

# CANTICLE OF ST. GERTRUDE

Fall 2018

A JOURNAL OF OUR LIFE



## creative peacemaking

Photo by Annon Cala

### A Message from the Prioress

by Sister Mary Forman

In the spring 2018 issue of the Canticle, we focused on "grateful simplicity." In this issue we take up the third aspect of our vision statement: "creative peacemaking."

Benedict writes of peace in seven places in his rule. In his prologue, he tells the newcomer to the monastery, "If you desire true and eternal life, keep your tongue from vicious talk and your lips from deceit; turn away from evil and do good; let peace be your quest and aim" [Ps 34:14-15, RB Prol. 17]. Thus Benedict lays down the motivation for living this way of life, a commitment to guard one's tongue and to take up deeds of good.

In the psalm itself, a wise person speaks of the need to "fear the Lord," meaning to hold God in awe and reverence, so that one can enjoy the life God has in mind for one. Behavior is important to the development of peace, so much so, that Benedict teaches, "Never give a hollow greeting of peace or turn away when someone needs your love" [RB 4.25-26]. Again, "If

you have a dispute with someone, make peace with him before the sun goes down" [cf. Eph. 4:26; RB 4.73]. I remember a friend saying that it is difficult to honor the original scriptural directive to not let the sun set on your anger, but with experience she learned

that dealing with anger may take longer than 24 hours and include several settings of the sun, as one allows peace to come to one's past memories, present conflicts and the hope to be peaceful in future situations.

There are concrete situations in the monastery requiring peace. In chapter 34, on the distribution of goods according to need, those who need less are to give thanks, and those needing more are to feel humble, not self-important, because of kindness shown toward one's weakness [RB 34.3-4]. RB 34.5 states: "In this way all the members will be at peace." In greeting guests, Benedict has a ritual: "First of all, they are to pray together and thus be united in peace, but prayer must always precede the kiss of peace..." [RB 53.4-5].

It may well be that prayer allows for the discernment of the motivation of one's guest, so guest and monk may be at peace before they exchange the kiss of peace. All decisions are the superior's to make, as Benedict makes clear in RB 65.11: "For the preservation of peace and love we have, therefore, judged it best for the abbot to make all decisions in the conduct of his monastery."



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 Mary Frances Kluss

Being a Benedictine sister, Sister Mary Frances Kluss finds abundant inspiration in the life of St. Benedict. She also finds particular inspiration in his death. As the story goes, St. Benedict had two of his fellow monks hold him up, arms raised to heaven, so that he could die with his whole self expressing prayer and praise to God.

As an LPN who has worked with the sick and dying, the metaphor of helping to bring another toward God at the moment of death has particular resonance. "I was able to visit Monte Cassino (one of the monasteries founded by St. Benedict) and there is a statue in the courtyard of the monks holding St. Benedict up. In my work, I sometimes think of those two monks."

Sister Mary Frances has served as an LPN in a variety of settings. Although she originally obtained a degree in elementary education and taught for five years, she felt urged toward another direction. "I really felt God calling me to something different," she says. "As soon as I entered nurse's training, I had a deep experience of rightness."

It was not the first time she had felt the desires of her heart shift directions. "When I was a kid I loved babies. I was the oldest of five and helped out a lot with my siblings. I wanted to be a farmer's wife and have lots and lots of kids. But when I was 14 I had a calling to be a sister but kept it under my hat. My mom would later tell me that my grandma had already thought I would be a sister someday." Her parents were her biggest spiritual influence. Her father had an appliance store in Lewiston and family life involved Catholic devotions and an emphasis on work.

She graduated from high school in Lewiston and entered college. "By the age of 21, I was beginning to see God wanted me to be more committed. I had a job that entailed 12 hour shifts at a place for processing peas. Before work I would sit in church and ask, 'God what do you want from me? Which order should I join?' One day, I suddenly had a sense to go to St. Gertrude's. I knew it was not a head thing, but a heart thing." She entered St. Gertrude's later that summer.

## Holding Others Toward God

*"I will take away your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh." Ezekiel 36:26*

When she took the time to figure out what made "head" sense about St. Gertrude's she realized it was the emphasis on prayer. Being raised in Lewiston, she had encountered the St. Gertrude's sisters in prayer, in her education, and also in her play. "I remember at school that they had played with us. They also seemed to do all kinds of work such as teaching and nursing. And they held that ordinary work was holy in God's sight. I like that." She also encountered

music through the Benedictines, including Sister Angela Uhlorn, Sister Benita Hassler, and Sister Margaret Dorothy (Mary Celine) Moriarty. Now Sister Mary Frances plays the organ and piano.

Ultimately she felt that her vocation at the center involved prayer. She knew she would work in service but that her work would be illuminated by contemplation of God. Before entering St. Gertrude's, she became involved in reading scripture more consistently and was encouraged to learn about other faith traditions. "I found that I got much more out of scripture when I read it slowly. I would take a page a day and could spend a whole hour with it. At St. Gertrude's I learned that I'd been doing something called Lectio Divina."

Sister Mary Frances was professed on August 12, 1974. She continues to express her spirituality in a variety of ways. She plays the organ and piano for liturgies and is a member of the Monastery musical group, the Von Gertrude Ensemble.

She has often served in taking Communion to the homebound. "I LOVE the Eucharist; Jesus is at the heart of it. The Eucharist is also very much a prayer of gratitude. It's so important to develop a sense of gratitude for all of life and the gifts that we have been given."

The influence of St. Benedict and his devotion to scripture continues to inspire her work in health care. "I love Ezekiel 36:26: 'I will take away your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.' That verse is about compassion and having a heart of flesh is what it means for me to work with the sick." ✕

Visit [www.stgertrudes.org/staff/sister-mary-frances-kluss](http://www.stgertrudes.org/staff/sister-mary-frances-kluss) to read a Q&A with Sister Mary Frances on prayer.





# membership



by Teresa Jackson O.S.B. and Jeannette Kelley  
Obl.S.B., Oblate Community Co-Coordiators

## What on earth is an oblate? (And how do you pronounce it?)

What is the future of Benedictine life? It is a question that many people seem to be asking with fear and trepidation. At a time when there are fewer traditional vocations to Benedictine monasteries many people seem to fear that many monasteries will close and that this ancient way of life is in jeopardy.

The reality is that this is a time of tremendous change and transition, but also of great hope. Benedictines have always responded to the deep, underlying needs of the times. Throughout the centuries we have been models of prayer, community and service. Today Benedictines are still responding to the needs of the times, but the difference is that many of these Benedictines are oblates.

Of course for many, if not most people, the words “monk” and “monastic” conjure up images of hooded figures gliding through medieval buildings in silent prayer and word “oblate” just conjures up befuddlement. It doesn’t immediately help most people when they hear that oblates are women and men who are often married, have families, but live in the “world” according to the ancient, monastic Rule of St. Benedict. But “oblates” are increasingly the face of Benedictine life in this new century. At a time when there are fewer traditional vocations there is a huge increase in the number of oblates who are committed to the Benedictine way.

Oblates are women and men who find the Benedictine way of life and spirituality to be compelling and something that they want to commit to. They are associated with a particular monastery, go through a period of screening, initiation and formation for a period of up to several years. They then make their commitment, called an oblation, and promise to live “according to the Rule of St. Benedict insofar as [their] state in life allows.” They are lay people, who don’t make vows and are not monks or sisters according to Catholic Church law.

At St. Gertrude’s we have almost eighty oblates. Oblates are often the “public face” of the Monastery as they share their connection to St. Gertrude’s and their commitment to Benedictine spirituality and



*A few of St. Gertrude’s oblates being very serious about the future.*

life. Oblates are regular and crucial volunteers in a wide variety of capacities ranging from heading up our renovation project, serving on boards and committees, participating in our cohousing project, to helping to run the Inn. St. Gertrude’s oblates meet together regularly in nine different “area groups” throughout the Northwest and then come together at the Monastery three times a year for retreats. Several oblates have moved to the area to be near the Monastery and to help out in many ways.

St. Gertrude’s oblates are also actively working to explore new ways that oblates can be an integral force in the future of Benedictine life. In October the Monastery is sponsoring a symposium “Oblates for the Future” to invite oblates and professed monastics from around the world to envision and plan for a new future for Benedictine oblates. St. Gertrude’s oblates are key organizers and supporters of the symposium. In addition, the oblate community is beginning to work on new ways to develop more inclusive leadership within the St. Gertrude’s oblate community.

Benedictine life continues to have a vibrant future and oblates are crucial to continuing to meet the needs of the times in the tradition of St. Benedict.

And, “oblate” is pronounced ahh-blate.

If you would like to know more about our oblate community please check out our website at [www.stgertrudes.org](http://www.stgertrudes.org). ✕

# spirituality

## Upcoming Retreats

### Spiritual Directors' Retreat: Reaching Across Cultures

**October 22-25, 2018**

**Monday 7:30 pm to Thursday 1:30 pm**

*Guest presenter: Dr. Gerald Reddix*

Enrich your ministry as well as your own spiritual journey through engagement with other spiritual directors and inspiring presentations about cross cultural spiritual formation. Open to practicing spiritual directors. Visit [www.spirit-center.org](http://www.spirit-center.org) for details. Suggested donation: \$310 single



### The Compassion Meditations

**November 13-15, 2018**

**Tuesday 7:30 pm to Thursday 1:30 pm**

*Facilitator: Nancy Copeland Payton*

The profound Buddhist meditations on compassion provide a way to engage the seed of deep kindness within us and to live with healthy compassion for all beings, including ourselves. Come with sincere desire and intention. No experience required.

Suggested donation: \$220 single / \$170 each shared



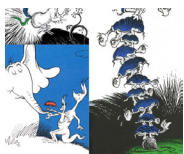
### The Spirituality of Seuss

**November 26-28, 2018**

**Monday 7:30 pm to Wednesday 1:30 pm**

*Facilitator: Sr. Jeanette von Herrmann, OSB*

Discover again why you and your children enjoy the books of Dr. Seuss. Explore the stories' hidden spirituality and ethical messages with supporting Scripture. Suggested donation: \$220 single / \$170 each shared



### Silence the Christmas Noise: An Advent Retreat

**December 3-21, 2018**

**Private retreat options**

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 the retreat days that fit your schedule.

Suggested donation: \$95/night (includes meals)



### Yoga: A Spiritual Practice

**January 11-13, 2019**

**Friday 7:30 pm to Sunday 1:30 pm**

*Facilitator: Sheila Thomsen*

Learn how yoga poses (asanas) can help access the knowing of the body and the knowing of the heart. The retreat will include journaling and shared reflection, hatha yoga and other practices to inform your own spiritual journey. Bring a yoga mat. Suggested donation: \$220 single / \$170 each shared



### Embracing the Artistic Call:

**A Cohort Program for Exploring  
the Mystery of Creative Experience**

**February 4-8, 2019 ~ initial retreat**

**Monday 3:00 pm to Friday 1:30 pm**

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 established artists as well as those longing to live a creative life with intention. See website for details: [www.spirit-center.org](http://www.spirit-center.org)  
Suggested donation: \$780 single



## The Art Room

*by Sister Lillian Englert*

CREATIVE PEACEMAKING in the Spirit Center Art Room...does THAT seem to be a stretch for this Canticle's central theme? Not so! How often retreatants will share what happens within them as they "play in the Art Room." Most people will say, "Oh, I'm not artistic!" when we show them the room for exploring their creative side. We simply reassure them that they are free to "come and play here" and so they do. God laughs and invites them to let their inner child come forth to create what has never before been created.

You have probably heard the story about an adult asking a child what she was drawing. The child responds, "I'm drawing a picture of God." The adult answers, "But no one has ever seen GOD's picture." The child responds, "They will when I finish my drawing!" This story reveals the surprise many retreatants experience as they let their inner child be free to CREATE WITH GOD. They delight in the wonder of timelessness and being as they color, draw, paint, and write to their heart's content in our Art Room. Play, pray and create become one as PEACE moves mysteriously within this creative space, to guide each restless heart into communion with God. ✕





# arts Spark!

Art. Faith. Creativity.

## Fall Art Challenge

with **Judith Marvin**, former *St. Gertrude's* artist-in-residence and *Embracing the Artistic Call* alumna

You are invited to create something inspired by hospitality. You can use any medium you



want (if it involves performance, the length would be 10-15 minutes). Beginning Sunday, October 21, you will receive weekly emails sharing artistic inspiration by Judith Marvin. Then, on December 2, the first day of Advent, there will be a gathering at the Monastery after Mass for people to share their works and reflect on the theme. If you can't make it to

the Monastery, you may wish to engage in this project with a group in your community. The creations from this project will be the source for the new



## Tora'dan on November 4

Jan and Tovas Porvas married in 2006 and have performed together around the world ever since. They arrived in the U.S. and Boise in the summer of 2016 with their young daughter. Don't miss this presentation of Persian traditional music in the chapel on November 4 at 2 p.m. This performance is free. ✕



## Artists-in-Residence

Johanna Strikwerda of the Netherlands and Pam Dolan of Montana were recent artists-in-residence. Johanna took a creative break from working on her doctoral thesis and Pam worked on illustrations for a book for her grandson. Learn more at [www.stgertrudes.org](http://www.stgertrudes.org) ✕



## vocations

### Welcoming Affiliate Kim Page

On Saturday, September 1, Kim Page became an affiliate of St. Gertrude's. She has made the first step toward becoming a sister. As an affiliate, she will continue to live in Boise, meet once a month with Sister Clarissa Goeckner, and visit the Monastery often.

### Second Journey

The second half of life presents a new threshold of integrated experience. Raising children, marriage and friendships, careers and life accomplishments, and simply navigating a good length of life's path have formed us in profound ways. Perhaps the next journey is a vocation in our Benedictine community that is serving over 20,000 people a year in a wide array of ministries. We invite you to explore the possibilities with us. How is God calling you now? We are holding "Second Journey" events in parishes throughout the region and we could be coming your way! For more information call 208-962-5003 or email [vocations@stgertrudes.org](mailto:vocations@stgertrudes.org).



Sister Bernadette,  
Affiliate Kim,  
and the prioress,  
Sister Mary.



## *Continued from page 1...*

This latter directive is a guard against a prior or second-in-command, who usurps the authority of the abbatial office to act alone in making decisions that belong to the duly elected leader, the subject of chapter 65. Elsewhere in the rule, the abbot is directed to seek the counsel of the whole community on important matters and that of the council on less important matters, from which counsel to make wise decisions [RB 3.1, 12, 6]. The last mention of peace in the rule has to do with rank when coming forward for the kiss of peace and for communion and for leading the psalms in choir [RB 63.4], which is the way to honor the date of entry into the monastery over any societal status one might consider important.

So what do these directives in the rule have to do with peacemaking? As I look over the community on any given day, I am aware of the efforts sisters make in maintaining an environment of peace within our household: chipping in graciously for the canning of fruits; the holding of one's tongue when irritated by another's insensitivity; the exchange of forgiveness when dialogue is needed to clear up misunderstandings; the kiss of peace at Eucharist while looking one another in the eye and saying silently, "I see you"; and the loving care of our elders in their later years so they may experience peace in their diminishments.

Sister Elisa has spent many years of her life bringing consolation and tools of reconciliation as she serves at-risk youth in South Central Los Angeles; Sister Betty has spearheaded the "Safe Parking" project in her parish in Redmond, Washington, that ministers to homeless adults living in their cars; Sister Carol Ann heads the community's social justice committee, which keeps us informed of peace and justice issues to which we respond. Many retreatants and visitors tell us that our very place is where they experience peace, not only in the care of the grounds and forest, but also in their delight that the deer and other animals wander over the property without fear. A peaceful environment is one way we offer hospitality to the sacred space so many come to be a part of.

On a corporate level, we sisters have participated in several creative peacemaking endeavors over the years. For three years in a row, the curator of our Historical Museum, with members of the Nez Perce Tribe and the National Park Service, participated in a symposium for reconciliation, beginning in 2002, the 125th anniversary of the 1877 conflict. The purpose

was to engage in prayer for mutual understanding and respect. At another time the sisters participated with folks from the Grangeville area in silent non-violent protest of an endeavor to create a white nationalist compound in nearby Kamiah. On May 1, 2008 Sister Clarissa, Prioress, received the Kessler-Keener Idaho Extraordinary Witness Award on behalf of the community for its promotion of human rights, and peace and justice over many years. For several years, we, along with several communities of religious sisters in the Northwest, have been a sponsoring member of the Inter-Community Peace and Justice Center of Seattle, an organization that raises consciousness of issues occurring in our neighborhoods, regions and in the globe. We also maintain connections with several peace organizations: Pax Christi, Pace Bene, Benedictines for Peace and Network. These groups help to widen our awareness of the need for peace in our world. Our petitions at Eucharist and liturgical prayer manifest the call for peace for so many wearied by war, natural disasters, and violence. During last year we held four vigils for peace, by focusing on the needs of people in our world, who long for peace.

Most recently Sr. Karen Joseph, OSB, of Immaculate Conception Monastery, Ferdinand, Indiana, reminded the community of the witness of our lives as a reservoir of hope by the way we live together. We pray at least three times a day the Lord's prayer, which Benedict believed was a way to ward off the effects of "the thorns of contention", particularly when we repeat the pledge made to each other, "Forgive us as we forgive" [RB 13.12-13].

In conclusion, I offer that prayer for peace attributed to St. Francis of Assisi:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me bring love.  
Where there is offense, let me bring pardon.  
Where there is discord, let me bring union.  
Where there is error, let me bring truth.  
Where there is doubt, let me bring faith.  
Where there is despair, let me bring hope.  
Where there is darkness, let me bring your light.  
Where there is sadness, let me bring joy.  
O Master, let me not seek as much  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love,  
for it is in giving that one receives,  
it is in self-forgetting that one finds,  
it is in pardoning that one is pardoned,  
it is in dying that one is raised to eternal life. ✠



# highlights



As part of our longstanding relationship with the Lewis-Clark State College Nursing Department, Sister Janet (an RN) is overseeing a service learning program on our assisted living floor with five nursing students this semester.



The Spirit Center retreat facility received a fresh coat of paint.



In their preparation for Final Profession, seven sisters from monasteries across the country gathered at Spirit Center July 10-25 for the Benedictine Spirituality Workshop and Retreat (BSWR).



We have been blessed at harvest time with donations of cherries, pears, peaches, and more. Sister Carlotta and volunteer Carrie Wiley celebrate the newly canned peaches.



The masonry on the chapel was painted and Sister Placida got to enjoy a lift. Calvin Bakie of maintenance does some touching up.



Raspberry Festival 2018 was one of our most memorable yet. Oblate Lisa Radakovich not only coordinated the baking of the shortcake, but shows how to enjoy it as well.



Celebraing 60 years of monastic profession: Sisters Bernadette and Clarissa, and Father Meinrad, monk of the Monastery of the Ascension (Jerome, Idaho) and our chaplain.



Participants get ready at the Raspberry Festival Fun Run & Walk.



On July 17 we enjoyed a reading and craft talk with Idaho Writer-in-Residence Christian Winn.

Our wonderful Raspberry Festival is made possible by employee Judy Snyder and Oblate JoAnne Zimmer, Festival Co-Chairs.





## Fall Lecture Series

These events provide insights into the history of our region and are held on Thursdays during the month of October with the support of the Idaho Humanities Council. Lectures begin at 7:00 p.m. and end at 8:30 p.m. A Q&A session with the presenters follows the lectures. Light refreshments are provided. The events are held in the Johanna Room at Spirit Center at the Monastery of St. Gertrude located at 465 Keuterville Road, Cottonwood, Idaho.



**October 4, Tracy Morrison**  
**"Idaho Women in Song."** Tracy is an Idaho songwriter and storyteller who performs at festivals, museums, libraries, and theaters around the country. Her songs feature celebrated characters such as Polly Bemis, Sarah Winnemucca, Kittie Wilkins (Horse Queen of Idaho),

Elizabeth Angelina Tuttle Clark, and Annie McIntyre Morrow (Peg Leg Annie). "I want to express that every woman and girl is important regardless of her culture, religious background, or socioeconomic status," says Tracy. "It is my mission to share these gifts to promote the legacies of these incredible women through story and song. They are the fabric of our Idaho heritage and there is a part of them in all of us."

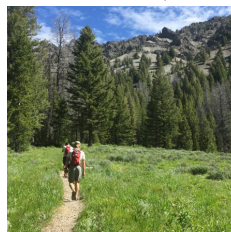
**October 11, Penny Bennett Casey "Florence Cemetery"**

In September 1861 gold was discovered in what is now known as the Florence Basin.

Where gold and money flowed, the undesirables followed. Gangs of vigilantes made their way to the bustling mining town, robbing and killing sometimes innocent men. Florence's "Boot Hill" Cemetery began to fill up with businessmen, miners, outlaws, a small child, and later Chinese. Penny Casey, an Idaho native, will share her research on the old Florence "Boot Hill" Cemetery and the mysteries surrounding some of the burials. She is a member of the Idaho County Historic Preservation Commission and the Idaho County Genealogy Society. She is also a past member and editor for the Idaho State Genealogy Society and has been the webmaster for the Idaho County GenWeb since 2004.



**October 18, Phil Wimer "Hiking Idaho"**



Come experience the Idaho wilderness through a slide presentation recounting years of high country adventures that often included horses and mules. The collection includes images by Phil Wimer and Lynn Welborn

— a nurse, photographer, and horsewoman. Phil is a Cottonwood native, graduated from St. Gertrude's Academy in 1960, and currently lives in Grangeville with his wife, Marilyn. "Over the last 65 years I have been into the high mountain lakes of Idaho County. The excuse has generally been called 'a fishing trip', but in truth the beauty of this area would be more than enough to call one to our mountains," writes Phil.

**October 25, Cort Conley "Idaho's Famous Characters"**

Learn about Polly Bemis, Buckskin Bill, and other Idaho characters! Cort Conley is a well known Idaho author and adventuresome soul. He has written numerous books, including "Idaho for the Curious." He will give his presentation in the Johanna room in the Spirit Center and then the group will move to the Historical Museum to view the new exhibit on Idaho characters. 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. ✖



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at st. gertrude



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