

July 12, 2015

Sixtieth Jubilee Celebration of Sisters Corinne Moeller, Norma Weigand and Evelyn Dettling

About sixty and a half years ago I was standing on East Street in front of Saint Boniface Church waiting for a cab that was coming to pick up Sister Evelyn to take her to the motherhouse. How proud I was to be able to be, not only one of her 4th graders, but also her companion! Who would have thought that one day that 4th grader would be privileged to reflect with Evelyn, Corinne, Norma, their families and our community as they celebrate the 60th anniversary of their profession of vows.

These three women, each in her unique way, have en-fleshed what it means to be a Benedictine woman in the 21st century. They have lived lives deeply committed to prayer, community and ministry. They are hastening on to the perfection of monastic life. And what inspirational paths each of these women have taken as they listened with the ear of their hearts.

In Chapter 72 of the Rule of Benedict we hear of good zeal which members must foster with fervent love. Saint Benedict notes, "They should each try to be the first to show respect to the other!"

The three women that we honor today as we celebrate their 60th anniversary of profession learned that lesson well. I remember hearing once, not "practice makes perfect," but rather, "perfect practice makes perfect!"

As we consider these three Benedictine women, I would like to reflect on how they practiced perfectly! And they each practiced perfectly, and still practice, in such unique ways, the skills of Benedictine life.

Absorbed in detail, searching history, providing direction for voting, Sister Corinne Moeller is an advocate for those in need! In her early years of teaching, she was intent on teaching her students in primary and intermediate grades. Adding her great knowledge of library skills, she made all of her students interested in research and getting to the bottom of things with great detail and precision.

A call to promote the reign of God to the poorest of the poor she found herself in the hollers of Appalachia, working in a food bank, providing tutoring to young children and working with flood victims through FEMA and the Red Cross. A bout with cancer did not deter her from her ministry, as she received treatment and also logged 1,000 volunteer hours with Catholic Charities.

As we moved to our new location she sought out new opportunities to serve the poor. She was the first to explore opportunities at The Lighthouse Foundation and now she is a regular volunteer at the Thursday morning food bank cheerfully serving breakfast to those who come.

Corinne certainly does not pursue what she judges better for herself, but is always seeking what is better for someone else. Today you might find her at the hospitality desk, welcoming guests or busily crocheting her latest creation. (You should see her mermaids!)

Sister Norma Weigand charms us daily with her sweet smile and warm greetings. "Oh, honey, I hope you're having a good day!" "God bless you, sir," "God bless you, Father!" as she fervently receives the Eucharist each day. "You are so kind," when anyone shows her any kindness. For years Norma was an excellent and skilled primary teacher who was totally dedicated to encouraging each student to be the best he or she could be. Today she reminds us often, "You are wonderful!"

Cooking and baking were always very high on her skill set! In addition to her teaching and administration responsibilities, those of us who lived with her always knew we were going to have a tasty, well-planned meal when she served local missions as cook. Summers at the motherhouse usually found her in the bakery making hundreds of apple pies and loaves of bread for the summer festival. Today it is our great joy just to "be" with Sister Norma and experience her "unfeigned and humble love."

To their sisters they show the pure love of sisters. Barbara Dettling had only one sister when she entered the community and today she finds herself surrounded by forty-six others. Her skill in teaching was evident as I sat in her first classroom with about sixty others at St. Boniface. For some reason she seated me right in the center of about six mischievous boys...she later told me that I was able to settle them down! Her enthusiastic teaching style overflowed into other areas of her life. High school students found her intriguing as she recited the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice in Latin. Sisters in formation found her challenging and caring.

Courageous and committed, she responded to an invitation to get her feet dirty in areas of peace and justice for which she has a living passion. Called to ministry in Appalachia, she walked past danger and promoted peace for the downtrodden and disenfranchised.

Showing "unfeigned and humble love to her prioress" she accepted the call to serve as Subprioress for two prioresses, welcoming guests, caring for the hospitalized, preparing schedules, listening with the ear of her heart to her sisters, Evelyn served with joy. A few months ago I invited her to consider a new ministry at Saint Athanasius and I must admit I had a

twinge of concern asking a 60 year Jubilarian to accept a full time ministry. She did so with humility and enthusiasm.

Our three jubilarians seeking God through prayer, community and ministry, have given a combined total of one hundred and eighty years to their Benedictine profession...and they're not done yet!

Dear Sisters Corinne, Norma, and Evelyn, thank you for your commitment to God, to us, and to others.

We pray that you continue to prefer nothing whatever to Christ, and may he bring us all together to everlasting life!

Sister Karen Brink, OSB

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