

Abtei Maria Frieden - Advent 2023 - Advent 2024

With courage and confidence

Year after year, time passes and we are always accompanied and guided. We can have this trust and it constantly strengthens God anew "in good times and in bad". There have been so many events since the last Christmas letter that we can only offer a selection here.

When Mother Mechthild OSB was re-elected on October 19, 2023, she chose the words "With courage and confidence" for her continued service as abbess.

After the number of members in our community had steadily decreased in recent years due to the departure of sisters to the Heavenly Father, the clothing of our postulant Laura Fabian on May 4th was a great celebration. She showed courage and confidence with this decision. Firmly convinced that Christ alone had called her, she wished to be clothed before HIM in our abbey church. This made it possible for her family and friends from home to be present. One of the reasons she chose the name Sr. Maria Nathanaela Nov. OSB was to express the connection with her home parish.

Sr. Bernadette OSB and Sr. Felizitas OSB testified to their courage and confidence. On September 15, we celebrated 40 years of profession with them. Many relatives, friends and benefactors attended the festive Holy Mass, which was presided over by Father Prior Pascal Herold OSB from Münsterschwarzach Abbey. The sermon vividly expressed the special nature of the religious life of the two jubilarians: varied with many highs and lows, carried by Christ, who called the two sisters. Deep gratitude could be felt in every respect on this day. Naturally, many of our Oblates, employees, volunteers and friends came to celebrate this special anniversary. It gives us great courage and confidence that we have so many people who continue to support us through prayer, advice and action. Without them, we would be much poorer and we would no longer be able to cope with everyday life. We would therefore like to take this opportunity to say a very heartfelt "Thank you God" - may HE repay all the good things that are constantly done for us. Let us include this thanks in our daily prayers.

On February 7, Sr. Emeline OSB and Sr. Assumpta OSB flew back home to their Philippine homeland for the abbess election. They helped us a lot in the kitchen, in the washhouse, in caring for elderly and sick sisters and in cleaning the house. We are extremely grateful for their commitment and miss them very much. A few days later, on February 12, Sr. Christine OSB came back to us - we are filled with joy and gratitude.

Although our community is small, we were able to faithfully observe all prayer times. We sing less, instead we recite as best we can. What counts with God is good will and wholehearted commitment. In addition to the daily times of prayer and the daily Holy Mass, we had Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on Sundays and Thursdays, organized hours of

adoration on Sundays, May devotions and solemn rosary devotions in October and rosary prayers on Wednesdays before Vespers.

Many of these services were very well attended, thanks also to the good musical arrangements by volunteer musicians who faithfully stand by us. We are very grateful that our new Archbishop, H.H. Herwig Gössl, who was inaugurated on March 2, has once again provided us with a chaplain. With Mr. Dominik Syga, we have had a new chaplain since September 1st. His spiritual impulses and Sunday sermons are increasingly appreciated by us and the many visitors to the service. For the feast of St. Hedwig on October 16, he invited us to a lecture on the life of the saint from his home country. The audience was very enthusiastic. On December 8, he invited us to a retreat with the prayer community he founded, "Cor unum".

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the priests who celebrated the Holy Eucharist with us this year: P. Augustin OSB from the Abbey of St. Stefan in Augsburg for several months, Dr. Zerndl, Pfr. Zettlmeier, Monsignor Georg Holzschuh, Pfr. Tilscher, Pfr. Treutlein, P. Sebastian OCist. from the Cistercian Abbey of Heiligenkreuz, Pfr. Matthias Wünsche, Deacon Michael Herbst and others.

We say a heartfelt "Thank you" and remain in your prayers.

Abbot Markus Eller OSB from the Benedictine Abbey of Scheyern held a retreat for us sisters and some oblates at the beginning of the year on Jesus' questions to his apostles and thus also to us: "Where do you live?", "What shall I do to you?" and others.

P. Joe Übermesser SJ from Nuremberg came to give us the Sacrament of Reconciliation and to give conferences in English to our Philippine sisters.

Mother Hildegard OSB, Abbess Emeritus of Eichstätt, came to our community for a few weeks after her resignation on Palm Sunday. It was a very enriching time with her, she helped in the library and in the kitchen and gave retreats in English to our Philippine sisters during her stay.

Mother Mechthild met with the abbesses of our Federation at the abbesses' meeting in Tettenweis in May.

Sr. Bernadette OSB and Sr. Nathana Nov. OSB attended novitiate meetings and seminars.

Oblates took part in joint meetings and also helped with upcoming work, and two new interested parties have enquired. We were very saddened by the serious illness of our faithful Oblate Brother Martin from Neuss. Despite intensive treatment in the hospital in Osnabrück, the Lord God called him home to eternity on January 20. M. Mechthild OSB was at the requiem in Nuremberg and our Oblate Sr. Maria Antonia was at the funeral. RIP

Our Jacky from Sommerach was a loyal helper for many years, especially in agriculture. Theresia Then once brought him to us so that he could support us. He spent many hours on the lawnmower, tidying up tools and the yard and, above all, cracking nuts. When he returned after the Christmas break at the end of January, his health was impaired. He soon needed more intensive care, so he had to go home again. In March, after a short period of intensive care in Kitzingen hospital, he passed away peacefully. Mother Mechthild and a group of employees and volunteers accompanied him on his last journey.

Older sisters need more help with everyday life. It's a good thing that we have Reinhard Meyer to support us with transportation for the sick and that Sr. Felizitas received an e-Quad as a gift from a family friend for her 70th birthday. In good weather, she can use this e-Quad to travel independently to the train station in Zapfendorf, from where she can go to physiotherapy at the thermal baths in Bad Staffelstein or to the clinic in Würzburg.

At the beginning of October, our senior Sr. Humilitas OSB fell. No broken bones were found at Scheßlitz Hospital, but there were minor injuries that suggested a brain haemorrhage. She was transferred to the hospital in Bamberg for clarification and possible treatment. "Thank God" she was able to be discharged after a few days due to her improvement and moved into our infirmary. There she was lovingly cared for by fellow nurses, Oblates, volunteers and the Manus nursing service from Zapfendorf. On November 5, she celebrated her 91st birthday. Very clear in her head her life story over and over again. "I'll die soon", a sentence she says very often, expresses her longing to be with HIM soon. Her trust in God and the devotion with which she accepts everything makes us wish that she will be with us for longer.

We were once again able to accommodate many guests - groups and individuals - in the guest house:

St. James pilgrims on foot or by bike, pilgrims on the Marian Way also on foot or by bike, bus pilgrims from Szczecin, bishops from India, Carmelite nuns from the Philippines, night pilgrims from Bad Staffelstein, parish councils, church councils, organic farming events. Throughout the year, Mrs. Christine Helmrich was a sought-after speaker for herb tours, wild herb cooking courses, courses for ointment making and smoking on her own initiative or through the health promotion of our district office in Bamberg.

In the wax factory, Ms. Hossner and Ms. Sellmer decorate countless artistic candles for all kinds of occasions. We were able to sell them in our monastery store, at the monastery market in Walkenried, at the Kunigudentag and Heinrichsfest, at the district office and the farmers' market in Bamberg, at the Genussmarkt in Ebrach, at markets in Bad Staffelstein and at the bazaar in Vierzehnheiligen.

in Bad Staffelstein and at the bazaar in Vierzehnheiligen. Numerous children were able to decorate their own communion candles with great enthusiasm. In this way, they get to know us nuns.

We were very happy when Sr. Corazon OSB and Sr. Trinitas OSB from our communities in the Philippines stayed with us during their semester break (both are studying Gregorian chant in Rome) and supported us noticeably in our choir prayers and work.

In July, M. Mechthild OSB took her well-deserved retirement after 43 years of teaching religion. The school family gratefully celebrated with her at the final service of the elementary school in the parish church of Zapfendorf and the employer of the Ordinariate in the Bamberg seminary.

In agriculture, we unfortunately had to reduce vegetable cultivation due to employee illness. Extreme weather situations are a particular challenge for our farm manager Mr. Andreas Schwab. We owe him a special debt of gratitude for every aspect of his work, including advising other farmers.

A significant change was pending in the kitchen. Our prioress and novice mistress Sr. Bernadette Mayr OSB handed over the management of the kitchen after almost 20 years. With Mr. Aschenbrenner, we have had a new kitchen manager for our community and guests since March 1.

We could go on and on, but it is not possible to list everything. We don't have the ambition, some loyal helpers would rather not be mentioned by name. For them, it goes without saying that they support us with dedication.

May all those who actively help us and all those who support us financially be blessed by God and experience HIS help and faithfulness for themselves. So we approach the feast of the birth of our Lord and Savior and the NEW year 2025 with courage and confidence. May it bring more peace in the world, more sisters, oblates, co-workers and volunteers, and God's protection and blessing for our readers

Your grateful Sisters, Abtei Maria Frieden inKirchsulletten