



Benedictine Touchstone • Spring 2009

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Prioress' Reflection

By Mother Mary Anne Noll OSB



This Spring Issue of the *Benedictine Touchstone* should be even earlier than the robins as a sign of spring for us northerners. In

order for this to be mailed in early February, I began to write this reflection in Advent!

The time frames of being in one liturgical season and reflecting on the next participates in the reality of the “the already” (Jesus has come) and “the not yet” (Jesus will come in the fullness). We are so blessed to have always known how the Gospel story ends (the first disciples did not) and that all time is present to God.

The cover photo captures the striking beauty of the 3rd Sorrowful Mystery (Jesus is crowned with thorns) against the snow covered background and the postcard perfect blue skies.

A Christmas card that we received had a beautiful holly wreath on the front with “cutouts” that allowed gold from the inside to highlight the holly. The front read, “As we celebrate the season” and the inside read, “Let us remember the reason.” Above this wording was a crown of thorns in gold—the gold that showed through the “cutouts”!

Time and thorns—an interesting combination!

Time: the measurement of movement. Some of the ancients believed that time was circular—no getting off the merry-go-round. With the Incarnation, the eternal God broke into time and our time has been assumed by the God-man.

Even though we note the passing of the seasons, the beginning and end of school years, and the marking of anniversaries, we also know that Jesus is with us and, therefore, the possibility of change and growth.

We notice subtle and not so subtle changes. A Gospel passage strikes us as if for the first time. We feel a need to be more recollected, to pray more for someone who

has hurt us or to become more involved in our parishes and communities.

Perhaps we do not even notice how the Gospel stylus engraves patterns of thought and prayer and reactions into our hearts and souls. We only notice that we are not as “edgy” or self-centered as we used to be.

Although each hour has 60 minutes, we can experience these minutes as unending or passing too quickly. A child waiting for Santa thinks that Christmas will never come. Family members who seldom see each other want to stretch the minutes of togetherness.

In the Prologue to his Rule, Benedict writes that we share by patience in the suffering of Christ. At the first reading, this does not sound so challenging. It does not refer to huge crosses, big sacrifices or great mortifications. But after a time, one realizes that allowing God time to change others, the world and me takes us into the sufferings of Christ. Until we all love fully (in heaven), we live with all the uncertainties and the pitfalls of human communication, the unpredictably of moods and attitudes of ourselves and others.

We marvel at the beauty of the front cover but the beauty evaporates when a thorn of suffering dares touch our lives.

This prickly pear cactus survives our Pennsylvania winters outdoors. The thorns on this cactus are deceiving: the large fixed spines or “thorns” are smooth but the small hair like, unseen, threadlike “thorns” easily enter under the skin. Anytime I have ever gone near our prickly pear cactus, these threadlike “thorns” find their way painlessly and furtively under my skin. Within a day or two, they make their presence known by their inflammation.

Many of life situations are like that: they get under our skin and fester. Time

often adds to the irritation. How long will this pain last? How long—if ever—before this person will seek help? Will there be enough money to live on?

The holly wreath with the gold from the crown of thorns was beautiful—on a card!

Perhaps this card is a reminder that these vexations, irritations, and inflammations of thorns can be turned into “gold” by offering



up these situations with Jesus' sufferings.

The grace of the forty days of Lent invites us to enter more deeply into Jesus' life and how he loved His Father in all the situations of His life: during His time of 33 years on earth through His passion and death. Indeed His wounds (and ours) are part of His glorified body. Blessed Lent!

Mother Mary Anne Noll, OSB

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Discerning a Vocation to Religious Life?

Experience Holy Week through the Tradition of Monastic Prayer

Holy Week Schedule • April 8 – 12

These services are also open to the public.

Holy Thursday 6:00 a.m. Tenebrae
(Vigils and Lauds combined)
9:00 a.m. Terce
11:45 a.m. Sext/None
4:15 p.m. Rosary
7:00 p.m. Eucharist
Adoration of Blessed Sacrament until 10:30

Good Friday 6:00 a.m. Tenebrae
9:00 a.m. Terce
11:45 a.m. Sext/None
3:00 p.m. Liturgy
7:00 p.m. Compline

Holy Saturday 6:00 a.m. Tenebrae
8:30 a.m. Terce
11:45 a.m. Sext/None
4:00 p.m. Vespers
8:30 p.m. Easter Vigil

Easter Sunday 6:25 a.m. Lauds
7:40 a.m. Terce
8:00 a.m. Eucharist
11:45 a.m. Sext/None
4:30 p.m. Vespers
7:15 p.m. Vigils and Compline

*Come and See
Weekend*
**May 15-17 (with the
option to stay
until the 20th)**
including *Liturgy of
the Hours, Community
Living, Daily Eucharist,
Silence, Lectio,
and Ora et Labora
(Prayer and Work).*

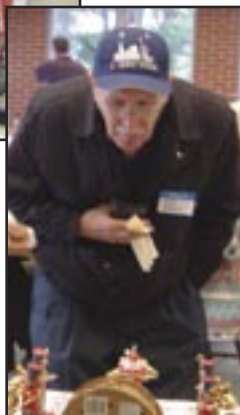
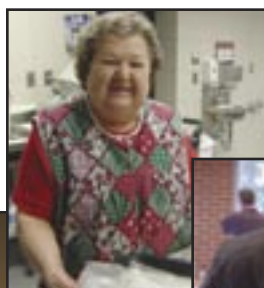
Please call (724) 834-3060 for a reservation.



*Both vocational discernment experiences are open
to single women between the ages of 16 – 40.*

Christmas Visit & Vespers

Due to the wonderful coverage in the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* and the *Latrobe Bulletin*, we welcomed many new guests to our Christmas Visit and Vespers. Many people expressed their gratitude for having this spiritual way of celebrating Christmas after Dec. 25.



Rest in Peace – Bequests

We extend our sympathy to the families of the following individuals. We are honored that these friends chose to remember us in their wills.

Mary Anderson, Pittsburgh, PA
Fr. Joe Linck, Stamford, CT
Dorothy Shirley, Irwin, PA

In Memoriam

We extend our sympathy to the families of the following individuals who have died recently. We are honored that their families designated St. Emma as a place memorials could be made in their name.

Mary Paulhamus, Baltimore MD
Molly Govi, Yukon, PA
Dr. Michael Simko, North Huntingdon, PA
Gert Augustine, Nicktown, PA
Elvira Clark, Greensburg, PA
Shawn Gearing, Greensburg, PA



Solemn Monastic Profession and Monastic Consecration Ceremony of Sister Miriam Walters, OSB



St. Emma Monastery ♦ Greensburg, PA ♦ September 13, 2008



The Benedictine Nuns process in.

*The Sister reads her Profession card
which she has written with her own hand.*



*Sister Miriam lights her
candle and approaches the
altar singing.*



*Sister Miriam lies prostrate before the
altar as a sign of giving herself totally to
God during the Litany of the Saints.*



*The Sister completes her
monastic profession singing with
confidence:*

*"If you uphold me by your
promise, I shall live..."*



*...let my hopes
not be in vain."*

(Psalm 119:116)



Here the Prioress presents the veil to Sister Miriam.



After the Celebrant has blessed the Insignia of Profession - the veil with the white lining, the ring, the wreath, and the book for the Liturgy of the Hours - they are presented to the Sister.

The Solemn Profession and Monastic Consecration of a Benedictine Nun encloses many symbolic signs, ancient antiphons sung in Latin, and special prayers, which express the deep meaning of this rite.



Prayer of Consecration



The congregation acknowledges the newest member of the community with applause.



Right Reverend Douglas R. Nowicki, OSB, Celebrant, with Sister Maria, Sister Miriam and Mother Mary Anne.



Sister Miriam, OSB

Fall Craft Show, Christmas Boutique a Success!



Our great gratitude and applause go to the volunteers who organized this event, made crafts, displayed the crafts and Boutique items so beautifully, and helped children make crafts during the Craft Sale Oct. 31–Nov. 2. A thank you also to the volunteers who cooked and served the food and worked at the various stations.

This was the third year -- and how it has grown! Two years a volunteer's suggestion to have a Craft Sale went from suggestion to a wonderful reality in four weeks!

Last year the Christmas Boutique was added: re-gifted items that made wonderful gifts for the young and the young at heart!

This year the volunteers asked if they could add food and themed baskets. Crafts were available for children to make and give as gifts. Children also enjoyed the face painting. With these additions, the location was changed from the bookstore area and lounge to the retreat dining room and the adjacent St. Benedict Conference room. Beside clearing \$4,700, this event brought many people to St. Emma's for the first time.

May God bless our very generous volunteers! Many thanks to you who donated items and to those who came.

Benedictine Sisters Catholic Gift & Book Shop



- A. Black glass rosary with oxidized crucifix and chalice centerpiece. \$5.75
- B. Imitation hematite rosary with oxidized crucifix and chalice centerpiece. \$11.95
- C. White rosary with oxidized crucifix and chalice centerpiece. \$5.75
- D. 5 mm glass pearl rosary with oxidized crucifix and chalice centerpiece. \$11.25
- E. Praying boy Communion keepsake, 3 1/2" boxed \$4.50
- F. Praying girl Communion keepsake, 3 1/2", boxed \$4.50
- G. Girl's set includes color laminated book, rosary and case, color bookmark, scapular and pin. \$26.50
- H. Boy's set includes color laminated book, rosary and case, color bookmark, scapular and pin. \$26.50

Visit our Bookstore • Hours: Monday – Saturday 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Visit online anytime: www.stemma.org

Priorities and Relationships

By Robert J. Allen

Many years ago when our oldest daughter was 5 and we were gathered around the kitchen table at the family dinner, I decided to share some thoughts about Lent with our children. As a start, I began with the ashes from Ash Wednesday as a sign of our mortality and for God's love for each of us as a person.

Lent for me at that time just after Vatican II was looking at our faith from a different perspective. I encouraged each one of the children to decide what they might want to give up since the choice was theirs, not some law or sanction. Cathy raised her hand with a suggestion – "Yes, Cathy," I said. "I know what I can give up" she replied. "What's that?" I asked. "The rosary. It is too long a prayer anyway." So much for my theological teaching.

Over the years, telling that story I have come to realize many of us seem to give up the very thing that may be helping us. We think we are making a sacrifice, but we are often omitting the link that would make us a witness to others. Who are we? Catholic. We go to Mass, but often judge

the service by the singing or the preaching when in reality what separates the Mass from any other Sunday Service in other churches is the EUCHARIST. It is not only

Over the years..., I have come to realize that many of us seem to give up the very thing that may be helping us. We think we are making a sacrifice but we are often omitting the link that holds us up as a witness to others.

the most important part of the Mass; it is the ultimate point of God's Love. God so loved us that He is continuing the relationship at and through the consecration in every Mass.

We will not be judged by what we have or what we made, but how we love

God and one another. Lent is that time to reassess our priorities and relationships. If we can't love one another, then we can't love God. Take these 40 days to develop a deeper relationship first, by loving yourself and seeing how God loves you, then extend that love to all you meet.

Yes, we have a free will, but it is how we continually form that will that sets us on a course to live each moment in God's Will, which is something we strive to do.

Use the Benedictine Rule of Prayer and Work: express God's love for you through good works, prayer and charity, toward your neighbor, and most of all, by loving yourself – believing that God loves you. You are in the prayers and daily sacrifice of each Benedictine Nun, each day because they choose to pray for you.

The Benedictine Nuns cordially invite you to our Fourth Dinner and Silent Auction at St. Emma



*Saturday, April 25
Reception & Silent Auction: 5 p.m.
Dinner: 6 - 8 p.m.
Valet parking*

*\$75 per person ♦ \$400 per table of six
\$500 table with Benedictine Sister at table
\$1,000 table sponsor with Benedictine Sister at table*

*Reservations must be made by March 28.
Payment may be made by credit card or check.*

Please make your reservation by sending your name(s) and payment to the monastery, or contact Mother Mary Anne for more details. (724) 834-3060, Ext. 113.

A Tisket, A Tasket, Any Items for Our Baskets?

Each year we have a silent auction before the fundraising dinner (April 25) at St. Emma. If you have an item(s) you have received as a gift and will never use, we would be delighted to give such items a great welcome and a place in a pretty basket.

Extra Gift Cards!

Last Christmas, 35 percent of Americans gave gift cards. They spent an average of \$147 and bought five gift cards for others. Did you receive any that you will not use? Well we have a great use for it. We want to have a Gift Certificate Basket at our Annual Dinner.

If interested in gifting any items, please contact Mother Mary Anne at: (724) 834-3060, drop them off at St. Emma's, or mail them to her at: 1001 Harvey Ave., Greensburg, PA 15601.

*Please remember us when revising
or making your will.*

*Our legal name is: The Sisters of
Saint Benedict of Westmoreland County*

Our Federal ID-# is: 75-231-104

Prayer Requests & Intentions

*Please use the enclosed envelope
to send us your prayer requests
and intentions.*

Danny Abramowicz to Speak May 1, 2

“Men – It’s time to stand up and be counted” is the theme of two special times for men. Nationally known Danny Abramowicz will speak May 1 from 6–10 p.m., and May 2, from 7 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Abramowicz has a long history with the NFL as a player, coach and football broadcaster. He’s a popular speaker at Catholic men conferences where he shares his true life story of conversion and exhorts Catholic sound teaching in a manner that bring enthusiasm and humor wit being a Catholic in today’s secular times.

The May 1 evening session is \$40 which includes dinner. The Saturday session is \$50, and also includes a main meal.. Both sessions and overnight with meals is \$130. For more information and/or reservations, visit www.stemma.org or call 724-834-3060 x 113.



2009 Retreat Programs

For reservations, please call (724) 834-3060 or email: retreats@stemma.org

Day and Evening Programs

March	5	Women’s Evening of Recollection 4 – 9 p.m. Rev. Leon Hont OSB, \$20
April	4	Lenten Day of Recollection for Lay and Religious 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Rev. Lester Knoll OFM Cap, Theme: Entering into the Passion, \$28
April	29	Women’s Day of Recollection 9 a.m.– 6 p.m. Rev. Emil Payer \$38
May	1	“Men– It’s Time to Stand Up and Be Counted.” Speaker Danny Abramowicz, 6 – 10 p.m., \$40
May	2	“Men – It’s Time to Stand Up and Be Counted.” Speaker Danny Abramowicz, 7 a.m. – 2 p.m., \$50 (\$130 for both sessions and overnight)
May	3	Day of Recollection for Third Order Carmelites 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
May	27	Women’s Evening of Recollection 4 – 9 p.m., \$20

Retreats

February 27 -		
March 1		Silent Lenten. Women and Men Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy, OFM Cap \$140
March	6-8	Men, Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy, OFM Cap, \$140
	13-15	Silent Lenten. Women and Men Rev. Mark Gruber, OSB, \$140
	27-29	Silent Lenten. Women and Men Rev. Mark Gruber, OSB, \$140
July	26 – 31	Five Day SILENT (Women and men) Rev. Mark Gruber, OSB, \$290

Encounter with Silence (held in Retreat House)

July 24—31, 2008 Rev Frank Erdeljac, \$400

Directed Retreats Held In Monastic Guest House

June 8 – 13 Rev Mark Gruber OSB, \$375
June 28 – July 4 Rev Mark Gruber OSB, \$450
(waiting list)



Because of the economic downturn impacting so many people, we Benedictine Nuns at St. Emma have decided to keep our 2008 fees. Even though our expenses have increased, we will continue to have the same quality of meals and accommodations as you have come to expect from St. Emma. Your spiritual growth is that important to us.

Flea Market Announcement • June 19-20

Donations gladly accepted after June 1

Please, no large appliances, clothing or shoes, thank you!

Receiving More Than One of These Newsletters?

The Benedictine Nuns at St. Emma Monastery request your help. We have recently changed computer programs and are working very hard to make sure we only have your name in our database once. If you receive more than one of these issues of the newsletter, could you please let us know either by e-mailing us at benedictinenuns@stemma.org or by cutting out and returning this notice in the enclosed envelope?

Additionally, we would like to have your e-mail address. Why? We would like to occasionally share information about special events and retreats. Because postage is expensive, we would like to inform you of some things via e-mail.

You are so special to us that we will **never** share any of your addresses (e-mail or street!).

Name:

Address:

City, State, Zip

E-mail:

I am receiving more than one newsletter. (Please enclose copies of addresses and mark the correct one.)

Please remove my name from your mailing list.