



# FROM THE CENTER

A Newsletter for Friends and Benefactors of Saint Benedict Center across the Country

## Eternal Promise

The feast of Our Lady of Lourdes on February 11, was celebrated with due solemnity at Saint Benedict Center and had the added glory of marking the Final Profession of two of our Sisters.

After three years of First Vows, Sister Marie-Celine Kelly and Sister Mary Clair Sonnier pronounced their Final Vows during the Offertory of the Mass, uniting the sacrifice of their lives more intimately to Christ, Who is offered and sacrificed in the Holy Mass.

The beautiful chants of the Mass of Our Lady of Lourdes strikingly complemented the simple, yet profound ceremony, as they echoed the invitation of Our Lord, "Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come!"

During the ceremony the Sisters requested to make "perpetual profession in this community of Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary for the glory of God and the service of the community," pronouncing their perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, "in honor of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and for the service of the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church."

The Brides of Christ then carried their charters of profession to the Gospel side of the altar where they signed and kissed them. The celebrant then spoke the awesome words - "I, on the part of God, if you keep these vows, promise you eternal life."

The newly professed each received a blessed veil and a crown of roses "as a sign of their anticipation of the Eternal wedding feast as a Bride of Christ" and a lighted candle, symbolizing the light of Christ, "as a sign of immortality, that, dead to the world, they may live in God, fleeing the works of darkness." The professed then left the chapel to don the veil of profession.

It's always breathtaking to see the look of profound joy on the face of the newly professed as they reenter the chapel wearing the veil and crowned with white roses!



As the Mass came to a close, the professed Sisters and those in the congregation turned their hearts once more in loving petition: "O Lord, may the right hand of Thine Immaculate Mother uplift us ... that by her help we may deserve to come to our eternal fatherland."

A formal luncheon with the community and family members followed. Some family members traveled from as far as Hawaii, Mississippi and Arkansas to join the celebration of this joyful occasion.

Please pray for Sr. Marie-Celine and Sr. Mary Clair as they continue on their earthly pilgrimage to their eternal wedding feast as Brides of Christ. "Confirm, O Lord, what Thou hast wrought in us..."

*Sisters greet the newly professed as they exit the chapel after the ceremony.*

## The Cutting Edge

The giant walls of “logs” – well, full-size trees actually – is an ever-present conversation starter for monastery visitors. While Brothers (with the help of large machinery) grind the trees into the chips which are fed into our BioMass heating system – some are kept aside for the newly acquired *Wood Mizer* sawmill!

Manufactured in Indiana, the Wood Mizer purchase was made possible through the efforts of Patrick Trimble (father of Sister Gabriel Marie) who received a 50% discount from the company, and generous donations to cover the whole cost. Patrick even lugged the new machine all the way to Massachusetts!



*Above: Sisters enjoy a demonstration of the new sawmill.*

*Left: Brother Gerard makes a cut from a large log on the new Wood Mizer sawmill.*



The *Mizer*, model LT15 Wide with a 25 hp gas engine, is a big band saw, mounted horizontally on rails. The saw head moves on the rails and through the log, handling logs up to

36 inches wide and 20 feet long. The machine is a completely manual operation as far as handling the log (turning, clamping, and saw feed) making lumber of varying thicknesses, from the conventional 2x4 board to a live edge (still has the bark on it) slab for a table top, etc. It is amazing to see it cut through a full tree like a stick of butter!

We are still learning the ins and outs of the machine and how to mill lumber correctly and so far have turned out about 1600 board feet. (That is the normal way to calculate an amount of rough sawn wood.)

Next the Brothers are looking into making a solar kiln to dry the cut lumber to use for facial lumber on the new addition that is planned for IHM School as well as many other projects around the monastery.

In true monastic spirit, nothing goes to waste... even the unused cut-offs and scraps from the sawmill will be ground up and used in our wood chip furnace to help heat the monastery!

*Brother Gerard and Brother Peter Mary get ready to make a cut that will eventually turn this full tree into boards!*



## Expansion Groundwork

With the unseasonal lack of snow this year, students and faculty at IHM elementary are getting a day-by-day peek at the groundwork that is being set for the new expansion project! Whether it is large machinery digging holes, Brothers cutting trees, or surveyors and architects scoping out the area, there is a definite feeling of excitement about the new building!

As things get wrapped up in the preliminary stages, the big question is: when will building begin? And the big answer is: hopefully in the spring! Please keep the project in your prayers!



a lot more safety to these bustling events - parking lot lights! Now the parking lot and driveways are lit up and highly visible! It has improved safety for pedestrians and vehicles... and the whole area looks like a little city at night!

## MacIsaac Hall Details

The new facility of MacIsaac Hall & Gym has been up and running now for about three years! A full schedule of high school classes takes place during the day, and afternoons and evenings are filled up with team practices, games and recreational sport nights as well as community events and activities.

The home games are especially well attended and sometimes it is hard to find a parking spot! It has also been a challenge to navigate the traffic as everyone exits!

Thankfully, the Brothers recently finished a much-needed building detail that has added

## Wishes Fulfilled

When the Sisters posted their Christmas wish list online, they were not prepared for the almost immediate fulfillment of their wishes!

Thanks to generous donors, items desired for the monastery, school and camp apostolates were purchased and shipped with true Christmas spirit!

New roasters have already been put to use here at the monastery kitchen and will be invaluable at the camp facility; and the new keyboard sets for music class and camp have been tuned up! And even the new easels for the school art room are dabbled with paint already!

May God bless our generous donors!



## Volunteers Chip In

### Chapel Cleaning Crew

If you visit IHM Chapel on any given Saturday, you may open the door to find a toddler sweeping the front hall, as mom vacuums the main carpet and dad and siblings clean windows and dust pews!

With two daily Masses throughout the week attended by roughly 200 people and three busy Sunday Masses, our little chapel always needs a good cleaning when the weekend rolls around!

Thanks to a school initiative a few years ago, families volunteer to chip in at the monastery by cleaning the main body of the chapel each Saturday. This huge help to the community, not only finds the early spring mud tracked in by students vacuumed up and the dust of summer wiped from each window sill, but it is definitely helping to polish up some beautiful eternal crowns for these families! Thank you, one and all, and may God bless you!



*Above: Charles Brackett fills online orders in the monastery shipping room.*

*Right: One of our happy volunteers at our monastery gift shop.*



*The Harriman Family is one of many volunteer families that clean the chapel.*

## Gift Shop Volunteers

Visitors to True Devotionals Gift Shop, right here on the monastery grounds, will always find a friendly volunteer waiting to welcome and help! Thanks to our lovely gift shop ladies, the little treasure house of gifts is in capable hands. A relay of women cover through the week, and are invaluable with their help in the shop as well as answering phones and taking orders.

And what casual shoppers and visitors don't see, is the barrage of orders flowing in from the world-wide-web version of the same shop! Thanks to Mr. Charlie Brackett, the new shipping room is kept up-to-date and orders are mailed out ASAP! ...Keeping customers happy and new ones logging in all the time! What a tremendous help! God bless our volunteers!



## Requiescat in Pace

**Charles Conrad Mueller**, age 88, died peacefully at home on December 4, 2018 after a long illness. "Charlie," a native of West Orange, NJ, entered the Church through the example of his high school sweetheart, Patricia Ann (Coen) whom he married at the age of 20 years, one month before he was drafted into the Korean War. He spent 18 months on the front lines and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. Returning to New Jersey, Charles joined the West Orange Police Department where he served for 25 years, retiring as a Sergeant at the age of 49. During that time, he and Patsy raised a family of seven children, striving to keep their family anchored in the traditions of the Faith through the tumultuous 70's. After retiring at age 49, Charlie and Pat picked up stakes and moved

to MA to be near the Center, where Brother Joseph, their eldest son had joined the community, as well as their second daughter, Sister Katherine Maria and their youngest, Sister Agnes Mary. Years later two of their grandchildren, Sister Marie-Bernard Maney and Brother Gerard Fretwell also entered the community. Thanks to a wealth of experience and skill, Charles helped build many of the present buildings of SBC, especially the chapel, convent and school. He even made some of the furniture for the convent. Charlie and Pat were life-long members of the Third Order and frequent communicants at the chapel.

He is predeceased by his wife of 66 years, Patricia, whom he loved as his closest soulmate, and his oldest son, Brother Joseph, MICM (Charles). He is survived by his children; Dianne Maney (Dennis), Sister Katherine Maria and Sister Agnes Mary, MICM, Paul (Amy), Carol Fretwell (Christopher), and Jean Crory (James). He also leaves behind 29 grandchildren and 43 great-grandchildren, with two on the way. He is greatly loved and will be missed by all. Rest in peace, Pops.