

ST. PAUL'S MONASTERY NEWSLETTER

March 2023

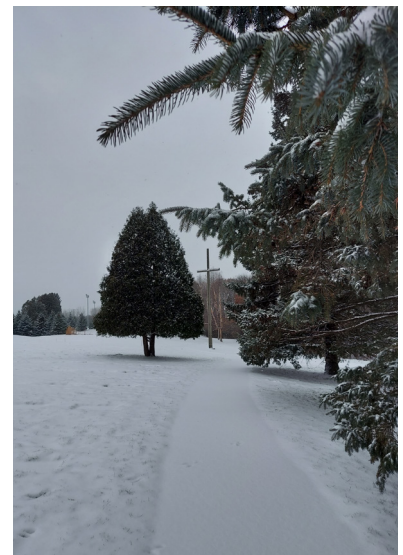


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WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

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



On June 22, 1948, 301 Summit Avenue (then known as St. Paul's Priory) was blessed by Bishop James J. Byrne and declared canonically erected by Mother Rosamond Pratschner, Mother President of the Congregation of St. Benedict. The Most Reverend James J. Byrne, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul, opened the first chapter meeting at 2:30pm on Tuesday, June 22 at the priory on 301 Summit Avenue by reciting the *Veni Sancte Spiritus* (Come, Holy Spirit).

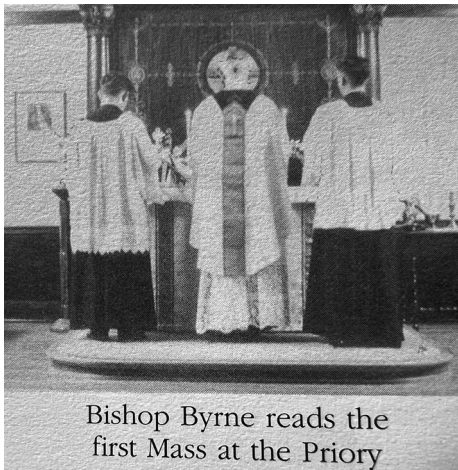
The Bishop read chapter 64 of the *Rule of St. Benedict* (on the appointment of an abbot) followed by this brief address:

You all sense what I am going to say to you this afternoon of June 22, 1948. This day is a momentous day in the history of the archdiocese and also in the lives of each and every one of you. There are countless souls already in this world and many more that are yet to come into



Mother Loraine
Election Day 1948

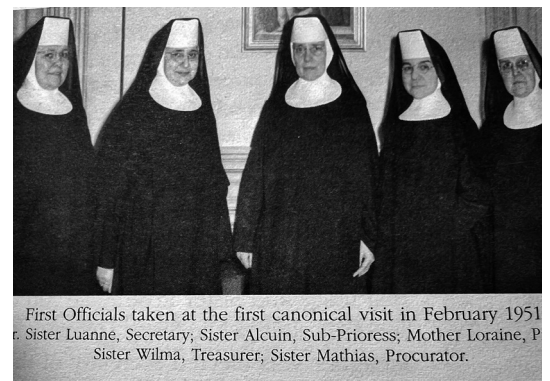
this world who will be affected by what we are doing this afternoon. I am sure that for each one of you it is a day on which your heart is filled with sadness, for you are separating yourselves from the Motherhouse that was near and dear to you. But there would be no spread of the faith if men and women did not have the courage to put their trust in Christ knowing that faith in Him has never yet been misplaced.



Bishop Byrne reads the first Mass at the Priory

are many graces unique to a foundation that are offered in abundance. The graces of Christ that will come to this priory will be greater than anyone suspects. Hence, there remains for you to keep alive those Christian ideals of charity, love, and obedience, and to be the very best Benedictine religious that you can possibly be.

You know that with each new foundation, if any of you have ever helped with other foundations, there



First Officials taken at the first canonical visit in February 1951
Sister Luanne, Secretary; Sister Alcuin, Sub-Prioress; Mother Loraine, P
Sister Wilma, Treasurer; Sister Mathias, Procurator.

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WELCOME LETTER

Sister Catherine Nehotte, OSB

The theme of this month's publication—Hospitality—reminded me of a story that Sister Jeron Osterfeld, OSB shared with me years ago. I consulted her good friend Sister Lucia Schwickerath, OSB to hear the story once again.

In the past, Sisters from our Monastery served two weeks during the summer at a Native American reservation where they taught the children catechism. Sisters would bring the children hard tack candy which was stored in the fallout shelter section of our former Monastery. During recess, each child was given a handful of candy. The children loved it!

On one occasion, an extremely shy little girl who took a liking to the Sisters courageously approached a group of three Sisters who were supervising the playground. She swayed from side to side as she said to the Sisters, "Every day you give us candy. Today, I give you candy!" With that she opened her dirty, sweaty hand to display her gift. The candy didn't seem very appealing to the Sisters. The first sister responded, "No thank you, we have plenty of candy at home. We are happy to share it with you." The little girl then approached the second sister who responded, "I don't need the candy; you enjoy it. I am big and you are small, enjoy the candy." The little girl was obviously let down and she slowly approached Sister Jeron. Looking at the unappetizing candy in the little girl's hand somewhat dirty hand, Sister Jeron took a piece.

The little girl watched Sister Jeron closely to see if she would put the candy in her mouth and eat it. Sister Jeron did in fact receive the gift from the little girl and consumed the piece of candy. Immediately the little girl's brown eyes gleamed with joy as she danced with a quick turn toward the other children and ran off to play. The little girl was delighted that she was able to give a gift, a treasure as it were, to share with others.

When Sister Jeron ate the candy it was as if they were no longer strangers. Sister Jeron often referred to this experience as that of receiving the Eucharist. Hospitality was shared on both parts: for Sister Jeron the hospitality that she extended was receiving the candy that she viewed as being "unclean." For the little girl, it was sharing her "treasure." Think of how happy the little girl was when Sister actually received something from her!

In the month of March, we as Benedictines are reminded of another story of "hospitality" when the monks carried St. Benedict to chapel where he received the Body and Blood of Our Lord for the last time. They supported St. Benedict's arms so he could pray and breathe his last in chapel. How might you be called to extend hospitality today?



BENEDICTINE ASSOCIATES NEWS & UPDATES

Sister Karen Sames, OSB, Associates Director

The Benedictine Associates continue to study and reflect on the program "Being Benedictine." Last month we watched the video presentation of Judith Valente, an oblate of Mount St Scholastica Monastery in Atchison, Kansas, on silence. A lively and enriching discussion followed. Later in February we will discuss Discernment from the same program.

Silence is defined by *Merriam-Webster* as forbearance from speech or noise; absence of sound or noise: stillness. Now, I am not sure we can ever reach total absence of sound or noise, but we strive to do our best.

In our complex world we have many distractions (TV, radio, cell phones, computers, social media, and emails just to name a few) and there are all kinds of noise (traffic, kids, pets, co-workers) around us. It is hard to find that oasis of quiet/silence. Some, like me, may not feel comfortable with silence at first. In our society, it is considered wasting time if we are just sitting around not accomplishing anything! Quiet time or silence can be very beneficial in our daily lives. Even our pets can appreciate it. Cats curl up on laps, dogs lay quietly at the feet of their owners. Thomas Keating said, "There is so much talking that goes on that is so utterly useless." And again he said "It is in the sky, the sea, the Redwoods that you will find silence." God's voice is heard in the silence.

Sitting quietly listening to our inner voices, leaving an opening for God in our lives, being open to the stirrings of the Holy Spirit is anything but a waste of time. As we sit to quiet ourselves, relaxing, letting go of the need to control everything around us. Letting go of hurts, anxieties, pressures (often that we put on ourselves), and our "to do" lists. We can learn to let go and learn to be open to whatever may be calling out to us. In silence we open a space where God can discover us. Silence is a doorway.

I often experience that I can get more tasks done after I have taken the time to experience silence. That time of silence helps me to refocus and to stay focused on the task at hand. Silence orients us to right action. On one of your busiest days, taking time for silence may be the last thing you think about doing. But if you take the time, you may find that you too are able to focus better.

[Click Here to Read More](#)



OBLATES: BENEDICTINE HOSPITALITY

Jeff Dols, ObISB

When most of us think of the Benedictine value of Hospitality, we are drawn to Chapter 53 of The Rule in which Benedict states: “All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ.”

During my initial Oblate formation, when I first read these words, I interpreted them to mean that each guest was somehow a stand-in for Jesus, and we were supposed to imagine that we were welcoming Jesus into our home. But, after reading the remarkable book, *Universal Christ* by Father Richard Rohr, as well as drawing from my own contemplative prayer experience, I’ve come to realize Benedict was talking about something much more profound than simply imagining Jesus at our door. Benedict is instructing us to “Welcome all as Christ” because each of us really is the embodiment of the Universal Christ.

According to Rohr, the Universal Christ is Divine Presence pervading all of creation since the very beginning. “God’s first ‘idea’ was to become manifest—to pour out divine, infinite love into finite, visible forms.

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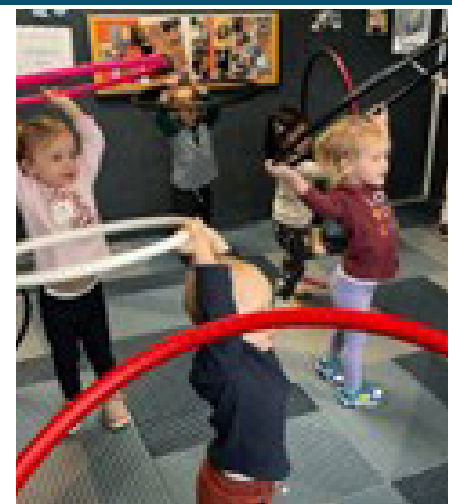
MAPLE TREE CHILDCARE CENTER

Jennie Schlauch, Maple Tree Childcare Center



The Maple Tree children recently enjoyed a visit with Hooperina. She performed a lively show and then had the children participate. In this photo, the toddlers are practicing their hoop skills. They had fun with this special movement activity.

Maple Tree Monastery Childcare Center has a full-time and a part-time opening for a teacher or a teacher’s assistant. Please contact Jennie or Sara for further information. Phone: 651-770-0766
Email: mapletreeccc@gmail.com. Candidates must be available to work until 5:30 or 6:00pm.



Special Events at the Monastery

Sub-prioress Sister Linda Soler arranged for some enjoyable events this past month, pictured here are the Sisters and staff enjoying a magic show with Bob the Magician and a tea service in association with the St Blaise Blessing of Throats.

Bob the Magician



Special Events at the Monastery

*St Blaise Blessing
of Throats and Tea
Service*





HOSPITALITY IS NOT AN OPTION...

Sister Linda Soler, OSB

The Gospel message on the Feast of St. Scholastica is from St. Luke on Mary and Martha. It tends to resonate with people we know. Martha is an organizer and seems to be doing the heavy lifting while Mary is listening and being present to Jesus. For me, they both knew hospitality with different expressions. We need to be both a Mary and a Martha for balance in our life, which is a Benedictine Value.

For example, a Martha may be busy about her own environment making sure all is in place, but then here comes the Mary in us when someone in need comes, and we truly listen to that person.

On February 10, we celebrated our special Benedictine Feast of St. Scholastica, the Church is recalling not only this remarkable Benedictine Abbess, but also the unique contribution of monasticism to the life of the Church.

St. Scholastica was dedicated to God from a young age. St. Gregory delights us as he shares in his dialogues the charming story of the last meeting Benedict and Scholastica will have on earth. Scholastica wanted her brother, Benedict, to stay, but he would not hear of it. Then a storm came, and Benedict had to stay. Scholastica was questioned by Benedict, "Sister, what have you done?" to which she replied, "I asked you and you would not listen; so I asked my God and he did listen." Scholastica's prayer was answered because she was pleasing to God for her simplicity, trust and love.

It is a stimulating thought to have Scholastica disclose to her brother Benedict that he did not listen when the first word of his Rule is, "Listen."

Scholastica died three days after their last meeting. Benedict saw a vision of Scholastica's soul departing her body, ascending to heaven in the form of a dove. Benedict placed her body in the tomb he had prepared for himself. I see some similarities of the three days and being placed in a tomb as a gentle reminder of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The name Scholastica means a schoolmaster or a schoolteacher, and Scholastica certainly was a teacher, particularly to her brother. Her hospitality is an invitation for each of us to be open to all who cross the threshold as we transitioned into this monastery 14 years ago from the former monastery.



MISSION ADVANCEMENT NEWS & UPDATES



Get inspired and nurture your faith! As the Monastery continues preparation for the year-long celebration of the 75th anniversary of St. Paul's Monastery and the 40th anniversary of the Benedictine Center this call to action returns to me often.

Get inspired! For almost eight decades the women religious of St. Paul's Monastery have been ministering to thousands of students, healthcare residents, spiritual-seekers, parents and families, and women and men hungry to live the charism of the Benedictine tradition.

This pursuit of Benedictine values is alive in the Holy Spirit now as it was then, maybe especially now as the Sisters grow in age and wisdom, offering their legacy to new generations. Hill-Murray School has an excellent article about our Sisters in their annual report. Before our Sisters could move from their many homes on Summit Avenue, the Archbishop directed them to build a high school before they could build their new residence. Hill-Murray (then Archbishop Murray Memorial High School) is a wonderful friend of St. Paul's Monastery and its Benedictine Center.

Nurture your faith! The greatest gift our Sisters have offered here in the Twin Cities for these last 75 years is the gift of their prayer. Multiple times a day the Sisters gather to pray the Liturgy of the Hours: morning prayer, midday prayer, and evening prayer (in addition to the celebration of the Eucharist). You are always welcome to share in these acts of daily prayer (please call 651-777-8181 to arrange your visit).

The Benedictine Center offers the respite of silence within the walls of our Monastery. In addition to a grace-filled personal retreat, you are able to join the Sisters for their daily prayers and meals.



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Practicing Hospitality as a Monastic Value

In last month's newsletter, we emphasized how, as the Rule of Benedict teaches us, that the newest members of the CARE Wellness Community are as needed and valued as the most senior.

This month we'd like to extend our description of the CARE Community and share how practicing hospitality is foundational to living Benedictine spirituality.



Excerpt from Benedictine CARE Chapter 2: Stability of Voice

Our culture doesn't do community well and there aren't many examples teaching us how to do it better. We long for it, and organizations and institutions talk about it, but in most instances, these actually take us away from community. Social media allows for quick, anonymous posting or "just watching"- consuming conversations, judging voices without personally contributing; all reinforcing our isolation.

But here's the gift that practicing community and hospitality as monastic values brings: monastic communities are schools for learning how to be in community. It starts immediately when greeting a new member or guest to the community. The Benedictine Tradition is rooted in extending the warmest example of hospitality most will ever experience. All are received as Christ.

And importantly, once we are a member of a Benedictine community this doesn't mean hospitality is just for us to experience, that we solely experience feeling embraced and accepted (which is true!) but what is harder to believe is that we are trusted to extend that hospitality back to those we encounter. That our voice and our presence is the source of this warmth and acceptance to others.

This is the critical transformation of not just having an experience of Benedictine hospitality and spirituality but starting to live it. Come join our Benedictine Wellness Community and practice living this with us!

[Click Here to Learn More](#)



HUMILITY

THE THIRD STEP

Sister Jacqueline Leiter, OSB

The third step of humility is that we submit to another person in obedience for the love of God, imitating Christ who became obedient even unto death.

My co-teacher's ninth grade son asked her repeatedly over several days to come to his Friday evening basketball game in Hugo, about 45 miles away. Naomi gets off work late in the afternoon and she had many lessons to prepare for the next week. She knew her husband would be able to go and bring the younger boys. Thinking of the distance, the cold, the traffic, and the late hour, she tried to let him down gently. It would be nice to have a few hours of quiet and peace in an empty house after a long week. Yet the morning of the game, her son asked her again. Something tugged at her heart, and she decided to go. Naomi thought it was guilt. I think it was humility, obedience, and love.

Giving up our own will can sometimes be an invitation to consider and prioritize the needs of the other person and to act out of love. It's not easy to give up our own will for that of another person. But doing so can help us to appreciate our own limitations and respect the gifts and wisdom of another person. Sometimes others have better ideas or a better understanding of the situation that we do.

Laying aside one's own will for another is a small way of laying down one's life down for another. By dying to ourselves and to our own will, we come to live more fully in Christ. Obedience is incarnational. We act in faith in following and responding to what is asked of us, even when we can't see the sense in it, even when it is hard. In faith, we trust that God is working through the situation and through our heart, helping us to become more like Christ each time we let go of our own will. But, oh, how difficult it is!

Even Benedict had to learn to give up his own will for that of another person, his sister Scholastica. Late one night, she asked him to stay with her and continue talking about the glories of God all through the night. Benedict refused her request, but then God sent a thunderstorm, and Benedict was effectively stranded until the next morning.



[Click Here to Read More](#)



EMBRACING HOSPITALITY: WHEN GUESTS COME, CHRIST COMES

Sister Mary Lou Dummer, OSB, Oblate Director

St. Benedict advised his monks that “all guests are to be welcomed as Christ.” In Chapter 53 of his his Rule, “The Reception of Guests, Benedict crafted a mandate that has made his followers famous for their hospitality.

For the Desert Fathers and many others throughout history, hospitality has top billing. It is a telltale sign that one is truly concerned about others, especially those in special need. The hospitable person is willing to forgo routine, to share limited resources, to treat the stranger as a VIP. The best food and accommodation are offered without a second thought.

The Desert Fathers’ hospitality called for more than just providing shelter and food. This delicate hospitality including sitting down and eating with the stranger. It is at this table where food and life are shared that the stranger experiences a deep sense of belonging and importance. It is in the breaking of bread and breaking open the human word that blessed communion is experienced.

Creating space! Making room! Offering an authentic welcome! These imperatives of hospitality apply not only to our relationship with God, but also to others we encounter. We are all on a journey; we are all in need of receiving and giving this friendly and free space to one another. It is not insignificant that the first beatitude deals with poverty of spirit. Jesus calls people blessed who experience this spiritual poverty. There is also a blessing in “poverty of space,” for in that space or in that situation, room is created for grace to flow in.

It is remarkable that in the Rule, which is otherwise so humane and flexible, there is no leeway regarding hospitality. “All guests are to be welcomed as Christ.”

Thank you, Benedict, for your emphasis on the importance of hospitality in the life of any Benedictine.

A possible daily prayer:
*Lord, give me a spacious heart,
that I may welcome you.*





Humility **Humble**

Karen Fleming

The basic definition of true humility is to regard one another more important than oneself.

The Rule of St. Benedict 7: 5-7 reads

“If we want to reach the highest summit of humility, if we desire to attain speedily that exaltation in heaven to which we climb by the humility of this present life, then by our ascending actions we must set up that ladder on which Jacob in a dream saw angels descending and ascending (Gen. 28:10). This descent and ascend can signify only that we descend by exaltation and ascend by humility.”

Pride, on the other hand, in opposition, is a high opinion of oneself. “Pride goes before destruction.” “It is better to be humble in spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud.” Proverbs 16:18,19.

In writing my family memoir, I included six character portraits of people who were special to me and had passed away. One was of a bachelor uncle. His name was Bernard but we called him Uncle B. My eldest son (a second generation nephew of Uncle B) helped me to have many lovely thoughts of Uncle B. In my son’s words, “When you visited Uncle B, he always focused his attention on you, wanting you to feel comfortable, and he engaged you in conversation about your interest.”

True humility demands unselfishness, consideration, genuine charity, showing others are better than you. Uncle B always made me feel important even though I thought him to be educated in many things I was not.

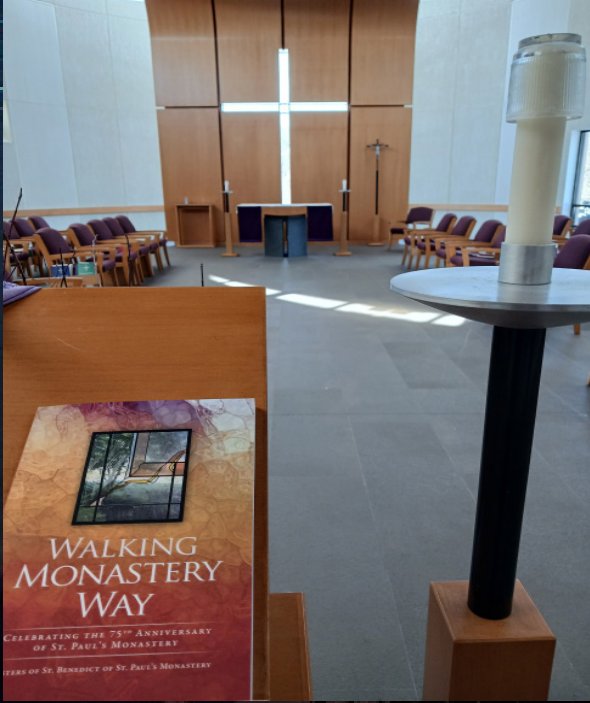
I believe that being humble is a lifelong pursuit, being it is so much a part of our lives, and difficult to achieve. I have had the privilege of making friends with many of the sisters at the Monastery. Some have passed, but are still in my thoughts. It seemed when I was with any one of them I felt important. They always wanted to hear about myself and my family. It was only if I asked about their life, then they would share.

HUMILITY—Jesus was humbled as He died on the cross for us. He was the absolute example of humility



75th Anniversary of St. Paul's Monastery

Sister Lucia Schwickerath, OSB



Walking Monastery Way

Anniversary book Celebrating 75 years of St. Paul's Monastery by the Sister's of St. Paul's Monastery

Celebrate Benedictine monastic life in St. Paul through this "memoir of many voices," which features historical photos. The book can be purchased on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). You can also contact S. Lucia Schwickerath, OSB at 651-777-8181.



Passing strangers remind us
of vulnerability.
Everyone has this potential

to be greeted as God.

But this means
creating a great debate
between our mind and heart.

It is not just giving

a cup of tea
or a set table.
Strangers can be laden

with heavy stories.
We still get to choose
how much to uplift.

Hospitality

Melinda Markell,
Marketing & Communications
Coordinator



The Practice and Reward of Hospitality

Stephen Kasperick-Postellon, Director of Liturgy & Music

When my wife Teresa and I were newlyweds, and also newly Benedictine oblates, our lives were quite full. I was a busy liturgist and musician serving a university parish, and she was an even busier graduate student.

We lived in an apartment on the property of the parish where I worked, and it was rare that we were able to find time, space, or money for being hospitable to our friends. Still, hospitality is what had drawn us to become oblates, and we wanted to live that charism in our own lives.

We decided we would host a supper on Tuesday nights. We'd invite friends, promising that if they showed up by 5:30pm we'd have something simple but nourishing to feed them, and we'd cheerfully send them home by 7:00pm (most of our friends were as busy as we were!). It wasn't long before those friends were inviting other friends, and at times, attendance grew as high as 30 people.

Supernatural hospitality, it seemed, was in evidence. This was confirmed for us when Carrie, who had recently returned from a time of service at an orphanage in Central America, knocked on the door at 5:30pm on a Tuesday. "My fiancé Davin told me there's a dinner here on Tuesdays and folks can just show up—is that right?"

We laughed—although we'd invited Davin a few times, he'd never made it to the dinner himself! Carrie came on in and became part of the community. Today, Teresa and I are godparents to their oldest son, who is now in college.

Benedictines have been renowned for their hospitality right from the beginning. Like so many other aspects of this spiritual path, we who live "in the world" have different means and opportunities for exercising hospitality than do monastics.

What can you do to welcome a guest as Christ, who said, "***I was a stranger and you took me in***" (RB 53)?

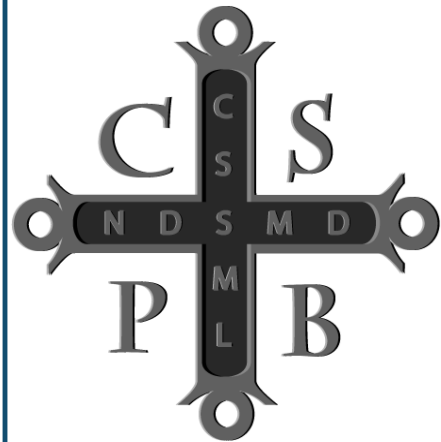


PRAYER SCHEDULE

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

EUCCHARIST: 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,
call 651-777-8181 or visit us at www.stpaulsmonastery.org.*

Commemorative Pavers

*Honoring Those Who
Light Our Way*

*Forever link yourself or a
loved one to the tradition and
future of St. Paul's Monastery*



CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE AND PAY ONLINE
OR PRINT AN ORDER FORM

Just Added!

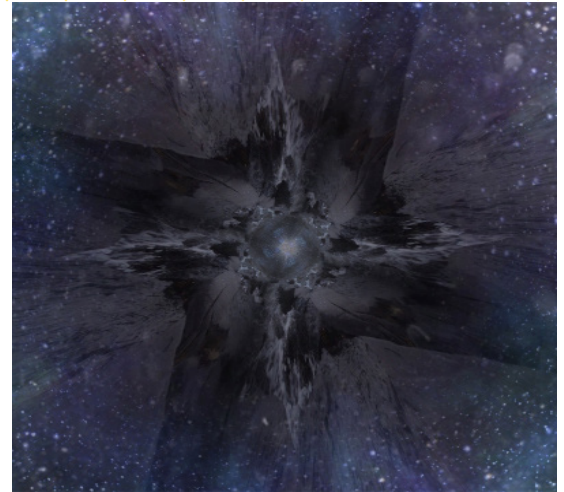
Triduum Retreat

Join the Benedictine community in celebrating these holiest days of the Christian year.

Led by Benedictine Center spiritual directors,
Gwen Pickering and Sister Jacqueline Leiter.
April 6, 3:00pm through Saturday night Easter Vigil
April 8, 8:00pm.

Contact the
Benedictine Center
at 651-777-7251, online
registration available soon at
benedictinecenter.org

Join the Benedictine community in celebrating these holiest days of the Christian year as we join the sisters in sitting with Jesus at the Last Supper, walking with him to the foot of the cross, and standing with Mary at the empty tomb. Allow your heart to open anew to the sacred Easter story. You will have the opportunity to join us in silence, worship, group *lectio divina*, and contemplation. There will be opportunity for rest, free-time, and individual spiritual direction. You will be home again for Easter Sunday.



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.

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Saint Paul, Minnesota 55109
651-777-8181
development@stpaulsmonastery.org

To connect with or support
Community ministries, visit us at
www.stpaulsmonastery.org
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