

CANTICLE OF ST. GERTRUDE

A JOURNAL OF OUR LIFE



2013 Theme:
"Behold, I make all things new." Revelation 21:5

This issue: Transformation

A MESSAGE FROM prioress sister CLARISSA GOECKNER:

A few weeks ago bare trees, bereft bridal wreath bushes and a brown landscape surrounded the monastery. Now the trees are bursting with leaves, the bridal wreath is blossoming, the lawns are velvety green, and flowers are blooming once again. When did this happen? Overnight, so it seems, the landscape was transformed; all was made new once again.

Spring-time is a good time to reflect on transformation because it is so obviously happening all around us. This reflection could take many directions but some lines from David Whyte's poem, "The Sun," set the focus for this article. He writes:

"...Sometimes reading
 Kavanagh I look out
 at everything
 growing so wild
 and faithfully beneath
 the sky
 and wonder
 why we are the one
 terrible
 part of creation
 privileged
 to refuse our flowering.

I know
 In the text of the heart
 the flower is our death
 and the first opening
 of the new life
 we have yet to imagine..."

"...prayer is the act of recognizing that life is infused with the Divine and that, whatever we are now, through transformation and growth, we are capable of becoming more."

Yes, it is true, nature does not refuse its growth and flowering; we, unfortunately, many times do. While nature's spring-time transformation seems effortless and boundless, our transformation is not. It is necessary for us to choose transformation that has the potential to bring unimagined new life.

In Benedict's rule, there are many values and practices that support growth and change. Let us consider prayer: prayer is an invitation

to grow; prayer is putting on the mind of Christ so that we learn to see the world as God sees it; prayer is designed to change us, to open us, to stretch us beyond our own agendas; and prayer is the act of recognizing that life is infused with the Divine and that, whatever we are now, through transformation and growth, we are capable of becoming more.

Why be more? Why transformation?

The transformation that Jesus and Benedict invite is not about self-improvement for the sake of self-improvement. It is about preparing us to be engaged in the great Christian enterprise of acting for others in the place of God. The monastic life, through its emphasis on transformation, prepares us to be persons for others. It is about living the vision Jesus embraced during his life: to bring glad tidings to the poor; to proclaim liberty to captives; to give sight to the blind and to let the oppressed go free. It is about moving beyond ourselves and seeking to relieve the oppression, blindness, and un-freedoms of our times.

We are able to be part of transforming the world only if we are attending to our own transformation first. Eckhart Tolle, in his book, *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*, reminds us that without this inner change, our egos will most certainly bring down any blueprint we might have for our lofty goals!

Embracing the sometimes difficult, challenging work of transformation will be a gift to our families, communities and world. As we invite our own growth and "flowering," so will we extend that invitation and be able to support the growth and "flowering" of those around us. This is not easy but necessary to create some newness on earth as God would imagine it! ✕



OUR MISSION

Eager to welcome God's transforming power in ourselves and our world, we, the Benedictine Sisters of the Monastery of St. Gertrude, seek God together through monastic profession and respond in Healing Hospitality, Grateful Simplicity and Creative Peacemaking.

SISTER BERNADETTE STANG AND FOLLOWING THE CALL

Discerning life's call might feel difficult, and the process of discernment may require the support of a spiritual director. This happens to be where Sister Bernadette is fulfilling her call: helping others discern how God is leading them forward. Answering God's call is something in which Sister Bernadette has experience.

"Back in the days of the Latin Mass I had a little black prayerbook, and, not understanding the Latin in the Mass, I would pray through that little prayer book four times during Mass, excluding the examination of conscience for Confession and the prayers before and after Communion. One section of the prayerbook consisted of scripture quotes, and the one that invited the most reflection was that of Matthew 16:26, 'What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but suffers the loss of his soul? Or what exchange will he make for his soul?' Of course now I prefer today's translation. It uses nonsexist language and changed 'soul' to 'life.' Regardless of the translation, it was the beginning of God's call. What am I to do with my life?"

The response to that question happened when the 21 year-old Bernadette came to visit her aunts at the Monastery. "I could tell right away that the whole focus here was on prayer. I was really touched by that." A few days after returning home to Minnesota, she knew she had to go back to St. Gertrude's. After saying goodbye to family and friends, Sister Bernadette returned to the Monastery. She entered the novitiate with Sister Ida Mae and Sister Clarissa and the three made First Profession in 1958.

Her first ministry was teaching at Sacred Heart in Boise, concurrently completing her bachelor's degree over six summers' study at Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee, WI. After ten years of teaching, she was called to be part of a team directing the training of catechists throughout the state of Idaho, literally building the foundations of the very first programs in the state. It was right after the second Vatican Council and she,



along with Sister Corinne Forsman, traveled the state helping to implement the Church's new vision. She describes great joy in being "the recipients of Vatican II and being an integral part in the rebirthing of that new church in Idaho."

"We give to God both our wholeness and our brokenness. It's our responsibility to welcome others this way: whether you are strong or broken, doesn't matter. You are a part of us."

Another great change occurred while she was on Sabbatical in Louisiana. One day with a local priest friend, their car was hit by an 18-wheeler. Her friend was killed, and Sister Bernadette lay in the hospital bed reflecting on what having life meant.

She knew "I didn't die because there was some work that God wanted me to do." Soon thereafter she had a dream "that I had to work with the oppressed," and found fulfillment of that calling in establishing an afterschool outreach program for children and women at a migrant workers' camp in Caldwell. Sister Bernadette was called home in 2006 to work with the Monastery's growing retreat ministry.

Now she divides her time between her role as assistant prioress in the Monastery and as a team member at the Spirit Center. Both roles call for journeying with people in their quest for a more profound relationship with God. "Community is about accepting both the strengths and the weaknesses of each other," she says. "We give to God both our wholeness and our brokenness. It's our responsibility to welcome others this way: whether you are strong or broken, doesn't matter. You are a part of us."

"The biggest spiritual hunger today is a relationship with God," she says. "People come to the Monastery and to Spirit Center to be enriched spiritually and to be in the presence of the sacred. The importance of who we are as a community is to share 'this sacred space' with the world. The best moments are when people are touched by God's grace."

She feels joy is a gift from God; she knows the gift is the response of a grateful heart. "If I can be in the stance of gratitude for all of life, the good and the bad, and for life itself, then I can't help but be filled with joy." She also takes the Monastery's mission very seriously. "We have a powerful responsibility to the world," she says. "And that responsibility is prayer both with and for others. Prayer drew me here in the first place."

Then what is the call for the future? What is her hope for herself and for the community? Her deepest hope for herself is that she live each day fully and joyfully and that she share with others, especially those in the margins of society. Her hope for the community is that its legacy of prayer and struggle for justice and peace will deeply affect and change society for the better. ✕





OBLATE COMMUNITY SILVER JUBILEE YEAR: *Reflections on Our History*

Beginning in the spring of 1986, the Sisters of the Monastery of St. Gertrude made contacts with friends and associates of the community regarding interest in an Extended Member Program. Twelve individuals participated in discernment days in March, June, and October of 1987. In June 1988, eight committed people made a presentation of interest to the Sisters at their Community Days. We said, "You invited us. We are ready, are you?"

The first eight Extended Members (seven women and one man) made oblations in August 1988. About two years later the name changed; we became known as Oblates. The Oblate Community has grown from the original eight members to a current population of seventy-two Oblates, four Oblate novices, and several regular inquirers. While we make this oblation with the intent that it is a life-long commitment; there have been a few who have left the community for various reasons. A total of 104 men and women have made oblations to the monastery; six of those have died and they are memorialized in the Monastery cemetery.

Our Oblate Community is unusual among similar groups with its focus on living community. Eight area groups meet monthly for prayer, study, and spiritual support. The entire group participates in three weekend retreats at the Monastery each year. In 2000, the Oblate Council was formed with a representative from each area group. Each group also has an area coordinator. In 2006, we changed from having a Sister as our director to having co-coordinators, a Sister and an Oblate. In 2012, we adopted our own vision and mission statements, reflecting our intentions as lay members of the Monastery of St. Gertrude community.

Since 1997, we have been represented at each bi-annual meeting of NAABOD (the North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors), usually by a coordinator and one or two Oblates. The Monastery hosted the first bi-annual NW NAABOD meeting in 2008 and has participated regularly since. We also sent representatives to the 2005 and 2009 Oblate World Congresses in Rome; two more oblates will be going this fall.

We began twenty-five years ago as a small group, with strong leadership and instruction from the cenobitic community on how to incorporate the wisdom and values of the Rule of St. Benedict in our daily lives. We are now a much larger group of men and women from various Christian denominations and life situations. We have a stronger role in leadership within the Oblate community, contribute to leadership in the cenobitic community, and have a much deeper understanding of who we are as Benedictines.

The oblates are an integral part of the Monastery of St. Gertrude as we have grown in our mutual prayer and support and our individual "monastic" lifestyles. We have been included in Monastery committees and provide many hours of volunteer time, filling a variety of needs. We continue to seek ways to give of our time, talents, and treasures in support of the Sisters' mission, vision, and individual lives, and in support of each other. ✕

Reflections include information from Connections for the Journey, a guidebook for Oblates of the Monastery of St. Gertrude. Learn more about becoming an oblate at www.StGertrudes.org/laymembership.html



Our Community Grows

Five people made oblations at the Monastery of St. Gertrude on April 7, 2013. From left to right: Julene Tegerstrand of Nampa, Rick Aldred of Missoula, Jo-Anne Zimmer of Boise, and Kay and Mikel Stevenson of Newman Lake. The journey to oblation is modeled after both the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) and the process of initiation into the monastic community. The model draws from both traditions, each of which have elements of developing lived tradition, a wisdom source, shared prayer, and outreach. ✕

SPIRIT CENTER RETREATS



NEW COHORTS: EXTENDED CONNECTIONS

Each year, nearly 2,700 individuals walk through the front doors of Spirit Center. After their first stay, many are eager to discover every retreat experience we have to offer. Private retreatants want to return to participate in one of the many facilitated retreats, and group retreatants long to come back to experience quiet time for personal renewal and spiritual direction.

Our 2013-14 retreat schedule features two new cohort programs that offer yet another retreat experience: an extended connection.

“Living as a Monk in Everyday Life” begins this fall with a week-long retreat, Sept. 9-15. Facilitated by Sr. Teresa Jackson, the program is designed to help people explore ways of living out Benedictine spirituality in their own lives outside of a monastery. After the initial retreat at Spirit Center, cohort members will maintain connections with Sr. Teresa and each other through intensive online instruction for the next nine months. The program will consist of four units: 1) the spiritual journey; 2) Benedictine prayer; 3) values and structures of Benedictine life; and 4) reading the Rule of Benedict. Cohort members will have weekly reflection exercises, participate in group discussions and complete suggested reading. The program will conclude with a final retreat, May 12-18, 2014.

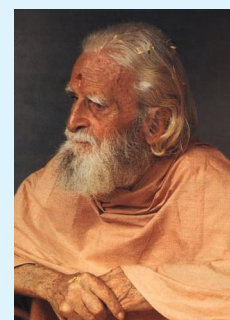
An extension of Spirituality and the Arts, **“Embracing the Artistic Call”** is a cohort program for individuals longing to live more creative lives. Created and facilitated by a team, the program will bring together creative people at every stage of artistic ability - from the serious artist to the watercolor dabbler - to explore ways of keeping creativity a priority in their lives, find inspiration and understand their individual creative processes. After an initial five-day retreat, January 13-17, 2014, cohort members will continue their exploration through 12 weekly invitations for artistic experience and reflection, and support of one another. A final retreat, April 11-13, 2014, will complete the cohort experience.

“Living as a Monk in Everyday Life” and “Embracing the Artistic Call” enhance our schedule of retreat experiences as they present opportunities for engagement on a different level and allow us to build extended relationships with those seeking deeper commitments in specific areas of their lives. ✕

Meet a Mystic

The rooms in Spirit Center are named for famous mystics and monastics. Each issue of *Canticle* features one of them.

Bede Griffiths, OSB (1906-1993) was a British-born Benedictine monk, Catholic priest, theologian, and mystic who moved to India in 1955 to found a monastery. He brought his Christian perspective to a study of Indian philosophy and Hinduism, lecturing around the world and writing twelve books on Hindu-Christian dialogue, including *Christ in India*. He took the Sanskrit name “Dayananda” (bliss of compassion) and lived out his life as a monastic in South India.



On scholarship at Oxford as a young man, he became a student of writer and theologian C.S. Lewis and the two became lifelong friends. After graduating, Griffiths and two friends began an “experiment in common living,” sharing in work milking cows and selling the milk for income. They lived according to the rhythms of nature and read the Bible together. Griffiths began to see strong relationships between scriptural wisdom and his experience of the natural world. This “experiment” inspired his vocation as a monk. Father Bede is also remembered as a great listener and loving teacher who saw in every person a unique expression of God. ✕





FAIR TRADE: MAKING RESPONSIBLE CHOICES

In our monastery the Peace and Justice Office shares a common space with the Care of the Land Office. This is a logical arrangement since these two ministries overlap in so many ways. Living in harmony with the land is a vital element in promoting peace and justice in our world. Everyone has a right to live on a healthy planet and share in its resources.

We believe that using Fair Trade Products is both a socially and an ecologically responsible decision. By directing our dollars towards businesses operating with the Fair Trade model we are able to help support a living wage to the farmer, many of whom are women. In this way we invest in stronger communities and promote a healthier planet.

If you join us for a meal in our dining room you will notice that our coffee and tea are purchased from Equal Exchange, an organization that guarantees fair prices to the growers. Yes, this means we are paying more for these products. But it is worth it when we consider its value in promoting human dignity and environmental integrity.

We have also made a commitment to provide Fair Trade products in our Book and Gift Shop. Our hope is that guests who purchase those items will be led to realize the importance of patronizing organizations that promote fair prices. By working together we can add strength to a movement that is making a difference in our world. ✕



Fair Trade tea, cocoa, chocolate, and coffee are all available for sale in the Monastery's Book & Gift Shop along with a variety of upcycled, artisan-made items. You can also find many of these products online at www.StGertrudesGifts.org. Call shopkeeper Sister Miriam at 208-962-5022 for more information.

DEVELOPMENTS

As we endeavor to be good stewards of our land, we are constantly making choices to bring healthier, more streamlined solutions in our living that will positively affect our environment. Ways we have begun to do this include being diligent about recycling, installing solar heating in our farmhouse, and choosing not to sell bottled water at our annual Raspberry Festival.

Last year, we began planning the biggest project we have ever undertaken that will make us a more earth-friendly monastery: installing a geothermal heating and cooling system at Spirit

Center, our retreat facility. This alternative heating system will reduce our carbon footprint by 80%. In our fall appeal, we asked for your support for this project. Thanks to your generous response, we were able to begin installation in April (see pictures below). With this greener, more efficient, and cost-effective system, we are excited that our retreatants will find Spirit Center not only warm and cozy in the winter, but cooler in the summer. The monastic community and everyone who worked on this project extend our most heartfelt gratitude for your support and faith in this endeavor.

We also owe a huge debt of gratitude to the Koch Foundation who supported us with a grant. In addition, we just received news that the M. J. Murdoch Charitable Trust will support the geothermal project with a substantial grant. We are overjoyed and grateful for this support!

Going green may not always be the easiest or most convenient thing to do, but we are finding that making these changes deepens our connection with one another and brings us in line with the values we intend to express. ✕



BORN INTO ETERNAL LIFE...

April 22, 1925 - February 14, 2013

SISTER MARY BERNARD LIESER

The Sunshine Nurse

Sister Mary Bernard Lieser, OSB was born into eternal life at St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center on February 14, 2013 at 2:15 a.m. Sister Bernard will be remembered as a woman of profound faith and great love for family, and for her ministry.



From her early life on a Minnesota farm to working in the St. Gertrude's Convent butcher house as a young sister, then from her 52-year career as a nurse to her ministry to the bereaved, she met life's challenges with joy and trust in God. As a result, life seems to have always offered the full breadth of itself to her. After only two weeks of initial nurse's training, Sister Bernard was put on the night shift at St. Mary's Hospital in Cottonwood. "I learned to see Jesus in every patient," she said.

The youngest of ten, she grew up in a home where German was the first language and there was no plumbing or electricity. "We worked hard, prayed hard, and played hard," she recalled. She milked cows at an early age and fought through blizzards that left "banks higher than the apple trees."

Sister Bernard kept extensive scrapbooks that are full of history. They include family genealogies, stories of medical advances (such as the first use of penicillin in Cottonwood), and notes from grateful patients including one calling her the "Sunshine Nurse" who "taught the true meaning of Jesus."

Sister Bernard was a Benedictine Sister of St. Gertrude's since March of 1949. After retiring from nursing, she continued attending funerals, visiting families in the Colton, Uniontown area, and was a favored visitor to shut-ins.

Sister Mary Bernard is survived by the Benedictine Sisters, including her niece Sister Bernadette Stang, a brother-in law Ray Worms, and a sister-in-law Theresa Lieser and numerous nieces and nephews and their families. The Mass of Christian Burial was on February 19. Memorial Masses were also celebrated in Arizona, presided over by her nephew Father Vince Lieser, and at the St. Louis Catholic Church in her hometown in Paynesville, Minnesota with her nephew Father Tim Baltis as a concelebrant, with over a hundred relatives and friends attending, many of whom carried out parts of the liturgy. The Mass, organized by niece Sister Margaret Mandernach, OSB, was followed by abundant food and the sharing of memories. ✕

January 18, 1936 – May 11, 2013

SISTER EMAGENE WARREN

With Courage and Devotion

Sister Emagene Uhlenkott Warren, OSB was born into eternal life at the Monastery on May 11, 2013 at 1:15 p.m. Sister Emagene will be remembered as a committed community member, a wise business woman, as well as a loving and devoted mother and grandmother.



The first born of five children, Emagene grew up in Clarkston, Washington in a devout, Catholic family. She enjoyed her career as a real estate broker and appraiser and joyfully raised her daughter, Terri. When Terri grew up and married, Emagene welcomed her grandchildren as the new "wonders of her life."

In her late forties, she felt called to religious life and became a Benedictine sister of the Monastery in 1985. Monastery life allowed her to express her talent for playing the piano, particularly in a Monastery ensemble called "Thee Band." She also returned to school and studied sociology and women's studies at Gonzaga University. She worked in Spokane as a social service coordinator in Catholic Charities outreach centers for low-income elderly. She then returned to St. Gertrude's, serving as house coordinator for twelve years and overseeing the business office for six. She also founded the Monastery's volunteer program. Most recently, she lived in Lewiston in semi-retirement and conducted outreach ministry.

Emagene lived "looking through the kaleidoscope" of her life as she considered the bright colors of her childhood, being a mother and then a grandma/great grandma, and forming relationships in her ministries – and the dark colors of a divorce, the 2003 death of her daughter, and the deaths of her parents. "Together," she said, "these form the colorful picture of my life." Sister Emagene would have celebrated her 25th Jubilee this summer.

The Mass of Christian Burial was held on May 17. Sister Emagene is preceded in death by her daughter, Terri Baker, and her parents, Claudine and Vince Uhlenkott. She is survived by her great-granddaughter Kayla Troumbley of Lewiston, grandchildren in Lewiston – Nicole Troumbley, Shawn Warren, and Eric Baker; her siblings Loren Uhlenkott of Alaska, Glen Uhlenkott and his wife Cyndie of Redmond, Washington, Lloyd Uhlenkott and wife Judy of Cottonwood, and Mary Uhlenkott Weeks and her husband Richard of Spokane; and the Benedictine sisters. ✕

MEMORIAL DONATIONS CAN BE MADE TO THE MONASTERY OF ST. GERTRUDE.

HONORING PARTNERS IN MINISTRY

The new Grotto Garden is experiencing its first spring. The grass (seeded last fall) is growing around the path and the newly planted flowers and shrubs bloom and show new growth. Beginning at the Grotto behind the main Monastery building, a path meanders up the hillside toward the cemetery, the resting place of the sisters. Along the path are engraved memorial stones honoring those who have supported our ministries. Some benefactors have chosen to also have their cremated remains placed there. The Grotto Garden acknowledges that while the sisters of St. Gertrude have been praying and ministering in Idaho and beyond for more than 100 years, they have never been alone on this journey.

The garden includes several spots with views of the Monastery to sit and reflect, remember departed loved ones, and deepen a spirit of gratitude for those who have invested in the future of the Monastery. To learn more call 208-962-5063 or email grotto@stgertrudes.org. ✕



Top, Right: Prioress Sister Clarissa leads the blessing of the Grotto Garden. Above: The path gently meanders up the hillside behind the Grotto chapel and beside the Stations of the Cross. Left: A large, engraved stone marks the entrance to the Grotto Garden.

This Crazy Call



The greatest angst
Comes with the call
Louder and softer
Shouting, whispering
Alternating
Driving me crazy
With this sound in my head.

Could it be clearer?
Or more certain?
More consistent?
My ego looms daring me
To ignore this, to
Make my way alone.

Then I hear, undercoating the sound,
Quiet murmurings of prayer
Sisters asking to be worthy of more
And, still stretching to hear, I stand
In awe of those who
Answered.

JUBILEES 2013



Sisters Claudia Rae Braun, Lillian Englert, and Evangela Bossert celebrate 50 years of monastic profession.



Sister Theresa Mary Stroeing celebrates 75 years of monastic profession.



Sister Agnes Reichlin celebrates 60 years of monastic profession.

RASPBERRY FESTIVAL!

August 4, 2013, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (PST)

This annual fund-raiser to benefit the Historical Museum at St. Gertrude is in its 21st year. More than 3,000 people attend annually from around the United States and beyond, enjoying a \$5 Pancake Breakfast, fresh raspberry shortcake and gourmet hamburgers, live music, kids' carnival, quilt show, hand-crafting demonstrations, new and used book sales, Fun Run & Walk, chapel and Museum tours and more. Raspberry jam, wine and other products are also available for purchase. Activities are located on the lawns surrounding the stone Monastery building as well as in our Spirit Center.

Visit www.MyRaspberryFestival.org to learn more, sign up for events such as the Fun Run & Walk and quilt show, and enter the raffle to win a variety of prizes. **We look forward to seeing you at Raspberry Festival!**



inn at st. gertrude

Bed & Breakfast
at the Monastery of
St. Gertrude, Cottonwood



Reservations: 208-451-4321
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WE ARE A COMMUNITY...



...committed to prayer and bringing about the Kingdom of God. For over 1,500 years Benedictines have lived lives of prayer and service to the world. For over 130 years, our community has lived this legacy of continual prayer, service, and community life and seeks to pass it on. We move into the future knowing that our presence,

our ministry, our faith, and our prayer witness to the transforming power of a way of life centered on God.

Participate

With early Christian communities as our model, we live out the values of praying together, living together, sharing all things in common, and serving the wider community and one another. There are many ways you are invited to participate:



- ✧ **Attend** prayer, Mass, or one of our Spirituality and the Arts concert events
- ✧ **Come away** to Spirit Center for a retreat
- ✧ **Visit** the Historical Museum of St. Gertrude and learn about our region's history
- ✧ **Experience** Benedictine hospitality at our bed and breakfast, the Inn at St. Gertrude
- ✧ **Schedule** an appointment at the Healing Center
- ✧ **Find** monastic-made crafts and sacramental gifts at the Book & Gift Shop
- ✧ **Live** in the Monastery as a volunteer or Monastic Immersion participant
- ✧ **Learn** about becoming a Sister or Oblate.

For more information, go to www.StGertrudes.org

We hope you are enjoying our color Canticles! Thanks to an anonymous printing donation, we are now able to print in color for the same cost as black and white. We are so grateful for the opportunity to share our life with you in this way.

