

PATHWAYS



NEWSLETTER OF THE BENEDICTINE SISTERS

DULUTH MINNESOTA

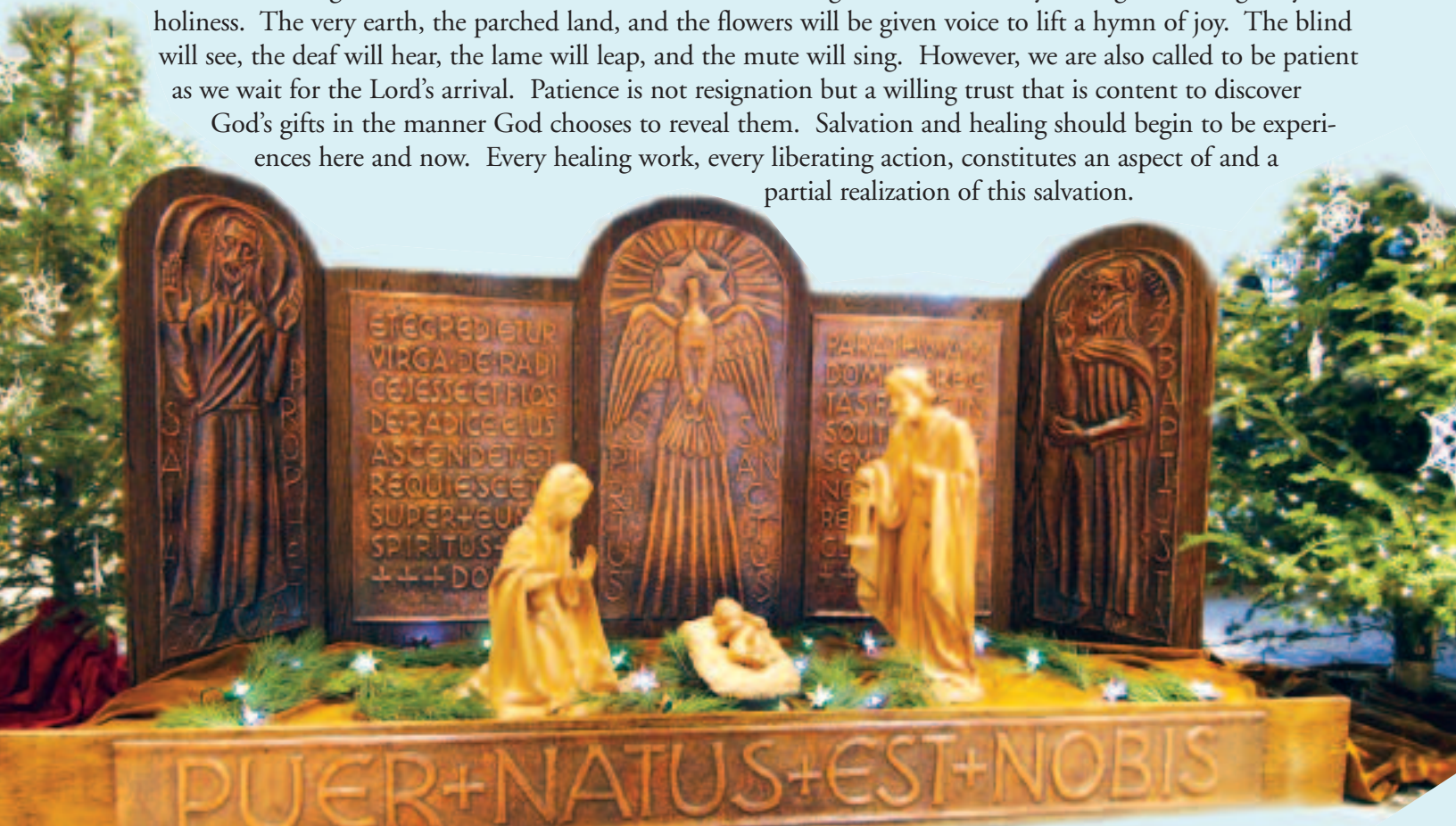
Advent, 2005

Vol 17, No. 2

Advent By Sister Cecile LaForest

Advent is an awesome season. The Advent liturgy allows us to “Oh” and “Ah” over its ecstatic message of Christ’s coming into our war-weary world that anxiously awaits a time of peace. Our disaster-ridden universe plagued by hurricanes, floods, and fires seeks respite from destructive forces. Our poor cry out from their homelessness and starvation. Yes, there is an urgency in our Advent prayer of 2005. We know that our God is not a passive God who keeps aloof in calamitous happenings. The entire focus of Advent and the Christmas season is to remind us that “God is with us.” God entered into human history in the most complete manner possible, as a human being, one like us in every way except our sinfulness—that is, except in the ways we freely choose to alienate ourselves from God. In Jesus the Spirit of God took up residence not just once in a young girl’s womb, but in human history for all time. Divine Love dawned for all humanity, never to set again.

We watch for Christ’s Presence in a darkened world, not be alarmed, but to be alert. We must have an awareness of the marginalized, the forgotten, and the depressed. The Scriptural passages from the prophet Isaiah and the relentless vigor of John the Baptist’s cry in the wilderness not only bring comfort and courage, but challenge us to change our behavior. They remind us not only that God has not abandoned the world, but that in his nearness he saves and strengthens us. We learn that the desert becomes a garden, and the way through it is a highway of holiness. The very earth, the parched land, and the flowers will be given voice to lift a hymn of joy. The blind will see, the deaf will hear, the lame will leap, and the mute will sing. However, we are also called to be patient as we wait for the Lord’s arrival. Patience is not resignation but a willing trust that is content to discover God’s gifts in the manner God chooses to reveal them. Salvation and healing should begin to be experiences here and now. Every healing work, every liberating action, constitutes an aspect of and a partial realization of this salvation.



A Letter from the Prioress



Dear Friends,

Advent is my favorite Liturgical Season because it celebrates the longing that lies at the center of our being, in the marrow of our bones, and in the deep recesses of the soul. It is the longing that lies at the heart of all great literature, poetry, philosophy, art, and religion. It is the longing for God. St. Augustine (354-430 AD) described this longing simply, yet profoundly, when he wrote, "You have made us for yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."

How fitting it is that our Advent journey takes us deeper and deeper into the womb of winter darkness where, with Mary, we wait in trust and expectation for our longing to find its fulfillment in a new birth of Christ within us. And the Christ to whom we give birth holds us all in the warmth of a fierce and tender love, inviting us, amidst our anxieties and fears, to "Be still and know that I am your God; be still and know that I am with you" (Ps 46:10). In that embrace we ourselves are invited to be a fierce and tender love for others as we enfold the Gospel in our lives.

What a graced moment in time this is! Filled with expectation and challenge, it is a moment of tremendous opportunity. Never before has there been so much to gain or lose in our life together on Planet Earth. In the very heart of the longing that lies at the center of our being stands our God, coming to us as Light and Hope and Healing, coming to create in us a new heart, a heart full of integrity and wisdom, a heart full of justice and compassion.

May you celebrate with joy the transforming presence of our Divine Beloved within you, holding on tightly to the promises of our God. Out of the darkness comes the One who makes all things new, the One who shows us the way to make even unimaginable dreams come true. With overflowing gratitude for God's gracious love poured out in countless ways (including your goodness and generosity) we wrap around you this Irish Blessing as together in love we let God be the fulfillment of our longing.

*May the blessing of light be with you –
light outside and light within.
May sunlight shine upon you and warm your heart
'til it glows like a great peat fire
so that the stranger may come and be warmed by it,
and also a friend.
May a blessed light shine out of the two eyes of you
like a candle set in two windows of a house,
bidding the wanderer to come in out of the storm.
May the blessing of rain – the sweet, soft rain – fall upon your spirit
and wash it fair and clean.*

*.....
May the earth be soft under you when you rest upon it,
tired at the end of the day.
May earth rest easy over you when at the last you lie under it.
May the earth rest so lightly over you
that your spirit may be out from under it quickly,
and up, and off, and on its way to God.*

Author Unknown

Lovingly with daily prayer and deep gratitude for the gift you are,

Sister Lois Eckes

Sister Lois Eckes, Prioress

In the fall of 2004, I accepted an invitation from the Alliance for International Monasticism (AIM) to teach English and Group *Lectio Divina* (Sacred Reading, Scripture) for six weeks in the summer of 2005 to the African Benedictine Sisters of Our Lady Help of Christians in Tanzania. I was excited that I would be teaching with Sister Marie Ballman, OSB, from Red Plains, Oklahoma, who had taught there before.

Some of you may be wondering about AIM USA. It is an organization of 168 communities of men and women in the United States and Canada who follow the *Rule of Benedict* and over 300 English-speaking monasteries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. AIM USA provides spiritual, educational, formation, and building assistance to monasteries in developing countries to enable them to be centers of life for others. Lay people also support AIM. (www.aim-usa.org)



Sister Jeanne Ann and candidates at Narunyu

Hospitality, a key Benedictine value, was abundantly experienced as we arrived in Dar es Salaam and traveled to the various convents. We were greeted with smiles, flowers, hugs, music, and joy. Their culture celebrates life and friendship. We taught at the motherhouse in Ndanda, the Novitiate in Narunyu, and the Secondary School in Mtwara. Our basic teaching tools were chalkboards while the Sisters used notebooks and pens. Life is simple. Many of our students were in formation. The African Benedictine Sisters of Our Lady Help of Christians community has 265 professed Sisters and about 80 women in formation. The Sisters work among the poor in villages, parishes, schools, and clinics. Wages are low. They do much for the people, for the church, and the country. They could do more for themselves and others if they had opportunities for continued education. The Sisters work hard. Sixty percent of the Sisters' meager income is derived from the sale of agricultural products. Lack of moisture has beleaguered the region this year, and so there is a shortage of food and thus a lack of financial resources for medicine, basic necessities, school, etc.

The majority of the villagers live in small clay huts with thatched roofs with neither electricity nor running water. Tanzania is plagued by malaria. There are no monies for the prevention of the disease. Many suffer from the symptoms of chronic malaria. I was fortunate to have preventative medication and felt bad when Mother Inviolata and some of my students contracted the disease.

There were no wastebaskets in the convents where I stayed. At first I thought this was an oversight. Then I realized that the Sisters had no need for wastebaskets, for they have nothing to throw away. They live simply and recycle. Items such as paper products or packaged items are considered luxuries which they do not have.

Even though we were "the teachers," we learned much about life and monasticism. We experienced the Sisters living out the Benedictine motto: *Ora* (pray) *et Labora* (work). They chant their prayers with spirit, life, and harmony. We shared group *Lectio Divina* with many community members. We were touched by their insights which were filled with wisdom and holiness.

Even though, mileage-wise, we are far apart from the Tanzanian Sisters and our cultures are different, there was a real sense of sisterhood as we shared the *Rule of Benedict*. We were grateful and renewed to see how the *Rule* is lived out in this community. There was a real sense of bonding and gratitude that we had come. I experienced friendship, empathy, and solidarity with the African Benedictine Sisters of Our Lady Help of Christians. It is an experience that is still unfolding for me, and I am very grateful for this opportunity.



Sister Marie, Form 2 Sisters,
Sister Jeanne Ann at Mtwara



Sr. Melanie Gagne

Highlights

Sisters at Cathedral School

By Sister Armella Oblak

Just over a year ago Sisters from St. Scholastica Monastery responded to the call from Tim Johnson, Principal of Cathedral Elementary School in Superior, Wisconsin, asking for Sisters to volunteer to teach religion classes at Cathedral School. Tim had called on Sister Marilyn Micke, whom he knew, and said that he felt it was important for the children to have interaction with the Priests and Sisters of the area. Sister Marilyn sought volunteers, and Sisters quickly responded to the call. Each Sister came prepared in her own way with specific expertise to bring the Good News to children ranging from pre-school through the eighth grade. The program is now in its second year and well received by the teachers, the children, and the Sisters involved.

Sister Melanie Gagne, who looks upon retirement as a new challenge, responded with some reservation to teach once a week in the fourth grade. But she says, "I find that I am really enjoying it and appreciate once again the sounds of young happy voices. These little ones have a spirit of joy and are the hope of our future. All of the flowers of all the tomorrows are in the seeds of today." Sister Melanie hopes that in some small way she can, with God's assistance, help nurture those seeds to fruition.

Sister Patricia Anne Williams loves the time she spends each week with the three pre-school groups. Sister Patricia Anne brings religion to pre-school by reading from books and by demonstrating the Christian values of respect, kindness, and praise by acknowledging actions of the group:

"Thank you for your good listening while I read the story on friends."

"I liked the way you waited your turn when I handed out the papers."

Sister Patricia Anne said it was gratifying to be told by a teacher that during calendar time one of the preschoolers said, "If it's Thursday, that means Sister Patty is coming."

Kindergarten classes have **Sister Martha Bechtold** for their teacher. Sister Martha got the attention of the class by having two teddy bears attend. The class routine starts with students singing a song together: "Jesus loves (name of the child carrying up a Teddy bear) and repeats it as a second child carries up a bear. This is followed by a Bible lesson. The class always ends with a visit from a puppet and a special song.

Sister Victorine Sitter shows first graders pictures of the Sisters at the Monastery doing a variety of activities. The children had many questions, as this was the first contact many of them had had with Sisters. Sister Victorine was energized by the young people and hopes the students are benefiting from the experience as well.

Sister Mary Rae Higgins' time is split between grades 3 and 5. She tells students about her visit to Italy last year—the Vatican and the Church in Rome. Sister Mary Rae was impressed with the quality and creativity of the teaching at Cathedral School as she read cards sent to her by students this past year.

Sister Mary Felten views her volunteer time with the sixth, seventh, and eighth graders as a privilege. She describes the students as inquisitive, stimulating, and enjoyable young people. Sister answers questions about the liturgical year, prayers, and the teachings and practices of the Catholic faith.

Tim Johnson, principal of Cathedral School, says, "The Sisters from St. Scholastica Monastery have been visiting and sharing their love of Christ with our pre-kindergarten through eighth grade students weekly since the spring of school last year. They bring a lifetime of commitment to God, which is shared in our classrooms at all levels. Our students benefit greatly by hearing and learning how the Sisters live out their faith."



Sr. Patricia Anne Williams



Sr. Martha Bechtold



Sr. Victorine Sitter



Sr. Mary Rae Higgins



Sr. Mary Felten

Photos by Sister Joyce Fournier

Pax Christi MN Annual Meeting

By Sister Armella Oblak

On October 1, 2005, Sisters Timothy Kirby, Maria Volk, Mary Jean Tuttle, Mary Catherine Shambour, Mary Josephine Torborg, and Freida Horak attended the Pax Christi MN State Assembly at the University of Minnesota, Crookston. Jim Wallis—a Christian leader for social change, speaker, international commentator on ethics and public life, and author of *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong, and the Left Doesn't Get It*—was the keynote speaker.

The main ideas Wallis stressed include:

- Religion is not a wedge to divide but a bridge to bring people together to act out of a prophetic stance.
- Hope is a choice. It means believing in spite of the evidence and watching the evidence change.
- The challenge of Katrina is for America to come to the realization that the people left behind in New Orleans had already been left behind in America. We need to move from ministry that thinks of projects to develop models of change, and then organize movements that can bring about the changes.
- Budgets are moral documents. They illustrate the priorities of the administration and show who bears the burden. We need to raise the consciousness of the voter to consider all moral issues rather than just one issue when they vote.
- Accountability should not be the “left” or the “right” but toward the whole by challenging policies, organizing conflict resolution, seeking peace rather than war.

Attendees returned from the conference inspired by Mr. Wallis’ optimism in what he sees happening in America today: a groundswell of change. No doubt the message received at the Pax Christi MN in Crookston will be part of the upcoming monthly meetings of our local Pax Christi chapter, which meets monthly in Duluth.

Wind Power

By Sister Mary Richard Boo

The Monastery, as well as the College, recently took a decisive step to improve the environment by joining the WindSense Renewal Energy Partnership. Both facilities became gold-level participants in the new program by accepting an invitation issued by Minnesota Power to use up to 2,000 hours of wind-generated power as part of their monthly power packages. Although membership is slightly more expensive than are ordinary usage costs, Sister Mary Odile Cahoon, Benedictine Sisters Benevolent Association treasurer, considers it money well spent in support of wind-generated energy and thus ultimately in the reduction of Minnesota’s reliance on fossil fuels.

Mustard Seed Ministry

By Rita Rosenberger

Louise Eilert and Linda Vukelich (*left to right*) are two special angels who decorate Benet Hall’s solarium. They are part of the Mustard Seed Ministry group at St. Joseph’s Church, Gnesen. Their group has contributed beautifully hand-made seasonal decorations to brighten the Sisters’ surroundings, as well as hand-made tote bags for Sisters who use walkers or wheelchairs.



Photo by Rita Rosenberger



First Building, Villa Sancta Scholastica 1909

Sponsorship: The College of

*"My dream is that some day there will rise upon these grounds
They will be built of stone; within their walls, higher education
beautiful ceremonies of the liturgy will be carried out"*

As Sister Elodie DeSmedt always said to us junior Sisters when she wanted us to remember something particularly important: "Write *that* on your underwear!" Every Sister of St. Scholastica Monastery certainly has the above quotation written on her underwear, and it has become so firmly engrained in our consciousness that it really doesn't matter whether Mother Scholastica really said it, or whether the dream was actually that of Sister Agnes Somers: it is unquestionably the root and foundation of The College of St. Scholastica.

Although the idea of a college was not proposed until after Mother Scholastica's death in 1911, its foundations were laid in the form of a young ladies' academy, the Sacred Heart Institute, almost immediately after the founding Sisters came to Duluth in 1892. As prioress of St. Benedict's Convent in 1880, Mother Scholastica had built and opened St. Benedict's Academy in St. Joseph, Minnesota, and wasted no time in doing the same in Duluth. As its enrollment grew, it moved from Munger Terrace to a site a few blocks west of St. Mary's Hospital and finally to the Kenwood campus that the College and Monastery share today.

In the fall of 1911, two years after the Sisters and the Academy had moved to their first building on the Kenwood site, Sister Agnes Somers and others proposed to the community that it was time to open a junior college. She later reported that this was "a devastating surprise" that was argued from every angle, and the proposal was sent to a committee to answer four essential questions: "Do we need a college at this time?" "Could we staff a college?" "Could we get students for it?" and "Could we stand the expense?" Apparently the committee was successful in convincing Mother Alexia Kerst and the Council, because Sister Agnes was then given the task of designing programs and specifying courses, and in September of 1912 the first six students were admitted to the Junior College division.

The problem of staffing a college was certainly not an insurmountable one: as early as 1895 Mother Scholastica had begun sending Sisters away to earn advanced degrees. The first four were sent to the University of Minnesota for summer school, the first Sisters ever to enroll there. Mother Scholastica and Sister Leona Michlitch were obliged to go to the university president's home to obtain permission for them to attend. The president, roused from his afternoon nap, graciously gave his consent. From that time onward, Sisters were sent to both Catholic and secular universities for undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Although the College was officially accredited only as a junior college, in 1913 upper division courses were added for Sisters only, and for two years during World War I a Normal (teaching) program was added for the training of rural school teachers. In 1924, coincidentally with the election of Mother Agnes Somers as prioress, the College became a four-year college with its own dean and, very soon, with separate living and classroom accommodations in a new wing of Tower Hall. Sixty-eight students were enrolled, and in 1926 two received the first A.B. degrees.



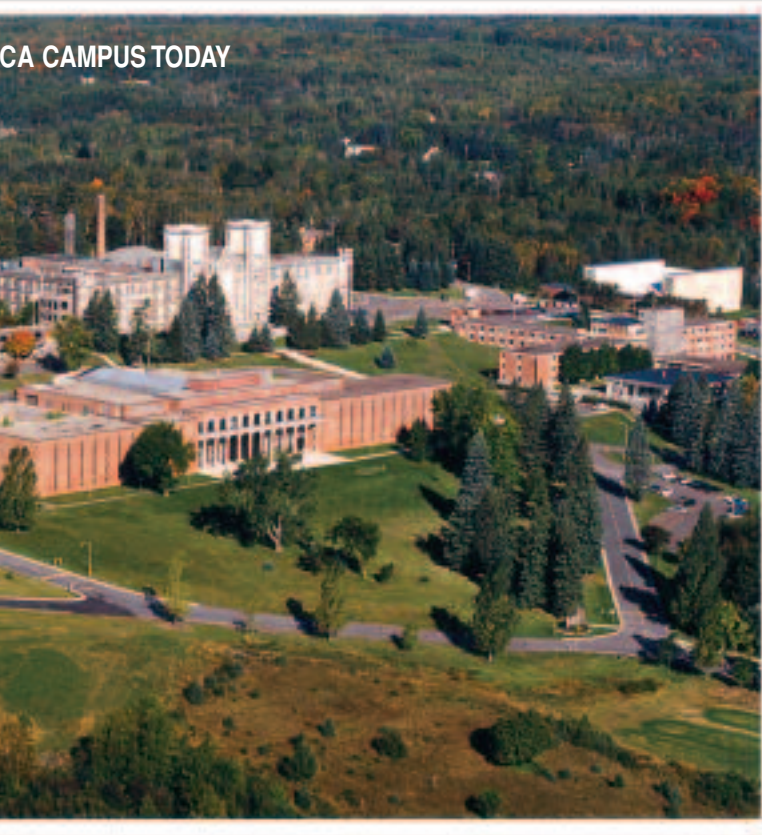
rounds fine buildings like the great Benedictine Abbeys.
ation will flourish; the Divine Office will be said, and the
t.” --attributed to Mother Scholastica Kerst, 1900.

In the subsequent decades, enrollment and programs grew. The College was accredited by the North Central Association. Faculty and administrators were mainly Sisters, and the prioress was the president of the College. Sister Petra Lenta and Sister Agatha Riehl established a cancer research laboratory. A self-study in 1947 revealed overall satisfaction with the College, its quality of education and the moral values inculcated in its students. Mother Scholastica's and Mother Agnes's dreams had come true.

A number of changes in College governance occurred in the 1960s, gradually removing the Sisters from its immediate management. By 1958, the prioress had given up the presidency of the College, appointing Sister-presidents, and in 1962 the College was separately incorporated in order to secure government funding for the construction of Somers Hall residence. The Board of Trustees was reorganized, and by 1968 had been given ultimate responsibility for the governance of the College, although Sister members of the Board retained certain reserved powers. New buildings were constructed, and in 1971 the first of a series of non-Benedictine presidents was hired. By 1991 the Sisters had

completely moved out of Tower Hall, and the division between College and Monastery seemed to be complete.

As the number of Sisters on the faculty and administration diminished through death, retirement, and departures, the problem of how to maintain the Benedictine values and character of the College became more pressing. Today, Sisters continue to serve on the Board of Trustees, although the reserved powers are now held by the Board of Directors of the Benedictine Sisters Benevolent Association (the Monastery's legal name). In order to educate faculty, staff and students, a booklet titled *Benedictine Heritage* was prepared in 1980 and is now in its third revised edition. Sisters on the faculty also identified a list of Benedictine values appropriate to the College, and this has been widely disseminated as well. Since the turn of the new millennium, there has been an increased stress on maintaining these Benedictine values by the administration. A mission director, Sister Mary Rochefort, has been appointed. In the recent capital campaign, the Monastery gave three million dollars for the upkeep of Tower Hall and for the establishment of a Catholic Studies program, which is currently in its first year of formal operation.



Although the Sisters may have given up formal ownership and the day-to-day running of the College, we have never ceased to regard it as “our” College. To quote *Benedictine Heritage*: “We feel ourselves an integral part of the effort which began in 1912. We remember those Sisters now retired (or still teaching!) who taught us, and we know them as Sisters with whom we share a home. We feel a unity with those who suffered the crises, and feel the triumphs of the events which have made the College notable for excellence in education. We are rightfully proud of its successes, and continue to make sacrifices and contributions so that it may continue to serve the needs of Catholic higher education.” The College of St. Scholastica is one of the crown jewels of the ministry of the Duluth Benedictines, and we continue to pray that God will send women to St. Scholastica Monastery who can maintain a Benedictine presence and witness at the College.

Sister Janelle Cahoon

By Sister Margaret James Laughlin

In the fall of 1942 when Patricia Cahoon arrived at The College of St. Scholastica to begin her freshman year, she found a college with an enrollment of four hundred women seeking to earn a bachelor of arts or a bachelor of science degree and a faculty and administration composed almost entirely of Benedictine Sisters. In 1946, having earned her bachelor's degree, she became a member of the Benedictine Sisters to be known thereafter as Sister Janelle. Her education continued, punctuated by the bestowal of a master's degree in theology from St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, and a Ph.D. in sociology from Fordham University. She did postdoctoral work at St. Louis University and at the Argonne National Laboratory.

Sister Janelle's first years of teaching at St. Scholastica included theology courses, but she then concentrated on sociology, serving as chair of the Sociology/Social Work Department from 1959 to 1980. Sister Janelle received the Lavine Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1990 and was awarded the title of professor emerita in 1993. She continues her long and productive career by serving the College through the administration of individual collegiate testing.

Regarding her years at St. Scholastica, Sister Janelle said, "I am happy to have been involved with all the changes that have come about at the College during the last fifty years. When I first came here, Tower Hall, the Library/Chapel, and Stanbrook Hall were the only buildings. There were no male students. Today we're building and growing again. We've had many curricular changes—new programs, majors, and courses added constantly. Graduate degrees are offered in addition to baccalaureate degrees. Education used to be delivered only in the classroom setting; that delivery system has changed as well. Now we have classes off campus and programs like ADEP (Accelerated Degree Evening Program) and distance learning. Benedictine ownership has evolved into sponsorship (*see Sister Margaret Clarke's article in this issue*) for the sake of promoting and sustaining Christ's mission in the world today. It's been exciting to see all the changes that have taken place."

"My whole life has been connected with teaching," said Sister Janelle. "I love working on a one-to-one basis with students, so I am happy I can help now by giving tests to students who cannot take them in a normal classroom setting."



Woman with a Mission *By Sister Linda Wiggins*



Three characteristics become quickly apparent when you meet Sister Pauline Micke: her enormous vitality, her infectious smile, and her passion for her ministry. An addiction counselor at Lake Superior Area Family Services, she does assessments, counsels clients individually, leads group sessions, and gives outreach presentations to various agencies and organizations about addiction treatment.

"One out of every three people is affected by gambling addictions," she explains. "Either a person has an addiction or has a family member or close friend with an addiction." LSAFS provides resources for treatment of other addictions as well as gambling (e.g., substance abuse) and offers mental health counseling because those with gambling addictions have a 50 percent chance of having a cross addiction. "Gambling environments often exacerbate mental and behavioral disorders with the intense noise, lighting, and activity. Many clients and future clients are in crisis when they walk through the doors of the treatment center. Those with gambling addictions have a two to three time's higher suicide rate than those with other addictions."

As Sister Pauline describes a typical day "on the job" with hands moving and eyes flashing, she is clearly totally immersed in her ministry and filled with compassion for those suffering from addictions. "How did you come to this particular ministry?" I asked.

"My parents were certainly models of those with a social consciousness; they were always helping others in our church parish and in our neighborhood or beyond." She describes an incident in which her parents directly helped a neighbor woman and children who were in an abusive situation, and recalls various social programs she initiated over the years (i.e., a "Meal on Wheels" with high school students when she was teaching at Cathedral High School).

Pausing for a moment, she quietly observes, "My own experience with a gambling addiction has given me a powerful insight for helping others." She cites Saint Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you . . . for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). She believes that her most valuable gift to share with others is her own weakness.

Another area in which Sister Pauline has a passionate interest is helping to empower women who are homeless in Duluth. She is a board member for Women's Community Development Organization, which helps women obtain affordable, safe, permanent housing. "Single women without children or those who are not in an immediate abusive situation often fall through the cracks," she notes. Today the trunk of her car is loaded with donated household goods, for she has helped another woman find an affordable home after weeks of searching.

As I help her juggle items into the back seat of her car, she smiles and remembers that Sister Vivian Arts once observed, "Isn't it wonderful how God got you going for the work you are doing, Pauline?"

We both agree it was, indeed, wonderful.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE FOLLOWING DECEASED RELATIVES AND/OR BENEFACTORS:

Roger Weingart
Ann M. Jovanovich Krmpotich 9/18/05
Kathryn R. Racek 9/26/05
Edith Shepard Weigel 10/6/05
John Maher 10/07/05
Sister Johnetta Maher's brother
Ida M. Davidson 10/20/05
Agatha F. Patterson 10/21/05
Leslie A. Venne 10/23/05
Gowan J. Miller 10/31/05
Leona B. Bielli 11/02/05
Adelaide S. Fargo 11/02/05



PATHWAYS



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Contributors: Sisters of the Community

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Benedictine Associates *By Sister Mary Rochefort*

Janelle Gapp and Megan Perry, college students, are learning that there is more than one way to learn about and live the Benedictine life. They are participants in a Monastery live-in volunteer program called The Benedictine Associate Program that has been active since 2002. Megan and Janelle, like Associates before them, share in the common life of the Sisters while volunteering the required hours per week in service with the monastic community.

Janelle is a junior at The College of St. Scholastica majoring in nursing. Her parents and five siblings live in Burnsville, Minnesota, where Janelle grew up. Theirs is a close family, and Janelle says, "There is never a dull moment when I go home." Janelle is involved beyond her course work at CSS, participating in several student groups including Peer Ministry, Students for Life, and Calling All Catholics. She is also a member of Benedictine Friends Across Campus, a program that connects Sisters and students on a personal level. Janelle and Sister Mary Christa have formed a warm friendship over the past year and a half.

Megan is a fourth-year biochemistry student at the University of Minnesota Duluth and niece of Sister Kathleen Doyle. A lover of nature, Megan belongs to the Wuda Wooch Outdoor Club that takes her on interesting journeys into the exploration of the environment. She enjoys outdoor activities in all seasons. Megan also partic-

ipates in the spiritual events at the Catholic Newman Center on the UMD campus. Chatfield, Minnesota, is home for Megan's family, and she enjoys visiting her parents, her brother Nathan, and her two sisters—Rachel and Anna.

Both Janelle and Megan are enjoying their time living with the Sisters. They have interesting conversations with their peers about "life in the Monastery." Janelle says, "I am learning so much about the monastic way of life—this is definitely a life-enriching experience for me. It is such a joy getting to know these Sisters; I am continually amazed by their dedication to serving God daily." Megan finds that the Benedictine Associate Program is helping her grow in many areas. She says, "The Benedictines are well educated, strong, and spiritual women. I am constantly inspired and am grateful to be so warmly welcomed into their community."

The program, however, does not benefit only the participants. The Sisters enjoy getting to know these young women and learn much from them as well. The Associates' volunteer service helps many individual Sisters as well as the community as a whole. Some of their volunteer activities include helping Sister Mary Paul Ludwig and Sister Agatha Riehl with crafts for the Monastery gift shop, being a receptionist at the information desk, working in the Spiritual Resource Center with Sister Lucille Geisinger, and visiting with Sisters on Benet Hall. All in all, the program brings a new joy and excitement to the Benedictine way of life—and we are grateful.



*Janelle Gapp and Megan Perry,
Benedictine Associates*

Photo by Sister Joyce Fournier

Highlights

(continued)



Community Receives Gift

Pat and Marge Marcella of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, have donated a modified golf cart to the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery in memory of Sister Valeria Lessard and in honor of Sister Mary Felten. The Sisters will use this cart for gardening and yard work around the Monastery. Pictured here is Sister Mary Felten with the new cart. Sister Mary says, "What a nice gift! I would never even have thought of it!"

Photo by Rita Rosenberger

Knocking on Doors *By Luce Dionne, Affiliate*



In September I came to Duluth to explore the Benedictine Life. As part of a ceremony I was invited to knock on the door of St. Scholastica Monastery, and the Sisters opened it to let me enter as an affiliate. I cherish immensely their gift of

Benedictine hospitality. Locally, their Benedictine hospitality has touched many lives in Duluth. And we know how much more the Sisters of St. Scholastica have opened their doors to many people and communities. I have also observed that in this city the door is open for anyone who is knocking in need. Duluth takes care of the poor, the outcast, and the homeless through the hearts of people in the many interconnected health services and interfaith congregations. It is inspiring to see.

In November CHUM (Churches United in Ministry) developed and participated in a Homeless Awareness Night. Essentially, the idea is bearing witness to homelessness in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in need by experiencing their plight. There is something to be learned here. What participants are saying is "Let us conquer our own fear of homelessness by experiencing it." Oftentimes, from the safety of our homes, we may get

preoccupied with the community fundraising, the volunteering, the political justice, etc. All of this is important, but perhaps it is also important to stand back, knock the door of our own hearts, and realize what "**being homeless**" really means. We already know, given the uncertainty of our times, that politically, economically, and environmentally the homeless could "be" you and I. They are you and I. We are all in this together.

Advent is coming. Homeless and journeying to Bethlehem in anticipation of the birth of Christ, Mary and Joseph found many doors that were not open. Some of the doors of Bethlehem never opened at the sound of the knock because the owners' hearts weren't open. Perhaps we can reflect on this same journey. By opening our hearts we may just receive a miracle like the one in Bethlehem. This Advent, by witnessing with Mary and Joseph the uncertain homeless journey to Bethlehem, may the light of Christ knock on the doors of our hearts so we can continue our journey together to our eternal homes.

Highlights *(continued)*

The Blessing of "Julian"

In celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Benedictine Health System, Sisters and BHS staff gathered for a prayer service outdoors to plant a tree in front of Stanbrook Hall on October 25. Sister Lois Eckes declared the tree's name to be "Julian," as in Julian of Norwich.



Photo by Rita Rosenberger

October Open House



On October 23, 2005, over two hundred guests joined the Sisters for an open house and reception to thank all who support the Monastery through their prayers, financial contributions, their volunteer time, and their many talents. We thank you again, dear friends, and all those of you who could not join us that day.

Photos by Sister Edith Bogue



Sisters bless the guests in the chapel.



Sister Claudia Cherro and her father Harvey Cherro



Sister Lois and Dolores Fiero



Sister Marilyn with guests in the gift shop



Guests at the Service of Gratitude



John and Julie Sanford visit with Sister Marguerite Baxter.



Sister Lois (right) with Michael Cowles and Mary Frances Skala



Linda Erickson and Zach at the reception name-tag table



Former Benedictine Associate Mary Farrell (left) visits with (left to right) Sister Nancy Flaig, Sister Mary Rochefort, and Sister Donna Schroeder.