



HORIZONS

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ST. SCHOLASTICA MONASTERY, Fort Smith, AR

October, 2008

St. Scholastica Gift Shop Gets a New Home

After months of planning and construction and weeks of packing, unpacking, and setting up displays, St. Scholastica Gift Shop staff reopened the store for business in its new first floor monastery location on Saturday, September 20.

At the Grand Reopening Ceremony, Sister Cabrini Schmitz, prioress, noted that the sisters had wanted to move the Gift Shop from its second floor retreat center location to the monastery for a number of years so that it would be more accessible and convenient for shoppers. A recent anonymous donation helped them to realize their dream.

The move involved new construction all over the monastery, as the mailroom was relocated to the second floor, the kitchen storage area was streamlined and moved into the pantry, and the newly available space was redesigned into the current gift shop. Workmen laid a cement sidewalk leading from the front parking lot to a separate gift shop entrance and built a doorway and awning. The former kitchen storage area and mailroom were merged into one large sales area with a display window off the monastery hallway.

Sisters and guests attended the Grand Reopening, during which Fort Smith Mayor Ray Baker cut the ribbon, Sister Cabrini Schmitz blessed every area of the Gift Shop, and Sister Maria Goretti DeAngeli, gift shop manager, read a passage from Ephesians. Following the Grand Reopening, everyone enjoyed refreshments in the dining hall. During its first weekend of operation, the shop enjoyed brisk business from alumnae, retreatants, and Oblates.

The gift shop has extended its hours of operation from 9:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. It will continue to be open from 12:30-3:00 p.m. most Saturdays. Call (479) 783-4147 first.

In the photos, clockwise from upper right, Sisters Regina and Mary Elizabeth Cassidy (visiting from Maryland) unpack their stock; Mayor Baker cuts the ribbon; he presents roses to Sisters Cabrini, Audrey, and Maria; he scatters rose petals by the entrance; and Sister Maria reads from Ephesians during the Blessing Ceremony.



A Message From the Prioress

'Change' is the one common-ground word that has become the mantra of both major political parties in our country as the nation prepares for the November election of the next President of the United States. My hope is that the 'changes' envisioned by both parties will encourage all citizens to listen and practice the Gospel mandates of respect for life from conception to natural death, love for one another, and peaceful relations with other nations.

'Change' is not a new word in the vocabulary of Christians. More than 2,000 years ago, John the Baptist went about preaching repentance, saying, "Repent, (change), for the kingdom of Heaven is close at hand" (Mt 3:2 in the New Jerusalem Bible). Jesus said, "In truth I tell you, unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven" (Mt. 18:3).

In Benedictine communities, conversion (change) of life, in Latin 'conversatio morum', is one of the three elements of the solemn promise Benedictines make at their monastic profession. The other two elements of that trifold profession formula are obedience and stability. It takes a lifetime for Benedictines to live out their initial response to the prioress's question at the time of their entry into the monastery: "What is it you seek?" And the newcomer responds, "To seek God in this community through prayer, work, and holy reading."

'Change!' It's the only constant in our lives. Each Ash Wednesday the phrase, "Repent (change) and believe the good news," is the challenge given by the distributors of the ashes. This Lenten challenge is directed to one's innermost self, the heart, and the spirit. Results of this change from within--and not just during Lent--will become obvious to others who witness the person's increasingly more other-centered actions. 'Change' in attitude and practice is a demanding life-long task for all Christians.

This issue of HORIZONS carries stories of some of the physical and personnel changes in the monastery. The cover story is about the Gift Shop move in early September from the Center to the Monastery. The Shop is now housed in a room built in the mid-1920s as a laundry room, later changed, converted into a pantry for the kitchen. To make way for the Gift Shop meant changing, renovating, several smaller rooms closer to the kitchen and equipping them with storage cabinets. When all the pantry items had been relocated, the renovation of the room began. The new exterior entrance without steps was created so retreatants and other customers have easy access from the parking lot directly into the shop.

Another change was needed to respond effectively to this high tech culture. The monastery needed an employee with expertise in computer maintenance, web sites, etc. So we hired Gareth Pereira, our first on-site computer maintenance person. Gareth has already made some major time and financially saving changes.

Again I want to go on record saying 'thank you and God bless you' to all you many wonderful benefactors who continue to enable us make the needed changes. Thank you for believing in us. We Sisters intercede daily for blessings for each of you.

—Sister Cabrini Schmitz, OSB



Photo by Tara Little
Arkansas Catholic

Welcome, Bishop Taylor!

Sister Cabrini welcomed Bishop Anthony B. Taylor to the Diocese of Little Rock, representing the Women Religious of the Diocese at a vespers service and reception held the evening before his June 5 ordination at the Statehouse Convention Center, Little Rock.

The sisters are looking forward to welcoming Bishop Taylor, seventh bishop of the Diocese of Little Rock, to their annual Nonagenarian and Centenarian Party November 17. Bishop Taylor will celebrate Mass with the sisters and spend the day at the monastery and retreat center.

From the Development Office By Sister Elise Forst, OSB



In our last newsletter, we told you about the hail storm in April. We thought that would be the big storm for the year, but on June 15, the first day of our annual retreat, a powerful thunderstorm knocked out power in our area of Fort Smith for two days. Being without electricity for that long was a new experience for us and one we are not eager to repeat! Luckily we have gas stoves and ovens so we didn't go hungry. Although we managed quite well with candles, flashlights, a few battery-powered lamps, a borrowed generator to keep the freezers running, and a lot of cooperation and patience, we feel we may need to consider ways to be a little more prepared in the future. Of course, we will need some help from our friends to prepare for these kinds of weather-related problems.

Later this month we will be sending our annual appeal letter. The needs we are focusing on this year include some emergency equipment to help us deal with future power failures. We are looking into a generator powerful enough to light the Infirmary, stairways, and halls and to run the freezers. Another critical need is replacing our twenty-year old telephone system. Most lightning storms knock out our telephones even though we turn them off during each storm. After June's storm, it took over a week to get the system working well again.

Going from ten to thirty computers within a few years is straining the networking infrastructure for our computer system. We are happy to have Gareth Pereira, the son of our Infirmary Director, now working part time with us in computer maintenance. In addition to immediate trouble shooting, he is using his expertise to evaluate our present system and recommend needed improvements. The appeal letter will ask for help to cover Gareth's salary and to implement the time and money-saving improvements he suggests.

The sisters who are living in the infirmary rooms you helped us renovate are enjoying increased independence and a better quality of life. We still have ten rooms that need improvements and are hoping to renovate some more in 2009. We are grateful to all of you who generously responded to our appeal for help last year and depend on your help again this year.

We are blessed to have generous friends and supporters. You are remembered with love and gratitude in our prayers.

Please remember us when revising or making your will. Our legal name is St. Scholastica Monastery, Fort Smith, Arkansas.

St. Scholastica's Investment in Technology Reaps Efficiency Dividends

Gareth Pereira, the monastery's new part-time computer technician, and Sister Pat Bolling, Information Technology manager, recently installed a new server in the Business Office as part of an overall computer system upgrade. Gareth also standardized equipment, revamped the data backup system, and is working on updating the website.

Gareth, who earned his B.S. in Computer Science from University of Arkansas--Fort Smith in 2003, has five years experience as a computer technician with Dbest. In addition to his part-time position at the monastery, Gareth has started his own computer consulting business, Gareth Pereira and Associates, gpsupportdesk@gmail.com.



In Loving Memory

Sister Rosemary Rufener

Born
October 1, 1917
Died
June 1, 2008



Sister Rosemary was born Clementine Rufener in St. Vincent, Arkansas, October 1, 1917, to Martin and Celestine Stoffel Rufener. She entered St. Scholastica Convent May 15, 1933 taking the name Rosemary, and graduated from St. Scholastica Academy in 1936. She received a three-year elementary Teacher's Certificate July 31, 1943. Continuing her education, she received her B.A. in History from Marymount College in Salina, KS in 1959 with minors in English, Philosophy, and Education; an M.A. in Education with a minor in History from University of Notre Dame in 1965; and a Texas Life Professional Elementary Administrator Certificate in 1969.

From 1936 to 1973, Sister Rosemary taught elementary school in and around Arkansas: St. John's School in Clear Creek, Missouri; St. Joseph's School in Paris; St. Joseph's School in Center Ridge; Immaculate Heart of Mary School in Marche; St. Mary's School in Lake Village; St. Boniface School in Fort Smith; Sacred Heart School in Hartman; St. Ignatius School in Scranton; St. Michael's School (later called St. Gabriel) in Kansas City, Missouri; St. Joseph's School in Amarillo, Texas; Amarillo Public Schools, Amarillo, Texas. In 1973 she began to work in other ministries: at St. Benedict Center in Madison, Wisconsin, and in parish work at St. Hyacinth and St. Mary Churches, Amarillo, Texas. During her time in Amarillo, she was a co-founder of Amarillo Habitat for Humanity. In 1997 she was assigned to parish work at St. Joseph's Church in Paris, Arkansas, visiting the elderly infirm in the hospital and nursing homes.

In 2000 she returned to the monastery where she served as a receptionist until very recently. She also served as a volunteer receptionist in the Pastoral Care Department at Sparks Regional Medical Center until her health began to fail.

Memorial donations may be made to St. Scholastica Continuing Care Fund.

Oblate Dr. Sue Abbott Boyd, 87, of Van Buren, died Sunday, August 31, 2008 in a local nursing home. She was the retired editor of South and West Literary Quarterly, a member of the Arkansas Writers' Hall of Fame, a fellow of the International Arts and Letters where she was honored as a United Poet Laureate, an alumna of the New York City New School for Social Research, an Oblate of St. Scholastica Monastery, a member of St. Michael's Catholic Church in Van Buren, a member of the American Legion, and a United States Army World War II veteran. One of her poems appears at right

13 Make Oblation and 9 Enroll in Oblate Program this Summer



Making their oblation on May 18th were (L row, back to front) John Mark Simpson, Julia Mason Williams, Kathleen Moffitt, Kathy Jarvis. (R row, back to front) Robert Nichols, Lisa Simpson, Kathryn Birkhead, Julie Hynes, Mary Louise Baier and Sister Magdalen Stanton, OSB.



May 18th Enrollees (L to R) Kevin Eveld, Gwen DeGruccio, Ann McElMurry, and Linda Spradlin



Dallas Oblates making Oblation June 21 are Patricia Plettner, Carl Pellegrini, Joesepp Bottallico, Sharon McGannon, Charles Wheeler, Fr. Rob Smith, Diana Smith, Beth Sparks, and Jeffrey Hunter.

Prayer

Father, I am not humble enough
My pride is showing.
I need to be where the light
Shines brightly upon me,
And the rivers flow freely.

Father, I am not friendly enough,
Teach me humility
And give me the power to smile
At my groping
Where the darkness turns to light
And the candles flow freely always,
And the rivers run out to the sea.

- Sue Abbott Boyd
April 4, 2003



Justpeace has launched a Monday Night Film Series at the Community Room of the Fort Smith Public Library, Main Branch, at 3201 Rogers Avenue.

Films will be shown on the 4th Monday of every month--October 27, November 24, December 22, 2008; and January 26, February 23, March 23, April 27, and May 25, 2009.

Come at 5:45 with a brown-bag dinner and Justpeace will provide drinks and dessert. The film will be shown promptly at 6:00 p.m., to be followed by a short discussion.

October's film is "Constantine's Sword," a documentary which takes a provocative look at holy wars past and present. The film, directed by Oren Jacoby and based on James Carroll's book "Constantine's Sword," runs 1 hour 35 minutes.

Justpeace continues to hold its weekly witness at Creekmore Park every Sunday afternoon, rain or shine, from 12:15-12:45 p.m. Witnesses are always welcome.

SWEATIN' WITH THE SENIOR SISTERS



Sister Herbert builds upper body strength on the Bowflex Machine.

Sister Patrick Cingolani, 94, counts to twenty in Italian. “Uno, due, tre, quattro...” Sister Herbert Huber, 87, counts in German. “Eins, zwei, drei, vier...” With a little bit of huffing and puffing and a lot of laughter, Sisters Richard Walter, 93; Josita Nahlen, 91; and Jovita Stengel, 90 match their curls, shrugs, knee lifts and kicks to the cadences. At St. Scholastica Monastery’s biweekly exercise class, between 5 and 15 sisters maintain fitness levels that help these nonagenarians seem at least a decade younger than their chronological ages.



Sister Patrick does leg lifts using the dyna band.

Sister Patrick, the class’ senior member and class clown, playfully shakes her dumbbells at their teacher, Tommy Camp, when he’s not looking, but

it’s obvious that the group is a mutual admiration society. “They’re a great group. I love working with them,” the Marvin Altman Fitness Center personal trainer said. “They are a blessing to me and I hope I’m a blessing to them.”

The one hour exercise class puts the sisters through circuit training. Each one rides two miles on an exercise bike, does upper body strength exercises on the bowflex machine, and works out with small handheld weights while seated, doing arm and leg exercises.

Even the sisters who are employed in the monastery full-time sometimes stop and ask Tommy for advice on workout programs and exercise suggestions. Several sisters swim or do water exercise daily in the indoor pool. Others work out with videos, on treadmills, and by walking through the grounds, all in addition to their daily work routines.

“Exercise at any age is beneficial at moderate levels,” Camp said. “If the sisters can’t do certain activities, we improvise. It keeps them active. We have fun down here and they enjoy it.”

Sister Josita, who at age 91 still serves as a hospitality worker in the Gift Shop, is proof of the class’ benefits. “We have a lively time!” she said, smiling broadly through the hour long routine.

“We’ve had a sharp decline in accidents due to falls in those sisters who exercise regularly,” Brenda Pereira, Infirmary Director, said. “It also improves their self-esteem and self-worth because they can continue to do things for themselves that they would otherwise have to ask for assistance with. The increased cardiovascular benefits have helped to lower blood pressure and may have even decreased the need for medications in some sisters. The long-term benefits of some type of exercise, regardless of age, cannot be overemphasized.”



Sisters Herbert, Patrick, and Richard hoist the barbells, encouraged by their trainer, Tommy Camp.



Sisters Josita and Jovita log in two miles each on their exercise bikes.



Sisters Herbert, Patrick, and Richard do leg lifts while counting to 20 in German and Italian.

Sister Theresa's Altar Servers Learn About Benedictine Life



Sister Kimberly Prohaska, OSB, Vocation Director, and the sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery welcomed some young visitors this summer! Sister Theresa Nguyen, OP from Fort Smith, a native of Vietnam, met with Sister Kimberly to involve young girls from her Altar Servers group in learning about vocations.

On several Saturdays, the girls, ranging in age from 10-15, came to the monastery with Sister Theresa to attend morning prayers and have lunch with the sisters.

The girls learned the monastery's history, went on guided tours and met with several sisters during each visit. They asked many questions about religious life and becoming a sister of St. Scholastica. While they shared prayer, meals, and recreation with the sisters, the girls learned that the Rule of Benedict calls sisters to lead a balanced life of prayer ("ora,") work ("labora,") and leisure. With Sisters Kimberly and Theresa, the girls had opportunities to experience the outdoors, to swim, and to go on a field trip to the bowling alley. The girls were happy to know that sisters laugh, play, and pray on the road to seeking God. The girls also spent a Saturday visiting Subiaco Abbey and are eager to visit again this fall. We are planting vocation seeds in the good soil of Fort Smith.

In the accompanying photo, Sister Kimberly welcomes Sister Theresa's Altar Servers to St. Scholastica. In the front row are Tracy Do, Le Phuong Nhi, Le Phuong Vi, and Anna Dang. In the back row with Sister Kimberly are Tiffany Nguyen and Missy Ho.



St. Scholastica Monastery welcomed two young women to its Summer Discernment Weekend July 3-8--Kimberly Minor from Macon, GA and Guadalupe Jimenez from South Houston, TX. They learned about monastic life at St. Scholastica and met for joint activities and programs with young men discerning their call to monastic life at Subiaco Abbey. During their time at the monastery, they visited Subiaco and Hesychia House of Prayer and even had time to enjoy some fireworks on Independence Day. In the picture at left, Sister Maria Goretti DeAngeli, Guadalupe Jimenez, Sister Pat Bolling, Sister Dolores Vincent Bauer, Brother Patrick Boland, Sister Catherine Markey and Kimberly Minor visit the monastery library.

Come and See Weekends

If you are a young Catholic woman between the ages of 18-45 who would like to learn more about Benedictine life, consider spending a "Come and See" Weekend with us. Our next five weekends will be held on:

October 24-26 2008
November 21-23 2008
January 9-11 2009
March 20-22 2009
May 15-17 2009

All weekends begin with Evening Praise, 5 p.m. on Friday, and end at noon on Sunday.

For more information, or to make a reservation, call Sister Kimberly Rose Prohaska at (479) 783-4147 or e-mail vocationdirector@stscho.org



Sister Alice O'Brien, OSB, (R) made her three-year temporary profession of vows at St. Scholastica Monastery on August 15th. "Making temporary profession in St. Scholastica Monastery has been a joyous event," she said. "Now I am a real member of this wonderful monastic community and am excited to journey to God with them." Sister Cabrini Schmitz, OSB, Prioress, presided at the ceremony during Evening Praise.

In 2009

**Renew Your Spirit...
Refresh Your Soul...
Attend a Retreat.**

SEASONAL RETREATS

St. Scholastica Retreat Center is offering three opportunities for visitors to encounter Jesus through the liturgical seasons.

On **March 21**, Rev. Rebecca Spooner, a Presbyterian minister, will lead an ecumenical Lenten Day of Recollection--"Rolling Back the Stone: Preparing Our Hearts for Easter."

On **April 9-12**, join the sisters in a Triduum Retreat as they celebrate Holy Week in silent prayer. This retreat begins on the evening of Holy Thursday and ends with the celebration of the Eucharist on Easter.

On **December 3**, Sister Maria DeAngeli, OSB leads an Advent Day of Recollection.

SPIRITUALITY AND CREATIVITY

On **April 25**, attend a one-day workshop, "Create Your Own Gourd Prayer Bowl." This popular workshop, led by Sister Melissa Ann Letts, OSB, was featured on Channel 40/29 television news last year.

Sister Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB will present two retreats that explore spiritual journaling and writing. The first, "The Poem of Your Life," will be held **October 2-4**. She will offer her popular retreat, "Soul Writing," on **November 20-22**.

On **March 13-15**, Sister Macrina will join with Velma Frye, singer, songwriter, and instrumentalist, presenting "Strum a Melody of Blessing With Your Life." Frye has cut a companion CD, "Seven Sacred Pauses," to Sister Macrina's award-winning 2008 book.

FOR THE CONTEMPLATIVE

Sister Rachel Dietz, OSB and Monsignor Scott Friend will serve as spiritual directors for a Silent Directed Retreat **January 8-11**. This retreat will be based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

Dr. John King will conduct a retreat based on the spirituality of Thomas Merton on **February 20-22**.

Clara Jane Rubarth, President of the Fort Smith Historical Society, and Sister Therese Moreno, OSB will co-present a two day scripture study on the Letters of St. Paul on **June 12-13**.

BE YOUR BEST SELF

On **May 1**, Sister Rachel Dietz, OSB joins with Peachtree Hospice social workers Kathy Lyon and Vicki Wilke to offer a one day Caregivers Retreat, filled with soothing, refreshing experiences to help caregivers renew their spirits and share with others ministering to loved ones at home.

Nationally-recognized author and retreat leader Paula D'Arcy returns to the Center on **July 31-August 2** to present a three-day retreat, "Walking Barefoot on Holy Ground: The Essentials of Living Effectively."

On **September 11-13**, Sister Linda Fischer, ASC, leads a retreat called "Let Go and Let God," exploring the central theme of surrender so important to those who participate in twelve-step groups.

Fr. Matt Linn, SJ presents a "retreat to reverse the aging process" on **October 30-November 1**. Fr. Linn, the author of numerous books on healing, has directed retreats in over 50 countries throughout the world.

HISPANIC RETREAT

Deacon Marcelino Luna, Director of Hispanic Ministries for the Diocese of Little Rock, will be leading a Spanish-language retreat entitled "God and I" on **May 29-30**. Participants will meet from 7:30-9:00 p.m. on Friday and return on Saturday for presentations, testimonies, music, and praise. Overnight accommodations will be available for those who need them.

RETREATS FOR THE BUSY

A 30-week retreat based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, "Retreat in Daily Life," will complete its 2008-2009 session in May. Look for information about the 2009-2010 retreat in the spring.

If you can spare two consecutive Saturday mornings and are willing to spend 30-45 minutes praying with scripture in the intervening six nights, the "Take Home Retreat," led by Sisters Rachel Dietz and Hilary Decker, OSB may be for you. The first group will meet right after the New Year. The first Saturday session will guide participants through various ways of praying with scripture and will allow for journaling time. Following that meeting, everyone will be given a take home list of six scripture passages, with the suggestion that 30-45 minutes be spent praying with each one. During the second three hour Saturday session, participants will spend time in faith sharing and group discussion.

Our annual Retreat Brochure will be mailed out in early October. For more information about any retreat, call (479) 783-1135 or visit www.stscho.org/retreats.html.

Photo of Rose by Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB

NEWS BRIEFS

On July 2-6, Sisters Cabrini Schmitz, OSB, Prioress, and Sisters Ethel Marie Sonnier and Hilary Decker, OSB, Chapter Delegates, went to the Federation Chapter Meeting at Our Lady of Grace Monastery, Beech Grove, IN. At the meeting Sister Joella Kidwell, OSB, of Monastery Immaculate Conception, Ferdinand, IN was elected President of the Federation of St. Gertrude.

On June 15-21, Sister Jean Maher, OSB, of St. Scholastica Monastery, Duluth, MN, led the sisters in their annual retreat. The theme of the retreat was "Bread Broken."

On June 29-July 3 Sisters Alice O'Brien, Regina Schroeder, and Cecelia Brickell, OSB attended the Monastic Institute in Colledgeville, MN.

On July 11-13, Sisters Rosalie Ruesewald and Catherine Markey, OSB attended the Convention for the Common Good in Philadelphia, PA and a "National Catholic Teach-In on the War in Iraq" sponsored by Pax Christi, USA.

On July 25-28, Sister Rosalie and Sister Christine Eckart, OSB participated in Bridgefolk at St. John's Abbey, Colledgeville, MN. Bridgefolk is a movement of sacramentally-minded Mennonites and peace-minded Catholics who meet each year to explore each other's traditions.

Sister Cabrini Schmitz, OSB, had an article, "Good Zeal," published in an Australian journal, "Tjurunga," edited by Father Michael Casey. The article had been derived from a presentation Sister Cabrini made to the Benedictine Vocation Directors Conference in 2007, at which Father Casey was a featured speaker.

On August 7-10, Sister Magdalen Stanton, OSB went to the American Benedictine Academy Conference at Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, SD, where she studied the theology of Thomas Merton.

On September 16-19, Maryanne Meyericks attended the National Communicators Network for Women Religious Conference in Cincinnati, OH.

On September 19-22, Sister Rachel Dietz, OSB attended the Subprioresses Meeting at Our Lady of Grace Monastery, Beech Grove, IN.

Sister Marcrina Wiederkehr, OSB's book, "Seven Sacred Pauses," was named "One of the Best Spiritual Books of 2008 by "Spirituality and Practice."



With her award-winning book, "Seven Sacred Pauses," Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB teaches us to live mindfully through the hours of the day.

Now, with the release of her 2009 limited edition inspirational calendar, "Sacred Pauses," she gives us the opportunity to live mindfully and prayerfully throughout the year.

The calendar, whose proceeds will benefit the Retreat Center, is available for \$10 at St. Scholastica Gift Shop, on our website at <http://www.stscho.org>, or by phone order at (479) 783-4147 ext. 34.

Read the large print edition of
"Horizons" in PDF format on
<http://www.stscho.org/Horizons.html>

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