

Atchison Sisters celebrate 160 years

(KAIR)--Atchison's Mount Saint Scholastica Monastery, this month, is celebrating the 160th anniversary of the arrival of the first Benedictine Sisters on the frontier, with two special events to be held, leading up to the anniversary date of November 11.

One part of the overall celebration is set for Sunday, when a concert by the Benedictine College Chamber Singers will be held. According to a release, the singers, under the direction of Dr. Timothy Tharaldson, will perform "The Miracle of St. Scholastica," in St. Scholastica Chapel, located on the grounds of Mount St. Scholastica Monastery. Show time will be 7:00 Sunday evening, with the concert open to the public. While admission will be free, a free will offering will be accepted. Those who attend should enter through the doors at St. Cecelia's.

The release explains that the concert, and another special event planned for the end of next week, are being held to mark the November, 1863, arrival in Atchison of seven Benedictine Sisters who came to start a school for the local residents. St. Scholastica's Academy for young women opened on December 1, 1863, with forty-four students. In 1877, the sisters purchased Price Villa, now called St. Cecilia-, and moved from their location near St. Benedict- Church to the present site of the Mount St. Scholastica Monastery.

As part of the lead-up to the November 11 anniversary, a lantern procession will be held Friday, November 10. Beginning at the Haverty Center on the Benedictine College Campus, the processsion will make its way across Atchison to the Benedictine Sisters' monastery. Beginning that evening at 6:00, the procession is open to the public.

The release explains that the event is held to commemorate two men who, on November 11, 1863, "carried lanterns to protect the arriving Sisters from anti-Catholic threats." At the end of the walk to St. Scholastica Chapel, the participants will pray with the sisters and have refreshments. Participants are invited to bring a lantern if they have one, preferably using a battery-operated candle.

According to the release, the lantern procession will not only honor the Sisters on the 160th anniversary of their arrival, "but will call on the people of Atchison to continue to shine their light against the prejudices and violence of our world today."

