

PO Box 1040, Abiquiu, NM 87510 USA

### Summer Drawing

We will have a Summer Drawing for a chance to win a 3-piece set of pierced pearl earrings, 18" string of pearls and a pearl ring, valued at \$200.00, donated by a dear friend of the monastery. The funds of this raffle will go to the education of our sisters, which is vital to our monastic life. Sister Hilda Tuyuc will be attending a course study from the Novice and Director Institute, May 8-22, 2008, sponsored by the American Benedictine Formation Conference. We have applied for a scholarship to help pay for the \$900, fee only. Sister Mary Fisher will be traveling to Africa to assist with the set-up of an ESL (English as a Second Language) program and at the same time learn how to teach ESL. (see last page.) The Monastic Institute at St. John's, School of Theology is offering a course on "Do As I have Done," (Jn 13:15): Authority and Obedience in Community, June 29-July 3, 2008. A single registration fee is \$500. We are suggesting a donation of \$5.00 per ticket. Please note tickets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> page. The winner of the pearl set will be raffled on the Feast of **St. Benedict, July 11, 2008.** Thank you for your gift to help us continue educating our sisters!



### From Our Prioress

"Easter is the season of celebration and joy. It marks the central mystery of our faith, that Jesus who died truly lives again as Risen Lord." (Scripture in Church, Helen Doohan) The gift of faith is what allows us to celebrate our Risen Lord with Easter Joy. Though this year death has a hold on me, "O death where is your sting?" I was feeling the sting. Just as we began the celebration of Easter we received word asking for prayers for a young man who committed suicide. Our hearts and prayers go out to all those who carry this cross. This year is the 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the death of Sarah, who was killed by a drunk driver and "only" 50 years old, too young to die. Lloyd, who died of AIDS, the side effects from the medication he had been taking for years to control the AIDS turned on him. Daily we pray for our young women and men who have died in Iraq fighting for freedom. I'm sure each of you can add to the list that challenges our beliefs in the Risen One. In spite of the sorrow of death, faith has taught me to trust in God even when I don't feel like it. The God we serve is a God of Love.

Alleluia! He is  
Risen, He is truly  
risen!

O death, where  
is your sting?  
1 Cor 15:50-58

As I await Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit, I dutifully turn to the Word of God. Daily chanting of the psalms and Lectio for 18 years as a Benedictine nun has shown me this is the place to find God and the strength I need to continue the journey of faith. Vespers for Holy Saturday, Antiphon 1: *Today I am greatly afflicted, but tomorrow I shall break my bonds.*

#### Psalm 115/116

*I trusted even when I said: "I am sorely afflicted." And when I said in my alarm: "There is no one I can trust." How can I repay the Lord For his goodness to me? The cup of salvation I will raise; I will call on the Lord's name. My vows to the Lord I will fulfill before all his people. O precious in the Eyes of the Lord is the death of his faithful.*

*Your servant, Lord, your servant am I; You have loosened my bonds A thanksgiving sacrifice I make; I will call on the Lord's name. My vows to the Lord I will fulfill before all his people. In the courts of the house of the Lord, in your midst, O Jerusalem.*

These words help me to live the life of faith. It is a daily struggle to be "his faithful one" as this psalm says. It is a dieing to self, some days I do better than others.

The psalms do not take the pain and sorrow away but they help me to live with hope for tomorrow and in our God who loves with a Tough Love. As we chant the psalms of the Divine Office we lift each of you to God. Please join us in prayer for all our faithful and not so faithful brothers and sisters who have gone on before us and for those who mourn their passing.

May the Resurrection of our Lord fill your hearts with Easter hope and faith. And by the way, "O death where is your sting?" I quoted out of context but I'll let you look that one up! (1 Cor 15: 50-58)

*Mother Mary Benedicta Serna, OSB*

Mother Mary Benedicta Serna, OSB

## Study of the RB by Sister Kateri

As most of you know, I attended an intensive study on the Rule of St. Benedict in Rome, from January 2 – February 28, 2008, given by Sr. Dr. Aquinata Böckmann OSB, and Sister Pauline Trivino, OSB. The course was hosted by the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing. There were morning conferences and study groups in the afternoon. The course was very challenging. St. Benedict has become more alive to me, and, now I appreciate how much Scripture is rooted in the Rule. I will share with the

community that a Rule written in 480 AD can still be significant today! Also, I learned ways of teaching the Rule of St. Benedict with more textual tools. I especially enjoyed meeting other Benedictines from the USA and throughout the world, such as Africa, Australia, Bulgaria, Germany, Israel, Korea and the Philippines. There were class excursions to Subiaco and Monte Cassino. My favorite group excursion was to Nursia, the birth place of Saints Scholastica and Benedict. I hope that other sisters will have the opportunity to attend this course.

A special thank you to my family and friends that made this possible!

This portrait of St. Benedict was in our classroom.



Fresco of St. Scholastica in a church near Nursia

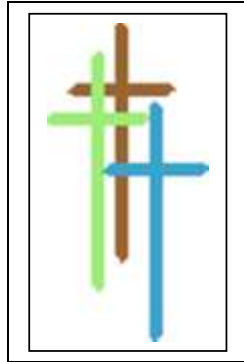


Front row from the left, second and third are Sister Pauline Trivino and Sr. Dr. Aquinata Backmann and the students from the INTENSIVE STUDY OF THE HOLY RULE AND DIALOGUES, JAN 2- FEB 28, 2008. Sister Kateri thanks all the participants for making this course study an unforgettable and enriching experience of the Rule!

## Journey of Trust Update

We have exciting news to share with you! On Saturday, April 19, 2008, we had the Lay Advisory Board Meeting at Santa Rose of Lima Church, in Blanco, NM, regarding our move to Gobernador, NM. Mother Mary Benedicta Serna reported that she and Mother Julianne Allen had a very welcoming and encouraging visit with Bishop Thomas Olmsted and Sister Mary Mathias Ward, Vicar of Religious for the Gallup Diocese. Corine Trujillo, Chair of the Grant Committee, reported on the eight proposals she and Sister Kateri Lovato have been researching and writing.

Our goal is to be in Gobernador this summer! With this funding it will be possible. Please visit our website for updates on our Journey of Trust. Pray with us in thanksgiving to Saint Joseph for his overwhelming care for us and all our needs. Thank you for all your support, love and prayers.



Crucifix in our Chapel.  
Picture taken by  
Robin C. Rupe

Community picture celebrating Spring. No more coats, gloves, sweaters. Mother Julianne and Sister Hilda not present. Picture by Dian Searles.





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Several books on Lectio Divina are available, such as Thelma Hall's "Too Deep for Words." Until the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the majority of books gave four "stages" or "steps" of Lectio:

1. Lectio: Reading and listening to the Word of God.
2. Meditatio – Reflecting on the Word of God
3. Oratio: The Word of God speaks to our hearts and we respond
4. Contemplatio: Entering the silence that is "Too Deep for Words"

In the first three steps we are very active reading, meditating, praying, but then, we come to a place in which we can't make ourselves go on. Thelma Hall, in her

book says, "For while we are moving toward God who is Light, our experience seems to contradict this when a kind of darkness or "night" comes upon us, and our path becomes obscure." This 4<sup>th</sup> step is a GIFT from God we can not achieve by our own works.

Today a 5<sup>th</sup> step is often added called "evangelatio." This may be an inspiration to action with RCIA, CCD, serve at a soup kitchen, start a Bible study group, etc.

These stages may occur one at a time or one may go from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup>. The Holy Spirit is our guide and it is important to listen to His "silent voice." Other times we may find ourselves "not getting anything" out of our reading. That's also a part of God's plan. We still continue everyday spending those 15 minutes or more reading God's word

and letting God speak to our hearts in his own way and time. During this past Lent and now in the Easter Season the Scriptures are very rich for *Lectio*. Pentecost is coming and I encourage you to spend time reading the Scriptures in preparation of Pentecost. The Gospel for the Mass of the day is John 20:19-23.

Find a quiet place where you can be alone for ten or fifteen minutes, slowly read these five verses, then sit quietly with them. A particular word or phrase may catch your attention. Keep repeating it. Thoughts may move forward to a deeper meaning or you may question, "Why does this particular Scripture jump out at me?" After two or three minutes, "slowly" read those five verses again. Perhaps that same word or phrase draws you or another phrase

clamors for your attention.

We need to be attentive to it, chewing on it for a few minutes and asking, "What might Jesus be trying to tell me through these words?" What thoughts are going through your mind?

Then once again slowly read these verses. This time you might ask, "What is Jesus asking me to do in my life?" After spending a few minutes with this you may be drawn into prayer for yourself, family member(s), co-worker(s), etc. Or you may just want to sit in silence in thanksgiving, love, and peace. The Holy Spirit will guide you. May this Pentecost bring you an abundance of God's wisdom, peace and joy!

## Sister Mary's Hope in Christ

In 2006 I went to Rome for the Monastic Formator's' Program. It was a marvelous experience that has helped me in teaching the Novices. During this program, I had the opportunity of meeting people from all over the world. Participants from Africa and one of them, Fr. Josaphat Twamba, is a Benedictine monk, from Mvimwa Abbey, Sumbawanga, a very poor area in the western bush country of Tanzania. They are in need of an English teacher for their school. Without English most students do not get past grade seven. For two years I have been praying and researching and finally I was introduced to Ann, who teaches English as a second language to children and has taught several children newly arrived from Africa and is making plans to go to Sumbawanga. Ann and I will be going to Africa for 3 weeks. Ann will assess the educational needs and will also give training classes to the teachers who speak some English. She hopes to return to Mvimwa Abbey School when she retires. We have found foundations and individuals to help with supplies, teaching tools, and electronic school needs. These children will be better prepared to secure meaningful work as well as encouraging peace in our world. The flight is \$2,500 for the round trip. The Mvimwa Abbey is 700 miles from the airport. The Abbey will take care of all our expenses once we get to Sumbawanga.

Thank you for considering this project. I appreciate your support and prayers for the success of this much needed endeavor.  
Fr. Josaphat and I hold you and your needs in prayer.

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[www.ourladyofthedesert.org](http://www.ourladyofthedesert.org)

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