

# ANNUAL REPORT

2016-2017



Benedictine Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery  
Office of Development, Duluth, MN





**St. Scholastica Monastery**

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## DEAR FRIENDS OF THE MONASTERY,

**T**his year marks the 125th anniversary of our founding in Duluth as St. Scholastica Priory, later named St. Scholastica Monastery. We know that we have been able to serve the people of Duluth, Northern Minnesota, and beyond only by the grace of God, and by the support over the years of family and friends like you. We are grateful to God and invite you to join us in prayers of thanksgiving for this blessing.

In a recent survey we asked for suggestions for topics of interest to our readers and received the question, "What do Sisters do?" In this annual report, we offer a small sampling of photos representing ministries of the Sisters in response to that request. We hope you enjoy seeing the varied ways the Sisters have used their talents, and recognize that they are similar in many ways to what you, too, are called to do to give glory to God.

None of our work would be possible without the support of family and friends. You play a vital role in our ministries with your prayers, volunteer hours, and donations. This year our volunteer coordinators reported 2,500 hours of service to the community. There were 1,360 contributions given to the Monastery, including gifts from 136 first time donors, which totaled \$267,724, an increase of \$38,566 from last year. In addition, \$300 was given through the Father John Whitney Evans Fund to support vocation efforts of the Diocese of Duluth, the local Knights of Columbus, and the Monastery.



Community Support.....	\$ 159,456
Retirement.....	\$ 11,697
Care of Infirm Sisters.....	\$ 13,091
Center for Spirituality and Enrichment.....	\$ 61,711
McCabe Renewal Center .....	\$ 7,319
Vocations.....	\$ 433
Twinning Monasteries.....	\$ 7,132
Local Poor.....	\$ 540
Other (designated by donor) .....	\$ 6,345
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>\$ 267,724</b>

**We, the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, Duluth, Minnesota, are monastic women who seek God in community through a life of prayer and work.**

**Living in accordance with the Gospel and the Rule of St. Benedict, we respond to the needs of the Church and the world through our ministries.**

We are grateful for all of your gifts.  
Blessings and peace,

*Sister Beverly*

Sister Beverly Raway  
Prioress

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## Our Prioresses



Present and past Prioresses pose for a photo in honor of 125 years as Duluth Benedictines.

Back L to R: Sisters Kathleen Hofer, Lois Eckes, Danile Lynch.

Front L to R: Sisters Grace Marie Braun, Beverly Raway, Clare Marie Trettel.



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August 2017, posing for a group photo in recognition of 125 years of the Sisters of the Benedictines.



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## Ministry of Outreach



Sister Edith Bogue (left) is passionate about monastic life. She shares her enthusiasm through parish visits, retreats, presentations, writing and social media.

Sister Lisa Maurer (right) is on a mission to touch the lives of all who she addresses in the many keynote speeches and retreat presentations she gives annually.

Both Sisters are sought after to travel around the U.S. to deliver keynotes and special presentations.

*"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."*

~ Mark 16:15

## Ministry of Education



Sisters Arlene Kleeman (left) and Lois Ann Glaudel (right) teach immigrant children in Chicago. They come with no English, and become proficient in one year. Their families come with nothing, and the Sisters and donors help them with clothing and household goods. Mostly Muslim, the children delight in Catholic rituals and love sharing their own religious rites. It makes for a rich and varied learning environment for all the children, most of whom go on to college.

*"Listen, my child, to the Teacher's instructions, and attend to them with the ear of your heart."*

~ Rule of St. Benedict, Prologue

## Ministry of Temporalities: Transportation

Sister Gloria Ess is part of the Temporalities team in the Monastery. She oversees the Community's fleet of cars, assigning cars and cell phones to Sisters who are traveling.

Sister Gloria is also an avid knitter; her creations keep some of our city's homeless people warm during the winter.



*"She will regard all utensils and goods of the monastery as sacred vessels of the altar, aware that nothing is to be neglected."*

~ Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 31



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## Ministry of Prayer



Prayer is at the center of our life as Benedictine women. Morning and Evening Prayer create a rhythm of prayer, work, study, and rest that consecrates all we do to God and places time itself in a state of holiness. We follow the example of Christ, who withdrew to pray to his Father.

*"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing,  
give thanks in all circumstances;  
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."*

~ 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

## Ministry of Caring for the Earth: Gardening



In their free time, many Sisters slip out to the gardens to care for their adopted plot. Sister Mary Josephine Torberg tends to the many gardens and seasonal pots outside the Monastery. Sister Pauline Micke raises tomatoes in a raised bed close to the Monastery where she can keep her eyes on them, and other vegetables in a plot down by Chester Creek.

*"The Earth is our environment to  
protect and the garden to tend to."*

~ Pope Francis

## Ministry of Caring for the Earth: Groundskeeping



We use no weed killers or pesticides on our land, only hard work, much of which is done by Sister Theresa Spinler. (left) 'Wildflowers' are accepted as part of the price of healthy soil. They provide food for bees, wasps, and birds, and find their way into the Chapel arrangements.

+Sister Mary Felten (right) who loved tending the gardens at the Sacred Heart Shrine, went home to God August 23, 2017.

*"The vocation of being a "protector"...  
means respecting each of God's creatures and  
respecting the environment in which we live."*

~ Pope Francis

## Ministry of Peace and Justice



Working for justice may involve petitioning Congress for humane treatment for immigrants, or raising money to help neighbors lift themselves out of poverty. Each June the Sisters volunteer at Duluth's Rhubarb Festival that supports CHUM, a fine local charity. This year, Sister Dorene King helped children make Norwegian troll faces out of rhubarb stalks and leaves, and Sister Therese Carson helped children with the coloring contest.

*"The life of Jesus is a life for others.  
It is a life of service."*

~ Pope Francis



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## Ministry of Making Connections



Sister Elizabeth Farias taught Spanish for many years before coming to Duluth as a Sister. She is our monastic librarian, and also teaches Spanish to some of the Sisters so that we can exchange letters with our pen pals at our Twinning community in Chile, *Monasterio de Santa Maria de Rautén*. In today's Church, learning another language helps us reach out in hospitality to recent immigrants who do not yet speak fluent English, especially the poor and marginalized.

*"Language is a gift that can be used thoughtfully or thoughtlessly, humbly or proudly. Someone constantly aware of the presence of God will know when and how to speak."*

— Columba Stewart, OSB

## Ministry of Fine Arts

Before entering the Community, Sister Therese Carson 'wrote' four traditional icons during retreats with a Russian Orthodox master.

She said, "When we pray in the presence of an icon, it creates a pool of stillness in which to encounter God. In painting an icon, we must first surrender our ego and faithfully follow direction from a master. As we work, we share in the ongoing creative work of the Holy Spirit. In a very real sense, what is formed on the icon board and in our hearts comes from God."



Icon of the Prophet Micah

*"Her eyes gaze upon the infinite spaces of the heart where joy and sorrow are no longer contrasting emotions, but are transcended in spiritual unity."*

—Henri Nouwen, on the Vladimir Virgin

## Ministry of Spiritual Outreach



Sister Sarah Ann O'Malley has a gift for taking disparate people and linking them through the deeper spirituality that lies at the roots of their creativity, such as composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, artist Vincent van Gogh, and scientist and theologian Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. She shows how their insights teach us how to live our lives today, as we continue on the path that leads to God.

*"Each one of us has our own evolution of life, ... but certain things are common. We learn things from each other's experience for, on a spiritual journey, we all have the same destination."*

— A. R. Rahman

## Ministry of Chaplaincy



As a chaplain at St. Mary's Medical Center in Duluth, Sister Sue Fortier is a frequent witness as God breaks into the human story with love, reconciliation, forgiveness and deep gratitude.

Being a chaplain is difficult and exhausting work, but it also a blessing to bring God's healing presence to another in the midst of suffering.

*"The sick, the old, the unborn and the poor, are masterpieces of God's creation, made in his own image, destined to live forever, and deserving of the utmost reverence and respect."*

— Pope Francis



# OUR 2017 JUBILARIANS

## Sister Victorine Sitter, 75 years Jubilarian, July 11, 1942

As a young girl in Berwick, North Dakota, Katherine Sitter worked in her father's general store and dreamed of becoming a Benedictine Sister. She was blessed to have heard the call from a young age. After elementary school she became a boarding student at Stanbrook Hall High School in Duluth and got to know many of the Benedictine Sisters. After graduation she entered St. Scholastica Monastery, taking the name Sister Victorine. Her sister Agnes followed her six years later.

Sister Victorine began teaching in the Duluth Diocese parish schools, working mainly with young children. Some of her students still keep in touch with her after many years. When the public school system in Towner, North Dakota, was hiring teachers under "Title 1" (which provides financial assistance to schools in low-income areas), she returned to her home state and taught English



Sister Victorine Sitter

in the public elementary school, where by law she wore secular clothing. She donned the habit again to teach CCD classes at St. Cecilia Parish in the same town.

After her retirement, she served in the Monastery transportation office and Benet Hall infirmary. Ten years ago, she was asked to be a proctor at The College of St. Scholastica. There she worked in a quiet and softly-lit room where students whose health problems require a low-stress environment where they can take exams and perform better. She prayed

with each person before they began the test, and her loving presence had a calming effect and helped them become their best.

Sister retired this spring at age 94, and now spends her time in prayer and visiting with Sister Agnes and the other Sisters on Benet Hall. "I am glad for a quieter life now, to spend more time in prayer with my Lord," she said. Her hugs and smiles are legendary.

## Sister Ramona Ewen, 75 years Jubilarian, July 11, 1942

Born Mary Ewen, Sister Ramona joined the Monastery in 1940 and made her First Profession in 1942. She studied Business at The College of St. Scholastica (CSS) and the University of Minnesota, and began her long teaching career at Duluth Cathedral High School, where she introduced students to bookkeeping, typing, and the use of office machines, and occasionally took on a sophomore English class. As the advisor for the Girl's Athletic Association, she facilitated the purchase of a hand-carved statue of the Virgin Mary for the school from Oberammergau in Germany; after Cathedral High closed, the statue was moved to the dining room of the Monastery.

Sister Ramona then became assistant professor of accounting at CSS and was student advisor for the CSS Brainerd campus. In her free time, she tutored younger students who needed one-on-one help in reading, math,



Sister Ramona Ewen

spelling, and English. In 1995, she won the Scholastica Inspiration Award for her "commitment, unselfishness, compassion, and friendliness," and over the years had three scholarships endowed in her name. She also served on the Boards of Trustees for Hibbing General Hospital, St. Joseph Medical Center in Brainerd, and facilities of the Benedictine Health System.

In 2000, Sister Ramona visited our Twinning Community of *Santa María de Rautén* and became friends with the Chilean Sisters.

She has also travelled to Ireland, Scotland, England, and Quebec, and is an avid Twins and Vikings fan. During baseball season, one can usually hear the Twins play-by-play drifting from her room.

The next time you read an edition of *Pathways*, think about Sister Ramona and say a prayer for her. She is the one who named it.



# OUR 2017 JUBILARIANS

## Sister Marguerite Baxter, 70 years Jubilarian, July 11, 1947

**F**lorence Baxter came from a close-knit and well-educated family in Houghton, Michigan to attend The College of St. Scholastica (CSS) where she studied Medical Technology. There she found her vocation as a Benedictine Sister. She received the name Marguerite, and after her novitiate was sent to teach at elementary schools. It was a difficult time for her, and after a few years she was happy to be reassigned to St. Mary's Hospital, where she finished her clinical experience and worked for several years in the hospital's laboratory. After earning a Master's degree from the University of Minnesota, she returned to teaching, this time at CSS as Chair of the Medical Technology Department, then as Co-Chair of the Health Science Division. She enjoyed teaching juniors in their early professional career. She left the College in 2000, having been awarded the status of faculty emeritus.

In addition to her professional commitments, over the years she represented St. Scholastica Monastery on the Board of



Sister Marguerite Baxter

Directors of St. Joseph Hospital in Brainerd and the Benedictine Health Center and St. Mary's/Duluth Clinic Health System in Duluth.

Next she worked behind the scenes in the Monastery liturgy office, bringing her excellent organizational skills and attention to detail to preparing materials for rituals and liturgies, and keeping us compliant with copyright laws. "I have always loved and appreciated the liturgy. Daily communal Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours keep us centered on the life of Christ and empower us to serve others in Christ's name."

In 2015, Sister left the Liturgy office and began her residence in Benet Hall. Grateful for this time to intensify her spiritual life, she now serves as a prayer advocate for others, and is always ready to serve as consultant for the Liturgy Office. When asked about the blessings of aging, Sister Marguerite said, "The Lord gives us gifts and we use them to the best of our ability – there is no retirement. Whatever the season of life, we use them in the service of God and others."

## Sister Mary Clare Hall, 70 years Diamond Jubilarian, July 11, 1947

**R**aised on a farm near Two Harbors, Minnesota, Claree Hall observed local women working on farms and raising families, and found she wasn't drawn to that life. What attracted her was the life of the Benedictine Sisters from St. Scholastica Monastery who came to teach religion to children one evening a week at her parish. She liked their kindness and respect, and the way they listened to her. Seeing her interest, the Sisters received permission from her parents to let her take a more active role in the CCD classes, and so she began to help with the smaller children.

After high school she entered the Community as Sister Mary Clare. She was an outstanding elementary teacher and was especially notable for excellence teaching in the



Sister Mary Clare Hall

first and second grade. She taught elementary school in Duluth, Aitken, Chicago, Cincinnati, and Minneapolis. The driving force of her ministry was to pass on the love she had received, always looking for goodness in the grade school children whom she taught, telling them, "You are very precious to God, and God loves you." Her former students, now adults, often ask about her and praise her contributions to their lives. She brought spiritual healing to her ailing mother and sister when she took care of them in their last illnesses.

Sister Mary Clare now takes part in the life at Safe Harbor in the Benedictine Living Community in Duluth, where she shares her healing love and compassion with others. She and they struggle with failing memory but know they are always precious in God's eyes.



# OUR 2017 JUBILARIANS

Sister Martha Bechtold, 60 years Jubilarian, July 11, 1957

**J**eanette Bechtold was raised in a large farming family near St. Cloud, Minnesota, where she learned to work hard, keep organized, make do with little, and fix whatever was broken. Curious about religious life, she attended a vocation retreat at St. Scholastica Monastery and came as postulant two months later. As Sister Martha, she earned Bachelor and Master degrees in Education. Her love of children and of creative play fitted her well for her first ministry as an elementary school teacher, where she encouraged her students to explore their creativity. In later years, she would teach religion to children, using teddy bears, songs, and her puppet Shelby to bring the Gospel stories to life, while captivating them with her balloon animals.

Moving on, Sister Martha became the Director of McCabe Renewal Center, directed the Monastery's oblate program, and cared for the associates, our live-in volunteers. She made several trips to our Twinning Monastery in Tanzania, where she developed a deep love for the Tanzanian people. She can still recite the Lord's Prayer in Swahili.



Sister Martha Bechtold

Sister Martha's practical training on the family farm prepared her to become Director of Temporalities where, she said, "My job requires me to care for everything that is not eternal." Sister Martha was the ideal cellarer, as this position is called in the Rule of St. Benedict, who stipulated that she should be, "wise, of mature character, sober, calm, and God-fearing. ... Above all things let her have humility; and if she has nothing else to give let her give a good word." Sister Martha put it this way: "Today we need good Benedictine stewardship even more to counteract the careless use of created things."

Sister Martha now lives on Benet Hall and spends her days praying and crocheting Christmas tree garlands for our Christmas Bazaar. She brings a dry wit to the challenges of growing old. After a walk outside on a bitterly cold and windy day, she commented, "Well, one thing about today's weather: it didn't take me long to get a lot of fresh air." Looking back on her decision to become a Sister, she said, "It meant moving a long way from home, but I am still happy with my decision."





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## MISSION



We, the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, Duluth, Minnesota, are monastic women who seek God in community through a life of prayer and work. Living in accordance with the Gospel and the Rule of St. Benedict, we respond to the needs of the Church and the world through our ministries.

*During the past year Sisters have served in the following ministries:*

Administration  
Advocacy  
Architecture  
Creative Arts (art, writing,  
photography, icon writing)  
Development Ministry  
Education  
Foot Care  
Governance  
Hospitality  
Health Care

Music  
Office and Secretarial Ministry  
Pastoral Care  
Peace and Justice Ministry  
Photography  
Public Speaking  
Prayer Ministry  
Renewal/Retreat Ministry  
Spiritual Direction Ministry  
Sponsorship  
Vocation Ministry

