



# Counting Our Blessings



*Benedictine Sisters with Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller MSps*

## Letter from the Prioress



Sr. Bernadine Reyes, OSB

### Recognizing Our Many Blessings!

Nineteen months ago, on a rainy Saturday afternoon, we held our Ground Breaking Ceremony for our new St. Scholastica Monastery. Fast forward, to the week of September 26, 2016, when we began moving into our new home. Then, on October 23rd, we welcomed Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, MSPS,

who celebrated Mass and blessed our new Monastery and Chapel. And finally, on November 20th, we held our Open House.

Throughout this journey, we have been blessed in so many ways by so many wonderful people. Our architects from Schemmer & Associates worked closely with our contractors from Koehler Construction Company to create and build our beautiful new home and office spaces. Our Monastery staff, along with many of our Oblates and volunteers, helped us prepare for the move by organizing, packing and unpacking. Women from our parish, St. Peter the Apostle, called and offered to prepare lunch for the Sisters and our staff on the days of our move, and they were true to their promise. Later, another group brought gifts for each sister. Support from Sacred Heart School Alumni and many other faithful donors provided us new furnishings including chapel chairs, bedroom furnishings, and a therapeutic tub. The blessing of the new Monastery and Chapel would not have been complete without our concelebrants, co-ministers, and special guests. We welcomed nearly 200 guests to our Open House including family, friends, and benefactors! So many expressed over and over how happy they were for us, and the eyes of some guests teared when they saw our chapel.

I think I can speak for all of the Sisters, that deep in our hearts, we know how very blessed we are and we are grateful for all who have sojourned with us!

In addition, we have been extremely blessed by four of our Sisters who served on the Land and Building Committee. They are Sisters Sylvia Ahr, Frances Briseño, Kathleen Higgins, and Susan Mika. Working closely with the Architects, Project Managers, and Construction Superintendents, they gave so much of their time and energy to this project, and we are truly grateful for their tireless efforts.

*“Throughout this journey, we have been blessed in so many ways by so many wonderful people.”*

We have been living in our new home for almost two months. We are settling in and enjoying our private rooms, offices and community spaces, and the beautiful chapel with a window that oversees the hills of Boerne and beyond. Transition from three living spaces to being under one roof has been relatively smooth.

So now it remains, as we settle into our new environment, we continue to look towards the horizon. Just as we have been blessed, we must also be a blessing to those we meet on the path of life.

Wishing you and yours many blessings this Holy Season of Christ and throughout the New Year!

With Gratitude and Joy,

*Sr. Bernadine Reyes, OSB*

### 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 **Benedictine Sisters** (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.

### 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.*



## Archbishop Blesses New St. Scholastica Monastery

The Benedictine Sisters welcomed Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, MSPS to their new St. Scholastica Monastery in Boerne on Sunday, October 23rd. The Archbishop blessed the new chapel during the celebration of the Eucharist. Concelebrants included Fr. Jonathan Felux, Msgr. Albert Hubertus, Msgr. John Wagner, Fr. Tony Cummins, and Fr. Norm Ermis. After Mass, the Archbishop blessed the Monastery offices and Sisters' living spaces. Monastery co-ministers and special guests were also present at the event.

## New Monastery Blessing



*Sr. Bernadine Reyes, OSB with Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, MSPS*



*Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, MSPS blesses the altar in the new Chapel*



*Co-Ministers (l-r) Bonnie Stewart, Nora Schmidt, and Marcia Mendoza before the Blessing ceremony*



*(l-r) Concelebrants, Fr. Anthony Cummins, Msgr. Albert Hubertus, Fr. Norm Ermis (Pastor of St. Peter's Parish in Boerne), and Msgr. John Wagner*



*(l-r) Altar server, Ella Hirsch, Fr. Jonathan Felux, Director - Archdiocesan Office of Vocations, Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, MSPS, and altar server, Hunter Beaton*



*Photo left: Sr. Elizabeth Ann Vasquez, SSCJ, Director - Archdiocesan Office for Consecrated Life, and Sr. Mary Agnes Zinni, OSB*



*Photo left: Pablo Garcia, Personal assistant to the Archbishop, and Sr. Susan Mika, OSB*



## Other News



## Snap Shots!



Sr. Mary Rose Goertz, OSB (2nd from right) enjoyed a visit with family including (l-r) her sister, Marcella Meuhr, her brother and his wife, Mark and Barbara Goertz, and their daughter, Monica Kadura



Sr. Mechtilde Goertz, OSB, visited the Treue Der Union, the oldest Civil War Monument in Texas.

Located in Comfort, TX, the memorial is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It is also a Texas State Historical Landmark and a Texas State Archaeological Landmark



Information technology specialists, Rodney and Brandi Sees (owners of Accurate Computer Solutions in Boerne), provide computer and communication support at the new Monastery

## 2017 Oblate Schedule

## Meeting Agenda

Meetings begin at 1 pm in the  
New Monastery's  
Large Conference Room

12:30 - 1 pm - Setup Meeting Space

1 - 1:20 pm - Liturgy of the Hours

1:20 - 2 pm - Formation

2 - 2:15 pm - Break

2:15 - 3 pm - Formation

3 - 3:30 pm - Clean Meeting Space

## January 8, 2017

Introduction to Centering Prayer  
Facilitator: Mary Hancock, ObOSB

## February 5, 2017

Benedictine Leadership Qualities  
Facilitator: Joseph Cordova, ObOSB

## March 5, 2017

Responding to a Relationship with Christ  
Facilitator: Deborah Hanus, DMin

## April 2, 2017

How Social Justice Impacts Everyday Life  
Facilitator: Sr. Susan Mika, OSB

## May 26 - 28, 2017

## SILENT RETREAT

Gazing into the Face of Jesus:  
Praying with Icons and Art  
Presenter: Jan Davis, ObOSB,  
and Bill Howden, ObOSB

## May 28, 2017

## OBLATION

## SAVE THE DATE!

2017 Feast of St. Benedict  
Spaghetti Dinner & Silent Auction  
**Wednesday, March 22nd, 2017**

4 - 7 pm • Benedict Hall

For more information  
call: 830.816.8504



## Other News

Facts About the  
New Monastery

The new Monastery, constructed around the Sisters' iconic Kronkosky Tower, provides housing for the Sisters and office spaces for staff. The 17,483 square foot complex includes eco-friendly natural lighting, low-e glass, window shading, chilled water HVAC, and solar panels.

**2016 Annual Giving Update**

"Thank you" to all who have generously responded to our recent appeal. To date, over \$18,000 has been received for operations for the new Monastery. If you have not yet participated in this important campaign, please consider a gift to the Sisters! Donations are still being accepted.

**Congratulations to our 2016  
Summer Sweepstakes Winners****Grand Prize  
Winner**

of the \$2,500  
Americus Diamond  
Pendant,  
Pamela Zanotelli

**\$500 Visa Gift Card**

Sarah Masur

**\$250 Visa Gift Card**

Helen Nowell

**\$100 Visa Gift Cards**

Dan Barry and Esther Ng

**\$50 Visa Gift Card**

John Belter

**Thanks to all who participated!**  
**You helped raise \$6,200 for the Sisters!**

**News  
Flash****New Address**

216 W. Highland Drive  
Boerne, TX 78006

**New Website**

[boernebenedictines.org](http://boernebenedictines.org)

**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:

**Scanlan Foundation**

\$10,000 in support of the new Monastery needs

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

\$2,000 in support of the new Monastery needs

**United Way of San Antonio**

\$5,000 in support of Health & Wholeness Center's  
operational & scholarship needs



# Open House

## Open House Brings Many to New Monastery

The Benedictine Sisters held an Open House on Sunday, November 20th. Nearly 200 guests, including family, friends, Oblates, members from the St. Peter's Parish Community, members from the Leadership Conference of Women

Religious - Region 20, and benefactors came to see the new Monastery. "We were happy to welcome so many people to our new home," said Sr. Bernadine Reyes, OSB. "We thank everyone who came to share this special day with us!"



*(l-r) Sr. Theresa Billeaud and Sr. Helen Miksch (CDPs from San Antonio) enjoyed the celebration*



*Jerry and Gail McKenna wouldn't have missed this special occasion*



*(l-r) Oblate, Anna Falkenberg and Sr. Susan Mika, OSB*



*Life-long friends, (l-r) Alida Sirus, Sr. Bernadine Reyes, OSB, and Delia Alvarado having fun at the Open House*



*Sr. Frances Briseño (center) with good friends Bill and Jody Nash*



*(l-r) Koehler Construction Co. Superintendent, Rodney Bargfrede, and wife, Tammy (left) with Sr. Sylvia Ahr, OSB and Tammy's parents, Lena and Raymond Rohlf*



*Sr. Antoinette Van Galen, OSB (center) with Oblates, Jan Davis and Bill Howden*



*(l-r) Faithful Sacred Heart School Alumni, Anna and Bob Elizondo, with Sr. Sylvia Ahr, OSB and Anna's sister, Sylvia Garcia*



*Special friends, Carla and Patrick Heath, with Sr. Ursula Herrera, OSB (center)*



## Open House



*Sr. Bernadine Reyes, OSB and Boerne's Mayor, Mike Schultz*



*Sr. Sylvia Ahr, OSB (front center) with several of her family members enjoying the festivities*



*Sr. Michael Brandt, OSB (right) with her brother, Lee Brandt, and Oblate, Anne Brunet*



*Sr. Germaine Marie Sutton, OSB with caregiver, Rachel Jensen (right) and young friends*



*Oblates and endearing friends, (l-r) Sharon Mazurek and Lupe Sotello*



*(l-r) Sisters Antoinette Van Galen, OSB and Mary Rose Goertz, OSB, with Oblate, Marilyn Rodriguez*



*Caterer, Karen Brickey, and Sr. Kathleen Higgins, OSB*



*Sr. Victoria Anne Olivares, OSB (2nd from left) and family members gathered at the Open House*



*(l-r) Oblates, Pam and Jerry Schmidt with long-time friend, Hope Ponce*



## Corporate Responsibility Updates

### Walmart - Making Progress on the Removal of Harmful Chemicals in Everyday Products

Since 2013, Sr. Susan Mika, OSB, and the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility group, which meets with Walmart, have been asking for a list of the chemicals which the company is asking suppliers to phase out. Walmart had said the list was confidential. Now, according to Bloomberg News (July 20, 2016), under the Walmart policy, manufacturers must list the targeted ingredients on packaging by 2018 and work to find alternatives. The program affects about 90,000 items made by 700 manufacturers. Already, Walmart suppliers have removed 95% of the chemicals on the list, by volume weight, from products sold in U.S. stores that are covered by the policy. This is significant due to Walmart's size and influence.



1. Formaldehyde, a carcinogen found in resins for wood products, building materials, paints and some consumer products like cosmetics
2. Triclosan, is a chemical used in antibacterial soaps, toothpaste and some cosmetics, not known to be hazardous to humans, but some animal studies have shown that it alters hormone regulation, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration
3. Toluene, a colorless liquid that is used in paint thinners, nail polish and fragrances
4. Diethyl phthalate, used to make plastic more flexible and in cosmetics, insecticides and aspirin
5. Nonylphenol ethoxylates, surfactants in industrial applications/consumer products like laundry detergent
6. Butylparabens, used as a preservative in cosmetics
7. Dibutyl phthalate, a solvent
8. Propylparaben, another preservative

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-07-20/wal-mart-asks-suppliers-to-remove-eight-chemicals-from-products>  
(originally published in the Benedictine CRI Newsletter, Issue 18)

### McDonald's Policies - The Use of Antibiotics in Suppliers' Chicken, Beef, and Pork



The Benedictine Sisters of Boerne are the lead filer of a 2017 shareholder resolution with McDonald's, asking the company to update their policies to remove antibiotics used by humans from their supply chain of chicken, beef and pork. A similar resolution for 2016 received 22% vote from the shareholders. The resolution needed 3% to continue for another year. The Sisters filed during the World Health Organization's "Antibiotics Awareness Week". The overuse and misuse of antibiotics in the meat industry is contributing to the rise of antibiotic-resistance, and this serious public health issue is responsible for 2 million infections and 23,000 deaths each year. Articles highlighting the filing appeared on Reuters News Service and in Time.com/money. There is much interest in this topic as various restaurant brands work to eliminate antibiotics from their supply chains and set deadlines for this to happen.



## A Letter from Sr. Ursula Herrera, OSB

## Caridad de Corazón



*Students who receive tuition*

*"I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things."*

**- Mother Teresa**



*Boys from the orphanage*

### **Dear Friends,**

Caridad de Corazón is an organization of the Benedictine Sisters. We are located on the US/Mexico border in Eagle Pass, TX.

Our mission is about listening to the poor and responding as we are able with the help of our many benefactors and mission workers. Below is a report of our work over the past year:

**Student Tuition:** We currently assist 43 students with tuition. We have a scholarship fund to help students in Piedras Negras to continue going to school after primary school. In Mexico, parents have to pay for continuing education into Secundaria (Junior High) and Prepa (High School). It is difficult for minimum wage working parents to provide an education for their children. With an education, these children have a greater chance at a better future.

**Food Pantry:** We help feed over 300 families a month in different colonias of Piedras Negras, MX. Our faithful partners include Sky Cross located in San Antonio, St. Mary's Church in San Angelo, and St. Robert Bellarmine Parish in Cortland Ohio.

**Orphanages:** We sponsor three orphanages and a home for special needs children in Piedras Negras. We

provide food, school supplies, shoes, clothing, diapers, and household supplies to 56 children total. A new kitchen has been built, and a new refrigerator, stove, freezer and air conditioner have been donated.

**Casa Bethany** (home for the homeless elderly) has 4 residents at present. We provide them with food, clothing, diapers, and laundry supplies.

**Soup Kitchen:** We assist a soup kitchen by providing food, clothing and school supplies to 48-55 children. The older children serve as mentors to the younger children with religious or school studies and crafts.

**Mission Work:** Two youth groups returned this year to continue work at Casa Bethesda in Piedras Negras. Their mission of "ministry to ministers" continued as they painted the orphanage and worked at the parish hall. The group of missionaries from Houston's St. John Vianney Church has been very faithful in visiting – and in addition to the home repairs of our Eagle Pass residents, they made some much needed repairs to the Mission House.

**Mission House:** We are in the process of refinishing the staircase so we can install a chair lift for second floor accessibility.

Renovations to the Mission House included:

- Repainting the kitchen cabinets
- Replacing the toilets with more water efficient ones
- Changing the faucets in the bathrooms and kitchen
- Replacing the upstairs floors in the closet and bath
- Painting the upstairs bedrooms and replacing the carpet
- Removing the carpet on the stairs
- Painting the private area as well as the ceilings and bedrooms
- Replacing the light fixtures in the dining area and bathroom
- Replacing and painting the outdoor back stairs

***There are so many needs in Piedras Negras and Eagle Pass and we still feel a strong calling to continue this ministry along the border.***

We want to thank everyone who assists us in our mission, and we are very grateful for their support. We know we could not provide as much help to the poor without them.

***May God bless you all and "keep you in the palm of His Hand".***

Sr. Ursula Herrera, OSB  
Director of Caridad de Corazón



# Benedictine Ministries

## 2016 Songwriters at the Ranch Event

Singer-songwriters Renee Coale Willis, Billy Montana, and Allen Shamblin took the stage at the 8th annual Songwriters at the Ranch on Saturday, October 29, 2016. The event, held at Crown Ridge Banquet Hall in San Antonio, drew a great crowd including many past supporters and newcomers as well. All proceeds from this "friend-raiser" benefit Benedictine Ministries in Boerne — the Omega Retreat Center, the Health & Wholeness Center, and the Sisters' Attic Thrift Store.

Thanks to all who attended this year's event, a very "Special Thank You" to our Emcee, Albert Flores, and our sincere appreciation to the following Sponsors and Donors:

### Presenting Sponsor



### Event Sponsors



### Table Sponsors

The Aloys & Gertrude Mika Family  
The Benedictine Sisters  
Fratello's Italian Market & Deli  
Frost Bank of Boerne  
Jim and Barbara Britton  
Jim and Beverly Tsakopoulos  
Paul and Mary Mac Gittinger  
The Perlitz Family

### Friends of the Ministries

Catholic Life Insurance  
Holy Trinity Catholic Church  
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St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

### Promotional Sponsors

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Today's Catholic  
Hill Country Weekly  
Ranch Radio 92.3

### Raffle Donors

Americus Diamond  
Anne Brunet  
Embassy Suites Riverwalk  
James Avery Jewelry  
Merilyn Pruske  
Sherry Zogheib



The Songwriters with the Jim & Lea Perlitz family and friends



Songwriters with autographed guitar winners, Steve and Bridget Gottardy



(l-r) Robert Elizondo, Songwriter - Billy Montana, Robert Cowan, Ronnie Elizondo, and Robert Corbo share a moment before the performance



(l-r) Allen Shamblin, Renee Coale Willis, & Billy Montana with Melissa & Charles Barrett and Randy & Tricia Dove



Sandra Kiolbassa and Sr. Michael Brandt, OSB enjoying the evening

For more photos, visit [benedictineministries.org](http://benedictineministries.org)



## Benedictine Ministries

### Art Program Promotes Overall Wellness

Year two of the Reaching Seniors Through Art Program is in full swing at Benedictine Ministries' Health and Wholeness Center thanks to the continued sponsorship of Majestic Ranch Arts Foundation (MRAF). Classes include Beginning and Advanced Oil Painting, Pastels, and Colored Pencils and are open to both members and non-members of the Center.

"MRAF is proud to partner with the Health and Wholeness Center to provide programs that engage adults in our community in the visual arts," said Kelly Leith, the organization's Executive Director. "The involvement in art activities can help develop the artist's abstract thinking, visual-spatial awareness, attention span, and overall fine motor skills. The expansion of the art program at the Health and Wholeness Center aligns with studies that show participatory art forms prevent cognitive decline and dementia in seniors while promoting self-expression, social support, sense of empowerment, and psychological health."

The winter art sessions begin the week of January 23rd. For more information, please contact Christy Hanich, Manager of the Health and Wholeness Center, at 830.816.8470.



*Advanced Oil Painting teacher, Pamela Gardner, showing her student how to hold the brush*



*Donald Durst, Beginning Oil Painting instructor, showing his student, Raquel Hug, examples of vantage points*



*(l-r) Pastel and Colored Pencil instructor, Anne Brunet, leading a class with students, Carole Locker and Judy Olender*

*Save the Date*  
*The Health and Wholeness Center's*  
  
*Springtime Tea*  
*Wednesday, May 17, 2017*  
*For more information call 830.816.8470*



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Find us on:



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

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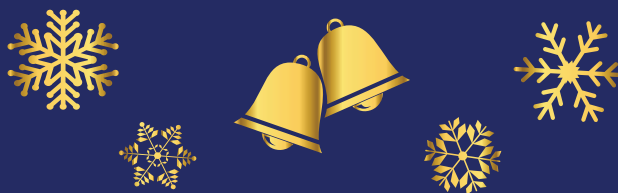
Sister Frances Briseño, OSB  
Councilor

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  
216 W. Highland Dr. • Boerne, TX 78006**

**Reception to Follow**