

Seek. Pray. Share.

Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana

VOLUME 10 NUMBER 1 SPRING 2019



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FROM THE PRIORESS



If these past six years were compared to a football team, I would say God is the Coach, I've been the quarterback, and the sisters were the team. You were the fans and supporters of the team. We have run plays, passed the ball, made field goals and, yes, the other team has sacked the quarterback a time or two. We have learned in every game we need you, our supporters, to help us remember our "Coach will guide us." We have it within us to carry the faith to others.

Together, with each one of you supporting the team, we have had a game plan:

First, we looked carefully at our resources. What did we have to help us live Benedictine life and serve those in need? Next to our sisters, buildings, and land, you are our biggest asset.

With your help we established an Assisted Living Program and space for our senior sisters. Like you, we have the gift of wisdom of our older sisters and we also have the responsibility for their care. Everyone stays as active as possible. But when the time of infirmity comes we must be there to assist. This program includes a new clinic where we have doctor's hours every few weeks. Our on-going care continues with nursing in Hildegard Health Care on the 3rd floor of the monastery. It is a Medicaid facility, which allows us to access government benefits. We have assisted care on the 4th floor of our building and, thanks to you, it is a 24/7 operation with different levels of staff

there to serve. Our non-infirm sisters continue to serve the infirmed and the assisted care sisters.

You have funded and actively helped with each piece of construction throughout the past years. Madonna Hall, which was once the Academy dorm full of asbestos and lead base paint, is now gone to reveal the new face of the monastery buildings. A new Benedictine Hospitality Center, located much closer to our church in our historic building, is up and operating. Adjoining rooms are being renovated and are scheduled for completion in July. And still, other parts of our historic home are slowly being renovated to meet the needs of today.

Thanks to you, we can focus on what is needed by those we serve, who are looking to deepen their spiritual life. They seek time away, spiritual direction, a chance to be in nature and a place of peace. Because of you, they have that place of peace. Because of you, we can continue our ministries and give praise to the God who guides all of our lives.

After all of this, your service, support, and prayers make our future possible. Our sisters serve in ministry from Evansville, Indiana to Louisville, Kentucky to Indianapolis, Indiana, serving the poor, working in parish and diocesan positions and so much more. The Benedictine Scholar House, an affiliate to the Louisville Family Scholar House, continues to serve single-parent families and their children. Our Latino ministry is an immigration center which serves those who need assistance.

Vocations is of utmost importance. We have been able to invite hundreds of young women to our monastery to help discern God's call. Between Camp Marian, Service to Sisterhood, and volunteers, we all have been blessed on our journeys to God. We do not know if those discerning will join our community or if they wish to be affiliated with us in a different way. But, we do know that together we seek God and listen for God's call.

The sisters are always looking into new forms of connection. What if someone would like to live close and volunteer? What if someone across the country wants to be more involved? What if... We must explore all avenues and keep our minds open to the possibilities, trusting God to make a clear path for us and the Church.

These are just a few of the many ways you have been on the sideline, cheering us on and helping us to serve those in need. With you, we grow in faith. With you, we see that there is another way than violence, political fighting, and drugs. Together, God calls us to be more than this. Thank you for joining us on the journey.

Love,

Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz, OSB
Prioress

P. S. It has been my pleasure to serve you during the past 6 years as prioress. I know that you have shared your support both financially and as a part of the team who wish to serve our God. I thank you and ask for your prayers as we discern our new prioress in June. She will need your support. I know she will love you as I do.

God bless you and your families!

Seek.Pray.Share.

Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana



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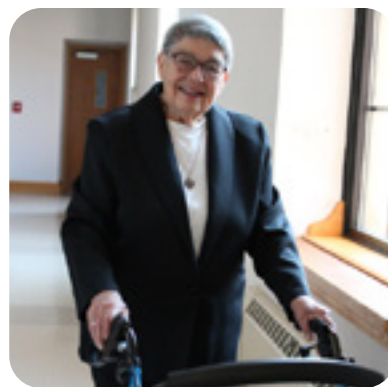
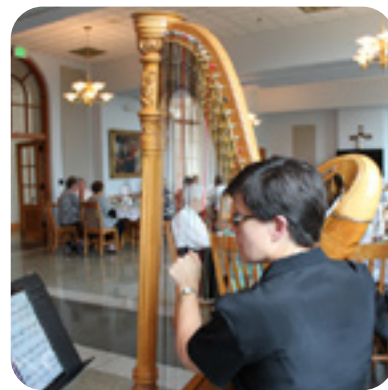
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Mission: We, the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana, are monastic women seeking God through the Benedictine tradition of community life, prayer, hospitality, and service to others. By our life and work, we commit ourselves to be a presence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

Seek.

Jeremiah 29: 12-13

A reflection by Sister Kathy Bilskie

*Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you **seek** me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord...*

What does it mean to “seek” God? Is God hiding or trying to get away from us? Quite the contrary. God is always near. And our seeking is reaching out to the God who is Presence to deepen the relationship. While we can use our intellect to think about a rapport with another person, at some point our hearts have to be involved. If we are serious about the relationship, then, not just a piece of our heart, but all our heart is involved in the connection.

Seeking God is more than basking in the radiance of God’s love during a religious rite or Church ceremony. Seeking God with all our heart is about living life fully and honestly with joy and sorrow, with the many little deaths as well as the elations of daily life. Seeking God with all our heart implies presenting ourselves with an open heart that is able to receive the richness of God. Such openness infers vulnerability. When a heart is open and seeking beyond itself, it gives over control and it risks accepting reality and possibilities.

All the tasks we do in life will not be considered a success, but we have been promised the realization of our heart’s desire to find God. God has promised: Pray and I will hear you. Seek with all your heart; I will let you find me. Yes, we do have to actively be a part of the process of seeking, but we are assured that our seeking will result in our recognizing our wonderful, loving God.



Seeking a Leader

by Dawn Schaefer

The sisters prepare to discern a new prioress

This year, the installation of a new prioress will take place at the Monastery as Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz's term is concluding in July. Historically, term lengths have varied, but in 2013, the sisters decided to elect the prioress for a six year term.

Sister Jane Becker shared that as the sisters enter the discernment/election process, they do so with openness to the Spirit. "We believe the Spirit speaks through the sisters praying and listening to one another's wisdom," she said. "The goal is to arrive at a choice for prioress that is best for the community and that each of us can say 'yes' to with peace of mind."

The sisters have set aside five days in late May for the official discernment process to elect the prioress that will succeed Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz. These solemn and focused days are started with prayer and reflection on the principles of discernment, making sure that each sister listens with her heart open to the Spirit and remembering to treat her sisters with respect. Through long discussions and prayer, the sisters determine the characteristics and abilities required from the next prioress. From these discussions and prayers, candidate names come to light.

Sister Jane described how they narrow down their talent. "In surfacing names, we first work broadly, with everyone giving three or four names of sisters who they feel should be considered for prioress." These names, accompanied with a line of reasoning for their nomination, are written down and displayed. "It is always encouraging at this point to realize how much talent we have in the community," said Sister Jane.

Similar to the primary elections of our country, a first preferential ballot is cast. The community decides on a cut-off number of candidates they want to consider further and then offers the nominations to the sisters in question, allowing them to accept or decline.

Once a candidate accepts, she stands before her sisters, offering up her biggest strengths, weaknesses, and her vision as prioress. After questions, nominees are excused while the community begins composing questions to address any concerns. After discussing these concerns with the candidates, they narrow down the pool until the entire community unanimously decides on a single person to lead them for the next six years.

The entire community will proceed into the church, eyes to God and confident in their vote. Following the exciting announcement, the new

prioress will step forward to accept the offer under the presence of God and all of her sisters. Each sister then has an opportunity to proclaim her support to the prioress-elect so that the community can move forward in solidarity.

"It is an awesome experience to go to church knowing who we are going to elect to such a responsible office," Sister Jane said.

From there, Sister Barbara Lynn will take a sabbatical from the community, getting some much needed rest and relaxation from her strong years as prioress and letting the new prioress settle into her role as leader of her community.

The installation is set to take place on July 13, 2019. ●





Sister Rachel Geracitano stands before Christ during her Final Profession Mass. She could not stop smiling throughout the whole ceremony.

Seeking Answers by Dawn Schaefer

The newly professed share why they joined community

What's my calling? For any young person entering adulthood, choosing a college or starting a career, it's a question that comes to mind daily. Many elders or professionals giving advice often suggest "find your passion." For Sister Rachel Geracitano and Sister Roxanne Cassandra Higgins, their interpretation of "calling" came in the most literal sense – by devoting their lives to sisterhood and community life at the Monastery Immaculate Conception.

Sister Roxanne took her first vows last August, temporarily professing her dedication to God and the Sisters of St. Benedict. Sister Rachel went one step further, laying down her life to God forever by taking her perpetual vows last October. Taking these vows means something vastly different to each sister. Listen to what the two newest members of the Sisters of St. Benedict had to say about their journey.

Why did you become a Sister?

Sister Roxanne: I became a sister because I felt called by God. I believe I am currently walking the path he designed for me.

Sister Rachel: It is the best way I can become who God created me to be. As a Benedictine I feel strongly connected to and frequently reminded of God's call to love.

How did you discern entering the Sisters of St. Benedict?

Sister Roxanne: My discernment consisted of a lot of prayers by me and my family and friends. It was hard. My heart belongs to Jamaica, but after one visit to Ferdinand, a piece of my heart took root here. It certainly was very emotional, but along with the emotions there was a peace I can't explain. A peace that said yes, right now this is where I want you to go.

Sister Rachel: It was a long process with multiple visits, conversations, and prayer. I knew in my gut from the very beginning that Ferdinand was the place for me – but I needed a lot of help discerning through and interpreting that gut feeling.

When did you first begin to think God may be calling you to religious life?

Sister Roxanne: I have always had a strong personal relationship with God. He has been there even when I did not want him there. That said, religious life has always been an option among all the other options.

Sister Rachel: God worked through Dr. Melanie-Prejean Sullivan, my campus minister at Bellarmine University. She suggested that I come to Ferdinand for a weekend retreat. She was instrumental in both introducing me to and walking with me through the entire discernment process. There were many other people who helped me formally and informally, some without even knowing it. On the

lighter side of discernment – there were a lot of irrational demands I placed on God to “prove” to me this was the path to pursue. I requested things that I did not think were possible: I had to have a dog (we had Serena, a black Lab at the time), I had to keep my Wii (we already had three), and I remember most vividly my demand to simply live my life on a hammock on the beach. A few months after that, I found myself in our hammock by the lake with Sister Michelle Sinkhorn telling her I wanted to apply to enter.

What do you like most about living in a religious community?

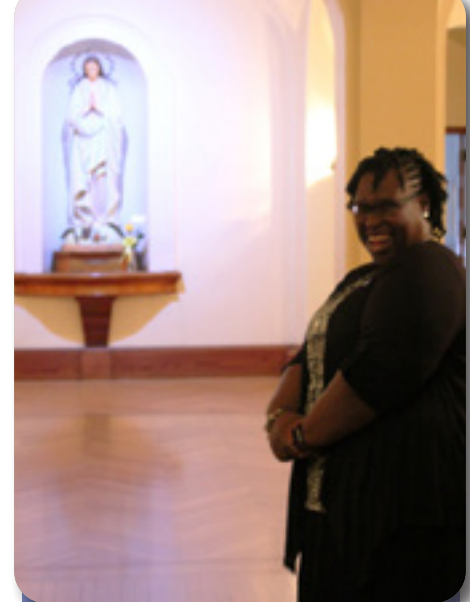
Sister Roxanne: I like the rhythm of the monastic life; our days are hinged by prayer. It is through this prayer that our work flows – Ora et Labora.

Sister Rachel: The amazing amount of love I experience. I’m learning how to live and love intentionally alongside wonderful women who are striving to do the same. Especially now that I’ve made final profession, I feel an even deeper sense of love, commitment, and belonging. I wish I had better words to describe it...

As a young child, what did you dream of becoming when you grew up?

Sister Roxanne: A scientist!

Sister Rachel: I thought for sure I was going to be a professional basketball player. I played on multiple teams, some of which were for age groups older than I was. Life circumstances took me away from the game, I was burnt out and my focus shifted elsewhere. (Thank goodness, because look where I am now!).



Sister Roxanne Cassandra Higgins giggles as she waits to greet her guests after her First Profession Ceremony. She had family and friends fly in from across the country to celebrate with her on her special day.

Sister Rachel Geracitano with Archbishop Joseph Edward Kurtz and Sister Kathryn Huber just after her ceremony.



What advice would you give to a young person considering religious life?

Sister Roxanne: People often ask how you know for sure that this is your vocation. I don’t think you ever know for sure, but you must be willing to do it... to just make up your mind to commit to right now. When I came, I knew I was to be here at that specific moment in time, but I also knew it may not be forever. In the midst of the fear, of taking a step into the unknown, listen for the peace that quiets or rather tries to calm the fear.

Sister Rachel: Two things: trust the process and be gentle with yourself. I remember feeling a lot of pressure to make a decision and to have answers for others. Let go of that! God is with you always – guiding you, inviting you ever deeper into relationship – let God show you the way. You are exactly where you are meant to be in this moment, take a deep breath and live into the beautiful mess! ●

Service to Sisterhood

Learn the life of work and prayer.

Do you think you might be called to religious life? Do you simply want to know more about the Sisters of St. Benedict?

Come live, work, and pray with us during the Service to Sisterhood Program this summer!

Visit zagwithus.org or e-mail tgunter@thedome.org for more details.





*“Be aware that God’s
gaze is upon you wherever you may be.”*

—Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 4

A reflection by Sister Mary Ann Verkamp

If someone asked me why I pray, I would probably respond with the question: Why do you breathe? Prayer gives me life. Prayer is a breath of the Spirit. Prayer connects me with my deepest desires. Prayer is the lifeblood of all I am and do.

On the day of our monastic profession, we sing: “Receive me O Lord... and I shall live.” God welcomes us with open arms. God wants to occupy that center space in our hearts, the place of living communion between creature and Creator. To the degree that we are open and aware of God’s presence, we are praying. Psalm 139 captures how intimately God is involved in our lives. If we are awake and attentive, we become aware of God’s gaze upon us.

“You knit me together in my mother’s womb.” (vs. 13) God has been present and attentive to us since before we were born. What can one say but that “Your mysteries fill me with wonder.” (v. 14) Nothing of my experience has been outside the encircling presence of God whether I was aware of his gaze or not. I am profoundly connected to the Divine Mystery. My very being is intertwined with God’s. This relationship is what prayer is all about. I pray because in God, I live and move and have my being.

Pray.

Prayer for Refugees

Sisters visit the border to serve our neighbors
by Tory Lanaghan

Recently, Pope Francis asked the Catholic Church to “Share the Journey” with thousands of migrants across the world. With this phrase in mind, Sister Gail Hamilton and Sister Teresa Gunter traveled to the Texas border to help another Benedictine, Sister Ursula from Boerne, Texas, distribute clothes, food, money, and comfort to refugees traveling to the United States late last year.

The sisters visited migrant homes that were always at capacity, orphanages full of children who missed their families, and soup kitchens in dire need of help. Even then, some migrant families still had to live on the streets until they could access the proper government agents. Both sisters were moved by the people and their great need.

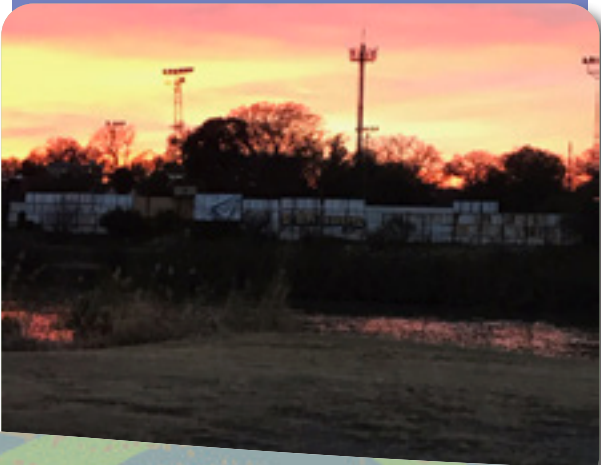
“I felt worlds away, seeing the conditions they live in or survive in on the streets away from their homeland, families, friends, and all they know,” Sister Gail said. “Yet it was our world that I was stepping into and this could easily be our story.”

Sister Teresa agreed, saying that one thing she learned was that it is important to help wherever we are called and to do what we can, when we can.

“As important as it is to make sure that our foreign brothers and sisters have jackets, blankets, shoes, socks, and places to sleep, it is just as important for our neighbors here in Southern Indiana to have the same,” she said. “Just as the migrant home I visited is always full, so are our homeless shelters in Southern Indiana.”

The sisters plan to return to the border to continue helping migrants in May, but until then, they will continue their loving ministries here in Southern Indiana. •

A view from the edge of the Rio Grande, where sisters stopped to distribute clothes and food to refugees.



What do you like to do in your free time?

I love spending time with my family. I have been married for 45 years and have 4 daughters, 11 grandchildren, and 1 great granddaughter. I also love to spend time with my mother-in-law who lives at Scenic Hills Care Center.

How long have you worked at the monastery?

23 years!

Where did you work before you came to the monastery?

I worked as a housekeeper at Memorial Hospital, Heritage Hills High School, and in a nursing home.

What positions have you held while working for the sisters?

I've always been the Housekeeping Coordinator.

What is your favorite memory from working with the sisters?

I loved restoring the wood floor in the choir room!

What do you like most about working with the sisters?

I have gained confidence in myself while working here. Everyone here works as a team and the appreciation of the sisters always shines through. •



Meet Pam Glyn, Our Housekeeping Coordinator

Camp Marian

Registration opens April 1

June 10-12: 5th and 6th grade girls

June 12-14: 7th and 8th grade girls

Register online at
thedome.org/event/camp-marian-2019
or e-mail Teresa Gunter at
tgunter@thedome.org



Prayer in Everything

Find God in the every day
by Sister Anita Louise Lowe



Sister Anita Louise Lowe, speaking at Formation Day for the Diocese of Evansville.

A few years ago, we had a tagline for our community that included the phrase, “Discover God in the Everyday.” As Benedictines, we are called to seek God in the ordinariness of life. While it sounds simple, discovering God in everyday moments requires us to be aware and attentive.

God calls each of us to discover his presence in our lives. In the Book of Kings we read a story of the prophet Elijah: Elijah was fleeing from the king when he received word from God to go out and stand on the mountain because God would be passing by. Elijah does so during a strong wind... but God was not in the wind. Next came an earthquake, but God wasn’t in the earthquake either. Following the earthquake, there was a fire, but God wasn’t in the fire. Finally, there came the sound of “sheer silence.” The story tells us that when Elijah heard this silence, he hid his face and stood at the entrance of the cave, for God was there.

This story emphasizes the need we each have for moments of quiet. Our lives are filled with many activities and distractions. In many places there is always some background noise. Doctors’ offices and stores have music playing. Some of us always have the TV on...whether we are watching or not. We have become accustomed to a level of noise, and the stillness can be disconcerting.

In order to discover God in the everyday occurrences of life, I invite you to find some time of quiet within your day. If you can, go outside, and let the sounds of nature remind you of God’s goodness in creation. Notice the songs of the birds and the slight rustle of the leaves on a tree as the breeze blows by. Feel awe at the beautiful sight of the moon and stars. Just be in the quiet, and let it nourish you.

Such a practice helps us develop an attitude of listening, of seeing, and, therefore, of praying.

St. Benedict began his Rule saying, “Listen carefully, my child, to the master’s instructions, and attend to them with the ear of your heart.” In order to hear God’s words, we need to cultivate an attitude of quiet attentiveness. I remember a cartoon with a small child asking his mother to listen to him. The mother, folding laundry, said, “I am listening to you.” The child went to his mother and held her face saying, “Whole face listen.”

God invites each of us into a relationship in which we and God are both in a stance of “whole-face-listening.” Such a stance allows us to see God’s presence in the various circumstances of our daily lives. Some of these may be blessings: a phone call from a good friend who lives at a distance, the surprise visit of a classmate from high school or college. Others may be an inconvenience: a traffic jam, interruptions to the plans I made for the day.

It is easy to notice God in the good situations in our day. The inconveniences, though, are also invitations to hear



God's call for my life in this moment. Am I being called to attend to someone in need? Does the traffic jam allow me a moment to think of God in my life rather than to be upset at something beyond my control?

Discovering God in everyday occurrences calls me to be open to hearing God's voice within the voice of those who are around me, even if I don't like what I hear. The call is to listen respectfully and to take what I hear to prayer in order to learn God's message for me at this time.

The second step to being more attentive to God's presence in our lives is a call to see. The story of the incarnation of Jesus reminds us that God became one of us. As brothers and sisters of Jesus, we are called to be the image of God for others.

Believing that each of us bears the image of God calls me to consider my response to other people. How do I see God in my family members and friends? What quality of God does each of them portray for me? Those who are closest to us, who see us each day, can remind us of what it means to love and how we can best respond to life's difficulties.

We are also called to see the face of God in the stranger. It can be difficult to see God's face in a person I dislike or in the face of one who does wrong. Yet, that is our call. With this attitude, watching the news can become a time of looking for God's presence in the face of the other, whether I agree or disagree with that person, whether I am seeing the face of a victim or of one who has done harm to another. In a time when it is all too easy to vilify those we disagree with, we are called all the more to look for God's image in the face of all, not just those who think like I do.

To discover God in the ordinary events of the day is a call to listen, to see, and then to take what I hear and see to prayer. By reflecting upon the events of daily life, I can ask for the grace to see with the eyes of God, to listen with God's ears, and to respond as God would have me.

In the words of Saint Teresa of Avila:

*"Christ has no body now but yours,
no hands, no feet on earth but yours,
yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world...
Christ has no body now on earth but
yours."*

We seek to become this image of God for our families, our friends, our co-workers, and our world. Let us all start by attending to God's presence in the ordinary events of each day and by allowing those events to lead us to become more like God in our thoughts, our words, and our actions. •



Sister Mary Leon Kiesel

October 18, 1934 – December 16, 2018

Sister Mary Leon was born on October 18, 1934, in Fort Branch, Indiana, the third of eight children of Leo and Lorene (Martin) Kiesel. She entered the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand in 1953 and made her profession of monastic vows in 1955.

Sister Mary Leon attended St. Benedict College in Ferdinand studying education. She worked the majority of her ministry as a teacher at St. Theresa School in Evansville, St. Bernard in Rockport, St. Mary in Huntingburg, Celestine Elementary and Holy Family school in Jasper from 1956 to 1997. She worked in parish ministry at Holy Family until 2005 and as an Activities Assistant at the monastery through 2012. Most recently, Sister Mary Leon served in the Ministry of Prayer at the Hildegard Health Center. •



Sister Shirley Ann Schultheis

November 18, 1940 – January 1, 2019

Sister Shirley Ann, also known as Sister Mary Keith until she reclaimed her baptismal name, was born on November 18, 1940, in Evansville, Indiana. She is the second of two children of Oscar and Nora (Pfeiffer) Schultheis. She entered the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand in 1958 and made her profession of monastic vows in 1960.

She attended Academy Immaculate Conception and St. Benedict College in Ferdinand, studying education. She worked as a teacher in Southern Indiana for Fulda Elementary, Celestine Elementary, St. Henry School, St. Benedict School and Marian Day School from 1964-1970. Her ministry led her to SIRS in Ferdinand and Boonville as a Special Education Supervisor and Community Resource Consultant from 1971-1999. Since 1999, her ministry was at the monastery as a Social Services Coordinator, Sales Associate at the Monastery Gift Shop, and supportive services for the Sisters of St. Benedict. •

Share.

“Be propelled by the Spirit of God within you. Be on fire with the love of God so that it becomes contagious. Become a hospitable and welcoming person to all. Develop the mustard seed concept. Start small. Be patient. God can grow large trees from small seeds. Be leaven. Be salt. Be light. Make a difference. Amen.”

— Sister Geraldine Hedinger
(1946-2010)

Sharing is also making a difference. How can we share our lives without making a difference in another person's life? As a community we make a difference in each others' lives as we seek God together in community. We share our lives in our common prayer whether we are at the monastery or out on mission. We share our lives in our daily sharing at the common table. We make a difference in each other's lives.

We make a difference in the lives of others by sharing ourselves in our ministries. Whether we are working with children, the homeless, the elderly, or in the bakery, we share who we are. We are called to be present to those to whom we minister to and share seeking God with them. God doesn't ask us to keep inside ourselves. He asks us to share who we are and our faith with others. God doesn't want us to move mountains, but we can make a difference by sharing our faith.

We make a difference to our families and all those who visit the monastery. We share our space and who we are with everyone who comes to take a tour. We make a difference in our guests lives. Many say how peaceful it is to come on the grounds. We share our lives and we make a difference. We start small, but God works in large ways through our small ways.

Reflection by Sister Jill Reuber



Share the Experience *by Tory Lanaghan*

John and Stella Bennett spread Benedictine love across the globe

Since 2014, John and Stella Bennett, members of the St. Hildegard Society, and 25-year friends with the sisters have travelled to Africa to spread the Benedictine charisms of community and hospitality to sick, poor, and starving people. Making their way through Kenya, Tanzania, and other countries, the two travel with a group of missionaries and priests. Together, they visit orphanages, feed the hungry, and pray over the sick, all while changing the lives of the people they visit.

Both John and Stella say that one of the most compelling parts of their visits is celebrating Mass together. Since it is not often that these communities have the opportunity to hold the sacrament of Eucharist, hundreds of people come from miles away to celebrate. Masses will last up to five hours and are book-ended with rallies where people gather to share the joy of Christ.

Stella said that seeing the Catholic community come together was life-changing. "People would pray all through the night. You could see them lying underneath the trees on mats just giving praise to God."

With the joy of community, or perhaps because of it, the Bennetts say that these trips are also peppered with real-life miracles.

John told us about one woman, who had appeared to have had a stroke earlier that day.

"a large group of missionaries laid hands on her, asking God to heal her," he said. "Within a few minutes the woman was getting up, walking around, and singing." To this day, this miracle woman is alive and well.

When they come home, John and Stella do not leave their Benedictine spirits in Africa. In Indiana, they bring service and love to everyone in their community. Earlier in their lives, John ministered at prisons and Stella served alongside the sisters at Camp Henderson, where she first met Sister Beata Mehling and fell in love with the sisters. 25 years later, Stella is now an Oblate with the Sisters of St. Benedict and both are members of the St. Hildegard Society. With Sister Mary Oliver Reising, they work to establish small Christian communities all around Indiana and are very active in Southern Indiana's Walk to Emmaus.

Truly John and Stella Bennett, with their loving relationships and dedication to the charism of community, represent what it means to spread and minister Benedictine spirit to the world. We hope to see them continue their ministries for many years. ●



Volunteers help feed the young and hungry orphans.



Stella leads a group of young school children through the grounds to their next class. She was very popular!



Stella (second from right) and John (second from left) enjoy themselves with locals and volunteers alike as they celebrate another day.

Charitable Gift Annuity

Join John and Stella and mutually benefit.



John and Stella are part of our charitable gift annuity program. You can be too.

Your Part: Give a Gift

Our Part: Make payments back for the rest of your life.

It's that simple.

To see our current pay out rates visit thedome.org/cga or call 888-649-1121 ext.2631 for more information.



Linda and Vic Begle with their sponsored child and her family.



Margie and Earl Jerger visiting with their sponsored child and her family.



Judy and Charlie Luebbehusen with their sponsored child and her family.

Share Your Hearts

Oblates and Sisters alike become family to Guatemalans

As all good stories do, this journey of love and hospitality begins with strangers and ends in family. Years ago, from 1965 until 2000, the Benedictine sisters served the community of Coban, Guatemala. They established a community of Ferdinand Benedictines along with native sisters, living the monastic life and evangelizing in many capacities. Sister Mary Judith Fleig always remembers the great love and hospitality she was shown during all 26 years in this small town.

“Whenever I visited a home, whether it was a dirt floor dwelling or a well-built house, I always felt their warm hospitality,” she said. “I always felt ‘mi casa es su casa,’ my home is your home.”

While Sister Mary Judith lived in Guatemala, she always recounted her experiences to her sister, Linda Begle, who was inspired by her dedication to the Guatemalan people. Linda and her husband, Vic, who are Oblates, followed Sister Mary Judith’s travels closely, but never thought they could be involved until they heard of Unbound, a movement of dedicated people who are confronting poverty in new and innovative ways. Vic and Linda joined immediately, choosing to sponsor a child from Guatemala.

“I never imagined that I would be in the same place where Sister Mary Judith ministered,” Linda said. But in 2006, Unbound brought her and her husband to Guatemala to visit their sponsored child, Miriam. After such a joyful experience, they encouraged other family members to sponsor a child in Guatemala. Sister Mary Judith’s siblings, Judy Luebbehusen and her late husband Charlie, and Margie Jerger and her husband Earl, decided to join Unbound with them.

After joining Unbound in 2012, the three couples and Sister Mary Judith traveled to Guatemala to visit their sponsored children and their families, and to personally see the ministries of Unbound.

Linda said, “Miriam told us in a recent letter, ‘I thank God so much because he crossed our paths and put you in my life.’ I think that this sums up our whole experience best.”

Oblates Judy and Charlie’s sponsored child, Heidy, wrote to them as well. “I thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything you have given to me, because it has been a great blessing. I pray to God to give you strength and to keep you safe.

In April, Vic, Linda, Earl, and Sister Mary Judith plan to travel to Guatemala again with Unbound. ●

Sister Mary Judith and Judy Luebbehusen on a visit to an Unbound project in Guatemala.





Share Our Time

Why volunteering provides countless benefits to you.

Giving back helps others – and you. From amplifying self-confidence to reducing stress, volunteering offers an abundance of health and wellness benefits. Start reaping these physical and mental health gains today:

- 1.** Decrease your risk of depression. Volunteering with and for others increases social interaction and assists in building a support system established on similar interests – both shown to lessen depression.
- 2.** Increase your self-confidence and enjoy a fulfilling sense of purpose!
- 3.** Volunteering helps you stay mentally and physically active. A study found that overall, volunteers report greater physical health than non-volunteers. Activities in volunteering get you moving and thinking!
- 4.** Spending time in service to others reduces stress levels. Feel a sense of appreciation and deeper meaning, both given and received, which can give a calming effect.
- 5.** Know that good feeling after a workout? It's the "happiness effect" – coming from a dopamine release in the brain. Helping others offers the exact same effect – volunteering makes you happy!
- 6.** Develop new relationships. Volunteering is a fabulous way to interact with others. Dedicating time as a volunteer helps you practice social skills and expand your network.

By volunteering your time and talents, you are providing something – something not required nor an obligation. You're not enlisting for

recognition or financial restitution. It's the optimist inside you. You recognize your time is meaningful and you can incite change in the world. Even small changes count. When you volunteer, you relate to the community. Through your involvement, benefits occur for others as well as yourself.

Join the Sisters of St. Benedict as a volunteer! Give some time to make a difference. Joyfully share your skills and talents. If you've ever been on the incredible monastery grounds on the hill overlooking Ferdinand, you know it's a special place. By volunteering to help the sisters with your God-given talent, time, and donations, you understand you're making a real difference.

Opportunities are available to volunteer in the following capacities:

- Gift Shop and Bakery (busiest time October–December)
- Grounds work: flowers, gardening, and clean up
- Cleaning of monastery
- Benedictine Scholar House activities
- Camp Marian (June)
- Service to Sisterhood (June-August)
- Archives
- Become an Oblate – Seek, share, and witness the Benedictine values and way of life.

For more information, contact volunteers@thedome.org or call Sister Mary Philip Berger – 812-367-1411, ext. 3021. ●



What's going on at the monastery?

Learn more about the construction at the monastery at www.thedome.org/construction.

As our workers diligently and carefully renovate our main entrance, we pray for their safety and speedy work.

Construction is due to finish in July 2019.

SISTERS
OF ST. BENEDICT
FERDINAND, INDIANA

Seek. Pray. Share.

