


Threshold

A publication of the Benedictine Sisters of Mount St. Scholastica
Volume 17 Number 1 Winter 2018



O LORD, HOW
GLORIOUS YOUR
NAME OVER ALL
THE EARTH!

Psalm 8



Service-learning at the Mount

By Mary Bugos, *Benedictine College student*

Mother Teresa is often quoted as saying: “Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God’s kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile.”

Many of Professor Whitfield’s theology students recently spent some time volunteering with the sisters at the Mount to complete the service-learning requirement in their curriculum. All parties involved walked away with a taste of that same happiness about which Mother Teresa spoke.

“For my Christian Moral Life class, Professor Mikail Whitfield had each student write a paper about the experience of corporal and spiritual works of mercy,” said Meredith Olson, a Benedictine student from Panora, Iowa. “I felt like the Mount was a great place for this because I was able to help at Dooley Center as well as have time praying with the sisters in St. Lucy Chapel.”

“I got some really positive feedback from my students,”

Whitfield said. “Some of them were apprehensive about doing it to start with, but they really enjoyed it afterwards. I had some really good reflections on the spiritual value of doing this.”

Olson said that she helped the sisters with a variety of odd jobs and also spent time visiting with the sisters in Dooley Center. “I enjoyed this the most,” Olson said. “Being able to sit and hear each one of their stories was something that I cherished throughout my experience.”

Whitfield also mentioned that his students were impressed by the conversations they had with the sisters. “Some of them spoke of hearing stories about what the sisters did with their life, and yet they look forward to spending eternity with God, rather than being apprehensive about that,” Whitfield said.

“That helped the students to change their view or think about things differently. While the main goal is to get the students active in helping others, it was very helpful for the students as well.”

The sisters also benefited from the students’ time at the Mount. “We see it as a win-win opportunity where sisters have contact with young people who are just beginning their lives, and volunteers experience the wisdom of our monastery elders and the peaceful and prayerful atmosphere of our home,” said Sister Barbara Ann Mayer.

Sister Seraphine Tucker enjoyed telling the students things about the Mount that she remembers from her years as maintenance director. “I know the unwritten stories that no one else knows,” she said.

Both Whitfield and Olson expressed gratitude to Sister Loretta McGuire, the volunteer coordinator for the Mount, who organized and planned the students’ visits.

“This experience is something that I hold close to my heart,” Olson said. “It allowed me to better open my heart and mind toward myself, others, and God.”

Above: Benedictine College student Maddie Haberman reads to Sister Celinda Medina, as part of the college’s service learning program.