



Vol. 35, Issue 1
Summer 2017

Leaven

St. Walburg Monastery • Covington, Kentucky

Sisters Contract to Sell 85 Acres of Monastery Property



New Development to be Called
Sanctuary

Giving Thanks for Partners and Blessings

On June 29 the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery announced that a purchase contract was signed with **Ashley Commercial Company, LLC** to sell 85 acres of monastery property for development. This contract strengthens our ability to continue our presence and mission while providing for our future retirement needs. This announcement, while simple, was years in the making! The various and often unexpected steps forward reveal themselves as blessings.



Blessing

Along with many other communities of women religious we have been talking about and doing long range planning for over a decade. Our monastic community has actively stayed at the planning table naming and owning the fears, hopes, what ifs, possibilities, maybes, cautions, ready or not questions for the past five years. Together we have listened and questioned professional consultants, heard and pondered the multiple studies conducted on our land, participated in public meetings and weighed possible development plans. We've been support and blessing to each other.

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Sisters Deborah Harmeling and Margaret Mary Gough, editors.

Pictures:
Cover: Sr. Deborah Harmeling
Pgs. 5-7 from Villa Madonna Elementary and High School/ Junior High Facebook pages
Pgs. 7-8 Sr. Mary Tewes.

Retirement Fund for Religious

Please give to those who have given a lifetime.

www.retiredreligious.org

Blessing

In 2012 **NRRO (National Religious Retirement Office)** offered professional and financial support to help us move forward. They helped us frame our goals and provided professional consultants to guide those goals to completion. They evaluated the health care service we provide for our elderly and infirmed members, guided us to new investment managers and provided a grant to secure a professional study of our unused property. Their funds also covered the required Title Search, ALTA study and appraisals.

Blessing

Implementing the proposal to sell the land involved working with the **mayor, city officials and council of Villa Hills**. These individuals understood our plan to sell property and explained to us how the development of our property could benefit the city and its residents. Meetings provided new insights, more questions for us and thought provoking observations. Throughout the process these individuals respected our need to keep the community informed and supportive before any public announcement was made or action taken. They never moved forward until we were ready.



Giving Thanks for Partners and Blessings (continued)

Blessing

Members of the staff of PDS (Planning and Development Services of Kenton County) were partners and educators as we moved onward. Under their leadership we began the process of discerning and determining new land uses for our property, at that time zoned institutional. This involved various studies: demographic, market, traffic and US Waterways and Streams. The PDS staff consulted with public utilities and local organizations. They planned, set up and prepared us for two public meetings with the residents of the city. They walked us through the presentations to and approval from the **Kenton County Planning Commission**. They might best be compared to Sherpa guides!



Blessing

Knowing the sale of the property would be the next step, we engaged a **real estate attorney** to represent us. He was both teacher and guide assisting us in reading and responding to studies and documents related to the approval of new land uses for our property. He accompanied us to meetings and public hearings. He pushed us to identify the community's values and hopes for the new development. Those named values are: sensitivity to the environment and our neighbors, diverse housing opportunities and openness to the city's needs.

Closing thoughts

These past five years were a steep learning curve for us and, perhaps, for our partners. Every step we took was new and different. Each step of the process provided new partners, ideas and thoughts to ponder. We began to understand how what we were doing would have a real and physical effect on others, not just on ourselves. Depending on one's point of view, what might have been seen as loss or gain could also be seen as opportunity or gift.

Ashley Commercial Company will call the new development **Sanctuary**. The word stems from the Latin, *sanctus*—holy. For us and many of you, the word is identified with that place in the chapel where Eucharist is celebrated. For others it can be a place of safety. The word also reflects our understanding of hospitality and welcome. Some day in the future we will have the opportunity to welcome new neighbors.

Sr. Mary Catherine Wenstrup, Prioress

The Chronicles

by Sr. Andrea Collopy, OSB

December 2-4—Sr. Kimberly Porter traveled to Sacred Heart Monastery, Lisle, IL where she assisted in the discernment process for election of prioress with Sr. Joella Kidwell of Immaculate Heart Monastery, Ferdinand, IN.

December 10—Sr. Kimberly Porter gave a presentation to oblates, other interested persons and community members on the Prologue to the *Rule of St. Benedict*. She focused on the first word of the Rule, *Listen*, an instruction which flows through the Rule.

December 16—The employees' Christmas lunch was held today. Sr. Cathy Bauer had taken pictures of each of the employees in preparation for a booklet which was distributed at the party. All 43 employees were pictured engaged in some occupation associated with their work.

December 17—Sr. Dorothy Schuette was honored with a reception at Emerald Springs Clubhouse on her retirement from her work at Mother of God Parish in Covington. Many friends and members of the parish came and expressed their deep appreciation for the service she gave for so many years.

December 23—In the late afternoon Greg Small, a former student and friend of our deceased Sr. Martina Arnold, came with his large family and entertained in the infirmary lounge.

December 24—The community had its special Christmas supper this evening. Maureen Smain, our chef, outdid herself with the Christmas menu. After sung Night Prayer, a party with games, exchange of presents and a buffet of desserts was enjoyed in the lower level.

December 25—Christmas Day began with a celebrative Liturgy of the Hours. Carols were sung and proclamation of the Birth of Christ was chanted at Eucharist which was shared with a large group of guests. After Eucharist a number of guests shared the festive brunch which has become a tradition in the monastery.

December 31—Kitchen workers were off this last evening of the old year and a group of sisters assembled a delicious

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The Chronicles continued

supper from the many gifts given to us for Christmas. A fabulous dessert table was part of the celebration which began after Night Prayer and continued with various games and informal conversation until 8:30 pm when we marked the beginning of the New Year with the “official” lowering of the ball in the front entrance. **January 21**—Much has been said within and outside the community on the prospective sale of property to assist with our retirement needs. After many preliminary discussions within the community, a task force, composed of delegates from St. Walburg Monastery, the city of Villa Hills and the Planning and Development Services of Kenton County staff (PDS) met frequently from January 2016 through the present to acquire information which would assist us in making decisions concerning the sale of the property.

Today’s meeting was a compilation of information gathered in the last year by the task force. Many detailed charts were available and among these were information from key persons, possible amenities to be included, land use, types of housing, and considerations regarding potential retail and transportation. Voluminous reports on all these topics were available for reading/study. Picture boards throughout the room showed suggestions for housing styles, green space and other ideas. The community is grateful for the progress made to date.

January 26-June 11—Sr. Aileen Bankemper has served monasteries of three federations during these months, facilitating primarily in elections and their preparations. From Jan. 26-30 she did pre-election facilitation at St. Benedict’s Monastery, St. Joseph, MN and from Feb. 23-28 she facilitated the election of prioress. From Feb. 3-6 she met with the election committee of St. Scholastica Monastery, Atchison, KS. She also facilitated at St. Walburga Monastery, Elizabeth, NJ from March 10-14 and St. Scholastica Priory, Boerne, TX. She spent April 17-23 in Ft. Smith, AR at St. Scholastica Monastery where the prioress’ term was extended for two more years. In June she returned to Atchison to facilitate the elec-

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Sister Xavier Anneken, 1923-2017

Born March 26, 1923 in Latonia, Kentucky
Entered St. Walburg Monastery December 27, 1946
Received habit, 1947
First Profession, June 29, 1948
Died May 23, 2017

Sister Xavier Anneken, OSB was born to **John H. Anneken** and **Clara Robish Anneken** on March 26, 1923 in Latonia KY and given the name Mary Martha Helen at her baptism. To her friends she was always Marcy. She was the sixth of nine children, four boys and five girls—four of whom became Benedictine Sisters—**Gemma, Clarita, Juanita and Xavier**. She attended Holy Cross School for twelve years and attended Xavier Evening College for five years and worked as a bookkeeper before entering St. Walburg Monastery in 1946. She became a novice in 1947, receiving the name Sister Xavier. First profession followed in 1948, perpetual in 1951, silver jubilee in 1973, golden in 1998 and diamond in 2008.



Sister Xavier always had a head for numbers and business. She taught for one year and served for ten years in the business office of the monastery. She received a BS degree from Xavier University in 1971. Most of her ministry was spent in the business offices of hospitals in the mountain regions of Hazard and Irvine, KY and in Colorado. She served as secretary of the community for six years, and was a member of several committees and boards. After returning to live at the monastery in 1979 Sr. Xavier served as transportation director until her retirement in 2011.

Sr. Xavier’s years in the Kentucky mountains were dear to her heart. She often took camping and hiking trips with her nephews in the mountains. She had a treasure trove of stories about Eastern Kentucky. Sr. Xavier was an ardent, lifelong Cincinnati Reds fan.

Sr. Xavier was blessed with a close-knit and devoted family. Her mother had died in 1937. After her sisters entered St. Walburg Monastery much of her time was spent with her sister Rita, her brothers and their families. During Sr. Xavier’s residence in the infirmary her nephews and nieces were loyal visitors.

Sr. Xavier was preceded in death by her parents and all her siblings. She is survived by the Benedictine community, nieces and nephews and many friends from the mountains. Her death occurred peacefully on May 23, 2017. Vigil for Sr. Xavier was held the evening of May 25, 2017 with Mass of Christian Burial on May 26, 2017. She is interred in St. Walburg Monastery Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to St. Walburg Monastery, 2500 Amsterdam Road, Villa Hills, KY 41017.

Connections: St. Walburg Monastery and Villa Madonna Academy

Since 1903 the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery have sponsored Villa Madonna Academy, a private, Catholic, K-12 school educating students in a Christ-centered community rooted in the Benedictine traditions of scholarship, service, and hospitality. Our connections with the Academy and its activities are close, and the Benedictine sisters are proud of the school and the way its faculty and staff pass on the Benedictine tradition. Four sisters serve on the VMA Board. Pictured on the next three pages are a few of the many times during the past school year when the Sisters and the school have come together.

Above right: Congratulations to **Soshana Bosley** (right), VMA elementary school principal, as she receives the May 25 declaration of *Soshana Bosley Day in Villa Hills* from **Mayor Butch Callery** (left). Soshana has been a VMA principal for 20 years and is a 1-12 year alumna of the school.



During Catholic schools week Jan. 31-Feb. 3 students from the elementary school visited the sisters at St. Walburg Monastery to share their school projects and learning. **Above left:** **Sr. Nancy Kordenbrock** assists a student with his art.

Right: **Sr. David Ruschmann** listens to a story told by fourth graders.

Right: **Sr. Henrietta Seiler** talks with fourth grade students—perhaps about fire safety!



The Chronicles continued

tion of the prioress on June 11.

January 30—**Srs. Mary Catherine Wenstrup** and **Rita Brink** left early this morning to attend the Conference of Benedictine Prioresses held at the Redemptorist Renewal Center near Tucson, AZ. A new organizational structure was approved and officers elected. **Abbot John Klaussen** of St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, and **Sr. Mary Irene Nowell** of Atchison presented ten hallmarks of Benedictine Colleges and Universities. Case studies were used to help prioresses in strategies for promoting Benedictine values. Sr. Mary Catherine has shared these with the faculty, staff and students at VMA.

Jan. 30-Feb. 3—VMA celebrated Catholic Schools Week. K-sixth grade students with teachers visited St. Walburg Monastery each day, sharing information, games, history in various ways. High school and junior high students also had a week-long celebration with a multitude of daily activities.

February 4—**Srs. Dorothy Schuette, Joan Fraenzle, Mariana Kirk, Sharon Portwood, Mary Carol Hellmann** and **Cathy Bauer** attended *Catholics at the Capital*, a regional meeting highlighting upcoming legislation of concern to people of Kentucky. Representatives from the Catholic Conference of Kentucky led the meeting which focused on issues of pro-life, school choice, justice reform and health care.

February 9—Three groups of approximately 27 students and two teachers from St. Ursula Academy visited St. Walburg Monastery today. They were interested in Liturgy of the Hours. With their teacher, **Linda Thomas**, and **Sr. Nancy Kordenbrock** and **Sr. Andrea Collopy**, they prayed Noon Day Prayer and received information on the recitation of the Divine Office through the years.

February 25—Celebration of the Feast of St. Walburg, our monastery patroness, began with a special Mass last evening because of the Center of Spirituality program planned for today. Over a hundred persons participated in the program—including community members and visitors. **Rev. Kenneth Overberg, SJ**

Continued on next page

The Chronicles continued

presented *The Mystery of God and Suffering*. Fr. Overberg is emeritus professor of theology at Xavier University who continues to teach and write. He spoke of the suffering that surrounds us. Because Christians have focused particularly on the life, suffering and death of Jesus and how this shapes our image of God, this leads to a response of lament, action and trust. Four presentations allowed time for discussion, questions and reflection. Fr. Overberg left copies of his book, *Into the Abyss of Suffering*, which is a development and extension of today's subject.

February 27—A memorial Mass for **Rev. Wilfred Fraenzle**, brother of **Sr. Joan**, was concelebrated by **Fr. Cahill** and **Fr. Henderson** this evening. Fr. Fraenzle had served the Dioceses of Covington and Lexington, often in the mountains of Appalachia. Services for Fr. Fraenzle were held in Lexington last week. Many parishioners of the Covington Diocese honored his memory this evening.

March 4—VillaRama, the chief fundraiser for Villa Madonna Academy, celebrated its 42nd anniversary at Receptions in Erlanger this evening. A large crowd of parents, alum and friends enjoyed the silent and oral auctions and the delicious dinner. For the first time those interested in items on the silent auction could place bids from their smart phones. The oral auction, as always, was a great attraction to bidders with unusual offerings. On one occasion the donor of the item offered a duplicate when the competition got heated.

March 10—**Sr. Dorothy Schuette** organized a letter writing party in the infirmary lounge. A group gathered to write letters or postcards to congressional members covering many issues, specifically health care, immigration, budget.

March 24-26—*Once Upon a Mattress*, a musical adaptation of the Princess and the Pea story, was this year's presentation by the students of Villa Madonna Academy. A dress rehearsal occurred on the 23rd and a good group of Sisters attended. Students who work in the infirmary or kitchen participated in the

Continued on next page

Connections: SWM and VMA (continued)

Although VMA elementary second grade students receive the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist in their individual parishes with their peers, the school takes a night to celebrate the Reception of First Eucharist with the entire second grade class.

On May 16, members of the VMA second grade celebrated with their families and friends at Eucharist in St. Walburg Monastery Chapel. In the back row of the picture at the bottom are second grade teachers **Rebecca Groeschen** (left) and **Marianne McGhee** (right).



Connections: SWM and VMA (continued)

Sr. Mary Carol Hellmann (right) serves as archivist at Villa Madonna Academy. She also visits classrooms to talk about the Benedictine tradition and heritage. In addition she offers occasions for VMA students to tour the monastery. She is pictured on March 19 taking the 3rd grade class through the Infirmary.



The Chronicles continued

performance or behind the scenes.

April 24—The lovely voices of the St. Henry High School Choir entertained the Benedictine Sisters in the monastery chapel this afternoon. Two students who serve in the infirmary are members of the choir—**Rene Oehler** and **Grace Von Lehman**—and their special talents were obvious and deeply appreciated.

April 27—**Sr. Mary Catherine** left early this morning for Benet Hill Monastery, Colorado Springs, CO, to facilitate the election of prioress.

May 4-7—**Sr. Margaret Mary Cosgrove, BVM**, our consultant from the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) who has helped us with our long range planning, was here. She met with the community council on May 5 and attended the chapter meeting on May 6. The agenda contained information about selling the property around St. Mary's house.

May 5—**Sr. Cathy Bauer** conducted a day of reflection at Mt. St. Joseph University for the Ignatian Volunteer Corps with the title *Touching the Wounds of Jesus*. In attendance were 25 enthusiastic members of the volunteer corps with **Linda Wihl**, their director. Ms. Wihl thanked Sr. Cathy for the day and for encouragement for the volunteers to be “empathetic and vulnerable in their care for their souls and those of others.”

May 9—For quite a few years the inmates at LaGrange Prison, LaGrange, KY, have presented a program called *Shakespeare Behind Bars*. They choose a Shakespearean play in which the inmates play the roles. This year's production was *Julius Caesar*. **Srs. Dorothy Schuette, Joan Fraenzle** and **Mary Carol Hellmann** traveled to LaGrange to enjoy the performance.

May 10-15—**Sr. Mary Catherine** left early Wednesday morning for Ridgely, MD where she facilitated the election of prioress at St. Gertrude Monastery. A most impressive establishment near the monastery is Benedictine School, founded by the St. Gertrude community but no longer operated by them. The school serves a variety of mentally and physically challenged students with almost

Continued on next page



Left: May 1 was Villa night at the Cincinnati Reds. **Srs. Nancy Kordenbrock, Joan Fraenzle, Henrietta Seiler** and **Dorothy Schuette** (first row) joined VMA faculty members and families at the game that evening.

On July 4 Villa Madonna Academy students took part in the Edgewood/Independence Fourth of July parade in the St. Walburg Monastery truck driven by **Sr. Cathy Bauer**. *Right:* Junior high/ High School students.



Left: Elementary school students with **Janet Baugh**, VMA Director of Admissions.

The Chronicles continued

unbelievable services and resources.

May 13—This morning the Benedictine Oblates held their regular meeting in the monastery lower level. **Sr. Mary Tewes**, director, had distributed papers on which those present were given the opportunity to name their gifts, how they shared them with others and how they lived out the charism statement of St. Walburg Monastery. Earlier, Sisters had volunteered to meet with an individual oblate to discuss their responses. It was a good experience for all involved—reviewing, meeting and encouraging. Then all joined in Noonday Prayer and lunch.

May 21—The annual Villa Madonna Academy Reunion was observed this morning, honoring especially the graduating classes of '67 and '92 and introducing the graduating class of 2017. The day began with Eucharist in a packed monastery chapel. After Mass the group adjourned to the academy gym for brunch and program of welcome and recognition. Also present or named in the program booklet were thirty living Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery who taught and/or graduated from VMA. It was a joyous occasion for meeting old friends and making new ones.

May 23—After months of suffering and final anointing, **Sr. Xavier Anneken** died in the early afternoon. She was the last of the four Anneken Benedictine Sisters. The name of her sister, **Sr. Clarita**, precedes her in the monastery necrology for the year 2015. **Sr. Gemma** died in 2005 and **Sr. Juanita** in 2010. (See p. 4 for Sr. Xavier's obit.)

May 25—**Srs. Mariana Kirk** and **Andrea Collopy** made a long-planned trip to Bellarmine University in Louisville where the Thomas Merton Center is located. It was a fascinating experience to see the works by and about Merton with a tour guide to explain.

May 26—Today the graduating class of VMA received their diplomas at Mother of God Church in Covington. Nine members of the class had attended VMA since first grade. The 28 graduates earned an average of \$250,000 in scholarship offers per student. Graduates will be attending 23 different colleges or universities in the fall.

June 9—**Bishop Roger Foy**s and the

Continued on next page

2017 Benedictine Oblates Ice Cream Social

On June 24 the **St. Walburg Monastery Oblates** held their annual Ice Cream Social for the Sisters and Oblates.

Above: **Hills of Kentucky Dulcimer Band** provided entertainment in the monastery dining room.

Right: Oblate **Gail Michalack** shows **Srs. Kimberly Porter, Aileen Bankemper** and **Mary Catherine Wenstrup** how to keep time with wooden dancing figurines.

Below: Clockwise starting from left: **John** and Oblate **Vickie Cimprich** talk with **Sr. Colleen Winston** and Oblates **Peggy McKnight** and **Mary Easterling**.



2017 Benedictine Oblates Ice Cream Social

(continued)



Above: Clockwise from bottom, Srs. Estelle Shulte, Martha Walther, Philomena Rarreick, Barbara Woeste and Denise Gough enjoy the dulcimer band.

Right: Oblate Jim Lockhart, the traditional bingo caller/corny joke teller, and his assistant Oblate Mike Page ready themselves for the start of bingo.



Below: Clockwise starting from bottom left: Srs. Joan Fraenzle, Henrietta Seiler, Martha Feder, Cecilia Daigle and Aileen Bankemper get ready to play bingo next to gift carts filled with prizes and an unidentified Oblate checking out a cart.



The Chronicles continued

Northern Kentucky Serra Club sponsored the 6th annual picnic for women religious at Summit Hills Country Club today from 11:30 am to 3:00 pm. It was a great opportunity for religious serving or having served in the area to renew acquaintances and to meet the Serra Club members and the diocese of Covington's seminarians. A delicious lunch was enjoyed by all. Bingo followed lunch and the day ended with door prizes awarded. Upon leaving, each religious was given a bag containing multiple and useful gifts. Thank you to Bishop Foy and all who worked hard to make the day so pleasant.

June 12—Nine members of the *Young in Spirit* group from St. Timothy parish in Union, KY, arrived this morning to tour the monastery. They visited various areas in the monastery building, participated in Noonday Prayer and enjoyed lunch with the community. Afternoon brought a visit to **Sr. Emmanuel's** art studio, the Guest House and a car ride to the cemetery and beyond. **Srs. Mary Carol Hellmann** and **Victoria Eisenman** hosted the group.

June 15-19—The Federation of St. Scholastica held its Pre-chapter meeting at the University of St. Leo in St. Leo, FL. **Srs. Mary Catherine Wenstrup, Rita Brink, Dorothy Schuette** and **Kimberly Porter** were representatives from St. Walburg Monastery. The task of the group was to prepare the agenda for the Chapter Meeting to be held at Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman, AL in 2018.

June 24—Today the Benedictine Oblates hosted their annual ice cream social with an excellent attendance for an enjoyable afternoon. Twelve members of the **Hills of Kentucky Dulcimer Band**—five of whom are oblates—entertained with familiar tunes. The entertainment was followed by ice cream treats with all kinds of toppings, served or self-service. The afternoon ended with the bingo and innumerable prizes heaped on oblate-operated carts from which everyone chose at least one prize. The lucky ones carried many prizes away. It was an enjoyable afternoon for hosts and guests alike. A big THANK YOU to our Benedictine Oblates!

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This list represents those who made donations to the community from Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2016



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**All members living and deceased
 of St. Walburg Monastery**

Pat Dwight

**All the Benedictine Sisters who
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 90th birthday**

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We make every effort to keep our listings of donors error free. If you find any mistakes, please accept our apologies and contact Sr. Deborah Harmeling, OSB (859-331-6771 or sdhosb@yahoo.com) about corrections.

THINKING ABOUT MAKING A SILENT DIRECTED RETREAT?



A Silent Directed Retreat for Women and Men will be held at St. Walburg Monastery on the weekend of **November 3-5, 2017**. Retreatants are invited to join the monastic choir for Liturgy of the Hours. Lodging will be at the monastery's Guest House with bedrooms on the 2nd and 3rd floors.

Each retreatant will have a private room and enjoy individual spiritual direction on all three days. The number of retreatants is limited to 9 persons. The fee of \$175 is due with registration.

Our experienced Spiritual Directors are **Mary Jo Ruccio** and Benedictine **Sisters Cathy Bauer** and **Dorothy Schuette**.

For information and sign up, contact Sr. Dorothy Schuette at dorothysosb@gmail.com. St. Walburg Monastery is located at 2500 Amsterdam Road, Villa Hills, KY 41017.

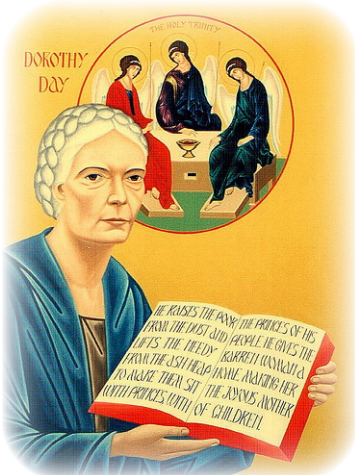


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The Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery invite you to join them for a
Center of Spirituality Day entitled
The Sacred and the Ordinary: an Encounter with Dorothy Day
presented by **Jeanne Hunt**, Pastoral Associate for Catechesis and Evangelization, Our Lady of
Visitation Parish, Cincinnati, Ohio, and regular contributor
to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's newsletter, ***The Catholic Telegraph***



Saturday, October 28, 2017
9:30 am - 2:45 pm
in the Lower Level
of the Monastery

**Call Sr. Deborah Harmeling at 859-331-6771
or email sdhosb@yahoo.com
for reservations.**

\$30.00 fee includes snacks, lunch and materials.



Icon of Dorothy Day by Nicholas Tsai from Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Oakland, CA.. Used with permission.
