



Ursulines *Alive*

Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph
Freeing and Nurturing Women and Children

Spring 2010

Vol. 8, No. 2

www.ursulinesmsj.org

A New Bishop for the Diocese of Owensboro On Death and Dying New Ministries



***Sister Sharon Sullivan joins a
legacy of Ursuline leaders***

From our Congregational Leader

A fresh slate...A new start!

Dear Friends,

On a frigid day in mid-January I kicked aside a pile of dry leaves and found a cluster of hopeful little crocus shoots peeking up already. In every winter is a hope of spring! My favorite part of spring in our climate is the renewal of life—new leaves, new grass, newly seeded fields, animal babies...

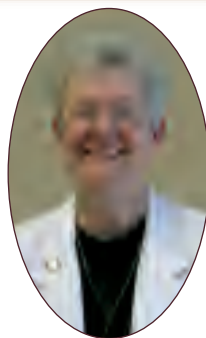
This spring issue of Ursulines Alive celebrates the excitement of newness: a new leadership team always brings new energy and new ideas to our community. We (especially the “old” leadership team) are eager to welcome them to their new jobs! Our new bishop will bring new approaches to the life of the Diocese of Owensboro. There’s just something about a new beginning, a fresh start that gets the adrenalin pumping and the blood flowing, as the slate is wiped clean and the possibilities seem endless....

It is appropriate that this issue also explores how our elderly and infirm sisters witness for all of us the promise of new life, in embracing as they do “the last of life, for which the first was made.” (Robert Browning) A psychologist told me that she loves to come to the Mount and see the faces of our sisters. “In their peace and serenity,” she said, “you can see that they have done their spiritual work.” As we Christians work at our preparations for Easter—the ultimate feast of New Life—we don’t have to look far for models of how to live our Lent.

May our God who “makes all things new” grant you fulfillment in every season of your life!




Michele Morek, OSU
Congregational Leader, Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph

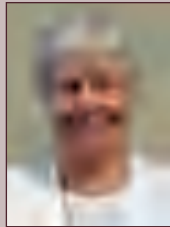


Sister Michele

COVER: Current and former congregational leaders of the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph photographed in December 2009. Pictured, left to right:

- Sister Dorothy Helbling- former Belleville, Ill., leader 1975-89, 1995-2005
- Sister Sharon Sullivan- newly elected for July 2010-2016
- Sister Annalita Lancaster- 1972-80
- Sister Mary Irene Cecil- 1980-88
- Sister Pat Lynch- former Paola, Kan., leader 1994-2002
- Sister Mary Matthias Ward- 1988-1996
- Sister Michele Morek- 2004-present
- Sister Kathleen Condry- former Paola, Kan., leader 2002 until the 2008 merger
- Sister Rose Marita O’Bryan- 1996-2004



<p><i>Sister Mary Ellen Backes</i> (Belleville) 1989-95</p>	<p><i>Sister Raymond Dieckman</i> (Paola) 1974-82</p>	<p><i>Sister Marcella Schrant</i> (Paola) 1990-94</p>
---	---	---

RIGHT: Former leaders not present for cover photo

Ursulines Alive is published by the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph, Maple Mount, Ky. Three issues are published each calendar year.

EDITORS: Director of Mission Advancement/Communications.....Dan Heckel, OSUA
Communications Specialist/Graphic Design.....Jennifer Kaminski

MISSION ADVANCEMENT STAFF:
Director of Mission EffectivenessSister Rose Marita O’Bryan
Director of Spiritual FormationSister Marietta Wethington
Director of Ursuline Partnerships.....Marian Bennett, OSUA
Administrative Specialist/Web DevelopmentTiffany Orth

In this issue

New Ursuline Leadership 3
Five new leaders are elected and will begin serving in July.

New bishop in Owensboro 6-7

New Development Director 8

On Death and Dying 9
The Sisters’ acceptance of death leads to a spiritual, peaceful end-of-life path

Obituaries 10

Not Really Retired 11
Featured: Sister Marie Montgomery

Soli Deo Gloria..... 12
We rejoice in the gifts of our sisters, given for the kingdom of God



Ursuline Sisters
of Mount Saint Joseph

OUR MISSION

We, the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph, sustained by prayer and vowed life in community, proclaim Jesus through education and Christian formation in the spirit of our founder, Saint Angela Merici.

OUR PURPOSE

Freeing and Nurturing Women and Children

OUR CORE VALUES

- Prayer
 - Service
 - Empowerment
 - Justice
 - Contemplative Presence
- ...in the spirit of Saint Angela

CONTACT US

Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph
8001 Cummings Road
Maple Mount, Kentucky 42356
270-229-4103
Fax: 270-229-4953
info.msjs@maplemount.org
www.ursulinesmsj.org
Become a fan on our new Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/ursulinesmsj

New leadership team faces the future with prayerful hearts

By Dan Heckel, Mount Saint Joseph Staff

“Do not consider yourselves worthy to be superiors and leaders. Rather, regard yourselves as ministers and servants, reflecting that you have more need to serve them than they have to be served by you, or governed.”

—Saint Angela Merici’s First Counsel



The five Ursuline Sisters elected to lead the community beginning July 18 are, left to right: Sisters Nancy Murphy, Rita Scott, Sharon Sullivan (congregational leader), Kathleen Dueber, and Julia Head (assistant congregational leader).

Sister Sharon Sullivan has an image she sees clearly: People are passing through a tunnel or a cave, and her task is to make sure they have a torch, or a light for their torch.

The newly elected congregational leader for the Ursuline Sisters hopes that is a role she and the rest of the new Leadership Team will fulfill over the next six years of their term.

“I would hope the sisters will look back and think their light shone a little brighter because of us,” Sister Sharon said. “I hope that people think of the Ursuline Sisters as ‘women of light.’”

During the final days of December, the congregational leader convened a Chapter of Elections to select the five sisters who will serve as the Leadership Team beginning July 18, and serving until 2016. Those elected were:

- Sister Sharon, a sister for 28 years who is academic dean and vice president of academic affairs at Brescia University.
- Sister Julia Head, assistant congregational leader, a sister for 49 years who is pastoral associate at Immaculate Parish in Owensboro, Ky.
- Sister Kathleen Dueber, councilor, a sister for 47 years, most of that as an Ursuline of Paola, Kan., prior

to the merger of that community with Mount Saint Joseph in 2008. She ministers at the Motherhouse in Maple Mount.

- Sister Rita Scott, councilor, a sister for 44 years, who is plant administrator at the Motherhouse, overseeing maintenance and the farm.

- Sister Nancy Murphy, councilor, a sister for 49 years, who has been local coordinator of the former Belleville, Ill., motherhouse since 2005.

Under the directives



After being elected congregational leader, Sister Sharon Sullivan, left, is congratulated by Sister Jane Miriam Hancock.

of the Ursuline Constitutions, none of the current Leadership Team was eligible for re-election. Sisters Michele Morek, Cheryl Clemons, Barbara Jean Head, Ann McGrew, and Maureen Griner will serve until July.

The sisters nominated had a few moments to share with other sisters what sort of leader they would make.

“Leadership is not primarily about the leaders, but it is about respecting each sister in her own response to the Spirit’s call and guidance,” Sister Sharon told the sisters. “To a certain extent, leadership in religious life might also be about getting out of the way – when I proclaim the word at Mass, I almost always remember to pray that my reading does not get in the way of or interfere with God’s word, that my preparation and reading will instead open the word and the way – I believe leadership in religious life must be the same.”

Sister Sharon is a special educator, whose task is “to help each student discover and believe in his or her own giftedness – often in spite of all they have been led to believe about themselves – and then to help that person commit to bringing that giftedness to fruition and to finally provide the support necessary for its full emergence,” she said. “Is that so different from what Angela and the Ursuline way of life call us to? To work with our sisters as they/we seek to live the mission to which we have been called – to witness the saving and loving word of God in our congregation, our communities, and our Church.”

The Ursuline Constitutions say the congregational leader (once known as mother or major superior) “is called forth as the spiritual and canonical leader. She governs the congregation in a spirit of service and collaboration by leading the members to a more intense awareness of their vocation and by facilitating their ministry and its integration into the mission of the Church.”

As spiritual leader, she:

Continued on page 4 3

Leadership *From page 3*

- Endeavors to inspire the sisters to fidelity in their vowed life
- Fosters among the sisters greater unity and harmony patterned on the Gospel and the spirit of Angela Merici
- Encourages the sisters to call each other to continual conversion of heart
- Challenges sisters to dedicated service in the Church
- Makes herself available to the sisters through personal visits and communications

The assistant congregational leader is somewhat like a vice president, acting on the leader's behalf for short periods when necessary, and otherwise carrying out the duties the leader delegates.

Sister Julia said leadership is about "ministering with and for the sisters, serving the needs of our sisters." She hopes when she looks back after six years in office that she will "have grown more deeply in love with God and with all of creation. I hope to have

"A leader must be a team player, with a great concern for the common good, and willing to sacrifice."

- Sister Rita Scott

been a leader who listened with ears and heart, one who communicated with transparency as far as possible and one who held fast to integrity and honesty of life," she said. "I expect to be more surely

a woman who prays with trust and confidence in God's abundant providence for us all. In short, I hope that I am ready for whatever God has in mind for my life."

The three councilors are empowered to assist the congregational leader, and will each have specific duties. They are to study the needs of the sisters, the congregation, and the Church, especially in their area of responsibility, and maintain communication between the team and communities of sisters.

Sister Nancy said "balance and harmony" will need to be key elements of her tenure as a councilor.

"Placing my gifts and limitations at the service of others will require a humility rooted in the heart, as well as a mindfulness of my own need for spiritual, psychological, and physical wholeness," she said. "The sisters' support will be encouragement and blessing for me as a leader."

She hopes the team's tenure will be viewed this way: "That our tending and nurturing of the common hungers, fears, hopes, and dreams of community will have uncovered new life and peace within ourselves and that the Spirit prompted us to risk new things in this regard."

Sister Kathleen is the only team member who has served before, while she was in Paola. She believes there



LEFT: Sister Darlene Denton of Louisville, Ky., chairwoman of the Committee on Elections, addresses the sisters. ABOVE: Sister Margaret Marie Greenwell, standing, of Louisville, embraces her Sister Visitor co-worker, Sister Michele Ann Intravia, as the sisters from Henderson, Ky., Sister Laurita Spalding, left, and Sister Margaret Ann Aull, look on during the December 2009 election meetings.

was an effort to have a sister from either Belleville or Paola – the two communities that merged during the current term – serve on the new team.

"It's humbling," she said. "I keep praying that I'm worthy of it. You just have to be open to the Spirit. We're there to be servants."

Sister Rita has been preparing for her new role by attending an eight-week class on canon law in religious institutions. Some of the leadership qualities she admires and hopes to emulate are being, "a prayerful/spiritual woman of faith, trust, and hope, one who recognizes the dignity of each individual and her gifts."

A leader must be a team player, with a great concern for the common good, and willing to sacrifice, she said. "One with confidence and continuity ... one who challenges self and others to stretch to their potential," she said. "One who is generous, has compassion, patience, and organizational skills. A woman with the ability and willingness to ask the questions and to listen with an open mind and heart."

Unlike a politician who enters office with an agenda that she campaigned on, the Ursuline Leadership Team takes its goals and direction from the Chapter of Affairs meeting this July. During Community Days in 2009, the sisters agreed to four areas of focus for the future:

- Health care needs for the entire community
- Master planning, for the physical, financial, and human resources of the community
- Exploration of the Ursuline charism and spirituality
- Examination of membership, both ongoing and new

There are committees assigned to each of these areas now, with each expected to present their findings this summer.

Two mergers with other communities occurred during this leadership term, but as of yet, there are no plans to add another community. "Only God knows about that," Sister Julia said. ■



Sister Julia Head, left, receives well wishes from Sister Dianna Ortiz. Sister Julia was named assistant congregational leader.



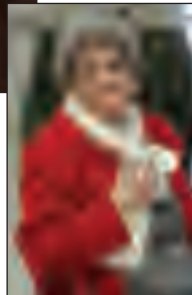
PAOLA MERGER

Sister Marie William Blyth signs the Book of the Company of Saint Angela to complete the official merger of her community, the Ursuline Sisters of Paola, Kan., with the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph. To her left is Sister Marie Montgomery, at right is Congregational Leader Sister Michele Morek, and seated is Sister Angela Fitzpatrick, who was also a Paola Ursuline. All of the Paola Ursulines signed the book on July 8, 2009, except Sister Marie William who was at a family funeral. Her signing occurred Sept. 3, 2009.



HONORING SISTER JEAN MADELINE

Sister Jean Madeline Peake, left, reacts with joy at the celebration honoring her 75th jubilee which took place Nov. 22, 2009 at St. Bartholomew Church in Louisville. At left, she was given a hug by Sister Jovita Milner who resides in Louisville. Both sisters taught at St. Bartholomew School. At right, Sister Maureen O'Neill (left) who ministers in Louisville helped greet guests at Sister Jean Madeline's reception. Nearly 200 family, friends, and former students attended the event.



LEFT: Sister Lennora Carrico was given a scarf at the Grayson County, Ky., Christmas party for associates and sisters on Dec. 5, 2009.

Find more MSJ photos online ursulinesmsj.org



ROSARY WALK

Sister Celine Leeker, third from left, helps lead the praying of the rosary at the Rosary Walk at Mount Saint Joseph Oct. 4, 2009 in honor of the month of the rosary.

BELOW: Sister Jacinta Powers, third from right, and Ursuline Associate Martha House, fourth from left, were part of a Hospice medical relief team serving in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Feb. 13-21.

Sister Marie Julie Fecher plays the organ during the Ursuline Associate fall commitment Mass on Nov. 4, 2009. Five members of an Owensboro, Ky., family made lifetime commitments, and a Springfield, Ill., man made his first commitment.



ASSOCIATE COMMITMENT MASS



HELPING IN HAITI



SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Spiritual Direction Institute Coordinators Sister Ann McGrew, seated, and Sister Marietta Wethington prepare for a weekly session at Mount Saint Joseph Conference and Retreat Center in October 2009.

Sister Mimi Ballard (right) teaches a class in weaving to an attentive group at Casa Ursulina. Scarves, shawls, and purses made by Casa Ursulina weavers are sold to several outlets in the States and are available online at www.casaursulina.org. Two of the weavers, Orfelinda (second from left) and Estefania (fourth from left), are now teachers in the beginning weaving class.



WEAVING IN CHILE

NEW BISHOP OF OWENSBORO HAS

By Dan Heckel, Mount Saint Joseph Staff

When Ursuline Sister Catherine Therese Barber sent a letter of congratulations in November to two of her former students for the Year of the Priest, she had no idea that one of those students would soon be receiving even bigger accolades.

In the early 1960s, Sister Catherine taught Fr. Chuck Walker and Fr. Bill Medley at St. Francis of Assisi School in St. Francis, Ky. On Dec. 15, Fr. Medley became Bishop-elect Medley for the Diocese of Owensboro, home of the Ursuline Sisters.

“The Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph have been a part of my life as far back as I can remember,” Bishop Medley said at the news conference announcing his selection as the diocese’s fourth bishop. “They staffed the school of my home parish, St. Francis of Assisi, in Marion County. They taught me, they taught my brothers and sisters, they taught my mother, they taught my father, and they taught at least one of my grandparents.”

The Ursulines opened St. Francis of Assisi in 1912, staffing the school until 1988.

“We would write on our papers, ‘AMDG,’ – ‘Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam,’ which means ‘To the greater glory of God,’” Bishop-elect Medley said. “The simplicity of their lifestyles, how they evidenced their vows, what a lesson in the way they lived.

“They always held before us the idea of priestly and religious vocations,” he said. “There’s no doubt that had an effect on me. That’s one thing that’s missed now, with not as many sisters in the schools.”

Bishop Medley was ordained and installed as bishop on Feb. 10. He requested that Sister Catherine be a lector at his ordination, and she read the Call of Jeremiah. Sister Cheryl Clemons was a commentator for those watching the live broadcast, and Sister Joseph



LEFT: The new bishop of the Diocese of Owensboro, William F. Medley, with his former teacher, Sister Catherine Therese Barber. She was a lector at his Feb. 10 ordination. **RIGHT:** Bishop-elect Medley is greeted by Sisters Emma Cecilia Busam, Joseph Angela Boone, and Amelia Stenger.



Angela Boone substituted for the apostolic nuncio and read the papal bull from Pope Benedict XVI. Several sisters sang in the choir.

Sister Catherine, who lives at the Ursuline Motherhouse and volunteers in the Mission Advancement office, is the only living Ursuline teacher of Bishop Medley.

“I always remember Bill having a twinkle in his eye,” Sister Catherine said. “He was very eager to learn, and an excellent student. He would be uncomfortable with anything except his best.”

The bishop got his strong sense of Catholicism from his family, Sister Catherine said. “He came from wonderful parents. His grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Hayden, were well-known and respected.

“It’s not surprising to me that he became such an important member of the Church,” she said. “It’s an honor to have taught a priest – and then to learn of his appointment as bishop was quite exciting,” she said.



ABOVE: Sister Cheryl Clemons was a commentator for the live broadcast of the ordination. **BELOW:** At the reception following the ordination, Sister George Mary Hagan withstood a long line to have her photo taken with Bishop Medley.



Sister Joseph Angela Boone, in her role as chancellor of the Diocese of Owensboro, signs the Oath of Fidelity that Bishop-elect Medley just signed during the Feb. 9 vespers service at St. Stephen Cathedral. From left are Fr. Larry McBride, Bishop-elect Medley, and Bishop-Emeritus John McRaith.



AS LONG HISTORY WITH URSULINES



RIGHT: Bishop-elect Medley speaks with Sister Sharon Sullivan while visiting Brescia University in December. **FAR RIGHT:** Bishop Medley is welcomed by Sister Marie Carol Cecil, center, and Sister Barbara Jean Head after celebrating Mass at the Mount Saint Joseph Chapel during his first official visit to Maple Mount Feb. 13.



Ursuline Sister Melissa Tipmore also got a special invitation from the new bishop, because she is good friends with his mother, Dorothy. Sister Melissa was a

23-year-old in her first mission at St. Francis in 1968, and Dorothy Medley was the first teacher's aide at the school.

"She was from a family who were one of the pillars of the parish," Sister Melissa said. "We befriended each other. She's just a super lady. When I left after four years, she had a big party for me." When Dorothy Medley's husband died, Sister Melissa was a comfort to her at the funeral.

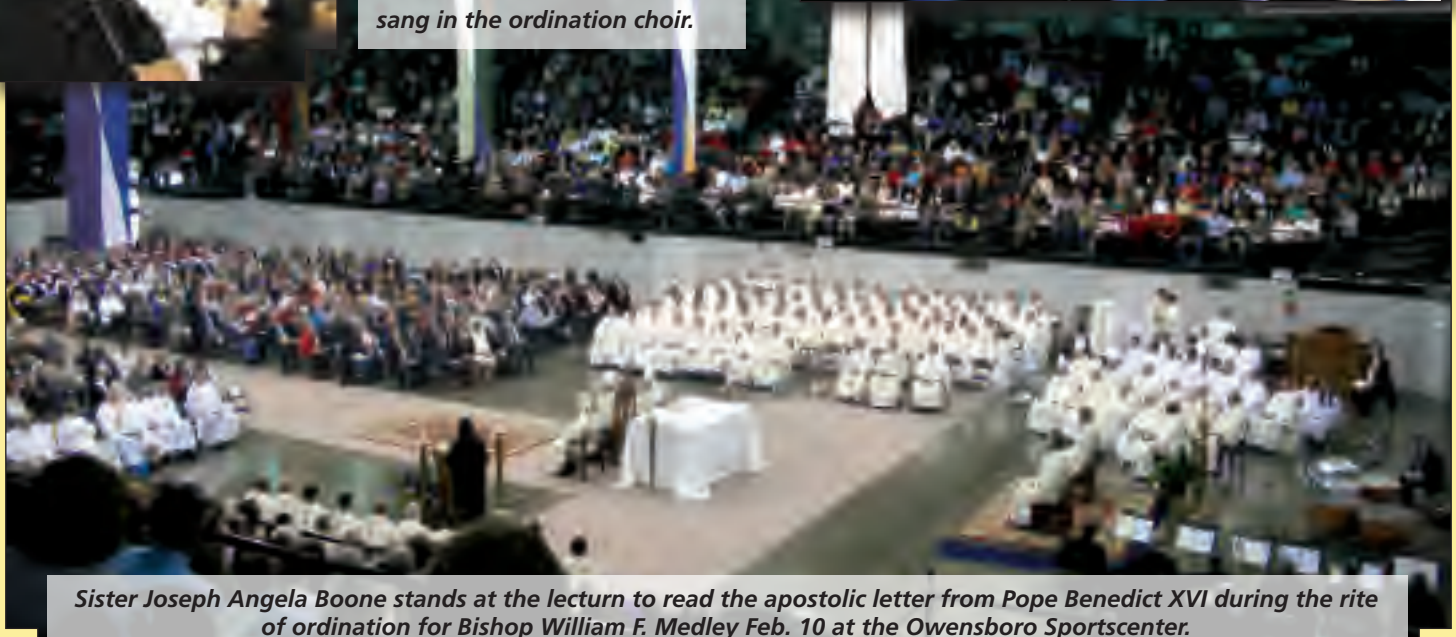
Ursuline Sister Maura Buckler taught Bishop Medley in first grade, but she left the community in 1973 and married. She and her husband ran a store in Bardstown when Bishop Medley was pastor at St. Joseph there, he said. When her husband died, Bishop Medley was touched that six Ursuline Sisters came to the funeral, although she'd left the community so many years earlier.

"They never forget a sister," he said.

Medley was also taught by Sister Mary Damien Abell (who died in 2001), and Sister Theresa Margaret Hite (who died in 2009). "When I look at how many sisters are serving in parish ministry all across the diocese, what a blessing," Bishop Medley said. "So many have moved to hospitals, pastoral care, and parish ministry. They are doing more to empower our laity to take their places, to get the education and certification to take over their ministry."



LEFT: Sisters Melissa Tipmore, Rose Marita O'Bryan, and Mary Celine Weidenbenner got to their floor seats early for the ordination. Sister Melissa is a friend of Bishop Medley's mother. **RIGHT:** Several sisters sang in the ordination choir.



Sister Joseph Angela Boone stands at the lectern to read the apostolic letter from Pope Benedict XVI during the rite of ordination for Bishop William F. Medley Feb. 10 at the Owensboro Sportscenter.



Ursula's Boat

How Your Donations Are Used

Each fall, the Ursuline Sisters ask for your help in joining "Ursula's Boat," our annual fund to help support the mission and ministries of the sisters. No matter when you give or how much, you are all on board with the sisters as they strive to fulfill Saint Angela Merici's dream to serve the Church and the Kingdom of God. The journey truly does make us one. On this page you will find our annual Statement of Accountability. We believe it is important to ensure you, our generous supporters, that every dollar you donate goes for the purpose you select.

The Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph share their passion to serve the Lord in four categories of ministry. Your dollars support these missions.

1. Social outreach and justice advocacy. Ursuline Sisters work daily with the poor, the elderly, the ill, and the voiceless, offering them hope and opportunity. Your dollars support Hispanic ministries in Louisville and Owensboro, Ky., and Casa Ursulina in Chillan, Chile; children infected or affected by HIV at the Hope House Day Care Center in Memphis, Tenn.; work with the poor, elderly, or disenfranchised in Kentucky, Tennessee, Illinois, Kansas, and Washington, D.C.

2. Ecclesial or Church ministry. Sisters offer their gifts of spirituality as parish ministers, directors of religious education, or music ministers at 10 churches in Kentucky, as well as serving the Owensboro Diocese. They also minister in five churches in Missouri, two in Illinois, two in New Mexico, one in Tennessee, and one in Kansas.

3. Education. Ursuline Sisters began as teachers, and their excellence in the classroom and in administration is still being felt today. Sisters are active in eight schools in Kentucky, including Brescia University. Sisters are also in the classroom in New Mexico, Illinois, Kansas, and Missouri, and a sister serves as the superintendent of Catholic schools in Louisiana.

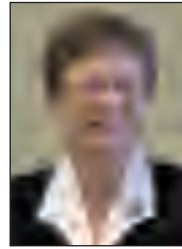
4. Body, Mind, and Spirit. Ursuline Sisters continue to take a lifetime of spirituality and experiences and apply them to the needs of the changing world in which we live. Sisters serve as counselors in Kentucky and Minnesota, and as healers in Louisville, Tennessee, Kansas, and the Motherhouse. They serve the spiritual needs of college students in Kentucky and Kansas, and act as retreat directors, quilters, and a religious presence in communities throughout Kentucky. Sisters in retirement maintain a vigilant Powerhouse of Prayer.

To find out how you can help the Ursuline Sisters on their journey, contact Dan Heckel, director of mission advancement, at (270) 229-2007, or dan.heckel@maplemount.org, or visit www.ursulinesmsj.org.

Ursuline Sisters' Quilt Club

It's not too late to join the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph Quilt Club! A raffle for a new handmade quilt takes place the first Friday of each month. To get your name in the drawings, contact Tiffany Orth at (270) 229-4103 ext. 278 or tiffany.orth@maplemount.org, or visit www.ursulinesmsj.org. If you act before April 2, you will get six chances to win a quilt for your \$20 membership. Your membership directly supports the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph.

Sister Amelia Selected As New Director of Development



Sister Amelia Stenger

Sister Amelia Stenger will begin her new ministry as development director for the Ursuline Sisters on Aug. 1. Her duties include leading and managing all programs and services regarding philanthropic activity to further the mission of the congregation.

Since August 1997, Sister Amelia has been director of the Mount Saint Joseph Conference and Retreat Center, a role she will continue until this summer. Prior to that, she was superintendent of the

Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Louisville from 1991-97, and filled the same role for the Diocese of Owensboro from 1984-91. She's served as a principal of three Kentucky schools -- St. Joseph in Bowling Green (1982-84), Christ the King in Madisonville (1977-82), and Immaculate Conception in Earlington (1975-77) -- and began her ministry as a teacher at Precious Blood School in Owensboro (1971-74).

Questions or comments concerning development efforts until August can be directed to Dan Heckel, director of mission advancement, (270) 229-2007, or dan.heckel@maplemount.org.

Statement of Accountability

As a member of the National Catholic Development Conference, the Ursuline Sisters submit an accountability report after the annual financial audit. This information is a summary of donations and expenses for fiscal year July 2008- June 2009. If you have questions, call Dan Heckel, director of mission advancement, at 270-229-2007.

Revenue

Unrestricted	129,971.44	16.04%
Restricted:		
Ministry	466.65	0.06%
Other	5,421.72	0.67%
Chile Missions	20,427.15	2.52%
Jamaica Missions	2,350.00	0.29%
Residence Hall	550.00	0.07%
Restricted to Renovations	4,250.00	0.52%
Bequests Unrestricted	486,076.93	60.00%
Bequests Restricted Retirement	13,876.79	1.71%
Retirement	11,262.01	1.39%
Quilt Club	27,009.65	3.33%
Picnic	108,403.66	13.38%
	810,066.00	100.00%

Expenses

Retirement Fund	160,552.11	19.82%
Residence Hall	550.00	0.07%
Chile Ministry	20,427.15	2.52%
Jamaica Missions	2,350.00	0.29%
Restricted to Renovations	4,250.00	0.52%
Other Restricted	5,421.72	0.67%
U.S. Ministry/ Program Service	561,070.67	69.26%
Admin/Management/General	43,123.39	5.32%
Fund Raising	12,320.97	1.52%
	810,066.00	100.00%

Sisters have much to teach about dealing with death

By Dan Heckel, Mount Saint Joseph Staff

At 2 a.m. on Sept. 23, 2009, Sister Clarita Browning came to sit with 101-year-old Sister Mary Clement Greenwell in her dying hours. “It was one of the most beautiful times of my life,” Sister Clarita said. “I prayed with her, and the nurse and the aides wanted to pray too. She drew her last breath while we were there,” Sister Clarita said. “It helps get us in touch with what the last hours are like.”

During this season of Lent, a time to prepare for dying and rising to new life, the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph have much to teach the rest of society about how to overcome their fears of losing a loved one.

“We don’t need to be afraid of death,” said Sister Mary Irene Cecil, who along with Sister Clarita was co-director of pastoral care at Maple Mount from 2002-2009. “God is love. We’ve lived our lives trying to serve God, we don’t need to be afraid. The unknown is what people fear, but they forget about God’s love.”

Sister Clarita said a sister’s long illness becomes a time of grace.

“The person who is dying comes to know Jesus in a very personal way,” she said. “We may not see them in formal prayer, but I believe they live very close to God. They make the transition from formal prayer to this personal prayer, that’s not something you can see. It’s very real to them.

“That person is ready to go to God,” Sister Clarita said. “We don’t fear it -- it’s a real grace to go to God.”

Joyce Crump, chief clinical officer with Hospice of Western Kentucky, said the sisters seem much more at peace than the lay people she works with.

“They approach death as not an ending, but a beginning,” she said. She said the sisters see their final journey as what Jesus went through.

“The other sisters rally around them and keep vigils,” Crump said. “It’s very peaceful for that patient.”

When a nurse in the Saint Joseph Villa infirmary sees that a sister is starting to make her final decline, she will alert pastoral care, who in turn informs the rest of the sisters. Then sisters sign up to sit with the dying sister around the clock, usually in one-hour shifts, Sister

Clarita said.

“It takes away any feeling that the dying person has of dying alone,” Sister Clarita said.

“There’s value with those sisters

who sit. They can be more ready for the person to go.”

Sister Marie Goretti Browning, who was director of pastoral care the second half of 2009, said, “We have a hard time letting go of people, but we look at it differently. Family members of our sisters who have begun to realize the end is coming, they find strength in the way we deal with it.”

On Dec. 2, 2009, Sister Marie Goretti was scheduled to sit with 103-year-old Sister Mary Bertha Wethington at 9 p.m. She arrived 10 minutes early to relieve the sister who had been sitting with Sister Mary Bertha.

“I prayed for her, I heard a noise and she had breathed her last. That was awesome for me, that I got there early to be with her,” Sister Marie Goretti said. “The ease with which she went was awesome. She’d been waiting for that for many years. It was such a smooth transition from this life to the life to come.”

Sitting with a dying sister makes everyone more aware of God’s presence in our lives, Sister Mary Irene said.

“To walk into a room where a sister is ill or dying, you know God is present there. It’s like holy ground,” she said. “You don’t talk, because you know God is doing what needs to be done. We don’t have to do anything. It puts you in touch with the mystery.”

Lay people have so many distractions in their lives, they often don’t take the time for spirituality involving death, the sisters said.

“They are so connected to family, to children and grandchildren,” Sister Clarita said. “They get so entangled, they lose sight of what’s going to happen to them. We don’t have the same continuing connections. We have time to make time for our spiritual life.”



Sister Mary Irene Cecil, right, reads to the late Sister Mary Bertha Wethington who lived to be 103 years old. The sisters’ belief in the spirituality of dying as well as the resurrection of the body provides solace to survivors.

Continued on page 11

A burial is about to take place on a snowy morning Feb. 8 at Mount Saint Joseph cemetery. All of the Ursuline Sisters are buried in this sacred place which dates back 80 years.



Nadine Trogden

Sister Agnes Catherine Williams 2009 award winner

Nadine Trogden was named the second recipient of the Sister Agnes Catherine Williams, OSU Award in November 2009. This award acknowledges parishioners of Sts. Joseph and Paul Church in Owensboro, Ky., for service and stewardship. In particular, it recognizes a parishioner's service/ministry to youth and education in the Catholic schools and the parish.

Nadine has taught in the Catholic School system for 25 years and provides speech therapy for children and adults. So strong was her desire to teach that she earned her master's degree at night while her family was young.



Sister Agnes Catherine (1905-2007) dedicated her life to educating God's children,

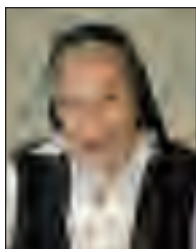
many of whom went to Sts. Joseph and Paul School. While there, she supervised student teachers from Brescia College and coordinated the speech clinic.

In the joy of eternal life

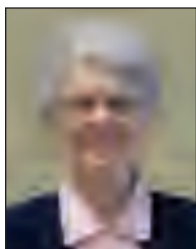
SISTER AGNES IRENE BICKETT, 93, died Nov. 25, 2009 at Mount Saint Joseph in her 74th year of religious life. She was born Agnes Lucille Bickett in Uniontown, the daughter of the late James Henry and Mary Alma Steward Bickett. She entered the Ursuline Community in 1935 and made temporary profession in 1937 and perpetual profession in 1940. Sister Agnes Irene was treasured for her sense of humor and her inspiring meditation and prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. She delighted in talking about her many teaching assignments. She taught and ministered in the Diocese of Owensboro, the Archdiocese of Louisville, as well as in Missouri, Nebraska, and New Mexico. She was the Guest House coordinator at the Mount Saint Joseph Motherhouse until her retirement in 2001. Survivors include one sister, Sister Blanche Rita Bickett, of Mount Saint Joseph, nieces and nephews, and the members of her religious community. The funeral Mass was Nov. 28 at Mount Saint Joseph, with burial in the convent cemetery.



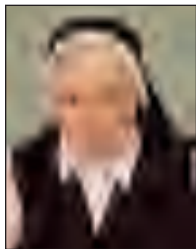
SISTER MARY BERTHA WETHINGTON, 103, died Dec. 2, 2009 at Mount Saint Joseph in her 83rd year of religious life. She was the oldest member in the history of the community. She was a native of Clementsville, Ky. An educator for 59 years, she taught or was principal in the Diocese of Owensboro, the Archdiocese of Louisville, and in Missouri. From 1972-88, she was coordinator of Saint Angela Educational Center, Louisville. From 1988 until her retirement in 2001, she was in residence at Saint Angela Convent, using her talents as a gifted seamstress in a ministry of quilt making for the Ursuline community. She retired to the Motherhouse in 2001. Survivors include a sister, Mary Louise O'Rourke, Creve Coeur, Mo., nieces and nephews, and the members of her religious community. The funeral Mass was Dec. 5 at Mount Saint Joseph, with burial in the convent cemetery.



SISTER MARGARET JOSEPH AULL, 87, died Dec. 7, 2009 at Owensboro Medical Health System after a short illness, in her 69th year of religious life. She was a native of Knottsville, Ky. She was known for her ready smile, her sense of adventure, her love of travel, and her deep prayerfulness. Sister Margaret Joseph taught in Owensboro, Louisville, and New Mexico, ministered at Mercy Hospital in Owensboro and tutored and ministered to the sick at Christ the King School and Parish in Madisonville. She retired to the Motherhouse in 2002, where she continued to minister as an information receptionist. Survivors include six sisters, Mary T. Higdon, and Anna Carolyn Lyddane, both of Owensboro; Sister Naomi Aull, Maple Mount; Sister Marie Michael Aull, CP, Whitesville; Joyce Marie Dunn, Tarpon Springs, Fla., and Beverly Ann Clark, Fairview, Texas; three brothers, William Guy Aull, Robert E. Aull, and Joseph A. Aull, all of Philpot; nieces and nephews and the members of her religious community. The funeral Mass was Dec. 10 at Mount Saint Joseph, with burial in the convent cemetery.



SISTER ANITA FLAUGHER, 98, died Feb. 5 at Mount Saint Joseph in her 80th year of religious life. Sister Anita was a gentle, prayerful woman, who loved teaching young children. She was faithful to her friends and family, and enjoyed working in the rose garden. A native of Fairfield, she ministered as a homemaker and teacher in the Diocese of Owensboro, the Archdiocese of Louisville and in Missouri. She was an educator for 44 years. Survivors include one sister, Mary Freda Simpson of Bloomfield, nieces and nephews, and the members of her religious community. The funeral Mass was Feb. 8 at Mount Saint Joseph, with burial in the convent cemetery.



Glenn Funeral Home and Crematory, Owensboro, was in charge of all of the arrangements.

Gifts in memory of a Sister may take the form of donations to the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph, 8001 Cummings Road, Maple Mount, KY 42356



Annual Procession To the Cemetery

The sisters sing "Holy Ground" in the Motherhouse cemetery on Aug. 5, 2009. Sister Michele Morek read, "There is a message of life transmitted from this hallowed place. The voices of these living saints who walked among us proclaim: "This is the City of Resurrection, God-with-us forever our joy." Sister Michele then blessed all 417 tombstones with holy water. Each year on Aug. 5, the Feast of Our Lady of the Snows, the Ursuline Sisters process to the cemetery to honor the dead. It was on Aug. 5, 1911, that Sisters Agnes O'Flynn and Ursula Jenkins went to the railway station in Owensboro and knelt to receive a blessing from Fr. E.S. Fitzgerald, the ecclesiastical superior of Mount Saint Joseph, for their journey to Washington, D.C. The sisters were going to the Apostolic Delegate to present their petition to become an autonomous community, the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph. Fr. Fitzgerald promised the Blessed Mother that if the journey were successful, the community would observe this date with a procession to the cemetery.

DEATH From page 9

"They haven't lived as close to it as we have," Sister Mary Irene said. "It's something they don't talk about."

Sister Marie Goretti said she knows many lay people have positive experiences dealing with death. She believes the sisters' attitude toward death is a reflection of their vocation.

"From the very beginning of our religious life, we are aware that death and new life is what we're headed for. It's death, dying, and rising," she said. "I am looking at death not as something to fear, but to prepare for."

Sister Clarita said the sisters have more of a shock when a sister dies suddenly and unexpectedly. "But I think those people are really ready to go," she said. "God just needs them more than we do." ■

Are you a caregiver for the very ill? Join us on May 8 for a "May I Walk You Home?" retreat led by Betty Medley, a certified bereavement counselor. The cost is \$20. Contact Kathy McCarty at 270-229-0200, ext. 413

Not Really Retired...

Sister Marie reliable as the mail

When Sister Marie Montgomery retired from teaching in 2007 at St. Francis of Assisi School in Gallup, N.M., her doctor gave her one piece of advice as she prepared to move back to Maple Mount: "Keep active, keep busy."

Considering she was 84 when she retired, she hardly needed that suggestion.

Sister Marie celebrated her 87th birthday in January, and since it fell on a Wednesday, she got the day off from delivering mail on campus, which she does Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. She also answers the phone at the information desk three days a week, serves as a Eucharistic minister at Mass, and shares the responsibility for ringing the chapel bell to alert the community that services are about to begin.

Fortunately, she just has to push a button for that. Those who see her move swiftly across campus wouldn't doubt she'd try climbing the bell tower if she needed to.

"I exercise one and a half hours a day," she said. "I stretch for an hour and then walk a half hour," she said.

A native of St. Lawrence in Daviess County, Ky., Sister Marie was the middle of seven children, and taught by the Ursulines from the sixth grade on. Two of her father's sisters were the 13th and 16th members of the Ursulines. But Sister Marie said she had no intention of becoming a sister.

"I came to the junior college to take a business class," she said. "I hadn't been here two weeks and I knew. It was God's way of calling me to the Ursulines."

She was a teacher or principal for 58 years. She ministered at 12 schools in five different cities in New Mexico, five cities in Kentucky, and two in Missouri. She spent two years as a parish minister in New Mexico and another in Houck, Ariz. Her longest tenure was 18 years as a teacher at Sacred Heart School in Farmington, N.M., from 1973-91.

"I loved it," she said. "When I left the classroom, I could have gotten a job visiting nursing homes and the hospital. But Gallup is full of hills," and she worried about getting around in bad weather, although during her time there, it rarely snowed. "When I left, it started snowing again, 24 inches in Gallup," she said. "I guess it's a good thing I came home."

Her favorite ministry was a semester she spent in 1956 at St. Paul School in Leitchfield, Ky. "Most of the boys were taller than I was," she said. "But I did not have one discipline problem. They were lovely students." A group told her they had learned more from her than any other teacher.

In her free time, Sister Marie enjoys playing cards. You can write to her at 8001 Cummings Road, Maple Mount, KY 42356. ■



Sister Marie Montgomery puts a letter in one of the sister's mailboxes after picking up the mail at the Maple Mount post office.



Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph

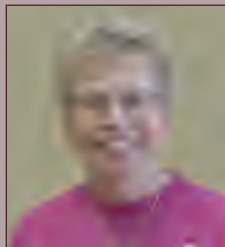
8001 Cummings Road
Maple Mount, Kentucky 42356-9999
270-229-4103
www.ursulinesmsj.org
info.ms@ursulinesmsj.org

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
OWENSBORO KY
PERMIT NO. 120

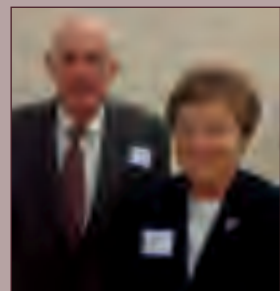
Soli Deo Gloria

We rejoice in the gifts of our sisters, given for the kingdom of God

Sister Fran Wilhelm worked with the Hispanic choirs of Sts. Joseph & Paul Parish, Owensboro, and St. Michael Parish, Sebree, for a year to produce a CD of hymns from the *Flor y Canto*, a popular Spanish and bilingual hymnal by Oregon Catholic Press. The net proceeds will benefit Centro Latino, a resource and advocate for Hispanic families living in the region. Some of the songs on the CD are Quiero Decirte Que Si, Christo Libertador, Ave Maria, and El Taller de Nazaret. To buy a CD, contact Sister Fran or Jaime Navarrete at J_navarrete@roadrunner.com.



Sister Dianna Ortiz has been hired as the office director for Pax Christi USA in Washington, D.C. Pax Christi is involved in Christian social justice, in which it rejects war and advocates conscience, economic and social justice, and respect for creation. It is committed to peace education and promotes the gospel imperative of peacemaking as a priority in the Catholic Church. Sister Dianna was recently the founding director of the Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition in Washington.

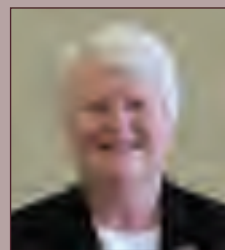


Sister Amelia Stenger is one of 30 people across Kentucky named to the state's Climate Action Planning Council, an initiative of the Energy and Environment Cabinet's Department for Energy Development and Independence. The council will set up a process to identify opportunities for

Kentucky to respond to the challenge of global climate change while increasing energy efficiency and energy independence, and spurring economic growth. The council will develop the Kentucky Climate Action Plan by Dec. 31, 2010. Sister Amelia is recognized as a leader in the Ursuline community on environmental efforts. She spoke on the relationship of religion and the environment at the Healthy Foods, Local Farms Conference Nov. 7, 2009 at the University of Louisville, where she met noted author Wendell Berry (pictured).

The former **Ursuline Sisters of Paola, Kan.**, who merged with Mount Saint Joseph in 2008, will be honored Oct. 30 by the Archdiocese of Kansas City, Kan., for staffing Catholic schools over the years. According to a letter from Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann, "The contributions made by these three orders (Ursuline Sisters, Benedictine Sisters, Sisters of Charity) to Catholic education in our archdiocese are unparalleled."

Sister Suzanne Sims began as principal of St. Mary of the Woods Elementary School in Whitesville, Ky., in October 2009. The school is in an incorporated city outside of Owensboro, where Ursuline Sisters taught for many years. Sister Suzanne was previously director of ministry development, researching potential new ministries for the Sisters. Prior to that she was the community's first director of Mission Advancement from 2000-2007.



The former **Motherhouse of the Ursuline Sisters of Belleville, Ill.**, which Mount Saint Joseph has owned since the two communities merged in 2005, was sold on Feb. 11 to a couple who intend to use it for Christian outreach services. Since the merger, several potential sales of the property on Douglas Avenue have fallen through. There are four buildings on the property, including Holy Spirit (pictured) and Villa Angela, where **Sisters Nancy Murphy and Nancy Liddy** lived while the property was for sale. Ursulines from North Dakota moved their motherhouse to Belleville in 1945, and the community became autonomous in 1983. "We are grateful that (the property) will be put to good use, honoring the work of the Belleville Ursulines," said Sister Michele Morek, congregational leader.