



*“... so arrange
everything
that the strong
have something
to yearn for
and the weak
nothing to run
from.”*

R.B. 64:19

MISSION PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

AUGUST 2016

INTRODUCTION

As an academic center of learning, Mount Marty College is built upon a Catholic, Benedictine tradition. The Benedictine Sisters who sponsor the College want to ensure that the Mission of the College is promoted and integrated into all areas of the College. The challenge of the Mission is to prepare students for a “contemporary world of work, service to the human community, and personal growth,” in an environment that incorporates the Core Values of Awareness of God, Community, Hospitality, and Life-Long Learning.

There are four documents that identify the Mount Marty College Mission. These include: the Mission Statement, the Core Values, the Beliefs Statement, and the Vision Statement. These foundational documents state our purpose, our values, our beliefs, and our vision.

The Mission Principles and Guidelines Manual serves as a guide to those who minister at Mount Marty College. Its primary purpose is:

1. To bring further clarity to understanding the functions and tasks associated with Mission.
2. To identify expectations and accountabilities for Mission.
3. To support the enhancement of Mission in the life experiences of those associated with Mount Marty College.

Each person in the Mount Marty College community is entrusted with this mission. It is the responsibility of each member of the MMC Community to be faithful to the mission, to live the mission and integrate the core values into their area of work and daily life.

The Mission Manual in its entirety can be found online at:

<http://www.mtmc.edu/shared/files/mission-manual-july10.pdf>

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*“Listen . . .
with the ear of
your heart.”*

*Prologue to the
Holy Rule of
Benedict*

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MISSION PRINCIPLES DEFINED FOR:

“A CONTINUED AGGRESSIVE ARTICULATION OF
THE VALUE-CENTERED LIFE IN THE ACADEMIC
COMMUNITY OF MOUNT MARTY COLLEGE.”

Author Unknown



*“They should
each try to be
the first to show
respect to the
other.”*

*Romans 12:10
RB 72:4*

- *Adhering to Catholic Identity and
Benedictine Heritage*
- *Articulating and Integrating the Mission of
Mount Marty College*
- *Providing Spiritual Opportunities for all
Mount Marty College Constituencies*

PRINCIPLE 1

Adhering to Catholic Identity and Benedictine Heritage

- As a Catholic Benedictine College, Mount Marty College seeks to create an environment which fosters and supports a Christ-centered way of life, with special emphasis on the values of Awareness of God, Community, Hospitality, and Life-Long Learning.
- The Benedictine educational environment of Mount Marty College strives for a balanced integration of study, work, prayer, and leisure. Career-oriented programs are situated in a context of liberal arts studies.
- Policies and practices concerning all aspects of Mount Marty College life are guided by Gospel values and official Roman Catholic teaching.

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PRINCIPLE 1

Adhering to Catholic Identity and Benedictine Heritage

1. All persons employed by or associated with the institution are responsible for understanding the mission of Mount Marty College and integrating its values into all aspects of their work.
2. Policies and procedures are written to ensure that they are consistent with Roman Catholic teaching and the philosophy of the Benedictine Sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery. The Board of Trustees and President are responsible for implementing such policies and procedures.
3. Membership on the Board of Trustees requires a commitment to the Mission of Mount Marty College.
4. The President, and members of the Executive Team, acting as mentor/role models, are responsible for understanding these policies and procedures. They will ensure that all employees within their purview uphold the Values and Mission of the College.
5. Evaluations of faculty and staff include an assessment of ways in which they carry out the mission of the College.
6. The stance of the College on respect for life is reflected in programming and is integrated into the curriculum.
7. The College community provides personal enrichment through religious, academic, and cultural opportunities.
8. The integrated curriculum is reviewed within the context of the liberal arts framework and Gospel values.
9. All financial transactions, public relations, marketing and advertising efforts will reflect consistency with the Catholic Benedictine Philosophy, Mission, and Values.

PRINCIPLE 2

Articulating and Integrating the Mission of Mount Marty College

- The mission of Mount Marty College is clearly communicated to the Board of Trustees, all employees, and students.
- Mount Marty College maintains structures and practices which facilitate ongoing integration of its mission in all aspects of college life.
- Each employee of Mount Marty College is expected to integrate to his or her respective campus role the Mission and Core Values. Appropriate modes of assessment are utilized in the realization of these goals.

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PRINCIPLE 2

Articulating and Integrating the Mission

1. The Board of Trustees ensures that the President carries out the Mission of the College.
2. The President is responsible for overseeing the promotion and integration of the Mission into all aspects of the college life.
3. The members of the Executive Team assist the President and are responsible for promoting and integrating the Mission into the Strategic Plan as well as establishing goals regarding the Mission of the College and its outreach educational programs.
4. The administration, faculty, and staff are responsible for integrating the Mission Statement into their respective contributions to the academic, social, spiritual, physical, and moral development of the students.
5. The Mission Committee is responsible for identifying and implementing ways in which the Mission of the College can be more fully lived and for promoting activities to strengthen the College community.
6. Prospective members of the Board of Trustees are made aware of the Mission of the College by the Chair of the Board of Trustees and the Monastery Council interviews. Candidate interviews focus on mission concepts. Orientation to the Mission and Core Values of the College is provided for all new members of the Board of Trustees.
7. Prospective employees are made aware of the Mission of the College. Interviews focus on Mission concepts.
8. Orientation for all constituencies of the College includes clarification of the Mission. Members of the campus community celebrate an annual Mission Day which highlights various aspects of the Mission and Benedictine Values.
9. The Mission Statement is included on employee contracts, student course catalog, student handbook and in official public communications.

10. Visible signs of the College's Catholic and Benedictine character are displayed throughout each location of Mount Marty College.
11. The College has an assessment plan which involves the articulation and integration of the Mission and Values at each location.
12. Annual reviews of all faculty and staff goals includes an assessment of the integration of Mission and Values in each one's respective professional performance.

PRINCIPLE 3

Providing Spiritual Opportunities for all Mount Marty Constituencies

- Opportunities for spiritual growth are regularly provided for and promoted in the entire Mount Marty College community. Principle resources for such opportunities are Sacred Heart Monastery, the Office of Campus Ministry, the Benedictine Institute for Leadership, Ethics and Social Justice, and the Mission Committee.
- The academic community promotes opportunities for spiritual growth through personal dedication and corporate policies that reflect Mount Marty College's Mission.

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PRINCIPLE 3

Providing Spiritual Opportunities for all Constituencies
through the Office of Campus Ministry, the Benedictine
Institute For Leadership, Ethics and Social Justice,
and the Mission Committee

1. Spiritual opportunities for personal growth and development are provided for all members of the Mount Martyr College community.
2. Students are offered opportunities for community worship as well as spiritual direction .
3. All Sacred Heart Monastery liturgies are open to the campus community. The Yankton location offers weekly Masses, Liturgy of the Hours, para-liturgical services, retreats, and service opportunities.

DOCUMENTS THAT IDENTIFY MOUNT MARTY COLLEGE



*“A kind word
is better than
the best gift”*

*Sirach 18:17
RB 31:14*

MISSION STATEMENT

**Mount Marty College, an academic community in the
Catholic, Benedictine, liberal arts tradition,
prepares students for a contemporary world of work,
service to the human community,
and personal growth.**

(revised and approved, April 1996)

STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

The Statement of Beliefs of Mount Marty College is based on the tradition of the Benedictine Sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, South Dakota. Central to this Gospel-based tradition are the four Core Values of Mount Marty College: Awareness of God, Community, Hospitality, and Life-Long Learning.

WE BELIEVE:

- that each person is to be treated with respect, and that human life, from conception to death, is to be safeguarded with the greatest care.
- that each person has the responsibility to share gifts and talents in service to the human community and to be a responsible steward of the goods of the universe.
- that education occurs best within a supportive Christian community in which each person is encouraged to grow and develop.
- that the College has the responsibility to provide a climate which supports faith development within one's own religious tradition, while remaining true to its Catholic sponsorship.
- that education is a shared responsibility of all members of the Mount Marty Community.
- that contemporary liberal arts education assists in integrating professional aims with the broader purpose of human life.
- that education is a lifelong process.

STATEMENT OF VISION

VISION

Mount Marty College is committed to becoming a preeminent academic institution in the region, combining the liberal arts and career-oriented education.

STATEMENT OF VALUES

Values, more than any other element, are the “heart and soul” of an institution. They provide stability in times of change, forbearance in the face of challenge, and nourishment to strengthen performance. It is important to define explicitly those values that reflect what our institution stands for, what we believe in, what we expect from ourselves and each other, and perhaps most importantly, what we aspire to be.

These are the values that will guide Mount Marty College through the future:

AWARENESS OF GOD

- to remember that the Divine Presence is everywhere
- to appreciate personal growth within a Christian atmosphere
- to foster integrity in all interactions
- to promote the integration of learning and faith
- to recognize that we are all called to be leaders in the ministry of higher education

COMMUNITY

- to build relationships based on trust
- to establish cooperative efforts to create value-centered lives
- to create opportunities for service as a way to express a corporate witness
- to recognize that educational quality is grounded in person-centered communities

HOSPITALITY

- to welcome all as Christ
- to promote an environment in which all are valued and respected

LIFE-LONG LEARNING

- to promote a wholistic approach to learning
- to develop life skills
- to develop critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills

RELATED DOCUMENTS



*“Every time
you begin
a good work,
you must pray
to God
most earnestly
to bring it to
perfection.”*

R.B. Prologue

MOUNT MARTY COLLEGE AS A MINISTRY

The work of the College is a ministry. All members of the College community take ownership of the mission. Lives are touched, communications are improved, motivations are redirected, and affirmations are expressed. This defines a living, loving community of service. Together we are transformed.

“The Church attaches great importance to higher learning, both for its own sake and for the life of the Church ... One of our expectations is that Catholic colleges and universities continue to manifest, with unmistakable clarity, their Catholic identity and mission.”

A statement in Catholic Higher Education and the Pastoral Mission of the Church, issued by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in November 1980.

MISSION COMMITTEE

ROLE: To ensure the centrality and integration of the mission and values of Mount Marty College.

MEMBERSHIP:

- Director of Mission (Chair) appointed by the President
- Assistant Director of Mission (Co-Chair) appointed by the President
- Director of Campus Ministry (Standing Member)
- Director of Events and Outreach (Standing Member)
- Additional members who include:
 - two Faculty Members elected by the Academic Senate (2 yr. staggered terms)
 - two Staff Members elected by the Staff Senate (2 yr. staggered terms)
 - all Faculty and Staff are eligible for re-election
 - two Students who are appointed by the Vice-President of Student Affairs
 - A minimum of two Sisters from Sacred Heart Monastery appointed by the Prioress (2 yr. term)
- College President (*ex-officio*)

(Referenced in the MMC Employee Handbook)

LIVING THE MISSION

Living the Mission is determined through ongoing review and reflection on the understanding of the Mission, Values, Beliefs, and Vision of Mount Marty College and the ways these are integrated into the programs, services, behaviors and practices of the college. Ongoing assessment helps identify areas that may need clarification and further education including:

- Articulation of the Mission, Values, Beliefs, and Vision of the College
- Education of all those involved in the College and its publics to the Mission, Values, Beliefs, and Vision, and their implications;
- Integration of the Mission, Values, Beliefs, and Vision in the planning, decision-making, operations, and culture of the College, and;
- Assessment and evaluation of these tasks for sponsors, governance, and leadership.

While this responsibility belongs with the college community, the role of the Mission Committee is to provide the specific expertise and resources in support of these four areas. Final accountability remains with sponsorship, governance and leadership of the institution.

INDICATORS OF LIVING THE MISSION

When the mission is alive at the College, these are some of the recognizable signs:

- Celebrating the mission has a high priority as it recognizes the identity of the College - by recalling and celebrating events in the lives of people important to the College.
- The College community is oriented to the Mission, Values, Beliefs and Vision of the College. On-going education is provided.
- The College community promotes a sense of belonging, affirmation, and respect.
- The College provides a spirit of Community and Hospitality for all who live, work, or visit here.
- It is understood by the general public that the college is sponsored by the Benedictine Sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery. Religious symbols are visible as special signs of this sponsorship. The liturgy of the Mass and prayer services are celebrated.
- Programs, strategic plans, budgets, and activities are Mission-directed.
- Assessment activities relate to living the Mission.

PRAYER OPTIONS

1. O God, Creator of all things and source of wisdom, and knowledge, send your Holy Spirit to guide our *thoughts*, words, and actions so that *everything* we do will begin with your inspiration and continue with your *guidance* and blessing.

Help us to speak and act with *integrity* so that we may uphold the values of Mount Marty College.

May we use our talents and abilities in the *best* ways possible so that *You* may be *glorified* and our neighbors served. We pray these things through *Jesus*, your Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit, Amen+

2. Gracious and Loving God, we come to you today with a spirit of eagerness and anticipation for life-long learning. Open our hearts, minds, and ears to listen to your wisdom for us today. We ask these things through Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit, Amen+
3. Divine Creator, we gather in your presence to commit to our core values of Awareness of God, Community, Hospitality, and Life-Long Learning. Together, as we seek you this day, send us your wisdom to assist us in all we do. We ask this through your Son and in the power of the Divine Spirit, Amen+
4. Heavenly Father, as we begin this class, we approach you with a spirit of humility and gratitude for the many gifts and talents present in this room. Give us the courage to use our abilities, and empower us to inspire all those we encounter this day. We ask this through Jesus the Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen+

BEFORE MEETINGS:

1. Eternal God, as we begin our meeting, we do so with the awareness that without your divine presence at the center of the meeting our work will be empty. Grace us with your wisdom and vision. Gift us with a sense of humility so that we will be open to listening to each other and to the Holy Spirit. Bless all who are gathered here and our many endeavors. We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, who lives with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen+
2. Faithful God, we rejoice in this opportunity to gather in your name. Each time we come together, we are gifted with your presence as we also address the practical matters at hand. Guide those who lead this meeting and bless us with a spirit of openness so that our own agendas will not hinder your divine inspiration. We ask this through your Son and in the power of the Spirit. Amen+

3. God of Holiness, we pause to be aware of your divine presence as we begin this meeting. May the decisions we make today reflect your compassion and goodness to all. Help us to work together in a common vision to promote the good of our students and to embody the mission of our college. We ask these things through Christ and in the power of the Spirit. Amen+

BEFORE A MEAL:

1. Bless us, O Lord, and these your gifts which we are about to receive, from your bounty through Christ, Our Lord. Amen+
2. Gracious and bountiful God, we are grateful for this opportunity to gather together as colleagues and friends. Fill us with your wisdom and divine insights as we approach the tasks at hand. Help us to be open to you and to each other. Bless this food and those who have prepared it. We ask these things through Christ and in the power of the Spirit. Amen+
3. God of all goodness, you graciously give us life and love. May our hearts always be filled with gratitude. May we honor both prayer and work as Saint Benedict teaches. Keep us mindful of those who go without daily necessities. Bless the food we are about to share and those who prepared it. We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, who lives with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen+
4. Ever loving God, You reveal your goodness in so many ways. St. Benedict lived the common everyday life with faith and hope. Awaken us to the miracles of life in all things around us and in the poor and little ones. Bless us with hearts filled with gratitude. Bless the food we are about to eat and all who prepared it. This we pray in the name of your Son and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen+

OTHER:

1. God of heaven and earth, You are the mystery hidden in the secrets of life. You call us, in the spirit of Saint Benedict, to have listening hearts. Help us to be attentive to your word, to your presence in others and in the events of our lives. Reveal your spirit of joy that we may reflect your goodness and happiness all the days of our lives. This we pray through your Son and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen+
2. All powerful God, You have created us and You sustain us daily with your loving care. Open our hearts to your Holy Spirit. Fill us with your spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence. Bless us this day with your peace and help us to share that peace with all we meet this day. We ask this through your Son, Jesus, who lives with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen+

HERITAGE OF MOUNT MARTY COLLEGE



*“As we progress in
this way of life and
in faith, we shall
run on the path of
God’s
commandments,
our hearts
overflowing with
the inexpressible
delight of love.”*

*Prologue to the
Rule of Benedict 49*

HERITAGE OF MOUNT MARTY COLLEGE

“Equipping people with basic human competencies and Christian values is, indeed, the work of education. The future of our college depends a great deal on keeping our mission clear and on actually achieving this mission in the lives of our students.”

“As we build on our heritage, we realize only too well that the high road to life in any capacity is not easy, and that people who have a message such as ours, must endure for that message, especially when it means communicating the Good News of the Gospel. I like to think that Mount Marty will always rank high in academic excellence, but, first and foremost, I envision her holding jealously to her Mission.”

Sister Jerome Schmitt, OSB
First MMC President
First Annual Faculty Address
1976

THE STORY OF BENEDICT

By S. Marielle Frigge, OSB

STORY OF FIFTEEN CENTURIES

The story of Benedict might more properly be called the story of Benedictines; this is true for several reasons. First of all, since Benedict of Nursia lived fifteen centuries ago (ca. 480-547), few biographical details of his life have survived. Only two sixth century sources are known: Benedict's own Rule for monasteries, and the Dialogues of Saint Gregory the Great, written about fifty years after Benedict's death.

Second, the Rule of Benedict was the seed of a Benedictine family tree that has given rise to numerous branches for nearly three-quarters of Christian history. In these fifteen centuries, Benedictine monastic life has taken on many different external expressions, in a variety of historical and cultural settings. But a fundamental spiritual vision has remained at the heart of Benedictine life; monastic men and women engage in a life-long journey of seeking God, preferring nothing whatever to Christ. Every outward expression intends to embody this essential, interior desire.

THE ERA OF BENEDICT

Benedict of Nursia in central Italy was born at the turning of an age. In the Roman Empire, the glorious day of Western classical culture and the early Christian era had turned into nightfall of the Dark Ages. Invading warrior tribes hastened the decline of an already disintegrating empire, and a century before Benedict's birth, Christianity had become the state religion, with disastrous effects. By Benedict's time, tens of thousands with little understanding of, or commitment to Christian life had entered the church.

In this age of warped classical society and diluted Christian culture, the young aristocrat Benedict was sent to Rome for education in the liberal arts. Gregory's Dialogues tell us that Benedict, observing the spiritual fall of many students, wished to avoid a similar fate. Abandoning his classical education, he sought the learning he most desired, experiential knowledge of God.

BENEDICT THE MONK

Benedict turned from study in Rome toward a way of life that had already existed for several centuries, Christian monasticism. Both in the East and in the West, men and women had withdrawn into a solitary life or gathered in communities under the guidance of a spiritual father or mother to pursue a single, all-embracing goal: to seek God above all else.

Gregory writes that Benedict first retired to the desert as a solitary monk, residing in a cave at Subiaco for about three years. A number of monks sought him out, pressing him to be their spiritual father (abbot). But when they proved to be “unteachable monks” who even tried to poison him because they found him too demanding, Benedict returned to the wilderness. Others then came to him, more willing to embrace the way of life he taught. Leaving his hermit’s cave, in the following years he formed twelve communities of twelve monks each. Members of Benedict’s monasteries ranged from Roman nobles to unlettered peasants to converted invaders. (Both forms of monastic life, solitary or eremetical and communal or cenobitic, exist to this day.)

A RULE FOR MONASTERIES

Gregory’s Dialogues describe Benedict as a wise spiritual guide, well known for holiness and teaching, who eventually wrote a monastic Rule “outstanding in good judgement and clear expression.” Gregory also includes an instructive story of how Benedict’s twin sister, Scholastica, once reminded her brother that love of God and the things of God come before all else—sometimes even before monastic regulations! The Dialogues thus reveal that from Benedict’s own time, both men and women followed his Rule for monasteries, and that this Rule is deservedly renowned for its flexibility.

Gregory advises anyone wishing further understanding of Benedict’s life and character to read his Rule, for “that saint was incapable of teaching a way of life that he did not practice.” The Dialogues here capture an accurate sense of the *Regula Benedicti*, or Rule of Benedict. The English translation “rule” cannot adequately convey the meaning of the Latin term *regula*. Benedict’s composition is not simply a collection of laws and regulations; it is better understood as a guide or teaching for a way of life.

BENEDICT’S RULE AS A WAY OF LIFE

Benedict’s *regula* represented little that was new or revolutionary in sixth century monasteries. Instead, the genius of Benedict lay in his masterful synthesis of the best and most essential elements of earlier monastic life and teaching. Long experience combined with broad and deep reading of scripture, theology, and monastic sources led Benedict to compose what he called a “little rule for beginners” addressed to “the strong kind (of monks), the cenobites.” These are monastic men and women who choose a celibate communal life, guided by a particular *regula* and a spiritual leader chosen by the community.

What characterizes this way of life that Benedict offers? In closing the prologue to his Rule, Benedict clearly indicates its purpose: “we intend to establish a school for the Lord’s service.” From its earliest days, monasticism proposed to educate; it intended to form and transform the attitudes, habits, and culture of those who chose this way of life. One secular historian has written that *Regula Benedicti* is designed to create nothing less than an “alternative society.”

BENEDICT'S "ALTERNATIVE SOCIETY"

In an era in many ways much like our own, an age of massive shifts in Western society and Christian culture, Benedict offered a guide for life itself as a "school for the Lord's service." Since the monastic way of life shapes the very personhood of Benedictines, and therefore permeates Benedictine ministries, it is important to note major hallmarks of Benedict's "alternative society." First of all, Benedict has fundamental convictions about divine and human reality. "The divine presence is everywhere," he says repeatedly, and the proper human attitude and response to this divine presence he summarizes in a single word: LISTEN.

In Benedict's view, God is always and everywhere present, in one's inner depths and in the persons, things, and events of ordinary, daily life. Anyone who listens attentively can perceive this divine presence, even in the most mundane or unlikely circumstances. Given these foundational, complementary convictions, all aspects of life can educate and transform the receptive learner: one's own daily experience; any and all members of the human community; the physical, mental, and emotional environment.

LISTENING

But to be truly transformed, one must truly listen. Benedict uses this word in its biblical sense, to mean both hear and obey, attend and respond. Hearing can yield new insight; that insight needs a partner, action, to transform persons, communities and culture.

Based on these twin beliefs about the ever-present God and ever-listening human persons, Benedict regulates the concrete rhythm of daily life in the monastery. This alternative way of life has offered wise guidance adaptable not only in various monasteries, but in diverse human organizations and institutions, including schools, hospitals, parishes and families, for fifteen centuries.

GUIDELINES FOR A WAY OF LIFE

The shape of Benedict's way of life emerges both in broad strokes and, at times, in fine detail. General guidelines of the Rule begin to sketch a way of life: Days, weeks, and seasons are arranged in a regular rhythm of prayer, mental and physical labor, and rest. All persons are equally loved by God; therefore every person is worthy of equal reverence. On the other hand, people have varying and unequal spiritual, physical, intellectual, and emotional gifts. Hence, matters ranging from diet to health care to workload are arranged not in equal measure, but according to the circumstances of each person. The best teacher is example, and no one should teach by word what he or she is unwilling to do. In making important decisions, the community leader consults all members. No one is ranked higher than another based solely on age, position, or occupation. Guests who present themselves, especially the poor, the sick, and pilgrims, are to be treated as Christ himself. Each

community member is to seek what is better for another, rather than for oneself, and accept with greatest patience another's weaknesses of body or behavior.

Frequently, Benedict applies his own general guidelines to daily life: in consultation about decisions, even the youngest and newest members are invited to state their views, since God often speaks through the young. While the sick are to be treated as Christ himself, they in turn are to accept service in the same spirit, and not make excessive demands. Visitors who express criticism ought to be listened to, for God may have sent them to offer helpful insights. After each use, farm and garden tools are to be returned, clean, to their proper places; even kitchen pots and pans are to be handled as "sacred vessels of the altar." All members are to serve the common table by turns, for even this mundane task can "foster love." Items crafted for sale should be offered at lower prices than those of the secular marketplace, so that avarice will not grow and, above all, "that in all things God may be glorified."

BENEDICTINE WORK AND WORKS

Always, Benedict returns to his central, guiding vision. In his alternative society, the fundamental, most important "work" is to seek God; out of this primary work flow the labor of daily life as a school for the Lord's service and the "works" of various ministries. In other words, those who live according to Benedict's guidance do not choose a particular ministry or apostolate in order to seek God. Rather, because they are seeking God, they minister to the needs of people in their time and place.

Through fifteen centuries, Benedictine men and women have ministered to a vast variety of needs. They have established schools, hospitals, and orphanages, given spiritual counsel, taught agricultural methods, copied sacred and secular texts, carried the Gospel to mission lands. Among Benedictine men and women of past and present, one can find musicians and artists, preachers and liturgists, farmers and bakers, doctors and lawyers, scholars and writers. But in all these works, those who follow Benedict's *regula* express its essential work: seeking God as a way of life, preferring nothing whatever to Christ.

Closing his 1981 book After Virtue, A Study in Moral Theory, Alasdair MacIntyre observes that our culture, in its "new dark ages," awaits another Benedict. But for fifteen centuries, the wisdom of the first Benedict has transformed the lives and work of countless men and women, in monastery and marketplace. To this day, Benedict of Nursia offers guidance for an alternative society, a "school for the Lord's service."

THE EARLY STORY OF THE BENEDICTINE SISTERS IN SOUTHEASTERN SOUTH DAKOTA

By S. Jane Klimisch, OSB

ROOTS AND BEGINNINGS

The Benedictine Rule of the 6th century outlines a way of life based on the Gospel. Its basic values are prayer and work in the framework of Christ-centered community living.

The link of Sacred Heart Monastery/Yankton with this 15-century heritage began in 1857 when Sisters Vincentia Gretener and Gertrude Leupi from the Society of Divine Providence in Baldegg, Switzerland, established a convent on a glorious and somewhat inaccessible mountain height in Canton Unterwalden. In this place dedicated to Mary and soon known as Maria Rickenbach, the Benedictine prior of the neighboring Engelberg monastery helped the two foundresses and others who joined them to shape their lives according to the Rule of Benedict. Here, in a Swiss “school of the Lord’s service,” the seeds of a new world daughterhouse began to sprout.

JOURNEY TO THE NEW WORLD/Conception and Maryville, Missouri

By 1873, the abundance of vocations to this mountain-top convent necessitated a temporary restriction on the number of newcomers. With the blessing of abundant personnel, the community felt called to share the Gospel in distant lands. In 1874, therefore, a group of five sisters from Maria Rickenbach answered the invitation of two Engelberg monks in Conception, MO, to come to America and teach in the parish school of Maryville, near Conception Abbey.

In his farewell to the sisters, their Benedictine mentor Anselm Villiger of Engelberg spoke of the need for missionaries in America’s midwest as well as the hardships they might expect in a pioneer country. He signaled their departure as an event “which may prove of great significance for the young convent of Maria Rickenbach.” His words were prophetic, for in his missionary audience were the beginnings of five Benedictine communities of women in the new world.

DAKOTA BEGINNINGS AT YANKTON

After a month’s journey on sea and land, five women arrived at Maryville on September 5, 1874: Sisters Anselma Felber, appointed superior of the group; Agnes Dali;

Beatrice Renggli; Adela Eugster; and Augustine Kuendig. A few months after their arrival, three of the sisters were called to Conception to conduct a school there.

A novitiate, opened at this site in 1876 and transferred to Clyde five years later, grew into the flourishing Benedictine Convent of Perpetual Adoration, eldest daughter of Maria Rickenbach.

From the time that a novitiate was opened at Conception, the parish school at Maryville was considered a branch house. In 1880, however, Mother Gertrude Leupi resigned her superiorship at Maria Rickenbach and, with four other sisters, arrived in Maryville to join the missionaries there. Even before her arrival, the plan of establishing the Maryville community as an independent house had been considered. This plan came to fruition when eleven novices were invested at Maryville and the house and chapel were blessed on November 17, 1880. That date, the feast of St. Gertrude the Great, marks the birthday, therefore, of the second foundation of Maria Rickenbach, the Convent of St. Gertrude at Maryville, later transferred to Yankton and called Sacred Heart Convent. Other foundations which soon evolved from Maria Rickenbach through its Maryville and Clyde daughterhouses were the Benedictine communities of Queen of Angels in Mt. Angel, Oregon, St. Benedict's Center in Madison, WI (originally Sioux City, IA) and the Olivetan Benedictines at Jonesboro, AR.

That the little community at Maryville suffered poverty and hardship from its very beginning is vouched for by one of the sisters who, in later years, wrote that "in those days the community was small and times were hard. We lived from hand to mouth, and sometimes there was not much in the hand."

CALL TO NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRY

On December 18, 1880, a month after the community's founding day, Martin Marty, newly-appointed vicar apostolic of Dakota Territory, came to Maryville to ask the sisters for help in his work among the Indian people. Previously he had consulted with Mother Gertrude Leupi who had given him tentative hope that she would consider sending three sisters to the Indian mission of Standing Rock Reservation in the Dakotas. After a silent prayer together, the Bishop asked the group to form their traditional monastic semi-circle. Instead of casting lots as in apostolic times, he simply selected three missionaries. (Some sources list four.) Pointing to Sister Jodoka Villiger, he said: "You Sister." Singling out Sister Adela Eugster, he said: "You Sister. " After a pause, he pointed to the youngest of the group, Sister Gertrude McDermott, and said, "And, you, Sister." Chronicles have not recorded the fears, tears, and even questioning which must have followed this scene. In any case, on July 29, 1881, a rugged lumber-wagon deposited the three Maryville sisters in front of a log house and government buildings which constituted Standing Rock Agency at Fort Yates in Dakota Territory. Sisters from Ferdinand, IN, and one from St. Joseph, MN, were already stationed at the mission. With the aid of these veteran missionary companions, the Maryville sisters were gradually oriented to the rigors of life at Standing Rock.

SEEDS OF FUTURE MINISTRIES

Because the Benedictine Sisters of Maria Rickenbach were initially called to the new world to serve the needs of the people in the midwest, they immediately adopted an openness to the Church's apostolic works. Their first call from Bishop Marty laid the foundation for future work in both education and health care. On the Standing Rock Reservation the Sisters taught in government schools. One of the sisters also ventured into health care, taking charge of the little agency hospital in 1889.

ON THE MOVE

After serving Native Americans at Standing Rock for half a century, the Sisters gradually departed from the mission because of government restrictions on their way of life. In August, 1924, they exchanged their place at Standing Rock for a parochial school near the agency where, for many more years, they lived and worked among the Indians. At the urging of Bishop Marty, two Maryville sisters, Jodoka Villiger and Radegund Vogel, took up claims in 1883 among the Austrian immigrants at Maria-Zell in Dakota Territory and homesteaded there. In the period from 1883 to 1886, the Maryville sisters gradually transplanted their motherhouse to Maria-Zell. After about three years at this location, the sisters were asked by Bishop Marty to consider moving into a vacant building (first an academy of the Mercy Sisters, then an Indian boys' school conducted by Bishop Marty) on a hill overlooking the Missouri River in Yankton. Since Bishop Marty's side of the plan was quite well finalized, the Sisters trustfully considered the proposal and agreed to transfer the Zell motherhouse to Yankton. On February 8, 1889, the one-time property of the sisters of Mercy which, since 1884, had been in the hands of Bishop Marty, was deeded by purchase to Mother Gertrude Leupi's community which would in the future be known legally as "The Benedictine Convent of the Sacred Heart." The Benedictines of Maryville now owned a secure home.

FURTHER MOVES

Still one more event stands out in the journey of the founding sisters from Maria Rickenbach to Yankton. At the request of Bishop O'Gorman of Sioux Falls, the newly-established Yankton motherhouse was converted into a thirty-bed hospital, called Sacred Heart Hospital, in 1897. The Sisters, therefore, transferred their motherhouse to Vermillion in December of that year after purchasing a former Episcopalian seminary to serve as a novitiate and an academy for girls. The new convent in Vermillion was placed under the parsonage of St. Joseph. By 1905, however, owing to financial and housing problems in Vermillion, the community decided to return to Yankton and build a convent near the hospital, using the material from the Vermillion structure. Brick by brick the Vermillion convent was dismantled and rebuilt in Yankton. Undertaken in February of 1908, the project progressed rapidly so that by August 28 of the same year the first Mass was celebrated in the chapel on the spot to which Bishop Marty had invited them in 1887.

From 1874 to 1908, five moves had brought them where they remain and flourish today as Sacred Heart Monastery.

GROWTH AND EXPANSION

Some of the major events in the early decades that followed the return of the Sisters to Yankton were these: the building of a chapel within the newly-transferred convent (1908); domestic work at the episcopal residence in Sioux Falls (1907-1921, and resumed in 1945-1995); the construction of a free-standing chapel in 1917 in memory of Bishop Martin Marty; the beginning of a vigorous education apostolate first known as Mount Marty Academy (1922) as well as the continuation and expansion of Indian mission schools and elementary and secondary schools throughout North and South Dakota, Nebraska, and Colorado. By 1936, Mount Marty College, destined to grow and flourish as a liberal arts institution, became an important part of the educational apostolate. In the same year, Sacred Heart Convent became a member of the congregation (now Federation) of St. Gertrude the Great, thus moving under immediate papal jurisdiction. A crowning in these decades was the erection of a third chapel, the magnificent Bishop Marty Memorial Chapel, which rose steadily, stone by stone, throughout the difficult war and post-war years of 1946-1950 and was solemnly consecrated in April 1950.

By 1960, the community had grown to 500 members, a number considered too large for effective monastic living. The chapter, therefore, decided to follow a long-established monastic tradition and founded a daughterhouse, the present Mother of God Monastery, located first at Pierre SD, and later transferred to Watertown, SD.

Among varied ministries throughout their history, the Yankton Sisters have maintained three foreign missions for short periods of time: Columbia (1960-1962); Guatemala (1965-1972); and British Columbia (1965-1977). In the early years of the community, the Sisters operated a hospital in Fairbanks, Alaska, long before that region reached American statehood.

MOUNT MARTY COLLEGE: EVOLUTION & GROWTH

Founded in 1936, Mount Marty College functioned as a junior college for women for 15 years. In 1949 the College offered upper-division work which led to the awarding of its first baccalaureate degrees in 1951. As a four-year liberal arts college, Mount Marty was accredited by the University of South Dakota in 1952, and in 1961 received full accreditation by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

The primary endeavors of the 1950's were those of stabilizing the academic program and attracting students for both the original teacher-education program and a liberal arts program. To meet the growing student population, a new residence wing and fine arts wing had been added to the original Bede Hall in the 1940's. At the same time, the central structure of the chapel became a strong visual statement of a Christian people to

whom worship is of prime importance. The motto of the school, PRO ARIS ET FOCIS (for altar and home), was meant to underline the goal of integration between religion and life. Other new structures later on in the 1950's were Whitby Hall and Marian Auditorium.

Some of the many highlights of the 1960's which shaped the academic direction of the College were these: the establishment in 1961, of a four-year baccalaureate program in nursing which took its roots from a three-year program in existence since 1905 as Sacred Heart School of Nursing; the separate incorporation of the College and the establishment of a Board of Trustees in 1967; the change from a women's college to a co-educational institution in 1969; the initiation of athletic programs to fit the new student personnel; the completion of three major building projects – Roncalli Center, Corbey Hall and Mount Marty High School (1966) which, in 1969, became Mount Marty College Library-Gymnasium. Nearing the brink of a fifty-year existence as a private secondary school for girls, Mount Marty High School, had, by 1969, reached a peak of excellence with its contemporary modular scheduling and academic offerings. Unable to maintain adequate facilities for both institutions, however, the Benedictine sponsors chose to close the high school and focus their apostolate on the growing collegiate program.

Greater social awareness and the desire for participatory government which marked the 1960's led to significant changes at Mount Marty. By 1970 the Student Government Association was in full swing as well as a faculty organization with its senate. Hosts of campus committees arose with the intent of reaching the voice of the grass roots. The campus open its doors to a wider intellectual world when, in 1969, the academic calendar was changed to a 4-1-4 plan with a January Interim affording an array of new academic offerings, independent studies, foreign travel, off-campus placements and internships. In 1971 the College became the first school in the nation to offer a basic baccalaureate degree in anesthesia. A selected studies program, degree programs in respiratory therapy, social work, and dietetics, five new associate of arts degree programs as well as several new pre-professional programs added to the spectrum of curricular expansion. While attempting to preserve its liberal arts philosophy of educating the whole person, the College continued to develop professional programs, many of which received state and/or national accreditation at this time. Alerted by demographic studies to the decline in the traditional college-age population, Mount Marty launched its continuing education program in 1975 which has since accommodated many non-traditional students. The tenuous affiliation between the College and the secondary education center in Watertown known as Harmony Hill became stronger during these years as the Watertown school was replaced by Harmony Hill Education Center which soon became a full-fledged satellite of Mount Marty offering lower-division college courses and in 1988 several bachelor degree programs. In the fall of 1998, because of increased growth and technology needs, the Mount Marty College educational programs in Watertown were moved to the campus of the Lake Area Technical Institute.

The 1980's decade began with a year-long centennial celebration of Sacred Heart Convent, sponsor of the College. Other landmarks in this decade were the completion of the new Sacred Heart Hospital structure in 1981 which enhanced clinical opportunities for students in the College nursing program; full academic accreditation of the College by

North Central for the third time since 1961; the launching of a master's degree program in anesthesia in 1983; in 1984, the opening of the evening college for the benefit of non-traditional students in this area; and in 1985, the establishment of a pastoral council.

Spring 1987 was marked by groundbreaking for a much-needed recreational facility especially to afford playing space for various Lancer athletic programs. Dedication of the structure took place in January 1988. Known as the Laddie E. Cimpl Arena, the facility bears the name of a major donor of this College.

After Vatican II, the role of lay leadership in the Church continued to develop. To better prepare the laity and others for this ministry, a Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministries (MAPM) was started in 1997. This program also served to educate candidates for the diaconate. The MAPM program was eliminated in 2011 due to declining number of applicants.

(Addendum to document by Mission Committee)

In order to meet the growing needs for technology, the "Laptop Initiative" was implemented in the Fall of 2001. Students were assigned a laptop computer for use throughout their academic years. To increase the availability and use of technology, and expand the library and other learning resources at the College, the Scholastica Learning Center and Cyber Café were constructed and dedicated in 2003.

The number of male students has continued to increase at Mount Marty. To ensure that standards are met and improve the aesthetic appearance of the Whitby Residence Hall, the summer of 2004 was spent remodeling and upgrading the Whitby area.

Educational programs continue to be developed to meet the needs of the populations that are served. In the Fall of 2005, a Masters in Business Administration was initiated on the Watertown Campus. It was initiated on the Yankton campus in 2008-2009.

An enhancement to the Watertown campus in 2008 included a new facility with space for classrooms and administrative offices. The need for additional space for the anesthesia program in Sioux Falls led to the purchase of a new facility. The anesthesia program was relocated to the new facility in spring 2010.

An assessment of the needs in the Yankton and surrounding area indicated a need for a Masters of Science in Nursing (MSN) leading to a Nurse Practitioner. The MSN was initiated in 2010 and received CCNE Accreditation in 2015. The need for a Masters in Education was also identified and was accredited by HLC in 2012. In 2016, the Nurse Anesthesia Program received a positive review by the HLC and COA to begin a Doctorate in Nurse Anesthesia.

In order to acknowledge and honor our Benedictine heritage, in 2016 framed pictures documenting the history of Mount Marty College were displayed in the Bede Building.

CHURCH RELATIONS (Continuation of original document)

Wherever the Benedictine Sisters are located, they are an integral part of the whole Catholic Church. Each Sister is accountable to the religious community, and is sent or commissioned by the prioress, the elected leader of the Sisters, to go forth and spread the good news of Jesus Christ. The community of Benedictine Sisters is accountable to its own membership and to the overall Church community.

The dignity of the person and the sovereignty of God are the two basic principles holding together all the activities and goals of each Church institution. Each person ministering within this structure lives the Gospel—making God present in a real way. To teach as Jesus taught, to heal as Jesus healed; this is the way each Sister and the entire Benedictine community continue the mission of Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION

All along, in their Benedictine journey, the Yankton community of religious women has been, and continues to be, in touch with the world around them without, however, sacrificing their essential nature as monastics. Their goal is not merely holding on to monastic essentials but rather sharing them with the wider world and, in turn, being enriched in the sharing. In the end, then, they continually taste the fruits of what Scripture calls “something old and something new.”

The sketch of the origins of the Yankton community has been taken from Sisters Claudia Duratschek, OSB, and Jane Klimisch, OSB, Travelers on the Way of Peace, a 75th jubilee publication (Sioux Falls, SD: Brown & Saenger, 1955). A detailed account appears in Sister Claudia Duratschek, Under the Shadow of His Wings (Aberdeen, SD: North Plains Press, 1971).

More recent information has been gleaned from the Sacred Heart Monastery newsletters, Yankton Benedictines, The Encounter, and from Women Gathering, a history of the Federation of Saint Gertrude, authored by Sister Jane Klimisch and published by Peregrina Publishing Company, Toronto, in 1993.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please refer to:

Ten Hallmarks of Benedictine Education: <http://www.ben.edu/center-for-mission-and-identity/upload/The-Ten-Hallmarks-of-Benedictine-Education.pdf>

Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching: <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/seven-themes-of-catholic-social-teaching.cfm>

Rule of Benedict: <http://www.osb.org/rb/>

Ex Corde Ecclesiae: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_15081990_ex-corde-ecclesiae.html

Catechism of the Catholic Church: <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism/catechism-of-the-catholic-church/>