



LIGHTNING-STRUCK MONASTERY BLESSED BY ASHLY AMPLIFIERS

ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA – Mount Saint Benedict Monastery in Erie, Pennsylvania is the spiritual center of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie and a nursing facility for elderly women. Its main chapel seats approximately one hundred individuals, and the sisters hold two well-attended services a day. Recently, the chapel was struck by lightning, which damaged all of the electronics in its sound reinforcement system beyond repair. The company that had installed that system, **Fact AV Technologies** of North East, Pennsylvania, quickly stepped in with a loaner system. In only a month's time, Fact AV had designed and installed a new system based on Ashly ne Series amplifiers. All of the sisters and nursing home residents noticed the new system's improved intelligibility and clarity.

“Almost all of the sisters can hear way better than I can,” laughed Eric Johnson, owner of Fact AV Technologies. “When we were commissioning the original system, they complained of a high-pitched hum. I couldn’t hear it, and only one of the three guys on my crew could hear it... barely. But they were right. I tracked down the problem and removed the hum.” In addition, everyone who attends services at Mount Saint Benedict Monastery regularly calibrates their ears to acoustic music. The services are frequently supported by woodwind ensembles, acoustic guitar, piano, bell choir, an a cappella choir, and myriad guest musicians.

Johnson duplicated the original system’s processing and user control, with a few minor updates. Inputs are ten wired and six wireless microphones plus a CD player. An AMX user-control system provides customized control of input selection and output volume. None of the building’s twelve-inch coaxial loudspeakers were damaged by the lightning strike. In contrast, Johnson took the amplification in a new direction in the new system. An eight-channel Ashly ne8250 powers the main speakers for the sanctuary. A two-channel Ashly ne800 powers the stage monitors, and a two-channel Ashly ne800.70 powers the 70-volt systems on the building’s first and second floors.

“Ashly’s feature set per cost is unsurpassed,” said Johnson. “Ashly offers a range of configurations that are very useful to me as I design optimal systems in different scenarios. Ashly amplifiers, and the ne-Series in particular, are lightweight and compact. The units are always reliable. I’ve almost never had service issues, but when I have, Ashly’s support staff turns the repairs around right away or sends advance replacements. Either way, they take care of me.”

He continued, “In addition, they sound great. As you might imagine, the monastery is very quiet, and the amps are perfectly silent. And their fidelity is excellent.” Despite all of the similarities between the old system and the new system, the sisters and the nursing home residents have noticed an obviously discernable increase in the system’s intelligibility and clarity. “The new Ashly amplifiers have played a huge role in that improvement,” concluded Johnson.