

Aurora Literacy Center Caps 25th Year with 'Mystery' Retreat

AURORA—Aurora's Dominican Literacy Center closed its yearlong 25th anniversary celebration June 1 with "Finding Mystery in the Ordinary," a retreat for 20 DLC staff and anniversary committee members.

Keynote speaker was Sister Ann Willits, OP, from Sinsinawa Mound in Wisconsin. The morning event was held at Casa Santa Maria, a new venue in Aurora that debuted with the Dominican retreat.

Sister Ann opened the retreat by asking everyone to say when they began to pay attention to their roles at the center. After a brief break, she asked participants to share what it means spiritually to belong to mystery.

"This retreat invites women to reflect upon the experience of ordinary mystery in their own lives," Sister Ann said. "We explore how God is present in all things."

To close her presentation, she led participants in a group litany on the theme "gratitude." "There is something strange about gratitude," Sister Ann said. "It always comes with prepositions."

"We are grateful for something, to someone, or with others. Let us be both intentional and repetitive in saying we are a grateful people!"

Sister Ann presented each participant with "Finding Mystery in the Ordinary: A Guide for Women," a five-CD audio course. "Finding Mystery" is her third recording for Now You Know Media, Inc., of Rockville, MD.

The retreat concluded with a



(Photo provided/Al Benson)

Dominican Sister Kathleen Ryan (center) introduces Sister Ann Willits (left) at a June 1 retreat concluding the Aurora Dominican Literacy Center's 25th anniversary celebration.

light lunch.

Sister Ann, a preacher, poet, writer and lecturer, has offered retreats, parish missions, lectures and conferences worldwide. She made her profession as a Dominican sister from Sinsinawa, Wis., in 1958.

For 21 years, she directed Parable, a national conference for Dominican Life and Mission. She earned a bachelor's degree from Rosary College, a master's degree from St. Thomas University and did postgraduate studies at Marquette University.

About the center

Founded in 1993 at St. Nicholas Church in Aurora with five students and five volunteers, the staff has expanded from one to seven people and includes both advisory and corporation boards.

Each year, about 200 women are tutored individually by 200 trained tutors.

Staff members register and test prospective students, train tutors and match them with students.

Tutor-student pairs meet at the center weekly for 90 min-

utes. Additionally, a twice weekly conversation class is offered.

Citizenship classes for men and women meet two mornings and two evenings weekly.

Sister Kathleen Ryan, OP, center founder and director, said, "Since 1993, we've tutored over 2,000 women to read, write and speak English. With our help, more than 1,500 men and women are now U.S. citizens.

Volunteers and students are sought for fall classes opening in September.

Info: 630-898-4636