

WITNESS

THE BENEDICTINE



VOL. 2 Winter 2021

SACRED HEART MONASTERY AND SACRED HEART BENEDICTINE FOUNDATION



Merry Christmas!

We Sisters think of you often and are so grateful for your friendship.

We want you to know that you are included in our Divine Office Christmas Novena. We pray that all good things come to you and your loved ones, that you are kept safe, and that you bask in the love of God. May your New Year be a blessing!

The Benedictine Sisters

“Come, Lord Jesus, Come!”

Happy New Liturgical Year! Yes, we begin our new liturgical year on the first Sunday of Advent! I love this season of Advent during which we are invited to once again choose one or more spiritual practices that help us to keep focused on preparing our hearts and our lives for the birthday of Jesus on Christmas, for meditating on the final coming of Jesus in glory at the end of time. Most especially we are invited to open our hearts to the many graces God desires to shower on us to welcome Jesus more and more deeply into our hearts and lives, one day at a time. I like to think of this Advent season as a time for me to pray with our Blessed Mother Mary and, like her, to allow Jesus to grow in my womb, to then be born anew on Christmas. The paradox is I need Jesus' graces to help me keep my eyes fixed on Jesus and to follow His will for me. He can grow in me only if I allow His graces to help me choose Him each moment of my day.



Indeed, we are countercultural when we spend extra time in prayer and avail ourselves more frequently, if we are able, to celebrating daily Eucharist and to the sacrament of Reconciliation, during these four weeks leading up to Jesus' birthday. The daily scripture readings at Eucharist provide rich material for us to do lectio divina, our sacred reading. All around us, our society is shouting a louder message of buy, buy, buy! A regular question one might hear is, “What do you want for Christmas?” or “Are you ready for Christmas?” When I am asked that question, I know what is meant, do you have all your gifts purchased and food and goodies made and your home prepared for company? Depending upon who asks me the above question, I decide if the person wants to hear my real answer or not. If I'm honest with myself, I would probably answer something like, “Well, I need Jesus to purify my heart more to make room for Him so that on His birthday I can offer my whole self as my gift to Him. No, actually I need a few more days to prepare for His birthday!”

I and we pray that all of us will enjoy a blessed Advent season that will help each of us to have a wonderful Christmas celebration of Jesus' birthday with our loved ones! “Come, Lord Jesus, come!”

Sr. Marie Hunkler, OSB



This wheel chair was a museum item we donated to St. Vincent's Care Center, Bismarck. Our community began St. Vincent's Nursing Home in 1941 in Bismarck. This wheel chair was among the earliest wheel chairs used by a resident. The North Dakota Historical Society has a similar wheel chair so we decided to donate it to St. Vincent's. What a contrast to the modern equipment that residents enjoy using nowadays!



This ropemaker was a museum item we donated to the North Dakota Historical Society in Bismarck. Jim Gallagher, who worked for us for over 50 years, said his uncle gave this to Jim. Jim used it on our Sacred Heart Convent farm in Minot in the 1950's. We happily donated it to the Historical Society for people to enjoy.

*"You will seek Me & find Me
when you seek Me with all your heart."*

Jeremiah 29:13

Seeking God

As Christmas approaches and we are moved within ourselves to encounter and know Christ in the baby in the crib, many of us ask, "How are we supposed to pray?" or "Am I praying the right way?" We ask this without perhaps realizing that the desire to know God more intimately is itself a prayer and this desire is a "right way" to pray.

These questions about how to pray and the right way to pray are ones I get asked frequently and ones I have also asked. We want to know God better and grow in knowing that we are beloved children of God. I have found for almost 30 years now that Spiritual Direction has helped me both keep on the path to seeking God and to listen for God's voice. As a Spiritual Director it has been a joy for me to journey with people who are seeking God. They wish to know God more intimately and to know the immense love God has for them. We speak of their prayer life and ways to make that more meaningful.

We also speak of whether they are hearing God's voice. For often I am asked, "How do I know God listens?" or "How do I know God is speaking to me?" Discerning the will of God, the voice of God is not easy. It is very easy as we pray to think we have been given answers that really are our own voices, our own desires and not the voice of God. As I journey with directees, I ask the Holy Spirit to journey with us, to be present so we may know what God wants of the directee. This has been helpful for me as a directee as well. I have needed help with discerning God's voice and desires for me, also.

Advent is a great time to open our hearts and minds to God as we prepare to receive the gift of the Holy Infant at Christmas. We desire this gift, we desire to know our God, to love our God and to know that we are loved in return. May God's peace, joy and love fill your hearts this Advent and Christmas season and always. Know that you are in our prayers.

Peace, Sr. Phoebe Schwartze, OSB



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Sister Anna Rose Ruhland celebrates her 60th Jubilee!



Sister Anna Rose Ruhland holding her Divine Office book which she has prayed daily for over 60 years.

Sister Anna Rose Ruhland responded to God's invitation to enter monastic life in Sacred Heart Monastery and professed her first vows in 1961. In that profession, she offered to follow God's will wherever it led her for the rest of her life. Her many years of service in various capacities have given a good testimony to her love of God and God's people.

Born the third of seven children to Joseph and Blanche Ruhland on a farm west of Garrison, she graduated from White Shield School before entering the convent. Upon taking her first vows, she attended the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, MN, to earn a degree in Foods and Nutrition. She completed her Dietetic Internship at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester, MN, and later earned her master's degree in this field at North Dakota State University in Fargo.

As a licensed dietitian she served at St. Vincent's Care Center in Bismarck, St. Luke's Hospital in Crosby and St. Alexius Hospital in Bismarck, as well as nutrition consulting in hospitals and nursing homes throughout the western area of North Dakota. She then served as a nutritionist for the Three Affiliated Tribes

at the Fort Berthold Reservation where she received the National Health Service Corp award for her work in developing nutrition programs. In 1984, she testified for the nutritional needs of the Reservation at the U.S. Select Hearing on Hunger and was honored by her dietetic peers in 1990 as the North Dakota Dietician of the Year. She served in this field for thirty-one years.

Her second career came from her prayer life and desire to serve God and his people by doing pastoral ministry. In preparation for this ministry shift, she participated in the Benedictine Renewal program in Rome and a pilgrimage to the shrine of Mary at Medjugorje. After graduating from the Clinical Pastoral Education at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester, MN, she began her work of managing the Pastoral Care Department and working as a chaplain at St. Vincent's in Bismarck and Marillac Manor in Bismarck.

In the course of her years as a community member, she has served on the monastic council and other boards and committees. She balances her life style with proper nutrition, physical exercise, and, of course, her communal and private prayer. This year we celebrated her sixty years as a professed Sister in our community. As monastics, our primary goal is to seek God. Sister Anna Rose provides us with a good example of living this goal.

For the past few years Sr. Anna Rose has been semi-retired but continues to minister part-time at St. Vincent's and Marillac. She loves to be of service, and would like to stay there as long as she can. God has blessed her with good health so her dream is being fulfilled. Thank you Sister!!!



Celebration at the Monastery in honor of Sister Anna Rose Ruhland. Pictured Sister Anna Rose and Sister Michael Emond.



Celebration at the Monastery in honor of Sister Anna Rose Ruhland. Seated Sister Ruth Fox, Sister Anna Rose and Sister Michael Emond.

Dan Stockman, who is a national correspondent for *Global Sisters Report*, a project of *National Catholic Reporter*, asked Sister Paula to be part of an interview for an article called “*Sisters urge care for communities amid economic shifts and energy transition.*” If you would like to read this article here is the link: [Sisters urge care for communities amid economic shifts and energy transition \(globalsistersreport.org\)](https://globalsistersreport.org)



Gratefulness from Pla in the Foundation Office

Many people think that I am one of the Sisters, I am not. However, I have been part of the history of Sacred Heart Monastery since 2001. Sometimes I get called Sister when I answer the phone, and I don't make a correction as it's totally understandable because they are calling a Monastery!

For those that don't know, I am a wife, a mother and a grandmother. When raising my three girls the time was so hectic; I look back and wonder if I really took time to appreciate all that happened especially in the first years of their lives. I recently spent a few days with our one and a half year old grandson who is totally dependent on others in his life . . . for everything. His parents are teaching him to be grateful, to be appreciative. His “more please”, and his “thank you” can melt your heart. His frustrations with not getting his way are quickly replaced with a smile and a laugh at another distraction, while totally forgetting his frustration.

As I go through my days, I am trying to be more like this little guy in being grateful, remembering to say please and thank you more than I do, to not let my frustrations ruin my day. I want the world to settle down, to reset. I wonder how I can make a difference. I listened to a podcast a while ago that reminded me, I can't change the world, but I can make a difference in “my world.”

I want you to know that you make a difference in the world of the Sisters, with your friendship, by praying for them, and with your donations if you are able. They thank you for your history with them, for new connections, for your understanding in the changes that they are going through as an aging community. Prayer is their biggest ministry, which, thanks to the web site, is worldwide. Please remember to let them know of any prayer requests.

In closing, I want to mention that the Sisters are not participating in Giving Hearts Day in 2022. They are grateful for all of the support you have given them since 2014. Many connections were made with both new and longtime donors and with other charities in S. W. North Dakota. Some of you will receive the annual postcard that will list those who are continuing this fundraiser.

Last year the Giving Hearts Day funds supported the fence project around the cemetery at Richardton. Due to manufacturing and shipping delays, it was not completed this summer as hoped. Stay tuned for updates and pictures.

Ila Perhus, Foundation Director

DONOR LEVELS



FRIENDS: Donations up to \$999.99

BELL TOWER: Donations \$1,000.00 and higher

LEADER: Donations \$5,000.00 and higher

BENEFACTOR: Donations \$10,000 and higher

BENEDICTINE SPONSOR: Donations \$25,000.00 and higher

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Neighbors and Blessings

When we moved from Richardton to Dickinson, we gave up our huge gardens, potato patches etc. We have a tiny garden space here and enjoyed fresh produce, but we knew we would not have any extra to can or freeze. That was our thinking anyway. Low and behold, our neighbors and friends are more than generous with garden donations.

We received fresh tomatoes, zucchini, beets, green beans, peppers, squash, corn, watermelon, cantaloupe, and, potatoes just to mention a few. Some were in such quantity that we could process them for winter storage. The most abundant gift was chokecherries. There were so many gifted to us that we did not have to go to the countryside and pick our own. In fact, we have so much chokecherry jam and syrup that we will give you a jar when you come to visit.



Mourning the loss of garden space has turned into blessed abundance!

Sr. Paula and Sisters

Sister Kathleen Kuntz and Sister Michael Emond peeling and slicing apples for winter apple pies!

Sister Lucille Heidt putting delicious chokecherry jelly in the jelly cabinet.

