“... so that in all things God may be glorified.”

- Chapter 57, Rule of St. Benedict
On the cover is a close-up crop of the newest addition to our collection of Brother Thomas Bezanson’s fine art pottery. This community is proud to have the beauty of art in our monastery. We delight in the relationship over the years with our brother, Thomas, who has gifted us with his creations in ceramic. Each piece, unique in shape and color, makes available to us, through all the senses, communion with God, the archetypal first and last Artist.

Whether the piece is in the sanctuary of our chapel for our prayer, or in our dining room as we gather as family, or in our hallways to greet our guests, one of Thomas’ pots has the capacity to move our spirit beyond ourselves to a realm where all life is seen as gift.

Please see Page 19 for “The Gift of Art,” a special Jubilee Year Event.

-Sr. Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, prioress

3................................................................ From the Priore "Jubilee draws us toward the future.”

4............................................. From the Development Director “Your support is a great blessing to us.”

5............................................. 2005 Community Donors

7............................... St. Benedict Academy Alumnae Donors

10................................. A Wonderful Year! SBA Alumnae enjoyed special events and success.

12 ..................................... Jubilarians celebrate “Uphold me O God according to your word ...”

18................................. In Loving Memory We remember Sr. Mary Regina and Sr. Bernardine

19................................. The Gift of Art Brother Thomas Bezanson Exhibit

BENEDICTINE CHARISM STATEMENT

The Benedictine way is to seek God in the cenobitic life and to respond in prayer and ministry.
Benedictine monasteries have been oases of hope across the centuries. They have provided centers where those who seek God can constantly confront their lives with the Gospel. Monasteries are to be starting places for setting out on the road toward hope. Jubilee has given us a time to reread our history and touch once again the audacity of the women who stepped out in faith in their time. Our time is now, no less is asked of us.

Benedict's Rule begins with the invitation “Listen carefully.” For Benedict, careful listening is the prelude to wise discernment. Engaged with the world we live in and steeped in the biblical Word, we contemplate the mystery of the reign of God and its challenge to many aspects of our contemporary culture. We see not only the breakdown of old structures but the envisioning of better ways of living and working together as a human family. Out of our experience of God in prayer and community, we discern God's presence in the sighs and hopes of our world. Jubilee draws us toward the future. It brings renewed energy and deepens the commitment of this community to be the legacy of hope for a new time.

As a community, we live out this hope in the service of the dawning reign of God countering the despair of our contemporary era. The fear and alienation, domination, exclusion, and violence that mark the new century are consequences of human actions and decisions. We hold the belief that life does not have to be arranged so that a few thrive while many suffer. Social theorists speak of globalization's possibilities and offer a vision of a planetary family. Sadly these theories are often at odds with our actual experience. The differences across borders and continents deepen fear and foment hostility, source of conflict and war.

As Benedictine women, we search our souls and probe the wisdom of the monastic tradition to address whatever obscures the face of God on our planet. The experience of solidarity within human community must be recovered only then will we act out of the ethic of the common good. When we do that we will see our deepest longings realized. It is a call for a spiritual transformation so that “all may have life in abundance.”

Benedictine life is lived in community as a sign of our solidarity and witness that peace is possible among strangers. It takes uncommon courage and generosity to make room in our lives for the “other” but that is what Benedictine hospitality is all about. This hospitality is made manifest in the ministries that we extend to a hurting world. They are the overflowing of our faithfulness to prayer and attentiveness to the presence of God in all creation.

Jubilee is the liberation of gratitude and the humble recognition that we have been blessed. Simone Weil writes: “God is present at the point where the eyes of those who give and those who receive meet.” We stand in that spot today. You have been very much a part of this jubilee year. You have shared the journey of life with us and we invite you to be a vital part of our future. Together we can move into the future with heroic hope fostering in each other the capacity to live with passion and compassion in a world that longs for biblical jubilee.

"We are a legacy of hope"

From the Prioress

Prioress, Benedictine Sisters of Erie
As we celebrate our 150th Jubilee Year, the Benedictine Sisters of Erie have gathered together to honor the people whose relationships have sustained us over the years. When we reminisce about our early history we remember the kindness and charity of the families who in 1856 provided our first four sisters with food, shelter and transportation. Beginning with our settlement in Erie, Pa., and continuing through today, our benefactors have helped us to sustain our monastery and our ministries through their financial support and volunteer activities. Our 2005 Annual Report captures the influence of the generosity of our supporters on the lives of the community.

During 2005 the Benedictine Sisters have continued to sustain our income through the stipends earned by the Sisters through our ministry activity, and some Social Security income that together represents 58% of our operating income. Our 2005 development efforts accounted for 12% of the community’s operating income. Our annual giving program continues to grow as the number of bequests increases each year. We received special gifts in honor of our Jubilee celebration from the St. Benedict Academy Alumnae Association and the Oblates of Mount St. Benedict Monastery. The alumnae honored us with a gift of $27,376, the proceeds from the Christmas Peace Concert during their November Homecoming Weekend. Our Oblates presented a gift of $4,266 to Sister Christine Vladimiroff, prioress, during a special reception as part of their October Homecoming Weekend. Both gifts have been designated for our Heritage of Hope Capital Campaign. Other income accounted for 30% of operating income.

Our operating expenses increased in 2005 as gasoline, natural gas and health care costs continued to rise. Property/buildings and transportation accounted for 34% of our expense budget followed by members’ personal expenses, which include health care at 32%, employee payroll at 19% and other expenses at 7%. Through careful monitoring and management of our expenses along with an increase in income we succeeded in ending another year in the “black.”

As we honor our benefactors during this 150th Jubilee Year we thank God for your presence in our lives. We are blessed to have supporters who share our vision of a world where all people live in peace, where charity, mercy and justice prevail and where hope reigns eternal. May God bless you.

Diane Cook, OSB
Treasurer

Mary Jane Vergotz, OSB
Development Director
During November 2005, the Benedictine Sisters were blessed to join in prayer with 916 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.
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Thank you to the 1,516 benefactors who contributed more than $49,000 to the 2005 Benedictine Sisters’ Annual Draw completed on July 25, 2005.

We take great care and effort in maintaining accurate lists of our benefactors. We apologize for any oversights. The Benedictine Sisters of Erie are grateful to the 3,278 benefactors who made gifts to our community during the year 2005. We keep you in our prayers. (* indicates deceased)
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SBA Memorabilia
IS STILL AVAILABLE

The following items are available for purchase from the Alumnae Association.

Please contact Ann Comstock at: 814-899-0614, Ext. 2573 or e-mail: sbaalum@mtsbenedict.org.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tote bags</td>
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<td>Sweatshirt</td>
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<td>Note pads</td>
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Cat’s Meow – SBA Collector’s Item | $20

Contact:
The Bare Woods
3330 W 26th St
Erie, PA 16506
814-833-1961

Let us pray...

For our sister alumnae who passed into eternity—

Kathryn “Kay” Sullivan Causgrove  ’34
Margaret McCallion Schroeg  ’39
Therese M. Olszewski Dymski  ’45
Barbara J. Becker McCormick  ’50
Dolores C. “Dolly” Kruzewski Sznajder  ’50
Barbara Willow Seidler  ’51
Patricia M. Ferrick  ’55
Joan Fialkowski  ’58
Jane Eppler  ’62
Carolyn Volk Pakiel  ’64
Alexandria (Alice) Ann Walczak  ’71
Frances T. Esser  N/A

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.

From the Director

We’d love to help! If you are planning a reunion, please contact me at the Alumnae Office, 814-899-0614, Ext 2573 or e-mail me at sbaalum@mtsbenedict.org.

We will provide you with a startup kit, mailing labels and a current class list. Please e-mail any information and photos taken at the event. We will post them on our Web site at ErieBenedictines.org.

—Ann Comstock, ’64
A wonderful year

It has been a wonderful year ... a year in which the Alumnae Association has been very, very busy. Joyfully, we celebrated with the Sisters their 150th year anniversary. On Friday, Nov. 25 the Alumnae Association and the Benedictine Sisters performed at the Warner Theater. Our concert, a musical gift of peace to the city of Erie, was the centerpiece of our first-ever Homecoming celebration. Proceeds from the concert, totaling more than $27,000, were given to the Benedictines Sisters. It was our way of showing our love, gratitude and support for the Sisters.

According to SBA Alumnae Association board member Sister Rosanne Loneck, ’61, for the alumnae, it was a weekend of joy and celebration that “warmed our hearts and stirred our souls. A full year of planning and many details melted (despite the snow!) into a weekend of wonderful memories and reconnecting. Smiles and tears: It was a time to give thanks and offer gratitude, to reflect, remember and tell stories, and to be renewed and grounded in our Benedictine tradition with friends we never can forget.”

This year’s tenth annual Alumnae Appeal focused on the St. Benedict Child Development Center at 345 East Ninth Street. Funds raised benefited the toddler program, helping the center to provide equipment needed to ensure a safe play area for toddlers. Additional funds raised helped the Sisters care for their older members and educate newer members. Money was also provided for alumnae scholarships, directly helping our families to afford Catholic education. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our alumnae members, more than $40,300 was raised this year.

Director Sister Marilyn Schauble acknowledges the 145-member SBA Alumnae/Benedictine Sisters Chorus during a standing ovation at the conclusion of their concert at the historic Warner Theatre in Erie. More than 1,700 people packed the theatre for the Nov. 25 event called “A Christmas Gift of Peace.” The concert was the highlight of a special three-day St. Benedict Academy Alumnae Association celebration over Thanksgiving Day weekend as a way of joining with the Sisters in the joy of their 150th anniversary year. This first-ever SBA Alumnae Homecoming included the annual Christmas party, Sunday liturgy at the monastery and the choral concert.

On Saturday, Nov. 26, the annual SBA Christmas Party was held at the Avalon Hotel in Erie. This year’s event, part of our Homecoming Weekend, was a great success. More than 300 women attended. The Kids Café was awarded the proceeds from the party. The dinner and gift auction raised $3,000 to refurbish the TV and game rooms this spring.

Annual Appeal

This year’s tenth annual Alumnae Appeal focused on the St. Benedict Child Development Center at 345 East Ninth Street. Funds raised benefited the toddler program, helping the center to provide equipment needed to ensure a safe play area for toddlers. Additional funds raised helped the Sisters care for their older members and educate newer members. Money was also provided for alumnae scholarships, directly helping our families to afford Catholic education. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our alumnae members, more than $40,300 was raised this year.

Calendar of Events

**Sunday, April 23**

- Annual Communion Brunch
- 9:30 a.m. — Liturgy at Mount St. Benedict
- 11:30 a.m. — Brunch at Lawrence Park Golf Course

**Tuesday, June 27**

- SBA Summer Picnic
- Mount St. Benedict 6 p.m.

**Friday-Sunday July 15-17**

- Relay for Life

To make donations for the Benedictine Sisters Team:

Contact Margaret Kloecker, (814) 452-0183
Celebrating their Jubilee Years

“The Benediction of Erie will recognize and celebrate the Jubilees of nine Sisters during Evening Praise on Sat., May 13, 2006.”

By Sister Mary Ann Luke, OSB

Bernadette Lorei, OSB: 60 years

Sister Bernadette is a native of St. Boniface Parish, Hammett, Pa., where she grew up in large and close-knit family. Her parents, Albert and Ellanora Trott Lorei, ran their farm with the help of their children. There, Sister Bernadette learned at an early age to be a dependable worker, diligent and careful in her work, and to respect both work and worker.

She attended the parish school and is a graduate of St. Benedict Academy. She earned a BS in elementary education at Villa Maria College, Erie.

Sister Bernadette entered the Benedictine Sisters in 1944 and made her first profession of vows in 1946. She made final profession on Aug. 22, 1949.

Sister Bernadette was an exceptional elementary teacher for 48 years, most of them at St. Mary's School, Erie where she was also principal for a time. She taught in several other parish schools: Sacred Heart and St. Joseph, Sharon; St. Stephen, Oil City; St. Michael, Fryburg; and Mount Calvary, Erie. Sister Bernadette also served St. Mary’s as the school secretary.

In recent years, she assisted in the monastery infirmary, cooking and serving breakfast for infirmary residents, assisting them as needed. She visits the Sisters, helps with them with errands and all the small services that make a difference in their comfort and peace in age or in illness. She encourages all the Sisters to visit the infirmary regularly and to help Sisters who are living there to keep in touch with the life of the whole community.

Sister Bernadette's priority, maintaining close contacts among all members of our community in the midst of busy lives or within the boundaries of incapacity, is clearly seen in her statement that celebration of the Eucharist, daily community prayer, lectio, community life itself and common goals are the greatest gifts of community for her.

Her hope for our community's future is that the spiritual life, guided by seeking God as the Rule teaches, “continues to be the main reason for our existence.”
Mary Daniel Meahl, OSB: 60 years

“‘If you desire true and eternal life, keep your tongue from spiteful talk, and your lips from deceit; turn away from evil and do good; let peace be your quest and aim.’…Then ‘my eyes will be upon you and my ears will listen for your prayers; and even before you ask me, I will say to you: here I am.’…See how the Lord in his love shows us the way of life.”

Rule of Benedict, Prologue 17, 18, 20

In addition, she gives private lessons in piano and organ. Sister Mary Daniel is a certified Kindermusik instructor; she has introduced dozens of toddlers to music and to the possibility that they might make music themselves. At present, she assists in liturgical music at the monastery and is active in state and national associations of musicians, several of which have recognized her accomplishments with awards.

She finds “the strength and beauty of community prayer and mutual love and support” to be the greatest gift to her of the community which, she hopes, will continue to live simply and to be true examples of Christ in this world.
Claire Marie Surmik, OSB: 50 years

Sister Claire Marie was born and raised in a lively and loving Slovak family in Manhattan's Yorkville neighborhood, then a sort of friendly, small town in the midst of the city. She attended the parish elementary school and followed two older sisters to St. Cyril Academy, Danville, Pa.

Sister Claire Marie, again following her sisters, Sisters Therese Marie and Lucia Marie, entered the Sisters of St. Cyril and Methodius after graduation. She made her final vows in 1961.

Sister Claire Marie earned a BA in English at Scranton’s Marywood College, an MA in education at Fairfield University, Conn., and an MS in educational administration at Scranton University, Scranton, Pa.

She served as an elementary teacher and principal in New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania and in Charleston, S.C. For several years, Sister Claire Marie was the assistant superintendent of schools, responsible for 65 elementary schools in the Diocese of Scranton.

Her wish to work for the poor and for peace and justice intensified in those years. Her search became a call to monastic life. She began the process of transfer to the Benedictine Sisters of Erie in 1988, and made her perpetual Benedictine vows on Oct. 25, 1991.

She has been a staff member of Emmaus Ministries since that time. As she had hoped, her work now brings her into direct contact with those she serves and allows her to work, as well, for systemic changes that will better the lives of those who are the casualties of our culture.

In the same way, Sister Claire Marie finds that “journeying the way of Benedict, walking with our Sisters, is community’s greatest gift to me.” She returns that gift with the warmth and openness that speak clearly her regard for each Sister and her pleasure in singing becomes our pleasure as she sings with the Sisters’ schola.

Community life and her own work enliven a hope that we will all live in “Openness to the call of the Spirit by facing our future with hope and joy as we struggle to reshape our lives to meet the needs of these times.”

Janet Staab, OSB: 50 years

“Listen, my sister, to me with an open heart and mind.”

Rule of Benedict, Prologue 1 [paraphrased]

Sister Janet, a daughter of Charles and Cecilia Staab and a native of St. Joseph Parish, Oil City, is a graduate of St. Joseph High School, Oil City, where she was taught by our Sisters.

Sister Janet entered the community after graduation and made her first profession on New Year’s Eve in 1956 and her final profession as a Benedictine Sister of Erie on August 13, 1960.

Sister Janet earned a BA in elementary education at Mercyhurst College, Erie, and an MS in mathematics at Clarion University of Pennsylvania. Her first ministry was teaching in elementary schools: Sacred Heart and St. Joseph in Sharon; Immaculate Conception, Clarion; St. Stephen, Oil City and St. Mary’s, Erie.

When a L’Arche house was established in Erie, Sister Janet ministered there for several years. She also cared for children in the East Coast Migrant Headstart program which was begun at Mount St. Benedict and later moved into Erie.

These experiences are reflected in her hope that the community will “always live a corporate commitment that responds to the needs of others.”

Presently, Sister Janet is the community archivist. She is responsible for organization and proper storage of the community’s records. Consequently, she is the community historian ex officio but informally. Our history is cared for meticulously, whether it be the vows of our first prioress, Scholastica Burkhard, or photos taken last week at a community gathering. Aside from the documents and artifacts at her fingertips, our history resides in its entirety in Sister Janet’s memory. Just ask and see.

Sister Janet’s gratitude for the community ranges from her appreciation of “their on-going love and support” to her enjoyment when they “maintain and show a good, healthy sense of humor.”
Dorothy Szczypinski, OSB: 50 years

Sister Dorothy, a daughter of the late Leokadya and Edward Szczypinski, is a native of Erie and a graduate of St. Stanislaus School and St. Benedict Academy.

A born teacher, Sister Dorothy earned a BA in mathematics at Mercyhurst College, Erie and an MA in education with a concentration in mathematics at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. She has taught on elementary and secondary levels and has been a tenured assistant professor of mathematics. She served also as assistant principal at St. Benedict Academy.

At present, Sister Dorothy teaches math at St. Benedict Education Center. After class, her intellectual curiosity and broad range of knowledge are efficient tools for providing her students with life skills. Those from other countries and cultures especially benefit from her advice on, for example: car maintenance, job skills, finding and furnishing a living space, language difficulties.

Sister Dorothy speaks of our community’s greatest gift to her: “To be accompanied through life by others, likewise called by God, all with different personalities, gifts, and at different stages of their journey. To witness, to observe, the grace of God at work in each life and in each death, is gift to me in my journey.”

She gives the same gift to her students when she participates in their lives as teacher, mentor, friend. Her community, too, receives these gifts, deepened by the gift of her presence and animated by her sense of humor.

Sister Dorothy’s interests extend from geology to theology. But the political and cultural facets of our society are deep concerns. She speaks of future hopes. “That part of our current decadent, violent American culture espoused by much of the entertainment world, the media, and so many individuals is not worthy of the dignity each human being is called to by our loving God. I see the present and future role of monastic life as one similar to that in the world of Benedict’s time.

“Monastic spirituality must be a leaven for an alternative way of life. It must by counter culture, offer a life that inspires love, not hate; hope, not despair; sharing, not greed; peace, not war; and justice, not oppression.”

Norma Jean Kingsley, OSB: 50 years

Sister Norma Jean, a daughter of Friend and Cecille Kearney Kingsley, is an Erie native educated in St. John’s parish school and St. Benedict Academy.

She entered the Benedictine Sisters in 1954 and made her profession of perpetual vows on July 16, 1959. Sister Norma Jean earned a BA in education at Mercyhurst College, an MA in pastoral ministry at St Francis College, Loretto, Pa., and has also studied spiritual direction at St. John’s University, Collegeville, Minn.

Sister Norma Jean taught first in elementary schools: St. Joseph, Sharon; St. Joseph, Oil City; and St. Michael, Fryburg and later at Venango Catholic High School in Oil City. She served at St. Benedict Academy and as administrator at Camp Glinodo. She then joined the staff of Ecclesia Center in Girard in its early years of service to religious and priests looking for sabbath and spiritual renewal. She served clients both as spiritual director and as an administrator. At present, she is a pastoral minister to the elderly.

Sister Norma Jean has served her Benedictine community as scholastic director and community secretary.

She sees her vow of stability as the community’s greatest gift to her: “If I embrace stability, I find change to be challenging and my faith at times is questioned. Embracing perseverance is the final gift.”

In the same vein, her hope for the future is that “We may always be willing to learn and share experiences as we pray and work to bring the presence of God into our world.”

Thus, with minds and voices together in openness, and learning from one another, we can hope to persevere together, to be led, finally, by Christ to everlasting life.

“Listen readily to holy reading and devote yourself often to prayer. Place your hope in God alone. If you notice something good in yourself, give credit to God, not to yourself. Never lose hope in God’s mercy.”

Rule of Benedict, Prologue 4:55, 41, 42, 74

“… that our hearts and minds may always be in harmony with our voices.”

Rule of Benedict, 19:7
Rosanne Lindal-Hynes, OSB: 50 years

Sister Rosanne, a native of St. Joseph Parish, Oil City and a daughter of John Patrick and Hazel Hynes, received her early education in the parish elementary and high schools.

After graduation, she entered the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, joining several other Hynes Benedictines who had preceded her: Sisters Evelyn, Mary Ellen and Pierre Hynes and Sister Mary Regina Flanagan. Rosanne made her final profession of vows in our community on July 16, 1959.

She earned a BA in elementary education at Mercyhurst College and took graduate courses at several universities. She received a diploma from Montessori Internationale.

Sister Rosanne’s ministries continue to reflect the concern for care of the poor upon which Benedict insisted. She was an elementary teacher in parish schools in Sharon, North East, Clarion, Fryburg and Erie, then began to move into more direct service to those in need of her gifts.

Sister Rosanne has been director of social services at St. Martin Center and a counselor at Community House for Women, head teacher at the East Coast Migrant Headstart program and a member of the Pax Christi staff, all in Erie.

Her present ministry is women’s advocate at Emmaus Ministries where her work ranges from the most urgent situations to the joy – and long hours – of collecting, wrapping and distributing more than 500 gifts for the children of Emmaus at Christmas. Always, she is the peaceful presence in lives that know too much trouble.

Peace in her own life is the gift of community: “The prayer life which binds me to my Sisters and the support which is life giving.” Her hope for the community is that it will “always adjust to the needs of the times.”

Those needs will, without end, include sharing our plenty with those who have need of it.

Anne Wambach, OSB: 25 years

Sister Anne, executive director of the Inner-city Neighborhood Art House, chose a teacher’s quote as the words of the Rule that mean most to her. Anne has been an elementary teacher and principal for much of her professional life and is also a liturgical musician who brings an abundance of gifts to the children of the Art House.

Sister Anne is a native of Philadelphia, a daughter of Isabel and the late Michael Wambach. She began religious life as a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Pa. Sister Anne earned a BS in education and an MA in liturgy and liturgical music at St. Joseph’s College, Rensselaer, Ind. She ministered at several schools in eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey and assisted in the parish liturgies as cantor, pianist and oboist.

These foundational years brought Sister Anne to her call to monastic life. She began the process of transfer in 1993 and became a full member of our community in 1997.

Sister Anne sees the community’s best gifts to her as “The richness of our prayer life and liturgy, our commitment to peace and justice and our love for one another – gifts that sustain me in the daily.”

She, in turn, shares with the community her presence, her gifts as musician and director of the choir and the bell choir, and a leadership of the Art House that, daily, gives possibility and hope to children who have little of either. They receive food and fun in a safe place, they are introduced to a range of arts, and they learn to know and to comport themselves as members of the body of Christ.

Sister Anne says of her own hope for the future: “In these challenging times, Jesus and Benedict demonstrate a radically different way of living in the world. Aware of the global issues that confront us today and well into the future, I hope that we can be a prophetic voice calling all to wholeness and holiness. In the words of Sister Joan Chittister, ‘God is calling us to more than the material level of life and God is waiting to bring us to it. All we have to do is live well with others and live totally in God. … The spiritual life demands all of us.’”

“Listen carefully, my daughter, to my instructions and attend with the ear of your heart. This is advice from one who loves you; welcome it and faithfully put it into practice.”

Rule of Benedict, Prologue 1-2
Mary Jane Vergotz, OSB: 25 years

A daughter of the late Josephine and Stanley Vergotz, she received her elementary education at her home parish, Holy Trinity. She was awarded a BA in social work by Gannon University, Erie and an MSW by St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo.

Sister Mary Jane ministered as director of professional services for Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Erie and at Saint Vincent Health Center, Erie, where her specialty was home health care. Presently she is sub-prioress, council member and development director for our community.

Sister Mary Jane identifies the community’s most important gift to her: “Living in an intergenerational community where I experience the fervent desire of newer members to emulate the lives of our faithful elders who show us how to “seek truly God” each and every day of their lives; sharing community with peers who have and intense commitment to assume responsibility for administration; and with all generations as we grow together in the good zeal of monastics.”

In these words are reflected the source of her patience and her willingness to take each person as she is.

In the same way, her hopes for the community in the future — “That we continue to be faithful to our Benedictine roots while we read, study and explore current theologians” — reflect openness to new ideas.

“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.

The Sisters sing the third stanza when they renew their vows.

Psalm 119
Her mind delighted in discovery

Sister Mary Regina Flanagan, OSB, died at her home, Mount St. Benedict Monastery, Erie, on Nov. 23, 2005.

She was born in Oil City, Pa., on Feb. 28, 1914, a daughter of the late William S. and Catherine Hynes Flanagan and received her early education at St. Joseph Elementary and High School in Oil City. She entered the Benedictine Sisters of Erie on July 2, 1935. Sister Mary Regina made her final monastic profession as a Benedictine Sister on August 19, 1939 and had celebrated her silver, golden and sixtieth anniversaries of profession.

Sister Mary Regina was a graduate of Villa Maria College, Erie, and earned a Master of Arts degree in mathematics at Villanova University, Radnor, Pa. As a recipient of National Science Foundation grants, she continued her study of mathematics at Notre Dame University, South Bend, Ind., and of chemistry at Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio.

She began her ministry in education as an elementary teacher and continued as a high school teacher and administrator. Sister Mary Regina served in several schools in the diocese of Erie: Sacred Heart and St. Joseph, Sharon; St. Joseph and St. Stephen, Oil City; St. Gregory, North East; Immaculate Conception, Clarion; and Venango Catholic High School, Oil City.

She was recognized as an outstanding science teacher by Gannon University, Erie, Pa., and by the Buhl Planetarium of the Carnegie Science Center, Pittsburgh, Pa. She was a co-author of algebra and geometry texts and developed an innovative program for nongraded mathematics instruction.

In later years, Sister Mary Regina ministered in social services in the Oil City area and cared for her sister, Alice Flanagan.

As well as her parents, her sister, Alice, preceded Sister Mary Regina in death. She is survived by her religious community, the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, her sister Catherine McMahon, Oil City, Pa., and several nieces and nephews.

Sister Mary Regina exemplified the phrase, “Love of learning and desire for God.” She found both in the travel that she enjoyed extensively, and she found joy in learning and teaching to the very end of her life.

A compassionate presence in our midst

Sister Bernardine Goebel, OSB, died at her home, Mount St. Benedict Monastery, Erie, on Dec. 9, 2005.

She was born in Newark, Ohio on Jan. 2, 1911, a daughter of the late Otto and Ottilia Stoecklein Goebel, and was baptized Dolores Mary. She received her early education at Immaculate Conception Parish schools in Clarion, Pennsylvania.

Sister Bernardine entered the Benedictine Sisters of Erie as a novice on August 24, 1927. She made her first profession on March 27, 1928 and her final monastic profession as a Benedictine Sister on August 2, 1932. She has celebrated her silver, golden, and diamond anniversaries of profession.

Sister Bernardine was awarded a Bachelor of Science degree in education by the University of Pittsburgh and a Master of Arts in psychology and counseling by the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

She began her ministry in education as an elementary teacher and continued as a high school teacher and administrator. Sister Bernardine served in several schools in the diocese of Erie: Sacred Heart and St Joseph, Sharon; St Joseph High School, Oil City; St. Gregory High School, North East; Immaculate Conception High School, Clarion; Venango Catholic High School, Oil City; Kennedy Catholic High School, Sharon; and St. Benedict Academy, Erie.

She served as a counselor and psychologist at Gannon University and at St. Benedict Education Center, Erie.

Sister Bernardine found in the Psalm 146 a rule for life: To secure justice for the oppressed, to set prisoners free, to give sight to the blind, to raise up those who are bowed down. She was a teacher and counselor in drug rehabilitation and education programs at the New York State Prison, Long Island City, New York. When she returned to Erie, she continued to serve at the Erie County Prison as a counselor and tutored high school student needing additional classes.

Her boundless regard for the value and dignity of every human being inspired and empowered her ministry. She judged nothing but need and was gifted in answering the needs she found.

As well as her parents, Sister Bernardine was preceded in death by seven brothers and sisters. She is survived by her religious community, the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, and by several nieces and nephews.
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 the permanent collections of more than 60 national and international venues, 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, Toronto; and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, England.

Pucker Gallery, Boston, represents his work.

“I would like to speak this word of gratitude to my Benedictine Sisters, to Bernie and Sue Pucker, to the staff of Pucker Gallery and to many friends in many places, all of whom are the bridges that have turned a possibility into a reality.

This is an exhibition of the Sisters’ collection of my work, examples from the past 20 years that I have been in Erie. It is a significant collection in that it is the only continuous example of my work that covers such a long period of time. This is the first time that it has been shown in its entirety – even to me.

It is significant for another reason: the awareness that no one does anything alone. I am very conscious of this life-principle for without others there would not be all of this, there would only be silence.”

-Brother Thomas