

Fall 2004

Fundraisers

LAVERNA FALL FESTIVAL

The annual LaVerna Fall Festival will be held at LaVerna Heights on Saturday, October 9, 2004, from 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. This year's festival will feature a Huge Furniture Sale! The Sisters of St. Francis will be selling a number of used furniture items from our convent space. Items for sale will include: twin beds, metal dressers with mirrors, wicker rockers, chalkboards, sewing machines, night stands, small tables, chairs and other miscellaneous items.

There will also be a Bake Shop, Coffee Shop/Snack Bar, Crafts, Quilt Raffle and More!

Our quilt...



Quilt Raffle

Quilting Angels, members of the LaVerna Guild, are hard at work on their next masterpiece which will be raffled off on October 9 at the Fall Festival. This year's queen size, hand-quilted treasure is called Sr. Bernadette's Flower Garden. Chances may be purchased by phone, mail or email. Donation of \$1.00 per chance. You need not be present to win. Make checks payable to LaVerna Guild, 104 E. Park, Savannah, MO 64485-0488.





The 2004 Friends of LaVerna Fundraiser ♦A Night on the Western Prairie♦

This third annual fundraising event was the best-attended ever! We wish to thank all who participated in any way. There are many of you: those who gave financial and material donations, those who volunteered their time, talent and resources, those who let us know their support from a distance, and those who came to share a night of fun. We are truly grateful for all of you, our dear Friends of LaVerna. We want you to know that we remember you in our prayers and in a monthly Mass for our benefactors and their intentions.

Putting our heads together for some last minute preparations.

♦We♦♦♦ be happy to take your money or ticket!♦





Sr. Kathleen says ♦Howdy!♦
and gets the spirit moving.



Our own Country Western Star: Jeremy
Long, son of Diane Long, nurse at
LaVerna Village.



Franciscan Federation

In August Sr. Kathleen and Sr. Christine attended the annual Franciscan Federation gathering which held in Fort Worth, Texas this year. This Federation is made up of Third Order Franciscans, both men and women, and is divided according to regions. This year Region 5, our region, was asked to help prepare the prayer and liturgies. Sr. Kathleen was a co-chair of this committee.

One of the actions of the Franciscan Federation was to demonstrate against the death penalty which is practiced so stringently in Texas. The 400+ attendees of the meeting signed postcards to Governor Perry and other officials asking for an end to the death penalty. Members also approved a letter thanking Journey of Hope, families of murder victims, for their witness of the reconciliation and their work to end the death penalty.



Jubilarians of 2004

**You are invited to a reception honoring our Jubilarians:
September 25, 2004
2:00-3:30 P.M.
Madonna Hall
LaVerna Heights**



Sr. Magdalene Bergmann - 70 Years

What is 70 years of religious profession to Sr. Magdalene? It began with a retreat with the Sisters of St. Joseph at Marymount College in Salina, continued with acceptance into the novitiate as Novice Anna with the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in Clyde, MO, and continued with her profession of vows as Sr. Magdalene with Mother Pia's community in Conception, MO, on August 11, 1934. Why three different religious communities? Because of poor eye sight (macular degeneration), she did not think she would be accepted by the Sisters of St. Joseph. Her stay at Clyde found her not at peace with her decision. When she was advised to try Mother Pia's poor group of Franciscan women, there was a feeling of being at home, at peace.

With poor eye sight what service could she offer as a Franciscan sister? From house cleaning, to cooking, to setting up and establishing Motherhouses in Chillicothe and Savannah, to serving as administrator of La Verna Heights Retirement Center, Sr. Magdalene has been a faithful servant in all that she does. She came by cooking naturally (her comment is that the sisters survived her cooking!) as her parents had owned and operated restaurants in Kansas. Her first meal at the elementary grades boarding school found her at the door to the kitchen ordering her meal. She soon found out that you ate what you were served!

God's plan for her to be administrator happened in an interesting way. When asked who was the administrator for the new nursing home at La Verna Heights, Sr. Magdalene responded, "I don't know. I suppose someone from our hospital in Marceline, MO." That wasn't a satisfactory answer for the state licensure person, who then asked, "Who's been hiring personnel?" She responded, "I have," and ended up signing the papers that gave her the role of administrator, a position that with further education she maintained for 35 years!

Whether it was as study hall monitor at St. Joseph's Academy in Chillicothe, MO, or as nursing home administrator, Sr. Magdalene was considered a no-nonsense person. She says she used to chuckle at what the students tried to get over on her. Men in building trades or repair work learned to trust her judgment and know that shoddy work would not be allowed.

Family is very important to her. She shared a common profession of vows anniversary with her Holy Cross brother, Fr. Fritz. Maintaining personal and family history scrapbooks fills much of her time, and attending family get-togethers brings her much enjoyment.

Sister Magdalene remains an active involved person. Attending Andrew County Ministries meetings, managing the work of the Andrew County Food Pantry, and participating in community meetings are ways she continues serving the God who called her to this way of life.



Sr. Raphael - 55 Years

Sr. Raphael is celebrating her 55 anniversary of profession. She professed her vows on June 20, 1949, in Chillicothe. Many and varied have been her ministries in our community. Teaching, formation director, seamstress, provincial superior, and vicar to name a few. But what most people probably think of first are her gifts and talents in the kitchen.

With the arrival of Spring, Sr. Raphael can be found in her garden planting a variety of vegetables and tending the asparagus and rhubarb patches. Many hours are spent tending her garden and harvesting its produce, along with the fruits and vegetables that are given to us. Sr. Raphael sets for all of us an example of stewardship as she takes care to use or preserve for future use, the fruits of the earth. She is very mindful of not letting things go to waste. So when produce shows up at the kitchen door from someone's garden or the local orchard calls regarding peaches or tomatoes she quickly responds that she will be glad to accept the gift. Enlisting her volunteers to peel, core, and stem, she then proceeds to can tomato juice, applesauce, beets and peaches, or to make jellies and relishes.

When she is not preparing a meal or canning, Sr. Raphael is often found baking bread, cinnamon rolls or pies. The aroma of fresh pastries baking permeates the upper floors of the building and puts everyone on alert for the anticipated treat. Once Sr. Raphael has discovered what someone likes in the way of foods, especially baked goods, it is not uncommon to see our guests departing with a loaf of their favorite bread, or some other delicacy she has prepared. Baked goods prepared by Sr. Raphael have also become one of the most sought after items at our annual Friends of LaVerna Fundraiser. These Bakery Baskets containing a variety of breads, rolls, jellies and relishes, have been the objects of some rather aggressive bidding wars between some very determined individuals.

Sr. Raphael's generosity with time and talents, her prayerful spirit, her reverence for creation and her dedication and commitment to God are examples for all of us. May she continue to bring nourishment of body and spirit to those she serves.



Sr. Marie Long - 50 Years

Marie Long, daughter of George Albert and Frances Mary Homer Long, entered our community at St. Francis Convent in Chillicothe, Missouri on February 13, 1951. (See photo of Marie as a postulant pictured with her Mom at St. Francis Convent. As can be witnessed here, her mother always came bearing gifts.)



When Marie was invested on August 12, 1952, she was given the name of Sr. Mary Helen. (Later she chose to return to her baptismal name.) She committed her life to Christ with her profession of vows on February 13, 1954. This fulfilled the wish she had nurtured since the age of six: to be a religious sister. (See photo in front of the Motherhouse in Chillicothe.)



Having earned her Bachelors of Science in education from St. Mary College in Leavenworth, Kansas in 1949, and having already taught one year, Sr. Marie began a long teaching career as a Sister of St. Francis. She taught in various parishes in Missouri and Iowa with the longest period in Marceline, Missouri.



Among her talents Sr. Marie is most known for her musical ability (her voice), her humorous way of looking at life, and her artistic creativity. Throughout the liturgical seasons her banners continue to adorn the podium of our Motherhouse chapel and are also displayed in other locations in the house. (See photo of putting the finishing touches on a banner.)

A change occurred in 1977 for Sr. Marie. For many years she had longed to return to the state of Louisiana where her parents had been born and raised and where she had visited numerous times. She secured a teaching position at St. Paul's in Lafayette and from there went on to teach in other parish schools in New Orleans from 1977 to 1984.



In 1985 she retired in her beloved state of Louisiana and continues to live there, residing in a seniors' retirement complex. During the last years she has had some health struggles, but remains cheerfully independent and happy.



Sr. Rebecca Brennan - 40 Years

It is not worthwhile to dedicate one's life for any cause inferior to that of love or to work hard for anything that is not inspired by redeeming love and does not serve its cause. But the cause of love for which Christ came is, indeed, worth all dedication and even all sufferings. This quote from Bernard Haring's Heart of Jesus is indicative of Sr. Rebecca's life, most especially her 40 years of religious profession. In a prior newsletter issue, Sr. Rebecca wrote of her ministry of suffering which has been a major factor in all that she does, and more so in the last seven years. These years of suffering are a special gift to our community, to the Church, and to all those we serve.

In her early years, Sr. Rebecca was convinced that God was calling her to religious life. After attending a week at our Provincial House in Savannah, she made plans to attend our aspirancy high school. In 1963 she committed her life to God as a religious by professing her vows. Shortly after that she began her teaching career which began at St. Therese School in Parkville, MO, continued at Bishop Hogan in Chillicothe, MO, and evolved into educating new members as director of formation. In 1987, her desire was to work in the healthcare field as a hospital chaplain. She continued in this work and as Director of Hospital Ministry for the Johnson County Kansas Catholic community until 1996, when illness prevented her from continuing.

Each change in Sr. Rebecca's life has been a part of her suffering, of letting go. But it has not prevented her from enjoying life. From playing cards with family or community members, to writing letters of encouragement to friends and family, Sr. Rebecca brings joy and hope to others. As she wrote in her "Redemptive Suffering" article, "We are called to fill up what is still lacking in the suffering Body of Christ. It is the Lord's grace that helps us endure. We do not boast of our sufferings, but rather boast of God's work within us."