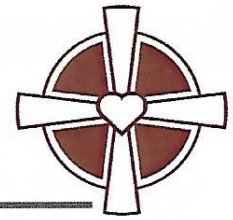


The Gleaner



An occasional newsletter of the Federation of St. Gertrude

Number 77 ♦ October, 2021

Message from the President by Sr. Jeanne Weber

It has been way too long since the last edition of "The Gleaner," which was published in January of this year. Upon getting vaccinated for Covid in January and February, I was able to resume traveling, and have been on the road quite steadily ever since. In February and March we held elections at Cottonwood, Beech Grove, and Martin. We also had the Federation Council meeting at Beech Grove. It was wonderful to be able to visit the federation monasteries again. As president, I've always experienced a warm welcome from the communities of the federation, however never more so than after a year of isolation due to the pandemic. One of my airport chauffeurs (Ann Papesh from Beech Grove) fairly gushed her gratitude at being able to drive to the airport to meet me (at 10:00 at night, no less). I laughed and observed that they probably hadn't let her out for awhile! It was also wonderful to meet in person with the Council—all except Mary Coswin as the U.S./Canada border was still closed.

In April, I spent time in Watertown visiting with the sisters and learning about the senior living project that they are planning. We had planned that visit for early December, but Covid in both Yankton and Watertown meant deferring it. Visitation at Madison was also delayed from December until April. The silver lining on that cloud was being able to enjoy the natural beauty of the monastery at Madison in the warmth of April as compared to the cold of December.

In May, the men and women Benedictine presidents met at Elizabeth, New Jersey. We were privileged to spend the morning with Cardinal Archbishop Joe Tobin, who reflected with us on the relationship between religious and the local church. In the afternoon we heard from Auxiliary Bishop Elias Lorenzo, OSB, also of the Newark NJ archdiocese, who spoke about working with the various Vatican dicasteries. Elias is the former president of the American Cassinese Congregation.

Also in May we held the Conference of Prioresses meeting virtually, after which I traveled to Ferdinand for visitation. In June, it was back to Beech Grove and Martin for installation of their newly elected prioresses. In July, I was able to get out to Mount Angel and also to make a quick trip to Rapid City to meet with the sisters there.

In August, the three federations and the BSPA (Clyde) congregation sponsored a workshop for visitors, which was a great success. We had 52 participants from 18 monasteries in attendance for this three-day Zoom workshop. Speakers were Bishop Elias Lorenzo, OSB, and Sisters Aileen Bankemper, Susan Hutchens, Lynn McKenzie, Kerry O'Reilly, Dawn Mills, and myself. The original plan had been to hold the workshop at Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman. The resurgence of Covid necessitated us going online with the workshop. The upside was that we were able to accommodate more participants in the online format.

The resurgence of Covid also meant that we were unable to gather in person for our long deferred Federation Chapter meeting. After having postponed the chapter three times, the Federation Council and I, with input from our canonist, Fr. Dan Ward, made the decision to cancel the in-person chapter and proceed with an online meeting. Because of Congregation for Religious (CICLSAL) regulations regarding online

*...but with the dawn
rejoicing
"At night
there are tears."*



general chapter meetings, we were unable to carry out the canonical business of the chapter (election of councilors and several amendments to *Listen II*). Over our two sessions, in June and August, we were able to accomplish several other pieces of business, including: accepting 2017-21 financial statements, approving the three-year budget, reviewing the handbook on the modification and suspension of regular monastic governance (which was commissioned by the 2017 Chapter), reviewing and refining the 2017 direction statements, and hearing the President’s address and the keynote speeches.

I would like to comment particularly on the keynote speeches for the Chapter. Our speakers for the day were Emily Cash, Psy.D. from St. Luke’s Institute in Louisville Kentucky, and Sr. Marielle Frigge, OSB from Sacred Heart Monastery in Yankton, SD. We had asked Emily and Sr. Marielle to address our collective journey through transition, and the grieving that comes with it, from the emotional/psychological and theological/scriptural perspectives. Emily’s talk focused on the stages we go through whenever we are faced with a significant transition. She also gave us concrete strategies to help us navigate these transitions. Sr. Marielle’s talk, titled “Lament and Praise in a Time of Transition,” opened up the biblical laments as well-springs of prayer and dialogue with God in times of difficulty. Both talks were rich, bringing meaning to the situations in which we find our monastic communities, our church, and our world. I found the congruence of their messages quite amazing. Once the recordings are available, I will send them out so they may be shared with your monastic communities.

In terms of the canonical business that we weren’t able to accomplish, current councilors have had their terms extended until the 2023 Federation Chapter. The business of considering amendments to our Listen II document will also wait until that Chapter, which will be held June 10-17, 2023 in Beech Grove.

All this by way of telling you why there hasn’t been an edition of *The Gleaner* since January. I hope that you will enjoy catching up on the news of the Federation—and that my “excuses” carry more weight than “the dog ate my homework.”

RAPID CITY ACTIVITIES



The pear trees in our orchard produced a bumper crop, with laden branches reaching to the ground. Sr. Carol Kovarik (right) and Lorane Coffin (left) evaded the wasps to ease the load on this tree. We were happy to share with employees and guests.



New oblates of St. Martin Monastery in Rapid City, Camilla Gunderson, Virginia Bird, and Erin Anderson, with Sr. Jennifer Kehrwald, administrator (Left) and Sr. Therese Marie Furois, oblate director (Right).





CROOKSTON NEWS

The Diocese of Crookston has agreed to purchase the monastery property, allowing the sisters to remain in a portion of the building. The diocese will move their offices here and also open a center here for their meetings and retreats. But it may be two to three years before they raise the funds and move in. Meanwhile we have appointed ourselves a Moving Committee and have begun cleaning out closets.

The diocese named their capital campaign *The Perfect Fit*, which we hope it will be. The campaign has disrupted our perfect lives at times, with tours and receptions for prospective donors. The diocese also made a five-minute video (available at <http://www.crookston.org/perfectfit>) to promote their cause, and we sisters had the fun of being filmed for it.



Above: Lights, camera, action for group interview of Sisters Kathy Kuchar, Jane Becker, and Anita Whalen.



Left: Sisters Rachel Beitz, Denise Schonhardt, and Dominica Gerszewski act enthused about heritage pictures presented to them by archivist Sister Anita Whalen.

YANKTON SISTERS BEATING THE COVID BLUES

Below: Sisters from Yankton wearing their "Benedictine" shirts. Right: Srs. Maribeth, Sharon Ann, and Kevin McDonald, lay employee, with root beer floats during Celebrate Benedict Week.





CELEBRATIONS AT THE DWELLING PLACE

Despite the ever-present shadow of Covid-19, the Mt Tabor Benedictines celebrated this summer with several events. On June 7th, Sister Kathy Curtis was installed as our fifth Prioress by Federation President Sister Jeanne Weber. (See pictures next page.) Later that month, we were blessed to have Bishop John Stowe from the Diocese of Lexington lead our community retreat. Bishop John used both of Pope Francis’ encyclicals, *Laudate Si* and *Fratelli Tutti* and his story telling ability to help us better understand our call to care for the earth and each other. (Photo: Front—Sr. Judy Yunker, Bishop John, Sr. Mary Going; Back—Srs. Jan Barthel, Kathy Curtis, Kathy DeVai, Eileen Schepers, and Kathleen Weigand. In September, Michelle Howell made her oblation at the creek where she does her morning prayer and meditations surrounded by her family and friends.



SR. JUDY YUNKER RECEIVES AWARD

In April, Sr. Judy Yunker of Dwelling Place Monastery in Martin, Kentucky was selected to receive a 2021 Leadership Award from the East Kentucky Leadership Foundation for her outstanding work in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. She was recognized during the East Kentucky Leadership Conference on April 22-23, 2021. The picture was a part of a television interview which aired in April and can be seen at the following link:

<https://www.wymt.com/video/2021/04/24/judy-yunker-leadership-awards/>



It seems so long ago that we might be tempted to forget how momentous it was for us to be able to receive our vaccinations against the coronavirus. Above, Sr. Karen Violette of Crookston is pictured receiving her vaccination.

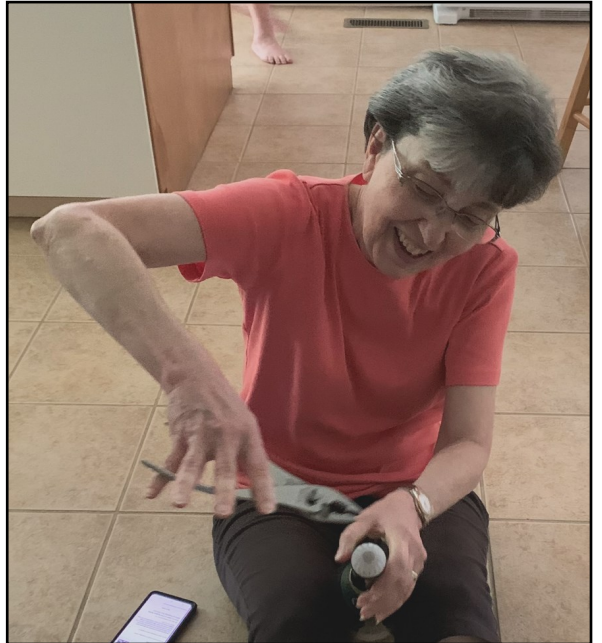




FEDERATION ELECTIONS



Left: In February, Sr. Mary Forman was elected to a second term of four years as prioress of The Monastery of St. Gertrude in Cottonwood, ID. Pictured are Sr. Jeanne Weber, federation president, Sr. Mary Marge Goeckner, sub-prioress, Sr. Mary Forman, prioress, and Srs. Jane Becker (Ferdinand) and Marcia Ziska (Atchison), election facilitators.



Left: On June 7 Sr. Jeanne installed Sr. Kathy Curtis as 5th prioress of Dwelling Place Monastery. Above: The morning of installation day in Martin was perfect for mimosas. Alas, not even a pliers could loosen the cork of the champagne bottle. Below: Kathy, with hardhat, is ready for anything. Perhaps she should have been the one tackling the champagne bottle!



Sr. Julie Sewell was installed as 9th prioress of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove on June 5, 2021. From Left: Sr. Sharon Kuhn (subprioress) Sr. Julie, Sr. Jeanne Weber (federation president), Sr. Jennifer Mechtild Horner (outgoing prioress), and Sr. Mary Ann Koetter (outgoing subprioress)





NEWS FROM NANAIMO



We celebrated our first anniversary as Abbeyfield St. Benedict with a special dinner—limited to the house manager and residents because of Covid. The dress code was chic/casual/crazy. We have learned many things in this challenging yet fruitful year and are looking forward to greater freedom from Covid restrictions in the months ahead. Photo—L-R: Sr. Rose Mary Terhaar, Sr. Germaine Chrupalo, Sr. Jean Ann Berning, Patricia Morton (resident), Sr. Val Swenson, Julie Foster (resident) Sr. Barbara Rinehart, Sr. Patricia Brady, Sr. Mary Ann Gisler.



Looking out the dining room window at Nanaimo;



Sr. Germaine tending her garden.

President's Schedule

- Oct 9-15: Visitation—Fort Smith
- Oct 26-29: RCRI Conference—Online
- Nov 13-17: Election—Nanaimo
- Nov 18-21: Monastery Chapter Mtgs.—Yankton
- Nov 30-Dec 4: Cottonwood—Federation Council
- Dec 12-14: Clyde—Invitation to give President's Address to the BSPA community

Federation Website Log-In

User Name: fedmember
Password: StGertrude1937!





HOLY WISDOM MONASTERY CELEBRATES COMMUNITY

On September 24-26, 2021, Holy Wisdom Monastery held a *Celebration of Community*.

We were overwhelmed with the outpouring of love and support for us throughout the weekend. It was a joyous time that brought together so many of our friends and family, both in person and virtually. People came from near and far to celebrate Sister Joanne



Kollasch's 91st birthday on Friday with a coworker lunch, blessing for Sister Joanne, then dinner with family members and a sing-along led by Father Bob Koopmann of St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, MN on piano.

The festivities continued Saturday with a luncheon to celebrate Mary David's 60th anniversary of monastic profession and a recognition for our outgoing board members Neal Smith and Maureen Van Dinter. We even had a special musical number by "guest nuns!"

The weekend concluded with the Sunday Assembly where Sister Everline Jeruto made her first monastic profession. We are blessed by Everline's profession as a sister in the community. Father Dan Ward of St. John's



Sr. Everline Jeruto makes her first monastic profession.

Abbey in Collegeville, MN encouraged us all to continue "turning the world upside down" by living the Gospel values. All the sisters celebrated the anniversaries of our monastic professions by renewing our promises; Sister Joanne, 67 years; Sister Mary David, 60 years; Sister Lynne Smith, 21 years; and Sister Denise West, 3 years.

"We need to celebrate, because celebration brings us hope," summarized, friend Jerry Folk.

The sisters are grateful to the planning committee and the hundreds of volunteers, sponsors, donors, women and men religious, community members, former and current coworkers, friends and family who made the weekend wonderful and a true celebration of community. We feel loved, treasured, cared for, energized and honored. The outpouring of generosity gives us a sense of belonging together and confidence that the path we are on is embraced by the people around us. We are not lone travelers on the road weaving prayer, hospitality, justice and care for the earth into a shared way of life. We continue to savor the beautiful messages sent via our virtual cards, the friendships with so many good people and the financial support that carries the community into the future! God has blessed us with our faith and this special community of communities.



Srs. Joanne Kollasch, Mary David Walgenbach, Lynne Smith, Everline Jeruto, and Denise West at the Sunday Assembly liturgy for their *Celebration of Community*.

As Sister Joanne likes to say, "This place is good, because good people come here."



WINNIPEG SISTERS ON THE MOVE

The sisters of St. Benedict Monastery in Winnipeg have sold their 88,000-square-foot monastery and retreat centre to Southeast Regional Development Corp. for use as a First Nations wellness centre. On September 21, the sisters moved into the wing of the building known as St. Benedict's Place, which was formerly small apartments for seniors. They may live there for up to two years while they secure a more permanent monastic home.



Clockwise from Upper Left: 1) Sandra, a Sister of Our Lady of the Mission, leads a procession of sisters, including Sr. Irene Burzynski, to their new rooms. 2) Srs. Dorothy Levandosky and Mary Coswin outside of St. Benedict Place, the sister's temporary home. 3) Managing the entire move with grace and skill was volunteer Brigitte Dupuis. She even brought each sister a vase of lovely flowers and a blessing for her new room. 4) Sr. Dorothy signing the sale papers. 5) Volunteer Jacinta, a Sister of Our Lady of the Mission, assisting Sr. Terry as she moves into to her new room. 6) Sisters Dorothy, Marie and Mary got a head start on the move to St. Benedict's Place. Shortline Movers did a great job moving their bedrooms and offices.





DICKINSON REFLECTIONS

When we moved from Richardton to Dickinson, we gave up our huge gardens, potato patches etc. We have a tiny garden here but it is enough for a fresh taste only. We are done with fresh food!! That was our thinking. Low and behold, our neighbors and friends are more than generous with garden donations. We were given fresh tomatoes, zucchini, beets, green beans, peppers, squash, corn, watermelon, cantaloupe, potatoes just to mention a few. Some were in such quantity that we could process them for winter storage. However, the most abundant gift was chokecherries. There were so many gifted to us that we did not have to go to the countryside and pick our own. In fact, we have so much chokecherry jam and syrup we will give you a jar when you come to visit.



Above: Srs. Kathleen Kuntz and Michael Emond peeling apples.
Left: Sr. Lucille Heidt with the chokecherry jam and syrup.



MOUNT ANGEL CELEBRATES OKTOBERFEST

Mount Angel, Oregon is a small town that hosts one of the largest Oktoberfest celebrations in the country. This year, Oktoberfest was held in-person after being held virtually in 2020. Each year, the Benedictine Sisters of Queen of Angels Monastery set up a booth in the arts and crafts section to sell various handmade crafts and goods. One of the most popular items sold are buttermilk coffee cakes made famous by the late Sister Immaculata.



Sister Rebecca Pirkl (front) with four volunteers from Texas who helped run the monastery booth during the four-day long Mount Angel Oktoberfest celebration.

Although the Oktoberfest was held in person, the sisters elected to host their own booth in the lobby of the monastery's Hospitality Center. Sister Rebecca Pirkl led the effort to transform the lobby into an Oktoberfest booth unlike any other. Over the course of the four-day festival, nearly 300 coffee cakes were sold and countless other items including prayer shawls, rosaries, books, coins, and photo cards – all made by the sisters!

The "booth" was a huge success and it turned out to be one of the most successful Oktoberfests ever!



FERDINAND NEWS

Automated Bells: Shortly after Christmas, the three bells at the monastery were removed from the bell tower and transported to Cincinnati to be refurbished and fitted to be rung automatically. The bells returned to the bell tower toward the end of Lent,



A worker installing the bells at Ferdinand

complete with new steel stands, yokes, strikers, wheels, and clappers. Then, a digital controller was installed, allowing the bells to be programmed to ring at the appropriate times. The refurbished bells rang for the first time on Easter Sunday morning. It was an exciting moment to watch the bells return to the bell tower and



then to hear them ring automatically for the first time. Having enough sisters who were able to ring the bells by hand had become problematic for the community. With automation, the bells continue

to call the community to prayer, and their sound is heard throughout the town of Ferdinand as a reminder to all of the call to give glory to God each day.

Jamaica Mission: Establishing a mission house in Jamaica wasn't in our long range plan, but issues with immigration forced our hand. Sr. Roxanne Cassandra Higgins is a temporary professed member of our community and came here from Jamaica with a religious worker visa. The immigration policies from the past years as well as the effects of the pandemic on immigration offices being open has caused a major backlog in cases. While we filed the request for Sr. Roxanne's petition to change status in order to apply for permanent residency with more than adequate time, that request has not yet been processed, and we don't know how much longer it will take. By the end of September, though, she had to leave the country. In order to provide community for her, we are sending two sisters to accompany her. The Franciscan Sisters of Allegany have offered us housing in Kingston and will be helping the three sisters offer volunteer services while there. We expect to rotate the sisters staying with Sr. Roxanne. The Archdiocese of Kingston offered a welcome to our community, saying in part: "We look forward to their sharing in the life of our Archdiocese and bringing to the fore the spirituality of Saint Benedict and Saint Scholastica during their stay amongst us." Please join us in praying for a



Sr. Judy Dewig, Sr. Roxanne Cassandra Higgins, and Sr. Agnes Weinzapfel preparing to head to the airport for their trip to Kingston, Jamaica.





NEWS FROM FORT SMITH

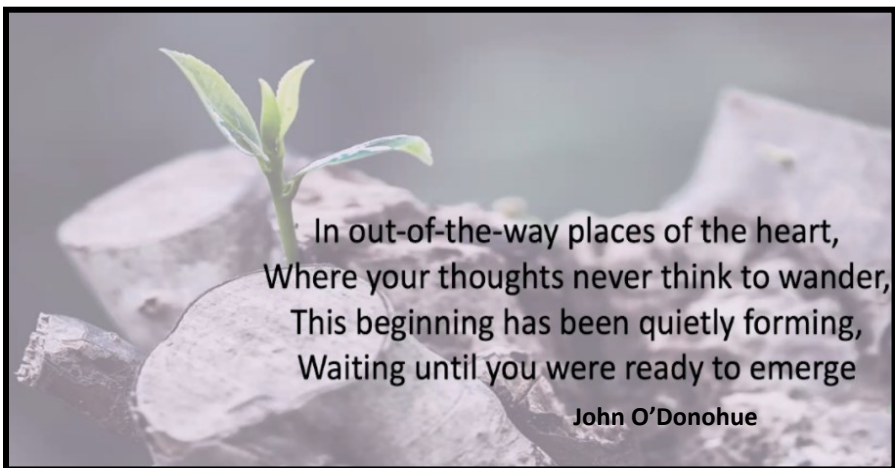
Sr. Faustina Nguyen made her first monastic profession on June 24. Also, Sr. Kimberly's family and friends were able to gather in August for a long-overdue celebration of her installation as prioress in October of 2020.



Upper Left: Srs. Stephanie Schroeder, Pierre Vorster, Faustina Nguyen, and Barbara Bock celebrate Sr. Kimberly's installation.

Above: Sr. Kimberly Prohaska, prioress, receives Sr. Faustina's first monastic profession.

Below, Sr. Kimberly congratulates Sr. Faustina after her profession ceremony. Left: Sr. Kimberly (3rd from left) with her family.



In out-of-the-way places of the heart,
Where your thoughts never think to wander,
This beginning has been quietly forming,
Waiting until you were ready to emerge

John O'Donohue





Zoom Photos of Participants in the Federation Chapter: Emily Cash, Chapter Keynote Speaker, Sr. Jeanne Weber, Yankton; Sr. Marielle Frigge, Yankton, Chapter Keynote Speaker; Sr. Jane Becker, Crookston; Sr. Barbara Rinehart, Nanaimo; Sr. Kathy Curtis, Martin; Sr. Terri Hoffman, Watertown; Sr. Kimberly Prohaska, Fort Smith; Srs. Mary Luke Jones, Susan Nicole Reuber, Marie Therese Racine, Julie Sewell, and Cathy Anne Lepore, Beech Grove, leading our opening prayer; Sr. Maribeth Wentzclaff, Yankton; Sr. Paula Larson, Dickinson; Sr. Jane Hibbard, Mt. Angel; Sr. Anita Louise Lowe, Ferdinand; Sr. Mary David Walgenbach, Madison; Sr. Mary Forman, Cottonwood; Sr. Jennifer Kehrwald, Rapid City, Sr. Dorothy Levandosky, Winnipeg; Sr. Kathy Kuchar, Crookston; Sr. Lynne Smith, Madison; Sr. Eileen Brick, Watertown; Sr. Kathy Burt, Yankton, Sr. Joan Tetreault, Rapid City; Sr. Val Swenson, Nanaimo; Sr. Delores Vincent Bauer, Ft. Smith; Sr. Kathleen Cash, Ferdinand; Sr. Barbara Bock, Ft. Smith; Sr. Teresa Jackson, Cottonwood; Sr. Mary Coswin, Winnipeg, and Sr. Kathleen Weigand, Martin.

