



TIDINGS

Saint Bede Monastery and Center

A Newsletter from The Sisters of Saint Benedict
VOL.14 NO.4

Eau Claire, Wisconsin
WINTER 2001

I Come . . . *cradled in a circle,
binding the world in unity.*

I Come . . . *to the peal of ringing bells
expectant with joy
as hope allays the toll of fear.*

I Come . . . *to encourage non-violent solutions
to world problems
as more nations seek lasting peace.*

I Come . . . *with complete understanding
as I carry the burden of hearts
filled with doubt.*

I Come . . . *feeling a deep compassion
with those who suffer
as I, too, have been torn with grief.*

I Come . . . *reaching out in love
to all who will bend in my embrace.*

I Come . . . *with Power:
Persons, Nations -
search for it - demand it - hold it.
Do they not know that I possess it?
It comes with **LOVE.***

Poem: Sister Dale Wollum, OSB

Illustration: Original paper cutting by Sister Rosalyn Tsai, OSB



**Sister Margaret Michaud, OSB
Prioress**

TIDINGS

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Rejoice! Immanuel is near.



MONASTIC MUSINGS

— Sister Margaret Michaud, OSB

As a community of Benedictine women, we are guided in our life together by the *Rule of Saint Benedict*. Although this document is over fifteen centuries old, it contains timeless wisdom and continues to inspire monastic women and men to this day. Among the 73 chapters of the *Rule* every facet of monastic life is addressed. Such practical matters as the food and clothing of the members, as well as the governance and decision-making procedures of the group are covered. Of course, the spiritual teaching in the Benedictine tradition is treated directly in several chapters and is implicit in the entire text.

Reviewing the topics mentioned in the chapter titles of the *Rule*, however, draws one's attention to the large number of chapters devoted to the common prayer of the community. Seven times a day and once during the night the monastery is directed to gather for the Work of God, the term used in the *Rule* for common prayer. Chapters 8-20 of the *Rule* delineate in detail how these prayers are to be celebrated. In Chapter 43 on "Tardiness at the Work of God or at Table" can be found the famous quotation emphasized in the formation of all Benedictines, "Let nothing be preferred to the Work of God."

Although our contemporary situation has caused us to modify the *Rule's* program somewhat, we still place the Work of God at the center of our lives. At Saint Bede, we come together at least three times daily for prayer. We believe this common prayer is the most important activity of our day. We understand our prayer as ministry performed in the name of all creation. Conscious of our relationship as creatures to the Creator, we sing our praise and thanks. Confident that our prayers are heard, we beseech God for all our needs.

We have always included the concerns of our world in our daily prayers. In recent times, however, we have been receiving numerous requests from people near and far to pray for them. We have a "Book of Prayerful Remembrance" in the back of our chapel. Sisters and guests write prayer requests in this book and we intentionally include these when we gather to pray. Several people send us prayer requests in written notes, by phone calls and through our web site. The increasing number of people asking for prayers has led us to consider taking up the ministry of prayer in a more deliberate manner. Since the beginning of our development program we have selected a donor to pray for each day. The "Donor of the Day" is announced at morning prayer.

In addition, we now will choose another individual or group to hold in prayer during the day. For example, we will identify church and civic leaders, those who carry serious responsibility for others. also included will be those who serve in areas such as health care and education. Of course, we will continue also to receive reverently any requests for prayers. It is a fact, that with the diminished number of our sisters, we have had to withdraw from some of our active ministries. We can still pray, however, and we believe it is a significant contribution we can continue to make.

When we hold individuals in prayer, we place their concerns in the hands of a loving God. We ask that they become aware of God's presence in their lives, confident that God will provide the strength and the guidance they need. We know our prayer is heard and answered although often the answer is not exactly what we have prayed for. Trusting in the love and care of a gracious God, we pray in faith. Praying for one another is our Benedictine heritage.

Visit us at: www.saintbede.org

REACHING OUT

— Sister Dale Wollum, OSB

- **Sister Therese Roth** has kept her needle point skills in practice by making "PEACE" bookmarks for all the students in the elementary schools within the CASE (Catholic Area Schools of Eau Claire). "PEACE" is the theme chosen for the year by each of the Catholic schools. She also is part-time librarian at St. Mary's School, Altoona.

- **Sherri Hydo**, a graduate student in nursing at UWEC, has been given valuable input while working on a spirituality project from Sister Roma Paulus, who has been sharing insights with her.

- **Sister Monica Mai** and **Sister Michaela Hedican** recently provided area nurses with a day of retreat at Saint Bede Center.

- The children of "Little Flower" home schooling group of Eau Claire, along with their parents, recently visited the retired sisters at Clairemont, providing them with gifts and entertainment.

- **Sister Catherine Manning** and **Sister Mary Jane Cournoyer** attended two workshops to support their work with the elderly. One workshop was presented by **Doug Smith**, M.Div., the other was entitled "Shattered Glass: Examining Grief and Loss Through Windows in Time," presented by **Ben Wolfe**, M.Ed., a counselor at Saint Mary's/Duluth (Minn.) Clinic Health System. In another activity, Sister Catherine in October led the prayer service near a tree

on Sacred Heart Hospital grounds that was lighted in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

- **Sister Mary Jo Donaldson** and **Sister Mary Frances Gebhard** recently attended the Wisconsin Network of Peace and Justice Assembly in Madison, Wis. Theme of the conference was "Globalization for Peace Not Profit." The keynote address, delivered by a woman born in Kenya, outlined how globalization can either exploit or aid struggling Third World countries.

- Improvements on the Mayer Trail at Saint Bede provided a summer Eagle Scout project for **Brad Dickey**. The scouts spent part of a weekend trail-clearing, replacing the trailhead fence and sign, installing a hand-crafted bench above a scenic ravine and making other improvements to the 1,135-yard trail.

- Volunteers for Eau Claire's Community Table, which provides meals for families and individuals, includes many Saint Bede sisters, including **Sister Mary Ann Dooher**, **Sister Margaret Michaud**, **Sister Helenette Baltes** and **Sister Mary Francis Gebhard**.



Sister Denis Smith, Former Prioress Returns to Saint Bede Community

Sister Denis Smith, prioress of Saint Bede Monastery from 1960-1972, in late October was brought home to her Benedictine community by **Sister Margaret Michaud** and **Sister Ruth Feeney**. Now 93, Sister Dennis has lived for many years with **Sister Mary Jackle** in San Antonio, Texas, serving in volunteer and in other ministries. She now joins the sisters in the assisted living unit at Clairemont, where she is active in the prayer ministry.

During her tenure as prioress, the Saint Bede sisters moved in 1964 from their Motherhouse in a residence on Eau Claire's Wilson Street to the newly-completed priory south of the city that is their home today.

For many years, Sister Denis taught business education and science courses at St. Patrick's and Regis high schools. She was a business education instructor at the former Saint Bede Academy and, after serving as prioress, taught at the Minneapolis Business College and served as a minister at St. Olaf's Catholic Church in Minneapolis. After moving to Texas she worked at St. Phillip's Clinic for the Poor and at the Health Science Center at the University of Texas, San Antonio.

A native of Madison Lake, Minn., Sister Denis holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the College of St. Benedict and later earned an M.S. in Business Education from the University of Wisconsin. She also holds a Certificate in Theology from the former St. Teresa College in Winona, Minn.



Sister Denis Smith

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Lucille Burke, Oldest Benedictine Associate, Finds Joy in Life and Saint Bede Community

— JoAnne Moran, Benedictine Lay Associate

Born in 1908, the only child of Nicholas and Margaret Schneider, **Lucille Margaret Burke** is the oldest Benedictine Associate in our community. This delightful lady brings to the membership a deep faith, a life rich in good works and a marvelous sense of humor.

Lucille's father emigrated from Luxembourg to Dubuque, Iowa where he established a grocery store. Later he met his future bride while singing in the choir at the local parish, St. Mary's.

As a youngster, life for Lucille centered on her home and St. Mary's parish in Dubuque. Here she was baptized and received her



Lucille Burke

elementary education. Being the smallest child in her classes, she recalled that she was always front and center in parades, processions and other activities that called for tiny girls. Her high school days were spent at the Immaculate Conception Academy in the city. Under the careful teaching and nurturing of the Franciscan Sisters, Lucille earned her diploma in 1925.

Still working at her parents' grocery store, she began studies in piano and earned a diploma

in music the following year.

Lucille, who laughs often and is prone to say, "I'm alright - the world's crazy," met her future husband James through a friend's introduction while working at the Dubuque Packing Co. The couple had one daughter, Marilyn, her greatest comfort when James died suddenly at work in 1967. Sometime later Lucille took a job at Walsh's General Store, where she bought and sold items for the store's Bargain Den.

In 1976 Lucille moved to Eau Claire. Today she lives with her daughter and husband, and is a member of St. Mary's parish, Altoona. Through the encouragement of her good friend Jay Farrell that she became interested in the Saint Bede lay associate program, joining that group more than a decade ago. With the help of her sponsor, **Sister Therese Roth**, she has been faithful to her commitment to pray for the needs of the Benedictine Community and helping the sisters when her health permits. Praying with the sisters and other associates is her joy and the welcoming atmosphere at Saint Bede lifts her spirits.

At home, this exceptional woman manages to knit dozens of pairs of mittens and scarves for the missions. Lucille said she also enjoys playing the piano, visiting with friends, a good game of euchre, crossword puzzles, spaghetti, tuna fish sandwiches and other small pleasures of life. Despite her many years, she often surprises friends who are awed by Lucille's bubbly vitality. "I'm dead," she quips, "but I won't lie down."

Carleen Tiefenthaler to Concentrate on Family Ties; Richard Helleloid Accepts Financial Manager Post

After many years as Financial Manager for the Saint Bede sisters, **Carleen Tiefenthaler** stepped away from full-time duties here in July to spend more time with family. Tiefenthaler, who will consult and handle special projects for the sisters, is succeeded by **Dr. Richard Helleloid**, who has served on the accounting faculties of UW-Eau Claire and other universities.

"My position as Finance Manager for the Sisters of Saint Bede Monastery has been a tremendous growth experience for me," said Tiefenthaler, who is anticipating golf and travels with husband Milo and special times with their children and grandchildren.

"In the past 15.5 years it has been my privilege to work for **Sister Connie Ostrander**, **Sister Monica Mai** and **Sister Margaret Michaud**, who have served as prioress, she said. In addition, she

expressed appreciation for eight years of close association with then-treasurer **Sister Hildegarde Geraets**, who directs Saint Bede Center. she said. "All have given me the opportunity to expand my knowledge in every aspect of accounting for a non-profit organization.

"The Sisters of Saint Bede had been my friend and my



Carleen Tiefenthaler and
Richard Helleloid

role models," added Tiefenthaler, who was first impressed by the Benedictines as a math major at their Mount Saint Scholastica College in Kansas. "I am pleased that I will be continuing to work with the Sisters on a limited basis."

In addition to teaching, Helleloid has owned a small business and operated a tax practice specializing in artists and arts-related organizations. "I have long had an interest in financial aspects of religious and non-profit organizations," he said. "I hope that as the new financial manager for Saint Bede I will help the community continue to provide spiritual services and a special setting to many other people."

His wife, Ingrid, teaches accounting at UW-Eau Claire. They are parents of a daughter, Siri, and son, Geir.

Sisters Track, React To Many Issues Through Peace and Justice Ministry

— Sister Mary Frances Gebhard, OSB

(Editors Note: Sister Mary Fran last summer resigned from St. Coletta of Jefferson, Wis., where she spent the past four years working with the physically challenged. A nurse, she has served in many health care ministries as a Benedictine and returned to Saint Bede to resume a previous role as coordinator of the sisters' Peace and Justice Ministry.)

I was preceded by **Sister Roma Paulus**, who did an excellent job of keeping the sisters aware of justice issues and of urging them to action. Later, Roma, who now lives at Clairemont, was very active in many issues.

Living at the monastery will enable me to be more active in the coordinator role. Saint Bede has a long history of promoting justice, including working with Northern Thunder on such issues as recycling, copper mining in northern Wisconsin, also a region of concern for Project ELF, the naval, first-strike communications link with nuclear submarines.

Currently Saint Bede Monastery has been focusing much effort on local issues such as feeding, clothing and housing those in need through the Interfaith Hospitality Network and Community Table. Each year the sisters set aside a specified amount of money for justice issues.

For example, a monthly donation is made to Catholic Charities to help needy people meet emergencies with food, rent, fuel and other necessities. The monastery also has membership in numerous peace and justice organizations such as Bread for the World, Pax Christi, Amnesty International, Common Cause, Moratorium Now, National Coalition Against the Death Penalty and the National Office of Post Abortion Reconciliation.

These organizations and others provide our community with opportunities to work on such issues as the death penalty, right to life, health care, gun control, nuclear proliferation, non-violence, rights for Third World nations and rainforest preservation.

The sisters are kept informed and contribute by action -- especially by their prayers.



Sister Mary Frances is flanked by St. Coletta's Pastor, Fr. Tom Gillespie, and Jaue Claire Ishegiero, Pastoral Minister.

Saint Bede Sisters Launch Prayer Ministry On Dec. 2 By Honoring Bishop Raymond Burke

EAU CLAIRE, WI - The sisters of Saint Bede Monastery and Center have selected the First Sunday in Advent for the start of an intentional prayer ministry. Announced by **Sister Margaret Michaud**, prioress, the ministry will reach out to individuals and organizations by including them in the sisters' regular prayer.

"We practice the long Benedictine tradition of prayer, said several times daily by our Saint Bede community," said Sister Margaret. "Our intentional prayer ministry seeks to acknowledge the needs of others. This is something we all can offer at Saint Bede, regardless of assignment or age.

"In a sense," she added, "this intensified ministry formalizes and extends our daily practice of remembering others in prayer."

Sister Margaret said the ministry would begin with prayers for Bishop **Raymond L. Burke** of the Diocese of La Crosse. Then, on designated days, the sisters will pray for local parishes and Catholic schools and organizations.

Sister Michaela Hedican, who coordinates the sisters' assisted living unit at Clairemont and is involved in planning the ministry, said the Benedictine sisters also will pray for area fire, police, health care, legal, social services and others whose work serves vital human needs. "These professionals and others we pray for also will receive a letter from the sisters designating their day of prayer. In time, we expect to include individuals and organizations where sisters have ministered in the past."

Sister Michaela said the sisters will continue to welcome request for prayers. Also continuing is their long practice of recording the names and intentions of those requesting the sisters' prayers in remembrance books at Saint Bede and Clairemont. She emphasized the sisters' prayers always are freely given to others.

Sister Michaela said the Benedictines anticipate the need for designating, equipping and staffing an office at Saint Bede for the ministry as increased requests for prayers are received. Both Sister Margaret and Sister Michaela agreed that the sisters, having committed their lives to God and service to others, "take very seriously their ministry of prayer."



Sister Barbara Coeilaud (left) and Sister Lucille Hubuaw

Visit us at: www.saintbede.org

BY THE LIBRARY LAMP

— Sister Lorayne Andre, OSB



If book catalogs, sales flyers and reviews are your interest or avocation, I don't need to tell you that the current golden words in the book world are Celtic and Benedictine.

A new resource on the market that captures the unique flavor of Celtic spirituality is William John Fitzgerald's *A CONTEMPORARY CELTIC PRAYER BOOK*. It weaves together the ordinary lives of the Celts in about the sixth-century with their traditional songs and literature, devotions to Mary and the saints and the sacred Liturgy of the Hours. Part I of the book presents the sacred "hours" as a constant daily link to God. The author, a Catholic priest, offers suggestions for recitation by an individual or group. A charming feature is the "meditative moment" with each day's prayer — a famous Irish locale in the Celtic world. Fitzgerald urges: "Taste it today."

Part II is a treasury of Celtic rituals and blessings: prayers for "shadowtimes" of sickness, prayers for "moon-times" of love and romance, prayers for "thintimes" of death and mourning. You will find here a lyrical way of looking at the world, a special sense of beauty and mystery, a free-spirited joy. As the texts linked the Celts of yore to God, they unite our risings, dyings and dreamings to the divine. "Blessed be!"

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The latest prayer book to excite the market is *THE GLENSTAL BOOK OF PRAYER*, subtitled "a Benedictine prayer book," and promoted by the monks of Glenstal Abbey near Limerick, Ireland. This abbey was founded in memory of Abbot Columba Marmion, the recently beatified Dublin Benedictine. According to reviewers, the popularity of the book is a surprise. Some have asked whether the Irish are turning to prayer as a sign of national soul-searching. "They say" buyers are of all types — teens to stockbrokers.

The book is pocket-size, attractive with an icon cover of St. Nicholas, and a ribbon marker for the reader's "prayer-stops" in a busy day. It has four clear sections: treasures from the monastic storehouse, familiar Catholic prayers, prayers in English, Gaelic and Latin for specific events and family observances, and a final section containing excerpts from the Rule of St. Benedict and the psalms. Resources are drawn from the Bible, Church wisdom and liturgies, and the calendar of saints.

The Celtic tradition — earthy, devotional — is reflected here in the experience of modern monks swept up in prayer "that God may be glorified."

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Liturgical Press recently reissued a book by Esther de



Sister Lorayne Andre

Waal first published in 1984, thus confirming its status as a contemporary Benedictine classic. In *SEEKING GOD* men and women, lay people and oblates have found inspiration and an introduction to the Benedictine Rule as a guide for daily living.

Kathleen Norris, who wrote the forward to this edition, attributes her religious conversion to the *Rule of St. Benedict*. She states that the de Waal book convinced her that it is Christ she seeks, and it is Christ who seeks her. In the author's words, Benedict's wisdom is for anyone who wishes "to take the gospel as guide." While the book deals with many aspects of monasticism, the focus is on prayer, the "essential priority," the author calls it. Chapters on the vows, relationships and authority enable readers to discover in the Rule Benedict's gift to us and the Church.

De Waal, an Anglican lay woman, lives on the Welsh Borders, where she grew up. She is therefore very familiar with Celtic literature and has written: *God Under My Roof: Celtic Songs and Blessings*, and most recently: *The Celtic Way of Prayer: The Recovery of the Religious Imagination*.

•••

Kathleen Norris and Tomie dePaola have collaborated on a stunning book for children, *THE HOLY TWINS*, about Saint Benedict and his twin sister, Saint Scholastica. The writer and the artist have combined to create a biography with appeal for young and old. Just enough sixth-century fact and flavor is included to depict the world in which the twins grow up. The illustrations are done in muted tones and incorporate many religious symbols, typical of dePaola's ecclesial art. The text is imaginary within a historical, informational framework.

I predict that Benedictina buffs will be giving copies of this book as Christmas gifts!

Developments

— James A. Schwartz, Director of Development

Despite Uncertainties, Donors Continue to Remember Sisters

An Indian Summer marred by the September 11 terrorist attacks and horrific aftermath have wrought profound changes at home and abroad. Many mourn lost loved ones and suffer a wide range of anxieties that have been amplified since U.S. military action began in Afghanistan.

Uncertainty now is our daily companion. Many have shelved dreams or adjusted their priorities to fit their new view of the future. At Saint Bede, where prayer, work and seeking God are "constants," our suddenly changed world has amplified the sisters' concern and compassion for others, and their spiritual focus.

Their formalized Saint Bede prayer ministry noted elsewhere in this issue, is an example of that concern. Increasingly, they recognize, people of all faiths are seeking solace, healing and direction through prayer. At Saint Bede and Clairemont the sisters gather several times daily for prayer on behalf of their community and for God's blessings for individuals, families and organizations. Many sisters still serve in the wider community as employees or volunteers in schools, health care facilities, parishes and other settings. The sisters, like many of our donors, volunteers and Lay Associates, also join in area efforts to provide meals, clothing, shelter and other assistance to those most in need. Both stewards and sharers of resources, the sisters amplify your gifts by reaching out to others. At Saint Bede Center their hospitality annually serves an estimated 10,000 visitors in a variety of ecumenical programs for spirit, mind and body.

Whether a Heritage Companion who has stated an intention to leave an estate gift for the sisters, an annual donor or Lay Associate or Saint Bede volunteer — all are sustainers of Benedictine values and traditions that have served western Wisconsin since 1892. Our sincere thanks to all of you for being one with us in the service of many.

Some Updates Since Fall TIDINGS

- Development Advisory Council members and others have assisted in adding nearly 100 names to our active mailing list. If you know someone who would enjoy being in touch with Saint Bede, please let us know.
- Our Fall Solicitation invites friends to consider a gift for the retirement needs of today's Saint Bede sisters and/or honor the memory of a departed member of their community.
- The second consecutive "**Celebrity Banquet - Dinner Beyond the Hill**" has attracted an outstanding cadre of Celebrity Servers who will staff 20 tables for their invited guests on Saturday, February 9, 2002 at Park Inn & Suites, Eau Claire. A grand array of items will be auctioned, including several antiques and a "Pauline" heirloom-quality baby blanket from the sisters. Their songs again will enliven the event, which benefits the Saint Bede retirement fund.
- Other planned events: Saturday, March 9, 2002 -- Pie Social and Thrift/Antique Sale at Saint Bede Center. Time to be announced. Sunday, March 17, 2002 -- St. Patrick's Day Event, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the Center. The event is the sisters' "thank you" to donors, neighbors and friends. Local tenor **Warren Petryk** will entertain with Irish and other songs and light refreshments will be served. Join us!
- A re-designed Saint Bede web site was "launched" in late October. Always a work in progress, the site capsules the sisters' history, ministries and activities. Your comments, suggestions and requests for prayers or information about Saint Bede are welcomed.

May your Christmas season be joyous, peaceful and filled with love and hope.

Visit us at: 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:

- **December 6** - Spirit of Living Network - "Receiving and Giving: Care for You"
- **December 7-8** - Advent/Christmas Retreat - From Annunciation to Birth - directed by *Sister Rosemarie Whitehead*, OSF and *Father Dick Rice*, SJ - sponsored by Saint Bede Center
- **December 15** - Diocesan School of Biblical Studies
- **December 18-Jan. 3** - Labyrinth available for meditative walking
- **January 10** - Spirit of Living Network - "Journaling"
- **January 26** - Diocesan School of Biblical Studies
- **February 15-17** - Marriage Encounter Weekend
- **February 21** - Spirit of Living Network - "Joyful Evening of Song and Dance"
- **February 23** - Diocesan School of Biblical Studies
- **March 1-3** - Lenten Retreat with Rev. John Heagle
- **March 7-9** - Parish nurse retreat - sponsored by UWEC Cont. Education - Nursing Dept.
- **March 23** - Diocesan School of Biblical Studies
- **March 26** - Spirit of Living Network - "The Labyrinth: Walking Your Sacred Path"

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



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CENTERING

– *Sister Hildegard Geraets, OSB*

The blue skies of October, ripened apples, corn mature on the stalk and nuts falling from trees have given way to bare branches, harvested crops, cloudy skies and chilly north winds.

The Newmau Community has returned with their weekly program for children as well as for their monthly program for the entire family. Diocesan programs for adult formation have met. Both Luther-Midelfort and Sacred Heart hospitals have offered programs for their employees. Confirmation classes of various denominations used the Center for "get away" space. Both Catholic and public schools have conducted training sessions for teachers and students. UW-Eau Claire and UW-Stout held staff retreats here. Small groups with an interest in the arts, spiritual well-being and Bible study met on a monthly or weekly basis.

We saw an increase in the number of people using the Center as a place for time out; either for the day or for an extended period. The people participating in these programs

come from a variety of backgrounds. They bring special gifts and all who work at the Center have been enriched by their contributions.

The liturgical year introduces us to new beginnings with the season of Advent. We are greeted with words such as awake, prepare, rejoice and Immanuel. This year we find Advent filled with tensions, questions and problems. This puts us in company with Isaiah, John the Baptist, Mary and Joseph. Because they were people of faith and filled with hope their mission in life was accomplished. So with us. Help through these days of unknowing may be found during the Advent retreat of December 7 and 8. Both **Sister Rosemarie Whitehead** and **Father Dick White** are well-received retreat directors. Or you may find answers in these unstable times by spending personal time at the retreat center.

However you prepare for the Christ Child, we wish you an Advent season filled with God's love, goodness and peace. Come, Immanuel.

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