



BENEDICTINE TOUCHSTONE



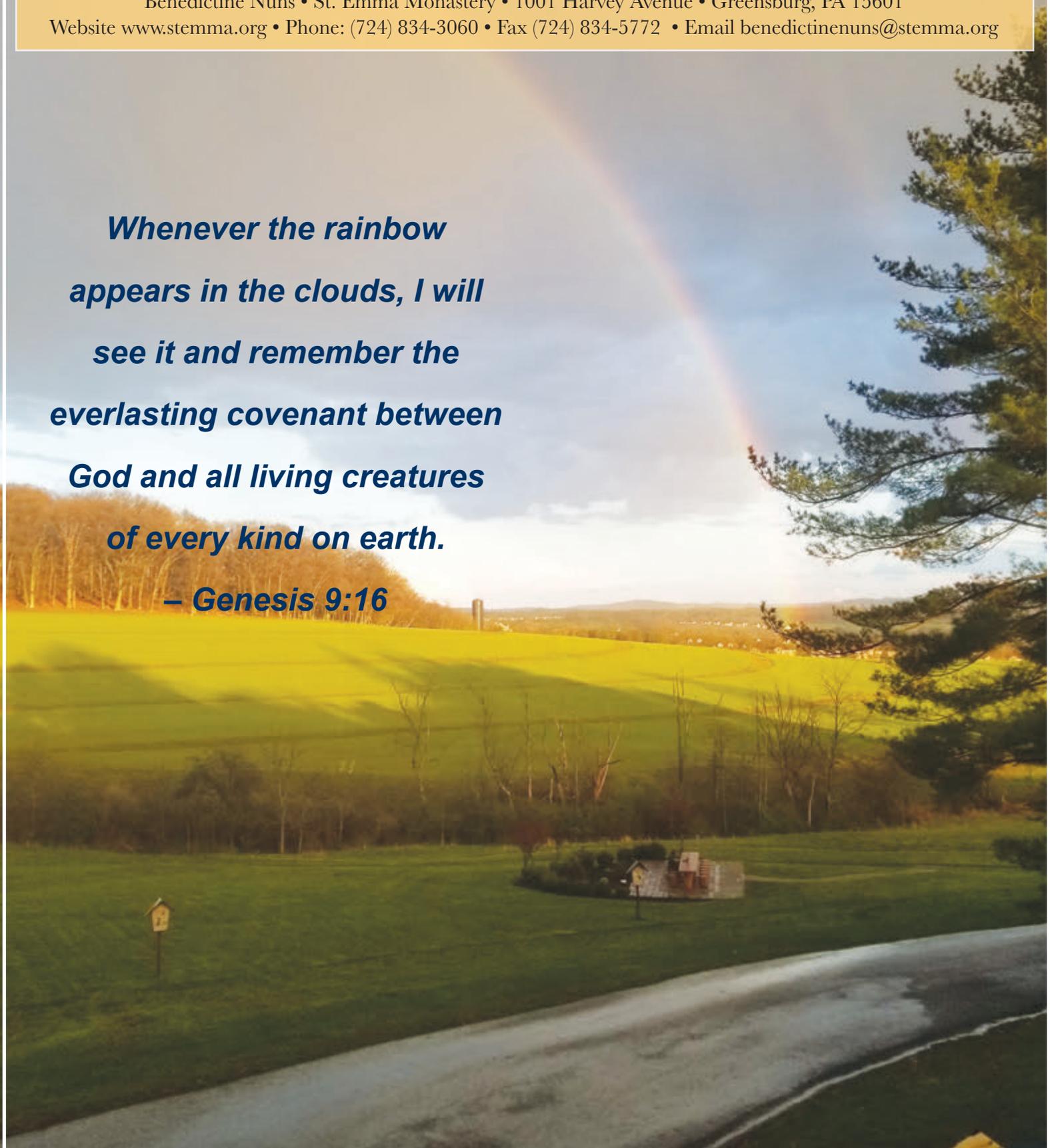
Summer 2018

Benedictine Nuns • St. Emma Monastery • 1001 Harvey Avenue • Greensburg, PA 15601

Website www.stemma.org • Phone: (724) 834-3060 • Fax (724) 834-5772 • Email benedictinenuns@stemma.org

*Whenever the rainbow
appears in the clouds, I will
see it and remember the
everlasting covenant between
God and all living creatures
of every kind on earth.*

– Genesis 9:16



Prioress' Reflection

By Mother Mary Anne Noll OSB



God's Promises

April 27. The day had been bright and beautiful; the weather forecast of scattered storms seemed unlikely. The sun still shone brightly as the rain suddenly began about 5:15 pm, at the end of Vespers.

Armed with our cell phone-cameras, we ran to the windows looking to the east for a rainbow. Very low on the horizon appeared hazy, joined together rainbows with another rainbow yet higher in the sky (page 4).

The rain stopped, the sun beamed, an hour passed. About 6:15 pm the rain poured down again seemingly oblivious that the sun was still shining. Again we ran to our positions to the east. This time, a double rainbow glowed with bright colors and arched across the sky above our property. (Cover photo)

Another hour passed. Same scenario: bright sun, sudden rain and two beautiful rainbows adorned the sky. Imagine! Three double rainbows in one evening!

God's promise from the book of Genesis appeared to us three different times with double rainbows in less than three hours! "And I will remember my covenant with you and with all living creatures. Never again will the floodwaters destroy all life. When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth." Then God said to Noah, "Yes, this rainbow is the sign of the covenant I am confirming with all the creatures on earth." (Genesis 9:15-17)

"I will remember my covenant with you." God reached out and made a deal with us and He promised to keep it. He did not ask for references or a background check. God didn't check us out on social media nor did He ask us what we would do in exchange. God offered a one-sided deal, all we had to do was accept His gift.

Day to day and year to year, we experience God's promises: the four seasons present various gifts each year. After a very prolonged winter with snow showers to the middle of April, the fulfillment of the promise of spring is most welcome. As I write this reflection, spring is "busting out all over": the decorative pear trees just shed their blossoms that created white blankets beneath each tree. The daffodils, tulips, and narcissus are blooming despite

their earlier attempts when cold weather and snow rebuffed their efforts. The tiny, tender leaves on many trees become more visible every day and the volunteers maneuver the lawn mowers so that St. Emma's looks like a huge park lovingly cared for.

Every seed contains within it the promise of summer. We await the chance to garden. We await the crop of lettuce and

the green onions. We plant tomatoes that will ripen at various times. At each of these moments we await the fulfillment of the ongoing promises of God called spring, summer, fall, and winter that house the next year's promise of life and growth.

Towards the end of the Prologue of the Rule of St. Benedict, Benedict observes that "we share by patience in the sufferings of Christ". I have often thought this phrase is one of the keys to the Benedictine life. We are in it for the long haul. This is cross-country skiing—not the grand slalom where one races to the bottom—dead or alive—in minutes.

Time is the measurement of change. Patience allows God the time to...germinate the seeds, create rainbows, and to provide both for our physical and spiritual growth.

"By patience" we are allowing God, time. Allowing God time to change me, to change others, and to change the world. Patience in the Bible "refers to the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting angry or upset." What enables us to act in such a way?

Continued on page 4



Benedictine Nuns Daily Prayer Schedule



5:20 a.m. ~ Vigils
 6:25 a.m. ~ Lauds
 7:00 a.m. ~ Eucharist
 8:40 a.m. ~ Terce*
 11:45 a.m. ~ Sext/None*
 5:00 p.m. ~ Vespers*
 7:00 p.m. ~ Compline*

* Times may vary; check with us.

You are welcome to join us!

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“Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?”

Many of us recall the hymn that we often sing at Mass. This is the essence of a vocation to the consecrated life. At some point Jesus has spoken our name in such a tender way that we desire to give all and to follow Him.

- Praying about such a stirring in one’s heart is Step Number 1.
- Talking it over with a confessor or spiritual director or spiritual friend is Step Number 2.
- Contacting a monastery or convent, talking with the Vocation Director or Superior is Step Number 3.
- Visiting a monastery or convent is Step Number 4.
- After such a **Come and See** experience, repeat the steps to discern where God is calling you.

For further information about our Monastery, Call Sr. Maria Johanna OSB, vocation director at 724-610-7595.

Come and See Weekends: July 3-8, July 4th week • December 23 - January 6, Christmas - Epiphany.
You are also welcome to visit when your schedule permits.

Please Visit Our Revised Website

Have you visited our updated website? If not, you are missing a treat! The newly formatted website is more user-friendly, which is a great concept for Benedictines who are supposed to be welcoming folks! It should be easier for you to find information and for us to maintain.

With this update, you will be able to find upcoming events, submit prayer requests, and register online for retreats. We still strive to make our website (as well as our *Benedictine Touchstone*) inspirational as well as informational.

If you have any suggestions to enhance our website still further, please let us know at benedictinenuns@stemma.org.

Benedictine Nuns
Saint Emma Monastery
Greensburg, Pennsylvania

"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 25:35)"

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COMMUNITY & MONASTERY | SPIRITUALITY | VOCATIONS | RETREATS AND RESERVATIONS | ROBERTSHAW COUNTRY HOUSE | DONATE

Monastery Prayer Schedule

You are welcome to join us for the celebration of *The Liturgy of the Hours* and the daily celebration of the Eucharist.

5:20 a.m. - Vigils
6:25 a.m. - Lauds
7:00 a.m. - Eucharist (Mass)
8:40 a.m. - Terce
11:45 a.m. - Sext/None
5:00 p.m. - Vespers
7:00 p.m. - Compline

Times may vary. Please check with us for times on a specific day. Thank you!

Community & Monastery
A monastery is a sign to the world, a sign written by the lives of those whom God calls to live this way.

Benedictine Spirituality
Learn about Benedictine monasticism as it applies to everyday life.

Me? A Benedictine nun?
Is God tugging at your heart to follow Him in a monastic community?

Spiritual Oasis
Get away from the desert of every day life. Learn about retreat opportunities.

Your Support Matters
Gifts given in faith to God make a critical difference.

Gifts that Inspire
Shop online and find several devotional items from our Gift & Book Shop.

Prayer: the Background of Our Day

By Sr. Petra

The priority of prayer and the fidelity to it is what drew me to St. Emma's. Prayer is our first response to any problem or decision to be made. Prayer is the backbone of our day, around which everything revolves.

Our monastic chapel is named *Cor Jesu*, which means Heart of Jesus. How fitting, since prayer to His Father was closest to His Sacred Heart! We gather as a Community to pray the full *Liturgy of the Hours*, the Divine Office, six times daily in addition to Holy Mass.

Although the foundation of the *Liturgy of the Hours* is the 150 psalms and we pray many of them each day, they always seem new because they are divinely inspired Holy Scripture. Many times a word or a phrase provides a completely new insight never before noticed. In fact, when prayer sometimes seems dry, it is helpful to consciously look for a word that "speaks" to my heart. It is also helpful to pray before the Office, asking the Lord to open my heart to the Scripture we are going to pray. We strive to pray the Psalms, not merely say or sing them.

The Church, in her Wisdom, has provided liturgical changes for the different seasons such as Advent, Lent, and Easter. There are different melodies for the hymns in the Office and the antiphons which frame each psalm. We look forward to each coming season like a child anticipates Christmas! Each season speaks more deeply to us each time it comes around. Like a good friend who has been absent for a while; each encounter with the different liturgies adds depth to our relationship.

Sprinkled throughout the year are the Feast Days and memorials that honor a particular feast or event, such as St. Benedict, St. Peter, Pentecost and the Annunciation. These have their own special hymns, melodies for the psalms, and antiphons. The Church provides for us a rich liturgical feast of prayer!

We spend much of our day in silence as we work at our various tasks in the monastery, unless we are involved in the business office, the gift shop, or with volunteers and retreatants. We forsake talking with others in order to talk with God and listen for the promptings of the Holy Spirit. We also have Grand Silence from after Compline until after Mass the next morning. This gives us ample time for private prayer and meditation. We also have time each morning for *lectio divina*, which is a prayerful reading of Holy Scripture and reflection upon it, which can lead to contemplation.



We receive many requests for prayers, all of which are shared with the Community either immediately or read aloud at meals. We are fortunate to be in a monastery where we do receive feedback from many whose prayers have been answered, sometimes miraculously.

My prayer is more of a constant companionship with Jesus, a quiet walking with Him throughout the day. I consciously thank Him for all things, great and small. Everything becomes fodder for prayer, from rainbows to fog, from eleva-

tors to doorknobs. This is an easy way to remain in His presence and to maintain a positive spirit.

Occasionally, there are "warm fuzzies," which are like hugs from God. While these are greatly appreciated, our fidelity to prayer is not dependent on feelings received, but on our call from God. This sustains us and fills us spiritually, enabling us to reach out in love and joy to everyone.

Prioress' Reflection *Continued from page 2*

Just gritting our teeth? That response almost guarantees future eruptions of our emotions! Letting other people bully us? This false application of patience would be linked to the false interpretation of humility that makes us doormats.

"Allowing God time" might be the key. It is acknowledging that God is in control and that He is a loving and caring God. God has "the whole world in His hands" and His hands are pierced out of love for us. His hands do not strangle or thwart or otherwise control us. Allowing God time that all things will work together unto good. Time for the embryo to develop, for the seed to sprout and grow, for me to know that God is my loving Provider.

About 30 years ago in our bookstore, we sold a plaque that read, "God, give me patience and I want it right now!" We sold many of them!

Thirty years later, our culture hones the need for and the service of speed: the fastest internet connection, wait for a meal more than ten minutes and it is free; text messages and twitter are replacing the long and slow emails; people use abbreviations because words are too long; LOL.

"Counter-culture" rightly describes the message of Jesus and the application that includes the monastic life. We are on a journey, a long one in a slow boat with particular passengers. We try to orient our lives to Jesus. We make vows for life. We trust that God will care for us and make good on His promise: an everlasting life with Him in heaven. We allow God time to bring this about through our own acts of patience. God provides many rainbows of re-assurance: some appear in the sky and the others in our hearts.



Please use the enclosed envelope to send us your prayer requests.

TIME ALLOWANCES

By Barbara Mayer, Development Director

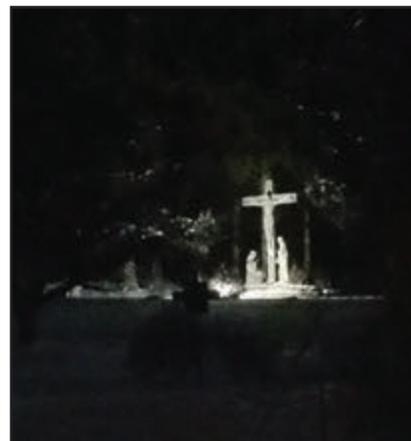
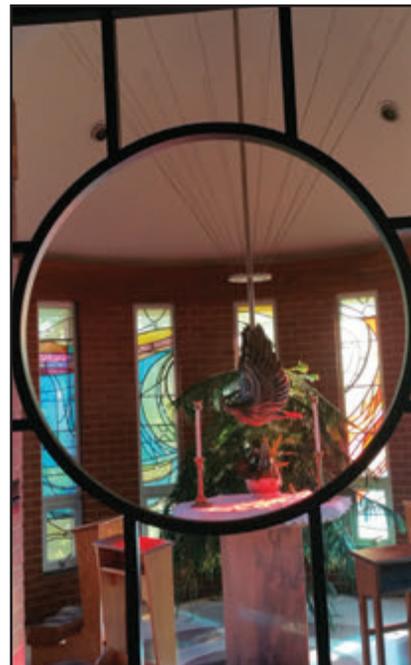
It's amazing how the use of a comma gives a different meaning to this phrase: *Allowing God time*, or, *Allowing God, time*. At a different time in my life I was the manager of four strong-willed, highly independent, but not very wise people; my children. To keep this team together I had to understand the importance of planning, creating charts, keeping the team focused on finishing the job at hand so goals could be met and accomplishments fashioned. Time was often considered the enemy as it moved too quickly towards the "next daily result". Working in these conditions was often stressful and not always successful or satisfying.

Allowing God time can also be stressful. How often have we said a prayer (please Lord, I need patience now) and been disappointed when the answer did not drop out of the sky? Or the answer was not what we hoped for (oh Lord, not again!) But how often do we allow God, time? Do we follow a daily prayer schedule? Do we take time to sit quietly and listen for His voice? It is certainly a challenge in our fast paced society of Twitter, where 280 characters are all that can be said in a tweet (the *Our Father* will not fit into a Tweet). Do we allow God, time, before we check our "daily feed?" Do we allow God, time, before we enter into our busy daily schedule? How can we reach a successful outcome if we do not allow ourselves this time?

Making time for God at St. Emma Monastery is the prime objective, not waiting for daily results, but following as rigorous a schedule as any family unit. The importance of prayer, giving God, time, is the first admonition of St. Benedict: "Listen carefully, my son, to the master's instructions, and attend to them with the ear of your heart" (Prologue, 1). Allowing God, time, gives us the spiritual connection needed to live a satisfying life.

Making a retreat is still one of the best modern day methods of allowing God, time. St. Emma Monastery offers many retreats each year which focus on a personal encounter with God, by allowing time, for God. Retreat structure releases participants from their daily technology rituals and reinforces the idea of listening carefully with the ear of your heart. Stressful daily life conditions are set aside for the attainment of spiritual goals.

Walking the grounds of the monastery can be another way of allowing God, time. The Rosary Path, the Padre Pio Shrine, the Last Supper Table, and the St. Walburga Shrine are all peaceful, meditative environments for anyone looking for God. Visiting these spaces has a way of putting ones' mind at rest, uniting one's heart with God, and maybe, a time for double rainbows and promises fulfilled.



The Last Supper Table

*St. Emma Monastery ~ Benedictine Nuns
13th Dinner & Silent Auction ~ April 21, 2018*



***Thank you ...**
to all of you who spent countless hours in
making this event so special.*

***Thank you...**
to all of you who supported this Dinner by
your presence and your donations. The Dinner
netted nearly \$24,000. May God bless you.*

Benedictine Sisters

Catholic Gift & Book Shop

Wedding gifts ~ Confirmation medals ~
Baptism gifts ~ Rosaries ~ Inspirational
books ~ Bibles ~ Statues ~ Liturgical Music
~ Crucifixes ~ Trappist Monk Jelly



Store Hours:

**Monday –
Saturday
10 am – 4 pm**

Visitors Learn, Serve at St. Emma

Volunteers

We welcome various groups of young people and college students. Seton Hill University, Greensburg, brought three different groups through the year to volunteer. We always tell them how indispensable their help is and how Benedict asks us to use our tools as sacred vessels.

They are surprised to learn that it was this monk in the 6th century who gave dignity to human labor. The two or three per cent of the people who could read and write probably never had a callous on their hands. Benedict included manual labor for each of his monks every day along with the hours devoted to *The Liturgy of the Hours* and *lectio divina* every day.

No longer was manual labor considered menial or demeaning but when done out of love for God and for neighbor, it changed the tools to sacred vessels. When the cooks, masons, tailors, gardeners, the calligraphers and the cellarer exercised their skills, these people saw the tasks and daily chores raised to the level of offering oneself to God.

We invite students to pray with us as well so they actually experience the very heart of our monastic life and that monasteries are alive and well in this 21st century.

Field trips

As part of the Monastic Spirituality Course at St. Vincent College, Fr. Nathan Munsch, OSB, has the students visit the Carmelite Nuns at Latrobe, The Sisters of Charity at Seton Hill, Greensburg and the nuns at St. Emma's. Since their time is limited to the 90 minute class time, they attend part of Vespers, tour the grounds and hear the relationship of a monastery and its values to their daily lives. Afterwards, we share a meal with them, and we always enjoy the conversations that occur.

Cub Scouts

A group of Cub Scouts visited this spring. They were working on their "reverence" badge. It was in February, at night, so the Cub Scouts used their Scouting skills (and flashlights!) to help us find our way around the different shrines.

Individuals

Individual young people often call on their own to volunteer in order to get needed service hours. We appreciate their assistance, as well.

The Culture Project

"The Culture Project, is an initiative of young people, set out to restore culture through the experience of virtue. We proclaim the dignity of the human person and the richness of living sexual integrity, inviting our culture to become fully alive." For the third year in a row, young adults who dedicate one or two years to the Culture Project stayed at St. Emma's during the Triduum while making a retreat. What an inspiration to hear these young people so enthused about their Catholic faith and how this can really change the world! Their inspiration comes from St. John Paul II and his writings, especially his teachings on marriage and the family.

Please remember us when revising or making your will.

Our legal name is:

The Sisters of Saint Benedict of Westmoreland County

Our Federal ID # is 25-1017575

Save the Date! 8th Tee Time for a Nun Monday, August 27, 2018

Hannastown Golf Club

9:30 Registration, 10:30 kick-off

Fee: \$100 per player which includes:

Cart • Greens Fee • Coffee & Donuts • Lunch • Picture

Steak Dinner at St. Emma Monastery

www.stemma.org/events/golf

Robertshaw Bed and Breakfast

*Your home
away from
home!*



www.robertshawbedandbreakfast.com

Flea Market – Extraordinaire!

Indoor/Outdoor • A/C • Handicapped accessible

June 14, Thursday: 2 pm–7 pm, Early bird: \$5 fee

June 15, Friday: 10 am – 6 pm

June 16, Sat.: 10 am – 1 pm 50% off - most items
1 pm– 3 pm Bag sale - most items

Delicious Food: eat in or take-out
Halupki • Halushki • Pierogies • Pizza

**Volunteers welcomed before, during
and after the Flea Market!**

Ye Olde Christmas Shoppe

Nov. 8, 9, 10

**Wonderful gifts, delicious food,
all re-giftable items,
and a great time for all!**



+ Rest in Peace +

+ We also thank the family of “Janie” (Mary Jane) Schnupp, Greensburg, who died on January 22, 2018, for suggesting that memorials be sent to St. Emma’s in her memory in her obituary. Janie was a “forever” volunteer; her beloved husband Johnny died 15 years ago and they both had volunteered here.

+ We extend our sympathy to the family of Genevieve Yanek from McKeesport, PA, and thank them for suggesting St. Emma’s as a suggested donation for memorials in Genevieve’s name in her obituary. Genevieve died on March 5, 2018 and was a long-time retreatant.

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+ We pray for Nancy Tedesco of Fredericktown a former retreatant who died February 10, 2017. She had included us in her will. Such donations are unexpected gifts from God.

Calendar of Retreats • 2018

- July 13-19** Six-day **SILENT** Msgr. Roger Statnick
Women/men, \$390 **or** \$175 for weekend
or \$230 through Monday
- July 13-20** Encounter with Silence, limited to 15, almost full,
Rev. John-Mary Tompkins, OSB, \$510 *Monastic
Guest House; \$445 Retreat House*
- Sept. 7-9** **SILENT** Ignatian Retreat for women Miles Christi
- Oct. 12-14** Women/men TBA
- Oct. 19-21** **SILENT** Women/men Fr. Boniface Hicks OSB
- Oct. 26-28** Legion of Mary

2019

- Jan. 22** Pro-Life Prayer Vigil 3—7:00
- March 8** **SILENT** Lenten men/women, Msgr. Roger Statnick
- March 15-17** **SILENT** Lenten, Fr. Bill Kiel
- March 29-31** Men/women TBA
- April 5-7** **SILENT** Lenten men/women TBA

Six-Day **SILENT** Retreat • July 13 - 19

By Baptism all Christians are called to holiness, which is simply the fullness of life in Christ. In our very secularistic world, this call is easily forgotten amidst over-activity and materialistic desires. During the two conferences a day and the homily at Mass, Msgr. Roger Statnick, Greensburg, PA will address aspects of our spiritual lives in order to freshen our appreciation and attention to ways of growing in the love of Christ. The **SILENT** atmosphere provides the “greenhouse” effect for the retreat graces to take root and grow. \$390 entire retreat **OR** \$175 weekend **OR** \$230 through Monday.

Mark Your Calendar! 2018 Days of Recollection

September 15: Legion of Mary, 9 am - 4 pm

December 1: Advent DCCW and others, 9 am - 2:30 pm

Ignatian Retreat for Women • September 7-9, 2018

This silent retreat will be preached by the Priests of *Miles Christi*, according to the method of St. Ignatius of Loyola and his book “Spiritual Exercises” at St. Emma Retreat House. The retreat consists of spiritual talks each day with a time for prayer and personal meditation following each talk. Holy Mass will be offered each day, as well as Exposition & Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and Holy Rosary. Confessions will be heard and you will have an opportunity to meet with the Priests for spiritual direction.

The cost is \$200 and includes two nights lodging in a single room, 6 meals, bed and bath linens, facility fees, and a small portion for the Priests’ transportation and accommodations.

To register or for more information, please contact
Miles Christi Religious Order at 248-596-9677 or
pittsburgh@spiritualexercises.net.

**We Love
Our
Volunteers**

We can always use help in the following areas:

Cook for the Nuns, volunteers, retreatants, Manage the St. Emma website,
Organize, Clean, Set tables, Garden, Welcome guests, and so on.
Call Mother Mary Anne at 724-834-3060

Our needs are simple and flexible, any time you have to give is appreciated! God’s Blessings.