

CANTICLE OF ST. GERTRUDE

Winter 2018



A JOURNAL OF OUR LIFE



healing hospitality

Hospes, Rafa, Sozein by Sister Mary Forman, Prioress

One of our core values is “healing hospitality.” Hospitality is an ancient Benedictine way of being, as found in Chapter 53 of the Rule of Benedict. In the Benedictine tradition, “All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, for he himself will say: ‘I was a stranger and you welcomed me’” (Mt 25:35; RB 53.1). This gospel directive lies at the heart of all extensions of courtesy, welcome, and ministry of human needs that comprise the rituals and caring actions of hospitality. Hospitality to guests, strangers, and the sick was the basis for the establishment of the first ministries of monastic communities: hostels and hospitals.

The word for guest in the Rule is *hospes* in Latin, a word rich in multivalent nuances. *Hospes* refers to both the host and guest. In the ancient monastic ritual of hospitality, there was the reception of the stranger or foreigner (*hospes*) by the host (*hospes*) or guestmaster, who, in offering the ritual greeting of the kiss of peace, the foot-washing, and prayer, provided the social context for the stranger to become a guest (*hospes*).

The word for healing has an even more ancient meaning. In Hebrew the word for healing comes from *rafa*, meaning to heal, that is, to grow fat, to make well, to restore and to build up strength. Many of us remember the name of one of the archangels—Rafa-el, that is, the angel of healing. From the book of Tobit, we learn that Rafael took Tobit on a journey to find

his future wife Sarah, to cure her of the demon that brought death to her intendeds, and to heal his father Tobias of blindness. In the ancient Jewish world, there was a belief, likely inherited from the ancient cultures around them, that any illness or disease was the result of God’s punishment for sin or wrongdoing. However, another whole strand of Jewish belief, as represented by the story of Tobit, reveals that God’s deepest desire is for healing.

Jesus’ healing of the sick, which occupies a significant portion of the Gospels, is to be understood in terms of his signs of care to the outcasts of Israel. Jesus firmly refused the Jewish teaching of the connection between illness and sin. Rather, his attitude was one of seeing illness as something missing from invigorating strength, which needed to be treated. Jesus is unique among all the great leaders of world religions in that the care of people’s minds and bodies was of particular concern to him.

In the letter of James 5, the notion of healing is understood in the Greek word *sozein*, which means both to heal and to save. Verses 14-15a show the elders of the church praying in faith over the sick person to heal/save him/her, that is, that the Lord “will raise the sick one up” from his or her illness. Over the centuries, particularly from the Middle Ages on, the notion of salvation of the soul took precedence over healing of the whole person.

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 Welcoming From the Inside Out

Sister Betty Schumacher

In a neighborhood of million-dollar homes and a thriving tech industry, Sister Betty's parish is finding creative ways to help those outside the reach of such financial prosperity. St. Jude's parish, where Sister Betty Schumacher works as a pastoral associate, is using its parking lot as a place of hospitality to the homeless. "Those with limited resources are just being pushed out," she says.

The parish has a history of responding to the needs of the community, engaging in hunger relief projects, hosting Tent City (a homeless encampment) several times, and regularly participating in service days. Projects have included a retirement housing development and yard work for a women's and children's shelter.

Yet two years ago the parish community began asking themselves what more they could do. The idea of Safe Parking emerged and after meetings among the pastoral council and local police department, the program began with a hearty volunteer corps on December 4, 2016.

Safe Parking allows people who sleep in their cars to use the church parking lot and restrooms. Participants pass a background check, consent to program policies, and demonstrate a plan to get back into housing. The program becomes especially effective when there are 5-7 cars because it creates a feeling of safety. St. Jude's Safe Parking program currently has 18.

Three quarters of the Safe Parking participants are working. They are single men and women as well as couples. One participant is a 74-year-old man who is homeless for the first time and has spent a great deal of his life taking care of his disabled son.



Sister Betty shares announcements with her parish community on the recent Feast of the Holy Family.



Sister Betty with a parishioner at St. Jude's in Redmond.

Safe Parking is supported by 30 volunteers. Each night at least one volunteer is in "The Hut" to meet with the residents of Safe Parking. While there is a focus on meeting the essential physical needs such as safety and warmth, the team also finds themselves addressing issues of loneliness and spends significant time talking with the overnight guests. Through a coalition with local churches, participants can also access showers and a hot meal on each day of the week. In the first year, police were called out twice for incidents.

St. Jude's, which serves 1,700 households, is diverse both economically and culturally. "What does it really mean to celebrate diversity?" asks Sister Betty. "It includes how we pray and gather as a community."

Sister Betty is also on the parish's Social Justice Committee, teaches a scripture class each Tuesday, visits and gives communion to the homebound, visits the sick and grieving, and welcomes new parishioners. "This is what gives me life," she says.

Sister Betty has been a Benedictine sister since 1969. Growing up in Grangeville, Idaho, she was educated by the Benedictine sisters. After her profession, Sister Betty began teaching elementary school. After ten years, she transitioned to parish work, eventually earning a Master of Ministry from Seattle University.

"We Benedictine sisters have a lot to offer by the way we live our life. The sense of community is vital to the world: connections, acceptance, belonging, finding meaning, and delving deeper. We are always challenged to stay in touch with those who are poor and struggling in our midst. What sustains us on this journey is our belief that we walk together and that we have a responsibility to bring about the vision of Jesus as One Body." ✠

Read the full story at StGertrudes.org.

membership

Exploring Cohousing at the Monastery

Hospitality is a foundational value for Benedictines. In his Rule, or guidebook, for monks, St. Benedict is very clear how hospitality is to be shown. He knew the monastic way of life, a simple life centered on God, would attract all kinds, not just vowed religious.

We are extending hospitality through new channels and exploring new ways to be Benedictine. Although Benedictine communities do not see as many people choosing traditional monastic profession as in the past, there is rising interest in this way of life. We are actively exploring creative ways for people to partner with us in meeting this need at this time in history.

One such project is cohousing. We are in the visioning phase of looking into establishing a cohousing community at St. Gertrude's. Our vision is to invite several single women who would commit to creating a community based on living Benedictine values and practices. These women would live in rooms that would be renovated to provide for more space and private bathrooms for each person. The group would work together to decide how they are going to be a

by Sister Teresa Jackson



community and live Benedictine life in this new way. They would be asked to make a monthly financial contribution to the Monastery in exchange for their room and board. The community members would participate in prayer, meals, and common activities along with the sisters. They would be completely financially independent and would be responsible for their own insurance, etc., and would be free to leave the community at any point. These women would not make monastic profession but would live according to the principles of Benedictine spirituality.

We are not yet at a firm decision for offering cohousing but are seeking those interested in exploring the idea with us. If you are interested, consider coming to one of our "New Ways to be Benedictine" weeks. These are week-long programs that allow you to visit the Monastery, meet other interested people, and learn more about our programs and Benedictine life. The initial dates are: Feb. 25-March 4, 2018, April 15-22, 2018, May 20-27, 2018. More info: Sr. Teresa Jackson, OSB, membership@stgertrudes.org ✕

ALSO COMING UP!



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

Actually discerning becoming a sister? Join us for Easter Holy Days Commemorating Jesus' Death and Resurrection (the Triduum)



March 29-April 1
Thursday 3:00 p.m.
to Sunday 1:30 p.m.

To learn more, call Vocations Director Sister Bernadette Stang at 208-962-5003 or email vocations@stgertrudes.org.

spirituality

Inner Hospitality

Live in me as I live in you. John 15:4

*If today you hear God's voice,
harden not your hearts.
Psalm 95:8*

Gertrude knew herself as God's dwelling place. As she matured in this experience, she blossomed in justice and charity. Her graced understanding of the mystery of the indwelling Trinity empowered her to open herself completely to the Divine life and impulse beating within her own heart. Her zeal for God flowered in gracious words of love and wisdom so that even a hardened heart was softened by her care.



Gertrude was awakened to the living presence of Christ dwelling deep within her. Indeed, Gertrude experienced the depths of her own heart. This awakening, a mystical grace, made Christ so real for her that again and again she returned to her own heart to dwell in this holy presence. Gradually, she overcame the resistance within herself and moved toward unconditional surrender to God's will in her.

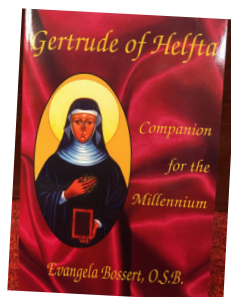
Few of us would be so prepared to receive the special grace of awakening that was given to Gertrude. This was the beginning of her life of mystical prayer. But that is not to say that we cannot experience awakening. Whenever people awaken to their deep inner selves, spirituality begins. This is an awakening to Mystery, to God, to the Sacred everywhere and in everything.



A response:

In the fleecy wool
of your Eternal Hospice
wrap my naked being.

*Excerpted from Gertrude of Helfta:
Companion for the Millennium by Sr.
Evangelia Bossert, OSB, available at
the Book & Gift Shop in the Welcome
Center and online at StGertrudes.org/shop.
Gertrude is the patroness of this monastery.*



Upcoming Retreats at Spirit Center

**February 12-16 ~ The Sacred Art
of Iconography**

**March 13-15 ~ A Watercolor
Journey**

**March 16-18 ~ Sacred Celtic
Landscapes: God's Evolving
Message of Love**

**April 9-15 ~ Centering Prayer
Intensive**

**April 16-18 ~ Zentangle: Creating
Art and Wellbeing**

**May 18-20 ~ A Woman's Call to
Spirituality: Emerging Faith in
Our Daily Walk**

**May 25-27 ~ Hearts on Fire:
The Medieval Mystics and Their
Spirituality**

**May 31-June 3 ~ Herbal Wisdom
for Today**

June 15-22 ~ Come to the Quiet

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

Stars in the Skies and Sands of the Sea

How many people in your family?

Mother, Father, relatives, friends

Church family, community family

Country and those 'round the bend

Muslims and Jews,

Chinese and Greeks,

Democrats and Republicans,

Widows and geeks;

Young and arthritics,

Paralyzed and Olympians,

Incarcerated and freelancers,

Widows and orphans;

CEOs and homeless,

Press agents and cooks,

Men with no ties,

Those with good looks,

With only one God, creating us all,

With only one Spirit, guiding us on,

With only one Body, making us strong,

We can't be at war; we must be at peace.

Or this world, our family, forever will cease.

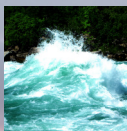
~Sister Meg Sass

Spark! Art. Faith. Creativity.

God of Creation: An Art Challenge Exploring Nature in Scripture



Jesus engaged images and metaphors from nature to help us understand a life of faith. The psalms are abundant in references to nature. In the upcoming art challenge, we invite you to journey into spring with this exploration of nature in scriptures. Then respond with your own creation. You can use any medium you want: song, poetry, visual art, photography, video, etc. (if it involves performance, the length would be 10-15 minutes).



Beginning Sunday, March 11 we will send weekly emails sharing scriptural and artistic inspiration. Then, on April 15 there will be a gathering after Mass at the Monastery for people to share their works and inspirations. 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.



Prairie dawn photo by Jude Repell.

Oblates Attend International Congress in Rome

Oblates Nikki Nordstrom and Charlene Bunch attended the Fourth International Congress for Benedictine Oblates on November 4-10, 2017. They joined nearly 200 Benedictine oblates from all over the world to discuss, share, celebrate, pray, and work together, exploring the theme "A Way Forward: The Benedictine Community in Movement."

Sister Joan Chittester, OSB, was the keynote speaker. She challenged attendees to be "carriers rather than consumers of Benedictine spirituality. Monasteries are not spiritual spas with sacred jacuzzis but places to develop Benedictine charisms that leap with light."

Sessions throughout the week addressed major questions: Formed by the Rule of St Benedict, what is our responsibility for our broken world? How can we act as peacemakers showing hospitality in the face of war, terrorism, refugee crises, and religious fanaticism? How can we serve as stewards of an abused planet as challenged and inspired by Pope Francis and his encyclical *Laudato Si*? How can we live a life of silence, contemplation, and simplicity surrounded by idolized entertainment, digital noise, and consumerism?

Participants also prayed the Divine Office together. "It was so electrifying to hear the 'Our Father' prayed in forty languages at once," says Nikki. "I often cried."



Oblates (lay members) Nikki Nordstrom and Charlene Bunch at the World Congress of Benedictines at San Anselmo.

"I feel so loved, humbled, and honored to have attended and represented St. Gertrude's," says Charlene. "What kept speaking to my heart was the unity that we have in living the Rule of Benedict wherever we are in the world. It became an emotional experience for me each time we met for the Liturgies: Lauds, Eucharist, Vespers, and Compline...especially singing the Gregorian Chant with someone from Slovakia on one side of me and someone from France on the other side. Just as Benedict was a light to his broken world when he wrote the Rule over 1,500 years ago, all Benedictines — vowed monastics and oblates — share this light to our broken world today. I am excited for more discussions as we seek God in practical actions to be that light, hope, and love." ✕

born into eternal life

Sister Valine Kachelmier, OSB

August 11, 1928 ~ September 20, 2017

Sister Valine Kachelmier, OSB, was born into eternal life at 2:45 p.m. on September 20, 2017. She was 89 years old and had been a Benedictine sister for 71 years. Sister Valine (formerly Sister Amata) will be remembered for her service in education and her rich, creative life that included candle-making, tending a Mary garden, and abundant prayer.



Following her years as an educator, Sister Valine trained in occupational therapy. In 1992 she was called back to the Monastery where she did OT in the infirmary, made candles, cared for the Grotto, and worked in the gardens. "I was delighted to return home. I deeply love the beauty and quiet atmosphere surrounding St. Gertrude's with its daily rhythm of prayer, work, and study. My heart overflows with deep gratitude for all the

blessings and graces that I have been given. I often pray with the psalmist: 'O God, for You I long at break of day. My soul thirsts for You. My body longs for You.'"

Sister Valine is survived by her sisters Eleanor Langdon and Clarice Riggs as well as nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews, cousins, and friends — and her Benedictine sisters. The Mass of Christian Burial was held on September 28. Memorial gifts in Sister Valine's honor can be made to the Monastery of St. Gertrude, 465 Keuterville Road, Cottonwood, Idaho, 83522 or online at StGertrudes.org. ✕

Continued from page 1...

So, what does all this ancient history of words have to say to us today? My own sense is that when we welcome Christ in another, when we are hospitable to who Christ is in the stranger and pilgrim, we have the opportunity to experience healing of our attitudes and perceptions of them by engaging in conversation and prayer together. Many of the retreatants coming to the Spirit Center comment on the peaceful atmosphere of the woods and grounds and the welcome of the sisters and staff. We sisters have experienced the loving receptivity of strangers become friends and companions on the journey to wholeness that is not only salvific, but also healing on many levels. How God brings that about is part of the mystery of the Lord's presence in our exchanges and our on-going prayer for all who come seeking a quiet place to rest, to renew tired bodies and spirits, and to refresh the perspectives of their lives.

Instead of New Year's resolutions in the coming year, what if we undertook "healing resolutions"? How might the way we greet each other be a sign of welcoming the Divine more deeply into our own and others' lives? How might we converse with each other such that we are open to the surprise of the giftedness of

presence together? Who among family members, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances needs a healing touch and mindful prayer that they be blessed with wholeness? Who will gift us with the hospitality of their lives when next we open our door to them?

For all of them I offer this prayer for the New Year:

Lord of All Hospitality, you knew what it was like to be born in a strange place, far from home. You also knew the experience of those who were ostracized from the religious society of the righteous and well. You ate at the table with tax collectors and sinners, you welcomed strangers to be your disciples, and you honored women by calling them to spread the good news of your resurrected presence. Let your own Spirit of hospitality, the coming into the midst of strangers, be as blessing for us today as we ponder the meaning and practices of welcoming, acceptance, and giftedness which underlie hospitality. May your own gift of humble hospitality to the great love of the One you called Father be deepened in our hearts this day, that we may witness to the Spirit of love that enlivens all creation and brings healing to those most in need of it. We ask this in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen. ✕

care of the land

Why do we log?

by Sister Carol Ann Wassmuth,
Forest Manager



New plantings in the Monastery forest on Cottonwood Butte.

When we wrote our Philosophy of Land Use in 1993, one of the actions we committed ourselves to was “using the land for financial profit in a responsible manner, always seeking to maintain the quality of soil, air, and water and the healthy balance of animal and plant life”. We expect to receive an income from our land but believe that this can be achieved in a responsible manner.

This past summer we conducted a timber sale in our woods on Cottonwood Butte. By selling those logs to a local mill we realized a financial profit. But there is much more to this story. With the advice from a professional forester and the work of a competent logger, we were able to leave a stand of healthy, viable trees for the future. Since Ponderosa Pine and Western Larch are the native trees most resistant to fire and drought, these were the species we chose to retain. Removing defective and stagnant trees gives the remaining trees more sunlight, water, and nutrition essential to their growth. In the coming year we will plant pine and larch

seedlings in any openings created by the removal of the vulnerable fir. In a way, these activities mimic the action of fire which in the past had been a natural part of the ecology in this forest type.

In the course of this logging operation, all state regulations concerning the protection of stream beds were carefully observed. Recognizing that we share these woods with other creatures, we deliberately left old, branchy trees used by wild turkeys for roosting and thickets needed by deer for cover. Leaving some dead trees, called snags, assures habitat for birds and small animals.

We believe that if done thoughtfully, logging and care of the land are not incompatible. After the logging equipment has moved on, what remains can be a healthier, more resilient forest than it had been earlier. This entails careful planning and implementation of the timber sale, but in the long run it will be an asset both to the vitality of the woods as well as our financial bottom line. ❖



A Glimpse of the Archives

Benedictines are known for having hospitality toward the past and the stories that tell us who we are. Some historians have attributed the survival of Western culture through the Middle Ages to the Benedictine monasteries of Europe. Sister Miriam Mendez oversees the St. Gertrude's archives. She sorts photos, scrapbooks, files, and is creating a searchable database of every sister of St. Gertrude's. She also responds to inquiries. Full story at StGertrudes.org. ❖

Honoring Sister Joan Smith



Sister Mary Forman, the prioress, hugs Sister Joan after presenting her with an appreciation plaque.

Sister Joan Smith, who recently retired from the Historical Museum, was honored for her commitment and work in bringing the history of our region alive for present and future generations. The presentation took place at the end of the 18th Annual Fall Lecture Series on October 26, 2017.

Former state historian Keith Petersen spoke of Sister Joan's attention to detail and impeccable memory as a source for museum work. With major exhibit renovations underway at the Historical Museum at St. Gertrude, Sister Joan has helped ensure accuracy in the interpretive displays.

Sister Joan also received a plaque commemorating a significant contribution in her honor to the Elmer J. and Marjorie C. Smith Family Museum Endowment



Kristin and David Prieur with Sister Joan.

made by friends Kristin and David Prieur. The fund was initiated by Sister Joan and family members in memory of her parents to provide ongoing support for the Historical Museum at St. Gertrude.

"Watching you has been an inspiration to me," said Kristin during her presentation. "I hope to contribute as much as you have." Kristin, who owns White Rock

Consulting, and Sister Joan first met when they worked on a Monastery capital campaign ten years ago.

"We've been making life plans," explained David, who is a professor in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Washington State University. "We've always wanted to do something for the Monastery. We have been talking about what we want in our legacy."

Kristin added, "When we saw this opportunity to honor Sister Joan we thought, 'Why wait? Let's do this now.' It means so much to her. It's not about us. It's about her and celebrating her work at the Historical Museum."

Sister Joan began work at the Historical Museum in 1988. She first took classes in museology then went on to serve as business manager, organize the first Raspberry Festivals, supervise a renovation in 1996-1997, and hire new staff. Later she returned to help with major work in the collections and assist with exhibit renovations. She retired from the Historical Museum this September.

In the spirit of celebrating Sister Joan's retirement, others are invited to contribute to the Elmer J. and Marjorie C. Smith Family Museum Endowment. Contributions will help support the continued exhibit renovations, compelling programming, and ongoing work in the collection that has been so important to Sister Joan. ✕

inn at st. gertrude



Two nights
for the
price of one
until 2/28.

**Bed & Breakfast at the
Monastery of St. Gertrude**
www.InnatStGertrude.com
Phone: 208-451-4321