



BENEDICTINE TOUCHSTONE



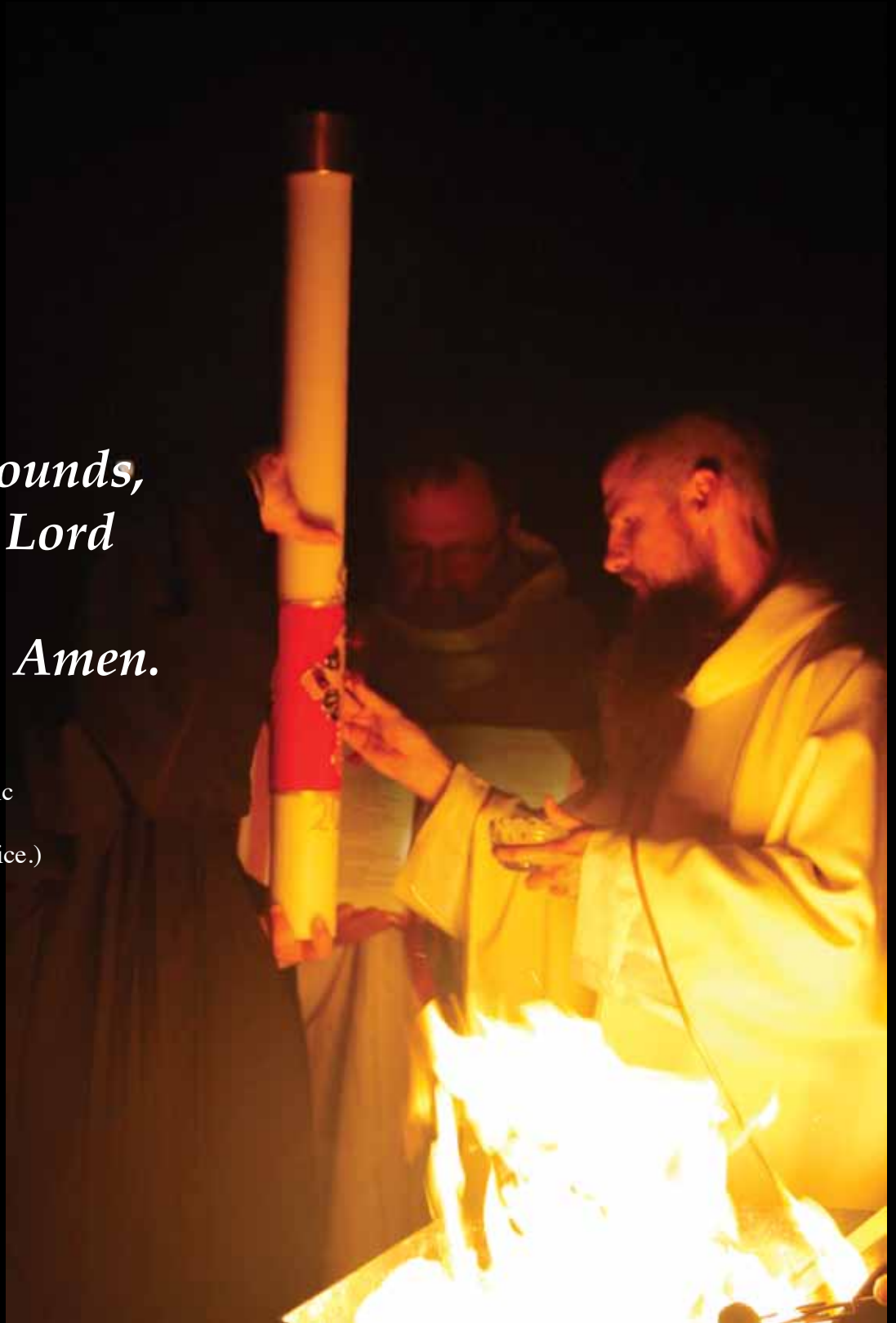
Spring 2014

Benedictine Nuns • St. Emma Monastery • 1001 Harvey Avenue • Greensburg, PA 15601

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*By his holy
and glorious wounds,
may Christ the Lord
guard us
and protect us. Amen.*

(The priest prays these words as he inserts each of the five symbolic wax nails into the candle at the beginning of the Easter Vigil service.)



Prioress' Reflection

By Mother Mary Anne Noll OSB



Infrastructure: the basic equipment, resources and structures (such as roads and bridges) required for a country, region, organization or activity to function properly.

In Western Pennsylvania, we hear a lot about infrastructure. Our “freeze and thaw” winters produce an abundance of “potholes.” With 446 bridges, Pittsburgh has the most bridges of any city in the world, three times more than the runner-up of Venice.

We worry about the age of our water and sewage lines and the capacity of the electric companies to meet our demand. Here at St. Emma's we should repair our roofs, resurface our blacktop roads, and re-point the bricks on the original house—among other things!

Lent: the annual call to inspect the infrastructure of our spiritual lives! The call to review our patterns of living and their connection to our beliefs! The opportunity to assess the impact of our faith on our adult relationships and responsibilities!

Does our faith resemble the roofs on our homes and monasteries? As long as there is no major damage by windstorms or large branches or we still go to church most Sundays, everything is fine?

A bridge connects two roads over a river, highways, ravines or railroads. Religion comes from the Latin word, *ligere*, to bind together, a bond between God and man, a bridge between humanity and divinity.

Lent is a good time to consider: what might be weakening the bond between God and me? What signs of “aging” or “neglect” or “decay” or “stress fractures” might be present in my relationship with God?

What inspection tools does Jesus give us to check the infrastructure of our spiritual lives? To pray, to fast, to give alms!

The first of these is prayer. Do we pray or say prayers? Do we communicate with God? Is it relational; does it build our getting together and knowing one another?

Do we recite our petitions and our concerns for our family, friends, and the world to God like an evening news broadcast? Or do we give God a chance to converse with us, to tell us that He indeed loves us, is interested in us—and possibly, has a few ideas or suggestions for our lives?

This Lenten season, why not spend time mulling over and meditating upon our favorite prayer? Instead of praying the Rosary in 10 minutes, meditate on one of the decades for 10 minutes. Let each phrase of the Our Father speak to us.

Sometimes we feel like we “are getting our prayers in” rather than spending time with “Our Father who has loved us from all eternity and takes delight in each of us.” Slow down and meditate on the incredible love that God has for me, for me—not just for every other person but me.

Fasting is another traditional Lenten offering! For many Americans, dieting comes to mind. People diet for health reasons and often for beauty reasons. I heard recently where models used to be encouraged to swallow cotton balls with lemon water to curb their appetites and black coffee to stay awake.

A good definition of fasting is to control our appetites rather than our appetites controlling us, to monitor what possesses us and what we possess.

To fast is to experience that we are incomplete, to experience the draw to food or other habits that fill us with “cotton candy”, that prevent us from realizing both how needy we are and Who can full our need for love, for meaning.

This Lenten season, perhaps some of our fasting could include less time surfing the Net and more time volunteering, help-

ing those less fortunate or spending more time with God.

And finally, the third of the traditional Lenten practices is to give alms. Does sending money to an organization that helps the needy, putting a gift under the Giving Tree, or dropping a ten into the extra collection for the disastrous hurricane that slammed the Philippines really exhaust the meaning of giving alms? Touch our hearts or our wallets?

Besides the alms of money, give the alms of your time: work at a food pantry, serve meals to the homeless or the homebound, visit shut-ins, involve your hearts and your hands along with your monetary donation. If we give and our hearts are not enlarged or our pocket book not challenged, have we truly given alms?

Last year a woman shared that she sent a greeting card to someone each day of the 40 days of Lent the previous year. She said this was her most meaningful Lent so far; many people commented that the card contained the message they needed to hear that particular day.

According to popular thought every material gift given by one individual to benefit his needy brother is almsgiving. For us Christians, we give alms because we see in the other the person of Christ. Giving alms implies a material service rendered to the poor for Christ's sake.

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Triduum - Easter Schedule

We invite you to join us Benedictine Nuns for the most sacred days of the year.

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 the Blessed Sacrament (until 10:00 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 (Midday Prayer)
- 4:00 p.m. Vespers
- 8:45 p.m. **Easter Vigil**

Easter Sunday

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



Vocational Discernment Opportunity

Are you a single woman between 16 and 35? Are you wondering about a call to a religious community? Looking for special prayer time over Palm Sunday or during Holy Week and Easter?

Would you like to experience the fullness of *The Liturgy of the Hours* as prayed in monasteries of old? The original **Tenebrae** service combines Vigils and Lauds into one long prayer on Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday mornings. Pray with us these psalms, antiphons, and readings of old as a bees-wax-colored candle is extinguished after each psalm until just the "Christ" candle (the white one) remains burning.

On Holy Thursday evening we have the beautiful Mass of the Lord's Supper, procession with the Blessed Sacrament, and opportunity of Adoration until 10 p.m.

Good Friday afternoon, The Liturgy of Good Friday is celebrated.

On Holy Saturday night, we begin the Easter Vigil by gathering at the cross by our chapel for the blessing of the new fire and the blessing of the Paschal Candle symbolizing the light of Christ. We process into the darkened *Cor Jesu* Chapel with the priest proclaiming, "Christ, the light." We respond, "Thanks be to God."

We are privileged to read all the 7 readings from the Scriptures and sing all of the responsorial psalms.

Easter Sunday we sing Lauds and Terce at 6:25 a.m. with Easter Sunday Mass at 8 a.m.

If you would like to experience this Holy Week either as a part of your general discernment to religious life or to the monastic life, please contact St. Emma's or email vocations@stemma.org

40th Anniversary of Walburga Shrine Celebrates Unique History

In 1903 the original St. Walburga Church in Pittsburgh, PA was built for its German congregation. In 1920 a fire damaged the church building in the spring; that fall a repaired and larger church was dedicated. In 1930 they built a new St Walburga Church, the source of our Walburga windows. Because of the dwindling number of parishioners, the diocese suppressed the parish in 1966.

The Pittsburgh Diocese knew that our founding Sisters came from the St. Walburg Abbey, Eichsteatt beginning in 1931 and offered us the windows if we had them removed from the church. After we stored the windows for eight years, Mr. Francis Church, architect, designed a star-shaped structure to utilize all 12 of these beautiful windows created by Mayer Company of Munich and New York.

This chapel was dedicated on Mary 12, 1974. The late stained-glass artist, Tasso Katselas who made minor repairs to the windows commented that the walls of this structure are mostly stained glass. He said it was unusual to walk into a structure and be surrounded by stained glass; one normally walked into a structure where walls framed a few stained glass windows.

Before the renovation of the Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, Greensburg, PA in the early 1970s, the base of this altar served as a capitol atop a column supporting the baldachin above the altar. On this photo one detects the beautiful terrazzo floor also in the shape of a star.

We have met people who have belonged to the St. Walburga congregation, who were baptized, attended school and were married in that church. Other visitor had relatives who donated a window or knew the organizations that did. Just recently a man visited from Florida who had served Mass in that church.

The statue of St. Walburga also came from the same church. Leila Guzman, Latrobe, PA re-painted her statue. Her face is so natural, kind, and loving—just as people have experienced her for nearly 1200 years.



Walburga holds the *Rule of St. Benedict* with a vial on top (representing the Walburga oil what comes from her relics about four months of every year). Her brother, Bishop Willibald, first bishop of Eichstaett in 741, established a “double” monastery at Heidenheim. He named his brother Wunibald as Abbot over the men’s monastery and his sister Walburga Abbess over the women’s monastery. After Abbot Wunibald died about 760, Bishop Willibald appointed Walburga Abbess over both monasteries.

Why do we revere any of the saints, yet alone Walburga? We all need heroes and heroines, individuals who have followed Christ in a way that transformed and sanctified these people.

“So it is that the union of the wayfarers with the brethren who sleep in the peace of Christ is in no way interrupted, but on the contrary, according to the constant faith of the Church, this union is reinforced by an exchange of spiritual goods,” —from the Catholic Catechism.

Who comes to this shrine? Our retreatants visit this shrine as a special place to stop and reflect on those who have gone ahead of us and help us to continue our path until we also reach the heavenly kingdom. Reeling from doctors’ reports or struggling with illnesses or situations in their families, people stop to pray and ask for Walburga’s help just as she helped the sick in her lifetime. Visitors coming for the first time to St. Emma’s are caught up in the beauty of this shrine as an avenue to God.

This Shrine adds another special place of prayer, reflection, and grace to St. Emma’s Monastery. We thank you God for all the blessings that so many people have received through prayer and devotion to our Lord through the intercession of St. Walburga these past 40 years.



I. In Her Parents’ Home (after c.710)



III. Entering the Convent School at Wimborne, England



(Left) IV. Making Profession at Wimborne

V. Departing from Her Native Land (740s)

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



VI. Crossing the North Sea



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



VIII. Healing and Caring for the Sick



X. The Abbess of Heidenheim



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



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



XII. The Miraculous Flow of Oil



Corpus Christi Mass and Procession



Participate with the Benedictine nuns in this meaningful tradition more commonly experienced in the past. This celebration of Jesus present within the Blessed Sacrament allows us to focus on this great feast outside Holy Week when the Last Supper is so quickly eclipsed by Good Friday. Through this public procession, we express our deep belief and our great gratitude for the precious gift of Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament.

Sunday, June 22, 2014 • 1:30 pm Mass Cor Jesu Chapel

Followed by outdoor procession with the Blessed Sacrament (with prayers and hymns) to three (traditional number) stations where Benediction is given:

- Last Supper Shrine
- Fatima Chapel
- Atrium (outside Cor Jesu Chapel)
- Final Benediction in Cor Jesu Chapel

Light refreshments following.

Children who made their First Communion are invited to join us in this procession and to wear their First Communion outfits.

Prioress' Reflection

Continued from page 2

Let us approach this grace season of Lent with hope and expectation that comes from spending more time with God in prayer. Consider making a retreat (our schedule is on the back cover), attend special reflections offered in your and neighboring parishes, take time each day to ponder the Scripture readings for Mass each day, listen to WAOB 106.7 FM (in the Latrobe-Pittsburgh area) for uninterrupted prayer and teaching.

Almsgiving? How can we give more of our time, talent and treasure by serving Christ in His people this Lent?

Fasting? How can we focus more on our incompleteness, on the beautiful reality that we are made for something more wonderful than the best we can experience here on earth? We are made for union with God forever.

Will fasting also put us just a little in touch with the men, women, and children who are forced to fast every day because they do not have enough food?

May the Lord help us to utilize the means of prayer, fasting and almsgiving to strengthen the infrastructure of our life in Him so that He might live more fully in us come Easter.

Blessed Lent! Joyful Eastertide!

Mother Mary Anne Noll OSB

In Memory

George Tarosky, Murrysville, (formerly of Apollo, PA) died December 18, 2013. George and his wife, Helen, made many Married Couples' retreats. We extend our prayerful sympathy to Helen and her family. We are honored that they suggested St. Emma's to receive donations in George's name in the obituary. May he rest in peace.

Enjoy Gardening?

If you are a family or other group that might like to maintain



a section of the flower garden at St Emma's, please contact Mother Mary Anne at: (724) 834-3060.



Into the Arms of Christ

By Mary Kay Swenson

As Catholics, we cherish the liturgical calendar that allows us to fully experience and reflect on the many seasons in our lives. Lent is the time when we take a deep look into our hearts to see where we might need to make changes. It is a time to reconnect with our spirituality, to direct our efforts to love, a time to turn toward God.

Each and every day of the year, rain or shine, in sickness or in health, yes even during their annual family visit (for a week), the Sisters of Saint Emma Monastery pause each day (six times in fact) to pray the *Liturgy of the Hours* and celebrate holy Mass. They do this to give glory and honor to God, to maintain their relationship with Him and to pray for all of the needs of the people of the world.

You may want to join the Sisters in prayer - wherever you are - by participating in the *Liturgy of the Hours* at various times during the day. "*The Liturgy of the Hours*, which is the public and common prayer of the Church, is the prayer of Christ with his body, the Church. Through the *Liturgy of the Hours* the mystery of Christ, which we celebrate in the Eucharist, sanctifies and transforms the whole of each day. It is composed mainly of psalms, other biblical texts, and readings from the Fathers and spiritual masters." (From the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*.) You can find the daily text for this Prayer of the Church online at www.usccb.org or download a phone app such as *Universalis*.

This Lent I invite you to take time to listen to that Voice inside you that directs us on our earthly journey. Trust in Christ's love, given totally and without any conditions - *for you*.

*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



Our B&B!

With the completion of connecting driveway (yes, it is plowed!) from the Parking Lot to the Diamond-rated Robertshaw Country House B&B, our guests can now drive safely to the front door to unload their passengers and luggage on a snow-free area (oh, the blessings of having warm water run through hoses warming the concrete and melting the snow!).

Not only is "Our light is always on" but our "Welcome Home to the Robertshaw" entrance is always snow and ice free!



Our very special Thanks to our volunteers, our guests, and our donors who made our Christmas Shoppe of November 14-16, 2013 our most successful yet: \$24,000 plus! This nearly covers the work on the slate roof on the original house to make it like new again! We are so grateful to each of you.

Save the Date!

**Tee Time for a Nun (for the Benedictine Nuns)
September 8 (Monday) • \$100 Player
Golf at Hannastown Golf Course
Dine at St. Emma Retreat House**

EXPERIENCE

St. Emma Flea Market

June 26: \$5 Early bird admission
Thursday evening, 4–7 pm.

June 27: Free admission

Friday, 10 am – 7 pm,

June 28: Saturday, 10 am–1 pm
50% off most items;

1 pm – 3 pm bag sale on most items;

3 pm – 7 pm, FREE ITEMS – you pick up



HUGE SELECTION

OF WHATEVER YOU DONATE TO US!

Dishes, antiques, glassware, furniture, books, DVDs, small appliances, linens, wall hangings and pictures, hardware, toys, games, figurines, sports equipment, exercise equipment and other things that you have.

Come to the area's *premier* Flea Market :

- browse through items carefully washed, beautifully displayed
- be warmly welcomed by the nuns and volunteers
- enjoy the delicious foods and desserts
- tour the Robertshaw Country House Bed and Breakfast
- experience the peace the world cannot give
- walk the beautiful grounds
- have a time of reflection in one of our chapel
- visit the Benedictine Sisters' Catholic Gift and Book Store
- Air-conditioned • Handicapped accessible
- Make it a family affair • Make it a day event!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AND APPRECIATED!

Experience the Flea Market from the inside out! Volunteer and help make this happen. Meet and befriend our other wonderful volunteers!

Volunteers are needed during the preceding three weeks to set up, during the flea market, and/or after the flea market!

Live at a distance? No reason not to volunteer! Just volunteer and stay overnight!

Contact: Mother Mary Anne OSB 724-834-3060

TIMING IS EVERYTHING!

“Redding up” as we do in Western Pennsylvania? Spring housecleaning? Downsizing? The remains of an estate or garage sale? We are very grateful when you consider St. Emma's as the recipient.

**DROP OFF ITEMS NOW.
THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH.**

Calendar of Retreats

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| March 7-9 | Silent Lenten (men/women) Rev. Boniface Hicks, OSB, waiting list |
| March 11 | Day of Recollection (men/women) 9 a.m.- 4:30, \$30 |
| March 14-16 | Silent Lenten (men/women) Rev. William Kiel |
| March 28-30 | Lenten (men/women) Rev. Donald Breier |
| April 4-6 | Silent Lenten (men/women) Rev. James Hess, OCarm |
| April 25-27 | Third Order Carmelites, Rev. James Hess, OCarm |
| Sept. 12-14 | Silent (men/women) TBA |
| Sept. 26-28 | Women, TBA |
| Oct. 17-19 | Married Couples, TBA |
| Oct. 24-26 | Legion of Mary (men/women) TBA |

Fees: Weekends - \$160



The Six Day Silent Retreat

July 18 – 24, 2014, Rev. James Hess, OCarm

The format of these days of silence, listening, and reflection includes daily Mass and two conferences each day. The schedule allows the precious commodity of time shared with God, to thank, to think, to reflect, to rejoice, to lament, to be. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, confessions, reflection times with the retreat direction and daily Vespers with the Benedictine Nuns round out these blessed days of retreat.

Unable to make the entire retreat? Come for the weekend and/or “double” the time of retreat by taking a day's vacation on Monday. You may also make any part of the retreat.

Retreat House accommodations: private rooms each with sink, and ceiling fan. A/C in chapel, lounge, and dining room. Fee \$390



The Encounter with Silence

July 18 – 25, 2014, Rev. John-Mary Tompkins, OSB,

Waiting list

“To us the retreat was the good news,” Dorothy Day wrote of the first retreats in *The Long Loneliness*. “I too am hungry and thirsty for the bread of the strong.” A Pittsburgh diocesan priest, Rev. John Hugo formulated and formatted this retreat which he gave often.

Monastic Guest House: 8 rooms: A/C, private bath. Fee \$490;

Retreat House: private rooms with sink, ceiling fan. Fee \$435

Busy Moms' Retreat

August 1 – 2, 2014

Not possible to be away the whole weekend? This retreat is for you! Dinner is at 6 p.m. with reflection and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament following.

Saturday's schedule includes morning Mass with the Benedictine Nuns, Confessions, reflections/sharing a personal time. Fee: \$85

4:00 p.m. Mass for Sunday. Have your families join you for Mass and pizza afterwards. Pizza meal \$5 per person.