



# PATHWAYS

*Newsletter of the Duluth Benedictine Sisters*

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## Letter From The Prioress

As I admire Sister Patricia Anne's delightful photograph of the black-capped chickadee on the front cover of this issue of *Pathways*, I am reminded of an exquisite poem by Emily Dickinson:

*Hope is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul,  
And sings the tune without the words  
And never stops at all.*



What a unique and most fitting metaphor for hope! In every season the vulnerable and seemingly fragile winged creatures of the Earth continue to survive and learn to thrive amidst incredible odds as they bless the world with their beauty, strength, and melodious songs. And so it is with hope, which stands strong and firm in every season of life and never gives up.

Deeply nestled in the Heart of Abiding Love, hope spreads its wings far and wide to receive and share the empowering strength and resilience that comes from God. Nestled and grounded in the depths of God's enormous love for us, we learn to sing the song of hope which our life is meant to be. We learn to sustain its melody even in the wild storms of life as we cling to the One whose Presence emerges from our inmost being singing in and through us that God's Love is going to have the last word.

Nourished by prayer and worship, by times of reflective silence and mutual support, the hope perched in our souls takes flight in works of justice and peace that bring Christ's saving love to our world. With or without words, our lives become light for the World and salt for the Earth as we provide shelter for the oppressed and homeless and share our bread with the hungry. Translating our compassion into commitment, we transform unjust structures and oppressive systems; we awaken hope in those who have been without voice and without power. We ennoble them to sing the songs of their lives with a sense of empowerment and freedom.

May the life-giving Spirit who gathers our hope under Her wings give us the grace to never stop singing with our lives the song of God's self-giving love and goodness poured out in Jesus and now in us.

Lovingly yours in Christ with deep gratitude  
and hope-filled prayer,

*Sister Lois Eckes*

Sister Lois Eckes  
Prioress



# The Life of a Monk ought to be a continuous Lent.

—Rule of St. Benedict

By Sister Renata Liegey

Lent is a journey: a journey into the Light. I have been drawn along that journey, not always knowingly; nevertheless, as each step has been taken I've been given the grace of gratitude.

As I reflect on this journey, it becomes apparent to me that the past twenty-plus years have been significant. At the onset of this period I became aware of my increasing depression. It was really not unusual, since I had just left an eighteen-year ministry which had been both life-giving for me and beneficial for many of God's children at St. Gertrude's School for Mentally Challenged Girls. My eighteen years there with extremely talented and caring teachers and staff, as well as with our very special students from the age of six through eighteen, began for me when Mother Martina Hughes said, "Just give it a try." I was reluctant—but in Mother Martina, God gave me a good push that sent me on a marvelous segment of my life.

At the conclusion of those years I experienced the onset of severe clinical depression which sent me to the Franciscan Center for Holistic Living in St. Paul for a deeply challenging year and a half. There it took me some time before I could realize that it was truly holy ground on which I was privileged to be living. Oh, the patience of our God: the Light which literally draws us forward, never failing despite the obstacles we manage to create.

A bright light shown for me when I discovered the gift of healing in both body and energy work. I was blessed in experiencing my own healing both within these modalities and in my own community. The latter graciously permitted me to become educated in therapeutic massage, energy work, and the wonderful discipline of T'ai Chi Chih (TCC). It was truly a whole new life that I was given. Our God is a God of surprises!

Within just a few years I had a private practice going (which I named "Tranquil Touch") and was traveling about in the Twin Cities area to schools, community centers, churches, and hospitals to introduce TCC. I have continued to be thrilled to share this practice, which has become so important to me on my journey.

Eventually I was also employed at Franciscan Center for Wholistic Living (which was to become WomenWell) to provide TCC and massage therapy for a clientele of women, both religious and lay, from all parts of the world. I found it extremely gratifying to be even a small part of healing in the lives of so many wonderful women and to see them move forward more freely on their individual journeys into the Light.

The Light continues to call each and every one of us though our pathways may be very diverse and our understanding of the way often blurred. My constant prayer is that others may find the peace and happiness this journey has brought me.





# The Braegelman Catholic Studies Program

By Sister Mary Josephine Torborg

The Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, aware of their diminishing numbers, engaged in strategic dialogue regarding the most effective way to keep alive and vibrant the Catholic Benedictine Heritage within our numerous ministries, especially in health care and education with fewer Sisters engaged in these ministries. It was of great importance to the Sisters as we participated in these dialogue sessions to ensure that our Catholic, Benedictine Heritage would always serve as a strong foundation in our ministry to the people of God.

Sister Margaret Clarke, OSB noted: “As well as giving women and men of all ages a solid foundation in the liberal arts, which we consider to be an aspect of Benedictine stewardship—in this case of our intellectual heritage—we also provide education for the professions in the Benedictine tradition of work. The idea of the dignity of human labor, whether of head, heart, or hands, is one that Benedictines introduced into western civilization, and which we perpetuate through our ministry of higher education.” (*Pathways* Vol. 6, No. 2) One of the crucial questions remains: How can we best perpetuate this Catholic, Benedictine influence with our students at The College of St. Scholastica?

In response to a CSS Capital Campaign request by the President of St. Scholastica College, Dr. Larry Goodwin, in August 2001, the Benedictine Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery made the Chapter decision to give a gift of three million dollars to The College of St. Scholastica. “In keeping with the traditional commitment of the Benedictine Sisters to the spiritual development of CSS students—and indeed the development of all members of the campus community...” the Benedictine Sisters designated two million dollars to develop and sustain an endowed Catholic Studies Program at The College of St. Scholastica. One million was designated for the renovation of Tower Hall. It was the hope and dream of the Benedictine Sisters that this Catholic Studies Program would insure a strong Catholic, Benedictine identity for our College as well as keep vibrant and alive our rich Catholic, Benedictine heritage as a strong foundation in all our academic endeavors.

With the designation of this gift for an endowed Catholic Studies Program, Dr. Larry Goodwin began several initiatives:

1. With his address to faculty/staff at the annual Faculty/Staff Institute in the Fall of 2003, entitled “Reflections on Catholic Identity,” President Goodwin began a campus-wide conversation about the Catholic identity of The College of St. Scholastica. He said, “I want it to be a genuine conversation, a give-and-take that will last throughout this academic year and beyond. Our Board of Trustees will be addressing the topic at their fall retreat. Over the course of this year I will invite each of you, in mixed groups of faculty and staff, to a lunch or a breakfast where we can conduct an honest discussion about our hopes and fears. I also plan to invite you to dinner on several occasions to hear speakers talk about topics such as Catholic feminism, a non-Catholic’s reflection on what it means to teach at a Catholic college, and a proposal for Catholic Studies at St. Scholastica.”

2. To keep alive the dialogue of this year of study on the Catholic Benedictine tradition and heritage, a director of Mission Integration was appointed. Sister Mary Rochefort, our present director, with the help of her Mission Integration Committee, began a new initiative to keep in the forefront the Benedictine Values of Hospitality, Community, Stewardship, Respect, and Love of Learning. Each year a specific value is chosen, and the College community learns the many facets of the value and expresses the value in celebrations, rituals, and classroom dialogues. “Our Catholic identity involves not only intellectual activity but also campus life, community worship, student formation, trustee development, and service to the region.” (Institute, 2003)

3. Fr. William Graham was hired as director of the Catholic Studies Program, now known as the Braegelman Catholic Studies Program. As director Fr. Graham was to develop an interdisciplinary curriculum of study for the Program with a focus on Catholicism. In discussing a Curriculum in Catholic Studies, President Goodwin encouraged faculty and staff to grapple with the questions: “*How can the Catholic worldview enrich our work as educators?* What insights does the Catholic tradition bring to our curriculum, to our teaching, to our research, to the education and formation of our students – traditional and nontraditional, undergraduate and graduate? How can the Catholic tradition inform our mission of intellectual and moral preparation for responsible living and meaningful work? How might the Catholic tradition help our students learn to touch the world?” (Institute, 2003)

# at The College of St. Scholastica

These are the ongoing questions we as educators must ask ourselves in conjunction with the questions of how we can best serve our students through greater interfaith dialogue promoting greater understanding, respect, and tolerance for religious diversity so that all feel welcome at The College of St. Scholastica. Making conversations happen is an important part of the Catholic Studies agenda. Thus, Fr. Graham began two lecture series to attract students and members of the local church: “Here Comes Everybody” and “What Do Catholics Think About?”.

4. Embracing our Catholic Identity and its challenge to service and the preferential option for the poor, the Peace and Justice Department of The College of St. Scholastica continued to enhance its annual Community Day program. This program encourages students, faculty, staff, and administration to go out into the larger Duluth Community to offer their services wherever they are needed.

As we consider the challenges of keeping our Catholic, Benedictine heritage alive and vibrant, we can take some encouragement from our alumni who have entered the professional world. As one alum recently related in a phone message from New York, “I had to call you to thank you for the strong foundation of values I received at The College of St. Scholastica. I had to use them this morning in a manager’s meeting as we were making some very strategic decisions.” He said, “These values undergird all my personal decisions as well as the decisions I make as a manager in the company. I feel privileged to have learned these values throughout my academic life at St. Scholastica. My colleagues in the company are not as fortunate, but they are very eager to learn more about our Benedictine values. Another moment of surprise came for me at the meeting when the President of the company announced that of all the departments in the company my department had received the highest rating for satisfied and engaged employees.” The alum said, “it is because I have focused on the Benedictine values within my department and the employees use them in their decision making. Keep on doing what you are doing at The College of St. Scholastica to give the students this strong Catholic, Benedictine foundation.”

*Photo by Sister Judine Mayerle*



# SISTER PROFILE: SISTER THERESA JODOCY

Photo by Sister Joyce Fournier



Mary Theresa Jodocy was born in Upper Michigan to Peter and Clemence Nizette Jodocy, as one of ten children. Three of her siblings died as infants—one was her twin, Norbert, who lived for three months. Her parents came from the French part of Belgium, and so the children spoke French at home and began school knowing only French, which remained the language at home.

Family prayer was central in their home. She prayed daily to St. Theresa to become a Sister, although she had never met one. Her parish priest gave a sermon one Sunday on the twins, St. Benedict and St. Scholastica, and from then on she read all she could on these two saints. While she was attending college in Marquette, Michigan, a student from The College of St. Scholastica transferred to Marquette. She suggested Mary Theresa attend a summer school session at CSS, which proved to be a wise decision. She met Sister Ann Edward Scanlon, who had a way of reading one's soul. Sister Ann Edward arranged for Mary Theresa to transfer in the fall as a senior. She then entered as a Postulant in January, graduated from CSS in June, and entered the Novitiate in July, receiving the name of Sister Matthias, after her priest brother. He was only a year older and had become like her twin, but she lost him to cancer when he was 33.

In the fall of 1954 Sister Matthias began a 15-year period of teaching in the Minnesota parochial schools. Upon completing a master's degree in education administration at UMD she was assigned to Phoenix as principal of St. Thomas the Apostle School. During that time she began a master's degree in theology from the University of San Francisco. After being principal for ten years at St. Thomas and St. Daniel the Prophet, she became Dean at Xavier College Prep, a school for girls in Phoenix, for four years. After completing her M.A. at San Francisco she accepted a teaching position at Notre Dame High School for Boys in Chicago. She enjoyed her work in these two high schools very much; however, she longed to put her theology to greater use by teaching adults in a parish. Her desire was fulfilled in the fall of 1988 when she was hired at St. Andrew the Apostle in Chandler, Arizona, as Pastoral Associate where she remained for five years. At this time she returned to her baptismal name of Theresa. She asked for a sabbatical in 1993 to study at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, which gave her a new lease on life to continue the work in parishes in the East Valley, namely at Holy Spirit and Holy Cross. Sister Theresa thrived on her work as Pastoral Associate, which included teaching Scripture, directing the RCIA, teaching returning Catholics, teaching Catechists for Certification, processing marriage annulments, and setting up three parish spirituality centers/libraries. She also directed the Ministry of Care Program, preparing members to bring Eucharist to the homebound and nursing homes. In each parish she was very involved with the liturgy, preparing Eucharistic ministers and lectors. She conducted grief support sessions and assisted families in preparing funerals for their loved ones.

While at Holy Spirit, Sister Theresa organized and directed three tours abroad: to the Holy Land, to France, and to Spain and Portugal. She prepared a book of the places to be visited on each tour which also included a liturgy guide indicating where they would attend Mass and the names of all who would lector and serve. Each pilgrim received a copy, and each tour was filled to capacity.

Sister Theresa says that St. Scholastica Monastery has assisted her in her ministries and enabled her to enjoy religious life. She was able to visit her parents' relatives both in Europe and South America. While her work keeps her occupied, she enjoys reading and playing board games and cards and is an avid Scrabble player. She says God has blessed her with good health and many wonderful opportunities to serve with love and compassion the people following in Christ's footsteps.



# Shalom Program

By Sister Jeanne Ann Weber



The annual retreat for the Shalom Spiritual Direction Training Program took place at St. Scholastica Monastery from January 14-16. The team consists of Sister Michelle Dosch, Sister Jean Maher, Sister Jeanne Ann Weber, and Pastor Alan Hendrickson. The retreat opened with a prayer ritual which focused on winter and its realities, gifts, and graces. The retreat offered opportunities for personal prayer as well as prayer with the Monastic Community, silence and group faith sharing, and meeting with a spiritual director.

The participants were very grateful for the Sisters' hospitality and the peace, love, silence, and healing presence of the Monastery. Some felt they were wrapped in a blanket of love and deep rest and peace. Some received the grace of living one day at a time, or the gift of courage and joy to continue to walk in faith on the adventure of life, knowing God is present. Some experienced the beauty, humility, awe, and uniqueness of each snowflake, of themselves, and of our universe. The retreat was a special time of blessings as it unfolded for each person. There was a sense of renewal and a call as they prepared to return to their daily lives. The participants were grateful for the Sisters' prayers for them and the opening of their home to them.

Other comments made by past and present participants in the Shalom Program: *Coming in the front door feels like coming home. I experience love, peace, and acceptance. I can share and better understand my spiritual journey. We speak the same language. I have experienced more than I expected in the area of healing and growth. The presentations, books, and groups have affirmed as well as stretched and challenged me. There is a deep and spiritual bonding. The Spirit unites the diversity in the group.*

Some of the Shalom graduates of 2009 have continued to use and integrate their skills in their churches, work sites, retreat centers, and/or homes. Some are in peer support groups that meet on a regular basis.

The next Shalom Spiritual Direction training session will begin in September of 2011. This program is designed to assist people in their own spiritual growth as well as to prepare them for the ministry of spiritual direction. Twenty-five individuals are currently enrolled. This group meets monthly at the Monastery over a period of two years, with the second year being a formal internship leading to a certification. For more information contact Sister Michelle Dosch at 218-723-6521 or [mdosch2000@yahoo.com](mailto:mdosch2000@yahoo.com).



Photo by Sister Patricia Anne Williams

*Members of the Shalom Spiritual Direction Training Program and team leaders, January 2011.*

# Benedictine Associate Elizabeth Farias

An interview with Andi Therrien

Photo by Andi Therrien



Elizabeth Farias (left, front row) and students in the ESL program at the Adult Learning Center

Asked why she wanted to be a Benedictine Associate, Elizabeth Farias from Early, Iowa, said it was exactly what she was looking for after a career of teaching and tutoring. She wanted a way to donate her time and skills to a good work, to feel that her contribution was needed, and to devote more than just an hour a week. After looking at several programs, she decided that the Benedictine Associate program was just right for her. This is her second “tour” as an Associate.

*What have you been able to bring to the program?* Her best quality, says Elizabeth, is her overall adaptability. Elizabeth’s duties are varied, but regular. This year she works at the Monastery’s information/reception desk. She “companions” various Sisters who want or need someone to go along with them on trips or visits outside the Monastery.

Elizabeth also enjoys reading to the Sisters in Benet Hall. At the McCabe Renewal Center she helps serve meals when needed. Last year she worked at Duluth’s CHUM (Churches United in Ministry) center.

Her favorite ministry outside the Monastery is volunteering as an assistant in the ESL (English as a Second Language) program at Duluth’s Adult Learning Center. Elizabeth taught high school Spanish for 35 years and also traveled in other countries such as Spain and Venezuela and enjoys immersion in different cultures. These skills help her as she tries to help others understand the English language and American culture.

*How do you talk with someone who doesn’t speak your language?* You discover with gestures, expressions, and pictures that you have a lot in common: music, laughter, food, children or family, even a cold. You exchange words for such things, and fill in with more expressions and gestures. “You *connect* with each other.”

*What have you gotten out of the Benedictine Associate program?* “It’s been beyond my expectations. I got loads more than I ever expected! The Sisters are good role models for doing your best, for diligence both in prayer and in work. I have really enjoyed the peace and tranquility that the *Rule of St. Benedict* has fostered here. The Community is an excellent example of right living. The Sisters express gratitude and appreciation for everything we [Associates] do. They are gracious in their welcoming and generous in their invitations and thanks.”

“Oh yes!” she added. “I’ll also be taking away from this experience a more physically fit body! More physical endurance! I have to walk up lots of stairs just to get to my room!”

*Would you recommend the program to others?* “Definitely!” she says. “You can learn so much! I think I’ve grown in my relationship with people in need, in my spirit, and in wisdom. I’m stronger in myself.”

\* \* \* \* \*

For more information about the Benedictine Associate program go to <http://www.duluthbenedictines.org/join-us/as-an-associate>. Or contact Sister Martha Bechtold, OSB, St. Scholastica Monastery, 1001 Kenwood Avenue, Duluth, MN 55811. Phone: (218) 723-6521. E-mail: [smbechtold@duluthosb.org](mailto:smbechtold@duluthosb.org).



# The Medium and the Message

By Sister Mary Catherine Shambour

Photo by Jeff Frey; courtesy of CSS



There! It hit me in the eyes again. The way our life is so rapidly changing. A whole collection of audio cassettes dumped into the garbage! But then, where could one even find a cassette player to play them, or a phonograph, or, coming soon, even film for one's camera? Let's face it. We've all been thrust headlong into the age of instant information and communication whether we like it or not, and the "chronologically gifted" among us might do better to accept rather than bemoan the fact. Way back in the 20<sup>th</sup> century we came to accept, through its consequences, the fact that the "medium is the message," and so what implications does the i-phone's *message* (that it can instantly retrieve nearly any needed information and transmit it to thousands around the world in any language) have on its user? But before such a philosophical or moral question could be considered, millions around the world have already been linked through instant communication. So what are we Christians to make of this?

Well, God too has been in the communications business for a very long time. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God...(Jn 1:1) And He kept communicating to the creatures He made in his own image for many millennia. First through creation itself, then through the prophets, and finally through His Son. Jesus, the *medium is* truly God's *message* to us. And by gift of the Holy Spirit, God still lives and works among us in His followers, the faithful who comprise His Body. The Church is now the medium that is the message. So how is the message playing out?

Before we attempt to determine which medium is the better communicator, we need to acknowledge that technological advances in communications are aimed at providing better connections, information, and entertainment for earth whereas the Church aims at improving connections between humanity and God. Thus what may be deemed failure in one realm may mean success in another, such as the "folly" of the cross. Yet the communications industry and the Church interact, exist in the same world, utilize many of the same techniques, and are equally concerned about their ratings.

In recent years the Catholic Church in the United States has undergone some shock treatments to its stability in the form of shortage of priests, closing of parishes and schools, dwindling church attendance, etc. And we're quick to point the finger of blame at some ruling or person in the Church, but rarely do we question the depth of our own faith and consider how we are responding to our own individual call to holiness. God continues to call men and women to follow Him in our digitalized age just as He has done over the centuries, but in first-world nations the decline in respondents seems to correlate with the rise in prosperity. This is not to decry recent advances in communications. No one would want to go back to carrier pigeons or the Pony Express. Even the Pope is on YouTube.

However, I sadly note among many Catholics an alarming decline in faith. They seem so enamored of having all that the world has to offer right at their fingertips that they believe technology will solve everything. Following the teachings of God through the medium of the Church is obsolete, boring and old-fashioned. Hours are spent following the actions and morals of the world's superheroes. Their standards become our standards. We spend hours in communicating trivia with hundreds of "friends" on Facebook but have no time left to listen to God speaking quietly to our hearts. Is there no way out of such chaos?

Fortunately, Jesus showed us the way. Amidst all the clamor of the crowds pressing upon Him, He would withdraw into solitude to be in communion with the Father. It was there that His mission was made clear to Him. Only in silence can we discern what God is asking of us and only when other voices are still can we give our "Yes" to God.

During this season of Lent probably our most fruitful exercise would be to devote fifteen minutes of each day to be spent in silent contemplation of Who is trying to communicate with us through His sacred Word and the events of our lives. Possibly then, like Peter, we may come to say, "Master, to whom else shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." (Jn 6:69)

# REMEMBERING THINGS PAST: THE TEKAKWITHA SHRINE

By Sister Margaret Clarke

1945 was a big year for statuary! St. Thomas More moved into the College library, a statue of Our Lady of Victory was installed on the newly-completed Victory Hall nursing students' residence, and it was also the year that Sister Scholastica Bush began writing the community annals. Sister Scholastica was an avid collector of all things collectable and had numerous friends and acquaintances who scoured the local antiques dealers for items she might display in her Tower Hall "museum." She had also acquired a rather impressive group of Native American artifacts (later "loaned" to the University of Minnesota—but never returned—and, we hope, eventually repatriated.) In keeping with her interest in this area, and with no explanatory preamble, on June 14, 1945 she writes: "The statue of Tekakwitha carved out of California redwood by Ben Hagen came today. It is simple, almost crude, and very effective for our purpose." It was a small statue, less than two feet tall, and was probably intended for the Native American section of her museum.

By September of that year, she had a new idea: "I spoke to Reverend Mother about a shrine for Tekakwitha and obtained her approval. Sister Ildephonse has been doing a very lovely piece of landscaping and gardening just beyond the convent garden. The flagstone walk. . .to the left leads just nowhere. Sister said she wished she had a statue to place there as a sort of end goal. I suggested my wood carving of Tekakwitha." Both Sister Ildephonse and Mother Athanasius were enthusiastic; Mother Athanasius mentioned that St. Mary's Hospital had an excellent stonemason in its employ. Sister Scholastica had been collecting rocks for several years for a grotto in the pine grove and donated those to the cause, soliciting donations from other Sisters as well. Sister Monica Laughlin recalls giving some stones collected in Africa by her miner-father. Sister Annella remembers her group of young Sisters carrying the rocks down to the site.

On October 27, 1945, the shrine was completed and dedicated with a procession of College students and Sisters honoring the occasion. The statue stood behind glass in a shingled enclosure, supported by a pedestal of the donated stones. A relic of the saint was housed in a miniature "tepee" inside the shrine. In the 1960s Sisters Alice Lamb and Mercedes Ryan took over the gardening of the shrine area.



*College students at the shrine about 1946*



*The shrine before it was dismantled – 1980s*



In 1997, with the expansion of the College Little Theater, the shrine was demolished, and the current whereabouts of the statue are unknown. In October 1999, a statue of Kateri Tekakwitha donated by the Renier family of Duluth (relatives of Sister Generosa Martin) was installed in a new, simple shrine a few feet away from the original location.



BLESSED KATERI TEKAKWITHA (1656-1680)  
Feast day: July 14

Kateri (a form of Catherine) was born to an Algonquin Christian mother and a Mohawk father. As a young child she survived smallpox, which left her scarred and partially blind. She was baptized by the Jesuits, and eventually found it necessary to leave her place of birth and live in a Christian settlement at Sault Sainte Marie. Her life was one of faith and courage, and she was notable for patience, purity, and a love of penance. The Church designated her “Blessed” in 1980, and the process of her canonization is proceeding. One of the windows in Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel was dedicated to her.

*Photos courtesy of  
Monastery Archives*



Over 135 historical photographs from the archives of the Monastery and the College are now available online on the Minnesota Reflections website, <http://reflections/mndigital.org>. On the Minnesota Reflections homepage, under Browse, click “by collection” and scroll down to College of St. Scholastica or St. Scholastica Monastery, and click “view the collection.” In the Monastery collections you will find pre-1950 photos of the Sisters at work and play and all of the buildings Sisters have constructed, plus a few historical photos from St. Mary’s Hospital



# Soup and Bread

By Sister Gretchen Johnston



I remember a Maundy Thursday service at a church where I grew up. I was in my mid-teens. The announcement in the bulletin said what time the service would be, where it would be, and stated that there would be a simple supper in the church basement afterwards. In solidarity with the poor, the meal would consist of soup and bread.

I did a double-take. Soup and bread was a hallmark of a poor supper? A lot of times at home we had soup and bread for supper. It was one of my favorite suppers. My mother had stored in her head many different recipes for soup and for bread and made endless variations. They were never the same twice.

Once a week we have a soup and bread supper here at the Monastery. It is still one of my favorite meals (although our people in the Monastery kitchen have a long way to go before they can rival my mother's meals). I often make soup and bread for a smaller group of Sisters to get together for a meal.

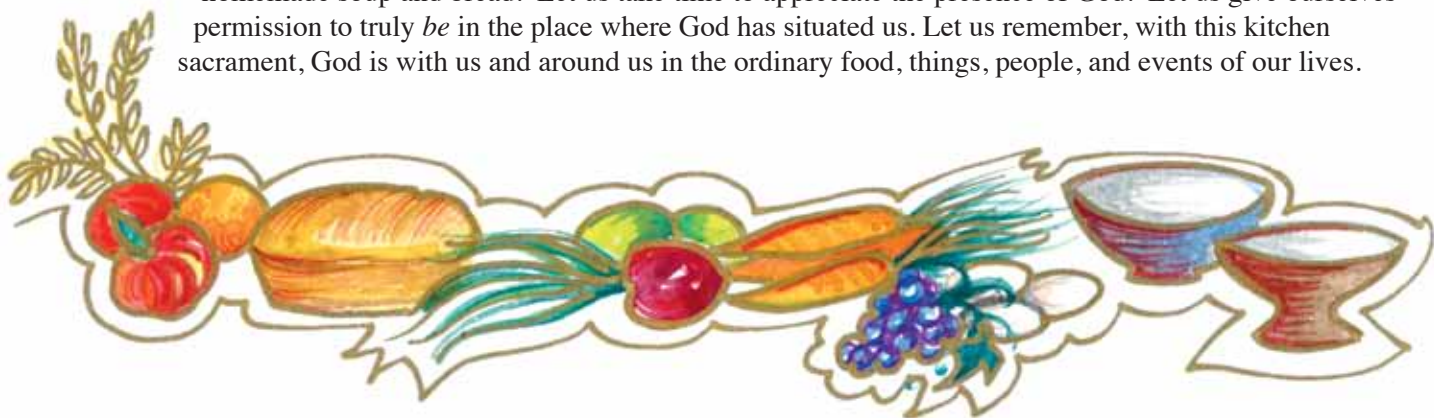
Why is a meal of soup and bread so simple and yet so satisfying? I can think of two possible reasons. Probably you can think of more. Eating soup tends to slow down meals, which has several benefits. Both homemade soup and bread use a medley of ordinary ingredients. It slows us down. Soup is a liquid; in our Western culture we have spoons in which we carry this liquid to our mouths. It is a balancing act of sorts to do this without spilling. This slows us down a little. Slower eating makes for better digestion. Slower eating also gives us more time to interact with the presence of God in the others at our table. It gives us more time to feel the presence of God around us, observe our surroundings, and perhaps even to think more clearly.

In both soup and bread several simple ingredients are combined to make a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. The taste of the whole is unique, yet one can taste the different flavors that contribute. Slower eating prompts us to savor each bite.

Our lives are frenetically busy. We have cars that carry us from point A to point B the faster the better. We have computers and cell phones that connect us to the Internet and other people at the touch of a few keys. We have cameras and instant messaging and Twitter that are supposed to record our feelings and share with others exactly what we hear and see or think we hear and see. The downside is that we do not have the time to be—truly *be* in our surroundings. We do not know how to connect with the presence of God in each other when we are busy tapping out electronic messages.

In a hectic culture where superlatives are the norm and more is better, homemade soup and bread remind us that it is the simple, ordinary things of life that give meaning and sustenance. They are an offering not only of food, but of the time and effort taken to prepare and partake.

St. Benedict writes in his *Rule* that the life of a monk should have a perpetual Lenten character about it. What would life be like if we all slowed down the pace of life to give ourselves time to think? This Lent, let us slow down with some homemade soup and bread. Let us take time to appreciate the presence of God. Let us give ourselves permission to truly *be* in the place where God has situated us. Let us remember, with this kitchen sacrament, God is with us and around us in the ordinary food, things, people, and events of our lives.



# SISTER PROFILE: SISTER MARILYN MICKE

*An Interview with Vicky Siders*

Photo by Sister Joyce Fournier



Sister Marilyn Micke has been a teacher, principal, superintendent, and educational innovator throughout most of her life. Yet she currently works in the Business Office in accounts payable and staffs the candy section at the Sisters' Christmas sale. I asked her how these seemingly disparate roles occurred, and her answers show the scope of a Sister's many ministries.

Sister Marilyn was born in 1918, the last of six children of Theodore and Adrienna Micke. She began her schooling in a one-room schoolhouse near McGregor, Minnesota. Her family moved to Cloquet where she attended third through eighth grades at Sacred Heart School, and she then became an aspirant at Villa Sancta Scholastica for her high school years. Why Scholastica? Benedictine Sisters had visited the resort her parents ran at Big Sandy Lake when Marilyn was just a little girl, and she had announced at that time her desire to become a Sister. Thus the move to the Villa was a part of that dream. After high school and a year at The College of St. Scholastica, Sister Marilyn taught in elementary schools in Hibbing, Brainerd, and Duluth, and taught and served as principal in Proctor. She says that her own education was piecemeal—her bachelor's degree picked up summers a few credits at a time—as was her master's degree. While teaching, Sister Marilyn was also asked, as was common, to help with fund-raising for various projects in the schools. In Hibbing she made and sold caramel apples; in Duluth taffy suckers to raise funds for some 50-60 new surplises for the altar boys.

After 21 years of teaching and candy-making in grades 5-8, Sister Marilyn was asked to accept the position of Diocesan Supervisor of 26 Catholic schools. She did not want the position—she protested that teaching was her field and that surely others were more qualified to supervise the entire system. But the Mother Superior at the time listened to Sister Marilyn's litany of "reasons" and simply said, "I think I've gotten a different message." Sister Marilyn served as Supervisor for ten years and then Superintendent of Schools in the Diocese for another 13 years—the first woman to hold such a title. In 1976, during her tenure as Superintendent, a young man who had worked with students at Woodland Hills asked Sister Marilyn to call together her principals to see if a new educational effort, Operation Aware, might be an asset to the parochial school curriculum. Operation Aware (later developed into the D.A.R.E. program) was a curriculum that taught sixth graders how to cope with peer pressure issues such as drugs, bullying, and vandalism by cultivating a "positive peer culture." After one year of Operation Aware, the public schools asked to become a part of the program as well. In 1982 Sister Marilyn left her duties as Superintendent of Schools to become the Executive Director of Operation Aware—a position she held until 1992. Operation Aware subsequently spread to 14 states and 5 Canadian provinces.

In 1992 at the age of 74, one might think that Sister Marilyn could "retire." But Sisters don't retire, of course; they just change hats. A former student asked Sister Marilyn to run his family resort near Brainerd for the summer. (Her family had run the Big Sandy Lake resort, after all, so Sister Marilyn knew the business). The Brainerd resort had a gift shop and restaurant, which Sister also ran. Her experience with that gift shop led to another position: during the off-season she was asked to please help out in the Monastery's gift shop—buying, selling, working with figures, and ultimately reporting sales to the Business Office. (You can see the connections coming!) And so, Sister Marilyn was eventually asked if she could combine her work in the Monastery gift shop with part-time work in the Business Office doing accounts payable—a position she still enjoys, though she is "down" to half-days because of the embroidery and candy-making that fill the other half.

Sister Marilyn says of her careers, "I have had the joy and freedom of serving the Lord for so many years. The challenge of life is to learn the art of being all you can be at any age." From teacher to superintendent; from taffy suckers for surplises to fudge for the Sisters' Christmas sale; from resort and gift shop manager to Monastery gift shop and then Business Office, Sister Marilyn has indeed been "all she can be."

Yet Sister thinks of herself first and foremost as an educator. One student recalls that Sister Marilyn "faithfully met the day-to-day challenge of fulfilling the role of principal, teacher, mother, doctor, janitor, referee, psychologist, counselor, fund raiser, etc., not only to the students in our 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades but to all the students." Moreover, . . . "Because she lived the faith she taught, she effectively planted the seeds of faith in her students."

# Highlights

## An Evening with Bishop Paul Sirba

By Sister Ann Marie Wainwright

On Sunday, January 16, Bishop Paul Sirba of the Diocese of Duluth came for evening prayer and supper. Nearly one year earlier he was ordained and installed as bishop and came for the first time to visit our Community. This time Bishop Paul had the opportunity to meet the women in initial formation, who sat at table with him during supper. Bishop Paul shared his vocation story and elicited stories from the formation Sisters as well. The conversation filled both Bishop Paul and the women in formation with gratitude to God for one another and for the loving, mysterious ways God chose us and opened our hearts to religious life.

At the conclusion of a pleasant meal the Community sang a song of blessing over Bishop Paul and requested a blessing from him. After blessing the Sisters, he graciously thanked the Community for its hospitality and prayers for him as shepherd of the diocese. He assured us of his continued prayers, often remembering the Sisters while praying the rosary. Bishop Paul then surprised the Sisters by graciously presenting to each of us a single, long-stemmed rose. In sharing our lives, prayers, and a meal with Bishop Paul, our Benedictine Community manifested the love and hospitality of God. God blessed us through Bishop Paul's presence among us, prayers for us, and kindness to us. Thank you, Bishop Paul Sirba. Pax!



Photo by Sister Lisa Maurer

*Sister Ingrid Luukkonen receives a rose from Bishop Paul Sirba.*



Photo by Andi Therrien

*Roses in the Chapel courtesy of the Bishop.*

### PLEASE PRAY FOR THE FOLLOWING DECEASED FRIENDS AND RELATIVES:

Letta Beaudry Tromans  
Charlotte Weiss 6/30/2010  
Martin Seipp 10/16/2010  
Mathilda Price 11/16/2010  
Dr. Leonard Sarvela 11/20/2010

John Hovanek 11/23/2010  
Isadore Nau 11/4/2010  
Harvey P. Cherro 12/10/2010  
Sister Claudia Cherro's father  
Marguerite Laskowski Beauclair 12/11/2010  
Francis (Frank) Sharnott 12/15/2010

Jacqueline Graham 1/16/2011  
Elaine Hayes 1/25/2011  
Annie Mike 1/26/2011  
Gertrude Anderson 2/4/2001  
+Sister Celine Plante's sister



# St. James School Students Visit Monastery

By Sister Dorene King

Laughter, learning, and listening blessed Sisters and students as they shared the gift of hospitality. On Friday, January 14, the 4th and 5th grade classes of St. James School in Duluth were our guests at the Monastery. These guests began their visit by sharing their puppet show production of the life of Johann Sebastian Bach. Following the puppet show the students were given a tour, attended our Eucharistic Mass, and had lunch with the Sisters. Each student, thirty-three in all, had the opportunity to eat lunch with a Sister. According to their comments, the Sisters and students were delighted and grateful for this encounter.

Photo by Andi Therrien



*Sister Dorene King (left) with students at the puppet show.*



Photo by Andi Therrien

*St. James School students visited with (l to r) Sister Agnes Fleck and Sister Jean Maher.*

## It's all about Love

By Sister Mary Rochefort

Benedictine Friends shared the gift of friendship as they made valentines together. Some made three or four valentines as they chatted away about many things. On Valentine's Day each person gave her valentines to significant people in her life.

Benedictine Friends is a joint endeavor between St. Scholastica Monastery and The College of St. Scholastica. Its goal is to bring Sisters and students together on a personal level, allowing them to develop lasting friendships. Large group gatherings are held six to eight times during the academic year.

In addition, individual friends get together for personal visits as time allows. The year's activities will culminate with a Sunday Mass followed by Brunch in Somers Hall Greenview Dining Room on April 17.



Photo by Sister Mary Rochefort

*Sisters Luella Wegscheid, Pauline Micke, and Mary Carla Flood (standing) with CSS students February 3, 2011.*

# Benedictine Center of Spirituality

By Sister Pauline Micke

THE ADVENT RETREAT held on November 20, 2010, touched deeply the lives of the 22 participants. As one states, "This really helps me prepare for the coming of Christ at Christmas, especially when all around me there is so much going on." Thanks to Sister Mary Josephine Torborg for deepening our longing during this season.



Photo by Sister Patricia Anne Williams

## ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES:

**Spiritual Direction:** If you are seeking spiritual direction, please call Sister Pauline at 218-723-7086. There are several Sisters who are engaged in this ministry.

**5<sup>th</sup> Steps:** We have some Sisters who are prepared to hear 5<sup>th</sup> Steps. Just give a call.

Call or e-mail Sister Pauline if your Church or group would like a retreat or presentation to be done at your site.

## LOOKING AHEAD:

**Lenten Workshop:** "Healing Life's Hurts II" — Saturday, March 19, 2011, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. This workshop will address the ways that life's hurts affect us and the varied ways of healing that are available to us. Topics include Meditation, Healing of the Mind, and Deeper Healing and Cosmic Healing. The workshop will be facilitated by Sister Michelle Dosch and Sister Jeanne Ann Weber. Freewill offering. Please register by calling 723-6555 or e-mail: pauline.m@duluthosb.org.

## PUT THIS ON YOUR CALENDAR:

On Saturday, July 16, 2011, Sister Sarah O'Malley will facilitate a workshop "Dorothy Day: 1897-1980: A Radical Christian Woman." Freewill offering. Call or e-mail for reservations.



# In Loving Memory

Photo by Sister Joyce Fournier



## Sister Celine Plante, OSB

July 20, 1927 – November 26, 2010



*Sister Celine cared for the aged for many years.*

Sister Celine Plante, OSB, 83, died Friday, November 26, 2010, at St. Mary's Medical Center. She entered the Duluth Benedictine community September 8, 1944, and professed her monastic vows July 11, 1946. She celebrated her Silver Jubilee January 2, 1972, her Golden Jubilee July 7, 1996, and her Diamond Jubilee July 9, 2006.

She was born July 20, 1927, to Isadore and Myrtle (Martineau) Plante in Fort Ripley, Minnesota. After graduating from elementary school, she attended Stanbrook Hall High School in Duluth. She was assigned to the ministry of various domestic services after taking her first monastic vows. Sister Celine served in this capacity for many years at the McCabe Guest Home (a residence for senior citizens) as well as in several convents: St. Thomas Convent in Phoenix, St. Joseph's Hospital and St. Francis Convent, both in Brainerd, and St. Thomas Convent in International Falls. One year she was the housemother of preschool children at St. James Children's Home.

In 1968 Sister Celine became the Food Service Supervisor in Somers Hall at The College of St. Scholastica. This faithful ministry earned her a ten-year service pin. Later she served in Food Service at the Monastery until 1996. In this work, on her own admission, she became a "fairly skilled bread-maker." Her talents were not limited to food service, however. After her retirement her artistry came out in the dish towels and pillowcases she embroidered for sale in the Monastery Books and Gifts Shop and the annual Christmas sale. She also took time to mend clothing for the Sisters in Benet Hall at the Monastery.

Sister Celine was a very quiet person who had an incredible way of communicating simply by her presence, her eyes, and her beautiful smile. She liked to tease and to be teased, and she loved the challenge of serving a variety of menus, especially when they were tailored to suit the needs and wants of the Sisters. At her wake several comments were made about her fidelity to prayer and to her work. She was a good cook and enjoyed using her culinary skills when making goodies for any occasion. The words of one of the hymns sung at her funeral seemed especially appropriate for her: "Give us the bread of life to eat!"

Sister Celine was preceded in death by her parents, her brother Elmer Joseph, and a sister who had died shortly after birth. In addition to the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, she is survived by her sister Gertrude Anderson, several nieces, and a nephew.



*Sister Celine (left) and Sister Rebecca Burggraff*



# In Loving Memory (cont.)

Photo by Sister Joyce Fournier



## Sister Ethel Radtke, OSB

January 17, 1920 – November 27, 2010

Sister Ethel (formerly Emilene) Radtke, OSB, 90, of St. Scholastica Monastery, died November 27, 2010. She entered the Duluth Benedictine community January 6, 1941, and professed her monastic vows July 11, 1942. She celebrated her Silver Jubilee August 16, 1967, her Golden Jubilee July 26, 1992, and her Diamond Jubilee July 28, 2002.

Sister Ethel was born January 17, 1920, in Two Rivers, Wisconsin, where she attended Washington High School, graduating as Valedictorian in 1938. On June 6, 1945, she graduated *magna cum laude* with a Bachelor's degree from The College of St. Scholastica where she majored in biology and minored in chemistry. She earned an M.S. from the *Institute Divi Thomae* in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1948 and did further studies at the University of Notre Dame. She made use of her scientific knowledge when teaching at Cathedral Senior High School in Duluth and at The College of St. Scholastica where she also served as prefect.

In 1968 Sister Ethel's ministry took her to Holy Redeemer Center in Two Rivers where she was the Adult Religious Coordinator. Later she was asked by the Duluth Diocesan Department of Religious Education to fill a position in the Indian Apostolate at St. Catherine Mission in Squaw Lake, Minnesota. This ministry lasted for thirty-six years beginning with the teaching of religion and expanding over the years to Indian crafts and culture, serving as the Community Resource Person, and providing a variety of services to the elderly.

When she found that many adults lacked high school diplomas, she began not only to teach GED classes but to chauffeur her students to the exam sites. This pioneer work resulted in GED programs established by both the school district and the reservation. She returned to St. Scholastica Monastery when she retired August 21, 2005.

Many of her Native American friends from Squaw Lake came to her wake expressing their gratitude for her work among them. One woman said Sister Ethel left a special mark on everyone she met. Another said she respected their culture and way of life and did not try to impose her beliefs on them. Others commented on her love of nature. Father Steve Daigle, pastor at St. Catherine's and presider at the funeral Mass, said Sister Ethel was a companion and true friend of the people, a presence of Christ for the diocese, and it was clear to all, in her ministry, that she was an extension of the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery.

Sister Ethel was preceded in death by her parents, Emil and Mabel (Peltier) Radtke and her brother, Harold Radtke. Sister Ethel is survived by the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, an aunt, other relatives, and many friends.



Left to Right: Sister Ethel, Sister Margaret James Laughlin, Sister Timothy Kirby, and Sister Joan Braun, at Squaw Lake in October 1992. All entered the Monastery in 1941.



Sister Ethel on snowshoes





*Sister Timothy at the organ in Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel*

## Sister Timothy Kirby, OSB

September 21, 1918 – December 22, 2010

Sister Timothy Kirby, OSB, 92, died December 22, 2010, at St. Scholastica Monastery. She was born September 21, 1918, in Montreal, Wisconsin, where she attended Montreal Elementary School, but graduated from Lincoln High School in Hurley, Wisconsin. She went on to earn an A.A. in Music from Virginia Community College, Virginia, Minnesota, where she lived with her cousin's (Sister Terrence Kirby's) family. She later received a B.A. from The College of St. Scholastica with a major in Music and a minor in Speech. In 1950 she earned an M.A. from Northwestern University with a major in Interpretation of Literature and a minor in Drama. She also did postgraduate studies in Administration, Counseling, and Literature.

Sister Timothy entered the Duluth Benedictine community September 7, 1940, and professed her monastic vows July 11, 1942. She celebrated her Silver Jubilee August 16, 1967, her Golden Jubilee July 26, 1992, and her Diamond Jubilee July 28, 2002. She taught Chorus, Speech, Music Appreciation, Religion, and English at Stanbrook Hall High School and was prefect of the resident students. Her next assignment was to Cathedral Senior High School where she taught Chorus, Speech, and English. In 1962 she joined the faculty of The College of St. Scholastica where she served in various capacities over the years: Prefect, Dean of Women, Associate Professor of Speech and Drama, Chair of the Drama Department, Campus Ministry, and Assistant Director of Alumni Relations.

From 1970-1980 during the summer months Sister Timothy worked in the Accounting Office, Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island, Michigan. During the school year Sister Timothy assisted on weekends at Young Adult and Adult Seminars at the Welch Center in Duluth, and in 1989 began ministering at the Federal Prison as a volunteer leading Catholic Scripture study groups and, later, also presiding at Communion Services on Sundays when a priest was not available. She participated in other "extracurricular" activities as well, many of which were music-related: the Skyline Singers, the College Orchestra, directing the Monastery *Schola*, serving as organist for the Monastery, and playing the string bass in the Monastery Contemporary Music group. She also was very committed to working for peace and justice.

She belonged to numerous organizations, some of which were: The American Association of University Women, Pax Christi (State representative from Duluth), SOAR, Benedictine Health System (Board of Directors for two BHS facilities in Shakopee, Minnesota), Arrowhead Interfaith Council Board of Directors, Welch Center Board, Spirit Valley Youth Center Board, Benedictine Health Center Board, St. Joseph's Medical Center Board (Brainerd), Women's Commission - City of Duluth (served as Chair), Spectra Board, College of St. Scholastica Alumni Board, and Arrowhead Interfaith Council.

Along the way she received many awards. In 1994 the St. Scholastica Alumni Association established the Sister Timothy Kirby Benedictine Spirit Award that honors alumni who have shown professional achievement and who exemplify the Benedictine values. In 2002 she was named Volunteer of the Year at the Federal Prison Camp in Duluth. In 2003 she received an Excellence in Service to the Community award from The College of St. Scholastica in recognition of her work with various groups in the Duluth-Superior area. In 2004 she received a Women as Agents of Change award from the Minnesota branch of the AAUW.

Sister Timothy was preceded in death by her parents Timothy and Franceline (Genisot) Kirby and her three brothers: Neil, John, and William. In addition to the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, she is survived by several nieces and nephews and countless friends.



*Sister Timothy and Jeanne Thompson, co-workers at CSS on an Alumni trip to Green Bay, Spring 1997*

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*Hope is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul,  
And sings the tune without the words  
And never stops at all.*

***by Emily Dickinson***