

ST. PAUL'S MONASTERY NEWSLETTER

May 2023



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This year, the monthly newsletter features themes from Benedictine values. This issue highlights the Stewardship of Gifts.

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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.*

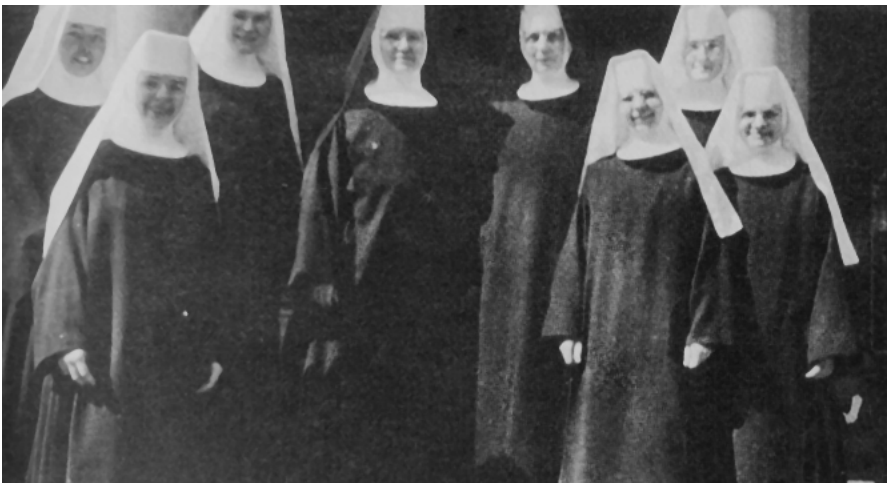
...A temporary motherhouse was founded at 301 Summit Avenue in St. Paul, the former Truman Gardner home, for the sum of \$39,000... with Mother Rosamond Pratschner and Sister Ethelburga Farrell signing the contract. On May 1, 1948, the committee met at 301 Summit Avenue and decided that the election for the first prioress would be held on June 22 at 2:00pm.

...The first days were not only adventuresome but, as one can imagine, quite difficult. Having the one building to live in, the top floor—the ballroom—was very warm in the evening. One of the Sisters, feeling far too warm on the third floor, came down at night and slept instead in the front hall...

Sleeping arrangements were quite primitive—cots, orange crates, and wash pans were the fare for these pioneers. Food was a scarce commodity until the parents of the Sisters began contributing to the larder. The orphanage on Randolph Avenue offered any excess, and missions donated spare food items as well. Sister Alcuin often would come upon bargains that would benefit all.

...Sister Neva Kempe recalls some first hours and days at 301:

In spring I made the first retreat at St. Ben's, June 15, 1948. After retreat I took the college bus to St. Paul, 378 Summit, where Sister Loraine was still stationed. Slept at 301 Summit the first night, but went to 378 for breakfast. Because I had a terrible cough which I got during retreat, Sister Loraine made me go to bed at 301 Summit. Sister Julene brought my meals up to the large room on second floor. Sister Loraine was the floor nurse and doctor.



These experiences were challenging, but this helped the Sisters to realize everything they had received was a gift.

Novices who came from St. Benedict's 1. to r. Sister Paul, Sister Andriette, Sister Eugene [Eleanor], Mother Rosamond, Mother Loraine, Sister Andrine, Sister Anne, Sister Blanche



WELCOME LETTER

Travis Salisbury ObISB, Director of Mission Advancement

Each month, our newsletter focuses on a Benedictine value. You'll notice this theme weaving through articles, images, and poems. This month, we celebrate stewardship of gifts—rather appropriate for the month that includes the Solemnity of Pentecost and the gifting of the Holy Spirit upon the Church.

The Benedictine way of life embraces the practice of discernment—essential to a wise stewardship of the gifts bestowed on us by our God. Not all of us were called upon to be a consecrated Sister or Brother, or called to the vocation to be ordained, but we were all given the same Spirit in Baptism to be part of the same body—the Church.

Following the profound example of our Sisters, we practice Benedictine values of prayer, silence, discernment, study, service for others, and especially welcoming all as Christ (RB 53).

Why is an intentional stewardship of our gifts important? Benedict tells us, echoing the epistle of Peter: **“so that in all things God may be glorified”** (1 Peter 4:11, RB 57).

When the Mass was retranslated over a decade ago, several conclusions to the Eucharistic celebration were added and my favorite quickly became:

“Go in Peace, glorifying the Lord by your life!” I’ve sat in the practice of *lectio divina* with this dismissal and have thought it a succinct admonition to be a wise steward of the gifts the Lord has given me.



Travis Salisbury as an oblate
(May 23, 2015) at The Basilica of Saint
Mary in the sacristy.

**Go. In Peace. Glorify
God. Glorify the Lord by
my way of living.**

To be a Benedictine—or rather **BEING** Benedictine—is this charge! You witness it not only in the great ministries stewarded by our Sisters these last 75 years, but most especially you feel it by being in their peaceful and peace-filled presence. Our learning of how to be Benedictine by their example should be a bright light to all we encounter of the wisdom and power of the Benedictine charism.

Today, let us truly be stewards of our gifts and go forth into the world in peace, and give God all glory by our Benedictine way of living.

St. Benedict and St. Scholastica: Pray for us.



OBLATE REFLECTION

Julie Taylor, OblSB

“Don’t let the perfect be the enemy of the good,” I heard someone say recently. It caught my attention, because I’ve always been a bit of a perfectionist, putting in long hours in volunteer or work projects until I meet my own high expectations. This perfectionism has often been an obstacle to seeing what God is really calling me to do. About a dozen years ago I learned a lesson about how we don’t have to be perfect to offer our gifts.

It was a quiet Sunday afternoon at St. Thomas the Apostle Church. I was working as the faith formation director, and I was driven by a desire to do an excellent job for the children and families there. I was also more than a little insecure and afraid of failing. So, I would often spend Sunday afternoons at church trying to get prepared for the coming week.

In retrospect, I should have been home with my husband and children, but I was anxious that I might not be prepared for the coming week. One Sunday afternoon, I was working on a project out in the church gathering area, when I saw a young woman knocking on the locked front door. “What now?” I thought, wanting to finish up my task so I could get on to the next ones. But I walked over to open the front door.

She asked if there was anyone around that she could talk to. I was the only one in the building, so I invited her in. She told me she had just found out she was pregnant, and she wasn’t sure how her boyfriend would take the news. I felt unprepared to talk about this—no workshop I’d taken had covered this! All I could do was listen and ask questions. I shared how much joy I found in being a mother, and that God certainly seems to bring good things out of unexpected happenings. We talked for maybe 45 minutes, and then she needed to go. As she left, I remember thinking that it would have been so much better had Sr. Mary Lou or our deacon been there to counsel her. But there were still tasks to be done that afternoon, and so back to work I went.

About a year later, the young woman returned, this time with a baby in her arms. In the busyness of my life, I’d forgotten about our conversation on that quiet Sunday afternoon. She thanked me for listening and encouraging her the previous year. I remember being a little taken aback—how could something I’d been so unprepared for have turned out so well? It was then that I realized that God might not need my carefully planned projects and programs.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

MAPLE TREE CHILDCARE CENTER

Jennie Schlauch, Maple Tree Childcare Center



Maple Tree
Childcare Center

Music is a part of every day at Maple Tree. We enjoy singing, dancing, playing instruments, and listening to music. In this picture, Rylan and Isla are dancing. Music makes the heart merry!

Jennie Schlauch
Program Director



ONGOING EXHIBITION

Come explore a selection of student artworks and be there at the awards ceremony to cheer on your favorite.

St. Paul's Monastery is located at
2675 Benet Road
St. Paul, MN 55109

Please call 651-777-8181 to let the Sisters know you will visit.



Artwork by Kiera Whitcomb

Exhibition Dates:

April 3rd - May 26th

Gallery Hours:

Mon-Sat, 9am-4:30pm, Sun, 1pm-4:30pm

**Closing Reception
& Art Awards Ceremony**

Wednesday May 17th, 6-7pm

HILL-MURRAY SCHOOL

**ART
EXHIBITION**

@

ST. PAUL'S MONASTERY

VOLUNTEER SERVICE DAY

9:30AM-12:00PM Saturday May 20, 2023

Help us to maintain the Monastery grounds through yard work, tree trimming, flower gardening, cemetery cleaning, weeding, pond and grounds maintenance, litter removal, and more. Bring your own gloves and tools if you like. Refreshments provided.



Hill-Murray students helping to clean the cemetery in 2022.

[Click here to go to the volunteer form on our website](#)

Please call the Monastery if you would like to attend
midday (11:30am) prayer service on May 20.

612-777-8181

Orders due by June 1!

CHECK OUT THIS
NEW MERCHANDISE!



Quarter zip pullover with embroidered logo
(light grey or dark grey) \$45



Hooded full zip sweatshirt with embroidered logo
(light grey or dark grey) \$45



Hot & cold tumbler with Monastery logo
\$25

More to come!

Check out this link for more St. Paul's Monastery items, such as stickers and baseball caps. **Quantities are limited.** Preorder by June 1 at <https://commandingedge.com/shop> and pick up for free at the Benedictine Festival on June 24, 2023.

Contact Jason Wittak at jwittak@stpaulsmonastery.org or



2-sided blanket (fleece and water resistant) with embroidered logo
\$35



REFLECTION STEWARDSHIP

Ann Siverling, ObISB

The memories that the word, “stewardship” conjure up have much to do with my former work as a pastor. Images of “stewardship drives,” “stewardship campaigns,” “stewardship Sunday,” and “stewardship pledges,” bubble to the surface of my thoughts, and with them, all the anxiety I felt as a pastor, always trying to make sure the stewardship efforts were financially successful.

I pushed these memories aside and then came a wonderful memory of my father. I grew up in a very rural farming community in South Western Minnesota. The soil in that part of the state is dark black and heavy and is especially rich with all nutrients that plants need to grow. One day I was out with my dad, walking the fields. I don’t remember how old I was, but I do know I was old enough to know that my family made their living off the land with the crops we produced and sold. I was also old enough to understand that sometimes finances could get tight in this farm life and in our family.

As my dad and I walked around the fields, I noticed one 40-acre plot of land that hadn’t been planted with a crop that year. My dad called these, “idle acres.” In my young and naïve mind, I asked my dad why he didn’t just plant those acres too, because then we would have more money. I remember my dad smiling gently at me and saying, “Ann, the land needs to rest.” In that moment I learned so many things about my dad. I learned that he didn’t just own the land or work the land; rather, he had a relationship with the land—a relationship of caring for it and taking care of it. (This was at a time when the government didn’t pay farmers some money to leave some land idle.)

I could not have said these words back then, but now I can say that my dad was a great steward of the gift (the land) with which he had been entrusted. In a way, this reminds me of the sisters of St. Paul’s Monastery and their relationship with their own land. As stewards of their land, they have left some free and natural (The Priory Preserve), and then used their land to help others:

- Maple Tree Childcare Center
- Harriet Tubman Center East
- Common Bond Communities
- Hill-Murray School



[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)



MISSION ADVANCEMENT NEWS & UPDATES

The 75th anniversary of St. Paul's Monastery is almost here!

Join the Sisters, Associates, and Oblates at St. Paul's Monastery on Saturday, June 24 from 12:00-3:00pm for the 3rd Benedictine Festival!

What can you expect?

- **Our Sisters!** Come down to the [Monastery](#) and celebrate 75 years of mission and ministry of the Benedictine way of life
- **Great food!** Potter's Pasties Food Truck , Nelson's Ice Cream , Mike's Mini-Donuts , popcorn.
- **Amazing music!** [Patty and the Buttons](#) preach the gospel of hot rhythm and happy feet! The band is similar to what you would find in a dancehall, cafe, or speakeasy between 1920 and 1940. The core instrumentation of accordion, clarinet, guitar and bass is light and swift. The Buttons are always enjoying themselves, which seems to give audiences permission to do the same!
- **Is it even a Catholic event if there isn't BINGO?** Join the Sisters under the big tent for good BINGO fun and the chance to win great prizes!
- **A fabulous raffle!** This year's Benedictine Festival Raffle offers chances to win a smoker grill, a TV, or a travel package valued at \$1000. Help us sell raffle tickets! Call Jason Wittak at 651-777-8181 ext. 409,
- [The Mission Office for the Diocese of Saint Cloud](#) will be present with their Fair Trade Market featuring fair trade coffee, cocoa, and tea; Seattle Chocolates, Servv Spices, hand made baskets, and souvenirs from different countries.
- Visit the many tents of the ministries of St. Paul's Monastery: [Oblates](#), [Benedictine Center](#), Labyrinth, and more.
- And, don't forget to pre-order your St. Paul's Monastery apparel by June 1 to pick up at the Festival!
<https://commandingedge.com/shop>

Volunteers are still needed to make this event a success.

Please visit our volunteer page to sign up for the Festival and for many upcoming events at the Monastery. Questions about volunteering? Contact Jason Wittak, Events and Volunteer Coordinator at jwittak@stpaulsmonastery.org or 651-777-8181, ext 409.





BENEDICTINE CARE WELLNESS PROGRAM

Teri Rose MS, LN, ObISB

Receiving as Stewardship

We can easily understand Stewardship as “doing” care-filled things. It becomes harder for us to experience Stewardship as also “receiving” care-filled things.

In Benedictine CARE, we frame lifestyle choices as just that—choices for Stewardship of our bodies (arguably a most sacred gift each individual has received from the divine).

CARE also introduces the importance of reframing lifestyle from something we must “do” and “control” to “get” a result we want (change in lab values, change in appearance, etc.) to lifestyle choices actually being guidance we receive from the divine and our inmost wisdom. Care-filled guidance we are gifted with for healing, nurturing, and restoration.

We are all familiar with the pre-flight instructions of “in the case of emergency, put your oxygen mask on first before helping others”. Many like this visual as a reminder for care givers to prioritize their own self-care. I agree with this importance.



However, I feel the greater significance is in the next line of instruction, “even though you don't see the bag inflate, oxygen is being delivered.” This is a powerful visual to remind us that, though we don't often feel it at first, divine support is being delivered. If we are open to receiving it.

Taking the risk that “oxygen”, the needed element for life, is being delivered, even when we don't fully trust that yet, is Stability of Faith. Staying open to receive it is a tremendous practice of Stewardship.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)



HUMILITY

THE FOURTH STEP

Sister Jacqueline Leiter, OSB

The fourth step of humility is that in this obedience, under difficult, unfavorable, or even unjust conditions, our hearts, quietly embrace suffering and endure it, without weakening or seeking escape.

Step four is difficult, particularly the part about the unjust conditions. Let us begin with a disclaimer: There are situations in life in which we are called to resist injustice and seek escape from abuse. Benedict is not speaking of those situations here.

Benedict knows that we all experience situations in life that are difficult and unfavorable, and even unjust. This happens in the world and even in the monastery. Life isn't fair. There are times when it is not possible to change the conditions to make it easier or more favorable.

Sometimes, there is a lesson or opportunity for us in the difficult, unfavorable, or unjust situation. What matters most is our response in these situations and the movement within the heart. Do we become jaded, full of hatred and anger? Or do we become gracious, loving, and patient in the face of suffering? Are we able to turn the other cheek when struck? Or do we respond back with an attack (either in words or actions)? Can we go the extra mile for the love of Christ and show love during a time of affliction?

Jesus endured unimaginable suffering and injustice, and we interpret Isaiah 53 in light of this suffering: *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth* (Isaiah 53.7 NRSV). In all his suffering, Jesus was patient, keeping silence when beaten, tortured, and reviled. He never struck back and flashed back in anger.

Jesus is our teacher of humility. I believe that Benedict is inviting us to be patient as we endure challenging situations in our everyday lives so that pride, anger, and hatred may be shorn away from our hearts. Through the Paschal mystery, in suffering we allow our hearts to be refined and grow more loving and humble in the image of Christ who loves us. In this Eastertide—and in our experience of difficult, unfavorable, or unjust conditions—let us remember a title of Christ's more typically associated with Christmas: Emmanuel. God is with us in our suffering.





REFLECTION

LORD 1, SIMPLE GIFTS

Melinda Markell, Communications & Marketing Coordinator

On my way to work recently there was a license plate which simply read, “Lord 1.” It was a very powerful statement to me because of the E-newsletter theme this month.

The stewardship of gifts immediately brings to mind the more complex art forms or intellectual pursuits, not simple gifts. For me, I thought about piano lessons or painting, not about the small areas of life we occupy on the daily.

The idea of that perfect gift and that perfect means to spread a message of hope often holds me back. I am always surprised when someone decides (and often it is a young person) to hold a towel or sock drive for their homeless shelter (why didn't I think of that?!).

In my heart, I immediately praised the woman in the lane in front of me for her clever use of her “gift.” We have been provided in the personalized license plate a 7-letter means of expression. She figured out how to do it most succinctly and in a way that could reach hundreds. What other simple items have we been gifted that we could use in the same regard?

In my early days of exploring religion, I learned that every breath is a gift in that it is considered a prayer to God. I considered this level of simplicity, and realized there are little gifts in front of us everyday that we can use almost like a rosary. Every dish washed, every footstep, every time you stop and appreciate your first cup of coffee, these are all times that can be given over into prayer.

Honestly, I am in communication with the Lord a lot. I pray for people and pray about my concerns of course, but I also point out every time I see something beautiful like a sunset or when I smell a particularly lovely flower. This is something that happened spontaneously. I found something awesome and I wanted to share it with “someone” just as awesome. I realize now that I am praising the Lord's gifts through sharing my joy.

I am guessing that we are all walking around with unacknowledged gifts due to a need for perfection. Perfection can often feel the only thing worth sharing. Let us all pray that the Lord illuminate our unacknowledged little “imperfect” gifts. These are far easier to share toward helping our world and toward praising God.





REFLECTION THE STEWARDSHIP OF GIFTS

Karen Fleming

“We are stewards of the gifts God has entrusted to us” (1 Peter 4:19).

I sometimes connect talents and gifts from God as the same. Talent could be inherited, like Dad was a carpenter and his son was attracted to the profession, thus an inherited talent or recognition of the joy he found following Dad's footsteps. I find that a gift from God could be just that, something wonderful just for that person without anyone claiming to be a part of it. To know what to do with this gift, one must recognize it as a gift and then pursue it on the journey of life. Are we drawn to something someone else is acting upon? A piece of art, a musical instrument...? Those are just some examples.

I remember as a very young child, maybe five or six, spending time at the neighbor's house pretending to be a concert pianist while playing on their upright piano. The lad of the house called my mother to suggest piano lessons. I took lessons for a few years and found the music books so appealing and so easy to play from. I spent years as an adult giving piano lessons to so many students that now when I look at the programs from those days, I cannot recognize many of the students. I also performed for many groups including the Monastery sisters.

Giving and Receiving

So, what does this prove? I recognized the love of the piano, and the gift God gave me and shared it for others to learn and just enjoy listening. I say all this in a casual manner with no pride in all of this because I know it is God working His will in my life.

As stewards of God, we all have the responsibility to **USE** our gifts. Some may recognize the gift just as it is but let it pass by the wayside thinking, “Oh well, it is a waste of my time.” I find that when using any gift I have, I enjoy sharing it. Sharing seems to give joy to the giver and receiver.

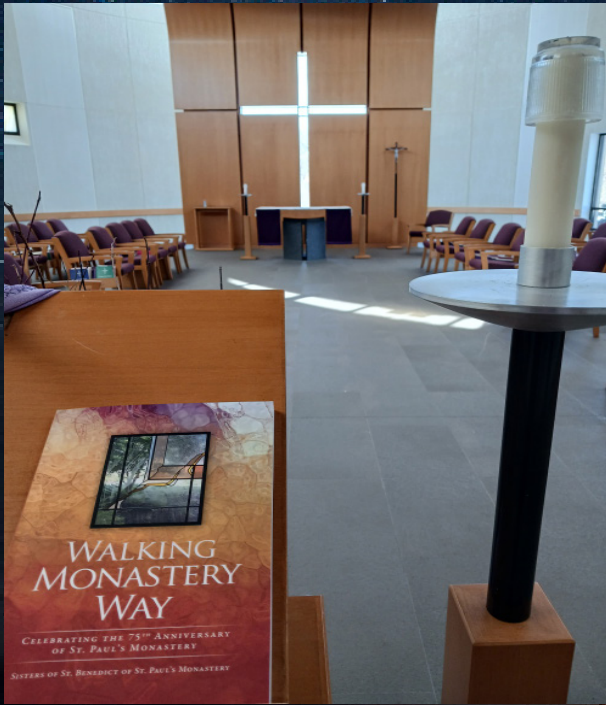
Stewardship means an administration or management

In Ephesians 3:2, Paul did not choose the stewardship of his apostleship or ministry. God had sovereignly commissioned him with the calling, spiritual gifts, opportunities, knowledge, and authority to minister as the Apostle to the Gentiles. God also does the same for us if we recognize and listen to His voice. Honor God by valuing the gifts He has given.

Reference: MacArthur, J. 2013. NKJV, The MacArthur Study Bible.

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 Sisters of St. Benedict

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.



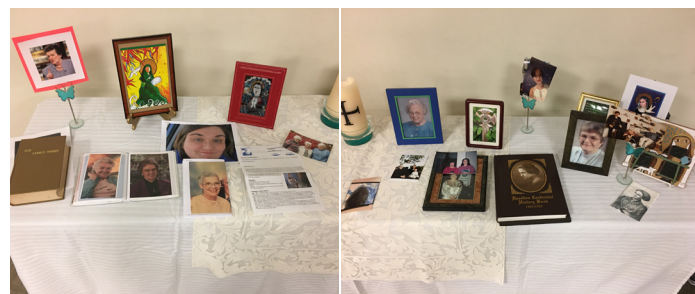
Presenters: Christine Jurisich, Spiritual
Director and Sister Paula Hagen, OSB

MONASTERY EVENTS COURAGEOUS WOMEN

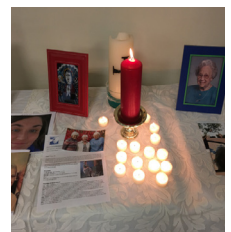
The Benedictine Center sponsored a retreat on April 21-22,
entitled: **Courageous Women Past, Present & Future.**

Presenters, Sister Paula Hagen, OSB, and Christine Jurisich
asked each woman to bring a picture of a courageous woman.
Each participant placed her picture of the courageous woman

on the pictured prayer table and shared what she valued in that person. Christine facilitated
a discussion on fear, courage, and wisdom.



On Saturday, the women
learned about three
Benedictine leaders: Saints
Lioba, Scholastica, and
Hildegard of Bingen. The
group reflected on the
virtues of these women in their own time, and



how they are still relevant today. In the closing prayer ritual, each woman lit a candle from the
Paschal candle asking for the grace she needed to be a courageous woman today.



CONCERNING LITURGY GOODS & GIFTS

Stephen Kasperick-Postellon, ObISB Director of Liturgy & Music

In Chapter 32 of his Rule, “The Tools and Goods of the Monastery,” Benedict provides principles for taking care of physical things. Tools, clothing, and all other items are entrusted to members by the superior “because of confidence in their manner of life.” These goods are to be “cared for and collected after use.” Ever practical, Benedict calls for a list of entrusted items to be kept so “the superior will know what is given and what is received back.” In the preceding chapter, he calls for the cellarer to “regard all the vessels and goods of the monastery as if they were the sacred vessels of the altar, aware that nothing is to be neglected.”

By virtue of our Baptism, each of us have been entrusted by God with charisms—special abilities granted to each Christian by the Holy Spirit, giving us power both to represent Christ and to be a channel of God’s goodness for people. Most preparation programs for the sacrament of Confirmation emphasize the traditional “seven gifts of the Holy Spirit;” these are given to us to keep, as part of our inner transformations as Christians. Charisms, by contrast, are given to us to give away, and to benefit others. By our use of these gifts, God continues to act in the world through our assent and cooperation.

We can apply Benedict’s principles on the stewardship of the monastery’s physical goods to our stewardship of our spiritual gifts, too. We are entrusted with these gifts so that we can use them for others—they lose their meaning if we hold on to them for ourselves. Like a superior keeping a tally of items distributed, God knows what gifts you’ve been given, but can you list your own gifts? Learning what these gifts are is crucial to using them well.

In my previous diocese, the *Called and Gifted* program of the Catherine of Siena Institute (siena.org) was a popular tool for discerning and testing these gifts. If “nothing is to be neglected,” we need to know what has been entrusted to us.

As St. Paul taught, “There are different gifts but the same Spirit.” What gifts have been entrusted specifically to you, so that you can bear God’s presence to the world?



PRAYER SCHEDULE

All are welcome to join the Sisters for prayer.
Contact the front desk to arrange your visit.

“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.*



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES URGENT NEED FOR HELP

THE SISTERS NEED YOU! PLEASE HELP AS YOU ARE ABLE WITH...

Driving Sisters to Appointments: The number of Sisters who are able to drive has decreased. The Sisters are seeking companions to drive them to medical appointments and other appointments throughout the week. [Click here](#) to spend meaningful travel time with a Sister as you provide the loving hospitality of a ride.

Tech Support for the Sisters: It's always frustrating when your phone or laptop acts up! Offer the hospitality of helping navigate small to more complex issues for the Sisters. If you have troubleshooting skills with technology the Sisters need you!

All volunteers are expected to abide by our safe environment procedures. This ensures a safe and respectful experience for both the volunteer and the Sisters. The Monastery will perform a background check before engaging volunteers for the ministry of hospitality.

Upcoming Event: May 20, 2023 1:00pm-3:00pm

Celebrating our Blessings: Gratitude on the Labyrinth



Saint Paul's Monastery Grounds—Outdoor Retreat. Come, enjoy May in Minnesota and celebrate our blessings by walking the beautiful outdoor prayer labyrinth at the Monastery! [Click here](#) to register or contact the Benedictine Center at 651-777-7251.



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

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