



PATHWAYS

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Pathways

NEWSLETTER

of the Benedictine Sisters

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Editorial Board:

Sister Beverly Raway, Prioress
Vicky Siders, director
Sister Ann Marie Wainright
Sister Linda Wiggins
Sister Margaret James Laughlin
Sister Sarah Smedman
Andi Therrien
Sister Therese Carson

Contributors:

Sisters of the Community

Cover Photo by:

Sister Therese Carson

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St. Scholastica Monastery
1001 Kenwood Avenue
Duluth, MN 55811 - 2300

Telephone: 218.723.6555 Fax:
218.723.5963

Visit our website:

www.DuluthBenedictines.org



A Letter from the Prioress

As I write this letter for the first time as the Prioress of St. Scholastica Monastery, I am now, and I suspect will be for some time, stunned with the reality of the position the Sisters have chosen for me. However, the beauty of the celebration on the day of Installation and the overwhelming gift of prayers and good wishes will sustain me for a very long time. I thank each of you who were able to be here to rejoice with me on that day. I especially thank Bishop Paul Sirba and Sister Kerry O'Reilly who presided over the Eucharistic Celebration and Installation Rite, respectively. Each day brings new insights about what is being asked of me, some of which seem like daunting and impossible tasks, but I am at peace internally. It is the gift of the "grace of office" our former prioresses are telling me... and reassurance "that with God all things are possible."



At the Monastery boxes are being packed, and cleaning and painting are going on as staff move in to new offices. The external changes are a visible sign of the transition going on internally in minds and hearts. New questions, new ideas, new emotions are being experienced in this time of transition... a sacred time for all of us... as Sister Lois Eckes lets go of the responsibility she has carried for ten years and new leadership takes on those duties. We are grateful for Sister Lois's guidance over the years and celebrated her gift to community with a special "thanksgiving" dinner. We wish her a well-deserved rest and restoration time which will include visits with family and friends, retreat and travel.

The summer and early fall were times to celebrate gifts and blessings given and received. Sister Luce Marie Dionne made her final monastic profession, and the Community hosted the chapter meeting of the Federation of St. Benedict which included the election of Sister Kerry O'Reilly as the new Federation President. I called forth and the Community blessed new and continuing staff members: Sisters Beverly Horn, Danile Lynch, Helen Giesen, Renata Liegey, and Claudia Cherro. We celebrated the arrival of new associates in our volunteer program, the 90th birthday of Sister Agnes Sitter, and the Silver, Golden, and Diamond Jubilees of the Sisters. I'm finding the role of Prioress includes blessings for a variety of events and people. In August and September I participated in commissioning of the Sisters in their ministries, the blessing of College faculty and staff and the football team, groundbreaking for the new Health Science Pavilion at BlueStone, and the site for a Habitat for Humanity House in Brainerd honoring Sister Vivian Arts. The Sisters also blessed leaders of the Benedictine Health System and renovated space at the Benedictine Health Center. All of these events and blessings mark times of transition and the culmination of powerful prayer and support.

As summer moves into fall, the change of seasons may be a transition time for you as well. I can imagine that some are moving to a new location, experiencing a new job or retirement, a son or daughter going to College, the loss of a loved one, or the gift of a new child or grandchild. I pray that you may find grace and a gift in each change and moment as described in a stanza from a poem called "Crossing the Threshold" by Gunilla Norris from *Being Home*.

Help me cross into the present moment—
into wonder, into Your grace:
that "now-place," where we all are,
unfolding as Your life moment by moment.

May the fall be a sacred and blessed time for you.

Yours in Christ,

Sister Beverly

Sister Beverly Raway, Prioress

The Gift of Fall

By Sister Ann Marie Wainright

*The part of me that feels stripped cries out to you,
“How can I give shade with so much gone?”*

*You speak to me of an inner shade whose name is peace
the gift that comes from letting go.*

*And suddenly, when I look again I realize that
what you have taken from me has only set me free to see.*

I am your story of glory!

*~ “Prayer Before An Empty Tree,” Seasons of Your Heart:
Prayers and Reflections, Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB*

I love the season of fall.

I love the feel of the air turning cooler and the sight of the trees ablaze in fiery shades of yellow, orange, and red. The sound of the leaves crunching under my feet during a walk through the woods becomes a sacred hymn honoring the sacrifice of every fallen leaf that, once green shade, has now become mulch to warm the frozen earth and food for next spring's growth. It is a tender, sacred time of year that is also relentless in its march toward the stark, empty trees awaiting the coming of winter's brutal cold without its green coat to clutch about itself. Nature's *kenosis*.



Photo by Sister Joyce Fournier

Late fall, and its naked trees, was the part I did not enjoy. The glory, the beauty, the color were gone, and it seemed to be a transitional time that I tolerated to get to the “good part” again – trees decked in snow like a winter-white wonderland; trees popping with that curious shade of green that only happens in spring; trees covered in flowers and then fruit and later its glorious fall attire. The good part...the better part of nature's life cycle.

In the fall of 2012 I began my first unit of clinical pastoral education at a hospital in Shakopee, Minnesota. After a long day of ministry to patients, I took a walk after supper through the neighborhood where I stayed. The trees had long since surrendered their colorful leaves, and all that remained was the skeleton of the

tree. I stood in silence before two trees on opposite sides of the street, their bodies and arms arched toward one another like graceful dancers. I could see every fine twig and branch silhouetted against the blue sky. It was beautiful.

I fell in love with those empty, naked trees and with the sacred season of late fall that comes to every human life, sometimes more than once to some of us.

In reflecting on how Christians hold the glory of the light of God in their hearts, St. Paul writes, “But we hold this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing power may be of God and not from us” (2 Cor. 4:7). Earthen vessels themselves, the trees of fall remind us that we too will be called to surrender whatever makes us feel important, purposeful, or special, for a greater gift: the vulnerable, naked, beautiful truth of being God's Beloved.

Installation of Sister Beverly Raway as Prioress of St. Scholastica Monastery

By Sister Beverly Horn and Sister Judith Oland

Photos by Sister Therese Carson

“O magnify the Holy One with me; together let us praise God’s name.”

Psalm 34:3

On August 15, 2015, Sister Beverly Raway was installed as the fourteenth Prioress of St. Scholastica Monastery—a truly joyous occasion. The entire ceremony was a sacred and beautiful event. The entrance procession in Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel included Bishop Paul Sirba of the Diocese of Duluth; Sister Beverly Raway; Sister Kerry O’Reilly, President of the Federation of St. Benedict; President Larry Goodwin, College of St. Scholastica; Christopher Raway (Sister Beverly’s brother); and five former Prioresses of St. Scholastica Monastery, spanning the last 40 years: Sister Grace Marie Braun, Sister Clare Marie Trettel, Sister Danile Lynch, Sister Kathleen Hofer, and Sister Lois Eckes.

Bishop Paul Sirba was the Eucharistic celebrant on this Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and Sister Kerry O’Reilly presided at the Installation of Sister Beverly Raway. During the Installation the transfer of authority from Sister Lois Eckes, Prioress during the previous ten years, was made. Sister Beverly was presented with the *Rule of St. Benedict*, and the Sisters of the Community stood and offered their support by saying together:

We, the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, have elected you, Sister Beverly Raway, as our Prioress. We believe that you hold the place of Christ in our Community. We look to you, our Prioress, for all that is good and holy. Help us to live the cenobitic, monastic life under the Rule of St. Benedict. Lead us in our Benedictine vowed commitment of stability, fidelity to monastic life, and obedience so that together we may seek the reign of God in justice and peace “that in all things God may be glorified.”



Bishop Paul Sirba and Sister Beverly Raway



*Sister Beverly Raway and Sister Kerry O’Reilly,
Federation President*

The Sisters came forward to offer obedient support and encouragement to Sister Beverly, and Sister Beverly embraced each Sister's hands with a blessing.



Sister Beverly receives the promise of obedience and support from Sister Kathleen Hofer, former Prioress



Sister Beverly prays during the Litany of the Saints



Community and guests applaud.



The new Prioress with five former Prioresses: Back, left to right: Sister Grace Marie Braun, Sister Clare Marie Trettel, Sister Beverly Raway, Sister Danile Lynch. Front, left to right: Sister Kathleen Hofer, Sister Lois Eckes

In his homily, Bishop Sirba referred to Our Lady as depicted in art. He stated:

“For me and for many, perhaps one of the most touching images of Our Lady’s tenderness and care to her daughters and sons is that of Our Lady of Guadalupe, an image she herself gave to the world as patroness of the Americas. On this the day of your Installation as Prioress of St. Scholastica Monastery, I offer you a feature of this image, Sister Beverly—in particular remain under the protection and motherly care of Our Lady’s mantle.”

The Bishop’s statement was especially meaningful to Sister Beverly because she recently received a gift from her friends Joan and Mac Baldwin of an icon of the Holy Protection of the Virgin Mary. The icon is of Our Lady in the Orans—the praying position—with a protective mantle in her hands.

Following the Eucharistic celebration a banquet was held in the Sisters’ dining room, and everyone continued rejoicing. This day will remain in everyone’s hearts and memories!

A Suscipe

By Sister Donna Schroeder with Sister Luce Marie Dionne

Photo by Sister Therese Carson



The Community of St. Scholastica Monastery celebrated the Feast of St. Benedict on July 11 with great joy. Sister Luce Marie Dionne made her perpetual profession in Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel. Her threefold promise of obedience, stability, and fidelity to monastic life is rooted in the *Rule of St. Benedict*, the 1500-year-old document that did so much to shape Western Culture. Her formation in the Monastery has given her a great appreciation of the Scriptures and of the *Rule of St. Benedict*, which is itself rich in Scripture. “During the ceremony we sang the *suscipe* from Psalm 119, which reads:

“Receive me, O Lord, according to your word and I shall live; and do not fail me in my hope.”

The ceremony began to the sound of the organ. The Paschal Candle led the entrance procession followed by all who were to participate in the ceremony. Sister Luce Marie carried a lighted oil lamp symbolizing the light of Christ which was then placed on the altar. The ceremony continued to the moment when the candidate read the document she had prepared, promising obedience, stability, and fidelity to monastic life. After reciting her promises, she made her commitment and prayers affirming that commitment to monastic life. She then lay prostrate before the altar, which is symbolic of Christ, while the traditional litany of saints was sung with the responses sung by the assembled community flowing over her. After this she moved behind the altar, faced the Community and sang the ancient *suscipe* three times. Each repetition was followed by a response from the Community to welcome Sister Luce Marie into full membership in the Community.

“*Suscipe*” is a Latin word for “receive.” The use of the *suscipe* has its origin going back to monastic professions. The term has its traditional roots in the offertory of a Mass, the rite by which the bread and wine are presented and offered to God before they are consecrated. As Christ offered himself on the Cross, we now daily celebrate this memory of Christ offering himself to God, the God of the Holy Trinity. Throughout history the *suscipe* has been used not only during Eucharistic celebrations but also by religious orders, saints, and people who personally wanted to offer their lives to God. This is a God of love who wishes us to love and live daily according to God’s word in our hearts.

Before coming to the Community, Sister Luce Marie had earned a B.S. in Theater Arts from Emerson College in Boston, Massachusetts, and a Master of Architecture degree from The Catholic University of America. She then worked for many years professionally in Boston on many different projects. Today she continues her external ministries through architectural projects. Along with renovations and a peace wall memorial, two of her most notable projects were the baptismal fonts at the parishes of St. Benedict and St. Michael in Duluth. As preparation for those projects, she studied the Sacrament of Baptism and then proceeded in transforming the space with the fonts’ designs as well as the coordination of the construction architecturally.

During her formation period Sister Luce Marie has had a number of responsibilities within Community including serving as a cantor and as the archivist for the monastic Community. As is true for all members, there will be the blessings of community life, a balance of prayer (ora) and work (labora), as well as ongoing formation. She has come to the Benedictine life offering her prayers and work, not only for the Community, but for the world. This also means the daily recitation and response to the *suscipe*, along with all of us on earth, as we are all part of this ongoing formation into this Trinitarian love of God.

Sister Profile: Sister Petra Lenta

By Sister Linda Wiggins

Photo by Sister Joyce Fournier



God's healing love is the absolute focus of Sister Petra Lenta's long ministry of seventy-six years as a Benedictine Sister of St. Scholastica Monastery. Each day through deep prayer and the reading of the Scriptures, she continues to seek to do the will of God. She has continued to be the ultimate seeker of the soul and science of healing, so to speak.

Following her graduation from The College of St. Scholastica in 1942, she entered a three-year program at the Institutum Divi Thomae in Cincinnati that specialized in cancer research. When she returned to Duluth in 1945, she and Sister Agatha Riehl established the Cancer Research Unit at The College of St. Scholastica where she also taught biology and chemistry. The Cancer Research Unit was active for over thirty years. In addition, she spent a year doing research in London at the prestigious Chester Beatty Laboratories where the Institute of Cancer Research was located in the 1960s and is still today.



Sister Petra and Sister Agatha Riehl in their laboratory at The College of St. Scholastica.

Sister Petra has a great love for the Blessed Mother of God, Mary, to whom she prays intercessory prayers. Sister Petra observed, "In witnessing her son's brutal suffering, Mary suffered greatly. She understands the suffering of all humanity, our brokenness and our great need for healing." Sister Petra has also witnessed much suffering through her work in cancer research and in her Benedictine ministry to those in need of spiritual and physical healing. Sister Petra passionately believes that suffering is not the end game but the beginning of all healing through God's love and mercy. Compassion for one another comes through experiencing pain and suffering. Paradoxically, so does real joy, real hope.

Adorning a large wall in Sister Petra's room are beautiful quotations from spiritual leaders, saints, and angels. Interspersed between the pithy words are beautiful pictures of religious architecture and nature. This wall is her prayer wall, her reminder of all things great and small and wonderful. Hope resides on this wall, in this room, and in the heart of the one who prays here daily.

This small, soft-spoken Sister carries a big heart, an acutely aware mind, and a smile that embraces humanity. Sister Petra has the ability to think both widely and microscopically and to serve with great joy because she dwells in the healing power of God each day.



Sister Petra's prayer wall

Photo by Sister Therese Carson

Highlights

Saved by Beauty Wins Award

Photo by Derek Montgomery Photography



Left to right: Meridith Schifsky, who helped to select art for the book; lead author John Schifsky, and contributing author Sister Lois Eckes. Contributing authors Peter Spooner and Rev. Dustin Lyon were unable to attend.

The Monastery's recent publication *Saved by Beauty: Sister Mary Charles McGough, OSB*, won a first-place award in the category of Art/Photography at the Northeastern Minnesota Book Awards ceremony held May 21, 2015, at the University of Minnesota Duluth Kirby Ballroom.

The ceremony honored books published in 2014 in six categories: Memoir and Creative Fiction, Poetry, General Nonfiction, Children's Literature, Fiction, and Art/Photography.

Saved by Beauty celebrates the life and art of Sister Mary Charles McGough (1925-2007). Images in the book feature woodcuts, watercolors, sculpture, and icons. Narratives include an essay by Sister Mary Charles, a section on her work at "the Barn," an essay on iconography, an essay on her work as an artist, and a biography. Books are available through Monastery Books and Gifts.

Dinner honoring Outgoing Prioress, Sister Lois Eckes

Article and photos by Sister Therese Carson

Sister Lois retired as Prioress in August, and the Community met at dinner to thank her for her ten years of devoted service. Sister Barbara Higgins and Sister Jeanne Ann Weber entertained us with comedy, and Sister Lois's administrative team gave heart-felt tributes to her leadership.



Sister Lois receives "magic coupons"



Sister Lois and her administrative staff: (left to right) Sister Renata Liegey, Sister Josine Krausnick, Sister Lois Eckes, Sister Danile Lynch, and Sister Luella Wegscheid



Sister Lois receives a hug from Sister Joan Marie Stelman

Under the direction of Sister Lisa Maurer as Master of Ceremonies, individual Sisters came up to give her "magic coupons" for activities she can once again enjoy, including bird-watching, caring for flowers, watching Twins baseball, blowing bubbles, and unbroken sleep, plus enough funds to take a well-deserved vacation.

The Sisters prayed over her, and she responded with a meditation on the loving eyes of Jesus, written by a favorite poet, John O'Donohue.

Sisters Attend Monastic Institute

By Sister Therese Carson

This summer six Sisters attended the annual Monastic Institute at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota. The topic was "Monasticism: Soul of the New Evangelization."

Father Jerome Tupa shared his unique vision of sacred architecture in bright colors and dancing forms that capture Pope Francis's exhortation to proclaim the joy of the Gospel. Father Tomas Rosica, a Vatican media attaché, said of the New Evangelization, "If you want to see it in action, watch Pope Francis." We must emulate our Holy Father who embraces people in all their gritty reality, seeing the Christ in all. Father Tomas finished with, "Make no small plans, for they have no magic to stir the heart."



Sisters with the Book of Revelation from the St. John's Bible: Sister Sarah O'Malley, Sister Mary Catherine Shambour, Sister Donna Schroeder, Sister Therese Carson, and Sister Theresa Jodocy. (Not pictured: Sister Luce Marie Dionne)

Sebastian Gomes, a producer for Salt and Light Media in Canada, showed his film of Pope Francis's first year. When the Holy Father broke with tradition to humbly wash the feet of teenage convicts, he showed that traditions must not get in the way of loving. This world will be transformed when people of all faiths consecrate time to God through prayer and live in voluntary poverty in solidarity with the poor. Monastics offer the world the example of authentic, relevant, mindful, listening and contemplative living where all are called to holiness and joy.

The Institute closed with a discussion about the challenges and opportunities facing monastic communities to share with others our Gospel joy. Abbot John Klassen recalled that when he was a novice he was told, "You should never say or sing 'Alleluia' without smiling." We become prophetic

communities through being light and leaven, transforming the world a little at a time.

Over the centuries we have learned, "to be where you are, and to be there well." In our monastic communities, each person has a place, a job, and a voice—three things sorely needed in this fragmented and rootless world.

Stanbrook Hall Reunion

July 25, 2015, alumnae of Stanbrook Hall met at the Monastery for afternoon tea and conversation. The date for next summer's reunion is July 23, 2016. All who attended Stanbrook Hall are welcome. We look forward to seeing you. Mark those calendars.



Reunion attendees from the Class of 1965

Photo by Sister Therese Carson

Sister Profile: Sister Mary Catherine Shambour

By Sister Therese Carson

When Sister Mary Catherine Shambour looks back on her life, her blessed childhood stands out brightly. “I grew up on a farm near New Prague, Minnesota, with Catholics of Czech descent whose lives centered on their parish Church.” Immersed in the Latin rituals of the Church, she developed a deep sense of holiness.

She studied English and Library Science at The College of Saint Scholastica from 1947 to 1951, and was drawn to the *ora et labora* life of her Benedictine instructors. “Their values were in the right place: they prayed at daily Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours while teaching and living among us; they loved us and we loved them.” After graduation she entered the Community as a postulant and immediately began teaching English at Stanbrook Hall. “I loved it, but after my novitiate year I received my ‘obedience’ to teach 5th grade in Cloquet, Minnesota,” followed by nine years in Duluth as librarian and teacher at the original Cathedral Senior High School and nineteen years at the new Cathedral High School, now the Marshall School.

Sister thrived on hard work. She taught, ran the library and media center, and gardened (once weeding out all the seedlings other Sisters had planted), all with boundless energy and intensity. One Sister recalled with affection, “Even in college, Sister Mary Catherine never strolled; she *hustled*.”

In 1973 she was studying Russian language on the side – “I was drawn to it by a love for Russian literature and my own Slavic heritage,” – when the spring thaw brought thirteen Russian freighters to Duluth to buy grain. She showed up at the docks and asked permission to come aboard. “I spoke only a little Russian, but they were very welcoming. I still remember the ship’s smell: soap and strong tobacco. I drove Russian sailors around Duluth and treated them to Dairy Queen.” Her love of Russian led to an M.A. Teaching degree in Russian from Indiana University, earned in summer sessions from 1973 to 1976.



Teaching English to students in Leningrad, 1980



Sister Mary Catherine with parishioner near Vladivostok, 2004

The Cold War was winding down, and America needed Russian teachers and interpreters. Between 1978 and 1994, Sister received four summer grants to study at Moscow University. One life-changing experience was teaching English in Moscow and Leningrad in 1980. “I was warmly welcomed and began to see Russians with different eyes. I learned that they did not want a war with us.”

Back home, she moved to Washington, D.C., gave talks about American-Russian relations, and accompanied and led various peace and religious groups to Russia. She was a liaison member of Pax Christi USA to the East-West Commission of Pax Christi International and made a number of trips to Europe. “I was in my element, fostering better relations between America and Russia, between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches.”

In 1986 she returned to Minnesota to teach Russian for nineteen years, primarily at the University of St. Thomas, and continued to lead various groups to Russia. In 2002 and 2004, as a mission volunteer, she helped two American priests strengthen the Catholic Church in Vladivostok. She visited homebound parishioners and worked in a hospice for homeless people. “I fed the residents, prayed with them, and washed their hands and feet, and once an elderly woman told me, ‘Now I know there is a God.’”

Retiring from teaching in 2005, she returned to the Monastery hoping for a full year in Vladivostok, but was asked to serve as Vocation Director, a fruitful choice for the Community. During her tenure, we welcomed four members into Perpetual Monastic Profession, four into First Monastic Profession, and one who is a novice. She is about to be ‘recycled’ again into another career, but hopes to find the time to organize hundreds of photographs taken in her many years of travel and ministry.

Benedictine Center of Spirituality

By Sister Pauline Micke

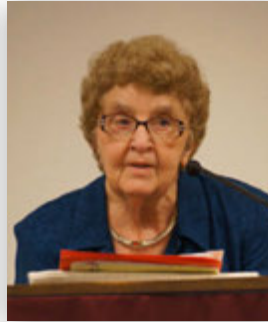
July 1, 2014—June 30, 2015 saw continual growth for the Benedictine Center of Spirituality. We served over 3,000 people with retreats, spiritual direction, presentations to various groups and churches, Sabbath Days of Renewal, and 5th Steps. The retreats (both private and group) and spiritual direction continue to be the fastest growing offerings.

Retreats:

May's retreat, "From Gabriel to Golgotha," given by Sister Ann Marie Wainright and the retreat in August, "Did You Hear the Good News," facilitated by Sister Sarah O'Malley on four women doctors of the Church, were well attended and participants gave us excellent evaluations and suggestions for future offerings.



"Did You Hear the Good News?"



Sister Sarah O'Malley



Sister Ann Marie Wainright, "From Gabriel to Golgotha"

Photos by Sister Therese Carson

This year we will be publishing two brochures. The first has been mailed out. The second brochure will cover offerings from January 2016-June 2016.

January, 2016—to be announced

February 27, 2016—Lenten Retreat, "Our Journey of Forgiveness and Liberation," facilitated by Father Steve Ulrick and Sister Pauline Micke.

March, 2016—to be announced

April 23, 2016—"The Seven First Words of Jesus and the Resurrection Call to Wholeness," a retreat focused on stress and burnout in light of Easter's message of hope. Facilitated by Kerry Sopoci, psychologist, and Beth Kaiser, pastoral ministry.

May, 2016—to be announced

Please join me in thanking God for abundant blessings as we continue to make available opportunities to help God's people grow in holiness and wisdom.

Mark Your Calendars!

In celebration of the Year of Consecrated Life, St. Scholastica Monastery will host a reception open to the public on **December 6, 2015**, from 2-4 p.m. All are welcome.

On **January 31, 2016**, the Monastery will conclude the Year of Consecrated Life with a day of prayer.

Twenty-fifth Triennial Chapter of the Federation of St. Benedict

By Sister Sarah Smedman

The twenty-fifth triennial chapter of the Federation of St. Benedict convened at St. Scholastica Monastery July 14-20, 2015. Its theme: *Monastic Life Without a Roadmap: New Realities, New Responses, New Relationships*. Although each Benedictine monastery is independent, several group together for mutual support and to maintain and extend the Benedictine charism among contemporary Benedictine women. Our Federation is the smallest of the four in the United States, and the only international one. In addition to St. Scholastica Monastery, Duluth, our Federation comprises St. Benedict's Monastery, St. Joseph, Minnesota; St. Paul's, St. Paul, Minnesota; St. Placid Priory, Lacey, Washington; St. Mary, Rock Island, Illinois; Annunciation, Bismarck, North Dakota; St. Benedict's, Muroran, Japan; St. Benedict, Taiwan; St. Martin, Nassau, The Bahamas; and Monasterio Santa Escolastica, Puerto Rico. Voting members of the Chapter are the Federation Officers and Councilors, the Prioress, and two elected delegates from each Monastery; non-voting members and guests include the Presidents of the Federations of St. Scholastica and St. Gertrude, and the Congregation of Perpetual Adoration.

After an opening liturgy, President Susan Hutchins called the meeting to order. The roll, called by Sister Sheila McGrath, secretary, ascertained that all were present. For discussion and reporting to the entire Chapter, voting members sat at tables of six or seven, which remained constant during the entire meeting. Each table selected a facilitator and note-taker.

On two mornings Sister Edith Bogue of our Monastery presented PowerPoint lectures: "Experiencing our Changes: Individually and Collectively. Parts I and II," followed by table discussions and sharing. Sister Edith's presentations were open to all Sisters of our Monastery.

Major action items of the Chapter included setting of direction statements for the Federation for the next six years; the election of a Federation President and of two Councilors, each for a term of six years; and the adoption of seven resolutions prepared prior to the meeting.

Following table discussions, each group shared possible direction statements. After each delegate marked her top three preferences, a writing committee amalgamated the top choices, from which they composed statements for final discussion by the body. The body approved the following direction statements:

1. Cultivate and nurture respectful relationships—
 within our Communities,
 within the Federation,
 with the earth, our common home.
- II. Intentionally engage in church and societal initiatives that may benefit from our
 Benedictine charism.
 Develop and share our spiritual and material resources.
- III. Enhance monastic life through the use of technology.

Following the monastic procedure of discernment, nominees for President spoke to the Chapter of personal qualities and experiences that prepared them for the office, as well as their stances on major issues; they then answered questions posed by the body. After convergence votes were taken and the Chapter seemed to be moving toward an election, the official ballot elected Sister Kerry O'Reilly of St. Benedict's Monastery in St. Joseph as Federation President. Following a similar process Sisters Lisa Maurer of St. Scholastica Monastery and Nicole Kunze of Annunciation Monastery were elected Councilors. All began their six-year terms immediately after this meeting's adjournment.

Three of the Resolutions adopted by the Chapter deal with minor language changes in our *Handbook*. Two deal with changes in election procedures to correspond with practices already in existence. One deals with the basic assessment and capital fee, which had not changed since 2003. Perhaps the most significant Resolution deals specifically with the study and prayerful reflection of Pope Francis's recent encyclical, "The Care of Our Common Home," required of each Monastery during the coming year.

Prior to the Chapter meeting each Monastery prepared for delivery two reports: the first: on what each had done to support the anti-trafficking Resolution adopted by the 2012 Federation Chapter; the second: on a new initiative undertaken in the previous two years. Actively engaged in anti-trafficking on several fronts, the aggregate efforts of the Federation are astounding! Perhaps St. Scholastica Monastery's most outstanding work has been the establishment of the Hildegard House for victims of trafficking. St. Scholastica's most significant new initiative is the developing of a new Model of Sponsorship of our College and multiple medical institutions. As the number of Sisters diminishes, our Traditional Model of having Sister-representatives on each Board of Trustees will no longer be feasible. We are seriously planning for a Variation on the Traditional Model.



Sister Kerry O'Reilly, Federation President, 2015—2021

Photos by Sister Therese Carson



The Federation Council, officers, and delegates on the Chapel steps before Sunday Eucharist

In the months before the convening of the Chapter, the Federation Council sent each Monastery questions for discussion by all Sisters. The purpose: to discover the collective opinions on issues we all confront in these changing times. The questions concerned the role of the Federation, the relationships within and among the Monasteries of our Federation and with other Federations, and interactions within our church and civic organizations. When responses were shared, the similarity among them was clearly evident. The Direction Statements of the Federation reflect our collective concerns (see above).

A free afternoon on Sunday offered delegates a variety of opportunities to experience beautiful Duluth. Most popular attractions: Canal Park and the downtown waterfront with beautiful views of Lake Superior, and a trip on the Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad, in 100 year-old coaches, along the first train route into Duluth, replete with wild animals and birds, lush scenery, and narration of its history.

The Chapter adjourned on Monday morning, July 20, with the approval of seven resolutions of gratitude to the host monastery, St. Scholastica, to outgoing officers and councilors, to those accepting new offices, to the presenters, to the election committee and the facilitator of the election process and discussion leader.

Following a Ritual of Installation of the new President and Councilors and a blessing of the gathering by Chapter members from the host Monastery—Sister Lois Eckes, Prioress, Sister Sarah Smedman and Sister Lisa Maurer, delegates, and Sister Edith Bogue, Federation Councilor—the Chapter adjourned for Eucharist and lunch, after which most delegates departed by plane or car.

As a member of the Federation Chapter, I am heartened by the coming together of so many talented people, living according to the age-old principles of the *Rule of Benedict*, striving to do their utmost to attain the same goals. The overwhelming sense of many peoples, not only in areas represented by our Federation or in the United States but all over the world, working together for Christ's peace and justice diminishes the sense of isolation and revitalizes hope that the kingdom of God is alive and vital on this earth.

EARLY MINISTRIES OF THE SISTERS

By Sister Joan Marie Stelman

Even before St. Scholastica Monastery and the Diocese of Duluth were officially founded, our Benedictine Sisters began serving the people of Duluth in our two largest traditional ministries: health care and education. When Mother Scholastica Kerst answered the call to come to Duluth and work with Bishop McGolrick, she knew the difficulty of the undertaking. Father P.J. Mahoney put it this way at Sister Helen Quirk's funeral: "[Duluth] was a settlement of human beings of the pioneer sort... To accomplish any good, especially in a spiritual way, required great strength of character, a happy mixture of a great heart and indomitable courage. Everything had to be built from the foundation upwards, and a stupendous task it was to lay the foundation of schools and hospitals." Fortunately, Mother Scholastica had experience in the field of pioneering new schools and hospitals.

Our ministry of health care began with the founding of St. Mary's Hospital in 1888. There was a tremendous need for health care, given the dangerous occupations in logging, shipping, and mining in the area and the prevalence of contagious diseases like tuberculosis, typhoid, and smallpox. From the beginning one of the emphases of the Sisters' health-care ministry was care for the poor. Sister Amata Macket came up with the creative hospital ticket idea to try to provide care for the miners and lumberjacks while generating some income to keep the hospitals financially afloat. Sisters served in many areas: nursing, administration, medical records, housekeeping, dietetics, laboratory, clerical, and more. We worked in close cooperation with the physicians who were some of our greatest supporters and champions. We trained and collaborated with lay nurses and other health-care professionals, who helped us expand this ministry throughout the diocese.

Hospitals Owned and Operated by the Duluth Benedictines

St. Mary's Medical Center	1888-present *
St. Joseph's Hospital, East Grand Forks	1895-1896
St. Benedict's Hospital, Grand Rapids	1898-1912
St. Anthony's Hospital, Bemidji	1900-1920
St. Vincent's Hospital, Crookston	1900-1920
St. Joseph's Hospital, Brainerd	1902-present *
St. Michael's Hospital, Cass Lake	1904-1905
St. James Hospital, International Falls	1912-1913
Hibbing General Hospital	1942-1977
Miner's Hospital, Crosby	1946-1964

** Now sponsored*

Education was our other historical work – another work needed desperately by the growing diocese. Schools were founded at all levels – elementary, secondary, and lastly The College of St. Scholastica in 1912. Again, the Sisters reached out to provide quality education to children who would not have had access to it otherwise, both through the Villa and through parish schools. In the summer, Sisters not only taught catechism to children in parishes without schools; they went to school themselves. The Sisters always tried to improve their skills and keep abreast of new knowledge and new methods. The Sisters operated more than 30 schools at all levels, most of them in the Diocese of Duluth, but also in Minneapolis, Cincinnati, Phoenix, Chicago, and Washington, D.C., where they responded to requests to come and serve from pastors and Bishops who knew of the amazing work they had done.

The Sisters also began work early on in another important area of ministry when they were asked by Bishop McGolrick to found an orphanage. In those days orphanages served not only as homes for children whose parents had died; they also provided foster care for children who were temporarily displaced by illness or injury in their families. Our social work ministries began with St. James, founded in the first St. Mary's Hospital Building in the West End. Care for the elderly was a natural outgrowth of our concern for all persons and our health-care ministry. It began with St. Ann's founded in the same location in the West End, after the construction of a new St. James in Woodland.



Sister Ernestine Rancourt signing a birth certificate

Photos from Monastery Archives

OF ST. SCHOLASTICA MONASTERY

Perhaps two of the most important hallmarks of the Sisters in our early days were flexibility and creativity. The Sisters knew how to make things work on the tightest of budgets and came up with ways to enhance and improve the quality of their work, following the teaching and example of Mother Scholastica. Following her lead, the Sisters had to be flexible in order to respond to the changing needs of the wider community.



Sister Amelia Faith and the girls at the orphanage



Sister Mary Martin Beringer and the boys

In his funeral homily for Mother Scholastica, Bishop McGolrick said, “When I look back to those early days of struggle and poverty...I turn with thanks to God and note the signal success of this community of St. Benedict.” He went on to talk about the gift the Sisters were to the region, saying, “The Sisters, trained by wise *Rule*, know that [platitudes] are not what the poor and suffering need, but friendly aid from those who take up part of the burden and lighten the load by sympathy and kindness, knowing the words of the Master, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you do to the least of these little ones, you do unto Me.’” His prayer for us was, “May God grant that those who live in the community, her children in faith...may so live and act according to her life and example, that they too, will hear the words, ‘enter thou into the joy of thy Lord’.” To which I think all of our Sisters, living and deceased, would reply with a resounding, AMEN!



College biology class 1935



Sister Marilyn Micke and class 1950s

The Benedictine Way of Dying

By Sister Therese Carson

With eyes on the horizon of their personal death, monastics live so that when death comes they have given all to God. Egos pared down to nothingness, they are united with God for eternity. This is what Jesus meant when he said, "Those who lose their life for my sake will save it" (Luke 9:24). The fear of death eases, for the veil that separates us from Heaven becomes so thin that in breathless moments God seems within reach. Death is only the earthly side of the face of our God, who hungers to gather us in divine arms and bring us home.



My first monastic funeral came the day before I entered the Community, for an elder Sister rich in years and wisdom. Sitting to one side and watching, I thought, 'This is how it should be.' Let me walk you through a Benedictine death.

It begins with the vigil. Unless her death is unexpected, no Sister dies alone. As this world fades into darkness, she hears friends praying, talking quietly, and singing as they hold her hand, for music helps the dying let go. For some, death comes as blessed release from pain. The Prioress informs the Community, and if the Sister was longing for death, the response is a heart-felt *Alleluia*. An older Sister lingering in pain may comment in amused jealousy, "She took my place in line." We place the Sister's photograph in the dining room and in the infirmary chapel, and for a month that photo remains with us.

On the morning of the funeral, maintenance workers dig the grave, someone fetches a fresh red rose from the florist, and the younger Sisters ready the Chapel. The passing bell, *Benedict*, begins tolling as the body or cremains come home, one toll for every year of life. The one pulling the rope remembers events of the Sister's life with each toll: *Twenty, when she entered as postulant, forty-three, when she became Subprioress.*

Her monastic family surrounds her in silence. On the casket or on the table next to the cremains, the Prioress places a red rose to honor Sister's full life of love and dedication, the *Rule of Benedict* for our shared Monastic Profession that bonds us into Community, and the oil lamp of this Wise Virgin whose spirit burns with holy fire. Above her shines the Easter candle, for we are Easter people, and the Risen Christ awaits us with open arms.

Many years ago, when Sister gave herself to God at her Monastic Profession, she sang the triple *Suscipe*, the ancient song of monastic self-offering. Today the cantor gives it a new poignancy as she intones for her. "Receive me, O Lord, according to your Word and I shall live, and do not fail me in my hope," and the whole Community responds in confidence, "We have received, O Lord, your mercy in the midst of your temple."

The Prioress recalls the Sister's baptism into the light of faith, a flame kept burning throughout her vowed monastic life. Together we pray Psalm 130: "*Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. ... Lord, remember me in your kingdom.*" Then, one by one, we come up to say goodbye, touching the *Rule of Benedict* and blessing ourselves with holy water, remembering how our mutual vows to this Community bonded us together.

We begin Morning Prayer, Sister's last Office. Her voice is silenced but sings in memory. We intone Psalms, the ancient prayers of the Hebrew people as they plead, lament, and praise God. Then there is time to share stories: funny, loving, admiring and respectful, remembering how she lightened our days with humor, kindness, or courage. The Community and family console one another, for Sister's family has become ours, and we have all grown old together.



After the wake we pause so that family can say a final goodbye before the funeral Mass begins. Then Priest and Prioress enter in procession as the organist plays in Sister's honor. The cantor intones Psalm 27, the heart of our call to religious life: "*One thing I ask of the Lord, this I seek: to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.*" As the coffin is closed and pall draped, the cantor lifts her voice in a litany to the women Benedictine saints whose images in stained glass watch over us; the last saint named is Sister. The priest blesses the coffin or box with holy water for, as she died to self in Baptism and rose to new life with Christ, she now shares with all the saints in his eternal glory.

Planning for death as she would plan for a trip, Sister had already chosen the music, hymns, and readings for her funeral. We like to think that she listens with satisfaction at how well it turned out. As Mass ends, a Sister and family member carry the rose to the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, and another carries the *Holy Rule* to its case by the icon of St. Benedict and St. Scholastica. The Prioress then blows out the lamp, for Sister has fulfilled her vows and rests, face to face with God.



The interment usually follows dinner. As the bell tolls again, cars with family and elder Sisters follow the hearse up the hill to our cemetery. The rest walk the road. The ceremony is simple and loving: we incense and sprinkle the grave, say last prayers, sing hymns, and say goodbye for a while. Sometimes the sun pours over us like a benediction, or the snow sifts through trees, but always the wind blows. We take turns laying earth over her, a final loving gesture as we return her body to the earth from which we all spring, and which will hold us, this side of Heaven, in its loving embrace.

We share in the human burden of grief and loss, but know that death is not sunset but sunrise, for "God will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away" (Revelation 21:4). Or as John O'Donohue says in his poem, *The Eyes of Christ*,

Forever falling softly on our faces
his gaze plies the soul with light,
laying down a luminous layer

Beneath our brief and brittle days
until the appointed dawn comes
assured and harvest deft

To unravel the last black knot
and we are back home in the house
that we have never left.



Photos by Sister Therese Carson



Sister Margaret Marincel
May 30, 2015



Sister Almira Randall
June 3, 2015



Sister Mary Richard Boo
November 13, 2014



Sister Estelle Charron
April 25, 2015

In Remembrance

On All Souls Day, November 2, we will remember all in God's family who have died in the past year.

Among those are the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery who have gone home to God: Sister Mary Richard Boo, Sister Lucille Geisinger, Sister Madeleva Schur, Sister Ingrid Luukkonen, Sister Agatha Riehl, Sister Claudia Riehl, Sister Estelle Charron, Sister Margaret Marincel, and Sister Almira Randall.

"May God bring us all together to eternal life" (Rule of St. Benedict 72:12)



Sister Lucille Geisinger
November 20, 2014



Sister Claudia Riehl
February 26, 2015



Sister Madeleva Schur
January 15, 2015



Sister Agatha Riehl
February 7, 2015



Sister Ingrid Luukkonen
January 30, 2015

Sister Profile: Sister Sarah Smedman

On a sixtieth anniversary, reflection on one's past is inevitable. As I think back, my primary response is loving gratitude. I am grateful for and to my parents, Ida and Leonard Smedman, who provided my brother John and me not only with life's necessities, but also with books, piano lessons, Sunday family walks and picnics, and always a sense of security. From John I learned early in life that not everyone sees things in the same way. Different opinions can both be right—or wrong. When we moved from Upper Michigan to the Hibbing area, I attended Assumption Hall, where I met the Benedictines. As ten-year-old Marilyn, I loved my fifth grade teacher, Sister Marilyn Micke, who not only challenged and kept 50+ students in line but read to us, including *Little Whirlwind*, a book I loved so much that years later I bought a first edition copy from a rare-book dealer. When I was 14, my dad left the mining company to purchase a small grocery and meat market, a successful business where our family worked hard together.

Always a good student, I graduated from Hibbing High School and The College of St. Scholastica. I first visited the Villa as a high school junior on a Sunday afternoon when, at the invitation of Sister Martina Hughes, Sister Mildred Lyons, my piano teacher, brought me here to play Chopin's *Military Polonaise* for the Sisters. After college, I entered the Benedictine community. As a postulant I taught at Stanbrook Hall and was school librarian, never foreseeing opportunities the future would offer. After earning an MA and a PhD, both in English, I taught at CSS, then at The University of North Carolina Charlotte (UNCC), where I was asked to develop a specialty in Children's and Young Adult Literature. Immediately becoming active in the International Children's Literature Association, I served ChLA as Board Member, Committee Chairs, and President.



Sister Sarah, brother John, and mother Ida on Ida's 85th birthday in Charlotte, North Carolina



The Teacher



Sister Sarah and Taiwanese friend and former student Dr. Chu-Chueh Cheng discover senior "Marilyn" Smedman in a vintage Hibbing Hi-Times in the Hibbing High School Heritage Room.

My work at UNCC spawned other riches; viz: lecturing in an NEA-NLA North Carolina-wide literature program and in an NEH three-year program teaching 100 teachers in the summer and mentoring them during the school year. After 14 years and discernment with my prioress, I accepted a professorship at Minnesota State University Moorhead, primarily because it was 1,240 miles closer to my Duluth Community and my elderly mother in Hibbing. At MSUM I taught only upper division and graduate classes—and again underwent the tenure process. Now within driving distance, I was elected to the Council and attended monthly meetings at the Monastery. Even closer to Detroit Lakes, I also served on the BHS Board of St. Mary's Hospital and Nursing Home there.

Both my profession and my Benedictine Community afforded me undreamed of opportunities to travel the U.S. including Hawaii, to Ireland, England, France, Germany, Korea, and especially to Rome for a five-week renewal program for English-speaking Benedictines.

My last years as a phased-retirement professor at MSUM eased me into retirement after 47 years of teaching, and return to full-time life at the Monastery, where I served on the Council and Staff and on the Board of Trustees of CSS as well as on several of our medical facilities. Reentering Community life with scheduled prayer, meals, work, and leisure has been rewarding, though I still miss colleagues, students, and the scholarly dimensions of academia.

I thank God for my life, for the variety of rich opportunities it has provided me, and for my Benedictine Sisters who have challenged and supported me. I could not be who I am without all of you.

Happy Birthday Sister Agnes Sitter!

By Sister Mary Rochefort and Sister Clare Marie Trettel



Sister Agnes (left) and Sister Victorine Sitter

Sister Agnes Sitter celebrated her 90th birthday surrounded by her Benedictine community and friends. Although she says “turning 90 is no different from any other birthday,” she is grateful for the opportunity to celebrate with her Sisters, family, and friends. During the first week in August her niece Patty and friends Ardis, Beverly, and Lorraine came to celebrate with Sister Agnes and Sister Victorine. A great time was had!

Sister Agnes grew up in Berwick, North Dakota, where, on a clear day, you CAN see forever. She is the third child in a family of four, and we all know that Sister Victorine is also one of the four. Growing up, Sister Agnes enjoyed helping at her father’s general store and car dealership. She especially enjoyed delivering gasoline to farmers with her brother Frank. When Frank was not able to continue this, Sister Agnes took over.

Jesus’ call to “Let the little children come to me” came early to Sister Agnes when in her senior year of high school she was encouraged by the principal to take the State Teachers Exams and passed with flying colors. She spent two years teaching in a local one-room school before joining the Benedictine community. Sister Agnes taught for a total of forty-eight years with the majority of those years in first grade. Her years with God’s little ones hold many wonderful memories. Many of her former students still keep in touch with her.

Sister Agnes returned to the Monastery in 1998 and has found it “good to be back with the Community.” She assisted Sister Annella Wagner on Benet Hall for several years. She now enjoys having more time for herself but still manages to keep herself quite busy. We wish God’s blessings on Sister Agnes, and we are grateful for her many years of service to our Benedictine community and to the myriad of people whose lives she blessed.



Photos by Sister Kathleen Del Monte

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE FOLLOWING DECEASED FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Robert Contardo 5/16/ 2015
Frances Mary Arts Salmi 5/20/2015
*Sister Helen Claire Arts’ and
Sister Vivian Arts’ sister*
Ronald Ruzynski 5/21/ 2015
Marjorie Tondryk-Deadrick 5/23/2015
Edwin Etzel 6/6/2015
Raymond A. Fanaselle 6/22/2015

Nell C. Eichner 7/8/2015
Clarence Stepan 7/24/ 2015
John F. Kendzora 8/13/2015
Reuben Patnaude 8/21/2015
Elizabeth Engebrit 8/27/2015
*Sister Agnes Sitter’s and
Sister Victorine Sitter’s sister*
Joseph Anthony Gust 9/4/2015

MAKING CONNECTIONS

By Sister Mary Catherine Shambour



In each of our lives there comes a moment, an event, or even a word spoken that makes an indelible impression and can even precipitate a major shift in our way of thinking or acting for the rest of our lives. I invite my readers at some time to reflect quietly on your own lived experiences and, in a spirit of prayer, recall any words or incidents that signaled a change in your life or started you along a new path. If of interest to you, I'll relate how a few spoken words changed the direction of my life.

Having been blessed with a happy home, a peaceful childhood followed by the relative optimism of the post-war era and imbibing all the merits and treasures of my faith through the Catholic milieu I lived in, fortified by a traditional Catholic education through college, I loved my Faith and looked forward to a promising future awaiting me. I longed to bring that same joy to others. However, one nagging thought kept pursuing and tormenting me through my final college years: God seemed to want more of me! As I started spending more time with God in personal prayer, I found myself gradually losing interest in earlier pleasures like partying, dating, and making future plans. I felt an inner longing for something more. Along with the yearning I was also being tormented and grew angry with God for interfering! In desperation, I sought assistance from one of my cherished Benedictine Sister instructors. Why," I pleaded, "can't God leave me alone? I can be a good Catholic woman, go to church, have a husband, home, and family – maybe even have a son become a priest. Why does God keep hounding me that I must do more?" Sister's gentle, loving response quieted my soul: "Because there are souls to be saved."

In the terminology of the day her words were the missing connection I needed. It wasn't about *me*, what I wanted. It was about what I had been given and was called to share with others. Though I certainly could do great things for God with my life, the *greater* gift would be to give my very self and let God work through me. From that day forward, the inner turmoil ceased. I stopped fighting God (it's a losing battle anyway) and allowed God to call the shots and keep the score sheet. Following graduation I entered the Benedictine community I had come to admire and respect.

Is this just a naïve, local color story from the never-to-be-repeated heyday of Catholicism's phenomenal growth in the United States during the mid-twentieth century? Possibly, but I think that Sister Joan's words to me might also help the many others who today find little if any connection between what their faith asks of them and their daily pursuits and have largely abandoned it as a medieval relic.

We don't hear much about "souls" being lost these days or even about the "Mystical Body of Christ," the idea that through the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the Christ, God is drawing all humanity to Himself. We don't hear much about all of us being one body in Christ and that what we do to one another we do to Christ. We are all busy storing up treasures for ourselves – even spiritual ones – as I once sought for my future. The "world" in which I intended to minister was a small, secure, closed society that held all truths.

How grateful I am that I lived to see my Church make an acknowledgement of history by calling on the Holy Spirit and convening all bishops of the world to discern the signs of the times as they relate to Christ's teaching and who, after three years of prayerful deliberation in the 1960s, gave the Church new direction and an openness to all peoples. How little the average Catholic knows about the underlying teachings found in those documents which are not just a "modernizing" of Church teachings, but take us back to the true Biblical sources and apply their meaning to "the joy and hope, the grief and the anguish of the men (read 'people') of our time."

Time does not stand still, however, and despite the Church's radical shift in openness to world issues and all peoples, the message has gradually lost momentum in prosperous Catholic nations while it has spread like wildfire among the poorer ones. While western Catholics argue among themselves over rituals and doctrinal issues as did the Scribes and Pharisees, Christ's representative on earth is urging us to see Christ at our doorstep in the desperate refugees seeking shelter and reminding us that the earth, our precious home, will not be able to sustain all God's people if we continue to live only for ourselves and do not care for it and share its abundance. How can we make the connection between our faith and the needs of our world? A cleric recently suggested that all we need do is live the Beatitudes, read Matthew 25, and shut up.

In Loving Memory



*"There's Yugoslavia." Summer 1962
St. Thomas the Apostle, Phoenix
Right: Joe and Marlys Marincel with Sister
Margaret in Phoenix*



Sister Margaret Marincel, OSB ***September 26, 1925—May 30, 2015***

Sister Margaret Marincel, OSB, 89, died Saturday, May 30, 2015, at Solvay Hospice House in Duluth. Born on September 26, 1925, she was the daughter of Nick and Helen (Majnerich) Marincel from Mountain Iron, Minnesota. Sister was in her 69th year of Monastic Profession.

After Sister Margaret graduated from Mountain Iron High School, she felt that she had a calling to religious life. Within a year she entered St. Scholastica Monastery on September 8, 1944. She professed her Triennial Vows on July 11, 1946, and made her Perpetual Monastic Profession on July 11, 1949. Sister celebrated her Silver Jubilee on December 14, 1971, her Golden Jubilee on July 7, 1996, and her Diamond Jubilee on July 9, 2006.

Earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education from The College of St. Scholastica, Sister Margaret completed a long and outstanding ministry to elementary school children of nearly 50 years. She especially found great joy in teaching fourth and fifth graders, where with her lively personality she stimulated and maintained a wonderful learning environment. She began her teaching ministry in Duluth where she taught at Sacred Heart (1947-49), at St. John's School (1949-54, 57-59), and at St. Anthony's School (1956-57). After her assignment to St. Timothy's School (1954-56) in Chicago, she moved to Phoenix to teach at St. Thomas the Apostle School (1959-70, 1972-74, 75-78). Sister Margaret served as a Librarian at Our Lady of Victory in Minneapolis (1974-75) and at St. Thomas the Apostle (1978-97). Retiring from her teaching and library ministries, Sister Margaret returned to St. Scholastica Monastery in 1997, where she continued to serve in many areas of the Monastery as well as assist the Liturgy Coordinator at the Benedictine Health Center (2001-03). In 2010 Sister moved to Benet Hall where she faithfully continued her Prayer Ministry.

In the summer of 1961 Sister Margaret toured the countries of Italy, France, Switzerland, and Yugoslavia, accompanied by her brother the Rev. Frank Marincel. Sister found the six weeks she spent in Yugoslavia, especially in Zagreb, Croatia, highly inspirational because not only was it the birthplace of her parents and where she visited many relatives, but it was also under strict Communist control. She never forgot how many Catholics walked miles to attend a Mass while enduring duress from Communist party members, and she observed: "As soon as I crossed the border of Yugoslavia into Italy I felt as though a heavy cloak had been lifted, and I was ready to kiss the earth of a free country."

Sister Margaret was preceded in death by her parents and her brother, Father Frank Marincel. Besides the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, she is survived by her brother Joe Marincel and his wife Marlys, devoted nieces, nephews, other family members and friends.



*Sister Danile Lynch and Sister Almira celebrating Sister Almira's Golden Jubilee, 1995.
Right: Sister Almira and student at the Grant School reading program*



Sister Almira Randall, OSB ***December 6, 1924—June 3, 2015***

Sister Almira Randall, OSB, age 90, died June 3, 2015, in St. Mary's Medical Center Hospice, Duluth Minnesota. She was a native of Duluth, Minnesota, born to Leslie and Millicent (Despins) Randall on December 6, 1924. Sister was in her sixty-ninth year of Monastic Profession.

The eldest of six children, Sister Almira entered St. Scholastica Monastery in September of 1943. She professed her Triennial Vows on July 11, 1945, her Perpetual Vows on July 11, 1948. Sister celebrated her Silver Jubilee in 1970, her Golden Jubilee in 1995, and her Diamond Jubilee in 2005.

Sister Almira began her superb ministry in elementary education at St. Gertrude's School in Washington, D.C. as a teacher and prefect from 1946-50. After that she taught at Blessed Sacrament School in Hibbing (1950-55); St. Bridget's in Minneapolis (1955-59); St. Mary's in Pine City (1959-64); Holy Name in Wayzata as Principal and teacher (1964-67); St. Bridget's School (1967-69); Sacred Heart Cathedral in Duluth (1969-70); and St. Jean's in Duluth (1970-87). Sister also earned a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education from The College of St. Scholastica and a Master of Arts in Elementary School Guidance from the College of St. Thomas.

In 1975 Sister received the Presidential Award for Outstanding service to Catholic Education in the Diocese of Duluth from the National Catholic Education Association. "I love little kids and I love language arts," declared Sister Almira. "I never cease to be amazed at how first graders can come here with nothing, and, after just a few months, they can read and write stories."

Sister was appointed House Director at the Monastery during the years 1987-94. Also she was a staff member of the McCabe Renewal Center (1995-2010) where she served in the kitchen, especially baking bread and pastries. Sister Almira loved indoor gardening and filled much of the Monastery with her beautiful plants, especially orchids. She loved her life as a Benedictine Sister: "There is peace in life lived with my Sisters in this Benedictine family—peace in knowing that I am where I belong."

Sister was preceded in death by her parents, her sisters Mary Ellen Parker and Lois Socha, and her brother Irving. She is survived by the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, her beloved sisters Patricia Tamayo and Irene Randall, nieces and nephews, and many dear friends.

St. Scholastica Monastery
Office of Development
1001 Kenwood Avenue
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*Help me cross into the present moment —
into wonder, into Your grace:
that “now-place,” where we all are,
unfolding as Your life moment by moment.*

Gunilla Norris