



THE COMMUNITY CASTELLER RING ON SCHWANBERG

We are a religious community of women within the Lutheran Church, who live a life of worship and work according to the Rule of St. Benedict.

The name “Casteller Ring” refers back to the beginning of our community life at Castell, a village 10 km away from Schwanberg. The spiritual roots go back to the liturgical renewal within the Reformed churches in the twenties and thirties of the 20th century on the one hand, and to the Lutheran Girl Guide movement on the other. Like other religious communities in the Reformed Churches our community sprang up after the Second World War in 1950. Contacts with the nearby Benedictine Abbey of Muenster-schwarzach played an important part. Our first sisters were deeply impressed by the prayer and monastic life of the monks and this nourished the vision that Benedictine life should also be possible in the Lutheran Church. At that time this was something completely new in the Lutheran Church but Christel Schmid and Maria Pfister dared to start monastic life, at the beginning in secret, and thus founded our Community. Soon more sisters came and the house at Castell became too small. We moved to Schwanberg which is now our home.

At present (in 2013) we are 39 sisters: 3 novices, 2 sisters with temporary vows, 34 professed sisters. We live by the so called Evangelical counsels chastity, communion of goods and mature obedience, so that we may grow deeper in our relationship with Jesus Christ. We take life vows which give us inner freedom. We have a prioress who is elected for a limited time by all the professed sisters. They form the board of sisters, the chapter, and make all the important decisions together with the prioress. Women who want to join the community live with us for about five years before they can take life vows. In this time they get to know community life and, both the community and the sister, have a chance to find out if the applicant is called to the monastic life. A newcomer is first a postulant, goes on to be a novice and after about two further years she can take temporary vows. There is an increasing number of oblates: women and men who live in their own homes with families, work, parishes etc, but are attached to our Community. They try to practise insights from the rule of St. Benedict in everyday-life.



Schwanberg is a hill of 480 m, a spur of “Steigerwald” with beautiful vineyards along its slopes. It was inhabited by the Celts. There is an ancient castle the basements of which date back to the Middle Ages. There is also a lovely garden with putti and a beautiful park. We made a modern conference centre out of the castle and in the course of time built several new houses, a convent, and in 1987 a church of our own, dedicated to St. Michael. The church is the centre of all the buildings on the hill and thus makes visible that we live according to the Benedictine motto “ora et labora” (pray and work). Prayer is the most important thing, work is the other side of the coin. We gather for prayer four times a day (lauds, midday prayer, vespers, compline) and celebrate the eucharist three times a week. Guests and visitors are welcome to join in.



Three houses are equipped for guests (the former castle accommodates seminar groups and holiday guests; Haus St Michael is a silent house, especially for retreats; Jugendhof offers facilities for school classes, children, young people, handicapped persons, families. Haus Respiratio accommodates pastors and church workers who need a time of renewal. They are offered therapy and spiritual guidance for several weeks.) The houses for guests belong to the “Geistliches Zentrum”, our work. There is also a café for the many hikers, bikers and tourist groups as well as single tourists who visit Schwanberg.

Sisters of the community lead courses and seminars such as liturgical singing, psalms, Bible study, feasts within the course of the church

year, retreats, meditation courses, youth activities. Apart from that we take also groups who want to use their own programme. Our two Schwanberg pastors Pfarrer Harald Vogt and his wife Pfarrerin Dr. Thea Vogt and several sisters offer counselling and spiritual guidance. A trained music therapist offers music therapy. Young people are welcome as volunteers and help us and our employees.

In 2007 the first “FriedWald” (woodland cemetery) owned by the Lutheran Church was opened on Schwanberg. The ashes of a deceased person may be buried in a biodegradable urn under a tree – a form of burial which has become very popular. Three of our sisters are involved in this work. We pray for the departed and offer counselling for the bereaved.

We try to recognize and understand the signs and needs of our time and to contribute to building up the Church of Jesus Christ within our modern world. We want to be free for God and the coming of His kingdom.



Communität Casteller Ring Schwanberg 4, 97348 Rödelsee,
www.schwanberg.de , mail: ccr@schwanberg.de