

# The Gleaner

Number 81 ♦ August 2023



An occasional newsletter of the Monastic Congregation of St. Gertrude

## Message from the President by Sr. Jeanne Weber

My thanks to all who helped to make the **27th Chapter of the Monastic Congregation**, held June 10-17 at Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, such a resounding success. The hospitality of the sisters there was truly unsurpassed, and the chapter would not have been a success without the many individuals who organized, planned, and assisted in countless ways. Videos of the talks and panel presentations of the chapter have been sent to each prioress/administrator. These videos and the transcript of the president's address also will be uploaded to our website.

Just one of the many actions of the chapter was to change our name: We are now officially **The Monastic Congregation of St. Gertrude**. In short, this change makes our name consistent with our juridical identity (see Listen H 2), and will help to clarify our status with the Vatican. If you are interested in a deeper analysis of the reasons for this change, you may ask any of your monastery delegates to share a copy of the white paper shared with the delegations or find this on our website. This paper was written by Dan Ward with input from the three monastic congregation presidents. St. Gertrude's is the last of the "federations" to make this change, which is the result of a truly collaborative effort to educate ourselves and our monastic communities.

Speaking of changes—numerous changes were made to our Listen II norms during this chapter. These changes were necessitated by our changing demographics, new governance structures in some monasteries, changes in canon law coming from the Vatican, and changes resulting from the pandemic. Because of the number of changes, it is no longer realistic to keep the hard copies of Listen up to date and, in this digital age, it doesn't make much sense to print and bind a new hard copy. We will (as soon as it is reviewed) post the revised Listen document to our website. Anyone who wishes may print a hard copy from there.

And speaking again of changes, the following pages tell the story of a very active season of change in our monastic communities. Let us keep each other in prayer, and as summer makes its way into autumn, may nature's season of rest be mirrored in our own lives. God's blessings to all!



Newly elected Council: Srs. Anita Louise Lowe, Monastery Immaculate Conception, Ferdinand, IN; Jill West, Sacred Heart Monastery, Dickinson, ND; Jeanne Weber (President), Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, SD; Jennifer Mechtild Horner (1st Councilor), Our Lady of Grace Monastery, Beech Grove, IN; Kathryn Burt, Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, SD; and Mary Luke Jones, Our Lady of Grace Monastery, Beech Grove, IN. St Scholastica just happened to pop into our gathering in order to escape the rain!



The **2023 Monastic Congregation Chapter on-site committee** wants to thank all the communities for our new blender! It was the delight of the Benedictines in Beech Grove to host the Chapter. In spite of the blender malfunction during the made-to-order milkshake social, the committee recovered quickly and kept on blending.



**Sr. Ann Patrice Papesch, Sr. Anna Marie Megel, Sr. Mary Luke Jones, Sr. Susan Nicole Reuber, Sr. Susan Marie Lindstrom.**



**Delegates, staff, and guests** of the 27th Chapter of the Monastic Congregation held June 9-17, 2023 at Our Lady of Grace Monastery, Beech Grove, IN

**Front Row:** Srs. Judith Ann Timmerman (Fort Smith), Jennifer Mechtild Horner (Beech Grove), Jill West (Dickinson), Marie Therese Racine (Beech Grove), Jeanne Weber, Yankton, Candyce Chrystal (Yankton), Jane Becker (Crookston/Ferdinand), Kathryn Burt (Yankton);

**2nd Row:** Srs. Dorothy Levandosky (Winnipeg), Terri Hoffman (Watertown), Teresa Ann Wolf (Watertown), Jane Hibbard (Mt. Angel), Rose Mary Rexing (Ferdinand), Regina Schroeder (Fort Smith), Teresa Jackson (Cottonwood), Kathy Curtis (Martin);

**3rd Row:** Srs. Barbara Lynn Schmitz (Ferdinand), Mary Wegher (Rapid City), Penny Bingham (Yankton), Mildred Busch (Yankton), Eileen Brick (Watertown), Julie Sewell (Beech Grove), Phoebe Schwartze (Dickinson), Kathy Kuchar (Crookston), Lorane Coffin (Rapid City), Dawn Mills (BSPA, Clyde), Celeste Boda (Ferdinand), Mary Luke Jones (Beech Grove);

**Back Row:** Srs. Carol Falkner (Beech Grove), Kimberly Prohaska (Fort Smith), Nancy Miller (St. Joseph, MN), Kathy Cash (Ferdinand) Mary Coswin (Winnipeg), Mary Going (Martin), Barbara Rinehart (Nanaimo), Paula Larson (Dickinson), Anita Louise Lowe (Ferdinand), Elise Marie Martinez (Cottonwood), Anita Whalen (Crookston), Kathy DiVaio (Martin), and Jennifer Kehrwald (Rapid City/Yankton)



## “55 AND UNDER” WEEKEND

Forty-nine sisters age 55 and under from 23 monasteries in the U.S. and Mexico recently attended their second in a series of three annual meetings exploring the future of Benedictine life. The meeting was held July 21-23 at Immaculata Monastery in Norfolk, NE and was also attended by the presidents of our Benedictine Monastic Congregations. The theme for this meeting, which focused on collaboration, was **“Companions on the Journey: Building Bridges of Hope.”** The meeting was facilitated by Sr. Candyce Chrystal from Sacred Heart Monastery in Yankton. Sr. Lynn McKenzie from Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman gave the keynote address. The weekend included collaborating on two service projects during the meeting as well as breaking up into interest groups which will create project proposals to be vetted at the third meeting in this series. That meeting will be held July 5-8, 2024 at Sacred Heart Monastery in Yankton. The planning team for all three meetings consists of Sr. Maria Victoria Cutaia from Clyde, MO, Sr. Elizabeth Carillo from Atchison, KS, Sr. Raphaela Cady from Lacey, WA, Sr. Carmy Luke from Yankton, SD, and Sr. Sarah Elizabeth McMahon from Norfolk, NE. Kudos to this team for all their work on this series of meetings, which has included securing significant grant funding from LCWR.



### MONASTIC CONGREGATION PRESIDENT’S SCHEDULE

- July 2-8: Clyde MO, Visitation
- July 12-15: Crookston, Installation of Adm.
- July 15-18: Rapid City, Installation of Adm.
- July 21-24: Norfolk, 55 and Under
- Sept 15-22: Yankton, Visitation
- Sept 26-29: St. Louis, RCRI
- Oct 3-7: Fort Smith—Council Mtg.
- Oct 25-28: Beech Grove—Conference
- Nov 9-14: Cottonwood—Election
- Nov 14-19: Mt Angel—Pastoral Visit
- Dec 2-5: Cottonwood—Installation



**ST. MARTIN MONASTERY, RAPID CITY**

In early May we Sisters of St Martin Monastery moved across the street to take up residence in the **Good Samaritan Senior facility**. Five of our eleven members are in independent apartments, five are in assisted living and one is in nursing care. With the help of professional movers and with friendly residents to welcome us, our transition was accomplished as painlessly as possible. Good Samaritan has provided us with a large room exclusively for our use. Part of it serves as an oratory for our daily celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours; the other part of the room has bookcases, a large video screen, cupboards, a sink, and tables and chairs for various community uses. We are blessed to have Mass every Sunday and four times during the week in a Good Samaritan chapel. Retired diocesan priests who celebrated with us at the monastery now come to Good Samaritan.

We are grateful to the Sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery in Yankton who offered to share with us their **annual retreat** via Zoom, June 18-24. Sister Michaela Hedican of St. Benedict Monastery, St. Joseph, MN gave two conferences each day on the theme of hope.

In April we petitioned the President and Council of the Monastic Congregation to suspend our regular monastic governance and **appoint a “commissary.”** This request was granted. Sr. Jennifer Kehrwald was appointed to continue her leadership of the community through August. At that time, Sr. Jennifer Mechtild will take up those responsibilities. Sr. Jennifer Mechtild will reside at her home monastery in Beech Grove, visiting us quarterly, or as needed. Two lay women who have been employed by the monastery will continue on as “Sisters’ Services Coordinators,” seeing to our day-to-day needs and acting as liaisons with Sr. Jennifer Mechtild.

The community welcomed President Sister Jeanne Weber and Sister Jennifer Mechtild for a visit July 16-18. In a ritual during Morning Prayer on July 17, **Sister Jeanne installed and blessed Sister Jennifer Mechtild**. Sister Jennifer Mechtild’s appointment for a term of two years becomes effective September 1, 2023 as Sister Jennifer Kehrwald returns to her community for a much-deserved rest.



**Sr. Jeanne Weber, President, installs Sr. Jennifer Mechtild Horner as Pastoral Administrator (Commissary) of St. Martin Monastery in Rapid City.**



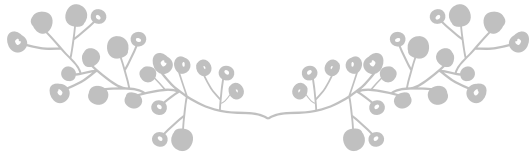
**Sr. Jennifer Mechtild receives a blessing from Sr. Michelle.**





### MONASTERY OF ST. GERTRUDE, COTTONWOOD

Sr. Teresa Jackson was installed by Sr. Jeanne Weber as Administrator of the Monastery of St. Gertrude on May 27, 2023. She will serve until the community can hold their election, which is scheduled for November of 2023.



Sr. Mary Marge Goeckner (subprioress) hands Sr. Teresa the scriptures during the installation ceremony.

### ST. BENEDICT'S MONASTERY, WINNIPEG

The sisters of St. Benedict Monastery in Winnipeg **moved into their new monastery** the week of July 17. They love their new digs, and are especially appreciative of their new chapel. As you can see, the building has plenty of light, air, and wood. The monastery was built and is owned by a non-profit group, with the sisters leasing the space.





**MOUNT ST BENEDICT MONASTERY, CROOKSTON**



On May 10, **Sister Jane Becker of Ferdinand** receives send-off wishes from the Crookston sisters as she moves offsite to complete her term as pastoral administrator for them. The Sisters presented S. Jane with mementos, a basket of good wishes and sentiments set to song. Sue Murphy was the emcee. Sister Jane was the onsite administrator for the Crookston community from August 2020 to March 2023. She served the community from her home monastery in Ferdinand from March through June.

Sister Jeanne Weber installed Sister Jennifer Mechtild Horner of Beech Grove, Indiana, as the offsite Pastoral Administrator of Mount Saint Benedict Monastery, Crookston on July 12, 2023. The Crookston sisters formally and warmly welcomed Sister Jennifer Mechtild with their hugs and promises of prayer and support. This was Sister Jennifer Mechtild's first visit to Crookston.



**Srs. Jeanne Weber, Jennifer Mechtild Horner, and Kathleen McGeary (Monastery Coordinator)**



**Sr. Jennifer Mechtild greets the sisters during the installation ceremony.**

**L-R Srs. Anita Whalen, Karen Violette, Dianne Maresh, and Bernadette Kostrzewski.**





## QUEEN OF ANGELS MONASTERY, MT. ANGEL

The sisters at Queen of Angels Monastery have all moved from their monastery to the Providence Benedictine Nursing Center's long-term care and assisted living (Orchard House) and to Mount Angel Towers. The sisters have settled in and are enjoying their new home. The sisters have a small chapel and a community room at **Orchard House**. The sisters will continue to have use of the monastery's chapel, chapter room, and administrative offices.



Pictured L-R: Srs. Mechtild Fennimore, Christine Rausch, Angela Meister, Marietta Schindler, Joseph Fennimore, Regina Rausch, Dorothy Rausch, and Susan Casey.



On July 14-16, the oblates of **Queen of Angels Monastery** gathered for their annual retreat at Mount Angel Abbey Guest House and Conference Center and via zoom. The presenter, Nancy Hendricks, OblSB, gave conferences on the theme, "Do not be afraid. It's all about love." The oblates had the opportunity to join the monks for prayer as well as have a tour of some of the religious art of the abbey. It was a wonderful experience of community building among the oblates.



Since the sisters have moved from their monastery, there has been much effort clearing out the monastery and preparing for a huge sale. Mount Angel Abbey has agreed to hold safe our treasured paintings, icons, statues, calligraphy, religious items and other items. There will be a special section, "Queen of Angels Monastery Legacy", in their collection for future generations to enjoy.

Sisters Marietta Schindler and Dorothy Jean Beyer celebrated their **60th Jubilee** on the Solemnity of St. Benedict. The Sunday before, the community with oblates, families of the Jubilarians and friends gathered together for Eucharist and lunch to celebrate this milestone occasion.

# 60th Jubilee!





### HOUSE OF BREAD MONASTERY, NANAIMO, BC

Greetings from the House of Bread Monastery in Nanaimo. This summer has been quite busy as we decided it was a good time to express **our gratitude to those who have been so helpful and supportive to us over the years** both as friends of our Monastery and participants in our ministries.

We have had dinners, high teas (Kate, our cook, worked at the Empress Hotel in Victoria and knows what she is doing!) and ice cream socials to express our appreciation to many.

You might wonder why we decided it was a good time to do this in the few short months of summer. The answer is very simple. It's because today we have an excellent cook to prepare the dinners, high teas and ice cream socials, and a competent executive director to help with the planning. And you never know what tomorrow may bring. "Prediction is very difficult, especially if it's about the future!"



Kate, chef at House of Bread Monastery



Srs. Mary Ann, Valerie, and Jean Ann, with guest

Sr. Valerie with two guests of the monastery







### MONASTERY IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, FERDINAND

Missioning: At the end of July, we held our **annual missioning ceremony**. The theme for this year is Unity in Diversity. Our symbol was created by Sr. Jayn Elizabeth Lein, showing God and a person working together to create that person's gifts which are to be used for the good of the community. Around the sculpture are multiple pieces of clay symbolizing our giftedness. After the service, each sister was invited to take a piece of clay as a symbol of her unique giftedness and to reflect on Pope Francis' statement from Laudato Si: "We are all co-creators with God...we use our gifts to care for our common home."



Hosting of Monastic Worship Forum: The biannual conference of the Monastic Worship Forum took place at our monastery July 31-August 2. It was a hybrid event, with ten participants on site and numerous participants via Zoom. Sr. Michelle Sinkhorn served as technology support. Sr. Kathleen Harmon, SNDdeN, was the presenter on the topic of "Becoming the Psalms."

### ST. SCHOLASTICA MONASTERY, FORT SMITH AR

Graduation class of **2023 Spiritual Direction Program** in the monastery chapel on May 6, 2023. Graduates: Cherry Schwulst, Patricia Stengel, Karen Hauskey, Raina Marciano, Renee Hearon with Director Alice Nahas.



HAPPY  
Birthday



Sister Marcella Schmalz and Hildegard Varga at **Sister Marcella's 103rd Birthday** luncheon at the monastery in July .



# Jubilees!

Sisters celebrating their **Jubilees**. (L-R) Sister Kimberly Prohaska, Prioress. Sister Leona Selig, 70 years. Sister Adrian Wewers 75 years, Bishop Anthony Taylor, Sister Elise Forst, 60 years, Sister Maria DeAngeli, 70 years. The celebration was on July 8.



Sister Maria DeAngeli and Sister Kimberly Prohaska went shopping for families who lost their jobs with Tyson in Van Buren, Arkansas. Over 900 families were impacted and the Literary Council sponsored a drive to help get kids new clothes for school. St. Scholastica's donated clothing and funds to assist those in need.



## SACRED HEART MONASTERY, YANKTON



It's been a blessed summer at Sacred Heart Monastery in Yankton, SD. Early in June, we **installed our 15th Prioress**, S. Penny Bingham (center). S. Penny also served as Prioress from 2012-2017. Sr. Penny has appointed S. Candyce Chrystal (left) as Subprioress and S. Bonita Gacnik (Right) as Procurator.

In July we welcomed **Abbot Primate Gregory Polan** from Missouri to the monastery. He spent time with the sisters before sharing an encouraging message to the sisters and the public about how the Rule of St. Benedict still inspires 1500 years later.





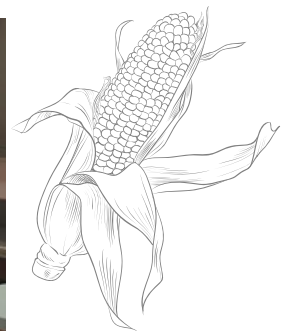
Three sisters celebrate **diamond Jubilees** this year. S. Delores Rush (center) celebrates 70 years of monastic profession, while Ss. Marlene Stetz (left) and Michaeleen Muhovich (right) celebrate 60 years.

## *Jubilees*

Each summer we celebrate with our employees **Benedictine Awareness Week** (July 10-14) with a full week of activities. Employees were invited to an indoor picnic, a morning coffee break with the sisters, and ice cream floats during the week. We were also able to recognize 5 employees for years of service this year. Pictured (L to R) are Annette Johnson (5 years), Phyllis Meier (35 years), Gary Bares (15 years), Jean Fitzgerald (5 years), and Katie Chonis (10 years).



The sisters with the help of community members shucked, cooked, and cut **1200 donated ears of corn** in preparation for the Yankton Community Holiday Feast, an annual community gathering held the day before Thanksgiving.



Pictured L to R: S. Mary Carole Curran, S. Marlene Stetz,  
S. Kathleen 'Kit' Courtney.



**We pay tribute to Sister Mary Forman, OSB**, 75, prioress of the Monastery of St. Gertrude, Cottonwood, Idaho, passed into eternal life on April 20, 2023, at the monastery.

Sister Mary was born in Boise, Idaho, on September 7, 1947, to Major Neal Forman and Eugenia T. Forman. After earning a bachelor's degree from Idaho State University, she worked as a pharmacist, co-founding the Terry Reilly Clinic in Nampa, the first low-income clinic in that area. She entered the Monastery of St. Gertrude in 1973, professing her vows in 1976. She subsequently earned a master's degree in theology from St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota. At the University of Toronto, she earned both a master's degree and Ph.D. in medieval studies. Sister Mary's dear friend, Abbot Placid Solari, chancellor at Belmont Abbey College, North Carolina, planned to present her with an honorary doctorate during Spring, 2023.

Sr. Mary's ministries were varied and spread throughout Idaho, North Dakota, Appalachia, Toronto, and Minnesota. She served as a pharmacist, mission effectiveness educator, pastoral associate, director of religious education, and youth minister. She spent many years at St. John's University/the College of St. Benedict as a teaching assistant, adjunct professor, and visiting professor of theology. Her deep knowledge of Benedictine spirituality and life also provided opportunities for her to minister as a spiritual director, retreat and workshop facilitator, and a consultant for men's and women's monastic communities.

Sr. Mary was a board member and, for two years, president of the American Benedictine Academy. She served as associate editor of the American Benedictine Review, *Magistra: A Journal of Women's Spirituality in History*, and *Vox Benedictina*. As well as many articles on Benedictine topics, Sr. Mary wrote the book, *Praying with the Desert Mothers*, and edited *One Heart, One Soul, Many Communities*.

Sister Mary served for six years as a councilor for the Federation of St. Gertrude. She was elected prioress of the Monastery of St. Gertrude in 2015, serving a six-year term. She was reelected for a four-year term in 2021. During her tenure, an extensive renovation of the Sisters' residence was completed, as the sisters moved toward expanding the definition of the community as the Center for Benedictine Life at the Monastery of St. Gertrude.

The larger Benedictine community remembers Sr. Mary for her friendship, her extensive knowledge and willingness to share her expertise in Benedictine history and spirituality, her administrative gifts, and her prodigious note-taking ability.

