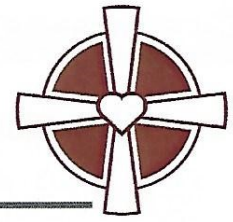


The Gleaner



An occasional newsletter of the Federation of St. Gertrude

Message from the President by Sr. Jeanne Weber

Number 71 ♦ April, 2019

"See, I am doing something new. Do you not perceive it?" (Is 43:19)

As I write this message, we are in the final weeks of Lent, and in the midst of preparations to celebrate the Paschal Triduum, the holiest feast of our liturgical year. In these three holy days, we celebrate the one mystery of the passion, death and resurrection of Christ, and our entry into that mystery through the Easter sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist. I share with you a lovely poetic description of the Triduum by Joan Halmo:

"The Triduum, standing at the heart of the paschal cycle, is an intense immersion in the fundamental mystery of what it is to be Christian and to be church. Year after year, those who keep the Triduum hunger in fasting and rejoice in feasting, contemplate cross-unto-glory, tell and hear the great stories of salvation, emerge fresh-robed from the waters into light and fragrant anointing, sing songs of victory, and taste of the wedding banquet of heaven and earth. In these most human and yet most divine of actions, the old passes into the radically new" (*A Triduum Sourcebook*, vii. qtd. in *2001 Sourcebook for Feasts and Seasons*, p. 118, LTP).

"In these most human and yet most divine of actions, the old passes into the radically new." As I continue to work my way into the ministry of president, every so often I find a treasure in the materials passed on to me by Sr. Joella. This past week, I came upon a couple of articles, one by Catherine Harmer, MMS*, and another by Miriam Ukeritis, CSJ**. Both speak to how religious life is evolving in our era. While addressing the reality of the growing age and smaller numbers of traditional religious institutes, they invite us to look for and nurture the signs of emerging life, the ways in which the old is passing into the radically new right before our eyes.



Catherine observes that as core communities of religious in life-long vows grow older and smaller, we are seeing the rise of newer and more diverse forms of membership. Women and men are committing themselves to the charism and mission of existing religious institutes for a specific period of time, or long term but in a different manner than we've come to know as traditional, institutional religious life. Or they are creating new types of religious life, for example, intentional communities of lay women and men who share varying degrees of communal life. As monastics, we already see these new expressions of religious life in our oblate programs, our volunteer programs, and in a variety of forms of associative membership with a core monastic community. Catherine notes that if we look at the many and various iterations of religious life in the history of the church, we may conclude

(cont. on page 8)

*Catherine M. Harmer, MMS, "The Committed," in *Religious Life in the 21st Century*, 1995, Twenty Third Publications (p 61-75).

**Miriam Ukeritis, CSJ, "Nurturing New Life" in *Covenant*, a newsletter published by the Southdown Institute, December 2011.

OBLATES FOR THE FUTURE SYMPOSIUM IN COTTONWOOD

What is the identity of Benedictine oblates in this time of change and transition? Are oblates “friends of the monastery” or is theirs a distinct vocation to live Benedictine life as lay people? How can oblates and cenobitic monastics work together to share the gifts of Benedictine spirituality with the world? These and other questions were addressed at the first annual “Oblates for the Future” symposium held at the Monastery of St. Gertrude in Cottonwood, Idaho in October of 2018.

There were forty one full time participants with eighteen monasteries represented including the Netherlands and Bahamas. Over the course of an intense five days participants were challenged to rethink what the oblate commitment means, to see how oblates and professed Benedictines can work together to build a strong future by envisioning new ways for oblate and cenobitic communities to collaborate and work together.

There was palpable energy and excitement during the symposium as participants felt that they had a chance to address issues concerning oblates at a new depth with a sense of possibility and hope. A key theme of the week was how cenobitic communities could see oblates as partners collaborating together with professed monastics to ensure the future of our communities.

To follow up on the work of this first symposium a follow up

To log into the Federation website

www.federationofstgertrude.org

In the middle of the home page, you’ll see a box that says “Login for Federation Members.” Click this button and enter this information:

User name: fedmember Password: Gertrude2013

You can now click on “Member Files” to access the directory.

President’s Schedule

April 27-30: Fort Smith—Pastoral Visit

May 3-8: Beech Grove—Federation Finance

May 11-13: Crookston—Centennial Celebration

May 23-25: Richardton—Installation

May 30-June 9: Ferdinand Election

Fort Smith Installation

June 10-12: Yankton—ABCU Meeting

June 20-23: Sioux Falls—Family

June 23-26: St. Joseph, MN--Transfer (tent.)

July 11-14: Ferdinand—Installation

July 20-23: Cottonwood--Transfer (tent)

will be held on September 10-14, 2019 at St. Gertrude’s in Cottonwood. The symposium is designed for people who are actively engaged in leading their oblate communities into the future. There will be limited scholarship funds available. For more information or to register contact: re-treats@stgertrudes.org



Participants at the Oblates for the Future symposium, Cottonwood



Srs. Germaine, Pat, Val, Maryann, Barbara, and JeanAnn at play. Photo by Sr. Rosemary.

The House of Bread monastery in Nanaimo, B.C. is a small community (7 professed sisters in our 70's and 80's). As many of you are aware we are moving toward becoming an Abbeyfield residence. When that happens we will remain a Benedictine community while also becoming renters of Abbeyfield. Other renters will join us and while we will share life together, they will not become committed members of our community.

Our lives remain rich with challenges along our path

toward completion (read: fulfillment), but that doesn't stop us from living life fully as you can see.

A NEW U.S. CITIZEN

by Sister Denise West, OSB

Recently Sr. Paz Vital, OSB traveled to Milwaukee, Wisconsin from Holy Wisdom Monastery to complete a journey that began years ago. On Thursday, March 21, 2019, Sister Paz took the oath of citizenship of the United States. "As a result of acquiring citizenship," says Sister Paz, "I was able to vote for the first time in the United States on April 2. In Mexico I was very politically active; I volunteered at the polls on Election Day all the time. It feels very good, even though I'm a little sad to see the person I voted for in my first U.S. election didn't win."

The community consulted with an immigration lawyer in Madison, Wisconsin to navigate filing a new application, and it took several trips to Milwaukee, for an interview, test and oath, to complete the process.

Sister Paz is reaching a second milestone soon. On May 23 she will graduate with a master's degree in Hispanic Theology and Ministry. A former researcher and teacher with a PhD and master's degree already under her belt, Sister Paz studied online at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, a program she began as a novice. "My hope is to create a Hispanic ministry at the monastery so that people will come and have a more diverse worshipping experience." Sister Paz is also interested in teaching monastic practices, offering opportunities to engage women with scripture through the lens of females and interpreting scripture based on their life experiences as Hispanic women.

We all offer our congratulations to Sister Paz! In October at Holy Wisdom Monastery there will be a panel discussion featuring Sister Paz and other Hispanics sharing their immigration stories.





ON THE MOVE: ST. SCHOLASTICA MONASTERY

Early February was a busy time for the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery. For many weeks, the Sisters were packing and moving into the smaller monastery located just next door. After years of construction, the eco-friendly, energy-efficient, beautifully-designed building was ready for inhabitants and was certainly worth the wait.

It has now been a couple of months since the Sisters made the transition into their new home. Not only is the space smaller, making the members closer in proximity than they were in their previous home, but the new monastery is a single story. It doesn't take long for one simply moseying through the halls to see a familiar face or beloved artwork.

Entering the monastery immediately puts one at ease. A large art piece, designed by Staci Goodman, using stained glass from the previous monastery's chapel, greets visitors as they enter the narthex.



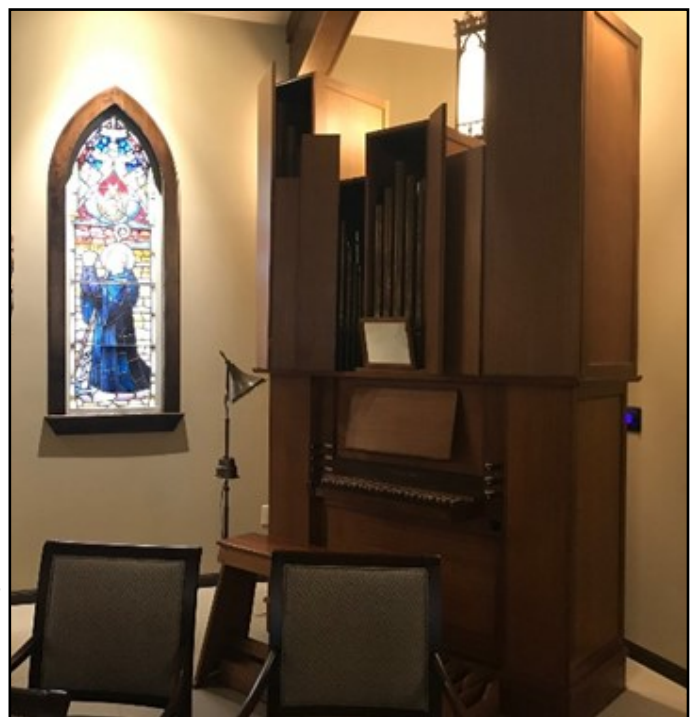
New chapel; Organ below

Lighting can warm or cool the space with effective dimmers, which adds a spiritual ambiance for a plethora of occasions. These details cast many pieces of art in a new light. "It is just beautiful," said Sister Agatha while observing the art piece.



Hallway to bedroom area

Just beyond the narthex is the Monastery's chapel. Though smaller and without the large mural of the historic monastery, the new chapel is adorned with the same stained glass windows from its predecessor, and is furnished with comfortable chairs and the community's faithful Flentrop organ. It may be smaller, but the space is beautiful, and the acoustics are wonderful!





The dining room is lined with several 4-person tables, just enough to fit the community members and their guests. It's not too big, and it's not too small. As they say, it's just right. To stylistically connect the space with that of the narthex and Chapel, stained glass from the historic monastery is also in the dining room wall adjacent to the hallway that leads to Mary Hall (the north hall), where half of the Sisters live. The décor is a treat for Sisters and guests alike, as are the kitchen staff's tasty meals!

After meals, the Sisters gather in the community room, just off the dining room and between north and south hallways that lead to Mary and Joseph Halls respectively. It is a peaceful space with big windows that overlook the courtyard. It will be beautiful to watch spring emerge in the comforts of this cozy room.



Stained glass windows from previous chapel in the narthex.



Bishop Blesses Monastery

Each of the residential halls has seen a lot of traffic these few months. Our community has been blessed with a number of volunteers who helped the Sisters pack, move, and settle into their new bedrooms, without whom the transition would not have gone as smoothly.

"Oh, she just did such a good job and helped me organize. And her daughter was so helpful, too," shares Sister Madeline Clifton about her experience when volunteer and St. Boniface School employee Deidra Barnes and her daughter assisted her with moving and unpacking.

"My daughter and I LOVED helping Sister Madeline Clifton move," shared Deidra. "She took my daughter around their new home and showed her paintings and told her stories. My daughter loved her time with Sister Madeline so much that her kindergarten class at St. Boniface is now working on a service project for the Sisters during the Lenten season. As she told her teacher, "they are my friends and we need to help them!"

In total, the Sisters were blessed beyond measure. Over 30 volunteers helped with the move, a stellar construction team built an amazing building, and thousands of friends and family donated to the *Forward in Faith* Capital Campaign. Thank you to the Scho Girls, the Knights of Columbus, Boy Scouts, and the many others who assisted the Sisters with this move! Our monastery would not be a home without you.



NEWS FROM YANKTON



The Sacred Heart Monastery Council meets with Beth Lipsmeyer and Ted Dunn.

Greetings from the Yankton Benedictines! We are very glad for the greening of the grass and no more 30 below wind chill factor days (although last year, we had big snowstorms here in April!). As we begin to see new life all around us, we are trying to replicate that within our home also.

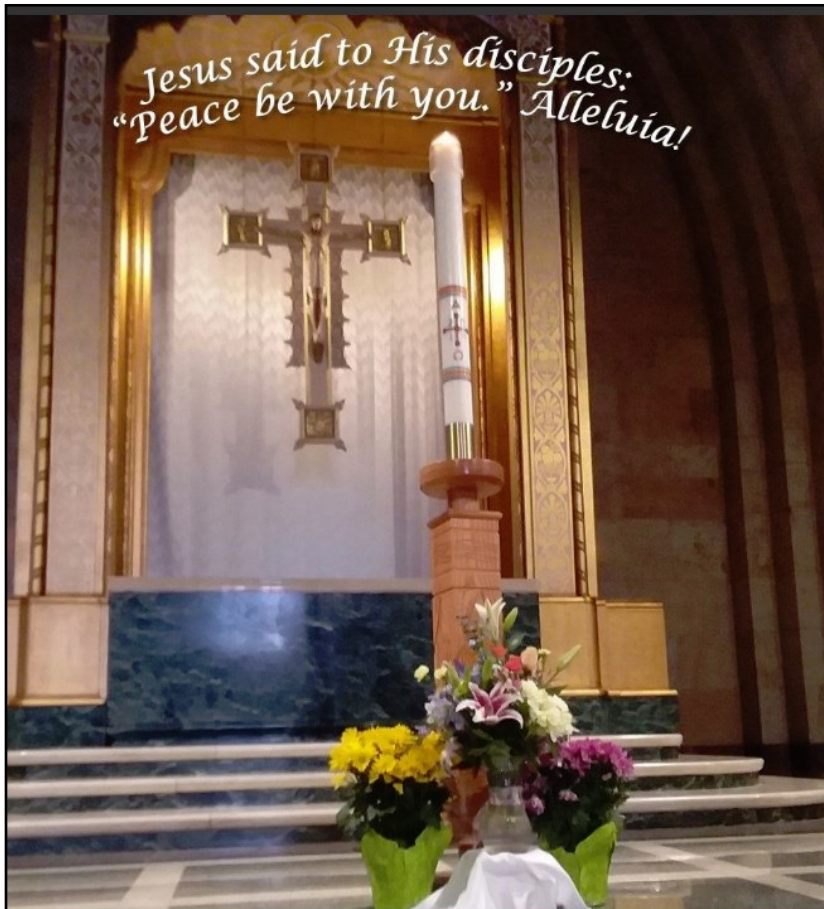
Last August, our Sisters identified four areas that they wanted to see us pursue for our future. They are: Communication Skills/Relationship Building, Living the Life Fully, Space, and Ministries (both in-house and Sponsored). Those are monumental tasks, but we are ready and willing to enter into the discussions with the presence of the Holy Spirit.

In order to assist us in the Communication and Relationship Building section, we have solicited the help of Beth Lipsmeyer

and Ted Dunn (a husband and wife team) from Comprehensive Consulting Services out of St. Louis. They have come highly recommended by other Benedictines and regional Orders who have worked with them. They will be joining us in April for initial consultations.

Seventeen Sisters have entered our community since 1983. Because most of them entered alone or with one other person, Sr. Maribeth thought it was necessary to help this group bond and started twice-yearly gatherings for them called, "Post-83." Last summer, Sr. Karen Joseph from Ferdinand, Indiana came to share with the group about Monastic Instincts. The group meeting in January featured "Giftedness," reflecting the gifts that each of them has to share with the broader community. The meeting in August will feature a session on "Caring for the Caregivers."

We have an annual tradition to celebrate Mardi Gras on Fat Tuesday. This year, the groups in charge chose the theme: "Be a Sport—Enter into Lent With Joy!" Each Sister was asked to come to





the gathering wearing attire from her favorite athletic team. There was good-will banter about which Sister's team was best. The evening started with a tailgate meal and ended with festive sporting games in the chapter room. It was complete with traditional ballgame snacks (peanuts, popcorn, candy, and cotton candy). Needless to say, everyone was ready for a day of fasting after all of that!



Novice Theresa attempts the bean bag toss at Mardi Gras.

This summer, we have a unique event happening in our community. We have the complete gamut of jubilee celebrations (two are celebrating their Silver Jubilees, three have a Golden celebration, and one each in their Diamond years—60, 70, 75, and 80 years!) This is a rare occasion that we have one in each category. It will give us a cause for much celebration all summer long!

FEDERATION COUNCIL MEETS AT HOLY WISDOM MONASTERY



The spring 2019 meeting of the Federation Council was held from March 19-23 at Madison, where we enjoyed the stunningly beautiful setting of Holy Wisdom Monastery. Of course, it wasn't as green as in this picture, but we did relish being out in nature and hearing the Sandhill Cranes, which had returned to the area. The sisters of Holy Wisdom Monastery were tremendously gracious hostesses. We enjoyed a couple of celebrations while there, a dinner and presentation for the members of "Friends of Wisdom Prairie," the group of volunteers that assists in the maintenance of the natural grasslands

surrounding the monastery, and the St. Benedict's day celebration of Sister Paz Vital's new citizenship (see article on page 3).

Among the business items for the meeting were planning for the 2020 Federation Chapter, an update on the prioresses meeting in Cullman, a report on current projects of the Federation Presidents, and a discussion of two timely articles from LCWR *Occasional Papers*.

On our last day, we enjoyed a fun afternoon of movies, shopping, and dinner out with Sr. Mary David at a lovely Italian restaurant in Madison.





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONT.

that there will always be religious life—the radical following of Jesus. However, she says, “what is not at all sure, and never has been is that the mode of following will always be the same” (61). Miriam stresses the importance not only of tending to the dying of our current form of religious life, but of noticing and midwifing the new life that is emerging. “Our task”, she says, “is to name, nourish, and illuminate the new life.” We might be tempted to think of this new life in terms of large initiatives like the creation of a new associate membership program. It could be something like that, but new life also springs up in our communities in smaller ways, which are just as important to recognize and tend. As we celebrate this Paschal season, let us be attentive to the “something new” that God is doing in our midst—in ourselves, in our monastic communities, and in our broader world.

NEWS FROM RICHARDTON

On April 11, we reelected Sister Paula Larson to a third consecutive term as prioress. Sister Kerry O’Reilly, member of St. Benedict’s Monastery in St. Joseph, MN, and president of the Federation of St. Benedict, facilitated the election process, and Sister Jeanne Weber, president of the Federation of St. Gertrude, presided at the election.



Sr. Ruth offers her support to Sr. Paula at election.

The community is preparing to move to Dickinson sometime this summer. Sister Paula has been the director of the renovation and expansion of Subiaco Manor, an apartment complex for senior citizens’ independent living, opened in 1990 as a corporate work of the monastery. It will be renamed Sacred Heart Monastery after we have moved from our present building.

Day by day more things are being completed on the new monastery. Here you see a picture of the front of our new chapel. The crucifix goes in the center and the tabernacle and holy oils are in the opening on sides. The other picture is the new addition which is added on the existing building. The addition has 2 offices, the chapel, storage room, two bedrooms, laundry, etc. All is supposed to be done in July or August of 2019

