

SPRING 2008

Tidings

BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF

ANNUNCIATION MONASTERY

SISTER NANCY MILLER ELECTED PRIORESS

Sister Susan Berger, completing the limit of (3) four-year terms as prioress of Annunciation Monastery, will pass the torch to Sister Nancy Miller, who will be installed as the community's new prioress on May 16.

Sister Nancy was elected by the sisters to serve a four-year term on March 9, 2008. "I am truly humbled and overwhelmed at the faith my community of sisters has placed in me," admits Sister Nancy. "In the days and weeks to come, I will learn more about what this really means in terms of my responsibilities as prioress. At this point, I cherish and appreciate the love and support surrounding me." Sister Susan will help Sister Nancy in her transition to becoming prioress in May.

The past months have included much prayer and dialogue as the sisters have prepared directives for the future, and discerned who among them has the qualities



Sister Nancy Miller, OSB

to lead the community to accomplish those directives as well as someone who can be the spiritual leader of the monastery.

Sister Nancy explains, "As we began the election process, each of us was asked to examine our hearts, and own gifts and limitations. It's natural to hold on to what is known and comfortable — but it is our tradition to remain open to where God is calling us at this point in history, as a monastic

community, and as sisters who serve and minister to others."

As prioress, Sister Nancy will provide leadership in the sisters' sponsored institutions: St. Alexius Medical Center, the University of Mary and Garrison Memorial Hospital. She will serve as president of the boards at St. Alexius Medical Center and the University of Mary. As the spiritual and administrative leader of her

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MESSAGE FROM THE *Prioress*



Dear Friends,

As I write this column, I reflect on the past 12 years and the privilege of serving as prioress of Annunciation Monastery. I have experienced the love and support of my sisters in community, as well as from our family members and friends. I am filled with gratitude because each of you are a gift and a blessing.

Our community has been preparing and reflecting on the directions for our future and who should be the woman to lead this community as its next prioress. On March 9, 2008, Sister Nancy Miller was elected the next prioress of Annunciation Monastery. In the months to come, you will get to know her and the gifts she brings to the service as prioress. Sister Nancy and I have begun the process of transition.

As many of you are aware, I am undergoing treatment to fight the cancer I was diagnosed with in July 2007. Your prayers and cards of support and encouragement fill my heart more than I can even express. I am always lifted up by your healing words. None of us knows what the future holds, but we do know the power of love, the power of prayer, and that God is truly holding us. This is the core of what strengthens and gives me courage.

I want you to know of my gratitude and that my prayers are also with you.

These past years have been blessed with opportunities to meet so many of you. We continue to share the rich legacy of our pioneering foremothers who started hospitals and schools in Dakota Territory. We continue to

dream and vision for the future — a vision that will continue to touch countless others through the mission and values we embrace. You, too, help to further the mission of Jesus. Thank you for your faithful support that will expand the dream of Sister Benedicta Riepp, who started the first Benedictine monasteries in America. Her dream of a tree covered with white blossoms, branching out and growing, offering endless opportunities to plant new seeds of love for God and all the earth — will continue.

May God bless you, and please remember our monastic community and our new prioress, Sister Nancy Miller, in your prayers,

With love and gratitude,

Sister Susan Berger

Our Ministry of Sponsorship

CATHOLIC, CHRISTIAN, BENEDICTINE: OUR LEGACY, OUR FUTURE

Bishop Paul Zipfel made his annual pastoral visit to St. Alexius Medical Center on a most appropriate day, Valentine's Day — a day devoted to love. It set the stage for his powerful comments which inspired and challenged everyone to "be" the healing face of Christ.

Sister Joanne Graham gave a presentation on the sisters' Ministry of Sponsorship, explaining how the sisters will continue to provide influence

and oversight at their sponsored institutions (St. Alexius Medical Center, Garrison Memorial Hospital and the University of Mary). "Our Ministry of Sponsorship signifies a recommitment to these institutions in new and significant ways - to deepen and extend the mission of Jesus through the way healthcare and education are delivered for generations to come," said Sister Joanne.

monastic community, Sister Nancy will guide the sisters in the implementation of their new long-range plan. "I am excited about the directions our community has chosen for the next four years," says Sister Nancy. The directives include:

- **Sponsorship of St. Alexius Medical Center, University of Mary and Garrison Memorial Hospital** — ensuring that Catholic, Christian and Benedictine values are strengthened and integrated to those served through these ministries.
- **New Membership** — invite women to explore their vocation (call) to monastic life with the Sisters of Annunciation Monastery.
- **Stewardship** — increase efforts in becoming better stewards of the Earth.
- **Respond to the contemporary hunger for God** — through spirituality programs, spiritual direction and offering a peaceful, prayerful place for

all to come and be renewed at Annunciation Monastery's Hospitality Center.

Sister Nancy speaks with admiration of the leadership of Sister Susan Berger. "I feel like it's impossible to follow in Sister Susan's footsteps. She is dearly loved and we are where we are today largely because of her leadership. I hope to be as compassionate and obedient as she and our past prioresses have been. They have provided a wonderful example for me. Sister Susan will continue to guide us and provide leadership to our community and to others as well."

Former Prioresses:

1947 – Decora Kaliher, osb
 1953 – Edane Volk, osb
 1966 – Kathryn Zimmer, osb
 1976 – Joanne Graham, osb
 1980 – Miriam Schmitt, osb
 1984 – Susan Lardy, osb
 1996 – Susan Berger, osb
 2008 – Nancy Miller, osb
 (term begins May 16, 2008)

A Snapshot of Sister Nancy Miller

Birthplace:

Harvey, North Dakota

Parents:

Joyce and Paul Miller

Siblings:

2 brothers, 6 sisters

Monastic Profession (Annunciation Monastery):

October 13, 1991

Educational Background:

Undergraduate degree in business administration,
 Master's degree in management

Ministries:

Assistant, Annunciation Monastery Business Office

Assistant Director/Director, University of Mary Bookstore

Director of Campus Ministry, University of Mary

Administrative Assistant (physical plant), Annunciation Monastery

Interests:

Reading, riding bike, walking, raquetball, time with monastic community and family/friends

We heartily thank you for your support as we continue offering mission and values programs to the various boards and personnel who serve at our institutions.



St. Alexius staff attends the Bishop's liturgy and luncheon.



St. Alexius Medical Center CEO, Andy Wilson, with Sister Joanne Graham and the Most Reverend Paul Zipfel, Bishop of Bismarck

In Appreciation For Your Leadership, Sister Susan

“Sister Susan Berger is a woman of genuine concern for each sister. As prioress she wholeheartedly supports the vision, mission and life of the community. Her ability to call forth each person’s gifts for the service of the community and the people of God is demonstrated by involving as many community members as possible in councils, boards and committees. She respects each one’s wisdom as a gift and grace from God for the good of all. Her prayer life is exemplary and is a model for all of us to follow as we move into the future.”

~ Sister Gerard Wald, OSB

“There are so many things I could say about Susan Berger and her years of service as prioress. She is such a good listener, truly concerned about each of the sisters as well as the whole community. She is a prayerful woman and an excellent speaker – her reflections have inspired us through the years. She does a fine job in representing our community no matter where she is asked to speak. Each time Sister Susan has given the reflection at Mass celebrating Benedictine Awareness Days, I have come away feeling so proud of her and so happy to be a member of Annunciation Monastery.”

~ Sister JoAnn Krebsbach, OSB

“Truly – a woman who models the monastic heart and what it means to be a Benedictine woman. Sister Susan calls me to have a grateful heart – in good times and in bad. She models servant leadership. And, she is my classmate!”

~ Sister Rosanne Zastoupil, OSB

“What characterizes Sister Susan’s leadership for me is her positive, encouraging attitude. Whatever comes along she says, 'We can do this,' or in the case of an individual, 'You can do this.' She has a knack for pointing out one’s gifts as she sees them.”

~ Sister Rebecca Mayer, OSB

“Sister Susan’s leadership over these years has been a blessing for our community. For me, she is a wonderful model of what a Benedictine leader should be: a woman of prayer and compassion who wants the best for each community member. I feel she does a great job calling each of us to greater participation and accountability in

community. I don’t know if we can fully thank her for the sacrifices she has made for the community over the past 12 years. I just know I am grateful for all she has done.”

~ Sister Nicole Kunze, OSB

“We Benedictines of Annunciation Monastery are richly blessed by the ministry of Sister Susan Berger, especially her 12 years as our prioress. She offered me loyal support through correspondence during my 1998-2000 mission to teach at the College of the Marshall Islands. Throughout my stay, Sister Susan found time to write, showing interest in my welfare, choosing beautiful cards, and always mentioning her joy in our monastic community and her admiration for each and all of her sisters in Christ.”

~ Sister Mary Elizabeth Mason, OSB

“She is prayerful – this is evidenced in her spiritual reflections for community meetings, funerals and when she addresses specifics to our sponsored institutions such as St. Alexius Medical Center, University of Mary and the wider church. She is determined to make a difference and is in tune with the signs of the times. She attends various committee meetings and is always well prepared. Sister Susan is sensitive to the needs of all the sisters, provides excellent care for the sick and the elderly, and she shows concern for the lay staff who work at the monastery. She has a great personality and I enjoy her wonderful sense of humor.”

~ Sister Stephanie Dolyniuk, OSB

“Sister Susan is a constant source of inspiration for me. She continually inspires me with her leadership and communication skills, her deep love and respect for people and her ability to vision for the future. But most of all, I treasure her monastic heart. It is full of love for God, people and the monastic way of life. She leads with this heart, she speaks with it and she listens with it. What a blessing she is to us!”

~ Sister Margaret Nelson, OSB

“Sister Susan Berger has a listening heart. Over the past 12 years I have had the occasion to stop in or have her stop in the office or at home. Always she maintains a listening stance, saying little, and listening intently. It is a gift to be sure.”

~ Sister Mariah Dietz, OSB

“Sister Susan has, by word and example, made authority not only more approachable but also more lovable. This spirit reaches out and is making us a loving community.”

~ Sister Helen Kilzer, OSB

“Sister Susan Berger is a servant leader who brings spiritual awareness to a community’s daily living, even as she courageously offers bold initiatives into the future. In her loving guidance, Annunciation Monastery and its ministries have continued to grow in God’s grace and thrive in serving the people of the region.”

~ Sister Thomas Welder, OSB

“To have had the privilege to work with Sister Susan Berger for the past six years has forever touched and influenced my life. As a leader, she is one who people choose to follow. Her respect for each person, her unfailing belief in God and the gifts within each individual, inspire commitment and passion to see our own lives as a ministry of service to others. Sister Susan’s genuine interest in others is expressed through her gift of listening. When she listens, she hears with both her head and her heart — and she understands. As Mother Teresa said, ‘We can do no great things; only small things with great love...,’ and that is Sister Susan Berger to me. Great things have happened, and will continue to happen, because of her great love.”

~ Jill Ackerman, director of Communications/Development

“I give thanks to God daily for Sister Susan’s leadership these 12 years. Her deep faith, compassion, love for God, the monastic way of life, and her love for each of us has touched me deeply. It inspires me to move into the future with hope and trust. Her vision and ability to call forth hidden gifts in each sister has vitalized our community and energized us. She is a sign of hope in our darkened world. She models what she believes and this has called me and us to seek God more intensely by pondering God’s work and allowing myself to be transformed by the Word. She truly is Christ’s presence in our midst.”

~ Sister Gemma Peters, OSB



“Strong in gentleness, delightful in presence, Sister Susan Berger inspires trust with her words and deeds. A woman of vision and courage, she is committed to the mission of Annunciation Monastery, the Church, and all who are associated with and who are served through our sponsored ministries of St. Alexius Medical Center, Garrison Memorial Hospital, and the University of Mary. Believing in the potential and call of each sister

to enlarge life for others, no matter her age, Sister Susan brings compassionate understanding to and recognition of the power in the community’s mission to ‘claim our humanity’ in its dignity and possibility. Seeking and strengthening avenues of collaboration with others to further the mission of Jesus, she inspires as she stands before the mystery of God, trusting in God’s love and the hope God has for each of us.”

~ Sister Janet Zander, OSB

“What I appreciate most about Sister Susan Berger is her great understanding, patience, and helpfulness with difficulties in human relationships. The Buddhist sister who was with us said that they call their advisor or mentor ‘Elder’ so I’ve called Sister Susan my ‘Elder’ even though I’m over 90 and she is much younger. Thank you, Sister Susan!”

~ Sister Helen Kyllingstad, OSB

“Sister Susan, you are a gift to my life as a student, friend, in our sharing monastic life as Benedictine women of prayer, teacher and leader. May your trust in God’s love and wisdom bring you peace.”

~ Sister Bernadette Fisher, OSB

Community Presence

COMMITTED TO THE FUTURE

Sister Thomas Welder

was the 2007 recipient of the Missouri Slope Areawide United Way's Lifetime of Caring Award for her leadership and support of various organizations and people in the community. Sister Thomas is an active participant on boards and in community organizations including service on the board of St. Alexius Medical Center, of MDU Resources Group, Inc. and the Bismarck-Mandan Development Association. A member of the North Dakota Higher Education Roundtable, she also serves on the "Covering Kids and Families Advisory Board" of the Dakota Medical Foundation and the board of trustees of Missouri Slope Areawide United Way.

Active in professional organizations and religious affiliations, Sister Thomas received the Greater North Dakotan Award from the Greater North Dakota Association in October 2002, was honored with the Theodore Roosevelt Rough Rider Award by Governor John Hoeven in May 2004, and was inducted into the Scandinavian-American Hall of Fame in 2007. Sister Thomas has served as president of the University of Mary since 1978 and is committed to fostering leadership development in students and colleagues.



Sister Thomas Welder, recipient of the 2007 United Way Lifetime of Caring Award, and Rodger Wetzel, 2006 Award recipient. Both serve on United Way's board of trustees.



"Six Days of Creation"



Sister Nancy Gunderson and her "Synergy" quilt.

Sister Nancy Gunderson's

"Six Days of Creation," received the People's Choice Award at the Bismarck Art & Galleries Association's (BAGA) Autumn Artistry Art Show. The public was asked to vote on their favorite art piece at the gallery throughout the month of October. Sister Nancy received a second place award for her quilt "Synergy," in BAGA's Juried Quilt Exhibit in January.

Sisters Expand Efforts in Recycling



Our sisters continue to find new ways to be better stewards of God's earth. We currently recycle: aluminum cans, steel cans, paper, magazines, cardboard boxes, ink cartridges, batteries and plastics.

Sister Edith Selzler with the eco-friendly bags she sewed for shopping trips. These bags can be purchased in our gift shop.



Sisters Rosanne Zastoupil and Gerard Wald were among the group of sisters who joined the wonderful people at Trinity Lutheran Church in cooking and serving a meal at "The Banquet" in January. Over 350 were served!

Immaculée Ilibagiza Inspires at Prayer Day

It was a rare privilege to hear international speaker and author, Immaculée Ilibagiza, speak at the University of Mary's annual Prayer Day



Rwandan genocide survivor, Immaculée Ilibagiza, with Sister Kathleen Atkinson

event on Feb. 7. She spoke of her personal experience of surviving the Rwandan genocide, her miraculous transition into forgiveness, and a profound relationship with God. Her book, "Left to Tell," has sold more than 250,000 copies worldwide, raising over \$150,000 for the orphans of Rwanda.

In Loving Memory

Sister Moira Paulus

*Born July 12, 1913
Died December 18, 2007*

Sister Moira was a friendly, outgoing woman who served in healthcare in North Dakota for 50 years, 35 of those years at Garrison Memorial Hospital. A medical technologist for many years, she was a charter member of the state's society for medical technology and was honored for outstanding service to the profession. She will

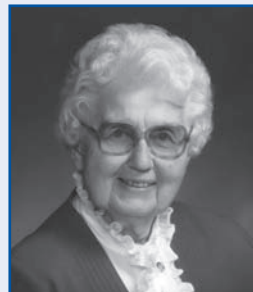


be especially remembered for her great smile which touched the hearts of so many.

Sister Wanda Piotrowski

*Born March 22, 1908
Died January 10, 2008*

An outgoing, fun-loving woman, Sister Wanda found joy in visiting with and helping people. She served 50 years at St. Alexis Medical Center in Radiology and Pastoral Care. She was also subprioress of Annunciation Monastery for six years, followed by seven years as a parish visitor at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit parish. She had a sparkle in her eye,



a great sense of humor, and treasured life as a Benedictine sister. She loved God, her large extended family and her many friends.

Sister Gerald Driessen

*Born September 19, 1904
Died February 8, 2008*

Sister Gerald loved to teach. She taught elementary grades for 53 years in North Dakota and Minnesota. Many of her students became her lifelong friends. She helped open St. Lawrence School in Flasher, spent 26 summers teaching religion in rural parishes and served six years in the curriculum lab at the University of Mary. She loved

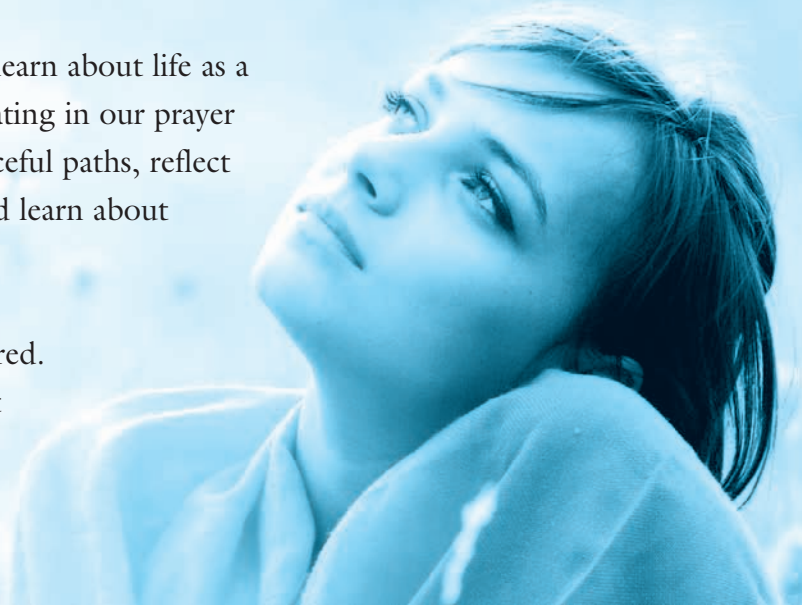


writing to friends, former students and relatives. Above all, she cherished being a Benedictine sister.

Is God inviting you to consider religious life?

We Sisters of Annunciation Monastery invite you to learn about life as a Benedictine sister. Explore your vocation by participating in our prayer and community life. Renew your spirit, walk the peaceful paths, reflect in the quiet, get to know our sisters, share stories and learn about our ministries.

There is no charge; however, pre-registration is required.
For more information, contact Sister Nicole Kunze at
(701)255-1520 or email:
vocations@annunciationmonastery.org



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

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