

Fall 2020

CANTICLE OF ST. GERTRUDE

A JOURNAL OF OUR LIFE

Gifts of the Spirit: AWE/FEAR OF THE LORD

*Photo taken on the Feast of the Assumption,
August 15, by Sister Janet Barnard.*



A Message from the Prioress

by Sister Mary Forman

Fear of the Lord Is the Beginning of Wisdom

Often when we hear the expression “fear of the Lord/God,” it conjures up images and experiences from our past of a God who is out to punish, who is on the watch to see if we are good, or who visits people with bad things if we are not good. Unfortunately, those images and experiences color our relationship with God and makes it hard to draw close to a God that is understood, even if unconsciously, as vindictive or someone to be feared.

However, in the tradition of spirituality, beginning with the First [Old] Testament, fear of the Lord is the sixth of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as evidenced in Isaiah 11:2-3: “The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon [Immanuel]: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength [= fortitude], a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord” [NAB]. In Hebrew fear of the Lord translates *סִיּוּרָאֵם דַּחַפָּה* [apachd malohim]. This phrase “relates to the virtues of hope, love and temperance” and to “a sensitivity to the activity of God and reverence for God’s majesty,” wherein one longs for union with God and avoidance of giving offense to God; it is not to be understood “in terms of human fear or terror.”¹ To this list of gifts was added the seventh, piety, an addition in the Septuagint (Greek) version of the Bible, so that the gifts would number “seven... connoting plenitude.”²

The phrase might best be translated as “awe of God,” for at root the Hebrew carries the sense of reverence and worship of God.³ Moreover, “in the Old Testament ‘fear of God’ often becomes synonymous with obedience to the commandments of Yahweh,” according to the scholar Walther Zimmerli.⁴ In most instances of humans encountering God in the Hebrew Scripture, “the phrase ‘fear of the Lord’” refers to “the commitment of humans to God through covenant...never...the human being overawed in God’s presence”; nor does “the fear of the Lord...inspire fight, flight, or despair,” that is, fear responses.⁵ In Deuteronomy, “fearing God implies obeying and serving God...one cannot fear God and mistreat another person” because all are members of the covenant of God.⁶ The consequences of covenant relationship with God and neighbor means that “fear of God is associated with care of the dependent and vulnerable,” provides “a check on wickedness and exploitation of others,” and seeks “people’s lasting good and flourishing,” that is, “working for the promotion of human rights.”⁷ Daniel J. Harrington expresses fear of the Lord in this way:

Continued on page 6

3 William Wilson, *New Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1987) s.v. “fear,” p. 159.

4 Walther Zimmerli, *Old Testament Theology in Outline*, as cited by Kason A. Fout, “What Do I Fear When I Fear My God? A Theological Reexamination of a Biblical Theme,” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 9.1 (2015) 25.

5 Fout, 28-29.

6 Ibid., 32.

7 Ibid., 36-37.

1 George P. Evans, “Gifts of the Holy Spirit,” *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, edited by Michael Downey (Collegeville, MN: A Michael Glazier Book/The Liturgical Press, 1993) 438.

2 Ibid., 436.

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.

Leading in a Pandemic

As the Monastery's new director of operations and external ministries, Sister Kim never imagined she would be advocating for guests to stay home and focusing on organization-wide sanitation practices. Yet with the Covid-19 pandemic, she has had to work for the safety of sisters, employees, and guests; putting limits on the thousands of people who visit each year from every direction. Yet, she remains enthusiastic about her new role.

"I have a great desire to make our lives better and bring out the best in people. I want people to perform to the best of their abilities and feel good about what they do. I want people to feel loved for who they are. If we work together toward the greater good then we are going to end up where we need to be. Everyone here is bringing our message to the world."

To ensure that message still goes out, Sister Kim is overseeing new online programs and the live streaming of Sunday Mass. She has put safety measures into effect so that guests from low-infection areas are welcomed with modifications.

The decision to come home stemmed from the Monastery's need for a director of operations and her desire to directly serve her community. She oversees the Spirit Center retreat center, Inn at St. Gertrude, and Historical Museum at St. Gertrude as well as human resources for employees. "I just missed being here: the environment, building, weather, clear and crisp smells of the Camas Prairie...I am enjoying getting to know the staff. Everybody here is stellar, top notch, devoted, kind, willing to do everything they can to help us be better."

Sister Kim moved home in May after serving as a patient advocate and social worker at St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center in Lewiston. In 2013 she earned an



honors degree in Social Work from Lewis-Clark State College and in 2014 received a Master of Social Work degree from Boise State's Master of Social Work Advanced Standing Program. She was also inducted into the Phi Alpha Honor Society for academic achievement in her social work education. During this time she battled and recovered from cancer.

Sister Kim's family are regular visitors during non-pandemic times. Her son and daughter are delighted with her move. Her sister, Professor Deborah Jordan at Jacksonville University in Florida, has enlisted the assistance of the sisters and staff to participate in a pen pal project this fall. The participants are uniquely paired with each other and exchange letters in an effort to share wisdom and life experience.

Her vocation began when she visited the Monastery for a two-week monastic living experience in the summer of 1997. Her son and daughter were grown and she was inspired to not only reclaim her Catholic faith but to explore the idea of religious life. "I was taught by Benedictine sisters from Atchison, Kansas, and always felt I had a Benedictine heart," she says. "I learned to let go and let God speak to me. You really have to do that in religious life. During formation I was asked, 'Does this way of life give you life?'" recalls Sister Kim. "It is, without a doubt, still giving me life." ✕

Sister Kim was recently featured in Idaho Public Television's *The 180*. Find the link and read more on her "Meet the Sisters" page at stgertrudes.org.



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Sister Karen Makes Perpetual Monastic Profession

On Saturday, August 15, 2020 — Feast of the Assumption — Sister Karen Martin made her Perpetual Monastic Profession, the final promise made in becoming a sister of the Benedictine community of the Monastery of St. Gertrude.

“Today, Karen, you are witnessing to the promise of the Lord, whose call to you is being fulfilled,” spoke the prioress, Sister Mary Forman, in her reflection. “This call you have heard in our life together. You, indeed, and we are blessed among women.”

Sister Karen was accompanied in the ceremony by her formation director, Sister Mary Marge Goeckner. The majority of the monastic community was present and sisters on mission as well as friends and family were able to witness the ceremony via live stream.

Sister Karen was born in Perham, Minnesota, to a farming family. She grew up Lutheran and while less-than-enthusiastic about church itself, she loved the organ music. As she grew through a childhood that she calls a “journey of forgiveness,” she began to feel a deep sense of the presence of God.

Several influential teachers helped her overcome difficulties in family and development. Karen graduated as valedictorian of her high school class and went to the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, Minnesota. Within a few weeks she attended Mass at Sacred Heart Convent Chapel. “At Mass I sensed a transcendence — a meeting of heaven and earth; the inspirational music and beautiful chapel certainly facilitated prayer.” She was confirmed Catholic.



Sister Karen (center) with her formation director Sister Mary Marge (left) and the prioress, Sister Mary.

Having always heard the call to religious life, at the age of 53 she decided to take action. She did an internet search for Benedictine communities and discovered St. Gertrude’s. She made her first visit in January 2013, returned for two more visits, and became a postulant in September 2013. Her First Monastic Profession was in 2016. Karen plays organ for Mass and prayer, plays clarinet with the Idaho County Orchestra, works in the Business Office, teaches piano, and helps with a variety of other projects around the Monastery. She also enjoys the Idaho climate.

“I have a desire to share a common vision of faith and spirituality with like-minded people,” she says. “We travel on our earthly journey aware, alert, thankful, only partially at home, and with a barefooted soul. Each day we are called to listen to God, those around us, and God’s Holy Word. We are called to live the ordinary life extraordinarily well.” ✕



Sisters are serving in the pandemic. Several sisters have received Catholic Extension’s *Sisters on the Frontlines* grants that they will use to help individuals and families suffering in this time. Read a full feature on the homepage at stgertrudes.org.

The oblates celebrate a new leadership team!

Sister Teresa and Oblate Jeannette Kelley (left and right) oversaw the creation of a new leadership structure that



features Debbie McCoy (front) as the administrative coordinator, Barbara Wodynski (back) as formation coordinator, and Jane Somerton (back, right) as the lead coordinator. Learn more about the oblates at stgertrudes.org.

mission advancement

A New Century of Benedictine Life: Building Remodel Update

History is happening at St. Gertrude's. After 70 years, the residential wing — also known as the Annex — will be updated to meet the needs of ministries into the future. The Annex is in need of updated plumbing and electrical as well as asbestos abatement. In addition, individual rooms will be enlarged and will feature private bathrooms. (Currently there are common bathrooms on each floor.) The major remodel begins this fall and will last approximately six months. The cost is \$2.3 million.

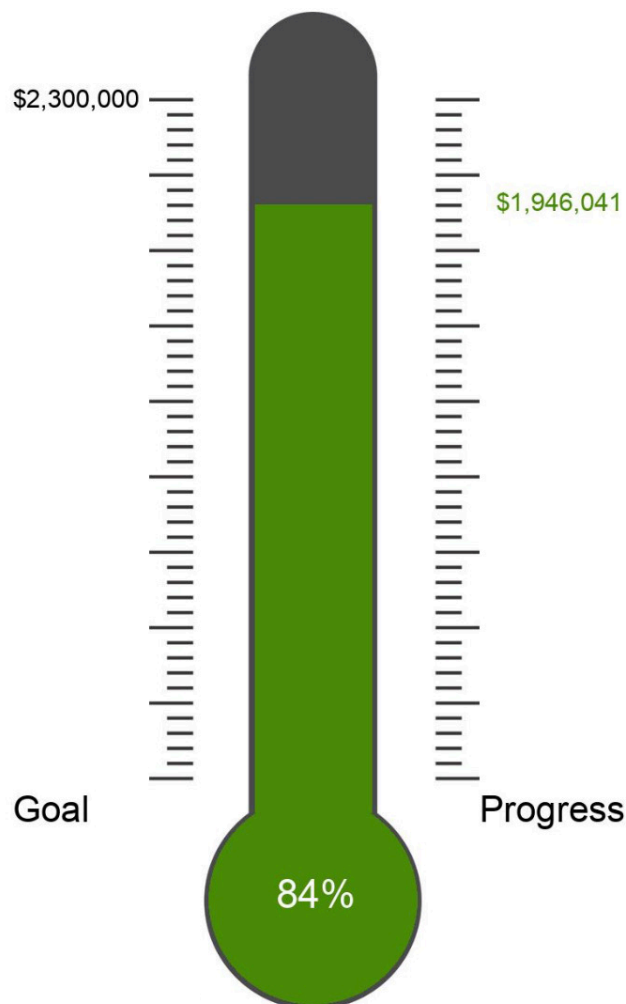
The planning and fundraising teams have finalized architectural plans, chosen a building contractor, and have a project completion schedule in hand. In July, with 80 percent of the funds raised, we began the public phase of the campaign. Thanks to you, we have raised another \$82,055 to date.

The renovations will create an energy efficient residence for those who live at the Monastery and coordinate ministries, which serve 20,000 guests, artists, and retreatants annually. With a deep commitment to the future of monastic life, according to the Rule of Benedict, we will welcome new vocations and host sisters and cohousing residents in a contemporary monastery residence.

To support this campaign, just return your donation in the enclosed envelope. If you know of anyone who would be interested in supporting this project, please share this article or campaign web page at stgertrudes.org/building-campaign. ✕



The Annex will be remodeled starting this fall.



Spirit Center Status



In early November the sisters will move out of the Annex into Spirit Center (the retreat center), where they will live until the remodel is complete in spring of 2021. They will continue prayer and Mass in the Chapel (which remains closed to the public). During the remodel Spirit Center will be closed but the Farmhouse will be available for group retreats. Depending on the status of the pandemic, there may be the possibility of day-long events at Spirit Center. For questions and Farmhouse reservations, contact the new interim manager, Tim Oberholzer, at 208-962-2070 or email toberholzer@stgertrudes.org.

Volunteer Renovation Coordinator and More: Jo-Anne Zimmer



Oblate Jo-Anne Zimmer is overseeing the historic renovation of the Annex. As a retired self-employed general contractor who spent her career in new construction and as a kitchen remodel specialist, she brings tremendous skills and experience to the work. Her arrival as a live-in volunteer upon her retirement six years ago combined with emerging building issues can only be attributed to God's grace.

"A person can retire to go play but I love an organized, Benedictine life with purpose," she explained. "Once this project came along I feel like I really knew why God sent me here."

The idea to remodel emerged when the community began to talk about the idea of cohousing, in which a group of women would live monastic life alongside the sisters. This meant remodeling the 5th floor dormitory-style rooms into suites with private bathrooms. Then what Jo-Anne calls the "pipe bomb" went off: a plumbing problem that revealed that the entire Annex system, that was meant to last for fifty years, was twenty years overdue for replacement. Add to that long-overdue asbestos abatement. Add to that the need to prepare for vocations with expanded living areas for all of the floors. A full-scale renovation was born.

Jo-Anne is special projects manager. She wrote grants to Support Our Aging Religious for other improvements on the assisted living floor (and oversaw the work). For the Annex remodel, she works with architects, meets with our favorite local contractor Morris Arnzen, selects materials, keeps a project schedule, and more. She knows this project is a big deal. "This remodel will take us into the future and beyond," she said. ✕



THE ST. GERTRUDE'S ECOSYSTEM

*A Reflection by Carrie Barton,
Donor Relations Manager*

One of the great joys of my work is visiting with St. Gertrude's supporters. Lately, I've been asking the question, "What inspires you to give your time, talent, and treasure?" The answer I hear most frequently is, "It makes me feel good!" There is some science behind that answer. A growing body of evidence, including research conducted by the University of Oregon, shows that generosity stimulates the production of dopamine, creating activity in regions of the brain connected to pleasure and reward. Our self-esteem and sense of purpose increase just knowing we made life better for someone else.



Lynne Twist, author of *The Soul of Money*, reminds us that in nature, different species of plants and animals coexist, "each providing something essential to a balanced environment, an ecosystem that supports all life." The same is true of the relationship between St. Gertrude's and you. Each of us offers something essential that helps balance the St. Gertrude's ecosystem. Each of us collaborates in St. Gertrude's mission and ministries. We are partners working together to extend healing hospitality, creative peacemaking, and grateful simplicity to a world in need.

In *The Soul of Money*, Ms. Twist says, "Collaboration and reciprocity are natural, and yet in the world that we inhabit, competition and the fear of scarcity often block us from seeing these ways of being with one another." I am grateful that you choose to embrace collaboration in community with St. Gertrude's or any other organization working for the greater good. That choice is a bold manifestation of God's love in the world. My prayer is that each of us feels the reciprocity in our acts of good will — making life better for ourselves and for others. ✕

**Contact Carrie Barton at 208-962-5060 or
cbarton@stgertrudes.org.**

Fear of the Lord is an attitude of proper respect for God, based on a realistic appreciation of who God is and who we are. It expresses itself in actions that are appropriate to a servant of God. Fear of the Lord is not a recipe for passivity and inaction. Rather, it is the beginning of true wisdom.⁸

The phrase “to fear God/the Lord” is one of the most frequently cited phrases in all the Bible, with over 150 citations, with the version, “to fear God/the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” appearing nine times (Job 28:28; Ps 111:10; Prov. 1:7, 9:10; Sirach 1:14,16,18, 19:17; and Isaiah 43:35). Predominantly in the wisdom literature, fear of the Lord is also described as pure (Ps 19:10); “prolongs life” (Prov 10:27); “is a strong defense” (Prov 14:26); “is a fountain of life” (Prov 14:27); “is training for wisdom” (Prov 15:33); “is glory and splendor” (Sir 1:9); “warms the heart” (Sir 1:10), “is wisdom and culture” (Sir 1:24); and “is the treasure of Zion” (Is 33:6). In none of these descriptions of the fear of the Lord, is there a hint of being afraid, but rather partaking in aspects that are life-giving, as if to say that is who God is.

A related expression for one who draws close to God to do as God desires, is that of a God-fearing person. Eight such persons are called God-fearing in the Bible: Joseph in dealing with his brothers (Gen 42:18), Moses in choosing elders with whom to share his leadership (Ex 18:21), Elisha (2 Kgs 4:1), Hananiah (Neh 7:2), Judith (Jdt 8:8, 8:31, 11:17), Job (1:9), Susanna (Dan 13:2), and Cornelius (Acts 10:1,22). “God-fearing” is a favorite expression for Benedict — a quality to look for in the leaders and in the deans.

In Benedict’s rule, the Latin for God-fearing is always *timens Deum*. Fearing God, expected of every monk, is clearly seen as the first step of humility: “the first step of humility, then is that [one] keeps the fear of God [*timorem Dei*] always before [one’s] eyes (Ps 35[36]:2) and never forgets it. [One] must always remember everything God has commanded, always keeping in mind that...all who fear God [*timentibus Deum*] have everlasting life awaiting them” (RB 7.10-11). Benedict follows the Biblical understanding of covenantal relationship with God: a God-fearing monk is obedient to whatever is asked and can anticipate eternal life. To reinforce this teaching on obedience to what God wills, Benedict quotes Psalm 35/36:2. The fear of God in this psalm “implies actual intimacy with God, knowledge of [God’s] love, and utmost confidence in [God’s] fidelity.”⁹

Timens Deum contrasts sharply with *pavor* and *perterritus*, Benedict’s words for fear and terrify thoroughly, which appear on Prologue 48: “Do not be terrified thoroughly by fear immediately and run away from the way of salvation, which must be begun by a narrow beginning.” Thus, the God-fearing monk is not afraid or terrified in his/her search for God in the community, but rather s/he draws close to God in prayer, lectio, the Divine Office, in interactions with members of the community covenanted with God, aware that it is God’s grace that makes possible intimacy with God and the ability to love one’s fellow members.

Recently at Sister Karen Martin’s Perpetual Profession ceremony (August 15, 2020), I reminded her and the community in the words of Henri Nouwen of blessed memory the following:

Community life is not a creation of human will but an obedient response to the reality of our being united... we are community not because we like each other or have a common task or project but because we are called together by God. God seems pleased to call together in Christian communities people who are humanly speaking, very different, who come from different cultures, classes and countries... Each person must love the others with all their differences and work with them for community. These people would never have chosen to live with each other. Humanly speaking, it seems an impossible challenge. But it is precisely because it is impossible that they believe that God has chosen them to live in this community. So then [with the grace of God] the impossible becomes possible.¹⁰

In other words, it is God who makes possible our becoming God-fearing, that is, we draw on God’s Holy Spirit to grant the gifts necessary to learn to love as the Divine One loves—totally, unconditionally, and in a covenantal relationship of desiring the best for others, a love given freely and wholeheartedly. This “God-fearing” way to love takes a lifetime of drawing close to the One who alone embodies loving unto death and beyond. One can never presume one has accomplished fear of the Lord; however, others may glimpse such in wise elders, in self-sacrificing parents and grandparents, in altruistic teachers, volunteers, and exemplars of servant leadership.

May we all look on such God-fearers around us, thank them for their example and hold our hope and trust in God to ask that we become models of grace, that is, treasurers of God-fearing love for those, who are vulnerable, exploited and longing to be seen as blessed in God’s eyes. ✠

8 Daniel J. Harrington, “Fear of the Lord,” *America* 199.15 (November 10, 2008) 39.

9 Samuel Terrien, “Psalm 36,” *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003) 314.

10 Henri Nouwen, as cited by Vü Tién Long, “The Grace of Community Life,” <https://dhformation.wordpress.com/2012/04/07/the-grace-of-community-life/>.

born into eternal life

In Memoriam: Sister Agnes Reichlin, OSB

"All of life is a healing journey.....I do whatever I can to help people come to that."

Sister Agnes Reichlin was born into eternal life at 8:35 a.m. on July 22, 2020. She was 86 years old and had been a Benedictine sister for 67 years. She will be remembered for her influential career in nursing, inspiring retreat ministry, and her enduring presence of love and patience.



Her story with St. Gertrude's began long before she was born. Her great grandparents on her mother's side are John and Gertrude Uhlenkott, who offered the land that helped inspire the sisters to move to Cottonwood in 1906. Her dad Frank, also a Swiss immigrant, often worked for the St. Gertrude's community as a woodcutter and farmer. Her mother Agnes grew up near the convent and her family was closely associated to the community through Mother Scholastica Uhlenkott.

When she was in first grade Agnes rode to a one-room schoolhouse west of Keuterville on a pony her father gave her. In second grade she was sent to boarding school at nearby St. Gertrude's. Amidst the nuns she began to have a sense of her own vocation. On February 1st, 1952, at the age of 18, Agnes entered St. Gertrude's. A year and a half later she made her First Profession. A year after that she was sent to Ogden, Utah, to study nursing.

After receiving her nursing diploma, Sister Agnes was sent to work at St. Benedict's Hospital in Jerome. Almost immediately she began to teach LPN classes. In 1963, she was appointed by Governor Smylie to the Idaho Board of Nursing. In 1965 she entered Seattle University, testing through many of the classes and completing her bachelor's degree in two years. She was inducted into Sigma Theta Tau nursing honor society. Twelve months later she obtained a master's degree in Nursing Administration and Maternal Child Health from University of Washington. She then became Director of Nursing, first at Jerome and then at St. Mary's Hospital in Cottonwood, where she stayed for the next 22 years.

Sister Agnes served 18 years as president of the St. Mary's Board of Directors and was honored for 25 years of service on St. Benedict's Family Medical Center Board of Directors. She spent years teaching for the hospital and community and served on many hospital and community

organizations' boards including an advisory council at Lewis Clark State College of Nursing. In 1970, she was appointed again to the Idaho Board of Nursing by Governor Cecil D. Andrus and served as the chairperson for four years. In 2012, the March of Dimes recognized Sister Agnes as a "Legend in Nursing." Many sisters and lay people have been inspired by Sister Agnes to become nurses. She lived by St. Benedict's rule that states, "care of the sick must rank above all else."

"Nursing taught me to be observant and listen," she said. "Healing has a lot to do with emotional and spiritual well-being. All of life is a healing journey and this community has a role to play in helping people heal. Jesus said, 'I came so that you may have life and have life to the fullest.' I do whatever I can to help people come to that."

Sister Agnes had a keen interest in ecological health, especially sustainable living. She taught classes on herbs, tonics, and salves for Lewis Clark State College. She also directed the Monastery's assisted living floor, served as the formation director, and was a charter member of the Stewardship of the Land Committee.

Sister Agnes is survived by Frances Reichlin (Elsie), Angeline (Clarence) Fuchs, Rose Wallace, Theresa (David) Shears, Kathleen (Jim) Steinke, many nieces and nephews, and her Benedictine sisters. Memorial gifts can be made to the Monastery of St. Gertrude. ✕



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teamwork

The sign on Peggy's office door.

Keeping the House

When Peggy Matson applied to work at the Monastery in 1988, she was newly married and working at a local bar. Her mom's best friend, Jeanette Nuxoll, worked in the St. Gertrude's kitchen and suggested Peggy apply. Sister Sylveria hired her and soon Peggy was creating meals alongside Jeanette and another long-time legend of the St. Gertrude's kitchen: Dolores Enneking, who is still working there.

Peggy was immersed in the enduring values of St. Gertrude's: to not be wasteful, reuse, no clanging and banging — “regard all utensils and goods of the monastery as sacred vessels of the altar.” (Rule of Benedict, Ch. 31). Peggy later moved to housekeeping where she worked with Donna Ross, who not only taught her how to strip and wax the floors, but that “we should clean well because it represents the Monastery.”

Over the years Peggy found support from her employer in raising her three sons — running out to school events, doctor appointments, etc. Recently, Peggy took a shift caregiving on the assisted living floor because she wanted to be a part of honoring sisters as they aged. “This place is a peaceful and quiet escape. I’ve never felt so appreciated in any other place I’ve worked.”

Peggy became housekeeping manager in 2002. With few retreatants these days, the team is catching up on deep cleaning projects. “I just try to make housekeeping feel equal, we work well together and have respect for one another. If someone needs extra support we can communicate and be there.” ✕



Housekeeping Team: [Felecia Brailey](#), Sherry Buttenhoff, Ruth Greiner, Peggy Matson, and Donna Ross.



museum

Salmon River Ancients



Just a few miles from the Monastery, down on the Salmon River, archeologists have unearthed evidence of human life dating to 16,000 years ago. This is more than a thousand years earlier than scientists previously thought — changing the timeline history on migrations across the Bering Strait thousands of years ago. Stone tools and other artifacts unearthed suggest these people are among the earliest evidence of humans in North America. Researchers uncovered several hundred artifacts, including stone tools; charcoal; fire-cracked rock; and bone fragments.

An artifact from the excavation is now on display at the Historical Museum at St. Gertrude. An in-depth article on the Cooper's Ferry project can be found at historicalmuseumatstgertrude.org. ✕



Archeologist Loren Davis at the Cooper's Ferry site.

**Visit the Historical Museum at St. Gertrude:
Monday — Saturday, 9 a.m. — 4:30 p.m.**

