



BENEDICTINE TOUCHSTONE

Spring 2008



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

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Praise and Honor to you, Lord Jesus Christ!



Prioress' Reflection

By Mother Mary Anne Noll OSB



This *Touchstone* cover displays: a Palm Sunday cross, a holy water font, and a card with the written vows for life of a

Benedictine nun before the tabernacle.

Our **processional crucifix** on the front cover is obviously decorated for Palm Sunday. The palm frond behind the cross and the red ribbon express the jubilant Hosannas on Palm Sunday as Jesus was triumphantly escorted into Jerusalem. In retrospect, this triumphal entry was too early.

From a human point of view, the week turned into total human tragedy and defeat the following Friday for Jesus and His followers. However, the palm fronds and glorious trappings preamble the following Sunday when Jesus rose from the dead.

We have no baptismal font in our monastic chapel; however the use of holy water reminds us of our baptism. In the early church, Lent was the preparation for the catechumens to be baptized on Holy Saturday during the Easter Vigil; this reality has been re-captured through the RCIA program. In the early church, the immersion of the candidates into the waters of baptism symbolized dying and rising with Christ. These newly baptized had died to certain patterns of thought, of heart, and of behaviors. The white garment they were clothed with symbolized a new way of living according to Christ's way of thinking and acting. The word "Christening" captures what happens to a person in baptism and is sometimes still used – even on greeting cards.

For the rest of us, do we consider Lent as the annual preparation for the re-newal of our baptismal promises that should be the highlight of our year? What Lenten

practice(s) have we chosen that will help us enter deeper into dying to an attitude or action that is not Christ-like or the practice of which will help us live a more Christ-centered life so that our renewal of our baptismal promises is not just a ritual?

Here in this monastery, we still practice Benedict's directive of seeking the superior's blessing on our Lenten practices. These papers are returned to the individual Sister; the Sisters give them on Holy Saturday to become part of the Easter fire and a sign of how these practices have helped us prepare for the re-newal of our baptismal promises.

The ancient myth about the pelican that drew blood from her breast to feed her young in time of famine became a wonderful symbol of Jesus giving his body and blood, his life, to nourish us.

In Baptism we are anointed for the Lord; we have died to sin and have risen with Christ. We have received our basic vocation to be Christians – other Christs. The specific vocation to single life, married life, religious life or priesthood all grow out of our baptism that gives us a special share in the life of the Trinity.

The **vow card in front of the tabernacle** expresses the solemn covenant between Sr. Mary Antony and God. Our Sr. Mary Antony OSB, wrote and signed her vow formula with her own hand during Mass on December 8, 2007. During the ceremony this vow card was placed on the altar and the next day before the tabernacle.

Like all of our vocations to whatever state in life, Sr. Mary Antony's vocation to the monastic life flowed from her baptism and from living a life in union with Jesus. At some point in her life, Jesus seemed to be inviting her in a still more specific way through the monastic life. That was nearly 10 years ago. To experience her solemn vows through her eyes and heart, please turn to the center section.

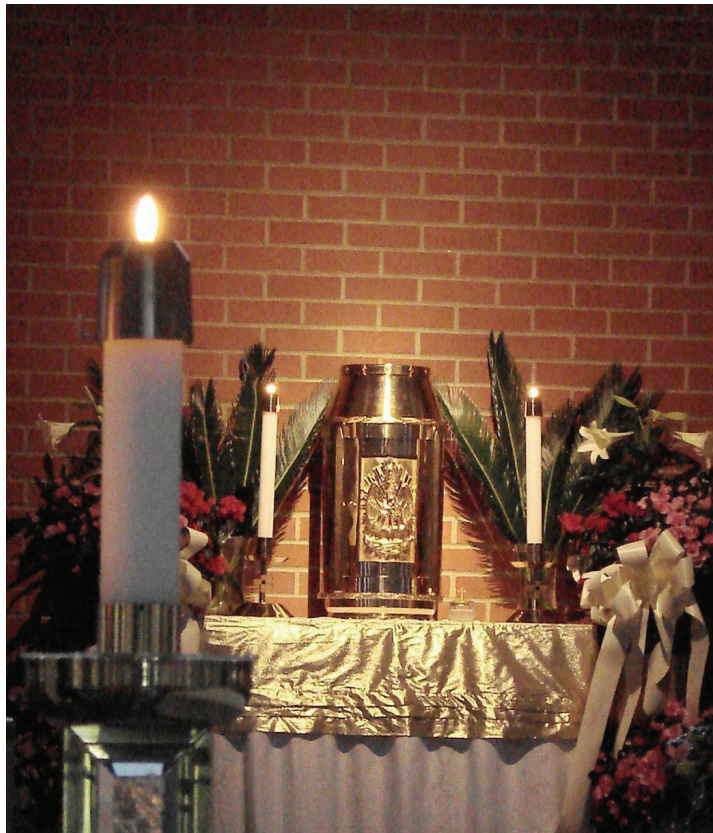
Originally this beautiful tabernacle with the pelican feeding her young from her breast adorned the Fatima (retreatants') Chapel. The ancient myth about the pelican that drew blood from her breast to feed her young in time of famine became a wonderful symbol of Jesus giving his body and blood, his life, to nourish us.

We pray that this Lent might be a special preparation for the renewal of each of our baptismal promises. And with a deeper life in the risen

Christ, we can truly say,

ALLELUIA. JESUS LIVES!

Mother Mary Anne Noll, OSB



This **holy water font** graces the entrance into our *Cor Jesu* Chapel. Each time that we enter and leave the chapel we make the sign of the Cross with holy water to remind us of our baptism.

“Welcome Home!”

A letter from Abbess Franziska Kloos, OSB

“As always, I found this greeting on my door when I return to visit my beloved community of St. Emma. After 15 visits, I can say in a very deep sense, that I feel really at home. Not only do I know each Sister, but also every single room and all the places of work. And most importantly, I am intimately familiar with the Cor Jesu Monastic Chapel and The Liturgy of the Hours which along with Holy Mass create the framework for each day.

I also know the wonderfully generous volunteers, many of them personally. Regis Cherry, who is my driver from the airport when I arrive, is a loyal friend to the community for at least three decades. Mondays bring the “Laundry Ladies” who so faithfully come each week to help with the mangling, the Chapel Belles who keep the Cor Jesu Monastic Chapel clean and sparkling as well as the other “regular” Monday volunteers who are of essential importance in helping to keep the retreat house gleaming and welcoming for our retreatants. Each Monday through Saturday there are one or more volunteers who come to assist with the Gift & Book Shop. Mrs. Henry and Darlene come each week to help with the sewing. Gene is there each week doing whatever it takes, and then there is Johnny and Dan without whom the Monastic Guest House would not have its welcoming faces. And there always new faces among the volunteers. They ALL are an essential, vital force at St. Emma, and I thank from my heart for all that they do to help my beloved community at St. Emma.

As on two of my previous visits, I saw St. Emma’s decorated for Christmas. I had to smile and told to myself with the over 100 Nativities what we learned in school - “Amerika, das Land der unbegrenzten Moglichkeiten!” (America, the country of unlimited possibilities!) I cannot imagine a German monastery who would have this variety - and unlimited ideas - for Christmas decor. I even experienced the time and work that goes into taking down the decorations for storage until next year. I don’t know if I will get to enjoy an American Christmas another time.

During my visit, nearly every day we had talks on our monastic way of life, our history, our past and our future, and most especially on our common Benedictine Rule and Constitutions. I think it was a deep experience for us all and further strengthened our bonds.

We had many enjoyable recreations in the evening. At one of them, my dear Sisters introduced me to a new friend: Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer. I was astonished when everyone - from the youngest to the oldest - serenaded me with all the verses of this typical American Christmas song. Two variations of Rudolph accompanied me back to Germany and “Rudolph”, I am sure, will be a great hit next year with the children in our school and kindergarten.

A special experience was the Pro-Life Prayer Vigil. Unable to personally attend the great March for Life in Washington, the Sisters have for some years had the custom of Eucharistic Adoration in the Fatima Chapel and inviting others to join them in prayer for this intention. About 50 others joined us in prayer.

Rev. Mark Gruber, OSB of St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe gave three reflections to this great theme of life from birth to natural death.

At the end I have to mention our dear Sr. Gaudentia. Turning 94 in March, she is the center of the community. In years of profession (75 years on the Fourth Sunday of Easter), she is the oldest in our Congregation. As always, she is sweet, charming and endearing.

Her love for Pope Benedict XVI is unique and edifying and also a reason of joy - and she quoted him in German and English. At the end of my visit, she even asked me, “Take me with you”, but then she stopped and said, “No, I better stay here.”

I wish Mother Mary Anne and my dear community in St. Emma a blessed year 2008, and I plan to return as soon as possible.”

Abtei St. Walburg,
February 7th, 2008
M. Franziska Kloos, OSB
Abbess of St. Walburg



Tanzanian Priest Shares Experiences



From the diocese of Njombe, Tanzania, Rev. Dietrich Kayombo visited here recently after completing his four-month Sabbatical program in Chicago. This summer he celebrates 25 years of Ordination to the priesthood.

We were again introduced personally to how “the other half of the world lives.” His parishioners number 7500. Each Sunday Fr. Dietrich offers Mass in the main church (that German Benedictine missionaries built 50 years ago!) and alternates between the four outstations. His Sunday collection averages about \$10 dollars – and grains and fruits if in season. In one of the outstations, the parishioners have already made bricks and gathered the stones for a church but a bag of cement costs \$15 and a sheet of metal roofing \$12.

Forty-five teenage girls attend a two year sewing course that Fr. Dietrich started to teach them a skill. They share 15 treadle machines. Malnourished kindergarten children orphaned by AIDS and raised by poor grandparents now receive porridge at the beginning of kindergarten each day.

Our hearts were touched by this experience of Catholicism across the globe and the conditions that people live in and how the Church touches and impacts their lives – spiritually and physically.

Consecrated Life - A Faith Perspective

By Sr. Mary Antony Martin OSB



“Mary Unloosening the Knots”

The knot created by Eve’s disobedience had been undone by Mary’s obedience.
– Saint Irenaeus

Before I ever considered entering religious life I made many pilgrimages to Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto at Emmetsburg MD. There I prayed for direction in my life. Unknowingly the Blessed Mother answered my prayers in a way I never expected. When the date for my Solemn Profession was given to me

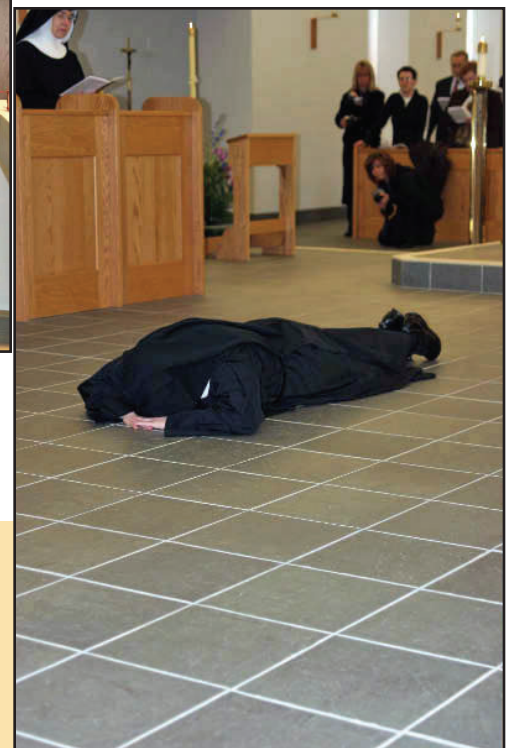
*The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
-on December 8, 2007*

I remembered my pilgrimages and prayer requests to our Lady of Lourdes who had called herself the Immaculate Conception. Realizing that the Blessed Mother had answered my prayers filled my heart with deep joy and gratitude.

The whole ceremony was one big grace and a little taste of what heaven must be like. As a little child feels joyful anticipation opening the gifts on Christmas morning with great excitement so was everything about my ceremony from the lighting of the candle, to singing my “Suscipe” and receiving the insignia of solemn profession.



Sr Mary Antony receives her profession card that she herself wrote from Mother Mary Anne and then pronounces her vows. (See front cover for profession card.)



“Prostrating in front of the altar during the Litany of the Saints, I felt the presence of each one of the saints giving me confidence and peace.”



“Alone with God, unaware of my surrounding, I was able to sing my ‘Suscipe’”(If you uphold me by your promise, I shall live; let my hopes in you not be in vain. Psalm 119, 116.)

“These words express deep faith and confidence, leaning on the Lord for everything and forever.”



The Antiphon “Regnum mundi” expresses the answer to the Lord’s invitation “Come follow me”:

“The kingdom of the world and all its splendor I have despised for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ: whom I have seen, whom I have loved, in whom I have believed, in whom I take delight.

My heart overflows with noble words. To the king I must speak the song I have made.” (Psalm 45, 1)



Sister Mary Antony receives her wreath (left) and the breviary (right) from Archabbot Douglas.



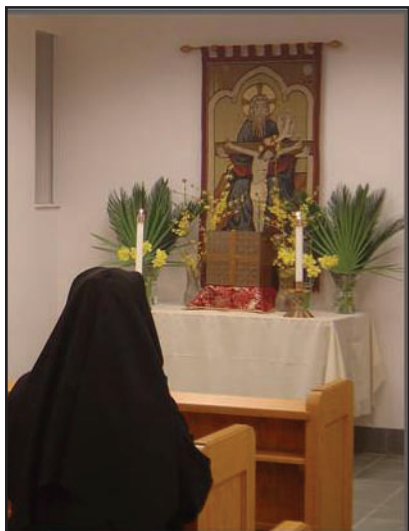
“The double veil will always remind me that I belong to Christ, hidden in God, and no longer to myself. I received the ring of faith that I may be called the spouse of God and serve him faithfully and in joy.”



Above: During the offertory procession, Sister Mary Antony offers her candle as a sign of her life. Right: Archabbot Douglas Nowicki, OSB, St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, PA, rejoices with Sister Mary Antony after Mass.



“A great quietness entered me and a peaceful joy. All fears and doubts were wiped away, believing this is the will of my God for me. The commitment I have made is pleasing God.”



Experience Holy Week

from within the tradition of Monastic Prayer

(Single Women 16-40)

Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday

6:00- 7:30 am Tenebrae (Vigils and Lauds sung together)

Lectio Divina (meditative reading)

9:00 am Terce 11:45 AM Sext/None

Holy Thursday

7:00 pm Holy Thursday Mass

Adoration until 10:00 pm

Good Friday

3:00 PM Sacred Liturgy

7:00 pm Compline

Holy Saturday

8:00 PM Easter Vigil

Easter Sunday

6:30 AM Lauds

7:40 AM Terce

8:00 AM Easter Mass



The public is also invited to join us for these Holy Week services.

Monastic Live-in Experience

May 16-18, 2008

July 11-13, 2008

Single women
Ages 16-40



In Memoriam

We extend our sympathy to the family of Veronica Standish, McKeesport, PA, who died recently. We are honored that the family designated St. Emma as a place memorials could be made in their beloved mother's name.

Charity is Love

By Robert J. Allen

Often "Stewardship" is used as being synonymous with "Fund Raising" as though the only way we show our commitment to the Church is by making a financial contribution. When in fact, stewardship is basically about advancing our relationship with God.

No less an authority is Saint Thomas Aquinas in the **Summa Theologica** when addressing the Act of Charity says: "People advance in the way to God, not merely by actual increase of charity, but also by being disposed to the act." The principle Act of Charity is Love. We must be good stewards

of our gifts, because they all come from God, but it is in how we share these gifts that determine how God will judge us.

In the over forty-five years of speaking and asking people to support the Church or private charities, there has never been a concern for the amount, but always for the person. We need only to ask two questions to understand who we are:

What do I own?

What owns me?

Pray over these questions for the grace to love God and your neighbor; so that what you own never owns you.

The late Bishop Sheen said, "Charity is a quality of the soul rather than a good deed." How important it is for each of us to support charitable non-profit organizations. When you donate to Saint Emma's Monastery, not only are you acting on charity, but you are showing your love for the Benedictine Nuns who are praying for you.

**Prayer Requests
& Intentions**
Please use the
enclosed envelope
to send us
your prayer requests
and
intentions.

3rd Fund Raising Dinner • Silent Auction & Dinner
April 26, 2008 • 5 – 8:30 p.m.



*Our retreat dining room
limits the number of
guests we can host.*

\$75 per ticket

*Call 724-834-3060 x 113
for information/
reservations.*

Benedictine Sisters Catholic Gift & Book Shop



First Communion Sets: \$29.50

Both sets include "My Mass and Holy Communion Book."

Girl's Set: Contains: satin purse, satin rosary case, pearl rosary, scapular, pin.

Boy's Set: Contains black leatherette book cover, black squeeze top rosary case, wood rosary, scapular, pin.



Communion Heart
Sterling Silver
Medal: \$26.00
Stainless Chain
#3404SS/18S
Gold-filled available.
Engraving available.



5 Way - Chalice
Sterling Silver Medal:
\$27.50
Stainless Chain
#0879SS/18HS

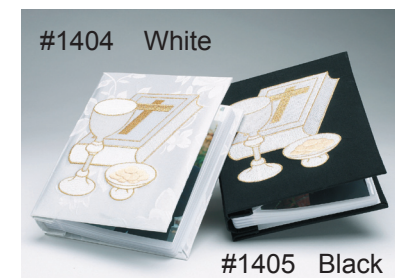


Photo Album: \$16.50

Gold embroidered, certificate page, room for 60, 4" x 6" photos

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

Please go to: www.stemma.org for more books and religious items from our Benedictine Sisters Catholic Gift & Book Shop.

For other beautiful items that can be ordered through us, visit these web-sites: www.blissmfg.com
www.jeweledcross.com
www.roman.com



Huge Indoor Flea Market

(Air conditioned)
June 20 (Friday)
June 21 (Saturday)
9 am - 3 pm

Halupki, haluski, peirogies, cookies
Items accepted (no clothes, shoes) beginning June 12

The play "Late Night Catechism" was presented at Mother of Sorrows, Murrysville, PA. We are grateful for the generous donation of \$1,417 collected after the performance for St. Emma Monastery.

\$8 Billion: Are You Part Owner?

Have you received a Gift Certificate(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 certificates just going to waste! Never fear – the Nuns will not be eating out on the certificates 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 CERTIFICATES that you could please donate for the Fund Raising Dinner's Silent Auction, etc.? If so, contact Mother Mary Anne at: (724) 834-3060.



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

2008 Retreat Programs

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

May	4	8:45 am - 4:30 pm Spirituality of the Little Flower "St. Therese's Little Way" Rev. Tom Smith, \$28
May	21	Men/ Women Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy OFM ^{Cap} 8:45 am -3:45 pm \$28
	21	Women Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy OFM ^{Cap} 4:30-9:00 \$20

June-29-July 4 **SILENT** Men/Women, Rev. Tom Acklin, OSB, \$300

July 18-24 **SILENT** Men/Women Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy, OFM^{Cap}, \$350

Each day includes daily Mass/homily and two conferences with the wonderful atmosphere of silence. People are welcome to come for part of the retreat if they cannot make it for the whole time.

August 22-24 Men/women, \$140

September 19-21 Women, \$140

26-28 Women, \$140

October 3-5 Women, Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy, OFM^{Cap}, \$140

10-12 Women, Most Rev. William Winter, \$140

24-26 Legion of Mary (Members only) \$140
Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy OFM^{Cap}

November 7-9 Couples Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy, OFM^{Cap}, \$270 per couple

14-16 Couples Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy OFM^{Cap}, \$270 per couple

Silent Directed Retreat at Monastic Guest House

June 6-12

Rev. Mark Gruber OSB, *waiting list*

June 27-July 4

Rev. Mark Gruber OSB, \$425

Encounter with Silence

July 18-25, 2008

Rev. Frank Erdeljac

The freshness of the Gospels presented in four talks a day as formulated by the late Rev. John Hugo.



- The Word of the Gospel received and welcomed in the fertile soil of
- Silence so that it may indeed take root.
- Dorothy Day described it as hearing the Gospel for the first time.
- Daily Mass.

Monastic Guest House (\$450) and
Retreat House (\$400). July 18-25