



S. Marlene witnesses Toni Cardini, right, sign her “Oblation” to live a life according to values found in the Rule of St. Benedict.

BENEDICTINE LIFE...

1,500 Years of Tradition, Unlimited Possibilities

by S. Barb Younger

While none of us can say exactly what the future holds, we know God offers us the opportunity to be part of unlimited possibilities to live a Christian life. St. Benedict offered a way of life when he penned his “Holy Rule” in the sixth century. What was true then is true now: Benedictine values of *Awareness of God, Moderation, Hospitality, Dignity of Work, Community Living, Listening, Taking Counsel, Common Good, Truthful Living, Stewardship, Respect for Persons, and Justice* are vital for life, for all peoples, everywhere. The more we as Christians practice these values the greater influence we have on the world around us. Below, Toni Cardini, shares her thoughts and experiences as an oblate...thank you, Toni!

“The first time my sister and I visited Mother of God Monastery it was by accident. We had grown up in Watertown, wanted to return and were looking for a place to stay. We were practicing Catholics attending morning mass during Lent, Adoration, Cursillo, and both of us spent a good deal of time volunteering. I hadn’t heard the word Oblate though. As we drove up I felt embraced by the statue of Mary and I knew my life was about to change.

We got to know the sisters from visiting, volunteering at simple tasks, lots of correspondence by phone, letters, and email. We attended the pheasant hunt, garden tours, Pax Christi, and helped serve meals to Watertown residents. Here was a spot where I felt at home and filled with peace. I could not believe my good fortune after learning about the Oblate Program. The study and preparation was heavenly. Each time I read the Rule of Benedict, I am overwhelmed by gratitude. Becoming an Oblate has truly changed how I view most things. I feel the Holy Spirit working in my life and an abundance of grace. I recently attended a several week course in Texas on the Beginning of Christianity. When the discussion of St. Benedict took place I brought several of my Benedictine books and talked about the monastery. Thank you dear sisters for letting me be a part of your lives and greatly enriching mine!”



The purpose of the symposium was to help us name our shared current reality; that is, our understanding of oblates, monastic understanding of oblates, feelings about the present and the future. To do so is the necessary work that we might name and claim a vision of the future and plan ways for monastics and oblates to move into a future together.

At the present time, there are 25,000 oblates across the world and 15,000 monastics (sisters and monks). Continuing to explore how oblates and monastics can be in relationship is a pathway, not just toward carrying on the Benedictine charism, but expanding it in ways we cannot yet see.

The evening before the October oblate meeting, S. Ramona and Kathy met with the Sisters at the monastery. Kathy's hope was to "share my overall sense of the wonders God has ahead for Christianity and of the particular place of Benedictinism in this mystery."

Some of the issues to be discussed in the future are: lay leadership of Oblates, sister mentors for Oblates and how being an Oblate is a vocation.

OBLATES FOR THE FUTURE: A Symposium

by S. Ramona Fallon

Oblates, Kathy Kersey (center) and Gerri Merkel (right), along with S. Ramona Fallon, participated in an Oblate symposium at St. Gertrude's Monastery in Cottonwood, Idaho. The theme for this symposium was, "Oblates for the Future" and was attended by 45 oblates and sisters from around the U.S. as well as the Bahamas and the Netherlands. It was a very full week! Attendees participated in presentations and panel discussions as well as enjoying prayer and meals with the sisters.

HEALTHCARE CHARRETTE

by S. Barb Younger

Your generosity helped make the weekend of November 3-4 a memorable one as 28 representatives from nine different women's religious communities joined us in Sioux Falls to discuss how we might collaborate in caring for our sisters and envisioning our future. Beth Lipsmeyer, Ph.D. and Ted Dunn, Ph.D. facilitated our time together.

We discussed our current practices and considered how we might share resources and information to benefit each other. We acknowledged that we are never done planning and strategizing since many factors contribute to our changing reality. Perhaps the most profound realization is that personal and communal transformation is an important element in any plan we could create!



PHEASANT HUNT

by S. Barb Younger

It was cold, cloudy and drizzling...perfect pheasant hunting weather! Thirteen hunters joined us at Oak Tree Lodge in Clark, SD for the 14th Annual Pheasant Hunt on September 29.



We're so glad we were able to sponsor the event again this year. A good time was had by all as 32 birds were brought home for the dinner table.

A big thanks to Mark Makins and the staff at Oak Tree Lodge for helping us to make this another memorable event in support of the Benedictine Sisters Foundation!

WE LOVE OUR VOLUNTEERS!



"Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless!" Sherry Anderson

by S. Nancy Zemcuznikov

Our community was extremely blessed this past summer and fall by volunteers who donated their time and talents with us. Diane Stone, featured in the last issue of "Extant" spent time on mission with S. Charles Palm at Fort Thompson.

This summer our outdoor gazebo was "rehabbed" by Arlene Goldblatt, Jody McDermott, Judy Oster, and Diana Kilber, volunteers and nieces of our own S. Clarice Schmitt! What a beautiful job they did! (See the group picture)

In the fall, Donna Vande Kieft helped bring in the harvest from our gardens and orchard. In the picture, S. Jane Schoenfelder steadies the ladder for Donna who picked our apple trees clean and helped in the washing, paring,

cooking and canning of all those apples. Somehow, she had the energy left to bake us all some fabulous apple pies! Many, many thanks Donna!

The quotation from Sherry Anderson is really true. In addition to all that our volunteers did they brightened our days with their goodness and joyfulness! What a priceless gift!





ABUNDANT HARVEST!

by S. Barb Younger

As South Dakotans surrounded by acres of crops and livestock, we shouldn't be amazed by the abundant harvest that pours forth from the earth each year. This year, our apple trees were "motivated" providing fruit which filled our freezers to the brim. Tomatoes and cucumbers kept our salads vibrant, and there was enough left over for the Palm Sisters to can the best garlic pickles in South Dakota! The flowers from perennial and annual beds kept the house and altar decorated all season. While S. Aurelia does much of the "in the dirt" work in our organic gardens, many sisters help with weeding, harvesting and preserving the bounty. The earth cries out to us all to be good stewards of our natural resources. We are amazed and blessed by the rewards that pour forth as we all do our part!

HEMISPHERIC CONFERENCE: Sisters Against Trafficking

by S. Teresa Ann Wolf

As a Board member of the USCSAHT (U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking), I participated in the Hemispheric Conference to Stop Human Trafficking held at the Jesuit Retreat Center in Cleveland, Ohio, October 24-27.

Attendees included representatives from six anti-trafficking networks in South America, Canada, and the U.S. Interpreter services were provided in English, Spanish, French, and Portuguese.

High points included being the "bridge interpreter" for my table of seven and listening to the testimony of two human trafficking survivors. The two women also gave us their blessing at the close of a Mass celebrated by Bishop Nelson Perez of the Cleveland Diocese.



Learn more about human trafficking at the USCSAHT website:

www.sistersagainstrafficking.org

PILGRIMS ON THE WAY!

CAMINO de SANTIAGO de COMPOSTELA



by S. Teresa Ann Wolf

Walking the Camino in Spain fulfilled a dream of tracing the footsteps of the Apostle James (Santiago) as he carried the Good News to the people of the Iberian Peninsula.

Having selected the relatively easy Portuguese Way from a variety of routes of different lengths and difficulty, Carmen Redlin – my companion and guide – and I walked tree shaded dirt paths, rolling hills, passing vineyards and gardens, and traversing cities and busy highways. We greeted fellow pilgrims from all over the world with “Buen Camino!” At wayside shrines and churches, as we sang Santa Maria del Camino, other pilgrims joined us.

Happy the day we arrived at the beautiful and majestic Cathedral de Santiago, after having walked more than 17 miles the last day! We joined lines to obtain a certificate verifying our walk of 118 kilometers from Tui to Santiago.

Afterwards we attended the Pilgrim’s Mass in the cathedral with thousands of other pilgrims in thanksgiving and to remember the intentions of all those we carried and continue to carry in our hearts.

SANT ANSELMO, MARIA RICKENBACH & MORE A Trip of A Lifetime

by S. Terri Hoffman

In September, Benedictine prioresses and superior generals from around the world gathered in Rome at Sant Anselmo for the *Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum*, Latin for International Community of Benedictines. This time was used to seek mutual support, exchange ideas, and share what we are doing in our communities and federations / congregations. The theme was “Let all be welcomed as Christ...” One hundred and fifteen sisters attended from all corners of the world, so talks and praying the Liturgy of the Hours was in many different languages. Thank heavens for interpreters!

A high point of the trip I still find hard to believe, was having a private audience with Pope Francis at the Vatican; each of us was able to greet him after his talk. We also had time to visit the foundational sites of our Benedictine heritage in Italy and Switzerland: Subiaco, convent of St. Scholastica; Monte Cassino Abbey; Maria Rickenbach Monastery; Engelberg Abbey; and Marienburg Monastery. It opened my eyes to how incredibly widespread Benedictinism is and the tremendous good works being done through the mission works of these sisters. I’m so grateful to our community for allowing me time away for this adventure, to learn and to grow.



Catholic Health Initiatives

by S. Nancy Zemcuznikov

Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI) is the third-largest nonprofit health system in the nation providing care in 18 states through 101 hospitals, clinics, health-service organizations and nursing colleges. Our Benedictine community is proud to be one of its founding members. Thirteen congregations of women religious support and influence the mission of CHI. Each community appoints a person to represent them at semi-annual meetings with the Board of Stewardship Trustees. Their role is to assist and encourage CHI in remaining true to their Catholic Christian values in providing healthcare to all persons.

For the past 12 years S. Francis Schumacher has represented our community well, bringing forward our Benedictine values as a model for Christian decision-making. We are deeply grateful to S. Francis for her wisdom contribution to CHI over these many years. S. Nancy Zemcuznikov, with a long history of providing healthcare in hospitals, clinics and community health programs will be our next CHI representative, attending the annual meeting in Chicago this December.



COURAGEOUS WOMEN...and more!



by S. Barb Younger

Words can't describe the grace that abounds, when an image or artwork I have created somehow leads others closer to God. In the winter of 2017, Jo Vitek asked me to illustrate the cover of *Courageous Women of the Prairie*, a compilation of stories from local women who are survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Neither Jo nor I knew that it would lead to a full illustration of the book, but it did! *Courageous Women, Vol. II* was released this past October with a new cover and accompanying illustrations.

I never dreamed my artwork would be published or used on some larger scale. I continue to be surprised

by how God uses my gifts and am grateful for the opportunity to create our community Christmas cards, take photos, and design web graphics as the "monastery artist."

LCWR Region 11 Abbey of the Hills

by S. Terri Hoffman

This past October Sisters Terri, Nancy, Ramona and Eileen attended the LCWR Region XI meeting held at Abbey of the Hills. This gathering takes place twice a year, in April and October. During these days, we summited possible names for the 2019 LCWR president-elect, LCWR Board members and voted for the 2019 LCWR Woman of the Year award. We also had good discussions on racism: steps we could take to become more aware of it, how we unknowingly take part in it, and how we might educate and influence our wider society about its presence and how it affects the common good.





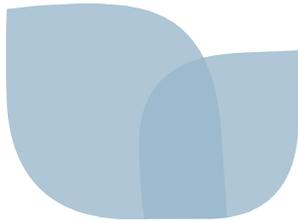
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A LOOK AT WHAT'S AHEAD!

BENEDICTINE MULTICULTURAL CENTER

DECEMBER 10-20: Christmas Nativities from Around the World

FEBRUARY 4-MARCH 11: Winter Spanish Classes

SPIRITUALITY CENTER

JANUARY 12: Meeting God Within me

FEBRUARY 15: Who Am I and Who Is My Neighbor?

FEBRUARY 23: Creative Meditation with Clay

MARCH 9: A Day with Hildegard of Bingen

MARCH 23: God in My Paintbrush

MARCH 29-30: Spring Directed Retreat



visit our website: www.watertownbenedictines.org