



Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration
31970 State Highway P Clyde, Mo. 64432
(660) 944-2221

www.BenedictineSisters.org www.facebook.com/BenedictineSisters
www.twitter.com/BenedictineSis

CONTACT: Kelley Baldwin at (660) 562-7433 or kelley@bspa.us.

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Benedictine Sister pens children's book

CLYDE, Mo. – *“Come rain or shine, bitter cold or heavy heat, Misty never missed a day of what he considered his sacred duty, always eager to be needed and ready to be of service.”*



Benedictine Sister Jean Frances Dolan takes a moment to read from her new children's book, “The Horse's Tale.”

A limited number of copies of “The Horse's Tale” will be available for purchase at \$15 each.

To purchase a copy of “The Horse's Tale,” please contact the Benedictine Sisters at (660) 944-2221 or 31970 State Highway P, Clyde, Mo., 64432. Books will also be on sale at the Tucson, AZ, Monastery gift shop.

The words, inspired by journals and a love of storytelling, appear in a new book called “The Horse's Tale” written by Benedictine Sister Jean Frances Dolan, OSB.

“I have been entertaining the Sisters for years with stories while at table,” she laughed. “So I thought I should start writing some of them down.”

“The Horse's Tale” follows the life of a young girl and her horse, Misty. The two are inseparable as the years pass and life brings a new job, marriage and children.

The idea for the book stemmed from a chance encounter with one of the Congregation's journals, one that Sister Jean Frances discovered in the archives.

“It mentioned a Sister who had taught at our Wildcat school in the late 19th century,” Sister Jean Frances said. “There was a huge blizzard that prevented her from sending the children home one day. It was bitterly cold, and she was afraid they'd get lost. Hours later, after the wood for the stove had run out, she brought her horse into the classroom. The students hugged him for warmth, and it worked! They stayed safe until the storm passed and the parents arrived to take them home.”

Sister Jean Frances quickly wrote a short story about the incident. A friend read it and suggested she use it as the basis for a larger book. Not only did Sister Jean Frances turn it into a 56-page children's book, she also drew the accompanying pen-and-ink drawings, naming many of the town's stores after employees at Our Lady of Rickenbach, the Sisters' healthcare facility in which she resides.

“I've always loved little stories like this, but I never thought of myself as a writer or that I could draw anything,” she said. “Somehow the characters and the animals just came alive.”

Her original goal was to have just a few books published to share with friends and family. However, the reaction to the delightful coming-of-age story has been so popular that the Sisters ordered more copies to sell to the general public. And Sister Jean Frances isn't finished: she's already been invited to write another book.

“Writing uplifts and stimulates my life and has been so much fun,” she said. “It has amazed me how easy it is to do, but God really does all the work.”