

# PATHWAYS



*Newsletter of the Duluth Benedictine Sisters Duluth, Minnesota Vol. 27, No. 3 • Lent 2016*





# A Letter from the Prioress

Welcome to Lent and to the Holy Year of Mercy. Lent, according to the Oxford Dictionary, comes from a shortened version of an Old Germanic word meaning “long” referring to the lengthening of days “as characterizing the season of spring.” As I write this letter the days are lengthening and sunrise in the Northland reached its latest time in the morning. From now on the sun will rise earlier each day, at first imperceptibly and then more noticeably, until by Easter it will rise nearly an hour earlier, a sure sign that spring is on its way.

This Lent and “longing” for Spring will be different in several ways for us this year. First of all, it begins earlier than most years (February 10th). The earliest possible date is February 4th which last occurred in 1818 and will not occur again until 2285 (Wikipedia). And because Ash Wednesday is also the date for the Feast of St. Scholastica, this feast will be moved back to February 9th where it will coincide with the celebration of Mardi Gras here at the Monastery. This is an evening made especially festive when the leadership of the Benedictine Health System treats us to pizza, party favors, and special entertainment.

Secondly, we celebrate Lent this year in the midst of the Holy Year of Mercy. The cover woodcut by +Sister Mary Charles McGough depicts one of the parables Pope Francis uses to illustrate the mercy of God. The parable of the Prodigal Son, or if you like, the Two Sons and the Merciful Father (Fourth Sunday of Lent; Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32) tells us that God is “full of joy, especially when he pardons”... and “mercy is presented as a force overcoming everything, filling the heart with love and bringing consolation through pardon.”

Pope Francis invites all of us to remember that we, as Church, are to be like the Father in our actions with others. His motto for the year is “Merciful Like the Father,” and he identifies several ways of reaching this goal. First, he says we need to spend time listening to the word of God in the silence of our hearts so that “it will be possible to contemplate God’s mercy and adopt it as our lifestyle.” He suggests pilgrimage, including our life’s pilgrimage as the way to reach that goal, but specifically recommends pilgrimage to a Holy Door or other holy site in your Diocese. The steps of pilgrimage to attain that goal include the following: “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not and you will not be condemned; forgive and you will be forgiven, give and it will be given to you...” (Lk 6:37-38). He especially recommends the opening of our hearts to those living on the fringes of society and the living of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. In practical ways we can live those steps of pilgrimage by doing one or more of the following:

- Pray Pope Francis’s Prayer for the Jubilee Year of Mercy; see page 3.
- Go to confession; forgive someone.
- Read Pope Francis’s book, *The Name of God is Mercy*, released January 12.
- Pick one spiritual and corporal work of mercy and carry it out in a simple way during Lent. (<http://www.loyolapress.com/corporal-and-spiritual-works-of-mercy.htm>)
- Create a “holy door” in your home and pray for someone in need of mercy each time you go through it.

May this Lent and the Holy Year of Mercy be a special time of reconciliation and reaching out to others in mercy. May we “find the road to the Father” who with loving arms greets us without questioning where we have been. And may the joy of the Gospel bring us all to a spring filled with the newness of resurrected life.

Lovingly in Christ,



Sister Beverly Raway, Prioress





## Prayer for the Year of Mercy

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father,  
and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him.

Show us your face and we will be saved.

Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money;  
the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things;  
made Peter weep after his betrayal,  
and assured Paradise to the repentant thief.

Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman:

“If you knew the gift of God!”

You are the visible face of the invisible Father,  
of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy:  
let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified.  
You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness  
in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error:  
let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by God.  
Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing,  
so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord,  
and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor,  
proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed,  
and restore sight to the blind.

We ask this through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy,  
you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.

Amen.

— *Pope Francis*



# Merciful Like The Father

## 2015-2016: The Holy Year Of Mercy

By Sister Mary Catherine Shambour



For all striving to live an authentic Christian life during this frightening and critical phase in the history of our church and world, being suddenly thrust into Lent may at first not be received with much enthusiasm. Yet this year not only our Lenten observances but all our offerings to God can become a source of joy and healing since we are blessed with extraordinary opportunities to experience and share the boundless nature of God's mercy during this special Holy Year of Mercy. Why such a special year at this time? For whom? What good can it accomplish?

To answer these questions we must ask what is the precedent of designating a special year to a special cause? The tradition dates back to the ancient Jewish custom of setting aside after each fifty years a year of "Jubilee" to honor God and restore order to God's creation. The land was to lie fallow in order to be replenished, slaves were to be freed, debts forgiven, and broken relationships restored. Centuries later the Church imitated the practice by proclaiming, at periodic intervals, years of special spiritual observances that were to bring God's blessings upon the faithful who observed them.

One popular practice became the idea of making a penitential pilgrimage to a special church or shrine in order to atone for one's sins, receive an "indulgence" of God's mercy and effect conversion. (Recall Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims, the still popular Camino de Santiago and even Muslim and Hindu pilgrimages to sacred shrines today.)

Though well intentioned and achieving much good, abuses also crept in over time. While the Church, as the minister of redemption, has the authority to dispense and apply with authority the treasury of the satisfaction made for sin by Christ and the saints to penitents who have sincerely confessed their sins and fulfilled certain requirements, ignorance and human sinfulness often have a way of turning good into evil, and for those too young to know church history, the "indulgences" of God's mercy came to be calculated numerically by how much temporal punishment (days or years of atonement still to be fulfilled in time for one's forgiven sins) could be attained by certain practices – and, sadly, by paying certain sums to the church – especially when needed to build magnificent temples to show the power of the church.

Such scandals and shrines came at a price: no less than the Protestant Reformation. Still, the notion of receiving partial or complete remission of the atonement needed for confessed sins remains strong among many (who doesn't like brownie points!) and our merciful God cannot be outdone in generosity. Thus certain practices or prayers can be recommended to assist us to amend our ways, though not even the Holy Father is going to play the numbers game. He only asks us, "Let us live this jubilee intensely, begging the Father to forgive our sins and to bathe us in his merciful 'indulgence'."

Being a sacramental church, we employ outward signs to impart sanctifying grace and make rich use of multiple signs and symbols to draw us to God. One such symbol is the Holy Door through which one must voluntarily enter to approach and seek the treasures of God's grace. Though God is always waiting for sinners to



receive them, some effort and a good dose of humility are required. The journey may be a long one, to a far distant land and a holy place, but is not life itself a journey and a struggle to a final goal? We, however, are living in a different time and place than our medieval forebears and Pope Francis knows that a pilgrimage to the Holy City is out of reach for the majority of the world's Christians, to say nothing of providing security for millions of pilgrims in our times. Thus he has designated the cathedral and other holy places in every diocese to open their "holy doors" to all seeking God's mercy and has outlined his desires and plan of action in his papal bull of indiction *Misericordiae Vultus* ("The Face of Mercy").

At first thought one may wonder why the Pope who has spoken to the whole world on such practical issues as the economy, international cooperation, and the environment should be focusing on the Biblical theme of mercy. The answer is simple: The greatest need in our suffering world today is for mercy, "the beating heart of the Gospel." If there is to be real change, "mercy must penetrate the mind and heart of every person." Therefore the Holy Father's appeal is for all Christians to return to the core message of the faith they espouse and bring God's mercy everywhere. Though this may strike some as simplistic, one can recall how pagan Rome became converted to Christianity by observing, "See these Christians, how they love one another."



Thus "The Face of Mercy," which is available online, urges all dioceses throughout the world to instruct and encourage the faithful to steep themselves in God's mercy through prayerful reflection and practical application of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. The first half of the document's twenty-five sections cite the principal Scriptural references from both the Old and New Testaments that proclaim the mercies God has shown "from generation to generation"—as are sung in the Church's liturgy every day. These alone could supply ample food for contemplation for all of Lent while also making us wonder how we or the church ever got a different impression of God! The last half of the document gives ample suggestions to clergy, parishes, and dioceses, of how to inspire the faithful to live their faith by carrying out the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

With all of these spiritual and practical resources available to us, how might we begin? A first suggestion would be to pray the Holy Father's prayer for The Year of Mercy daily and then to examine ourselves to see which of the works of mercy are open and waiting for our response, remembering that it is on these that we will one day be judged, not merely on church attendance.

Finally, because it is difficult for one to practice mercy if one has never experienced mercy, one particular goal of the Year of Mercy is for Christians carrying heavy burdens of guilt to experience God's forgiveness. Thus a special appeal is also made to "lite" Catholics who have seen little need for God's forgiveness to avail themselves of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and realize the power and grace God provides. In whatever way, let us each make this Holy Year of Mercy the greatest year of our lives.

# A Multitude Of Mercy

By Sister Linda Wiggins

In his Encyclical Letter, *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis creates an extraordinary system of dynamics through which we may care for our common Global Home: the earth. The Prime Mover of his system appears to be the quality of Mercy, especially since he declared this year from December 8, 2015, to November 21, 2016, the Year of Mercy.

Mercy is clothed in the delicate fabrics of compassion, forgiveness, tenderness, kindness, and charity. Pope Francis, furthermore, declares outright that to imbue such qualities is not the mark of weakness, but of strength (154). He envisions a world where “might makes right” is discarded and replaced with one in which we recognize the connectedness of all living beings and their interdependent relationships. This system also operates under the rubric of “the common good.” Cooperation replaces competition as the main function of achieving the common good, a condition in which every human being has dignity, respect, the necessities of life, (e.g., clean water,) and experiences joy in the common day and in being in authentic relationship with others and with the earth. Pope Francis calls arriving at such a condition as living in the fullness of God.

Jesus, our merciful redeemer, with whom we walk the way of the cross each Lenten season, never turns down our outstretched hand or refuses to hear our pleas not because we are worthy of such attention, but because his mercy is infinite. Mercy is the means through which we have a rich life. It is the quality that bonds us together with all living beings. “Every violation of solidarity and civic friendship harms the environment,” observes Pope Francis (142). It also negates the presence of mercy. This quality embodies care for the “other” in every action. The earth is home for all human beings, not just those who live in one city, or one country, or one continent. To use all the earth’s resources for personal gain, power, and profit is not only selfish, but criminal in that it propagates a culture of spiritual and physical death. Such action also severely limits life for future generations.

Upon reflection of the incredible beauty and holy wisdom in Pope Francis’s *Laudato Si'*, I have decided to study and incorporate one aspect of mercy detailed in it for each week of my Lenten Journey this year. In case you wish to join me, I have included a brief outline for the six weeks of Lent below:

**Week I** In order to avoid what Pope Paul calls “rapidification,” I will slow down my pace each day and concentrate on being fully present to those I encounter, giving the gift of my time to others. This includes listening to another’s voice with mercy and with an attitude of the heart. It also includes looking at others directly eye to eye and not being stingy with smiles or pats of reassurance.

**Week II** In order to discover that “less is more” I will make a conscious effort to trim my use of house lights, car trips, electronic devices, and lower the thermostat in my living space. I will augment my recycling efforts and give material things I am not using to others or other organizations. I will walk or carpool to conserve gas usage when possible.

**Week III** I will read at least one book on the culture of a third world country so I can intelligently understand this culture’s mores and religious beliefs. I will pray for this culture and its people throughout the rest of the year.

**Week IV** I will try to be genuinely grateful for all the gifts I receive through community and through my blood family. I will practice the art of gratitude as it is central to being aware of others’ goodness and needs. I will be prudent in giving thanks before and after meals, in receiving others’ offers of friendship, and in seeing the good in my enemies.

**Week V** I will center on deep empathy for all those who are suffering physical or mental ill health. I will pray in solidarity with them, hold them ever in my heart, and alleviate whatever suffering I can through prayer, friendship, ministry, music, and love.

**Week VI** I will pray for the poor fervently, for Jesus, the Son of Man, also had no place to lay his head (Mt. 8:20). No one has total dominion over the earth, for it is a gift from God. To use the earth’s resources with total disregard for others’ need of these resources is not merely wrong, but inhumane. Forgive all of us for such unbridled greed, O Lord.

As Lent approaches, may we be always mindful that true virtue is not found in the quantity of our riches, but in the quality of our loving care. May these Lenten exercises increase our ability to be merciful in every aspect of living.



## Sister Profile: Sister Danile Lynch

“You want to do WHAT! You want to go WHERE!” Those were the words my mother used one Sunday in April 1964 when I told her I was only thinking of entering the convent. I had gone home for the weekend from college to gently let her know of my future plan to enter the “convent at the Villa.” I knew I had better not tell her I had already been accepted to enter that September!

My father, Daniel, was raised in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and my mother, Agnes Godfrey, was raised in Hibbing, Minnesota, making me a true “Midwesterner.” My parents, sister Jane, and brother Daniel, had moved to Mundelein, Illinois, before I was born. Mundelein was classified as a village and had a population of approximately 3,000 at the time. It was originally named Area, Illinois, but changed its name to Mundelein after Cardinal George Mundelein who possessed much influence in the Chicago area during the early days. The village today would be known as a “bedroom community” of Chicago, but way back then it was known for having the seminary for the Archdiocese of Chicago. The magnificent seminary grounds were the backyard for my childhood friend Mary and me. We would spend as much time as we could outside playing in the woods there. We loved to sit on a huge log that had fallen across the creek and dream about the future. Many of the seminarians would come by most days and wave and greet us as we watched them go to the baseball field in the late afternoon. I attended Santa Maria del Popolo grade school (it took several years for me to learn the whole name and how to spell it!) and graduated from Holy Child High School in Waukegan, Illinois.

The Soo Line railroad trains would move slowly through Mundelein each day, so a few of us kids would ride our bikes to the main railroad crossing to watch the steam engines and boxcars as they passed through the village. We always loved to hear the whistle blow and see the steam move skyward. I now believe that my “travel bug” goes back to those days. Also, my uncle and aunt who lived 20+ years in Saudi Arabia would come back to “the States” every three years. I would love to sit and listen to them tell the stories of all the places they visited on each trip. I have heard the expression, “join the convent and see the world.” I have been blessed in that regard as I have had the opportunity to travel for work and fun throughout the USA and to a number of foreign countries.



*Daniel, Jane, and I at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary, Mundelein, Illinois*



*Childhood friend Mary and I  
September 11, 1965*



*Kissing the Blarney Stone 1978*

Back to the convent: I have known wonderful wisdom women during these last 50 years. A few days before I entered the Community, I remember a Sister told me that I should pray one Hail Mary every day in thanksgiving and gratitude for my vocation. Since I knew that I was a “doubting Thomas,” I have prayed three Hail Mary’s every day. The Blessed Mother has had to work overtime with me! The first night in the convent as Sister Cabrini, our postulant director, was explaining the night practices to us, I remember going to bed and truly feeling that I was “at home.” I had/have no words to explain that feeling; I just knew I was where I was meant to be. Our novice director, Sister Rosaria, would remind us that “character consists of doing the right thing at the right time whether one feels like it or not.” To this day I think of Sister Rosaria so very often!

I have been in the health-care ministry most of my years in the Community. I began my work at St. Mary’s Medical Center in Duluth, then moved south to Chicago. From there I went farther south and west to work in Phoenix. Following the completion of my master’s degree I went to a small town in northern California, Red Bluff, where I worked for the Sisters of Mercy. The hospital provided rural health care to many migrant workers. Leaving California I spent the next six years in Duluth serving the Community as prioress before moving to Washington, D.C. to work in a Catholic psychiatric facility for 11 years before “retiring.” I have had many wonderful visits to the sights in each area of our beautiful country where I worked, but I always knew that home is where the heart is and that is here at the Monastery in Duluth!

# The Cross is the Surest Path to God

By Sister Therese Carson

It is 1937. Duluth is still in the bottomless hole of the Depression. Iron mines are closed, workers laid off, and ore ships rust in port. Years of drought have bankrupted farmers and forced them off the land. The world watches uneasily as fascist dictators threaten war. Yet, in the midst of this darkness, the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery are investing in the future. They have begun an ambitious building project: the Chapel of Our Lady Queen of Peace that will link Stanbrook Hall, also under construction, and The College of St. Scholastica. Workers lay the cornerstone in July 1937, and the Sisters dedicate the completed chapel in August 1938. On the first floor is the college library, and soaring above it is the nave of the chapel with its central tower high above the floor, full of summer light. On an exterior panel an invocation in Latin reads *Crux sacra sit mihi lux*: “May the holy cross be my light.” The Sisters know that the surest path to God is through the Cross.



*Crucifix in original Chapel above the altar  
(photo from Monastery Archives)*

The new worship space is full of light, simple and serene. It is designed for liturgy and contains nothing for mere show: everything serves its purpose and is well made. For the crucifix above the altar, the Sisters have asked 30-year-old Harry Eversfield Donohue, a respected Catholic sculptor from Ossining, New York, to create a large *corpus* and cross out of black walnut and oak. The decision is a blessing for both parties. Mr. Donohue is already working on a marble *Mary, Mother of Mankind* for the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., and he is intimately familiar with both Cross and Motherhood: his beloved young wife Ruth Ann is sick. In three years she will die, leaving their three children without a mother and him with an aching emptiness of soul.

Meghan O'Rourke describes grief as necessarily private: “To mourn is to wonder that grief is not written all over your face in bruised hieroglyphics.” We fear showing the dark depths of sorrow, but the artist draws on what is inside and so can give voice to our collective silent pain. As Mr. Donohue carves into marble and walnut, the emerging figures of Mary and Jesus testify to his growing sense of loss and pain and, at last, to acceptance of the will of God and exhausted peace. And, yes, to a renewal of joy.

Today the chapel and library spaces are reversed: in 1986 the Chapel moved down to the first floor and became barrier-free worship space for the aging Sisters, and the library moved upstairs into three floors carved out of the original vaulted nave. The *corpus* and cross were separated, and the *corpus* was hung on the wall of the Eucharistic Chapel. Harry Eversfield Donohue died a year later in 1987, having lived forty-seven years without his beloved Ruth Ann, who had died shortly after the birth of their third child in 1940. Ruth Ann was only 22.



Come and look at his Jesus; see him through the eyes of this suffering artist. You will see the commonplace execution of a troublesome “prophet” who is God-made-man, who in his surrender to death gave us eternal life. You will also find the unresolved grief hiding within your own heart. Look into his eyes. Jesus hangs near eye level, spat on and mocked by passersby, abandoned by his friends. Even his Father appears to have turned the divine Face away. In his anguish he looks up to the gathering darkness and cries out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” He does not hold himself back from pain and grief. Surely the artist, as he carved Jesus’ tortured face into the rough wood, cried out inside, “Lord, you healed others. Why can’t you heal my wife?”

In *Radical Grace: Daily Meditations*, Richard Rohr, OSF, says we have to suffer to know the human situation from within. If we avoid pain we will remain small, superficial, and isolated. Pain is holy, the touchstone of spiritual growth. When we consent to feel, holding nothing back, we experience God from the inside. When we walk through the pain holding onto Christ’s hand, we make the world better by surrendering to divine will.



Photo by Sister Therese Carson

*Christ in Eucharistic Chapel*

As Mr. Donohue recorded his suffering in the face of Jesus in his studio, his *Mary* began to wear the face of his beloved Ruth Ann. Stroke by stroke he built her, a labor of deepest love, balm to his soul and gift to all who see, until she stood before him, whole and healthy, a bittersweet joy, with arms outstretched to gather all her children in an embrace. You can see her in the crypt level Memorial Hall of the Shrine in Washington, D.C.

Ten years after he completed the crucifix and his Mary, Harry Donohue wrote a meditation on the Way of the Cross: “All of us know the pain that comes when one we love is taken from us and the voice is heard saying, ‘From here you must go on alone. My love is ever with you, but you must find it by faith.’ ... [Christ] grieved, not that men on earth had not given him what he wanted, but that men had not received what he had to give them – salvation. ... In his last moment Jesus Christ realized that his human body could not carry him further. ... Defeated in his human form, he cried out, ‘My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?’ Feeling, as I do, that in the lesson of [these words of Christ] lies the road to salvation, I desire with all my heart that those who look upon this crucifix may see what I so keenly realized when I made it: only by yielding to the will and love of God can man be saved.”

Christmas is far behind us. The small child in the manger has grown into a man and has learned he is the son of God, and knows the terrible price he will pay to save us from ourselves. In this Lenten season let us love each other with nothing held back, even when it brings suffering. Let us love as Christ loves us, through death and beyond into life.

## Sister Profile: Sister Edith Boque

My colleagues and students were surprised to find me working in vocation ministry rather than our College. One student asked, “Doesn’t tenure mean being a professor forever?” while a colleague remarked that he never imagined I had skills or interests besides statistics. Neither knew that change has been a constant in my life.

I was born the oldest child to Donald and Elizabeth Bogue. Our family moved from my first home in Oxford, Ohio, to the South Side of Chicago when I was three, just before my sister Gretchen was born. During my childhood we lived for a time in Bombay (now Mumbai), India and Santiago, Chile when the United Nations sent my father to train demographers there. In 1960 my mother learned to program computers; she worked alongside my father in his research for the rest of her life. My teenage years coincided with the Civil Rights Movement, urban riots, and anti-war protests. My senior year of high school was disrupted by the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Bobby Kennedy; four years later, the bombing of Cambodia cancelled college classes. I came of age in the midst of social upheaval.

Our family was not religious; my parents were critical of organized religion. From an early age, though, something drew me to explore the possibility that God might exist. In fourth grade I begged to go with the neighbors to Sunday school; as a teen I explored the many churches in our neighborhood. I had private instruction in that pre-RCIA era and was baptized into the Church in 1972, much to the displeasure of my parents.

As a young adult I worked in two women’s centers, a Lutheran campus ministry, a pizza restaurant, and the graduate admissions office of a large university. After earning an MSW, I was an oncology social worker for several years before moving to Ann Arbor for doctoral studies in sociology and social work. At Michigan I worked on a variety of research projects while completing my own dissertation.



*Left: Leaving for Chile with younger sister Gretchen and father and mother. Above: playing flute (far right) in an English Country Dance band ca.1980. Right: Ceremony of knocking on the door in Affiliate Rite.(Sister Edith second from right.)*



In those years I also had a passion for English Country Dance (an ancestor to modern square dancing). I called dances and played in bands, traveling around the country. Those dances taught me a great deal about community life. Their beauty and joy grow as many people coordinate their actions while dancing with their own style and grace. Experienced dancers welcome newcomers; no one is left out, even those with three left feet.

I was increasingly active in my large student parish: lector, Eucharistic minister, worship commission, faith sharing leader, altar server, sacristan. As my prayer life deepened, I felt God’s irresistible call to come closer. I looked at religious communities, but it was a long process to sort out the many different charisms. On retreat at a Benedictine monastery in Indiana, I attended community Vespers and knew that this was what I was seeking. A few years later I knocked on the door of Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel and became a Duluth Benedictine.

I have a firm belief in the importance of Catholic higher education and was glad to participate in our Community’s mission at The College of St. Scholastica for over a dozen years. As my knowledge and experience of the Benedictine way of life increased, opportunities opened to share that appreciation with others. This became my passion; I again found myself traveling to give workshops and retreats.

Ten years ago, as I made my perpetual monastic profession, I never dreamed that I would one day invite others to that same joy. But the God who prompted a schoolgirl to go to Sunday school and a folk dance caller to enter a monastery is clearly a God of surprises. I’m sure this will not be the last.



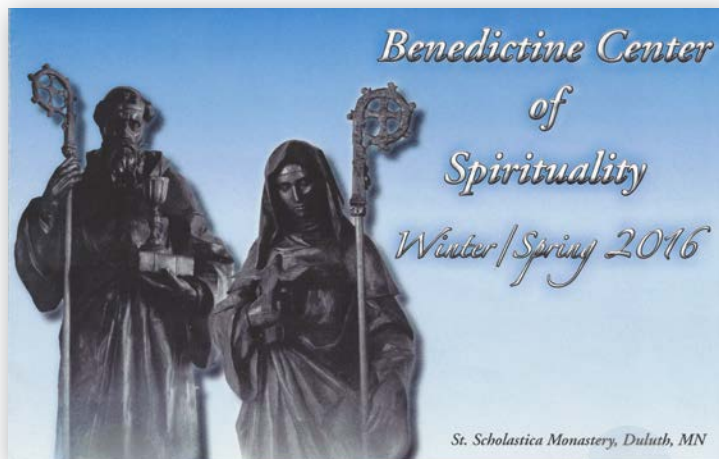
# Benedictine Center of Spirituality

By Sister Pauline Micke

## 2016 Brochure Has Been Published!

The new winter/spring brochure has been printed and sent out. If you didn't get a copy and would like one, please call Sister Pauline at 218-723-7086 or email [pauline.m@duluthosb.org](mailto:pauline.m@duluthosb.org).

**\*\*Please note that in the Lenten Retreat, the date is Saturday, February 27, not February 24. This correction will be sent out and printed in several places.**



**The Advent Retreat**—the last one for 2015—was a blest experience as 25 participants reflected on their own traditions and memories in light of the Advent Sunday Gospels. David Allen, our facilitator, added some humorous and moving memories that made everyone's personal memories come alive again.



*David Allen at Advent Retreat*

## 2016 will offer MORE RETREATS!

**Saturday, February 27, 2016**, from 9 a.m. to noon we will gather for a Lenten Retreat. Pope Francis has declared “The Year of Mercy” and our retreat “God’s Mercy, Forgiveness, and Liberation” led by Father Steve Ulrich and Sister Pauline Micke will lead us in reflecting on God’s faithful relationship with us.

**Saturday, April 23, 2016**, from 9 a.m. to noon gather with us for what at first looks familiar—but there will be a new twist. We are familiar with the seven last words of Jesus during His crucifixion. Facilitators Kerry Sopoci, a licensed psychologist, and Beth Pellin Kaiser, pursuing an MA in pastoral ministry, will lead us as we reflect on the “Seven First Words of Jesus and the Resurrection Call to Wholeness.”

**Ongoing:** The Benedictine Center of Spirituality offers the following ministries, all of which are ecumenical in nature: Spiritual Direction, Retreats, Individual and Group Sabbath Day(s), Hearing 5th Steps, Outreach—we will come to you for what you seek.

To register: 218-723-6555 or email [pauline.m@duluthosb.org](mailto:pauline.m@duluthosb.org).

# The Thomas Merton Room at St. Scholastica Monastery

By Sister Sarah Smedman

On December 10, 2015, the Thomas Merton Room of the Spiritual Resource Center at the Monastery was dedicated, housing a collection of books, tapes, and articles collected over years by Sister Laura Daigle (d. 2009), a collection previously open to the public at the former St. Anthony's School in Duluth. Well versed in Merton's work, well acquainted with notable Merton scholars through years of attendance at Merton Conferences, Sister Laura met and led discussions at St. Anthony's with interested readers of Merton's work. Sister Elizabeth Farias, Director of the Resource Center, organized and catalogued this collection.

Thomas Merton (1915-1968) is undoubtedly the most influential Catholic writer of the twentieth century. He was born in France of a New Zealand father and American mother, both artists who died young. As an adolescent, Merton lived in New York with grandparents. After some years as a youthful libertine, while a student at Columbia he converted to Catholicism. On December 10, 1941, he entered the Cistercians, an order of strict observance, at Gethsemani Abbey, Kentucky. In ensuing years at Gethsemani he lived in a hermitage on the Abbey's outer property. As Merton's own spirituality developed, he became interested in and a great supporter and writer of two most urgent issues of our time—race and peace. Catholics and non-Catholics alike criticized Merton's political writings as inappropriate for a monk. His interest in later years in Zen Buddhism led him to a conference on East-West monastic dialogue in Bangkok, where he died on December 10, 1968, the twenty-seventh anniversary of his entrance to Gethsemani.



*Merton's hermitage*

Photos by Sister Sarah Smedman



*Merton's grave at Gethsemani*

The Merton Room contains Merton's most widely printed and influential autobiography *Seven Storey Mountain* as well as all but a few of his sixty-some books, including his poetry and topics ranging from monasticism to civil rights and nonviolence. Tapes of his work and references to his hundreds of articles are also available, as well as books about Merton's work, many published in honor of his one-hundredth birthday.

## PATHWAYS



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# Tanzania School Projects Under Way

By Sister Beverly Raway

The Benedictine African Sisters of St. Agnes in Tanzania have two projects under way, both related to school construction. One is located at the Secondary School at St. Agnes Convent, Chipole, and the other near Dar es Salaam under the auspices of the Sisters of St. Gertrude's Convent, Imiliwaha. Last summer students and faculty from The College of St. Scholastica visited both of these projects, took pictures of the progress, and offered support from funds they had collected.

Sister Lily Kangalawe of St. Agnes Secondary School, which is located one hour from Njombe, has been working for many years to complete a wall around this girls' school to protect the property and the students from robbers and predators, as much traffic comes and goes on the road near the school. A guard keeps watch at night but cannot be in all places at once. The wall is nearly complete, with one long section left to finish. The brick wall, which will enclose the entire complex including classrooms, administrative building, dormitories, a poultry shed, and pigsty, will have two gates with glass embedded in the top to discourage anyone from climbing over it. Sister Lily is eager to complete the project as soon as possible.



*Wall panels to be filled in with bricks*



*Sisters pass through one of the two gates*

At the opposite end of the country, Sister Gaudensia Mwanyika is fulfilling a dream to build the first school in Tanzania for children with learning and physical disabilities. The School will be called St. Scholastica English Medium School. Sister Gaudensia conceived of this idea while earning her Master's Degree in Education at The College of St. Scholastica in Duluth. Here in the United States, she observed that handicapped children were able to attend school with other students and envisioned what she might do to make that happen in her own country. So far her community has purchased four acres of land and given her the help of two other Sisters. These Sisters and two hired workers have now made enough cement blocks one-by-one to construct three classrooms. The long-term goal is to continue building classrooms and to enroll students little by little until the school includes a kindergarten through secondary school education.



*Sister Gaudensia (right) shaping a cement block*



*Blocks curing in the sun*

*Photos by Adam Bridge*

# First Profession of Sister Kathleen Del Monte

By Sister Sarah Smedman

November 20, 2015, in a simple ritual at Evening Prayer, Sister Kathleen Del Monte made her first profession of vows, promising to God, before our Benedictine Community, obedience, stability, and fidelity to the monastic way of life for the ensuing three years.

Kathleen grew up in New Hyde Park, New York, and had earned a bachelor's and master's degree in history, sociology, and anthropology, before her doctorate in Applied Anthropology from the University of South Florida in Tampa. Prior to entering St. Scholastica Monastery Kathleen worked as a Policy Analyst for the Florida Legislature, a position in which she evaluated state programs and agencies primarily in the field of education, but also in health and human services and in juvenile justice. The Legislature depended upon the vital information these analyses provided as a basis for its work.

Successful and well respected in a job she enjoyed, with all the material possessions of a good life, Kathleen felt that she was at a crossroads; something was still missing. A career move up the ladder just didn't resonate. Discerning with her pastor and a parish deacon, she decided to investigate religious life. Drawn to the Duluth Benedictines through their web site, and then particularly to the video "Sing a New Song" where the Sisters seemed real people of depth, she thought, "Maybe I can do that." While visiting the Monastery she was attracted to the liturgical prayer, the hospitality, and the sense of community of the Sisters and felt that God was calling her to this "place and space where I could become wholly myself—who I am called to be."



*Sister Beverly Raway, Prioress, presents Community and Federation documents to Sister Kathleen*



*Sister Kathleen (4th from left) pictured with (from left to right) her witnesses, Sister Luella Wegscheid and Sister Claudia Cherro, Prioress Sister Beverly Raway, Director of Sisters in First Formation Sister Donna Schroeder, and Novice Director Sister Barbara Higgins*

Sister Kathleen firmly believes that God has called her here. She has a "growing realization that this is where God's grace will bring about in me continual transformation within and through this Community and that God will bring us all together to the heavenly kingdom."

The Community thanks God for bringing you to us, Sister Kathleen.



## Sister Profile: Sister Elizabeth Farias

By Sister Therese Carson

Sometimes finding one's religious vocation takes a long time. Sister Elizabeth Farias came to it late in life, which is ironic as she grew up near Early, Iowa. She lived on the family farm with her parents, two brothers and a sister. Life was good. She attended a small Catholic school in Early, and graduated in a class of ten. Now what? "I was considering a career in library science and my parents wisely recommended a small college, so I enrolled at a Benedictine college in Kansas but ended up majoring in Spanish – no one spoke Spanish in Early, so it sounded exotic." Her parents managed to pay for her junior year in Madrid – Spain, not Madrid, Iowa. What an eye-opening and mind-broadening experience that was!

Elizabeth graduated in 1962 with a BA in Spanish. "When Sputnik put us behind the Soviets in the space race, there was a rush to learn other languages." She taught Spanish in a high school near Cedar Falls, Iowa; then a colleague showed her an ad for a school in Venezuela that was looking for US-certified teachers. In a phone interview the superintendent asked her repeatedly if she could stand the heat. She said yes, and in 1967 flew to Maracaibo to teach Spanish for two years to young native speakers. "With only four years of Spanish in college I didn't have a large vocabulary. I had to learn quickly."



*At Lake Maracaibo 1967*



*Caring for her mother 1999*



*In the Spiritual Resource Center, 2016*

Photo by Sister Therese Carson

She returned to the US and settled in St. Cloud, Minnesota, teaching in a high school designed for the new modular scheduling concept. "It motivated students to carry more classes and take the initiative in using their time wisely; it was very effective, but too expensive." In 1999 she retired and began to care for her mother. "I never thought I'd return to the farm, but I really enjoyed this time with my mother. Although the job was demanding, she was not. She shared family stories, and she taught me how to cook some favorite dishes." Her mother died in 2003, and Elizabeth remained in Early and taught Spanish as adjunct instructor at nearby Buena Vista University.

Elizabeth, now in her late 60s, again began to ask the question "Now what?" Searching for another adventure as a volunteer, she settled on St. Scholastica Monastery and moved there in September 2009. "People told me I was crazy to go north for the winter, but Sister Grace Marie Braun answered all questions promptly and completely. I was impressed." She returned to Early the next spring, but was glad to return to Duluth again in September. When she asked for a third stint, she was told all the positions were filled. "The thought of a vocation never entered my head, but apparently a few Sisters saw something in me. To my great delight I was asked to consider becoming a Sister. A priest friend said he thought I should try it, as I was far past the 50-year-old age limit and not getting any younger." In September 2011 she entered the Community as a Postulant. Her familiarity with the life and the Sisters eased her transition from laywoman to Sister.

In 2013 Sister Elizabeth became Director of the Spiritual Resource Center. "Fifty years ago I chose Spanish over Library Science, and here I am, a librarian. The position is perfect: I find a well-stocked and organized library deeply satisfying. I especially enjoy searching for new books that will be uplifting and challenging as we continue our spiritual journeys. It has been a long and winding path from Iowa to monastic life, but there are no regrets. There is even time for piano lessons and college classes. This semester it is *Introduction to the New Testament*. As she says with a smile, "One is never too old to learn something new."

# The Year of Consecrated Life Celebrated at the Monastery

By Sister Therese Carson

The Year of Consecrated Life, declared by Pope Francis in November 2014, began on the First Sunday of Advent of that year and ended February 2, 2016, with the World Day of Consecrated Life. People who live consecrated lives include priests, deacons, brothers, nuns, sisters, hermits, consecrated virgins and widows, and members of Secular Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life. There are many pathways to God through consecrated life, but all carry at their heart the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience that together overturn our human priorities and open us to intimacy with God and joyful labor in God's service.

In observance of the Year of Consecrated Life, the Sisters opened their house on Sunday, December 6, 2015, to all wishing to learn about our life and ministries. Sisters prepared posters to explain their particular ministry and the work they do in various offices, and these lined the hallways and rooms in the public areas.



Photos by Sister Therese Carson

Rockhurst Dining Room offered refreshments and “Chat with a Sister” areas where guests could talk with a Sister and ask about consecrated life in Duluth. A series of videos played on a large television screen, spotlighting the work of individual Sisters, Community projects, and the meaning and method of consecrated life. Some Sisters played the grand piano in the Community Room and others the organ in Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel. The Open House ended with Evening Prayer.

As January ended, the Sisters joined with Campus Ministry of The College of St. Scholastica in a 24-hour prayer service in Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel. It was an opportunity for people of all faith walks to experience different ways to pray. The Chapel remained open to the public for prayer, and people came and went throughout the night. It began on Saturday at sunset with Evening Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by 24 hours of adoration. Praying at night when all is still and the world sleeps brings unexpected vision to the tired mind. As the stream of thought slows to a stop, the voice of God speaks in the silence. We keep vigil with all who are unable to rest because of illness or pain or worry. Night becomes a holy time, blessed by the presence of God. It reminds us that God is with us always, only a prayer away.

Campus Ministry led worshippers in Taizé song and acoustic praise music. Taizé is a solemn meditative prayer combined with repeated chant that breaks down our barriers and opens us to the divine. As we continue the chant and listen for the voice of God, we enter into a rich and deep communion with God and each other where time ceases to exist. Our heart beats in rhythm with the Holy Spirit, and we freely surrender our whole self to God.



Students and Sisters came and went all night, with always two praying before the Blessed Sacrament. As the sky began to lighten in the east over Lake Superior, the young people who had been up most of the night went for some rest, and Sisters took their places in the Chapel. The monastic community and a few hardy students gathered for Sunday Morning Prayer and Eucharist. In the afternoon worshippers were guided through *Lectio Divina*, an ancient practice of prayer and meditation with Scripture. The day ended with recitation of the Rosary, Benediction, and finally Evening Prayer.

As the Year of Consecrated Life began, His Holiness wrote an Apostolic Letter to religious men and women in which he encouraged us to look to our past with gratitude, live in the present with passion, and embrace our future with hope. Quoting Saint Pope John Paul II, he said, “You have not only a glorious history to remember and to recount, but also a great history still to be accomplished! Look to the future, where the Spirit is sending you in order to do even greater things.” As Benedictine women we accept this challenge to “wake up the world” and show how Jesus lived on this earth and how all can follow in his footsteps.



Photos by Sister Therese Carson



*As we chanted, “The Lord is my light, my light and salvation: in God I trust,” we came up one by one and lit candles before the altar and the Blessed Sacrament.*

## Please Pray for the Following Deceased Family and Friends

Alice Lauer 4/16/2015

Mary Kathleen (Call) Bailey 11/7/2015

Burrell Kubacki 11/18/2015

*+Sister Madeleva Schur's sister*

Susan Marie Flattery 11/29/2015

Richard “Barry” Doyle 11/29/2015

*Sister Katie Doyle's brother*

Stanley F. Jurkanis 12/17/2015

Janet C. Wieveg 12/20/2015

Mary Holmes Lewis 1/25/2016

Ivan E. Rochefort 1/30/2016

*Sister Mary Rochefort's brother*

# What is Your Gospel?

By Sister Edith Bogue

The homily I heard on Christmas Day is still with me. Father Peter Lambert posed two questions to the assembly, declaring that the answers prepared us to be evangelists – people who proclaim the Gospel. Over the next days, as I pondered his questions, they became a New Year’s Resolution and then what our monastic forebears, the ammas and abbas of the Egyptian desert, called *praxis*, a spiritual discipline. It is short, simple, and profound.

His first question was easy: to recall a specific happy Christmas event. The only difficulty was choosing from so many: leaving church on a snowy night after Midnight Mass to see candle luminarias glowing around the building; my younger sister’s squeals of joy when Santa somehow fit a big-girl bed into his sleigh; my own astonishment on first hearing from a BBC radio announcer (growing up unchurched) that Christmas celebrates Emmanuel, God-with-us. Seeking one memory set me to rummaging through my storehouse, reliving all those happy moments in an instant.

The second question was more profound: to remember when we really discovered the Gospel, the moment when Christ changed our hearts and our lives. These memories, not so numerous, enveloped the happy memories with the deep joy of encountering Christ, the giver of all gifts, and responding with a “Yes” from the depths of the soul.

“Hold on to that memory,” Fr. Peter charged us, “it is *your* Gospel, the unique Good News that you have to share with the world: your story of God’s love coming to you in surprising ways.”

There is a profound truth to this. Transformation, in both the Scripture and the lives of saints, begins with an encounter: a burning bush, an angel with surprising news, a carpenter whose words and gaze make listeners’ hearts burn within them. None of them saw the full sweep of salvation history in that moment, yet each knew that their world was fundamentally changed. The truth and beauty of that encounter with God’s abundant love cast a new light on their world. By that light, they see and respond to God’s presence in the people and events of their everyday lives. The light of the Gospel comes into the world refracted through each of the believers who have received it.

Savoring the quiet joy at the end of the day, I recognized that homily as the place God touched my life that day, my portion of the Gospel to share. Then the lightbulb flashed: What if *every* day began with the question, “What is your Gospel today?” and lived out the answer? Could I really do that? Could you?

What is *your* Gospel today?

*The light of the Gospel comes to each of us in surprising ways, asking us to carry Christ to all the corners of the earth. [Henry Ossawa Tanner, The Annunciation. Public domain.]*





# Books for Children and Young Adults

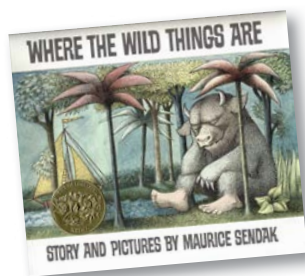
By Sister Sarah Smedman

Two thoughts flirt in my mind as I wonder how to begin writing about literature for children and young adults. The first is a cardinal principle: A good children's or YA book is a good anybody's book. For a parent, grandparent, doting aunt, or visiting adult to pick up a "cutesy" book and think, "Oh, children would love this" may indeed be true. Taste is personal, even in children. But not everything one enjoys reading means that it is, by literary standards, "a good book." Or good for the reader. Or even a book for children. If you buy that "cutesy" book for a child, who does indeed love it, you may condemn yourself to reading aloud a zillion times a book you come to abhor. If, however, you choose a book with a good story, life-like characters, vivid descriptions that create live settings, and a worthy theme, the adult reader as well as the child will want to hear it—and read it—again and again. Everyone has a right to her own taste but should not confuse "what I like" with sound judgment about what is "good" children's or YA literature.

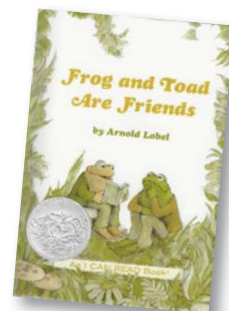
Which leads me to the second thought, precisely worded by one of the most notable of today's writers for children, the multiple award-winner, Katherine Paterson: "It is not enough to simply teach children to read; we have to give them something worth reading. Something that will stretch their imaginations—something that will help them make sense of their own lives and encourage them to reach out toward people whose lives are quite different from their own."

Springing from such arable ground, I would like to suggest a few books every child should be privileged to know. Though some are, and some are not, likely to be on today's best-seller lists, they are classics whether published in the 1960s or the 2010s—or years earlier. Many of you will know them. All of them are in print. All have significant themes. And delightful characters. And beautiful language that reads well aloud.

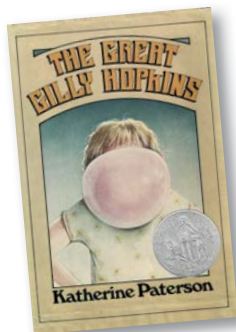
To be read to the very young: *Good Night Moon*, by Margaret Wise Brown and Clement Hurd. (Stretches the imagination and makes babies aware of the world around them.)



For 4-year olds and above: *Where the Wild Things Are*, by Maurice Sendak (Helps children understand and deal with the "wild" sides of themselves in a highly imaginative way.)



An I Can Read Book: *Frog and Toad Are Friends* by Arnold Lobel (A truly human theme that reaches out to those different from ourselves.)



Middle Grade Readers: *The Great Gilly Hopkins* by Katherine Paterson (Down-to-earth and humorous story of a foster child. Scratch the hilarity on the surface; the pathos is not far beneath. Sees the real humanity of someone different from—yet in many ways very like—ourselves. Characters are unforgettable.)

Teen Readers: *The Fault in Our Stars*, by John Green (Recent realistic novel translated into an excellent film about teenagers suffering with cancer.)



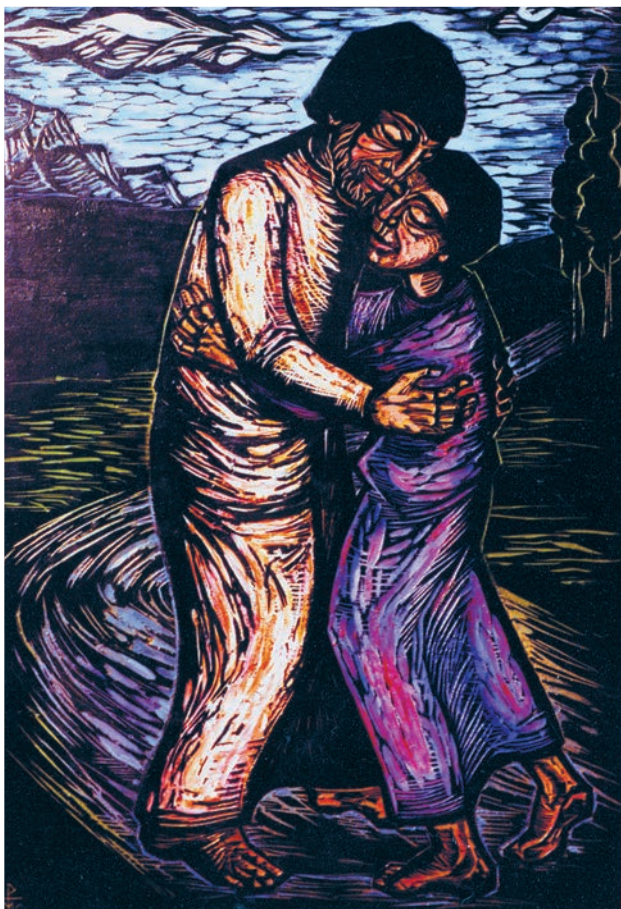
Looking ahead: what differentiates children's from adult literature? What determines "classics"? books for specific age groups? Caldecott, Newbery, and other award winners? Suggestions?

*Dr. Sarah Smedman, Professor of Children's and Young Adult Literature, Ret. The University of North Carolina Charlotte and Minnesota State University Moorhead, Former President and Board Member of the International Children's Literature Association*

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*“Merciful, Like the Father”*

— Motto of Holy Year of Mercy