a new women's philanthropy circle, held its inaugural event in June, featuring a keynote speech by Dr. Debra Mesch, director of the Women's Philanthropy Institute at Indiana University's Center on Philanthropy.

Women of the Rule's purpose is making a difference in the world by supporting the mission and work of the Ferdinand Benedictine Sisters. Members, who make an annual financial contribution, will review proposals submitted by the sisters, and select ministries and projects as grant recipients. Members also have the opportunity for personal enrichment through special programs on Benedictine spirituality and values that the sisters will design for them.

"Members of Women of the Rule experience the power of giving together as they make philanthropic decisions with other women committed to the same values," said Sister Barbara Catherine Schmitz, a gift officer for the community. "Their generosity will expand the reach and influence of the sisters' work."

The group chose the name "Women of the Rule" because the Ferdinand sisters, like all Benedictine communities, live the Rule of St. Benedict, a spiritual path for finding God in daily life. Members found it fitting as they, too, seek to instill in their own lives the Benedictine values of prayer, service, hospitality, peace, balance, stewardship, and care of others.

For more information about Women of the Rule, please contact Sister Barbara Catherine at [barbarac@thedome.org](mailto:barbarac@thedome.org), or 812.367.1411, ext. 2649.

## Sisters Celebrate Golden Jubilees: 50th Anniversary of Monastic Profession

From left: Sisters Rosa Lee Koch, Mary Emma Jochum, Mary Cheryl Uebelhor, Mary Austin Blank, and Mary Oliver Reising all celebrate 50 years with the Sisters of St. Benedict in 2009. Sister Susan Ann Necas (not pictured) celebrates her 25th anniversary in 2009 as well. Sister Mary Emma reflected: "What a God-given gift it has been to live 50 years of vowed life as a Benedictine in our community. The spirit of this community of sisters has led me to a deeper life of prayer, to a servant leadership ministry, and to a sacred reverence for all God's creation."

## New Endowment Will Promote Sacred Music

A new endowment has been established by the Verkamp Family with the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand for the purpose of promoting sacred music.

The name of the endowment is the Mechtild of Hackeborn Sacred Music Series in honor of Sisters Mary Aquin and Mary Ann Verkamp and their love of sacred music. It will be used to provide sacred music concerts and speakers for the public. The first concert will take place in the fall of 2010.

Sister Mary Aquin entered the community in 1950. She served as a teacher, a missionary, and as secretary for the late Bishop Francis R. Shea of Evansville. She died on January 15, 2009.

Sister Mary Ann entered the monastery in 1961. She spent 26 years as a missionary in Guatemala and currently serves as monastery librarian.

The endowment is named after the Benedictine saint Mechtild of Hackeborn (1241–1298), who was known as "God's nightingale" because of her beautiful voice.

The Sisters of St. Benedict welcome additional contributions to the endowment. For more information, please contact Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz at [barbaral@thedome.org](mailto:barbaral@thedome.org) or 812.367.1411, ext. 2630.







Bill Cook, Sister Rose Mary Rexing,  
Gayle Cook

## Dome Award Recipients: Bill and Gayle Cook

In March, Bill and Gayle Cook of Bloomington, Indiana, received the Dome Award in recognition of their generosity and support of the work, lives, and mission of the Sisters of St. Benedict.

"We're extremely grateful for the support of Bill and Gayle Cook and for the great gift that they are to this area," said Sister Kristine Anne Harpenau, prioress. "Their investment in Southern Indiana is clear from their efforts to preserve many historical sites for future generations, as well as their support of our community."

Bill Cook is the founder of Cook Group Incorporated. The Cooks, along with their son Carl, received a 2008 National Preservation Honor Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation for their work with the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana.

Past recipients of the Dome Award include Joseph Story of Little Rock, Arkansas; Irma Lasher of Derby, Indiana; the Krampe Family of Ferdinand; and Gregory and Edwina Kempf of Evansville, Indiana.



## Rosary Steps Get 'Extreme Makeover'

After more than 60 years of visitors climbing Grotto Hill to the Our Lady of Fatima Shrine, the Rosary Steps were greatly in need of repair.

The generosity of donors soon got the project under way. Workers replaced the original sandstone and gravel steps with aggregate concrete. They built structures for flowers and plants between every set of 10 steps (each decade of the rosary). And they installed new wiring for electricity and light fixtures along the path.

Special thanks to Jack and Rita Dehon-Durham, the family of John R. Trimble, Mr. and Mrs. Jerome B. Walker, and Gene and Barb Welp for their support in making this project a success.

We invite you to experience the peace and beauty of Grotto Hill, where there are also shrines to Our Lady of Lourdes and Our Lady of Guadalupe, and a pathway for the Stations of the Cross.

## Sisters Profess Vows



Sister Catherine Marie Duenne, 31, recently made her perpetual profession of monastic vows as a Sister of St. Benedict of Ferdinand. A native of Charleston, Missouri, Sister Catherine is a graduate of the University of Missouri and teaches at Notre Dame Academy in Louisville.



Sister Gail Hamilton of Welland, Ontario, and Sister Doris Schepers of Ferdinand made their first profession of monastic vows this spring. Said Sister Gail, "On my profession day, I was overcome with a deep and reverent joy, and with the awesome awareness that the day was my God-given gift to proclaim my response to God's call in my life." Sister Doris said, "I professed a deeper commitment to this Benedictine community of women, where I seek to serve God in my everyday life."



For the latest news, please visit Home@theDome on [thedome.org](http://thedome.org).



# The sisters' educational legacy lives on

by Sister Paulette Seng, OSB

Sister Helen Jean Kormelink has a big job as superintendent of Catholic schools and secretary of education in the Diocese of Joliet, Illinois. She oversees 70 Catholic schools with more than 23,000 students and about 1,600 professional staff.

She also has big dreams for the future of Catholic schools. As she told the Joliet diocesan paper earlier this year, "I would like to see every Catholic school shine out like a beacon of hope for its parish, for the Church, and for the civic community. I would like to see Catholic schools have such a strong academic component that every student would be able to succeed in any future endeavor. I would hope that all students in Catholic schools would meet their spiritual, intellectual, and physical potential."

Sister Helen Jean and the 41 other Ferdinand Benedictine Sisters ministering in education today are continuing a rich tradition of leadership and service in education that began in 1867, when four Benedictine sisters from Covington, Kentucky, came to Ferdinand to teach the children of German immigrants.

These sisters today are walking in the footsteps of great women educators whose work and dedication have shaped the lives of countless individuals and transformed society.

"The sisters provide values, guidance, and character building. They build up students' self-esteem and self-confidence.

They set an example by their lifestyles. Because of the sisters and my education from them, I enjoy and experience fulfillment in helping others," reflects Andrew Goebel of Evansville.

Benedictines have always valued learning and scholarship. When the founding sisters arrived in Ferdinand, they wasted no time in their mission to teach. Only two weeks after their arrival, the sisters opened a school with 125 pupils enrolled. Three years later, in 1870, the sisters established Academy Immaculate Conception (later called Marian Heights Academy), a boarding and day school for girls that eventually became an international college-prep school and received an Excellence in Education Award from the United States Department of Education in 1988.

Reflecting on her Academy education, alumna Jackie Perry says, "The sisters taught me to think for myself, to respect myself and others, to show compassion for every human being, to appreciate other cultures and their struggles and my dignity as a woman."

Over the years, sisters taught and mentored many educators who continue to minister in Catholic schools today. Diane Alvey, a recipient of the Evansville Diocesan Teacher of the Year Award who teaches at St. Theresa School in Evansville, recalls, "The Benedictine sisters played a major role in my decision to become a teacher. One of my college teachers, Sister Maria Tasto, was a role model for me. She took an interest in each of her students and treated them with respect."



Well into the 20th century, the primary ministry of the Ferdinand Benedictines was education. The legacy of learning and leadership these sisters left is widely recognized in the establishment and/or staffing of more than 75 schools in 12 states and five countries and the thousands of students under the sisters' tutelage.

That was then; this is now. What role do the sisters have in education today?

The Ferdinand Benedictines are still engaged in educational ministries. Forty-two are currently serving in universities, seminaries, high schools, elementary schools, and alternative education centers in 28 different locations throughout Southern Indiana, Kentucky, Illinois, Italy, and Peru.

In her ministry in the Diocese of Joliet, Sister Helen Jean Kormelink exemplifies how, one sister at a time, the sisters continue to impact countless students and families.

Sister Helen Jean began her career as a teacher at Christ the King School in Indianapolis in 1956, after obtaining a bachelor's degree in education from St. Benedict College in Ferdinand. After teaching for 13 years, she pursued further education, receiving a master's degree in clinical psychology from Xavier University and a doctoral degree in educational psychology from the University of Michigan.

With her professional credentials and teaching experiences, she moved into administration, serving as assistant superintendent of schools in the Evansville Diocese and Indianapolis Archdiocese before becoming superintendent of schools and co-director of education services in Peoria. In the Diocese of Lafayette in Indiana, she served as director of catechetical ministries. In 1993 she became assistant superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Joliet and then took the position she now has as superintendent of schools.

In those 16 years, what she has accomplished is immeasurable, according to school personnel. "Catholic schools in the diocese are excellent, spiritually and academically, because of Sister Helen Jean," says Madonna Turner, assistant superintendent of schools.

*"The sisters taught me to think for myself, to respect myself and others, to show compassion for every human being, to appreciate other cultures and their struggles and my dignity as a woman."*

Sister Helen Jean says that one of her primary goals each year is to ensure that "her schools" encourage and foster the values that the parents espouse, in an atmosphere of respect, love, and kindness, and where justice and service are more than mere words.

She teaches Christian values and behaviors by her example. "I strive to be attentive to diversity, welcoming minorities, especially Hispanics, to our schools, trying to meet the needs of special students, accepting children from various economic backgrounds, and offering scholarships whenever possible.

"I think of the Benedictine value of conversion expressed in terms of becoming a little better each day, going from good to great. I like to encourage that in the schools."

*Continued*



Sister Sarah Cathleen Yungwirth is coordinator of religious education and reading resource teacher at St. Raphael School in Louisville. She also serves as president of the Academy of Catholic Educators, an organization of teachers from throughout the Louisville Archdiocese.



# Finding the 'aha' moments in the classroom

by Sister Paulette Seng, OSB

One of the things that drew Sister Kathleen Marie Cash, 27, from Eddyville, Kentucky, to the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand was their long tradition of ministry in education. "I feel very much at home in this tradition. I'm part of a long line of great women who have dedicated their lives to education. I'm also part of our community's broader mission to be the Christ that others see each day. Our educational ministries go far deeper than teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic."

Sister Kathy says she has always seen teaching as a natural part of herself. "Some tease me that I was born teaching. I always tried to teach my younger cousin things that I thought were interesting. My friends didn't want to play school with me because it was too much like regular school! I started tutoring during high school and spent the last semester of my senior year working with a special education student who was in kindergarten."

She discovered a deep passion for the field of mathematics education during her first years at Brescia University in Owensboro, Kentucky. "I so loved studying the subject that I could not wait to share my excitement with others as a teacher."

She received a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Brescia in 2004. She entered the monastery in August of 2004 and spent the next two years in initial formation before beginning her teaching career at Forest Park High School in Ferdinand. She taught a year at DeSales High School in Louisville before going to Trinity High School in Louisville, where she currently teaches.

Now in her fourth year of teaching, she explains the joy and satisfaction that comes from her work. "When a shy student finally raises his hand to answer a question – I live for that. When I see my students so engrossed in an activity that they barely hear the bell ring – I live for that. When they stop by my room at the end of the day just to chat – I live for days like that. When one student leans over to help the kid next to him – I live for that kid. When my student comes up with a better example than I have – I live for that moment."

She speaks of "aha" moments – moments when a student finally gets it. "Those moments don't come every day, but they are why I teach."

To encourage her students to think, Sister Kathy posts a challenging "problem of the week" on the bulletin board. "My students gather around and work with enthusiasm on the math problem. It's exciting to me because it's exciting to them. That excitement, that drive, that's what gives me satisfaction. When I see students become as enamored with the subject as I am, I love it."

As passionate as she is about teaching, Sister Kathy also sees her role as "extending far beyond the confines of the classroom and going much deeper than the quadratic formula. I try to instill Christian values in my students. I try to foster a caring environment, being honestly concerned about their lives. I allow my students to ask me questions about my life as a sister and about my faith life as well. I also serve on the retreat team, leading groups of seniors in their Christian Awakening experience."

Sister Kathy teaches algebra, geometry, and pre-calculus at Trinity, an all-male high school. She also coaches the freshman soccer team, directs the school's liturgical music program, and moderates FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America).

An "incurable idealist," she says, "I want every one of my students to succeed in the classroom. One of my dreams is to develop a model of instruction that will reach the students who traditionally struggle in school or in math. I hope, in the next few years, to begin structuring my teaching techniques in a way that my classroom fosters cooperative learning, student-led activity, and project-based lessons so that I engage all of my students on a daily basis."

It's also gratifying when her students learn lessons that have nothing to do with math. One day, she had a particularly rambunctious and energetic class that did not want to study algebra at the end of the day. After she successfully, and with great patience, involved them in an activity to settle them down, they said to her, "You were the only teacher who didn't yell at us today. Why?" She showed them a small rock she keeps in her pocket and explained that whenever she wants to get upset with them, she touches the rock and reminds herself to pray for them instead. "They were impressed that prayer could have such an effect on their lives. A few weeks later, one of those same students showed me a cross that he put in his pocket to remind himself to stop and pray."

Another "aha" moment that would bring great satisfaction to any teacher.



"One of Sister Helen Jean's guiding principles is to do what is best for children. She believes that our schools should challenge and empower each student to achieve their academic and personal potential," comments Pamela Gean, director of curriculum for Joliet diocesan schools.

Bishop Joseph Imesch, retired bishop of Joliet, knows Sister Helen Jean quite well after working with her for 13 years. Praising her style of leadership, he says, "Sister Helen Jean made the superintendent's office available to principals, parents, and other school personnel – she brought them together so that the education ministry in the Church was improved tremendously by better communication and openness. She is empowering. She believes that 'together we can do this.'"

The bishop also credits her with introducing and advancing technology throughout the school system.

So, what does Sister Helen Jean consider her greatest accomplishments? "Catholic school ministry is a day-by-day, little-by-little, two steps forward, one step back process." But she mentions the opening of an innovative elementary school in Naperville, Illinois, the development of the first long-range



Sister Rebecca Ann Mathauer has been a religion teacher at two Louisville grade schools. She is currently working toward her second education degree for language arts and reading.

*"I would like to see every Catholic school shine out like a beacon of hope."*

strategic plan for schools in the diocese, and the development of a standards-based curriculum.

Her greatest satisfaction, however, comes from "working with the staff, principals, lay board members, and teachers to assure quality Catholic schools, and hearing about their success and the good things happening in schools and parishes."

Sister Helen Jean credits "the Benedictine sisters who taught me in high school" as her mentors. Like most great leaders, educators stand on the shoulders of those who went before them. So, too, will the new generation – the newer sisters in community who are ministering in education.

What advice does Sister Helen Jean give to those new teachers? "Remember that you never go into a classroom alone. Jesus is always with you; call on him often for help. Take care of yourself. Ask for help, find a mentor, and consult your principal. Build a positive relationship with other teachers on the faculty."

Why is Sister Helen Jean such an influential leader in education? "Because I love what I do and the people I do it with," she responds simply.

*"The sisters provide values, guidance, and character building. They build up students' self-esteem and self-confidence. They set an example."*

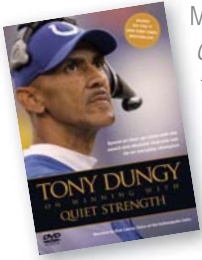


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# Book Reviews



## *Quiet Strength* by Tony Dungy

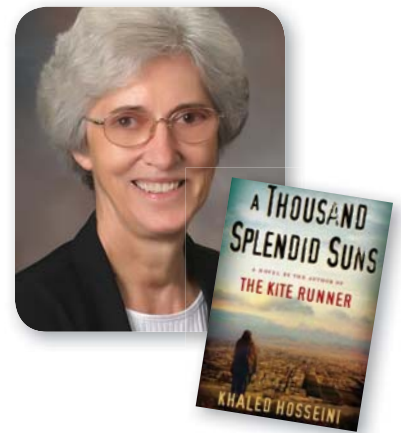


My admiration of the demeanor of Tony Dungy as he coached the Indianapolis Colts led me to read his book, *Quiet Strength*. He tells of the disappointments and triumphs he experienced and is able to view these through the eyes of faith. He believes that God has a plan for us and events that we see as disappointments are but steps leading us to eventual success and fulfillment. Dungy is unafraid to talk about his faith and to share it with others. It plays a prominent role in his coaching and in his leadership, both on and off the field. This book is inspiring, thought provoking, and a great testament to his Christian faith.

## *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini

*A Thousand Splendid Suns* is one of the most powerful books I have ever read. It evokes strong emotions about the treatment of women under the Taliban in Afghanistan. The cruelty to women and the courage that is needed to escape it are vividly described. Although it is a novel, the author, a native of Afghanistan now living in the United States, portrayed situations with which he has some familiarity. The book gives insights into the present turmoil in that part of the world and the plight of women under some regimes.

Reviewed by Sister Mary Cheryl Uebelhor, instructor at Brescia University, Owensboro, Kentucky



## *Soul Collage* by Seena B. Frost



Seena shares an intuitive process to gain deep personal wisdom and “see” one’s inner self. This book is delightful reading because it shares soul cards made by others and how their cards have helped them on their inner journey. Because the soul collage process can be used in a variety of ways and settings, the application of this creative method to access inner wisdom is very open ended and flexible. I found myself making cards after reading only the first few chapters and then going back and consulting this book for more direction and guidance. Creating a soul collage mixes imagination with intuition and serves as a way to connect with your unique story and honor it.

Reviewed by Sister Rose Mary Rexing, former director of Mission Advancement for the Sisters of St. Benedict



## Look Again by Lisa Scottoline

Lisa Scottoline has written many novels, most of which center on the legal system, particularly within the courts. Unlike her previous novels, *Look Again* centers on the love between a mother, Ellen Gleeson, and her adopted son, Will. The relationship is threatened when Gleeson receives a flyer in the mail with a picture of a missing child who looks amazingly like her son. This incident causes Gleeson to search for the truth behind her son's adoption and leads her into some harrowing experiences. Scottoline's story is thought provoking and suspenseful and compels readers to come to a greater understanding of the lengths to which an adoptive mother will go to protect her child.

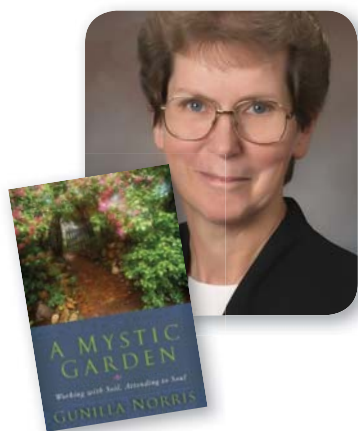
Reviewed by Sister Briana Craddock, school-based therapist, Louisville



## A Mystic Garden: Working with Soil, Attending to Soul by Gunilla Norris

I highly recommend this book by Gunilla Norris. The author has the gift of discovering God in the ordinary activities of our lives; in this case, gardening. It's a book to be pondered at any time of the year. Gunilla shares profound meditations as well as poetry on each of the four seasons. It is a book about transformation. In other words, living the Paschal Mystery.

Reviewed by Sister Mary Ann Verkamp, monastery librarian, Ferdinand



## What else have the sisters been reading recently?

*Dreams from My Father*, Barack Obama

*The Shack*, William Paul Young

*The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment*, Eckhart Tolle

*Quantum Theology: Spiritual Implications of the New Physics*, Diarmuid O'Murchu

*Riding the Dragon: 10 Lessons for Inner Strength in Challenging Times*, Robert J. Wicks

*The Hawk and the Dove*, Penelope Wilcock

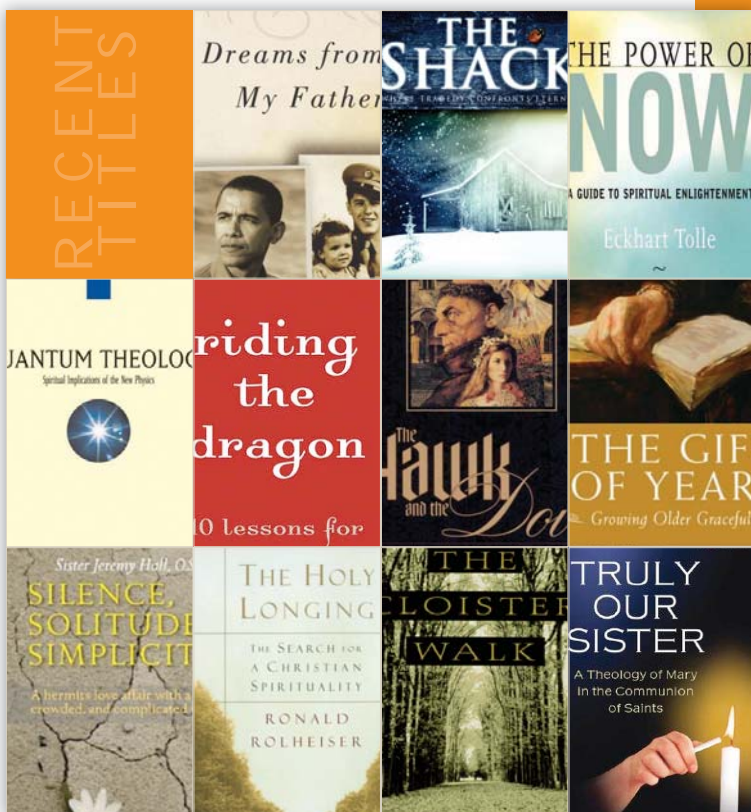
*The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully*, Joan Chittister

*Silence, Solitude, Simplicity*, Jeremy Hall

*The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality*, Ronald Rolheiser

*The Cloister Walk*, Kathleen Norris

*Truly Our Sister: A Theology of Mary in the Communion of Saints*, Elizabeth A. Johnson



## In Memoriam

**Sister Gemma Gettelfinger** died on July 23, 2008, at age 91. Sister Gemma was born on September 14, 1916, in Ramsey, Indiana. She was the youngest of Laura and Joseph Gettelfinger's nine children. She entered the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand in 1934.



Sister Gemma began her ministry as a teacher, serving in schools in Poseyville, Rockport, Elberfeld, Columbus, Siberia, and Troy, Indiana, and in Belcourt, North Dakota. She earned her bachelor's degree in education at St. Benedict College. She also trained as a nurse at the Sacred Heart School of Nursing, and gave many years of service caring for patients at the former Stork Memorial Hospital, St. Joseph's Hospital, and St. Ann's Nursing Home, all in Huntingburg, Indiana. She also served in the monastery infirmary for 25 years.

She is survived by her brother, Paul Gettelfinger of Corydon, Indiana, her nieces and nephews, and members of the Sisters of St. Benedict.

**Sister Carla Mitchell** (formerly Sister Mary Charles) died on October 27, 2008, at age 104. Sister Carla was born on December 21, 1903, in Evansville; she was the second of six children of Cecilia and Charles Mitchell. Sister Carla entered the Sisters of St. Benedict in 1921. When she celebrated her 85th anniversary of religious profession in 2007, Sister Carla became the only Ferdinand Benedictine, and likely the first Benedictine sister in the United States, to observe that milestone.



Sister Carla began her teaching career in 1922, and continued to share her passion for knowledge for 79 years. She taught in Arizona, California, Louisiana, North Dakota, and Indiana, where she taught at Floyds Knobs, St. Ferdinand, Marian Heights Academy, St. Benedict College, Tell City, St. Henry, St. Joseph, Trinity, Mater Dei, Elberfeld, Montgomery, and Fort Branch. She taught at every level, from kindergarten to university, and also taught prison inmates. A constant learner, she earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in Latin from the University of Notre Dame, and a second master's in French from the University of Nebraska.

She is survived by her sister, Mary Agnes Olinger, four generations of nieces and nephews, and members of her religious community.

**Sister Mary Aquin Verkamp** died on January 15, 2009, at age 76. Sister Mary Aquin was born on August 6, 1932, in Huntingburg, Indiana. She was the eldest of John and Wilhelmina Verkamp's seven children. She entered the Sisters of St. Benedict in 1950.



Sister Mary Aquin served in many roles during her 46 years of active ministry, even as she lived with Parkinson's disease. She taught for 20 years at St. Benedict School, Mater Dei, and the former St. Ferdinand High School. Her missionary work took her to Guatemala

for two years; upon her return, Sister Mary Aquin continued to serve the Guatemala mission as stateside coordinator for 20 years. And she served the Diocese of Evansville for a dozen years as secretary to Bishop Francis R. Shea of Evansville. At the monastery, she served as secretary and bookkeeper for Kordes Center and as administrative assistant in the business office. Sister Mary Aquin received her bachelor's degree in education and her MBA from the University of Dayton.

She is survived by her brothers, Robert, Gilbert, and Bernard Verkamp; her sisters, Virlee Kreilein and Sister Mary Ann Verkamp of Monastery Immaculate Conception; her nieces and nephews; and members of the Sisters of St. Benedict.

**Sister Bernette Wildeman** died on February 19, 2009, at age 94. Sister Bernette was born on October 14, 1914, in St. Philip, Indiana. She was the fifth of 10 children born to Valentine and Bernadine Wildeman. She entered the Sisters of St. Benedict in 1930.



Sister Bernette earned her bachelor's degree in education at St. Benedict College, and taught for more than 50 years at schools in Rockport, Elberfeld, Vincennes, St. Anthony, Tell City, Washington, Indianapolis, Haubstadt, Mount Vernon, Boonville, and Evansville (St. Joseph, St. Benedict, Holy Rosary, and Christ the King). She also taught religious education in Ferdinand and Dubois and served in support ministries at Monastery Immaculate Conception.

She is survived by her brother, Anthony Wildeman of Evansville, and her sister, Poor Clare Sister Mary Elizabeth Wildeman of Evansville, her nieces and nephews, and members of the Sisters of St. Benedict.

**Sister Angela Sasse** died on May 19, 2009, at age 88. Sister Angela was born on September 11, 1920, in Henderson, Kentucky. She was the eldest of six children born to Verena and Joseph Sasse. She entered the Sisters of St. Benedict in 1940.



Sister Angela served as a teacher and librarian for nearly 60 years. She taught in Starlight, Indiana, and served as a teacher and librarian at Academy Immaculate Conception and St. Benedict College in Ferdinand, Mater Dei in Evansville, and Vincennes University Jasper Center. She also taught religious education at St. Henry Parish and served as librarian and archivist at Monastery Immaculate Conception. Sister Angela received her bachelor's degree in education from St. Benedict College.

She is survived by her sister, Sister Marge Sasse of Monastery Immaculate Conception, and her brother Herman Sasse; nieces and nephews; and members of her religious community.



Obituaries and reflections may be found at [thedome.org](http://thedome.org).



# Perspectives

If you could have dinner with anyone, who would it be, and why?



*"I would choose to have dinner with a mother who was one of this past spring's Air France flight victims."*

– Sister Mary Carmen Spayd,  
flower gardens/arrangements,  
monastery service



*"If I could have dinner with anyone, I think I would like to have dinner with all of my nieces and nephews and their families. Sitting together at dinner would provide the best opportunity to find out what they have going on in their lives."*

– Sister Agnes Marie Dauby,  
director of vocation ministries



*"I would want to have dinner with Barbara Bush. I never knew my grandmothers and I would like to think she would be a perfect Grandma."*

– Janet Werne, recently  
retired switchboard operator  
for the Sisters of St. Benedict

*"Many years ago, on the last day of school, a graduating senior told me that he had no idea what he wanted to do after graduation. He seemed lost, and the memory has haunted me. It would be a delight to have dinner with him and learn whether life has been good to him (I surely hope so)."*

– Sister Mary Carmel Spayd,  
flower gardens/arrangements,  
monastery service



*"It would be really neat to sit down and have a 'boys night out' with the apostles – without Jesus there – to learn what he was really like."*

– Eric Pund, grounds maintenance  
supervisor for the Sisters of  
St. Benedict



# The gift of faith

What could be more important?

Share your faith with those you love with a gift from For Heaven's Sake, the monastery gift shop.

For Heaven's Sake offers a unique array of religious and inspirational items, books, greeting cards, home decor, sacred art, Christmas decorations, and gifts for special life moments. Many items are made by the sisters themselves.

Visit in person on the monastery grounds or online at [forheavensake.org](http://forheavensake.org).

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OF ST. BENEDICT  
FERDINAND, INDIANA

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## Save the Date!

October 3, 2009	Monastery Angel and Partner celebration
October 16-18	Benedictine Life Weekend
October 18	Oblation Day for Benedictine Oblates
October 25	Community celebration for sisters observing 60th and 70th anniversaries of profession of vows
November 21-22	Christkindlmarkt celebration at the monastery and throughout the town of Ferdinand
November 22	Advent/Christmas Concert (at Monastery Immaculate Conception in the afternoon, at West Baden Springs Hotel in the evening)
December 24	Christmas Eve services at the monastery church

## Please Join Us!

### Upcoming Spirituality Ministry Programs and Retreats at the Dome

October 9-10	Lectio Divina: Praying the Scriptures
October 12	Compassionate Healing
November 7	Centering Prayer
February 15, 2010	Compassionate Healing
March 5-6	Retreat – Dining in the Kingdom of God: Luke's Gospel and Hospitality

### Saturday Mornings at the Dome

October 17	Reflections on the Mysteries of the Rosary
November 14	Care for the Caregiver
January 16, 2010	Forgiving What We Cannot Forget
February 20	Dance of Universal Peace

For more information, or to register, please visit [thedome.org/programs](http://thedome.org/programs).