

# PATHWAYS



NEWSLETTER OF THE BENEDICTINE SISTERS

DULUTH MINNESOTA

Lent, 2006

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## WEAR THEM OUT WITH LOVE

*By Sister Sue Fortier*

When I was a child I dreaded the season of Lent. It was a time of giving up candy, movies, and other treasured things. These acts of penance had more to do with myself than with God and a larger community. I kept my resolutions diligently, and at the end of the season I could pride myself into believing I was a good Catholic girl. Today Lent has become not only a season but a way of life, lived in communion with others: a journey from darkness to light that is not so much about individual acts of penance as it is about profound change and conversion of life.

I recall a retreat I made some years ago. Every day while walking in beauty, I came across a pair of worn-out boots that became a metaphor during my days of solitude. Life had forever changed around me and within me, and I knew



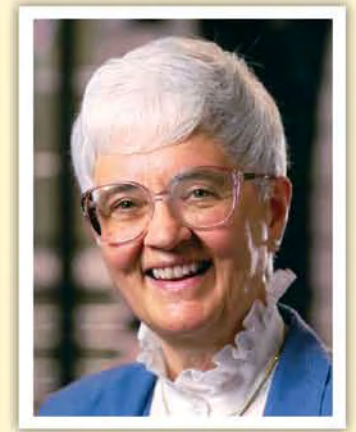
I could no longer walk in the worn-out ways that had become so comfortable. Something new was beckoning and calling me to trust, like a child trusting her first steps forward. As with all who enter the wilderness of the heart, I discovered that what was being asked of me was a change in the pattern of my life.

Lent is a time for allowing our hearts to be re-patterned: a time to reinvent our lives through the power of love. It is a season for taking an honest look at what blocks the flow of life within us—a season of recognizing that our hearts have become too small for the visions that stir in them. Together we face our fears and wrestle with questions that will heal, renew, and restore our lives. As a people, we need this Lent of 2006 as never before, and our planet needs the transformation of our lives. The human family is groaning through the darkness of our times, and it is as if the whole world is in labor, longing for Easter.

How then shall we live this Lent? Let us re-envision life and create patterns of possibility as we allow ourselves to become transformed. Let us breathe in the Gospel and mirror a life of welcome, beauty, and respect for each other. Let every act become a sacrament extending life beyond ourselves. May this season liberate us from our worn-out ways of living as we move forward with courage and commitment to create a better life for each other and our world. As we journey together, let us don our Baptismal Shoes and wear them out with love.

*"Lent is a time for allowing our hearts to be re-patterned..."*

# A Letter from the Prioress



Dear Friends,

Recently I attended the Conference of Benedictine Prioresses meeting at St. Scholastica Monastery in Fort Smith, Arkansas. It was a grace-filled gathering at which we ratified a document entitled *Wisdom From The Tradition*. This document is intended not only for monastic communities, but for all who seek to deepen their relationship with God and to live the Gospel with greater authenticity and renewed passion.

At its core, the wisdom found in Benedict's *Rule* is about the spiritual transformation that happens when we listen with the ear of our heart to the voice of God calling from deep within and beyond ourselves. It is the call to experience and share God's extravagant love. The wisdom of our Benedictine tradition both invites and challenges us to nurture within ourselves a contemplative heart through faithfulness to daily prayer so that we might respond to our times with a wisdom that is both healing and prophetic.

Our Benedictine tradition teaches us that by listening with reverence and respect to one another we gradually overcome the fear that alienates and divides us. As we work to build a community of equals where everyone is valued as a graced presence of Christ, we counteract the individualism, the isolation, the intolerance that afflict our society in so many ways.

Steeped in the wisdom of Benedict's *Rule*, we are reminded that the purpose of authority is to author life, and that in order to be life-bringing it must listen to the wisdom of the whole community. Obedience, which means listening with the ear of one's heart, is the responsibility of everyone. For Benedict, genuine obedience honors diversity, individual conscience, and the personal dignity of each member of the community.

Hospitality has long been a revered part of our Benedictine tradition, and awareness of its wisdom is being manifested anew in this age of violence and fear of strangers. From a culture of exclusion, Benedict challenges us to welcome everyone as we would Christ, to reverence the Divine Mystery in each person, to nurture a culture of inclusion while at the same time preserving necessary and healthy boundaries.

The final aspect of our Benedictine tradition that *Wisdom From The Tradition* ponders is that of peace, our quest and aim. For Benedict, peace flows from justice, which in the biblical sense means right relationships.

Balance and moderation, respect for all, inclusion of each person, the value of the common good, care for the Earth, and all the goods given for our use are part of Benedict's prophetic response to the violence and injustice of his day. Inspired by this wisdom, we are challenged to be a leaven of Divine Justice in our world firmly entrenched today in oppressive and violent ways.

A story is told about Benedict's own spiritual transformation. It is said that one night Benedict was standing at his window praying while the rest of the community was fast asleep. Suddenly a light more brilliant than the sun shone from the Heavens, and the whole world was gathered up before his eyes in what appeared to be a single ray of light. As we listen carefully to the wisdom of our Benedictine tradition, we are invited to enter Benedict's vision, to see the essential oneness of God's world, to dwell in that single unifying ray of light that radiates God's extravagant, all-embracing love for us all and for all creation. Filled with its brilliance, we are being called forth in these difficult times to be beacons of God's radiant light and healing embrace of the world.

May the Holy Season of Lent and the celebration of the Easter Mysteries be for each of us an experience of profound grace as we give ourselves anew to God's transforming love. We hold you in our hearts in continual prayer and with deep gratitude for the gift you are to us.

Lovingly yours in Christ's love and peace,

*Sister Lois Eckes*

Sister Lois Eckes  
Prioress



# PERPETUAL MONASTIC PROFESSION

By Sister Edith Bogue

What can I write about making my Perpetual Monastic Profession? The rite was profound and moving, and, like a wedding, the ceremony is not the story. It is the moment of transition—an unfolding love story, when the time of hope-filled questioning is transformed by a single “yes” into a lifelong commitment.

*“Sister Edith, you faithfully followed God’s call in your life. You have lived and studied and prayed with this monastic community during your time of discernment . . . .”*

How much is summed up in those short words spoken by Sister Mary Rochefort! The journey that brought me to this day in 2006 has been a long one. Nearly eight years ago I stood outside the doors of the chapel—truly outside—on the front steps, with Sister Mary Richard Boo and Sister Michelle Dosch, ready to take the first step to test my vocation as a Benedictine. After knocking once, twice, and then a third time (“Do not grant newcomers an easy entry,” advises Benedict in his *Rule*), Sister Danile Lynch, the prioress, opened the door.

*“Peace to all who enter here!” she said. “Tell us what you are seeking.”*

What, indeed? A closer relationship with Christ, a chance to explore the Benedictine way of life within a community that cherishes it. Was this reason enough to leave friends, job, and parish to move halfway across the country? As I visited regularly during my Affiliate year, the Benedictine way of life became ever more attractive. While attending the Monastic Institute that summer, I wrote in my journal: “I am entering religious life. I am going to be a monastic. I don’t know *how* to do this, but, in fact, I am going to do it.”

Thus I found myself, on February 10, 1999—the Feast of St. Scholastica—just outside the chapel entrance with Sister Elizabeth Ann Gilbertson and Sister Michelle.

*“I feel God is calling me to come closer. In response to this call, I ask the members of this community to help me learn the Benedictine way of monastic life,”* I said.

*“Welcome to Saint Scholastica Monastery,”* said Sister Danile. *“You are embracing the way of Jesus which is the way of the cross.”*

I stepped across the threshold, received the Postulant’s cross, and was entrusted to Sister Cabrini Beauvais, who was instructed to be “gentle, yet firm; loving, yet strong; patient,

yet challenging.” I entered more fully into the Benedictine life of WORK and PRAYER.

What a difficult time! Learning the dozens—no, hundreds—of small customs that make up the culture of monastic life. Finding all the rough edges of my personality as I encountered the 130 others in the community. Praying at new times and in new ways. Trying to make sense of it all, I wrote in my journal: “God is love. God is everywhere. If I have not found love in a particular situation, I have not yet found the part where God is.”

August 10, 2000, found me standing near the baptismal font, again stating my desire to know God more fully, and to pursue the Benedictine way of life.

*“Welcome to our Novitiate, a school for the Lord’s service,”*

said Sister Kathleen Hofer, now the prioress. *“We promise to help Sister Edith by our example, affirmation, prayerful support, and ministry of service to others,”* responded the assembled community. Thus began my year as a canonical novice, a year dedicated to the study of *The Rule of Benedict*, our liturgical prayer, monastic history—and to living more fully the Benedictine way of life. As the year came to an end, with the possibility of making a first monastic commitment, my journal writing focused on what the purpose would be: “to seek and live a life of

Photo by Sister Joyce Fournier



Sister Edith Bogue and Sister Lois Eckes, prioress

prayer in community.”

So it was that I stood before the altar for the first time, on the Feast of the Assumption in 2001, reading and signing a document of monastic profession—only to find just how challenging it can be to try to live out all the values and elements of Benedictine spirituality. With students to teach, meetings to attend, guests in need of hospitality, I found it easy to lose track of that central purpose. Over and over, though, the discipline of community life and God’s faithful love awakened that sense of purpose and dedication in me again.

During the Rite of Monastic Profession on January 15, 2006, the prioress, Sister Lois Eckes, asked: *“In the waters of baptism, you have already put on Christ and are consecrated to God. Are you resolved to unite yourself more closely to Christ through the bond of perpetual monastic profession?”* With a full and confident heart, I am able to respond: *“With God’s help, I am.”*



## Sister Profile: Sister Sarah O'Malley

By Sister Mary Richard Boo

“My inspiration in my pastoral work as well as in much of my writing has been Father Henri Nouwen,” says Sister Sarah O'Malley, a Duluth Benedictine currently working as

director of the ministry of care in Most Holy Trinity Parish, Phoenix, Arizona. Her work, sponsored by the Parish, is primarily for the hospitalized, homebound, bereaved, and those residing in nursing care centers. Enthusiastically, Sister states: “I have a passion for this ministry of care. I believe it’s a continuation of Jesus’ own work with His followers.” She doesn’t work alone in this expansive outreach ministry, of course, but recruits, trains, and provides ongoing educational opportunities for some 60–70 volunteers. Sister Sarah herself conducts grief support and caregivers groups, offers an annual retreat for the bereaved, assists families with funeral planning, and serves as the advocate for the creation of the diocesan program of ministry of care in the Phoenix diocese.

As if this weren’t enough, Sister Sarah continues writing for publication. Her interest in creative writing began in the late 1970s when she co-authored with Father Bill Fournier her first book, *Age and Grace: A Handbook of Programs for the Ministry of Aging*, published by Liturgical Press. Since that initial success Sister Sarah has collaborated with Father Robert Eimer, OMI, in writing eleven more books. Their numerous works include two dramatic versions of *The Way of the Cross*; Advent and Lenten prayer reflections; resource books for funerals, wakes, and reconciliation services; and a *Marian Novena*. Together they have published with three firms: Daughters of St. Paul, Resource Press, and Our Lady of the Snow Press, in addition to their major publisher, The Liturgical Press. Sister Sarah comments, “Writing is exciting and challenging—the writer takes a vision of ministry and makes it happen! I really understand the need for practical, creative resources for those individuals who serve in varied areas of ministry.”

What has prepared Sister Sarah for this ministry? Initially, 19 years of teaching and administration followed by 11 years of ministry of care work in Duluth’s West End

parishes (i.e., St. Clement’s, Sts. Peter and Paul, and St. Jean’s—all of which eventually merged). During her time in the West End, Sister Sarah took three academic quarters of Clinical Pastoral Education at the Behavioral Center followed by a year’s residency as chaplain at Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge, Illinois. This pastoral training provided an enriching personal and professional foundation for her future parish ministry. Prioress Grace Marie Braun then suggested that Sister Sarah “look over” the job possibilities in Phoenix, where Sister Elizabeth Holland was about to retire—and Sister Sarah found her niche there for the next 14 years.

In recent years Sister Sarah has pursued a study of the life and writing of her mentor, Father Henri Nouwen (1932-96), giving presentations and parish retreats based on his pastoral books: for example, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, *Can You Drink The Cup?* and *The Living Reminder*. In May of 2006 Sister Sarah will attend the first Nouwen International Conference in Toronto, Canada. “I look forward to discovering new and creative ways to show that we are all ‘Wounded Healers.’ Adapting Father Nouwen’s works for parish use helps me to grow personally while I’m simultaneously trying to enrich the spiritual lives of others.”

Enriching others is what Sister Sarah O'Malley is all about.

### **Publications co-authored with Father Robert Eimer, OMI**

*Come Let Us Celebrate*  
*In the Potter’s Hand*  
*Journey of Decision*  
*Unless You Take Up Your Cross*  
*From Seed to Blossom*  
*Mary’s Fiat*  
*Prayer Services for Parish Council*  
*We Were There*  
*Points of Light*  
*Beacons of Hope*  
*The Dayspring from On High*



# Alicia's Place

By Sister Margaret James Laughlin

Photo by Sister Joyce Fournier



*The former Cathedral / Sacred Heart Convent—now Alicia's Place*

Alicia's Place, the former Cathedral/Sacred Heart Convent now renovated by the Women's Community Development Organization (formerly the Women's Transitional Housing Coalition) with the financial assistance of the Benedictine Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, was formally blessed on January 17. The house now provides ten apartments for homeless women struggling with alcoholism and/or mental illness. Sister Lois Eckes, prioress, stated in an earlier communication to the Sisters that "this is an occasion to celebrate and give thanks for our part in helping Alicia's Place become a reality. The decision to name this facility in memory of and in honor of our beloved Sister Alicia Panger is a fitting tribute not only to Sister Alicia but also to our community and, in particular, to those who lived and served at Cathedral/Sacred Heart over many years."

Of the more than 250 Sisters who served there between the years 1892-1978, about thirty were present the afternoon of January 17 to bless the renovation and its new occupants. In conclusion they prayed: "May the spirit of love that has filled these rooms continue to triumph over the wounded and bring them peace. May they find hope for a new beginning in their lives. As the Sacred Heart brings forgiveness and love, may we all be granted the grace to recognize Christ in others."

The Sisters then toured the building—its three floors of apartments and the basement which will house offices and a meeting room. The transformation from the building they had known to modern efficiency apartments amazed and delighted them. Nonetheless, they searched for familiar items such as the stained glass windows which indicated the former location of the chapel, the fireplace the location of the recreation room, and window locations to indicate former bedrooms.



*The Sisters bless the renovation and its future occupants.*

Photo by Sister Theresa Spinler

Photo by Sister Joyce Fournier



*This stained glass window portraying St. John Baptist de La Salle, patron of Christian teachers, was originally part of the house's chapel, which has now become an apartment.*

Following the blessing by the Benedictine Sisters, Michelle Gordon led a traditional Native American ceremony.

May all the women who will seek shelter, support, love, healing, and hope in Alicia's Place be richly blessed.

# SPONSORSHIP: SAINT MARY'S

*This is the third in a series of articles on sponsorship. The introductory article by Sister Kathleen Hofer dealt with an overview of the Monastery's sponsored institutions; the second article by Sister Margaret Clarke discussed the Monastery's sponsor relationship with The College of St. Scholastica.*

In the first article in this series, the term *sponsorship* was used “to express the deep sense of responsibility as well as the bond that unites an institution with an official entity in the Church.” This article will define and clarify the continued role of sponsorship of Saint Mary's Medical Center by the Benedictine Sisters while also describing the process through which Saint Mary's became integrated with the Duluth Clinic, a not-for-profit regional clinic of 400+ physicians, into a health system—Saint Mary's/Duluth Clinic, or SMDC. Future articles will describe the Monastery's sponsorship of the Benedictine Health System and the creation of Essentia Health, an affiliation of the SMDC and the Benedictine Health Systems.

For many years the BSBA (Benedictine Sisters Benevolent Association—the Monastery's legal title) and all of its institutions, including Saint Mary's, were part of the same legal corporation. Major decisions, including budgets, were brought to the decision-making bodies of the BSBA. Gradually, as health care became more complex and controlled to a greater extent by the federal government, it became evident that more business expertise was required.

In the early 1970s a separate board of lay community members, physicians, and Sisters was established for Saint Mary's, though legal and financial decisions still came to the BSBA. In 1985 the Benedictine Health System was established with separate incorporation of each of its members, including Saint Mary's, and increased power and responsibility for the individual Boards. Reserve powers of the BSBA included mission, legal, financial, and property matters.



**St. Mary's**  
MEDICAL CENTER

An affiliate of SMDC Health System

## MISSION

*St. Mary's Medical Center exists to witness to the love of God through compassionate and competent health services for all, especially the poor and powerless. As a Benedictine-sponsored Catholic organization, we promote the highest level of physical, emotional, and spiritual health and well-being for all persons, from the moment of conception until their providential end. As a member of the SMDC Health System, we help bring the soul and science of healing to the people we serve.*

Although Saint Mary's was no longer in the immediate purview of the BSBA, officers and key members of the BSBA were constantly looking to secure the successful future and growth of the mission of Saint Mary's. One important aspect of this was the hospital's effort to assure a strong ongoing relationship with medical doctors. Since 1915, when the Duluth Clinic was founded, a relationship with its physicians critical to the success of Saint Mary's was formed and nurtured. Over the years, the support of one another grew to the point where the Clinic moved its location to one physically connected to Saint Mary's. Eventually, the mutual support had the potential to be viewed as anti-competitive and, hence, in possible violation of anti-trust requirements.



# MEDICAL CENTER

*By Sister Monica Laughlin*



**Duluth Clinic**

*An affiliate of SMDC Health System*

**MISSION**

*We are here to serve patients.*

The clinic and hospital boards agreed that outright competition would not be good but that the problem could be resolved if the Duluth Clinic and Saint Mary's were one corporation. Beginning in 1993 discussions were held regarding the most appropriate way to deal with this. The integration committee (three physicians, two Sisters, and St. Mary's executive vice president) were encouraged when they found how closely the values of both institutions paralleled each other. However, even nationally, there were few if any roadmaps to point the way forward. But, like their pioneer forebears, the leadership of both Saint Mary's and the Duluth Clinic forged ahead in planning such an integration. Four years later, on January 1, 1997, SMDC was born.

The initial implementation agreement allowed for equal numbers of board members from the Duluth Clinic and Saint Mary's Medical Center. The committees—Mission/Values/Culture, Finance, Quality, and an Executive Committee of officers—were to be balanced also. A unique position was created in order to take advantage of the expertise and experience of Sister Kathleen Hofer, OSB, who had been the President and CEO of Saint Mary's. Called "Active Board Chair," it provided for her to be full time and to act in an advisory position to CEO Dr. Peter Person. For board membership, Saint Mary's decided to appoint three lay persons in addition to three Sisters and one Sister-designee of the prioress. Reserve powers for the BSBA, exercised partly through the BHS, focused strongly on the Catholic character of Saint Mary's and Benedictine sponsorship. The integration agreement spelled out specifically the aspects essential to Saint Mary's and its subsidiaries (St. Mary's Hospital of Superior and Polinsky Medical Rehabilitation Center) remaining Catholic and commissioned the Saint Mary's Board of Directors to ensure that these were adhered to completely.

The positive effects of integration, in addition to solving a political problem, surpassed the hopes of even the founders. Because of the network of regional clinics owned by the Duluth Clinic, Saint Mary's can now more effectively serve a much larger population. Further, the integration makes possible the ideal of totally integrated care. Teamwork on all levels and in all departments is the byword.

Thus, although the original mission of the Sisters has remained unchanged, time and societal development have altered the way in which health care is administered. Although Sisters no longer provide the work force of nurses, laboratory technologists, health information personnel, and personnel in other areas, Benedictines are still instrumental in maintaining a culture at Saint Mary's that is both Catholic and catholic. In addition to Sister Kathleen Hofer, four Sisters work full time in key areas of Chaplaincy, Clinical Pastoral Education, and Mission Coordination. Several Sisters also volunteer their time in the hospice unit. St. Scholastica Monastery in its role as sponsor continues to promote and sustain Christ's healing ministry to the people we serve.



**SMDC**  
HEALTH SYSTEM

*Reflecting the heritage and continuing partnership of  
the Health Care Ministry of the Benedictine Sisters  
of St. Mary's Medical Center and the physicians  
of the Duluth Clinic*

**MISSION**

*SMDC brings the soul and science of  
healing to the people we serve.*

## SISTER THERESA SPINLER WINS TREE-SCAPING AWARD

By Sister Mary Richard Boo



Photo by Sister Joyce Fournier

Sister Theresa Spinler with her 2005 Tree-scaping award

Trees have always been important to the Monastery and the College and to the Sisters who themselves planted the original trees on the St. Scholastica campus. Today Sister Theresa (Teri) Spinler carries on that tradition and has recently been honored for her achievements. While resident at the Sisters' McCabe Renewal Center, Sister Theresa received a 2005 Tree-scaping award from the City of Duluth for her work at that site. Each year the awards are given to "encourage and reward the use of trees in the landscaping and beautification of Duluth properties." The award signed by Mayor Herb Bergson and Louise Levy, Tree Commission Chair, states that the honor is "In recognition of your use and care of trees in the overall planning, management, and stewardship of your property [the McCabe Renewal Center]." The presentation award took place November 28, 2005 in the City Council chambers.

## SISTERS HONORED

By Sister Mary Richard Boo

Benedictine Sisters are gone from Assumption Catholic School in Hibbing, Minnesota, but they are definitely not forgotten. At the most recent Endowment Dinner, January 31, 2006, Sister Melanie Gagne, Sister Mary Rae Higgins, and Sister Mary Rochefort were presented with certificates of Special Appreciation in recognition of their years of teaching. Each Sister was cited "for hearing the call for religious vocation and providing selfless and exemplary service to the Church's mission of passing on the Faith."

## NEW RESIDENCE HALLS NAMED FOR BENEDICTINE SISTERS

By Sister Judine Mayerle

Kerst Hall and Scanlon Hall, three-story apartment buildings that house nearly 300 undergraduate students, were dedicated last fall in honor of Mother Scholastica Kerst, the founder of St. Scholastica Monastery and the College, and Sister Ann Edward Scanlon, a past college president. The new housing makes it possible for more than half the student population to live on campus as part of the college's deliberately designed "residential learning community." Kerst and Scanlon Halls (and Cedar Hall, built in 2003) are located on the wooded highlands on the northwest part of the campus.



Sister Lois Eckes, prioress, blesses the Benedictine crosses to be placed in each apartment in Kerst and Scanlon Halls, while (left to right) Bob Ashenmacher, CSS executive director of marketing; Dr. Larry Goodwin, CSS president; student leader Joseph Birkholz; and Molly Weyrens, campus minister, look on.

Photo by Sister Judine Mayerle



# LIGHTS

## PROUD TEACHER—APT APPRENTICE

By Sister Mary Charles McGough

A teacher's greatest joy—when a pupil catches on, forges ahead, and surpasses you! Five years ago, Gary Erickson began his apprenticeship with me at two studios: Subiaco, where he still works in iconography, water color, and printmaking; and Earthen Vessels studio where I taught him what little I knew about the potter's wheel. Gary took to the wheel as if by second nature!

Recently, Gary was privileged to bring twenty or more of his Earthen Vessels wheel-wrought pieces to St. John's University where the famous artist-in-residence potter, Richard Bresnahan, has built the Johanna Kiln, the largest wood-fired anagama kiln in North America. This kiln is fired only once each year. Gary participated in a ten-day, ten-night firing of some 15,000 pieces in this immense three-chambered kiln, which during this period of time consumed 14 cords of wood! A crew of over thirty kept stoking this mammoth kiln day and night, and then it cooled for two weeks. Gary then returned for the grand opening. It's hard to imagine the apprehension and excitement.

Gary's pieces were exquisite. A display of them was held at the Monastery and will be shown again, we hope, in some Duluth showcase window for a broader viewing. Congratulations, Gary, artist-in-residence at Earthen Vessels Studio, St. Scholastica Monastery, Duluth, Minnesota.



Sister Mary Charles McGough and Gary Erickson with an exhibit of Gary's work

Photos by Sister Joyce Fournier

## PLEASE PRAY FOR THE FOLLOWING DECEASED RELATIVES AND/OR BENEFACTORS:

Deacon Robert Szyman 11/13/05  
Anna Rose Faith McQuaid 11/17/05  
+ Sister Amelia Faith's sister  
+ Sister Marian Faith's sister  
Henry Raway 11/18/05  
Sister Beverly Raway's father  
Mary Ann Shega Beaupre 11/20/05  
Frances "Eileene" Stelman 12/01/05  
Thor W. Erickson 12/05/05  
Olive M. Bergeron 12/17/05

Anne Connolly 12/18/05  
Rose Novak Klima 1/02/06  
Sister Mary Hope Novak's sister  
Doris Wilmers Axtell 1/01/06  
Joe Noel 1/12/06  
Bernadette Hill 1/08/06  
Mary S. Deutsch 1/13/06  
Virginia Buffington Shaw 1/14/06  
Margaret Dugan 1/15/06



# “Sing a New Song”

PRODUCED FOR VOCATION MINISTRY

by Sister Judine Mayerle

“Sing a New Song,” a new 30-minute film produced for the Monastery’s Vocation Ministry, is an intimate portrait of the Duluth Benedictines as Sisters speak from their hearts of the amazing journey to which God has called them. Thirteen Sisters were interviewed for “Sing a New Song,” with all the Sisters in the Community providing a visual and aural backdrop of prayer and song, ministry and leisure.

“Our Beginnings,” the first of twelve sections, shows the foundation and growth of St. Scholastica Monastery and its role in building the infrastructure of the Diocese of Duluth. “Our Ministries” highlights the Sisters’ contributions in health care, education, social work, spiritual direction and retreats, and the arts. In “A

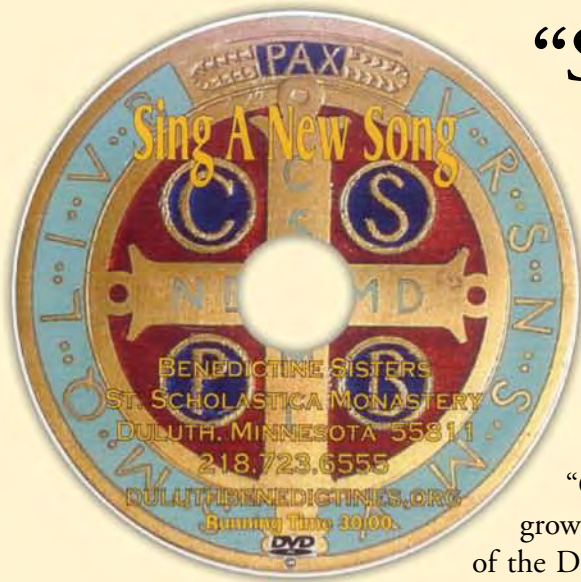
Life of Prayer” Sisters speak of communal and personal prayer, of the Liturgy of the Hours and the daily celebration of the Eucharist, of the way in which everyone in the Community is involved in liturgy. “A Life of Balance” highlights St. Benedict’s emphasis on balance and moderation in the lives of monastics. “Work is good and prayer is good, but too much work or too much prayer puts us out of balance,” a Sister comments, “and balance includes leisure.” “Hospitality and Stewardship” shows how these two Benedictine charisms are lived out at the Monastery and in the Community’s ministries. The section on the *Rule of St. Benedict* reminds us that the *Rule* is still relevant today even though it is over 1500 years old because it is wisdom literature “which flows from the very heart of God.”

In “Our Life in Community” Sisters speak of having all their actions—their work, their prayer—be part of something larger than themselves. “Stability in Community” shows that similar to vows taken in marriage, the Sisters promise to care deeply for each other, to always be there for each other in the Monastery of their Final Profession. “Living in Duluth” gives a glimpse into the seasons of the city, of the beauty of living on Lake Superior. In “A New Song” several Sisters speak of what drew them to St. Scholastica Monastery, while another reflects on how her life has changed since she entered the Community: “I realize that I’m happier now than I’ve ever been in my life.” She says that when people ask her father if he is upset because his daughter became a nun, he replies “She’s doing what she wants to do; she’s happier now than she’s ever been; how can I be sad about something like that?”

“The Gifts We Bring” highlights the unique contributions each woman brings to the Monastery, as well as the challenges and opportunities afforded women who enter the Community today. In the last section, “Come and See,” Sisters speak directly to women who are in vocation discernment. “Be willing to follow your heart, be willing to seek,” “Be open to how God’s grace might be leading you, be open to the surprises that God might have in store for you,” and “I can’t think of any place that’s richer to be than this Monastery, than this Community, than this life.”

“Sing a New Song” was produced by Sister Judine Mayerle, OSB, with Marsha Hystead, Senior Creative Director at H.T. Klatzky and Associates; Lance Parthé, principal cinematographer, and Dave Pogel, editor, both of Parthé Film and Television Production. The original soundtrack music, based on the Monastery’s schola singing the refrain from “Sing a New Song (Psalm 98, music by Dan Shutte),” was composed and played by Duluth musician-composer Steve Horner.

“Sing a New Song” is available (DVD and videocassette) to women interested in learning more about vowed membership at St. Scholastica Monastery. Sisters will present “Sing a New Song” to individuals and groups involved in vocation ministry or who wish to learn more about the Monastery. Persons interested in “Sing a New Song” may e-mail the Monastery at [DuluthMonastery@aol.com](mailto:DuluthMonastery@aol.com).





# HAPPY 90<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY SISTER BERNADETTE AND SISTER CHARLENE!

*By Sister Almira Randall*



Sister Bernadette comes from a family of six—her parents, one brother, and two sisters. She was born December 2, 1915, to Hermina and Ernest Bergeron in Cloquet, Minnesota, and was named Rita. She was sent to Sacred Heart School, and it was there, when she was in the eighth grade, that her journey as a member of St. Scholastica Monastery began. Sister Modesta, her eighth grade teacher, called several of the girls together and asked if they would be interested in becoming Sisters. They could go to high school at the “Villa Academy” and be under the direction of a Sister prefect. Young Rita went and was very happy in the spiritual environment.

Although she left the Villa for a few years, in August of 1941 she returned to her “home on the hill” and became a postulant. After making first vows in 1943, she was sent out to teach in Duluth, Brainerd, Chicago, Phoenix, Wayzata, and Minneapolis. She says of those days, “In all my years of teaching, my favorite subject was always Religion. The children were always so eager.”

Another memory is of her assignment to St. Bridget’s School in Minneapolis in 1951. She says, “At that time there was only the original school building where church services were held in the gym, the enrollment numbered 500 students, the students attended Mass every day, the students marched in and out of school every day to the tune of John Philip Sousa marches, all the teachers were nuns, and where for three years I taught 35 sixth graders in a room on second floor about half the size of a regular classroom. We liked it!”

Sister Bernadette liked to read, liked to watch football and baseball games, and she loved every cat and dog in any neighborhood in which she lived. In her days as librarian she tried to interest every child in reading. Sister Bernadette lives on Benet Hall now. She sums up her life by stating that she is “deeply grateful to God for giving her good Christian parents, a very saintly pastor in her youth, and wonderful Sister teachers.”

*Photos by Sister Joyce Fournier*



On a cold day in the middle of December 1915—the 9th to be exact—a baby girl was born to Bernadine and William Schoen in a log cabin at Swan River. Not many days later she was taken to the church and baptized, being given the name Dorothy by the priest. Little Dorothy had an older sister, Lucille, and would be followed by three brothers. At a very young age she and her brother Charles were sent to live with Grandma in Buckman because their father had died and their mother had to work. She speaks fondly of her grandmother and of the Benedictine nuns who taught her in school. Until she was eight years old she spoke no English—only Bavarian German. During the second grade she moved to Minneapolis, and the family was reunited. She says, “It was one of the happiest years of my life.”

When she speaks of her childhood Christmases she remembers how her mother made Christmas cookies and candy during the night to surprise her children. Dorothy thought Santa did it all.

In 1934, at the age of 18, she entered the convent. After making first vows she thought, “Now I’m going to teach!” Imagine her dismay when she was told, “You’re going to be a nurse.” “Oh, no!” she cried. “I don’t want to be a nurse!” She wanted to be obedient, but she definitely didn’t want to be a nurse. “I never prayed so hard in my life,” she laughed. In the end she was sent to Virginia, Minnesota, to teach 4th grade. During the many years she taught—60 years in all—she had every elementary grade at one time or another. She loved teaching, and she loved the children.

When she returned to the Monastery, she served as companion to the elderly Sisters when they went to the clinic. She took her refrigerator towels along, and as she sat in the clinic she crocheted the tops—300 or 400 towels a year!

Sister Charlene has a wealth of memories and is a marvelous storyteller. As we finished our conversation, her face lit up, and she said, with all the joy and enthusiasm of an eighteen-year-old, “And you know what? I’d do it all over again!”



# One Campus, Four Addresses



We are, as always, grateful for your continued generosity and prayers. In this Lenten season we ask especially that you join us in praying for peace in the world.

Please remember when you make a contribution that each of the four Kenwood Avenue institutions—St. Scholastica Monastery, The College of St. Scholastica, the Benedictine Health Center, and Westwood Senior Independent & Assisted Living Apartments—has its own separate mission, ministries, and financial structure. Each organization also has a separate mailing address:

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