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484 acres set aside for future regional seminary, monastery in South

by SueAnn Howell by Catholic News Service

CHARLOTTE, N.C. -- A community of cloistered nuns and the Te Deum Foundation have jointly acquired land in North Carolina's Cleveland County for a new monastery and a future seminary.

Mother Dolores Marie of the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration, abbess of St. Joseph Monastery, and Wilhelmina "Billie" Mobley, president of the Te Deum Foundation, announced the purchase of 484 acres in Mooresboro, about 60 miles west of Charlotte. The property is situated on the south side of the Broad River, adjacent to a county-protected greenway.

The land will be split between the Poor Clares, for a permanent monastery, and the Te Deum Foundation, for a future regional seminary.

The Poor Clares, who moved their community to the Diocese of Charlotte from Ohio in 2010, have been living in a temporary monastery on the St. Ann Church campus in Charlotte. They are now raising money to build a chapel and monastery on the 333 acres they will occupy.

The Poor Clares are part of the religious order of Eternal Word Television Network founder Mother Angelica, located in Hanceville, Ala., at the monastery at the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

The other 151 acres are being set aside for a future regional seminary -- a project being spearheaded by the Te Deum Foundation, a nonprofit organization that operates separately from the Diocese of Charlotte and supports seminarians in their education.

The proposed seminary would be the only one in the Southern region of North and South Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee and Mississippi.

Right now, seminarians for the Diocese of Charlotte attend schools in Maryland and Ohio, including Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg and Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus. Several also attend the Pontifical North American College in Rome. The Diocese of Charlotte has 17 seminarians currently training for the priesthood.

Both the Poor Clares and the Te Deum Foundation had been searching for land somewhere in the Diocese of Charlotte for some time, and Mother Dolores Marie and Mobley say they are thankful to have found a mutually beneficial piece of property.

Through a combination of the generosity of the non-Catholic landowner and money from the Te Deum Foundation and the Poor Clares, they succeeded in acquiring the piece of property valued at \$2.9 million, Mobley said.

Mother Dolores Marie and Mobley met with Charlotte Bishop Peter J. Jugis March 1 to discuss the project and to show him a topographic map of the site.

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The two also shared a video presentation on their complementary mission of assisting priests and seminarians through prayer and sacrifice. They are currently visiting parishes and groups, showing the video, and discussing how donations can be made to the Poor Clares and the Te Deum Foundation to further this work.

"It is great news that the sisters have been able to acquire the land for their monastery," Jugis said. "I pray that God continue to bless them as they move forward with their plans. Their witness of a life devoted to contemplative prayer is a great blessing for the church in North Carolina."

The Poor Clares spend hours each day in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, praying and interceding for the whole world, with a particular charism of spiritual motherhood, especially for priests.

The Te Deum Foundation is also dedicated to prayer and the support of current and future priests in their educational needs.

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