



BENEDICTINE SISTERS

SACRED HEART MONASTERY
in CULLMAN, ALABAMA

916 Convent Road NE, Cullman, AL 35055 ~ www.shmon.org ~ (256)734-4622

August 1, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE _____

Two Benedictine Sisters celebrate Jubilees

A jubilant celebration was held Saturday, July 30, at Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman as Sister Mary Adrian McLean marked 60 years and Sister Magdalena Craig 50 years of Monastic Profession. The Jubilee Mass was held in Sacred Heart Monastery Chapel where the Benedictine Sisters were joined by numerous family and friends of the Jubilarians.

Abbot Cletus Meager, O.S.B., served as Principal Celebrant, Rev. Frank Muscolino as homilist, and Rev. Marcus Voss, O.S.B. as Con-Celebrant. Bishop Emeritus David Foley of the Diocese of Birmingham was in attendance.

Sister Mary Adrian was born Lillie Katherine McLean in Jasper, AL, one of seven children of Henry Newton and Rose Nell McLean. She was baptized at St. Cecilia Church in Jasper. While attending Sacred Heart Jr. College in Cullman, Sister Mary Adrian began to discern a call to religious life. Drawn to the life of the Benedictine Sisters, then Lillie Katherine entered Sacred Heart Monastery in 1954, receiving the name Mary Adrian. Sister Mary Adrian made her First Monastic Profession in 1956 followed by Perpetual Profession in 1959.

A gifted teacher, Sister Mary Adrian prepared for this ministry with a bachelor's degree from St. Bernard College, graduate coursework in Educational Administration at St. John's College in Cleveland, OH, and a master's degree in Special Education from Peabody College in Nashville, TN.

For 15 years, Sister Mary Adrian taught in parochial schools in Florida and Alabama, occasionally serving as principal in addition to teaching. In 1971, she began teaching special education in the Cullman city schools, a role she cherished and in which she excelled. Her excellence was recognized state-wide when in 1977 she received the Outstanding Teacher of

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the Year Award for the state of Alabama. The same year, Sister Mary Adrian was inducted into the Teacher Hall of Fame at Jacksonville State University.

In 1981, Sister Mary Adrian was asked by monastic administrators to take on a new role as Associate Director of Benedictine Manor, a role which was a good fit for her personable manner, administrative abilities, and strong sense of ministry. A creative flair was always present in Sister Mary Adrian, but a sabbatical with the Carmelite Sisters in Louisiana allowed her an opportunity to discover artistic gifts she had not previously realized and which eventually found an outlet in the medium of clay. Through both formal instruction and creative experimentation in her studio, Sister has become an accomplished potter. Visitors to the monastery often seek her out, wanting not just to see her pottery, but to experience the warmth and wisdom she exudes as she speaks about the spirituality that undergirds her creative endeavors. Sister also shares her work through the Empty Bowls program and has been invited to the Bahamas on three occasions to present clay workshops for special needs children.

Within the monastery, Sister Mary Adrian is a joyful, generous presence, adding life and light to community celebrations, enhancing the monastery environment with her decorative displays on feasts and special occasions, and enriching the lives of her Sisters with her good cheer, generosity of spirit, and wise heart.

Celebrating her Golden Jubilee of 50 years of Monastic Profession, Sister Magdalena Craig was born Donna Craig in Louisville, KY, to James and Rose Craig and was baptized at Holy Name Church in Louisville. Her family later moved to Decatur, GA, where she became acquainted with the Benedictine Sisters of Cullman through a high school friend. She enrolled as a student at Sacred Heart College, and a year later, in 1964, entered the monastic community. In 1966, she made her First Monastic Profession, followed by Perpetual Profession in 1971.

Sister Magdalena was prepared for the ministry of teaching at Mount St. Scholastica College in Atchison, KS, and the University of Alabama from which she earned a B.S. in Education. Later study at Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., allowed her

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the opportunity to study under eminent theologians as she earned a M.A. in Liturgical Studies.

After a number of years teaching in parochial schools in Florida and Alabama, Sister was asked to return home to the monastery in 1976 to serve as liturgist and organist. In the years since, the monastic community has been immeasurably enriched by the beauty she has brought to liturgical celebrations with her musical gifts and nuanced liturgical insights.

In 1997, Sister Magdalena traveled to France as part of a tour group studying cathedral organs. This experience led to an unexpected ministry – serving as a tour leader on European expeditions which she entitled *Benedictine Journeys*. For around 15 years, Sister organized and led trips to cultural and historical sites throughout Europe. In 2000, she spent six months on sabbatical in France in order to study French.

Within the monastic community, Sister Magdalena has held several significant roles, serving as Vocation Director for several years in the 1980's, and beginning in 2005 accepting the role of Novice Director, responsible for the formation of new members of the monastic community. She continues to serve in this role, and to serve as the long-standing Chair of the Initial Formation Team.

Despite being a gifted musician, a well-read monastic who nearly always has a challenging book or a theological journal in her hand, a widely-traveled tour guide, and a sought-after speaker and retreat leader for monastic formation programs around the country, Sister Magdalena is best known within the community for her simple and generous presence amongst her Sisters, taking her turns with dishes and chores, caring for the monastery cat, taking routine shifts at the monastery Information Desk, and pitching in whenever an extra hand is needed – a good and treasured member of the monastic community who lives the monastic life faithfully and well.

The Jubilee was a celebration of this fidelity on the part of both of these Sisters – 60 and 50 years respectfully of faithful service to God and the world through the monastic way of life. Following the Eucharistic Celebration, a buffet luncheon was held. Numerous family and friends of both Sisters joined the monastic community in celebrating this milestone of monastic fidelity.

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