

Passages

ST. PAUL'S MONASTERY, ST. PAUL MN SISTERS OF ST. BENEDICT



VOL. 16 ISSUE 3



SPRING 2006

A Hundred Thousand Thanks!

St. Paul's Monastery, normally a relatively quiet and well ordered establishment, became briefly a busy, bustling place on Sunday, March 12. The occasion: The Irish Gala, a festive event that attracted nearly 175 guests for a social hour, dinner, silent auction, tours of the monastery and Irish entertainment. Honorary chairpersons of the Gala were Jean and Don Regan.

Dinner featured an authentic Irish menu including corned beef, soda bread, Irish coffee, and bread pudding. The meal was prepared and served in the beautifully decorated Monastery dining room by a group of about 25 volunteers largely from Our Lady of Lourdes parish in Minneapolis.

The group, known as the Food Group, has volunteered to serve large-scale food service projects, primarily to several Catholic organizations in the Twin Cities. Since the Gala, they have also prepared and served an appreciation dinner for the St. Paul's Monastery volunteers in late April.

Principal organizers of the Food Group are Marilyn and Paul Piazza,



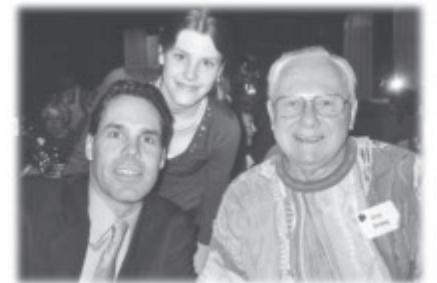
The cooks: Paul & Marilyn Piazza, Terry & Virginia Keegan.

both of whom were grade school students of the Benedictine Sisters, and Virginia and Terry Keegan, owners of Keegan's Irish Pub. Both the Keegans and the Piazas are members of Our Lady of Lourdes parish.

Following dinner a program of professional level Irish songs and dance was performed in the monastery chapel. The program was directed by singer Dr. Agnes Wolohan Smuda, who has appeared as soloist with the Plymouth Music Series, Minnesota Opera, and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. Other artists on the program included Dr. Carolyn Campfield, director of the Saint Paul Expressive Arts Center, Molly Culligan, an Oblate of Saint Benedict, Larry David, former pianist of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, and Alice Preves, violinist of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. Concluding the program were the Irish dancers of the *Scoil na dTri*, the premier Twin Cities Irish Dance Academy.



Don & Jean Regan, Gala Honorary Chaircouple.



Guests: Greg Stang, Cassie Stang, and Cris Stang enjoying the Irish dinner.

All in all, it was indeed a gala occasion and a most successful benefit for the Sisters of St. Benedict of St. Paul's Monastery. A hundred thousand thanks!

Don Conway

The Implementation Committee

June 10, 2006 will mark the second anniversary of the beginning of the Implementation Committee to assist the Sisters of St. Paul's Monastery with their future planning and use of the current monastery building and land.

Much discussion, planning and prayer has taken place over this time. Some specific decisions have been made by the community with

input from the Implementation Committee, most notably the decision to sell the property on which Hill-Murray School is located, along with four additional acres of monastery property, to Hill-Murray. In addition the community has committed itself to working with two other future partners, Tubman Family Alliance and CommonBond Communities.

Continued on page 3

Our Heart is Restless Until it Rests in God

This saying of Saint Augustine expresses the fundamental longing at the center of the monastic way of life. We express this longing through our efforts to live a life balanced by prayer, work, and study. Living in this way, we are ever ready and attentive to discern what our commitments demand of us at any given time.

Surely in this time in our history as a monastic community, we reflect on the various responses we have made to God's beckoning presence in our midst. The stories we recall from our elders and from our own time here makes us fully aware of the personal and communal costs required whenever we move into the future. Those stories remind us of the confidence and peace that come when we surrender to the flow of God's grace and provident care. This does not minimize the "restlessness" any of us might feel as we experience a certain uprooting in what has become familiar in this

monastery. But especially now, as we ponder decisions that will challenge us in various ways, we hold true to the practice of discernment.

Discernment, a form of resting in God, is marked by one's awareness that God is present to all tasks, relationships and times. Practicing such awareness holds out the only true antidote to restlessness about what will happen next year, the shape of a new monastery, our relationship with new neighbors, or the impact on our daily rhythms of life.

Our future unfolds as we attend faithfully to the movements of God in our community. Open to the present and to the future, we are absolute in our trust that God will sustain us as God has done from the very beginning when one hundred and seventy-eight women left Saint Benedict's Convent for Summit Avenue to form St. Paul's Priory. Resting in God is our invitation just as it is our discipline. Please continue to pray for us as we pray each day for you.

Carol Rennie, OSB

News from the Monastery...

The Cloister Shop

St. Paul's Monastery Cloister Shop is the little gift shop you see as you enter the lobby of the Monastery. A small committee has been formed to help in the process of enhancing the shop with new merchandise and regular hours.

New Hours Beginning August 1

Mon-Fri.	10:00 – 3:00
Sat.	10:00 – 3:00
Sun.	12:30 – 3:00

Sister Doris Jean Schmid Recognized

It was December and recognition time at St. Therese Care Center in New Hope. Sister Doris Jean Schmid received her Certificate of Appreciation for 20 years of service at St. Therese. That's a lot of hours of listening and many steps in service. Congratulations, Sister Doris Jean!

Don Hermann Honored Employee

Don Hermann was honored at the Employee Appreciation Dinner in

February for his 25 years of service in maintenance at St. Paul's Monastery. Don's dedicated service to the sisters and employees has been a loyal and generous gift to the Monastery. Thank you, Don!

Visitation

The Sisters of St. Paul's Monastery regularly are visited by the Federation Leadership to which they belong. This year in March the Visitation arrived for this week long event.



The Visitation were L to R: S. Susan Hutchens, Rock Island, IL; S. Jane Becker, Ferdinand, IN; S. Michaela Hedican, President of the Federation, Eau Claire, WI; and S. Susan Berger, Bismarck, ND.

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Special Assignment: Bakery

Volunteers are in evidence in virtually every nook and cranny in the monastery as they go about their various duties. Each one of them is important—some would say indispensable—to the daily operation of the monastery.

While one small group is not as visible as their colleagues, their impact is felt directly and deliciously each day by very nearly every person present.

They are the bakery crew, a talented, cordial, and loyal foursome who appear faithfully each Wednesday morning to create an array of breads and assorted goodies adequate for a week of happy consumption by residents and guests.

For the past seven years they have arrived regularly, promptly and prepared to get started baking their weekly treasures. They are Ann and



Volunteer bakery crew include (l to r): Steve and Ann Uphus, Joan Gennaro, and Fred Gorka.

Steve Uphus of Hastings and members of St. Pascal's Parish; Joan Gennaro of Falcon Heights and a member of Corpus Christi Parish; and Fred Gorka of Maplewood and a member of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish.

In the monastery kitchen their principal "tool" is the large revolving oven whose shelves hold fifteen baking pans, each of which can carry

36 cookies. On "cookie day" they generally bake a total of 100 dozen cookies, three or four kinds.

Other works of culinary art that they produce include Eucharistic bread, rhubarb and apple pies in season, assorted muffins, dinner rolls, breads and occasional raisin coffee cakes.

Don Conway

The Implementation Committee, *continued from page 1*

Along with this set of decisions, three changes in the Implementation Committee and its organization have occurred. Original members of the committee no longer serving are Brad Wood, Sister Sarah Voss, and Mary DesRoches, the latter after more than a year's dedicated service as "owner's representative."

Several new Task Forces have been established to focus on specific issues or entities. These include Task Forces on: the Benedictine Center, the Maple Tree Child Care, Care for the Elderly members of the community, Education, and Quality of Monastic Life and Mission. The continuing visits of Ms. Donna Fyffe from Community Works, Inc. to the community have provided guidance to the Implementation Committee as

well as to the monastic community.

As the Implementation Committee moves into its third year it will continue to place a priority on keeping members of the monastic community informed about its deliberations. In addition, there will be some broader communication to those who are its neighbors.

**Charles Keffer, Secretary,
Implementation Committee**

In Gratitude

The Sisters of St. Paul's Monastery are sincerely grateful to each member of the Implementation Committee: S. Colleen Haggerty OSB, Jean Hartman, Tom Holloran, Charlie Keffer, Dick Lidstad, Maureen Mahoney and to Mary Des Roches

and Brad Wood for their service to the monastic community these past two years.

Their wisdom, advice, challenge and encouragement have brought us to an important level in our planning, specifically as we want to be good stewards in the reuse of our monastery building and land. The amount of time they have spent in meetings on our behalf does not go unnoticed, neither does their steadfast loyalty and friendship. They are our valued co-workers in our efforts to promote our vision of being in ministry to those in need, especially women and children in our local area, and of responding to the ways we can be of service to the church and society today.

Sister Eleanor Wartman

SEVENTY YEARS

Sister Berthel Duepner celebrates 70 years as a Benedictine, a musician having studied violin at MacPhail and piano at the University of Minnesota. Until 1972, Sister taught piano and music at various schools throughout Minneapolis, St. Paul, Hastings and Mandan, N.D. She has been teaching since 1972 in the religion



Sister Berthel Duepner

program at St. Augustine's parish in South St. Paul as well as moderating scripture discussion groups, instructing converts, preparing children for first confession and Holy Communion. Sister has been very active in the Minnesota Piano Teachers Association serving as judge in spring contests for many years.

Sister was born in Normandy (St. Louis), MO, in the month of June and the

following October, she and her family (with two brothers) moved to Minneapolis settling in Robbinsdale. Educated in public schools, she graduated from North High in Minneapolis.

S. Berthel was privileged to plan, promote and lead fourteen trips to Fatima when the pastor at St. Augustine's, Father Raymond Zweber, started retreats in Fatima. These trips included treks to Rome, Lourdes, the Holy Land and Spain. Fatima appears to be a favorite site. Presently, she continues to be as active as ever giving piano concerts at the monastery whenever she has refreshed her repertoire.



SIXTY YEARS

Celebrating 60 years as a Benedictine is **S. Rosella Schommer** who was born in Munich, N.D., the third of nine children. Moving to Minnesota and settling in Jordan, her grade school education came from the School Sisters of Notre Dame and from the Benedictines during high school. Attending the College of St. Benedict and entering St. Paul's Priory, she finished her major in elementary education at the College of Saint Catherine.

With two Benedictine aunts visiting the Schommer family, S. Rosella was impressed hearing about St. Benedict's and hearing her mother's encouraging words about religious life made her seek entry.

Sister spent six years in Bogota, Columbia, years and memories she treasures living in a different culture and learning a new language. Her years in varied grade schools in Minneapolis, St. Paul, Fairfax, Montgomery, St. Bonifacius and Havre, MT, all enriching experiences



Sister Rosella Schommer

have led her presently to the Maple Tree Childcare Center where she has been for the last 15 years.

Valuing the Benedictine values of prayer and work no matter where she was, the monastery, a parish school or in a foreign country, Sister Rosella feels fortunate and blessed to have chosen the monastic life.



FIFTY YEARS

S. Margaret Kramer, the eldest of seven children, is a farmer's daughter from Eden Valley, MN, returning to the country whenever an opportunity arises. After attending the College of St. Benedict and the College of Saint Catherine, she studied at St. John's School of Theology and spent a semester in the Holy Land, an unforgettable experience.

Benedictine sisters have played a major role in her life since she was in first grade witnessing their kindness,



Sister Margaret Kramer

excellent teaching, prayerfulness and wit. Later, after attending the College of St. Benedict for two years, she entered St. Paul's Priory. Attractions to Benedictines included the chant, a smaller monastic community, esteem of education and the arts, the balance of action and contemplation, solitude and service to others. In

JUBILARIANS



Margaret's words, "I thank God for drawing me to live my baptismal call in this beautiful way of life for the past fifty years."

Besides teaching at St. Anne's in Minneapolis, Maternity of Mary in St. Paul and in Hastings, Sister has been in pastoral work at St. Bonifacius, Shakopee, Hastings, Leavenworth and Montgomery. Presently, she is in pastoral care at St. Therese Care Center in New Hope. She claims she has come full circle as her students of almost fifty years ago from St. Anne's come to St. Therese to visit their parents, now residents there.



S. Mary Claire Inhofer is a Minneapolis native having attended St. Anne's Grade School, St. Anthony High School, the College of Saint Catherine and Mundelein in



Sister Mary Claire Inhofer

Chicago. It was while attending St. Anne's that Sister had some nudges towards the Benedictines. She had Sister Othmar for first grade and during fifth grade, Mary Claire was invited by her neighbor to go to St. Benedict's. Hearing the chanting of the Divine Office mesmerizing her enough to retain the memory and become a sister of St. Paul's Priory.

Sister spent some years teaching in Minneapolis,

Hastings and Stillwater, was a pastoral associate at Immaculate Heart of Mary in St. Paul, and a pastoral minister at St. Therese in New Hope.

The Divine Office has always been a high priority in her life as well as having the balance of prayer, work and leisure, favorite words of Benedictines everywhere. Sister looks forward to all the exciting and challenging developments in the community's future regarding the new monastery and all its noteworthy surprises.

Carole Sweely, OSB



Sister Carol Rennie writes:

Since my first grade, when I was blessed to have a Benedictine as my teacher, I knew there was something special about the way she affected my life.

I always knew "I was special" in that first grade classroom, but I was also aware that all thirteen of us were considered "special." I have never forgotten that absolute attentiveness I received in grade one and throughout my sixteen or more years of being guided through my educational endeavors by Benedictines.



Sister Carol Rennie

I never forgot that initial message, "you are special."

I have been blessed a hundredfold through the multiple ministries that came my way. I was a teacher, a principal, a diocesan Director of Religious Education, a Regional Coordinator for Religious Education, a teacher of teachers for a non-profit organization that allowed me to enter the life of what it means to be ecumenical, a Director of Student Services, Coordinator of a Teaching Parish Program, Director of a Spirituality/Conference Center, a Teacher in Graduate programs, a Spiritual Guide, a poet and a seeker of what it means to have mutual companions who accompany me on my spiritual journey. I take great pride in telling folks that I hold February 14 as a special day in my life. It is a day I spend considerable time remembering persons who have walked with me. My heart is deeply grateful for the ways they nurtured Christ in me.

I believe those first feelings about being special have continued throughout my life, even to this day. My journey of life demonstrates God's ways are truly rich and full.

I am absolutely certain that I could never have known God's goodness as I do today were I to have designed it all on my own.

The Development Office of St. Paul's Monastery does not lend, sell, share or trade names on our database.

Fables, Anyone?

“Once upon a time in a Benedictine monastery on a slight hill in a suburb of a large city, the number of sisters was dwindling considerably, very few were entering the community and some sisters were very concerned while others were not. One of the sisters was beside herself with worry, what would happen to their new monastery if new life did not come to join them. As she was pondering this, Sister Mary Joachim came shuffling down the hall with a gleam in her right eye which meant she was up to something again and fun was just around the corner.”

Sister Carole Sweely has written a book of fables about happenings in a Benedictine monastery concerning a small community of sisters. There are two types of fables—the friendly and prosaic versus the macabre, the silent or not so silent tragic events of sundry incidents in a monastery,



happenings to fragile and some not so fragile human beings. Fluke events occur when least expected, a fan leaf disconnects during noon praise, a motorized wheelchair goes out of control tossing its occupant to a surprising end. Might this be poetic justice for her own lack of Christian control, the reader might ask. There are at least 60 fables to enjoy depending upon the reader’s sense of humor. None are to be taken seriously; however, there might be some wee bit of monastic life to savor or with which to identify since multiple characters abound, to say nothing of

monastic happenings, easy to find in any religious community.

S. Carole from Tracy, MN, a graduate of the College of Saint Catherine and the University of Notre Dame has been a Benedictine sister of St. Paul’s Monastery for multiple years and her powers of observation have been on overtime since she began this book in 1998 after she had completed the community history, commemorating the Benedictine presence in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis for fifty years. She claims writing this book has been a grand therapy for her heart and soul and only hopes the reader might be teased into laughter by the unexpected and the all too human condition of any religious community. Illustrations accompany the printed word and they, too, tease the humorous spirit throughout the book. Yarrow Brown, an artist from Rock Alley Studio in Winona, MN, lends her imaginative gift and delightful drawings to this first volume of human foibles and fantasies

Carole Sweely, OSB

WHERE THERE IS

A WILL there is a way to assist others with your generosity!

Do you know that over 50% of the population in the U.S. have not prepared their Will.

Please consider including the Sisters of St. Benedict of St. Paul’s Monastery in your Will and inform us at your earliest convenience. We would like to express our gratitude.

Our legal name is: St. Paul’s Monastery.

Volunteers... a Gift

The Sisters of St. Benedict of St. Paul’s Monastery adhere zealously to the Benedictine tradition of *Ora et Labora*; that is “Prayer and Work.” In doing so they are richly blessed by the participation and support of scores of relatives and friends from outside the monastery. Among them are the Oblates of St. Benedict, retreatants, friends and relatives.

Last but by no means least, are the many volunteers whose varied services allow the Sisters to concentrate their attention on their prayer ministries.

Almost every part of the monastery life benefits from the work of volunteers including the Benedictine Center, the MOMS ministry, Health Care, Housekeeping, Liturgies, Vocations and Food Service.

So integral to the operation of the monastery are the volunteers that it could not function properly without their invaluable contributions.

In recognition of and gratitude for the volunteers’ many services, the Sisters of St. Paul’s Monastery hosted a Volunteers’ Appreciation Dinner Tuesday, April 25, in the Monastery dining room.

The dinner, attended by 40 volunteers, had a German theme and menu. It was prepared and served by members of the Food Crew, the volunteer group largely from Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Minneapolis, that had also served the Irish Gala dinner on March 12 and the Employees Italian Dinner on February 7. Dinner preparations and service were coordinated by Marilyn, Paul, and Peter Piazza, members of the Food Crew and long-time friends of the Sisters.

Don Conway

Beauty in the Eye – and Soul – of the Beholder

In February, 2006, the Benedictine Center introduced a new element in its programming with an exhibit of the clay sculptures of Virginia Matter, OSB. Sr. Virginia, a member of the Center staff, is an accomplished artist whose work reflects her deep experience with contemplative prayer and an understanding of how beauty informs the spiritual life. At the opening of the exhibit, Sr. Virginia described how the strands of her life come together as she faces a lump of clay and begins to interact with it.

Exhibits of religious art and art that reflects a spiritual sensibility are important elements in the spiritual journey, according to Center director Victor Klimoski. “The artist lays claim to our eyes as she or he captures beauty in many forms. But we know as well that what catches our eye stirs something in our souls.” Sam Rahberg, program administrator of the Center, hears “soulful” comments as guests pass through the gallery he has helped fashion out of the monastery lobby.

The exhibits have two primary purposes. The first is to accent the role of art as a distinct language of the spiritual life. Beauty breaks through daily discourse and offers a visual interpretation of the ways we encounter the mystery of God.

Elisabeth Horst’s exhibit of her weavings, for instance, convey the energies of change she felt in her Episcopal Church as the first women to be ordained risked everything to respond to their calls to ministry. Pat Connolly’s exhibit of photographs from a village in Madagascar reflects the changes in him as he encountered the hospitality, authenticity, and genuine community of people others might describe as lacking the comforts of Western society.

The second purpose of the exhibits is to enhance the welcome guests receive as they enter the monastery and its Center.

“We firmly believe,” Klimoski says, “that the very space people use while they are with us is part of the formation that occurs. The exhibits teach the eye and the soul even if one does not stop to contemplate each piece. They are a visually compelling way of saying, ‘You are entering into a special time and place’.” In addition to the exhibits themselves, the Center also regularly offers workshops and courses for people interested in developing or enhancing their artistic abilities as a spiritual practice.

The next exhibit opens May 20 and will feature a collection of photographs by nationally recognized photojournalist, Linda Schaefer.

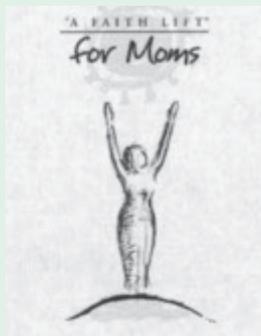


One of Sister Virginia Matter’s clay sculptures.

Hers are the last photographs taken of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Ms. Schaefer’s encounter with Mother Teresa changed her life, and the images she presents convey what she saw in this notable woman. On May 20, Ms. Schaefer will open the exhibit with a day of reflection she has developed around what she learned from Mother Teresa.

Future exhibits include a collection of art drawn from the nooks and crannies of St. Paul’s Monastery (July), the graphic art of Kirsten Malcolm Berry (September).

Victor Klimoski, PhD



Faith Lift for MOMS

An enthusiastic group of leaders met on Sunday, April 30, to continue planning for the Second *Faith Lift for MOMS*. This two day conference for mothers from the five state area will be Oct. 27-28 at St. Joseph’s Parish in West St. Paul. Mark your calendars, MOMS, and keep this event in your prayers.

S. Paula Hagen



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Coming Events

May 20

*Art Exhibit: A Photojournalist's
Journey into the World of
Mother Teresa.*
Day of Reflection
9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

June 11

*Play-ers and Pray-ers
(Family Summer Spirituality)
A Day of Spiritual Renewal,
Immaculate Conception,
Columbia Heights*

June 20-25

*Conference: Annual MOMS
Regional Coordinators
St. Paul's Monastery*

August 1

*National Night Out
Monastery Grounds - 6:30 p.m.*

August 17

*Gentleness Born of Wisdom:
Virtuous Ministry
An iLLUMINARE Day of Renewal
Benedictine Center*

September 8-9

*Benedictine Spirituality Seminar
Benedictine Center*

October 27-28

*Conference: A Faith Lift for MOMS
St. Joseph's, West St. Paul*

Dear Friends,

Shamrocks, crocuses, tulips,
peonies, roses...

The Irish Gala was more than
shamrocks and corn beef. It was the
spirit of the Irish hovering over the
Italian chefs as they assisted the
genuine Irish culinary experts in a
monastery of predominantly
German sisters. We all enjoyed the
competitive spirit of a silent auction
and the heartbeat rhythm of
genuinely Irish song and dance.
This was all made possible because
of our multi-cultural friends and
relatives who so generously donated
to the project even though they were
not able to attend. "A hundred
thousand welcomes," "A hundred
thousand thanks!"

"What's new?" you ask. On
August 1, we will host an Open
House at the monastery Cloister
Shop, our gift shop. Check page 2
for new hours. The enclosed envelope
offers you an opportunity to *Honor a
Jubilarian* as they have honored us
with 280 collective years of dedicated
service; the changing visual art
exhibits are a delight to the eye with
a variety of art media.

One knows spring is in the
air when the wild turkeys perform
their mating rituals, trees bud and
flowers peek through the moistened
soil softened by thunder claps. But so

fleeting is spring
as summer
manages to take
control. At your
celebrations of
first communion,
graduation and
other family
gatherings, please
assure your
extended families
of our daily
prayers. We pray for God's guidance
for them and for their safety.

We wish you shamrocks,
crocuses, tulips, peonies, roses as
we daily pray for you because we
"We thank you," "We love you,"
"You are special!"

With grateful thanks,

Sister Lucia Schwickerath, OSB
Development Director



Sister Lucia
Schwickerath, OSB

