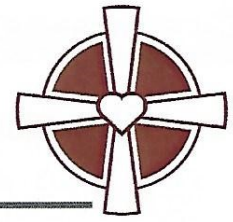


The Gleaner



An occasional newsletter of the Federation of St. Gertrude

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Message from the President by Sr. Jeanne Weber

After Sr. Alberta Dieker of Mount Angel died, Sr. Jane sent me a list of aphorisms she had gleaned from her writings. I printed these and taped them to my computer and whenever I take a few moments to read and ponder them, they inspire me and guide my work. I share some of what they have meant to me and encourage you to ponder their meaning for you.

1) *Every day is a gift.* Period—no matter what. Some days I might be tempted to respond with *Huh!* And yet—these words often move me into a different space—one of gratitude for the presence of God in whatever the day holds. The second is like the first—2) *Life is a mystery.* Not a mystery as in we're supposed to figure it out—but a mystery that can inspire wonder and awe as we ponder the presence and action of God in ourselves, our sisters, and in the situations we face, both in our monasteries and in our nation and world. Remembering that God is in this with us, gently and firmly loving us through it, can be a tremendous source of hope in these difficult times.

3) *Some things don't matter so much.* This one has a sense of humor. I had to remind myself of its wisdom recently when the menu said *BLT's* (my favorite summer meal) and we ran out of bacon before I went through the line. Can you hear the air leaving the balloon? 4) *Routine is good, but expect change.* Evidently God has determined that my knowing with some confidence what the future holds is one of those things that doesn't matter so much. In the midst of this pandemic, we've let go of so many things, the illusion of control and knowing what is coming down the pike being chief among them. What gifts might be hidden in this time of upheaval? Perhaps learning to fall back into the arms of God in complete trust? 5) *Some things I don't need to know.* Mostly those questions start with "why." I need to challenge myself to ask the questions in a way that leads me deeper into the mystery, rather than in a way that expects black and white answers.

6) *Never give up on anyone*—least of all yourself. This one reminds me of that beautiful last "tool" in RB Chapter 4—*Never lose hope in God's mercy.* We can be so prone to judging situations, ourselves, other people as good/bad, right/wrong. Ever wonder what life would be like if we could rather see Christ in everyone and everything? I share the following poem by Sr. Judith Bloxam of Mt. Angel, which says it better than I.

Morning Praise

Awake at daybreak... your heart washed clean.
Open your eyes as you arise, and gaze...
into the face of one who comes to greet you.
Search the lines of love...
at times, somewhat tense and tired,
but search them well with single-hearted clarity.
Do you not... begin to see...
deep down in these eyes that mirror your own,
begin to see... the Face of Christ,
shadowed reflection in so many faces
giving Praise at daybreak. S. Judith Bloxam, Mt Angel





Sisters of Our Lady of Grace Monastery, Beech Grove Remember the Victims of COVID-19



At the end of July, we began tolling a bell for the daily number of Hoosier victims of Covid-19. It is a solemn period of silence and stillness at the end of Evening Prayer as we listen to the haunting echo of a handbell ring 3, 8, 15, 25 times. We do not know individual names or even from what part of the State they come. All we know is that a Hoosier has died and a family is grieving.

Our ritual was prompted by reading in the Indianapolis

Sr. Sheila Marie Fitzpatrick rings the bell for Indiana victims of Covid-19. Star, day after day, the number of people who have died in Indiana. Like you, we are sad for people we don't even know who have passed away because of the Coronavirus. Each sister has created her own ritual during the resounding of the bell.

One, with closed eyes and open, upturned palms, prays "Number one, may you rest in peace. Number two, may you rest in peace." As the last bell sounds, she closes her palms and asks God to enfold the grieving families. Another, prays "May you rest in peace" and ends with a prayer for the dead and a Hail Mary. Still another prays, "May you rest in peace and may God bring comfort to your family."

The number, provided every noon by the Indiana State Board of Health, fluctuates daily. Our plan is to continue the practice until we no longer have reason to do so.



Jubilarians and a Centenarian from St. Scholastica Monastery, Fort Smith



Jubilarians at Fort Smith include Sr. Pierre Vorster, 80 years (upper left); Sr. Regina Schroeder, 60 years (upper right); Sr. Miriam Hoffman, 70 years (lower left); and Sr. Louise Sharum, 70 years (lower right). The jubilarians were gifted with a declaration by the Mayor of Fort Smith and were entertained by Gregory Allen who plays the violin.



Sister Marcella Schmaltz, a native of Paris, Arkansas and one of the founding members of Saint Benedict's Monastery in Canyon, Texas celebrated her 100th birthday on July 5.



Sr. Dorothy Levandosky Installed at St. Benedict's Monastery, Winnipeg

Despite the hard work of the Winnipeg election committee to get them permission to enter the country, Sisters Jeanne Weber and Jacquelyn Ernster were turned back at the Canadian border as they tried to get to Winnipeg to facilitate the community's discernment and election of Prioress in mid-August. Hence the Winnipeg community met with them and Sister Kathy Huber via Zoom. After setting their directions for the next four years and taking some time for discernment, the community, with the assistance of the Sr. Jeanne and the Federation Council, concluded that the best course of action at this time would be to have an administrator. Sister Dorothy Levandosky



was thus appointed Administrator for the next two years. S. Mary Coswin, Federation Councilor, was designated by Sr. Jeanne to do the honors of installing S. Dorothy. S. Dorothy retired

from a 45-year teaching career last June and brings many gifts to the community and her leadership position.

Sister Mary Coswin (left) installs Sr. Dorothy Levandosky as administrator.



Sister Dorothy Levandosky

Sr. Jane Becker Installed at Mount St. Benedict Monastery, Crookston

On Tuesday, August 4, Sr. Jane Becker of Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand was installed as Administrator of Mount St. Benedict Monastery for a term of two years. Sr. Jane is a licensed psychologist and has most recently served her community as formation director and sub-prioress.

Before she died Sr. Shawn Carruth had led the community in discernment around future leadership. As the result of that process, the members made the decision to ask for an administrator. After Sr. Shawn's death, because the office of prioress cannot be vacant more than three months, Sr. Kathleen McGeary, subprioress, was appointed administrator and very ably led the community until Sr. Jane could be installed.



Sr. Jane Becker and Sr. Kathleen McGeary

Sr. Jennifer Kehrwald Installed at St. Martin Monastery, Rapid City

Sister Jennifer Kehrwald of Sacred Heart Monastery in Yankton was installed as administrator of St. Martin Monastery in Rapid City during Vespers on Friday, May 22. In 2018-19, the community, under the leadership of Sr. Mary Wegher, undertook a discernment process to determine if they had future leadership. This process culminated with a decision to ask for a monastic administrator. Sr. Jennifer, in addition to having been procurator and prioress in Yankton, also led the Crookston community as administrator for four years.



President's (Hopeful) Schedule

September 13-18—Visitation, Crookston

October 7-8—Federation Council meeting (via Zoom)

October 29-31—Installation, Fort Smith

November 8-12—Pastoral Visit, Mt. Angel

December 3-7—Visitation, Madison



Happenings at the Monastery of St. Gertrude

Since the lockdown we have been engaged in new endeavors, in outreach to the many people, who miss being with us. Sr. Teresa Jackson hosted a six-week on-line retreat on Benedictine spirituality for 535 participants, beginning in March. Then Theresa Henson, head of Communication and Marketing, hosted a six-session once a week on-line class on art and beauty, in which twenty-two paid participants were engaged. Theresa also started the kickstarter program, which raised monies for operations. In July, an online program committee was formed consisting of Sr. Mary Forman, Sr. Kim Marie Jordan—Director of Operations, Sr. Teresa Jackson, Theresa Henson, and Will Hunter—Innkeeper, all of whom have training/experience in ministry, theology, spirituality, and/or therapeutic engagements. All departments of the monastery have been welcomed to present proposals for on-line presentations. The name of this new endeavor is called **St. Gertrude's L.I.V.E.**



St. Gertrude's L.I.V.E.

(Living in a Virtual Environment)

Online Monastic Studies, Spirituality, and Arts Wherever You Are

For more information see: <https://stgertrudes.org/st-gertrudes-l-i-v-e/>

In addition, the Spirit Center is revising the format for presentation of its programming by considering weekly day-long presentation of topics.

Three sets of duos were asked to contribute the story of their lives for StoryCorps, by engaging in an audio conversation of significant life events, to be stored at the archives of Story Corps in NYC, which makes these stories available to Northwest Public Radio programming. Those pairs were Sister Barbara Jean Glodowski and her sister Mary Anne, former Sister; Sisters Kim Marie Jordan and Mary Forman; and Theresa Henson and Will Hunter.

When Sister Agnes Reichlin died on July 22, 2020, Theresa Henson found out how to live-stream Agnes' Vigil and Mass of Resurrection, so her family and friends could view these celebrations of her life. Following those ceremonies, Theresa also live-streamed the Perpetual Profession of Sister Karen Marie Martin, on August 15, 2020. Since then the Sunday Eucharist has been live-streamed, to the gratitude and joy of many of our oblates, friends and supporters, who have posted their positive comments.

Recently a new automatic door has been installed into the Second Floor Sun Porch Wing for our elders, thanks to a grant from SOAR! [Support Our Aging Religious]. The old folding door was on its last legs and we are so grateful for this new door. We have also received an NRRO grant, which will allow a working collaboration with consultants from Plante Moran to assist us in analyses of our plant and buildings and our finances, so as to increase revenue and decrease expenses and increase our sustainability fund, which includes retirement and the future of our external ministries.

Finally, Deborah Jordan, Assoc. Professor at Jacksonville University, Florida, has asked the Sisters and employees of the monastery to participate in her "Pen Pal Program: a snail-mail letter sharing project," with the students of her class. Students and monastery participants will write a series of seven handwritten letters to their pen pal, based on a series of prompts provided by the professor. The rationale is to encourage engagement in "a carefully crafted 'conversation' with a friend and ally," in an art form seemingly lost in the age of electronic messaging with its textese.



Mount Tabor Sisters Remember Kentucky Dead

Like Benedictine monasteries across the world, the sisters of the Dwelling Place Monastery are called to Daily Office by the ringing of our monastery bell. Since March, it has rung for another reason, to remember the Kentuckians who died the previous day due to the corona virus, Covid-19.

Shortly after the first Kentuckian died from the virus, our governor asked all religious, civic and governmental organizations to ring bells every day at 10:00 am in honor of the Kentucky lives lost to the virus. Here at the Dwelling Place, Sister Kathy DiVaio has taken on this ministry of remembrance, one toll for each life lost. Since the first day, it has been silent only four times. Yet we trust in God’s mercy and in science and so we pray and go about our daily lives.

Life is settling into the new normal here on our mountain. Chores are being done, ministries attended to, and masks and hand sanitizer containers are everywhere. We have had volunteers come to work on our buildings and grounds but have not been able to offer the hospitality that is so life giving to us and them. We miss the larger community of worship and ministry but are thankful for the gift of community and the constancy of monastic life.



Clockwise from left: Srs. Ruth Fox, Lucille Heidt, Patti Koehler, Carol Axtmann, Kathleen Kuntz, Marie Hunkler, Michael Emond, Renee Brannigan, Laura Hecker, and Paula Larson

News from Sacred Heart Monastery, Dickinson

On August 19th we celebrated our first year anniversary of being in our new home in Dickinson. It went fast!!! We are all still present from a year ago. We have adjusted to being “city slickers”. We do miss the quiet of the prairies. One of the grieving points was no longer having a huge garden. Our garden is the size of a postage stamp here. However, quite to our surprise we have very generous neighbors who are loading us up with beets, cucumbers both slicing and canning size, tomatoes, green and yellow beans, etc. So back, we go to Richardton to get canning jars, and now all are happily at work stocking up for the winter. So we continue to count our blessings.



Left: Srs. Michael and Kathleen canning pickles.

Right: Srs. Ruth, Carol, Patti, Lucille, and Kathleen snapping beans.



News from House of Bread Monastery, Nanaimo



Sr. Jean Ann won the treasure hunt!

After 12 years of planning we will soon be completing our twofold goal of finding a way to age in place and share what we have with others. In September we transition to become Abbeyfield St. Benedict, a home for healthy seniors who want both independence and companionship. Our lasting legacy will be to continue to create community, a true Benedictine value. We welcome prayer as we begin this new adventure.

In the last two weeks we have lived a Staycation. This involved later prayer times, alternatives to scheduled meals, activities that included, treasure hunts, guessing games, outdoor activities, movies and other fun activities.



Sr. Mary Ann holds the guessing game prize bag!

Benedictine Sisters of Mt. Angel Take Annual Founder’s Day Dinner to Virtual Stage



The pandemic has affected nearly every aspect of life throughout the world. It is no different for the Benedictine Sisters of Mt. Angel who recently made the decision to move their annual Founder’s Day fundraising dinner from historic Agatha Hall to the virtual space of Facebook and YouTube. Now called the Founder’s Day Virtual Celebration, the campaign will span nearly 8 weeks and will include a virtual and direct mail appeal.

And then there is, of course, the monastery mustard. “We had to find a way to incorporate our famous mustard,” said Mission Advancement Director Michael Trevino. “It is something our supporters really enjoyed. The sisters were very well known locally for their Monastery Mustard. In 2015, the difficult decision was made to discontinue production. But many loyal fans remained. In 2018, it was decided the mustard would return in a very limited capacity – the Founder’s Day Dinner. “It was originally meant to be a gift to those who came to the dinner,” said Sister Jane Hibbard, pastoral administrator. “We had to find a way to involve the mustard with a virtual event.” The sisters decided the mustard would return as part of

“thank you” gift baskets to sponsors. A one year’s supply of mustard will also be given away as a virtual door prize.

Summer Fun at St. Martin’s Monastery, Rapid City

How do you vacation when you can’t leave the monastery? With encouragement from Sister Jennifer Kehrwald, our new administrator, we sisters in Rapid City planned occasional mini celebrations to enhance the regular summer schedule and refresh our spirits. They included the opportunity to take a personal day off, Sunday Sundaes, a later time for Eucharist and morning prayer, a progressive dinner, S’mores in the front yard, a Labor Day barbeque, and the possibility of a drive through Spearfish Canyon to see the fall leaves.

In July Father Michael Peterson, OSB of St. John’s Abbey gave our retreat conferences via ZOOM. The theme was “Benedictine Resilience.” At the end of each conference Michael graced us by playing original musical compositions on one of his many recorders.



Clockwise from lower left: Srs. Mary, Marmion, Jennifer, Jane Frances, Therese Marie, and Lorane.



Ferdinand Community Days and Missioning: Due to COVID-19 cases increasing in Indiana, we were not able to hold community meetings in July as we normally would. Instead, we adjusted the schedule from three days to two and conducted a hybrid gathering with those sisters living away from the monastery participating via Zoom. At the end of our summer



Sr. Anita Louise commissions Sr. Roxanne.



Mission card by Sr. Jane Becker.

meetings, we always hold a missioning ceremony. Our mission sisters participated via

Zoom. Later, Sr. Anita Louise and Sr. Rose, prioress and subprioress, visited the mission deaneries that were located in Jasper, St. Meinrad, Evansville, and Louisville, delivering their mission cards, bestowing a blessing upon them, and having an outdoor distanced visit with the sisters. Sr. Jane Becker created the artwork that accompanied our mission cards, depicting Benedict's vision of the world gathered in a ray of light.

Cupola Repair: When we renovated the monastery church in 2001 (completed in 2005), we did not include repair/replacement of the copper cupola at the top of the dome. During the past few years, however, when it rained particularly hard, water would leak from the cupola to the floor of the church. With the financial assistance of a donor, we were able to fix the cupola. Helming Brothers of Jasper, Indiana, removed the cross at the top of and then began creating new copper panels for the cupola. After installing the new copper panels, the cross will be gilded before being returned to the top of the dome.



Srs. Anita Louise and Rose with cross from the top of the cupola.





From the Archives of Holy Wisdom Monastery



**St. Benedict Monastery in Sioux City, Iowa.
This building no longer exists.**

Holy Wisdom Monastery traces its origin to a Benedictine community of women in Maria-Rickenbach, Switzerland. In the mid-19th century, sisters from this monastery came to the US and founded a new Benedictine community dedicated to meeting the needs of a growing immigrant population. Mary Ellen McDermott, a young American woman, chose to enter this German-speaking Benedictine community in Conception, Missouri. She became Sister Gertrude and learned to speak German so well that many believed her to be of German descent. In 1881, Sister Gertrude and several sisters traveled by train and boat to the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in the Dakota Territory to teach at a government school



**Sr. Gertrude McDermott,
Founding Prioress**

for Native American children. After many challenging and unusual experiences, including a friendship with Chief Sitting Bull, the Lakota warrior, Sister Gertrude became the founding prioress of a new Benedictine community in Iowa. Mother Gertrude arrived in Sioux City, Iowa with four sisters. The sisters put down roots in the heart of the city and became the Sisters of St. Benedict of Sioux City, Iowa. Their ministries in Sioux City included a home for girls and women, and a hospital and nursing school.



Main building, Holy Wisdom Monastery today.

In 1953, at the invitation of Bishop William P. O'Connor, the sisters moved to Madison Wisconsin to open a high school for girls. From the beginning of their time in Madison, they nurtured a vibrant ecumenical ministry. In 1966, they closed their high school and opened an ecumenical retreat center. Their journey toward becoming an ecumenical Benedictine monastic community began in the 1980's and became a reality in 2006, with their re-founding as Benedictine Women of Madison, the first ecumenical Benedictine community of sisters in the

US. In addition to their ecumenical worship and retreat ministry, the sisters have a deep commitment to ecological sustainability and restoration of the land, air and water. In 2009 the sisters dedicated their new 'green' monastery building. The monastery buildings with solar panels and the grounds serve as an educational resource and example of how to care for the earth, demonstrating practical and spiritual aspects of reverence for all of creation.

