



## *Election of Prioress*

April 27 to 29 was a very busy time for us Sisters. Every four years we have a canonical election of a prioress, the servant leader of the community. The process leading to the election is so unlike our public world. There are no candidates, no campaigns, billboards, radio commercial etc. Instead, the Sisters enter into a process called discernment. An experienced discernment leader leads this process. In our case, this was Sister Jane Becker from the Monastery of the Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, IN. In addition, the President of the Monastic Congregation of St. Gertrude, Sister Jeanne Weber, is present and presides over the canonical election, which follows the discernment process. Our Monastery is a member of the Monastic Congregation of St. Gertrude.



*Sister Paula Larson, Prioress*

During the discernment process, we are asked to reflect on our present situation and assess the situation regarding future needs and directions. We call them directional statements that help us navigate the future. This follows with the community praying and thinking about who could be considered for the leadership role. We go at this process until we reach a consensus.

After the consensus is reached, the Federation President calls the canonical election to order. This event occurs in the Monastery chapel. She is assisted by Sisters elected from the membership who serve as 1st teller, 2nd teller, and secretary.

With God's Divine assistance, we re-elected Sister Paula Larson to her fourth term as Prioress. She is known by most of you as she has been around awhile. We are thankful that she will continue in leadership and ask Almighty God to continue to guide her in this position. We thank you for your prayers. In all things may Christ be glorified.



*Sister Jeanne Weber, OSB, President; Sisters Patti Koehler, Anna Rose Ruhland and Marie Hunkler*



*Sister Jeanne Weber, OSB, blessing Sister Paula Larson as Prioress*

## *Sister Kathleen Kuntz celebrates her 75th Jubilee!*



Sister Kathleen Kuntz celebrates her 75th Jubilee as a Benedictine Sister of Sacred Heart Monastery, Dickinson, North Dakota.

Sister Kathleen was born November 26, 1929, at Fallon, North Dakota to Frank and Eva (Gerhardt) Kuntz. She is the ninth of fourteen children. With her six brothers and seven sisters, she was raised on a farm near Fallon. Her family was deeply religious and so Sister Kathleen's spiritual journey began at a tender age. She attended Saints Peter and Paul School in Fallon where she had Benedictine Sisters as her teachers.

Sister Kathleen entered Sacred Heart Monastery, then located in Minot, in 1946. She made her monastic profession on July 21, 1948. Over the next several years she alternated between going to school and teaching. She received a bachelor's degree in education from Minot State and a master's degree in pastoral studies from Loyola University in Chicago.

Sister Kathleen ministered as a teacher and principal at Saint Nicholas in Garrison, Saint Leo's in Minot, and Colegio Hermanas Benedictinas in Bogotá, Colombia. Later she did parish ministry for eight years at the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation and served as pastoral care director at Saint Vincent's Care Center in Bismarck for four years.

She has also served the monastic community in several capacities. In addition to serving on several boards and committees, she was formation director 1958-62 and 1973-80. She held the position of subprioress 1973-80 and 2005-09. She served in the area of hospitality to guests at the Spirituality Center while living in Richardton. Sister Kathleen continues to be a welcoming presence to those who visit here in Dickinson.

As hobbies, Sister Kathleen enjoys knitting, beading, and the weaving of pouches from llama wool. She appreciates nature, with the beauty of sunrises and sunsets helping her experience the peace and presence of God on the prairie.



### **Prayer Tables**

We had prayer tables built for our chapel. It seems the older we get the heavier the Divine Office books become so we took care of that by this addition. It works well. We are ever faithful to our prayers.

## *Sister Lucille Heidt celebrates her 70th Jubilee!*

Sister Lucille Heidt celebrates her 70<sup>th</sup> Jubilee as a Benedictine Sister of Sacred Heart Monastery, Dickinson, North Dakota.

Sister Lucille (Viola) was born to Albinus and Eugenia (Greff) Heidt on August 23, 1935, thirteenth of fourteen children. She was born on the family farm east of DeSart, North Dakota.

On November 27, 1951, Viola entered Sacred Heart Convent in Minot, ND. She professed final vows August 24, 1956. Religious life for Sister Lucille has been very flexible and full.

She has worked as a cook, laundress and in maintenance at the Monastery and served at Garrison, Crosby, Fallon, St. Vincent's in Bismarck, ND and also at Malta, MT.



Sister Lucille lived and worked on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation from 1989 to 2016 serving in Pastoral Ministry. She was a true Benedictine missionary presence. In her missionary capacity, she conducted and/or assisted in funerals, wakes, catechism, pastoral ministry and counseling. She spent the month of July at the Mandaree Mission Christian Camp, cooking, supervising, chaperoning, and catechizing.

Nearly one hundred years after the Sisters' first mission to the Three Affiliated Tribes, Sister Lucille was the last remnant of that original mission. She moved back to the Monastery in 2016. She retired from her mission work on the reservation; however, no one ever really retires from work. She is now the sacristan for the community, she helps in the laundry and in the kitchen. We love her pie baking skills. In her spare time, she enjoys embroidery and community time.

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## *Clarification on Giving Hearts Day!*

Please note that we are **no longer participating** in Giving Hearts Day in February. 2021 was the last year we joined in that great fundraiser.



There was some confusion especially this year as one of our local nursing homes changed their legal name from St. Benedict's (or St. Ben's as we called them) to Benedictine Living Community – Dickinson. With our move to Dickinson and the fact that the Sisters legal name is Benedictine Sisters of Richardton it made total sense to think that this was the Sisters. It is not.

If by chance you gave to the nursing home here in Dickinson this past year, please know that your donation went to a great organization. Again, we are no longer participating in the February Giving Hearts Day. We do want to thank you for your support!



*Eternal rest grant unto her and let perpetual light shine upon her.*

## *Sister Carol Axtmann*

**April 8, 1937 – February 26, 2023**

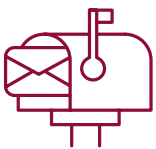
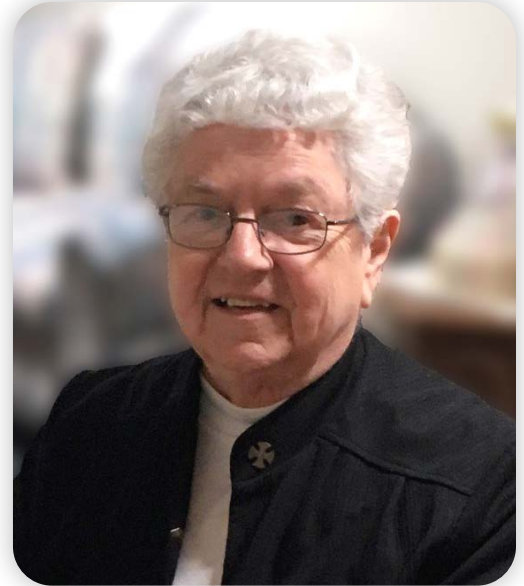
Sister Carol (Helen) Axtmann was born April 8, 1937, in Rugby, ND, the fourth of ten children, and she was raised in the small town of Orrin, ND. She and her three sisters attended Sacred Heart Academy in Minot, ND, for their secondary education. During her senior year of 1955, she joined the Benedictine Sisters of Sacred Heart Convent and made her first profession of vows in 1956.

Sister Carol loved learning and was able to receive her BA degree in 1970 from Mount St. Scholastica in Duluth, MN, and her MA degree in 1979 from Mount Angel Seminary in OR. While she pursued her degrees, she began her teaching career of countless students in Minot at Little Flower School, Fallon School, St. Leo's School in Minot, and Bishop Ryan High School in Minot during the years spanning from 1956–1988. In 1962, she and three other Sisters began our mission in Bogota, Colombia; she spent fourteen inconsecutive years at our Bogota School. She spent the summer of 1980 in Umoji, Nigeria, Africa assisting a cloistered Benedictine community in its initial stages.

Sister Carol received her certification as a chaplain with NACC in 1995. She enjoyed serving as a chaplain at St. Vincent's Care Center, Bismarck; Benedictine Living Center, Garrison; and Madonna Towers and Madonna Meadows, Rochester, MN, and maintained relationships with many staff and others she met through the years.

In 2001, Sister Carol was appointed subprioress at the monastery. Through the years, she served in a number of capacities on monastery boards and committees, and coordinated the Sacred Heart Academy alumnae for years. She shifted to a new ministry in 2011 when she was asked to manage Subiaco Manor, Dickinson, up until August 2019 when the community moved from Richardton to the Manor site, which then became Sacred Heart Monastery.

Sister Carol was charismatic, loved Jesus and loved sharing Jesus, had a warm heart and had many friends, was close to her family, and had countless talents and interests, such as knitting hundreds of winter caps, crocheting, music, card making and letter writing, puzzles, and loved a competitive game of scrabble. She died quietly on February 26, 2023, at St. Vincent's Care Center at the age of 85.



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701-456-1900 or email the Foundation Office at [shbf@sacredheartmonastery.com](mailto:shbf@sacredheartmonastery.com).



*A reflection by Sister Marie Hunkler*

Having lived through a rather long winter in ND, when the signs of spring began popping forth, such as green grass, trees budding, the first crocuses, tulips, and lilacs burst forth, I and we became so excited. I am reminded of the passage in Luke 12:27: *“Notice how the flowers grow. They do not toil or spin. But I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of them.”*

On our farm, where I grew up, we had two huge lilac bushes in our front yard. We loved to make a bouquet of lilacs and give them to our Mother. So, for me, more than any other flower, I watch for lilacs to bloom each spring as they bring back memories of my childhood.

In our backyard here at our monastery we have a rather long row of lilac bushes. We took a number of photos of the lilacs when they were in full bloom and it had not rained on them. I have no words to describe how beautiful the bushes were, nor can any photo capture the beauty of them. Also, the scent of lilacs is wonderful! I for one wanted these bushes of lilacs in full bloom to last all summer! The fact is that when lilacs blossom they are in full bloom for a matter of days and then they are gone. We had a few bouquets of lilacs inside and they lasted two days or so and then they wilted. It's almost as if they were saying “let me stay on my lilac bush and you enjoy me while I am alive; please don't miss my beauty!”

These beautiful flowers remind me to be awake to the beauty of God's creation around me that has its season of life and then dies to again rise to a new life its next season. My life also has its seasons of beauty and dying and there too I want to be awake to the beauty and then death and new birth percolating in my heart and soul as I live each day in God's world of creation. What transformation is at work in me at this moment? Yes, as it says in Rev. 21:5: *“Behold, I make all things new.”* Am I saying “yes?”



**Benedictine Sisters of Richardton**

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## *May Calendar*

Each year we come up with a way to not only give back in winnings, but to give prayer support to a deserving group of people. Our May Calendar for 2023 honored teachers. There were over 300 names sent to us to pray for in chapel. Some were teachers from long ago, some teaching now, some were family members and some were even the Sisters here at the Monastery. Thank you, thank you, to all who teach! Your names were on the chapel prayer board for the month of May and read in chapel on May 25.



Teachers come in all forms, not just educational in classroom settings, but also in every office and business, in farming and ranching operations, hospitals and clinics, oil field, the list goes on and on. Benjamin Franklin once wrote, "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." May we never be too old to learn or to teach!

Thank you to all who responded to this year's calendar fundraiser. We do not send out thank you notes unless requested. Please know how much we appreciate your support. We loved reading the messages included on many of the entries regarding the teacher you recognized and we also appreciated the extra labels that some of you put in for additional entries. Thank you, thank you!

**Online donations: [www.sacredheartmonastery.com](http://www.sacredheartmonastery.com)**