



BENEDICTINE TOUCHSTONE

Spring 2005



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

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Prioress' Reflection

By Mother Mary Anne Noll OSB

Here at St. Emma Monastery, God obviously supplied this incredible symbolization of the Death and Resurrection of His Son both for Easter 2003 and 2004. Since Easter is so early this year, chances are that these decorative crabapple trees will have buds of promise rather than the blossoms of full glory.

Have we noticed on every crucifix the "bended" knees of Jesus? In April 2001, Bishop Emeritus Anthony G. Bosco, Greensburg, PA wrote a pastoral letter titled, "On Bended Knee: The Eucharist and Service." The detail of the painting by Ford Madox Brown showed Jesus kneeling and washing the feet of Peter. The letter described

Crawling? Getting out of bed? Climbing a mountain or a stepladder? Getting in or out of a car? Flexibility? A humble attitude? An apology?

Many people have waited for years for us to install the four-story elevator that was finished last November for the retreat house. Why? Their stiff and sore joints rebelled at the thought of having to bend on the stairs.

Nearly every expression of loving God or neighbor involves "bending" in some way—either physically or spiritually or symbolically. We kneel, sit, rise stand or lie prostrate to pray depending upon the setting and the ritual. We walk into a church, up the aisle to receive Holy Communion, to

We bend our knees and our hearts to answer the phone, make dinner, cut the grass, go to work or visit someone in the hospital. We bend our schedules and our plans to take people to the doctor, to the store or to visit a loved one.

Parents bend their knees and their sleep patterns as they crawl out of bed AGAIN to care for their baby or rock it or walk with it. When the child or children are older, the parents sit on the floor and play with their children or take them for rides in a wagon, or give them "horsey" back rides.

To be Christian means to "bend" or expand the concept of our needs to include the needs of others in the love of Christ. In order to live in a family or a community, we need to bend our ideas, our likes and dislikes—or at least our expression of them.

To love God and neighbor means to "bend" and to turn away from ourselves as the center of the universe. It also demands the loosening of the death grip on our idea of when, where and how God has to act in order to fit our concept that God is good.

Why do we not want to bend away from our rigid positions? We grasp a hurt, an unfortunate remark or a misunderstanding and refuse to bend and forgive, to bend an elbow and pick up a phone or bend our fingers and write a note of apology or a thank you.



the service we should show and be to one another as a result of receiving Jesus in the Eucharist.

When we hear, "to bend the knee," what do we think of? Genuflection? Physical therapy? Sitting down?

participate also in the celebration of the other Sacraments, and to accompany the body of a deceased relative or friend on its way to its final resting-place.

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Pro-Life Prayer Vigil



Many thanks to the individuals who joined our monastic community for the Pro-Life Prayer Vigil on January 19.

Program on Benedictine Spirituality



On Sunday, April 17 we will host a day of recollection for those interested in Benedictine Spirituality. This day is directed to those who desire to learn more about our tradition as well as lay people who are Oblates (laity who seek in the Rule of St. Benedict direction for their daily spiritual lives). The day begins with 8:45 a.m. registration and concludes with 5:00 p.m. dinner. (A meeting for Oblates will follow dinner). Conferences, opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and Sunday Eucharist are included in the program. The retreat master is Rev. Justin Matro OSB, a priest-monk of St. Vincent Archabbey. He is vice rector of St. Vincent Seminary and teaches courses in spirituality. The theme for the day is "Benedictine Methods of Prayer." Fee is \$32.00.

Prioress' Reflection

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Several times in his homilies, our Chaplain, Msgr. Robert J. Shuda, has described God as serving us on bended knee for this foot washing takes place in John's Gospel where the divinity of Jesus is so transparent. What a beautiful portrayal of God "bending His knees" to serve us, to wash our feet, to bind up our wounds! Some days we find it hard to believe that God is really interested in ME—yet alone that He is serving me on "bended knee".

For the final time, Jesus bent His physical knees on the cross even as He bent His heart and will towards the Father with the cry, "Into your hands I commend, I hand over my Spirit."

In this year of the Eucharist, let us marvel at our Lord's humility expressed in taking on our humanity with the flexible bended knees of a

child until the rigor mortis bent knees on the cross. He did not think equality with God something to be clung to but humbled himself, bending his knees in our humanity as one of us. Just as Christ on bended knee served us at the Last Supper so too should we receive our Lord more humbly in the Eucharist and in one another with an attitude of bended knee.

Lord during this Lent, bend and make pliable our hearts so that they may beat with your love, that our voices might express your concern and love, that our actions may embody your serving attitude.

Yours in the Risen Lord,

Mother Mary Anne Roll, OSB

Widowed Day of Recollection

Have you known that devastation called "losing a spouse?" Was it just weeks ago or 20 years ago – and can seem like both at once? On Sunday, April 24 we will host a day of recollection for the *Widowed*. The theme for the day is "Loneliness to Solitude."

The day begins with 8:45 a.m. registration and concludes with 5:00 p.m. dinner. Conferences, opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and Sunday Eucharist are part of the day. The retreat master is Rev. Lester Knoll OFM Cap, of St. Clare Friary, Pittsburgh. Fee is \$32.00.

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 p.m. Vespers
(* Times may vary)
7:30 p.m. Compline
Lectio Divina II

All are welcome to join us in prayer.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Sr. Angela Makes Temporary Vows

On Sunday, January 16, Sr. Angela Uhlott professed temporary vows (for three years), received the black veil, and her religious name: Sr. Maria Johanna (pronounced Yo-HAN-na). Her patronal saints are Mary and John at the foot of the Cross. Sr. Maria Johanna grew up on various Air Force bases and then lived in Oil City, PA. From her time in college until she entered our community three years ago, she lived in the Pittsburgh area. She taught at Aquinas Academy, Pittsburgh, PA, for two years before entering the monastery.



Sr. Maria Johanna singing the Suscipe during profession ceremony.



Sr. Maria Johanna proudly showing her profession card.

Attends Episcopal Ordination

On Wednesday, February 2, Mother Mary Anne represented the monastic community at the Episcopal Ordination of the Most Rev. Paul J. Bradley, Auxiliary Bishop of Pittsburgh.

OUR Retreat

Our annual community retreat was November 16-24, 2004. Rt. Rev. Leo Ryska OSB, President of the The Pontifical Institute of Liturgy Foundation in New York, NY was the retreat master. Abbot Leo's conferences on various aspects of monastic spirituality were thought provoking and offered much for us to pray about.



Christmas Visit & Vespers



Over 300 people joined us on December 27 for Christmas Visit & Vespers and enjoyed seeing the nativity sets from various countries as well various expressions. It was wonderful to see more families with young children this year. Many thanks to the individuals who have given us nativity sets and who help with the decorations—the people who come really find this a spiritual way to celebrate Christmas.

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Blessing of the Candles~ Feast of the Presentation of our Lord



Our chaplain, Msgr. Shuda, blessing candles in the Atrium.



Procession into Cor Jesu Monastic Chapel for the celebration of the Eucharist.

New Conference Room, Elevator & Renovations

The long awaited – and much needed – 4-story elevator and large conference room as well as the various renovations in the retreat house were blessed on Saturday, November 27. Approximately 150 people joined our monastic community for this wonderful occasion. Rt. Rev. Douglas R. Nowicki OSB, archabbot of St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, presided at

Mid-afternoon Prayer followed by an outdoor procession (on a warm, sunny afternoon) to the new St. Benedict Conference Room where the prayers of dedication were offered.

With the 4-story elevator, we now have handicap accessibility to all levels of the retreat house. Additionally handicap restrooms and shower/bath facilities were also part of the renovations.

The St. Benedict Conference Room seats 90 and the St. Joseph Conference Room (also new) seats 12 while the renovated St. Scholastica Conference Room seats 45.

As mentioned in our Winter newsletter, the retreatants' dining room also has a new look having received a new tile floor, updated heating and air conditioning system, ceiling, serving line, as well as new chairs.

The kitchen area was doubled – with “Alleluias” and “Amens” from the Sisters and volunteers who assist them in cooking the meals for the retreatants. Much of the equipment from the “old” retreat kitchen was re-used in the “new” retreat kitchen or found new uses in the monastery.

Please contact us for information for bring groups for a day program or a dinner.



Archabbot Douglas making remarks during the dedication ceremony.
(Photo credit: Ed Zelachoski, The Catholic Accent)



Retreatants enjoying dinner in renovated retreatants dining room.

You who join us today represent the range of people who come to St. Emma – young and old, married and single, lay and religious, Roman Catholic, Byzantine, Orthodox, Protestants, – all of us God-seekers and God-lovers.



Archabbot Douglas blessing the renovated St. Scholastica Conference Room as Mother Mary Anne looks on. (Photo credit: Ed Zelachoski, The Catholic Accent)



The Sisters and guests process to the St. Benedict Conference Room for the Prayers of Dedication.

Blessed Saturday, November 27, 2005



Sisters and guests singing a hymn of gratitude during the blessing ceremony.



Mother Mary Anne with retreatants in the St. Scholastica Conference Room.

"Coming Home" to St. Emma

The following is an excerpt from Mother Mary Anne's Reflections during the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Retreat House which took place on November 27, 2004.

We gather here because we are celebrating a very special hallmark in the life of the retreat house as a center of spirituality for Western Pennsylvania and beyond.

This afternoon we have come together to celebrate the goodness, the graciousness, the mercy, the love, the forgiveness of God that people have received, that you our guests – all of whom have been nourished by coming to St. Emma Retreat House during these past 50 years have received.

You who join us today represent the range of people who come to St. Emma – young and old, married and single, lay and religious, Roman Catholic, Byzantine, Orthodox, Protestants, — all of us God-seekers and God-lovers. Some of you have come for years (John Hudock on first overnight retreat); some came perhaps before the retreat house was built. Some have recently come for retreat or for a day or evening of recollection; others have been touched by Christmas Visit & Vespers or coming to the Gift & Book Shop.

Bishop Hugh L. Lamb, who was not only the first bishop of our very new diocese at the time but also resided here at St. Emma, had encouraged Mother Leonarda and the community to build this retreat house. Since the dedication on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1954, nearly 165,000 people have come here to deepen their relationship with God. Some of us recall personally – others from history books that that date was the closing of the Marian Year that marked the 100th anniversary of the proclamation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

Many have told us that coming to St. Emma is like "Coming Home" – the highest compliment that anyone can ever be paid – is coming home...

This retreat center was one of the very first to offer retreats for married couples.

In 1969 we welcomed the first of the ecumenical and Protestant groups to St. Emma.



Sr. Renata proclaiming the scripture reading at the blessing ceremony.

Benedictine Sisters Catholic Gift & Book Shop



Main section of the gift shop

Occasionally we have mentioned our very large Gift & Book Shop but have never really described the wonderful selection of articles available for all occasions – or as a reminder or expression of one's faith.

Until now, you had to come HERE to visit our shop. With the flier enclosed in this issue of our *Benedictine Touchstone*, we are bringing a very small selection of our First Communion and Confirmation items to you.

In our store we have a wonderful selection of items for Mother's Day and Father's Day including statues, medals, pictures, and outdoor statues.



The Book Nook

ALLELUIA

Holy Week - Easter Schedule

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 (Vigils and Lauds together)
- 9:00 a.m. Terce
- 11:45 a.m. Sext/None (Midday Prayer)
- 3:00 p.m. Celebration of the Lord's Passion
- 7:00 p.m. Compline

Holy Saturday

- 6:00 a.m. Tenebrae (Vigils and Lauds together)
- 8:30 a.m. Terce
- 11:45 a.m. Sext/None
- 4:00 p.m. Vespers
- 7:00 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



Thank you for your generosity!

We are so touched that you respond so warmly and generously to our requests for your prayers and financial support

Bishop Brandt visits

On the Feast of St. Scholastica, February 10, Most Rev. Lawrence E. Brandt, Bishop of Greensburg, was the main celebrant and homilist at our community Eucharist. His homily both affirmed our monastic life with its witness of the primacy of God as needed in our world as a reminder

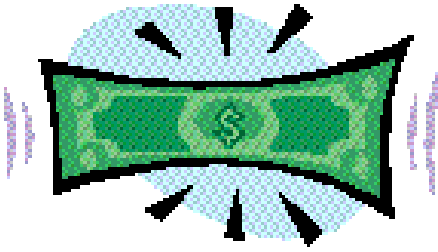
and reminded us of our wondrous vocation and responsibility.



Prayer Requests and Intentions

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

Thank You!



By Robert J. Allen

Thank You! Without equal, these are the two most important words you can say for a gift from someone. But in another sense, these words mean . . . you have trusted me with your money to help some one or some program and I accept the responsibility.

The vast majority of charities accept this responsibility and understand the ethical and binding action they assume by asking for and receiving someone's donation.

St. Emma Monastery goes even further, because your gift not only works to provide services, its cost is shared by the Benedictine nuns who work free and to the many volunteers who come daily to work in the many programs and take no compensation. In fact, St. Emma Monastery has no paid employees. In my forty-four years in development, this is not only the first time, but the only time, I have witnessed a fund raising effort that was

totally run by volunteers with no paid staff.

I want to say Thank You publicly to you the BENEFACTOR and to you the VOLUNTEER for all that you have given to truly make the words Thank You so significant.

When you write your next check to any charity, you know a percentage is for administration salaries, benefits; but now you have a charity that allows 100% of your gift to go directly to the charity. No they can't duplicate the loaves and fishes, but the Benedictine nuns of St. Emma Monastery do seem to make the dollar go further.



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



Mother Mary Anne with the architect and contractors: Tom Farrell, Farrell Electric Company, Peter Ceconni Jr., AIA, Architect, David Raimondo, Raimondo Construction Co., Inc., and Joe Tamasy, Jay Squared Mechanical.

In Memoriam

- ◆ Margaret Durco died December 31, 2004. Margaret volunteered every Tuesday for nearly 10 years. May she who served us and others so generously know the warm embrace of our loving Father.

Thank You

We are pleased to announce completion of the renovation of St. Emma Retreat House. A special thank you to the architect and contractors for their dedication to this project.

Annual Flea Market

On Wednesday, April 27 we will hold our Annual Flea Market. Doors open at 9:00 a.m. Old items, glassware, china, furniture, books, records, and items too numerous and too varied to be mentioned will be available.

Spring cleaning your attic or garage or just the back of your closets? We very much appreciate any donations (no clothing, shoes or large appliances, please) – just contact Mother Mary Anne OSB.

Food cooked by the Nuns as well as handmade wax items by the Nuns will also be available.



Resurrection Tapestry
St. Emma Monastery

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.

Retreat House Schedule

April	17	Benedictine Spirituality <i>Rev. Justin Matro OSB</i> (\$32)
	23	People Concerned about Pro-Life <i>Rev. Lester Knoll OFMCap</i> (\$23)
June	24	Widowed , <i>Rev. Lester Knoll OFMCap</i> (\$32)
	3- 5	Legion of Mary and OTHERS, <i>Rev. Bradley Baldwin TOR</i> (\$110)
	10-16	6 Day SILENT (lay and religious), <i>Rev. Lester Knoll OFMCap</i> (\$290) Part time reservations welcome.
August	5-11	6 Day SILENT (lay and religious), <i>Rev. Mark Gruber OSB</i> (\$290) Part time reservations welcome.
	26-28	Men/Women, <i>Rev. Tom Smith</i> (\$110)
September	16-18	Women, <i>Rev. Edward Litavec</i> (\$110)
	23-25	Women <i>Most Rev. Anthony G. Bosco</i> (\$110)
	30-Oct 2	SILENT (men/ women), <i>Rev. Lester Knoll OFMCap</i> (\$110)
October	14-16	Women, <i>Rev. Timothy Fitzgerald CP</i> (\$110)
	21-23	Married Couples, <i>Rev. Thomas Kram</i> (\$210)
	28-30	Married Couples, <i>Rev. Mark Gruber OSB</i> (\$210)
November	4- 6	Legion of Mary and OTHERS (\$110) <i>Rev. Francis Lendacky</i>
December	3	Day of Recollection for Sisters

Monastic Guest House Schedule

Directed Silent Retreats 2005

May	22-27	Lay/Religious, <i>Rev. Thomas Acklin OSB</i> , \$325
June	10-16	Lay/Religious, <i>Rev. Mark Gruber OSB</i> , \$390
	19-24	PRIESTS, <i>Rev. Thomas Acklin OSB</i>
July	18-23	Lay/Religious, <i>Rev. Mark Gruber OSB</i> , \$325

Encounter with Silence

July	8-15	<i>Rev Frank Erdeljac</i> , Monastic Guest House, \$400, Retreat House, \$310
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Pro-Life Day of Recollection



On Saturday, April 23, Rev. Lester Knoll OFMCap will lead the Spring Pro-Life Day of Recollection. His theme is "Prevailing Prayer for Life."

Program begins with registration at 8:45 and concludes with Eucharist (anticipated Sunday). Fee is \$23.00. Registration is required.