



FROM THE CENTER

A Newsletter For Friends and Benefactors of Saint Benedict Center Across The Country



Brothers and the IHM group participate in the March for Life.

Never Say Die

Washington D.C. was literally flooded with pro-lifers of all ages on the grey drizzly day of January 23, 2012, for the 39th March for Life.

Among the crowds was the IHM contingent of Brothers and students who had driven through the night to participate. The Sisters had arrived a few days earlier for their booth at the March for Life Convention.

Despite the ugly weather the crowd of marchers was tremendous! The enthusiastic mob marched passed the Supreme Court for over two hours!

But one of the most impressive sights was the large crowd that took up the rear, slowly and solemnly marching up Capitol Hill, singing the Divine Mercy Chaplet. What could be more appropriate?

Join us in praying that God will put an end to the scourge of abortion... and "have mercy on us, and on the whole world."

Host-Making Room

For many years the Sisters made the altar breads for IHM Chapel, having been taught by the Good Shepherd Sisters, who gave them their ovens. Several years ago, however, this job had to be abandoned due to lack of space.

In the spring of 2011, thanks to the generosity of the Brothers and friends, a host-making bakery was begun in Saint Joseph's house. One generous friend even donated and installed the flooring.

In an quest to upgrade the antiquated ovens, the Poor Clare Sisters in Cleveland, Ohio, came to the rescue and gave their whole operation to the Sisters, who through a series of miraculous events were able to drive out and pick them up in two vans. This included two ovens, mixer, cutters and a humidifier.

While the last electrical outlets are being installed, we anxiously anticipate the honor of making the "Bread of Angels" to be used at the Sacrifice of the Mass.

Once we get our operation "up and running" we hope to make our breads available to other parishes and chapels.



Sister Marie-Bernard and postulants prepare the new host-making room in Saint Joseph's house. We are looking forward to restarting this beautiful task.

Answered Prayers

Medical Pro-Life issues in the abstract are one thing, but when they become real and personal they are more than traumatic. It is always good to remember that the medical community does not have the last say in life issues. Following are two stories that show the tremendous power and love of God when we turn to Him in prayer.

Gianna Elizabeth Maney

Dan Maney, a graduate of IHM, turned 21 the day before his wedding to Kaite Patterson in January, 2010. Before they celebrated their first anniversary they were expecting their first child. "I remember getting out of work early," Kaite recalled, "waving excitedly to everyone as I left to go to our first ultrasound appointment. Dan met me at the doctor's office; we both were full of smiles.



Above: Dan kisses newborn Gianna on March 31, 2011. Note the Omphalocele at bottom right of photo.

Gianna underwent a series of surgeries until the final surgery in September 2011.



The test seemed to be going fine, when suddenly the technician announced that she wanted to run the images by the doctor. Having worked as a medical assistant I knew that I often used the same line to keep a patient calm when something appeared wrong. Immediately I looked at Dan and said 'I think something's wrong.' Dan assured me not to worry, but I wasn't convinced. It seemed like an eternity before the door finally re-opened and a doctor appeared. After scrutinizing the images he turned to us and began, 'I wish we were meeting under better circumstances.' At that moment time stood still. He then explained to us that our baby had an *Omphalocele*. I remember being so confused as he explained that the baby's stomach, liver, intestines and spleen were growing in a sac outside of its body. I remember not feeling anything but shock. I could hear the nervousness in Dan's voice as he asked different questions. Finally he asked the doctor if the baby would live, and the doctor replied, 'in some cases the baby will survive and we won't

know much until the baby progresses. Some couples might decide that they can't go through the pregnancy and might consider termination and I just want to give you that option.' I think before he could even finish that sentence I blurted out, 'That's not even an option.' He made some comment 'that it has to be on record that I gave you the option.' Before he took more images of the baby I excused myself. In the bathroom fighting back tears, my heart was racing and it felt hard to breathe and as I looked around wondering what to do and I remember hearing my mother-in-law's voice saying, 'say *Hail Mary's*' and right there in the bathroom I prayed *Hail Mary* after *Hail Mary*. I told Our Lady that I needed her help and asked her to be with me. The tears ceased at that moment and I walked bravely back into the room. For the remainder of the visit I just kept saying *Hail Mary's*. I have never felt Our Lady as close as I did that horrific day.

There were many tears that night, but Dan and I found comfort in prayer and after we entered our apartment we hit the floor on our knees and began to pray. It was a very difficult thing to say that you wanted whatever God's will was, but to actually feel that and believe it was a totally different story. In my mind I wanted to surrender to God, but in my heart I didn't want my baby to die. We immediately started a novena to Saint Gerard, storming Heaven for a miracle.

We could never have imagined then how many people were praying for our little girl. People from around the whole world, people we didn't even know. Each day was a little bit easier and little did I realize, God's grace was moving within us. After reading the story of Saint Gianna Molla we decided to name our little girl after her. Saint Gianna gave me so much comfort and I often would close my eyes and ask for her help to total surrender to God's will as she did. This was a huge turning point for me.

Thanks to all the prayers, things began to look better, even before she was born. The doctors ruled out chromosomal abnormality and then the large hole in her heart that they predicted would require surgery disappeared and the enlarged kidney began to look normal.

I remember people talking to me with a sad look in their eyes, wondering how we could go through something like this, remarking that they could have never done it. I would respond that God knew what He was doing and that we were honored that He felt we were strong enough to go through such a difficult thing and if Jesus decided to take her after we baptized her, then we felt had done our duty as parents. That thought that we would have a little saint in Heaven gave us such peace.

On March 31, we drove into Boston. The day had finally come, for Gianna's birthday! We said the last prayers of our Novena and headed to the hospital for a scheduled c-section. We prayed a rosary on our way that everything would go smoothly and that we would be resigned to whatever God willed. Dan and I both remember feeling such peace that day. We both said it was the grace of God Who was watching over us. Gianna was born at 2:09 p.m. and Dan was able to baptize her before they took her off to the NICU.

One of the NICU nurses recently told us that when she saw Gianna that first night she went home and said 'That Omphalocele is going to burst by tomorrow, guaranteed.' It didn't. She was so stable that they took her breathing tube out after the first day and although her condition was still precarious she was in our arms shortly after. They had originally told me I wouldn't be able to hold her for a month.

She stayed in the NICU for a couple of weeks. When they transferred her to a regular room we stayed with her the next four weeks. Finally at six weeks we took her home. Dan and I would do daily dressing changes to keep the *Omphalocele* clean and in tact, trying to reduce its size. If this worked, the first plan was for Gianna to have her final surgery when she was a year old. But unfortunately this method wasn't working and complications would soon begin if it kept growing so we decided to go with the second option, which was a series of surgeries to push everything back into her body.

On August 8, we were admitted back to Children's. Gianna spent several weeks in the ICU intubated and paralyzed as they began the procedure. In three weeks a second surgery brought her closer to the goal. For the next three months, Dan and I stayed with her in Boston.

The Devil would try at times to make us weary and lose hope, but prayers helped us not to get discouraged. We discovered that the hospital had a chapel where the Blessed Sacrament is reposed and we would pray our rosary there almost every night. During the day I would make frequent visits to Our Lord and would receive strength and reassurance from Him.

On September 29, 2011, Gianna was scheduled for her final surgery. We felt that same inner peace the day of Gianna's surgery as we had the day she was born. Her surgery went beautifully and I will never forget the smiling faces of her two surgeons as they came to greet us. They hugged us and said, 'This is the best way to end our week!'

Gianna fought a couple of infections after her surgery and had some breathing issues at night that required oxygen. But we were sent home on November 4, 2011, with a normal baby, oxygen for nighttime, a feeding tube, and a schedule to wean her off her narcotics. A month later Gianna breathing and eating on her own and off all medications.

'Gianna is a normal baby,' the surgeon told me at her last visit, 'treat her like a normal baby.' She is progressing quickly and making up for lost time. She sits, roll around on the floor, babbles, laughs and smile and will grow up just like any other little girl.

The odds of being born with a giant *Omphalocele* are 1 in 10,000. Nine of ten patients who die from *Omphalocele* die either from major cardiac or chromosomal disease. Gianna is a miracle. Never underestimate the power of prayer and faith. Gianna is living proof that God answers prayer and He has the final say. Taking her life for my convenience was never an 'option'."



Left: Kaite and Dan stand in IHM Chapel after Gianna's official baptism.

Below: Thanks to many prayers, Gianna is presently healthy, happy and growing as a normal child.



Mark Dominick Ewing

This spring Bernie Lemanski, who frequently attends rosary and Benediction at IHM chapel on his way home from work stopped the Sisters and asked for prayers for his daughter. She had just received some bad news regarding her pregnancy with her third child. Her name was immediately put on our prayer list. A few months later, after the baptism of her beautiful son, Mary sent us the following story:

Dear Sister Katherine Maria,

I am happy to share my story with you and others. Thank you for giving me this opportunity and for all of your prayers, for without you and all of the other Sisters and Brothers of Saint Benedict Center my story would have had a very different ending.

On Friday, June 3, 2011, I attended my scheduled obstetrician appointment, (my husband was unable to go), so my wonderful father gladly volunteered...little did I know just how important that would be, and how much I would need him there.

The appointment included a routine ultrasound so I could find out if our baby was a boy or girl. This particular ultrasound would take a bit longer because the technician was required to check all vital organs and take measurements of all parts of the body to ensure my due date was accurate.

After the ultrasound I was told that I was carrying my third son! How happy my husband would be. I thought...on the other hand I had been hoping for a girl, but knew as long as the baby was healthy that was more than I could ever ask for.

I sat and waited in a private room for my doctor to review all of the ultrasound pictures. I anticipated her entering the exam room to discuss my pregnancy thus far and I would ask her jokingly, "What am I going to do with three boys!"

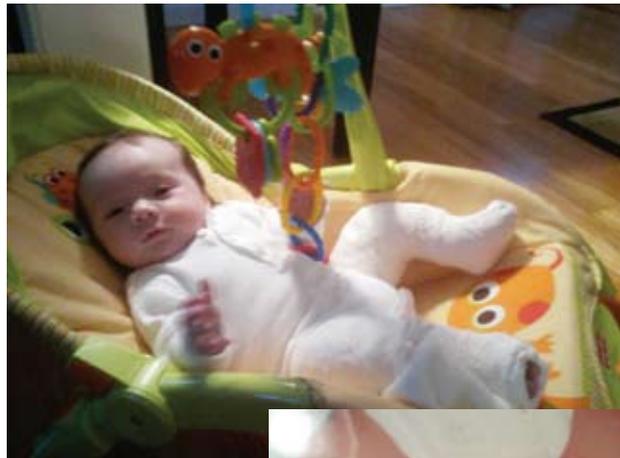
So when my doctor entered the room I was enjoying the surprise that it was



The Ewing Family happily welcomes Mark Dominic into their home.

another boy and giggled as she entered.

From the instant she stepped into the room, I knew something was wrong; her face was long and dreadful looking. She immediately grabbed my hand and told me now was not the time for giggling; there was something seriously wrong. My emotions switched instantly to hysterical tears and need for my father for support. My doctor persisted to tell us that the baby had a very serious chromosomal abnormality, either Trisomy 13 or Trisomy 18. She told my father and I that this baby would most likely not survive *in utero* past my 7th month of pregnancy, if he did there was a very strong possibility that he would die during delivery; and lastly, if by chance, he was strong enough to make it through delivery there could be no way he would live to see his first birthday. She told me that when this occurs most women terminate the pregnancy and that I should strongly consider this and that I didn't have much time to decide. I was almost 22 weeks pregnant at that point and she told me the guidelines for abortion were okay up until 23 weeks and a few days. She was sending me to Boston for further testing and was adamant that I make a decision rapidly. At that point it was 3:30



Right: Mark's birth defect as seen at birth.

Above: Casting and surgeries will correct Mark's feet over time.



p.m. on Friday afternoon and my appointment in Boston would be first thing Monday morning.

My dad asked my doctor why she was saying this and she told him it was because of two things she saw in the ultrasound pictures...first he had clubfeet. We didn't know what that was, so she described it very insensitively as his legs looking like hockey sticks. Secondly, he had a cyst on his brain, and to have two defects automatically diagnosed him with a horrific disease.

That was the most devastating time of my life. I went home and just cried all night asking God why...why would he do this to my family and me? How would I have the strength to go through this? Saturday I spent the morning crying harder and praying to God that he would make me miscarry so that

we didn't have to go through the heartache of delivering a stillborn baby. I was so scared of holding the baby and loving him instantly and then the thought of losing him was unbearable to me. By Sunday morning I was now crying even harder and praying differently to God, begging him to give me as much time with my baby, "Mark-Dominick," as he possibly could. I would take 5 seconds, 5 minutes, 5 days, just anything... please just don't take him before we get to meet him and love him. He deserved to be loved, even if it was for only 5 minutes.

I was so fixated on losing my baby, but all along my father was telling me that everything was going to be just fine! He was praying and also asked all the Sisters and Brothers to pray for us after we left the doctors and they had been praying all weekend long.

Monday gave us new hope – my husband and I went to my appointment in Boston to see the specialist and she confirmed that our baby was strong and healthy. Yes, the brain cyst was present and extremely common in fetuses. It would dissolve on its own by gestational week 30; and as far as the clubfeet, yes he did have them, but again this is very common and 100% treatable after birth.

Without all of your prayers and my strong faith, combined with being pro-life, I know that this would have had a very different ending.

Today, Mark is a very healthy 2-month-old baby. We have been treating his feet since birth and he is making great progress. His feet will be in casts before surgery and braces after. He will meet every milestone with crawling, walking and eventually playing sports, leading a very active life. He will have no limitations due to his birth defect.

We are truly so blessed to have this beautiful boy in our lives; and will forever be grateful for all your prayers and for God's grace in giving him to us.

Sincerely,

Mary and Adam Ewing



Adam and Mary Ewing stand with Mary's parents after Mark Dominic's baptism in IHM Chapel during the 2011 Christmas season.



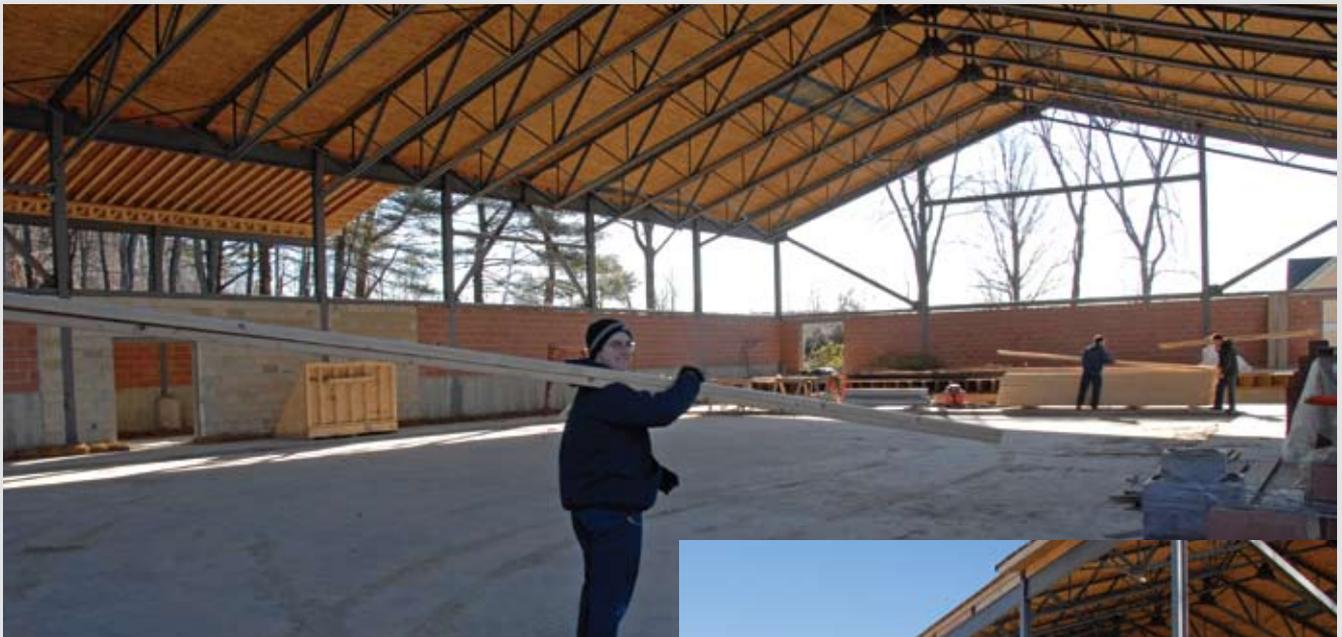
Sister Martina Marie, Sister Katherine Maria and Sister Christopher Margaret help to get the new mailroom into working order.

Mail-out Room

This summer a transformation began to convert the building known as Saint Joseph's Guesthouse, into a work place for the Sisters.

Downstairs are the host-making room and now a much-needed "mail room" for our Internet orders and bulk orders of calendars and books. Made to function with efficiency, we aim to keep accurate records and fill orders faster.

The room will be a busy place as the catalog orders have kept us buzzing over the past few months, not to mention the constant orders for True Devotion rings. Upstairs will be used for conferences, the kitchen for canning. This addition is a welcome expansion to the community as we grow in numbers.



Postulant Christopher carries lumber to the other Brothers.

The Gym Update

The block exterior walls are finished on the gym and work has slowed down but not stopped during the winter. It will resume full force in February when the wooden walls will be added to complete the shelling-in of the structure. Then the details begin!

Meanwhile the retaining walls were poured and faced with stone for the basement entry. Working off donations, our brick memorials are increasing and will make a beautiful testimony to all those who have made this project possible.



Brother Peter Mary and Brother Anthony Marie work on the stone wall near the basement entrance of the gym.

Hymns in Harvard

In early December, the Harvard Historical Society invited the Brothers and Sisters choir to perform a Christmas concert of traditional Carols.

Directed by Brother Peter Mary, they sang 19 songs on the stage in the main room of the Historical Society. Maria Rindenello, who plays the harp professionally, accompanied many of the carols.

The afternoon event ended with a gathering and social where attendees agreed that this should be scheduled every year as a new tradition for Harvard.

Proceeds were split with the society and the IHM building fund for the gym.



Brother Peter Mary, MICM, introduces the concert in the Harvard Historical Society.

Ladies' Pilgrimage

In November fifty-seven ladies joined our "pilgrimage" to Connecticut for a day of peace and prayer.

The first destination was the Knights of Columbus Museum in New Haven, where pilgrims enjoyed the beautiful display of 90 Crowned Madonna paintings from the Vatican, along with "Christmas in Africa" creches, the Papal Gallery, and many other interesting galleries ... and of course, the gift shop!

After a pizza lunch, the journey continued to Saint Mary's Church, (the church where the Knights of Columbus were founded) where Prior of the Dominicans, Fr. DeLuce, gave a short history of the church, its spirituality and artistic elements. Saint Mary's houses a beautiful Shrine to the Infant of Prague.

The last stop of the day, was to the Cardinal Kung Foundation in Stamford, where the group was guided through an informative and moving tour, focusing on the life of Cardinal Ignatius Kung... and the underground church in China.

It was a beautiful day, great camaraderie and tremendous spiritual benefits! Everyone is already looking forward to the 2012 Ladies Pilgrimage!



Gift Shop to Go

Aside from our popular little gift shop here on the monastery grounds... and our busy online gift store, the Sisters often take our mobile gift shop to various Catholic shows, conferences and vocation fairs.

Toting a wide variety of gifts and goods, the Sisters' table is usually very exciting since it offers things that can't be found online... or here in our physical store, such as the handmade shopping bags and cinch backpacks featuring tapestries of Our Lady... straight from the Sisters's sewing room!

So let us know if there is a conference you would like to do some unique Catholic shopping at... and we'll be there! In the meantime, check out our online gifts at <http://store.saintbenedict.com/>



The Ladies' Pilgrimage (minus those still in the gift shop!) stands on the steps of the Dominicans' Saint Mary's Church which houses the Shrine to the Infant of Prague.

