

PATHWAYS



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Pathways

NEWSLETTER

of the Benedictine Sisters

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Editorial Board:

Sister Beverly Raway, Prioress
Jan M. Barrett, Director
Sister Kathleen Hofer
Sister Lisa Maurer
Sister Therese Carson
Theresa Butler

Contributors:

Sisters of the Community

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by Sister Therese Carson

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St. Scholastica Monastery

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

Telephone: 218.723.6555

Fax: 218.723.5963

Visit our website:

www.duluthbenedictines.org

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Benedictine Monastery of
Duluth, MN

Twitter:

@ St.ScholasticaMonastery

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st.scholasticamonastery



Dear Friends of the Monastery,

Greetings from all the Sisters. As we move into Advent, our thoughts turn with gratitude to all of you who have supported us. We are especially thankful for your concern and prayers throughout the pandemic and during our recent move to temporary residence in Stanbrook Hall as we begin the renovation process of Stanbrook West. We can happily report all is going well on both fronts.



Most of you know that I am beginning my second term as Prioress. I accepted the invitation of my Sisters, counting on their prayers and yours. The first step in the discernment process for Prioress, following a period of prayer, is the development of direction statements which will guide the Community over the next four years. We agreed that our first internal priority was to renew our commitment and fidelity to monastic life, especially to our common prayer and common table.

The daily commitment to the Liturgy of the Hours is one of the central elements of Benedictine prayer life and spirituality. We are there at prayer, whether seen or unseen by the larger community around us as a manifestation of *ecclesia orans* the praying Church. Because this is so important, we held four discussion sessions during and following our Wednesday evening meal in September and October. We considered what our prayer life means to us personally and as a community, what distracts and what enhances our prayer, and what inspires us to keep coming to pray together daily.

We also wrestled with the time of morning prayer and opted in the end to move our prayer from 9:00 a.m., which we adopted during our lockdown period, back to 7:30 a.m. We agreed to this time as a commitment to begin our day with prayer with the rising of the sun and to be there before the Angelus rings to recollect ourselves. This is in keeping with the custom of *statio*, the practice of pausing in silence to be recollected before beginning prayer in order to be fully present, putting aside as much as we can the issues of the day.

We recognized, reflecting on our document on prayer called *Of Time Made Holy*, that what we do on behalf of the praying Church every day is not only a commitment, but a privilege. It is a nurturing time for each of us in our own spiritual growth as we chant or recite the psalms and absorb the message of the spiritual reflection and scriptures. It is a time to pray for your needs and all the needs of the world in our intercessions and a time to recognize our unity as the body of Christ. It is a time made holy, especially now as we reflect in the month of November on the communion of saints and those who have gone before us in faith.

As we turn our hearts to Advent and the beginning of a new liturgical year, upon which Sister Lois so beautifully reflects, we pray especially for good health for you, your families, your communities, and for our earth. The scriptures for the first Sunday invite us to “be watchful,” to “be alert,” to recognize our blessings and to live justly that the Lord might “meet us doing right,” mindful of God “in all our ways.” May it be so, and may your Advent be a time of new awakening to the gifts God so lovingly gives us when we ask in prayer.

Blessings and peace,

Sister Beverly

Sister Beverly Raway, OSB

“Behold, I Am Making All Things New.” ~ Revelation 21:5

by Sister Lois Eckes

As we continue our journey together as a global community through the prolonged darkness of COVID, my reflection for this issue of *Pathways* is permeated with soul stretching awarenesses and understandings that were not so intensely mine two years ago.

First of all, it is resoundingly clear to me and to countless others that we are all indeed a part of the cosmic web of life, and what we do to the Earth and one another we do to the whole of creation. Our Indigenous sisters and brothers have understood this for eons. The advent of the COVID virus and its emerging variants have brought this truth to light on a planetary level in ways that are both alarming and heartbreaking.

Secondly, the depth of my reverence for the Earth and the Indwelling of God within all creation continues to unfold and fill me with awe, gratitude, and persistent longing for the advent (coming) of a new birth; a new birth of living the truth that indeed we are all one Earth community, made in the image and likeness of God with an unequivocal responsibility to live that truth without compromise.

We are living in a precipitous moment of cosmic history manifest in countless ways, beginning with climate change and our collective and cumulative denial of its causes and consequences. The Celtic tradition, both ancient and Christian, experienced a profound mystical connection with nature and saw every creature as an appearance of the Divine. This sense of spiritual kinship with one another, this sense of profound respect for the earth and all its natural rhythms, is at the very heart of our living into the likeness of God, in whose image we are made.



On the threshold of this season of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, God’s promise proclaimed in the Book of Revelation reverberates palpably and relentlessly throughout our shared humanity and cosmic story. “I am making the whole of creation new...It will come true...It is already done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, both the Beginning and the End” (Revelation 21:5-6). “Christ is the fullness of God and in His fullness we and all creation share” (Colossians 2:9-10). He is in our midst making all things new. He is the deepest Center of all creation, coming to fullness within each of us with a love beyond all imagining, beyond all telling, birthing and embracing the entire cosmos imprinted with the Divine DNA.

Christ is the Transforming Light, gathering us as one beloved community into the Heart of God. May we listen with the ear of our hearts and embrace the Divine call to let God be born into fullness within us, making all things whole and new.



“We live in a world that responds to our longing;
it is a place where the echoes always return,
even if sometimes slowly.”

~ John O’Donohue, *Eternal Echoes*

What's The Difference?

by Sister Lisa Maurer

When discerning a vocation to religious life, beyond the initial and all important “yes” to God, there is discernment about what type of community to join. Often, people wonder about the differences in religious communities. Why are there Benedictines and Franciscans? What are the different types of religious communities? How are they different? These and other similar questions are good to ask.

In the Roman Catholic Church, religious orders and congregations, sometimes called institutes, are associations of men and women who dedicate their lives to prayer, service, and devotion. Religious communities differ in their flavor, feel, and attitude based on their foundation and focus. Most times it is obvious to understand. Their name gives it away. For example, the Dominicans follow the way of St. Dominic. The Franciscans follow in the way of St. Francis and we Benedictines follow the way of St. Benedict. This means our guiding principles are derived from *The Rule of St. Benedict*.

Religious communities also differ in their structure and focus, in other words, their charism. Active/Apostolic communities' emphasis is on direct ministry. These sisters may minister as teachers, nurses, administrators, or missionaries, and the list can go on and on. Cloistered/Contemplative refers to religious women who live in an enclosed space that is not accessible to external guests and who may not go outside the area without permission. These religious women do not engage in active ministries outside their enclosure. Their lives are devoted to prayer and meditation. And then, there is Monastic Life...Benedictine Monastic Life. Benedictines live a contemplative/active life, grounded in liturgical and personal prayer balanced by work, study, and leisure.

One distinction about Benedictine Monastic Life compared to other religious communities lies in the Monastic Profession. Benedictines are from the Order of Saint Benedict and that is why many times you will see OSB behind a Sister's name. Benedictines are a monastic religious order of the Catholic Church that follows *the Rule of St. Benedict*. Most people are accustomed to hearing that sisters take vows – the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Benedictines profess stability, fidelity to the monastic life, and obedience.

By the profession of Stability, a Benedictine commits herself to a particular monastery and the Sisters who make up that community. Not only does stability assume that one will remain faithful to her community, but it gives her the assurance that the community will remain faithful to her. This knowledge gives one the confidence and the safety needed to respond with a whole-hearted “yes” to unknown surprises and challenges.

The profession of Fidelity to the Monastic Life challenges a person to give themselves completely and unreservedly to the way of life prescribed in *the Rule of St. Benedict*. Striving to live a life of fidelity means to constantly look to imitate Christ in all things and in all matters of being. Fidelity to a monastic life is a daily commitment to the whole of the monastic experience, its challenges and its blessings. It is this commitment that includes a devotion to lives of poverty and celibacy, as these essential elements of a vowed consecrated life are lived in community.

Obedience is a promise to listen and respond to the Will of God. God's Will may be revealed in many ways: personal prayer, Sacred Scripture, *the Holy Rule of St. Benedict*, the Prioress, the community, the events of day-to-day life, and the needs of the local community. It is a deliberate commitment to forget oneself in order to work for the common good and fulfill the Will of God. According to Wikipedia there are 100 Benedictine houses across America which consist mostly of monasteries, and in 2020 there were approximately 6,800 members (3,381 Sisters and 3,419 priests).

Religious life, in its diverse expressions, is a gift from God. Whether active or contemplative, Franciscan or Benedictine, religious life makes a difference in the world. Do you want to be a part of that difference?

If you or someone you know wants more information about a Benedictine Monastic Life, email Sister Lisa at vocations@duluthosb.org or visit www.duluthbenedictines.org/vocations



First Monastic Profession of Sister Jayne Erickson

by Sister Therese Carson

Sister Jayne Erickson made her First Monastic Profession on Friday, September 17, at Evening Prayer in Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel.

Sister Jayne has been connected to the Duluth Community for many years. She grew up in Cloquet where she was active in a teen Catholic youth group. There she met +Sister Barbara Higgins, and this initial encounter blossomed into a lifelong friendship. She earned a degree in youth ministry at The College of St. Scholastica and in education at the University of Northern Iowa, and served young people in Minnesota and Iowa as youth minister, children's minister, and elementary school teacher.

Jayne retired early and came home to Cloquet, where a friend piqued her interest in the Benedictine associate program in Duluth. She inquired and became a live-in volunteer in December 2017. In December of 2019, she entered the Community as a postulant and then in September of 2020 began her novitiate year. She jokes that, because of the pandemic, we all joined her in her year of physical isolation from the world.

Monastic promises are made to a prioress and a community; thus, the Rite of First Monastic Profession was presided over by Prioress Sister Beverly Raway. Sister Jayne's witnesses were Sister Theresa Spinler and Sister Jeanne Ann Weber. Her novitiate director was Sister Donna Schroeder, who will be guiding her until Perpetual Profession.

Her First Monastic Profession will last three to six years, a time of fuller immersion in the Benedictine way of life. Sister Jayne will deepen spiritually, study the Rule of St. Benedict and monasticism, and become more fully integrated into the Community



Clockwise from upper left: Procession into Chapel, with Sister Gretchen Johnston leading with the Paschal candle, followed by Sisters Donna Schroeder, Jayne Erickson, Jeanne Ann Weber, Theresa Spinler, and Beverly Raway.

Benedictine Cross and pin of First Profession.

Sister Jayne Erickson reads her vows to Prioress Beverly Raway and to the Community, flanked by witnesses Sisters Jeanne Ann Weber and Theresa Spinler.

From left: Sisters Theresa Spinler, Donna Schroeder, Jayne Erickson, Beverly Raway, and Jeanne Ann Weber.

Sister Profile – Sister Agnes Atai Ongodia

by Theresa Butler, Development Administrative Assistant theresabutler@duluthosb.org

We have had a new face at the Monastery. Her name is Sister Agnes Atai Ongodia and she is an IHMR (Immaculate Heart of Mary Reparatrix) Sister from Ggogonya, Uganda. Sister Agnes came in May to live at the Monastery and participate in prayer and community life with the Sisters while she attends The College of Saint Scholastica (CSS), working to complete her Bachelor's degree in nursing.

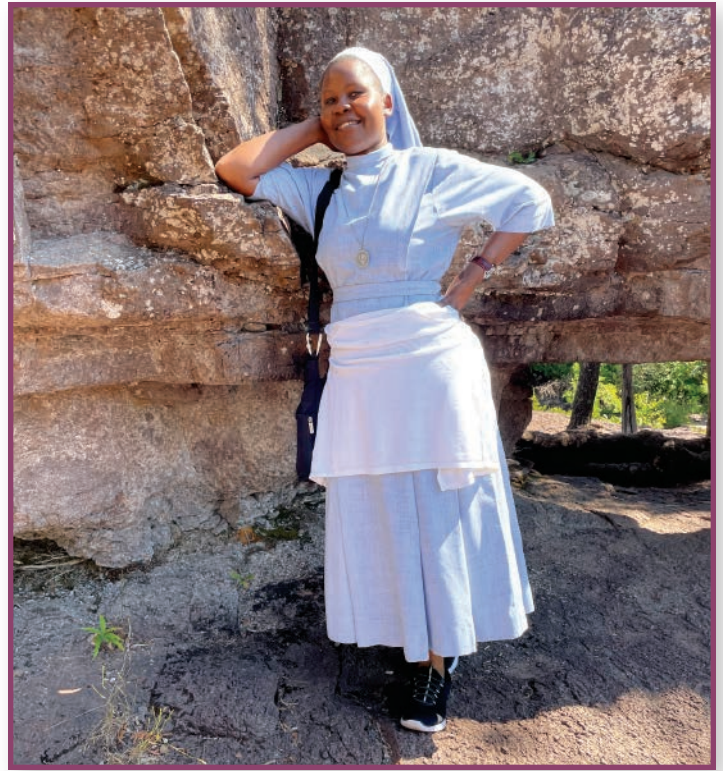
Agnes was born into a Catholic family, the second oldest of nine children. Her family and church community helped instill in her the Catholic faith, which she continues to treasure today. Her family's prayer life included the rosary, which was especially treasured by her mother, who held deep faith in the rosary helping them overcome problems.

Agnes' family was active in their parish and their pastor visited them often. She also witnessed Sisters of an active religious order, who worked at a nearby school and attended her parish. One of these Sisters she called "Grandma" and was her first inspiration for becoming a Sister. One of the things that attracted Agnes to the Sisters as a child was their white habits, a sign of purity and grace.

Sadly, Agnes' mother and father both died when their children were young and so they were partly raised by her aunt. Her father died before she joined a religious Community and her mother while she was a candidate.

After Agnes graduated from high school at age 16, she went to live with her cousin; there she was first introduced to her religious Community. While at church, Agnes would see IHMR Sisters praying and she began to watch them and was interested in learning more. One day a Sister approached Agnes and asked if she had ever considered becoming a Sister. This began a relationship between Agnes and the IHMR Sisters that grew as she shared her story and got to know them. Along with talking to the vocation director and other Sisters, Agnes was also encouraged to talk to her priest about pursuing a religious vocation.

When Agnes initially shared with her cousin her interest in religious life, the cousin was not supportive, feeling that Agnes needed to focus more on her studies and help take care of her younger brothers and sisters. The Sisters then suggested that Agnes talk to her aunt who had helped raise her and she gave Agnes her full support to become a Sister.



Sister Agnes Atai Ongodia at Gooseberry Falls

She said, "If God is calling her to religious life, she will join. If she is not being called, she will come home and pursue something else."

After receiving her aunt's blessing, Agnes decided to give religious life a try. In 2005 she went to a "Come and See" weekend and then lived with the IHMR Sisters for one year. A few months after that year ended, Agnes applied to join the Community. In 2010 she took her first vows and in 2017 her final vows, becoming Sister Agnes. She is one of over 300 Sisters in her Community.

Sometime after she was a fully professed Sister, she was helping with one of her Community's farms when her Mother Superior asked her to begin the process of getting her passport. She did not know at that time where she would be called to go but was open to the Spirit. She later was asked to go to the United States and begin studies at Assumption College for Sisters in New Jersey. Her dream of coming to the United States came true in 2018 when she came on a 24-hour flight to New York before finishing her journey to New Jersey. She studied at Assumption College for three years and completed her associate degree in nursing. In May of 2021 she came to Duluth to begin studies at The College of St. Scholastica.

Sister Agnes has recognized many cultural differences between Uganda and the United States. At the church that she attended in New Jersey, it was common for parishioners to talk loudly in church until the priest entered to celebrate Mass. When people enter church in Uganda, they are quiet and reverent. Overall, she noted that there is more socialization among Ugandans than among Americans. She said that in her country more people are outside during the day and conversing with one another and kids are outside playing. Here she saw that people are more focused on completing their tasks independently.

The differences in food between the United States and Uganda are also notable. In her country, two of the food staples are matoke (cooking bananas) and posho, which is made with maize flour and commonly eaten with beans. Here, Sister Agnes' favorite foods are french fries, rice, and chicken. Experiencing these differences have helped her adjust to the culture of the United States.

Sister Agnes is grateful for the blessing of a full scholarship to attend college and for the Sisters inviting her to stay with them. She says that just being here is a blessing.

When she completes her studies and returns to her Community in Uganda, she hopes to help the elders in both her religious community and the outside community. She strives to show love to all as a nurse. Ugandan hospitals prioritize care for the wealthy over the poor and this injustice saddens her. She wants to be a nurse who helps all people.

Her Community's mission is to "surrender ourselves daily to Christ so that He uses us as He wills. We are called to leave our comfort zones to open our hearts to Him so that we can participate in His mission of bringing Good News to the poor. His poor must regain their dignity through our consecration."

Sister Agnes' own values and goals support our Community's vision statement: "...We will minister to the body, mind, and spirit of those we encounter, especially the poor and the powerless."

She is a perfect fit for our Community and we are blessed to have her with us.



Sister Charity Nkwera (left) and Sister Agnes Atai Ongodia enjoyed a trip to Gooseberry Falls and the Superior lakeshore before classes began this fall. They come to us from different countries (Tanzania versus Uganda), but both share preferences in food. Each week they prepare vegetarian meals to have when classwork prevents them from sharing in our common table.

Sister Agnes' home lies on the northern shore of Lake Victoria; the largest lake in Africa, it lies on the border of Uganda and Tanzania.



Sisters Beverly Horn and Sarah Smedman celebrate their 90th birthdays

Sisters Beverly Horn and Sarah Smedman both turned 90 this summer, Sister Beverly on June 16 and Sister Sarah on June 18.

We honored Sister Sarah with a party on June 17, during a brief hiatus in mask requirements. She has led a full and interesting life, earning a Ph.D. in English from Indiana University and teaching English for 47 years at The College of St. Scholastica, The University of North Carolina in Charlotte, and lastly at Minnesota State University in Moorhead. She specialized in children's literature and over the years amassed an extensive collection of first-edition books.

The party on June 17 was intended to honor both Sister Sarah and Sister Beverly Horn but, because of an unexpected conflict, Sister Beverly was unable to attend. Instead, she celebrated on July 11, the Feast of St. Benedict, at a dinner that also honored the outgoing leadership team who have served the Community for six years. Sister Beverly Horn had served as Subprioress and began a sabbatical in which she plans to finish research papers that have been on hold for a while.

Sister Beverly holds advanced degrees in nursing and a Ph.D. as Nurse-Scientist, with studies in anthropology as a related field. She is a founding member of the Transcultural Nursing Society. Her research on the influence of culture on health and health outcomes has transformed the practice of health care for members of religious and ethnic groups in America. For more information on her career, see the article in the Advent 2020 issue of *Pathways*, which can be read on our website.

We are blessed to have two such amazing women in our Community.



Above: Sisters Kathleen Doyle, Clare Marie Trettel, Kathleen Hofer, Theresa Jodocy, Sarah Smedman, and Grace Marie Braun



At right: Sister Beverly Raway and Sister Sarah Smedman share a moment at the microphone during the party.



Above: Sister Beverly Horn celebrates her 90th birthday.



At left: Sisters Claudia Cherro, Beverly Raway (Prioress), Beverly Horn (former Subprioress), and Danile Lynch, Treasurer.

Oblate Candidates: The Formation Process

by Sister Pauline Micke, OSB, Oblate Co-Director pauline.m@duluthosb.org

On October 21, we held a long-overdue Oblation Ceremony for the men and women who have been journeying to become Benedictine oblates of St. Scholastica Monastery. Being an oblate is a vocation in itself. Oblates form a faith-based community to study and ponder *The Rule of St. Benedict*. With its emphasis on prayer, silence, obedience, building community, and humility, the Rule guides them as they live and work in their parishes or churches, families, workplaces, and the world. Oblates affiliate with a particular Benedictine monastery, which becomes their monastic “home base” forever, unless they transfer their oblation to a closer monastery after moving. On October 21, Rosemary Brewer transferred to our oblate community.

After an Inquiry Stage to explore what it means to become an oblate, a person becomes a candidate in a Rite of Enrollment and enters a period of discernment to learn about and grow into the oblate way of life. Mark Hakes and Thom Chartier are our new candidates. They will study *The Rule of St. Benedict* and learn about Benedictine spirituality and practices as they are lived in the 21st century. This is not just academic learning; rather, they will read, reflect, talk with oblates and Sisters, and listen in prayer for God’s call in her or his life.

For one to two years, they will attend oblate meetings regularly, study more deeply the Benedictine life, and make connections with the Oblate Community and the Monastery. This is an initial grounding in Benedictine spirituality and gives a basis for discerning the desire and readiness to commit to the path of Benedictine spirituality and way of life as an oblate.

When they are ready, they will make formal commitments to prayer, living the Rule daily, *lectio divina*, and being active in the oblate community. At the ceremony, we welcomed Sharon Rolle, Michelle Naar-Obed, and Christine Ketelsen as oblates.



Sisters Beverly Raway and Pauline Micke listen as Mark Hakes and Thom Chartier express their desire to become Candidates.



Sister Beverly Raway accepts the transfer of Rosemary Brewer to our Oblate community.



New Oblates Sharon Rolle, Michelle Naar-Obed, and Christine Ketelsen make their final oblation.

From left: Thom Chartier, Sr. Pauline Micke (Oblate Co-Director), Chris Ketelsen, Rosemary Brewer, Mark Hakes, Sr. Beverly Raway, Michelle Naar-Obed, Jane Dolter (Oblate Co-Director), and Sharon Rolle.

The Sisters Embrace a Renovation for Their Future Monastic Home

by Jan M. Barrett, Director of Development and Public Relations janbarrett@duluthosb.org

In August 2020, the Sisters agreed to move forward with their vision for future monastic housing by renovating Stanbrook West as their new home. After careful consideration of their ministries and ministry partners, the decision was made to keep their home at the heart of campus.

Stanbrook West is at the back of the Monastery, facing Saint's Field and the Sisters' cemetery up the hill. The renovation includes a small addition and when completed will meet the needs and be the home for all the Sisters, including those on Benet Hall, with space for the needs of the Monastery staff. In light of stewardship, sustainability, and the desire for continued connection to The College of St. Scholastica (CSS) and the Benedictine Living Community of Duluth (BLCD), they chose this over building a new Monastery.

This decision will right-size the Sisters' living quarters, reduce their footprint, and accommodate their ministries. Sustainable design practices that are environmentally responsible will be used, including high efficiency heating and cooling systems, low-consumption water fixtures, high-efficiency site lighting, and sustainable building materials with a high-recycle content.

We have also affirmed a vision to allocate space in Stanbrook Hall for the Center for Spirituality and Enrichment and for our ministry partners. We are collaborating with our ministry partners – CSS, BLCD and Benedictine – regarding the future use of space and ways the Sisters can continue to collaborate, support and grow their ministry partners.

The first step of the renovation project was to move the Sisters from Stanbrook West to guest rooms and offices in Stanbrook Hall. Monastery environmental services director Lisa Askelson and her team oversaw the relocation, beginning in April 2021 with an intended completion date of August 31. Lisa Askelson says, "It took a lot of P.R.A.Y.E.R.S. – Prayers, Rearranging, Attentiveness, Year Long Work, Exhausting, Reassuring....and finally Success!" This involved more work than she ever thought because of the accumulation of Sisters' belongings from many years. "However, I now know that this was something the Sisters truly needed."



HGA architects presenting plans and processes



McGough Construction transforms our back lawn to become the new approach to the Monastery.



Lisa Askelson (Monastery Facilities Director) and Christine Etchison (Monastery Environmental Services Manager) kept us on schedule and calmed our fears.

Once the relocation phase was complete, the Sisters, their staff, and construction company representatives gathered for a renovation blessing construction on September 7.

Prioress Sister Beverly Raway asks for everyone's prayers and patience during this endeavor, as she eagerly awaits and looks forward to early 2023 when the project is slated for completion. She shares that leaving her room during the relocation felt like a "life in review" because of the memories evoked by the precious treasures found while packing and organizing. "It has been bittersweet remembering and then giving away. We've had to be patient with one another and ourselves during this time, because it has been an emotional process."

Sister Therese Carson recalls, "I was the first to move to fourth floor Stanbrook because I needed to be settled before shoulder surgery last May. The first days were lonely, waiting for others to move. I miss watching wildlife up close from my window – squirrels and birds, with an occasional deer or bear – and look forward to moving back into the renovated building."

Sister Luella Wegscheid says, "The renovation is long overdue and I'm glad we made the decision to proceed with this project. It's way past time to look at reconfiguring the space we have and are going into. I'm very excited. Sister Lisa Maurer has been good about providing updates and pictures of how the construction process is going. She's been instrumental in this project, and I appreciate the updates from her. For me, relocating was easier than I thought it would be. I think it's all about one's attitude. If you are positive and think it's going to go well then it will."



Sister Beverly Raway leads the Sisters, staff, and construction team in a blessing of the construction site.



Sister Beverly Raway blesses a bedroom in Stanbrook.



After down-sizing, Sister Josine Krausnick passes on some treasured shells to Sister Therese Carson.



Sister Beverly Raway blesses Sister Luella Wegscheid and her room; Sister Jeanne Ann Weber holds the Holy Water.

Sister Lisa Maurer, chair of the Building Committee, has been immersed in the project and states, “This is a monumental undertaking! Each day I look out the window and say wow, this is really happening! I am grateful for our staff, the architects, designers, contractors, laborers, and my fellow Sisters for their grace, patience, and guidance. Surely, there have been some stressful times because we are human and change means letting go of how we know ourselves and our memories while embracing the unknown. This is when I thank Jesus for his love. He has given us the strength to take on this project so that we can look to the future.”

Sister Kathleen Hofer was on the committee for building Stanbrook West more than 30 years ago. She feels that it worked for 30 years but now, with smaller numbers of Sisters, there is no longer a need for so many bedrooms. “With stewardship at the forefront we have much more space than we need, so it makes sense to renovate Stanbrook West for our Monastic home, which will include offices, bedrooms, and Benet Hall. I feel good about this decision because we will be more like a true Monastery building. I also like that we will have our own kitchen, and another big plus on the safety spectrum is that we will have sprinklers.” She adds with a smile, “I am also pleased that our Chapel will remain the same and we will have access through an enclosed walkway.”

Discussing her relocation to less space in Stanbrook Hall, Sister Kathleen shares, “It is a pain! I am sorting through years of boxes from 32 years of working in health care. When I left St. Mary’s Medical Center, I put things in boxes and stored them in an extra room because we had the space. I didn’t feel any pressure to sort through them until now. Moving my personal things was relatively easy but going through the boxes of my past in healthcare is overwhelming.”

As we encounter each phase of this renovation project, our final destination feels especially appropriate as we continue to honor Mother Scholastica Kerst’s dream from so many years ago:

“My dream is that someday there will rise upon these grounds a fine building, like the great Benedictine abbeys of Europe. It will be built of stone; within its walls, higher education will flourish; the Divine Office will be chanted, and the beautiful ceremonies of the liturgy will be carried out.”



Sister Lisa Maurer on her moving day



Sister Kathleen Hofer with her boxes of old records from her years in healthcare.



Architectural rendering of future monastic home

A Lasting Friendship Across Campus

by Sam Burns, alumnus of The College of St. Scholastica

When I was attending The College of St. Scholastica, I signed up for the Benedictine Friends program, not knowing just what I was getting myself into! Before I joined, I had a typical college experience – I was seeking a healthy balance between classes, work, friends, and my physical health, all while trying to discover my *raison d'être*, a deeper sense of spirituality, and myself. I was interested in knowing a bit more about the history and heritage of our college and what made our campus Benedictine, so when a friend suggested I join this program, I didn't hesitate.

At the inaugural Benedictine Friends meeting, I was paired with Sister Barbara Higgins, OSB. We introduced ourselves over some ice cream, got a peek into each other's lives, and there began a friendship I would never have imagined making during my years at CSS. Soon, we started meeting independently of the program; we'd share meals, pray the Divine Office with the community, or just make time together to sit and chat about God, life, our favorite books, our struggles and hopes, and those little 'blessed moments' we found in each ordinary day.

Following graduation, Sister Barb and I stayed in touch and continued to support one another in prayer and in friendship. Though we couldn't visit as much after I left Duluth, and seeing her face-to-face became impossible through the global health crisis, her presence in my life never dwindled. She asked me for monthly updates on my life and I always looked forward to hearing back from her, usually with news about the Monastery, her Sisters, and her insightful and hopeful commentary on the state of the world.



In retrospect, I can distinctly see the extent to which Benedictine Friends impacted my life. I was unaware at the time, but it was perhaps the greatest cross-cultural, intergenerational experience of my college years, and it produced fruit for years after graduation. Sister Barb opened my eyes to Benedictine spirituality and a way of being which invigorated my Catholic identity. She was an instrument for community-building and seeking the flourishing of God's children, and I aim to follow her lead. Her examples of selfless love and trust in our Lord will stay with me for life. Sister Barb, thank you for helping me grow. May you rest in peace. And I promise, as you always told me, to "stay in touch with The Source and pursue peace."

New grad Sam Burns, with his mother Carolyn Burns and +Sister Barbara Higgins

Greetings from the Center for Spirituality and Enrichment!

by Dawn Carrillo, Director

At this writing, the beauty of October is fully upon us with its brilliant sun, crisp mornings, and the ever-changing, dazzling palette of colors in the natural world around us. The quiet months of winter loom, as summer and fall take a step back to let winter and her regenerative life stretch out her arms and enfold us. There is comfort in this repetitive cycle, but our emotions can be affected, too, as we watch leaves fall and plants go into dormancy for the coming months. I used to think of fall as more of a slow death process, which left me feeling sad, dreading the time until the first breath of spring. I have now come to understand it as a time of deep slumber, a “making way” for the energies of summer and fall to rest and to give birth to new life.

Here at the Center for Spirituality and Enrichment, we have been challenged to “make way” for changed circumstances, too. The renovation of the private living quarters for the Sisters will make way for new life and vitality in this wonderful community of women while, at the same time, we miss welcoming overnight guests to the Monastery during the renovation project. And the pandemic continues to affect all of us, making in-person events difficult to impossible and allowing only limited guests at McCabe; yet, it has also given the opportunity to make way for all sorts of creative learnings and new offerings. Change, says theologian Ilia Delio, OSF, is the only constant.



In the midst of these changes and challenges, we at the Center continue our varied and exciting online programming, accessible to anyone who can click on a link in an email! We have multiple ongoing offerings, plus some special seasonal ones. We invite you to join us in any or all of the following enrichment opportunities:

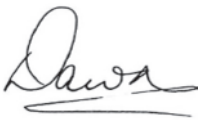
- **Benedictine Conversations:** monthly, informal conversations with a guest interviewee each time
- **Visio Divina prayer sessions:** monthly
- **“The Spirituality of Imperfection”:** an Advent retreat with Dr. Victor Klimoski on December 4.
- **“The Advent Call: Nurturing Hope”:** an Advent mini-retreat on December 9, the first of four mini-retreats created and facilitated by the Feminist Theologies Committee of St. Scholastica Monastery for the 2021-2022 year
- **“The Gift of Dreams”:** a presentation with Val Beale on January 10, 2022.
- **Feminist Theologies Mid-Winter Retreat:** Offered on February 3, this will be the second of four mini-retreats created and facilitated by the Feminist Theologies Committee of St. Scholastica Monastery for the 2021-2022 year. The full list of dates:
 - Thursday, December 9, 2021
 - Thursday, February 3, 2022
 - Thursday, April 7, 2022
 - Thursday, May 26, 2022
- **“Wisdom for Today”:** a Lenten retreat with Dr. Gary Boelhower on March 5, 2022.
- **Christophany Reflection Group:** formerly known as Omega Reflection Group, held twice a month with reflection on the writings of theologian Ilia Delio.

- **Soul Collage Circle:** held monthly with introductory sessions as requested
- **Centering Prayer groups:** ongoing online prayer groups.
- **Center for Spirituality and Enrichment blog:** monthly on various topics.
- **Spiritual Direction ministry:** open to anyone who would like to have a companion walk with them on their spiritual journey.
- **Outreach programming:** programming we create and facilitate for outside groups, organizations, parishes, and dioceses.

Our Benedictine Conversations (noted in the above list), which resumed in September after a summer hiatus, has been a wonderful series for us since we moved to online programming. Each month we have thoughtful, insightful guests who inspire us to live out our Benedictine values in everyday life. All of these Conversations can be found on our retreat website (retreatduluth.org), and if you missed any in the series, we also have an Archive page (retreatduluth.org/benedictine-conversations-archive)!

Due to our circumstances with the renovation and the ongoing uncertainty of the pandemic, we are continuing to plan for Zoom events. We hope to be onsite soon, offering “hybrid” programming to keep up our connections with all those who do not live in the Duluth area or who are homebound in any way. We are deeply grateful to each of you who have participated in and supported us on this journey; you remain our inspiration and our joy in this ministry!

In the peace of Christ,



Dawn Carrillo,
Director of the 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 more about these ongoing and upcoming events and offerings. We have something for just about everyone! Settle into winter with one of our offerings and make way for new life.

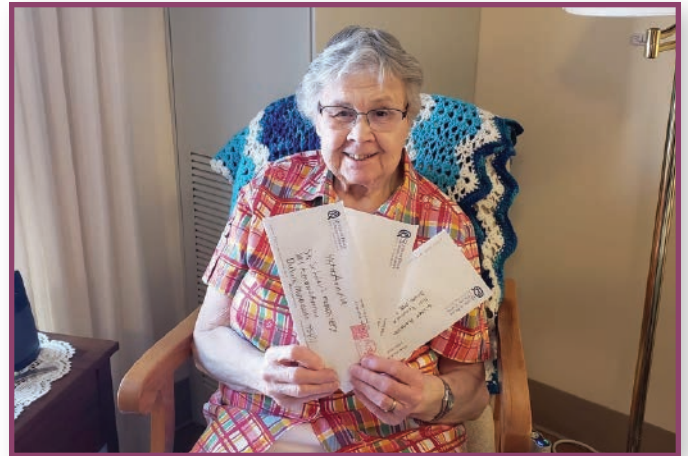


Highlights

Catholic Schools Week

During their celebration of Catholic Schools Week, the first week of February, students from Queen of Peace School in Cloquet wrote letters to the Sisters. We have a long history with this parish and school, as our Community founded the school in 1912, and many of the students in turn were inspired by their sound Catholic education to join us.

Sister Annella Wagner happily shows off her correspondence.



Mittens for the Homeless

Last January, a Maple Grove, Minnesota organization called Warm Hands Green Heart donated 41 handmade mittens to the Monastery. Made from refurbished fabric, especially flannel shirts and hockey socks, the mittens are sold in regional specialty shops. Sisters Lois Eckes and Theresa Spinler delivered the mittens to local shelters just in time for the arctic cold.

If you are interested in learning more about these mittens, visit: <https://www.warmhandsgreenheart.com/>.



Sisters attend Vespers and Installation of Bishop

After nearly a year and a half without a bishop, following the death of Bishop Paul Sirba in December 2019, the Very Reverend Daniel Felton of the Diocese of Green Bay was installed as the tenth bishop of the Diocese of Duluth on May 20. Seating was limited, and some Sisters attended the previous evening's Vespers and the installation, while the rest of the Community watched via an internet feed.

*Sisters Pauline Micke,
Kathleen Hofer, Danile Lynch,
Beverly Raway, Kathleen Del Monte,
and Clare Marie Trettel*



Gardens and Gardeners

When Mother Scholastica Kerst purchased farmland on high grounds along Kenwood Avenue, she no doubt envisioned a working farm to feed Sisters and students of Villa Sancta Scholastica Academy, and for a long while the land was used as a farm, but times have changed. The lower elevations were excavated for buildings as our ministries expanded, and vegetables are now confined to a fenced garden at the bottom of the hillside along Chester Creek and two new raised beds in the Garden Court. The term 'garden' now speaks of flower beds, forests, and prairies, created and maintained through the hard work of Sisters and volunteers.



Volunteers + Corinne Hood, Linda Senta, and Kathy Noble care for a bed by the College soccer field.



From left: Sister Theresa Spinler cares for our 'grounds', including the Garden Court. Sister Dorene King helped maintain various gardens. Sister Elizabeth Farias grew a nice crop of peas, carrots, and greens in new raised beds in the Garden Court; her prize was a carrot 36 inches from frond top to root tip.



Left: Sister Josephine Krulc removes buckthorn stumps. Thanks to her and Sister Therese Carson's labor, this invasive tree is slowly being brought under control in our woodland, one tree at a time. Below: Thousands of plants of all sizes were removed from the cemetery and the stumps pulled to prevent re-sprouting.



Celebrating the Feast of St. Charles Lwanga

On June 3, we helped Sister Agnes Atai Ongodia feel at home by celebrating the Feast of St. Charles Lwanga, Patron Saint of Uganda, with traditional fabrics and musical instruments.

From left: Sisters Beverly Raway, Agnes Atai Ongodia, Jeanne Ann Weber, Charity Nkwera, and Dorene King



Then, on July 12, Sister Elizabeth Nakku from her Community came for a visit. Sister Agnes Atai is studying Nursing at The College of St. Scholastica. Read her story on pages 6 and 7.

From left: Sisters Charity Nkwera, Beverly Raway, Elizabeth Nakku, and Agnes Atai Ongodia



Direction setting, Election of Prioress, and Celebration

For four days in early June, we discerned the direction for our future and wrote our direction statements to guide decisions for the next six years, and then re-elected a Prioress, choosing Sister Beverly Raway for a four-year term. In this we were guided by facilitators Sister Jennifer Mechtilde Horner and Sister Joella Kidwell. Sister Kerry O'Reilly, President of the Federation of St. Benedict, was present as observer.



Left: Sister Jennifer Mechtilde Horner of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, Indiana (election facilitator), Sister Kerry O'Reilly of St. Benedict's Monastery in St. Joseph, Minnesota (President of the Federation of St. Benedict), Sister Beverly Raway, and Sister Joella Kidwell of Immaculate Conception Monastery in Ferdinand, Indiana (election facilitator)



Right: We celebrated with dinner and dancing. Clockwise from Sister in habit: Agnes Atai Ongodia, Jennifer Mechtilde Horner, Beverly Raway, Jeanne Ann Weber, Jayne Erickson, Dorene King, Elizabeth Farias, Charity Nkwera, and Gretchen Johnston.

Celebrating Independence Day

The Fourth of July has been low-key the last two years, without fireworks or trips to waterfalls on the North Shore. This year we celebrated the summery weather with Dilly Bar ice cream treats from a thoughtful donor.

From left: Sisters Jeanne Ann Weber, Luella Wegscheid, Pauline Micke, Danile Lynch, and Donna Schroeder in the Garden Court.



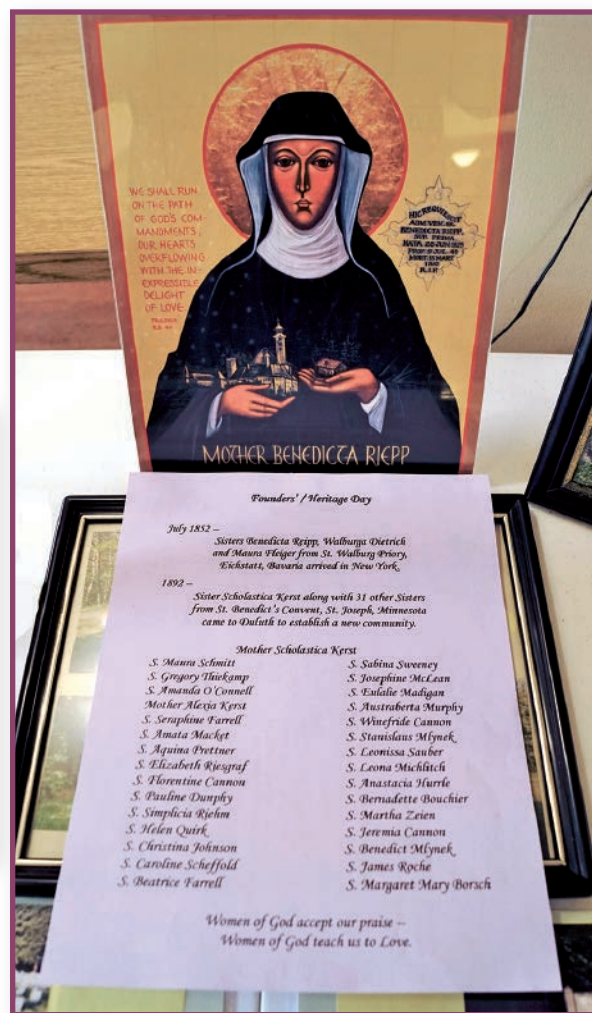
Heritage Day

July 22 is the anniversary of the founding of St. Scholastica Priory (now Monastery) in 1892. Each year we remember the 32 women who came to what was a frontier town to found a hospital and elementary schools for its Catholic families. In the remembrance rite, held each year on Benet Hall, we take turns reciting the names of the first Sisters, occasionally stumbling over an obscure German name, but holding them in reverence for what they accomplished against great odds.



Above: Sister Beverly Horn leads the ceremony.

Right: Icon of Mother Benedicta Riepp, who founded the first Benedictine Community for women in America, at St. Marys, Pennsylvania in 1852, and the list of the first 32 Sisters in the new foundation in Duluth.



Commissioning Day with Bishop Daniel Felton

Every year on Commissioning Day, the Prioress presents each Sister with her ministries for the next year. In turn, the Community blesses her. This year we welcomed Bishop Daniel Felton to the Monastery for his first visit. The rite began with a Call to Ministry by the Prioress and a reading from Proverbs: “My child, if you accept my words and treasure my commandments within you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; if you indeed cry out for insight, and raise your voice for understanding; if you seek it like silver, and search for it as for hidden treasures — then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.”



The Sisters are commissioned and anointed with holy water. We then bless the Prioress in turn, singing, “Abide in peace ... May the right hand of God’s providence protect you now and forever.”

New Monastery Leadership

As she begins a new term, the Prioress has assembled a fresh leadership staff, including an experienced and able laywoman.



For the next four years, the Community will be led by (from left) Sister Jeanne Ann Weber, Subprioress; Sister Danile Lynch, Treasurer; Sister Beverly Raway, Prioress; with the assistance of Amber Terch, Executive Administrative Assistant.

Three Sisters celebrate their Diamond Jubilees of Monastic Profession

The Community celebrated the diamond anniversary of monastic profession for three Sisters on the weekend of the Assumption of Mary: Sister Maria Volk, 70 years; Sister Claudia Cherro, 60 years; and Sister Theresa Spinler, 60 years.

On August 14 at Evening Prayer, Sister Claudia Cherro and Sister Theresa Spinler renewed their vows in chapel before the Community. Together they sang the *Suscipe* three times, a declaration of trust, each time on a higher note: "Receive me, O Lord, according to Your word and I shall live, and do not fail me in my hope," and the Community responded, "We have received, O Lord, Your mercy in the midst of Your temple."

Both had written by hand the vow formula that promised stability, fidelity to the monastic way of life, and obedience: the foundations of Benedictine community life. The more familiar promises of poverty and chastity are part of fidelity to monastic life. Together Sisters Theresa and Claudia read their vows and placed them on the altar and signed them. Prioress Beverly Raway countersigned, accepting their promises in the name of God.



2021 Jubilarians (left to right) Sisters Claudia Cherro, Theresa Spinler, and Maria Volk, with Prioress Beverly Raway



Three lamps on the altar symbolize their life in the Spirit.



*Top: Sisters Theresa Spinler and Claudia Cherro pray the *Suscipe*. Bottom: On Sunday afternoon, Sister Maria Volk renewed her vows in a separate ceremony on Benet Hall.*

Please Pray for Our Deceased Family and Friends

Dr. Elizabeth Brochman	2/6/2020	Carl A. Sjodin	7/12/2021
Mary McKenna Dwan	6/28/2020	Marjorie Bowin	7/17/2021
Dianne Pauser	9/2/2020	Evonne Marie Schlichting	7/24/2021
Alice L. Stack	11/26/2020	Dr. Raymond Curtis Flaa	7/28/2021
John Dennis Molstad	3/5/2021	Lloyd J. Shun	8/10/2021
Richard Ahlstrom	3/17/2021	(brother-in-law of +Sister Barbara Ann Vierzba)	
Marie C. Sweeney	4/21/2021	Mary Jill Dupont	8/16/2021
Mary Kathryn Lanigan	4/30/2021	Richard Coathup	8/17/2021
Dorothy B. O'Meara	5/9/2021	Barbara Jane Coffin	8/21/2021
Donald W. Rubertus	5/11/2021	Raymond John Kriskey	8/21/2021
Nancy Cooper	5/14/2021	Nancy H. Claypool	8/23/2021
(former Sister)		William Meisner	9/1/2021
Arnold Richter	5/22/2021	Margie Tarnowski	9/16/2021
(brother-in-law of Sister Luella Wegscheid)		(sister of +Sister Eustacia Tarnowski)	
Dorothy Jean Gagne	5/26/2021	Corinne Hood	9/17/2021
(sister-in-law of Sister Melanie Gagne)		George Joseph Shambour	9/19/2021
Lillian C. Horvath	5/27/2021	(brother of +Sister Mary Catherine Shambour)	
Mary Ellen Thurman	5/31/2021	Alice Marie Mottillo	9/20/2021
(former Sister)		Ellen M. Pazdernik	9/26/2021
Betty Jean Contardo	6/4/2021	Robert J. Boisjoli	9/27/2021
LeAnn House	6/11/2021	Lynne Marie Johnston	9/28/2021
Muriel Olsen Lundgren	6/22/2021	Patricia Riley	9/29/2021
Frederick A. Olsen	6/24/2021	Dr. Jeffery Allen Higgins	10/2/2021
Sister Monica Raway, OSB	6/25/2021	(nephew of +Sisters Barbara and +Mary Rae Higgins)	
(cousin of Sister Beverly Raway)		Patricia Maher Vidmar	10/8/2021
Ralph E. Hedman	6/25/2021	(sister of Sister Johnetta Maher)	
Edna Mae Perich	6/27/2021	Deacon Frederick C. Wright	10/10/2021
Mary McKenna Dwan	6/28/2021	Carl M. Burggraff	10/17/2021
John A. Kroening	6/30/2021	Cap't. Thomas H. MacKay	11/4/2021
(brother of Sister Mary Christa Kroening)		JoAnn O'Brien	11/9/2021
Ron Skudlarek	6/30/2021	(sister of Sister Pauline Micke)	
(brother-in-law of Sister Martha Bechtold)		James Mayry	11/9/2021

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me even though he dies, will live."

~John 11:25

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

Address Service Requested



*First Vespers of Advent
Photo by Sister Therese Carson*

“The daily commitment to the Liturgy of the Hours is one of the central elements of Benedictine prayer life and spirituality. We are there at prayer, whether seen or unseen, by the larger community around us as a manifestation of *ecclesia orans*, the praying Church.”

~ Sister Beverly Raway

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