



BENEDICTINE TOUCHSTONE

Winter 2006



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

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



*O King
of Nations,
and their
desired One,
the Corner-
stone that
makes both
one: Come,
and deliver
man, whom
you formed
out of the
dust of the
earth. Amen.*

Prioress' Reflection

By Mother Mary Anne Noll OSB



In our technological culture, candles are lit in our churches as a sign of our self-surrender for as candles burn,

they are consumed. Candles are lit to make meals special, on Advent wreaths, and on birthday cakes.

Try to imagine the pre-electric world in which candles were a main source of light. With observation and from usage, Jesus noted that people lit a lamp or a candle and put it on a lamp stand so that all could see.

The early church placed the celebration of Christ's birth on December 25—just after the winter solstice. The light of Christ enlightening the world coincides with the lengthening of daylight.

Two thousand years later, the contrast between the light of Christ and the darkness of events in the world seems to become ever more dramatic. Each year we plead with new urgency for Christ to come into our hearts and our world.

Can one read the newspapers, watch the news, or be aware of the local happenings and not see a dark landscape?

Darkness enveloped the one-room schoolhouse where the Amish girls were killed several weeks ago about four hours from us. Hearts around the world were touched first by the horror and then by the incredible Christian witness of the Amish who immediately forgave the man who killed their daughters.

How brilliantly did the light of their lived faith in Jesus Christ contrast with the darkness of the deed! "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do."

A few days later came the report that the older girls had asked that they be shot first in the hope the man would

spare the younger. "No greater love has one than to lay down his life for his friends."

As money arrived at the Paradise (how ironic the name!) Post Office, nine Amish elders said they would share the money that was sent with the children of the dead murderer so his children could go to school. It would be not right, these elders concluded, that the Amish might receive a lot of money and the other family practically none. "Be perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect for the sun shines on the just and the unjust alike."

In this world where violence often begets more violence in an eye for an eye mentality, these faith actions expressing their profound living of the Gospel dazzle in this darkened world.

On the photo on the front cover, we see the O Antiphon banner, "O King of Nations," on the ambo. The antiphon continues, "and their desired one, the Cornerstone that makes both one. Come, and deliver man, whom you formed out of the dust of the earth." These O Antiphons address the Messiah under the great titles of the Old Testament and are sung at Vespers beginning December 17. They also are used as the Alleluia verse before the Gospel during the Eucharist on these same days.

In the foreground of the cover photo burn the Advent candles—three purple and one pink—marking the progression of the Advent season.

Most of us are familiar with the Christophers' motto, "better to light one little candle than to curse the darkness."

Who can measure the impact on the darkness of the world by those who offer up their sufferings of body, mind and heart with those of Jesus on the Cross—of those who attend Mass daily and pray frequently?

The world becomes brighter each time people practice, "whatever you do



for the least of my brethren..."

It is so moving to hear first-hand of someone who has cared for their invalid spouse for years, parents who have devoted their lives to a special needs child, or of a son or daughter who has always looked after their parents.

How brightly those candles glow when people take neighbors or relatives shopping or to a doctors' appointment! The volunteers who help the many religious organizations and work for the various civic causes also brighten the world.

Recently I received a business card and on the back, it read, "I have Jesus for my personal Lord and Savior..." What a surprising place to find the light of Christ

One candle lights up the path for us and for others. It brings the light of Christ into a world that is stumbling in the dark. If we do not make the effort to have our candles burning brightly, who will?

A blessed season of Advent hope and expectation of the coming One who enlightens our lives. May this Christmas make us greater transparencies of the light of Christ.

Mother Mary Anne Noll, OSB

Mother Mary Anne OSB

A Letter from the Abbess

Dear friends and benefactors of St. Emma,

I have just returned to our motherhouse in Eichstätt and, with the memories of my visit to St. Emma still fresh in my mind, I want to share my impressions with all of you.

My visit was filled with positive experiences. One of the highlights for me was the recognition of how much the new church building has influenced the community prayer and the spiritual life of the whole community. There is a special spiritual atmosphere at St. Emma, and I credit this to the nourishment that comes from their devotion to the liturgy. The sisters are clearly striving toward the spiritual values in the spirit of St. Benedict, whose Rule encourages us to “seek God” before all else.

Another highlight was to see how the community cares for the last of the original, founding German sisters, Sr. Gaudentia, with such love and respect. She is the link to their roots, and continues to be a joy to all who have the privilege of helping her.

The community of 13 sisters is surrounded and supported by a wonderful circle of volunteers. These lay people offer faithful, loyal support and help at all levels. They are like an extension of the community itself: men and women of all ages, working together for a common goal. When I expressed my appreciation of their generous self-giving, the gift of their time and talents, it warmed my heart to hear their answers: “The sisters here are wonderful! They deserve our help.” They even told me how grateful they are to have the opportunity to help at St. Emma. As a German, this especially impressed me, because it really seems to be unique to America, that people volunteer their services so generously in this way.



Mother Franziska Kloos, OSB, Abbess of our Motherhouse, Abtei St. Walburg, visits with Sr. Gaudentia.

Next year I plan to return again to St. Emma, and will look forward to seeing my beloved sisters and friends. Meanwhile, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for the tremendous support you give to St. Emma, whether it be through your donations, your time and work, or—even more important—through your prayers.

The building projects are now completed, but still need financial contributions until they are paid for. Nevertheless, they were well worth it, because they not only make the retreat work easier (for example, I think of the new kitchen), but they also provide more comfort to the guests (especially the new elevator and new conference rooms!) These new additions were certainly no luxury—they were much needed, indeed, long overdue! Making the retreat facility more spacious, more accessible to people with mobility problems, and offering beautiful spaces for community worship and private prayer—these things will help the sisters of St. Emma not only continue their ministry of hospitality, but will also help to attract new vocations to come and seek the Lord in this Benedictine environment.

Thank you again for your continued support of St. Emma and I send my blessing to you and your families.

*M. Franziska Kloos OSB
Abbess*

M. Franziska Kloos, OSB
Abbess, Abtei St. Walburg, Eichstätt

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

A History of St. Emma – Part IV



Mother Emmanuel Drey, OSB

Upon Mother Leonarda's death in 1965, Mother Emmanuel Drey, OSB was appointed Prioress. Born a Jewess, Bessie Drey became a Christian and a Catholic at age 21. At school, she was told that she could read the Old Testament while the other students were receiving Catholic instruction – but not to read Is. 49... "And a virgin shall conceive and bear a son." Since that directive was given, of course Bessie had to read it!

At an art school in Munich, Bessie became friends with the woman who would enter Abtei Sankt Walburg and become Sr. Dorothea Brockmann, OSB. For a time they had an art studio together; they entered at the same time and made vows together.

In 1937 Abtei Sankt Walburg purchased a 15-acre property in Minster, England, known as St. Mildred's Abbey—in case the community would have to flee Germany (they did not). This Benedictine Abbey was founded in 670, destroyed, and re-founded several times until it was suppressed under Henry VIII and sold into private hands.

Thank You!

We were recently surprised and touched to be designated as the Community / organization to benefit from collections taken up after recent performances of the play **Late Nite Catechism**. We received \$1,141.97 from Latrobe Art Center, Latrobe, PA, and \$400.22 from the Queen of Peace Parish in Patton, PA.



Prayer Requests & Intentions

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

Needless to say, Sr. Emmanuel was in the first group of Sisters or the Holocaust would probably have claimed yet another victim. Since Minster is only a 30-minute drive from Dover, these few German nuns had to stay with a British community in Teigmouth (no longer in existence) when the war broke out. The property was poor when they arrived and even poorer when they returned after the war.

In 1953, Sr. Emmanuel was sent to St. Vincent Archabbey and College, Latrobe, PA to be an assistant to Mother Leonarda.

In her short eight years as Prioress, Mother Emmanuel paid off the large building debt and had the plans drawn for the star-shaped Walburga Shrine consisting of the windows from the St. Walburga Church, Pittsburgh, PA. The Diocese of Pittsburgh had graciously donated these windows to us when that parish was closed in the late 1960's.

In 1967 Mother Emmanuel had the first dishwasher installed for the retreat house. Until that time, the Sisters washed the dishes by hand for all the groups – whether it was a weekend of 50 or one meal for 120.

Operated on for liver cancer on Thanksgiving Day, Mother Emmanuel died just two months later in January 1973.

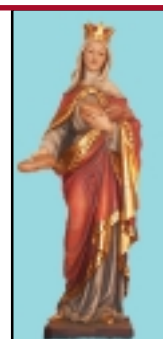
Until the time of Mother Emmanuel's death, all the correspondence for St. Emma was done from St. Vincent. From 1953-63 Sr. Emmanuel came out to register retreat groups and helped serve in the dining room. During the first six years of the retreat house (before the monastery was built), Sr. Emmanuel and the other Sisters waited until the retreatants had taken their rooms in the retreat house and then stayed in the vacant rooms or in one of the linen rooms.

Using her artistic talent, Mother Emmanuel designed Mass vestments, palls to cover the chalice, corporals etc. that the Sisters sewed and embroidered.

Mother Emmanuel dealt with her liver cancer the same way she dealt with the other heavy crosses in her life: in silent resignation to the will of the Father.

We who entered at St. Emma heard her speak only one time about what it was like to have to flee the country of your birth. She said that a person has no idea at how deep the relationship is to the country of your birth until you are forced to leave that land.

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*

Postulant Sheridan Takes Veil of Novice

On Saturday, September 2 our postulant, Sheridan Fremming of Dallas, Texas, took the next step in her formation process, receiving the habit and white veil of a novice that were presented in a ceremony preceding Vespers. The garments were blessed during the celebration of the Eucharist that morning. Prior to entering, she had worked as a medical unit secretary.



Novice Sheridan Fremming

In blessing the habit, our chaplain, Rev. Msgr. Robert J. Shuda, prayed: "O God, bless this religious garment. Your servant who will wear it will visibly express her willingness to serve you with her whole being."

The cincture (belt) was blessed next using these words: "God, You let Your Son be bound by the hands of the godless in order to save us. We ask you, bless this cincture. Grant your servant who will wear it the grace to always remember the fetters of Your Son."

Then he prayed and blessed the scapular: "God, You grant every virtue and give grace in abundance. We ask you fervently: bless this scapular, which Your servant will wear as a sign of her religious life, so that she may be recognized as dedicated to You."

Finally, in blessing the veil, he prayed: "Lord, graciously bless this veil, which proclaims her dedication to you, so that she may be blessed, immaculate and holy through Christ, Our Lord."



Habit, veil, scapular and cincture after they have been blessed at Mass.

Please remember young men and women who are discerning priesthood and religious life in your prayers.

Mark your calendars now! 2nd Annual Fundraising Dinner

April 14, 2007 • 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

\$75 per person • \$400 for a table of 6

Hors d'oeuvres, Silent Auction, Dinner

Call St. Emma for additional information.

Mother Irmngard Visits from Nambia, Africa



In July, Mother Irmngard Porta, OSB of the Generalate St. Joseph's House in Nambia, Africa visited us. Besides visiting some of her Sisters studying in the States, Mother Irmngard had also attended the General Chapter of Benedictine Sisters who belong to the Federation of St. Scholastica in Erie, PA.

During her visit, she shared with us the joy of the numerous vocations to their monastery and the reality of the extreme poverty the community and country experiences. Springing into action, we sent her back "packed" with three old laptops (greatly expanding their existing computer system of one that they shared!) that we had received as well as important practical items such as toiletries, office supplies, religious articles and fans (handheld plastic advertisements).

Advent: The Season of Hope

By Robert J. Allen

Although most of the world ignores Advent and many Catholics treat it as a short lent, it is really a time for celebration; the birth of a Child who is God's gift to all people for all time. In this Child, we are given the great gift of Hope. His name is Emmanuel; God is with us.

Hope enables us to go on, to seek God in all we do, in all the people we meet in our hidden fear of what we didn't do or should have done. As Catholics, we are given the gift of Faith, but as fragile humans, we must put into practice the act of

Hope in order to enjoy peace in our life.

We cannot offer peace in your life as God provides nor can any amount of money ever buy happiness. However, as a non-profit, we can help to provide assurance that your gift can guarantee a higher-than-average return to you and provide tax relief. This is called a Charitable Gift Annuity – the hope for many who live on fixed income or dislike the volatile world of the stock market.

The government allows charitable institutions to accept a charitable donation that provides a tax deduction, removes this gift from estate tax, and

guarantees a fixed percentage of income for your life and that of a second person – and have a portion of that gift be tax free.

Starting as low as \$5,000 at age 65, you could earn 6% or more for life.

Just contact our development office or call (724) 834-3060x113 and in the privacy of your home and without obligation, we will provide an Educational Illustration.



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, mulching 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.

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.

Carmelite Nuns Attend Meeting



October 17-23 brought us some new guests — and friends. The Discalced Carmelite Nuns of the Association of Saint Teresa met here for their triennial assembly meeting. The Sisters traveled from Carmels in Guam, Salt Lake City (Utah), Carmel by the Sea (California), Arlington (Texas), St. Louis (Missouri), Lafayette (Louisiana), Port Tobacco (Maryland), Danvers (Massachusetts), Loretto (Pennsylvania) and Ontario (Canada). We enjoyed supper together one evening and shared some wonderful commonalities in our traditions.

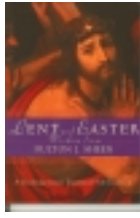
E-mail: benedictinenunes@stemma.org

Christmas Gifts to Strengthen Your Faith

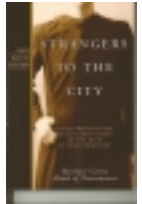
Books



Advent and Christmas with Thomas Merton
\$ 9.95



Lent and Easter Wisdom from Fulton J. Sheen
\$ 9.95



Strangers to the City by Michael Casey
\$ 15.95



A View from the Monastery
\$ 15.95

• **Advent and Christmas Wisdom from Henri J. M. Nouwen** \$ 9.95

• **Advent and Christmas with Fulton J. Sheen** \$9.95

Rosaries

- **All Brass Rosary**, silver plated, 5 mm beads \$ 49.00
colors available: crystal, pink, ruby, peridot, sapphire, topaz (shown), amethyst, garnet, emerald, jet
- **Brass Rosary** with sterling silver center and cross, \$ 72.00
6mm Aurora Borealis Checo beads, colors available: amethyst, crystal, pink, aqua, peridot, ruby (shown), sapphire, emerald, garnet
- **All Sterling Silver Rosary** - 8 mm black onyx beads \$112.00



All Brass Rosary (topaz)



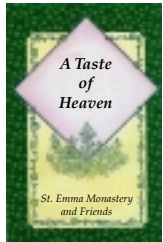
All Brass Rosary Sterling silver center & crucifix (ruby)



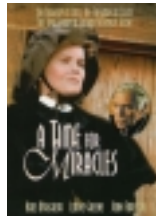
All Sterling Silver (black onyx beads)

2007 St. Emma Calendar – Scenes from the monastery

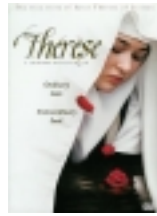
DVDs



A Taste of Heaven
A Cookbook with recipes from St. Emma Monastery and friends. \$



A Time for Miracles
\$19.95



Therese
\$ 24.95



Bernadette
\$ 24.95



Miracle of Marcelino
\$19.95



The Best Christmas Pageant Ever
\$ 16.95



The Star of Christmas (Veggie Tales)
\$14.98

Order Form: Order by Dec. 11 for Christmas delivery! Mail to: St. Emma's Monastery, 1001 Harvey Ave., Greensburg, PA 15601 • (724) 834-7483 • Fax (724) 834-5772

Payment Method

Check Money Order

VISA Mastercard

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Card Number _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

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Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone (If we have a question about your order.) _____

Need by _____

Shipping Costs

Up to \$ 20.00 \$ 5.95

\$20.01-\$40.00 \$ 6.95

\$40.01-\$75.00 \$ 8.95

\$75.00-\$125 \$9.95

\$125.01 & up \$10.95

NO CODs

Item	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price

Pennsylvania residents, please add 6% sales tax. **THANK YOU!**

Shipping & Handling
See chart to left
TOTAL



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 Nuns of St. Emma Monastery, Greensburg, PA for

Christmas Visit and Vespers,

Saturday, December 30 • 12:30 - 3:30 p.m.
Enjoy 100+ Nativity displays and other Christmas decorations • Cookies and Punch

3:30 Christmas Caroling
4:00 Sung Vespers with Benedictine Nuns

If able to attend, call us with number at 724-834-3060 or email 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 17, 2007 from 2:30 P.M. until 8:30 P.M. Rev. Mark Gruber OSB will be the retreat leader. There is no fee.

Retreat Schedule – 2007

February	23-25	SILENT Lenten Rev. Mark Gruber OSB
March	2- 4	SILENT Lenten Rev. Tom Acklin OSB
	9-11	Men Rev. Mark Gruber, OSB
	16-18	Women Rev. William Fay
	23-25	Silent Lenten Rev. Mark Gruber OSB
	28	Lenten (Men/women) Rev. Jacques Daley, OSB
	31	Lenten (Lay / religious) Rev. Mark Gruber, OSB
April	22	Benedictine Spirituality Rev. Maurus Mount OSB
	28	Pro-Life Rev. Mark Gruber, OSB
	29	Bereaved Rev. Edward Litavec
May	6	Carmelite Spirituality Rev. Justin Matro, OSB
June	25-July 1	SILENT (lay / religious - part time welcome) Rev. Mark Gruber OSB
August	3-8	SILENT (lay / religious - part time welcome) Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy OFMCap
	24-26	Men/women Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy OFMCap

Monastic Guest House

Priests' Retreats

Semi-Directed Retreat

"Prayer: the Contemplative Dimension"

January 7 (Sunday supper)-12 (Friday breakfast), 2007
Rev. Lester Knoll OFMCap

Daily Outline: Eucharist, one conference, spiritual direction (optional), Eucharistic Adoration, silence except for meals. optional discussion in the evening.

SILENT Directed Retreat

March 4 (Sunday supper) — March 9, 2007 (Friday breakfast) Rev. Tom Acklin OSB

Daily Outline: Eucharist/homily, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament throughout the day, spiritual direction (optional), meals also in silence.

Lay & Religious

SILENT Directed Retreat

May 21-26 Rev. Thomas Acklin, OSB *waiting list*
June 3-8 Rev. Mark Gruber, OSB
August 3-9 Rev. Mark Gruber, OSB

Development Director's Retreat • May 6-9, 2007

Robert J. Allen, author of *Text for Task*, will provide the opportunity to better understand how your work in development is your vocation. This retreat/seminar aims at how stewardship is founded on some 2,360 passages in the Old and New Testaments. It also offers you the opportunity for spiritual renewal.