

PATHWAYS



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Dear Friends of the Monastery,

It's barely spring as I write this letter, but you can tell in this issue of *Pathways* that we are dreaming of what summer will bring. For some of us it means participating in God's creation and finding the gifts of peace, joy, and hope in gardening and a deep connection to nature.

The official first day of summer is on June 21, which this year is also the second day of our annual retreat. I look forward to the quiet and peace that a time of reflection brings, and an annual trek to the Valley of Silence. There is a **pathway** behind the cemetery that takes you down, down, the hill through tall grasses in the open areas, through maple woods, and hazel and alder brush, past a lone tall northern oak and then to a large outcropping of gabbro **rock**. When the rains have been good and the air sweet, down in the crevices of the **rock**, I look for and hope to see the pale corydalis also called the rock harlequin (*Corydalis sempervirens*), a relative of the bleeding heart, with its tiny pink flowers and yellow lips. They are delicate, with dusty green leaves a flash of joyous color against the gray **rock**.

Layers of balsam fir branches shelter this secret spot from the wind, and the warm sun is a blessing on the **rock**, especially if June is cool. I linger there awhile, then step down off the **rock** to continue along the **path**. It keeps winding down past a **rocky** outcropping to the left where a fox den may still be found, and then to the lowest spot where exposed auburn-brown roots of cedar trees are washed smooth by rivulets of trickling water. Only the leaves of cowslips are visible now, but I can picture the swath of yellow and remember my friend Sister Aelred Roehl who named this spot the 'River of Gold.' Traveling from there to the dry side is tricky, stepping from one **rock** or root to another and then on patches of mud and moss held back by decaying logs.

It's worth the risk, to hear the gurgling waters, and the calls of curious chickadees breaking the silence, letting you know you are in their territory now. **Walking** up the far side of the **path** there is a sunny spot to the left where I remember seeing a burrow that hid an unknown creature's young. Up near the top of the hill in a grove of sugar maples I see the fallen log that shelters the delicate pink sprigs of spring beauties and leeks abound. When I crush the silken green leaves, the smell is pungent.

Too soon it's time to return home... but a comforting, calm circles through my body and mind after **walking** this familiar **path**, and I'm filled with a feeling of deep connection to the earth. I've **walked this path** so many times, in all seasons, and the **walking** reminds me that this is holy ground, God's **temple**, where there is a natural rhythm to the changing seasons and to life. I picture these familiar scenes over and over again as the psalms of the week wash over me.

May the days of summer bring what you most desire and may hope and peace wash over your soul as you walk God's ways.

Sister Beverly

Sister Beverly Raway, OSB

Psalm 143: "In the morning let me know your love for I put my trust in you. **Make me know the way I should walk...** To you I lift my soul. Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. Let your good spirit **lead me on a level path.**"

Psalm 27: "One thing I ask of God and this I desire, to live in the house of God all the days of my life, **to gaze on the beauty of God whom I seek in the temple.** For God will hide and protect me under the cover of his tent; set me high upon a **rock.**"



Pale Corydalis



Gabbro Rock

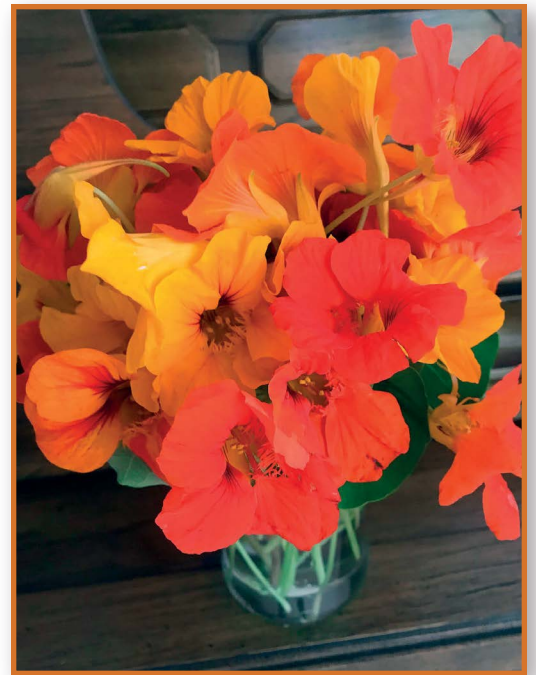
To Plant a Garden Is to Believe in Tomorrow

by Becky Urbanski

I like to think that, as a gardener, I'm part of a group of hopeful people. We have hope that tiny seeds will grow and flourish into plants. Some will be flowers that brighten our days, some will be vegetables that provide food, some will be fragrant grasses and stately trees. As we look at those small packets of seeds or those tiny seedlings, we have hope of what they will become to make our little piece of the world better. Audrey Hepburn once said, "To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow." I think that is so true.

Our Benedictine Core Values can be guiding lights for gardeners. We must have *Humility* as we sometimes have great fails when caring for our plants. Seeds might not germinate, or we overwater a favorite plant. What is important is that we learn from the experience and move on. The simple nature of gardens is *Stability* to a physical space. We watch gardens change throughout the seasons, but they also remain the same. St. Benedict reminds us that God's presence is in our *Work*. I can recall some days in the garden where I have never worked harder in my life. This work honors our ability to do so as well as contributes to the community through nature's beauty. Gardens are made for *Hospitality*. We love to share our gardens by inviting people to see them, taking flowers to friends, dropping off bags of vegetables to those in need, laughing at the puppy rolling in the freshly mowed grass, or watching the birds sing in the trees.

Gardens are where we can be open to God's *Peace*. Time spent in the garden can help us to sort out the complexities of life and can give us strength to meet challenges. Gardens provide quiet places to reflect and to remind us of simple joys such as watching a bee go from flower to flower or the leaves moving in the breeze. The peace given to us from a garden can quiet our spirits and gives us hope.



Nasturtiums

Finally, I always think that as a gardener I am a "keeper" or steward of this space. I am called to be the caretaker for this garden, and I will not be the only one to do so. The earth has been around for billions of years, and with our help and *Stewardship*, it will be here for many generations to come.

As summer days arrive, we all need a little peace, joy, and hope. God shows us love through a garden. Happy Summer!

Becky Urbanski, Ed.D. has served in two of our Sister's ministries, the College of St. Scholastica and Benedictine and has been a long-time friend of the Monastery. She recently retired from Benedictine as senior vice president for mission integration and marketing. Becky is also a Master Gardener Emeritus.



Becky's garden in full bloom



The ABCs of Fostering Vocations

by Sister Lisa Maurer

- A. Ask a young person if they have ever considered a vocation to religious life or the priesthood.
- B. Bring your children and grandchildren to Mass.
- C. Cheer on the seminarians and men and women in religious formation that are from your parish/diocese.
- D. Donate to organizations that promote and foster vocations.
- E. Encourage a young person to share their gifts and talents by volunteering at the local parish.
- F. Fight the urge to be disheartened by the “lack of vocations” and trust in God’s Providence.
- G. Guide young people to pray that they might know God’s dream for their life.
- H. Help a young person to see that they are precious.
- I. Include being a priest, religious brother, or sister in your hopes and dreams for any young people you know.
- J. Join the local Serra Club or another organization that is dedicated to supporting vocations in the Church.
- K. Keep an eye open for news stories that present priests, brothers, and sisters in a positive light!
- L. Let your children and grandchildren know that you would support them in considering a vocation.
- M. Make promoting and fostering vocations a priority in your life.
- N. Name the gifts that you see in a young person. Tell them why you think they would make a good priest, brother, or sister.
- O. Open your home to a priest, brother, or sister. Invite them to share a meal with your family.
- P. Pray for vocations to religious life and the priesthood.
- Q. Quiz a young person about Bible stories that are about people hearing God’s call.
- R. Remember those priests, brothers, and sisters who have had an impact on your life and offer a prayer for them.
- S. Support vocation ministries and activities in your area.
- T. Talk positively about vocations.
- U. Untangle any confusion a young person might have when it comes to vocations within the Church.
- V. Visit a monastery or convent or take a trip to a seminary. Give young people a chance to see where and how men and women are living out their vocations.
- W. Witness to your own vocation. Whether you are married, single, a priest, or a vowed religious, share your vocation story with young people.
- XYZ. Even though this is the end of the list, remember that there is no end to the ways we can promote and foster vocations!



If you or someone you know wants more information about Being Benedictine, email vocations@duluthosb.org or visit www.duluthbenedictines.org/vocations.

Sister Johnetta Maher: Soon to be 100 Years Old

by Sister Mary Josephine Torborg

The world became a better place on November 7, 1922, the day Genevieve Maher was born in Powers, Michigan. She grew up in Watersmeet, Michigan, and from an early age she had a deep desire to become a teacher. However, it remained just a desire until she entered high school in Watersmeet and took a Home Economics class with a very inspiring and vivacious teacher. When she completed this course, she knew in her heart that she wanted to become a Home Economics teacher.

When Sister Monica Simon and Sister Prudentia Moran came from Duluth to the Watersmeet High School to recruit students for the College of St. Scholastica, they visited with Genevieve and her parents. From that time forward, her career plans unfolded. In Autumn, 1940, she and her parents made their first trip to Duluth. On arrival, they enrolled their daughter at the College of St. Scholastica with an intended major of Home Economics.

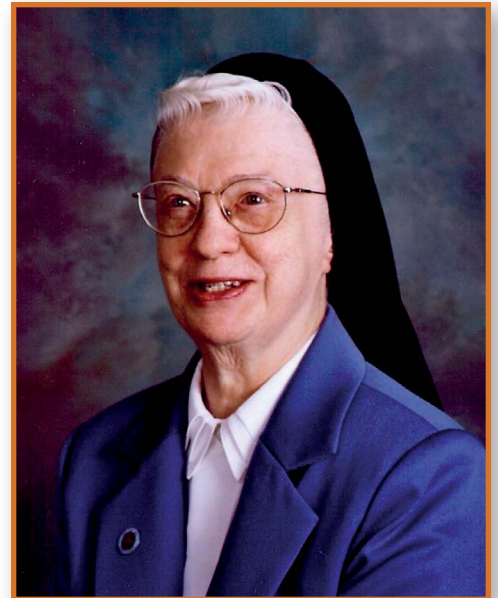
Genevieve loved college life but was also drawn to the Benedictine way of life. She saw it manifested in the lives of the Sisters who were faculty members and taught the many classes, and in the Sisters who were prefects on the residential floors. The deep faith life of her parents and family also had prepared her well; she decided in her sophomore year to enter the Monastic Community at St. Scholastica as a postulant. On entering the novitiate, she took the name Johnetta, after St. John the Evangelist.

Mother Agnes Somers decided that Sister Johnetta should continue her education in Home Economics. It was fortunate that she could do her student teaching at Stanbrook Hall, Duluth, our high school for girls. After graduation, she was assigned to teach Home Economics at Stanbrook Hall from 1944 to 1949. In 1949 she was asked to teach Home Economics at Cathedral High School, Duluth. She recalls, "The next fifteen years were exciting, challenging, fun, and rewarding."

When Sister Johnetta began teaching at the College of St. Scholastica in February 1964, she was responsible for the training of home economics teacher-candidates. As she began this challenge she noted, "I have always said that the twenty years of high school teaching were the best preparation one could have for training teachers. I had been there!" Thirty-one years later she could still say, "I enjoy teaching at the College of St. Scholastica."

Rose Mary Perrault, a graduate of the Home Economics Department of the College of St. Scholastica, said it best when she wrote in the Department Memories: "The College of St. Scholastica received a special gem when Sister Johnetta entered the Home Economics Department as a (faculty member)."

Barb Nettleton Ignatius (Class of 1970) shared these words of wisdom: "Sister Johnetta was the unflappable, brilliant, and capable role model for all of us. She set the bar for a very thorough curriculum and was the glue that held it all together."



Sisters Johnetta Maher, Rebecca Burggraff, Grace Marie Braun, and Mary Josephine Torborg help at a banquet at Somers Hall in the College in 1968.



Preparing the dining room for a reception

These are just a few of the jewels of wisdom and praise that students, faculty, staff, and administrators shared about Sister Johnetta. We can understand the basis for these acclamations when we note just a few of her accomplishments. She served as chair of the Behavioral Arts and Science Division for eight years and as chair of the Home Economics Department for 33 years. As chair, she took on the responsibility of developing and implementing two new licensure programs: Family Education/Parent Education and Family Education/Early Childhood Family Education. The proposals were so well prepared that approval from the State Department was received on the first submission with no revisions required. St. Scholastica was one of the first institutions in the State of Minnesota to gain approval for these new programs. Sister Johnetta was awarded the Burlington Northern Faculty Achievement Award for this significant contribution to the college and students.



Sister Johnetta loved giving tours of the Heritage Room.

After her retirement from the College, Sister Johnetta served as coordinator of the Monastery dining room. A task very dear to her heart was serving as overseer of the Heritage Room collection of antique furniture and works of art. Sister would give tours of this room and she would be able to give information about all the items. Everyone enjoyed her tours.

For relaxation, Sister Johnetta would often be seen crocheting baby afghans. She learned this craft from her mother, Mayme Maher, when she was still a young girl in Watersmeet. Sister also was famous for her yarn cats that she would make for the Monastery Christmas sale and the Monastery Gift shop. She loves to play cards. When I play cards with her on Sunday afternoons, I am amazed at the thrill she finds in winning the game. She is a real card shark when it comes to playing Rummy.



Every Christmas, her nephew David Vidmar gives her an amaryllis.



Sister Johnetta is justly proud of her yarn cats.

When asked recently what she thought a blessing of aging might be, she responded, “You’re only as old as you feel. If you feel like doing things you did when you were fifty, you can pick up where you left off.” Perhaps this is her secret for living so many years.

We look forward to Sister Johnetta’s one hundredth birthday celebration on November 7, 2022.

Sister Theresa Spinler: A Caring Heart and Healing Hands

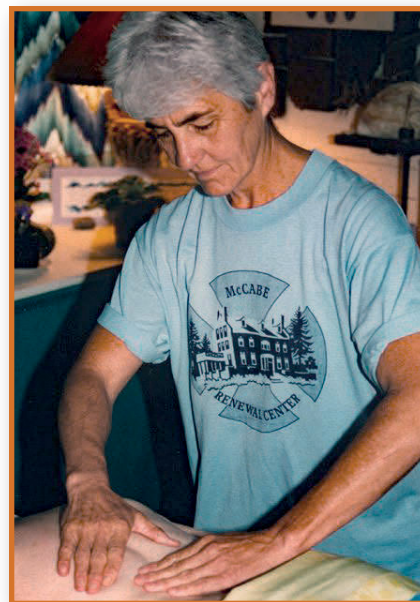
by Jan Barrett, Director of Development and Public Relations

Sister Theresa Spinler is passionate about her ministry. If you have visited the Monastery, you have witnessed much of what her heart and hands have created. The Monastery grounds are cared for and much of this work is performed by Sister Theresa – though she is quick to credit other Sisters and volunteers for their work. In the summer months, many hands work to maintain the gardens, perennials, annuals, and trees. Sister Theresa brings the natural world into our chapel and dining room, using potted greenery, flower arrangements, and seasonal displays for Advent, Lent, summer, and autumn. At present she is caring for a thriving assortment of African violets in the cloister walk outside the chapel.

Although known for her green thumb and passionate care for the earth, she has served in other roles as caregiver. For 18 years she was a registered nurse at St. Mary's Medical Center. After retirement, she opened "Healing Hands," a full-time massage service at McCabe Renewal Center where she lived with a small community of Sisters. After 14 years her hands needed some rest, so she moved back to the Monastery and performed foot therapy while caring for the environment.

During the warmer months, a typical day begins with early morning prayer and reflection. Then, she heads to the gardens, and by 6:00 a.m. is surrounded by flowers, reveling in the beauty, breathing in the earthy smells, and listening to the wind in grasses and trees. "It's renewing and refreshing. It permeates my whole being, and God is so present." Early rising and a hard work ethic are inherent and help in her ministries of caring for the earth and caring for others. Summer mornings take her back to her youth on the farm in southern Minnesota, and she recalls quiet mornings and evenings on the farm where the breeze brought sounds of rustling corn and the smell of fresh alfalfa.

Sister Theresa is passionate about caring for the environment and adamant that no pesticides are used on the grounds of the Monastery, the College and the health center next door (Benedictine Living Community – Duluth).



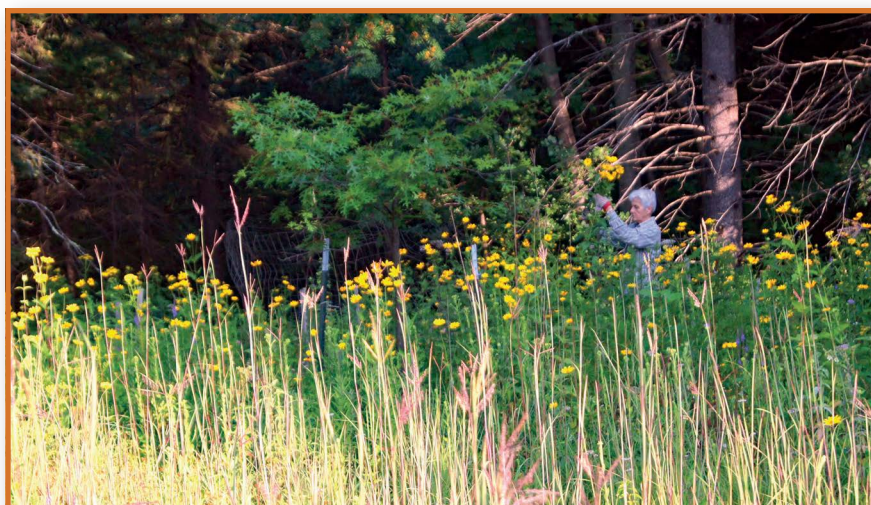
Healing Hands



*Caring for African violets
in the cloister walk*



*Small birds like this redpoll
will eat from her hand.*



*Working in our restored prairie, cutting
wildflowers for a chapel arrangement*

If you have visited Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel, you've enjoyed some of the floral and seasonal displays created by Sister Theresa. When asked about her inspiration in this ministry she says, "I pick a lot of flowers and items including what others might call 'weeds' and I start putting them together. The arrangement becomes real to me this way and I hope that others take personal meaning from it."

She continues, "I love creating displays for the seasons of Advent and Lent, and for the beautification of the Chapel. Bringing the beauty of the outdoors inside is something I cherish. I don't like repeating what I've done so I use items such as pottery, cloth, driftwood, bark, and grasses to represent something new." (See *Highlights*, page 16.)

She looks after the Sisters' Gethsemane Cemetery. With more than 500 headstones, Stations of the Cross, various gardens, and new trees to be planted and pruned, this would be a fulltime job. "Thankfully, other Sisters and volunteers help with this work."

Sister Theresa loves the wildlife at the Monastery: deer, bear, squirrels, chipmunks, and birds, all who thrive in our sanctuary. They are precious to her, but she knows that in high numbers they can damage shrubs and perennials. When the woodchuck and rabbit populations climb too high, they are live-trapped and released elsewhere. Here again, she shows her loving heart for all living things. She says there is never a dull moment in her work.



Sister Theresa's flower arrangements always include a little wildness.

We hesitate to mention 'snow' in our summer issue of *Pathways*, but Duluth winters are long, and much time and energy is expended in snow removal. With shovel and snowblower Sister Theresa keeps the entries and paths open in the central Garden Courtyard, helped by a few other Sisters and volunteers. She also works indoors during the winter with a variety of plants and environmental projects.

Sister Theresa shared a beloved quote from the Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky: "The world will be saved by beauty." Her own heart and hands bring beauty, peace, and the Holy Spirit to her ministry of caring for the earth, our beloved home.

"If we finally choose to tend this creation with skill and care, it will be because we are moved by the world's beauty, awed by its complex interrelatedness, and feel ourselves kin with the rest of creation. ...What we love is what moves our heart, and what moves our heart is what moves our lives."

~ from Making Room: Soul-Deep Satisfaction through Simple Living by Kyle Kramer



Autumn chores, winter snow removal: every day is spent out-of-doors with nature.

Caring for the Earth, Our Common Home

by Sister Therese Carson

*"To see a World in a Grain of Sand and a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand and Eternity in an hour."*

~ William Blake

I first encountered the Creator in a garden. I would kneel in the soft soil and pull unwanted seedlings, divide, transplant – letting my hands move without conscious direction, forgetting everything but the work before me. I touched mystery and God danced with me.

In our creation story, life began in a Garden. In Genesis, our forebears walked with their Creator, tended the earth, and lived in what poet David Budbill calls 'this shining moment in the now.' Today the earth continues to speak of the One who ceaselessly calls it into existence. When we work in soil, we collaborate in God's work of creation. We live in the timeless Now. On our knees, hands deep in loam, we see how all creation is interconnected in a living community. We uncover the fragrant white mycelia of fungi that feed on the year's decay and transform it into humus. With our fingers we explore a complex web of life and death, into which we enter as laborer, not master. The endless cycle of decay and renewal is a silent song of praise to the Creator of all. Through it, we touch the dance of life, death, and rebirth – what Christians call the Paschal Mystery.

Yet somehow, we lost our sense of the sacredness of soil and have reinvented the farm as industry, with its economy of scale, reliance on technology and fossil fuels, and ever-expanding production.

Now we plant in monocultures, on a vast scale that requires heavy investments in machinery to cultivate and harvest, and artificial fertilizers and pesticides to keep the overtaxed and damaged soil producing. We feed the multitudes – but at what cost to the soil, to its resilience and health? To the health of the people who work it? To our sense of our place in creation?

In the Paschal Mystery, Nadia Bolz-Weber writes, we are "entering the difference between God and humanity and just touching it for a moment. Touching the shimmering sadness of humanity's insistence that we can be our own gods, that we can be pure and all-powerful." We have forgotten that good gardeners treat the land with respect and love and leave it in better condition for their children.

So, what does this mean for the small part of the earth we call home? To undo the damage, start with the Hippocratic oath: "Do no harm." Make changes in manageable, sustainable ways. At the Monastery, we are looking at how we use resources such as electricity, natural gas, and gasoline, and becoming more aware of what we bring into our home. This is a work in progress.

Plastic has become a toxic burden to land and oceans. Believing it to be food, sea animals eat plastic until it fills their digestive tracts, and they starve. Plastic causes endocrine damage in humans and other living creatures – think cancer, diabetes, and neurological disorders. It does not easily break down into harmless substances. Continue to recycle plastic, but even better, limit the amount brought into the home, especially as non-durable goods that will be quickly discarded, like plastic utensils, cups, straws, bottles, and bags. Avoid buying items with excess plastic packaging, especially the thick 'clamshells' that are not recyclable, and let the companies and stores know that decision.

Consumer goods use energy and produce pollution both in the manufacturing and in disposal. Reduce pollution by buying less. Invest in well-made items that will last a long time. Buy based on need, not want. Donate used clothing and household goods, and shop second-hand stores. Insulate the home, use LED lighting, choose a fuel-efficient or hybrid car. Investigate local solar collectives that make solar energy more affordable.



Planting an Oak for Her Grandchildren
charcoal drawing by Sister Therese Carson

Don't waste money on electronics that duplicate what is already owned. A quick internet search will provide many more ways to reduce one's carbon footprint.

What about the natural spaces? Sit, watch, and listen to what they are saying; that is the Benedictine way. Are trees succumbing to blight or drought? Plant native trees that are disease-resistant, last a long time, and sequester carbon in their root masses. Is there silence instead of the music of birds and insects? Replace lawns with native grasses and wildflowers that will attract and feed birds and pollinating bees and wasps. A healthy garden is biodiverse: a mix of many different grasses, perennials, and annuals that provide cover and food for a wide range of insects, birds, and small animals. Especially look for native plants that nourish native insects. Learn to love the snakes and arachnids that maintain a garden's healthy balance. Watch for invasive imported plants like glossy buckthorn, lily of the valley, and honeysuckle, and pull them before they spread and crowd out native plants.

Keep outdoor lighting to a minimum; the biological clocks of many animals are photoperiodic and depend on changes in the length of light and darkness. Artificial outdoor lighting can disrupt cycles of reproduction and migration. And avoid insecticides. Insects are vital to a healthy earth, but their numbers are dropping quickly. This world can survive – perhaps even thrive – without humans, but it needs insects to pollinate flowers (think apples and tomatoes as well as beauty), get rid of dead animals and feces, and feed birds and fish. It may take the collapse of agriculture for us to learn to respect insects and grubs.

In his encyclical *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis says, "Human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbor and with the earth itself. The harmony between the Creator, humanity, and creation as a whole was disrupted by our presuming to take the place of God and refusing to acknowledge our creaturely limitations. ... The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation." It is the poor who will suffer first, for they lack the resources to escape rising sea levels, increasing temperatures, and drought.

In silent contemplation of God's creation, we rediscover our proper place in it. We must accept ourselves and all creation as a gift from God and give ourselves as gift to each other. We can learn from the example of communal bees: the survival of any individual rests on the survival of the whole community. In the words of theologian Henri Nouwen, "Stop trying to be in control, to alter nature for your own needs, and allow something creative to happen, not by you but to you." Let God be God.

***"I breathe in your air, you breathe in mine.
You give me your breath, I give you mine."***

~ from "Because We Come From Everything" by Kimberly Blaeser



Sister Josephine Krulc removes invasive buckthorn.

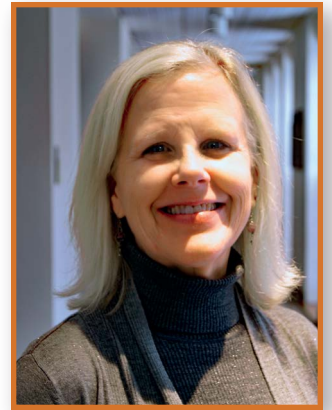


A restored prairie on the Monastery grounds

Greetings from the Center for Spirituality and Enrichment!

by Dawn Carrillo, Director

At this writing – almost the end of April – winter is still fiercely trying to hold onto us. The dark, cold days, coupled with the war in the Ukraine, the ever-present uncertainty of the ongoing pandemic, and the many other serious global issues we are facing, have the potential to overwhelm and drain us of energy and hope. But Easter brings us an entirely different message, one of Resurrection joy and unbounded delight. And even though winter has been quite tenacious this year, I notice my very young apple trees starting to bud, and the daylilies are beginning to send their shoots up, finding their way through the earth and reaching for the sun. The creative love and presence of God, which our beloved Earth reveals to us through its cycles of life, will never end. This is the Easter message! Consider the black bear in the poem “Spring” by Mary Oliver, from *New and Selected Poems*:



*Somewhere
a black bear
has just risen from sleep
and is staring*

*down the mountain.
All night
in the brisk and shallow
restlessness
of early spring*

*I think of her,
her four black fists
flicking the gravel,
her tongue*

*like a red fire
touching the grass,
the cold water.
There is only one question:*

*how to love this world.
I think of her*

*rising
like a black and leafy ledge*

*to sharpen her claws against
the silence
of the trees.
Whatever else*

*my life is
with its poems
and its music
and its glass cities,*

*it is also this dazzling darkness
coming
down the mountain,
breathing and tasting;*

*all day I think of her –
her white teeth,
her wordlessness,
her perfect love.*

At the Center, we offer programming that explores how, like this black bear, we all can more *perfectly love*. Please visit our website at retreatduluth.org to view our current program offerings (mostly by Zoom), as well as information on other resources we have for spiritual direction and private retreats. We would love to walk with you on your journey of love...



*Dawn Carrillo
Director, Center for Spirituality and
Enrichment*

Please visit our website at retreatduluth.org or email dcarrillo@duluthosb.org for information on the Center, to sign up for our weekly emails, and to find out about upcoming events and offerings.

Our Oblate Community's reflection and discussion for this spring

by Sister Pauline Micke, OSB, Co-Director of Oblates in Duluth pmicke@duluthosb.org

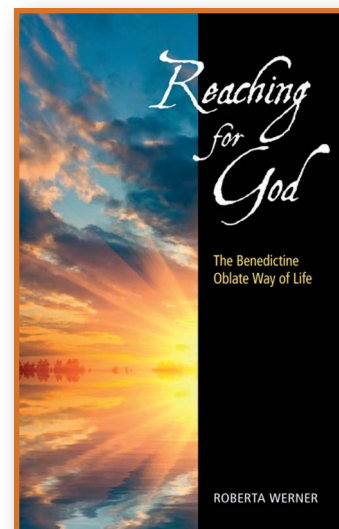
Each year we choose a book or topic to discuss. This year the book is *Reaching for God: the Benedictine Oblate Way of Life* by Sr. Roberta Werner, Assistant Oblate Director at St. Benedict's Monastery in St. Joseph, Minnesota.

Chapter five on "The Importance of the Laity in the Work of the Church and the World" is the source for our reflection and discussion that began this April. It quotes many Vatican documents and their description of the life and mission of the laity in our churches and the world. One important statement from *Lumen Gentium* ("Light of the Nations") says that the laity "are sharers in the priestly, prophetic and kingly functions of Christ."

In this chapter, Sister Roberta quotes documents that call the laity to be "a living testimony to faith and the love of Christ in their daily family and social life." The documents say, "It is the laypeople who have to bring Christianity (a spiritual dimension) into the marketplace because, as Pope Paul VI said, 'they are the bridge to the modern world.'" In the coming months, we will focus our reflection and discussion on this.

Again, according to the documents, the call and mission of Oblate Communities is to be "key role models and effective missionaries because of our natural connections to the social, economic, educational, and other facets of our lives." We are to bring the Good News that God created us, loves us unconditionally, and sent his Son to show us how to live and be saved. What a vital and superb call and vocation for our needy world!

What is your response? May you continue to be blessed and grow in this love.



Please Pray for Our Deceased Family and Friends

Shirley Osborne	5/6/2021	Raymond Kiminski	2/21/2022
Carl Buraglio	9/20/2021	Ray Muskat	2/24/2022
Judy Golla Beckers (former Sister)	1/2/2022	Dorothy M. Kray	2/28/2022
Lydia Mamone	2/4/2022	James S. Conroy	3/3/2022
Margaret Neussendorfer Billias (former Sister)	2/11/2022	Mary Lou Ramsay	3/11/2022
Ruth Olson (sister of Sister Mary Susan Dewitt)	2/13/2022	Rev. John Doyle	3/20/2022
William Anderson	2/16/2022	Charlotte Fisketti	3/31/2022
Cindy Snow	2/19/2022	Jill L. "Kerness" Christie	4/3/2022
Nancy Netland	2/19/2022	Stuart Seiler	4/5/2022
		Richard E. Senn	4/12/2022

"Nothing can make up for the absence of someone whom we love. ... It is nonsense to say that God fills the gap. God doesn't fill it but, on the contrary, keeps it empty and so helps us to keep alive our former communion with each other, even at the cost of pain. The dearer and richer our memories the more difficult the separation. But gratitude changes the pangs of memory into a tranquil joy. The beauties of the past are borne, not as a thorn in the flesh, but as a precious gift in themselves."

~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*

Highlights

Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple

Each year on February 2, we remember when the infant Jesus was brought to the Temple for consecration 40 days after his birth. This was in obedience to God's command to Moses: "Consecrate to me all the first-born, whatever is the first to open the womb" (Exodus 13:1). The first reading at the day's Eucharist comes from the Prophet Malachi: "And suddenly the Lord whom you seek will come to the temple, and the messenger of the covenant whom you desire. ... Then the sacrifice of Judah will again please the Lord" (Malachi 3:1,4).

Mary also came to be ritually purified, for childbirth brings women into intimate contact with the boundary of life and death (see Leviticus, chapter 12). This feast reminds us that Christianity is rooted in Judaism. As devout Jews, Mary and Joseph followed the Law and taught it to their son.

When they entered the Temple with their child, two elderly people who were filled with the Holy Spirit recognized them. Mary and Joseph were dressed in worn and simple garments, but Simeon and Anna, who had waited for the Messiah all their lives, saw God's promises coming to fruition in this ordinary family. Simeon took the child and cradled him lovingly in his arms, praying, "Master, now let your servant go in peace ... for my eyes have seen your salvation, ... a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

Simeon's prayer to God is used in Compline, the Night Prayer that closes each day. The icon above, written by Sister Therese Carson, captures the moment as the old man and the infant look into each other's eyes in shared joy.

February 2 also marks the halfway point between the winter solstice and spring equinox, a "cross-quarter" day called Imbolc (lambs' milk) when the Celts believed the boundary between this world and the spirit world became thin. Christians adapted these days to holier purposes, and so this is also called Candlemas Day when we consecrate to God's use the Chapel's candles, bringers of light. And, as St. Blaise Day is on February 3, we also have our throats blessed, a comforting ritual during these – hopefully – waning months of the pandemic.



Celebrating the Feast of St. Scholastica

Our celebrations have been a bit subdued during the pandemic. This year, our founding Saint apparently sent her white dove to welcome all to our Gathering Space. The blue represented flowing holy water, which during the pandemic and until this year's Easter Vigil, we had been unable to provide for blessings.

The details of the lives of Saints Benedict and Scholastica come to us though Pope Gregory I, who wrote of Saints Benedict and Scholastica in his *Dialogues* fifty years after their deaths. His account is not what we would call history; rather it is a spiritual portrait of the brother and sister. They had met one last time to speak of spiritual matters, and when dusk approached Benedict made ready to return to his monastery with his monks, according to the requirements of the Rule he had written. Scholastica begged him to remain and continue their conversation. When he refused, she prayed to God who sent a storm that kept him there the rest of the night.



When she died a few days later, her soul ascended to heaven as a dove. Her brother Benedict saw this and knew his sister had died.

Each year, Benedictine (formerly known as Benedictine Health System) commissions two new images for the feasts of St. Scholastica on February 10 and St. Benedict on July 11, which they print as holy cards for their colleagues, the Sisters, and the College of St. Scholastica. This year's artist is Brother Mickey McGrath, OSFS, whose work is full of color and the joy of the Holy Spirit.



© Brother Michael O'Neill McGrath, OSFS. Used with permission.

Mardi Gras Celebration

On Mardi Gras every year, the administrative staff of the Benedictine brings the Sisters joy with pizza and entertainment. This year, the *Triple J's for Jesus* (Sister Joan Marie Stelman, Jim Smith, and Rev. J. Scott Cartwright) led us in a sing-along. We were also honored to have Bishop Daniel Felton of the Duluth Diocese join us. Thank you to our friends at Benedictine for making our evening memorable.



Top Row:

Mardi Gras program;

Sister Beverly Raway, Bishop Daniel Felton, Sister Jeanne Ann Weber, and Sister Danile Lynch;

Sister Jeanne Ann Weber and Sister Katie Doyle are served pizza;

Bottom Row:

Sister Donna Schroeder;

Sisters Charity Nkwera (left) and Mary Susan Dewitt.



Highlights Continued

Lent, Holy Week, and Easter

Each year, Sister Theresa Spinler prepares a display using symbols taken out of the stories we encounter in this season: stones that are not turned into bread, jars that hold the water turned to wine at a wedding or the water the Samaritan woman gave to Jesus, the Cross that awaits us on Good Friday.



Lenten display



Father Tom Foster blessing palms

On Palm Sunday, Fr. Tom Foster blesses the palms and then reads the story of Jesus's triumphant entry into Jerusalem. In the Chapel, we hear the narrative of Jesus's gift of his own Body and Blood as Sacrament, his betrayal, arrest, trial, and finally his terrible death.

During the Triduum, silence reigns over the Monastery. On Holy Thursday the new holy oils are placed in their repository, accompanied by prayer and chanting. "For the oil that softens dryness, we give thanks, O Lord. ... Through our vowed monastic profession, anoint us to your service, Lord. ... In our ministries to the sick, may we pour out the healing oil of our love." This year Sisters Luella Wegscheid, Lisa Maurer, and Jayne Erickson (left to right) bore the oils to their resting place.



Placing of the Holy Oils

At the Mass of the Lord's Supper, we hear how Jesus demonstrated to his disciples – who had earlier sought the place of honor at Jesus' side – that whoever wants to follow him must become servants. "If I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you" (John 13:14-15). Fr. William Fider and Sister Beverly Raway followed Christ's example and washed the feet of four Sisters.

On Good Friday, we again listen to the narrative of Jesus, "a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity, ... pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins" (Isaiah 53:3,5). We bow low before the cross, acknowledging our un-repayable debt to God and our commitment to love one another, for "we love because God first loved us" (1 John 4:19).



Fr. Fider and Sr. Jeanne Ann Weber



Washing the feet of our Sisters

Highlights Continued

The Easter Vigil service begins in darkness, the spiritual darkness of life without God. Then Fr. Tom Foster lights the new fire outside the chapel doors.

From this fire he lights the Easter candle. Then Sister Beverly Raway, followed by the congregation, processes with it into the chapel. The light of Christ illuminates the darkness and multiplies from person to person in many small beeswax candles.

In this candlelight, Sister Jayne Erickson sings the Exultet, the haunting recounting of the story of salvation from the sin of Adam and Eve, through the Israelites' Exodus from slavery, to the Passover's fulfillment as Christ the Paschal Lamb breaks the power of Death.

"This is the night, when once you led our forebears, Israel's children, from slavery in Egypt and made them pass dry-shod through the Red Sea. ... This is the night, when Christ broke the prison-bars of death and rose victorious from the underworld. ... The sanctifying power of this night dispels wickedness, washes faults away, restores innocence to the fallen, and joy to mourners, drives out hatred, fosters concord, and brings down the mighty."

After his Homily, Fr. Tom blesses the new waters of Baptism, which are flowing for the first time since the pandemic began, thanks to some quick repair work by engineer Steve Carlson at the College. Alleluia!



Fr. Tom Foster lights the new fire



Sr. Beverly Raway processes in with Easter candle



Fr. Tom Foster blesses new waters while Sisters gather around Baptismal font



Sister Jayne Erickson sings the Exultet

Highlights Continued

Let's Listen Session with Bishop Daniel Felton

On March 9, the Sisters participated in a “Let’s Listen” session. These were held throughout the Diocese of Duluth in cooperation with Synod 2021-2023: *For a Synodal Church*, an initiative of Pope Francis. Bishop Daniel Felton seeks to better understand the spiritual needs of the people of northeastern Minnesota to help discern the next step in the Church’s mission.

The evening of shared listening began with an exegesis by Bishop Daniel of the story of the disciples walking the road to Emmaus with the unrecognized Risen Christ. Then Andrew Jarocki, Diocese of Duluth Contact Person for the Synodal Process, facilitated an open sharing of ideas from the Sisters.



Prioress Sister Beverly Raway speaks with Bishop Daniel Felton and Andrew Jarocki. In the foreground, Sisters Jeanne Ann Weber and Dorene King engage in conversation.

55 & Under group meets

Sister Lisa Maurer and Sister Gretchen Johnston participated in 55 & Under, a gathering of younger professed Benedictines from across the United States. This year’s gathering entitled “Embracing our Future with Joy” took place April 1–3, 2022 at Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, Indiana. The weekend was filled with prayer and community time along with presentations and discussion on what it means to live the Benedictine Charism today and into the future.

Sister Lisa commented, “I was energized by being with other Benedictines. I look forward to working with them to further the Benedictine Charism.”

Sister Gretchen attended virtually, and said, “I came away with a renewed commitment to getting to know other Sisters from all across the Benedictine world.”



Sister Maria Volk turns 90

Sister Maria Volk turned 90 years old on March 13 and celebrated with a party held on Benet Hall. Sister Maria joined the Sisters in 1950 and made her first monastic profession in 1951. She spent many years in teaching and pastoral work and later in retirement served as a leader and advocate for peace and justice with the organizations Pax Christi and CHUM.

Sister Maria celebrated her 70th Jubilee as a religious Sister in 2021, and her story can be found in last year’s Annual Report on our website under Newsletters.

Happy 90th, Sister Maria; may God bless and keep you!



Renovation Update

A photograph showing a large, open-sided wooden structure with a metal roof, situated in a snowy courtyard. The structure appears to be under construction or renovation, with debris and construction materials visible inside and around it. The ground is covered in snow, and brick buildings are visible in the background.

A photograph of a long, narrow corridor under construction. The walls are made of vertical metal studs, and the floor is concrete. A yellow caution tape is strung across the corridor. A red ladder is visible on the left side, and a workbench with tools is on the right.

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*Monarch on milkweed in the vegetable garden
Photo by Sister Therese Carson*

**“Time spent in the garden
can help us to sort out
the complexities of life
and can give us strength
to meet challenges.
Gardens provide quiet places
to reflect and to remind us
of simple joys ... The peace given
to us from a garden can quiet
our spirits and gives us hope.”**

~Becky Urbanski

*If you prefer an electronic copy of Pathways,
please email us at monastery@duluthosb.org.*