

PATHWAYS



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Letter from the Prioress

Their Father

*Their father always went out in late April
Or early May to plant the warming land
With seeds stored from last year; It was as certain
As sunrise he would go, his pipe in hand.*

*His grey eyes took account of the spring weather
the while he hitched his horses to the drill.
He would go riding, whistling over the furrows—
up and down through all his fields until*

*his land was full of promise. Through the summer
he would watch, anxious as a mother does,
the growth of young wheat. O, he was careful
not to count too much on it, for he was*

*a farmer's son. He knew the odds of farming.
He had seen drought, and grasshoppers, and rust.
But he was God's son also. He could whistle
come blight or hail. He knew Whom he could trust.*

By Ellen Murphy, CSJ
Sunday by Sunday, March 25, 2012
Used with permission



Indeed we know Whom we can trust! Like the farmer in Ellen Murphy's prize-winning poem, we know the odds of living: its joys and sorrows, its triumphs and tragedies. We know the agony of the cross and the exhilarating promise of the empty tomb.

Somehow, as wondrously as the seeds from last year's planting, there grows within the earth of our hearts a surging conviction and radiant certainty of Christ's fierce and tender presence. Filled with the Spirit's lavish gifts, our lives proclaim the timeless love and goodness of God.

Because we know Whom we can trust, we choose to believe that possibility and grace are everywhere. We stand firm and unshaken in the good news that Christ's love is always stronger than the evil in the world. In Him we boldly affirm that "our hope is turning back the world's despair and our joy beating back the world's sorrow."

May your lives blossom with the beauty of God's love and longing for you as you trust in the Spirit at work in your precious lives!

Lovingly yours in Christ, with deep
Gratitude and prayer always,

Sister Lois Eckes

Sister Lois, OSB
Prioress

Pentecost: God's Gift That Keeps on Giving

Reflection and photo by Sister Jean Maher

Have you ever been afraid? I have. Have you ever wondered what the future holds? I have. Have you ever wondered if you have what it takes to change the world with the vision Jesus had to create a kingdom of nonviolence and love? I have had those doubts as well. It helps me to get in touch with what the apostles and followers of Jesus must have been feeling as they gathered together in that upper room after Jesus ascended into heaven. Perhaps they were saying to each other, "We need a strategic plan, but where do we begin?" How quickly things changed with the arrival of the Holy Spirit! Fear was changed to courage. Doubt was changed to conviction. Sadness was changed to joy. How wonderful it is to celebrate Pentecost, the feast of the Holy Spirit, in a season of the year when the beauty of creation returns with bright sunlight, green grass, blooming trees, colorful flowers, and gardens of beauty and nourishment. The Holy Spirit continues to bless us with hope and joy in so many amazing ways.

Last night I attended the Echoes of Peace 10th anniversary concert and celebration in a building that was once the diocesan cathedral and is now the Sacred Heart Music Center. I was overwhelmed with joy as I experienced the profound presence of the Holy Spirit through the power of music, poetry, stories, and art. This beautiful event was also a fundraiser for the Grant-Nettleton Community School Collaborative, an organization that reaches out to over 300 children and their families in need. Sara Thomsen, the founder and director of the Echoes of Peace Choir, is a good example of someone who listened to the wisdom of the Holy Spirit ten years ago. When the world was trying to figure out how to respond to the tragedy of the 9-11 event, Sara started a choir to sing a message of peace, healing, nonviolence, and love. Hundreds have joined this choir over the years and thousands have been inspired by her musical messages of hope for a hurting world.

Deborah Cooper, a member of the Echoes of Peace Choir and gifted poet, has inspired me to recognize the Holy Spirit in the strangers in our midst. This is the poem she shared at the concert:

"You Are My Other Me"

(Mayan greeting)

Open our eyes
that we might see
our own face, reflected
in a stranger
that we might recognize
and bless
the holy light
in every soul we meet
grant us the bravery
to leave the foot-worn path,
to move beyond
repeated patterns
and assumptions

to walk in the ways
of fairness
and equality.

Guide our hands
in the service of healing
and uplifting.

Teach us to listen deeply,
to speak truth out in the open
to understand that we belong
to one another . . .
hand-in-hand.

Help us to mend goodness,
to insist upon compassion,
to repair the damaged world
in countless, daily ways.

Give us hearts
that break easily open,
like seeds . . .
the possibility
of transformation.

Create in each of us
a space of consolation
and of peace.

Deborah Cooper

Deb Cooper is a woman of vision who has used her creative gifts by teaching poetry in many places around our city, including McCabe Renewal Center, schools, and the jail. Both Deb Cooper and Sara Thomsen are instruments of healing and hope to thousands of people because they knew the gifts they were given were meant to be shared.

What are your gifts? Perhaps you have a listening heart or a good sense of humor. Do you have an ability to notice those in need and the generosity to reach out and help? Are you blessed with the gift of leadership and the ability to work for peace and justice? Whatever your gift, I encourage you to share it and then stand back and watch it multiply. Thank you, Holy Spirit. Your surprises never end!

Summer School

Compiled and edited by Sister Mary E. Penrose

Many of us Sisters remember coming home after a year of teaching, only to go out again to teach catechism at various places where there were no Catholic schools. Our residences and experiences differed greatly from our usual teaching assignments. Often very generous laypeople provided us with room and board in their own homes during the two or three weeks we were there. Classrooms might be a section in the parish church or outside where the children's desks and chairs were wooden logs or suitable rocks.

Sister Agatha Riehl, a college teacher, remembers the time she and her two companions resided upstairs of a mortuary. It was the first and only time she was assigned to teaching catechism. Both of her companions, elementary teachers, didn't have much faith in college teachers teaching little ones. One day when she left the classroom momentarily, they eavesdropped on her class. What they didn't know was that Sister was the oldest of seven in her family and had plenty of experience with small children! The last activity of the day was going to chapel to pray and she recalls children asking, after only one hour of class, "Is it time to visit the chapel?" They wanted to go home!

Sister Melanie Gagne, who had just made her final vows felt "green as they come" for her first teaching experience. Nevertheless, she had great expectations when she and her companion arrived at the parish. Prior to their arrival, the Bishop had told the parishioners, "I am sending you two crackerjack nuns"! Her companion taught first through fourth grades upstairs in the church using the pews while she taught fifth grade through high school in the church hall using folding chairs. The pastor informed the Sisters that he waited until they arrived to order needed books and supplies which never did materialize. Since it was harvesttime, some parents came to see if it were worth sending their children when they were so desperately needed to help bring in the crops. This assignment was one of the most challenging experiences in her teaching career.

Sister Marguerite Baxter, who had taken her students outside in front of the church for their lessons, noticed one of the boys trying to get her attention by looking up and pointing at something. To her surprise, when she looked up she saw another boy, not in her catechism class, sitting on the branch of a tree and listening to every word she said. Could he have been related to the Zacheus mentioned in the Gospel?

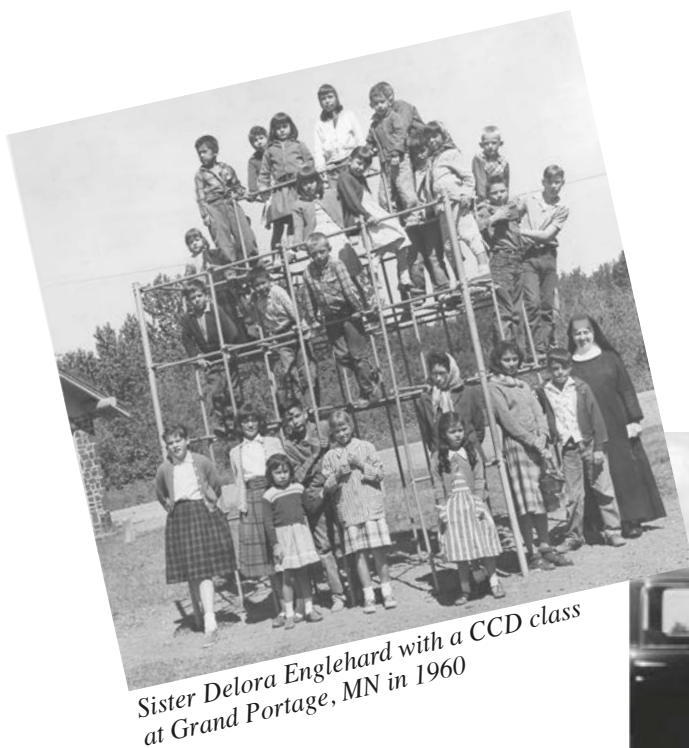
Sister Mary E. Penrose, who usually taught Confirmation classes, was excited when, for the first time, she was assigned to teach a First Communion class. Putting her whole heart into it, she was certain she had done her best preparing the little ones for their First Confession and First Communion. When confession day arrived, she sat in the last pew, rather smugly thinking how well she had prepared them. Suddenly one of the children came to her greatly agitated and, with terror in her eyes, announced, "I can't think of any sins"! Stunned, Sister took her through an examination of conscience once again to no avail. Finally, she suggested, "Tell Father you can't think of any sins and he'll help you." Coming out of the confessional—all smiles—the little girl snuggled up to her and whispered: "He thought of some"!

In June of 1961, four Sisters, including **Sister Mary Rae Higgins**, were sent off to teach catechism in Cornell, Wisconsin, for Father Carl Meyer, O.M.I. He was definite about wanting Benedictines. When he made his request to Mother Athanasius, she replied that she would have to "scrape the bottom of the barrel." At the end of the session, Father remarked, "You surely came up with four Golden Nuggets!" That was not the end of the story. Monsignor Michael Hogan, on hearing about it, ordered golden frogs (ever heard of them?) and wrote a long poem dedicated to the Sisters, sending each Sister a poem and one frog!

One summer **Sister Estelle Panger** and another Sister were teaching catechism in Ball Club and living in the only available housing, the rectory. Other residents at that time were two priests and their housekeeper. Mrs. Ness was a very good cook and baker, providing luscious meals that included pies almost daily. In a humorous mood, the Sisters wrote home to Mother Agnes and said that they had a bad case of "pie orrhea." Mother Agnes, thinking they were poor spellers, wrote back, "When you come home, wash your dishes separately with boiling water and see your dentists promptly."

Sister Donna Schroeder had just completed a biology degree and some courses in preparation for making vows. She dreaded the thought of her first-ever teaching experience being a catechism assignment. Her anxiety was not diminished when the pastor of the parish decided that, since the students had so little religious education, classes would be held from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. He also had so much confidence in the “good Sisters” that nothing was provided for them but the spaces in which to teach: the church, the sacristy, and the basement of the church. Fortunately, this novice teacher’s companion was an experienced teacher. Things went as well as they could until her Sister colleague requested that she take music practice one day. Since she had no skills in this area she asked the students which hymns they knew best. At practice, she started to sing the one she thought she could best survive, but no one sang. She said, “I thought you knew this hymn.” Their response was, “Yes, but we know it louder.” Her colleague hastily came to the rescue!

Summer School Scrapbook:



Sister Delora Englehard with a CCD class at Grand Portage, MN in 1960



Sisters +Eucharist Charest, Katherine Byrne, and +Marcella Cartie arriving in Chisholm, MN to begin CCD classes, September, 1975 Photo from Chisholm Free Press



Left to right: Bishop Welch, Sisters +Marion (Regis) Faith and Mary E. (Romanus) Penrose Summer, 1948, Gnesen, MN



Sisters +Sharon O'Neill, Marilyn Micke, +Aelred Roehl, and +Clement Fried at St. Paul Parish, Remer, MN. CCD summer class, 1950



+Sister Dympha O'Donovan teaching a CCD class in Grand Lake, MN, 1954

Our Continued Journey Into “A Future Filled with Hope”

Third in a series of articles by Sister Judine Mayerle, Chair, Monastery Strategic Planning

Morning comes early for our monastic Community because the Liturgy of the Hours in Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel begins at 6:45 a.m. on weekdays. Morning comes even earlier when time is allowed for a 30-40 minute walk before communal prayer. A good place to walk is in Tower Hall, the main College building connected to the Monastery by an enclosed cloister walk, with long halls and many staircases that give you a workout from ground to fourth floor. Tower Hall is quiet in the early morning, the only sounds the custodial Third Shift as they prepare for the arrival of students, faculty, and staff.

An early morning walk through Tower Hall is to step into our monastic Community’s history because this is where our first Sisters, women of vision and courage, dreamed The College of St. Scholastica into existence 100 years ago. It’s a good place to walk and reflect anytime, but especially when you’re doing strategic planning and need to think about our dreams of the past, the reality of our present, our hopes for the future.

So much has changed since the College took over all the space in Tower Hall where for many years most of the Community lived in cloistered areas. A warren of offices has replaced the hall-length Community room on the first floor west wing overlooking the Angelus Garden as well as the private bedrooms of the Community elders across the hall. The Sisters’ refectory (dining room) on the second floor has been replaced by a large classroom, but across from the refectory the old slate blackboard remains in its wood frame with the word in faded white paint at the top—“Namedays”—a silent reminder that once the names of Sisters celebrating their special day were written there in chalk, as well as announcements, requests (“please return juice glasses to the refectory”), and on occasion even part of a special liturgical antiphon, such as “It is the Great Beginning,” taken from the Benedictus antiphon on a Christmas morning almost half a century ago.

And even though Information Technologies offices fill the space where the Monastery kitchen and bakery once sent meals out to the college dining rooms, up to the Sisters’ refectory, and over to the resident high school students in Stanbrook Hall, if you look and listen with the eyes and ears of your heart you might glimpse the swish of the long white habit of a “kitchen Sister” as she disappears behind the door or scent the aroma of long-ago yet freshly-baked bread and cookies.

As you walk the quiet halls you might hear quick footsteps from the past of a Sister-Prefect responding to the needs of a student or a white-veiled Novice rushing to ring the Angelus. You can look out a window at the end of the west wing where porches have been replaced by a brick extension and see Gethsemane Cemetery where the Sisters who founded and grew our monastic Community and the College now rest. And as you walk

the north trending halls you can see in the terrazzo floor and in the ceiling evidence of where the four sections of Tower Hall were added over nineteen years until its completion in 1928.

The first two articles in this series on our strategic planning gave an overview of how we identified issues and concerns regarding the quality of our monastic life and our ministries as Benedictine women in the 21st century. As we focused on two key questions—what future did we envision for our monastic Community, and what actions would be necessary to create that future—we realized that addressing those questions could create new paradigm shifts within our Community, which should lead to a deliberate transformation of our lives.



Sister Mary Christa Kroening and Sister Mary Josephine Torborg reflect on Sister Grace Marie Braun’s description of the Community at its largest size (520 Sisters) in 1964 and 1965. Community Weekend, April 2012.

At our January 2012 weekend with consultant Donna Fyffe of CommunityWorks, we revisited our four Directives ratified in May 2011 and sharpened our focus for this second year to address the challenges of stewarding our resources—our members as well as our tangible assets—to ensure the long-term viability of our Community.

The Community gathered for an April weekend to discuss three PowerPoint presentations: the first a review and analysis of our demographics and ministries from 1892 to the present with projections to the year 2025 by Sister Edith Bogue, the second an extensive look at our financial situation by Sister Danile Lynch (Community Treasurer), the third a presentation by Sister Judine Mayerle of two possible construction projects—a handicapped entrance to Stanbrook Hall and an enclosed link between Stanbrook West and the Chapel (a third project, renovation of the Garden Court this summer, is the focus of this year's Annual Appeal). Analysis of the data will continue to challenge us to look realistically at the shape of our current and future Community and to envision how best to prepare for that life to come.

The Community met again in late May and will meet throughout the summer to make meaning of the data of our “current reality” until it becomes knowledge and then wisdom so that we understand the consequences of the informed decisions we must make and the actions we may take; to explore new possibilities for our changing Community; and, as prophetic monastic women, to discern the movement of the Spirit and the will of God for us at this time.

Both the Centennial being celebrated by the College this year (1912-2012) and our monastic Community call us to reflect on our history in Duluth even as we celebrate the present and look to the future. A walk through historic Tower Hall will do that to you; strategic planning will do that as well. The College motto – *Omnes semitae eius pacificae* – “All her paths are peace” – was first stated by our founding Sisters as “Her ways are ways of beauty, and all her paths are peace” (Proverbs 3:17, in reference to *Sapientia/Wisdom*). All of us on this beautiful campus—the Monastery, The College of St. Scholastica, the Benedictine Health Center, and Westwood—seek Wisdom as together we strategically plan for the future.

You might pause outside Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel at the end of your walk where more than 25 years ago the Community exchanged the beautiful three-story space of Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel with that of the halfway below ground single-story library. And even though more than 25 years have passed since you last climbed the terrazzo stairs up to the 1938 Chapel, the ears of your heart might hear the magnificent sound of the Cassavant organ as a Sister-organist celebrated the sacred space with Widor's “Toccata.” You want to linger in that aural memory, even as you want to linger in the sacred spaces on campus which are imbued with our story. But the bell rings and the monastic Community of 2012 is about to begin Morning Prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours.

Sister Laura Swan of St. Placid Priory in Lacy, Washington, president of the American Benedictine Academy which will have its biennial gathering on our campus in early August, has asked: “How might we cultivate a heart, and the relationships, literally to see and embrace the new resurrection of monastic life?” (*American Monastic Newsletter*, February 2012). This is the challenge we have taken on in our strategic planning, and through the intercession of Our Lady Queen of Peace, patroness of our journey, we believe we are moving into “a future filled with hope” (Jer. 29:11).



One of our cherished “Elders,” Sister Ramona Ewen, with Postulant Paule Barbeau, who entered our Community in January 2012. Community Weekend, April 2012.

REMEMBERING THINGS PAST—FINDING BURIED TREASURE

By Sister Margaret Clarke

Some popular columnist of years ago used to title an occasional essay “things I found on the way to looking other things up.” Much the same thing has happened here—prompted by the Feast Day of St. Scholastica in February, we were rooting around in a difficult-to-open cupboard in the Archives and dug out a box labeled “Kerst family album.” I must admit I had seen this album before, but never what was underneath it in the box. To our amazement, we found under a layer of paper and cloth wrappings two large framed needlework samplers done by Mother Scholastica before she entered religious life. This inspired us to retrieve the other boxes of Kerst artifacts and display some of their contents in the College for the Centennial St. Scholastica Feast day. Here are the items that we uncovered—literally—some homely and everyday, some truly spectacular.

The needlework samplers. Young Catherine Kerst had decided at age 13 and graduation from eighth grade that she was going to become a Sister. Her parish priest told her to wait a couple of years, which she did—exactly—and in the interim she attended St. Joseph Academy in St. Paul run by the Sisters of St. Joseph. It is possible that during this time she completed these two pieces of needlework. The German text reads: “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”



The needlework samplers.



Catherine Kerst at age 13 in 1860 when she started the samplers.

Mother Scholastica’s album. Although this is labeled “Kerst family album” it was obviously assembled by Mother Scholastica. In it are early photos of the founding Sisters of the Duluth Community as well as portraits of her family.



Mother Scholastica’s photograph album, showing her parents Peter and Anna Kerst.



Mother Scholastica's statue of St. Scholastica. This 15-inch tall painted plaster statuette has been on display in the Archives for several years. Even though it is over 100 years old, and was made in a time when sentimentality was rife in religious art, it is restrained in style and still has its bright colors.

Mother Scholastica's rosary and crucifix. In the early days, a large rosary was part of the habit worn by the Sisters. This rosary is visible in an early photo of Mother Scholastica. Together with this in the box was another rosary labeled "Sr. Mechtilde's rosary with cross belonging to Mother Scholastica." The amazing thing about these artifacts is that they were not immediately consigned to some museum display upon the death of Mother Scholastica, but were passed along, in keeping with holy poverty, to others who could use them, and no doubt cherished them for their origins.

Mother Scholastica in the early 1900s, showing her wearing the rosary.



Mother Scholastica's alligator purse.

Mother Scholastica's alligator purse. A note inside the purse states that it was given to her by her brother Conrad (who died in 1891 shortly before the move to Duluth) and then used after her death by Mother Alexia and others doing business for the Community.

This "recycling" of possessions went on in the Community for many years, and still exists to some extent. When I made final profession in 1964, there were many more Sisters coming to the Community than leaving it by death, so new profession rings had to be provided each year. The rings of the Sisters who had died in the previous year were given to the local goldsmith to be melted down so that the amount of new gold needed would be less. The rings of my profession group contain gold from the rings of Sister Agnes Somers and Sister Monica Simon. I have always felt that my ring is not only a symbol of my commitment to Christ, but also a tangible connection to the "great ones" of the Community who went before us. We love and admire those who built the Community, and we continue to carry on this work, sometimes with the aid of objects that they had also used.

--Sister Margaret Clarke is Archivist for St. Scholastica Monastery, and her continuing project is to find a place where these items and others of historical interest can be displayed for all to enjoy. Photos by Andi Therrien.

Sister Profile: Sister Sue Fortier

Perhaps without knowing it, I was listening to the beauty that would one day draw me back to the place I would call home. At a young age, while vacationing with my family on the North Shore, I was in awe of the splendor and majesty of Lake Superior. I remember saying to myself, “Some day I’m going to live by this big lake.”

Listening was a daily practice of mine even as a child. Beyond our back yard was an open field, an empty paradise where I would play and listen to the seasons come and go. I first learned the art of listening on my childhood swing in North Minneapolis where I took to heart what I heard each day in a vivacious family of three sisters, two brothers, a non-conventional French father and an Irish mother. This swing became my first place of ministry.

Like many children, I didn’t like particular foods. My mother would entice me to eat by telling me children in China were starving. The very thought of this horrified me. Taking my mother’s words to heart, and believing China was under the earth, I would smuggle food from our house and stuff it into the pipe of my swing where I believed it would fall to the starving children. Somehow, at a very early age, I felt the need to respond to human suffering and believed I could make a difference.

Honoring this belief, I entered our Community at a time of social change and upheaval in the Church. When John XXIII convened Vatican II, we were propelled into a world of possibility and imagination. It was an era of renewal born through suffering and a defining time in my life. Faith and humor, courage and trust became my constant companions. These years, full of struggle and blessing, stretched my parochial boundaries and reshaped my life.

I have had the joy and privilege of being teacher, mentor, healer, and friend. I thoroughly enjoyed teaching children in Morgan Park, Duluth, International Falls, South St. Paul, and Mahtomedi. I left teaching to become a hospital chaplain at St. Mary’s Medical Center, Duluth, where I continue to be, today. While listening to people struggle with the complexity of life’s questions wrapped in their own profound search for meaning, I witness the unfolding of grace in the sacredness of each story shared. As in childhood, I take to heart what I



Sister Sue vacationing with her brothers and sisters on the North Shore.



hear each day.

I was honored as St. Mary’s Employee of the Year, served as Interim Director of Chaplaincy, was the Minnesota Representative for the National Association of Catholic Chaplains, and a board member for the American Cancer Society. Coming from a family that loved to sing, I continued singing with the Duluth Symphony Chorus and the Echoes of Peace choir in Duluth.

From the altar of my life, I have given and received many blessings. My childhood dream has come full circle. As a Benedictine woman I am home by the “big lake” that nourishes, inspires, and teaches me. You can often find me there, listening, as the lessons of life lap up against the shore.

Happy Birthday, Sister Mary Martin Beringer!

by Sister Luella Wegscheid

"I can't believe that I'm 90!" Sister Mary Martin said these words many times during the days of preparation for her special birthday celebration on April 19, 2012.

She was the youngest of five children born to Martin and Regina Beringer. Her siblings were Ambrose Beringer, Lorene Wegscheid, Luella Wegscheid, and Kathryn Wegscheid. (All four of these children married siblings in the Wegscheid family.) Sister Mary Martin and her 96-year old sister, Lorene, are the only two remaining in the family. It was a special blessing that Lorene was able to be present for this birthday celebration.

Several other relatives and special friends graced us with their presence at the birthday dinner. It was a joyous event with a very delicious meal, wonderful time for visiting, and many special birthday wishes.

In the opening prayer for the meal Sister Lois Eckes, our Prioress, referred to the important place Sister Mary Martin has had in the lives of those who know her, from the children at St. James Children's Home, to the elementary students she taught, to the youth she mentored at Woodland Hills, and to the members of our Community whom she served for nineteen years as the Director of Temporalities. It is impressive to think of the number of lives on which she has had a positive influence.

Sister Mary Martin is grateful to God that she is able to go to Mass and have the extra time for prayer. She says she never thought that so many wonderful things would happen to her. This 90th birthday celebration was so much more than she ever expected. She is grateful to everyone who had any part in making the day so special.

Photo by Sister Patricia Anne Williams



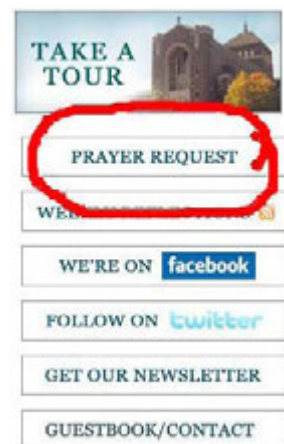
Sister Mary Martin (left) and her sister Lorene Wegscheid

Online Opportunities

by Andi Therrien, Webmaster

The Development Office of St. Scholastica Monastery is happy to introduce our friends and benefactors to two online opportunities. St. Scholastica Monastery's web site is www.duluthbenedictines.org and it now offers a safe and easy method of making online donations to the Monastery. Credit card information goes directly to Authorize.Net, and the private donation information is processed there. Authorize.Net will send you an online acknowledgment, and then later the Sisters will send you a personal thank-you note.

You may also request Sisters' prayers via the web site. The Sisters are happy to pray for your intentions if you simply click on the Prayer Request button on the Home Page and then fill out the prayer request form.



Donate Online

Benedictine Center of Spirituality

By Sister Pauline Micke, OSB, Director

Lent was a wonderful time for the Center in its Outreach and Retreats! Both of the retreats—one at St. Michael's Parish, Duluth, and one here at the Monastery—were facilitated by Sister Pauline Micke and Sister Ann Marie Wainright, OSB. The 28 participants spent time reflecting on St. Paul's spirituality in terms of what it means to live "In Christ" and how living this way leads to the cross and our continuing process of conversion. The evaluations were very positive, and all welcomed the time for reflection and integration of this timely topic.



Photo by Sister Pauline Micke

Sister Ann Marie Wainright (foreground right) and participants of the Lenten discussion group at St. Michael's Parish



Photo by Sister Ann Marie Wainright

Sister Pauline Micke and participants of the Lenten Retreat: "St. Paul's Spirituality and Our Call to Conversion"

A six-week Lenten Discussion program was held at St. Michael's Parish in Duluth. It was also led by Sister Pauline Micke and Sister Ann Marie Wainright. The focus of the discussions was from the "Lenten Longings: For the Life of the World," a discussion series published by Renew International. It is based on the Gospel of Mark. In the Sunday morning group there were 15 people who took part. One participant, in evaluating her experience, stated, "It helped me to live more mindfully each day."

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendars! Saturday, July 14, 2012, Sister Sarah O'Malley will be facilitating a workshop from 8:45 a.m. to noon at St. Scholastica Monastery on "Dorothy Day: 1897-1980 — A Radical Christian Woman." This workshop will look at Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin who co-founded the Catholic Worker Movement in the United States. A freewill offering.

For more information or to register please call 723-6555 or 723-7086. You can also e-mail Sister Pauline at pauline.m@duluthbenedictines.org.

5th Steps and Sabbath Days continue to be popular. Time to make one's 5th Step and the Sabbath Day(s) which provide time to come apart and renew and be are being sought out by more and more people. Give us a call.

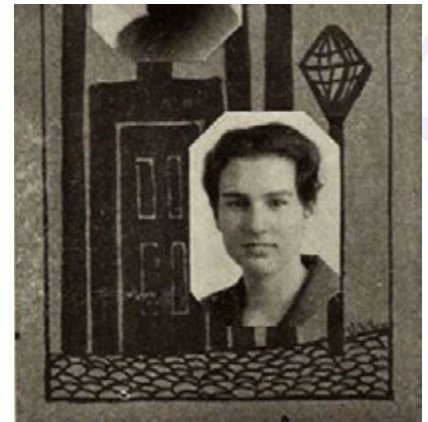
Yoopers!

By Sister Margaret James Laughlin

Back in the days when Sisters rarely left their convents and schools/hospitals, Sister Monica Simon and Sister Prudentia Moran became known to hundreds of families and high school principals in the States of Michigan, Wisconsin, and the Dakotas where they recruited students for The College of St. Scholastica. They learned to drive a car in the days when such driving was pioneering activity for religious and when automobiles were fewer and less comfortable than at present. Yet with a car jack, a spare tire, blankets and thermos jugs and application blanks, they went forth daily to seek students for the College. There were weeks at a time when they never reached home. So through the passing of thirty years, rarely failing an appointment regardless of the state of health or weather, Sisters Monica and Prudentia became traditional—and much beloved.

Sister Cecile LaForest: Negaunee, MI

There came a time in early summer that precipitated a momentous turning point in my life. I was enjoying a Saturday evening band concert with four friends. As we walked around the area listening to the music, we noted our pastor, too, delighting in the music as he sat on the rectory porch swing. We stopped to chat with him. His reaction to an opportunity to speak of a religious vocation to a group of five teenagers was prompt. He addressed the topic in adroit fashion: “There are five of you here. They say that one person in five has a calling to religious life. Which of you has a vocation?” My cousin promptly told him that I wanted to be a Sister. He pointed his finger at me and said, “Dorothy, you come to see me some time.” I was stunned and barely murmured, “OK, Father,” but I knew that I lacked the courage to ring his doorbell. Within that month Sisters Monica and Prudentia were in our area recruiting college students, and they suddenly appeared on our doorstep informing us that Father Dittman told them that they should not leave town until they had talked to me about their program for high school girls aspiring to enter the Convent. Two months later I was on the Soo Line to Duluth, my first train ride.



*Sister Cecile (Dorothy) LaForest
The Scholastician, 1935*

Sister Johnetta Maher: Watersmeet, MI

The driving route from Duluth to Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, includes Watersmeet, a small town with one school. One sunny spring day I was called out of class to visit with two nuns who had arrived from Duluth, Minnesota. They were meeting with any senior girls who were interested in college. I knew Mary Kelly of Watersmeet, three years my senior, had attended St. Scholastica and was very encouraging. However, I was not ready to make up my mind. Sister Prudentia and Sister Monica Simon were not to be put off. They insisted on going to my home and visiting with my parents. That did it! I was booked for college! I learned that several girls from nearby Ironwood and Bessemer were going to



A skating outing. The Michigan Club at CSS 1941. Sister Johnetta first row, third from the left.

be attending St. Scholastica, and we became good friends and travelling companions. Our home became one of the overnight stops of Sisters Prudentia and Monica on their future recruiting trips, and eventually my two younger sisters Patricia (Vidmar) and Frances (Kessel) were students at St. Scholastica.

Sister Margaret James Laughlin: Iron Mountain, MI

Back in 1937 when I graduated from high school, I knew that a first cousin of mine whose home was in Ishpeming, Michigan, was happily attending The College of St. Scholastica in Duluth to major in a new program, Medical Record Librarian. I also knew that my mother would require (like her mother before her) that I enroll for at least one year in a Catholic college since my home town of Iron Mountain had had no Catholic elementary or high school. It seemed pointless to explore other options when St. Scholastica would fulfill my mother's wishes and after a year I could go elsewhere if I wished.

When Sisters Prudentia and Monica, having already visited with my relatives in Ishpeming, arrived in Iron Mountain with my name and address in hand, they talked with my parents because I was at work. It didn't take long to sign me up for St. Scholastica. Needless to say, once I got here, I stayed.



*Sister Margaret James Laughlin in group at CSS and Inset.
From The Towers, 1940.*



*All dressed up. Sister Monica (Donalda) Laughlin.
From The Towers 1941.*

Sister Monica Laughlin: Iron Mountain, MI

As with my older sister, our mother requested that I attend a Catholic college at least for a year. Unlike my sister, I protested violently. I had attended a workshop in Concert Band at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor the previous summer and had my heart set on attending the University there. Obviously, my mother won out, and I packed up and headed for Duluth.

I had earlier met Sister Martina on visits to Sister Margaret James and was enchanted by her charming personality and impressed by her musical accomplishments. She accepted me as a piano student. (It was only years later that she told me how dismayed she had been at my piano playing and that, had I been a piano major instead of clarinet, she would have told me to go into some other major.) By that November I had been ready not only to stay at Scholastica but to enter the religious community there. It had never occurred to me how much our family would have suffered through losing two of us at once when they asked me to wait. So I did, and took a teaching job in a small town in Southern Michigan. By that time I'd nearly forgotten my desire to enter the Community. Then came the summer for Sister Margaret James's "home visit" with Sister Martina as her traveling companion. We had a wonderful visit, and all my desire to be a nun came back. I still owed some money for my years at Ann Arbor, so had to delay a while longer before I could realize my dream. Finally, in January, 1947, I entered as a postulant and have never looked back.

Sister Theresa Jodocy: St. Nicholas, MI

Our family was brought up on a farm in the middle of Upper Michigan, in the farming community of St. Nicholas which belonged to the parish of St. Joseph in Perkins. As we daily said the family rosary, we always prayed to St. Theresa for missionaries. Hoping to become one some day, I trusted the good Lord would lead me there if it was to be. Having been born a twin and losing my partner, Norbert, as a baby, I was always keenly interested in twins. When I was about eight years old, our parish priest gave a sermon one Sunday on the twins, St. Scholastica and St. Benedict. From then on I read anything I could find on these two saints.

After graduating from high school I completed the two-year elementary education program at Northern Michigan College in Marquette, Michigan. A friend of mine at Northern had transferred from St. Scholastica in Duluth to Northern. She spoke highly about the College, and I decided I would attend one summer session and meet a few Sisters. This would give me the opportunity to check out the convent and the college as well before returning to elementary teaching at Nahma, Michigan.

Meeting Sister Ann Edward, Sister Mary, and Sister Timothy as our summer prefects was a perfect introduction to what would become my future and most wonderful life. Sister Ann Edward was tireless in working out my transfer to the College and assuring me I could graduate with my B.S. degree in three years and three summers and become a postulant as a senior. Everything fell into place as Sister AE had planned. After three years I went home for my first visit following final vows. I might add that when I went home, our old parish priest told me that he had visited Monte Cassino the year I was born and prayed there that someone in his parish would become a Benedictine. My twin and I were the first babies he baptized on his return.



*Sister Theresa Jodocy
CSS grad 1953*

Sister Marguerite Baxter: Houghton, MI

In 1935 my sister Alice was ready for college and was especially interested in secretarial courses. My father suggested a women's college in Duluth where his top-notch secretary, Margaret Sullivan, had attended a few years earlier. Alice discovered that a few other girls from the Copper Country were enrolling at The College of St. Scholastica, so she found travel companions and a good roommate.



The Michigan Club at CSS 1943. Sister Marguerite second row, second from the right.

Having heard that Alice had two younger sisters at home, Sisters Monica and Prudentia began visiting our family in Houghton on their annual visits to Upper Michigan. Kay enrolled at the College in 1941, and I followed in 1942, taking courses leading to a B.A. degree in medical technology. Both Alice and Kay transferred to Northern State Teachers College in Marquette, Michigan, after their sophomore year as CSS did not offer teacher education at that time. I remained four happy years. My contact with the Benedictines influenced my future plans, and I entered the Monastery during my senior year in college.

Sister Mary (Adriette) Rochefort: Fayette, MI

Unlike most of our Sisters from Northern Michigan and Wisconsin, I never knew Sister Prudentia and Sister Monica in their recruitment days. They either did not visit Holy Name High School in Escanaba, Michigan, or they had retired by the time I got there.

My first encounter with the Benedictine Sisters was when, as a senior, my pastor, Father Bassett, suggested that I accompany him to Duluth where he was going to give a Vocation Retreat to high school girls at St. Scholastica Priory. My initial response was, "I have no idea where Duluth is and I have never heard of the Benedictines." My intent was to join the Notre Dame Sisters in Milwaukee since they were my teachers at Holy Name. However, I went along "for the ride" anyway.

And, the rest is history. I will admit that I fell in love with the campus on that beautiful summer day in July, 1957. A year later I was planning my next trip to Duluth, to become a postulant at Villa Sancta Scholastica. Like it or not, I had to admit that Father Bassett was right—God was calling me to this place and I am grateful.



Sister Mary Rochefort, high school graduate

HIGHLIGHTS

Formation Visit to St. Benedict's Monastery

By Sister Donna Schroeder

The women in Formation and their Directors, Sisters Michelle Dosch and Donna Schroeder, had an enriching adventure on the weekend of April 15 to 18. We were invited to St. Benedict's Monastery in St. Joseph, Minnesota, for an opportunity to get acquainted with others in Formation from monasteries located in St. Paul and Crookston, Minnesota; Rock Island, Illinois; and Bismarck, North Dakota, and to learn more about documents that American Benedictine women hold in common. Sister Margaret Michaud, who was among those who collaborated to write the documents *Upon This Tradition* and *Wisdom From the Tradition*, gave us background on the documents and their significance. These documents were written under the auspices of the Conference of Benedictine Prioresses. In addition we considered *With Hearts Inclined*, which contains the norms for the Federation of St. Benedict and its member monasteries.

We also attended the Liturgy of the Hours with the monastic community: Evening and Morning Prayer and Vigils on Saturday night as well as group *lectio* on Sunday morning. Eucharist was also a part of each day. The weekend was not, however, all work, pray, and no play. On Friday evening we enjoyed getting acquainted with each other with some icebreakers and were tempted by some munchies which included delicious homemade fudge. On Saturday we had opportunities to visit important sites on their campus which included the grave of Mother Benedicta Riepp, who led the first Benedictines coming to America and suffered the kind of martyrdom that is often the fate of pioneers. We were also given copies of *With Lamps Burning* which provided some of the historical background of the early years of Benedictine women in America.

Photo by Karen Steveler, OSB



Participants in the Formation Weekend

Celebrating Creativity

By Sister Dorene King

This summer give your child, grandchild, or young acquaintance the opportunity to explore their creative gifts in art, nature exploration, music, and drama. The Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery invite children who will enter the 5th and 6th grades in the Fall of 2012 to "Celebrating Creativity" (formerly known as "The Barn Program"). St. Scholastica Monastery Sisters will be the leaders of all activities such as basket-weaving, nature detective, and mystery painting. "Celebrating Creativity" will be held at St. Scholastica Monastery from Monday, July 16 to Friday, July 20 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Since the program will have a limited enrollment of twenty, please secure an opening with a \$25 deposit and a completed registration form as soon as possible. The suggested donation for the entire program is \$100. Scholarships are available. To obtain a registration form and to inquire more about the program, please contact Sister Dorene King at McCabe Renewal Center (218) 724-5266.

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner 2012

By Sister Mary Rae Higgins

The Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner was held on Tuesday, April 17, with 50 guests attending. The theme of roses was carried throughout and two of our deceased members were remembered with a red rose which was placed in Chapel: David Kirby, a driver, and Mary Ann Nault, who last served as a friend on Benet Hall. A pink rose was presented to Vicky Siders, Director of Development and Public Relations and to Andi Therrien, that office's able Administrative Assistant, who did so much to help with invitations and place cards.

The following pins were awarded:

Five years:	Gary Sundre, driver Marianne Connelly, music Bridget Lawson, music
Ten years:	Pam Christensen, gardener Pat English, Benet Hall
Twenty years:	Pat Gentry, Benet Hall Lillian Horvath, Benet Hall Scott Junkert, music Becky Urbanski, music

We are so grateful for all our volunteers who gave us a total of 2,311 hours of service this past year.

Iain MacGillivray, who graduated from CSS this year, played a flute piece in honor of our deceased volunteers and four other violin and song tunes from his native Scotland. Iain led the group from the Chapel to the Dining Room with his bagpipes, always a thrill. To close the evening, nine Sisters sang "Sandyland," a song about building your house upon a rock. The Sisters wore hard hats and work belts with tools and made a big hit. Sister Lois closed the program with a thank you to Sister Mary Rae Higgins for planning the event.

Photo by Catherine Wright



Above: Twenty-year pins were awarded to Pat Gentry (left) and Lillian Horvath (right) pictured here with Sister Lois Eckes. Top right: Sisters singing "Sandyland." Below left: Attendees at the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. Below right Iain MacGillivray

Photo by Catherine Wright



Photo by Catherine Wright



Photo by Andi Therrien



The Saint John's Bible: Celebrating a New Heaven, a New Earth, and a One-Hundredth Birthday

By Sister Sarah Smedman

The three-day celebration, “A New Heaven and a New Earth: A Spiritual Journey with *The Saint John's Bible*,” to honor the hundredth birthday of The College of St. Scholastica was a highlight of this centennial year. *The Saint John's Bible*, a hand-written, hand-illuminated Bible commissioned by the monks of St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota, in 1998, was created by thirteen of the finest calligraphers, iconographers, and illustrators under the direction of Donald Jackson from his studio in Wales. The final volume, *Letters and Revelation*, was completed in May 2011, and on June 18, Donald Jackson, artistic director and chief calligrapher, and his wife Mabel, in a solemn ritual presented it to Abbott John Klassen and Fr. Bob Koopman, president of St. John's University, who each polished a small unburnished cross and thus finished *The Saint John's Bible*.

The College of St. Scholastica was founded by the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, who follow the *Rule of St. Benedict*, a Rule grounded in Holy Scripture. With the completion of *The Saint John's Bible* coinciding with the College's centennial, an event focused on the former seemed a natural way to celebrate the birthday of the latter. Both *The Saint John's Bible* and the College's centennial celebrate the accomplishments of the past and look toward the future. *The Bible* is created through the use of age-old methods and materials, for example, handmade inks on calfskin. Yet it incorporates modern historical events such as the holocaust, New York's Twin Towers, and contemporary cars and eyeglasses in a waste heap, as well as references to the ecology of Minnesota, its grasses, butterflies, and insects. The College lauds its Benedictine heritage and continues it through its commitment to the Catholic intellectual heritage, the values it promulgates, and its centennial theme, “The Love of Learning.” In tune with the cultural and economic ethos of the times, CSS moves forward into the future, utilizing both modern technology and traditional methods to develop new programs and to educate students ethically as well as intellectually and spiritually.

Preparation for *The Saint John's Bible* event at St. Scholastica actually began in June of 2010 with the securing of two major speakers, Irene Nowell, OSB, of Mount St. Scholastica, Atchison, Kansas, and Tim Ternes, Director of *The Saint John's Bible*, Collegeville, for a three-day residency in Lent of 2012. Ternes' promise to have all seven volumes of The Bible for display at St. Scholastica Monastery during that time was also secured. Within a month Pastor Dave Mesner had pledged Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Duluth as co-sponsor with the Monastery. A planning committee, which I chaired, was formed and included Pastor Dave, Linda Susens, Grace Monson, and Linda Turpening from Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd; Sister Marie Therese Poliquin, Sister Mary Rochefort, and me from the Monastery; and from the College Nathan Langer (Coordinator of Campus Ministry), Bob Aschenmacher (Executive Director of Communications and Media), Sister Mary Rochefort (in her professional role as Associate Vice President for Mission Integration), and Lori Barnstorf (secretary of Campus Ministry). By early 2011 the dates—February 28-29 and March 1, 2012—were locked in on everyone's calendar. Wonderful publicity about the upcoming event was launched.



Sister Sarah points to the image of Abraham and Sarah, from the Pentateuch Volume of *The Saint John's Bible*, 2003.

Finally the days came. *The Saint John's Bible* arrived and was displayed in the Gathering Place of Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel. At the exhibits individuals who had been coached in outstanding features of each volume turned pages, pointed out aspects too good to be missed, and answered questions for viewers. The three days included lectures, *Visio Divina* sessions, and culminated in a glorious ecumenical worship service at 7:15 p.m. on March 1 in Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel.

At 7:15 p.m. on Tuesday, February 28, in the Chapel, I opened the Bible event with congratulations to CSS on its centennial anniversary and with words from the late Irish poet John O'Donohue: "When we experience the Beautiful, there is a sense of homecoming. . . . The Beautiful offers us an invitation to order, coherence, and unity. When these needs are met, the soul feels at home in the world" (*Beauty*, 2,5). Certainly, three days in company with *The Saint John's Bible* invited us, in so many ways, to experience the Beautiful.

Sister Irene Nowell, who holds a bachelor's degree in music from Mount St. Scholastica College in Atchison, a master's degree in theology from St. John's University in Collegeville, and a doctorate in biblical studies from Catholic University in DC, delivered the opening address: "Opening Our Eyes to God's Light." Accompanying her presentation were illuminations from *The Saint John's Bible* projected on the white wall behind the altar. A member of *The Saint John's Bible* Committee from its origin, Sister Irene, a Biblical scholar and textual consultant, helped to decide which texts would be illuminated. Exhibiting the breadth and depth of her knowledge, her sense of humor, and her ability to interpret and clarify the texts she discussed, Sister Irene's talk was acclaimed by her audience.

Despite the all-day forecast of threatening weather, the blizzard held off until 2:00 a.m. on Wednesday, more than long enough for everyone to gather after Irene's presentation for camaraderie at a reception in the Monastery's Rockhurst Dining Room and to get home safely.



Sister Sarah with the book opened to the *Vision of the New Jerusalem*, from the *Letters and Revelation* volume of *The Saint John's Bible*, 2011.

On Wednesday, Duluth was favored (?) by its one vicious snowstorm of the past winter. Notwithstanding, the *Visio Divina* sessions went on as scheduled. At 2:00 p.m. that afternoon, Tim Ternes facilitated a fascinating two hours on "Sacred Scripture with *The Saint John's Bible*" for the twenty-five Sisters and those outsiders who had braved the weather. First Tim premiered a new film on *Letters and Revelation*. Then—the *Visio Divina*, which is a study of and reflection on an illumination and its interpretation of the text. Tim focused on the illumination of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse. Because his emphasis is always on the primacy of the text, the session began with participants reading that section of *Revelation* aloud, followed by comments about what in which passages struck them. Focus then turned to the illumination and lively discussion about its relation to the text, about what readers saw, how they interpreted it, and what dimensions the illumination added to the text. Challenged and excited by the *Visio* session, participants lingered despite the weather over coffee and more talk.

The *Visio Divina* session on Wednesday evening at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd was embedded in Evening Prayer led by Pastor Dave Mesner, musicians Linda Turpening, and Grace and Mark Monson. At the center of a song, prayer, and communion service, Sister Irene presented the *Visio* on "The Baptism of Jesus"; that illumination from the Gospel of Mark was projected on a screen high in the sanctuary. Sparsely attended because of the weather, the service was moving, and memorable in part because of the friendships among the participants.

The pièce de résistance on March 1 was the ecumenical worship service, “Opening Our Eyes to God’s Light,” which began in semi-darkness in a full Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel with the lighting of six blue candles adorned with gold ribbon (CSS’s colors), handcrafted by Sister Mary Josephine Torborg for this occasion, and with the hymn “Open Your Ears, O Faithful People,” hummed in parts by the Women’s Choir of the College. Ethereal! Prioress Sister Lois Eckes and Pastor Dave Mesner welcomed the congregation. Tim Ternes briefly introduced *The Bible* itself. Then, one by one four volumes of *The Bible—Genesis, Psalms, Gospels, and Revelation*—were carried, in turn, to the ambo by pairs, each a man and a woman, representing Good Shepherd, the Monastery, other Christian denominations, College faculty, staff, alumni, students and Trustees. After each procession a passage from the particular volume was proclaimed in turn by Pastor Joyce Piper, representing Bishop Thomas Aitken of the Northeastern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church; Dr. Steve Ostovich representing the College; Nan Asperheim representing Good Shepherd’s congregation, and Sister Mary Rochefort, representing the Monastery. A brief reflection followed each of the readings. Father Dale Nau, Chancellor of the Diocese of Duluth and representing Bishop Sirba, Benedictine Sister Irene Nowell, Pastor April Ulring Larson of First Lutheran Church in Duluth, and CSS President Larry Goodwin, respectively, delivered quite different but inspirational commentaries on the texts that had been read. During the readings and reflections Tim projected on the wall behind the altar corresponding illuminations from *The Bible*, adding both beauty and meaning to the service. Interspersed throughout were periods of silence for private prayer and music. Beautiful music, both instrumental—with Barb LeBeau Coffin ’53 presiding at the organ and Tyler Kaiser on the guitar—and congregational singing reverberated to the rooftops. The music was of a piece with the worship service theme and had been selected because it was well known to most Christian denominations. In their solo renditions of “The Lord’s Prayer” and the *Nunc Dimittis*, Christa Overson and Dr. Mark Monson of Good Shepherd each sent shivers through the assembly. Indeed, heavenly music. After prayers of petition, the Sharing of Peace, and a final blessing by Sister Lois and Pastor Dave, the congregation sang the doxology with full throats and full hearts, concluding a glorious and awe-inspiring worship and experience.

Exhibition of all seven volumes of *The Bible* and a reception in Rockhurst Dining Room hosted by the CSS Alumni Association kept everyone long after the service, sharing their exhilaration over the joyous experience.

When the books, calendars, and cards Brian Woods from Liturgical Press had provided for sale during the three days and *The Saint John’s Bibles* and materials Tim Ternes had brought from the Hill Museum were all packed up and gone, and Sister Irene was on a plane back to Atchison, the long anticipated *Saint John’s Bible* event at Saint Scholastica Monastery was over. This had been the first such celebration in which the first words of *Genesis*—“In the Beginning when God created the heaven and the earth. . .” and the last words of *Revelation*--“then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. . .” had been proclaimed. With the final “Amen,” written by Donald Jackson and the gold crosses burnished by Abbot John and Father Bob, *The Saint John’s Bible* was completed.

Back home at St. John’s, Tim Ternes wrote thanking the Committee for its “well thought out and beautifully executed” planning. “The final service on Thursday evening” he commented, “was one of the nicest prayer services with *The Saint John’s Bible* that has been done to date. The music, reflections, reverence, and spirit were all perfectly matched and truly moving. Thank you for making it all happen.” High praise from one who has directed and participated in such services across the world that capped the Committee’s satisfaction that their preparation had been rewarded with success.

Photos by Andi Therrien

IS IT I, LORD?

by Sister Mary Catherine Shambour

Photo by Jeff Frey; courtesy of CSS



“Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go, Lord, if you lead me, I will hold your people in my heart.” So goes the refrain of a contemporary hymn we may have sung many times in church without giving it much thought. But for some, these words prayed or sung in conviction summarize the end of a soul-searching quest and the beginning of a new life dedicated completely to God.

Having been asked to write in each issue of *Pathways* something about religious vocations and about our Benedictine way of life at St. Scholastica in particular, I’d like to clarify for anyone, especially eligible women, some signs that indicate God could be inviting them to consider a calling to religious life. Even if you yourself are not eligible, please don’t stop reading now as you may well be able to help someone else recognize signs indicative of a possible calling. Recall too the recent survey of new entrants

into women’s religious communities showing that nine out of ten were encouraged to consider religious life by someone suggesting it to them!

What are some of these “signs” and requirements? Though objective requirements—age, health, religious and educational background, freedom from impediments, etc.—can vary from community to community and be readily delineated in one phone call, the actual process of discerning one’s motivation may be lengthy and heart-rending for both the candidate and a community. Just how does a woman discern that she is being called to dedicate her life to God?

The answer is as varied as there are individuals, but one might note a few general characteristics. First, the person has received the gift of faith which makes her recognize that she is a unique creation of God with a human body and an immortal soul. This gift may have been given her through an early baptism and been nourished by the sacraments and Christian upbringing, or may have come only after a long quest or specific life experiences led her to perceive a loving God for whom her soul yearns. Through myriad experiences, persons and events in her life, both good and bad, and by reflecting upon them through the eyes of her faith and seeing all creation and human history as part of God’s loving plan for the salvation of the world, she seeks to draw closer to this source of all being and wishes to become a part of it. She begins shutting out other voices, seeks more solitude, spends more time in prayer, both liturgical and private. She strives to hear what God is saying to her by listening “with the ear of her heart.”

Gradually she begins to perceive God’s immeasurable love beckoning her to closer union with God and all creation. Previous loves, ambitions, and desires now begin to pale in comparison and lose their attraction. She shuns any immoral behavior of her companions even if this may cost her the loss of some friends. She loves her Church and will stand by it even if she may find some services “boring” or may have her own preferences in music or ritual. She is eager to learn more about her faith and takes advantage of opportunities the parish or youth group provides. She will volunteer to help with parish activities, go on mission trips, work with the soup kitchen. If the parish has adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, she will be there.

We’ve all known someone like this. Yes, they are rare in our day, but they exist and may need just a word of affirmation from us coupled with a comment that they would make an excellent religious and might want to consider that option. The same, of course, applies to anyone who can recognize herself in the above description and is free to consider religious life.

Unfortunately there are many false notions about the value and relevance of religious life in our day. This article hopes only to describe the essential underpinning needed to begin discernment and sustain one throughout a consecrated life. More to follow. Have you ever asked, “Is it I, Lord?”

An Associate's Life

by Debra Waites

Photo by Andi Therrien



I became an Associate at St. Scholastica Monastery mid-June 2011. Since then I have lived in a 5th floor apartment with a beautiful view of Lake Superior from my bedroom and a rooftop that allows me a panoramic view of Duluth, the beautiful grounds of the Monastery and campus of St. Scholastica College, and walking space to pace and pray at any time.

As an Associate I have the privilege of not only living here but also can participate in many aspects of the communal life of its members. The Liturgy of the Hours, the Work of God, is available for me to attend as my schedule allows, as is the Eucharistic Celebration. I have so far been here for three seasons. Although the liturgical seasons have been varied from dramatic to quiet and still, the weather seasons have been unusually mild, not what I expected from my first Duluth winter! Lent, especially Holy Week, precipitated an upheaval in my soul that contributed to a renewal of my life and faith with Christ.

Another opportunity afforded to me as an Associate is being able to attend concerts, lectures, programs, and organizational meetings. I have been a guest at such venues as hearing and meeting Temple Grandin, Lori Line, Scottish and Irish Dancing, seeing the artwork of the magnificent *Saint John's Bible* without ever leaving the premises! I have attended meetings of Pax Christi and met people who are diligently working to bring about peace and helping the poor through non-violent activism.

That is what I have received. You probably want to know what I have to offer to the Community; I am rather a jack-of-all-trades and master of none! In a nutshell, I do whatever needs doing in just about any area where there is need. At the Monastery proper, I represent the Community by working at the Information Desk answering the telephone and greeting any who come by. I companion members of the Community who need a steady arm when venturing out for varied appointments or just a walk outside. I also contribute through calligraphy, gardening, working in the gift shop and assisting Sister Katie with secretarial duties, cleaning, typing, hospitality, and rearranging furniture! I also help out at the McCabe Renewal Center.

Living as a Benedictine Associate is grace-filled and most likely a blessing for all concerned. It certainly has been for me.

Please Pray for the Following Deceased Friends and Relatives:

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Coleman
Henry M. Neuman 2/3/2012
Deacon Herb Riley 2/9/2012
Suzanne Olsen 2/11/2012
John E. Rossi 2/19/2012
Keith Merline 2/22/2012
Dorothy C. Harrington 2/25/2012
Judith Borowicz LaTour 2/27/2012
Robert Oswald 2/27/2012
Stanley Rochefort 3/10/2012
Sister Mary Rochefort's brother

Bonnie Wilkins 3/9/2012
Sister Mary Clare Hall's sister
Margaret Gratto Buscko 3/20/2012
Margaret Cherro 3/25/2012
John Sorman 3/23/2012
Harry Deichert 3/27/2012
Fr. George Kovalik 4/4/2012
Roger Darling 4/12/2012
Margaret Sweeney James 4/16/2012

In Loving Memory



Sister Charlene (sidecar) and Sister Marie Therese Poliquin joke around during a fund-raiser for a car for the Sisters while they were teaching at St. Bridget's in 1989.

Sister Charlene Schoen, OSB ***December 9, 1915 – February 13, 2012***

Sister Charlene (Dorothy) Schoen, OSB, 96, of St. Scholastica Monastery died Monday, February 13, 2012, at the Monastery. She was born to William Joseph and Bernadine E. (Heurung) Schoen on December 9, 1915, in Swan River, Minnesota. On August 28, 1934, she entered St. Scholastica Monastery and professed her monastic vows July 11, 1936. She celebrated her Silver Jubilee in 1961, her Golden Jubilee in 1986, her Seventieth Jubilee in 2006, and her Seventy-fifth Jubilee on August 14, 2011. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education from The College of St. Scholastica and a Master of Arts degree in elementary education and counseling from St. Thomas University in St. Paul, Minnesota.



Sister Charlene and students at Assumption Hall in Hibbing.

Sister Charlene's entire life in ministry was dedicated to teaching. She began this ministry at Marquette School, Virginia, Minnesota, in 1937. Her teaching career spanned over fifty full-time years including assignments at St. James and Sacred Heart Schools in Duluth, St. Timothy School in Chicago, Assumption Hall School in Hibbing, St. Thomas School in International Falls, and St. Bridget's School in Minneapolis. Of those assignments, she taught at St. Bridget's for over twenty years. She was principal of Holy Name School in Wayzata from 1958 to 1964 and, finally, she returned to St. Bridget's to teach part-time for seven years and one year at St. Elizabeth Seton School before retiring. She felt especially at home at St. Bridget's because she herself had attended school there from third through eighth grade. She was proud of never missing a day of teaching

because of illness and grateful for each day she taught "God's children." She wrote a personal letter to each of her students on the occasion of their graduations.

At her wake many commented on her genius as a teacher, her prayerfulness, and her love of family. She was devoted to the children she taught, whether pitching a baseball for them at recess or teaching them about the importance of love. Sister Charlene said, "If there was a disturbance in the classroom, I'd say, 'Someone is chasing love out of the room!'" Sister Charlene was publicly awarded several certificates of appreciation for the many years she taught in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her brothers Charles and Otto, and sister Lucille Manson. In addition to the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, she is survived by many nieces and nephews, other relatives, and countless friends.

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*“There grows within the
earth of our hearts a surging
conviction and radiant certainty
of Christ’s fierce and tender
presence.”*

Sister Lois Eckes