

PATHWAYS



Newsletter of the Duluth Benedictine Sisters

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A Letter From The Prioress

Dear Friends,

The photograph adorning the front page of this *Pathways* issue speaks more eloquently than words about the essence of hope. Each spring our winter-weary souls feast on the miracle of new life budding forth from beneath layers of crusted snow to proclaim once again the triumph of Life over death.

We cannot live and flourish without hope. Hope is at the very heart and center of being human. Hope opens our whole being up to the possibility of believing and loving. It is the dynamism that carries us forward from what is to what might be. Hope emerges when our own resources seem to fail us, when we come undone in the presence of a paralyzing situation that seems without possibility. Hope begins again and again.

In a collection of poetry entitled, *God Speaks*, Charles Peguy includes a poem entitled "Hope." He imagines God describing hope this way: *My little hope is nothing but that little earnest of a bud which shows itself at the beginning of April... All life comes from that tender, delicate April bud...*

*Now I tell you, says God, that without that late April budding, without that one little budding of hope,
the whole of my creation would be nothing but dead wood.
But my hope is the bloom, and the fruit, and the leaf, and the limb,
And the twig, and the shoot, and the seed, and the bud.
Hope is the shoot, and the bud of the bloom
Of eternity itself.*

May God's strong and tender love fill us all with a resilient hope that makes a path past every dead end and emerges when our own resources seem to fail us.

Lovingly with deep gratitude in Christ Our Hope
who has come to make all things new,

Sister Lois Eckes

Sister Lois Eckes
Prioress



Cover Photo by Sister Edith Bogue

WISDOM'S HOUSE

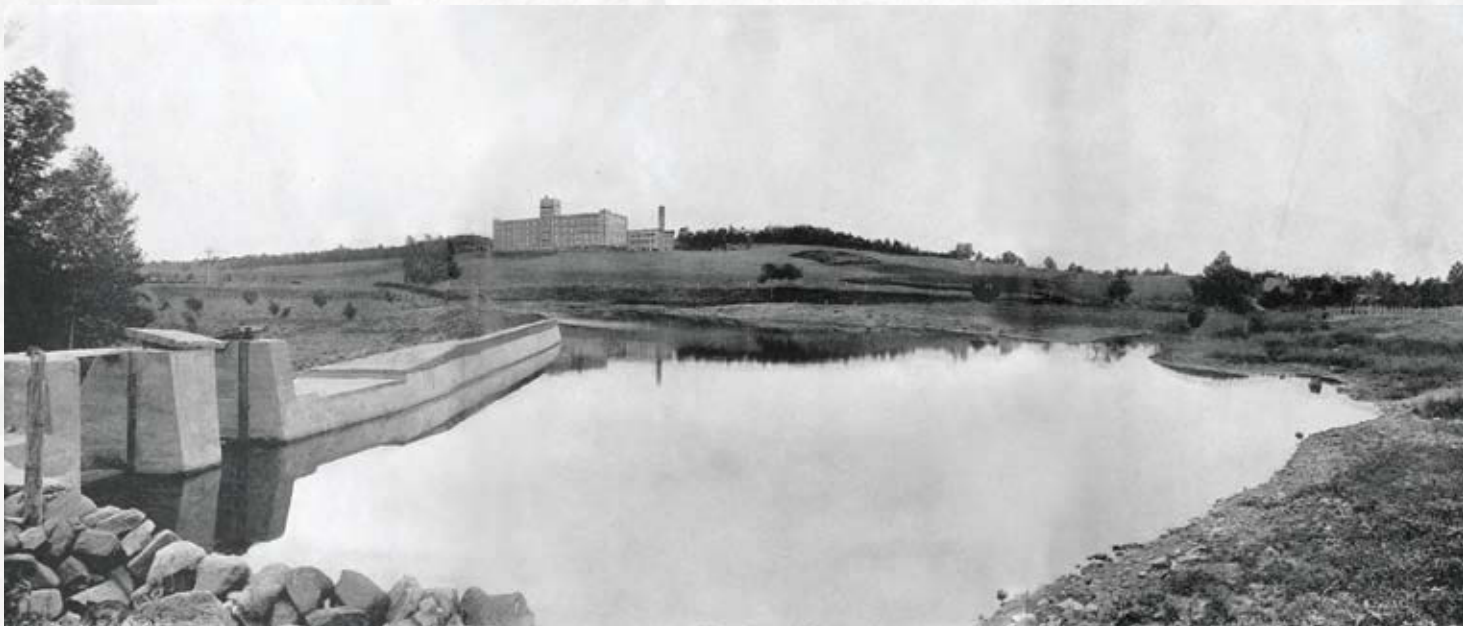
By Sister Margaret Clarke

This is the third in a multi-part history of the construction of Tower Hall and the Sisters' move in 1909 to this site.

Wisdom has built her house; she has made its seven columns. . . . She says to those who are uneducated. . . . "Come in here. . . . take the road of understanding." Prov. 9:1-6 passim. NCV

In September of 1909, when the Sisters and boarding students from Sacred Heart Institute moved into the newly-constructed Villa Sancta Scholastica, they found a spacious and stately new home. One alumna, Valeria Sauve, reported in the June 1910 *Villa Quarterly* her first impressions: "there it stood on the hill in all its stately grandeur, reminding me very much of the feudal castles. . . ." College students today still love "going to school in a castle." The building contained public rooms on the first floor front: parlors, public offices, chaplain's quarters, classrooms. Second floor had classrooms, Community offices, infirmary and Sisters' private areas. Third and fourth floors had bedrooms in the westward-trending wings. On fourth floor front were the Chapel, music and art studios, and library. The students' dining room was on first floor and the Sisters' refectory on second.

A separate building adjacent to the northwest wing held science labs, laundry and sewing rooms, the kitchen, and the dynamo/boiler rooms in the basement. The total cost of the four-story building including the reconstruction was about \$236,000. School opened on September 7, 1909, for 58 boarding students, including six postulants. Only sixteen professed Sisters lived at the Villa, along with eleven novices. The remainder of the 130 Community members lived on the various missions in Duluth and Brainerd. Everyone settled in, and school—elementary and Academy—progressed happily. The only cloud on the horizon was the need to pay the debt.



This anticipatory rendering of the completed Tower Hall was published in many Villa documents long before the construction of even the first tower. The dam on Chester Creek created a pond for skating as well as watering the livestock.



A high school recreation room in 1909



A dormitory for the Academy "little girls." The furniture was still in use for the postulants well into the 1950s.

In June 1911 Mother Scholastica died, and her sister, Sister Alexia, was elected prioress a month later. In the fall of 1911 Sisters Agnes Somers and Katharine McCarthy convinced the Community Council to add a new academic department—junior college, with upper division courses for Sisters only—and The College of St. Scholastica was born, enrolling six students in its first year.



Sisters view the aftermath of the 1913 fire in the boiler room/science laboratory building.

On April 23, 1913, a fire gutted the laboratory-laundry-boiler room building. This also destroyed the dynamos, and the plant was without electricity for several weeks. The students found entertainment in roaming the dark halls after lights out and appreciated having evening study hours curtailed. By fall, the facilities had been rebuilt and the dynamo replaced by city light. In 1916 Mother Alexia died, and Mother Celestine Sullivan was chosen as her successor. Mother Celestine proved herself a very able administrator and managed to retire much of the crushing debt which had accrued through the early building projects.

By the end of the First World War in 1918, when national restrictions on building were lifted, the Community was ready to begin a new comprehensive building project: after all, the original plans had not yet been realized! This project was delayed by the 1918 Cloquet fire and the influenza epidemic for which the Sisters opened their closed school buildings to patients and volunteered as nurses.



The 1920 additions: First tower (right) and gymnasium (left)

Mother Celestine was replaced by Mother Chrysostom Doran in August 1919, and the Chapter was ready to proceed with building. Thomas Ellerbe (Franklin's son and the new head of the firm) was hired to design the necessary additions. Construction began. By fall of 1920 an addition to the northwest wing had been completed, providing space on the third floor for a 120-seat chapel (now the College Music Hall) and additional science classrooms and laboratories on fourth floor. The Chapel was dedicated on July 11, 1920, and served the Community for twenty years. A subject of curiosity to many subsequent visitors was the "bump out" at the end of the addition in which the chapel altar was located: according to oral history, canon law required that there be no non-religious construction above a consecrated altar.

Construction continued on a free-standing gymnasium/auditorium built in an architectural style reminiscent of an English country chapel, complete with belfry. This has led to a good deal of confusion during the years, but with the exception of a short period of time early in its history when it was used by St. Anthony's parish for Sunday Mass, it has never formally been a chapel.



Left: College students in the new Chapel in the lateral wing extension. The statues of Sts. Benedict and Scholastica later had their gesso coatings removed to reveal the wood carvings now located at the Monastery entrance in the cloister walk.

Below: Rear view of the 1920 additions showing the lateral wing extension with the Chapel "bump out"



In November 1921 the first (and only, according to the original plan) tower was completed. A large bell, donated by the Agnew family, was consecrated and installed in the new tower. This bell now hangs in the bell tower of the 1938 Chapel. The Community and the student bodies of the Academy and College continued to grow, and within a few years it became obvious that even more space was sorely needed.

To be continued in the Summer 2009 *Pathways*. Photos from Monastery Archives.

Daily Bread

This is the third in a series of articles on Sisters who worked in Food Service. In the Fall and Advent Pathways Sister Grace Marie Braun, +Sister Paschal Pocta, Sister Johnetta Maher, Sister Bertille Goblirsch, Sister Rebecca Burggraff, and Sister Celine Plante were featured. This article concludes the series with Sister Mary Josephine Torborg and Sister Annella Wagner.

Some Sisters in food service ministry were dietitians, some bakers, some “hot food” specialists. Those who worked at St. Scholastica Monastery served the Sisters, students of the College, and students of Stanbrook Hall High School. These are the memories of Sister Mary Josephine Torborg and Sister Annella Wagner as their stories were told to Vicky Siders and Sister Mary Richard Boo.

Sister Mary Josephine Torborg

After my novitiate I taught elementary school for nine years and was then called home to work on a degree in dietetics because Sister Grace Marie Braun was moving to college teaching. I then became food service director at The College of St. Scholastica for five years. I also worked for nine years at St. Mary’s Medical Center where I served as a dietitian. My special focus was oncology and teaching classes for diabetics, helping to develop three diet booklets that were given to diabetic patients.

During the years that I was at the College, I was responsible for everything that went on in food service. Sister Rebecca is right that we tried many recipes—and not all recipes are successfully increased to quantity cooking! I supervised 40 to 50 students every semester and scheduled them for tray lines, banquets, catering, waitressing, or the dish room. I also worked with Sister Rebecca and Sister Celine and with kitchen staff, who did the cooking in Somers Hall. At that time the bakery was still in Tower Hall, and the College bought bread from the Monastery bakery, transporting it in a station wagon that had been fitted with racks. Each morning some eight sheets of rolls (5 or 6 dozen per sheet) would be sent over for breakfast. Later bread and cookies would be sent.

I liked best the creativity I could put into food service: candlelight dinners, banquets, catered dinners. These were the “topping on the ice cream” financially—the events that kept food service going. That was how we made ends meet—the catering and banquets brought in the funds we needed.

Students really liked candlelight dinners. It was expensive, however, to buy candles for such a large dining room, so I began saving candle pieces and making new candles. That was, I suppose, how I got into the candle-making business. (One year I made 300 candles for a fund-raising auction!) This was when I realized that I had a creative spirit—I hadn’t known it before!

After my years in food service I went on to other schooling and received my master’s and doctoral degrees in spirituality. So perhaps the food service kindled in me more than creativity!



Left: Sister Mary Josephine

Above: Sister Mary Josephine with kitchen staff and volunteers who helped serve one of many banquets

Sister Annella (Leonore) Wagner

Today I look gratefully at a mission of “feeding the flock” for more than fifty years. It has been my constant goal to serve my Sisters with the same care a Good Shepherd gives his flock, and I am convinced that the Good Shepherd was Himself guiding me along that path of food service ministry. Often it seemed obvious that He was working through persons and opportunities: the Sister cooks, educational opportunities, the prioresses who supported and encouraged me, and the Sisters who appreciated my efforts in food service.

I began my work at McCabe Guest Home (now McCabe Renewal Center) with Sister Louise Seurer to guide me. Every Sunday morning I would join Sister Louise for an hour of prayer in the chapel, giving thanks for the blessings of the past week and asking for help in the week to come.

Later, in the Monastery kitchen, Sister Luke Kahl, hands on her hips, challenged me to learn by doing. I learned to cut ice cream bricks on the meat slicer, to derind a slab of bacon and cut it into uniform strips, to chop nuts very fine to make them go further. I learned, too, to listen to Sister Rebecca’s closing statement every evening: “One more day for Jesus, one less day for me.”

In 1958 I was assigned to St. Joseph’s Hospital in Brainerd as Dietary Manager—with the additional task of catching the thief who was regularly stealing food. (Mission accomplished!) While I was playing Sherlock Holmes, I was also learning the fundamentals of menu planning, diets, personnel policies, payroll, labor unionization, and more. My most challenging adventure was to plan, organize, and implement the patients’ Five Meals a Day Plan: Brainerd was the first hospital in Minnesota to put this plan into action, and it was used successfully for over three years.

Throughout my entire career in food preparation and management, I have tried to learn, formally and informally, more about the field. To that end, I eventually compiled a diet manual which was approved by the Brainerd Hospital medical staff, attended countless workshops and conferences as they became available, completed correspondence courses, and attained membership in numerous state and national organizations.

Fulfilling moments for me were those in which I observed student workers “blossom” into skilled employees who might well go on to a career in food management. The Brainerd School District formally recognized my work with work-study students by presenting me with an Outstanding Lay Educator award in 1979. That same year I received a twenty-year Service Award from Brainerd’s St. Joseph’s Hospital.



*Left and right:
Sister Annella in the
1980s and 1950s*

*Below left to right:
Sister Bertille Goblirsch,
Sister Annella,
+Sister Lelia Hartung,
Bishop Brom,
Sister Rebecca Burggraff,
and
Sister Celine Plante*



Sister Estelle Charron's Walking Sticks

An Interview with Sister Estelle Charron by Andy Therrien



Sister Estelle Charron began her twenty-year hobby of creating walking sticks in response to a need for a special gift to honor the installation of a religious community's new leader. At the time, Sister Estelle was on sabbatical at a working farm run by Sisters of that religious community and was dabbling in the wood-burning craft the Sisters made available for guests. Someone suggested a walking stick would be an appropriate gift to signify a new journey, and someone else suggested that Sister Estelle could engrave it to make it more personal. That was her first walking stick. Not long after that she made two more for friends at Christmas. She enjoyed the process so much that she's been making walking sticks ever since, and engraving them by wood burning.

"Part of the pleasure is going out in the woods to look for sticks. I like wood," she says. "I like to handle it. It's pleasant to feel the various textures and to feel the stick becoming comfortable to handle." Sister says she herself uses a metal cane when she goes out in the woods. "That's because every time I finish a walking stick, someone wants it!"

She collects fallen branches that litter the ground and brings them to a crafts room in the Monastery. There she peels off the twigs and bark. "And I do try to return the bark and sawdust and twigs to the woods," she says. "I like maple. Poplar is good. Pine is soft but too splintery. Birch doesn't last. And it's pointless to use diamond willow. Diamond willow is already as beautiful as it can get. I once tried to use river willow, but after I removed the bark, it stank—it smelled *bad!*" Some woods are too heavy to be useful as walking sticks, she added. And she uses only sticks with knots in them because "I like knots."

What Sister Estelle likes most about her hobby is the solitude and silence it brings. She hikes alone in the woods, enjoying the company of the animals. She also works alone in the craft room. She considers her entire craft time a holy time—enjoying a peace and renewal and closeness to God through her creativity.

Sister Estelle's walking stick engravings are specially chosen. All of the sticks receive the Benedictine cross and have a paraphrased scripture verse spiraling down from the top. Other designs such as cats, butterflies, or objects are from everyday life. People gifted with one of Sister Estelle's walking sticks certainly know it is a treasure that is personal, precious, and unique.



Photos by Andy Therrien

Benedictine Center of Spirituality

By Sister Jeanne Ann Weber, Director

For many years our Community has been engaged in spiritual direction, retreats, and outreach seminars/retreats both at the Monastery and at McCabe Renewal Center. A new dream began in the spring of 2008 with the announcement of the Benedictine Center of Spirituality, which includes these ministries and expands their scope. The Center is located at the Monastery and is a place of peace, renewal, hospitality, and beauty. The Center includes four ministries, all of them ecumenical:

- Shalom Spiritual Direction Program is designed to assist people in their own spiritual growth, as well as to prepare them for the ministry of spiritual direction. This group meets monthly at the Monastery over a period of two years, leading to a certificate. A new group will begin in the fall.
- Individual or group retreats at the Monastery provide an opportunity to reflect on one's own spiritual journey and deepen one's prayer life and relationship with God. Overnight accommodations are available. Contact Sister Jeanne Ann Weber at 218-723-7074.
- Outreach provides retreats, conferences, presentations, and seminars for churches, RCIA, senior groups, etc., at sites other than the Monastery. Presentations have been made in various dioceses. Some retreats have focused on Forgiveness, Social Justice, and the Transforming Cycle of the Advent/Winter Seasons. Contact Sister Pauline Micke at 218-723-7086 or pmicke27@yahoo.com.
- Spiritual Direction provides an opportunity for individuals and groups to journey in a relationship that fosters spiritual growth and self-awareness. For available spiritual directors, contact Sister Jeanne Ann Weber at 218-723-7074.



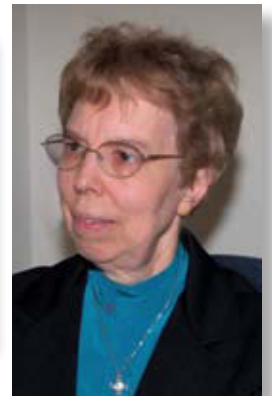
*Shalom Spiritual
Direction participants*



*Individual or group
retreats*



*Outreach Program
(Sister Pauline Micke standing)*



*Spiritual Direction
(Contact Sister
Jeanne Ann Weber)*

Our web site can be found at www.duluthbenedictines.org. If you would like to be on the mailing list for the Benedictine Center of Spirituality, call 218-723-6555 or email: jaweber@css.edu.

The Shalom Spiritual Direction Program is now accepting inquiries/applications. If you would like more information, contact Sister Michelle Dosch at 218-723-6581 or mdosch2000@yahoo.com.

Lenten Retreat: Tree of Life – Seeds of Hope, Saturday, March 14, 2009, from 9:15 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Lunch included. Freewill offering. To register, call 218-723-6555.

(Photos by Sister Patricia Anne Williams. Third from left courtesy of workshop staff.)

Happy 90th Birthday, Sister Cabrini!

By Sister Almira Randall

Photo by Sister Joyce Fournier



Sister Cabrini Beauvais

Sister Cabrini Beauvais was born December 23, 1918, in Freeport, Illinois, and was baptized Margaret. She was the second of five children, three boys and two girls. Her father, Ruell, was a railroad man, and her mother, Ann, a stay-at-home mom.

Of her childhood days Sister Cabrini says, "We were always a close family." The family lived for a time with Grandma and Grandpa because they were not well. She says of that period, "it was a really good time," although she remembers the long walk to school from their house. Other fond memories are of summers spent on her cousins' farm where she enjoyed the woods and the animals. Christmas was a mostly family celebration "with all the trimmings" and midnight Mass. After Margaret graduated from high school, the family moved to Duluth and, though it was during the Depression, she did find work in a number of places, one of which was the Glass Block store in downtown Duluth. After five years the family moved to Dubuque, Iowa, and Margaret came to Villa Sancta Scholastica to begin her journey as a Benedictine Sister. The day was September 8, 1945.

Sister Cabrini's first assignment after the novitiate was to teach at International Falls. She later taught at Phoenix, Arizona, for several years. From 1955-1958 she served as Mother Martina Hughes' secretary and as subprioress of the Community from 1966-1972. She was Formation Director of Postulants and Novices twice. She says that although she enjoyed all her assignments, her favorite was Ely, where she taught religion classes to the children from the public school from 1975-1994.

In 2000 Sister Cabrini went to Dubuque to stay with her sister Pat for a well-deserved sabbatical, but she is "not sure yet about retirement." She's currently in charge of the copy room at the Monastery, sorts the Community mail, and volunteers at St. Mary's Medical Center hospice unit.

When asked if she has words for the rest of us, Sister Cabrini said, "I'm forever grateful for my vocation to this Benedictine Community of women, for God's love, and for the ways He has let me serve Him over the years. I'm grateful for my beautiful home at St. Scholastica overlooking the hills and Lake Superior."

And WE are very grateful that you live here among us, Sister Cabrini! Happy Birthday!

Please Pray for the Following Deceased Friends and Relatives

Lorraine Kugel Piering n.a.
Martin Chamberlain 8/18/08
Edna Crossman 8/29/08
Annette Murray McGrath 10/13/08
William Hammann 11/12/08
Irene Riehl 11/13/08
Pauline Trucano 11/5/08
Audry Benson 11/6/08
Howard James Quesnel 12/5/08
Pat Cady 12/23/08
Sister Mary Christa Kroening's sister

Josephine Donnohue 12/24/08
Dorothy Spang 12/28/08
Lucille Belcich 12/29/08
Charles Geisinger 1/12/09
Sister Lucille Geisinger's brother
Raymond Lessard 1/20/09
Sally Summer McGregor 1/23/09
Rod Micke 2/14/09
Sister Pauline Micke's brother

Highlights

Sister Clare Marie Trettel Honored

By Sister Margaret James Laughlin

Sister Clare Marie Trettel was recently honored by The College of St. Scholastica's School of Education, which has established the Sister Clare Marie Trettel Distinguished Scholar Award to recognize students whose outstanding commitment to education surpasses the required curriculum. The first Distinguished Scholar to be named could be a member of the Class of 2009.

Sister Clare Marie, a shining example of outstanding commitment to Catholic education at all levels and positions, first taught upper elementary students at Marquette School, Virginia, and Our Lady of Victory School, Minneapolis. She then moved to St. Mary's School, Pine City, where she was also principal, and then principal at St. Francis School, Brainerd. In 1982 she became superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Duluth, and in 1985 Elementary Education Coordinator in The College of St. Scholastica Department of Education. This appointment was cut short in 1987 by her election as prioress of the Duluth Benedictine Sisters for a six-year term. She then returned to the Department of Education as coordinator of the Educational Curriculum and Instruction Program and has continued to serve in roles essential to the success of the (now) School of Education and its students.

But "outstanding commitment to education" requires more than success in one's occupation. Some of the many boards and organizations Sister Clare Marie served are: Minnesota Chief Administrators of Catholic Education, Minnesota Nonpublic Accrediting Association, Minnesota Catholic Conference Education Department, and State Commissioner of Education's Nonpublic Study Committee.

Our congratulations to you, Sister Clare Marie, on this richly-deserved acknowledgement of your "outstanding commitment to education."



Photo by Sister Joyce Fournier

Sister Clare Marie Trettel

Steve O'Neil Honored by McKnight Foundation Award



Photo by Mark Luinenburg, courtesy McKnight Foundation

Long-time Monastery friend, Benedictine Oblate, and Duluth community activist Steve O'Neil was one of seven Minnesotans to receive the Virginia McKnight Binger Award in Human Services presented by the McKnight Foundation on November 20, 2008. According to the McKnight Foundation, the \$10,000 awards "honor Minnesota residents who give their time to improve the lives of people in their communities." Candidates are nominated by someone who knows of their work. Sister Lois Eckes says of the award, "Steve exemplifies in an incredible way all the qualities which the McKnight Award honors. His selfless and tireless work to empower others and to enhance the quality of life in our local community and beyond has made him a beacon of hope and a true servant/wisdom leader among us." Asked about his reaction to the award, O'Neil said, "I have been blessed by the great fortune of working with so many amazing community leaders. The award symbolizes the work for a more just world we are all committed to create."

Epiphany House Blessing

By Sister Martha Bechtold



Sunday, January 4, was the date of our annual house blessing at the Monastery. On the Feast of Epiphany each year we gather in the main corridor of the Monastery at the double doors entering from the cloister walk. The entrance and hall are filled with Sisters, including some in wheelchairs who reside on Benet Hall, our infirmary floor. The ceremony begins with a song appropriate to the season and a litany reminding us that, according to Benedictine tradition, all guests are to be welcomed as if they were Christ in person. Then, at the designated time, Sister Martha climbs a small stepladder and scribes the following on the lintel:

20 + C + M + B + 09



The letters C, M, and B represent the names ascribed to the three wise men who visited the family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Traditionally they are known as Casper, Melchior, and Balthazar. The numbers represent the current year. That inscription will remain until the Feast of the Epiphany next year. As the ritual ends, the prioress asks for God's blessing on all who live here and all who will pass through the door as visitors. This annual tradition continues to remind us that the coming of Christ to earth over two thousand years ago is not just an historical reality, but a daily blessing on our comings and goings. (Photos by Sister Edith Bogue)

Sister Gotharda Nyoni Graduates from CSS!

By Sister Edith Bogue

Photo by Sister Edith Bogue



Sister Valentina Pilla, Sister Gotharda Nyoni, and Sister Gaudensia Mwanyika celebrate Sister Gotharda's graduation.

Sister Gotharda Nyoni gave the Invocation at the start of the December Commencement ceremony for The College of St. Scholastica. Her voice rang strong and clear as she prayed for God's blessings on the graduates and the College, which she called "a little piece of heaven." Although her words were spoken in Swahili, the language of her native land of Tanzania, all those present were able to share in her prayer, translated in the program.

The crowd included her cousin Lucian Komba from Madison, Wisconsin, and many of the Sisters from St. Scholastica Monastery who have witnessed Sister Gotharda's determination and creativity. She graduated with a B.A. in Monastic Management, a major designed with her adviser, Sister Edith Bogue, an associate professor in the College. She combined courses in theology, ministry, management,

and graphic/publication design. This unique mix of knowledge will be put to good use in the many ministries undertaken by her monastic community.

Her time of return, though, is still a few years off. While completing her undergraduate studies, Sister Gotharda became fascinated with the theory and practical aspects of management. "These are things that could be important for us in Africa," she said. With the permission and support of her superiors, she applied and was accepted for entrance into the Masters in Management program at the College. Just a few weeks after her graduation – before she even had time to catch her breath – she began her new life as a graduate student. We wish her well!

Linda Wainwright Knocks on the Door

by Sister Mary Catherine Shambour

On December 20, Linda A. Wainwright from New Orleans, Louisiana, began the first stage of her application for membership in the Monastery by participating in the Rite of Affiliation. Her decision to do so came after discerning for some time what God was asking of her. Like many women today, after finishing college and working successfully in her career as an accountant, Linda began searching for something more in her life. Through prayer, the guidance of others, and a chance occurrence where a stranger handed her a medal of St. Benedict, she began her search by contacting and visiting various communities including one Franciscan and two other Benedictine monasteries. It was the *Rule of Benedict* and Benedictine spirituality that she found most attractive and relevant, and St. Scholastica Monastery where she felt most at home through correspondence and two visits. On completion of a dual Master's program in Pastoral Studies and Counseling at Loyola University in New Orleans this year, Linda will apply to become a postulant.



Photo by Sister Patricia Anne Williams

Sister Lois Eckes, prioress, (left), Sister Mary Catherine Shambour, Director of Vocation Ministry, and Linda Wainwright.

What would lead a woman to come such a distance to begin a new life with God at St. Scholastica Monastery? She responds in these words: "For a Benedictine, seeking God is the focus of one's life. A Benedictine does that through prayer and community. In community the Benedictine sees the face of Christ in others and the hand of God at work in human history. In prayer the Benedictine takes her efforts to God, allowing God to gaze passionately upon her and to transform her so that she more readily presents the face of Christ within community. I find Benedictine spirituality to be utterly beautiful and vitally necessary to human life inside or outside of the Monastery. At St. Scholastica Monastery,

I feel I am where I am supposed to be – at home – and doing what I am supposed to be doing—seeking God. God is so good to me!"

Yes, Linda, we thank God that you have found us and we welcome you to seek God with us.

Women's Discernment Weekend

By Sister Jeanne Ann Weber

January 23 and 24, the participants of the Women's Discernment Weekend retreat prayed and visited with the Community of St. Scholastica Monastery, heard presentations on discernment, on the meaning of religious life and about various types of communities, and viewed "Sing a New Song," a film on St. Scholastica Monastery. Saturday evening included an informal gathering with the women of the Community currently in formation who shared their vocation stories. On Sunday afternoon, following Eucharist and brunch, the retreat concluded with a blessing.



Photo by Andy Therrien

The Benedictine Quest: Seeking God

By Sister Mary E. Penrose

The end of all prayer is union with God. Throughout history, groups have pursued this end in different ways. Eventually, these ways came to be characteristic enough to label them “traditions.” Seeking God in the life of Benedictines is one of them. It is a tradition which has been found to be so practical that Oblates and others who are not monastics have adapted it for use in their everyday lives. What is it about this tradition that is so appealing?

Our ancestors who lived in the ancient world experienced a basic rhythm of work and rest in their lives, and they felt kinship with the universe and its habits. They worked and rested with the seasons and according to the tempo of the day. Today when we are less in touch with mother earth and the cycles of nature, it is good news to know that the *Rule of St. Benedict* respects this basic rhythm. Devoting thirteen chapters of his *Rule* specifically to prayer indicates how important St. Benedict viewed it. According to him, of all the works his monks did, nothing was “to be preferred to the Work of God,” that is, the Hours of the Divine Office. To have all the activities of the monastery revolve around these Hours, he divided the monastic day into intervals adapted in tone and content to match the time they were prayed—morning, noon or night.

Benedict, however, did not limit himself just to legislating the times and places of prayer. Sprinkled throughout the *Rule*, either directly or indirectly, are references to prayer. For example, in the chapter on the “Observance of Lent,” he encourages his monks to add to their usual service “something by way of private prayer.” Elsewhere, he exhorts them to pray for the sick and for those who went on a journey. They were to pray also before they undertook any good work. He invited guests to pray with the community and encouraged his monks to pray before they gave guests the kiss of peace. Preparatory to prayer they were to listen readily to holy reading and devote themselves often to private prayer, which was to be reverent, short, and pure unless prolonged by divine inspiration.

A master of moderation, Benedict, when advising his monks on the “how” of prayer, made exceptions when necessary. As a keen observer of human nature he suggests in one chapter that the opening Psalm be prayed slowly to allow for those who come tardy to the Divine Office. He was practical enough even to make allowance in his arrangement of the Hours to have a short interval between the Night and Morning Office, “during which the brethren may go out for the necessities of nature.” The monks were to allow the common prayer of the Hours to take root interiorly and to be lived out during the rest of their day. It was Benedict’s desire that what they had prayed in common would enrich their private prayer, and he wanted prayer to pervade all aspects and moments in their lives.



Photo by Andy Therrien



In loving memory



Sister Laura (Marie) Daigle, OSB
(December 9, 1921—January 4, 2009)



Portrait photo by Sister Joyce Fournier. Other photos from Monastery Archives.

Sister Laura (Marie) Daigle, OSB, 87, of St. Scholastica Monastery, died at St. Mary's Medical Center, Duluth, on January 4, 2009. Sister Laura was born December 9, 1921, in the Township of St. Mathias, Crow Wing County, Minnesota. She attended Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Grade School, Cloquet, Minnesota, and in 1939 graduated from Stanbrook Hall High School, Duluth, Minnesota. That same year she entered St. Scholastica Monastery in Duluth and made her monastic profession in 1941. She celebrated her Silver Jubilee in 1966, her Golden in 1991, and her Diamond Jubilee in 2001. She was in her 68th year of monastic profession.

Sister Laura served many places in many capacities. She taught middle and upper grades in St. Gertrude's School, Washington, D.C. as well as at St. Thomas School, International Falls, Minnesota, and St. John's School in Duluth. She was the prefect for girls at St. Gertrude's and for boys at St. James Children's Home in Duluth. She graduated from The College of St. Scholastica in 1958 where she earned a B.S. degree and an RN. Her main duties after that were in the field of medicine. Over the years 1955-1963, she was a student nurse, an assistant head nurse, and finally head nurse at St. Mary's Medical Center in Duluth. Sister Laura then served as a nurse in St. Joseph's Hospital, Brainerd, Minnesota, and Night Supervisor at the Cuyuna Range District Hospital, Crosby, Minnesota. In 1966 she was head nurse at Hibbing General Hospital where she also worked as a therapist at the Psychiatric Day Hospital in Hibbing and as a Nurse Counselor for youth in a drug program. In 1991 she retired and resided at St. Scholastica Monastery where she assisted in the Gift Shop and the Spiritual Resource Center. In 2000 she became the Associate Oblate Director and the Director of the Thomas Merton Center, which she had founded in 1978.

Sister Laura was preceded in death by her parents, Theodore and Hazel (Tougas) Daigle, and one brother, Donald. Besides the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, she is survived by two brothers, Steve and Ted, one sister, Clara Lou Kinnunen, and several nieces and nephews.

“State of the Union”

by Sister Mary Catherine Shambour

It has been decreed that each issue of *Pathways* will include information on vocation ministry, and thus I, the one assigned this task, wish to keep you posted on the current state of affairs. And it is fitting to do this because all of you, our faithful readers and supporters, have been touched in one way or another by a Sister in this Community, be it a favorite Sister teacher, college prefect, nursing supervisor, relative, or friend. Periodically we are asked how the Community is faring and what our prospects for the future are.

In His loving wisdom and kindness, God never gave any human the power to foretell the future, though the Bible keeps admonishing all to make provisions for their destiny and final end. Thus the Community over the years has prudently been making adjustments due to its changing demographics and the needs of our time. We have withdrawn from some ministries and have taken on new ones, have consolidated a number of institutions into systems, have trained lay leaders to carry on our values, and have provided for a growing number of retired Sisters.

God has blessed us in these endeavors: our sponsored institutions continue to grow and flourish. Ironically, despite fewer Sisters working in them, we are now reaching thousands more people than before. The former three-building “Villa,” or Priory, now Monastery campus encompasses an entire community of caring—from child care to senior citizens, along with training thousands of college and graduate students. The Monastery has opened a new Center of Benedictine Spirituality to complement the work of the McCabe Renewal Center, has been a leader in providing philanthropic support to local and national causes assisting the poor, and has been providing support to assist Benedictine monastic communities abroad. All this may not sound like the Priory or Villa you remember, but it does demonstrate that once again Benedictines have responded to the needs of the time and are carrying on the work of God under different circumstances.

However, one of our greatest causes for hope is that in the last few years God has led five young women to come and seek God with us. Another has become an Affiliate, some women are discerning their call, and inquiries come in on a regular basis. A small but significant turning point in religious vocations seems to have been reached for us and some other communities, and for priestly vocations as well. One cannot help but admire these women, who despite all the clamor of the prevailing culture and the unpredictability of their and our future dared to say “Yes” to a loving God. No one can predict what challenges they will face. Their community will definitely be smaller, but will be based upon the firm foundation of over 1,500 years of Benedictine monasticism and the spiritual legacy of the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery. Do not expect again to see long rows of women in black filing into chapel or at the head of every classroom or nursing station. Our world has changed, as has your life, your family, your parish. These will, however, be women steeped in prayer who will lead others to God by their lives and actions in ways and situations that we have not yet dreamed of, for our God is forever creating something new. Like us and the women before us, they will rely on and be grateful for your support and prayers. Amen.

