



The Focus

Benedictine Sisters
of Watertown, SD

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2016

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Issue 3

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Benet Place Assisted Living closes its doors.

Sharing in the presence of a woman who desires to be wholly alive is a powerful experience. Such a woman is Sister Adrienne Kaufmann. Leading with her energetic, bold, and straightforward personality, Sister Adrienne is a special woman. Those who share in her presence experience the wisdom of a life committed to faith, authenticity, and prayer. For eleven years, Sister Adrienne has served as vocation director and continues to model for others what it means to live life as vocation, wholly alive. On October 30, 2016 Sister Adrienne received Outstanding Recognition from the National Religious Vocation Conference in honor of her leadership, service, and dedication to vocation ministry in the Catholic Church.

Vocation ministry is a ministry of helping others become wholly alive. Sister Adrienne accompanies women seeking to know God's will when choosing a life path. "My favorite part of my job is my

one-on-one contacts with women," Sister Adrienne shares. She works personally with each woman to identify action steps for meeting her goals and to identify God's work along her journey. It can be a long process.

Wholly Alive:

Life as Vocation

"Walking with these women on their spiritual journeys is very satisfying because the women often tell me that our conversation has been so helpful. It feels good knowing that I am helping them take purposeful steps along their life path," she says. Her work

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Greetings

From the Prioress

Sister Marlene Minnaert
Prioress of Mother of God Monastery

Dear Friends,

As I reflected on this past year I began to realize how much change has occurred in our community. And why not, for isn't change very much a part of the fabric of life? Everything that exists changes, either by growing or by deteriorating. Jesus tells us, "Unless you change and become like little children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." Our spiritual growth, too, is a process of change – moving to what is more God-like, more God-centered. Let us rejoice in changes that challenge us.

As the Sisters of Mother of God review the past year we note many changes. Some have brought great sadness and others,



Reverend John Dear

Rev. Dear, an international voice for peace and nonviolence, a priest, retreat leader and author, was the keynote speaker for the SD Pax Christi conference on October 15, 2016 in Watertown, SD. The Watertown Benedictines and the Presentation Sisters co-sponsored the event.

great joy. In late August, Sr. Marlene Konrady died after years of struggling courageously with multiple sclerosis. We also gained a new member when Sr. Barbara Younger made first profession.

Please note the two articles about Marlene and Barbara in this issue of the Focus. You will also note Sr. Adrienne's recognition by the National Catholic Vocation Conference for her great work in vocation ministry locally, regionally and nationally.

Significant change in our community this past year resulted from the Sisters' participation in CARE (Conversational Approach to Relational Effectiveness), a program empowering religious women to walk deeply, share mutually, and live authentically in community.

Committed to caring for our Sisters at the Monastery as long as possible, we established supportive care in one ten-bedroom unit.

A major ministry change occurred in the fall when the Monastery Board of Directors and St. Ann's Corporation made the painful but necessary decision to close Benet Place Assisted Living. Benet Place Independent Living is still open and provides many activities for the residents. The former Assisted Living, now changed back to the original name of St. Ann's Hall, provides space for the Sisters' internal ministries.

May we be gifted in the New Year with many blessed changes!

S. Marlene

In memoriam

Sister Marlene Konrady, OSB

Sister Marlene Elizabeth Konrady OSB, 73, (formerly Sr. Jerome) died in Watertown, SD on Thursday, August 25, 2016 after a prolonged illness. Born on November 24, 1942 to the late Ernest and Mary Konrady, S. Marlene was raised in Watertown where she attended grade school at Immaculate Conception Parish School. Her parents were founding members of Holy Name Parish.

In 1960, S. Marlene entered Sacred Heart Convent and one year later transferred to Pierre, SD where she continued Benedictine formation as a novice and made perpetual vows in June of 1965. While continuing her own education, ultimately earning a Master's Degree in Art, she began teaching at St. Mary's in Aberdeen and later at Harmony Hill High School in Watertown. S. Marlene was an avid gardener and cook, a very talented potter and painter, and a skillful seamstress and quilter!

In 1973 she was asked to transition from teaching to parish ministry. She worked closely with clergy and parishioners in Ramona, Oldham, Florence, Waverly, Elkton, Henry, Aurora, Madison Newman Center and Beardsley, MN. Some of the ways that she brought health and healing to those she served was through baptism and marriage preparation classes, organizing and presenting weekend retreats.

S. Marlene served as Pastoral Administrator for the Sioux Falls Diocese at Florence, Henry, Elkton, Aurora and White, South Dakota. She was also Pastoral Administrator for the New Ulm Diocese at Beardsley, MN.

In October, 2001, S. Marlene was diagnosed with progressive multiple sclerosis and soon after became wheelchair bound. With the help of parishioners making modifications to the house where she lived, she was able to continue working in Beardsley, MN for another five years. Forced by her illness, S. Marlene retired from parish ministry in 2007, and returned to Mother of God Monastery. Her unwavering faith in God and the support of close friends and family helped her face her final years with grace and dignity.



Barbara Younger Becomes a Newly Professed Sister

Barbara Younger, a California native and most recently from Valparaiso, Florida, became a newly professed Sister of Mother of God Monastery on October 22, 2016. Sister Marlene Minnaert, prioress, received Novice Barb's vows during Vespers. The Benedictine Sisters of Mother of God Monastery were all present to share in her First Monastic Profession.

Sister Barb promised to join her life's journey with this community when she vowed to God "stability in this monastery, fidelity to the monastic way of life and obedience according to the Rule of Benedict and the Federation of St. Gertrude." She was then presented the community's official pin and a copy of the Rule of St. Benedict. Sister Barb will continue her formation at Mother of God Monastery.



Wholly Alive

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includes organizing five-day discernment retreats, supporting women via telephone conversations, encouraging parents and parishes to instill in the young that all the baptized have a call from God, and working with a vocation committee to reach



Sister Hannah Vanorny, OSB, Bismarck, ND (l) congratulates Sister Adrienne Kaufmann, OSB (r) as she accepts the NRVC Award.

out to those discerning their call. “When we see life as vocation, we can then make choices to deepen our relationship with God and contribute to building the kingdom,” says Sister Adrienne. “My

greatest hope for my community is that together, we are faithful to fulfilling God’s greatest dream for us, that we strive to be a loving community, and that we be open to receiving those God sends to us.”

Sister Adrienne is a native South Dakotan and grew up in Colman, SD. After graduating high school, she entered religious community in 1956 as a Yankton Benedictine. In 1961 she became a founding member of Mother of God Monastery. Sister Adrienne received her Ph.D. in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from George Mason University, served as co-director of the Common Ground Network for Life and Choice, and has over twenty-five years of experience working with graduate and undergraduate students at Augsburg College, Minneapolis; American University, Washington D.C.; and Mount Marty College, Watertown Campus.

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Sisters Foundation Highlights

The months since our Garden Tour have flown by so quickly. We barely seemed to have caught our breath from the tour and we were planning the 14th Annual Pheasant Hunt held on September 25th. The weather leading up to the Hunt was warm and beautiful so we were concerned that it might be too hot for the hunting dogs. As usual, God provided and we had a pleasantly cool morning to begin the Hunt. Our new event schedule was welcomed by the hunters. They practiced trap shooting at 9:00, began hunting at 10:00, ate lunch and enjoyed beverages in the lodge after all the hunters returned and ended the event with a live auction.

A big thank you to Oak Tree Lodge for providing the hunting venue and for the appetizers that they prepared for our luncheon. Thanks goes to HyVee for providing our continental breakfast, lunch and desserts. Thank you to Randy and Chris Owens for their auction service. Many thanks to all the sponsors of the event and auction and for all of you who participated in this year’s raffle. The Sisters of Mother of God Monastery once again prepared an incredible basket of homemade goods and garden produce for our raffle basket and the lucky winner was Scott Driscoll. The total proceeds from

"Your generosity is incredible!"



this event were \$9,200.

A recent example of the use of the funds was an emergency grant that was awarded to Sister Charles Palm. She requested \$2,500 to supplement the food pantry on the reservation at Fort Thompson (see page 6).

Other 2016 grants that were awarded were \$1,000 to assist the Watertown Initiative to Prevent Sex Trafficking (WIPST) to rent the electronic billboard during the Sturgis Rally and the hunting season, \$1500 to fund the Around the World Youth

Program at the Benedictine Multicultural Center and \$8,487 to Benet Place Independent Apartments to replace the main floor carpeting.



Throughout November, the Sisters were praying for you and your loved ones. Thank you for sending us the names for whom you requested prayers. Thanks also for your generosity with your All Souls' gifts. These funds will help support the ministries of the Sisters.

You recently received a letter from Sister Marlene, explaining that the Community has established a supportive care unit for our elder sisters so that they can continue to live and pray at the monasatery with their sisters. Thank you for your support in this effort. Your generosity is incredible! As change can be so difficult, we ask for your prayers during this adjustment period.

Finally, I would like to wish you and your family Peace and Joy throughout 2017!

Jennifer Vick, Foundation Director

The Woman of Stability

Sister Charles Palm and her Native American Ministry



The door to the office of Sister Charles is always in motion. The residents of the Fort Thompson reservation come to ask a question or to pick up some canned goods from the foodbank. Sister Charles is well respected on the reservation and in the local community. Respect for her work builds trust among friends and donors, yet, S. Charles remains humble and forever grateful.

In 1989, Saint Joseph Church was built on the Fort Thompson reservation in Buffalo County, South Dakota. This was made possible through the generosity of many people, large and small donors alike. S. Charles witnessed the donors' pride in the new construction. It was contagious! The stability and dedication of Sister Charles was the driving force. The excitement of the new church still exists today and it remains the heart of the reservation.

One of the major problems of today's reservation is poverty. In some cases, a Native American family may only have one meal a day.

Sister Charles is in contact with concerned individuals and organizations to help solve the hunger problem. St. Joseph Parish sponsors a food pantry and Feeding South Dakota is also available to assist families struggling to feed their families. She is called Winya Wakan by Native Americans in the Dakota language. This term of endearment means Holy Woman.

When Sister Charles was asked which of the Benedictine values make her so successful in ministering to Native Americans, she responded: *"One of the values of Benedictine life is stability. I have been ministering to the Native Americans on the Crow Creek Reservation for thirty-two years. One of the questions that the Native Americans ask when someone new comes to minister is, 'How long are you going to stay?' Native Americans appreciate you more and more the longer you stay because it gives them the opportunity to get to know and trust you.*

We as Benedictines commit ourselves to living a sustainable lifestyle, practical, simple, and steady. That's the lifestyle of Native Americans, too. Even though they are poor, they still look out for each other and share what they have."

Article by:

Jennifer Vick, Community and Development Director

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Sisters M Ministries

Outreach Ministries of the Benedictine Sisters



Front row L-R: Dr. John Stransky, Fred Smith, Irene Redlin, Mary Livermore Second row L-R, Glenn Wensing, Fern Smith, Maxine Horning, Lester Kampen, Standing - Fr. Chris Uehlein

A Difficult But Necessary Decision



Change is difficult for all of us especially when it impacts how, where and with whom we live our lives. This past summer, we Benedictine Sisters had to take a hard look at our communal life and how we are changing. The general, wide-spread healthiness and energy we once possessed that naturally gave life to our ministries comes at a premium for us now. This is a most unwelcomed change for us to admit - let alone accept! Yet, looking with eyes wide open we could see our growing needs as elders and we spoke of the resources that will be needed for our own care.

During that time together, we also realized that we are not able to financially sustain or continue to physically operate one of our primary ministries; Benet Place Assisted Living, formerly, Evergreen Assisted Living. The model and culture, even the availability of assisted living

facilities have changed across the country; once group home like settings, now apartment style settings; once limited in number, now abundant! Always a mission of love

for us, closing our assisted living facility was a most

difficult decision to make mainly

because we knew it would change the

lives of our residents in how, where and with

whom they would live their lives; not something easily asked, elder to elder.

Today our former residents pictured above are getting more settled in their new homes. Each one has undergone a difficult time and has adapted to that change with graceful forbearance. What a beautiful gift and role model, these, and so many "certain beloved friends" have been to us! You have touched our hearts and with great love we say Thank You !!!

- Sister Nancy



Article by:
Sister Nancy
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"So long as the memory of certain beloved friends lives in my heart, I shall say that life is good."

Helen Keller



Mother
of God
Monastery

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Upcoming Events

- **JANUARY 6-7** - Call of the Soul Workshop
The Spirituality of Soul Work
- **JANUARY 21** - God in My Paintbrush
Workshop
- **FEBRUARY 6** - Spanish Courses begin at the
Benedictine Multicultural Center
- **FEBRUARY 11** - Images of Jesus in Scripture
Workshop
- **FEBRUARY 13** - Creative Meditation with
Clay Workshop
- **FEBRUARY 17** - A Myers-Briggs Workshop:
Who Am I and Who is My Neighbor?
- **MARCH 11** - Meeting God Within Me: A
Centering Prayer Workshop
- **MARCH 22-24** - Prioress Election

2017 DISCERNMENT RETREATS FOR WOMEN

A Discernment Retreat is a time to grow in your understanding of how God is calling you. It is also a time to listen to God through praying with Scripture and the Liturgy of the Hours.

You will have private sessions with a spiritual director who can help you pay attention to the stirring of God within your heart.

Your week will be an opportunity to be immersed in the balanced life of the Sisters of Mother of God Monastery.



For more information, contact Sister
Adrienne Kaufmann at 605.886.4159.