



BENEDICTINE TOUCHSTONE

Summer 2008



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

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Sr. Gaudentia OSB

75 years of monastic profession

"Thanks be to God! I pray for you!"

Prioress' Reflection

By Mother Mary Anne Noll OSB



What a great photo for a vocation ad on the front cover of this Touchstone: our Sr. Gaudentia on her 75th anniversary of her monastic vows! The caption? What 75 years of living the monastic life faithfully can do for you! Our Sr. Gaudentia is one of the great human success stories – of having loved God and others rather than looking after # 1.

On Good Shepherd Sunday, April 13, our 94-year-old Sr. Gaudentia marked the 75th anniversary of her monastic vows and was able to attend Mass. Having slept in her wheelchair for half an hour before Mass, the organ and entrance hymn literally awakened her and she was alert all during Mass.

Since her memory has really declined, the idea of a “practice” has no meaning. When I asked her at the appropriate time if she could read her vows, she took the paper and began, “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Sr. Gaudentia read her vows very movingly. At the phrase, “made my vows in the presence of Mother Abbess Benedicta OSB (who died in 1950)”, Sr. Gaudentia bowed her head according to an old tradition and then waved – as if to her!

As she has done for 75 years on the anniversary of her vows, she sang the *Suscipe* in a clear voice, “Uphold me, O Lord, as you have promised that I may live and let my hope in you not be disappointed.” (Ps. 119:126)

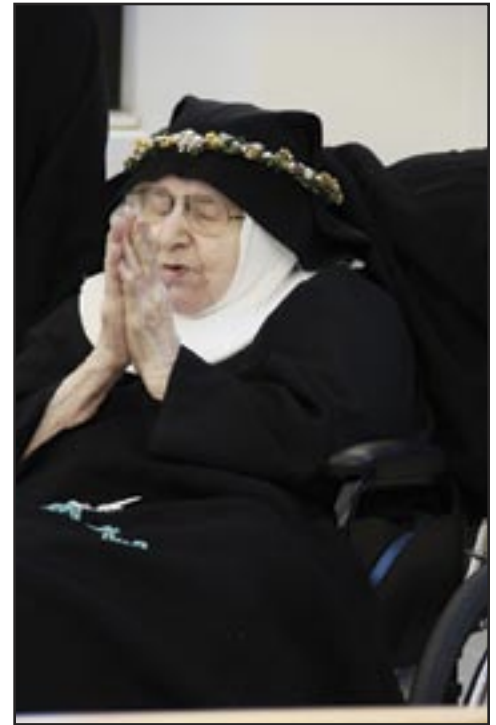
Received during her final profession in St. Vincent’s in 1936, Sr. Gaudentia has burned her profession candle every year during Mass on the anniversary of her vows. The red “G K” is for her name, Gaudentia Kaemmerle. Our community has the tradition of taking another patron saint (as part of our private devotion) for major jubilees and the initial for each of these saints adorns her profession candle. Her

patron for her 25th jubilee is Joseph, her 50th – Benedict, her 60th – Walburga, and her 70th – Irmengard

Sr. Gaudentia also received the this wreath she is wearing at her final vows in 1936. At her 25th Jubilee, some of the green leaves were painted silver. At her 50th, some were painted gold. The cluster of pearls was added at her 60th anniversary of vows. When a Sister dies, she is buried wearing her beautiful wreath.

I shared with the regular Sunday Mass participants that Sr. Gaudentia was an only child who entered the Abtei Sankt Walburg, Eichstett, Germany before she was seventeen in 1931. At age 19 Sr. Gaudentia made vows on Good Shepherd Sunday and the following year was sent to St. Vincent Archabbey in 1934.

For over 50 years Sr. Gaudentia served the monks in their refectory. With the last group of Sisters who served at St. Vincent, she came to St. Emma in 1987.



Sr. Gaudentia sings the *Suscipe* during the ceremony.



The red “G K” was inscribed when Sr. Gaudentia made her final vows, for her name, Gaudentia Kaemmerle.

For the next ten years Sr. Gaudentia had charge of our retreat dining room. When health issues prevented that service, she cared for the guests and volunteers and then for our refectory.

After these remarks, the people clapped. Sr. Gaudentia responded, “Thanks be to God! Happy Thanksgiving! I pray for you!”

After Mass, she greeted the participants and responded graciously to their congratulations with, “Happy New Year! Maybe that’s not right! Have a good day!”

When Sr. Gaudentia is able to attend The Liturgy of the Hours, she joins in the singing of the office. In her cell, she follows the rosary on a tape and prays the rosary 6—10 times a day. Literally Sr. Gaudentia has watched the Inaugural Mass of Pope Benedict XVI several hundred times and she is recollected each time. On occasion she has remarked, “You know, I have seen it three times already!”

When Sr. Gaudentia says, “I pray for you”, you can count on it!

Mother Mary Anne Noll, OSB

The Pope's Visit to the United States

St. Emma Community



Thanks to modern technology, we had the great blessing of participating in Pope Benedict XVI's pastoral visit to the United States from his landing in Washington, D.C. through his departure in New York. What a wonderful opportunity to see him speak from his deep love of Christ and of the Church and to be renewed by his message of hope!

April 15-21, 2008, Pope Benedict XVI journeyed to the United States. The Holy See had a full schedule, which included a visit to President Bush at the White House, an address to the General Assembly of the United Nations, prayer during a visit to Ground Zero in New York City, and the celebration of Holy Mass at Yankee Stadium with an attendance estimated at 60,000.

Pilgrims on Their Way



The Brian Gordon family from Blue Springs, MO, proudly display their tickets for the Papal Mass in Yankee Stadium. The family made the trip as a pilgrimage and St. Emma's was one of their destinations. Below, their twin two-year-olds, Cecilia and Thomas, enjoy St. Emma's grounds.

**Come and See Weekend:
Vocational Discernment Experience**
July 11 -13 – or anytime convenient for you



Are you single, between the ages of 16–40, a practicing Catholic and feeling a movement in your heart to give “all to God”?

Does the reality of having the *Liturgy of the Hours* structure your life appeal to you?

How would I know?

Join us for a discernment weekend where you can experience the rhythm of our life, meet our community and see where God leads you.

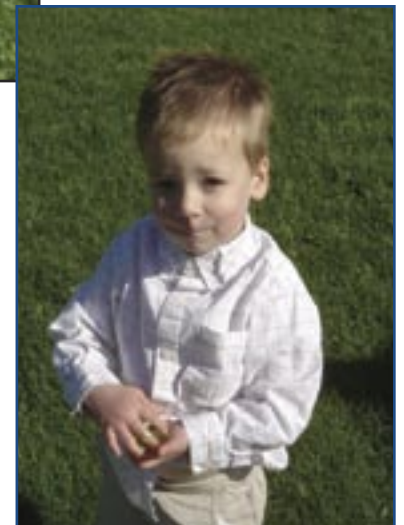
Email vocations@stemma.org

Visit www.stemma.org for more information.

Let the little ones come to me...



Let them dance before the Lord.



I will praise the Lord all my life long.



*3rd Fund Raising Dinner
April 26, 2008*



A special, special thanks to Sally Ann Novak who so beautifully and effectively welcomed our guests and emceed the evening. This was after she "singlehandedly" (unfortunately this was literally true!) creatively assembled and donated many of the cleverly themed baskets!





We thank the 120 guests who came for the 3rd Fund Raising Dinner April 26, 2008 and all those who donated baskets, items, gift certificates or their efforts to make it a lovely evening – and a financial success!



The dinner cleared \$18,500; this included over \$6000 for the baskets in the Silent Auction!



May God bless each of you.



God's Providence comes with faces, large hearts, and giving hands: **Our Volunteers**

By Mother Mary Anne, OSB

Our very first volunteers came from Jeannette when the Sisters were collecting clothes to send to relatives in Germany after World War II. Mother Leonarda asked Catherine Noel if she knew any organist that could play for Masses, but there was no money to pay an organist. Catherine replied that she was an organist and would accept no money. Her husband, Lou Noel was part of the package deal.

For the next 20 years Mr. and Mrs. Noel helped on every day of recollection and every day of a retreat in the kitchen and the dining room. Their services also included helping with the dishes (by hand in "the good old days"!), stripping the beds and, yes, playing for Mass. Mr. Noel died in 1971.

In just two weeks God answered Sr. Walburga's prayer to send another man to replace Mr. Noel. Accepting his mother's invitation to join her in volunteering here, Regis Cherry from Wall agreed to come. His mother, Dale, volunteered each week until she died five years ago at age 86! Sr. Walburga's prayer really worked for Regis still comes every week!

The Tom Bonners came from Pittsburgh to help pick apples in the early 70's.

Their children's basketball heights gave them great advantage for this seasonal job but Mrs. Bonner came weekly for over 20 years. Since they moved to Virginia, her visits are longer and fewer but also includes another volunteer: her husband.

In the early 50's, Mrs. Rubino organized a group of women from Greensburg who held tea parties and an annual Strawberry Festival at the former Penn Albert Hotel, Greensburg, to raise money for St. Emma's. Here the Sisters sold the nationality dolls, aprons, stuffed animals, and clowns that they had made.

Now each week about 40 volunteers come; others help during retreats and special events; some come whenever they can and some to fulfill service hours requirements. They range in age from 4 through 83!

Several volunteers approach 20 years of volunteering! The most recent volunteer is a 14-year-old who stopped today to meet us and he supersedes the collegiate who began this morning!

God's timing is exquisite as He brings extra help when needed, inspires people to offer and allows us to meet the nicest people.



Tom and Alma Bonner on their 60th wedding anniversary, May 5.



Regis Cherry

Visit our Bookstore



Hours: Monday – Saturday 10 am – 4 pm
Visit online anytime: www.stemma.org

+ In Memoriam +

We extend our sympathy to the families of Robert E. Stecik and Theresa Simko, both of North Huntingdon, PA.

We are honored that their families designated St. Emma as a place memorials could be made in their name.

Benedictine Nuns Daily Prayer Schedule



5:30 a.m. ~ Vigils ~ *Lectio Divina I*
6:30 a.m. ~ *Lauds*
7:00 a.m. ~ *Eucharist*
Terce
11:45 a.m. ~ *Sext/None*
5:00 p.m. ~ *Vespers*
7:30 p.m. ~ *Compline ~ Lectio Divina II*

You are welcome to pray with us.



*We are called by
our Baptism to
become saints.*

*Have you ever thought
about making a day
of recollection or a
private retreat?*

**Carolina Walters, Latrobe, PA,
dresses as St. Therese of the Little
Flower.**

It's not too early to plan...

Craft Sale and Christmas Boutique

Oct. 31 (evening)

Nov. 1 (Day)

Nov. 2 (afternoon)



Boutique features previously loved items
that make wonderful gifts from young
shoppers and from the young at heart
shoppers.

Craft items gratefully accepted.

Prayer Requests & Intentions

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



*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*

2008 Retreat Programs

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

- June-29-July 4 **SILENT** 5-day Religious/lay, Rev. Tom Acklin, OSB, \$290 (Part time participants welcome)
- July 18-24 **SILENT** 6-day, Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy, OFM Cap, \$350 (Part time participants welcome)
- August 22-24 Men/women, \$140, Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy, OFM Cap
- September 19-21 Women, \$140, Msgr. John Conway
26-28 Women, \$140, Rev. Tom Smith
- October 3-5 Women, Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy, OFM Cap, \$140
10-12 Women, Most Rev. William Winter; \$140
24-26 Legion of Mary (Members only) \$140
Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy OFM Cap
- November 7-9 Couples Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy, OFM Cap, \$270 per couple
14-16 Couples Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy OFM Cap, \$270 per couple

2009 Retreat Programs

- February 27 - March 1 **Silent Lenten**, Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy, OFM Cap
- March 6-8 Men, Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy, OFM Cap
13-15 **Silent Lenten**, Rev. Mark Gruber, OSB
27-29 **Silent Lenten**, Rev. Mark Gruber, OSB



Encounter with Silence

July 18-25, 2008

Rev. Frank Erdeljac

The freshness of the Gospels presented in four talks a day as formulated by the late Rev. John Hugo.



- The Word of the Gospel received and welcomed in the fertile soil of
- Silence so that it may indeed take root.
- Dorothy Day described it as hearing the Gospel for the first time.
- Daily Mass.

**Monastic Guest House (\$450) and
Retreat House (\$400). July 18-25**