

# The Gatekeeper

St. Scholastica Monastery Fort Smith, Arkansas

## St. Scholastica Hosts NBVDC 2007

St. Scholastica Monastery welcomed vocation directors from across the country to the National Benedictine Vocation Conference October 2-8, 2007. The planning team worked for months in preparing for the event and enthusiastically welcomed men and women to Arkansas. The planning team coordinator, Sister Kimberly Rose Prohaska, welcomed other team members, Sister Pat Bolling also of Fort Smith, and Brother Francis Kirchner of Subiaco Abbey, Sister Therese Johnson of Jonesboro, Arkansas, Sister Alice O'Brien of Columbia, MO, and Sister Jo Ann Yankauskis of Piedmont, OK. On October 2-4 Sr. Kimberly and Br. Francis offered opportunities for new vocation directors to learn about the necessary elements of being

in vocation ministry. Thirteen Benedictines took part in the new vocation directors sessions just prior to the opening of the NBVDC.

The opening of the NBVDC began with a presentation and welcome written by Sister Cabrini Schmitz, prioress, and delivered by Sister Rachel Dietz, sub-prioress. The planning team then performed a skit entitled, "Stations of the Cross for Vocation Directors, A Comedy" followed by a social. The days that



NATIONAL BENEDICTINE VOCATION DIRECTORS  
NBVDC 2007

followed allowed for directors to pray with the Sisters of the monastery and to hear the main presenter, Fr. Michael Casey, OCSO of Tarrawarra Abbey, Victoria, Australia speak about navigating shame and guilt to discern God's call, (continued on page 2)

## Kelly Fogarty Joins St. Scholastica!

My official entrance to the St. Scholastica Monastery was on September 14, 2007. These past two months have definitely been life changing. I have encountered situations and people that have opened insights into me, in hope, to answer the big questions. Why am I here? What is God calling me to do?

I was very content with my career, my

home situation and my overall sense of place in my life, however,



Candidate Kelly Fogarty  
St. Scholastica Monastery

I was not completely fulfilled. What was blocking my relationship with God? Or, if this is not what God intended for me, what else is there?

I believe that all people have a vocation. It is up to us to ask

God of his divine plan and not follow our sometime selfish ways. Once I truly believed this and honestly asked God why I felt my internal struggle for a deeper personal connection with him and other people, I felt myself open up to the possibilities and listened for the Holy Spirit's guidance. I knew I was not in this search alone; he would lead me to the right people and places. It was time for action. Once I stepped inward and gave time (continued on page 3)



Volume 1, Issue 2

Newsletter Date  
November 2007

### Special points of interest:

- *The National Benedictine Vocation Directors are welcomed to Fort Smith, Arkansas*
- *Meet our Candidates!*
- *What are the Sisters reading?*
- *Fifth Grade Vocation Days*
- *Visit opportunities...*
- *Do you share our 20/20 Vision?*

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## The National Benedictine Vocation Directors Conference

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pre-formation, the formation that begins before formation begins, St. Benedict's criteria of suitability and readiness, and recruitment for the monastic cemetery. Father Casey also gave presentations to the sisters of St. Scholastica in Fort Smith and Atchison, KS and to the monks of Subiaco Abbey. Abbot Jerome Kodell of Subiaco Abbey made his presentation around the question, "Who was the first Vocation Director in the Bible?" Both Abbot Jerome and Fr. Michael Casey provided the vocation directors with much to ponder and put into practice in vocation ministry.

The NBVDC was not all work and prayer! Vocation directors from as far away as England to Florida to Washington State, were

given opportunities to experience southern hospitality at its finest! Participants were gifted with treats of NBVDC handmade tapestry bags filled with such items as chocolates and hot sauce, and they experienced choir music from the Fort Smith Chorale and an afternoon trolley tour of the city. Fort Smith Mayor, Ray Baker provided us with a lovely luncheon and honored the team and presenters with the keys of the city and even honorary pardons! The overall event was well received by 53 vocation directors who are always welcome back to spend time with the sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery. The next NBVDC will be hosted by the monks of St. John's Abbey, in Collegeville, MN in 2009.



*Stepping Stones Through Monastic Life  
The NATIONAL BENEDICTINE VOCATION CONFERENCE 2007*

For more information about the National Benedictine Vocation Directors Conference please visit our website, <http://www.stscho.org> or contact the vocation office.

## "What a Monastic Reads" Sr. Pat Bolling, OSB

*(Sr. Pat shares this quote from 'Yeshua of Nazareth, Spiritual Master' by Richard Chilson)*

"We encounter (God's) Dominion of Love through Yeshua's parables. These short stories, examples, and metaphors drawn from ordinary life catch us, bring us up short, cause us to open our eyes and minds to a new way of seeing. Yeshua does not speak directly of Love's Domain, not because he wants to be difficult, but because it is so different from our current sense of reality. How can he describe a reality we experience only fleetingly? So he selects common aspects of experience, sometimes turns them upside down, or stretches them beyond their bounds, to offer a glimpse

of Love's Rule. He demands a new way of seeing; questioning our basic sense of what is real. Parables can suggest possibilities without having to spell out details.

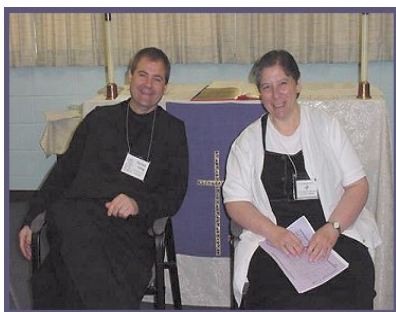
Consider Alice in Wonderland as a spiritual book. Children still connect to the truth; one reason they sometimes frighten adults: children see the truth and at times blurt it out embarrassingly. Alice falls down a rabbit hole, or through a looking glass and enters an upside-down world. She finds herself painting white roses red so the Queen won't shout, "Off with their heads!" We must play along

**"These short stories, examples, and metaphors drawn from ordinary life, catch us, bring us up short, cause us to open our eyes and minds to a new way of seeing".**

with all sorts of crazy adult games to survive. After a while the child grows up and becomes an adult who has mastered the games and learned to hide the truth. (continued on page 3)

## St. Scholastica Monastery Vocation Events

The vocation office never lacks for activity! October was by no means a quiet month. With the National Benedictine Vocation Conference just completed, the vocation department switched focus to the fall Fifth Grade Vocation Day. Sisters from the monastery along with the monks of Subiaco Abbey, religious in the Diocese of



*Brother Patrick Boland and Sister Cecelia Marie Brickell at Fifth Grade Vocation Days!*

Little Rock and a host of wonderful lay volunteers offered a day of vocation education for fifth grade children. Fifth Grade Vocation Day has been a part of the Diocese for over 15 years. It began with 50 students as a one time event that now occurs two times a year and embraces approximately 600-700 participants. The partici-

pants go through a variety of workshops called X+Y=Z (music). Imagine, New Kid on the Block, Different Strokes, Father, Brother, Sister Act, To Tell the Truth Sister/Brother and Pictionary. It is a day of happy chaos! The next FGVD is April 7, 2008.

The sisters will visit Nazareth, TX, Feb. 10, 2008 to honor sisters and promote vocations. Vocation Come and See Weekends available at anytime. Monastic Summer Experience with Subiaco and St. Scholastica July 3-7 2008.

## “What a Monastic Reads” Sr. Pat Bolling, OSB (Continued from page 2)

Quite soon we have forgotten altogether that the red roses are indeed but paint. Yeshua’s parables could be seen as just such a mirror or rabbit hole leading not to some upside-down crazy land, but back to sanity and reality. They provide ways out of a wonderland neither wonderful nor life-giving.

Consider parables as windows into a new reality. They afford us an opportunity to peer through into a new way of seeing, thinking, and living. And since they offer us a strange new world, let’s take the time needed to adjust our eyes and mind. They may be short and pithy, but it takes a lifetime to digest them. Take the time. Return to them again and again. There is more than one way to peel

a parable. No stale school of philosophy here. No schoolmaster teaching us rules of conduct. They free our mind, give wing to our fancy.

Enter them at your own risk from every possible angle, at least one viewpoint for each person or object in the tale. Meditate upon them. St. Benedict suggests ruminating on Scripture as a cow chews on her cud. Keep them in heart; dare rewrite them. Change the scene; alter the characters. Play! Imagine! Then come back to the original and discover what has appeared and what was there all along.”

The book quoted is: *Yeshua of Nazareth, Spiritual Master* by **Richard W. Chilson.**



Sister Pat Bolling is the community webmaster and assists in vocation ministry for the monastery.

## Kelly Fogarty joins St. Scholastica Monastery (continued from page 1)

and attention to God’s message for me, things started to happen. I felt less anxious and my prayer was more focused. At this time, I did not share my internal struggle with anyone. I was driving to work one day and listening to a radio station, to which I do not normally listen. An ad came on the air and I heard Sr. Kimberly’s voice, asking if I ever thought of living a religious life. I answered out loud, Yes. What was I saying? I surprised myself. She gave a telephone number and I knew then if I did not call at the moment, I would talk myself out of it. So, when Sister and I spoke, she invited me to visit. This was possible, as I lived in Fort Smith. I wondered why I never realized the community was for women. As I

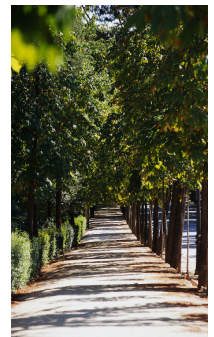
drove up the driveway of the monastery, I was excited but I wondered what this was all about. How is this possible? I am a successful speech pathologist and I am visiting a monastery for a potential life change. That did not seem real, but then I remembered my prayer those past few weeks. What do you want of me, God? So, I took a deep breath, asked the Holy Spirit to be with me as I toured the building and spoke to the sisters. I came away from that meeting feeling refreshed and hopeful; which I had not experienced in a long time.

That encounter showed me what God would do when we receive him openly and honestly. I try not to limit him but because of my fear or inability to understand sometimes, I do. As

***‘That encounter showed me what God would do when we receive him openly and honestly’.***

we begin each day, may we be open to the love and patience God has for all of us and may we show that to each other.

—Kelly Fogarty



## Changing of the Guard

### Changing of the Guard

The one who has been in charge for so long now,  
surrenders the keys  
She, who thought she knew what was best for her,  
steps aside to let You pass  
The one who directed everyone’s movements, hands  
over the control panel  
She, who needed no help ever, is in constant

need of it now  
Open wide these gates, Lord  
Redirect this lineup  
Let there be a complete *changing of the guard* so that  
no one scarcely recognizes  
The one who used to stand there  
Let’s have no neutral Swiss attire though, not here  
I am ready to don a more distinct uniform



Mary Beth Fritsch  
Candidate of St. Scholastica  
Monastery January 2008

Clothe me instead,  
Lord, in the cape of  
my destiny  
Make it a perfect fit  
With colors I recognize  
Colors I might  
even eventually  
flaunt

--Mary Beth Fritsch

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## *The Gatekeeper*

Vol. 1

No. 2

Gatekeeper is published quarterly by the vocation office of St. Scholastica Monastery PO Box 3489 Fort Smith, Arkansas 72913. Vocation Department Email: vocationdirector@stscho.org Telephone: 479.783.4147.

Anyone is welcome to be on our mailing list at no charge.

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## St. Scholastica Monastery 20/20 Vision



*The year is 2020 and St. Scholastica Monastery rejoices in  
20/20 vision!*

*We are a prophetic, contemplative, vibrant community  
steeped in Benedictine values, a center of hospitality to all  
of God's creation.*

*We stand in solidarity with the powerless; we are a voice  
speaking for the voiceless.*

*We are a Eucharistic community building on our gospel  
tradition of prayer, work and leisure.*

*We have embraced the challenge and have been enriched  
through the new and multi-cultural membership in  
community.*

*Our 20/20 vision compels us to joyfully reach out to the  
needs of our world and our church.*

**Do you share our vision? We invite you to come & see!**

**Contact us today!**

## Do you know a woman we'd like to know?



**Please share with women information about the Sisters of St. Scholastica!**

**Write or Call today!**

**Does she have listening heart-like ours?  
A Heart filled with passion for being a God seeker?**



We are Benedictine Sisters:

Committed to seeking God, rooted in a rich monastic tradition. Women who seek to be a voice for the voiceless—by living a life balanced in hospitality, simplicity, and in the wisdom of the Gospel.

We join together in prayer, community life and service to help create a loving world! Come live out our 20/20 vision by sharing in our dream of being a prophetic and contemplative community!

Do you know a woman who would like to know more about us?

**We'd like to know her too...**