

PATHWAYS



NEWSLETTER OF THE DULUTH BENEDICTINE SISTERS, DULUTH, MINNESOTA

VOL 36, NO. 2

LENT 2025



PATHWAYS

MAGAZINE

of the Benedictine Sisters

Published by:

Sisters of St. Scholastica
Monastery, Duluth, MN

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Lenten arrangement in Chapel
by Sister Theresa Spinler

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PATHWAYS is published three times a year
and is distributed among friends, relatives,
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Dear Friends of the Monastery,

As we enter the holy season of Lent, we are invited into a sacred time of reflection, repentance, and renewal. It is a season that calls us to quiet our hearts, listen deeply for God's voice, embrace simplicity, and walk more intentionally in the footsteps of Christ.

Lent in 2025 carries even deeper significance, as it coincides with the Jubilee Year that began on Christmas Eve 2024. This Jubilee is a time of heightened spiritual reflection, pilgrimage, and a renewed focus on God's mercy. During this sacred period, Catholics can receive a plenary indulgence — full forgiveness of sins. The theme for this year's Jubilee, "Pilgrims of Hope," invites us to journey together in faith and trust, allowing God's light to guide us through life's challenges.

In announcing the Jubilee, Pope Francis wrote: "The forthcoming Jubilee can contribute greatly to restoring a climate of hope and trust as a prelude to the renewal and rebirth that we so urgently desire; that is why I have chosen as the motto of the Jubilee, Pilgrims of Hope."

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus reminds us: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Lent offers us the gift of slowing down. In a world filled with noise and distractions, it is a time to rediscover the quiet strength of prayer, the beauty of silence, and the transformative power of humility. Whether through fasting, acts of charity, or deeper contemplation, each Lenten practice draws us closer to the heart of Christ and God's boundless love for us.

Our world is in great need of healing, unity, and compassion. As the Apostle Paul encourages: "Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9). During this Lenten journey, let us recommit ourselves to being instruments of peace, reaching out to those in need, and fostering a spirit of togetherness in our families, communities, and beyond.

May this season of reflection and renewal prepare us to celebrate the joy of Easter with hearts transformed by God's love. I pray that you find strength and hope along the way, and I encourage you to seek opportunities to bring light to a world longing for unity and peace.

Wishing you a blessed and transformative Lenten journey.

With Lenten blessings,

Sister Beverly

Sister Beverly Raway, OSB



Reflection for Lent: Bloom in the Desert

by Sister Jeanne Ann Weber, OSB

On the first Sunday of Lent, we hear in the Gospel that Jesus is being tempted by the devil in the desert for 40 days and nights. During Lent we are being called to reflect upon the desert and upon Jesus. When I think of the desert, the word that comes to mind is barren, with little life because there is no water. The heat is scorching, and water sources have dried up. Sometimes our lives seem barren and dry. This is a time not only to examine our lives, but to realize that life is not always fair, not always easy, but Christ is with us in the desert.

At night it is cooler and safer to travel in the desert. However, there are no lights in the desert, and it is very dark. So how do we know where we are and where we are going? We hope for the stars to be out to give guidance. Christ is the Star that guides us in the deserts of our lives. Writer Corrie Ten Boom was in a German prison camp because she hid Jewish people during WWII. She said that no pit is too deep that Jesus is not deeper.

Christ is our light in the darkness, and we are called to be lights for one another. David Brooks writes about illuminators in his book *How to Know a Person: The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen*, a New York Times best seller. Brooks explores the idea that everyone can be an illuminator. These are people who uplift and inspire others, help others to shine, make the world a better place, and bring about God's kingdom. But David Brooks also talks about diminishers. Through their

negative energy they make others feel undervalued and not seen. They can lessen creativity and self-confidence. He says that in every group there are illuminators and diminishers. May we be light bearers, illuminators!

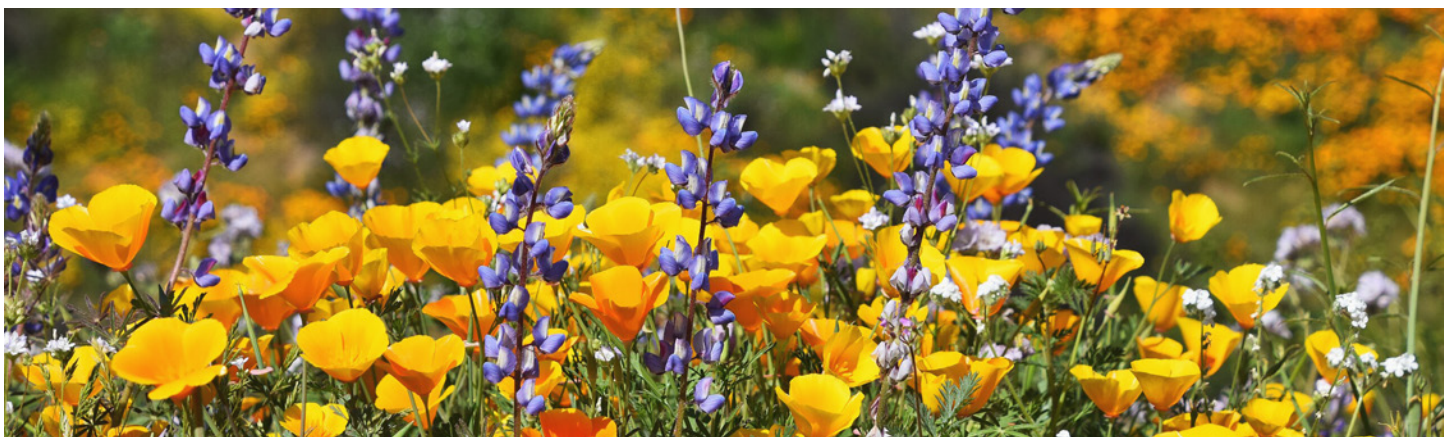
There are a variety of dangers in the desert including snakes, scorpions, and javelinas - wild pigs. I have encountered all of these in the desert but was protected from harm. As Jesus said, He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you. I am grateful for the many ways Christ has guarded me over the years.

In the desert of life, it is easy to become discouraged, rebellious, and a seeker of distractions and idols to deal with the monotony, the uncertainty, the pain. Let us pray that we too can better respond with Jesus who said, *You shall worship the Lord your God, and him alone shall you serve.*

I was in the desert one spring when it was in bloom because of the spring rains. It was astonishing to see all the flowers, blooming trees, and fruit. What was barren and lifeless was full of life! I think of Christ saying,

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

Let us choose life as we prepare for the great paschal mystery of Christ's death and resurrection. Alleluia!



Pilgrims of Hope

by Sister Lisa Maurer, OSB

In his letter announcing the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope, Pope Francis said that “we must fan the flame of hope that has been given us, and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty, by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart, and far-sighted vision.” He went on to say that, as Pilgrims of Hope, “we can become for our world messengers and witnesses of Jesus’ dream of a single human family, united in God’s love in the bond of charity, cooperation, and fraternity.”



We are all called to be Pilgrims of Hope in whatever our state of life. As a professed monastic, I am blessed to be a Pilgrim of Hope in my religious vocation. I am able to use my gifts and talents for my Community, for the Church, and for the world. Everything I do, whether it is coaching football, leading a retreat, or washing church linens, I do it as a witness to Christ and a sign of hope in the world.

Like all Pilgrims of Hope, my life is filled with ups and downs, joys and sorrows, but the one thing that keeps me going is my commitment to God and to the belief that He is always faithful. I am filled with hope, when I consider the fidelity of my Sisters. These women have lived dedicated lives for 50, 60, 70 years or more. When I think about their perseverance, I can't help but be filled with hope for the future!

As a Pilgrim of Hope, I have hope that more and more men and women will consider a vocation to religious life. A vocation to religious life is a reason for hope, because it signifies a dedicated commitment to serve others and live a life focused on spiritual growth. Pope Francis said that this Jubilee Year “can contribute greatly to restoring a climate of hope and trust as a prelude to the renewal and rebirth

that we so urgently desire.” Wouldn't an increase of vocations to religious life do just that?

Here are some ways that vocations to religious life make a positive contribution to the world and offer hope for the future:

- Women and men in religious life are Pilgrims of Hope in their dedication to helping others through acts of charity, education, healthcare, and community outreach.
- Members of religious communities are Pilgrims of Hope as they demonstrate a commitment to the common good and foster a sense of belonging and support, demonstrating the power of community.
- By actively working towards social justice and addressing societal issues, religious men and women are Pilgrims of Hope as they contribute to positive change in the world.
- In their dedication to prayer and the spiritual life, vowed religious serve as Pilgrims of Hope and a visible reminder of the importance of faith, inspiring others to deepen their own spiritual practices.

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

What Does Being an Oblate Mean to Me?

by Rev. Dr. Cheryl Fleckenstein, OblOSB

When my daughter converted to Judaism after marrying a Jewish man, I began to question why I should stay Christian. I could think of many reasons to leave Christianity:

- Antisemitism
- Suppression of dissent within the Church
- Crusader colonialism
- “National christianity”
- Institutional patriarchy and sexism
- Toxic theology
- Lack of transformation

And yet, there were many reasons to remain Christian:

- Leaving the church would hurt those with whom we ally.
- Where else would I go?
- Jesus, and what he taught about God’s unconditional love, and his call for us to share that love.
- I can let my old image of God die and see what rises from the tomb.
- I can show my Jewish grandchildren that all of Christianity isn’t toxic and antisemitic.

That last reason is probably the strongest reason that I stay Christian. To me, being an Oblate means being an active member of Christ and his Church in its efforts to proclaim Christ’s gospel message. Being an Oblate means striving for my own Christian renewal and improvement. How I live and proclaim that Gospel means that every day I make the decision to stay Christian.



Rev. Dr. Cheryl Fleckenstein at a retreat, with Sister Donna Schroeder

Why I am an Oblate? Because Benedict’s Rule, with its balance of work and prayer, makes sense to me and fits my personality and beliefs. I am an Oblate because Benedict based his Rule on scripture, which has always been central to my life. I am an Oblate in order to be in community with others who strive to practice their spirituality by following the Benedictine values and practices of Work, Hospitality, *Lectio Divina*, Prayer, and Stability. That final value of Stability is another big reason why I stay Christian. We draw strength and encouragement from each other with our common identity. The Sisters of St. Scholastica and the Oblates are my family.

Sabbath Time

I love the wee hours of the morning. This is my sabbath time, the part of the day where I am still, where I am at peace, and where I feel closest to the Spirit that moves within. Before my son (and the dog!) wakes up and the day and its tasks divert my attention, this early morning time grounds me and awakens my creativity and, yes, compassion—compassion for all whom I love, compassion for the world, and compassion for myself.

I have cherished rituals that I keep during this daily time of deep silence and mystical purity that are nourishing and comforting. Each morning, I begin with the ritual of making myself a good coffee, first grinding the beans, then heating the water, and finally, the brew, to which I add the exact amount of cream to ensure it is the perfect color and taste. At the first sip of this exquisite brew, I often think of Seattle... where I fell in love with coffee as a young adult and where my first child was born. And so begins my morning reflecting...

my children come to mind, one by one, and I let myself feel their joys and sorrows, and my deep gratitude for sharing life's journey with them. Then other family and friends come to mind, especially those in need of compassion and support, while I wait and watch as the sun rises over Lake Superior through my living room window. Sometimes in winter I am gifted with an incredible view of the "sea smoke" billowing magically from the life-giving waters of the Lake below.

Reading and, sometimes, writing follow in my cozy office space (with a second cup of coffee). My mind is often filled at this point with ponderings on the future, reminiscences of the past, and hope for this day. I am filled with rest and calm as I wait for what the day will



reveal. These rituals have become my morning prayer, my contemplative entry into the day, my sabbath rituals.

What do these musings have to do with spirituality? Everything! The Spirit is active and alive in each of us so uniquely, and when we listen and respond to this Spirit, we become aware of our profound need for these sorts of sabbath times, to listen more, to love more, to become the dream that God has dreamed for each of us

and every part of Creation. In giving ourselves the gift of silence and sabbath, we honor ourselves, the workings of Creation, and the God of Life. We come to know ourselves as holy, as beautiful, as pure in our humanness. The poet Steve Garnaas-Holmes, in musing on the biblical ritual of purity, offers this perspective:

*What if purification isn't
the removal of anything,
but transforming
something into pure joy?*

*What if purification
isn't washing away
part of you, but*

revealing your deepest beauty?

*What if you are already made pure,
but are not yet celebrating?*

*What if what came before was not impure, but
what may come next is as yet unimagined?*

*What if you are holy water, even
now being turned into wine?*

The gift of sabbath time is to come to know deeply what this poet describes so eloquently. The greatest gift that we at the Center provide is exactly this — sabbath time. We offer this in our programming, yes, but we also offer our spaces and individual ministry to others: beautiful,

CENTER FOR SPIRITUALITY AND ENRICHMENT

private guest rooms, lovely meeting areas, contemplative places for quiet and reflection, communal prayer times with the Sisters, spiritual direction and life-coaching — all brought about and sustained by the foundational principle of life-giving Benedictine hospitality.

Our greatest aspiration at the Center is for each person who walks through our doors, that they leave with a greater sense of their holiness, their beauty, and their belovedness in the eyes of God. That we are able to do this, at least in part, is seen in the eyes, the smiles, and the words of our guests who come and go. We have ongoing relationships with many groups — such as with the Duluth Diocese deacon aspirants and their wives who come one weekend a month for their formation — and with countless individuals who come regularly to our doors. They are able to experience sabbath time in these sacred spaces and leave refreshed and renewed.

As 2025 continues to unfold, we hope you give yourself the gift of sabbath time, both in your daily life and, possibly, coming to experience the gift of the Center for Spirituality and Enrichment at St. Scholastica Monastery. You might consider coming for a private retreat time, or attending one of our programming offerings. We have several ongoing offerings, such as our once-a-month Grateful Gatherings sessions, and also varied seasonal opportunities, such as “What I’ve Learned So Far: Claiming the Ways We See, Understand, and Interpret the World” on April 4-6 facilitated by Diane Millis and Vic Klimoski.



Sea smoke at Dawn on Lake Superior.

Please visit our website at retreatduluth.org or email dcarrillo@duluthosb.org for information on the Center and to find out about our other ongoing and upcoming events and offerings. You are welcome to come for any of our offerings, or just because you need time apart from the noise and busyness of life.

Come to the Center to find your own sabbath time... we are here and would be honored to welcome you.



A most blessed Lent to you,

Dawn Carrillo,
Director of the Center for
Spirituality and Enrichment

Behind the Scenes: The Essential Work of Christine Etchison

by Theresa Butler, Development/PR Administrative Assistant

The Sisters have a long tradition of taking pride in their home and keeping it clean, tranquil, and orderly. One of the wonderful people behind this is Environmental Services Manager Christine Etchison. Christine is inspired by the Duluth Benedictines and is proud to work for these faithful, trailblazing women.

Christine originally hailed from North St. Paul, one of six children to parents John and Anita. She attended St. Peter Catholic School in North St. Paul and Hill-Murray School in St. Paul. Her parents owned a restaurant, and she grew up working at the family business.

After high school, Christine went to Minnesota State University in Mankato, where she graduated with a bachelor's degree in Recreation Parks and Leisure Services with an emphasis in Psychology, Resource Management, and Therapeutic Recreation. One of the jobs that she was thankful to do during college was work at Yellowstone National Park. After graduating from college, she worked in recreational therapy with adolescents in psychiatric hospitals in Faribault, Minneapolis, and Anoka, Minnesota.

Christine, her husband Dennis, and two daughters lived in the Twin Cities and then West Branch, Michigan before moving to Duluth in 2012. In 2014 Christine was working as a housekeeper and was looking for a new position when she saw an ad in the Duluth News Tribune for a housekeeper at St. Scholastica Monastery. Having grown up with Sisters while attending Catholic school, Christine thought she would like the working environment at the Monastery, responded to the ad, and was hired. When she started at the Monastery, she was a housekeeper on Benet Hall and helped the Sisters with their daily needs.

After Christine's supervisor, Lisa Askelson, became the new Monastery Facilities Director, Christine was promoted to Environmental Services Manager. As Environmental Services Manager, Christine manages six employees' schedules and their daily and weekly duties. She orders cleaning supplies, equipment, paper



Christine in her office.



Christine with Tammy Tucker, one of our valued Environmental employees.

EMPLOYEE PROFILE: CHRISTINE ETCHISON



Sister Petra Lenta's prayer wall.

products, and bedding, and oversees and helps with the cleaning for all the spaces of the Monastery.

With the recent major remodeling, Christine, Lisa Askelson, and the Environmental staff worked as a team, helping the Sisters relocate from their home in Stanbrook West into Stanbrook guest rooms and emptying the many storerooms, kitchens, and laundries. With the renovation completed, they moved Sisters into their new rooms. It was an accomplishment for Christine, Lisa, and the team to make the transition as smooth as possible. Having moved many times in her life, Christine was able to journey with the Sisters through the stress of downsizing, packing, and moving. Her goals were to put the Sisters' belongings where they could be easily found and to help them feel settled and at home.

During the eleven years she has been at the Monastery, she was blessed to have her daughters Mary and Sarah attend and graduate from The College of St. Scholastica next door. While they were in college, she and Dennis were both part of the Parent Council, which helped with student needs and assisted at student events. As a council member, Christine advocated for the mission and values of the College which the Sisters started, met other parents, and helped continue our Benedictine legacy.

Christine is inspired by the Sisters' fidelity to private and communal prayer, the Benedictine values, and the healthcare and educational facilities that they founded. One source of inspiration was Sister Petra Lenta, who died in 2019. When Sister Petra lived in Benet Hall, she created a prayer wall where she posted prayers, images, and conversations with God. Christine provided her with tape and scissors, and in time the display covered two adjacent walls. After Sister Petra passed away, Christine and others who worked with her were each able to take one of the prayers from her prayer wall to remember her.

Christine says of her work, "I am blessed to work at the Monastery where I work in the Sisters' home and not in a business. It is a blessing and honor to be a part of their home and help them carry on their legacy." And we are thankful to have you in our Monastery family, Christine!

Please Pray for Our Deceased Family and Friends

Birgit A. Johnston	10/09/2024	William J. Weniger	12/27/2024
		<i>Brother-in-law of Sr. Luella Wegscheid</i>	
Pamela Jean Mittlefehldt	11/27/2024	Patricia Ann Kellar	12/22/2024
Edward A. Ruisi	11/29/2024	Dennis J. Hackett	1/29/2025
Jane Rolle	12/15/2024	Bethyl L. Wittbrodt	2/4/2025
Patricia Ann Kellar	12/22/2024	<i>Oblate</i>	
Joseph Marincel	12/25/2024	Kathleen Silvers	2/12/2025
<i>Brother of +Sr. Margaret Marincel</i>		Thomas "Tom" Dahlberg	2/17/2025
Mary C. Murphy	12/25/2024		



Sister Lisa Maurer introduces young students to vocations

In her role as Vocation Director, Sister Lisa Maurer embodies the Benedictine values of community, teaching, and service by visiting Catholic schools throughout the Diocese. Her visit to Assumption Catholic School in Hibbing (at left), where she shares the beauty of religious life with first grade students, reflects the Benedictine commitment to fostering relationships, sharing wisdom, and nurturing faith in young hearts. Through her presence and teachings, Sister Lisa demonstrates the value of building a loving, faith-filled community.

Sisters and Pen Pals

Organized by Sister Dorene King, St. Scholastica students and Sisters gathered together at the Monastery to write pen pal letters to third graders at Stella Maris. This meaningful activity beautifully reflects the Benedictine values of community, hospitality, and service. By fostering intergenerational connections, demonstrating care and respect, and sharing the joy of thoughtful communication, this initiative exemplifies the spirit of the Benedictine tradition, which calls us to nurture a welcoming and loving community.



CSS student Allison Rice and Sister Katie Doyle.

Hope for the Holidays

The Sisters' heartfelt participation in the Hope for the Holidays campaign beautifully reflects the Benedictine values of hospitality, compassion, and service. By writing messages of encouragement and love, they extend a spirit of welcome to asylum-seeking neighbors, embodying the call to treat all as Christ. Each card is a tangible expression of care and a reminder of our shared humanity, bringing light and hope during this holy season. This act of kindness highlights the Benedictine tradition of fostering love, prayer, and community, even across distances.



Sisters Jayne Erickson, Beverly Raway, Donna Schroeder, Dorene King, and Therese Carson

Christmas Cookies for Inmates

We are called through our Paschal walk with Christ and our shared humanity to welcome the stranger in our midst.

"Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ... for I was in prison and you visited me. ... Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Matthew 25).

The holidays can be lonely for those serving time. In December, Sisters and staff members joined to bake Christmas cookies for the inmates at the nearby St. Louis County Jail. We follow in the footsteps of St. Teresa of Calcutta, who warned a guard in San Quentin Prison, "What you do to these men you do to Christ."



Sisters Dorene King and Beverly Raway mix cookie dough.

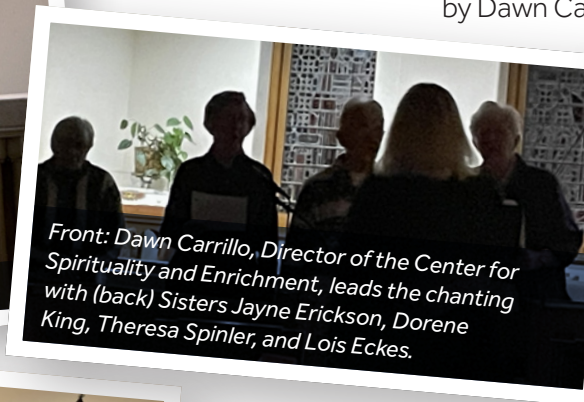
Advent Taizé Service with the College

Each Advent, the Sisters and College students gather in candlelit darkness for meditative Taizé prayer. In Taizé, scripture, repetitive chants, and silence quiet the mind and opens the spirit to the movement of the Holy Spirit.

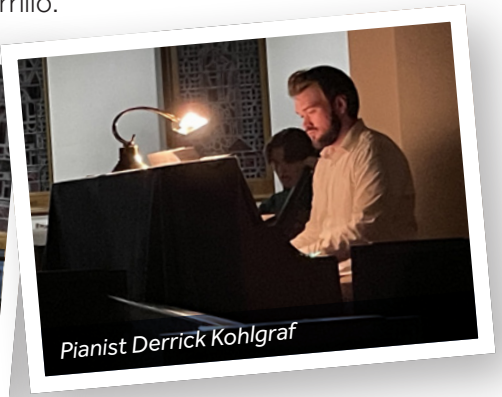
This service is organized by the Center for Spirituality and Enrichment and led by Dawn Carrillo.



Icons in candlelight



Front: Dawn Carrillo, Director of the Center for Spirituality and Enrichment, leads the chanting with (back) Sisters Jayne Erickson, Dorene King, Theresa Spinler, and Lois Eckes.



Pianist Derrick Kohlgraf



Sister Lisa Maurer applies her experiences as football coach to Catholic Healthcare

Sister Lisa Maurer was featured in the Winter 2025 issue of *Health Progress*, The Journal of the Catholic Health Association of the United States. Her reflection, *Building a Playbook for Life to Inspire Joy and Overcome Challenges*,

can be found at <https://www.chausa.org/publications/health-progress/archive/article/winter-2025/reflection-building-a-playbook-for-life-to-inspire-joy-overcome-challenges>

In her article, Sister Lisa describes the Benedictine values of hospitality, stewardship, respect, and justice, and how they relate to religious life, team sports, and Catholic healthcare.

Opening of Jubilee Year 2025

On December 29, 2024, Sisters Claudia Cherro, Joana Charles, Sairis Leopold Mkinga, Lisa Maurer, and Agnes Atai attended the opening Mass for the 2025 Jubilee Year at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Rosary. Here they are pictured in that order with Bishop Daniel Felton.



Pope Francis marked the opening of the Jubilee Year 2025 Pilgrims of Hope when he opened the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica on December 24, 2024.

Bishop Daniel Felton opened the Jubilee Year in the Diocese of Duluth at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Rosary during Mass on December 29, 2024. In the Diocese of Duluth, we will be celebrating the 2025 Jubilee Year as Pilgrims of Hope by designating six locations within our diocese as pilgrimage holy sites to visit and receive Jubilee indulgences. All six locations have a historic connection to Monsignor Joseph Buh, thus affording the opportunity for the faithful to learn more about him and to pray for his intercession. Visit the Diocese of Duluth website for more information at <https://dioceseduluth.org/jubilee-year>, or contact your local diocese.

Sister Lisa Maurer invited to give keynote address at Advent retreat



At the beginning of Advent, Sister Lisa Maurer was in Findlay, Ohio, at St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church. She gave the keynote address *Discerning with Mary* at the yearly women's retreat *Advent by Candlelight*. Here, Sister Lisa (middle front) is pictured with the planning team.

Celebrating Scholarship on Flannery O'Connor's 100th Birthday

In honor of the 100th birthday of acclaimed Southern Gothic writer Flannery O'Connor, the CSS Librarian & Archivist Heidi Johnson recently presented her thought-provoking paper, "Flannery O'Connor's Second Century," at a National Endowment for the Humanities conference.

Reflecting on O'Connor's words, "I find that some of my best readers are Sisters," Heidi explored the profound connection between O'Connor's works and religious communities, casting new light on the author's influence and legacy.

In November, Sisters and friends of the College's library gathered to enjoy Heidi's insightful presentation. A special moment was captured with Sister Donna Schroeder, Sister Beverly Raway, and Petey the Peacock joining in the celebration! (Flannery raised peacocks.)

Thank you, Heidi, for sharing your scholarship and helping us see O'Connor's work in a new way!



Sisters Donna Schroeder and Beverly Raway with Petey the Peacock.

Bingo on Benet Hall

On most Thursday afternoons, volunteer Sharon Captain comes to Benet Hall to call the Bingo game. She also brings many treats and a cache of quarters for those who prefer cash. Her dedication and enthusiasm are always welcome.



Sharon Captain calls the numbers and Sister Josine Krausnick happily wins again.

McGough Christmas Party

Sisters Beverly Raway, Lisa Maurer, and Danile Lynch attended the McGough Construction Company Christmas party, at which Jim Frisell, Regional Vice President for Duluth, was honored at his retirement for 49 years of service with McGough. Jim was the senior manager from McGough who directed the Monastery Renovation Project and was instrumental in the building of the new St. Mary's Medical Center.



Sr. Beverly Raway, Jim Frisell, Sr. Lisa Maurer, and Sr. Danile Lynch.



Sister Beverly Raway's Birthday

The Community always celebrates the current Prioress's birthday. Sister Beverly Raway will be stepping down this summer after election of a new Prioress. We made sure to make her birthday special, with lots of laughter, singing, and her favorite pecan pie. She also was given a handmade mirror that said, "Reflecting God's presence for 80 years."



Christmas Party on Benet Hall

On December 17, the employees and caregivers on Benet Hall gave the residents a Christmas Party. All enjoyed it but especially Sister Johnetta Maher, who at 102 years is our oldest living member. She took great delight in her gift, a lighted purple angel.

Blessing of the Spiritual Resource Center

Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery gathered to bless the newly dedicated Spiritual Resource Center. The Sisters prayed for all who will enter this space, that they may find peace, inspiration, and a deeper connection to God. Sister Beverly Raway sprinkled the collection

with holy water. Sister Elizabeth Farias has worked with a team of employees, carpenters, Oblates, and volunteers to place the shelving and reorganize the books.

A Spiritual Resource Center is the library for a monastic community. It contains resource material for conducting research, deepening one's understanding of scripture, broadening one's mind, and reading for sheer pleasure. Although many secular books and periodicals are included, the primary focus is spiritual studies. This may include the history and writings of the Catholic Church, the history and theological viewpoints of different faiths, ethics, and information regarding recent events, particularly told from a Catholic viewpoint. The Center provides material to enlarge our minds and keep us from growing stale.

Medieval monasteries included scriptoriums for the copying of manuscripts, for study by monastics, and for the preservation of



Sr. Beverly blesses the collection.

knowledge. Much of the world’s knowledge, developed over thousands of years, would have been lost with the fall of Rome and the destruction of great libraries such as the one in Alexandria. It was saved through the quills of monks. Today our books are printed electronically and also available digitally, but books continue to play their role in the education and formation of monastics and the dissemination of new ideas and schools of thought. A Spiritual Resource Center remains at the heart of a thriving Community.

Messiah Singalong

In December the College holds a singalong in Mitchell Auditorium, where hundreds of singers and musicians join their talents to present George Fredrick Handel’s oratorio *The Messiah*. Sister Marie Therese Poliquin is there most years. At age 99, she sings her part with deep satisfaction, sitting in front of the massed mezzo sopranos.



Blessing Time

This past New Year’s Eve, we revived the custom of blessing our clocks, watches, and calendars at the evening meal.

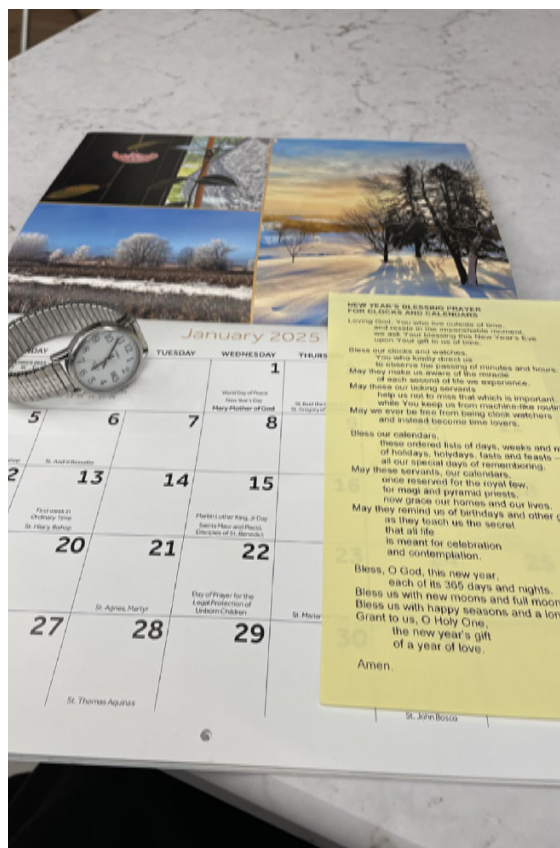
Loving God, You who live outside of time, and reside in the imperishable moment, we ask Your blessing this New Year’s Eve upon Your gift to us of time.

Bless our clocks and watches, You who kindly direct us to observe the passing of minutes and hours. May they make us aware of the miracle of each second of life we experience. May these our ticking servants help us not to miss that which is important, while You keep us from machine-like routine. May we ever be free from being clock watchers and instead become time lovers.

Bless our calendars, these ordered lists of days, weeks and months, of holidays, holy days, fasts and feasts – all our special days of remembering. May these servants, our calendars, once reserved for the royal few, for magi and pyramid priests, now grace our homes and our lives. May they remind us of birthdays and other gift-days, as they teach us the secret that all life is meant for celebration and contemplation.

Bless, O God, this new year, each of its 365 days and nights. Bless us with new moons and full moons. Bless us with happy seasons and a long life. Grant to us, O Holy One, the new year’s gift of a year of love.

Amen.



Sister Sairis Mkinga bids us farewell

Sister Sairis Mkinga, former Prioress of St. Agnes Convent in Chipole, Tanzania, spent part of her sabbatical with the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery. As she readied herself to leave the next day, in a mutual exchange of gratitude, the Sisters presented her with

an icon of Saints Benedict and Scholastica, and Sister Sairis gifted the community a beautiful, colorful fringed cloth featuring zebras. We wish her blessings as she continues her sabbatical with a 30-day retreat.



Christmas Caroling at the Monastery

On December 18, 2024, The Center for Spirituality and Enrichment hosted an evening of Christmas caroling and fellowship at the Monastery. Led by Sister Dorene King, with Father Corbin Eddy on the piano, the Sisters and guests sang a selection of Christmas songs. The evening included playing instruments and using signs to illustrate the song, "The Friendly Beasts."



Sr. Jeanne Ann Weber and Oblate Marilyn Mayry



Associate Karen Wallace and Sr. Joana Charles



The Dove in the Friendly Beasts

Our Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany Liturgies



On each Vesper of a Sunday of Advent, we bless and light the next candle.



Advent symbols of Isaiah and John the Baptist.



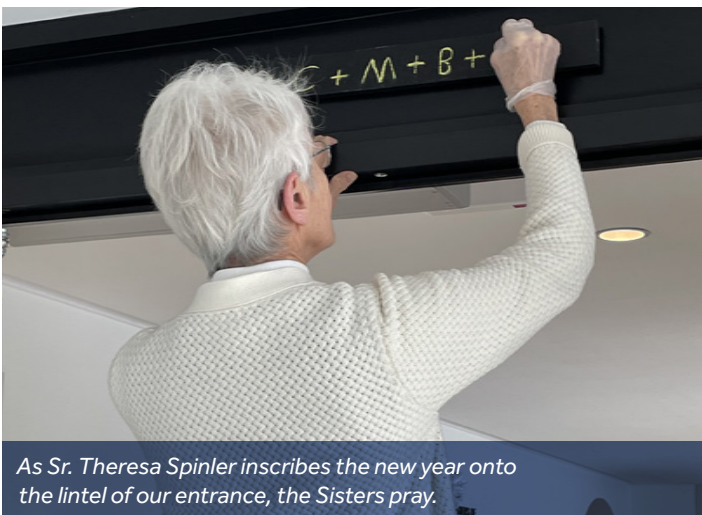
We are blessed with Fr. Corbin Eddy as resident chaplain. His Christmas Eve message was inspiring.



Flowing water bringing new life.



Every year a few days before Christmas, we put up a beautiful tree, lit simply with white lights.



As Sr. Theresa Spinler inscribes the new year onto the lintel of our entrance, the Sisters pray.



The prioress blesses the entrance and the Community with Holy Water.

Sister Mary Christa Kroening, OSB

Sister Mary Christa Kroening, 95, died peacefully at the Monastery on New Year's Day, 2025, in her 70th year of monastic profession. Born August 15, 1929, to Arthur and Lydia (Schmid) in Springfield, Minnesota, the first of their six children, Virginia worked beside her siblings on the family farm and farm market. Educated by Franciscan Sisters, she had heard the call to religious life from an early age. After studying business in high school and graduating as class valedictorian in 1947, she worked as the secretary/bookkeeper for Springfield Milling Corporation for three years. In 1951 she left home to study art and music at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis and became secretary and bookkeeper for the English Department.

In 1952, inspired by a pilgrimage to France and Italy, she transferred to The College of St. Scholastica to study elementary education. Encouraged by her advisor, she entered St. Scholastica Priory as a postulant the next year. She took the name Mary Christa and made her triennial vows in 1955 and her perpetual profession in 1958. In 2015 she celebrated her Diamond Jubilee.

Sister taught in Catholic elementary and junior high schools in Hibbing, Crosby, and Duluth until 1970, while completing her bachelor's degree in Elementary Education during summers at The College of St. Scholastica. A passionate teacher, she was recognized as an Outstanding Educator for her innovative work in individualized education. She became Religious Education Coordinator for Sacred Heart Parish in Duluth and took Clinical Pastoral Education to better minister to hospitalized parishioners. She earned master's degrees in Systematic Theology and in Liturgical Studies at Saint John's University. For 16 years she was Director of Liturgy for the Community, renewing the Benedictine tradition of communal prayer by adapting rituals for the changing liturgies of the Church, and assisted



in the complete renovation of the Monastery's chapel and College library.

Sister joined the Benedictine Health System (now called Benedictine) in 1997 as Director of Mission Integration and then as Senior Consultant for Liturgical and Ritual Services. She helped design or renovate many chapels, wrote books

of prayers for Catholic healthcare, and became an early champion of integrating spiritual and physical dimensions of healthcare. She championed the core Benedictine values in healthcare: caring for the sick as one would Christ, hospitality, respect, justice, and stewardship. She served on boards for Essentia Health, St. Mary's Medical Center in Duluth, various entities of the Benedictine Health System, and The College of St. Scholastica, and was known for her infectious enthusiasm, sense of humor, and her iconic white gardening hat. In 2014 she retired from outside ministry.

In gardening – turning the soil, planting, watering, weeding, and cultivating, as she had been taught

as a child – she saw our monastic life with its cycle of communal prayer, lectio divina, work, and rest. Through her many decades of service, she became a shining example of authentic Benedictine life, serving God through ministering to others.

She was preceded in death by her parents Arthur and Lydia Kroening and siblings, Theodore Anton (Donna) Kroening, John Arthur (Gloria) Kroening, Paul Edward Kroening, Audrey Ann (Benjamin) Bambenek, and Patricia LaMay (Richard) Cady. She is survived by sister-in-law Gloria (John) Kroening, beloved nieces and nephews, and the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on January 8, with Father William Fider presiding. Interment was in Gethsemane Cemetery at the Monastery.

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The Braegelman Catholic Studies Program at The College of St. Scholastica is offering an online discussion with Dr. Natalie King about *End-of-Life Care: A Catholic Perspective*, on April 23, 2025.

For more information and to register, please visit:
<https://tinyurl.com/Braegelman>