



# The Focus

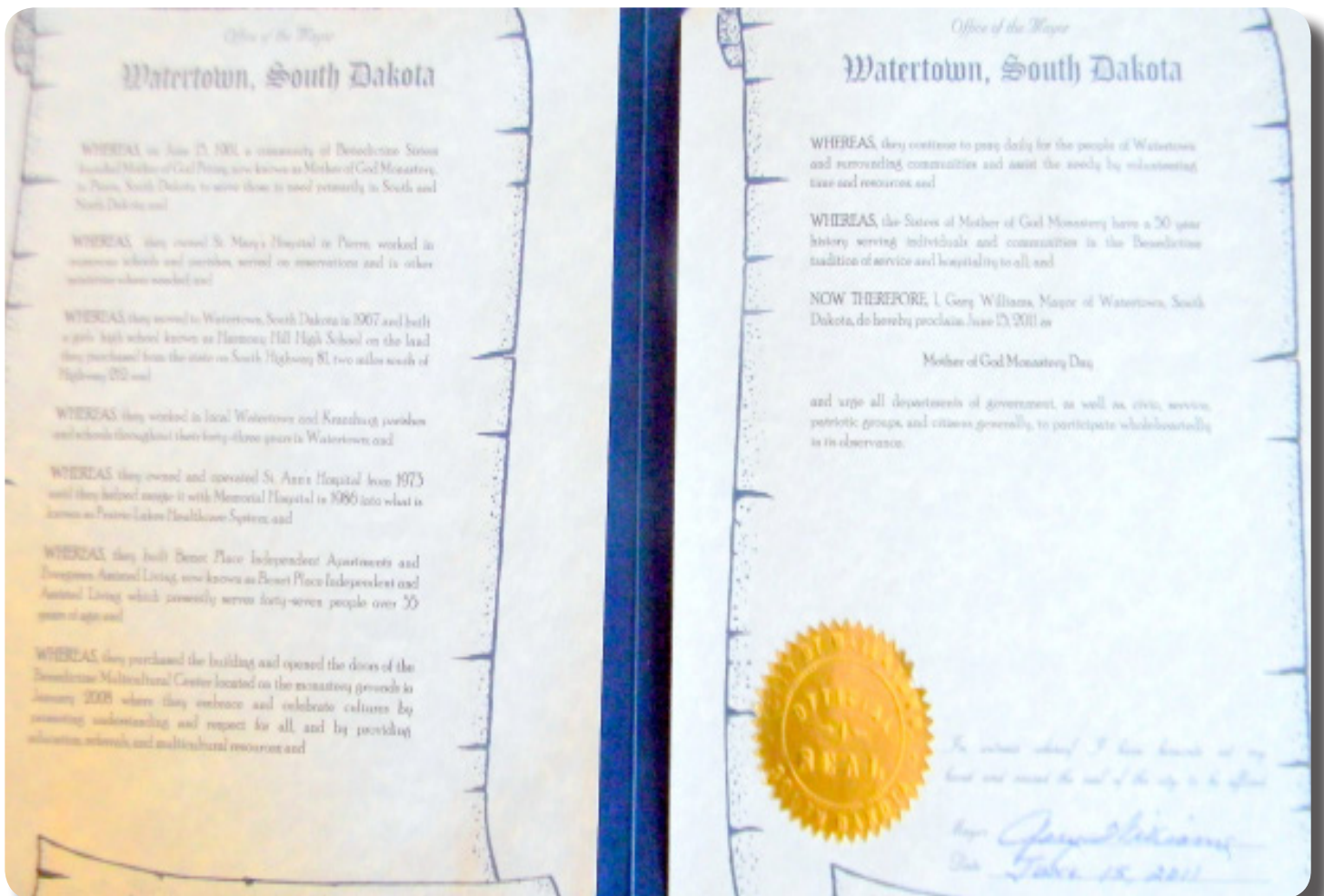
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Fall 2011

BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF WATERTOWN, SOUTH DAKOTA

## SPECIAL 50TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

The Sisters of Mother of God Monastery have been celebrating fifty years of Benedictine service throughout 2011. Celebrations have been held at various missions where the Sisters have served. Several events were also held this summer in Watertown. Stories and pictures of these events are included in this edition of the FOCUS. June 15, 2011 marked fifty years since the community was founded and a Eucharistic celebration was held at Holy Name Parish, Watertown, SD, followed by a reception and luncheon. A short program was held during the luncheon and at that time Watertown mayor, Gary Williams, presented the Sisters with the following Proclamation.



## Sister Marlene's Message



**Marlene Minnaert, OSB**

Friends of Mother of God Monastery,

It is wonderful to have this opportunity to greet you in this first edition of the FOCUS since my installation as prioress of Mother of God Monastery. It has been four months since this momentous occasion on June 15<sup>th</sup> that combined my installation with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of this monastery.

I'm aware of the many people who have been part of my journey these past 50 years. Coming home to Watertown to a ministry within community is almost coming back to my beginnings in religious life. I had been in community about eight years when I came to Watertown. I left to minister with the people of St. Thomas More Parish and the people of Brookings who befriended me and supported my ministry outreach. They are a tremendous faith community and they taught and formed me well. My faith in the workings of the Holy Spirit guiding me and our monastic community gave me the strength and courage to say "yes" to this call to leadership and to leave Brookings. This new ministry within community is a challenge that I can meet only because I believe that "he who began a good work will continue to complete it .." (Phil 1.6) if I but rely on the Spirit.

In preparation for the election of new leadership for the coming years, the Sisters set four Direction Statements to guide us. These four statements are sensitive to the "signs of the times" reading them in light of the Gospel. So as we read the "signs of the times" in light of our current Direction Statements we will be striving to deepen our relationship with Christ and one another while being attentive to immigration issues, the growing poverty of our nation and the need for more civility in government, a government that is concerned with being a voice for the voiceless. We will also continue to attract and invite new vocations to share this mission with us.

I thank you in advance for your prayers and support during my six year term as prioress. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for the many ways you have helped the Sisters of Mother of God Monastery celebrate our special golden anniversary year. We have enjoyed the many opportunities to reconnect with the good people that we have befriended while on mission. A special thank you to the Watertown residents who have opened their arms and hearts to our community. Enjoy the pictures and stories of the anniversary events found in this edition. Please know that you are welcome to our monastery at any time. I look forward to meeting you.

Blessings, *Sister Marlene*



Sister Marlene (front) requests service leadership from (l-r) S. Mary Lambert Skalsky, S. Amanda Wolf, S. Jeremy Sitter

It was very fitting that the monastery's new leadership team be installed during the Eucharistic Celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Mother of God Monastery on June 15, 2011 at Holy Name Parish in Watertown. After Sister Marlene was installed by the federation president, S. Joella Kidwell, S. Marlene called forth S. Jeremy Sitter, assistant prioress, S. Amanda Wolf, treasurer and S. Mary Lambert Skalsky, procurator, and invited them to accept their responsibilities. Fellow sisters, friends and relatives of the entire community were present to give their support for the new leadership team. Sister Marlene was elected by her community in May, 2011 and she appointed her team that will lead the community through June, 2017.



## Sister Kim Engelhart Makes Her Perpetual Monastic Profession



*Sister Kim read her profession document to her Benedictine Community, friends and family.*

“What is more delightful than the voice of the Lord calling you? See how the Lord in His love shows us the way to life.” Using these words from the Rule of St. Benedict as the theme of her celebration, S. Kim made her perpetual monastic profession with the community of Mother of God Monastery on September 25, 2011. The Eucharistic Liturgy and Rite of Profession took place at Holy Name Catholic Church in Watertown, SD. Fr. John Lantsberger was the celebrant at the Eucharist, and S. Marlene Minnaert, Prioress, presided at the Rite of Profession. Holy Name Parish was S. Kim’s home parish, and it was a wonderful opportunity for her and the Sisters to share the celebration with S. Kim’s family, friends, and fellow parishioners. A reception followed in the parish center. S. Kim made temporary promises in January, 2008 and now she has made a life-long commitment of Stability in this monastery, Fidelity to the monastic way of life, and Obedience. S. Kim is the daughter of the late Gene and Bernice Engelhart of Watertown. She has Associate Degrees from Lake Area Technical Institute in both Child Development and Computer Information Systems. She currently works for the Watertown Public School System.

## Denise Cree Enters the Noviate



*Denise Cree received the Holy Rule during her investment ceremony.*

Denise Cree, Oakland, California, entered the novitiate at Mother of God Monastery. Friends and members of her community joined Denise for her investment ceremony during Morning Praise on

August 14, 2011. The novitiate is an intense year-long program where the novice continues to discern her call to a particular Benedictine community. Her study will center on the Rule of St. Benedict and learning from the community’s unique history, values, and way of life. Denise joined the community in February and spent six months as a postulant. Since then, she has been learning about the Benedictine way of life through study, prayer, and community living.

An educator by profession, Denise shared her experience by teaching English and citizenship classes at the Benedictine Multicultural Center. As a novice, Denise will participate in all areas of community life and prayer. Besides her study, she will assist in sacristy work and in the area of communications.

## S Nancy Zemcuznikov’s First Profession



*Sister Nancy Zemcuznikov received a Benedictine pin from Prioress, S Marlene Minnaert*

Nancy Zemcuznikov made her first profession at Mother of God Monastery on August 14, 2011, during the Eucharistic Liturgy. She committed to the three Benedictine promises of Stability, Fidelity to the monastic way of life, and Obedience. Stability is her promise to seek God in this monastery and with this Benedictine Community. Fidelity is to embrace the monastic life and lifelong conversion to Christ. Through Obedience, S. Nancy promises to listen to God as revealed in prayer, the Rule of St. Benedict, the prioress and community, the world, and in herself.

S. Nancy has a wide range of education and experience in health care. She has been serving as community nurse and has helped with various health care needs of the sisters. She has also participated in REC (Residents Encounter Christ) retreat weekends as part of the community’s prison ministry. During her time of temporary profession, S. Nancy will continue to integrate the Benedictine way of life through her prayer, study, community life and ministry. She will also have the opportunity to explore other areas of ministry that will allow her to use her gifts in service of God’s people.

# JUBILEE 2011

**Seven Benedictine Sisters of Mother of God Monastery celebrated Jubilees this summer. This number represents a total of 410 years of Benedictine service to the people of God.**

## Golden Jubilee (50 Years)



*Janice Iverson, OSB*

Sister Janice Iverson was born in the remote village of Miranda, SD. At age four, she learned that nuns did “God’s work.” She knew then that she wanted to do “God’s work.” Being a member of the only Catholic family in Miranda, she witnessed the strength of faith of her mother. She experienced from her non-Catholic father, the loving support and respect that he held for his wife’s faith. Her family environment was a constant reminder to be true to God. Her grandmother’s faith taught Sister Janice to listen to the “quiet” within. It was this “quietness” that led her to choose the Benedictine life style: seeking God and serving others. Sister Janice is a founding member of Mother of God Monastery and has served her community as business manager and health care coordinator for the past six years.



*Jeremy Sitter, OSB*

Sister Jeremy (Angela) Sitter was born near Buxton, ND. At the age of three, she moved to a farm near Ipswich, SD. She attended Holy Cross School in Ipswich, being taught by the Sisters from Sacred Heart Convent, Yankton, SD. After completing the eighth grade she planned to enter the Community in Yankton. Due to circumstances beyond her control she needed to stay home and attend Ipswich High School. After high school, Angela attended Mount Marty College, where she received her teaching certificate and taught for three years at Saint Joseph Indian School in Chamberlain. With the encouragement of a friend, she entered Sacred Heart Convent in 1961 and became a founding member of Mother of God Monastery in Watertown, SD. After receiving her degree in elementary education, Sister Jeremy taught for over forty more years. Currently she is serving as Assistant Prioress for her community.

## 60th Jubilee



*Marion Fischer, OSB*

Sister Marion (Helen) Fischer was born to Joseph and Cecilia (Haan) Fischer on their farm on October 27, 1929. Helen attended Holy Rosary School run by the Benedictine Sisters. She attended Mount Marty High School also run by the Benedictines. She felt a huge appreciation for the Sisters and their ministries. On August 20, 1949, Helen joined Sacred Heart Convent in Yankton. After 12 years with formation and teaching in Yankton, Zell, Tabor, Lincoln, NE, Albion, NE and Aberdeen, she became a founding member of the new foundation now known as Mother of God Monastery in Watertown. Sister Marion served in numerous ministries over the next 50 years, teaching, working with orphans in Haiti, New Jersey and Arizona, and serving the Native American Communities in Sisseton, Enemy Swim, Fort Thompson and Big Bend. Presently, she is “retired” at Mother of God Monastery, volunteering for almost every need that arises.



*Jeanne Giese, OSB*

Sister Jeanne Giese was born to Rudolf and Marion Giese on their farm south of Hoven, on December 26, 1930. She attended St. Anthony’s School in Hoven and Mt. Marty High School and Mt. Marty College in Yankton. Before her sophomore year in college she joined Sacred Heart Convent in Yankton. She finished her college education there earning a degree in music and continued teaching at Mt. Marty until she was asked to become a founding member of the new monastery in Pierre. Her main ministry in Pierre was to be the community liturgist and director of formation. Sister Jeanne earned a master’s degree from St. John’s University in Collegeville, MN and a master’s degree from SDSU in Brookings. During the ensuing years she taught at St. Mary’s HS in Richardton, ND, Immaculate Conception HS in Stephan and Harmony Hill HS in Watertown. Later she worked at Blue Cloud Abbey in the American Indian Culture Research Center.

Over the years, S. Jeanne served the monastery as assistant prioress, prioress, archivist, communications director, liturgist and oblate director. She also served on various boards in the community.



## 70th Jubilee



*Veronica Haag, OSB*

Sister Veronica Haag is the daughter of the late Fridolin Haag and Whilhelmina Wanner. She was born and grew up on a farm near Richardton, ND. She entered Sacred Heart Monastery in 1947. She graduated from Mount Marty College as an elementary school teacher. She taught in North and South Dakota and Nebraska for many years. Her main ministry has been working with the Native Americans for the last thirty-seven years. Her ministry includes teaching, visiting homes, social and parish work. One of her highlights was receiving a grant to the Philippines. There she taught English to the juniors and seniors at Ramon Magsaysay High School in the mornings. The afternoons were spent in Manila learning Tagalog, Anthropology and Social Studies. Sister Veronica is a member of Mother of God Monastery. She was a founding member of Good Shepherd and Kateri Centers in Sioux Falls, SD. Sister is now living at the monastery while serving in her outreach programs



*Marietta Miller, OSB*

Sister Marietta Miller and her twin sister were born on July 15, 1933. Her father died when they were very young. Her mother sent the girls and an older brother to Holy Rosary School in Kranzburg, SD for several years. They were taught by the Benedictine Sisters from Sacred Heart Convent in Yankton, SD. Sister Marietta loved the sisters who taught her and wanted to become one of them. When she was sixteen, her mother gave her permission to "try it out" with the understanding that she would be welcomed home any time. Sister Marietta never turned back. For over ten years, she served as a cook for the borders at Stephan Indian Mission until she was sent to get educated to become a teacher. Upon earning her degree, Sister taught first grade and was principal for St. Anthony's school in Hoven. She was then called to be principal in Pierre where she ministered for nine years. After she received the blessing of her prioress and community Sister Marietta became certified in Hospital Spiritual Care and was hospital chaplain at CHRISTUS Health System in Texarkana, TX for fourteen years. Sister is now retired and volunteers as a chaplain at St. Mary's Hospital and Nursing Home in Pierre, SD.



*Rosalie Sitzmann, OSB*

Sister Rosalie Sitzmann 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. Sister Rosalie gave 35 years of dedicated service to the field of nursing and nursing education. She was the Director of Nursing Services at St. Mary's Hospital in Pierre, SD. Sister Rosalie started the School of Practical Nursing in Pierre in 1949. After earning her PhD from Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. in 1970, she was invited to join the staff at South Dakota State in Brookings, SD. She held various other health care leadership positions during her career. She also was elected as Prioress for her Benedictine community, Mother of God Monastery. Following her nursing career, Sister Rosalie transitioned to the growing area of pastoral care. Currently, she is a tenant of Benet Place Independent Apartments. This year, Sister Rosalie is celebrating 90 years of life and 70 years of Benedictine service.



*Introducing Mr. and Mrs. Michael Vick!*

On July 1, 2011 Jennifer Jakobek, Development and Community Relations Director for the monastery and the Benedictine Sisters Foundation was married to Minnesota resident, Mike Vick. They were wed in the monastery chapel and all seven of their children participated in the Mass. A reception followed in the Sisters' dining room. The couple resides in Watertown.

# 50th Anniversary Celebrations

Many anniversary celebrations have been held throughout 2011. Several events are still planned in October and November. Most of the events were held at the parishes/schools where the Sisters ministered in the past 50 years. In addition, events were held in Watertown. Enjoy the pictures and stories included in the following pages. A common theme runs through all events: The Sisters of Mother of God Monastery have touched many lives in the past fifty years.

## Hoven, SD - May 1, 2011



*Sisters Ida, Marva, Francis, Marietta, Mona and Evelyn share a humorous thought with Father Lance Oser during a luncheon given in honor of the Benedictine Sisters.*

## Watertown, SD - June 15, 2011



*Sister Ramona Fallon receives the Mayoral Proclamation from Mayor Gary Williams at the 50th Anniversary dinner held at Holy Name Parish, Watertown.*

## Polo, SD - June 5, 2011



*Well over a 100 guests, former students and Sisters enjoyed Polo hospitality and lots of reminiscing during a meal that followed a Eucharistic celebration.*

## Mother of God Monastery Family Day - July 10, 2011



*Sisters Francis and Johanna Schumacher take the backseat of the carriage and their sister, Diane, sits up front with driver, Bruce Hestad, while they tour the monastery grounds on Family Day.*

## Zell, SD - June 19, 2011



*Touring the first convent in the Dakotas, and later a boarding school for many of the Sisters, invoked fond memories and stories. during a Parish celebration in Zell, SD*



### **Indoor Picnic/Bingo - July 25, 2011**



*The edible centerpiece for the indoor picnic was baked by Foundation board member, Carla Roby. She and other board members threw a party for the Sisters during Community Days which included a picnic supper and a evening of Bingo and fun!*

### **Richardton, ND - August 7, 2011**



*In addition to teaching at St. Mary's School in Richardton, many of our Sisters attended school there as well. Pictured above is a group of alums who attended the 50th anniversary celebration.*

### **Ice Cream Social and City Band Performance July 27, 2011**



*Watertown's City Band performed right outside the main entrance of Mother of God Monastery during an Ice Cream Social (below) given to the Watertown residents as a thank-you for their support throughout the past 50 years.*

### **Ipswich, SD - July 30, 2011**



*Sisters from Mother of God Monastery traveled to Ipswich for an all-school reunion and to join the parish in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding*

*of Mother of God Monastery. Benedictine Sisters from Mother of God Monastery taught at Holy Cross from 1932 - 1978. There were many special moments to make it an evening to remember.*

### **Brookings, SD - September 18, 2011**



*Ss Kim, Mildred, Marlene, Adrienne, Emily and Marion, share with the young girls of Saint Thomas More during a father/daughter luncheon after mass.*



## IN LOVING MEMORY *"Come to me... and I will give you rest."*

### SISTER ANTOINETTE TRAMP, OSB

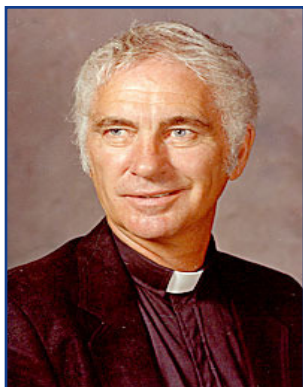


Sister Antoinette (Verona) Tramp, OSB, 91, of Mother of God Monastery, died on Wednesday, June 1, in Jenkins Living Center, Watertown, South Dakota. A Liturgical Wake was held at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, June 6, 2011 at Mother of God Monastery. The Mass of Christian Burial was held on Tuesday, June 7 at 10:30 a.m. in the Monastery chapel.

Sister Antoinette was born on May 23, 1920, a twin sister to Vernon, at the home of their parents, Albert and Elizabeth (Goeden) Tramp, on a farm near Menominee, Nebraska. They completed a family of eleven children. Sister attended St. Boniface Elementary School, taught by Benedictine Sisters. She attended Mount Marty High School for two years. Sister was the only child of the eleven siblings to attend high school.

Sister Antoinette entered Sacred Heart Convent at Yankton, SD June 7, 1937. She made her final vows on June 24, 1941. Her first ministry was teaching at Stephan Indian mission. She returned to Yankton to attend college and graduated from St. Scholastica College in Duluth MN with a bachelor's in dietetics. Her next ministry was at St. Mary's Hospital in Pierre where she worked as a dietitian until 1967. When Mother of God Priory moved to Watertown, she became the librarian in Harmony Hill High School. In addition, she continued dietetic consultations in the Watertown area for many years. Later she was the community archivist for several years. When her health began to fail, she moved to Jenkins Living Center. Sister Antoinette is survived by her twin brother Vernon, two sisters Pauline and Caroline, family members and friends, and her sisters of Mother of God Monastery.

### FATHER RICHARD ORTMEIER



A former chaplain of Mother of God Monastery, Father Richard Ortmeier, 85, of Sioux Falls, passed away Monday June 27, 2011, at the Primrose Retirement Community in Sioux Falls. Mass of Christian Burial was held Friday, July 1, 2011, at St. Liborius Catholic Church in Polo, SD with Bishop Paul Swain

as presiding celebrant. Burial followed at Mount Calvary Cemetery with full military honors. In World War II he served as a medic and MP in Japan. He attended Crosier Seminary in Onamia, MN and celebrated his first Mass in his home parish at Polo on May 30, 1956. He served in various parishes in the diocese of Sioux Falls from 1956 to 1996.

Father Ortmeier carried a deep appreciation for his upbringing in rural lifestyle throughout his priestly ministry. He enjoyed retruning to the farm to walk through the prairies and to pheasant hunt. He especially enjoyed his ministry with the Native Americans who fondly named him, "Chasing Clouds."

### LVs Ride Cyclists Visit the Monastery



In mid-July a group of cyclists, on a summer journey to raise money for the poor, joined the sisters for prayer and supper before spending the night in their guest house. This amazing group of young men and women, known as Lasallian Volunteers (LVs), work for the Christian Brothers. They volunteer for various lengths of time and work in many different areas/ministries sponsored by the Christian Brothers. This group cycled across the U.S. intent on raising awareness of poverty in our country. They started their journey on June 14th in Washington state and ended in New Jersey on August 14th. They came from various areas of the country and different occupations. Along the way they were hosted by various churches, schools, businesses, families, strangers and friends spreading peace and joy on their epic journey of love. They raised over \$100,000 to assist the Christian Brothers in their ministry to the poor.



# Benedictine Multicultural Center News

## Round Table with Senator Johnson

"What are your thoughts on immigration?" So began Senator Tim Johnson's Round Table discussion at the BMC on August 23<sup>rd</sup>. Concluding a lively interchange with staff and invited guests, the Senator commended the BMC for its work with immigrants and continuing advocacy for immigration reform.

Since, during this year the Sisters are celebrating Monastery's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, they gifted the Senator with Monastery-made "anniversary" wine, as well as a short history of our first fifty years: *Shaping the Dream*.



Appearing (l-r front row) Josie Koopmans, Senator Tim Johnson, S. Marlene Minnaert. (back row) Mary Palmer, Jennifer Vick, S. Teresa Ann Wolf, S. Ida Herrick and Yésika Muñoz.

## Grants awarded to BMC

Recently, the Mission and Ministry Fund of Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI) awarded a project grant of \$172,500.00, to be distributed over a period of three years, to the BMC. The purpose and goal of this project is to empower immigrant women with the necessary tools to choose their preferred future for themselves and their children through a) assistance with basic survival needs, b) assistance with care of children, c) advocacy with legal immigration issues, and d) assistance with education and integration issues.

To complement the grant from CHI, The Watertown Community Foundation awarded the BMC a grant of

\$2000.00 to provide cell phones for two outreach workers/translators, and for ESL curriculum materials to be used for English classes and one-on-one tutoring at the BMC.

The South Dakota Humanities Council (SDHC) awarded a grant of \$3500.00 to the BMC to develop *Walk in My Moccasins: An appreciation of Native American Culture*. This project offers a unique opportunity for students and adults to experience Native American culture via hands-on presentations of 'traveling' exhibits brought to classrooms and other venues by Mary Palmer and S. Teresa Ann Wolf. In addition, three SDHC speakers will make presentations to large groups at the D.D. Miller Auditorium in Watertown at 1:00 p.m. on November 18, March 8, and April 3. Special thanks to the Watertown School District for collaborating with us in this project.

The BMC continues to be grateful to these foundations and to all our friends, colleagues, and benefactors who help us to welcome the stranger.

## 2011 Pheasant Hunt

The Ninth Annual Pheasant Hunt, sponsored by the Watertown Benedictine Foundation, was held on September 18, 2011. Once again, the hunt was held at The Oak Tree Lodge outside Clark, SD. Thirty + hunters enjoyed the beautiful weather and great hunting. The trap shooting contest was a big hit with Merlin Jeitz taking first place. The day concluded with a successful auction. All proceeds of this event go to help support the ministries of Mother of God Monastery.



The Pheasant Hunt participants share a little camaraderie as they ride to the cornfields of the Oak Tree Lodge. This was the hunters' first day out for the 2011 Pheasant Hunt season.

# Special Feature: The 2011 Flood in Pierre, SD

By: Sister Mona Kirwan



**Sister Mona Kirwan**

The Benedictine Sisters have lived in Pierre, SD over a hundred years. They founded St. Mary's Healthcare Center and have taught in St. Joseph's School. Saint Benedict House was built fifteen years ago to house the Sisters who worked at the hospital. For the past several years it has housed non-traditional nursing students from Capital University as well as Sisters Evelyn Sehn, Mona Kirwan, Naomi Roth, Sandra Meek and Adel Sautner. At the end of May, we began to carefully listen to the daily news. Here is my account:

## **Saturday, May 28<sup>th</sup>**

The Oahe Reservoir was full and severe winter storms and heavy rains in Montana were causing flooding in North Dakota. The snow in the mountains had not even begun to melt. Water was being released into the Oahe spillway with a force greater than Niagara Falls. We were notified that we were in the path of the flood and would need to sandbag St. Benedict House. We prayed we would not need to move.

State and City officials estimated that water levels would reach beyond the 1,437.8 ft elevation at St. Benedict's front door. S. Adel moved her monastic library, the American Benedictine Academy material and the computer system out of the way of potential flooding to St. Joseph's Convent on the hill by Sts. Peter and Paul Church. The city was occupied saving essential services so it was left to home owners to protect their property and themselves. The water level was estimated to reach 1,440 ft. We were four elderly Sisters who knew that we were not capable of sandbagging. We called the emergency number and asked for volunteers to help us. In about an hour a young man who had offered his help to anyone who could use his services came to the door with 15 sand bags. God bless him! Little did we know that we needed thousands of bags. We received advice from Fr. Kevin Doyle and The Grand Knight, Galen Jordre about plastic sheeting and extensions from our eve troughs. Neighbors offered their expertise in plumbing etc. even though their own homes were in danger. In the evening, Susanne Pietrus called and suggested that we move out of the house. We worked into the night organizing, marking furniture for moving and packing personal belongings. That was the last night we slept in the house in our beds.

## **Sunday, May 29<sup>th</sup>**

We awoke early agreeing that attending Mass was not a possibility and began planning our evacuation. By 9:00 a.m. volunteers --- the Knights of Columbus, parishioners of Sts. Peter and Paul, employees and their families from St. Mary's Healthcare Center, Pastor Mike Bishop, the Disciples of Christ Church and many people we didn't know came to move us. One person took each Sister's personal belongings and put them in the room designated for her at St. Joseph's Convent. Sister Jeremy and Naomi moved our food. Our furniture was taken in vans and pickups to the Family Center, Sts. Peter and Paul Parish where Fr. Doyle and Seminarian Melvin Kuhn gave us a room for everything from St. Benedict's. The parish made storage space available to anyone in need. Ladies brought sandwiches, fresh, homemade cookies and bottled water to the volunteers who worked round the clock helping people to move or sandbag their homes.

At the end of the day everything was as secure as we could make it and everyone was exhausted. We could not bring ourselves to leave the house alone that night. Ss Adel, Evelyn and I slept on the floor of our bedrooms thinking this might be the last night we would spend in the house before it filled with water.

## **Monday, May 30<sup>th</sup>**

We were advised to have the carpets removed as it would be too difficult to do if they were saturated by flood water. A plumber spent the day checking the sump pump in our basement and turning off the water and sewer. We left on only the electricity so that the sump pump could drain the water from our basement. A friend who had a flat bed truck waited in line for three to seven hours to fill sand bags and haul them to our house where other friends completed a sandbag barrier around our house. The sand bags were being filled by volunteers, the National Guard and the women from the prison. It was hard, hot, dirty work for the women who filled the most bags every day. Morris Inc. constructed 75 miles the levees ran was constructed down Crow Street in front of our house. This gave us hope that our house might be spared.



## June, July, August

The Pierre area experienced torrential rain falls as well as more water being released from the reservoirs. The floor of our small, partial basement was covered with one to two inches of ground water. Our basement and crawl spaces continued to be water logged through July and August. We were grateful for our functioning sump pump. On the Feast of St. Benedict, July 11<sup>th</sup>, we installed blowers in the crawl spaces to facilitate drying. As the water levels fell in late August, early September the water in our basement miraculously disappeared.

Having been out of St. Benedict House for over three months, we share with many of the residents of Pierre and Ft. Pierre being “displaced” persons. With our neighbors, we have experienced our share of anxiety and depression not knowing if our home would survive or when it would be safe for us to begin moving back home. We have also experienced the kindness of our many friends in Pierre. To all of them, we express deepest gratitude. Our house has been painted and the flooring and carpets will soon be installed; we are hoping to be back in our house very soon.

## PAX CHRISTI CONFERENCE - WELL RECEIVED

“Until they Have Faces: A Gospel Perspective on Nonviolence”, was the theme of the Seventh Annual South Dakota *Pax Christi* Conference held in Watertown, SD, on September 17, 2011. Kathy Kelly, *Pax Christi* Teacher of Peace and co-coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, inspired and challenged participants “to liberate our capacity to love and to feel our hunger for peace.” Her incredible experiences living with the Afghan people, within the U.S. prison system, and knowledge of U.S. warfare including newest use of drones were told in stories and songs that deeply touched the audience who gave Kathy several standing ovations.

J.A. Murphy, an actor who has worked with Catholic Relief Services for 24 years portrayed Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen, Seattle, when he gave his prophetic speech on nuclear disarmament. Following his presentation, local teenagers, Drew Mahowald and Bonnie Triplet, proclaimed “A Safer World is Our Right.” This was written by teenager, Sarah Hutchison, obtained through her father, Ralph Hutchison, Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance.

The yearly conference is sponsored by Presentation Sisters, Aberdeen, SD, Benedictine Sisters, Watertown, SD, and local *Pax Christi* chapters. The possibility of forming a local *Pax Christi* chapter is being considered! For more information about *Pax Christi* email: [sistersmandk@mchsi.com](mailto:sistersmandk@mchsi.com) or [srjohanna@hotmail.com](mailto:srjohanna@hotmail.com)



Preparing for the conference: Seated: (l-r) Teresa Ann Wolf OSB, J.A. Murphy, Michelle Meyers PBVM Standing (l-r): Kay O'Neil PBVM, Jane Sandsmark, Johanna Schumacher OSB, Mike Sandsmark, Gabriella Crowley PBVM, Donna Williams

## BENET PLACE CELEBRATES NATIVE AMERICAN DAY



S Veronica Haag dressed in her Native American regalia to visit the residents of Benet Place. Her purpose was to explain the meaning and purpose of each piece of her regalia that she was wearing. She showed and explained a number of the artifacts used during her presentation. Dance and stories, extremely important to the Native Americans, were explained. The residents were very appreciative of the presentation.



Volunteers at Mother of God Monastery this summer came to live, pray, recreate and work with the Sisters in community. (l-r) Magda Heying, Yanira Novoa, Aica Jo, S. Veronica, Betty Kroetes, S. Rose.



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## **Please join us for *Conversation and Coffee***

**Wednesday mornings  
9:15 - 10:15 AM  
Harmony Hill Hall**

**Our time together will start with a short introduction to the topic of the day and will progress into a conversation that includes your questions and sharing over a cup of coffee. Following our conversation, there will be optional prayer yoga 10:30 - 11:30 AM.**

**For more information, contact S. Emily  
886.4181 or [sisteremily@hotmail.com](mailto:sisteremily@hotmail.com)**

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

Oct. 16	<b>Celebration-Ft. Thompson</b>
Oct. 21	<b>Enneagram Workshop</b>
Oct. 25	<b>Yankton Benedictine Series</b> ("Hildegard of Bingen and the Living Light")
Nov. 12	<b>The Prophets in the Bible</b>
Nov. 18-19	<b>Healing the Inner Child</b>
Nov. 20	<b>Anniversary Celebration-Pierre</b>
Dec. 3	<b>Advent Retreat</b>
Dec. 9-22	<b>Nativity Display at BMC</b>
Dec. 10	<b>Saint Series I</b>
<b>Dec. 17</b>	<b>Taize Prayer Service</b>

If you would like more information on any of the programs or events listed above or if you would like next year's program booklet, please contact Jennifer at 605-882-6646. [communications@dailypost.com](mailto:communications@dailypost.com)