



## You Will Show Me the Path of Life, the Fullness of Joy in Your Presence



Sister Lucille Heidt renews her monastic profession on the occasion of her 60th jubilee celebration.

More than what she does, is how she does it. The Native American community values honor, love and respect and Sister Lucille exudes these qualities. Recognizing that, in 2006 she was adopted into the Lowcap Clan of the Mandans and received the name Maaishu-huce-dee-awaa-gish, which means Hovering Eagle Woman. They have been generous to her, too, including the trip to Rome with about twenty Native Americans for the canonization last October of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha.

This is also the year in which Sister Lucille celebrates the sixtieth anniversary of her monastic profession. This is a private celebration with the monastic community. She grew up on a farm about fifty miles from here and joined her Sister Dolores in this community when she was sixteen years old from our Sacred Heart Academy in Minot.

Sister Lucille is still going strong because she recognizes blessings in her life and blends in well with them.

### *A Twofold Tale of Overly-Answered Prayers*

One of the things we learn early in life is that there is, indeed, too much of a good thing. Be it carnival rides, candy bars, coconut cake (3 layers!) or having a sleepover at a friends' house, we come to realize even as youngsters that good things also have limits on enjoyment. Of course, this is not some lesson we learn once and for all; sometimes we have to overdo several things several times before the idea of moderation begins to get some appeal.

This has been quite the year for Sister Lucille Heidt! In January she learned she was the Diocese of Bismarck's nominee for the Lumen Christi (Light of Christ) award. Bishop David Kagan put forth her name for the national award by the Catholic Extension Society which honors men and women working in mission dioceses in the United States.

Sister Lucille began her work on the Fort Berthold reservation in 1989 and has never looked back. She loves and respects the people and they respond to her in the same way. She is called upon for service in a variety of ways; as Fr. Stephen Kranz, OSB, former pastor of the Church of St. Anthony in Mandaree, said: "It is not uncommon for Sister Lucille to be called in the middle of the night or very early in the morning, sometimes by phone and other times by knocking on her door. Anyone, be it a member of the Catholic community or a member of the community at large, is comfortable to first approach Sister Lucille with their needs."

Because of her great love and many gifts she soon became an indispensable member of that community. She is first of all a friend with all that entails, but she also has assisted in parishes, taught catechism, did sacramental preparation and home visitation, prepared for funerals, etc. As she was well-versed in all areas, when Fr. Paul Eberle came last year to take over after Fr. Stephen retired after forty plus years, she was able to greatly ease the transition.

### Mission Statement Benedictine Sisters of Richardton

We are a vibrant community of Catholic Benedictine women who strive to deepen our relationship with God and one another through sharing the spiritual and material gifts God has given to us on this prairie.

Once upon a time we were great at praying for rain, but God's generosity of 16.1 inches in the last two weeks of May put a damper on those prayers big time. Rain for the grounds and fields we voted for heartily; rain inside the house did not even make the ballot. We still have over 50 buckets throughout the monastery (even downstairs in rooms with no outside connections) and incalculable blankets and towels scattered about. Walking the halls these days is a bit of a minefield, so it must be a mindful experience.

The roofers were scheduled for late May but their first tools would have been oars because of the water

depth from the rain. There is still more drying out that is necessary before they arrive, but God is still throwing us showers every few days. When they finally get here we rather think we should start with a party.

There is great truth to dark clouds causing droopy spirits. When the sunshine came it was grace on so many levels. Add to that a freshly mowed lawn, trees in leaf, flowers popping and we are finally having days of joyous, bright spring. We want to celebrate with a work crew of roofers who have finally arrived!

But as you can tell from the pictures below it is a two-fold tale of inconvenience and beauty. We'll take beauty!



## The Collection Basket

Because of the closeness of our houses, we feel the loss of a monk almost as much as one of our own Sisters. Bro. Basil Kirsch died suddenly on his way to Christmas Eve Mass, leaving space in the hearts of many of us. He was a good friend who always enlivened our get-togethers as well as being a great communicator of necessary business between our houses in his role as prior. Prior Michael Taffe assumed the role within a few weeks and is filling it admirably. But Bro. Basil was a great friend to many and he will be missed for who he was among us.



If you have heard that when one vehicle or piece of equipment malfunctions, a trend begins, we can verify it. One of our cars and our pickup ailed (one to death); our tractor and snow blower gave us fits; our elevator, cooler and freezer have taken their turns going on strike; our coal furnace developed a major cog in its get-along; and our beautifully refinished road shows damage from the piles of snow and the snow removal from last winter. Obviously we

do not need many reminders that all things are temporary, but we try to keep the temporary long-lasting nonetheless.



This year in late March we were blessed with students from Colorado College in Colorado Springs, CO. This is the fourth year we have had a group here on their Spring Break to learn about our way of life. Though we have had the same faculty chaperons every year, this is the first year that we have had returning students. From the sounds of their departure, the "See you next year!" bodes well for having more.

All the students (two men and five women) and chaperons stayed here this year, but had events at Assumption Abbey and both monasteries provided the faculty for the classes. While spending time in a monastery may not sound like "Spring Break" material, there is much to be said for it. Time and quiet take on a whole new meaning. There are crafts to learn, bread to form, and bake and eat (thanks to Bro. Alban), forays into

North Dakota nature to enjoy, and a chance to learn about an unusual way of living.

We are always amazed at each one's ability to so readily and wholeheartedly adapt to new experience. We are always refreshed by their openness and presence, youth and enthusiasm.



While we invite the monks over for St. Scholastica's feast in February every year, it is such an enjoyable event that we never tire of calling it newsworthy. For entertainment this year we had a Wheel of Fortune-like game with two teams of three monks each competing against one another. On the wall was a clause inspired by the *Dialogues* story of Benedict and Scholastica. It just so happened that Fr. Terrence Kardong's name was drawn to be on a team and he immediately set about trying to reveal the words (his reputation was on the line, you know) and he did, indeed, break the code and help his team win. The other event that caused a lot of joyful noise was a rowdy game of Apples to Apples. We had played and enjoyed this at our Christmas party over at the Abbey, and this is great fun as a "the more, the merrier" sort of game. Luckily for those not playing, was that it was played in a room by itself off the main community room so those playing more staid games or simply having good conversations could hear themselves!



**Maryann Nowakowski, our postulant, congratulates Fr. Terrence as one of the winners of the game. His face looks like he won the whole thing, but he had to share it with the other two members of his team, Brothers John Pat Arnett and John Seiler.**



**During our retreat with Fr. Xavier Nacke of Conception Abbey we had a mini school reunion. All are graduates of Creighton's Christian Spirituality Program: Fr. Xavier in 1979, Sister Renée Branigan (standing) in 1981, and Sister Paula Larson, prioress, in 1987.**



A retreat is a normal part of most monastics' summers. It is a time to step out of the ordinary day of being busy and take some serious quiet time with the Lord. This year Assumption Abbey stayed close to home in choosing Sister Renée Branigan as their retreat director. We are still friends so it must have gone well.

For our retreat, we have invited Fr. Xavier Nacke, OSB, of Conception Abbey in Missouri. He and Sister Renée were together at Creighton University in Omaha many years ago in the Christian Spirituality program.



We received \$25,000 from the Catholic Extension Society Hunkler endowment for re-carpeting our downstairs meeting room/museum area and two water-leveling tanks for the furnace system. We were blessed to have the Colorado students here to help us move everything a few weeks before the rains. The ceiling in that area has been compromised by the dripping water but so far we have managed to spare the carpet. The room looks so refreshed by the carpeting that we go to great lengths to keep it dry.

Benedictine Sisters of Richardton  
P.O. Box 364  
Richardton, ND 58652

NONPROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
UNITED PRINTING



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Volume 35, Issue 1 - Spring/Summer 2013

Published twice a year by the  
Benedictine Sisters of Richardton

E-mail: [witnesseditor@sacredheartmonastery.com](mailto:witnesseditor@sacredheartmonastery.com)

[www.sacredheartmonastery.com](http://www.sacredheartmonastery.com)

Phone: 701-974-2121

Fax: 701-974-2124

On March 13 of this year we were all in the TV room awaiting the announcement of our new Pope. How deeply we were pleased and humbled by his quiet graciousness, sincere and very apparent humility, and wit when he was introduced to the world! Daily some meal conversation turns to Pope Francis and we find joy in the way he is leading the Church.



This June we had a unique birthday celebration: two Sisters born on the same day, same year and in the same profession class became ninety-five together. Sister Annella Gardner knew she was born late in the morning and Sister Monica Thome does not know the time of her birth, so the “Who’s older?” question has never been answered. Two others in that profession class of six (two have died) are still with us, too: Sisters Perpetua Steiner and Brigid McLean. Next year they hope to celebrate their 75th jubilee of monastic profession.



Sisters Monica Thome, Perpetua Steiner (standing, our oldest at almost ninety-eight) and Annella Gardner are all in the same profession class so they have done this birthday thing for many years together, but it doesn't lose its thrill!



It's llama day at the “Spa”! Actually it was just a very full morning of hard work. We had Hilary Gietzen, a local sheep shearer, to help us get all eight llamas sheared in a day. For starters, llamas do not go meekly to the shearing and they have a very nasty way of displaying their displeasure. Sister Paula, left, took advantage of their constrained reclining position to clip their hooves while Hilary did the shearing, Maryann stroked their heads and calmed them, and Sister Patti gathered their wool for cleaning and spinning. Chillli was the hardest to convince all this was a good idea and from his “after” he must have been fighting because he anticipated looking like a very spindly, underfed, over-sized dog. Our dog Molly was not impressed.