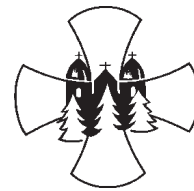


# Canticle

www.StGertrudes.org

OF ST. GERTRUDE - A JOURNAL OF OUR LIFE



JANUARY 2008

## The Road Less Traveled

"I was just an old, rough clod of dirt when I got here," Sr. Jean Ihli said when asked how her life has changed since arriving at the Monastery of St. Gertrude in May 2000 to begin the process to become a Benedictine sister.

Sr. Jean celebrated her Perpetual Monastic Profession on Saturday, November 17 in the Chapel at the Monastery.

While prostrate near the altar, Sr. Jean was covered with the Resurrection Pall. The monastic community sang a Litany of Blessings and pronounced a Solemn Blessing and prayer over her.

After being uncovered and regaining her feet, Sr. Jean received a golden ring as "the seal of your faith in Christ and the sign of your vocation in this community." Then everyone who attended the ceremony – friends, family, well-wishers and sisters – enjoyed a reception in the dining room.

Sr. Jean came to St. Gertrude's from Boise where she had retired from the State of Idaho. She had been involved in parish work at St. Mary's, and she was an Oblate at St. Gertrude's before entering. These contacts helped influence her to pursue her religious vocation.

"I came here after I was finished taking care of the usual things. My working years were finished and I had retired, plus my mother had passed away and I no longer needed to care for her. So I arrived at the monastery intent on taking care of the next thing I felt called to do by God."

It took the customary seven years for Sr. Jean to prepare for final profession: affiliate (one year), postulant (one year), novice (two years) and temporary professed (three years).



Sr. Jean Ihli lies beneath the pall used to cover the coffins of deceased sisters. This symbolizes the death and resurrection character of the Perpetual Monastic profession. Fr. Hal Weidner, left, and Prioress Clarissa Goeckner look on.

"Becoming a sister is not easy. I learned a lot about myself and religious life along the way. The sisters and I have worked hard at determining if this was the right place for me.

"Thanks to the sisters' guidance and direction, I've grown spiritually and developed a stability that I didn't have before.

"And I am still here," she smiled.

Sr. Jean will continue with her ministries at the monastery: gardening, laundry, maintenance of the sacristy, reading to the sisters in the infirmary and ministering to parish shut-ins.



# Greetings From the Prioress

The recent Advent readings, Christmas songs and New Year hopes expressed a deep longing for peace on earth. On the other hand, the evening news continues to be a daily reminder that so much of what we hope for is unrealized. It became clear to me that peace and peacemaking skills might well be the most important gift we can bring to our times.

How do we become peacemakers? How do we make 2008 a year of peacemaking?

A number of people have offered insights into the first question, and, it will come as no surprise that St. Benedict is one of these. He saw the great need for peace and fashioned a life style that would take this need seriously. In the microcosm of the monastery, he constructed a way of life that honors the needs of the other, promotes justice and leads to peace. He challenged members to make peace the very “quest and aim” of their lives.

In the event that there were failures against this ideal during the course of the day, members were to make peace before the setting of the sun. That this should happen was not left to chance but was embodied in daily rituals: the Our Father, the kiss of peace at the Eucharist and the greeting of guests. These gestures to this day are reminders of our commitment to be peacemakers.

Insights from two other peacemakers inspire us as well. The great Latin American advocate for the poor, Brazil’s Archbishop Dom Helder Camara was asked: “After facing death squads, would-be assassins and hostile forces within your own church, who is your most difficult opponent?”

His answer came quickly: “I am my worst enemy, my most difficult adversary. Here I have the greatest struggle for peace.” The great Mahatma Gandhi also identified his greatest enemy as “... my own inner violence, selfishness and imperfection.”

To be the peacemakers our times require, we must first wrestle with our own demons, embrace our true selves, disarm our hearts and accept, in peace, who we are. This is a process of repeatedly showing mercy to, forgiving and befriending ourselves.

The process of making peace within ourselves is a most difficult challenge – but it is the necessary starting point. John Dear, S.J., respected leader of the ecumenical peace movement, puts it so well: “We must recognize our complicity in global violence. If we recognize and confess violence within us, we allow God to begin the process of our disarmament, first in our war-torn hearts, and then in the world itself.”

Awareness of our own inner violence, selfishness and imperfection, and knowing how often we need to show mercy and forgiveness to ourselves, allows us to be more generous in forgiving others. This gives us grounding and freedom to be creative in our peacemaking efforts within ourselves, our homes, our communities and in our world. It makes possible more risk taking, more thinking outside the box, more conversations on behalf of peace and more courageous actions to bring peace. It also enables us to join with others in pursuing peace.

“Creative” is the adjective we, as a community, have chosen to give reach and urgency to our Benedictine core value of peacemaking. Through forgiveness of self and others, we are invited to apply creativity to the task of peacemaking – opening our eyes, ears and especially our hearts to the possibilities of peace as we negotiate the conflicts of daily living!

As we walk the way of 2008, we are encouraged to embrace creative peacemaking as our deepest call. During the coming months we will pursue activities which require us to think in creative and challenging ways: our 2004 Direction Statements urge us forward to become a community of justice and peace; our Capital Campaign moves ahead, “Growing a future rooted in hope”; our Strategic Planning for that future has already begun; our 100th Anniversary (Aug. 08 - Aug. 09) celebrates the founding of our Motherhouse in Idaho and takes us back to our roots and gives wings to our future.

It is a privilege and gift to be on this journey with you our valued family members, friends, employees, oblates, volunteers and donors. May our joint creative efforts bring peace to our homes, our communities, our workplaces and the world!

*Sister Clarissa Goeckner*

# A Stitch in Time Saves Bindings

A worn out and irreplaceable family Bible with a carved wooden cover sits in the book press. The novice bookbinder carefully removes the Bible and notices, to her horror, that she has applied the reconditioned spine cover upside down!

Much to Sr. Placida Wemhoff's dismay, this actually happened to her in her first year as a bookbinder at St. Gertrude's. "Thank God for water soluble glue!"

For 30 years Sr. Placida taught grades five through eight. During a year's sabbatical upon finishing that ministry, Sr. Placida realized that she would like to learn bookbinding.

"Book binding lends itself to our Benedictine contemplative lifestyle. It is quiet, repetitive, and allows time for solitude, reflection and prayer," said Sr. Placida.

In the *Rule of St. Benedict*, the saint outlined his ideal communal life; he was very specific about the hours necessary for reading and he suggested books for a monastery's collection. St. Benedict's contemporary, Cassiodorus, went so far as to declare that bookbinders and adequate light for nocturnal reading were necessary at his monastery.

When the monastery was built in the 1920s it included a bindery. The sisters printed and bound their own texts and used the bindery extensively for St. Gertrude's Academy. The late Sr. Philomena Vogler kept the bindery active until her retirement.

After her sabbatical, Sr. Placida cleaned up the old bindery equipment and organized and sorted Sr. Philomena's supplies and materials. She then embarked on a course of study from Gudrun Aurand, Bookbinder/Conservator for Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections (MASC) at Washington State University.

Through a story on St. Gertrude's website, Sr. Placida received her first major customer, a man in California who had purchased several prayer books from Europe dating from the 1600s.



Sr. Placida Wemhoff holds pages of a book which needs to be rebound.

"Handling those books was a sacred act," Sr. Placida remembered. "I thought they looked great when I finished with them," she said. The customer was pleased, too, especially since Sr. Placida charged him a pittance.

"I was still trying to figure out pricing," she protested. "He told me I didn't charge him enough."

Sr. Placida eventually worked out what she considers a fair price for her skill. "To bind, mend pages, and re sew the book I charge no less than \$100. And I am always glad to accept any donations customers feel they can make, too."

Resewing a spine can take many days, depending upon the book's condition. Replacing the cover can take hours.

"I can usually provide a quote over the phone based on their description of the book," said Sr. Placida. "I like to have

five or six orders, or books, at once so that as the glue is drying on one, I can work on something else."

Most of the books Sr. Placida repairs have sentimental value to their owners. Sometimes Sr. Placida suggests buying the book new as it is far less expensive than having it rebound. However, for valuable family treasures, cost is seldom an issue.

"I do many family Bibles and cookbooks, plus books on housewifery that were popular bridal gifts in the 1880s."

Her suggestions for book handling include clean hands, a dry storage area out of out of reach of mice and a bookshelf with the books standing up. And if a book is torn, don't repair it with tape.

"The tape irreparably stains the paper. Don't ever use tape!" she stated with a voice that sounded like a finger pointing and shaking. "Books are meant to be used with respect and treated well."

For more information contact Sr. Placida Wemhoff at the Monastery of St. Gertrude, 465 Keuterville Rd., Cottonwood, ID 83522. Her phone number is 208-962-5015.

# Planting Healthy Options

by Darla Anglen-Whitley

“Our backyard is an abundant source of God’s gift of healing plants to us,” said Sr. Carlotta Maria Fontes, who received her Master Herbalist certification from the Global College of Natural Medicine in Santa Cruz, CA, in May 2007.

“It amazes and excites me that I can walk out the door or up the hill and recognize plants that can help cure us,” she continued. “And if I don’t recognize them, I know how to identify them.”

Sr. Carlotta studied herbs and their effects on the human body during an intensive, one-year correspondence course. She learned how to identify and grow herbs, prepare them for use, and make teas, tinctures and tonics. In addition she studied Ayurvedic and Chinese medicine, plus she had to do five case studies on volunteers.

“That part of the class was interesting. People told me what was bothering them and I had to make recommendations based on my course work. I cannot diagnose or prescribe, but if someone comes to me with a specific ailment, I can make suggestions about which herbs to use for relief,” said Sr. Carlotta.



Sr. Carlotta Maria Fontes surrounded by potted herbs and drying chilis.

Sr. Carlotta has always wanted to help people in a holistic way, addressing the body, mind and spirit. She did not know much about herbs until she came to the monastery in 2002.

“The sisters use essential oils in healing ways, and I found that very exciting,” recalled Fontes. “After I entered the monastery I started working in the herb garden with Sr. Theresa Dvorak. I was hooked. I knew then that I wanted to become a Master Herbalist.”

The herb garden is being created into a place for soul healing and meditation into which Sr. Carlotta hopes to incorporate aromatherapy and color therapy components. She grows and

gathers culinary herbs for the kitchen, creates teas for the sisters and guests, and uses herbs in the soaps, lip balms and salves she makes to sell in the monastery’s Book & Gift Shop.

“I didn’t know anything when I started and I am still learning. I am looking forward to an apprenticeship, studying the herbs of St. Hildegard and learning about Native American plants. I hope to keep giving classes, learn more about local plants, and practice on myself some of what I learned!”

## A True Story of Epiphany

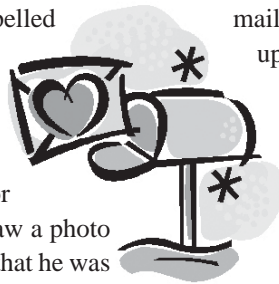
Many years ago a mother and her two sons were compelled to leave their home. While driving through Oregon the fleeing family ran out of gas right beside a mailbox with the name of one of our donors on it.

This family of donors took the refugees in and cared for them until one day, the son of the Good Samaritans saw a photo of one of the fleeing sons on a milk carton advertising that he was missing. That discovery sent the family out on the road again.

After a time, the mother and her children returned home and the parents were reconciled. The sons who ran away with her grew up and prospered.

Last fall, one of the refugee sons called our office and related this story. He had been looking on the internet for the names on the

mailbox all those years ago in Oregon. Their names came up as donors to the monastery.



He wanted to thank them for their kindnesses, for their willingness to put themselves at risk for his family, for the time they took to take him hunting and fishing. After explaining all this, he left his phone number. We called the donors to relate this story and to reconnect with the man if they chose to do so.

The donors were delighted for the chance to get back in touch with this family. They had wondered for years what had happened to them, had prayed for their safety and wished them well.

A little kindness truly does go a long way, and the impact of a gift has unimagined effects. We hope you have a wonderful year.

# A Creative, Disobedient Life

by Darla Anglen-Whitley

“It seems to me that God has many ways of calling one to religious life,” Sr. Carm Ternes, 87, smiled, eyes twinkling. “In my case, as a young girl, I thought the Benedictine habits were so beautiful and exquisite! So began my vocation!”

Born and raised in Strasburg, ND, Sr. Carm (baptized Elizabeth) attended a school staffed by Ursulines, who often told her that she had a vocation to religious life.

A sequence of providential events, plus a dose of her usual creativity and disobedience, led young Elizabeth to Idaho. She and her best friend, Lucille, who also wanted to be a nun, met a Benedictine sister in her “angelic” habit at church, sparking the idea of joining a Benedictine community. Next, the two friends saw a postcard featuring St. Gertrude’s in Idaho, and they determined that they would join the convent there.

Sr. Carm’s father, however, refused to take her to Idaho as it was too far away. So, Sr. Carm, exhibiting her typical creativity (and just a little disobedience), started a novena to St. Theresa of the Little Flower. She asked the saint to persuade her father to let her go to Idaho, and, after the third novena, a miracle happened.

“My parents’ friends from Coeur d’Alene, ID, came to visit us. While at dinner my father casually asked the guests how far Cottonwood was from Coeur d’Alene. By the end of the meal, it was decided that I would return to Idaho with them and they would take me to Cottonwood.

“It suddenly hit me that I had no choice but to accept this sudden turn of events, leave all those I loved (including my best friend, Lucille), and make a lifetime commitment, for better or worse.

“I really made my perpetual profession that day,” Sr. Carm said. “The decision to come to Idaho was for life.”

Professed in 1941, Sr. Carm immediately began a teaching career that spanned nearly three decades. Her early years in the classroom were difficult and she “only lasted a few months” at her first assignment in St. Maries, ID. Eventually she began attending college and earned a BA in Education and a MA in Speech and Drama.



Sr. Carm Ternes

In addition to teaching in schools across the state, she taught at St. Gertrude’s Academy and was often assigned as prefect of the boarder students - both boys and girls.

“I am amazed how, through God’s grace, that I and the students survived!” she recalled.

When asked, “why did you stay?”, Sr. Carm replied, “Staying was never a question. When I left North Dakota, I was here for life. In fact, my final profession seemed to me a renewal and public commitment to my choice.

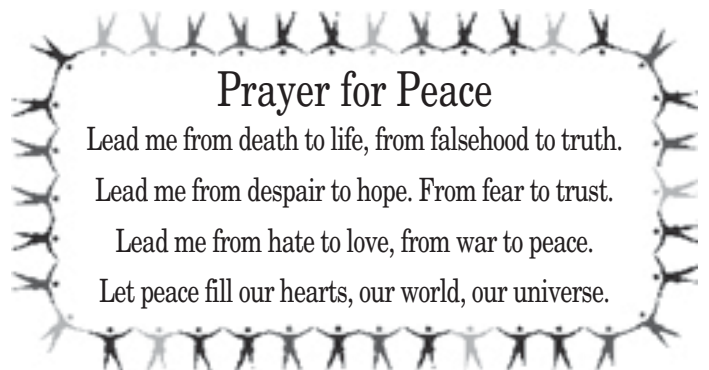
“Through the years I struggled with obedience and the fear of being able to cope with my assignments, but I never doubted my decision to come here.”

Life as a sister has absorbed Sr. Carm’s attention and energy for over 65 years. She ministered as a teacher, prefect of boarder students, Religious Ed Coordinator, Pastoral Assistant, Hospital Chaplain and Community Archivist.

“When you place your dedication to God above all other things, then graces and blessings are often a reward. This applies to religious life and every life, for that matter.

“I love community! Everyone needs a support group to belong to, to love and be loved by – that’s what marriage and family are about, too, really. Community is the best thing about being a sister at St. Gertrude’s.”

Retired now, Sr. Carm takes care of the sisters’ house in Lewiston, ID, and offers hospitality to their many guests. She is also involved with the Center for Wisdom in Living, an advocacy and training organization for people in or approaching retirement.



## Prayer for Peace

Lead me from death to life, from falsehood to truth.

Lead me from despair to hope. From fear to trust.

Lead me from hate to love, from war to peace.

Let peace fill our hearts, our world, our universe.



# DEVELOPMENTS

by Sr. Mary Kay Henry, Director of Development

A mother asked me to pray for healing for her son who recently returned from the war in Iraq, torn apart with mental and spiritual anxiety because he cannot believe that God can forgive what he had to see and do as a "good soldier." Other friends showed me through a shelter system for people who are homeless or without food, and I was surprised to learn that in the U.S. over 40% of those who receive food in shelters are children. Please pass on the compassion and creativity!

"Grounded in our contemplative call, we will grow in our global awareness and will actively engage in peace-making and works of justice."

What might this creativity look like in this new year?

It will look like each of us sinking into silence and prayer daily in order to put on the mind and heart of Christ. Like continuing our

connections with you which maximize the time, talent and treasure of us all.

Creativity might appear as the strategic planning process in which our community is engaged. This process will stir us to new imagination and long term unity, both of which make us a creative leaven in our local ministries and in addressing global concerns. We are deeply grateful to the forty-plus friends who are broadening the base of our dream by serving on the planning committee in this process.

It also might look like the celebration of our hundred years of being a Benedictine *motherhouse* in Idaho! Get creative in celebrating this benchmark with us from August 2008 through August 2009! We hope to make Raspberry Festival 2008 an informal opening of the festivities and will kick off the celebration on August 16, during the 50<sup>th</sup> jubilee of Sisters Ida Mae Fuchs, Clarissa Goeckner and Bernadette Stang.

We are humbled by and grateful for the gifts of prayer, volunteer hours and financial support that you have already invested in your own dream by participating in our mission and ministries during 2007. Have a very blessed 2008!

May the God of surprises and creativity bless you with all you need in ways that only God can imagine!

\* \* \* \* \*

This *Canticle* on "CREATIVITY" is a fitting place in which to thank Darla Anglen-Whitley, Assistant Director of Marketing and Communications for the monastery. During her almost ten years with us you have experienced her creativity through *The Canticle*, the museum's *Rediscover* and *Echoes of the Past*, numerous brochures, articles and other publicity which she has produced.

Beyond this work that she does so well, her innate alertness to possibilities for collaboration, her gracious relational skills, and her probing questions of why things are the way they are and what if they were this way . . . have all added vitality to our bonds with you.

We ask God as Creativity, Wisdom and Unity to continue to bless her as she moves on to a new part-time position in similar work. This move in February frees her to complete the education that will allow her to bring her creativity and skills into the world of teaching. We will miss her terribly and we wish her the best.



## Vocation Events

### 2008 Come & See Weekends

*A planned weekend retreat opportunity for women considering religious life.*

February 15 - 17

April 11 - 13

May 9 - 11

June 6 - 8

### Easter Triduum

March 20 - 23, 2008

*Celebrate Holy Thursday, Good Friday,*

*Holy Saturday and Easter with us.*



Visit us at [www.StGertrudes.org](http://www.StGertrudes.org)  
[vocation@stgertrudes.org](mailto:vocation@stgertrudes.org)

# Aloha, Fr. Hal Weidner

In an unabashed plug for himself and grinning widely, Fr. Hal Weidner, new chaplain at the Monastery of St. Gertrude and St. Mary's Hospital quipped, "If people want to get to know me better, they might start by purchasing one of my books, *Grief, Loss and Death: The Shadow Side of Ministry* or *Praying with John Cardinal Newman*."

Fr. Hal, from the Congregation of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri in Rock Hill, SC, began working at the Monastery in September when Fr. Meinrad Schallberger, former chaplain, was asked by his prior to return to the monastery in Jerome, ID.

"I told a friend that, ideally, during my sabbatical years, I would like to be a chaplain at a motherhouse," Fr. Hal recalled. "She sent me a notice that St. Gertrude's was looking for a chaplain, I applied, and here I am."



Fr. Hal Weidner

Fr. Hal lived in Hawaii for the last 16 years. While there he worked at founding an Oratory and served as pastor of Holy Trinity Church in Honolulu.

"Compared to Hawaii, this area seems like a desert," Fr. Hal said. "However, the sisters at the monastery are wonderful," he smiled.

Fr. Hal expects to spend a lot of his free time working on two new books, keeping his virtual Oratory up to date, and scouting out a place for a new Oratory ([www.TheVirtualOratory.com](http://www.TheVirtualOratory.com)).

Fr. Hal has a rich and varied background. He served as the Major Superior of his Oratory in South Carolina and studied and has traveled throughout the world including Japan, India, Israel and Europe. Fr. Hal holds a doctoral degree from Oxford University in Oxford, England, and has published numerous books, articles, essays and reviews in publications such as *Catholic Digest*, *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* and *The Catechist*, to name just a few.

## Sisters on the Move

### Sr. Mary Frances Kluss

top photo in center, was recently honored for her 15 years of ministering at Holy Names Care Center in Spokane. "There have been many changes over the years," Sr. Mary Frances, LPN, related, "and I have certainly appreciated working at the Care Center with our patients and staff."

She is shown here with Sr. Shirley Roberg, SNJM of the US-Ontario Holy Names Leadership Team and Kay Foster, Director of Nursing at the Care Center.



**Sisters Clarissa Goeckner, Carm Ternes, Evangela Bossert, Janet Marie Barnard and Mary Kay Henry** traveled to Mt. Angel, OR, for the 125th anniversary celebration of founding of Queen of Angels Monas-



tery and Mt. Angel Abbey. The three foundresses of St. Gertrude's lived and ministered with the Mt. Angel sisters the first two years both groups were in the U.S.

The highlight of the celebration was the special Mass at St. Mary Parish, plus visits by sisters from the monasteries in Switzerland from which the founding sisters came. A church full of parishioners joined the two communities in this historical milestone.

Shown in the photo at left are L-R: Sr. Donna Marie Chartraw, Sr. Clarissa Goeckner, Mother Maria Andrea Kappeli of Switzerland, Sr. Kathryn Huber, and Sr. Anita Baumann of Switzerland.

# Come Away to a Retreat

## Come to the Quiet

January 25 - February 1, 2008 Friday 7:30 pm - Friday 1:30 pm

*Directors: Lillian Englert, OSB and Kathy McFaul*

A silent individually directed retreat. Relax in God's presence, surrounded and supported by a praying community. Includes optional faith sharing, creative expression, body prayer and ritual.

**Suggested Donation \$470**

## Rebuilding After Loss

February 15 - 17, 2008 Friday 7:30 pm - Sunday 1:30 pm

*Presenter: Barbara Jean Glodowski, OSB*

Coping with grief, loss or crisis can feel like swimming upstream. Discover how prayer and creativity can bring you back home.

**Suggested Donation: \$150 single/ \$200 shared**

## Journeying on the Way of the Cross

March 7 - 9, 2008 Friday 7:30 pm - Sunday 1:30 pm

*Presenter: Bernadette Stang, OSB*

Use scriptural companions to discover yourself: Are you following the crowd on Palm Sunday? turning your head in embarrassment like Peter? or gazing lovingly on your Son like Mary?

**Suggested Donation: \$150 single/ \$200 shared**

## Paths of Spirituality: Trusting With God at Mother Earth's Lighthouse

April 11 - 13, 2008 Friday 7:30 pm - Sunday 1:30 pm

*Presenter: Mary Kay Henry, OSB*

A time to walk the four paths of the spiritual journey in light of scripture and *Earth's Imagination* – a video series by Dr. Brian Swimme. For men and women who desire want to be beacons of hope. Bring a poem, short story or picture that brings light to your life.

**Suggested donation: \$150 single/ \$200 shared**

## Mother-Adult Daughter Retreat Birth-Life-Death-Rising: Jesus' Mystery - and Mine!

April 25 - 27, 2008 Friday 7:30 pm - Sunday 1:30 pm

*Presenter: Judith Brower, OSB*

**Suggested Donation: \$215 got two**



Visit us at [www.StGertrudes.org](http://www.StGertrudes.org)

Email: [retreat@stgertrudes.org](mailto:retreat@stgertrudes.org)

[outreachretreats@hotmail.com](mailto:outreachretreats@hotmail.com)



IDAHO CORP. OF BENEDICTINE SISTERS

**Monastery of St. Gertrude**

465 Keuterville Rd., Cottonwood, ID 83522-5183

Nonprofit Org.

U.S. POSTAGE

**PAID**

Permit No. 10  
Cottonwood, ID

## Look Inside

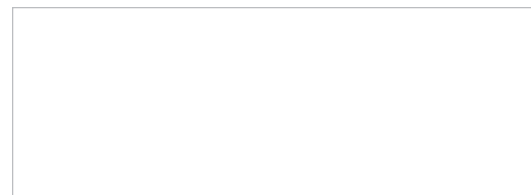
It's a Profession ..... 1

Binding Stitches ..... 3

Planting Health ..... 4

Sr. Carm's Story ..... 5

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



**Befriend the Earth!**

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