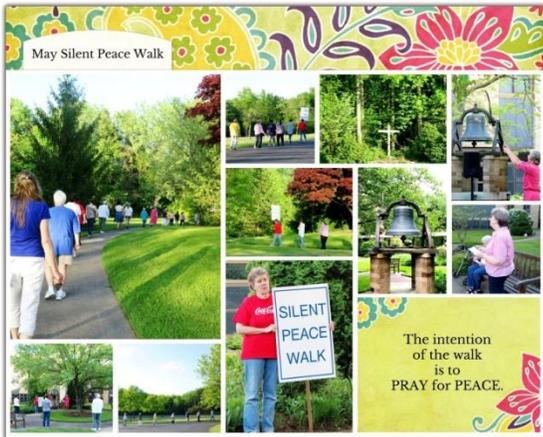


Silent Peace Walk on the Monastery Grounds



Due to COVID-19 physical distancing restrictions, the Silent Peace Walk, sponsored by Benedictines for Peace (BFP) and held monthly since August, 2017, took on new form at the monastery. Several sisters who live at the monastery gathered for a Silent Peace Walk on the monastery grounds.

Silent Peace Walks are in response to the escalating tensions and divisiveness present in our country and our world. This simple public prayer is a powerful nonviolent tool to bring peace, beginning with one's own heart, to

families, communities, nation, world, and all of creation. Especially now, during the suffering of a pandemic, the walk is intentioned to pray for peace for vulnerable peoples and communities suffering from the virus or from the fear and anxiety associated with it.

The Silent Peace Walk initiative is another way of making visible the community's Corporate Commitment: *As Benedictine Sisters of Erie we commit ourselves to be a healing presence and prophetic witness for peace and justice by actively addressing the climate crisis and the rights of women and children.* (Updated: January 2020)

Sister Anne Wambach receives the Serra Club Outstanding Sister of the Year Award



Sister Anne Wambach was named 2020 Outstanding Sister of the Year by the Erie Serra Club, an international Catholic lay organization dedicated to supporting and encouraging vocations to the priesthood and religious life. According to Dennis Deiner, current Serra Club president, "Sister Anne was chosen for her witness and example as prioress of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie. Her work as prioress, her attention to the needs of Erie, her hospitable spirit, and musical contributions to worship celebrations at the monastery make her most deserving."

The Serra Club of Erie, in existence since 1960, has been designating this award for the past 30 years. The festivities usually associated with this award were cancelled due to the imposed restrictions on public gatherings as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, Mr. Deiner came to the monastery to personally deliver the award and extend the well wishes of the Serra Club of Erie.

In accepting the award Sister Anne said: "I am honored to be receiving the Serra Club's Sister of the Year Award. It came as a surprise but some of the most blessed moments in our lives happen

unexpectedly. Thank you for this recognition. When I think about this award and the coming end of my term as prioress of the Erie Benedictines, I realize that I am equally grateful to the community, my sisters who have called forth the best in me. They have helped me become the religious woman I am today and I share this honor with them.”

In lieu of the public festivities the Serra Club made a donation to the charity of Sister Anne’s choice. “Sister Anne chose the Inner-City neighborhood Art House, a ministry of the Erie Benedictines,” said Mr. Deiner. “Before becoming prioress, she ministered there both as Program and Executive Director.”

Postulant Jen becomes a Novice



The Benedictine Sisters received Postulant Jennifer Frazer into the novitiate, the second stage of monastic formation, at Evening Praise on May 2. (Click [here](#) to view a video that recaps the ritual and celebration.)

During the ceremony Jen expressed her desire to seek God through sharing monastic life with the Benedictine Sisters of Erie. Sister Anne accepted Jen’s request with gratitude and then asked the community to voice their willingness to support Jen and Novice Director, Sister

Stephanie Schmidt. Sisters Jen and Stephanie then received a special blessing from the community.

Sister Anne Wambach, prioress, welcomed Jen to this next phase of monastic formation: “Jen, we welcome you to the novitiate. May you be open to the wisdom that you will find there and may you always make kindness one of your greatest gifts as you continue on your spiritual path.” (Click [here](#) to read Sister Anne's reflections.)

As a postulant Jen participated in community prayer and life as well as a program of study. She also ministered at St. Benedict Child Development Center and the Inner-City Neighborhood Art House. As a novice Jen will experience a year of intensive prayer and study, with classes on the Rule of Benedict, monastic history, psalms, liturgy and Scripture. She will minister within the monastery, which will give her the opportunity to come to know the sisters more deeply and learn from them.

“This is a special time for the community,” said Sister Anne Wambach. “When we have a novice in our midst we, too, are called to growth and change.”

Many hands make light work



Teamwork at its best came to the forefront in the monastery when the recommendation was made to use masks to help prevent the spreading of germs as related to COVID-19. A group of community members took up the project of mask-making. In doing so they responded creatively to a need and served a common good.

Friends and family members donated fabric and elastic; the Neighborhood Art House lent sewing machines. Put that together with a monastery sewing room well-stocked in buttons and thread and pre-cut fabric provided by Sisters Beth Adams, Anne McCarthy, Stephanie Schmidt, and Postulant Colleen Leathley, and the sewers were able to take it from there.

Novice Jen Frazer, Postulant Jacqueline Small, and Sister Kathy McCarthy, Scholastic, sewed more than 250+ masks of various styles and color. "It really was a group effort," said Postulant Jacqueline, "and we were happy to be able to provide masks for community members, friends and family, employees and guests at Emmaus Soup Kitchen."

Clearly, this outreach served many. It was also a good reminder that "when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved." (Mattie Stepanek) Many hands really do make light work.

Chapter 57 makeover complete



"It is said that 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder' and I believe the presentation of beauty can make a world of difference for the experience of art," said Sister Margaret Ann Pilewski, the Chapter 57 store manager. "After 30 some years Chapter 57, the community's fine art gift shop, has received even more than a face lift. Combined with a refreshed presentation of art, the finished product leaves beauty in the eye of the beholder and a whole new experience of what was, what is, and what can be."

The gift shop was closed in January and now, after several weeks of renovation, the update is complete. Special thanks go to the monastery maintenance personnel who played a big part in bringing about the transformation, along with Sister Margaret Ann and all who assisted her with the set-up. New lighting, carpets, paint and a rearrangement has helped create a beautiful space. Additional

touches, which include repurposed cupboards and new countertop display tables, as well as some new for sale items, finalize the revitalized look and feel of Chapter 57.

Due to pandemic restrictions, a reopening for the public will be delayed. However, the residents of the monastery were invited to an open house. “The sisters have exclaimed over and over—‘it is so big . . . it is so modern . . . it is so beautiful . . . ,’” shared Sister Margaret Ann. “And I simply smile from ear to ear because I know it is the same size and the same space; the renovations have given new beauty and energy to it.”

While it is true that the monastery remains closed to guests and visitors, the least we can do is provide you with a sneak peek at what to expect when the gift shop is allowed to reopen. Click [here](#) to enjoy a glimpse of what you will see if you ever come to visit the Mount.



Click [here](#) to read the latest edition (Spring/Summer 2020) of the community's magazine: THE MOUNT.