



Leaven

Vol. 32 Issue 2
Winter 2014

St. Walburg Monastery • Covington, Kentucky



*The Prince of Peace is
born to us,
Our light in the midst
of darkness,
Our hope in the face of
violence,
Our peace amid
turmoil.*

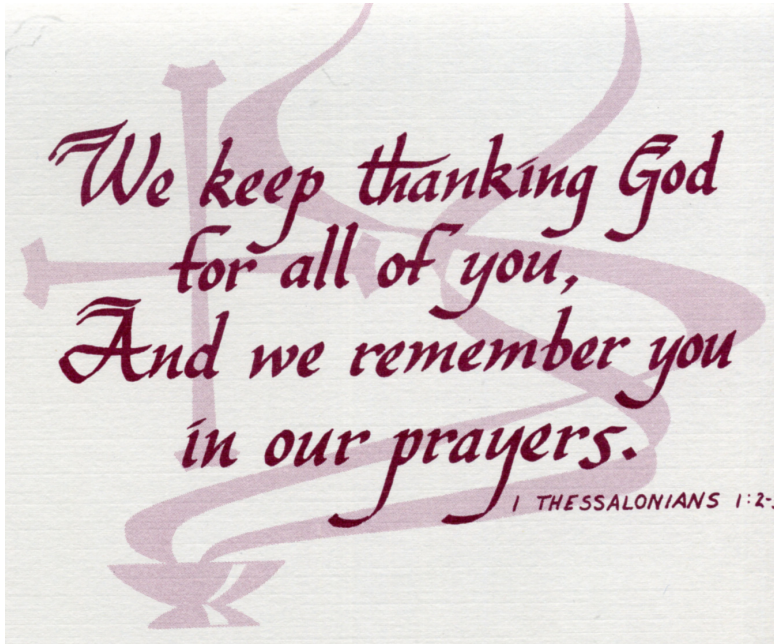
Peace to you
and those you love
this Christmas season
and in the New Year
to come.

Sr. Mary Catherine Wenstrup, OSB

&

*The Benedictine Sisters
St. Walburg Monastery*

The Prioress Writes . . .



Thanksgiving and the First Sunday of Advent are perfect bookends for closing the liturgical year. We give thanks for blessings received, the good earth, for one another and for all of you. You, in this case, refers to our families, co-workers, employees, those for whom we pray, benefactors and readers of this issue of *LEAVEN*. We open the season of Advent with deep longing for the coming of the Prince of Peace and, especially, for peace on this earth where we experience so much violence, suffering and fear. Together let us pray for peace and reconciliation in the coming year. We can make a difference.

This year the community is especially grateful to the NRRO (National Retirement for Religious Office) and you who support this organization. For two years now we have worked steadily with our NRRO consultants to do future planning. Together we will be discerning options that support the presence of our Benedictine community monastic lifestyle and promote our ministries. Pray for us as we study and discern. You can help us make a difference.

May the coming of the Prince of Peace bring peace to each of you and thanks again for your continued support.

Sr. Mary Catherine Wenstrup, Prioress



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Sisters Deborah Harmeling and Margaret Mary Gough, editors.

Cover:
The Light of the World, oil painting by Sister Emmanuel Pieper.
Photographs: Sisters Deborah Harmeling and Mary Tewes.

Congratulations to Our 2014 Jubilarians Celebrating 240 Years of Monastic Profession



Left:
Sr. Ann Middendorf
Celebrating 60 Years



Right:
Sr. Denise Gough
Celebrating 60 Years



Left:
Sr. Rosemary McCormack
Celebrating 60 Years



Right:
Sr. Martha Walther
Celebrating 60 Years

The Chronicles

by Sr. Andrea Collopy
July 23—At dinner this evening the community celebrated **Sr. Rose Rauen's** retirement from 32 years of service as the community treasurer. After Evening Prayer, festivities continued with a melodic tribute, a reading from Sr. Rose's PhD dissertation, games and ice cream specialties. Later we viewed the taped version of the day's Jeopardy program to watch **Eileen Bunch**, a new freshman at Villa Madonna Academy, in her appearance on the popular program.

July 26—The parish of Sts. Peter and Paul, California, Kentucky, invited the religious of the diocese to a picnic honoring them for their service to the Covington Diocese. Three Benedictines attended, a second picnic is scheduled for August 23.

July 27—**Sr. Rosemary McCormack** was honored by Jesus Our Savior Parish in Morehead, Kentucky. *(See pictures on page 5.)* After 25 years of faithful service as Director of Religious Education in the Appalachian area, she retired from her position. A group of 13 from St. Walburg travelled to Morehead to join the celebration with Sr. Rosemary and to share in the potluck supper sponsored and attended by many parishioners.

August 3-8—**Fr. Joel Rippinger, OSB**, a member of Marmion Abbey in Aurora, Illinois, conducted the annual community retreat. With "Revisiting the Benedictine Way" as his theme, Fr. Joel led us through five holy and peaceful days of reflection on our monastic profession and the Benedictine way of life.

August 10—**Sr. Anne Shepard**, prioress of Mount St. Scholastica Monastery, Atchison, Kansas, was

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The Chronicles continued

our guest this evening. She will join **Sr. Mary Catherine Wenstrup**, our prioress and **Sr. Rita Brink**, administrator of St. Joseph Monastery, St. Marys, Pennsylvania, journeying to the Conference of Prioresses and the LCWR meetings in Nashville, Tennessee.

August 16-17—The statue of Mary purchased with donations from Civil War soldiers was on display at the James A. Ramlage Civil War Museum during the annual Battery Hooper Days this weekend. Battery Hooper was an artillery fortification which contributed to the defense of Northern Kentucky during the Civil War. The museum holds artifacts of all kinds from the Civil War period, and this year the statue of Mary with its history held a prominent place in the museum. *(See this page.)* The weekend offered a great visit to the past—an 1860 fashion show, beginnings of St. Elizabeth Hospital, a special debate by vice presidential candidates and a fictional debate between President Lincoln and Confederate President Jefferson Davis. The sisters who attended found it a fascinating experience.

August 18-21—**Sisters Mary Catherine Wenstrup, Deborah Harmeling, Cathy Bauer** and resident **Patty Bickett** left for St. Marys, Pennsylvania where they rented a truck to “transplant” to St. Walburg Monastery dining room tables purchased from St. Joseph Monastery. **Sr. Rita Brink**, administrator, is supervising the sale of the remaining property of this historic monastery, the first monastery of Benedictine women in the United States. The Kentucky group returned on August 21 with Patty as driver of the U-Haul containing our grandmother’s tables, smaller in size, giving our dining room a new look. In monastic tradition St. Joseph

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Historic Statue of Mary Displayed at 2014 Battery Hooper Days

From the early days of our history we have treasured a Civil War story and a statue of Mary. (see left) In the 1860’s **Mother Alexia Lechner** was building a new monastery on Twelfth Street in Covington even though the country was in the midst of the Civil war. Union soldiers encamped near that location offered to help with the brickwork for the new building. One of the soldiers got mortar in his eyes and was in danger of losing his sight, but the Sisters prayed for a miracle and used a relic of St. Walburg to ask for her intercession.



The man’s eyes were healed. To show their gratitude, the soldiers made a financial donation so that a statue of the Blessed Mother could be purchased for the new



chapel.

This summer the statue was part of a display and reenactment (above) at the James A. Ramlage Civil War Museum in Ft. Wright during the annual Battery Hooper Days.



Celebrating 25 Years of Ministry in Morehead, Kentucky



Right, Sr. Rosemary thanks parishioners and friends.

Below, the Gough Sisters, Srs. Margaret Mary, Stella and Denise were part of the Benedictine contingent that celebrated with Sr. Rosemary in Morehead.

Sr. Denise went to Morehead in 1975 to work as a nurse anesthetist at St. Clare Regional Medical Center, and Sr. Rosemary joined her in 1989 when she became Director of Religious Education at the parish. Sr. Denise retired in 2006 but continued to live in Morehead.



On July 27 Jesus Our Savior Parish in Morehead, Kentucky, threw a parish potluck supper and party celebrating Sr. Rosemary McCormack and her 25 years of service as the Director of Religious Education. Pictured left are Sr. Rosemary and Reverend Paul Prabell, pastor.



The Chronicles continued

Monastery is the grandmother house of St. Walburg Monastery. The Benedictine monastery of Erie, Pennsylvania is the daughterhouse of St. Joseph Monastery. St. Walburg Monastery is a daughterhouse of Erie.

August 23—A large group of Benedictine Sisters attended the 125th anniversary of the arrival in Kentucky of the Sisters of the Congregation of Divine Providence. A solemn Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption marked this special occasion.

September 1—Edward Smain, father of our kitchen manager, Maureen Smain, died today. Members of the Smain family have served this community in countless ways.

With other good friends, Benedictines attended the visitation on September 4, Ed's 84th birthday, and the funeral Mass on September 5. A reception for the Smain's many friends and guests was held in the monastery lower level in the afternoon.

September 2—Villa Madonna Academy, with its students, faculty, parents and friends, commemorated 110 years of Catholic education with a Mass celebrated by Fr. Baiju Kidāagen, chaplain. Although classes resumed for students, guests enjoyed a reception afterwards.

September 4—Sr. Cathy Bauer began a two year Spiritual Director Internship program at Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, Our Lady of Grace Monastery, Beech Grove, Indiana. The program is designed for a person who desires to enrich his/her spiritual life, to discern whether they have a call to become a spiritual director, and to develop experientially the skills needed for spiritual direction. Sr. Cathy's visits to Beech Grove during the next two years will involve a varied but regular travel schedule.

September 8—The student body of
Continued on next page

The Chronicles continued

VMA celebrated the school's 110th anniversary with cake made by the Benedictine Sisters. According to **Sr. Vincentia Dolan's** day book the first Villa classes were held on September 8, 1904 with twenty-five students, eighteen of whom were boarders.

September 13—Sr. Deborah Harmeling presented an informative program called *Exploring the Illuminations of Hildegard of Bingen* for the Center of Spirituality day. (See picture on this page.) She explained Hildegard's theological thought and spirituality represented in the art of *Scivias*. An interested and inquisitive audience asked many questions.

September 14—Holy Cross Parish celebrated anniversaries today: the beginning of the parish in 1889 and the establishment of the elementary school in 1914. Benedictine Sisters staffed the school for many of those years; some attended the school itself. **Bishop Roger Foys** celebrated Eucharist on this Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Many past and present parish members attended. A nostalgic tour through the old school building and the reception for guests revived many memories.

September 28-29—Sr. Mary Tewes and Oblate Gail Michalack attended the Mid-West Regional meeting for Oblate Directors at Benedict Inn, Beech Grove, Indiana. Directors from monasteries in Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois and Michigan gathered. A committee was formed to organize a workshop for the region in 2016 to assist communities in forming lay Oblate Directors.

September 29--Patty Bickett, (See pictures on this page) who has been a resident since the beginning of January, became a postulant today at Evening Prayer. Patty has a daughter and granddaughter and since January

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All Around the Monastery



and lectio, attending classes, being a sacristan, helping in the infirmary and working in the kitchen, volunteering at HONK (Housing Opportunities of Northern Kentucky), and continuing the development of her artistic and photography skills.

Patty Bickett (left and below) became a postulant on September 29. Her program for the postulant year (entering more fully into the community's life, charism and vision) includes participation in community prayer and Eucharist, spending time in daily prayer



(Above) **Sr. Deborah Harmeling** was the speaker at the September 13 Center of Spirituality Day, Exploring the Illuminations of Hildegard of Bingen. Approximately seventy-two people attended and learned about the art and theology of Hildegard's first book of visions, *Scivias*.

Halloween 2014

We don't usually share pictures of the community's Halloween costumes with readers of LEAVEN, but this year the theme for costumes was hymn titles from our hymnal *Breaking Bread*. Sisters showed so much creativity that we decided to share the costumes with OCP, the publishers of *Breaking Bread*. They put some of the costumes on OCP's Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/OCPmusic> so we thought it would be appropriate to include some in *LEAVEN*.

(Left) When we first saw Sr. Rosemary's costume, we thought she misunderstood the theme. Then we realized that she was the Cincinnati Reds winning the World Series in 1975 & 1976 and the song title was *Were you There?*

(Right) Sr. Christa decided to be service music and appeared as *Holy, Holy, Holy*.

(Below left) Sr. Charles represented *Now is The Time* and Srs. Nancy and Joan were *Companions on the Journey*.

(Below right) Maureen Smain was the celestial postal carrier *Send Us Your Spirit, O Lord*.

The Chronicles continued

has served as an AmeriCorps worker at Housing Opportunities of Northern Kentucky (HONK). We are glad that Patty is taking the next step in her discernment as a member of St. Walburg Monastery and we are happy to welcome her as a postulant.

September 30—Srs. Mary Catherine Wenstrup and Rita Brink attended the funeral service for Sr. Christine Vladimiroff, OSB at Mount St. Benedict Monastery in Erie, Pennsylvania. Sr. Christine held leadership positions in her community and in national organizations.

October 3-5—The Suzuki Group, an assembly of young musicians, made their second retreat at the Guest House and presented a concert at Madonna Manor on Sunday afternoon.

October 4—Srs. Ann Middendorf, Martha Walther, Denise Gough and Rosemary McCormack celebrated 60 years of monastic profession at Evening Prayer. (*See pictures on page 3.*) It was a private community celebration to which Cindy Zegarra and Mary Helen Willenborg, former members of the class, were also present. Cindy travelled up from Georgia. A festive dinner followed.

October 9—The city of Villa Hills held a bingo with refreshments for Seniors in the city. A large contingent from Madonna Manor and St. Walburg Monastery enjoyed the new and varied "shapes" on the bingo cards and the homemade delicacies prepared by volunteers.

October 18—The VMA Craft Fair was the biggest ever—approximately 73 vendors, including the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery, exhibited wares. It is impossible to list all who contributed or helped with items for sale—knitted, crocheted, sewn—wooden figures, note

Continued on next page



The Chronicles continued

cards, framed pictures and baked goods of all kinds. A large and continuous crowd filled the Sports Center from 9 am to 3 pm.

Patty Bickett attended the first in a series of two day classes offered by the Diocese of Covington's Office of Catechesis and Formation. As part of her program for her postulant year she will attend classes on Christology, the Old and New Testaments, Mariology, Eschatology and the Book of Psalms.

October 19—St. Walburg Monastery Oblates renewed their oblation today at community Noon Day Prayer. After celebrating Morning Prayer and Eucharist with the community, they assembled in the lower level for a group reflection led by **Sr. Mary Tewes**, oblate director. Four inquirers made their oblation; thirty oblates renewed their oblation. *(See pictures on page 10.)*

October 22-26—**Srs. Christa Kreinbrink, Henrietta Seiler and Joan Fraenzle** left on the 22nd for St. Marys, Pennsylvania. The next day **Srs. Deborah Harmeling and Cathy Bauer** joined them to help with the two day flea market sale of items from St. Joseph Monastery. *(See page 11.)* The sisters at home supported this effort through their prayers. **Srs. Christa and Cathy** left for Kentucky immediately after the Saturday sale to prepare for the funeral of **Sr. Betty Cahill** who died on the 23rd after a difficult illness. *(See obituary on this page.)*

October 29—**Srs. Denise Gough and Rosemary McCormack** moved back to Northern Kentucky today from Morehead, Kentucky. They are now residing at the monastery.

Sister Betty Cahill, 1931-2014

Born July 11, 1931 in Erlanger, Kentucky

Entered St. Walburg Monastery for the third time, December 8, 1957

Received habit, June 14, 1958

First Profession, August 24, 1959

Died October 23, 2014

Sister Betty Cahill was born to James C. and Georgia Hummel Cahill in Erlanger, KY on July 11, 1931, the feast of St. Benedict.

She was given the name Betty Ann at her baptism. Betty was the fourth of six children—four girls and two boys. Each sibling was known by a nickname. The Cahill family resided in Erlanger, home of St. Henry Parish where Betty was educated for twelve years by the Benedictine Sisters.



After entering St. Walburg Monastery twice before, Betty re-entered on December 8, 1957 and became a novice, Sister Kent, on June 14, 1958. First and perpetual profession followed in 1959 and 1962. When sisters were given the option to return to baptismal names, she became Sister Betty.

Sr. Betty was a lover of the great outdoors. During her first years at the monastery, she helped on the farm and studied at Villa Madonna College. By the time she received her BS in 1974 the college had moved and been renamed Thomas More College. Sr. Betty taught 3rd, 6th, 7th and 8th grades from 1961-1975 in diocesan schools, twice serving as principal and house superior. From 1978-1986 she spent happy years serving the people of Appalachia in Floyd County, Kentucky.

In 1987 Sr. Betty became part of the formation team at the monastery and continued as novice director until August, 2004. She worked hard to keep the grounds in tiptop shape and took an active interest in the natural environment for the rest of her life. Sr. Betty served as archivist in her later years, organizing, sifting, sharing. Her anecdotes from the archives were a featured event at each community meeting. In the last *LEAVEN* issue is a reflection by Sr. Betty on the running of the Kentucky Derby with admonitions from St. Benedict's Rule.

Sr. Betty's physical condition deteriorated in the last several months. Not one to complain, she made several trips to the hospital and frequent doctor trips. Having moved to the infirmary several weeks earlier, Betty made the choice for hospice care which was needed for only one day. She died peacefully on Thursday, October 23, 2014. Surviving Sr. Betty are her sisters Birdie, Ritzie and Dolly, and her brother Bill, her sister-in-law Ginny, many nieces and nephews and the Benedictine community.

Sister Dominic Sullivan, 1928-2014

Born January 14, 1928 in Ludlow, Kentucky
Entered St. Walburg Monastery December 27, 1947
Received habit, June 29, 1948
First Profession, June 30 1949
Died November 11, 2014

Sister Dominic Sullivan, was born to James Patrick and Frances Breuer Sullivan on January 14, 1928 and given the name Mary when she was baptized at St. James Church, Ludlow, KY. Mary was the sixth of twelve children—six boys and six girls—two of whom died in infancy. St. James School was staffed by the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth. Two of Mary's sisters entered that community, Sister Teresa Catherine and Sister Rose Patrick. One day in conversation with her sister Jean (Sister Rose), Mary declared she was planning to join the sisters “up on the hill”. She became a postulant at St. Walburg Monastery on December 27, 1947 and began her novice year in 1948, receiving the name Sister Dominic. First and perpetual profession followed in 1949 and 1952. Silver, golden and diamond jubilees were celebrated in 1974, 1999 and 2009.



After perpetual profession Sr. Dominic served as a nurse aide in hospitals staffed by the Benedictine Sisters in Florence and LaJunta, CO from 1949 until 1953. She returned to Kentucky where she taught primary or middle grades in the schools of the Covington diocese—Holy Cross, St. Therese, St. Paul and St. Francis Xavier.

In 1964 Sr. Dominic was sent to the Kentucky mountain region of Appalachia where she did catechetical work and home visiting for Our Lady of Good Counsel parish in Hazard, KY. These many years in the mountains were very active and happy ones for Sr. Dominic.

In 1980 when she returned to live at the monastery Sr. Dominic was engaged in home visiting and community service wherever she was needed, particularly in driving and helping in the infirmary. Failing health required that she move to the infirmary in 2004. Her family, far and near, visited frequently and in these last days were a constant presence in prayer and comfort. Sr. Dominic died peacefully in the evening of November 11. Her siblings, James, John, Ann, Thomas, Sr. Teresa Catherine, Elizabeth, Michael, Daniel and Theresa preceded her in death. Surviving her are her brother Joe and his wife Maureen, her sister Sr. Rose, SCN, many devoted nieces and nephews and this Benedictine community

The Chronicles continued

October 31—The traditional Halloween party with its “themed” costumes, games and refreshments provided an opportunity for laughs and fun this evening. Hymn titles from *Breaking Bread* was the theme and creativity abounded. Imagine, if you will, costumes for *Companions on the Journey, Were You There?, Table of Plenty, Peace is Flowing Like a River, Christ Be Beside Me, America the Beautiful* and many, many more. (See pictures on page 7 and <http://www.facebook.com/OCPmusic>.) What will next year bring?

November 7—**Srs. Mary Catherine Wenstrup and Deborah Harmeling** left for Sacred Heart Monastery, Cullman, Alabama today. Sr. Mary Catherine began facilitation of the discernment process for the election of prioress. Sr. Deborah helped a writing committee write direction statements and met the community in preparation for doing a day of reflection in March.

November 11—After a long illness and patient acceptance, **Sr. Dominic Sullivan** died today. (See obituary on this page.) Members of her family were frequent visitors during her years in the infirmary and were with her during these last days.

November 14-16--**Srs. Dorothy Schuette and Mary Tewes** led a retreat for women, *Encountering Christ in the Psalms* at the Guest House this weekend. Five women attended and issued great reviews. **November 26**--This evening we celebrated our traditional Thanksgiving community dinner with a 52 lb turkey (See page 11.) and many wonderful side dishes, homemade bread and homemade pies--pumpkin, apple and pecan.

Oblates Gather to Renew their Oblation and Welcome Four New Oblates on October 19, 2014



Receiving Benedictine Oblate Pin

Top left: **Jessie Lamantia** (left) with prayer partner **Gail Michalack**; Top right: **George Hageman** (left) with prayer partner **Jerry Edwards**. Bottom left: **Beth Cefalu** (left) with prayer partner **Sr. Victoria Eisenman**; Bottom right: **Gayle Underdown** (left) with prayer partner **Sr. David Ruschmann**.



Giving Thanks for Our Benedictine Heritage

In January 2014 the seventeen members of St. Joseph Monastery (Benedictine Sisters of Elk County, Pennsylvania) voted to close the monastery which is the first monastery for Benedictine women in the United States. The closing of this monastery marks a new beginning for the sisters there and a new historical reality for Benedictine women in the United States.

We at St. Walburg Monastery have visited St. Joseph Monastery frequently since Sr. Rita Brink was appointed administrator in 2012. We feel a deep sadness about the closing but harbor sincere hopes for the seventeen community members who are relocating to



other communities. With our prayers and labor, we have supported Sr. Rita and the dedicated volunteers

from the town of St. Marys, Pennsylvania (see above left and right) as they organized the sale of treasured and not so treasured items at the monastery.

Sr. Rita scheduled two weekends for the sales—Friday and Saturday, October 17 & 18 and Friday and Saturday, October 24 & 25. Members from St. Joseph Monastery's daughter and granddaughter houses (St. Walburg Monastery, Mt. St. Benedict Monastery, Erie, Pennsylvania and the Benedictine Sisters of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) travelled to St. Marys to help with the sales. All proceeds from these sales and ones scheduled for Spring 2015 will benefit the retirement of the sisters of St. Joseph Monastery. There was a line of eager buyers on Friday, October 25 (see right) waiting for the doors to open.



At St. Walburg Monastery we are not only grateful to the sisters past and present of St. Joseph Monastery for planting the seeds of women's monasticism but we are also grateful for a reminder of them in our midst. On a trip to St. Joseph Monastery in August we purchased the monastery's smaller dining room tables for our dining room. As we celebrated our traditional Thanksgiving meal this year on our grandmother's tables, (right below) we gave thanks not only for the 52 lb turkey (left with Maureen Smain) but also for the tables themselves and the rich heritage that the sisters who have gone before us passed down to us.





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SAVE THE DATE

The St. Walburg Monastery Center of Spirituality is offering
a day of discussion and reflection entitled

Encountering Islam and Your Muslim American Neighbors

presented by **Shakila T. Ahmad,**

President and Chair, Board of Trustees

Islamic Center of Greater Cincinnati

Saturday, April 18, 2015

10:00 am - 2:00 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 and lunch
