



# TIDINGS

## ***Saint Bede Monastery and Center***

A Newsletter from The Sisters of Saint Benedict  
VOL.17 NO.1

Eau Claire, Wisconsin  
SPRING 2004

## ***Daily Liturgies at Saint Bede Involve the Talents of Many***

### ***Nothing is to be preferred to the work of God***

These words of Saint Benedict, as found in Chapter 43 of the *Rule*, have held a place of priority in the lives of Benedictines through the centuries. This "Work of God," known today as the Liturgy of the Hours, is key to our life at Saint Bede Monastery.

In ***Of Time Made Holy***, one of five liturgical tracts published by the Conference of American Benedictine Prioresses, it is stated that "Although many Christians pray the Liturgy of the Hours regularly, Benedictines commit themselves, not only in theory but also in fact, to its daily corporate celebration. This is a distinctive aspect of the Benedictine spiritual tradition within the church."

Three times daily the members of Saint Bede Monastery unite in this prayer which consists of psalms, scripture readings, antiphons, hymns, orations and periods of silent reflection. Formerly in Latin, now in English following the Second Vatican Council, these central elements form the basic structure of each hour, with adaptations suitable to particular monasteries.

The scriptural core of each hour provides a foundation and authenticity, which unites us with Christians through the centuries, and indeed, back to Jewish origins. The antiphons, hymns and orations enable us to keep the liturgy ever new and in touch with the culture and current liturgical emphases.

***"We believe that the divine presence is everywhere ... we believe this is to be especially true when we celebrate the Divine Office." -Rule of Benedict***

Here at Saint Bede, the services of several persons are called upon to provide the books, music and rituals needed for the various feasts and seasons of the church year. In addition, all members of the community assist by assuming roles of leadership for each day. Thus our corporate prayer depends upon our cooperative work.

Indicative of the high priority Liturgy of the Hours holds in our community, and due to limited personnel here, ***Sister JoAnn Dold, OP***, in 1997 was asked to become the principal liturgist and organist at the monastery. The community has benefited from her knowledge of liturgy and musical skills. Sisters who work with her in these areas are ***Sister Helenette Baltes, Sister Hildegarde Geraets*** and ***Sister Mary Pattison***. Lay employee, ***Judy Bredeson***, is our liturgy program assistant.

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*Liturgy Team Members (from left) Judy Bredeson and Sisters Helenette Baltes, Jo Ann Dold, OP, Mary Pattison and Hildegarde Geraets*



**Sister Margaret Michaud, OSB  
Prioress**

# MONASTIC MUSINGS

— Sister Margaret Michaud, OSB

"Let nothing be preferred to the Work of God," is a powerful mandate from the *Rule of Saint Benedict*. In this twenty-first century we Benedictines at Saint Bede's strive to fulfill this imperative from our Holy Father Saint Benedict. The "Work of God" is our daily celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, our common prayer, which we offer to God in praise, thanksgiving and petition for our needs and the needs of our world. This issue of *Tidings* features this central and essential element of our life, our community prayer and worship.

We gather in chapel three times daily for common prayer, the Liturgy of the Hours. These prayer times create the framework for our days of worship, work and community living. Without a resident chaplain, we are not able to celebrate Eucharist daily but do so three times a week. Liturgy of the Hours is thus our *daily* experience of community unity before God. It is when we are gathered together in prayer that we become conscious of our Benedictine vocation to give voice to the prayer of all creation, a prayer of praise and supplication to God with the risen Christ through the love and power of the Holy Spirit.

As we grow older and fewer, we have to face the fact that we cannot serve God's people in the active ministries we formerly engaged in. The number of our sisters working in education and health care drops each year as age and infirmity require that these good services be curtailed. We can and do, however, continue our ministry of prayer and praise. This is something we can do for the church and the world; this is something to which we daily commit our time and energy. This is at the heart of our identity as Benedictines. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve in this way.

Our families, friends, associates, co-workers and benefactors are remembered intentionally every day. We have a *Book of Prayerful Remembrance* in the back of the chapel. In it we write the names of those who ask us to pray for them. We encourage others to write the names in this book. Some people contact us by mail or by phone. Some use our e-mail address: [sisters@saintbede.org](mailto:sisters@saintbede.org). We welcome any and all needs as intentions to hold up in prayer.



*Sisters in discussions during  
election of Prioress four years ago.*

## TIDINGS

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## Sisters Pray for Guidance

During April 16-18 the Benedictines of Saint Bede Monastery will seek God's help during their discernment of community goals and leadership. This prayerful process will lead to election of a prioress to succeed Sister Margaret, who has served as prioress from 1972-80 and 1996 to 2004. Installation of the new prioress will be celebrated on Sunday, June 6.

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# REACHING OUT

— Sister Dale Wollum, OSB

□ A mid-November celebration of Regis High School's 50th anniversary featured a scriptural reading from Ephesians 2:19-22 by **Sister Mary Jo Donaldson**, a former teacher there. **Sister Monica Mai** accepted a plaque honoring all 47 Benedictine Sisters who served Regis students through the years. **Sisters** attending the event included **Lorayne Andre, Mary Jane Cournoyer, Mary Frances Gebhard**, and **Marjorie Hill**.



Sisters Lorayne Andre and Mary Jane Cournoyer



Sisters Monica Mai and Mary Jo Donaldson (right)

□ **Sister Margaret Michaud**, an instructor in the Diocesan School of Biblical Studies, from May 15-29, will join a group of 27 travelers led by **Fr. Mark Pierce**, pastor of Roncalli Newman Parish, LaCrosse, touring holy and historical sites in Greece and Turkey. Accompanied by **Sister Michaela Hedican**, Sister Margaret also participated in the Conference of American Benedictine Prioresses, held January 27-February 2, at Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman, Alabama.

□ **Sister Michaela Hedican**, president of the Federation of Saint Benedict, in January visited Saint Martin Monastery, Nassau, The Bahamas, as a guest of **Sister Annie Thompson**, Prioress.

□ Saint Bede's own "poet laureate," **Sister Dale Wollum**, in autumn learned that her poem titled, "Ah, It Comes," would be included in *The Colors of Life: - The International Library of Poetry*.

□ **Changes** -- **Sister Lucille Hubmann** in December joined the Sisters residing at Clairemont. **Sister Lois Klimek**, for many years a resident of Lakeside Nursing and Rehabilitation and later Clairemont, this fall moved to a care residence at Alexandria, Minn., to be nearer her sister. **Sister Mary Jo Donaldson** returned to the monastery this fall after her mother, Mrs. Josephine Donaldson, died at age 100 at her Eau Claire home. **Sister Petronelle Marthaler**, a home caregiver for Mrs. Donaldson for 13 years, now is living at Saint Bede.

□ **Sister Ruth Feeney**, Vocation Director, said "**Busy Student Retreats**" served UW students from campuses in Eau Claire, Stevens Point, Menomonie and La Crosse. Praying and sharing experiences with students were **Sisters Dale, Jo Ann Dold, OP, Mary Frances Gebhard** and **Margaret Michaud**.



Sister Lucille Hubmann



Sister Lois Klimek

□ **Sister Mary Pattison** again joined volunteers **Linda Madson, Mary Jo Walter** and **Linda Geraghty** in continuing a Christmastime tradition here. This year the women collected, packaged and gifted 13 area Hmong families with toys, games, school supplies and household items.



(Left: helping Hmong families are volunteers (from left) Linda Madson, Mary Jo Walter and Linda Geraghty.)

□ **Sister Judy Kramer** spent January 31-February 8 on her second mission as a Spanish translator in Cuenca, Ecuador. She joined a medical team organized by **Dr. Steven Cook**, an emergency room physician at Sacred Heart Hospital, and **Dr. Brent Wogahn**, an Eau Claire surgeon. Sister Judy, who also assisted patients and medical professionals at the small Andes Mountain clinic in 2002, again brought Chippewa Valley-donated items for the children, including toothbrushes, crayons and coloring books with health themes and Spanish subtitles.



(Right: Sister Judy Kramer with Dr. Steven Cook also served in Ecuador two years ago.)

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## Liturgies *continued from page 1*

In recent years, five new books have been assembled for our daily liturgy: Advent-Christmas, Lent, Easter, Ordinary Time, Feasts and Saints. The materials were compiled and organized by a group of Sisters. The effort, time and money involved in the preparation and printing of these books is another indication of the status given to the Liturgy of the Hours at Saint Bede. Indispensable to this undertaking, however, was the service of Judy Bredeson. Her skill on the computer and her knowledge of music and liturgy have enabled her to do all the typing and music notation for these books, which then were printed commercially.

In addition to this spiritual activity, we are grateful for the opportunity to celebrate the Eucharist three times each week. We are well aware that many parishes these days are deprived of daily Mass, due to the lack of available priests.

In all our liturgical celebrations, whether of the Eucharist or of the Hours, we are pleased when lay associates, friends and neighbors join us, for the liturgy is the prayer of the church and belongs to all. We are also very grateful for benefactors whose generosity has enabled us to purchase a Rodgers organ for the chapel and assisted us with costs for books and on-going needs for our liturgies.

As essential as the organ, books and other materials are for the Sisters' daily liturgies, we know it is the inner disposition of mind and heart that matters. Here lies the challenge. It is the challenge given to us by Benedict when he states in the *Rule's* Chapter 19:

***"Let us consider how we ought to behave in the presence of God and the angels, and let us stand to sing the psalms in such a way that our minds are in harmony with our voices."***

Our prayers are always united with Christ and directed to the praise of God whose life and gifts are at work among us. In addition to praise, we make intercession for the needs of the church and world. In particular, we pray for all those who have asked for our prayer and for all our benefactors, living and deceased, in gratitude for their generous gifts.

So it is, gathered as community, we daily give "audible voice by the power of the Spirit to the words of praise, repentance and supplication in the hearts of all people" (***Of Time Made Holy***). It is our privilege, in addition to other ministries and services, to focus time and energy to the Work of God, these hours of liturgical prayer. May God keep us faithful to this monastic tradition.

*(Editor's Note: This article is a collaborative effort by the Saint Bede liturgy team.)*



*Daily liturgy binds community in prayer and song.*

## News & Events

### **Fr. John Heagle Again Leads Lenten Retreat**

*Healing Our Lives and Relationships* is the theme of the Lenten Retreat, scheduled for March 19-20 at Saint Bede Center. This program of spiritual reflection will be led by Fr. John Heagle, who for the past 19 years has co-directed the Therapy & Renewal Associates (TARA), based in Seattle.

"Our human journey is a paradox of promise and pain, of soaring dreams and broken hearts," Fr. Heagle notes. "In order to achieve some measure of spiritual maturity, each of us must face the brokenness of our lives and relationships. We must make the demanding journey of self-knowledge and reach out for healing."

"Christian spirituality does not provide an escape route from the wounds of life," he adds, "but it does offer us a path - a "Way" that leads toward recovery and wholeness. This retreat explores this paschal journey - the deeply personal path that leads to a transformed life. Using biblical models, especially that of Jesus himself, we will seek together the promise and gift of redemptive healing."

Fr. Heagle, also adjunct professor in the School of Theology and Ministry at Seattle University, is a licensed psychotherapist. Ordained in the Diocese of LaCrosse in 1965, he spent the first 20 years as a priest in pastoral ministry, including eight years as pastor of St. Patrick's in Eau Claire. He has authored seven books on Christian spirituality and co-authored three books with Sister Fran Ferder, FSPA. Their most recent book, *Tender Fires: The Spiritual Promise of Sexuality*, was released in 2002 by Crossroad Publications, New York.

Cost of the full retreat, which opens at 7 p.m. Friday, March 19, is \$75, including overnight accommodations and meals. The fee for commuters is \$50, including meals. The program for Saturday, March 20, includes optional attendance at Morning Praise at 8 a.m., followed by the opening presentation at 9:30 a.m. The retreat closes with Mass at 4:15 p.m. and the evening meal.

Reservations are due March 12. For more information, please call Saint Bede Center at (715) 834-8642.

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Gaiety and generosity again marked the Sisters' Celebrity Banquet gathering of approximately 165 guests on Saturday, February 14, at Park Inn and



Suites, Eau Claire. The evening featured great food and drink, items for every taste at auction, and prayers and singing by the Benedictines. The Sisters dedicated this year's banquet to the late Richard deGrood and his widow, Deirdre, originator of the Celebrity Banquet series. Many thanks to sponsors, donors, bid-



ders, guests, auctioneer Jerome Boge, celebrity servers and volunteers. As always, proceeds from the event benefit the Sisters' Retirement Fund.



## Hope for Jamaican Poor Has Roots in Wisconsin

- **Excerpt from a recent letter from Sister Connie Ostrander, OSB**

For the past ten years, my Benedictine colleague, **Sister Naomi Rosenberger**, of Benet Hill Monastery, Colorado Springs, and I have been missionaries in Jamaica, assisting **Bishop Paul M. Boyle, C.P.** in establishing the infrastructure of the Diocese of Mandeville, Jamaica West Indies.

I am grateful to Saint Bede Monastery, of which I am a member, for commissioning me to live and work among the poor in Jamaica. During this time, Sister Naomi and I have raised five Jamaican children. Their father died and their mother had a serious nervous breakdown. The two girls, Megan and Kadian, have lived in our convent since they were 7 and 12 years old, and they now are 15 and 21.

This past July, we received legal custody and guardianship of the younger child, Kadian. Being "Sister Moms" has added an entirely realistic and unique dimension to our lives.

Jamaica is known as an island of sea, sand, sun, beautifully flowering trees, reggae music and beautiful people. However, Jamaica also has a history of being the main slave trade island and vestiges of this sin continue to live in the psyche and realities of our people.

This island is second to Haiti for poverty in the Western Caribbean. Currently, one of the major cities in Jamaica has been placed under curfew because of the violence of gangs, dons, murders, and the shooting even of children. My compassion and hope grow ever stronger for this country and the people we love. Life can be raw and tough in Jamaica and vigilantism is a reality to fear; we continue to keep our inner eye upon HOPE! Perhaps, in much of the world, "Hope" must become our conscious and lived reality in the NEW MORNING OF GLOBAL JUSTICE as we all REACH OUT together!

Continued on page 6.

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## LIBRARY NOTES



Looking for inspiration and respite from news of political, social and economic injustice? Read about the extraordinary people -- lay and religious -- whose courage, determination and skill have focused on social justice. The following books,

and others at Saint Bede Library, are refreshing reads for those looking to make a difference in their homes or hemispheres. JAS

□ **GREAT WOMEN OF FAITH: Inspiration for Action.** Author Sue Stanton, with illustrations by Charlie Craig, presents mini-portraits of 34 extraordinary women. Drawn from different eras, continents and backgrounds, her subjects are religious and lay, widely celebrated and relatively obscure. All demonstrate the power of God in instilling the faith, courage and persistence to speak out for what is right and for actively serving the poor, oppressed and most vulnerable. Among featured heroines are familiar Americans such as Jane Addams, Dorothy Day, Flannery O'Connor and Rosa Parks. Equally inspirational are the less familiar feats of religious Sisters from Mexico, Europe and Africa, and women such as Agneta Chang, Catherine de Hueck Doherty and former slave Sojourner Truth. Each of the book's brief profiles is followed by suggestions for further reading.

□ **JUSTICE & PEACE: A Christian Primer.** J. Milburn Thompson, chair and professor of theology at Kentucky's Bellarmine University, has produced a succinct teacher's compendium of global issues that college students should be informed about. Updated topics in this *Catholic Book Award* winning soft cover include topics ranging from the Cold War and multi-national corporations to global warming and terrorism, and much more. Thompson provides a good resource for those seeking better understanding of current and historical global issues.

□ **GROWING UP EMPTY: The Hunger Epidemic in America.** Loretta Schwartz-Nobel, who explored hunger in the U.S. in a previous book, casts new light on a festering social problem. She deftly records her observations of hunger among the working poor, refugees, military families and other groups struggling to feed themselves and their families. She recalls the nation's outrage over the hidden hunger in our midst when, decades ago, Senators Joseph Clark and Robert F. Kennedy expressed shock over their findings of grinding poverty and malnutrition in the Mississippi Delta. "Now, more than thirty-five years later, after all the political and counterefforts, all the years of funding and then dismantling of food aid programs, once again, public denial and silence have returned," she writes. Readers likely will be outraged and perhaps agree that justice -- not charity -- is among solutions to widespread hunger in this bountiful nation.

□ **STATIONS OF THE BANQUET: Faith Foundations for Food Justice.** Rev. Dr. Cathy C. Campbell, rector of an Anglican Church in Winnipeg, Canada, examines food as a core value of Christianity, which accepts the responsibility to help feed the hungry; grow, process and distribute food responsibly, and work together as followers of Christ to "struggle for an abundant life for all (*John 10: 10*)." Her research is a thoughtful and well organized guide for those who are living Christianity by seeking justice by working for safe, sustainable food supplies for the world's hungry.

### Hope for Jamaican Poor Has Roots in Wisconsin (Continued from p. 5)

One of the ministries involves Global Solidarity, or reverse mission. A priest who led one of our groups wrote, "Being with you in the Diocese and with the Jamaican people renews my hope for the Church." Groups of ten persons, from various parishes in the U.S., come to us for short-term missionary experiences from September through June.

They assist us in work projects, meeting the poor, and experiencing the poverty of a Third World.

In January, 60 missionary guests arrived from Wisconsin. **Fr. Tom Linder** brought nine college students from Stevens Point's Newman Parish. They helped our Jamaican housing team build 12' x 12' one-room houses for the poor. Several Wisconsin groups from the Plattville and Wausau areas also left deep impressions with the good of their presence and outreach.

**Linda Dekan** of the Saint Bede Development Office has been instrumental in sending many usable items to Jamaica, and we are grateful. For seven years, **Tom Roovers** and his wife **Mary Pat**, of St. Matthews, Wausau, have come to help among our poor, bringing well over 200 people from Wisconsin.

Tom has become a "fixture" in the bush (country) and is known affectionately as "Masta Tom." He has organized huge shipments of usable goods, utilizing U.S. Air Force planes for humanitarian needs. He also sends shipments of wood, home furnishings, paint and toys for children in 9-foot containers.

Margaret Mead, the anthropologist, used to say, "The people of another culture reside within a circle. Our stance must be to kneel outside that circle, reverently acknowledging everyone within, and giving thanks for the God who was there before we came."

This awareness gives a context and enables us to see God present in every culture. Then, we too, can experience inner healing as a gift given from those we serve. Those who serve as short-term missionaries learn this subtle mystery. They receive much more than they give!



Sister Connie

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# Developments

— James A. Schwartz, Director of Development

Donors again showered blessings on this community during the holiday season, a time marked by the Sisters' visits with family and friends, and spiritual activities in the chapel and retreat center.

More than 1,200 gifts, large and small, were received. Donors, in addition to designating gifts to specific ministries, also gave generously to the **Sisters' Retirement Fund**. Now recovering from losses during the "down" market of recent years, the fund is increasingly vital as the community begins to make withdrawals. Many of our oldest Sisters had little opportunity to save for rainy days while working for minimal stipends as teachers, nurses and in various parish assignments. Today, with fewer Benedictines in salaried positions, the fund already is making a difference in the lives of this 38-member community.

Growing older is a factor for many of our donors as well. Long-time friends are passing. For their adult children and grandchildren, there are fewer opportunities today to know the Sisters through their traditional ministries.

Fortunately, increasing numbers of friends are coming to know the Sisters through prayer requests and hospitality and the ecumenical programs and opportunities offered by Saint Bede Center. Friendships are made and strengthened as well through the Sister's Celebrity Banquet in February and March Donor Appreciation Event -- their personal "thank you" to donors, lay associates, volunteers and others.

Our sincere thanks to all who collectively share their time, energy or resources with the Sisters on behalf of the lives touched by these Benedictines. Also appreciated are our **Heritage Companions**, donors and other friends who have signaled their intention to remember the Sisters in their estates.

In recent years, individuals have established two **endowments**. These are designated funds that are invested to benefit the Sisters and perpetuate the memory of a deceased Benedictine, or honor current members of the community. Last year, for example, two relatives created an endowment in memory of **Sister Denis Smith**, an outstanding teacher, administrator, and former prioress. In retirement, she dedicated herself to serving the poor.

Last December a special friend honored **Sister Mary Jane Slaney** with a named endowment. Sister Mary Jane is retired and living in Springfield, Mo., where she served for many years as a teacher and school librarian. As part of her ministry at St. Agnes Cathedral Parish, she continues to visit the sick and assist with programs she established for the elderly. More than 200 parishioners have already endorsed the new endowment.

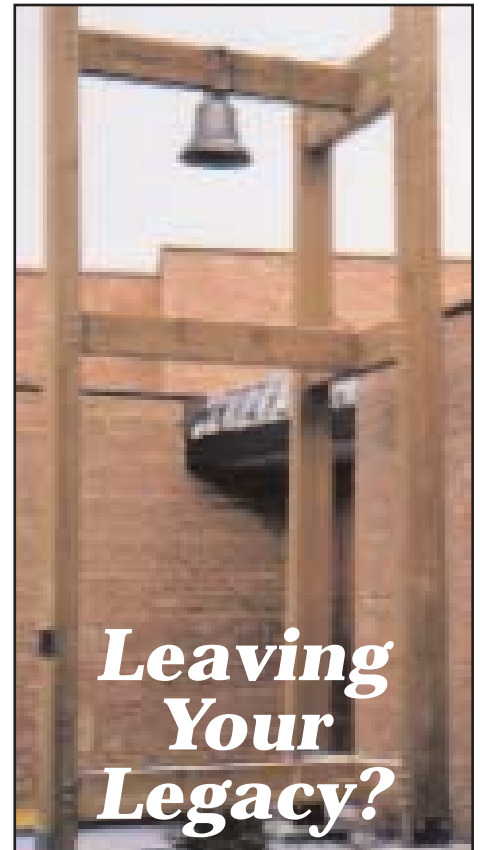
For information about establishing an endowed fund in memory or honor of a favorite Saint Bede Sister, or for details about becoming a **Heritage Companion**, contact us at (715) 834-7130, or e-mail us at [development@saintbede.org](mailto:development@saintbede.org).

*Thanks to all friends, volunteers and donors  
who made Celebrity Banquet 2004 a success!*

## Briefly... Dates to Circle

**Donor Appreciation Event** - Sunday, March 14, from 2:30-4:00 p.m. at the Saint Bede Center, with Tenor/Musician **Warren Petryk**. Refreshments served. Everyone welcome.

**School Reunion** -- Saturday and Sunday, August 7, 8. Former students, faculty and staff of Saint Bede Academy. Family members welcome. Call Mary Traynor at the Center or Jim Schwartz in Development for information.



**Contact us for our  
"Varieties of Gifts"**

## UPCOMING CENTER EVENTS

As an ecumenical retreat and conference center, **Saint Bede Center** offers a variety of religious, spiritual, cultural and educational programs. Listed below are some of the upcoming events which might be of interest to you.

- **March 18 - April 15** - Spirit of Living Network
- **March 19-20** - Lenten retreat - Healing Our lives and Relationships -- Directed by: Rev. John Heagle
- **March 27 -- April 24 -- May 22**  
Diocesan School of Biblical Studies
- **April 3** - Women's Self-Care Retreat  
- Sponsored by The Healing Place
- **April 5 - 11** - Labyrinth Available for Meditative Walking

### Of Special Note:

**August 7- 8:** All School Reunion of former Saint Bede Academy

A book discussion group meets monthly at the Center..  
Current book: *The Life You Save May Be Your Own* by Paul Elie. If interested, please call for date and time.

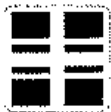
For more information about these events, please call  
**SAINT BEDE CENTER - (715) 834-8642**

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A Newsletter from The Sisters of Saint Bede Monastery      SPRING 2004

## CENTERING

– Sister Hildegard Geraets, OSB

Wait. Wait and prepare. Five times a year the liturgical year asks us to wait and prepare. As I write this article, I am waiting for Lent. As you read this, you are waiting, too.

The liturgical year provides five times a year - Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Pentecost - for us to wait, to reflect, and to grow in spirituality. Each stepping stone in the year is introduced with a period of waiting to create space for us to have time to grow and change what is necessary to help us find God. How can we prepare for these periods of transition?

Seeking a place of quiet, away from the distractions of everyday living, is a starting point. Saint Bede Retreat Center provides such a place. During this year, visitors have come on sabbatical, seeking a place that stimulates thinking without the distractions of their work place. Others have selected one day a week with an overnight to be by themselves that they may work on a plan of spiritual growth. Those who have commitments that don't allow for scheduled time to be away come whenever they can. Rather than being alone all the time,

there is the option of joining the Sisters in prayer as they recite the Divine Office, the official prayer of the church. Others prefer being alone with a book or video. There is the choice of working with a spiritual director who can guide you along the path of spiritual growth.

During this Lenten season, March 19-20, **Father John Heagle** returns to the Chippewa Valley to direct a retreat called "Healing Our Lives and Relationships."

An increasing number of people gather each month at Saint Bede for a book discussion. On March 7, the book, "The Life You Save May Be Your Own," will be discussed. A different book is discussed each month. Participants select the title, usually one with a religious theme.

How will you prepare and wait? The choice is yours. May the Lenten season help you prepare for Easter and Pentecost, which leads us through the final acts of redemption.

