

ST. PAUL'S MONASTERY NEWSLETTER

February 2023



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WELCOME LETTER

Sister Jacqueline Leiter, OSB

In February, we love to retell the story of Gregory the Great's story about Benedict and Scholastica's last visit together ([Benedict and Scholastica's last visit together](#)).

The twins had a yearly custom of gathering together in a small house at the bottom of a mountain between their monasteries. After visiting and sharing stories together all day, it grew dark. Scholastica wanted to continue visiting with her beloved brother all night, but Benedict rejected her request, for it was unacceptable to be away from his monastery overnight.



When Benedict refused to listen to her, Scholastica turned to God in prayer, and God listened because of her love. God sent a violent thunderstorm, making it impossible for Benedict to leave. The sister and brother did indeed remain in the house talking of the spiritual matters and the glories of heaven all through the night until the next morning.

This story reminds us of the power of love. God made humans to live in relationship and in community with one another. We are bound together by being present to one another, listening to one another, sharing meals, working together, and praying and playing together. Community relationships are strengthened in love for each other. Sometimes it is hard work to build community, but it is also gift.

Scholastica's humility and her love for Benedict were strong enough to pray up a storm and teach her brother about the power of love. The Rule teaches us that love has power to transform our hearts: "As we progress in this way of life and in faith, we shall run in the path of God's commandments, our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love." (Prol. 49)

We experience transformation both individually and communally. Know that the Sisters of St. Paul's Monastery cherish you—our community of friends, neighbors, and supporters. We are grateful that you are part of our story. We are grateful to share the journey with you.





BENEDICTINE ASSOCIATES NEWS & UPDATES

Sister Karen Sames, OSB, Associates Director

So, how are you doing on your New Year's resolutions? Did you make a resolution, perhaps, to live your faith-filled life more intently? How would one go about doing that?

Well, I urge you to be open to the stirrings of the Holy Spirit. Is the Holy Spirit nudging you to get involved with a social justice issue, or perhaps volunteering to tutor a child who may need more help with their education? There are so many opportunities out there that it can be overwhelming.

Are you like me (when you see those commercials to help the children living on the streets)? Maybe they need a place like Covenant House, or they are ill and need places like the Shriners Hospital or St. Jude's Hospital. Or maybe, you are affected by commercials that show abandoned pets, or news articles of the war in Ukraine. Does your heart just melt and you want to do all you can to help?

It has been my experience that when I try to do something by myself, I don't always manage to get the job done. I am daunted by the overwhelming needs out there. I have found it easier to work with others who share my values and concerns—people who want to build a more loving, compassionate, and peaceful world. Some groups that I have participated in have been: Stephen Ministries, Pax Christi Twin Cities Chapter, Sister-Online.org, and the Red Cross, and of course, the big one—BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF ST PAUL'S MONASTERY!

Each organization has many different levels of participation. Check out what issue you would like to foster and then check out if there is a level of volunteering that fits your gifts and talents. Here at the monastery we have Benedictine Associates, Oblates and Volunteers. Call us and we can help you in your willingness to serve (Jason Wittak, Events & Volunteer Coordinator 651-777-8181 ext 409, jwittak@stpaulsmonastery.org).

Enjoy your search for where the Holy Spirit may be calling you to serve. May you find the service that is fulfilling and life-giving to you and to the people you serve. God bless you.





OBLATES

WHO ARE OBLATES?

Who are Oblates?

Oblates of St. Benedict are Christian women and men who associate themselves in a special way with a Benedictine monastery, pledging themselves to be more fully who they are through their baptism and confirmation. With the Rule of Benedict as a guide, Benedictine spirituality is flexible and can be adapted to the life of anyone who is seeking God and has a desire to live out the Gospel message.

What do Oblates do?

Oblates live the Gospel of Jesus as it is presented in the Rule of Benedict.

Oblates strive to live a balanced life of prayer, work, study and holy leisure.

Oblates value and support one another in community while bringing Christ and the spirit of monasticism into their families, places of work, and in civic and social activities.

How do you Become an Oblate?

Oblates begin with a desire for greater spiritual growth according to the Christian ideals and values set forth in the Rule of Benedict. They spend a year in formation exploring the traditions of Benedictine life and the application of the Rule to contemporary living. A candidate then makes a promise of Oblation to enter a new relationship with St. Paul's Monastery and is encouraged to join the Sisters in the prayer and work life of the monastic community.

MAPLE TREE CHILDCARE CENTER

Jennie Schlauch, Maple Tree Childcare Center



The Maple Tree children send their love this Valentine's Day. In this picture, two of our preschoolers are painting big hearts. We cherish the special friendships that are formed here at the center.





WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

*Excerpts from With Grateful Hearts The Past We Own
written by Sister Carole Sweely, OSB.*



Chapel and college at St. Benedict's in St. Joseph, MN

In 1857 there were 57 sisters at the Convent of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, Minnesota. The chief works of these sisters dealt with teaching music, domestic work, needlework, and elementary school teaching.

All prayers (with the exception of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary) were recited in the German language until after World War I. Major superiors were appointed by the abbot or the bishop in the area from 1857 to 1889. St. Benedict's main focus from 1858 to 1900 was elementary school teaching with secondary and college teaching after 1900.

In 1947, ninety years later, the Benedictine community at St. Joseph numbered 1277, staffing elementary schools, secondary schools, a college, hospitals, homes for the aged, and orphanage, Indian missions and mission in Formosa.

**With grateful hearts the past we own;
The future, all to us unknown,
We to your guardian care commit,
And, peaceful, leave before your feet.**

Midday Prayer, Philip Doddridge (1702-1751)

A Benedictine monastery, whatever the location, consists of sacred spaces, dreamers with eternal desires, guests who are welcomed as Christ, and events that distinguish monastics as being a school for the Lord's service. In 1948, with these attributes in mind and at heart, 178 sisters from St. Benedict's Convent in St. Joseph, Minnesota, chose to establish St. Paul's Priory at 301 Summit Avenue, one of the oldest and most historical sites in St. Paul, Minnesota.

What would motivate 178 sisters to move to a different diocese, seventy-five miles southeast of their Benedictine roots along the Mississippi River to new and uncharted sites? The answers again were varied and yet common: a familiar and to some a more desirable education system, family, and friends in the St. Paul area and the appeal of challenges and adventures of establishing a new priory.



*301 Summit Avenue
with Mary Hall to the right*

In 1947 with over 1200 sisters at St. Benedict's, Pope Pius XII perceived it as too large for a Benedictine "family-oriented" community. Mother Rosamond Praschner went to Rome to discuss possibilities of establishing three new foundations to lessen numbers at St. Benedict's and to initiate beginnings of the Federation of St. Benedict. [Click here to continue reading.](#)



GALLERY OPENING SEEING GOD 2023

BENEDICTINE CENTER SEEING GOD

Artists speak to us in a language that takes us out of the ordinary. It is a dialect that expands how we image the mystery of God revealing itself to us each day in the work around, in the encounters that come our way.

Exhibit runs through March 25



You are welcome to view this new exhibit, simply call ahead, 651-777-8181.

[Click here for more information](#)



BENEDICTINE
CENTER OF ST. PAUL'S
MONASTERY

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

MELINDA MARKELL, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Danika Payette, Mission Advancement Analyst

For February, we are featuring our Communications and Marketing Coordinator, Melinda Markell, who newly joined our Mission Advancement team in November 2022. When looking for a new position, Melinda was hoping to find a career in the religious field where she could dedicate her skills towards a higher purpose.

She feels that she has found a new home here at St. Paul's Monastery, where she describes the Monastery life as dedicated, beautiful, and prayerful. So far, she finds the Sisters and staff to all be very kind people, and she believes it won't be long before she has gained a family here.



Her proudest moment thus far includes increasing the number of “friends” and likes on Instagram for St. Paul's Monastery, also partially in thanks to Sister Jacqueline Leiter, OSB's photography!

Melinda grew up in the West 7th area near downtown Saint Paul with her mother (Homemaker), father (Mechanic), and two siblings: an older sister who currently resides in Arizona and a younger brother who is still local to the Twin Cities. Melinda's grandfather and his sons, including her father, owned Markell's North Star Service Station on West 7th where it operated for 60+ years before her dad retired.

Currently, Melinda still lives in her childhood home in the same West 7th neighborhood with her mother and brother. They recently lost their 14-year-old cat to cancer and their house was empty for one whole month before they started exploring adopting a new cat. They now have Nefertiti, a 3-year-old, tortoise shell, adopted from Feline Rescue in St. Paul.

Melinda obtained her high school diploma from the Perpich Center for Arts Education (Minnesota Center for Arts Education at the time), where she studied Literary Arts. This school had an alternative method of learning that did not include a grading system, so she tested out several colleges before finding one that fit.

She spent a year at the College of St. Catherine University in the Twin Cities, one semester at Emerson Communications College located in Boston, MA, and then finally landed in Vermont where she graduated from Goddard College. Later, she received her Master's from the University of Minnesota with an Interdisciplinary Major to learn about Nonprofit Management and focus on Indonesian Shadow Puppetry. [Click here to read more.](#)



MISSION ADVANCEMENT NEWS & UPDATES

This is an exciting year! In 2023, we will mark the 75th anniversary of the founding of St. Paul's Monastery. In 1948, 178 courageous Sisters elected to go forth from the Monastery of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, Minnesota and establish a new foundation in the Twin Cities—St. Paul's Priory at 301 Summit Avenue.

On August 15, 1983, the Sisters created the Benedictine Center to further deepen their mission and hospitality. For the past 40 years, the Benedictine Center continues to nourish souls and welcome guests into the Benedictine way of life.

Mission Advancement, on behalf of our vowed community of Sisters, is planning several events to honor these anniversaries beginning in 2023 and continuing through June 2024. Please save the dates for the following (more information to come on these and more!):

- Final Oblation on Pentecost Sunday, May 28
- Mass with Abbot John Klassen on Sunday, June 18
- Community Celebration of the 75th on Saturday, June 24
- Blessing of the Animals on Sunday, October 1
- All Souls Celebration on Thursday, November 2
- Christmas at the Monastery, December 2-9
- **... and much more is in the works!**

Volunteers and sponsors are vital to the success of each of these events. If you have interest in serving on the planning committee for any of these events or volunteering on the day of the event please contact Jason Wittak (jwittak@stpaulsmonastery.org; 651-777-8181, ext. 409).

Contact Travis Salisbury, Director of Mission Advancement, if you feel called to sponsor any of the above events. Sponsors enhance the Monastery's ability to widen our hospitality and impact.

The Holy Spirit is guiding St. Paul's Monastery to a future full of hope! The Benedictine tradition is a responsive one and adapting to the needs of the times. Our ministries are thriving. Our partnerships are strong. We look forward to the excitement and encouragement of this anniversary year, both for the Monastery and the Benedictine Center.

We hope that you'll join us in celebrating 75 years of vowed life and 40 years of dedicated ministry through our Benedictine Center.

Saint Benedict and Saint Scholastica: pray for us!

BONDED IN SHARED INTENTION

Teri Rose, ObISB

I am grateful for the experience of community that I am witnessing and feeling in Benedictine CARE. For the first time since I began working in healthcare a health education initiative has become a living community. No longer are there simply participants and a teacher coming together to learn about nutrition. Rather, the presence of the participants themselves, bonded with the shared intention to allow God and the Holy Spirit to lead, created a body that the Spirit has breathed life into. A healing, nurturing, grace-filled breath. The true source of health.

Benedictine CARE is still young, yet already it is an experience that is being shaped by each member. CARE is a space that is responding to the voices within the community. In each meeting, we take multiple pauses to turn towards the divine and shift our attention to bringing our innate wisdom forward. We don't try to "figure things out" or "solve problems". We listen. Members are being given the opportunity to not just establish trust with each other, but most importantly, with themselves. Part of this bringing forward has been a member-driven initiative to form a peer group for increased accountability and support. It is a rich experience.

In Benedictine CARE we are exploring how to apply our Benedictine values of Stability, Stewardship, and Community in the ordinariness of daily lifestyle choices. We don't just study our 1500-year-old tradition, we are bringing it with us in our kitchens and grocery stores, when we travel, and when we are ordering at restaurants.

We would love to have you join us in our newest Benedictine Center offering.



[Click Here to Learn More](#)



HUMILITY

THE SECOND STEP

Sister Jacqueline Leiter, OSB

If we take seriously the first step of humility and keep a reverence for God before our eyes, always remembering that we are within God's presence, then we will know that God is God, and we are not God. The second step of humility flows naturally after the first step and invites us to love not our own will and the satisfaction of our desires.

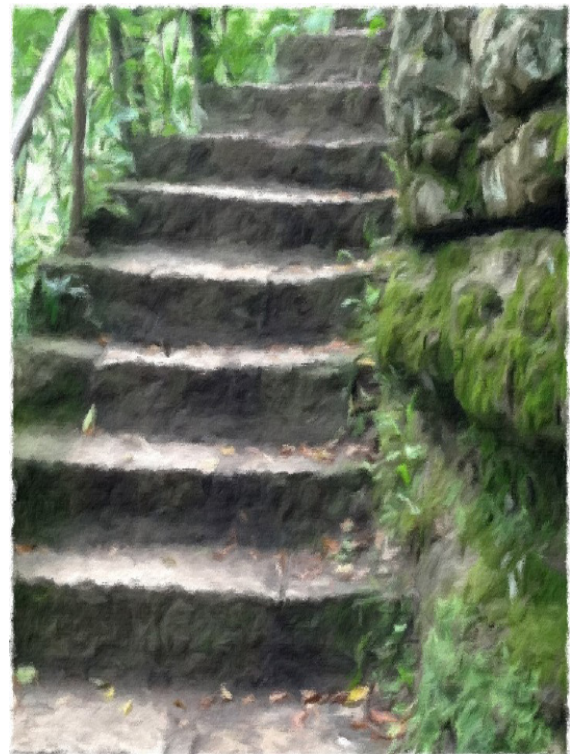
Benedict encourages us in the second step to "imitate Christ who said, I have come not to do my own will, but the will of the one who sent me" (John 6:38). This is the same Jesus who prayed at Gethsemane, "Abba, Father. Everything is possible for you. Take this cup away from me. But let it be as you, not I, would have it" (Mark 14:36).

God gave us a will, and it is good. We would not be human without a will. However, we sometimes have a problem knowing our own will. We are conflicted and confused, not knowing what we want. Sometimes our will is for more than one thing. And if we do know what we want, we might not know why we want it. We may not know if there is a source of good and love behind our will. In today's culture, we also often find that chasing after our own will does not satisfy our desire, but only leads to emptiness.

When we embrace God as creator and center of our lives, we learn to follow God's will in our lives. We come to know that we don't have all the answers. We come to know ourselves, and accept our gifts and limitations.

We are called to a lifestyle of discernment, turning to God and seeking to follow God in each step of our day. We may need to slow down, remind ourselves that God is present with us, and take time to turn and open our hearts to God and listen.

We may need to ask God to guide us and show us the way. When we seek after God's will, we will come to know the source of good and love that is guiding us each step of the way. We will little by little align our will with that of God.





TERRY JOHNSON

ST. SCHOLASTICA HONOREE

Ann Siverling, OblSB

In 2018, the year of their 70th anniversary, the Sisters of St. Benedict of St. Paul's Monastery established the St. Scholastica Honor. The honor celebrates the virtues of St. Scholastica (Community, Hospitality, Listening, Dignity of Work, Respect for Persons, Stability, Justice, Awareness of God, Stewardship, and Moderation), and this honor is presented to someone exhibiting the qualities and dedication to the Benedictine way of life in support of St. Paul's Monastery.

We are honored to announce that this year's St. Scholastica Honoree is Terry Johnson. Terry has volunteered her time and talents at St. Paul's Monastery for 15 years! Terry began regularly going to the Health Care Center to work with the Sisters living there in 2007. She shared that she was at an activity at the Monastery one evening when Sister Carol Rennie, OSB was the Prioress.

The activity she was attending was a practice to help the Sisters get more exercise. She found herself offering to help with this activity in the future. Sister Carol introduced Terry to Monica, a fellow oblate who was in charge of the activities for the Sisters. According to Terry, she and Monica, "teamed up and had a great time!"



Eventually Monica became Terry's sponsor when Terry became an oblate. In time, Monica left this work at the Monastery, but Terry was invited to stay and keep working with the Sisters. She came to the Monastery twice a month and created her own way of doing exercises with the Sisters. She would bring to the Sisters whatever was inspiring her on that given day. She shares that she listened to the Sisters all the time and the Sisters were her teachers.

Terry was 67 years old when she first came to the Monastery in 2006. Showing up at the Monastery was a surprise even to her. Terry was struggling with an inner turmoil and was looking for a retreat and to find someone to talk to. She looked on the internet to see if she could find a retreat. She found the resume of one of the Sisters at St. Paul's Monastery. [Click here to read more.](#)



WHAT IS COMMUNITY? WHAT IS TOGETHERNESS?

Karen Fleming

Websters New World Dictionary:
Any group living in the same area
or having interests, work, etc. in
common—A sharing in common.

Acts 4:32 “Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common.” A community of believers, Christian believers. In common: A flock, schools, fraternities, political beliefs, shared cultures. Germans, Italians, Irish, Polish, Czechs...



Once upon a time people of one flock such as above were drawn towards each other after they migrated to America, some still do. Communities where they spoke the same language, shared the same beliefs, ate the same type of food, and even shared the same housing.

My Great Grandfather entered America in the latter part of the 1800s. He came from Bohemia and acquired a job as a policeman in Omaha, Nebraska. Several years later, with my grandfather's help, his younger brother came over. He often had to help his brother translate his native Czech language to English.

His brother eventually worked for the railroad repairing engines. Both lived in a Czech community and shared housing even after Great Grandpa married and had three small children (tight fit).

On one of the many trips my husband and I took, we drove through Omaha looking for the Czech community housing and found most of them still standing. The only Czech restaurant had a menu that looked so appetizing to me, a thorough-bred Czech, but my husband (Heinz 57 make-up) wasn't interested in things like pork, sauerkraut, and dumplings. We passed by.

To see the tiny houses in a row, like a community, left much to my imagination. They came together as people with the same culture, shared their beliefs, and made their lives work as a community.

What makes a community—being together in shared belief and way of life. The Benedictine Monastery is a perfect example of this.

75th Anniversary of St. Paul's Monastery

Sister Lucia Schwickerath, OSB



WALKING MONASTERY WAY 75th Anniversary Book Available

Walking Monastery Way Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of St. Paul's Monastery by the Sisters of St. Benedict and St. Paul's Monastery

Celebrate Benedictine monastic life in St. Paul through this "memoire of many voices," which features historical photos.

The book can be purchased on Amazon.com. You can also contact S. Lucia Schwickerath, OSB at 651-777-8181

*heartfelt love sublime
radiating God's presence
be my valentine*

*Haiku by Sister Rose Alice
(1930-2013)*





SETTING BONES IN A BROKEN BODY

Stephen Kasperick-Postellon, Director of Liturgy & Music

Life in community is hard. This is true of a community of any size: a marriage, a monastery, a nation. The Trappist monk Thomas Merton (1915–1968), in his book *New Seeds of Contemplation*, reflected on why this is: “As long as we are on earth, the love that unites us will bring us suffering by our very contact with one another, because this love is the resetting of a Body of broken bones.”

Benedict, too, saw the difficulty of community life. He wrote his rule for cenobites, “those in monasteries who live under a rule and a superior.” He recognized that some people were called to a more solitary form of monasticism, as anchorites or hermits.



These were not to simply be solitary folks who wanted to avoid dealing with other people, but rather those who had already been “tested by long monastic practice and the help of many others, [...] trained within community for single combat in the desert.” We grow in holiness not by avoiding the challenges of community life, but rather by working through them.

How are we to work through these challenges? Benedict offers guidance here, too. Among his tools for good works in chapter 4 of the rule are these: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” “You must honor everyone.” “Never do to another what you would not want done to yourself.” “Pray for your enemies out of love of Christ.” “If you have a dispute with someone, make peace before the sun goes down.” And the last tool, my favorite: “Never despair of God’s mercy,” toward others and toward yourself!

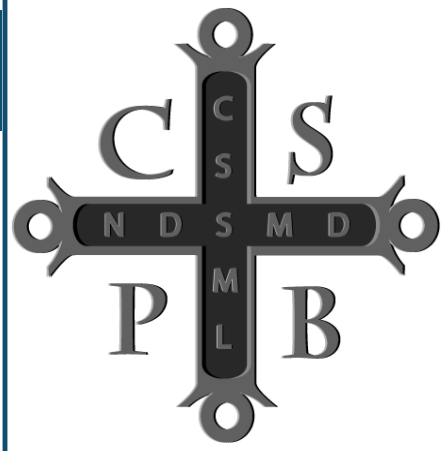
Merton, in his reflection on community life as setting bones in a broken body, continued, “There are two things that people can do about the pain of disunion with other people: they can love, or they can hate. Hatred recoils from the sacrifice and the sorrow that are the price of this resetting of bones. It refuses the pain of reunion. [...] But love, by its acceptance of the pain of reunion, begins to heal all wounds.”

Lord, help us to accept the pain of reunion, of life in community. May our acceptance of this pain be the beginning of our healing.

PRAYER SCHEDULE

All are welcome to join the Sisters for prayer.
Contact the front desk to arrange your visit—
masks and proof of vaccination required.

“Nothing is to be preferred to the Work of God.”
– Rule of Benedict, Chap. 43



SUNDAY

MORNING PRAYER: 10:00AM
EUCHARIST: 11:00AM
EVENING PRAYER: 5:00PM

MONDAY-SATURDAY

MORNING PRAYER: 8:00AM
MIDDAY PRAYER: 11:30AM
EVENING PRAYER: 5:00PM

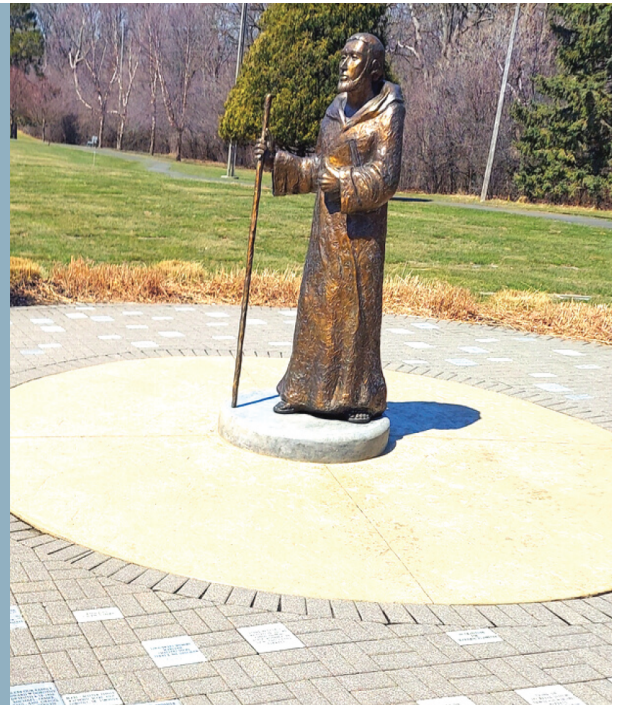
For further information and to arrange your visit,



Commemorative Pavers

*Honoring Those Who Light
Our Way*

**PAVERS BLESSING WILL BE HELD
AT A FUTURE DATE FOR THE
75TH ANNIVERSARY IN JUNE 2023**



Forever link yourself or a loved one to
the tradition and future of St. Paul's
Monastery by purchasing an
engraved commemorative paver.

**CLICK HERE TO PAY ONLINE
OR PRINT ORDER FORM**

Community Prayer Ministry

You can send prayer requests, which go to all the Sisters. They pray daily during Evening Praise and during the Rosary.

Click here to go to the Monastery website and fill out a Prayer Request form.

MISSION STATEMENT

We, the Sisters of St. Paul's Monastery, are a community that live Gospel values as expressed in the Rule of St. Benedict. Through our Monastic life and wise stewardship, we nurture contemplative presence in service of Church and society.

St. Paul's Monastery
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To connect with or support
Community ministries, visit us at
www.stpaulsmonastery.org
[Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

