

CANTICLE OF ST. GERTRUDE

A JOURNAL OF OUR LIFE



2015 Theme:
Celebrating the
Year of Consecrated Life

This issue:
Answering God's Call

ANSWERING GOD'S CALL

A Message from Prioress Sister Clarissa Goeckner

Karl Rahner defines spirituality as a "mysterious and tender thing." It seems to me this also could describe a vocation to religious life. Even after words of explanation, much mystery remains. After years of commitment, each "yes" to God is still a very personal and tender promise.

As a young person, I was hoping I would not have a vocation to religious life. While I chose to be close to God, I did not want to take extreme measures. I had many plans for my life and wearing a black habit, such as the sisters did then, was certainly not one of them. I set out to pursue my interests and, in that process, was myself pursued by influences that subtly weakened my defenses.

The Benedictine sisters were one of those influences. As a student, I was touched by their attentive presence and dedication. Each of us was the recipient of respect, understanding, and, yes, love. Sometimes I would imagine myself teaching, like the sisters, with caring competence, and communicating to each student the good news that he/she is special, loved by God and holding profound potential to change the world. I would also see myself as a person of strength, faith, prayer and kindness like the sisters.

There were other influences that moved my heart as well. The monastery grounds, prayer in the chapel, and attending the annual retreat days brought moments of strength and openness. I came to know that I would always want to be close to this stronghold as I moved ahead with my life.

Although I wanted to enter St. Gertrude's, it was with feelings of sadness and loss that I crossed the monastery threshold on that warm August evening. It made me sad to leave my family and friends to strike a new and unfamiliar direction. Where would this path lead me?

Many years have passed since that evening; since then, there have been many calls within that call to which I have joyfully said yes and look back gratefully. It has been an incredible gift to serve God's people as an elementary, junior high, high

school and college level teacher, a principal, associate director of campus ministry, assistant prioress, director of children's/family catechesis for the diocese of Boise and prioress of our community.

In retrospect, a college English course, "The American Novel," was a gift along the way that affirmed my choice to be a Benedictine sister. William Faulkner's work *Absalom, Absalom!* depicts a world in shambles because people fail to recognize that all are brothers and sisters no matter what color or creed. Recognizing our common bonds despite diversity and relating to people with respect is the only way to build a peaceful world. Jesus taught this many years ago, but it was Faulkner's shock tactics that got my attention. I wanted to be part of a community dedicated to bringing peace.



Some of the deepest hopes I hold for myself and for our world are values that have been lived by Benedictines throughout the centuries. It has been a privilege, challenge and joy to be bound in prayer, vision, mission and affection to the women in my community. By being part of them, my desire to extend the values of healing hospitality, simplicity, creative peacemaking and community have had a more expansive and deeper reach than had I tried to go it alone. In spite of my reluctance, I am gratefully in awe of the way God has guided my life to be part of this challenging and meaningful mission.

In *The Sound of Music*, Mother Abbess advises Maria to find "...a dream that will take all the love you can give, every day of your life, for as long as you live." My journey with the Benedictines of the Monastery of St. Gertrude has been such a dream. Every day of my life it has taken all the love I can give. I know this will continue for as long as I live! ✕

Sister Clarissa has served as prioress for ten years and the community will discern/elect a new prioress this March. Read more on page 7.



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 STORY

SISTER BARBARA JEAN GLODOWSKI: THE PERSISTENCE OF GOD'S CALL

To hear God's call, it helps to be listening. That's why Sister Barbara Jean, the mission and spiritual care director at St. Luke's Jerome, begins her day with prayer and sacred reading. Then, she says, "I set my dial to look for love. I find God — and God is with me all day long."

Indeed, her day is long. Sister Barbara Jean's leadership involves visiting and praying with patients, providing pastoral care for employees, training a hospital volunteer ministry team, leading the ethics committee, and coordinating a crisis team of ordained ministers from a variety of faith traditions. She monitors the Patient Satisfaction Survey and makes suggestions for employee programs in order to improve service and ensure the mission, vision, and values are aligned throughout the organization.

She invites balance to her day with a two-mile outdoor walk (in addition to the 6-plus miles she walks in the hospital during her day of work). She is diligent about keeping work and home life separate, and concludes each evening with reading and prayer. "Several years ago I took an assessment of my Benedictine life and scored low in balance and leisure. I have worked on that. I remember I am a temple of the Holy Spirit."

She also cares for her 96-year-old mother and considers the ability to do so one of the rewards of following God's call. Sister Barbara Jean was happily engaged in work in Lewiston where she recruited and trained volunteer ombudsmen for the Area Agency on Aging, an organization that sends volunteers into nursing homes to mediate for elders. But then the prioress asked her to become the mission and spiritual care director at St. Luke's Jerome. After initial reluctance, she realized the move allowed her to be closer to her mother. "Elder care is a ministry," she says. "I am enjoying it."

Sister Barbara Jean insists she has a history of resisting God's call. At her birth, a Benedictine nun prayed Barbara Jean would become a religious. But as she grew, she felt drawn in other directions. "I wanted to grow up, be a nurse, and get married,"



Sister Barbara Jean teaching at a recent in-service at St. Luke's.

she says. But what she did not know is that her own mother had contemplated becoming a nun and after discerning a call to marriage and family, prayed that one of her children would have a vocation. When an invitation came to attend

a Profession ceremony at St. Gertrude's, the adolescent Barbara Jean found herself reluctantly in tow.

"Oh I was mad," she recalls. "I didn't want to go. But at the ceremony, I was awe-struck. All I could do was cry. When her priest poignantly asked her if she felt a calling, she affirmed her desire to be a nurse and get married. "Then he asked, 'Have you ever thought of putting God first?' That pierced my heart," she recalls. After that, her life took on a movement toward entering St. Gertrude's that she finally couldn't deny. At the age of 18 Barbara Jean left her native Jerome. Two years later she made her first Profession. That was over fifty years ago.



Sister Barbara Jean became a teacher and eventually earned her master's in education in 1975. "I was never afraid to try new things and see if the cutting edge ideas taught at the university actually worked." She shared her innovative style at schools in Cottonwood, Greencreek, Pocatello, Nampa and Rupert. Eventually she became a reading specialist for the Idaho State Department of Education in Boise. After five years of working with remedial students, she was assigned to five schools a year as a consulting teacher, helping teachers improve at teaching.

In 1993 she was called home to be assistant prioress to Sister Mary Kay Henry. After four years, Sister Barbara Jean began a nationwide ministry leading workshops on second-half-of-life spirituality. During this time, she also continued her work as a reading specialist and consulting teacher. In 2003, she was called by community leadership to be the Mission/Pastoral Director at St. Mary's Hospital and Clearwater Valley Hospital. When Spirit Center opened, she became the retreat center's first director. Then several years later, she began working for the Area Agency on Aging in Lewiston and then St. Luke's in Jerome. "I was born with my feet planted in mid-air," says Sister Barbara Jean in describing her comfort with the many changes she has experienced through her career in education and human services.

"I love working with creativity, with what-ifs, what-could-be... 'Status Quo' is not in my vocabulary. I am future-oriented. In answering God's call, I really don't think I am a good example. I fought for so long but once I opened to new opportunities, life was amplified in unforeseen ways. Why not respond to the nudge? You can investigate and try it. Why fight it?" ✕

Sister Barbara Jean leads the upcoming retreat, "Breakthrough Enneagram," March 13-15. Info: www.Spirit-Center.org

MEMBERSHIP

OBLATES ANSWERING THE CALL



Oblate Nikki Nordstrom: When asked to write a few words about being drawn to being an oblate I smiled...then the smile stilled as I wondered how to find those words that would provide a taste of this life-deepening experience. There are about ten oblate groups in the Northwest; ours is in the Puget Sound area. We are a mighty band of twelve who meet one Saturday a month in each other's homes to study, discuss and share a mid-day meal.

Our meetings are an opportunity to focus on Benedictine values and rhythms and of our paths of growing ever more deeply into those rhythms. Two to three times a year we gather with many of the oblates to share in the rich tradition of retreats at St. Gertrude's. When someone once asked me how the Puget Sound group functioned for me, I said it was like a "collective elder" — it helps to open my mind and heart.

The combination of all these experiences has developed a much deeper understanding of what a life with Benedictine values at its core can look like; how this rhythm can increase our awareness, the value of others and lead us to ways in which we can be more present to those in our lives and in our world. Together we pick up and follow that thread of monastic fabric, our days a prayer within a prayer.



Oblate Regina Sullivan: My Benedictine journey began about 18 years ago when Mary Jayne Minnette suggested I visit the monastery with her and consider becoming an oblate. I knew of the monastery from my association with Engaged Encounter weekends that are given at the monastery but was not familiar with the Benedictine order of sisters that live there. Then I met Sister Corinne Forsman when she was working at Holy Family and she guided me toward the ways of St. Benedict and how these ways affect my every day life in a very positive way.

Simplicity, hospitality, and prayer were a lifestyle that I have been searching for. I could relate to the concept of becoming a more disciplined person and striving for a balanced life.

As I became more immersed in the Benedictine way of life, my life did seem to simplify. Material things were not as important. My prayer life has broadened to include meditation, scripture, commentaries, and ritual prayer. The biggest gift I have received from my Benedictine journey has been that of being thankful for all that God has given me.

We celebrate the voices of our lay members.



Oblate Rick Aldred: I first learned about oblates from my wife, Tamara. In 2000, my wife Tamara joined a Benedictine discussion group in Missoula. When a priest from Mount Angel came over, Tamara accepted his invitation that she become an oblate. I supported her in this choice. Over the next few years that discussion group fell apart and through a series of fortuitous circumstances, Tamara became affiliated with St Gertrude's and transferred her oblation. I came to the April retreat the year she did that. I liked what I saw and was particularly surprised to see several male oblates there. Over the course of the retreat, I decided I would like to do this as well. I became a seeker and, with the help of Oblate Fred Kelley, went through the process of becoming an oblate. It was clear through the retreats that I attended that people accepted me as an equal member of the group, and I really liked everyone I met.

I am happy to say that my connection with the Monastery and the cenobitic community has deepened over time. Several of the nuns have become friends. Despite initial questions about the role of men at the monastery, I think that the male oblates have much to contribute to the group and to the church.



Oblate JoAnne Zimmer: In the spring of 2010, while alone in the chapel, I received God's call that I was home. But, HOW? I met with Sister Katie who directed me to the oblate program. I became an oblate in 2013 and yet God kept calling me here. After much prayer, patience and many conversations with Sister Teresa, she found the way; in August 2014 I received word to come to St Gertrude's as a live-in volunteer with the Monastic Immersion Program and I also joined her cohort retreat program, "Living as a Monk." I left my job, my adult daughter, and my home on Friday, September 19 and arrived here on Saturday, September 20, 2014.

I live in the Monastery with the sisters on the 5th floor and participate in all community prayer, celebrations, and dishes while volunteering six hours a day in the business office. My evenings are free for study (yes, the cohort program involves reading and writing) and Gonzaga basketball games (a second religion here).

My life here is rich in prayer, faith, and purpose! By living a simple life by the Rule of St. Benedict I've made incredible self-discoveries, uncovered challenges, and found new strengths. When God calls me to leave I will be a much different person than before I came. My heart has found deep peace! ✕

SPIRIT CENTER RETREATS

LETTING GO INTO SILENCE

"And don't we all, with fierce hunger, crave a cave of solitude, a space of deep listening – full of quiet darkness and stars, until finally we hear a syllable of God echoing in the cave of our hearts?" Macrina Wiederkehr

Silence plays an important role in one's spiritual journey. Pulling away from the busyness and noise of everyday life to become still and listen for the voice of God and the whispering of your own heart can be a life-changing experience.

Friede Gabbert has been experiencing the monastery's gift of silence and peace since she was invited by a friend to attend a retreat in 2001. Her favorite retreat experience is January's "Come to the Quiet," in which participants observe silence for a week, speaking only during daily sessions with a spiritual director.

When she comes to Spirit Center for "Come to the Quiet" or for a private retreat, Friede lets the world go. She steps away from the constant demands of busy life, including her volunteer position as director of her community's food bank, and allows herself to be open to the silence.

"There's a sense of needing to be quiet," she said. During her stay she prays with the sisters, reads, writes in her journal and takes walks. "Being in a quiet, peaceful setting I discover things more and can write better," she said.

Because she "lives in her head," as she says, her spiritual director encourages creative play in Spirit Center's art room, where she can paint, draw, make collages, create mandalas and more. "One year I spent time just cutting out one snowflake after another," she said. "Art play lets you get into a part of you that can go untouched most of the time."

When her time at Spirit Center is over, Friede is always reluctant to leave. "I feel so close to God and I don't want that feeling to end." Re-entering her normal life can be jarring so Friede uses the 1-1/2-hour drive home to prepare herself for returning to the demands of her job and daily family life.

"I don't know where I'd go to be able to refresh like I can at the monastery," she said. "It's an oasis for me and I so appreciate the sisters offering their lives and home."

For more information about scheduling a private retreat or registering for the next "Come to the Quiet" retreat (June 26-July 3, 2015), call Spirit Center, 208-962-2000, or visit spirit-center.org. ✽

Upcoming Retreats at Spirit Center

The Annunciation: Listening With the Artists
March 20-22

A Watercolor Journey, April 14-16

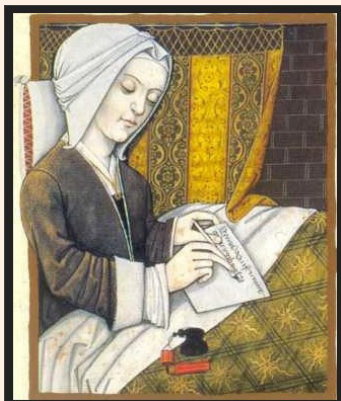
A Woman's Call to Spirituality: Making a Difference in Our World, May 1-3

Centering Prayer Intensive, May 15-21

208-962-2000, www.Spirit-Center.org

MEET A MYSTIC

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



Mechtild was a medieval mystic who began having visions at the age of twelve. These visions were of a divine reality more abundant and beautiful than even her home of Saxon nobility. As a young woman she joined the Beguines, an order of lay women who served the poor with good works and

prayer, seeking to live a life of total generosity in the manner of Jesus Christ.

Mechtild's visions were of an abundant and loving God, radiant through all creation, leading us into exuberant and life-affirming relationship. Mechtild recounts her visions in *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*. Along with writing these poetical works, Mechtild also risked criticizing clerics of religious laxity and confidently shared her theological insights — both put her in the way of some harsh opposition. Later in life, she joined the nunnery at Helfta where she experienced protection and support. Here she would influence two other mystics: her namesake Mechtilde of Hackeborn and Gertrude, to whom our monastery is dedicated. From Mechtild's *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*:

*The day of my spiritual awakening
was the day I saw—
and knew I saw—
all things in God and God in all things.*

*It draws down the great God into the little heart,
it drives the hungry soul up into the fullness of God,
it brings together two lovers, God and the soul, in a
wondrous place where they speak much of love.*

*How should one live?
Live welcoming to all.*

*When are we like God? I will tell you. In so far as we
love compassion and practice it steadfastly, to that
extent do we resemble the heavenly Creator who
practices these things ceaselessly in us. ❖*

inn at st. gertrude



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or www.InnatStGertrude.com**

Be
still
and know...

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clients at the Healing Center at
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info@CynthiaSchultzBCST.com



BORN INTO ETERNAL LIFE...

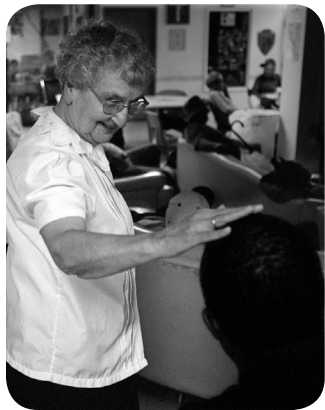
IN MEMORIAM: SISTER BERNIE TERNES, OSB April 30, 1924 ~ October 3, 2014

*"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
I was a stranger and you welcomed me..." Matthew 25:35*

Sister Bernadine (Bernie) Ternes was born into eternal life on Friday, October 3 at 12:02 p.m. She was surrounded by many Benedictine sisters, including Sister Carm Ternes, her biological sister. She leaves a profound and inspiring legacy of living for justice and for serving others.

She was born Angela Ternes on April 30, 1924 in Strasburg, North Dakota. She made her First Profession on August 4, 1943. The next three decades found her teaching in schools across Idaho — both Catholic and public. In 1976 she took a field trip to the First Avenue Service Center in Seattle, Washington. After seeing firsthand the suffering of people on "Skid Row," Sister Bernie signed up as a Night Crisis Team volunteer. Eventually, the streets became her ministry.

At age 52, she began walking the streets at night, checking under bridges and in alleys and sitting on bar stools with



those who had no hope. She also served as a prison chaplain. Engaged in what she calls "the ministry of presence," Sister Bernie felt that "just being there for them," helped these men and women recall the depths of God's love.

Sister Bernie also lived for justice by advocating for legislation that empowered the poor

and promoted peace. She gave talks to community groups and attended marches. She even traveled to Fort Benning, Georgia, to protest at the School of the Americas, where some of the perpetrators of South America's most horrific violence and human rights violations have been trained.



Sister Bernie served the homeless in Spokane at Our Place Ministries, House of Charity, and St. Margaret's Shelter for women and children. She came home in 2011 at the age of 87 to participate in the Monastery's hospitality ministries that included tending the Grotto Garden, re-crafting greeting cards, and welcoming guests.

"I would encourage everyone to follow their dreams," she said. "My years on Skid Row, in prison [as chaplain] and at various shelters have been life-giving challenges for me. I am truly grateful to my community for their support, for only if I am grounded in prayer and realize my dependence on God, can I minister to others."

Sister Bernie is survived by her sister Sister Carm Ternes, the Benedictine sisters of the Monastery of St. Gertrude, and nieces and nephews. The Mass of the Resurrection was held on Friday, October 17. Memorial gifts in Sister Bernie's honor can be made to the Monastery or to Our Place Ministries at 1509 W. College Ave, Spokane, WA 99201 ✕

PEACE & JUSTICE Called to Care: Oblate Alyse Cadez

If you are going to go hiking with Alyse Cadez, it may take longer than usual — especially if the trail needs care. While working on the Navajo Reservation early in her career, she had frequent opportunities to hike in Canyon De Chelly and become known as the hiker who lingered behind to pick up all the trash. "We were raised to care for things," she explains, citing a strong influence from her paternal grandmother. "We cared for the land and were taught that if you have something, you take care of it."

These values led her to study integrated environmental systems at University of Colorado Boulder and to become a park ranger with the National Park Service and further their



mission to "preserve and protect." About 20 years ago she began making regular visits to the Monastery and found these values encompassed in Benedictine spirituality and the life of the monastic community. She was inspired to become an oblate (lay member) and eventually joined the Peace & Justice Committee that engages in advocacy for the people that she says "don't have someone to care for them," especially women and children vulnerable to hunger, poverty, domestic abuse, and human trafficking. "We help people understand," she says, "so we can be part of something effective together." ✕ *Alyse Cadez is the mother of two sons and is a new grandma. She just retired from the National Park Service where she most recently served at Nez Perce National Historic Park, Spalding.*

SISTERS OF THE EARTH

by Sister Carol Ann Wassmuth



In our Philosophy of Land Use document that we adopted as a community in 1993 one of the commitments we included was that of “joining with other people who are endeavoring to heal the wounds that have been inflicted upon our planet.” Working with others who share similar values supports us in our endeavors and multiplies positive results.

Sisters of the Earth is one such organization. Established in the early 1990s, Sisters of the Earth is an informal network of women who share a deep concern for the ecological and spiritual crisis of our times. Their primary aim is to support one another in the work toward healing the human spirit and restoring earth’s life support systems.

The women who are members of Sisters of the Earth come from every walk of life and live out their commitment in a large variety of ways. They are teachers, gardeners, artists, mothers, members of religious orders, contemplatives and activists living in the United States, Canada and beyond. Every other year a general meeting is held where ideas and resources are shared and enthusiasm is rekindled. A directory of members is published regularly which describes their activities and interests with helpful contact information. Videos, book reviews and invitations to retreats/workshops are shared via e-mail.

As a Benedictine community we have agreed that caring for the land is one of our corporate ministries and an important aspect of our identity. Being a member of this network is a support to us as we strive to be authentic Sisters of the Earth. ✕



Our Philosophy of Land Use guides our stewardship of our land. You can read the document online at www.StGertrudes.org/careoftheland.html.

A FUTURE WITH ROOTS

The community celebrates the past while preparing for a new era of leadership.

On Wednesday, September 26, 1882, three nuns from a cloister in Sarnen, Switzerland (with a mixture of reluctance and enthusiasm but overwhelming faith and courage) left their home to sail across the Atlantic to New York. A steam train brought them across the continent to new territory where they first established a religious community and mission in Gervais, Oregon. They were our foundress, Mother Johanna Zumstein, OSB (pictured above), Sister Magdalene Suter, and Sister Rosalia Ruebli. They began our legacy of ministry in the Northwest.



On February 18, 2015 — in the spirit of St. Gertrude’s founding sisters — Sister Janet Barnard (left) and Sister Wendy Olin (right) fly to Switzerland to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the motherhouse in Sarnen. The celebrations include a special anniversary Mass and the premier of an opera. Within a week of their return the monastic community will gather to discern and elect the next prioress.

Sister Clarissa Goeckner was elected as the 13th prioress in 2005 and re-elected in 2011. To choose a new leader, the community will review their directions and goals then identify who among them possesses the qualities to lead at this time. Contrary to typical elections, the group seeks “convergence and consensus” through a facilitated process of prayer, discussions and nominee presentations. Installation of the new prioress will take place on June 13. The process has already begun with daily prayer for the next prioress. ✕

“God speaks to each of us as God makes us, then walks with us silently out of the night.
These are the words we dimly hear: You, sent out beyond your recall, go to the limits of your longing.
Embody me.
Flare up like a flame
and make big shadows I can move in.
Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror.
Just keep going. No feeling is final.
Don’t let yourself lose me.
Nearby is the country they call life.
You will know it by its seriousness.
Give me your hand.”

~ Rainier Maria Rilke, *Book of Hours: Love Poems to God*

MUSEUM

ABOUT US

art·i·FACT: Stories from the Collection

The Rhoades Emmanuel Memorial gallery is a collection of exquisite Asian and European artifacts that includes many vases, carvings, textiles, and other artifacts. Some Asian items date from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and European artifacts from the 18th century. Sam Emmanuel donated the collection when his wife, Winifred Rhoades, passed away. Winifred was a renowned organist of the silent movie era who had grown up on the Camas Prairie. The artifacts were first exhibited in the section in the southeast corner of the new Museum building. Later, in 1988, the multi-purpose room at the rear of the Museum was renovated, and the artifacts were moved to this section. The collection is in pristine condition and reflects some sixty years of serious collecting. We hope you will come experience these treasures soon.

Learn more at www.HistoricalMuseumatStGertrude.org



Just Arrived

Medal of ST. GERTRUDE, our patroness



A Benedictine nun from Helfta, Saxony, Gertrude was one of the great mystics of the 13th century. She recalls us to Jesus Christ as the center and source of all hope for the world, offering her own spiritual experience as a testimony to the profound mystery of God's unconditional love for all.

Available in the Welcome Center
or www.StGertrudesGifts.org

WE ARE A COMMUNITY...

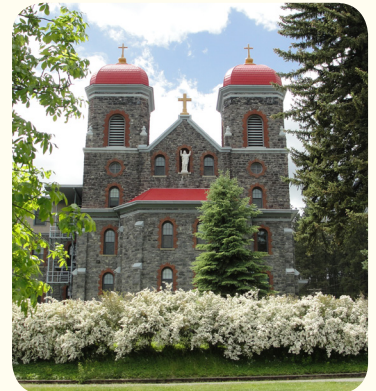


...committed to prayer and bringing about the Kingdom of God. For over 1,500 years Benedictines have lived lives of prayer and service to the world. For over 130 years, our community has lived this legacy of continual prayer, service, and community life and seeks to pass it on. We move into the future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

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

You are welcome here.

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 at 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, visit 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.

