



In Touch

BASILIAN SISTERS TO MEET IN ROME FOR TENTH GENERAL CHAPTER



Attending the General Chapter are: (top row left to right) Sister Seraphim Olsafsky, Provincial; Sister Jean Marie Cihota; and Susan Sisko. In the bottom row are: Sister Margaret Kapusnak and Sister Sylvia Burnett

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It is hard to believe that six years have gone by since the last General Chapter.

Chapters in monastic terminology are general meetings or assemblies of a religious community. For Basilians Sisters, July 8-24, 2013 are the dates of the Tenth General Chapter of the Sisters of the Order of St. Basil the Great.

All of such meetings are called for by the Constitutions of our Order, The Kenotic Way, and have three main purposes: “to nurture and keep alive the spiritual heritage of the Order inspired by the teachings of and ideals of our holy Father St. Basil and our holy Mother St. Macrina; to review the spiritual, apostolic,

administrative and financial growth of the Order; and to elect leadership for the Order.

The membership of this meeting is made up of the General Administration, the Major Superiors of the various units of the Order, and elected delegates. During the course of the meetings, the participants will hear reports from the General Administration and from the Major Superiors. These reports serve to provide a broad picture of the state of the Order.

Aside from this, the basic work of the Chapter is to consider proposals and recommendations submitted by the membership at large; to review the documents

of the Order and to propose and approve any needed changes and to develop a Vision Statement for the future. These activities help give direction to and precede the election of the General Superior and four General Councilors.

As this Chapter will take place during the Year of Faith proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI, all are called to “keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, who inspires and perfects our faith...” It is in a spirit of faith that we pray daily to the Holy Spirit, to the Mother of God, and to our holy patrons, St. Basil and St. Macrina, for guidance for all who will participate in this event.

A Message from Sister Seraphim

Spring 2013

Dear Friends,

On the Saturday before Easter Sunday, the Wall Street Journal's front page depicted a prostrate Pope Francis in St. Peter's Basilica. The article noted that "Catholics here are closely watching the words and gestures of Pope Francis for clues to the direction the newly chosen pontiff will lead his 2,000 year old church." Everything is being noted and discussed, from the Pope's choice of shoes, to his living quarters, to his powerful example of washing the feet of 12 young inmates from a juvenile detention center. There is no doubt that his actions will have far reaching impact within the Church and the world for years to come. He is sending a very strong message over the globe: "The one who is highest up must be at the service of others."

Years ago when I was teaching at St. John's Cathedral in Munhall, the new pastor, Reverend Judson Procyk, gave a homily that has remained with me over the years. He pointed out that we each have great power to influence others, even if unknown to ourselves. Using the analogy of a clock and a wristwatch, he said "we never know when another person is watching us and setting their watch by the clock of our lives." Others learn for good or ill as we interact with one another, as we respond to misfortune and illness, to occasions of being treated unjustly, or to situations where we are called to make moral and difficult decisions. Today is a good time to remember that the Holy Father isn't the only one with the authority to influence others. Every day of our lives finds us in this position as we interact within our families, communities, and places of work and recreation. As a follower of Jesus, we have the privilege and responsibility of leading others to the source of all Goodness, by living our lives in love for others, and with integrity in our actions. In many instances we may have even greater power to influence others toward good than even the Roman pontiff. Let's choose to use it well. Let's choose to use it in whatever way possible.

We Sisters pray, work, and hope that Mount St. Macrina be a place where all who come to reflect and pray are able to reset their watches, and to return home with a renewed energy to spread the good news of Jesus Christ.

Thank you for your faithful remembrance and support of the Sisters and of Mount St. Macrina. Without you we would be unable to keep our clocks working properly!

God bless you and know that you are always remembered warmly in our thoughts and in our Liturgical prayer life.



In Touch

A biannual publication of the
Sisters of St. Basil

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Spring 2013

Volume 22, No. 1

Sincerely in the Lord Jesus,

*Sr. Seraphim Olsafsky,
O.S.B.M.*

Sister Seraphim Olsafsky, OSBM
Provincial

Sr. Susan Sisko, OSBM Elected to Co-Chair CSLC



The Tri-Diocesan Leadership Conference (TDSL) of Western PA, established in 1974 has reorganized its structure and changed its name to better reflect and expand the association's representation of Catholic Sisters in Western PA. The organization is now known as the Catholic Sisters Leadership Council (CSLC) of Western PA. The CSLC will foster relationship and mutual support, share information, engage in dialogue, exercise its collective voice and collaborate with one another and with others.

The Council will consist of representatives from communities ministering in the Western PA region, and will include a Board of Directors and four officers who are elected members of leadership in their communities. Sr. Susan Sisko has been elected co-chair of this newly formed organization. Serving along with her is treasurer Sr. Benita DeMatteis, OSB, (Sister Susan, OSBM), secretary Sr. Mary Norbert Long, SC and co-chair Sr. Maria Fest, CDP.

Helping Hands Day– Sat., June 1



will be several pavilions needing to be cleared of a winter's worth of leaves and debris.

The GCU is a fraternal benefit society which has served Byzantine Catholics since 1892. The GCU is pleased to partner with the

Sisters of St. Basil on this project.

For those participating, here are a few tips:

- The group will meet at the Trinity Center for coffee and donuts at 9:30 a.m. A brief prayer service will follow. Work will begin at 10 a.m.
- Bring lawn tools such as brooms, rakes, weed whackers, etc. for outside work.

The Greek Catholic Union of the U.S.A. (GCU) Helping Hands Day will take place on Sat., June 1 at Mount St. Macrina. This annual event prepares the grounds for 79th Annual Pilgrimage, Aug. 31 - Sept. 1, 2013.

On Helping Hands Day, GCU members will be joined by many volunteers of the Sisters of St. Basil who will weed and plant the floral gardens, urns, and other areas surrounding the shrines throughout the grounds. Other work centers

- Bring brooms, mops, dust pans, etc. for indoor cleaning.
- Lunch will be served.

To register, or for additional information, call Sister Carol at 724-438-7149 or Chris Petty, GCU, at 1-800-722-4428, extension 209.

Renovations at Trinity Center and the Pilgrim House...



The Trinity Center second floor restrooms are undergoing some needed refurbishment. Pilgrims using this facility for Pilgrimage and events throughout the year will appreciate the improvements.

Restrooms at the Pilgrim House are also being upgraded. One first floor side is being renovated to accommodate a very limited number of Pilgrims requiring street level entrance.

Donations for this project will be greatly appreciated! Thank you!

Preparations Underway for 79th Pilgrimage in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Aug. 31 & Sept. 1

Members of the Pilgrimage Committee recently met at the monastery at Mount St. Macrina to plan the 79th Annual Pilgrimage in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The committee agreed that the theme for this year would be Theotokos, Steadfast Foundation of Faith.

The Sisters of St. Basil are in continuous preparation for the Pilgrimage. As in previous years, the Sisters will welcome all those Pilgrims who come from distant places whether by cars, vans, buses, or airplanes. They will continue to welcome those who come early and camp on the race track, or stay at Trinity Center. Light fare will be available at the Lunch Stand on Friday evening. Liturgical prayers will be held at the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Shrine in the House of Prayer on Friday evening as well as at the Trinity Center for those arriving earlier. On Monday morning the Divine Liturgy will take place at the



Shrine Altar just as it has been over the past years for those not leaving until Monday.

Plans for the weekend include many opportunities for participation in the Divine Liturgy of the Byzantine Catholic Church. Also scheduled are Matins, Vespers, the sacrament of reconciliation, healing and anointing services, and other services in honor of the Mother of God. In between scheduled events, pilgrims find solace in walking the beautiful grounds of Mount St. Macrina, visiting the many shrines, and enjoying the companionship of family and friends who share a common purpose.

The Pilgrimage provides for the diverse spiritual needs of many pilgrims who frequent this major nifying event in the life of the Byzantine Catholic Church. Its participants include clergy and faithful from across the country. It holds the distinction of being the oldest and the largest Byzantine Catholic Pilgrimage in the United States.

Congress Passes the Long Awaited IRA Rollover Provision

For anyone who wishes to take advantage of this, it is a tax-free provision for gifts distributed to qualified charities. It allows individuals aged 70-½ or older to make tax free charitable donations up to \$100,000 (\$200,000 for married couples) from their IRA accounts. This provision will be in effect for both 2012 and 2013.

Under "Other Miscellaneous Individual Provisions included in Legislation" was this clause:

"Extend through 2013 the provision allowing for tax-free distributions from IRAs that are rolled directly to a charity (the legislation also makes provision for rollovers made in January 2013, to allow them to be claimed for the 2012 tax year, and for distributions taken in December 2012 to allow them to be contributed to a charity in January 2013, and count for the 2012 tax year".

We want to be aware of this option for charitable giving. Please consult with your financial advisors for taking advantage of this new provision for your personal giving.



An Historical Week in Rome



large banners and their flag. Across the aisle from us was a particularly energetic man swinging a large banner with RUS on it. I learned that RUS means Renewed in the Holy Spirit.

Soon Sr. Ioana and I were joined by the General Superior, Sr. Miriam Claire, and two other Sisters. As the Sisters and I waited for the Audience to begin we prayed and were entertained by a band from Munich, Germany. They were so proud that the Pope was from Germany and they came to Rome to show their support.

Shortly after 10:30 the Pope appeared riding in the popemobile, slowly making its way around the first section of the Square and then coming down the aisle where we were sitting. The Sister at home saw us on TV as the Pope passed us. The Pope continued on to the back of the Square so that as many people as possible could see him. There were many people who did not have tickets and remained standing outside the barriers.

Finally, the Pope went up the middle aisle and onto the stage. He spoke of the joys and difficulties during the eight years of his pontificate. Then he greeted the various groups present in their own languages as he usually does.

As the Audience ended and the Pope left, the crowds did not linger as much as they did on Sunday. I feel the people were beginning to face the reality of the Pope leaving.

On Thursday, the final day of Pope Benedict's pontificate, he met with the Cardinals in the morning, and in the afternoon the television showed him boarding the helicopter for a fifteen minute ride to Castel Gandolfo. The helicopter circled slowly over Rome and we could hear the helicopter over our Generalate House because we are so close to the Coliseum. Whenever we hear the helicopter overhead we know that an important person is in our neighborhood.

As the helicopter left, all of the church bells in Rome began ringing. It was Rome's way of saying "so long, farewell, auf wiedersehen" to Pope Benedict XVI.

To be continued...

Sr. Joanne Lickvar, OSBM

Sun., Feb. 24, was the beginning of the last week of Pope Benedict XVI's pontificate and an extraordinary week in the Eternal City. This day was the last Angelus for the Pope Benedict and the pilgrims came from far and near to fill St. Peter's Square and Via della Conciliazione to hear the Holy Father. Pope Benedict spoke of the joys and difficulties during his pontificate and many of the pilgrims had tears in their eyes as he spoke. After greeting the throng in many languages, the Pope closed the window to cheers of "Viva la Papa" and "Ben-e-det-to". Usually the crowd disperses as soon as the pope leaves, but this time they lingered and kept cheering until the Pope opened the window a second time and thanked everyone for their support. It was like an encore and it was hard to leave and even harder to believe that the pontificate of Pope Benedict XVI was coming to an end.

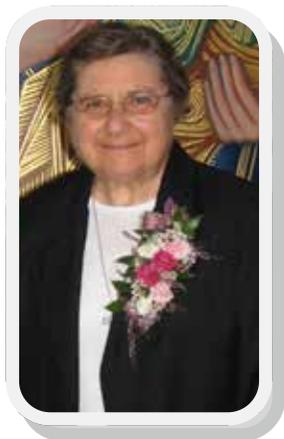
On Tues. afternoon, Feb. 26, I went to pick up the General Audience tickets at the Bronze Doors. Little did I realize that I would have to wait in line an hour and a half to get the pre-ordered tickets. The Prefecture had over 50,000 requests for tickets, thus the reason for changing the Audience to St. Peter's Square. In line there were young and old, religious and lay people, speaking many different languages. The couple next to me had a young girl around two or three years old. Either the father or the mother held her the whole time they waited in line. It was an endurance test of their faith and love of the Holy Father.

The long farewell continued at the last General Audience on Wednesday, February 27. Early on Wednesday morning Sr. Ioana and I arrived at the Vatican by bus before 7 am. St. Peter's Square and the adjoining streets were all blocked off by the police. People were standing in line at the end of Via della Conciliazione. Slowly the police began allowing people to go half way down Via Conciliazione and wait there to give more room for new people arriving. Finally at 7:30 we were able to go to St. Peter's Square and wait again in line to go through security. Once through security the pilgrims dashed forward to find a seat as close to the front as possible. Since I could not run as fast as many of the young, Sr. Ioana and I ended in the second section, the section by the obelisk to the right of the stage. The blessing was that we were in the first row, where the Holy Father would pass in the popemobile.

As I waited for the audience to begin, I noticed what a beautiful day it was. The sun was shining with a cloudless sky that was so blue. Yet for the past four days we had had rain every day. The many sea gulls circled around the square as if they sensed something important was about to happen. I looked around the crowd and saw people who came from near and far. Many groups from all over Italy and countries as far away as Peru, Indochina, many Asian countries and the United States as well.

I looked around at the crowd and spotted a large contingent from Slovakia who had come to Rome for a conference and were holding

Sr. Alphonsa Danovich, OSBM Received Into God's Eternal Embrace



Sr. Alphonsa Danovich, OSBM

Sr. Alphonsa Danovich was called home to God in the early hours of Mon., Nov. 26, 2012.

The youngest daughter of the late John and Julia (Dzmura) Danovich, Sr. Alphonsa was christened Catherine at her baptism. She entered the

Sisters of St. Basil from St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church in Johnstown, Pa., on Sept. 16, 1951. She pronounced her First Vows on April 4, 1954, and made her Final Profession on Aug. 15, 1957 in the presence of the late Archbishop Nicholas T. Elko.

From 1954 - 1971 she served as a teacher in the parish schools of the Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Province of Pittsburgh. In the summer of 1971, her life and ministry as a Basilian Sister took an unexpected turn when she learned that she had been elected as the General Treasurer of the Order with headquarters in Rome, Italy. She then worked in the

Vatican Office of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See. After serving as a General Councilor, Sr. Alphonsa was elected to the position of General Superior in 2001. At the completion of her term of office, she returned to the Monastery in Uniontown. After a sabbatical year, Sister accepted her final call to ministry as the Assistant Finance Officer for the Eparchy of Phoenix in Arizona.

In recognition of her service to the Church and the Holy See, she was presented the "Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice" award in 1995 by the late Pope John Paul II.

Sr. Alphonsa was preceded in death by her parents, her

brother John, her sisters Helen (Kohan) and Anna (Brezovec). In addition to the members of her community, she is survived by her sister Mary Slonka, her sister Magdaline (Bill) Ostheim, and many devoted nieces, nephews and their families. Relatives and friends were received at the Monastery Chapel on Fri., Nov. 30 from 3:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The Parastas Service was celebrated by the Very Rev. Eugene P. Yackanich. The Funeral Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Metropolitan Archbishop William Skurla on Sat., Dec. 1 in the Monastery Chapel.

Interment followed in the Dormition Section of Mount Macrina Cemetery.

Sr. Isidore Maruhnic, OSBM, Completes Her Earthly Journey



Sr. Isidore Maruhnic, OSBM

On Nov. 20, 2012, Sister Isidore made her own personal entrance into the eternal temple. The daughter of the late George and Marie (Romanko) Maruhnic, Sister Isidore was born in what was

then Czechoslovakia, and given the name Veronica at baptism. She entered the Sisters of St. Basil from St. George Byzantine Catholic Church in Linden, N.J. on Feb. 15, 1947. Sister Isidore pronounced her First Vows on Dec. 9, 1948 and made her Perpetual Profession on Aug. 28, 1953 in the presence of the late Bishop Daniel Ivancho.

As a Sister of St. Basil for almost 66 years, Sister Isidore spent about half of that time working in culinary arts in the Monastery, at St.

Basil's Home, at Mount Macrina Manor, or at missions throughout the Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Province of Pittsburgh. Other years were spent in the ecclesiastical sewing department. She eventually managed this department before ill health required her retirement. Sister's handiwork can be seen in the many churches of our Metropolitan Province, giving evidence of her giftedness and expertise.

Sister Isidore was preceded

in death by her parents, her brother Peter and her sister Anne (Staryak). In addition to her Sisters in community, she is survived by her beloved sister Barbara Dellisante and several nieces and nephews. The Parastas Service was celebrated on Fri., Nov. 20 by Rev. Michael Huszti, The Funeral Divine Liturgy was celebrated by the Very Rev. Eugene P. Yackanich on Sat., Nov. 24 in the Monastery Chapel.

Interment followed in the Dormition Section of Mount Macrina Cemetery.

Sisters Honored with Holy Forerunner Award



Pictured at the Cathedral Center with Bishop John Kudrick are (left to right): Sister Martha Moyta, Sister Agnes Herbenick, Sister Salome Yanochko and Provincial Sister Seraphim Olsafsky. Sister Martha served in the Eparchy under the late Bishop Emil Mihalik. Not pictured is Sister Leonora Kondrach.

Sister Salome, Sister Agnes, and Sister Leonora were honored by Bishop John Kudrick through his bestowal of the Holy Forerunner Award on November 4, 2012 at a banquet held in St. John Cathedral Center in Parma. Sister Salome, Sister Agnes, and Sister Leonora were individually honored by receiving the Holy Forerunner Medal, and a framed Certificate of Appreciation. These Sisters were thanked for their many years of dedicated service to St. Mary Byzantine Catholic School in Cleveland, Ohio. In his remarks, Bishop John expressed his appreciation on behalf of the Eparchy of Parma for the many ministries in which the Sisters of St. Basil participated for over 30 years in the Eparchy. Bishop acknowledged the untold good, known only to God, which the presence of the Sisters has brought among God's people in the Parma Eparchy!

Sister Susan Harvey Begins New Ministry

In the fall of 2012, Sister Susan Harvey, OSBM began her ministry at St. Gabriel's Byzantine Catholic Church and School in Las Vegas, Nevada. Sister is teaching religious education classes, helping with office work and ministering to the people of St. Gabriel's Parish.

St. Gabriel's School, which was founded by parishioners of St. Gabriel's Byzantine Catholic Parish, began its first semester in late August with grades Kindergarten through Third. Grade Four will be added in fall 2013. It is hoped that as each year passes and a new grade is added, the school will eventually reach a capacity of at least 250 students.

Sister Susan is also the directress of the Basilian Associates.



Pictured l. to r.: Rev. Marcus Gomori, Pastor of St. Gabriel's Parish, co-Principal and religion teacher; Bishop Gerald on a recent visit to the new school; Rt. Rev. Stephen Washko, Protosyncellus of the Eparchy of Phoenix, who accompanied the Bishop on his visitation; Mrs. Octavia Houtekier-Boyd, principal; and Sr. Susan Harvey, O.S.B.M., administrative assistant and teacher.

In Touch

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Pope Francis Jorge Mario Bergoglio, SJ



Born: December 17, 1936
Ordained Priest: December 13, 1969
Ordained Bishop: June 27, 1992
Elected Pope: March 13, 2013

O God, shepherd and ruler of all the faithful,
look favorably on your servant Francis,
whom you have set at the head of your Church as her shepherd;

Grant, we pray, that by word and example
he may be of service to those over whom he presides
so that, together with the flock entrusted to his care,
he may come to everlasting life.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the
unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.