

## *Christmas Blessings from the Benedictine Sisters*



*Kasperov Mother of God*

Community iconographer: Sister Dianne Wansley, O.S.B.

*The Benedictine Sisters wish you and those you love*

*Peace, Hope, and Joy!*

*As our Christmas gift to you, we will offer our daily Mass and Liturgy of the Hours for you and your intentions. May the blessings of this holy season be with you and your family all throughout the coming year. Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!*

*Sister Mary Clare and the Benedictine Sisters of Florida.*

Iconography is the ancient art of “writing” standardized compositional models of depictions of Biblical texts and numerous iconic types of Christ, Mary and the saints.

### **Community Calendar**

Entries marked \* are open to the public

#### **DECEMBER 2009**

- 11-13 Community Weekend
- 12 Gift Wrapping Party for our “Sponsor a Family” children
- 13 Sisters’ Recorder Ensemble prelude 10:10 a.m.\*
- 15 Advent Penance Service\*
- 23 Employees’ Christmas luncheon  
House Decorating party
- 25 Christmas 10:30 a.m. liturgy\*
- 31 New Year’s Eve Prayer Service 7:30 p.m.\*

#### **JANUARY 2010**

- 1 Feast of the Mother of God 10:30 a.m. liturgy\*
- 3 Feast of the Epiphany 10:30 a.m. liturgy\*
- 15-17 Community Weekend
- 22-24 Sisters’ Camping Weekend
- 24 Oblate Sunday\*
- 28-Feb 3 Benedictine Prioresses’ Meeting

#### **FEBRUARY 2010**

- 7 Recollection Sunday
- 10 Feast of St. Scholastica 5:30 p.m. liturgy\*
- 13-15 Community Weekend
- 17 Ash Wednesday 5:30 p.m. liturgy\*
- 22 Lenten Study Evening
- 28 Monastery 121<sup>st</sup> Anniversary

# Benedictine Sisters Begin Discernment Process In Preparation for Prioress' Election in May 2010

In May 2010, the Benedictine Sisters of Florida will enter into an intense time of prayerful discernment that will culminate in the election of a new prioress. The discernment process in a Benedictine community of women is a Spirit-filled time when each individual and the community as a whole engage in prayer, reading and consideration of the contemporary needs of the community and qualities of leadership needed to bring that vision to life. It is a process held in sacred trust that matures in personal prayer and community dialogue.

In August 2009, Sister Mary Clare, Prioress, appointed the community's election discernment team: Sister Roberta (chair), Sister Mary David and Sister Germaine. During August Community Days, Sister Roberta gave an introductory presentation on discernment. Here are some excerpts from her talk to help you, our readers, understand why we are counting on your prayerful support in the months ahead.

Discernment is the practice by which a community or an individual seeks, recognizes, and intentionally takes part in the activity of God in concrete situations. A necessary initial attitude is impartiality and docility to everything except the will of God. Discernment requires belief that the Holy Spirit is always at work in the world.

The practice of the communal discernment is very demanding! Seeking wisdom as a group requires much from the participants and can be an exhausting process as each person strives to get beyond self-interests, personality clashes, and power strategies that can crowd out genuine dialogue. Solutions to our problems and our questions do not always come directly from God. As the community builds consensus, the circumstances of time, place, and persons require the discernment of tangible signs. What a profound challenge we have not only to see the signs that God dangles in front of us; we must also analyze and search out their profound meaning in order to discover the will of God. Perhaps one of the most difficult steps in the discernment process is the leap in faith from "What seems good for ME in this decision?" to "What is God's will for the good of community?" The spiritual discipline of discernment is meant to bring us closer to God, to God's love and peace.

We are pleased that Sister Cecilia Dwyer, O.S.B., Prioress in Bristow, VA, has accepted our invitation to serve as our "outside" facilitator. Sister Cecilia will be with us for community weekends in February and March and will

lead the election process May 6-9, 2010. Sister Esther Fangman, O.S.B., President of the Federation of St. Scholastica, will join us for the election weekend, May 6-9, 2010. The next prioress will serve a six-year term. We count on your prayerful support!



Sister Mary Clare, prioress, and the community welcome our newest affiliate, Karen Bray.

## IN MEMORY OF...

**Flora Beguin**  
Mary D. Kean

**Ralph Lange**  
Felda Lange

**Jerome J. Cacciardi**  
Gerri C. Elliott

**Jean McCallum  
of Winslow, Scotland**  
Glen & Gail Greenfelder

**Sister Mary Ann Carollo**  
Maris P. Leitz

**George & Blanche Naeyaert**  
G. M. & Arlene Pringle

**Parents of Ella Conarton**  
Ella Conarton

**Mary Neuhofer**  
Robin & Pamela Neuhofer

**Josephine & Thomas Giella**  
Mary Giella

**Kevin Pringle**  
G. M. & Arlene C. Pringle

**Sister Cecilia Heintz, OSB**  
Anne Louise Smith

**Ramon Ramos**  
Gary & Connie Caudill

**Harry Kalino**  
Felda Lange

*Please remember us when  
making or revising your will.*

Our official name is: Benedictine Sisters of Florida.

Our federal ID # is 59-0737887.