

Spring 2009

the Mount

BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF ERIE

A World of Hope



**Rejoice in hope,
be patient in tribulation,
be constant in prayer.**

Romans 12:12

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The Mount is produced by Kathy Linse.
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Cover photo by Sister Lucia Surmik, OSB.



A World of Hope

When I was a girl in grade school, one of my classmates was a gal named Hope. Her younger sister, in my sister Maureen's class, was named Joy. I found this to be very intriguing as all of my friends were named Susie, Debby, Brenda and Linda. Colleen was impressive to me and I am half Irish! I felt encumbered by Kathleen; nobody in my family ever called me Kathy (and they still don't, but I've "grown into" Kathleen).

While working on this issue I had those girls' faces in my mind after all these years and thought "What a great pairing of names!" (I am sure my son is happy that we didn't name him Fortitude.) What triggered this memory are words on the next page from Sister Christine. "Christian hope is radically different from wishful thinking. Hope is a cooperative, communal venture. We do not simply 'hope for the best,' we put our hope into action. Hope invariably involves a sense of promise and a sense of future."

Hope is defined as belief in possibility. In this issue of the Mount you will read about that in Korea, Mexico, Croatia, Rome and South Africa as well as right here in Erie. You'll read about the hopes of our jubilarians and a faith realized in meeting our Heritage of Hope Capital Campaign goal.

As for me, after the long illness and recent death of my husband, I am learning the cooperative, communal venture that is hope: My family, my friends and the Benedictine Sisters of Erie accompany me. I have hope, that one day, again I will have joy. Meanwhile, I urge this for all of us: Put our hope into action and work to help others have a sense of promise and a sense of future.

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune—without the words,
And never stops at all.

—Emily Dickinson


Kathy Linse

Director of Communications

BENEDICTINE CHARISM STATEMENT

The Benedictine way is to seek God in the cenobitic life
and to respond in prayer and ministry.





From the Prioress

To what do we attach our hope today?

The disciples on the way to Emmaus are returning home after the horrific events in Jerusalem –Jesus’ trial, condemnation and death. It is clear that they attached their hope for the future to the promise of Jesus that the world would be transformed. Now the dream was shattered. They utter the saddest words in Scripture: *“But we had hoped. ...”* (Luke 24:21).

We are in a comparable situation as the disciples. The deep beliefs, foundational ideas and key institutions that shaped our identities are in flux. When we live in the vortex of constant change and betrayal certainties crumble. The situation of the present throws off our equilibrium. To be without hope is essentially to be without a future. To what do we attach our hope today?

The Gospel is a narrative of hope. The presence of the Risen Christ and God’s Spirit transformed the disciples: Dispelling their fear, giving them hope, bringing them back into community and charging them for mission and witness in their chaotic world of the first century. As disciples in this third millennium, we are challenged to find the resonance between the strong Easter faith of our Christian tradition and become people of hope in these unsettled times and in the midst of the despair that surrounds our world. It is our defining vocation to be people of hope as followers of the Christ.

Christian hope is radically different from wishful thinking. Hope is a cooperative, communal venture. We do not simply “hope for the best;” we put our hope into action. Hope invariably involves a sense of promise and a sense of future. Moving confidently into that future is an opportunity for God’s reign to breakthrough in our world. It will take all of us working together to bring justice to our human family. The gospel agenda is clear. The stranger must be welcomed. Borders should not divide the human family. Each immigrant brings the gift of their culture, language and religion. The Earth must be cared for as coming from the hand of God and part of the same creation that brought us into being. The resources can be stewarded so that all enjoy God’s bountiful gift. Violence and war need not claim lives as we learn to live together as brothers and sisters in our global village. Economic justice must replace the ethic of greed and hoarding. Poverty is a result of lack of political will. The distribution of the world’s wealth must assure that all live in circumstances that affirm their humanity. It is a weighty agenda for an Easter People.

Like the disciples on the way to Emmaus, Jesus accompanies us and opens the Scriptures for us. We will recognize him in the breaking of the bread and on every face of those we meet on the way. Erich Fromm teaches us: “To hope means to be ready at every moment for that which is not yet born, and yet not become desperate if there is not birth in our lifetime.”

Christine Vladimiroff, OSB

Prioress, Benedictine Sisters of Erie

South of the Border

Olé!

*By Sister Claire Hudert, OSB and
Theresa Caritas Serafin, Oblate*



New Oblates, from left: Margely Guadalupe Tec Martin; Jessica Varguez; Karen Alejandrina Niquete Massa; Flor Azucena Tec Martin; Sister Christine Vladimiroff, Prioress; Sister Marilyn Schauble, Director of Oblates; and Vanessa del Carmen Chan Varguez

"It was such a wonderful experience to witness the commitments of these Mérida, Mexico, Oblates. Benedict's way of life can be a "way" for anyone to intensify their Christian baptismal commitment. Benedict's values of listening, welcoming one another as Christ, prayer, work and hospitality along with concern for those less fortunate are truly lived out day by day by our Oblates in Mérida. Community and Oblates together, makes for double blessings for each and every one of us."

Sister Marilyn



In the very middle of a blustery Erie winter, Sister Christine Vladimiroff, prioress, and Sister Marilyn Schauble, oblate director, left the cold and snow behind and traveled south to spend January 7-12 with the Oblate community in Mérida, Yucatan, Mexico. Traveling separately, each was greeted at the airport by a delegation of Oblates carrying a banner of welcome. "We needed to invest in that relationship and let them know that they are a part of our community in Erie," said Sister Christine. As soon as each arrived, they felt not only the warmth of the Yucatecan sun, but also the equally warm signs of Yucatecan hospitality, as members of the Oblate community of Mérida were present to welcome them.

For Sister Christine the 2009 trip was a return visit. For Sister Marilyn, it was her first time meeting the group on their home turf, though she had met a number of them when they traveled to Erie for the 2000 homecoming celebration and

again in 2005 for the 150th anniversary celebration. Their purpose in going was to strengthen the bonds between the Erie Benedictine Sisters and Oblates and the Oblate members in Mexico. The message they brought was the assurance, "You are important to us. We care for you and we appreciate you. We want you to know that you are a part of us."

Sister Christine received the commitments of the five newest Mérida Oblates (ages 18-20, all university students) and gave

with candles. At the end of the party, the Oblates read a declaration that they wrote expressing how happy they were that Sisters Christine and Marilyn took time to be with them. Everyone loved it!

comments. Your visit “gave me the opportunity to value my commitment as an Oblate and witness once again the great interest the Sisters have to keep alive communication and the ties of friendship.” Also, “I really liked that they had an opportunity to get to know some aspects of the culture and traditions here.” And “by their presence I was personally strengthened in my Oblate path.”

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2008 Annual Report

**...so that in all things God may be glorified.
(1 Pet 4:11; RB 57:9)**

The Rule of Benedict is the rule of life for the Benedictine Sisters of Erie. In Chapter 57 (entitled "Artisans of the Monastery") Benedict directs the artisans to practice their craft with all humility and to be mindful of the evil of avarice in establishing prices.

The practice of humility is a dominant theme in the Rule. As followers of Benedict we are expected to practice humility daily: to have a modest sense of our own significance, to be unpretentious and not proud, haughty or arrogant.

In Chapter 57 we are also warned about the evil of avarice: an excessive or insatiable desire for wealth or gain. Although originally directed toward the artisans, all members of the community are expected to heed this warning. That includes those entrusted with responsibility for the financial affairs of the community. Our ministry of finance is grounded in humble service and wise use of our resources so that the needs of the community are provided for, resources are shared with others and services are available to those in need.

So we humbly offer this 2008 Annual Report to keep you informed of our financial situation, knowledgeable about how we use our resources and aware of the importance of your support to our financial health. We have once again seen an increase in our Sisters' stipends/salaries as well as an increase in development income due to gifts from the Anonymous Friend Fund of the Erie Community Foundation and bequests. The community continues to see decreased costs in utilities thanks to the replacement of the HVAC systems, newly insulated exterior walls and new windows made possible through the gifts to our Heritage of Hope Capital Campaign. Like everyone else who was fully invested we suffered the loss of \$1.9 million throughout our portfolios, cutting our operating trust and retirement funds by nearly 1/3 of their value. These losses for us, as for everyone else, call us to watch our pocketbook more closely.

Our 2008 Annual Report can be evaluated through the Benedictine values of humility and lack of avarice. Through our commitment to work, the generosity of our many benefactors and a simple lifestyle we continue to live within our means – debt-free. Your humble support over the years enables us to not only live simply but also to continue our many varied ministries and provide hospitality to all who visit. As loyal followers of Benedict we know that avarice has no place in a monastery. Throughout our history we have been frugal in our spending, wise in our fiscal management, content with the resources that are available to us and intent in sharing our resources with others.

As we complete this report we want to share one of our favorite Benedictine mottos. Benedict ends Chapter 57 of the Rule by summing up why we live our life in community. Perhaps you have or will adopt this motto, too. We live the Benedictine way of life **so that in all things God may be glorified.** (1 Pet 4:11; RB 57:9) Amen. Alleluia.

Sister Diane Cook, OSB (left)
Treasurer

Sister Mary Jane Vergotz, OSB
Development Director



Development Income

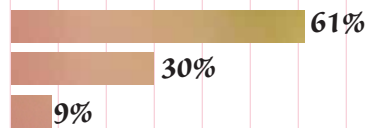
Annual Programs	93,439.59
Unrestricted Gifts	142,748.46
Restricted Gifts	931,154.67
Total	1,167,342.72



Benedictine Sisters of Erie

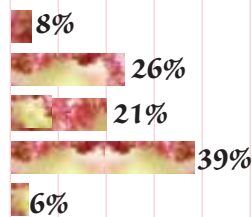
Operating Income

Sisters' Stipends/Salaries	2,364,258.95
Development/Gifts	1,167,342.72
Other	365,055.59
Gain/(Loss) before Investment Activity	3,896,657.26
Investment Activity	(1,910,625.52)
Gain/(Loss) after Investment Activity	1,986,031.74



Operating Expenses

Administration	288,385.33
Members' Personal Expenses	986,715.15
Payroll Expenses	819,300.62
Property/Buildings/Transportation	1,479,759.58
Other	240,051.03
Total	3,814,211.71



2008 Community Annual Donors - denotes gifts of \$100+

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Community of Life

During November 2008, the Benedictine Sisters were blessed to join in prayer with 763 individuals for our Community of Life program. Each participant was matched with an individual Benedictine Sister who held her partner's loved ones in daily prayer. Thank you for your donation of \$22,915.

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Garden of Memories

Bernadette Sullivan, OSB & Cecilia Sullivan, OSB in Honor of Bill & Teresa Sullivan

Bequests

Barbara R. Fallon • Robert A. Ladner • Ralph E. Meahl • Wilbert J. McCarthy • Betty Jane Stancliff • James F. Tobin

Annual Draw

Thank you to all 1,520 benefactors who contributed more than \$45,149 to the 2008 Benedictine Sisters Annual Draw completed in July, 2008.

Matching Gifts

We thank the foundations that provide matching gifts to the Benedictine Sisters Ministry Fund: Bank of America Foundation • General Electric Foundation • PNC Foundation

Great care and effort are taken in maintaining accurate lists of our donors. We apologize for any oversights. The Benedictine Sisters of Erie are grateful to our benefactors.

I feel happy and give thanks to God

Sister Elia (Kyung Hee Lee) spent April 2008 through January 2009 with us as part of her sabbatical year. She is a Missionary Benedictine Sister of Tutzing, Daegu Priory, in the Republic of Korea. Sister Elia is from the same community as Sister Madeline Yu, whom you will recall also spent a sabbatical with us. Both Sisters were here to work on their English skills.

Sister Elia had just finished her term as secretary to the prioress and previously she was Director of Health Information Administration at Daegu Fatima Hospital.

Sister Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, prioress, said: "Again, it was a wonderful opportunity for us to participate in such exchanges as we get much more than we give. Globalization increases our contact, our knowledge and hopefully our network of relationships in a manner that makes us aware of the varied ways the human existence can be lived."

We asked Sister Elia to share her thoughts about her experiences with the Erie Benedictines.



From left, Sister Mary Jane Vergotz, subprioress; Sister Lumen Choi, OSB, prioress and Sister Mary Daniel Park, OSB, both of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Daegu, South Korea and Sister Christine Vladimiroff, prioress.

Sisters Christine and Mary Jane accepted gifts from Sisters Lumen and Mary Daniel during their visit to the Mount Saint Benedict Monastery in March. Since 2004, the Erie Benedictine community has welcomed two members of the Daegu community: Sisters Elia Lee and Madeleine Yu, as long-term guests so as to improve their use of the English language.

A Reflection: My thoughts about living at the Mount

I came here on April 10, 2008. It was very cold and windy. When I left Korea, it was raining and spring was over. In Erie spring is coming just around the corner.

When I arrived in the Erie Airport, Sister Mary Therese (Egan) Sister Mary Grace (Hanes) and Korean Sister Min



Sister Roberta Lavin, OSB was Sister Elia's English teacher.

Shik, SSJ were waiting for me. The plane was delayed two hours. So I was sorry for them that the plane kept them waiting for me. I was glad to meet them. We shared greetings. Sister Mary Therese gave me some pretty roses. We took pictures for a memory of my arrival in America.

As I came in my room I was surprised at how Sister Mary Therese prepared everything: a welcome card, baskets that were wrapped with small gifts and a nice bed. She said to me, "Open one basket now; the other is for later." The baskets were filled with shampoo, soap, lotions, cards and toothpaste. I slept well until late in the morning. My mind was so grateful for this wonderful sleep.

Sister Mary Therese introduced me to the Sisters around me. I think the Mount Sisters are very hospitable. I would like to give thanks to Sister Christine and all the Sisters for accepting me here. My neighbors are very kind. They said, "If you need something, you may knock on my door anytime."



A visit to Niagara Falls.

The Mount has a lot of grass around big trees. This is very calm and peaceful. The Mount is a big monastery and it was built in 1969. They have three hermitages in the forest. Someday I want to go there. The Mount is having renovation now; however, they still made room for me here.

After I stayed here one week, I noticed that spring was coming; many kinds of flowers are coming out, e.g., forsythias, daffodils and magnolias. Weeping willows are growing more and more each day.

Sister Mary Therese is very kind and a good person. Every time she knew my needs, my wants and my feelings even



before I asked. I am lucky because I met good Sisters and I am living here with them. Every day I experience good things. I am receiving them with trembling heart every new morning.

Prayer time is new and refreshing. It is simple, deep and gives time for reflection. Prayer leaders prepare the whole mind; even older Sisters are leaders. Chapel windows are very nice and they help to lead me to meditation. While we pray and pause, I feel like I am in the forest because I hear a stream. It was flowing water in the holy water font. The Mount has a lot of musicians; they seem to love each other and together play in praise of God.

Meal time is very happy; Sisters talk to each other at the table. Sisters and guests have meals in the same dining room. We do not do this in my monastery; keep clausura! (*Sisters and laity are kept separate.*)

The Mount Sisters are working for poor people. So they are very happy and it gives them pleasure to help others.

When I visited the infirmary I felt love. I saw that there are open minds among the Sisters, e.g., Jim is a brother of Sister Maureen (Tobin) and he was very ill. But he was always



Sister Mary Therese Egan, OSB.

happy and singing. Now he is in heaven. On May 14th, he went to heaven. It impressed me deeply my first funeral experience in America. The toll bell was ringing as my heart was trembling.

On June 16 Sister Margaret Harrison passed away. As the toll bell was ringing we were going to her room and I saw a kitchen employee going there, too. This showed that the Sisters loved the employees and include them in so many ways.

The Soup Kitchen. Sisters and volunteers were happy; they did not give orders. They made the visitors comfortable as in their own home. "Your only host is Christ."

The Art House. The Sisters who are teaching do not mind if there are few students or many students. They are professional and know what they do is special and important.

They have different teaching ways; children are all important so every one presents their talents. Sisters and teachers and children together play and sing.

I am proud of the Mount Sisters' ministry for poor people. They say: "The work is not our own; this is God's work."

One of the things I have that is fun is changing my clothes (not wearing the habit). I felt that the Mount Sisters' clothes made me united with the Sisters, guests and employees. Now my shyness has changed and I am comfortable.

I am learning English from Sister Roberta (Lavin). She is a very pretty woman; has a clear head, is a smart cookie and in class we laugh a lot. Sometimes she plays the organ for prayer and she is taking care of Sister Marie Celine (Bucholz) with love and wisdom. They are good friends!

I am learning English, American culture and the Mount Sisters' life. It is the right time for me to be in Erie. Every morning as I awake, I feel happy and give thanks to God.

Q&A

To me it is like Heaven!

We also asked Sister Elia some questions before she left; here are the answers she wrote for us.

What was surprising to you about Erie?

What wonderful nature! Erie has beautiful seasons; it reminds me of the sea because it is near the lake. Mount Saint Benedict is in a peaceful part of Erie and has many tall trees, flowers that change with the seasons, many deer that roam the grounds — all beautiful aspects of nature — even with the snow. I love snow!

What activities did you participate in at the monastery?

I enjoyed many visits to the infirmary and I hope that my smile helped the infirm Sisters to feel better. Just to be with them and see love on their smiling faces, even though they are in difficult situations. I hope that I helped them.

I volunteered weekly in the Emmaus Soup Kitchen and I appreciated the loving interaction of the Sisters and volunteers with God's poor.

I also visited the Art House, Saint Benedict Day Care, SBEC (*Saint Benedict Education Center*) and other ministries and these visits gave me good insight into the Erie Benedictine philosophy of hospitality to the poor

especially women and children. At times I helped with programs in the wellness activities at the Mount. I willingly washed dishes and waited with open hands to help in other areas. This year I also had time to walk to Glinodo and in the Mount gardens. These opportunities cleared my mind and helped me to praise God's creation.

What is different here from your monastery in Korea?

I note that here at the Mount the community is more open to receiving guests in many areas of

the monastery. Mount employees are also included in many activities. The Sisters have more freedom in choosing their attire while we in Korea wear a special habit.

The schedule of praying the Divine Office is regular here as it is in Korea but at the Mount it is more flexible as to the hour of prayer. Also the tempo and pauses at prayer here allow for personal reflection. There is no special seating in Chapel nor in the dining room.

Sunday Eucharist is very special at the Mount and many musicians participate in the praise of God. Also many guests celebrate with the Sisters; that is quite different in our chapel. I think here liturgy is alive. Sisters at the Mount make good lasting friendships even among different age groups. Also there is more opportunity here for special conferences on the spiritual life.

What will your ministry be when you return home?

When I return to Korea I will work in the hospital as a medical recorder at Daegu Fatima Hospital. Before I came here I worked 20 years at the hospital. Daegu Fatima Hospital has 750 beds and over 1,000 employees. We have two big hospitals. I need to know the English language because many modern progressive methods and medical terms are written in English. Many staff members also write records in English and I hope to be able to assist them.

What would you like our readers to know about the Benedictine Sisters of Erie?

I would like others to know that the Sisters are very accepting of other monastics and other cultures. Every morning I wake up refreshed in mind and every evening I retire with a thankful heart.

I know that the peace-filled atmosphere and the beauty of nature that I experience here are expanding my mind. I will miss the beautiful outside view and the Sisters' hospitality! To me it is like heaven!



50
YEARS

Four Sisters celebrate the joy of their Jubilee Years

The Benedictine Sisters of Erie will recognize and celebrate the Jubilees of these Sisters during Evening Praise on Saturday, July 11.

Sister Mary Ann Luke, OSB, shares how these Sisters came to their vocation and the gift they have been to their Benedictine community, families, friends and more.

**"Uphold me, O God, according to your word
and I shall live, and do not fail me in my hope."**

The Sisters sing this third verse of Psalm 119 when they renew their vows.



Sister Irene Spacht, OSB



Sister Christine Vladimiroff, OSB



Sister Colette Korn, OSB



Sister Kathryn Disbrow, OSB

Psalm 119

I have no love for divided hearts.
My love is for your law, O God.
You are my shelter, my refuge.
I hope in your word.

Leave me, all who do evil.
I will keep God's command.

**Uphold me, O God, according to your word,
and I shall live,
and do not fail me in my hope.**

You disown all who turn away from your law;
they deceive only themselves.
The wicked count as nothing.

I tremble before you,
standing in awe of your decrees.

50
YEARS

Irene Spacht, OSB

...faithfully observing his teaching in the monastery until death, we shall through patience, share in the sufferings of Christ that we may deserve also to share in His kingdom.

Let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ and may He bring us all together to everlasting life.

Rule of Benedict, Prologue 50; 72: 11-12



Sister Irene Spacht is a daughter of the late Charles and Elizabeth Porter Spacht. She grew up on the family farm in North East, Pa., where she learned how to work, how to work well, to solve problems, to cooperate with her co-workers — her brothers and sister — and to enjoy the results of their work: cherries, grapes, sweet corn, fresh eggs. She saw first hand how care of the Earth produces its gifts.

Sister Irene's family has been the strong support of their parish, St. Gregory, North East, for years. Any native of the parish will remember Charlie at the church door with worship aids; Betty, organizing a bake sale. Sister Irene learned about parish community and support.

In the parish school where our Sisters taught, she found, as well, Benedictine community. She entered the Benedictine Sisters of Erie on September 8, 1957, and made her final profession of vows on August 16, 1962.

Sister Irene earned her first degree at Mercyhurst College and her master's at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. She is certified in education and as a school counselor. In 1995, after teaching at St. Joseph and Sacred Heart schools in Sharon; Mount Calvary School, Erie; St. Joseph and St. Stephen schools, Oil City, and at Venango Catholic High School, Oil City, she returned to St. Gregory School as teacher and principal until 2004.

Since 1986, she has been a member of the North East Juvenile Diversion Board which meets monthly to assist North East young people who have been arrested. Sister Irene has been listed three times in "Who's Who Among American Teachers" and received the Golden Apple award in 2004.

She presently ministers as administrative assistant in the community's Communications and Development Office. Sister Irene also is a long time member of the community Liturgy Committee, responsible for the planning and execution of prayer and eucharistic liturgies.

Sister Irene finds in the Liturgy of the Hours and the eucharistic liturgies the community's greatest gift to her and hopes for the future of the community that we remain a leaven for society and a voice for the oppressed, and that we continue to meet, as far as possible, the needs of those who search for solitude and prayer.

50
YEARS

Christine Vladimiroff, OSB

As we progress in this monastic way of life and in faith, our hearts will warm to its vision, and with a love full of delight that cannot be put into words, we shall go forward on the way of God's commandments. Rule of Benedict, Prologue 20.

Sister Christine is a daughter of the late John and Agnes Olszewski Vladimiroff. She entered the Benedictine Sisters in 1957 after her graduation from Saint Benedict Academy and made her final profession of vows on August 16, 1962.

She is a teacher who earned her first degree at Mercyhurst College, Erie, Pa., and later received a master's degree in Spanish literature and a doctorate in Latin American studies, both from the National University in Saltillo, Mexico. She has done graduate work in Scripture and theology at several universities.

Sister Christine taught at Saint Benedict Academy and at Mercyhurst College and was also administrator of Saint Benedict Academy for eight years.

Sister Christine continued her ministry in education by teaching teachers for ten years in the Diocese of Cleveland, first as multicultural coordinator and then as Secretary for Education. In that office, she was responsible for all aspects of the Catholic school system of the diocese which includes the city of Cleveland and eight densely populated counties of northeastern Ohio.

In 1991, Sister Christine was appointed president and CEO of Second Harvest, among the largest hunger relief organizations in the United States. This, too, was a job for a teacher who could demonstrate to the public and to the food industry the intensity of need for food assistance to a large segment of the national population. She served for eight years, developing the administrative structure and coordination with individual food banks, together with expanding communication and cooperation with food producers and transporters.

She has also served as member and chair of the board of Bread for the World, helping to educate the public and its legislators in the same needs for food distribution to the hungry.

At the same time, Sister Christine was an elected member of the council of the Federation of Saint Scholastica, an organization of more than 20 American Benedictine women's monasteries

In 1998, our community elected Sister Christine — who had served her community as formation director and member of the community council — prioress of the community. She is presently prioress of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, completing her third term in 2010. Although the prioress is administrator of the community as an organization, her most important function is teacher and mentor of the community, collectively and individually, as followers of the Rule of Benedict and as Christians.

During this period, she has also been president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, a national organization representing some 76,000 U.S. women religious, as well as a member and, currently, president of the Conference of Benedictine Prioresses which includes the leaders of two dozen monasteries in Mexico, Canada and the United States

Sister Christine's great hope for the community — a sacrament of God's love for her, each Sister a gift in whom she can hope to see the face of Christ — is that we "live deeply the Gospel life," becoming a sign of hope in a lonely and alienated world.



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YEARS

Colette Korn, OSB

First of all, every time you begin a good work, you must pray to God most earnestly to bring it to perfection. Rule of Benedict, Prologue 4

Sister Colette, a graduate of Saint Benedict Academy and a daughter of the late Albert and Coletta DeHarde Korn, made her final profession of vows on August 16, 1962.

At that time, the Sisters wore the traditional habit, yards of black wool serge and more yards of white linen. These were, necessarily, custom-made, not a simple or easy task. Several Sisters worked full time in the sewing room, a large bright room in the old house on East Ninth Street. The seamstresses needed sharp eyes and agile fingers and had to be patient and meticulous. Sister Colette brought these qualities to her ministry and learned from the experienced seamstresses who expected excellence and were happy to teach it to an apt student.

When habits were no longer worn, Sister Colette worked for a time in food service, again caring for the needs of her Sisters. Then she found a new interest: nursing. She is a nurse aide and is certified in care of the elderly.

Sister Colette ministered at Hamot Medical Center for several years. She received the highest honor that Hamot gives its staff; she was named a Hamot Ambassador. As she gained experience, Sister Colette became more and more interested in geriatric care. She now ministers in home health care for the elderly and for others who require long-term care for chronic, serious illness. Her care and concern for her patients, matched by her expertise, have made the end of life easier for dozens of

patients and for their families.

She is readily available to them, a problem solver who can improvise solutions to provide better care, who is interested and determined to make their circumstances better in all the ways she can. Families of patients are given the same thoughtful consideration that the patients receive.

Sister Colette finds the community's greatest gift to her to be the support the Sisters give one another, sharing both in their joys and supporting them in the inevitable sorrows. She appreciates this support whether the occasion be personal or related to the difficult situations her patients experience.

Prayer is basic to Benedictine life, to Christian life, to all life, as Benedict demonstrates in the Rule with his injunction to pray always and with the careful attention he gives to every detail of celebration of the Divine Office.

With these things in mind, Sister Colette hopes for us that prayer will continue in the future to be the first priority in our community life.



50
YEARS

Kathryn Disbrow, OSB

This, then is the good zeal which monks must foster with love: "They should each try to be the first to show respect to the other." (Romans 12:10) Rule of Benedict, 72

Sister Kathryn, daughter of the late Henry and Mary Disbrow and stepdaughter of John Cifolelli, came to the Benedictine Sisters soon after her graduation from Saint Benedict Academy in 1957. She made her final profession of vows on August 16, 1962.

Sister Kathryn received her bachelor's degree from Mercyhurst College and a master's degree in elementary mathematics from Clarion State University. She also holds a master's degree in administration from the University of Dayton and is certified in early childhood development.

She began her ministry as a second-grade teacher at St. Mary's School, Erie, now the site of the Kids' Café on East Tenth Street. She served as an elementary teacher in several parish schools: Immaculate Conception, Clarion; St. Joseph and Sacred Heart, Sharon; and Mt. Calvary, Erie. Sister Kathryn was principal as well as teacher at St. Joseph and St. Stephen schools in Oil City. In the summers, she taught in the CCD programs in Sharon, Sharpsville, Clarion and West Middlesex.

Sister Kathryn returned to Erie in 1981, first to administer the newly established East Coast Migrant Head Start program and then to assist in our community's business office. She was later the community treasurer.

Now, Sister Kathryn is the lead teacher in the infants' room at Saint Benedict Child Development Center. She is their first teacher. Her experience and education, together with an unfailing good nature, a peaceful demeanor and immense patience are the gifts she brings to the center. She has great concern and real tenderness for children and she gives

them the first tools — kindness and courtesy, neatness and promptness, listening as Benedict taught us all — to cope with a world still strange to them. They can also walk quietly in straight lines, an important prerequisite for further education. It is a wonderfully good fit for both students and teacher.

Sister Kathryn identifies, as our community's best gift to her, the members of the community who have influenced, mentored and modeled for her what it means to be a community member. She remembers with gratitude those Sisters who have gone before us and whom we remember with gratitude for lives congruent with the spirit of the Rule.

She hopes that, as we reflect on the Word in Scripture, we recognize that each of us has a responsibility as community members to contribute to the spirituality of the whole — the same life lesson that she teaches at the center.



May the spirit continue to give hope

A VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA

By Sister Dorothy Stoner, OSB

South Africa. What comes to mind? Apartheid. Soweto and the students struggle for freedom. Nelson Mandela. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission. AIDS. An evolving democratic African nation.

And a small community of 18 Benedictine Sisters of Christ the King, Polokwane, South Africa.

Sister Christine Vladimiroff, prioress, asked Sister Janet Goetz and me to spend some time with these Sisters, considering with them their community goals which addressed areas of formation and vocation work. Because of our own community ministries in these areas Sister Janet and I were able to share with the Sisters information drawn from contemporary monastic, formation, and vocation literature; share life experiences; and raise questions that encouraged them to make applications within their own cultural context.

Underlying all our conversations were basic questions such as: How does an entire community continue to deepen their understanding of and commitment to the Benedictine way of life? How does a community think about and plan an “ongoing” formation/education process for the entire community? What are the key elements that need to be part of a formation program for young women preparing for a life with the community? How can a community think about vocation ministry? And always the question: How is this done within the culture and particular circumstances of the Sisters of Christ the King in South Africa?

We spent six days in December considering these basic questions in various ways: through short informational presentations, in small group conversations, in planning sessions. We met with the prioress, Mother Monica; at other times with Mother Monica and her council; and several times with the total community. We worked mornings, afternoons, and evenings. In between the



Sister Janet Goetz, OSB, (I) with me and Mother Monica.

meetings we prayed together, had shared *lectio divina* on Scripture and the Rule of Benedict, and celebrated life together. It was truly a week of grace and blessing.

Sister Janet continually commented on the beauty of the country and the beauty of the community. She noted how much time and energy they wanted to offer each other to make their monastic community more firmly rooted in the living tradition of Benedict.

This was my third visit. I couldn't help but think of the changes I experienced both in South Africa and in the community. In 1995 there was no electricity for the people “in the bush” where the Sisters live; no running water to the tiny dwellings. The people in

Sisters Scholastica, Deo Gratias, and Immaculate enjoy some free time after lunch.



the villages throughout the country were being invited by the new Mandela government to gather in their local areas to draw up local governing constitutions and also lists of problems that needed to be addressed by the various levels of government. Some of the Sisters were involved in this process with their neighbors.

When I returned in 2000 with Sister Jean Wolbert, power lines were strung up and lights shone in some people's huts. You could look out across the land at night and see a few huts lit up. It wasn't real dependable, but it generally worked. Water began to reach the people's dwellings, as well. There was a new president. And the reality of how long it would take to address the needs of all the people of South Africa was beginning to be realized, with its accompanying discouragement and even violence.

When I returned this past December, eight year later, I was amazed by the housing developments that have spread through the areas; large houses with flowers and bushes. Water and electricity are available, and much more dependable. Many more roads are solid. The people are again preparing to elect a new president, and more political parties are emerging. Varying views are being expressed; problems are being named; a variety of responses are being offered, without fear of destroying the country. There is so much that needs to be attended to in South Africa and efforts are being made to address these needs. Development is slow, but it is happening.

In some ways I think this is true of the Benedictine community in Polokwane, as well. They truly were the black servants of a white community. When they were forced out on their own they decided they wanted to be a Benedictine community. The Sisters have struggled to discover for themselves what this means.

It has been difficult for this small group of black South African Sisters to grow in confidence and security. In the past they often spoke of feeling like orphans, with no large founding or sponsoring community of European/United States Sisters to guide them. They struggled with the lack of economic resources and ministries that supported them, and continue to deal with this. They lacked confidence in their own abilities to understand Benedictinism and make community and personal decisions according to it. Their membership declined. Older Sisters died; younger members left once they were educated.

But the Sisters continued to search for their identity. Benedictine Sisters from the United States continued to be sent to this community in South Africa – Sisters sent by AIM (Alliance for International Monasticism), the Federation of Saint Scholastica, and our community. Prioresses came to the United States to participate in the General Chapter meetings of the Federation of Saint Scholastica every four years. In addition their bishop has been attentive to the community, trying to support their growth. It's not been easy.

When we drove onto the property in December I noticed several things immediately. The building that had been used for the young



The two most recently professed Sisters: Sisters Immaculate and Deo Grantias.

Sisters in formation had been repaired and newly painted. It looked fresh and inviting. The fields around the main house and chapel had been plowed. They were ready for planting. When we went into the chapel for our welcome and blessing by the community I saw new chairs, built by the neighboring monks, and new prayer books. When the Sisters spoke of their prioress who had been elected within the year they spoke of her with love and trust. As Mother Monica shared her ideas with us it was obvious she has a vision for her community, one grounded in clear, practical steps that she feels need to be taken for their growth.

Our meetings with Mother Monica and her council were wonderful experiences for Sister Janet and me. To watch how the young Sisters who make up the council responded with love and respect, and with honesty, and to observe the ways in which Monica mentored these young women and also sought their advice spoke of such promise for the future of their community. The sisters in the community are striving to learn ever more fully what it means to live a communal life and to hold all things in common. They are beginning to trust their own insights and learnings. They are making changes in how they live as they desire to follow the Rule of Benedict more closely.

There is a new spirit emerging in Polokwane. May it continue to give hope to the 18 professed Sisters there and to the two new women who joined them within the past few months. May that same spirit give hope to their Sisters in Erie.

.....spirit & hope.....



**Benedictine
Sisters** OF ERIE

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN 2005-2008

"We have been blessed."

HERITAGE OF HOPE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN REACHES \$9 MILLION GOAL

*By Sister Mary Jane Vergotz, OSB
Director of Development*



On April 24, 2009, the Benedictine Sisters of Erie proclaimed: "We have been blessed" when our capital campaign pledges reached \$9 million. The outstanding generosity of our relatives, friends, former students (especially alumnae of Saint Benedict Academy) Oblates, former members, campaign volunteers, businesses and foundations allows us to say with gratitude and joy: "We have been blessed." Our supporters' response to our request for help was more than we could have ever imagined when we began this campaign in 2005. As we complete this campaign we thank all of you for honoring us by sharing your resources either through a gift to the campaign or by remembering us in your will.





Much has already been accomplished as a result of the campaign. As funds became available we began to update and renovate our 40-year-old monastery. Our aim was to create renewed space that would meet the changing needs of the community and address infrastructure improvements. Renovation plans incorporated factors such as simple design, energy efficiency, accessibility, cost effectiveness, and use of “green” materials.



Joyce Savocchio and Judy Lynch, honorary co-chairs of the *Heritage of Hope* Capital Campaign (front, from left) with Sister Mary Margaret Kraus, OSB, former prioress; Sister Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, current prioress; and Sister Mary Jane Vergotz, OSB, director of development, discussed the start of the public phase of the \$9 million *Heritage of Hope* Capital Campaign.

The *Heritage of Hope* Capital Campaign Leadership Committee was introduced at the news conference on Nov. 1, 2006. Members include: (front, from left) Jo Clarke, Sister Miriam Mashank, OSB; Will O’Neil, Sue Clayton, Kathy Danch, Betsy Monsalve, and Sister Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, prioress. In the back row, from left, are Sister Diane Cook, OSB; Ann O’Neil, Rick Clayton, Steve Danch, Marco Monsalve and Sister Mary Jane Vergotz, OSB.





I shared a wonderful afternoon with the late Sisters Margaret Harrison, OSB, left, and Joanne Huether, OSB. We were sitting outside the new Chapel of Repose at the monastery.

Thus far we have completed the following renovations and improvements:

- Chapel, Gathering Space, and cloister walk.
- Front entrance and foyer.
- 33 new bedrooms with private baths.
- Library carpeting.
- 624 new windows.
- Roof replacement.
- Insulation.
- New HVAC.
- Electrical service upgrade.
- Drainage repair.
- Fire alarm system upgrade.
- Exterior door security system.

A ministry fund was established with proceeds from the campaign to address the needs of our current ministries and provide funds to address future ministry needs.

Funds earmarked for the ministry programs were used to:

- Renovate classroom and office space and rest rooms at the Inner-City Neighborhood Art House.
- Replace windows at Saint Benedict Education Center.
- Improve classrooms and programs at Saint Benedict Child Development Center.
- Replace the gas line at Saint Benedict Center.

The success of our campaign is due to the efforts of many people. Our campaign consultants, Tom Reid and Chris Kane of the Reid Group provided steady guidance; the campaign leadership committee provided advice and support; campaign volunteers including Oblates, Saint Benedict Academy Alumnae and Sisters spent hours contacting donors, hosting receptions, and a multitude of other duties.

Over the past four years the Development and Communications Department staff: Jo Clarke, Ann Comstock and Kathy Linse; Sisters Rosanne Loneck, Dona Obenrader and Irene Spacht; and volunteer, Barbara Roseborough, worked tirelessly to successfully complete this campaign. Our prioress, Christine Vladimiroff, who led our campaign efforts by visiting with donors in Erie and throughout the country, maintained a high level of energy and optimism throughout the campaign. Finally, the Sisters, through their prayers and words of appreciation and encouragement, provided the impetus to reach our intended goal.

Our heartfelt thanks to all of our donors, campaign staff and volunteers for helping us to accomplish more than we dreamed possible. We know that your support is steeped in your love, devotion and deep regard for the Sisters.

"We have been blessed."

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“Benedictine Women: Women of Hope”

Raising awareness and seeking opportunities for global connections and consciousness

On February 3, 2009, Sister Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, prioress of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, was elected President of the Conference of Benedictine Prioresses of the North American Federations/Congregations for a four-year term (2009 – 2013).



Sister Christine shares:

In an increasingly complex and global world it is important to have structures that help us act in solidarity with others who share our values and goals. Benedictine women know this to be true. The Conference of Benedictine Prioresses of the North American Federations/Congregations was founded for this explicit purpose. Its constitution states: “The purpose of the Conference is the mutual assistance and encouragement of Benedictine Prioresses to further the ideals of Benedictine life in the perspective of the needs of the Church, the Benedictine Order, and contemporary society.”

The organization helps support prioresses in their ministry of leadership in their respective monastic communities. It also acts in concert to look at issues that impact the present and future vitality of our monasteries and members. The Conference fosters dialogue with members of the church and society in order to understand contemporary realities and to take appropriate action when necessary. Working together, the prioresses recently published “Wisdom from the Tradition” which took Benedictine values such hospitality and seeking peace and offered them for reflection to others who are concerned about our Church and society.

Another goal of the Conference is to raise awareness and seek opportunities for global connections and consciousness. This is realized by the fact that it works on the international level through another organization *Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum* (CIB). This organization brings together in a sisterly bond all Benedictine women’s communities to promote mutual support, the exchange of ideas and experience among the women throughout the world. It is an affirmation as well as an initiative to foster the development of women’s Benedictine monasticism.

Delegates are chosen by each of the 19 regions and come together each year to experience monasticism through the lens of other cultures and to share the wisdom of the tradition. This year the Conference of Delegates will meet September 1-14, 2009 in Zadar, Croatia. I will be a delegate to this meeting. Every four years the CIB holds a symposium focused on a topic of the Benedictine tradition. In September of 2010 the symposium will draw delegates from all over the world to San Anselmo in Rome, Italy. The gathering will focus on “Benedictine Women: Women of Hope.” The Benedictine family continues to value the more than 1,500 years of tradition and legacy we have received and develop it as gift for the future.



Sister Marian Wehler, OSB



MISSION OF FRIENDSHIP *Erie Benedictines*



Sister Claire Hudert, OSB (center photo)

By Sister Claire Hudert, OSB and Theresa Caritas Serafin

The beginnings of a Benedictine presence in Yucatan were felt in 1976 when Sister Marilyn Randolph, OSB, came to teach English to a Mexican community of religious, the Madres de la Luz (Sisters of the Light). Two years later she joined the staff of the Mission of Friendship. By then the Erie Diocese had already enjoyed a seven-year sister relationship with the Archdiocese of Yucatan and had established various projects in this southeastern state of Mexico with the intention of being in a loving and supportive relationship with the poor. Friendship has been the goal and process as the Misión de Amistad (Mission of Friendship) has continued to weave history with the Yucatecan people.

Although the outreach of Mission of Friendship has included lay volunteers from various parts of the United States, many Benedictine Sisters of Erie have also been involved with the Mission.

In 1979 Sister Marilyn became the Coordinator of the Mission and was joined in her missionary efforts by Sister Mary Ellen Cummings, OSB. Their enthusiasm and dedication accompanied the works of the Mission, which at that time included a dispensary, activity centers, children's library program, assistance at a shelter for impoverished disabled persons and various other forms of ministry to people who were in need. Erie Benedictine Sisters who later served long term at the Mission include Claire Hudert and Ann Hoffman.

The early years of the Mission were under the guidance of the Erie Diocesan Mission Office with Father Jan Olowin as director. In 1984, Sister Theresa Zoky, OSB, became the director of the Mission Office, and for the next 20 years new projects were initiated which are still in existence today, including the Amigos sponsorship program, the Los Amiguitos (Little Friends) Day Care Center, the Nueva Vida Girls' Shelter, Sister Parish Program and two medical dispensaries.

One of these projects, the Amigos sponsorship program, has attracted the participation of more than 40 Erie Benedictines who help sponsor children or families in Yucatan. Over the years, several Sisters have even had the opportunity to visit Yucatan and personally meet their sponsored children and families. Some have also participated in short-term mission service trips. These Sisters include Mary Margaret Kraus, Cindy Hoover, Mary William Hoffman, Phyllis Schleicher, Elizabeth Oettel, Janet Goetz, Ann Hoffman, Lucia Surmik, Michelle Wilwohl, Colette Korn and Marian Wehler.

In 1983, Theresa Caritas Serafin (Cari), a Felician Sister from Buffalo joined the staff of the Mission of Friendship. She became a Benedictine Oblate in 1988, the same year that Sister Claire began serving at the Mission. In 1996, Cari invited a group of five members of a local church choir to study the Rule of St. Benedict and by 1998, Sister Phyllis, then prioress, received the first five commitments. The group has now grown to include 19 members. The newest members were received by Sister Christine Vladimiroff this past January. (See p. 4.)

Each February, Sister Claire accompanies a service-learning group from Wheeling Jesuit University, acting as teacher, translator and guide. Over nine years, the group has grown from five participants to almost 40, expanded to several more sites and inspired involvement by other universities. Many parishes from the Erie Diocese also send groups to visit the Mission and their Sister Parishes. This year Sisters Claire and Marian coordinated a mission trip with couples from St. Patrick Parish in Franklin. One of the most enjoyable parts of that trip was distributing sets of new clothing to children the Mission serves. Delighted faces and big smiles greeted the clothes, which had been purchased for them by the Sisters and by members of St. Patrick Parish.

And so the involvement of our community of Erie Benedictine Sisters and Oblates with the Mission of Friendship continues, blessing us as we touch and bless our sisters and brothers in Mexico.

Inner-City Neighborhood Art House Annual Report

A depth of gratitude

From year to year the Inner-City Neighborhood Art House is sustained by the time, energy, service and monetary donations given faithfully by friends and benefactors. These gifts allow classes in the visual, performing and literary arts to help “at risk” children experience beauty, grow in positive self-expression and self-discipline, and develop into full and productive human beings. This year approximately 500 students from 200 families participated in programming and private lessons made possible by the selfless giving of others. A generosity such as this inspires a depth of gratitude that is ever alive and growing; it keeps the past memorable, the present meaningful and the future a creative vision. For all of this and more, a heartfelt thank you.



Inner-City Neighborhood Art House Donor List

Gifts \$10,000 and above

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Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield
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Susan Wressell
Thomas Wu
Anonymous



During their spring break service week, Ohio Wesleyan students Jen Schmitt (with book) and Kathryn Sweeney read to children at Saint Benedict Child Development Center.



Canisius student John Ewell entertains Sister Rosanne Rice, OSB, with his piano playing.

No passports required Spring Break at the Mount

You might think they got the short end of the straw; all the other mission trips were filled, so the only choice left was Mount Saint Benedict Monastery.

Not so. They wanted to come!

Students from Ohio Wesleyan University (Delaware, Ohio) and Canisius College (Buffalo, NY) each spent a week with us in March. Campus ministers explain the purpose of the Alternative Spring Break and give some details about what to expect in a Catholic monastery. Each student has her own reason (and his) for coming: She heard from another student and wanted to see for herself; she wants to strengthen her faith; some want to experience an intentional community, some are studying art, literature or medieval history. Some return for a second year.

The week is full. The students participate in our monastic prayer with the help of a Sister prayer partner. They help in our ministries – day care, Kids' Café, the infirmary are just a few; and they jump into those ministries with both feet. They eat meals with the Sisters and share the happenings of the

day. The group meets with Sisters in the evenings to discuss a theme they have chosen; together we question, share, listen. Students form a community among themselves. As a group and individually they ponder the impact of the experience on their souls, beliefs, choices.

They tire at different times during the week and are rejuvenated by an evening out together, a conversation, a nap, lots of chocolate from Romolo (no, Stefanelli!), a funny story about convent life.

Praying together helps root this ministry and helps them to understand commitment, to challenge their faith and hope, to yearn for justice.

As the week progresses, we hear more about the school work they need to tackle before they return to classes the following Monday.

Their energy is infectious; generosity is mutually apparent among students and Sisters. We are changed by their presence among us. We anticipate that next year's Alternative Spring Break students will be just as great as these.



*By Sister Janet Goetz, OSB
Vocation Minister*

Squawk talk

Richness, beauty and diversity

By Sister Mary Ann Luke, OSB



Our third feathered friend was camera shy.

The newest residents of Mount Saint Benedict Monastery are a trio of conures. They live in the Sunset Room, a gathering space in the newly renovated part of the monastery. When the reconstruction was completed, some of the Sisters living in the new wing felt that it was perfect with one exception: A pet was lacking.

Research and consultation followed; pet stores were visited. The final choice was a group of finches, colorful and lovely little birds. They would be quiet and undemanding, as beautiful as flowers.

But to get to the finches, you had to pass the conures. They were like three little magnets. Good-bye, finches.

Conures are small parrots of varying sizes and colors. They originate in Mexico and the Caribbean islands south through Central and South America into Argentina. They live in flocks which may be quite small or number hundreds of birds. They are more or less noisy and more or less colorful, usually more.

Conures are very beautiful birds, intelligent, active, playful and, since they are flocking birds, they are highly social, requiring — and wanting — a great deal of attention and interaction. They usually are reasonably quiet but, being parrots, are capable of a shriek audible nearly the length of the monastery. They jabber among themselves and respond when spoken to with little squawks and bumbles. They may, but probably won't, learn to talk — not a bad thing in a monastery. They are immensely attractive and entertaining, a pleasure just to watch and to chatter with.

But conures have a ministry: to display the glory, power and goodness of God, visible in the beauty and diversity of the creation God has given us — to care for, to be responsible for, to appreciate and enjoy, even to love.

There are many species and subspecies of conures. There is an uncounted, all but unimaginable, variety of other bird species. There have been many species, now extinct, too often as a result of human activity, whether directly, from the mining and clear-cut logging of the forests where the birds live, or when they strike microwave towers or lose their way in nights lit bright as day, or by the less direct, but no less destructive, climatic change.

If the richness, beauty and diversity of birds is beyond our comprehension and appreciation, how dim is our perception of all creation. Pray, then, for creation. Pray that our eyes see, our spirits know and our hearts are moved to love it in all its parts.

That in all things God may be glorified.

From the **Director**



*"We'll always come to thee again,
when Alma Mater calls"*



Reunions

SBA Reunion: Classes of '89 '90, '91

Saturday, June 13, 2009 from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

A reunion picnic will be held at Mount Saint Benedict Monastery. Please contact:

Sister Mary Ellen Plumb, OSB – maryellenosb@yahoo.com

Kathy Kaiser Klapthor – 814-833-0373

Sister Rosanne Loneck, OSB – 814-899-0614, Ext. 2428

Watch the mail for further information.

Class of 1969 – Our 40th year class reunion is scheduled for Saturday, August 1, 2009 at Jr's on the Bay. It will include dinner and a cash bar. For more information, please contact:

Kathy Anysz 814-866-0802

Sue Lackovic Koprowski 814-864-1250

Pat Stull D'Annibale 814-825-6790

Pat Causgrove Wheeler 814-456-3180 or pwhels@aol.com

Class of 1974 – Our 35th year class reunion will be held Sunday, July 26, 2009 at the Erie Yacht Club. 11 a.m. Champagne Brunch. For more information and to make reservations call 814-866-0294 or e-mail SBAClass1974@live.com.

Let us pray...

For our SBA alumnae who passed into eternity—

Miriam Suleski Amann	'33
Louise Lechner Kooser	'37
Marie Lechner Rosenthal	'37
Virginia Paulson Smith	'40
Mary Ann Keating, OSB	'41
Marie Therese Dudenhofer Inter	'53
Patricia Wisinski Windsor	'54
Patricia Henry Schneider	'59
Patricia Baginski	'60
Katherine Brosman Marofsky	'60
Kathleen Seelinger Zimmer	'67
Traci Ann Gido Kelly	'84

Visit **ErieBenedictines.org** for event updates and to download sign-up forms, or send your e-mail address to Alumnae Director Ann Comstock at sbaalum@mtsbenedict.org to receive electronic reminders and sign-ups. If you don't use e-mail, write to Ann at Mount Saint Benedict Monastery, 6101 E. Lake Rd., Erie, PA, 16511. And whenever you see or hear about SBA alumnae being honored or highlighted for their achievements, let us know. Clip an article, jot it down, or call us, so we can share the news with all our members.

LAST CHRISTMAS WE HAD A PARTY...AND WHAT A PARTY IT WAS!!!

On December 5, 2008, 434 SBA alumnae and Benedictine Sisters celebrated our Annual Christmas party at the Avalon Hotel in downtown Erie. More than 50 themed baskets donated by alumnae members and local businesses were raffled. Proceeds from this raffle, \$3,610, will be used to help establish the *Fresh Start Fund* at the Saint Benedict Education Center Welfare to Work Job Placement program. The fund will provide small grants to parents for emergency needs as well as help them to provide their children with needed school supplies. A group of singers who sang at our homecoming in 2005, directed by Sister Marilyn Schauble, OSB, provided the entertainment and received a standing ovation. It was a great time celebrating with our classmates and former teachers. Here are some of the ladies who joined us in our holiday celebration.



Mrs. Helen Czulewicz, honored guest.



Class of 1966



Class of 1967



Class of 1968



Class of 1952



Class of 1969



Bonnie Zaczyk Prokocki '67, President of the Saint Benedict Academy Alumnae Association, presents a check for \$3,610 to Sister Miriam Mashank, OSB, director of Saint Benedict Education Center. The money is to establish the *Fresh Start Fund*.

Scholarship Winners

The Annual SBA Communion Brunch was held on Sunday, May 3 at the Lawrence Park Golf Course Clubhouse. Eighteen scholarships of \$200 were awarded to SBA alumnae relatives who will attend Catholic schools for the 2009-2010 school year. Scholarship awards have exceeded \$41,150 since we began the program in 1991. Here is a list of this year's winners:



Alumnae Member

Linda Rieger Graves
Theresa Jankowski Hiney
Kimberly Grab
Julie Massing Murray
Patricia Grugin Smith
Lucille Gorny Murawski
Paula Roseborough Medina
Ann Marie Pasky Skolnik
Cathy Winiarczyk Rieger
Janet Respecki Benovic
Diane Adkins Tobin

Tina Krasinski Delio
Evelyn Komorek Schneidmiller
Dee Jankowski-Madura
Delphine Respecki Trambley
Nancy Wilczynski Kujawinski
Helen M. Ropelewski
Christina Grychowski Justice

Student

Jackson Graves
Jennifer Phillips
Amanda Grab
Kevin Murray
Emily Smith
Adam Murawski
Devon Heberle
Joseph Skolnik
Ryan Rieger
Jayme & Justin Cooper
Joseph Tobin
Julia Tobin
Nicholas Wisinski
Katelyn Gourley
Jennifer Phillips
Jayme & Justin Cooper
Justin Kujawinski
Aegeas Wiertel
Nicole Grychowski

Relationship

Son
Granddaughter
Niece
Son
Granddaughter
Grandson
Nephew
Grandson
Son
Grandsons
Son
Daughter
Nephew
Granddaughter
Niece
Great-nephews
Grandson
Nephew
Niece

School

Our Lady of Peace School
St. Luke School
Our Lady's Christian School
Bishop McGuinness
St. Alphonsus School
Cathedral Preparatory School
Mercyhurst Preparatory School
Cathedral Preparatory School
Cathedral Preparatory School
St. James School
Calvert Hall High School
Mercy High School
St. George School
St. Luke School
St. Luke School
St. James School
Blessed Sacrament School
Gilmour Academy
Mercyhurst Preparatory School

Joy in our midst

Sister Mary Ann Keating, OSB, age 86, died at her home, Mount Saint Benedict Monastery on Tuesday, May 19, 2009, after a long illness.

A daughter of the late Bernard and Anna Barker Keating, she was baptized Mary Eileen at St. Joseph Church, Oil City, and attended the parish school.

Sister Mary Ann entered the Benedictine Sisters of Erie on July 2, 1940. She made her first profession of vows on June 29, 1942, and her perpetual vows on August 21, 1945.

She was a graduate of Saint Benedict Academy and attended Villa Maria College and Stonehill College, Northeast, Mass. She was certified in dietary management. Sister Mary Ann ministered in food service throughout most of her religious life.

She served at St Joseph and Sacred Heart Convents, Sharon; at St. Joseph Convent, Oil City; at Kennedy Catholic High School and John XXIII Home, Hermitage; at the residence of the Bishop of Erie in the tenure of Archbishop John Mark Gannon and of Bishop Alfred M. Watson; at the former motherhouse on Ninth Street and at Glinodo Center. Later, Sister Mary Ann was receptionist at Benetwood Apartments and at Mount Saint Benedict Monastery.

Sister Mary Ann was a remarkably skillful cook and her kitchen was as orderly and as clean as a surgical suite. She could prepare a picnic or a banquet, each with equal care and equally excellent results.

When she managed the kitchen on Ninth Street, young Sisters were assigned to help with the simple tasks. She taught them how to mash potatoes and how to clean a stove; how to brown a roast and how to scrub: the pots and pans, the floors, the tables, the sinks, the windows and doors until they were bright and shining.

Early In the morning, the kitchen was rich with the aroma of bread rising on the back of the stove and of coffee brewing. Sister Mary Ann saw the Sisters off to school well- nourished, with a good lunch to follow, and welcomed them home with another feast, whether it was the simple supper of Lent or the contentment of the ordinary days.

She served three good meals a day, seven days a week for decades, to bishops and archbishops, to dozens of teenagers, to elderly residents of John XXIII and to her Sisters in community.

Sister Mary Ann had nine brothers and three sisters; she was the next to youngest and the last to follow them all to God. She is survived by her Benedictine community and by her nieces and nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews.

Memorials may be made to the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, Mount Saint Benedict Monastery, 6101 East Lake Road, Erie, PA 16511.

This tribute was written by Sister Mary Ann Luke, OSB



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