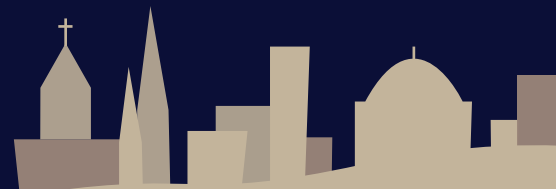




# Season of Hope Year of Mercy

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## Letter from the Prioress



*Sr. Bernadine Reyes, OSB*

### A Time of Hope and Mercy

Greetings,

As we enter the Advent and Christmas Seasons, I am reminded of the joys discovered during this time of the year. With a focus on the coming of Christ, I enjoy sharing this time of hope and peace among community, family and friends.

Along with these joyful times, I also acknowledge the fact that my heart is and has been troubled this year. My memory takes me back to 2014 when thousands of unaccompanied children, mainly from Central and South America, entered our country's borders. Many of them were looking for their families who were already in the U.S., and many were sent here by their families to flee the gangs and the drug cartels.

This year those same borders received thousands of women and children from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. Texas established two detainment centers for women and children located in Karnes City and Dilley, as well as a center for men located in Pearsall. I am familiar with the Dilley facility - Sr. Frances Briseño and I joined Sr. Pat Connolly of the Daughters of Charity in an effort to be present to the women when our time permits.



*Sister Bernadine Reyes, OSB at the Dilley, Texas Detainment Center.*

In San Antonio, Sr. Susan Mika has been involved with the Interfaith Welcoming Committee that has reached out to these women when the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) transports them to the bus station or the airport. The committee offers them hospitality and food, among other services, for their journey to the detainment centers.

On one particular visit to Dilley, Sr. Pat and I had the opportunity to assist the Chaplain in a communion service. One of the women, Maria, immediately volunteered to read, select the hymns, and lead the singing. Other women also volunteered to read. I was so impressed with the participation in the liturgy; there was no doubt that these women came from an active faith community hundreds of miles away.

In the last few months, the news broadcasts have been filled with stories about the Syrian Refugee crises in Europe. More recently, the news has been about the opportunist terrorist who entered France and, along with other terrorists already in France and other parts of Europe, carried out violent attacks on innocent lives. These acts of terror have compromised refugee acceptance throughout the world. In our own country, governors are declaring they will not accept Syrian refugees.

Though my heart is troubled because of the reality of violence and its effects in the world, especially on the plight of all refugees, victims, and survivors, it is not without hope in this season of celebrating the coming of God's Son and in the new call from Pope Francis for the Jubilee Year of Mercy. What a providential time for this call to "Mercy" for the church throughout the world! May we all listen to this call... reflect deeply on its message, and react compassionately at this very crucial time for humanity.

Wishing you and yours peace, hope, and joy ~

Blessings,

*Sr. Bernadine Reyes, OSB*

Sister Bernadine

### MISSION STATEMENT

We, the Boerne Benedictines, are called to seek God in community and to respond in ministry through sharing our spirituality and addressing the needs of the people we serve, especially the poor.

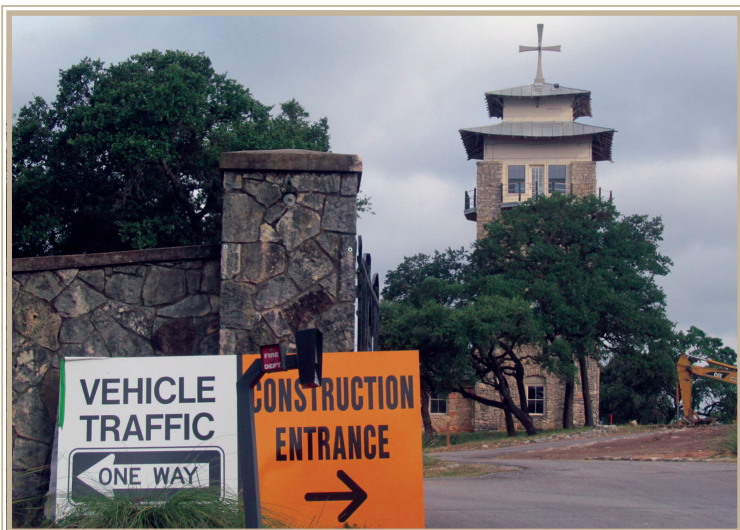


## New Monastery Construction Underway

## New Monastery Updates

Construction began in June on infrastructure changes for Benedictine Ministries which included a new separate entrance, driveway, and parking lot. Preparation for the construction of the new Monastery followed including removal of Lidwina's Dwelling and land clearing.

Pad site preparation was completed in September, the foundation was poured in October, and the installation of the structural steel beams began in November. The photos below depict this progress. Expected completion date is late summer 2016. Visit [www.boernebenedictines.com](http://www.boernebenedictines.com) for new construction updates.



### New Monastery Wish List

- Archival storage and materials
- Chapel chairs
- Communications & technology
- Furnishings for bedrooms
- Furnishings for living room
- Kitchen appliances
- Landscaping
- Solar panels
- Therapeutic bathtub

If you would like more information about how you can help,  
please contact the Office of Mission Advancement  
at 830.816.8504 ext. 31



## Mission Advancement

### SAVE THE DATE!

**2016 Feast of St. Benedict  
Spaghetti Dinner & Silent Auction**

**Wednesday, March 16th, 2015**

**4-7 pm • Benedict Hall  
316 W. Highland Dr. • Boerne, TX**

**Tickets on sale in January and  
MUST be purchased in advance.**

**Adults: \$15 • Children 10 and under: \$5**

**For more information call: 830.816.8504**

**All proceeds benefit the Sisters and the New Monastery**

### Congratulations to our 2015 Summer Sweepstakes Winners



#### Grand Prize Winner

of the \$2,500 Americus Diamond Pendant,  
Alexis DeSela (above right), with Sr. Sylvia Ahr, OSB

#### **\$500 Visa Gift Card**

Irene Goertz

#### **\$250 Visa Gift Card**

Sandra Hickl

#### **Handmade Quilt**

Ron Nolte

#### **\$100 Visa Gift Cards**

George & Pat Giddings

Bill Herrera

#### **\$50 Visa Gift Card**

Amy Mackrell

**Thanks to all who participated!  
You helped raise \$6,400 for the Sisters!**

### RECENT GRANTS RECEIVED

The Benedictine Sisters wish to thank the following grantors for their generosity and for recognizing the importance of our mission and our ministries:

#### **Kronkosky Charitable Foundation**

\$20,000 in support of the Health & Wholeness Center

#### **Marietta K. Randall Foundation Trust, Broadway Bank - Trustee**

\$2,000 in support of the Sisters' elder care needs

#### **Myra Staford Pryor Charitable Trust, Frost Bank - Trustee**

\$5,000 in support of the Health & Wholeness Center

#### **Kendall County United Way**

\$5,000 in support of the Health & Wholeness Center

#### **LCWR Region 12**

\$650 in support of the Caridad de Corazón  
Eagle Pass Border Ministry

#### **Tapatio Ladies Club**

\$500 in support of Monastery Technology Needs

### Leaving a Legacy

Please consider remembering the Benedictine Sisters in your Legacy Planning. There are many ways that you can make a difference in the lives of the Sisters as well as the thousands who benefit from their programs and ministries.

Our legal title is Congregation of Benedictine Sisters and we are a 501(c)3 charitable organization.

For more information, please contact your estate planner, attorney, or Sr. Sylvia Ahr, OSB, Treasurer at 830.816.8504.

### 2015 Annual Giving Update

"Thank you" to all who have responded so faithfully to our annual appeal. To date, \$21,600 has been received. If you have not yet participated in this important campaign, there is still time! Donations are still being accepted.



## Annual Songwriters at the Ranch A Night to Remember

## Special Events

The 7th Annual Songwriters at the Ranch Event was held on October 10th at Leon Springs Dance Hall. Guests enjoyed a wonderful evening of food and entertainment. San Antonio's News 4 Chief Meteorologist, Albert Flores, was the Emcee.

Singer/Songwriters, Reneé Coale Willis, Austin Cunningham, and Billy Montana delighted their audience. The trio brought laughter, tears, and true inspiration that flowed throughout the room. Their songs, both classic and new, were delivered with passion, honesty, and musical brilliance.



(l-r) Austin Cunningham, Reneé Coale Willis, Emcee - Albert Flores, and Billy Montana

A raffle was held and the grand prize, a guitar autographed by Reneé, Austin, and Billy, was won by Sandy Sulak of St. Joseph Honey Creek Parish. Special thanks to ALL who supported this year's event! To view more photos from the event visit [www.songwritersattheranch.org](http://www.songwritersattheranch.org).

### *Our Sincere Appreciation to the following Sponsors and Donors:*

#### Presenting Sponsor

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MASERATIOFSANANTONIO.COM



Real Meat, Real Smoke, Real Sausage!

#### Event Sponsors

James & Lea  
*Perlitz*  
The Stuart - Griffin - Perlitz  
Foundation

BOB & ANNA  
ELIZONDO

#### Table Sponsors

The Aloys & Gertrude Mika Family  
Barbara Kiolbassa  
The Benedictine Sisters  
Fratello's Italian Market & Deli  
Holy Trinity Catholic Church  
Paul and Mary Mac Gittinger

#### Friends of the Ministries

Catholic Life Insurance  
Frost Bank of Boerne  
St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church  
St. Joseph Catholic Church,  
Honey Creek

#### Promotional Sponsors

Alamo Mailing  
Boerne Printing  
The Boerne Star

#### Raffle Donors

Bill Scheidt  
James Avery  
Judith Osborn  
Lea Kochanek  
Peggy Raley

## Our Ministries

*Sister Victoria Anne uses fun props and toys to help engage her students in learning about Jesus.*

## A PASSION FOR TEACHING

By Randi Gilmore



Sister Victoria Anne Olivares, OSB developed a passion for teaching as a young adult. She worked diligently to become the talented educator that she is today. After retiring from her many years as a teacher in both public school and Catholic school education, Sr. Victoria Anne became involved with three different ministries over the last few years, where she gets to share her love for education with others.

St. Peter the Apostle Catholic Church in Boerne was looking for a Catechism teacher for special needs youth. When Sr. Victoria Anne heard about this position, she knew the Lord was pulling her to accept the job. She has a desire for helping those with learning disabilities, and she does not believe that anyone should be denied the gift of education. "If a child is hungry for the sacrament, why would we hold them back?," says Sister. Sr. Victoria Anne incorporates fun and hands on learning techniques in her classroom to really engage her students in learning about Jesus.

This year marked Sister's third year of teaching RCIA (The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults)

classes at Prince of Peace Church in San Antonio. Sister currently instructs teenagers as well as couples wishing to have their marriages validated within the church.

Sister's third ministry is teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) courses for mothers from Mexico at the Presentation Ministry Center in San Antonio. Twenty five mothers are registered for this course, and the center offers them childcare while they attend class. Sr. Victoria Anne plans her curriculum around teaching the women grammar, writing, speaking, interview preparation, and employment application procedures. "I want them to know the language," says Sister, "and give them all they need to be successful."

In September, Sr. Victoria Anne injured her leg making it impossible for her to commute to her ministries in San Antonio. She has taken a short leave until she is well enough to resume teaching her RCIA and ESL classes. In Sister's absence, volunteers have taken over her classes until she can return.

She continues to teach her classes at St. Peter's.



*Sister Victoria Anne brings joy, patience, and her love of God to her special needs students.*



## Our Ministries

The Corporate Responsibility Program addresses the corporations in which the Benedictine Sisters hold stock. The program uses the power of stock ownership to raise critical issues of our day with management, workers, boards of directors, and the public.

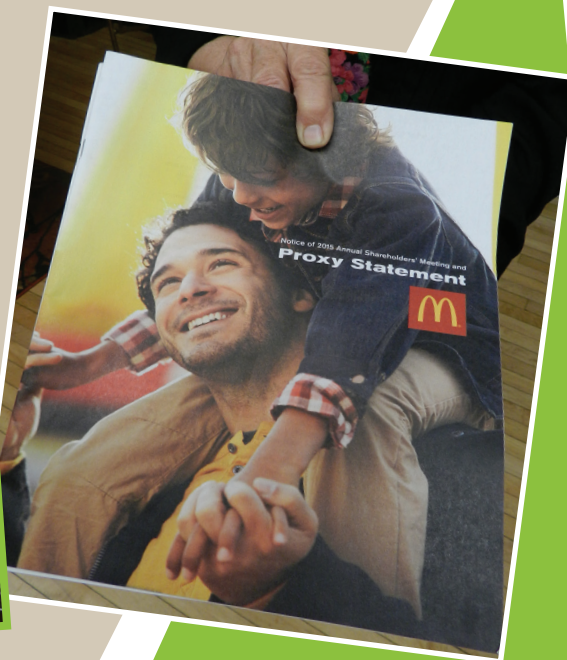
### Benedictine Sisters File Resolution with McDonald's Over Use of Antibiotics for Humans in Food Supply

For the 2015 proxy season, the Benedictine Sisters filed a resolution with McDonald's asking that the company eliminate the use of antibiotics used by humans in the supply chain for chicken, pork and beef. McDonald's updated a 2003 policy to look at their chicken supply chain. The Sisters withdrew the resolution because it was a start. For the upcoming 2016 proxy season, the Sisters re-filed a resolution, focusing on eliminating the use of antibiotics used by humans in the pork and beef supply chain.

The story went viral and was covered by more than 115 sources including CNN and Money CNN. In her comments to the press, Sister Susan Mika, OSB stated, "McDonald's recently updated its policy to procure only chickens raised without antibiotics used to treat humans, which we roundly applauded as an important step forward

in sustainable meat production, and an acknowledgment that it understands the damage overexposure to antibiotics has on public health. But, we question why this important commitment isn't also being applied to the beef and pork it sources, as hamburgers are a mainstay of McDonald's business. This double-standard makes no sense to us; what's good for the goose, ought to be good for the gander, or in this case, the whole farmyard."

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization have repeatedly warned about the public health threat of antibiotic resistance. The CDC estimates antibiotic-resistant infections cause over 2 million human illnesses and 23,000 deaths each year in the United States costing somewhere between \$55 and \$70 billion annually.



(l-r) Sister Mary Ann O'Ryan, OSB from the Benedictines of Chicago Community and our Sister Susan Mika, OSB attended the McDonald's shareholder meeting in Oak Brook, Illinois, near Chicago earlier this year. Photos courtesy of the Benedictine Sisters of Chicago.



## Celebrations

### Golden Jubilarians Honored for Faithful Lives

Nearly 300 guests attended the July 18th Golden Jubilee Celebration for Sisters Ursula Herrera, OSB and Susan Mika, OSB. The festivities began with Mass at St. Peter the Apostle Catholic Church in Boerne. Celebrants included Fr. Norm Ermis of Boerne, Msgr. Frank Kurzaj, V.F. of Floresville, Fr. Wieslaw of Panna Maria, Bishop John Yanta (retired), Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI (retired) and Msgr. Douglas Fater (retired). Sister Bernadine Reyes, OSB gave a touching reflection that highlighted the fifty years of service each Sister has professed and faithfully lived. A delightful luncheon followed in the Cana Ballroom at the church.



*Jubilarian, Sister Susan Mika, OSB with her mom, Gertrude Mika.*



*(l-r) Sister Ursula Herrera, OSB, Sister Bernadine Reyes, OSB, and Sister Susan Mika, OSB.*



*Jubilarian, Sister Ursula Herrera, OSB with her mom, Fidencia Herrera.*



*Enjoying the celebration are (l-r) Chris Rombawa, Fr. Jim Henke, Sister Frances Briseño, OSB, Joe Hemmi, Carol Shimek, and Mary Ann & Gilbert Keller.*



*Sister Antoinette Van Galen, OSB (left) with Anna Falkenberg.*



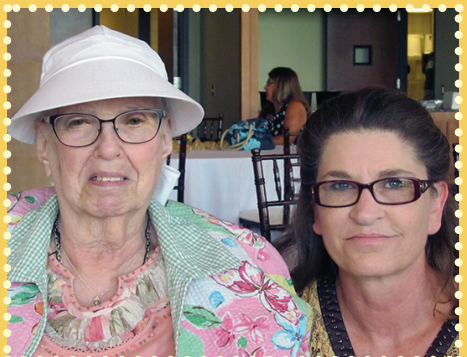
*Sylvia Newell, Sister Mary Louise Hernandez, OSB, Richard Hernandez (Sister's son), and Robin Ann Domingez, ObOSB having a good time.*



*Bishop John Yanta (retired) visits with Sister Mechtilde Goertz, OSB.*



*(l-r) Gladys Janysek, Sister Victoria Anne Olivares, OSB and her sister, Socorro Nelson, at the luncheon.*



*Sister Germaine Marie Sutton, OSB with her care giver, Rachael Jensen.*



(continued from pg. 8)

## Celebrations



All smiles at the luncheon are (l-r) Anne Brunet, ObOSB, Sister Mary Rose Goertz, OSB, and Angie Webb, ObOSB.



Presentation of the gifts during Liturgy (l-r): Sister Sylvia Ahr, OSB, Nora Schmidt, ObOSB, Fr. Norm Ermis, and Msgr. Frank Kurzaj.



Sister Michael Brandt, OSB with longtime friends Dr. Edward and Twyla Benson.

## LOOK WHO VISITED US!



(l-r) Sister Bernadine Reyes, OSB, Adrian Leal, Sister Kathleen Higgins, OSB, Adam J. Leal, Mary Anne Votion, Belinda Leal (Sister Bernadine's niece) and Abby Leal gather for a group photo.



Sister Mechtilde Goertz, OSB enjoyed a late summer visit from Thomas and Ann Kelton & family. (Ann is Sister's cousin).



(l-r) Sisters Mary Agnes Zinni, OSB Josie Sanchez, OSB (from the Benedictines of Colorado Springs), and Kathleen Higgins, OSB. Sister Josie was heading home after her visit with us.



(l-r) Our endearing friends, Lynn Stewart and Sister Monica Carroll, SHSP, stopped by the Monastery. Sister Monica was on a brief home visit to San Antonio before returning to her mission ministry in Zambia.

“Let all guests  
who arrive be  
received like  
Christ”  
Rule of Benedict  
Chapter 53



## Other News

### Happy 90th Birthday, Sister Mary Agnes, OSB!



Sister Mary Agnes Zinni, OSB (center) is 90 years young! She celebrated this milestone in September with friends and members of the Contemplative Outreach of San Antonio Leadership Team: (l-r) Barbara Ballard, Mary Hancock, Timothy Kooock, Bill Walker, Sister Mary Agnes, Cleo Tamez, Sr. Josie Sanchez, OSB, Rose Marden (Assoc. Dean of Continuing Ed at Oblate), and Justin Broglie. (not pictured: Sister Susan Mika, OSB and Anna Falkenberg (ED, Socially Responsible Investment Coalition).

### Event Honors P.E.A.C.E. Initiative's 25th Anniversary and the Memory of Selena Quintanilla



Enjoying the event are (l-r): P.E.A.C.E. Initiative Board Member Irene Chavez, Congressman Lloyd Doggett, City Councilwoman Shirley Gonzales, P.E.A.C.E Initiative Executive Director Patricia S. Castillo, and Senator Jose Menendez. A painting of Selena singing is in the background.

"Como La Flor", a special event that honored the 20th Anniversary of Selena Quintanilla's death and the 25th Anniversary of the P.E.A.C.E. Initiative, Putting an End to Abuse through Community Efforts, was held in San Antonio, Texas on Friday, November 6th. The evening included a Selena sing-off contest, a Selena look-a-like contest, and a Selena art exhibit by local and Austin artists.

The P.E.A.C.E. Initiative was established in 1990 under the auspices of the Benedictine Sisters to address the issues of domestic violence impacting the city. In 2003, the P.E.A.C.E. Initiative spun off and became an independent 501(c)(3) organization. Executive Director, Patricia Castillo, is a faithful friend of the Benedictine Sisters and has been with the P.E.A.C.E. Initiative since it began 25 years ago.

## 2016 Oblate Schedule

**January 10, 2016**

*Initial Formation*

Topic: Social Justice

Presenter: Sr. Susan Mika, OSB

*On-going Formation*

Topic: Graceful Aging Spiritually

Presenters: Marilyn Rodriguez, ObOSB and Rosalyn Collier

**February 7, 2016**

*Initial Formation*

Topic: Stewardship

Presenter: Joseph Cordova, ObOSB

*On-going Formation*

Topic: A Place in the Heart: The Role of Place in our Spiritual Lives and How it affects the Greater World  
Presenter: Deborah Hanus, D. Min., CC

**March 6, 2016**

*Initial Formation*

Topic: Tools for Good Works

Presenter: Marilyn Rodriguez, ObOSB

*On-going Formation*

Topic: Psalms as Prayer

Presenter: Mary Piker, CC

**April 3, 2016**

*Initial Formation*

Topic: Humility

Presenter: Tamara Mapp, ObOSB

*On-going Formation*

Topic: Beatitudes

Presenter: Nan Neff, ObOSB

**May 27-29, 2016**

**RETREAT** - Cultivating a Monastic Instinct

Presenter: Sr. Karen Joseph, OSB

**May 29, 2016**

**OBLATION**



## Benedictine Ministries

## Health &amp; Wholeness Center Hosts New Art Program



Artist, Anne Brunet (standing), guides her Pastel students.



Graphic Sketch Artist, Chad E. Keith, teaches varied sketching techniques.



Donald Darst lectures about contrast and depth to his Oil Painting students.

Pastels, Graphic Sketching, and Oil Painting Classes are now being held on Wednesdays at the Health and Wholeness Center, a ministry of Benedictine Ministries. The new program, *Reaching Seniors Through Art*, is sponsored by the Majestic Ranch Arts Foundation. Pastels and Sketching classes alternate weeks and consist of 4 classes each session. Oil Painting classes are offered in 8 week sessions. Class fees apply only to non-members. The next sessions begin January 13th. Class size is limited. Please contact Christy Hanich, Manager of the Health and Wholeness Center for more information, 830.816.8470.

## Save the Date

*The Health and Wholeness Center's  
Springtime Tea*

*Wednesday,  
May 11, 2016*



*Benedict Hall*

*Tickets \$25 Each*

*On Sale Early Spring*

*Call 830.816.8470 for more information*

## Sisters' Attic Has Moved!



We didn't go too far!  
The store is much larger and is still  
located on the grounds  
of the Benedictine Sisters!  
(Near the new parking lot.)

**COME SEE OUR NEW LOOK!**  
**213 W. Highland Dr.**  
**830.249.0020**

**Congregation of Benedictine Sisters**  
**416 West Highland Dr.**  
**Boerne, TX 78006**  
**Ph: 830.816.8504**  
**[www.boernebenedictines.com](http://www.boernebenedictines.com)**  
**Find us on:**



**Ministries in Texas including  
Boerne, Eagle Pass, & San Antonio**

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and Marilyn Rodriguez, ObOSB  
for their time, wisdom, and advice.*

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**Sisters' Council**

Sister Bernadine Reyes, OSB  
Prioress

Sister Sylvia Ahr, OSB  
Sub-Prioress

Sister Frances Briseño, OSB  
Councilor

Sister Ursula Herrera, OSB  
Councilor

***Keep in Touch***

We would like to hear from you!  
We are continually updating our database.  
Please send us your updated information  
if it is incorrect on the mailing label.



**The Benedictine Sisters wish you  
a very Merry Christmas and a  
Happy, Healthy New Year!**

**Please Join Us For Our  
*Christmas Eve Liturgy***

**December 24th • 5 pm**  
**St. Scholastica Monastery**  
**416 W. Highland Dr. • Boerne, TX 78006**



**Reception to Follow**

