



# Monastery Mosaic

May/2010

## From the Prioress

Dear Friends,

Today we celebrate the feast of St. Joseph the Worker. Let me tell you the tale of St. Joseph and my mother.

Raised in a large family I recall that my parents lived from pay check to pay check in the early days of their marriage and parenthood.

There was a statue of St. Joseph in the dining room and if funds were short my mother would say, "O.K., Big Boy. You have to face the wall until you come through with the money we need." Since St. Joseph did not enjoy looking at the wall it seemed it wasn't long before the money came through and he was turned back around. He then had the pleasure of looking at squabbling kids and a grateful and satisfied mother.

While my theological understanding differs from my mother's, the underlying principle holds. If you ask for help it comes, in a variety of ways.

In my last letter I explained that as part of our planning process we would be calling on the larger community (you) to assist us. We still plan to do that-but not yet. We still have our own work to do.

Our community recently completed two days of meetings with our facilitator and since we continue to ask the Spirit to lead us that is

exactly what happened. (Note the similarity to my mother's request. The difference is that she didn't ask for help; she just waited until St. Joseph became sufficiently bored with staring at the wall that he came through with what she needed.)

Being attentive to the Spirit moving among us we realize that the next step in our process planning is to respond to the Spirit's call to "Come aside." As a community we will spend two days of retreat reflecting deeply on the essentials of monastic life and explore creative ways of sharing Benedictine life through different forms of membership. We have shared with our Associates on this topic of membership and will be enlisting their help as we go deeper.

As each step unfolds I will continue to keep you informed and at a timely point in the process we will be calling on you for your ideas and your wisdom.

Know that you are in our prayer and we trust you keep us in yours.

Sister Barbara

(see next page)

### **News from the Monastery**

After twenty-three years working as a psychiatric nurse at NRGH, Sister Valerie will be retiring from full time work. After a much needed break she will return to work on a casual status. She says she's ready for a rest!

Bob Becker is working as a volunteer here for two weeks. Having worked as a volunteer at Queen of Angel's monastery in Mt. Angel, Oregon, Bob decided he'd like to volunteer at our monastery and experience this part of beautiful B.C. at the same time.

Sr. Germaine extends her thanks to those who responded to her call for volunteers. She has a long list that seems to have no end so if you haven't had a chance to contact her, know that she is waiting day and night by the phone for your call. (You're quite right. I'm exaggerating. She actually waits only during the day.)

Following the Saturday evening liturgy on June 5<sup>th</sup> we invite you join us for coffee and cake at the Retreat Centre as we celebrate Bishop Remi De Roo's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary to ordained priesthood. You might ask why I put this announcement under Monastery news. It's because Remi has been and continues to be a very important part of our history and holds a special place in our hearts and lives. We hope you will be able to join with us in celebrating his anniversary.

### **Associates and Oblates**

In May we will be welcoming three new Associates. Ray Seller, and Bob and Jan Opoka have asked to become Associates of the House of Bread. We are delighted to

celebrate this new relationship with them in a ceremony on May 20.

The Oblate team sponsored a Benedictine retreat day on April 18 and will be offering another retreat day on Sunday, June 13. The theme will be Building Community/Living Hospitality. If you have not attended one of these days you might want to give that gift to yourself. The response has been positive and encouraging.

### **Monastic Wisdom**

#### *On Understanding*

Some disciples came to see Abba Poemana and said to him: "Tell us, when we see brothers dozing during the sacred office, should we pinch them so they will stay awake?" And the old man said to them: "Actually, if I saw a brother sleeping, I would put his head on my knees and let him rest."

#### *On the call to conversion*

One day Abba Arsenius was asking an old Egyptian man for advice. There was someone who saw this and said to him: "Abba Arsenius, why is a person like you, who has such great knowledge of Greek and Latin, asking a peasant like this about your thoughts?" And Abba Arsenius replied, "Indeed I have learned the knowledge of Latin and Greek, yet I have not learned even the alphabet of this peasant."

Stories taken from Illuminated Life by Joan Chittister