



BENEDICTINE TOUCHSTONE



Summer 2012

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



*Monastic Vocation:
Living the life
of the Gospel
through the prism
of the
Rule of St. Benedict.*



Prioress' Reflection

By Mother Mary Anne Noll OSB



"I am the light of the world." Probably all of us reading this sentence identify this quote with Jesus. But light can blind us as well as light up our paths. Light looks "colorless" when seen with the naked eye.

Refracted through a prism or through colored glass, light becomes rainbows and hues of colors.

Jesus' light shines through each person lighting up the world with the particular gifts, care and concern expressed through that personality and the people they impact.

Religious communities highlight various aspects of the Gospel. We think of the Ursulines who were the first teaching community, of the Missionary Sisters of Charity working with the poorest of the poor, and of the Maryknoll Sisters with their great missionary thrust.

In his Rule, a "wisdom" document describing growth into Christ and the practical implementation of the Christian life, St. Benedict crystallizes the lived experiences of the early monks and nuns into a "how-to" document.

Benedict refers to his monastery as a "school of the Lord's service," a "household of God," a "workshop in which the tools of the spiritual craft" are engaged. He sets forth our goal as to "prefer nothing whatever to the love of Christ" and "to share by patience in the sufferings of Christ."

Prayer is that intimacy with the Lord that changes us for we become like those with whom we associate. Prayer forms the structure of our day and expresses our hearts, the hearts of all who ask us to pray for them, the unspoken needs of the world and offers them to God.

The chapter on humility is the longest of the 72 (and the Prologue) for without humility God will not be the center of our

lives and life in community will be very difficult if not impossible.

Obedience is the gift of ourselves to Christ, in imitation of His gift of self to the Father. It is the practical expression of praying "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done." It is the opportunity to give our most precious gift, our self-will to God.

And, if all of the above sounds familiar, it should! For these are all aspects of following Jesus: they have a more enunciated role in our monastic life and a more visible expression. The prism of the Benedictine Rule separates the Light of Christ into these beautiful shades for us to more easily embrace Christ and His love for us.

The front cover captures the beauty of the windows in our Cor Jesu Chapel as they reflect and refract the sun in such beautiful ways—just as the monastic life does for the Christian life.

On June 29, we mark the 10th Anniversary of the Dedication of our Cor Jesu Monastic Chapel. This beautiful Chapel expresses in architecture the reality that God is the center of our lives as human beings and as Benedictine nuns. This architectural gem provides the external reminder to all who see it that here in this

place a group of women – out of love for and called by Jesus Christ—have given up what the world considers the norm: family, possessions, and following one's own hopes and desires.

The front of the church rises unhindered to the heavens as do our souls as they are drawn to God and His praise. The sun shining through the lance like windows on a nearly direct east/west axis highlights through long, vertical shafts of light the Dedication candlesticks on the wall, the pews and the nuns in the choir stalls. The movement of the sun sends alternating patterns of shafts of bright sun and the shadows of the brick pillars in between.

Tonight at the beginning of Compline, a shaft of sun highlighted the head and body of Jesus on the hanging crucifix while both arms were in shadow. The sun continued to sweep across the tabernacle and then the Sisters in the pews.

The heart of our monastic vocation is the call by God to serve Him completely and praise Him in this monastery through the seven offices and daily Mass. Our prayer finds concrete expression in the various works during the day out of love for God, our fellow nuns and through the hospitality we offer.

May our monastic life aid you in your search for God and living the Gospel of Jesus more fully.

Mother Mary Anne Noll, OSB



A night photo of our Cor Jesu Monastic Chapel. The 10th anniversary of its dedication is June 29.

The Touchstone is published by the Sisters of St. Benedict of Westmoreland County for our friends and benefactors:

Publisher and Editor

Mother Mary Anne Noll OSB

Development Director

Mary Kay Swenson

Graphic Arts and Design

Susan Garrison

If you have questions or comments about this publication, please address them to:

St. Emma Monastery

1001 Harvey Avenue

Greensburg, PA 15601-1494

Phone (724) 834-3060

Email: benedictinenuns@stemma.org

www.stemma.org

Witness to Freedom

By Rev. Brother Jeremiah Lange, OSB

Homily at St. Emma May 14, 2012 • (based on 1 Acts 15:22-31, Gospel John 15:12-17)

The early Church almost from the start faced an immediate threat to its existence. The explosive intervention of God into man's insular, self-consumed existence via the Incarnation, the radically counter culture message of Jesus Christ, and the ultimate triumph over sin and death through Christ's Passion and Resurrection was nearly incomprehensible to the Near Eastern World. This had not been a Paradigm shift, the very Paradigm had been shattered.

For the early disciples when their witness was not met with outright hostility, they were often greeted with skepticism, the message was either too good to be true or they weren't giving the entire story. Particularly in reference to the treatment of the venerated Jewish Laws, they had been the guardian of the Jewish heritage, the mark of the people's religious identity. To dismiss them or consider them inconsequential to one's relationship with God was unthinkable.

Thus for some of the early adherents, to those of the Jewish faith who could make out dimly the realization of the Messiah in Jesus Christ, the Laws must be incorporated into this revolutionary movement. They could not move forward without the assurance that the externals provided, it offered some modicum of safety, a security borne of one's sense of control. Be it circumcision or dietary laws, they seemed to be essential.

Having already met that challenge within their own local community, the Apostles and the presbyters sends these four

men, Paul and Barnabas, Barsabbas and Silas, to Antioch to ensure that the new emergent faith there would not be suffocated by these unnecessary burdens.

That mission, that challenge to liberate those in bondage, is just as necessary, if not more so today. And that very challenge is integral to your life because just like those four men who traveled to Antioch, you have embraced a mission of liberation.

No vocation happens by chance. Christ reminds us in today's Gospel that it is He who has chosen you; it is He who has appointed you. Or perhaps a better way to put this, He has offered this challenge to you and through His Grace you have given your *Fiat*. You are not here by mistake, you have been called to this monastery, under this Prioress with these Sisters to participate in a unique way in God's salvific intention for the world.

And this is a world in bondage, bondage to the allures of the materialistic, self-serving life, that worships power and money. This is the bondage that destroys lives and leaves only abject despair in its wake. And it is so all consuming, so embedded into man's psyche that the captives can see no way out, thus they are left to an aggressive self-reliance, all the while trying to ignore the hunger they cannot satisfy. And you, you consecrated religious, you women of

St. Emma, have been chosen and sent to set them free.

You certainly are not storming the barricades, scaling the walls or landing on the beaches in full battle gear (although that might be fun). Rather you fight this battle, if you will, by the life you lead, by your fidelity to the vows you have made to God. He has asked you and you have said yes. Christ has given you one command, to love one another, and this life you reveal that love to the world,

Blessed John Paul in *Vita Consecrata* states: The consecrated life reflects the splendor of this love because by its fidelity to the mystery of the Cross, it confesses that it believes and lives by the love of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

You are that reminder that the Cross is the superabundance of God's love poured out upon this world, and the presence of Christ amidst the world's darkness.

By your sacrifice, you offer an alternative to these desperate captives. You demonstrate for them the true, everlasting freedom and peace that can only come from entrusting one's entire life, one's entire being, one's hopes and dreams, one's will and intellect to God. Emboldened by the realization that God has called you here and that you have been appointed to this prophetic witness, trust that grace of God will secure your growth ever more

+ Rest in Peace +

We extend our deepest sympathy to the families of:

+ Yvonne Tamasy, West Newton, PA, beloved wife of Joe Tamasy.

+ David Truxal, Greensburg, PA.

We thank both families for suggesting memorial contributions to St Emma Monastery.

Prayer to Know One's Vocation

O blessed St. Walburga,
Who heard the call
of the Heavenly Bridegroom
in the depths of your heart,
intercede now with that same
Heavenly Bridegroom
that I may know
to what vocation He is calling me.
If my vocation be to
the consecrated life,
may He fill my heart with the
same love, joy, peace that you knew
in serving and following Him.
I ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Take My Hands

*Take my hands and make them as your own,
and use them for your kingdom here on earth.*

*Consecrate them to your care, anoint them for your service
where you may need your gospel to be sown.*

*Take my hands, they speak now for my heart,
and by their actions they will show your love.*

*Guard them on their daily course, be their strength
and guiding force to ever serve the Trinity above.*

Take my hands; I give them to you, Lord.

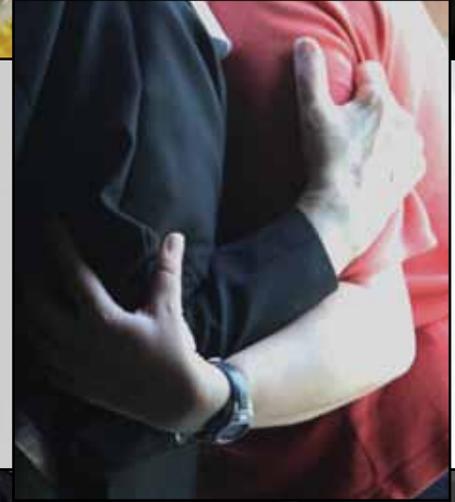
Prepare them for the service of your name.

*Open them to human need and by their love they'll sow
your seed so all may know the love and hope you gave.*

Sebastian Temple

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Is God calling you? Does your heart or the heart of someone you know resonate with our monastic life?

If so, or if you're not sure, come and immerse yourself in our classical monastic life for an Immersion weekend.

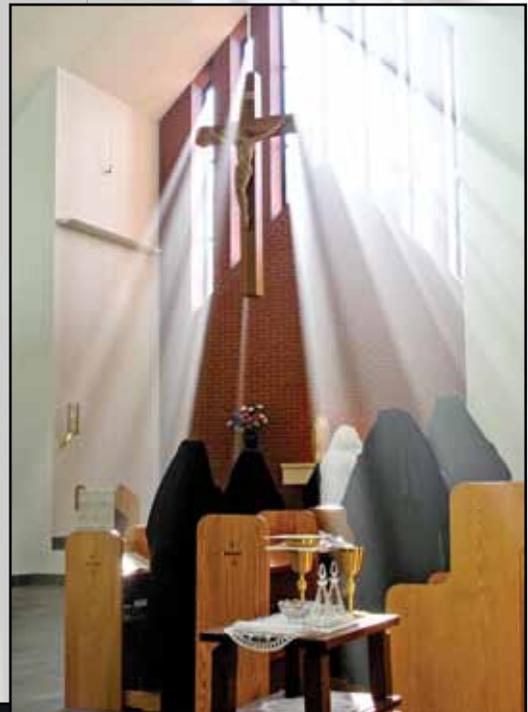
Experience *The Liturgy of the Hours*, the monastic table, love made manifest in work, community recreation, and the silence that fosters prayer. The Rule of St. Benedict has freed and formed and directed the hungers of the human heart to God for over 1500 years!

We invite women (ages 16-38) to join us for this "heart and hands on" experience. Please call or email (vocations@stemma.org) to learn more about our life, the immersion experiences or to discuss other opportunities to visit.

Overnight Immersion Experience
August 11-12, 2012

Thanksgiving Weekend Immersion Experience
November 23-25, 2012

New Year Immersion Experience
January 4-6, 2013 (Ages 16 - 25)



Benedictine Nuns Daily Prayer Schedule

- 5:25 a.m. ~ Vigils ~
- 6:30 a.m. ~ Lauds
- 7:00 a.m. ~ Eucharist
- Lectio Divina I
- 8:40 a.m. ~ Terce
- 11:45 a.m. ~ Sext/None
- 5:00 p.m. ~ Vespers
- 7:30 p.m. ~ Compline ~ Lectio Divina II

Seventh Annual Dinner & Silent Auction

Our thanks to those who made the evening a success! May God bless you abundantly!



Mark your calendars for next year! April 13, 2013



May Crowning



On Thursday, May 10 members of the Junior Legion of Mary, Our Lady of the Morning Star, held their annual May Crowning here at St. Emma led by their spiritual director, Rev. Joseph Sredzinski. Starting in the Fatima Chapel, the group processed to the outdoor Our Lady of Fatima Shrine. During the rosary, each participant presented a carnation to our Lady. Benediction followed.

“Work: Prayer Made Visible”

By Mary Kay Swenson

As much as I would like to take credit for the words of this title, they are the words of our very own Mother Mary Anne. As I reflected on them: “Work: Prayer Made Visible”, I realized this is exactly who the Community of Nuns at Saint Emma Monastery is. Their very life is prayer made visible. It is their work; their prayer; their offering to God of the gifts He has given them. What a beautiful life!

Perhaps you have been a recipient of some of the works of the Nuns. Maybe you have been to Mass in the Cor Jesu Chapel at Saint Emma’s or eaten some of their home cooking (flavored also by the love and dedication of the volunteers) or maybe you have had the opportunity to make a retreat at Saint Emma’s and witness firsthand the love and peace offered to all. If you have even spoken with one of the Nuns, you know what I am referring to. So many lives have been changed because of the presence of this Benedictine Community.

I invite you to prayerfully consider this, to speak to and encourage others to listen to God’s call for their lives.

Each of us can make our work our prayer. How drastically our lives would change if like the Nuns we worked only to serve God. Rather than thinking about our challenges of our jobs or the differences in pay scale (like the Bible story about the workers in the field), we could simply offer our lives and our work to God. Make God our “Boss”. We could never find a more perfect Boss. All that He requires is our love.

The Nuns at Saint Emma Monastery pray six times each day for us: for our lives, our jobs, our families, our needs. Most of all, they pray that each person be given the Grace to serve God joyfully and faithfully. They offer all of their day and the work it involves back to God. Ora et Labora. Prayer and Work.

Perhaps you or someone you know has a calling to Religious life. I invite you to prayerfully consider this, to speak to and encourage others to listen to God’s call for their lives. Contact St. Emma’s to speak personally with a Nun for more Vocation information.

Register now online!

www.stemma.org, then go to "Special Events"

Second Annual "Tee Time for a Nun"

Monday, August 27, 2012

Hannastown Country Club

Registration: 9:30, Start time: 10:30 a.m.

Fee: \$100 per player which includes:

Cart • Green Fee • Box Lunch

Cap or Visor • Group Picture

Steak Dinner at St. Emma's at 5:00 p.m.

Dinner only: \$35

Type of Event:

- Shotgun Start
- Scramble
- Special Events



*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



Robertshaw Bed and Breakfast.

www.robertshawbedandbreakfast.com



Take a leisurely drive
to the monastery.
We invite you to *join*
Jesus
at the table.

Prayer Requests & Intentions

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

2012 Calendar of Retreats

- Sept. 21-23** **Silent**, Rev. Thomas Acklin, OSB \$150
Sept. 28-30 Women, Rev. Msgr. Edward McCullough \$150
Oct. 5-7 Women, Rev. Thomas Acklin, OSB \$150
Oct. 5-7 Married Couples (at Monastic Guest House)
 Rev. Ed Litavec, \$300
Oct. 19-21 Married Couples (at Retreat House)
 Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy OFM Cap \$290
Oct. 26-28 Legion of Mary and OTHERS
 Rev. Boniface Hicks OSB \$150
Nov. 29 Advent Evening of Recollection (men/women) \$22
Feb. 15-17 **Silent** Lenten Retreat (men/women)
 Rev. Thomas Acklin, OSB
Feb. 22-24 **Silent** Lenten Retreat (men/women)
 Rev. William Kiel
March 8-10 Lenten Retreat (men/women)
 Rev. Thomas Acklin, OSB
March 15-17 **Silent** Lenten Retreat (men/women)
 Rev. Boniface Hicks, OSB

Six Day Silent Retreat July 20-26

Mass and two conferences a day and periods of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament provide the framework for you and God to meet in the silence of this six day **SILENT** retreat. Lay/religious. Opportunity for individual spiritual direction and the Sacrament of Reconciliation available. Retreat Master: Rev. James Hess O.Carm. Fee: \$375

Encounter with Silence, July 20-27

Truth must bear fruit in love, and love must proceed from truth. These words of the late Father John J. Hugo crystallize the completeness of Christianity that the *Encounter with Silence* memorably conveys. The retreat creates a spiritual hothouse of strict silence, profound prayer and Holy Mass.

Retreat Master: Rev. John-Mary Tompkins, OSB

- Retreat House accommodations: \$425
- Monastic Guest House accommodations: \$475

Busy Moms' Retreat • Aug. 3-4

Vocation to Catholic Motherhood • Rev. Thomas Acklin, OSB

This overnight retreat was planned for mothers of young children knowing that a weekend is impossible, but an overnight is do-able!

The retreat opens with dinner at 6:00 p.m. on Friday with Mass at 8:00 p.m. (come any time after 2:00 p.m.). Have your family join you for the 4:00 p.m.

anticipated Sunday Mass and to stay on for pizza, pop and ice cream.



Save the Date!

Nov. 8 - 10, 2012 • St. Emma Monastery



Ye Old Christmas Shoppe
Re-giftable items and food!