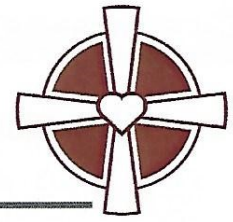


The Gleaner



An occasional newsletter of the Federation of St. Gertrude

Number 78 ♦ June, 2022

Message from the President by Sr. Jeanne Weber

This edition of *The Gleaner* is long overdue. I will plead a full travel schedule as my excuse.

In February I made a double trip to Crookston and Winnipeg where the temperatures were in the 20's below zero and the snow was measured in feet. The sisters of each monastery gave me a very warm welcome. Because I was visiting both monasteries, I made the trip by land rather than by air. Everything went just fine until the return trip, when I hit blizzard conditions as I drove out of Grand Forks. I called Jane Becker and turned around. The 25 or so miles of white knuckle driving to Mount St. Benedict's was overshadowed by the wonderful, warm welcome they had for me when I arrived yet again at their doorstep.

The first week of March saw me in Beech Grove for visitation. This visitation was the last of the pandemic postponements. Mid-March I had 10 days in Mt. Angel for the annual Federation Finance committee meeting, followed by the monastery's Board of Trustees and Planning Committee meeting. Just as I got to experience full winter in Crookston and Winnipeg, so in Mt. Angel, beautiful spring—gorgeous flowering plants and shrubs and green grass! It was a feast for the eyes and great to get out walking. Thanks to Jane Hibbard for her “Uber” service to the Portland airport. She's unfailingly cheerful and even stops at great hamburger places for meals!

After a couple of days to do my laundry and repack my suitcase, several of us toodled over to Beech Grove (via Clyde, MO), for the 55 and Under gathering. I always enjoy traveling with others, and the others on this trip, Srs. Carmy Luke (Yankton), Lynn McKenzie (Cullman), Dawn Mills, and Maria Vicoria Cutaia (Clyde) made the miles fly by.

The beginning of Holy Week found the Federation Council in Cottonwood for our spring meeting. Sr. Teresa Jackson generously provided us shuttle service from and to the Spokane airport. Amidst our meetings, we celebrated beautiful and meaningful Palm Sunday liturgies with the St. Gertrude sisters. Spring in this region of the world being fickle, we made the trip back to the airport through fresh fallen mountain snow, a beautiful sight.

After Easter, Sr. Jane Becker and I set out west for visitation in Dickinson. We travelled a day earlier than scheduled to beat yet another blizzard. As is the case with spring blizzards, by the time we were ready to head home, most of the snow was gone.

In May, Sr. Jennifer Horner and I flew to Winnipeg for visitation. In a bit of an ironic twist, our travel by air was felicitous, as flooding (from all those blizzards!) closed the highways north from the MN and ND border crossings.

Lately I've had three weeks at home to catch up. This includes working with the Joint Benedictine Archives Repository Project, the 55 and Under Planning Group, planning for our 2023 Chapter, assisting monasteries as they plan for the future, and moving forward with several Federation initiatives, including civil incorporation. As you can see from my schedule on page five, I head out again this next week. God's blessings to all of you who so warmly welcome this gyrovague into your monastic homes. Keep me in your prayers!

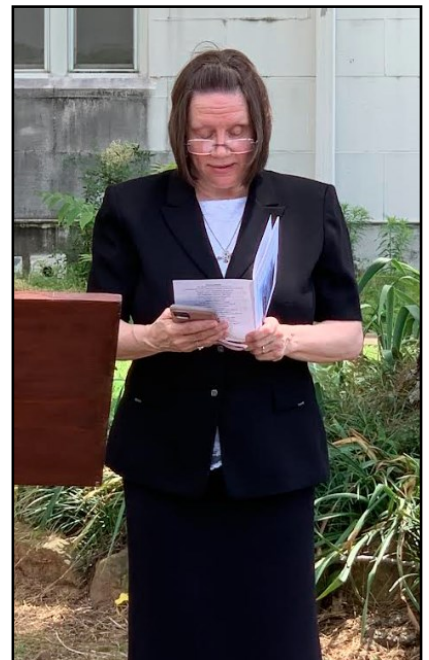
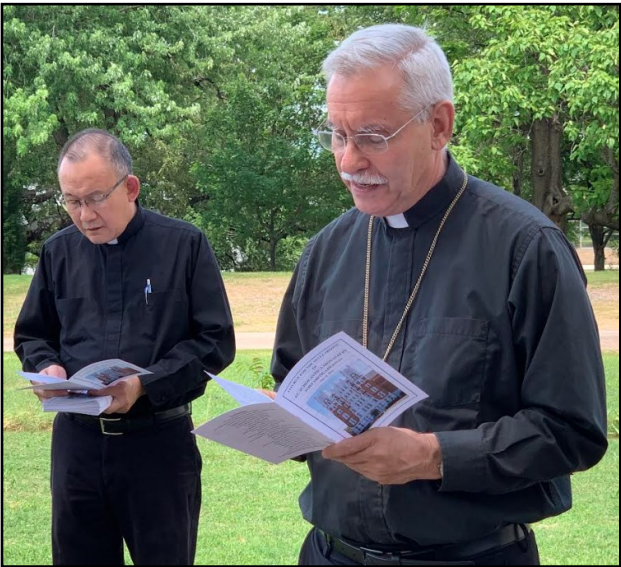


Ahh! Winnipeg in February



News from Fort Smith

The sisters of St.Scholastica Monastery in Fort Smith recently held a ritual for the desantification/ decommissioning of their former monastery building. Bishop Anthony Taylor presided over the rite, assisted by the sisters' chaplain, Fr. Joseph Chan. Members of the monastic community, oblates, alumnae, employees, friends and benefactors participated in the ritual and supported the sisters in this momentous step. Deconstruction of the building is anticipated to take place in June. Pictures clockwise from left: Fr. Joseph Chan and Bishop Anthony Taylor; Srs. Maria Goretti de Angeli, Kimberly Prohaska, Dolores Vincent Bauer, and Adrian Wewers; Sr. Kimberly Prohaska, Prioress.



St. Scholastica Monastery in Fort Smith, AR held the graduation for The Formation in the Ministry of Spiritual Direction for the class of 2022 on May 21, 2022. Sr. Judith Timmerman 3rd from left) of Fort Smith was one of the graduates.





Crookston On the Move

The sisters of Mount St. Benedict Monastery in Crookston, led by Sr. Jane Becker, have been in negotiations for over a year for the sale of their monastery to the diocese. The target date for the sale is July 1st. At that time they also plan to establish a restricted fund with the diocese for perpetual care of the monastery cemetery.

With great foresight, their new monastery was built with five bedroom/living wings—four for sisters and one for guests. This structure means that the sisters can enjoy a relatively private living space within the



The Mount St. Benedict used furniture parking lot.



Srs. Kathy Kuchar, Eileen Beutel, and Kathleen McGeary, "the brains," with two members of the moving crew, "the brawn."

monastery while the diocese can utilize the rest of the space. Over the past few months, the sisters have moved into two of the wings, or deaneries. They have also been moving and consolidating their offices in the chapel wing in order to accommodate diocesan offices. They will continue to use the dining room and some other common spaces, including the Chapel for funerals. For daily liturgy, the sisters' community room is being converted into a small chapel.

For over a year the community has been putting together a document working out the conditions that need to be set to guard their monastic life and have peaceable working relations between the Diocese and the Monastery as they share space. In March they signed a Memorandum of Understanding to this effect. Now, as Sr. Jane says, the lawyers can start their work.

Over the last year, Sisters Agatha, Anne Marie, Adeline, Lorraine, Dominica, and Francella developed increased medical needs and moved to the Villa Care Center across the street. That was a big adjustment for all.

Please keep the Crookston community in prayer as they make this transition.



Srs. Eileen Beutel and Jane Becker "on the move."



News from Nanaimo

Abbeyfield St. Benedict has been in existence now for 21 months and while still a young house, it is home to nine seniors, seven of them our own Benedictine sisters. We continue with our Benedictine prayer life and the other two residents choose to join us. We're still working on expanding our board to be sure it has the skills needed to operate the house well into the future. As individual needs increase each resident works with family/friends to access the care needed. The Benedictine sisters are working with Canadian Religious Stewardship to care for the last remaining Benedictine members when the time comes, which we hope will not be too soon!



Val and Patricia work on a jigsaw puzzle.



We had a severe windstorm mid-May, and a large fir tree fell on the house. Thankfully, no one was hurt and our insurance is up to date.



Germaine, Patricia and Jean Ann work on an Easter project.



Gail, Pat and Lyn are volunteers who are most generous with their time and talents

Dickinson News

April was an interesting month for us. During Holy Week, we had an historic snowstorm with 30" of snow. With the wind we have in North Dakota, there were quite the snowdrifts. The town of Dickinson was shut down.

Then just two weeks later, when we were scheduled for visitation, wouldn't you know, another snowstorm was predicted and luckily our visitators could arrive a day early. Subsequently, the visitation was on schedule as we sat in the monastery and watched the snow fly.



Our visitors were Sr. Jeanne Weber and Sr. Jane Becker. This was the first time to have a visitation in our new location. One of the sisters was in the nursing home so we could use her living space for their housing. Now that we have downsized and eliminated all of our monastery ministries it was a new experience. It was much less taxing and we had more time to actually focus on our monastic life together.

Now we look forward to spring! Happy Days to all.



Srs. Jane Becker and Jeanne Weber give the Dickinson visitation report.



Sr. Laura Hecker at the back door of Sacred Heart Monastery in Dickinson after the Holy Week blizzard.

Rapid City News

God has been speaking through the aging process of the Benedictine Sisters from St. Martin Monastery in Rapid City, South Dakota. These sisters have been in the Black Hills of South Dakota for 133 years and are facing the fact that that their Oblates will be the ones who continue to keep the Benedictine presence alive in western South Dakota.

On May 21, 2022 the Sisters and Oblates gathered to remember the past, transition to a lay person as Director of Oblates, and face the future with hope.

Sr. Jennifer Kehrwald (left) installed Julia O'Neil-King (center) as the next Oblate Director and assured Oblates of the continued prayerful support of the Benedictine Sisters. Pictured with them is Sr. Therese Marie Furois.



President's Schedule

- June 15-22: Atchison—FSS Chapter
- June 22-23: Chicago—RCRI Workshop
- June 23-July 2: Ferdinand—Giving Retreat
- July 2-4: Leavenworth, Kansas—Family
- July 15-18: Sioux Falls—Family
- July 19-25: St. Ben's—FSB Chapter
- August 8-13: St. Louis—LCWR Assembly
- August 29-Sept 12: Rome—CIB Delegates Mtg.

Lost your Federation Website Information

Contact Sr. Mildred Busch

mbusch@yanktonbenedictines.org



News from Beech Grove

It's been a busy spring for the Beech Grove Benedictines. Our postponed visitation finally took place in March. Led by Sr. Jeanne, our visitators (Sr. Michaela Hedican and Sr. Nancy Miller) worked diligently to review our monastic lives. We are grateful for this time of self-assessment and grace.

Hosting the 55 and Under group at the Benedict Inn and OLG was a delightful experience. Forty-five sisters attended the event in person from 15 monasteries across the United States. The participants heard from the Federation Presidents and other leaders in the Benedictine world about a variety of topics pertaining to the future. There was and is much energy and hope for the future of Benedictines. This group of younger sisters will continue to gather for the next two years in Norfolk, Nebraska and Yankton, South Dakota.

The Benedict Inn and monastery also welcomed the Women Touched by Grace (a Lilly Endowment program) for their 5th and final retreat. The 20 members of WTBG IV were all in attendance after a 2-year hiatus brought on by the pandemic. These clergywomen from across the nation, committed themselves to 5 retreats over a 2 ½ year time span. As it turned out, it was a much longer period and we consider it a blessing that they all could join us.

The Benedict Inn certified 17 new spiritual directors as part of our Spiritual Direction Internship. The Inn has provided this program since 1991 and certified 247 directors from 16 classes. A new 4-semester class will begin in the fall.

On May 15, Prioress Sr. Julie Sewell presided at Evening Prayer welcoming five candidates making their Oblation. Oblate director Sr. Antoinette Purcell is anticipating another five new Oblates this fall.



Participants in the "55 and Under" Conference held in Beech Grove April 1-4, 2022

55 and Under Gathering

Fifty-one "Under 55-ers" from 19 monasteries attended the "55 and Under" gathering in Beech Grove April 1-4, 2022. The planning committee for the event consisted of Srs. Maria Victoria Cutaia of Clyde, Carmy Luke of Yankton, Elizabeth Carrillo of Atchison, and Raphaela Cady of Lacey. Thanks to their hard work, they were awarded a significant grant from LCWR to help reduce the cost of the meeting.

This was the first of three annual meetings focusing on how the younger members of our monastic communities can creatively live the charism in the future. Under the overall theme of "Embracing Our Future with Joy, this particular session, was titled, "Fire for the Journey-Engaging our Charism." Sr. Aileen Bankemper of St. Walburg Monastery, Covington, KY facilitated the meeting. Speakers included Sr. Judith Sutera of Atchison, Sr. Nicole Kunze of Bismarck, Sr. Rosann Ocken of Norfolk, Sr. Dawn Mills of Clyde, and the Federation Presidents Srs. Lynn McKenzie, Kerry O'Reilly, and Jeanne Weber.





News from Ferdinand

Our monastery in Ferdinand has been “abuzz” with activity over the last several months — and not just because our beehives have warmed up. As COVID cases in our area receded, activities have increased. Tours have resumed, and we’ve seen quite an increase in the number of people who are joining us for Sunday Mass. Over the next month, we’ll celebrate three jubilees of monastic profession with services open to the public. One of those jubilees had been postponed for a year due to the pandemic and its restrictions.

We have also had a full slate of retreats and workshops, including virtual, in-person and hybrid sessions, that continue to be well-attended. Our Benedictine Hospitality Center has seen a surge in overnight guests as well, especially over the weekends, and more people are inquiring about and using St. Gertrude Hall and our other event spaces. All in all, we’re cautiously optimistic.

Recently we began a campaign to create an endowment for the ongoing care and upkeep of our church. The Endowment for Our Sacred Space will officially begin in a few weeks, but we have already begun to receive generous support from donors who want to join us in ensuring that this historic landmark is preserved and that the work done in renovation in the early 2000s is not undone.

While the beehives are indeed busy, the newest addition to the monastery is a brood of eleven chickens, all named after the Apostles. There were twelve, but Judas died. That’s not a joke. A group of talented donors and volunteers built what can only be described as the Taj Mahal of chicken coops, a quite ingenious habitat that is on wheels so it can easily be moved from one spot to another as needed.

Our monastery was also the centerpiece of a recent video program by a local PBS affiliate focusing on religious landmarks in Indiana. See the link to view the segment.



Sr. Teresa Guenter, tends to the monastery flock of chickens.



Our Bakery remains as busy as ever, and we’ve added a large walk-in freezer that allows us to actually get ahead on some of those items that freeze well. Our hope is that this will relieve some of the stress felt by the team during the holiday season later this year.

Finally, Sr. Jill Reuber, Director of Vocations, has been very engaged with a number of young women. Two have been accepted to entering the postulancy this fall. Join us in praying for them during these months of transition.

Employees, sisters, and volunteers work hard to keep up with orders and to prepare extra goods to be frozen in anticipation of the fall “rush.”





Winnipeg News

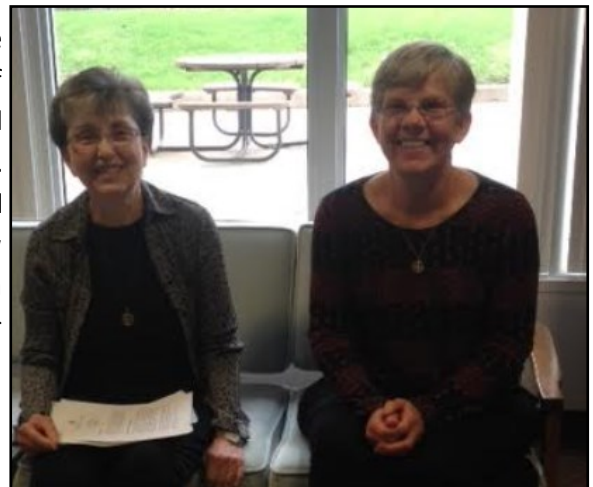
As a community of eleven Sisters, we are anticipating a new chapter in our community's graced history. Though we are grieving the departure from a building in which we have lived, for 61 years, and especially our chapel, our monastic life of prayer, service and hospitality, as well as the somewhat rural 74 acres of beautiful grounds which we have shared with many guests, it is nonetheless time to move on. We fully plan to continue our monastic life of prayer, service and hospitality at 419 Youville Street. With the Rule of St. Benedict in one hand and the Scriptures pressed to our hearts with the other hand, we are committed to continue to live lives of obedience to God's call, stability and daily conversion to Gospel values. We have so valued the silence and solitude of this rural setting and we hope that we will discover a new silence within the sounds of the city. We are blessed to be in partnership with Reseau Compassion for their support of our Benedictine charism and our Benedictine community.



Sr. Dorothy with visitation report



"Mary and I were cleaning out old files and by the end of the morning, we went bonkers!"



Visitors Jeanne Weber and Jennifer Mechtild Horner

Federation Council Meets in Cottonwood

The Federation Council met at St. Gertrude's Monastery in Cottonwood April 8-12, 2022. In case you were wondering, the picture was not taken at the

monastery, but at the "Keuterville Pub and Grub" where we enjoyed an evening out. The food was great, and the décor, as well as the proprietress of the establishment, introduced us to the local culture. (Ask Mary Coswin about ginger ale and pickle relish!) The evening was a great deal of fun.

Pictured from left to right are Srs. Mary Forman, prioress at Cottonwood, and Councilors: Srs. Teresa Jackson (Cottonwood), Mary Coswin (Winnipeg), Jennifer Mechtild Horner (Beech Grove), Barbara Lynn Schmitz (Ferdinand); and Jeanne Weber (Yankton) President. Sr. Mary Luke Jones of Beech Grove attended the meeting virtually.

