

The Focus

Benedictine Sisters
of Watertown, SD

Summer Vol. 38
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Hospitality is one of the major Benedictine values described in Chapter 53 of the **Rule of Benedict**, a book that lays out the basics for our life together as monastic women; namely, *“All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, for he himself will say: ‘I was a stranger and you welcomed me.’” (Matt. 25:25)* So simple, so direct and yet so challenging. The chapter goes on to explain in surprising detail how the guests are to be treated *“with all the courtesy of love.”* To ensure this welcoming process, Benedict adds: *“The guest quarters are to be entrusted to a God-fearing brother/sister.”*

Guest Director since she moved back to the Monastery several years ago. *“Receiving and caring for the needs of guests,”* she explains, *“was an easy transition for me when I returned to the Monastery after working for many years as a pharmacist in health care-related ministries. ‘Receiving and caring for guests’ instead of patients was a natural extension of my ministry in health care. I enjoy arranging for and taking care of the needs of our guests, much as I did for the patients I served for so many years.”*

A Motto For Life: "Let All Guests be Received as Christ"

The Sisters at Mother of God Monastery do their best to live up to Benedict’s hospitality standards for guests. Sister Johanna Schumacher has served as

In Chapter 66 of the **Rule**, Benedict outlines the duties and qualities of the Guest Mistress, or Portress, who *“should be a wise senior not prone to wandering about”* and should be available for guests at all times. S. Johanna admits that she does do a bit of *“wandering about”* as she is *“taking care of Dayspring; making reservations for guests at the Monastery,*

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Greetings

From the Prioress

Sister Marlene Minnaert
Prioress of Mother of God Monastery

Dear “faithful readers of the Focus”,

In this issue of the Focus we share with you the stories of a few of our Sisters, S. Rosalie, S. Teresa Ann and S. Johanna. They continue to faithfully live out their Benedictine commitment through a dedicated life in monastic community. The commitment of a Benedictine is to seek God within community, to strive to grow in relationship with our Creator and Redeemer and to continually show by our lives that it is possible to live in peace and harmony while working, praying, and living together. You might say, “How do you do this when you seem to live such busy lives?”

Or, as you read about our busy lives you might wonder how you can seek God and grow in these

The Beatitudes was the title for our community’s annual retreat in June with S. Margaret Michaud, OSB, of St. Benedict’s Monastery, St. Joseph, MN. It was a blessed time for all of us. Using the account from the Gospel of Matthew, she equated the 8 Beatitudes to the rungs of a ladder, each Beatitude hinging on the one(s) before. Connecting them to verses in the Rule of Benedict was also helpful. For instance, the first beatitude speaks of being poor in spirit. In poverty, we take care of what we do have and we have a reverence for all good things. It spurs gratitude. This connects with our value of treating all things of the monastery as though they were vessels of the altar. A wonderful week of reflection and prayer!

- S. Terri Hoffman

relationships and yet do so much?

In many ways it’s like all faithful “God Seekers” no matter what vocation we live. Busy married couples, single adults and parents all committed to their work, still stay connected if not by phone or other social media device but by a letter or in person. They are aware mentally of their relationships. They are never far away. We all find a way to spend quality time with those we love. For our religious community, time committed to prayer is top priority. It forms the bookends of our day. Together we pray Morning and Evening Prayer, Mass at 11:00 am and Day Prayer at 12:45 am. Lectio, Centering Prayer and Scripture reading are other times when we converse with the Beloved throughout the day.

The psalms, which are the foundation of our prayer remind us that God can be found in all the experiences of life. It is easy to stay in touch with our Lord when we realize that He is with us in every experience from seeing the beautiful sunrise, the delight of a child playing with a stuffed animal or even while dealing with a difficult situation. God is there with a message for us. Every moment reminds us that God is present and calls us to respond. This reminds me of the relationship of parents with children or persons with those they love. They can be present to them all the time even when they are not physically together. It is their awareness of them that makes them present.



Sister Margaret Michaud, OSB

Monastery News

The Latest Events of the Benedictine Sisters

60th Jubilee:

Sister Amanda Wolf, OSB

S. Amanda Wolf (Clara) was born on the family farm near Zeeland, ND. The Wolf family moved in 1943 to a farm near Raymond, SD. Clara attended grade school at Logan Consolidated School and high school at Mount Marty in Yankton, SD. During her junior year, Clara entered Sacred Heart convent, making Monastic Profession on June 29, 1956. S. Amanda is a founding member of Mother of God Monastery. Her journey of places of ministry include teaching at Polo and Zell, SD; financial offices at St. Mary's Hospital, Pierre, SD; working with the homeless and marginalized at Care and Share in Crookston, MN; missionary in Gualan, Guatemala; and hospitality at Benet Place Independent Living, Watertown, SD. Presently, S. Amanda resides at Mother of God Monastery.



Congratulations!

70th Jubilee:

Sister Marmion Maiers, OSB

Life for Alice Florence began February 28, 1924 in Ipswich, SD, daughter of John and Clara Maiers. Her father died when she was young so her mother moved to town, six blocks from Holy Cross School and Church in Ipswich to raise her eight children. They attended Holy Cross Parish.

Alice entered as a candidate at Sacred Heart Convent in Yankton at the age of 13. She graduated from high school at the age of 16. Her first assignment was to teach at the Indian Mission School in Stephan. After becoming a novice, Alice questioned her vocation and left the convent. She worked in various jobs for the next few years, one being a rivet bucker for Boeing Aircraft in Seattle. She returned to the convent and made her first profession in 1946. S. Marmion spent many years in education then shifted to parish work, spending 13 years at Sacred Heart Parish, Texarkana, TX. Presently she resides at the Monastery.



75th Jubilee:

Sister Rosalie Sitzmann, OSB

Sister Rosalie is celebrating her 75th anniversary of service to God and the world and her 95th birthday. You can find her story on page 6 of this issue.

A Motto for Life

Continued from front page

Dayspring or at Harmony Hill Hall; answering the phone and trying to find people; refurbishing and cleaning the guest areas and stocking supplies; occasionally baking a special treat for the sisters and guests; making jams and jellies; and, of course, taking care of my flowers (the lovely flowers greeting guests as they enter the main door; pictured on page 1), and doing all of this within the confines of the Monastery. Well, maybe I'm not wandering too far, but I am enjoying it all." Most guests announce their coming before they arrive, but some may show up unexpectedly, making S. Johanna's life even more interesting.

In addition to a four-room guest department

located in the monastery, Mother of God Monastery also has an eleven-bed house located south of Benet Place known as "Dayspring", (pictured on page 5) which was originally designed as a retreat center. It is still used for retreats when needed, but also serves as an extension to the guest quarters used



S. Johanna assists Ray, a Benet Place tenant, with a DaySpring reservation.

by guests visiting the Sisters or the Benet Place residents. When necessary, the Sisters also host guests at their community home at Pelican Lake.

All Sisters, of course, not just the guest director, are committed to welcoming the stranger as they would Christ, in whomever they encounter through their ministries. The Benet Place Apartments and Assisted Living Center, for example, have provided

Sisters Foundation Highlights

Great thanks for all of your financial support and prayers throughout the summer. Your response to S. Marlene's request to remodel Benet Place's kitchen was overwhelming! We are excited to create a safe and efficient environment in the kitchen! The 5th Annual Garden Tour was once again a sell-

Your response to S. Marlene's request to remodel Benet Place's kitchen was overwhelming!

out! Our apologies for those of you whom we could not accommodate on this event. Hope you can make it next year! All proceeds from the tour go directly to benefit the good works of the Benedictine Multicultural Center. Thanks to all the Sisters and volunteers who assisted with this event. A special thanks to Dougherty & Company for once again donating the catered luncheon!

Summer Appeal (gross)	\$26,693.00	Garden Tour (gross)	\$2,592.00
Expenses	908.56	Expenses	674.72
Proceeds	25,784.44	Proceeds	1,917.28

many opportunities for the community to express hospitality to those in need of care. Under the direction of Sister Teresa Ann Wolf, administrator, the Benedictine Multicultural Center, located along South Highway 81 near the Monastery has served persons from other cultures in many ways since its opening in 2008. In addition, Sisters from Mother of God Monastery have ministered to the needs of others since they became an independent community in 1961 at Pierre, SD. During their 55 years as a community, they have served those in various health-care-related areas, teaching, parish ministry, pastoral care, administration and even a few newer ministries as they strive to apply Saint Benedict's mandate: ***"Proper honor must be shown to all."***



Article by:

Sister Judith Fischer, OSB



Assisted by:

Sister Johanna Schumacher, OSB

Our **14th Annual Pheasant Hunt** will be held on Sunday, **September 25th**. This all-inclusive hunt will take place at the Oak Tree Lodge. A big thank-you to the Makens family who has been supporting this event since its inception! Following the hunt, there will be a luncheon and live auction. Randy and Chris Owen will once again be our auctioneers and that means lots of fun and laughter! In addition to the auction there will be a raffle for a monastery basket containing fresh produce, canned goods and baked goodies. All proceeds help support the Sisters' ministries. If you are unable to hunt but would like to join us for lunch/auction, contact Jen: communications@dailypost.com.



A Day at the Sturgis Bike Rally

Watertown Initiative to Prevent Sex Trafficking (WIPST) Partners with F.R.E.E. International.



Through a small allowance from the CHI grant to the Watertown Initiative to Prevent Sex Trafficking for volunteers to assist with prevention activities during the Sturgis Rally, Sister Francis Schumacher, Denise Cree, and I spent August 8th working with the F.R.E.E. International staff based at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Sturgis. The following are some of my observations.

8:00 AM: Provided with free parking by the Knights of Columbus, we ate at a Lutheran Church which advertised Breakfast for Bikers. Good food and a number of bikers wore 'Christian Biker' signs.

9:00 AM: We met Tess, Lisa, and Judy, who assigned our work: putting labels with information about sex trafficking and the national hotline number on tubes of lip balm – 4,000 of them! Monotonous work but, oh, so important; if we could help only one victim the tedium was worth it. We also appreciated the networking opportunities.

As we worked

and chatted, the background noise of roaring motorcycles steadily increased, punctuated by an occasional siren.

1:30 PM: We took a late lunch break and navigated through thousands of motorcycles and people for something to eat – loud and overcrowded but we did not feel in any danger. Then back to work on lip balms.

5:30 PM: Finished with lip balms! We took a last walk through Main Street to experience the atmosphere and take photos. A biker from Illinois asked for a photo with him. (left) And a large man with his beard flowing down his leather-covered chest, asked if we were Catholic Sisters, and upon being reassured that we were, proudly told about his eight years of Catholic School in North Carolina. Humbly, he asked for a blessing. I thought, "If he is not embarrassed to ask for a blessing in front of thousands of bikers and half-naked women, then I am not embarrassed to give him one." So I asked him to remove his cap and I stretched my arm high to give him the best blessing in my repertoire.

6:30 PM: Dark storm clouds rolled in and the atmosphere definitely became more menacing-less laughter, more angry tones. Traffickers began to parade their victims for prospective buyers. Definitely time to leave. As we walked past a group of young women dressed in body paint and not much else, I was reminded of the tragic statistics shared earlier by Judy: the largest sex trafficking venue in the United States is the Super Bowl; the second largest is the Sturgis Bike Rally.

Article by:

Sister Teresa Ann Wolf; Grant Manager for the Watertown Initiative to Prevent Sex Trafficking
More Information on WIPST
www.watertownbenedictines.org
 605-878-2021





Sister Rosalie Sitzmann, OSB

Celebrating her 95th Birthday and 75 Years of Service to God in 2016

It is a rare occurrence for a woman to reach her 95th birthday but it is even more rare that she would also be celebrating 75 years of service to God and the world! If you knew S. Rosalie, as many of us do, it would not surprise you that she achieved these two milestones this summer. Along the way, she accomplished incredible things that have improved all of our lives. She has always served God by helping others no matter where her career led her. She is not the only one in her family that chose this path. Sister Rosalie is one of nine children in her family that chose a life in a religious order. Her parents raised eleven children, seven girls joined a

religious order, two boys became priests and two girls chose to lead a married life. The Holy Father must have been impressed with this statistic as he invited the seven nuns to visit him in 1961!

That same year, she became a founding member of Mother of God Monastery. She was elected as the second Prioress of her Benedictine community in 1963. Before becoming Prioress, S. Rosalie was charged with building a permanent home for the sisters and Watertown, SD was chosen. This was no easy task but her perseverance was remarkable.

The sisters knew that she would be capable of leading them in the early 1960's because before the move to Watertown, Sister Rosalie was the Director of Nursing Services in Pierre and in 1949 she started the School of Practical Nursing at St. Mary's Hospital in the same city.

It was one of only a few in the country and South Dakota badly needed one. She gave 35 years of dedicated service to the field of nursing and nursing education. Following those years, Sister entered a Clinical Pastoral Education program and selflessly served in pastoral care until 2006. She has touched the lives of many throughout her ministries and she still does today. Currently she resides at Sacred Heart Monastery Care Center in Yankton, South Dakota.



Article by:
Jennifer Vick, Director
of Community Relations
and Development



S. Ida helps the children learn more about soccer during this year's National Night Out!

Saturday,
October 15th

SAVE THE DATE for the South Dakota Pax Christi Peace Conference on Saturday, October 15, 2016.

The keynote speaker, Rev. John Dear, is an international voice for peace and nonviolence, a priest, pastor, retreat leader and author. The title of his talk will be "The Mission of Gospel Nonviolence". For more information, contact Sister Johanna Schumacher at 605-882-6600.



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Upcoming Events

- **SEPTEMBER 23-24** - Discovering Myself: Through the Enneagram Workshop
- **SEPTEMBER 25** - 14th Annual Pheasant Hunt - Clark, SD
- **OCTOBER 8** - Going Deeper... With the Enneagram Workshop
- **OCTOBER 15** - South Dakota Pax Christi Peace Conference - Watertown, SD
- **OCTOBER 29** - Wheat Weaving Workshop
- **NOVEMBER 11-12** - Healing the Inner Child Workshop
- **DECEMBER 10** - Emmanuel With Us: Advent Retreat

- ALL NEW -

Conversation & Coffee

Two Wednesdays per Month 9:15 - 10:15 am

Our Conversation & Coffee theme this year will center around **WATER**.

Using Scriptural references and images from both the Old and New Testaments, we will explore how God is present as the creating force of love and power of the Holy Spirit from the first pages of Genesis all the way through to the book of Revelation.

Guest presenters who are knowledgeable about water quality and are invested in conservation efforts will facilitate the 2nd session each month.
Join us!



For more information on
Conversation & Coffee visit:
www.watertownbenedictines.org