



In Touch

Basilian Sisters Select New Administration

“He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.”

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The new administration of the Sisters of St. Basil is pictured from left to right: Sr. Joanne Lickvar (councilor); Sr. Sylvia Burnett (councilor); Sr. Margaret Ann Andrako (assistant provincial); and, Sr. Ruth Plante (provincial).

The graced time of the Provincial Chapter of the Sisters of St. Basil led to the election of Sister Ruth Plante as Provincial; Sister Margaret Ann Andrako as Assistant, and Sister Sylvia Burnett and Sister Joanne Lickvar as Councilors. The above quote from Matthew 28:7 will surely be an inspiring quote for the new administration to hold in their hearts over the course of the next five years. Although the team is new in one sense; each of those elected have been in Province Leadership in the past and come well-prepared for the tasks set before them.

While preparing for Provincial Chapters, at times the Sisters chose the Myrrh-Bearing Women as themes for their prayer and reflection before and during the long process. The weekend of April 16-19, these holy women proved to be a rich source of inspiration as the Sisters engaged wholeheartedly into the process of “Facing the Future with Courage.” In one of the petitions during the Divine Liturgy, we prayed “that we may be as open and trusting as the Myrrh-Bearing Women disciples . . .”

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A Message from Sister Ruth

Spring 2015

Glory to Jesus Christ!



Dear Friends,

The winter was so long and intense that almost everyone I meet comments on how glad they are to see the blooms and blossoms and new life which are appearing everywhere. We are definitely people of the light!

We Sisters of St. Basil are also in the midst of change and transition. In April we had our Provincial Chapter which concluded more than a year of study, discussion and dialog. At this Chapter we worked on issues, dreams, and visions which will lead us into a future of hope. We then elected a new Provincial Council to continue to lead us in the fulfillment of our mission to be a praying, healing, and life-giving presence. Our models for this discernment journey were the Myrrh-bearing Women. These women knew that there would be a big obstacle (the boulder in front of the tomb) which would be a huge challenge to their mission (anointing the body of Jesus). Yet, it never stopped them. They went forward in faith. And how greatly they were rewarded! They were the first to learn of the Resurrection of Jesus! We likewise know that we have many challenges ahead of us, but we also choose to move forward in trust.

As we enter this next chapter in the history of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Province, we do so knowing that we continue to be accompanied by you – as you have done since our founding in 1921. We count on the support of your prayers, your friendship, and your generosity in helping us to bring so many of our needs and projects to a successful conclusion.

With this year's Annual Appeal we hope to accomplish two simple goals – replacing all of the windows in our dining room and renewing the fish pond area. Our 50-year old windows can be opened and closed only with great difficulty; opening them can even pose a real danger. The fish pond has many cracks and leaks and needs to be refilled constantly in order to sustain the lives of the fish and water plants there. This area, the site of the statue of Our Lady of Victory, has long been a popular place on the Mount for adults and children alike.

In the interests of good stewardship we want to take care of our material resources. So much of what we have is due to your generosity. As always, we will appreciate any assistance you can give us to complete these projects. Please know that you are always remembered in our prayers. If you have any special needs or intentions for which you want us to pray, never hesitate to call or e-mail them to us.

With our prayers and gratitude,

Sister Ruth Plante, OSBM
Provincial



In Touch

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New Administration (Continued from page 1)

With this in mind, the total community entered into a discernment process which involved exchange and interaction with all of the nominees before the actual election took place. This process was preceded by a prayer asking “for freedom of heart that we may act for the good of each other, for the province, and for the good of those we serve in sincere love.”

At the conclusion of the Chapter and encouraged by the words of St. Basil that “There is nothing unpremeditated; nothing neglected by God for God’s unsleeping eye beholds all things,” each Sister made a generous promise in support of “Facing the Future with Courage.” The Sisters are most grateful to all the faithful who offered their prayers for God’s blessing on this significant event in the life of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Province.

Sisters of St. Basil Invite Volunteers to Pilgrimage Preparations

For those who wish to volunteer in Pilgrimage preparations, there are two opportunities this summer.

The first opportunity is Helping Hands Day, which is sponsored by the Greek Catholic Union of the U.S.A. Helping Hands Day efforts will take place at Mount Saint Macrina this year on Saturday, June 6.

The annual observance combines the strengths of young people and adults to produce meaningful results for the preparation of the 81st Annual Pilgrimage which will be held, September 5 & 6.

On this day, at Mount Saint Macrina, the youth and faithful of the Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, the GCU (a fraternal benefit society serving Byzantine Catholics since 1892), and the many friends of the Sisters of Saint Basil join together for a common cause—to prepare the grounds for the Annual Pilgrimage. Volunteers will clear floral gardens, shrines, urns and other planting areas throughout the grounds, and



then plant annuals. Other work centers will be the pavilions, which will be cleared of a winter’s worth of leaves and other debris.

The GCU is pleased to partner with the Sisters of St. Basil the Great and interested youth and adults for Helping Hands Day. If you are able to participate, here are a few notes:

The group will meet in the Trinity Center for coffee and donuts at 9:30 a.m. A brief prayer service will follow, and work will begin at 10:00 a.m.

- Bring lawn tools (including brooms, rakes, weed whackers, etc.) for outside work.
- Bring brooms, mops, dust pans, etc., for any indoor cleaning.

Lunch will be served.

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

Later in the summer, on Saturday, August 16, there will be another organized preparation day. (The rain date will be Saturday, August 23.) Volunteers are asked to meet at the Trinity Center at 9:30 a.m. Please bring Brooms, weed whackers, blowers, weeding tools, rakes and clippers. Lunch will be provided.

For further information, please call Sr. Joanne Lickvar at 724-438-8644 or email Sister at jpatlickvar@gmail.com.

Sisters Celebrate Year of Consecrated Life



The Sisters of St. Basil in Uniontown announce various events for The Year of Consecrated Life established by Pope Francis. The first aim of the Year is to stimulate gratitude for the gift of Religious Life in the Church. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops formatted the year for this country by encouraging and naming dates and activities for Religious and laity to encounter each other in prayer, social, and service settings.

At Mount St. Macrina, the Sisters have the privilege of joining with thousands of faithful Catholics at the annual Pilgrimage in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help each Labor Day Weekend. The Sisters and people pray together formally and informally during this time. More than 200 men, women and youth serve alongside the Sisters in preparing and serving at this event while also getting to know each other better. The US Bishops called for times of service over the summer of 2015 and for praying

together September 13, 2015. However the Uniontown schedule will focus on the Pilgrimage and its preparation over the summer.

Special days and weeks of service will be designated and special events will occur during the Pilgrimage to highlight this Year of Consecrated Life. The first date has been announced - that is, Saturday, June 6 which is Helping Hands Day at Mount St. Macrina. This annual day of service focuses on cleaning and preparing the gardens, including planting the flowers. The Greek Catholic Union co-sponsors this event and donates the flowers.

Mount Macrina Manor Breaks Ground for Renovation

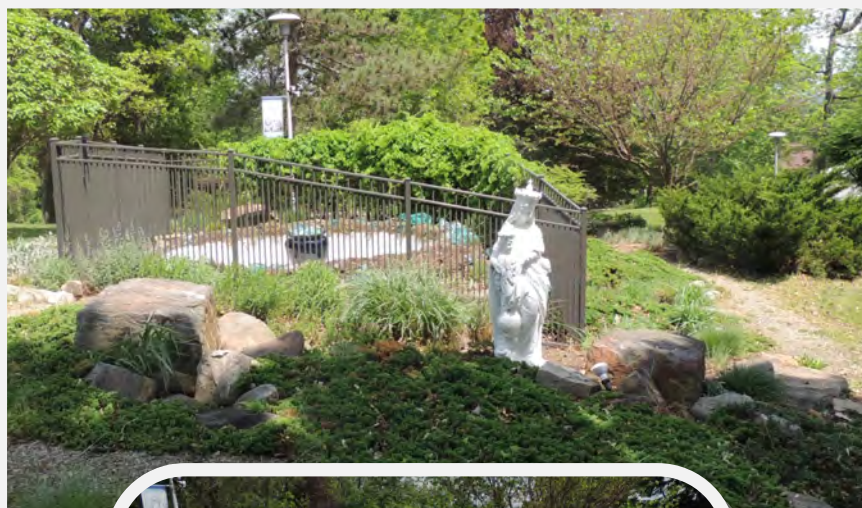


On April 14, 2015 groundbreaking ceremonies took place at Mt. Macrina Manor. Mt. Macrina Manor is undertaking the renovation and refurbishment of the entire facility.

Pictured at the groundbreaking are: JoLynn Meyers, Mt. Macrina Manor Nursing Home Administrator, Sr. Seraphim Olsafsky, Provincial, Sisters of St. Basil the Great, V. Rev. Lawrence A. DiNardo, VG, JCL, Board President, Metropolitan Archbishop William C. Skurla, Metropolitan Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, Sr. Susan Sisko, OSBM, Board Member, Sr. Carol Petrasovich, Board Member, Eric McRoberts, Architect, RPLS, Carmine Molinaro, Jr., Esquire (partially hidden from view), Martin Saunders, Esquire, Board Member, Sr. Ruth Plante, Board Member, Richard Dropik, Project Manager/Engineer, RPLS, Ted Stefancin, Sisters of St. Basil's

Project Representative, Sr. Barbara Jean Mihalchick, Board Member, Sr. Margaret Ann Andrako, Board Member, and Joseph Massaro III, Contractor.

2015 ANNUAL APPEAL TO FOCUS ON REPAIR ISSUES



In January of 2015, the “new” monastery of the Sisters of St. Basil turned 50 years old. And we all know what happens in the aging process!! Things break down; others don’t work as well as they once did. So it is with our monastery. Our Annual Appeal is being conducted to help us to replace our extra large dining room windows – most of which do not open and/or close properly. New windows will allow us once again to have fresh air coming in especially during the warm spring and summer days. The fish pond, the site of the Our Lady of Victory statue, is leaking badly. In order for the fish and water plants to survive, additional water must be added frequently. Hopefully, with a generous response to our appeal, we can give the needed attention to both of these areas.

The fish pond at the Mount has long been a favorite spot for children and adults alike.

It would be so nice if Sister Euphemia and the other Sisters at the Monastery could open the dining room windows and enjoy the fresh air on beautiful days.



My Pilgrimage by Sr. Elaine Kisinko

I am part of a very great number of people who grew up with the Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help at Mt. St. Macrina in Uniontown, Pa. As this wonderful event changed, evolved and grew during the years, I too absorbed the differences and moved forward with them.

As a small child, I envied the little girls in white dresses who walked in procession and I so wanted to be one of them. It was very lovely, orderly, and precise, and I remained but an admiring spectator. But for the past thirty years, I have been honored and privileged to walk in a different kind of procession with children. When the group assembles, it looks like unorganized chaos, but once they begin to move, everyone falls into place one would think they had practiced. No more uniformity in dress. Now we have all the vibrant colors reflecting the energy and exuberance of the young. Bright gold crowns shine with all of the love that is showered on the small participants. Parents and others proudly walk with their children, making it even a family event. Some of the little ones ride in strollers and wagons. Each one presents a flower to the Mother of God and receives a blessing from the archbishop or a bishop.

Before I became a Sister of St. Basil, my Pilgrimage was that of every young woman of that day, even with concern as to what to wear because we were dressed in our best then. I walked the grounds, prayed, participated in the services, bought a medovnik and shopped at the very much smaller and different Religious Gift Store. Prior to those big days, I had spent time helping



Sr. Elaine (right) and Sr. Barbara Jean Mihalchick (left) lead the Children's Procession at Pilgrimage.

the Sisters clean the Pilgrim Homes and make beds. I also learned how to fold cabbage leaves into holupki, taught by a group of blessed women volunteers, all of them gone from us and now smiling down on us from their eternal happiness.

Once I entered, the early years were busy with various tasks. The best part then was that a novice got to visit with her family for a little while! Then, I started teaching school and sometimes my assignments were in faraway parishes. So, Pilgrimage was a homecoming with a sad Labor Day leaving as we Sisters parted to travel

to our appointed schools.

For many years, my responsibility was again at the Pilgrim homes. My charge was here because a lot of the women did not speak English, and I knew the Zemplin Slovak of my grandparents. These were the big years, when bus after bus rolled onto the grounds bringing Pilgrims from near and far. It was an exciting and inspiring time, and ladies looked forward to being together every year, exchanging

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The Sisters of St. Basil the Great warmly invite you to the
81st Annual Pilgrimage in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help
September 5 & 6, 2015



The Sisters of St. Basil invite everyone as they celebrate the 81st Annual Pilgrimage in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help under the title of “Mary, Model of Consecrated Life”. The Pilgrimage will held at Mount St. Macrina, Uniontown, Pa., September 5 & 6.

“As we celebrate the Year of Consecrated Life, it seemed quite appropriate to select this theme as Mary provides the example of how consecrated life should be lived, “ said Sr. Ruth Plante, Provincial, Sisters of St. Basil the Great.

As always, Pilgrimage will offer the Divine Liturgy of the Byzantine Catholic Church, Matins, Vespers, the sacrament of reconciliation, healing and anointing services, and other services in honor of the Mother of God. In addition, there will be many beautiful processions, and activities for children and teens. 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.

The Pilgrimage provides for the diverse spiritual needs of many pilgrims who frequent this major unifying 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.

Annunciation icon from the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Mount Saint Macrina House of Prayer, Uniontown, Pa.

My Pilgrimage *(Continued from page 6)*

stories of their lives from the past year, praying and singing hymns together sometimes all night. After all, this was Otpust – Pilgrimage – for many of them the highlight of their lives.

Recently I have been assigned to work at communication and information, which is very nice because I get to talk with nearly everyone. Occasionally I

even get to use my Slovak again! Just as for the women mentioned above, the Pilgrimage is a highlight in my life. Perhaps you too are a long time pilgrim, and reading this has evoked some memories in you.

Because no matter how the years bring changes, the Pilgrimage continues to be such a beautiful, unique event that is so

significant to our Byzantine Catholic Church. Please consider coming, whether for the first time or for a return after many times. For these few special days we Sisters, our Hierarchs, Clergy, and people young and old, are Pilgrims united together as at no other time, giving glory to God and honoring His Mother as Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

In Touch

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THANK YOU

GCU Matching Funds Project

From 1923, when our Foundress, the late Mother Macrina, was asked to staff the St. Nicholas Orphanage built by the Greek Catholic Union, until today, this fraternal organization has been part of the history of the Sisters of St. Basil the Great, a relationship treasured with gratitude by the Sisters.

Although it is more than halfway to the 81st Annual Pilgrimage, the Sisters look back to the 80th Anniversary Pilgrimage with deep gratitude to the Greek Catholic Union. Its logo reads "A Fraternal Benefit Society," and this description holds so true for the long-standing relationship the Sisters have with the GCU. The Special Matching Funds Project which was initiated to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the Pilgrimage in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help was truly an expression of fraternalism and was a benefit to the many who come to the Pilgrimage to be renewed and refreshed.

Announced in June of 2014 from the Main Office, the GCU extended the program through June of this year. The Sisters are deeply grateful to Mr. George Juba, National President, to the Main Office, and to the many Districts and Lodges that have participated enthusiastically in the project from the time of its inception.