



# BENEDICTINE TOUCHSTONE

Winter 2007



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

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*And  
the  
Word  
became  
flesh  
and  
dwelt  
among  
us...*

## Prioress' Reflection

By Mother Mary Anne Noll OSB



“And the Word became Flesh and dwelt among us.”

To incarnate. According to the *Incarta Dictionary English*, the verb means

1. show something in human form, 2. personify something (to be the epitome or personification of something), 3. cause something to happen.

Centuries ago who could have guessed that not only is the Incarnation the Reality that has forever changed the world but also has become the reason for the biggest buying season!

Under the guise of “Sparkle Season”, the feast of Christmas has become incarnate in the business world. Decorations – all too often separated from the spiritual nature of Christmas – adorn the malls before Labor Day.

Christmas carols and songs help set the mood so that people spend more and more. Their “good” Friday is Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving!

God so loved the world that He **gave** us His only begotten Son Who would **give** His life for the ransom of many. Herein lies the origin of our gift giving. How strange that Christmas sometimes becomes a secular quid pro quo gift exchange!

The cover of this Touchstone features the tapestry of the birth of Christ, one of a series that adorns the hall by the monastic library. These tapestries depict the story of our Redemption from the Fall through the crowning of Mary – who is the first fruit of our Redemption.

Joseph and Mary look so young, calm and determined. Even the ox and ass seem to match the mindfulness and marvel on Mary’s and Joseph’s faces.

What a striking insight that “a baby is God’s wish that the world go on!” When the Babe was born in Bethlehem, it was certainly the Father’s greatest desire that the world would go on. But no longer would it be, “The same old, the same old”.

The questions, “What would God do if He came upon earth? Is God disinterested since He created the earth and set it in motion? Does it matter to God that there

is suffering, injustice, and death on earth?”

With the coming of Jesus as a human being, we can no longer justly say to God, “You don’t know what it is like.”

Jesus shows us that God forgives, that God is tender compassion, and that God somehow unites our varied sufferings with those of His Son on the cross.

Mindfulness and wonder at the birth of Emmanuel, “God-with-us,” pervade this painting.

What can we do this Advent and Christmas season to increase our mindfulness of God-with-us in our daily lives this Christmas season?

When we see the lights, will we recall that Christ is the Light of this world? Will we meditate on the words of the carols as we sing them? Will we note how often Jesus’ suffering and death are also mentioned in these musical meditations?

*God so loved the world that He gave us His only begotten Son Who would give His life for the ransom of many. Herein lies the origin of our gift giving.*

Will the Manger Scene be front and center in our home?

Will we include a time of reflection on the Scriptures, or attend an extra Mass and

celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation as preparations for this feast of God’s love for us?

Will we bring Christ to someone who is normally not within our immediate circle of family and friends

through a visit, an offer of help, or a gift?

The business world drops Christmas the morning of December 26. Will we celebrate God-with-us during the Octave or even to Epiphany with the Church?

The Good News and the Wonderful News is that God indeed loves us. Let us receive the gift of His Son more fully this year – and share this best of Gifts with others.

Blessed Advent and Christmas!

*Mother Mary Anne Noll, OSB*

Mother Mary Anne OSB

## St. Emma Hosts Missionaries of Charity Overnight

To commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mother Teresa’s death, St. Vincent College hosted a weekend of “Remembrances by those who knew her best.” EWTN also presented much of the presentations live. President James Toohey of St. Vincent College had been legal council for Mother Teresa for 14 years and was deeply touched by her.

Mother Nirmala and 10 Sisters stayed overnight at St. Emma’s as well as a few attendees.

Our community was blessed to attend the Masses and presentations on Friday night and Saturday.





# Hooray for the Future of the Church!



Clelian Heights volunteers.

Students from Clelian Heights, Greensburg, PA come each week to set the tables for the retreatants. Another group practiced the fine art of doing dishes using the commercial dishwasher. Under the caring tutelage of their teachers, these young people do their work with care and pride.

October 6-7, members of the Mother of Sorrows Senior High youth group of Murrysville, PA made a retreat with the theme, "Falling in love with the Catholic Faith." They also prayed Vespers with us.

Coming from Franciscan University, Steubenville, OH, the resident assistants serving in the dorms attended an overnight retreat/workshop in August on how to deepen their faith so that they might better serve the students in their dorms.

On September 15, students and staff of Seton Hill University, Greensburg, PA chose St. Emma's as one of their volunteer sites for their annual Labor of Love. They weeded many flower beds and the graves of our Sisters as well as cleaning in the Gift Store.

Members of the Junior and Senior Youth group of Mt. St. Peter, New Kensington, PA spent began their volunteering by attending Sext and None (traditional names for noon day prayer times). Their tasks included replanting our mail box, assembling shelving, moving a pile of earth and sorting items for the Christmas Boutique.

It is so wonderful to see youth involved in their church and wanting to volunteer.

We enjoy meeting them and appreciate what they – and all of our other wonderful volunteers – do.



Members of the Mother of Sorrow Senior High youth group.

## Youth4Christ

On a picture perfect day in July, several hundred youth gathered at St. Vincent College, Latrobe, PA, for a Youth4Christ day that consisted of music groups, talks on the Catholic faith, Confessions, Mass, candlelight procession to St. Vincent Basilica and worship service. Religious communities were invited to attend with vocation information. It was so inspiring to see so many youth so respectful and so interested in their faith and enjoying the day.



Sisters Mary Antony and Petra prepare bookmarks for the Youth 4 Christ event at St. Vincent.



Sister Maria and participants of the Youth for Christ adoring the Blessed Sacrament.

We Benedictine Nuns pray for you, our relatives, friends and benefactors each day during our daily Eucharist, the *Liturgy of the Hours* (sung 6 times daily), and our daily lives of dedication and service within the monastery. Once a month there is a special Mass offered for you and for the Members of the Fatima Guild.



## Visiting the Roots: St. Walburg in Eichstaett

### Sr. Maria Glaubitz OSB

From August 21 to September 21, 2007 I was given the chance to visit the Abtei St. Walburg in Eichstaett, Germany again. There I had entered the Benedictine monastic life and had spent fulfilled and happy years in prayer, work and community, led by the Rule of St. Benedict. For long years. I especially loved the Abbey Church because in the crypt of the church we venerate the tomb of a Benedictine saint: St. Walburga.

In the year 1999 my Abbess, Mother Franziska Kloos OSB, asked me if I would like to go for some time to the daughter house, St. Emma Monastery in Greensburg, PA, to support the Sisters there. This request came completely unexpectedly and took me by surprise. I needed time to reflect on this decision. It was eventually St. Walburga's life and example that encouraged me to say my "Yes".



**Mother Franziska and Sister Maria.**

to visit my roots, - seeing the Sisters in the Abbey, having visits from family, friends and former students – last but not least feeling the presence of St. Walburga

But who is she? When I entered the monastery I really knew nothing about her life. I assume many Catholics have no or little knowledge about St. Walburga either.

Those who learned to know her and experienced her intercession often show a deep devotion to her.

St. Walburga was born in 710 in Wessex, England, of a family of the local aristocracy. Her parents were – according to a later tradition – Richard and Wuna. Educated at an early age by English Benedictines in Wimborne, she eventually entered this monastery and made profession there. When her relative, St. Boniface, asked England for help in the missionary work in Germany, two of her brothers followed this call. St. Willibald (700-787) later became Bishop of Eichstaett; St. Wunibald (701-767) founded a monastery for Benedictine monks nearby in Heidenheim. Walburga responded to this call, left her homeland in England and devoted her life to the evangelization of Germany. After the death of her brother Wunibald, she became Abbess of the double Benedictine monastery in Heidenheim. Walburga was responsible for the spiritual and material welfare of both the monks and the nuns. Respected and loved during her lifetime, people remembered her for her deep prayer life, charity and courage, as well as for miracles of healing. Walburga died on February 25, 779 and was buried in Heidenheim. One hundred years later Bishop Otkar of Eichstaett



exhumed her relics and brought them to Eichstaett where they were buried in the little Holy Cross Church on the outskirts of town, where in 1035 the Benedictine Abbey in her honor was erected. This abbey has been in continual existence ever since.

Entering Eichstaett by car or train, I always watch to catch that first glimpse of the distinctive Tower of the Abbey Church with its tall gilded copper statue of St. Walburga on a cupola, greeting and blessing those arriving.

The first visit to the crypt gives me joy and peace. This is the place of her presence and the "miraculous flow of oil". For over a thousand years, St. Walburga's relics have exuded a mysterious dew. It appears yearly between the 12<sup>th</sup> October (the feast of the translation of her relics) until her death day, February 25. This clear water has become known as "Walburga's Oil" and is seen as a sign of her intercession. The oil has always been collected and given to pilgrims. Healings attributed to St. Walburga's intercession continue to be reported up to the present day.

Looking up, I see the walls of the crypt adorned to the ceiling with about 1200 votive pictures. The most ancient one dates from about 1615, the most recent one from the present day. This place is a witness of so many sorrows and worries entrusted to the saint and also a place of praise and thanksgiving to God for received

*Continued on page 5*



**Inside the St. Walburga shrine at St. Emma Monastery.**



## Visiting the Roots *Continued from page 4*

consolation and healing through the intercession of St. Walburga. So I join all these faithful ones of so many generations in giving my special intentions and my gratitude to our Saint. “Walburga a humble and deeply prayerful person committed herself entirely. Again and again she was forced to set out on new travels. On every occasion she stuck deep roots where God wanted her. Only someone who is bound to God, to family, to a vocation, to Church

and homeland can be a mainstay to others”, (A. Bauch, Saint Walburga, Her Life and Heritage, p.68).

Four wonderful weeks in the Mother Abbey seemed to fly. Preparing for the journey back, I remember that I will meet our Saint again at St. Emma’s in the “Walburga Shrine” in the precious stained glass windows, picturing her life and mission. My prayer is that her blessings will forever be given us anew.



### *Traditional Hymn to St. Walburga*

O Virgin full of goodness,  
Worthy of all love,  
Rich in mercy,  
Worth of praise,  
Clean of heart and purified in mind,  
Loved by God,  
And honored, too,  
O holy Walburga:  
Accept us and to God for us  
And for all who do us good.  
Amen.

Thinking  
about a  
vocation  
to the  
religious  
life?



Single women between the ages of 16-40 are invited to come and pray with us during the Sacred Triduum, March 20-23.

(Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday)

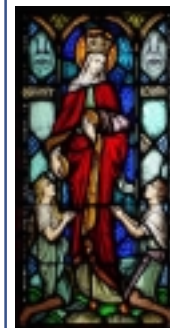
**Please mark your calendar!**

**April 12, 2008**  
**Dinner & Silent Auction**  
**St. Emma Monastery**

## *Our Christmas Prayer Schedule*

*December 24*  
11:15 p.m. Vigils  
and Midnight Mass

*December 25*  
6:30 a.m. Lauds  
8:00 a.m. Christmas Day Mass  
11:45 a.m. Sext/None  
4:30 p.m. Vespers  
7:15 p.m. Vigils



*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*

## *Farewell, Father Bob*

The caption of this article and the photo probably struck you as familiar. In our last Touchstone, we used the above as part of our article on our retiring chaplain of nine years, Msgr. Robert J. Shuda.

As that issue was at press, Father Bob died unexpectedly and apparently during the early hours of August 14. Although according to his family, he seemed to have had his last wishes all written out and was ready, no one was ready to receive such surprising news that he had gone to God so quickly.

His very sudden death makes the headline, "Farewell, Father Bob" all the more remarkable! The photo shows Father Bob during the funeral of one of our Sisters at the cemetery. How touching!

We extend our deepest sympathy to his brother, Rev. Paul Shuda, Harrisburg, PA and to his sister, Sr. Michelle CSSF, St. Anne Home, Greensburg, PA.

*May angels accompany him to his everlasting resting place in heaven.*



## Knights of Columbus Council 1480 Presents Check to Monastery



**Grand Knight Frank Damico presents a check to Mother Mary Anne for St. Emma on behalf of the Knights Council 1480.**

Within a few months of the purchase by the Benedictine Sisters – of the property now known as St. Emma – the Greensburg Council of the Knights of Columbus asked if they could come for a day of recollection. They have remained friends ever since. That first summer the Knights loaned several folding tables to the Sisters and said they could keep them as long as they needed them. We are still using them – 64 years later!

Recently Grand Knight Frank Damico presented a check of \$3000 to St. Emma's on behalf of the Knights Council 1480. We are so grateful for their ongoing prayerful support as a group and the additional support of individuals volunteering.

### *Prayer Requests & Intentions*

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

**Bequests** ~ We are grateful for the following individuals who remembered St. Emma in their wills:

- + Father Thomas Kram, Pittsburgh
- + Grace Ferney, Pittsburgh

**Memorials** ~ We are also grateful to the families of the following individuals who suggested that memorials be made to St. Emma in lieu of flowers.

- +Felix Vittone, Latrobe
- + Pauline Pringle, Greensburg
- + Steve Lukacs, Irwin

*May God grant them eternal rest.*

*Are you looking for a gift that expresses the real meaning of Christmas? Something spiritual and unique?*

St. Emma's now offers Gift Certificates for you to use in your giving habits. Certificates are available for the Catholic Gift and Book Shop, for Retreats, or for the Monastic Guest House. Available for \$10.00 and up. Now you can charge it online or by credit card.



### *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.**



## Time to Reflect

By Robert J. Allen

Each year has a beginning and an ending. We seldom think about what happens in between. So, as 2007 comes to an end, let's think about how you can plan for 2008 and beyond. I'm fond of saying that only God and the life insurance companies know how long we are going to live. The difference is that God knows when I'm going to die and the insurance companies can only calculate.

Well, the Benedictine Nuns at St. Emma can provide a fixed payment to you for life. It will help you answer the question: "How can I provide for my spouse after I die?" or "How can I be assured of income at a fixed rate and guarantee it?" It is called a Charitable Gift Annuity.

If you are in a 33% income tax bracket in 2007 and you itemize your deductions, a \$1000.00 gift to Saint Emma's in this calendar year will save you \$330.00 in taxes.

Maybe you purchased some stock a few years ago for \$1,000.00 and it is now worth \$10,000.00. An outright gift of stock to the Benedictine Nuns would result in a charitable contribution deduction of \$10,000.00

Let St. Emma's Planned Giving Program help you make charity meaningful for others while it provides for you. For further information, call or write St. Emma's and we will be pleased to provide you, your attorney, your accountant or tax advisor additional information.

You should always contact your attorney for legal advice.

## IRA Tax-Free Giving

- The IRA owner must be at least 70-1/2 years old.
- Charitable gifts must be completed by December 31, 2007
- Gifts must be made in an outright manner—gifts to fund gift annuities or charitable remainder trusts do not qualify.
- A maximum of \$100,000 per donor may be given.
- The distribution must be made directly from the trustee of the IRA to the charitable recipient.
- A gift from your IRA counts toward your minimum annual distribution requirement.

Source: Internal Revenue Service

## PayPal is a New Option

Friends and Benefactors of Saint Emma's, you now have the option of paying for items in the Gift Shop or for your Retreat through PayPal accounts. We are set up to accept donations as well. Several had asked for this because they wanted to earn bonus miles. We are grateful for the suggestion.

## Red-tailed Hawk Takes Flight

Can you see the red-tailed hawk in this photo?

This juvenile hawk had been helped into adulthood by a local wildlife protection group. The moment for his ritual flight into maturity had arrived and St. Emma's was asked to be the site for its launching pad.

Consisting of Sisters, volunteers, and cameras, our version of a press conference gathered to see our first red-tailed hawk that close.



The cage door is opened and spectators watch for the young hawk.

Shy and unaccustomed to a cage, our teenager hid in the back of the cage that was partly covered. We learned that our red-tailed hawk was still a "wanna be" for it was still too young to have red tail feathers. Unaccustomed to posing for photos, our adolescent hawk emerged from the cage with a vertical take-off. His speed defied photo taking.

The answer to the leading question? We didn't see the hawk either!

## Benedictine Sisters Catholic Gift & Book Shop



Christ Icon  
Sterling silver • \$ 250



Our Lady of Perpetual  
Help Icon  
Sterling silver • \$ 200



Leatherbound  
Liturgy of the Hours  
Large print • \$ 189

Order Form: It's easy to order! Use the enclosed envelope to return your order to the Monastery or call (724) 834-7483 or Fax (724) 834-5772.

Please go to: [www.stemma.org](http://www.stemma.org) for more books and religious items from our Benedictine Sisters Catholic Gift & Book Shop.

For other beautiful items that can be ordered through us, visit these websites: [www.blissmfg.com](http://www.blissmfg.com)  
[www.jeweledcross.com](http://www.jeweledcross.com)  
[www.roman.com](http://www.roman.com)

Mark Your Calendar Now!

## 2008 Recollection Programs



**January 16** • Pro-Life Day of Prayer  
 Rev. Mark Gruber OSB  
 2:30 – 8:30 pm Light refreshments  
 No fee

**March 15** • Lenten Day of Recollection,  
 Lay & Religious  
 Rev. Mark Gruber, OSB,  
 9:00 am – 4:00 pm \$28

## Little Angel Shopping Center

Religious gifts within a child's budget!

### Christmas Boutique

Previously loved items for both adults and little angel shoppers.



### Craft Sale

Crafts made by friends of the Sisters.

Free admission!

These are features of the  
*Benedictine Sisters Catholic Gift and Book Shop*  
 Monday – Saturday 10:00—4:00 pm  
 through December 22, 2007. New Items added daily.



## Visit and Vespers Dec. 29

Continue your celebration of the Incarnation December 29 (Saturday), by visiting St. Emma Monastery.

**1:00 – 3:30 p.m.**

See the various crèches  
 Meet the Benedictine Nuns  
 Enjoy cookies and punch

**3:30 p.m.**

Sing Carols with the Nuns

**4:00 p.m.**

Sing Vespers with the Nuns

RSVP 724-834-3060 or  
 Benedictinenuns@stemma.org  
*You are our guest.*

## Upcoming Retreat Schedule

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

### 2008 Retreat Programs

February	8-10	<b>SILENT</b> Rev. Mark Gruber, OSB
	15-17	<b>SILENT</b> Men/Women Rev. Tom Acklin, OSB
	22-24	<b>Men</b> Rev. Joseph Sredzinski
March	7-9	<b>SILENT Men/Women</b> Rev. Mark Gruber, OSB
June–29-July 5		<b>SILENT</b> Men/Women Rev. Tom Acklin, OSB
July	18-24	<b>SILENT</b> 6-day retreat, Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy, OFM Cap
August	22-24	<b>Men/women</b> Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy OFM Cap

### Silent Directed Retreat at Monastic Guest House

January 9-13	Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy OFM Cap, (limited to 8 retreatants)
June 6-12	Rev. Mark Gruber OSB
June 27-July 4	Rev. Mark Gruber OSB

### Silent Directed Retreat for Priests

February 24-29 (Sunday - Friday)	Rev. Tom Acklin OSB, at Monastic Guest House and Retreat House
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## Encounter with Silence

July 18-25  
 Rev. Frank Erdeljac,  
 Accommodations  
 at **Monastic  
 Guest House and  
 Retreat House.**



## Text for Task Development Workshop

The author of a wonderful manual, *Text for Task*, now in its 8<sup>th</sup> printing, Robert J. Allen, will personally present his insights of 45 years in fundraising and provide personal answers to how to increase your donations.

Make your reservation now to attend a Development Workshop at St. Emma January 27-30, 2008. \$395 includes room, meals and workbook. You can make your reservation online or write to: St. Emma Workshop, 1001 Harvey Ave., Greensburg, PA 15601 or call (724) 834-7483 ext 113