

Coming into Focus: How Spiritual Direction helps us see

Surely the Lord is in this place.
Genesis 28:16

When people seek spiritual direction, they often are burdened by a sense of loss or absence. They may no longer feel they possess the clarity or purpose they once had. They may feel empty; distant from God; rudderless.

Sister Catherine Cleary, OSB says we've all been – or will be – there. It's part of our makeup.

“We are Gospel people,” the Benedictine spiritual director says. “We are hungry and longing for something. This absence drives us to seek more.”

Three chairs in the room

Spiritual directors say direction is not a map or set of rules, but rather a conversation in which we share our concerns as the director reflects back to us what we say. That is, if we share our fear we have lost our faith – and Sr. Catherine says this is a common concern – she will acknowledge what we have said and ask what that might mean.

“This is a listening ministry,” she says. “We listen to the directee,



and we listen to God. We say we have three chairs in the room: one for the director, one for the directee and one for God.



*Sr. Catherine
Cleary, OSB*

“We begin with a prayer to pull our attention in, away from our busy lives and phones and screens, to the Presence.”

Slowly, then, we begin to share ... and hear ourselves.

“I help the directee listen to her or himself,” Sr. Catherine says. “Eventually a path or purpose may become clear. It's like standing on a lakeshore while a sailboat is

still out too far to detect. If we stand there long enough, we'll see it come into focus. But it's been there all along, whether we have attended to it or not.”

Called to something new

For some, the nagging discomfort – the doubts and even dissatisfaction – may come courtesy of a new calling. That is, we may be experiencing a divine nudge.

“Sometimes directees find themselves moving from traditional word prayers to more contemplative prayer,” Sr. Catherine says. “All their lives their prayers have been about daily things – their child passes a test,

Continued next page

LETTER from the Prioress



*Sr. Sandra Brunenn,
OSB*

A Benedictine Blessing

On October 15, 1874, five Sisters from the Benedictine community in Chicago travelled south to Nauvoo, Ill. to establish a school for girls. From this humble beginning the Sisters of St. Benedict of Nauvoo - and now Rock Island - were established.



On October 15, 2014, we celebrated our 140th birthday! We invite you to join us in thanksgiving as we celebrate the influence our presence and ministry has had in the Church, and most especially in central Illinois.

On October 15, 2014, we celebrated our 140th birthday! We invite you to join us in thanksgiving as we celebrate the influence our presence and ministry has had in the Church, and most especially in central Illinois.

This summer I was blessed to attend a symposium in Rome of leaders of Benedictine women's communities from around the world. Through that experience I carry a vivid awareness of how the values of St. Benedict continue to be enlivened in small communities all over our planet.

What a blessing Benedict continues to be for all of us. May we renew our awareness of the blessing we all are to the world today. In this season of thanksgiving, I thank God for each of you!

Into Focus cont'd. from page 1

their friend gets better, they do well on a project at work – but now they may be called to slow down, to experience awe.



“When we slow down and really focus on the beauty of a tree, or the smile of a child, or the intricacy of a snowflake, we experience awe. It becomes contemplative awareness of the Presence.”

God as Presence ... as Friend

As with the boat on the lake, God has always been there, beckoning. We perhaps have been too busy – with our jobs, our families, our TVs and phones – to notice. Spiritual direction invites us to respond.

“How do we connect with a precious friend?” Sr. Catherine asks. “Maybe we sit by the lake and watch the sunset. We don't need to talk or go somewhere or do something. We just need to be.”

Like any relationship, it takes time and attention to develop a deep and trusting intimacy.

“To build a relationship with God takes quiet time,” Sr. Catherine says. “We need to clear away the clutter. Spiritual direction helps us do that. It helps us go deeper, and connect with the One who is calling us.”

Spiritual Directors Help Explore *Something New*

Spiritual direction is the process of prayerful listening to another to help discern what s/he is being called to at this time in life. Here, two Benedictine directors – who welcome persons of all faiths – share their insights into what direction can mean.



Sister Margaret Murphy, OSB

“The words ‘spiritual director’ can be misleading. It’s really more about being a companion on a spiritual journey.

Sr. Margaret Murphy, OSB

“Most of us don’t know

God’s plan for us. In direction, we listen to God who works through the director and directee, which is why we say we always have a chair for the Holy Spirit.

“I start a session by asking directees about their background, their spiritual journey. By asking only open questions, I let them identify their own feelings.

“Then I ask, *Who is God for you? What is prayer for you? What’s your experience of God?* These questions let us explore where they are, and perhaps help them see where they can move next.

“Sometimes they want affirmation that something – something they want to do, maybe – is from God. I ask if they feel peace and joy from it. That’s key. I also ask if they think it’s what Jesus would do.

“Often they are missing balance in their lives. They are working too much and think it’s the right thing to do. But I remind them of the commandment, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ As

yourself! We forget about ourselves.

“To gain balance in their lives, I remind them that prayer is key for the journey. Relationships are important to integration and growth. And I suggest they give themselves time to create. Go back to the piano. Write in a journal. Garden. Draw. Walk in nature. Get in touch with what feeds the spirit.

“For so many people, all their lives they just did, did, did. But now as they are growing older, they are more aware of the Presence. Of being called to something new. This is one of the things we, as spiritual directors, help people explore.”



Sister Mary Schmidt, OSB

“Before the directee ever comes into view I seek out some prayer or scripture that may be fitting. I pray that we recognize and realize the Divine Presence here with us.

“People come with hope, fear and loss. Sometimes there is anger and aloneness and hurt.

“We look for where God might be in all of that. We look for how God might be calling the directee to some change.

“As director, my job is to listen without judgment; to help them find the door that God is holding open.”

For more information about spiritual direction – or to make an appointment with a director – contact the Sisters:

Sister Catherine Cleary, ccleary@smmsisters.org or (309) 283-2118

Sister Margaret Murphy, mmurphy@smmsisters.org or (309) 283-2232

Sister Mary Schmidt, mschmidt@smmsisters.org or (309) 283-2238



Sr. Mary Schmidt, OSB

Live-in Benedictine Volunteer Shares Experiences



Laurel VanderJeugd, second from left, participates in the Sisters' lives during her volunteer experience with the community. Above, she chats with Oblates during their annual retreat day.

Laurel VanderJeugd caught her breath when she read the notice in Connecting Point. Then she read it 19 more times. The Benedictine Sisters were inviting people to come live and volunteer with them for a period of two weeks to 12 months. This was exactly what she had been looking for!

Laurel got up her nerve, picked up the phone and called to inquire. "I'm interested in the volunteer program and I'm 77 years old," she blurted out to the Sister who answered.

Sister Sheila McGrath laughed and said she would send more information. The information arrived a week later at Laurel's home in Virginia, but Laurel and the Sisters – who were comfortable with her age – had already begun planning. For Laurel, it was a coming

home. Raised in Moline, Ill., she not only had Benedictines for religious education, she had entered their religious community.

Laurel didn't become a Sister. She married and raised her family in Moline, moving to Virginia 20 years later. She still felt strongly connected to the Sisters, though, and couldn't wait to get back. Now two months into her nine-month volunteer period, she shared some experiences and observations about her time here so far.

Q. What led you to leave your life and move in with Sisters halfway across the country?

A. I've been looking for something like this since I retired in 2002. When I learned about the opportunity, I couldn't get here fast enough. Everything fell in place to facilitate it. My granddaughter needed a place to live, so she's taking care of my house. One of my daughters lives in Davenport, and I still have friends here.

Q. What has your life been like here?

A. It's such a blessing for me to be here. I feel I'm at home, with family. The little things they ask me to do – I'm working on a craft project right now – are so comfortable and rewarding. I host a 3:30 p.m. tea with the Sisters in Healthcare every afternoon. That's especially rewarding. My prayer style had begun to change before I arrived, and it continues to do so. It's become more constant, supported by the Liturgy of the Hours three times a day.

Q. You plan to stay through May. What do you hope to gain during your time here?

A. I can't say what I hope to gain. I can say what I hope to give. I want to be all I can be for the Sisters. I want to soak up every aspect of Benedictine spirituality and lifestyle. I want to be of service. I wonder if other people really know what the Sisters are offering through this program. I can't imagine not jumping at this opportunity. I am so grateful for it.

Laurel is the first participant in the Benedictine Sisters' new live-in volunteer program. Designed to share the Sisters' spirituality and life with the greater community, the volunteer program invites people to live, pray, work and enjoy leisure with the Sisters. For more information, contact Sr. Sheila McGrath at (309) 283-2100.



Sister Peggy's Homeless Shelter Lives On

Sister Margaret Suerth died Oct. 4, 2014 (see page 9). Although we shared this story several years ago, we thought it would be appropriate to share it again now, in memory of our Sister Peggy. For more information about her PADS project, visit www.ivpads.com. Photos above courtesy PADS.

Hank (not his real name) had been sleeping on benches at Starved Rock State Park near LaSalle/Peru, Ill., since summer. A polite and gentle man, he had graduated from college and attended a year or two of medical school before being sent to Vietnam. He had returned frightened of noise and commotion, and had taken refuge in the quiet of nature.

But nature was turning colder and less hospitable. With red and gold leaves collecting on Hank's jacket as he slept, park authorities – never thrilled about having a homeless guy lurking about – were getting vehement about their quandary. They called the police again. Thanks to a determined Benedictine Sister, the police finally had somewhere to take him.

“We had just opened a homeless shelter,” homeless advocate and shelter founder Sr. Margaret Suerth said. “A couple of churches in the area would open their doors once a week. It was a lot of work, but worth it.”

Work, indeed. Sr. Margaret and her volunteers had to haul mattresses, bedding, dishes and food from one church to another during those early years, as the shelter location changed every night. At first, the shelter only operated three nights a week, leaving guys like Hank on their own the other nights. Some of them, like Hank, walked the distance between

locations just to have a warm and safe place to sleep. That meant a lot of walking: two of the churches were 16 miles apart.

Eventually Sr. Margaret and the other volunteers found enough churches to keep the shelter open every night of the week. With donations and grants, they also were able to buy enough mattresses and bedding to outfit every location. When the churches wanted their space back, though, the volunteers had to start over.

“Everyone seemed to be in favor of having a homeless shelter but no one wanted it in their backyard,” Sr. Margaret said. “Finally, we found space that works wonderfully for everyone.”

Like most shelters, occupants must be in for the night by 10 p.m. and out for the day by 7 a.m. Dinner is served at 6 p.m. and breakfast is served 12 hours later. Two sleeping rooms – one for women and one for men – adjoin a rec room that offers TV and card tables for clients that sometimes include entire families.

“In the 13 years I have worked with homeless people, I have met only one person who chose to live that way,” Sr. Margaret said. “Most have problems, like Hank. Some are down on their luck. But they are all God's people and deserve our help.”

Ultimately, the Veteran's Administration agreed to pay for Hank's housing and expenses. He moved into a high rise right next to the shelter, and still comes over for meals occasionally. “You've never met a nicer person,” Sr. Margaret said. “You have no idea how grateful I am to have been able to help such people. It's been a real gift.”

The Power (and Cost) of Blessing

It was August. Dusty and warm. The Benedictine Sisters had gathered in front of their monastery in Nauvoo, luggage next to idling cars. It was time to say goodbye as they headed to their missions across Illinois. Those who would stay behind – the teachers and administrators of their boarding school, the cooks, the housekeepers, the retired – raised their hands in supplication, singing, “May the blessing of the Lord be upon you, we bless you in the name of the Lord.” Those who were leaving – teachers, mostly – got into the waiting cars secure in the love, support and joy they had just been given.

“I took that blessing with me as I went to my mission,” Sister Marilyn Ring, OSB says. “It gave me comfort, knowing the Sisters were with me in spirit.”

The power of a blessing can be almost tangible. Yet what, exactly, is this thing we offer casually at a sneeze, formally at Mass? What is this thing we claim to have been given as we look back upon good times and good friends?

Blessing, Defined



Sr. Marilyn Ring, OSB

Scripturally, to bless someone means to praise and desire good fortune for her or him. A blessing might invoke divine favor, divine assistance.

Yet in casual conversation, a blessing seems to convey the notion of “gift,” however profound.

“I would say a blessing is an unexpected gift that enriches and enhances who you are,” Benedictine Oblate Florrie Dammers says.

Sister Catherine Maloney, OSB agrees. “Gift comes to mind,” she says.

Benedictine Oblate Chris Kraft takes a slightly different approach.



Years ago, the Benedictines gathered on the lawn at summer's end to bless the Sisters who were returning to teaching positions in schools throughout Illinois and Indiana.

“A blessing happens when God intervenes in my life,” she says. “It’s a surprise sometimes, and sometimes gentle awareness.” She relates how she found her expensive hearing aid after having lost it. “I couldn’t afford a new one. God’s not a fixer, but when I prayed about it I experienced the patience to look

again. Finding it was a blessing.”

Sr. Marilyn says a blessing is based on relationship, both with God and other people.

“A blessing allows us to feel the goodness and love that come from God through other people,” she says. “They make us feel cared for, and that’s so important. And if we have no relationship with someone who might need our blessing, we can offer a silent blessing.”

Blessing Comes from God

Theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote from prison, “A blessing is the visible, perceptible, effective proximity of God. A blessing demands to be passed on.”

Exactly, says Sr. Marilyn. “I don’t have the power to bless someone. It comes from God. When I think of offering a blessing, what I hope to do is share God’s blessing.”

And sharing a blessing by way of a smile or kindness enhances the blessing twofold.

“I’m a befriender at the hospital,” Sr. Marilyn says. “I visit patients who might not have any visitors at all. I can’t heal them, but we can have a moment of prayer, kindness and connection. It’s a blessing for me, and, I hope, for them.

How Do We Bless Someone?

In his 2014 book, *Sacred Fire*, Ronald Rolheiser, OMI describes the components of a blessing this way:

“To bless someone is to see and admire that person, speak well of him or her, and give away some of your life so that he or she might have more life.”

Such blessings are abundant in scripture, of course, from the moment God pronounced creation very good to Jesus’ passion.

In our own lives we, too, can find many examples. We bless others when we really see and take delight in them. We bless others when we speak well of them whether at work, socially or at home. Finally, we bless others when we give them something of ourselves – our time, our responsibilities, our treasures – to enlarge their lives.

To understand each component, Rolheiser suggests it might be helpful to contrast the opposite of a blessing with a curse.

Seeing and Admiring

Say a child is making a racket – an enthusiastic, high-pitched, happy racket. An adult might laugh with her, admiring the child’s youthful joy and exuberance, or the adult might scowl and tell the child to shut up.

That opposite is, Rolheiser says, most certainly a curse meant to “suppress life, deny joy its place, squelch exuberance, and shame enthusiasm.” It is as damaging to



Sister Charlotte Sonnevile feels blessed by Sister Sterfanie MacDonald’s preschoolers during their annual Christmas program.

the spirit as a blessing is uplifting.

Speaking Well of Others

While that first component may seem to be one of convenience – we do or don’t take the time and effort to see and be present to another – the second component creeps closer to home.

Speaking well of others requires that we humble ourselves – perhaps even minimize our own role – with our full and sincere praise.

We may all remember a time when we did not share credit with a colleague, neglected an opportunity to congratulate someone on a job well done, or passed up the chance to mentor a junior associate. Parents might remember not telling their children – as God told Jesus at his baptism – “In you I take delight.”

When you “withhold your blessing,” you miss the chance to feel, as Rolheiser says, “bighearted.”

Giving Something of Ourselves

The affirmations of delighting in and speaking well of

Continued back cover

Gift Presented to Sister Catherine

Muslim community representative Lisa Killinger presented Sister Catherine Cleary, OSB with artwork symbolizing that we are all children of God. The gift was made in honor of Sr. Catherine's founding of the Women's Interreligious Dialogue, which was held for the 8th time this fall.

"We began the dialogue to help people feel comfortable sitting next to each other, whether they look different or worship in different places," Sr. Catherine says. "We have much in common. We go to the same parks and hospitals. We go to the same schools. We love our families. And our faiths - Christian, Muslim and Jewish - are all under the tent of Abraham."



Lisa Killinger, left, presents Sr. Catherine Cleary with a gift of appreciation for her work in the Women's Interreligious Dialogue. Shown above, l-r: Lisa Killinger, Sisters Helen Carey, Catherine Cleary, Charlotte Sonnevile, Claudia Scharf, Stefanie MacDonald, Marilyn Ring and Margaret Murphy.

Sister Jackie Makes Final Profession



In a simple but moving ceremony surrounded by Sisters, family and friends in the monastery chapel August 23, 2014, Sister Jackie Walsh, OSB, made her final monastic profession.

"As usual, when I let go and trust God, things work out as they should," Sr. Jackie says. "I'm very happy with the path I've chosen. My life's experiences and relationships, with God and my Sisters, continue to blossom and unfold. I have such a sense of peace that I didn't have before.

"This life is balanced. It all works because God is here, and we are all here to seek God."

Oblates Win Peace Award

Benedictine Oblates Toni Sipula (pictured here listening to Sister Edith Bogue at our annual Oblate Day retreat) and Rick Heiser, Bloomington, Ill., have been awarded the Grabill-Homan Community Peace Prize from the Illinois State University Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies Program. Toni was recognized for her decades of service to low-income families through Clare House, an organization she founded in 1978. Rick was recognized for his work in community building. For information on our Oblate program, visit www.smmsisters.org/oblates.



Sr. Margaret Suerth, 1932-2014

Sister Margaret (John Marie) Suerth, OSB died Saturday, Oct. 4 at the monastery. Margaret grew up in Chicago, attending Catholic grade school and Providence High School. She earned her BA from St. Scholastica College, Duluth, Minn., and a Masters Degree from the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Ind.

Sister Margaret entered the Benedictine community in August, 1950 and made her final profession as a Benedictine sister on August 25, 1955.

Her ministry included teaching at schools throughout the Peoria Diocese, outreach to the poor, work for social justice. In the 1990s she founded a homeless shelter in LaSalle/Peru (see story on page 5).



Sister Peggy was a warm, loving and kind woman. We miss her deeply.

Make Plans for your Winter or Spring Retreat

Refresh your spirit as you enter 2015! For more information about these retreats and others, contact Sister Jackie Walsh at (309) 283-2108 or retreats@smmsisters.org, or visit www.smmsisters.org/retreats.



Vocation Retreats for 22-50 year old Single Catholic Women

Retreats are scheduled throughout the year! Contact Sr. Stefanie at (309) 283-2300 or smacondald@smmsisters.org for information.

Silent Directed Retreat

You will receive personal time with a spiritual director. In addition to daily Eucharist, there will be opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Centering Prayer, rest and prayer with the Benedictines. Sun Jan 18, 4:00 pm - Wed Jan 21 4:00 pm

Valentine's Evening: Have Your Cake and Eat It, Too

How do we stay engaged after getting married? Come explore this question with your spouse. Facilitators: Krista and Matt Nixon and Marshall and Valerie Plumley. Fri Feb 13, 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm

Swift and Slow: The Ways of Conversion

Conversion can be sudden insight and renewed life as well as grey, slow days filled with tedious inner work. St. Benedict knew that both are necessary to bring forth conversion's full fruit. Come reflect on the dynamics of the mysterious and graced process. Presenter: Sr. Marianne Burkhard, OSB Sat Feb 21, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Men's Retreat: Finding God in our Daily Lives

Join with other men who want to deepen their faith and prayer life. Director: Fr. Mike Schaab, recently retired pastor of St. Pius X Church, Rock Island, STL, Catholic University of America, Doctor of Ministry Chicago Theological Seminary. Fri. Mar. 6, 7 pm-Sun. Mar. 8, 12 pm

For information and fees regarding these programs, or for a complete listing of fall retreats, contact Sr. Jackie Walsh, OSB at (309) 283-2108 or retreats@smmsisters.org, or visit www.smmsisters.org/retreats.



SMA News



Members of the Class of 1954 gathered at Benet House to celebrate their 60th anniversary on Oct. 10-12, 2014. Shown here, l-r: Sr. Margaret Murphy, Theresa Fleichsman St. Ledger, Barbara Steele Filson, Mary Cupp Castrey, Alice Cokel Clark, Sr. Mary Schmidt, Barbara Flaherty Jensen.

Members of the Class of 1955 enjoyed lunch and a visit on Aug. 19, 2014. They also did some planning for their 60th anniversary reunion in 2015. Shown l-r: Millie DeSplinter Powers-Carr, Sr. Marilyn Roman, Patricia Winters DeReu, Suzanne Martens Floming-Deskin, Alice Gavin Enderlin.



Members of the Class of 64 enjoyed a reunion. Shown here, front row, l-r: Marcie Foresman Coffman, Pat Brennan Gruber, Kate Kuhlman Murray, Kathy Houlihan Kenny (the one with glasses sticking her head between the others in the center), Mary Ann Beckman Murphy, Ann Kresbach Wilhelm, Rita Marie Watson, Maureen McHale Airsman; Back row: Carmelita Magsamen Walsh, Janice Wyffles Ralph, Sandy Grazino Zelinski, Margie Treat McKenzie, Paula Romanelli Brown.



The Class of 1962 enjoyed their 70th birthday parties together. Front row, l-r: Nancy Kelly Platt, Patti Layton Sederwall, Veronica Hecks Minnaert, Rosemary Carrol Ellinger; middle row: Carol Morris Fisher, Helen Ksycki Johnson, Peg Hemp Callahan, Mary Jane Miller Murphy, Pat Pearson Forsythe, Steve Staszak Drucker, Mary Megan Brinckerhoff; back row: Mary Ann Schreck Liggett, Janet Albert Cheek, Liz Goeke.



The Class of 1965 meets for the day at Starved Rock State Park every October. Front row, l-r: Patty Haas Hensen, Joy Schierer, Diana Cathelyn Dilitkanich, Sue Stickelmaier Schierer, Andy Abrams Corbett, Linda Sullivan Owens, Marie McHarry; back row: Sr. Marilyn Ring, Shirley Pecharich McElvain, Barb Glueckert Bryzgalski, Carolyn Cathelyn Van Opdorp, Mary Croegaert Buysse.

In Memoriam ...

Pat Stecher Bulfer, '68, died Oct. 22, 2014

Mary Jane Lyons Hasenberg, '55, died May 14, 2013

Norma Mitchell-Schwerdtfeger, '53 died May 16, 2014

Anna Jean Hoffman, '58 died Oct. 6, 2014

Ralph Grivetti, father of Theresa, '67 and Carol, '69, died in Oct. 2014

Martha Elena Sastrias, '58, mother of Martha Porcel, '84 died

Margaret Westfield, mother of Lisa Westfield, '76 died Aug. 13, 2014

Paul Cain, father of Chris Schmidgall, '67 died Aug. 13, 2014

Daughter of Monika Brenner, '81 died in a hit and run accident in 2014

Reunion Announcements

In Rock Island:

Class of 1953

September 18-20, 2015

Class of 1955

April 22-24, 2015

Class of 1957

August 14-16, 2015

Class of 1959

October 9-11, 2015

Class of 1963

July 24-26, 2015

Class of 1975

March 13-15, 2015

In Nauvoo:

Class of 1965

April 24-26, 2015

More information: Peggy Weber
Siegfried (309) 221-3488

Connecting
Point

Autumn/Winter 2014/15

Published three times a year by
the Benedictine Sisters of St. Mary
Monastery, Rock Island, IL 61201
Phone: 309-283-2100
Fax: 309-283-2200

Editor
Susan Flansburg
sflansburgpr@smmsisters.org
www.smmsisters.org



Sisters of St. Benedict

St. Mary Monastery
2200 88th Avenue West
Rock Island, IL 61201-7649
309-283-2100 • 309-283-2200 FAX
www.smmsisters.org

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #29
Rock Island, IL

Return Service Requested

Blessing (cont'd. from page 7)

another are wonderful blessing components, Rolheiser says, but to bless someone fully is to give up some of our life for her or him.

You've done it. You've stepped back, allowing the child to become her or himself without claiming credit. You've perhaps done the same as a coach, a mentor or a friend.



Sister Mary Core shares the Christmas village she created with Sister Stefanie MacDonald's preschoolers.

And if you haven't, you may be struggling with not having been blessed by your own parents, teachers or coaches as you were growing up. Indeed, you may be struggling with a kind of daily, dull and joyless existence that might be called depression.

Lifting the Blanket of Depression

As Sr. Marilyn notes, a blessing is a shared experience; that is, to bless another is to receive a blessing yourself. And blessings bring joy, banishing depression.

When we bless others, Rolheiser says we lift "a huge depression from our own hearts – because when we act like God, we get to feel like God."

Today, the tradition of the Benedictine August farewell blessing has been relegated to the archives. Nearly all of the Sisters work near enough to home to return every night for Vespers and dinner. Yet blessings abound.

"We still ask for a blessing from the prioress before we travel," Sr. Marilyn says.

"And we bless one another throughout the day. Every morning after Lauds as the young Sisters leave for their ministries I pray that they have a good day, that God's blessings shower down upon them. I pray that God blesses the Sisters in healthcare with peace and comfort."