

# TIDINGS

## Saint Bede Monastery and Center

A Newsletter from The Sisters of Saint Benedict  
VOL.14 NO.3

Eau Claire, Wisconsin  
FALL 2001

## Teachers' Summer Preparations Will Serve Elementary Grades Well

### Five Benedictine Teachers and Librarian Welcome New School Year

Though fewer Saint Bede sisters are in the classrooms, the Benedictine teaching ministry continues to serve Catholic and public schools in the Chippewa Valley. Collectively, the five grade school teachers and librarian featured here have more than 145 years of educating children.

Energized with summer courses, workshops and private studies (see *Reaching Out*), the sisters are eager for those special moments with their elementary school classes and school colleagues as a new school year unfolds. Following are some thoughts on teaching by **Sisters Bernard Heit, Marjorie Hill, Mary Maves, Lucy Miller, Therese Roth** and **Karen Streveler**.

**Tidings** – *What is memorable about your summer course, "Creating More Peaceful and Productive Classrooms," program taught by Dr. Corwin Kronenberg of the University of St. Thomas and Dr. Betsy Geddes, Portland, Ore. ?*



Sister Bernard Heit

"Dr. Kronenberg gave us goals of love and logic, strategies for bonding with children and ways of empowering students," said Sister Bernard, a first grade teacher at St. Mary's School in Altoona." He stressed the importance of sharing the thinking, sharing power, maintaining self-concept and giving consequences with empathy." Dr. Geddes, she added, stressed the basic needs of children - inclusion in the group, control over some decisions, a

desire to be liked and the ability to do the work.

"It was fun and motivational," said Sister Mary Maves, who was among some 300 Catholic and public school teachers who participated. "What makes the course so much fun is feeling affirmed - learning things that I am already doing." A fourth grade teacher at St. Olaf School, she described Kronenberg as a professor who "knows the sisters well" and is a font of ideas "for getting the most out of kids."

**Tidings** – *Aside from religion classes, what's special about Catholic schools today?*



Sister Mary Maves

"We are able to share our Catholic values throughout the day and not just in our religion classes," said Sister Karen Streveler, who teaches third graders at Immaculate Conception (IC) School. "These values help create a very caring and positive learning atmosphere."

Sister Marjorie Hill, who teaches fifth graders at IC, put it this way: "Catholic schools provide a Christian atmosphere of reverence, respect and responsibility where good values are stressed and students learn how to translate these values into virtues."

A similar comment came from Sister Therese, part-time librarian at St. Mary's in Altoona. Her career includes service as teacher, principal, supervisor, college department head and librarian. Along with the standard subjects, she said, "we teach responsibility and are able to integrate religion in every area of the curriculum."

**Tidings** – *Describe a satisfying moment in dealing with young learners, and perhaps a challenge in "reaching" your pupils.*



Sister Karen Streveler

Like her Saint Bede colleagues, Sister Lucy Miller has a rich teaching experience in Catholic schools. Her last assignment was at St. Francis School in Ellsworth. Today she substitute teaches in the Eau Claire Catholic and Public School systems.

"When young children learn to read," she said, describing a day brightener, "they sit so proud with their favorite books and their faces light up with their sense of

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**Sister Margaret Michaud, OSB  
Prioress**

## TIDINGS

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# MONASTIC MUSINGS

— Sister Margaret Michaud, OSB

Twice a year our monastic community gathers for what we call our "chapter" meetings. In ancient and medieval times Benedictine communities held these gatherings daily. They always began with the reading of a chapter from the Rule of St. Benedict, hence the name "chapter." The abbot or abbess would give a spiritual exhortation, daily tasks were assigned to community members, and those who had committed offenses against the smooth running of the house asked for forgiveness. Occasionally important matters, such as the reception of a new applicant into the monastery or key issues regarding the work and worship of the community, were brought before the group.

St. Benedict outlines the procedure to be used when the community gathers to make decisions about their life together. In Chapter 3 of the Rule he writes, "As often as anything important is to be done in the monastery, the abbot shall call the whole community together." All the members are gathered; all are asked to share their insights; all are required to listen to one another with open hearts and minds. The abbot listens and brings the matter to a decision.

We, here at Saint Bede Monastery, don't meet as often as the ancients did. But we try to follow the Rule's process for decision-making. Every sister who has been perpetually professed is a member of the chapter. This means that she has the right and the duty to attend the meeting and to speak her truth regarding the matters to be discussed. When decisions are to be made, we strive to gather all the relevant data. We pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance. We try to look at all sides of the issue and to reverently hear the insights of everyone. Often we have differing views and in honesty express them. Sometimes we recognize that we are not ready to make a decision. In those instances we return to prayer, reflection and further discussion.

This method of decision-making is not the most efficient. It is time-consuming and demands patience and discipline. It requires us to listen and to speak with sincerity and respect. It is based upon the conviction that the Holy Spirit dwells in each of us. When we can share our Spirit-given insights with one another, our decisions are better for all of us.

We recommend the Rule's teaching to any group in the process of making decisions. The efforts to pray for guidance, gather information, listen to all sides of the issue, share the insights of all, and take time to reach a conclusion bear fruit. The ancient wisdom of the Rule of St. Benedict once again is shown to have timeless value.

## In Loving Memory

*Sister Alicene Tucker, 104, died May 26 at The Clairemont in Eau Claire. She was teacher, archivist, historian and author of "Benedictines in Altoona." A funeral Mass in Saint Bede Chapel, was followed by burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery. As she remembered others with acts of kindness and prayer in life, please keep Sister Alicene in your hearts and prayers.*



## REACHING OUT

— Sister Dale Wollum, OSB

# Two Visiting Benedictines Lead Saint Bede Retreat

Two Benedictine Sisters from St. Benedict Monastery in St. Joseph, Minn., conducted the annual retreat on "The Psalms" for 24 Saint Bede sisters from June 17-22. **Sister Theresa Schumacher** provided practical insight in the understanding of many psalms which constitute a major portion of the Liturgy of the Hours which is prayed daily at Saint Bede.

**Sister Ann Marie Biermeier** challenged us to "produce" an effect of the psalmody on our lives through the



Sister Theresa Schumacher (left) and Sister Ann Marie Biermeier.

use of words in poetry, letter writing or journaling. Molding clay and experiencing water colors proved delightful once the sisters' apprehension disappeared. Though the retreat was a silent one, an atmosphere of relaxation prevailed, and the week ended with a renewed commitment of vows on Friday, June 22.

"Benedictine Spirituality Today," a program on spiritual and personal growth by **Fr. Columba Stewart, OSB**, at Saint John's University during June 25-29, was attended by **Sister Lucy Miller, Sister Barbara Weiland** and **Sister Dale Wollum**.

**Sister Pauline Hoffart** celebrated her 90th birthday on April 27 with a gathering of friends from her hospital days. On the following day, she was surprised by the visit of nieces, nephews and other relatives from North Dakota and the Upper Midwest. Sister Pauline continues to delight many with her beautifully knitted baby outfits.

**Sister Lucille Hubmann** enjoyed a long anticipated visit with her cousin from Germany, who is visiting the U.S. The 25-year "reunion" included good conversations, shared photos and a trip to the Chippewa Valley Museum and other local sites.

Three separate workshops in June kept **Sister Karen**



Sister Pauline Hoffart (row one, third from right) and family.

**Streveler** busy. Besides creating bookmarks and other applications for her photos, she and **Sister Bernard Heit** and **Sister Mary Maves** took a graduate-credit class on "Creating More Peaceful and Productive Classrooms," offered by the University of St. Thomas in Eau Claire. She also attended a "Leaven for Our Lives" workshop for monastic women professed since 1967 and a program on "Rituals, Symbols and Practice" at the Monastic Institute of St. John's University. **Sister Marjorie Hill** helped prepare for the new school year with a workshop dealing with Wisconsin Academic Standards.



Sister Judy Kramer (left) with Sister Inez Lezama.

Summer fun for **Sister Judy Kramer** included serving two weeks with the Sisters of St. Agnes in Fond du Lac as a Spanish/English translator. Several missions in Nicaragua have been staffed by North American and Central American Sisters of St. Agnes for 50 years and seven native Spanish-speaking sisters were in Wisconsin to participate in the St. Agnes chapter meetings.

Saint Bede Center was the scene for family reunions of Golden Jubilee celebrants **Sister Maryanne Doohar** and

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## Teachers' Summer Preparations Will Serve Elementary Grades Well

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accomplishment." Another of her special moments: "To see the joy on the faces of physically disabled children when they experience success." Sisters Karen and Marjorie agreed that happiness is when a child succeeds in mastering new concepts, resulting in a boost to self esteem. Sister Bernard spoke of "witnessing the wonder in the eyes of a child" when new learning takes place.

Many sisters also find joy in returning to familiar classrooms each fall and welcoming the children of former students. They talk of being considered "family" by teaching colleagues, administrators, parents and parishioners.



*Sister Marjorie Hill*

**Tidings** – *Has the grade school environment changed much since your earlier days of teaching? If so, how?*

An emphatic "yes" came from Sister Marjorie. She said she works with more children with learning problems from dysfunctional homes. Among her other observations: "Students are bombarded with extras" -- structured after-school programs ranging from sports and music to special, quality activities like "Odyssey of the Mind." In-school enrichment courses also benefit students but require teachers to find creative ways of fitting ever-expanding basic courses and mandated new ones, like computer education, into limited class schedules. "The emphasis today is on discovery and hands-on activities," said Sister Marjorie. "All changes, good as they are, require extended time, yet the length of the school day remains the same."

Sister Bernard, citing changes during her career, said students today are less apt to marvel at their teachers' presentations. "You must motivate them constantly to stay on task," she said. Methods and materials used in modern classrooms, she added, have become "very complex and constantly changing." Sister Bernard also finds imaginative ways to reach students who are less accepting of teacher authority.

Sister Karen, beginning her 24th year of teaching, said "many children come from smaller families. For some of them, sharing the teacher's attention with other students requires special learning. We also have much more technology now than when I first started teaching," she said.

Quality education is Job One for all the sisters. "We can't waste a year of education for any child," said Sister Mary Maves. We try to make each class day count."

**Tidings** - *Finally, how would you capsule your philosophy of teaching as it relates to grade school children? What values resonate well with your students?*

"To have the students realize the successes they have accomplished so far in their basic skills by seeing their good work and then stretching their horizons to the next levels," said Sister Lucy, "then stretching their horizons to the next levels which need to be mastered with the sense of you can do it!" Sister Bernard said all children have the ability to learn if they "feel accepted and have a good self-image. I have a great respect for my students and am very fair and gentle, but firm with them. Each child," she added, "is a special person to God and together we grow in God's love." Sister Karen takes pains to treat each child as a unique individual. Every youngster, she said, "deserves a learning environment that "helps him or her discover and develop their God-given talents. By this I mean an environment that not only allows each child to grow physically and intellectually but also emotionally, socially, spiritually and morally."

## Developments

— *James A. Schwartz, Director of Development*

Summer set a different pace at Saint Bede. The sisters' agenda included retreats, conferences and workshops, visits with family and friends, and countless tasks to maintain the Monastery and Center to meticulous standards.

For the Development Office, the season - an especially warm one - was a time for planning activities, recognizing donors for their generosity, preparing publications and working with others on projects to extend the sisters' values to the wider community.

We also analyzed and celebrated the importance of donated gifts, thoughtful advice and volunteered energies to Saint Bede. The more than \$232,000 contributed during fiscal year 2000-01 enhances the spiritual and corporal good works of 42 Benedictine sisters. Most are based at the monastery and the sisters' unit at Clairemont; others are assigned elsewhere in Wisconsin and in Missouri, Texas and Jamaica.

With several sisters retiring each year from salaried posts to live at Saint Bede, support from donors becomes increasingly critical. Typically, sisters who served in schools, parishes, health care facilities and elsewhere accepted modest stipends. Few had opportunities to accumulate savings, participate in pension plans or qualify for significant Social Security earnings. That's why they

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**Visit us at: [www.saintbede.org](http://www.saintbede.org)**

## REACHING OUT

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**Sister Mary Jo Donaldson**, **Sister Clarita Selz** also hosted her family at the Center.

**Sister Doris Steinfeldt** and **Sister Mary Jane Cournoyer** renewed friendship and stories at a reunion held at St. Benedict's for those who made vows 55 years ago. **Sister Dale Wollum** and **Sister Lucille Hubmann** explored the beauty and vastness of Lake Michigan with Saint Bede staff member **Jo Ann Moran** during a three-day trip to Mackinaw City, Mich.

**Sister Britta Coyne** and **Sister Bernard Heit** enjoyed a trip to Branson, Mo., while visiting **Sister Mary Jane Slaney** in Springfield, Mo. Having their picture taken with the Lennon Sisters of Lawrence Welk fame recalled memories of the singers' visit to Eau Claire and to Saint Bede when the Lennons were little children. The priory was then housed at 1328 Wilson St.

**Sister Mary Pattison** was among the 50 musicians and liturgists from 29 monasteries of women and men across the U.S. and Canada who convened this summer for the 15th meeting of the Benedictine Musicians of the Americas.

## Sister Joins Group On Mission to Peru

*Letter to the Saint Bede community by  
Sister Jean Kroeger, OSB*

**Note:** Sister Jean, a registered nurse for Gunderson Lutheran Hospital, La Crosse, joined about 35 other health care professionals last March to provide eye care services for Peruvians in need. She worked closely with an optometrist, Dr. Steve Laliberte.

"Thank you so very much for praying for me as I undertook the adventure to serve people in Lima and Lucrin, Peru, from March 3 to 14.



*Sister Jean Kroeger (right) shares smiles with eye-care patients in Peru.*

"We stayed at an orphanage in Lucrin. There were 110 lovely, lively, little boys and girls. When we arrived early Sunday morning on March 3rd it was only appropriate we begin fitting and distributing glasses to the little orphans and employees at the orphanage.

"It was a great 'sight to behold' when the individuals were fitted and received glasses that now enabled them to see. Early the next morning we boarded an old school bus for an hour trip to the hospital in Lima.

"As we were approaching the hospital there were crowds waiting to receive eye care. Many of these people had been waiting since midnight. We worked ten to twelve hours each day. (The great Benedictine tradition of *Ora et Labora*.)

Throughout the course of our stay we tested, fitted and distributed 6,000 pairs of glasses. These glasses came from the generous people here in Wisconsin. I am grateful that the Lions Club sponsored this project.

"I will never forget the beautiful and gratifying smiles as they received their glasses. It literally gave them a new outlook on life!"

## Two Benedictines Serving in Jamaica Are 'Family' for Two Young Women

*— Sister Connie Ostrander, OSB*

During July, Megan Waite, 18, and Kadian Waite, 12, visited Saint Bede. From Jamaica, West Indies, the two young women are thriving under the unofficial guardianship of Sister **Connie Ostrander** of Saint Bede and another Benedictine, **Sister Naomi Rosenberger** of Benet Hill Monastery, Colorado Springs.



*Megan Waite and Sister Connie (left) with Kadian Waite and Sister Naomi Rosenberger.*

Sisters Connie and Naomi are assistants to **Bishop Paul M. Boyle**, C.P., of the Diocese of Mandeville, Jamaica. They have ministered in Jamaica for the past eight years and Megan and Kadian were taken into their convent in 1995 after the girls' father died and their mother became ill.

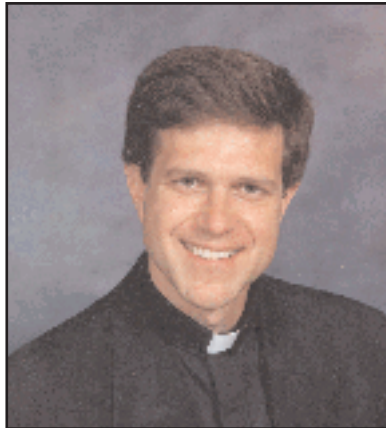
The Benedictine sisters also placed three of the girls' brothers in two of the orphanages in Mandeville. They keep the children together by inviting the boys to their convent for

*Continued on page 6.*

## Sisters' Hospitality Makes Monastery A Second Home for Saint Bede Chaplain

- Fr. Thomas Krieg

When I arrived at Saint Bede's five years ago as chaplain to the sisters, I felt at home immediately. **Sisters Margaret Michaud** and **Michaela Hedican** had served as spiritual directors for me, giving me some familiarity with the monastery and a few of the people there. It was not this simple familiarity, however, that made me feel at home. Rather, it was the sheer warmth of the entire community that confronted me from the first "The Lord be with you" in the summer of '96 until now.



Fr. Thomas Krieg

We all have mottos that we would like to live by. We might strive to "Live each day to the fullest" or "Smile at everyone I meet." More often than not, it seems, these mottos contrast with our day-to-day behavior. The Benedictines have a motto from the Rule: "Let all guests be received as Christ." This virtue of Christian hospitality is not just an ideal at Saint Bede's - it is an obvious reality to all who have entered its doors. I experience it myself, I hear of it again and again from people around town, and I see it when they open their doors to homeless families and people in transition.

During my term as chaplain, I confess, I have tested the sisters' kind hospitality with my nasty habit of arriving late for Mass. When I myself have to wait for people, I get irritated quickly, and I suppose the sisters have been annoyed by my tardiness from time to time as well. It never shows on their faces, however, and for this I am grateful.

Not long ago, a sister from another religious order joined us for Mass on a day when I was running late. After Mass, she approached me and said "It's remarkable how peaceful this community is while they wait. If you were late for Mass at my house, the sisters would be fidgeting, and watching the clock with evident irritation. Here, they sit and pray." Indeed. You have to love those Benedictines, rich in mercy and slow to anger. (Of course, I realize that taking mercy for granted, whether God's or the sisters', is a mistake, and I hereby resolve to be punctual!)

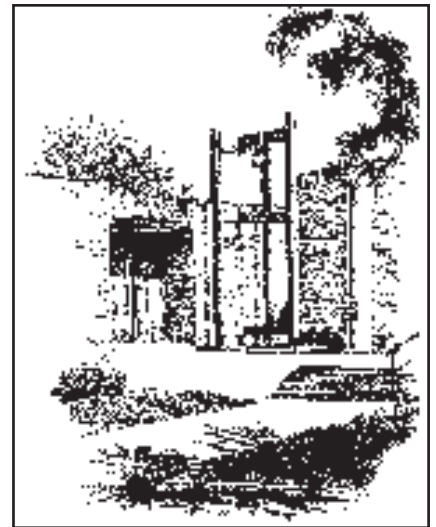
When I look at the sisters during Mass I know that I am worshipping with an exceptional group of women. They have distinguished records of service; they have not chased after idols. When I preach to them, I realize that their waters run deep, and this frees me somehow to break open the Word without any need to entertain or impress that I sometimes feel in other situations.

Overall, I could not have a more pleasant community with

whom to celebrate Eucharist. Their hospitality, deep spirituality, and commitment to justice remind me several times a week what following Jesus is all about.

Fr. Krieg, 37, is a Wausau native and graduate of Newman High School and the University of Notre Dame. He served as a mental health intern in Seattle and later attended

Mundelein Seminary and the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, Calif., before serving at St. Patrick Parish in Onalaska. In addition to his Saint Bede assignment Fr. Krieg serves in campus ministry at UW-Stout and is associate pastor of the Newman Community, Eau Claire.



Saint Bede Bell Tower  
by artist William Keegan

## Two Benedictines Serving in Jamaica Are 'Family' for Two Young Women

Continued from page 5.

meals and celebrations. In these and other ways, Sisters Connie and Naomi strive to maintain a sense of "family" among the children.

After seven years with the sisters, the girls have graduated from high school and sixth grade respectively. They have learned to speak English and have taken dance for five years. They affectionately call Sisters Connie, "Grannie," and Naomi, "Mom." In Jamaica, the two Benedictines are referred to as "Sister Moms."

The girls' visit to Saint Bede was a highlight. "It is wonderful to live in community," Megan said. "They are all good people like 'Mom and Grannie.'" Kadian took a few piano lessons from **Sister Helenette Baltes** and learned the art of paper cutting from **Sister Roslyn Tsai**, a visiting Benedictine from Taiwan.

**Note:** Sister Connie and Sister Naomi, along with Bishop Boyle, are helping to fund services to Jamaicans in need by soliciting \$1 million in donations this year, worldwide, for the Diocese of Mandeville.

## BY THE LIBRARY LAMP

— Sister Lorayne Andre, OSB



## "new" Rule of Saint Benedict

### LISTEN...

Saint Benedict's first word to us in the Rule he wrote which is still today a manual of Benedictine spirituality.

### LISTEN...

The liturgical Press is celebrating its 150th anniversary by publishing a new, very handsome edition of that Rule. The text is Leonard Doyle's translation, in print since 1948. Liturgical Press claims this is "the most widely known and used English version of the Rule." The format is classical: simple, clear type, as straight-forward as the Rule itself. Lines are pleasantly poetic, since quotations from scripture are abundant. Combine these features with a rich cloth cover designed by the inimitable Frank Kazmarcik and you have a book you'd love to use or display. It will remind you of prayer books from the past: very black type on cream-colored stock, subheadings in red, even a ribbon bookmark!

### LISTEN...

The Rule reflects the personal wisdom of St. Benedict and years of monastic tradition. The way of life he outlines is marked by simplicity, moderation and discretion in all things, humble obedience, and a dedication to prayer and work. The monk reads and rereads the Rule to find "instruction for the soul and comfort for the heart," according to Anselmo Lentini. This special edition contains the dates on which the common reading of the Rule may begin. At Saint Bede Monastery the annual oral reading of the Rule extends from January to May.

### LISTEN...

Liturgical Press states that its mission is "to proclaim the Good News through various media and to deepen the faith and knowledge of a richly diverse church." Thus the Press plays a prominent roll in the abbey's apostate. At a time when the principles of Benedictine spirituality are emphasized for all - lay people as well as monastics - it is significant that both Doyle and Kacmarcik are attached to St. John's Abbey as oblates, not professed monks.

### LISTEN once more ...

We rejoice with the Press on their anniversary.

We treasure the words the wise Benedict presented to us in this volume—  
ever old, ever new, familiar yet revelatory.

## Developments

*Continued from page 4.*

are deeply grateful for the many gifts to their retirement fund, and to ministries that serve people of all ages and many faiths.

Recognizing that the community is aging and that retirement brings more sisters home, **Sister Margaret Michaud, Prioress**, said Saint Bede is working to involve younger and older sisters in an intentional prayer ministry that expands one maintained by the elderly or infirm sisters at Clairemont. Current plans involve coordination with medical, legal and other professionals and setting up a specialized office. This project offers new opportunities for donors, especially those whose lives have been touched by the power of prayer.

Other opportunities for sharing the sisters' ministries: Installation of air conditioning in Saint Bede Chapel and acoustical improvements in the sisters' dining room. Both facilities are shared by visitors and guests. Used several times daily by the sisters for community prayer, liturgy development and private reflection, the chapel bakes during warm weather as exterior brickwork heats up. The acoustics project, requiring some interior design improvements, will enable hearing-impaired sisters and guests to better enjoy conversations, meetings and special events in the monastery's Community Dining Room.

Those projects, to benefit from a solicitation, are included in plans to raise \$251,000 during the current fiscal year. Success, as always, will be linked to friends, old and new, who share the sisters' values.

**God's blessings be yours. Thanks for being with us.**

Visit us at: [www.saintbede.org](http://www.saintbede.org)

## UPCOMING CENTER EVENTS

As an ecumenical retreat and conference center, Saint Bede Center welcomes church, civic, and service groups to use the facilities for retreats, meetings, seminars, and workshops. In addition, the Center offers a variety of religious, spiritual, cultural, and educational programs. Private retreatants are always welcome as well! Listed below are some of the upcoming events which might be of interest to you:

- **October 12-14** - Marriage Encounter Weekend
- **October 18** - Nursing: Tending and Caring  
- A Retreat Day for Nurses  
*directed by Sisters Monica Mai and Michaela Hedican, OSB*
- **October 27** - Diocesan School of Biblical Studies
- **November 8** - Spirit of Living Network
- **November 24** - Diocesan School of Biblical Studies
- **December 6** - Spirit of Living Network
- **December 7-8** - From Annunciation to Birth:  
An Advent/Christmas Retreat  
*- directed by Sister Rosemarie Whitehead, OSF and Fr. Dick Rice, SJ*  
*- sponsored by Saint Bede Center*
- **December 15** - Diocesan School of Biblical Studies

Catholic Soup for the Soul book discussion group meets **monthly** at the Center. If interested, call for date and time.

For more information about these events, please call  
**SAINT BEDE CENTER - (715) 834-8642**



## TIDINGS

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FALL 2001

## CENTERING

– Sister Hildegard Geraets, OSB

The psalms are filled with expressions of gratitude to God for the gift of land and what it provides for the inhabitants. The Center staff wants to sing praise to God for the gift of friends, friends who so generously responded to the spring solicitation which was designated for renewing the interior of the Center.

Four projects were completed through this effort. An air conditioning unit was installed in Benet. Because of this, we have been able to host groups through the month of July in spite of the unusual heat wave. We were able to cover the cost of replacing the original hearth in Fireside Lounge with a new wood-burning unit. The lounge also benefited from new carpeting and recently upholstered chairs.

Regular users of the Center have noticed that the "fogged over" thermal panes have been replaced. Once again, as you go up the stairs you can enjoy the natural beauty of the

outdoors, including the wild animals that also enjoy our back yard.

None of this would have been possible without your help. We appreciate your support in whatever form it comes: using the facility, volunteer work, words of encouragement, or monetary gifts. New people have been taking advantage of our overnight accommodations. Others have come to spend a day in quiet surroundings. Several have enjoyed the woods or walking around the monastery grounds.

However you wish to renew yourself, Saint Bede Center can provide the sacred surroundings you are seeking. We invite you to join us in monastic prayer and share a meal with us. For further information, call the Center office at (715) 834-8642.



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