

# PATHWAYS



NEWSLETTER OF THE BENEDICTINE SISTERS

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## *The Night is as Clear as the Day*

By Sister Joan Marie Stelman

*...even darkness is not dark for you,  
and the night is as clear as the day....Psalm 139:12*

Advent is a time of waiting and a time of darkness. The readings for Advent are filled with a sense of expectation: hope for a time of peace, a time of healing, a time of light, the coming of the Savior. Yet as important as it is to “keep our eyes on the prize,” we must not let our focus on the longed-for light blind us to the riches that surround us in the darkness.

We tend to be filled with impatience, wishing away not only the darkness of the season but the darkness and the drudgery of our everyday lives. If we live only looking to the future, we are bound to be disappointed. How often do we feel “let down” when Christmas finally comes – and is gone in the blink of an eye? We are like a carload of children pestering God – “Are we there yet?” – who are then disappointed and cranky upon reaching their destination. The chosen people experienced a similar “letdown” when they realized that their Messiah was not a glorious hero, but a working man from a humble background. Not only did he fail to solve all their problems – poverty, injustice, oppression, – Jesus couldn’t even save himself. It’s easy at this distance to criticize and scoff at the Israelites, but aren’t we often just as intolerant when our problems aren’t resolved according to our own individual visions of perfection. In a reversal of the old saying, it seems we can’t see the trees for the forest.

If we only look at the mountain of problems facing our world, it is easy to be tempted to throw up our hands in despair or to allow ourselves to be consumed by anger. Why is it sometimes easier to throw our energy into worrying about huge problems than actually to do something to help those around us each day? Perhaps partly it’s a question of glamour. It is certainly more glamorous to find a cure for AIDS than it is to visit a sick neighbor or to fight for world peace rather than to show tolerance to an irritating family member. It is very seductive to picture ourselves as saviors of the world – or prophets at the very least.

I am not advocating that we should ignore world problems or stop recycling, but I am suggesting that we also need to take the time to look around us, for all our life is “Advent” until we are truly united with our Lord. Our call to live in loving community should be more than responsibility; it should be our treasure. If we take time to look, we will see a myriad of opportunities – glittering in what seems to be darkness – to show the love of Christ to those around us.

I remember traveling from St. Cloud to Minneapolis on the Greyhound bus just before Christmas several years ago. The bus company had overbooked the trip, and people were jammed into the aisles, ill-tempered and tired. A young man, who was going home from college in North Dakota to spend the holidays with his parents, got up to give his seat to a mother with a crying toddler. He was about 6’5” and couldn’t even stand upright on the bus, but he chatted with all of us nearby and charmed the little boy from tears to laughter. With good humor, courtesy, and a few kind words he turned a miserable experience into a pleasant one and transformed a busload of passengers snarling at one another into a group of pilgrims exuding camaraderie and good will.

There was still poverty and violence in the world, and we on the bus were still tired and bedraggled, but I know that Christ was with us. And I am convinced that we will never recognize Jesus in his glory at the end of our waiting unless we recognize Emmanuel, God with us, here, now, in the most ordinary moments of our “dark” lives.



# *A Letter from the Prioress*



here is a God-shaped hole in the heart of each of us that only God can fill. The holy season of Advent/Christmas/Epiphany speaks to that ancient longing and beckons us to journey deep within the Holy Mysteries of this sacred time to experience anew the birth of God in our hearts and our lives.

It is a birth that happens as we realize that God chooses the small and simple, the quiet and hidden places for Divine visitations. It is a birth for the poor, the outcast, the maligned, the rejected, the refugee. Jesus was all of these. His first resting place was a feedbox for animals; his deathbed was a cross. This holy season challenges us to see with new eyes, not only a child born in poverty, but a God who calls us to be far more than we ever imagined possible. Jesus shows us the way and is Himself the fulfillment of the God-shaped holes in our hearts.

The following poem invites us to ponder the self-emptying God who shapes and fills our longing.



## *God Waits*

*We surround  
the simple stable  
with a glow of godly light*

*We fill the sky  
with winged angels  
and a supernatural star*

*Shepherds come with questions  
about a heavenly king,  
and magi march  
a thousand desert miles,  
bringing golden gifts.*

*But I think  
the bundled bag lady  
warming her weary feet  
on the sewer grate  
knows best  
the naked truth  
about that night –*

*the clammy warmth  
of cattle's breath,*

*the beggar's share  
of borrowed straw,*

*the fragile fragility  
of life.*

*The tinsel in our story  
hides the hard message  
of stable-birth—*

*that God waits,  
weeping and powerless  
as a newborn babe,  
for a word of welcome.*

Gary Boelhower, Ph.D., Chair  
Theology/Religious Studies Department  
The College of St. Scholastica

May you give birth to Christ as Mary did and carry His love and peace in your hearts as you welcome and serve Him in others now and throughout the New Year.

Lovingly with deep and prayer-filled  
gratitude for the gift you are,

*Sister Lois Eikes*

Sister Lois  
Prioress

# All Souls' Day

By Sister Patricia Anne Williams



All Souls' Day, November 2, is the day in the Church year when we remember and pray for all the people from God's family who have died. On this day in the Gathering Space of Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel here at St. Scholastica Monastery, a simple table is found. Upon it there is a photograph of each Sister in our monastic family who has gone to God through death during the past year. Here one stops and once again gazes upon the faces of these Sisters. The moment is different for each one of us. A smile or silent tear touches a face as special memories of those Sisters play out in our hearts and minds. For some, a silent prayer or inner conversation with those Sisters happens. I believe that for all of us, however different the experience of this encounter, we share one same memory. On that table is also a single red rose that we Sisters know signifies the fullness of each one of their lives lived among us in love and dedication.

We are gathered. "As on the day of her Final Monastic Profession, a lighted lamp symbolizing the wise virgin who keeps her lamp trimmed, supplied with oil, and burning with the light of Christ" is carried in, one for each Sister we are remembering. Our Prioress, Sister Lois, prayerfully reads a short statement reflecting on that Sister's life, and her lamp is placed upon the altar. Then Evening Prayer begins. We, the living, gathered in our places around the altar, sing our psalms, listen to the readings, and silently reflect on the day. And on the altar "the souls of the just are in the hand of God....they are at peace....they shall shine like sparks" (Wisdom 3).

The Prologue from the *Rule of Benedict* sums it all up: "as they progress in this way of life and in faith, they run on the path of God's commandments, their hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love." And "may He bring us all together to eternal life (RB 72:12). Amen, Alleluia!



Above left: Photos of the five Sisters who have died in the past year: Sister Eugenia Daly, Sister Mary David Gruden, Sister Matthew Laurich, Sister Barbara Ann Tushar, and Sister Mary Charles McGough. Above: Sister Bertille Goblirsch places a lamp on the altar as a Sister is remembered. Left: The five lamps on the altar (Photos by Sister Patricia Anne Williams)

# Homecoming

By Sister Linda Wiggins



his summer Sister Jo Krulc, along with her sister-in-law Joan and two nieces, traveled to Slovenia (Slovenja), a small European country nestled among the bordering countries of Austria, Italy, and Croatia. While slightly smaller than the state of New Jersey, Slovenia provides significant transit to European countries; more significant to Sister Jo, however, it provides a large portion of family history because she was born there on a small farm owned by her parents, Frank and Josephine.

After World War II, Slovenia became a republic of the renewed Yugoslavia, a multinational state comprised of Croats, Serbs and Slovenes. Under Communist rule, Slovenia's political history was complex, since the country was also in a civil war during this period. Factions were labeled Red (communists) or White (home guards). Many were suspected of being traitors to the communist rule. In 1945 Frank was told that he was under suspicion of being a traitor and should leave the country immediately. He knew that entire families were killed for being suspected or accused of being traitors. He loved his home and farm dearly, but not as much as he loved his family. He would leave the next day.

Wanting his wife, Josephine, to have a good night's rest, he did not inform her they were leaving until the next morning. She did not want to leave because traveling with seven children, one an infant, would be difficult. Neighbors came to help with packing, and a cousin offered to take the baby and keep her until they could return in a few months. The cousin had a child who played with Francka, Jo's older sister, so Francka begged to stay with the baby and her friend. Amid the chaos of the morning, the parents agreed to leave the two—baby Angela and Francka—with the cousin, believing they would return in a few months.



*Left: Sister Jo Krulc celebrating her First Communion in 1948 in a refugee camp.  
Below: 1973 photo of Sister Jo Krulc's mother (center back) and her sisters (Francka on the left and Angela (right, dark hair) with their husbands and children.*



*Above: Sister Jo Krulc with wooden handcrafted items made in Slovenia.*

On a heavily laden wagon, they left their home and traveled to a refugee camp in Lienz. Two years later they were moved to Spittal, site of another refugee camp, where they lived for three more years. In 1950 they finally were able to relocate to the US and were sponsored by a family in Biwabik, Minnesota. By this time, two more children were born, so seven children arrived at their new American home: Ann, Ivana, Mary, Jo, Frank, Christine, and Martin. The family moved to Aurora in 1954 and the last child, Tony, was born. Although once they were established they wanted to have the two girls join them, their cousin pleaded with them to let the girls stay in Slovenia, and so, after much reflection, they did. Francka has visited the US twice; Angela has not desired to leave Slovenia, but always looks forward to visits from her siblings. Sister Jo entered St. Scholastica Monastery, December 6, 1964, and has visited Slovenia five times since 1969, her first visit.



*Above: The family home. Pictured here left to right, Vesna and Peter (Francka's son and his wife) and their three children with Francka (front right).*

*Right: St. Martins – the family has always attended this church.*



In 1991 Slovenes were dissatisfied with the power exercised by the majority Serbs, and civil war erupted in which the Slovenes established their independence in the same year. Modern Slovenia has a very stable economy and population. Sister Jo loves the shops in Moravce where her family lives, and enjoys noting all the progress in terms of modern conveniences—e.g., condos, high-rises, cell phones, TV (31 channels), automobiles, restaurants—now in her homeland. Most of all, she loves joining her family in working in the hayfields, or cooking and eating wonderful Slovenian food, gardening, going on picnics, appreciating her family's delicate hand-crafted needlework, carpentry items and, always, Francka's beautiful orchids. When they attend Sunday Mass, they still sit in the same pew in St. Martins as they did many years ago. Her sisters continue to bake bread in a brick oven. Her sister Francka's son Peter and his wife and family live in the family home where Sister stays when she communes with her ever-growing Slovenian family. Sister Jo Krulc has an assurance not many have—that no matter to which side of the Atlantic ocean she travels, she is always going home.

# Beauty Everywhere

By Vicky Siders



Sister Joyce Fournier recently donated six of her photographs (and eight others)—matted and framed—to her high school alma mater in northwestern Minnesota. Sister Joyce graduated from Warren High School, as did all but one of her brothers and sisters. The school has since consolidated with two other communities. In June 2007 Sister Joyce read an announcement in *Connections*, a newsletter published by the Warren-Alvarado-Oslo Public Schools, asking for art work by alumni to display in the school. “This is something I can do,” she remembers thinking.

Sister Joyce drove across state to the high school, a 17-year-old building with very little art work on the walls of the multipurpose room or entryway. She spoke with the administrators there and asked if she could make a donation of framed prints in memory of her parents and siblings. Then she planned, measured walls, and called a high school classmate, Ron Colpron, a photographer from California, to ask if he would like to be included in this project. He sent Sister Joyce some photos, and she chose eight of his prints and six of hers to frame and take to the high school on a second trip.

Two of Sister Joyce’s photos are of sunrises—a favorite subject of hers—in memory of her father, Leo Fournier, who was mayor of Warren for 19 years, and of her mother, Anne Harder Fournier. These are now hanging in the fireplace area of the high school’s main foyer.



Photo by Andy Therrien



Photo by Sister Joyce Fournier

*Left: Sister Joyce Fournier in her framing studio.*

*Above: “The Four Seasons” she matted and framed for the high school.*

*Right: The plaque listing her brothers and sisters who graduated from Warren High School.*



Photo by Sister Joyce Fournier

Four other photos, “The Four Seasons” are on display in the multipurpose room and are in memory of her brothers Byron and Charles and her sisters, Marie and Judith. The eight photos by Ron Colpron have been placed in the high school office.

Since the early 1990s Sister Joyce has enjoyed taking photos—particularly of nature. “It’s God-created. It’s lovely. There’s so much beauty everywhere,” she says. Sister Joyce also operates Scholastica Framing and Photography at the Monastery. The framing and photography are third or fourth careers, following years in education and administration. And Sister Joyce truly enjoys the art involved in both the photography and framing processes. “I frame so many different things,” she says. “Needlework, posters, fabric of all kinds, photographs. I help people choose mat colors and frames and glass, and then—when they pick it up and see it put together—that’s wonderful!”

# The Oblates of St. Scholastica Monastery

By Sister Joan Marie Stelman



enedictine Oblates are lay Christians who choose to deepen their spirituality by incorporating the values and principles of St. Benedict into their lives and by formally affiliating themselves with a particular monastic community. In his *Rule*, St. Benedict stresses the importance of a healthy balance among prayer, work, and leisure. Oblates make a special commitment to deepen their prayer life through spiritual reading (*lectio divina*) and some form of participation in the Liturgy of the Hours. This commitment to prayer also serves as a connection between the Sisters and the Oblates – we are glorifying God together, along with Christians all over the world who pray the Divine Office. Every day the Sisters at the Monastery specifically remember our Oblates in prayer.

St. Benedict also emphasizes the importance of community in living a fully-realized Christian life. Within the monastic community, we Sisters make vows of stability, obedience, and *conversatio* (fidelity to monastic life). Obviously, as lay persons living in the world, Oblates do not make these vows in the same way. However, they make a commitment to stability in and fidelity to Christian life and to accountability to God, their communities, and their families. They strive to promote the values of moderation, good stewardship of resources, and respect for all life. As part of our extended family, our Oblates are able to carry the charism of St. Benedict and the values of our Community into the world in a unique way.

Our Oblates attend monthly meetings from September through June when possible, and they try to make a retreat each year. For those at a distance, it is possible to keep in touch through the newsletter and by mail. A person who is interested in becoming an Oblate begins as an “Inquirer,” visiting us and meeting with the Oblate Director. An Inquirer who decides to become an Oblate then enrolls as an Oblate “Candidate.” The Candidate Program lasts for about a year, during which time Candidates incorporate *lectio divina* and daily prayer into their lives. They also learn about the *Rule of St. Benedict* and formulate a personal “rule” of living for themselves. During this time, they attend monthly meetings and/or correspond regularly with the Oblate Director. When Candidates are ready, the Director invites them to make their formal Act of Oblation, which takes place in our Chapel. The word “oblate” comes from the Latin *oblatio* or offering, thus, in Final Oblation, Oblates offer themselves to the service of Christ in a special way, deepening and strengthening their baptismal commitment.

If you are interested in finding out more about this program, please contact Sister Joan Marie Stelman, OSB, at the Monastery address, by email at [jstelman@css.edu](mailto:jstelman@css.edu), or by phone at 218-733-2210.

## Please Pray for the Following Deceased Relatives and/or Benefactors

Veronica Engelter	9/27/06
Helen Maruska	5/17/07
Ed McGuire	10/13/07
Harold Thomas High	10/13/07
William T. Dalbec	10/23/07
Bill O'Neil	10/30/07
Albina Fanning	11/2/07
Josephine Miller	11/20/07
Aileen Coon	11/26/07
Sr. Mary Odile Cahoon's sister	



## Transcultural Nursing

By Sister Beverly Horn



ranscultural Nursing, a sub-specialty within the broad field of Nursing, focuses on cultural issues that influence health and health care. This sub-field originated in the 1960's when Dr. Madeleine Leininger, a nurse-anthropologist, observed in her practice how children with psychiatric issues behaved differently depending on their culture. Her pursuits in nursing education, research, and practice are widely published.

In the 1970s Sister Beverly Horn was one of Dr. Leininger's first doctoral students in this subspecialty at the University of Washington, Seattle. Currently, there is a vast cadre of nurses prepared in this subspecialty in the United States and throughout the world.



Sister Beverly Horn

Culture includes how individuals or groups look at the universe to form values about the world around them—their worldview. One's worldview includes beliefs about: cosmology—the origin and structure of the universe, relationships with nature, moral and ethical reasoning, social relationships, magico-religious beliefs, and aesthetics. Some specific domains of culture include: family roles and organization, communication, nutrition, pregnancy and childbearing practices, death rituals, spirituality, and health and illness practices and practitioners. Transcultural nursing is concerned with provision of culturally competent and culturally congruent care. Nurses and other health care providers require the knowledge and skills to be culturally competent in care giving. Culturally competent care is congruent with the patient or client's worldview and thus his or her beliefs and values.

The Global Transcultural Nursing Society was formed in 1975. The central office is at Madonna University, Livonia, Michigan. There is a full-time business manager on site at the office. Sister Beverly Horn is the Executive Director of the Transcultural Nursing Society, and does much of her work electronically, spending approximately one week each quarter on-site. The organization sponsors the successful *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*, published by SAGE publications.

## Retired or Recycled

By Sister Barbara Ann Vierzba



ou probably have heard the phrase, "Sisters don't retire. They get recycled." In other words, they just get another job! As a Community we are working toward our goals, one of which is "planning so each Sister will be encouraged and empowered to enjoy a meaningful retirement."

On October 26-28 we were privileged in having Sister Mary Hopkins, OP, from Sinsinawa, Wisconsin, come to present a workshop. Sister Mary has been working with religious communities all across the country with retirement planning for the past 20 years. Her title for this workshop was The Transformative Power of Change.

In early August ninety Sisters took Dr. Richard Johnson's Retirement Success Profile. Intensive research has identified 15 spiritual challenges (or success factors) that together can predict to what degree a Religious is likely to find faith, peace, and continued personal growth in retirement. These fifteen areas are: Ministry Disengagement, Attitude Toward Retirement, Self-Direction, Health Perception, Financial Security, Current Life Satisfaction, Projected Life Satisfaction, Life Meaning/Spirituality, Leisure Interests, Personal Adaptability, Lifespan Development, Felt Responsibility for Caregiving, Religious Community Life, Perception of Age, and Replacement of Apostolic Work Function. We broke into small groups and began to get in touch with the findings in our assessment. We will be working on this for the next several years.

## Highlights

### *Spiritualities of the Earth Conference*

By Sister Mary Josephine Torborg



As people gathered in Mitchell Auditorium at The College of St. Scholastica on the evening of October 19, 2007, strains of gentle music permeated the room. The 11th annual spirituality conference, “Spiritualities of the Earth,” was about to begin. In the hushed silence a voice proclaimed: “Let us reflect on our responsibility to live in harmony with the universe that is God’s gift and our home. . . as we express our gratitude for all the elements that support the marvelous web of life day after day, season after season” (Gary Boelhower). Symbols of the four elements of the earth were carried in and placed on the stage accompanied by waving streamers, song, and larger-than-life-sized puppets. With this prayer ritual we began our weekend of exploration of earth spiritualities and ways of becoming prophetic agents of healing and hope in our fragile and wounded world.

Sister Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, Prioress of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, Pennsylvania, the keynote speaker for the weekend, focused on “Benedictine Spirituality and Sacramental Vision: Rediscovery of the ‘thou’ of Creation.” Sister emphasized how humility, stability, and reverence are key values in our commitment to be stewards of the earth.



*“Water” and “Fire”, and musicians  
Richard Townsend, Sara Thomsen, and  
Marianne Connelly. Photo by Mary Plaster.*

On Saturday morning participants engaged in breakout sessions presented by faculty members from The College of St. Scholastica, spiritual leaders from the larger Duluth community, and creative song leaders. Topics ranged from “Green Judaism: Renewing the Earth One Congregation at a Time” to “Is Climate Change a Moral Issue?” to “Jewish and Christian Roots for an Eco-Spirituality.” Saturday afternoon Sister Christine challenged us once again as she addressed the topic “Quest for Compassion and Communion: Our Agenda for Today and Our Hope for Tomorrow.” Our concluding ritual celebration included the Puzzle Peace Children’s Choir and a Commitment Prayer pledging to do our part in nurturing our beautiful planet Earth.

In preparation for the “Spiritualities of the Earth Conference, Sister Mary Josephine Torborg, OSB, and The College of St. Scholastica Earth Action Club held an Energy-Efficient Lighting Extravaganza Campaign, a partnership between The College of St. Scholastica, Minnesota Power, and Daugherty Hardware and the environment. It was a way to educate the campus community about conservation of our resources, the environment, and to raise funds for the conference. Additional funding was received from several groups at The College of St. Scholastica: the Theology and Religious Studies Department, the Interreligious Forum, Student Senate, and Earth Action Club. St. Scholastica Monastery and the Monastery’s Feminist Theology Committee also funded the event.

# Monastery Reception



n October 9, the Monastery hosted a reception for family and friends. Attendees toured the Monastery, had refreshments in Rockhurst Dining Room, and attended a Service of Gratitude in Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel. It was a rainy, cold afternoon, but more than 150 people attended! We were warmed by their smiles and friendship.



*Guests enjoy the buffet.*



*Sister Lois at the Service of Gratitude*



*Sister Clare Marie Trettel (left)  
and Judith Gerald*



*The Chapel was filled with family and friends.*



*The Sisters bless attendees.*

*Photos by Andy Therrien*

# New Programs at the Monastery

By Sister Jean Maher



any important events and experiences in our lives begin with a dream. The Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery gathered as an entire Community in 2005 to “dream” and plan for the future. One of those dreams was to develop new ways to share our spiritual resources with those outside of the Monastery. The prioress and council asked a group of Sisters to form a task force that would create ways for this dream to become reality.

March 8, 2008, the Sisters will be offering a retreat day at the Monastery from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Topics will be “My Faith Journey: Learning to Live with the Questions” with Sister Pauline Micke, presenter, and “Discovering the Mystery: Learning to Find God in the Ordinary Events of Life” with Sister Mary Josephine Torborg. If you are interested in coming to this retreat, call Sister Martha Bechtold at 218-723-6521.

Another plan for bringing this dream to reality was the creation of a program to train people to become spiritual directors. Thus the Shalom program began in September here at the Monastery. One Saturday each month thirty-one participants from Duluth, Grand Rapids, Superior, Rochester, Mountain Iron, Cohasset, Aitkin, Two Harbors, Ely, Coleraine, Hermantown, Chisholm, Britt, and Cook gather at the Monastery for classes and formation. The team that has created this Shalom program consists of Sister Michelle Dosch, Normajean Strommen, Sister Jeanne Ann Weber, Pastor Alan Hendrickson, and Sister Jean Maher. The team does most of the teaching, but outside experts are brought in for certain topics. Each participant is expected to read a book each month and write a reflection paper as well as receive spiritual direction for themselves. In the second year of the program they will also be asked to have a directee (someone they direct) and to participate in a supervision process each month. At the end of the two years, each participant will have a chance to discern his or her call to ministry. The Sisters are pleased with the enthusiastic response to the program, and the participants are grateful for this opportunity to grow in their personal faith journeys as they prepare to bring the Good News of God’s love to the world around them. In them the dream continues to grow so that in all things God may be glorified.



*Left: Shalom program participants enjoy a luncheon together in Rockhurst Dining Room.  
Below: Participants share with each other the results of their Myers-Briggs profiles during one of the workshops.*



Photos by Sister Jean Maher

# Come and See!

By Sister Mary Catherine Shambour

*"Every scribe who becomes a disciple of the kingdom of Heaven is like a householder who brings out from his storeroom both new and old" (Matthew 13:52).*

Did you ever grieve over having to leave behind some treasured object—your Linus blanket, a special Valentine, your first formal—because you were moving on to something new? Later you probably had to leave behind more meaningful remembrances: home, school, and parents because it was time to move on. Indeed, isn't life a series of letting go—the continual closing of one door to move into another era, even right into eternity? For us poor humans this would probably be too much to bear unless we anticipated the new to be better. (Here is where believers have a definite edge over others!) But being human, we are creatures of feelings, and we love to cling to the objects that once had meaning and brought us comfort. Besides, these keepsakes and symbols can inspire and identify us and our history: they help make life colorful and interesting. (Isn't that why the British keep their royalty—for the parades?) There certainly is a place for tradition and custom, but over long periods of time some accoutrements may lose or even obscure their meaning. For example, do the plumes on the headgear of the Knights of Columbus really portray who these good men are and what they do? Would the Pope be as well protected if the guards weren't wearing Michelangelo-era uniforms?

Periodically, long-established institutions examine or are asked to re-examine their *raison d'être*—religious institutions being no exception. We may find that our message is being lost or blurred by too many details. When Jesus announced the Good News that the Kingdom of God was at hand, his greatest opposition came from religious leaders who prided themselves on the strictest observance of the Law in all its minutiae, proudly widening the phylacteries they wore to call attention to their holiness. The old wineskins of their hearts were not ready to receive the new wine Jesus came to offer. Their emphasis on the externals had blinded them to the weightier matters of mercy and justice. They didn't get it. So the lessons of the parables were lost on them and Jesus was accused of heretical teaching. Fortunately, some scribes DID get the message—those whom Jesus compared to "the householder who brings out from his storeroom new things as well as old."

Traditions are important—not in themselves, but for the motivation they represent. It is the heart that matters. The irony is that our never-changing God is forever creating something NEW and calling us to change of heart while we frequently prefer the old. Less than half a century ago, representatives of the universal Catholic Church, the People of God, guided by the Holy Spirit, met for years of intense soul-searching to discover how Christ's message must be interpreted in light of today's rapidly changing world. The changes inaugurated were monumental. Votes aren't all in yet on the effects of those changes, but the call for continual, authentic Christian response to the needs of the present time is irrevocable.

Religious communities, too, were called to reform, and we Benedictines delved deeply into our charism, finding the old that still had much relevance--and discovering new insights for new needs. And some things changed. Some remain the same. Today, as women of the 21st century question whether they can seek God within this blend of the old and the new, the answer comes in Jesus' reply to those who inquired where He lived—"Come and see."