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Coming Events



Display of INAI Studio sacred space interior design photos and awards in the lobby of Weber Center Retreat and Conference Center, Adrian, Michigan.



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Adrian Dominicans

INAI Studio celebrates 40th anniversary

The Adrian Dominican Sisters will celebrate the 40th anniversary of INAI Studio, founded by Sisters Barbara Chenicek, OP, and Rita Schiltz, OP, on June 2. The event—marking the exact date that INAI was opened—will begin at 1 p.m. with a visual presentation of their award-winning sacred space design in the auditorium of Weber Retreat and Conference Center. An open house tour of INAI Studio will follow, with refreshments provided.

Through INAI Studio, Sisters Barbara and Rita have spent the past 40 years designing worship areas for a number of parishes and institutions in the United States and abroad, including the Dominican Chapel of the Plains, in Great Bend, Kansas; the Oratory at Jubilee Centre in Rome; Carmelite Monastery Chapel in Baltimore, Maryland; and the Chapel of Hope at Holland Community Hospital in Holland, Michigan, among others. They also served as consultants for the design and construction of the Monastery and Basilica at Prouilhe, Fanjeau, France.

In August 2009, Sisters Barbara and Rita presented a special gift to the Adrian Dominican Congregation: a 17-foot tall fabric-appliqued tapestry of 14th-Century Dominican mystic and reformer, St. Catherine of Siena, which has been integrated into the wall of St. Catherine Chapel on the Motherhouse grounds.

The churches, hospital and monastery chapels, and other liturgical creations have earned Sisters Barbara and Rita numerous awards. The Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art and Architecture recognized them for their liturgical and interior design of Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Naperville, Illinois, and for St. Philip the Apostle Catholic Church in Lewisville, Texas. They have given presentations on design at Yale University in 2007; World Youth Day, a gathering of Catholic young adults, in Toronto in 2002; and at the National Conference of the Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art and Architecture in 1992.

Both artists were born in Chicago. Sister Rita entered the Adrian Dominican Congregation in 1943 and Sister Barbara in 1953. They are celebrating their Double-Diamond (70 years) and Diamond (60 years) Jubilees, respectively, this year.

Sister Rita taught art at Colegio Santo Domingo, a high school established by the Adrian Dominican Sisters in the Dominican Republic, from 1946 to 1957, earning her Ph.D. in art from the Universidad de Santo Domingo in 1957. She was an assistant professor of design, metalwork, and graphics at Barry College (now University) in Miami, Florida, from 1958 to 1963 and directed the art department at St. Dominic College in St. Charles, Illinois, from 1963 to 1970. During a 1970 to 1972 sabbatical, she did post-graduate study in metal smithing and jewelry at California State University.

Sister Barbara studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and earned her bachelor's and her Master of Fine Arts degrees at Siena Heights College (now University) in Adrian. She directed the art department at both Aquinas High School in Chicago and at Rosary High School in Detroit. From 1966 to 1973, she taught design, drawing, and painting at Siena Heights. Both Sisters studied art and architecture during visits to Japan in 1986, Mexico in 1988, and Mali in 1993.

For more information about the Adrian Dominican Sisters, visit their web site at www.adriandominicans.org.

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