



PATHWAYS

Newsletter of the Duluth Benedictine Sisters

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Editorial Board
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Contributors
Sisters of the Community

Cover Photo by
Sister Edith Bogue

Obituaries/Vita by
Sister Mary E. Penrose

Obituary Photos by
Sister Joyce Fournier and from
Monastery Archives

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St. Scholastica Monastery
1001 Kenwood Avenue
Duluth, MN 55811 - 2300

Telephone:
218.723.6555

Fax
218.723.5963

Visit our website
www.DuluthBenedictines.org



Letter From The Prioress

My whole being continues to be filled with humble awe as I reflect on the experience of being re-elected Prioress of our Community on June 12, Pentecost Sunday. The Holy Spirit's movement among us and outpouring upon us was awesome and incredibly powerful in so many ways. I was reminded once again of how tenderly we are loved by God and how beautiful is the monastic community of holy women I have been called to serve with the Heart of Christ.

At Evening Prayer on August 7, during the Rite of Affirmation of my re-election and the Commissioning of each Sister for her ministry, I shared a personal reflection with the Sisters based on the Scripture reading chosen for that celebration (Revelation 22:1-5) and a portion of our Community Vision Statement which reads, "We will live and share our Benedictine values so as to be a center of worship and praise in our region: a Spiritual Wellspring as well as a place of compassion and hope." I would like to share an adaptation of that reflection with you in acknowledgment of the treasured place you hold in my heart and the gift you are to our monastic community.

I invite you to focus with me on the Ancient, Divine Dream that lives within each of our hearts. It is a dream placed there by God when our lives began in our mothers' wombs. That Godseed, as it were, has unfolded uniquely within each of us and yet is intertwined with the dream unfolding in every other heart and in all creation. It is the Divine invitation for us to become God's glory, fully human, fully alive.

Through the hearts of our unfolding lives, as the Book of Revelation reminds us, flows the River of the Water of Life. On the banks of the River grows the tree of life, continually producing fruit and leaves that bring healing to the nations. This abundance of Divine Life within each of us becomes a spiritual wellspring from which God's immeasurable love and healing flow into our world.

May we stand together on the threshold of the future we are creating for our children and grandchildren, deeply immersed in Christ who longs to make each of us a living center of praise and worship, a holy place of compassion and hope, a spiritual wellspring of new life and lasting peace for all creation.



Lovingly in Christ with deep gratitude and prayers,

Sister Lois Eckes

Sister Lois Eckes, Prioress

Affirmation of Prioress and Commissioning

Following the Rule of St. Benedict

By Sister Mary Christa Kroening

The Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, following the *Rule of St. Benedict* chapter 64 on the election of a Prioress, re-elected Sister Lois Eckes on June 12, 2011, the Solemnity of Pentecost, for four years. On August 7, 2011, Sister Linda Soler, OSB, a member of the Federation of St. Benedict Council, came to Duluth to preside at the Rite of Affirmation.

This monastic ritual began with the solemn entry of the Community into the Chapel in Monastic Statio. This is the custom of walking in procession from the Gathering Place, touching the Holy Water of our baptism, signing ourselves with the Sign of the Cross, and entering Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel. Before the altar the partner Sisters make a bow in reverence to the presence of Christ symbolized in the Word of God, Crucifix, and Altar Table. Then the partner Sisters bow in reverence to the presence of Christ in each other.

Sister Lois affirmed her willingness to continue to carry out the duties of the Office of Prioress. She received a special blessing led by Sister Linda Soler of the Federation and proclaimed by the Community. (*RB 64 Election of the Prioress*).

Following the Rite of Affirmation, Sister Lois called forth the administrative staff (*RB 65 Appointment of the Subprioress and RB 31 Qualifications of the Monastery Cellarer and RB 66 The Porter of the Monastery*):

- Subprioress, Sister Judith Oland
- Treasurer, Sister Verda Clare Eichner
- Director of Temporalities, Sister Martha Bechtold
- Director of Hospitality, Sister Renata Liegey
- Administrative Assistant, Sister Luella Wegscheid

The administrative staff then promised their wholehearted service to the Benedictine Sisters assembled in Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel. In turn, the Community members affirmed the re-election of Sister Lois stating in part, “We believe that you hold the place of Christ in our Community.” Sister Lois then gave an inspirational reflection. Each Benedictine Sister was commissioned with her work for the coming year. (*RB 48 The Daily Manual Labor, RB 5 Obedience and RB 71 Mutual Obedience*).



Clockwise from left: Community members with raised hands sang a blessing over Sister Lois. Sister Lois called forth her staff who agreed to dedicate themselves to service of the Community. Each Community member was commissioned to her ministry for the upcoming year.



Turning Toward the Morning

By Sister Gretchen Johnston



Where does the time go when it is done?

Why is it never yesterday?

Where does the sun go when it is dark?

When is it morning on the other side of the world?

How does the year know it is spring?

Why do we have to go to bed in the daytime (when it is light in the summer)?

These and other questions are perennial questions of children (many times of adults also). Almost any answer is better than a complicated explanation of time zones, seasons, solstices, and equinoxes. Even though time zones, seasons, solstices, and equinoxes are factual and help us understand how the sun and the earth revolve and work together, these facts still do not help us know “Why?” We don’t really know, but we know it is part of a cosmic cycle in which we learn to live and love, and so we rejoice—Alleluia!

It is autumn now, no longer summer, both part of the cosmic cycle. We have a choice—to grieve the passing season or welcome the coming one. Most of us do both, the wisest choice. We cannot grieve summer so much that we forget the beauties of autumn or welcome the autumn so enthusiastically that we forget what came before. The cycle is essential. The death of summer is the birth of autumn, and so we rejoice—Alleluia!

Not long ago I was in a hospital room with my grandmother during her last week on earth. She kept pointing at beautiful people I could not see. It was time for my cousin to leave, so he thrust his one-and-a-half year old baby into my arms as he hugged our grandmother and shared some special words with her. Baby Lee was laughing and pointing and saying “Peekaboo!” I think he saw some of the angels surrounding us. Later on, grandmother entered new life. Death is the birth of new life, and her spirit helps us to love. Love never ends, and so we rejoice—Alleluia!

I have a friend who says that December 22 is the first day of spring. Puzzled the first time I heard, I asked him what he meant. “Well, of course, because that’s when the days start getting longer!” He’s right, and so we rejoice—Alleluia!

God, in infinite and unstoppable mercy and love, has made the world and indeed the whole cosmos so that new life is always springing forth. Every now and then we glimpse it, and so we rejoice—Alleluia!

Why? We don’t know the why, but we do know some of the how, and when it happens, we rejoice—Alleluia!

“See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”- Isaiah 43:19a

Oh, my Joanie, don’t you know that the stars are swinging slow,
and the seas are rolling easy as they did so long ago?
If I had a thing to give you, I would tell you one more time
that the world is always turning toward the morning.

Folk song by Gordon Bok

Journey of the Heart: First Monastic Profession

By Sister Ann Marie Wainright

August 29 is a date that holds special significance. Not only is it the day that the Church celebrates the Feast of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist, it is also the anniversary date of Hurricane Katrina's landfall in 2005, levee breaches flooding my hometown of New Orleans and changing my life forever. August 29 also became the date I gave my life to God and to life in this community through first monastic profession. All three events remind me of John the Baptist's words: "He must increase; I must decrease" (John 3:30).

During my first monastic profession, I processed into the Chapel beginning at the baptismal font and ending at the altar. My Sisters in community stood on either side of the aisle, holding me with their warm smiles. Passing through their midst toward the altar reminded me of when the Israelites passed through the waters of the Red Sea in fleeing slavery, of when I was fleeing a storm and the floodwaters in New Orleans, and of passing through a birth canal into a new life.

Passages transform the heart: opening what is closed off to new possibilities; softening what is hardened through compassion; surrendering fears through deepened faith and renewed vision. Passages transform us because of God's presence to us through the people in our lives.

At the altar, I made my threefold promise of fidelity to the monastic way of life, stability, and obedience. With regard to the threefold monastic promise, Augustine Roberts, OCSO, writes in *Centered on Christ: A Guide to Monastic Profession*:

The purpose of following Jesus in his own way of life according to the commitments of monastic profession is to aid this divine work of creating the world anew, starting with your own heart. In the process, fidelity to monastic life becomes a transformation in the silence of love, chastity becomes virginity of intellect and spirit, personal poverty is made Christ-like in the depths of the soul, obedience grows into dependence on the Holy Spirit in every moment of your life, and stability roots us all together in his kingdom of brotherly love (315).



Photo by Sister Lisa Maurer

Sister Ann Marie proclaims her first monastic profession.

First monastic profession is a journey of the heart. My heart becomes united more fully with God's heart through my human life with this beautiful community. In every moment God's love transforms me so that I can more fully love others as God does. My community's presence is both a sign of support and of God's ever-present love. I was deeply moved when they extended their hands in prayer and blessing over me. Through my first monastic profession, I now live intentionally the call of God on my life that began at my baptism – a call to "run on the path of God's commandments, our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love" (*RB Prol.49*). I am so blessed!



Photo by Andi Therrien

Sister Ann Marie Wainright and Sister Lois Eckes with the illustrated Rule of St. Benedict

Inexhaustible, Renewable Energy Source

By Sister Mary Catherine Shambour

Photo by Jeff Frey, courtesy of CSS



“We have not so much as heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” (Acts:19:2)

As a former teacher, I smile whenever I hear the above passage which reminds me of students who claim they never heard of an examination item, whereas they had heard it many times but weren’t paying attention. However, these sincere souls in Ephesus, once they were baptized in Jesus and received the imposition of hands, received the Holy Spirit and immediately began speaking in tongues and prophesying. Powerful stuff! And how about us? Do we value and exercise the powerful gift we have received, or is the Holy Spirit merely that dove depicted in the stained-glass window?

I suspect that for many Christians the Holy Spirit remains an abstract term in the Creed and not the guiding principle of their own existence or of God’s continuing saving presence in the world. We may recall hearing about the Spirit’s brooding over the waters at creation forming cosmos out of chaos, or speaking through the prophets, or descending upon Jesus at His baptism and

upon the Apostles in tongues of fire, but do we realize that the Spirit today continually strives to transform humanity into the unity of the Body of Christ?

Do we recognize that by our baptism we each have been given a role in God’s loving plan for the universe and carry the power of that same Spirit within us?

I fear that most of us are so preoccupied with planning our own futures or securing our place in the world that we fail to ponder what plans God may have for us. We strive to get the best possible education, to know the right people, get the most rewarding positions, even seek God’s blessings on our efforts, but may fail to search our own hearts as to our deepest motives and whether we are doing what God wants us to do. Neglecting the spiritual dimension of our being, we can never attain the full potential of God’s plan for us—or our own happiness. We come to know God’s plan for us by calling on the Spirit who dwells within us, who alone knows the depths of God, searches our depths and pleads for us before God with “inexpressible groanings.” If we continually beg this Spirit to guide us, the Spirit’s gifts of wisdom, knowledge, understanding, counsel, fortitude, piety, and fear of the Lord will be granted us, and we will become what God wishes us to be.

Yet we must be aware of what we are asking for: Fire! This is the fire that Jesus longed to see ignited in the world and which He sent at Pentecost to all who wish to receive it. Once one has responded to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, life will never be the same. The Spirit may invite the soul to enter deeper into the mystery and so gift it with love for God that other earthly treasures pale in comparison. So, “duped” as it were, the soul responds to love’s invitation by surrendering itself completely to God in imitation of Christ’s total gift of unconditional love to the Father. This is the essence of every religious vocation. It is not a career choice one makes but a response to love.

Today we often hear young people—and even those not so young—who are seeking meaning in life say, “I want to be a part of something bigger than myself. I want to make a difference in the world.” Whether they realize it or not, this is already an inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Our task as parents, counselors, educators, or religious mentors is to help them see a connection between their longing for meaning and the Spirit’s continual work of transforming the world into the unity of the Body of Christ. There are manifold ways of doing this, of course, but for those who wish to give all they have and are and allow God to work through them, pursuing a religious vocation through any of its hundreds of different forms in the Church still provides the most support and opportunities for growth.

St. Scholastica Monastery in Duluth offers women who seek God the opportunity to do so in a contemporary setting where praising God is at the center of our lives and where one’s abilities and talents are put to use in building up the Kingdom of God. Here one will find the values that our 21st century world yearns for: community and solitude, sharing material and spiritual goods in common, obedience to God’s laws, respect for all persons, and above all, that peace which the world alone cannot give. Jesus has told us that the Kingdom of God is within us. May we all learn to enter that inner chamber of our hearts and listen to what the Spirit speaks.

Two Women Enter Postulancy

By Sister Lisa Maurer

On Wednesday, September 1, 2011, Linda Sellards and Elizabeth Farias entered the Postulancy at St. Scholastica Monastery. After satisfactorily completing the Affiliate stage of Initial Formation Linda and Elizabeth now move into the Monastery where they participate in the prayer, work, and life of the Community while taking classes in Scripture, prayer, and Benedictine history. This first stage on the road to monastic profession is a period of transition to the Benedictine life that may last from a minimum of six months to two years.

When asked about their feelings upon entering the Monastery both women expressed excitement, gratitude, and joy. Postulant Elizabeth of Early, Iowa, commented, "I am eager to begin my journey. I am excited for the opportunity to grow, and I am awed by the fact that God has called me." Postulant Linda, who hails from Hermantown, Minnesota, summed it by saying that she is "full of joy at being here."

Photo by Sister Lisa Maurer



Linda Sellards (l) and Elizabeth Farias ask to become Postulants.

Photo by Sister Lisa Maurer



The Postulants are led into Chapel by Sister Michelle Dosch, Postulant Director.

Photo by Sister Lisa Maurer



Elizabeth Farias, Sister Lois Eckes, Prioress, and Linda Sellards

Photo by Andi Therrien



Left to right: Sister Mary Catherine Shambour, Vocation and Affiliate Director; Linda Sellards; Sister Lois Eckes, Prioress; Elizabeth Farias; Sister Martha Bechtold, witness; and Sister Michelle Dosch, Postulant Director

What is Spiritual Direction?

By Sister Jean Maher



Listening with the ear of our heart is what St. Benedict in his *Holy Rule* calls us to do. In today's world of multitasking and instant messaging the challenge is to find time and space to listen that deeply. Spiritual direction is one way to strengthen our listening skills. I have been engaged in the ministry of spiritual direction for over thirty years on both the receiving and giving ends. The past eight years I have also been involved with the training of spiritual directors.

I believe that Jesus is one of the best role models for spiritual directors. In the 24th chapter of the Gospel of Luke we see Jesus approaching Cleopas and his companion on the road to Emmaus with a simple question: "What are you discussing as you walk along?" Perhaps it's another way of saying, "What's going on in your life?" After Jesus asked the question, He simply listened as they poured out their sadness, distress, fears, and confusion over the events of the past few days. He let them tell their story and He listened deeply. Only then did He share with them the Scriptures that would help them to understand what was happening. Cleopas and his companion finally recognized Jesus in the sharing of a meal. Their eyes and their hearts were opened with joy.

The purpose of spiritual direction is to help us understand and strengthen our relationship with God. We do this by looking at the events of our everyday life, our relationships, our dreams, and our experiences of mystery. Where is God in the midst of all this?

Spiritual directors are people who have gone through training and are receiving their own spiritual direction as well as supervision and ongoing education through reading and study. A director and directee usually meet about once a month for about an hour. For those who are unable to meet with a director in person because of distance or illness, the use of telephone, e-mail, or Skype have been helpful. Whatever a directee shares in a spiritual direction session is considered confidential by the director. Regardless of whether the session is held in person or through technology, it is important to have a quiet space that is free from interruptions.

Sisters who are offering spiritual direction at the Monastery are Sister Lois Eckes, Sister Michelle Dosch, Sister Mary Rae Higgins, Sister Renata Liegey, Sister Pauline Micke, Sister Mary Josephine Torborg, and Sister Jeanne Ann Weber. I offer spiritual direction at McCabe Renewal Center, and Sister Barbara Higgins offers this ministry in Phoenix, Arizona. Spiritual Directors International offers a list of available spiritual directors who live around the United States and beyond. This "Seek and Find Guide" can be found at www.sdiworld.org.

A common image or metaphor for spiritual direction is a picture of three empty chairs: one for the director, one for the directee, and one for the Spirit of God, who lives within and around us, the One who is the real director in every session. People come to spiritual direction for a variety of reasons that might include the desire to:

- Identify and trust your own experiences of God
- Live the essence of your spiritual affiliation with integrity
- Develop a sensitivity for justice and concern for the poor
- Share your hopes, struggles, and losses
- Discern and make difficult decisions
- Integrate spirituality into your daily life



Photo by Lynn Braggala

Sister Jean Maher with a directee

Because spiritual direction is a professional ministry, there is a suggested donation at the Monastery and McCabe Renewal Center of \$40.00 per session, or whatever your budget allows.

Tilden Edwards, an Episcopal priest who founded the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation in Bethesda, Maryland, has written many books on spiritual direction. In his book, *Spiritual Director, Spiritual Companion*, he states:

Spiritual direction has become a vital dimension of the maturing spiritual life for many thousands of people today. I don't believe it is a passing fad. It has endured in one form or another since the early days of the church, and its value is corroborated by every other deep spiritual tradition. Once experienced in an authentic form, I think its value will become apparent to most people. Even for those who avail themselves of spiritual direction only at special points of need in their lives, it can still be appreciated as one of the vital disciplines of the church. It is not needed by everyone as a formal practice, but it is important that it be visible and available for those who are in need of spiritual companionship. Its cumulative, long-term fruits for the well-being and deepening of church, family, and societal life are incalculable. It supports, tests, and encourages our relationship with God and the truth of our own souls. It helps us to risk embracing the often disorienting transformations that emerge from becoming vulnerable to the most subtle yet substantial reality of our lives: our soul-life in God.



Sister Profile: Sister Lois Ann Glaudel

By Sister Arlene Kleemann

Margaret Ann Glaudel was born on May 7, 1944. The proud parents, Lois and Roland, made their home in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Catherine and Mary were to follow little Margaret, and those three got into loads of mischief as they grew—actually they are still very good at mischief!

Growing up in Our Lady of Victory Parish was interesting to say the least. Father Joseph Musch, the pastor, was known far and wide for running a “tight ship.” Margaret’s class was the first one in that school to go all the way from first through the eighth grades. After graduating, she went to high school at Stanbrook Hall in Duluth.

It was during the last years of high school that Margaret began to think about entering the Benedictine community. She had grown to love and admire the Sisters, and she loved to join the Sisters at prayer. The only drawback to entering was the fact that she would have to have a letter of recommendation from the aforementioned Father Musch. The fact that she met with him and got the letter is a sure sign of her vocation.



In 1966, Margaret, now Sister Lois Ann, began her teaching career at St. Leo’s in Hibbing. This was also the year that the habit changed to black jumpers and colored blouses. On the first day of the change one of the little second graders said, “You’ve got legs!” Don’t you wonder how they thought Sisters moved around?

It was during that same year that Sister went through the terrifying experience of student teaching. With the help of Sister Mary Henry she did, and she is still teaching to this day.

After completing her formative years in Community and taking final vows in 1968, Sister Lois Ann taught in Brainerd. It was there that she learned to play the guitar and, under the fine tutelage of Sister Devota, learned to drive. From Brainerd, Sister went to teach in Pine City, and it was after that, in 1982, that she headed for St. Timothy School in the big city of Chicago. The school merged in 1993, which then led Sister Lois Ann to St. Matthias, St. Hilary, Pope John the XXIII, and then to St. Mary of the Lake, where she teaches now.

It is overwhelming to think of how many students and parents have benefited from Sister’s love and guidance. Her Sisters in Community, her family, and her friends have always been a source of love, support, and encouragement. What more can anyone ask?

25th ANNIVERSARY OF CHAPEL RENOVATION

By Sister Margaret Clarke

Central to every Benedictine monastery is its chapel, where the community gathers for Liturgy of the Hours and Eucharist. During the century that the Duluth Benedictines have occupied their Kenwood site, the Monastery chapel has changed its location, size, and décor a number of times to accommodate the size of the Community and the current understanding of the norms of divine worship. This fall we are commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the most recent of these changes.

In 1909 when the Sisters moved into the newly completed Villa Scholastica, two adjoining rooms on fourth floor were utilized for a small chapel. Five years later, Mother Alexia Kerst moved the chapel down to second floor as more central to the life of the Community. It was not until 1920, with the extension of a westward-trending wing that a purposefully-designed chapel was constructed, large enough to accommodate both Sisters and student body, although not simultaneously.



Altar prepared for the first Mass in the Villa fourth floor Chapel 1909.



College students in the third floor (1920) Chapel. This is now the College Music Hall. The statues of Sts. Benedict and Scholastica were from Sacred Heart Institute, and now stand at the Monastery end of the Cloister Walk.



The Community assembled in Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel, 1945

As the population of both Community and College increased, Mother Agnes Somers in 1937 embarked on an ambitious building program which would include not only a new high school building, but centrally located between that building and Tower Hall, a spacious and dignified Chapel and a library for the College. Within this neo-Romanesque structure the College library occupied the ground floor and Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel the remainder of the building. The Chapel was dedicated in August 1938, and remained the center of liturgical worship for the campus for nearly fifty years. With a little “squeezing” it could accommodate up to 500, its ceiling soared about 80 feet above the pews, its stained-glass windows commemorated women saints and the changing light of the day hours. For at least two generations of Sisters it became the beloved House of God that the Psalms extol.





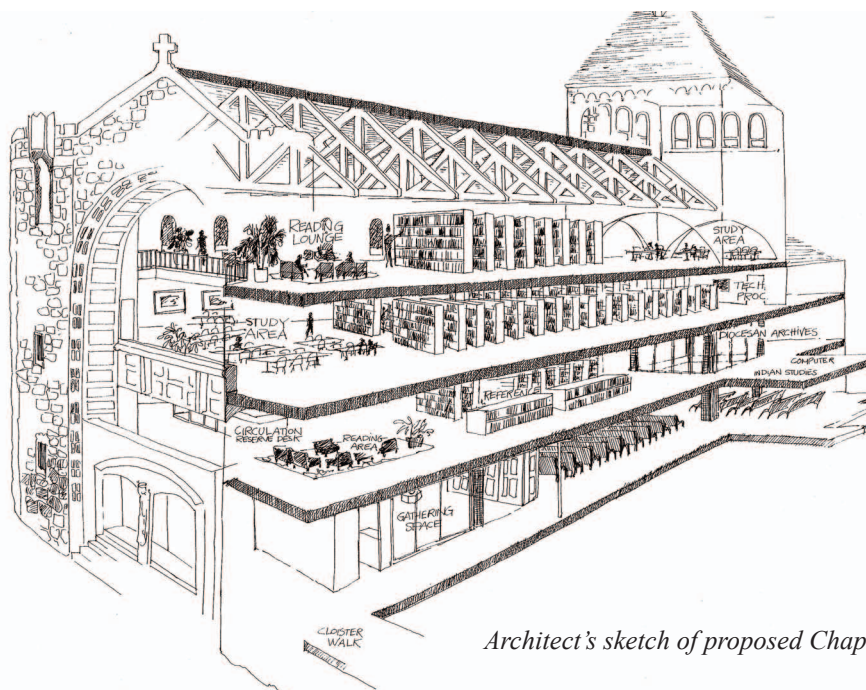
*Interior Chapel during 1980 sesquimillennium celebration
(1500 years since St. Benedict's birth)*



*Exterior, Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel
and College Library.*

In the 1970s, accelerating change in liturgical practices after Vatican Council II and the needs of an aging community inspired a few modifications in the existing Chapel. As early as 1972 the College also had been investigating ways of increasing space for the library. Possibilities explored included construction in the tennis court and Angelus garden, connection with the gym, and a number of renovated sites in Tower Hall. All of these seemed to be either unsatisfactory or structurally impossible. Mother Grace Marie Braun was serving on the CSS space committee, and a Priory committee was investigating monastic space needs. The College settled tentatively on a location for its new library in the elevator wing of Tower Hall.

On May 5, 1984, Mother Grace Marie presented a proposal to the Community gathered in Chapter. She noted: "I would like to present an idea for your consideration. . . another option for the College Library. This idea came from some of you as you talked to me about space needs. I was wondering if we could consider using the [present] Chapel for the Library, and renovate the Library for our Community Chapel." She pointed out that this would provide direct barrier-free access to the Chapel from the cloister walk, we would be able to design the space in accordance with the most recent norms for worship, it would be more energy efficient, all of the Sisters would be able to be present for Community worship, and the exterior of the building would remain unchanged. With the insertion of two additional floors in the remaining space, the College Library would then have at least twice its present square footage.



Architect's sketch of proposed Chapel/Library renovation, 1984

Mother Grace Marie warned that this would require sacrifice and inconvenience for some time, and would do violence to our attachment to the current Chapel. A majority of the Community affirmed going further with consideration of this idea, and she then proposed it to the College. By October she was able to report that the College was interested, that the project had been determined to be structurally sound, and that the cost would be sustainable by the College and Priory. The rest of the year was devoted to the intensive study by the whole Community of environment and art in worship, and how this could be incorporated into the renovated Chapel.

At a Chapter meeting on January 5, 1985, a formal vote was taken, affirming the decision to go forward with the proposal. By February the design phase was under way, with William Moser of Architectural Resources as the chief architect and John Buscemi as liturgical design consultant, with a committee of community members. Construction began in July 1985 and continued through September of 1986. The Sisters held their first service in the new chapel on September 28, and the formal dedication was celebrated on October 12, which is now celebrated yearly in Community as the anniversary of the dedication of our church.

Primary areas in the new Chapel include a gathering space centered around the font, a seating area for the assembly, the sanctuary with ceiling that extends upward for an additional story, two side chapels dedicated to Mary and Benedictine Saints respectively, and a Eucharistic chapel beyond the sanctuary. Insofar as possible, many of the materials from the 1938 chapel were utilized in the new construction: the pews, marble from the original altar, wood paneling and carvings, the stained-glass windows. New works of art were also commissioned.



After twenty-five years, the “new” chapel has become for us “the Chapel.” Some of us still feel twinges of nostalgia when we recall the grandeur of the 1938 Chapel, but we can say that for the most part, our decision has stood the test of time, and we are happy with the results. We can say with the patriarch Jacob, “Truly this is the Gate of Heaven and the House of God.”



Window on the Oblates

By Sister Edith Bogue

“I want to let St. Benedict’s *Rule* guide all of my life, not just my prayer and home,” the Oblate said, “but what can I do about my work? It’s a jungle – politics and competition.” Heads nodded around the table. He continued, “How can I be Benedictine when no one else even knows what that means?”

It was the monthly gathering of the Monastery’s Oblates, Christian women and men who “love what St. Benedict loved and want to practice what he taught.” The topic was obedience as found in *The Rule*, but not the rigid or blind obedience often portrayed in films. For Benedictines, obedience is an attentive attitude that watches and listens to know the needs of others – bosses, yes, but also fellow workers and even strangers. “But if I live that way,” said another, “people may take advantage of me.” “Yes,” another nods, “a doormat. There’s no mutual obedience where I work!”

As the conversation continued, they probed the depths of Benedictine spirituality. Could true obedience listen for the real and deep needs of others, not superficial demands? How can we live obedience to competing claims? The Oblates shared the stories and wisdom of their lives, drew strength and fresh perspectives from each other – and shared that deepest of all Benedictine realities, community. After the hour’s discussion, their real-world situations were unchanged but they were renewed in their approach to dealing with them.

Who are these Benedictine Oblates? They have a variety of professions and decades of difference in age. They span the spectrum of ecclesiological and political viewpoints. Beyond all these differences, each has made a promise to “live according to the spirit of the *Rule of St. Benedict*” through their connection with the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery. Some have been Oblates for decades, others for just a few years. Three of those grappling with obedience – William Christ, Lauren Anderson-Bauer, and Judith Broman – were preparing to make their Oblation on May 22, 2011. Two others became Oblate Candidates in May, beginning a period of prayer, study, and reflection.

While many people share in the spirituality of the Duluth Benedictines – carrying on our mission in health care and education, volunteering in dozens of ways at our Monastery, participating in our retreats and programs, joining us for prayer – the Oblates are special. Their promise links them to this Monastery and these Sisters. They are not freelance Benedictines: they are Oblates of St. Scholastica Monastery.

How does one become an Oblate? Some learn about Oblates from a friend or book; others hear of well-known Oblates like Catholic Worker founder Dorothy Day or author Kathleen Norris. If their interest is piqued, they contact the Oblate Director and attend several Oblate Meetings as Inquirers. Those who find themselves drawn to learning and living Benedictine spirituality enroll as Oblate Candidates. After reading, participating in the Oblate meetings, and reflecting on how they might incorporate St. Benedict’s *Rule* into their own lives, they ask to make their Oblation. Inquirers are welcome at any time of the year.

Benedictine Essentials is the theme for meetings in 2011-2012. Autumn meetings focus on prayer, *lectio divina*, the monastic instinct, and great Benedictines. Beginning in January, we will read *The Rule* through from beginning to end – as St. Benedict said we should – pondering how we can apply the wisdom of this 1500-year-old document to our 21st century lives. The answers are always interesting and sometimes surprising. Contact information: Sister Edith Boque, Oblate Director at oblates@duluthosb.org. See also blog: <http://oblosb.wordpress.com>.

Left to right: Cassandra Brisset; Lauren Anderson-Bauer; Erin Brisset Erkkila; Sister Lois Eckes, Prioress; Sister Edith Bogue, Director of Oblates; Judith Broman, and William Christ. Cassandra and Erin are Oblate Candidates, and Lauren, Judith, and William made their oblation in May, 2011.



Photo by Sister Patricia Anne Williams

Sister Profile: Sister Margaret Marincel

By Sister Melanie Gagne

“Life is the seed, love is the flower and laughter is the fragrance.”
Ashram (India)

Margaret Marincel was born in Mountain Iron, Minnesota, to devout parents, Nicholas and Helen Marincel. She had an older brother Frank, and a younger brother, Joseph. The three siblings were orphaned at an early age and raised by an aunt and uncle (Helen and Joseph Marincel).

Margaret’s only contact with the Benedictine Sisters was during the summer sessions of Religious Education Classes in her hometown. Sister Antonia Erchul, one of the instructors, was instrumental in planting the seed of a religious vocation. Margaret entered the Duluth Benedictine Community in 1945 and received the name of Sister Medard. Later she returned to her baptismal name.

After her initial formation she began a career of teaching in parochial schools. Her first assignment was a class of fifty-two second graders at Sacred Heart School in Duluth. She then taught at St. John’s in Woodland and lived at St. James Children’s Home. Here she began a running battle with Rusty, “The King of the Parlors.” Rusty, a much-loved and spoiled Irish Setter, raised Sister’s ire by sleeping on the couches and shedding an abundance of hair, which she spent time vacuuming up. Later on Sister taught for short terms at St. Anthony’s in Duluth and St. Timothy’s in Chicago and for a long term of approximately thirty years in Phoenix, Arizona. For many years Sister taught the second through fifth grades at St. Thomas the Apostle School in Phoenix and then became the full-time librarian there. On the side, with her green thumb and love of the soil, she cultivated gorgeous roses, which she used to adorn the altar in the chapel.

Sister Margaret’s two brothers have always been a source of great pride and comfort for her. Frank was ordained a priest in 1958 and said his first Mass in Sacred Heart Parish in Mountain Iron. Joe married Marlis Hayes in 1949 and together they raised six children. The relationship with her siblings has always been close. When Sister Margaret was teaching in Arizona, Father Frank would spend time visiting in the winters away from the arctic winds of Northern Minnesota. Together they visited their roots in Croatia and met many relatives, including their maternal grandmother. They also traveled to Lourdes, Fatima, and Medjugori. The family of Joe and Marlis were visited in the Dominican Republic during Christmas vacation. Several of Sister Margaret’s nieces and nephews joined the Air Force. Ken, a talented musician, played as a guest pianist in the Catholic Symphony in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The death of Father Frank in 2001 was a great loss to the entire family. Joe and Marlis visit Sister at the Monastery several times each year. Sister is now retired and lives in Benet Hall.

Her love of prayer and great sense of humor contribute much to the joy of community living.



Photo by Sister Joyce Fournier

Highlights

Monastic Worship Forum

By Sister Dorene King

Photo by Father Dunstan Moore, OSB



Sisters who attended the Monastic Worship Forum (L to R) Sister Jeanne Ann Weber, Sister Dorene King, and Sister Mary Christa Kroening

The “New” Roman Missal is coming and its advent will coincide with the first Sunday in Advent. Although there are some word substitutions in the “new” liturgy, the “New” Roman Missal is mainly an opportunity for catechesis. This opportunity to broaden our understanding of the liturgy was the purpose of our attendance at the Monastic Worship Forum held at St. Meinrad’s, Indiana, this summer. Sister Jeanne Ann Weber, Sister Mary Christa Kroening and Sister Dorene King plus monastics from as far away as Massachusetts, Florida, and Oregon participated in the forum.

Dr. Paul Ford, professor at St. John’s in Camarillo, California, gave a dynamic presentation concerning the changes and added several insights regarding worship. According to Dr. Ford, the changes in the missal are intended to help our prayer “resemble our Latin heritage more closely.” The translation of the Latin

prayers into English follows directly each line of the Latin text. In addition, quotations incorporated into the liturgy from the Bible and patristic writings are translated into their equivalent English meaning. Dr. Ford shared meaningful insights on the necessity of silence and the centrality of the altar. Throughout worship the juxtaposition of audible sounds and silence gives an opportunity for the proclaimed Word to become part of silent prayer. As our whole life from our baptism to our funeral is oriented toward the altar, we are called to offer our life each day in the service of others. So in the concluding rites the priest proclaims, “Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.”

New Benedictine Associate

By Sister Martha Bechtold and Debra Waites

In June, Debra Waites came from Kansas to join us as an Associate. As a live-in volunteer she will assist in ways which are needed at the Monastery such as staffing our information desk, assisting in retreat ministry, and accompanying our elders to their appointments. She also has the opportunity to participate in our way of life as much as she wishes. Here are her words:

Always We Begin Again was the title of the book. The subtitle read *The Benedictine Way of Living*. Written by a lawyer named John McQuiston II. The content resonated deeply within. Surely, this was the way life ought to be lived! Some of the components were already my practice, albeit as an individual. Google search brought up Benedictine communities. The St. Scholastica Monastery web site was well done and intriguing. Was I a woman who. . . would like to deepen her spirituality? Was at a crossroad in life and needed time to discern what path to take? Desires to experience monastic community? Thought about religious life? “Yes” to all the questions.

Age 54, a life filled with the wonders but also the deep sorrows that accompany life as a human. Shell-shocked by the past year. Born and raised in the metropolitan Detroit, Michigan, area but transplanted to northwest Kansas in recent years, where the sky is vast and the plains allow an unimpeded view for miles and miles and miles and Needed: time to be still, to reflect, pray, discern, mourn, rest, work, heal, write. Granted: St. Scholastica Monastery in Duluth, Minnesota. Green, lush landscape and the magnificence of Lake Superior. The beauty of the Monastery itself. The gentleness of the community that dwells therein and reaches as far as Phoenix, Arizona. The love of Christ.

I am blessed.



Photo by Andi Therrien



If It Weren't For the Pictures

By Sister Beverly Raway

It has been over a month since our return from Tanzania, our fifth trip to work with the Benedictine Sisters of St. Agnes' and St. Gertrude's Convents in Chipole and Imiliwaha. As one member of our group of seventeen said, "If it weren't for the pictures I took, I'd think it was all a dream." As I review the pictures and the e-mail messages posted, I know it really happened and that we, though glad to be home, have all in some way left our hearts behind with the people who shared their lives with us for a brief but very memorable time.

We extend special thanks to Midwest Medical, Lake Superior Medical, Arrow-Pasek Pharmacy, Essentia Health, Play It Again Sports, the Stockfest 7 Committee, and Student Senate of The College of St. Scholastica and to Theta Xi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau Honor Society for Nursing as well as many other individuals for generous contributions. Because of their gifts our group was able to bring over 950 pounds of medicines, medical and school supplies, soccer balls and nets, and children's clothing toted in duffel bags and personal luggage. The funds also allowed us to purchase equipment and supplies in Tanzania given to the Sisters for their use and for distribution to the nearby villages.

Highlights of the trip include the exuberant response we received as we delivered a microscope for the new health care center at St. Agnes Convent, Chipole, and reports from the students of their experiences when they distributed blankets they purchased to the elderly poor. Their photos and stories of the humble thanks of the people are heart-wrenching. At St. Gertrude's, Imiliwaha, the student group focused on care of the orphans and took the first steps toward development of a sponsorship program. Photos of each child were taken and a short biography prepared which the students hope to put on a sponsorship web site. At each Convent, the faculty and students conducted mini clinics assessing the Sisters' health. We found many Sisters had high blood pressure and diabetes and followed up with group and one-on-one information sessions about medications, diet, and exercise.

Our experiences of life in Tanzania made us recognize how privileged and blessed we are in the United States with clean water from the tap, warm showers, washing machines, cars, and instant communication with loved ones from afar. We also recognized that our presence was as much valued as the bringing of material things. And we found that their generosity could not be outdone: A humble gift of a blanket was repaid with the even more precious gift of four eggs, and several pairs of socks given to a child who had none, were shared with friends, who with much laughter immediately put them on. We all wished we could be so selfless and joyous when giving. We are grateful to the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery and The College of St. Scholastica for making this journey possible and for prayerful support.



In Chipole, Sister Beverly demonstrates how to carry the new microscope properly.



Sister Beverly with the twins Benedict and Gertrude at St. Gertrude's convent, Imiliwaha.

Benedictine Center of Spirituality

By Sister Pauline Micke



We've had a wonderful spring and summer—hosting workshops and meeting new people who want to journey with us as they seek to nurture their spiritual lives.

The new 2011-2012 brochures have been mailed out. If you wish to be on our mailing list, please contact me at 218-723-7086 or e-mail me at: Pauline.m@duluthosb.org.

From August 8-11 the Benedictine Center of Spirituality was host to the Centering Prayer Training Workshop. Nineteen people from New Hampshire, North Carolina, Illinois, and from both St. Paul and Duluth in Minnesota, gathered for this event. It was inspiring to be with these people as they moved through the training. As one participant said, "My wife and I do Centering Prayer every day."

Some Exciting Upcoming Events!

Saturday, October 29, 2011 — CAREGIVERS NEED CARE TOO. This workshop will be held from 9 a.m. to noon and will be facilitated by Sister Mary Carla Flood, OSB, MSW, LGSW. Sister Mary Carla has been legally blind since birth. She is currently working in private practice in the area of disability awareness and for more inclusion of people with disabilities in the Church and in society. We welcome her as a presenter for the Benedictine Center of Spirituality.

Saturday, November 19, 2011 — Advent Retreat: ADVENT: THE CALL TO BE LISTENERS AND LOVERS. This retreat will be facilitated by Sister Mary Josephine Torborg, OSB, Ph.D., an Associate Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at The College of St. Scholastica. As we begin our Advent adventure, we are challenged to live the Christian Story anew in our lives. Who are the messengers that God is sending into our lives today? This inward journey of awareness is about listening and loving, receiving and sharing, being loved by God and sharing that wondrous love with others and with the whole world. For information call Sister Pauline at 218-723-7086 or e-mail Pauline.m@duluthosb.org.



Sister Mary Carla Flood

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE FOLLOWING DECEASED FRIENDS AND RELATIVES:

Marian Fisher Kettenbeil	4/5/2011	James Higgins	7/28/2011
Father Lawrence Antus, OMI	5/24/2011	Sister Mary Rae Higgins' and	
Father John J. Golobich	6/5/2011	Sister Barbara Higgins' brother	
Mary Holt	6/30/2011	William Meierhoff	8/10/2011
Jacquetta Johnson	7/2/2011	Martha Caskey	8/17/2011
Ray Gagne	7/15/2011	Lucy Jane Myer	8/2011
Sister Melanie Gagne's brother		Rita Palmer	9/1/2011
Anne R. Welliver	7/13/2011	Sister Josine Krausnick's sister	
Sister Annella Wagner's sister			





*First missions 1942:
Sister Mary Paul Ludwig
(l) to Chicago, and Sister
Renee (r) to International
Falls.*



*Sister Renee, St. Mary's
Employee of the Year,
Spring 1991.*

Sister Renee Cormier

February 25, 1920—June 9, 2011

Sister Renee Cormier, OSB, died June 9, 2011, in Benet Hall in St. Scholastica Monastery. She was born February 25, 1920, in Charleston, South Carolina. The next year her family moved to Duluth where she later attended first grade at St. James Catholic School and made her First Communion at Good Shepherd Parish. When she was in second grade, her family moved to Cloquet, and in 1934 she graduated from eighth grade at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School. Sister Renee received her high school education in Duluth, Minnesota, and was one of the graduates from the first graduating class of Stanbrook Hall. She earned a B.S. degree in Elementary Education from The College of St. Scholastica and received a Teaching Certificate from the University of Minnesota, Duluth, as well as a Life Certification for teaching elementary grades.

Sister Renee entered the Duluth Benedictine community August 30, 1938, and professed her monastic vows July 11, 1940. She celebrated her Silver Jubilee August 15, 1965, her Golden Jubilee August 12, 1990, and her Diamond Jubilee August 13, 2000. She taught for 37 years at various places, including St. Thomas in International Falls; Our Lady of Victory, Minneapolis; Holy Name, Wayzata; St. Clement's, Duluth; Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Cloquet; Marquette School, Virginia; St. John's, Duluth; and St. Joseph's, Crosby, all in Minnesota, and at St. Timothy's in Chicago, Illinois. During that time she taught a total of 1,126 children. She had a booklet in which she recorded every student's name.

In 1978 she returned to Duluth and worked at the third-floor Information Desk at St. Mary's Hospital as a paid employee for fourteen years, and from 1992 to 2004 as a volunteer. In 1987 she received a Certificate of Recognition for "making a positive contribution to 'Guest Relations' at St. Mary's Medical Center" and in 1991 she was given the "Employee of the Year" award.

Sister Renee had other talents and personal interests in addition to her assigned ministries. One area in which she was proficient was remedial reading. She was a prolific reader and read every book in the Villa High School library when she was there. She also loved to embroider and to help provide quilts and craft items for the annual Christmas sale.

Sister Renee's sister Marian said she was always a very happy person. At Sister's wake, stories told showed that she was much loved by others. Father Brian Schultz, in his homily, said Sister Renee did little things for her God and, as one of the readings of the Liturgy pointed out, God never grew weary in loving her.

Sister Renee was preceded in death by her parents Nelida (Mailhot) Cormier and Felix Cormier, and a brother, Philip Cormier. In addition to the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery she is survived by three sisters: Anne Oxley, Cecilia Venne, and Marian McCarty and a brother, Felix (Philip's twin) as well as other devoted relatives and friends.

St. Scholastica Monastery
Office of Development
1001 Kenwood Avenue
Duluth, MN 55811-2300

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*“See, I am doing something new!
Now it springs forth, do you not
perceive it?”*

(Isaiah 43:19a)