

SUMMER 2008

Tidings

BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF

ANNUNCIATION MONASTERY

SISTER NANCY MILLER INSTALLED AS PRIORESS



Sisters offer a blessing for Sister Nancy Miller.

“I will, trusting in God’s abiding love and the help of my community,” was the promise Sister Nancy Miller proclaimed as she was installed as the eighth prioress of Annunciation Monastery in a spirit-filled ceremony May 16.

The Rite of Installation took place in the presence of her monastic community, invited guests and her family. Sister Nancy faithfully assumed her role as guide and model of the Benedictine values and being Christ’s presence in community.

Sister Nancy Miller processed to the altar of the monastery chapel accompanied by Sister Susan Berger, outgoing prioress, and Sister Michaela Hedican, president of the Federation of St. Benedict where covenanting prayers and hymns of blessing were offered for Sister Nancy. One by one the sisters placed their folded hands into the waiting hands of their new prioress. In a gesture of loving support each sister bowed respectfully — faces smiling, hearts full of joy.

Removing the cross that she wore during her 12 years as prioress, Sister Susan Berger placed it upon Sister Nancy Miller.

Story continued on page 3...



MESSAGE FROM THE

Prioress

Dear Friends, as I write my first column as prioress, I am filled with a flood of emotions. Our hearts are heavy following the death of our prioress of 12 years, Sister Susan Berger. Over the past year, we journeyed with her during her battle with cancer. She taught us how to trust in God in times when it would be easy to give up. We witnessed her courage, strength and unfailing love and it has changed each one of us. In her last column, Sister Susan spoke about the power of prayer, the power of love and the awareness that God is truly holding us. It gives us comfort to know she is being held by God. On the morning of Sister Susan's funeral, another one of our beloved sisters, Sister Louista Eckroth passed away. The day was calm and sunny, following a week of clouds and thunderstorms. We believe it was a gift from Sisters Susan and Louista. Both of them had a deep appreciation for God's creation. It would be just like them to want a beautiful day for their friends and family. Both of them were gentle, humble, and holy monastic women — each remarkable in her own way. We will miss them always. They will be forever in our hearts, helping us lead with the vision and enthusiasm they displayed while on this earth.

Our hearts are also full of gratitude for the beautiful expressions of sympathy and memorials we've received from so many of you. Thank you for your prayerful support. We know that you, also, have lost a friend in these

sisters. So we, in turn, pray for you too.

Many visitors have been coming our way this summer and we are enjoying catching up with old friends. The Priory High Reunion was held July 18-20. It was energizing to get reacquainted with the women who attended Priory High between 1959 - 1968. The alumnae divided their time between Annunciation Monastery and the University of Mary. We also hosted a summer vocation live-in experience July 9-13, which allowed women the opportunity to get to know our sisters and about our ministries and ponder where God is leading them in their own lives. Currently we have two new women in the beginning stages of initial formation. Perhaps you know a woman who may have a vocation to this life. If you do, we'd love to visit with her. We appreciate your prayers for vocations.

You will read in this issue of Tidings about the contributions you have made to our women in various stages of formation as well as developments in our ministry of sponsorship. Ongoing sponsorship programs are being held at St. Alexius Medical Center, Garrison Memorial Hospital and the University of Mary. The response to them is very encouraging. Together, with our friends and colleagues, the mission of Jesus will continue to be embraced and lived out each day. Thank you for supporting us in our ministries.

... Sister Nancy Miller story continued from page 1

Each prioress receives and wears this cross when she functions in her official role as prioress. Artist Sister Michael Kaliher, a member of Annunciation Monastery, designed the cross.

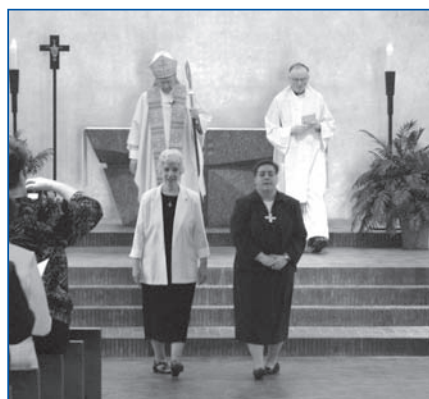
The following day, on May 17, the Most Rev. Paul Zipfel, Bishop of Bismarck, presided over the Eucharistic celebration for Sister Nancy at Our Lady of the Annunciation Chapel. Bestowing upon her the blessing of the universal Church, Bishop Zipfel's inspiring words encouraged Sister Nancy to always find time to be alone with God in prayer and reminded all of God's great love, citing the gospel, "Live on in my love. All this I tell you that my joy may be yours and your joy may be complete."

Sister Nancy assured those in attendance, "Today marks yet another event in the history of Annunciation Monastery. Benedictine women have been present in this area for well over 100 years ministering in education and healthcare. Our hope is that we will continue our presence and work in the Bismarck diocese for hundreds of years to come."



Sister Joanne Graham and Sister Nancy Miller bow to each other. Sister Joanne served as the fourth prioress of Annunciation Monastery.

“Our hope is that we will continue our presence and work in the Bismarck diocese for hundreds of years to come.”



Back row: Bishop Paul Zipfel and Fr. Daniel Maloney.
Front row: Sister Michaela Hedican with Sister Nancy Miller.



Sister Susan Berger places prioress cross on Sister Nancy Miller.

Congratulations, Jubilarians!

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

*S*ister Rachel Mayer

“The blessings of living in community these past 50 years are too numerous to mention,” says Sister Rachel Mayer.

“My life has been completely God-directed and I still marvel at how my sisters in community called forth gifts within me that I didn’t realize I had!” She is the first to admit others recognized her vocation long before she did.

Sister Rachel’s ministries began in nursing. She served as a pediatric nurse at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Minot, ND, and at St. Alexius Hospital in Bismarck. When Mother Edane asked her to consider teaching, she found her natural gifts called forth. “It was exactly where I was meant to be,” she says. Her supervisor, Sister Norma Scharf affirmed, “You are a born teacher!”

Sister Rachel holds master’s degrees in elementary and religious education. She taught 10 years at Christ the King School, Mandan, followed by an impressive 37 years at Cathedral School, Bismarck. She has prepared children for first communion, first confession



and coordinated their liturgies. She served as organist, director of the children’s choir, and confirmation coordinator. With her teaching career spanning over 47 years, Sister Rachel continues teaching adults who are going through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults process (RCIA). Sister Rachel currently divides her time between RCIA and working in the monastery archives.

After 50 years, Sister Rachel is grateful for the support of the sisters who helped her become the person God called her to be.

*S*ister Eleanor Stockert

Over 50 years ago, Sister Eleanor Stockert followed God’s call to become a sister. She grew up on a farm south of New England, ND. Sister Eleanor recalls appreciating the prayerful and joyful spirit of the

Benedictine sisters she met at summer vacation school. At 19 she joined the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery in Bismarck.





Sister Eleanor was sent to St. Joseph's Convent in Mandan where she served as homemaker, helping in the kitchen, laundry, and sacristy at the church. From there, she worked in a Dickinson nursing home. She worked at the Bishop's residence for one year, followed by seven years in laundry and homemaking at Annunciation Monastery. Sister Eleanor worked as a dietary aide at St. Alexius Hospital, Bismarck, for nine years and fulfilled her dream of working as a nurse aide at Garrison Memorial Hospital, Garrison, ND. She especially loved working with the children.

After five years, Sister Eleanor moved home and became a nurse aide at the monastery.

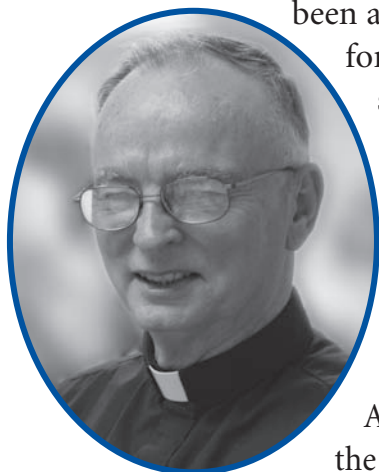
A woman of diverse interests, Sister Eleanor learned the art of T'ai Chi Chih® Joy Thru Movement. After discovering its healing benefits, she became interested in sharing it with others and became a certified instructor. She offers T'ai Chi Chih classes through Annunciation Monastery's Hospitality Center. Within the monastery, Sister Eleanor cuts hair, has duties within the house and has charge of the sisters' cabin at Lake Tschida.

Sister Eleanor cherishes praying the Liturgy of the Office and living in community. She appreciates the supportive family atmosphere at Annunciation Monastery and adds, "We have grown so much together. All of our sisters have gifts that are shared in our sponsored institutions and beyond. It's exciting to receive new members and they bring their own unique gifts — it's life-giving."

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

Fr. Daniel Maloney, OSB,
of Assumption Abbey,
Richardton, ND,

celebrated his 40th jubilee of ordination to the priesthood in June. Father Daniel serves as chaplain to the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery, presiding at the Eucharist, officiating at funerals, offering the sacrament of reconciliation, anointing the sick, and meeting the



spiritual needs of the sisters. Father Daniel has been a familiar figure at the monastery for the past 25 years. He shares meals, stories, jokes, and his amazing wealth of knowledge on numerous subjects with the sisters on a daily basis. He also teaches at the University of Mary.

A deeply spiritual person, Father Daniel is a blessing for the Sisters of Annunciation Monastery, as well as for the many others he serves.

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS

Sister Neola Winter says her 60 years as a member of Annunciation Monastery have been fulfilling and heartwarming. “My Sisters are more like real blood sisters. God has been extremely good to me and I am so grateful.” Sister Neola served 23 years as librarian at St. Mary’s Grade School, Bismarck, worked in the monastery library and volunteered for five years in the library for the Diocese of Bismarck. She also taught elementary grades in Catholic schools in Mandan and Bismarck.



Sister Audrey Martin

had varied and happy careers as a Benedictine. She taught in elementary and secondary grades for 25 years in schools in Dickinson, Bismarck, Flasher and Mandan. She was a counselor at St. Mary’s Central High School and served as subprioress, vocation director and oblate director for Annunciation Monastery. She also set up the archives at St. Alexius Medical Center and was archivist for the monastery. “Becoming a Benedictine was the best vocation choice I



could have made,” she says. “I thank God for calling me to the community of Annunciation Monastery.”

Sister Miriam Schmitt

is a scholar of medieval women monastics and mystics, especially Hildegard of Bingen and Gertrud of Helfta. She has shared her extensive research through lectures, retreats, classes and writings including co-editing the book, “Medieval Women Monastics: Wisdom’s Wellsprings.” She taught in elementary and secondary grades in Catholic schools in the diocese, at the University of Mary, St. John’s School of Theology, Collegeville, MN, and was a faculty member of the United Methodist Spiritual Formation Academies for 20 years. Former prioress of Annunciation Monastery, Sister Miriam also was treasurer of the monastery, Priory High School and the University of Mary. She appreciates the community’s daily commitment to an enriching liturgy. “I treasure the beauty, elegance and prayerful celebration of our liturgical practices with our focus on the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours.”



Sister Claire Schmitt

saw fields ripe for the harvest and became a sister to help in that harvest.

She served in a variety of fields. She taught elementary and secondary education and enjoyed being involved in catechetical work. She taught at St. Mary's Central High School and in Catholic schools and parish religious education programs in Mandan, Bismarck, Dickinson and Flasher. She tutored students in the learning center at the University of Mary and served in parish ministry in Bismarck and Linton, ND, South Dakota and California. She was a patient visitor at Garrison Memorial Hospital. She also spent three months in Africa teaching English to sisters preparing to become elementary teachers.



Sister Terence Glum,

assistant to the secretary at the monastery, taught science at the University of Mary, helped in the registrar's office, and was a nurse and anesthetist at St. Alexius Medical Center and Garrison Memorial Hospital.



Her passion is tending flowers and when she works at the monastery switchboard, her hands are busy knitting for the poor. She finds common prayer a great source of encouragement. "While working in anesthesia for 15 years, I knew even if I could not get to prayers, the other sisters were interceding for my patient and me." Seeing her U-Mary students doing well in their professions is rewarding to her. "I never go to a clinic or the medical center without meeting someone who says, 'I had you as an instructor.'"

Sister Jeanette Hinds

plays violin in the Bismarck-Mandan Symphony Orchestra and visits patients in the medical centers for St. Mary's Parish in Bismarck. She enjoys being a part of St. Mary's Parish. She helped plan funeral liturgies there for 10 years. Music is a large part of her life. She taught elementary music, private piano lessons and played the organ for 37 years in schools and parishes in Bismarck, Mandan and Dickinson. "I am most appreciative of our monastic community and the prayer we share together," she says. "We grow and support each other and adjust to the changes of the world and church. And God holds us all together."



60-Year Jubilarians

In 1947 they were young women eager to follow God's call as Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery, Bismarck. That call has taken different twists in the road for each of these sisters who marked their 60th anniversary of monastic profession this summer.

SISTER HELEN HONORED AT 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF FLAND

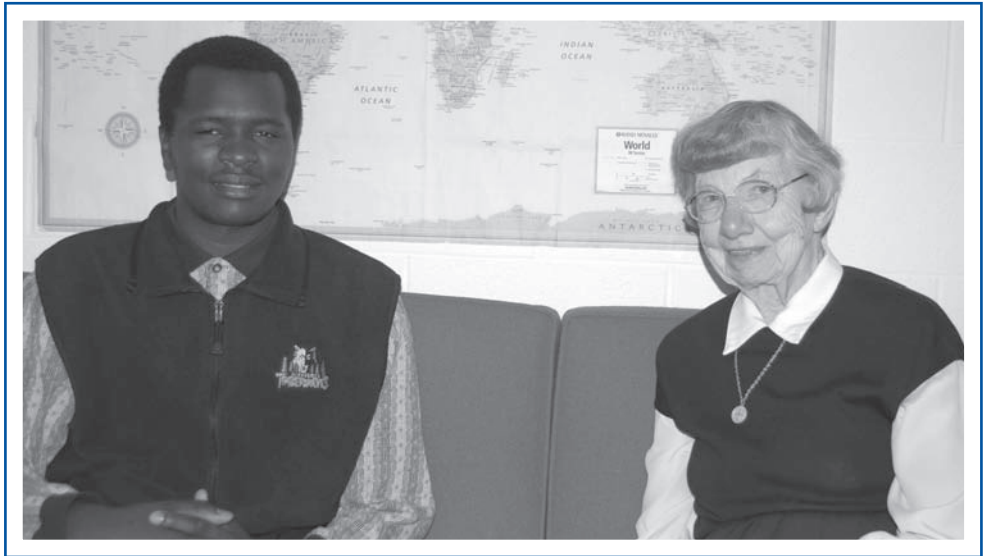
The common language of gratitude was spoken at FLAND's (Foreign Language Association of North Dakota) 40th anniversary celebration in April. Having served as FLAND's first president in 1968, Sister Helen Kilzer was invited to speak about the evolvement of foreign language teaching methodologies since the launching of the Russian missile Sputnik. Awards and honors were distributed to language teachers from throughout the state. Sister Helen was surprised to find she was an honored guest and was awarded a gift in appreciation for her dedicated service. "I was so honored," exclaimed Sister Helen.

Sister Helen's long career began in 1960 as a French teacher at St. Mary's High School. Students may remember her dictum "Ici on ne parle que le francais," (translation: Here one speaks only French) and for the French Camp she originated and conducted.

She taught in the French Department at the University of Mary. In keeping with her philosophy "One learns a foreign language by speaking it," she prepared and traveled with students to France, living with French families and appreciating their history and culture. Back at the University of Mary, she added Spanish and German to her teaching and

enhanced her skills with a year's sabbatical in Germany.

Sister Helen lived out a dream fulfilling her belief that foreign languages are best learned in childhood. She offered her services as a German teacher at St. Mary's Grade School,



Sister Helen teaches French to University of Mary student, Bernard Yego, from Kenya.

beginning in third grade. She saw her last 8th grade class of German students continue their study in advanced German classes in High School.

Now, at age 90 Sister Helen tutors students in languages, such as Kenyan student, Bernard Yego.

(Note: Sister Helen Kilzer's story and FLAND presentation can be viewed on Annunciation Monastery's website:

www.annunciationmonastery.org (scroll down on the Happenings page).

A GROWING TRADITION

Sister Elizabeth Novy planted fruitful seeds within her first graders over 25 years ago while teaching at Cathedral School. Those seeds were planted in her challenge to her students. How could they help the poor? Their idea blossomed into a tradition that would ultimately become a lucrative fundraiser. The children decided to have a sale. Sister Elizabeth taught the children how to make God's Eyes out of colorful yarn. She also taught them how to start plants from cuts to sell along with the crafts.

The proceeds from the annual craft and plant sale have grown each year. The first sale resulted in a profit of \$26. An impressive \$4,000 was raised this year for the God's



Sister Elizabeth, Susan Renner and a student with his God's eye.

“It’s important for children to understand how they can carry on God’s work in the world”

Child Project in Guatemala and an African mission in Kenya.

Cathedral teacher, Susan Renner, has carried on Sister Elizabeth’s tradition with her class for the past 12 years. Her first graders know they can make a difference. “We appreciate Sister Elizabeth so much,” says Mrs. Renner. “She patiently helps the children get started with their God’s Eyes and she always helps out with the plants and the sale.” As for Sister Elizabeth, she wouldn’t miss out on this special time with the children. “It’s important for children to understand how they can carry on God’s work in the world,” she explains.

UPDATE ON FORMATION

In gratitude to those of you who contributed to our recent appeals, we would like to update you on some of our activities. Sister Melissa Cote has completed her first year of pharmacy school at Creighton University, Omaha, NE. This summer she is happy to be back working at St. Alexius Medical Center as a Pharmacy technician. She hopes to return to St. Alexius as a registered pharmacist after two more years at Creighton and the required year of rotation.



Sister Melissa Cote at St. Alexius Pharmacy.

Sister Agatha Muggli, novice director, and novices, Sisters Madelyn Louttit and Hannah Vanorny participated in the Novice and Director Institute (NADI), sponsored annually by the American Benedictine Formation Conference. NADI gives novices and directors an experience of the diversity within Benedictine life, offering presentations on varied topics and providing peer support. Sister Madelyn said, "It was enriching to spend time with novices and directors from Benedictine women's communities all over the country. We shared our stories and struggles, broadened our perspectives, learned about Benedictine monastic life and values, and formed new friendships. We marveled at the ways God calls us to Benedictine monastic life, each different, but with an unmistakable common bond we all recognize and share."

In Loving Memory

Sister Susan Berger, OSB

May 1, 1945 – June 12, 2008

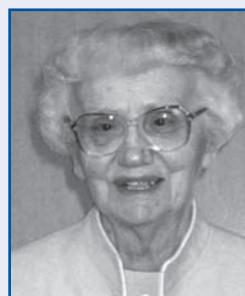


Strong in gentleness and delightful in presence, Sister Susan was an extraordinary monastic woman of vision, courage and faith. Through word and example, she inspired others to ponder God's word and live by it.

As prioress of Annunciation Monastery from 1996-2008, she embodied the qualities spelled out by St. Benedict—listening with the ear of her heart, respecting and loving each person and representing Christ within the monastic community. A gracious and humble person with a great smile and sense of humor, she loved life, the prairie and its people.

Sister Louista Eckroth, OSB

February 12, 1919 - June 16, 2008



Sister Louista, a kind and gentle woman, taught elementary grades for 32 years in Dickinson, Mandan and Mott. She made learning an exciting adventure for her students and exhibited joy and pride in their accomplishments. They knew she loved them. In later years, she was happy for the opportunity to be a parish visitor and did all she could to brighten peoples lives. Sister Louista loved God and deeply reflected on God's Word in the Scriptures. Everyday she walked outdoors and marveled at God's natural beauty.

MEMORIES LIVE ON FOR PRIORY HIGH WOMEN

There were cries of joy and the buzz of visiting as 90 women greeted and reconnected with one another at the Priory High School Reunion July 18-20.

Everyone who ever attended or taught at the boarding school, operated by the Sisters of Annunciation Monastery from 1959 to 1968, was invited.

Events were held at the University of Mary (part of which was the high school) and at Annunciation Monastery. There were socials, brunches for separate classes, tours, Evening Praise and Eucharist with the sisters and a banquet. One class had three members at their brunch "but we still talked for three hours," a classmate said with a big broad smile.

That was how the whole weekend was. With joyful and grateful hearts, the women visited,



Left to right: Danielle (Dorothy Helbling) Marie, Joan (Holzer) Gad, Shirley (Kramer) Permann, Patricia (Schulte) Gedak, and Betty (Huber) Vetter

renewed acquaintances and remembered their days at Priory High.

A highlight was the Saturday evening banquet. There were moments of quiet and prayer during the memorial service for deceased Priory High women, faculty and staff. Then the women took the mike and revealed some of the pranks they pulled during high school, but mostly they spoke in gratitude of the education they received and their appreciation for

their Benedictine teachers. They said they learned how to think for themselves, to appreciate the arts, and to develop talents they never knew they had.

"The whole weekend was wonderful, especially for me, the banquet," said Julie (Schweitzer) Arnegard '69. "The setting was just gorgeous. You sisters truly touched our lives at the Priory in so many ways. The weekend was a highlight in my life. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."



Sharing photos: Yvette (Sadowsky) Geffre, Yvonne (Sadowsky) Fickel, Julie (Schweitzer) Arnegard, Jean (Gross) Eaton, Debb O'Brien



Shirley (Kohler) Staiger and Marie (McLaughlin) Hanken

MINISTRY OF SPONSORSHIP DEEPENS

“Thanks to the support of our generous friends and benefactors, we are continuing to deepen our ministry of sponsorship at St. Alexius Medical Center, Garrison Memorial Hospital and the University of Mary,” explains Sister Joanne Graham, chair of the Monastery’s Sponsorship Group.



The sponsorship group is comprised of sisters on task forces who developed training modules on: Sponsorship; Spirituality; Benedictine Legacy (history and values); Ministry of Laity; Becoming Church;



St. Alexius employees attend sessions on Benedictine awareness.

Scripture (Jesus' teaching and healing ministries). She says, “This deepening and understanding of the Benedictine values enlivens us and our colleagues to extend God’s love to those we serve each day. We are encouraged by the strong attendance at our educational sessions. It is evident there is a desire to “let all

be received as Christ” so the mission continues into the future. Our sisters are finding new ways to partner with others in this evolving ministry.”

“Sponsorship is a structured relationship through which Annunciation Monastery, in the name of the Catholic Church, directs and influences a health care or higher education ministry that meets a need and furthers the mission of Jesus.”

If you are interested in making a donation in support of our ministries, please use the enclosed envelope. Thank you.
Please remember us when making or revising your will. Our legal name is: Benedictine Sisters of the Annunciation, B.M.V.
For more information, contact Jill Ackerman, director of communications and development, (701)355-8907 or: jill@annunciationmonastery.org

If you wish to be removed from our mailing list, or if you have a change in address, please notify: Communications Director at the above address. Thank you.

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