

PATHWAYS



Newsletter of the Duluth Benedictine Sisters • Duluth, Minnesota • Vol. 28, No. 2 • Advent 2016



Published by:

Sisters of St. Scholastica
Monastery, Duluth, MN

Produced by:

Monastery Development /
Public Relations Office

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*Cover Photo from Monastery
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PATHWAYS is published
quarterly and is distributed
among friends, relatives,
associates and benefactors of
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Dear Friends of the Monastery,

As I walk to chapel down the cloister walk, the crimson sunrises that come later every morning are a reminder that the season of thankfulness and watchful waiting is coming closer. Ordinary time of the Church year ends and, as green vestments are replaced by purple and rose, we greet the beginning of the “new year” with longing for the Advent of Christ.



After a very busy fall, I have imagined this Advent as a settling-down time, a quiet time to contemplate the coming of the Lord in the restful embrace of my comfortable easy chair in my room with snow quietly falling outside my window. Now, I don’t know about you, but often when I take quiet time in my chair, I fall asleep. So with this thought in mind, I turned to the scriptures for the first Sunday of Advent for inspiration for this issue of *Pathways* and found that the verbs in those readings are *not* restful ones. They are active. We are urged to “stay awake” (Romans 13: 11-14), for we do not know when our Lord will come (Matthew 24: 37-44). We are encouraged to “throw off” and “put on” to “run forth to meet your Christ” (Collect), to “climb the Lord’s mountain”...“that he may instruct us in his ways, that we may walk in his paths” (Isaiah 2: 1-5). St. Benedict’s words from the Prologue also invite us to choose to “run the path that leads to Christ as we progress in this way of life and in faith.”

Yes, Advent is a time for quiet listening, but it is also a time to stay awake in order to recognize the coming of the Lord in the events and people around us. After the contentious election, this seems a more difficult time than ever to see the Christ in each other. As we anticipate the coming of the peaceable Kingdom promised in later readings of Advent (Isaiah 11: 1-10), we know it will take work and an active choosing to transform and be transformed.

For some of us that means extra effort to put aside pressing tasks, real or imagined, to make certain there is space for quiet contemplation and an ordering of the day toward the One who comes, especially as the bustle of the holiday season approaches. It takes “throwing off” old habits, to make sure there is time for this important work of God. It can mean “throwing off” harmful habits of judging the motives of others or of comparing ourselves to others. Sometimes we fail, but we get up and continue on the path so that we may be merciful to others and to ourselves.

Indeed, as the year of Mercy comes to a close, we are invited by Fr. James Martin (*Give us This Day*, November 2016) to consider someone whom we may not have been merciful towards this year. He says, “Why not ask God to help you see yourself as God sees you: someone who is trying his or her best? Why not conclude the Year of Mercy by being merciful to someone God cares for very much: you?”

With grateful hearts we remember your kindness to us in the past year and give thanks for all the ways you have enriched our lives.

Yours in Christ,

Sister Beverly

Sister Beverly Raway, OSB

Who Do People Say That We Are?

by Sister Edith Bogue

“Who do people say that I am?” asked Jesus (Mark 8:27), a simple factual question. It resembles election candidates’ questions as they shift their public images to seek a broader audience. Jesus, of course, was not pandering to the crowds. He knew who he was. Nonetheless, the reports helped him discern how his followers received his messages and his presence.

Jesus asked the disciples a second, more personal question: “And you, who do you say that I am?” This question opened the door of the disciples’ hearts to deeper revelation. “You are the Messiah,” answered Peter, speaking a truth they did not yet understand (Mark 8:29). The Gospels were not written to be engaging stories or historical narratives. The Gospel writers were changed forever by their encounter with the Risen Christ. They set aside everything – jobs, homes, family, reputation, even safety – for the sake of living the Gospel. They wrote so that others could share their experience and their transformation.

In these times of rapid change, our friends wonder: “What will become of the Sisters?” Fifty years ago, decades of unprecedented growth in the number of vowed religious came to an end. Now religious orders are engaged in re-founding. We must listen to the needs of today’s Church and world, and discover new ways to respond.

Recent research by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation asked people about their views of Catholic Sisters. Most felt knowledgeable about Catholic Sisters, yet few gave correct answers to four questions about them. One-fifth believe that most Sisters “live in seclusion, shut off from family and society.” More than a third think that Catholic Sisters have little impact on non-Catholics. When asked what they heard recently about Sisters, over half mention social issues or disagreements within the Church. Only one fourth mention Sisters’ service in the community.

If Sisters are doing good work, do public misperceptions matter? Yes. Despite their favorable opinions of Sisters, few women today consider joining an order. Those who explore religious life receive support from friends but push-back from family. Faulty images of religious life make it hard to discern the call to become a Sister, and harder still for parents to support their daughters.

Sisters and concerned lay people are already at work to present accurate and attractive images of Sisters. Initiatives like *National Catholic Sisters Week* each March or the *Sister to All* campaign show real Sisters in real settings. When we go to public events, we seek out strangers and get to know them.

You can help. People trust the information they receive from friends, family, and colleagues. Share your issue of *Pathways* or leave it at your church. Connect with us on Twitter, Facebook, and our blog. Share our posts. Most important of all, tell the stories of your encounters with Sisters. Encourage people to join us for prayer, come for retreat, or simply visit.

“Who do people say that we are?” We don’t know yet: that story is still being written.



Lost in Fog

Article and photo by Sister Therese Carson

On a chill morning at first light, I come down the long hill to the Duluth waterfront and walk to the end of a pier. What haunting beauty is there! Out in the lake a freighter is anchored, half-hidden by a low fogbank, waiting for an open berth. The fog slowly drifts eastward and swallows the whole world. Nearby a foghorn begins to call, *This way home*. I stand in a globe of dim grey light, chilled to the bone, waiting. At long last the fog lifts, sunlight dances on the water, and I think, “I’ve been here before.”



At times a fog settles into the soul and wraps us in darkness. No one is exempt. This is the Dark Night that St. John of the Cross described so eloquently 500 years ago. It comes when we stumble in our work, our relationships, our faith. Suddenly we are in free fall. We look in a mirror and a stranger looks back, God slips through the fingers and is lost, and “the earth lurches to a halt and hangs still on its axis, the atoms in the air coming to rest within their molecules,” as Debra Spencer says in *Moment of Inertia*. Or, as the Psalmist cries,

You have put me in the depths of the Pit, in the regions dark and deep.

Your wrath lies heavy upon me; I am shut in and cannot escape; my eye grows dim with sorrow.

My only companion is darkness.

~Psalm 88:6-8, 18

Where can we go? The way of the world is ashes and dust; there is no going back. God is hiding and waits for us in this place of pain and loss. The delusion that we can go it on our own has been torn away, and we can only wait in silence. This is our share in the Paschal Mystery, that we must face our failure and die to self in order to be reborn in Christ, but ah! – it hurts almost beyond bearing!

We must stop fighting and rest, lay down the self-will and let our hearts become an empty vessel. Slowly, the warmth of God steals in. We are not alone, for God waits with us. *Even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light* (Psalm 139:12). God is lifting us to our feet, filling our emptied hearts until we overflow with divine love.

If only we could learn this lesson once and be done, but humans are stubborn creatures. We will emerge from night and lift our burdens again, thinking, “*It’s all up to me.*” Mercifully, each time, the infinitely compassionate God draws us deeper into the Mystery and wears down the self-will, making us a more perfect vessel for divine love, until one day we abandon it on the side of the road and walk on with God.

As a Benedictine, I return often to this dark night as I spiral into the mystery of communal monastic life. My life has become a descent into surrender of self-will, renewal of faith, and recommitment to the Community. In his Rule, St. Benedict asked that we “*support with the greatest patience one another’s weaknesses of body and behavior ... and may Christ bring us all together to everlasting life.*” (Rule of Benedict, Chapter 72) He understood that if we live this life with patience, compassion, love, and endurance we will find God through community.

From the very beginning, God made humans for each other. This means we are called to love with humility and grace, embracing all as Christ embraces us all. To live right means to surrender to God, to empty ourselves so that Christ can fill us, complete us, and share us with others.

Remember this on Christmas morning when you pray before the Child lying in the manger, God-Made-Human, the One who emptied himself. He gave himself as gift, so that we can learn to be fully human and become in turn a gift to others.

Benedictine Center of Spirituality

By Sister Pauline Micke, OSB

As this year of 2016 draws to a close, it is a good time to spend some time considering the seasons of our lives. We may be surprised to find how God is encountering us in our relationships.

September's Retreat, Good Grief: The Quality of Mercy, used the Scripture passage from Second Corinthians to help participants see the role that mercy, love, and compassion play as we journey further into healing and wholeness: *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort others with the same comfort we ourselves receive from God."*

October's Retreat responded to a frequent request for more sessions on prayer. Praying in Color offered participants the experience of entering into an active, playful, visual, and contemplative prayer practice to help them create a way into stillness and listening. This is a new way to talk with God without words.

December's Retreat for Advent will be Saturday, December 10, from 9:00 a.m. to noon at the Monastery. Cheryl Fleckenstein will take us on a Journey into the Holy Presence with the Women in Jesus' Genealogy. These women show how to prepare this Advent: to listen to the voice *crying out in the Desert*; to understand what it means for the Spirit of the Lord to be upon us; and with Mary to recognize the sign that God gives us regarding the *Messiah, Emmanuel, God with us*. Call 218-723-6555 to register.

We invite you to take the time with the seasons of your life to encounter yourself growing in holiness and wholeness.

COMING SOON: We will soon mail the flyer with Benedictine Center of Spirituality offerings for January to June, 2017. If you do not receive a flyer, or if you'd like to be on our mailing list, e-mail me at pauline.m@duluthosb.org.

Blessings on your Holidays as you continue to be formed as intentional disciples, a term used by Sherry Weddell in her book on the path to knowing and following Jesus.

Please Pray for the Following Deceased Family and Friends

Linda Kay Wright 10/28/2015

Margaret Eleanor Berg 10/4/2016

Joseph A. Nowak 10/27/2016

Dr. John B. Sanford 10/31/2016

June Hogan 11/5/2016



Photo by Sister Therese Carson



Photo by Sister Paule Pierre Barbeau

The Summer Express

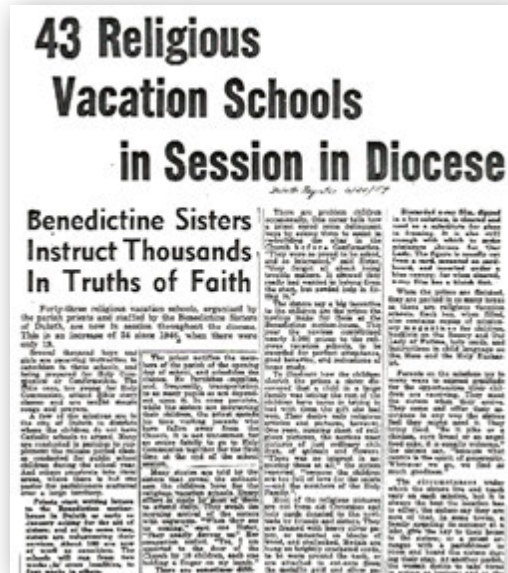
By Sister Mary Catherine Shambour

When St. Scholastica Monastery celebrates its 125 anniversary in 2017, there will be numerous tributes paid to the Benedictine Sisters for lasting contributions they have made to the city of Duluth, the Diocese of Duluth, and beyond. When one looks at the impressive list of eighty-four educational institutions, eleven hospitals, and seven other institutions founded or staffed in northern Minnesota and beyond, (Cf. *House of Stone* by Sister Mary Richard Boo) there is no wonder that Bishop James McGolrick, Duluth's first bishop, would claim, "Mother Scholastica built my Diocese!"

But beyond the institutions they founded, including those still thriving today (St. Mary's Medical Center of Essentia Health, The College of St. Scholastica, and the Benedictine Health System), perhaps their deepest legacy is their evangelization work in a far-flung, largely rural diocese. To build Catholic schools and staff them with trained religious was beyond the means of communities with small Catholic populations, or where public schools were supported by the mining industries. Thus, as the Diocese and the Benedictine community continued to grow, the Sisters provided a foundation in the faith through the schools they founded or staffed; through evening, weekend, and release-time classes for students in public schools; and through a system of year-round catechetical schools on the Iron Range that served thousands of children and adults for decades. They also created a well-organized, unique system of summer vacation schools that flourished throughout the last half of the twentieth century. Older members of the Diocese – and Sisters including myself – still fondly recall those experiences.

This annual "Summer Express" proved what could be accomplished through the cooperation of parishes and the Sisters willing to come and offer their services, even when conditions for teaching were not ideal (damp church basements during June's rainy season). Parishes provided transportation for the Sisters, lodging, and some meals. These varied from place to place but people generously shared what they had to offer.

Sometimes this meant one or two Sisters shared a bedroom in a family home (up to even three Sisters to one large bed), or stayed in an empty rectory or trailer. For my first assignment in the 1950s to Grand Portage, my companion and I were housed in the oldest church in Minnesota (built in 1865). My companion slept in the small sacristy and I slept in the bell tower. Termites kept falling on me, so I joined her in the sacristy. We had a kerosene lamp and a gas-burner hot plate for cooking, as electricity had not yet reached the site. Here also, with two days left in the session, I came down with mumps, contracted from a pupil in Grand Marais. My companion walked miles to a telephone to call Mother Martina to send a sister substitute and a car to take me to St. Mary's Hospital in Duluth, where I was quarantined for ten days. (Imagine a ten-day hospital stay today when feeling fine!)



The CCD program in Ely, Minnesota, included Sisters Andrine Kvaternik and Maxine Erchul (sitting) and Sister Marcella Cartie (standing).

Provisions for meals varied from place to place. If possible, we cooked on our own, but frequently Sisters were expected to go to a different home every day for the evening meal. On another assignment in the 1950s, Sister Ramona Ewen and I lived on the upper floor of a rectory, where the pastor who served three parishes was happy to have someone cook and share an evening meal with him. However, with empty cupboards and a total Sunday collection of twelve dollars, we had to make do with little. Once he picked up a large turtle on the highway, brought it home, and asked us to prepare it for supper. Another evening he presented us with 36 chicken gizzards he had received from a parishioner.

Teaching assignments generally included preparing children for Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation; teaching Bible stories and saints' stories; singing, directing the choir, and playing the organ; and organizing outdoor sports and indoor games. These experiences honed the Sisters' teaching skills. An excellent article from the *Duluth Register* of June 24, 1954, titled *Vacation Schools in Session in Diocese: Benedictine Sisters Instruct Thousands in Truths of the Faith*, describes how the whole enterprise was organized and received. It includes quotes from two Sisters describing their experiences: "When the children see us coming, they nearly devour us," one reported, and her companion added, "Yes, I am escorted to the door of the church by ten children each one holding a finger on my hands." Former students described how thrilled they were to receive the religious prizes awarded them for faithful attendance and accomplishment. A few thousand prizes per year were hand-made by novices at the Monastery for the summer programs. They cut religious pictures from old Christmas cards, covered them with used X-ray film that had been cleared by a lye solution, and mounted them on wood or Plaster of Paris plaques with a yarn border. Humble as the prizes were, they were cherished and unique. In one family, the children even took turns in taking to bed with them the prize one of them had received.



Sister Noemi Weygant and her class in Grand Portage, Minnesota, 1960.

The Sisters' service in the summer vacation schools continued for several decades. It reached its peak during the 1940s, 50s, and 60s when the Community's membership was close to five hundred. Between 1960 and 1969, 118 Sisters taught in summer religion programs, with 86 in the Diocese and six in other states. However, the situation changed rapidly during the late 60s and 70s, when the number of Sisters and new vocations sharply declined, and laity were encouraged to become more involved in parish religious programs. Here, too, the Sisters played a major role in the gradual transition by getting more training themselves and training future catechists at The College of St. Scholastica. Gradually summer vacation schools staffed by Sisters became a thing of the past.

While their services helped lay the groundwork for the faith, the new theology of Vatican II, which stressed that *all* the baptized – not just clergy and consecrated religious – are called to holiness, helped pass the torch of educating others in the faith to our dedicated laity today. *Ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus!* (That in all things God may be glorified.)

Photos from Monastery Archives

Lake Placid: A Place of Peace

By Sister Theresa Spinler

Lake Placid (its original name was Lake Sayer) has been a lovely, quiet, heavenly place for all of us since 1962. It has been a vacation place and also a spiritual retreat sanctuary for many of us. We have had many years to enjoy it, but as of this past August it is no longer our special getaway place. We sold it because too few Sisters were able to use it and the upkeep in both expense and human energy grew too costly.

The original acreage was 342 acres, purchased by Mother Athanasius Braegelman, Sister Mercedes Ryan, and Sister Monica Simon. The deed says it was purchased in October 1962, probably from the U.S. Steel Company. Already in 1961, lumber had been ordered from the Sather Company in Two Harbors to construct the cabins. The main and secondary cabin had room to sleep sixteen people. In November of 1962, a transformer and meter were installed, and by the end of December the construction of the two cabins and a small storage shed with a lean-to for firewood was finished.

An attempt was made to dig a well, but was abandoned when it was still dry at a depth of sixty-five feet. Instead, a pipe extending into the lake with accompanying filter and pump provided water for the cabins. In 1998, the pipeline to the lake failed and a new well reached water at a depth of one hundred sixty-five feet.



In 1999, I was asked to chair a committee to remodel the Lake Placid buildings. We reinforced the 72-foot-long roof of the main cabin, put in air chutes and insulation, remodeled the bathroom, rebuilt the fireplace to make it usable, put in new floor tiles, and replaced the shingles and ceiling tiles. The small cabin had become a home for mice, so we repaired and shingled the roof, installed double entry doors, and turned it into a storage shed for equipment. We also built a gazebo, a most welcome addition. There we spent many hours enjoying the serenity, the beauty and songs of birds, and the whispering wind in the pines while we prayed, reflected, visited with one another, enjoyed a meal or read a good book.

In 2008, we purchased a small pontoon that was easy to operate. The next year we were challenged by mischievous beavers who chewed the wires on the pontoon and sharpened their teeth on the rudder of the paddleboat. That was not good news for us – or the beavers! Lake Placid has always required a lot of upkeep, including mowing the grass, clearing the road of snow and fallen trees, making sure the beavers did not dam up the road – which they tried to do every fall and spring – keeping the heat functioning and pipes unfrozen, and so on. The beauty of this peaceful place made the time and effort spent in upkeep all worth it!

So many memories are connected with this dream place. It offered opportunities for hiking, swimming, fishing, and biking, and rides around the lake by paddleboat, pontoon, rowboat, or canoe. It was indeed a place of welcome renewal for soul and body. In the beginning, so many Sisters wished to enjoy Lake Placid that each person could enjoy it only one week a year. Two Sisters lived there throughout the summer to prepare meals for everyone who came and to keep the cabins clean.

Every season had its special beauty. The deciduous trees in their autumn glory, intermingled with the evergreens, were mirrored in the quiet waters. Our hearts filled with both wonder and sadness as we watched formations of geese begin their journey south, listened to their honking calls, and anticipated the departure of a beloved pair of loons each fall. Deep blankets of snow and the ice-covered lake offered skiing and snow shoeing. Spring brought the excitement of watching the break-up of ice, welcoming the return of birds enjoying the feeder filled with seed, and rejoicing in the appearance of a pair of loons who would make Lake Placid their home for another season.



Summer bathed us in its warmth and gentle breezes, its abundance of wild flowers and fruit, and the loons caring for their young and hearing their haunting calls throughout the day and into the night.

We have all had a variety of experiences at Lake Placid. I remember hiking the trails in the woods and getting lost twice. Once it was in the winter and another time in the fall. I climbed the highest spruce tree available in order to see the lake but I only saw more treetops! Eventually my sense of direction or my Guardian Angel helped me find the way. Sister Eugenia Daly was not as fortunate. While picking blueberries one summer, she became lost and spent the night in the woods, viciously attacked by mosquitoes. We had to call in the sheriff with a search party to rescue her.

I remember the excitement and struggle of pulling in a big Northern pike, then leaving some Northerns on a line tied to the dock and finding them all eaten by snapping turtles. In the spring, the snappers dug holes on the sandy road leading into the cabin to lay their eggs. They were not quick to leave the road as we drove or walked near them. Once I put a thick branch near the head of a snapper and with one *snap* the branch was in two pieces!

I remember one frightening night in the cabin. It sounded like someone was trying to open the locked door, so we crept to the kitchen and armed ourselves with the sharpest knives we could find for protection. When the rattling subsided, we peeked out the window and behold there was a huge black bear circling the cabin. To our great relief, he or she spotted the bird feeder and enjoyed its contents before lumbering back into the forest.

I vividly remember the beauty of the night sky, especially on cloudless nights. In the midst of the deep stillness all around, one could clearly see the stars in their constellations, a wonder not possible to behold in the city full of lights. The Northern Lights would perform with awesome flashing colors, and the sounds of night in the midst of such encircling stillness filled one with a profound sense of peace and wonder at this vast expanse of God's presence and greatness.

Our hearts are filled with a mixture of great joy, gratitude, and sadness as we say good-bye to Lake Placid. We rejoice that we could enjoy the beauty and wonders of creation with which Lake Placid blessed us. We give thanks for the wisdom and foresight of our community and its leaders as well as for God's Providence that led to its purchase. Now we find comfort in knowing that we can draw inspiration and renewal from this holy place of peace at any time, for the gift of Lake Placid now lives in our hearts' memory.

Lake Placid was purchased by a Northland resident and his family who have great respect and appreciation for this beautiful place. They plan to preserve its unique beauty and honor the story it tells.

Highlights

Monastery Open House

Story and photos by Sister Therese Carson

On Sunday, September 25, the Sisters welcomed some 120 guests to the Monastery Open House to share lively conversation and good food. Sister Beverly Raway, Prioress, gave a special blessing to all, and then introduced Jan Barrett, the Monastery's new Director of Development and Public Relations.

A slide show of our Twinning Communities showed how your donations help support the Sisters in Tanzania and Chile with health care, construction and repair of buildings, and other necessities that they otherwise would struggle to afford.



Guests and Sisters enjoy the buffet table.



Jane Dolter, Joan Dolter, and guest.



Sister Sarah Smedman with Mary Lee.



Sister Jeanne Ann Weber (center) with the Mastersons.

Highlights, continued

We thank our donors and friends who make all our ministries possible and who bless us in so many ways. As you await the birth of the Christ Child into your hearts, may the Lord bless you with rich faith, undying hope, love for all, and peace.



Jordan Lyaruu and Rafael Mumba.



Sister Marilyn Micke and her niece, Sister Pauline Micke.



Sister Joan Marie Stelman



Judy and Jim Dawson.



Sister Dorene King and guest.



Jan Barrett with guest.

Highlights, continued

Sisters Attend Inauguration of New College President

Story and photos by Sister Therese Carson

On Friday, October 14, the Sisters attended the inauguration of Colette McCarrick Geary, Ph.D. as the 12th president of The College of St. Scholastica. The inaugural Mass was held in Mitchell Auditorium at the College.



Sister Mary Josephine Torborg.



Sisters Theresa Spinler and Lois Eckes.

Concelebrating the Eucharist were the Most Reverend Paul Sirba, Bishop of the Duluth Diocese; the Right Reverend John Klassen, OSB, Abbot of St. John's Abbey in Collegeville; and priests of the Duluth Diocese. Also present was Dr. Geary's uncle, Theodore Cardinal McCarrick, Archbishop Emeritus of Washington, DC.

Sister Beverly Raway, Prioress, welcomed Dr. Geary, the priests, family, guests, faculty, students, and Sisters. Sister Josephine Torborg read the first Reading from *Proverbs*, and Sister Theresa Spinler and Sister Lois Eckes led us in the Psalm response. Sister Gretchen Johnston, as a member of the College's Board, shared in the Prayers of the Faithful.

The Inaugural ceremony followed the Mass and was held in the Burns Wellness Commons Reif Gymnasium. Many Sisters were present to witness the historic occasion. Dr. Geary is the first laywoman president of our college. Sister Kathleen Del Monte, Associate Vice President of Mission Integration, offered the Invocation, and Sister Beverly Raway welcomed Dr. Geary on behalf of the Monastic Community.



Sister Kathleen Del Monte.



Sister Beverly Raway, Prioress.

Highlights, continued



Dr. Colette McCarrick Geary

To Doctor Colette McCarrick Geary, 12th president of The College of St. Scholastica, we say, “Welcome home!”



Sisters at inauguration

Join Us in Welcoming Jeff Hyatt

By Sister Jeanne Ann Weber



As you may have read in the last *Pathways*, the Community agreed that the time is right to expand our spirituality and enrichment ministries. The decision included hiring a director to coordinate our present spirituality ministries and to offer a broader range of retreats, workshops, hosting of groups, *et cetera*, by renovating space at the Monastery in Stanbrook.

After an extensive search, we hired Jeff Hyatt as the new Director for the Benedictine Center of Spirituality and Enrichment. His starting date is November 7, 2016. Since 2001, he has led ministries, retreats, and workshops for the purpose of life transformation. He has experience with a wide variety of Christian denominations and with other faiths and spiritual traditions.

Jeff has served as a pastor, worship leader, retreat organizer and speaker, workshop leader, and radio producer. He has also been involved in serving the needs of the larger community through various non-profit organizations that serve the poor and underserved.

Jeff shared some of his values by saying: “Relationships are the context of life. As human beings, we were created to live in a right relationship with God, ourselves, the other, and the natural world. It’s in these relationships that we best reflect the life and love of God in the world as we are transformed more and more into our truest Selves.”

We look forward to sharing the vision and dream of our expanded ministries as they unfold. Continue to keep us in prayer, and thank you for the many ways you support our Community and its ministries.

Highlights, continued

Sister Claudia Riehl Living a Legacy Award

By Jan Barrett

Sister Beverly Raway, OSB, congratulated the Sister Claudia Riehl Living a Legacy recipients at the annual leadership conference for the Benedictine Health System. Sister Lisa Maurer, OSB, visible at the podium, was emcee for the annual leadership conference held at the DECC in Duluth in September.

The Benedictine Sisters sponsor the Benedictine Health System, and are blessed to know that the legacy of Sister Claudia Riehl lives on in this program that recognizes associates who embody her characteristics in their daily work. The recognition program was established in 2010 and is named for Sister Claudia Riehl, OSB, longtime Director of Mission Integration at BHS. Sister Claudia went home to God on February 26, 2015, but lives on in her work and in our hearts.



Photo courtesy of the Benedictine Health System

Love of Learning

Article and photo by Sister Jeanne Ann Weber

Learning has been an important Benedictine value over the ages. There are so many ways to learn, grow, and be transformed. The College of St. Scholastica, adjacent to our Monastery, offers many opportunities for education through classes, workshops, speakers, and concerts.



Sisters Barbara Higgins, Martha Bechtold, and Dorene King

On October 31, nineteen Sisters from the Monastery took advantage of an Emeritus College offering: *A Day at College 2016*. After coffee and sharing, Dr. Colette McCarrick Geary, President of The College, welcomed all and shared various Benedictine values that are important in our world today. This was followed by *The Orphan Train Experience*, a meaningful and touching presentation by Renee Wendinger.

Next was a presentation by Sara Breeze about *Sister Amata: The Lumberjack Nun*. The presentation was near and dear to all the Sisters as Sister Amata Macket was a legendary member of our Community. Sara Breeze captured the unique character, gifts, and appearance of Sister Amata.

Sister Amata traveled the forests of Northern Minnesota to offer a first form of health insurance to the lumberjacks. This guaranteed the men care at several hospitals built by the Sisters, unless of course the injury was due to fighting or drunkenness! Sister Amata would also darn socks, bake pies, lend a listening ear, doctor their ills, and give spiritual support. The Sisters and the other 280 students at *A Day at College* enjoyed hearing about the amazing life of Sister Amata. We are so proud of her!

Highlights, continued

Sisters' Blessings

By Jan Barrett

It is the tradition of St. Benedict to begin new work begins with prayer and a blessing. Some months are busier than others for the Sisters because there are so many wonderful events they attend to provide their blessing. These include the Benedictine Health System and The College of St. Scholastica, two of our sponsored institutions. A similar commissioning occurs with orientation of new employees of Essentia Health.

Photo courtesy of the Benedictine Health System



As sponsors of the Benedictine Health System (BHS), the Sisters in attendance at the annual leadership conference in September gave the closing blessing to more than 300 leaders. BHS is a Catholic organization entrusted with advancing our health care ministry. Dr. Becky Urbanski, the Senior Vice President of Mission Integration and Marketing, said, "It is always a meaningful and moving moment when the Sisters bless the participants of the annual BHS Leadership Conference. The blessing is an expression of our connection to their mission and ministry and their faith in us as we carry on their work. Receiving their blessing is a highlight of our time together."

Photo by Sister Lisa Murer



Each autumn as football season begins, the College of St. Scholastica team gathers in the chapel for prayer, a blessing, and a Benedictine medal. Kurt Ramler, Head Coach for the Saints, said, "It's been tremendous for everyone involved to have Sister Beverly's blessing. We feel fortunate to be members of an amazing community and love playing football in a Benedictine way."

Photo courtesy of The College of St. Scholastica



In September, as faculty and staff began the school year at The College of St. Scholastica, the Sisters offered a prayer and sang a blessing to these dedicated people. Those who experience it value the tradition and say they look forward to this blessing every year. Heidi Johnson, the College Reference Librarian, says, "It always gives me peace, a purpose, and fills me with the sense that I am supported in my work."

We are proud of these women and men who daily witness to our Catholic and Benedictine values and heritage.

Highlights, continued

Sister's Book Review Included in ChLA Quarterly

By Andi Therrien

Photo by David Ballard



Sister Sarah Smedman has written a book review which is being featured in the Fall 2016 **Quarterly** of the Children's Literature Association (ChLA) published by The Johns Hopkins University Press. **Quarterly** provides "first rate scholarship in children's literature studies, and each issue features an editorial introduction, juried articles about research and scholarship in children's literature, and book reviews" (<http://www.childlitassn.org>).



In this issue of **Quarterly**, Sister Sarah reviewed the book **Spirituality in Young Adult Literature: The Last Taboo** by Patty Campbell with Chris Crowe. In her book Campbell examined the sparsity of stories written for young people about spiritual struggles, and their search for God in their lives or, as Campbell put it, their "Godsearch." She used her familiarity with many young adult (YA) books and their authors to explore the reason for this. Sister Sarah examines and comments on Campbell's samples, methodology, critiques, and conclusions as well as those of Crowe.

Campbell suggests that in an adolescent's life there are many turning points, a spark of understanding or coming together of ideas, a realization of truth or self-knowledge when the divine breaks through. She says these moments are "inherently spiritual" and they are at the heart of many YA stories. Sister Smedman observes that Campbell often fails to see a distinction between religious and spiritual experiences. Such moments are grace-filled, God-encountering, holy moments. Are religious locations, symbols, and encounters with dedicated or wise people the same as the turning points mentioned above?

Sister Sarah, now retired, is a former professor of children's and young adult literature at the University of North Carolina Charlotte and Minnesota State University Moorhead, and a former Board member and president of ChLA. She is active in several Monastery ministries, including writing about children's and young adult literature for the Monastery's quarterly newsletter, *Pathways*.

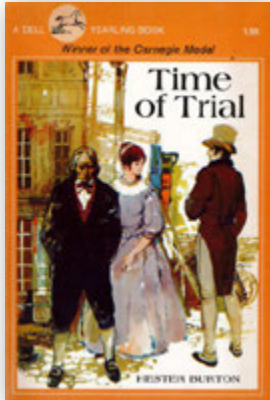


Oil painting by Sister Mary Charles McGough

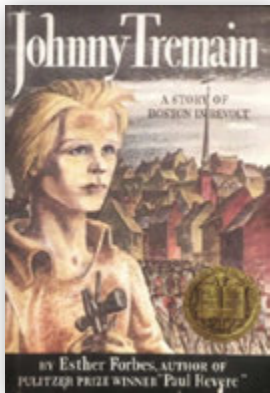
Creative Use of History: The Historical Novel

By Sister Sarah Smedman

A recapitulation from my earlier article: historical fiction writers agree that the purpose of their work is to make history come alive for the reader, and that all historical fiction grows out of assiduous and accurate research. Qualities of excellent writing based on research include accuracy, judicious selectivity, organization, and an imaginative and lively use of facts. “Fact used imaginatively – this is what children look for in historical stories: good story and a full, even a crowded, background” (Margery Fisher). A cogent rationale authors offer for writing historical novels for young readers is that the past offers, in Hester Burton’s words, “robust, exciting stories of young people thrown into some terrible predicament or danger, and scrambling out of it unaided.” While the protagonist in historical novels is fictional, background characters are often real.

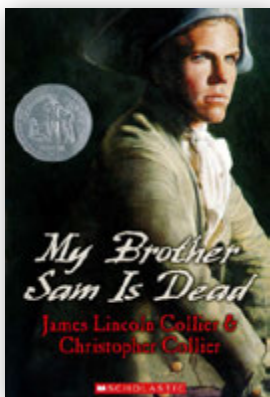


In Burton’s Carnegie Award winning novel *Time of Trial* (1963), set in the early 1800s, Margaret Pargeter works with her father in his London bookstore. When Mr. Pargeter publishes his booklet condemning deplorable living conditions of the poor, he is misunderstood by lower and upper classes alike. The bookshop and his home are sacked and burned, and he is jailed as a revolutionary. Now homeless, Meg, along with the orphan Elijah that Meg adopted when his tenement home collapsed and her housekeeper Mrs. Neech, move to the seaside hometown of Robert Kerridge, a friend in London. Robert’s wealthy parents, members of the socially elite, do their best to rend his romantic attachment to Meg. Depicting both political and social dissension, the ending of the novel offers hope: “*The spring is begun.*”

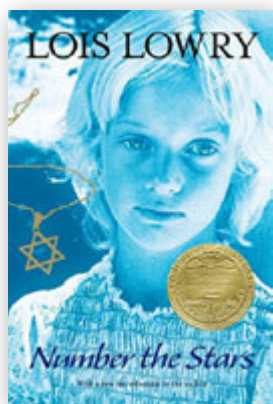


Perhaps because war thrusts people into dangerous predicaments, many children’s and YA novels are set during wars. Both Newbery Award winner *Johnny Tremain* (Esther Forbes, 1943) and Newbery Honor Book *My Brother Sam Is Dead* (James and Christopher Collier, 1974) are set during the American Revolution. When Johnny, a cocky silversmith apprentice, badly burns his hand, he becomes a dispatch rider for the Committee of Public Safety and so works with illustrious patriots Paul Revere, James Otis, John Hancock, Samuel Adams, and John Adams. He takes part in the Boston Tea Party and the Battle of Lexington. Johnny loses his friend Rab in battle, yet his future looks hopeful when Dr. Warren believes he can cure that maimed hand, enabling him someday to practice his trade again. I can personally testify that a good story well told can invigorate young readers: I read *Johnny Tremain* aloud to my first seventh-grade class at the end of the

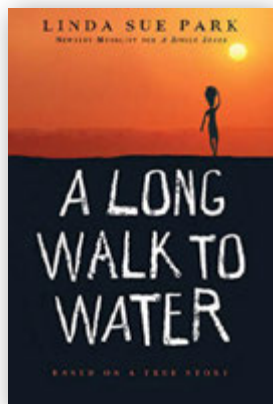
school year. The following September I decided to read *Johnny Tremain* aloud, but the book was checked out of both the school library and the public library for the entire semester. The eighth graders gave me a copy for Christmas, with the note that I should read “their book” to every class.



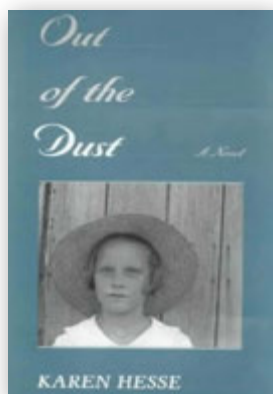
Nonetheless, the Colliers believe that *Johnny Tremain* provides too simple an interpretation of the Revolution by putting it into “easy categories of good versus bad,” so they wrote *My Brother Sam Is Dead*, the story of a family, and one son, the protagonist Tom Meeker, torn by division. Tom loves, admires, and supports both his father, a staunch supporter of the British, and his older brother Sam, who was disowned by his father when he joined the Continental army. Ironically, the father is kidnapped and killed aboard a British ship and Sam is shot by the Continental army. In an interview, Christopher Collier said a reason for writing the book was to “undermine the historical myth that Americans believe . . .and bring the real story to kids.”



The holocaust novel, Lois Lowry's Newbery Award winner *Number the Stars* (1989), tells the little known story of the 1943 Danish resistance to the Nazi threat of relocation of the Jews. They smuggled almost 7000 people across the sea to Sweden. In this family story undergirded by the *Little Red Riding Hood* folk tale, protagonist 10-year-old Annemarie Johansen escapes the Nazi soldiers and their dogs when she carries a basket with food and a secret weapon to her Uncle, captain of one of the boats that ferries Jews to Sweden.



Linda Sue Park's *A Long Walk to Water* (2010) is set against the background of the Second Sudanese Civil War in which millions of people were killed, imprisoned, tortured, killed, or enslaved, and millions more displaced. It parallels two stories, one set in 1985 and one in 2008-09. Prominent – printed in dark letters – is the heartbreaking story of Salva, one of the lost boys of Sudan who is separated from his family by war. He walks for months to refugee camps in Ethiopia, from which he is finally rescued to go to America. The other tells the story of Nya, a girl who walks miles every day to carry water on her head back to her family. The stories come together at the opening of a well in Nya's village, for which the adult Salva has planned and raised American money to bring clean water. When Nya gathers courage to thank Salva, the two, each from long warring tribes, meet each other.



Wars are not the only adversity from which young people struggle to extricate themselves. Karen Hesse's free verse novel *Out of the Dust* (1997), recipient of both the Newbery and Scot O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction, depicts 14-year-old Billie Jo Kelby's suffering as she endures Oklahoma's destructive dust storms, the deaths of her mother and newborn brother in a kerosene fire, and the growing distance between herself and her father. Billie Jo was an accomplished pianist with future promise until her hands are badly burned in the fire, for which she felt responsible. To escape what she thinks an impossible life, she hops a freight car where she meets an older man who had also abandoned his family. Billie Jo decides to return to all that she loved in her dust bowl life. By the end she knows "the fact is/ what I am/ I am because of the dust./ And what I am is good enough./ Even for me.

While some adults decry more than one of the above titles as too difficult and sad for teen-age readers, others believe them appropriate, "the kind of book that can be life-changing, because without ever denying the essential amorality and randomness of the natural order, they offer [the reader] a believable, hard-won hope, . . . the kind you can hang on to in the midst of poverty and war and violence. Young readers need such alternatives to ideological rigidity, and such explorations of how stories matter. And so do adults." (*New York Times*)

Erratum

"...*Nostra maxima culpa*." On page 20 of the 2016 Fall *Pathways*, the article on Celebrating Creativity was written by Sister Therese Carson.

Sister Profile: Sister Lisa Maurer

by Jan Barrett

Sister Lisa came to the Monastery from Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, the oldest of three children born to Gene and Diane Maurer. She attended St. Mary's Catholic School (grades 1-12) in Sleepy Eye and Southwest Minnesota State University. After college, Sister Lisa taught and coached in Catholic schools within the New Ulm Diocese until coming to the Monastery in 2007. She made her First Monastic Profession in August, 2009, and completed her Master's Degree in Pastoral Ministry at St. John's University School of Theology and Seminary in May of 2016. She works as the Mission Integration Director for the Benedictine Health System (BHS), a Catholic long-term health care organization sponsored by St. Scholastica Monastery. Sister Lisa is in her third year as an assistant football coach for kickers and punters at The College of St. Scholastica.



Sister Lisa Maurer and her mother, Diane Maurer

Sister Lisa has always appreciated the discipline learned as a child through attending Catholic school, and never missed a Sunday Mass with her family. In fact, the only time she recalls missing Mass was on Ash Wednesday during spring training for college softball when she couldn't find a local church. She has always been a sports enthusiast and found great strength, structure, and determination while playing sports throughout school and in college. A rich grounding in Catholicism and a deep respect for *The Rule of St. Benedict* led her to a calling as a Benedictine Sister.

Her initial attraction to the St. Scholastica Monastery came after watching the film *Sisters*. She was inspired by and in awe of the women who spoke of loving God and living lives that were real and rich. She appreciated that the Sisters, while different, encouraged one another with love and support in their search for God. After visiting the Monastery, she was immediately drawn to life as a Benedictine Sister. She was attracted to the prayer life of the Sisters and enamored by the beautiful grounds surrounding the Monastery. She also loved the direct connection to The College of St. Scholastica and, as a die-hard Twins and Vikings fan, staying in Minnesota was a plus.



A day in the life of Sister Lisa begins between 4:30 and 5:00 a.m. She faithfully starts her day with personal prayer and reflection in front of the Blessed Sacrament, before joining fellow Sisters for communal Morning Prayer. Around 7:30 a.m., she heads to work at BHS and then back to the Monastery late in the afternoon for Evening Prayer and dinner. In the fall, her afternoons and Saturdays are full with coaching football. Her day ends in prayer and reflection before bedtime.

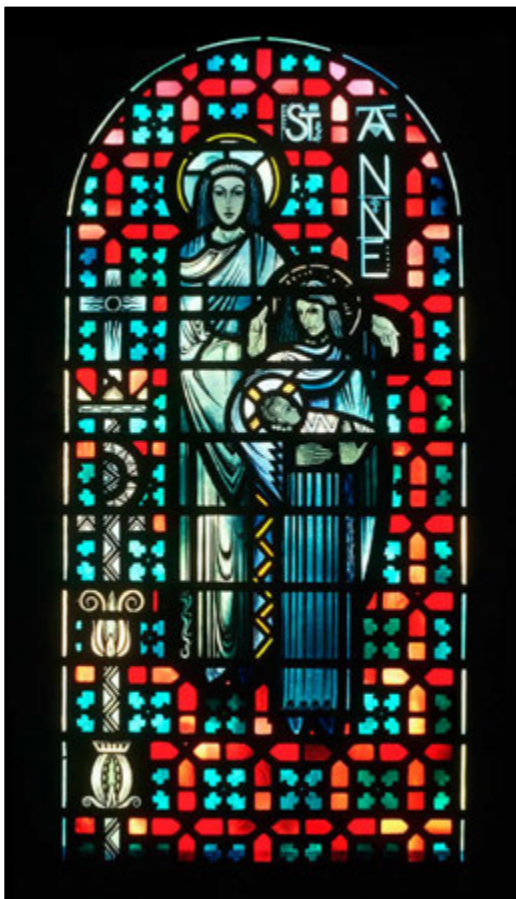
A busy schedule hasn't kept Sister Lisa from entertaining, engaging, and inspiring audiences near and far. She speaks to thousands of employees throughout BHS, an outreach to more than 35 communities, where she upholds and educates employees on the mission and values handed on to BHS by the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery. Beyond her BHS ministry, Sister Lisa has become a sought-after emcee and speaker for many community and church organizations including the Kiwanis Club, the Diocese of Duluth Women's Conference, the Night for Life for the Women's Care Center, and Mentor Duluth, to name a few.

Although she answers to coach, director, speaker, friend, auntie, and nun, she affectionately and graciously remembers being called "Sister Lisa" for the first time as an incredible moment because it signified the official commitment that she and God made to one another. Sister Lisa often says, "I believe the way to happiness is to be how God dreams you to be. All of us are called to live lives of holiness that lead us back to God. Mine just happens to be as a Benedictine Sister, for which I am grateful."

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*“Even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light.”*

Psalm 139:12