



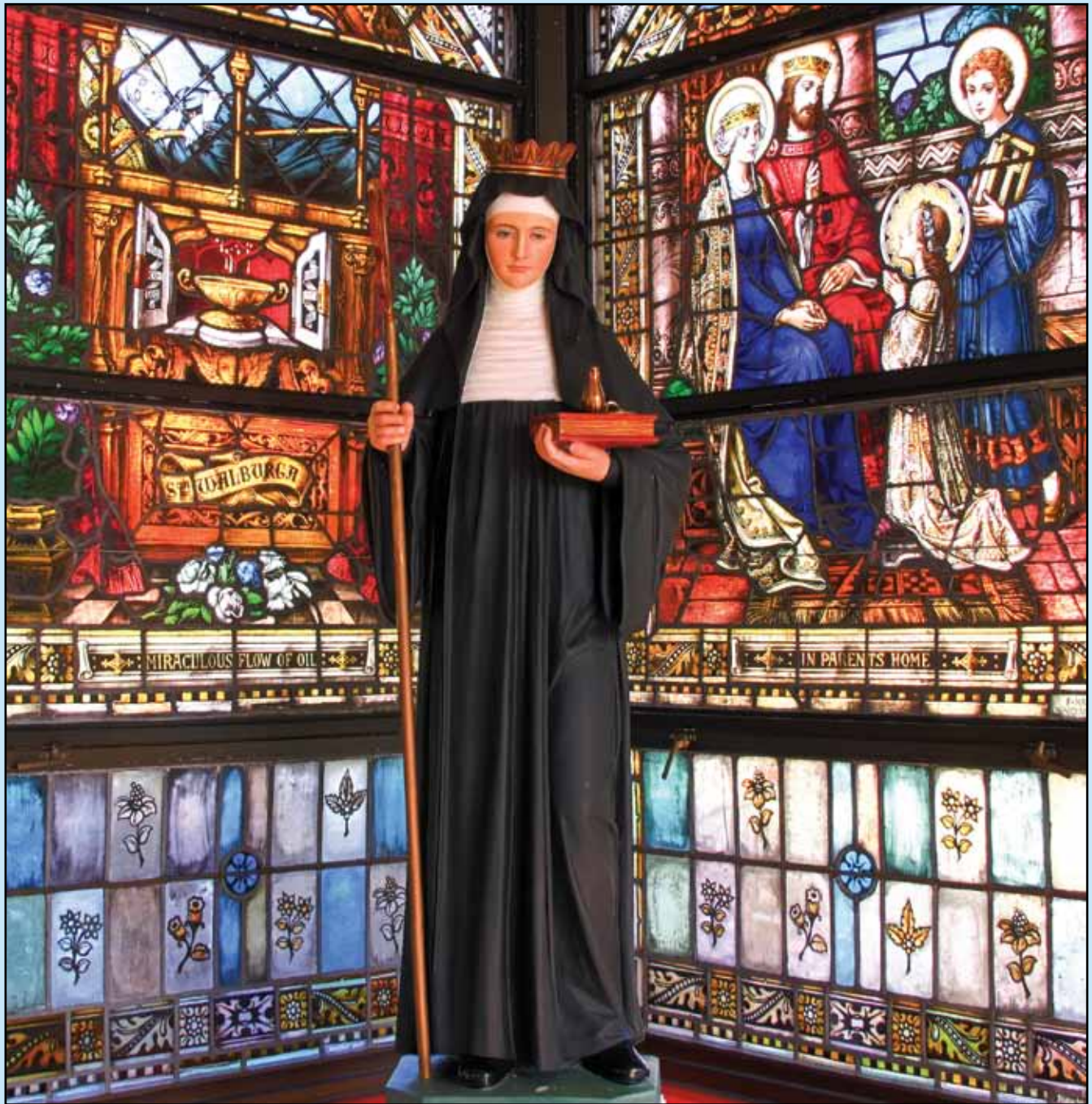
BENEDICTINE TOUCHSTONE



Spring 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



Happy Birthday St. Walburga!
1300 – and counting!

Prioress' Reflection

By Mother Mary Anne Noll OSB



For the past year, I have offered people a project that would be unique in their resumes: plan a 1300th birthday celebration for

St. Walburga! They could figure out how many cakes, how many candles – and how many fire trucks!

The relationship between St. Walburga who lived in the 700s, St. Emma Monastery, and all of us today in 2010? Living, influential, experiential!

Our forty founding Sisters entered Abtei St. Walburg, Eichstaett, Bavaria, that was founded in 1035 and has been in continuous existence ever since! During the 1930s our Sisters came to this country in order to provide help for the monks of St. Vincent and to support their Mother Abbey where vocations were abounding, but funds to support all these Sisters lacking due to the inflation at that time in that country that rendered their money “useless.”

On January 1, 2010, St. Emma Monastery was granted the status of a Conventual Priory, in accordance with the provisions of Canon Law. What does this mean? For Benedictines, each monastery is autonomous, “stands alone,” – even though they form congregations for mutual encouragement and support. The Sisters of St. Emma Monastery will continue to belong to the “Federation of Bavarian Abbeys of Benedictine Nuns,” but now as an independent Conventual Priory, and forever the daughterhouse of our beloved Abtei St. Walburg.

Since the goal of every Benedictine community is to become autonomous at some

point, Mother Franziska OSB, the Abbess of Abtei St. Walburg, has worked closely with this community towards this reality. Among other things, she encouraged us to pray Vigils and to make Solemn Vows as part of the needed requirements for this to occur. Since we also now have the requisite number of American women in Solemn Vows, this appeared to Mother Franziska



St. Walburga statue (15th century)
in Abtei St. Walburg

and the communities of Abtei St. Walburg and St. Emma Priory as the appropriate time. During these last 18 months, Mother Franziska has worked carefully with our community, the Holy See, Bishop Brandt of the Diocese of Greensburg, and the Archabbot of St. Vincent to create St. Emma Monastery as an independent Conventual Priory.

During Mother Franziska's visit last November, the community members voted to become an Independent Priory. We along with Mother Franziska selected the effective date to be January 1, 2010, the 1300th birthday year of St. Walburga – and the 975th anniversary of the founding of Abtei St. Walburg, Eichstaett!

From the outside, St. Emma Monastery is still the same. From the inside, we have now officially “come of age” according to Canon Law. The community here at St.

Emma is now responsible for continuing to live this wonderful pattern of monastic life, building upon the example of our founding Sisters, and the spiritual support, encouragement and wisdom, that Mother Franziska and the community of Abtei St. Walburg provided over the years. According to Canon Law, a Conventual Prioress has a higher position and, therefore, now has the sole responsibility for St. Emma Monastery.

How fitting that this daughter house of Abtei St. Walburg should become independent in the year celebrating St. Walburga's 1300th birthday and the 975th anniversary of the founding of that Abbey in her honor!

Why do we remember her and try to imitate her? What did Walburga do that made her an outstanding success story as a human being—a saint?

Walburga practiced loving God and neighbor in her daily prayer and work that made up her life as a Benedictine nun. All of us—in or out of the monastery—are called to the lifelong practices of having contact with God everyday and manifesting that prayer and love of God through our work and interactions each day.

Walburga's faith and her faithfulness in following Christ enabled her to leave her family, homeland and culture of England to go to the new land and culture of Germany. Life often demands and God's grace enables that we move from the “known and comfortable” of the present to the “unknown and, therefore, unpredictable” future.

Continued on page 6

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

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*Reflection from Mother Franziska Kloos OSB***“Saint Emma Monastery now an Independent Monastery”**

As I look back on 2009, there is one memory that gives me particular joy. It was the culmination of many steps over many years, finally leading to the Decree of Independence raising St. Emma Monastery to a Conventual Priory.

What does this mean? In his Holy Rule, St. Benedict describes various kinds of monks. The monks he viewed to be the most steadfast of monks are described as cenobites, who live in a monastery, serving the Lord under a Rule and an abbot (Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 1).

St. Benedict understood that a monastery is much more than the physical buildings. He described it, borrowing St. Peter’s words, as a house of the Lord built upon living stones. Monks and nuns who love and serve the Lord are those “living stones.”

In St. Emma, everything has been prepared over decades for this wonderful House of the Lord, this house of living stones to become an independent Priory. The community, together with the Prioress, continues to seek the Lord in prayer and work, in peace and unity.

The Mother Abbey has confidence in her daughters at St. Emma. The daughters must have the faith to go forth in the spirit of Abraham, who left the land of his kinsfolk and his father’s house to journey in a land that the Lord would show him; to go forth in the spirit of St. Walburga, who traveled from Anglo-Saxon England to work in the mission field of Germany; to go forth in the spirit of their founding Sisters, who left Abtei St. Walburg to pray and work in the “missions” of St. Vincent Archabbey, Seminary and College.

The Abbess and the community of Abtei St. Walburg very much appreciate and thank all those who have helped to support this House of the Lord and helped to make possible this grant of autonomy. We gratefully remember at this time all the Bishops of the Dioceses of Pittsburgh and Greensburg, and the Archabbots of St. Vincent Archabbey, who greatly helped St. Emma Monastery at the different stages of this journey. Our special thanks go to the

Most Reverend Lawrence E. Brandt (Diocese of Greensburg, 2004-present) and to the Right Reverend Douglas R. Nowicki OSB (1991-present) who brought the process to this longed-for conclusion.

We also thank:

- the community of St. Vincent Archabbey, past and present, for their spiritual and practical guidance;
- the volunteers who are such an integral part of St. Emma and give so generously of their time, prayer, hearts and talents to assist the community in their regular and special needs
- and those who so generously support the St. Emma community financially, with gifts of great variety and their prayer.

With all my heart, I wish all of our daughters at St. Emma – this House of the Lord – God’s abundant graces

for the future. Through the intercession of St. Walburga, may your community be a place where in all things God may be glorified (Rule of Benedict, Chapter 57).

*Mother Franziska Kloos OSB
Abbess Abtei St. Walburg*



Mother Franziska Kloos OSB and Archabbot Douglas R. Nowicki OSB (St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, PA) signing the Independence documents.

Mother Franziska Celebrates 25 Years as Abbess

On May 1, 2010, Mother Franziska celebrates her 25th anniversary of her abbatial blessing. What a special occasion also for us for we have been greatly blessed by her wonderful leadership during all of these years!

On each visit Mother Franziska basically saw “all” within the first day and no improvement went by unnoticed. She “pitched in” and ran the dishwasher both in the monastery and in the retreat house. Her presence and her conferences were always uplifting.

Several times Mother Franziska sent Sisters for several months to “live in and help out.” Ten years ago she and the community generously loaned us Sr. Maria as novice-mistress and sub-Prioress for which we are very grateful.

The idea to build our beautiful *Cor Jesu* Chapel was hers. When Mother Franziska said to me, “Build a real monastic chapel,” my heart nearly stopped. She also “blessed” all the other renovations and improvements that we undertook.

With our independence as a Conventual Priory for which she worked so zealously, our Abbess Mother Franziska, in her own words, moves “from being a mother to being a grandmother.” We know that we remain in her prayerful heart as she remains in our grateful hearts.

**Congratulations and God’s continued blessings,
Mother Franziska! Ad multos Annos!**

Mother Mary Anne OSB and the Nuns of St. Emma Conventual Priory



Shrine of St. Walburga located at St. Emma Monastery

Built in 1974, the walls of this star-shaped chapel were originally the 12 stained glass windows designed for the former St. Walburga Church in Pittsburgh, PA. The windows depict the life of St. Walburga, a Benedictine nun who was born in Anglo-Saxon England in 710 and followed her kinsman, St. Boniface, in the German mission.

St. Walburga's Way of Loving

I. In Her Parents' Home (after c.710)

Walburga was born in the kingdom of Wessex in southern England. Her noble parents, St. Richard and the "Blessed Wuna", had at least six children. They and their parents gathered daily for prayer at the cross on their estate.

Let us pray for our families and all those dear to us.



II. Her Father and Brothers Set Off as Pilgrims (720)

The departure of her father and two elder brothers as pilgrims to Rome made a deep impression on Walburga. Richard died at Lucca, Italy. The youths reached Rome where St. Wunibald (c.701-761) became a monk. The more robust St. Willibald (c.700-787) continued on to the Holy Land.

Let us pray that we may deepen our own commitment to Christ, our Holy Redeemer.



III. Entering the Convent School at Wimborne, England

As many devout nobles wanted a monastic education for a daughter, it is highly possible that Walburga went to this famous and strictly disciplined Wessex monastery. Girls studied the Bible, Latin and music. They also learned arithmetic, geometry and manuscript writing (i.e. a scribe's most basic skills).

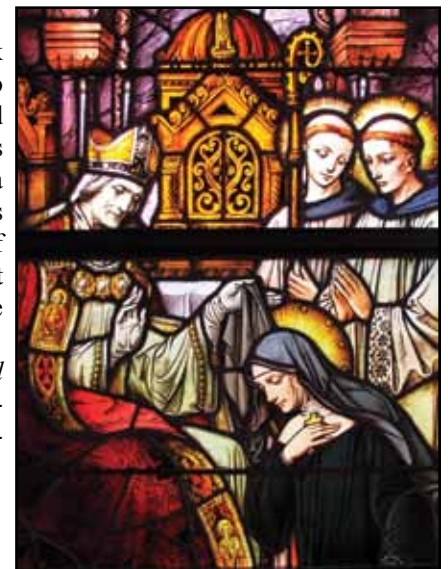
Let us pray that the young may grow up to know and love the faith.



IV. Making Profession at Wimborne

Certainly Walburga took vows; probably she did so at Wimborne. She promised solemnly to obey her abbess and to be deeply rooted in a life of singing God's praises seven times a day and of showing in her conduct that she preferred nothing to the love of Christ.

Let us pray that the Lord may call many to the priesthood and religious life in today's Church.





V. Departing from Her Native Land (740s)

Walburga's great kinsman is St. Boniface (c.675-754), a Benedictine monk, archbishop and martyr. Filled with good zeal she left England to help him to proclaim Christ's inexhaustible riches. Inevitably saying goodbye to loved ones was painful and she was never to see her native land again.

Let us pray for all those suffering from the loss of loved ones.

VI. Crossing the North Sea

Although a mere legend relates that Walburga's prayer calmed a storm, it has spiritual significance. At times she and her Sisters faced mighty waves of trials and tribulations, but, by persevering in prayer, she gained ever greater tranquility and the gift of bringing the peace of Christ to others.

Let us pray that we may develop greater spiritual maturity through our ways of trials and tribulations.



VII. Kinsfolk Welcoming Her Arrival in the Missionary Area (740s?)

Her brothers, Willibald and Wunibald, welcomed Walburga and the nuns with her to Germany. Willibald became the first bishop of Eichstätt, a diocese created in 741 by Boniface. In 752 Wunibald founded a monastery at nearby Heidenheim and became its abbot.



Let us pray that we too may respond humbly and lovingly to God's Divine Providence.

VIII. Healing and Caring for the Sick

One dark night, according to a legend significantly derived from a living tradition, Walburga, then abbess of Heidenheim, went alone to a noble's home. She prayed all night at his dying child's bedside and by dawn the girl was healed!

Let us pray for the sick and their caregivers humbly and lovingly to God's Divine Providence.



IX. Teaching at Bischofsheim on the River Tauber (before 761)

Perhaps Walburga's ablest pupil was Huneberc, a younger kinswoman, whom she later chose to write biographies on Willibald and Wunibald, the invaluable sources of most of our information. Both were probably at Bischofsheim where the Wimborne-educated abbess, St. Lioba, was another of Boniface's kin.

Let us pray for parents and all educating the young.



X. The Abbess of Heidenheim

Abbot Wunibald, who evangelized successfully in the area, died in 761 after decades of illness and Walburga was asked to continue his work. She came with some nuns, including Huneberc, to face the difficult task of ruling both monks and nuns.

Let us pray that wisdom may be bestowed on all holding positions of authority in the Church.



XI. St. Walburga's Death (February 25, 779)

Walburga died peacefully after many years of courageously carrying her cross, the burden of being an abbess; it was indeed the cross which inspired so many Anglo-Saxons to do such great things for God. However, her life is not limited to her earthly biography, but includes her being and working in God after death (cf. Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 42).

Let us pray that we may do Our Father's will with loving and loyal hearts.



XII. The Miraculous Flow of Oil

In the 870s Walburga's remains were solemnly brought to Eichstätt. In 893 as some of her relics were being moved elsewhere it was discovered that her bones were covered with drops of a dew-like liquid. Touching the holy reliquary, a cripple was healed and devotion spread rapidly.

Abtei St. Walburg, which established St. Emma Monastery in 1931, was founded in 1035 and the present tomb was soon built. Below the sarcophagus is a shaft where the

'holy oil' flowing from the reliquary is collected. Over the centuries countless pilgrims, distressed in mind and body, have visited her shrine, and still



today some of those who pray with deep faith are cured or receive a deep sense of peace in their hearts to bear their cross more easily. Devotion to her has extended throughout the world.

Let us pray for the devout, the distressed and the dying who are making both intercession and thanksgiving to our beloved and generous St. Walburga.

*Text based on research by Sister Beda Brooks OSB,
Abtei St. Walburg, Eichstätt, Germany*

Your way of acting should be different from the world's way; the love of Christ must come before all else.

— Rule of Benedict, Chapter 4

For us this “way of acting” means

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



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

Upcoming Monastic Live-In Experiences:

A Monastic Triduum, March 30-April 5, 2010

Summer Experience, July 9-14, 2010

For additional information or to register for one of the Live-in Experiences email vocations@stemma.org or call 724-834-3060.

If you know of someone who is considering religious life, we ask you to share this information with them, or if appropriate, to send us their name and address and we would be happy to send them information about our community.

As always, please remember in your prayers all those who are discerning a call to the religious life or the priesthood in your prayers - God bless you!

Triduum - Easter Schedule

Everyone welcome to worship with us!

Holy Thursday

- 6:00 a.m. Tenebrae (Vigils and Lauds together)
- 9:00 a.m. Terce
- 11:45 a.m. Sext/None (Midday Prayer)
- 4:00 p.m. Vespers
- 7:00 p.m. Mass of the Lord's Supper • Adoration of Blessed Sacrament (until 10:30 p.m.)**

Good Friday

- 6:00 a.m. Tenebrae
- 9:00 a.m. Terce
- 11:45 a.m. Sext/None
- 3:00 p.m. Celebration of Lord's Passion**
- 7:00 p.m. Compline

Holy Saturday

- 6:00 a.m. Tenebrae
- 8:30 a.m. Terce
- 11:45 a.m. Sext/None
- 4:00 p.m. Vespers
- 8:15 p.m. Easter Vigil**

Easter Sunday

- 6:25 a.m. Lauds
- 7:45 a.m. Terce
- 8:00 a.m. Eucharist**
- 11:45 a.m. Sext/None
- 5:00 p.m. Vespers
- 7:15 p.m. Vigils and Compline



— Prioress' Reflection
Continued from page 2

May we as an independent Priory and all of you move into our tomorrows with that same faith and faithfulness that St. Walburga lived – and inspires us to live.

Ad multos Annos – to St. Walburga, to our Motherhouse of Abtei St. Walburg, to St. Emma Conventual Priory, and to all our beloved volunteers and friends!!

Mother Mary Anne Noll, OSB

Mother Mary Anne Noll OSB
Prioress

P.S. Mother Leonarda and the first Sisters arrived at St. Vincent Archabbey on February 25, 1931 – the feast of Saint Walburga. The steamship line chose the day of their departure from Ger-

many and Divine Providence chose the date of their arrival in Latrobe, PA.

As the Sisters crossed the Atlantic, one story from the life of St. Walburga must have echoed in their memories; namely, the occasion when a violent storm arose as her ship crossed the North Sea. St. Walburga prayed and the storm abated.

Arriving at St. Vincent on Walburga's feast day must have been a reassurance for our founding Sisters. They had just “retraced” the faith journey of St. Walburga by crossing a body of water separating them from family and from a known land and culture and bringing them to the new and unknown land and culture of Western Pennsylvania. St. Walburga encouraged them in their journey of faith.

Step after step in faith, each of our Sisters –past and present– has laid the foundation for this community to become a Conventual Priory in 2010.

Why God Must Come First

By Robert J. Allen

Pope Benedict XVI recently stated, “One must first believe in order to understand God’s truth.” What a wonderful insight into our gift of faith! He also cited Saint Anselm: “Nor do I seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe so that I may understand.” This shows that faith comes before reason, and reason can deepen faith.

Too often we make judgments on what truth is based on our feelings or the emotion we are expressing at that moment. To believe in God allows us to better understand how God is with us in all things.

This leads us to more fully realize that we will never fully understand God. Our goal should be to seek God in all that we say, think or do, and see God in everyone we meet, to believe that God exists in each person.

Seeking God in all that she said, thought or did made Walburga who lived 1300 years ago a saint and that same seeking of God will do the same for us. Her family certainly believed, or the father and brothers would never have set out on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The mother with Walburga (and possibly other siblings) had to have faith to allow them to go.

Seeing God’s hand in her going with other Benedictine Nuns from Wimborne to Germany, Walburga trusted that God was the same from the one culture that she knew in England to the unknown culture that existed in Germany. In her daily round of prayer and work, she always had to look beyond the surface in order to see Christ in the Sisters that she lived with, the guests who came to the door: all were God’s beloved.

Her faith “developed” and deepened as ours should. These early English missionaries relied upon friends and benefactors who shared their faith and trust in God to help fund their monasteries in their outreach to Germany.

“Development” is based on faith: the “recipients” began a religious community, a school or a social service because they saw a need and felt called in faith with God’s help to respond to that need. “With God’s help” included the generous donors who also searched for God and whose desire it was to make the world an essentially better place in which to live.

That is the reason we seek God then and now—both for the nuns and for the benefactors.

Benedictine Sisters Catholic Gift & Book Shop



Both gift sets include: prayer book with padded, gold stamped cover and gold page edge, rosary (wood for boys, pearl for girls), rosary case, color bookmark, scapular, pin.

Boy’s Set \$36.25 # 6521/7000/GB;

Girl’s Set \$36.25 # 6520/02/GB

Boy’s and Girl’s Prayer Books sold separately, Boy’s #6521, \$11.95; Girl’s #6520, \$11.95

Shipping Costs

Up to \$20	\$ 5.95
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\$40.01 – \$75	\$ 8.95
\$75.01 – \$125	\$ 9.95
\$ 125.01 & up	\$ 10.95
NO CODS	



Clear vinyl book cover with textured cover book, rosary, scapular, pin.

Girl’s Set # 6500/05, \$13.75

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Sterling Silver Birthstone Necklace.

18” Stainless Chain.

\$27.75

5401ROSS/18S



Hand Made Chalice Neck-

lace with Heart Shaped

Beads in Chain. \$15.00

#S869



Five Way Sterling Silver Medal,

18” Stainless

Chain (not shown)

\$27.00

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Total			

For more First Communion items and links to other sources, visit our website www.stemma.org



Prayer Requests & Intentions

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

\$8 Billion: Are You Part Owner?



Have you received a Gift Card(s) for which you have no particular use? The National Retail Federation estimates that 10% of the approximately \$80 billion gift cards given this last Christmas season – or \$8 billion worth of gift cards – do not get redeemed.

Mother Mary Anne spotted the above statistic and knew immediately that she could find a use for cards just going to waste! As mentioned in past issues – the Nuns will not be eating out on the cards or using any spa days! – but like everything else the Sisters receive, she'll find a best use for it!

Do you have any unused GIFT CARDS that you could please donate? If so, contact Mother Mary Anne at: (724) 834-3060.

HUGE INDOOR FLEA MARKET JUNE 18-19 • (AIR CONDITIONED)

Delicious food (eat-in or take-out) • Dishes • Glassware • Children's items • Furniture • Tools • Seasonal items • Books • CDs • DVDs • Hardware • Small Appliances • Housewares • Stuff, stuff, and more stuff!

Comments from last year's visitors

'The 'Premiere flea market– Items displayed as if in a store' • 'Everything is so clean and neat!' • 'Have always wanted to visit St. Emma; this gave me a reason!' • 'Couldn't believe the quantity and variety of items.' • 'I look forward to this every year.' • 'The delicious food is enough to bring me back.' • 'I scheduled a vacation day so I can come!' • 'Everyone is so friendly!'

Donations gladly accepted after June 1
(Please, no large appliances, clothing or shoes)

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



2010 Retreat Programs

For additional information on any of these retreats or to make reservations, please visit www.stemma.org – thank you!

- March 12-14** **Men** Rev. Barry O'Leary, Theme: Saints Alive, \$145
- 15** Lenten Evening of Recollection, 4-9 p.m.
Rev. Msgr. Lawrence Kiniry, Theme: Women of the Resurrection, \$20
- 19-21** **SILENT** Rev. Boniface Hicks, OSB, Theme: The Silence of Joseph, \$145
- 25** Lenten Evening of Recollection, 4-9 p.m.
Rev. Robert Lubic, \$20
- 27** Lenten Day of Recollection, 9-3:30 p.m.
Rev. Donald Raila, OSB, Theme: Obedience as a Pleasing Sacrifice to God, \$28
- July 23-29** **6 Day Silent Retreat**, Rev. Donald Raila, OSB
Theme: Keys to Growing in Holiness: Obedience, Silence, Humility, \$365

Encounter with Silence, July 23-30

Truth must bear fruit in love, and love must proceed from truth. These words of the late Father John J. Hugo crystallize the completeness of Christianity that the Encounter with Silence memorably conveys.

The retreat creates a spiritual hothouse of strict silence, profound prayer and Holy Mass. It then plants the seed of conversion by showing that Christ's teaching must be radically change our lives, and especially our mentality: Christianity demands more than respectability and natural virtue. Christians are called to holiness and perfection.

It boldly challenges the purely human thinking of our times with divine truth. Join us in holy silence and be transformed, so that the Church and Her saints can transform the world. *Retreat Master:* Rev. John-Mary Tompkins OSB

Retreat House accommodations: \$425

Monastic Guest House accommodations: \$475

Busy Moms Overnight Retreat • Aug. 20-21

Angels to Your Children, Archangels to Your
Grandchildren, Christ to Each Other

Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy OFM Cap • \$75

The vocation of motherhood is awesome to the point that sometimes moms don't take time for themselves. With that in mind, this overnight retreat was planned for mothers of young children. (You are welcome to stay an extra night if possible.)

The retreat opens with dinner at 6:00 p.m. on Friday with Mass at 8:00 p.m. (but you are welcome to come any time after 2:00 p.m.). The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available at various times throughout the retreat. Saturday's schedule includes a conference and Holy Hour as well as time for sharing and quiet time just for you. We invite you to have your family join you for the 4:00 p.m. anticipated Sunday Mass and to stay on for pizza, pop and ice cream.