



# BENEDICTINE TOUCHSTONE



Spring 2011

Benedictine Nuns • St. Emma Monastery • 1001 Harvey Avenue • Greensburg, PA 15601

Website [www.stemma.org](http://www.stemma.org) • Phone: (724) 834-3060 • Fax (724) 834-5772 • Email [benedictinenuns@stemma.org](mailto:benedictinenuns@stemma.org)



*Experience the Benedictine  
Blessing of hospitality:  
Robertshaw Country House  
Bed & Breakfast opens!*

## Prioress' Reflection

By Mother Mary Anne Noll OSB



The year 1931: German Sisters arrive at St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania; months later

Mr. and Mrs. John Robertshaw Sr. build their "Country House" just north of Greensburg, Pennsylvania. From the human point of view, no one could have connected those facts when they were happening. From God's point of view, the basis for St. Emma Monastery was being prepared – both spiritually and physically!

On February 25 we celebrated the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of Mother Leonarda Fritz OSB and the first 10 Sisters from Abtei St. Walburg, Eichstaett, Bavaria at St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania.

Our forty founding Sisters transplanted the Benedictine values of seeking God, of prayer and work, and of welcoming guests as Christ as lived in the Abtei St. Walburg in Bavaria for 900 years to the American soil and psyche. These Sisters incarnated these values at St. Vincent's, Latrobe, PA and later in their own St. Emma's near Greensburg, Pennsylvania.

From 1931-1987 the Sisters treated the numerous monks, seminarians, collegians, high school boys, retreatants,

and, later, the Pittsburgh Steelers as Christ through their cooking and serving in the various dining rooms at St. Vincent. Our Sisters were the very first women on the St. Vincent Campus.

With the purchase of the Robertshaw Country House and 10 acres in 1943 and the adjacent 90 acre farm the following year, the Sisters took root in American soil and their Benedictine stability received physical and permanent expression.

That very first summer Knights of Columbus and Sodality girls from St. Bruno Parish—both from Greensburg—asked for days of recollection. Nearly 70 years later, over 175,000 people have come to St. Emma's to intensify their relationship with God.

Being a wise, practical, holy, German Benedictine nun, Mother Leonarda knew that she had to provide a future income for her community. Therefore she built the Fatima Chapel (1950) and retreat house (1954) before the novitiate building with the small convent chapel (1960) and second convent building (1964).

How fitting that we celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Sisters coming to this country and announce yet another application of Benedict's Rule to welcome guests as Christ!

Fifteen hundred years ago Benedict talked about welcoming the "wayfarer and pilgrim." We are all wayfarers and pilgrims on this journey through life. Physically we travel from place to place and spiritually we are always looking for "home"

and where the heart can be at rest.

With the opening of the Robertshaw Country House Bed & Breakfast May 2, you have yet another possibility of finding rest and refreshment for your spirit as well a place to lay your head for the night.

Through this expression of hospitality, we now welcome those traveling to and through our area, those seeking restorative peacefulness and renewal

while about their daily business or travel, and those wanting to step aside and catch a "spiritual breath" but not within a traditional retreat format.

The Robertshaw Country House features craftsmanship, elegant furnishings, charm, modern amenities, beautiful surroundings, and Benedictine hospitality extended by our nuns and volunteers.

*Mother Mary Anne Noll, OSB*

Mother Mary Anne Noll OSB

### Memorial Contributions

We are so honored that the family of Emmy Wagoner, N. Huntingdon, PA, chose St. Emma's as a recipient of donations in memory of Emmy who died Oct. 19. Rest in Peace, Emmy.

### Prayer Requests & Intentions

Please use the enclosed envelope to send us your prayer requests



The Robertshaw House when it was first constructed, 80 years ago.



# 1931—2011

## 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Benedictine Nuns of St. Emma Monastery

As we know, God's very creative heart finds varied ways of bringing about His plans and purposes. Match up the financial crisis in Germany in the 1920s, the unprecedented numbers of women entering Abtei St. Walburg, and a financial need and desire on the part of St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania for Sisters to cook and work in their dining rooms, and one sees pieces of the human puzzle that brought our Sisters in 1931 to southwestern Pennsylvania.

A teacher for 30 years in the then very cloistered elementary school attached to the Abtei St. Walburg, Mother Leonarda Fritz OSB offered to replace the Sister designated to be the superior who became ill.

Affectionately known as "Mother Bearcat" (referring to the name of the St. Vincent sports' teams), Mother Leonarda inspired both awe and respect from the students and monks.

Most of the 40 Sisters who came during the 1930s left their mother abbey and their homeland just a few short months (and sometimes weeks!) after making their temporary vows for three years. Several years later at St. Vincent these young Sisters made vows for life without any family or friends present to rejoice with them on the occasion of their final commitment to Christ as a Benedictine Sisters.

During the six years of World War II, none of the forty Sisters received a letter from Germany so they had no idea who had died or who had been drafted or if siblings had married, etc.

After the war ended, some of the Benedictine pastors collected money for the Sisters to send "Care Packages" to their relatives in Germany. Relatives have told us how grateful they were to receive such

packages when they and the country knew extreme want. Only God knew that these Sisters would be sending post-war help to their families through such packages!

Nearly all the Sisters had been here in America for 25 years and more before they had their first home visit. The war had occurred. The number of Sisters they once knew at the mother abbey had greatly changed in 25 years, many of their parents had died, kid brothers and sisters were grown, married and now had older children.

In a tribute to the Sisters in *Saint Vincent Review* (Winter 2000), Rev. Donald Raila OSB wrote a compelling article beautifully entitled, "The Sisters of Saint Benedict, Earnest in Prayer and Mighty in their Labor of Love." (Read the article on our website: [www.stemma.org](http://www.stemma.org).) The title captures the reality of their lives and how all at St. Vincent experienced these Sisters.

This year we mark 50 years since the opening of our Novitiate for American



Dear Mother Mary Anne & Sisters,

Best wishes and continued prayers on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the arrival of the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburga Monastery in Eichstaett at St. Vincent Archabbey.

Sincerely in Christ,  
Archabbot Douglas and Community

*The Touchstone* is published by the Benedictine Sisters of Westmoreland County for our friends and benefactors:

Publisher and Editor

Mother Mary Anne Noll OSB

Development Director

Robert J. Allen

Graphic Arts and Design

Susan Garrison

If you have questions or comments about this publication, please address them to:

St. Emma Monastery • 1001 Harvey Avenue

Greensburg, PA 15601-1494

Phone (724) 834-3060

Email: [benedictinenuns@stemma.org](mailto:benedictinenuns@stemma.org)



An aerial view of the monastery.

*Continued on page 6*



## Step Through this Door for... The Robertshaw Country House Bed & Breakfast

Also celebrating 80 years, The Robertshaw Country House is a grand house constructed with fine craftsmanship and excellent materials. Amidst the natural beauty of the grounds at St. Emma Monastery, the Robertshaw Country House offers a charming, comfortable place to get away and relax.

For breakfasts, guests will enjoy a traditional Bavarian continental breakfast with cheeses, cold meats, hard boiled eggs, breads, yogurt, fruit, juice, etc, served on linen-covered tables.

Guests are invited to enjoy our beautiful flower gardens and outdoor terrace, and to walk the outdoor Stations of the Cross or the Rosary Path. Those so desiring may join our monastic community for The Liturgy of the Hours and/or daily Mass, or simply enjoy some quiet prayer time in one of our chapels.

May the “wayfarers and pilgrims” of the 21<sup>st</sup> century find a spiritual mooring in our Robertshaw Country House Bed & Breakfast as they pass through our area on business or pleasure – as wayfarers and pilgrims have done for the past 1500 years as they sought lodging at monasteries.

*All guest rooms are air conditioned, have cedar lined closets, and wi-fi access.*



### Sunset Room:

Queen-size bed • Gas fireplace • Spacious, modern bath with 1931 fixtures.



### Formal dining room:

This dining room is also available for small groups for luncheons and dinners.

***Can't wait to make a reservation?***

***“Search” the web for: Robertshaw Country House.***  
***or***

***on our website, [www.stemma.org](http://www.stemma.org), click the B&B entry.***  
***Follow the easy directions***  
***to make a reservation online!***



**Living Room:**  
Board game corner • Gas fireplace • Air-conditioned.



**Garden Room:**  
Two double beds • Spacious, modern bath with separate tub and a separate shower (7 heads!) with 1931 fixtures.



Enjoy the beautiful grounds of St. Emma Monastery.



**Emma Room:**  
Two single beds • Spacious hall bath • Electric fireplace.



**Robertshaw Suite:**  
Queen-size bed • Spacious, modern bath with 1931 fixtures • Sitting room w/gas fireplace • Sleeper sofa (if needed)



## Living Your Faith

**By Robert J. Allen**

In a recent study it was determined that people who attend weekly or regular worship services are also better “neighbors”. “No matter the civic activity, being more religious means being more involved”, says the article.

When we look at Saint Matthew’s gospel, chapter 25: 31-40, we are told how we are to be judged. It is by being that good neighbor. It is the essence of Stewardship of Community. We must serve one another, we must make sacrifices, and be accountable for our actions. We must give “for you can’t keep it unless you give it away”. You will eat a meal today because the seed that was planted has been harvested; it had to give in order for you to live.

In the last issue of this *Touchstone*, I commented on my visit

to the Abtei St. Walburg in Eichstaett, Bavaria and experienced the gift that Leodegar made when he established the monastery in 1035! My wife and I also were the beneficiaries of every gift that has been given to that Abbey every day since.

The Sisters at St. Emma and all guests who visit in whatever way are the beneficiaries of every prayer said for them, of every dollar donated, of every hour that has been volunteered, of every gift of any kind that has been given to the Sisters during these 80 years since they first arrived.

It is true that “You can’t keep it, unless you give it away.” But it is also true that once you give it away, it keeps on giving and giving and affects people decades and centuries from now. What an investment for you, your future and the future of the world!

### *80<sup>th</sup> anniversary* Continued from page 3

women. Our Sisters not only had to acquire property but also had to build the needed chapel and monastery before American women could enter.

With the entrance of the first American women in 1961, St. Emma’s began to pray the Divine Office (now known as *The Liturgy of the Hours*) in English—one of the first Benedictine communities in the United States to do so.

Today we continue the beautiful tradition begun in 1963 of singing the Divine Office using the Gregorian chant melodies for the psalms, antiphons and hymns. These melodies give a beautiful, distinctive character to the various liturgical seasons and feasts and add such a special dimension to our prayer.

Today the community acknowledges God’s great Providence during our first 80 years and marvels what God has done for and through our community. American accents have replaced the German accents except for our 97 year old Sr. Gaudentia who came to St. Vincent’s in 1934 at the age of 20. Sr. Gaudentia embodies the love of God and others, the love of the Eucharist and prayer, the graciousness and dedication that we seek to live each day.

We are privileged to be the American enculturation of the same monastic values of prayer and work, of seeking God, and of welcoming guests as Christ that our founding Sisters brought with them from Germany. We are blessed to be the 2011 link in this monastic chain at St. Emma’s and pray for those who will follow.

### + *Rest in Peace* +

We pray for the following who remembered us in their wills and extend our sympathy to their families:

- + **Margaret Bokan**, died July 25, 2010.
- + **Dot Petrosky**, Latrobe, PA, died August 13, 2009.
- + **Tom Cable**, Pitcairn, PA, died August 24, 2010.

## GOLF FOR A NUN



*The First Annual Sisters’ Golf Classic invites you to Golf for a Nun!*

All proceeds go to help the vocation and living expenses of the Benedictine Sisters of St. Emma Monastery.

Monday, September 12, 2011

Hannastown Golf Club

Shotgun starts at Noon

Fee per player \$100.00

Includes: Box lunch, cart, green fee and dinner;

Prizes – Trophy

A good time and a great cause!

The Dinner and Awards will be in the St. Emma Retreat Dining Room at 5:30 p.m.

All are welcome: for reservations call: 724-834-3060, Ext. 113.



### *You “Brite”-ned Our Life*

Many thanks to all of you who responded to our A “Brite” Idea request in the Fall 2010 *Touchstone* for compact florescent bulbs. Your generous gifts of bulbs, a suggestion from a reader about a program for non-profits, and the endeavors of several illumination exchange engineers (i.e. a fancy name for light bulb changers!) combined to replace all the bulbs throughout the monastery and retreat house. This corner of God’s creation has decreased its kilowatt demand saving energy and has lowered our electric bill! God bless you all!

*In his love, the Lord shows us the way to life... (Rule of St. Benedict)*

## Holy Week Schedule

### **Palm Sunday**

7:00 a.m. Blessing of palms  
Eucharist

### **Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday**

6:00 a.m. Tenebrae (Vigils and Lauds together)  
9:00 a.m. Terce  
11:45 a.m. Sext/None (Midday Prayer)

### **Holy Thursday**

4:00 p.m. Vespers  
7:00 p.m. **Mass of the Lord's Supper**  
**Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament**  
(until 10:30 p.m.)

### **Good Friday**

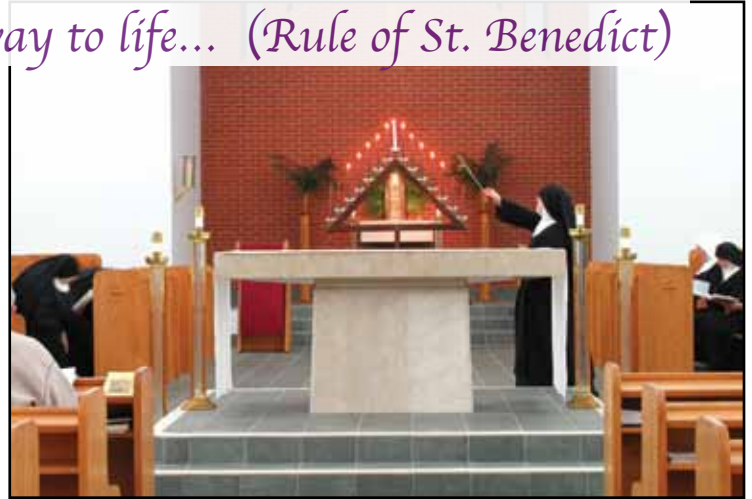
3:00 p.m. **Celebration of the Lord's Passion**  
7:00 p.m. Compline

### **Holy Saturday**

4:00 p.m. Vespers  
8:45 p.m. **Easter Vigil**

### **Easter Sunday**

6:25 a.m. Lauds  
7:45 a.m. Terce  
8:00 a.m. **Eucharist**  
11:45 a.m. Sext/None  
5:00 p.m. Vespers  
7:15 p.m. Vigils and Compline



### Considering Religious Life?

*Upcoming Monastic Live-in Experiences  
for single women ages 16-38.  
Monastic Triduum, April 20 (Wednesday)  
-24 (Easter Sunday), 2011  
Summer Experience, July 8-13, 2011  
Advent Weekend, December 9-11, 2011*

*For more information, please  
email [vocations@stemma.org](mailto:vocations@stemma.org) or call 724-834-3060.*

**Check out our vocations blog  
at [www.stemmanuns.blogspot.com](http://www.stemmanuns.blogspot.com).**

*All are invited to join us for Holy Week services!*

## **God bless you!**

Our great gratitude to all of you who helped make our *Ye Olde Christmas Shoppe* in November such a wonderful (including financial) success! We could not have done it without the help of all of those who sorted, displayed, created baskets for the raffle, cooked, baked, cleaned, or helped in many and varied ways before, during and after the event. God's perfect Indian summer weather added to the enjoyment of many new and long time friends.

Many guests came for our *Christmas Visit & Vespers* on December 27. We thank all those who carried, decorated, baked, or helped extend our Benedictine hospitality that day and with storing the decorations afterwards.

[Visit our Bookstore](#)

**Monday – Saturday 10 am – 4 p.m.**  
**Visit online anytime: [www.stemma.org](http://www.stemma.org)**

**Visit our entirely new website!  
[www.stemma.org](http://www.stemma.org)**

## Igou Family String Ensemble Returns!



Mark your calendars now for an April 27 performance by The Igou Family String Ensemble of Somerset, PA. Their program will be "Laudate Dominum" or "Praise the Lord," at 7 p.m. in the Fatima Chapel.

This fabulous group presented an inspiring Christmas concert here on Dec. 30. Their program is a treat you won't want to miss!

*A special way to celebrate the Alleluia of Easter!*

## Searching for "Fleas"

Indeed, what is a Flea Market without "fleas"? Spring cleaning various storage spaces and wondering what to do with those items you no longer need or can use? St. Emma's would be grateful to receive these donations. Please call 724-834-3060 with any questions.

**Mark your calendars now for our Annual Flea Market, June 17 (10-7) and June 18 (10-3).**



**Donations may be dropped off now!**



Please remember us when revising  
or making your will.

Our legal name is:  
The Sisters of Saint Benedict  
of Westmoreland County

Our Federal ID-# is: 25-1017575

## 2011 Calendar of Retreats

- April 1-3** Silent Lenten Retreat for Men and Women, Rev. Bill Kiel, *Prayer and Fasting – Not Only During Lent*, \$145
- April 8-10** Silent Lenten Retreat for Men and Women, Rev. Frank Erdeljac, *The Compassionate Love of God According to the Little Flower*; \$145
- April 11** Lenten Evening of Recollection for Men and Women, Rev. Leon Hont, OSB, \$20
- April 16** Lenten Day of Recollection for Men and Women, \$28
- April 29-May 1** Silent Retreat for Third Order Carmelites (men/women), Rev. James Hess Coram, *The Way of Perfection*
- May 21-28** Eagle Eye Summer Institute. Designed for young people who are thirsting to discover a new depth and intensity to their Faith. For more information: [www.soaringforwisdom.com](http://www.soaringforwisdom.com)
- July 22-28** 6-Day Silent Retreat for Men/Women, Rev. Paschal Morlino, OSB, *Praying the Transfiguration as a Gateway to Hospitality*, \$365
- August 12-13** Busy Moms Overnight Retreat, Rev. Boniface Hicks OSB, \$75
- Sept. 16-18** Silent Retreat (men/women) Conferences by Benedictine Nuns, *The Contemplative Life*, \$145
- Sept. 23-25** Women's Retreat, Rev. Paul M. Robine, \$145
- Sept. 30-Oct. 2** Women's Retreat, Rev. Frank Erdeljac, \$145
- Oct. 28-30** Married Couples Retreat, Rev. Ed Litavec, \$280
- Nov. 4-6** Married Couples Retreat, Rev. Angelus Shaughnessy, OFM Cap, \$280

## Encounter with Silence, July 22-29

Retreat Master: Rev. John-Mary Tompkins, OSB

*Truth must bear fruit in love, and love must proceed from truth.* These words of the late Father John J. Hugo crystallize the completeness of Christianity that the Encounter with Silence memorably conveys.

**Retreat House accommodations: \$425**

**Monastic Guest House accommodations: \$475**

## Busy Moms Overnight Retreat, August 12-13

Retreat Master: Rev. Boniface Hicks, OSB

Retreat Offering: \$75

The vocation of motherhood is awesome - and self-consuming! With that in mind, this overnight retreat was planned for mothers of young children knowing that a weekend is impossible, but an overnight is do-able!

The retreat opens with dinner at 6:00 p.m. on Friday with Mass at 8:00 p.m. (but you are welcome to come any time after 2:00 p.m.). Saturday's schedule includes conferences, Holy Hour, opportunity for Sacrament of Reconciliation, as well as time for sharing and quiet time just for you.

We invite your family to come for the 4:00 p.m. anticipated Sunday Mass and to stay on for pizza, pop and ice cream.