



# BENEDICTINE TOUCHSTONE

Winter 2005



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

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*“Lord our God,  
you have given us the true bread from heaven.  
In the strength of this food*



*may we live always by your life  
and rise in glory on the last day.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.”*

## Prioress' Reflection

By Mother Mary Anne Noll OSB



At 6:30 p.m. on September 27, 2005 the voice on the phone identified itself as Rev. Jonathan Wisnieski, Co-director of Vocations for the Diocese of Greensburg, and asked, "Would your community like to have the monstrance blessed by Pope John Paul II overnight? The monstrance arrived 24 hours early for its pilgrimage in our Diocese and rather than leave it in my office, I can bring it to you." About 20 minutes later, Father Jonathan unpacked this monstrance for the first time in our Diocese.

Last fall Pope John Paul II blessed six monstrances – one for each continent – to encourage prayer before the Blessed Sacrament for vocations, especially for the priesthood and religious life. The Sisters asked if they could take turns praying before the Blessed Sacrament exposed in this monstrance all night.

The cover photo shows Father Jonathan blessing us with the Blessed Sacrament during Benediction. The weekend before we had had a retreat group. On Saturday morning during that retreat, our Sr. Hedwig died at St. Anne Home, Greensburg, PA. After the viewing of her body here Monday afternoon and evening, the Funeral Mass (followed by a meal) was Tuesday morning. We were looking forward to an uneventful 24 hours before Sr. Pancratia's niece and nephew arrived from Germany for her 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary

of vows on Thursday. In addition, another weekend retreat would begin on Friday.

We could never have anticipated this grace of extended Eucharistic adoration and it was so fitting. We had just celebrated Sr. Hedwig's life; a life given so generously in service of God and others. Her total offering to God was especially seen in her offering up of her Parkinson's Disease for the 8 1/2 years when she was in St. Anne Home.

Sr. Hedwig's favorite flower was the sunflower; how fitting for someone trying to live the Christian life day by day. The sunflower bloom follows the course of sun from its rising to its setting. A Christian follows the "Son" from the morn till the eve of his or her life.

A sunflower begins as a single seed buried in the earth and needs water and sun for it to sprout and grow. In our climate this plant will know some chilly nights and some very hot days. Moisture will be uneven: too little, enough and too much. Some-

times it will grow where it is seen and admired; sometimes it shows its glory to God alone off the beaten paths. The splendor of its blossoms turns into a great number of seeds that again will be planted and will continue to glorify God and give joy to the hearts of those who pass by.

During Sr. Hedwig's Funeral Mass, these sunflowers stood as an honor guard in front of Sr. Hedwig's profession candle.

At our solemn profession ceremony, while the Sister lights her profession candle, the schola chants, *The one who follows me does not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.* (John 8:12). Each year on the anniversary of our vows, this candle is burned before the altar during the Eucharist. Upon the Sister's death, her candle is placed next to the tabernacle and burned until it is consumed.

Each Monday evening we have the Blessed Sacrament exposed while the community gathers in silent prayer for vocations to the priesthood and religious life. We pray in a special way that God might deepen our own vocations so that He might lead other women to our community.



### Our Christmas Prayer Schedule

Dec 24

11:15 Vigils and Midnight Mass

Dec 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

*All are welcome  
to join us in prayer.*

## Blessing of the Rosary Path



The blessing of the Rosary Path.



Matt Deibert and Mother Mary Anne.



We extend special thanks to the following who helped make this spiritual project possible:

- Matt Deibert, Greensburg, PA who made and installed the shrines as his Eagle Scout project.
- Peter Cecconi, Jr., architect, Jeannette, PA for designing the wayside shrines.
- Kuzmkowski Roofing, Inc., Delmont, PA for donating the metal material for the roofing and the backing that the ceramic depictions are adhered to – and for providing instruction to Matt on how to install the roofing.
- Mark Feiling, New Alexandria, PA and his son, Mark, for drilling the needed 20 post holes.
- Brother Don Smith SM, Dayton, OH for whom as a Marianist this commission was truly a labor of love shown in the exquisite design and execution of the Mysteries of the Rosary.
- Mrs. Rose Farabaugh, Ebensburg, PA, whose memorial contribution in the name of the George and Rose Farabaugh Family made these beautiful ceramic works of art possible. Rose and her late husband made many married couples' retreats.



The procession along the Sorrowful Mysteries.



Brother Don Smith, SM, works on the project inside and outside (above right).

On the beautiful Sunday afternoon of October 30, 2005, about 75 people joined us for the blessing of the Rosary Path with our chaplain, Rev. Msgr. Robert J. Shuda, officiating. The Mysteries follow the natural topography of the area. The Joyful and Luminous Mysteries ease around the field, while the Sorrowful Mysteries follow the steep part of the hill. One rounds the bend and faces the Mystery of the Resurrection and then continues through the Glorious Mysteries that follow the mowed paths that another Eagle Scout had prepared (with 10 benches) through this wooded area.

“Walk” or “path”? Until recently we referred to it as a “walk.” “Walk” reminds us of the walk for diabetes, cancer, or another excellent cause

– there is a beginning and an ending with a measured distance in between.

Our pilgrimage through life resembles a “path,” a meandering trail that is probably muddy at times, narrow, has some nice vistas or dense woods. Perhaps an unusual view or plant distracts us from the path. Perhaps we misjudge the distance between the stones over the creek, get too close to the poison ivy hidden amidst the other luxuriant green, or marvel at the tiny flowers that God has tucked away behind some larger brush.

Mary and Jesus experienced our “path” through life. The Rosary focuses on 15 events of the life of Jesus and Mary on earth while the Glorious Mysteries focus on the reality beginning with the Resurrection.

May this Rosary Path be a means of seeing how our daily lives participate in the lives of Jesus and Mary.

## Sr. Laura Makes Temporary Vows

On Saturday, September 3, Sr. Laura Walters professed temporary vows (for three years), and received the black veil and her religious name: Sr. Miriam. Miriam is the Hebrew form of Mary – and she chose the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary as her feast day. Sr. Miriam lived in the Meadville, PA area and was a member of St. Agatha Parish. Prior to entering the monastery, she



worked in a factory that manufactured vibrational components.

*Benedictine Presence*

**75<sup>th</sup>**

1931 - 2006

Please Join Us  
For This Gala Event  
and Dinner

1931-2006 Diamond Jubilee Anniversary Dinner to be held at St. Emma Monastery on Saturday, February 11, 2006 to celebrate with the Benedictine Nuns their monastic presence in the United States.

All Benefactors, Relatives and Friends are invited, but space is limited to first response basis. Reservations are \$75 each.

For early reservations, call 724-834-3060, ext. 113.

## Sr. Pancratia Celebrates Her 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Monastic Profession

September 29 was a day of special jubilation as Sr. Pancratia celebrated her 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of monastic profession. Archabbot Douglas R. Nowicki, OSB (St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, PA) was the main celebrant and homilist for the celebration of the Eucharist during which she renewed her vows. Seven other priests also concelebrated.

Sr. Pancratia entered our motherhouse, Abtei St. Walburg, Eichstätt, Germany, in 1933 and professed temporary vows in 1935. A few short weeks later she set sail for America and St. Vincent Archabbey. During her 47 years at St. Vincent, Sr. Pancratia worked mainly in the college dining room. During the Steelers' summer training camp, she served in their dining room.

In 1982 she came to St. Emma to help care for our infirm Sisters. For many years Sr. Pancratia cared for a small flower garden that supplied roses for the Sisters on their Feast Days. She also was an exquisite embroiderer.



Archabbot Douglas R. Nowicki, OSB, places a wreath on Sr. Pancratia's head during the ceremony in which she renewed her vows.



Maria Bittl and Hans Sillet visit with their aunt after the ceremony.

In chapel every morning long before Vigils, she participates fully in our prayer and community life. The aging process prevents her from helping in all the various corners as she would like, but she still helps with dishes each morning and other small tasks.

### *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

(\* Times may vary)

7:30 p.m.

Compline ~ *Lectio Divina II*

*Rest in Peace*

Sister M. Hedwig Scholz, OSB  
1921 – 2005



SISTER M. HEDWIG SCHOLZ, OSB, 84, entered into the eternal embrace of the Father at St. Anne Home, Greensburg, PA on September 24, 2005. Agnes Theresia Scholz was born on February 23, 1921 in Schmottseiffen, Germany, the second of eleven children born to Alwin and Hedwig (Schwanitz) Scholz.

Sister Hedwig came to Abtei St. Walburg, Eichstätt, Germany, May 1944 during World War II. She was sent with other Sisters from St. Walburg to nurse wounded soldiers under the banner of the Red Cross. Sr. Hedwig received the habit on November 16, 1947 and professed vows on December 8, 1948. In June 1949, Sister Hedwig was assigned to St. Mildred Abbey, Minster, England (a foundation St. Walburg made in 1937) to care for a dying Sister. She professed her perpetual vows on Easter Wednesday, 1952.

The following year she was assigned to St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, PA. Sr. Hedwig assisted Mother Leonarda and, later, Mother Emmanuel with correspondence, etc. She nursed Mother Leonarda and Mother Emmanuel in their illnesses and cared for the other Sisters who needed the extra loving care or the nursing assist. Sr. Hedwig served in the retreat dining room at St. Emma over weekends until 1961 and continued to assist in dining rooms at St. Vincent. Upon Mother Emmanuel's death in 1973, Sr. Hedwig became the Superior of the Sisters at St. Vincent. She was among the last thirteen Sisters to come to St. Emma in May 1987.

Here at St. Emma, Sister Hedwig assisted with the care of the older Sisters, helped in the retreatants' dining room, and corresponded with various relatives of our deceased Sisters. For many years, Sr. Hedwig made the pleated coifs (part of our habit) for the Sisters at St. Vincent and at St. Emma.

Diagnosed in 1976, her Parkinson's Disease worsened dramatically in 1997. Sr. Hedwig said that she could no longer walk, knew that we could not give her the 24 hour care that she needed and generously offered to go to St. Anne Home, Greensburg. During these 8 1/2 years, Sr. Hedwig bravely and patiently endured the cross of Parkinson's. Observing her increasing limitations, we could only marvel at her deep joy, her interest in all that was happening at the monastery, with her family and be utterly amazed at what she endured.



Final commendation at the Sisters' cemetery. Archabbot Douglas R. Nowicki, OSB, (St. Vincent Archabbey) was the main celebrant and homilist of the concelebrated Funeral Mass.

*All Souls' Day*

We were very honored that so many of you sent us the names of your deceased loved ones to remember in our prayer during the month of November.



*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*

**Prayer Requests and Intentions**

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

# The O Antiphons

Dating back to the eighth and ninth centuries, the O Antiphons accompany the Magnificat at Vespers (Evening Prayer) from December 17-23, and address the Christ using titles from the Old Testament. We sing them using the traditional chant melodies and special ceremonies.

*O Wisdom, who came from the mouth of the Most High, reaching from end to end and ordering all things mightily and sweetly: COME, and teach us the way of prudence. Amen.*

Lord, we have such a limited point of view and such limited experiences. We cannot see into the heart of another. We don't know the trigger words that another has. We don't know how successful they have been in struggling against a response or what is in their hearts.

*O Adonai and Ruler of the House of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the flame of the burning bush and gave him the law on Sinai: COME, and redeem us with outstretched arms. Amen.*

Who rules our house; is it the Lord? What have been our burning bush experiences? When were the times when God was so transparent in an ordinary situation, in prayer or in another person that there could be no doubt that God is real and personal?

*O Root of Jesse that stands for an ensign of the people, before whom the kings keep silence and unto whom the Gentiles shall make supplication: COME, to deliver us, and tarry not. Amen.*

Lord, we are each a "kingdom", we each have turfs. Do we keep silence before you, our Lord and King? Do we try to listen more attentively to your Word? Do we have recourse to You?

## Giving Thanks

The Thanksgiving holiday focuses our gratitude to God for all His blessings throughout the year. It also provides an opportunity for us recognize the gifts God gives to us through so many people.

We are grateful to our wonderful volunteers. No list could ever encompass everything these generous people assist us with, but their endeavors include: mangling sheets, cleaning chapels, planting and weeding flower and vegetable gardens, working in the gift shop, cooking for and serving the retreatants, cutting grass, dealing with the leaves, washing windows, sewing and mending, washing drapes, removing snow, helping in the office, washing dishes, organizing and working our annual Flea Market, running errands, driving Sisters to appointments, baking Christmas and Easter cookies, trimming shrubs and cutting down trees, refinishing furniture, and doing the "whatever" it takes to make St. Emma special. The generosity of these people manifests God's Providential care for us and makes the miracle possible that we have no hired help.

We also thank the volunteers from the Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, Greensburg, and Seton Hill University, Greensburg, who worked here as part of their annual volunteer days.

Many thanks, too, those who gave items for our Flea Market or who shared with us delicious baked goods and food, flowers and plants, furniture and equipment, handmade items for the Gift Shop and the many etceteras.

*O Key of David, and Scepter of the House of Israel, who opens and no man shuts, who shuts and no man opens: COME, and bring forth the captive from his prison, he who sits in darkness and in the shadow of death. Amen.*

We have the power to open...our mouth to praise God and to affirm one another. These words open another's heart as well as our own. We also have the power to shut—to shut out, to shut up, to keep closed, and to block.

What are the chains that hold us in darkness? What has a death grip on us?

*O Dawn of the East, brightness of light eternal, and Sun of Justice: COME, and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. Amen.*

Rising Dawn, enlighten us. We burn night lights in our halls and on the stairs so we don't trip on anything. What tends to trip us up? How could God's light enlighten our mind and direct our steps?

*O King of the Gentiles, and their desired One, the Cornerstone that makes both one: COME, and deliver man, whom you formed out of the dust of the earth. Amen.*

The Desired of all. Do we truly desire Jesus above all? Is He truly our pearl of great price?

*Continued on page 7*

## Year-end Planning

By Robert J. Allen

As this calendar year is coming to an end, we celebrate Thanksgiving and are grateful for all the many gifts we have received. Many of us, as we quickly look to Christmas, overlook Advent, a wonderful time in the Church year to enjoy the season of HOPE.

Too often we compare Advent to Lent when they are actually very different. Advent is more in line with our National holiday of Thanksgiving. It is basically a time when four weeks are set aside to reflect and plan. A time to ask ourselves two questions: What do I own? What owns me?

Just as God gave us the Child Jesus who came into the world owning nothing and left it giving us everything, we must reflect on the goodness of God in our own life. What we do at Thanksgiving is to say, *Thank You* for our family, friends, job, health, food, wealth and many other material possessions. Advent helps us to reflect on and enjoy the powerful GIFT OF HOPE. If our life is not filled with good relationships, or our work is not where we want to be, we can and must turn to God, who is HOPE.

If you are enjoying your relationship with the Monastic Community, you can see how less produces more and you are the beneficiary. Each day, both in prayer and in work, you are lifted up to God through this Community of Benedictine Nuns...even when you don't ask.

In Thanksgiving for their presence and with a renewed HOPE for the birth of the Christ Child, take time to write or visit St. Emma Monastery to seek their prayers in a special way in your life.

Prayer is not an option; it is a way of life. Prayer not only brings us in communication with God but allows us to refocus where we are going and helps us to plan ahead.

## Book Reviews

### Advent of the Savior

"In this season of watchful longing, we must ask ourselves, 'What are our deepest longings?' Advent is the time to explore this question. It is the time to move gradually from longing to hope. By coming to understand more deeply what God has already done for us in sending us our Savior, we are able to deepen our hope for the certain coming of Christ to us. The Advent prayer of the early Church, 'Come, Lord Jesus!' is still answered in new and surprising ways."

Preface, *Advent of the Savior* - Stephen J. Binz

### The Coming of God

"Rarely does one find a book of such spiritual insight and depth as is found in *The Coming of God*. Maria Boulding demonstrates the art of *lectio divina* brought to its rich fulfillment in reflections on a treasury of scriptural, patristic, and other spiritual classics. The reader comes to the realization of how the mysterious yet wondrous coming of God into our lives is the sheer gift of divine grace. This book is destined to become a spiritual classic."

Abbot Gregory Polan, OSB,  
Conception Abbey, Conception, Missouri

### Waiting for Dawn

"In *Waiting for Dawn*, Fr. Mark Gruber once again plumbs the depths of our being by the incisive beauty of his words as he names the hunger of the human heart which we have only intuited. The book presents the Advent Season as a prototype of our entire life illumined by the goal of seeking Christ, making sense of the events of each day when we allow God's love to channel the present into the future as it unfolds through the years."

Mother Mary Anne Noll, OSB, Prioress,  
St. Emma Monastery, Greensburg, Pennsylvania

## New Programs for Medical Personnel

This spring we plan two days of recollection for medical personnel who extend Christ's healing and compassion in a special way: doctors, nurses, aides, technicians and staff.

On Sunday, April 30 Rev. James Holland, St. Sebastian Parish, Pittsburgh, PA will lead a day beginning at 10:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Prior to studying for the priesthood, Father Holland was a registered nurse.

On Saturday, May 6, Dr. Vera Krokonko will lead a day beginning at 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. A retired pediatrician, Dr. Krokonko also holds a doctorate in Formative Spirituality from Duquesne University.

Please call for additional information and reservations.

## Order Christmas Gifts



Triptych, limited quantities, \$80.00



Nativity Music Box  
Limited quantities,  
\$49.95



3 Dimensional, Last Supper Statue,  
limited quantities, \$150

### *Benedictine Sisters Catholic Gift & Book Shop*

- **Waiting for Dawn, Portents of His Coming**, Rev. Mark Gruber OSB \$19.95
- **Jesus is Born** (children's book), Rolf Krenzer, Constanza Droop \$14.95
- **Advent of the Savior, A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives of Jesus**, Stephen J. Binz \$4.95
- **The Coming of God** (Third Edition), Maria Boulding OSB \$14.95

For additional items offered by  
the Benedictine Sisters Catholic Gift & Book Shop, go to:  
[www.stemma.org](http://www.stemma.org)

## The O Antiphons

*Continued from page 6*

Bind two into one: heaven and earth, time and eternity, divinity and humanity. Two into one: Jesus' heart and our hearts, sword and ploughshare, your grace and our nature, your healing and our brokenness.

*O Emmanuel, God with us, Our King and Lawgiver, the expected of the nations and their Saviour: COME to save us, O Lord our God. Amen.*

Expected of nations – what do most nations expect? Help from allies, better economy, better trade agreements?

"Expectations" the most natural and perhaps dangerous parts of our lives. We expect others to behave in a certain way. What do we expect of Jesus? That we will have a different life than He? That believing in him will be a life insurance policy so that we will never have a problem or difficulty?

We pray these reflections will help you join us in prayer during these special days of Advent.

## *A Blessed Christmas!*



*We remember you, our relatives, friends and benefactors, in our daily Eucharist as well as in The Liturgy of the Hours which we sing six times a day. Once a month the Eucharist is offered especially for you and your intentions. We hold you in our hearts as we offer our lives consecrated to Christ through our daily ora et labora.*



**You are cordially invited**  
to extend your celebration of  
Christmas ~ of Christ's birth ~  
by joining the Benedictine  
Sisters of St. Emma Monastery,  
Greensburg, PA for a

### **Christmas visit and Vespers,**

December 26. 12:30 - 3:30

Enjoy beautifully decorated Sisters' Chapel and  
displays of 80+ Nativity displays  
and other Christmas decorations  
Cookies and Punch

3:30 - 4:00 Christmas Caroling

4:00 Sung Vespers with Benedictine Sisters

If able to attend, call us with number  
at 724-834-3060 or email  
[benedictinenuns@stemma.org](mailto:benedictinenuns@stemma.org).



### **Pro-Life Day of Prayer**

The Benedictine Nuns invite you to join them for the annual Pro-Life Day of Prayer to be held Wednesday, January 18, 2006 from 2:30 P.M. until 8:30 P.M. Rev. Mark Gruber OSB will be the retreat leader. There is no fee.

## **Retreat House Schedule**

### **Weekend Retreats**

March 2006	3-5	Silent (men/ women) <i>Rev. Mark Gruber, Waiting list</i>
	10-12	Men <i>Rev. Tom Smith</i>
	17-19	Women <i>Rev. Mark Gruber OSB</i>
	24-26	Silent (men/ women) <i>Most Rev. Anthony G. Bosco.</i>
	31- Apr 2	Silent (men/ women) <i>Rev. Mark Gruber OSB, limited openings.</i>
May	21-26	<u>Directed Silent Retreat</u> <i>Rev. Thomas Acklin, OSB</i>
June	2-4	Legion of Mary and OTHERS
	16-22	6 Day <u>SILENT</u> (lay and religious) <i>Rev. Mark Gruber OSB</i>
August	4-10	6 Day <u>SILENT</u> (lay and religious) <i>Rev. Tom Smith</i>
	25-27	Men/Women <i>Rev. Bill Kiel</i>
September	15-17	Women <i>Most Rev. Anthony G. Bosco</i>
	22-24	Women <i>Rev. Edward Litavec</i>
	29-Oct.1	<u>SILENT</u> (men/ women)
October	6-8	Women

### **Days of Recollection**

January	28, 2006	"Divine Mercy" 8:45 a.m. — 6:00 p.m. <i>Rev. Jacques Daley OSB \$32</i>
March	11	"Divine Mercy" 8:45 a.m. — 4:30 p.m. <i>Rev. Jacques Daley OSB \$32</i>
April	8	Lenten (Lay / Religious) <i>Rev. Tom Smith</i>
April	22	Pro-Life
April	23	"Divine Mercy" Sunday <i>Rev. Thomas More Sikora OSB</i> 8:45 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
April	23	Benedictine Spirituality <i>Rev. Donald Raila OSB</i> 8:45 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
April	30	Widowed <i>Rev. Edward Higgins 8:45 a.m.–6:00 p.m.</i>

## **Monastic Guest House**

### **Priests Silent Guided Retreat**

**January 2-6, 2006** *Rev. Lester Knoll OFM Cap, Theme: "The Priest: Witness to the Mysteries" (Daily outline: Mass, One conference, one optional discussion session (evening), Eucharistic Adoration each evening, Silence.) Limited to 8.*

### **Priests Directed Silent Retreat**

**March 5-10, 2006** *Rev. Thomas Acklin OSB*

### **Directed Silent Retreat**

**June 2-8, 2006** *Rev. Mark Gruber OSB*

**August 4-10, 2006** *Rev. Mark Gruber OSB*