



Autumn 2004

St. Gertrude's Canticle

A Journal of Our Life

Look Inside

New Members	3
Anatomy Lesson	4
Developments	6
Straight Records	7

Stay in Touch!

PHONE:
Monastery
(208) 962-3224

Museum
(208) 962-7123

EMAIL:
monastery@connectwireless.us
vocation@stgertrudes.org
retreat@stgertrudes.org
outreachretreats@hotmail.com
develop@connectwireless.us
museum@velocitus.net

WEBSITE:
www.StGertrudes.org

Marketing for Monastics

By Colette Cowman, Idaho Catholic Register

Idaho's Benedictine Sisters, as well as many other women religious communities throughout the United States, are noticing a trend among the women who show an interest in joining those communities.

"We are seeing that most of the women looking at us are in the 40's and 50's," said Sr. Janet Barnard, OSB, vocations director. This trend is reflected in the women in formation right now at the Monastery of St. Gertrude, Cottonwood.

"So many of the Baby Boomer generation bought into the cultural idea that we can have everything and anything, and so for quite a few years career was important for a lot of women. But the women who are looking at our community are saying, 'We can't have everything. We have missed our spiritual life.' They are reassessing their value system and saying they want to give more to God and the church."

Sr. Janet said half of those in formation at St. Gertrude's have been married and have children and half remained single.

"Some women got married and had children because that is what they felt they were supposed to do," she said. "Then, either through widowhood or divorce, they no longer have that life style. Their kids are all grown, and they are trying to decide what to do with their lives. They feel God is calling them in a new way.



Sr. Janet Marie Barnard, Vocations Director for St. Gertrude's.

"A recently professed sister and one of the novices came to the monastery as fairly new Catholics. They found the church as

adults and now they feel the Lord calling them to religious life," said Sr. Janet.

She said interest in joining a religious community seems to be picking up recently, especially among women in their 40's and 50's.

"There is more interest than usual," Sr. Janet said. "We are receiving more calls and emails of women who are considering. One woman visited us over Easter who found our community on the Web. She has been thinking about religious life, did a Web search and made arrangements to come for a visit."

See **Marketing** on page 2



Greetings from the Prioress

This issue of *The Canticle* is about vocation, or God's call to serve. Our deepest call as Christians is to share in God's profound life, and to love and serve God and one another as Jesus taught us to do. I hope you enjoy reading about the vocations presented in this issue.

St. Benedict presents the ministry of the Prioress as a key vocation in the monastery. Two of the longest chapters in the *Rule of Benedict* focus on the qualities of the Abbot or Prioress and on the election of this important leader. He says the prioress "is believed to hold the place of Christ in the monastery. Therefore, she must never teach or decree or command anything that would deviate from God's instructions. On the contrary, everything she teaches and commands should, like the leaven of divine justice, permeate the minds of the community."

In April 1999, the community blessed me into this vocation. The sacred and challenging role has drawn forth my best gifts as I and my administrative team, Srs. Meg Sass and Emagene Warren, have helped move the community in the direction we set for ourselves prior to my election.

This is the last year of my first term. The whole community will gather in November to set directions for the next six years. The directions we set this fall are integral to our April election, during which we will spend time in prayer and discussion to discover who among us has the gifts to lead us where we sense God calling us.

An example of what can happen when the prioress has clear directives is the community's leap of faith into our current building and renovation project, plus our fundraising campaign described in the "Anatomy of a Capital Campaign" on page 4.

We decided to move ahead with the construction of Spirit Center before the entire funds were raised. Two major factors in this decision were keeping costs lower and the upcoming election. My administrative team and I have worked closely with the architects and contractors; it seemed wisest to complete the new facility this year while we were still in office. We will wait to see whom the Holy Spirit blesses with the vocation of prioress for the remainder of the project.

As our families and friends, please join us in prayer for the faith and courage we need in order to live the present faithfully and joyfully and to discern wisely. We ask God to bless you with all you need in order to live out your vocations with love and joy.

Sister Jean

Marketing, from page 1

Sr. Janet believes that part of the reason for the increased interest in the Idaho Benedictines is that she has been doing more consistent advertising. She said advertising, utilizing the Internet and employing other marketing strategies in vocations promotions are strategies being used in monasteries across the nation these days.

"We have five different ads that we rotate through the regional Catholics newspapers, and we have had some good responses from those."

She also sets up a booth at career fairs at universities and colleges in the Northwest and at conferences like the Diocese of Boise Fall Education Conference.

"I have a booth with all the other employers," she said. "We don't expect women will decide on the spot to become a sister, but this contact gives them information and plants the seed."

Sr. Janet said prayer is a big factor in attracting women to join the Benedictine Community.

"Our community is more intent on prayer for vocations than in the past," she said. "Sr. Corinne Forsman (vocations director before Sr. Janet) started us praying for vocations every Wednesday night as a community in 1999.

"How can that not influence us in making ourselves open to accepting new people as well as letting God know we are ready to accept new people," said Sr. Janet.

"God is hearing our prayers. We have another three women seriously considering joining us this winter or spring."

New Members Here For Many Reasons

By Colette Cowman and Darla Anglen-Whitley

Here is some background on each of the four novices and two postulants currently seeking membership with the sisters at the Monastery of St. Gertrude, Cottonwood, and brief comments on what attracted them. All are over 40.

A postulant is a woman who moves into the monastery for a year, participates in daily prayer and ministries of the community and formally studies Benedictine life, prayer and scriptures. A novice is a woman who moves in closer, becomes fully familiarized with the Benedictine way of life through personal and communal prayer, study, reflection, solitude and work. She takes classes on the Rule of St. Benedict, monastic profession and scripture. This step lasts two years.

Novice Jean Ihli was born and raised in the Boise Valley. She worked in the clerical and accounting fields for 35 years. Ihli will become a sister in November, 2004.

“The first time I came for a visit I fell in love with the Camas Prairie, the monastery, the Benedictine lifestyle and the sisters who live this life of Christ’s love and simplicity.”

Novice Michele Bateman was a retail checker in Boise prior to entering St. Gertrude’s. After visiting three religious communities, she made a personal commitment to serve God at St. Gertrude’s. “I feel this community offers the stability and training I need to make a difference in this world.” Bateman will make her first monastic profession in November 2004.

Novice Mary Mendez is a mother of three and a first year novice. Prior to coming to St. Gertrude’s she lived in California where she worked as a Hospice nurse. “The things

that I wanted to continue my search for God ... And the rest is history!”

Postulant Cindy Schultz was born in Cottonwood and grew up on the Camas Prairie. She became a registered nurse and worked in rural hospitals as well as specializing in emergency nursing.

“I have known this community all my life and have been significantly influenced by their Benedictine charism and wholesome way of living. I’m drawn to this particular community because these women truly live and cherish the Benedictine

rhythm that resonates with my own yearning to seek God.”

Postulant Kim Marie Jordan is from Houston, TX. Kim Marie worked in the publishing field for 14 years. She began visiting St. Gertrude’s in 1997 and made one or two visits every year before moving to the monastery in October 2003.

Kim Marie was attracted to the monastic way of life, particularly the Rule of St. Benedict, which sets daily times for work, prayer and study. “My reason for entering the monastery is to seek God,” she said. “Living in community has proven to be the most challenging part of this way of life.

“But I truly believe that God has called me to be part of this group of prayerful women. I cannot imagine being anywhere else.”



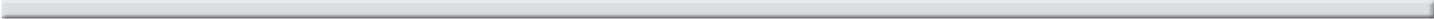
St. Gertrude’s formation group, left to right: Novice Jean Ihli, Postulant Cindy Schulz, Novice Carla Fontes, Novice Michele Bateman, Postulant Kim Marie Jordan and Novice Mary Mendez. Novices Jean and Michele will make first profession in November.

which drew me here are the monastic community’s way of living out the Benedictine life, the commitment to the land, the simple lifestyle and most importantly, the prayer.”

Novice Carla Fontes lived and worked in Boise for 11 years. She has always had the feeling of a need to seek and be closer to God. In May of 2000 she had the opportunity to make a pilgrimage to Medjugorje. While there she suddenly had a strong feeling that she wanted to spend her life as a nun.

“I did a lot of praying about this feeling, and when I got back to the states I started to look into various types of communities. Some friends suggested I visit here. When I came to a retreat at St. Gertrude’s in June, 2001, I felt so much at home. I admired the way the sisters prayed, worked and spent their time in recreation. I made the decision that it was with this group of women





The Vocation of the Monastery

by Sr. Mary Kay Henry

We all know individuals have vocations; so do organizations such as the monastery. I like to think that “vocation” is the life quest urging us all on to live in right relationships.

Each of us finds oneself called to live well four basic relationships which shape how we are in the world and how we in turn influence the world: relationships with Self, Other people, Nature, God.

Can you see how their initials present a metaphor for our fundamental vocation? They sing out that when our relationships are true and loving, our life is a S-O-N-G in sync with the Hymn of the Universe.

Jesus’ life was such a S-O-N-G and he gave us a new commandment: Love one another as I have loved you. Unconditionally ...



Sr. Mary Kay Henry, Director of Development

Thus we can claim that the vocation of the Monastery is to be a S-O-N-G of unconditional love.

St. Benedict knows that to be such a song requires the constant practice of daily

prayer, daily reflection on the Scriptures, and daily reverence for each other.

It also means daily forgiveness of each other when we fail to do what is better for another; treating the goods of the monastery as vessels of the altar; and seeking God’s transforming power each and every day, even in the midst of hard and burdensome things.

Benedict promises that these practices will help us “run the path of love with expanded hearts”, hearts increasingly able to respond to the needs of our time with healing hospitality, grateful simplicity and creative peacemaking.

This is the love out of which all our ministries flow. This is the love out of which Spirit Center is being built. This is the vocation of our monastery.



DEVELOPMENTS

by Sr. Mary Kay Henry, Director of Development

Have you thought about making a “planned gift” to the monastery? Here are several ways:

Give an Asset Instead of Cash. Using appreciated securities to make your gift can deliver more tax benefits to you than using cash. Giving us appreciated assets may be more beneficial than continuing to maintain them in your portfolio. Ask your tax or financial professional for advice.

Plan a Gift in Your Estate. Your bequest helps ensure that we continue our ministries into the future without affecting your assets during your lifetime. Or, you can turn surplus life insurance coverage into a charitable gift to the monastery, or purchase a new policy and make us the beneficiaries.

Partner With Us in Your Giving. You can receive stable lifetime payments that are taxed attractively when you create a *charitable gift annuity*. You can receive income

to help you meet many family obligations from a *charitable remainder trust*. Increase your estate for your children while delivering years of income to the Benedictine Sisters with a *charitable lead trust*.

Always seek professional advice when considering any of these possibilities. Your tax or financial advisor knows your situation the best and can offer the most advantageous options for you, plus provide income for the sisters of St. Gertrude.

Setting the Records Straight

by Darla Anglen-Whitley

"I remember, once, telling my mother that I'd like to become a Franciscan nun," recalls Sr. Mildred. "I still remember her reply: 'Why not join St. Gertrude's?'"

Born Esther Elizabeth Henrietta to Victor and Mary Jansen Lustig in 1913, Sr. Mildred grew up on a farm near Greencreek, ID. She recalls her mother carefully showing her three brothers and seven sisters the proper way to do a task, then telling them, "After you learn a better way, feel free to do it your own way."

During Advent the children would recite 4,000 Hail Marys on the way to school. "We were encouraged by our mother to occupy our minds with religious thoughts."

Sr. Mildred's older sister, Louise, worked at St. Gertrude's as a nurse. She returned home one October evening with the message, "Esther, Mother Scholastica wants to speak to you."

"You know what she wants," her mother cautioned. "You had better decide what to do before you go."

Suffice it to say, Esther Elizabeth Henrietta decided to join St. Gertrude's. The only caveat: she had to enter by the following Sunday so she could join three other Prairie girls in formation: Sr. Mercedes Martzen, Sr. Alexia Kaschmitter and Sr. Winifred Lorentz. The formation group entered St. Gertrude's on November 1, 1931, and made profession in 1933.

Did she have any doubts about her vocation? Not a one.



"My mind was made up so definitely," she remembers, "I was assured in my soul this was the right decision. My affection still goes first to Jesus, my Heavenly Bridegroom."

Sr. Mildred taught school for her first 20 years. In 1952 she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. After her convalescence and recovery, she made a career move

into the medical records field.

"Medical records are vital to the recovery and safety of the patients," she acknowledges. "The community sent me to school to become a Registered Record Librarian in 1961." She worked as the Medical Records Administrator at St. Mary's Hospital in Cottonwood and helped organize the Idaho Medical Record Association (now the Idaho Health Information Management Association). She served as its vice president, its director and the editor of its journal, *Mountain Echoes*, at various times until her retirement in 1979.

For the next two decades she ministered as companion, cook and nurse for a number of families throughout Idaho.

Sr. Mildred, now retired, especially loves the schedule of daily prayer, mixed with work and relaxation, that is central to St. Gertrude's. And she still takes her mother's ancient advice, engaging in regular, continuous and constant prayer.

"We must attempt to bring ourselves into God's presence through prayer, remembrance and spiritual sayings. God's presence is a mighty place to be."

Making News

Sr. Clarissa Goeckner was appointed as the Director of the Office of Catholic Education Ministries (CEM) by Bishop Michael Driscoll in June, 2004.

Sr. Maria Elena Schaefers moved to Boise in August to begin work at St. John's parish in Boise as a pastoral assistant.

Sr. Mary Bernard Lieser, 79, retired in August from 52 years of nursing, all of it as a night nurse. The last 22 years she worked the oncology floor at St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center in Lewiston, ID. She is enjoying her free time, helping out where needed, and has no immediate plans for her future. "I brought my uniform home just in case I need it," she quipped.

Novices Jean Ihli and **Michele Bateman** will make their first Monastic Profession on the Feast of St. Gertrude, November 16, 2004. The ceremony will take place at 11:00 am in the monastery chapel, followed by dinner. Everyone is welcome to attend. Guests planning to stay for dinner must RSVP by November 5, to (208) 962-3224.

Saint Martin's Abbey in Lacey, WA, paid tribute to the **Sisters of St. Gertrude** by naming their newly constructed dining hall in the sisters' honor. Abbot Neal Roth says the Abbey was pleased to find an appropriate way to honor the Benedictine nuns who operated the school's kitchens from 1904 - 1959. "The sisters did it the old, hard way, with everything bought fresh or brought fresh from the farm and prepared from scratch, Abbot Neal said. "It wasn't fancy, but it was wholesome. They also brought a lovely feminine spirit with them - they were hospitable and very kind."

Come Away to a Retreat

Jesus' Table Manners: A Call to Eucharistic Hospitality

October 15 - 17, 2004 (Fri. 7:30 pm - Sun. 1:30 pm)

Presenter: Patrick McCormick

In the Eucharist we remember and celebrate Jesus' radical table fellowship and seek to be a leaven of God's peace and justice in the world. We hear and respond to a hospitality the world does not know and prepare for a banquet only God can provide.

Patrick McCormick is Associate Professor of Christian Ethics at Gonzaga University. He is the author of books and articles on ethics and has served on several hospital ethics boards.

Prayer Beyond the Beginnings

November 5 - 7, 2004 (Fri. 7:30 pm - Sun. 1:30 pm)

Presenter: Meg Sass, O.S.B.

Like all aspects of our faith, prayer is meant to change, mature, deepen over the years. But sometimes it seems like we can't pray and/or God doesn't hear. This week-end is an opportunity to reflect on how we pray, to explore questions about prayer, and to experience some different styles of prayer.

Gift Yourself To Advent Quiet

Enter into the spirit of this holy season by preparing for Christ's birth. Come away and be present to God through a private retreat. Call or write for information.

Come to the Quiet

January 21 - 28, 2005 (Fri. 7:30 p.m. - Fri. 1:30 p.m.)

Directors: Lillian Englert, O.S.B., Kathy McFaul & others

A silent individually directed retreat. Relax in God's presence, surrounded by natural beauty and supported by a praying community. The retreat differs in content each time but includes optional faith sharing, creative expression, body prayer and ritual. Weekend-only retreat is an option.



Visit us on the web:
www.StGertrudes.org
Email: retreat@stgertrudes.org
outreachretreats@hotmail.com



IDAHO CORP. OF BENEDICTINE SISTERS

Monastery of St. Gertrude

HC 3 Box 121, Cottonwood, ID 83522-9408

Look Inside ...

Marketing Monasticism

The Anatomy of a
Capital Campaign

Sr. Mildred Lustig:
Getting the Records Straight



Befriend the Earth!

This document is printed on recycled
paper using soy-based inks.

Nonprofit Org.

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

Permit No. 10
Cottonwood, ID

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

