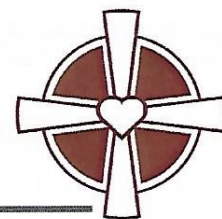


The Gleaner



An occasional newsletter of the Federation of St. Gertrude

Number 79 ♦ November, 2022

Message from the President by Sr. Jeanne Weber

These past few months have been enriching ones for me as Federation President. In June and July I attended the general chapters of the Federations of St. Scholastica and St. Benedict. The presidents typically attend each others' chapters and facilitate their direction setting and election processes. Srs. Lynn McKenzie was re-elected as president of the Monastic Congregation of St. Scholastica, and Sr. Nancy Bauer of St. Ben's was elected as president of the Monastic Congregation of St. Benedict. Both chapters approved a change of name—from *Federation* . . . to *Monastic Congregation* . . . We will bring a similar resolution to our chapter in June. The presidents have been working on this change for a few years. It is based on a growing awareness that the various ecclesial entities we work with, including the Vatican, define a "Federation" as a structure of support without any governance role. This has become a source of misunderstanding with some significant consequences for us. Bringing this resolution to the general chapter is another step toward reclaiming our monastic heritage and clarifying our monastic governance structures for ourselves and for the church at large.

Another highlight was a trip to Rome for the CIB Council of Delegates meeting. If you recall, the CIB (*Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum*) is an international organization of Benedictine abbesses and prioresses. The U.S. has two delegates to the CIB, Sr. Aileen Bankemper (Covington, KY) as chair of the Conference of Benedictine Prioresses, and Sr. Clare Carr (Benet Hill), elected by that body. I am the alternate delegate, which allows me to attend the meetings, but not to vote. Three other Benedictines from the U.S. attended the meeting: Srs. Lynn McKenzie (Cullman, AL), CIB Moderator, Mary Luke Jones (Beech Grove, IN), CIB secretary, and Michelle Sinkhorn (Ferdinand, IN). Together Mary Luke and Michelle expertly handled the details and technology for the meeting, which was hybrid.

The six of us traveled together, leaving a week before the meetings to be able to see some of Italy. We spent a couple of days each at Subiaco, Florence, and Assisi—expertly chauffeured and guided by two sisters from a monastery near Assisi. While in Rome, we enjoyed the hospitality of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters at their Rome Casa. We proved not so adept at navigating the mass transit system—getting off at the wrong stop *twice* on our first night in Rome. Perhaps that could be attributed to jet lag! No matter, we ended up having a wonderful time at the most hospitable pizza place in Rome—and took a taxi home after seeing St. Peter's at night (stunning!), and the obligatory stop for gelato!



Srs. Michelle Sinkhorn, Mary Luke Jones, Clare Carr, Aileen Bankemper, Jeanne Weber, and Lynn McKenzie wait for their flight to Rome from the Atlanta airport

As part of our time in Rome, Sr. Lynn and I had a lunch meeting with two American canonists from the *Dicastery* for Institutes of Consecrated Life, for the purposes of clarifying our governance structures and to discuss with them efforts toward restructuring the CIB so that it parallels, rather than being dependent on, the male Benedictine Confederation. As part of the trip, we were also privileged to meet Sr. Raffaella Petrini. Sr. Raffaella is a Franciscan Sister of the Eucharist who is the first woman to hold the office of Secretary General for the Vatican City State, and one of the first three women to



President's Schedule

November 29-December 3: Crookston—Pastoral Visit

December 6-8: SHM, Yankton—Chapter Meetings

January 31-February 8: Cullman—CBP Meeting

March 16-19: SHM, Yankton—Election

To log into the Federation website

www.federationofstgertrude.org

Contact Sr. Mildred Busch: mbusch@yanktonbenedictines.org if you need the user name and password.

You can click on "Member Files" to access the directory, other Federation documents, and past issues of *The Gleaner*

MILESTONES AT ST. SCHOLASTICA MONASTERY

The sisters of Saint Scholastica Monastery in Fort Smith, Arkansas mourned a great loss and celebrated exciting new beginnings in recent months. Sister Pierre Vorster celebrated her 100th birthday on March 18th, 2022. Sister Pierre's celebration included honorifics from local and state leaders. She was surrounded by friends, family, and former students on this wonderful occasion to celebrate her accomplishments and her faith.

On July 5, 2022 the sisters gathered outside the new monastery to watch the beginning of the demolition of their beloved former monastery; the Gothic Revival building stood for nearly 100 years as a landmark in Fort Smith. It served as home for the sisters and a place of light and knowledge to the area.



A few weeks later, the sisters rejoiced with Novice Siena Fisk as she made her temporary profession on August 15th, 2022.



Message from the President cont.

be appointed to the Dicastery for bishops. Despite a very hectic schedule, Sr. Raffaella spent an hour with us, and with great grace, answered all the questions we peppered her with.

As part of the meetings we heard reports from each CIB region around the world, including very poignant reports from the Abbesses of Poland and the Ukraine. Sr. Lynn McKenzie was re-elected as Moderator of the CIB for the next four years. She was highly affirmed by the delegates for the leadership that she has exercised these past four years.

The entire two weeks of the trip were very relaxing for me, being one of those rare times that I could participate in and enjoy the meetings without being responsible for them. It is also a great gift to get to know monastic women from around the world. I am tremendously grateful for this wonderful opportunity.



TWO POSTULANTS ENTER AT FERDINAND

The Ferdinand community welcomed two postulants on Sunday, September 4. Katie Cummings, originally from Kansas City, Kansas, came to the community from Madison, Wisconsin where she worked as communications coordinator for the University of Wisconsin. Callie Nowlin, a native of Austin, Texas, entered the community from Fort Worth, Texas. Prior to entering the community, she served as a Latin teacher for a classical charter school, Great Hearts Online Arizona. Both women began their contact with us during the pandemic and initially became acquainted with the community through a variety of Zoom meetings organized by vocation director, Sr. Jill Marie Reuber. As part of the entrance ceremony, the two women were welcomed into the monastery and received a medal of St. Benedict, Liturgy of the Hours books, and an apron—the latter two items representing *ora et labora*.



Postulant Callie Nowlan, Sr. Jill Marie Reuber, and Postulant Katie Cummings

In addition to formation classes at the monastery, the postulants are taking theology classes at nearby Saint Meinrad School of Theology. They are also working in various areas of the monastery, allowing them to get to know a variety of sisters and to offer service. Sister Louise Laroche serves as their formation director.



From left to right: Sr. María Jesús Berrú, Sr. Felícita Rentería, Postulant Judith Velasques Paz, Sr. Anita Louise Lowe, Sr. Magna Lucia Castillo, Sr. Marílu Cordova, Sr. María Montálban, and Sr. Nolberta Ramírez Jiménez.

Shortly after the visit, work began to replace the roof on the Santo Domingo house. The old roof original to the house which was built in the 1970's, was full of holes and rust. The situation had deteriorated to a point that water was entering two of the bedrooms and the upstairs sitting room during times of heavy rain. Additionally, water coming from the roof had caused damage to the wooden beams that make up part of the building's structure. Sr. Maria Montalban managed the project, buying materials and arranging for transport from Piura to Santo Domingo – a distance of 80 miles and 3.5 hours on curvy roads. Work began on August 4 and was completed on September 19.

NEW SUPERIOR AND NEW ROOF IN PERU

In late July, Sr. Anita Louise Lowe and Sr. Kathleen Marie Cash traveled to visit our sisters at Monasterio Paz de la Cruz in Morropon, Peru. Sr. Kathleen served as translator. During their stay, Sr. Anita Louise visited with each sister and led the community in a discussion about their goals for the coming four years. She then appointed Sr. Magna Lucia Castillo as the new superior for the monastery, replacing Sister Felícita Renteria, who had served as superior for two terms. Srs. Anita and Kathleen also visited the sisters' convent in Santo Domingo, which houses three of the sisters who serve as teachers and pastoral ministers. The sisters also use the convent to host small programs for people in the area.





Crookston Monastery under New Management

Mount Saint Benedict Monastery in Crookston now shares space with the Diocese of Crookston—or vice versa, since the diocese has bought their property. The furniture moving is finished, and the focus is now on working out systems to get along as friendly neighbors. For example, on Tuesday mornings the sisters' chaplain presides at Eucharist and the sisters provide the music and communion servers. When the bishop or vicar schedules mass another day, then the diocesan staff do the set-up, music, and services. The diocesan staff have photos of the sisters and are in the process of assembling their own pictures so the sisters can learn their names.



The Crookston Sisters in their new oratory and door to the monastic section of the building.



Sisters enjoy a meal prepared by the new cook. (Sisters Myra, Kathleen, Anne, and Kathy)

The sisters' bedrooms and oratory are set off with a new "entrance." When a retreat is being hosted in the main dining room, the sisters usually take their food trays back to tables in their cozy community room. Sister Jeanne will be visiting Crookston in late November to work with the community on changes to their by-laws that will move them to a new form of government with a commissary.



Sr. Kathleen McGeary and Bishop Andrew Cozzens

Watertown Project Advances

Sr. Barbara Younger and Lisa Ronke, Director of Community Relations for The Village of Harmony Hill, check out the shower stall in one of the assisted living apartments being built by the Watertown sisters. Sr. Terri, prioress of Mother of God Monastery, notes that construction is progressing very nicely for the 48 assisted living and 16 memory care apartments. November is a busy month as construction crews finalize exterior work before winter. The apartments should be ready to welcome new residents in early 2023. If you know someone who would be interested in living in what promises to be a beautiful new facility, or if you want more information, you can call Lisa Ronke at 605-237-8407, or email her at live@villagewatertown.org





NEWS FROM NANAIMO

*You've got to know when to hold 'em,
Know when to fold 'em...* So sang Kenny Rogers and so sing the Benedictines of Nanaimo.

After two years of relationship with Abbeyfield (our name being Abbeyfield St. Benedict) we have made the decision to terminate the lease. Abbeyfield is a wonderful organization for healthy seniors desiring both companionship and independence. We, however, have reached the point where the needs of our older sisters cannot be accommodated by Abbeyfield. We're working with Canadian Religious Stewardship who will provide the management required to make it possible for the Sisters of the House of Bread Monastery to age in place as long as possible. We welcome your prayers as we make this transition.

In other news: Because few of the Sisters are able to travel for holidays we had another week of Staycation to relax and to honour our history together. Activities included viewing our history through photo albums, Jeopardy! (in which everyone was a winner) , Bingo, a tour of two in-house



Left: Sr. Valerie, Patricia Morton, resident, and Sr. Barbara Upper Right: Srs. Mary Ann and Pat Lower Right: Sr. Rose Mary with some of her

art galleries, movies and a great variety of snacks. The other residents loved being part of it and learning more about our lives. Even while increasing fragility becomes a more constant companion we continue to find creative ways to stay engaged with life.

FEDERATION COUNCIL MEETS AT MOUNT ANGEL

The Federation Council met at Queen of Angels Monastery in Mt. Angel October 24-28. Sr. Jane and the sisters treated us



royally—even serving us king crab, courtesy of a friend of the monastery, one night for dinner. Though the agenda was pretty stiff, the members also found some time for fun.

Sr. Mary Coswin seizes the opportunity for drama with her king crab.



Council Members: Srs. Mary Luke Jones, Jennifer Mechtild Horn-er, Mary Coswin, Jeanne Weber, and Teresa Jackson. Sr. Barbara Lynn Schmitz attended via technology from Ferdinand.



THE CREATIVE/SPIRITUAL LIFE CIRCLE AT SHALOM AT THE MONASTERY



In the Fall of 2021, Shalom at the Monastery, the retreat ministry of Queen of Angels Monastery, began a monthly Benedictine-centered Zoom discussion group on the intersection of creativity and spirituality. The discussion is led by Susan Black, oblate, writer, and artist of Black Star Studio and Gallery, who lives in Aurora, Oregon. The Circle is a dynamic experience founded on a four-fold premise: 1. That all people are inherently creative. The spirituality of living God-centered lives is the ultimate creative act. 2. That each one of us has been given gifts of creativity and spirituality that are as individual as we are. These gifts evolve throughout our lives. 3. That our gifts of creativity and spirituality, like all gifts, are to be used to build up the Kingdom of God. 4. That

creativity and spirituality blossom in supportive communities, because that's where people thrive, too. The Creative/Spiritual Life Circle meets on the 3rd Saturday of each month, from 1:15 – 2:30 p.m. All are welcome. There are no pre-requisites or qualifications beyond an open mind and a generous spirit. If you are interested, let Sr. Dorothy Jean Beyer know by emailing her at dorothyjeanb7@gmail.com and she will send you the Zoom link. Just remember we are on Pacific Standard Time.

Susan Black: "Recent years have seen me develop my identity as an artist/writer; this process has taken on more depth now that I realize that visual art and memoir writing are expressions of my spirituality, not merely hobbies."

Recently, Susan exhibited her four watercolor paintings, "Veni, Sancte Spiritus" at the monastery. These depicted water, wind, fire and the dove. We look forward to welcoming you at The Circle for some lively discussions.



TIME TO SHARE OUR ABUNCANCE OF BOOKS
Queen of Angels Monastery has had many book sales over the years. But now we are downsizing, and books are crawling out of all the spaces in the monastery where they have been living. Many of these books were also donated for us to sell. Now all we need is people who want to buy the books. This is a **LARGE BOOK SALE!**



St. Paul Hermitage

OUR LADY OF GRACE MONASTERY

The Sisters of St. Benedict at Our Lady of Grace Monastery have recently sold St. Paul Hermitage, a retirement and nursing care facility which has been among their ministries for 60 years, to Green Tree Healthcare. Speaking of the decision, which came after much discernment and prayer by the monastic community, Sr. Julie Sewell, prioress, noted that the

healthcare landscape has changed significantly from when St. Paul Hermitage opened its doors in 1961—in terms of



Sr. Rocio and Sr. Julie, prioress

the finances, operating requirements, and the personnel needed to meet the needs of residents in nursing care facilities. Green Tree Healthcare, being part of a larger health care system has more resources than a stand-alone facility can provide. The sisters are grateful to have found an organization which shares their values to take over this foundational ministry. Sr. Julie noted that they will continue be regular visitors to 'The Hermitage' as their community has both Sisters and Sisters' family members living at the facility.

SR. ROCIO ENTERS TRANSFER PROCESS

The sisters of Our Lady of Grace Monastery formally received Sr. Rocio Moreno Soto into the transfer process during a ritual on November 6. Sr. Rocio has been a member of Queen of Angels Monastery in Mt. Angel. A teacher by profession, Sr. Rocio, is originally from Durango, Mexico. She has been in the residency period of the transfer process at Beech Grove since February, 2022.

NEWS FROM ST. MARTIN MONASTERY

The sisters of St. Martin Monastery were honored guests of the Rapid City Catholic School System's annual award banquet September 9, at which they were inducted into the school system's Hall of Fame. Recognized for pioneering Catholic education in the Diocese of Rapid City, when their foundresses opened a school in Sturgis in 1889, the same year that they arrived in the Black Hills, the Benedictines of St. Martin's have been involved in Catholic education throughout their history.

To prepare for the event, the sisters furnished a

history of St. Martin's Academy that described the heroic efforts of their pioneer sister-educators. In the previous 20



Front from Left: Srs. Michelle Aldrich, Teresa Hinker, Eleanor Solon, Lorane Coffin;
Back: Srs. Yvette Mallow, Joan Tetrault, Jennifer Kehrwald, and Mary Wegher.



years before it closed in 1991, the Academy was the only Catholic secondary school in the area. Closing the Academy did not indicate diminishment of the sisters' concern about Catholic education. It was a major objective of their discernment in 2007 to sell the Academy property to the Diocese of Rapid City and the Catholic School System. Their former high school, St. Elizabeth Seton School, now houses over 400 students in Grades P-K through 5.



WINNIPEG NEWS



The Sisters of St. Benedict Monastery in Winnipeg have signed a lease to officially move from their current location in East St. Paul to 419 Youville Street in St. Boniface (also in the greater Winnipeg area). Construction on their new monastery began in June, 2022. The property will be managed by Réseau Compassion Network, with the input and cooperation of the Sisters. Sr. Dorothy is shown signing the lease agreement. Below is an architect’s rendering of the front of the monastery.

The sisters are currently living in a wing of their former monastery building, which has been sold to a First Nations group. As part of their ongoing transition, the sisters recently ritualized their last liturgy in their former chapel. Below are excerpts from Sr. Dorothy’s remarks to open the liturgy.



We are gathered here in this beautiful, sacred, chapel space where for 61 years, we have celebrated the Eucharist, prayed the Divine Office, and rejoiced in the renewal of Monastic Profession. We have received blessings and healings through the Anointing of the Sick and through Reconciliation, participated in retreats, experienced the joy and sorrows of Wakes and Funeral Masses. We have shared this space with numerous groups and with our neighboring parish of St. Theresa’s. Needless to say, this is a bittersweet moment in our Community’s history of 110 years. We are both sad and grateful. But this not new to us – in the past,



we have been “on the move,” from Duluth Minnesota to Holy Ghost Parish and Pritchard Avenue, from Pritchard Avenue to Arborg and from Arborg to Winnipeg. And next year, we will be making another move – this time to our new monastic home at 419 Youville Street where, through collaboration with Réseau Compassion Network, we will make our new chapel a treasured place of prayer.

Fall Foliage at Mt. Angel