

# The Road to Emmaus



***Benedictine Touchstone • Summer 2009***

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# Prioress' Reflection

By Mother Mary Anne Noll OSB



“Did not our hearts burn within us as the Stranger explained from Moses and the prophets why the Messiah had to suffer

those things so as to enter his glory?” This reflection of the two men on the road to Emmaus happened after they recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread (the tapestry on the front cover of this *Touchstone*) and His disappearance from them.

We so identify with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Often our heads and hearts are downcast when someone asks us what is wrong. We want to say, “Don’t you watch CNN or read the newspapers? Have you not heard what has just happened to my loved ones? I try to do what God wants but He does not listen to my prayer. My loved one’s cancer is back, our family is still torn apart, we may lose our house.”

In response to Jesus’ question of “What things?”, they answered with some of the saddest words ever written, “We had hoped...” We had unconsciously hoped that faith would be a life insurance policy against the tragedies of life. We had hoped that living a good life would have prevented tragedies happening to a loved one. We had hoped that a particular treatment would slow the onset of a disease, that the treatment would cure our loved one. If we are

older we would hope that we die before our children.

We are like these men on the road to Emmaus: we know everything about our lives—names, dates, places, events—except from a faith perspective, from the heart of God. We thirst to know the WHY: WHY my loved one or WHY me? WHY when things are already so tough? WHY when things have just started being better? WHY would God permit the suffering of the young, the innocent, the good? So often we feel the WEIGHT of the WHY.

Forty years ago, a priest told the high school students on retreat here that Emmaus was “Emma” and “us”! What a striking way to describe St. Emma Monastery! “Emma” and “us”: How fitting for those who come physically to the retreat house and gift shop or those who “come” through email and snail mail. Each person knows the hunger for meaning, the hunger for love, the hunger to give oneself for another. Each desires to grow in relationship with God, to gain the strength to endure the WHY DID THIS HAPPEN or the faith to keep on believing that God is good – despite the evidence of TODAY.

Looking back we often say that only God got us through such a time or tragedy. Or we marvel at how God worked through an event that we knew that God could never be a part of. We are dumbfounded at how God managed to bring people into our lives who said the right thing, helped us and comforted us.



Today we are in the fifth week of Easter still with many “Alleluias.” Without Easter there is nothing to celebrate for death and darkness would ultimately win. Easter is the beginning and the end of our faith as Christians for Jesus has risen from the dead and gone ahead to prepare a place for us in the heavenly kingdom—Alleluia, Alleluia!

Jesus’ Resurrection from the dead is the reality expressed and reported

in the Acts of the Apostles that is read during the daily Eucharist in the Easter season. These cowards who had locked themselves in the Upper Room in fear of their lives after the Crucifixion now boldly proclaim that Jesus is the Messiah, the Anointed One of God, Who had been crucified and was raised from the dead.

No amount of beatings or hardships or persecutions could contain their love of their Master and the message of the Gospel, “the Good News.”

What is “the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ” for you, for me? Is it the reality of how far God was willing to go to prove His love for each of us by sending His Son to take on our human nature? Is it the Good News that we are not traveling this journey alone? Is it the Good News that our “yoke” can be very heavy but a yoke that is meant for two and that Jesus always wants to help us carry our burdens?

Emmaus: may we also find the nourishment we need for our journey through the Word in Scripture, in inspiring words from a book or a song, in the comforting and loving words of others. May we also find our nourishment in the Eucharist, the Bread of life, our daily bread and Bread for eternal life. Alleluia! Alleluia!

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About the cover photo: The Emmaus tapestry at St. Emma Monastery was woven by Sr. Walburga, OSB, Abtei Sankt Walburg, Eichstaett, Bavaria.

*Mother Mary Anne Noll, OSB*

*Are you single, between ages 16-40 and trying to discern what path to follow as God's will for you?*

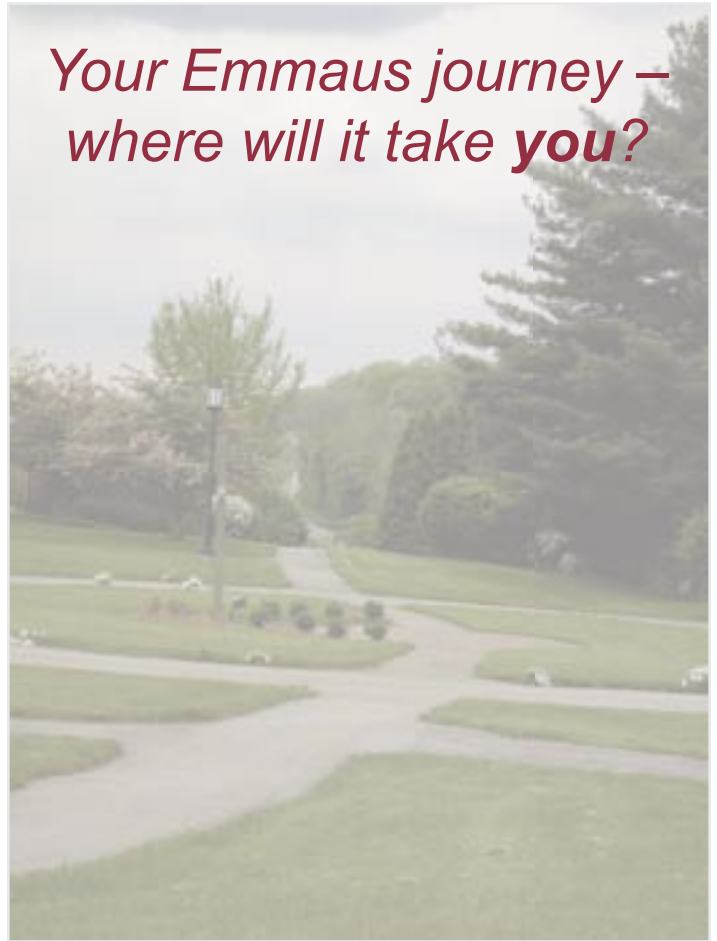
*Has Jesus become so real for you that you wonder if you might be called to the religious life?*

*Do you wonder how you would know if you had a vocation?*

*Are you looking for a community whose daily life is structured around the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours? Whose ministry is their monastic life? Who seek God in community? For whom work expresses their love of God and others?*

*We invite you to contact us so that we might discern together if your vocation is "Emma & us." For more information, call 724-834-3060 or e-mail [vocations@stemma.org](mailto:vocations@stemma.org).*

*Your Emmaus journey – where will it take you?*



## *When isn't a Dinner a Dinner?*

### **By a Dinner Guest**

When you attend the Annual Dinner Banquet at Saint Emma Monastery, "unique" comes to mind, but it too falls short of capturing the "spirit" that permeates this experience.

Over the years we have all attended dinner banquets/events. They basically have a theme or a big name speaker, a sports celebrity, or an honor to bestow on someone we know. But



St. Emma's doesn't offer any of these "normal, considered necessary" attractions.

Instead some of the guests arrive early and pray Vespers with the Nuns! This dinner is a love feast; people talking to people who care about people. They all seem to know that because of

the Benedictine Nuns of St. Emma's we are in a better place. Each person, volunteer or friend (or becoming one!) is overjoyed to break bread with the Sisters.

Most of the guests – if not all – could be doing something else on a Saturday evening. But as one woman said, "if it will help the Nuns, I'm all for it." These Benedictine Nuns not only pray and make sacrifices, they "LISTEN." What an original concept to actually listen to my personal problem or concerns, but they do.

What a wonderful time of the year to be with this consecrated group of women – Easter Season! In God's grand design, God chose women as the first to experience that Jesus was raised from the dead. Their love for Him did not end when He died; they came to do the proper anointing of the body for burial that the observance of the Sabbath had not permitted them to do.

Sometimes our busy schedules do not permit us from spending the time in prayer that we desire to do. These nuns offer our prayers of praise and petition to God in our name. Hospitality for these nuns means caring for you.

This dinner is not a one evening event, it is their daily life magnified for this moment to reassure each of us: GOD CARES.



*Fourth Dinner and Silent Auction  
at St. Emma  
Saturday, April 25, 2009*





*From Mother Mary Anne OSB  
and the Benedictine Nuns:*

*We are SO GRATEFUL to each of you  
who made this dinner "UNIQUE."*

- To each of you who began your evening by praying Vespers with us
- To each of you who participated in the evening
- To each of you who gave baskets or who donated items for the baskets
- To Jeannie Brower, Christine Hopper and many others who helped make the baskets for the Silent Auction so beautiful and unusual once again
- To those who baked for the "Delectable Desserts" sale before the dinner
- To those who volunteered with the preparation, serving and clean-up
- To those who could not come and sent a donation
- To the companies who gave items for the dinner or the Silent Auction
- To Debbie Johnson for making the DVD for the evening

*May God bless each one!*

**Debbie Johnson and Jeannie Brower (above) "discovered" on the program that evening that they were co-chair and chair for the dinner!**

# Plan Ahead for Your Estate

By Robert J. Allen  
Director of Stewardship

There are three areas of stewardship I like to suggest people consider when they ask me about how they could help Saint Emma Monastery. I begin with: "Do you have a Will?" followed by, "Have you considered a Living Trust?"

Current statistics state that over 50% of people die in the U.S. without a Will.

I cannot encourage people often enough to see an attorney and draw up a Will or Living Trust.

Giving in this country is a two-way street; people are very generous and support their favorite charities at a record dollar level, but even more importantly they seek to do good. In doing good for others they often choose a charity as the conduit for this gift. A second way to



give is a Charitable Gift Annuity because it helps the charity and it returns a percentage of the gift back to the donor each year. There are three basic components:

- Guaranteed return to you
- A tax deduction
- A portion tax-free income annually

In essence, it is like an Endowment for St. Emma's.

The third type of stewardship is the Gift of Life Insurance. Often people

can make a very large gift with a much smaller cash contribution from their pocket. A Charitable Gift of Life Insurance is also tax deductible to the extent the law allows, but basically the cash portion of the insurance policy.

We have prepared Planned Giving Brochures for you to receive for the asking and will send them to you for consideration in the privacy of your home. It is our policy not to contact anyone about Planned Gifts unless they request our assistance so your request is confidential.

Let us help you in your estate planning and remember as you proceed seek help from an attorney to be assured of good advice in your state.

## Benedictine Sisters Catholic Gift & Book Shop



Huge selection of rosaries, baby and baptismal gifts, greeting cards for all occasions including the Sacraments, devotional bracelets, and "In Memoriam" gifts for the bereaved.



Gifts for baby and baptism, devotional and religious bracelets.



Large selection of statues, religious nightlights, and Gifts for baby and baptism, devotional and religious bracelets.

**Much more not featured in these pictures!**

Visit our Bookstore • Hours: Monday – Saturday 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
Visit online anytime: [www.stemma.org](http://www.stemma.org)

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# Seeing your dollars at work! God bless you for your generosity!

Last year you so generously responded to our appeal for the repair/preservation of the outside of the windows on our refectory (monastic dining room) and Chapter Room (where the community meets for formal, official meetings). Painting became the expensive band-aid that no longer even wanted to adhere.



Although the project was ready to go last fall, the actual work began this spring.

What a difference! Look for photos of the completed project in the next *Touchstone*.



What a difference landscaping has made to our Cor Jesu Chapel! The choice of trees and shrubs and the beauty of the layout really enhances the “jewel” that is our chapel. Your response also made landscaping possible by the barren walls of the retreat house.

Photos of this completed project will also be in the next *Touchstone*.

### Rest in Peace – Bequests

*We extend our sympathy to the family of the following individual. We are honored that this friend chose to remember us in her will.*

Mary M. Dolinar, Imperial, PA

### Receiving More Than One of These Newsletters?

The Benedictine Nuns at St. Emma Monastery request your help. We have recently changed computer programs and are working very hard to make sure we only have your name in our database once. If you receive more than one of these issues of the newsletter, could you please let us know either by e-mailing us at [benedictinenuns@stemma.org](mailto:benedictinenuns@stemma.org) or by cutting out and returning this notice in the enclosed envelope?

Additionally, we would like to have your e-mail address. Why? We would like to occasionally share information about special events and retreats. ***Because postage is expensive, we would like to inform you of some things via e-mail.***

You are so special to us that we will **never** share any of your addresses (e-mail or street!).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

- I am receiving more than one newsletter. (Please enclose copies of addresses and mark the correct one.)
- Please remove my name from your mailing list.

### NEW LEAF PAPER®

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS STATEMENT  
of using post-consumer waste fiber vs. virgin fiber

St. Emma saved the following resources by using New Leaf Sakura Silk, made with 100% deinked recycled fiber and 50% post-consumer waste, processed chlorine free, and manufactured with electricity that is offset with Green-e® certified renewable energy certificates:

trees	water	energy	solid waste	greenhouse gases
5 fully grown	2,471 gallons	3 million Btu	231 pounds	574 pounds

Calculations based on research by Environmental Defense Fund and other members of the Paper Task Force.

[www.newleafpaper.com](http://www.newleafpaper.com)



*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*

# Annual Flea Market

*Make it a family event!*



Volunteers Mrs. Henry and Mrs. Darlene Peddicord sort donations for the Annual Flea Market.

June 19, Friday – 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
June 20, Saturday – 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

- Huge selection of dishes, cookware, glassware, work bench items, tools, fabric, crafts, antiques, books, jewelry, framed prints, and lots of other great stuff!
- Halupki, haluski, egg drop soup, pierogies, cookies
- Indoors, A/C,

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**Always wanted to visit and never knew  
if you could? Now's your chance!**

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**Tis true:  
Your "trash" is another's "treasure"**  
*Spring cleaning?*

"Redding up" (Western PA for making order!)?  
Benedictine Nuns invite you to consider giving your  
"STUFF" for their Flea Market. (NO clothes, shoes or purses)  
CALL BEFORE bringing appliances or furniture.  
THANK YOU!



## Busy Mothers! Do something for YOU!

For those who cannot be away  
for an entire weekend!

August 28-29 • 4 p.m. Friday  
to 5 p.m. Saturday • \$75

Theme:  
*Behold the Handmaid of the Lord:  
the Vocation of Motherhood*

## 2009 Retreat Programs

For additional information on any of these retreats or to make reservations, please visit [www.stemma.org](http://www.stemma.org) – thank you!

- June 28-July 4 Directed Retreat**  
*Rev. Mark Gruber OSB – waiting list*
- July 26-31 Five day SILENT retreat**  
*Rev. Mark Gruber OSB*  
Theme: Vanity of Vanities, \$290
- Sept. 11-13 Married Couples** *Rev. Boniface Hicks OSB*  
Theme: Love shared in Liturgy and Lectio Divina: Ways to Deepen Married Life in Christ, \$270
- Sept. 18-20 Women** *Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy OFMCap*  
Theme: Be All You Can Be for the Lord, \$140
- Sept. 25-27 Women** *Most Rev. Anthony G. Bosco*  
Theme: A Weekend with Mary, \$140
- Oct. 2- 4 Women** *Rev. Thomas More Sikora OSB*  
Theme: The Eucharist – Center of Our Lives in the Church, \$140
- Oct. 23-25** The Legion of Mary (Members only)  
*Rev. Brian Welding, \$140*
- Nov. 6-8 Married Couples**  
*Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy OFMCap*  
Theme: Angels to Your Children; Christ to Each Other, \$270
- Dec. 3 Women – Evening of Recollection**  
3:45 – 9 p.m., \$20
- Dec. 5 Women and Men – Day of Recollection**  
*Rev. Bill Kiel, 8:15 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., \$28*

## Encounter with Silence

Rev. Frank Erdeljac • July 24-31, 2009

*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 the Word may take root. Daily Mass.

Dorothy Day described it as hearing the Gospel for the first time.



Retreat  
House (\$400)

## Prayer Requests & Intentions

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