

Seek. Pray. Share.

Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana

VOLUME 10 NUMBER 2 FALL 2019

Election Night, June, 2019.
All sisters join in prayer
and song to support their
new prioress-elect, Sister
Anita Louise Lowe.

INSIDE

Exclusive interview with the
new prioress, Sister Anita
Louise Lowe.

Father Joe Ziliak expresses
the importance of giving back.

New retreats and events
happening at the dome.





FROM THE PRIORESS

Our Benedictine community in Ferdinand is standing at the threshold of a new chapter in our monastery's history. With every election and installation of a new prioress, our community embarks on the journey of life together with renewed direction, energy, and zeal. As we start this new chapter, we do so trusting that God is with us and guiding us along the path we are to walk.

The Responsorial Psalm, Psalm 32, that we sang at the Installation liturgy stated, "I will instruct you and teach you the way you should walk." I do believe that God is

leading me as prioress of this monastery and that God is leading all of us. Our task is to trust in that guidance and to follow on the way God leads us.

What is that path on which God is leading us? I believe it can be summed up in one word: love. Each of us, no matter who we are or what manner of life we live, is called to love. We are called to love as God has loved us, and we are called to share that love with all whom we encounter. As we move forward into the coming weeks and months and years, may we always remember to trust that God is indeed guiding us on the path of life. God guides us as we walk the path that calls us to love as we have been loved.

Let us also remember that we do not walk this path alone. We walk it together... We sisters join with you in walking your path of life, your path to love as God has called you to love. We do so trusting that the Spirit is always guiding us and filling us with peace. May God bless each of you on your journey in life.

Sister Anita Louise

Sister Anita Louise Lowe, OSB
Prioress

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Mission: We, the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana, are monastic women seeking God through the Benedictine tradition of community life, prayer, hospitality, and service to others. By our life and work, we commit ourselves to be a presence of peace as we join our sisters and brothers in the common search for God.

You will find me when you ***seek*** me
with all of your heart.

Jeremiah 29:13



Seek.

Seeking all Women

Women of the Rule funds Sisters' needs by *Tory Lanaghan*



On August 9, 2019, a very special group of women gathered in the dining hall at Monastery Immaculate Conception to vote on some important projects. Women of the Rule, a philanthropic group dedicated to supporting the Sisters of St. Benedict, funded nine different projects intended to help the sisters with their ministries this year. Before the luncheon, they had already funded Visit Verification and food service supplies for Community Health, portable heating and A/C for Hildegard Health Care, study materials for incarcerated women, a Peruvian mission experience, a discernment mission experience, and monastery bakery enhancements.

A group of light-hearted and giving women gathered to dine on a healthy meal of salad greens from the sisters' hydroponics project. Hydroponics is a Women of the Rule project which has been producing fresh lettuces for the sisters since last winter. While everyone sampled the fresh greens, they heard five proposals and voted for three they felt would best serve the sisters. With \$78,000 of allocated funds, they chose to fully fund an emergency warning system for the monastery and further education for sisters in Latino Outreach ministry, as well as partially fund the automation of the church bells. The sisters were so grateful for the support.

"It was with great joy that I learned two of the grant proposals I sent to Women of the Rule were awarded," said Sister Kathryn Huber, who submitted proposals for study materials for incarcerated women and the automation of the church bells. "I have so much gratitude for Women of the Rule."

With 86 active members, Women of the Rule is dedicated to making a difference in the world by supporting the mission and ministries of the sisters. All the members come together to form a partnership with the sisters by providing financial support for

important strategic initiatives. They also have opportunities for personal enrichment through programs centered on Benedictine spirituality and values offered exclusively by the sisters for Women of the Rule.

"The Rule of St. Benedict is a spiritual path for finding God in the ordinary circumstances of daily life. The Sisters of St. Benedict live the 1,500-year-old monastic tradition of the Rule. Women of the Rule, joining with the sisters, seek to instill Benedictine values—hospitality, peace, balance, stewardship, listening, care, and respect for others—into their own lives." •

Sister Karlene Sensmeier was so happy to hear her proposal for the emergency warning system was fully funded.



Want to join Women of the Rule?

Be a part of lasting change.

If you are interested in becoming a Woman of the Rule, contact Sister Barbara Catherine Schmitz at bcschmitz@thedome.org.

To learn more, visit their page on our website at www.thedome.org/get-involved/women-of-the-rule/.

Father Joe Ziliak has a humble home in Evansville, Indiana. He collects religious texts and memorabilia from his travels to share with his guests.

Seeking ways to give back

Father Joe Ziliak tells us why he loves the Sisters of St. Benedict *by Sister Jennifer Miller and Tory Lanaghan*

“The sisters have always been there for me since I began first grade at St. Ben’s with Sr. Cleophas,” Fr. Joe stated with pride. The sisters played an important role in Fr. Joe’s life, especially given the fact that he was the youngest of five boys and his mother died when he was just 11 years old. He shared, “The nuns were motherly. They were wonderful. And I have loved them through the years.”

Fr. Joe recalled that there were 59 students in his class at St. Ben’s, and yet the nuns kept good order and the students learned much. He especially liked his music teachers. He had an exceptional singing voice which led him to sing solos at church. He said the sisters had deep pockets in which they carried holy water. The students were sprinkled prior to the service. His recollection is that his teachers were always “kind and gentle,” not the ruler-wielding tyrants about which some speak. Fr. Joe remembers both his teachers and the other sisters who were teaching at St. Ben’s. He runs through the names like a litany: “Sisters Helen Maurer, Daniel, Mary Carmen, Mary George, Lambert, Mary Esther, Mary Margaret, Dolores Gaesser, Mary Richard, Isadore, Carmelita.”

Although the sisters spoke to Joe of priesthood as a noble and worthy life, they didn’t pressure him to become a priest. They did indicate he had talents that would work well in the priesthood. It was a Benedictine priest at St. Ben’s who asked Joe if he wanted to go to St. Meinrad. Joe felt that the priests and the sisters modeled the good things in life, that their attitudes were worth following.

Fr. Joe was subsequently ordained to the priesthood in Innsbruck, Austria in 1962. His ministry has included work with seminarians, working in radio and TV, being editor of *The Message*, and pastoring the parishes of St. Nicholas, Nativity, and St. John the Baptist, Newburgh. Although Fr. Joe retired in 2012, he is currently Vicar for Retired Priests. He helps out in parishes if needed. And he leads trips to various places all over the world. He recently returned from a trip to the Pacific northwest. He speaks of the giant redwoods with a whisper of wonder. Japan was another more recent trip, a country that Fr. Joe found clean, hospitable, and recognizing the gifts of older citizens.

Father Joe Ziliak, the youngest of five boys, lost his mother at a very young age. Here his whole family gathers together. He is in his mother’s arms.



Upcoming travel includes trips to Ireland, the Holy Land, and Oberammergau for the Passion Play.

Fr. Joe has traveled to more than 40 countries. In so doing he has learned much about history and unique cultural practices. His travel has also encouraged an attitude of openness to other people, to different values, to other ways of living. He believes that no particular country has all the answers.

Fr. Joe is happy to give to the sisters, believing it is his “opportunity to support values and a way of life that has been wonderful” for him. Fr. Joe defines giving as “a way of saying I’ve been blessed and I want to help somebody else achieve that same blessing.” Fr. Joe trusts that the sisters use well what they are given. He notes that, “We are all obliged to give. There are many ways to help the sisters in their ministry. If a person can help financially, that goes a long way. Living in a world where things aren’t always kind and good, this is an outfit you can trust. With the sisters, what we give is passed on to others.”

Pleased that the sisters keep changing to meet the needs of the people, Fr. Joe pointed in particular to the use of Benet Hall for affordable senior housing, to the wisdom of having Trilogi medical services close by, and to the people touched through the efforts of Sr. Jane Michele working for Habitat for Humanity. Fr. Joe believes that sisters have touched many people through the years and that their formation efforts continue to make a big impact in the world today.



Fr. Joe remembers how the sisters made his choice to enter the priesthood much easier with their loving presence.

If you want to include the Sisters of St. Benedict in your will, as Father Joe has done, visit FreeWill.com/sosb or contact Jean Weyer at jweyer@thedome.org to get started. Your plan can help keep the sisters moving toward the future. ●

Everyone needs *a plan*.

If you’re like most Americans, you haven’t created a will, or the one you have is outdated. Writing a will is one of the most important actions you can take to protect your estate and care for the people and causes you love.

The Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana, have partnered with the professionals at FreeWill to provide a **FREE**, secure, and simple way to write a legally valid will. Visit www.FreeWill.com/sosb to begin.

There is no cost, whether or not you choose to include a gift to the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana. Many of our supporters have already taken this step to ensure the continuation of our sisters’ ministries and the care of our senior sisters and historic monastery.

Questions? Contact Jean Weyer
jweyer@thedome.org • (812) 367-1411, Ext. 2631

SISTERS
OF ST. BENEDICT
FERDINAND, INDIANA
.....
Seek. Pray. Share.

Get started on your **FREE** will today!
Visit: www.FreeWill.com/sosb



Pray.



Whatever you ask for in ***prayer***,
believe that you have received it and it
will be yours.

Mark 11:24

Pray for our new ministries

Sisters shift roles as new leadership changes.

by Dawn Schnell

Along with the election of a new prioress comes many ministry changes for our sisters here at the monastery. Listed are several updates recently made.

Sister Anita Louise Lowe – Prioress

Sister Anita was installed as prioress on July 13 after her election on June 4, 2019. Previously she held roles as the Director of Liturgy, Assistant Director of Communications, Public Relations Manager, Assistant Director of Vocations, and Director of Vocations. Sr. Anita also taught English and French to students at Marian Heights Academy.

Sister Rose Wildeman – Subprioress

Most recently Sister Rose served as the Monastery Coordinator. She has worked as a music teacher and liturgist in Evansville for several years. Sister Rose has also served as the Director of Initial Formation and Assistant Monastery Liturgist.

Sister Marilyn Schroering – Monastery Coordinator

Sister Marilyn assumes the role of Monastery Coordinator, after serving the monastery at the switchboard and reception area. Other past ministries include working in the monastery kitchen and retreat center, teaching for 11 years and working in school administration for 19 years.

Sister Jill Marie Reuber – Vocations Director

The newest Vocations Director for the monastery is Sister Jill Reuber. Coming to the monastery full time from her teaching positions at Sacred Heart Model School in

Louisville. Sister Jill also taught at St. Patrick's School in Louisville and St. Bernard's in Rockport. She has been instrumental in leading the monastery's own girls' camp, Camp Marian.

Sister Anna Corrine O'Connor – Benedictine Hospitality Center

Alongside Sister Jackie Kissel, Sister Anna Corrine oversees and manages the Benedictine Hospitality Center. She has recently moved back to the monastery from teaching Theology at Presentation Academy in Louisville. Sister Anna Corrine's ministries include working at Southern Indiana Rehabilitation Services, St. Vincent Day Care, teaching at several local Catholic schools and serving as retreat coordinator for Kordes Retreat Center.

Sister Traci Stutz – Liturgist

With a masters in pastoral studies, liturgy, and scripture, Sister Traci will serve the Sisters of St. Benedict as Liturgist. Previously, her time and talents were dedicated to her ministries as Director of Vocations, Benedictine Scholar House, and Kordes Retreat Center. Before that, she served at the Flaget Retreat Center and as the Assistant Director of Youth Ministry with the Archdiocese of Louisville.

Sister Karlene Sensmeier – Director of Planning and Outreach

Sister Karlene will continue her efforts in outreach and will also lead planning strategies and activities for the monastery. She taught at St. Benedict in Evansville, St. Matthew's in Mount Vernon, and St. Mary's in Apple Valley before becoming principal at St. Benedict School. Former ministries include Assistant Development Director, Institute for Spiritual Leadership and Kordes Retreat Center Director.

Sister Doris Schepers – Technology


As a systems administrator for 22+ years, Sister Doris Schepers' knowledge of computer programming and information management will benefit the monastery as she joins the technology department. Sister Doris also has a teaching background with a masters in education with an endorsement to teach technology.

Sister Jeanne Ellen Niehaus – Switchboard

In company with lay staff employee Julie Beck, Sister Jeanne Ellen will handle switchboard operations at the monastery. You can find her at the main entrance in the afternoons, greeting callers and visitors. Previously, Sister Jeanne Ellen was an elementary school teacher, maintenance/housekeeping supervisor, and Social Services Coordinator with St. John Center for Homeless Men. ●

Sister Marilyn Schroering (Monastery Coordinator), Sister Anita Louise Lowe (Prioress), and Sister Rose Wildeman (Subprioress) will be using their gifts to guide the sisters forward according to the community's direction statements.





Sister Anita Louise was happy to celebrate with all her friends and family on the day of her installation.

Pray for our new Prioress

Meet Sister Anita Louise Lowe, 14th prioress

Sister Anita Louise Lowe, 14th Prioress of Monastery Immaculate Conception, has a deep connection to God and her community of sisters. We interviewed her to find out what the discernment process was like and how she plans to guide the Sisters of St. Benedict according to the community's direction statements.

Q: During the discernment process, when you realized you were “in the running” as the next prioress, what went through your mind?

Unlike the political world, we don't “run for office” in the community. Instead, we use a discernment process in which the sisters discuss what qualities we need in a leader at this time and who might possess those qualities. I wasn't surprised that my name surfaced among the many names that came forth, but I didn't expect it to go quite as far as it did! It is humbling to be called to serve the community. I admit that there were moments throughout the process when I wondered if I could do this, but then I would pray. And, I felt graced throughout, knowing that the Holy Spirit was truly leading the community and me as we continued to discern.

Q: How did your family and closest friends react to your news of being prioress-elect? How have they supported you in your new ministry?

When I called my sister right after the election, she kept saying one word over and over: “Wow!” My family and friends have been very supportive in checking on how I am and encouraging me to take time off as I can.

Q: What has been the biggest change for you in this new role versus your previous ministry?

I think the biggest change for me is that, in liturgy, I could organize my day around a to-do list. While some days the unexpected happened, most of the time I knew what needed to be taken care of depending on the day of the week or the liturgical day of the year. As prioress, there is little predictability. What is stable is community prayer and meals. Beyond that, I need to be open to the unexpected needs of my sisters.

Q: What are you looking forward to most during your first year as prioress?

I most look forward to getting to know my sisters on a deeper level as I meet with each of them. I also look forward to how we as a community will unpack our direction statements.

Q: Tell me about the direction statements the community decided upon and what that means for the coming year.

The direction statements will guide us through the end of my term of office in 2025. This year the council will look at each statement and list some possible ways forward or elements that could be included as we approach the statement's purpose. During some of our community meetings, we will begin to have a similar discussion with the entire community, looking at what each of these statements mean for us individually and how we envision putting them into action.

Q: What will be the biggest challenge for the community moving forward?

At this point in history, we continue to deal with some of the same issues facing American society at large: baby

boomers. We had unusually large numbers of sisters entering the community in the 1950's and early 1960's. As the baby boomers age, we have a large number needing various levels of care. Since the 60's, we, like many other religious communities, have seen the numbers of new entrants decrease. We need to look at this both realistically and with hope for the future. Vocation efforts need to be a major emphasis for us, as well as looking at ways that we can build relationships with volunteers, oblates, and others who are drawn to Benedictine spirituality. The main question becomes how we will continue to live our Benedictine charism and invite others to join us in following the way of Benedict.

Q: What message do you have for friends of the monastery or those wanting to know the sisters on a deeper level?

One of the core values of Benedictine life is hospitality. We are called to receive Christ in each person who comes to the monastery. In today's world, that may mean coming as a visitor to our monastery or our website. We want to welcome people to explore their spirituality in light of the teachings of Benedict. I hope that anyone who wishes to know more about our community or about our spirituality will feel free to come and pray with us, to come and seek God with us.

Q: Will you be able to continue playing your harp and give any music lessons? How will being prioress affect this love of yours?

Playing the harp is like therapy for me, so yes, I will continue to play the harp. I mentioned to the community that I would need to be able to practice and play, if for no other reason than to feed my spirit. The difference now is that I need to make sure that I plan time in my schedule for practice. I just started teaching harp in the last year or so and only had two students. I am happy about that now, because I believe that I can maintain these two, especially since both are nearby and flexible if I need to change a lesson day or time.

Q: The demands of a prioress can be taxing. How do you relax and recharge?

Playing the harp is definitely a way for me to recharge my energy. Another is the simple act of walking outside during the day, whether that's a walk through the courtyard after Mass or some other time of the day, or taking a longer walk on our grounds or in one of the area parks at another time. Nature is rejuvenating for me, so it's always good for me to get outside, even if it's just for a few minutes. I enjoy taking time on Sunday mornings to sit in the courtyard for my prayer time. When winter comes, I will need to find a place to sit which allows me to see the countryside.

Q: What are the keys to translating the vision for the community's future into action?

I think we first need to have conversation as a monastic community about our vision for the future. We need to dive into our direction statements to see how we want to

live them out. Our first direction statement calls for us to live our Benedictine life with intentionality, integrity, and faithfulness. This will call us to say what it means to be a Benedictine woman in this day and age. From there, we can see how we live this out. Our second statement is to be a viable community by attending to vowed membership, other forms of affiliation, stewardship of our resources, and financial stability. That covers a lot of territory. Part of stewarding our resources involves making sure that our buildings and grounds are maintained and cared for. And, as I mentioned above, we need to have a strong emphasis on working to attract women to join our community and men and women to partner with us in our Benedictine way of life. The third statement is a call to be aware of and responsive to the needs of our world. In a world that is increasingly divided and fragmented, this statement calls us to listen and respect all views and to help bring a sense of dialogue to the major issues that face our nation and our world. •

In memoriam

Sister Mary Longtine



February 14, 1938 -
August 21, 2019

Sister Mary was born in Milwaukee, WI. She was the third of six children of William and Elizabeth (Braun) Longtine. She entered the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand in 1956 and made her profession of monastic vows in 1958.

She is survived by three brothers, Bill (Mary Margaret) from

Evansville, IN, Paul (Jouella) from Enumclaw, WA, and Robert (Judy) from Naperville, IL; one sister, Ann Spallone (Marco) from Fort Wayne, IN; nieces and nephews, and members of her religious community. She was preceded in death by her parents.

Sister Mary attended Academy Immaculate Conception and St. Benedict College in Ferdinand, studying education. She worked as a teacher in southern Indiana at Holy Rosary School, St. Ferdinand High School, Dale Elementary and High School, Mater Dei High School, Marian Heights Academy, St. Philip School, Trinity Catholic High School in Whitesville, Kentucky, and Ladywood-St. Agnes High School in Indianapolis. Starting in the early 1990's, she served as a naturalist for Wyandotte Cave and Harmonie Park. Following these years, she served as a tour guide and assisted in other supportive services at the monastery. •



Share.

But do not
forget to do
good and to
share,
for with
such
sacrifices
God is well
pleased.

Hebrews 3:16

Share in the celebration

Sisters celebrate Silver and Golden Jubilees

by Tory Lanaghan



Sister Teresa Gunter receives a blessing for her 25th year.

Four sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana celebrated their monastic profession this summer. Sister Jane Michele McClure, Sister Joan Scheller, and Sister Rose Wildeman celebrated their 50th year, a Golden Jubilee, and Sister Teresa Gunter celebrated her 25th year, a Silver Jubilee.

The golden jubilarians, Sister Jane Michele, Sister Joan, and Sister Rose entered Monastery Immaculate Conception in 1967 and professed their monastic vows in 1969. All three sisters

were high school classmates at Mater Dei High School in Evansville, Indiana. During their time there, they were attracted to the Sisters of St. Benedict while interacting with their teachers and administrators.

The silver jubilarian, Sister Teresa, entered Monastery Immaculate Conception in 1992 and professed her monastic vows in 1994. Originally from West Memphis, Arkansas, Sister Teresa found the Sisters of St. Benedict through working at Madonna Day School, a special education school that the Sisters founded in order to serve special needs families in Memphis, Tennessee. Several sisters she worked with invited her to visit Monastery Immaculate Conception. Soon after, Sister Teresa decided to stay.

Sister Teresa served as Vocation Director for Sisters of St. Benedict and youth minister for parishes in Evansville. She is currently spending time taking care of her family in Arkansas.

Sister Jane Michele is a fundraiser for Evansville's Habitat for Humanity and recently received an honorary Doctorate of Human Letters from the University of Evansville for her work serving the homeless and underprivileged. **Sister Joan** serves as director of Latino Outreach Ministry, helping immigrants in southern Indiana improve the quality of their lives.



Sister Joan Scheller, Sister Rose Wildeman, and Sister Jane Michele McClure celebrate 50 years of sisterhood.

Sister Rose was recently appointed subprioress and works together with Sister Anita Louise Lowe to guide the community on the path of the new direction statements.

All of these sisters pledged their hearts and lives to the Sisters of St. Benedict. Celebrate with them their many years of prayer, hard work, peace, and community and wish them many, many more in the future. ●

The golden jubilarians renew the vows that they read at their first profession 50 years ago. Later the prioress held those vows high as the sisters processed out of church.



Brand new to
our shelves:
Prayerful
Honey Mustard
Pretzels come in
16 oz, 8 oz, and
4 oz bags.



Share the snacks

Monastery Baked Goods reveals new items

Monastery Baked Goods has launched new products and improved packaging for many items. Read on to find out what's now available for purchase at the Monastery Gift Shop or online at monasterygiftshop.org.

Honey Mustard Prayerful Pretzels

Our newest pretzels are bursting with flavor and crunch and have the perfect kick of tangy mustard and the sweetest honey. Come snack time, this treat hits the spot!

Hildegard Minis

The wonderful flavor of our bestselling Hildegard Cookies is now available in a mini version! Pick up your resealable 8 oz bag today.

Simply Lemon Cookies in 4 oz and 8 oz size

The intense lemon flavor and crisp exterior give way to a chewy center cookie! It's difficult to eat just one, but if you do, the new resealable packaging will keep them fresh.

Pretzels Available in 16 oz Bags

Soccer games? Tailgate party? Grab our new size 16 oz bags of Spicy, Sweet or new Honey Mustard Prayerful Pretzels for the win! •

The new Hildegard Mini's have the same delicious flavor as our Hildegard cookies, but in a bite-sized portion.



Our delicious lemon cookies now come in multiple sizes to fill your cravings.



Share your spirit

Why a retreat can change your outlook

Wanting some "time off?" There are so many choices available these days, from all-inclusive resorts and sight-seeing adventures with the family to quick weekend getaways. But many times these "vacations" aren't providing the renewal you are seeking.

Life is demanding, especially today with cell phones and computers constantly keeping us wired and reactive. Sometimes you need to step away and unplug from the daily distractions.

Why not start afresh with a spirituality retreat or program offered in our Benedictine Hospitality Center? Set aside the commotion and stress, and instead immerse yourself in calm surroundings and reconnect with your spirituality and faith. There is nothing wrong with taking time for yourself. Retreats offer the perfect way to relax and refuel, allowing you to return as a stronger, better version of you as a result!

What are you waiting for? Look at our upcoming programs and retreats on the next page, led by our Spirituality Ministry Team or special guests. Reassert your faith and replenish your soul with the Sisters of St. Benedict. •



What's Happening at the Dome?

Here are a few upcoming events and celebrations

September

27-29 Alumnae Reunion

October

10-13 St. Louis Women's
Retreat
20 Rite of Oblation
Ceremony
23 Forgiving What We
Can't Forget Retreat
27 Diamond Jubilees

November

3-9 National Vocations
Awareness Week
15 Opening Ceremony for
Christkindlmarkt
16-17 Christkindlmarkt
18-21 Benedictine Directed
Retreat for Oblates and
Others

December

6-8 Come and See Weekend
8 Feast of the Immaculate
Conception
24 Christmas Eve Mass

February 2020

16 Oblate Meeting
21-23 High School Come and
See Weekend
28-1 Come and See
Weekend

Benedictine Hospitality Center

Renew yourself

Enjoy the hospitality of the
Sisters of St. Benedict and discover
the peace you long for.

Sign up at thedome.org, or e-mail
hospitality@thedome.org to reserve
your room.



SISTERS
OF ST. BENEDICT
FERDINAND, INDIANA

Seek. Pray. Share.

