

Passages

St. Paul's Monastery, St. Paul MN Sisters of St. Benedict



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SUMMER 2004

Community elects S. Carol Rennie as ninth prioress

The weekend of April 30-May 2 was a sacred time for the sisters at St. Paul's Monastery. They gathered to call forth a person from their midst to minister as their prioress, their leader, for the next five years.

Although prayer, dialogue, listening to the wisdom of one another, and attentiveness to the guidance of the Spirit are hallmarks of daily living, coming together to reflect on membership and leadership reveals the deep meaning of community, so central to the monastic way of life.

These three days of reflection and dialogue, facilitated by Benedictine Sisters Maria Tasto and Kristine Harpeneau from Ferdinand, IN, led to the consensus that S. Carol Rennie was to be the prioress, the leader, for the next five years. The sisters then went to the monastery chapel to cast their vote. S. Michaela Hedican, President of the Federation of St. Benedict, presided at the election and canonically declared S. Carol Rennie the ninth prioress of St. Paul's Monastery.

Until her election, S. Carol served as Director of the Benedictine Center and as Director of Oblates.



During the installation ritual, S. Michaela Hedican, President of the Federation of St. Benedict and S. Marie Fujan, outgoing Prioress, lead the community in blessing newly elected Prioress S. Carol Rennie.

Her background includes working in elementary schools as both teacher and principal; in a diocesan position as Director of Religious Education; in a regional parish position as Director of Religious Education programs.

S. Carol was Director of Student Life and the Teaching

Parish Program at the Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity. She also served as resident director of the Teaching Parish Program at the Presbyterian Seminary, Louisville, KY, and as a workshop instructor with the National Teacher Education Program.

Currently S. Carol is an adjunct instructor at St. John's University, Collegeville; the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul; and St. Mary's University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. She serves on the Board of Overseers at St. John's School of Theology•Seminary, Collegeville.



Each beginning, an ending; each ending, a beginning

*Each beginning, an ending.
Each ending, a beginning.
Which do I prefer?
Are they not the same?
Help me take life as it comes!*

Beginnings and endings!
Endings and beginnings!
That is what life is all about.
Truly I do hope to take life as it comes. To a great extent, that is what being a prioress is all about—attending to the people and the circumstances of the day.

Many days there are great joys and surprises to delight the heart. Another day could bring a sorrow to be shared. Living the Paschal Mystery, trying to live as Jesus did, life and death are a part of every day. Life returns to the same refrain—beginnings and endings. Endings and

beginnings. It is our destiny.

I have not yet reflected enough to identify the highs and lows of the ministry of my prioressing. I am confident of a few things—Jesus is faithful to his promise to be with us. Jesus constantly gives us reminders through the presence of a friend, the laughter and hug of a small child, the song of birds singing outside a window, the sound of water trickling or of waves crashing. Examples are endless. I encourage you to think of your own.

Some time ago I saw a plaque: “God will never ask more than God will supply the grace to accomplish it.” I am here to attest to the truth of that statement. We call it the grace of office. That grace exists as surely as day follows night and night follows day and it is most welcome.

My experience is that, whatever one calls it, God’s grace is available for anyone who asks, no matter who they are or what they are doing. I will be asking for that grace, strength and guidance as I visit several Benedictine monasteries in the next months.

Gratitude fills my heart for the members of my community, my family and friends and the many people who entered my life during these last eight years. And you, dear readers of *Passages*, I want you to know that I felt your presence especially when I was writing an article. Thank you. I close with the words of St. Thomas More: *Pray for me and I for thee and may we merrily meet in heaven.*

**Reflection by
Marie Fujan, O.S.B.**

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Sister Loarn Brey begins new life

Loarn Brey was called to the fullness of the Resurrection April 5, 2004, at the age of 82, having lived her monastic profession for 63 years.

In the fall of 1937, S. Loarn followed her sister, S. Victoria, to St. Benedict’s Convent, St. Joseph, MN. After her novitiate, S. Loarn began a service that lasted more than half a century as cook, housekeeper, driver, pastoral worker, and health aide. In these ministries, she served at St. Joseph, St. Paul, Minneapolis, St. Bonifacius, New Hope, and at the monastery.

She enjoyed embroidering baptismal gowns for the monastery’s Cloister Shop, a task she often did in S. Victoria’s nearby room in the

health care center while they watched EWTN together. She had lasting devotion to the Sacred Heart and the Rosary and a great belief in the power of prayer.



S. Loarn worked with great purpose all her life and took much pride in that. As she aged, osteoporosis and crippling arthritis took their toll.

Less than a month before she died, her doctors diagnosed cancer, and she never recovered her strength after that surgery.

We are confident that S. Loarn, true to the Benedictine motto she loved, **Ora et labora**, has entered into an eternal season of Alleluias and well deserved leisure.

Crossing the Threshold

Thresholds, cloister walks, open doors, pathways. These metaphors clearly are expanding to include everyone who is associated with this monastic community (sisters, relatives, oblates, lay employees, volunteers, friends) and beyond.

At our doorstep is an invitation and our monastic logo, the cloister walk, is a reminder that we are about a walk, a path, a way to act, a way to alter chaos.

Sister Marie has alerted you to the fact that we, as Benedictine women of St. Paul's Monastery, are standing on a threshold, an in-between place, as we listen for the voice of wisdom as to how we are being called to share our resources of land and building with others. It is a frightening time of sorts and surely a time for hopefulness. We stand on the threshold trusting that the God of wisdom will indeed be our guide.

We proceed with confidence because we have been grounded by the strong leadership of a Mother Benedicta Riepp, who in 1852 at the age of 26, brought Benedictine women to the United States from Eichstatt, Bavaria. In more recent years, actually in 1948, 178 women also took a courageous step to come to St. Paul, Minnesota, leaving a well established monastic community at St. Benedict's Monastery in St. Joseph, Minnesota. The torch was carried in this Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis by these sisters with the leadership of eight fine women

who served as prioress: Mother Loraine Tracy, Mother Marcelline Jung, Sister Rose Alice Althoff, Sister Cleo Schoenbauer, Sister Duane Moes, Sister Rosemary Rader, Sister Eleanor Wartman and Sister Marie Fujan.

Collaboration has always been a hallmark of Benedictines. Leadership will not depend solely on me as prioress, but on every single sister and oblate. They will be called upon to share their unique wisdom for the common good of this community, the church, the world. And we will depend on all of you, our friends, to support us and keep us faithful to being a Benedictine presence in all of our endeavors.

Thresholds, cloister walks, open doors, pathways. These metaphors remind us that it is a walk, a path, a way to act, a way to alter chaos. Thus, the tradition of the Benedictine way continues on, following Benedict, who in the fifth century formed and transformed a culture to be faithful to the challenge of the Gospel.

So help us to be at peace. Help us to walk the path in courage.

Sister Carol Rennie
Carol Rennie, O.S.B.
Prioress

Vigil of Pentecost

Welcome newest Oblates!
The final oblation of (l-r):

Linda Anderson,
Margaret Cochran,
Diane Humenansky,
Marilyn Thompson,
Bernie Reeder,
Mary Martin,
Craig Jarrell



Spring and at the



25th — 50th — 75th Celebration, May 23, 2004



*Jacquelyne Witter (r) congratulates jubilarian
S. Susan Bourauel*



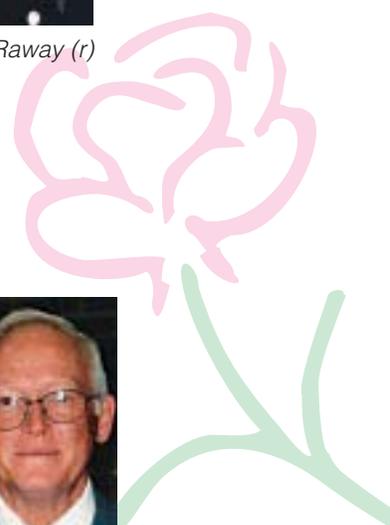
*Marlene Yarusso & Sister Monica Raway (r)
enjoy a hearty laugh*



*Annamae Fox with cousin
S. Viola Irene Schlicht*



S. Faye Buck (l) meets up with the Schaffers, Rita and Pat



summer scenes monastery



*On her election day, S. Carol Rennie with the sisters who facilitated the days of discernment:
S. Maria Tasto (l) and S. Kristine Harpeneau (r).*



*A surprise morning visit from St. Benedict's and the Bahamas!
(l-r) S. Colleen Haggerty, S. Mary Benedict Pratt, Novice Elizabeth Mingo*

Jubilees Jubilees Jubilees Jubilees

*O*n April 25 the community celebrated the **Jubilee Day** of six of the sisters: S. Viola Irene Schlicht, 75 years of monastic profession; S. Bertha Karels, 60 years; S. Susan Bourauel and S. Monica Raway, 50 years; S. Faye Buck, 25 years. On May 23 the jubilarians again celebrated with their families and friends.

S. Viola Irene, as was the custom of some teachers, diligently kept a list of every pupil she taught, well over 1,000, in her 50 years of elementary teaching.

Where did this teaching happen? S. Viola Irene began her teaching career in 1929 at Most Holy Redeemer School, Montgomery, where in spite of her strong German background, she managed to learn a little Czech; St. Anne's, Minneapolis; St. Philip's, Litchfield, where she was one of five teachers to open the new school; and St. Bernard's, on the North End of St. Paul.

In the transition years between her teaching and her retirement, S. Viola Irene spent 10 years in pastoral ministry at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, St. Paul.

In 1985, the time seemed right for her to retire to the monastery where her activities include praying, reading, embroidering dish towels, making cards to sell in the Cloister Shop, and in the evenings, playing cards.

Sister Bertha is one of the few sisters in the community who hails from the southwestern part of Minnesota, from the town of Rosen. After graduating from Ortonville

High School, S. Bertha did domestic work in the surrounding area before entering St. Benedict's Convent in 1944. A few years later she transferred her stability to St. Paul's Priory when it was founded.

Between 1944 and 1985, S. Bertha taught children, usually in the middle and upper grades, in Gilman, Hastings, St. Paul, Richfield, and Litchfield. Of her teaching experience at St. Bernard's, she says "It seemed like a mass of humanity there, more people under one roof than I was used to in a whole country parish."

Since retiring to the monastery, S. Bertha has been the community sacristan, faithfully cleaning and even mopping the chapel until the day she unexpectedly was admitted to St. Joseph's Hospital for a pacemaker. She put down the mop and dust cloth.

She enjoys the liturgical seasons as well as the natural seasons. Being a true Minnesotan, she looks forward to the changes that spring, summer, autumn and winter bring to her daily walks.

S. Monica, born on the Raway family farm near Miesville and baptized at St. Joseph's, had the first part of her elementary schooling in a rural one room school house. She completed eighth grade at Guardian Angels School in Hastings and



S. Viola Irene



S. Bertha



S. Monica

graduated in 1943 from Hastings High School. For the next several years, she did homemaking tasks, factory and office work in and around Hastings.

She entered St. Paul's Priory in 1952 and after making monastic profession, she served at the Archbishop's Residence, Immaculate Heart of Mary, both in St. Paul, Assumption, Richfield, and St. Bernard's in St. Paul.

Since her return from St. Bernard's, S. Monica has earned the nickname "Road Runner" having been the community driver for many years, taking sisters to and from their appointments. She has been a devoted driver to a variety of destinations giving her pertinent information that no one else in the monastery might know. With a smile, she says that she recently "retired" from airport trips.

The Liturgy of the Hours, the Eucharist, lectio divina, and many other opportunities have helped to deepen her spiritual life. She is grateful to her community, family, relatives, and friends for their steadfast love.

S. Susan hails from Bruno, Saskatchewan, Canada, the daughter of Susan and Peter Bourauel, second oldest of six girls. Taught by Ursuline sisters through grade and high school, she knew Benedictine

Jubilees Jubilees Jubilees Jubilees

monks from St. Peter's Abbey in Muenster.

S. Susan was raised in a German family, deeply committed in faith and love of music.

Her mother excelled as a violinist and her father was a singer and bass horn player. All her sisters played instruments and sang.

After a year of secretarial college and taking classes at a private music studio, she felt her call was to religious life and to teaching music.

After receiving her degree in music at the College of St. Catherine and later working for education credits in the master's program at the then College of St. Thomas, she taught school music, directed adult and children's choirs and gave piano, organ and band lessons at St. Bonifacius, Fairfax, Chanhassen, Litchfield, Visitation and St. Anne's School in Minneapolis.

After spending six years in the monastery development office, and serving as secretary/treasurer of the Federation of St. Benedict, S. Susan is now the community's liturgical musician.

S. Susan cherishes common prayer and Eucharist. Hobbies that help her keep her sense of humor intact are playing the piano, cards, knitting, reading and keeping up on professional sports. S. Susan is grateful to her community and her family for the support they have given her these past 50 years.



S. Susan



S. Faye

S. Faye, now happily celebrating 25 years of monastic profession, entered the community after serving in the Army, marrying, raising two children, being a homemaker and the ideal good neighbor.

S. Faye was born in Weedville, PA, not far from St. Marys, PA, the birthplace of American Benedictinism. When her family moved to St. Paul, they found a house on Tanner's Lake, not far from St. Paul's Monastery. Coincidence?

As a laywoman, S. Faye was always concerned with the poor and the sick around her. She gave them food and even, on occasion, shelter in her home. She often nursed the sick in their homes.

After her daughter Yvonne married and her son Andy became engaged ("I'll be a mother forever"), S. Faye took a year to look into religious communities where she might live in community and continue doing good things in the company of others.

After visiting St. Paul's Priory and liking it, she applied to be a lay employee and to work in the infirmary while awaiting a dispensation from her marriage. Her former husband later died.

After making her monastic profession in 1979, she settled deeply into community life at the monastery where she worked in the infirmary, the kitchen, the business office, and the reception desk. For the next four years, she was on the pastoral care

team at St. Therese Care Center, New Hope.

In 1992, S. Faye came home to the monastery where she continues to work tirelessly with the sisters in the health care center and to nourish her prayer life in community.

Two of our sponsored ministries

Ministry of Mothers Sharing

Director S. Paula Hagen, O.S.B., reports that for the Annual Spring Conference representatives came to the monastery from Indiana, Florida, Missouri, Arizona, Nebraska and Minnesota for spiritual renewal, training, networking and goal setting.

The staff is currently planning enthusiastically for the second annual M.O.M.S. summer training. These trainers represent the Sisters of St. Benedict in several parts of the country.

Maple Tree Childcare Center

Jennie Schlauch, Director of The Maple Tree, located to the north of the monastery, says they currently have 23 employees including two sisters. Their staffing ratio is excellent which is a deciding factor for many families.

While most children are self paying, they currently have four children supported by county funding. One family has been with the Center for 12 years and many return when a new child is born. Frequently the Center has inquiries about registering a child before s/he is born!



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Invitation to Worship

Sunday

Morning Praise 10:00 a.m.
Eucharist 11:00 a.m.
Evening Praise 5:00 p.m.

Monday — Friday

Morning Praise 7:30 a.m.
Noon Praise 11:45 a.m.
Eucharist 5:00 p.m.
Evening Praise 6:40 p.m.

Saturday

Morning Praise 8:30 a.m.
Noon Praise 11:45 a.m.
Vigil of Sunday 4:45 p.m.

The voice on the phone, the smile at the desk

The voice you hear five mornings a week pleasantly saying “Good morning, St. Paul’s Monastery” is that of receptionist Bonnie Fazekas who has been saying that for the past 15 years. Well, for several years, she was actually saying St. Paul’s **Priory**.

Married to husband Arnie and mother of Christina, Eileen, Amy, and Danny (deceased), Bonnie lives in the same house in North St. Paul in which she was raised and from which she walked to St. Peter’s School and North High School. Deep roots.



(l-r) Danielle holding Danny, Bonnie holding newcomer Charlie, Kaitlin holding Nathanael



The greatest joy in Bonnie and Arnie’s life are their five grandchildren. Pictures are never far from her reach should anyone happen to ask about them. Who else would have an e-mail address like Gramma5?

When she’s not welcoming retreatants and guests at the front desk or answering the phone, Bonnie enjoys going up to their camper near Cambridge, as well as antiquing with her sisters, reading, walking and swimming. She tries to keep physically fit (and succeeds).

When asked what she likes about working at the monastery, she replies that she enjoys interacting with the sisters and those who come to the monastery, the quiet atmosphere in which she works, and the life long friendships she has made and continues to make with fellow employees.