

# Vocations Supplement

Archdiocese of Indianapolis

## The Jubilee of Mercy and discernment

Fr. Eric M. Augenstein

In a few weeks, the Church throughout the world will open the Jubilee Year of Mercy. In his letter announcing the jubilee year, Pope Francis spoke of what mercy is about: "With our eyes fixed on Jesus and his merciful gaze, we experience the love of the Most Holy Trinity. The mission Jesus received from the Father was that of revealing the mystery of divine love in its fullness" (*Misericordiae Vultus*, #8).

It seems to me that this understanding of mercy also speaks to what we understand vocation to be—our vocation is God's call to each of us to become his disciple, to experience his love, and then, filled with that love, to be sent out on mission in the world.

Whether as priests, deacons, consecrated men and women, or through the sacrament of marriage, our vocation is to love as best we can and to show God's love to others. But we can only do that after we have first fixed our eyes on Jesus "and his merciful gaze" toward us.

In fact, we might even be able to articulate a plan for discernment based on the Holy Father's understanding of mercy. To discern is to listen for God's voice; it begins by growing in relationship with God and experiencing his love. We might think of discernment encompassing three components:

- Prayer—to keep "our eyes fixed on Jesus and his merciful gaze."
- Sacraments—through which we "experience the love of the Most Holy Trinity," especially in the Eucharist and the sacrament of penance and reconciliation.
- Works of mercy—sharing in Christ's mission of "revealing the mystery of divine love in its fullness" to all we encounter, especially those most in need.

To discover one's vocation is to grow in receiving and showing mercy; and to grow in receiving and showing mercy is a sure path to discovering one's vocation.

Ultimately, our vocation cannot be about us—I am not a priest because I wanted to be a priest, but rather because God called me to follow him and to serve him as a priest.

And so any path of discernment should not really start with us, but with God. To put God first in prayer—to receive God's grace in the sacraments—and to serve God in our brothers and sisters—that is both the path of mercy and the path of discernment.

In this year's Vocations Supplement, you will read stories of people who have spent time with God, have been strengthened by the sacraments, have served their brothers and sisters, and in doing so have heard the call to service as a priest, deacon, or consecrated religious. I invite you to read their stories—stories of men and women who have walked the joint path of mercy and discernment.

And if you're trying to figure out where you are on that path, I'd love to walk alongside you and help you keep your "eyes fixed on Jesus and his merciful gaze." †



Father Eric Augenstein is vocations director of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. For more information about the ministry of the archdiocesan vocations office, log on to [www.HearGodsCall.com](http://www.HearGodsCall.com).



During recess at St. Vincent de Paul School in Bedford, children surround Father Rick Eldred, the pastor of that parish as well as St. Mary Parish in Mitchell, who has gained popularity with his outgoing personality and his "Popcorn with Padre" movie-hosting sessions at the school.

(Photo by John Shaughnessy)

## God's joy and humor shine through in priest's life

By John Shaughnessy

BEDFORD—The children on the school playground rush to Father Rick Eldred, giving him high fives, fist bumps and hugs.

And whenever he shouts, "One, two three!", the boys and girls at St. Vincent de Paul School in Bedford respond with a roar, "We're St. Vincent and proud of it!"

That's the close bond that the 66-year-old pastor has with the children—a bond that has grown through his occasional movie-hosting sessions at the school, the ever popular "Popcorn with Padre."

"The kids keep me young," Father Eldred says, his voice dripping in joy. "Our school symbol is the shamrock, and on last St. Patrick's Day, I brought in 230 6-inch cookies sprinkled in green in a shamrock shape for the kids and the staff. After the movie, all the kids had green lips, green tongues and sugar highs. They all bounced out of the school that day."

The memory makes Father Eldred smile widely and laugh softly—the same reactions he shows when he shares his path to becoming a priest. After listening to the story of that journey, there's a sense that not only Father Eldred has a good sense of joy and humor, so does God.

From the time he graduated from college to his early 40s, he worked in the family business in Terre Haute, running the company's moving and storage operations. He enjoyed helping with Special Olympics and had served on different parish councils, but he was still confused when he was stopped one day in the early 1990s by Msgr. Lawrence Moran, then the pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Terre Haute.

*'You have your challenges just like anyone does in life, but I really enjoy being a priest. The peace and joy as a priest are off the charts. You have this wonderful knowledge of the presence of the Lord in your life.'*

—Fr. Rick Eldred

"He asked me if I thought I'd ever be a priest," recalls Father Eldred, who is also the pastor of St. Mary Parish in Mitchell. "I asked him, 'What did I ever say to you to make you ask that question?'"

"I told him I wasn't interested, but he kept inviting me over to his house to discuss it more. As a courtesy, I went with him to a dinner in Indianapolis with the archbishop

[Archbishop Emeritus Daniel M. Buechlein]. I didn't realize it was a dinner for people who had a possible vocation. I've told people I was on the menu, but I just didn't know it."

Still, he started praying about it. And he had a change of heart when he came across the Bible passage—Matthew 19:16—where a young man approaches Jesus and asks what he needs to do to gain eternal life.

"Jesus told him, and he went away sad," Father Eldred says. "I didn't want to be that way."

Yet while he continued to move toward a vocation to the priesthood, he hadn't let anyone in his family know about it.

"No one knew I was considering it," he says. "I was sitting in my office when over the loudspeaker they said I had a call from Sacred Heart School of Theology and Seminary. Everyone looked at me. I said, 'Hey, I'm the treasurer. They want a donation.' I didn't tell them I was the donation."

The seminary in Wisconsin wanted him to come that same day, which was the first day of classes.

"I said, 'I can't do that. I have a business and houses. How about Wednesday?' He said, 'How about Tuesday?' I took

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## Benedictine Sisters find joy in community, ministry and prayer

By Natalie Hoefer

There is no barrier on joy—it is ageless and timeless.

Just ask the Sisters of St. Benedict at Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove. In a recent interview with three sisters of different age groups, a common message that resonated was joy in their vocation, no matter the ministry.

Here are the stories of these three Benedictine sisters, and the joy they find serving God and others in religious life.

### 'I find even more joy in my work'

Benedictine Sister Susan Reuber, 35, had been teaching English at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis for eight years when she acknowledged that "something" was missing in her life.

"My job was too much of my life," she said. "I realized there has to be something more."

She visited the Benedictine Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese, where her sister is a member of that

religious community. But she "didn't feel at home there."

It was suggested she attend a discernment weekend at Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove.

"I put it off for a while," Sister Susan admitted. "It was out of my comfort zone."

But by the end of the weekend, she said, "I didn't want to go home."

Now a Benedictine sister for three years, Sister Susan is living a life of enhanced joy.

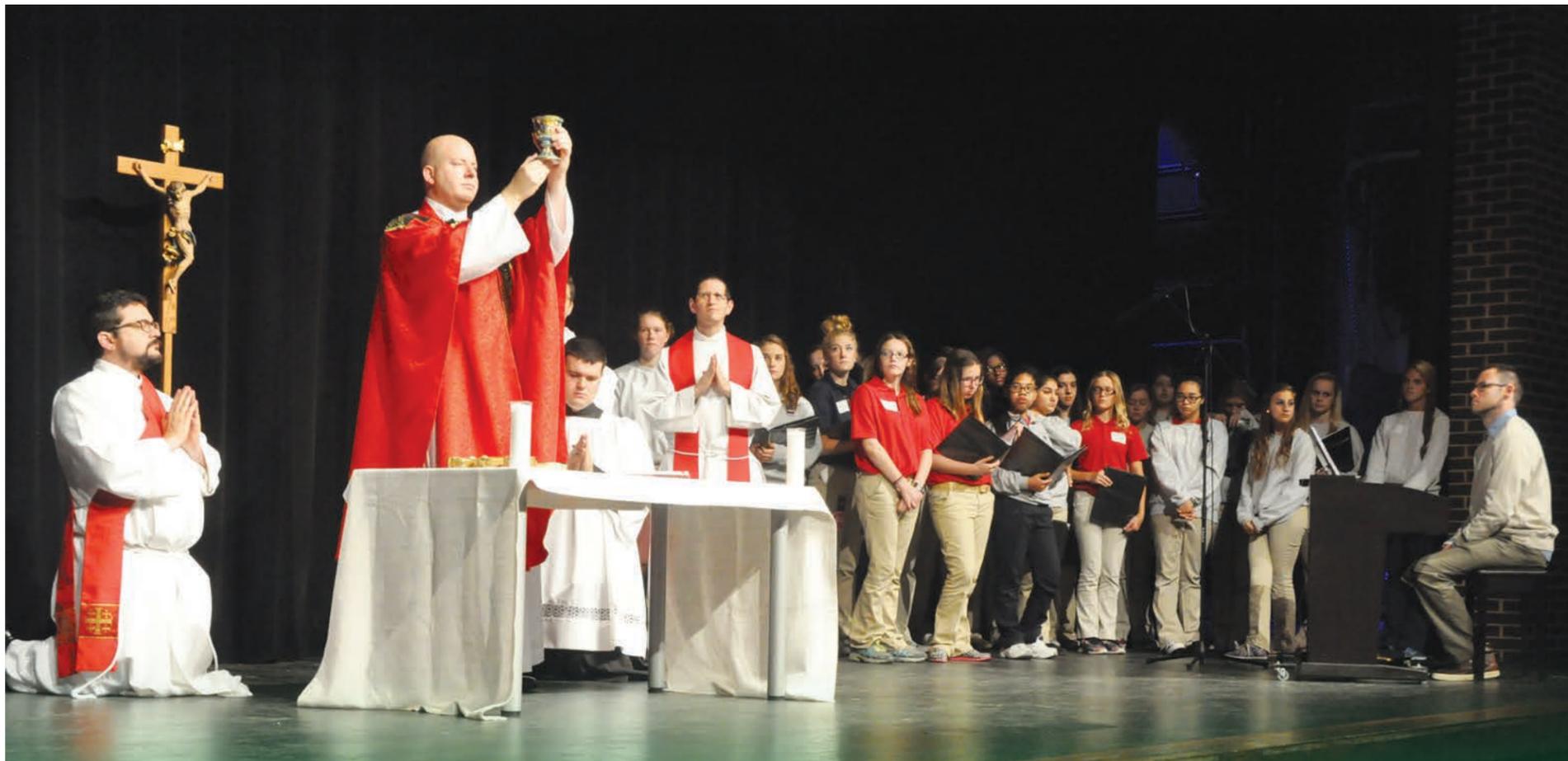
"I always found joy in teaching, in my work," she said. "But now I find even more joy in my work because I have someone to share it with, and more to share with my students."

"I enjoy being able to show my faith to them, and sharing my life as a sister with them when they ask questions about religious life."



Sr. Susan Reuber, O.S.B.

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## High schools work to help students be open to God's call in their lives

By Sean Gallagher

Since Father Eric Augenstein became archdiocesan vocations director in 2013, he's made a point to visit Catholic high schools across central and southern Indiana on a regular basis.

It's a key setting for him to help people discern God's call in their lives because high school students are at an age when they often give serious thought to their future.

"It's important to let young people in our Church know who they can talk to if they want to have more conversations about a vocation, that they know that there is a vocations office, that there is a vocations director," Father Augenstein said.

And he has been in contact with a growing number of high school students interested in learning more about vocations.

Four new seminarians for the archdiocese this year are graduates of Bishop Chatard and Roncalli high schools, both in Indianapolis, and Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville.

One of the new seminarians is Matthew Long, a 2015 Roncalli graduate who is now a freshman at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary and at Marian University, both in Indianapolis.

On Oct. 28, he participated in a vocations day for freshmen at Roncalli in which archdiocesan priests, religious priests, seminarians and religious sisters spoke with the high school students about their vocations.

Although Long noted there wasn't such a vocations day at Roncalli when he was a student there, he said that his experience at the high school—especially a class specifically on vocations during his senior year—was "a big part" of his vocational discernment.

"It made vocations, especially the priesthood, seem like so much more of an option," Long said. "It just made it seem down to earth and not so out of reach."

To further classroom exploration of vocations, the archdiocesan vocations office has made resources available to schools and parishes across central and southern Indiana that will help young people learn about the ways that God calls people to serve the Church and the world.

The vocations curriculum was developed by the Valdosta, Ga.-based Vianney Vocations. It is adaptable for kindergarten through 12th grade and usable both in schools and parish religious education programs.

Its resources—including lesson plans, activities, prayers, videos and art—can be accessed and used online. Many also can be printed.

"My hope was to make good information about vocations available to teachers and catechists, then to allow them to use that in however it would fit best with their school, their students and their curriculum," Father Augenstein said. "There is good information available for them to pull from."

The presence of priests and religious sisters in Catholic high schools across the archdiocese also helps young people consider God's call in their lives.

Benedictine Sister Kathleen Yeadon, who teaches seniors in social justice and Scripture classes at Bishop Chatard, sees this happen on a daily basis.

"I use every topic as a springboard for a discernment. In social justice, each student chooses a cause to research and work on throughout the first quarter," said Sister Kathleen, a member of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove. "I explain how God calls us through the interests we have. In sacred Scripture, many of the Old Testament stories [teach] the class on how discernment works."

"I am always on the lookout for young people who might be interested in a Church vocation. I create lots of projects in my class, and we do plenty of reflections so it gives them time to think about how God is calling them."

Quenton Wellington, a senior at Bishop Chatard, appreciates the witness that Sister Kathleen gives to him and his classmates.

"She has a special connection with God," he said. "She is energetic, passionate, caring and forgiving. Seeing her have a relationship with God is very helpful because it shows everyone that we need God in our life. Dedicating yourself to God can be hard, but he will be right there with you."

As faith formation director at Father Michael Shawe Jr./Sr. High School in Madison, Champaign Drumm helps sophomores, juniors and seniors learn about and be open to the vocation God has planned for them.

"If they are going to be truly great disciples, they need to figure out how to figure out what they are called to," Drumm said. "It is important to educate them on all aspects of a vocation so they have a better understanding of what it is. We have to make it more approachable and a more tangible idea in order for them to even slow down to think about it."

The class on vocations that Matthew Long took at Roncalli as a senior helped him slow down and listen to God's call. He hopes the increasing effort at his alma mater will mean more young people discerning priestly or religious vocations in the future.

"It's kind of cool to have vocations continually brought up more and more, especially at Roncalli," he said. "It will be nice to see vocations grow here."

*(For more information about the vocations curriculum that the archdiocesan vocations office has made available to schools and parishes across central and southern Indiana, send Father Eric Augenstein an e-mail at [eaugenstein@archindy.org](mailto:eaugenstein@archindy.org) or call him at 800-382-9836, ext. 1496 or 317-236-1496.) †*



Above, Father Eric Augenstein, archdiocesan vocations director, speaks about vocations on Oct. 28 to freshmen at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis. (Photos by Sean Gallagher)

Top photo, Father Timothy Wyciskalla, second from left, elevates a chalice during an Oct. 28 Mass at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis while members of a student choir stand at his left. The liturgy was part of a day dedicated to vocations for the freshmen at the high school. Kneeling third from left is seminarian Matthew Long. Father Eric Augenstein stands fourth from left. Kneeling at left is Dominican transitional Deacon Reginald Wolford.



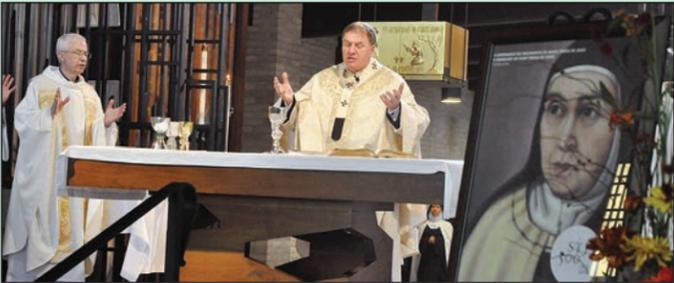
Providence Sister Edith Ben, left, vocations director for the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, speaks on Oct. 28 with freshmen women at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis.



Haley Stonecipher, left, and Elizabeth Bradley, both freshmen at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis, lead the singing of the responsorial psalm during an Oct. 28 Mass at Roncalli. The Mass was part of a day on vocations for the school's freshman class.



Above, a Discalced Carmelite nun receives Communion from Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin during Mass on Oct. 10. (Photos by Sean Gallagher)



Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin, center, celebrates Mass on Oct. 10 in the chapel at the Discalced Carmelite Monastery of St. Joseph in Terre Haute to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the birth of St. Teresa of Avila, who founded the women's branch of the Discalced Carmelites. Benedictine Father Tobias Colgan, at left, was a concelebrant at the Mass. An image of St. Teresa stands at right.



Discalced Carmelite Sisters Mary Grace Melchior, left, Marianna So, Marie Cecile Franer, Susanna Choi and Christine Rosencrans kneel in prayer during the Oct. 10 Mass.

Below, the Discalced Carmelite nuns of the Monastery of St. Joseph in Terre Haute stand in the cloistered part of their community's chapel on Oct. 10 while Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin incenses the altar. Archbishop Tobin celebrated a Mass that day at the monastery to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the birth of St. Teresa of Avila, the foundress of the women's branch of the Discalced Carmelites.

## Carmelite nuns' community celebrates 500th anniversary of foundress' birth

By Sean Gallagher

TERRE HAUTE—Western Indiana in 2015 might seem a world away from Spain in 1515. But a group of Discalced Carmelite nuns in Terre Haute recently celebrated the close connection that they have to St. Teresa of Avila, their order's foundress who was born in Spain 500 years ago.

Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin, several priests, and scores of friends of the Carmelite Monastery of St. Joseph worshipped on Oct. 10 with the 14 contemplative nuns of the Terre Haute community during a Mass in honor of St. Teresa.

In his homily during the Mass, Archbishop Tobin shared the connection that the nuns had with their foundress.

He said that they, and all people of faith today, can learn what holiness means by looking to St. Teresa.

"[She] taught that holiness begins with desire," Archbishop Tobin said. "Holiness understood as communion with God who is love, and living in a loving relationship with the people that God sends into my life begins with wanting it."

He also reflected on the way in which St. Teresa understood that God was working through the many instances of suffering in her life to bring about great good.

"For her, suffering was not simply a masochistic embrace of pain," Archbishop Tobin said. "It was confidence that God was doing something with the suffering that came into her life. She often talked about being purified by what she suffered. Certainly, God made her suffering fertile."

Ultimately, Archbishop Tobin said, St. Teresa remains relevant for the Church today because of the way she points to Jesus, and helps the faithful of all times and places grow in their relationship with him.

"Jesus is the only way that we can understand the gift that God's love brings to us," he said. "And it is only by our enduring friendship with him that we will make our way home."

Although he reflected on St. Teresa during his homily, Archbishop Tobin said with a smile that he did so "in great fear and trembling knowing that the real experts on St. Teresa of Avila are sitting behind me."

The monastery's chapel is arranged with the altar in the middle, with the cloistered nuns separated from the sanctuary and the congregation by a cast iron grillwork.

After the Mass, members of the contemplative

community that supports itself through making icons, greeting cards and knitted gift items—in addition to the support of donors—spoke about the importance of St. Teresa to their vocation and community life.

Discalced Carmelite Mother Anne Brackman, the prioress of the Monastery of St. Joseph, has had much opportunity to reflect upon the example and teachings of St. Teresa since entering the community in Terre Haute in 1959, just 12 years after it was founded.

She noted the continuing significance of the conversion that occurred in Teresa's life, where she went from wanting people to admire her, to her living for Christ alone.

"I believe that people today need to be encouraged that conversion is possible," Mother Anne said. "Sometimes, it takes a long time."

She said that St. Teresa's example can be an encouragement to Catholic parents "who are very distressed at the faith life of their children" who no longer practice it.

"We can't lose hope," Mother Anne said.

She was gratified to have the archbishop, several priests and so many friends of the cloistered monastic community gather to honor their foundress.

"It certainly was an affirmation of what we hope we are for the archdiocese," Mother Anne said. "Even though we are primarily hidden and many people may not know about us, we believe that our life of prayer can be leaven in the dough."

Discalced Carmelite Sister Clare Joseph Daniels reflected after the Mass on how the community has given special attention to the study of St. Teresa's writings in the three years leading up to the 500th anniversary of her birth.

"It's been like having her so present to us. We owe everything to her," Sister Clare Joseph said. "She gave us the way to walk more closely with Christ."

For Sister Clare Joseph, St. Teresa is timeless because she "was so rooted in the Gospel."

"She was so rooted in following Christ," Sister Clare Joseph said. "For me, Teresa totally shows the way of radical love, radical commitment and radical abandonment to following Christ."

(For more information about the Discalced Carmelite Monastery of St. Joseph in Terre Haute, visit its website at [www.heartsawake.org](http://www.heartsawake.org).) †



# Sister's focus on doing 'small things' leads to closer bond with God

By John Shaughnessy

With tears streaming down her face, the Marian University student rushed into the office of Franciscan Sister Monica Zore.

The young woman told Sister Monica that she had just learned that one of her friends had died of a drug overdose. Sister Monica offered condolences, gave comfort and then made plans to let the student reschedule the math test she was supposed to take that day.

"Letting her take the test later is not a big thing in my sight, but it was a big thing in the student's eyes," Sister Monica says. "I would have to proctor her test another day—not everyone would do that—but she was so relieved. It made a major difference to her that someone saw the pain she was in and offered comfort.

"That's what Pope Francis, Archbishop [Joseph W.] Tobin and St. Francis are calling us to do. We don't have to do the big things. It's the small things that can make an important difference. If I can help others to understand that, to do that for a child in the classroom, then that ripple is just going to keep going on."

That combination of caring, teaching beyond the classroom, and understanding the importance of the bonds that connect us have defined the vocation of Sister Monica ever since she professed final vows in 1975 as a Sister of St. Francis in Oldenburg. In fact, her own need for community and connectedness eventually became a major factor in her twisting journey to becoming a religious sister.

She entered the Oldenburg community for the first time straight after high school, but then she left after 10 months.

"I was beginning to question if religious life was what I was supposed to be doing," she recalls. "I also knew I couldn't continue my education immediately in mathematics. In high school, I decided I wanted to teach math because I believed God had given me a gift to teach it to others. Other students told me I made it understandable for them."

So she spent the next three years at Marian University in Indianapolis, pursuing her math degree while discussing her future with God.

"For me, giving up family and children was a real challenge. After I left the community for the first time, I prayed to God, 'If you really want me to be in community, don't make me choose between a physical partner and you.' I wasn't sure I was strong enough to do that. I knew a lot of good guys in college, but I never really met someone."

Still, those three years led her to a better understanding of herself and a deeper relationship.

"That's when I discovered that I needed the community to continue my faith journey. When I entered the community the second time, I was 21, and I knew Jesus in a personal relationship. I knew I needed community to strengthen and develop my relationship with God.

"For me, community is that place where I know I'm going to get support through my struggles, whether in spirituality, growth or whatever. I know that even when we disagree, we believe in the same fundamental things. And I know these people love me and I love them even when we do struggle. It makes it easier to go outside the community and do the same thing."

Beyond the community of the sisters in Oldenburg, she has established another community at Marian where she has taught math for the past 32 years. When she first arrived at Marian, she estimates there were about 30 other sisters teaching there. Now, at 66, she is the only one still teaching.

Yet her impact is considerable, usually in one-to-one connections.

"She's my greatest mentor. She means everything to me," says Stephanie Hostetler, a senior from Shipshewana, Ind.

Hostetler first became connected to Sister Monica during a "math for elementary education" class. But their bond grew stronger during a difficult time in Hostetler's life, when she was upset by a breakup and struggling with preparing for math tests for her teaching license.

"The summer before my junior year, I thought about transferring," she says. "Sister Monica called me weekly for a month or two before school started. She was very helpful and giving of her time. I drop by her office to visit, and even if she's



When Franciscan Sister Monica Zore was asked where she wanted to have her photo taken at Marian University in Indianapolis, the longtime math instructor chose the school's fountain, explaining, "It's a reminder of God's extravagant, overflowing love. It's constantly pouring out, and it never runs out." (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

grading papers, she'll take the time.

"She gives great advice. I've learned from her to never give up, to be confident, to trust that even when things are bad, they're going to get better, to trust in God's plan."

Those beliefs are at the heart of Sister Monica's approach to life, says a friend who has known her for about 50 years.

"She's extremely generous, always helpful and very supportive," says Franciscan Sister Carol Slinger, who taught Sister Monica when she was a high school student at the former St. Mary Academy in Indianapolis.

"She's also a very family-oriented person—her blood family and her religious family. She's always striving to do the best for them."

Sister Monica's love shines through in the rosaries she prays for others, the extra efforts she makes for students, and even in the homemade spaghetti sauce she

creates with tomatoes that she grows in her mother's garden.

"I've learned that God works in ways we never imagine could happen," Sister Monica says. "The older I get, the more I see that. God is so creative. He can take the things we do and use them to move us to a closer union with him."

Sister Monica has found that deeper relationship with God as a religious sister. She believes everyone will find their vocation by putting their trust in him.

"You have to listen to your heart and follow it," she advises. "You won't go wrong if you do that. It's in your heart that God will speak to you. God will give you the grace. Trust what you hear and take time to listen. The plan that God has for each of us is the best."

(For more information about the Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis in Oldenburg, visit [www.oldenburgfranciscans.org](http://www.oldenburgfranciscans.org).) †

## Saint, Sisters of Providence help young adult's discernment to religious life

By Jason Moon

Special to The Criterion

SAINT MARY-OF-THE-WOODS—Providence Sister Tracey Horan knows she's in the minority.

In September 2014, Sister Tracey, a native of Indianapolis, was welcomed into the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods as a postulant. And in August, she entered her canonical novice year.

The Sisters of Providence currently have more than 300 women religious in their congregation, with eight women in initial formation. However, the median age of members is 78.

Sister Tracey is one of only eight sisters currently in the congregation who were born in the 1970s or later.

There are fewer than 56,000 women religious living in the United States at this time, a number that has steadily declined since the 1960s and the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council.

But Sister Tracey and the other younger women religious with the Sisters of Providence liken these statistics back to when St. Mother Theodore Guérin and

her five companion sisters traveled from France to Indiana in 1840.

"Sometimes, among the newer members, we joke that we really don't have to worry until there are fewer than six of us, since that's how many were in Mother Theodore's group when they first came to Indiana," she said. "But look where we are now! At that time, Mother Theodore said, 'all appearances are against it,' and I'd imagine that's how some people feel today when they look at the future of religious life."

Sister Tracey graduated from the University of Dayton in 2010. Following that, she taught math at a middle school in Texas before coming to the White Violet Center for Eco-Justice, a ministry of the Sisters of Providence, to serve as an intern.

While at White Violet Center, Sister Tracey worked in its garden and tended to its alpacas.

Prior to coming back to Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, she served as an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer with Indy Hunger Network, where she developed fresh food access and nutrition projects.

But the path of consecrated life called her back to Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, something she felt she needed to take steps toward in May 2013.

"At that time, I had just finished my yearlong internship at White Violet Center, and I felt like I needed some time away from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods to understand what was moving in me," Sister Tracey said. "I had been discerning with another religious community throughout my internship year, and a visit with those sisters helped to clarify what I was feeling.

"They were able to see in me the spark, the energy and passion I had about the mission and charism of the Sisters of Providence. Their support and affirmation helped open my eyes to the call of Providence."

Sister Tracey said the Sisters of Providence, as well as the writings of Mother Theodore, inspired her to choose her path.

"The women I have encountered have inspired me with their intentionality, their dedication to justice, the depth of their spirituality, [and] their openness to conversion and learning from others," Sister Tracey said. "Reading Mother Theodore's story also made a big impression on me. The way she spoke the truth with compassion and cared genuinely for others, even those who challenged her, still calls me to extend the hand more readily.

"I've listened to the sisters share how they continue to live their vows—what it means to practice prophetic obedience, live single-heartedly, and be in the right relationship with all. The sisters draw from a sacred presence that is deep and wide, and I am blessed each day to experience that presence in so many of them."

Sister Tracey admitted she and the younger sisters have talked about the community and its current state regarding median age. But she said she believes the answer lies within the process of evolution.

"On my tough days, I worry about what this will mean for our community," she said. "I wonder how our ministries will be impacted ... and how I live out my call. On days when I recognize how deep Providence runs here, in these woods, among out sisters and Providence Associates, and in others who carry our mission in various ways, I realize that we are evolving as Providence intends.

"It is both scary and exciting to know that something new and different is emerging, as it always has been in our history. Who knows what it will look like to be a smaller congregation in the future ... but the spirit of Providence will live in us whether we're 3,000, 300 or three [sisters]. And if we 'lean with all our weight on Providence,' as Mother Theodore encourages us, I trust we'll always have what we need to carry on the mission."

(Jason Moon is the media relations manager for the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods. For more information on the Sisters of Providence, log on to [www.spsmw.org](http://www.spsmw.org).) †



Providence Sister Tracey Horan, right, is pictured with Providence Sister Marceline Mattingly. (Submitted photo)



Archdiocesan seminarian Jeffrey Dufresne, right, assists at an April 11 deacon ordination Mass at the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln in St. Meinrad. Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin, left, was the principal celebrant of the Mass. Dufresne, a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis, currently receives priestly formation at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad. (Photo courtesy of Saint Meinrad Archabbey)



### Seminarian Jeffrey Dufresne

- **Age:** 26
- **Parents:** Michael and Jennifer Dufresne
- **Home parish:** St. Monica in Indianapolis
- **Education:** Chaminade-Julienne High School in Dayton, Ohio; Marian University in Indianapolis; Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad
- **Favorite Scripture passage:** Hosea 11:1-4
- **Favorite saint:** St. Lawrence
- **Favorite author:** Msgr. Robert Hugh Benson
- **Favorite prayer or devotion:** the Jesus Prayer
- **Hobbies:** Fishing, playing the guitar, golf

## Seminarian looks forward to empowering the faith of the laity

By Sean Gallagher

Seminarian Jeffrey Dufresne knew in his heart he was a priest long before he even considered entering formation for the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

He wasn't delusional. He just had a sharp awareness of and a high value for the common priesthood which all Christians share by virtue of their baptism.

The bishops at the Second Vatican Council more than 50 years ago noted in the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" ("*Lumen Gentium*") that all the faithful offer spiritual sacrifices in the world to God in the way of life to which they have been called. "They ... exercise that priesthood in receiving the sacraments, in prayer and thanksgiving, in the witness of a holy life, and by self-denial and active charity" (#10).

Dufresne was led to this awareness while growing up in Dayton, Ohio, in a family that deeply appreciated its Catholic faith.

"Some of my earliest memories are going to Mass with my family, even when I was 3 or 4 years old," said Dufresne.

"The Sunday liturgy was always a constant in our family life, which is an important component of growing up in the Church and being able to hear God's call to a vocation."

The education he received at Chaminade-Julienne (CJ), a Catholic high school in Dayton, also helped him enter more deeply into his faith.

Dufresne said that his religion classes, the way service was integrated into the life of the school on an almost daily basis, and the good example given to him by his teachers and campus ministers led him "on a search for the radical Christian life."

By the time Dufresne graduated from high school in 2008, he was convinced where God wanted him to live out this deep life of faith.

"My experience at CJ—being able to think and to study, learning how to pray a little more deeply and learning how to live out the Christian life—really led me to want to serve the Church as a lay pastoral minister," he said.

So he enrolled that fall at Marian University in Indianapolis as part of its San Damiano Scholars Program,

which forms college students for lay ministry in the Church.

Receiving this formation alongside other San Damiano scholars helped Dufresne become a pastoral leader among his peers in the broader Marian community.

"We brought that common formation to the greater community," he said. "I really felt like that was an opportunity to have instilled in us a mindset for lay pastoral ministry, to learn how to be leaven in a community."

Mark Erdosy, executive director of the San Damiano Scholars Program, witnessed the leadership that Dufresne exercised personally.

"Jeff is very passionate about his faith," said Erdosy. "He is equally passionate about ministering with people and helping connect them with Christ. ... Jeff is a very compassionate person who will make time for people because he wants to be Christ's presence for others. It's who he is called to be."

As a student at Marian, Dufresne grew in his understanding of God's particular call to him. He began to sense that God might be calling him to service, not in the common priesthood of the baptized, but in the sacramental priesthood.

He first got an inkling of this call while praying before the Blessed Sacrament in adoration during his freshman year at Marian.

"Sitting there in prayer and in silence, I really felt a sense that God was calling me to discern the priesthood and to think about being a priest," Dufresne said. "I kind of had my heart so much set on lay ministry, but also on being a husband and a father, that I tried to put that off to the side for a few years. While I still prayed, that voice kind of made me skittish."

Indeed, it wasn't until the spring of 2013—a year after he had graduated from Marian—that he really responded to that call and began the process to affiliate with the archdiocese as a seminarian.

Part of what particularly led him to become a seminarian was seeing the sacramental leadership of the chaplain of Bishop Fenwick High School in Franklin, Ohio, where Dufresne was serving as the interim director of campus ministry.

"As I reflected on how fulfilling my role and ministry was for me, I realized that it wasn't as fulfilling as it could be," he said. "I really started to see that, although I was doing my best in so many

ways to live out the priesthood of the baptized, it was really the sacramental priesthood that I was being called to and that I really had a desire to live out by being able to bring God's presence, his healing, his love and his grace to people in the sacraments."

Although he grew up in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Dufresne chose to become a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis in part because of his experience of the life of faith at St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis.

He valued it so much that he would drive two hours to attend Sunday Mass while serving at Fenwick High School. The worshipping community there was for him "full of life" and "very hospitable." And he valued getting to know the "two joyful and passionate priests" who served there, Father Todd Goodson, its pastor, and Father Dustin Boehm, its associate pastor at the time.

"His personality is a bridge," said Father Boehm of Dufresne. "He's a guy that, as soon as you meet him, you kind of ask the question, 'Wow, what's behind his joy?' And he makes no bones about it. His personality clearly gains a lot of life from the Gospel and from Jesus Christ."

As he continues in his formation for ordained ministry and looks forward to possible life and ministry as a priest, Dufresne hopes to be able to help the faithful whom he would serve to embrace their common priesthood.

"The mission of the sacramental priesthood is to empower the laity through the sacramental life to live their vocation to transform the world where they are," he said. "That spiritual leadership that is rooted in the sacramental life is what drew me to the priesthood in the first place."

Dufresne looks forward to helping lay Catholics to powerfully live out their faith in so many areas of life—as spouses, parents, in the work world and in the broader community.

"What I've realized over time is that there are many ways to live out the radical Christian life that I was looking for, and was passionate about finding when I was younger," Dufresne said. "We're all members of the one body of Christ in the Church by baptism."

(For more information about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, log on to [www.HearGodsCall.com](http://www.HearGodsCall.com).) †



Seminarian Jeffrey Dufresne views historic photos of Cardinal Joseph E. Ritter during an Aug. 11 visit to the New Albany birthplace and boyhood home of the former archbishop of Indianapolis. The visit was part of an annual pilgrimage of seminarians in formation for the priesthood for the Church in central and southern Indiana. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



## Husband, father becomes a deacon to serve the Church in a different way

By Victoria Arthur  
Special to *The Criterion*

Deacon Steven Gretencord was about to leave the hospital, thinking his work for the day was done.

Then he received an urgent request. There was someone who needed a Catholic chaplain—immediately. Just 10 minutes before, this patient had learned he was dying of cancer. The man and his family were reeling from the news, and they were waiting.

There was no time to prepare. But at that moment, and in so many others in his ministry, Deacon Gretencord said the Holy Spirit took over. As he approached the door to the man's hospital room, he recalled the Gospel reading from that weekend's Sunday Mass: St. Mark's account of Jesus calming a storm on the Sea of Galilee.

"I told the man and his family that before Jesus calmed the storm, the disciples still experienced the terror of it," Deacon Gretencord said. "I told them that we all have storms in our lives, and sometimes we may wonder if Jesus is asleep in the back of the boat. But he's always there for us to call upon him, to trust him, and to find peace."

The words flowed, along with more than a few tears on the part of everyone in the room. And along with the Holy Spirit guiding him through that critical encounter, Deacon Gretencord credits years of formation for his life and ministry as a permanent deacon.

"I felt quite calm about it," he says of that day this past summer. "I spoke from my heart, but my preparation and formation definitely came into play."

Deacon Gretencord was among the first group of men to be ordained as permanent deacons in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis in 2008. Permanent deacons are distinguished from transitional deacons, who are men in the final stage of formation for the priesthood.

Looking back over his life, Deacon Gretencord says he never felt called to the priesthood. But the husband and father was eventually called to serve the Church in a different way, and it began in the unlikeliest of places.

### A game changer

Deacon Gretencord was at Indiana State University's Hulman Center in Terre Haute, watching his beloved Sycamores play basketball. On that day 15 or so years ago, he was seated next to Father Stephen Giannini, who at the time was Gretencord's pastor at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Terre Haute.

During the game, Father Giannini made an offhand remark about a meeting he had just attended in Indianapolis. The archdiocese was exploring the idea of beginning a deacon formation program.

"It sounded interesting—but not for me," Deacon Gretencord recalls thinking at the time. "But then the idea kept popping up after that."

The next pastor of Sacred Heart Parish mentioned the permanent diaconate to him as well. Soon after, a series of articles in *The Criterion* caught his attention. Deacon Gretencord began pondering the idea, and even brought it up in his workplace. And then one day, a colleague at his office mentioned that his

brother-in-law—a permanent deacon in Pennsylvania—was coming to visit. The co-worker offered to arrange a meeting between the two of them.

"We spent five hours talking," Deacon Gretencord said. "By this time, I had spent a lot of time reading [about the diaconate]. The more I investigated what a permanent deacon was, the more I wondered if it was something I was capable of doing. Something kept drawing me, and then this man shared his firsthand experience. What struck me most was the call to service—especially ministering to those that society forgets."

Then in his late 40s, Deacon Gretencord spoke with his wife, Kathy, and their son, Jason, about the leap of faith he was considering. Both were supportive, and Deacon Gretencord embarked on his long journey toward becoming a deacon. Four years of formation followed, with a regular commute to and from Indianapolis. This was no minor commitment for a man with a full-time job—vice president of Valley Electric Supply in Terre Haute.

On June 28, 2008, the native of Fowler, Ind., was ordained a permanent deacon at the SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. Today, he considers this ministry a perfect fit for him.

"It's just *me*," he says of the role he has embraced with a passion.

### 'Always there'

Now one of 40 permanent deacons ministering in central and southern Indiana, Deacon Gretencord describes the duties of the ministry as three-fold, encompassing word, sacrament and charity. Deacons proclaim the Gospel and preach homilies at Mass. They assist the priest in other ways during liturgies, and they can officiate at weddings and funeral services that do not involve the Eucharist. They can celebrate the sacrament of baptism and are ordinary ministers of holy Communion. And they dedicate themselves to service.

"During formation, you find out what calls you," Deacon Gretencord said. After ordination, every deacon is assigned to one or more ministries of charity.

Deacon Gretencord has ministered to people in need—particularly youths—through Catholic Charities Terre Haute. Then there is his regular service to the city's Union Hospital, where he is a volunteer chaplain. In addition, he volunteers as a chaplain to two prisons in Terre Haute—the U.S. Penitentiary and the Federal Correctional Institution.

As the Church continues to face a shortage of priests, Deacon Gretencord said that deacons are called to do more and more within parishes as well. Sacred Heart Parish, for example, has operated without a resident pastor for six years. Recently, Father Joseph Feltz, archdiocesan vicar for clergy, was appointed sacramental minister at Sacred Heart, traveling regularly from Indianapolis to celebrate Masses and assist the parish in other ways.

Through all the transitions in recent years, Deacon Gretencord "has been the steady one," according to Barbara Black, Sacred Heart's parish life coordinator.



Above, Deacon Steven Gretencord kneels in prayer during an Oct. 10 Mass at the chapel of the Discalced Carmelite Monastery of St. Joseph in Terre Haute. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Top page photo, altar server Cami Swaner, left, Deacon Steven Gretencord and Father Joseph Feltz, sacramental minister, process out of Sacred Heart Church in Terre Haute at the end of a Mass celebrated on Oct. 18. Like all permanent deacons, Deacon Gretencord balances his ministry between duties at the parish and serving in the community. (Submitted photo)



Deacon Steven Gretencord is shown in the chapel at Union Hospital in Terre Haute preparing to take Communion to a patient. He serves as a volunteer chaplain there. (Submitted photo)

"Deacon Steve is instrumental in everything we do," Black said. "He's at every Mass, and he preaches the homily once a month. He's always there. ... He's always available."

And like all permanent deacons, Deacon Gretencord fulfills all of his duties on a volunteer basis. Now 63, he looks forward to retiring from his full-time role at Valley Electric Supply at the end of this year. But he has no plans to retire from his ministry.

"I cannot imagine my life without being a deacon," he said. "It's a wonderful, remarkable privilege."

(Victoria Arthur is a freelance writer and a member of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg. ) †

# ELDRED

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my mom to lunch. On the way back, I told her, 'I got a call from the seminary, and I'm going to leave in an hour.' She had been praying on it. I went in my brother's office and told him the same thing. He said, 'I'm sure you'll be good at it.'"

Everything went according to plan in seminary until he became a transitional deacon—the last year before his priestly ordination in 1999—and he took a class centered on the Mass.

"That was the first time I thought about having to stand up in front of people and giving homilies. If I had thought about it before becoming a deacon, I would have quit. I didn't talk until I was 4. When I did start to talk, I had a horrible speech impediment. When I told them about it, they said, 'Duly noted. Now get with it.' It's still there at times, but people say I do a good job of overcoming it."

People also say he's a terrific priest and pastor.

"He's compassionate and enthusiastic, and he's a great teacher," says Teresa Underwood, the principal of St. Vincent de Paul School. "The kids love him. At Mass, he always makes a point of saying we're coming closer to Jesus. It's really important to him that Catholic education is available."

As a member of St. Vincent Parish, Underwood also admires the way Father Eldred has connected that parish with nearby St. Mary Parish in Mitchell.

"We're two separate parishes, but he saw the importance of bringing us together while allowing us to have our own identities," she says. "We're the Catholic community of Lawrence County. He's a unifier."

He's also an evangelizer, says Rose Warthen, a longtime friend who first met Father Eldred when he served as the pastor of St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville from 2001 to 2005.



## Father Rick Eldred

- **Age:** 66
- **Parents:** John and Beatrice Eldred (deceased)
- **Education:** St. Patrick School in Terre Haute; the former Bishop Paul C. Schulte High School in Terre Haute; Indiana State University in Terre Haute; Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee, Wis.; Sacred Heart School of Theology and Seminary in Hales Corners, Wis.
- **Favorite saint:** St. Theodora Guérin
- **Favorite Scripture passage:** Matthew 19:16-22
- **Favorite prayer/devotion:** Eucharistic adoration, Stations of the Cross
- **Favorite spiritual author:** Sister Emmanuel Maillard, member of the French Community of Beatitudes
- **Hobbies:** Golf, movies, travel and genealogy

Father Rick Eldred poses for a photo next to a statue of the namesake of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford. Father Eldred's concern for the poor shows in his efforts for Becky's Place, the Catholic Charities transitional housing site in Bedford for homeless women and children.

(Photo by John Shaughnessy)

"I believe he's led by the Holy Spirit," Warthen says. "He's very upbeat about his faith and evangelizing. And it's contagious the way he feels about our Catholic faith. He makes you want to be like him in his faith."

Father Eldred's journey to the priesthood has been filled with some amazing moments. On his 51st birthday, he and five other priests concelebrated Mass with then-Pope John Paul II at the pope's summer residence in Italy. He also concelebrated Mass with Pope Benedict XVI at the canonization of St. Theodora Guérin in Rome.

"I've experienced things that are just unbelievable," he says. "You take a little kid from Terre Haute, and he's celebrating Masses with two popes?! I say, 'God, why me?'"

Still, he regards the everyday moments of being a priest as equally special.

He beams when he talks about giving first Communion to children, working with seminarians and providing the sacrament of reconciliation.

"I like to show people that God still loves them," he says. "I've been blessed to get three eucharistic adoration chapels started, too."

"We also have a Christmas in July fund where we collect money for seminarians and retired priests. We send them gift cards. The retired priests are surprised to get a 'thank you' from a parish where they were never an active priest. And the seminarians are thankful, too."

He has also helped to establish Becky's Place, the Catholic Charities transitional housing site in Bedford for homeless women and children.

For Father Eldred, it's all a matter of caring for people, especially in those moments where they face physical,

emotional and mental problems.

"You see someone with cancer or a 6-year-old with a brace on his leg. Or you're with a wife and a son in the process of their husband and father dying. You try to be there for them. Sometimes, all you can do is pray and support them. But I've seen the power of prayer, too. The greatest gift mankind has is the power of prayer."

He has seen that power in his life.

"You have your challenges just like anyone does in life, but I really enjoy being a priest," he says. "The peace and joy as a priest are off the charts. You have this wonderful knowledge of the presence of the Lord in your life."

(For more information about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, log on to [www.HearGodsCall.com](http://www.HearGodsCall.com).) †

# BENEDICTINE

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As she continues to teach at Roncalli, she brings more prayer to her job.

"I lead prayer before each class," said Sister Susan. "And when all the sisters pray in community, I know they're lifting me up in prayer, even though they may not know what kind of day I've had."

Her life of prayer and work as a Benedictine has provided Sister Susan that "something" she was missing before: "I've become grounded in my relationship with God."

## 'It's a joy to spread Christ to the world'

For the last 50 years, Benedictine Sister Anna Marie Megel has ministered as a teacher, a missionary and in administration.

During the past 14 years, she has particularly enjoyed ministering to Latinos at St. Monica Parish on the northwest side of Indianapolis.

"When I first came [to the parish], we didn't have a large Hispanic community, so I did it all," said Sister Anna Marie, who learned to speak Spanish during 12 years of mission work in the South American countries of Columbia and Peru.

As the Hispanic population increased in the parish, Sister Anna Marie's ministry to them became more focused on religious education, sacramental preparation and outreach to the poor.

Her work is now expanding beyond the Hispanic community as the parish seeks to create more unity

between its Latino members and parishioners from other ethnic backgrounds. But as she reflected on her ministry at the parish thus far, Sister Anna Marie noted the joy she has found in helping others.

"I love serving the people," said the 70-year-old sister, who has been a Benedictine for 50 years. "Hispanic people are impressive and inspiring. They are caring, concerned, and they help their people a lot. I'm edified by their generosity and appreciation and their giving of self."

"[Benedictines] are called to welcome all as Christ. I really get to do that in my ministry."

Her service at St. Monica fulfills one portion of the two-fold call of St. Benedict's Latin motto, "ora et labora,"—prayer and work. While the two are intertwined, her prayer life takes a special focus at Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove—another source of joy for Sister Anna Marie.

"I love being a sister," she said enthusiastically. "I love living in community. I love our daily prayer as community."

Despite all the time Sister Anna Marie dedicates to work and prayer, she counts herself as the blessed one.

"In return, I receive much more than I'm able to give. It's a joy to be able to spread Christ to the world."

## 'Joy in the living of the day'

At age 86, Benedictine Sister Bernardine Ludwig is still active in ministry.

"I don't think I'll ever retire until God says, 'That's enough.' Then I'll be ready," she said.

Her current ministry involves a lifelong joy in making crafts. When she was a child, a health condition required Sister Bernardine to live a quiet life. So her mother kept her hands busy with crafts.

In her current ministry, said Sister Bernardine, "I crochet, knit, embroider, do needlework, make rosary bracelets and holy things. I find joy in doing it. It's very quieting. I can center on Christ. I pray for the people that [purchase her pieces], that they might be inspired in some way."

And through her craftwork, Sister Bernardine helps those in need. She crochets blankets for Birthline, an archdiocesan ministry to help women in crisis pregnancies and their children. At a recent craft fair, her creations helped raise nearly \$750, half of which went to a refugee assistance program.

Her crafts are not the only part of Sister Bernardine's life that bring her joy.

"I find joy every day in the living of the day," she said. "I find joy when we're together as a community, when we pray and eat together, and at times when we play together."

"I find joy when we have guests. St. Benedict says we're to treat our guests as Christ—it's like Christ coming in our midst."

Before dedicating her ministry to prayer and crafts, Sister Bernardine most recently coordinated activities for the sisters at the monastery until she was 80. Before that assignment, she worked in social services at the sisters' St. Paul Hermitage.

But for 36 years she ministered as an educator, teaching first grade.

"That's another joy, when I hear from the students or their parents about how [her former students] are serving God," she said.

Looking back on her 68 years as a Benedictine, Sister Bernardine sees a life of blessing.

"It's all God's gift. When you think about it, our life is all gift."

(For more information on the Sisters of St. Benedict of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, log on to [www.benedictine.com](http://www.benedictine.com).) †



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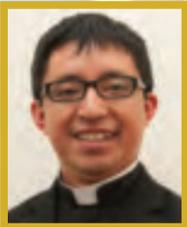
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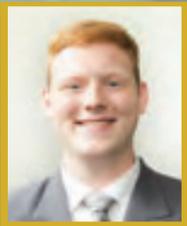
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