ST. PAUL'S MONASTERY REVISED EN



TABLE OF CONTENTS

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

Conversatio Morum

\frown	
	- 46
	_

July 1

Bl. Junipero Serra

July 3

St. Thomas the Apostle

July 6

St Maria Goretti

July 11

St Renedic

July 15

St. Bonaventure

July 16

Our Lady of Mount Carme

July 22

St. Marv Maadalene

July 24

St Sharhel Makhlū

July 25

St. James the Greate

July 26

Ss Joachim and Anne

July 29

Ss. Martha. Marv. and Lazarus

July 31

16

18

St. Ignatius of Loyolo

03	With Grateful Hearts: Celebrating 75 Years Sister Carole Sweely, OSB
04	Welcome Letter Travis Salisbury, Director, ObISB
05	Reflection: Oblates Sister Mary Lou Dummer, OSB
06	Maple Tree Childcare Center / Deadline Extension!
07	Benedictine Festival
08	Sisters' Profession
09	Memorial for Sister Carol Rennie, OSB
10	Mission Advancement News & Updates
11	From the Archives: A Bell for the Irish
12	Humility and Conversatio Sister Jacqueline Leiter, OSB
13	Benedictine Associates Sister Karen Sames, OSB
14	Reflection: Convert-Commit Karen Fleming
15	Walking Monastery Way / Volunteers Needed

Concerning Liturgy: Ever Ancient, Ever New

Prayer Schedule / Looking for Volunteers

Benedictine Center Retreat/

Mission Statement

Stephen Kasperick-Postellon OblSB, Director of Liturgy & Music



WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

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



Aspirants, November 1948

Vows:

"Vows are not to be taken lightly as the experienced sister knows that life's challenges do not get easier with time and age, but often grow and change whether one is in or out of the monastery. Life is a daily offering and challenge" (page 23).

"Final vows is a lifelong commitment to what the Sisters promised at her triennial vows. Daily reinforcement of these ideals is the constant in the sister's life. It is at final vows that she receives a ring as a sign of her lasting profession in community" (page 24).

"Sometimes the timing belongs to God and the person, not the process. As a result, there are moments in one's life where the commitment changes or one is no longer able to continue the process no matter how deep the wish and desire to do otherwise. The original intent becomes lost and one must recognize the gift that somehow has changed into something else and move on. Religious life, like any other choice, is not an easy avenue to follow. There are positives and negatives in all careers. One only hopes for the daily courage to continue whatever path one has chosen" (page 25-26).

Return to 301 Summit:

Once, years after the big move, an occasion to visit 301 Summit presented itself. Luck gave the writer a Benedictine companion for this nostalgic journey. The event of the day, a dinner, was in full progress and all kinds of people in their Sunday best appeared to support the German Volkfest celebration. We thought we could look in and lose ourselves in the crowd. We toured the basement and discovered brightly lit dining rooms; the chapel had become a dining area. The red stairs still welcomed all and canvassing

"The Red Stairs", Priory stairs at Summit Avenue, 1948

the second floor, we found gift rooms in the former infirmary and bedrooms. Third floor was a ballroom once again with a bed in the former novices' recreation room while a cloak room took over the bedroom of the novice directress.

Words held no magic for either individual as this former home then and now serves other purposes and our loyalties have stabilized elsewhere. The memories came alive, however, once we stepped over that threshold. In every passing of 301 Summit Avenue, no doubt, a Sister from 2675 is quick to look up and note well, with a peculiar softness in her voice, "That was our first motherhouse" (page 84).



WELCOME Letter

Travis Salisbury, Director of Mission Advancement, ObISB

The term *conversatio morum* is found in chapter 58 of the Rule of St. Benedict: She who is to be received shall make a promise before all in the oratory of her stability and of the reformation of her life (*conversatio morum*) and of obedience.

This phrase is translated in many ways, however, the spirit behind it can be reduced simply to being Benedictine. This faithfulness to the practices and values of the Benedictine tradition witnesses to another way of being in the world—an alternative desperately needed in the world today.



Our times aren't all that different from what St. Benedict and St. Scholastica experienced in the fifth century. Wars and political conflict, disease and natural disasters, division and the distractions of daily life. To all the anxiety the world offers, St. Benedict reminds us that our relationship with God is primary through prayer, silence, and meditation. St. Benedict calls our bluff and says that we can't do this alone—we need community to rub off our rough edges.

This conversion of life, fidelity to Benedictine wisdom, is so powerful precisely because it is grounded in relationship with God in community through prayer. Sister Joan Chittister says: "Prayer in Benedictine spirituality is not an interruption of our busy lives nor is it a higher act. Prayer is the filter through which we learn, if we listen hard enough, to see our world aright and anew and without which we live life with souls that are deaf and dumb and blind".

Our life here at St. Paul's Monastery is this daily journey through conversatio morum—a

continuing effort to seek God and to be conformed to Christ. It is not a "one and done" moment. That's not how conversion/fidelity works. It is a daily choice. It is hard work and rarely is a straight line to enlightenment. It is the journey we commit to whether as a vowed religious Sister, a Benedictine Associate, an Oblate. It is this "School for the Lord's Service" that we all share here and together we are St. Paul's Monastery.



St. Benedict and St. Scholastica: pray for us!



OBLATE UPDATE

Sister Mary Lou Dummer, OSB

Something New is Happening

Our Oblate Community is an extension of St. Paul's Monastery, inviting women and men of all Christian faith traditions to participate in the spirituality of seeking God in prayer and work

according to the tradition of St. Benedict. Oblates and the Monastic Community share in the Spiritual journey with one another in keeping with their way of life.

Oblate formation is centered on the continual development of a monastic heart that leads one to seek God using the *Rule of St. Benedict* as a guide for life. It is about information, formation, and transformation.

In the Spring of 2012, I was invited by our Prioress, Sister Lucia, to continue the Oblate ministry. I am continually aware of the importance of Oblates to this Monastic Community. Why is this? Very simply! It is about Community. All that we do as Benedictines comes from a profound sense of community awareness. The relationship is one of mutuality—we learn from one another. I am profoundly challenged and encouraged by our Oblates. I see the *Rule of Benedict* lived out in so many ways. The tradition of Being Benedictine truly lives on.

After serving our Oblate community for eleven years as Director, it is time for me to pass the torch to our Oblates as they fulfill leadership roles. My life has been so enriched and I say thank you to God and to our Oblate Community. Together our lives have been enriched. Hopefully in the future, I will be able to offer my services as a mentor. Let the celebration of this Oblate Ministry continue.

Thank you and Blessings always. Sister Mary Lou Dummer, OSB

Congratulations to the Oblates of 2023!
Shown here from left to right: Melissa Dan, Sheryl Rose, Dr. Susan Skinner, Jennifer Jara, Kathy Jandric, Sarah Sutliff, Tyler Gieseke, Deb Holdgrafer, Jan Buczek, Jennifer Cassidy, Edith-Nicole Cameron, Sister Catherine Nehotte.



MAPLE TREE CHILDCARE CENTER



Jennie Schlauch, Maple Tree Childcare Center

The Maple Tree toddlers and preschoolers had a special day on June 9. The Jacobson family arranged for a fire truck to visit the center.

Firefighters and EMT staff came and did a great job interacting with the children. They allowed them to climb onto the fire truck and ask endless questions.

This picture shows a couple of toddler friends on their way to check out the equipment.





Good news! We have a deadline extension for Monastery merchandise.

https://commandingedge.com/shop

Last chance to order online...





Abbot John Klassen celebrates Mass.



Flowers from the Sisters of St. Benedict's Monastery.



Friends of the Monastery enjoyed brunch after Mass.



Maplewood Police gave away soccer balls.



Sister Anne McCarthy led the Sisters' retreat.



Mike's Mini-Donuts were a huge hit at the Festival.



Bob Tomaschko and Jan Buczek called many games of Bingo.



Nelson's Ice Cream provided seven delicious flavors for the Festival.



Potter's Pasties supplied tasty food for our guests.



President Melissa Dan of Hill-Murray School and her mother Christina Luey chat with Sister Jacqueline Leiter.



Maplewood Emergency Services brought their service vehicles for young people to explore.



Patty and the Buttons' live music made the afternoon fun and enjoyable.



Sister Andriette Schommer First Profession: July 11, 1949



Sub-Prioress Sister Linda Soler First Profession: February 10, 1991



Treasurer Sister Jacqueline Leiter First Profession: February 10, 2004



Sister Virginia Matter First Profession: July 11, 1957



Sister Andrine Schommer First Profession: July 11, 1949



Prioress Sister Catherine Nehotte First Profession: October 18, 1987

ST. PAUL'S

1,132 years of

Profession!

MONASTERY



Sister Susan Bourauel First Profession: July 11, 1954



Sister Sharon Schiller First Profession: July 11, 1967



Sister Paula Hager First Profession: July 11, 1958



Sister Catherine Schoenecker First Profession: July 11, 1952



Sister Eleanor Wartman First Profession: July 11, 1949



Sister Karen Sames First Profession: February 11, 1990



Sister Louise (Mary) Inhofer First Profession: July 11, 1950



Sister Lucia Schwickerath First Profession: July 11, 1959



Sister Marie Fujan First Profession: July 11, 1957



Sister Mary Lou Dummer First Profession: July 11, 1958



Sister Mary White First Profession: July 11, 1966



Sister Margaret Kramer First Profession: July 11, 1956







MEMORIAL

SISTER CAROL RENNIE, OSB

"May Christ bring us all together to everlasting life."

Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 72

Wisdom

I, Wisdom, am with you.

I am a light that will never grow dim.

Love me and you will see me.

Look for me and you will find me.

At the slightest indication

of your desire for me,

I will make myself known to you.

Watch for me at the very start

of what you are about,

and you will have no trouble.

You will find me, ever present,

sitting at your table.

Even thinking about my

presence will help you.

Be aware of my presence, my concern,

Be aware of my presence, my concern, my willingness to inspire and to instruct you.

As you meet with each other,

I will meet with each and all of you.

(Adapted from Wisdom 6:12-16)

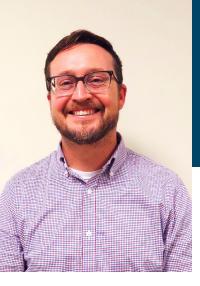


CLICK HERE TO DONATE OR TO
DESIGNATE FUNDS IN MEMORIAM OF
SISTER CAROL RENNIE.



Sister Carol Rennie, OSB Born: June 27, 1936 Professed: July 11, 1956 Died: May 26, 2023

Sister Carol Rennie, OSB entered peacefully into eternal life, fulfilling her baptismal call on May 26, 2023. She was 86 years old, having lived her monastic profession for 66 years. She was born at midnight on June 27, 1936, in St. Joseph, MN. She was the second child born of Alfred and Bernadette (Kosel) Rennie. She was baptized and confirmed at St. Joseph's Church in St. Joseph, MN. She graduated from Cathedral High School in St. Cloud, MN in 1954. She entered the novitiate at St. Benedict's Monastery, St. Joseph, MN, on June 15, 1955, and received the name Sister Damian. She made her First Vows on July 11, 1956, and Final Vows on July 11, 1959. Sister Carol later transferred to St. Paul's Monastery.



MISSION ADVANCEMENT NEWS & UPDATES

Travis Salisbury, Director of Mission Advancement, ObISB

It's more than a number!

On June 22—Founding Day—the Benedictine Sisters of St. Paul's Monastery celebrated 75 years of being Benedictine. Their mission and ministries formed and continues to form thousands of souls in the wisdom of the Benedictine practices and values.

75 years is a milestone to celebrate well—and Mission Advancement plans to do just that! Please mark your calendars and watch for more information on these upcoming events:

- 40th Anniversary Celebration of the Benedictine Center (August 15, 5:00-8:00pm)
- Oblate Retreat and Renewal of Commitment (September 23, 9:00-11:00am)
- 2nd annual Blessing of the Animals (October 1, 1:00pm)
- All Souls Day Celebration and Blessing of New Pavers (November 2, 5:00-8:00pm)
- Give to the Max Day (November 16)
- Christmas at the Monastery Silent Auction (December 2-9)
- Advent Retreat with Sr. Michaela Hedican (December 2, 9:00am)
- Wine Education Event with Jack Farrell (December 5, 6:30-8:00pm)
- St. Nicholas Day fundraiser (December 6)
- Christmas at the Monastery closing celebration (December 9 5:30-8:00pm)
- And much more in 2024!!!

The ministry of Mission Advancement is so much more than raising money for the mission of our Sisters. The Monastery is about encounter. First and foremost, encounter with the Divine in our liturgical prayer and in the quiet still times we find in this sacred space. We find encounter in our friendships with the Sisters. We discover friends old and new at events like Benedictine Festival or the Blessing of the Animals. And we find encounter by experiencing the Divine in each other as we journey together.

Your financial support facilitates hundreds of encounters here every single day. We believe, as St. Benedict rightly instructs us, that all guests are to be welcomed as Christ ... so that in all things God may be glorified. Thank you for your ongoing support of our Sisters and this great Benedictine adventure we share with them. You are a blessing and a gift to this Monastery.



FROM THE ARCHIVES A BELL FOR THE IRISH

Reprinted from a 1965 Newspaper Article

Twice a day the bell peals forth from the tall tower of the new Benedictine Priory on E. Larpenteur Avenue in Maplewood. It has a beautiful tonal quality—something beyond most

bells. It also has a long and musical history whose echoes sweep across the wide valleys of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers to a tiny crossroads in Scott County called Credit River.

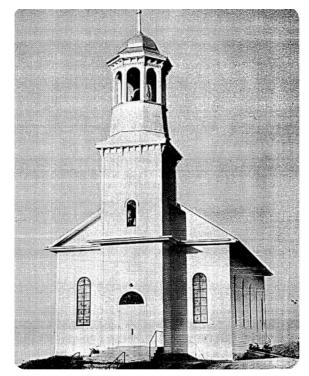
It was here almost a century ago that some of the first of the Irish immigrants from the Auld Sod put down their roots in the new sod. Names like Faricy, O'Connell, Hanrahan, Suel, Ryan, White, Cassidy, Kennelly sprouted on the hilly, fertile land. Their community center was Credit River and their church, St Peter, was at the center.

The pride of the church was its bell, cast in Belgium and installed with great affection in the church steeple. From that lofty perch it marked by its tolling the human dramas enacted on the stage all around. The marriages, the births, the deaths, and the special occasions and

ceremonies, the holidays, and Sundays. Credit River folks lived by the bell, whose tonal qualities were sweet as a May morning.

But one by one the sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters began leaving the sod for the city. The stores at the crossroads closed. Pretty soon the church was almost alone. So, a few years ago, it was closed and torn down. Antique and souvenir fanciers came to take what they could—but not the bell.

One of the Faricy clan, whose last reunion filled almost two farm fields with descendants, remembered the bell. It was salvaged and stored. And, when members of the family heard that the Benedictine Sisters were building their new priory in Maplewood, the bell was offered and accepted.



Back in early January, the bell—all refurbished and polished—was hung and blessed by Auxiliary Bishop O'Keefe of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul.



HUMILITY AND CONVERSATIO

Sister Jacqueline Leiter, OSB

Benedict's 12 steps of humility are a short primer teaching us a way of life (conversatio morum) that leads our hearts to a more loving place of inner freedom.

Conversatio and humility are both about a way of life that invites us to constantly turn our hearts towards love.

As we journey along the steps of the ladder of humility, we examine and reorient our relationship with our God, with others, and with ourselves. We may have to change what we do, what we say, and how we move throughout our world and community. Sometimes it seems like we fall off the ladder and have to pick ourselves up and try again. Turning ourselves around and walking the way of humility and love can be challenging and scary. We may feel vulnerable at times. We may even feel as if we are pretending. We may find that doing what the steps encourage and require us to do does not come easily or naturally.

Yet Benedict assures us of the hope of our goal: "Now, therefore, after ascending all these steps of humility, [you] will quickly arrive at that perfect love of God, which casts out fear

(RB 7:67). This is the kind of love that is born in us and transforms our hearts. What was difficult before (all those challenging and inconvenient steps that require obedience, giving up one's own will, patience, being content in the last place, silence, etc.) becomes easier. Through love, we no longer perform with dread and great effort, but now as though naturally, from habit (RB 7:68) and "out of love for Christ, good habit and delight in virtue" (RB 7:69).

This love is that place of inner freedom that enables us to live in right relationship with our God, with others and with ourselves. It is the place that enlarges and strengthens our hearts so that we can live, speak and act as people of love and compassion, as people who walk gently in this world. May God bless us fill our hearts with this love.





BENEDICTINE ASSOCIATES

Sister Karen Sames. OSB

Are you feeling restless? Do you feel like you are stuck in a rut? Do you ever think that there is more to life than this? These questions are all motivators

for *conversatio morum*. This restlessness could be the stirrings of the Holy Spirit calling you to *conversatio morum*.

Our Benedictine Associates are women who are seeking a deeper relationship with God, the sisters and each other through the Rule of St. Benedict. They turn themselves over to God in their community where they live.

Conversatio morum is part of the vowed life which Benedictine monks and sisters profess at Triennial Vows and Perpetual Vows and strife to live every day the monastic way of life. Conversatio morum or "Fidelity to the monastic way of life" encompasses all aspects of the total self-offering of the monk/sister to God.

If you are seeking to live a monastic way of life or even a life of deepening your faith in God—through *coversatio morum* you turn to God—seek God's will in your life. You are seeking how to grow in your faith and to live the Christian way of life in the community where you live. Our Benedictine Associates and Benedictine Oblates of St. Paul's Monastery strive daily to turn their lives over to God and God's will.



Begin one step at a time. In order to hear the stirrings of the Holy Spirit, one must listen intently and actively. Sit quietly, aware of God's presence, and reflect on what surfaces for you in your life. This will take more than sitting quietly just once. It's a daily practice, often as part of *Lectio Divina* and Contemplative or Centering Prayer. It is hard at first, but as you continue to be present it comes more naturally to you.

When reflecting on what you have received from your prayer, respond with action, turning always towards God. There are many books and websites to help you become familiar with different issues or topics.

Volunteer where help is needed. Seek counsel from a spiritual guide or companion.

Blessings on you as you explore all the avenues where the Holy Spirit will guide you. Peace!



REFLECTION Convert / Commit

Karen Fleming

Do potential Benedictine converts, followers of Jesus Christ, understand that once they convert their lives to Him commitment follows?

For an answer, we need only look to the Sisters, Associates, and Oblates of St. Benedict. We learn from them that there are opportunities in both scenarios for us to learn and grow and become stronger in our faith and closer to our Savior.

"Conversion is the opening of our heart to the grace of new possibilities" (Kownacki & Snyder

p.141). The new avenue we choose shows us there is much more to see. It pulls our vision away from our old life and directs it toward a different way of life. Conversion opens our eyes, thoughts, action, and our hearts.

Once conversion takes place, we step into a commitment—a key to unlock our hearts to see and believe what our conversion offers.

"We commit on a daily basis and learn to grow into the commitment we have made" (Kownacki & Snyder p.142). Love and patience are the keys to learn what our commitment entails.



As an example, in marriage one commits

to their partner and converts to a new way of life. "Until death us do part" is a powerful statement that can mean making difficult compromises, even sacrifices. But, we do it out of love. Or, if we are blessed with children, we are called through love and commitment to raise them according to scriptural teaching. The keys of love and patience become our support.

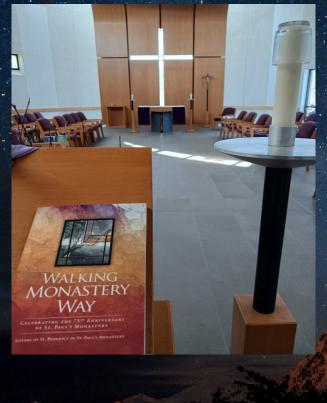
"This is a call to move always toward the best self we can possibly be" (Kownacki & Snyder p.142).

In our new way of life there may be questions that we are not sure of the answers. It always helps to ask WWJD (What Would Jesus Do)?

Ref: Kownacki, Mary Lou and Mary H. Snyder (eds.). Joan Chittister: Essential Writings (Modern Spiritual Masters). August 10, 2014. paperback.

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. You can also contact Sr. Lucia Schwickerath, OSB at 651-777-8181.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Help us plan an exciting Christmas at the Monastery for 2023!



Jason Wittak, Volunteer & Events Manager 612-777-8181 ext 409

jwittak@stpaulsmonastery.org



CONVERSATIO MORUM AS A MARRIED OBLATE

Stephen Kasperick-Postellon, Director of Liturgy & Music

Conversatio morum is a tricky phrase to translate. The oblate manual of the Monastery of the Ascension (a Benedictine men's community in Jerome, Idaho) includes an extended reflection on possible interpretations (you can read it for yourself at <u>idahomonks.org</u>). I

particularly love the phrase with which this reflection ends: "constantly surrendering to the need to change, when the Spirit prompts it."

When Teresa and I married, we did so at the regular Saturday evening Mass at the parish where I was music and liturgy director and she was a cantor. We used the gospel reading of the day, which happened to be Mark 10:17-30, the story of the rich young man who came to Jesus asking, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus tells him, "You know the commandments," and the man insists that he has observed "all of these ... from my youth."

The next verse was the crux of the matter for us: "Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, 'You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then, come follow me." Quite a challenging text when you've set up a

wedding registry and are about to receive a mountain of gifts from the people hearing it!

This verse (or rather, Matthew's version) is what is said to have prompted St. Antony to go out to the desert and live as a monk. It seemed pretty clear to us that this wasn't what we were being asked to do, at least at that time. But look earlier in the verse: Jesus looked at the man—saw him for who he was—and loved him; said to him, "you lack one thing," and told him what that one thing was. Teresa and I knew that God saw us and loved us, and that the next "one thing" in our life was to be joined in this sacrament.



In the more than 20 years since, we've repeatedly come back to this text, aware that God still looks at us with love, and still calls us again and again to the next "one thing": becoming oblates, becoming parents, finishing degrees, letting go of things that inhibit our ability to receive and give love. This has been our *conversatio morum*; on this side of the grave, the next "one thing" is never the last one. Lord, help us each day to hear the prompting of your Holy Spirit, and surrender to the need to change.

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

MONDAY-SATURDAY

MORNING PRAYER: 10:00AM

EUCHARIST: 11:00AM

EVENING PRAYER: 5:00PM

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 <u>www.stpaulsmonastery.org</u>.



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. <u>Click here</u> 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.

September 29-30, 2023

Sand, Symbol, and Source
Developing your Inner Knowing
With Rev. Sheryl Lyndes Stowman, M. Div

Click here for more information and to register.





In this retreat you may bring a question or challenge, an exploration of your life purpose or a significant transition. Or you may bring your curiosity and openness to discovering who and what you are.



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
2675 Benet Road
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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