



the Mount

BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF ERIE

Christmas 2005 — Hope



the Mount

Christmas 2005

The Mount Magazine

Benedictine Sisters of Erie

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ErieBenedictines.org

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The 2002 Christmas Eve liturgy at Mount St. Benedict Monastery, themed “The Christmas Rose,” included this interpretive dance of the hymn, “So Tender the Shoot.”

Liturgical dance is a deeply spiritual experience that is not viewed as performance or entertainment. Rather, it is a shared experience between the dancer and the congregation to “stir the souls,” lifting their hearts and spirits to the Lord.

Shown, from back, are Sisters Roberta Lavin, OSB; Audrey Berdis, OSB; Kathleen Ruszkowski, OSB; and Jean Bhatti.

*Rose, out of sight in the snows of the night,
heaven knows that your light is unfolding.
Sturdy the root, yet so tender the shoot
that creation is mute in beholding you.*

*Then, glory to God in the highest,
with peace to God's people on earth.*

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BENEDICTINE CHARISM STATEMENT

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



“Gratitude for the Past, Hope for the Future”

“Gratitude for the Past, Hope for the Future” is our mantra as we move through our Jubilee Year celebrating 150 years of this monastic community. It is difficult to imagine the challenges our Sisters faced in 1856 when with great risk they came to a new land with zeal for the care of German immigrants. Our foremothers and founders stepped into the chaos and the unknown of their day, trusting and hoping in God’s good guidance and great providence. We are their daughters, proudly bearing the legacy of those strong and holy women.

In this sesquicentennial we likewise look with hope-filled hearts to the future. Jubilee is the symbol and vision of a new age. “Hope is the memory of the future,” Marcel writes. “Good hope” has the qualities of realism, courage, patience and the willingness to embrace difficulties. It is not an “easy hope” that merely wishes for better things.

Our world challenges us as it did our founders. There are new immigrants in a nation increasingly hostile to the “outsider.” The poor are trapped in our inner cities with failed educational institutions, no medical care and crime and violence on the dark streets of their neighborhoods. In a land of plenty, children go hungry.

Hurricane Katrina showed us with pitiful clarity that the poor get left behind. It was a visual metaphor of the social, economic and political divide in our country that so often overwhelms hope. Such apocalyptic disasters — tsunamis, hurricanes, earthquakes — lift up before our eyes the specter of a suffering people and a wounded planet. To be without hope is to be trapped and to sense only limits rather than possibilities.

So it is with realism and hope that we must forge a future as a monastic community worthy of the past that our foremothers achieved. Emily Dickinson wrote:

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

This community in 2006 has frontiers to cross and challenges to meet. Jesus proclaimed jubilee—a year of God’s favor. Jubilee promised everything that the Torah taught the people to hope for: Good news to the poor, release to prisoners, the end of blindness, and freedom from oppression.

Our year of jubilee celebrations is not a prolonged party, but a profound prayer. We commit ourselves to take up this jubilee agenda and be open to God’s truth and love as it is revealed in the events of our lifetime. Traces of hope are found each time we take the next step to live as tenderly and lovingly in our time as Jesus lived in his. In his presence, the poor experienced healing, freedom and acceptance. We wish to be such a community.

We embrace our time as holy, our past as gift, and our future as blessing.

Christine Vladimiroff, OSB

Prioress, Benedictine Sisters of Erie

Rejoice! Sisters Celebrate 150 Years of Prayer and Ministry

The anniversary planning committee's desire was to commemorate this 150th Jubilee Year by centering on the key elements of the Benedictine monastic tradition as it has been lived in "gratitude for the past and with hope for the future." Come along as we take a look back at the events thus far.

The Jubilee Year officially begins

The formal opening celebration of the 150th Jubilee Year began with Solemn Monastic Vespers at 7:30 p.m. in the chapel at Mount St. Benedict Monastery on June 23. This date coincides with the Erie Benedictine community's annual Founder's Day honoring Mother Benedicta Riepp, who first brought Benedictine Sisters to the United States, and Mother Scholastica Burkhard, the first prioress of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie.



Bishop Donald W. Trautman blessed the icon of Mother Scholastica Burkhard, first prioress of Mount St. Benedict Monastery, after Solemn Monastic Vespers. He was assisted by Sister Patricia McGreevy, OSB, left; and Sister Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, prioress.



Sister Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, prioress, welcomed Archabbot Douglas Nowicki, OSB, of St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Pa. The archabbey is the oldest Benedictine monastery in the United States. Sister Christine as successor of Mother Benedicta Riepp, and Archabbot Nowicki as successor of Abbot Boniface Wimmer, represent 150 years of Benedictine relationship.



Sisters Kathleen Ruszkowski, OSB, left; and Margarita Dangel, OSB, with bowls of incense, led the procession of Sisters into the chapel. Behind them is Sister Diane Rabe, OSB, with the processional cross.



Sister Jean Bhatti interprets the music and words of "The Magnificat" through dance.

Showing and telling the Erie Benedictine story

A history of the Benedictine Sisters in Erie and surrounding communities was displayed at the Erie County History Center, 419 State Street from June 22 through October. The interactive display explored the Benedictine charism statement: "To seek God in cenobitic life and to respond in prayer and ministry."

Visitors saw a brief history of the journey from Eichstätt, Bavaria, to St. Marys to Erie along with the Benedictine cross with each member of the community listed since 1856; the prioress display followed. Other panels depicted community life and prayer at the original motherhouse at 345 East Ninth Street and the monastery at 6101 East Lake Road. A ministry timeline indicated the formal ministries. The show was interspersed with art from several deceased Sisters and Sister Margaret Ann Pilewski, OSB.

The display will re-open in June 2006 in conjunction with the closing of the Jubilee Year.



David Frew, Ph.D, executive director of the Erie County Historical Society, and Sister Mary Louis Eichenlaub, OSB, view some of the items at the opening of the display.



Sisters Diane Cook, OSB, left; and Rosanne Loneck, OSB, enjoy checking out the timeline.

Relationships renewed and refreshed

The Cenobitic Life Committee prepared a homecoming of gratitude on July 9 at the monastery for former Erie Benedictine community members and participants of the Benedicta Riepp temporary membership program.



Former member Barbara Wojciak (center) smiles at "what a truly grand reunion ... on so many levels. Being with the community ... is indeed a gift. My heart is full." She is with Sister Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB, left; and Sister Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, prioress.



Sister Mary Margaret Kraus, OSB, former prioress and honorary chair, welcomed everyone: "Our anniversary festivities of 150 years would not be complete without this evening's celebration. I am so happy that you are with us. ... You are one with us and are held in our memories, our loving thoughts and daily prayers."

Departed Sisters remembered with joy

A Service of Memories recalling the deceased Sisters of the community took place on Thurs., Aug. 4 during 4:30 p.m. Evening Praise. A community dinner celebrating the lives and contributions of particular Sisters over the years followed. On Fri., Aug. 5 a litany of deceased sisters was sung beginning at 9:00 Morning Praise in the Garden of Memories.

Sister Cecilia Sullivan, OSB, said, "Our 150th celebration would not be complete without the memories of our deceased Sisters. We are grateful for the courage and love they had so that we Benedictines may continue to share our charism of peace and justice into the future."

Sisters reunited to renew friendships

The Benedictine Sisters of Erie reunited and reminisced with parishioners, friends and former parochial school students during two mission visits in August and two in September. The celebrations were also an expression of gratitude on behalf of the Sisters for the hospitality bestowed by those communities.

A downtown celebration of the Benedictine inner-city ministries took place at St. Mary Church on August 6. The prayer service offered gratitude for the Sisters' former teaching ministries and the people they knew at St. Mary and Mount Calvary in Erie, St. Mary and St. Gregory in North East, and St. Boniface in Hammett, Pa.

A social followed at the former St. Mary Auditorium, now the St. Benedict Community Center and the ministries were open for tours.

People from the Fryburg (St. Michael) and Clarion areas celebrated during an August 21 prayer service and reception from 3 to 5 p.m. at Immaculate Conception Church, Clarion. Sisters also visited the Oil City area at St. Joseph Church on Sept. 11 and the Shenango Valley area at St. Joseph Church, Sharon, on Sept. 18.

Erie



Prayer service at St. Mary Church.

Sister Dianne Sabol, OSB, director, St. Benedict Community Center.

Clarion



Mary Rose Dietz and Sister Mary Margaret Kraus, OSB.



Sister Theresa Zoky, OSB; Carolyn Wolf; Sisters Cindy Hoover, OSB; and Karen Kosin, OSB.



Sister Audrey Steff, OSB and Msgr. Joseph Riccardo, pastor of Immaculate Conception.

Oil City



Sister Anne McGreevy, OSB

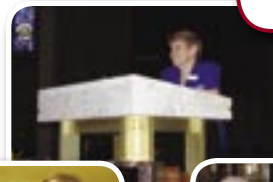


From left, Sisters Rosanne Lindal-Hynes, OSB; Jean Bhatti; Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, prioress; and Kathy Horan, OSB in St. Joseph Church.



Sister Janet Staab, OSB greets a friend at the reception.

Sharon



Sister Jean Lavin, OSB



Sisters Miriam Mashank, OSB, center; and Margaret Ann Pilewski, OSB, right; visit with Jane Leyde.



From left, Sisters Andrea Weidle, OSB; Mary Margaret Kraus, OSB; and Bernardine Goebel, OSB.

Sisters celebrated their jubilees



At Evening Praise on Sat., Oct. 8, nine Sisters renewed the monastic profession they had made as Benedictine Sisters of Erie 75, 60, 50 and 25 years ago. Standing, from left, are: Sister Dianne Sabol, OSB, 25 years; Sisters Veronica Mirage, OSB; Paula Burke, OSB; Michelle Wilwohl, OSB; and Mary Bernadette Ladner, OSB — 50 years; Sisters Jerome Eustace, OSB and Jean Lavin, OSB — 60 years. Seated, from left, are: Sisters Margaret Harrison, OSB and Joanne Huether, OSB — 75 years. More than 350 family and friends joined the community to celebrate the lives of the jubilarians.

“This is an important community celebration of the fidelity of these women. Their commitment inspires us to greater fidelity and renewed commitment to the monastic way of life,” said Sister Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, prioress.

Oblates celebrate with the Sisters

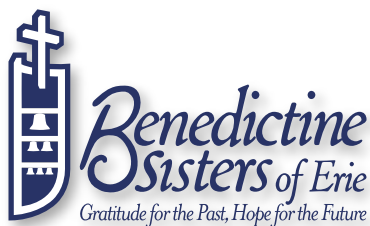
An Oblate Homecoming took place Oct. 14-16 as Oblates gathered with the Sisters in celebration of the 150th anniversary. U.S. Oblates as well as those from Mexico and Canada had a joyful weekend of creative presentations, prayer, music, story telling, renewal of commitment, sharing and fun! Please see pages 8 and 9 for Oblate Jerry Trambley’s “report.”



Oblate Marg Wehrer interprets through movement the gathering hymn at Saturday morning prayer.

Another Homecoming: Alive in '05 !

The St. Benedict Alumnae Association enjoyed a special three-day celebration over Thanksgiving Day weekend as its way of joining with the Sisters in the joy of the 150th year. This first-ever Homecoming included the annual Christmas Party, Sunday liturgy at the monastery and a special choral concert at the Warner Theatre: “A Christmas Gift of Peace” for the Erie community. Please see the alumnae pages (12 and 13) for a glimpse into the fun!



Sister Marilyn Schauble, OSB conducted choral practice every Monday evening beginning April 4 through November in the monastery chapel.

“Oblates are monasticism’s gift to the world”

So wrote Father Bede Classick, OSB, Oblate director at St. Paul’s Abbey in Newton, N.J.



During the weekend of Oct. 14 –16, Oblates of Mount St. Benedict Monastery met to celebrate the 150th anniversary year of the arrival of the Benedictine Sisters in Erie. The theme for the entire weekend was “You are gift; we are gift.”

More than 100 Oblates from the United States and Canada and about a dozen Oblates and their director from Mision de Amistad in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico came for this special “Oblate Homecoming.”

The celebration began Friday with evening prayer and a brief slide show depicting Mount St. Benedict Oblates and Sisters past and present. Then everyone headed for the dining/ community room, where there was plenty of food and opportunity to get to know each other around a table project that called for a large gift box to be decorated according to a theme representing one of the gifts of a Benedictine community.



Boxes depicting peace, joy, silence, prayer and commitment were just several of dozens of other gifts that come from an immersion into Benedictine spirituality and life.

After morning prayer Saturday, there was another slide show and narration on the history of Benedictine Oblates.



Oblates and Sisters then heard from the four living prioresses of Mount St. Benedict: Sisters Phyllis Schleicher, OSB; Mary Margaret Kraus, OSB; Joan Chittister, OSB; and Sister Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, the current prioress.

They discussed the relationship between Sisters and Oblates in the Mount community and the key word was “seamlessness.” Sister Christine noted several events when Oblates and Sisters have operated as one community.



The prioresses talked about the seriousness of oblation to a Benedictine community and a shared charism and adherence to the corporate commitment.

The panel of prioresses was followed by a

potluck lunch supplied by Oblates.

On Saturday afternoon, the Mexican Oblates had the program. They dressed in native costume, sang songs of the Yucatan and danced. The traditional dance of the Yucatan is the *jarana*. The Oblates from Merida danced a jarana of the ribbons, remembering Benedictine pioneers, prioresses and Oblates, and then presented the world premiere of the “Jarana Benedictina.”



There was also a slide presentation about the history of the Oblates in Merida and those Oblates, in traditional costumes, danced Mayan dances. They then presented the community with a *gremio* (banner) now hanging in the foyer of the monastery chapel.

The entertainment at the special dinner on Saturday started with the sudden and surprising appearance of the Mother Benedicta Riepp (founder of the Benedictine Sisters in Erie) and Mother Scholastica Burkhard (the Erie Benedictines’ first prioress). Amid much laughter and joy, their spirits, portrayed by Sister Therese Glass, OSB; and Oblate Shirley Blumish, assured the current community of their approval and their blessings.



Following that bit of merriment was a hilarious “Mount-style” production of the radio show “A Prairie Home Companion” with Sisters Helen “Hellison Keillor” Heher, OSB; Susan

Doubet, OSB; and Anne Wambach, OSB providing voices and sound effects.



New Oblates, from left, are: First Row - Georgina Moroney, Ann Wirth, Nancy Jackson, Marie Love and Carlotta Andrews with Sister Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, prioress; Middle Row: Jean Rodenbough, Jean Ockuly, Mary Jo McEvoy, Betsy Dauer and Nora Horihan; Last Row: Lola Ellison, Janice DiLuzio, Phillip Aiello, Sheila Woeger, Virginia Montowski, Andrew Gillespie and Gene Karlen. Not pictured are: Barbara Baglier, Jim Bryan, Dee Carr, Elizabeth O'Donnell and Anne Walsten.

Dinner ended a day full of prayer, learning and celebration and most Oblates headed to their lodgings, realizing that they had to be back at 8 a.m. Sunday, in time to practice for the commitment ceremony.

The ceremony had changed from previous years and began with Oblates stationed along the aisles next to the walls and across the back and front of the chapel, surrounding the entire community of Sisters.

The 20 initiates were presented to the community and made their oblations; then the Oblates who were renewing said their names and together promised to be Oblates for another year. Sister Christine gave a reflection, which included a number of quotes from the Oblate commitment statements.

Following the Sunday Eucharist, there was lunch and Sisters Karen Kosin, OSB; Lucia Marie Surmik, OSB; and Claire Marie Surmik, OSB; (the Oblate directors) had the final word for all those who had worked to make the weekend a success.

Ron Wasielewski, an Oblate who has been a reporter for the former diocesan newspaper and for the Erie Times-News summed up this jubilee experience.



He said, "This weekend I've discovered that becoming an Oblate is not simply joining another organization. This is a call to live out the Gospel and to do it in unity with the Benedictine community. I've been an admirer of the Benedictine ministries for many years now. I've written about them and now I am part of that ministry."

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.

To learn more about becoming an Oblate, please visit ErieBenedictines.org or make inquiry to bethany2@peoplepc.com.



Gratitude for the Past, Hope for the Future The celebration continues

The unifying theme of all the events that marked the 2005 celebrations of the Jubilee Year was the Benedictine charism: “The Benedictine way is to seek God in cenobitic life and to respond in prayer and ministry.”

To that end, the Sisters commemorated their relationships with one another, with former members, with St. Benedict Academy alumnae, and the Benedictine Oblate communities of Mexico, Canada and the United States.

The celebration of the 150th anniversary year continues into 2006. Two of the events planned are inspired by the Sisters’ desire to present a jubilee gift to particular communities in Erie and the surrounding areas: A presentation by two prominent women religious and an exhibit of Brother Thomas Bezanson’s fine art pottery.

March 25 Forum on Religious Life Mount St. Benedict Monastery 6101 East Lake Road 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

The Benedictine Sisters will host a “Conversation on Religious Life in the Future.” The featured speakers for this event will be Sister Mary Collins, OSB, Ph.D. and Sister Mary Ann Zollman, BVM.

Sister Mary is a theologian, former prioress of the Benedictine Sisters, Atchison, Kan.; and professor of liturgy at Catholic University of America.

Sister Mary Ann holds a doctorate in ministry and has served as vice president of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Dubuque, Iowa) and former president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR).

Their focus will be an examination of the theological and ecclesial concepts that form the foundation to religious life and how these are expressed in the monastic and apostolic traditions.

Invitations have been extended to women religious in the dioceses of Buffalo, N.Y. and Cleveland, Ohio as well as Erie and members of LCWR Region IV (western Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Washington, D.C.; and West Virginia).

May 6 Private Opening of Exhibit of Brother Thomas Bezanson’s Porcelain Ceramics

May 7-June 2 Public Exhibit, Hours vary Mount St. Benedict Monastery

A native of Halifax, Nova Scotia, Brother Thomas Bezanson was a Benedictine monk at Weston Priory in Vermont before coming to Erie. He began his work in pottery in 1953 and continued through his years at the priory. He has been an artist-in-residence with the Benedictine Sisters of Erie since 1985.

Brother Thomas is an internationally acclaimed artist with works found in permanent collections of more than 60 national and international collections, among which are the Art Institute of Chicago; Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Osaka Municipal Museum, Japan; Philadelphia Museum of Art; the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C; the Royal Ontario Museum, and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, England.

Pucker Gallery, Boston, represents his work and the gallery owners will be present for the private opening May 6.

June 25 Closing of the Jubilee Year

The 150th anniversary year will formally close with a eucharistic liturgy on June 25. Abbot Notker Wolf, abbot primate of the Benedictine Confederation and abbot of Sant Anselmo Monastery, Rome, Italy will preside.

The women monastics who will be attending the General Chapter of the Federation of St. Scholastica hosted at Gannon University are among the invited guests. The Federation of St. Scholastica, of which Mount St. Benedict is a member, is a union of 23 autonomous Benedictine monasteries in the United States and Mexico. These 100 delegates and other invited guests will be honored at a reception and dinner after the liturgy.

Also, the interactive historical display depicting the history of the Benedictine Sisters in Erie and surrounding communities will reopen June 1 - 30 at the Erie County History Center. The display is an artistic exploration of the Benedictine charism statement.

For more details about Jubilee Year events, please visit ErieBenedictines.org

Come and See: Be hope for the future

When the apostle asked Jesus where he lived, Jesus replied, “Come and see.”

Today, how can we show young women where we live?

This was the question our Erie Benedictine community asked itself at recent meetings.

One response to the question is a newly created Community Vocation Committee assigned the task of developing a plan of action to reach out to young women who believe God is calling them to religious life. The committee will be planning publicity and programs as well as working with the Vocation Awareness Committee of the Erie Diocese. Our new committee asks each of us to reach out with an encouraging voice to women with whom we are in regular contact.

This year we celebrate our 150th Jubilee: “Gratitude for the Past. Hope for the Future.” Our hope is that young women will carry the flame of Benedictine values into this 21st century future. We believe that the Benedictine Sisters of our past recreated and made those values alive in their environment in the “New World.” We believe that Benedictine values are enduring.

What are the values we uphold?

Creating a united community one person at a time: Seeing Christ present in each Sister, in each person we meet; loving him or her despite any differences or disagreements.

Praying together three times a day.

Reading and meditating on the words of God in the Scripture daily and letting the Word penetrate our hearts.

Ministering to one another, to women, to children, to the marginalized, to those who lack adequate resources; we listen, we care about one another, we respond honestly and with reverence.

Vocation is from the Latin *vocare*: “to call, to name.” The dictionary makes note of the fact that “vocation” implies a special commitment to a call from God. We welcome women to come and see how we live community life day by day, how praying together strengthens our commitment to the call of God, how our ministries flow from and feed our life and our prayer.

The world needs women witnessing to community life and a life of prayer. We open our hearts: “Come and See: Be hope for the future.”

Someone challenged to live religious life is usually:

Motivated by a deep love of God

Willing to share faith and life in community

Eager for common daily prayer together

Sensitive to human needs and a desire to meet those needs

Searching for meaning in life that witnesses to Gospel values

Open to life: its growth and its challenges

If this sounds like a challenge for your future, Come and See!

Call Sister Dorothy Stoner, director of formation, at (814) 899-0164, Ext. 511

e-mail: vocations@mtstbenedict.org

For more information, please visit ErieBenedictines.org and click on to “Membership.”



Members of the new Vocation Committee are, from left: Sisters Irene Spacht, OSB; Judith Trambley, OSB; Ann Hoffman, OSB; and Susan Doubet, OSB.



*Joining with the Benedictine Sisters of Erie
in celebration of 150 years of their presence
in the Erie area.*

SBA Homecoming Choral Concert — A Gift of Peace

Members of the SBA Alumnae Association and Benedictine Sisters joined hands to put together a special gift for the city of Erie, a Christmas concert entitled “A Christmas Gift of Peace.” The alumnae were all so grateful for the education we received and the relationships we built while at the academy. Helping the Sisters celebrate their 150th year was a privilege. The Alumnae Association used this celebration concert as the cornerstone event for our first ever Homecoming Weekend – “Alive in ’05!”

Half the fun of presenting this concert was “putting it together with friends we never can forget.” We sang, we laughed, we talked, we partied and then we sang again. It was great fun, a very special time we will never forget.



We laughed ...



We sang ...



We talked ...



These darn name tag strings are always getting tangled!



Flawless accompaniment, grace under pressure, intense love of music: Sr. Charlotte Anne Zalot, OSB



Barbara Dobrowolski Miller '59 enjoys a few minutes of quiet before rehearsal.



We have some really good seats available in this row. ...



We partied ...



SBA Executive Board – 2005

The St. Benedict Academy Alumnae Association announces the addition of four new members to the executive board. President Barbara Hammill Brown welcomed Anne Kuna Shiel, Janet Romanowicz Hammond, Kathy Glass Danch and Kathy Kaiser Klapthor at the August 2005 board meeting.



Bottom row, from left: Margaret Kloecker '68; Anne Kuna Shiel '79; Ann Comstock '64; Pat Benecki Straub '59. Top row: Mary Rita Roach Groucutt '72; Marilyn Smith Grasso '60; Janet Romanowicz Hammond '67; Barbara Hammill Brown '67; Bonnie Zaczek Prokocki '67; Kathy Glass Danch '73; Kathy Kaiser Klapthor '73; Sr. Rosanne Loneck, OSB '61

SBA Annual Appeal 2005



Sister Diane Rabe, OSB shares a playful moment with a toddler at the center.

Each year the St. Benedict Academy Alumnae Association chooses one of the Benedictine Sisters ministries as the recipient of their Annual Appeal campaign. This year the campaign was focused on the St. Benedict Child Development Center at 345 East Ninth Street. Funds from

this year's campaign will benefit the toddler program, helping the center to provide the equipment needed to ensure a safe play area for toddlers.

Additional funds help the Benedictine Sisters care for their older members and educate newer members. Money is also provided for alumnae scholarships, directly helping families to afford Catholic education. The gifts received plus the pledges made during the Phone-A-Thon totaled \$44,700.

During the month of September, several SBA alumnae came to Mount St. Benedict to participate in the appeal's Phone-A-Thon.

Let us pray...

For our sister alumnae who passed into eternity—

Sister Mary David Callahan, OSB	'41
Mary Ann Woycheck Bufalari	'46
Charlene M. Tanner	'52
Jane Eppler	'62
Susan Dylewski Bragan	'72

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.



Bonnie Kinsinger '59



Kay Yourkovik Kujan '55



Marilyn Smith Grasso '60



Patti Dobrowolski Popovich '64



Sr. Margaret Ann Pilewski, OSB '65 and Sr. Judith Bohn, OSB '58



Cathy Considine Stemmler '64

Grant Unto Her Eternal Rest

Sister Elaine Kecer, OSB died at Hamot Medical Center on August 10, 2005 after a long illness.



She was born in Mingo Junction, Ohio, on Jan. 11, 1921, a daughter of the late George and Susan Samos Kecer and received her early education in Edinboro, Pa. schools. She entered the Benedictine Sisters of Erie on January 2, 1942. Sister Elaine made her final monastic profession as a Benedictine Sister on August 21, 1946 and had celebrated her silver, golden and sixtieth anniversaries of profession.

Sister Elaine was a graduate of Villa Maria College and a graduate student at Catholic University of America, Boston University, Gannon and Edinboro Universities.

She was an elementary teacher and principal whose gentleness and interest in the religious education of children made her an exceptional teacher. She focused especially on developing in the young an understanding and appreciation of liturgy and liturgical music.

Sister Elaine taught in several schools in the diocese of Erie: Sacred Heart and St. Joseph, Sharon; St. Michael, Fryburg; St. Gregory, North East; St. Stephen, Oil City and Mount Calvary, Erie.

She served St. Mary Magdalene Parish, Altamont Springs, Fla., as an elementary teacher and an active participant in parish committees and events. In her years in Florida, Sister Elaine cherished the natural beauty of that subtropical setting, as she did the beauty surrounding her home in Erie.

When Sister Elaine returned to Erie, she became secretary and bookkeeper at St. Mary's School and later taught business English, medical terminology and adult reading at St. Benedict Education Center, both in Erie. In recent years, she has pursued her interests in crafts, reading and sewing.

As well as her parents, Sister Elaine was preceded in death by her sisters, Sister Helen Kecer, OSB; Mary Mativak and Anne Kecer, and her brothers George, Michael and Robert Kecer. She is survived by her religious community, the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, and by nine nieces.

This tribute was written by Sister Mary Ann Luke, OSB. Memorials in honor of Sister Elaine may be made to the Benedictine Sisters of Erie Development Office, 6101 East Lake Road, Erie, PA 16511.

We remember with gratitude these Oblates who faithfully shared in our Benedictine way to seek God in the communal life and to respond in prayer and ministry.



Virgil Roseborough
October 26, 2004



Olivia Staab
December 14, 2004



Charlene M. Tanner
April 26, 2005



Rev. Charles Kennedy Sr.
August 5, 2005



Sr. Mary Jane Vergotz, OSB (right) director of development for the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, presented \$10,000 to Sr. Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, prioress. The donation was from an anonymous benefactor to establish in memoriam the Charlene M. Tanner Fund for Social Justice and the Environment as part of the Ministry Fund of the Erie Benedictines. Charlene was a faithful Oblate and long-time benefactor who passed away April 26, 2005. The presentation was made during the Benedictine Oblate Homecoming, Oct. 14-16, 2005, celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie.

Support Benedictine Life, Prayer and Ministry

Please consider a Christmas gift to the Benedictine Sisters of Erie.

Your Christmas gift will support these efforts of the Benedictine Sisters:

- Monastic prayer and liturgy
- Education and action for peace
- Continuing education of Sisters and Oblates
- Spirituality programs
- Hospitality to guests
- Education on important issues in the Church and society
- Formation of new members
- Care of the elderly and infirm sisters
- Upkeep of buildings and grounds

Our ministries:

- St. Benedict Education Center
- St. Benedict Community Center
- St. Benedict Child Development Center
- Inner-City Neighborhood Art House
- Emmaus Soup Kitchen and Food Pantry
- Sister Gus' Kids Café
- Benetwood Apartments

Ways of giving a Christmas gift to the Benedictine Sisters of Erie:

- Donate a gift of cash, stock, securities or mutual funds.
- Enter a charitable gift annuity.
- Remember us in your will or estate plans.
- Name us as the beneficiary of an IRA, life insurance policy or charitable trust.

For more information, please contact:

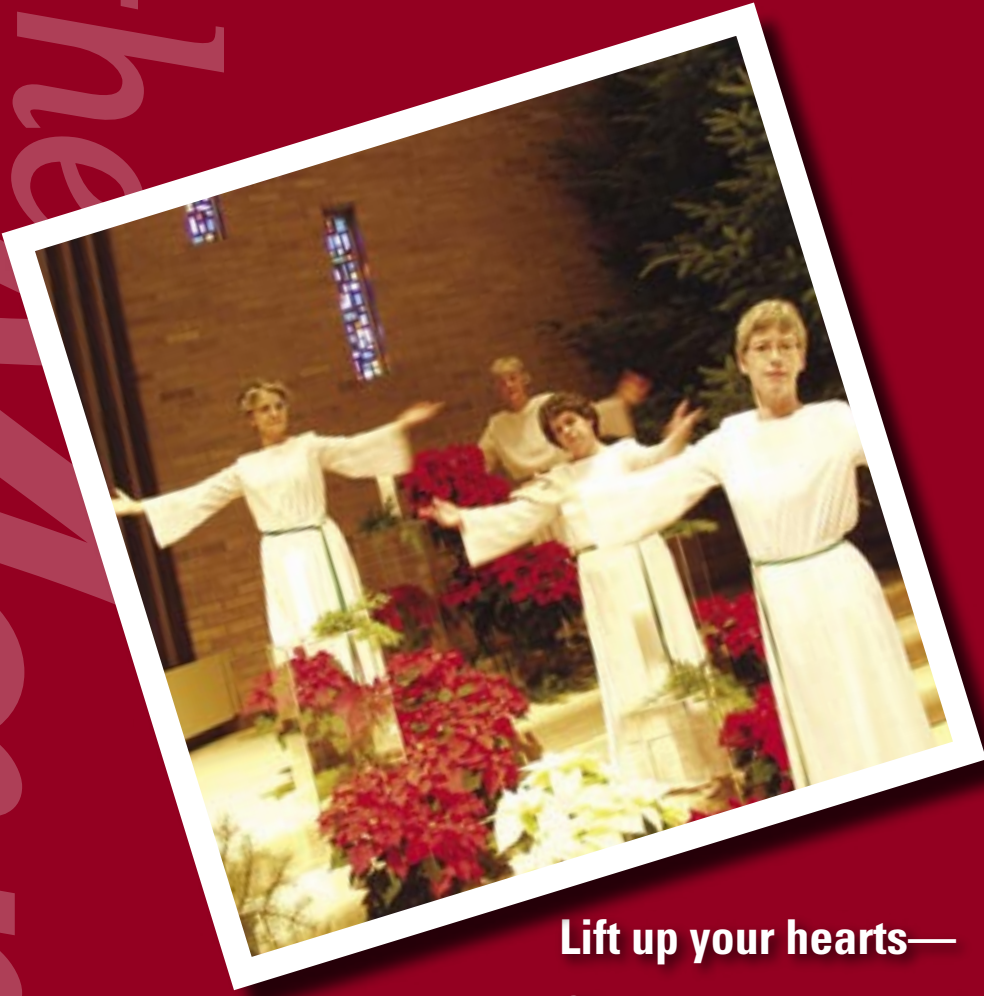
Sister Mary Jane Vergotz, OSB

Director of Development

(814) 899-0614 Ext.409

e-mail: smaryjane@mtstbenedict.org

Or visit: "How you can help" at ErieBenedictines.org



**Lift up your hearts—
Christ is born in each of us.
May our hearts be opened to receive
the peace and joy of this Holy Season.**



Mount Saint Benedict Monastery
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Erie, PA 16511-1599

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