



HORIZONS

Vol. 37, No. 1

ST. SCHOLASTICA MONASTERY, Fort Smith, AR

February 2008

Justpeace Pilgrims Attend Beatification of World War II Martyr Franz Jagerstatter

The sisters at St. Scholastica Monastery are members of the national Catholic peace movement, Pax Christi USA. Several of them are also active participants in Justpeace, an ecumenical River Valley peace group, as well as Church Women United. They have been involved in prayerful vigils for many years in opposition to preemptive war. Their half-hour silent Weekly Witness continues every Sunday afternoon from 12:15 to 12:45 p.m., as they meet at the northeastern corner of Creekmore Park, Fort Smith, each Sunday at noon, ending with the reading of the names of soldiers who died in the previous week and praying for peace.

“We remember our soldiers, their families, and everyone who suffers in wartime,” Sister Rosalie Ruesewald, OSB, a core member of National Benedictines for Peace and coordinator of St. Scholastica’s Social Justice committee, said. “We pray for our soldiers but oppose the preemptive war in which they serve.”

On October 26, 2007, Sister Rosalie and Justpeace member and St. Scholastica Oblate program enrollee Kathy Jarvis traveled to Linz, Austria to attend the beatification of Franz Jagerstatter, who was beheaded by the Germans for refusing to serve in the German Army during WWII.

Blessed Jagerstatter, who was born on May 20, 1907, in St. Radegund, Austria, was educated in a one-room schoolhouse, but became an avid reader with his grandfather’s encouragement.

When Hitler came to Linz to announce the annexation of Austria in 1938, Jagerstatter was the only person in his town to oppose it. He was inducted into the German Army, serving from October 1940 until April 1941, when he was released to return to his wife, three daughters, and family farm.

As a part-time church sexton, Blessed Jagerstatter received the Eucharist daily. Through prayer, reflection, and Bible reading, he became convinced that the German war was unjust, and decided that he could not in conscience serve in the Army.

He sought counseling from his bishop, his pastor, family and friends. All of them urged him to consider the needs of his family and his country and serve in the military. And yet Jagerstatter knew he must resist.

“If the Church stays silent in the face of what is happening, what difference would it make if no church were ever opened again?” he said.

Jagerstatter did not judge the bishop, his pastor, his family or his countrymen for cooperating, however reluctantly, with the Nazis. “God has given me the gift of seeing things as they are,” he said.

When he was called to service again in February 1943, he announced his refusal to fight and volunteered to perform nonviolent service.

He was arrested and moved to a Berlin prison. He was condemned to death for sedition in July and beheaded on August 9, 1943.

On the eve of his execution, Jagerstatter wrote, “If I must write... with my hands in chains, I find that much better than if my will were in chains. Neither prison nor chains nor sentence of death can rob a man of his faith and his free will.”

“I think Franziska, his wife, is also a martyr,” Sister Rosalie said. “She was denied state assistance after his death because of the controversy. She had to take care of the farm and her girls. She was young.”

Five thousand pilgrims from all over the world joined Sister Rosalie and Jarvis at the beatification Mass held in St. Mary Cathedral in Linz. Cardinal Jose Saraiva Martins, who presided over the Mass, said Jagerstatter’s courage is an important example for people today, who face “conditioning and manipulation of consciences and minds, sometimes through deceitful means.”



Retired Bishop of Linz and Abbot of St. Lambrecht Maximilian Aichorn, OSB and Sister Rosalie Ruesewald, OSB

Following the beatification, the pilgrims passed by the prison where Jagerstatter was first held following his arrest. In the evening they attended an opera composed in his honor, followed by a reception hosted by the Governor of Upper Austria. In the days that followed, they attended Mass at St. Radegund Church and visited Jagerstatter’s farm, now a shrine. They participated in a peace vigil at a church in Ostermiething. They also toured the Mauthausen Concentration Camp.

“Seven hundred eighty priests were executed in Mauthausen,” Sister Rosalie said. “Many people, university students and ordinary citizens, were executed by the Nazis for supporting peace. Sixteen people were executed on the

same day as Blessed Franz.”

A biographical DVD, “The Refusal,” is available from the Center for Christian Nonviolence at www.centerforchristiannonviolence.org. “Die Letzten Tage,” a 2005 DVD about the life of Sophie Scholl, a university student who was executed by the Nazis for promoting peace, an Academy Award nominee for best foreign film, is another good resource for social justice discussion groups to use.

Blessed Franz Jagerstatter, who followed his conscience despite great personal sacrifice, is a role model with an important message for our time.

“Let us love our enemies, bless those who curse us, pray for those who persecute us. For love will conquer and will endure for all eternity.”

From the Desk of the Prioress

It's still too early for the new growth of spring, but St. Scholastica Monastery is welcoming new life in a number of ways.

Just a little over a month ago we with the rest of the world welcomed the New Year, which this year, has that extra day for good measure. You notice this issue of HORIZONS appears with a new look. That's because St. Scholastica Monastery hired Maryanne Meyerriecks, its first ever Communications Director. An area correspondent for The Arkansas Catholic for a number of years, she comes with years of experience in print and electronic media and with an eagerness to learn other aspects of publicity to get the word out about the life and ministry of the Benedictine Sisters of Fort Smith. Welcome, Maryanne!

Maryanne's office will become the clearinghouse, both for the monastery and the retreat center for all publicity, whether in print, on billboards, radio, television, or the internet. Up to this time those duties have been covered in part by many Sisters.

The community is very grateful to Sister Pierre Vorster, who edited the three-times-yearly monastery publication, HORIZONS, took the pictures, arranged for newspaper and television coverage for a total of 25 years! That's quite a record for a science teacher with no journalism background. She did a job the monastery is quite proud to dis-

play. Sisters who assisted her with HORIZONS were Sisters Elise Forst, copy editor and advisor, Audrey Becker, mailing list coordinator and circulation manager, and Kimberly Prohaska, computer layout.

Other Sisters who participated in the multiple publicity efforts were Sisters Magdalen Stanton with the original web site, and Kimberly Prohaska and Pat Bolling, the revised web site's upkeep and updating. Doing the Retreat Center publicity through newspapers, magazines, parish bulletins, and brochures were Sisters Therese Moreno and Hilary Decker, with some assistance from Macrina Wiederkehr and the program committee of the Retreat Center advisory board.

Also in this issue are listed the many benefactors who welcomed our annual appeal letter and contributed money and in-kind gifts in the course of this calendar year. My custom when someone makes a substantial donation is to call them to express the sisters' gratitude. These generous folks often tell me that I didn't need to call; I am so encouraged by their responses which can be summed up with this one: "We want you Sisters to be around a long time and we want to help." How grateful we are to you. This issue will show some of your dollars at work.

With great joy and hope we welcomed two postulants within the last

six months: Kelly Fogarty and Beth Fritsch. Both are gifted women who will continue to discern their call to monastic life

by living, praying, and working with us. The Oblate group of men and women from various denominations continues to increase as these God-seekers come to walk the spirituality of St. Benedict along with us. Sister Macrina Wiederkehr's latest book, "The Seven Sacred Pauses", will be on book shelves this spring.

Not only is this a season for welcoming the new; it's with more than a tinge of sadness that we must bid farewell to our last two missions, St. Joseph's Home in North Little Rock where Sisters Vivian Luyet and Dolores Vincent Bauer performed a needed and highly respected ministry with the poor and with the elderly, and St. John's Parish in Russellville where Sisters Regina and Barbara Schroeder will serve as Parish Ministers through June of this year. These four Sisters are needed to fill positions at the Monastery. Our two corporate ministries are Hesychia House of Prayer at New Blaine staffed by Sisters Louise Sharum, Marian Walbe, Andrea Loran, and Ethel Marie Sonnier, and the Retreat Center at the Monastery staffed by Sisters Hilary Decker, Madeline Bariola, Macrina Wiederkehr, Elise Forst, and Therese Moreno.

For more information on the activities at St. Scholastica's, check out the web site at www.stscho.org or come by for a tour. May what happens to you this year be the blessing for which you are praying and waiting. May this Lent enliven your spirit of joy and hope.

—Sister Cabrini Schmitz, OSB



SISTER CABRINI SCHMITZ

In Loving Memory



OBLATE FRANCIS MICHAEL FINCH, born August 7, 1919; passed away on October 26, 2007. A funeral Mass was held on October 30 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Springfield, MO, where Finch had

served as a eucharistic minister, President of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, President of the Parish Council, and Sacred Heart Angel. A decorated World War II veteran, Finch was buried with full military honors at the Missouri Veterans Cemetery. He is survived by his wife, Darlene; his daughter and son-in-law, Julie and Joy Sebek; his son and daughter-in-law, Michael and Ellen Finch; four grandchildren; his sister, Ruth Patterson; and many nieces, neph-

ews, in-laws and friends.

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OBLATE JOHNNIE FRANCK, born December 19, 1926, passed away on October 10, 2007 in Florida. He is survived by his widow, Jacqueline, seven children, and seventeen grandchildren.

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OBLATE MARIE NOLL, born January 2, 1925; passed away on October 7, 2007. She was preceded in death by her husband, Aloys J. Noll, whom she married on April 23, 1946. They had no children. She is survived by many nieces and nephews.

Heaven-born, the soul a heavenward course must hold; beyond the world she soars; the wise man, I affirm, can find no rest in that which perishes, nor will he lend his heart to ought that doth time depend.

- Michaelangelo

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Maryanne Meyerriecks Managing Editor, Photos
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From the Psalms

*Eyes we have and cannot
see.*

*Grace of God, give sight to
me.*

*Ears we have and cannot
hear.*

*Voice of God, sound forth,
ring clear.*

*With our hearts deceit we
deal.*

Jesu just, our depths reveal.

*-Sister Consuella Bauer,
OSB
1950*

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Sisters Madeline Clifton, Miriam Hoffman, Cabrini Schmitz, & Magdalen Stanton

Louise Kaufman

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We have tried to include all benefactors in 2007. If your name was overlooked or improperly printed, please accept our apologies and contact us to correct the error.

Development Office
St. Scholastica Monastery
P.O. Box 3489
Fort Smith, AR 72913
Telephone: 479-783-4147
E-mail: elise@stscho.org

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

And Beth Makes Three!

On December 26, St. Scholastica welcomed its newest member, Beth Fritsch, during Evening Praise. Beth joins two others in formation: Kelly Fogarty, who was received on September 14, and Sister Cecelia Marie Brickell, who made her temporary profession of vows on June 24. During her formation period, Beth will be living community with the formation group, pursuing religious studies, and studying the Rule of St. Benedict under the direction of Formation Director Sister Maria DeAngeli.



Kelly Fogarty, Beth Fritsch, and Sister Cecelia Marie Brickell

Beth, the third of four children of Joseph and Arlene Fritsch, was born on April 13, 1962.

"I had considered religious life when I was in college," Beth said, "but I was not mature enough then to make such a commitment." Instead, she earned a B.A. in Theology; an M.Ed; an MBA from Xavier University, Cincinnati; and a paralegal certificate from the University of Cincinnati. While she achieved success in the business world as a real estate closer, asset manager,

and, later, contract project manager for a utility company, she never forgot the contemplative part of herself.

Beth had prayed with Sister Macrina Wiederkehr's book, "Seasons of Your Heart", for many years. In 2006, after a large corporate merger gave her the gift of time and freedom, she traveled to St. Scholastica Monastery to attend one of Sister Macrina's retreats, "The Secret Garden." At the monastery, she found a place where her soul felt very free. She continued to travel in Ireland and France, but still felt a pull towards the monastic life and the welcoming and loving community where she had begun to feel at home.

After a period of discernment, she made arrangements to sell her home in Ohio and become a member of St. Scholastica.

"It often amazes me that I ever would have been led to Arkansas," she said, "as I had never visited and would not have chosen to reside there. I do believe that it is a confluence of many factors which align to situate a person in the place they are meant to be. I believe this happened to me and I am grateful for the grace to say, 'Yes.'"

Consider Your Call

St. Scholastica Monastery Monastic Experience

July 3-8, 2008

This retreat weekend is open to young Catholic women between the ages of 18-45 who want to learn about Benedictine life. There will be times for prayer, ministry, getting to know the Sisters and participating in monastic life. For more information, contact our Vocation Director:

Sister Kimberly Rose Prohaska, OSB
St. Scholastica Monastery
P.O. Box 3489
Fort Smith, Arkansas 72913
(479) 783-4147
vocationdirector@stscho.org

St. Scholastica Gift Shop

Fort Smith's only Catholic gift shop for Religious Articles, handcrafted items, and home-made baked goods.

Open:
Monday-Friday 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Most Saturdays 12:30-3:00 p.m. at
the Retreat Center, 2nd Floor

IN THE NEWS

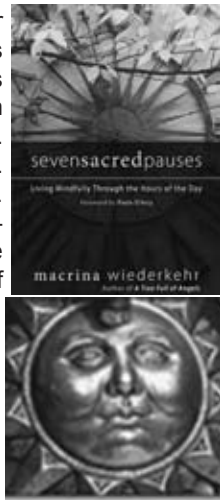
Sister Maria DeAngeli, OSB, Formation Director at St. Scholastica Monastery, is attending an Intensive Study of the Holy Rule in Rome, Italy. At the two-month long conference, Sister Maria and 27 other participants from English-speaking countries around the world, will embark on an in-depth study of the Rule of St. Benedict and the Dialogues of St. Gregory using primary sources. During the program, which is conducted at the Generalate of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing, the class will take trips to Nursia, the birthplace of St. Benedict, to Subiaco, and to Monte Cassino.

Sister Cabrini Schmitz, OSB, Prioress, is attending the Conference of Benedictine Prioresses from January 31-February 4 in Ferdinand, IN. This annual meeting brings together prioresses from the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and the Bahamas.

Sister Macrina Wiederkehr's seventh book, "Seven Sacred Pauses: Living Mindfully Through the Hours of the Day", will be released by Sorin Books on March 31, 2008. A companion CD, "Seven Sacred Pauses: Singing Mindfully From Dawn to Dark", by Velma Frye, was released in December, 2007. In this book, Sister Macrina encourages readers to use the seven sacred pauses in the monastic day--the Night Watch, the Awakening Hour, the Blessing Hour, the Hour of Illumination, the Wisdom Hour, the Twilight Hour, and the Great Silence--to keep vigil with God in their own lives.

Sister Macrina will be conducting retreats using themes from *Seven Sacred Pauses* at St. Scholastica Retreat Center from February 22-24; at The Cenacle Retreat, Houston, TX from April 4-6; at Subiaco Retreat Center from April 11-13; and at Bon Secours Spiritual Center in Marriottsville, MD from April 18-20. Sister Macrina will also be signing books in several cities across the country.

"Seven Sacred Pauses" is available for pre-order at Amazon.com, which also sells her first six books. "Seven Sacred Pauses" CD is available through <http://www.velmafrye.com>.



Seven Sacred Pauses CD
Velma Frye

On November 29, a special prayer service was held at St. Joseph Home in North Little Rock, marking the departure of Sisters Vivian Luyet and Dolores Vincent Bauer, OSB and the end of 100 years of Benedictine ministry there. Sister Cabrini Schmitz, OSB, led the two-hour prayer service, beginning in the second floor Chapel and continuing through the building, stopping to pray, sing hymns, and sprinkle holy water in each area of the building.

The Diocese of Little Rock, owner of St. Joseph Home, is offering the property for sale. It hopes to find a buyer who will keep the building, listed on the National Historic Registry, and maintain its Catholic ties, and is waiting until March 1 to give interested Catholics a chance to come forward.

Sister Vivian, 89, returned to St. Scholastica for health reasons. Sister Dolores Vincent is serving as assistant procurator in the monastery.

Read the large print edition of "Horizons" in PDF format on our website at:

www.stscho.org/Horizons.html

CALENDAR OF EVENTS AT SPIRITUALITY CENTER

- Feb. 16 Caregivers Day of Recollection
Sister Rachel Dietz, OSB
- Feb. 22-24 Honoring the Soul's Need for Reflection
Sister Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB
- March 8 Lenten Day of Recollection
Clara Jane Rubarth
- Mar. 20-23 Holy Week/Triduum Retreat
Sister Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB and Sister Hilary Decker, OSB
- Mar. 28-30 Retreat on Thomas Merton
John King
- Apr. 11-13 Dreams and Other Ways to Listen for Wisdom
Rev. Susan Sims-Smith and Bishop Larry Maze
- Apr. 18-20 Beatitudes: Promises of Joy (Not Fun)
Fr. Mark Stengel, OSB
- Apr. 24-27 Directed Retreat
- June 14 Create Your Own Gourd Prayer Bowl
Sr. Melissa Anna Letts, OSB

To register or to get more information, call 479-783-1135 or e-mail retreats@stscho.org

St. Scholastica Monastery

1301 South Albert Pike
P.O. Box 3489
Fort Smith, AR 72913-3489
Monastery@stscho.org

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