

FROM THE CENTER

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

Profession of Vows

Veni sponsa Christi, accipe coronam quam tibi Dominus praeparavit in aeternum, alleluia! “Come, bride of Christ, accept the crown which the Lord has prepared for you forever, alleluia!”

January 17, 2016, was a day of great joy in Heaven, in the Church, and here at Saint Benedict Center, as two novices pronounced their first vows as Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Sister Marie-Celine Kelly of Harvard, MA, and Sister Mary Clair Sonnier of Batesville, AR, both wore their mother’s wedding gowns, and were escorted down the aisle by their fathers. There they received a blessing before the Solemn High Mass began. Father Neil Roy officiated and Father David Lewis served as Deacon while Brother Christopher Isaac served as sub-deacon. The Mass was sung antiphonally by the Brothers and Sisters choir.

At the Offertory, the communion rail gate was opened and the Sisters approached, and knelt before “the altar of God, Who has given such joy to their youth.” There they offered them-



selves in union with Christ, and in the sight of the community, family and friends. The *Veni Creator* was chanted asking in prayer that the Spirit of God come to sanctify the offering about to be made.

“In the presence of Almighty God...and for the service of the Holy Roman Catholic Church,” the Sisters vowed their lives to God through Poverty, Chastity and Obedience and they promised to make the first interest of their lives the doctrinal crusade of Saint Benedict Center.” After pronouncing their vows, they signed them on the Gospel side of the altar, kissed them, sealing forever the promise made to their Eternal Bridegroom. Then returning to the altar rail, they knelt down as the priest



Above: The Sisters kneel at the altar rail before pronouncing their Vows.

Left: The community of the Sisters, Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.





The newly professed Sisters prayerfully exit the Chapel to don the habit of a Sister Slave.

Right: Sisters returned to the Chapel in the full habit, and the Solemn High Mass continued.

blessed them, saying, "I, on the part of God, do promise you, if you keep these vows, everlasting life." The Sisters were then given a ring as a sign of their consecration, with the words, "I espouse thee to Jesus Christ; may He preserve thee inviolate." Finally they received the professed habit of the Order with a lit candle, and exiting the chapel, they exchanged the bridal dress for the black veil and habit of a Slave along with the medal and the chains of the rosary.

Holy Mass then resumed and at Communion time the newly professed Sisters approached the rail alone and received Our Lord for the first time as His Spouse.

After Mass a line formed in the foyer of the Chapel where the community greeted the Sisters wishing them "perseverance" before the crowd outside offered them congratulations. Friends and family traveled from Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Florida, Ohio and Wisconsin to celebrate this wonderful event which was followed by a formal luncheon in Saint Agnes Hall. The day closed with Vespers as the new Brides of Christ began their pilgrimage, awaiting the Eternal Bridegroom.



Check out the full gallery of photos from the Profession Day on our website: www.saintbenedict.com



Sister Mary Clair and Sister Marie-Celine cut the cake in celebration of the Eternal Espousals.

Sister Marie-Celine

Sister Marie-Celine was raised in Hopkinton, Massachusetts, and attended Immaculate Heart of Mary School from grades 1-12. Her family moved in her junior year to Harvard. She excelled in her academics and was also MVP in IHM's marching band playing the trumpet and the euphonium. She achieved 2nd chair in Central District Competition and "All State Competition" twice and played in concerts at both district and state levels. Sister graduated from IHM in 2012 as Salutatorian. She also attended Morning Star Camp from 2003 to 2012, working her way up to counselor. Sister entered the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 2013.

Sister Mary Clair

Sister Mary Clair was born in Alabama where her father served in the US Army. The Sonnier family moved to South Carolina, then to Brussels, Belgium, before Lt. Col. Sonnier retired to Arkansas, where sister spent most of her life with her five brothers and one sister. Sister Mary Clair was home schooled until her tenth grade, when she attended Saint Cecelia's Girls School where she graduated in the top of her class with due honors. Sister was a faithful attendee of the Latin Mass at Saint John the Baptist in Little Rock. She attended Morning Star Camp in 2011 and joined the community in 2013.

Hall of Fame

MacIsaac Hall has already been busy, even though there are still many details unfinished. In December, the annual Christmas pageant and concert were performed with an amazing attendance of 400 people! With a makeshift carpet covering the newly painted floor and a curtain-less stage, the three-part production was enjoyed by everyone who overlooked the missing microphones and stage lighting.

After Christmas break, the gym became even busier with daily practice for the basketball teams, both boys and girls. When the season opened for the first time we were able to host home games. It was exhilarating for the teams to play on their own court. Collectively the teams have played 18 home games, and 17 away games. The girls have won 7 and lost 11 and the boys have 5 wins and 12 losses.

Sister Marie-Therese and Sister Marie-Celine coached the girls' team, and Mr. Jon Olden and Brother Christopher Isaac coached the boys. It was also exciting to see alumna, Bridie Vail, return to referee several home games with her father, John, who started and coached the girls' team several years ago. It was a dream come true to watch the games played in our own gym! We've also started training our young Eagles by starting two elementary teams! Thanks to Anna Alexander, PA-C who coaches the girls and Mr. Kevin Mooney who has taken on the boys, we are looking forward to some great new players!

On February 22, we were honored to have Bishop McManus of our diocese join us for our final double header game. The bleachers were packed with an enthusiastic crowd who cheered for the teams and for the Bishop. It was a glorious day.

As the basketball season winds down, the gym remains active with continued work on the stage and classrooms and, of course, nightly games of in-house volleyball or basketball open to the public. We still need donations, so please continue to help us finish the project. For the stage we need stage lighting, several curtains, and sound system. For the gym we need folding chairs and folding tables for functions. For the classrooms we need four teachers desks, four blackboards, window blinds, student desks and book shelves. God bless you for anything you can help with!



Above: Our IHM Eagles, boys' team and girls' team were happy to finally be playing at "home."

Left: Brother Thomas Augustine, Superior, and Bishop McManus of the Worcester Diocese.

Brother Martin Mackenzie

Formerly known as Cameron Mackenzie, Brother Martin grew up in the suburbs of Boston. The eldest of a large family of 10, all homeschooled, pray the family Rosary everyday and attend the Latin Tridentine Mass. Brother began serving at the Latin Mass right after his First Communion, and to that experience he attributes his vocation. After graduating, Cameron worked at his father's family-owned business, Mackenzie Machine and Design Inc., for four years as he discerned his vocation, first visiting the Institute of Christ the King. However, his first experience at Montfort Retreat with the Brothers, Slaves, clinched his vocation.

In July, 2015, he entered as a Slave of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. After spending six months of postulancy he "got an idea of what the life of a Brother in this order is like; living a beautiful, liberating slavery to Our Lady!" On January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany, Cameron entered the novitiate receiving his cassock and took the name of his favorite saint, Saint Martin de Porres. He now launches off on a two year program of prayer, study and work before he takes his first profession. Perseverance, Brother!



Brother Martin stands with fellow Brothers and priest friends, including the pastor of his home parish, Father Higgins of the Parish of Mary Immaculate.

True Devotion in Nebraska

Over the years, parishes across the country have invited the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary to spread the message of “To Jesus through Mary” and to promote the spirit of True Devotion to their parishioners.

This fall, Sister Mary Elizabeth and Sister Marie-Bernard traveled to the Midwest visiting the parish of the Immaculate Conception, in Omaha, Nebraska, for the weekend of November 19-23. Their visit was a motivational impetus to their parish-wide preparation for *Total Consecration to Mary*, planned to take place on December 8. The Sisters’ visit included a mini-retreat for young women, an evening with the parish youth group, presentations on True Devotion after the Sunday Masses, vocation talks for girls of all ages, as well as many occasions to meet and greet the parish families. There was also the added blessing of being able to attend the Ordinations to Minor Orders of the Fraternity of Saint Peter at Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary in Lincoln, NE.

“The mini-mission was blessed from start to finish,” Sister Marie-Bernard said, “we feel honored to have met many wonderful Catholics along the way! What an encouraging experience to be at a place where family life is thriving, thanks to a traditional Catholic parish! How beautiful! We thank Father Brancich, FSSP, and Father Botta, FSSP, for their welcome to their parish! A special ‘thank you’ to our host family, Bart and Julie Crowell, for their generosity and friendship! It was such a blessing to be with you all!”



Above: Sister Mary Elizabeth gives a presentation on True Devotion to Mary and the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in the parish recreation center.



Left: Sister Marie-Bernard and Sister Mary Elizabeth with their hosts, Julie and Bart Crowell, outside Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary.



Above: The Hannon and Brizek families witness the entrance.

Please pray for Postulant Katy and Postulant Jenny as they begin their religious journey!

Postulants

On February 2, the Feast of the Purification of Mary, the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary welcomed two new postulants to the convent for a 6 month period of serious discernment. Amanda Katherine Hannon from Louisiana, is 18, and the second of nine children. Jennifer Marie Brizek from New Jersey, is 19, and the second oldest of eight.

Both young women have been home schooled and are very devoted to the Latin Mass which they grew up attending. Jennifer first attended Morning Star Camp at the age of 10 and participated later as a camp counselor. Katie (Amanda) first attended at age 14 and “wanted to join (the Order) after the first week.” Pray for their perseverance.



Hitting the Road

While Brother Peter Mary was studying for his Class A drivers license he decided to get the Coach Bus license too, just in case. Considering the amount of money spent each year on bus rentals for band parades, pilgrimages, sport events, and pro-life activities he thought a Coach license would be worth it. Once he had passed the test he put the word out to several of the larger bus companies in the country, that we needed a bus of our own, then left it in Our Lady's hands to see what would happen. Lo and behold! Several months later a large bus manufacturer contacted us and said they would help with a bus!

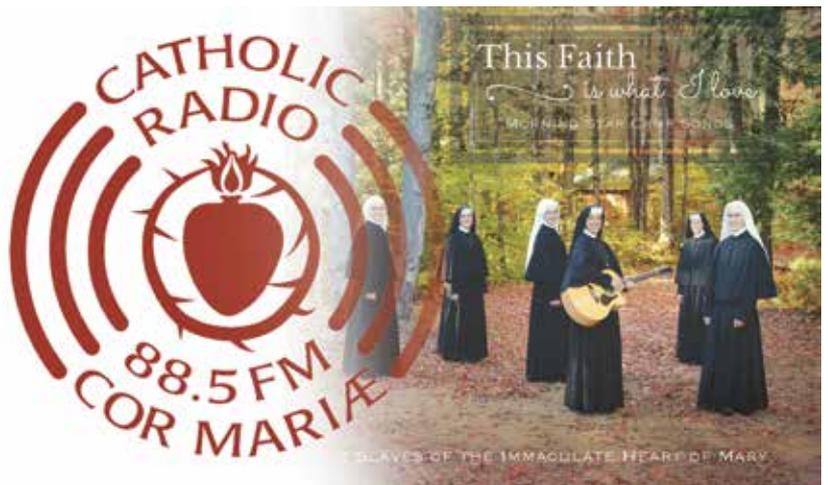
What a surprise it was when the Brothers arrived in New Jersey to discover the bus being donated was 2000 MCI, 55 passenger coach bus! Granted, it has a lot of miles on it and needed a little work to get it through inspection but what a great addition! So far, we have used it for 5 events! Right now we are having our logo painted on it and are planning future pilgrimages, school and band events. There is no stopping us now...as we hit the road.

Brother Peter Mary takes the wheel of the new addition to the monastery's fleet of vehicles! Brother will be driving this bus to band, and school outings.



New Endeavor... on the Air!

The Sisters were invited by Radio CorMariae, an official affiliate of EWTN Radio Network, to take on a new endeavor in making an hour long radio program of a compilation of the songs on their new CD. On February 17, 2016, the Sisters accepted this exciting new project and recorded introductions to each of the songs on the CD at the Friars' radio station in New Bedford, Massachusetts. The Sisters' program was aired for three days at the end of February and is also scheduled for March 17! So, stay tuned to the station's internet stream at www.radiocormariae.com to catch the Sisters on the air!





Sisters take a break from school work and help package CD's during Christmas vacation.



Singing in the Reign (of Jesus through Mary)

Some people have asked the question, “Why?” to our CD project. Our answer: Although Gregorian Chant is our daily diet of prayerful song, we’ve taken some popular hits and converted them into a means of evangelization. Saint Louis de Montfort, Saint John Bosco and many other saints had changed the lyrics of popular songs of their day as a means of expressing the truths of the Faith in an appealing manner. People are trapped into the thinking that only the mainstream radio can provide music and that they can only sing contemporary songs. Because of the powerful impression music makes in the lives of the youth, our goal is to fill their minds and hearts with lively Catholic tunes to sing and hum during the day. We hope to open up a new and brighter vista through our newly released CD, *This Faith Is What I Love*.

The CD can be ordered through our website or you can get just one tune at a time on the following sites online: 24-7, 7digital, 8tracks, Akazoo, Amazon MP3, Apple iTunes, Beyond Oblivion, Deezer, eMusic, Google Music Store, GreatIndieMusic, Groove, iHeartRadio, Inprodicon, JB Hi-Fi, MediaNet, MixRadio, Omnifone, Rhapsody, Shazam, Slacker Radio, SoundExchange, Spotify, Tidal, Tradebit, Yandex, YouTube Music-<https://www.saintbenedict.com/index.php/> our-store by visiting Saint Benedict Center Gift Shop located at 264 Still River Road, Still River, MA. or by calling (978)456-8296. The gift shop is open Mon.-Sat. 10am-4pm and Sunday from 10:45-11:45am.

May She Rest in Peace

PATRICIA MUELLER passed away at home on January 12, at the age of 84. She leaves behind her loving husband, Charlie, an inseparable companion of 65 years. She was predeceased by her eldest son, Brother Joseph, MICM (Charles, Jr.) and four baptized babies. She was also the mother to Sister Katherine Maria, MICM, Sister Agnes Mary, MICM, Dianne (Dennis Maney), Paul (Amy Mueller), Carol (Chris Fretwell) and Jeanne (Jim Crory). She leaves a legacy of good example and faithfulness to the Rosary, Our Lady, and the Church to her 29 grandchildren, one of whom is Sister Marie-Bernard, MICM, and 15 IHM alumni. Her love for children continued up to the day she passed away with constant visits from her children, grandchildren and 27 great-grandchildren who loved her in return.

Her younger years were filled with a crusading spirit, fighting for the Latin Mass and traditional catechesis in West Orange, New Jersey. Faithful to the daily Rosary, a custom in her Irish household, she was known also for her “trimmings” on the Rosary. Patricia raised her family in the same tradition where God came first in all things. She never gave up following the Latin Mass in the hard days of the '60's and '70's when it was almost impossible to find one, sometimes traveling half the day to and from Sunday Mass—then she would add on a “Holy Hour” in reparation to the Sacred Heart! Her faithfulness and prayers finally led her to Saint Benedict Center, where the family visited and finally settled nearby in the '80's. Up to the very day she died, she was a faithful attendee at the Center's Masses and a dedicated Third Order member.

She will be forever missed by all but, through the grace of God, she will be an advocate for those she leaves behind in this vale of tears.

Eternal rest grant unto Patricia and may she and all the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace.

