

# YANKTON BENEDICTINES

Volume LI, No. 2

Fall 2019

## CHARISM

*We are Benedictine women of Yankton, South Dakota, sharing our gift of seeking God through our prayer, work, study and community life.*

## MISSION

*Rooted in our rural heritage and growing in relationship with God and one another in monastic community, we live a life of prayer, work, and lectio by which we serve God and God's people in our time and place.*

## CORE VALUES

*Christians follow Christ by bringing to life the values of the Gospel. We have gathered clusters of these values into these three: Awareness of God, Community, and Hospitality.*

## In this issue:

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2019 Diamond Jubilarians  
Ted and Beth Dunn



# Reflection from the Prioress — S. Maribeth Wentzlaff, OSB



Prioress  
2017-2023

*"If we all wait  
to step forward  
until we feel  
worthy or  
qualified, no  
one would be  
helping at all!"*

What a blessed and beautiful fall! As I write this article, the crops are starting to turn golden, and it is time for harvesting. I grew up in a rural area of South Dakota, so harvest time was a regular part of life. It seemed that there was always a balance/dance of when to harvest the crops, with the farmers waiting until the crops were dry enough, but doing it before the snow flies. Sometimes in South Dakota, that could be the difference of just days.

As I was thinking about that, I realized that this is a metaphor for the Church and the Kingdom of God. The time is ripe for people to step up to follow God and live the Gospel. The needs are there: human trafficking, natural disasters, lost young people, depression, hunger and poverty, homelessness, racism, and the list goes on from here. As Jesus called the early apostles and disciples to go out to the ends of the earth, He still calls us today. Are we listening to that call? If not, why not?

I remember from my younger years that some of the farmers who had bigger acreages could not harvest all of their fields without some assistance. So, they would hire combiners to come up with their rigs from Kansas or areas south to come to South Dakota to help to complete the task. As Scripture says, "The harvest is plenty, but laborers are few." With assistance, the harvest was always completed in good time.

As a former Vocation Director, I visited with many young women who had a desire to serve, but they could never see themselves as Sisters. They were too afraid of all that they might have to give up; or they were concerned about how their family/friends would respond; or they felt that they were not qualified. This reminds me of the quote by Mark Batterson, "God doesn't call the qualified. He qualifies the called!" If we all wait to step forward until we feel worthy or qualified, no one would be helping at all! I confess; I have been guilty of driving by someone pulled over on the side of the road and thinking, "I'm in a hurry; someone else will stop to help them." Who is that someone else? The need was there, and so was I! I then remember Matthew 25: "As often as you do it for the least of these, you do it for me!"

We have all been given gifts to share with the world. One translation of Matthew 10:8 says, "The gift you have received, give as gift." The harvest is ready; let us be the laborers who step forward to help. Let us also keep inviting others to share in the ministry with us. It's more fun to do the work together!

In this issue of Yankton Benedictines, you will find several examples of the harvest being reaped by those committed to the Benedictine way of life. Put on your work clothes and some gloves and join the ministry! God bless your harvesting!

*Your Sister in Christ,  
Sister Maribeth*

## Fall/Winter Calendar

### December

- 1: Adoration 1:30 – 2:30
- 7: Council Meeting
- 7: MMC Christmas Vespers Concerts at 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm
- 8: Meeting with Watertown Sisters
- 9: Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception
- 14: Spiritual Enrichment Program
- 19: Catholic Daughters Christmas Party
- 21: Desert Day
- 24: Christmas Vigil Vespers at 7:00 pm
- 31: New Years Eve Prayer at 7 pm

## Benedictine Peace Center

Spiritual Refreshment Opportunities  
at a Monastic RETREAT CENTER

### Schedule at your Convenience:

- Silent Personal Retreat
- Spiritual Direction
- Group Retreats

### Spiritual Formation Opportunities:

- Spiritual Direction Ministry Tutorial
- Contemplative Mornings
  - 3rd Saturday morning each month

### Retreats:

- Our Advent Journey-  
Becoming Empty for God - Nov.30

### To contact us for more information:

[www.yanktonbenedictines.org/Center](http://www.yanktonbenedictines.org/Center)  
[benedictinePeaceCtr@yanktonbenedictines.org](mailto:benedictinePeaceCtr@yanktonbenedictines.org)  
605.668.6292

# “Ora et Labora” Reflection from S. Rosemarie Maly



Labor Day, seems a fitting occasion to reflect on the “labora” part of our Benedictine motto: “Ora et Labora” and the significance of work in our Benedictine life and spirituality.

In considering the what and why of work, it is helpful to first take note of what work isn't. In our Judeo-Christian tradition, work is not punishment for sin. Rather it is a mark of being fully, wholly human. We live to work well with purpose, integrity and

quality. Adam and Eve are given the task to work long before they sin. God asked them to till and cultivate the garden and take care of it (Gen. 2:15). Thus, work is not a penance; it is a privilege.

Growing up on a farm I have very fond memories of countless hours spent working in our family garden with mom, dad and my siblings, tilling the soil, planting the seeds, weeding, watering and finally harvesting the fruit of our labor. I'm sure there were times when we complained, but mostly, I remember working together as family and enjoying the fresh produce we had all summer long, and through the winter, the foods we canned or froze.

For Benedict, work included, along with plowing, planting, weeding and harvesting in the field and taking care of the animals, all sorts of household tasks, such as cooking, washing dishes and serving in the kitchen, cleaning, laundry, and the list could go on with examples of manual labor; work also includes caring for the sick, teaching children and adults, welcoming guests at the door, making pots, copying manuscripts, and more.



Having named the what of work, it behooves us to consider the why of work. First and foremost, we are co-creators with God. By our work we participate with God in creation. On the seventh day when God rested, the work of creation was not finished. God gave us the privilege and responsibility of continuing the work of creation; God expects us to participate in the on-going creation of the world. Through our work we help to bring the Kingdom of God closer to fullness. Work is our contribution to creation and a necessary part of our journey of holiness.

Benedict is clear in the Rule that work has value in that it gives us the responsibility to serve others: “The monastics should serve one another...Such service...fosters love.” (Ch 35:1-2) Jesus came among us as one who serves. (cf. Luke 22:27, Matt. 20:28, Gal. 5:13). Thus,

living the Gospel, as Jesus modeled for us, means service in humble love. The Gospel challenges us to be stewards of the gifts God bestows on us. Through our stewarding of God's gifts, we become more human, and help to make the world more just. Work in Benedictine life is for carrying and supporting others. “Let those who are not strong have help so they may serve without distress...”

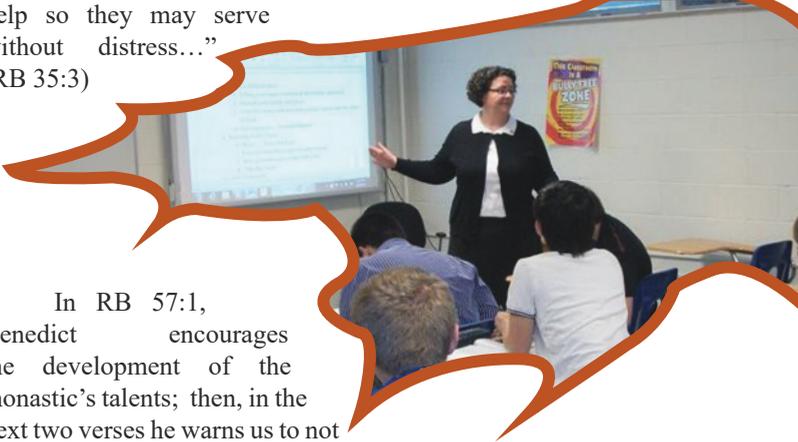
(RB 35:3)

In RB 57:1, Benedict encourages the development of the monastic's talents; then, in the next two verses he warns us to not get caught up in the reasons so many people develop their talents, and work – for material gain, popularity, or success, and in the competition, individualism and acclaim that goes along with that attitude. Thus, Benedict gives the admonition that one who “becomes puffed up by skillfulness in his/her craft...is to be removed from practicing,” not as a punishment for doing well, but as a way of staying rooted in who one is rather than what one does. (RB 57:2-2)

Another reason Benedict gives for physical work is to help us stay grounded and balanced. Good honest labor will keep the monastic grounded (RB 48:7-8), lest s/he drifts off into intellectual or spiritual fancies. “Prayer without study (reading) will be uninformed; study without prayer will be simply intellectual exercise. Without work both will be removed from reality.” (Esther de Waal)

Balancing mental and spiritual with physical activity is vital and necessary for a healthy and wholesome life. “Idleness is the enemy of the soul. Therefore the community must be occupied at specified times in manual labor and at other times in prayerful reading – lectio divina.” (RB 48:1-2) For Benedict, work doesn't define the monastic; but it is necessary and good to help support the monastery and through the activity, whatever it is, to seek God.

Ultimately, Benedict says very clearly in his Rule that our real work is to prefer nothing whatever to the love of Christ (Ch. 4:21; 72:11); if we keep Benedict's instruction always before our minds and in our hearts, it will impact the way we view our work. Our real work is to love one another with the love with which God loves us.



## Bearing Fruit in the Community

For 139 years the Yankton Benedictine Sisters have been involved in “hands-on” efforts to address needs in our local area and have been instrumental in helping organize non-profits in Yankton to assure that services continue into the future.

In 1974 Ss. **Denise Stevens** and **Jeanne Ranek** along with concerned citizens began the Contact Center. This organization responds to emergency needs of people in Yankton by providing a continuum of care and centrally located resources and information, making it easier for individuals to find help. During this time “Meals On Wheels” was started at Sacred Heart Hospital under the direction of S. Inez Welchert. It continues through the Senior Center.

As additional needs arose the Contact Center started a Woman’s Shelter (now River City Domestic Violence Center), a Visitation Center (Family Visitation Center) and a Homeless Shelter (Pathways Shelter for the Homeless). There was a growing need in Yankton to provide a weekly meal for others, so Sisters helped bring the Yankton Banquet to fruition. Sisters volunteer with and serve on the boards of these agencies, as well as United Way, Boys and Girls Club, Big Friend/Little Friend, Habitat for Humanity, etc.

When Wangari Maathai, a woman from Kenya, challenged the world to the Million Tree Campaign for climate change, the Monastery became involved. Trees were provided for the students of Sacred Heart Middle School along with books about the earth for their library. These trees continue to absorb carbon in the local area.

Since 2015, at the request of the Monastic Chapter, the Social Justice Committee has led the way in assisting the Monastic Community to study and become active on current social justice

issues. Learning about the efforts in South Dakota to abolish the death penalty, Sisters took part in a writing campaign when the death penalty was discussed in the State legislature.

Following the impetus of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, the community studied and raised awareness of human trafficking in South Dakota and the world. The Social Justice



S. Mary Jo Polak and S. Joelle Bauer leading the Human Trafficking Retreat, May 2019

Committee has given presentations on trafficking and provided printed informational pamphlets and flyers around the Yankton area. As others take on the issue of trafficking, the Sisters’ focus turns to local housing needs and racism. In line with the work of LCWR they are studying the recent U.S. Bishop’s pastoral letter on racism, “Open Wide Our Hearts.” A speaker on Native culture will be hosted, and Sisters will participate in Yankton’s “Connecting Cultures” group.

Reflecting on these efforts, the Sisters continue to be prophetic voices, speaking to the needs of the time, and bearing fruit that will last into the future.

## Jubilarians Grow Through God’s Call...

### Diamond Jubilarians



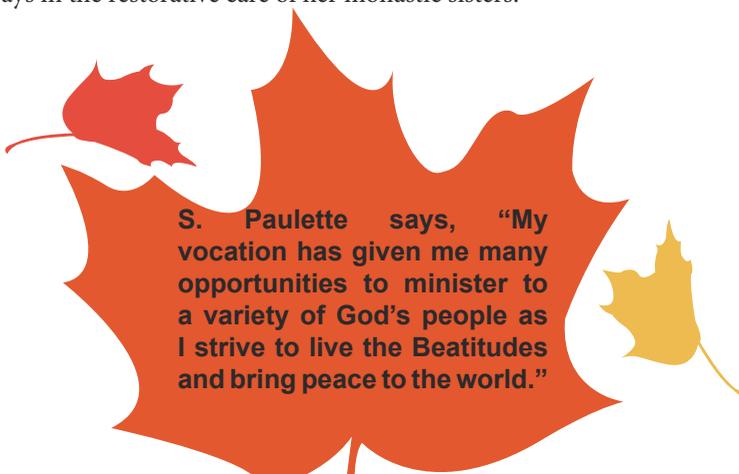
#### Celebrating 60 years

**S. Paulette Larsen** was born at home on April 27, 1937, the fourth child of William and Madelene (Schumacher) Larsen of Platte Center, Nebraska. She attended St. Joseph’s Parochial School and graduated from Platte Center High School. After high school, she worked for the Mutual of Omaha Insurance Company to earn money to go to nurses training. She entered nurses training at Sacred Heart School of Nursing in Yankton, South

Dakota in 1956. She joined Sacred Heart Monastery in August 1957. She became a novice June 28, 1958 and received the name Paulette. She made her first profession on June 29, 1959 and final profession on June 29, 1962. She also completed her nursing education this same year.

S. Paulette spent her life of ministry in healthcare as a nurse and later a massage therapist. She was a nurse at St. Michael’s Hospital in Tyndall, South Dakota, Madonna Care Center in Lincoln, Nebraska,

and St. Thomas More Hospital in Canon City, Colorado. Many years of her life were devoted to the care of the sick and elderly sisters in the St. Joseph’s Care Center at Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, South Dakota. Later, she became a massage therapist and assisted in countless ways in the restorative care of her monastic sisters.



**S. Paulette says, “My vocation has given me many opportunities to minister to a variety of God’s people as I strive to live the Beatitudes and bring peace to the world.”**



### Celebrating 70 years

**S. Kevin (Patricia) Irwin** is the oldest daughter of the late Bernard and Edna Irwin and grew up on a farm south of Rockham, SD. She graduated from the 8th grade at St. Mary's School in Zell and then Mount Marty High School in Yankton. After graduation from Mount Marty High School, she joined Sacred Heart Monastery in 1947.

She became a novice on June 23, 1948 and was given the name Kevin. She made temporary profession on June 24, 1949 and final profession on June 29, 1952. In May 1954, she graduated from Mount Marty College with a Bachelor of Music Education degree and in 1956, she received a Masters from the University of South Dakota in music.

S. Kevin taught in Dimock, Stephan and Yankton, South Dakota. She was appointed Dean of Students at Mount Marty 1962-1968. From 1968-1972, she was at the Newman Center in Vermillion and took classes in Counseling. She then ministered in Student Life at Mount Marty until 1978 and began her work with divorced, separated and widowed in the Yankton area. She practiced counseling at Benedictine Family Services until it closed in 1992 and then ministered 15 years as Volunteer Coordinator & Pastoral Minister at Sacred Heart Parish in Yankton until she retired in 2007. She continued to volunteer with communion calls and visits as well as volunteering at the Yankton Area Banquet. She was also the director of novices in 1985 to 1986.

**S. Kevin says, "The constant in my life has been in knowing that God loves me, and God's invitation to me has been St. Benedict's admonition to seek God at all times."**



### Celebrating 75 Years

**S. Jane Frances Garcia** was born in Farisita, CO, into a very religious family—three older half sisters were vowed religious. Her faith was nurtured by her home parish in Gardner, CO. It was the influence of the Sisters who taught vacation school in Gardner that brought S. Jane Frances to Yankton in 1941.

After first profession in 1944 she was sent to work at Sacred Heart Hospital which paved the way for her mission in nursing, a profession she learned "on the job." She was a founding member of the Watertown community in 1959. Her heart's desire was to serve the poor and underprivileged Spanish and Mexican people, so S. Jane Frances volunteered as a missionary to Guatemala for two years. On her return, she continued her education and graduated with degrees leading to nursing registration.

In June 1977 she transferred her stability back to Sacred Heart Monastery in Yankton and resumed serving the Hispanic people in Colorado, including religious education and pastoral care in parishes,

nursing homes, and jails. Of special memory was the summer of 1995 when she was privileged to spend a month in Rome for a Benedictine Monastic experience. She writes, "Life as a Yankton Benedictine has been a tremendous fulfillment in my ministries as a health provider, serving the poor, the incarcerated, and preparing young people for confirmation and Holy Eucharist. How can I begin to thank God for the graces afforded me to carry out His Holy will?"

**S. Jane Frances writes, "Life as a Yankton Benedictine has been a tremendous fulfillment in my ministries as a health provider, serving the poor, the incarcerated, and preparing young people for confirmation and Holy Eucharist. How can I begin to thank God for the graces afforded me to carry out His Holy will?"**

### Celebrating 80 Years

**S. Wilma Lyle** begins by stating "My life has been an interesting and exciting one." Like many of her generation, S. Wilma grew up on a homesteaded farm where her parents, William Michael and Lillian (Ruddel) Lyle, raised their seven children. During her years at Mount Marty High School, S. Wilma felt called to be a Benedictine Sister and began convent life on August 24, 1937.

After first profession in 1939, her teaching career started with elementary and junior high schools in Glen Ulin, Richardton, and Selfridge, ND, and Hoven, Aberdeen and Yankton, SD, with many summers spent teaching in vacation schools. S. Wilma loved teaching and served Mount Marty College as professor in the religion department and as academic dean.



In 1964, she along with five other Sisters, spent seven years setting up and teaching in their mission school in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala. She found this to be the most enriching experience of her life. In 1973 S.

Wilma was elected prioress and served two terms which she found both challenging and exhilarating. After her terms in office she resumed teaching and taking on various ministries.

**S. Wilma states: "I've been blessed and enriched in so many ways and am so grateful for the gifts of life, health, intelligence, education and experiences, especially experiences undreamed of in 1939 when I was professed."**

## News Notes



**Ss. Bonita Gacnik, Erin Colgan, Barbara Kowalkowski and Jacquelyn Ernster** participate in the national day of caring with the United Way. They helped at the Clothes Closet.

**S. Marielle Frigge** gave two conference retreats for St. Benedict's Monastery in Minnesota, June 9-22, one at the Monastery in St. Joseph and one for Sisters at their health care facility in St. Cloud.

On May 29, 2019, at the blessing of Avera Downtown, painted portraits of **S. Kathleen Crowley** and **S. Joan Reichelt** were unveiled and hung in the Legacy Hall. This is in appreciation of all that they have done for Avera, especially their service as a System Member.

**S. Carol Jean VanDenHemel** attended the YTM conference at St. John's this week, June 16-23 in Colleagueville, MN.

**Ss. Maribeth Wentzlaff, Candyce Chrystal, Terry Lafferty, Rosemarie Maly, and Marietta Kerkvliet** attended the Association of Benedictine Colleges and Universities meetings that were held from June 10-12 at Mount Marty in Yankton.

**S. Marietta Kerkvliet and S. Patricia Ann Toscano** attended the Monastic Liturgy Forum at Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, IN. July 1-5.

Six Sisters attended the NAABOD, North American Association. Oblate Director/Associate Director 2019 Biennial Conference at St. Benedict Center, Schuyler, NE, on July 5-9. They were Sister Patricia Heirigs, Director, with **Ss. Barbara McTague, Bonita Gacnik, and Rosemarie Maly** as Associate Directors. S. Mary Jo Polak was the music accompanist and S. Marielle Frigge gave one of the keynote presentations. Her talk was about the "Today and Tomorrow" of Benedictine Spirituality. The theme for the conference was, "Continuing the Sacred Tradition, Benedictine Spirituality Today and Tomorrow." **S. Patricia Ann Toscano** helped **S. Patricia Heirigs** prepare all the liturgies for both the Liturgy of the Hours and the daily Eucharist for the conference.

**Sisters Maribeth Wentzlaff, Mary Kay Panowicz, Patricia Heirigs, Marietta Kerkvliet, Carmy Luke, Carol Jean VanDenHemel, Mildred Busch, and Terry Lafferty** attended the Regional LCWR Conference held at St. Ben's, in St. Joseph, Minnesota on July 13. The speaker for the event was Diane Bergant.

The Avera System Members have been busy attending annual fall required meetings along with the Avera Quality Congress on August 21.



**S. Matthew Wehri's** old time friend, Curt Nelson, of over 40 years visited her here at the Monastery. **S. Matthew** taught him to be a good Christian before he graduated from MMC in 1975.

**S. Louise Marie Goettertz** was recently commissioned to calligraphy the names and dates for the SD State Chiropractic licenses issued this summer.



**S. Bonita Gacnik** led a service project during Mount Marty College Mission Day on September 11.

**S. Joyce Streff** attended the Avera Chaplain Regional Meeting in Buffalo MN from Sept. 12-19.

**S. Maribeth Wentzlaff** gave a Mission presentation to the Avera Physician's Academy at Lake Okoboji on Sept. 13.

**S. Carmy Luke** completed a 30 day retreat at the Sophia Retreat Center in Atchison, KS.



**S. Jacquelyn Ernster** met her goal of collecting over 80 boxes of diapers in celebration of her 80th birthday. They were donated to Yankton area agencies.

## Ted and Beth Dunn

The Sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery have been striving to work on the Action Plans established by the community in 2016. One of those Action Plans deals with working on communication skills and relationship building. In order to assist them in this goal, the Sisters have solicited the services of Ted Dunn and Beth Lipsmeyer Dunn from Comprehensive Consulting Services out of St. Louis, MI. They have an established program called CARE (Conversational Approach to Relational Effectiveness). Our Sisters will be engaged in this program through the fall of 2020. The goal of this extensive program is to empower religious women and men to walk deeply, share mutually, and live authentically in community.



Ted and Beth joined the community for the August Chapter meeting to assist the Sisters with examining where they have been and where they see themselves now and into the future. Currently, Ted and Beth are training the Sister facilitators to assist with the rest of the CARE program with the other Sisters. This is a lived example of the Sisters' vow of conversion of life.



- Are you a 21 or older single female with no dependents?
- Do you desire an exciting adventure while discovering direction and focus in your life?
- Are you open to making a difference while doing something you enjoy?
- Are you in transition (e.g., school to a career, changing jobs, etc.)?

**APPLY ONLINE**  
[yanktonbenedictines.org/who-we-are/residential-volunteer-program/](http://yanktonbenedictines.org/who-we-are/residential-volunteer-program/)  
 Program Director Sr. Bonita Gacnik:  
[bgacnik@yanktonbenedictines.org](mailto:bgacnik@yanktonbenedictines.org)  
 Cell Phone: 605.760.2741

Opportunities to attend Monastery (e.g., lectures, programs, concerts, workshops, etc.), and Mount Marty College (e.g., lectures, athletic events, plays, concerts, etc.) events.



- BENEFITS**
- Room and Board
  - Spiritual Direction
  - Wireless Internet
  - Computer workstation with printer
  - Cable TV
  - Private Room



**THE YANKTON BENELECTINES RESIDENTIAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**  
 check us out on:  
  

**Our goal - is to provide an opportunity for you to serve others while discovering more about yourself.**

Single women 21 and older without dependents.

### What did you enjoy about volunteering with the Sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery?

**Elizabeth Donner** said: "The generosity of Spirit, the JOY in helping, the stories and kindness, the smiles, and expressions of thankfulness."

**Kim Mosqueda** stated: "Being here has given me more peace in my life. I have grown in compassion, and it is humbling to be around people who have such a love for God who hold onto their counter-cultural ideals."

Current residential volunteer, **Jandi Dunlap** says, "You really don't have to answer to anybody but God. The Sisters understand this. They learned how to live and work with one another in a community setting through God's teachings. That is an entirely new concept for me. So, I think I have a lot to learn from them."

## You're Invited!

### MORNING PRAYER

Monday-Friday @ 7:00 a.m.  
Saturday & Sunday @ 8:30 a.m.

### EVENING PRAYER

Monday-Friday @ 5:15 p.m.  
Sunday @ 5:00 p.m.

### EUCCHARIST

Monday-Friday @ 11:15 a.m.  
Sunday @ 10:00 a.m.

Eucharistic Adoration, 1:30-2:30 p.m.  
First Sunday of the month

## Social Media



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**Blog:** <https://yanktonbenedictines.org/sacred-heart-monastery-blog/>

## YANKTON BENELECTINES

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*The harvest is plentiful,  
but the laborers are few.*

Luke 10:2

**Is God calling you?**

*Listen with the ear of your heart.*

Listen to God's guidance as you explore your Vocation.

Contact us: 605.668.6000 or [yanktonbenedictines.org](https://yanktonbenedictines.org)