



Tidings

BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF ANNUNCIATION MONASTERY

FALL/WINTER 2015

www.annunciationmonastery.org

Sister Idelle Badt Makes First Monastic Profession

"I have come not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me." John 6:38

On August 16 the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery received Idelle Badt into the next stage of religious formation—First Monastic Profession. Idelle completed her novitiate year of becoming more deeply immersed in the monastic life of the sisters and the rich Benedictine tradition of St. Benedict. She is now called Sister Idelle.

Idelle grew up in Savage, MT. She is one of three daughters born to Clydette Boyer

(Williston, ND) and Robert Badt (Savage, MT). Idelle shares, "I had the same childhood experiences as most people. I dated and did the normal teenage things. I certainly didn't consider myself sister material. My family didn't have a lot of connections to sisters; in fact, we were kind of Christmas and Easter church people."

Idelle earned a bachelor's degree in vocal performance from Dickinson State University. After graduating, she was offered an opportunity to move to New York to be a nanny for a year — an experience that confirmed she is a true caregiver at heart. She worked as grant



Sister Idelle signs the profession document with Sister Nancy Miller, prioress.

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MESSAGE FROM THE

Prioress

Autumn greetings from all of us at Annunciation Monastery!

Where do the months go? In my last column, we were recovering from a prairie fire that left us grateful that nobody was hurt and the homes and buildings in its path were spared. And now it is fall—a chill in the air and the scattering leaves in the wind remind us that winter is not far away.

I've been reflecting on time, how it flies and how to use it wisely and gratefully. "Where did the time go?" "I don't have time..." "Do you have time to...?" These words are commonly heard among our sisters, our staff, and probably have come out of your own mouths. I know they have come out of mine. So much of our lives is focused on time. In fact, sometimes I waste time thinking about how I don't have time!

And the fact is time is irreplaceable. When it's gone, it's gone. Our monastic life of prayer, community and service helps us remember how to prioritize our time. With prayer three times every day, we are called to pull ourselves away from the busyness of the day and be in God's presence, with intention. Monastics have done this for centuries and I expect it will continue for centuries to come. God calls women to religious life, to this life of prayer still today.

Idelle Badt became "Sister Idelle" when she made her first monastic profession on August 16th. Maria Huber was received as a postulant

on August 30th. You will learn more about both of them in this issue of Tidings. Each of these women listened to where God was calling them after spending time with our sisters. It takes time to get to know our sisters, our mission and values, and to learn about life in a monastic community. It takes time to know God too! This process of formation allows adequate time for women to move to each stage of their journey to becoming a sister with greater confidence that they are on the right path. It is a patient journey. We're grateful for these women who trusted enough to follow the path that God was leading.

Thank you, dear friends, for your time. We are truly grateful for you, our friends, who help us carry the mission of Jesus into the future. You give of your time, talent and treasure to our sisters. And we are full of gratitude.

Sister Nancy Miller, OSB

administrator for Trenton Indian Service Area near Williston where she ran a youth program and discovered her gift for writing grants. Turning community problems into solutions inspired her to explore opportunities to make a difference.

Idelle moved to Sidney, MT, and worked for Richland County Health Department as Retired and Senior Volunteer Program director. "This was my favorite job ever," she explained. "I wrote grants and was a liaison for all of the programs for the elderly. I just love, love, love working with the elderly."

Idelle got involved with music at her parish and participated in Taizé prayer services. When a friend invited her to a Cum Christo weekend, it would become a turning point in her life. "One of the sisters talked about her vocation and she



"After my first visit, everyone at work could tell there was something different about me...I was drawn to this place; it just felt like *home*."

kept pointing at me, saying, 'You are going to be a nun.' People teased me about this, but I kept thinking, 'How does she know?' I had actually been thinking about it for several years but hadn't told anyone."

Intrigued by the thought that God might be calling her to religious life, Idelle began spiritual direction with a sister who encouraged her to journal about her thoughts and the pros and cons of becoming a sister. Idelle was also encouraged to visit different religious communities to experience the prayer and daily life of the sisters. After visiting Annunciation Monastery, Idelle felt she had to look no further. "After my first visit, everyone at work could tell there was something different about me. I wanted to go back to Annunciation Monastery. It's hard to explain how I was drawn to this place; it just felt like home."

Now, having made her First Monastic Profession, Sister Idelle reflects on what she has learned over the past year.

Eucharist

"The meaning of receiving Eucharist changed me. It was transformational. I have realized Church is not a building, it's ME when I leave the church. When I leave, I am literally the Body of Christ. What a gift we have in the Eucharist!"

Rule of St. Benedict

"Everyone is welcomed and treated as Christ at Annunciation Monastery. Your background doesn't matter when you walk through the door. Love abides here, no matter who you are. We are all equals."

Common Life

"To me, living in community is similar to a good marriage. We share common goods, we relate to one another on a deep level. We talk of things that are important and we care for each other."

Prayer

"Praying with the sisters grounds me every day and brings peace and a sense of stability."

Story continues on next page

Care of the Sick

“The care of the sick and elderly is what really stands out to me. This is where I feel my strength lies. I feel called to help others when they need me.”

Humility

“One of the themes for my first profession is the second step of humility from the Rule of Benedict. It reminds us to love not our own will nor take pleasure in the satisfaction of our desires. It is easy to become caught up in what we want for ourselves, but it is far more important to follow what God wants. I am also called to be obedient to the prioress of Annunciation Monastery and my monastic community. This requires surrender.”

Life

“I started out setting life goals like, ‘If I make this much money, or get this position or title, I will be successful and happy.’ Then I reached those goals and I still felt something was missing. When I became completely open to where God was leading me, things really started to fall into place. I have learned a lot about myself over the past year. I’m peaceful in the knowledge I am called to this life. I now see my life as an action. It’s how I treat people. I don’t want to have to tell people I’m a sister. I’d rather have them tell by the way I treat others, by how I am present to them on a deeper level. I didn’t choose this life—it was divine intervention!”

Music

“My first degree is in music. I feel blessed to share my gift with my monastic community in prayer and at events. I learned to play the ukulele and mandolin this past year. It is nothing for me to bring my ukulele into a sister’s room and play and sing with her. Sometimes I go to the sisters’ cemetery and bring the mandolin. I sit and play for the sisters.”

Sister Idelle is now a student at the University of Mary and is considering social work. She says, “This is my ‘other’ call. I’ve always been a caregiver to the elderly. I feel like it’s my mission to be family for people who may not have family to care for them.”

Sister Nancy Miller, prioress of Annunciation Monastery, reflected on the theme of Sister Idelle’s profession day—I come to do Your will. “In the monastic life, we strive for this surrender to God’s will. As a result, we can grow in a loving relationship with Jesus and with others. We seek God as we live in community and we pray that we will know God’s will for us. As a member of this community which Benedict calls the school of the Lord’s service, Sister Idelle will discern the wisdom of Benedict: to seek God, who first seeks us.”

May God bless Sister Idelle and all who listen and respond to God's call!



Sister Idelle celebrates with her parents, Clydette Boyer and Robert Baddt.

Living with Gratitude!

God – When God is first in our lives, the rest falls into place. Everything in God's time, with confidence in God's plan.

Rejoice – Try to rejoice in the small things in life, not just the big things. Recognize the goodness in each day and see it as a gift from God who loves you.

Attention – Pay attention to others who need you. How is God asking you to help someone today?

Thanksgiving – A spirit of thanksgiving leads to a life of gratitude. Gratitude attracts blessings!

Interest – Be interested in life! You only have one! Make a commitment to being a lifelong learner. Be interested in others; they can probably teach you a thing or two.

Time – Our time is the best thing we can offer to those in need, as well as to ourselves. Time with God. Time with family. Time for self. Time with friends.

Understanding – Offer understanding and patience instead of judgement and impatience.

Devotion – Be devoted to attending worship and to personal prayer. Strive to be a devoted friend, spouse, parent, sibling, child. Adhere to God's Word and commandments.

Empathy – Allow yourself to walk in another's footsteps, acknowledging each person has a journey. Be the ear that listens, the shoulder to lean on, the voice of encouragement.

"I Always Wanted to Be a Saint"

Even as a little girl, Maria Huber loved learning about the saints. Their deep faith, perseverance and courage was interesting and mysterious to her. "In fact," she says, "I always wanted to be a saint." As a student in high school and in college, she observed these similar qualities in the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery.

Maria recalls walking to the front door of the monastery on August 30, and experiencing such joy and peace about "finally" becoming a postulant of Annunciation Monastery. As a postulant, Maria moved to the monastery to participate more fully in the life of the sisters. She was welcomed by Prioress Sister Nancy Miller and Subprioress Sister JoAnn Krebsbach, as well as the entire monastic community.

Maria was born and raised in Strasburg, ND, where her parents, Marvin and Leona and family live. She has three sisters, three brothers and a new sister-in-law. Her family prayed together regularly, often saying the rosary especially during difficult times or as a travel prayer prior to long trips. "Maybe this is part of the reason I do better praying the rosary in a group setting," she says. She has also found journaling to be a helpful way for her to talk to God.

As a seventh grader, Maria attended her first live-in retreat at Annunciation Monastery with friends. She attended another retreat the following year. As the years went on, and she attended the University of Mary, Maria developed deep friendships with the sisters.

Prioress Sister Nancy Miller reads from the Rule of St. Benedict on the day Maria Huber was received as postulant.



During her sophomore year in college, Maria was working at Badlands Ministries and realized she had a burning desire to become a sister. She says an experience at the Thirst conference further ignited that desire.

Cautiously, she felt the need to slow down, step back and really focus on whether God was calling her to religious life. She admits not feeling qualified to be a sister. "My sister wrote me a care power letter at a Search retreat; it really encouraged me. She saw qualities in me that made her think I could be a sister." Maria feels her parents may have seen a religious vocation in her but wanted her to find her own way.

After graduating from the University of Mary, Maria lived in an apartment in Bismarck and worked as a pre-K instructional aide at St. Anne's School, a position she still holds. She sought out opportunities to pray with the sisters and attend monastic events. Maria became an affiliate, the first step of discernment.

After her affiliate year, she expressed her desire to become a postulant to her affiliate director, Sister

JoAnn Krebsbach. She completed the necessary paperwork to seek acceptance to become a postulant. The paperwork helps the discernor as well as the monastic community to reflect on her readiness to proceed. Once accepted, Maria began to give away possessions that she would no longer need after moving to the monastery. Donating her furniture and other household items to a good cause, Ministry on the Margins, helped her feel better about letting those material things go.

"I could feel the excitement and genuine support of the sisters. I look forward to the future with the Sisters of Annunciation Monastery."

On August 30, the sisters gathered in anticipation of Maria's knock on the monastery door, a Benedictine tradition dating back to the times of Saint Benedict. After expressing her desire to seek God with the Sisters of Annunciation Monastery, she was welcomed warmly and given monastery prayer books and a Benedictine medal. She was shown her place in chapel as well as her bedroom at the monastery.

"I felt so happy and ready for this next step," says Maria. "I could feel the excitement and genuine support of the sisters. I look forward to the future with the Sisters of Annunciation Monastery."



Maria loves helping the students at St. Anne's School with art projects and delights in seeing them progress through the school year as they learn new skills. In her free time, Maria enjoys cooking with Sister Hannah Vanorny, making her own art, watching movies and finding fun craft projects on Pinterest for her young students.

Restoring Art Requires Blood,



Tom Berger and Linda Schadewald (with Sisters Gemma Peters and JoAnn Krebsbach) with the newly restored “Sacred Heart of Jesus” and “Woman from India” paintings.



Sweat, and Heart!

The late Sister Michael Kaliher probably didn't realize when she painted her "Sacred Heart of Jesus," in 1967, that it would be one of the most treasured paintings in the monastery. The vivid colors, captivating eyes and expressive features of Jesus have adorned the wall near the chapel for a long time. Noting a rip in the canvas, Sister Nancy Miller asked Sisters JoAnn Krebsbach and Gemma Peters to contact local artist, Linda Schadewald, to ask if she knew anyone who could professionally restore it, and another of Sister Michael's paintings of a woman from India.

Linda consulted with her brother, Tom Berger, who is also an artist. They did some research and determined it would cost a virtual fortune to have these paintings professionally restored. Linda and Tom felt challenged by the project and thought of their late sister, the beloved Sister Susan Berger, former prioress of Annunciation Monastery and an artist in her own right. They knew Sister Susan would be happy if they tried to restore the paintings.

In their research, they had the good fortune of finding Gainsborough Products, LLC, and a professional art restorer from the company who advised them in the delicate process. Linda and Tom realized this would be no easy task after they each read a large manual that offered a few different processes that "might" work.

"These are phenomenal paintings," says Linda. "Once we started investigating, we were hooked on doing the process. It was



Sister Michael Kaliher's art can be found throughout Annunciation Monastery.

an opportunity to learn something and we knew we wanted to do it for our sister, Susan, and the Sisters of Annunciation Monastery. We weren't sure it would work so we told the sisters up front that in the process of restoration, we could potentially destroy it." Tom adds, "We wanted to be sure to preserve everything we could so it would look exactly the same as when Sister Michael painted it. Art is magic and you don't want to lose it. We met Sister Michael when we were very young and have always admired her work."

The restoration of the painting of the Indian woman worked like textbook. It was painted with oil paints on a canvas that seemed to be from an old army tent. Both Linda and Tom agree that Sister Michael likely saw a fabric surface she could paint on and that's what she

"Art enables us to *find* ourselves and *lose* ourselves at the same time."

—Thomas Merton

used. To their great relief, the materials used in the multi-step process adhered beautifully to the original canvas.

However, relief faded into frustration with the Sacred Heart painting. Multiple tears were discovered throughout the painting and the materials weren't bonding to the original canvas. It wasn't until they were well into the process that they determined the original canvas was not canvas at all, but oil cloth. The oil was resisting the materials they were using to repair it. "I would often pray to Sister Michael, 'Could you give us a little help here?'" admits Linda. Even the professional art restorer was challenged. Through trial and error and many exasperating hours in a well-ventilated garage to clear toxic fumes, they finally completed the process of bonding the canvases to close rips and imperfections, and matched oil paints to repaint the surfaces. They estimate 150-200 hours of work went into the process. Tom constructed a gorgeous

**"Every artist dips
his brush in his own *soul*
and paints his own *nature*
into his pictures."**

-Henry Ward Beecher

frame for the finishing touch. Linda and Tom photographed and documented the entire process, so, if someone else tries to restore the paintings in the future, they will know what materials were used in the past and avoid roadblocks with the oil cloth.

"We are so grateful that Linda and Tom cared enough about Sister Michael's art and the sisters to do this work for us," says Sister JoAnn Krebsbach, subprioress. "We have a feeling that Sister Susan Berger and Sister Michael Kaliher are both happy that our sisters and guests will enjoy these paintings for many years to come."



Each step of the process was photographed and well-documented for historic purposes.



Endowments Benefit You and Our Mission

A. An endowment allows a donor to donate a gift of \$5,000.00 or more to an endowment/savings account of the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery. Those funds stay in this account indefinitely as principal. The interest may be designated to a mutually agreed-upon ministry of the sisters. Businesses and corporations are also eligible for the North Dakota tax credit for endowed gifts of \$5,000.00 or more.

B. At this time, donors are eligible to receive the North Dakota tax credit. For a donation of \$10,000.00, a donor can receive a tax credit of \$4,000.00. There is a maximum tax credit benefit of \$10,000.00 per individual, \$20,000.00 per married couple.

For more information on endowed gifts, please contact Brian Lardy, director of finance at 701-355-8904.

Sister Thomas Speaks to the Westerners



Sister Thomas Welder spent an afternoon sharing the rich history of Benedictine Sisters in North Dakota with the Fort Abraham Lincoln Corral group known as the “Westerners”. This interesting and diverse group has corrals, or posses, of people throughout the United States who gather to “chomp and chat” and enjoy a program about an aspect of the American West. Well, in our opinion, there’s nothing more American than the early pioneer sisters who came to settle in Dakota Territory in 1878.

Sister Thomas was invited to speak about the history of the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery who changed the landscape of Dakota Territory with their courageous spirit, starting healthcare and education on the wild prairies.

Thank you to the Westerners for the kind invitation to share stories of mission and ministry on the prairies.

Textile Art Tells Stories *by Sister Nancy Gunderson*

I was recently honored with a professional development award to cover the cost of studying culturally-engaged forms of textile art for a week with nationally known artist Susan Shie in Wooster, Ohio. Susan is a textile artist known for expressing social activism through her quilts. Susan features events from the news and people who emerge as contributors to society such as Nelson Mandela, Pope Francis, and the Dali Lama. I am enjoying the fruits of my time with Susan and am creating story quilts, something I hope to teach students in the future. This is an exciting time!

The University of Mary is considering offering an art minor in the future. Because of the rootedness and stability at the heart of the Benedictine tradition, this kind of program should reflect the nature of who we are and where we are at — the beautiful plains of North Dakota — as much as it reflects the classical tradition of that subject. To bolster the possibilities of that minor, I was approached to teach a course in textile/folk art to supplement the classical art history experience and invite students to consider art as a living process for reflecting on their own families, communities and traditions. This will be a unique offering where students study American folk art and learn a number of skills to create a story/diary quilt by drawing, painting, writing on cloth and completing their work using traditional and contemporary quilting techniques.

When I came to Annunciation Monastery, our then prioress Sister Susan Berger encouraged me to apply for a Bush Grant that allowed me to study textile art from some of the nation's most accomplished textile artists. Our current prioress Sister Nancy Miller has allowed me to participate in some wonderful learning experiences that have expanded art horizons for me and which have now led to this opportunity to teach textile/folk art. Given the long-standing relationship between the Monastery and the University, I am excited to bring this one-of-a-kind offering to the University of Mary in the fall of 2016.



Sister Nancy teaches Introduction to Christian Ethics, Mary in Church and Culture, and Virtue and Character, at the University of Mary. To celebrate the historic visit of Pope Francis to the United States, Sister Nancy created this art quilt which contains excerpts from the Pope's speeches to Congress, the United Nations and at Independence Hall. Quotes from the synod on the family are woven throughout. The skyline contains quotes from people on the streets.

Sister Snapshots



"A Joyful Spirit" retreat for girls, was a huge success this year. Special thanks to Karen and the late Dwight Kautzmann, for sponsoring this camp. Their generosity allowed us to provide t-shirts, treat bags and prizes to these wonderful girls.



After 15 years of wear and tear, new carpet was installed in the monastery gathering space and around the chapel. Sister Margaret Nelson (seated) and Sisters Madonna Wagendorf and JoAnn Krebsbach are happy with the progress and think Marcel Breuer would approve of the "Breuer blue!"



Candace Simar was welcomed as an Oblate of Annunciation Monastery on October 4 during Eucharistic celebration. Candace Simar is a well-known writer and poet from Pequot Lakes, MN.



Pictured: Sister Rosemary DeGracia (assistant oblate director), Sister Patricia Schap (oblate director), Sister Nancy Miller (prioress) with Candace and Keith Simar.

Sister Snapshots



Sisters Denise Ressler and Ruth Margaret Karabensch are two faces of Benedictine hospitality at the front desk.



Sister Agatha Muggli, and other sisters, take turns helping out in the kitchen and washing dishes.



Kathryn, our Benedictine volunteer, helps Sister Madonna Wagendorf cut fresh garden beans.



Sisters Lawrence Fischer and Janet Zander serve coffee and smiles!



Sister Terence Glum helps with many assorted projects.



Our cooks, Monika Cox, Sister Idelle Badt and Sister Hildegarde Urlacher are making all kinds of delicious dishes with these giant squash from our friends, Anita and Tom Decker. Thank you to all of our friends who share their garden harvest with us! We are very grateful!

Sister Elizabeth Novy, 99, enjoys her daily walk. Her advice for a long life? "Keep moving!"



Sisters Rosemary and Rosanne and several other sisters discussed the joy of living consecrated life on Real Presence Radio this summer.

We are grateful for our nurses, Sisters Joseph Dukart, Donna Johnson and Gerard Wald for their care and attention to the sisters in the monastery assisted-living area. Seated is Sister Jeanette Hinds.



Sister Nicole Kunze relaxes after a day of teaching chemistry at the University of Mary.

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God Bless Our Donors!

Thanks to the generosity of our faithful friends and family, we are able to carry our mission and ministries into the future. Your gifts help advance the offerings in our Hospitality Center (used to house guests, hold retreats and offer meeting space). They also help us promote vocations, so we can encourage women to follow God's promptings to religious life. Our retired sisters benefit from your gifts, as they no longer earn a salary. These may be some of the sisters who have taught you or your children in school or vacation Bible school. Donations are also directed to our efforts in promoting God's healing and teaching mission in our sponsored ministries. We can't thank you enough. Please know of our daily prayers of gratitude for your generous support.

