

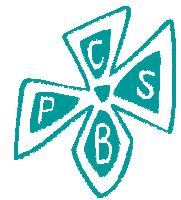
The Gatekeeper

St. Scholastica Monastery Fort Smith, Arkansas

Consider Your Call Discernment Retreat

Volume 3, Issue 4

September 2010



Special points of interest:

- *Consider Your Call Discernment Retreat July 8-12 2010*
- *Benedictine Bookends: What a monastic reads ...*
- *Vocation Booths: Benedictine Presence is Everything!*
- *Vocation Calendar: Who's Who...*

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This summer's vocation discernment retreat held extra appeal for the women who came to St. Scholastica. The retreat hosted five women interested in learning more about the monastic life and how this way of life might be calling the participants to a deeper and specific relationship to God.

The women who came to the retreat varied in background, age, culture but all felt the need to come and see like never before.

This retreat is unique in that it is a joint effort of vocation directors from both St. Scholastica Monastery and Subiaco Abbey. It is different in



Cindy Johnson, Crystal Dore, Roxana Rodriguez, Abbot Jerome, Katy Johanan, Sister Alice, Jennifer Verkamp and Sister Kimberly

that the vocation directors know that seekers for their communities are seeking the same thing, and this seeking does not know gender. Yes, both the Abbey and the Monastery are autonomous and govern as each should—one as a women's community the other as a men's community.

Both communities offer other opportunities throughout the year to experience monastic life, with weekend live-ins. This is important to anyone who is seeking a possible vocation to religious life, but few communities offer joint experiences from both the women's and the men's monasteries.

This experience often held in the summer months is a five day event that arranges for the retreatants to not only experience the life of prayer, but to join in ministry, to dine with the members, to have sessions about the monastic life, and to learn how that is lived out in each of our monasteries.

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God is Here

Sister Rose Ashour, OSB

His voice

I heard it in the trees and in the wind

He spoke to me in sunshine and in rain.

Flowers, birds and squirrels echoed his, "Yes, I'm here." All these spoke of Beauty.

"But" said, I, "I'd like to see him, not only hear."

Then down the pathway where I stood,

I saw a boy, a girl, a man, a woman.

His face was there—in theirs, the image of God.



Sister Rose Ashour, OSB

This time I heard no voice,

But faith told me,

"Often you hear him but seldom see."

So listen and look, he's so near.

—Sister Rose Ashour, OSB

Vocation Opportunities: How is God calling you?

Come and See Weekends may just be the thing for you! Here are some scheduled times. If these do not fit into your time frame consider making one suited just for you!

- September 24-26, 2010
- November 19-21, 2010
- December 10-12, 2010
- January 7-9, 2011
- February 11-13, 2011

OBSERVERSHIP PROGRAM

This program is open to any woman who wants to learn more about the monastic way of life in a formation like setting so as to deepen her discernment as a potential postulant of St. Scholastica.

An interested candidate must have been to the monastery for a visit at least 3 times previ-

ously and be willing to commit to at least one month of living in the monastery. She can keep her employment and still join us as an Observer.

For more information about this great experience call the vocation office today!

479-783-4147



STORAGE OR CLUTTER

Sister Rose Ashour, OSB

Boxes here, boxes there

Boxes everywhere.

What do I store in boxes?

Useful things

Useless things—things that matter, things that don't.



So many boxes, so many things.

God, don't let me get boxed in with all my boxes.

—Sister Rose Ashour, OSB

Benedictine Bookends (What a monastic Reads) : Little Bee

Little Bee, Little Bee. What an interesting title to a book. Why am I drawn to the text? Well, it may have everything and yet nothing at all to do with the fact that I have this thing about books, movies, or music with the word ‘bee’ in it.

Books such as *The Secret Life of Bees*, or *Akeelah and the Bee*, *The Bee Gees*, *Winnie the Pooh the Bee line to Honey* or even the more direct title, *Bee Movie* about a cute animated bee. There are things out there that I have yet to add to my bee list, *Kissing the Bee*, and *Bee Season*. There is so much out there about bees. I am not sure why I have this fascination with these bee titles, or themes about bees. More often than not I am the first one to flee from our buzzing

honey-making friends. I just don’t want to meet the frustrated end of a bee that matters more to the bee than to me!

So, what about *Little Bee*? This text written by Mr. Chris Cleave starts about telling the reader the following, “**WE DON’T WANT TO TELL YOU TOO MUCH ABOUT THIS BOOK.**”

“It is a truly special story and we don’t want to spoil it.

Nevertheless, you need to know something, so we will just say this:

It is extremely funny, but the Afri-

can beach scene is horrific.

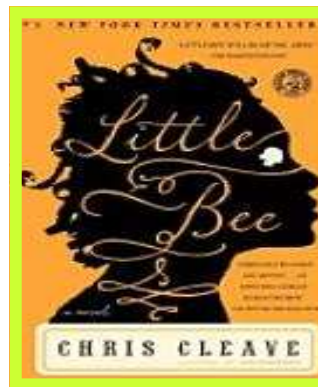
The story starts there, but the book doesn’t.

And it’s what happens afterward that is most important.”

What Mr. Chris Cleave says is true enough, and although this is a work of fiction what the message conveys is not. I began with the first page, wanted to read the next, finding myself in real places and in real connection with the characters Cleave writes about.

Cleave states, “Once you have read it, you’ll want to tell everyone about it. When you do, please don’t tell them what happens either. The magic is in how it unfolds.”

—Sr. Kimberly R. Prohaska



Consider Your Call Discernment Retreat

(continued from page one)

During the retreat participants have ample time to reflect and meet the other members of the monastery or abbey as well as have opportunities to share with like minded persons who are seeking just as they are.

How did the women who came find us? Most encountered us via the internet and our webpage. Some discovered us by intent, that is, through vocation searches such

as *Vision Vocation Match* and *Google*. Some learned about us through personal invitation of another sister or through parish bulletin announcements. No matter how women come to learn about us they come to see what we are about. They come to seek the answers that are singing questions in their hearts.

—Sr. Kimberly R Prohaska, OSB



Katy Johanan, Cindy Johnson, Crystal Dore, Roxana Rodriguez and Jennifer Verkamp

Prayer impacts Vocations

The Sisters of St. Scholastica have a terrific prayer life. The sisters who reside on third floor of the monastery, also known as our infirmary, are our powerhouse of prayer. Myriads of time and loving prayer have been lifted up in all kinds of prayer and one of the most important is our prayer for vocations.

There are several sisters who pray the rosary each day specifically for those who are entertaining the notion of a call or vocation to religious life.

The community has for a number of years included the names of serious discerners on the community prayer calendar so as to pray by name for the women who have expressed an interest in religious life. It is

through this prayer that women seekers are finding their way to live out their life as a religious sister of our community and elsewhere.

Another way the sisters are praying for vocations is through the annual World Day of Prayer for vocations. The vocation committee of St. Scholastica offers a special prayer service on behalf of women who are thinking about the life.

Most recently the community has begun a weekly prayer for vocations that is prayed together at the end of vespers. The prioress leads this prayer and the sisters respond. On First Friday the community also prays a novena to the Infant of Prague for specific intentions of vocation seekers. This is a prayer custom that reaches back into the history of the community of St. Scholastica and we are happily reaping the fruits of that prayer. Please pray for vocations!

Vocation Prayer

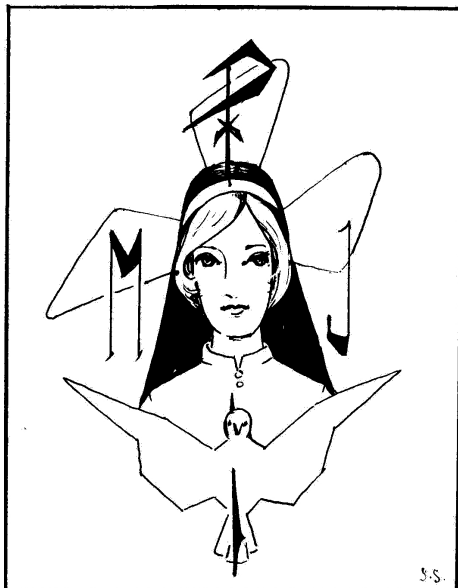
God of love
God of infinite compassion,
We thank you and praise you
for your presence among us.

Give us the strength to be
ever more true to our call
to be ourselves and to be your
disciples of justice and peace.

May our witness and example
lead others to you and to service
in your kingdom here on earth.

Please, O God, give to your
Church, your world, persons
who are willing to follow you
and not count the cost.

We ask this through Jesus,
whose life was freely given as
the seal of your infinite care
for us.
+ Amen.



The image to the left is a piece that was compiled by Sister Simon Edelhuber who joined the monastery in 1940. Sister Simon after many years of dedicated service entered her eternal reward on February 17, 2006 at the age of 95.

The vocation prayer listed above is the work of the monastic community.

Seeing Double? Holy Twin Day: Sister Kimberly Prohaska

Some say it's in the water, or double the trouble while others offer the proof of genetics. Whatever the cause, it is still wonderful to encounter the faces of twins, identical or fraternal, boy or girl, it's a joy to the heart to meet those who share connections with more than just a date of birth.

St. Scholastica and St. Benedict are called the Holy Twins. It was with this thought in mind that sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery entertained the gift of twins and

triplets.

The Verkamp, Schmitz and Trinidad Families are blessed with an abundance of look alike, birthday sharing family members.

Sister Kimberly, who boasts of her own twin brother Kirk, invited the Verkamp and Trinidad twins and



Verkamp, Schmitz & Trinidad Twins

triplets for a day of learning about The Holy Twins, and tour the monastery. Twin day also included the gift of an ice cream social for all the sisters followed by recreation and swimming

for the twins and triplets. 'Twin day' was thus born or rather born double in the monastery!

—Sr. Kimberly Prohaska

What draws me to St. Scholastica Monastery



Postulant
Sandra Nelson

There was something most genuinely familiar about the community of Benedictine Sisters who reside and live out their vocation at St. Scholastica Monastery in Ft. Smith, Arkansas. There was and continues to be a beautifully mysterious presence of reassuring peace and comfort that touched upon all my senses. During each visit to the community I was blessed with a true purpose as to what God was asking of me revealing himself to me in very significant ways as I experienced life with the sisters. As such, the desires of my heart, mind, body and soul for the love I have for Jesus Christ was more than an inclination to continue my relations with the sisters more deeply. My own inner rhythm seemed to fit like hand to glove, in complete unison with the manner in which they are living. It was this unmistakable truth that

led me to investigate St. Benedict and the Rule that governs their way of life.

The more I discovered, the more I found that my charism coincided with this life so well, I began to envision the possibility to reach higher, above to the heavens, just by being present there to grow in relationship with God and others like no other place I've experienced. The structure of prayer, community time, ministry and personal time for learning, meditation/reflection and recreation is balanced in such a way that I had recognized it in myself and the manner in which I feel called to live this gift of life to be quite similar to these sisters who had been chosen by God.

My cup over flows with gratitude and love for I have been accepted by this community to enter as a Postulant on September 14, 2010. I look forward to continuing my journey with this community, and believe my gratitude, joy and the love I have, giving of myself in prayer, community life and ministry is where communion with God feeds and nourishes my soul. It is the fuel for acts of kindness, charity and love (hopefully) reflecting something of divine guidance and grace. I feel I am ready to accept whatever the personal growth challenges may be and trust in the Holy Spirit to provide what is needed to fulfill God's purpose. Amen!

— Postulant Sandra Nelson

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Check out our website!
[Http://www.stscho.org](http://www.stscho.org)

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*Consider
Your
Call*

*"Listen carefully,
my daughter,
to the master's
instructions..."*
Rule of St. Benedict Prologue

Come and See Monastic Experience
For Women and Men ages 18-45
St. Scholastica Monastery
1301 S. Albert Pike Ave.
Fort Smith, Arkansas 72903
To attend this annual summer retreat contact:
Sr. Kimberly R. Prohaska at 479-783-4147
June 23-27, 2010

Monastic Word of the Month (Good) Zeal

(Noun) fervor for a person, cause, or object; eager desire or endeavor; enthusiastic diligence; ardor.
*(Check out Chapter 72 in the Rule of St. Benedict for more about *good zeal*)



Do you know a woman we'd like to know?



*Does she have listening heart-like ours?
A Heart filled with passion for being a God seeker?*

We are Benedictine Sisters:

Committed to seeking God, rooted in a rich monastic tradition. Women who seek to be a voice for the voiceless—by living a life balanced in hospitality, simplicity, and in the wisdom of the Gospel. We join together in prayer, community life and service to help create a loving world! Come live out our 20/20 vision by sharing in our dream of being a prophetic and contemplative community!

*Please share with women
information about the sisters of
St. Scholastica!
Write, or Call today!*

Do you know a woman who would like to know more about us?

We'd like to know her too...