

PATHWAYS



Newsletter of the Duluth Benedictine Sisters

Duluth, Minnesota

Vol. 24, No. 1 • Fall 2012



Published by
Sisters of St. Scholastica
Monastery, Duluth, MN

Produced by
Monastery Development /
Public Relations Office

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Pathways is published
quarterly and is distributed
among friends, relatives,
associates and benefactors of
the Sisters of St. Scholastica
Monastery.

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Letter from the Prioress

“Grace is everywhere.” This line from *The Diary of a Country Priest*, written by Georges Bernanos, is one of my favorite gems of truth and comes to mind often as I reflect on the workings of God in my life, in our monastic community, and in the world as a whole. Everywhere and every day there are reminders of God’s abiding love and presence.

In the splendor of creation and the abundance of Earth’s beauty and fruitfulness; in the growth of our monastic community, both in new members and in the fidelity of those who for years have given their lives to God and the service of others; in the precious gift of daily prayer and liturgical celebrations—grace is indeed wondrously manifest. In the outpouring of love and concern for those whose lives have been devastated by personal tragedy, natural disasters, and suffering of multiple kinds; in solidarity with the marginalized and in the courageous and persistent response to events and actions that threaten basic human rights and the full flowering of the human family; in the growing desire to transform conflict into collaboration and communion, and domination into mutuality and love—grace is powerfully present.

In these times when the cries of all creation, groaning in one great act of giving birth, grow louder and more intense, the Spirit still hovers over the chaos and breathes new outpourings of grace within our hearts, preparing us for a fresh inbreaking of the Reign of God. Though mysteriously hidden at times, the God of our longing draws us deeper and deeper into the Divine Presence, carving out within us a spaciousness for the Christ we are called to welcome in the poor, the rejected, the oppressed, and one another. All of these are privileged places of encounter with the all-encompassing, gratuitous mercy and empowering love of our God.

With Jon Richardson, author of *Night Visions*, let us pray, “You hollow us out God, so that we may carry you, and you endlessly fill us only to be emptied again. Make smooth our inward spaces and sturdy, that we may hold you with less resistance and bear you with deeper grace.”

Indeed, “Grace is everywhere!”

Lovingly in Christ, with deep gratitude and prayers,

Sister Lois Eckes

Sister Lois, OSB
Prioress



Can Suffering Be a Sign of Hope?

By Sister Paule Pierre Barbeau

People have asked me in the past few years why we have to suffer and whether good can come from suffering. I have had the opportunity to reflect on these questions, especially in recent years, as I personally struggled through major life disappointments and tragic losses. I added a question of my own: “Can suffering lead to hope?”

Human beings encounter all types of suffering – physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual. Suffering varies greatly in degree. “Death by a thousand pinpricks” illustrates well the type of suffering we endure on a daily basis if we are alive and responsive to those around us. At the other extreme is the intense suffering that strips us of our strength and leaves an immense void in our very core. Each painful event is unique in itself, as well as unique to the person who endures it. Thus no two deaths cause the same pain or sense of loss, nor do two people react to a loved one’s death in the same manner. Suffering is universal, however. It is part of the human condition.

I have found that good can come from suffering. In order for that to happen the suffering must be embraced rather than denied or repressed. Note that I did not say that it must be “enjoyed!” The interior work needed to deal with the emotions associated with suffering (e.g., love, guilt, joy, regret, etc.) may lead to amazing human growth, strength, patience, and increased self-knowledge. This in turn may lead to increased empathy and compassion. Allowing others to share in our suffering and trusting them with our feelings can heighten our sense of community. Other gifts can surface if we pay attention, such as increased intimacy with others who share in our suffering, or simply becoming aware of others around us who are suffering and ways in which we can help them. We can also grow in our spiritual life and in Christ’s love by turning over our suffering to Christ. “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:27-29).

Our suffering takes on meaning if we choose to unite our suffering with Christ’s. Christ suffered throughout His ministry, when He was misunderstood by His family (Mk 3:21) and His disciples (e.g., Mk 8:14-21), when He wept for His friend Lazarus (Jn 11:35) and the future fate of Jerusalem (Lk 19:41), and when He endured His agony, crucifixion, and death. Christ’s suffering conferred meaning to his death, without which his death would have been devoid of its sacrificial character, thus stripping it of its salvific value.

“For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ” (2 Cor 1:5). We share in Christ’s suffering by accepting our own suffering and by sharing it with Christ in prayer and with those whom we trust. For we find Christ in each of our neighbors. In my own journey I have not suffered alone. Family and friends have shared my grief just as I have shared theirs. It is in this that I have found goodness and meaning in suffering. For in this sharing I have found Christ, and both He and those around me have lightened the load, providing comfort. Our suffering unites us with each other and with Christ in a bond of love that allows us also to share in Christ’s glory. “Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory” (Rom 8:17). Therein lies the hope.

REMEMBERING THINGS PAST: GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

By Sister Margaret Clarke

With the recent publication of *Lost Duluth* by Tony Dierckins and Maryanne Norton, an illustrated compendium of notable but no longer existing buildings and neighborhoods, we were inspired to add our own heritage of “lost” buildings once belonging to the Benedictine community of Duluth. We have chosen three for this first installment: there may be more to come!

The “Old” St. Mary’s Hospital. The earliest of these to be constructed in 1887 was located at Twentieth Avenue West and Third Street in what is now Duluth’s West End. The Benedictine Sisters in Duluth in the 1880s were missioned from St. Benedict’s Convent in St. Joseph, Minnesota. Mother Scholastica Kerst was prioress there at that time. The independent Duluth community did not yet exist. The Sisters were responsible for teaching in four parish schools. Abbot Alexius Edelbrock of St. John’s, a close friend of Mother Scholastica and the Kerst family, had a dream of establishing an independent abbey of monks in Duluth, and to that end had purchased several lots in the West End. He sent a crew of monks together with the monastic architect from St. John’s, Father Gregory Steil, to construct a church, school, and “seminary,” which he envisioned as becoming the new abbey. Bricks from the St. John’s brickyard were sent to Duluth by the trainload, and by the end of 1887 the construction was nearing completion. Another problem had arisen for Abbot Alexius, however: an ecclesiastical investigation of his abbey and Mother Scholastica’s convent had been mandated. The time was not ripe for a new monastic foundation, so he suggested to Mother Scholastica that the convent take over the seminary building as a hospital. The church and school became the Benedictine parish of St. Clement’s.



The 1887 St. Clement’s “campus,” including church, elementary school, and “seminary”—later to be St. Mary’s Hospital.



The original St. Mary’s Hospital at 20th Avenue West and Second Street.

Father Gregory’s plan for the building strongly resembled other structures he had planned: a plain unadorned façade topped by a Mansard roof, no electricity, no running water, not originally intended as a hospital. Sister Alexia Kerst, who had been the hospital administrator in Bismarck, was in charge, with six additional Sisters. They chose to locate surgery on the fourth floor, accessible by a hand-cranked elevator. Dr. William Magie, one of the founders of the Duluth Clinic, was the staff physician. St. Mary’s Hospital was dedicated and blessed on April 3, 1888, by Abbot Alexius, who then checked himself in as the first patient, suffering from what various sources state to be pneumonia, typhoid, or exhaustion from his dealings with his monastic detractors and Roman superiors.

The hospital also served as home for a number of Sisters who taught in the Duluth schools and who hiked all the way downtown daily. In 1898 a new hospital building was constructed in central Duluth, and the building became first an orphanage (the precursor of St. James Orphanage) and then in 1911, St. Ann’s Home for the Aged. The building was demolished in 1958 to make way for a parking lot.

The Motherhouse that wasn't. In 1892, when the Duluth community became independent, Mother Scholastica rented two 16-room townhouses in the newly constructed Munger Terrace for a Sisters' residence and girls' academy. A significant number of Sisters still lived at the hospital as well. Mother Scholastica, who had unerring taste, had chosen one of the premier addresses in Duluth, and it soon became evident that the rent was a bit more than the fledgling Community could afford. Her parents, Peter and Anna Kerst, purchased two lots for the Community on Third Street at Fifth Avenue East, and plans were made to build a motherhouse at that location. Bishop McGolrick, who had also been living in Munger Terrace since his church and rectory had burned, had hired a notable Duluth architect, Gearhard Tenbusch, to design his new Sacred Heart Cathedral in 1893. It was doubtless the Bishop who recommended Tenbusch to Mother Scholastica, and plans were drawn up for an elaborate structure with towers, turrets, balconies and elaborate brickwork very much in keeping with the Victorian taste of Duluth architecture at that time. Construction began on the foundations in 1893, but lack of funds and a severe economic downturn in Duluth prevented anything but the basement to be completed. After a skirmish with the community in St. Joseph, who still owned property in Duluth, Mother Scholastica managed to gain title to two lots on Third Avenue East and Third Street and was able to put up a simple brick building there to house the Sisters and Academy: Sacred Heart Institute.



Munger Terrace as it appeared in 1892.



Gearhard Tenbusch's plans for the new motherhouse at 5th Avenue East and Third Street.



Sacred Heart Institute on 3rd Avenue East and Third Street, constructed 1894.

Around the turn of the century, Duluth still harbored a number of anti-Catholic groups who were fearful that the Catholics, in the form of the Benedictine Sisters, were infiltrating the area along with Polish, Irish, Italian, and German immigrants. One account says that the Sisters were afraid to walk in certain parts of Duluth lest they be attacked by Nativists. Another recounts that some well-meaning businessmen visited St. Mary's Hospital ready to rescue the nuns who were being held there against their wills. The abandoned foundations of the unbuilt motherhouse proved to be what would now be designated an attractive nuisance in that regard. Various groups were giving guided tours of the "dark cells, dungeons and cubilettes" in which the nuns would be immured. In 1896 Bishop McGolrick wrote a scathing letter to the *Duluth Herald* stating "To allay the fears of these poor people, we invite them to visit all our institutions. . . . They are at full liberty to examine every nook and corner for skeletons, walled-up nuns and buried babies. . . . We have no desire for boiled Baptist, nor do we long for Unitarian on toast."

The “New” St. Mary’s Hospital. By 1897 the financial problems of both the civic community and the religious community had eased, and Bishop McGolrick suggested to Mother Scholastica that the abandoned Fifth Avenue site be completed as a new hospital as the West End St. Mary’s was now overcrowded and far from the main business district. Mother Scholastica and the Chapter agreed, and construction began. Mother Scholastica’s correspondence with the previous architect, Mr. Tenbusch, seems to indicate that they had fallen out over some fees, and she therefore chose to go with a new architect for the hospital building. This time she went to St. Paul for Clarence H. Johnston, who would ten years later build Glensheen in Duluth as well. The yellow-brick building seems to have been modeled on the original motherhouse plan, but less flamboyantly decorated. It could house 200 patients—twice as many as the original St. Mary’s. Even so, the demand for services became even greater, and in 1912, an extension with an additional 75 beds was added. Over the decades, additions were made along the Third Street axis in 1921 and 1957, and in 1967 the yellow-brick east wing was razed to make way for a new east wing, opened in 1969.



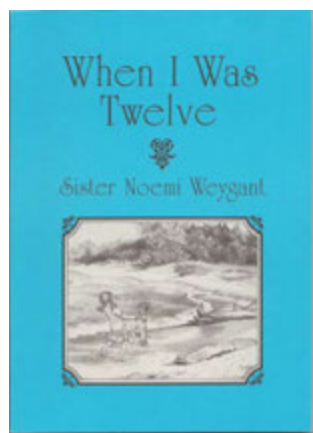
*The “new” St. Mary’s Hospital at
5th Avenue East and Third Street in 1898*

Forgotten but not gone. Although we have concentrated here on buildings no longer present, there are still places existing in Duluth where the Sisters lived and worked, but which no longer have any connection with the Benedictines. Munger Terrace, visible as one drives up Mesaba Avenue, has been converted into 32 low-income apartments. Sacred Heart Institute on Third Avenue East and Third Street, the original motherhouse, became first a residence for St. Mary’s Nursing students and eventually a retirement home for older Sisters. It was sold in 1972 and has also been converted to low-cost housing.

From Russia With Love

By Sister Mary Catherine Shambour

Pictured below are two versions of the same delightful memoir, *When I Was Twelve*, written by now deceased Sister Noemi Weygant: one the original version published by Priory Press in Duluth in 1991 and the second a translation into Russian published by Dialogue in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 2011. The original, brought into Russia through Duluth’s Sister City relationship with Petrozavodsk, so delighted one of its Russian readers, Victoria Kirenskaya of St. Petersburg, that she proceeded to translate it into Russian so that Russian children would have the opportunity to read this charming story of young Ida Weygant beginning with her twelfth birthday when the family moves from Montana to Duluth and she meets new friends and falls in love with Lake Superior. The pencil sketches in the original copy are the work of artist Roberta Moog of Duluth and have been reproduced in the Russian version. A number of copies were brought to Duluth this summer by Galina Tyun from St. Petersburg University who assisted with its publication and has visited the College and Monastery several times. If you would like a copy of the Russian edition, please contact me at 218-723-6646.



SISTER LISA MAURER MAKES HER PERPETUAL MONASTIC PROFESSION

July 11, 2012, Sister Lisa Maurer, OSB, professed her lifetime commitment of seeking God as a Benedictine at St. Scholastica Monastery. In Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel filled with her Benedictine Sisters, family, and friends, Sister Lisa professed the threefold promise of obedience, stability, and fidelity to monastic life. Msgr. Douglas L. Grams of the Diocese of New Ulm presided at the Eucharistic celebration of the Rite of Perpetual Monastic Profession. The beautiful Rite included the singing of the Litany of Saints, the signing of the profession document, the singing of the ancient prayer, *Suscipe*, and the presentation of the blessed ring, which is the sign of Sister Lisa's perpetual promise. Following Eucharist those present greeted Sister Lisa and gathered in Rockhurst Dining Room for a celebratory meal.



Originally from Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, Sister Lisa came to St. Scholastica Monastery in 2007. She became a Novice on August 15, 2008, and made her First Monastic Profession in 2009. Sister Lisa's first official ministry was as Pastoral Associate at the Parishes of St. Lawrence and St. Joseph in Duluth where she served for nearly three years. Sister Lisa is currently the Mission Integration Manager with the Benedictine Health System and is pursuing a master's degree in Pastoral Ministry from St. John's University. She continues to be involved in many ministerial works within the Monastery and The College of St. Scholastica. Sister Lisa frequently visits parishes and schools, giving presentations on various topics including vocations and Benedictine life.

"I thank God for calling me to life as a Benedictine at St. Scholastica Monastery. I am thrilled and honored to be a part of this faith-filled community of Sisters. I am grateful to my family and friends for all their love and support. I pray that God blesses more women with the grace of a monastic vocation!"

Photos by Catherine Wright and Andi Therrien

TWO WOMEN BECOME NOVICES

Sister Elizabeth Farias

I have been asked to write about “moving on up” from the postulancy to the novitiate here at St. Scholastica Monastery. The reaction I had as a new postulant mostly dealt with being able to participate in *statio*, seeing my new “digs” in the cloistered area of the Monastery, and being able to say, “I really like this.”

The first few days as a novice, I kept thinking, “Who are they calling ‘Sister?’” and then the realization: “Oh, that’s me. I am a Sister now.” Even though it was a little difficult getting used to being Sister Elizabeth, I admit that a couple of months before becoming a novice I did send off for new address labels with the name Sister Elizabeth Farias, OSB, on top (just in case they might be needed some day!). The title of Sister does not come without a little sacrifice, though. Getting rid of my car looms large, and curbing my spending is a bit of a challenge.

In the novitiate I have found that, as we delve deeper into learning the monastic way, both in our studies and in the way we live our lives, I am excited, challenged, and a bit scared. I frequently ask myself, “Can I really live this life with integrity, honor, and joy? The answer I keep getting is “no—not if I try to do it all on my own. . . but with God’s help and my Sisters’ prayer, example, and tutelage, then yes, I think it might just happen.”



Sister Lois Eckes, (right) presents a copy of the Rule of St. Benedict to Sister Elizabeth Farias as Sister Michelle Dosch, Director of Postulants and Novices, looks on.



Sister Paule Pierre Barbeau (left) with sponsor Sister Jeanne Ann Weber. Photos by Andi Therrien

Sister Paule Pierre Barbeau

“From now on, you will be called Sister Paule Pierre, OSB,” announced Sister Lois, during the Rite of Reception as a Novice. Wow. The decision to modify my name, taking on the name of my father who had passed away just a few weeks before, had not been taken lightly. I was, furthermore, now carrying the name of two persons who could potentially be considered the two greatest apostles – Saints Peter and Paul. This seemed like a large burden to bear, given the strong personalities of these two men and their unequivocal devotion to Christ. Upon further reflection, however, it is a wonderful comfort to have them at my side to sustain me and intercede for me in my own lapses and foibles just as Christ sustained them in their own faith and ministry. I am now settling into the routine of the novitiate. This year is about studying the *Rule of Benedict*, gaining an understanding of the vows, and deepening my spiritual life, all with a view of further discerning whether God is calling me to religious life within this Benedictine community. It is a privileged time of study and prayer which allows little contact with the “outside world.” I look forward to better defining the presence of God in the center of my being during this time of solitude. I already have had time for meditation during time spent gardening, as well as time for regular *lectio divina* and contemplation. Far from being a time of loneliness, I expect this year will be a time of discovery of self, of God, and of others.

Postulant Kathleen Del Monte

Photo by Sister Lisa Maurer



Left to right: Sister Donna Schroeder, Director of Sisters in First Monastic Profession; Sister Lois Eckes, Prioress; Kathleen Del Monte; Sister Mary Catherine Shambour, Director of Vocation Ministry; and Sister Michelle Dosch, Director of Postulants and Novices

July 15 marked a special day in my ongoing spiritual journey. On that day we celebrated the Rite of Passage from the Affiliate to the Postulant stage of Initial Formation. On this day I formally asked the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery to allow me to join more fully in their Community. My eyes filled with tears as they responded: “We thank God who has brought you to this day and we...stand ready to help and support you as you experience more fully our Benedictine monastic way of life.” When Sister Lois, our Prioress, read from the Prologue of the *Rule of St. Benedict*: “Listen carefully, my daughter, to the master’s instructions, and attend to them with the ear of your heart,” and later “as we progress in this way of life and in faith, we shall run on the path of God’s commandments, our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love,” I was both humbled and filled with joy!

The postulancy marks my transition to becoming a Benedictine monastic woman. During this sacred time I am graced to live, pray, study, and work with the Community. It is a time to study the *Rule of St. Benedict*, to learn about monasticism, and to reflect on and practice the tools of God’s service. I am so very blessed to have this opportunity to deepen my prayer life – with daily Eucharist, communal Morning, Midday, and Evening Prayer, and *lectio divina* (sacred reading). In addition, I serve as sacristan, assist with liturgical ministries, study theology, assist with vocation ministry, and answer the phone and greet guests. I am, indeed, very grateful to God and to the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery for allowing me to be here in this sacred place!

BARN PROGRAM REPRISED AS “CELEBRATING CREATIVITY”

By Sister Dorene King



Sister Dorene and several of the children participating in “Celebrating Creativity” Photo by Andi Therrien

The popular “Barn Program” (1968-1984) begun by Sister Mary Charles McGough was brought back to life this summer as “Celebrating Creativity.” “Celebrating Creativity” was held at St. Scholastica Monastery during the week of July 16 – 20. The program involved nine St. Scholastica Monastery Sisters and eight children who had completed either the fourth or the fifth grade. In addition to art activities, we sang, square danced, played “Bird Bingo,” and went on several nature exploration outings.

“Celebrating Creativity” will return next summer for the week of July 22 – July 26. The program is for children who will enter the 5th or 6th grade in the Fall of 2013. For further information and to pre-register for this program, please contact Sister Dorene King, OSB, at McCabe Renewal Center (218) 724-5266.

Sister Profile: Sister Barbara Higgins

My introduction to the Benedictines came at an early age. Our family, consisting of twelve children (I'm a middle child), were parishioners at St. Clement's church in Duluth, Minnesota, where I was born and raised. In Sister Valeria Lessard's kindergarten I knew I would be "one of these special Sisters" when I grew up.

My parents, Jim and Gen Higgins, were actively involved in our parish, which brought us closer to the Benedictine Sisters and Priests. A solid faith life was demonstrated by mom and dad on a daily basis. Mary Rae, who is five years older than I, announced in her senior year that she was entering the convent. After I got over the shock, I felt so proud. She has been a healing mentor and friend all these years.

For me, entering our Community September 8, 1953, at the age of 18 was right in every sense of the word. However, it didn't take long to realize how homesick and discouraged I became with thoughts of "I don't have anything to offer." I remember sitting in our large chapel as a novice praying desperately "God if you want me here, you better keep me here!" God surely did hear my prayer because every time I mentally packed my bags to catch the Piedmont bus to head for home, something would intervene. . . and here I am today.

After my novitiate year, at the age of twenty, I was assigned to teach second grade at St. Francis School in Brainerd, Minnesota. Initially, the challenge of large classes and little educational preparation left me feeling weary and insecure. One morning when the early wake-up bell rang I turned on my reading light, put one foot out of bed, and said, "God I just can't do it today!" I looked at the floor and saw a holy card that had dropped out of my Bible the night before. The message: "Arise my love, my dove, my beautiful one and come!" I laughed and moved into the new day. As I grew in knowledge and confidence, I enjoyed teaching at St. Francis and in the elementary grades in Cloquet and St. John's in Duluth.

In the early seventies I was asked to join the staff at the Welch Center as a Youth Consultant. Those nine years were ever so enriching in areas of personal/spiritual growth and ministering to teens and their parents with their struggles and crisis situations. Also, directing leadership training, seminars, and Christian living at the Center and Twilight experiences out in the parishes was challenging and exciting!

My summers at Creighton University, working on a Masters in Christian Spirituality, was another unique experience in deepening my prayer life, strengthening talents, encountering others' faith journeys and so much more. Other ministries I have been called to through the years: Director of Residential Life, Chaplain at CSS; Subprioress; RCIA, Prayer Life, and Senior Living at St. Patrick in Scottsdale.



Allow me to add that my ability to act silly, do pantomimes and give people the permission to laugh out loud has developed my creativity and provided a sense of ease to my Sisters and so many other folks along the way. Mom and Dad were entertainers in the field of dancing. Mom especially loved to ham it up. When I was a teenager she said to me, "Can't you do something serious?" My response was, "Mom, show me!"

At this point in my life I am offering Spiritual Direction to two parishes in the Phoenix area and meeting with twenty-four directees over a month's time. I love this ministry. . . my semi-retirement.

Over the past 50 years in our Community, God has been my constant companion along with my awesome Sisters, family, friends, and those persons I have encountered in many ministries. I am deeply grateful.



*Sister Barbara Higgins (left) and
Sister Mary Rae Higgins*

Photo by Andi Therien

IS IT I, LORD?

by Sister Mary Catherine Shambour

Photo by Jeff Frey; courtesy of CSS



In a previous article on the development of vocation this writer pointed out some of the signs and stages through which a woman passes as she discerns that God is inviting—even pursuing—her to dedicate herself totally to Him through a religious vocation. As the call grows stronger she recognizes that only by surrendering her own will and freedom to God in imitation of Christ’s obedience to the Father can she return such love and find her own fulfillment.

What reaction does she receive from her contemporaries? True to our American cult of individualism, some will say, “Well, everyone’s got to do her own thing, but what a waste!” Even Catholics, especially more sophisticated ones will lament, “When is this Church ever going to get rid of those medieval relics of the past: all that black, vows of obedience, requesting permissions, getting reprimanded? Can’t we see that this is the 21st century and those ideas are just totally obsolete? Why doesn’t she strive to do something useful with her life like getting an Olympic medal or becoming CEO of a Fortune 500 company, or at least providing us with grandchildren?” The American woman contemplating a

religious life today will find encouragement in short supply except from those who recognize it as “one’s deepest gladness meeting the world’s greatest needs.”

So what are the world’s greatest needs? Anyone who even minimally attends to world news—apart from the latest celebrity’s scandal—can see that the world’s soon-to-be 9,000,000,000 population and the very planet itself is in a perilous situation. The world’s poor in many Third World nations—despite an alarming growth in persecution—are turning daily by the thousands to the basic truths of Christianity as exemplified in the Beatitudes, seeing in the Gospel message their only hope. And their young people are flocking to religious life seeing in it their opportunity to build God’s kingdom on earth for their people.

And in our nation? Even if we don’t personally experience its “greatest needs,” in an election year we are certainly bombarded with hearing them! While we’re quick to blame others, do we ever focus on the underlying cause of our predicament and name it? Is anyone concerned by the fact that for the first time in recorded human history vast majorities of people in the most advanced nations of the world have totally abandoned belief in any higher power to which they are answerable and seek only to squeeze out of an overburdened earth every pleasure they can possibly accumulate for themselves? Can it bode well for the world’s future when human beings made in the image of God ignore their spiritual dimension which is eternal? If the pundits scoff that religions are the source of most wars and evils in the world, are they looking at the basic truths those religions espouse or aberrations of them they see practiced?

Being an authentic Christian in today’s interrelated world means interpreting the basic teachings of Jesus in a global context. Fortunately there are selfless individuals who are concerned about the world’s needs and seek projects or professions that will benefit humanity. But who in our society will help bring people back to God for whom they were created?

This October our Church commences the Year of Faith. With God’s grace, many will reflect on how they can better live their Faith in today’s milieu. But some will be asked to demonstrate that God is worth giving one’s entire life for by dedicating their entire existence to Him just as the early Christians accepted even martyrdom to carry on God’s loving plan for humanity. Such persons are needed to prompt others to holiness according to their state of life and to keep the light of Christ shining in our unbelieving world. Though Catholic women currently cannot be priests, they can consecrate their lives to God and neighbor through embracing religious life in a variety of its many charisms. A modern woman will want to know that the form of consecrated life she chooses has meaning for herself and the contemporary world. In a subsequent article we can discuss what values a *monastic* vocation offers our contemporary culture and why this form has persisted for centuries. But if we still consider religious life a “wasted life,” I suggest we meditate for a while on the crucifix.

Women’s Weekend Discernment Retreat

Single Catholic women ages 18-50 interested in learning about religious life are invited to spend a weekend at the Monastery from Friday, October 12 through Sunday, October 14. The weekend includes sessions on prayer, discernment, various forms of religious life, a chance to pray with the monastic community, and to visit with Sisters and women currently in formation. For further information or to register, contact Sister Mary Catherine Shambour at mcsambour@duluthosb.org or call 218-723-6646.

HIGHLIGHTS

ENFLAMING THE HOPE WITHIN US:

24th Federation Chapter Meeting of the Federation of St. Benedict

By Sister Mary Catherine Shambour



The new Council includes Sister Agatha Muggli, Annunciation Monastery, ND; Sister Mary Jane Berger, St. Benedict's Monastery, MN; Sister Linda Soder, St. Paul's Monastery, MN; and Sister Edith Bogue, St. Scholastica Monastery, MN. Photo by Sister Nicole Kunze, Annunciation Monastery, Bismarck, ND.

Sister Lois Eckes, Prioress, and elected delegates Sisters Edith Bogue and Mary Catherine Shambour participated in the 24th Federation Chapter Meeting of the Federation of St. Benedict at Annunciation Monastery in Bismarck, North Dakota, from July 17-22. Every three years the prioresses, chapter president, councilors and delegates from the ten monasteries in the Federation meet for the purpose of fostering monastic life of all their members by encouraging them to share their gifts of leadership and human and material resources, to set their common goals, conduct business and elect new councilors.

The Federation of St. Benedict, comprising a total of 565 members from the United States, Japan, Taiwan, Puerto Rico and the Bahamas, is the smallest of three Benedictine federations in the United States. Sister Edith Bogue was elected as one of the four councilors to serve on the Federation Board for 2012-2015.

MONASTIC INSTITUTE 2012

By Sister Mary Catherine Shambour

Eight members of St. Scholastica Monastery participated in the 27th annual Monastic Institute from June 24 to June 28 at St. John's University School of Theology-Seminary in Collegeville, Minnesota. The theme of this year's conference, which is open to monastic men and women as well as laypersons was "Prayer and Community," and featured presentations by monastic men and women from "active" Benedictine communities and from contemplative Cistercian communities who also follow the *Rule of St. Benedict* according to the strict observance. In addition to attending sessions by four key presenters, the 125 participants daily joined the monks of St. John's for liturgical prayer and Eucharist, toured the Monastery and St. John's Bible display, attended a social, heard a concert by the National Catholic Youth Choir, and spent an early evening as guests of the Sisters of St. Benedict's Monastery in neighboring St. Joseph, Minnesota.



Sisters left to right rear: Sister Agnes Fleck, Sister Mary Josephine Torborg, Sister Paule Pierre Barbeau, Sister Elizabeth Farias; Sister Michelle Dosch, and Sister Donna Schroeder. Front: Sister Ann Marie Wainright and Sister Mary Catherine Shambour

Our Centenarians

Sister Thea Sandusky celebrated her 104th birthday on Benet Hall at the Monastery with balloons, cake and ice cream and many of her Sister friends. Sister Thea was born June 4, 1908. Also celebrating this summer was Sister Devota LaVoie who was born July 27, 1910. Sister Devota also celebrated on Benet Hall with a special Bingo-themed cake. Happy Birthday Sisters!



Sister Thea Sandusky

Photos by Sister Joyce Fournier and Catherine Wright

Sister Devota LaVoie

Photos by Andi Therrien

BENEDICTINE COMMONS SCULPTURE DEDICATION

By Sister Margaret Clarke

The dedication of a commissioned sculpture in the recently completed College of St. Scholastica Science Center addition was one of several dedicatory celebrations for this facility. The new addition includes laboratories, offices, and workrooms for the Chemistry department, as well as a spacious commons area. Because the Benedictine community was the major donor for this facility, they were given the honor of naming the commons area, and chose “Benedictine Commons.” The décor of this area recognizes the contributions of the Benedictine Sisters to the sciences at the College. Large wall panels feature photographs of Sisters who taught in the departments that were originally located in the 1968 science building, and the sculpture, “Wisdom Heralding Peace,” reinforces the centuries-long commitment of the Benedictine order to the love of learning.

The sculpture’s creator, Sara Balbin of Wisconsin, outlined some of the symbolism of this work: “This sculpture calls us to utilize the wisdom of science to promote peace, and to seek God through learning.” The abstract female form holding a model of an atom and the dove of peace, incorporates symbols of the lake and stone natural environment, the Benedictine Sisters, and the campus architecture.



Photo courtesy of CSS

Sister Profile: Sister Agnes Fleck



Sister Agnes at Glastonbury Tor, Somerset, August 1999

Born in Wilmington, Delaware, Sister Agnes Fleck lived in the East until she, her mother, father, and brother settled in Virginia, Minnesota. Her dad John's family had emigrated years before to the Iron Range from Slovenia, and her mother Agnes's had emigrated from Donegal to Pennsylvania and Delaware.

Sister Agnes's first contact with the Benedictines came when she became Sister Lucy's second grade student at Marquette School in Virginia. Then began a happy association with the Benedictine teachers. By the time Agnes had reached the fourth grade, she had decided to become a Sister. With a scholarship to Stanbrook Hall, she came to Duluth. As an aspirant, Agnes was one of a group of like-minded girls who were exploring the possibility of becoming a Benedictine.

In the fall of 1953 Agnes entered the Benedictines with a group that numbered 22 postulants by January 1954. That July 11th the group became novices and donned wool habits, white coifs, and veils. After pronouncing first vows in 1955 as Sister John Marie, Agnes was assigned to teach either grade five, six, or seven in Cloquet, Minneapolis, and Wayzata. Along with many of the Sisters, during the summers Sister taught children in areas without religious instruction. Once the catechetical teaching was completed, Agnes attended summer school at The College of St. Scholastica.

Thirteen years later, Mother Martina Hughes brought Agnes and four of her group back to Duluth to complete a final year of education. She received a degree in Elementary and Secondary Education, Theology, and English. The following year Sister Agnes completed her "practice teaching" at the old Central High School during the fall semester and then taught half-day at Central in the English and Film program developed by the National Film Institute and Composition during the other half of the day at the College. The next fall she was teaching composition and mythology full time at the College. When President Frank Shea told her she needed to have a Master's degree to teach at the College, Sister Agnes gladly began a pursuit of education to enhance the English courses she was teaching—British and American literature, drama, and poetry. A major step in Sister Agnes's return to the University of Minnesota was with the University's first study abroad program in London. As a member of that group, Sister Agnes lived in and took British Literature and Shakespeare classes at the Queen's Hotel in Crystal Palace on Gipsy Hill for a semester. She traveled through England, Ireland, Scotland and Europe. She then returned to the University of Minnesota the following winter to complete her studies. Once back at St. Scholastica, Sister Agnes began teaching a full schedule of British literature, drama, mythology, composition, and Shakespeare.

The founding of the Shakespeare Association of America gave Sister Agnes opportunities to continue her education. She continually wrote papers for presentations and seminars at the yearly meetings throughout the States, and every five years internationally. The international meetings gave her experiences in Stratford-upon-Avon, Berlin, Tokyo, Valletta, and Brisbane as well as additional travel opportunities.

In 1979 prominent Shakespeare scholar Professor Norman Rabkin at Berkeley accepted Sister Agnes for her first National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant to study tragedy. She subsequently received three additional NEH grants to study Japanese music and mythology. More recently a St. Scholastica Faculty Development Grant in 2000 enabled Sister Agnes to visit China with a People to People delegation to learn about arts and culture in Beijing, Xian, and Guangzhou. Then in 2002-2003 she accepted an invitation to teach English at Xinxiang University in Henan Province for a year. Here she delighted in the response of the 225 composition undergraduate students she taught and the 30 graduate students to whom she taught Shakespeare and drama.

In 2004 the Benedictine Rome Study Program allowed Sister Agnes to join twenty Sisters from throughout the States to study a common heritage. The group traveled to Montecassino, Subiaco, and Nurcia, areas related to the life of St. Benedict, and studied Rome and its history, viewing its ruins, churches, and history and art. A four-day free period allowed Sister Agnes to return to Venice with one of the Sisters whose dream it was to see Venice.

As time and her age progress, Sister Agnes continues learning by discovering the delights within Minnesota. For the past few years she has spent the last week in June with many other Benedictines at St. John's and St. Benedict's, probing a deeper understanding of what it means to be Christian and Benedictine.

Upon reflection, Sister Agnes realizes how rich her life and experience have been. Beginning with her parents and reaching to the others with whom she has interacted and from whom she has received, many times she has taken for granted the persons who have given her so much. She is grateful to all. She prizes the relationships she has shared with others. She hopes she has given a measure of her love for this world and its beauty back to all, especially to her students. This profile details a mere sketch of the many, including the Benedictines, who have made her a part of the people of God. May God be glorified in and through us all!

BENEDICTINE CENTER OF SPIRITUALITY

By Sister Pauline Micke, Director

As we begin our 5th year, we are filled with gratitude to God and to all of you for the growth and blessings that continue to grace our ministry. This past year we served over 700 people. Some of the favorite offerings were Spiritual Direction and the Sabbath Day(s).

Thirty people gathered on July 14, 2012, for the Dorothy Day retreat. This was facilitated by Sister Sarah O'Malley. Everyone enjoyed the day and grew in their understanding of this unique woman who called us to heed the Gospel call for social justice and care for the poor through the Catholic Worker Movement.

Dorothy Day Retreat

Photos by Sister Pauline Micke



There will be some new offerings as we begin 2012-2013. As requested by people who took part in parish missions, retreats, and the Advent and Lenten Parish discussion groups, we are beginning "Pausing for Prayer" sessions which will take place 4-6 times a year. We will host these in the parish, someone's home, and at the Monastery. Each will be an experience of a different type of prayer. Call if you or your parish would like to schedule one of these sessions.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Advent Retreat: Sunday, November 17, 2012, from 8:45 a.m. to noon at St. Scholastica Monastery. "Advent: Companions on Our Journey" will reflect on the message that the Advent prophets John the Baptist and Mary have to teach us about actively waiting and preparing for the coming of our Savior.

For more information call 218-723-7086 or email Pauline.m@duluthosb.org

Please Pray for the Following Deceased Friends and Relatives:

Helen Duncan Dahlquist 5/19/2012
Pierre Barbeau 5/22/2012
Sister Paule Pierre Barbeau's father
Meg Bye 5/30/2012
Rose Bjork 5/31/2012
Sister Judith Oland's mother
Jane Jenswold Klotzbach 6/1/2012
Rose Ann Maher 6/1/2012

Rose Vierzba 6/12/2012
Sister Barbara Ann Vierzba's mother
Fr. Norman Pahl, OMI 7/23/2012
Robert Prosen 7/28/2012
Margaret McGillis 8/5/2012
Mary Beth LaForge 8/13/2012

AMERICAN BENEDICTINE ACADEMY AT ST. SCHOLASTICA MONASTERY

By Sister Sarah Smedman

St. Scholastica Monastery, from August 2-5, 2012, hosted the biennial Conference of the American Benedictine Academy, a nonprofit association whose purpose is to cultivate, support, and transmit the Benedictine heritage within contemporary culture. One-hundred twenty nuns, monks, and oblates, representing 32 monasteries/abbeys from Florida to Texas, Massachusetts to Washington, of course including Duluth, attended the Conference, whose theme was “Seek Peace and Pursue It: Monasticism in the Midst of Global Upheaval.”



The four plenary speakers addressed various aspects of what theologian Sandra Schneiders identifies as four “clusters” of contemporary ministries rising out of and directly related to the charisms of religious communities. The primary motivation of all four “clusters” is seeking peace based upon justice. Sister Susan Mika of St. Scholastica Monastery in Boerne, Texas, is one of those focusing on systemic or structural change as a means to achieve social justice. She cited several examples of what can be accomplished if people work together in a common cause. Her talk, “The Power of our Portfolios in this Global World,” emphasized the importance of Benedictine investors knowing the companies in which they hold investments, attending stockholders’ meetings, and speaking out for—or perhaps against—the policies of those companies, ensuring that they do indeed comply with our values.



Brother Luke Devine of St. Martin’s Abbey, Olympia, Washington, spoke on “The Contribution of Buddhist-Christian Dialogue to Peace.” Brother Luke is but one of the intellectuals—scholars, artists, teachers, researchers, and writers—who, from a faith perspective, seek and explore understanding of the mores and culture of our time. He focused on the significance of knowledge of others’ beliefs and practices as a basis for understanding and appreciation.



From a more practical perspective, Sister Colleen Maura McCrane, whose talk “Practicing Presence: Wisdom from the *Rule* [of St. Benedict] on Finding a Balance in a Digital Age,” emphasized the necessity of “intentionality” in the use of technological tools of communication—e-mail, cell phones, facebook, etc. Although these cannot—and should not—replace face-to-face communication, technology is not only with us but has benefits as well as dangers and pitfalls. They are tools to be used judiciously and sparingly when necessary, not habitually nor as screens to distance speaker from audience. Because face-to-face communication includes tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language and is immediate, misunderstanding and misinterpretation are less likely and can be cleared up at once. It does not obscure the humanity of the people involved.

Weldon Nisley, pastor at Seattle Mennonite Church, is an Oblate of Saint John’s Abbey in Collegeville, MN. He has served with Christian Peacemaker Teams, is founder of Bridgefolk, a Mennonite Catholic peace group, and is an epitome of those who work directly with the suffering victims of natural disasters and social



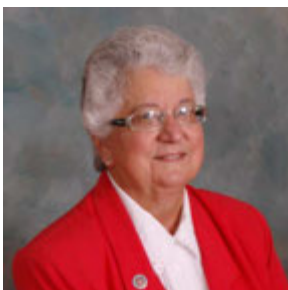
injustices, particularly wars. As a member of Christian Peacemaker Teams, he was among the first into Iraq as peacemakers at the beginning of the war. Nisley's talk, "Seeing Jesus, Being Peace," accompanied by graphic portrayals of the massacre of innocents and their homes, addressed the efforts of his team to befriend the victims of the horror perpetrated upon them. Nisley was seriously injured there and rescued by Iraqis who, remembering these peacemakers, welcomed them back years later.

In addition to plenary addresses, the Conference included discussion circles where attendees exchanged reactions to the talks, including questions for the speakers; business meetings; and, of course, praying together the Divine Office, Eucharist, and special dinners. Those attending the ABA prayed Morning Praise together in Queen of Peace Chapel at a later hour than the host community but Evening Prayer and Eucharist together with us. On Friday evening we enjoyed an "indoor" picnic together in Rockhurst dining room. On Saturday evening we St. Scholastica Sisters were invited to join the other ABA members at the closing banquet. The program for that evening comprised the installation of the new officers, an address by outgoing president, Sister Laura Swan, St. Placid Priory, Lacey, Washington, and the presentation of the Egregia Award for Dedication to Scholarship Embodying Benedictine Culture to Sister Shawn Carruth, Mount St. Benedict Monastery, Crookston, Minnesota.



ABA Conference dinner
Photos by Sister Edith Bogue except photo below

The evening closed with a stunning one-woman presentation of *Hildegard of Bingen and the Living Light*, written and performed by Linn Maxwell. The acclaimed mezzo-soprano captivated the audience with her acting and, interspersed throughout the story, memorable vocal rendition of Hildegard's songs, self-accompanied with various medieval instruments.



*Photo by Sister
Joyce Fournier*

Sister Mary Rochefort

On Sunday, after Morning Praise, Eucharist, and brunch, ABA visitors left Duluth singly or in groups, leaving their hosts satisfied and proud of a successful Conference under the leadership of Sister Mary Rochefort, St. Scholastica Monastery, Duluth, MN.

The Range of the Iron Rangers

By Sister Sarah Smedman

From the 1920s to today, the Mesabi ("sleeping giant") and the Vermilion Ranges, source of the richest iron ore deposits in the world, have also been gold mines of Benedictine vocations. Over the years some fifty young women from several towns have become Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery in Duluth. Different in talent and disposition, these "Rangers" have been teachers and nurses, musicians and artists, cooks and seamstresses. They served as prioress and subprioress, treasurer and procurator; on the Monastery Administrative Staff and on the Council, and as the good earth of the Community from which the Duluth Diocese was built. Many of them were well traveled, and many were homebodies. The Iron Range has enriched St. Scholastica Monastery and its missions, as it has the worldwide steel industry. Ten of these Rangers are still living, praying, and working among us. One of the ten is featured in a Sister Profile in this issue and two others opted not to be included in this article.

Sister Armella Oblak, Soudan, MN

Growing up in a small mining town in northern Minnesota where everyone knew everyone, Sister Armella Oblak was impressed with the many Benedictines who lived down the block or around the corner: the three Erchuls, Sister Ruth Schwieger, Sister Victoria Nemanich, and others. After high school graduation, 65 years ago, she cast her lot with those Sisters she so admired.

As a child Sister Armella walked, with her parents and eight siblings, two miles to the Catholic Church in Tower. A fond memory: on holy days more relaxed services were held in the Men's Club in Soudan.

Like most young Sisters, Sister Armella taught elementary students before she enrolled in nursing school. With a specialty in maternal and child health, she was Head Nurse in Labor and Delivery at St. Mary's in Duluth and St. Joseph's in Brainerd. Caring for new mothers and their babies, Sister Armella says, was "my thing!" From active duty nursing, she moved into health-care administration, serving as the first administrator of the Benedictine Health Center and the first president of Benedictine Long-Term Care, Inc. in North Dakota. Later, during her ten years as Director of Hospitality at the Monastery, her warmth and graciousness made guests feel so welcome. "I've loved every bit of everything I've done, Sister Armella says, "especially meeting and interacting with the many people with whom my work brought me into contact." And always, she remembers, "the Sisters I knew and loved from my hometown were so caring and considerate."



Sister Ingrid Luukkonen, Zim, MN



A convert to Catholicism at age 25, Sister Ingrid entered the Monastery three years later. A religious but not church-going child, she sought refuge from the rough-and-tumble of eight brothers in a huge spruce tree. Alone among the branches she often experienced herself embraced in the arms of God. During her study of the New Testament, preceding her conversion to Catholicism, Ingrid felt such empathy with Christ that she could not read the Passion.

Thinking habited Sisters peculiar and passé, Ingrid at first resisted any idea that God might be nudging her toward religious life. When a friend suggested she meet the Sisters, Ingrid finally agreed to talk with Sister Mary Paul, a pleasant enough conversation. Some time later, however, she met Mother Martina at the convent in Hibbing and initiated the process for entrance into the Monastery. Most rewarding of Ingrid's 54 years in Community has been her engagement in various ministries she never thought she would be capable of, including, as a pastoral minister, giving homilies. Most unusual was the serendipitous founding of a "cooking school" in Antofagasta, Chile, where five days a week in five "poblaciones" she taught native women first to make apple pies, then everything from baking powder biscuits to pasties. Soon the women asked for Bible study while the food was in the oven.

In retirement Ingrid reads widely to make up for days when her service to others took most of her time. Her final comment: "As a Benedictine I always considered myself primarily a worker in God's vineyard, for years not even having heard the word *monastic*. My concern is that currently *labora* may be overlooked by emphasis on *ora*. American Benedictines do both."

Sister Josephine Krulc, Aurora, MN



Born in Slovenia, Sister Josephine grew up in Biwabik and Aurora, where she was living when she came to The College of St. Scholastica. During her senior year in College, she entered the Monastery. In Sister Jo's words, her friend from Eveleth was entering and "badgered me to do the same. She left. I stayed." And stayed, for in 2016, Sister Jo will celebrate her Golden Jubilee.

During these almost fifty years, Sister Jo's ministries have been first in teaching, then in nursing. As a nurse, she served in hospitals, nursing homes, and provided private home care. Sister Jo found her service in Catholic elementary schools rewarding, but says one of life's greatest challenges was her first year teaching and living on a "mission," our in-house term for our convents away from the Monastery. Currently, Sister Jo is in Washington, D.C., serving as nurse-governess to her ten-month-old grandnephew whom she loves nurturing and watching grow and learn.

Particularly rewarding, and contributing to her own personal growth, Sister Jo says, are the personal relationships she developed with her clients in each of the phases of her nursing career and the friendships she cherishes with her Sisters in Community. What Sister Jo would really like to do now is to retire and eventually come home to Duluth. The opportunity and time has not yet come.

Sister Judine Mayerle, Bovey, MN

At her first encounter with the women in long black robes who came to Bovey each summer to teach catechism, Sister Judine thought nuns were cool but didn't want to be one. She was going to be a foreign correspondent, graduate from the University of Minnesota's Journalism school, wear a trench coat and a press card tucked into her hatband. However, on a January afternoon, with her first glimpse of the campus, framed in gently falling snow, she knew. Forgetting the U of M but not journalism, she enrolled at The College of St. Scholastica and earned a double major in English and History with a minor in Journalism. Although she enjoyed college life, she was especially drawn to the solitude of Maryglade and the Chapel, to the Sisters chanting the Divine Office. During her sophomore year, Sister Judine entered the Monastery.

After earning her BA and teaching at Duluth Cathedral High School, Sister Judine went on to graduate school, earning a Master's degree in Motion Picture History/Criticism at UCLA, and a Ph.D. in Television History/Criticism and Mass Communication Law from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. Subsequently she taught at The College of St. Scholastica, Northwestern University, the University of Minnesota—Minneapolis, and Marquette University, Milwaukee.

Sister Judine enriched her student's education by inviting film and television professionals from Los Angeles to visit her classes. Sister Judine enjoys ongoing relationships with many of her former students.

Several years ago Sister Judine left higher education to become an "almost" full-time writer. Her novel, *The Blue Horse*, a mystery set in a Benedictine monastery, is near publication. She has also produced the film "Sing a New Song" about the Duluth Benedictines. Currently she is writing a social/cultural history of St. Scholastica Monastery and chairing the Community's Strategic Planning process. On September 8, 2012, Sister Judine celebrated her Golden Jubilee.



Sister Margaret Marincel, Mountain Iron, MN

A child-fan of Sonja Henie, Margaret longed to roller and ice skate but didn't learn until she came to the Monastery. Always with a soft spot in her heart for the poor and neglected, and inspired by Sisters Antonia Erchul and Lucy White, who taught catechism in Mountain Iron, she did investigate other religious communities before she entered St. Scholastica. It was her cousin Jenny, a 1943 CSS graduate, who paved the way for Margaret's decisive interview with Mother Athanasius Braegelman.



Margaret's mother died at Nopeming when she was 43 and Margaret, 15. Always difficult without her ailing mother at the helm, life became harder when her father died. Orphaned within a two-month period, Margaret and her brothers Frank and Joe were subsequently cared for by an uncle and aunt in Mountain Iron. Sister Margaret says that her ability to "roll with the punches" originated early in her life.

For most of her 68 years in Community, Sister Margaret has been a teacher of grades two, three, four, or five. Thrust into niches for which she did not feel prepared, Sister Margaret appreciated the help she received from confreres and parents, especially in Phoenix, where she loved the beautiful climate.

Particularly challenging for Sister Margaret was teaching at St. John's School in Woodland and living at the Children's Home—trudging up the hill after a long day of teaching lively youngsters to help with the young orphans. Margaret, being Margaret, "rolled with the punches," even to de-feathering and cleaning chickens for the priests' retreats.

Back at the Monastery, Sister Margaret continued sacristy work she had done in parishes, especially caring for Chapel linens. Retired now, she loves the liturgy and enjoys friendships with her Sisters.

Sister Sarah Smedman, Hibbing, MN

When my dad's company transferred us to Hibbing, I met the Benedictines at Assumption School. I was ten; my fifth-grade teacher was Sister Marilyn Micke. Any thoughts I had then of becoming a Sister were dissipated by four rich and exciting years at Hibbing High. Attraction to religious life was rekindled by friendships with the Sister-faculty during my college years. I entered the Monastery after graduation from St. Scholastica.

At St. Scholastica I was excited when I was encouraged to think for myself. A risk-taker and a good student, voicing my thoughts taught me that others did not necessarily think as I did. Sometimes troublesome, these traits, however, emboldened me to seize opportunities that changed my life.

My greatest challenge has come late in life: adjusting to retirement after 47 years of an active and successful professional life. Separation from university teaching and administration, scholarly research and publication, leadership in professional organizations, friends and colleagues with similar interests across the world, now far away, engenders loneliness. Compensatory, however, are rekindled friendships, service to the Monastery and our sponsored institutions, and the waters of Lake Superior.

Vatican II generated my interest in feminism, activated during my dissertation work and in development of literature classes, nurtured during the five-week Rome renewal program for English-speaking Benedictine women, and continuing in readings/discussions of our Feminist Theologies Committee.

My professional activities and the Community have provided opportunities to travel—in the United States and abroad, happily to the Italian Alps region where my mother was born. I have not yet visited my paternal ancestor's home, Finland, still an aspiration.



Sister Mary Hope Novak, Virginia, MN

Sister Mary Hope has vivid memories of her grade school years at Marquette School, recalling even the names and personalities of her teachers. She wanted to come to the Monastery as an aspirant as Sisters Agnes Marie Stopnik and Rosalyn Tisel had done. Her father said, "No," so she graduated from Virginia High School before becoming a postulant in 1941.

Sister Mary Hope hoped to be a nurse like her sister Rose. However, she was assigned to teaching, first primary, then upper grades, which suited her. She took joy in preparing children for First Communion at Sacred Heart School for 13 years, simultaneously teaching them Gregorian chant. Transferred to various schools to teach upper grades, she found herself adaptable and a capable disciplinarian. Frequently driving Sisters to visit families, she became sensitive to the impoverished background of many of her students.



Mention "this" or "that" and Sister Mary Hope lights up, for her years operating the This and That Shop were her happiest. When a friend whose husband was a doctor brought her several objects he had accepted as payment, Sister Mary Hope was launched on years-long research and learned the value of the many objects and oddities people continued to bring her; further research enabled her to price and sell "this" and "that" and everything in between during her afternoons in the Shop. Mornings she was in charge of the greenhouse and 20 students who worked with her.

Two regrets Sister Mary Hope suffers: being unable to service people coming to the greenhouse wanting flowers when she raised only green and flowering plants; and, she has always wanted to play the piano; the family never had one. She has never played the piano!

Sister Agnes Fleck, Virginia, MN

Sister Agnes is profiled on page 14 of this Pathways issue.

Range Sisters who have died: *Although the Community archives record the places where Sisters were born, they do not have records of the towns where Sisters were living when they entered the Monastery. Consequently, we apologize for anyone we may have inadvertently omitted.*

Hibbing

1. Sister Agneta Bachnik, 1905-1988
2. Sister Martina Hughes, 1902-1992
3. Sister Josepha Thornton, 1909-1994
4. Sister Dolores Latendresse, 1901-1995
5. Sister Viola Pianfetti, 1910-1999
6. Sister Mary Ellen Hanson, 1917-1999
7. Sister Leonard Eslinger, 1911-2002
8. Sister Helen Clare Arts, 1921-2003
9. Sister Ardell (Eucharista) Dalbec, 1914-2004
10. Sister Vivian Arts, 1920-2004
11. Sister Virginia Currie, 1913-2007
12. Sister Matthew Laurich, 1911-2007

Chisholm

13. Sister Emmanuel Hanley, 1903-1998

Eveleth

14. Sister Susanne Prebilio, 1918-1996
15. Sister Mary (Hermina) Skule, 1914-2004
16. Sister Andrine Kvaternik, 1921-2007

Gilbert

17. Sister Sylvia (Cyril) Tushar, 1911-2004
18. Sister Mary David Gruden, 1921-2007
19. Sister Barbara Ann Tushar, 1921-2007

Virginia

20. Sister Sylvia Casagrande, 1909-1970
21. Sister Cyprian Fabish, 1905-1981
22. Sister Georgiana Polansky, 1906-1988
23. Sister Terrence Kirby, 1912-2003
24. Sister Agnes Marie Stopnik, 1918-2004
25. Sister Rosalyn Tisel, 1918-2006

Tower-Soudan

26. Sister Adeline Zollar (1), 1907-1931
27. Sister Victoria Nemanich, 1902-1948
28. Sister Eymard Gornick, 1905-1949
29. Sister Gervase Erchul, 1912-1965
30. Sister Adeline Zollar (2), 1912-1988
(younger sister)
31. Sister Amelia Faith, 1918-1992
32. Sister Ruth Schweiger, 1907-1995
33. Sister Boniface Dragavon, 1907-1998
34. Sister Maxine Erchul, 1910-1999
35. Sister Antonia Erchul, 1908-2000
36. Sister Marion (Regis) Faith, 1911-2003

SALMELA MAKING FILM OF MONASTERY STAINED GLASS

Jack Salmela, a novelist, civil engineer (semi-retired), and filmmaker, is currently creating a film of the stained glass windows at St. Scholastica Monastery. This work is Part 2 in a series called, “Celebrating Stained Glass in the Northland,” and will be aired on Duluth Public Access TV late this fall. Part I was a film about the stained glass at Pilgrim Congregational Church in Duluth.

Salmela says he became interested in stained glass as most anyone would. “You attend church for another reason, and the stained glass is sort of an extra thing. But when you start looking at details—different styles, who established or funded certain themes—whether its art deco or a classical style—then you realize that the windows have stories to tell.” Salmela says he found the stained glass at Trinity Lutheran extremely vibrant, and when he learned about the symbols, he was able to then recognize them in many forms of Christian art. In his novel, *Sisterhood of the Hennepin Chalice*, published in 2011, stained glass has a redemptive effect on three characters.

Salmela, who initially wanted to become an artist, was dissuaded from that path in favor of something more stable—hence a civil engineering degree from the University of Minnesota. He then became interested in photography and writing and has had travel articles with accompanying photos appear in the *Duluth News Tribune* and a feature article in *Lake Superior Magazine*.

Filmmaking, says Salmela, is the best venue for combining art and storytelling. He is a member of Public Access TV and thus is able to use PACTV’s resources – camera, audio gear, computer programs, technical help – and its medium to get his films completed and to the public. Salmela has filmed stained glass at several locations for a future episode on stained glass. “There is a lot of wonderful stained glass in town, and much of it is being preserved. When St. Clement’s Church was torn down, a man salvaged much of that, and it now exists in three different churches throughout Duluth.”

In working on his film of St. Scholastica’s stained glass, Salmela says that it will be about more than just the stained glass—it has to also be about the Sisters, the 120-year history of St. Scholastica Monastery, and the centuries-long legacy of female saints. . . something that is quite apparent to anyone who looks closely at the windows on each side of the Gathering Space inside Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel. “The title and subtitle of the film may be ‘St. Scholastica Monastery: Renovation and Renewal.’ I’ve incorporated several themes of nature regeneration with the renewal of vows that the Sisters make.” Salmela says, “For the Monastery’s history, I wrote sections of the script and gave them to Sister Margaret Clarke (archivist) to review for accuracy. Then, once approved, I gave them to Sister Dorene, and we recorded the voice-over (over historic black and white photographs).” The original 1938 Chapel was renovated in 1986. This renovation involved switching Library and Chapel spaces while maintaining much of the original Chapel’s beautiful stained glass. Sister Dorene King is the film narrator, and Sister Lois Eckes, Sister Grace Marie Braun, Sister Mary Christa Kroening, and Sister Joan Marie Stelman are interviewed as are newer Sisters, Sister Lisa Maurer and Sister Paule Pierre Barbeau. Laypeople interviewed include Heidi Johnson and Mary Bridget Lawson from The College of St. Scholastica.



Photo by Andi Therien

“I like coming to the Monastery,” says Salmela. “It’s a peaceful place and I feel that. I’m going to be sad when this ends—I feel privileged that the Sisters have been welcoming and supportive and given me access.”

Sister Lois Eckes, Prioress, says, “The Sisters have welcomed Jack Salmela because his personality and quiet respect for the people and the art manifest a spirit that deeply appreciates the sacred. We marvel at how the Holy Spirit has both inspired and guided this project and rejoice with Jack in the mutual blessing it has become.”



Sister Jeanne Marie Lortie, OSB

February 4, 1917—June 13, 2012

Sister Jeanne Marie (Marie Rose) Lortie, OSB, 95, died June 13, 2012, at St. Scholastica Monastery. She was the first of five children born to Hormidas J. and Veronica (Lavigne) Lortie on February 4, 1917, in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada. She was in the seventy-seventh year of her Benedictine monastic profession. Sister Jeanne Marie entered St. Scholastica Monastery on September 12, 1933. She professed her triennial vows on December 30, 1935, and her perpetual vows on July 11, 1940. She began her life-long love of teaching as an elementary school teacher at Our Lady of The Sacred Heart school in Cloquet, where she taught fifth grade from 1936-1938. She taught at Sacred Heart Cathedral Elementary School, Duluth (1938-40); St. Thomas School, International Falls (1940-41); St. Clement's School, Duluth (1941-45); St. Bridget's School, Minneapolis (1945-48); St. James School, Duluth (1948-53); and Assumption Hall School, Hibbing (1953). She then began teaching high school classes in Speech, Drama, Chorus, and French at Stanbrook Hall High School in Duluth (1955-65).

A scholar as well as a teacher, Sister Jeanne Marie received a B.A. in 1951 from The College of St. Scholastica with a major in English and minors in Music, History, and French. She received her M.A. from Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, in 1955 where her major field of study was Speech and Drama with a minor in Interpretation and Music (choral). In addition, she received a grant to complete a European Travel Study Tour in 1960 for advanced study of French. Subsequently, she earned an M.A. in French from Laval University, Quebec City, Canada, in 1965. She authored two music books published by Willis Music Company in Cincinnati. An accomplished musician both in voice and organ, she led many school choirs during her teaching missions and also gave private organ lessons. Sister Jeanne Marie authored two books—*Gracious Living*, published in 1970 and *Hey Father*, published in 1972. Both books addressed contemporary issues confronting the Church and life in religious communities. *Gracious Living* was far more than just an etiquette manual: it was her vision of living in religious community where taking great care in how one treated others was paramount in living the Christian life.

Sister travelled extensively over the United States and Canada giving workshops and lectures to over 3,000 religious on *Gracious Living* and on historical topics from the archives of St. Scholastica Monastery. In 1971 she was nominated and accepted into membership of the International Platform Association. A talented speaker, she was also often invited to speak at ecumenical meetings and conferences. She belonged to numerous professional organizations, including The National Association of Speech Teachers, Benedictine Academy for Scholarly Studies, American Association of University Women, and held licenses in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois to judge speech, drama, and music contests.

Establishing Priory Press in 1972, Sister Jeanne Marie published a number of books written by Community members and others. She celebrated her Golden Jubilee on June 16, 1985, and her 75th Jubilee on August 15, 2010. Sister was preceded in death by her three sisters, Rita Lortie Culnan, Ann Lortie McKane, and Jeanne Lortie Morrissey. In addition to the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, she is survived by her brother Dr. Paul Lortie and sister-in-law Marge of Sarasota, Florida, loving nieces, nephews, and many friends.

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