



Witnessing Hope

How could we tire of hope?
So much is in bud. *Denise Levertov*

Fifty-three prioresses assembled in Beech Grove, Indiana for our annual meeting of the Conference of American Benedictine Prioresses from January 27 – February 3. The highlight for me was helping prepare for the sixth international Benedictine Women's Symposium in Rome, September 8 – 15, when Abbesses and Prioresses from around the world will gather for a week of prayer, presentations, and dialogue on "Benedictine Women: Witnesses of Hope."

Our discussions were focused on "What does it mean to be a witness of hope today?" These reflections were powerful and I envy those going to Rome for the international conversations. The question of hope stays with me. Hope is about putting our hearts and hands to a task that is meaningful and then having confidence in the future, whatever that might be. How is St. Gertrude's a witness to such hope?

Our 2008-2020 Strategic Plan has become a pathway of hope to a preferred future through our Vision which

draws us together in service of others and reaffirms healing hospitality, grateful simplicity and creative peacemaking as the hallmarks of whatever ministries we do. It calls for increasing membership of the monastic community, the oblates and volunteers. We invite women to consider becoming Sisters here if they find this a life-giving context for living out God's call to them. For example, Novice Wendy Olin's first Monastic Profession on July 24 expresses her desire to be a witness of hope to all she will serve.

When JulieAnn Horras and Dawn Howell became oblates on April 11th, they joined 70 others in living Benedictine spirituality and bringing our vision and values far beyond the monastery. From serving at the Raspberry Festival to chairing the Social Justice Committee, Oblates witness hope to us and extend Christ's light to the world.

Our volunteer program brings another partnership of hope. Fred and Jeannette Kelley moved here from Washington three years ago to partner with us long term. Hundreds have come for shorter times. The volunteers' assistance allows our members to continue ministering in schools, hospitals, and parishes. We are deeply grateful for such dedication.

The generosity of our families, friends and benefactors strengthens our efforts to be witnesses of hope in many ways. A significant example is providing resources for the renewal and support that thousands of retreatants experience at Spirit Center.

Hope exists within people now. Hope is about joining with others, putting our hearts and hands to a task that is meaningful and then trusting that effort to the God of newness, hope and surprises. Thanks to so many of you, we come closer to doing just that! ✱

Sister Clarissa Goeckner



Photo JulieAnn Horras and Dawn Howell became Oblates of the Monastery of St. Gertrude during the Oblate Retreat on April 11. Pictured left to right are Oblates Martha Eckhoff, JulieAnn Horras, Jeannette Kelley, Prioress Clarissa Goeckner, Sister Teresa Jackson, Oblates Kate Muldoon and Dawn Howell.

Sister Louise Olberding

a Vocation Story

When Sister Louise Olberding requested her baptismal certificate, the parish secretary discovered that the priest had recorded the baptism under the name Mary Gertrude instead of Gladys Marie.

“Gertrude was watching over me all those years and I didn’t know it,” said Sister Louise, who marked 60 years as a Benedictine from St. Gertrude’s in 2009.

Although she always wanted to be a nun, Sr. Louise felt more deeply called to be a missionary. “From early childhood, I wanted to lead people to Jesus,” she said. Inspired by the Medical Missionaries she admired and the Holy Cross Sisters who were her teachers, she was ready.

Growing up, she was surrounded by religious sisters. Her aunt, Franciscan Sr. Richard, visited her family often in Nebraska and later in Emmett, Idaho. Sr. Richard was a dedicated teacher who inspired Gladys Marie to religious life.

Sisters from St. Gertrude’s taught summer catechism in Emmett and sometimes boarded at the Olberding home. One of these Sisters asked Gladys Marie, “Do you think you’d like to be a Sister?”



Photos Sister Louise Olberding today; and on the shore of Idaho’s Salmon River in the 1960’s.

“Belonging to a group with the same life goals is the most wonderful part of being a Sister at St. Gertrude’s.”

Sister Louise Olberding

“I AM going to be a Sister,” Gladys Marie answered matter-of-factly and she accepted the sisters’ invitation to visit St. Gertrude’s.

Her parents sent her to boarding school for two years, hoping she’d change her mind about entering religious life. However, on her 17th birthday, she walked up the steep front steps of the Monastery of St. Gertrude.

Sr. Louise began teaching soon after her first monastic profession in 1949. She attended Gonzaga University and

St. Louis University, earning degrees in medical technology and hospital administration. She ministered at nursing homes in Mt. Angel, Oregon. Later, at St.

Vincent Hospital in Portland, she discovered her gift for pastoral care which she shared for 30 years with patients and staff.



In 2000, she moved back to the monastery for health reasons. “I’m happy to be here,” she said. “Belonging to a group with the same life goals is

the most wonderful part of being a Sister at St. Gertrude’s.”

Sr. Louise spends her days in prayer and reflection. She offers a basic formula for deepening one’s relationship with God: “Strike up a conversation with God regarding your concerns. Ask for his help. Learn to say, ‘I love you, God, and thanks for the good things you have done for me!’” ✕

Membership

Knowing one's vocation or life call often starts with a small, nagging thought: "Is this all there is?" People usually come to a point in their life when they begin to wonder about the deeper purpose of their life. Attending to these thoughts about meaning may be the beginning of a profound invitation to follow God in a more intentional way.

At the Monastery of St. Gertrude we are a community of women who have experienced those thoughts and continually strive to respond to God's call in Benedictine monastic life. Through a life of daily prayer, community and ministry we walk together, seeking to know God in ever deeper ways.

We offer many ways to help people explore the invitations of God in their life. For single, Catholic women 18-60 we offer support in discerning a call to professed life in our monastery. For people of all backgrounds we offer opportunities for retreats, spiritual direction and volunteer positions.

Where are the whispers of God in your life? Do you have a heart awakened by prayer, impelled by justice, and acting with compassion? Would your heart be strengthened within a Benedictine community? What is God inviting you to?

To explore these invitations further please contact Sr. Teresa or Sr. Janet at: vocation@stgertrudes.org or 208-962-3224. ✕



Left Monastery volunteer Brother Bob Wallace assists with dishes after lunch. **Right** Development Council Co-Chair John Bieter speaks with Russ Thurow and Mary Bieter at a Friends of the Monastery gathering at St. Mary's Church in Boise, Idaho.

Developments

The development office cherishes strengthening connections with as many of you as possible. Assisted by our development advisory council and other sisters, we are meeting with Friends of the Monastery throughout the Northwest to say **Thank You**, hear your insights and perceptions of the Monastery and how we can serve you better, and share upcoming initiatives and events at the Monastery. Thanks to the 100-plus participants in the Boise area in March. Congratulations to Mary Durham of Caldwell who won the drawing for a night for two at the Inn at St. Gertrude. Next gatherings will be in Lewiston/Clarkston, Moscow/Pullman, and on the Camas Prairie.

Priority initiatives to reach our vision and mission are:

- Growing the endowments for the Historical Museum at St. Gertrude and Spirit Center.
- Replacing five miles of water pipeline to provide sufficient water to irrigate the Monastery's gardens and grounds; and to provide adequate fire prevention/protection.
- Establishing a Fund for Alternative Energy Resources to research and use more efficient, environmentally friendly fuel resources.

Many thanks for your contributions totaling over \$400,000 toward our Annual Fund for FY 2010. Thanks to those trying our new Donate Online option, at www.StGertrudes.org. Please consider including the Idaho Corporation of Benedictine Sisters in your will or other form of Planned Giving. **Thank you.** ✕
Info: 208-962-5062 or develop@stgertrudes.org



NEW RETREAT!

The Artist's Prayer: Exploring Spirituality through Creative Expression

Karla Neumann Smiley, Ministry Director for the University of Idaho Campus Christian Center will lead this retreat July 12–16 focusing on developing spirituality through art. With an MA in Theology and Art from the Lutheran School of Theology, Karla served on the Grunewald Guild, an ecumenical center for faith and art in Leavenworth, WA. This retreat requires no previous art experience and all materials will be provided. Visit www.Spirit-Center.org for more information. ✽



Photo Artist Karla Neumann Smiley will be leading the Artist's Prayer retreat.

ASSISTING OTHERS IN THIS ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

In these economically challenging times more and more people request assistance to participate in Spirit Center retreats. In response to this need, we are building a Spirit Center Scholarship Fund. A donation to this fund will enable us to help underwrite the costs of individuals with limited incomes who come to Spirit Center. Please send your donation to Spirit Center, 465 Keuterville, Rd., Cottonwood, Idaho 83522. ✽

WHY I MAKE RETREATS AT SPIRIT CENTER by Jo-Anne Zimmer, Boise, Idaho

"My private retreats at Spirit Center are special times to go to the quiet and leave my stresses at the door. A special nurturing and safe place, Spirit Center allows

"The more times
I come the more
I want to return!"

Jo-Anne Zimmer

me the personal freedom to totally unwind and re-charge. Relaxing, praying, meditating, or writing in my journal, I spend much of my time in the comfort of my private room with

spectacular views of the Camas Prairie. I come to Spirit Center two to three times a year and my experience differs with each visit, yet I always leave totally refreshed and ready to experience life with renewed joy."



Photo Jo-Anne Zimmer

If you are interested in scheduling a private retreat to relax and renew, please contact Sr. Lillian Englert at 208-962-2071, retreat@spirit-center.org. ✽

Upcoming Retreats You Won't Want to Miss!

Celebrating Wildflowers, June 4 – 6, 2010
Carol Ann Wassmuth, OSB

Come to the Quiet, June 18 – 25, 2010
Lillian Englert, OSB & Spirituality Ministry Team
(Weekend only option – June 18 – 20)

The Artist's Prayer, July 12 – 16, 2010
Karla Neumann Smiley

Introduction to Holistic Living, July 16 – 18, 2010
Agnes Reichlin, OSB and Carlotta Maria Fontes, OSB

Retreat Info: www.SpiritCenter.org

Our community is committed to understanding and practicing peacemaking and works of justice awakened by prayer, impelled by justice and done with compassion. In 2001 the Monastic Council established the Social Justice Committee to provide opportunities for education and action on social justice issues. Membership includes monastic oblates and members. The committee meets annually to review the past year, determine a focus for the coming year, and develop plans for effective action to help alleviate problems and change the societal systems at their root.

Our present focus is the extent and impact of local and global hunger. Specific actions have included being a sponsor of the Hunger Summit in 2008, an endorsing organization for the Idaho Interfaith Roundtable Against Hunger, and participants in the annual Bread For the World offering of letters. Individual sisters and oblates are also involved in hunger related programs such as food banks.

The Gospel challenge is clear. We will find Christ in the forgotten ones of our world. St. Benedict promotes a spirituality expressed in service to others. Our community's strategic plan sets a specific goal to deepen our practice and promotion of social justice grounded in the prayer of Jesus: **THY KINGDOM COME.** ✱



Left The Social Justice committee gathers for its yearly, goal-setting meeting: (from left) Sr. Maria Elena Schaefer, Jane Somerton-Frith, Alyse Cadez, Sr. Bernadette Stang, Rick Fairbanks, Sr. Carol Ann Wassmuth. **Right** 2009 Raspberry Festival volunteers Mary Jane Minnette and Pat Goldade assist Sr. Wilma Schlangen with the preparation of our famous raspberry shortcake.

“You Make It Happen!”

A Call for Raspberry Festival Volunteers

Join nearly 3,000 people for the 18th Annual Raspberry Festival on Sunday, August 1. Over 100 volunteers are essential to the success of this fundraiser for the Historical Museum at St. Gertrude. Raspberry Festival 2010 attendees enjoy a pancake breakfast, raspberry shortcake, jam and wine, barbeque beef sandwiches, hamburgers, hot dogs, live entertainment, Arts & Crafts Fair, Fun Run/Walk, Kids' Carnival, Car Show, Quilt Show, Monastery chapel and Museum tours, muzzleloaders, long boat and more. We deeply appreciate all who VOLUNTEER with set-up and takedown, food service, booths: information, raspberry products, refreshments; museum door, quilt show, kids' carnival, run/walk. **Reserve your VOLUNTEER spot today by calling Sister Bernice Wessels, 208-962-2053! Find more ways to support the festival at www.StGertrudes.org. (Click on Make a Donation)**

Historical Museum Nominated for Award

Idaho Representative Walt Minnick has nominated the Historical Museum at St. Gertrude for the 2010 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. The Institute of Museum and Library Services in Washington, D.C. will present several \$10,000 awards at the end of the year.

Upcoming Event: Chinese Conference

June 24-25, the Historical Museum at St. Gertrude and Lewis-Clark State College are co-sponsoring Chinese Remembering 2010, the third conference pertaining to the history of the Chinese in Idaho. Go to www.HistoricalMuseumAtStGertrude.org or call 208-962-2050 for information. ✱



In Memoria

Farewell to Two St. Gertrude's Sisters

In Memoria Sr. Wilma Schlangen 1915 - 2010

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



Sister Wilma (Hildegard) Schlangen, 94, died peacefully on February 1, 2010 at the Monastery of St. Gertrude. She entered St. Gertrude's in 1937, made Monastic Profession there in 1939 and celebrated her 70th Jubilee in 2009.

Her intelligence, industriousness and leadership abilities prepared Sister Wilma well for service as laundry manager at St. Valentine's Hospital in Wendell, ID, kitchen manager at St. Martin's Abbey and College in Lacey, WA, dietician at St. Benedict's Hospital in Jerome, ID, director of the Kitchen at St. Gertrude's for 30 years and director of the gardens and orchard for twenty-four years. Until the last year; she continued to assist in food preservation and the production of raspberry jam. The Museum is dedicating this year's Raspberry Festival, August 1, to Sister Wilma to honor her commitment to tending the raspberries and overseeing the shortcake at most of the Festivals. Her large family, monastic community and countless friends remember Sr. Wilma's zest for life, and acceptance of others as they were even while encouraging growth and change. She inspired others by her groundedness, joyfulness, simple delight in everyday miracles, and her unfailing commitment to the community's way of life and its broad spectrum of outreach to others. Above all she grew into a woman of prayer with a profound awareness of God's goodness and mercy.

On her 70th Jubilee she said, "As I get older, I am falling in love with Jesus who is my all. I am slowly learning how to sit still and pray and just "be" with God." ✕

In Memoria Sr. Winifred Lorentz 1915 - 2010

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



Sister Winifred (Rosanna) Lorentz, 94, died peacefully on March 19, 2010 at the Monastery of St. Gertrude. Born in Cottonwood, Idaho to Jacob and Susan (Lies) Lorentz on July 3, 1915, Sr. Winifred entered the Monastery of St. Gertrude in 1931 where she made Monastic Profession in 1933 and celebrated her 70th Jubilee in 2003.

She learned to play the piano very early. For fifty years she taught piano and accordion lessons, during which time she also directed choirs in parishes and continued to play the organ for local parishes until she retired in the 1990's. She also did domestic work, chauffeured the Sisters and provided in-home care to elderly friends of the Monastery. From 1985-1999 she delighted the residents at the Grangeville Care Center with her piano music. In 1997 they honored her for distinguished service. Her family, friends and monastic community remember Sister Winifred as deeply dedicated to her life's calling and her works of service; also for her profound faith and trust in God's presence and protection, her quick wit and love for beauty. She was grateful for the health care provided in her later years. Family and friends were precious to her and she enjoyed keeping in touch with them via email.

Sister Winifred is survived by her brother Ray (Bernice) Lorentz of Lewiston and brother-in-law Clifton Smith (Loretta) of Grangeville. She was preceded in death by her parents and her brothers Max (Marie) and William (Bud) (Martha), and her sisters Helen (Bill) Gentry, and Loretta Smith. ✕

Young and old, men and women—volunteers are essential to life at St. Gertrude's. Their zest for the ordinary, the mundane, is nothing short of inspiring. Volunteers give freely of themselves because they know life's secret: *The happiest people are givers.*

Volunteers understand that washing dishes *can* change the world. Answering phones and preparing the *Canticle* for mailing *are* good for the soul. Weeding the garden does make the heart grow stronger. Tasks of any size *can* build up the Reign of God.

They come for a day, a week, sometimes stay a month. They help with a special project or an everyday task. They have time for prayer, study and recreation. Along with accommodations they receive abundant gratitude from the Sisters, and know their dedication helps strengthen St. Gertrude's ability to be a light of God's presence in a hurting world.

Perhaps for some, volunteering at the Monastery becomes part of the YES to which Dag Hammarskjöld refers: "I don't know who—or what—put the question. I don't even remember answering. But at some moment I did answer YES to someone—or something—and from that hour I was certain that existence is meaningful and that, therefore, my life, in surrender, had a goal."

For information about volunteering at the Monastery of St. Gertrude, please contact Sr. Teresa Jackson, Volunteer Coordinator, at 208-962-3224 or volunteer@stgertrudes.org. ✕

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Photo Volunteer Toni Kraut serves guests at the Historical Museum at St. Gertrude's Raspberry Festival.

IN THE NEWS

Full stories at www.StGertrudes.org

April 26-29 Sr. Clarissa Goeckner, Prioress, attended the Northwest Leadership Conference of Women Religious in Beaverton, Oregon. The education session was on "Courageous Conversations" - ways to face conflict respectfully, with strength and creativity.

May 6-20 St. Gertrude's is hosting the national Novice and Director Institute (NADI). 11 novices and 11 novice directors from across the U.S. will participate. Sr. Agnes Reichlin of St. Gertrude's and Sr. Rose Wildeman of Ferdinand, Indiana will be directing the workshops and retreat.

June 13 The Grand Opening of the Inn at St. Gertrude Bed & Breakfast begins with "coffee" at 11:30 am, the Blessing of the Inn at 12:00 pm followed by visiting. Come and enjoy this new venture at the Monastery.

July 24 Novice Wendy Olin will make her first Monastic Profession in the Monastery chapel at 1:30 pm. The public is invited.

July 30-August 1 The last SGA class (1970) is holding its 40th reunion including noon meal with the Sisters and tour of the former Academy on July 30, Mass with the Sisters at 6:30 pm on July 31 and enjoying Raspberry Festival on August 1.

September 10 50th reunion of SGA class of 1960, including noon meal with the Sisters and a simple tour of the Monastery.



Care of the Land Book & Gift

RECYCLING

Our corporate ministry to care for the land is focused on the 1,400 acres of forest and farmland we steward. Reducing waste by recycling is another broad based community effort to care for the planet.

“In order to live in harmony with the earth and to promote responsible stewardship we commit ourselves to choosing a life-style that will give witness to our love of the earth.”

*Monastery of St. Gertrude
Philosophy of Land Use, 1993*

Community members and employees at the monastery can generate a small mountain of waste. Each month we drive recyclables ten miles to the recycling center in Fenn, ID. On routine trips 60 miles to Lewiston or 90 miles to Moscow, ID we transport recyclables that Fenn does not process.

Inconvenient? Labor intensive? Yes. A recent guest observed, “You take recycling seriously.” Why do we do it? Because the earth is our home. Throwing recyclable things away is stashing our trash in the next room. Every recycled box, bottle and can increases respect for our home. Recycling generates financial gain indirectly by cutting waste disposal costs 60%. **Living in harmony with the earth means choosing to minimize the impact we have on our planet’s resources.** ✱



Photo Sisters work with volunteers at the newly established recycling center in Fenn, Idaho to transfer the recyclable material accrued at the Monastery over the last month.

MONASTERY BOOK & GIFT SHOP DELIGHTS THE SENSES!

Books, cards, handmade soaps, crosses, crucifixes and First Communion sets can be found in a unique collection at the Monastery Book & Gift Shop. Each item is perfect to share as a gift—or to keep as an inspiration for prayer. Customers have a lot fun as they search for the ideal items. But the Shop’s volunteers may have even more fun and intrigue as they interact with different people and take on unique roles.

As a volunteer, you might serve as a:

Connector – helping customers find the right spirituality resource or other gift

Learner – exploring signage and shop-keeping tasks

Contributor – offering marketing ideas

Merchandiser – suggesting new products

Creator – designing eye-catching displays

If you’d like to share your expertise, learn a new skill or find out about other opportunities as a Monastery Book & Gift Shop volunteer, please contact Sister Miriam Mendez, Manager, 208-962-5022, gsinformation@stgertrudes.org. ✱

Shop Online Now at
www.StGertrudesGifts.org



Photo Our Nature’s Gifts boxed sets (featuring handmade herbal soaps, healing salve and peppermint lip balm) are among the products Book & Gift Shop volunteers help sell.