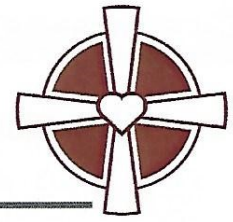


The Gleaner



An occasional newsletter of the Federation of St. Gertrude

Number 73 ♦ January 2020

Message from the President by Sr. Jeanne Weber

Message from the President

As I begin this letter, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation for your prayers and thoughtful messages after the death of my mother. You have truly held me up in this time of grief. A special thank you to Sr. Barbara Lynn Schmitz of Ferdinand who took my place as first visitator at Winnipeg the week after Thanksgiving, and to Sr. Jennifer Kehrwald of Yankton who took her place on the visitation team. Knowing that one is surrounded by a community of love and support makes all the difference in the world. Thank you!

This issue of the Gleaner will feature the delegations to our Federation Chapter in June. I had hoped to put out an issue in November or early December devoted to your archival stories. Two things kept that from happening, my mom's death and Sr. Mildred, our federation secretary, being assigned to take over our gift shop after Sr. Fran's death (and just at the start of the Christmas shopping season). We still have much rich material from you, some of which we've been able to include in this issue and will continue in future issues.



The Federation Council and I have been at work for the past year preparing for our Federation Chapter, which will be hosted at Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, IN June 9-15. The theme for the Chapter is *At Night there are Tears, But with the Dawn, Rejoicing* (Psalm 30:5). I'd like to share with you how this scripture passage (Psalm 30:6) speaks to me at this time. As monastic communities, we have experienced a tremendous shift in our circumstances over the last 50 years. Our membership has become significantly smaller and older and we have needed to let go of treasured ministries, roles of service, and a cultural notion of what it means to be successful. In some ways the life of our communities corporately is paralleling our individual journeys through the losses of aging. That is the night and the tears piece of the quote. It is not the entire or even the dominant reality. Dawn and rejoicing are both a present reality and a future hope. As we age, individually and collectively, our letting go and emptying out make room for Christ to become all and in all. That is the heart of our call as monastics—to prefer nothing whatever to Christ, who has preferred nothing whatever to us. We cannot see the shape that monastic life will take in the future; all we can do is to live monastic life to the fullest here and now, and trust the dawn to the One who has called us to this life and who walks the path beside us.

Our keynote speakers for the chapter will be Sr. Marielle Frigge, OSB, Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton SD, and Emily Cash, PsyD of St. Luke Center in Louisville, KY. They will lead us in an interactive and ritual oriented process of understanding and navigating the major transitions and losses facing our monastic communities at this time in our history. Emily will focus on the psychological aspects of transition and grief. Sr. Marielle will help us to examine these experiences through a scriptural/theological lens. We will also have a workshop on the issues that communities need to consider as we plan for the future. Sr. Jennifer Kehrwald, OSB, Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton and Fr. Dan Ward, OSB, St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, have agreed to do this session, which will also be interactive, inviting the sharing of all of you who are in the midst of that planning.



VISITATIONS GALORE!

Four of our Federation monasteries had their canonical visitation this fall. Srs. Jennifer Kehrwald (Yankton) and I were on the visitation team for House of Bread Monastery in Nainaimo in September. The sisters were getting some much needed rain while we were there, but it cleared up enough for us to venture outdoors on the fun day that we had scheduled at the end of the visitation. We enjoyed life for a week in their soon to be Abbeyfield St. Benedict house, and especially appreciated the gracious hospitality of the sisters and their beautiful setting.

The sisters of Dwelling Place Monastery in Martin had visitation in October. Sr. Mary Coswin, who was the second visitor, had her travel plans majorly upset by a blizzard in Winnipeg. The sisters of Dwelling Place graciously made a late evening run to the Louisville airport to pick her up a day later than originally planned, arriving back at Mt. Tabor at around 2:00 in the morning.

After the visitation the remaining members of the Council appeared as if my magic (or rather thanks to Mary Luke from Beech Grove, who picked them up at the Louisville airport) and we held our fall Federation Council meeting over the next few days. The weather in Martin, though chilly for a couple of days, was decidedly better than that in Winnipeg. The hospitality was grand—those sisters in Martin are great cooks!



A lighthearted moment after the signing of the visitation report at Dwelling Place Monastery: Srs. Mary Coswin, Eileen, Shepers, and Jeanne Weber.

The sisters of the Monastery of St. Gertrude in Cottonwood hosted Sisters Paula Larson (Dickinson), Jacquelyn Ernster (Yankton) and myself for their visitation in early November. While there we enjoyed celebrating the feasts of All Saints and All Souls with the community, especially the lovely calligraphy banners with the names of each of their deceased sisters adorning the chapel. Srs. Jacquelyn and I flew in to Boise, rented a car, and enjoyed the lovely drive up to Cottonwood. Fortunately the weather cooperated for that trip.



The Federation Council seeking Divine guidance as we work on the chapter budget.

Srs. Jennifer Kehrwald, Yankton, and Barbara Lynn Schmitz, Ferdinand, were the visitators for St. Benedict's Monastery in Winnipeg. They also braved a snowstorm in their travels, this time on the way to Winnipeg, arriving around midnight rather than their scheduled 5:00 p.m. Sr. Barbara Lynn took my place as lead visitator (after the death of my mother) and Sr. Jennifer graciously accepted the community's invitation on short notice to be the second visitator.



Srs. Jennifer and Barbara Lynn at Winnipeg



Chapter Delegates and Alternates



Mount St. Benedict Monastery, Crookston, MN: Sisters Shawn Carruth (prioress), Kathleen McGeary and Kathy Kuchar (delegates), Eileen Mohs and Anita Whalen (alternates).



Monastery Immaculate Conception, Ferdinand IN: Sisters Anita Louise Lowe (prioress), Rose Mary Rexing and Kathleen Marie Cash (delegates), Karen Joseph and Paula Wolff (alternates).



Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, SD: Sisters Maribeth Wentzlaff (prioress), Penny Bingham and Kathy Burt, (delegates), Joyce Feterl and Carol Jean VanDenHemel (alternates).



Our Lady of Grace Monastery, Beech Grove, IN: Sisters Jennifer Mechtild Horner, (prioress), Cathy Anne Lepore and Julie Sewell (delegates) and Anne Louise Frederick (alternate)



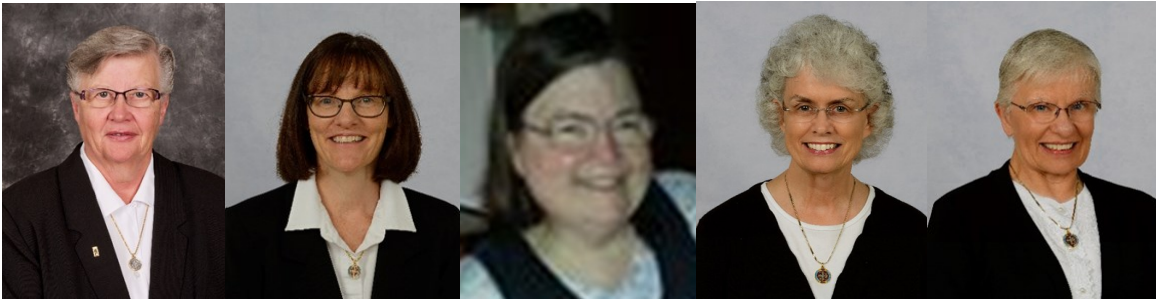
- President's Schedule**
- January 17-22**
Fort Smith—Election
- January 28-February 6**
Yankton—CBP
- March 9-12**
Yankton—Fed. Finance Committee
- March 19-24**
Martin KY—Election
- March 26-April 4**
Beech Grove—55 and Under/Council
- April 19-24**
Crookston—Visitation
- May 14-19**
Winnipeg—Election
- May 27-30**
Martin—Installation
- June 3-4**
Chicago—LCWR Religious Life Leadership Workshop
- June 8-16**
Beech Grove Federation Chapter



Queen of Angels Monastery, Mt. Angel, OR: Sisters Jane Hibbard, SNJM (administrator), Donna Marie Chartraw and Dorothy Jean Beyer (delegates).



Chapter Delegates and Alternates, cont.



Sacred Heart Monastery, Dickinson, ND: Sisters Paula Larson (prioress), Jill West and Phoebe Schwartz (delegates), Renee Branigan and Marie Hunkler (alternates).



St. Scholastica Monastery, Fort Smith, AR: Sisters Kimberly Prohaska, (prioress-elect), Dolores Vincent Bauer and Barbara Bock (delegates), Maria deAngeli (alternate).



St. Martin Monastery, Rapid City, SD: Sisters Jennifer Kehrwald (administrator), Joan Tetrault and Lorane Coffin (delegates), Mary Wegher (alternate).



Monastery of St. Gertrude, Cottonwood ID: Sisters Mary Forman (prioress), Janet Marie Barnard and Kim Marie Jordan (delegates), Barbara Ann Bielenberg (alternate).



Right: St. Benedict Monastery, Winnipeg Manitoba: Sisters Virginia Evard (prioress), Gerarda Pura and Dorothy Levandosky (delegates), Joan Mormul (alternate).

Left: Dwelling Place Monastery, Martin KY: Sisters Eileen Schepers (prioress), Jan Barthel and Kathleen Weigand (delegates).



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



Left: House of Bread Monastery, Nanaimo, British Columbia: Sisters Barbara Rinehart (prioress), Valerie Swenson (delegate).



Right: Holy Wisdom Monastery, Madison, WS: Sisters Mary David Walgenbach (prioress), Lynne Smith (delegate).



Mother of God Monastery, Watertown, SD: Sisters Terri Hoffman (prioress), Eileen Brick and Marva Jean Hoeckleman (delegates), Adrienne Kaufman and Judith Fischer (alternates).

HOLY WISDOM MONASTERY RECEIVES DONATION

On October 24 Holy Wisdom Monastery in Madison, WS celebrated the 10th anniversary of the dedication of their monastery building and gratitude for a \$4 million gift from Pleasant Rowland to complete the building campaign. More than 250 people attended the event which started with Evening Prayer, included reflections of gratitude and words from Pleasant and from Srs. Mary David and Joanne, and concluded with a delicious reception. Sr. Joanne Kollasch is pictured addressing the gathering.



BEECH GROVE "ARTS AND ARTISANS"



The Beech Grove Benedictines highlight the talents of the monastery artisans by hosting an annual fundraiser entitled Arts & Artisans. The event includes lunch and the opportunity to purchase items created by the sisters. Tables are set up on the periphery of the luncheon area where the sisters are busy making greeting cards, rosaries, throwing pots, weaving, painting and any number of other creative endeavors. Arts & Artisans is one of three fundraisers hosted by Our Lady of Grace Monastery in support of its ministries. Pictured are Sr. Carol Falkner at the pottery wheel and Sr. Nicolette Etienne.



FORT SMITH ELECTION

On Monday, January 20 Sister Kimberly Prohaska was elected the 13th prioress of St. Scholastica Monastery in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Srs. Kerry O'Reilly (St. Benedict's Monastery, St. Joseph MN) and Kathy McNany (Emmanuel Monastery, Baltimore MD) facilitated the discernment process. Sr. Jeanne Weber, federation president, presided over the canonical election. Sr. Kimberly is currently the administrator of St. Scholastica Monastery. Previously she has served as sub-prioress and vocation director. She is pictured with her federation chapter delegation on the page opposite.



TALES FROM THE ARCHIVES: FORT SMITH

In 1878, in response to the needs of German immigrants to Arkansas, 4 sisters were sent from the Benedictine monastery in Ferdinand IN to the northwest Arkansas wilderness. On arrival they found that no convent was available to them. They accepted the hospitality of the monks of New Subiaco Abbey and immediately began a school for the children of the area. By January a log cabin convent of 2 rooms had been completed in Shoal Creek, 11 miles east of New Subiaco and St. Scholastica was officially founded on Jan. 23, 1879. The sisters taught school in one room of their new home and lived in the other. It wasn't long until young women seeking God started arriving to join the fledgling community. From these humble beginnings the sisters of St. Scholastica expanded to teach all over Arkansas, Missouri, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas. When the struggling community of St. Joseph Benedictine convent in Pilot Grove, Mo. requested to be amalgamated with St. Scholastica in 1916 they were received in September. As the sisters there ran a hospital as well as teaching, St. Scholastica expanded their ministries to health care, and gradually established and staffed 4 more hospitals in Arkansas.



This picture says something about our early sisters desire to give themselves a creative outlet. The wreath was woven out of the hair



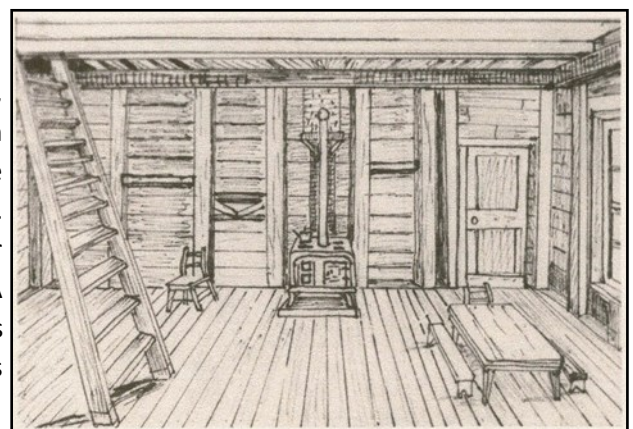
This rather ornate ink well was on Mother Meinrada's desk. It may not have been unique back then but looks positively exotic now.

Illness was a constant problem for the Shoal Creek community, due to lack of medical care in the area and poor quality water. The Sisters had asked the Bishop repeatedly for permission to move to Fort Smith due to poor road conditions and the inability to get the Sisters to the doctors and health care they needed. Permission was repeatedly denied until on one of the Bishop's visits after a heavy rain, his car got stuck in the mud and he had to get out and help push the car. He arrived covered in mud and not long afterward the Sisters received the permission they had so long sought. In 1924 the sisters moved into a new convent outside Fort Smith and established St. Scholastica Academy. The convent was expanded in 1929. From our home in Fort Smith the community continues to discern and meet the needs of the Church as we are able.

A story from Sr. Anne Michele Raley: I was assigned to St. Joseph's School in Fayetteville. The second graders were busybodies, always talking and visiting one another. One day I said, "Does anyone know what the 11th commandment is?" Of course, they didn't know. So I said, "The 11th commandment is 'Mind your own business!'" At the end of the year I gave a religion test. One of my questions was "How many commandments are there." A quiet and timid little girl answered on her paper, "Once there were 10, but now there are 11. I roared with laughter when I saw that answer. You can be assured I gave her an "A" in religion.

MOUNT ANGEL

In 1882, A small group of Benedictine Sisters from Maria Rickenbach, Switzerland traveled by ship with a group of Benedictine Monks from nearby Engelberg to Oregon. They established two communities in the Willamette Valley which was just beginning to be settled by pioneers. Arriving in Gervais, Oregon and finding no convent or school ready for them, they found an abandoned saloon to stay in for five months. A young girl of 12 sketched the first dwelling of the sisters - Matt's Saloon. The girl, a born artist, entered and was professed four years later as Sister Protasia Schindler. She later found a seedling by the





railroad track and planted it in front of the monastery not knowing that it was a giant Sequoia. It now stands as a symbol of the community's rootedness and stability.

The community grew rapidly, moving in 1888 to Mt. Angel, named after Engelberg. The sisters built a high school and normal school for girls while the monks had a school for boys and a college for seminarians. The sisters soon were called upon to



maintain other schools. Among other ministries that developed were building and running a nursing home, expanding to a four-year college, opening a shelter for migrants and homeless persons, and running a retreat center after the schools closed. At present, other entities have taken over the nursing home and the shelter. We still maintain a hospitality and retreat center within the monastery.

Several years ago, a beautiful rooster found his way to our property, and finding it a spacious and congenial place, decided to stay. A friend of the monastery brought a black hen to keep the rooster

company. From then on, the rooster never left her side. A lovely hen house was built and one day two little black chicks appeared. One winter night when "Chuck" was roosting in a nearby tree (he took his sentinel responsibilities seriously) and not having enough sense to come out of the cold, he froze to death. In the spring another black rooster found its way and took up his residence with the black hen and her chicks. No one can explain how he got here either.



A couple of interesting stories from our history: Soon after we began changing out of our habits, one of our sisters who had dementia would usher one of the "girls" out

of the building and back to where she belonged. The sister so ushered would obediently leave the building and come back in by another door.

Sister Carmel, our oldest sister who reached 103, could easily be persuaded to do her broom dance, humming a tune. She was still doing it in her 90's. She also at one time joined a group from the college to march in protest in front of the Archbishop's mansion



over something he demanded of one of the professors. When they arrived at the mansion they proceeded to go inside and have tea with the archbishop.

During the renovation of our monastery the archives was moved. The new building has a heat/humidity controlled room. In 2000 Sr. Christine Rausch, monastery archivist, began removing the documents from metal files to archival boxes, organizing and numbering all the boxes and items inside. That completed, she assembled picture albums for each year from the beginning to the present. She continues to update and add to the historical data.





SWEET GIFTS FROM MOUNT ANGEL



Some of you will remember the Monastery Mustard that we made and sold across the country. We discontinued the making of it at the end of 2015. Our family and friends continue to ask for it. So, the good news is that we are currently making it once a year, gifting it to those who attend our very successful Founders Day Fundraising Dinner in October. When the Monks of Mount Angel Abbey infused one of their Benedictine brews into fudge and sold it, we had the idea of fudge infused with our Monastery Mustard. Hattie's Sweet Shop in Mt. Angel took up the challenge and produced Divinely Spiced Dark Chocolate Fudge, infused with Divinely Original Monastery Mustard. A unique Christmas present.....we've received requests for orders from as far away as Las Vegas. It is available for Valentine's Day, a birthday, an anniversary or any special event. We are happy to ship it to you. \$7.50 per box plus shipping.

We also invited a beehive to be part of our community in the spring of last year. It produced 55 gallons of honey. Pacific Honey Bee of Mt. Angel created the "angel bottle" to market the "Mt. Angel" honey. The bees take the winter off, but they will be back in the spring for a second round of sweetness. This also became a popular Christmas gift at our Monastery Gift Shop. We are happy to ship the honey to you at \$10 for a 12 oz. bottle plus shipping. A great gift anytime. Call 503 845-2556 and ask for Amy.

MONASTERY OF ST. GERTRUDE RENOVATION

At Monastery of St. Gertrude in Cottonwood we are busy fundraising and otherwise planning for the renovation of our annex, which we hope to begin within the next year. The "annex" is the bedroom wing that was built in 1949 (left side of picture). Starting in November 2020 we will all move out, into the Spirit Center and the renovation will replace the plumbing which is beyond it's life expectancy, replace the flooring which has asbestos, and provide some upgrades to the dining room and 2nd floor assisted living area. On the 3rd and 4th bedroom floors two bedrooms will be made into one, each with a private bathroom. On the 5th floor where we will be housing our "Benedictine Cohousing Companions" 2 1/2 bedrooms will be combined into one, each with a private bathroom. We anticipate moving back into the building in the spring of 2021.



ALL HALLOWED EVE AT NANAIMO



There is a need for both prayer and play. The first one who can name all the real characters behind the costumes will receive a prize from the Benedictines of Nanaimo. This is assuming the prize will make it across the U.S. border. Email: houseofbread@shaw.net