



BENEDICTINE TOUCHSTONE



Fall 2010

Benedictine Nuns • St. Emma Monastery • 1001 Harvey Avenue • Greensburg, PA 15601

Website www.stemma.org • Phone: (724) 834-3060 • Fax (724) 834-5772 • Email benedictinenuns@stemma.org



Prioress' Reflection

By Mother Mary Anne Noll OSB



Of the numerous paintings of St. Walburga that adorn the many, long halls and of the 1200 votive paintings that line the

walls of the 75 foot high Crypt of St. Walburga, in the Abtei St. Walburg, Eichstaett, Bavaria, this is my favorite!



We see the Trinity (Father represented by the "Eye of God", the triangle), the Son by the Lamb and the Holy Spirit (dove not shown) pouring their life symbolized by the rays into St. Walburga's heart. This grace flows out of her heart as droplets into the relics (shown by the deceased St. Walburga surrounded by angels) from her relic into a vessel that collects the "Walburga oil." Through the use of this oil as a sign of their faith and trust in our merciful Father, many people find consolation and some have received healing. What a symbolic way to represent the actual crypt of St. Walburga!

Her brothers, St. Willibald the bishop (left) and St. Wunibald the abbot (right) along with her parents, St. Richard and Wuna, surround her.

Supporting the monastery on the left, Bishop Heribert had suggested founding the Abbey to Count Leodegar. Count Leodegar to the right of the building had

been healed of a very serious illness. They present this monastery to St. Walburga in her honor.

For me, this painting expresses the mystery of God's life in St. Walburga and in each one of us. The life of God finds a unique expression, a shape, an outlook, and a personality in each of us that mediates God's care and comfort to particular people in particular ways.

St. Walburga's cooperation with God's grace in her life 1300 years ago still affects us today. Her "presence" in the Abtei St. Walburg through her relics and her prayer, since its founding in 1035, inspires the nuns and draws a constant stream of pilgrims who often seek special requests from God or thank God for favors received.

On May 25th I was blessed to participate in the Mass and festivities honoring Mother Franziska Kloos OSB on the 25th anniversary of her election as the 63rd Abbess of Abtei St. Walburg.

I met her during my first visit to Eichstaett in 1979. I well remember her election in 1985 and her first visit to St. Emma's in 1986. Including her last visit here in April to celebrate our becoming an Independent Priory, Mother Franziska visited us 21 times. We were blessed each time! I was delighted to participate in Mother Franziska's anniversary celebration, both in my own name and in the name

of St. Emma Monastery. Mother Franziska really deserves our gratitude and praise.

Before the Mass of thanksgiving, the community lined up for the procession with Abbesses and other religious women.

That hymn expressed my personal past, the past 975 years of that monastery and the 79 years of our monastic life in America.

About a dozen Abbots, other priests, and the present and past bishops of Eichstaett followed as the concelebrants.

We climbed the long flight of stairs, passed through a small, narrow door broken through a wall 30-inches thick, and stepped across the threshold from the monastery into the back of the parish church of St. Walburga. Above that area is the Sisters' choir (where traditionally the choir loft would have been in our parish churches) and below that area was the previous burial crypt for the nuns.

The huge painting above the main altar shows St. Walburga being received into heaven by the Lamb of God and dominates the church. Behind this main altar is Crypt of St. Walburga where her relics are.

The bishop of Eichstaett, Most Rev. Dr. Gregor Maria Hankey OSB noted that "OSB" means "oh, she builds!" He said this is true not only in the physical renovations and improvements to these centuries old buildings but in Mother Franziska's endeavors to build up the Sisters and their spiritual lives as well. St. Walburga must be proud to see her tradition continued.

For the recessional hymn, we sang *Grosser Gott, wir loben dich (Holy God, We*

Continued on page 3



You are welcome to pray with us.

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



In his love, the Lord shows us the way to life...

– *Rule of Benedict*

We invite single women (ages 16-40) to experience our monastic life in order to discern if this “way of life” is the path God is calling them to follow.

- ✦ Daily Eucharist
- ✦ The Liturgy of the Hours chanted six times daily
- ✦ Silence
- ✦ Lectio Divina (sacred reading)
- ✦ Love made manifest in work
- ✦ Living in Community
- ✦ Hospitality

Upcoming Monastic Live-In Experiences:
Advent Weekend, December 10-12, 2010
Monastic Triduum, April 20-24, 2011
Summer Experience, July 8-13, 2011

To schedule a visit, please call (724) 834-3060
 or e-mail vocations@stemma.org to register for one of these dates
 or to arrange a time that fits your schedule.

Watch our website for our new vocation blog.

Prioress' Reflection — Continued from page 2 —

Praise Thy Name) with the Cathedral choir and the pipe organ leading us in jubilant song.

My heart swelled and my eyes misted. It was so humbling for me to be part of that procession and monastic tradition. That hymn expressed my personal past, the past 975 years of that monastery and the 79 years of our monastic life in America.

When I was growing up, *Holy God, We Praise Thy Name* was the Catholic

hymn that ended processions, Benedictions, and special Masses; this hymn often ends such celebrations in the monastery as well.

Growing up, I had no idea that this hymn was a translation from the German nor did I have any idea that it was based on that solemn hymn of praise enumerating the wonderful works of God in people and creation, the *Te Deum*, that we sing on Sundays and major feast days at the end of Vigils.

What an experience of a living tradition! I am so blessed to be a part of something that is so much greater, richer, and beyond me – our Benedictine, monastic tradition!

May the life of God continue to shape our lives, form us and use us to bring His loving care and healing into our contemporary world – in the tradition of St. Walburga.

Mother Mary Anne Noll, OSB

Cover photo: Blessed Mother statue in Marian niche, Cor Jesu Chapel.

May Crowning



On May 13 the Junior Legion of Mary of Aquinas Academy, Greensburg gathered with family and friends for their first May Crowning. Their chaplain, Rev. Joseph Sredzinski, led the rosary and invested them with the brown scapular.

All Souls Prayer Requests:

During the month of November, we Benedictine Nuns mention individually the names you have sent us of your deceased ones. These names are then placed by the Sacred Heart Statue that we pass every time we enter and leave our chapel.

The Touchstone is published by the Benedictine Sisters of Westmoreland County for our friends and benefactors:

Publisher and Editor

Mother Mary Anne Noll OSB

Development Director

Robert J. Allen

Graphic Arts and Design

Susan Garrison

If you have questions or comments about this publication, please address them to:

St. Emma Monastery • 1001 Harvey Avenue

Greensburg, PA 15601-1494

Phone (724) 834-3060

Email: benedictinenuns@stemma.org



The Legacy of Volunteering

I don't know if Leodegar helped manually prepare the dwellings for the first Benedictine Nuns to arrive in Eichstaett in 1035, but he voluntarily offered his money and means for the honor and glory of God. In thanksgiving for being healed from a major illness (centuries before the helps of modern medicine), Leodegar voluntarily donated his earthly treasure to further the kingdom of God by establishing a spiritual center, the monastery. He also practiced "planned giving" by donating the income of villages that would sustain the Abbey of St. Walburga long after his death.

Similarly our volunteers give of their time, talent and treasure: the greatest treasure being the gift of themselves so generously given to further God's kingdom in this little corner of His earth known as St. Emma Monastery.

The poem "How do I love Thee, let me count the ways" can be adapted to "How do I love God and St. Emma's?" Let us try to count the ways with the help of these photos:

Inside the buildings, outside the buildings, original house, retreat house, two monastery buildings, monastic guest house, seven furnace rooms, two chapels, dining rooms, two kitchens, laundry, gift and bookshop, office, website, photography, cleaning, cooking, entering data, grass cutting, weeding, trimming, driving, shopping, sorting "stuff", preparing for Flea Market and Christmas Boutique, working them, cleaning up after them, praying with us, baking, cutting praying for us, cleaning windows, scrubbing and waxing the floors, moving furniture, planting, scrubbing and waxing, housecleaning, watering.

You can see the results of their loving hearts how they – like we – seek to use "the tools of the monastery as the sacred vessels of the altar" as Benedict instructs us to do. We thank them and ask God's blessings on them.
– Mother Mary Anne



How do I love God and St. Emma Monastery?



See the results of their loving hearts.



Thank you, Father Joseph!

Our chaplain for the last three years, Rev. Canon Joseph R. Sredzinski has moved all of eight miles to Jeannette, PA, to his new assignment. Assisting the pastor and his classmate, Rev. John Foriska, Fr. Joseph will serve as Parish Priest for Ascension and Sacred Heart Parishes.

We want to thank Fr. Joseph for his faithful service by celebrating our daily Mass, helping out with confessions with retreat groups, and available when someone called and "wanted to see a priest." Fr. Joseph also continues his ministry to the elderly at Westmoreland Manor, Greensburg, PA, and his involvement with the Polish Falcons as their national chaplain for nearly 30 years. This past spring he celebrated the 40th anniversary of his priesthood. Congratulations! May God continue to grant you many more years of your priestly ministry.



August 18 marked an historical event as we ended the faithful service of chaplains

generously provided by the Diocese of Greensburg since 1961: Rev. Thomas McDonald, Most Rev. Norbert Gaughan, Rev. James Bump, Rev. Msgr. Lawrence Persico, Rev. Msgr. Robert Shuda and Rev. Canon Joseph Sredzinski.

Benedictine priests will now serve as our chaplain and Rev. Chad Ficorilli OSB, St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, PA, began his service August 19. Welcome, Father Chad!

Youth Groups Volunteer



Again this year wonderful participants from the Catholic Heart Work Camp did a outstanding job of housecleaning the retreat house (including windows), kitchen, dining room, and conference rooms. They also weeded and helped with the clean-up after the flea market.



We ask God's blessings on them and on those who organized the Catholic Heart Work Camp for our area.

Seton Hill University included us in their Day of Caring, leaving behind sparkling areas.

Right: Forty freshmen from St. Vincent's College were an afternoon whirlwind that left St. Emma Monastery shining and weed-free.



COMING SOON

TO YOUR LOCAL...COMPUTER OR SMART PHONE OR I-POD

A new look, greatly improved, recently updated, much more interactive, and informative, inspiring Website is coming SOON to your local computer or phone or I pod! Begin checking mid-October our www.stemma.org address for the new format, more features, more information about our community, a sharing in our spirituality through the daily meditations, sign up for retreat, donate and SHOP at our bookstore online.



www.stemma.org

A "Brite" Idea

Fluorescent bulbs cost less to use.



We want to replace them throughout the retreat house and monastery in our lamps and lights fixtures but we need several hundred! If you could pick up some for us, we would be most appreciative!

- 13 watt fluorescent = 60 watts (in a regular bulb)
- 23 watt fluorescent = 100 watts (in a regular bulb)

Other Needs

Do you have an extra – that you are not using? Thanks for thinking of us!

- Small pizza oven
- Digital photo frame
- Portable DVD player

Prayer Requests & Intentions

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

Walburga: a Woman of Faith and Interior Freedom

By Robert J. Allen

During this 1300th birthday anniversary of St. Walburga, my wife, Dorothy and I visited the Crypt of St. Walburga and the nuns at Eichstaett; as you know St. Emma Monastery was founded by the Abtei St. Walburg. There were several other reasons to make this pilgrimage, but none more compelling than the personal experience we had only one year earlier.

Our daughter, Cathy, needed an operation on her throat; the risk of her losing her voice was only one of the very serious, possible negative effects. Mother Mary Anne sent us the small bottle of Walburga oil. Our five children, Dorothy, and I came together to both be with Cathy and to bless her with this oil.

With the oil in hand and the wonderful gift of faith in our hearts, we blessed her and trusted in God that the wonderful intercession of St. Walburga would guide the surgeon's hand. Three hours later we were informed that a full recovery was expected!

Nearly 1300 years ago this remarkable woman, St. Walburga, worked side by side with her brothers, St. Willibald the first bishop of Eichstaett in 741 and St. Wunibald the abbot in Heidenheim, in the great work of evangelization in Germany. Anglo-Saxon by birth, St. Walburga was talented, and well educated.

When her brother St. Wunibald died, she was appointed abbess over both monks and nuns. During her lifetime, she was already credited with healing several sick people. Some of her relics are in the Crypt of St. Walburga at Eichstaett, Germany; her feast day is February 25.

The walls of the very beautiful star-shaped Shrine of St. Walburga at St. Emma Monastery consist of full-size stained glass windows depicting the life of St. Walburga (see Winter issue of *The Benedictine Touchstone*).

As Paul Harvey would say, "And now for the rest of the story." Our daughter, Cathy? Today Cathy has complete use of her voice, is back working and leading a full life.

Why St. Walburga, did we have this wonderful experience of personally visiting and praying at your Crypt? I think it is because we have experienced your far reaching work, St. Walburga, through the charism and work of the nuns of St. Emma. Because of them you too are invited to seek St. Walburga's powerful intercession through your prayers and theirs.

The communion of saints is real: we are united with those who are in heaven and joined with other Christians here on earth. The Benedictine Nuns embrace you and all your needs in their prayer and works as Walburga and her nuns did while living on earth—and as St. Walburga continues to do from her place in heaven.

Nuns Join Chamber of Commerce



On July 7 the Westmoreland Chamber of Commerce welcomed St. Emma Monastery and Retreat House as a new Chamber member. Participating in the ribbon cutting ceremony and presentation of the

membership plaque were Tom Sochacki, president, and other Chamber members. Chamber members then toured St. Emma's and enjoyed Benedictine hospitality in welcome and refreshments.

We look forward to welcoming the broader Westmoreland civic community to St. Emma's as their venue for meetings, meals and events.

+ Rest in Peace +

Anna Marie Golek, Wilmerding, PA died in April after a lengthy battle with cancer. We extend our sympathy to her cousin and her friends. We are so honored that Anna Marie remembered us in her will. Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord!

Thank You, Thank You!

Our thanks to all those who helped organize, sort, display, cook, serve, assist shoppers, donated or purchased items or helped in any way to make our Annual Flea Market so successful. Truly this is a wonderful event each year for us Sisters, our volunteers and for those who come. God bless all of you abundantly who made this event possible!



Visit our Bookstore

Monday – Saturday 10 am – 4 p.m.
Visit online anytime: www.stemma.org

De Olde
Christmas Shoppe

Friday, Nov. 12 11 a.m.-7 p.m.
Saturday, Nov. 13 10 a.m.-4 p.m.



- ◆ Wonderful gifts (new and gently loved) for each person on your gift list
- ◆ Great low prices!
- ◆ And yes, we will wish you a *Merry Christmas!*

Food (flavored by Benedictine hospitality)

Fri.: fish sandwiches, pierogies, cole slaw, soft pretzels, cookies

Sat.: pizza, Italian sausage sandwiches, kielbassi, soft pretzels, pepperoni rolls, cookies

Eat in or take out

Donations appreciated!

Photos with St. Nicholas
(not Santa Claus)

Saturday, 12:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Each child receives a treat from St. Nicholas!



Missionary Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe at St. Emma

As the late Pope John Paul II looked upon an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe in January 1999, he said, "I ask her to visit as a pilgrim of faith each and every diocese, parish and family in America." On October 20, this image will be in the Marian devotional niche of the Cor Jesu Monastic Chapel for veneration for all those who would like to come and spend some time in prayer with our Lady. A special Holy Hour concluding with Compline will begin at 6:45 p.m.



Pro Life Prayer Vigil

Wednesday, January 19, 2:30 – 8:00 p.m.

The Benedictine Nuns invite you to join them for their annual Pro Life Prayer Vigil. Light refreshments available.

You are our guest – there is **NO Fee**.

Calendar of Retreats

| | | |
|-----------------|----------|---|
| October | 22-24 | Legion of Mary, \$145 |
| November | 5-7 | Married Couples, <i>Fr. Angelus Shaughnessy, OFM Cap</i> , \$280 |
| December | 2 | Advent Evening of Recollection for Women 3:45 - 9 p.m., <i>Rev. Emil Payer</i> , \$20 |
| December | 4 | Advent Day of Recollection, Lay and Religious, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., <i>Rev. Ed Litavec</i> , \$28 |
| 2011 | | |
| March | 11-13 | Silent Lenten Retreat for Men and Women <i>Rev. Boniface Hicks OSB</i> |
| March | 18-20 | Men's Retreat at the Retreat House, <i>Rev. Ed Litavec</i> , Theme: <i>Lent, A Time to Shape and Renew</i> |
| April | 1- 3 | Silent Lenten Retreat for Men and Women <i>Rev. Bill Kiel</i> , Theme: <i>Prayer and Fasting – Not Only During Lent</i> |
| April | 8-10 | Silent Lenten Retreat for Men and Women <i>Rev. Frank Erdeljac</i> , Theme: <i>The Compassionate Love of God According to the Little Flower</i> |
| April | 29-May 1 | Silent Retreat for Third Order Carmelites (men/women), <i>Rev. James Hess Coram</i> , Theme: "Ascent of Mt. Carmel" |
| July | 22-28 | 6-Day Silent Retreat for Men and Women <i>To be announced</i> |
| July | 22-29 | Encounter with Silence Retreat (accommodations at Monastic Guest House and Retreat House) <i>Rev. John-Mary Tompkins OSB</i> |
| August | 12-13 | Busy Moms Overnight Retreat <i>Rev. Boniface Hicks OSB</i> |

Priests Silent Guided Retreat, January 23-28, 2011

Theme: The Lord Has Drawn Us to His Heart

Very Rev. Joseph M. Mele

Father Mele will propose passages of sacred scripture that guide retreatants to grow ever closer to Jesus, who counts on us, his ministers, to spread and build up His Kingdom, and to radiate His love and His truth. This retreat will listen in the winter quiet for God's heart calling to ours, inviting us to come out of ourselves, to trust in Him, and by encountering His love "heart to heart," to renew us making our lives a gift of unbounded priestly love.

*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: 25-1017575