

## Annual Report of the Benedictine Abbey of Kirchschletten Advent 2011 - Advent 2012



Dear Sisters and Brothers,  
dear Relatives and Friends,

everything has its time, thus we read in the book of Kohelet. It is time again to look back, to pay tribute to God's providence and to let share it people who were close to us.

Much has changed in the past months, and we can give you only a short overview. This is supposed to give witness of our live in fullness as God has promised to everyone who believes in him. Our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI. has announced this a Year of Faith. May it let us experience continuously God's closeness and love.

In the picture above new faces can be seen. One year after Sr. Christine OSB of our founders Abbey of Immaculate Heart of Mary in Fatima, Vigan, Ilocos Sur has joined us, M. Columba OSB, Our Lady of Peace Abbey Cogon and M. Nathanael, Our Lady of the Divine Providence Monastery Mindoro, have decided to send us one sister each to strengthen us. On Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> 2012 came Sr. Hildelita OSB and Sr. Hedwig to help us. Meanwhile they have already adjusted themselves rather well. Everyday there is something new. Presently they are amazed at the snow which covers the landscape like with icing sugar but tastes only for water. It can also be dangerous if you walk to fast or have only shoes with badly profiled soles. Here we learn again to admire the "old crew" of our Philippine sisters for having adjusted themselves to accept and endure this completely different climate.

It was very nice to us when in July M. Cielo OSB, Abbes of Fatima, Sr. Joseph-Mary OSB, Sr. Fatima OSB and Sr. Marianne visited us. Thus many of our voluntary helpers were able to admire Philippine dances at a grill party.

Our voluntary helpers come among others from Würzburg and Bayreuth from Nuremberg and Bamberg from Zapfendorf and Kirchsulletten, even from Hamburg. It is impossible to mention them all by name, it would fill several pages. We heartily give "Thanks to God" to them all. Only one is to be mentioned especially, Mrs. Evelyn Bechtle. She had come from Hamburg and helped us from March to August in our guest-house, the store, the candle workshop and in many transportation services.

Our day of the voluntaries was a feast - incomparable in every aspect, because so many helpers supported us in the past year! The landry hall almost burst.

Back to the past year. Shortly before Christmas Sr. Barbara OSB requested a leave-of-absence. She went home to her parents and is now working with handicapped children. Our oblate Br. Joseph who had worked many years as reliable driver and in the guest-house left us after returning from his vacation in America. Our novice Sr. Johanna became convinced that live in our community is not the right thing for her and gave up her monastic habit.

The New Year began with the annual retreat. The Philippine sisters were joined from January 8<sup>th</sup> by four Philippine sisters who work at Jakobsberg. Retreat master was Fr. Martin Birk OSB from Münsterschwarzach Abbey.

Sr. Pia Luislampe OSB from Dinklage Abbey directed the German language retreat in which some of our oblates participated.

We are very glad that the group of our oblates has grown: Mrs. Rita Bauer was accepted as Sr. Margareta and Mrs. Ingrid Sandmann as Sr. Klara. At our third oblates' meeting five other ones showed interest. Let's see what the Holy Spirit will inspire them.

The monthly devotions of adoration, the Palm Sunday Procession, the Rogation Procession, the May devotions, the Corpus-Christ-Procession as well as the procession at the occasion of Perpetual Adoration and of the Feast of Saint Martin were divine services during the year in which we prayed together with other faithful and gave witness to our faith. It was a special joy for us when Archbishop Prof. Dr. Ludwig Schick on Carnival day spontaneously participated in our prayer service for spiritual vocations. In only a short time our church was filled with worshippers. We also were glad that at the occasion of the second mass celebration of Fr. Gerd Neumeier on July 5<sup>th</sup> Mrs. Renate Kelletat of the Group "Musica Tre Fontane" played recorder. At St. Benedict's Feast Day July 11<sup>th</sup> 2013 this Group will give a concert in our church at 20:00 hours.

At present we all are fairly healthy, no one seriously sick. This makes us thankful. It was not always like this during the past year. We needed medical help and some had to be hospitalized in different clinics. Our Prioress Sr. Bernadette OSB had to undergo shoulder surgery in Bad Neustadt\Saale. Sr. Mary Paul OSB was in a clinic in Bamberg and in the heart surgery department in Erlangen because of heart trouble. Sr. Lumen OSB was given relief in Bamberg and M. Gertraud OSB had to undergo ex-

tensive surgery. In April she had such a bad fall that because of a fractured thighbone the existing hip-bone and knee prosthesis had to be replaced because they did not fit into the middle piece. Smaller and bigger falls of our older sisters were healed.

We had many visitors last year. I mention only a few. On January 13<sup>th</sup> came Mr. Hartmut Koschyk, Member of Parliament, together with his wife Gudrun, his driver and secretary. They were amazed at the life in our Abbey and invited us to a visit to Bayreuth and Goldkronach. We enjoyed a sunny day with excellent food, visited the Castle Church, the Opera House, the Eremitage and the Castle in Goldkronach. Dean Keiling deemed it an honour because he knows our Abbey since 35 years.

On August 11<sup>th</sup> the Protestant Lady Bishop Mrs. Dorothea Greiner said at her visit that it is good that many evangelical faithful are our guests and student pastors male and female come to us for formation. Meanwhile some protestant deaneries have ordered the candle "Leben aus Gottes Kraft" which is produced in our candle workshop. These candles will be distributed at Christmas time.

In the guest-house we had many single individuals as well as groups for retreats, seminars, trainings. Quiet days are in demand.

A pilgrim association from Schlammersdorf came in February for a weekend. We were enthusiastic. Meanwhile we are assigned as a hostel for pilgrims on the way to Santiago and housed a number of such pilgrims. The direction to our house is indicated by small traffic signs. On October 28<sup>th</sup> we invited to a promotion day for St. Jacob's pilgrims prepared by Mr. Sawinski and our voluntary helpers, oblates and the gardeners' association of Kirchschletten\Oberoberndorf.

In the candle workshop many many candles were ornamented for different occasions. They are sold as far as Poland, Russia, Austria, Holland, Togo and even Yokohama. The greatest order was placed for the millenarium of Bamberg Cathedral. The inscriptions "Towards heaven" and "The three Blessed" were executed with a tiny brush. It needed much concentration and endurance.

Many First Communion Children came to us to design their own candles, and we showed them our church and the farm especially the lambs of our Coburger sheep.

Confirmation groups of Bamberg and Würzburg dioceses showed interest in our monastic life. The Divine Office made a deep impression on these young people.

Many children and youngsters were eager to learn. They were sent to us by different activity groups in the area. In a quiz a price was given and that to the Zillig family (parents and four boys) of a village nearby. They were invited to spend one weekend in the monastery.

An apprentice Mr. Sebastian Porzelt has made the examination with distinction. He has a successor now in Mr. Peter Billinger. Mr. Andreas Schwab, the administrator of our ecological farm has the gift to motivate not only young people for agriculture and

conservation of creation. Meanwhile we are acknowledged as agricultural model farming. On August 24<sup>th</sup> we had a demonstration here for almost 200 interested people from Bavaria, Northrhine-Westphalia and Hessia, a full success. They watched to operation of sowing machines. Even the Bavarian Broadcasting Company was here and produced a program on the life of our Abbey, the farm and the work with youngsters from a *Gymnasium* in Bamberg. It was shown on October 12<sup>th</sup> in the series "Our land". We had a lot of positive feedback.

The most successful crops were buckwheat and apples. The former is already sold out the latter we made into apple juice to be sold in bottles. Thousands of them are stored in our farm yard - very tasty!

During the whole year we informed ourselves on the most efficient methods of ecological and easy to handle central heating devices. We have concrete plans for the renovation of house Edeltraud: education towards appreciation of values, conservation of creation, sharing in our life, accommodation for pilgrims and such alike. Now we have to find ways to finance it.

We thank all our relatives, oblates, friends, benefactors, voluntary helpers, interested people and people who pray with us. We include your joys and sorrows in our daily prayers.

We wish you and pray for a Merry Christmas and God's protection and blessing in the New Year 2013.

M. Mechthild OSB and the community

