



PATHWAYS

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*Lo, winter
is past...*



*the time of
singing birds
is at hand*

Song of Solomon 2:11



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LETTER FROM THE prioress

Here in the Northland the earth emerges, tentatively yet persistently, from a brutal winter into the beauty and promise of spring, filling our noble hearts with the joy of rejuvenation and life awakened and renewed once more. Echoing the sentiments of poet Albert Camus, we can triumphantly declare that “Once in the midst of a seemingly endless winter, I discovered within myself an invincible spring.”

Our Lenten/Easter journey through the Paschal Mystery, (the dying and rising of Christ), celebrates the soul’s movement echoed in nature. Through our Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving we invite God to transform our heavily laden and weary hearts into new hearts, radiant with Christ’s Easter love.

The joy of that love sings in our hearts like the song of the birds in springtime, declaring that once again our hard-hearted, wintry spirits have been raised to new life. Indeed, within every human heart there lives an invincible spring, teeming with the promise of Life in abundance, steeped in layers of the Divine, gifting us with Spirit energy to bless and heal our world.

In her poem “The Mountains of the Lord” Jessica Powers tenderly describes in another way the joy of Christ’s Easter love that delights the soul transformed by Lenten grace.

The Mountains of the Lord

.....

I questioned innocence renewed by grace:
what did you see on hills beatified?
What voices heard you in the holy place?
With words of light the penitent replied:

Under the night’s impenetrable cover
wherein I walked beset by many fears,
I saw the radiant face of Christ the Lover,
and it was wet with tears.

May Christ be an invincible spring unfolding in your hearts and blossoming in the beauty of your grace-filled life.

Lovingly yours in Christ with deep gratitude and Easter prayer,

Sister Lois Eckes

Sister Lois Eckes, Prioress



LENTEN REFLECTION: THE STAGES OF LENT

By Sister Mary E. Penrose

As a child I found Lent an enchanting time even during the years it was celebrated on bitterly cold Minnesota mornings. My mother, brother, and I bundled up and walked through snow to the pastor's home (about six blocks away), entering it from the basement. We crowded in with others who had also made the decision to attend daily Mass during Lent. The light afforded by the basement was dim, and the candles were little help. Nevertheless, they added to the mysterious atmosphere. Before Mass there was confession. The priest sat in an old creaking folding chair before which we knelt during the recital of our ignoble deeds. With more people in the rather small space offered by the basement, the area became warm and some of us fell asleep. As I grew up, though the mystery of this early liturgy remained, my understanding was enlarged. Instead of "giving up" things, I began to see the very act of getting up each morning to trudge down to the priest's house to go to Mass as the sacrificial "giving up" of a warm bed and extra moments of sleep. Surely Jesus must have been pleased with that!

This early view, the first stage of my living out the mystery of Lent, changed with the years. As I outgrew my childhood, I felt I had more realistic views about the world and what was taking place in it. I pretended we were like the early Christians in the catacombs and, instead of offering what I now thought the "silly" things of childhood, I tried to get into the mindset of these pioneers. Like them, I needed to offer things that were more "sensible" and helpful to the Body of Christ. It would involve more perception and difficulty. What, at this stage, would Jesus like me to give Him in Lent? Food for the poor, clothes for the needy. What else...? My thoughts returned to the early Christians. They gave their very lives; they were martyrs! I didn't think I could be a martyr, but what might be the closest to it? I remembered that the martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "the cost of discipleship" was great and not many people could handle this cost. This was the second stage of living out the mystery, and his answer brought me to the third and final stage of Lenten living.

To find out how hard the cost of discipleship was, I asked Jesus what He wanted from me. He told me He wanted my very self. That would definitely be hard. How can anyone give their whole self? I looked at Jesus to see how to do that. I saw that He frequently went off to a quiet place to pray to His Father. I heard Him say, "Take up your cross and follow me," and "This cup is the new covenant in my blood which will be shed for you." He even revealed a frightening thing to His disciples: "The hand of my betrayer is with me at this table." "This is how they will know you are my disciples: your love for one another." "...the one who has faith in me will do the works I do."



Is that all there is to it? NO. I can find a quiet place to pray each day. I can acknowledge that I have enemies, but nevertheless treat them and others with respect and kindness. If tragedies happen—a death in the family, the loss of a job, the loss of home and property by a flood, and so on, we can still have faith in Jesus. Underneath His explanation about what the cost of discipleship involves, a light began to shine: "While I am in the world I am the Light of the world." Now we share this Light and are to pass it on to others!

BEHIND THE WHEEL

By Sister Martha Bechtold

The Transportation Office of the Monastery is a place humming with activity each morning and frequently in the afternoon. Staffed by Sister Gloria Ess and Sister Martha Bechtold, it is the hub of driving activity. Sisters submit requests for their driving needs for the following day. Drivers are then assigned cars for their individual uses. Non-drivers are put on a schedule that meets their transportation needs and gets them to appointments on time. It is here that our volunteer drivers come into play.



Photo by Andi Therrien

Vonne Petruzzellis

Each morning there are requests for transportation to one or more of Duluth's three clinics, also to St. Mary's Medical Center, the Medical Arts Building, hearing aid services at the Miller Hill Mall, dentists, and an occasional stop at Super One grocery store or Walgreen's. Sister Joyce is usually the very early morning driver to the airport or to the shuttle that takes passengers to the St. Paul/Minneapolis airport. Kathy Noble, a faithful volunteer, is also an early-morning driver. Her alarm clocks (her two dogs) awaken her early, and she is ready to go, even before 8 a.m.



Photo by Andi Therrien

Fred Mudrak

Koresh Lakhan is a regular Friday morning driver, and sometimes is needed at other times. Jean Captain's usual time is Wednesday afternoon, and Frank Mudrak comes on Tuesday afternoons. Other drivers during the past year have been Lyle Johnson (a Tuesday morning driver now wintering in Texas), Ron Hon, Mike Esler, Larry Baker, Vonne Petruzellis, Roni Sturk, and Tom Mosiniak.

Our volunteer drivers were asked what the generous gift of their time means to them. Koresh says of his experience, "It is a pleasure, indeed an honor, to drive the Sisters to their various off-site appointments. These drives provide me with an opportunity to learn more of their rich, storied past, and of their joys and challenges during their daily routines. There is never a dull moment on our rides!"

Photo by Andi Therrien



Jean Captain

Jean Captain also expresses her experience as a "pleasure" when she says, "It's a privilege and a pleasure. I couldn't have a better volunteer experience."

Frank Mudrak expressed his driving experiences in this way: "I have been a volunteer driver for the Sisters going on five years. My driving serves as a "give and get" opportunity. The Sisters appreciate the service I can give, and I appreciate getting the extra prayers they say for me."

Our drivers express happiness in being called upon to be Monastery volunteer drivers. On our part, we are very grateful, and we do pray for them daily.



Koresh Lakhan

Photo by Andi Therrien

CALL TO HOLINESS: Women's Weekend Retreat

What does it mean to be "holy"? Who is called to be holy? How can one be holy in today's culture? Single Catholic women ages 18-45 are invited to ponder these matters in a special weekend retreat at St. Scholastica Monastery beginning at 5:00 p.m. Friday evening, March 14 and ending at 1:00 p.m. Sunday, March 16.

There is no charge for the retreat. Housing and meals are provided, but registration is required by March 12. Contact Sister Mary Catherine Shambour at 218-723-6646 or mcsambour@duluthosb.org.

REFLECTIONS ON THE BENEDICTINE VALUE OF STEWARDSHIP

By Sister Ann Marie Wainright

Christian stewardship and Benedictine life

We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.
(Native American proverb)

In the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' document entitled, "To Be a Christian Steward: A Summary of the U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Stewardship," they link stewardship with a heart filled with gratitude:

What identifies a steward? Safeguarding material and human resources and using them responsibly are one answer; so is generous giving of time, talent, and treasure. But being a Christian steward means more. As Christian stewards, we receive God's gifts gratefully, cultivate them responsibly, share them lovingly in justice with others, and return them with increase to the Lord. (Stewardship: A Disciple's Response. A Pastoral Letter on Stewardship, Tenth Anniversary Edition. Appendix A, pg. 42.)

Stewardship is a core value of Benedictine monastic communities. Guided by the *Rule of St. Benedict*, we are grateful for God's gifts. We regard all persons as bearing Christ to us, and all we have as if they were sacred vessels of the altar (R.B. 31.10). We care for our land by making it beautiful with flowers, trees, and vegetable gardens, and we maintain our property as a place of peace and homecoming. We contribute to sustaining the environment by recycling, composting, and responsible use of fuel resources. We care for human resources by providing a place where people can share their gifts and talents in ways that nurture needs while providing for their growth as persons. Thus, stewardship becomes an act of building up the Body of Christ in the world (1 Thess. 5:11; Jude 1:20; Romans 14:19).



He will regard all utensils and goods of the monastery as sacred vessels of the altar, aware that nothing is to be neglected. He should not be prone to greed, nor be wasteful and extravagant with the goods of the monastery, but should do everything with moderation and according to the abbot's orders.

Stewardship: Where is your heart?

Store up riches for yourself in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy and robbers cannot break in and steal. For your heart will always be where your riches are. (Matt. 6: 20-21)

In reflecting on stewardship, a key question one must answer is, “What do you value?” We protect what we treasure. In a time when power and freedom were influenced by social status and wealth, St. Benedict stressed the importance of persons, the value of the contribution they could make with their talents, and the quality of relationships between the monks as they lived and worked together. In doing so, St. Benedict prescribed a way of life different from the world of his day – a life patterned on that of Christ.

Benedictine life is, by its very nature, an expression of stewardship. By how we live together as a community we bear witness to God’s call to the human race to live in right, covenantal relationship. Benedictines seek to preserve for future generations what God loves and values most of all: the human person, weak, vulnerable, and yet mysteriously bearing the seed of what is holy into the world.

Stewardship: It begins with you and me

Though we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us, or we find it not.
(Ralph Waldo Emerson)

A basic premise of Benedictine life is to be faithful to seeking God in the ordinary circumstances of daily life, including how people should live together (R.B. 4; 53; 72); the significance of listening deeply and carefully to one another (R.B. Prologue; 71); the importance of taking seriously others’ needs (R.B. 34; 36; 37; 39; 40); and the necessity of spending time together in common prayer (R.B. 8-20; 43) and at the common table (R.B. 35; 41; 43) in order to build relationships.

Spending time together as a Benedictine community – as one family in Christ seeking the face of Christ in each other – allows us to be stewards of God’s generous love. We discover our own uniqueness in the eyes of one another through openness, curiosity, and gratitude.

With awe and humility we reflect on how God works through the lives of our Sisters, and how God may also be at work in our own lives, especially during times when we cannot perceive it. Out of the common struggles of being human arises the call to receive with openness and gratitude the gift hidden within pain and loss, and to cultivate that gift for the building up of others.



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Stewardship: Gratitude for giftedness

When we tug at a single thing in nature, we find it attached to the rest of the world. (John Muir)

St. Benedict saw the interrelatedness of all people and all of creation as something to preserve and foster. Every human person is made “in the image and likeness of God” (Gen. 1:26), manifesting some sacred aspect of God in the world (R.B. 2.1-3; R.B. 3.3; 4.1; 36.1-3; 53.1-2, 15; 72.1-4, 7-11). This filled St. Benedict with awe, humility, and gratitude.

Community helps us understand the delicate balance of life, and how connected we all are in a common struggle to go to God. Being good stewards of God’s call to right, covenantal relationship means we cannot devalue or discount anything God has made as disposable or useless, nor can anyone or anything be disconnected from the web of life without all of us feeling the consequences.



Stewardship: Finding God in “lurking places”

My profession is always to be on the alert to find God in nature, to know his lurking places, to attend all the oratorios, the operas, of nature. (Henry David Thoreau)

Seeking and discovering God in creation, in the ordinary circumstances of life and in community require an open-heartedness that allows God to surprise us beyond our expectations. We pray to love what God loves, to want what God wants, and to see our various circumstances and ourselves as God does. Stewardship begins with trusting that God is faithful, generous, and merciful; stewardship requires minds, hands, and hearts open to the wonder of how God gifts us; stewardship is the living out of our call to be gift to others.

*-Illustrations from the Rule of St. Benedict by
Sister Mary Charles McGough
and calligraphy by Meridith Schifsky*

SISTER PROFILE: Sister Mary Rochefort

By Sister Clare Marie Trettel

Mary Louise Rochefort, the youngest of 15 children, grew up in the small town of Fayette, which is on the Garden Peninsula in Upper Michigan. It is a beautiful area on the shores of Lake Michigan surrounded by limestone bluffs. According to Sister Mary, Lake Michigan is the most beautiful of all the Great Lakes! Her home town and the beach where she learned to swim is now part of Fayette State Park.

Mary's father was a commercial fisherman, but as the work became too difficult, he then, much to Mary's delight, became a farmer. Mary loves animals and was more than happy to help with them—especially the small calves. This love of animals carried over to her work in the schools as she became well known for the guinea pig and other animals she kept in her classroom.

Mary attended the small country school in Fayette until high school. The pastor of the Fayette parish to which her family belonged selected Mary to attend the newly built Catholic High School of Holy Name which was opened in Escanaba—around 50 miles from her home. Arrangements were made for her to live with a family in the area as she attended high school.



Sister Mary and the siblings who attended her Golden Jubilee in 2010. Left to right: Lorna, Sister Mary, Ellen, Ione, and Dick.

During her senior year Mary's pastor, Father Bassett, was influential in having her visit Villa Sancta Scholastica and, after this visit, she decided that she would enter St. Scholastica. In 1958 Mary arrived in Duluth, entered the Community, and a year later was given the name Sister Adriette. She kept this name until 1987 when she decided to return to her baptismal name, Mary.

Sister Mary's skills and talents benefitted many as she was assigned to various ministries. She was an outstanding primary teacher who was dearly loved by her many students. Her organization and planning ability as well as being an excellent communicator aided her in being a principal who inspired her faculty to do their best. Her strengths were also evident in her role as director of Associates, formation director, and the many retreats and days of reflection for women that she has given.

At the present time as Associate Vice President of Mission Integration at The College of St. Scholastica, Sister Mary continues to use her many abilities. She is welcomed not only to classes at the main campus but also to the other campuses as she teaches and helps to instill the Benedictine values in students, faculty, and staff. When speaking to groups about the special places in the lives of St. Benedict and St. Scholastica, Sister Mary often indicated a desire to travel to Italy to see these sites herself.

In late August, 2013, Sister Mary learned that she has an aggressive and rare form of cancer. Since then she has had surgery, radiation therapy, and has now begun chemotherapy. A group at the College decided that it was time to make Sister Mary's wish come true. Donations were collected from The College of St. Scholastica community to send Sister Mary and me to Italy. The trip was a wonderful experience—especially visiting the birthplace of St. Benedict and St. Scholastica in Norcia. We will forever be grateful to all who made this possible.

Sister Mary enjoys life—she loves to fish even though she will not eat them! She is a renowned pizza maker who has hosted many pizza parties for the Community. But above all, Sister Mary is a wonderful friend and woman of prayer. Her positive attitude stems from a deep faith and reliance on God who walks this journey of faith with her.



Sister Mary and Sister Clare Marie by the statue of Benedict in Norcia

BENEDICTINE ASSOCIATES

By Sister Josine Krausnick, Subprioress and Director of Benedictine Associates

The Benedictine Associate Program is an opportunity for women who desire to experience the monastic life for a period of time. The Associate may be at a crossroads in her life and seeking to discern God's direction for her. A Benedictine Associate lives at the Monastery with other Associates and participates in the life of the Sisters, sharing meals, getting to know the Sisters, and spending leisure time with them. She, whenever possible, attends the daily Liturgy of the Hours and Eucharist.

Benedictine Associates also take part in the work/ministry assignments at the Monastery. These ministries may include spending time with the elderly and infirm members of the Community, escorting Sisters to appointments, driving, working at the information desk, gardening and other household chores, clerical or computer work, and participating in the Monastery's outreach to the poor.

The Benedictine Associate may commit to a period of time, six months to a year, and this time is, we hope, a time of spiritual growth and deeper self-knowledge. Our current Benedictine Associates have shared with us their thoughts on their experiences.

Vonne Petruzzellis



Sister Josine Krausnick

Photo by Sister Joyce Fournier

Benedictine Hospitality . . . that's the best way I can describe what I've experienced here at St. Scholastica since the first moment I arrived on a wintry, ever so foggy night when Sister Martha graciously greeted me at the door. She had even saved a plate of food for me from dinner, as I had arrived later than expected.

Being at a most fragile juncture in my life, I sought a place in which to pray and ponder, and to heal. I believe that heaven had guided me here because the warmth and love of the good Sisters was the unforeseen light in the dark that was to help carry me through this part of my journey.

I've assisted the Community through volunteer driving, computer projects, manning the information desk (and at times, the gift shop), and in a myriad of other ways. Sharing meals, stories, and laughter with the Sisters made me feel right at home, while having a cup of coffee (and perhaps dessert) with the Sisters on Benet Hall was both a pleasure and a privilege. Through it all shone the gentleness and generosity of these professed women who welcomed me with a Christ-like heart and an unpretentious interest in my well-being.

"O sweeter than the marriage-feast
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!" (Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*)



Photo by Andi Therrien

Yodit Gidey



Photo by Andi Therrien

I was born in Ethiopia July 5, 1991, and came to Duluth to work on a Bachelor's degree in Biology. I first came to the Monastery as a volunteer at the information desk, where I learned about the Associate Program and became interested in it. In Ethiopia my family went to church regularly which helped me have a close relationship with Christ. Therefore, I felt blessed when I got the opportunity to be an Associate at the Monastery. I knew it would help me become closer to God. I joined the program looking for spiritual strength and to learn about monastic life, but I ended up gaining much more.

Being a part of the Associate program helped me to grow spiritually and intellectually. Every day is a learning experience for me. I find it inspiring to get to know the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery and to learn about their incredible ministries. Duluth's extreme cold weather would've felt much colder if it were not for the warm hospitality of the Benedictines. I am grateful for all the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery. I am truly touched by their generosity, spirit, and support. I feel blessed to be a part of this Benedictine Monastery.

Roni Sturk



Photo by Andi Therrien

When I first decided to become a Benedictine Associate, my reasoning was to regroup spiritually and have some time to reflect on my life overall. I wasn't really sure what life in the Monastery entailed, and since I have walked through the doors I have been pleasantly surprised. It is fair to say that life in the Monastery is never boring; each day is surprisingly different and yet the same. My favorite times here are the times that I spend chatting with the Sisters. Their personalities are very different, but they are all selfless and devoted. The stories they share about the many different opportunities and/or apostolates they participated in throughout their lives are awe-inspiring. They are all gems, and I take in what they say and it has kept me in a state of self-reflection.

My tasks at the Monastery vary: I have driven and/or accompanied Sisters to appointments and the occasional run for ice cream. I work at the information desk and volunteer at the gift shop once a week—that is my favorite day because it is the one day that I usually see the Sisters throughout the whole day. It is a great day of conversations and remembrances. When the weather is nice, I work out in the gardens. It is a lot of work; it's dirty but also very therapeutic. Overall, life as an Associate is wonderful, exhausting, and never boring. My time here has been precious and will be with me always.

THEOLOGY OF BLESSING

By Sister Mary Christa Kroening, OSB, Senior Consultant, Liturgical and Ritual Services at the Benedictine Health System

Theology of Blessing

Our loving Lord God is the source of blessings. To bless is to ask God to send holiness, comfort, and abundant goodness upon people. Blessings are plentiful throughout the Bible from Genesis 1:22 recounting how God blessed all the living creatures, through to the end of the book of Revelation 22:14.

“Blessed are they who wash their robes so as to have the right
to the tree of life
and enter the New Jerusalem.”

All of life manifests the blessing of God. The creation of the garden, the multiple rivers flowing to water all of the plants and trees, all these manifest God’s generosity. The goodness, truth, and beauty of creation show forth the divine presence. The priestly blessing of Moses and Aaron showers peace, prosperity, and happiness upon the people.

May the Lord bless you and keep you!
May the Lord let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you!
May the Lord look upon you with kindness and give you peace!
Numbers 6:24-26

When God called the patriarch Abraham and his wife Sarah to leave their homeland and go forth to a new land, it was with generous blessings as they are recounted in scripture.

I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you;
I will make your name great, so that you will **be** a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you.
All the communities of the earth shall find blessing in you.
Genesis 12:2-3

When the people exiled from Egypt followed the Prophet Moses and wandered to the Promised Land, it was at Shechem that Mount Gerizim was named for blessings and Mount Ebal for curses. It seemed that the early concept of these wandering people was that God’s Presence was limited to the mountain. Even when the Israelites continued their journey and came to the plains, they built a ziggurat or step pyramid in order to worship God, indicating that the Divine Presence was up high toward the heavens.



Sisters singing a blessing to friends in Phoenix 2008



Blessing St. Mary's Medical Center Leadership Team 2009

God our Creator and almighty Father blest us with the gift of his only Son, Jesus. The life and teachings of Jesus, the Christ, constitute the greatest blessing along with the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is in the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus teaches the Beatitudes.

Blest are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blest are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blest are the meek, for they will inherit the land.
Blest are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.
Blest are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
Blest are the clean of heart, for they will see God.
Blest are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Blest are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:3-10

“The blessing of God...is His Holy Spirit. Now this divine gift, which is God Himself, exhibits all the traits of blessing. The great themes of blessing—water which regenerates, birth and renewal, life and fecundity, plenitude and peace, joy and communion of hearts—all are equally the fruits of the Spirit.”

from “Riches of Blessing” copyright © 1973

Xavier Leon-Dufour, Dictionary of Biblical Theology, pg. 51

Blessings at St. Scholastica Monastery

The first blessing that I created as Director of Liturgy was for the Benedictine Health Center on October 12, 1980. During 1984-1986 the chapel/library building on the St. Scholastica campus traded spaces. This called forth a whole series of blessing rituals:



Blessing of the History Boards at St. Scholastica Monastery 2010

Formal Closing of Chapel 6/23/1985

Rite of Entry to Renovated Chapel/Blessing of Font 9/28/1986

Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel Revision was blest 10/12/1986

Placing the Holy Oils in Ambry 4/16/1987

Installation of the Ambo 5/2/1987

Inauguration of the Benedictine Devotional Area 7/2/1987

Marian Devotional Area 3/25/1988

Enthroning the *Rule of St. Benedict* 4/13/1991

Blessing the Tracker organ, built by K.C. Marrin 11/14/1992

Dedication of the K.C.Marrin Organ 2/10/1993

Placing the icon of Benedict & Scholastica 3/20/1995

The Benedictine Community blest our present prioress Sister Lois Eckes on August 7, 2005, and upon her reelection again in 2011. Our Prioress bestows weekly blessings at the beginning of each liturgical week at Evening Prayer on Saturday. There are four sets of blessings for the various ministries. Many Sisters ask a blessing when they are sent on a long journey. We also have a Journey Prayer asking the Lord, the Almighty and Merciful, for a protective blessing and interceding with the Angel Raphael.

At the beginning of the New Year on the feast of the Epiphany, we celebrate the journey of the Magi by assembling in the Monastery hallway where the Director of Temporalities marks the doorway from the cloister walk: The initials for the names of the Magi are interspersed with the numbers of the New Year:

20 + C + M + B + 14

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In Rockhurst Dining Room, Sisters take turns leading a meal prayer, blessing us and the food for each evening dinner. On March 21, 2007, we gathered there to bless the statues of Saints Scholastica and Benedict.

Photo from Monastery Archives



Blessing of the tree "Julian," a gift from the Benedictine Health System, 2005



Sister Dorene King is blessed as she makes her perpetual profession in 2011

Photo from Monastery Archives

Blessings for the Benedictine Health System

The BHS has 40+ campuses in 6 states in 15 (Arch)dioceses. Starting in 1998 and continuing to the present the BHS has held ground-breaking blessings for new chapels and other new construction. Twenty-four new chapels have been blest by the bishop of the designated diocese of each facility. In August 1999 the Holy Water Fountain for the BHS Corporate Office was dedicated. These rituals are adapted from the *Book of Blessings*.

We have multiple changes of facility names to faith-based names; for example, Lake Haven is now St. Eligius, patron of steel workers, and the two Arrowhead Health Centers are now named for the Archangels Gabriel and Raphael. The BHS also has blessing rituals for closing of six facilities, as well as for transfer of sponsorships for six sites.

To celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Benedictine Health System, an evergreen tree, named Julian for Julian of Norwich, was planted and blest in front of the Monastery building. Two Honeycrisp apple trees were planted in the Garden Court and blest in 2010.

Meal prayer cards are provided at Unified Leadership meetings and two prayer books have been created to facilitate having a blessing prayer to begin each meeting across the system. These can be found on the web site: www.bhshealth.org. Other blessings include: new administrators, altars, tabernacles, new crucifix, healing gardens, and a new copier. A recent event was blessing the office for Sister Lisa Maurer, OSB, in March 2012. The New President/CEO of the Benedictine Health System, Rocklon Chapin, was commissioned February 10, 2014, (the Feast of St. Scholastica) at Evening Prayer.

Photo courtesy of Benedictine Health System



Groundbreaking and blessing of New Senior Housing site at Benedictine Living Community of St. Peter, June 2010



Blessing of St. Eligius Health Center employees by Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, November 2010

Photo courtesy of Benedictine Health System

CONGRATULATIONS SISTER MARY HOPE NOVAK!

On November 26, 2013, Sister Mary Hope Novak celebrated her 90th birthday. Friends and Sisters gathered in the Benet Hall dining room to congratulate her on this milestone and to share cake and coffee. About her ninetieth birthday party, Sister Mary Hope said, "I am so happy that my friends and the Sisters are here to celebrate with me."



Photo by Andi Therrien

Sister Mary Hope and her 90th birthday cake



Photo by Andi Therrien

Fr. Brian congratulates Sister Mary Hope.

Born in Virginia, Minnesota, November 26, 1923, Sister Mary Hope was the seventh of nine children. She attended Marquette School and then graduated from Virginia High School before entering St. Scholastica Monastery in 1941.

Her first assignments were in teaching, first primary then upper grades. She took joy in preparing children for First Communion at Sacred Heart School for 13 years, and also taught them Gregorian chant. She also enjoyed teaching the upper grades and found herself well suited for students in that age group.

In later years Sister Mary Hope managed the greenhouse at the Monastery as well as the *This and That* shop. Sister is now retired and a resident of Benet Hall.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE FOLLOWING DECEASED RELATIVES AND FRIENDS:

Wilma Scheeler 9/24/2013
Darlene Huard 11/1/2013
Virginia Sodeman Michelizzi 11/14/2013
Thomas J. Mrak 11/16/2013
Amelia Chamberlain 11/19/2013
Dorothy Fosness 11/22/2013
Andrew F. Stehney 11/27/2013

Katherine Michel 11/30/2013
Eleanor Urbaniak 12/20/2013
Andre P. Brissett 12/30/2013
Joseph McNamara 1/5/2014
Mary Quinlivan 1/17/2014
Florence Cherro 2/3/2014
Sister Claudia Cherro's mother

ST. MARY'S MEDICAL CENTER: 125 Years Old

By Sister Sarah Smedman

In 2013 St. Mary's Medical Center in Duluth, originally St. Mary's Hospital, celebrated the 125th anniversary of its founding. A significant aspect of the year-long commemorative events paid tribute to the Benedictine Sisters of St. Scholastica, who founded St. Mary's in 1888 and to those many Sisters who, over the years, worked as administrators, nurses, medical technicians, receptionists, chaplains, and now Board of Trustees members. On November 25, the show of appreciation of the Benedictines' major role in the history of St. Mary's culminated in a magnificent reception for the Sisters still living to carry on the dream of our founders. For the event St. Mary's auditorium was literally transformed into a wonderland. Huge bouquets of white flowers in tall crystal vases flanked the entrance into the ordinarily drab auditorium. Inside, similar tall white bouquets lined the walls. Some 24 white-clothed tables, each with eight chairs, also covered in white and banded with gold sashes, filled the room. Not usually given to effusion, I admit the ambiance quite took my breath away.



Lighting, flowers, ambiance!

Hospital administrators, doctors, heads of departments, and other St. Mary's hospital personnel joined the Sisters at tables. Caterers, dressed for the occasion, moved among the crowd serving a variety of hors d'oeuvres and desserts.

During a brief program Sister Kathleen Hofer—longtime and last Sister Administrator, subsequently Chair of the Boards of St. Mary's Medical Center/St. Mary's Hospital Superior, and SMDC, which has become Essentia Health East Region—introduced Dr. Peter Person, Chief Executive Officer of Essentia Health; Dr. Dan Nikcevich, Essentia Health East Region President and Chief Medical Officer; and Mr. Jim Garvey,

Administrator of St. Mary's Medical Center and Executive Vice President of Hospital Operations. Both doctors spoke of learning the science of medicine in top-flight medical schools, then of their debt to Sister Kathleen and the Benedictines for really understanding and absorbing the spiritual values underpinning the art of health care. Mr. Garvey, Administrator of St. Mary's, spoke, too, of his appreciation of the Benedictine values imbuing St. Mary's culture. Sister Kathleen then introduced the current and former prioresses present, and also past and current St. Mary's Sister-employees and trustees.



Photo by Sister Kathleen Del Monte

History board section showing some Sisters who have Served as administrators of St. Mary's Medical Center through the years, ending with Sister Kathleen Hofer.

This tribute to the Sisters followed many celebratory events during St. Mary's anniversary year, which included employees and the public as well: notably, on February 7, a Mass with Bishop Sirba presiding, commemorating the opening of the hospital in 1888; the installation of a "history wall" depicting milestones in St. Mary's growth and changes from its founding to the present, ending with a promise to "Continue the Dream"; and a portrait wall of Sister administrators since the hospital's opening. On August 5 and for the ensuing week, the illumination of the hospital in blue lights publicly proclaimed to Duluth and neighboring communities St. Mary's 125 years of service.

-Photos courtesy of Essentia Health St. Mary's Medical Center unless otherwise noted

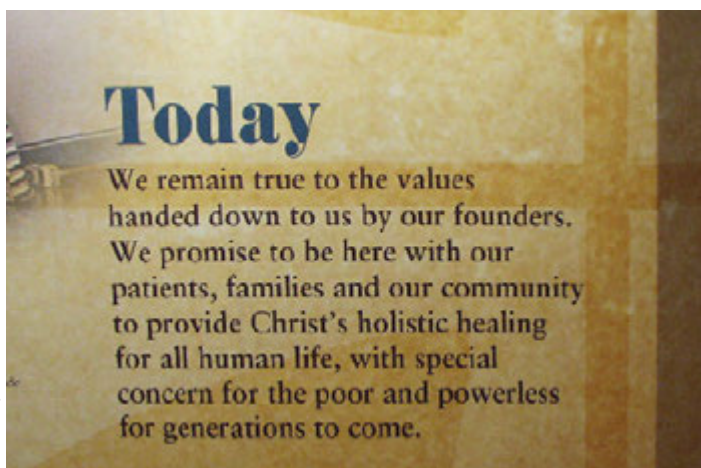


Sister Mary Josephine Torborg (standing, back to camera), Dr. Peter Person, former Prioress Sister Clare Marie Trettel, Sister Johnetta Maher, and Sister Mary Rochefort, are greeted at the celebration.



Sister Claudia Cherro (above, from left), Prioress Lois Eckes, and Sister Theresa Spinler enjoy appetizers during the celebration in the auditorium at Essentia Health St. Mary's Medical Center.

Photo by Sister Kathleen Del Monte



Admiring St. Mary's wall portraying Sister administrators that is located across from the Medical Center's chapel, are Sister Josine Krausnick (from left), Sister Ingrid Luukkonen, Sister Annella Wagner (partly obscured), Sister Melanie Gagne, Sister Luella Wegscheid, and Sister Joan Marie Stelman.

**Happy Birthday, St. Mary's.
And God's blessings as the "Dream" shapes the future.**

SISTER DONNA SCHROEDER: Scientist, Mentor, Monastic

By Sister Edith Bogue

Photo courtesy of CSS



Sister Donna in a Biology lab.

Soon after meeting Sister Donna Schroeder, people find themselves engaged in animated conversation. She combines a genuinely friendly personality with an interest in almost everything. It's no wonder she became a scientist nor that she has filled many roles in the Monastery, our College, and our health-care organizations. At a party marking 44 years of College teaching, a colleague hoped she would get a good vacation. "Oh no," said Sister Donna, her eyes twinkling, "Sisters don't retire, we just get recycled." Indeed. Her days are filled with classes for the five Sisters in temporary vows, meetings of the Monastery Strategic Planning and Vocation Ministry Teams, service on the Board of Essentia Health, prayer on Benet Hall, and the life of the Community. An avid reader, she's equally likely to mention a book on the sex life of bees or the spirituality of the desert monastics – or the fruit of her early morning *lectio divina*.

Born Janet Schroeder, Sister Donna grew up in Doyon, North Dakota, a small town on US-2 along the northern tier of the nation. Her parents, John and Grace, passed on their values and their love of reading from the beginning. The oldest in a family that eventually included five children, her early life was shaped by frugality and close ties to family and community stemming from the Great Depression. Her face lights up at the memory of playing canasta with her friend Adele and the camaraderie of knowing everyone from the town and neighboring farms.

That support and her family's faith steadied her through the tragedy of losing her sister Joanne, just a year younger, in a drowning accident and later her brother Michael to a brain tumor. She attended St. Mary's High School in Devil's Lake, North Dakota, where her love of learning grew and she had her first encounter with religious life.

Sister Donna chose The College of St. Scholastica for practical reasons, but fell in love with the campus. She remembers being "absolutely awestruck" with Tower Hall, where she lived first as a student and later, in the 1980s, as a Sister. She was equally taken with the Sisters, saying "I had never met so many interesting women who accomplished so much. It was breathtaking!" After her sophomore year, she entered the Monastery and began her religious life. She has always been a teacher. She taught biology and algebra at Gerard High School in Phoenix for six years, and began teaching biology at the College in 1969. She continued there, with time away to complete a PhD at University of North Carolina, until 2013. Sister

Donna was an early recipient of the Max Lavine Award for Excellence in Teaching and served as Department Chair for many years. She was a great friend of the late Sister Mary Odile Cahoon, another biologist, and accompanied her on an African Safari Educational Program for women in science.

As Sister Donna approached an age when many slow down, Sister Lois noticed that "junior sisters" often sought her out as an informal mentor and asked her to become the formal Director of Sisters in First Profession. After a year of Monastic Studies courses at St. John's School of Theology, Sister Donna traded grasshopper dissections for teaching the art of discernment and the development of a monastic heart to these newer members. It's a fitting development. One thread runs through any conversation with Sister Donna: her love and dedication to this community of monastic women. What a wonderful gift to hand on to the Sisters who will build the next generation of Benedictine life!



Janet, Michael, Grace, John, Debra, and John in 1957



Joanne and Janet 1944

Photo by Andi Therrien



Sister Lisa Maurer's First Monastic Profession in 2009. Pictured left to right: Witnesses Sister Mary Christa Kroening and +Sister Bertille Goblirsch; Sister Lois Eckes, Prioress; Sister Lisa Maurer; Sister Donna Schroeder and Sister Michelle Dosch, Directors of Initial Formation

BENEDICTINE CENTER OF SPIRITUALITY

By Sister Pauline Micke, OSB

The Advent Retreat: This retreat on November 23, 2013, was a wonderful time of prayer and renewal for all the participants. Thanks to Sister Mary Josephine Torborg for leading this time of blessing for us.



Photos by Sister Paule Pierre Barbeau



Upcoming Event—Mark Your Calendar

Lenten Retreat: “Saying ‘Yes’ to Journeying the Paschal Mystery with Jesus Christ.” This retreat will be held on Saturday, March 15, 2014, from 9:00 to noon at St. Scholastica Monastery. Facilitators will be Sister Pauline Micke, OSB, MA Theology, Spiritual Director, and Beth Pellin Kaiser, Director, Music and Liturgical Ministries, Coordinator of RCIA, St. Michael’s Parish, Duluth, Minnesota.

During our time together we will consider the Gospels of Lent and the Easter Season as our starting point for understanding just what it means for us to say “Yes” to journeying with Jesus through the Paschal Mystery. We will deepen that understanding and grow in learning how to make it a part of our everyday lives. This will empower us to enter more fully into the living, dying, and rising of the Paschal Mystery with Jesus. Through living out the Paschal Mystery daily, we will experience the new life that comes from this central aspect of our Christian lives.

To register: Call 218-723-6555 or email Pauline.m@duluthosb.org.
Freewill Offering

Update on Ministry of Spirituality Advisory Board

The Advisory Board met on January 16, 2014 to focus more intently on its goals for this third year of its existence. Its two committees—Fundraising and Publicity, and Visioning and Programming—established three task forces to develop the key areas of board structure, programming, and fund-raising. The meeting dates for this year will be the third Tuesday of the month: April 15, September 16, and November 18, 2014.

We’ll keep you informed of these developments. A big “Thank You” goes to the Board members for their generous investment of time and work in developing this area of our Ministry. We ask God’s blessing and your prayers for continued growth in our Ministry of Spirituality.

SURPRISED BY JOY

By Sister Mary Catherine Shambour

Photo by Jeff Frey; courtesy of CSS



O.K., I'll admit it. I've been discouraged. ("Bless me, Father...") The job of being a religious vocation director today isn't exactly an easy sell. And it isn't that we haven't been working! Of course we're grateful for the seven women who have had the courage to entrust themselves to God in this age, but seeing the tremendous needs of our world, we'd like to see more results. Even you, dear God, lamented that the laborers for the harvest are few.

But among all the depressing headlines of recent months something unique has been happening: a man of God is actually sparking worldwide attention, and people of all stripes are finding hope, encouragement, and challenge in his words because he approaches them as Jesus did: with love and compassion. I became intrigued and wanted to know if his message might also be addressed to me and help revive my drooping spirits. Thanks to the privilege of living in a first-world nation and having the asset of instant communication (something Pope Francis also praises for its potential for good) I was able to download his words for my own reflection. For one week I prayed over his lengthy apostolic exhortation "The Joy of the Gospel" and found in it a special inspiration that seemed somehow lacking in other well-intentioned past efforts to revitalize the faith through various themes and programs. I encourage you to do the same for there is something in it for everyone. The work is readily available on line for reading, downloading or purchase, but, hopefully, sections of it will be the subject of homilies, retreats, study groups, and especially each Christian's personal reflection.

It is a lengthy document not because the Pope is addressing the major problems of the world but because he wishes to invite all baptized Christians to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ since "with Christ joy is constantly born anew." It is with this joy that Francis encourages all Christians to embark on a new chapter of evangelization that can help point new paths for the Church's journey into the future. He reminds us that evangelization is an integral part of being a Christian and through his own enthusiasm, joy, and sincere love for all humanity urges those called to be the salt of the earth not to lose their savor.

Being the pastor of a universal Church, Francis knows well the challenges of transmitting the Gospel message to a world comprised of various cultures and degrees of progress. He realizes that not all Christians have had the privilege to learn and enjoy the riches of the Gospel message in its fullness, but he sees and appreciates the depth of faith found in the world's poorest Christians who have much to teach us. Though not explicitly addressing priests and religious in the document—he will be devoting 2015 as the Year of Consecrated Life—he does give practical advice to "religious workers" which includes most of us who still attend Church, such as asking us not to concentrate so much on one aspect of our service to the detriment of others or becoming "disillusioned pessimists, sourpusses." Every one of us can find ourselves in his exhortation being lovingly encouraged by Christ's representative on earth to do better.

As we enter into another Lenten season, let us not look upon this as another drab time in which we're called to do penance by "giving up" something (like candy or bubble gum as we did as children). In fact, repentance and penance are really applications of what we are being invited to in the Gospels by the Greek imperative *metanoete*, which calls us to an inner conversion, a change in our way of thinking, a renewal of our inner being. This is not only possible but incumbent on all baptized Christians regardless of our age or state of life. As millions of our brothers and sisters in the world are struggling merely to survive, a new Francis, through his own example, shows that only through a real and sincere closeness to the poor can the proclamation of the Gospel have meaning. We do not have to travel to the refugee camps to find the poor in our midst or the spiritually poor in the midst of our wealth. This Lent we can all probe deeply into our own souls to find what is blocking the joy we have been given in Christ and seek new ways to bring the Joy of the Gospel into our world.

SISTER PROFILE: Sister Estelle Charron

By Sister Luella Wegscheid

Photo by Andi Therrien



Sister Estelle and Miss Kitty

In November of 1928 Harold and Amy Charron of Duluth, Minnesota, welcomed a daughter into their lives. She was bound to give them much joy along with her brother, Harold. While their early years provided a share of challenges when the family lost everything when the depression hit, it also provided much enjoyment.

When Estelle was a baby the family moved to a farm in Michigan. She loved her experiences growing up on the farm because of her love of animals and her love of being outdoors. One of the favorite memories of her childhood was swinging on a rope and climbing in the barn with her brother. She also remembers one of their cows, “Snoopy.” “Snoopy” was very inquisitive.

One time Estelle’s mother heard a knocking on the door only to find that it was “Snoopy” knocking with her horns. The cow then came into the house. Because of the small space, there was no way to turn the cow around, so it needed to be led through the house and out another door. The big concern was whether or not the neighbors saw the situation!

Estelle entered religious life at St. Scholastica Monastery in 1949, received the habit and the name Sister Laurice in 1950, made her First

Monastic Profession in 1951, and her Perpetual Monastic Profession in 1954. When the opportunity was provided for Sisters to return to their baptismal names, Sister Laurice chose to return to her given name of Estelle.

Sister Estelle’s formal education provided a BS MT Degree in Medical Technology from Marquette University and an MSA Degree in nonprofit administration from Notre Dame University. These degrees were necessary for a large part of her work experience which included elementary school teacher, cook and housekeeper, medical technologist, manager of the print shop and the bookstore at The College of St. Scholastica, Treasurer for the Monastery and its corporate entity, and bookkeeper for Monastery Books and Gifts. She said her most rewarding work experience was being the Treasurer for the Community, as she helped in the corporate reorganization and getting the various organizations separately incorporated. She said she learned a lot during these experiences. Always having a love of numbers was very beneficial in her work. Sister also served on several corporate boards in Minnesota.

Sister Estelle had time to pursue some hobbies. Her favorite was camping and hiking with friends, especially on Isle Royale, which she did every summer for about ten years. She particularly enjoyed being outdoors with the moose, wolves, and nature. She also had an artistic talent for painting birds and flowers on wooden plaques and doing wood-burning of Scripture quotes on walking sticks. These were highly sought after items once anyone saw them.

When asked what she considered her blessings in life, she responded that being a member of the Community and having a place like Benet Hall (our nursing floor) where she now resides and receives excellent care from the loving, caring, and generous staff. She has particularly appreciated the spiritual benefits of being a member of the Community. Among her other blessings have been the opportunities to do so much camping and hiking and to have had her love of animals. Being able to read and do puzzles of various kinds continue to give her joy. Sister Estelle offered this advice for anyone who may be struggling with advancing years: “Cool it. Use what abilities and graces you still have and don’t take it out on others. Enjoy life to the best of your ability.”



Photo by Andi Therrien

Sister Estelle gathering wood for the walking sticks she used to carve

BOOK AND EXHIBIT OF SISTER MARY CHARLES MCGOUGH'S ART SCHEDULED



The summer of 2014 the Monastery will celebrate the life and art of Sister Mary Charles McGough (1925-2007) with a book and art exhibit. The book, *Saved by Beauty: Sister Mary Charles McGough, OSB*, will be published by the Monastery's Duluth Benedictine Books. The exhibit, *Sister Mary Charles McGough: Engagement and Transcendence*, is a collaboration with the Tweed Museum of Art at the University of Minnesota Duluth. The exhibit will feature a variety of her art but focus primarily on woodcuts and icons from two important eras of her 60-year career as an artist.

John Schifsky is the lead author of the book, with contributions from Sister Lois Eckes, Peter Spooner, and Fr. Dustin Lyons, and with art selection and arrangement by Meridith Schifsky. Debra Salzer is designing the book.

The Tweed Museum exhibit, *Sister Mary Charles McGough: Engagement and Transcendence*, will run from June 3 through September 21, 2014. Activities planned in conjunction with the exhibit include the following:

Opening reception: Tuesday, June 3, 2014, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.,

Tweed Museum of Art

Gallery Talks: Sunday, June 29, 2014, 2:00 p.m. and Saturday, July 19, 2014, 2:00 p.m.,

Tweed Museum of Art

Prayer Service and Reception: Sunday, September 21, 2014, 2:00 – 4:00,

Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel, St. Scholastica Monastery

For information on Tweed events, contact: Christine Strom, Tweed Museum of Art (218) 726-7823, or cstrom@d.umn.edu.

For information on the book or the Monastery Prayer Service and Reception, contact: Vicky Siders, St. Scholastica Monastery (218) 723-6540 or vsiders@duluthosb.org.

Related Events:

- UMD University for Seniors Lecture Series: “Sister Mary Charles – One Person’s Impact” by exhibition curator and Sister Mary Charles book essayist Peter Spooner, Monday, May 12, 2014, 11:30-12:30 - UMD Kirby Plaza 309. This lecture is open and free to the public.
- UMD University for Seniors 4 week Short Course: “Sister Mary Charles: Engagement and Transcendence” Wednesdays, April 23, 30, May 7, 14, 9:30-11:30 - UMD Kirby Plaza 309. Led by Peter Spooner. This four-week class is for individuals who are 50+ years of age and who participate in the University for Seniors Program. Individuals can view program details, register online, and see other lifelong learning courses at www.d.umn.edu/goto/seniors. For more information call 218-726-7637 or email usask@d.umn.edu.

REV. JOHN WHITNEY EVANS FUND

Before his death in 2002, Rev. John Whitney Evans planned to create a fund to financially assist men and women who choose to pursue a vocation to either the priesthood or to religious life. As a memorial to Father Evans, the Knights of Columbus, assisted by the Bishop of the Diocese of Duluth and the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, established a memorial fund to support vocation ministries.

Gifts to the fund are given in memory of loved ones, and the contributions are used by the Knights of Columbus, the Sisters, and the Diocese to support vocation expenses.

As you know, young people who believe they may have a vocation find that there are many expenses when they first begin. Initially, when they leave the world of work, they are responsible for their own health care and personal expenses. The Rev. John Whitney Evans Vocation Fund supports these men and women who are discerning their calling to a religious vocation.

The memorial board is located at St. Scholastica Monastery, and the Fund is administered by the Sisters of St. Scholastica. The names of your loved ones and your name will be engraved on a plaque and installed on a lovely six-foot wooden memorial board located next to the Monastery's vocation ministry offices. Donations are \$100 for each plaque.



If you are interested in supporting this fund, please fill out the form below. Whether or not you are able to participate financially in this project, we ask you to please join us in praying for men and women who are called to religious life or to the priesthood.

Rev. John Whitney Evans Vocation Fund

Please accept my donation of \$100

In memory of _____
(As you would like it to appear on the plaque)

Your name(s) and the name(s) of the person(s) remembered
will be engraved on the plaque unless you instruct otherwise.

Donor Name _____
(As you would like it to appear on the plaque)

Donor Address _____
Donor Telephone _____

Make check payable to:
St. Scholastica Monastery
Note: Evans Vocation Fund

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St. Scholastica Monastery
1001 Kenwood Avenue
Duluth, MN 55811

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Office of Development
1001 Kenwood Avenue
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Lo, winter
is past...
the time of
singing birds
is at hand

Song of Solomon 2:11

