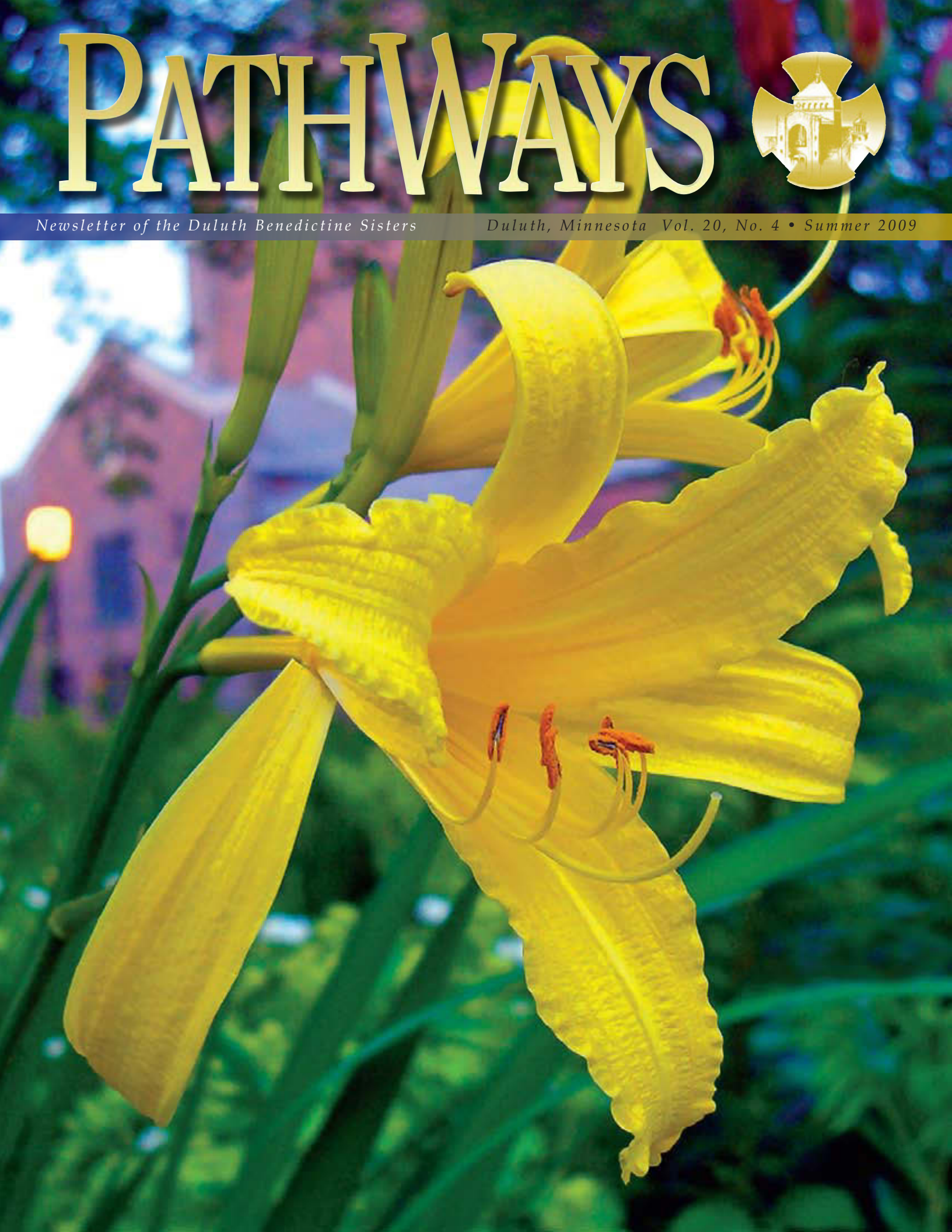


PATHWAYS



Newsletter of the Duluth Benedictine Sisters

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A Letter From The Prioress

Dear Friends of the Monastery,

How life-giving it is to experience the intimate way in which the rhythms and celebrations of the liturgical year and the seasons of nature dance together the wondrous story of God's immeasurable, indwelling love for us and all creation. God's marvelous in-breaking into human history through the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus is fittingly celebrated as nature rests and waits in wintry darkness and then slowly awakens and arises in the new-born beauty of springtime.

The celebration of Pentecost, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church and our world, beautifully coincides with the emergence of summer. As the earth bursts forth her lush and abundant life making beauty out of sunlight, so are our lives meant to surge and blossom with the gifts of the Spirit.

Sent to be Christ's presence among us, the Holy Spirit breathes the breath of Divine life, healing, and hope upon us all. Sent to be Christ's presence among us, the Holy Spirit illuminates our minds and hearts, and as a compass guides us along the path of justice and truth, integrity, and compassion. Sent to be Christ's presence among us, the Holy Spirit fills all the world with the transforming power of the Resurrection, affirming "that creation matters, that love and justice matter, that humanity in all its ambiguity and complexity is still fearfully and wonderfully God-made" (Cynthia Gana Lindner, *The Christian Century*, April 24, 2009).

Filled with a profound and holy longing that pervades the fabric of our lives at every level and in every place, let us open our hearts fully and unreservedly to a new outpouring of the Spirit upon our world. The pervasive ache within us is first and foremost the ancient longing of God's age-old love for us all.

Come, Holy Spirit! Come Father and Mother of the poor! Come our sweet refreshment, our solace in the midst of woe, our light in darkness. Healer of our wounds, dew upon our dryness, warmth for our cold and stubborn hearts. Fill our inmost being, renew our strength. Bring all who are lost home to you, home to what is true and good and beautiful. Enkindle the fire of your love within us that all our gifts form one family within your world. Amen. (Paraphrase of *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, the Sequence for Pentecost)

May you experience the coming of the Holy Spirit in all the quiet miracles of each day and be forever amazed that God is so in love with you!

Lovingly in the Spirit of Christ with ever-grateful prayer,

Sister Lois Eckes

Sister Lois



Listening to Your Garden

By Sister Pauline Micke

Photo by Andy Therrien



Sister Pauline (right) and a CSS student work to prepare the garden for winter.

Spring rain, warmer temps, and singing birds—along with the new life of greening grass and crocuses blooming—all tell us that spring is here. With the coming of the signs of spring we gardeners start anticipating what lies ahead: getting seeds, preparing the soil, plotting the layout of the garden. Gardening is an experience that can teach us much about our own spiritual life. Recall what the Parable of the Sower and the Seed has to say:

“A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seed fell on rocky ground where it had not much soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns and the thorns grew up and choked it. But some seed fell on rich soil and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold. Whoever has ears ought to hear” (Matthew 13:3-9).

The images in this parable all speak to our own life’s journey. They hold a deep and significant reflection for our own spiritual growth. Look at the images—rocky ground, shallow soil, too much sun, lack of roots, the thorns, and the rich soil and high yield.

What message can gardening give us? As one works in the garden, it’s a wonderful time to reflect on how our spiritual life also needs this same care and nurturing. Like the soil, we need the right balance in order to thrive.

If we’re stuck on rocks and have shallow soil, it’s difficult to develop roots and be grounded. Without these, our spiritual life will dry up and wither. We can allow all kinds of distractions to occupy that center of our life where God and the Kingdom ought to be the focus. Thus we are not rooted and live in only a very shallow way our relationship with Jesus and the Gospel values.

There is nothing like digging in the dirt to help your life stay balanced. As the seeds are planted, they speak to us of another parable Jesus used. “Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains a grain of wheat. But if it dies, it bears much fruit” (John 12:24).

What do I need to let go of? Where is new life coming to birth for me? How will I nurture it? Listen to the whispers of the seeds so that your garden will give you that “more” experience and your life will “bear much fruit.”

Living Our Benedictine Values in the Monastery Food Service

By Sister Barbara Ann Vierzba

The Monastery Food Service serves not only the Sisters, including the Sisters who live in Benet Hall Infirmary, but also people who reside in the Benedictine Health Center and those who attend Adult Day Services, people who come to The Café (mainly employees of the BHC), and the children who attend the BHC's preschool.

When employees accept work in the kitchen and join this food service team, they become a part of our Benedictine family and assume our Benedictine values. There are two Benedictine values that I would like to address: Hospitality and Care of the Sick. In the course of a day, kitchen employees exemplify these values continuously. The phone rings for a request, and a friendly voice picks up the call, assuring the caller that an order will be filled or that a change in menu is possible—whatever the request may be. Sometimes people stop in the kitchen to make requests, and most are possible to fulfill. We might need to change our routine to take care of an urgent need. Whether we are the ones having direct contact with another person or not, there is a real sense of being there for all we serve.





One of our supervisors works directly with the staff at the Benedictine Health Center and has direct contact with each resident to find a diet that is most suitable for that person. There may also be calls for a plate of cookies and a pot of coffee for a family sitting with their loved one at the time of illness or death, or a meal to be made for the funeral of one of the residents.

The Sisters, too, are served by the Monastery Food Service and make requests of the kitchen personnel. There are many meetings held at the Monastery, and the kitchen employees are most gracious in providing food and beverages for these meetings and adjusting to “change” as those meetings may change. We sometimes have a big feast-day dinner or Jubilee celebration, and everything is served so beautifully.

We are very aware of the many talents of our food service employees that come forth in the preparation of food. The cooks are willing to try new recipes and are very creative.

This past year we have had our Food Service supervisors work as a team. Each of the four supervisors has a definite area to supervise. This is a great opportunity for each person on the team to coordinate activities with the other supervisors. The Benedictine Value of Hospitality is key to making each person’s contribution part of the whole picture.

Many thanks to our Food Service employees for the wonderful job they are doing in keeping the values of Hospitality and Care of the Sick ever present in their lives.

Photos by Food Service Employees



Adriana Rivera, Our Chilean Friend

By Sister Mary Susan DeWitt and Adriana Rivera

For all of us it's hard to tell what the real story is behind a face, and this is no exception for Adriana Rivera. Adriana is an energetic teacher and administrator, a follower of rules and regulations—who would ever have guessed her stormy beginnings?

Adriana, a Chilean from the seaport town of Antofagasta, first came into contact with Duluth Benedictine Sisters in 1964. At that time she was a student in Colegio San Jose, the English school in Antofagasta. Four Sisters, newly arrived in the city from Duluth, were teaching there. Adriana was bright, full of energy, full of fun—but, unfortunately, not full of academic diligence. Sports were her life. This is not so unusual for a young Chilean girl; however, the school decided her grades were not sufficiently good to stay, and she was expelled. Fortunately, this is not the end of the story—just the beginning!



Adriana (left) and Sister Ingrid Luukkonen 1967

Being expelled from high school was a terrible thing for Adriana, and she desperately wanted to go back. As good fortune would have it, she found a friend in Sister Mary Paul Ludwig, fresh from Minnesota. Sister Mary Paul gave her strength and courage and promised that if she could get back on track and take her studies seriously, she would have Sister's support. Then it was up to Adriana: she had to prove herself, and she did. Sister Mary Paul recalls, "From March of 1964 I realized that Adriana had the potential and the desire to make something of herself. She was determined and promised she would not let me down." She finished high school and went on to the university where she received her degree in elementary education with a minor in teaching English as a second language. This was a tremendous achievement for a girl who had lost her mother and had only herself and, of course, the Sisters to rely on.

Shortly after graduating, Adriana received a scholarship to study US educational methods and strategies at Roosevelt Junior High School in Blaine, Minnesota. Adriana's bright and happy spirit, which had almost caused her downfall years earlier, helped her adjust to this new way of life. She came to the US and learned, and then went back to Chile ready to share everything with her students. It is always a wonder to us how we are prepared for work in unexpected ways. Adriana had supposed she would return to Chile and continue as a Chilean teacher, but fate had something else in store. After some time working at Colegio San Jose, she was employed with the Escondida Mine in Antofagasta and found herself working with Australian, American, and Canadian children. Since then, she has worked exclusively with the children of expatriots in Chile. Right now she works for Freeport-McMoRan Mining Corporation in Copiapo where she administers the elementary school set up for the children of US citizens.

In 1997 Adriana was introduced to the Sisters of Santa Maria Monastery in Rauten, Quillota, Chile, and found she was drawn to help the Sisters there. The Sisters of Santa Maria, a contemplative Benedictine Monastery with thirteen members, are in a “Twinning” (Sister Monastery) program with the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery in Duluth, and Adriana finds she has become part of their lives just as they have become part of hers. Adriana has been teaching English and computer lessons to the Sisters and has started a Sunday school for the little children to attend during Sunday Mass.



Teaching Sunday School in Rauten



Adriana and Sisters of Santa Maria Monasterio, Chile

Adriana feels that the Sisters in Minnesota have had a remarkable influence on her life, and she is happy to give to others a little of the love and kindness she has received from them over the years.



During one of her trips to Duluth in the 1990s, Adriana (right) visited with (left to right) Sister Ingrid Luukonnen, +Sister Sharon O'Neill, Sister Theresa Spinler, Sister Mary Susan Dewitt, and Sister Mary Paul Ludwig.

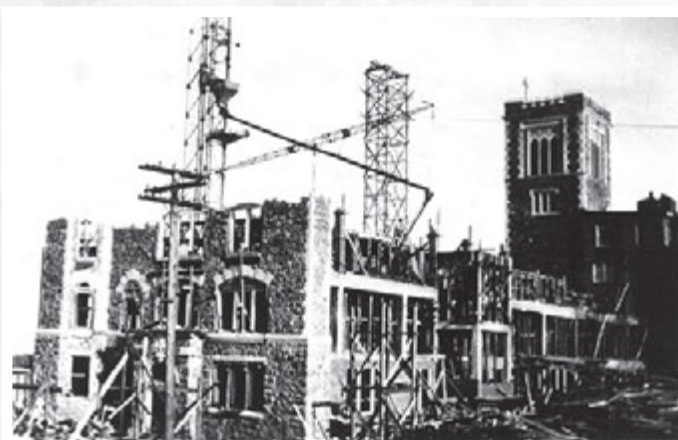
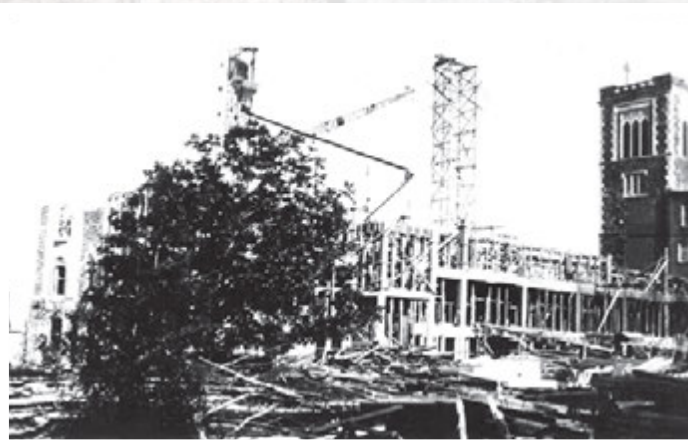
Completing The Work

By Sister Margaret Clarke

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

*So often as you begin a good work, pray earnestly to God to bring it to completion.
RB Prologue 4.*

In May 1924, the last month of Mother Chrysostom Doran's administration, she recommended to the Chapter that "no further building should be undertaken for at least two years." Her successor, Mother Agnes Somers, seems to have honored that suggestion to the letter: on August 22, 1926, the Chapter was presented with architects' preliminary drawings and an estimate of \$200,000 for "enlarging the Villa." After some discussion, the Chapter voted unanimously to proceed. Why Mother Agnes chose new architects, the St. Louis firm of P.M. O'Meara and J.B. Hills, has never been recorded. She also took local counsel, reporting in *All Her Ways* that she consulted Bishop Thomas Welch (1926-1959): "It was under his enlightened guidance that the Sisters, in the fall of 1927, planned and executed the completion of . . . Tower Hall." Judging by the finished product, the final building differed from the 1906 German and Lignell plan only in the central section, with now two towers flanking an elaborately decorated entrance.



The 1928 addition to Tower Hall under construction

On December 11, 1927, Mr. Cassidy E. "Casey" Jones of Duluth was "stolen" from another construction project to become the Superintendent of Construction, for a total fee of \$5,000. He worked through the O'Meara and Hills branch office in Minneapolis and left a copious correspondence about every aspect of the work. By February 1927 construction had begun. Basalt "blue trap" stone was obtained from the quarry on the "back forty," and in place of imported limestone some cast concrete was used for the exterior trim. The new addition—a wing extending along the main axis toward the north—included a full ground floor. It was therefore necessary to excavate what is now known as the tunnel below the existing south wing and lateral kitchen wing to continue this floor below the main building. Much to the delight of the Sisters and students, the long-postponed elevator was also installed in its waiting shaft. Three large fifth-floor rooms were constructed between the towers in the center section. On March 24, 1928, the new wing was ready to be occupied. The College and Academy students were happy once again to have separate quarters.



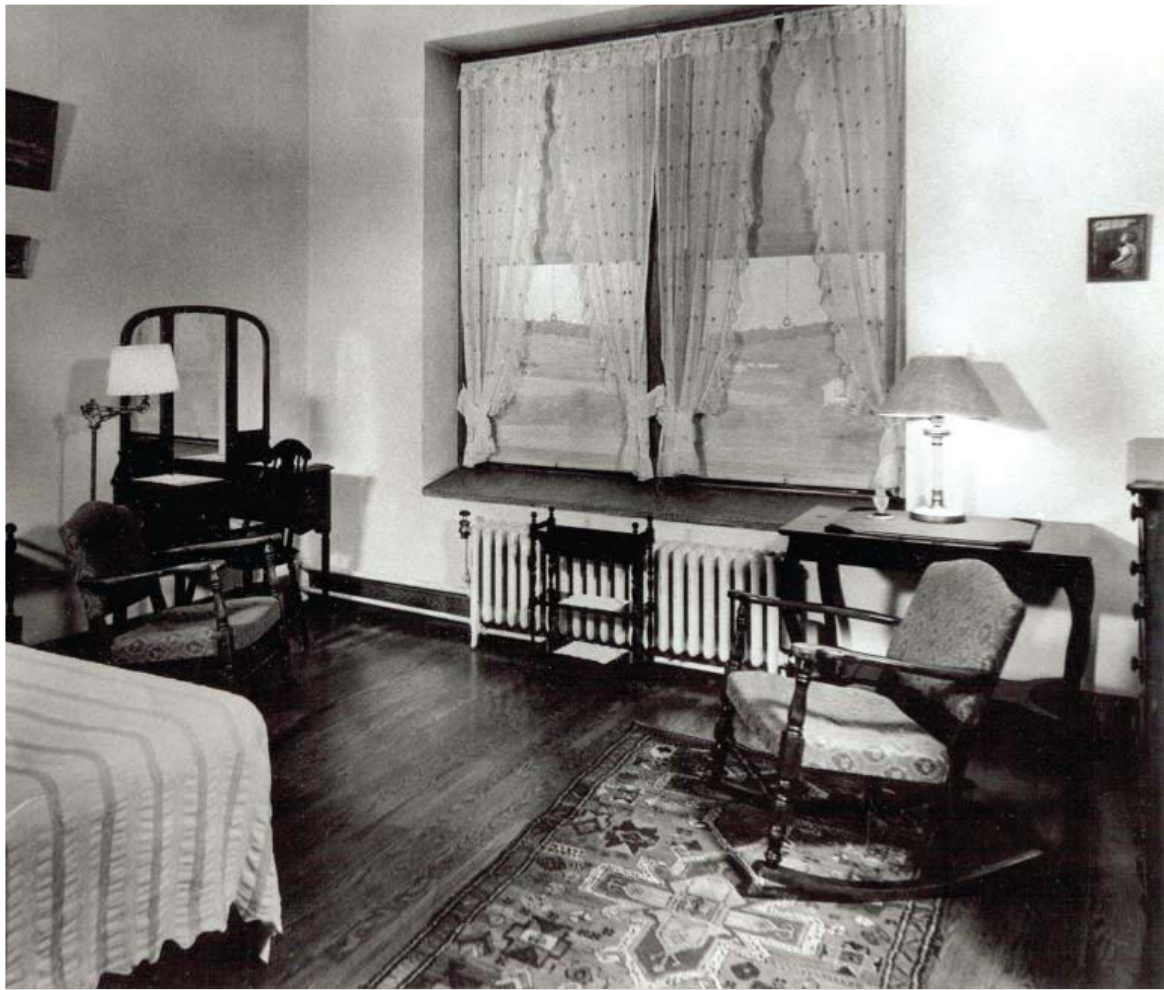
Tower Hall as completed in the spring of 1928

Walking through Tower Hall today, one can easily discern the dividing line between the 1909 and the 1928 sections. Terrazzo floor patterns, millwork, and light fixtures are all subtly different. There is a 10-foot drop between the tunnel and the ground floor of the new wing, which have been connected first by steps, then a ramp as OSHA regulations came into existence. The external aspect of the completed building has remained as it was when completed, but inside walls have gone up and been taken down with amazing frequency as the needs of the College dictated. In celebration of the centennial of Tower Hall, historic photographs of room interiors are being installed throughout the building.

The architects also planned the interior decoration of the lobby and adjacent parlors. They chose a Tudor motif, with plaster parget ceiling, wormy chestnut (or perhaps cypress) paneling, Nemadji ceramic floor tile and Kasota marble trim. It is as impressive today as Mother Agnes, a great anglophile, had hoped it would be. She immediately established a fund to pay for appropriate furnishings, and the chairs and console table now in the lobby, which are reproductions of 17th century pieces, were purchased from the Grand Rapids Furniture Company.



The lobby of the Tower Hall addition. The painting of the Last Meeting of Sts. Benedict and Scholastica was done by a St. Louis artist—a copy of a print owned by the Sisters.



A College student's dormitory room in the new addition

The O'Meara and Hills company remained a favorite of Mother Agnes: in 1937 as O'Meara, Hills and Quick, they were hired to plan the Chapel/Library/Stambrook Hall buildings, in 1945 as Maguolo and Quick to plan Victory Hall at St. Mary's Hospital, and in 1957 an addition to St. Mary's Hospital. Mother Agnes also chose studios in St. Louis for the interior decoration of the Chapel.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION:

"I have heard that the two towers are different because in the Middle Ages they always built cathedral towers with differences because it was regarded as presumptuous to make things 'perfect.' Is this correct?"

- The person who told you this was confusing architecture with oriental rugs—where a "mistake" is always included in the pattern to indicate that only God is perfect. It is true that some cathedrals, like Chartres, have two different towers, but this is usually due to there being a lapse of from 50 to 500 years between their construction, with a change in architectural taste in the interim. Our 1921 tower has wooden louvers in a simple wooden frame. The 1928 tower has louvers surrounded by stone Gothic tracery. This was probably just the choice of the architect, with no definite rationale in mind.

Photos from Monastery Archives

Monastery Books and Gifts

By Sister Linda Wiggins

Photo by Andy Therrien



Across from the information desk on the main floor of St. Scholastica Monastery dwells a haven of beautiful gifts, only some of which are material goods. Quietly adorned by a sign, “Monastery Books and Gifts,” hanging perpendicularly from the wall, this lovely little shop has a treasure of beauty within its modest circumference. In fact, its manager, Sister Katie Doyle, has a philosophy of what belongs in this small space—“beauty.” Quoting poet Sara Teasdale, she observes: “Look for a lovely thing and you will find it.”

One cannot get enough of “looking” at Sister Katie’s unique display of items that radiate beauty and spiritual delight. Selection of gifts displayed revolves around the liturgical season. Currently, during this Easter season on the liturgical calendar, you are greeted just outside the door of the shop with a lovely arrangement; an icon of

the resurrected Christ with arms spread widely, and a large glass vase in which a bouquet of dogwood branches are decorated with several shimmering colorful butterflies: the very essence of transformation and regeneration that this season always gives.

Inside the shop, an exquisite grouping of hand-painted gourds by a California artist awaits your admiration on a beautiful antique husband-and-wife desk. Next to the desk a charming green overstuffed chair holds an enormous air fern in a basket. Definitely not the ordinary gift shop display, but certainly a verdant reminder of this life-giving season. To the right is a grouping of the late Sister Mary Charles McGough’s icons that are reproductions from Conception Abbey press. Prepare to spend a quiet moment under the restorative gaze of The Mother of Compassion and her child.

Monastic time is different from the usual hustle of modern life and is reflected in this space where you are welcome to spend time and look, touch, and marvel at the beauty found here, whether it be contemplating which wonderful book, journal, or calendar will allow you to take a bit of this not-so-ordinary time home; perhaps you will find refreshing thoughts in the many unusual cards offered, or admire the hand-made items created by the Sisters, including children’s clothing, infant items, kitchen towels with delicate embroidery, or hand-made rugs. Beautiful sacramentals are always available, and unusual CDs such as Russian Chant are offered. Some items from third-world countries are also displayed.

Sister Katie has an amazing ability to capture the beauty of the common day, the common life, and the extraordinary gifts we are all given in each liturgical season, and each patron leaves with gifts that will keep on giving whether they made a purchase that day or not.

Highlights

Dr. Susan Ross at St. Scholastica

By Sister Sarah Smedman

On March 30, 2009, in Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel, Dr. Susan Ross, internationally acclaimed feminist theologian, spoke on “Seeking Light and Beauty: Women, Justice, and Sacramentality.” Dr. Ross is Professor, Chair of the Department of Theology, and Faculty Scholar at Loyola University in Chicago, and Vice President and member of the international Board of Editors of *Concilium*, a worldwide theological journal published in six languages five times a year. *Concilium* “exists to promote theological discussion in the spirit of Vatican II, out of which it was born.” From 2006-08 she served as Director of the Ann Ida Gannon, BVM, Center for Women and Leadership at Loyola.

Dr. Ross spoke from her current research exploring the contribution of women religious in the United States to promoting justice and peace through beauty. She anchored her lecture, accompanied by slides, in her experiences at Manhattanville College in New York and at Mundelein in Chicago. Ross emphasized the commitment of the Sisters to external and internal beauty in the buildings they erected, even during the Depression of the 1930’s, as well as the milieu they provided for students, then all young women from families of various economic means. She interpreted the creation of an esthetic environment as justice, in the context of satisfaction of the human need for beauty, then pointed out the sacramentality of beauty as a conduit of grace. Many in the audience readily related Ross’s message to Tower and Stanbrook Halls here at St. Scholastica.

Dr. Ross’s lecture was the high point of a three-day visit to St. Scholastica, cosponsored by the Feminist Theologies Committee of the Monastery and the Theology and Religious Studies Department of the College.

Her lecture was preceded by a dinner with members of both sponsoring groups and an informal pizza and conversation with students. It was followed by a reception for the Sisters and invited guests in Rockhurst dining room.

Selected Publications: *Extravagant Affections: A Feminist Sacramental Theology* (Continuum, 1998)
For the Beauty of the Earth: Women, Sacramentality and Justice (Paulist, 2006)
Co-editor, *Broken and Whole: Essays on Religion and the Body* (University P of America, 1995)

Sister Agatha Riehl Receives Award

By Sister Margaret Clarke



Photo by Andy Therrien

Sister Agatha Riehl recently received a certificate honoring fifty years of membership in the Lake Superior Section of the American Chemical Society. Sister Agatha, who taught chemistry at The College of St. Scholastica for over fifty years and was co-creator of the cancer research laboratory at the College, also served as chair of the department in 1966-1967.

ACS, founded in 1876, is a congressionally chartered independent membership organization which represents professionals at all degree levels and in all fields of chemistry and sciences that involve chemistry.

The Lake Superior section includes Northwestern Wisconsin and Northeastern Minnesota, extending from Ashland, Wisconsin, to International Falls, Minnesota, to Hinckley, Minnesota. Its members include chemists from regional colleges and universities and industrial and research facilities such as Murphy Oil in Superior, Lake Superior Research Institute at UW-Superior, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Laboratory and Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI) in Duluth.

Highlights, Continued

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

By Sister Mary Rae Higgins

The Volunteer Appreciation Dinner was held April 23, 2009, at the Monastery. Volunteers joined the Sisters for prayers in Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel and then dinner in Rockhurst Dining Room. Our volunteers contributed 3,207 hours this past year, and this evening the Sisters thanked them for their kindness and generosity. At the dinner Frank Barnaby received a ten-year pin for volunteering as a driver.

Iain MacGillivray, a student at St. Scholastica, played the bagpipes as he led the attendees from Chapel to the dining room. Then he delighted the group by playing the violin, the spoons, a flute, and drum and also by singing. This versatile young man is from Scotland.

We appreciate all the hours volunteers donate, and we are also thankful for their friendship.



Sister Lois Eckes presents Frank Barnaby with a ten-year service pin.



Iain MacGillivray plays the bodhrun.



Sisters and guests enjoyed visiting at the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner.

Photos by Andy Therrien

Highlights, Continued

Benedictine Friends Brunch

By Sister Mary Rochefort

Benedictine Friends, Sisters, and College of St. Scholastica students gathered for their annual end of year brunch at which they celebrated not only another great year, but also the success of members of their group who graduated May 10, 2009.

Benedictine Friends is a program offered through Mission Integration and Campus Ministry, which seeks to connect Sisters and students on a personal basis. Over the past several years lasting friendships have been formed.



Sister Mary Rochefort (center) with student program directors Stacy Brooks and Priscilla Lamphier



Photos by Sister Patricia Anne Williams

Sister Mary Rae Higgins (right) with Carrie Ronstrom, Frederick McDougall, and Megan Welle

Please Pray for the Following Deceased Friends and Benefactors:

Wilford M. Stokes	10/25/2006
Edith Coughlin	1/3/2007
Marie K. Holicek	9/29/2008
Irving "Steve" Johnson	10/10/2008
Georgie Firmine	11/3/2008
Regena Maher	11/13/2008
Delores Schindle Pouliot	11/20/2008
Lucille Belcich	12/29/2008

Frances Bizal	1/3/2009
<i>Sister of +Sister Gervase Erchul, +Sister Antonia Erchul, and +Sister Maxine Erchul</i>	
Geraldine Connoy Tanksley	1/6/2009
Janet Sundby	2/2009
Rose K. Bonifaci	3/12/2009
<i>Sister of +Sister Ann Marie Cheslak</i>	
Dr. John Hugh Murphy	3/26/2009

News from Benedictine Center of Spirituality

By Sister Jeanne Ann Weber

Graduation of Shalom Spiritual Directors

May 1-2 were very exciting days as twenty-five Shalom participants shared their projects of synthesizing two years of study, personal/spiritual growth, community building, project research, and development of their spiritual direction skills. Saturday concluded with the graduation ceremony and a banquet. The six Shalom team members, as well as the graduates, were in awe of the gifts shared and God's Spirit at work.



Photo by Sister Patricia Anne Williams

Shalom grads and mentors on the Monastery steps

Inquiries/applications are now being accepted for the 2009-2011 Shalom Spiritual Training Program. If you would like more information, contact Sister Michelle Dosch at 218-723-6581 or Mdosch2000@yahoo.com.

Outreach: Recently Sister Pauline Micke has given retreats on Reconciliation and on St. Paul and his Spirituality. She would be available to give a retreat on these or other themes at your parish or at the Monastery. Contact Sister Pauline Micke at 218-723-7086 or PMicke27@yahoo.com.



*Sister Pauline Micke (center)
and St. Michael's Parish retreatants*

Coming Up: *The Return of the Prodigal Son*

Monastery. A Retreat of Discovery & Reflection on grief, forgiveness, and generosity, using Scripture, Henri Nouwen, etc. Facilitator: Sister Sarah O'Malley, Director of Ministry of Care at Most Holy Trinity Parish, Phoenix, author and retreat facilitator. Freewill offering. For more details, go to our website www.duluthbenedictines.org.

Healing Touch Workshop

By Sister Michelle Dosch

A workshop, The Process of Healing Touch, was held at St. Scholastica Monastery March 17. The presentation was given by Sister Michelle Dosch with the assistance of Steve and Lynn Dosch.

Healing Touch is the art of caring that comes from the heart of the healer and reaches to the person receiving help.

Healing Touch takes a holistic approach to health and healing, addressing the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions of the human person.

Healing Touch is the "philosophy of caring." We use our hands to care compassionately for another, with the aim of restoring harmony and balance throughout the body. This in turn enables the person to self-heal.

Photo by Sister Patricia Anne Williams



Sister Michelle Dosch and workshop attendees

The morning presentation gave the principles and practice of Healing Touch. The content included energy system concepts and the energy field. Assessment of the energy center was shown. Meditation for centering and continuing the energy flow was demonstrated. The basic Healing Touch sequence was shown. The goals were to acquaint people with the basic practice of Healing Touch, with encouragement to those who may want to go for training to become Healing Touch Practitioners.

Sister Profile: Sister Margaret Clarke (Frances Joseph)

Sister Margaret Clarke completes her 40th year of teaching at The College of St. Scholastica this spring. She will continue her work as archivist at St. Scholastica Monastery and will also teach one class next year. One might say she is quasi-retired. Sister Margaret writes about coming to St. Scholastica and her professional career.

Photo by Andy Therrien



Most of my early life was spent in my mother's hometown, Bellingham, Washington. Although my mother's family were all staunch Presbyterians, my mother did her nurses' training at a Catholic hospital and became good friends with some of the Sisters there and later made friends with Sister Joseph of Aramathea, FCSP. I think Sister Joseph prayed me into church, if not into the convent . . .

After graduating from high school, I attended Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, where I majored in chemistry and minored in math and philosophy. I had always been attracted to Catholicism, and in my freshman year was received into the Catholic church. Very shortly after that, I began considering religious life. I found a book in the library, *A Guide to Catholic Sisterhoods in the United States*, and started looking through it. My criteria for an acceptable community were that they say the Divine Office in choir, have a college and a not-too-outrageous habit. Alphabetically, the Benedictines were the

first I came to that met these requirements. My letter was answered by Sister Prudentia, who, once she had you, never let you go! I arrived on September 13, 1959, after surviving a train derailment near Staples. It was my first sight of the campus, and indeed, of Minnesota. I will always be grateful to Mother Martina for being willing to take me sight unseen!

In 1962 I was assigned to Stanbrook Hall where I taught Chemistry, Physical Science, Earth Science, Geometry, Art, and Religion. I was at Stanbrook until it closed in 1967 and then spent a year teaching Chemistry and Earth Science at the new Cathedral High School. In 1965 I had received a grant from the National Science Foundation to pursue a master's degree in chemistry during summers at Marquette University. I completed that in 1968 and was then assigned to The College of St. Scholastica where I spent one year as audio-visual director and then began teaching natural science courses. From 1972 to 1975 I attended Oregon State University where I received a Ph.D. in Physical Science with concentrations in Radiation Physics and History of Science.

During my forty years at CSS I served as chair of the Physical Science Department and Division Chair of the Natural Science Division and taught, among other things, Physics, Earth Sciences, Logic, History and Philosophy of Science, and Introduction to the Visual Arts. I also spent two terms with Sister Monica and the students at our study center in Louisburgh, Ireland.

In Community, I served on the Monastic Council and as parliamentarian to the Chapter. Currently I am in charge of the Monastery Archives.

I have also spent a good deal of time working in the graphic arts and have done quite a number of projects for the Community and the College, mainly calligraphy and drawings for various events. I also do art needlework when time permits. I have been a member of the Duluth-Superior Chorus since 1977 and have sung in almost all of the productions since then. I also serve occasionally as cantor in Community.

I have often seen the hand of Providence guiding me through what seemed at the time to be completely random events into the life that God has designed for me, and am profoundly grateful for that guidance. I can't imagine any life for which I am more suited than Benedictine community, and I hope that I have been able to contribute something worthwhile to it.

Gardening Benefits

By Sister Mary Christa Kroening

Photo by Sister Patricia Anne Williams



Sister Mary Christa gives a tour of the gardens.

Gardening enhances life with health, hope and happiness. Homegrown herbs and vegetables offer tasty salads and dinners. Locally grown produce, fresh from the garden, contains vitamins and minerals that often are lost in storage and shipping. Part of the joy of gardening is tasting the peas and beans directly from the bush. Pulling a carrot or picking a ripe tomato and eating it right in the field offers a flavor that can only be experienced.

The season of spring calls forth new life from the long winter cold and snow. Spring is time for planning, plowing and planting the garden. The summer sun comes to warm the earth and helps the seeds to burst open, sprout, climb fences, and blossom with new growth. Vegetables and herbs grow to maturity offering savory morsels to stimulate appetites. It is in fall that the harvest delights and rewards gardeners.

Sister Pauline Micke and I are garden partners, planting vegetables and herbs in plots at the Monastery Chester Creek Garden. Records and planning are important for successful gardening. We use crop rotation and companion planting to produce an abundant harvest. Watering is a daily activity unless God blesses the earth. Collaboration, cooperation, and communication contribute to successful sharing of our produce.

Some plants, like people, are good companions, and some just do not get along. Rotating crops is a standard practice. Each kind of plant takes a particular nutrient from the soil. Many pests winter in the soil and expect to find their favorite food nearby. If it is not nearby, they do not know where to go, so rotating thwarts their efforts.

Some benefits of gardening are fresh air, healthy foods, regular exercise, and therapy wrapped in one activity. When hands are busy with meaningful activity, the mind is free to focus and create. Ideas come from our encounters with nature's unfolding variety. There is an abundance of aesthetic benefits also. By living close to the earth, we experience the ripple and flow of Chester Creek. The Paschal Mystery happens daily as we bury a tiny seed in the ground and observe the emergence of a tiny plant. Seedlings grow their second leaves and soon develop foliage, buds, and fruit. Curious creatures meet us each day. We encounter nature's wildlife in action—bugs, slugs, beetles, birds, worms, deer, foxes, chipmunks, squirrels, raccoons, woodchucks, and rabbits.

We meet new people, share gardening surprises, problems, and produce. Curious questions abound, sometimes like weeds. Often they emerge as opportunities to relate why we Sisters choose not to marry, how we came to live a monastic life, do we pray all day? How many Sisters are there anyway? What do we do with all of our vegetables? There are questions about faith, church, the pope, and monastic life. We have even listened to repentant hearts. We have met gardeners who are musicians, architects, teachers, artists, and electricians. Many elders and visitors walk near our garden pathway and stop to converse with us.

We volunteer with seed packing, the plant sale at the Damiano Center and sometimes a harvest gathering of all the Community Gardeners. Last year we hosted an historic garden tour for a local group. A few years ago one gardener's helper wanted to know the difference between one monastery and another. He obtained a liturgy of the hours prayer book and asked how to use it. Today he is a Benedictine brother in Blue Cloud Abbey. Gardening offers opportunities for extending Benedictine hospitality.



A View of Korea

By Sister Sarah Smedman

South Korea. A world afar, so far that I never imagined I would travel there. However, when two of my colleagues and I were invited to visit a former colleague, Ok-Hee Lee, who, with her husband and son, returned to their native Seoul last June, we jumped at the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Leaving Duluth on March 24, we arrived in Seoul 23 ½ hours later, on March 25. Across the dateline, Seoul is 14 hours ahead of Duluth.

In the next eight days we visited—literally as well as figuratively—the high and low points of Seoul and at least glimpsed a different world. Korea is the size of Indiana; its population, one-fourth that of the United States, almost 11 million of whom live in Seoul. So many people on so little land, much of which is mountainous, demands building upwards. The result: miles and miles of high-rises in and around a city with excellent transit systems and inexpensive cab fares. Cars park on the wide sidewalks. Everywhere the cleanliness of the city is striking. Ninety percent of Seoul was destroyed during the Japanese occupation, 1910-45, and the subsequent Korean War. In the last 50 years the city has been rebuilt. Such purposefulness is evident today: people walk fast, talk fast, eat fast. Koreans' diet is simple: rice, the staple; fish; little meat; vegetables including seaweed. People are conscious of getting enough protein and foods that are “good for you,” likely a holdover from days when food was scarce and people, hungry.

The highest point is Seoul Tower. Rising 777 feet from the base of Namsan, the highest mountain in Seoul, it offers a 360° view of the city. Accessible by cab, bus, and subway to the base of the mountain, then long flights of stairs and cable car to the base of the Tower, and finally elevators to the rotunda, the view is well worth the ascent. At night the lights of the city, stretching for miles, are breathtaking against the black sky. In front of Namsan is the government complex, at the center of which is the president's home, Blue House, so-called for its blue tiled roof. On the back side of the mountain is a traditional tea house and restaurant. From the tea house, just visible at the top of the mountain, is an American military base.



Changing of the guard at Gyeongbokgung Palace

Korean history and historical sites particularly drew me. The National Museum of Seoul, a modern building on uncommonly spacious, landscaped grounds, displays art and artifacts dating from the Paleolithic age. Of particular interest were the 518 years of the Joeson dynasty, from 1392-1910. Seoul includes five restored palaces—huge, gated and walled complexes—where royal families lived and worked. Because Joeson kings supplanted Buddhism with Confucianism, today few temples survive. The active temple in the midst of Seoul looks much like the palace buildings with their colored tile roofs. At 10:00 a.m. Chogyesa was filled with devotees, mostly elderly, praying in various ways. Even a reverent tourist, gazing at the three enormous gold statues of Buddha, felt an intruder in a sacred space and exited quickly.

The one unsavory site I visited was Namdaemun, a huge open-air market, crowded with goods of all kinds—clothes, luggage, jewelry, cosmetics, produce and other foodstuffs, restaurants—and people from lower economic classes. Women prepared kimchi, a traditional dish of fermented cabbage, in narrow, unsanitary alleys. Namdaemun contrasted with the much smaller Insadong, whose shops offered antiques and traditional crafts, some artistically wrought and others obviously designed for tourists seeking inexpensive mementos. Strolling these streets were many Orientals, especially Japanese, and but few Caucasians, primarily Europeans.

Home in Duluth, after so richly diverse and exciting days, my emotions were ambivalent: sadness at leaving old friends in a new place; serenity at returning to quieter time and familiar, open spaces; and gratitude for having had an opportunity that, in retrospect, seems like a dream, almost like a time-out-of-time to which I am unlikely ever to return except in memory.

Monasteries as Balm for a Broken Church

By Sister Mary Catherine Shambour

No thinking Catholic can honestly say that all is well with the American Catholic Church today. Though we may be the largest Christian denomination, statistics also show that the numbers of those leaving the Church outnumber those entering it by four to one. Though the reasons are too many to recount here, it is obvious that many people are not finding in their Church the home that they are seeking. Though we profess one creed, the ways we interpret its expression have divided us into numerous self-righteous “tribes” who often fail to recognize or even speak to one another. This is hardly the peace and unity for which Christ prayed. We need the guidance of the Holy Spirit to melt our stubborn hearts and lead us in the ways of peace. We need selfless leaders and role models to show us another way. We need holy men and women to show us how peace can be attained by living entirely for God.

In his apostolic exhortation on religious life, *Vita Consecrata*, Pope John Paul II spoke of consecrated life as being “at the very heart of the Church” since it makes Christ present to the world through personal witness of dedicated men and women living the evangelical counsels. However, he also saw religious communities as vital to the Church in exemplifying the *spirituality of communion*: places where persons of different ages, languages, and cultures meet as brothers and sisters to demonstrate that dialogue is always possible and that communion can bring differences into harmony. It is no wonder then that his successor, in seeking to lead his flock and bring unity to a fractured Church, chose the name Benedict since Benedictine monasteries have always been recognized as havens of peace. The motto of Peace over our doors is more than an inscription. It is a reality for those who truly seek God, but it always comes at a price.

Faith communities, parishes, families that are seeking peace—and young people who wish to give their lives to God and bring God’s love to the world—might look well at the *Rule of Benedict* to see how this peace is achieved. Monasteries will always be needed by the Church because they point the way to peace, which comes by the continual reliving of the paschal mystery: a continual dying and rising with Christ to our own imperfections and failings, a continual seeking of God in the everyday and in everyone. By daily meditation on the Scriptures, the monastic seeks to put on the mind of Christ who emptied Himself for others. By faithfulness to the demands of the common life, the monastic learns to put aside her own will for the sake of the common good. All are to be welcomed. Everyone is to be heard and listened to with respect—especially the young. Failings are to be acknowledged; forgiveness is to be given; differences are to be resolved before the setting of the sun. Nothing is to be preferred to Christ.

In its constant search for peace and community, monastic life has endured till now and will always be a model for the Church as she continues her mission on earth. For those who are searching for the setting in which to dedicate themselves totally to God and neighbor and which will bring themselves the peace for which they yearn, I invite you to come to Benedict’s “school of the Lord’s service.”



Photo by Sister Joyce Fournier



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*“Some seed fell on rich soil
and produced fruit,
a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold.”*

Matthew 13:8