

Passages

Volume 27/Issue 2 Fall 2016





Greetings From the Prioress: *Encounter the Spirit in Your Life*

Sometimes the experience of Mercy is quite tangible.

I often experience Mercy when I stop to refresh my spirit in the Monastery Healthcare Unit. I see there the Mercy and Unconditional Love of Christ when one Sister reaches out from her wheelchair to take the hand of another Sister, saying to me, "You know, she is lonesome".

Elsewhere in the Monastery, I have seen small groups gather to purposely

listen to and be moved by the Holy Spirit to various *Works of Mercy*, serving Christ in each other. At a monthly Community Day, one Sister was led to begin visiting an isolated person in our neighborhood each week.

My most vivid experience of Mercy

was in my own call to create Ministry of Mothers Sharing. As various groups gathered and grew in their openness to the Holy Spirit's presence within them, they spontaneously reached out to a young mother who was overwhelmed with a new baby and the needs of her other young children. They delivered meals and groceries and took the children for play activities so the mother could rest.

Such *Works of Mercy* and compassion witness to the Holy Spirit alive in each and every person, as we grow in the awareness and joy of God's presence in our human family.

I see a beautiful example of God's presence and mercy each holiday when children visit our Community with their handmade art gifts, songs of love, arms filled with hugs, and joyful faces.

Pope Francis embodies and speaks of this dynamic: "Everyone needs to be touched by the comfort and attraction of God's saving love, which is mysteriously at work in each of us." (From Walking in Joy with Pope Francis: 30 Days with the Joy of the Gospel)

United in that Spirit,

Sister Paula Hagen, OSB Prioress, St. Paul's Monastery

ter Saula Hagen



At left: Maple
Tree Monastery
Childcare Center's
spring visit to
the Healthcare
Unit. The Sisters
delight to see the
children's art and
performances of
various songs and
skits during their
spring and various
holiday visits.

Monastic Leadership Team

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Sister Mary Lou Dummer, Subprioress

Sister Catherine Nehotte, Treasurer

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Cover: The Good Samaritan

In A Spirit of Merciful Giving

by Sister Mary White, OSB

"True love, in fact, is not an outward act, it is not giving something in a paternalistic way in order to assuage the conscience, but to accept those who are in need of our time, our friendship, and our help. It means living to serve, overcoming the temptation to satisfy ourselves." –Pope Francis, 10 February 2016

This year, dedicated the *Year of Mercy* by Pope Francis, is also my 50th Jubilee as a Benedictine Sister. Both occasions have deepened my understanding of giving in a Spirit of Mercy.

From childhood I've been taught to feel pity for those in need, that sharing is an obligation, and the "right thing to do." It feels good to give.

I clearly remember my mother's instructions to reach out to classmates who were unpopular or isolated. I had many opportunities to put this into practice on the playground.

Frankly, it wasn't easy to risk my own popularity and, at first, I only did it to obey my mother. But I began to notice and feel empathy for the outcast and marginalized; I learned that there are times when I need to stand away from the

crowd because of the values I hold.

Yet to grow more purely in the image of Jesus's own giving, I want to move beyond feelings of self-satisfaction or obligation. Poverty is best served by love, humility, and by recognizing that anyone's poverty is also mine.

Pope Francis reminds us of a higher spirit of giving, one that flows from love, not pity. Mercy, in its highest form, is inspired by humility and the love between us as family in the Body of Christ. This deeper experience of giving continually challenges me, but I understand it more profoundly every year of my Benedictine service.

In the faces of the victimized and imprisoned, from whom I both give and receive, may I see

Christ and be ever mindful of Matthew 25:40: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

The Call to Mercy and my work with those in need has caused me to revise my belief that "It is better to give than to receive." Not at all! It is best to both give and



Above (I-r): Lisa, a Branchout Transitional Services client, and Sister Mary White

receive. Love moves the one in a position to give beyond condescension or pity, and it fosters a sense of mutuality between giver and receiver.

Furthermore, I have learned that charity must go handin-hand with justice. That is, it is of equal importance

that we address our laws and policies

– in particular, access to education,
employment and healthcare – that make it
difficult to move out of poverty.

Let us consider the parable of the Good Samaritan. Justice, in this example, calls us not only to assist the wounded person but also to ask: "Why are so many people beaten down and left behind? How can I learn about the causes of this hurt and help address ways to prevent the same for others? What are the mercies and gifts that protect or prevent me from this situation?"

To the extent that I keep these questions in mind, I count on the help of you, my friends and colleagues, to seek actions which truly reflect the deep Mercy of

Corporal Works of Mercy

Feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned, bury the dead

Spiritual Works of Mercy

Instruct the ignorant, counsel
the doubtful, admonish
sinners, bear wrongs patiently,
forgive offences willingly,
comfort the afflicted, pray for
the living and the dead

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In A Spirit of Merciful Giving

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Jesus – a Mercy of the heart that enhances the dignity of both giver and receiver.



During 50 years of ministry with the poor and marginalized, Sister Mary has affected thousands of lives. Reflecting on this she said, "When I honor and recognize my own neediness, I am better able to address need in another. For these many years and many mercies I have been given and my fellow pilgrims who have modeled a true spirit of merciful giving, I feel such love and gratitude."

She asks that we reflect, with her, on the following questions:

- How have I experienced Mercy, especially when I have felt undeserving of it?
- Do I remember that even my ability to give is a gift from God?
- Am I growing in my ability to give out of genuine love for the one in need?

A Valiant Woman

by Sister LaVerne Hudalla, OSB

"Who shall find a valiant woman? Far and from the uttermost coasts is the price of her... Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness." (Proverbs 31: 10; 25-27).

My friend Grace Olakunle immigrated to the United States from Lagos, Nigeria in 1995. In 2008, as a single mother of three, Grace needed affordable housing. She and her family found a home at CommonBond Communities.

I met Grace while I was a volunteer for Campfire, CommonBond's youth recreation and service program. In 2009, Grace enrolled her middle child Ezekiel in Campfire, and her family and I have been fast friends ever since.

Two of Grace's children have hearing difficulties, including her oldest, 19-year-old Timothy, who is enrolled at Gallaudet University. Gallaudet, in Washington, DC, is the world's only institution of higher education devoted to those who are deaf or hard of hearing. Ezekiel, now 16 years old, attends Twin City Academy and Esther, 10, is a fourth grader at Achieve Language Academy.

One of the goals of CommonBond Community is to assist families to improve their financial status and stabilize their home life, and Grace embraced this for her family. She decided that, along with her children, she would further her education, too. When Grace shared this with me,



Above (I-r): Sister LaVerne and Grace in the Monastery courtyard

I told her about a scholarship for CommonBond adult residents, which is endowed by St. Paul's Monastery Justice and Peace Committee

In 2011, Grace, along with four other residents, applied for this competitive scholarship. The scholarship criteria included the applicants' accomplishments, specific goals and inspirational motivation. The scholarship presentation was announced at a dinner event at the Monastery. The Community, Grace and her family rejoiced together when Grace received the scholarship.

To begin her journey toward becoming a nurse, Grace enrolled in Century College. She formed a study group, also mostly single mothers with active children in the house, and they found respite for study at the Monastery. Sister Benita Gerold provided them with much-appreciated homemade cookies. Her children also occasionally joined the Sisters for game nights.

On a beautiful spring day in 2012, Grace earned her RN degree at Century College. But she didn't stop there. She went on to Bethel University to acquire her Bachelor of Science in Nursing. For the past four years, Grace has dedicated her skills to patients with mental illness at Regions Hospital.

Grace beautifully expresses, in her love and care for her children and her patients, one who both seeks and shares Mercy. Grace's search for affordable housing provided the springboard, allowing her and her children to embrace and pursue their educational and vocational goals. My Sisters and I feel blessed that they have also embraced us.

"Her children rise up and call her blessed." (Proverbs 31:28).



St. Benedict with pupils St. Placid (at left) and St. Maurus (center)

Education as a Work of Mercy

by Jane Hengtgen

Education is intrinsic in Benedictine life and tradition, evident by the number of Benedictine educators and schools founded by Benedictines.

In the original language of the *Works of Mercy*, education is said to

"Instruct the ignorant." In today's language, education is a process that fosters intellect, knowledge, and understanding.

Benedictine educators, in their tradition of hospitality, reach out with unconditional love, the kind of love that God showers upon us. It is expressing love for all, love that springs forth freely accepting each individual as they are, with no exceptions.

In reference to her work in Campus Ministry at Hill-Murray School, Sister Linda Soler quoted the Rule of St. Benedict: "The Lord often reveals what is better to the younger." (3:3)

Says Sister Linda, "I believe that the spirit works through our young who can be our teachers today. I approach my service and my role in their lives with a listening heart and by welcoming the Christ in all I encounter." Sister Jacqueline (Jackie) Leiter, who teaches English as a Second Language in the public schools, sees the transformative nature of education daily. "When my

students
go from
relying on
others to
being able
to read on
their own,
the world
opens up
to them.
You can



Above (I-r): Sister Linda and Sister Jackie

see the excitement in their eyes – that they have access to books and knowledge; they can think through a thing, research it and problem solve instead of relying on others."

Sister Jeron Osterfeld, OSB (1922 – 2014) was a Minnesota educator for over 50 years, and she exemplified *Works of Mercy* that "foster intellect, knowledge, and understanding." Students experienced a teacher strong in purpose, firm, and with a great amount of mercy for each individual.

Sister Jeron believed and said, "When I was assigned to teach, it was a sacred responsibility. Each student was a unique individual to me, and we learned from each other. It was a partnership."

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Education as a Work of Mercy

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Here is one story that stands out above the rest, and that calls to mind another *Work of Mercy*: *Counsel the doubtful*.

Sister Jeron was working with a student, and she observed that he seemed very troubled. He explained to her that he had decided to commit suicide. Sister Jeron spent the next four hours with this young man, talking over many issues, praying together, and extending her love and merciful heart. The next morning he called and said "I have changed my mind." They remained lifelong friends and continued their conversations about life's challenges. Today, he extends *his* talents and Mercy in healthcare service.

However one defines education, when it is a calling and practiced as a *Work of Mercy*, it can completely change, or even save, lives. It can foster not only intellect, knowledge, and understanding but also courage and hope.

In this *Year of Mercy*, let us remember those who have believed in us and prepared us for a world of possibilities in which we can participate.



Sister Jeron Osterfeld

Sister Linda's 25th Jubilee

The "Suscipe" (suscipe is Latin for receive) is first sung by each professed Sister at the time of their Monastic Profession: "Receive me, O God, as you have promised, and I shall live. Do not disappoint me in my hope." At the Final Profession, all the Sisters sing "We have received your Mercy, O Lord, in the midst of your people." It's both a petition for mercy and

a prayer for grace to sustain each Sister individually, and as a Community.

This year, Sister Linda Soler celebrated her 25th Jubilee, and she gives praise to God for her Vocation as a Benedictine Sister. She is most grateful to Hill-Murray School for hosting her Jubilee reception last April 10th.

Sister Linda is the fourth of five living children of George and LaVonne Soler. She honors her parents as the foundation of her Vocation. Although only 8 years old when her mother died, Sister Linda knows in her heart the love of a mother. Her father made many sacrifices for the family, and he is an example of strength and stability.

Sister Linda graduated from St. Bernard's School, and has a B.A. in Theology and Certification in Pastoral and Catechetical Ministry, and is a Certified Life Coach.



On April 10th, Hill-Murray School sponsored Sister Linda's 25th Jubliee celebration (pictured above with her father George Soler)

"I embrace the values I learned from my parents and family and from my Catholic education. These are the primary influences that led me to choose my Vocation. I was Baptized at a Benedictine Parish, I was taught by Benedictine Sisters at St. Bernard's who planted a seed within, I joined a Benedictine Community, and now I am in ministry at a Benedictine School. This is what I would call the Circle of Life!" said Sister Linda.

During her years of ministry, she has served in Faith Formation, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Pastoral Ministry, and Confirmation at St. John's Church of Little Canada. Within her own Benedictine Community, Sister Linda has served as Vocation Director on the Monastic Council, as Building and Grounds Supervisor, and as Subprioress; she was a Councilor for the Federation of St. Benedict, and has served on a variety of other committees on a national, regional and local level.

Sister Linda currently serves as the Monastery's Membership Director (see below) and as Hill-Murray School's Student Service Coordinator, Varsity Football Spiritual Coach, and Virtus Facilitator.

When asked if she had a preferred ministry, Sister Linda responded, "There is no favorite ministry. Each call has been an opportunity to



Sister Linda Soler with a student

embrace the Paschal Ministry, and to grow closer to God as a Monastic. Seeking God is not a choice; it is a way of life."

Sister Linda believes Religious Life needs to promote growth by way of attraction. This is why ministry needs to be joy-filled with the endless lessons from those to whom we minister, so "That in all things God may be glorified!"

Membership Director Appointment

Sister Linda Soler was appointed New Membership (formerly Vocation) Director at St. Paul's Monastery as of June 1, 2016. Sister Linda has twelve years in vocation-related ministries on a local, regional, and national level. She has visited over 72 parishes and schools throughout our Archdiocese, and she is a frequent guest on Relevant Radio.

2016 Jubilarians

On Sunday May 1st, we witnessed the re-commitment of our Community's Jubilarians: Sister Rosella Schommer (70th), Sister Carol Rennie (60th), Sister Margaret Kramer (60th), Sister Mary White (50th), and Sister Linda Soler (25th). After a beautiful Liturgy, the Community gathered for a festive meal and time together to share stories and the blessings they have received from their Monastic life with this Community.



Seated (I-r): S. Linda Soler and S. Mary White. Standing (I-r): Prioress, S. Paula Hagen; S. Carol Rennie; S. Rosella Schommer; S. Margaret Kramer

In Memoriam

"May Christ bring us all together to everlasting life." -Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 72



Sister Sarah Voss, OSB

July 30, 1937-July 12, 2016

Sister Sarah (Leota Joyce) died surrounded by the prayers of the Sisters and team of doctors and staff at Regions Hospital.

She was the firstborn of James and Stella Marie (Stewart) Voss in a family of two girls and six boys. She is survived by her Benedictine Sisters, Associates, Oblates; brothers, Ronald, John, Barry, Bruce; and sister Bonnie. Preceded in death by brother James, Jr.

She was baptized and confirmed at the Cathedral of St. Paul in 1956. In September 1958, she entered



St. Benedict and St. Scholastica lithograph by Sister Sarah

St. Paul's Priory on Summit Avenue in St. Paul.

Sister Sarah's many and varied talents and interests led to a variety of ministries. She was prepared as a teacher and taught 8th grade at different Twin Cities schools for 10 years. Spending time at the University of Minnesota engaged her artistic talents. She always found time for painting and providing works of art for feast days, Christmas and greeting cards.

"If there are artisans in the monastery, let them practice their crafts with all humility." RB:57:1 Her studies at Notre Dame led to a degree that prepared her to be an administrator in Community Health Centers and Nursing Care Centers.

Health problems never diminished Sister Sarah's zeal to serve or to address situations whether it was on the Community's Monastic Council and Finance Committee, the Federation Finance Council, or participation in various art shows.

Sister Sarah was an avid reader and always had several books going at one time and others on her waiting list. Her interest in books on the spiritual life was evident. She celebrated her Silver Jubilee in 1985; her Golden Jubilee in 2010; and joyously celebrated 55 years professed in 2015. The CSPB (Crux S. Patris Benedicti) House was her "Culminating Ministry." She had the dream for a studio and classes and to provide a place where sisters, friends and neighbors could get their hands dirty, discover and express their artistic talent.

Death and Dying: A Dialogue

by Sister Carol Rennie, OSB

At its core, dialogue is an exchange of meaning between individuals.

We most often associate dialogue with words, but it also can occur through gestures, companionship, touch, or being fully present to another. In this way, presence through dialogue is a sacramental action enabling one to communicate to another that: "You are not alone, you have not been abandoned, you have companions throughout this experience."

Along with the rituals of our Community, the rituals of the Church offer yet another form of dialogue, established over centuries, as a way to recall that the Church itself is born out of the death of Jesus Christ.

The dialogue is exemplified during a bedside vigil for a dying Community member. We surround our dying friend; her companions in life, so are we her companions during these last steps of her journey back to God.

We, her Monastic Community, then welcome our departed Sister's body into our midst: Offering prayers, remembrances, and songs that celebrate her with gratitude. This form of dialogue lets us acknowledge our



Community's shared Baptism in Christ, our profession of Benedictine faithfulness towards one another, and our celebration of the gifts and enduring presence of the Sister who has joined the procession of saints.

After the celebration of our Sister's life, we proceed to the Community's cemetery where her body is laid to rest in its rightful place among those who preceded her. Our ritual allows us to weave the experience of death and dying into a shared experience for all – community members, family, and friends – as we participate fully in the cycle of life, trusting that when death comes to each of us, it can be experienced as a Mercy and a friend.

We also believe the ties of love and friendship that bind us as one throughout this

life do not end with death, that our loved one now shares her new life with

God in Heaven, and she will always be a part of our lives here on earth.

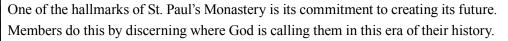
For thirty days, a candle burns before a picture of our deceased Sister in the dining room to remind us of the sacred ways she has made our world a more loving place by her presence and goodness. In the midst of sadness, we use this memorial to remember with gratitude how our Sister touched our lives.

We were, we are, and we will continue to be part of a great procession of women. Those before us have led the way, and our memories of them give us courage and strength as we continue our journey.



The Commitment To Service Never Wanes

by Victor Klimoski, Ph.D.



Four direction statements frame their agenda and, over the past 18 months, Sisters have explored the practical implications of those statements. They include careful attention to the dynamics that foster a vibrant spirit of Benedictine Monastic Community: Prayer, worship, and common life. A direction statement at the heart of their legacy is outreach. It is a vision of ministerial service to the wider world that does not grow old or retire.

What has become clear to the Community is that practical action on its outreach goal demands new forms of collaboration and inspiration with their Benedictine Associates, Oblates, monastery staff, and volunteers who will help extend their legacy for generations to come.

One immediate result of this new awareness is bearing fruit already.

Recently, leadership from the organizations – Hill-Murray School, CommonBond Communities, the Tubman Center, and Maple Tree Monastery Childcare – at the corner of Century and Larpenteur avenues attended a Community day discussion. Leaders shared the activities and ways in which the Community might contribute.

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The Commitment To Service Never Wanes

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Sister Paula Hagen, Prioress of St. Paul's Monastery, will continue to gather with these leaders to build on possibilities for helping create a model neighborhood of mutual service and support. This local initiative will guide the Sisters as they invite Oblates, Benedcitine Associates and volunteers to join them in serving the needs of others wherever they can.

About the Author

Victor Klimoski is a consultant to the Community, served as Director of its Benedictine Center, and recently retired as Continuing Education Director at Saint John's School of Theology.

Common Bonds: Breaking Bread With Our Neighbors

by Victoria FritzKapps, SPM Kitchen Manager and ObISB

If you were to work in the kitchen at St. Paul's Monastery, the philosophy you would be asked to follow intersects with and honors the Rule of St. Benedict:

- We strive to welcome each person as Christ and to offer nutritious, made-fromscratch food at every meal.
- We honor Benedictine traditions and the recipes and culinary practices they have developed, while bringing new and relevant practices and cuisine to the table.
- We are good stewards of our budget and resources, striving to wisely use all that is provided for us. In doing so, we support the Community in their efforts to minister to others.

This year Pope Francis called us to administer the *Works of Mercy* to others. How do we in the kitchen do that?



I believe a major step in extending Mercy is knowing your neighbors. Based on this belief, I presented the idea of inviting our neighbors to dinner, and the Community agreed. Through our connection with CommonBond Communities, we invited twelve

neighbors for evening prayer and dinner, and we plan to offer a monthly Saturday dinner invitation to our neighbors.

As an Oblate, chef, and just as one human being to another, I am excited to welcome our neighbors to share in our plenty. Inviting neighbors for food and fellowship is a natural extension of Mercy from the Community at St. Paul's Monastery.



See the 2016 Oblates at stpaulsmonastery.org/ Oblates/Profiles of Oblates

Pilgrimage to Korea

by Samuel (Sam) Rahberg, Benedictine Center Director and ObISB

Early this summer seven pilgrims, accompanied by myself and Sister Carol Rennie, experienced the global character of Christianity through the lens of Korean Benedictine life. The Benedictine values of prayer, work and hospitality were familiar, but the cultural context was entirely new. The Missionary Benedictine Sisters in Seoul and Daegu, led by Sisters Isaac, Anna and Timothea, surpassed all expectations for kind hosts. We encountered stirring language, landscape, heritage, and flavors of South Korea as a universal invitation to prayer and renewal. We invite you to attend the Benedictine Center's multi-sensory pilgrimage reprise on October 27.

Clockwise below (I-r): Pilgrims Jean Hartman, Mary Lou Kozmik, Rebecca Erickson, Anne McManus, David and Nikki Thompson, Meredith Matthew Musel, Sam, and Sister Carol arrive in Seoul; 2) Sister Isaac Bae and Sister Carol; 3) Seoul Priory Novices welcome the pilgrims; 3) Chamomile tea harvest, Daegu Priory. Poetry and more pictures at www.facebook.com/samuelrahberg





Monastery Welcomes Mission Advancement Director

The Sisters are delighted to welcome Dr. Cheryl A. Maloney as their new Mission Advancement (formerly Development) Director. Cheryl brings over 25 years of experience in fundraising, healthcare, the arts, economic growth, and nonprofit leadership.

Born and raised in the Twin Cities, Cheryl spent ten years in the San Francisco Bay Area where she became a respected community leader working with many State-wide leaders and politicians to respond to critical issues including women's rights,

spirituality, community growth, international peace and justice, and the arts. From an early age she recognized the importance of being authentically engaged in community building, collaborations and learning from others along the way.

Cheryl is looking forward to meeting all the Sisters' many longtime friends: "It is an honor to empower the growth of our organization. I so appreciate the efforts of the former Development directors, especially my predecessor Dr. Thekla Rura-Polley, for establishing a solid base from

We invite you to support the Sisters, Oblates and Benedictine Associates and their ministries

An envelope is enclosed for your convenience, or contact Cheryl Maloney to discuss your interest in supporting the Community.

Phone: 651-777-6850

E-mail: cmaloney@ stpaulsmonastery.org

Thank you and God bless you.

which to expand the good works of the Sisters. Hope you plan to attend our upcoming Christmas at the Monastery. Save the date: December 10th. If you visit the Monastery, please stop by and see me if you can. Or feel free to call me anytime."



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The Sisters of St. Benedict of St. Paul's Monastery



Celebrate with the Community!

Christmas at the Monastery

Saturday, December 10, 2016

4:00-7:00 p.m.



To donate or be an event sponsor, call Cheryl at 651-777-6850 Please Help Us... keep your record up to date. If your address has changed or is incorrect, please call 651-777-8181 to let us know.

Thank you!

Upcoming Dates of Note:

Sept. 20: Attentive Companions: Spiritual Direction and the Journey with God

Sept. 22: Autumn: A Sacred Season for Letting Go

Oct. 6: How Our Stories Determine Our Leadership

Oct. 13: Rhythms of the Soul: A Musical Reflection on the Spiritual Life

Oct. 14-16: School of Discernment

Nov. 17: Give to the Max Day

Nov. 25–27: Centering Prayer and Lectio Divina Retreat

Dec. 10: Christmas at the Monastery

Dec. 31: On the Crest of a New Year

Jan 6 –7: More of the Ordinary: Encountering God in Everyday Life

Jan. 19: The Grace of Benedictine Spirituality in 2017

Feb. 24-March 1: School of Lectio Divina

For prayer times and additional events, visit www.stpaulsmonastery.org