



the Crookston
Benedictine

Fall, 2016 Vol 29.2
Mount Saint Benedict Monastery
620 Summit Ave. Crookston, MN 56716

from our prioress . . .

Dear Friends,



Sister Shawn Carruth

“For everything there is a season...a time to break down and a time to build up.” (Eccl 3:1a, 3b) For the past few years we’ve been in the building and moving in season. Elsewhere in this issue of *the Crookston Benedictine* you will see how that has changed our viewpoint in terms of where we are and who we are. All on one floor now, there is no more upstairs

or downstairs. We’re closer to the earth. We’re closer to the hummingbirds that dine at the same time we do at feeders outside our dining room windows. We’re closer to the deer that we can easily see making their own feast of our grape vines, or of the leaves on our young trees. We see them stroll past our bedroom windows and sometimes stop to take a look in. Face to face we are observed as well as observers. We are part of this creation. From the windows in our monastery residence we have the broad and far view to the south

to the woods and cemetery. We remember that, like all creation, our time here has its limit.

In early August the crew began working on the demolition of Marian Hall so we have now moved into the breaking down season. Recently we opened the time capsule from the cornerstone of Marian Hall and came face to face with that earlier time of building and the reality that our lives are built on the lives and dreams of many who’ve gone before us. But this time of tearing down will open new views to us, too. We will have a longer view to the north when it is all done. Eventually, the space will be landscaped and that view will remind us that God’s work of building needs some space not filled with what we build. The approach to the monastery from the north will have an unobstructed view of the monastery and especially of the chapel. No matter what we build up or tear down the chapel remains our focal point. And what we do there keeps us ever adjusting our focus. It is the space in which we gather several times a day to praise God for the abundance of God’s blessings on us and where we pray God for abundant blessings for you, all our good and dear friends. Whether our windows look out from third floor or ground floor, whether we see the distant or short view from those windows, we ask in prayer for the grace to see all persons and things from God’s viewpoint as Saint Benedict did. The words of one of our hymns at noon prayer express it well: “unveil to us the truth concealed by all that clouds our view.” God bless you.



The *Crookston Benedictine* articulates the vision, charism and mission of the Sisters of Saint Benedict, Crookston, MN, and helps the monastic community maintain and build relationships with the wider community.

The *Crookston Benedictine* is published twice a year by the Sisters of Saint Benedict, Mount Saint Benedict Monastery, **Sister Denise Schonhardt**, editor, and **Sisters Anne DeMers, Lorraine Kraft, Mary Daniel Neumann** and **Yvonne Shafer**, staff.

Cover Photo by Sister Denise Schonhardt

Liturgy Schedule

Morning Prayer:	11:20	am	Sunday
	8:30	am	Monday - Saturday
Noon Prayer	11:50	am	Monday - Saturday
Evening Prayer	4:30	pm	Sunday
	5:00	pm	Monday - Friday
Eucharist	8:00	am	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
	11:15	am	Wednesday
	4:30	pm	Saturday (Sunday Mass)



Sister Anne DeMers renews her monastic profession.

Sisters celebrate jubilees

By Sister Anne DeMers and Sister Denise Schonhardt

Have you ever heard of a jubilarian being the accompanist for her own jubilee? That is exactly what happened when Sister Anne DeMers celebrated her jubilee. The accompanist failed to appear and the only person who was prepared to accompany was Sister Anne!

On the feast of Saint Benedict, July 11, Sister Anne DeMers observed twenty-five years of religious profession as a Sister of Saint Benedict at Crookston. She previously spent years as a Benedictine sister at Queen of Peace Monastery, Belcourt, ND. On this occasion, Monsignor Roger Grundhaus, president, con-celebrated with Monsignors Donald Krebs and Gerald Noesen. The 11:00 Eucharist was followed by a meal and a reception was held at 2:30 p.m. Mary

Jo Christianson, Tom Christianson and Amy and Tim Johnson, members of Sister Anne's family, were able to be present to celebrate this special event.

On July 26, the feast of Saints Anne and Joachim, Sister Dorothea Kripps celebrated 80 years and Sister Mary Fay, 75 years of religious profession at their residence, Villa Saint Vincent. A special reception was held for them in the wellness room at the Villa. Carolina Peck used the Mount's "people-mover" to transport the elderly across the street for the celebration. Monsignor Grundhaus thanked the sisters for their years of service and prayed a blessing specific for an anniversary of consecrated life.



Facing Ecological Challenges

Sister Anne DeMers

A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal (Laudato Si', #202)."

Pope Francis' statement gives pause for reflection as Mount Saint Benedict Monastery moves into the future. What are some challenges *Laudato Si'* presents to us in our new setting? How may we further the "ecological conversion" Pope Francis mentions in this document?

We live on approximately 200 acres of rich, black soil located in the Red River Valley, an area that contains wetlands, woodland and cropland. Our woodland contains some old oak trees thought to be "virgin forest." Much of the rest of the tree growth along the river has been there for many decades. In a presentation to our community in 2005, it was called one of the pearls in a string of ecologically preserved prairies and wetlands stretching from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada.

How have we used this land and what are our future plans? For decades some of our land supported the monastery's garden and orchard. As our members aged many volunteers helped us continue our organic gardening. At one time we supported a high tunnel garden and made an effort to foster Community Supported Agriculture, both of these projects managed

by Mike Klawitter. Our present indispensable gardeners/ outdoor workers, Lonnie and Carolina Peck, became a part of these efforts and continue to aid us as we grow into the future.

This year our garden plot grows buckwheat, prairie grasses and flowers. It was hard to lose some large, age-old trees due to the construction of our new building. We are in the process of replacing them by planting a variety of new trees around the building. We have plenty of space in which to continue to plant trees.

We enjoy seeing deer wandering outside of our windows – especially the windows that face south, except when they're munching on our new saplings. Raccoons, rabbits, and squirrels meander across our viewing area and have sisters watching their movements, especially early in the morning and at dusk. They have claimed a space in our lives "*In union with all creatures, we journey through this land seeking God (Laudato Si', #243).*"

Also, *Laudato Si'* talks about a "cultural ecology" that seems to describe why we needed a new monastery in the first place. You might ask, "What is this "cultural ecology?"

Ecology

“There is a need to incorporate the history, culture and architecture of each place, thus preserving its original identity. Authentic development includes efforts to bring about an integral improvement in the quality of life and this entails the setting in which people live their lives. These settings influence the way we think, feel and act. We use our environment as a way of expressing our identity (Laudato Si’ #143)”.

Marian Hall, built primarily for high school girls, had become a residence for us. We shared this residence with retreatants, live-in volunteers, guests, programs and civic events



Since the beginning of the community in 1919, great effort has been made to retain and promote the trees and all growing things on the Mount grounds.

We came to a realization that we were being formed by the space in which we lived. Our sisters loved Marian Hall with its gracious space and sense of hospitality; it holds memories of some of our formative events. But, as we age and look forward to deepening our monastic life of prayer, we recognized that our living space was not only expensive to maintain, but it also presented some problems: elderly sisters having to walk down dormitory halls to a common bathroom, often to a lukewarm or cold shower; upper stories without air conditioning.

The cost of renovation, according to a study undertaken by Benedictine Health System, was prohibitive. The community tried to sell the building to prospective buyers at a low price. But the cost of heating and maintenance discouraged many who showed interest.

After a decade of exploring options we made the decision to create a space that would foster our Benedictine life. As Pope Francis stated in *Laudato Si’*, “*We use our environment as a way of expressing our identity.*” We seek to accomplish this with our new monastery. We have space for chapter meetings, small group living areas, a refectory (monastic dining room), and infirmary (wellness center) and guest bedrooms and dining room. We now have the time and space that draw us toward one another in a way that fosters a more cohesive community spirit.

In our new surroundings, away from the bustle of activities that so easily distracts us, it is easier to practice “mindfulness,” -- an awareness of living in the presence of God. Monastic practices such as table reading and silence (at certain times and places) are again becoming part of our lives. We look forward toward these continuous changes that are happening in and around us as we face our future together.

*That in all things, God may be glorified
(RB 57 & 1 Peter 4:1).*

We walk on Holy Ground

Sister Denise Schonhardt

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth -- and the earth was without form or shape, with darkness over the abyss and a mighty wind sweeping over the waters. --Genesis 1:1-2

God said: Do not come near! Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. -- Exodus 3:5

Our concept of the universe is grounded in the creation story found in Genesis. God created the universe, God created men and women in the image and likeness of the Holy One, and human beings were to have control over the earth and all living creatures. We understand now that the universe is an evolutionary, ever-changing, sacred event. Nothing in the universe is static because the universe is constantly dying and being reborn into something new. The whole universe is created fresh at every moment.

Earth is embedded in the structures and processes of the universe. Earth is dependent upon space, the formation of the galaxies, the evolution of the stars and the gravitational pull that allows matter to gather into galaxies, stars, solar systems and planets

In a 1989 article in *Spirituality Today*, Father Charles Cummings, OCSO wrote that the cosmos is the place

of God's self-revelation. Father Charles also wrote, "Ecology studies our total environment and all the living or non-living creatures that dwell with us in this cosmic house (*oikos*/house). Eco-spirituality studies our relationship to God as it develops in the context of our relationships with the cosmos in its totality. The challenge of eco-spirituality is to find God within — not apart from — this totality, and to view the totality as a dynamic, interdependent process centering on the risen Christ and growing to perfection in love. "Thus you may have strength to comprehend with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." (*Eph 3:18-19*)

As we become more and more aware that nothing happens in the universe that does not affect everything else in the universe, we open ourselves to new possibilities and new wonders. "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined the things that God has prepared for those who love him." (*1Cor. 2:9*) We have the opportunity to forge for our generation and for generations to come a lifestyle that is sustainable within the global community. We come from holy ground, we walk on holy ground and we will return to holy ground.

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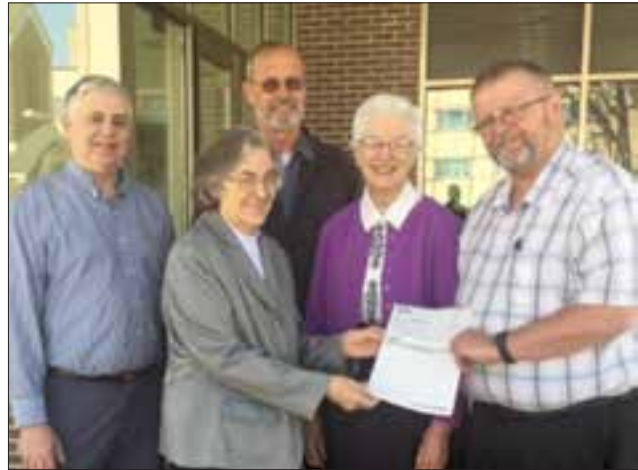
Green energy powers new monastery

Sister Denise Schonhardt

For almost a hundred years we Benedictine Sisters have treasured the gifts of the earth. Though it all started with organic gardening long before it became popular, it was not until the early 2000s that we put into words what we practiced. Among the actions we committed ourselves to in our statement “On Holy Ground,” was to:

- ❖ promote sustainability by encouraging responsible utilization of natural resources including the land, water, air and wildlife in ways to restore, enhance, preserve and conserve those resources; and
- ❖ maintain an environment of beauty and peacefulness that promotes prayer and contemplation; while recognizing the sacredness of creation.

These values came to the forefront when we made the decision to heat and cool the new monastery 100% through the use of geothermal energy. Only the remodeled part of the building is heated by a high efficiency boiler powered by electricity produced by the



Ken Johnson, representative of Ottertail Power Company presents a check to Sister Shawn Carruth, prioress, in the presence of Dan Johanneck, business manager; Dudley Hulst, maintenance supervisor and Sister Myra Schmiege, treasurer.

company that has made the largest investment in green energy in the country. This company is moving toward making even greater use of green energy.

While the use of green energy reflects our commitment to care of the environment, it also provides some extra benefits in terms of comfort. The new building uses radiant heat in the floors. (No more cold floors when getting out of bed!) Each room has individual temperature controls. (No longer do three bedrooms share a single thermostat.) The building is air

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On Holy Ground

This holy ground is our legacy to generations yet to be born. Theologian Father Thomas Berry wrote, “Unless we are totally depraved we will seek to give to our children not only life and education but a planet with pure air and bright waters and fruitful fields, a planet that can be lived on with grace and beauty and a touch of human and earthly tenderness.”

We need to recall that though Earth can continue without us, we cannot survive without Earth. Benedictines reflect on Benedict’s mandate that the goods of the monastery are to be treated as the vessels of the altar and to ponder Benedict’s vision when he saw

the entire world in a single ray of light. Saint Gregory of Nazianzus put it this way, “Christ exists in all things that are.” Saint Paul wrote, “We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.” (*Romans 8:22*)

How will we and future generations live on this sacred Earth, this home in which a loving Creator has placed us? Or, will we experience the warning of Hosea when he says “the land mourns and all who dwell in it languish, and also the beasts of the field and birds of the air and even the fish of the sea are taken away” (*Hosea 4:3*).

Saint Mary's Hospital garden

By Sister Mary Fay

Two Sisters to Saint Louis went
On a serious enterprise bent
To learn if they could
What makes hospitals good
And keeps weary Sisters content.

They listened from morning 'til night
To wise folk who know what is right
But when they were done
They had found only one
Who was able to answer their plight.

Said one man, "Now this is a rule:
Don't send off your Sisters to school.
They can't work every day.
They must take time to play.
Give them each a good garden tool."

So home they came with due speed.
And bought tools that gardeners would need.
They spaded a plot
In the big vacant lot
And started to sow some good seed.

Sister Roland wanted poppies of red
To bloom in a big flower bed.
She spread seeds in profusion
But to her confusion
They grew up to be daisies instead.

Sister Jolenta was ahead of the rest.
She weeded and planted with zest.
Her tomatoes when ripe
Were juicy and bright
A bumper crop at its best.

Sister Lucy we had to excuse.
To labor she'd never refuse
But her poor little nose
Turned red as a rose
And protested with many "kachoos!"

These verses may disappoint you.
Poor excuse for a poem, it is true.
But we pray that our story
To God may give glory.
We've all done the best we could do.

Sister Mary wrote the previous poem while she ministered at Saint Mary's Hospital in Detroit Lakes.

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Energy conservation

conditioned. (No more sweltering heat on the bedroom floors on days of high-humidity with temperatures in the 90s. Yes, even northern Minnesota has those times!) The heating of the water is more reliable. (No more ice cold showers in the morning!) The building uses motion-sensitive LED lighting in the common areas. (No more stumbling in the dark room trying to find the light switch!)

The use of geothermal heating and cooling, a high efficiency boiler and LED lights creates a cost savings. The Energy Management Representative for the power company, Ken Johnson said. "They'll see a payback on their energy-efficient investments in less than nine

years." The power company also gave us a laage rebate check.

In our small corner of the universe we were able to give concrete help to protect God's gift of creation. "As Benedictines, we're committed to the care of all creation—including our buildings and every tree on the property," said Sister Shawn Carruth, prioress. "From the start of this building project, we were committed to care for the environment in our use of energy."

Let them regard all the goods of the monastery and its whole property as if they were the sacred vessels of the altar.
—Rule of Benedict 31:10

Meet our jubilarians . . .

By Sister Anne DeMers

Sister Dorothea Kripps

Dorothea Kripps, the first of three children born to Anton and Anne (Avenson) Kripps, was born in Park Rapids. She attended both elementary and high school and was inspired to be a sister by being parish organist for five years. Each year the pastor sent the choir girls



Sister Dorothea shares an affectionate moment with Sister Anita.

to the Mount each summer to witness the monastic receptions and profession. Mother Eustacia, always looking for women who might be called to Benedictine life, would go out of her way to greet them and talk with them. This made an impression on Dorothea and influenced her to join the monastic community. She made her final profession on July 11, 1939.

Sister Dorothea attended Corbett College, Crookston; Alverno College, Milwaukee; Saint John's University, Collegeville, and the Sherwood Institute of Music in Chicago and other schools. From 1936-1976 Sister Dorothea taught music, played the organ and/or directed the choir in Crookston, Bemidji, Mahanomen, Moorhead and Benson. After 30 years in music ministry, she retired due to hearing loss. She then took classes in home nursing to become a certified nurse assistant and used her newly acquired skills at Villa Saint Vincent from 1976-1991.

Sister Dorothea retired to the Mount where she pursued her hobbies of stringing rosary beads, sewing,

knitting and being of assistance where needed in Good Shepherd Hall. Now Sister Dorothea lives at the Villa where she worked for many years. On June 27 she celebrated her 101st birthday with a trip to the Mount, graciously greeting each sister and often prefacing her remarks with "when you get to be one hundred. . . ." Although her memory isn't "what it used to be," she remains a courteous and generous conversationalist, putting the other person at ease and affirms each in turn.

Sister Mary Fay

Sister Mary Fay grew up in Moorhead where her family was among the early settlers in the area. Mary is



Sister Mary Fay

the second of four children of James and Emma Fay. In the second grade she set her heart on being a sister like

her Benedictine teachers. As Sister Mary said that as she “grew in age and foolishness” she decided she did not want to be a sister, Her eighth grade teacher said to her, “Well, I think you have a religious vocation.”

Before long she began to feel excited about the prospect of entering the convent. When she mentioned to her parents that she was leaning toward the convent they allowed her to attend Mount Saint Benedict Academy. She looked forward to giving herself completely to God in that Benedictine community.

When she was invested as a novice she received the name, Sister Pius (she later resumed her baptismal name – Mary). Her years in formation were difficult for her. A few years later her teaching ministry ended in critical illness. By the time she recuperated, plans for building Saint Francis Hospital were in progress and nurses were needed.

She received nurses’ training and then served for 45 years in health care institutions sponsored and staffed by the community.—

in emergency rooms, laboratories, obstetrical floors, x-ray and medical records departments. She claims she did what she would never have done on her own initiative. Sister Mary served at Saint Mary’s Hospital in Detroit Lakes, Saint John’s Hospital in Browerville, Saint Vincent’s Rest Home and Villa Saint Vincent in Crookston.

Then Sister Mary was asked to serve in the archives of Mount Saint Benedict Monastery. This was a much-appreciated opportunity for her, giving her the opportunity to enrich her monastic life through prayer, interpersonal relationships, and meaningful work, thereby fulfilling the dreams of her youth.

During this time she wrote the community history: *A*

Time for Remembering, published in 1994. She describes her experience of community as living and working with Benedictine sisters – “very ordinary women, seeking to love and serve God together through prayer and service.” At present she resides at Villa Saint Vincent in Crookston.

Sister Anne DeMers

Sister Anne grew up as the oldest of five children of Joseph and Bernice DeMers in Saint John, ND, just

east of the Turtle Mountains. She attended public school until her parents enrolled her at Saint Catherine’s School in Valley City, ND for the last three semesters of high school. She then received a bachelor’s degree in elementary education at Minot State College.

After two years of teaching in public schools, she knocked on the door at Queen of Peace Monastery

in Belcourt, ND, and asked to enter. In September, 1962, she became a postulant and after two years of formation she received her first assignment -- teaching 4th grade at Saint Ann’s School in Belcourt. During these years of her life she taught grade school music, physical education for 7th and 8th grade girls and coached girls’ basketball and track teams. In the early 70s she earned a master’s degree at the University of Grand Forks.

She later moved to East Grand Forks where she worked as a religious education coordinator for elementary students and also served as a parish visitor. Then she became the director of vocations for the



Sister Kathleen McGeary, subprioress, Sister Anne and Sister Shawn Carruth, prioress.

Geist presents senior recital

Marietta Geist, piano student of Sister Dominica Gerszewski, presented a Senior Piano Recital on May 29 in Sacred Heart Chapel at Mount Saint Benedict. Geist's program consisted of pieces by Beethoven, Brahms, John Field, Randall Hartsell, Kayler and Bober.

Geist was assisted by Charles Brantner (trombone solo) and Kathryn Geist (piano). George French accompanied.

Geist won a position to play in the 20-piano honors concert in the Convention Center in Minneapolis. This was the second time she was chosen to play in the concert.



Kathryn and Marietta Geist.

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Sister Anne

Benedictines at Belcourt and returned to work in the area. While there, Sister Anne, some teachers at Saint Ann's, some Sisters of Saint Joseph, and some ministers from the area who were interested in social justice concerns formed a peace group. They and another peace group from Canada initiated an annual peace festival held at the Peace Garden.

In 1982 Sister Anne left the Benedictine community in Belcourt and joined the Sisters for Christian Community (SFCC). She lived in the vacated rectory at Saint John (her home town) guided the religious education program, in the parish, hosted "Hymns of Heaven on Earth" for KEYA radio station on Sunday mornings and worked for the Head Start program north of Dunseith as teacher/supervisor.

When her mother entered Villa Maria, a long term care facility in Fargo, Sister Anne moved to the Fargo

area and enrolled at Moorhead State University, eventually living with the Benedictine sisters from Crookston in Moorhead. After her mother's death in 1987, Sister Anne completed a degree in computer science in 1991, packed her belongings and traveled to Crookston to discern her future.

She spent two semesters at Saint John's University, Collegeville, to help her prepare for her work. For almost all of her twenty-five year in Crookston Sister Anne served as Director of Liturgy. For a time she was appointed Director of Vocations.

She became a member of the Twin Forks Choir in Grand Forks, and in 2012 resumed working with music and liturgy. Sister Anne expressed her gratitude to her Benedictine community and looks forward to deepening her prayer life during her years of retirement.

Sisters retire from pastoral care ministry

Sister Rachel Beitz

As of June 30, 2016, three sisters retired from Pastoral Care ministry at Villa Saint Vincent.

Sister Rachel Beitz, chaplain and pastoral care director, served for nineteen years. Sister Francella Gust, pastoral care assistant, served for thirty-four years. Sister Agatha Hermann, pastoral care volunteer, served for thirteen years.

Sister Kathleen, subprioress, wrote a short piece about the retirement of the Sisters for the community *Newsline*. She commended the sisters as she wrote: "The sisters have served with a great deal of love and concern for the elderly."

The ministry of pastoral care consists of spiritually journeying with others. Pastoral care is mainly a ministry of being a presence, of listening, of giving spiritual support and praying with and for others.

It is a privilege to hear and affirm the life stories of the residents. Their stories are God's stories, about their relationship with God in their lives. Each person is very precious to God.

The dying are given special care and attention as they journey home to God. Pastoral Care ministers truly "walk on holy ground" as they assist in this special ministry.



Sisters Francella, Rachel and Agatha display the cake at their retirement party.



Sister Norma Jean welcomes one of the guests to the open house.

Interest and friendship overcome rainy weather

Sister Denise Schonhardt

Rain did not keep approximately 500 people away from Mount Saint Benedict on Sunday afternoon, April 24. We Sisters of Saint Benedict hosted an open house to celebrate our new monastery. Though most of guests were from the local area, others drove four to six hours to reach the Mount for the day.

The open house was an opportunity for us to connect with family, former students and newly-made friends and those of many years. Many people commented on the beauty and simplicity of the building. They expressed their delight that we have a home suitable to living the values we hold and the practices appropriate to monastic life. Many also recalled memories of when they were students at Mount Saint Benedict. Some of the guests had been boarders, and they hold special memories because they actually lived at the Mount.

The new monastery has a total of 36 bedrooms divided into four wings. The sisters living in each wing also enjoy a common room and a kitchen. The public areas include dining rooms for guests and employees, a kitchen area, art and craft rooms and a guest area.

The guest area consists of eight bedrooms and a lounge. There also is a meeting room, a parlor and a chapter room. Originally the chapter room was a place where a chapter of the *Rule of Benedict* was read aloud to the monastic community prior to the discussion of decisions to be made by them. Today it provides a suitable space where we discern and make decisions necessary for the functioning of the community.

For many years we were involved in teaching and healing ministries, but now we have the leisure and space for a more contemplative lifestyle. Sister Denise Schonhardt, director of communications, commented, "We are free to live the lifestyle appropriate to monastics with its emphasis on personal and liturgical prayer and common life. This is the way of life we have been called to live."

We are grateful for the support we have received from our friends for many years. Without their friendship we would not have our new home, one that is appropriate for our needs.

Remembering...

Sister Constance Suedbeck



Ione Anne Suedbeck made her first appearance in rural Adrian, Minnesota, the fifth of seven children born to Frank and Mary (Schutz) Suedbeck. She attended rural schools in the Adrian vicinity and a public school in Slayton,

Minnesota. After high school, she worked on the family farm, a bookkeeper at a produce, billing typist at a wholesale plant and as the bookkeeper at the Murray County Oil Coop.

After becoming acquainted with the Crookston Benedictines who taught at a catechetical school in Slayton, Ione entered Mount Saint Benedict in 1951 where she became known as Sister Constance. Sister Constance attended summer school sessions pertaining to primary education at Mount Saint Benedict, Marillac College in Saint Louis, the College of Saint Scholastica in Duluth, and she graduated from the University of Mary in Bismarck, ND.

Praying the Liturgy of the Hours, attending daily Eucharist and singing in the Mount choir were very important to Sister Constance. Her first love was working with little children, and doing manual labor was a close second. Energetic, with her tall, gaunt frame, she spent her strength and all the time she could spare in the gardens and with fresh vegetables. During the growing seasons, this ministry claimed most of her time and attention. In addition to education and gardening, her ministries were wide and varied: as dietary supervisor at Saint Francis Hospital in Crookston, laundry supervisor at Saint Mary's Hospital, Detroit Lakes, convent housekeeper and cook at Saint Elizabeth School in Lefor, North Dakota, a nurse aide at Villa



Sister Connie loved to play cards, She is pictured with Sisters Edwin McDunn, Aquina Woehle, Winnifred Deffe and Flora Klier.

Saint Vincent, a home health aide in Fargo, bookkeeper at Care and Share Center in Crookston and as a volunteer at the Crookston Public Library.

Sister Constance will be remembered by many who were blessed to have her as a creative teacher at Saint Joseph School, Moorhead, Cathedral Elementary School, Crookston and Assumption School, Barnesville. Sister Constance also taught religious education classes at Carrizo Springs, TX and helped in the summer program in Moorhead for children of migrant farm workers. After joining the Crookston Foster Grandparent Program in 1989, she served at Highland Middle School, Rainbow Village Day Care and Lincoln School. Sister Constance expressed her love of these years when she wrote, "I love working with little children. They are so open and appreciative."

Sister Constance quoted her Foster Grandparent Director as saying: "Each of us is like a tea bag. We don't realize our strength until we get into hot water." Sister Constance was seldom out of hot water.

She believed every person's primary duty was to stay healthy by eating a healthy diet—including garlic, onions, vinegar and spinach. She preached this belief to anyone who would listen. This is what got her into hot water much of the time.

When her health began to fail, she became a resident in assisted living at Mount Saint Benedict Monastery in 2003, but continued to enjoy working in the garden as her strength permitted. In 2016, she moved to Villa Saint Vincent.

Sister Constance was preceded in death by her parents, her sisters Esther Johnson, Raphie Vande Velde, Florence Disch, Lollie Engebretson and Elvira Dommeyer and a brother, Archibald. She is survived by many nieces and nephews and the members of Mount Saint Benedict Monastery.

Sister Cornelia Gust

Sister Cornelia Gust, 91, died at Villa Saint Vincent, Crookston, MN, Tuesday, April 26, 2016.

Sister Cornelia (Margaret) Gust was born June 27, 1924 on her grandfather's farm near Tabor, MN. She was the oldest of the eight children of George and Julia Gust: Joseph, Sister Mary Jean, Betty Ann, Gerard,



Robert, Timothy and Philip. She and her siblings enjoyed their childhood on their parents' farm. They all graduated from Sacred Heart High School in East Grand Forks and went on to higher education. After graduating from high school Margaret enrolled in the

Normal Training Class in Central High School, East Grand Forks. After that, she taught in schools in rural Polk County.

Margaret and Mary Jean both entered Mount Saint Benedict in June, 1946. Since Margaret had taught before she entered she was given the task of substituting in schools for sisters who became ill.

When Margaret became a novice and was invested in the Benedictine habit she received the name Sister Cornelia. Mary Jean became known as Sister Ameliana. Sister Cornelia and Sister Mary Jean made final monastic profession on July 11, 1951.

Sister Cornelia was asked to teach at the Cathedral School where she taught third and sixth grades. She



Sister Cornelia and Sister Mary Jean share their delight in each other.

was appointed the prefect of freshmen and sophomore girls at Mount Saint Benedict Academy and was like a "housemother" to them. Her next assignment was to Lefor, ND. Because the sisters were teaching in a public school, they had to wear secular clothing. Their living arrangements were also interesting. They lived in the belfry of the church with each sister having one level in the belfry as her bedroom. After teaching in Barnesville, she finished a Bachelor of Arts degree from Clarke College in Dubuque, IA. Her next assignment was as assistant principal at Mount Saint Benedict Academy. This was followed by seven years of working with young sisters in temporary profession. While Sister Cornelia was teaching at Sacred Heart High School she had a ministry to the elderly at a local nursing home.

On December 31, 1976, the Sisters of Saint Benedict elected Sister Cornelia as their sixth prioress, and in 1981, they re-elected her to a second term. During Sister Cornelia's time as prioress, the Benedictine world celebrated 1500 years since the birth of Saint Benedict of Norcia, founder of the Benedictine Order. The Sisters of Saint Benedict celebrated this anniversary with a "Life Chapter" during which they reaffirmed their commitment to Benedictine values.

Sister Cornelia served on the Juridic Committee of the Federation of Saint Gertrude, an organization of Benedictine communities who offer support to each

other. This committee was responsible for developing the revised constitutions of the Federation which had to be approved by the Apostolic See in Rome.

During Sister Cornelia's term as prioress, some very difficult decisions were made by the sisters. Since the beginning of the community, the Benedictine Sisters were involved in teaching and healing ministries, so it was difficult to close some hospitals and especially Mount Saint Benedict Academy.

After completing her term as prioress, Sister Cornelia took a sabbatical at Holy Names College in Oakland, CA. Following her sabbatical, she accepted a position at the retreat center at Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, IN. Her responsibilities included coordination of the lay ministry program, spiritual direction and retreat work. After four years, she returned to Mount Saint Benedict where she worked in the Mount Center, giving retreats and spiritual direction. Meanwhile Sister Cornelia was elected to the Council of the Federation of Saint Gertrude. This position often took her to other Benedictine communities throughout the country.

Due to health issues Sister Cornelia entered the assisted living section of the monastery, Good Shepherd Hall. Eventually, she was admitted to Villa Saint Vincent, a skilled nursing facility.

Sister Cornelia was preceded in death by her parents Julia and George Gust and by brothers Joseph, Robert and Gerard. She is survived by sisters Sister Mary Jean of Mount Saint Benedict and Betty Ann (Burnell) Skelton of LaMesa, CA and by brothers Timothy (Alice) of Los Angeles and Philip (Zeny) of San Diego, her Benedictine Sisters and many nieces and nephews.

Sister Edith Bedard

Sister Edith Bedard, 97, died at Villa Saint Vincent on May 13, 2016.

Sister Edith Bedard's journey of ninety-seven years, including seventy-five of them as a Benedictine sister, began on April 16, 1919, in Charlesbourg, Quebec, Canada. She was one of 22 children born to Alma



and Barthelemy Bedard. Sister Edith recalls her mother relating that she was born in the early morning on a stormy April day in Holy Week. Despite the weather, that same afternoon she was taken to the parish church and baptized Anna Marie Pauline Bedard

At age thirteen, Pauline expressed her desire to enter the convent, but her mother said she was too young. She encouraged her to pray to know God's will. Pauline continued to dream of serving God as a sister.

When Pauline was 19, her cousin, Sister Cecilia Beaudry and her mother were visiting. Pauline made up her mind to go to the US with her cousin and become a Benedictine sister like her. She obtained her parents' consent, and when Sister Cecilia left to return to Crookston, Pauline went with her accompanied by her aunt and mother.

On August 27, 1938, Pauline was to enter the monastic community, but she could not speak English, so Sister Cecilia and Sister Cuthbert LaCoursiere were commissioned to teach her the formula of entrance. Sister Edith wrote later that her pronunciation and French accent must have sounded unfamiliar to the sisters but she was admitted just the same. A week later her father came to accompany his



Whether she was scrubbing the floor, baking a cake or cleaning raspberries, Sister Edith was always spotless.

wife back to Canada. In July 1939, Pauline received the habit and her name as a sister, Sister Edith. She wrote, "My mother and brother came for the celebration. What a happy day! I really was a sister now giving myself to God." Four years later at her final profession her mother and aunt were present again. Sister Edith wrote: "Now it is for life!"

Sister Edith related that the days were sometimes very lonely, especially on holidays. Every New Year's Day, in French-Canadian culture, it was customary to kneel and receive the father's blessing, so she would write for his blessing. When the letter came she would kneel down and make the sign of the cross. Later, she received permission to call them on New Year's Day. The first time she called, she and her parents were overcome with tears as she knelt by the phone to receive the blessing. From that time on it became a yearly event.

She had many talents culinary, sewing and efficient competent execution of her assignments. Many sisters on mission welcomed her ministry and prayerful, joyful presence. Her competence led her to appointments as dietary supervisor in hospitals in Red Lake Falls, Crookston and Mahanomen. In Red Lake Falls, she was often seen pulling a little red wagon filled with fresh, homemade bread which she distributed to many elderly and people in need. One of her last assignments was to the chancery where she and Sister Cuthbert were an unbeatable team. They were appreciated by the bishops who had busy lives and schedules. The sisters tried to make life pleasant for them.

Sister Edith also had hobbies. One involved dressing dolls in the Benedictine habit that were so life-like one would expect them to talk! Sister also won many prizes at county fairs for her culinary and baking skill. When Sister Edith finally came to the Mount due to health problems she never used the word "retire." Sister's health problems involved a time of convalescence at Villa Saint Vincent. When she was able to return to the Mount, she exclaimed that it was a good experience for her to see what those old people have to go through. She was only 90 years young.

And so the journey that began in Charlesbourg, Quebec continued, prayerfully, somewhat slower but she was always present in chapel for morning, noon and evening prayer and for Eucharist. Until she entered Villa Saint Vincent, she wore her Benedictine habit, white during weekdays and black on Sundays and feasts. One still could count on a bright smile and time to converse.

To her death she spoke with a distinct delightful French accent.

Now she can say with God, "Ce n'est pas seulement pour la vie; c'est pour l'éternité (Not only is it for life, it is for eternity)!"

Sister Cecilia Smith

Sister Cecilia Smith, 95, died at RiverView Hospital, Crookston, on Saturday, July 16, 2016.



Mary Cecilia Smith entered this world on May 8, 1921 in Devil's Lake, ND, the first of eleven children of Pearl and Alex Smith. Her mother's father, Fred Lang came from Germany and married a young French and Indian woman. Her father's parents were Metis (French and Chippewa) from Canada. So,

Mary Cecilia's heritage was German, Sioux, French and Chippewa.

Mary Cecilia grew up near Saint Michael, ND where she also attended elementary school.

She credits her interest in becoming a sister to the Grey Nuns who taught elementary school in Saint Michael. She recalled that she wanted to become a Gray Nun but Father Damian Priske, OSB brought her to the Mount and it was there that she entered in August, 1937. She became a novice in 1938 and was invested in the Benedictine habit and received the name Sister Damian (Later she went back to her baptismal name of Cecilia). She made first monastic profession in 1942 and final profession in 1945. Sister Cecilia taught in elementary schools in the Crookston Diocese in Red Lake Falls, East Grand Forks, Barnesville, Bemidji, and Crookston. In addition to that she taught in Lefor, ND and Asherton, TX, mostly in primary grades. She had a great impact on her students, many of whom remained friends throughout her life.

Sister Cecilia received a Bachelor of Science degree from Viterbo College in La Crosse, WI. Sister Cecilia's love of learning did not stop with the degree from Viterbo College. She continued to enroll and participate in scripture, theology and spirituality classes.

In 1995 she began taking care of her mother. She wrote, "My experience there was very different from being at the Mount or on mission. I was responsible for everything, house work, cooking, ironing, outdoor work... I also took care of our spiritual life such as saying our daily rosary, reciting the office, going to Mass on Saturday evening or Sunday."

While her mother was in a long-term facility in Devils Lake, Sister Cecilia lived with the Mercy Sisters. During the time she visited her mother daily, she was asked to visit the Catholic residents. She was soon asked also to bring them communion. After the death of her mother, Sister Cecilia returned to the Mount where she volunteered at the reception desk and used her embroidery skills in creating sets of dishtowels depicting each day of the week. She had difficulty keeping up with requests for her dishtowels.



With great pride Sisters Eulalia and Cecilia show the handiwork projects they exhibited at the county fair.

Sister Cecilia was always neatly dressed. She was gracious to all guests. To the very end Sister Cecilia searched for ways to be helpful whether it be carrying a dinner tray or some other task that made life more pleasant for others. Work, prayer, holy reading and hospitality were well-established in Sister Cecilia's life.

Sister Cecilia is preceded in death by her parents, and her brothers Ambrose, Francis, Edward and Howard. She is survived by her sisters Delia Markland of Tacoma, WA, Alice Kimmerly of Sheyenne, ND, Winifred Bartlett of Tacoma, WA, and Julie Graham of Manchester, WA, brothers Larry of Federal Way, WA, and Alfred of Devils lake, ND, many nieces and nephews and her monastic community.

M.S.B. Worldview

Sister Evelyn Strei

It seems the days of 'daze' of getting lost in a new building are over, or at least, for now. The times of going to Marian Hall are over, and the asbestos team has removed all trace of the material and deconstruction is in process.

One day I went to the Marian Hall supply room for furniture polish and found the room bare not only of the usual supplies but of the shelving and furniture. Another day I went to the west fire escape where the vases were stored. I went away empty-handed since the space also was being made ready for the sad ending of an important part of Marian Hall.

There was a storage room on the main hall. It was a good place to keep things which could be used later. But this was the day the movers were assigned to empty it.

Could I survive another disappointment? I used my creative abilities and found other alternatives.

We now have no elevator since the new monastery is one level, but the inborn habit of going "up to a room" or "down to the kitchen" is still part of our vocabulary. How many times have I been asked, "Where are you going?" By now I have lost track of my elevator language."

Perhaps we sisters could create a new "world view". After all, we speak of people "going down south" or "up north." Until we make our language "elevator free," we will continue our teasing, "Now, Sister, where did you say you were going?"

Monastery Tales

Sister Kathy Kuchar attended the Monastic Institute at Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville, from July 3-7. The topic was "Monastic Profession: Baptism, Kenosis, and Growing into Christ." Speakers were Abbot John Klassen, OSB, of Saint John's Abbey and Prioress Michaela Hedican, OSB, of Saint Benedict's Monastery.

The Brownsville, TX, diocesan newspaper, The Valley Catholic, recently featured an article on the South Texas Empowerment of Women Center in Rio Grande City. This endeavor offers support to abused women and children. Sisters Rosalia Fink and Jeannine Spain have spearheaded this effort these past years.

On Sunday, June 5th, Monsignor Grundhaus celebrated his 50th anniversary of priestly ordination at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. The Mass was followed by a luncheon. On Sunday, June 19, we hosted a dinner in appreciation for Msgr. Grundhaus' presence with us as chaplain. He received a basket of cards and a money tree for this festive occasion.

From May 21-June 3, we hosted Sisters Maria Goretti DeAngeli, Kimberly Prohaska, Patricia Bolling and their business manager, Ravi, from Saint Scholastica Monastery in Fort Smith, AR. Their monastery is contemplating possibilities and plans for a new building and they wanted to look at some features in our new monastery.

Holy Rosary School in Detroit Lakes celebrated its centennial on Saturday, June 11. Sister Marmion Karels and Sister Kathleen McGeary represented us on this occasion.

When the Sisters of Saint Joseph celebrated their feastday on March 19th, we invited them to have supper with us on Sunday, May 15, the Feast of Pentecost.

On Monday, May 16 we had two sixth grade students and two adults from Saint Michael's School in Mahanomen here as guests. They attended Noon Praise, ate lunch in the guest dining room and went on a tour after lunch.

Three school groups visited The Saint John's Bible. These groups included Mrs. Schoeneberger's fifth grade class from the Cathedral, Father August Gothman's sixth grade RE class and Mrs. Kraft's summer school age class. To say that they were impressed by the bible would be grossly misrepresenting their reactions.

Sister Jennifer Kehrwald was with us August 14-21. We acknowledged her 50th Jubilee by having a festive meal on the evening of Friday, Aug. 19th.

The search committee for a new Director of Sunrise Center for Children and Families identified Sue Murphy as very qualified to assume the position. The Sunrise Center Board approved the recommendation as has our monastic council. Ms. Murphy will assume the duties of Center Director effective September 16, 2016. The Sisters of Saint Benedict will continue as canonical sponsors of Sunrise Center and the council has also approved a document that expresses our assumptions and expectations for the Center and its Director.

Sister Judy's retirement from the Center directorship is effective September 15. She will be available for a short period of time to Ms. Murphy for consultation purposes. We thank and commend Sister Judy for her years of unflagging commitment to ensuring the well-being of children and families and the development of a Center which is recognized for its outstanding quality of care.



Sister Shawn receives Michelle Snyder as an oblate novice. Sister Kathleen McGeary is director of oblates.

Photo gallery . . .



Above: Visitors sign the guestbook for the open house. *Above Right:* This young man was proud to receive a crucifix during the open house. *Right:* Sister Eileen Mohs and Dan Johanneck grill steak for the “end of construction party” for employees, architects, construction managers and sisters.





Above left: Sister Denise's sister, Cindi Wavra and her daughter Liz pose for a photo during the open house. *Above right:* Patty Hallback, sister of Sister Eileen Beutel, expresses her sense of fun before the chapel doors. *Left:* Do you remember the old jingle, "Munch a bunch of Fritos Corn Chips"? Well, the deer on our property act as though they can munch on just about anything -- including bird seed from Sister Rosella's bird feeder and the leaves on our saplings!

Alumni News

Deceased Alumni, Family members, Friends, Faculty and Staff

Harriet Mae (Morlan '47) Mooney died June 13, 2015

Mary "Kathleen" (Lindquist '47) Green died February 20, 2016

Joann M. (Hince '64) Dufault died March 16, 2016

Jule Mae (Olson '51) Hazard died July 2, 2016

Elizabeth (Betty) (Zurn '61-'64) Thompson died August 9, 2016

Bernadette (Bernie) Blokzyl died March 29, 2016

Mother of Bill ('70), Loanne ('72) Marthaler, Karen ('74) Hanson, Mary ('78) Grenier, Connie ('77) Harris, Suzanne ('78) Franz, Laure ('80) Williamson and Denise ('81-82) Hutchison.

Ruby E. Ovaldson died June 10, 2016 –

Mother of Donna ('57) Leibrick and Sandra ('60) Whalen (deceased).

Alumni News

Sr. Cornelia Gust died on April 6, 2016.

In August of 1951, Sister Cornelia was appointed prefect of the boarders. She was "sort of a house mother to the students, serving as nurse, seamstress at prom time, and teacher of practical living." * In the fall of 1963 Sister Cornelia was appointed assistant principal (Sr. Eleanor Mueller was the principal) and teacher of English. From 1964-1971 Sister Cornelia directed the initial formation for those entering the convent. In 1971-72 Sister again was on the faculty of Mount Saint Benedict High School. Many alumni will recall Sister Cornelia as prefect and teacher..

*from autobiography of Sister Cornelia Gust, OSB

**Please see Sister Cornelia's obituary beginning on page 15.

Sister Mary Fay '40 celebrated her 75th jubilee of profession as a member of the Sisters of Saint Benedict Monastery on July 26. Sister Mary lives at the Villa Saint Vincent and the sisters from the Mount had a special tea at the Villa in the afternoon for Sister Mary along with Sister Dorothea Kripps who was celebrating her 80th jubilee of profession.

Sister Luella Walsh '45 celebrated her 70th Jubilee of Profession at the Monastery of the Benedictine Sisters of the Good Shepherd at Rio Grande City, TX. Sister Luella lives in this community with Sisters Nancy Boushey and Sister Frances Solum.

Janeen (Kripps '50) Miller came to visit with the sisters in August. Janeen also visited with her aunt Sister Dorothea Kripps at Villa Saint Vincent.

In July, Kathy (Mathena '63) Clemensen, her sister Ruth Mathena Windholz and their niece visited at the Mount with the sisters.



**Back row: Gerald Arel, Heidi (Eisenrich) Hiscock, Mary Mercil, LouAnn (Brouillard)Mulvaney, Jane (Pawlik) Johnson, Patty (Ewals) Glass, Brian Conkins, Natalie (Moran) McCleary, Dan Kucera, Tom Kelly, Jim Snyder, Debbie (Stainbrook) Radi, Tim Riopelle, Marcy (Rock) Beich
Front row: Louise (Maruska) Ogaard, Mary Miller, Peggy (Anderson) Swenson, Sandy (Johnson) Herkenhoff**

Class of 1976

Mount Saint Benedict Class of 1976 40th Reunion was held on August 5th 6th and 7th, 2016

Reunion festivities began on Friday evening with a

small get together at Kay Miller's home (Mary Miller's mother).

Classmates gathered Saturday at the University of Minnesota Crookston for a wonderful evening of dinner, dancing and lots of reminiscing.

Many also attended Sunday morning mass at the Cathedral of The Immaculate Conception, and a short tour was also taken of the former MSB High School class rooms, which is now the current Cathedral Grade School.

--Submitted by LouAnn Brouillard Mulvaney

Class of 1979

Robin Brekken had an informative article about his organic farming in the Grand Forks Herald of July 30, 2016. In 1998 Robin decided that there had to be a better way to farm than to use chemicals to grow his crops. So he started organic farming. He had to manage weeds without chemicals – as Robin says, “It was a tall order – it’s still a tall order.” His farm was officially certified as an organic producer in 2001. An interesting new venture was organic feed pellets. The pellets are made from lower-quality hay combined with organic grain screenings. The pellets are as good or better than any hay he has grown. For over 15 years Robin has experimented with organic farming and says, “We’ve learned a lot, but we have a lot left to learn.”

--Submitted by Sister Yvonne Schafer

MSB and Assumption School (Barnesville) alumni visit MSB

What a “mini-reunion” to have four former students visit us here on Monday, August 29. They were Rosemary (Buth '71) Griffin, Lora (Bernier) Card, Joyce Manning and Mary Johnson ('67 – '69). One of them had the newspaper clipping of their class as primary students with Sister Marmion. (This is from

only 50 years ago. The stories and remembrances flowed easily. Others who joined us and had more to recall as they moved on to the upper grades as well as music, were Sister Mary Daniel, Sister Laurian '46, Sister Dominica '44 and Sister Lorraine '51. Rosemary Griffin graduated from Mount Saint Benedict Academy and Mary Johnson was with us for two years. It was a first for most of them to see our new chapel ('95 and our new facility '16). They also saw the rubble of the Marion Hall demolition.

--Submitted by Sister Marmion Karels '51

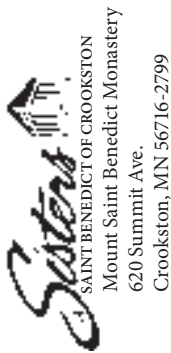


Sister Jone Karels '50 (left) and her sister, Sister Genevieve visited the Mount this September. They are pictured with Sister Marmion Karels '51 and Sister Lorraine Kraft '51.

Alumni Director's Note

It is always good news to hear about alumni class reunions, so if your class is having one or has had one, I would be happy to include it in our Alumni News in the Crookston Benedictine. Also if your class reunion group is meeting in Crookston, we welcome you to come to the Mass which is celebrated on Saturdays at 4:30 pm in the Mount Chapel (Sunday Liturgy). Your former teachers would love to see you!

I would appreciate news about our alumni for our publication, so write to me or e-mail it to Sister Yvonne Schafer, 620 Summit Ave., Crookston, MN 56716 or ymschafer@Yahoo.com. Thank you very much.



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- New Address
- Please add my name
- Please remove my name
- Receiving more than one copy
(Send all labels indicating which is correct)

Please let us know if you have remembered the Sisters of Saint Benedict in your will and estate planning.

Please contact: Sister Denise Schonhardt,
Mount Saint Benedict Monastery,
620 Summit Ave.,
Crookston, MN 56716-2799
phone: 218-281-3441, email: denise.schonhardt@bhshealth.org

Visit us on the web at www.msb.net

Serving together

Sister Denise Schonhardt



Sister Denise Schonhardt

A few days ago I came across an article (and I do not remember the source) about American sisters being at the forefront of the environment movement. The article stated that American sisters have a history of supporting causes that were unpopular for many people. In the past, to

the general society. Catholic schools were not popular and neither was Catholic health care especially when sisters cared for wounded soldiers without regard for which army they belonged to in the Civil War. Work among minorities such as Native Americans and Latinos and among the poor was also distasteful to some. Nevertheless, American sisters tried to be as Christ to all people. Perfectly? No.

In all of this, American sisters were joined and aided by lay people who were as committed to acting the way Christ would so that the Gospel would be lived concretely. In the gospels, what do we find Jesus doing? He healed the blind, the deaf, the dumb and those ailing in body and soul along with preaching the Reign of God. As Christians, we all have the obligation to spread the Reign of God. This means loving God with our whole mind, soul and heart, and loving our neighbor as our self.

In the Letter of James, the new testament states *"If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,' but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it?"* -- James 2:15-16

We sisters continue to be grateful to you who have supported us in so many ways, financially and/or by prayer. Very often we hear sisters marvel at the generosity of others to us. We hope that we are worthy of the trust you place in us.