

PATHWAYS



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Dear Friends of the Monastery,

The Sisters greet you and hope that you are doing well, and that the great feasts of Easter and Pentecost and the promise of summer weather have lifted your spirits. For those who have lost loved ones, we share your grief and pray daily with you.

Singing the *Alleluia* at the Easter Vigil brought tears to my eyes and a flutter to my heart. As I reflect on the daily Mass readings, I'm reminded that telling stories and remembering our saving history is a vital part of what makes us human. We remember the stories of your compassion for one another and sing our *Alleluias* with gratitude, for always "we are an Easter people and Alleluia is our song." (St. Augustine)

As the days of pandemic continue, I want to say, "Coronavirus, you will be defeated!" We are an Easter people. We are a people who, like our Savior, Jesus the Christ, will rise again. This time is given to us as a gift – yes, a gift – that helps us realize we are not here forever, that all of us have a short time on this lovely blue planet earth to make a difference. What we do with that time matters. We can stay with the *Lamentations*, isolated, "woe is me" – but we are free to do good now, with hearts racing with joy, like Peter and John running to the empty tomb. We may be sequestered in our offices and rooms and homes, but we are connected more than ever by a common experience that brings us closer in will and heart. We will and we do rise again!

For those of us who are Catholic and Christian, it is a painful sacrifice to be unable to share in the Eucharist, especially on the great feasts of Easter, Pentecost, and Corpus Christi. But Christ is present in more ways than one. He is present in the Body and Blood, but also in the Word shared, and in those who gather in ones and twos in person or connected electronically in crowds. Christ is present every day in the hands of those whose service keeps us connected, healthy, and well: in the administrative staffs of our sponsored ministries, the IT staffs, the educators who have mastered teaching on line, the security teams, the associates, nurses and doctors, those in food service and environmental service, the technicians who keep our lights on and water flowing, and all who touch our lives daily.

And Christ is present in you. You are out there every day, living witnesses to our values. You have conquered your fears and put your lives on the line to teach the young, care for the sick, manage essential services, and show by your example what it means to be the hands and feet of Christ caring for those most in need.

For those marking *Shavuot*, the festival of First Fruits, and those who have fasted throughout the month of *Ramadan* and are celebrating *Eid al-Fitr*: may you, too, have peaceful and holy days. Blessings to you all.

And thank you to all of you, who together are showing what it means to be an Easter people with Alleluia as our song.

Blessings and peace,

Sister Beverly

Sister Beverly Raway, OSB
Prioress, St. Scholastica Monastery



Our Call to Holiness

by Sister Lisa Maurer

By virtue of our Baptism we are all called to holiness. *Lumen Gentium*, the central document of the Second Vatican Council, said that the call to holiness is indeed universal, embracing all baptized Christians.

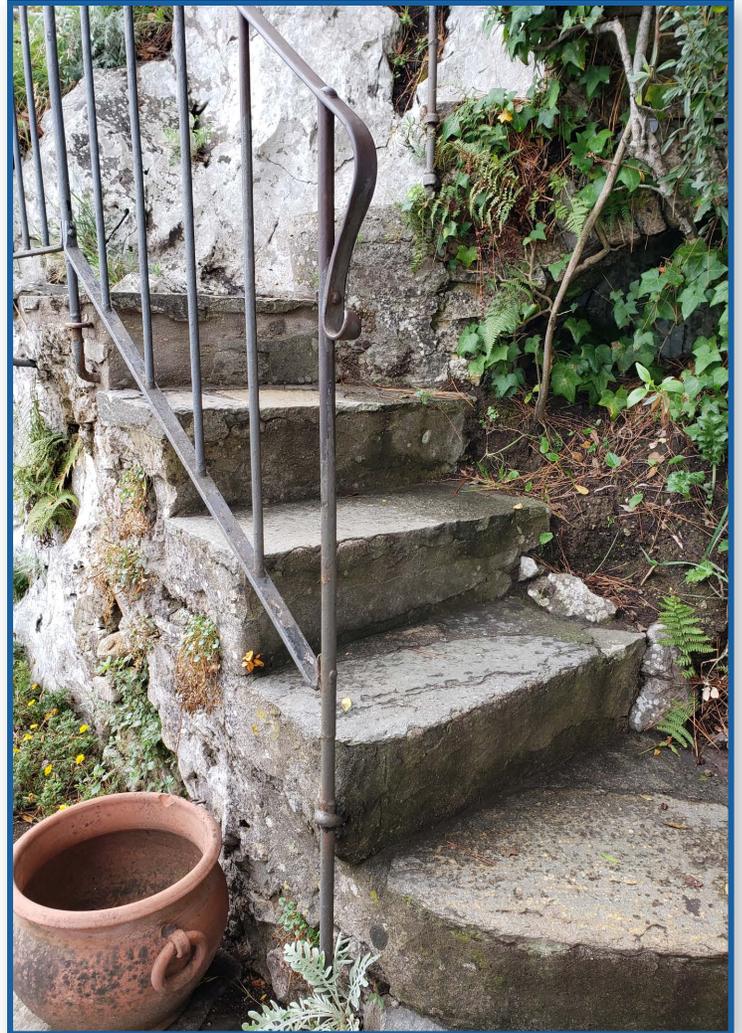
All men, women, and children of every age, in every state of life, condition, talent, and profession are called to holiness, to love and serve God. It is the universal vocation of all of us. Within that universal call, each person has a particular call to live a life of holiness. That particular call is to the married life, the single state, the priesthood, or religious life. One's vocation is the way each person is equipped to live their life of holiness.

All through Scripture we see this call to holiness as the call to the Christian life. It is not a fluke that God created us and called us to be his holy people. In Leviticus we hear that we are to be holy because the Lord God is holy (Leviticus 19:2). In that call we are to bear no hatred, reprove one another but incur no sin, take no revenge, cherish no grudge, and love your neighbor as yourself. In the Gospels, Jesus tells us to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48). We have every reason to believe that holiness is not beyond our reach. God would never call us to something that was impossible. In Psalm 103 we are told that the Lord is kind and merciful. Therefore, it is possible to achieve this life of holiness. God wants it for us.

Answering the call to holiness requires conversion, a transformation. We need to ask ourselves, "How does God dream me to be? How am I to live my life of holiness? What is my particular vocation?" Responding to a call of holiness is not a onetime thing. It is not a static achievement but a continued response and renewal of commitment. We keep striving moment by moment and day by day for authentic holiness.

Practically speaking, in answering our call to holiness we need to see God is everything and imitate Jesus in all we do. As we accept God's call, we choose God and others above ourselves and unite our will to God's. Holiness requires that we live a life rooted in prayer and the practice of virtue.

It could be said that holiness is really a synonym for being well-rounded and whole. These words get to the heart of what God intended human beings to be. As Saint Irenaeus said, "The glory of God is humanity fully alive." Each of us must discover the way in which we will find fulfillment in this life so that we may be with God forever in heaven. This ought to be our life-long goal. To be holy is not a privilege for the few, but a vocation for everyone.



If you or someone you know believes they are being called to live their life of holiness as a Benedictine (Sister, Oblate, Live-in Associate, Volunteer) call Sister Lisa at 218-723-7011, email vocations@duluthsb.org, or visit www.duluthbenedictines.org/vocations.

From the Oblate Viewpoint

by Jane Dolter, Co-Director of Oblates

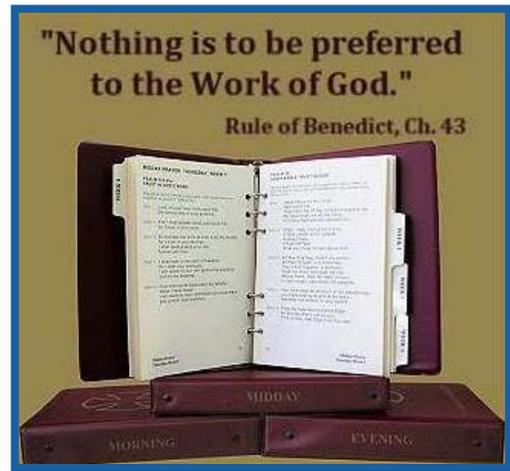
“Pandemic” was an answer on Jeopardy recently. I am sure this clue was written well before it became a household word around the globe.

COVID-19 has given us time to pause and reflect. Remember those days when you longed for a day away from your busy life to just be at home? We never dreamed we would have endless days at home and call it “sheltering in place.”

What are we learning during this time? We are learning to appreciate our basic freedoms. Many have taken so much for granted. We are experiencing life in slow motion. We now have time to make those long overdue calls and send those day-brightening cards.

We are supporting our family and friends during times of need. For one of our oblates, that meant flying cross country to retrieve grandchildren when their parents were deployed.

We are growing through this enriching experience. We are learning what our priorities really are or should be



and continue with daily *Lectio Divina* and the Liturgy of the Hours.

We are filled with hope. God has blessed us with wise and committed medical professionals. He has opened the hearts and wallets of those with the capacity to feed those in need. God has a plan. It is now our time to “Be still and know that I am God.” He’s got this.

If you would like information or have questions about becoming an oblate, contact either of the Co-directors.

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Jane Dolter, Oblate
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Please Pray for Our Deceased Family and Friends

David J. Garron	1/4/2020	Tom O'Rourke	3/10/2020
Gertrude Jeannine O'Connell	1/9/2020	(brother-in-law of Sister Lois Eckes)	
Dorothy Marie Jaret	1/18/2020	Lynn E. Mielke	3/18/2020
Terese Moraski	1/20/2020	Werner Joseph Engelmeier	3/19/2020
Margaret Osmundson	1/24/2020	Nancy Jean Moline	3/21/2020
Lynn Wilson	1/31/2020	Lorrain E. Deroche	3/24/2020
Laura Stock Budd	2/3/2020	Earl Rosenwinkel	4/7/2020
Jean Bergeron	2/7/2020	Betty Polyner	4/9/2020
Mary Donalda Sauve	2/19/2020	Margaret E. Bujold	4/16/2020
Marian Parker Congdon	2/24/2020	Maureen McGirl Nygaard	4/18/2020
Charles H. Seipp, Jr.	3/4/2020	Rev. Gerald J. LaPatka	4/18/2020
Ann Marie Opack Nelson	3/7/2020	John Urban Mitchell, oblate	4/20/2020
Dianne M. Kolar	3/8/2020	Ralph David Verby	4/20/2020

Volunteers: the Heart of Monastery Books and Gifts

by Theresa Butler, Development/PR Administrative Assistant

The people who volunteer at the Monastery say it is a two-way street: they give their time to the Sisters and in return their lives are enriched. One of the many opportunities to volunteer time for the Sisters is working at Monastery Books and Gifts. Bookstore manager Deb Castle says, “The volunteers are the heart of the ministry, and they’re each special in their own way.”

Monastery Books and Gifts was first established in 1988 as Priory Gifts under the leadership of Sisters Joan Braun, Agatha Riehl, and Mary Paul Ludwig. Sister Katie Doyle was also a longtime manager. Initially the Sisters took care of all the bookstore’s needs but, as time went by, volunteers were asked to help. The bookstore sells new and used books, greeting cards, every-day gifts, specialty items for sacramental celebrations, and icons featuring the artwork of +Sister Mary Charles McGough.

Deb and five volunteers work with the Sisters to keep the bookstore a vibrant part of the Sisters’ ministries. Deb first became connected with the Sisters in 2009 when she worked at the Benedictine Health Center; she later became a certified spiritual director in 2013 through the Monastery’s Shalom program. In 2019 she became manager of the bookstore and is grateful to continue as part of the Benedictine ministry.

Lois Hon has been connected to the Sisters since she was young through her aunt, +Sister Therese Oswald, whom she visited as a child with her parents. Lois went to Catholic school where she was taught by Duluth Benedictine Sisters. Monastery Books and Gifts is a good fit for her: Lois owned her own greeting card distributorship for 16 years and worked in various retail stores.

Chris Ketelsen first became connected to the Sisters through spiritual direction at McCabe Renewal Center. The positive connection she established at McCabe led her to begin volunteering at the Monastery, which she has been doing for over 15 years in a variety of roles, including for Monastery Books and Gifts. Chris shares, “The Sisters have touched my life in a way that I would not believe possible. It is a wonderful place to volunteer.”

Linda Senta has been volunteering at the bookstore for 10 years. “I have had the privilege of working with three managers: Sister Katie, Lori Henningsen, and now Deb Castle. All have been kind and compassionate teachers of the ins and outs of the bookstore.” Linda and her husband +Bob Senta both had relationships with the Sisters, so the Monastery was a natural place for Linda to start volunteering after she retired.

Mary Wilson’s connection with the Sisters began when she saw an opening listed in the Duluth News Tribune for a volunteer opportunity at the Monastery. Mary says, “I’ve fallen in love with the Sisters. They are wonderful and being part of it up there – it is peaceful and loving, and it makes me feel good.”



Shirley Slettendahl (above) and Chris Ketelsen (below) are long-time volunteers.



Monastery Books and Gifts is open Monday through Friday from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m.

We are looking for volunteers to help fill these hours. If you are reliable and want to help out once a week for a couple of hours in a welcoming and beautiful environment, please call 218-723-7076.

Sister Donna Schroeder: a Mind for Science, a Heart for God

by Sister Therese Carson



Janet Schroeder was raised in Doyon, a small village east of Devils Lake on the North Dakota prairie. If you were to take US-2 west from Grand Forks with eyes fixed on the horizon, you might miss the landscape's subtle beauty. With her roots firmly in one place, young Janet studied the changing seasons. She saw the low areas – prairie potholes – fill with meltwater each spring, shining like quicksilver and irresistible to migrating waterfowl. She counted snow and Canada geese as they passed overhead by the thousands on their way to breeding grounds in Canada. Half of her world was the sky, a vast dome of deep blues and towering thunderstorms and brilliant stars – and birds, everywhere, in the air, the grasses, and the trees. She grew to be a keen observer of creation.

Her parents ran a machine shop off the highway, and Janet would sit inside at a desk, watching for customers while drawing whatever occurred to her fertile imagination. “I wasted a lot of paper.” Watching her father take apart combines and replace the worn sickles, hammer and anvil making a kind of music, she developed a good eye for how parts fit together to create a working whole. From this emerged her fascination with putting together ‘some assembly required’ furniture, wooden doll houses, and doll furniture.

Her parents seldom took the family to church, though she attended Catholic catechism or Lutheran Bible School during the summer. But when she was eleven, everything changed. She, her sister Joanne, and two cousins were wading in a prairie pothole. None of them could swim, but Joanne, always adventurous, ran into the adjacent ditch and dropped into deep water. Janet and her cousins made a chain and tried to pull her out but were unable to reach her; Janet slipped in and was saved by her cousins. After Joanne's death, Janet transferred to a Catholic academy in Devils Lake as a boarder. Upon getting a license she commuted in an old Studebaker pickup. For a brief time, she was a ghost writer for older students, giving them poems to copy as their own. “I was flattered that they thought I could write well and was yet unaware of the ethical issue of helping someone cheat.” With commuting, she found it hard to fit into her classmates' social life; plus, it was not ‘cool’ in the 1950s for girls to be good in math and science.

Two Benedictine Sisters visited the academy as recruiters for The College of St. Scholastica and made a good impression on Janet. After graduation she came to Duluth to study biology and mathematics. Like many students, she loved the architecture of the original Romanesque Chapel and Tower Hall. She attended Mass early mornings and listened to the Divine Office. She found herself deeply moved by the chant and its atmosphere of prayer. In the Benedictine Order she recognized a way of living that was deeply spiritual in a healthy and rational way, combining contemplation while ministering to people's needs. She got to know some Sisters well and so, at the beginning of her Junior year, entered as a postulant. When she became a novice, she was given the name Donna.

When she wasn't studying or at prayer, her novitiate year was filled with labor – laundry, gardening, table waiting, and dishwashing. She saw these simple tasks as the necessary underpinning of daily life and, when done with love and intention, a kind of spirituality accessible to all. After first profession she completed her studies in biology and mathematics and, for a year, taught algebra and general science at Stanbrook Hall High School. “I was pretty green



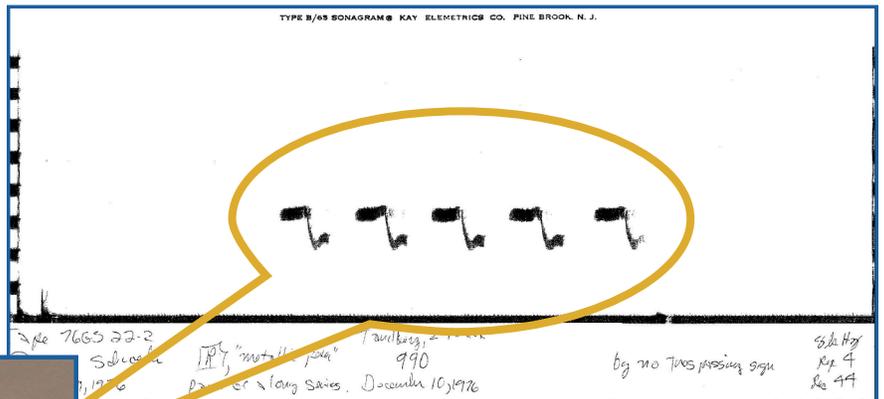
Sister Donna in Animal Biology lab.

at teaching and had much to learn.” From there she went to Our Lady of Victory School in Minneapolis to teach fourth grade. “That is a good age to teach. The children still like their teachers and are interested in learning. At Christmas they surprised me with small gifts that touched my heart.”

Then another move, this one to Gerard High School in Phoenix to teach biology and algebra. “The laboratory was well equipped and so it was a pleasure to teach, but I taught algebra in the last hour of the day, and students who were tired or who came poorly prepared struggled. I had difficulty making connections with the bored and resentful adolescents. In my last year I taught algebra in the morning and the difference was astonishing and wonderful.”

Back in Duluth, she taught biology at The College of St. Scholastica (CSS), beginning with microbiology. “These were another kind of student. They came to learn, talked about what they were learning, and helped the slower among them understand.” She went on to chair the biology department for twenty years.

In 1972, she was given a leave of absence to study Ecology at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and begin her research in animal behavior. “There is a subset of ecology called behavioral ecology that is concerned about the ways in which behaviors of animals adapt them to their niches. I chose the titmouse, a darling small grey songbird, and did most of my research in a fenced area belonging to the university. I spent two years in the woods collecting data, feeling the soft earth under my feet.” This meant slipping into the field before first light to record the dawn chorus of birdsong. “I would ride my bicycle in all weather and conditions to a spot favored by the titmouse and follow the birdsong through the woods, tape recorder on shoulder and microphone in hand. It was hard but satisfying. Once the police pulled me over in the dark, thinking I was up to no good at that hour.



Tufted Titmouse with sonogram of his call.



“I would emerge hours later, covered with mosquito bites, spiderwebs, and twigs, with recordings that I would use to generate sonograms of the calls. I still have a box of them. Those years made wonderful memories when I was tied to my desk by such things as papers that need grading.” Her PhD dissertation was titled *Whistled Song as Communication in the Tufted Titmouse*. “Sadly, most small songbird populations are decreasing rapidly because of loss of habitat, predation by domestic cats, and light pollution that confuses birds as they migrate at night.”

In 2007 her ministry took a new turn when she was asked to become involved in the formation of new Sisters. She went to Saint John's University for a certificate in monastic studies. "It was a good year, praying the Divine Office with the monks and learning more about monastic history and the 'why' behind our traditions. It deepened my appreciation for the Benedictine Order." On her return, while continuing to teach at CSS until 2013, she became director of Sisters in their first monastic profession, something she loved. With her intuitive understanding of the human heart, she sees the good in everyone and looks beyond the surface to the person within.



Sisters Michelle Dosch and Donna Schroeder shared the ministry of Formation.



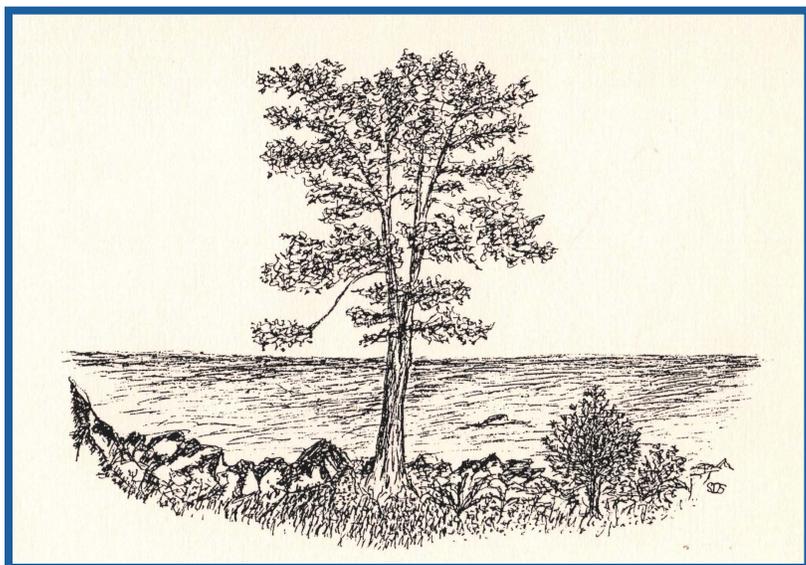
Sister Donna has served as trustee on boards for the Benedictine Health System, for its facilities in North Dakota, St. Mary's Medical Center in Duluth, and Essentia Health East. She is now on the board of The College of St. Scholastica.

All this work is balanced with recreation with her Sisters – evening games of scrabble and cards (the latter now on hold because of the COVID-19 crisis). She continues to put together and paint wooden doll houses and furniture from kits. "I like putting bits together to make something beautiful or useful. It used to be full-sized desks and filing cabinets, but now I do smaller things, although wearing bifocals makes it a challenge." She would like to have done more writing, and perhaps have studied art.

In 2002 she was blessed with a visit to Tanzania to help build a relationship with a Benedictine monastic community in Imiliwaha. While there she thought a lot about the way that humanity first emerged in this land. "I was riding in an old car with a Sister taking a short cut

through a muddy field. We came out on a dirt road, and there were women walking, carrying loads on their heads, and dressed in brilliantly colored fabrics, and I thought, 'God is here, in this place, with these people. God is inside them and the light shines out of them.' That was a powerful moment. In visiting the historic slave market in Zanzibar, I saw the shameful results of tribal warfare and the slave trade, in which our own country played a sad role. And yet everywhere there was beauty: in the animals, the faces and movement of the people, and in their music which I loved. God is here with them. With all of us."

Dollhouse and a pen-and-ink drawing



“Have You Found Him?”

by Sister Mary Catherine Shambour (mcsambour@duluthosb.org)

This is Sister Mary Catherine’s open response to the question “Have you found Him?” asked by a faithful reader of Pathways named Jim who lives in Kansas. Jim has been in communication with her and has been intrigued by a statement she made in a previous article regarding her search for God during seventy years of religious life.

Dear Jim,

Thank you for your e-mail and profound question which I shall with some difficulty attempt to answer. It means summing up the many unexpected places where I have found God, only to be encouraged to continue the search that will end when I see God face to face. Everyone’s life is a search for God, whether or not one is aware of it. Consider that each person has a unique fingerprint and DNA: there must also be a unique purpose to each life. After millennia of humanity’s search for meaning, the Good News of the Gospel is that God is also searching for us! In light of the uncertainties of the present pandemic, what has caused the present disconnect?

I would say that, for many Christians, we have failed to focus our attention on the meaning of the many crises facing humanity, and instead have concentrated mostly on getting the best out of life for ourselves. We think that’s only right, and certainly for many getting ahead is a matter of survival. But, since our American dream sets no limits on profit, those who control the resources feel free to monopolize them to their own profit, disregarding effects upon the environment, their laborers, and God’s concern for the poor. A perfect example is the rapid growth of huge corporations that control the food chain for our population. When required to shut down because of the pandemic, it is the workers and poor who suffer as millions of tons of food and livestock are wasted.

Is God pleased with what we are doing? Sadly, too few of us connect such issues with our faith. While many pray and offer their services to the poor, God is also calling us to be co-creators with his plan for the earth. We are being asked to take initiatives to save humanity, which we know



Sisters Beverly Raway, Katie Doyle, and Mary Catherine Shambour pose for a ‘Selfie with a Sister’ at the Community’s 125th anniversary celebration in 2017.

– or should know – is in grave peril. If we don’t hear the challenge in our churches, we should listen to the scientists and other prophets in our midst and take action with them.

As much as I deeply cherish my Catholic faith, I recognize that as a whole we don’t like to change or to admit our failings over the centuries. We have so many beautiful, meaningful customs and traditions that provide us grace and comfort, but we must also realize that we cannot stop the rapid rate of change in the world and must respond to its present needs. A great example of this in my lifetime was the summoning of the Second Vatican Council for the entire Church. It followed the devastation of Europe after two major wars, in which one Christian nation declared war on another and justified the annihilation of six million people. After three years of consultations under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Church Fathers – allowing a few women as observers – created a series

of documents that updated the theology of the Catholic Church, to guide it in responding to the needs and changes of the times.

We who entered religious life a decade before the Council, when religious orders were bursting with applicants and the American church was growing and thriving, were thrilled to study the Council's major documents, especially those dealing with suggested reforms in religious life. Cardinal Leon Joseph Suenens' book *The Nun in the World: Religious and the Apostolate* opened new opportunities for Sisters to spread the good news of the faith, and to discard some rules and customs that were no longer helpful to genuine religious growth.

While Vatican II helped bring many needed reforms to the Church, it also led to some reforms being made too quickly or without proper understanding. This led to the defection of many clergy and religious from their communities. Our own St. Scholastica Monastery suffered the loss of many members as we struggled to form new constitutions and norms, but we also benefited from the advice to return to the spirit of our founder, St. Benedict, which we took very seriously.

The great theologians of the Council taught us that we must be so deeply in love with God that we do not fear to engage the world through dialogue. We must seek the hidden God in our world through seeking the living God in our lives. In the words of Karl Rahner, "The Christian of the future will either be a mystic, one who has experienced something, or will be nothing at all." To be a mystic is to seek the presence of God in everything and to respond with love. It is to listen to the voice of God deep within us and to return love for love. It is to see the interconnectedness of everything and strive to discern what God is asking of us in return.

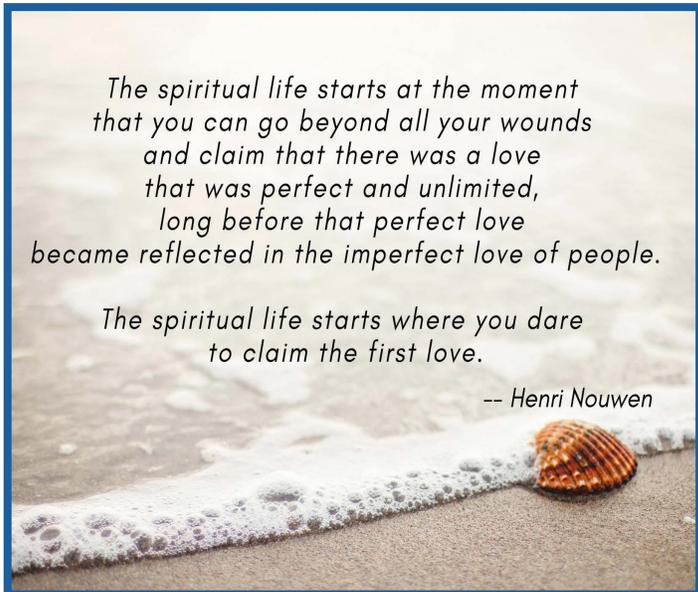
This is aided by quiet silence, a contemplative walk, listening to inspiring music, and meditative reading, particularly from Scripture. Daily devotional practices, such as the rosary or Chaplet of Divine Mercy, will become especially meaningful if recited slowly and thoughtfully,

with emphasis on what they mean for us and our world today. For those with smart phones or computers, there are many sources of inspirational materials available to help find God and meaning in these uncertain days. I hope that while we are unable to attend church and receive the sacraments, we will find God in new ways that will aid us in the difficult days ahead.

Finally, reflect on instances in your own life where you knew you were truly loved: when you received a kind word of encouragement, or felt that someone really understood you, or when someone came to assist or console you. These instances of God's presence will help prepare you for when you meet God face to face. As I come to the end of my life, these images come to my mind daily. If I had more time, I would love to tell you more about how I found God in such unexpected places as "the evil empire" of the Soviet Union, where I had the privilege of studying, teaching, participating in dialogues with peacemakers and assisting the Church. Over thirty years on eighteen service trips, I made lifelong friends.

So, Jim, my final answer is, never give up on your search, for "where there is love, there is God."

Sister Mary Catherine



*The spiritual life starts at the moment
that you can go beyond all your wounds
and claim that there was a love
that was perfect and unlimited,
long before that perfect love
became reflected in the imperfect love of people.*

*The spiritual life starts where you dare
to claim the first love.*

-- Henri Nouwen

Highlights

Candlemas Day

On February 2, the Church observes the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, commemorating the day on which the child Jesus was brought to the temple to be consecrated to God. Because the true light has now come into the world, the commemoration includes the blessing of candles used in liturgical services throughout the year that symbolize the light of Jesus Christ to all peoples. For this reason, the feast is often called Candlemas Day.

The icon shows the moment when St. Simeon took the infant Jesus into his arms and prayed, “Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel” (Luke 2:29-32).



(left) At the baptismal font is an icon of St. Simeon (by Sr. Therese Carson) with candles to be blessed. (right) Fr. Gabriel and the altar with representative candles.

This winter we were blessed with Fr. Gabriel Baltes, a Benedictine priest from Procopius Abbey who was on sabbatical and staying with us for a while. He eventually joined us in lock-down when the COVID-19 pandemic changed all our plans.

College of St. Scholastica inaugurates new President

Dr. Barbara McDonald was formally installed as the 13th president of The College of St. Scholastica, beginning with solemn Mass on the eve of the Feast of St. Scholastica.

At the inaugural ceremony the next morning, CSS alumna Mayor Emily Larson was Master of Ceremonies, Sister Kathleen Del Monte gave the invocation, Sister Beverly Raway welcomed Dr. McDonald on behalf of the Sisters, and Christopher Dolan, Chair of the Board of Trustees, read the investiture.

The new president spoke of the College’s strengths and diversity and of her vision for its future.



Christopher Dolan and Sister Beverly Raway place the College of St. Scholastica Medallion on Dr. Barbara McDonald.



Amy Bergstrom, Chief Diversity Officer, presented her with a ceremonial Anishinaabe Shared Spirits blanket with symbols of the sacredness and unity of all creation, and the Anishinaabe group *Around the Earth* drummed an honor song.

Dr. Barbara McDonald comes to CSS from North Hennepin Community College near Minneapolis, where she served four years as president. She was born and raised in Beirut, Lebanon, where her father worked for an oil company. She has lived in the Middle East, Asia, Europe, and Africa, teaching English as a second language while raising three sons and a daughter. She and her husband now live within an easy walk from the campus.



Feast of St. Scholastica at the College

Each year on the Feast of St. Scholastica, the Sisters bring sweetness to students at The College of St. Scholastica in the form of doughnuts, granola bars, and juice. Distributing doughnuts and smiles in Storms Den are (from left to right), Diane Vertin, interim VP of Academic Affairs; Megan Perry-Spears, Dean of Students; Mary Anderson, Director of Career Services and Experiential Learning; and Sister Mary Josephine Torborg, Associate Professor of Theology and Religious Studies.



Mardi Gras on the brink of Lent

Each year, on the evening before Ash Wednesday, administrators and staff of the Benedictine Health System put on a splendid Mardi Gras celebration for the Sisters. Mardi Gras is traditionally the last indulgence in rich foods before the rigorous Lenten fast. Ours has become a celebration of community, where women of diverse backgrounds and ages come together to share smiles and laughter. For “Fat Tuesday” we wear funny hats and masks, and dine on pizza in all its variety, salad, ice cream, soft drinks, and beer. This year, local musician Kevin Buck led us in a sing-along of music from over the decades, show tunes, and favorite hymns. It brought some of us back to our youth; the years fell away and for an evening we were 20 or 30 or 40 again.

Next page, top: Sisters Beverly Horn and Daniel Lynch; Sister Theresa Spinler; Sister Donna Schroeder; Sister Jeanne Ann Weber; Kevin Buck. Bottom: Fr. Gabriel Baltes; Sisters Pauline Micke and Elizabeth Farias; Statue of Mary, Mother of God, with beads; Sister Dorene King



Lent at the Monastery



On Ash Wednesday, Christians moved into the season of Lent. In the Liturgy of the Hours, in place of the banished “Alleluia,” we intone “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless glory.” Lent is a time of quiet joy and transformation, where we see all creation bears the imprint of God and is therefore a sacrament. This Lent we returned to the monastic tradition of bowing one’s head when greeting each other, recognizing the presence of Christ in each person.

In the Chapel Gathering Space, Sister Theresa Spinler placed a plain wooden cross among stones and driftwood that speak of the spiritual poverty of sin. Baskets recalled the manna that sustained the Israelites for forty years of wanderings, for God is infinitely merciful and provides for our needs even when we have turned our faces away.



At the front of the chapel was a woodcut by +Sister Mary Charles McGough of *The Return of the Prodigal Son*. When we turn from sin to ask God’s forgiveness, God comes running to meet us and embraces us with undiminished love and, yes, with joy. In the Book of Tobit, we read, “If you turn back to God with all your heart, God will turn to you with a face no longer hidden” (Tobit 13:6). To seek God’s presence in everything we see and hear and do is to live in that liminal space where the human and divine meet.

“And then, the whole world changed:” Monastic Life in a Time of Pandemic

by Sister Therese Carson

It is one thing to write calmly about “that liminal space where the human and divine meet.” It is quite another matter to be pushed over the cliff. Suddenly it is desperately important to know that God waits at the bottom with open arms. This hope is what gets us out of bed each morning to face another day of lockdown.

“Courage doesn’t always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, “I will try again tomorrow.”
~ Mary Anne Radmacher

We had time to prepare, even before Governor Walz issued his first stay-at-home order for Minnesotans, which began March 27. This Community is blessed with two leaders who hold doctorates in nursing: Sister Beverly Raway, elected as prioress in 2015, and Sister Beverly Horn, subprioress. Using information from the Centers for Disease Control and the Minnesota Department of Health, they developed a plan grounded in science and adapted for the special needs of a religious community whose charism is communal prayer.



After our last Sunday Mass on March 15, where our friends were told of our plans, the outside doors to the Chapel were locked. This was a symbolic severing of the visible aspects of hospitality that hurt deeply, even though we knew it would be temporary. Public Mass throughout the Diocese of Duluth was then suspended beginning March 20.

We are blessed to have Fr. Gabriel Baltes, OSB who has been with us on sabbatical. He celebrates private Sunday Mass with one Sister present as assistant and delivers pithy and moving homilies. The rest of the Community takes part electronically, as many of you do for your parish Mass, using an internal broadcast from the security camera in the Chapel. This will regretfully end when Fr. Gabriel returns to his Community in Lisle, Illinois. He has been a blessing to us all, for with you we share a thirst for the Eucharist “like a deer that longs for running streams” (Psalm 42).

“We can believe that God is present and still be either six feet away or in the safety of our homes on Sunday morning. The Church will always be the Church, no matter how physically close its members are. God isn’t just found in the confines of a physical church building – God meets us where we are.”

~ Miguel Petrosky



We began by restricting access to monastic buildings, starting March 13. It took a few days to set this up, to determine who of our employees could work from home and who needed to remain on site. The Center for Spirituality and Enrichment cancelled all activities. We regretfully bid *au revoir* to our volunteers until we can once again pray and work together. Hand sanitizing stations appeared at elevators, stairways, and entrances, and Sisters and staff were instructed to wash their hands frequently.



spend time with one individual,” Sister Lois Eckes commented. “We are getting to know one another more deeply.”



We pray communally in the Liturgy of the Hours, with some Sisters in the chapel at least six feet apart and others joining via television. Sister Jeanne Ann Weber and her team continue the Benedictine tradition of adapting liturgy for the circumstances of the time.

In our prayers we remember you and your needs, those caring for the sick, those who are isolated in their homes, and those whose work supports daily life. With you we have discovered that western civilization rests on a bedrock of underpaid truck drivers, mail carriers, UPS and Fedex drivers, distributors, and grocery store stockers and cashiers. For large monastic communities, add housekeepers and cooks.

“Whether or not this plague, like the biblical ones, is a punishment, it certainly is apocalyptic. I don’t mean this in an end-of-the-world way, but rather in the literal sense of apocalypse as an unveiling – a revelation of how things really are. This crisis has ripped the cover off certain truths about our souls and our society.”~ Peter Mommsen, Editor, Plough Magazine

To break potential transmission of viruses, Sisters don masks and gloves to serve food in the dining room. Instead of having four at each table, two Sisters sit at the far ends; most have found that this builds up relationships. “Now we have an entire meal to just

The lockdown has been hard for Sisters on Benet Hall, our licensed assisted living center. Following guidelines from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), they must remain on Benet Hall, take meals in their rooms, and may not mingle with the larger Community. Besides the caregivers and housekeepers, only two Sisters who look out for their needs may visit, wearing masks. This separation of friends is a grief, but phone calls and notes reach across the chasm to keep us united.

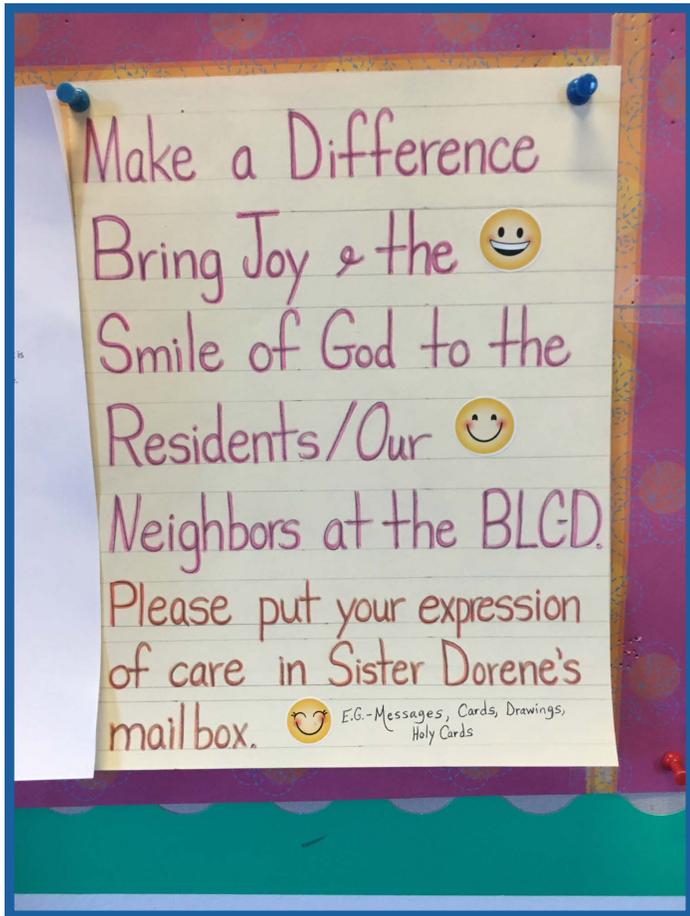
Sister Barbara Higgins misses being with the larger community. “And I miss walking outside – big time! I deal with it by keeping my sense of humor and avoiding news programs. This has deepened my trust and love for God and helped me appreciate the many blessings I have, and I pray for those who have few resources. I hear that out in the world people are reaching out to each other, going beyond small acts of kindness. Everyone is forced to slow their pace and focus on what is essential: on God and family. That gives me hope.”

*“Why are you cast down, my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise God, my help and my God.”
~ Psalm 42:11*

Sister Josine Krausnick also misses walking outside, especially now that spring has come. “Eating alone in my room is not much fun, and we are missing Friday night movie and popcorn! But once I acknowledged and accepted God’s presence in all this, it became easier to embrace my own personal commitment to do

God's will, not mine. Lent and Holy Week provided a great setting for this. I'm becoming more patient with what is and am grateful to every staff member who works so hard to keep us safe and healthy."

*"Times of crisis reveal the true nature of a person. In some it brings out their inherent self-centeredness; in others, their compassion and desire to help."
~ author unknown*



There are three institutions on our campus: the Monastery, the College of St. Scholastica, and the Benedictine Living Community of Duluth. We are isolated from one another to prevent COVID-19 from spreading, but we remain connected via notes, emails, and social media. This is vital because, as Sister Pauline Micke says, "None of us can live and thrive without trust and hope, no matter what lifestyle we are living."

Some have become email pen pals with students isolated with their families, to help keep them connected with the campus and to let them know that God remains with us, that we all are the

'walking wounded' beloved by God who yearns to touch our spirit and heal us. We are building strong relationships that – who knows? – may lead to new vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life.

"There are moments in history when people of faith must ask what their faith instructs them to do." ~ Anne Nelson

New adjustments to changing circumstances continue; as the prioress said at the outset, "If we don't change something at least twice a week, then something is not right." Meanwhile, we are thriving as a monastic community. With the suspension of most outside ministries, there is more time for prayer, for meditation, for just *being*. Drawing back for a while revealed how busy our lives had become. Now we are resting in monastic silence and contemplation.

Sitting further apart in prayer has not broken our connection with each other. "I am more aware of the movement of God's grace among us," says Sister Lois Eckes. "We are more in unison in word and mind." Sister Beverly Raway agrees. "I find I pay more attention when praying the psalms. I hear a word or phrase that gives me hope and makes me listen more closely to what God is saying to us."

Sisters now meet at 3:00 p.m. in the chapel for a half hour of sacred music or the rosary, so that those on Benet Hall can join via television in their rooms. Exposition and Adoration on the last Sunday of the month is well attended. Fr. Gabriel has been speaking to groups of ten about Church history as seen through the lens of liturgy and on the Second Vatican Council. In the midst of the unknown, our lives are becoming richer.

Although card games have been suspended, Sister Donna Schroeder continues to play scrabble with her friend Sister Theresa Jodocy; they sit six feet apart and wash the tiles afterwards. Sister Donna adds, "And I have more time for reading and *lectio divina* which helps my mind be fully present at communal prayer. Although I can't travel to see people, there is time to get in touch with people I haven't heard from in some time."

As prioress, Sister Beverly's days remain full. "But I go for more walks now. I especially like to take an evening walk round the cemetery, stopping at the

graves of our former prioresses to ‘listen’ for advice. What I hear is usually in the form of the four C’s: Keep going with courage, consistency, compassion, and calm. They have certainly all faced challenges and know what we are facing and are praying for us from the communion of saints.” On a recent walk she encountered a mother bear with two cubs. “The wildlife around the Monastery and around the world are thriving and moving closer to our open areas. The skies are clearing and the waters becoming cleaner. I hope that we’ll stay with that trend after we come out of this crisis.”



Prioress' graves and the Pietà

Looking out from our hilltop, we grieve for the suffering this pandemic has caused, including the deaths of family members and friends, and are thankful to have a safe place in which to shelter. Most welcome the minor inconveniences – the paucity of fresh food, our restricted mobility – as sacrifices that teach us to watch out for each other more. We help support the nonprofits that are housing homeless people in hotels and providing them with medical care; for, as the whole world discovered, our survival depends on caring for each other. “This has shown us that the well-being of people is more important than corporate profit,” Sister Donna says. “Love of neighbor is central. We do not impose risks on others, and we pay attention to others’ needs, and volunteer to help them. I am less worried about our current restrictions than I am about what will become the new normal.”

Sister Dorene adds, “It is vitally important that we acknowledge our oneness and dispel the myths of superiority of any nation, race, gender, and – yes – our status as human beings. We need to be intentional about all the created order and thereby foster the well-being of all.”

“God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.”

~ St. John Henry Newman

Biblical plagues do not end with a return to the *status quo*, but instead show us how to come together in new ways. We survive by helping each other thrive. “When this is over,” Sister Beverly says, “I want us to remember that the earth is our common home. We are all part of the circle of life. When we scar the earth and pollute and ravage the forests, it all comes back to us. We are one with all of creation and when one part suffers, we all suffer.”

“We can only live the changes we wish to see; we cannot think our way to humanity. Every one of us, and every group with which we live and work, must become the model of the era which we desire to create. ... We must therefore strive cooperatively to create the new world. There is no time left for destruction, for hatred, and for anger. We must build – in hope, and in joy, and in celebration.” ~ Ivan Illich

Or, as Sister Lois says, “We truly are one family, very much interdependent. Our actions matter and make a difference, for good or ill, to our planet. I don’t know what the future holds, but I know Who holds the future, and with that I am content.”

A Brave New Benedictine World

by Dawn Carrillo, Director, Center for Spirituality and Enrichment

In 1931, the English author Aldous Huxley wrote a novel entitled *Brave New World*. When I read this book many years ago for a high school English class, I felt discomfort and fear at the possibilities being presented in this classic work. While our experience over the last two months certainly bears little resemblance to the totalitarian, technologically engineered police state presented in this story, the uncomfortable feelings I had while reading this novel have surfaced in a déjà vu-like way on several occasions for me recently. Life as we know it has been rocked — turned upside down for some — and we aren't sure how or if we will ever get back to some semblance of what we understand as normal.

*Unprecedented times...finding our new normal...
Vaccines... daily briefings...
Confirmed infections... deaths on the rise...
Flatten the curve...ventilators numerous enough for
the ill...
Shelter-in-place...herd immunity... antibodies...
droplet precautions...death tolls...*

These phrases have, quite alarmingly, become a part of our everyday lexicon. The COVID-19 pandemic and all of its uncertainties and ramifications hang over all of our waking moments, operating as the “elephant in the room” in the midst of each conversation, idea, or hopeful plan. It is our reality at this moment in time, and the context in which we live and breathe.

Try as I might, it is difficult to awaken each day to this new reality. There is a darkness I encounter in the fear I feel every day for my children, for loved ones, for the world, for myself — a darkness that drains my creativity and threatens paralysis. As I read through my Facebook news feed, I see that I am not the only one experiencing this darkness. People everywhere are frightened, reaching out for answers, for comfort, for some sense of sanity in a situation that seems surreal and overwhelming. Sleep disturbances, anxiety, and a general malaise are commonly reported by many. There is no rosy picture here; this is just plain hard.

I wonder if this is somewhat how the disciples felt after Jesus was crucified? They, too, were paralyzed with fear, huddling together in hiding places trying to understand their new normal. Life as they knew it for three hope-filled and exciting years with Jesus had come to an abrupt and violent end. Their hopes and dreams for Jesus to be the Messiah they expected, the one who would release them from the tyranny of Roman oppression, were shattered. But we know the rest of the story...that from within the darkness, the Light of the World was revealed.

Darkness and light, fear and hope, despair and unbridled joy are the constants in life since the dawn of time. We have only to read any part of Sacred Scripture to see these forces ever-present, and certainly most operative in the story of Jesus, the Christ. As people of faith, we have a challenge to live into. During times of fear and darkness, our task is to remember to move toward and live into the Light. To live in hope. To be aware that there is more to the story. This is undeniably hard, but in the midst of the darkness, we can also see the overwhelming presence of God at work in the courage, dedication, and selflessness that is present all around us in so many people and in so many ways. The pain remains with us, yet it takes on a different hue as we turn our face toward the Light.

St. Benedict also struggled with incredible social challenges, and out of these challenges came the Rule of Benedict, a rule for monastic life and values that have stood the test of time. For over 1500 years, Benedict's wisdom has modeled a way for all of us to move toward interior harmony, remarkably effective in times of chaos and uncertainty. Benedict



shows us a path of peace and tranquility in the midst of darkness...a brave new Benedictine world.

At the **Center for Spirituality and Enrichment**, a ministry of the Benedictine Sisters of St. Scholastica, we continue to journey with you. Flowing from the wisdom of St. Benedict and St. Scholastica and the 125 years of lived experience of this monastic community, we strive to offer programming to accompany you wherever you are in your spiritual life, to be a force of healing peace. Though we cannot, at this time, come together in our usual ways, we do have offerings that we invite you to prayerfully consider.



Consider meeting with a spiritual director, either online or by phone.

- Our **spiritual direction ministry** is alive and well, either through an online venue or by telephone. You may feel a need for just one session as you navigate your own circumstances, or it may become a longer relationship with your director. Appointments are typically one hour in length. To schedule, email retreat@duluthsb.org or call Dawn at the Center for Spirituality and Enrichment at (218) 723-6699.
- Remain connected to us through our **Center blog** at <https://retreatduluth.org/blog/>. Benedict has profound wisdom for us to consider in our response to the pandemic and life in general, and we invite you to explore this with us in our reflections.
- Finally, we would like to invite you to join a **newly forming Omega group**! Omega groups are discussion groups based on the work of theologian and author Ilia Delio, OSF. Sister Ilia has been focusing much of her recent work on the current pandemic, and we invite you to join with us as we reflect on what God is saying to us today. We will begin meeting with this group twice a month through Zoom — a very simple process, I assure you! Please visit our website at retreatduluth.org or call Dawn at (218) 723-6699 for more information.

I leave you with a few lines to contemplate from a lovely poem I came across recently:

*We ignite not in the light, but in lack thereof,
For it is in loss that we truly learn to love.
In this chaos, we will discover clarity.
In suffering, we must find solidarity...
...When this ends, we'll smile sweetly, finally seeing
In testing times, we became the best of beings.*

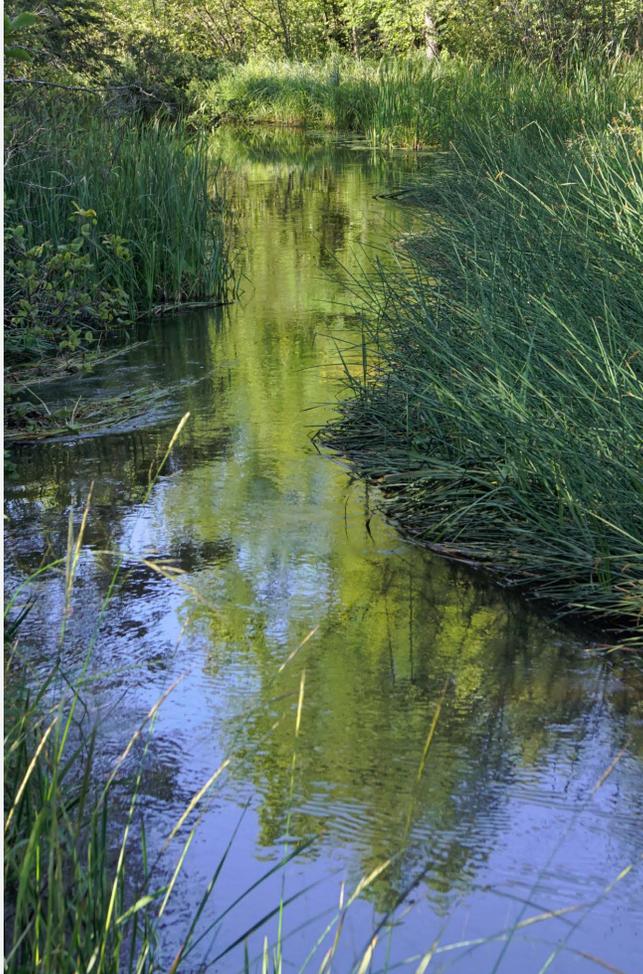
~ Amanda Gorman, *The Miracle of Morning*



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Our lay volunteers become part of our life as drivers or companions for Sisters with outside appointments. They welcome guests and callers at the Information Desk, add joy to our elders' lives on Benet Hall, bring their musical talents to our liturgies, serve in Monastery Books and Gifts, work beside us to keep our gardens groomed and productive, and help organize and put on the Christmas Bazaar.

If you would like to share your time with the Sisters as a volunteer, please call our volunteer coordinators Kathy Noble at (218) 343-3589, or Mary Tanner at (218) 831-7086, or email at volunteer@duluthosb.org.

**Please join us for Sunday Eucharist
at 11:00 a.m.**

in Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel

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