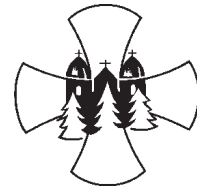


# Canticle



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OF ST. GERTRUDE - A JOURNAL OF OUR LIFE

SPRING 2007

## Stretching Her Faith

"I experience the ministry of healing every day in my yoga classes," said Sr. Michele Bateman. "Students keep returning to class and bringing friends. Their bodies feel better, and, so, they are better."

A graduate of the Himalayan Institute and certified yoga instructor, Sr. Michele Bateman teaches two classes each day in Cottonwood with 30 students. Her students find that yoga improves flexibility, reduces stress and aids in "inner healing."

"Yoga is a science and philosophy, not a religion," stressed Sr. Michele. "Yoga is the union of body, mind and spirit. When these are in alignment, so to speak, healing happens automatically."

Sr. Michele's interest in yoga recently led her to join a pilgrimage tour to the Ashram of the Holy Trinity in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The Ashram was the home of Fr. Bede Griffiths, a Benedictine priest who guided the Ashram to become a center of contemplative life and inter-religious dialogue.

"We focused a lot of our attention on recognizing similarities among the faith traditions – specifically among Christian, Hindu and Muslim – and in finding commonalities of belief.

"So much of the pain in the world that needs healing is based on ignorance and judgment about religious beliefs," Sr. Michele said.



Sr. Michel Bateman standing in front of the gates of a Hindu temple in Trichy.



Sr. Michele, seated on the far right, preparing for a communal meal of dahl and rice at the ashram.

"And ignorance and judgment cannot lead to wholeness or healing."

While in India, Sr. Michele, and several of her fellow pilgrims, found themselves sick with a type of bronchitis. The illness left her unable to participate in daily excursions and explorations of the surrounding countryside. As she began to heal, however, she took walks around the area alone. Everywhere she went she met individuals who were eager to invite her into their homes and share a cup of tea with her.

"Being sick was a blessing in a way. I was able to meet local people and experience the power of dialogue and personal sharing. Treating humans like humans is necessary for peace."

Her trip to India has expanded her view of healing to include "the whole world."

"I know that sounds so big – the whole world. But I believe one person can make a difference. Mahatma Gandhi said, 'You must be the change you want to see in the world.' I want to create hope in people that wholeness – healing – is possible. Education and inter-

religious dialogue are vital to this effort."

"You will be hearing more from me on this subject," she said with a smile.



# Greetings From the Prioress

Our Mission Statement calls us to respond to needs with “healing hospitality”. This issue of *The Canticle* shines a light on the “healing” dimension of hospitality.

Hospitality has always been a key Christian and Benedictine value which invites us to open our hearts to letting the Scriptural view of life shape us. It requires that we open our hearts to community members, beloved friends, enemies, strangers and the needs of our times.

More than a cheery smile, a warm hello and sociability, hospitality asks that we “cross thresholds,” “re-imagine boundaries,” “negotiate space,” and “break down walls.”

Healing remains a deep need in our world. Many people – including ourselves – are searching for soundness and wholeness, not only physically, but spiritually and emotionally as well. Bookstore shelves are lined with self-help titles: *Healing of Memories*, *Healing the Family Tree*, *Healing Life’s Hurts*, *The Wounded Healer*, *Healing the Culture*, and *Healing Life’s Sore Spots*.

Watching the evening news engages us with graphic clues of where healing hospitality is needed today: people are poor, homeless, abused, refugees and victims of war and violence of all kinds.

Through the ages, monasteries have typically offered themselves as PLACES of hospitality, refuge, comfort and healing. In our community we determine ways we can participate in this broad monastic tradition of building guest houses, providing places of refuge, and being involved with the poor, homeless, abused, weak

and those struggling with the great questions of life? What qualities do we bring to these urgent tasks?

Jesus had great insight into healing on all levels. Each time he healed someone the event was clothed with hospitality to the deepest needs of the person. Jesus’ example invites all of us to strengthen the dimension of “healing” in our hospitality.

In Luke’s Gospel we are told the story of the two who were going to the village of Emmaus, talking along the way about what had recently come to pass in Jerusalem - Jesus’ death on the cross. Jesus joins them and listens to their concerns.

They pour out their feelings of disillusionment, sadness, loneliness, regret, disappointment, fear and hopelessness to their anonymous companion. Jesus listens to them and receives their feelings; he accompanies them, dines with them, and, in the breaking of the bread their eyes are opened and they recognize Jesus alive in their midst! They are filled with hope, healing and the courage to go forward in light of this revelation.

No matter the ministry in which we are engaged - whether in a hospital, school or prison; through prayer or retreats; doing laundry or managing the kitchen - we deeply desire that our ministries be marked by those qualities Jesus models for us and which we have often learned from you our families, friends, oblates, volunteers and donors: listening, accepting feelings, being present and supportive while walking with those in need.

Thanks for all the ways you walk with us and support us.

*Sister Clarissa Goeckner*

# Making Space, Place for Wholeness

When you think about the word “healing”, laundry is not one of the first things that pops into your head. For Sr. Jean Ihli, however, doing the laundry for community is part of living a life that brings healing and wholeness to others.

“Society asks so much of people these days,” Sr. Jean says. “They need spaces set aside to regain balance. If doing laundry for the sisters, kitchen and sacristy helps create and maintain that space, then that’s just what I want to do.”

But that is not all Sr. Jean does. Like most sisters at the monastery she carries several different responsibilities in the care and maintenance of this large house. Another of her jobs is taking care of the sacristy which involves preparing for Mass by getting hosts and wine ready, preparing the linens, turning on the sound system, and lighting the candles.

“The spiritual healing of Mass is very important. I want it to be just right for our guests and sisters.”



Sr. Jean Ihli, left, and at work, above, in the flower gardens in front of the monastery.

A couple of afternoons each week Sr. Jean takes Eucharist to local parishioners who have trouble getting out. She makes time to visit with each one instead of rushing in and out. “I receive such grace from them when we share with one another,” she smiled.

On other afternoons, weather permitting, Sr. Jean is outside working on the flower gardens, her avocation. She remembers seeing St. Gertrude’s for the first time and recognizing the potential for flower gardens to enhance the beauty of the building and grounds.

While many retreatants and guests find walking up the hill to the cemetery ‘magical,’ there are others who are unable to make the hike. For those, Sr. Jean says, “we try to create a healing atmosphere around the house. The beauty of the grounds and gardens promotes serenity and healing.”

“I’m so busy sometimes that it is easy to let my own quiet time for reflection and study slip in this house of prayer,” she remarked. “But working with my hands frees my heart and mind for contemplation and prayer.”

## Sisters in the News

**Clarissa Goeckner**, Prioress, attended the Conference of Benedictine Abbots and Prioresses at Mercy Center, Burlingame, CA, in February. This meeting is held every four years. Special speakers included Abbot Primat Notker Wolf from Rome; Sr. Maire Hickey, OSB, of Dinklage, Germany, and Abbot Armand Veilleux, OSCO, from Chimay, Belgium. “I was touched by hearing from so many attendees how well-regarded and respected we are around the Benedictine communities,” said Sr. Clarissa.

If you are feeling stiff and sore, former prioress **Sr. Jean Lalande** is back at the Body Therapy Clinic in Lewiston, ID, as a part-time massage therapist. She works several days each week and is enjoying using her gift of healing touch.

**Sr. Mary Forman**, PhD, Associate Professor of Monastic Studies at Saint John’s University, Collegeville, MN, will present a week-long seminar at Spirit Center July 1 - 7, entitled, *Living in Community: Insights from the Rule of Benedict*. Everyone who wants to explore, listen, reflect, dialogue and deepen their desire to live their Christian faith is welcome. Contact the Retreat Team for more information: [retreat@stgertrudes.org](mailto:retreat@stgertrudes.org).

**Sr. Teresa Jackson** volunteered to attend a “Leadership Plenty Training” sponsored by the Northwest Area Foundation Horizons program. The NWAF’s focus is on reducing poverty in rural areas. Sr. Teresa will teach 25 local residents leadership skills, such as managing meetings and converting ideas into action.

# Writing History, Celebrating Roots

Our founding sisters arrived in America 125 years ago this year, and Sr. Evangela Bossert was commissioned to write a paper commemorating their arrival in this country on October 30, 1882. The paper will be published by *American Benedictine Review* along with articles about two other original Benedictine communities who traveled from Switzerland to the Pacific Northwest at the same time.



Sr. Evangela Bossert

Sisters Johanna, Rosalia and Magdalene departed Sarnen, Switzerland and traveled to Gervais, Oregon. In their party were monks from Engelberg Abbey and sisters from Maria Rickenbach. The

monks founded Mount Angel Abbey and the Maria Rickenbach sisters started Queen of Angels Monastery, both in Oregon. Our sisters eventually worked their way from Oregon, through Washington to Idaho.

“It deepens my appreciation of our roots to write about our early beginnings and see the many ups and downs of Benedictine communities.”

Sr. Evangela is also writing an article about the early relationship and connections between the three communities. It will be published in the *Catholic Sentinel*, the diocesan paper for Oregon.

## Volunteers Give . . . And Receive

It must be spring in the volunteer program – there are volunteers popping up everywhere!

Fred and Jeannette Kelley moved to Cottonwood from Buckley, WA, in 2006, and their volunteer time at St. Gertrude’s is daily and ongoing. “My official assignment is to clean Spirit Center and the chapel,” said Fred, “but I’m really available for anything.”

Jeanette answers phones, washes dishes and performs a variety of office tasks. Sometimes Fred and Jeannette provide hospitality to guests at Spirit Center for the Retreat Team.

Colleen Wilson has been volunteering for the past year and is also from Cottonwood. One morning each week she helps with data entry, fills brochure racks and more at Spirit Center. “It is important to help out here because the Monastery is such an integral part of this community.”

Juan and Laura Oleaga of Boise, ID, came to St. Gertrude’s to volunteer for two weeks “wherever the sisters need us.” That meant outside, in the kitchen peeling potatoes, upstairs doing office work and more. “Our time here has been very profitable – spiritually – for us. We have enjoyed the library and praying with the sisters,” smiled Laura.



Volunteers relax for a photo after noon dishes. L-R: Fred and Jeannette Kelley, Juan and Laura Oleaga, and Elfie Rosin. Not pictured: Colleen Wilson.

Elfie Rosin of Denver, CO, is here for three months. In addition to some housekeeping and reception duties, Elfie is translating documents from German to English.

“The sisters’ are so grateful for our presence and help,” Elfie commented. “They are an extremely knowledgeable group of women with great insight and wisdom. It is great to be here.”

If you or someone you know is interested in a volunteer opportunity at St. Gertrude’s, contact Sr. Emagene Warren, the Volunteer Coordinator. Her email is [emagenewarren@hotmail.com](mailto:emagenewarren@hotmail.com).



# Museum Notes

by Lyle Wirtanen, Director

The museum is preparing for our springtime visitors, especially school groups from a variety of locations in north central Idaho. Fourth grade classes study Idaho history as part of their curriculum and make up a majority of school group visitors.

To help schools provide this service to their students, we received a \$3,400 grant from the Idaho Community Foundation and the J.A. & Kathryn Albertson Foundation Fund. The grant will be used as a fuel reimbursement stipend for public and private schools who visit.

Moonlight Serenade Dinner Dance is scheduled for April 21 at the Greencreek Community Hall. Featuring music of the 30's and 40's performed by *Hog Heaven Big Band*, the event includes a full course dinner and a no-host bar. Mark your calendars! Tickets are just \$25 per person. Contact the museum for more information.

On Saturday, May 12, the museum and the Nez Perce Longhouse Group will be hosting a Native American Sovereignty and Spirituality Symposium at Spirit Center. Speakers from around the Northwest will address sovereignty, spirituality, and diplomacy among the Nez Perce and surrounding tribes and the Federal, State, and Local governments.

The symposium is sponsored by the Kansas Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission. They received a grant from the National Park Service to conduct seven symposia on the diplomacy theme in each of the Midwestern states. Because those symposia were so successful, a second grant was funded to conduct three more symposia on the same theme in Washington, Idaho, and Oregon. We are fortunate to be the hosts of this event in Idaho. For more information contact the museum at (208) 962-2050.

Be sure to include a visit to the museum in your spring and summer travel plans. If you haven't been by lately you will be pleasantly surprised by the new display cases. Over the last five years the Governor's Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Committee has granted over \$80,000 to the museum for improvements. Most of the grant funds have gone toward new display cases which allow staff to place artifacts behind glass, in museum-quality settings, with wonderful lighting.

# Blowin' in the Wind

by Darla Anglen-Whitley

One wild night in December the winds reached speeds of 75 mph on the prairie. As a result a large white spruce tree that stood sentinel at the edge of the lawn split in two. One half fell down the stairway leading to the front lawn, crushing a light fixture atop the cement newel post. The remaining portion of the tree was felled the following day.



Sr. Catherine Manderfeld remembers the sisters planting the trees in 1931. She was in high school and watched the work from her dorm window. She wonders if the trees came to the monastery via the University of Idaho in Moscow. Wherever they came from, the trees have framed the monastery grounds for 75 years.



Local chainsaw artist Dennis Sullivan salvaged the bottom 20' of the tree. One of these behemoth logs will be sculpted into *The Beacon*, a free-form work of art which is destined to become the donor recognition piece for the Capital Campaign. When finished it will honor and name those people who, through their generosity, made Spirit Center, the monastery renovations and ministry endowments possible. The finished artwork will be on display in the lobby at Spirit Center.



If you are in the area, stop and see the sculpture reveal itself in the carving yard at Dog Bark Park, along Highway 95 in Cottonwood.



# “Thank You, Jesus!” for Everything

by Darla Anglen-Whitley

Sr. Petronilla Lieser is a woman of determination. In fact, she was determined to organize our brief interview and tell me what to write. And when I brought her back to the questions at hand she said, “Thank you for setting me straight.”

Thank you is a phrase that Sr. Petronilla uses a lot, especially, “Thank You, Jesus!”

Born Cecelia Margaret to Teresia Hemmesch and Joseph Lieser on April Fool’s Day, 1920, in Paynesville, MN, she was one of the three girls from her family to enter St. Gertrude’s. As of 2006, 16 members of the Teresia and Joseph Lieser family have entered religious life or the priesthood.

But before she came to Idaho, Cecelia fell in love with a boy named Roman. She was 14. According to legend, he dropped his fiancé when he found out young Cecelia was interested in him. The two dated for four years until a fateful August in 1938 when Cecelia joined her mother on a retreat.

The priest at the retreat suggested to Cecelia that she had a vocation to religious life. After returning home, she couldn’t shake the idea but was afraid to talk to her mother because of the Roman complication. Cecelia finally shared her desire to enter religious life.

“Mother was so upset she didn’t speak to me for two whole days,” remembers Sr. Petronilla. Then she had to tell Roman of her decision. His reaction was much more tempered. “He said he thought if God wants me, I better go.”

By October 1, 1938, Sr. Petronilla was at St. Gertrude’s, home-sick and missing Roman. These early days at the monastery found her repeating to herself “I will never give up!” Thus her innate determination was strengthened.

From 1940 when Sr. Petronilla made profession until 1984, she worked as a “domestic” in the kitchen and laundry at Our Lady of Consolation Hospital, as school cook at St. Paul’s School in



Sr. Petronilla Lieser standing beneath her beloved Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Nampa and at St. Gertrude’s Academy in Cottonwood, and as head of the Dietary Department at St. Mary’s Hospital in Cottonwood. When she left the Academy the students dedicated the 1965 annual to her.

“All those years I watched as sisters came to the convent and then went out to minister. I asked three times to be sent out; three times I was told, ‘No,’ ” recalls Sr. Petronilla with tears in her eyes.

“Community life is not easy, especially obedience to the prioress and the *Rule of Benedict*. I obey because I believe that God directs me through the prioress. I pray throughout the day ‘Give me strength, give me courage, give me love.’

“And you know what? God touched the hearts and lives of patients at the hospitals and students at the schools even though I was only a cook. I know now that doing the ordinary things in life well really matters more than all the extraordinary acts.”

In 1984 Sr. Petronilla finally received her “Yes,” to go out on a mission. She found herself in Kellogg and then Orofino, ID, as a parish visitor and Pastoral Associate, plus cook for Fr. George King. It was her job to visit parishioners and get them back into the church. Given her dogged determination, how could anyone tell her no?!

“Reaching out to people is a good thing about being a nun,” exclaimed Sr. Petronilla. “To bring joy and laughter to others, to help them fall in love with the church and God, to be there to pray and play with them ... this is God’s good work.”

According to Sr. Petronilla to be a sister in this day and age requires women to have a deep and committed prayer life and “determination to stick it out!”

“It isn’t so easy to live in community. I get under people’s skin and others get under my skin. Sometimes only determination keeps us here. Just like in married life – make a commitment to whatever you choose and determine to make it work.”



# Vocation Events



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[vocation@stgertrudes.org](mailto:vocation@stgertrudes.org)

## Come & See Weekends

*Reflection and discernment weekends for single women. Pray with the monastic community and other women exploring religious life.*

May 11 - 13, 2007

## Triduum At the Monastery

*Experience the days prior to Easter at the monastery. Participate in liturgy and prayer with the Sisters*

April 5 - 8, 2007

## Monastic Living Experience

*A two-week opportunity for single women to share our monastic life, prayer and work.*

July 1 - 12, 2007



# DEVELOPMENTS

by Sr. Mary Kay Henry, Director of Development

Do you sometimes feel like the retreatant who told us that his life gets hectic keeping his family a priority, working long hours to create a new hospital, and managing his medical practice? He longs for a place to let his life come back into balance. "That's where you sisters come in. What you offer us over-busy people is sanity in a box."

We cannot offer "sanity in a box" without your help. There is a 12-letter word that starts with "ph" which is a synonym for a "healing response to a need requiring social change for the sake of the common good". This word involves community-minded people who seek out organizations whose values and services resonate with their fundamental human impulse to say how life should be and could be.

I remember so well the "ah-ha" moment while setting our goals in 2005. Our reason for being and our call to action wove themselves together in a clear commitment to do what Jesus did: to pray and to make a healing response to the needs of the day.

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

Each year we focus on an urgent situation in the world that needs healing. We learn more about it and collaborate with others to provide direct services and to change the circumstances that underlie the concern. Hunger, domestic violence, sweatshops, hu-

man trafficking are just a few of the areas that have recently received our attention.

Jesus is our model for *\*philanthropy*, that 12-letter word. Jusef Mgeni describes philanthropy as "a conscious effort to eliminate difficult challenges facing the community." Jesus does this by engaging in mutual relationships with his apostles, disciples and the crowds.

A large crowd gathers and he teaches them for three days. They are hungry. Jesus responds with extravagant hospitality. He honors the people's potential by inviting them to bring to the "table" the gifts they have. Five loaves, two fishes for five thousand people; twelve baskets of surplus to pass on. A snapshot of a culture of philanthropy that provides a healing response to an urgent need and sends the participants out to tell the story and to continue the abundance.

Our community deeply appreciates each of you who participates in our mission by supporting our ministries through which we can meet needs that are your heartfelt concerns. We invite you to consider sustaining our mission and ministries by making a planned gift such as including us in your will, making a gift from your IRA, establishing a charitable gift annuity or a charitable remainder trust.

I thank you personally for your prayers and good wishes for my healing from cancer. I completed my chemotherapy treatments in February and am cancer free!

# Come Away to a Retreat

## The Dance of Contemplation & Compassion

April 27 - 29, 2007 • Fri. 7:30 pm - Sun. 1:30 pm

*Presenter: Mary Kay Henry, O.S.B.*

Can prayer make a difference in the face of war, starvation and other violence? Apply your spirituality on behalf of social justice. Bring a Bible, journal and quotes and stories that inspire you to prayer and action for change.

## Mother & Adult Daughter Retreat:

I Give You a "New" Commandment -  
What Might "New" Mean for Me?

May 4 - 6, 2007 • Fri. 7:30 pm - Sun. 1:30 pm

*Presenter: Judith Brower, O.S.B.*

On this 5th Sunday of Easter, reflect on the implications, joys and challenges of "Resurrection Life" and what the new commandment of loving Jesus may offer us today.

## A Circle of Women: Retreat for Knitters & Crocheters

May 18 - 20, 2007 • Fri. 7:30 pm - Sun. 1:30 pm

*Presenter: Teresa Jackson, O.S.B. & Monastery Knitters*

Working with yarn is more than a relaxing hobby, it is a way to deepen our prayer and spirituality. Bring a project to share. All levels of experience welcome, including beginners.

## Come to the Quiet

June 15 - 22, 2007 • Fri. 7:30 pm - Fri. 1:30 pm

*Directors: Lillian Englert, O.S.B. and Kathy McFaul*

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 always includes optional faith sharing, creative expression, body prayer and ritual.



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

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