



BENEDICTINE TOUCHSTONE



Spring 2015

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

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Prioress' Reflection

By Mother Mary Anne Noll OSB



for all who are striving to live “a consecrated life”?

In Baptism, we are anointed with the sacred chrism, set aside for Christ. In 2002 at the consecration of the altar in our *Cor Jesu* Chapel, I was struck when Bishop Anthony Bosco so liberally poured the sacred chrism on the altar and spread it around to set this altar aside for the Sacred Mysteries—when bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

We baptized have been set aside and marked for Christ.

Fifteen hundred years ago, St. Benedict so accurately noted that although a monk's life should always have a Lenten character about it, few are able to live like that. He exhorts us in Chapter 49 of his Rule to rise from the negligences of the rest of year to live a life more solely out of love for Christ.

Pope Francis has designated this year as the Year of the Consecrated Life, of those who feel called by Christ to give their lives by vow within a particular community. The Decree on Consecrated Life calls us to remember the charism of our founder and our tradition, to celebrate our religious life now, and to have hope and share hope in the future. We invite you (see Page 5) to learn more about this particular monastery and why we live as we do.

And at the base of all this is humility. The cover photo one of the embroidered images on the beautiful vestment created by Sr. Dominica OSB, Abtei Sankt Walburg, Eichstaett, Bavaria for the dedication of our monastic *Cor Jesu* Chapel. The one side of the vestment has three panels reflecting the Passion: Paul laying his cloak at Stephen's feet, Peter warming himself at the fire, and Christ treading out the grapes in the winepress.

The Resurrection side shows the

resurrected Jesus flanked by Peter and Paul being released by an angel from prison on the one side and the blind Peter being led into Joppa on the other

side. In the middle panel Jesus raises the son of the widow of Naim from the dead.

In the bottom panel Benedict stands in front of the “pearly gate” at the top of the ladder of humility with the monks ascending and descending. Some of us would expect this process of becoming humble on the Passion side rather than the Resurrection side!

Much in our society is narcissistic: me, myself and I. These three words express the viewpoints of looking out for number one. Do you recognize these phrases? “I have to take care of me.” – “No one can tell me what to do.” – “I am an individual and have my rights.”

Much of the social media reflects and reinforces the above attitudes. How many “likes” does your Facebook page get? Facebook is a wonderful tool to keep in touch with family and friends, but it is a natural forum for “me, myself and I”.

In our culture, the word “humility” is identified and confused with being a doormat, putting oneself down, denying one's gifts, or having a negative self image. Actually humility is about God as the center of our life and not about us at all!

Benedict's longest chapter is on humility. What are the occasions and situations that help us realize how self-centered we are or how we practically want to do our own will rather than God's? The Rule is truly amazing and so is Chapter 7: it tells us not only about seeking God but where we can expect to meet God in the daily human encounters with other well-meaning but limited human beings like ourselves.

Benedict not only recognizes that we do not have the strength to live our life preferring Christ above all, neither do the other people we live with—whether inside or outside of monasteries. And just

Benedict's longest chapter is on humility. What are the occasions and situations that help us realize how self-centered we are or how we practically want to do our own will rather than God's?

this reality brings about all kinds of situations that cause us pain, anxiety, consternation, and that easily lead us to concentrate on ourselves and our misery—

missing the point that these situations are meant to turn away from ourselves and to rely more fully on God.

In Benedict's own words, “Accordingly, brothers, if we want to reach the highest summit of humility, if we desire to attain speedily that exaltation in heaven to which we climb by the humility of this present life, then by our ascending actions we must set up that ladder on which Jacob in a dream saw angels descending and ascending (Gen 28: 12). Without doubt, this descent and ascent can signify only that we descend by exaltation and ascend by humility. Now the ladder erected is our life on earth, and if we humble our hearts the Lord will raise it to heaven. We may call our body and soul the sides of this ladder, into which our divine vocation has fitted the various steps of humility and discipline as we ascend.”

May this Lenten experience help us to live more fully as those “set aside for God” and to grow in our focus on the love that God has for us manifested in His Son's dying and rising for us.

Holy Lent! Blessed Easter!

Mother Mary Anne Noll, OSB

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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

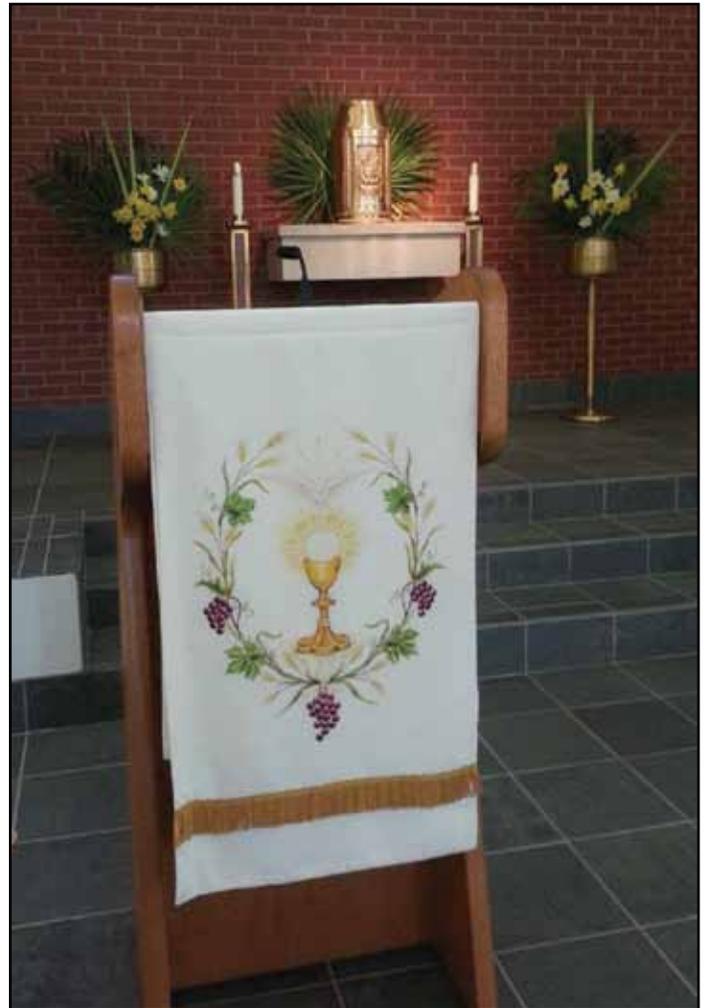
- 6:00 a.m. Tenebrae (Vigils and Lauds together)
- 9:00 a.m. Terce
- 11:45 a.m. Sext/None (Midday Prayer)
- 3:00 p.m. Celebration of the Lord's Passion**
- 7:00 p.m. Compline

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
- 8:30 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



Are you a single woman between 16 and 35?



*Are you wondering about a call to a religious community?
Looking for special prayer experience with a monastic
community Palm Sunday OR during Holy Week and Easter?*

*If you would like to experience this Holy Week either as a
part of your general discernment to religious life or to our
monastic life, please contact St. Emma's 724-834-3060
or email vocations@stemma.org.*

We Welcome Our New Sisters from St. Joseph Monastery

In January 2014, upon the recommendation of the St. Scholastica Federation, the Benedictine Sisters of St. Joseph Monastery, St. Marys, PA, agreed to close their monastery, and each Sister began the process of transfer to another community. Our community of St. Emma's welcomes Sr. Margoretta and Sr. Helen.

Sister Margoretta

Born in Lucinda, PA, the second of six children, Sr. Margoretta Judy OSB, began the process of transferring her vows to St. Emma's in July 2014.

Sr. Margoretta had only Benedictine Sisters teach her, both in elementary and high school. She graduated from St. Joseph High school with 23 in her class (the largest graduating class they had ever had).

Sr. Margoretta entered St. Joseph Monastery in 1960 and made vows in 1961.

After teaching elementary school for about 40 years, Sr. Margoretta operated their Trifles and Treasure Gift Shop for the last 10 years.



Sister Margoretta Judy



Sister Helen Herbstritt

Sister Helen

A native of St. Marys, PA, the Benedictine Sisters of St. Joseph Monastery were also Sr. Helen's only teachers and her inspiration. Upon graduation from Central Catholic High School in 1962, she entered the monastery.

Sr. Helen taught elementary school for 17 years. She then provided organ and piano instruction that stretched from

generation to generation. For the last 20 years, Sr. Helen was an organist at Sacred Heart Parish, St. Marys, PA. For over 30 years, she served her community as an organist, choir director and liturgist.

Sr. Helen celebrates her 50th Jubilee of Vows



On November 22, 2014, Sr. Helen Herbstritt OSB, celebrated 50 years of her vows as a Benedictine Sister. The youngest of 10 children, Sr. Helen was joined by her siblings, Midge Fritz-Lenze and Maurice both of St. Marys, and Roger from Virginia. Other relatives, friends and volunteers joined her for the joyous occasion.

Archabbot Douglas R. Nowicki, OSB, St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, PA, was the main celebrant and the homilist at the Jubilee Mass.

YEAR OF CONSECRATED LIFE 2015

A Monastery is...

Common (mis)Conceptions:

*From and for the Middle Ages
Wasted lives
For people running away from the world
Out of touch
Focus on themselves instead of helping others
What could a monastery teach me when I am in the world
and the nuns are out of touch?*

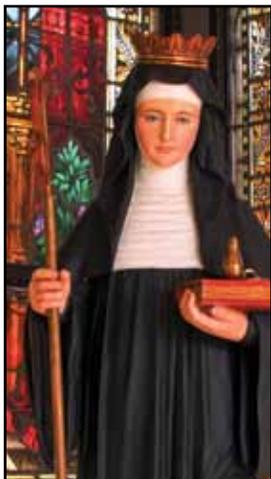
BUT for 1500 years, the small wisdom document known as the Rule of Saint Benedict has freed, formed, and directed the hungers of the human heart to God.

Unwrapping the Presence of St. Emma Monastery

*What do they do all day?
Why would they still wear the habit?
How does a monastery relate to the Church?
What impact does a monastery have on the world?
What earthly good is a monastery?
What do people experience when they visit?
Prayer and work? Why is that reality and rhythm important for all of us?
Why does Benedict describe a monastery as a school of the Lord's service?
Benedict directs that we see the tools of the monastery as sacred vessels — seriously?
What does it look like to value a person over the work that they do?
Why is a monastery set apart from the world for a better view of the world?
Why is it important that we nuns are at "our post" praying in the name of the Church and for the church and the whole world?
How has the Rule freed, formed and directed the hungers of the human heart for over 1500 years?
Why is hospitality, welcoming guests as Christ, part of what Benedict requires?
What is the transforming power of a monastery?*



**DURING THIS YEAR OF CONSECRATED LIFE,
WE INVITE YOU TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR ST. EMMA MONASTERY.**



On **February 25**, we celebrate the feast of St. Walburga. Born in England in 710, Walburga felt called to be a Benedictine nun and later went to Germany where she died in 779. Indeed, consecrated life in the monastery "helped wake up the world" that was Germany to Jesus Christ.

How fitting that our "Unwrapping the Presence of a Monastery to our Times" begins on her feast day! We hope you can join us.

- 4:30 Feast Vespers of St. Walburga in Fatima Chapel
Introducing the life of St. Benedict in those stained glass windows
Light meal with the Benedictine Nuns
Questions and discussion
- 7:30 Compline

Mark your calendars for these spring presentations / sharing on Benedictine life as lived at St. Emma Monastery;

March 25 • April 29 • May 20

RSVP APPRECIATED: 724-834-3060 or retreats@stemma.org

Corpus Christi Mass and Procession

Sunday, June 7, 2015 • 2 p.m. Mass, *Cor Jesu* Chapel



Join the Benedictine nuns in this beautiful tradition honoring the Blessed Sacrament—a custom more commonly experienced in the past. This celebration of Jesus present within 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.

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.

St. Emma Retreat House: 60 years old—and still growing!

On December 13, 2014 we celebrated the 60th anniversary of the dedication of the retreat house actually dedicated on December 8, 1954. What a wonderful opportunity to reflect how God has touched so many lives during this time! The improvements and expansions to the original building are also amazing. More about these 60 years in an upcoming issue.

Robertshaw Bed and Breakfast

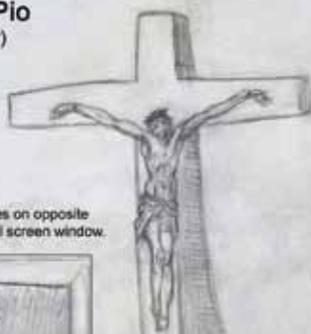
Coming to the Greensburg area for a graduation, wedding, special event or to get away?
Planning your next year's Christmas trip?



Make the Robertshaw Country House Bed and Breakfast your home away from home.
www.robertshawbedandbreakfast.com

St. Padre Pio
(as confessor)

Image viewer sees on opposite side of confessional screen window.



Timothy F. Schmalz
2013 ©

Padre Pio Sculpture Arrives

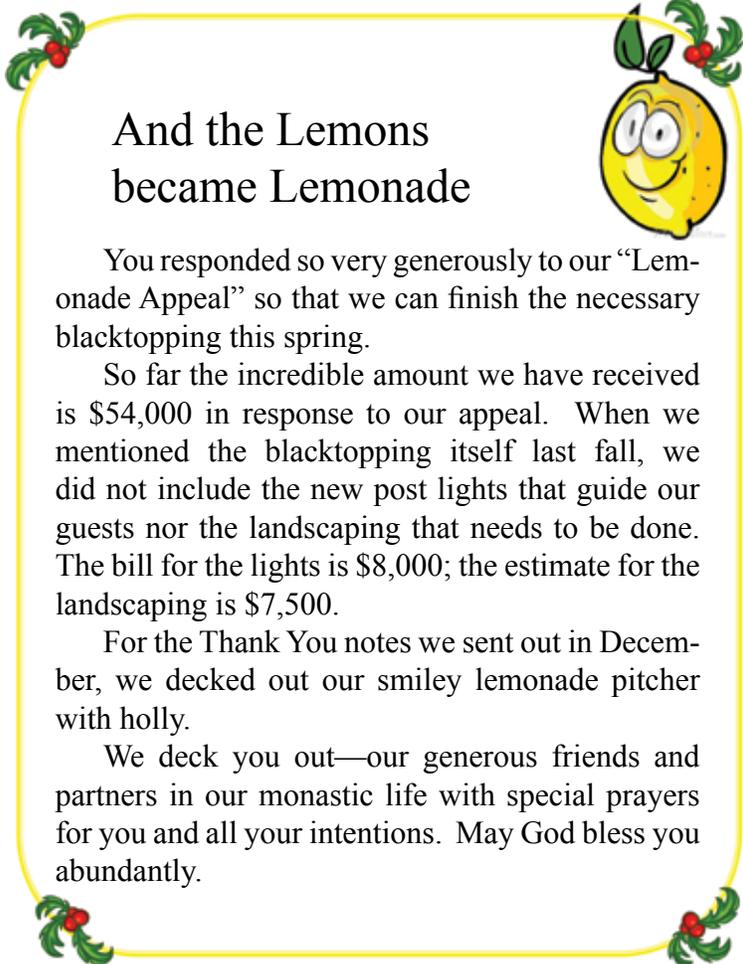
About 17 months ago, a friend, whose family has great devotion to St. Padre Pio, asked if we might consider a shrine to Padre Pio. The discussion of what the statue might look like brought up the name of Timothy F. Schmalz who sculpted the bronze figure of Jesus seated at the Last Supper Shrine.

Two months later in Rome and the night before he presented a miniature of his “Homeless Christ” (a man sleeping on a park bench) to Pope Francis, Timothy sketched this incredible piece. From a distance one sees a nine-foot crucifix with Padre Pio seated at the bottom right with his face leaning on the cross.

To the left of the crucifix one sees an open seat. Seated there, a person is awestruck to see Christ’s face and his nail-pierced hand on the Confessional screen—exactly where one sees Padre Pio’s face and stigmatic hand on the other!

The statue arrived February 16, and we cannot wait to share this interactive statuary with you!

“You complain because the same trials are constantly returning. But look here, what have you to fear? Are you afraid of the divine craftsman who wants to perfect His masterpiece in this way? Would you like to come from the hands of such a magnificent Artist as a mere sketch and no more?” (1/1/1921) – Padre Pio



And the Lemons became Lemonade



You responded so very generously to our “Lemonade Appeal” so that we can finish the necessary blacktopping this spring.

So far the incredible amount we have received is \$54,000 in response to our appeal. When we mentioned the blacktopping itself last fall, we did not include the new post lights that guide our guests nor the landscaping that needs to be done. The bill for the lights is \$8,000; the estimate for the landscaping is \$7,500.

For the Thank You notes we sent out in December, we decked out our smiley lemonade pitcher with holly.

We deck you out—our generous friends and partners in our monastic life with special prayers for you and all your intentions. May God bless you abundantly.

Our Lenten Journey

By Mary Kay Swenson

Life is certainly a journey! So often we make plans for a day, a week or even months ahead - and those plans turn out very differently than we expected. Recently, a priest reflected on this stating that perhaps sometimes “things” happen to us in order that we might be forced to stop our daily routine and take a look at our lives more carefully. This is precisely what we are called to do during Lent – stop, discern and change our path.

Too often we become so busy in our routines that we allow the television or the computer or our phones to control our lives simply because they are a quick escape from reality. By specifically setting aside time for a retreat, we force ourselves to stop and really look at our lives.

This Lent, consider giving yourself the gift of time by making a retreat. Someone once told me that children spell time, “L-O-V-E”. A retreat allows you to pause and reflect – to give the gift of LOVE to yourself and by doing so, to extend that gift to God.

You are always welcome at Saint Emma’s for a day, a weekend or an extended stay. Please call ahead to make a reservation or just stop by if you wish to pray with the nuns, pray privately in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, walk the Stations or the Rosary path or spend time at the Last Supper Shrine and the Padre Pio sculpture.

Wanted: Tickets to Professional Sports Events

We have a problem; YOU have the answer. We know that tickets to the Pro Sports teams in Pittsburgh—Steelers, Penguins, and Pirates—are big draws for Silent Auction Baskets. Do you have any tickets that you would be willing to donate for one of our Fundraising events?



We nuns would be most grateful; the basket winners would be ecstatic. Call Mother Mary Anne, OSB. 724-834-3060.

Are You Part Billionaire?

You are if you have any unused Gift Cards in your possession! Would you consider giving St. Emma's your cards? People love them in our Silent Auction baskets.



Flea Market – Extraordinaire!

Indoor/Outdoor • A/C • Handicapped accessible

This not the usual Flea Market. • Everything is clean and displayed beautifully. • Where do you get all these wonderful items? • I look forward to this each year and take a vacation day. • Everyone is so friendly. • I have passed St. Emma's numerous times but had no idea what all is here. • It is so peaceful here. • The grounds are beautiful. • It is nice to meet the nuns.

Thursday, June 18 2 pm – 7 pm Early bird: \$5 fee

Friday, June 19 10 am – 6 pm

Saturday, June 20 10 am – 1 pm; 50% off (most items) Bag sale (most items) 1 pm – 3 pm; After 3 pm – FREE

Delicious Food: eat in or take-out

Items wanted. Volunteers needed and welcomed!

May the Angels Escort Them Into the Heavenly Kingdom

We extend our sympathy and prayer to Mrs. Jean Milchak, Greensburg, PA, and her family on the death of her husband and their father, grandfather, etc. We were honored to be the suggested recipient of Memorial Contributions in Donald's name in his obituary notice. Donald died on January 15, 2015.

On January 27, 2015 we were shocked to learn that Tracy Emmel (51), Annville, PA had died. A friend of the community, Tracy had volunteered here. We express our condolences to her brothers and thank them for suggesting St. Emma Monastery as a recipient of Memorial Contributions in Tracy's name.

Calendar of Retreats • 2015

- Feb. 27-3/1** SILENT LENTEN (men/women)
Rev. Boniface Hicks, OSB
- March 6- 8** Lenten (men/women), Rev. Jean-Luc Zadroga, OSB
- March 13-15** SILENT (men/women), Rev. Bill Kiel
- Sept. 11-13** SILENT (men/women),
Rev. Boniface Hicks, OSB
- Sept. 18-20** SILENT (men/women),
Rev. Boniface Hicks, OSB
- Oct. 2-4** Men/Women, Rev. Bill Kiel
- Oct. 2-4** Married Couples, Rev. Angelus Shaughnessey,
limited to 12 couples (8 couples, Monastic Guest House \$300; 4 couples, Retreat House \$300)
- Oct. 23-25** Legion of Mary, TBA

2015 fees: Weekends \$165 • Couple \$310

The Six Day Silent Retreat • July 17 – 23

Retreat Master: Rev James Hess O.Carm.

Theme: "Penthos—a way of saying you are sorry for your sins"

The format of these days of silence, listening, and reflection include 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.

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, Weekend time frame \$165

The Encounter with Silence • July 17 – 24

Limited to 15 people

Retreat Master: Rev. John-Mary Thompkins OSB

Silence provides the fertile ground in which the Word of God heard in the four Scriptural based conferences each day takes root. Mass is also celebrated daily. Bring your Bible and your notebook.

"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."

Monastic Guest House 8 rooms: A/C, private bath, \$500;

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

Busy Moms' Retreat • July 31 – August 1

Reflections by Mother Mary Anne, OSB

Not possible to be away the whole weekend? This retreat is for you! Friday dinner at 6 pm.

Saturday's schedule includes Mass, reflections, personal time and Confessions until 4 pm, Fee \$85

You're welcome to continue your retreat through Sunday at 11 am. Fee: \$140

Mark your calendar! • Tee Time for a Nun

August 31 • Monday 10 am