



In Touch

83rd Annual Pilgrimage



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Although, the remnants of hurricane Harvey attempted to disrupt our Pilgrimage celebrations on Saturday, so many faithful pilgrims refused to be deterred by the chill in the air, the strength of the breeze, or the intermittent showers.

In her thank-you letter, Sr. Ruth Plante, OSBM, Provincial said, "Instead, the wind was a reminder of the breath of the Spirit, and the raindrops

were so many blessings flowing from Mary, the Life-giving Spring.."

She added that this faith and steadfastness brought forth the fruit of a lovely, sun-filled Sunday reminding us of the loving warmth of the Light of the World. Pilgrims of all ages filled the air with hymns and prayers blanketing the Mount with happy hearts and a palpable sense of peace and joy.

All who came had an important part in making the 83rd Annual Pilgrimage a memorable and spiritually uplifting event.

"We will continue to pray for you each and every day, asking our dear Mother of Perpetual Help to watch over you and protect you. May the road of your life's journey lead you back to this holy Mount for pilgrimage in 2018," added Sr. Ruth.

A Message from Sister Ruth

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!

Autumn 2017



Sr. Ruth Plante, OSBM

Dear Friends,

During the refreshing crisp days of autumn, we are surrounded with countless signs of bounty – generous gifts from our Creator and Lord. Sadly, in today's world, we are not given much time to reflect upon all of these blessings because they become crowded out by the ghosts and goblins of Halloween, and the glitz and pull of Christmas advertising.

Hopefully, as we continue to grow in the love of Jesus, we can rise above this “fluff” in order to see more clearly the abundant blessings which are ours. As an elderly gentleman once said to me: “Sister, any day both feet are on this side of the grass is a good day!”

Jesus gives us everything sufficient for our life journey – even if it does not include everything we want or expect. May we recognize this abundance and show our satisfaction by not giving in to comparisons, competitions, and envy.

While we come to offer gratitude for the gifts of our good earth, may we also give thanks for what has grown in our hearts and souls – courage, forgiveness, kindness, patience as well as the many subtle ways that Jesus nurtures and grows our positive qualities – yes, we all have them!!! Certainly, current society and politics have given us ample opportunity to lean upon the fruits of our spiritual lives!!

As our life's journey moves us into the Advent season in preparation for the wondrous Christmas feast, may we not allow social commitments, shopping, correspondence, and other stressful situations to distract us from the true meaning of all of these activities – the joyous celebration of the birth of our Divine Savior whose coming brings us full circle to the Source of our abundant blessings.

As always, we continue to remember you in our daily prayers for, indeed, all of you have been and continue to be the cause of many blessings for all of us.

Sincerely in the Lord,

Sister Ruth Plante, OSBM

Sister Ruth Plante, OSBM
Provincial

In Touch

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BASILIAN SISTER JUBILARIANS FETED DURING COMMUNITY DAYS



Jubilarians are (left to right) Sr. Susan Sisko, Sr. Seraphim Olsafsky, Sr. Melita Marie Penchalk, Sr. Regina Adams, and Sr. Bernarda Sevachko. Also pictured in the second row are: Father Michael Huszti, Chaplain and Sr. Ruth Plante, Provincial.

Jubilee is a time to “return to Galilee,” to the time when one first heard the call and to treasure in one’s heart the living memory of that call. It is for the Jubilarians, and for all the Sisters, “a return to that blazing light with which God’s grace touched us at the start of our journey.” These words of Pope Francis express this even more succinctly when he stated, “To return there means reviving the

memory of that moment when his eyes met mine, the moment when he made me realize that he loved me.” These are the memories which sustain us on the journey and which we celebrate at each Jubilee.

Nine Sisters of St. Basil celebrated a lifetime of dedication during the annual community day gathering at Mount St. Macrina. From Diamond Jubilarian Sr. Maria

Petruska, to 40-year Jubilarian Sr. Susan Sisko, the Sisters have offered a total of 565 years of loving service throughout our Metropolitan Church. As the Feast of our holy Mother St. Macrina fell during community week, July 19th was the day chosen to honor all these Sisters. The gospel during the Divine Liturgy of Thanksgiving was about the Beatitudes. Father Michael, Monastery Chaplain, noted that this

gospel asks the most of us. In addressing the Jubilarians, Father spoke of the depth of their love for the Lord, this love exemplified in their fidelity to the holy vows over the years. No less are they honored for their faithful fulfillment of the various apostolates to which they were called and assigned.

Earlier in the week, the Sisters gathered at the Manor to honor Sr. Maria Petruska, Sr. Rita Keshock, Sr. Paula Dzurisin and Sr. Mary Grace, the Jubilarians who now reside there. The joyful gathering began with the singing of odes of the Akathist to Our Lady of Perpetual Help. A wonderful time of socializing followed the congratulations offered by Sr. Ruth, Provincial, on behalf of all the Sisters.

Briefly, each one’s ministry is included in the following notes.

(Continued on page 4)

Basilian Sisters Honor Jubilarians *(Continued from page 3)*



Jubilarians enjoying a celebration meal following Divine Liturgy.

75th Anniversary

Sr. Maria Petruska

entered the community from St. Mary's Parish, Mahanoy City, Pa.

Sr. Maria's teaching ministry included the elementary, high school and college levels both within the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Province and abroad in Palestine, Guam, Japan and Tanzania. Sr. Maria's empathy for those entering the United States lacking a proficiency in English led her to tutor for the Intermediate Unit I Adult Learning Center in Uniontown. Several

of her students still keep in friendly contact with her. Sister now resides at Mt. Macrina Manor.

70th Anniversary

Sr. Rita Keshock

entered the community from St. Nicholas parish, Youngstown, Ohio. She spent many years as a teacher and principal before devoting her talents to fine arts and crafts at the monastery. Sr. Rita's specialty is etching icons on eggs, and she has given many workshops teaching this technique. Sr. Rita was an active member of the

Uniontown Art Club and the Uniontown Flower Club, and she took great joy in sharing her talents and knowledge among the membership. Presently, Sr. Rita resides at Mt. Macrina Manor.

Sr. Paula Dzurisin

came to the monastery from St. Michael's, Pittston, Pa. She also spent a good number of years as a teacher and principal in the parish schools as well as at Mount Macrina Academy. During the Alumnae reunions, her students make a point of visiting her. Following her years in

the teaching ministry, Sr. Paula spent a year in pastoral visiting at the Manor. Her background in business education led to her next assignment, that of managing the Card Dept. at the monastery. When health issues required a lessening of her responsibilities, Sr. Paula continued to assist in that same ministry for a number of years. Sr. Paula now resides at Mt. Macrina Manor.

Sr. Bernarda

Sevachko entered the community from St. Nicholas parish, Youngstown, Ohio. Sr. Bernarda's first 45 years of service were devoted to the teaching apostolate. For the next 25 years, with unflagging energy, she has been active in pastoral and catechetical ministry for the five Byzantine Catholic parishes in the Youngstown area. Her ministry is marked by the enthusiasm which she brings to all she does. At present, there is no

(Continued on page 5)

Basilian Sisters Honor Jubilarians (Continued from page 4)

indication that Sr. Bernarda is thinking of retiring.

60th Anniversary

Sr. Regina Adams came to the community from St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic parish, Trenton, N.J. Sister had been both teacher and principal in many of the schools staffed by the Sisters in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Ohio. After leaving the teaching apostolate, Sister served in parish ministry in her home parish of Trenton, N.J. for five years. She is currently serving in parish ministry for the Wilkes-Barre, Kingston and Swoyersville parishes, as well as cantoring at St. Mary's Parish, Wilkes-Barre.

Sr. Melita Marie Penchalk entered the community from St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic parish, Barberton, Ohio. Sister served mainly in the teaching apostolate on both the elementary and secondary levels in the

schools in Pennsylvania, Indiana, Ohio, New Jersey and New York. Sr. Melita also served in administration as a Provincial Councilor. After this, for the next 12 years, she was an Assistant Superintendent of Catholic Schools in Phoenix, Ariz. Presently, Sr. Melita serves as community archivist and helps part-time in the Gift Shop.

Sr. Mary Grace Skuban entered the community from St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church, Taylor, Pa. Sister was an LPN on the staff of Mt. Macrina Manor, serving both in direct nursing care and in medical records. Other ministries were at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary, Mt. Macrina House of Prayer, and as Activities Director at St. Basil's Home. Upon returning to the monastery, she served as monastery sacristan as well as assisting with the health care of the Sisters at the Monastery. Sr. Mary Grace now

resides at Mt. Macrina Manor.

Sr. Seraphim Olsafsky served two terms as Provincial of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Province in Uniontown. She entered the community from St. Edward's Roman Catholic Church in Youngstown, Ohio. Sr. Seraphim was active in a variety of ministries, beginning her apostolic work in education as a teacher and/or principal in Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Ohio. Sr. Seraphim also served as Directress of Novices, as Assistant Provincial, Personal Formation Directress, Social worker, Curator of the Archieparchial Museum and Director of the Byzantine Seminary Press. Presently, she is Director of Mount Macrina Cemetery and Mausoleum.

40th Anniversary

Sr. Susan Sisko came to the community from St. John the Baptist Church, Bridgeport, Conn.

As with most of the community, Sister was active in the education ministry at both the elementary and secondary levels, sometimes concurrently as principal. In addition to being on the Provincial Council for two terms, she also served as Coordinator of the Monastery community during this time. Vocation, Formation and Young Adult Ministry were also assignments carried out by Sr. Susan. Presently, Sr. Susan is a resident director at Notre Dame University in Indiana.

Each of the Sisters has brought a diversity of gifts and talents to the Province, and each has enriched it in her own unique way. May God grant each of them many more spiritually fruitful years in His service.



83rd Annual Pilgrimage in Honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Sept. 2 & 3, 2017

Mount St. Macrina

Uniontown, Pa.



Improvements Made to Mt. St. Macrina Cemetery



In May, Mt. St. Macrina Cemetery underwent a needed face-lift. The Raimondo Company, a masonry restoration contractor, was engaged to carry out restoration in three areas of the Cemetery: the entrance pillars; the limestone Altar and surrounding areas including the Bishops' headstones, balustrades; and the Versalock road leading to the main altar area.

Mount Macrina Manor Renovations Completed



After four years of planning, 26 months of construction, and hours of moving offices, resident rooms, furniture, and everything else in the building, the Mount Macrina Manor construction is ending. Since Sept. 19, 2011, there have been many years of meetings with Mount Macrina Manor administration, board members, staff, architects, engineers, and construction project managers.

Finally, the groundbreaking ceremony was held on Apr. 14, 2015, and construction work officially began on May 15, 2015.

Mount Macrina Manor was originally constructed in 1971. A lot of hard work, dedication, and passion went into planning the updates that were made to the outdated facility. Many of the systems in the building from the original structure were in dire need of replacement. An update was way overdue as much of the interior of the building was beginning to show its age. The ending to the project will be a major milestone for all of us at the Manor. We have persevered through the last few years of many challenges and obstacles. Although it has been a difficult journey, the results will be well worth it in the end to accommodate the changing needs of residents, their families, and the community.

Mount Macrina Manor can continue to be the community's choice for skilled nursing and outpatient rehabilitation services for many years to come.

Upcoming Programs at the House of Prayer



**CHRISTMAS
MORNING OF
PRAYER**
Fr. Stephen Wahal
“BETHLEHEM,
UNIONTOWN AND
HEAVEN”
Sat., Dec. 9

9:15 am - 1:00 pm
Offering: \$35 (Lunch incl.)
Registration Due: Dec. 5
The Sacrament of
Reconciliation will be
offered.

MINI RETREAT DAY
Sr. Carol Petrasovich
“WINTER RESPITE”
Sat., Jan. 27

10 am - 1 pm
Offering: \$35 (Lunch incl.)
Registration Due: Jan. 23
The stillness of winter and
the unhurried days of
January are an ideal time
to contemplate, reflect and
experience Rest in the Lord.

**MORNING OF
PRAYER**
Sr. Carol Petrasovich
Sat., Feb. 3,
10 am - 1 pm

Offering: \$35 (Lunch incl.)
Registration Due: Jan. 30
Energize your prayer life
and become more fruitful
in your thanksgiving, praise
and prayers of petition.

**LENTEN NOONTIME
REFLECTION AND
PRAYERS**
Sr. Carol Petrasovich
Tuesdays, Feb. 20, 27
& Mar. 6, 13, 20
12 - 1 pm

Free Will Offering
What better time than Lent
to pray for the needs of
others during your Lunch
hour! Join us for a short
reflection followed by
communal and private
prayer.

**MONDAY
MORNING READING
SERIES**

Sr. Barbara Jean
Mihalchick
“Praying Our
Goodbyes”
Mondays, Feb. 26
& March 5, 12, 19
10 - 11:30 am
Free Will Offering
Registration Due: Feb. 19

HEALING RETREAT
Rev. William Kiel
Sat., Mar. 3,

9:30 am - 3:30 pm
Offering: \$35. (Lunch incl.)
Registration Due: Feb. 26
Spend the day with Fr. Kiel
growing in faith and
knowledge of the Lord.
Concludes with a Healing
Liturgy.

**LENTEN DAY OF
PRAYER**

Rev. Jason Charron
“ABRAHAM, THE
EUCARIST AND
SACRIFICE”
Sat., Mar. 10
9:15 am - 1 pm
Offering: \$35. (Lunch incl.)
Registration Due: March 5
The Sacrament of
Reconciliation is offered.

**WOMEN’S
DISCERNMENT
RETREAT**

Sr. Barbara Jean
Mihalchick
Apr. 20-22
**7:00 pm Fri. - 11 am
Sun.**
Offering: \$155.
Commuters: \$145.
Registration Due: April 16

Come, discern with a
religious community that
has followed the Lord’s
direction and served the
Church for a long time. The
program will teach
discernment skills and
acquaint participants with
the many aspects of
religious life. Open to single,
widowed and divorced
women ages 30-50.

**CANDLELIGHT
DINNER
FOR MARRIED
COUPLES**

Thurs., Apr. 26, **6:30
pm - 9 pm**
Offering: \$70/couple
Registration Due: April 20.
Experience a lovely evening
of music, dining, a silent
auction and a
heartwarming
presentation in the
atmosphere of a former
1903 Coal Baron’s home.

**Visit www.sistersofstbasil.org for a
complete list of events and updates.**

Four Sisters Enter into the Joy of the Lord



Sr. Jean Marie Cihota, OSBM

Sr. Jean Marie (Jean Ann) Cihota was called home on Thursday evening, May 18.

Sr. Jean Marie was born in Mingo Junction, Ohio, the daughter of the late John and Anna (Burch) Cihota. She entered the Sisters of St. Basil from St. Nicholas Church, McKeesport, Pa., on Feb. 2, 1956, and made her Final Profession of Vows on Aug. 20, 1961.

Sr. Jean Marie began her ministry as a teacher on the elementary level for about 12 years before being called to be part of the team which organized the Religious Education program and office in Pittsburgh. As part of this group, she collaborated in initiating the God With Us series for Eastern Christian

Formation. She also began the same office in the Parma Eparchy. The office being firmly established there and in Pittsburgh, Sr. Jean Marie was called to Pastoral Ministry for the Passaic Eparchy at St. Therese Church, St. Petersburg, Fla. Then she answered the call to community ministry as the Assistant to the Provincial.

Sr. Jean Marie held this position for ten years, also coordinating the many aspects of life in the monastery. Additionally, she served as Vocation and Affiliate Directress for the community and was also appointed Assistant Vocation Director for the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh. When her term of office concluded, the Eparchy of Phoenix became the home of her heart for the last years of her life.

Sr. Jean Marie was preceded in death by her parents, her stepmother and a sister. In addition to her sisters in community, she is survived by her brother, sister, stepsister, and many devoted nieces, nephews and their families.



Sr. Leonora Kondrach, OSBM

Sr. Leonora departed from this life into the embrace of the Lord in the evening of the first of June.

The daughter of the late Michael and Margaret (Havrilla) Kondrach, Sr. Leonora (Irene) was born in Hazleton, Pa. She entered the Sisters of St. Basil from St. Mary's Church, Freeland, Pa., on July 4, 1946, and made her Final Profession of Vows on Aug. 28, 1953.

Sr. Leonora dedicated over 50 years of her religious life to the ministry of teaching on the primary level, and her love of teaching is one of the ways she

wanted to be remembered. In addition to being a teacher, Sister also served as principal. This much-loved ministry was interrupted by a span of five years, when Sr. Leonora went on to serve in parish ministry. Teaching, however, was still in her heart, and she readily went on to serve as a teacher's aide at St. Mary's in Cleveland.

On returning to the Monastery in Uniontown, Sr. Leonora volunteered to help Sr. Petronilla in pastoral ministry at Mount Macrina Manor.

Sr. Leonora also had a love for music, and one of her favorite ways of relaxing was to play the piano. In her later years, she also took up learning to play the violin.

Sr. Leonora was preceded in death by her parents and her brother John. In addition to her sisters in community, she is survived by her sister, sister-in-law, a nephew and several nieces.

Four Sisters (Continued from page 10)



Sr. Leona Trudich, OSBM

Sr. Leona Trudich fell asleep in the Lord on June 20.

Sr. Leona was born in the village of Hrabske in what was then Czechoslovakia. She was the daughter of the late John and Mary (Hrabar) Trudich. She entered the Sisters of St. Basil the Great from St. John the Baptist Church in Lansford, Pa., on June 23, 1936, at the tender age of 16. Sister made her Solemn Profession of Vows on Nov. 30, 1944.

Sr. Leona served from Chicago to the East coast in the ministry of education as principal, teacher and catechist.

During her long academic career, fortified by both a B.S.

and M.S. in Education, she taught in 18 schools. When teaching was no longer an option, Sr. Leona served in parish ministry in the Hazleton area before retiring to the monastery in 2005.

Sr. Leona was the last surviving member of her immediate family, having been preceded in death by her parents and her sisters Mary Bujnak, Anna Oross and Julia Dotsey. In addition to her community, she is survived by several nieces and nephews and their families.



Sr. Helen Millow, OSBM

Sr. Helen Millow peacefully went home to the Lord on Sun., Sept. 24.

The daughter of the late Michael and Mary (Hrinda) Millow, Sr.

Helen was born in Scranton, Pa. She entered the Sisters of St. Basil the Great from St. John the Baptist Church in Scranton, Pa., on Oct. 1, 1964, and made her Final Profession of Vows on Aug. 6, 1972.

She served as teacher and then also principal in several of the schools staffed by the Sisters throughout the Metropolitan Church of Pittsburgh. Sr. Helen was also the monastery coordinator, assistant treasurer and treasurer of her Province of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

She also worked with the staff of the Eparchy of Parma as assistant eparchial finance officer. She then returned to the monastery and continued to capably fill the office of Province Treasurer, until she became ill.

She was preceded in death by her parents and her brother Michael. In addition to her members in community, she is survived by her sisters Mary Ann McLaughlin (+Charles), Anna Mae (Stanley) Lehman, Jean (Kenneth) Morgan, her sister-in-law Bernadette Millow and nieces, nephews, grand-nieces and grand-nephews.



During this Christmas season, when you shop online at [amazon.smile.com](https://www.amazon.com/smile), Amazon will donate to the Sisters of St. Basil. Go to [smile.amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com), create an Amazon Smile account (you can use your existing Amazon account) and select the "Sisters of St. Basil the Great" as your beneficiary. You'll find the exact same prices, selection and shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to the Sisters.

In Touch
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Live Nativity

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Mount St. Macrina, Uniontown



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