

Fall 2017 CANTICLE OF ST. GERTRUDE



A JOURNAL OF OUR LIFE

living everyday *sacredness*

Sacred Meal
Eucharist
Fasting

Sacred Meal in Benedictine Life *by Sister Mary Forman, Prioress*

I grew up in a home where my sisters and I and Mom ate all our meals together; my Dad worked away from home for about three weeks out of four, so it was a big deal when he was able to eat with us. We would set the dining room table with Mom's best china and silverware, rather than eating in the kitchen when Dad came home. On holidays, we set an extra place at the table for Christ, who might come in as the unexpected guest knocking on the door and needing a meal or a place to stay.

That sense of a meal being sacred because of the presence of those gathered around the table carried on when I entered the St. Gertrude's community. Benedict highlights the sacred sense of the meal, when he repeats twice in RB 35.3 & 6—on the kitchen servers for the week — that the members are to serve each other mutually in love (*caritas*): verse 2 states "such service fosters love," whereas verse 6 says "let all the rest serve each other mutually with love." Benedict establishes the theology of service as an act of love and service to God.

Benedict extends the awareness of the sacredness of meals and the serving at such by stressing that all utensils and goods of the monastery are to be regarded "as sacred vessels of the altar" (RB 31.10). I remember that as a postulant I accidentally broke a dish and the

older sisters doing dishes with me told me how, when they were younger, they had to hold up any glass, dish, garden implement, etc. that they broke in the chapter of faults as a way of acknowledging their responsibility for the breakage. Such a humbling, perhaps humiliating, act certainly brought home the seriousness of caring for utensils and goods as sacred. Benedict did not only believe that the actual vessels of the altar, which are handled with great care, but any tool, is sacred because God has created the earth and all that it holds as sacred.

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Benedict provided a means for strengthening the community for its negligences toward living the common life by emphasizing the practices carried on during Lent, for he saw the whole of monastic life as "a continuous lent" (RB 49.1). He recommends adding an extra measure of prayer, abstinence from food and drink, and self-denial regarding sleep, needless talking and idle gossip (RB 49.4-5, 7).

Fasting was to be one means, along with prayer, for increased mindfulness, as a kind of preparation for Easter joy, to which all of living the life tends. Thus, there is an intimate connection between prayer, meals, and fasting as means to deepen the awareness of the presence of Christ hidden in the very ordinary practices of eating together, praying in common, and fasting from those behaviors that run counter to common life.

Continued on page 6

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 Rose Marie Nutsch

When Sister Rose Marie entered St. Gertrude's as a teenager, she was incredibly shy and somewhat frightened by her new life in the community of sisters. But over time, she grew in her social abilities and was able to discover a path that would lead her into education.

"At first I thought I would be a nurse; originally I was told I would be a domestic worker, but then Sister Aquinas said I would be good as a teacher," recalls Sister Rose Marie. Teaching would ultimately provide a path for her to grow in self-expression. "I really enjoyed the kids. I liked to make up games and crafts for them. Teaching was a way to release my creativity."

Most every teacher has a grade specialty and for Sister Rose Marie, it was second grade. She taught at Sacred Heart in Boise for 30 years. She began teaching at Sacred Heart in Emmett, then taught at St. Joseph's in Cottonwood, Sacred Heart in Boise, St. Mary's in Boise, and finally returned to Sacred Heart in Boise.

As a candidate, she attended St. Gertrude's Academy and then St. Gertrude's College. She was professed at the age of 19 on August 6, 1966. She earned her teaching certificate from University of Idaho.

The Benedictine sisters have been present in her life from the very beginning. Rose Marie Nutsch was born at St. Valentine's Hospital in Wendell that was run by the sisters of St. Gertrude. She was educated by the sisters at their school, St. Paul's, in Nampa. The daughter of devout Catholic parents, she was the middle child amidst eight



Sister Rose Marie at a community health walk last spring.

siblings. "Our home was very structured. There was an emphasis on work. We raised cattle and hay. Mom had a big garden including the cleanest cornfield in the valley!"

"By 8th grade, we were encouraged to begin thinking about what we wanted to do," recalls Sister Rose Marie. "My teacher, Sister Angelica, asked me, 'Do you think you have a vocation?' and I said yes. My parents were very supportive. Their faith was a big inspiration to me."

Sister Rose Marie now lives at home at the Monastery and is the house coordinator "There is more time for prayer and relationship," she says. "It's exciting to be here and see all the new things happening. My life as a Benedictine has been life giving. We are Benedictines and we are here to see to the needs of the people. We are always responding to this call in new ways." ✕

Weeds among the Wheat by Sister Meg Sass

Puff balls of thistle down
Rise above the golden heads;
Both run with the north east breeze.

One floats high on summer's air
Spreading destruction everywhere
Sucking up water and sun,

Clogging up combines, yellow and red
Smothering the fields, tangling the stems,
Feeding the birds of blue heaven.

The other formed into golden sheaves
Then ground, kneaded and baked,
Feeds all peoples of earth.

Animals both wild and tame
Crunch and are sustained
Stalks burned by fire.

Unlikely companions growing together,
Tug, crowd, compete, increase
In life giving tension

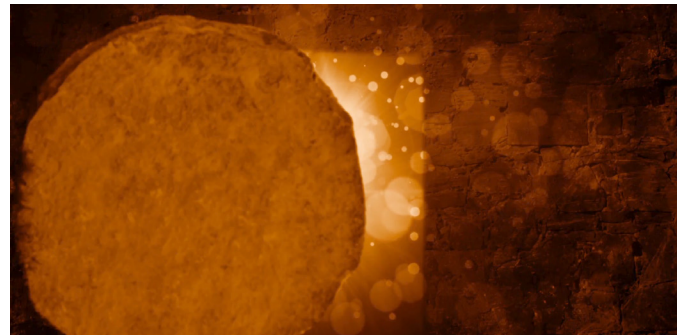
Growing together until the harvest
Like us.

Recognizing New Forms of Benedictine Life

"There was a time I would read the account of Mary Magdalene at the tomb in John's Gospel and get rather irritated at her. I mean, she's standing right in front of Jesus but she doesn't recognize him. I want to shake her and say "Look! He's right in front of you! How many times does he have to call your name before you recognize him?!"

Now that I'm older, although probably not wiser, I am much more sympathetic to Mary Magdalene's plight. Here is this poor woman who has just lost her teacher, her *rabboni*. She has seen him cruelly and ignominiously tortured to death. She just wants to see Jesus again.

At this critical time in the history of Benedictine monasticism I wonder if most of us are like Mary Magdalene: standing at the tomb of Benedictine life as we have known it, weeping because we want to see Jesus, we want the life we've known. In our longing for the past we cannot see that the risen Christ, the new forms of Benedictine life, are right in front of us. It is extremely human to want to go back to the way things were, to have what we used to have. It is hard to wake up and recognize a completely new, incomprehensible reality and way of being.



At a time when there are fewer traditional vocations to the Benedictine life perhaps we need to ask whether a new reality is staring us in the face and we are failing to recognize it because we keep looking for what is past. We are standing at the tomb of Benedictine life as it has been, clinging to what we have known while a completely new form of life is calling our name.

Perhaps we do not have a vocation crisis after all. Perhaps the vocations are just coming in a new form. What if making oblation is a form of Benedictine vocation? When Mary Magdalene was able to let go of her friend, the human Jesus, in order to embrace the risen Christ, her understanding of the world changed. When she understood she had to release the past and embrace a new reality she was able to go out and change the world. In embracing oblates as people with a different, yet vital Benedictine vocation our world will be made new.

A new, largely unexplored shift is happening in the Benedictine world. It is based on the solid foundation of the Rule and the history of the faith-filled and courageous Benedictines who have come before. It is also an opportunity to take our eyes off the empty tomb and begin to look at a new, transformed reality, a resurrection rather than joining Mary Magdalene in only hoping for a resuscitated body. Vocation is always a call from God, we do not invent it and we often resist it. But many new committed, faith-filled Benedictines are rising up in our midst.

On October 7-13, 2018, the Monastery of St. Gertrude is offering a symposium for professed monastics and oblates entitled "Oblates for the Future" to explore these issues. Please plan to join us. ✕

Read the full version of this article at
www.StGertrudes.org/blog



Plan to join us next year! Dates: October 8-12, 2018

WHERE: Spirit Center, Monastery of St. Gertrude

**INFO: Contact Nikki Nordstrom, OblSB, at
nikki@stgertrudes.org or call 425-949-9744**

spirituality

Upcoming Retreats

Learn more and register online at www.spirit-center.org or call 208-962-2000.

We look forward to welcoming you to Spirit Center!



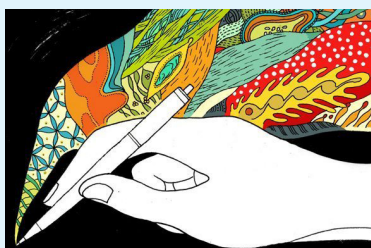
Spiritual Directors' Retreat, October 17-20, 2017, Tuesday 7:30 pm to Friday 1:30 pm

Gather with other spiritual directors to unwind and renew. Make connections with one another in sharing your experiences and questions. Enhance your ministry as well as your personal spiritual journey. Open to practicing spiritual directors. Suggested donation: \$260 single / \$210 each shared.

November is for writers...

The Creative Word: A Contemplative Retreat for Writers, Nov. 6-10, 2017, Monday 7:30 pm to Friday 1:30 pm

Engage your call to write and explore new sources of inspiration in community with others seeking to go deeper with their writing. Focus on your craft within the daily rhythm of life in a Benedictine monastery with generous time allowed for solitude and renewal. Suggested donation: \$350 single / \$300 each shared



Poetry for the Spiritual Journey, November 17-19, 2017, Friday 7:30 pm to Sunday 1:30 pm

Explore how poetry can connect you more deeply with yourself, the world around you, and with the sacred. Whether poetry is a lifelong friend or totally new to you, discover how it can enrich your daily life. No writing experience necessary. Facilitator: Jory Mickelson. Suggested donation: \$220 single / \$170 each shared



Artwork by Heather Hopkins Berndt

Embracing the Artistic Call: A Cohort for Exploring the Mystery of Creative Experience, Feb. 5-9, 2018

~ initial retreat, Monday 3:00 pm to Friday 1:30 pm
Working together, we will embrace the profound mystery of creative expression, nurture new artistic possibilities and support our individual artistic journeys. The program includes two retreats and guided work at home over a 12-week period. It is open to all who long to live a creative life with intention. Suggested donation: \$780

Silence the Christmas Noise: An Advent retreat, Private retreat options. December 1-17, 2017



Set aside a few days for calm quiet Advent preparation this year. YOU are worth this gift of time away from the holiday rush to prepare yourself for the true meaning of Christmas.

Choose retreat days that fit your schedule. Suggested donation: \$95/night (includes meals)

The Sacred Art of Iconography, February 12-16, 2018, Monday 3:00 pm to Friday 1:30 pm

"Holy icons direct us toward the Divine." Fr. Damian is an iconographer whose works are featured around the world. Don't miss this encounter with sacred Christian art using traditional egg tempera. Materials provided; no experience necessary. Suggested donation: \$575 single



Spark! Art. Faith. Creativity.

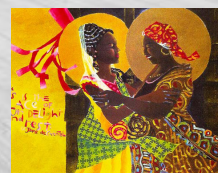
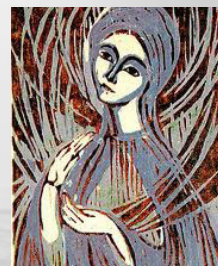
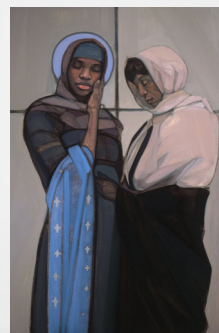
Spark is a creative community sharing a spiritual journey and engaging in faith formation through artistic response.

Upcoming: Song of Mary Art Challenge

We invite any and all to create something inspired by the Magnificat, or Song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55). You can use any medium you want (if it involves performance, the length would be 10-15 minutes).

Beginning Sunday, October 1, we will send weekly emails sharing artistic inspiration and guiding in lectio with Mary's heart response a few lines at a time. Then, on November 5 there will be a gathering at the Monastery after Mass for people to share their works and celebrate the spark! If you can't make it to the Monastery, you may wish to engage in this project with a group in your community.

To learn more and accept the challenge email creative@stgertrudes.org or call 208-962-5065.



Creating Homes that Heal



Employee Tyler Wiley creates delicious food for the community and guests. In his spare time he has been busy advocating for an Oxford House in Lewiston that will soon open after a long search for a suitable space. It will be a home where those in recovery live together in community and mutual accountability as they learn how to live in health.

"These guys get out of prison or treatment and they are so used to people telling them what to do and having the system support them, eventually they will have to break the reins. They have to eventually live life," he says.

In an Oxford House, up to eight individuals in recovery live together, each holding jobs to pay the rent. There is rigorous accountability: individuals are voted into a house and must take frequent drug and alcohol tests. There is a house treasurer that oversees a mutual account for utilities and household expenses. They also help one another, cooking and sharing meals and taking on household projects. "They lift each other up

and keep each other whole," says Tyler. "These guys will love you when you can't love yourself."

Tyler knows because he has lived in an Oxford House. His heroin addiction emerged after taking OxyContin, a prescription pain reliever, for a severe work-related injury. His once-stable life went into destruction and chaos. "I am proof it can happen to anybody," he says. "And I am proof that the Oxford House works. Now I want to give back what's been freely given to me." ✕

Read the full version of this article at www.StGertrudes.org/blog

"Eucharist is giving thanks to God who has given everything to us. We receive Our Lord in community with one another, as family, and we pray for mercy for the times we have been divided. We eat together to know unity. We become what we eat. As we are filled with Christ, receiving God's grace, we ask how we can become gracious to God in return. We gather together to forgive, know how we are loved, to put our focus back on God."

~ Father Meinrad Schallberger,
Chaplain (shown on front)



If you would like prayer support from our community, please call us at 208-962-3224 or visit www.StGertrudes.org

born into eternal life

Sister Theresa Mary Stroeing, OSB

October 5, 1915 ~ August 14, 2017



Sister Theresa Mary Stroeing, OSB, was born into eternal life at 11:22 a.m. on August 14, 2017. She was 101 years old and had been a Benedictine sister for 79 years. Sister Theresa Mary will be remembered for her service in education and parish work, wisdom and faithfulness, and love of a good cribbage game.

She entered this world on October 5, 1915, to John and Katherine (Mayers) Stroeing in West Union, Minnesota. Her parents were the caretakers of a sheep farm owned by the Benedictine brothers at St. John's Abbey in West Union. She had two aunts, a great-aunt, a great-great aunt, and several cousins who were in religious life. All her grammar and high school years she was taught by Benedictines.

Having known she would be a sister since third grade, Theresa Mary entered St. Benedict's Convent in St. Joseph, Minnesota, where she was assigned to take care of the

sisters' turkeys. Unfortunately, the birds made her sick with a painful rash on her face and arms. Then she met Sister Johanna Uhlenkott from a convent in Cottonwood, Idaho. Within a month, Theresa was on a train bound for St. Gertrude's. She made Profession on March 21, 1938.

She served in domestic work for 17 years at St. Valentine's Hospital in Wendell, Idaho, and St. Martin's University in Lacey, Washington. She taught grade school for 17 years in Cottonwood, St. Maries, Grangeville, Rupert, Nampa, Lewiston, and Boise.

She also provided home care for the elderly and served in parish work at St. John's in Boise. She retired and moved back to St. Gertrude's in 2000 where she gardened, crafted, and served in prayer ministry. She gave this advice to her sisters: "Be faithful to prayer and the Divine Office. And love each other."

Sister Theresa Mary had five brothers and sisters. She is survived by numerous nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews, cousins, and friends — and her Benedictine sisters. The Mass of Christian Burial was held Saturday, August 19. Memorial gifts in Sister Theresa Mary's honor can be made to the Monastery of St. Gertrude. ✕

...continued from page 1

In light of the devastation to thousands of people in the Gulf and others hungry and homeless in our world, there is an invitation to be in solidarity with those who long to sit at the table as a family and also know that loved ones are sheltered. One way to be in solidarity is to offer prayers on their behalf. Another is by sharing our resources for their aid.

As I reflect on practices learned in my home, and deepened in the community, I offer some invitations for seeing the sacred in the ordinary:

- How might meal times be a source of sharing stories and important events in the family's life together?
- Where is there a special room or designated place for prayer where one can be silent and listen to the voice within?
- What has graced the table and brought surprising



realizations of the presence of the holy?

- How does the family ritualize healing from breaches of what it means to be family?
- In what ways might there be denial of food or drink or fasting from thoughts and words that harm to invite words that are life-giving?
- How might mindfulness in washing the dishes, of cooking and serving the meal, of cleaning the house, be reminders of the sacredness of these acts and of the tools being used?
- How might our simply eating a meal, having a bed to sleep in, having friends with whom to share our lives, be a reminder to pray for those who have lost everything or to fast so as to contribute to their need?

No doubt, you can think of many other ways to be open to the sacredness of meals and companionship. I invite you to consider them as a way to see Christ in your midst. ✕

community

Sister Barbara Jean Retires with President's Award

Her cancer may be in remission, but she still faces a long road to recovery from radiation and chemo. Sister Barbara Jean Glodowski is taking the next leg of that journey at the motherhouse in Cottonwood. She has moved home from Jerome, Idaho, where she recently retired from St. Luke's Health System as director of mission and spiritual care.

She did not leave without a grand celebration. In an event on August 1, staff and city officials honored her and the overall Benedictine influence on healthcare in southern Idaho that began with the sisters founding St. Valentine's Hospital in Wendell in 1923. The sisters learned healthcare on the job and often worked without pay to keep the hospital going.

The expanding need for healthcare in rural Idaho led the sisters to found St. Benedict's Hospital in 1952 in Jerome that then became St. Luke's in 2011. The healthcare system serves the Magic Valley, has over 14,000 employees, and has won the Truven Award for healthcare excellence five years in a row.

St. Luke's Health System President and CEO Dr. David Pate recognized her with a special President's Award. "Sister Barbara has provided powerful spiritual care," he said. "Her influence has radiated out across the community in countless ways.....She has been a



Sisters Wendy Olin, Mary Forman (prioress), and Barbara Jean at the St. Luke's celebration.

source of strength and support for St. Luke's Jerome team members as well."

The event took place outside the hospital near the bridge that was dedicated last year in honor of the Benedictine sisters' legacy. The mayor of Jerome declared it "Benedictine Day."

"It really surprised me," says Sister Barbara Jean. "It was an overwhelming day. I am so proud of our sisters and how we could serve southern Idaho." ✕

Read the full text of Dr. Pate's speech honoring Sister Barbara Jean at www.StGertrudes.org/blog

Scenes from Summer



Sister Esther at the Unity in the Community event in Spokane on August 19.



Oblate Ev Burns with special Benedictine cookies during a summer oblate retreat.

Sue Yoshino, a summer guest at the Inn, took this photo of a fawn resting in the cemetery.



We had a fantastic Raspberry Festival thanks to our amazing chairpersons: Judy Snyder and JoAnne Zimmer, OblSB!



Volunteer Annon Cala took this picture of a beautiful elk on the Monastery hill.



Shimi Tree Flamenco from Boise performed on July 14.

tribute

A Testimony to the Sisters of St. Gertrude

by Father Gerald J. Funke

I was born and raised on the Camas Prairie; in a certain sense “in the shadow” or better said, “in the sunlight” of the Monastery of St. Gertrude. My entire elementary education was at St. Maurus School in Ferdinand, which was staffed by the sisters. St. Maurus was a small school with two classrooms—“the little room for 1st – 4th grades, and the “big room” for 5th – 8th grades. I was blessed with gifted and inspiring teachers; among them were Sister Edith Forsmann who was my teacher in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades, Sister Grace (now Bernadette Stang), my 5th grade teacher, and my piano teacher was Sister Winifred Lorentz.

My first two years of high school were the last two years of St. Gertrude’s Academy; Sister Augustine Uhlenkott was the principal. Then Prairie High School moved into the Academy building and several of the sisters continued to teach at Prairie. Among my teachers were Sisters Bernie Ternes, Carm Ternes, Catherine Manderfeld, Jean Lalande, and Benita Hassler. The sisters nurtured my mind, imagination, and spirit. There are not many places that are so isolated—yet we were given a vision not only of a wide and wondrous world, but of nothing less than the Kingdom of God.

The seed of my vocation as a priest of the Diocese of Boise was unknowingly and silently planted

and watered by the sisters. Sister Benita Hassler was my Spanish teacher at the Academy; she frequently recounted stories of her experience while on mission in Colombia. Sister Angela Uhlorn—our families are neighbors—left on her mission in Colombia while I was a student at the Academy. Their stories and example sparked my imagination and later decision to volunteer myself for four years of service in the diocesan mission in Cali, Colombia. And who would have thought that while I struggled to conjugate Spanish verbs in Sister Benita’s class that Spanish would become a primary language of my priestly life and ministry. While I served in Cali, frequent visitors, hosts, and co-missioners in Bogotá were Sisters Maria Elena Schaefer, Judy Uhlenkott, and Regina O’Connell. The example of these generous, committed, and heroic women has been a priceless gift throughout my life.

Through my 37 years as a priest in the Diocese of Boise, the sisters have been my coworkers and companions/mentors in ministry. Frequently when I pray the Liturgy of the Hours, I think of the sisters gathered in the Monastery chapel praying the same prayer at roughly the same time with me. Truly I can say I am a priest today, to a great extent, because of the sisters of St. Gertrude. ✕



Historical Museum Fall Lecture Series

October 5 ~ Richard Storch, “Photography of the Nez Perce and Plateau Indians,” 7:00 p.m.

October 12 ~ Alex McGregor, “Merchants, Mule Packers, A Rugged Path to Success: The Mullan Road 1860-1883,” 7:00 p.m.

October 19 ~ Jim and Holly Akenson, “7,003 Days: Life in the Back Country” 7:00 p.m.

October 26 ~ Open House: View the new exhibit featuring a replica of Sr. Alfreda’s attic. 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Info: www.historicalmuseumatstgertrude.org

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