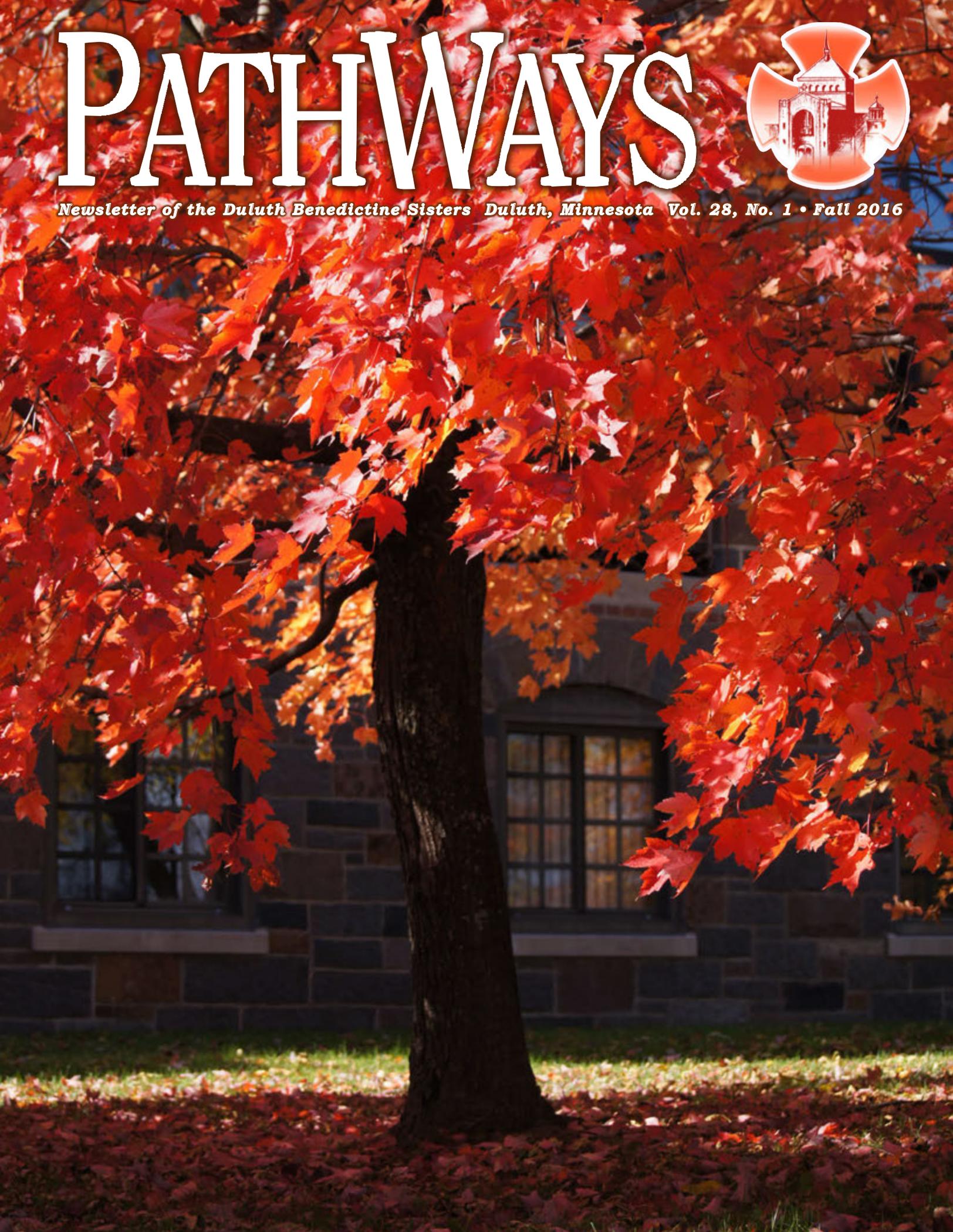


PATHWAYS



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Dear Friends of the Monastery,

As I write this message it is the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Hints of fall are in the air, and it is the one year anniversary of my installation as Prioress. I recall that Bishop Sirba placed my ministry and our Community under the mantle of Mary's protection and I gratefully acknowledge the prayers and support of Blessed Mary and all of you. It has been a remarkable year.



Late July and early August were especially poignant as with mixed emotions we celebrated the birth to eternal life of Sisters Jean Maher and Jane Casey and then on August 13th the joyous celebration of the 50th Jubilee of Sisters Danile Lynch and Josephine Krulc. Sister Jane celebrated her 90th birthday a few days early and renewed her vows just six days before she went home to God. We thank all who were able to be with us for these heartwarming events, especially Bishop Paul Sirba who celebrated the Eucharist with us on our Jubilee Day. You will find further information about these celebrations in our Annual Report and in the pages of this issue.

In June and August, the Community made some important decisions at our Chapter meetings, which provide direction for future planning and renovation at the Monastery. Motivated by a revised mission statement developed during our strategic planning and energized by the results of a marketing study conducted in the spring, we agreed that the time is right to expand our spirituality and enrichment ministries. This decision also included the resolve to search for and hire a director to coordinate these ministries and to develop a plan to renovate space at the Monastery in Stanbrook. Your prayers and support will be appreciated as we move forward with this venture. The mission statement which supported these decisions is as follows:

*In light of our Benedictine values, wherever we live and minister
we call ourselves to create:
A center of worship and prayer
A spiritual wellspring
A place of compassion and hope.*

In August the community paused during our Commissioning Day to consider what Pope Francis is asking us to do in our personal lives and expecting us to witness to others in this Jubilee Year of Mercy. This message relates directly to our call to be a "spiritual wellspring of compassion and hope." In his Papal Bull, Pope Francis reminds us, first, that Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy. Secondly, he says we need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy, which he describes as a wellspring of joy, serenity and peace. And, finally, he invites us saying, "we are called to gaze even more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the mercy of God in our lives." This is summarized in the phrase he chose as the logo for this year: "Merciful like the Father." In other words, Pope Francis is asking us to be an image, an icon, of the mercy of God. We Sisters are committed to that call and goal, and invite you to do the same.

We thank all of you who have been so generous in supporting the Monastery and our twinning communities.

May the fall be a sacred and blessed time for all of us.

Yours in Christ,

Sister Beverly

Sister Beverly Raway, OSB

Fields Of Grace

by Sister Linda Wiggins

Boaz asked the overseer of his harvesters, “Whose girl is this?” The overseer of the harvesters answered, “She is the Moabite girl who returned from the plateau of Moab with Naomi. She asked leave to gather the gleanings into sheaves after the harvesters; and ever since she came this morning she has remained here until now, with scarcely a moments’ rest.” (Ruth 2: 5-7)



As September arrives, we Northland residents begin to sense a difference in the early morning air; we find it cooler, crisper, and know, innately, such change is announcing the coming of Autumn—maybe not tomorrow or even next week, but it is on its way. Soon we will be shaking off the stupor of summer’s heat and humidity and walk more briskly, with autumn’s inevitable duties of harvest which include reaping, gathering, and gleaning confronting us. Amid the brilliant colors of autumn, we regain a sense of purpose that had faded away in the languid days of summer.

Often autumn brings a feeling of abundance with the lushness of color, the smell of ripening fruit trees, the popping up of pumpkins everywhere from porch steps to store fronts, surrounding us. The act of *gleaning* itself indicates there is enough crop and residual material left over to gather into sheaves after the main harvest has been completed. Thus, those who are not landowners may gather what is left to sell or use for their own sustenance.

Gleaning becomes a significant act in the Book of Ruth where the gathering of “left overs” appears both literally and metaphorically. Ruth, the widow of one of Naomi’s sons, is the “leftover” from the family. Naomi has lost to death her husband and two sons, and has returned her daughter-in-law Orah to her Moabite family. When they arrive in Bethlehem, Naomi and Ruth are surrounded by many who recognize Naomi and greet her enthusiastically. Naomi however laments that her name should no longer be “Naomi” but “Mara” which means bitter because she has returned to Bethlehem destitute without her husband, her two sons, and any grandchildren. She perceives herself as a leftover from the clan of her husband, Elimelech. She is obliged to sell the land of her deceased husband and sons because of her current poverty. Ergo his patrimony and line of Judah lineage will end.

Fortunately, Elimelech had a kinsman Boaz who willingly and lawfully claimed the land and took Ruth as his wife. They had a son, Obed, who continued the line of lineage for Elimelech and his sons. Naomi rejoiced in her grandson, the love of her daughter-in-law, Ruth, and their restored lineage in the House of Judah.

Another gleaning metaphor appears in the New Testament account of the Syrophenician (Greek) woman (Mark 7: 24-30). Jesus has entered a house in the district of Tyre so that he could escape from the crowds who frequently gathered to hear him speak. A short time after he arrived at the home, he was approached by a woman whose daughter had an unclean spirit. She fell at his feet and begged him to drive the demon out of her daughter. Jesus answered, “Let the children be fed first. For it is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs.” She immediately replied, “Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children’s scraps.” Jesus answered the woman: “For saying this, you may go. The demon has gone out of your daughter.” The woman returned to her home and discovered her daughter was healed.

Neither woman was born Jewish, but their great love for a family member transformed them from being “left overs” to being fields of grace for their loved ones, where true abundance resided and spread gleanings throughout the generations in prolific fecundity.

Statement on Civil Discourse in the Political Season



We, the Benedictine Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, care deeply about the well-being of our nation, region and city. While we hold varying political views, we seek and support leaders who govern for the common good. Duluth's leaders recognized that incivility posed a serious threat to good governance as early as 2003. They responded with the *Speak Your Peace* Civility Project, which we actively supported. In recent years, we have been alarmed by the rapid acceleration of political incivility. Polarized positions obscure truth, generate fear, and prevent elected officials from collaborating to solve the serious issues of our time.

Therefore, we support the *Statement on Civil Discourse for the Common Good* issued by the Leadership Council of Women Religious (LCWR) on July 1, 2016. We concur with LCWR's *Letter to Presidential and Vice-Presidential Candidates and their Party Chairs*, which calls on all candidates and parties to turn aside from the rhetoric of extremism. Members of our community are among the 5,671 sisters who signed this letter which states, "We cannot let the voices of hatred and fear carry the day."

As Benedictines, we are called to "Seek after peace and pursue it." We invite others to join with us in pledging to engage in honest and respectful dialogue throughout this election year, and to call on candidates at all levels of government to do the same.

*Sister Beverly Raway, Prioress
St. Scholastica Monastery
Duluth, MN*

Documents from the Leadership Council of Women Religious (LCWR) *Statement on Civil Discourse for the Common Good*

*Marcia Allen, CSJ, President
Sharon Holland, IHM, Past-President
Mary Pellegrino, CSJ, President-Elect*

"You are called to defend and preserve the dignity of your fellow citizens in the tireless and demanding pursuit of the common good, for this is the chief aim of all politics."
-- Pope Francis, Address to the US Congress, September 24, 2015

We live in a world increasingly marked by hatred, brutality, and violent conflict. We see our own country threatened by increasing disparities in economic, political, and social power. We are caught in a political system paralyzed by ideological extremism and hyper-partisanship. Those on both sides of the growing political divide too often appeal to our basest instincts and stoke the fires of fear that threaten to tear the fabric of our nation apart. We cannot let the voices of hatred and fear carry the day.

We call for a return to civility in our discourse and decency in our political interaction that promotes the common good, reaches out to others, engages in constructive dialogue, and seeks together the way forward. We hope for political dialogue that reflects the principles and values upon which this nation was founded.

The need for courageous leaders has never been greater. We simply ask that all refrain from language that disrespects, dehumanizes, or demonizes another. All are created in God's image and are worthy of respect. We ask that all who seek to influence public opinion, all who hope to serve this nation as leaders, be always mindful of the common good and respectful of the dignity of each and every person.

Citizens of this pluralistic nation form a diverse polity characterized by a wide variety of beliefs, experiences, and interests. Disagreements and differences of opinion have the potential to challenge all of us to abandon easy certainty and seek a fuller truth. The problem is not our many disagreements. It is how those conflicts are handled

that spells the difference between building the common good and destroying the bonds that bind this nation together.

In his address to the US Congress last September, Pope Francis invited members of Congress to promote respect for the dignity of every human person and to renew their commitment to a spirit of cooperation. He also addressed each of us and all who seek to lead this nation when he said,

“Each son or daughter of a given country has a mission, a personal and social responsibility . . . You are called to defend and preserve the dignity of your fellow citizens in the tireless and demanding pursuit of the common good, for this is the chief aim of all politics. A political society endures when it seeks, as a vocation, to satisfy common needs by stimulating the growth of all its members, especially those in situations of greater vulnerability or risk . . . Building a future of freedom requires love of the common good and cooperation in a spirit of subsidiarity and solidarity.”

Let us engage in careful listening and honest questioning. Let us honor the dignity of those with whom we disagree and treat them with the respect that is their God-given right. Let us seek the common good, desire only good for all others, and offer our own truth with equal measures of conviction and humility.

LCWR Letter to Presidential and Vice-Presidential Candidates and their Party Chairs

On behalf of the 5,671 Catholic Sisters across the United States who have signed this letter, we ask you to join us in calling for civility in our discourse and decency in our political interaction that promotes the common good, reaches out to others, engages in constructive dialogue, and seeks together the way forward. We ask you to join us in promising to engage in political dialogue that reflects the principles and values upon which this nation was founded.

In his September 24, 2015 address to the U.S. Congress, Pope Francis reminded all who seek to serve that, “You are called to defend and preserve the dignity of your fellow citizens in the tireless and demanding pursuit of the common good, for this is the chief aim of all politics.”

Unfortunately, we live in a time when our politics is too often marked by self-interest and demeaning rhetoric. We seem to be caught in a political system paralyzed by ideological extremism and hyper-partisanship. Those on all sides of the growing political divide too often appeal to our basest instincts and stoke the fires of fear that tear at the fabric of our nation. We cannot let the voices of hatred and fear carry the day.

We need courageous leaders willing to speak the truth. We simply ask that all who seek to lead refrain from language that disrespects, dehumanizes, or demonizes another. We pray that all who seek to influence public opinion will be mindful of the common good and respectful of the dignity of each and every person.

Citizens of this pluralistic nation form a diverse polity characterized by a wide variety of beliefs, experiences, and interests. Our differences have the potential to challenge all of us to abandon easy certainty and seek a fuller truth. The problem is not our differences. It is how those disagreements are handled that spells the difference between building the common good and destroying the bonds that bind us.

We urge you to join us in pledging to engage in careful listening and honest dialogue that honors the dignity of those with whom we disagree and treats all with the respect that is their God-given right. Please join us in promising to seek the common good, to desire only good for all others, and to offer our own truth with equal measures of conviction and humility.

We know that you offer yourself in service of the people of the United States at great cost to yourself and your family. We promise you our prayers in the weeks and months ahead.

Peregrinatio Edithae

By Sister Edith Bogue

A pilgrim is distinguished from a tourist by her mindset, not her destination. The pilgrim expects to encounter God through places, people, and situations, and to be transformed. Egeria, a 4th century Galician pilgrim, deepened her faith through lengthy travels around Mount Sinai, Jerusalem, and Constantinople. A fragment of her letter describing her experiences survives as the *Peregrinatio Egeriae*. An inspiration at the Diocesan Discernment Day on January 2 prompted a pilgrimage of my own.

I had welcomed Fr. Ryan Moravitz' invitation to participate in that event, but worried about getting lost or encountering wild animals with antlers on my long pre-dawn drive to Crosslake, a completely unfamiliar place. I encountered God often in speakers and young people discerning their futures. During a time of Adoration, I felt one of God's gentle nudges: "Do more of this. Be a pilgrim and get to know your diocese."

I began making Sunday pilgrimages that quickly revealed the variety of parish families, each with a distinct personality. Some assemblies were so crowded I could hardly find a seat, as on the day two babies were baptized at Sacred Heart in Virginia or Palm Sunday at St. Raphael's. On a cold Saturday evening in February, a solo guitarist at St. Mary's in Silver Bay led the assembly in heartfelt praise. I saw hospitality in action at St. Martin's as ushers found chairs for dozens of visitors on the fishing opener. I saw corporal acts of mercy in food and clothing drives, nursing home visits, and more. I joined the diocese on pilgrimage at Cloquet's Queen of Peace Church for the Witness to Freedom tour with relics of St. John Fisher and St. Thomas More.

Pilgrimages usually include surprises. At prayer in Our Lady of Lourdes in Pine River, the style of the Madonna and Child caught my eye. Yes! It was a woodcut icon by our Sister Mary Charles McGough, one not included in our book *Saved By Beauty*. I shouldn't have been surprised to hear hints of polka-Mass music in a parish on the Iron Range. In Sawyer at St. Mary and Joseph Church, Deacon Bassa showed me the amazing 1884 original log church under restoration. My pilgrimages by car look tame beside the tales of Jesuits coming from Fort William, Ontario, to Old St Francis in Grand Marais by dogsled or canoe. The willingness of pastors and parishioners to talk to the vocation-ministry Sister from the Monastery never stops surprising me.

A pilgrimage isn't complete without the Cathedral. I was in the crowd for the opening of the Holy Door at the start of the Year of Mercy, and again with Communion and Liberation's Way of the Cross on Good Friday. In June, Prioress Beverly Raway and others received blessings from newly-ordained Fathers Charlie Friebohle and Paul Strommer.



I'm writing, like Egeria, before my pilgrimage ends. My appreciation for our Diocese, and for our Monastery's place in it, grows constantly. And wherever I go, I see the face of Christ.

Above: *Madonna and Child*. Painted woodcut by Sister Mary Charles McGough, O.S.B. (photo by Sister Edith Bogue)

Left: *Log Church, Sawyer, Carlton County, MN*. Historic American Buildings Survey Records. Minnesota Historical Society. Photo retouched.

Benedictine Center of Spirituality

by Sister Pauline Micke, OSB, Director

As we begin our ninth year, we are again so grateful for the blessings and growth we have experienced in the last eight years. Some significant steps took place this year, both in the people who facilitated retreats and the themes and focus for the retreats. We now have three men presenting retreats and four new women, and presenters and topics continue to be ecumenical. Some presentations were in response to requests from evaluations in three key areas:

1. Various aspects of prayer.
2. Grief and loss, and our call to wholeness, self-care, and compassion.
3. Scriptural themes, with a deeper study of the people in God's story of salvation.

This last year, we hosted seven group retreats and a number of private retreats. One area that is expanding is our outreach into churches, retirement homes, and senior living facilities, with Sister Sarah O'Malley facilitating eleven of these retreats.

Photo by Sister Therese Carson



Sister Sarah speaks on Oscar Romaero's love for his people

On August 20, Sister Sarah O'Malley led an inspiring retreat on "Greater Love Than This: Two 20th Century Martyrs." Edith Stein (Teresa Benedict of the Cross) and Oscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador, gave their lives in solidarity with their people and taught us how to live out God's love and mercy.

The first brochure for 2016 has been mailed. If you did not receive it or wish to be on our mailing list, please contact us at 218-723-7086 or e-mail at pauline.m@duluthosb.org.

We continue the following programs: Hearing Fifth Steps, Spiritual Direction, and Sabbath Days.

Upcoming events, to be held on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to noon, include:

September 24, [Good Grief: the Quality of Mercy](#)

October 22, [Praying In Color](#)

December 10, [Journey into the Holy Presence with the Women in Jesus' Genealogy](#)

Watch for more information in your Church newsletters, and visit www.duluthbenedictines.org.

Please Pray for the Following Deceased Family and Friends

Emil Riehl 2/27/2016

Brother of Sisters +Agatha and +Claudia Riehl

Margie Michael 4/3/2016

Carol Ann Emerson 6/11/2016

Charles Seashore 6/30/2016

Robert Mars 7/10/2016

Richard E. Gajewski 7/29/2016

William Zelen 8/4/2016

Fidelis John Eckes 8/15/2016

Sister Lois Eckes's father

Volunteering at the Monastery

by Mary Tanner and Kathy Noble

Volunteering at St. Scholastica Monastery is an enjoyable and rewarding experience. We are more than 40 strong, women and men of all ages. Some of us have volunteered for years and some for just a short time, but we love it and would encourage others to join us.

Volunteers drive Sisters to appointments, accompany them during a medical visit, work in the gift shop, staff the information desk, visit with Sisters on Benet Hall, serve at special Monastery events (open houses, tours), and help plant and care for the beautiful flower and vegetable gardens. Most of this happens during the week but occasionally we need volunteers on the weekend. Scheduling is flexible. Every April, the Sisters invite volunteers and a guest for dinner and a fun evening during National Volunteer Week.

We especially need people at our Christmas Bazaar on Thursday, December 1, to work at the sale and to contribute favorite baked goods such as; cookies, bars, bread, or pies. Do you make special items such as towels, aprons, or knit or crocheted goods? We also need good, “used-a-bit” items. Please consider helping us for this fun event.

Mary Tanner describes why she volunteers, “When we moved to Duluth in 1982 and began work at The College of St. Scholastica, we felt a special connection with the Benedictine Sisters. Their friendship and support have grown over the years. We treasure their leadership, guidance and interactions, and volunteering helps me stay connected. The time I give is only a bit of appreciation for all that the Sisters have given over the years. I also consider my volunteer hours as mini-retreats. Through their stories, caring, and presence, I receive so much more than I can ever offer them.”

Linda Senta, who helps in the Monastery gift shop says, “Volunteering brings me a sense of joy and satisfaction, as I feel I always get back far more than I give. It gives me the great opportunity to know the Sisters. I am in awe of their dedication, compassion, work ethic, and kindness. They are so grateful for what we do and there is no greater compensation!”

If you are interested in volunteering or wish more information, please call Mary at 218-831-7086 or Kathy at 218-343-3589. We would enjoy talking with you. If you find the Monastery a good fit for your volunteerism, we would then schedule a brief informal interview so we can provide further information about these activities and get to know you as well. Some of these volunteer activities require a background check, which we would then make arrangements to process.

Volunteering here is a special experience. Please consider giving your time and talents to the Sisters and assisting in the many areas where volunteers are needed. You will enjoy your time with them and be warmly welcomed and greatly appreciated!



Chris Ketelson staffs the gift shop and information desk.

Photo by Sister Therese Carson

A Tribute to Pat English, Volunteer

by Sister Annella Wagner

Pat English was a very dear friend to many of our Sisters here at St. Scholastica. She began her faithful visits to Benet Hall by bringing Mary Ann Nault to see a close friend, Sister Devota Lavoie. Then Pat began to attend the daily coffee and snack time on Benet Hall and stayed to play bingo with Sister Devota and the other Sisters. Eventually, when Sister Devota could no longer call bingo, Pat took on the role of caller.

Pat enjoyed sweets and she would always bring candy for bingo prizes or simply for sharing during the daily coffee and conversation time. And Pat did love her coffee, but most of all she looked forward to visiting with the Sisters.

In recent months, even though there were times when only one or two Sisters would show up for bingo, Pat was very happy to call the numbers and play along.

Over the years, Pat was invited to join us for the Mardi Gras party hosted by the Benedictine Health System, and she also attended Community gatherings on Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day, and came to many Benet Hall special events. Pat had said many times how much she deeply appreciated being welcomed into our home.

This past fall, Pat began to miss her regular visits. Her absence was due to failing health, but she would never dwell on her own difficulties. She would always call to say when she would be unable to come to “work”.

On November 10, 2015, just before noon, Pat called my phone and left a message saying that once again she would not be able to come to Benet Hall. Pat went on to say that she would no longer call each time she could not be here, and that we should just assume she would not be here unless we heard from her. She said she would like to call this a “leave of absence”. Her voice trembled as she said to go ahead and replace her if we needed to but she was not quitting because she loved her time with us so very much! She also said she hoped to regain strength to return, even though she was worried this was not meant to be. She ended with the words, “I will miss you all.”

We miss you as well, Pat. God bless you.

Pat English went home to be with her Lord on Thursday, November 26, 2015. Her memorial Mass was held December 8, in Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel in the Monastery.



Patricia English. Photo from family.

Release

The sun shines brightly,
the road a mosaic of stained glass
It is quiet, almost surreal,
flashing lights, uniforms, brightly colored trucks
All is calm, there is little movement,
clumps of people, whispering, looking away
An invading sense of tragedy and trauma,
a lonely covered body in the middle of the road
Overwhelming grief and loss,
the comfort of a hug, tears, unspoken reassurance
Hopelessness and uncertainty,
a gentle breeze, rustling leaves, chirping birds
Dismay, confusion, powerlessness,
letting go, turning to God – a heartfelt prayer
One last profound sigh and goodbye
release.

*S. Paule Pierre Barbeau,
St. Louis County Law Enforcement Chaplain*

Lectio Divina and the Art of Listening

by Sister Linda Wiggins

In the sixth century, St. Benedict developed a practice of reading scripture called *Lectio Divina*. Designed for his monks, *Lectio Divina* would, in Benedict's thinking, allow his followers to read scripture by carefully taking on "the mind of Christ." His monks would begin their reading (*Lectio*) with the awareness they were reading the words of Christ. They were in fact beginning a time of communion with Christ, and by centering on Christ, they would keep their entire focus on him. Such focusing demands a silent place in which to read, free from outside interruptions, movements, activities, and sounds.

This environment would allow the monks mentally to retain the scripture passage after completing their reading and enter into the second step of *Lectio Divina: Meditatio*—meditating on Christ as the key to the scripture's meaning. Here the monk needs to stay with Christ and ponder his words, his intentions, his conclusions. The monk must keep the image of Christ constantly in his mind and listen with the ear of his heart, as Benedict admonishes him to do in the first sentence of his prologue to his Rule. The true objective in this kind of reading method is not to dissect the text itself, but to enter totally into full communication with Christ.

Thus, the next step in this method of scripture reading is *Oratio*—praying. Prayer leads all readers of scripture into the territory of spiritual growth, deeper relationship, intense love for Christ and perpetual gratitude for his words, his love, his listening ear. Monks spend a good part of their day in prayer, but this prayer for enlightenment about the words of Jesus makes the monk appreciate the gift that listening gives the listener.

The last step of *Lectio Divina* is *Contemplatio*; that is, taking some time to contemplate the meaning of the scripture read today, and how these words of Jesus will lead to a richer understanding of his teachings, a closer relationship with him, and a sharper appreciation of how the art of listening leads to much more fulfilling discipleships, relationships, and friendships.

In the upcoming issues of Pathways, I will be writing a regular column on *Lectio Divina* and would welcome reader comments, suggestions of scripture passages, questions, etc. I have included with this article a passage for those who would like to practice *Lectio Divina* to use. I selected this particular passage because it is short, pithy, and contains some themes introduced in this article, e.g., the referral to listening. Do give it a try.

Salt is good, but if salt itself loses its taste, with what can its flavor be restored? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out. Whoever has ears to hear ought to hear. (Luke 15: 34-35)

2016 Monastery Christmas Bazaar

Mark your calendars for the 2016 Monastery Christmas Bazaar on Thursday, December 1. Join us from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. in Rockhurst Dining Room and shop for your Christmas gifts. Sisters and volunteers will sell homemade jams, breads, fudge, toffee, caramel rolls, pies, and other delicious baked and canned goods. You can shop for plants, books, puzzles, crafts, towels, knitted items, gently used items, Russian articles, and much, much more. This year we will have Belleek Irish China and Wade Irish Pottery available for sale at incredible prices.



New this year will be a raffle of prizes that include gift certificates to local restaurants, a Belleek lamp, a Sister Mary Charles McGough woodcut, and other items. Tickets are available the day of the sale at \$1.00 a ticket or 6 for \$5.00. You will be able to bid on the items of your preference.

Bring your family and friends and enjoy great Christmas shopping, coffee and donuts and visiting. If you are able to bake for the sale, make special items, or volunteer for a few hours on the day of the sale, please call Sister Teri at 218-461-5569 or Mary Tanner at 218-831-7086 or Kathy Noble at 218-343-3589. We look forward to seeing you.

Errata

“...*Nostra maxima culpa.*” On page 23 of the Summer 2016 Pathways, we inadvertently switched two captions. Thanks to the many who pointed out our error. This is the corrected format:



Christian Brother's Boys School, later the coed Cathedral Senior High School (photo c.1914)



Sacred Heart School, which housed the parish Grade School and Duluth's first Cathedral High School (photo c.1914)

Correction to 2016 Annual Report:

On page 2 of the 2016 Annual Report, it is stated that the term for Prioress is five years. However, the term is six years.

Sister Profile: Sister Kathleen Hofer

by Sister Sarah Smedman

Photo Courtesy of St. Mary's Medical Center



From the time she was a little girl, Kathleen Hofer was energetic, multi-talented, and into almost everything. Born in Grand Forks, North Dakota, the daughter of Stephen and Elsie Theisen Hofer, she and her brother Jerome grew up in the small farming town of Michigan, North Dakota, where their father was a banker. Known as a tomboy, she reveled in romping on relatives' farms and playing softball, baseball, and football in her small town. In school, Kathleen's interests and activities broadened. Always a lover of sports, she also became active in chorus, band, and drama, and was editor of her high school newspaper. Beginning to think ahead to her future and influenced by her father's work as a banker, Kathleen's interests focused on business and some aspect of health care.

When Kathleen was a junior in high school, two Benedictine Sisters who were recruiting students for The College of St. Scholastica visited her. Their mention of the CSS program in Medical Records caught Kathleen's attention, for she glimpsed the possibility of combining health care and business. After graduation, Kathleen enrolled as a freshman at CSS.

At CSS, Kathleen became familiar with the Benedictine way of life and acquainted with many Sisters. She and her friends speculated about what it might be like to be a Sister. As a sophomore, she told one of the Sisters that she was attracted to the Benedictine life, and that in the future she might be interested in joining the Community. The response was, "If you think that is what God wants of you, why wait?" Kathleen made her decision and called her parents, who after the first shock were entirely supportive. Nevertheless, her decision surprised family and friends because she did not fit their stereotype of a nun. In January 1953, Kathleen became a postulant. She entered the novitiate in July of that year and received the name Sister Leonie, but later returned to her baptismal name, Kathleen. After making her first profession in 1954, she was assigned to teach in the elementary schools in the Duluth Diocese, which she did for seven years.



Photo Courtesy of The Woman Today

Subsequently, Sister Kathleen earned a B.A. degree from CSS with majors in Medical Record Administration and psychology and an MBA from George Washington University with a major in health care administration. She has had an extensive and successful career in healthcare, first as a professor and Chair of the Medical Record Administration department, then the first Chair of the Division of Health Sciences at the College of St. Scholastica. Since the early 1980s, she has served at various times as the CEO of the Benedictine Health System (BHS); as CEO of St. Mary's Medical Center (SMMC); and as Board Chair of the BHS, SMMC/St. Mary's Hospital Superior, St. Mary's Duluth Clinic (which she co-founded), and the Essentia Health East Region. She is a deeply committed and seemingly tireless worker. After a day's work, she will pause for dinner and a short rest, and then her car (with Kathleen in it) is often heard leaving the garage again, not to return until hours later.

Sister Kathleen's colleagues attributed her success as an administrator to her ability to listen and incorporate others' thinking into situations. One commented, "She is a strategic thinker, detail-oriented but with both feet planted in reality. She has tremendous empathy for others." She has continuously remained an active member of professional, civic, and health care organizations at the local, state, and national levels. Her leadership in health care during years of phenomenal change and challenges has earned her nationwide recognition.

Always a dedicated and active Benedictine, Sister Kathleen has also served the Monastery as Prioress, Treasurer, and Council member, and on the Board of Trustees of CSS, which she chaired for four years.

"I have been blessed to be able to do what I [have been] doing," Sister Kathleen says, "but we never know what needs the future holds. I will be open to whatever needs or opportunities arise."

Sister Profile: Sister Agnes Sitter

by Sister Sarah Smedman

Agnes Sitter, the third daughter of Frank and Theresa Wald Sitter, grew up in Berwick, North Dakota, with two older sisters, Katherine and Elizabeth, and a younger brother Frank. Her father owned a garage and filling station, and as a child, Agnes enjoyed delivering gas to farmers, sometimes with Frank and other times alone. Sometime after Agnes' family had moved to a farmhouse so that an uncle and aunt might live in their former home, a fire destroyed everything including the garage and the house.

Agnes attended public schools in grades 1 through 12. Although she had no aspiration to be a teacher, when she was a senior a friend persuaded her to take the North Dakota State Teachers Exam with her. Agnes passed with high marks. For the next year she taught in a one-room country school, and in the year after that a second similar school. She drove her own car, chopped wood and carried coal to keep the fire going, did the janitorial work, and taught multiple grades. When boarding with a family proved unsatisfactory, she lived in the schoolhouse. At the close of that second year, "I had had my fill!" announced Agnes. Before resuming her professional career, Agnes lived with relatives in Detroit, to gain experience beyond her North Dakota rural life.

For some time, Agnes had been considering religious life, but was deterred by her father's reaction: "I gave one daughter to the convent. Must I give a second?" However, encouraged by her older sister, now Sister Victorine, OSB, she left home and entered our Community on December 23, 1946: "It was *hard!*" When Agnes became a novice the following summer, she received the name Sister Aniceta but later resumed her baptismal name, to her father's joy. Having made first Monastic Profession in 1948, Sister Agnes continued her lifelong ministry as an elementary teacher, most of those years as a first-grade teacher *par excellence*.

A life-long learner, Sister Agnes continued her education while she taught, taking classes on Saturdays, during the summers, and at UMD. She vividly recalls walking down Duluth's Third Street hill from St. Peter's School and Convent and back up again on blustery, bitter cold Saturdays, freezing and hardly able to breathe against the wind.

A teacher who loved and understood little ones, Sister Agnes has a treasure trove of stories. When a quiet, tow-headed chap refused to transfer schools, he told his mother, "No, because I love Sister Agnes' smile." With her quizzical grin, she remembers a first grader, who at the end of the year told her she was the best teacher he'd ever had. She thanked him, sweetly, then murmured to herself, "Yes, and the only one you've ever had." Shy herself, she commiserated with those children who shied away from presenting alone in front of the class. Standing beside them, she emboldened and assured them they could do it. Many of Sister Agnes' former "children," now parents and grandparents themselves, still visit her regularly.

When, after fifty years of teaching, Sister Agnes returned to the Monastery, she served as a Monastery receptionist and then for many years as an assistant on Benet Hall, where she was as sensitive to the Sisters' needs as she had been to children's. Always a committed, disciplined, and hard worker, Sister Agnes is a realist with a quiet and quirky sense of humor who sees and tells things as they are. Now in her ninety-first year, having given faithful, loving service to scores of children, to her Benedictine Sisters, and to the God to whom she vowed her life, Sister Agnes is still unpretentious Agnes. May God grant her years of health and happiness.



Photo by Sister Joyce Fournier

Sister Profile: Mary Susan Dewitt

by Sister Therese Carson

Photo by Andi Therrien



Sister Mary Susan Dewitt was born Betty Ellen Dewitt in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, the fourth of 13 children. Both parents were staunch Catholics. (Her mother was heard to say, “I wouldn’t take a million dollars for any of my children and I wouldn’t give a nickel for another one!”) Both parents sang in a barbershop quartet, and singing together became a joy, a blessing, and a constant for all the family. All of her brothers also played guitar.

Growing up, Betty had a sense of drifting through life. She was searching for something to give her meaning and direction. “I resisted the idea of entering the convent. It sounded boring to me. God and I were not close, and the thought of giving up my family was too painful.” In high school, God began chipping away at this resistance. Betty visited The College of St. Scholastica and met, for the first time, Benedictine Sisters. She was intrigued.

After high school, she left for Duluth to begin a nursing degree at the College. In this rich Benedictine atmosphere she began to wonder if, like Jonah, she was running from God’s call. “Deep down I wanted more from life than just living.” It was this formless yearning for something more that decided her to enter the convent in her sophomore year. This came as no surprise to her father, who said, “You know, honey, I kind of knew you wouldn’t be satisfied with a regular life.”

Receiving the habit as a sister and living the Benedictine life of *ora et labora* did not automatically make her an authentic sister. She still had the sense of searching, and God was still a distant figure.

Six years later, she was on a plane going to South America to answer another call: to run a clinic as a missionary nurse among the poor in Antofagasta, Chile. It was this call that finally led her, during 12 challenging, grace-filled, Spirit-led years, to a healing, living relationship with the God who had called her away from the comforts and distractions of home. Living amid the beauty of the Chilean people and sharing their material poverty, she found spiritual richness. There was no more searching. “It was as if my life dropped, like an anchor, into the heart of God.” Another gift in Chile: she learned to play the guitar!

Returning to Duluth was difficult. All her closest relationships were in Chile. “Grief was a steady companion for a long time. One of the wisest decisions God led me to make was to begin CPE training and become a chaplain. It provided the support, grounding, and inspiration I needed for the new ministry to which the Lord was calling me.”

Sister Susan has been a chaplain for 35 years now at the Benedictine Living Community (formerly the Benedictine Health Center), where she brings her gifts of loving relationship, faith, and music to residents, families, and staff. Although her days are very full, she has learned that her strength lies in being faithful to prayer. “When I get sloppy about it, the Holy Spirit calls me back in the gift of ‘Prayer on the Road.’ Alone or in a crowd, the Lord is always there.” She knows that to love God is to love others and feels blessed to have some very good friends, inside and outside the Monastery. Every day she sees the Holy Spirit moving in her community, in her place of ministry, and in her life. “It’s not perfect. As Joan Chittister, OSB, said when asked what they did all day in the Monastery, ‘We fall down and we get up. We fall down and we get up. We fall down and we get up.’ I can so relate to that!”

School Days! School Days! Historical Fiction for Young Readers

By Sister Sarah Smedman

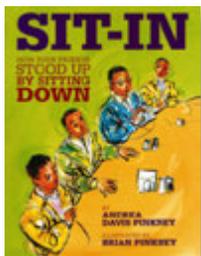
Autumn! Daylight declines. Air is crisp. Children's lives change. Outdoor play and games shrink. Study and reading indoors expand. Intelligence and imagination develop crisper edges. Classes and homework take priority. It's an apt time for reading historical fiction.

Noted historical fiction writers agree that the purpose of their work is to make history come alive for the reader, for history is primarily people. Since Walter Scott, historical novelists have been interested not only in making the past live, but in the impingement of the past on the present and the degree to which history and character illumine each other.

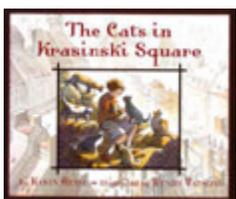
A fundamental concern for authors of historical fiction for young readers is that the characters must be people with whom they can identify. Whatever the subject of the story, it must illustrate necessary connections between individual lives of the characters and the public action or social order of the setting, so that the story offers a coherent interpretation of the moment of the past in which it is set. Authors do not write historical fiction so that today's readers can escape into it, but rather so that they can interpret/respond to it to understand life around them.

All historical fiction grows out of careful and accurate research. Skillful writers pass on historical facts pleurably to readers, for as Hester Burton has said, "The prime object of writing historical fiction is an exercise of the heart rather than the head." While the protagonists are fictional characters, the historical action and the social order are factual. Words spoken by actual persons, such as Hiram Bingham or Martin Luther King, are never invented. Research proves they are words actually spoken by those persons.

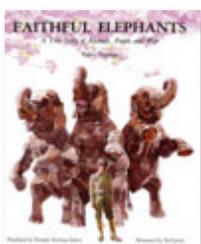
The focus here is on historical fiction in picture books, chosen randomly from a veritable treasure trove. Picture books, too, grow from assiduous research but typically portray a specific incident from a larger historical event. At the end of their stories, authors provide an overview of the historical situation of which the incident may be a small but meaningful part.



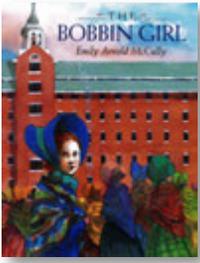
Sit-In: How Four Friends Stood Up By Sitting Down by Andrea Davis Pinkney, illustrated by Brian Pinkney is a brilliant—both in text and color—account of the sit-in at Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, that began on February 1, 1960, then grew bigger and wider. The eventual outcome, detailed by a timeline of events at the end of the story, was President Lyndon B. Johnson's signing of the Civil Rights Act on July 2, 1964, outlawing racial segregation in schools and public places.



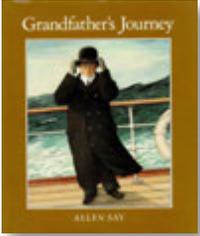
Karen Hesse's *The Cats in Krasinski Square* is set in Warsaw, Poland, outside the ghetto into which the Gestapo had walled all Jews. With the help of a little girl, who had only "a gentle hand and a tender voice" to offer the homeless cats who "came from the cracks in the wall and the openings in the rubble," the cats outfoxed the Gestapo so food on an incoming train could be smuggled to the starving Jews in the ghetto. While not minimizing the terror of the situation, Wendy Watson's illustrations also indicate the humor.



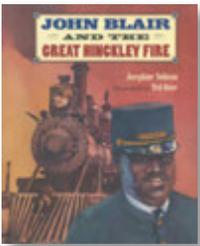
In *Faithful Elephants: a True Story of Animals, People and War*, Yukio Tsuchiya tells of the necessity of killing the animals in Tokyo's Ueno Zoo before bombs fall and set them free to rampage. Lions, tigers, bears, and big snakes are poisoned. Elephants, however, recognized and refused poisoned food; their hides were too thick for needles to penetrate. They had to be starved. The emotional impact of the book is heightened by Ted Lewin's illustrations of the horror and grief of the elephants' attendants. *Faithful Elephants*, in touching readers' hearts, reminds us that war affects everyone in ways we may never know.



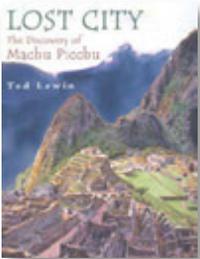
In author and illustrator Emily Arnold McCully's *The Bobbin Girl*, ten-year old Rebecca Putney works in one of the first cloth manufacturing plants in Lowell, Massachusetts. In the early 1880s, although these factories offered young women the first opportunities to work for independent salaries, the conditions were deplorable: long hours, low wages, locked doors and windows, and no ventilation. When owners lowered the wages, many women went on strike, but many needed their jobs to survive. Although this strike was unsuccessful, it was a first step forward. "We showed we can stand up for what is right."



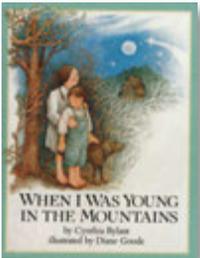
Sparsely told and cleanly illustrated, Allen Say's *Grandfather's Journey* is a circular tale of three generations of a Japanese family who travel to America, return to Japan, then back to America, loving their homes in both countries. "The funny thing is," says the grandson, "the moment I am in one country, I am homesick for the other."



In *John Blair and the Great Hinckley Fire*, Josephine Nobisso tells the story of a "hero history almost forgot": John Blair, the porter on the Limited Train No. 4 that left Duluth for St. Paul on September 1, 1894, with a scheduled stop in Hinckley. When the Hinckley Fire disrupted normalcy, John Blair acted courageously, compassionately, and calmly and saved many passengers. Nobisso's prose creates the excitement, the anxiety, the fear, the tension—the fluctuating emotions of the moment. Ted Rose's more relaxed, spacious illustrations as the story progresses provides a complementary balance.



Often biography and history are inextricably connected in picture books, which is true in author-illustrator Ted Lewin's *Lost City: The Discovery of Machu Picchu*, the story of Yale Professor Hiram Bingham, who yearned to explore the hidden land beyond the Andes Mountains. The Yale Peruvian Expedition was organized in 1910. After difficult, treacherous travel through dense terrain, Bingham stumbled on more than he hoped for: Machu Picchu, "a city lost in time, a city lost in the clouds." To research this book, Lewin not only read Bingham's journal but also traveled to Peru, following his footsteps as closely as possible.



Cynthia Rylant memorializes a quieter life based on her childhood in Appalachia in *When I Was Young in the Mountains*, a simpler time when families were happy with the bare necessities of life and lived in concert with nature. "And that was always enough." Illustrator Diane Goode, attracted to the story because of the special quality of the relationships between the characters, portrays "the warmth and affection [she always tries] to express in [her] work." Art and text are in perfect harmony.



Not historical fiction but a definitive portrayal of an historic event: *The Star-Spangled Banner*, illustrated by Peter Spier, includes all four of Francis Scott Key's verses and the music, "The Story of the Star-Spangled Banner," and "A Collection of Flags of the American Revolution and Those of the United States of America, Its Government and Its Armed Forces" on the cover pages. A requisite for every home and school library,

Forthcoming: Historical Novels for Older Readers.

How Great Is Your God?

by Sister Mary Catherine Shambour

It's been quite a year! As we take in the beauty of hillsides ablaze in fall colors, we realize that yet another year of God's precious gift of time has passed away while we've been busy about other things. But what about our brothers and sisters who starve in bombed-out cities, or pick through garbage to sell a scrap of metal for bread or risk an overcrowded raft in hope of reaching a safe shore? Can they pause and reflect on God's goodness? We chant in our morning prayers, "When I behold the heavens, the work of your hands, the moon and the stars which you set in place, what are we that you should be mindful of us?" (Psalm 8) Then we turn to the morning news of scandals, killings, and vicious political rhetoric.



Image: NASA Goddard Space Flight Center

Is this what we have made of that beautiful blue sphere of earth caught in the astronaut's camera? Can there be hope that someday humans will live together in peace with God and all creation? Yes, if we are people of faith and believe that God, through the Holy Spirit, is "forever creating something new." While many in our nation have come to accept the present situation as irreversible and conclude that religion has no relevance in their lives, God still speaks to a majority of Americans who believe in God and who continue to search for meaning.

This is not the first time Christianity has faced a crisis of unbelief. In the great malaise that descended upon Europe following two World Wars in which a great Christian nation attacked other Christian nations, and the "good" Catholics and Lutherans systematically annihilated 6,000,000 people deemed "inferior," a new interpretation of Christianity was needed. In

response, Pope John XXIII summoned all leaders of the universal Church to gather to pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance. Their three years of prayer and discussion brought down upon the Church an avalanche of grace that enriched our lives and helped guide Christianity in its necessary relationship to the changing world.

At the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, the German theologian Karl Rahner, SJ, wrote in his essay *Christian Living Formerly and Today*, "...the Christian of the future will either be a 'mystic', one who has 'experienced' something, or he will cease to be anything at all." He foresaw that in the increasingly secular world and in the absence of the luxuriant devotions of another age, the Christian will need to search in earnest for the basic elements of faith to sustain belief, and continue to pray and love God unconditionally by being open to the Holy Spirit who will assist in discerning meaning and purpose in life. This requires that we trust God without limit and open our hearts to the Holy Spirit, who will reveal the transcendental meaning that hides within our personal experiences.

In addition to the grace of the sacraments, as available, this will require necessary times of deep, personal soul-searching prayer and inevitably cause some suffering - even such as being experienced by Christian martyrs today. It will also require a willingness on our part to "read the signs of the times," to see God's creative power and unitive actions at work in our world and connect these with the truths of our Biblical faith and our actions.

We cannot dismiss human progress as irrelevant to our faith; rather, the Church should assist in making the connections. While more Americans value higher education, it is also true that for every year of education attained there is a corresponding decline in religious practice. Is this because religious education often ends with preparation for First Holy Communion or Confirmation? Or is it because many older Catholics lack a deep knowledge of Scripture because they were advised not to read the Bible as it might weaken their faith - that only the clergy should explain it to them? We are all in need of further study and reflection on the truths of our faith.

Parishes create a perfect opportunity when they hold Bible studies and retreats, or encourage members to read and discuss Pope Francis' encyclicals and exhortations on *The Joy of the Gospel*, economy, environment, and love.

One area of human progress today with the potential for broadening faith in a loving God who cares for and has a plan for all of creation, particularly in its discoveries of an ever expanding universe and the quantum theory in physics, is modern science. A sad paradox is that while most believers see no relevance to their faith in these findings, many scientists are so overwhelmed with their discoveries that a prominent atheist among them could proclaim, "Your God is too small!"

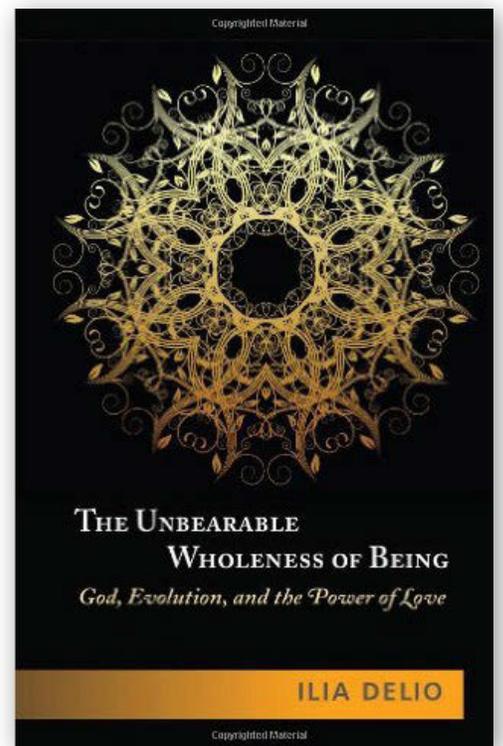
Fortunately, because the Church allowed the writings of the deeply spiritual French Jesuit paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin to be printed after his death in 1955, a number of contemporary theologians who are also scientifically trained have elaborated on his theories using recent scientific findings for evidence. These all point out that, rather than leading away from Christianity, a scientific investigation of evolution leads us toward a profound sense of the Cosmic Christ in the universe drawing all things to himself through the power of his creative love.

The writers also show, as did Teilhard in his final book *The Divine Milieu*, how all concerned humanity can cooperate in God's plan for transforming creation into the Cosmic Christ.

This year the Feminist Theology Discussion group at the Monastery, which has been meeting monthly on Sundays for ten years to discuss books by contemporary women writers and theologians, has chosen to discuss *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being: God, Evolution and the Power of Love* by Franciscan Sister Ilia Delio. We choose to discuss books that enlighten and deepen our understanding of the faith and find religious meaning in the developments of today's world. We will continue to pray and research this topic with trust that our God is truly great! May the Holy Spirit make us all "mystics."



Image: Hubble Legacy Archive



When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?

Psalm 8:3-4

Highlights

Celebrating Creativity

By Sister Dorene King

Photos by Sister Therese Carson



During the last week of July we had the company of eight young people, ages 10 and 11, in a celebration of our gift of creativity. Under the guidance of Sisters Dorene King and Gretchen Johnston, they learned songs, made abstract paintings, went on a woodland scavenger hunt, created mosaics using pebbles found in Chester Creek, and wove small baskets using thin willow wythes.

Sister Martha Bechtold taught how to make balloon animals, and Sister Joan Marie Stelman joined them for an hour of storytelling. Each child made a mask and then in two groups they planned original skits, which they performed the last afternoon for the enjoyment of family and the Sisters.



Three Duluth Sisters Attend BSWR in Alabama

by Sister Therese Carson

Three Sisters in First Monastic Profession are discerning their readiness for Perpetual Monastic Profession: Elizabeth Farias, Paule Pierre Barbeau, and Therese Carson. With three Sisters from other Benedictine communities they attended the Benedictine Spirituality Workshop and Retreat in July at the Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman, Alabama. The directors were Sisters Magdalena Craig and Marcia Ziska. The only thing warmer than the weather was the Community's gracious and loving hospitality.

Twice daily, a presenter immersed the group in one of the central charisms of Benedictine spirituality: mindfulness of God's presence; the balance of prayer, daily *lectio* and work; an honest humility; silence and listening; mutual obedience; hospitality and care of the earth; stability and the common life. Benedictine life is difficult; it demands everything we have, but it is also very human and down-to-earth. As Sister Magdalena said on the first day, "The unique Benedictine charism is that, wherever we are, it is Holy Ground. When we stand at the kitchen sink, washing dishes, that is our altar. It is how we do the little things that make us mindful of God and of each other."

After the last conference, the retreatants began seven days of silence, using prayer, meditation, *lectio*, and art to help them listen for the still, soft voice of God speaking to the heart. As Sister Marcia explained, "Discernment is determining from within one's own experience where God is and where God is not. We must be in touch with ourselves before we can be in touch with God. It happens when we open ourselves to God active in our lives and keep prayer at our center. It takes attentive intimacy with self and with God." A daunting task, but one which they are better able to handle, thanks to two very special directors, many presenters, and the still voice of the Holy Spirit.



Photo courtesy of Sacred Heart Monastery

Highlights, continued

Sister Lisa Maurer Graduates

by Sister Therese Carson

Sister Lisa Maurer completed her Master's Degree in Pastoral Ministry at St. John's University's School of Theology and Seminary, and graduated May 8, 2016. She attended classes part time for four years, commuting once a week or once monthly from Duluth to Collegetown, Minnesota. In her final paper, she wrote on caring for the elderly from the viewpoint of a health administrator titled, "Do Not Forget Me When I Am Old: A Pastoral Plan for the Spiritual Care of Older Adults."

She spoke of how her studies helped expand her understanding of the Church and world. "Especially challenging and rewarding were the classes on Christian Thought, Ecclesiology, and Christology. They gave me a broader understanding of what God calls us all to be as members of the Body of Christ."

Sister Lisa works as the Mission Integration Director for the Benedictine Health System.



At St. Scholastica Medium English School in Tanzania, the Walls Are Up

by Sister Therese Carson



In December 2015, Sister Gaudensia Mwanika of St. Gertrude Convent in Imiliwaha, Tanzania, completed her Master's in Education from The College of St. Scholastica. While she was here, she watched students with disabilities of all kinds learning alongside their classmates. In Tanzania, she said, disabled children were not allowed to attend school, but here they are



valued equally with other children. She began to dream of building a school for handicapped children that, she believes, would be a first for Tanzania.

After graduation, Sister Gaudensia spent a month raising donations to pay for her dream, and then went home to begin building it. She, two other Sisters, and two hired workers made all the cement blocks one by one, using handmade concrete mix and a press. A well was dug, the foundations set and the walls and roof are completed. She hopes to open the school in January when two classrooms are finished. Expansion will occur as time and donations allow.

Photos from Sister Gaudensia Mwanika



*(L to R) Digging well
Making blocks
Drying blocks
Building foundations*

Highlights, continued

by Sister Paule Pierre Barbeau



WISDOM CONNECTIONS: *Timeless Tradition ↔ Technological Times*

Delightful, interesting, challenging, surprising, inspirational, energizing, fun – all describe the ambitious inter-Federation/Congregation **T⁴** project. The aim of this project is to create a repository of Benedictine wisdom and to make it available through web-based technology to Sisters in the communities of the American Benedictine women's Federations and Congregations. By the third year of the project over 25 communities are expected to be participating in the project. Sisters in initial formation and newly professed Sisters are assigned to Stable Groups of four or five Sisters with a facilitator. Each group is named after a woman saint of note, most from the 4th and 5th centuries. Sisters access the resources, reflect upon them, and share with their Group their understanding of them and how they relate to their own experience, all the while getting to know each other and building relationships. All the Sisters in initial formation at St. Scholastica Monastery participate in the **T⁴** project.

I love the diversity in my group - *Marcella*. The five of us are from different monasteries, which enriches our sharing. We are at different points in our formation and faith journeys, hence bringing varying levels of experience. We meet via videoconference about once a month. So far, we have shared our vocation stories and experiences in our own communities. We have learned about our own communication styles and how they mesh with others' communication styles. We have viewed online resources from the wisdom library. Sister Karen Joseph's *Staying at Table* was the basis of a very important discussion on the lively times in which we currently find ourselves. Sister Joan Chittister's *Love, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation* gave us insight into and allowed us to share personal stories of forgiveness and healing.

The Stable Groups are large enough for variety yet small enough for intimacy. I look forward to our meetings this coming year, as well as meeting my group mates and other Sisters at the **T⁴** Symposium planned for the summer of 2017.

Our Prayer Ministry Continues

by Sister Therese Carson

The Sisters often are asked to pray for a person or a situation where God's healing touch is needed. What happens to the requests you send to the monastery via mail, email, and phone? We post them on a weekly list in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, in the Benet Hall chapel for the elderly Sisters, and on a prayer board in the Sister's communication room – the Hub. Urgent requests go directly to the prayer board. At Eucharist and Evening Prayer, we ask the Lord's blessing and guidance for those who have asked for our prayers.

A fourth copy of the list remains in the Development Office, where each morning the staff prays for our friends and benefactors, and specifically for individuals on the list. This tradition goes back to the directorship of Sister Grace Marie Braun. Using her words, we ask God: "May your light surround them, may your love be their support, and may your life flow through them." Our Director of many years, Vicky Siders, retired in May, but the Development Office prayer ministry continues under our new director, Jan Barrett, who joined us on August 1. "May God who has favored us in wonderful ways be praised and blessed forever." Amen!



Photo by Sister Therese Carson

Highlights, continued

Sister Mary Rochefort's Legacy Continues in the Community Builder Scholarship

By Sister Therese Carson

Before her death in February 2016, Sister Mary Rochefort spent 15 years at The College of St. Scholastica in mission integration, where she kept the College, its faculty and students grounded in the Catholic Benedictine tradition. In her memory, two scholarships will help freshmen who seek to build an inclusive and welcoming student community.

This year's winners are Micaela Jacobson of Minnetonka, Minnesota and Josephine Steller of Arkansaw, Wisconsin, both nursing majors.

Photo by Andi Therrien



Photo by Dave Ballard

Scholastica Campus Hosts the ABCU

by Sister Beverly Raway, Prioress

In June, The College of St. Scholastica (CSS) and St. Scholastica Monastery were hosts for the annual meeting of the Association of Benedictine Colleges and Universities (ABCU). Participants for this four day event included presidents and other administrative staff of the member organizations and the Prioresses and Abbots of the sponsoring Benedictine abbeys and monasteries. This was a time to showcase our college, to honor and thank Dr. Larry Goodwin, who completed his distinguished tenure as president of the ABCU, and to introduce and welcome our new President, Dr. Colette McCarrick Geary.

The weather was perfect during these days and the meetings were stimulating. Our guests dined with the Sisters on Sunday evening and joined us for Morning and Evening Prayer and the Eucharistic Celebrations throughout these days. Sister Beverly Raway and Dr. Geary participated in the Benedictine Leadership Formation Institute, which included talks by Sister Laura Swan and Sister Thomas Welder on the historical and spiritual legacy of Benedictine higher education. Dr. Goodwin led a presentation on the hallmarks of the Benedictine approach to education, which was followed by a discussion of practical application by two outstanding speakers: Beth Domholdt, Vice President of Academic Affairs at CSS, and Diane Fladeland, Vice President of Academic Affairs at University of St. Mary in Bismarck, North Dakota. Abbot Matthew Leavy led us in an exploration of the process and practice of *Lectio Divina*, concluding with a practical experience of this ancient art of prayer.



Dr. Colette McCarrick Geary and Sister Beverly Raway



Sister Beverly Raway (front row, middle) with other attendees

Photos courtesy of Sister Beverly Raway

The Presidents and Monastic Superiors held fruitful dialogue discussing common issues and began planning for the ABCU meeting for next year, to be held June 3-7 at St. Benedict's and St. John's University. This will mark the 25th anniversary of the ABCU, and the organization will celebrate its history and look toward the future.

Highlights, continued

Reflections on the 2016 Monastic Institute, St. John's University

by Benedictine Oblates Beryl Singleton Bissell and Rev. Bill Christ

The 2016 Monastic Institute was held July 3-7, at St. John's School of Theology and Seminary in Collegeville, Minnesota. The theme was "Monastic Profession, a Call to *Conversatio*." In reflection we would add that the theme could have been, "enabling Christ to come alive in you!"

Sister Michaela Hedican, Prioress of St. Benedict's Monastery in St. Joseph, Minnesota and Father John Klassen, Abbott of St. John's Abbey led 120 nuns, monks, priests, pastors, and oblates through a series of thoroughly enlightening, inspiring, and uplifting lectures and group discussions. They seamlessly blended Holy Scripture and the **Rule of St. Benedict** with our lives as followers of Christ.

We left the beautiful campus of St. John's Abbey with hearts filled with gratitude for wisdom and fellowship shared during four days of liturgy, Eucharist, worship, prayer, and meditation. We made many new friends and renewed acquaintances from previous Monastic Institutes. In conversations with our dear Sisters and spiritual mentors from Duluth, we were blessed by the richness of shared laughter, tears, and peace.



(L to R) Rev. Bill Christ, Beryl Bissell, and Sisters Beverly Raway, Lois Eckes, Mary Catherine Shambour, and Edith Bogue

Looking ahead, we are excited about continuing the Oblate practice of sharing the hospitality of Christ with each and every person, not only in our circles of family of friends but also throughout our communities, always welcoming the new strangers through whom we encounter and welcome the Risen Christ.

Stanbrook Hall Reunion

Article and photos by Sister Therese Carson

On Saturday, July 23, about 30 graduates from the monastery's former Stanbrook Hall High School, which closed in 1967, returned to share conversation, photos, and memories of their younger days. This is the 50th anniversary of the Class of 1966, who were well represented at the reunion.



Alumnae of Class of 1966



"...and here's another of my grandkids."



Sister Barbara Ann and Sister Luella Wegscheid (left) who joined her in the Community. Photo taken 2005



Sister Barbara Ann (left) with Sister Louise Bauer, SLW, 2009



Photos from Monastery Archives

Sister Barbara Ann Vierzba, OSB ***November 16, 1943 – May 18, 2016***

Sister Barbara Ann Vierzba (Amadeo), OSB, 72, died on May 18, 2016, at St. Scholastica Monastery. She entered the Duluth Benedictine Community on September 8, 1962, and made monastic profession on July 11, 1964. She celebrated her Silver Jubilee in 1989 and her Golden Jubilee in 2014.

Sister Barbara was born in Brainerd, Minnesota, on November 16, 1943, the daughter of George and Rose (Schley) Vierzba. She attended high school in Brainerd and Duluth, and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education from The College St. Scholastica in Duluth, a Master of Arts in Education from the University of Minnesota Duluth, and Clinical Pastoral Education certification at St. Mary's Hospital, Duluth.

Sister Barbara Ann taught for twenty-five years at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School in Cloquet, Minnesota; St. Timothy's School in Chicago, Illinois; and St. Thomas the Apostle School in Phoenix, Arizona. She was principal and teacher at St. James School in Duluth, Minnesota, and St. Francis of Assisi School in Brainerd. She continued ministering to others in the Sisters Care Program in St. Paul, Minnesota, and at St. Gabriel's Hospital and St. Otto's Nursing Home in Little Falls, Minnesota, as Chaplain.

Sister Barbara Ann also served in the Monastery business office and was the Subprioress at the Monastery for twelve years before retiring due to ill health. She served on the Board of Trustees for St. Joseph's Medical Center in Brainerd for ten years and the Benedictine Health Center in Duluth for six years.

Sister Barbara Ann was preceded in death by her parents and her brother, Michael.

Besides the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, she is survived by one sister, Joanne (Lloyd) Shun, brothers Edmund, Douglas (Marsha) and Marvin, sister-in-law Donette Vierzba, many nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews, and many friends.

In Loving Memory



Jean and her brother Phil, c. 1948

Sister Jean (Donna Marie) Maher, OSB ***September 13, 1942 – July 26, 2016***

Sister Jean Maher, 73, died on July 26, 2016, at St. Scholastica Monastery in Duluth, Minnesota, in her 54th year of consecrated life.

Jean Marie was born in Chicago, Illinois, on September 13, 1942. She entered the Benedictine community on September 8, 1960, and celebrated her Golden Jubilee of Profession in July of 2012. Sister Jean's many ministries included teaching grade school and high school, giving pastoral care in parishes, providing for the spiritual needs of students through campus ministry, and directing the McCabe Renewal Center. She led retreats, facilitated spiritual workshops, guided individuals through spiritual direction, and served in community leadership in Duluth and at St. Scholastica Monastery.

Sister Jean graduated with a BS in Education from The College of St. Scholastica and went on to complete an MA in Religious Studies at Mundelein College in Chicago, Illinois, an MA in Applied Theology at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, and a D. Min. in Spiritual Direction at the Graduate Theological Foundation, Donaldson, Indiana.

She was preceded in death by her beloved parents, Dorothea (Callahan) and Jack Maher. She is survived by her devoted brother Philip, her cherished nieces Kathleen, Julie, Christina, nephew Philip, and dear great nephews and great nieces. She is also survived by her extended community of many friends and her Benedictine Sisters.

Sister Jean celebrated life to the full, and lit up our lives with her joyful presence, generous loving spirit, and deep faith. She will be greatly missed.



Sister Jane Casey sweeping the courtyard

Photo by Andi Therrien



Visiting her friend, Sister Mary Clare Hall

Photo by Sister Therese Carson



Sister Jane Casey, OSB ***August 6, 1926 – July 28, 2016***

Sister Jane Casey died July 28, 2016, at St. Scholastica Monastery in her 70th year of monastic profession.

She was born on August 6, 1926, to James and Mary Jane (Kelly) Casey in Duluth, Minnesota. The oldest of five children, Jane was raised in a devout Catholic family where her parents blessed their children daily with holy water before they left for school, played outside, and went to bed. Jane knew by the time she was twelve that she would be a Sister. After graduating from Cathedral High School in 1944, she entered the Duluth Benedictine Community in the fall.

She professed her perpetual vows on July 11, 1950, celebrated her Silver Jubilee in 1972, her Golden Jubilee in 1996 and her Diamond Jubilee on July 9, 2016. Sister earned her BA degree in Elementary Education from The College of St. Scholastica and her MA Degree in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Minnesota-Duluth.

Sister Jane found her 47 years of teaching in many Catholic elementary schools a happy and rewarding endeavor. Her teaching ministry took her to Minnesota schools in Duluth, Virginia, International Falls, Hibbing, and Minneapolis, as well as to Chicago and Cincinnati. She never tired of delighting in her young pupils nor they in her. She retired in 1997 and was given an opportunity to travel to Lourdes and to Rome. When she returned, she became a companion and assistant to the Sister sacristan at St. Ann's Senior Residence in Duluth. Blessed with good health, boundless energy and a passion for sharing the love of Christ to all, she joined another Sister in her ministry on Central Hillside, working out of St. Mary Star of the Sea Church. She visited seniors and the homebound in high rises and homes in the area and brought Holy Communion to them, as well as interacting with the residents at St. Ann's. In 2008, Sister returned to the Monastery to live out her days attending to the needs of others in prayer, deed, and heart.

Sister Jane was preceded in death by her parents, her brothers James and Thomas, and her sister Georgia Barr. Besides the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, she is survived by her sister Terese Perich, many nieces, nephews, and friends.

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*Love transforms us
from being “left overs”
to becoming fields of grace
for our loved ones.*

— Sister Linda Wiggins