

Fall 2006

Sr. Margaret Walker - 50 Years

Please take this picture journey with me: Sr. Margaret walking down our first floor hallway, twin sisters Maloree and Molleigh in tow with a tiny Shih Tzu pup in the hand of one of them; Sr. Margaret sitting with our Sr. Judith, who is a resident at La Verna Village, assisting her with her dinner; Sr. Margaret in the cold of winter, taking a broom to sweep snow away from under and around her bird feeders so that she can throw fresh seed on the ground and put it in the feeders (Oh, and there must be a fresh ear of corn for those ornery squirrels who eat the bird seed!); Sr. Margaret trying to find new bulletin board ideas so that this year's religious ed students feel special; Sr. Margaret "sneaking" chocolates to our co-workers who care for our sisters in assisted living; Sr. Margaret making sure the popcorn can is filled sufficiently for evening recreation; Sr. Margaret attending literacy classes to maintain her certification to continue teaching GED classes to high school and adult students; Sr. Margaret making sure that the "guest" who happened upon us has a cold drink or snack, "just in case they would like something"; Sr. Margaret sitting in chapel for a quiet moment of prayer following evening Vespers; Sr. Margaret who would love to have a fishing pole in hand just a few days of the year!



Sr. Margaret places the infant in the crib.

And all of this would be a present day picture of Sr. Margaret who is celebrating 50 years of her profession of religious vows. And it would also be a small reflection of her life dedicated in service to others in her living out of these vows. Her life as a Franciscan sister has been and continues to be one lived for others, whether elementary students in Missouri schools in Kansas City, Brunswick, Marceline, or Chillicothe, or now as a tutor for children and a religious education teacher in St. Rose of Lima's Parish School of Religion here in Savannah. Her concern for the poor, the homeless, and those in prison has been reflected in her visits and letters to prisoners, her work in food pantries, and in her 12 years of teaching at the Northwest Missouri Psychiatric Rehabilitation Center.



Last year's St. Rose Third Grade with teacher, Sr. Margaret

Sr. Margaret has a special dedication to creation and to her family whom she says influenced her vocation. As she has said, "I recognized and answered God's call because of my mother's prayers. I was born during a snowstorm, and my father had to go for the doctor. My mother prayed that if the baby lived, she would encourage the child to become either a priest or a religious sister."



Fishing With Friends

The life with her family on the farm, working together, taking walks through the woods and pastures, a quiet evening watching a star-filled sky, all contributed to her following God's call to this Franciscan community. And we give thanks to God for her!

Sr. Catherine Braun - 55 Years



Perhaps you may have been to an doctor's office and in passing heard the doctor, while dictating on his machine, say: "And what do you call it when a growth from your head is removed?" Yes, he is going to remember the joke he just heard from Sr. Catherine. He had no trouble with "tonsillectomy" and "appendectomy", but "hair cut" kept him guessing. Telling jokes is one of Sr. Catherine's trademarks in touching peoples' lives. One might describe her as God's minstrel as she used throughout her life her gifts of memory, music, imagination, and laughter, not only to entertain but also to teach, to comfort, to inspire young and old alike to "keep their eyes on God".

Sister Catherine grew up in Kenosha, Wisconsin, the last of seven children born to John and Elizabeth Braun. At the age of 27, she entered the convent and made her religious profession on February 17, 1951. Her ministry of service began in Conception Abbey helping in the kitchen cooking for hundreds of seminarians and the priests and brothers of the Abbey. She continued her kitchen work at our St. Francis Hospital in Marceline, MO. In 1957 she came to Savannah to become head of the laundry department for the Sisters and the newly established nursing home, La Verna Heights Retirement Center. This was the "meat and potatoes" of her ministry into the 1990's. But there were the desserts! Even after 40 years, her kindergarten students of religion recall her teaching them to use the telephone to "talk to God", and former members of the seniors' singing group, the "Jubileers" recall with delight their good times together.



Sr. Catherine "cutting the rug" with Guild Member Garnett Hughes.



The Jubileers perform for their dynamic director. (circa 1980's)

After 55 years of religious profession, when asked if she would be willing to live this life again, she answers: "Yes, without a doubt!" for Jesus continues to be her life's meaning and goal!

Sr. Catherine fishing for fun with the children.



SISTERS KATHLEEN, CHRISTINE, AND MARY ELLEN ATTEND GENERAL CHAPTER

This year marked the event held every six years which Franciscans call "General Chapter". It is the time when our congregation meets to discuss themes pertinent to our religious life and mission and also elects the leadership for the next six years. The year 2006 was a unique situation because it was decided to make a change in scheduling the General Chapter as well as in scheduling each of the Province Chapters to better facilitate decision making and planning. The General Chapter was split into two sessions, with the Chapter of Elections in April and the Chapter of Affairs in July. This presented somewhat of a challenge to our province in terms of personnel and finances, since it is necessary to travel to Austria where the Generalate is located and to be gone for a length of time. Even though we were entitled to three delegates, our province chose to send only two delegates for each session. Sr. Kathleen, who serves as an ex-officio delegate participated with Sr. Christine in the April Chapter of Elections (one week). Sr. Mary Ellen joined Sr. Kathleen for the July Chapter of Affairs (almost two weeks). Topics this year centered upon the charism of our congregation as we move into the future and on our ongoing work in the revision of our Constitutions.

NEW LEADERSHIP TEAM (Franciscans of Vöcklabruck)



Pictured Left to Right are: Top Row: (Sr. Franziska, Sr. Teresa (Austrian Province), Sr. Barbara (German Province), Sr. Angelika, (Austrian Province)
Bottom Row: Sr. Kathleen (USA Province), Sr. Martina (Austrian Province) and General Superior Sr. Kunigunde Furst (Austrian Province).



The Leadership Team is congratulated as they gather around the picture of our founder, Fr. Sebastian Schwarz.

LaVERNA NEWS

On May 16, 2006, the Sisters honored our long-time employees at the Annual Employee Recognition Dinner. Gem Pins depicting the number of years of faithful service were given to each of the honorees. The honorees this year were Debbie Price, Linda Vice, Jeanne Nold, Barbara Munsel, Beverly Gillespies, Emilie Wolf, Roy Dalbey, Betty Tollefson, Jane Evans, Sr. Elaine Gregory, OSB, Sherri Johnson, Mary Evelyn Leeson, and Jackie McGuire. Debbie and Linda have served with us for 30 years and Jeanne Nold for 25 years! We appreciated their dedicated service and congratulate them on this achievement!

This year LaVerna Village had a float in the annual Savannah Chamber parade. Sr. Catherine rode in the bus with some of the residents and Ross Marine, LaVerna Village CEO, rode on the float in a rocking chair accompanied by his able administrative assistant Tom Mitchell, other staff and their children. The parade became even more memorable when a sudden downpour soaked everything and when the bus stalled!

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION DINNER

May 16, 2006

- 30 YEARS: Debbie Price, Linda Vice
- 25 YEARS: Jeanne Nold
- 20 YEARS: Barbara Mumsell, Beverly Gillespie
- 15 YEARS: Emilie Wolf
- 10 YEARS: Roy Dalbey, Betty Tollefson
- 5 YEARS: Jane Evans, Sr. Elaine Gregory, OSB, Sherri Johnson, Mary Evelyn Leeson, Jackie McGuire

Tom is named assistant to the administrator or administrative assistant (?).

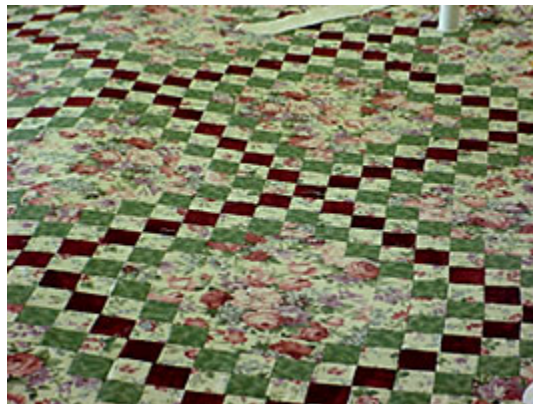


Sr. Kathleen extends the Sisters' appreciation to Debbie Price for her years of service.

QUILT RAFFLE

Drawing Held October 14, 2006

Queen size, hand-quilted, called "Irish Lace", this beautiful quilt is a medley of color: green and rose shades with large roses at the center of the squares. It was lovingly stitched by members of our LaVerna Guild. See photos of our quilt below!



Click photo for a closer view.

Proceeds from these raffles will benefit the Sisters' ministries and retirement fund. The drawing for the quilt will be held on October 14, 2006, at 2:00 p.m.



Pictured from left to right are some of our LaVerna Guild "Quilt Ladies": Jolletta Beyers, Jean Pikes and Juanita Gach.