

## **Sister Ephrem Hollermann**

### **Prioress from 1995–2005**



Sister Ephrem (Rita) Hollermann was born in Melrose, Minn., on July 13, 1942, the fourth of five children born to Henry and Eleanor Wiener Hollermann. She entered Saint Benedict's Convent on September 8, 1961, became a novice on June 12, 1962, and made her first profession on July 11, 1963, and her final profession on July 11, 1967. Prior to her election as the 14th prioress of Saint Benedict's Monastery, she served the community as a junior high teacher of English and religion in various schools throughout the Diocese of St. Cloud, Minn., 1964–1974, as teacher of religion at Cathedral High School in St. Cloud, 1974–1976, as director of novices and initial formation at Saint Benedict's Monastery, 1976–1983, as a doctoral student in historical theology/church history, 1983–1987, and as assistant professor of theology at the College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University, 1987–1995.

Early in Sister Ephrem's first term as prioress, in a further effort to reclaim its monastic identity, the community decided to describe itself as a "monastery" rather than a "convent," and became known as Saint Benedict's Monastery. As prioress, the focus of her teaching was a comprehensive reflection on the biblical and monastic foundations of Benedictine life within the universal call of the church to holiness.

The community's directive at the beginning of Sister Ephrem's first term was to implement the Comprehensive Facilities Plan approved in 1994. Within six years, significant progress was made, most notably the addition of an assisted living wing at Saint Scholastica Convent, the establishment of the Art and Heritage Place and program and the relocation and expansion of the Spirituality Center. During her second term, the community embarked upon its first-ever capital campaign, making possible the renovation and restoration of the main monastery building.

Before and during her terms as prioress, Sister Ephrem interacted with numerous Benedictine women's communities in North America as presenter, retreat director, federation delegate and visitor. Her visits to Benedictine monasteries in Canada, Mexico, Brazil, the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Italy, Germany, Taiwan and Japan during her years as prioress have lent perspective to her research and writing interests related to Benedictine monasticism among women. Monasterio Santa Escolastica in Puerto Rico gained independence in the year 2000.

After 10 years as prioress, Sister Ephrem spent a year in Studium, the community's scholar-in-residence program, resuming her research and writing interests, as well as preparing for her return to the College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University as an associate professor of theology from 2006 until her retirement in 2014. She was named professor emerita in 2014 and received the Egregia Award from the American Benedictine Academy in 2016.

Currently, she is engaged in historical research and writing in the field of American Benedictine women's history.