

Prayer Awakens

Prayer awakens. Justice impels. Compassion acts. **Thy Kingdom Come.** Sounding the depths of our new Vision Statement continues to be an adventure! Its brevity invites deeper reflection, wider vision and greater heroism and generosity.

As we carefully chose those few words that would unite, energize and lead us into the future, there were none more important than "Prayer awakens." We knew prayer would be the foundation of whatever else we decided.

Why?

Prayer is the core of the Benedictine way of life. Benedict's sixth century exhortation "to prefer NOTHING to the Work of God" remains key to our 21st century lives. Our community history is rich in stories citing the importance of prayer in the lives of our foremothers. One favorite tells of when the entire community was ill with the flu. In spite of this, at least two sisters always made it to chapel to pray the office so this important "Work" would not be skipped. Besides faithfulness to communal prayer, the early community was strongly committed to meditation and other forms of private prayer. Seeing life through the light of prayer is woven into the fabric of who we are and we deeply appreciate and strive to carry on this legacy.

"It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye."

~ Antoine De Saint Exupery
The Little Prince

So what does prayer awaken?

William Johnson, S.J., in his book *The Inner Eye of Love* emphasizes the importance of light and seeing. He quotes Jesus' words in Matthew: "The eye is the lamp of your

body. So if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness." He goes on to say that we humans are shortsighted, seeing only partially and so often lacking a bigger vision. However, there is hope since we have a third eye, an inner eye, the eye of the heart, the

eye of wisdom, the eye of love. When this inner eye is awakened, humans, blind from birth, see. They see the abundance and glory of God; the beauty and potential of each individual; and a deeper meaning to the universe. It is this "seeing" that we pray will be awakened in us: to the glory, abundance, mercy, forgiveness, and mystery of God; to the gifts, potential and beauty of each person; to the meaning and possibilities that lie in the universe of which we know so little. We pray to see the needs of our times with the inner eye of love and, with humility and contemplation, we hope this seeing will lead us to do what we can so that God's reign will be revealed in some way through us in this moment. Archbishop Oscar Romero wrote: "The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts; it is even beyond our vision." Thus we can only cry out with ardent longing **"Thy Kingdom Come!"** and hope that we will recognize "the work of God" in the many ways it is manifested.

During the last two months of northern hemisphere darkness we have all feasted on the light of Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas and New Year. May these diverse lights guide us like the Epiphany Star as we seek the Kingdom in 2009. May Thanksgiving light awaken us to God's generosity and abundance so that we may live generously. May the light of Advent invite us to hope and joy and may we live and act from this hope. May the transforming light of Christmas transfigure our inner darkness, and may we live open to conversion and transformation. May the light of the New Year bring new possibilities, invitations and growth; may our hearts be open to what God is wishing to do through and in us during this new Year of the Lord's Favor. *With gratitude to all of you for who you are to us in all seasons, may Christ be our light on the journey through 2009! Sister Clarissa ✱*



Sr. Clarissa in the monastery chapel.

Early Years on the Camas Prairie

1909 - 1934: Part 2 of
a Centennial Series

On the afternoon of September 10, 1908, Archbishop Edward O'Dea presided at a meeting of St. Scholastica's community in Colton, Washington where three decisions opened the way to the future. The sisters elected Mother Hildegard Vogler for a third term as prioress; Archbishop O'Dea gave formal permission for the sisters to transfer the Motherhouse and Novitiate to Cottonwood, Idaho; and the sisters confirmed that the new convent would be named in honor of St. Gertrude the Great.

The sisters wasted no time establishing a small community in Idaho near St Michael's Monastery. Although few in number, on September 28 they began praying the Divine Office. By April 26, 1909, Mother Hildegard had transferred her office to St. Gertrude's Convent, and all official business was transacted from there. In late summer, Reiland Brothers of Uniontown completed the addition of the north wing to the original homestead; and on August 25 the large bell rang out joyously as Abbot Frowin Conrad from Conception Abbey in Missouri and Bishop Alphonse Glorieux of Boise, along with seven priests and other friends in the area, celebrated the good news with the sisters. Almost immediately the community of St. Gertrude's made it a priority to educate the children of pioneers on the Camas Prairie. Within a few years, they were teaching in Cottonwood, Nezperce, Ferdinand, Greencreek and Keuterville.

In July of 1914 Abbot Conrad returned to St. Gertrude's to preside as the community wrote and adopted new American Constitutions which were approved by Rome and promulgated in 1916.

Mother Hildegard's health had begun to decline and a new Prioress was elected on July 6, 1920. Following some hours of deliberation, the community selected Sr. Scholastica Uhlenkott who chose Sr. Dominica Sweeney as her assistant. After serving as prioress for eighteen years and guiding the sisters "home" to Idaho, Mother Hildegard's time of leadership came to an end.

As the numbers of sisters increased, they felt the need to build a larger, more permanent home. The cornerstone for their new building was laid in July 1920; four years later, on July 24, 1924, Bishop Daniel Gorman of Boise dedicated the blue porphyry stone convent and chapel in the presence of hundreds of people from around the Camas Prairie and elsewhere.

In 1923, Bishop Gorman had come to the sisters with an urgent appeal to open a home for the aged in southern Idaho. They agreed to purchase the Wendell Inn at Wendell, Idaho. Persistent requests by the area doctors led to the addition of a small hospital. When complete, the Bishop gave it a solemn blessing under the title St. Valentine's Home and Hospital.

Realizing that their foundation was not thriving, the Benedictine monks at St. Michael's decided to return to Missouri in 1925. The sisters bought their property primarily to secure the water rights. For a time they managed both a beef and a dairy herd at the site, but later sold most of the property.

In 1927 the sisters established St. Gertrude's Academy – a boarding and day school in the old convent which had been renovated for this purpose. By 1932, St. Gertrude's Academy was a high school accredited by the Idaho State Department of Education. It was during these years that Sr. Alfreda Elsensohn began collecting and storing biological specimens that her students brought into class. In time this collection broadened to include historical artifacts contributed by people of the area and formed the nucleus of the original Historical Museum at St. Gertrude.

As their commitment to education expanded, so did the sisters' interest in health care. They had already trained a small staff of nurses in various schools of nursing, and in the autumn of 1930 they opened Our Lady of Consolation Hospital in Cottonwood. This later became known as St. Mary's Hospital. 1909 - 1934 proved to be a fruitful time in the maturing community's history. ✕



JULY 6, 1920

Mother Scholastica Uhlenkott is elected Prioress.



JULY 24, 1924

Formal dedication of the Monastery of St. Gertrude stone building. Hundreds of well-wishers joined the celebrations.

New Sister for St. Gertrude's


Novice Celebrates First Monastic Profession

About 100 family members, Benedictine oblates and friends from Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Montana, California, and as far away as Indianapolis, Indiana joined the Cottonwood Sisters to celebrate the First Monastic Profession of Sister Kathryn Mary (Katie) Stewart Cooper on November 15, 2008 at the Monastery of St. Gertrude. After renewing her baptismal vows, Sr. Katie professed her intent to live out the rest of her Christian life according to the Rule of St. Benedict as a member of the community with Prioress Clarissa Goeckner presiding over the Rite of Monastic Profession and Father Eamonn McNerney as celebrant. Sr. Katie's daughters, Cheryl Cooper, Moses Lake, WA and Tina Lasko, Clackamas, OR, assisted Sr. Wilma Schlangen with the Presentation of the Gifts. Guests enjoyed a wonderful, home-cooked luncheon prior to the Mass and a reception in the monastery refectory after.



*Left to right:
Cheryl Cooper,
Tina, Derek, Nick
and Alex Lasko,
Sr. Katie Cooper,
Darlene Denny,
holding baby
Arianna and
Chrissy and
Kyle Osborne in
the monastery
chapel.*

Reflecting on the event Sr. Katie said, "I am thankful that God has called me to be part of St. Gertrude's cenobitic community through professing stability, fidelity to the monastic way of life and obedience. My prayer is to be able to help others in whatever way He desires. I thank all who sent greetings, everyone who came to celebrate and my community. It means so much that my family, friends and the sisters were here to share this deeply special day with me." Read more of Sr. Katie's story at www.StGertrudes.org/jubilees.htm ✱



Monastery of St. Gertrude

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS
"AT HOME" IN IDAHO

1909 *Upcoming* 2009
Centennial Events

January 1, 2009, 12:15 PM, Refectory
Monastery History Series
Beginning of 3-4 minute readings from Monastery's history. Readings will occur daily until the Grand Finale on August 16, 2009.

January 18 - 25, 2009
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
Focused on biblical Jubilee themes.

February 22, 2009, 2:30 PM, Chapel
Feast of Saints Benedict & Scholastica FREE Concert
Honoring future members of St. Gertrude's.

April 26, 2009
"Thank You" celebration
for the people of the Camas Prairie
Official date of St. Gertrude's being named the Motherhouse of the Benedictine Sisters.

SAVE THE DATE!
Centennial Grand Finale
August 16, 2009
Mass & Reception

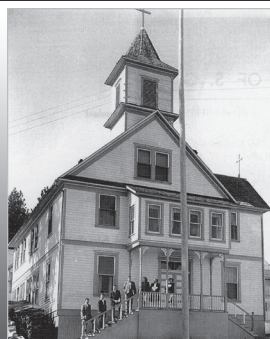
For more info call 208-962-3224 or visit www.StGertrudes.org

"I asked Sr. Judith to help me as I sang the Suscipe, and I could feel her presence among us. In my other ear, I could hear my mother saying, 'Don't cry!'" ~ Sr. Katie Cooper



1920s

Group of Benedictine monks on the steps of St. Michael's Monastery.



1927

Students at St. Gertrude's Academy.



1930s

Sisters serving in the nursery at Our Lady of Consolation Hospital.



1932

Sr. Alfreda Elsensohn in St. Gertrude's Museum, originally housed in the attic of the old wooden convent.

Oblate Program Milestone ~ 20th Anniversary

The sisters of the Monastery of St. Gertrude are celebrating the 20th anniversary of their Oblate Program this year. In 1988 eight men and women responded to the sisters' invitation to share in the life and ministry of the monastery in a deeper way. They felt a deep connection to the sisters and wanted a more formal way to live out that relationship. The sisters welcomed these "eager eight" as the first extended members of the monastery. Later the name was changed to "oblates", a term with a long history that means "someone who makes an offering of themselves."

Over the years more and more oblats have committed themselves to the Monastery of St. Gertrude in this way. They include men and women, single and married, Catholic and Protestant and they promise to live out the values of the monastery, especially healing hospitality, grateful simplicity and creative peacemaking, in their everyday life.

Oblates gather together in local groups on a regular basis to pray, study Benedictine spirituality, have fellowship and support the sisters in whatever ways they can. There are groups in Puget Sound, Spokane, Coeur d'Alene,

Moscow/Pullman, Lewiston, Boise, and the local community. The oblats convene three times a year at the monastery for retreats and meetings to deepen their faith and commitment. Currently there are over 60 active oblats, most living in Idaho or Washington.

According to Prioress Clarissa Goeckner, the oblats have become an integral part of St. Gertrude's. "Not only

do they learn from us but their inquiries, insights and actions influence us as they serve on committees, help with our annual Raspberry Festival and volunteer in a variety of ways. It is hard to imagine our life without them. We are very grateful for their presence and contributions to us in the last 20 years and look forward to the future as the oblats continue as part of our community."

Jeannette Kelley, one of the original eight members, serves as Co-coordinator of the Oblate Program, along

with Sr. Teresa Jackson. Reflecting on the last 20 years she said, "Being an oblate of the Monastery of St. Gertrude has enriched my life beyond measure. Attempting to live the Rule of St. Benedict in my own life as a lay woman is both challenging and rewarding. While each oblate comes from a different life situation, each one of us feels God's blessing in our mutual relationship with the sisters." ✱ For more information send e-mail to oblates@stgertrudes.org or visit www.StGertrudes.org.



The "Eager Eight". Left to right, back: Karen Dunham, Maxine Quebral, Carolyn Aschenbrenner, Mariel Arnzen, Fred Kelley; front: Jane Frith, Linda Stubbers, Jeannette Kelley



Left to right: Oblates Fred and Jeannette Kelley, Nancy Gillard and Jo Baim represented St. Gertrude's at the 2007 North American Association of Oblate Directors Conference in Lacey, WA. While Fred networked, Jo served as organist for the entire conference, Nancy led Monday evening prayer and Jeannette participated on a panel. The conference focus was "The Charism of Benedictine Leadership".



St. Gertrude's oblats in the monastery chapel.

Strategic Plan 2008 - 2020

The implementation of our new **2008 - 2020 Strategic Plan** is a major highlight of the Monastery of St. Gertrude's Centennial "Celebrating 100 Years 'at Home' in Idaho". We are addressing six goals, focusing on three or four strategies each year, as an achievable way to implement our new Vision Statement by 2020. One of these goals is to grow a vibrant monastic community which includes expanding membership of the sisters, the oblats and the volunteers to create one, mutually enhancing, community of prayer and ministry. Learn more and download our 2008 - 2009 Strategic Plan Brochure at www.StGertrudes.org/Community/Mission_Vision.htm.



A Persistent Calling

The Vocation Story of
Sr. Valine Kachelmier

For some, their path in life is clear from a very early age and nothing can change their course. So it was for Valine Kachelmier growing up in Nezperce, Idaho. “After 62 years as a sister at St. Gertrude’s I often reflect on how Jesus has drawn me

closer to his loving heart throughout my life. I never heard God tell me to follow the more narrow path, but I felt drawn to the things of God and a desire for a deep relationship with God from the beginning.”

Seeking this relationship was more important than the typical pursuits of her age. “My call was persistent. From my early years in grade school at St. Anthony’s, I liked to go pray in the nearby Catholic Church after school when most of the children had gone home to play. Sometimes I ventured into the sacristy to see the beautiful vestments the priest wore at Mass. Next door was an empty classroom where an old altar was stored. I loved going in there to look into the tabernacle. I never paid much attention to the boys. They liked me though, and gave me marbles. I used to smile, say thank you and then run off...at home I had a huge soap box full of beautiful marbles!”

Devoting herself to Scripture, young Valine soon memorized every prayer in her catechism book. “I entertained myself by dressing up as a sister and parading through the house, holding a prayer book, bowing my head and speaking gibberish out loud. It is no wonder that no one in my family ever tried to discourage me from becoming a sister.”

She entered St. Gertrude’s the summer after 8th grade. For the next three years she battled severe homesickness. “I finally went to my Sister Director to tell her I just had to abandon the convent and go home. She assured me that it was just a temptation to give up my calling. She

was right. That was the end of my homesickness, and the monastery became the place where my desire to be near God and the things of God was satisfied. I grew to enjoy all my work as a novice, especially preparing the altar for Mass and decorating the sanctuary.”

In the winter of 1946, her first year professed as Sister Amata (Latin, meaning “you must love”) she was called to substitute teach in Greencreek, Idaho. “A deep sorrow came over me as I

“I never heard God tell me to follow the more narrow path, but I felt drawn to the things of God and a desire for a deep relationship with God.”

-Sister Valine Kachelmier

realized this meant leaving the life I had grown to love so deeply. I got homesick for St. Gertrude’s this time!” It was a sadness that stayed with her for some years. The substitute position became a permanent one, lasting until May of 1947, and launching a teaching career that took her to Grangeville, Nampa, Saint Maries, Cottonwood, Boise, Pocatello and Rupert. “I loved the students but I missed life at the monastery and found teaching very challenging. During one assignment I was in charge of a class of 70 students in two grades! It was extremely difficult to be away from home for so long. However, strengthened by the graces of obedience, I taught for 37 years and served as principal many of those years.”

Following her years as an educator, Sr. Valine trained in Occupational Therapy. In 1992 she was called back to the monastery where she did OT with sisters in the infirmary, made candles, cared for the grotto and worked in the flower gardens. “I was delighted to return home. I deeply love the beauty and quiet atmosphere surrounding St. Gertrude’s with its daily rhythm of prayer, work and study.” In her retirement years Sr. Valine has enjoyed the life in community she sought since childhood. “My heart overflows with deep gratitude for all the blessings and graces that I have been given. I often pray with the psalmist: ‘O God, my God, for You I long at break of day. My soul thirsts for You. My body longs for You.’ A religious vocation is a very special relationship with God; one that can be nurtured by Scripture and developing a listening heart; one that is finely tuned to the things that matter to God. I find fidelity to prayer very life giving.” ✠



Sr. Valine baking bread while
Sr. Cecile Marie Uhlorn looks on.

Create Jubilee: A Year of Favor

Capital Campaign Update by Sr. Mary Kay Henry, Director of Development



When Jesus began his public ministry by proclaiming that he was making all time Jubilee Time, the Gospel of Luke tells us he used a passage from the Prophet Isaiah for his inaugural address:

“The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for the spirit has anointed me. The spirit of the Lord has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord’s year of favor.”

-Luke 4:18

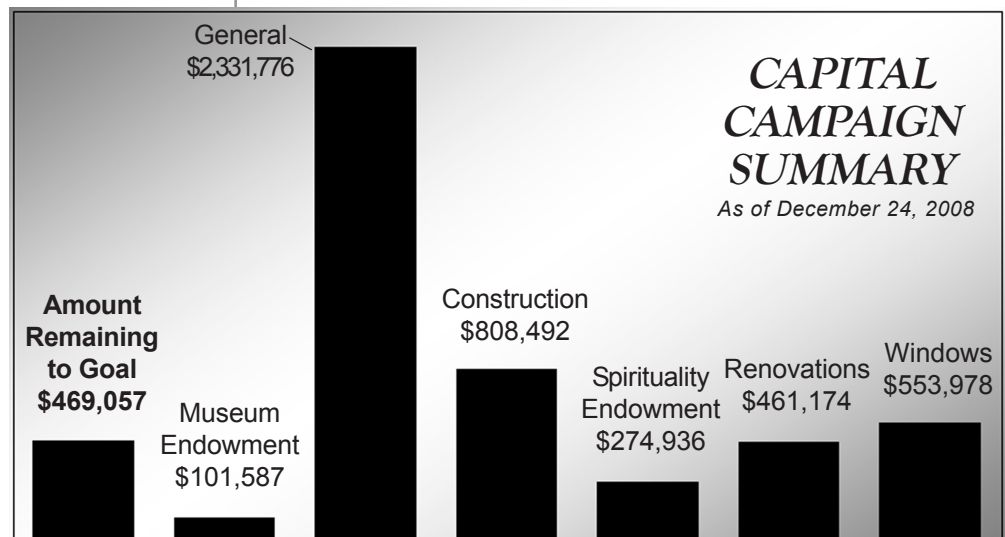
Jesus’ Vision Statement of every day Jubilee guided our decision in 2004 to launch a Capital Campaign to build Spirit Center, renovate the monastery and establish endowments for our Spirituality Ministry and the Historical Museum at St. Gertrude.

Today our community expresses every day Jubilee as **“Prayer awakens. Justice impels. Compassion acts. Thy Kingdom Come.”** This urges us onward in prayer and outreach as we celebrate “100 years ‘at home’ in Idaho” by helping create a Year of the Lord’s Favor for the nearly 10,000 people we serve annually through our ministries here at St. Gertrude’s, as well as all those served by our sisters ministering away from the monastery. In this Jubilee Year 2009 we count on your generosity to help move our vision and mission forward by completing our ***Growing a Future Rooted in Hope*** campaign early in the new year.

Total cost of the project is \$6.9 million dollars. The community financed \$1.9 million of that amount. The generosity of 940 donors has brought us so close to our \$5,000,000 campaign goal that we are looking at the final step to the finish line – **with just \$469,057 to go!**

The endowment totals below include:

- 2 named endowments for the Historical Museum at St. Gertrude: one \$50,000 and one \$25,000, and
- 5 named endowments for Spirituality Ministry: two \$50,000 and three \$25,000.



We continue to actively invite people to make a difference in the world by helping to:

- provide spiritual retreats, conferences and other educational opportunities through gifts to Spirit Center and the Spirituality Ministry endowment,
- sustain our community’s spiritual and professional life and outreach ministries through support of the monastery renovations, and
- preserve history and foster cultural understanding through gifts to the endowment for the Historical Museum at St. Gertrude.

“We contribute to St. Gertrude’s because it helps us do more of the spiritual and outreach work we wish we could do personally. The monastery, museum and Spirit Center provide many spiritual, cultural and educational opportunities on the prairie, and the sisters are active volunteers in the Camas Prairie communities.”

~ Morris and Julie Arnzen of Cottonwood, owners of Arnzen Building and Construction, serve on the monastery’s Capital Campaign committee.

Gift Giving Opportunities

- Gifts of all amounts are deeply appreciated.
- Gifts can be made online at www.StGertrudes.org – just click on the Make a Donation button.
- Establish a named endowment for Spirituality Ministry or the Historical Museum for a minimum of \$25,000.
- Apply a gift to the construction costs of Spirit Center.
- For Spirit Center, sponsor a guest room for \$25,000, the elevator for \$100,000, or a conference room for \$100,000, \$500,000 or \$750,000.
- For the monastery, sponsor windows in the brick annex for \$1,000 or in the stone building for \$3,000 (\$52,022 remains towards the \$606,000 cost.)
- For the monastery, help sponsor the new elevator (\$119,305 remains towards the \$432,000 cost.)

Due to suggestions from you, our donors, we have extended the campaign. Many people have expressed a desire to make a gift or give additional gifts, but prefer to wait until the economy is more stable. ✱

Consider leaving a legacy gift to St. Gertrude's through your will or by creating a charitable gift annuity or other planned gift. (Our legal name is Idaho Corporation of Benedictine Sisters.) **Contact us at 208-962-5062 or develop@stgertrudes.org to learn about more ways you can contribute to Growing a Future Rooted in Hope.** Ask for Sr. Mary Kay Henry regarding planned giving.



During the Fall of 2008 the sisters held several successful events. On October 16 and October 23, guests from the Camas Prairie were introduced to the campaign over complimentary breakfasts at Spirit Center, while Prioress Clarissa Goeckner presented the story of St. Gertrude's. On November 8 about 250 supporters attended "Sisters Saturday at the Keuterville Pub & Grub." This Windows Campaign fundraiser featured all-you-can-eat tacos and the opportunity to visit with the sisters who prepared and served the festive meal. Photos (clockwise from top left): Sr. Mary Kay Henry, event hosts Wally and Kathy Von Barga and Prioress Clarissa Goeckner at the first Prairie Breakfast; Emmett and Dakota Wilson at the second breakfast; Sisters Janet Marie Barnard, Placida Wemhoff and Corinne Forsman prepare and serve tacos. Donna Nuxoll and Mary Ellen and Doug Black enjoy "Sisters Saturday."

DONOR APPRECIATION EVENT!

Thank you for the many ways you support our commitment to help reveal God's transforming power in the world. Your help makes our community life of profound prayer and generous ministry possible. We look forward to thanking you at a CAPITAL CAMPAIGN DONOR APPRECIATION EVENT. Please mark your calendar for June 5 – 7, 2009 and plan to join us for this special celebration honoring all who have participated in the campaign.

Donor Information

Growing a Future ~ Rooted In Hope

Name _____
 Address _____
 City, ST, ZIP + 4 _____
 Phone _____ E-mail _____
 Signature _____ Date _____

Please make checks payable to: **Idaho Corporation of Benedictine Sisters**
Gifts are tax deductible as allowed by law

To make a gift via credit card, please complete the following:

Credit Card No.: _____
 Expiration Date: _____
 Signature _____ Date _____

In gratitude for God's gifts, I/we pledge:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$75,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$3,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 |

Payable as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly | <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-Annually |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly | <input type="checkbox"/> Annually |

For a period of:

- ☐ 5 years ☐ Other _____

I/we wish to designate my/our gift as follows:

- ☐ General Campaign - Where needed most
☐ New Construction - Conference and Spirituality Center
☐ Endowment: Spirituality Ministry
☐ Endowment: Historical Museum at St. Gertrude
☐ Renovations - Historic Monastery

To make a gift of securities or a charitable gift annuity or donate via direct withdrawal contact our Development office: 208-962-5062 or director@StGertrudes.org

Helping Set the Table

By Carol Ann Wassmuth, OSB
Social Justice Office Coordinator

Each evening the sisters at the Monastery of St. Gertrude gather for prayer and sing the words of Mary in her Song of Praise: "You fill the hungry with good things." For us, this is a daily experience of the first phrase of our Vision Statement: **PRAYER AWAKENS**. So many in our world go without the basic necessity of food. It is estimated that close to a billion people suffer from hunger. Approximately 18,000 children die daily from malnutrition. **JUSTICE IMPELS** us to do what we can to change this.

The Monastic and Oblate Communities of the Monastery of St. Gertrude are focusing our social justice energies on the issue of hunger - locally, nationally and worldwide. If **COMPASSION ACTS** then what can we do to make a difference?

We recognize that the first step is to educate ourselves so we have a deeper awareness of the problem. It is so easy to forget the needs of others while we ourselves enjoy plentiful, nutritious food. The next step is to take action. One practical way is to make financial contributions from our charity fund to organizations like Heifer Project International (www.hieifer.org) whose mission is to make food available to those in need. We also network with groups who are committed to relieving hunger, thereby adding our voice to their endeavors. One such organization is the Idaho Interfaith Roundtable Against Hunger (IIRAH). Their mission is "to make hunger history in Idaho by assuring food security for everyone." St. Gertrude's is an endorsing organization of IIRAH and I have the privilege of serving on their Board of Conveners. (Learn more at www.iirah.org.) We are also a member of Tables of Hope which brings together local entities, both private and public, who share a common concern about food availability for everyone living in the five counties of central Idaho. We will be working with them to sponsor an educational Food Forum in Lewiston, Idaho, in spring.

"It is estimated that close to a billion people suffer from hunger. Approximately 18,000 children die daily from malnutrition. Justice impels us to do what we can to change this." -Sister Carol Ann Wassmuth

For many years we have been a member of Bread for the World which focuses on national level advocacy. Every Lent the sisters participate in their Offering of Letters project – an effective way to express to our legislators our concern for global hunger issues. The monastery was a sponsor of the Idaho Summit on Hunger and Food Insecurity held in Boise, Idaho, on October 10, 2008. Featuring presentations by USDA Deputy Under Secretary Kate Houston, and Jim Weill, President of the Food

5 Things You Can Do Now!

1. Donate to the Idaho Food Bank www.idahofoodbank.org
2. Organize a canned food drive for local families in need
3. Join the Offering of Letters at www.bread.org
4. Buy Fair Trade/organic products
5. Learn more about the issues:
 - National Catholic Rural Life Conference (www.ncrlc.com)
 - OXFAM (www.oxfamamerica.org)
 - Sustainable Table (www.sustainabletable.org)
 - TransFair USA (www.transfairusa.org)

Research Action Council, this event brought together about 250 people from around the state to learn about the problem of hunger in Idaho. The conference focused on six areas: childhood hunger and obesity, senior hunger, the "new hungry", hunger advocacy, family hunger and

rural community food systems; and determined priority actions for the coming year. St. Gertrude's will be involved in the work required to achieve those goals.

Each day we pray the words that Jesus teaches, "**THY KINGDOM COME**," and we ask that everyone may be given their daily bread. We have been blessed with a planet that provides food in abundance and there is enough for us all. So, we are each challenged to ask ourselves, "What is my role in making this vision a reality?" As we contemplate the present global food crisis we might be tempted to think our small contribution to the solution is not worthwhile. How can our minute actions have any significance? In her book *Radical Grace*, Mary Jo Leddy reminds us: "When we don't believe we can make a difference, some small part of God's dream for the world dies." **Yes, God will "fill the hungry with good things" but we are asked to help set the table.** ✽



Participants at the 2008 Idaho Summit on Hunger and Food Insecurity.

Farewell, Sr. Judith

Lifetime Pilgrim Sister Judith Brower Makes Her Final Journey

Sister Judith Brower died November 11, 2008, at the Monastery of St. Gertrude. The first of seven children, she was born to James and Edith Fox Brower on August 11, 1946, in Chicago, IL. She made her vows with the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity in Manitowoc, WI, in 1965, transferring to St. Gertrude's on November 25, 1988. Sr. Judith served as an elementary, high school and college teacher for many years in Ohio, Wisconsin, Nebraska and Idaho. From 1997 until her death she resided

"My ministries are about helping others on their journeys to the heart of God."

-Sister Judith Brower

at the monastery and engaged in a variety of ministries. Inspiring many with her "Monastery Well" daily Gospel reflections, and "Monastery Lights" hand-decorated candles, she also enriched lives as Director of the Oblate Program (1997 – 2000), as a spiritual director, as monastery Liturgy Coordinator, and as a retreat facilitator. Sr. Judith was adept at desktop publishing, cooking and photography. She loved music, using her original compositions for community prayer and during retreats. Her extraordinary annual rendition of the Easter Vigil *Exultet* will remain an inspiration. She will be remembered most as a strong, creative, caring and vulnerable woman who sustained lasting friendships and enjoyed sharing meaningful and spiritual conversations. Sr. Judith's brothers Jim and Bill of Chicago, cousin Lou (Tom) Sachse of Spokane, many oblates and other friends joined the monastic community on November 16 for a vigil service in the monastery chapel and for the Mass of Christian Burial on November 17. Fr. Eamonn McNerney presided and Sr. Meg Sass gave the reflections.✽

In Memoria
Sister Judith
Brower
1946 – 2008

For more about Sr. Judith,
go to www.StGertrudes.com
and click on In Memoria.



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(Just click on News)

Chaplain News

✽ **Father John Gathungu** from Nyahururu Diocese, Kenya, arrived in June 2008 and served as chaplain for three months. He now ministers at Holy Trinity Parish in Nezperce, ID. We welcomed our new chaplain, **Father Eamonn McNerney**, on September 14. Father Eamonn comes to St. Gertrude's from Ireland, via Berkeley, CA.

Sisters on the Move

✽ **Assistant Prioress Mary Marge Goeckner** traveled to the Monastery Subprioresses & House Coordinators Retreat, September 18 – 22, 2008 in Beech Grove, IN. Twenty eight Benedictines from around the US, and from Mexico and the Bahamas, gathered for the event whose theme was Water – its restfulness, healing and calm as well as its power and destructiveness. On September 23, the group participated in the Benedictine Health Care Coordinators Seminar. Sr. Mary Marge also attended the 50th Jubilee celebration of Fr. Bob Dorin, New England Province of Jesuits, on September 14.

✽ **Sister Meg Sass** was a primary event organizer for the Diocesan Fall Conference in Boise, ID, September 27 – 29, 2008. She also gave a presentation, as did **Srs. Barbara Jean Glodowski, Carol Ann Wassmuth, Teresa Jackson and Mary Kay Henry**. **Srs. Maria Elena Schaefer, Rose Marie Nutsch and Sue Ellen Drexler** attended the event as well. Bishop Mike Driscoll gave the Key Note Address on his continued call to participate in the Diocesan Pastoral Plan: All at the Table. About 550 people participated.

SGA Salutes Centennial

✽ St. Gertrude's Academy (SGA) Alumni gathered in the monastery chapel on November 16, 2008 to sing hits from today and yesterday as part of the second concert in our Centennial series: **TRADITIONS SHAPING TOMORROW – a celebration of our friends in music and story**. The event honored faculty and students of the former Academy, and St. Gertrude of Helfta – patroness of the monastery and SGA, author and spiritual director.



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Reflections

Reader Submissions
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A Reflection For those Who Serve - by Archbishop Oscar Romero

It helps, now and then, to step back and take the long view. The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us. No statement says all that could be said. No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession brings a perfection. No pastoral visit brings wholeness. No program accomplishes the church's mission. No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own. **Amen.** ✕



AT THE MONASTERY OF ST. GERTRUDE

2009 Upcoming Retreats

Stations in 2009

February 27 - March 1, 2009

Presenter: Meg Sass, OSB

Repent: The Challenge to Change

March 13 - 15, 2009

Presenter: Barbara Jean
Glodowski, OSB

All at the Table in God's House

March 27 - 29, 2009

Presenter: Mary Kay Henry, OSB

For more info contact
Spirituality Ministry

1-208-962-2000 or
retreat@stgertrudes.org

Monasticism Is for Protestants Too!

April 3 - 5, 2009

Presenters: Nancy Copeland-Payton
and Teresa Jackson, OSB

Come to the Quiet: a Silent, Directed Retreat

Full Week: June 19 - 26, 2009

Weekend Only: June 19 - 21, 2009

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Cover Photo
Scaffolding surrounds the
Monastery of St. Gertrude
chapel as it nears completion
(1920s).