

BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF ANNUNCIATION MONASTERY



Sister Susan Lardy, Sister Hannah Vanorny and Sister Nancy Miller, prioress, joyfully celebrate Sister Hannah's Perpetual Monastic Profession.

Sister Hannah Says "Yes" to God and Community

The joyful Eucharistic celebration of Sister Hannah Vanorny's perpetual monastic profession was held October 12 in Our Lady of the Annunciation Chapel, Benedictine Center for Servant Leadership, Bismarck.

A native of Oakes, ND, Sister Hannah is the daughter of Tom and Sharon Vanorny. The second oldest child in the family, she has two brothers and two sisters. She says, "I think my family and friends are so supportive because they can tell that I'm happy. Even if they don't really understand it, they are happy for me because I am completely ready for this step. I feel like I've been living this life fully since I was first professed on September 27, 2008.

Sister Hannah's story continues on page 3



MESSAGE FROM THE Prioress

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

Lamentations 3:22-23

Steadfast. This is the word I reflect upon as I put my thoughts together for this issue of Tidings. Every fall, the trees in the valley below our home transform into a dazzling display of golden hues. The surrounding bluffs and the city below, delight the eye with cascading foliage arching over the streets and roads as if heralding an important guest. The trees that patiently endure the changing of the seasons, the elements that will strip them of their glory, seem to know that this is just a moment. God's plan is always bigger than this moment in time, this season of life. To be steadfast is to be faithful to that plan. We strive to be like the trees that are rooted but also willing to flex and change as life demands.

I am reminded of our own monastic community, ranging from our elders to our newest members. They, too, are steadfast in their faith—willing to persevere and trust in God's plan. On October 12, Sister Hannah Vanorny made her perpetual monastic profession. She has professed her commitment to seeking and serving God as a Benedictine Sister of Annunciation Monastery. Each one of our sisters has made this promise –from Sister Hannah, our youngest sister, to Sister Rose Schweitzer, who celebrates her 100th birthday in November. Decade after decade, our sisters have been rooted in this region, committed to living together in this place and serving the people of the area.

In this issue you will read about our new postulant Idelle Badt who is listening and

responding to God's call in her life. We have also welcomed another woman into our midst who is exploring religious life with our monastic community as an affiliate. These women bless us with their presence and unique talents. We are truly grateful. We ask that you join us in prayer for these women and all women and men who are discerning a religious vocation.

As you continue to read through *Tidings*, you will get a glimpse into some of Sister Michael Kaliher's art which is displayed throughout our home. Her art captures her growth as artist and God seeker. In addition, you will see how we have been steadfast to the mission to "Let all be received as Christ" at St. Alexius Medical Center since 1885.

Recently two of our sisters, Sister Helen Kyllingstad and Sister Delora Schweitzer, went home to God. They were steadfast in their faithfulness to God's plan for their lives. Their example paves the way for us and our new members. While the future is unknown to us, it is known to God. How blessed are we to rest in that knowledge!

As we surrender to the changing seasons and our changing lives, let us always be open to God's plan. These changes prepare us for new, incredible things to come! I would like to express the gratitude of all of our Sisters at Annunciation Monastery, to you, our friends. You have been steadfast in your support of our sisters and ministries. We pray for you and we love you.

Peace,

Sister Vancy Miller, OSB Sister Nancy Miller, OSB To make perpetual monastic profession means that Sister Hannah has made a permanent promise to live out the Benedictine, monastic life as a full member of the Sisters of Annunciation Monastery. And, as Sister Hannah adds with a bright smile, "I received my ring with the bell banner of Annunciation Monastery engraved on it, a visible symbol of my community, and my promise to God and to my sisters."

Sister Hannah graduated from North Dakota State University with a MS in history. Her love of learning about people and events that formed the world today, is helpful in her current ministry as vocation director at Annunciation Monastery. "Learning about the courageous Benedictine women who have gone before us challenges us to keep growing, learning, and deepening our relationship with God and those we serve."

A trip to Rome became a pivotal point in her journey because, as she says, "I was able to connect-the-dots from those first monasteries of St. Benedict and other holy men and women who laid the foundation of the life Benedictines continue to lead today. As things became clearer, I realized how much I love community life and the joy that comes with it."

Since she first became acquainted with the Sisters of Annunciation Monastery in 2006, Sister Hannah (now age 33), admits she has changed in many ways. She says she feels not only more comfortable with longer, more sustained periods of prayer, but more comfortable with God in general. She feels she has grown as a leader through her past involvement with the Newman Center at Minnesota State University Moorhead, MN, and through her recent service in campus ministry at the University of Mary, Bismarck. Other experiences include directing liturgies, coordinating mission trips and her current ministry as vocation director at Annunciation Monastery. She credits her leadership growth to the sisters who have served as faith-filled mentors.

Sister Hannah generates many creative ideas through her ministry and the way she lives monastic life. Her creative outlets include baking, leading prayer services, planning parties and events, writing and exchanging insights on social media. She shares her experiences as a sister on her blog, "Benedictine Bliss." Sister Hannah appreciates quiet reflection on Scripture and loves daily prayer with her sisters. An avid runner, she often participates in marathons with her family members. She enjoys an unusual hobby for a sister—shooting a gun. A friend taught her to shoot and she has turned into a pretty good markswoman!

When asked about why women today pursue religious life, Sister Hannah believes there are women who seek something deeper and feel a pull toward growing closer to God through prayer, community and service. "They may consider marriage or the single life, and yet, feel like something is missing but they are not sure what to do about it. In today's culture, they are hesitant because this is a different lifestyle. Many people don't think about it. I encourage anyone who even wonders about religious life to explore the possibility. I find my faith through my monastic community, which is why I fell in love with the monastic order in the first place. We seek God together and it is a blessed and joyful life."



NAABOD Conference a Great Success

What a pleasure it was to host 68 oblate directors and oblates from across the United States at the North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors (NAABOD) Conference at the University of Mary, July 12-17.

Works of Heart

ister Michael Kaliher grew up in Northville, MI. In the days when tuberculosis was rampant, the Kaliher household was struck. As a young child, Sister Michael was afflicted, as were her parents. The family was admitted to a sanatorium in neighboring Maybury to be treated. They were quarantined in separate living quarters for two years. After they were released, they were confined to their home.

Sister Michael recalls keeping herself occupied while her mother rested. She sat in a rocking chair by the window and read and sketched the things she had seen. Her father brought her books from the library. What peaked her interest more than the words, were the blank pages at the beginning and end of each book. "What a waste," she thought, and much to her father's dismay, she filled them with her drawings.

Noting the love and talent his daughter had for art, her father made drawing pads out of butcher paper. "I was so amazed that empty page after page was there for me to draw whatever I wanted," says Sister Michael. She vividly remembers coming home from a parade and drawing everything she had seen. Cowboys, stagecoaches and horses were common drawings in her books. Those sketch books became a record of her progression as an artist.

The family moved to California two weeks before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Sister Michael's talent was noticed in her high school art class, earning her a two-year scholarship to the Kann Institute of Art in West Hollywood. The institute was for commercial art, rather than the fine art she was passionate about. Her other primary interest was in becoming a sister, a desire that stirred within her at the age of 9. She says, "Even as a child, I liked to go to church, especially in the springtime. I loved the colors, sounds and smells



Sister Michael Kaliher's painting of the Annunciation Monastery bell banner hangs in a prominent location between the chapel and the dining room.

of spring. I was so taken aback that I thought, 'God, your world is beautiful."

Sister Michael's second year at Kann left her feeling uninspired. "My heart was elsewhere; I knew I was meant to become a sister." She was drawn to the Benedictine order's 'family' values and commitment to hospitality and community. "I think I had an inert longing for family after spending time with the children in the ward at Maybury. The Benedictine belief in community/family life and their daily commitment to the Divine Office is what drew me to join Annunciation Monastery."

After becoming a Sister of Annunciation Monastery, Sister Michael was sent to St. Catherine's in St. Paul, MN, and earned her bachelor's degree in fine arts. She taught art for 14 years in grade schools and at the University of Mary. She humbly states, "Somewhere in between I went to Notre Dame and got my master's degree."

To her disappointment, religious art was cut from the Notre Dame art program. Determined to incorporate God into her art, she found clever ways to include God in her work without her professor's knowledge. She tells of how her choice of colors and design tell the story of creation, how a piece of wood revealed "The Wise Virgin" to her, and how a butterfly

symbolized Christ's resurrection. Sister Michael says that most of the time, the image is revealed to her before she even begins to work. Many of her ideas came to her in chapel. Her favorite challenge was to capture the intricate details and expressions of the human face.

Sister Michael's works are displayed throughout Annunciation Monastery. Each piece tells a story that she recalls with great joy, and sometimes a chuckle. Her illustrations are found in several books, including "The First Sioux Nun," by S. Ione Hilger, OSB, "Father De Smet in Dakota," by Fr. Louis Pfaller, OSB, and "Medieval Women Monastics," edited by S. Miriam Schmitt, OSB, of Annunciation Monastery.

With her loss of vision, Sister Michael is resigned but not bitter. "I miss drawing very much," she admits, "but I am grateful for my memories." She always wanted to read the classics, so is now catching up with them on books on tape. She enjoys classical music and spending time in prayer and with her monastic community.

Sister Michael loves to share the message that God is always loving and merciful. Like God, she encourages forgiveness. And as she did every day before entering the classroom, she offers this prayer, "God, please let me help someone today."







- 1. The Wise Virgin painted on wood
- 2. Koi sculpture and enamel bowls
- 3. Water lilies
- 4. Boy in red hat
- 5. Sacred Heart of Jesus





A Chat with Postulant Idelle Badt



Prioress Sister Nancy Miller welcomes Idelle as a postulant of Annunciation Monastery

Birthplace: Sidney, MT Parents: Clydette Boyer Robert Badt

Rochelle & Rachel Siblings:

Education: Dickinson State University, ND,

Bachelor's degree in vocal performance

Work experience: Nanny in New York; Grant

Administrator for the Trenton Indian Service Area, Williston, ND; RSVP Director at the Richland County Health

Department, Sidney, MT.

On September 7, 2013, Idelle Badt knocked on the front door of Annunciation Monastery, requesting to seek God with the sisters as a postulant and was welcomed with open arms. Postulants engage in a ministry, participate in the daily life of the sisters and learn about Benedictine monastic life.

Q: What ministries were you involved with prior to moving here?

A: In my work as a grant administrator in the Trenton Indian Service area, I coordinated a youth program and discovered I have a talent for writing grants. Believe it or not, I like doing the research for grants. It's tedious but I like finding solutions to community problems. As the RSVP director at Richland County Health, I wrote grants and was the liaison for programs for the elderly. It was my favorite job ever because I love, love, love elderly people and I found it fulfilling to help them.

Q: What led you to consider becoming a sister?

I think I've always been drawn to the idea because God is the priority in my life, deepening especially A: over the past few years. I became more open to the idea after I attended a Cum Christo women's prayer retreat in Sidney. The weekend was enlightening. "During a vocation talk, one of the sisters would stop talking, point at me and say, 'You're going to be a nun.' I remember thinking, 'How does she know?' because I had been thinking about it for several years but hadn't told anyone."

Q: What were your next steps?

A: I started spiritual direction, spent time journaling and prayed a lot. I weighed the pros and cons of becoming a nun. After my first visit to Annunciation Monastery in July 2012, this felt like home. After I left the monastery, everyone at work could tell there was something different about me. Although I loved my job, my coworkers and missed my aunt whom I had been living with, I knew the only place I wanted to be was Annunciation Monastery. I missed the routine of daily prayer and Eucharist, and the sisters.

I came back at least once a month to visit and when I was away, it warmed my heart to receive real mail, not email, from the sisters. At the end December 2012, I moved to Bismarck and lived with the sisters at St. Alexius Convent.

What excites you about the future as a Sister of Annunciation Monastery? Q:

There are so many things. I am enjoying my new ministry at the University of Mary as an advisor in the A: student support services department. It is exciting to carry on the mission of the sisters at the university. I have moved into Annunciation Monastery, with my own room and place in chapel. I love the view from my room. This sounds crazy but the day I became I postulant and was led to my place in chapel, there was a crack of thunder, followed by a rainbow on the horizon! I think that's a good sign.

I'm grateful to be here. I want to discern where God is leading me, what God wants from me, and how I should live my life. I look forward to getting to know the sisters on a deeper level and participating in the Benedictine monastic life, while learning and growing in faith. It feels like I am on the right path.



Idelle (center) is pictured with some of our sisters who helped celebrate her entry into the postulancy.

Left to right: Sisters Kathryn Zimmer, Susan Lardy, Ruth Margaret Karabensh, Nancy Miller, Postulant Idelle Badt, Sisters Agatha Muggli, Denise Ressler, Eleanor Stockert, Thomas Welder, Rosemary DeGracia.

"When God Invites, God Provides ..."



his is a favorite saying that Sister Kathleen Atkinson has seen proven over and over again as she ministers to the homeless, transitional and imprisoned in the Bismarck area. In the past six months, Sister Kathleen's Ministry on the Margins has experienced growth in requests for help as well as people coming forward to offer help. Here's an update of just two of the new programs:

A recent Prison2Society conference initiated mentor teams to help some of the 1,000 North Dakota men and women who re-enter the community from prison every year. Sister Kathleen coordinates the trained teams of five to seven persons as they work with the Department of Corrections, Parole and Probation, and various social service agencies to help returning inmates successfully access housing, employment, basic needs and positive community connections.

In collaboration with the Ruth Meiers Hospitality House and Great Plains Food Bank, Ministry on the Margins recognized a need for emergency food services to those who cannot access services during the day due to work, school or lack of transportation. Sister Kathleen is engaged in opening a food pantry Thursday evenings from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. and Tuesday mornings from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Ministry on the Margins office downtown, 311 East Thayer Ave., Bismarck.

Volunteers and donations are needed. Please contact Sister Kathleen at 701.426.8747 or email kathleen@annunciationmonastery.org. She is available to speak to churches and organizations about her work with the poor as well as prison ministry. God is inviting and providing.

Mission Possible

he torch of mission never dims at St. Alexius Medical Center. It has been and will always be the foundation of the sponsored ministries of the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery. At St. Alexius, the mission comes straight from the Rule of St. Benedict, which encourages "Let all be received as Christ."

In her role as vice president of mission effectiveness at St. Alexius Medical Center, Sister Susan Lardy has spent the past 13 years passionately sharing the faith-filled stories of the founding sisters who started St. Alexius back in 1885. Sister Susan also served on the St. Alexius Board of Directors for 16 years and was subprioress of Annunciation Monastery for four years, and prioress for 12 years. These roles provided opportunities to grow in her faith, leadership, relationships and in her knowledge in healthcare. "I always admired the sisters in healthcare; they had a spirit and energy that was wonderful to see," she says. It is imperative that we enliven and live the mission in a real way. Together, we are called to uphold the Gospel values and recognize that care of the sick must rank about and before all else—for in caring for the sick, we are Christ."

On June 15, 2013, Sister Susan handed the mission torch to Sister Mariah Dietz, who is now vice president tof Mission Effectiveness. The transition seemed natural as Sister Mariah began her nursing career at St. Alexius and has served on its board of directors. For more than 40 years, she was a valued faculty member of the University of Mary's Nursing Program. Sister Mariah served as director of spiritual care at St. Gabriel's Community since 2010. Caring for both staff and patients is dear to her heart.

"We are called to uphold the Gospel values and recognize that care of the sick must rank about and before all else—for in caring for the sick, we are Christ."

Sister Mariah explains, "This ministry allows me to weave both of my loves together, healthcare and the Sisters." She says the beauty of her position is that "you listen with the ear of mission in every task, whether it's regarding things like budget planning, patient care and staffing. The focus remains on the impact on the mission. When decisions are mission-based, God takes care of the rest."



Sisters Susan Lardy and Mariah Dietz offer prayer, compassion and encouragement at St. Alexius Medical Center.

Gary P. Miller, president and CEO of St. Alexius Medical Center, feels the mission involves every person and is the reason St. Alexius is a premiere healthcare facility. "We often talk about the challenges and uncertainty in healthcare because it is ever-changing," says Miller. "The sisters are our core anchor to mission; they ensure we are grounded in the mission of Jesus above all else. We are blessed to have the sisters who are our sponsors and teachers in the values that make St. Alexius stand apart."

Not only are Sisters Susan and Mariah both Sisters of Annunciation Monastery, they are also first cousins. Growing up in Sentinel Butte, ND, the cousins enjoyed family gatherings and the values which laid the groundwork for their journey to religious life. Although she has retired from St. Alexius, Sister Susan serves as a consultant to Sister Mariah. She also serves as director of sisters in temporary monastic profession at Annunciation Monastery.

"When decisions are mission-based, God takes care of the rest."

Sister Mariah helps coordinate sponsorship and leadership training sessions at the medical center, assists with Benedictine awareness convocations and new employee orientation sessions. She offers spiritual reflections at department meetings and retreats. She makes rounds throughout the hospital and asks patients about their care and how it can be improved. "It is affirming to hear how our staff embraces and extends the mission to one another and to the patients we serve."

St. Alexius Medical Center in Bismarck is ranked the best **hospital in North Dakota** for 2013-14 by U.S. News & World Report. The annual U.S. News Best Hospitals rankings, now in their 24th year, recognize hospitals that excel in treating the most challenging patients. St. Alexius was recognized as being highperforming in cancer, gastroenterology and GI surgery, geriatrics, gynecology, orthopedics and pulmonology.

St. Alexius President and CEO, Gary P. Miller, said, "This is not the first time St. Alexius has been recognized from U.S. News & World Report or other ranking agencies. St. Alexius has a 128 plus year commitment to provide a great place of healing for people in Western and Central North Dakota. The excellence of our physicians and the commitment of our associates to our mission will continue to earn St. Alexius Medical Center national recognition for care provided. I truly appreciate all the work that goes into earning such recognition."



Gary P. Miller, President and CEO of St. Alexius, joins the sisters beneath the prominent Benedictine motto. "Let all be received as Christ."



Sister Helen Kyllingstad, OSB

Born: February 9, 1917 Professed: July 11, 1947 Died: August 9, 2013



Sister Delora Schweitzer, OSB

Born: January 7, 1915 Professed: July 11, 1939 **Died:** August 26, 2013

In Loving Memory

Sister Helen Kyllingstad, OSB

Throughout her life, Sister Helen blended her faith in God and her love of nursing to heal and promote the well-being of people.

She served as a nurse for 55 years, a hospital administrator for 25 years and an anesthetist/anesthesia teacher for 23 years. She was a public health nurse, helped start hospitals in Beulah and Bowman, began a school for nurse anesthetists and was administrator of Richardton Memorial Hospital for 20 years.

She enjoyed reading, word and jigsaw puzzles and creating wallpaper greeting cards. She loved nature, bird-watching, and identifying and collecting wild prairie grasses. Sister Helen was also deeply proud of her Norwegian heritage.

"This is a good life," said Sister Helen of her journey as a Benedictine Sister. "I wouldn't change it." Through her example of loving service, she encouraged and inspired others to trust in God's abiding love.

Sister Delora Schweitzer, OSB

With a great love for children and teaching, Sister Delora served as an elementary school educator for 42 years. She taught in Catholic schools in Dickinson and Bismarck and was principal and assistant principal at Christ the King School, Mandan. She also tutored in the Learning Skills Center at the University of Mary.

Sister Delora enjoyed people. She was always interested in others and cared about whoever she encountered in her life. She had a deep love for her Benedictine community and her family. Social gatherings and prayer services were special to her and she seldom missed them.

Jesus was the love of Sister Delora's life. Her faith and love ran deep within her. The day before she died, she said, "I am waiting for the Lord to take me home."

St. Joseph School Celebrates 100 Years! God bless you on the next 100!



George Kary (graduated from St. Joseph's Grade School in '42), Sister Denise Ressler, Father Shane Campbell and Sister Andre Hushka enjoyed the celebration.



St. Joseph School, Mandan, celebrated its 100 year anniversary in the 4th of July parade. Sisters Denise Ressler and Andre Hushka rode on the float, representing the sisters who used to teach at St. Joseph School.

Speaking of 100 years,

Happy 100th Birthday to Sister Rose Schweitzer!



Sister Rose Schweitzer, OSB

Her secrets to a long, happy, faith-filled life:

"I sit. I pray. Sometimes I say the rosary three times a day."

"Get a good night's sleep and take naps."

"I grew up eating German food - lots of dough."

"Lights out at 9:00 p.m. Rise and shine for prayers at 5:45 a.m."

"Do not miss daily prayer."

"Do as much as you can. I still like to bake bread and do my own laundry."

"Listen to music that makes you happy. I like classical and the Tibor Brothers

'Germans From Russia' music."

"Laugh and enjoy life - be kind to people."





Sister Nancy Gunderson, OSB

Sister Madelyn Louttit, OSB

Sisters Nancy Gunderson and Madelyn Louttit attended the 29th annual Monastic Institute at Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville, MN, in July. The institute is an opportunity for ongoing formation, spiritual education for sisters, oblates, anyone who is interested in Benedictine spirituality.



Sister Nancy Gunderson received the "Juror's Choice Award" at Bismarck Arts and Galleries Association's 69th Annual Art Show "Autumn Artistry." for her art guilt called, Momentum. Congratulations, Sister Nancy!

Sister Agnes Reinert has retired from her ministry in pastoral care at Cathedral of the Holy Spirit and her 10-year ministry as volunteer chaplain for the Bismarck Police Department. She is living with Sister Madonna Wagendorf at Garrison Convent in Garrison, ND. She serves in pastoral care



Sister Agnes Reinert, OSB

at Garrison Memorial Hospital, assists parishes with Eucharistic ministry and visits the homebound.

Sister Rosanne Zastoupil was awarded the University of Mary Presidential Leadership Award at the University's Alumni Recognition Awards and Hall of Fame Induction event on October 4. The award is conferred on individual alumni for distinguished achievements as servant leaders regionally, nationally, or internationally.



Sister Rosanne Zastoupil, OSB

A student of the first freshman class at Priory High School in 1959, Sister Rosanne has served in different capacities at the University of Mary for the past 40 years. She continues to serve as director of payroll and benefits at the University of Mary.



Sister Thomas Welder, OSB

Sister Thomas Welder Awarded Caritas Award by Catholic Charities of ND

Sister Thomas Welder was honored by Catholic Charities North Dakota in Fargo on Oct. 15 when she was presented with the Caritas Award. This award is given each year in recognition of those exemplifying faith, hope and love to the least of God's people.

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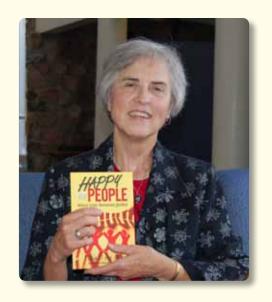


If you are interested in making a donation in support of our ministries, please use the enclosed envelope. Thank you. Please remember us when making or revising your will. Our legal name is: Benedictine Sisters of the Annunciation, B.M.V. For more information, contact Jill Ackerman, director of communications and development, (701)355-8907 or: jill@annunciationmonastery.org

Oblate Writes Book on Catholic Social Teaching

Marie Hoff, Ph.D., an oblate of Annunciation Monastery, has written a book, *Happy the People: When Love Becomes Justice*. In her book, Hoff attempts to do three things: provide an introduction to the social teachings of the Church; relate these teachings to Scripture, prayer, and liturgical worship; and give some basic information on how to take action for justice, in conjunction with one's local parish, work and civic life.

A lively study guide for small faith communities, RCIA groups, teachers, students, board members of Catholic organizations, or any individuals who want to put their faith into action, *Happy the People* links prayer, worship, Scripture and Church documents with justice principles and values.



"Marie Hoff does a splendid job of opening the door to Catholic Social Teaching. She offers good perspective, connections to the psalms, and great questions for reflection or discussion. This book is ideal for persons willing to step through the door of knowledge and discover the truths that lie in their hearts. You will leave with a deeper understanding, a broader view, and an informed conscience regarding social justice." ~ Leland D. Nagel, executive director, National Conference for Catechetical Leadership

Happy the People: When Love Becomes Justice can be purchased at your local bookstore, Amazon, Liguori Publications, Annunciation Monastery or ebooks.