



Passages

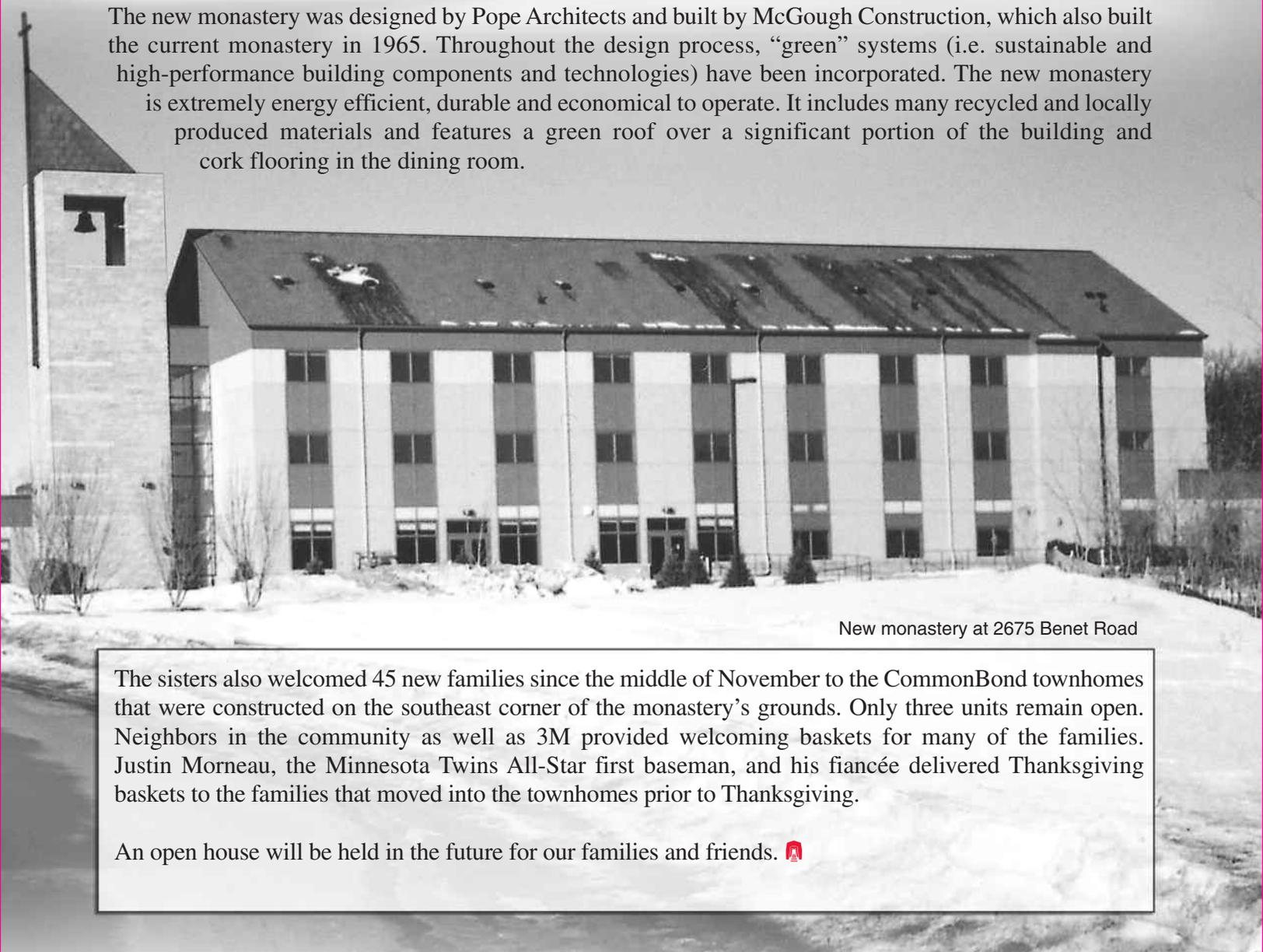
VOLUME 19 / ISSUE 2

A NEW ADDRESS AFTER 44 YEARS

Jean Hartman

After 14 years of discernment and planning and 10 months of construction, the sisters will be moving into their new home at 2675 Benet Road on February 10, 2009. The new monastery features a chapel with the altar, ambo, water font and chairs made by St. John's Abbey. It also includes stained glass windows designed by Michael Pilla, a local stained glass artist. Thirty-nine sisters will move to the new monastery. The Benedictine Center will also have beautiful space in the new monastery with conference and guest rooms.

The new monastery was designed by Pope Architects and built by McGough Construction, which also built the current monastery in 1965. Throughout the design process, "green" systems (i.e. sustainable and high-performance building components and technologies) have been incorporated. The new monastery is extremely energy efficient, durable and economical to operate. It includes many recycled and locally produced materials and features a green roof over a significant portion of the building and cork flooring in the dining room.



New monastery at 2675 Benet Road

The sisters also welcomed 45 new families since the middle of November to the CommonBond townhomes that were constructed on the southeast corner of the monastery's grounds. Only three units remain open. Neighbors in the community as well as 3M provided welcoming baskets for many of the families. Justin Morneau, the Minnesota Twins All-Star first baseman, and his fiancée delivered Thanksgiving baskets to the families that moved into the townhomes prior to Thanksgiving.

An open house will be held in the future for our families and friends. 

KEEPING BALANCE IN THE MIDST OF CHANGE

Dear Friends,

Our patron, St. Benedict, becomes even more prominent as all the changes we have discerned over the past fourteen years suddenly are real. By the time you receive this issue of PASSES, the sisters will be settling into our new monastery. It is an exciting time even as it evokes a sense of loss as we leave this current place that has been home for forty-four years. That is why Benedict continues to be such an excellent teacher. His ministry began with a three-year sojourn in a cave. There he discerned what God wanted him to do in order to advance the Gospel. Our time of discernment as a community was our own type of cave experience. It was only through prayer, conversation, and deep listening to the Holy Spirit that we gained wisdom about our future.



Carol Rennie, OSB

Now we must act on where we have been led. We do so with confidence that our life as a community gives us sustaining power for the adjustments we will be making. We do so because we are women on a mission deeply grounded in the Gospel and sustained daily by prayer and Eucharist. We can act on our decisions because we are accompanied by friends and donors of this monastery – people like you.

The spirit of community teaches us that we follow Christ together. In that process we form relationships that nurture the best in us and enable us to face challenges that would be daunting alone. As friends and donors, your companionship is manifest in your constant encouragement. You pray for us, you think of ways to help us with tasks that need doing, and you share your resources by contributing to the financial well being of the monastery and its key ministries.

While we express our appreciation to you in this form of communication, we also do so daily as we remember all of you at prayer. It is prayer that forms us women as a monastic community, and it is prayer that strengthens the web of relationships we have with you. We thank God for your friendship. Continue to journey with us. 🙏

In gratitude,
The Sisters of St. Benedict
Carol Rennie, OSB
Prioress

GIVING IT BACK

Carol Rennie, OSB.

Pat Melody, oblate, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, was one of seven recent recipients of the 2008 Virginia McKnight Binger Award in Human Service. Pat received a check of \$10,000 for her advocacy on behalf of the homeless.

In the last six years, Pat has spent 25 hours a week at the Dorothy Day Center which sleeps about 200 people on the floor every night and the agency was one of the recipients of Pat's gift. Pat said it was wonderful to offer a check to folks who least expected such a gift.

In her selfless manner, Pat is always ready to go the extra mile for others. She believes that being grounded in the Benedictine way has strengthened her desire to be Christ for others. Congratulations, Pat. 🙏



Pat Melody

OBLATES' CORNER

Sue Buelow, Oblate



The Oblates have begun another year of formation, focusing our studies on the Rule of Benedict. In the Prologue and throughout the 73 chapters of the rule, Benedict refers to living a Christ-centered life with others. The teachings of Christ could be summed up in one word: love. We are to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves.

The Sisters at St. Paul's Monastery have taken three vows that convey the core of the rule; stability (to remain with their original monastery), obedience (to listen and respond to God's direction), and conversion of life (to stay open to transformation). Love is the motivating reason behind all Benedict's rules for those living in community.

Benedict asks us to live a life of love and service, reaching out to others because we see the face of Christ in them. The monastic community provides for us the most beautiful expression of what it means to love our neighbors as ourselves and to greet each guest as Christ himself.

We as Oblates can apply these same vows as values to our daily lives as we commit to family and community, as we listen and respond to God's calling, and remain open to Christ's healing and transforming touch in our lives. Through our promises as Oblates we pray that this love of Christ will live in our lives and touch the lives of those we meet each day.

The Rule is our resource in how to relate in love to other people. Listen to how Esther de Waal has summarized the content of the Rule. "It is all about love. It points me to Christ. Ultimately the whole meaning and purpose of the Rule is simply (in Benedict's own words), 'Prefer nothing to the love of Christ.'" 

GRATEFUL

Bernadine Frischmon, OSB.

I have been blessed with very good parents and an exceptionally happy and fun loving family. Coming from a family of ten (three sets of twins), there was always something happening. From my youth, the grace of God moved me to want to be a sister. I never told anyone, but I knew it was something I wanted to do. My parents cared for welfare children and I always felt sorry for them because they did not have what I had. Many of them came from St Joseph's Children's Home and I knew that sisters were in charge of them. I never got to work at St Joseph's Home, but I have been blessed with the opportunity of helping children grow in their faith at St Augustine's and now at the Cathedral of St Paul.



S. Bernadine Frischmon, OSB.

Life has not always been work; there has been time for fun. I have had many opportunities to go fishing which I enjoy very much. Coming from the farm, I still enjoy the outdoors. The old saying, "You can take the girl from the farm but you can't take the farm out of the girl," is so true for me. At one time in my religious life, I did cooking and this, too, was enjoyable. I'm told I'm a pretty good cook, still.

When I was growing up, prayer was very important in our family and is still very important to me. I have been blessed by God in many ways far beyond my expectations, especially in education and in my travels to Europe and elsewhere. My heart is grateful. 

(This article is a continuation of our mission sister series.)

CELEBRATIONS AFTER 40 YEARS!

Saint Therese in New Hope is celebrating 40 years of compassionate care. The sisters of St. Paul's Monastery have been involved since the very beginning, thanks to S. Marcelline Jung, OSB, whose vision and wisdom initiated the ministry in 1966 when ground breaking took place by Bishop Leonard Cowley. In the summer of 1967, Sisters Paula Hagen and Virginia Matter interviewed potential residents and in December of the same year, residents and sisters moved into the new space.

Sisters who began ministry there were: Sisters Marcelline Jung, Aidan Barthel, Kenneth Kauth, Liberta Williams, Wilma Guettler, Virginia Matter and Paula Hagen. Presently, there are two sisters in residence: Marie Rademacher and Lois Hauwiller. Throughout the years, forty sisters from the monastery have shared in this ministry while the facility has provided loving care to more than 40,000 people. Saint Therese, a Catholic facility, serves seniors of all faiths. Barb Rode is the present President and CEO. 🏠



Sisters at St Therese Home



S. Paula Hagen



S. Marcelline Jung



S. Annette Esboldt, emcee for the New Year celebration.

ESCAPE FROM PARADISE...

...occurred January 1, 2009, when Sisters Walburga Dietrich, Maura Fleiger and Benedicta Riepp joined us for one of our last celebrations in our present but not long lasting monastery home. It was a special occasion to have this trio with us for the afternoon program which consisted of their own history highlights before we got into our own from 301 Summit Avenue and 2675 Larpenteur and with stated hopes for 2675 Benet Road. After Mass and a German meal, the above three flew in for the remainder of the gathering. Food was not in their schedule since they are in the midst of a continual feast with those above. None looked emaciated in any way after their long absence and their clothing was the typical black and white looking still quite fresh. Amazing, for those who are concerned about clothing in the next life. Some of the best gifts they gave us were the many greetings and inquiries from those who have gone before us and are waiting for us. How inviting is that? S. Annette Esboldt served as emcee and singer along with S. Marie Fujan and the visiting trio consisted of Sisters Paula Hagen, Virginia Matter and Carole Sweely. 🏠



Ministry of Mothers Sharing (MOMS)

An outreach ministry of the Sisters of St. Benedict of St. Paul's Monastery

The *On the Journey Retreat Series* expanded with the publication of *In God's Hands*. This retreat, in addition to *Choice-making* and *Emptying Your Cup: Finding Peace Through Letting Go*, offers a 3 hour retreat experience for women. In addition, the **MOMS** National Leadership Team responded to the needs of many for retreat facilitator training with the development of our fourth workshop. Tapping into the minds of leadership that gathered for a recent Minnesota Networking Meeting, this workshop is designed to answer the questions that come to mind when one steps forward to be part of the 3-hour retreat facilitator team. The workshop offers information on an array of topics including servant leadership, how to create a sacred retreat environment, lead a prayer ritual, and market the retreat.

Ministry of Mothers Sharing (MOMS) Networking Meetings take place across the country, bringing MOMS leaders in a local area together with an opportunity to connect and learn from each other. Here in Minnesota, representatives from parishes as far apart as Duluth and Lakeville come together to share wisdom on issues ranging from the value of a team approach in leadership to understanding how to use the benefits of today's technology while overcoming barriers it can impose. **MOMS** leaders share the feedback given by the participants experiencing the ministry in their communities.



A few are listed here:

- *Sacredness of all human relationships and friendships*
- *Strengthened my relationship with God and prayer*
- *Being connected to the feminine in my person (Feminine Face of God)*
- *My vocation and life work as a mother is a great ministry*
- *Finding the "spark of divinity" inside myself*
- *Taking time for reflection and regaining balance*
- *All of my life is holy – all the daily pots and pans of being a mother*
- *Seeing God as my partner in parenting my children*
- *Feeling very supported in my ministry of Christian parenting*

A **MOMS** training & conference is held at the monastery each year to bring all Regional Coordinators, Staff, and Advisory Committee members together for ongoing training, enrichment, and visioning. The **MOMS 2009 National Leadership Training & Conference** will take place at the new site of St. Paul's Monastery, July 7-11, 2009. Interested participants are invited to visit www.stpaulsmonastery.org, click on *Ministry of Mothers Sharing* at the top, and email us for information. – Jean Glaraton, Adm. Assistant, MOMS



SISTER VIVIAN KOVAR died December 16, 2008, after a brief illness.

She was 85 years old, having lived her monastic profession for 63 years. Sister was born in Amidon, N.D., and the first and only girl having four brothers. Entering the Scholasticate in 1943 at St. Benedict's in St. Joseph, MN, and after her first vows in 1945, she began a diversified career in health care, teaching, parish ministry, secretarial work, pastoral care and her last great love, reflexology.

Her ministry in education took her to St. Bernard's, St. Paul, Visitation, Minneapolis, Immaculate Heart of Mary, St. Paul, Assumption, Richfield, St. Columba's, St. Paul, and in pastoral care, St. Therese Home in New Hope. She came home to the monastery in the early 1990's helping in the Benedictine Center and the Archives until she found reflexology, thus devoting her time and unlimited energy to this science for the good of the sisters.

Sister had a variety of interests: reading, a great devotion to jigsaw puzzles and a public fondness for her home state of North Dakota.

She had a hearty laugh, a good sense of humor delighting in stories and the incongruities of life. Sister was a quiet monastic devoted to lectio and liturgy having a fondness for singing. She loved being a farmer's daughter and spoke fondly about her youth riding bareback on a trusty steed to various destinations on the North Dakota prairies.

We pray, after her many years of varied and devoted dedication but steadfast service, she may be received with the same graciousness and joy she greeted others, being guided by that Morning Star of the prairies into the everlasting Light. 🕯️

TO HEAR A NEW VOICE

Sunday, November 2, 2008, S. Paula Hagen, OSB, introduced S. Patricia Wittberg, a Sister of Charity from Indianapolis, IN, as the day's guest speaker with her topic, "Liminal Periods in Religious Community."

AFTER explanations and examples of the word liminal with meanings of threshold and transition, Sister proceeded with stories, examples, questions and answers to that which we might be looking for in the new spaces once our move to the smaller monastery takes place.

A MAIN feature of her presentation had to do with new membership and how we stand in our attitude towards new members. This is often uncharted territory since new membership has not been a flourishing aspect of our lives for some years. A few have arrived and only another few have handled all this newness as their directors since the rest have gone quietly about their monastic business.

A KEY message throughout the address was we are all responsible for these new members and all in community can be aware of these valued guests who might be interested in the Benedictine life style.

WITH table discussions followed by large group contributions and the ever present goals to be written and posted, the day ended with all more aware of this conundrum – how do we invite others to be interested and simply to wish for others that which we have devoted our lives to here for the next. Might it be sheer folly to cast our nets into the mysteries which will only be revealed in the next life and live this life as if we already know some of the surprises OR might our lives here already reveal some of these mysteries we are searching for and having already found them we delight in our fulfilled wishes which are sustaining us longer than we ever dreamed. 🕯️

KEATING AND CENTERING PRAYER

Kathleen Lindstrom



*“And the Lord God formed man...and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;
and man became a living soul.”*

Genesis 2:7

These difficult times may be trying to our very souls; but we are reminded of a basic gift that is always available to calm our minds and ease our worried hearts. It is the gift of *breath*.

“God breathed breath into us at the beginning of the world,” says Sr. Virginia Matter, a teacher of Centering Prayer and a member of Minnesota Contemplative Outreach, “and it is this life-giving ability that keeps our body healthy and in harmony. It is so natural, we don’t even think about it.”

She tells us more about this sacred gift that keeps us alive and can also be used as a source of prayer.

Used as *prayer*, the act of breathing can open us to God’s healing presence, where we breathe out tension, breathe in peace and fall deeper into the heart of love. “It’s so simple,” Sr. Virginia says. “By just breathing and being present, we will find refreshment and feel centered; our false self will begin to fall away. We will come to know peace.”

Breathing and being present are at the heart of Centering Prayer, an ancient form of Christian meditation re-introduced to lay people in the mid 1970s. This movement was co-founded by Fr. Thomas Keating [see box story], a Trappist monk, who believes all people are invited to be contemplatives and to experience the inner stillness that can heal and transform.

According to Sr. Virginia, there are more than 30 Centering Prayer groups in Minnesota right now (20 in the Twin Cities alone) filled with like-minded people wanting to live more meaningful, meditative lives. “You come to sit with one another, knowing you won’t be judged and don’t have to perform for anyone. You can just show up and be yourself. People are searching for a place like this.”

She was drawn to Christian meditation in the 1970s and ultimately learned about Fr. Keating, who has since become a friend and mentor. “He’s a beautiful teacher,” she explains. “He’s in his eighties but continues to study and learn new things. It gives me such hope—that there’s always an opportunity for spiritual growth no matter how old you are.”

Currently, she says, Fr. Keating is working to simplify the Centering Prayer concept so people don’t feel overwhelmed. “He wants people to know that their relationship with God is simple and wonderful.

“As simple,” she emphasizes, “as taking a breath.” 

The Benedictine Center is honored to host* Fr. Thomas Keating on Friday, February 27, from 7 to 9 p.m. at Transfiguration Church in Oakdale, speaking on “Transforming the Heart of the World: Living as a Contemplative Today.”

He is co-founder of Contemplative Outreach and a Centering Prayer sage, who is “dedicated to helping people tune in to a fuller level of reality that is always present to us.”

The cost is \$40. For more information or to register, go to www.stpaulsmonastery.org, and click on the Benedictine Center tab; call 651-777-7251; email benedictinecenter@stpaulsmonastery.org.

*Underwritten by the Trust for the Meditation Process: www.trustformeditation.org

PEOPLE AND SPACES

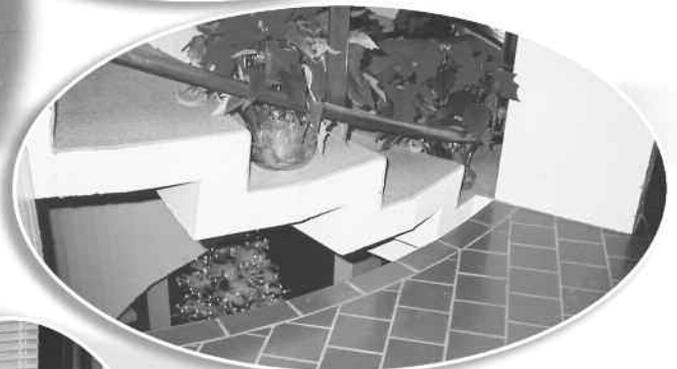
Fred and Linda Mayntz, our Charleston, S.C. friends, packing our library books for their used book ministry.



Without volumes, the library echoes with emptiness.



Leadership gallery, their most quiet moments.



Find the last standing Christmas tree.



Sisters Mary Courteau, Catherine Schoenecker and Joan Schneider enjoy quiet moments during the January 1st celebration.



Sandra Carlson, still enthusiastic about cartridges and computers.



S. Irene Uptegrove's crucifix almost alone in the library reading area.

GLORY!

Marie Fujan, OSB

Early last December I read something in the Prophet Isaiah that I had never seen, at least it had not registered before. Chapter 43 gives the Promises of Redemption and Restoration. Verses 6 and 7 say: "...Bring back my sons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth: Everyone who is named as mine, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made." Whom I created for my glory! That is the phrase that sent a jolt through my bones!

During the Christmas season we focus on the love of God that sent the Eternal Word to become one of us, Emmanuel, God with us, Jesus. The mystery of the Incarnation is filled with the glory of God; the angels sing, 'Glory to God in the Highest.'

Whom I created for my glory has a different focus, doesn't it? What gave me a jolt was realizing that God created us for God's own glory! Of course everything that God creates gives God glory, but we are talking about us, you and me. That means that the very act of creating human beings, creating out of love, gives God glory! No wonder God made us in God's own image and has a plan for each.

Certainly it follows that how we live, what we say and what we do, also needs to strive to give glory to God and to discern God's plan. That is what I want to say to women from all over the country who inquire about religious life. The task of discernment is to discover what God is calling each one to be and to do.

That is my prayer for young people today. Research is showing a growing interest in religious life; the majority are people under 30. Again I encourage all our readers to pray that women who are discerning religious life, especially the women that God is calling to our monastery, will have the grace and courage to respond to God's call. God says of all of us...*Whom I created for my glory!* 📖



Marie Fujan, OSB

Christmas at the Monastery



Happy participants for Christmas at the monastery event.



Singers at our last Christmas at the monastery event.

OUR BENEDICTINE HERITAGE

Benedictine men and women have been around ever since mid-sixth century when Benedict attracted followers with his solitary lifestyle after becoming disenchanted with Rome, so he fled to caves and various monastic sites. When communities were established, numbers remained small, especially if they became too large or unwieldy for a comfortable living style. Benedict had a variety of living experiences all reminiscent of universal character traits as various chapters of his Rule indicates.

Benedict lived during the decline of the Roman Empire when so much of Europe was in chaos and people were hungry for order with stability, community with concern, a discipline with prayer in their disorderly lives. This was the time for Benedict's Rule to come into existence. Monasteries became centers of learning, centers of civilization and centers of prayer for those in need of all three.

Because of his Rule, Benedictine ideals have flourished ever since always adapting to society's surroundings and needs. Many have responded, even to this present day when individuals and groups find themselves at a monastery, hoping the door will open to that which they are seeking to find.

It was Mother Benedicta Riepp and her two companions who came to St. Mary's in Erie, PA, in 1852 from St. Walburga's Abbey in Eichstatt, Bavaria, to establish the first monastery for Benedictine women in the United States. "Before the turn of the century there would be 18 additional women's monasteries stretching from Maryland to Oklahoma and Florida to Minnesota." (Esther Fangman, OSB, President, Federation of St. Scholastica, CELEBRATING 150 YEARS: 1852-2002)

In 1948, there were 178 Benedictine sisters who bravely left their established motherhouse at St. Benedict's in St. Joseph, MN, to chart new territory in St. Paul, MN, arriving at 301 Summit Avenue in June becoming one of the new priories with three others since the number of sisters at St. Benedict's was becoming too large. St. Placid's in Tacoma, now Lacey, WA, St. Bede's in Eau Claire, WI, and Annunciation in Bismarck, N.D., who had established themselves earlier, were the other monasteries in this group.

Summit Avenue was the home of the Benedictines from 1948 to January 2, 1965, when they moved to 2675 Larpenteur Avenue East in Maplewood. Previously, in 1958, the sisters had built Archbishop Murray Memorial High School establishing their presence there before their move to the corner of Century and Larpenteur. On January 2, 2005, the sisters celebrated their 40th anniversary in Maplewood. 🏠



Our monastery history.

from the LIBRARY ALCOVE

Carole Sweely, OSB

If you like a good adventure war and spy caper, I heartily recommend Ken Follett's *HORNET FLIGHT*. After reading Follett's *THE PILLARS OF THE EARTH* years ago and *WORLD WITHOUT END* recently, I renewed my interest in him and found I could not put this book down for long, taking it with me into uncharted territory and wanting it nearby if I got lost. The setting is Denmark during WWII and among the central characters are some school boys, one who is extremely gifted in mechanics. His father is a minister, a letter of the law fellow, while his mother is devoted and loving towards her two sons. They live on Sande, a German-occupied Danish island, where recently the Germans have built a sophisticated radar station to foil the flight paths of the RAF. Even though there are varied groups of characters, they are easy to keep track of since some stand out in a crowd and others do not. If you like espionage, spies, tense moments and a hard to put down read, this is the book for you.

FRANKLIN AND WINSTON by Jon Meacham is a winner for history buffs. After seeing a documentary about FDR on PBS some months ago, I have had a "reawakening" towards Eleanor, Franklin, Winston and Clementine. There are many fascinating stories about all four but especially the main two. For example, FDR was very much the host during the daily cocktail hour imparting the chosen beverages with grace and zeal. Some of his sayings for refills were, "How about another sippy?" or "Would you like a little dividend?" The author mentions the relationship between FDR and Winston that it was the latter who had to pursue as the former was somewhat remote and distant. Both appeared as leaders to have that special "grace under pressure" with which leaders are sometimes blessed and, of course, this was most evident once the U.S. entered WWII. Winston had excellent company at last after standing alone for months and eager for Franklin's war expertise. The marriage distance between Eleanor and FDR is mentioned but when things became unbearable, they were there for each other as in the moments when Eleanor learned of her brother Hall's death. Clementine and Winston were constant even though Clementine had a brief fling. Family devotion was high for both. So, if you wish for behind the scenes information, this is a wonderful book with details and delights for history lovers. 📖

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LAMENT

*Oh, everything is far
and long ago.*

*I believe that star
these thousand years is dead,
though I still see its light.*

*I believe, in that boat
passing through the night
something fearful was said.*

*In the house a clock
struck...*

Where did it strike?...

*I would like to walk
out of my heart
under the wide sky.*

*I would like to pray.
One of all these stars
must still exist.*

*I believe I know
which one
still lasts*

*and stands like a city, white
in the sky at the end of the beam of light...*

– Rainer Maria Rilke

*“Love is this—
that two solitudes border,
protect, and salute
one another.*

– Rilke