

# School of Lectio Divina

## The Benedictine Center of St. Paul's Monastery

### *Purpose Statement*

The Benedictine Center of St. Paul's Monastery is offering the School of *Lectio Divina* to adapt the ancient monastic riches of sustained *lectio divina* to contemporary people. Through an intensive retreat experience set in the rhythm of life at St. Paul's Monastery, participants receive teaching about lectio divina, spend time meditating on a sacred text significant for them, have the opportunity for individual spiritual direction, and participate in reflective conversation with other participants. In addition, the Center provides a variety of on-going support activities and resources after the retreat participants make sustained *lectio* core to individual prayer and spiritual development.

### *Audience*

The School of *Lectio Divina* accepts applicants who have had some initial experience with *lectio divina*, including but not limited to participation in introductory experiences offered at the Benedictine Center and elsewhere. With its primary focus on the Scriptures, the School is Christian and ecumenical in its commitments.

### *Outcomes*

As a result of their participation in the School, individuals can expect the following:

- To learn the teaching around *lectio divina* and its fundamental structure
- To gain insight into the obstacles to the practice of *lectio* and how to respond
- To explore forms of meditation that support the practice of *lectio*
- To identify a text for sustained *lectio*
- To plan how to cultivate *lectio* as a regular spiritual practice

### *Structure/Process*

1. An application process will help individuals and the Center determine readiness for participating in the School.
2. Participants will complete assigned reflection exercises and make initial discernment of the text they will use for lectio during the retreat.
3. Maximum enrollment of 14 persons. One cohort is offered each program year.
4. There will be one primary teacher for each cohort plus three spiritual directors to offer support and counsel as participants seek them. The primary teachers for the School of Lectio Divina are S. Meg Funk OSB and Kathleen Cahalan, Ph.D. Spiritual directors will be members of the Center's staff and people who themselves have a well-developed practice of *lectio*.
5. The retreat will be five days in length, beginning at 1p (with the option available to arrive earlier that morning) and concluding at 1p. Opportunities for silent prayer and prayer with the monastic community will be included.

### **Day I**

Optional early arrival and quiet

Orientation and culture setting, including observance of silence

Overview of Sustained Lectio

Teaching: Finding Your Revelatory Text

Personal Quiet Time

## **Day II**

Teaching: Literal Voice

Personal Practice and Conversation with Lectio Companion

Teaching: Afflictive Thoughts of the Body and Antidotes

Personal Quiet Time

## **Day III**

Teaching: Symbolic Voice

Personal Practice and Conversation with Lectio Companion

Teaching: Afflictive Thoughts of the Mind and Antidotes

Personal Quiet Time

## **Day IV**

Teaching: The Moral Voice

Personal Practice and Conversation with Lectio Companion

Teaching: Afflictive Thoughts of the Soul and Antidotes

Personal Quiet Time

## **Day V**

Teaching: The Mystical

Personal Practice and Conversation with Lectio Companion

Teaching: Discernment. Tools for Spiritual Direction, and

Sustained Lectio Divina

Personal Quiet Time

## **Day VI**

Shared Reflection and Closing Blessing

Personal Practice

## *Fees*

In order for the School of *Lectio Divina* to be self-sustaining, fees reflect direct costs. Each participant pays \$700 inclusive of room and meals and four sessions of spiritual direction after the event. Partial scholarships for those who would otherwise be prevented from participating are available.

## *On-Going Support for School of Lectio Alums*

Sustaining *lectio divina* especially outside the structures of monastic or religious life can be challenging. While ultimately individuals must determine how best to stay faithful to and integrate their practice of *lectio* into their daily lives, the Benedictine Center offers several supportive activities:

- The Lectio Companions will remain available to participants to offer support, answer questions, and reflect on the experience of developing a disciplined practice.
- The Center has incorporated events into its annual planning with School of Lectio alums in mind. These would include: guest speakers, book discussions (especially the work of S. Meg and others), days of prayer that develop and deepen meditation practices.
- The Lectio Companions will facilitate three sessions of follow-up conversations after each School.
- School of Lectio alums are invited to share their experience of their practice and/or their text in brief essays in the Benedictine Center's e-bulletin and publications.