



CANTICLE OF ST GERTRUDE

A JOURNAL OF OUR LIFE

WINTER 2024

SISTER TERESA JACKSON ELECTED PRIORESS

On November 12, 2023, the Benedictine Sisters gathered in the monastery chapel at the Center for Benedictine Life - the last session of their three-day chapter. In previous sessions, they discussed and approved direction statements and other business related to the monastic community.

This Sunday afternoon session brought the Sisters together to cast their votes for a new prioress.

In the presence of facilitator Sister Jane Becker, OSB, from Monastery Immaculate Conception, Ferdinand, Indiana, and Sister Jeanne Weber, OSB, of Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, South Dakota, who is also president of the Monastic Congregation of St. Gertrude, the votes were tallied to confirm Sister Teresa Jackson, OSB, as prioress.

From the San Francisco Bay Area, Sister Teresa earned degrees in history, law and spirituality before entering the Monastery of St. Gertrude in 1997. She professed first vows in 2000 and final vows in 2003. She previously ministered as a retreat facilitator, volunteer director and vocation director, and is a certified spiritual director.

Sister Teresa had been serving as interim administrator for the CBL since her appointment in May following the death of Sister Mary Forman. She led the community of Sisters, Oblates, employees and volunteers



Sister Jeanne Weber, left, president of the Monastic Congregation of St. Gertrude, installed Sister Teresa Jackson as prioress on December 3.

through a challenging transition while encouraging the progress of the Benedictine Cohousing Community, Spirit Center programs and other initiatives.

On December 3, during a special Mass, Sister Teresa was formally installed as prioress by Sister Jeanne Weber.

As Sister Teresa begins her six-year term, she plans to continue the smooth transition that is bringing the Center for Benedictine Life into the national - and international - spotlight, welcoming all to move forward on their journey integrating the Benedictine charism and spirituality into their lives.

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.

From the Prioress

The World Needs Benedict Now More than Ever

Here at the Center for Benedictine Life at the Monastery of St. Gertrude, we believe that the world needs Benedict now more than ever.

There is no lack of things in the world to worry about today. Profound political, social, cultural divisions seem to drive us into silos where we only talk to people who we know already agree with us. Climate change threatens our very planet. Wars threaten not only countries but the stability of our broader world. How do we cope with a society, a world, that may seem like it is on the verge of collapse? As we worry about the challenges and problems of our modern world, we usually focus on modern solutions for our modern world. But perhaps the best solutions may not be new and timely, but rather time tested and proven.

St. Benedict (480 - 547) lived in a time even more challenging than our own. In response to the profound problems of his time, Benedict did not despair, give up or engage in frenetic activity. Instead, he created a guidebook for people who wanted to live a life focused on God above all else, and he created a community focused on living the values of the Gospel in daily life. His guidebook, the Rule of St. Benedict, was a very practical guide for fallible human beings seeking to live a transformative faith.

One of the key aspects of Benedict's guidebook highlights people practicing their faith and values as part of a community. Our contemporary emphasis on individualism at all costs was totally foreign to monastic life. In the next to last chapter of his Rule, he states: "may [God] bring us all together to everlasting life." In other words, we are not alone on this journey; we do it together.

How different would our world be if we took Benedict's emphasis on community seriously? When you are a part of a community, you cannot easily dismiss or disparage people you don't like or with whom you disagree. As part of a community, you are accountable for your actions that hurt the community, and you also receive the support you need to live up to the community's ideals. As a part of a



community, you know that your healing and salvation are not simply an individual matter but are bound up with those of other people.

At the Center for Benedictine Life at the Monastery of St. Gertrude, we try - and struggle (!) - to live Benedict's ideal of community. There is a famous story in which a newcomer to a monastery asked an old monastic what they did all day. The monastic thought for a while and said, "Well, we fall down, and we get up, and we fall down, and we get up." That is the Benedictine value of community that the world needs so badly. We are all part of a larger community, we all need each other, and together we fall down and support each other to get up.

We are blessed to have all of you as part of our community!

Sr. Teresa Jackson OSB

Sr. Teresa Jackson OSB
Prioress

Advancing the Mission

With community life foundational to the *Rule of St. Benedict*, the sisters at the Monastery of St. Gertrude have chosen to evolve the concept of community and invite others to share in that relationship - oblates, volunteers, employees, benefactors, artists-in-residence, retreatants, members of the Benedictine Cohousing Community, and friends. Anyone who desires a deeper connection with the divine is welcome to learn and grow with the Center for Benedictine Life community.

This exciting evolution in the life of St. Gertrude's calls for changes in our language and how we work. To that end, our development and communications departments are combining into a new department - Mission Advancement. This change in language helps further the mission of the Center for Benedictine Life in two ways.

First, thinking of our work as Mission Advancement, rather than development and communications as separate functions, encourages us to question everything: does this work elevate our values of healing hospitality, grateful simplicity, and creative peacemaking? Does it further our mission to share Benedictine spirituality? If not, can we find a different way?

Second, Mission Advancement directs our focus to the shift in our identity from "the sisters are St. Gertrude's" to "**WE** are St. Gertrude's."

Adopting an identity in which **WE** are St. Gertrude's ensures the continuity of this sacred place, it's people and the ministries of the Center for Benedictine Life. As a community, **WE** can expand our outreach to share Benedictine life, spirituality, and values with a world in dire need of grounding in the Holy.

Now that you know more about Mission Advancement, did you realize that every time you share your St. Gertrude's connection with family and friends, you are helping fulfill the mission of the Center for Benedictine Life? Keep it up! And if you have any questions or comments, please get in touch. Call (208) 962-5060 or email cbarton@stgertrudes.org.

Thank you for your faithful and generous support!



Mission Advancement Office Staff, left to right: Michele Byers, Carrie A. Barton, Julie A. Ferraro.

Rest in Peace

Tributes to Sister Cecile Marie Uhlorn

When Sister Cecile Marie Uhlorn passed away on September 19, 2023, a bit of music left the world with her. "Her voice and music was and is heavenly," wrote Peggy Barrett on Facebook. "She was so kind and loving."



Her relatives appreciated her music, as Carol Terhaar Adams explained. "Sr. Cecile was such a caring and fun Aunt. Enjoyed her visits with our family so much and the singing we would do when she played

her guitar. She was such a good choir director she could get us all singing."

Past students honored her, too. "God blessed you abundantly, dear Cecile," wrote Cheryl Hampton. "Thank you for mentoring me so many years ago."

"We remember your music, your smile, your laugh, your love, and your deep faith and trust in His love," wrote Beth Schu.

Jennifer Horner praised Sister Cecile as "a beautiful person and a wonderful friend," while volunteer Judy Forsman added, "She was kind, funny and full of fun. And oh what a pianist."

As Janice Bury noted, "Thank you for sharing your gifts with all you met, Sister Cecile."

Projects Completed...



Work on the 2nd Floor Bridge, which allows members of the CBL community access to the Sun Porch and other parts of the monastery building, was mostly completed before winter weather set in - in mid-October! Another coat of exterior paint will be applied come spring! Thanks to our donors, and Arnzen Building Constuction for making this goal a reality.



After many months without the elevator servicing the monastery annex, technicians from Otis Elevators set to work providing a complete retrofit - all parts being replaced to ensure future reliability. Sister Teresa Jackson, prioress, blessed the finished equipment - and those who will ride in it - after the final inspection cleared the way for its use.



and Holidays Celebrated

In early November, Sister Elisa Martinez created an altar for Dia de los Muertos in the monastery's multi-purpose room, where members of the CBL community added mementoes of their deceased loved ones.



Many hands contributed to creating a festive atmosphere for the Christmas Eve Mass, with the schola leading carols before the reading of the Martyrology and blessing of the creche.

On December 30, the Idaho County Orchestra performed a holiday concert amidst the lights and poinsettias, too!



News About the Raspberry Social

With the coming of a new year - and a leap year, at that! - the Center for Benedictine Life continues to evolve the way Benedictine spirituality is shared and lived. In February, Sister Teresa Jackson starts a six-part Zoom series through Diffusions: Wisdom from the Center titled "Benedict for Everyone." The Benedictine Cohousing Community has started a formation program for those already living in the monastery, as well.

After much prayerful discernment, the Sisters, oblates and employees of the Center for Benedictine Life at the Monastery of St. Gertrude have decided to discontinue the tradition of the August Raspberry Social. Organizing the event involves more work than is available with our current resources.

We have enjoyed the decades of welcoming our friends and visitors to the monastery and sharing the bounty of our raspberry vines and our hospitality. We look forward to seeing you throughout the year for Mass, prayer, retreats at Spirit Center, a stay at the Inn, or a stop at the Welcome Center and Historical Museum. Know you are always welcome!

Zumstein Legacy Circle Members

The Zumstein Legacy Circle - named after Sister Johanna Zumstein, founder of the Monastery of St. Gertrude - are those who have included the Center for Benedictine Life in their estate plans. Like all donors to the community, they are the recipients of many prayers and abundant gratitude.



Anonymous Members

Mary Lou Amidei
Carrie A. Barton
Doug Black
Frank & Sharon Bouten
William Bouten
Kristi Uhlenkott Bryant
Margaret M. Burt
Michele Byers
Tom & Kathy Cahill
Christine V. Carney
Rev. Barbara Harrison Condon
M. Edrea Eisenhauer
Sister M. Arlene Ellis
Carol Fairhurst
Joseph P. Fetzek
Mary Anne Glodowski
Virginia Goeckner
Carmen Haddock
Dr. Rhonda Hazell
Charles & Debra Heller
Theresa Henson
Birgitta Maria Ingemanson
Laurie Coffey Jones
Fred & Jeannette Kelley
Lisa Ladendorff & Peter Wordelman

David & Christine Larson
Amber R. Lewis
Beth McPherson
Robert & Vivian Parrish
Greta D. Pate
Gloria Hall Pettinger
Maria Plafcan
Kristin Prieur
Mike & Nadine Reilly
Judy Roe
Jim & Mary Schmidt
Joann Schmidt
Msgr. Andrew Schumacher
M. Louise Shaner
Pauline Spangler
Dixie Stevens
Susan H. Swetnam
Irma Tacke
Patricia W. Thrasher
The Revs. W. Robert & J. Kay Totten
Jerry & Kaye Wessels Family Trust
Theresa Kopczynski Wessels Family
Mary V. Willcox
David Wong
Larry & Cindy Youngberg

YES! I want information about the Zumstein Legacy Circle.

- ☐ The Center for Benedictine Life at the Monastery of St. Gertrude is already included in my will or estate plans. Please welcome me as a member of the Zumstein Legacy Circle.
- ☐ Please send me more information about the Zumstein Legacy Circle.
- ☐ I would like learn more about how to support the Center for Benedictine Life with a recurring monthly gift.

Name _____ Email _____
Street _____ City _____
State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Return in the enclosed envelope.

Financial Report

July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

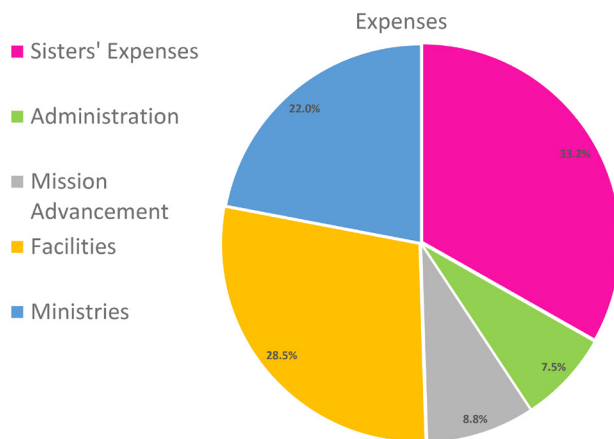
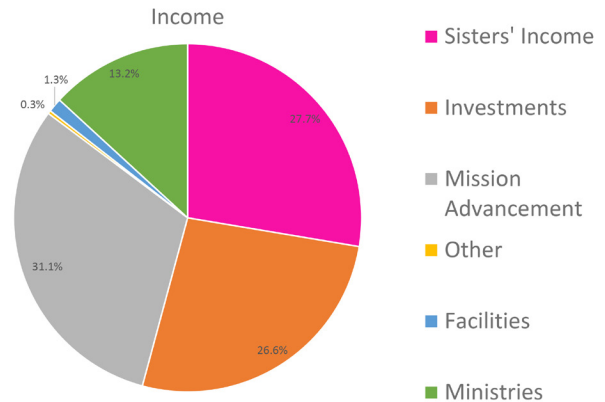
We are deeply grateful for the gifts given by 1279 donors, and welcome 153 new donors!

On both charts, Ministries includes:

- Spirit Center
- Historical Museum at St. Gertrude
- Inn at St. Gertrude

Mission Advancement includes:

- Development
- Communications
- Marketing



One thing about Benedictine religious life that hasn't changed in over 1,500 years:

The Sisters - along with the entire Center for Benedictine Life community - join in prayer daily for our donors. While the balance of Benedictine spirituality allows for practical matters to be handled - everything from burnt out lightbulbs to shoveling snow - it is by holding the donors, and many others, in prayer that the CBL community continually shows gratitude for the exceptional generosity of all those who support our ministries.



Museum Musings

What an incredible 2023 at the Historical Museum and Gift Shop! Our year began with the Steffens Foundation awarding us a grant to pay admissions for school groups. Nine schools - a total of 153 students and 47 accompanying adults - took advantage of the offer. We require one adult to accompany every four children.

No admission was charged during the Raspberry Social when nine Living History actors shared their 60-90 second stories with guests throughout the museum. At least 500 people enjoyed the presentations, according to our estimate.

Overall, nearly 2,400 people toured the museum between January and December.

The Spotlight Gallery offered three exhibits during the year: "Together We Serve" showing our military artifacts; "Icons of the Prairie," exhibited art highlighting local artists during spring and summer; "A Prairie Wedding Fest" currently features wedding dresses and gifts.

Thanks to our museum members and the Speaker's Bureau, two lectures were held in the spring and two in the fall. We hope to continue to offer this enrichment to the community free of charge.

The Gift Shop continues to add a broad range of unique items: flour sack towels featuring an image of either Cottonwood or the Monastery campus, a variety of jams made by the cloistered monks in Massachusetts, wine and water tumblers or refrigerator magnets produced by Prairie High School students, hard-to-find books about Idaho, and many items from handmade cards to soaps and salves made by our Sisters and members of the Center for Benedictine Life. We also now stock items specific to the holy sacraments along with other religious gifts.

Please mark your calendar to visit the museum and gift shop in 2024!

Visit the Historical Museum website for more information:

<https://historicalmuseumatstgertrude.org>

Spirit Center

During 2023, the staff at Spirit Center made a point to "Invite You to the Center." This message - with a bit of a double meaning - offered numerous opportunities for groups and individuals to find spiritual sustenance at the Spirit Center and the Center for Benedictine Life, as well as enjoying programs offered online through Diffusions: Wisdom from the Center.

We said farewell to Marilyn Uhlenkott upon her retirement during the first half of the year, welcoming Tiffany McWilliams, who embodies Benedictine hospitality with her winning smile and gracious solicitude.

Spirit Center offered 21 in-person programs between January and December, with a total of 222 people in attendance. We also hosted 64 groups, welcoming another 644 people to our campus.

Well aware that some seekers simply wish to take time away from their daily routine to refresh their spirit, we were glad to offer space to 136 private retreatants for prayer and silence.

With online programs drawing interest around the globe, 18 programs were offered through Diffusions (formerly St. Gertrude's L.I.V.E.). For these, a total of 335 people "logged on" and engaged in conversations both lively and inspiring.

Looking forward to 2024, Spirit Center will continue to Invite You to the Center with programs

that provide healing hospitality and creative peacemaking in a spirit of grateful simplicity.

Be sure to check out our schedule:

www.spirit-center.org

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and February
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