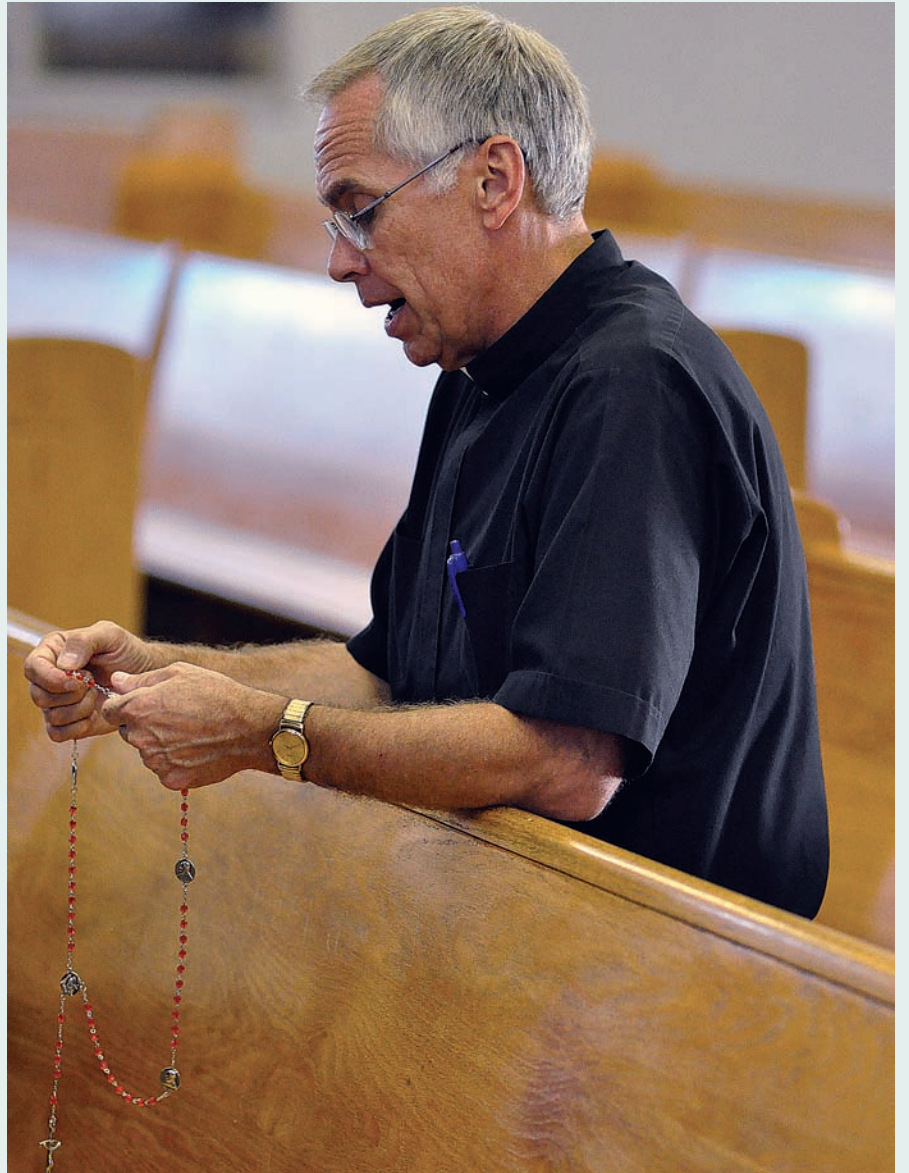




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Seeking God above all things

By Fr. Eric Johnson

Director of the archdiocesan Office of Priestly and Religious Vocations

At the conclusion of the sixth chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew, Jesus speaks about being dependent on God. His words are spoken to a people whose hearts are filled with the cares and anxieties of daily living, and whose attention is fixed on how they are to acquire security, plan for the future, obtain sustenance and shelter themselves.



Fr. Eric Johnson

Jesus reminds the people that life is more than food and drink. He tells them that their heavenly Father knows each of them intimately, is aware of their needs and cares deeply for them. He then says, "Seek first the Kingdom of

God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you besides" (Mt 6:33).

In doing so, Jesus calls those listening to him not to allow the experience of worry and anxiety to crowd out the place of God in their minds, hearts and actions.

Jesus' teaching seems all the more relevant to us today. Our lives are often so full, so hectic and so weighed down with responsibility. In our daily lives, there are so many demands, obligations and uncertainties that can pull at us, occupy us and fill us with anxiety.

It can be easy to become consumed with our immediate concerns and lose sight of the Kingdom. Our hearts and minds can become crowded as we brood over work, strained relationships, difficulties and an uncertain future. It is tempting to give in to focusing all of our thoughts and energy on these things, to let go of prayer and silence, and to fail to appreciate the needs and relationships that surround us.

Part of the difficulty is our tendency to view God's call as one obligation among many, and to see our relationship with him as one of any number of relationships. Such a way of perceiving things, however, places our relationship with God in competition with our other relationships. It fosters within us a tendency to see God's invitation to the Kingdom as something that needs to be balanced against the other demands in our lives.

Christ's command to seek first the Kingdom of God reminds us that this is not so. It echoes his words to Martha: "You are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing" (Lk 10:41-42).

Our relationship with God is not simply one of many, but *the* relationship that should define all others. Seeking the Kingdom is not simply another obligation, but the pursuing of our ultimate goal of life and salvation.

When we place our relationship with God before all else, our other relationships are not diminished, but are deepened, nurtured and become more reflective of God's love. When we strive to "seek first the Kingdom of God,"

it places our other obligations in their proper perspective and helps to alleviate our anxiety.

This annual Religious Vocations Supplement contains the stories of men and women who have responded to God's call by embracing a vocation to the priesthood, the permanent diaconate or the consecrated life. Their stories reflect the many and varied ways that countless other priests, deacons and religious have generously offered themselves in service to us.

I believe it is good for us to remember them in gratitude. For in the ways they have taught us, cared for us, nurtured us and led us, we are reminded of God's own providential care. Their unique response to God's call to love and service reminds us of his love for us and our own call to seek God above all things. They encourage us to pursue God with the same energy that we devote to so many other things, and to strive after his righteousness with purpose, passion and conviction.

Simply through their presence among us and by embracing their vocations, priests, deacons, and religious brothers and sisters remind us that life is so much more than food and drink, that there is something beyond the cares of this world that is worth embracing and that God's love will indeed provide for the rest.

May their witness encourage our trust in God's care for us, and inspire us to seek more eagerly the Kingdom of God. May it also lead us to invite others to take up their example of service in the Church as priests, deacons, and religious brothers and sisters. †

Benedictine sister enjoys daily rhythm of monastic life

By Mary Ann Garber

BROWNSBURG—Like the rhythm of music, the rhythm of monastic life provides harmony for Benedictine Sister Marie Racine.

Sister Marie is a member of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, and ministers as the music teacher and choir director at St. Malachy School in Brownsburg.

“Christ has a way of capturing your heart,” Sister Marie said. “During my discernment, I was falling in love with Christ, and I think that has to happen in order to be able to make a commitment to religious life.

“My former life seems so long ago now,” she said. “This is where I feel called to be, ... to find union with Christ. I wanted a lifestyle that would bring me closest to Christ, closest to my true self, to become the person that I was created to be. For me, that needs to be done in community. ... Fidelity to the monastic way of life is one of our vows. It’s a commitment to ongoing conversion. It’s learning how to love more and more like Christ.”

The native of New Bedford, Mass., grew up in a musical family with five siblings.

As a sixth-grader, she sang in a children’s choir. During middle school and high school, she sang in a folk group for Masses at two parishes and entertained patients at local nursing homes.

Folk music was “in style” in the 1970s, and she also learned to play the violin.

Looking back, Sister Marie said, she has been singing for the Lord since childhood.

She first thought about religious life in the fifth grade then considered it again more seriously in high school, but decided to study mathematics, education and computer science at Fitchburg State University in Fitchburg, Mass.

“I went to college to be a teacher,” Sister Marie said, “but also got a minor in computer science. Before entering the [Our Lady of Grace] community in 2000, I was a software engineer for 17 years. I never taught at a school.”

But God had other plans for her.

She started discerning a call to religious life again as a young adult then discovered the Sisters of St. Benedict of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove online at www.benedictine.com while researching other women’s religious communities.

Now she serves God as a woman of prayer and teaches music to 400 Catholic school students in kindergarten through the eighth-grade.

“Our family was encouraged to pray for



Benedictine Sister Marie Racine, the music teacher and choir director at St. Malachy School in Brownsburg, works with fourth-graders, from left, Joey Wynne, Sydney Arnes and Ben Zimmerman as they play recorders and a xylophone. Sister Marie is a member of the Sisters of St. Benedict of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove.

vocations,” Sister Marie recalled. “After my first year in college, I stopped thinking about it. The thought did not come back to me until I was 38 when I was invited by a sister in my parish to think about being a religious sister.”

She found herself wanting a lifestyle that would bring her closer to Christ.

“I was looking for a community that was committed to daily prayer and living together in community,” she said. “That’s what I felt called to—that rhythm of prayer and community life. ... Liturgy is one of the things I love.”

Benedictines focus on music and liturgy in their daily lives, she said, and living in a community dedicated to prayer appealed to her.

“It’s a good fit for me,” Sister Marie said. “That’s part of the rhythm of my life. I want to live that with integrity.”

After she joined the Beech Grove Benedictines in 2000 with four other women, she began taking piano and organ lessons from another sister at the monastery.

A few years later, her community asked her to return to college to study music, music education and organ.

“We are really encouraged to use our

gifts,” Sister Marie said. “I spent one year as a postulant, two years as a novice and was first professed for four years. That’s when I went to school at the University of Indianapolis to study music. It was a privilege to have that opportunity. I made my perpetual monastic profession in 2007.”

Living in community means “letting go and letting God” shape her future, Sister Marie said. “To be able to continue our musical tradition in our community, we need trained musicians. It was beneficial for my own ministry life and also good to be able to contribute in this way to my community.”

After Sister Marie earned her certification to teach music, the principal at St. Malachy School at that time contacted her to come for an interview.

“I try to be a role model as a Benedictine sister and teacher,” she said. “I talk about my community life in the classroom, and I bring the fourth-graders to the monastery for a visit in the spring every year. I enjoy educating children about music and faith and religious life. They have a lot of questions about my life.”

Her goal is to teach students how to

experience the joy of music.

“I know that I have done my job if I see joy in their eyes,” Sister Marie said. “I am often surprised by how much they can learn to do.”

She reminds her choir students that they are using the gift of their voices to give glory and praise to God.

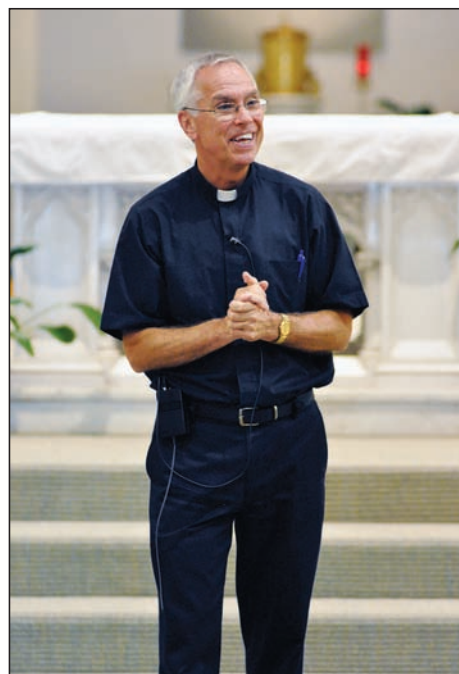
The process of surrendering your life to God results in many joyful surprises in community life and daily life experiences, she said, as well as a deep sense of peace.

“There are many ways to serve in community,” Sister Marie said, “but the most important thing is to do it cheerfully, to be joyful together. There are blessings and challenges in living in community. I’ve always believed that it’s a mystery how all these particular people are together in one community. We’re all there because of the mystery of God’s plan for us.

“People sometimes ask me, ‘How did you know?’” Sister Marie said about answering God’s call to religious life.

“I always say, ‘When it happens, you know,’” she explained with a smile. “When you feel that call in the depths of your heart, then you can make no other choice.” †

From Sudan to Richmond, priest gives thanks for his vocation



Father Todd Riebe speaks on Aug. 17, 2011, at St. Andrew Church in Richmond to archdiocesan seminarians who were on a pilgrimage to the three parishes in the eastern Indiana city. Father Riebe is the pastor of the Richmond Catholic Community made up of the parishes of Holy Family, St. Andrew and St. Mary.

By Sean Gallagher

One day in 1991, Father Todd Riebe was walking with some friends along a dusty street in Juba in southern Sudan.

Their quiet stroll was brought to a sudden halt when artillery shells began exploding all around them. Juba had been a frequent target in a decades-long civil war in Sudan.

“It was right there [where we were],” Father Riebe said. “In fact, the person right next to me was killed.

“I can remember, as this was all happening, laying there and saying, ‘This is it,’ and thanking God. It had been such a good life. I couldn’t have asked for anything more. Then it all ended and you went to see who was alive and who wasn’t.”

At the time, Father Riebe, who grew up as a member of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Terre Haute, was a member of the Comboni Missionaries religious order and was ministering in Juba as a high school principal.

Two years later, the Sudanese government expelled him and the other members of his order in the country.

He returned home to Terre Haute for a sabbatical and soon began assisting at

St. Patrick Parish. In early 1995, he was asked to lead the parishes of Holy Family, St. Andrew and St. Mary in Richmond, and has ministered there ever since. He became a priest of the archdiocese in 2000.

Although a world away in many ways from his pastoral experience in Richmond, Father Riebe said the eight years that he spent in Sudan prepared him well for parish ministry in the archdiocese.

While he saw extreme material poverty in war-torn Juba, he saw a spiritual richness in the people who lived there.

“The Sudanese helped me. They’re people of such deep faith,” Father Riebe said. “We missionaries would lament that this [poverty and war] were unjust, that this was terrible. And they would witness to us that with faith comes the patience that we don’t necessarily have. [They would say,] ‘In the end, God will make all things right.’”

On the other hand, after he came home to Terre Haute, Father Riebe gained a new appreciation of the spiritual poverty of so many Americans.

“I realized that while here there is an affluence of material goods, there is a poverty here that is as deep as the [material] poverty in Africa,” he said. “And, in one sense, it’s harder because it’s the

poverty of spirit. All these things have made us strangers to ourselves.”

When he arrived in Richmond, Father Riebe saw great spiritual riches in the three parishes there. But their members often kept their heritage to themselves, according to lifelong St. Andrew parishioner and current deacon candidate Frank Roberts.

“In the past, each parish was jealously involved in protecting its identity and its independence from the other parishes,” said Roberts, 73. “But [Father Riebe] led and completed the joining of the three into the Richmond Catholic Community.

“That, in and of itself, has been such a blessing to us because we work on many common projects.”

The founding of Seton Catholic High School in Richmond, which opened in 2002, has been the largest among these projects, one that both needed the three parishes to come together and nurtured the bonds among them.

One of the main tasks to make the high school a possibility was to renovate an old school building on the St. Andrew Parish campus.

“In an earlier time, that would have been nuts,” Father Riebe said. “That would have been St. Andrew’s problem, not [the other

Marcotte brothers share family bonds and call to priesthood



Above, seminarian Dave Marcotte, right, assists Bishop Christopher J. Coyne during the annual archdiocesan chrism Mass celebrated on April 19, 2011, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

Left, seminarian Dave Marcotte, left, Benedictine Father Severin Messick, seminarian Doug Marcotte and the two seminarians' parents, Bill and Irene Marcotte, pose on July 19, 2009, at St. Michael Church in Greenfield. In a Mass on that day, Father Severin, at the time the pastor of the parish, blessed Doug as he prepared to leave the U.S. to enroll at the Pontifical North American College in Rome for his theological formation. Father Severin died on Sept. 28, 2011.

By Sean Gallagher

Priests often refer to each other as “brother priests” because of the close spiritual bond that brings them together in the priestly life and ministry that they share.

If, God willing, both of them are ordained priests for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, seminarians Doug and Dave Marcotte will be brother priests to each other in both body and spirit.

They are brothers, age 26 and 24, and grew up in Greenfield, where their parents, Bill and Irene Marcotte, are members of St. Michael Parish.

Doug is in his third year of theological formation at the Pontifical North American College in Rome, and is scheduled to be ordained a transitional deacon on June 23 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

Dave is in his second year of theological formation at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad.

Doug appreciates having his brother as a fellow seminarian because he knows that the call to the priesthood is something that few other people share or can understand on a personal level.

“It’s nice to have somebody that you can talk to and that you can relate with and that you’re so close to who’s having the same experiences as you,” Doug said.

Dave said that both of them being seminarians has deepened their relationship even though they now live thousands of miles apart and have conversations with each other on the Internet via Skype.

“It’s harder in the sense that I can’t talk to him as often or be able to spend time with him,” Dave said. “But the reality is that, even if we’re both priests in the archdiocese, we may be separated by a fair distance, too.”

“It’s tough, but in a lot of ways our friendship and relationship is that much better.”

Doug began discerning a possible call to the priesthood when he was a junior at Indiana University in Bloomington. He completed his degree there then became a seminarian in 2007.

When Doug told his brother and his parents about his discernment, Dave was

a freshman at IU.

At first, Dave felt no similar call to the priesthood. But over time, he said that his brother’s discernment, combined with his own increased involvement in faith activities at St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington, led him to broaden his horizons in considering what plans God might have for him.

“I found myself being more and more drawn in to my faith, and to the [Catholic] community both in Bloomington and at home,” Dave said. “That got me thinking a lot more, too, about what possibilities

priesthood, with the possibility of thus not having any grandchildren, was challenging.

“It was difficult at first, but now I see how wonderful it is for the both of them to be studying to become priests,” she said. “They just have a peace and happiness about them. And so since they are that way, then I have said to God, ‘I’m very happy. My sons are giving their lives to you. If this is what you want, then this is what I’m going to do. I’m not going to fight it.’”

Bill said other parents should



‘I think they’ll both be great priests. I really do. ... I think they’ll each relate well to people. I think their own personal lives, their piety, will be a tremendous blessing to all who know them.’

—Deacon Wayne Davis on seminarians Dave and Doug Marcotte

there were for me. I think that’s when I first started to really think that much more about the priesthood.”

Dave started the process to become an archdiocesan seminarian after his sophomore year at IU, and has been in priestly formation since 2008.

Both brothers acknowledged that the guidance of their parents as they were growing up planted the seeds of their vocations.

“My parents always made going to Mass on Sunday a non-negotiable,” Doug said. “So I grew up knowing that it was something important.”

They also helped their sons be open to whatever vocation God might call them to, including the priesthood.

“I always encouraged and talked to them about the priesthood whenever they asked questions,” Irene said. “I think that’s really important because I think sometimes parents kind of downplay that. I think it’s important to answer their questions about [vocations].”

At the same time, Irene acknowledged that having her two children consider the

encourage their children to consider a priestly or religious vocation, but within limits.

“You can encourage them,” he said. “You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make them drink it. They’re going to have to decide on their own. You can offer them all kinds of assistance or help or guidance. But it’s going to be their ultimate decision.”

Although the relationships within their family have played a significant role in Doug and Dave’s vocational discernment, the brothers valued highly the example of their longtime pastor, the late Benedictine Father Severin Messick, who died on Sept. 28, 2011.

“When I first really started thinking about [the priesthood]—even before I talked to my brother or my parents—he was the first person that I went to to talk about it,” Dave said. “He had a lot of advice to give and a lot of helpful insight every step of the way.”

“When I looked at Father Severin, I always saw a man of great joy,” Doug

said. “And I thought to myself that he didn’t seem unhappy at all. In fact, he was very joyful. I think that, more than anything, kind of led me to continue to allow the priesthood to be something that I considered.”

People who know Doug and Dave have hopes that they will follow well in Father Severin’s footsteps.

“I think they’ll both be great priests. I really do,” said Deacon Wayne Davis, who ministers at St. Michael Parish and has known the brothers for much of their lives. “I think Doug is more outgoing by nature than David. David is quiet, but not shy.”

“I think they’ll each relate well to people. I think their own personal lives, their piety, will be a tremendous blessing to all who know them.”

Msgr. Anthony Volz has had both brothers minister with him during seminarian summer assignments. He thinks having brothers as seminarians can send a message to other Catholic families.

“That catches people’s attention,” said Msgr. Volz, pastor of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis. “It says that in a world where perhaps the spiritual life is de-emphasized, it should be emphasized in family life. It doesn’t mean that everyone’s going to be a priest or a nun. But it means that they’ll be good, faithful Catholics, good, faithful followers of Christ.”

With his ordination to the transitional diaconate only five months away, Doug is already looking forward to the day when he and his brother, Dave, may share an even deeper bond as priests than they have known up to now.

“I certainly look forward to being able to share that experience with my brother, to have that bond with him of not only him being my brother, but really sharing what is most unique about us—the priesthood,” Doug said. “The defining aspects of our lives will be something that we share and that we won’t share with most people.”

(For more information about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, log on to www.HearGodsCall.com.) †

A bride of Christ

Desire for Christ leads Bishop Chatard graduate to life as Dominican sister



Above, during a visit to the kindergarten class at St. Henry School in Nashville, Tenn., Dominican Sister Imelda Grace Lee reads to the class with the help of kindergarten student Grace Sizemore. As part of her teacher education program at Aquinas College, Sister Imelda Grace observed and helped in the classroom during the fall of 2011.

Left, holding her right hand on a copy of her religious community's constitutions, Dominican Sister Imelda Grace Lee, right, professes her first vows as a member of the Nashville, Tenn.-based Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia on July 28, 2011. Holding her hand is Mother Ann Marie Karlovic, superior of the community. The liturgy in which Sister Imelda Grace professed her vows took place in the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Nashville. Sister Imelda Grace is a former member of Christ the King Parish and a graduate of Bishop Chatard High School, both in Indianapolis.

By Sean Gallagher

As a student at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis, Katherine Lee had her mind set on becoming a lawyer, getting married and having a family.

During the Christmas break of her senior year in 2006, she shadowed a lawyer at a top-notch law firm in Indianapolis to see what a typical day in her future lucrative career might be like.

"At the end of the day, this lawyer said to me, 'You can have all of this [in reference to his spacious office], any luxury—cars, houses, money. Anything that you could want in the world you could have,'" she said. "Rather than being overjoyed at this, I heard a voice in the back of my heart say, 'Is that all that there is?'"

Five years later, she found what was missing—and more riches than she could have imagined when standing in that lawyer's office—when she professed vows of poverty, chastity and obedience as a member of the Nashville, Tenn.-based Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia. She is now known by her religious name, Sister Imelda Grace Lee.

In a recent e-mail interview with *The Criterion*, she reflected on her vocation journey.

"It is really beautiful to look back and see how the Lord has been at work through my life, and to see how he has taken those things that I wanted and transformed them into something more wonderful than I could have ever planned or chosen for myself," Sister Imelda Grace said. "I am truly a bride—the Bride of Christ—and I am truly a mother, a mother to souls.

"Though I am not a lawyer fighting for the truth, I am a Dominican defending the truth, proclaiming the truth and living for the truth."

As a child, she attended Christ the King School in Indianapolis. However, her parents, one of whom was Catholic, had chosen not to baptize her as an infant.

A desire for that sacrament grew in her when she and her first-grade classmates were learning about Christ and the Eucharist in their religion class.

"My parents initially thought that I

was too young to make such an adult decision, knowing that baptism meant a lifelong commitment to God," Sister Imelda Grace said, "but through my persistence and a strong desire to receive our Lord in the Eucharist, I was granted permission.

"And so, a year and countless formation classes later I was baptized only a few months before receiving my first holy Communion."

The memories of her baptism as a first grader made a lasting impression on Sister Imelda Grace.

"As much as I would have preferred to have been baptized as an infant, I consider it a tremendous privilege to be able to remember my baptism—my birth into the Church—and to be able to hear the voice of the late, great Msgr. Francis Tuohy recite the baptismal formula, and to see my baptismal candle all aflame," she said.

"The Lord, in his mercy, granted me the most precious gift of faith as a child, and the grace to persevere in that faith as I grew older—a faith that I cherish to this day."

After graduating from Bishop Chatard, she enrolled at Indiana University in Bloomington still with the idea of pursuing a career in law.

But her experience in the lawyer's office months earlier had set her soul looking more and more toward Christ.

"As I began my time at IU, I began to go to daily Mass and pray the [Liturgy of the Hours] daily," Sister Imelda Grace said. "Through this, my desire for Christ grew and deepened, and I longed for him to be everything for me, my sole treasure. In return, I longed to give myself to him completely and entirely without reserve."

It was during the first of the two years she spent in Bloomington that she began actively discerning a call to religious life.

Dominican Brother Cassian Sama was ministering at the St. Paul Catholic Center

in Bloomington at the time, and led a group of young adults who were discerning God's call in their lives. He has since been ordained a priest, and has returned to minister there.

"You could see that she really exuded a devotion, especially when she came to daily Mass," Father Cassian said. "She was always here hanging around St. Paul Catholic Center, even when she had nothing to do, just to pray.

"That kind of caught my curiosity and I got to know her. Our conversations were mostly about God. She was so passionate about her faith, about praying and offering her life to pray for those

who don't know God, and to serve Christ in a selfless way."

One of the young adults in the discernment group was seminarian Michael Keucher.

"Her discernment was very much of a model for my own at that time," said Keucher, a member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in

Bloomington, who is in his first year of theology studies at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad.

"Not that I would call myself holy, but it's interesting how holy people stick together and make each other holier," he said. "She took her discernment very seriously and prayerfully. I could tell that she lived her faith in a very real way, even on the campus."

Father Cassian was also impressed by the way that she was able to forgo the temptations of campus life, yet at the same time have a great desire to lead others to Christ.

"The worldly things around her, [even] on this secular campus, didn't affect her a bit," he said. "That was something beautiful to see."

He spoke to her about the Dominican community in Nashville. She made a retreat there in May 2008, discerned a

'Though I am not a lawyer fighting for the truth, I am a Dominican defending the truth, proclaiming the truth and living for the truth.'

—Dominican Sister Imelda Grace

vocation with the sisters over the course of the next academic year and entered as a postulant in 2009.

She was not alone, joining 21 other young adult women who entered the community at the same time. Fourteen other women professed first vows with her last July.

"Being a member of a community with so many other young women is truly a gift," said Sister Imelda Grace. "There is a certain joyful zeal and enthusiasm that the young sisters bring, and I know this from the experience of being one of them."

At the same time, she has valued getting to know many of the older members of the 151-year-old congregation.

"To see these older sisters living on the foundation that the sisters long before them had laid, and the younger sisters striving to live and embrace the heritage that has been passed down to them, was more powerful in my discernment than simply looking at the youthfulness of the community," she said.

The Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia are primarily a community of teaching sisters, and Sister Imelda Grace is studying elementary education at her community's Aquinas College in Nashville.

After volunteering as a catechist for third- and fourth-grade students in religious education classes at St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington, Sister Imelda Grace knows the spiritual depths that can be found in teaching the faith to children.

"As I taught these children the truths of the faith and watched them grow closer to Christ, I realized that the Lord had not only asked me to be a teacher, but to be a mother—of souls," Sister Imelda Grace said. "And this spiritual motherhood is what I began to long for.

"I realized that in religious life I would still be a mother, and I would still have the joy of being a bride."

(For more information on the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia, log on to www.nashvilledominican.org.) †

Prayer and work

Monks of Saint Meinrad continue ancient traditions in the present

By Sean Gallagher

The Benedictine monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad have been witnesses to the Gospel and servants of the Church in southern Indiana for more than 150 years.

But the tradition of prayer and work that they carry on today can be traced back 1,500 years to the *Rule* that St. Benedict wrote during the sixth century in Italy.

From the way in which they gather for prayer in their church several times a day to their care for infirmed monks and welcoming guests to the monastery, it guides the life of the Saint Meinrad monastic community.

Currently, there are 95 monks of Saint Meinrad, ranging in age from 23 to 94. Many of them are priests. Some are solemnly professed brothers.

Some monks teach or serve in the administration of Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology, the community's primary apostolate.

Others assist at Abbey Press, which produces and sells religious gift items, booklets, pamphlets and magazines, and at Abbey Caskets.

Parish ministry both within and outside the Archdiocese of Indianapolis has also been a ministry of the monks of Saint Meinrad for most of its history.

The following photo essay shows how the monks pray, work and share life together in community in a tradition deeply rooted in the history of the Church.

(For more information on Saint Meinrad Archabbey, log on to www.saintmeinrad.edu.) †



The Benedictine monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad and other monks living there who are studying in the community's seminary pray the Liturgy of the Hours on Oct. 15, 2011, in the community's church.



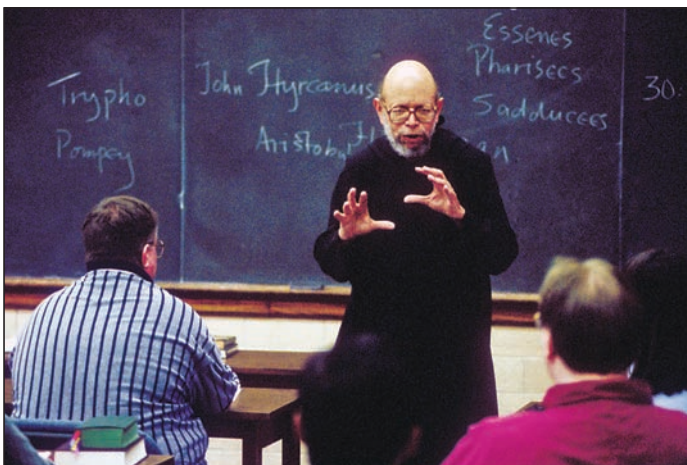
Benedictine Brother Francis Wagner kneels while professing solemn vows as a monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad during a liturgy in the Archabbey Church on Jan. 25, 2011. When men are received as novices in the monastery and when monks profess solemn vows, all of their hair, except for a narrow band around the head called a corona (Latin for "crown"), is cut off as a symbol of their dedication to the service of God and the Church.



With the hoods of their habits drawn up, Benedictine monks of Saint Meinrad carry lit candles as they walk in a procession to their community's cemetery on All Souls Day, Nov. 2, 2011.



Benedictine Brother John Mark Falkenhain bakes bread on Nov. 29, 2011, in the monastery kitchen. He took up the hobby in 2011. His bread is now served daily at breakfast for the monks. Brother John Mark also serves as his community's vocations director.



Benedictine Father Cypryan Davis teaches a Church history course at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology, the primary apostolate of the monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey. Future priests, permanent deacons and lay ministers are prepared there for ministry in the Church.



Benedictine Brothers Andrew Zimmerman and Maurus Zoeller play chess on May 27, 2011, in the calefactory, or living room, of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad. The monks, along with Benedictine Brother Mario Ibson, right, have competed in a friendly chess rivalry for more than 30 years.



Benedictine Brother Elijah Luckett walks through one of the courtyards on the grounds of Saint Meinrad Archabbey on Oct. 5, 2011, in St. Meinrad. Visitors are always welcome at Saint Meinrad, and can join the monks any day at prayer or Mass in the Archabbey Church or tour the historic buildings and peaceful campus.

Sister of Providence finds 'God energy' in ministry at St. Ann Clinic

By Dave Cox
Special to The Criterion

TERRE HAUTE—Providence Sister Beth Wright finds “God energy” everywhere around her and within her. She believes it was “God energy” that led her to the Sisters of Providence. She feels “God energy” in all elements of her life. She encounters “God energy” in all of the people she serves in her ministry as assistant administrator of St. Ann Clinic in Terre Haute.

St. Ann Clinic offers free medical, dental, psychological, pharmaceutical and counseling services to people who have no medical insurance. Between 150 and 200 patients visit the clinic each week.

It is located on the campus of St. Ann Parish in Terre Haute, which is scheduled to be closed in May. St. Ann Clinic will remain in operation after the parish closes.

Not only was it a life-changing decision to join the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, but also Sister Beth was not even Catholic when she was first moved by “God energy.”

“I was into my own spiritual journey. I was sitting in my apartment journaling, looking out the screened-in porch at the little lake with a fountain. I was asking the questions,” she said. “What is the meaning of all this? What’s my purpose in being here? I was quiet.

“In my head, I heard, ‘Nun.’ That’s it! ‘Nun.’ Immediately, even without the background, I thought n-u-n, not n-o-n-e.”

“I knew immediately what [that word] meant because I started resisting the possibilities right away,” Sister Beth said. “In that experience, and in looking back over my life, it seems like where the Spirit is moving me is not usually rational.

“It’s not always something I would think of. But, in my journey, that seems to be where I usually find the movement of God, not in human reason. I find the movement of God when I open myself to possibilities or what may be considered as impossibilities.”

As assistant administrator, Sister Beth interviews potential new volunteers, answers the phone when necessary, oversees the processing of donations, fills in and assists wherever needed, and associates with donors, who are plentiful and generous with their time, services and money.

Providing services to patients is at the heart of her ministry.

“I see human beings who should be able to have health care,” Sister Beth said. “In my opinion, health care is not a privilege. It should be a right. Several of our patients have said if it were not for our clinic, they would be dead. We range from [treating people with] colds and breathing issues to those who have been diagnosed with cancer. The clinic has good community support.”

Sister Beth, a native of Beech Grove, is still in initial formation. She is in her Tertian year, the final year of preparation before she professes perpetual vows.

Recently, she was involved in a group discussion about a book titled *A Presence That Disturbs*. Part of that discussion centered on a quotation from the psychologist Victor Frankel that said, “To live, you must choose; to love, you must encounter; to grow, you must suffer.”

Where does she find her “God energy” at St. Ann Clinic?

“I find it in the encounters I have every day. What I find in my life is all of that. What I find in my ministry is the encounter, which, to me, brings to the center the love and compassion.”

Sister Beth believes her spirituality has grown since she entered the Sisters of Providence eight years ago.

“Prayer for me is very broad. It is the energy. Prayer is where you touch the ‘God energy.’ The way I define prayer is it is like breathing. Both are necessary for life. My spirituality has grown to the point that I know that we are all in God and of God, and we need to treat



Providence Sister Beth Wright works on Dec. 13 at the St. Ann Clinic in Terre Haute, a ministry that provides free medical, dental, psychological, pharmaceutical and counseling services to people without medical insurance.

one another that way,” she said.

Sister Beth learned to trust her “God energy” as she answered her call. In several discernment gatherings, she has heard other women ask, “How did you know? One hundred percent, how did you know?”

“My response would be if you want a guarantee, I didn’t have that. There is no guarantee, just like exploring marriage. I felt called to focus on where I could be supported in ministry, where I could make a difference. It comes down to, for me, how am I going to channel my passion, my life energy? What’s attracting me? For

me, it was religious life, community life, living a life in common.

“The call is something I could not ignore,” Sister Beth said. “It’s a leap of faith—at least it was for me. But I cannot imagine not being where I am now. I would not be able to do what I am doing at St. Ann Clinic on my own. It’s a gift to be there and work with people from 13 counties who don’t have health insurance.”

(For more information about the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, log on to www.spsmw.org.) †

Courage and compassion mark Franciscan sister’s journey of faith

By John Shaughnessy

The joy dances in her eyes as she recalls the defining moments from her childhood.

She can see herself walking through the neighborhoods of Holy Trinity Parish on the near west side of Indianapolis



Sr. Jackie McCracken, O.S.F. Holy Saturday.

in the 1950s—growing up in a family where her mother and grandmother shared secrets in the Slovenian language, growing up in the Catholic school where the Franciscan sisters in their habits welcomed her warmly, growing up in the parish church where she sang in the choir on summer mornings at the 5:30 a.m. Mass and brought baskets of hard-boiled eggs to be blessed by a parish priest on

Like the savory smell of the Slovenian walnut bread—*potica*—that she still makes, it all comes back to Franciscan Sister Jackie McCracken, enveloping her in the warmth of her childhood blessings.

“It’s a huge part of who I am, who I’ve become,” she says with a satisfied smile.

That same smile and that same sense of joy return later when Sister Jackie adds the details of the woman she has become at age 66—an advocate who has worked to help victims of domestic violence, a teacher who has led high school students to deepen their faith through service, a program coordinator who now directs college students in internships that help them discover God’s call in their lives.

For Sister Jackie, it’s all part of her incredible journey of becoming the woman that God envisioned her to be—a life journey that she considers still full of possibilities.

“The transformation is still taking place,” she notes. “I see my transformation as occurring in partnership with the Divine. When I was a kid, I didn’t see it as an equal partnership. You hear the term ‘co-creator.’ I see myself as a co-creator in my life with God.”

While Sister Jackie says that the child she was wouldn’t recognize the religious sister she has become, the ties that connect them are still evident.

As a student at the former Holy Trinity School and the former St. Mary’s Academy in Indianapolis, she was fascinated by and felt close to the Franciscan sisters who taught her.

“They were always very friendly, very open, great teachers, great role models,” she says.

She has the same positive feelings about being in community with her fellow religious sisters in the Third Order of St. Francis in Oldenburg.

“I’ve become a part of these women, and we’re part of something bigger, making an impact on people’s lives—teaching and ministering,” Sister Jackie says. “I’ve been involved in so many ministries that I have a compassion for people from all walks of life.”

She taught religion and English at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis in the 1970s. She has served as the communications director for her order. For 14 years, she had various roles as an advocate for female victims of domestic abuse, from being there for women during court proceedings to training judges and lawyers about the issue of domestic violence.

She was also the executive director of Indiana Campus Compact, part of a national organization that promoted

service learning opportunities for college students, faculty members and presidents. She worked at Cathedral High School in Indianapolis from 2008 to 2010, helping teachers imbue the concept of service into their classes.

She now serves as a program associate for the Indiana Network for Higher Education Ministries in Indianapolis, helping college students explore faith-based career possibilities.

Looking back on her life as a religious sister, she once wrote, “I’m not sure that any other lifestyle would have allowed me the flexibility and encouragement to pursue the ministry and service opportunities I’ve been engaged in during my lifetime. I’ve grown as a person, become courageous, taken risks and become transformed as a result of the people in my life.”

All those qualities and experiences show the heart that Sister Jackie has for others, according to Franciscan Sister Barbara Piller, congregational minister of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis in Oldenburg.

“She’s very dedicated to the Franciscan tradition of justice to the poor and the underserved,” Sister Barbara says. “Her special passion is for women and children. She’s always working to make a situation better. She works for peace through justice. And she’s true to herself. At the same time, she’s very aware of the needs and goals of the community—from her Franciscan community to the global community.”

Sister Jackie’s emphasis on community and compassion is evident in one of her favorite quotes from American anthropologist Margaret Mead, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Sister Jackie recommends her choice of vocation to women who want to dedicate their lives to God and make a difference to others as part of a community of women who support each other.

“For any young woman, this way of life offers a broadening of perspective, an opportunity to grow in a multitude of ways, and the opportunity to see yourself as a rich, vibrant participant in the human race and the human questions we all have,” she says.

Sister Jackie smiles and adds, “My sisters say, ‘Join the convent and see the world.’”

(For more information about the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis in Oldenburg, log on to www.oldenburgfranciscans.org.) †

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Deacon candidate leaves corporate world to teach high school religion

By Sean Gallagher

A few years ago, deacon candidate Tom Horn flew around the country while working as a vice president of manufacturing for Navistar, a commercial truck and diesel engine company that brings in nearly \$10 billion in revenue annually.

Today, he drives a school bus to take students to work on service projects as a religion teacher at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis.

For Horn, being behind the steering wheel of a bus is far more significant than being a jet-setting corporate executive.

"I feel like what I'm doing now is really important, whereas what I did before was more about stock prices and earnings per share and the board of directors," said Horn, a member of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis. "Trying to call [students] to God and trying to get them to question God in their life is a lot more important in my mind."

Being active in the Church has always been important for Horn, 50, who grew up near Dayton, Ohio, and served in the Marine Corps after graduating from the Naval Academy.

After participating in a Christ Renews His Parish retreat in 2004 at St. Mark Parish, his life of faith started to deepen when he committed himself to looking at each day's Mass readings.

"It was a habit that I wanted to get into to give a little time to God," Horn said. "The more I read the Scriptures, the more time that I spent with them, [the more] I just started to question my priorities in life and where I was headed.

"It was apparent that I could and probably should be doing more for the Church. The next thing I knew, I was inquiring about the diaconate."

In the middle of this discernment process, Horn accepted a promotion at Navistar that made him a vice president of the company in 2005. It was a job based in Chicago that he would hold for the next four years.

Even though the job required a lot of travel and time away from his wife, Virginia, and their sons, Bill and Brian, he thought taking the promotion was the natural thing to do.

"I thought that was why you worked," Horn said. "I thought the reason you went to work was to do as well as you could and, if people offered you promotions and more money, you were supposed to take them ..."

As his discernment of a possible vocation to the diaconate deepened then led him to enter the archdiocese's deacon formation program, his job and that calling seemed to be more in conflict.

This isn't the case with most deacon candidates who are still in the work force, according to Deacon Kerry Blandford, director of the archdiocese's deacon formation program. But most of them, unlike Horn at the time, live and work near their homes and parishes. Horn often found himself thousands of miles away from the place where he would need to do supervised ministry in the formation program.

"As it become more and more difficult, I knew I was going to be forced into making a decision," Horn said. "I couldn't be in Chicago, and give the time and dedication that I needed to give to the archdiocese."

In late 2008, after praying about the matter and speaking with his family, Horn decided to resign from Navistar and begin

'I feel like what I'm doing now is really important, whereas what I did before was more about stock prices and earnings per share and the board of directors.'

—Deacon candidate Tom Horn on moving from the corporate world to teaching religion at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis



Deacon candidate Tom Horn, a religion teacher at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis, talks with sophomore Luke Jahnke, a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis, on Nov. 16, 2011.

studies to become a math teacher.

The drastic change in salary that he would experience was fine with him, but was it acceptable to his family?

"I was concerned that I was being selfish," Horn said. "It was something that I wanted to do. It was a priority in my life. It was something that I was called to do. And yet I'm dragging the three of them along. Because of their love and support, they're nodding their heads. But what's really in their hearts?"

Although Virginia was willing to accept the change, it didn't come without challenges.

"I felt like it was jumping off a cliff with just faith," she said. "It was a test [of faith], for sure. A big test. You jump off a cliff, and you just know that God is going to catch you. You just feel that strongly about it."

Although he studied at Marian University in Indianapolis to qualify for a teacher's license to teach math, Horn was given the chance to teach religion at Roncalli in the summer of 2009.

He started his job there a few weeks later, and loves it. But he knows that it is very different from working for Navistar, where the success or failure of every project could be clearly measured.

"It's a whole different chase [at Roncalli], if you will," Horn said. "It really isn't measurable. We're not just trying to educate them. We're trying to change their hearts as well. That's not always apparent."

But the warm interactions that he has with his students, their parents, and faculty and staff at Roncalli have made a big difference, Virginia said.

"He's been blessed by the affirmations he's getting from the teachers, from the students, from the parents," she said. "You don't get feedback that way [in the corporate world]."



Deacon candidate Tom Horn teaches a class on the sacraments on Nov. 16, 2011, at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis.

Chuck Weisenbach, Roncalli's principal, thinks Horn's presence in the school has been a plus to everyone in the community.

"I feel like God certainly blessed us with the wealth of life experiences and knowledge that he brings with him from a career spent in corporate America and his Marine Corps experience," Weisenbach said. "And then certainly the preparation that they obviously received in their diaconate program is unbelievable preparation."

Connor Basch, a sophomore at Roncalli and member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis, was a student in Horn's class on the sacraments last semester.

"It's probably been my favorite religion [class] since I've been in Catholic schools," Connor said. "He likes to involve everybody in the class and use real life examples."



Virginia Horn

Transitioning from life in the corporate world to teaching at a Catholic high school didn't simply have an effect on Horn's work life. It, and being in the deacon formation program, has blessed his marriage.

"We're together again," Horn said. "We're not geographically separated. We're not on different ships going in different directions. We are unified."

Virginia feels the service that her husband has given as a deacon candidate has changed him.

"He's not the same man that I married, but in a very good way," she said. "There's a lot more to him than I ever knew, and now it's being allowed to come to the surface."

Horn is looking forward to being ordained with his 15 classmates in a liturgy scheduled for June 23 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

"I'll be glad to not be reading any books and writing any papers for a while," Horn joked. "Ultimately, it will free up more time to serve, to do those things that we really should be doing. And I get excited about that."

(To learn more about the archdiocese's deacon formation program, log on to www.archindy.org/deacon.) †

RIEBE

continued from page 8

parishes'] problem.”

But with his help and that of many Catholics in Richmond, it succeeded.

“We were investing in the Richmond Catholic Community,” he said. “We were investing in the future. And to have a mission and be hoping for the future was exactly what we needed to become stronger and to grow together.”

While Father Riebe is quick to spread the credit around to many other people for bringing the parishes together and in the founding of the high school, Roberts said his pastor’s holiness has had a real and lasting effect on the Richmond Catholic Community.

“He is probably the most saintly man I’ve ever known,” Roberts said. “He is just absolutely tireless in his dedication to the Church, in living the word that he preaches. He’s one of these people who can walk into a room and, with his smile, light up the whole room. His enthusiasm is unending.”

Father Riebe’s dedication to his priestly life and ministry have also nurtured vocations in other people.

Father Jeremy Gries, administrator of St. Mary Parish in Rushville, spent the summer of 2006 ministering in the Richmond Catholic Community as a seminarian. At the time, he was unsure if the priesthood and parish ministry were really where God was calling him in his life.

“I came back after that summer largely thinking that, ‘Yeah, God’s calling me to this,’” Father Gries said. “And I think Father Todd played a big role in that, helping me to see that parish life is not only a good and joyous life, but it’s a life that God had called me to. It was an important summer for me.”

Franciscan Sister Maria Kolbe Elstro recalls Father Riebe’s first day ministering in the Richmond Catholic Community.

On that day in 1995, she was a fourth-grade student in a religious education program there. She and her class were doing jumping jacks because they had not memorized the beatitudes. Father Riebe stopped in the classroom to see what all the noise was about.

“He just sat down and taught us the beatitudes in a way that the children would understand,” Sister Maria Kolbe said. “He’s always been a person who’s gone the extra mile.”

Submitted photo



Father Todd Riebe interacts with children in southern Sudan, where he ministered as a high school principal from 1985-93 as a member of the Comboni Missionaries religious order.

She experienced this in a special way in 2009 shortly before she entered the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration in Mishawaka, Ind., as a postulant.

Her sister had just given birth to a baby boy that was ill and had to be rushed to Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis.

“Father Todd came out all the way from Richmond at midnight to baptize him,” said Sister Maria Kolbe, who is now a novice in her community. “He stayed until 2 a.m. on a Sunday morning and then drove back and said five Masses.”

Such dedication to his vocation influenced her own calling.

“The way he gives [of himself] has taught me that we need to fully give of ourselves as priests or as religious,” she said.

And the way that her longtime pastor helped lead

three parishes into one community of faith led her to understand the give and take of life in a religious community.

“For me, the Richmond Catholic Community is like a big family,” Sister Maria Kolbe said. “And so if I were to come home, it’s just like a big family reunion. Father Todd is basically the father figure.”

Gratitude and awe are at the heart of Father Riebe’s thoughts about his life as a priest—whether it is in Richmond or far away in Sudan.

“It is a wonderful life. It is an amazing life. I love being a priest,” Father Riebe said. “Even there, if it had ended that day, that was my thought—thank you, God.”

(To learn more about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, log on to www.HearGodsCall.com.) †

‘Nun Run’ participants invited to visit religious communities on Feb. 24-25

Vocations directors for the Oldenburg-based Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, the Daughters of Charity, the Little Sisters of the Poor, the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods and the

Benedictine Sisters of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove have organized a “nun run” that will take place on Feb. 24-25.

During that time, “nun run” participants will visit, pray and share meals with members of these religious communities

who minister in Indianapolis and Beech Grove.

Women ages 18-40 who are interested in learning more about these religious communities are invited to participate.

Transportation, meals and overnight

accommodations are provided.

For more information or to register for the “nun run,” call Daughter of Charity Sister Theresa Sullivan at 812-963-7563 or send an e-mail to her at Theresa.Sullivan@doc-ecp.org. †



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