

Seek. Pray. Share.

Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana

VOLUME 11 NUMBER 1 SPRING 2020

A volunteer kneels before the statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe while she helps maintain the Lourdes Grotto. Photo by Nick Burk.

INSIDE

Women of the Rule take a look into the world of our Peru Sisters.

Learn about the history of our monastery bells.

Gene Hausmann, architect, reflects on his work in St. Benedict's Hall.





FROM THE prioress

Spring and the Easter season go hand in hand for those of us who live in the northern hemisphere. Both are times which refresh our spirits and call us to hope in the future. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we may find ourselves feeling weary rather than renewed, more worried rather than refreshed.

If we turn to scripture, though, we will find a similar sentiment. Many of the psalms begin by telling God about the troubles we find surrounding us and encompassing us. We cry out for help and deliverance, and then we turn to trust, asking God to be with us and to lead us out of whatever trouble has befallen us.

In Psalm 57, we hear the psalmist say: “Have mercy on me, God, have mercy, for I have taken refuge in you. In the shadow of your wings, I seek refuge until this time of trouble has passed. ...Protect me from the fury of my foes; send forth your faithfulness and love.”

All of us need to ask God for refuge and trust that God is with us to protect us and to enfold us in mercy and love. Be assured of our prayers for you in this regard.

As we move into early summer, many of us normally would be thinking about vacations and summer travels. Even if our travel plans are curtailed, we still need to take breaks for our refreshment and renewal. I hope that your reading about our sisters in this magazine can provide some moments of respite for you. May the stories of our lives of prayer and service inspire you to join us in pausing throughout the day to rest in God’s presence, to ask for God’s blessing and guidance, and to reach out as we are able to those who are in need.

Then, with the psalmist we can join our voices in gratitude saying, “I will thank you, God, among the peoples and sing your praise among the nations.”

May God bless you with all that you need.

Sister Anita Louise Lowe, OSB
Prioress

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CONTENTS

Seek.

- 3 **Seek the Road to Santo Domingo:** Women of the Rule visit Peru Sisters
- 5 **Seeking the Right Fit:** Sister Paula Wolff spreads God's love

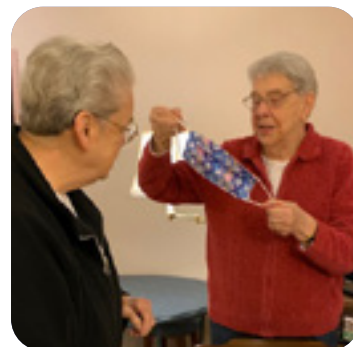
Pray.

- 7 **Calling Us to Prayer:** A history of the monastery bells
- 10 **Pray for Our Jubilarians:** Sisters celebrate landmark years

- 10 **In Memoriam:** Sister Marilyn Market
Sister Jan Youart

Share.

- 11 **Sharing Time, Talent, and Treasure:** Gene Hausmann shares why the sisters are in his estate plan
- 13 **What's Happening at the Dome:** Thursday Chats on WhatsApp
The Dome Golf Classic
Alumnae Reunion
Fall Fest at the Monastery



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Design: Tory Lanaghan, Communications Specialist

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.

Seek the Road to Santo Domingo

Women of the Rule Visit Peru Sisters

by Holly D'Amour

Eight pilgrims with ties to Women of the Rule set out for Peru in early January: two married couples, two sisters from the Monastery, a member of the Mission Advancement staff, and a volunteer translator. We commiserated over the grind of international travel. We celebrated the pre-Columbian history and beauty of Lima. We learned the meaning of Benedictine hospitality at the Monastery in Morropon, sharing prayer, laughter, love, and fabulous meals with the sisters there. We met the Bishop of Chulucanas, a remarkable man who has devoted his life to serving in Latin America. We painted railings, repaired plumbing, and learned to improvise when familiar home improvement products were not available. We searched for lost luggage, toasted with Pisco Sours (the national cocktail of Peru), and experienced the wonder of Machu Picchu, either vicariously or in person. But without a doubt, one of the most memorable events was our visit to Santo Domingo.

I never have been a proponent of mission trips. Unless you have a skill that is unavailable in a country—surgeons, engineers, scientists—I believe it's more helpful to fund a project than to offer your service in person. Your money provides employment for local workers, the project is completed, and the economy gets a boost. Think of it as missionary "trickle-down economics."

That being said, when I learned that the sisters were planning a mission trip to Peru for a small group of Women of the Rule members, and no one in the group spoke Spanish, I volunteered as a translator. I convinced myself that I was being true to my principles. I had a needed skill. I had lived and worked in Latin America, and I was conversational in Spanish. But my real reason for going was much less noble. I was in desperate need of personal renewal.

I found that renewal on a trip to the small mountain village of Santo Domingo. Our trip began early Monday morning, our second full day with the sisters at their Monastery in Morropon. We had heard a good deal about Santo Domingo during our visit the previous day to Chulucanas to meet Bishop Dan. Bishop Dan explained that in the 1960s and 70s there was a coordinated effort by the Vatican to send priests and nuns to Latin America. It was thought that their positive influence would help stem the tide of Communism in Latin countries. Sisters from Ferdinand answered the call, settling in nearby Morropon and establishing a satellite mission in Santo Domingo.

Bishop Dan told stories of the early days of the Santo Domingo mission, when the only access to the village was on foot or by mule. I was particularly interested in hearing about Sister Romaine from Ferdinand who spent

46 years in Peru, 36 of which were in Santo Domingo, where she operated a medical dispensary for the village. As I listened to Bishop Dan recount the history of the mission, Santo Domingo took on a magical quality for me, and I was excited that we would be visiting the village the following day.

The next morning two drivers; eight pilgrims; Sister Magna; María Jesús, a Postulant at the Morropon Monastery; and Maria Jesus's little brother piled into two Toyota pickup trucks, each designed for five people, for a two-hour ride up the mountain during the rainy season. Sister Magna and María Jesús were going back home. Magna was from Santo Domingo, and María Jesús's grandmother lives there.

The trip began with a quick prayer. I would have been a bit more fervent in my petition if I had known what was ahead. Bishop Dan said that a new road had been built 10 years ago to Santo Domingo. What we had not been told was that it was very narrow, with no guardrails, and only the first five or six miles were paved. The remainder was still under construction, and there were 39 switchbacks or blind curves hugging the mountain. Right-of-way on these one-lane, hairpin turns was determined by which driver honked first! Needless to say, the trip to the "magical" village quickly began to feel like the Peruvian version of Mr. Toad's Wild Ride.

I kept a death grip on the armrest and dashboard. At one point, I hit my head on the roof of the truck as we rumbled over a washout. We stopped just a few yards down the road. I was sure we had

broken an axle, but the truck was not disabled. We stopped to pick up a middle-aged man and his son walking up the mountain. As they climbed into the bed of our Toyota, it occurred to me that our stop was not prearranged. This was no mountainside Uber service. It was a simple act of kindness.

We experienced many acts of kindness that day, from the heartfelt greetings we received as we walked through the village with Sister Magna, to her family's hospitality as they invited us into their home and treated us to refreshments. We learned the importance of service to others as countless villagers stopped us to ask how Sister Romaine was doing, inquiring when she was coming back, and sharing remarkable stories of her healthcare mission to the village. We quickly were overwhelmed by the beauty of the mountains, the generosity of the villagers, and the quiet simplicity of their homes.

The day ended much too soon. As we headed down the mountain in our trusty Toyotas, we passed through a tiny town where a mother and toddler stood by the road. Sure enough, our driver stopped and they climbed into the back of our pickup. María Jesús and her little brother were seated on a board stretched across the truck bed. They scooted to one side to make room for the mother and son. As we pulled away, the sun shone directly in the little boy's eyes. María Jesús took off her hat and placed it on the child's head, shading him from the bright light.



While there, sisters and travelers had the opportunity to learn traditional dances from friends of the Peru sisters.

I will never forget that simple, selfless gesture. That was the moment I realized I was not the missionary on this trip. I was the mission. I was there to learn the true meaning of charity, and I had seen countless examples that day in Santo Domingo. Charity isn't overseeing projects, donating funds, painting railings, and translating conversations. It's helping people up or down the mountains in their lives—whatever or wherever those mountains may be.




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 or call her at 812-367-1411, ext. 2649

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



Sister Paula Wolff with Archbishop Joseph Kurtz of the Archdiocese of Louisville. Sister Paula formerly ministered as his executive secretary.

Seeking the Right Fit

Sister Paula Wolff Spreads God's Love *by Greg Eckerle*

It's always been important for Sister Paula Wolff to have a job where she can use her faith to spread God's love.

That's why her new position as administrative assistant for the leadership team at Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand is a natural fit. She is continually connecting with the public and her fellow Benedictine sisters as she handles phone calls, correspondence, makes appointments, and keeps a calendar for Prioress Sister Anita Louise Lowe. She also helps Sub-prioress Sister Rose Wildeman and Monastery Coordinator Sister Marilyn Schroering.

She started her new ministry in early February, after serving eight years as executive secretary to Archbishop Joseph Kurtz at the Archdiocese of Louisville. That experience made Sister Paula an easy choice for Sister Anita as administrative assistant. "I knew she could definitely handle the job," says Sister Anita, "and would really be a help to me. Having worked with the archbishop, she's familiar with how to handle an office, how to deal with outside calls. There's a real steady quality to her. Even her first day here, I got more accomplished because she took on some things I hadn't even considered. She just took it all on, with no problem."

"No matter who calls for Sister Anita, I can always be the person to listen," says Sister Paula. "Sometimes a person needs to be heard, whatever their needs are. That's an

important part of the spirituality ministry. I hope I can offer that, to let people know that God's here, and God's listening, and we can take the time to listen, too."

A poignant reminder of God's presence is the huge painting that Sister Paula chose to display near her desk – an illustration of Jesus's post-resurrection walk to Emmaus, where the risen Christ travels alongside two grieving disciples. She likes that it depicts how one can be that close to Jesus, and just talk to Jesus along the way. It's the perfect companion in her mission to spread God's love.

Another key part of her background is the six years Archbishop Kurtz spent in leadership for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, three years as president and three as vice president. He was the public face and voice of American bishops and their representative to the Vatican and Pope Francis. That helped Sister Paula get a perspective of the world-wide church that she hopes will help her connect the Ferdinand community in different ways to the global church. "We sisters want to do a lot of things in our mission; hopefully we can be far-reaching in what we do," she says.

"I want to help Sister Anita in any way I can, so that she can concentrate on other things she needs to do. I think I can draw on my Louisville experience to help here."

Sister Paula's assistance has proven quite valuable through her career, as this is the third time she's been asked to fill an open position. While working in the Office of Lifelong Formation and Education in the Louisville Archdiocese, she was asked to return to the Ferdinand monastery in 2007 to work in Hildegard Health Center. In 2012, Archbishop Kurtz asked if she could return to Louisville. Then came the recent call from Sister Anita, asking her to come back home to Ferdinand.

"It was a wonderful surprise; it's good to be back," says Sister Paula. "I was very happy. I'm very glad to be with the sisters again. I see myself as a connector for Sister Anita with the outer world and our community. It's a privilege and honor to connect people to work with the sisters here, to help in any way I can. It's so rewarding working with the sisters."

Sister Marilyn Schroering notes that Sister Paula is easy to work with, very accommodating, and very helpful. "She goes about her work, but has time for you when you need something," she says. "It's a good team to work with, and I'm looking forward to the coming years. She catches on really fast."

The Louisville Archdiocese gave Sister Paula a going-away reception, even though she reminded them that usually only agency directors get a reception when they leave. They told her she was getting a reception anyway, a nice event attended by the entire staff and many priests with whom she had worked.

Sister Paula joined the Ferdinand community in 1995. She had previously taught for Catholic schools for seven years but still felt something was missing. So she heeded a call to look at religious life. "I'm a thorough person, so I looked at many different religious communities," she says. "I came to Ferdinand for a weekend. I'm from Minnesota and I didn't know a single soul in Indiana when I came here. But it just



Sister Paula is very excited to work at home in Monastery Immaculate Conception. Sister Anita matches her enthusiasm and is thankful for her help.

felt like home, it was a fit. It felt like God was calling me here. I'm very glad that God did, even though I didn't know anybody. And when I drove up the street, I was awe-struck at the splendor of the building and the hill. It was beautiful, God's creation. Then I found the beautiful, nice people here, which made it even more wonderful."

On a later visit, she was stranded in Evansville because of an ice storm. But she was impressed when some sisters living in Evansville picked her up at the airport, took her to their house and fed her lunch. True to her nature, Sister Paula pitched in to help fix the lunch and wash dishes. The whole match became even more of a fit.

"It became clear where I needed to be," she says.

And as Sister Anita points out, "I just keep saying, 'I love Paula!'"



Sister Paula talks with Fr. Anthony Chandler before a meeting for the Priests' Council of the Archdiocese of Louisville. Sister Paula took meeting minutes for the council during her time in Louisville.



Pray.

Calling Us to Prayer

A History of the Monastery Bells *By Martha Rasche*

On March 13, 2013, a group of sisters gathered in the Benedictine Parlor of Monastery Immaculate Conception awaiting the nod from the prioress to ring the bells. After five ballots stretching over two days, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Argentina had just been elected pope, and the celebratory moment called for 10 minutes of ringing all three of the monastery bells.

“I’ll never forget that,” says Sister Rachel Geracitano, 23 years old at the time and a postulant among the women awaiting the go-ahead. “That was an incredible time. We were just so happy. We were celebrating with the world that Pope Francis was elected. It was a beautiful moment, and bell ringing was a part of that.”

The ringing of bells has been a part of Christian churches since about 400 A.D., started by an Italian bishop as a call to prayer. Pope Sabinianus sanctioned their use in 604, and shortly thereafter they became common in northern Europe. Today, in countries the world over, bells signal not only a call to prayer and worship but also peal in celebration and toll to announce a death.

At Monastery Immaculate Conception, bells have called the community to prayer morning, noon, and evening since 1890.

Mother M. Agatha Werb purchased the monastery’s first bells that spring with a monetary gift from a donor in Louisville, Kentucky. The cast-iron bells were blessed on April 27. The largest bell was named Benedict; the medium bell, Mary; and the smallest, Joseph. All three bells were refurbished in 1907, and Benedict II replaced Benedict I in 2002.

Sister Rachel, who made her final vows in October 2018, says three things about ringing the bells particularly appeal to her. The first is the physical act of it.

“I learn through touch and feeling. I learn by doing. I pray well when I use my body: when I walk the labyrinth or when we sit and when we stand and when we bow. Those things are all meaningful. So the very act of pulling that rope, there is something to that.”

The second is that when she rings the bells, it gets an immediate, visible response.

“We are truly calling people to prayer. We are calling people to pray. When I ring the bell, people come. That’s pretty cool.

“The other thing that always sticks in my mind about it is that this has been something that has been part of monastic life and a part of our Benedictine tradition from the very beginning. There’s always been that practice of calling people to prayer, and I feel connected with all the centuries before.

“I’m taking a part in this tradition, and I’m joining with hundreds and hundreds of years that other people have been calling people to prayer. And also the other Benedictines around the world, they’re also ringing the bells to call their sisters to prayer. I feel interconnected when I do that.”

Sister Leona Schlachter began ringing the bells upon entering the religious community in 1954. She took part in the age-old tradition as a postulant, novice, and first-year professed before beginning her teaching ministry. Since she retired, she again takes her turn pulling the ropes in the church balcony. At 82, she is among the oldest sisters doing so.

“I do it to give praise to God,” she says, adding that even when she is not one ringing the bells, she likes their gentle prompt to pray. “It reminds me that God is with me, with us,” she says. “Throughout the day when we hear that bell, we know that Jesus is calling us. That is my main focus of wanting to ring the bell as long as I can.”

She last rang the bells in February — on weekends, weekday mornings and evenings, and solemnities that required three bells. When she signed up for the task, she was asked which of the bells she wanted to ring.

“I said, ‘Well, I could ring any of the three bells.’ And they gave me the big bell to ring. If I do it again, I’m going to say I prefer one of the bells that’s not quite so heavy.” It’s not just ringing the bells that can be hard on one’s body, but the process as a whole: climb the steps to get to the second floor, ring the bell for three minutes, and then descend the stairs and get to the chapel in time for the service.

“As I get older, I don’t have that same energy I used to have,” Sister Leona acknowledges. “The spirit is ready but the flesh is weak.”

On March 19, the Feast of St. Joseph, the sisters started ringing the smallest bell for five minutes at 3 p.m. each day as a call for prayer to end the coronavirus pandemic. The sisters picked up the idea from St. Joseph Church in nearby Jasper and since have shared the idea with others.

After seeing a Facebook post about what the Ferdinand monastery was doing, the Benedictine community in Yankton, South Dakota, followed suit. The spread didn’t stop there.

The Benedictines of the Sacred Heart Monastery “talked to their ministerial association — and many of the churches in the area, no matter what denomination, if they have bells they’re ringing them at 3 also,” Prioress Sister Anita Louise Lowe says.

During the pandemic, Benedictine monasteries continued to gather several times a day to celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours and the Eucharist, but without public attendance. Most churches in the country closed their doors, perhaps making the ringing of bells more important than ever.

“Having the bells ring is not just a call for us to prayer, but hopefully it reminds anybody that hears them to pray, even if it’s not at that moment,” Sister Anita says.

Also in response to the pandemic, Sister Anita asked the Office of Spirituality to provide the monastery website with a weekly prayer practice. For the first one, Sister Kathryn Huber talked about the intentions of the 3 o’clock bell.

“In our prayer we are asking God to remove this coronavirus from the earth. We are praying for comfort and support for the many ways the pandemic has affected the lives and well-being of so many people in the nations of our world, and in our churches, our synagogues, our mosques,” she said.

Sister Kathryn started ringing the bells at the monastery as a novice in 1958. These days she signs up to ring them on Wednesday mornings and also has volunteered for some of the 3 p.m. slots.

She recalls that the church of her childhood in Starlight, Indiana, had one bell on which the church custodian and his family were charged with ringing the Angelus three times a day. “You could almost set your clock by when they rang the bells,” she says.

A time or two she rang the monastery bells while her family visited,

Bell Ringing Primer

Only the medium bell is rung on weekdays before morning and evening prayer. It also is rung before compline (night prayer), penance service and other community prayer or liturgy, and before the Transfer Liturgy begins during a sister's funeral.

Only the small bell is rung on weekdays before noon prayer. This also is the bell the sisters added at 3 p.m. daily as a reminder to pray for an end to the coronavirus pandemic and for all those affected by it.

All three bells are rung:

- Before Sunday morning and evening prayer; on solemnities; and before "first vespers," which means the vigil to Sundays and solemnities.
- On Holy Thursday, at the Glory during Mass; then the bells fall silent until Easter Sunday. During the intervening days a simple clapper calls the sisters to prayer.
- On Easter, at the Glory of the Eucharist and before noon prayer.
- On All Souls' Day, during the sisters' procession to the cemetery.
- In Advent, after the O Antiphon has been intoned.
- At Midnight Mass, before the prelude music begins, before Mass starts and during the Gloria.
- Upon the election of a prioress, during the singing of "Te Deum."
- Upon the election of the pope.
- Before the Masses at which sisters' final professions and jubilees are celebrated.
- Before a sister's funeral Mass and during the recessional and walk to the cemetery afterward.

Next to the biggest bell sits a device known as a tapper. It is used to toll a bell. As its name suggests, the tapper taps the side of the bell rather than rings it.

A bell is tolled rather than rung to signify the death of a sister, the current bishop of Evansville, the archabbot of St. Meinrad Archabbey or the pope. On those occasions, the tapper is tolled nine times, with a pause the length of a "Hail Mary" between each stroke. The tradition for tolling the death of a sister, bishop, or archabbot includes ringing the large bell six times after the final toll and then repeating the tolling and ringing from the beginning. In the case of a pope's death, the large bell is rung for 10 minutes following the ninth toll of the repetition.

From left to right: Sisters Leona Schlacter, Agnes Weinzapfel, and Jacqueline Shively ring the bells for Sunday evening prayer.



and she invited her young nieces and nephews to help. The youngsters, now in high school and college, were fascinated.

In her role as monastery prioress and Federation of St. Gertrude president in the 1990s, Sister Kathryn visited several countries. She starts to name places she has been: Africa, the Philippines, Peru, Guatemala, Rome — "they all rang bells."

The parish church in Cobán, Guatemala, where the sisters had a mission until 1999, was in town and had a bell. In the rural countryside, on the other hand, where a priest visited twice a year at most, the church members called people to prayer with firecrackers, "homemade, of course." They also used firecrackers during the consecration at Mass.

A lesson in ringing the monastery bells includes a warning not to pull too hard on the rope of the smallest bell. That bell is light enough that it could tip. Then, Sister Anita says, "The only thing you can do is climb up to the belltower and manually flip it over. That requires two people, because otherwise it will ring while you're doing it."

On the other hand, if one doesn't pull the rope hard enough, the bell won't ring fully.

Another piece of advice is to let go of the rope.

"Don't hold onto it the whole time," Sister Anita says. In her early days of bell ringing, she was assigned the big bell.

"They didn't tell me to let go, and it lifted me a few inches off the floor!"

Finally, she advises double-checking the time before tugging the rope.

"When I first entered community, in the morning we had the Angelus. There was no call to prayer; that was the first bell that rang. And whenever that first toll of the bell happened, the whole community knelt.

"One of our sisters got up there, she looked at the clock wrong, and she pulled the rope, early. And everybody knelt. We laughed about the fact that she was able to bring the community to their knees."

Given that fewer and fewer of the sisters are physically capable of ringing the bells, the community has looked at switching to automation.

"At some point we would need to consider automation so that the bells themselves would continue ringing, and that they would continue ringing not just for us as a community but for the wider community who hears them," Sister Anita says.

She wants to ensure that, whatever the means, the centuries-old tradition of calling the community to prayer with bells continues.

Pray for Our Jubilarians

By Dawn Schnell

Ten Benedictine Sisters will celebrate special anniversaries of their religious profession in 2020. Celebrating 80 years are Sisters Mary George Kissel and Theresita Schenk. They entered the monastery in 1938 and professed their vows in 1940.

Sister Mary Victor Kercher is celebrating 75 years of monastic profession. She entered in 1943 and professed vows in 1945. Observing her 70 year jubilee is Sister Mary Leah Baehl. Entrance into the monastery for Sister Mary Leah occurred in 1948 with vows in 1950.

Entering the monastery in 1958 were Sisters Mary Francis Williams and Mary Lee Hillenbrand. They professed their vows in 1960 at the Ferdinand monastery.

Celebrations for these Diamond Jubilees will be acknowledged with the community in October.

This coming July, the following sisters are commemorating their Golden Jubilees: Sisters Rose Mary Rexing, Agnes Marie Dauby, Ann Marie Howard and Karen Joseph. The 50th anniversary of their monastic profession will commence with a Jubilee Mass on July 11. A reception for family and friends will follow. These sisters entered Monastery Immaculate Conception in 1968 and professed their monastic vows in 1970.

These sisters have served a total of 625 years in ministries for the Sisters of St. Benedict. Founded in 1867, the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand currently number 130 and serve in areas of education, parish work, health care, retreat and spirituality work, social services, and counseling in Indiana, Kentucky, and Peru.



All ten sisters gathered before the community in January for the announcement of jubilees.

In Memoriam

Sister Marilyn Market

January 24, 1924 - November 27, 2019



Sister Marilyn (Evelyn) was born on January 24, 1924, in Evansville, IN. She was the youngest of eight children of John and Otilia Marie (Freppon) Market. She entered the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand in 1941 and made her profession of monastic vows in 1943.

Sister Marilyn attended Academy Immaculate Conception and St. Benedict College in Ferdinand, studying education. She worked as a teacher in Indianapolis and throughout

Southern Indiana at Christ the King, St. Benedict, Tell City, Northeast Dubois, Vincennes, North Spencer, Southwest Dubois, Barr Reeve, St. Phillip and St. Peter (Barr Reeve). She also served as a missionary in Guatemala, was a private tutor, and engaged in supportive services and prayer ministry at the monastery.

Sister Jan Youart

February 2, 1937 - February 22, 2020



Sister Jan, previously known as Sister Mary Timothy, was born on February 2, 1937, in Shelbyville, IN. She was the oldest of three children of Hubert and Mildred Youart (Zinser). She entered the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand in 1955 and made her profession of monastic vows in 1957.

Sister Jan attended St. Benedict College in Ferdinand for her bachelor's degree and Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa, for her master's degree. She also received National Association

of Catholic Chaplains certification. She worked as a teacher in Evansville and throughout Southern Indiana at Holy Rosary, St. Theresa, Christ the King, Sacred Heart, Holy Spirit, Holy Redeemer, St. Meinrad Elementary, and Holy Family. She also served as an administrative assistant, a chaplain at Deaconess Hospital in Evansville, IN, an operator of a daily Spiritual Assistance Crisis Line and nightly Dial-A-Prayer program, and in supportive services and prayer ministry at Monastery Immaculate Conception.

Share.

Gene Hausmann, right, with Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz, who worked with Gene closely during renovations.



Sharing Time, Talent, and Treasure

Gene Hausmann shares why the sisters are in his estate plan *by Greg Eckerle*

In his long career as an architect, Gene Hausmann says he probably dealt with nearly a thousand individuals or groups. But it was one toward the end of his career, 25 years ago, that made a particular impact.

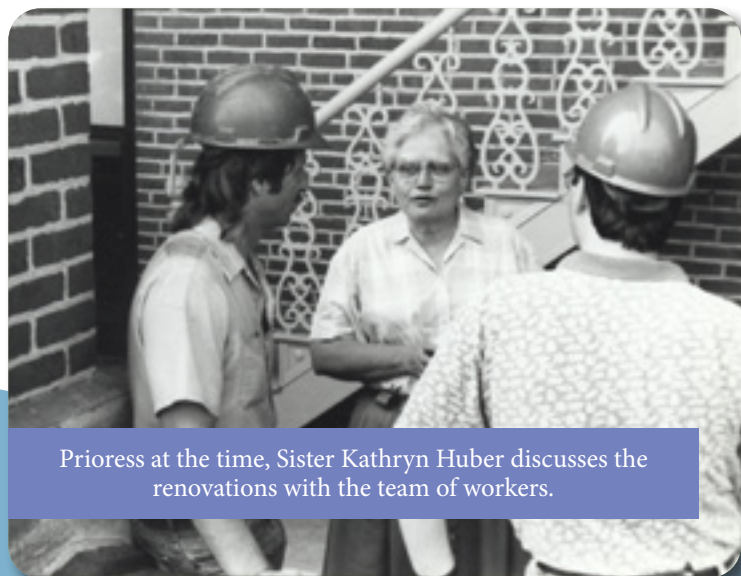
“Fortunately, I had a project for the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand,” says Gene, who worked on re-designing St. Benedict Hall, a living quarters for the sisters. “They were the most impressive client I think I’ve ever had. They knew what they wanted and what they were able to afford. I’m glad I had a chance to meet them.”

So glad, in fact, that he became a regular financial supporter of the sisters, including becoming a member of the St. Hildegard Society. The society recognizes people who create a lasting legacy by including the sisters in their estate plans. Gene had seen enough of how the sisters operated, and their work in education, hospitals, and nursing homes, to agree to invest in the future of the community.

“I think anybody would want to go with a group like that,” he says. “Why wouldn’t I support a group who does those kinds of things? From what I saw, they handle their money very well. They handle everything very well. They’re the kind of people you want to be associated with, and you want to help them any way you can. They are first class.”

In the planning meetings with the sisters on the building renovation, Gene noted the sisters “were not foolhardy with their money, they used it wisely.” During his year working on the monastery project, Gene was touched by how considerate the sisters were regarding the living space of their fellow sisters, and by the compassionate care they shared, especially with the elderly sisters.

Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz, who was on the building committee, describes Gene as a man of integrity, a person whose bottom line was always the good of the sisters. He understood the sisters wanted lasting quality, but not extravagance. “He brought fresh eyes to the project,” she said. “He was



Prioress at the time, Sister Kathryn Huber discusses the renovations with the team of workers.



Building Committee members, l. to r. Sisters Mary Cheryl (chairperson), Barbara Lynn, Rosa Lee and Charlene Ann, Ed Montgomery (engineer) and Pat Clark.

responsible for the details of adding light to the building and asking why the loveliest room was being used for dishwashing. He rectified that.”

Gene, a resident of Belleville, Illinois, attests that working with the sisters was the highlight of his life, “the best project I’ve ever had, one that went smoothly and successfully.” He was pleased to discover the sisters had done their homework and were able to answer all his questions.

As for having the sisters in his estate plan, Gene says, “Because of the high respect I have for the sisters, it’s

refreshing to know that they’ll get something even after I’m not here.”

For more information about becoming a member of the St. Hildegard Society, please contact the Mission Advancement Office at 888-649-1121, ext. 2631, or email maoffice@thedome.org.

St. Benedict Hall renovation started nearly 25 years ago. Because of Gene Hausmann, the sisters have a lovely place to live, pray, and eat together.



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





What's Happening at the Dome?

Here are a few upcoming events and celebrations



Thursday Chats on WhatsApp

Join Sister Jill Reuber every Thursday on WhatsApp for vocation discernment chats! These talks will include topics like religious life, faith, discernment, decision making, or just everyday issues surrounding our world today.

This invitation goes out to all women ages 18-40. We would love if you considered joining the conversations with Sister Jill and others who are journeying in their faith.

For more information and to receive the chat link, email: vocation@thedome.org or call Sr. Jill Reuber at 812-367-1411, ext. 2830.

Save the Date: The Dome Golf Classic at Sultan's Run Golf Club

We hope you are eager to join us on **Monday, September 28, 2020**, at the Sultan's Run Golf Course in Jasper, Indiana. The Clubhouse at Sultan's Run offers a great view of the signature 18th Hole, Supreme Sultan. Whether you are at the turn, finishing your round, or just visiting to take in the sights, you'll find The Clubhouse at Sultan's Run a great place to relax.

Register online at thedome.org or contact Susan Carpenter at 812-367-1411, ext. 2643 or scarpenter@thedome.org.



Save the Date: AIC/MHA Alumnae Reunion

Calling all Academy Immaculate Conception and Marian Heights Academy Alumnae: The date for the 2020 Alumnae Reunion is here! On **September 25 through September 27**, join all your fellow classmates at Monastery Immaculate Conception for a weekend of friends, food, and fun.

Visit with former teachers and catch up with old friends on the grounds of Monastery Immaculate Conception. Friends and family are welcome to join.

More details and online registration coming soon.





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We are looking forward to...

Fall Fest at the Monastery: Meals, Music, and More

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to cancel Spring Fest at the Monastery this April. For all those who were excited to join our sisters and the rest of the Southern Indiana community, fear not! We plan to reschedule this event for the fall.

You are welcome to join us this fall for live music, good eating, beer from St. Benedict Brew Works, and more. Proceeds from the event will help the Sisters of St. Benedict and all of their ministries. Keep an eye out for a date, because you will not want to miss this festival.

Keep an eye out for more events on our social media!



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