



SUMMER 2004

Tidings

BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF

ANNUNCIATION MONASTERY

Lewis and Clark Visitors Invited to Monastery

THE Circle of Cultures Lewis & Clark National Signature Event will be hosted by the University of Mary, one of the sponsored institutions of the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery. The event is scheduled October 22-31, 2004. We Sisters welcome you to visit our monastery while you take in this unique event.



Did you Know?

Annunciation Monastery rests on the bluffs by the Missouri River - on the Lewis & Clark trail in Bismarck. Those who have experienced the spectacular view from this site have commented, "a view beyond mortal words." Perhaps this very view was enjoyed by the eyes of famous explorers Captain Meriwether Lewis and Captain William Clark.

Learn about our fascinating history, which started in North Dakota not too long after Lewis & Clark ventured into "The Unknown."

We refer to our founding sisters as pioneers into the unknown as well, as they were really the first women in the rugged Dakota Territory to establish formal education and health care over 125 years ago.

Where are we located?

Annunciation Monastery is approximately seven miles south of Bismarck. Just follow Airport Road which winds into University Drive until you see our sign. Our 100 ft. landmark bell banner can't be missed. We are directly to the south of the bell banner.

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Annunciation Monastery rests on the bluffs of the Missouri River on the Lewis & Clark trail. It is south of the University of Mary, site of the National Lewis & Clark Signature Event October 22-31, 2004.

MESSAGE FROM THE *Prioress*



National Lewis and Clark Signature Event Offers Magnificent Experience of Dakota Prairies and its People

From Oct. 22-31, the University of Mary, sponsored by the Sisters of Annunciation Monastery, will host a national signature event celebrating Lewis and Clark's travels across our country.

The monastery and university welcome with Benedictine hospitality everyone who comes to these prairies south of Bismarck.

We welcome as the native people welcomed Lewis and Clark.

AS I begin to write, the morning sun creeps over the horizon casting warm rays on the ripe alfalfa field to the east of our monastery dining room. A meadowlark sits on a light pole. If I listen carefully to the morning silence, I hear its clear song announcing a new day. The greens in the rural landscape create a tapestry that only summer can create. In the distance to the south, a stream of fog outlines the Missouri River. All of nature stretches simultaneously in one breath of interconnected life.

These same Dakota prairies and Missouri River welcomed Lewis and Clark as they journeyed west. They came, pioneers searching for a truth larger than themselves. Along the way they learned about the land from which they received water and food, sometimes harshly and with great struggle. They formed relationships with the peoples native to the Missouri valley who lived here long before President Jefferson dreamed the dream of the excursion to the Pacific Ocean. They traveled with a woman, Sacagawea, their guide, silent and strong.

In late October the University of Mary, sponsored by the Sisters of Annunciation Monastery, will host one of the national signature events celebrating

Lewis and Clark's travels across our country. The monastery and university welcome with Benedictine hospitality everyone who comes to these prairies south of Bismarck. We welcome as the native people welcomed Lewis and Clark.

We don't travel as Lewis and Clark did, but many will travel by plane, car and bus to see what they discovered. We will explore on bike and on foot some of the trails, roadways, and waters that Lewis and Clark traveled. We want to remember and imagine the spirit that lit their lives.

These same Dakota prairies and Missouri River also welcomed the first Benedictine women who came to Bismarck, Dakota Territory, from St. Joseph, Minn., in 1878 to teach children and again in 1885 to provide health care. These Benedictines came to a Bismarck rough and wild with a diverse population of settlers and their families, bankers, gold diggers, railroad men and riverboat men. These sisters and people, courageous pioneers, came to

"God bless us with pioneer courage . . . with eyes that see possibility, ears that hear the unexpected voice of God and hearts that build roads to peace."

Dakota Territory for reasons as diverse as they each were. Along the way they created community.

These prairies are about interconnections of roots, cultures, nature, peoples and God.

As we live into the 21st century, may God bless us with the pioneer courage of these people, with arms that embrace our wounded world with love, eyes that see possibility, ears that hear the unexpected voice of God, and hearts that build roads to peace.

Susan Berger, OSB

Sisters Welcome Guests to Monastery Chapel, Labyrinth, Gift Shop

What Will You Encounter When You Arrive?

Encounter our Benedictine hospitality firsthand! Spend some time enjoying the breathtaking view from our dining room, visit with our sisters, browse our gift shop; or if you wish, join us in our daily praise in our chapel.

Gift Shop Offerings

We will be present at a booth display at the signature event site at the University of Mary's field house which will feature some of the items for sale at the monastery gift shop. These items will include prairie pottery by Sister Hildegard Urlacher. Sister Edith Selzler will have an array of hand-crafted and hand-painted cards available, as well as beautiful one-of-a-kind journals. Sisters who do needlework will offer embroidered dish towels and crocheted afghans, baby blankets, candles, rosaries, Benedictine medals and other items. The DVD, titled "Prayerful Presence on the Prairie," outlining the history of the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery will be available for purchase.



The chapel of Annunciation Monastery is an inviting place to pray alone or with the sisters during the Eucharist and community prayer times. For prayer times, look on our web site.

The Labyrinth Walk

You might want to plan some time to walk our outdoor labyrinth, an ancient prayer path that is designed for peaceful prayer or reflection. Our labyrinth is located east of our monastery, a short walking distance from our front doors. Instruction guides for walking the labyrinth are available at the front desk of the monastery and at the labyrinth entrance. As you walk, you just may be treated to seeing white-tailed deer, wild turkey and pheasants, certainly some ground squirrels, and maybe even an eagle or hawk that are common to this area. They share our love of this land.

Join Us in Prayer

While taking in the signature event, you may desire to find a place to worship. We Sisters invite people of all faiths to join us in daily praise at Annunciation Monastery. You'll find prayer times on our web site under "Join Us in Prayer."

We hope you add Annunciation Monastery to your list of things to experience while you take in this wonderful event! For more information, please contact Sister Gemma at (701)255-1520 or refer to our web site: www.annunciationmonastery.org.



Sisters and friends gather for blessing of the labyrinth, a sacred prayer path located east of the monastery. Rocks mark the walkway that leads to the center of the circle.

"Listen With the Ear of Your Heart"

Participants Complete Spiritual Direction Training

THE past two years have been intense for 11 participants in the spiritual direction program co-sponsored by Annunciation Monastery and Sacred Heart Monastery, Richardton.

Sister Jean Maher of St. Scholastica Monastery, Duluth, Minn., program coordinator, led people through the process of becoming spiritual directors. Along with Sister Jean, the new program was developed by Sister Ruth Fox of Sacred Heart Monastery, and Sisters Patricia Schap, Miriam Schmitt and Gemma Peters of Annunciation Monastery.

Sister Jean explains, "Spiritual direction is an ancient ministry in the church inviting persons to grow in their relationship with God by focusing on their spiritual journey." That spiritual journey leads to a deeper understanding of who they are as persons and in relation to others.

Training in spiritual direction involves two main components, says Sister Jean. It's extremely important to be prepared academically. Participants read two books each month and submit a summary of the reading including questions, insights, and new awarenesses. They meet monthly as a group and with their own spiritual directors regularly.

The second year of training allows the interns to work with a 'directee' monthly in spiritual direction under supervision. They submit a summary of each session while maintaining the confidentiality of the directee. The supervisory aspect of the program teaches the intern to listen with an open heart and mind without contributing his or her own personal experience.

The focus in spiritual direction is



Participants and directors of the Spiritual Direction Training program are (Back Row, L-R:) Sister Jean Maher, Claudia Dietrich, Sisters Susan Berger, Renee Zastoupil, Martha Jane Bonine, Agnes Reinert, Joanne Graham, Anna Rose Ruhland, Kathleen Kuntz (Front Row, L-R:) Sister Gemma Peters, Steven Anderson, Marlane Peterson (not pictured: Steven Schou, Sisters Ruth Fox, Patricia Schap and Miriam Schmitt).

always on the directee. Directors are taught to be mindful that God is the real director in this process. The director is merely a companion on the journey, a channel of God's wisdom, support and love.

"Anybody who's serious about growing in their relationship with God can benefit from spiritual direction," explains Sister Jean. She includes, "those who are serious about their spiritual journey and relationships with themselves and others, those who

are grieving, and those who are discerning something in their life."

Participants in the spiritual direction program were deeply grateful for it.

"The experience was so rewarding and challenging," says Sister Martha Jane Bonine of Annunciation Monastery. "I found each session both mentally and physically exhausting but also felt a real energy in knowing God is present to all of us as we journey together."

Annunciation Monastery Hospitality Center

In addition to spiritual direction, Annunciation Monastery's Hospitality Center offers presentations on spirituality, private retreats, reflection days and facilities for group retreats or meetings. The fall spirituality programs are listed on the web site or you can receive a brochure by calling Sister Gemma Peters, 701-255-1520.

To donate to spreading the mission of Jesus through the Hospitality Center, please use the enclosed envelope.

Meet Some of Our Artists



Sister Hildegard Urlacher's "prairie pottery" incorporates the many hues seen in the grain fields, prairie grasses, sunsets and autumn leaves in the North Dakota landscape. She has created her own unique design using leathering tools, a soft leather strap with feathers and her own glazes. "When I work with clay, I must approach it with a calm spirit," explains Sister Hildegard. She recalls the

lessons she's learned from the Native American approach to working with clay. "Their culture has such a beautiful respect for Mother Earth that they ask permission to take the clay from the earth before giving it a new identity. This process of giving a lump of clay an identity is what makes it holy." With an appreciation to God for her love of the arts, Sister Hildegard is grateful for the support of the community of Sisters who encourage her gifts.



Sister Mary Ann Welder is shown sewing her Little Red Riding Hood dolls for the monastery gift shop. Turn them one way to see Little Red Riding Hood, turn them upside down and there's Grandma and the Big Bad Wolf!



Sister Edith Selzler has created a wide array of products for the Lewis & Clark Signature event. From bookmarks laminated with prairie sage, to watercolor note cards of the North Dakota prairie rose, and unique leather-covered journals, she captures the spirit of the pioneers from long ago. Another of her designs is featured on a note card showing the bell banner of Annunciation Monastery with the scenic bluffs and valleys along the Missouri River.



Sister Ralphine Fried spends her mornings making hand-strung rosaries for missions across the globe. In the afternoon she switches to crochet, where she explains she uses different muscles and movements to keep her fingers agile. Here she holds a Navajo print afghan she created for the Lewis & Clark Signature event.



Sister Terence Glum faithfully knits afghans, sweaters, baby blankets and other items for the monastery gift shop and for the poor.

Sister Mary Ann Recognized for Volunteer Service

LITTLE did Sister Mary Ann Welder know when she accompanied Sister Agatha Muggli to her volunteer day at the Bismarck Emergency Food Pantry that she would continue volunteering for the next 20 years.

Each Tuesday from 1 to 4 p.m. Sister Mary Ann can be found writing thank you's to generous donors or stocking shelves or grocery bags with food for those who don't have the funds to buy groceries.

"We provide food to individuals and families throughout Burleigh County," explains Sister Mary Ann. "It is intended to help them through a crisis point in their lives whether it's loss of employment, illness or some event that leaves them without the ability to buy food." Clients are referred to the pantry by social service agencies and churches.

Sister Mary Ann's reward for 20 years of service at the Food Pantry is the gift of serving God's people.

Sister Mary Ann says the food is distributed according to need and family size. Volunteers try to offer a variety of healthy foods and staples to prepare meals. "We interview the clients to determine what best fits their needs and situation." She shares a story about an individual who didn't have a stove so volunteers made sure the foods he was given were precooked or ready-to-eat. Since many of the clients have young children, Sister Mary Ann says they are given some "special" items like cookies and candy.



Sister Mary Ann Welder, a volunteer for 20 years at the Bismarck Emergency Food Pantry, stocks shelves with donated food items.

A local church donates "birthday bags" for families who want to have a birthday party for their children. The bags include a cake mix, candles, balloons — all the fixings for a special birthday celebration.

The 20 plus volunteers of the Bismarck Emergency Food Pantry recently recognized Sister Mary Ann for her 20 years of volunteering for the agency.

Sister Mary Ann has also volunteered in the stone soup kitchen of the Ruth Meiers Hospitality House for the past ten years.

She says her reward is the gift of serving God's people in a very sustaining way.

In Loving Memory of Sister Bernice Fibiger

August 7, 1911 – June 2, 2004



Throughout her whole life, Sister Bernice embraced God's steadfast love and spread it to others.

A kind-hearted woman with a great interest in people, Sister Bernice taught children for 50 years in St. Paul, Minn. and in Bismarck, Flasher, Dickinson, Mott and Mandan.

Then she began a new ministry at Garrison Memorial Hospital. For 20 years she comforted and prayed with the sick and dying, supported their families and showed care for hospital employees. She also decorated the halls of the hospital

with artwork and inspirational sayings. She loved people and they in turn loved her.

Sister Bernice was an inspiration to others. As one employee said, "When she told you, 'God bless you,' 'it made you feel that yes, you were blessed.'"

SISTERS RECEIVE HONORS, NEW MINISTRIES



Sister Nancy

Sister Nancy Miller has accepted the position of Director of Campus Ministry at the University of Mary. She assumes her new ministry in August. Sister Nancy has served as director of maintenance, housekeeping, transportation, purchasing and food services for Annunciation Monastery.



Sister Martha Jane

In August Sister Martha Jane Bonine will become administrative assistant at Annunciation Monastery. She will direct maintenance, housekeeping, transportation, purchasing and food services. She attends graduate school in the summers at Creighton University, Omaha, Neb.



Sister Kathleen

Sister Kathleen Atkinson was named Director of the new Center for Christian Leadership at the University of Mary. The intent of the Center for Christian Leadership is to bring people of various faiths together for faith formation, leadership training, education and professional collaboration. Formerly, Sister Kathleen served as the Director

of Catechesis for the Diocese of Bismarck. She begins her new position in August. She is also vocation director for Annunciation Monastery.



Sister Gerard

Sister Gerard Wald was awarded the 2004 regional Minn-Dak Circle K Advisor award. The award presentation was held at the 44th annual Minn-Dak District of Circle K International convention in Bismarck. Circle K is a student service organization affiliated with Kiwanis International.

The honor recognizes Sister Gerard's leadership and dedication to the organization. Sister Gerard serves as director of the student volunteer program at the University of Mary.

Sister Martha Clare Celebrates 60th Jubilee



Sister Martha Clare Kilzer

SISTER Martha Clare Kilzer, celebrated her 60th anniversary of her monastic profession on July 10.

A native of Richardton, N.D. Sister Martha Clare is one of the original 142 Sisters who volunteered to come to the Diocese of Bismarck to establish Annunciation Monastery. She made her perpetual monastic profession at the

Cathedral of the Holy Spirit on July 11, 1947.

Her patient and adaptable personality was helpful during her first assignments of teaching various grades from third through eighth for eight years at St. Joseph's School in Dickinson.

Over the years, Sister Martha Clare has served in a variety of positions, including that of secretary to the prioress, teaching at the Cathedral School in Bismarck, and later at St. Lawrence School in Flasher, N.D., and serving as church organist. She was called to be principal of St. Egbert's School in Morehead City, N.C.

The parish set up a foundation entitled the "Sister Martha Clare Foundation," granting scholarships to needy children.

Sister Martha Clare did further study at Marquette University in Milwaukee to major in philosophy, and shortly after, a master's degree at Villanova University in Pennsylvania. She was asked to take library science at Simmons College in Boston, to prepare to become the first librarian at what was then Mary College in Bismarck. She chuckles in amazement at the variety of roles in which she has been called on to serve.

Throughout, Sister Martha Clare possessed the grace of accepting each new challenge and assignment with a quiet reserve and determination to glorify God in each ministry.

Presently, Sister Martha Clare resides at St. Vincent's Care Center in Bismarck. The constants in her life continue to be her faithfulness to prayer and weekly visits from her sister, Sister Helen Kilzer, also of Annunciation Monastery.

Sister Martha Clare, both lovable and loving, throughout her life has found herself a "beginner" many times over. However, her 60th Jubilee is a celebration of something which is not new to her - a life of service, gratitude and love of the Lord.

Sister Thomas Receives State's Highest Honor

SPRING commencement ceremonies for the University of Mary were running right on schedule when suddenly Gov. John Hoeven and first lady Mikey Hoeven were introduced and made their way on stage. They presented a surprised Sister Thomas Welder with North Dakota's highest honor, the Theodore Roosevelt Rough Rider Award. Sister Thomas, a member of Annunciation Monastery and president of the University of Mary for 25 years, is the 33rd recipient of the honor awarded North Dakotans who have achieved national recognition.

Hoeven said throughout her career, Sister Thomas has embodied the ideal of servant leadership and commitment to community . . . "We honor her remarkable contribution to the academic, business and spiritual life of North Dakota."

He added that Sister Thomas is an inspiration to countless individuals. "Her achievements, character and leadership serve as an example for North Dakota and the nation."

Dr. Harold J. Miller, chair, of the University of Mary Board of Trustees, said, "Sister Thomas has taken a small college with a few hundred students and a handful of degree programs and developed it into America's Leadership University." He called Sister Thomas "a builder of bridges," who is gentle but firm



Photo Courtesy of Jerry Anderson, University of Mary

Sister Thomas Welder (r) is given the Rough Rider Award by Gov. John Hoeven and first lady Mikey Hoeven. Her portrait will hang in the Capitol.

and who empowers others "to make a difference." Despite all she has accomplished, "few have remained so humble," he said.

Sister Susan Berger, prioress of Annunciation Monastery, described Sister Thomas as a faithful Benedictine and a strong Dakota prairie woman. She told Sister Thomas, "you carry on the mission of our founding Benedictine sisters who first came to these prairies 125 years ago to teach. You live their pioneer spirit of courage and love for the people."

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Bismarck, ND 58504-9653

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