



CONGREGATION OF BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF PERPETUAL ADORATION
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News Release

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE – Rickenbach: RICK-en-bock

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Benedictine Sisters' healthcare facility damaged during Easter fire

CLYDE, Mo. - Our Lady of Rickenbach, the healthcare facility for the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in Clyde, was damaged during a fire on Easter Sunday, March 23.

The fire was discovered around 8 a.m., just as the sisters were gathering for prayer services. With assistance from guests, staff members, neighbors and first responders, each of the 25 sisters in residence were evacuated safely to the motherhouse.

While the fire was detected and extinguished quickly by the building's automatic sprinkler system, much of the interior received extensive water damage.

"Even though the sprinklers put out the fire, the responders were a godsend," Prioress General Sister Ramona Varela, OSB said. "They immediately went to work cleaning up the water, which was ankle-deep on the floor. If they hadn't done that, then we would have suffered much more damage to the walls, the floor and contents inside the building."

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Paul Davis Restoration is assisting with repair efforts after an Easter fire damaged the Benedictine Sisters' healthcare facility, Our Lady of Rickenbach (above left). Much of the water damage was located along the main corridor, ending at the building's chapel (the round part of the building that is shown).

Volunteer firefighter Dennis Wiederholt (center) and others helped remove ankle-deep standing water, a result of the building's sprinkler system that extinguished the fire. Seven of the roof's trusses were damaged and much of the interior will need to be cleaned and restored (above right). It will be several weeks—perhaps months—before the sisters can move back into the building.

Our Lady of Rickenbach, which opened in 2001 to provide a wide range of the sisters' healthcare needs from recuperative to long-term care, will be closed until restoration efforts are complete. In the meantime, the sisters have been moved to a wing of the motherhouse where they will receive proper medical care under more challenging conditions.

"The sisters are all settled in an area that coincidentally used to be the infirmary many years ago," Clyde Prioress Pat Nyquist, OSB said. "However, we'll have adjustments to make. There are several people to each room, the restrooms are quite a distance from the bedrooms and the area is not handicapped accessible."

Investigators will spend the next few days examining the building to determine the cause of the fire and assess the damage, which includes charred trusses in the roof. Insurance will cover much of the repair cost, but the sisters will be responsible for a \$5,000 deductible.

It could be several weeks or up to two months before the residents will be able to move back in. In the meantime, the sisters have been deluged with offers of assistance from kind-hearted people throughout the area.

"At this point a walk-in bath tub would be wonderful to install in our temporary infirmary as it would be safer for the sisters to use," Sister Pat said. "Since there is no designated recreation area at that location, it would also be nice to have volunteers visit to take the sisters for a walk, to enjoy the spring weather."

When repairs are completed and the sisters can move back to their permanent home, it would be a blessing to have someone help coordinate those relocation efforts, Sister Pat added.

"We'll need to transport sisters, heavy hospital beds, records, food and other supplies," she said. "It will take a lot of people working together."

A fire wasn't the Easter celebration the sisters were expecting, but they are grateful no one was injured and the building was saved. The outpouring of help from those in the area that morning and afterward has served as another reminder of the miracle celebrated each year.

"Beginning with our heroic guests and ending with generous neighbors, we have been humbled by the kindness we received and know we have been incredibly blessed," Sister Lynn Marie D'Souza, OSB said. "We have seen with our own eyes the resurrection, where death and destruction does not have the last word and the living spirit of God rises up in God's people."

For a list of requested donation items or other ways to help, please contact the Benedictine Sisters at (660) 944-2221.

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