



SUMMER 2010

Tidings

BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF ANNUNCIATION MONASTERY

Sister Nancy Gunderson MAKES PERPETUAL MONASTIC PROFESSION



Top photo: Sister Nancy Gunderson (center), reads her profession document. (To her left is Prioress Sister Nancy Miller, right is Sister Susan Lardy).

Bottom photo: Sister Nancy Gunderson is embraced by her director, Sister Susan Lardy.

Photos by Jerry Anderson

With joy and thanksgiving, the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery celebrated the perpetual monastic profession of Sister Nancy Gunderson on June 5. Most Reverend Paul Zipfel, Bishop of Bismarck, presided at the Eucharistic liturgy during which Sister Nancy professed her lifelong commitment to God and her monastic community.

“When I think about my own journey to this day, I feel very centered and at peace,” reflects Sister Nancy. “I feel the support of my monastic community through the sisters’

encouraging notes and prayers. I am encouraged to grow as a seeker of God, as a teacher and as an artist. When you are doing something you are called to, you do it well and your gifts flourish.”

Story continued on the bottom of page 4 ...



MESSAGE FROM THE Prioress

We believe the Benedictine values such as prayer, community, hospitality, respect for persons, moderation and service are vital in making our world a better place in which to live. We also believe we are all called to carry out those values in a unique way.

The Rule of St. Benedict has endured for two reasons. One – it is rooted in the Scriptures – love of God and love of neighbor. Two – it is adaptable to new times and cultures. The sisters who came to Dakota Territory in 1878 adapted the Rule to their frontier life and the basic values have remained the same.

Together, we are living and sharing the same mission today. We sincerely thank all of our friends who support the continuing education of our sisters and our Ministry of Sponsorship. Your contributions, both financial and prayerful, are very much appreciated. Because of our mutual commitment to mission, our sisters took another step forward as we hosted a sponsorship formation day in May that brought the leadership of our sponsored ministries together in one location. We are learning together how to share our legacy at the University of Mary, St. Alexius Medical Center, Garrison Memorial Hospital and at Annunciation Monastery's Hospitality Center.

Dr. John “Jack” Shea, an author and expert in sponsorship, presented and facilitated discussion on sponsorship, leadership formation and mission effectiveness. This day of collaboration was yet another investment in the future.



Leaders in our sponsored ministries enjoyed a day of collaboration on “Sharing Our Legacy.”

This issue of Tidings will update you on our many recent blessings. Having just celebrated the perpetual monastic profession of Sister Nancy Gunderson, we pray for her and our other women in various stages of initial formation: Sister Madelyn Louttit, Sister Hannah Vanorny and Rosemary DeGracia. We are grateful to have them in our midst.

We wouldn't be where we are today as a monastic community without the visionary leadership of three of our sisters who celebrate their anniversaries of monastic profession in July. Sister Moireen Kelly, who is one of our founders, will celebrate 75 years as a Benedictine Sister! Joining her in their Jubilee celebrations are Sisters Joanne Graham and Lawrence Fischer who are both celebrating 50 years! Each of these sisters has added so much in terms of faith, wisdom and vision to our monastic community and beyond.

Sister Nancy Miller, OSB

Sister Nancy Miller, OSB

Vocation Ministry Team Reaches Out

By Sister Gerard Wald, OSB, Director of Vocation Ministry

I would like to provide you with a glimpse of how our Vocation Ministry Team has expanded its approaches to becoming more visible both locally and nationally by providing on-site and online opportunities to get to know our Benedictine monastic community.

One of the best ways to experience our rich Benedictine, monastic life is through our “Come and See” experiences for women. These live-in retreats offer a unique opportunity to see how religious life is lived today at Annunciation Monastery. A call to religious life requires listening, prayer, reflection and exploration. Our prayerful home offers a comfortable and peaceful environment for women to contemplate where God is calling them.

Each year, University of Mary students are invited to tour the monastery as part of their courses. They learn about the mission and guiding principles of our community. Students are always welcome to



Students and sisters enjoy game night at the monastery.

join our sisters at prayer and our monthly game night, which is a much-anticipated event at the monastery! Students and sisters enjoy having fun together in an informal setting. Sisters also keep in contact with students through our Campus Friends program. Our sisters support students with prayer and friendship.

Sisters collaborate with University of Mary Campus Ministry by participating in Benedictine Buzz sessions where our sisters talk about their call to religious life. In addition, the University hosts Benedictine Awareness Days during which the sisters host a liturgy and convocation on Benedictine life. A Benedictine Awareness event is also held at St. Alexius Medical Center annually. These are valuable opportunities for us to get to know the dedicated people who serve at these institutions and they learn about our rich Benedictine tradition and their role in sharing it with others.



Sister Gemma encourages students to sign up for a Campus Friend.

To learn more about Annunciation Monastery, check out our web site at www.annunciationmonastery.org. Some of our recent vocations found us through the web. Within a week of setting up our Facebook page, it had over 100 fans! YouTube videos provide other glimpses into our life.

STONES: A Symbol of Community and Stability

Sisters Nancy Gunderson, Madelyn Louttit and Hannah Vanorny were part of a significant ritual on Feb. 7. During morning prayer, they were presented with stones bearing their names. Each new member of Annunciation Monastery receives a name stone – a symbol of belonging to the community. When a sister dies, her stone is returned to the collection of name stones of deceased sisters in the chapel during her funeral vigil. These stones are reminders of the sisters' faithfulness to God and community.



Sister Nancy Miller, prioress, with Sisters Hannah, Madelyn and Nancy who show their name stones.

Sister Nancy Gunderson story continued from page 1

"I came to realize what a rich heritage and tradition I was stepping into. I wanted to contribute my energy with the energy of the monastic community to help move the mission forward."

Sister Nancy first came to Annunciation Monastery from Plymouth, Minn. She recalls being attracted to the timelessness of the Benedictine values and culture of the sisters who sponsor St. Alexius Medical Center, Garrison Memorial Hospital and the University of Mary. "I came to realize what a rich heritage and tradition I was stepping into. I wanted to contribute my energy with the energy of the monastic community to help move the mission forward."

Prioress Sister Nancy Miller says, "Each time we celebrate a sister's perpetual monastic profession, there is a wonderful sense of community and hope for the future. Sister Nancy Gunderson brings her own unique gifts. She adds to the foundation that was created when our Benedictine foremothers settled here. We seek God together. We support and serve each other and the greater community by sharing that legacy. We are committed to doing our part to carry it forward."

Sister Nancy Gunderson is a theology professor at the University of Mary. A talented fiber artist, she enjoys her involvement with the Bismarck Arts and Galleries Association (BAGA). Sister Nancy has four daughters and nine grandchildren.

Sister Nancy looks forward to the future with her monastic community. She says, "As God has led me in the past, I have faith God will lead me into the future with my sisters in community." She quotes a favorite verse from the prologue of the Rule of Benedict: 49-50: "As we progress in this way of life and in faith, we shall run on the path of God's commandments, our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love." She adds, "I think I know what that is."

*The Sisters of Annunciation Monastery
congratulate all who serve at St. Alexius
Medical Center for 125 years of healing
service in Bismarck and beyond!*



Sisters Begin New Ministries

After serving 21 years as alumni director at the University of Mary, Sister Denise Ressler will leave that ministry to begin another. As alumni director, she has kept in touch with over 14,000 alumni of the University of Mary and has coordinated a multitude of events and reunions over the years. A consummate planner, Sister Denise has been active in Bismarck's Diocesan events including its June 2010 Centennial celebration. Sister Denise has accepted a new ministry as archivist at Annunciation Monastery.



Sister Mariah Dietz and Sister Denise Ressler

Sister Mariah Dietz is also beginning a new ministry as Spiritual Care Director at St. Gabriel's Community, a nursing care facility sponsored by Benedictine Health Systems in Bismarck. She recently became certified in Clinical Pastoral Education. Sister Mariah has served at the University of Mary since 1971 as teacher in both graduate and undergraduate programs. She was chair of the nursing division and most recently as director of graduate nursing.

Glimpses of Our Ministry

St. Alexius Medical Center



Hospitality

Sister Rita Miller serves as hospitality hostess at St. Alexius.



Respect

Sister Renee Zastoupil serves as director of pastoral care.



Healing Presence

Sister Agnes Reinert is a comfort to patients and their families.



Mission

Sister Susan Lardy is vice president of mission effectiveness at St. Alexius.

of Sponsorship in Action!

University of Mary



Service

Sister JoAnn Krebsbach teaches classes in theology.



Sharing the Legacy

Prioress Sister Nancy Miller commissions University of Mary corporate faculty to carry the mission forward.

Garrison Memorial Hospital



Community

(front, Lt. to Rt. :) Sisters Francis, Rose and Madonna are pictured with Kelli Halvorson, who works in administration at Garrison Memorial Hospital. Sisters and staff support each other!

Annunciation Monastery Hospitality Center



Prayer

Sister Patricia Schap is one of several certified spiritual directors who minister in our Hospitality Center. Spiritual directors help people grow in their relationship with God.



Sister Patricia Schap (back row, center) is pictured with students from St. Mary's Grade School. Each week she goes to their classroom to help them with reading. The children were treated to a tour, prayer and homemade cookies and lemonade!

We Sisters of Annunciation Monastery congratulate the Diocese of Bismarck on 100 Years of ministry and service to the people of this region!



ELECTRONIC GIVING OPTION OFFERS CONVENIENCE

Our secure web site, www.annunciationmonastery.org offers the convenience of electronic giving.

Reasons to consider Electronic Giving:

- ~ No need to write checks or send cash
- ~ Peace of mind knowing that the Sisters of Annunciation Monastery will receive your donation even if you forget or are away from home
- ~ More secure than checks
- ~ All contributions are recorded on your bank statement with date of settlement
- ~ Donations can be made as a one-time donation online or you have the option of setting up recurring donations (ie. monthly)
- ~ If you wish to start contributing online, click "Donations" and follow the prompts.

God bless you and thank you for contributing to our ministries!

Sisters Celebrate 75 & 50 Years of Monastic Profession

Three Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery will celebrate their 75th and 50th anniversaries of monastic profession on July 10, 2010. The public is invited to a reception in the monastic dining room from 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Sister Moireen Kelly, Sister Joanne Graham and Sister Lawrence Fischer were called to serve in the "School of the Lord's Service" -- a testimony of what it means to live a life of prayer, obedience and stability.

Sister Moireen Kelly ~ 75 Years

*G*od and music are woven throughout Sister Moireen's years as a Benedictine Sister. Like notes on a musical score, she marks her 75 years of monastic profession with joy and appreciation.

Sister Moireen joined the Sisters of St. Benedict, St. Joseph, Minn., and made her first monastic profession on July 11, 1935, and began her life-long ministry as a music teacher, choir director and organist. She was sent to Bismarck to teach music in schools and give piano lessons.

Sister Moireen earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from the College of St. Benedict. When the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery founded a new independent community in Bismarck, she transferred her commitment from St. Benedict's to Annunciation Monastery.

Sister Moireen ministered throughout North Dakota at St. Mary's in Bismarck; St. Joseph's Convent, Mandan; and at St. Patrick's Convent in Dickinson, where she also served as superior. She also taught vacation school in Driscoll, Watford City and Belfield.



*"Every day, to the best of my ability,
I try to do ordinary things extraordinarily well."*

When the sisters opened Priory High in Bismarck in 1959, Sister Moireen taught choir and was assigned the position of procurator. She oversaw the furnishing of the cafeteria and rooms. She recalls, "The furniture had been ordered by world-renowned architect Marcel Breuer himself!"

She continued in her music ministry for 31 years at Annunciation Monastery and the University of Mary, where she was a faculty member for 15 years. She was organist for her monastic community until her retirement in 2007.

Sister Moireen says her life as a Benedictine Sister continues to be fulfilling. She has made the Benedictine motto, "prayer and work" her own throughout her life. She says, "Every day, to the best of my ability, I try to do ordinary things extraordinarily well."

Sister Joanne Graham ~ 50 Years



Sister Joanne has served in leadership positions throughout her life as a Benedictine sister. She was called to serve as a nurse, nurse educator, hospital administrator, prioress of Annunciation Monastery, and vice chancellor and chancellor of the Bismarck Diocese. At the time she was appointed chancellor by Bishop John F. Kinney, she was one of six women in the United States to serve in that position in the Church. She also served as vice chancellor of the Diocese of St. Cloud, Minn.

Early on, Sister Joanne had an interest in health care. She earned a nursing diploma from St. Elizabeth School of Nursing, Lincoln, and a bachelor's degree in nursing education from St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo.

She recalls, "There was a tugging in my heart that I was trying to deny," and she began to consider a religious vocation. She felt drawn to the Benedictine charism and before long she was boarding a plane to a place she'd never been before -- Annunciation Monastery and the prairies of North Dakota. She felt connected to these sisters and was received as a postulant in December of 1958 and made her monastic profession as a Benedictine Sister of Annunciation Monastery on July 11, 1960.

"My greatest reward has been watching people, with whom I've ministered, develop their gifts and serve God."

Sister Joanne taught at the St. Alexius School of Nursing and worked in obstetric nursing when prioress Mother Edane asked her to pursue a master's degree in hospital administration. She did so and earned her master's in 1966 from St. Louis University.

She returned to St. Alexius and served as administrator and president of the board, a position Sister Joanne held from June 1966 to May 1976. She was elected prioress of Annunciation Monastery in 1976 and served until her term ended in May 1980.

Sister Joanne was associate administrator at St. Alexius from 1980 to 1985 and Bishop John Kinney asked her to serve as vice chancellor of the Diocese of Bismarck in 1986. She later became chancellor of the Diocese and held this position until 2003. During this period, Sister Joanne earned a pontifical degree in canon law from The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

Sister Joanne works with canonical matters for the Federation of St. Benedict and her monastic community. She is a member of the University of Mary Board of Trustees, a certified spiritual director and chair of Annunciation Monastery's Ministry of Sponsorship Group. The University of Mary awarded Sister Joanne an honorary doctorate in leadership in 2009.

"My greatest reward has been watching people, with whom I've ministered, develop their gifts and serve God," says Sister Joanne. She finds great joy in witnessing the recognition of gifts in others who then rise to the challenges of their ministry, just as she has been called to do over these past 50 years.

Sister Lawrence Fischer ~ 50 Years

Saying “Yes” to God is central to Sister Lawrence’s life of dedication and loving service to others. As treasurer of Annunciation Monastery for the past 32 years, Sister Lawrence began saying “yes” to God’s will even before she became a Benedictine Sister.



With deep roots in southwestern North Dakota, Sister Lawrence graduated from Rhame Public High School. Gifted in many areas, she decided to pursue a degree in accounting and business at St. Benedict’s College in St. Joseph, Minn. At St. Benedict’s she became acquainted with more of the sisters and often attended Mass and Vespers.

A major turning point in her life occurred when Sister Lawrence attended the novice reception for a friend who was joining the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery in Bismarck. When exchanging goodbyes, a friend asked, “Will you be in the novice class next year?” In a grace-filled moment, Sister Lawrence responded, “Well, yes!” She became a postulant with the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery in December of 1958 and became a novice in June 1959.

Sister Lawrence attended the University of Mary and received her Bachelor of Arts in theology/philosophy with a double minor in business education and math. She taught math in Bismarck at Cathedral School, St. Mary’s Central High School and Priory High. As business manager of the University of Mary, Sister Lawrence started the financial aid office and ran the bookstore.

“We live our lives day by day and we continue following our call. I still feel God leading me where I am needed.”

In 1971 Sister Lawrence became bookkeeper and assisted with human resources and maintenance in the monastery business office. Six years later, she returned to school at Creighton University, Omaha, Neb., and earned her master’s degree in business administration. She returned home to Annunciation Monastery and was appointed treasurer. Sister Lawrence also served on the St. Alexius Medical Center’s Board of Directors for many years.

Sister Lawrence continues to provide leadership and witness as a “student in the Lord’s service,” in her ministry as treasurer for the monastic community. As she considers the blessings of the past 50 years, Sister Lawrence is still saying “Yes,” to God. “We live our lives day by day and we continue following our call. I still feel God leading me where I am needed,” she says.

Baby Sighs and Lullabies

Sister Nancy Gunderson's office usually draws some "oohs and ahhs" because it is such an energizing space. It is decorated with her colorful fiber art quilts. Once a week, something new and precious filled the space with a new kind of energy. Baby sighs.

Sister Nancy recently wrapped up her weekly babysitting ministry. One of her theology students was trying to juggle her classes and arrange childcare for her new baby. The new mother had a one-hour stretch that was uncovered. Sister Nancy happily offered her services. An experienced mother and grandmother herself, Sister Nancy enjoyed time with her tiny new charge.



Sister Nancy prepares for class while snuggling baby Aaron.



Sisters Patricia Schap and Margaret Nelson helped roll out the feast.



Rosemary DeGracia, Sisters Patricia Schap, Agatha Muggli, Gerard Wald and Rosanne Zastoupil prepare a fruit salad.



Sisters Gerard Wald and Mariah Dietz relish their pickle duty.

Over 300 Served at the Banquet

Each year our sisters prepare and serve a meal at "The Banquet," a free meal served at Trinity Lutheran Church for anyone needing a hot meal or desiring fellowship. This beautiful event is sponsored by a variety of community businesses and organizations each week. The sisters and other volunteers served 343 people.



Sisters Donna Johnson and JoAnn Krebsbach set tables.

You Are a Beautiful Woman

by Sister Kathleen Atkinson (a reflection from Guatemala)



*T*here was nothing magnanimous in the gesture. I was with a GOD's CHILD service team at Panajachel, Guatemala, and we were ordering breakfast when an elderly woman came to the door begging. As she walked on, I picked up my waffles and syrup packets and followed her.

It was a busy morning, but one man stopped long enough to simply say, "You are a beautiful woman." I translated it for my barefoot friend, giving her a gesture that said, "he told us we're beautiful women."

You are a beautiful woman. That is the message I want to communicate after taking part in a four-month field experience in Central America.

You are a beautiful woman, Maria Juliana. I hold her, bathe her, feed her at the Casa Jackson Home for Malnourished Infants. Rescued as a newborn from a dumpster, she has been with us since November and has a long way to go. But she's a fighter and is surrounded by people fighting with her. As I tell her of her beauty, I send a prayer out for her mother. A woman must be devastatingly desperate to abandon her child that way.

You are a beautiful woman, Dora Luz. Her tiny home is always open for family, Spanish students and service volunteers. I live with her these months and am grateful for her daily prayer wrapped with tortillas and frioles. Taking in strangers from around the world is not only a necessity for family income, it is a true ministry of hospitality. Like mothers everywhere, she waves off attention with a smile and a shrug.

You are a beautiful woman, mother of Anita and Juan. I don't know her name because she often does laundry when the family arrives at the homeless shelter. She dresses them for school in the morning. Reviews their homework with them at night. Reminds them to say their meal prayer. She works in the day while they're at school, carrying their family belongings in a black garbage bag. Coming "home" every night to the shelter. Home is a mattress in the corner of a crowded room.

Before I try to confront systems and persons stripping women (and men) of the beauty with which they were created, I am living and learning with them. Often my own heart is broken open with what I experience.

God's beauty surprises me there, too.

In Loving Memory...



Sister Bernadette Fisher

Born: January 5, 1917

Professed: July 11, 1938

Died: December 20, 2009

A much beloved teacher for over 45 years, Sister Bernadette taught elementary grades and served as a principal. She often went beyond the call of duty to help her students. She worked at St. Alexius Medical Center in various programs and established the medical library. She also served as secretary for the monastic community and did meal preparation at St. Alexius Convent.

She had a grateful, generous and optimistic spirit and was always willing to help wherever she could. For many years, she collected cancelled stamps to help missionary activities. She loved to read, write letters and do crossword puzzles.

Deeply devoted to God and others, she will be missed by those whose lives she touched.



Sister Edane Volk

Born: October 12, 1908

Professed: July 11, 1928

Died: December 21, 2009

Sister Edane was a founder and the second prioress of Annunciation Monastery from 1953-66. She was the first president of the University of Mary. Under her leadership, the Benedictines built a new monastery designed by architect Marcel Breuer, began the University of Mary, staffed a number of Catholic schools and opened rural hospitals. She saw great growth at St. Alexius Medical Center and Garrison Memorial Hospital.

With the love of music in her heart, she spent 25 years teaching music and playing the organ in schools and churches in Dickinson and Mandan.

Sister Edane was grounded in her love for monastic life and deeply reliant on the sustaining grace of God.



Sister Florence Marquart

Born: August 6, 1922

Professed: July 11, 1942

Died: January 14, 2010

Sister Florence was among the pioneering sisters who founded Annunciation Monastery. She served in a variety of ministries including occupational therapy, central supply in hospitals and switchboard operator. She spent 33 years in her favorite ministry of caring for the sacred vessels and vestments of the church and setting up for church services.

She will be especially remembered for her gentle smile, deep faith in God and her reverent care of places of worship.



Sister Rachel Mayer

Born: August 23, 1935

Professed: July 11, 1958

Died: March 17, 2010

Sister Rachel taught for ten years at Christ the King School, Mandan, and served 38 years at Cathedral School and parish in Bismarck, where she prepared hundreds of children for the sacraments of reconciliation, communion, and confirmation, and coordinated children's liturgies. She started and directed RCIA for many years. It was life-giving for her to accompany people on their faith journey. She was also committed to her ministry as monastery archivist. Sister Rachel enjoyed crocheting and was a loyal fan of her favorite sports teams.

In her kind, patient and organized manner, Sister Rachel brought children and adults deeper into the Catholic Church.

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For more information, contact Jill Ackerman, director of communications and development, (701)355-8907 or: jill@annunciationmonastery.org



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Vocation “Come & See” Weekends

July 22-26, 2010 & August 5-9, 2010

Discerning a religious vocation? We invite women 18 years and older to explore religious life in our Benedictine community. The days will consist of prayer, meals and recreation with the sisters. Time will be allowed for quiet reflection and listening to God's call in your heart. Spiritual guidance will be available during this time. There is no charge to attend. Pre-registration is required.

**For more information, contact Sister Gerard at (701) 255-1520
or email: vocations@annunciationmonastery.org**



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