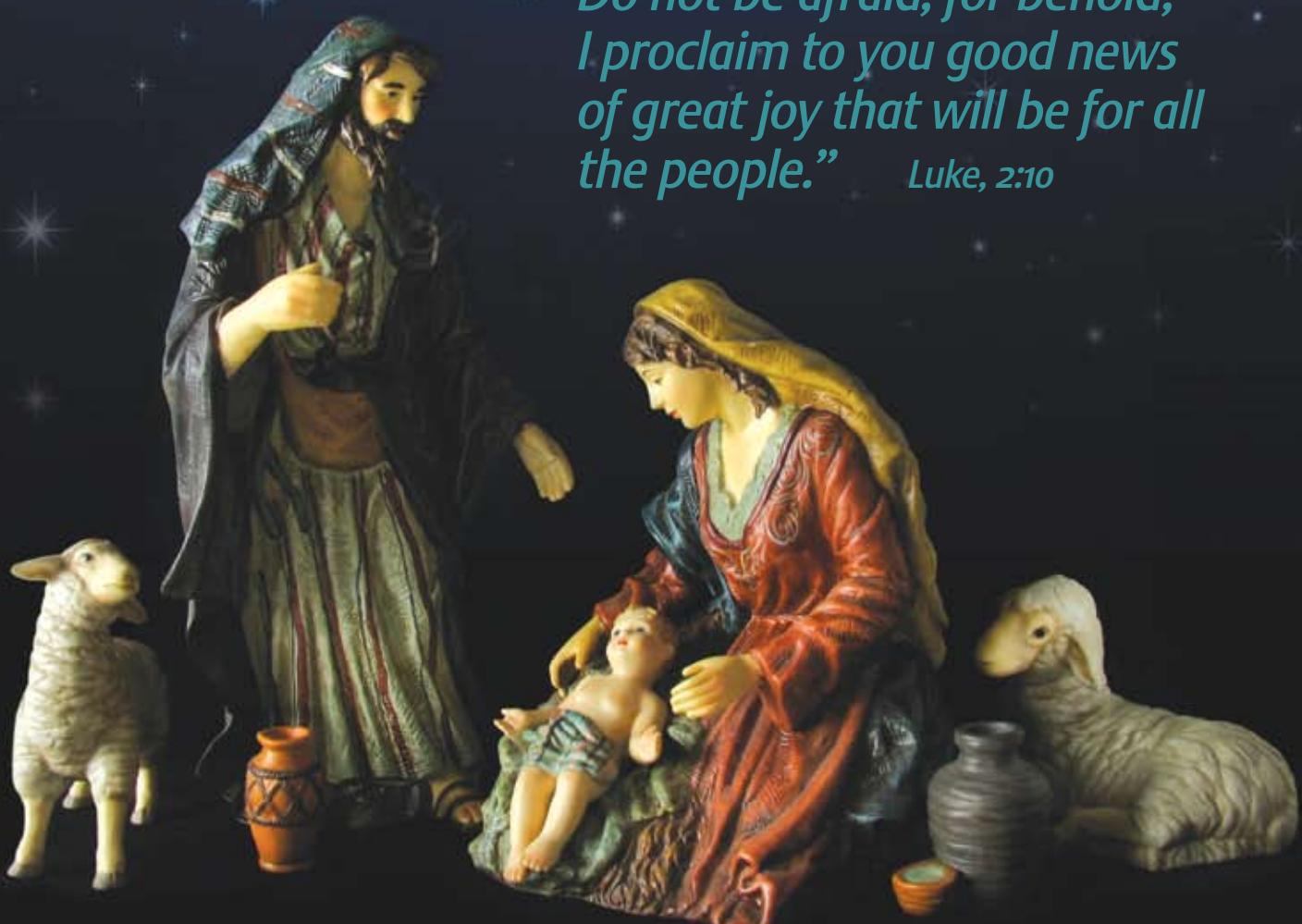


the Mount

BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF ERIE

Christmas 2006

*“Do not be afraid; for behold,
I proclaim to you good news
of great joy that will be for all
the people.” Luke, 2:10*



the Mount

Christmas 2006

The Mount Magazine

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Nativity sets are beloved worldwide for celebrating the birth of Jesus. But did you know that they were not always small, motionless figurines? In fact, the original nativity set was live, with people dressed as Mary and Joseph, and real animals used in the barn. The first of these was said to be created by St. Francis of Assisi in the 12th century, and spread to Germany in the 1600s. Traditionally, the display was at the front of medieval churches and temples.

Eventually, artists began carving these images into wood or making them out of straw, and when the nativity sets moved to other countries like Italy, other materials such as stone and ivory were used. Many Italians commissioned famous artists to create their nativity scenes.

When the town of Bethlehem, Pa. was settled in 1741, the people there brought this old tradition to the United States. Originally, nativity sets in America were called *crèche*, French for "crib." Today, the materials used can range from papier-mâché to glass, resin, ceramic or porcelain.

Many families choose to pass their nativity scenes down from one generation to the next as an heirloom gift.

The cover is our nativity gift for you.

- 3 From the Prioress
"I proclaim to you good news of great joy."
- 4 A Benedictine Community Celebration
Oblates "come home" for prayer, study and commitment.
- 8 "Seek patience and passion in equal amounts."
The chapel reconstruction changes are amazing.
- 12 Have you heard the news?
The Heritage of Hope Capital Campaign goes public.
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Sisters are recognized in several ways.
- 18 Did You Know?
The Saint Benedict Academy "Block" is alive and well!

BENEDICTINE CHARISM STATEMENT

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



I proclaim to you good news of great joy.

Advent nourished our hope and opened us to the incredible mystery—God is in our midst. God is found in our world. Love is something that happens in ordinary places—in our kitchens, at our tables, in our workplaces, in our families, in our churches. Ron Rolheiser, OMI writes: “Through the Incarnation, God crawls into ordinary life and invites us to meet him there.” The celebration of the Incarnation does not provide us with a ladder by which to escape from the ambiguities of this life and our fragmented world. Rather, the grace of Christmas is to find a way to insert ourselves into our world and live deeply in the precise circumstances in which we find ourselves. To have faith in God is to have faith that God is with us.

The Christmas story recurs. The times and places that open us to hearing the word of God or encountering the Christ are not always comfortable or comforting. Will we recognize the Christ in the homeless or will there again be no room for them? Will we open our hearts and our borders to the immigrant who seeks a better life in our midst? Will we provide for our children food to grow, education to awaken them to beauty and medical care when they are ill? Will the poor abound in the richest country on Earth because of unjust structures? Will we find the political will to protect the refugees in Darfur? Those thrown upon the mercy of the world will be the measure of our hearts. Our faith calls us to look carefully at the world. What changes the world is what we give birth to by the love that we incarnate in our person and in our interaction with others. God is with us.

The angel delivered the news of the birth of Jesus to shepherds living on the fringes of society: *“Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.”* The shepherds found a homeless couple and a newborn infant in the manger. They stood in awe of one sharing their poverty. They were changed forever. Listen to the angels’ message in the context of our times. It assures us that our hope for enduring peace, joy, love and the reign of God is not a fantasy.

This Christmas we will sing about peace and “goodwill to all.” The celebration of the holiday will stir the hope in our hearts anew. It is time we have a vision of a world not torn apart by violence. It was the poet Emily Dickinson who said, “We dwell in possibilities.” Our God is the God of infinite possibilities.

Our monastic community wishes to extend to you our warmest Christmas wishes and the blessings of this holy season. We walk together in hope because God is with us.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine Vladimiroff, O.S.B."

Prioress, Benedictine Sisters of Erie

"... come forward to deepen your trust and renew your experience of God. You discern God's presence in the signs and hopes of our world and you are a sign of hope because your very life tells others that God walks with us.... Together, we make a mutual commitment today to support each other in this journey. We have heard God's call to us and it gives purpose to our lives. You see that the monastic charism can bring meaning to your life's journey. Your commitment is to prayer, community, and ministry."

- Sister Christine spoke to the Oblates of their association with the monastery.

Sisters welcome Oblates "Old and New"

By Oblate Barbara Roseborough

The Fall Community Weekend, October 27-29, 2006, brought Sisters and Oblates together for a celebration of Benedictine family, prayer, study and recommitment.

Friday evening saw the assembly gathered in the Community Room for a presentation on the *Heritage of Hope* Capital Campaign. Sister Christine Vladimiroff, prioress, and Sister Mary Jane Vergotz, development director, introduced the campaign to the Oblates and showed the video that further describes the history and ministries of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie. Oblates Ann Daugherty and Cindy Liotta gave testimony to the impact their association with the community has had on their lives.

In a presentation entitled "Chapel Renovation Project: Dreams Dreamed, Dreams Defined, Dreams Developed," Sister Charlotte Anne Zalot, who has headed the Chapel Project Task Force since 2003, spoke of the "behind-the-scenes" deliberations involved in the current transformation of the community's worship space. Understanding that refashioning the chapel had to speak vitally of who they are and what they believe, the Sisters determined that the space had to reflect their monastic identity and had to be simple, welcoming, beautiful, accessible and safe. The chapel renovation is expected to be completed next spring.

Saturday's activities focused on the presentations of Jerome Kodell, OSB, Abbot of Subiaco, Ark. In the morning, Abbot Jerome addressed "Saint Benedict and Holy Scripture: The Truest of Guides" (Rule of Benedict Chapter 73:3); in the afternoon, he spoke of "Running the Path of God's Commandments: The Track and the Hurdles" (Rule of Benedict Prologue 49). The Scriptures, he told his listeners, help to deepen faith. The purpose of *Lectio Divina*, reading Scripture reflectively, over and over and over, is transformation, not merely information. His point was simply that it is through *Lectio Divina* that one can reach an intimate, transforming knowledge of God.

The Commitment/Recommitment Ceremony, held during Morning Praise on Sunday, welcomed 22 initiates into the Oblate fold, while 191 renewed their commitments. Among the initiates were several from places as far distant as Oregon, New York City, and even Rome, Italy. How wonderful that the influence of a relatively small community like the Benedictine Sisters of Erie is felt globally!

After the Sunday Eucharist and a celebratory brunch, Sisters and Oblates said their farewells, packed up their memories, and headed home!

Oblates are laypersons, single or married, who seek a deeper experience of God and community through a formal relationship with a Benedictine monastery. They are men and women who choose to live a life based on the Rule of Saint Benedict and who make a formal commitment to Benedictine prayer and values even as they continue to live and work in their own families and communities.



"I am excited about my new relationship with all the people in the Oblate program. At the same time I know that this is an awesome responsibility. To journey in this special way with the Oblates is truly gift and grace."

-Sister Marilyn Schable, OSB
New Oblate Director

Oblate Initiates 2006



Front Row – Left to Right: Ann M. Daugherty – Erie, Pa.; Cheryl L. Spahr – Shaker Heights, Ohio; Susan E. Payne – Verona, Pa.; Barbara Baglier – Toronto; Marcia J. Kusse – Rochester, N.Y.; Cindy Liotta – Erie *Back Row – Left to Right:* Marilyn Schable, OSB, Oblate director; Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, prioress; Robert Zinsky – Harrisburg, Pa.; Linda Logwood – Philadelphia; Sharon Stone Kilpatrick – Sperryville, Va.; Margaret (Peg) Butler – Shaker Heights; Lois Manookian – Portland, Ore.; Janice Etchison – Brooklyn, N.Y.; Heather Canfield – Edinboro, Pa.; Andrew Canfield – Edinboro *Absent from Picture:* Barbara Conroy – Chatham, N.J., Ann B. Fegan – Bethlehem, Pa., Michelle A. Hintz – Cleveland, Janine M. Mariscotti – Glenside, Pa., Suzanne D. Metcalf – Rome, Italy, Roxana Pierson – Greenwood, Va., Glenda Jean Tremewan – Murphy, N.C., Paul Tremewan – Murphy, N.C.

Renewing Oblates 2006

Phillip Aiello – Cleveland Heights, Ohio
Carlos Humberto Varguez Aguilar – Mérida, Mexico
Toni Allen – Pittsburgh, Pa.
Jessie Anderson – Ivyland, Pa.
Carlota Andrews – Erie, Pa.
Regina Anthony – Frederick, Md.
Bruce Arkwright – Erie, Pa.
Kate Arkwright – Erie, Pa.
Conrad Armandi – Oakland, Maine
Glenda Armandi – Oakland, Maine
Cecile Armor – Erie, Pa.
David Armor – Erie, Pa.
Gerry Baron – Erie, Pa.
Cynthia Bertelson – Blacksburg, Va.
Virginia Bertges – Bridgeville, Pa.
Ted Bertot – Vanceburg, Ky.
Donna Bessken – Hartsell, Ala.
Marcie Bircher – Akron, Ohio
Shirley Blumish – Erie, Pa.
Cheryl Bough – Fremont, Calif.
Leslianne Braunstein – Washington, D.C.
James Bryan – Pearland, Texas
Susan Buell – Madrid, Spain
Barbara Burget – Jamestown, Pa.
Mary Lou Burkhard – North East, Pa.
Armando de Jesus Narvaez Cab – Mérida, Mexico
Joanne Cahill – State College, Pa.
Lyngine Calizo – Philadelphia, Pa.
Andy Canfield – Edinboro, Pa.
Heather Canfield – Edinboro, Pa.
Carol Ann Canton – Edmonton, Alberta
Dee Carr – Rochester, N.Y.
Donna Faye Carr – Erie, Pa.
Manuela de Jesus May Chale – Mérida, Mexico
Jose Manuel Uc Chan - Mérida, Mexico
Doris Cipolla – Erie, Pa.
Jo Clarke – Erie, Pa.
John Coleman – Erie, Pa.
Ann Comstock – Erie, Pa.
Carol Comstock – Erie, Pa.
Mary Kathryn Crom – Jamestown, Pa.
Elizabeth Dauer – West Seneca, N.Y.
Karen Davis – Warren, Pa.
Mark Davis – Warren, Pa.
Adele DellaValle-Rauth – Huddleston, Va.
Bob DellaValle-Rauth – Huddleston, Va.
Marie Dietrich – Parma, Ohio
Janice Diluzio – Erie, Pa.

Terrie Doboz – Euclid, Ohio
Elizabeth Morris Downie – Fenton, Mich.
Gary Duck – Indianapolis, Ind.
Katherine Duck – Indianapolis, Ind.
Cathy Dudenhoefer – Erie, Pa.
Lola Ellison – Erie, Pa.
Kathleen Esser – Erie, Pa.
Nancy Ferrari – Pittsburgh, Pa.
Jessie Ferriols – Oberlin, Ohio
Harry Finkbone – N. Ridgeville, Ohio
Judy Flanigan – West Point, Pa.
Patricia Goetz – North East, Pa.
Bridida Eugenia Rodriques Gomez – Mérida, Mexico
Mark Gorman – Meadville, Pa.
Kim Granche – Ridgway, Pa.
Eileen Grimaldi – West Seneca, N.Y.
Leroy Hammond – Erie, Pa.
Mary Hazlett – Akron, Ohio
Johanna Heher – Harborcreek, Pa.
Margaret Himber – Youngsville, Pa.
Neil Himber – Youngsville, Pa.
Nestor Tiburcio Pue Hoil - Mérida, Mexico
Diane Hoover – Harborcreek, Pa.
Nora Horihan – Erie, Pa.
Kay Hosterman – Erie, Pa.
Janet Houk – Shaker Heights, Ohio
Deni Howley-Cusack – Greenwood, Maine
Mary Ann Hoy – Freeport, Maine
Nancy Jackson – DuBois, Pa.
Carolyn Jarmin – Lyons, Colo.
Kirill, Kalmykov – Calgary, Alberta
Gene Karlen – Cleveland Heights, Ohio
Steve Kasperick-Postelon – Lansing, Mich.
Teresa Kasperick-Postelon – Lansing, Mich.
Pamela Kelch – Franklin, Pa.
Ralph Kelch – Franklin, Pa.
Mary Beth Kennedy – Erie, Pa.
Kathleen Kingslight – Portage, Mich.
Maria Kingston – Erie, Pa.
Helen Klauk – Erie, Pa.
Herman Klauk – Erie, Pa.
Margaret Kloecker – Erie, Pa.
Ann Kosin – Harborcreek, Pa.
Doris Kreuz – Buffalo, N.Y.
Andy Kukec – West Allis, Wis.
Donna Marie Lee – Ellsworth, Maine
Susan Lees – Indio, Calif.
Josephina Martin Leon - Mérida, Mexico

Jane Leyde – Hermitage, Pa.
Marjorie Londregan – Pennington, N.J.
Marie Love – Erie, Pa.
Christine Lundt – Conshohocken, Pa.
Karen Lundwell – Erie, Pa.
M.J. Lyon – Lake Geneva, Wis.
Mary Jo McEvoy – Livonia, Mich.
Sheila McLaughlin – Waterford, Pa.
Judy McPherson – Grand Ledge, Mich.
Sally Maleno – Erie, Pa.
Ann Manning – Prospect, Ohio
Rita Marshall – Harborcreek, Pa.
Rebecca Martel – Richford, Vt.
Anne Martin – South Euclid, Ohio
Jesus Niquete Massa – Mérida, Mexico
Elsie Mayer – Erie, Pa.
Pam Mead – Erie, Pa.
Ed Metzler – Indianapolis, Ind.
Donna Marie Miller – Fredonia, N.Y.
Virginia Montowski – Erie, Pa.
Banu Moore – Jamestown, N.Y.
James Moore – Jamestown, N.Y.
Georgina Moroney – Florence, Mass.
Mary Ann Novascone – Prairie du Sac, Wis.
Penny O'Donnell – Southern Pines, N.C.
Edith O'Nuallain – Wicklow, Ireland
Jean Ockuly – Willoughby, Ohio
Barbara Ostrowski - Prairie du Sac, Wis.
Elizabeth Ozorak – Meadville, Pa.
Kathleen Pae – Erie, Pa.
Isuaro Camara Panti - Mérida, Mexico
Maria Aide Varguez Pech - Mérida, Mexico
Nelsi Elmire Varguez Pech – Mérida, Mexico
Alice Peightal – Erie, Pa.
Peggy Petrich – Morgantown, W.Va.
Gordon Pew – Haverhill, Mass.
Joan Agnes Pew – Haverhill, Mass.
Kathy Poulton – Grove City, Ohio
Mary Anne Pressler – Bay Village, Ohio
Dolores Prestay – Trevor, Wis.
Carl Puleo – Madison, Conn.
Marg Purcell – Brick, N.J.
Lanora Queckborner - Mérida, Mexico
Marcy Rahner – Erie, Pa.
Marilyn Randolph – Mérida, Mexico
Dorothea Reilly – Erie, Pa.
Pat Rettger – Hermitage, Pa.
Carol Richardson – Westborough, Mass.

Frances Rizzo – Hutchinson, Kan.
Jean Rodenbough – Greensboro, N.C.
Barbara Roseborough – Erie, Pa.
Mary Pat Rossi – DuBois, Pa.
Nancy Sabol – Erie
Pat Sabol – Wheeling, Ill.
Dee Samples – Fairview, Pa.
Tom Schlaudecker – Findley Lake, N.Y.
Saima Scott – Chagrin Falls, Ohio
Marie Scrimenti – North East, Pa.
Rita Scrimenti – Erie, Pa.
Lyta Seddig – Meadville, Pa.
Robert Seddig – Meadville, Pa.
Frank Seibold – Sharon, Pa.
Theresa Caritas Serafin - Mérida, Mexico
Charlene Serfozo – Erie, Pa.
Josephine Sigler – Erie, Pa.
Pauline Silvia – Middletown, R.I.
Cynder Sinclair – Carpenteria, Calif.
Annette Slater – St. Marys, Pa.
Lorraine Sloan – Edinboro, Pa.
Barbara Smibert – Ancaster, Ontario
Kathleen Stephens – Oil City, Pa.
Betty Stockover – Littleton, Colo.
Juanita Storm – Arden, N.C.
Ralph Storm – Arden, N.C.
Barbara Strauch – Maspeth, N.Y.
Aune Strom – Valparaiso, Ind.
Mary Pat Sullivan – Erie, Pa.
Sandy Sutton – Waterford, Pa.
Wretha Swinehart – Mansfield, Ohio
Gail Taylor – Oberlin, Ohio
Dorothy Teko – Rockport, Mass.
Jerry Trambley – Erie, Pa.
Marlene Trambley – Erie, Pa.
Lynn Walker – Brooklyn, N.Y.
Bob Wehrer – Waco, Texas
Margaret Wehrer – Hamilton, N.Y.
Ruth Wehrer – Waco, Texas
Ron Weir – Erie, Pa.
Anne Wirth – Pittsburgh, Pa.
Flo Wroblewski – Buffalo, N.Y.
Anne Marie Wykoff – Erie, Pa.
Barbara Wysocki – Erie, Pa.
Teresa Zampogna – Erie, Pa.
Eileen Zinchiak – Erie, Pa.

MOUNT SAINT BENEDICT CHAPEL RENOVATION PROJECT

*Seek patience
and passion
in equal amounts.*

*Patience alone
will not build the temple.*

*Passion alone
will destroy its walls.*

—Maya Angelou—



Keeping a construction project on time is always preferred but not always possible, especially when it comes to weather. Many things can be kept in check but controlling the weather is beyond human management. Rain and snow, ice and sleet: All of it has a lesson to teach—patience. The Mount Saint Benedict Chapel Renovation Project has never lacked for passion; now, it will not lack for patience. Learning this lesson can only be described as a blessing in disguise. The surprise of an early November snow prompted patience and made one thing clear: Even a work site can be beautiful. Snow covering the roof, snow dusting dirt mounds; snow crusted on equipment, snow showered on partially completed walkways—all of it created a quiet sense of well-being. The pristine beauty allayed fears of progress delay and work setback. All shall be well.



CHAPEL RENOVATION PROGRESS REPORT

Photos and text by Sister Charlotte Anne Zalot, OSB



FLOOR

Reconstruction has begun and the changes are amazing. Already the chapel floor has been leveled. A special light-weight concrete was used in the space by the windows and stones were spread to fill the center area. Once this was completed, the PEX piping for in-floor heat was installed leaving the chapel bathed in pink. The final step: the pouring of a heavier weight concrete. Within a matter of hours the 23-inch slope was gone and a level floor that ensures easier accessibility was in place.

CEILING

Soon after the chapel floor was leveled ceiling work began. The ceiling tiles that had remained in place by a promise and a prayer were removed. Old insulation came down in a pink fluff that marked the end of the demolition phase of the project. In no time at all, new insulation was put in place. All is ready for the wood ceiling which will grace the space as a result of the kindness of Wayne and Patty Hepler who are donating the wood to help this reality come to fruition.



ROOF



The roofers have made progress. After stripping away the old shingles a secondary roof was installed. One and a half inches of air space between the old roof and the new will allow for better ventilation and prevent ice buildup. To provide protection, titanium sheathing was then put down. It proved its worth when even the gusty winds of October failed to dislodge it. Soon the new shingles will be put in place.

FOUNDATION



The foundation has been laid for the Chapel of Reserve. Dimensions were taken, digging was done, and finally concrete was poured. Through rain and snow, ice and mud, the workers persevered. As a result the chapel for the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament is taking shape. Soon the steel structure will be put in place. This will allow for the exterior walls to then be completed.



FRONT ENTRY

Work on the front entry continues. The main entrance to the monastery will be made safer with heated sidewalks. Once the PEX piping was laid, the concrete was poured. Next, a breezeway will be created with the installation of glass on either side of the walkway immediately preceding the front doors. The hospitality of a dry, safe entrance will begin curbside.



The hallway between the chapel and the monastery dining room has been designed to be a cloister walk that joins these two spaces and leads the community and its guests from Table to table. Windows with a view to the courtyard and new flooring will help to make this passage special. Lintel work on the window openings has begun here and around other window and door openings throughout the construction site.

LINTEL



CLERK OF THE WORKS



Clerk of the Works, Gary Good, continues to work on behalf of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie. He keeps tabs on the progress being made and deals daily with questions asked and questions answered. Gary is in close contact with all on-site workers. The efforts of Gary Good, Dan Welch, another longtime employee of the Mount Saint Benedict Physical Resource Staff, and Sister Charles Marie Holze, director of physical resources, give every assurance that the job will be well done.

CPTF continues to meet as needed. Recently they worked together to pick just the right color for the Blessed Sacrament Chapel EIFS (Exterior Insulation and Finishing System). Selecting a color for this addition to complement the bricks on the monastery building, color that sets the addition apart and yet blends it to what is, was a bit challenging but eventually success was achieved. (By the way, the color chosen is BAKED CUMIN!)



"TOURS À US"

The Chapel Project Task Force (CPTF) has instituted "Tours À Us" which provides the opportunity for Sisters to view the renovation progress at times when the site is declared safe for entry. Excitement and awe run rampant as changes occur. Every advance brings the project one step closer to dreams realized.





SISTERS ANNOUNCE \$9 MILLION CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Sister Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, prioress, announced the public phase of the *Heritage of Hope* Capital Campaign during a 10 a.m. news conference Wed., Nov. 1 (All Saints Day) at Mount St. Benedict Monastery.

The Heritage of Hope Capital Campaign is to raise funds for renovating monastery properties, enhancing the worship and prayer space and assuring the Sisters' ministry.



Joyce Savocchio and Judy Lynch, honorary co-chairs of the *Heritage of Hope* Capital Campaign (front, from left) join Sister Mary Margaret Kraus, OSB, former prioress; Sister Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, current prioress; and Sister Mary Jane Vergotz, OSB, director of development, to discuss the announcement of 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. 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.



Today is a very important day for the Benedictine Sisters of Erie. The Heritage of Hope Capital Campaign is an investment in a future that will enable us to bring the Benedictine gift of hospitality and ministry of compassion to those in need. We have received a great legacy from the women who went before us and we want to leave a heritage that brings hope to others and peace to our world.

The capital campaign has actually been active for the last 18 months, during which it was in the quiet phase. Now that the campaign is public, the Sisters and lay leadership will be promoting the campaign and openly encouraging people in Erie, across the country and around the globe to contribute.

As of Nov. 20, supporters pledged \$5,701,702 and have paid \$4,214,027 toward those pledges. The Sisters are seeking \$3,298,298 in additional gifts from their families, friends and supporters including 3400 alumnae of St. Benedict Academy.



Ed Mead Sr., chairman of the board emeritus of the Times Publishing Company, speaks with Tom Reid, capital campaign consultant, during the reception.

Dana Massing (left) reporter for the Erie Times-News, discussed projects that will be funded through the campaign with Kathy Linse, director of communications for the Benedictine Sisters of Erie.



—Sister Christine



Sister Mary Philip Kiehlmeier, OSB, seated in front, shares in the excitement of the campaign's opening event with, from left, Mark Bliley, Sister Dianne Sabol, OSB; Shelley Miller and Dan Edgar.

Campaign Goal:

\$9,000,000

Pledges Received:

\$5,701,702

Cash Received:

\$4,214,027

As of Nov. 22, 2006

Speaking at the event were the honorary co-chairpersons for the campaign, Judy Lynch, former Erie County Executive, and Joyce Savocchio, former Mayor of Erie. They asked the gathering to support the Sisters as they have continued to address the educational, social service and spiritual needs of the Erie community.

Sister Mary Margaret Kraus, prioress from 1964-1978, spoke about the generous response from family and friends when the community was compelled to build a new monastery in the late 1960s when the former motherhouse on East Ninth Street was no longer inhabitable.

Former students of the Benedictine Sisters, Tom and Ann Mansfield, along with Benedictine Oblate Barbara Roseborough shared stories about the Sisters' influence in their lives.



Scott Bremner of WSEE (35) television, interviewed Sister Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, prioress, about the capital campaign.

Betsy Monsalve, an SBA alumna and her husband Marco, a business consultant, explained why they are giving generously to the campaign. Betsy recalled her longtime relationships with the Sisters and Marco detailed how the Sisters are an excellent model of corporate leadership and cooperation for the Erie community.

After the remarks, Sisters, friends, family, alumnae and the media were invited to tour the chapel's renovations thus far and enjoy the Sisters' hospitality.



Sister Irene Spacht, OSB
and Ann Comstock of
the Benedictine Sisters
Communication and
Development offices
greeted guests at the
media event.

VV We have raised more than \$5.5 million and are grateful to all who have participated. The people of Erie and beyond have always supported the Benedictine Sisters and we are confident they will help us reach our goal. VN

—Sister Mary Jane Vergotz, OSB,
campaign director

Renovation of Monastery Properties

(\$5.5 Million)

While the monastery has been well maintained, major renovations are needed to bring the living facilities into the 21st century for our Sisters and visitors.

- Repair roof and replace windows
- Enlarge monastery residential rooms and install shared bathrooms
- Renovate front entry for accessibility
- Monastery assisted living renovation
 - Air conditioning
 - Call-bell system
 - Wider bedroom doors
- Renovate ministry buildings and Sisters' residences

Enhancing Our Worship and Prayer Space

(\$1.5 Million)

Several improvements are needed to provide a gathering space that meets the physical and spiritual needs of the community and our guests.

- Interior renovation of Chapel
 - Level the floor to improve accessibility
 - Upgrade HVAC and electrical systems
 - Reconfigure space in the monastic choir tradition
- Replace Chapel roof and ceiling
- Create a Blessed Sacrament Chapel for contemplative prayer and reflection
- Incorporate a significant water (baptismal) symbol

Assuring the Future of Our Ministry

(\$2 Million)

- Create a fund to support current and future ministry
- Provide seed money for new ministry development



Papal honors bestowed

Pope Benedict XVI has bestowed papal honors upon 62 persons in the Diocese of Erie, including three Benedictine Sisters of Erie. Sisters Mary William Hoffman, OSB; Miriam Mashank, OSB; and Phyllis Schleicher, OSB have been awarded the Papal Cross pro Ecclesia et Pontifice.

The ceremony for the conferral of papal honors took place at St. Peter Cathedral, Erie, on Mon., Nov. 20 at 7 p.m. with His Eminence Justin Cardinal Rigali presiding. The bestowal of papal honors is intended not only to honor the recipients themselves, but all who share in their ministry and generous service to God and neighbor.

**"We are grateful
for all that the
Benedictine Sisters
of Erie have done
and are continuing
to do here in the
Diocese of Erie."**

**-The Reverend
Edward M. Lohse,
JCL, vice-chancellor
of the
Diocese of Erie**



Sister Mary William Hoffman, OSB



Sister Miriam Mashank, OSB



Sister Phyllis Schleicher, OSB

Sisters Mary William and Phyllis are the directors of Catholic Rural Ministry. Their mandate, nearly a decade ago, was to establish a permanent, compassionate presence of women religious in the rural mountain towns of McKean and Potter counties.

Sister Miriam is the executive director of the Saint Benedict Education Center which offers intensive case management and academic remediation along with job readiness preparation, development and placement assistance for more than 800 people each year.

FAITH highlights Catholic Rural Ministry

Just as farmers across the Erie Diocese bring in the last fruits and vegetables of the season, the latest FAITH magazine presents a cover story about a different kind of harvest, one taking place in the rural mountain towns of McKean and Potter counties. The Nov./Dec. issue arriving in homes last month includes a cover story on the work of Sisters Phyllis Schleicher, OSB, and Mary William Hoffman, OSB.

"Bountiful Harvest" by Anne-Marie Welsh, editor and senior writer for FAITH, relates: "At a stage in their lives when many people are making plans to retire, two members of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie answered a new call nearly a decade ago. Their mandate was to establish a permanent, compassionate presence of women religious in McKean and Potter counties."

To read this story about Sisters Phyllis and Mary William and their Catholic Rural Ministry, please visit <http://www.eriercd.org/faithcurrent.asp>

FAITH photo by Art Becker reprinted with permission.



National Award for the Art House

Sister Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB, founder of the Inner-City Neighborhood Art House and its executive director from 1995-2005, was awarded the 2006 Social Entrepreneurship Award from the Manhattan Institute headquartered in New York City.

The initiative honors five nonprofit leaders who have found innovative, private solutions for some of America's most pressing social problems with little or no government financial aid.

The awards were presented at a banquet in New York on Nov. 14. Winners received \$10,000 for their organizations.

The Nov. 17 *Wall Street Journal* reported (in part):



At the Art House, however, every child gets a chance to nourish his soul with beauty. Tables are strewn with books of classical art and architecture. Kids can take professional instruction in air brushing—used in commercial art. But they can also study violin under a graduate of a Moscow conservatory. The 30 activities and classes available every afternoon range from the readings of “Hooked on Books” volunteers, to museum field trips, to creative-writing exercises supervised by Sister Mary Lou, a former elementary-school teacher and a published poet.

While a few kids go on to careers in the arts, Sister Mary Lou told us that, for the majority, the experience has built life skills. “Doing videos together, or plays,” for instance, has fostered “team work, self-confidence, discipline and a sense of community among the children—who really discovered what was way down deep and were affirmed in who they were.”

In Memoriam *Grant unto her eternal rest*

On Dec. 2 the Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at Mount St. Benedict Monastery for Marjorie Eichenlaub Londregan who had recently passed away in Princeton, N.J. The Benedictine charism (spirit) she experienced from childhood through graduation from Saint Benedict Academy greatly influenced her interest in the arts, liturgical renewal, social justice and the environmental movement.

Inspired by the Sisters' monastic life and their role in society, her husband, Ted, joined Marjorie in supporting the Benedictine Sisters. Following careers in Washington, D.C., they made their commitments as Oblates to deepen their bond with the community.

Preceded in death by her husband, Marjorie is survived by their son John and his family, and by her sister, Mary Louis Eichenlaub, OSB.



From the **Director**



You recently received a letter from the Alumnae Office notifying you that you will be asked for your support for the "Heritage of Hope" Capital Campaign of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie. This capital campaign, the first in more than 40 years, addresses three major areas:

- Major renovations needed for the living facilities of the Sisters and their visitors
- Improvements in the chapel and gathering space to meet the physical/spiritual needs of the Sisters and their guests
- Creating a support fund for future and current ministries

Many SBA graduates have remained in Erie and know all the work that the Sisters have done since the academy closed in 1988. Others of our 3,400 members are living outside Erie and may not be aware of all the events that have taken place since they graduated from SBA.

The following update is for all who will be asked for their support.

— Ann Comstock, '64
Alumnae Director

Did you know?

Saint Benedict Education Center: A Model Job Placement Program for Pennsylvania is located in the former Saint Benedict Academy. SBEC offers intensive case management, academic remediation, job-readiness preparation, job development and job-placement assistance for some 800 people yearly.

Saint Benedict Community Center: After purchasing the former St. Mary's Auditorium from the Erie Diocese, the Sisters did extensive renovations. The center provides recreational opportunities for neighborhood children and those who have special needs and face mental or physical challenges.

The Inner-City Neighborhood Art House: The former Good Year Tire store on E. 10th St. was purchased by the Sisters and turned into a center which provides classes in the visual, performing and literary arts to at-risk children in Erie in a safe, nourishing and caring environment.

Emmaus Ministries, Inc.: In keeping with the monastic practice of providing bread and soup to the poor, the Benedictine Sisters of Erie have operated Emmaus Ministries for more than 30 years. The Soup Kitchen serves 1,000 hot meals weekly and its food pantry distributes 30,000 food bags per year. Sister Gus' Kids Café, in the basement of the former St. Mary's School, provides a home-cooked meal and recreational opportunities to 70-plus children a day.

Saint Benedict Child Development Center: Housed in the former Benedictine Motherhouse on E. 9th St., the Center provides over 120 economically disadvantaged children, ages 3 to 5, with a daycare program, Head Start for migrant children, and infant care.

Benetwood Apartments: Located on property adjacent to the monastery, the low-rise 75-apartment building is a government-subsidized, nonprofit facility administered by the Benedictine Sisters. It provides comfortable, safe retirement living for elders of low income and those with disabilities.

The "SBA Block" is still alive and well!



Seated, from left: Sister Paula Burke, OSB; Helen Czulewicz, Sister Mary Grace Hanes, OSB; Ann Czulewicz Vaughan (Helen's daughter).

Standing, from left: Janet Romanowicz Hammond, Pat Benecki Straub, Kathleen Kutz, Sister Mary Louis Eichenlaub, OSB; Mary Rita Roach Groucott and Sister Rosanne Loneck, OSB.

A special birthday celebration was held on Wed., Oct. 18, 2006 at Mount Saint Benedict Monastery. A group of SBA alumnae and Sisters gathered to honor Helen Czulewicz. Helen worked more than 20 years at the academy in the food service department and was known and loved by all the girls. She will celebrate her 92nd birthday this month. Helen was presented with a framed sketch of the two academy buildings. It was an evening filled with stories, laughter and catching up with old and dear friends.



Let us pray...

For our sister alumnae who passed into eternity—

Marjorie Eichenlaub Londregan '41
Frances D. Wroblewski Gress '70

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@mtstbenedict.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.



the
monastery



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