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Federation of Saint Scholastica

Gyrovagi

Gyrovagi: An occasional newsletter from the President of the Federation of St. Scholastica

Spring 2018

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FSS Chapter Meeting

Critical Junctures

The time for our quadrennial Federation Chapter meeting is fast approaching. Committees have been working hard on preparing various aspects of the topics for our Chapter meeting. They have been in communication with the prioresses and delegates about these topics, asking for their input and for their preparation for the Chapter. We owe a debt of gratitude to these committee members for their attention to detail, creativity, and dedication. THANK YOU!!!



S. Lynn McKenzie, OSB
Federation President

The time during the Federation Chapter meeting will be packed, but we hope it will be enlivening and enriching as well as a source of hope as we move into the future as individual monasteries and as a federation as a whole.

The federation chapter committees are:

Program Planning Committee

Elaine Fischer (Atchison), Chair, Clare Carr (Colorado Springs), Patricia Henry (Torreon), Kimberly Porter (Covington), and Christine Ereiser (Tulsa). (Christine is serving as the Liturgy Committee chair and so is the liturgy liason to the Program Planning Committee.)

Election Committee

Judith Ann Heble (Lisle), Chair, Karen Brink (Pittsburgh), and Joan Marie Stief (Baltimore)

Juridic Committee

Mary Catherine Wenstrup (Covington), Chair, Molly Brockwell (Atchison) and Judy Zonsius (Chicago)

Liturgy Committee

Christine Ereiser (Tulsa), Chair, Philomena Fleck (Elizabeth), Barbara Helder (Pittsburgh), and Therese Haydel (Cullman – local contact for committee).

Centennial Committee AKA "Federation 100"

Elizabeth Brown (Glendora) and Linda Romey (Erie), co-chairs, Ana Cloughly (Colorado Springs), Elisabeth Meadows (Cullman), Catherine Martinez (Tulsa), and Andrea Westkamp (Bristow). This committee has begun meeting, but the 100th anniversary of the founding of our federation is not until 2022.



Cullman in June



**Past President of the Federation of St. Scholastica -
a going home to God.**

Sister Johnette Putnam, OSB, 84, a Benedictine sister of Mount St. Scholastica, Atchison, Kansas, died Sunday, February 4, 2018, at the monastery. The vigil service will be Thursday, February 8, at 7:00 p.m. in the monastery chapel and the Mass of Resurrection will be celebrated there as well on Friday, February 9, at 10:30 a.m.

Born in New Orleans, La., Sister Johnette was a member of St. Scholastica Priory in Covington, La., until it closed in 1988 and she transferred to Mount St. Scholastica in Atchison. She taught in grade schools in Louisiana and was a principal for several years. From 1958 to 1968, she taught at St. Joseph High School in Chauvin, La., and St. Scholastica Academy in Covington, La. She held a B.A. in English from Mount St. Scholastica College, M.A. in theology from St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn., and an honorary doctorate from Mount Marty College in Yankton, S.D. In 1968, she was elected prioress in Covington and in 1978 became president of the Federation of St. Scholastica, an organization of Benedictine monasteries. She held this position for 12 years and then was a retreat director at Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman, Ala., before moving to Atchison. There she served as director of Sophia Center from 1992 to 2003 and helped launch Souljourners, an ecumenical program for training spiritual directors at Sophia Center. She wrote many articles and gave lectures and workshops on monastic life, community leadership, liturgy, and spirituality.



Sister Johnette was preceded in death by her parents Gorham and Georgiana Serpas Putnam, by her brothers Charles, Joseph and S. Jerome, and a sister, Emilie Nicaud. She is survived by her twin brother John (Dot) of Tierra Verde, Fla., nieces and nephews, and her monastic family. Arensberg Pruett Funeral Home (www.arenbergpruett.com) is in charge of arrangements. Memorials may be sent to Mount St. Scholastica or made online at the Mount's web site (www.mountosb.org).

The above is the obituary that appeared on the website of Mount St. Scholastica.

In 1990 at the Federation Chapter, which was at the end of her 12 years in office as Federation President, Sister Johnette's address to the Chapter concluded with this:

With the completion of our constitution, the solid growth in our theological understanding and the deepening of our monastic spirituality we are on the road to a new moment and to a new millennium. The question before us now is, will we steward well all that has been given us by a gracious God who has abided with us over the years? Will the seeds of renewal that have been planted in our member monasteries bear fruit in our individual and corporate lives? Will we be able to seize this moment of revitalization?

For further inspiration about the life of Sister Johnette and her service to us in the Federation of St. Scholastica, I encourage you to see Jeanne d'Arc Kernion's eulogy of Johnette given the night before Johnette's funeral:

<https://www.federationofsaintscholastica.org/news-events/>

Jeanne d'Arc said she had known Johnette for 69 years! And, of course, for many of those years they lived together in community at St. Scholastica Monastery in Covington, Louisiana.

***We give thanks to God for the life and loving, dedicated service of Johnette Putnam, OSB.
Rest well, dear Johnette,
in the tender loving and eternal embrace of your God!***



Federation of St. Scholastica to celebrate Centennial in 2022



The "Federation 100" committee has enthusiastically embraced the challenge of creating a direction and vision for a four-year-long celebration of who we are, where we've been, and where we might go. Committee members are Ana Cloughly (Colorado Springs), Elisabeth Meadows (Cullman), Catherine Martinez (Tulsa), Andrea Westkamp (Bristow), and co-chairs Elizabeth Brown (Glendora) and Linda Romey (Erie). They began meeting last October, each generously offering her unique experience, knowledge, skills and creativity to the process.

"What do we want to achieve with this celebration?", "How will we achieve it?" and, "What skills will we need?" were the questions we addressed at our first meeting. By the end of that meeting, we were expressing feelings like, "I'm excited!", "I'm energized!" and "Wow!" You will soon know why we have such energy and excitement—and be invited to join in our enthusiasm—as we share our vision for this celebration and outline our four-year working plan with Chapter Delegates in June and then with our communities. And, be assured, there will be ample opportunities for all of us to participate in this celebration of Benedictine life.

Elections and Visitations in the Federation:

In early March, 2018 the sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery in Boerne, Texas elected Sister Frances Briseño as their next prioress. She will be installed on May 19, 2018. (Sister Mary Catherine Wenstrup (Covington) facilitated the discernment process and Sister Mariette Therese Bernier (Elizabeth) assisted her.)



Newly elected prioress Frances Briseño (on right) pictured with current prioress Bernadine Reyes.

St. Walburg Monastery in Covington, Kentucky will be having its election of prioress the weekend of April 5-8, 2018. Susan

Quaintance (Chicago) will be facilitating the discernment process and she will be assisted by Elaine Fischer (Atchison). St. Benedict Monastery in Pittsburgh will be having its regular canonical visitation April 19-22. Visitation will be Lynn McKenzie and Tonette Sperando (Cullman).

The last visitation of 2018 will be October 18-21 at St. Scholastica Monastery in Chicago. Visitation are Kathy McNary (Baltimore, chair), Lynn McKenzie, and Jacquelyn Ernster (Yankton, SD of the Federation of St. Gertrude).

Scheduled for 2019 for elections are: Tulsa (March 14-17), Bristow (April 4-7) and Chicago (April 25-28).

Scheduled for 2019 for visitations are: St. Leo (January 18-21), Ridgely (October 3-6), Elizabeth (Oct 24-27), Lisle (November 12-15) and Glendora (November 21-24).

(Note: the dates of each upcoming election and visitation are posted to the federation website. After the election, the website posting is updated to name the person elected as prioress.)

CIB 2017 in South Korea

In September, 2017, during the heat of public exchanges between the US President and the North Korean leader (as North Korea carried out a series of provocative missile and nuclear bomb tests), as well as while the alliance between the USA and South Korea was being strained, the Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum (CIB) met in Daegu in the southeastern region of South Korea. The USA Benedictines were well represented. Pictured at right are Lynn McKenzie (delegate), CIB Moderator Judith Ann Heble (Lisle), Jennifer Mechtild Horner (delegate), CIB executive secretary Mary Jane Vergotz, and Anne Wambach (1st alternate delegate). Despite the serious tension between the governments of the USA and South Korea over what to do about the escalating aggression by North Korea, the CIB delegates of the USA and South Korea, as well as the other delegates from around the world, prayed for and spoke of world peace, and created peace just by our being together. The time in South Korea for the CIB gathering was a once in a lifetime experience that created more understanding among diverse peoples who are united in living the monastic way of life according to the Rule of St. Benedict. New friendships were forged and awareness of different cultures and languages helped us all to see our world in microcosm with hope of peace for at the macrocosmic level.

There were opportunities to stay with Benedictine Sisters at 3 monasteries in 3 different South Korean cities (see map) as well as to visit a few men's Benedictine monasteries. We even visited a Buddhist monastery at the Unmunsa Temple where we had the opportunity for interreligious dialogue with Buddhist nuns. We also learned about the rich and deep Catholic faith in South Korea, informed by and fostered by

the blood of martyrs over centuries. We prayed together for peace in the words of a prayer service for world peace from the Erie Benedictine Sisters, on the same day that many Benedictine Sisters in the USA were united in that same prayer.



American OSB representatives in South Korea

For more about our time in South Korea, I invite you to read Sister Judith Ann Heble's account in the CIB 2017 newsletter available here:

http://www.benedictines-cib.org/english/en_news.html

I agree with Sister Judith Ann that I will never again celebrate the feast day of St. Andrew Kim Taegon and companions (Korean martyrs) in the same way. Their memory and the celebration of the gift of themselves sacrificed for their faith should be a challenge to all of us to live our faith in a more authentic and deep way.



Areas with blue arrows indicate the cities in which we stayed at 3 different women's OSB monasteries.



CIB group visiting Unmunsa Buddhist Temple (largest training Center for Buddhist nuns in Korea)



The CBP gathered for its annual assembly in Cullman at the Benedictine Sisters Retreat Center from Feb 1-7, 2018. There was some business of changing the governing documents of CBP. In addition, from the CBP members who expressed an interest in attending the quadrennial CIB Symposium in Rome in September, 2018, names were drawn from a hat, one from each of the federations, and one at large. Therefore, in addition to the federation presidents and the prioress general of the BSPA congregation, also attending the symposium in Rome from our federation are Karen Brink (Pittsburgh) and the next prioress to be elected in Covington, KY. (Covington will hold its election in April 2018.) The alternate from our federation will be Maricarmen Bracamontes (Torreon), in the event the newly elected prioress of Covington KY is unable to attend.

The usual array of reports about national Benedictine happenings were given, informing the prioresses on such activities as the ABFC, the inter-federation archives digitization committee, the 55 & Under gathering being planned for 2019, T4,, etc. In addition, the delegates who attended the CIB conference meeting in South Korea in September 2017 gave a power point presentation of pictures from their enriching time with other CIB delegates from around the world who gathered there for two weeks.

There were 3 guest speakers during the annual assembly. Malachy McCarthy, a former Benedictine monk who serves as the archivist to the Claretian Missionaries, presented on the topic of monastery archives and their importance in preserving our legacy. Sister Ephrem Hollermann, OSB (St. Joseph, MN) gave a response to Malachy's presentation giving her own experience of using various monasteries' archives in writing her earlier history of American Benedictine women and her current undertaking of writing the history of St. Joseph Monastery in St. Marys, PA, the first Bavarian Benedictine women's foundation in the United States. John Picciano of Florida, a friend and benefactor of Holy Name Monastery in St. Leo, FL, gave a two day workshop on addictions (as well as some other mental illnesses) and their treatment. There was much opportunity for question and answer and sharing of information about various treatment centers, and the best way to deal with these issues when they arise in our communities.

The CBP gathering was capped off by a grand Mardi Gras celebration including Cajun food and a Dixieland jazz band providing great entertainment and an opportunity for dancing and fun.



55 & Under

Mark your calendars and tell your 55 & Under members (must be in 1st profession or perpetual profession) that the next gathering will be held in Beech Grove, Indiana at Our Lady of Grace Monastery Retreat Center **March 8-11, 2019**.

The planning committee members

are: Belinda Monahan (Federation of St. Scholastica), Chair, Lisa Mauer (Federation of St. Benedict), Susan Reuber (Federation of St. Gertrude), Maria Victoria Cutaia, (Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration) and Fidelis Marie Lanowich (Missionary Benedictine Sisters).

Interfederation Archives Digitization Committee

This group of dedicated Benedictine women has been working together the last few years to find ways that together Benedictine Sisters in this country can improve the way we keep and preserve our legacy through our archives collections. They

have met a wonderful resource person who is knowledgeable and willing to help—Malachy McCarthy, a former monk of Saint Anseim Abbey in New Hampshire who now serves as province archivist for the Claretian Missionaries of the USA-Canada Province based in Chicago.

He has previously presented introductory archives workshops for religious communities. The Interfederation Archives committee is making plans to have a workshop for Benedictine women archivists with Malachy McCarthy as a presenter in the next year or so. It is their hope that a network among Benedictine archivists will begin to form and provide a support and encouragement in the important work of preserving the legacies of our monasteries.

Perhaps in the future a suggested set of Benedictine archives procedures and policies could be developed that would help all Benedictine archivists in their service to their communities.



Benedictine Sisters of the African Association of St. Mechtildis to meet in Twasana, South Africa in July 2018

The Benedictine Sisters from all over the African continent form the Association of St. Mechtildis. Sister Theodora Ntuli of Twasana, South Africa, is the association’s moderator. She has been in touch with me over the last few years and has invited donations from the monasteries of our federation to help support their association meetings. Quite a few of our member monasteries have been very generous in supporting the association’s meetings. In the Association’s newsletter after their meeting last year, Sister Theodora commented that our federation is their most important supporter.

Sister Theodora has said that they consider themselves the “daughter” of the Federation of St. Scholastica. We owe that honor to the foresight of Sister Esther Fangman (Atchison), then the federation president, who invited some of the African Benedictine Sisters to a Chapter meeting of our federation. Our Sisters from Africa were able to witness first-hand the value of joining Benedictine monasteries of women together for support, education and growth in our vocation to the monastic way of life. Not too long after attending a meeting with our federation, the African Sisters formed their own association. We are proud to be a part of their origin as an association.



Participants at the 2017 meeting of the Association of St. Mechtildis, held in Namibia. Included above at center is Sister Judith Ann Heble (Lisle), Moderator of the Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum (CIB).

The next meeting of the Association of St. Mechtildis will be from July 2-12, 2018 at the monastery of Sister Theodora in Twasana, South Africa. As the president of the federation I have been invited to attend and speak at this meeting. It will be an honor and a privilege to join them in South Africa. The theme for the 2018 meeting is “Obedience and Disobedience in Benedictine life.” The topic for last year’s meeting of the Association, when Sister Judith Ann Heble (Lisle) joined them, was “Benedictine Values in Relation to Tribalism.” According to the Association’s newsletter after the 2017 meeting, the reasons for the choice of tribalism as their topic included “to be visible as African Benedictines and be rooted in one culture – Benedictine culture. To have confidence that we are all one as members of the Association of St. Mechtildis, to find ways on how to combat tribalism in our communities and to accept each other as valuable members of the community.” Their newsletter continued: “It became very clear to us that we all suffer from tribalism. We all realized that tribalism is poisonous in our Congregations and it destroys community living, causes diseases, disunity, etc. When we leave our families to join religious life we take on the culture of the congregation, or the monastery, and leave our culture behind. Benedictines have their culture and meaning the way they live or do things. So one cannot live two cultures; if I am a Benedictine, I must do a like a Benedictine. Tribalism prevents growth in many ways.”

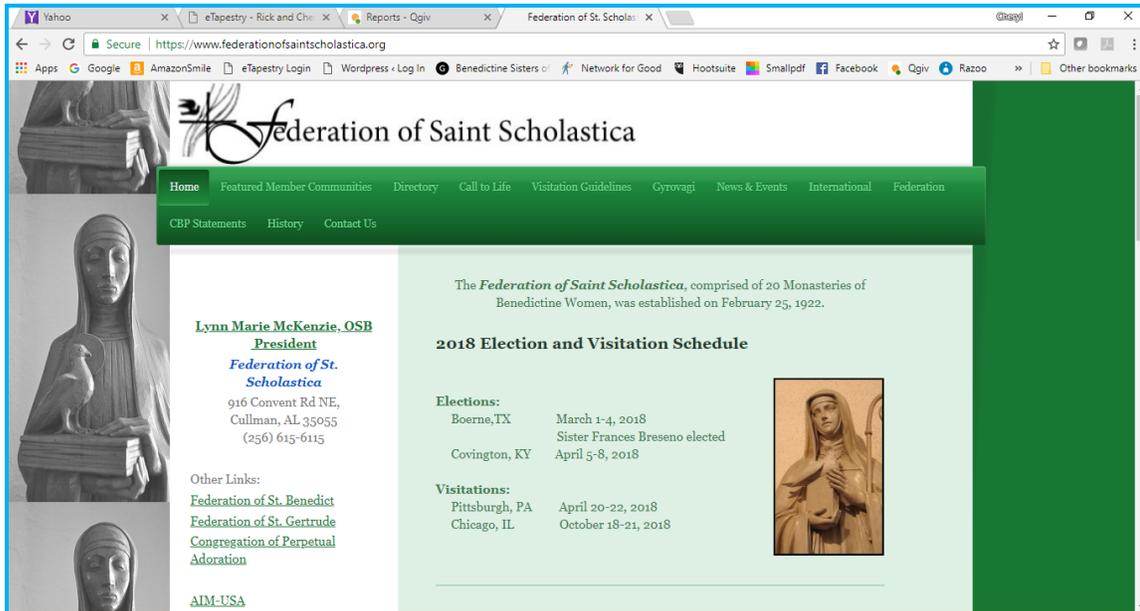


Your Federation Council Members:

- Susan Quaintance**, 1st Councilor (Chicago)
- Kathy McNany**, Secretary (Baltimore)
- Anne Wambach**, Treasurer (Erie)
- Maricarmen Bracamontes** (Torreon)
- Rita Brink** (Covington)
- Elizabeth Brown** (Glendora)
- [**Kathy White**, recording secretary (Baltimore)]

The Federation Council met at Mount St. Benedict Monastery in Erie, Pennsylvania in September 2017. Their next meeting will be held at Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman, Alabama April 12-14, 2018.

Federation Website Updates: <https://www.federationofsaintscholastica.org/>



The Federation of St. Scholastica is fortunate to have a thoughtful, competent and dedicated webmaster in Therese Haydel (Cullman). She has been working on the website for a few years now and has made many improvements and upgrades. If you have not yet signed up for the e-news blasts, please do! (You can find the sign up information at the bottom of the home page of the website. But if the print there is too small (which we have not been able to get the site provider to enlarge), feel free to email Therese directly and she will get you added to the list:

thereseosb@yahoo.com

The e-news blasts lets you know by email that new items have been added to the federation website. Currently there are well over 100 Sisters who have registered to receive these e-news blasts.

If you have been following updates on our federation website, then you know that in the last year we have added a "featured member communities" tab. Each month a different monastery of our federation posts news of current happenings and/or information about the community's history. This has been a popular part of the website to visit. This is a great way for us to stay connected with each other. There is this notation at the top of the "featured member communities" page: "If you have missed previous Featured Member postings or would like to revisit then go to the Featured Member Archives page." There is a link to that archive on the left hand side of that page.

You may know that there are some areas of the website which are accessible only by typing in a password. (If you need the password, please feel free to contact Therese or Lynn.) These include the federation and individual monastery directories.

The 2018 Federation Directory is now available both in compiled and in individual monastery versions. These directories include contact information and note who serves in different capacities in each of our monasteries, in addition to a list of the Sisters in each monastery.

Please note that while there is no longer a printed copy of the federation directory, anyone in our monasteries can print out copies from the website. Each year Therese sends reminders to the prioresses when it is time to update their directory information. But any time there is a change in information for the directory, such as after a monastery election or new appointments, you can email Therese and she can make the changes in real time. Also password protected is the up-to-date version of our federation constitution, [Call to Life](#). This includes the few amendments made at the 2014 Chapter meeting. This, too, can be printed from the website for insertion into your own constitution binders. However, you might wish to wait to print the updated version of [Call to Life](#) until after the 2018 Chapter meeting in June 2018 so that you add any changes that may be adopted by the Chapter delegates at that time.

Since last year, new links to various Benedictine and other monastic organizations have been added to the left navigation bar (AIM, ABA, MID, etc.), a new International page has been added to include links to newsletters from various International organizations and letters from the Abbot Primate.

Sisters from the federation have submitted photos from Benedictine gatherings in which they have participated (e.g., Benedictine Vocation Directors at St. John's) and links for the News page (e.g., Advent and Lenten reflections by the Tri-Community group).