



BENEDICTINE TOUCHSTONE

Spring 2007



Benedictine Nuns • St. Emma Monastery • Greensburg, PA 15601

Phone: (724) 834-3060 • Fax (724) 834-5772 • Website www.stemma.org • Email benedictinenuns@stemma.org



Christ has died.

*Christ
is risen!*

*Alleluia!
Alleluia!*

Prioress' Reflection

By Mother Mary Anne Noll OSB



By the time you receive this newsletter, the grace-filled week that we call HOLY will be before us. We Bene-

dictine nuns are so blessed to participate in the fullness of the liturgy (except for the rite of baptism or receiving people into full communion with the Church) celebrated in our chapel. You will read our Holy Week prayer schedule but we would like to have you "share" in the last four days more deeply.

Although the Sacred Triduum (three days) formally begins with the Eucharist celebrated Holy Thursday evening, we have maintained the singing of the *Tenebrae* (the offices of Vigils and Lauds combined) beginning 6:00 am Holy Thursday.

Tenebrae (Darkness) refers to the darkness after extinguishing one after the other of the 14 candles (adorning the two sides of the triangular shaped top of a tall wooden stand). After the last psalm, the white central Christ candle is carried out and the church is in darkness symbolizing darkness overcoming the Light. After a brief time of prayer, the Christ light is returned to the candle stand and the *Christus factus est* is sung in Latin.

"Christ became obedient for us unto death" (Philippians 2:8ff). The Gregorian chant melody so powerfully expresses these Scripture verses. On Good Friday "even to the death on the cross" is added. On Holy Saturday, "therefore God has also exalted him and given Him the name that is above all other names" completes the quote and the reality that we celebrate.

After the Eucharist on Holy Thursday evening, we Process with the Blessed Sacrament to the Atrium (large room

outside our chapel) where we spend time with Jesus before the Blessed Sacrament until 10:30 pm.

On Good (good for us—not on the surface very good for Jesus) Friday, we again begin with *Tenebrae*. The Good Friday Liturgy is held at 3:00 pm. During this day of sacred silence and prayer, we marvel at the lengths that God did go to prove His love for us.

Tenebrae also begins Holy Saturday's *The Liturgy of the Hours* at 6:00 am and lasts the usual 90 minutes.

The Easter Vigil begins after dark on Holy Saturday night and consists of four

During this day of sacred silence and prayer, we marvel at the lengths that God did go to prove His love for us.



basic elements: the Service of Light, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of Baptism and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

To begin the Service of the Light with the blessing of the new fire and Paschal candle, we gather at the cross just inside our drive way and then process into chapel following the Paschal candle. The celebrant sings three times, "Christ our Light" and we respond, "Thanks be to God" while our candles are lit from the Paschal candle. The sung *Exsultet* powerfully proclaims, "...Exult, all creation around

God's throne! Jesus Christ, our King, is risen!"

During the Liturgy of the Word, we have all seven of the Old Testament readings followed by the sung responsorial psalm after each and the prayer. The Epistle and the Gospel from the New Testament follow.

Since we are a monastery, we have no one baptized or received into the Church. We, of course, anticipate the renewal of our baptismal vows celebrated during the Liturgy of Baptism.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist then follows as usual.

On Easter Sunday itself, we celebrate the feast of the Resurrection with the Liturgy of the Hours with the antiphons from the Resurrection accounts and lots of Alleluias. Our Eucharist is at 8:00 am.

Easter has an octave: besides the Scriptures at Mass each day referring to the Resurrection, we sing the Easter antiphons at all the Hours all week.

How have we prepared for the renewal of our baptismal vows on Easter? Have we looked at Lent as a time to do things and practice attitudes that we want to continue

after Easter in our desire to be more Christ-like? Or have we chosen "things" to give up during Lent but that we can re-assume on Easter?

How will you spend Holy Week? We hope that our experience will entice you to enter more deeply into the liturgical life of the church this week. Blessed Holy Week and Easter!

Mother Mary Anne Noll, OSB

"... Exult, all creation around God's throne. Jesus Christ, Our King, is risen!"

Easter Reflection

The Gospel during the Easter Vigil is taken from Mark 16:1-7. We have all known the long walk from the death bed of a loved one to the funeral home and to the cemetery. We know about and believe in the Resurrection so we have hope that our loved one lives on in God.

But Mary Magdalene, Mary who was the mother of James, and Salome only knew that their loved one had died. Since they had not been able to properly anoint the body with spices before the sacred Sabbath, they rose early to make their long (the actual distance is immaterial), sad trek to the place where Jesus had been laid.

Who would roll back the stone? After all, the huge stone that covered the entrance to a tomb had been positioned on a slight grade so that it could roll against the tomb opening. This stone-

in-place helped prevent grave robbers (people were often buried with possessions) and kept the bodies safe from wild animals.

We can so identify with these women. They knew how things were: their dead one was dead, the stone barred the entrance to the tomb and they could not move it.

We know that when the women looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back and it was very large.

We know how things are. We have our eyes fixed on the problems that confront and confound us. Who can change them? We know what relationships are torn or tenuous, who suffers from what addictions, what medical problems and financial problems have no human answer. Some of these situations we have seemingly known for ever.

In Matthew we learn that “an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled back the stone and sat upon it.” I picture that angel having fun with that stone. He first moved it easily away from the entrance, picked it up as if a large balloon, twirled it on the tip of his right index finger, threw it some distance, sat on it — and beamed!

Do we give God a chance with the stones that keep our problems in place? Do we lift up our eyes again and again to see if a stone has been moved in any direction, ever so slightly?

Do we notice when God has nudged a boulder and someone went for help, a job was found, the peace of Christ was experienced in the midst of deteriorating medical conditions, or family members finally spoke to one another — and give thanks?

May our celebration of Jesus’ Resurrection this year enable us to “look up,” to watch for, and to wait for stones to be moved and removed in our lives.

ALLELUIA!

Do we give God a chance with the stones that keep our problems in place?

Triduum and Easter Sunday Schedule

Holy Thursday:

- 6:00 a.m. Tenebrae (Vigils and Lauds together)
- 9:00 a.m. Terce
- 11:45 a.m. Sext/None
- 4:00 p.m. Vespers
- 7:00 p.m. Mass of the Lord’s Supper
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
(until 10:30 p.m.)

Good Friday:

- 6:00 a.m. Tenebrae (Vigils and Lauds together)
- 9:00 a.m. Terce
- 11:45 a.m. Sext/None
- 3:00 p.m. Celebration of the Lord’s Passion
- 7:00 p.m. Compline

Holy Saturday:

- 6:00 a.m. Tenebrae (Vigils and Lauds together)
- 9:00 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
- 7:45 a.m. Terce
- 8:00 a.m. Eucharist
- 11:45 a.m. Sext/None
- 5:00 p.m. Vespers
- 7:15 p.m. Vigils



Encounter: *St. Benedict of Nursia* *(480-547)*



St. Benedict writing his Rule at Montecassino in 529.



The young Benedict is leaving Rome to search for God in solitude.



Through prayer, St. Benedict restores a young monk to life.

What a wonderful Church we have to offer the Benedictines the opportunity to celebrate *the Solemnity of the "Transitus"* (the passing over from this world to eternity) of St. Benedict on March 21.

This monk, who on July 11 we will again celebrate as Patron of Western Monasticism, was never a priest. He believed the world was too busy and gave us a rule to live by. It was relevant then and is today with over 8,000 monks and 16,000 Benedictine nuns and sisters worldwide.

Here at St. Emma in the Fatima Chapel fourteen stained glass windows picture the most important events and miracles in Benedict's life reported by Pope St. Gregory the Great in the second Book of his Dialogues. "To be '*one spirit*' with Christ is the secret center of every miraculous action of the saint, and it is towards this mystical center that Gregory directs the aspiration of his reader as well as his own." (A.de Vogüé, *The Life of Saint Benedict*, Foreward)

Benedict's Rule for Monks, can give us an even deeper understanding of this saint. Pope Gregory explains: "He wrote a Rule for Monks that is remarkable for its discretion and its clarity of language. Anyone who wishes to know more about his life and character can discover in his Rule exactly what he was like as an abbot, for his life could not have differed from his teaching." (Book II of the Dialogues of St. Gregory [36])

Benedict, whose name means "Blessed with God's grace," was a young Christian of a well-to-do family from Nursia. He was sent to Rome for education and preparation for a secular career. But offended by the excessively liberal morality of the student environment in the 5th century he decided to leave Rome intending to consecrate his life to the service of God. (Cf. A.de Vogüé, *St. Benedict, The Man and his Work*, p.14)

He moved to Subiaco, spending three years in a grotto in a lonely wilderness laboring for God alone. Shepherds discovered the saintly man, asking for his advice and direction. The first young men gathered around him to share his life for God.

Twelve small monasteries were founded and directed by him. The envy and jealousy of a priest, trying to poison him, caused Benedict to leave and to move together with some monks to Montecassino high on the hillside south of Rome. Here on this mountain he established a new monastery, wrote his Rule for his community and performed miracles of prophecy and power. This time of his life did not show further temptations but was characterized by prayer, peaceful radiance and perfection. It became more evident that Benedict, the man of God, had *the Spirit of the Only One, the Spirit of Christ*.

What are the guidelines that St. Benedict gives to each of us in 2007 who want to seek Christ more closely?

- ◆ Cherish Christ above all.
- ◆ Take the Gospel as guide for your life.
- ◆ Do not prefer anything to the Work of God (the Eucharist, communal and personal prayer, sacred reading)



At their final meeting, St. Benedict and his sister, St. Scholastica, talk about the spiritual life.

- ◆ Work seriously, but balanced; idleness is the enemy of the soul.
- ◆ See and receive Christ in all you meet, in the sick, in the guest.
- ◆ Love silence, restrain your speech so God can speak to you.
- ◆ Imitate the example of Christ in obeying.
- ◆ Show respect to all others, supporting with the greatest patience one another's weaknesses of body or behavior.
- ◆ Prefer nothing whatever to Christ that he may bring us all together to everlasting life.



*Six days before his death, he ordered his tomb to be opened ...
In the oratory he strengthened himself for his departure by receiving the Body and Blood of the Lord. While the hands of his disciples held up his limbs, he stood with his hands raised to heaven and breathed his last breath amidst words of prayer.
(Book II of the Dialogues)*

Before his death Benedict was granted a cosmic vision. Praying at his window long before the night office, the holy man suddenly experienced a flood of light from above more brilliant than the sun. He saw the whole world gathered up in a single beam of light. To the soul who sees the Creator, all creation is bound to appear small, explains Gregory.

After 1500 years monastics, men and women, still live according to the Rule of St. Benedict, which he called “a little rule for beginners”. His Rule (still published and available in different editions in our Monastery Gift Shop) has also proven valuable for lay people, called oblates, who form their lives according to his spirit.

“We know the recommendation left to his monks in his Rule by this Father of Western Monasticism:

‘Prefer absolutely nothing to Christ.’

(Rule 72,11; 4,21).

At the beginning of my service as Successor of Peter I pray to St. Benedict to help us to hold firm *the centrality of Christ* in our life. May he always be first in our thoughts and in all our activity!”

(Benedict XVI's address at his first general audience, 4/27/2005)





A Benedictine Nun born in 710 in England, Walburga was among the first Benedictine Nuns to respond to the invitation of St. Boniface to help in the mission field in Germany. She died on Feb. 25, 779.

On February 26 we celebrated the Solemnity of St. Walburga (that was superseded by First Sunday of Lent on the 25th). Beside the liturgical celebrations, we gathered at the Walburga Shrine for a prayer service in honor of St. Walburga.

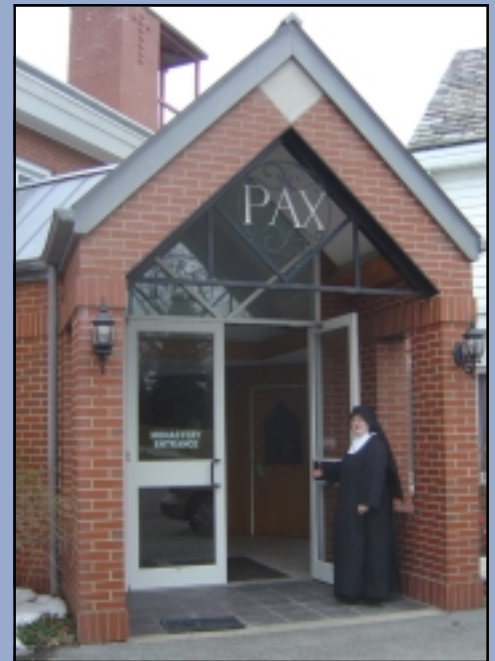


November 14-22 Rt. Rev. Lambert Reilly, OSB, retired arch-abbot of St. Meinrad Archabbey, St. Meinrad, IN gave our community retreat. We offer a special thanks to our wonderful volunteers who staffed the kitchen providing delicious

nourishment for our bodies while Archabbot Lambert provided stimulating nourishment for our souls!

“Come and See” Weekend

*July 6-8,
2007*



Are these values what you are looking for in religious life:

- * The Liturgy of the Hours
- * Community Living
- * Daily Eucharist
- * Silence
- * Lectio
- * *Ora et Labora* (Prayer and Work)

If so, and you are single and between the ages of 18 to 40, join us for “a come and see” weekend, July 6-8, 2007 or arrange another time to experience our monastic life.

*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*



This month's features:

Girl's and Boy's First Communion rosaries:

Prices: (Boy) Silver or gold tone \$29.00

(Girl) Silver or gold tone \$37.50

Confirmation (dove) charm – Silver or Gold tone \$2.50



First Communion Book – available in boy or girl, Deluxe Edition – gilded pages, padded cover \$10.00 each, Standard Edition, \$ 6.50 each



A Heavenly Taste contains 226 scrumptious recipes from the monastery and retreat house kitchens as well as from those of some of our friends. A great gift for any occasion – bridal showers or holidays – or just to say “thank you” to some one you care about.

Cost per book is \$15.00 or two for \$25.00 plus shipping and handling.

Order Form: It's easy to order! Use the enclosed envelope to return your order to the Monastery or call (724) 834-7483 or Fax (724) 834-5772. Shipping rates apply.

Prayer Requests & Intentions

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



Girl Purse and Accessory set – 6 pc., includes purse, standard book, rosary, rosary case, scapular, and pin. \$30.00/set



Deluxe book and accessory set. 7-pc, includes prayer book, prayer card, rosary, rosary case, scapular, pin and candle. \$25.00/set available for boy or girl (not shown)

The Grace of Freedom

Still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more. – Ephesians 3:2

By Robert J. Allen

When we examine the word steward, we come to better understand that as a steward in the household of a King because this was a person he trusted. It is this trust that we have come to understand this covenant that God has with his people. In reality, you cannot have a covenant without trust.

The stewardship that we are most responsible for is that of God's grace. What we do with that grace, how we cooperate with that grace will call us to be good stewards. First this grace allows us to love God, but the stewardship of God's grace is given to us for the benefit of others. As we share with the poor, the disenfranchised, those who are homeless or give help others, we are practicing charity. The way we are called in St. Matthew's Gospel 25:30-40.

The monastic community is here for you and me, to call upon God's grace daily, in fact six times a day in Church and continued through their works. The Benedictine Nuns of St. Emma grasp the concept that as you give up your freedoms, the more you can use your freedom to make the most of what God gives you; the more disposed you become to receive more from God. He gives us his grace freely to be good stewards for others, your gift to charity is one way you show your stewardship and by supporting the Benedictine Nuns of St. Emma you are bringing Christ's message of salvation and forgiveness to all who visit this monastic and holy place.

Days of Recollection

Bereaved

April 29, 8:45 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Blessed are those who mourn, they shall be comforted.

Rev. Edward Litavec, pastor of St. Mary Czestochowa Parish, McKeesport, PA will be the retreat master for the day. The day is open to all who have lost a loved one. Fee for the day is \$35.

Benedictine Spirituality

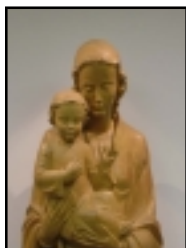
April 22, 8:45 a.m.–6:00 p.m.

Rev. Maurus Mount, OSB a Benedictine monk and priest of St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, PA will be the retreat master for the day. The day is open to all Benedictine Oblates and those interested in learning more about Benedictine spirituality. Fee for the day is \$35.

Pro-Life Day of Recollection

Saturday – April 28, 8:45 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Rev. Mark Gruber will lead the day which includes celebration of the Eucharist, spiritual conferences, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and noon meal. Fee is \$25.00.



Memorial Cards Available

We would like to introduce you to our Memorial Cards wherein our community upholds the deceased in a special in prayers as mentioned in the card. Of course, we also pray for the family whose loved one has gone ahead of them to God.

Each packet contains a Memorial Card and prayer card with envelope for you to send/give to the family as well as a form with return envelope to send to us with the name of the individual to pray for.

Suggested donation: \$10.00



Huge Indoor Flea Market

St. Emma Retreat House

Friday and Saturday, June 15-16 • 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Household/Christmas, books, records, toys, some antiques/collectibles, china, glassware, furniture, etc., etc.

Home-cooked food, includes haluski and cabbage rolls

Take-outs available

To donate items, contact Mother Mary Anne at 724-834-3060

Retreat Schedule 2007

For reservations, please call (724) 834-3060.

Retreat Programs

May	6	Carmelite Spirituality <i>Rev. Justin Matro OSB</i>
	23	Women's Evening of Recollection 4-9 p.m. <i>Rev. William Kiel</i>
June	25-July 1	SILENT (lay/religious - part time participants welcome) <i>Rev. Mark Gruber OSB</i>
August	3- 8	SILENT (lay/religious - part time participants welcome) <i>Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy OFMCap</i>
	24-26	Men/Women <i>Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy OFMCap</i>
Sept	14-16	Women
	21-23	Women <i>Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy OFMCap</i>
	28-30	Silent <i>Rev. Mark Gruber OSB</i>
October	19-21	Women <i>Rev. Mark Gruber OSB</i>
November	2- 4	Couples <i>Rev. Mark Gruber OSB</i>
	9-11	Couples <i>Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy OFMCap</i>

Silent Directed Retreats

May 21-2	Rev. Thomas Acklin OSB <i>limited openings</i>
June 3-8	Rev. Mark Gruber OSB
August 3-9	Rev. Mark Gruber OSB <i>limited openings</i>

Development Directors' and Staff Retreat:

Development as a Ministry • May 6-9, 2007

Robert J. Allen, author of *Text for Task*, will provide the opportunity to better understand how your work in development is your vocation. This retreat/seminar aims at how stewardship is founded on some 2,360 passages in the Old and New Testaments. It also offers you the opportunity for spiritual renewal.

Encounter with Silence • June 24-July 1

Truth must bear fruit in love, and love must proceed from truth. These words of the late Father John J. Hugo crystallize the completeness of Christianity that the Encounter with Silence memorably conveys.

Father Frank Erdeljac currently carries on this legacy. Perhaps the most famous lover of the Retreat is the Servant of God, Dorothy Day. She made the retreat over 20 times and wrote of it in her books.

Accommodations at Monastic Guest House \$450; Retreat House \$400

2nd Annual Fund-raising Dinner

Held at St. Emma

April 14, 2007 5-8:30 p.m.

\$75 per person,

Hors d'oeuvres, Silent Auction, Dinner
Call St. Emma for additional information