



ST. PAUL'S
MONASTERY

Passages

Volume 29/Issue 1 Spring 2018



70 Years: Sacred History, Sacred Future



Greetings from the Prioress: *Sacred History, Sacred Future*

“Look to the past with gratitude, live the present with passion, embrace the future with hope.” – Pope Francis

Anniversaries are important. They strengthen the rootedness and bond that forms through the years—whether as a couple, a family or a community.

As a Community, we now pause and reflect together and celebrate, united in purpose and joy; we consider all the founders, builders and supporters who established and sustained us for seventy years. We remember those whom we loved and sent on to heaven—treasured leaders who had a vision and provided the inspiration for us to be what we are today.

Our leaders were not afraid to make bold decisions about the future needs of the Sisters and the ministries we were called to establish. Courage and respect for the needs of all was a hallmark, with daily prayer in Community

the backbone and stabilizing force. We continue their vision of sharing the wisdom of this great Benedictine tradition from “generation to generation.”

Saint Benedict created the path for us. We follow this path of discernment as we seek to build upon what was first established 70 years ago. We are in the process of continuing to make wise decisions for the future of our Community and those whom we serve. A creative spirit has always been part of Benedictine life: in the liturgy, in the serving of festive meals and in the classrooms. The old and young are united in creating beautiful celebrations of life, death and many successful adventures.

In the following pages, we hope you will enjoy reading about our sacred history, which fills us with gratitude for the past and inspiration as we continue to serve in creative, Christ-centered ways. We deeply appreciate your willingness to journey with us as God calls our Community into the future.

United in that Spirit,

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



*At left:
Hill-Murray
student
volunteers
worshipping
with the
Community*

Monastic Leadership Team

- S. Paula Hagen, Prioress
- S. Mary Lou Dummer, Subprioress
- S. Catherine Nehotte, Treasurer
- S. Catherine Schoenecker, Healthcare Center
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Cover: 1) Founding members in 1948, St. Paul’s Priory, 301 Summit; 2) Larpenteur Avenue Priory, 1965-2009; 3) St. Paul’s Monastery, 2009-present

Welcoming All as Christ: 70 Years of Outreach

by Michael P. Kassner, OBlSB



Every morning, the bell at St. Paul's Monastery announces the new day and the promise it holds. The bell's song rippling throughout the surrounding area also reminds those within

earshot that the Benedictine Sisters are there for them.

When the Sisters established their community in the Twin Cities in 1948, they lived on St Paul's Summit Avenue, and the only bells they had were attached to alarm clocks used to ensure their on-time arrival at the hospital, retreat center, orphanage, high school, and 14 grade schools they helped staff.

Only in 1965, when the Sisters moved into their new Monastery on Larpenteur Avenue, near the intersection of four cities—

Oakdale, Maplewood, North St. Paul, and St. Paul—did the Sisters finally have a bell to announce their presence.

Laws of nature limit the distance clock alarms, and even the Sisters' much-larger Monastery bell, can be heard. However, those restraints do not apply to the Sisters' outreach.

Through partnership building, skill sharing and abiding by St. Benedict's Rule, the Sisters are able to offer assistance to the local community and beyond. In fact, looking back over 70 years of service, one could conclude there are no limits to the Sisters' prayerful and loving service.

Helping people — all people

The St. Therese Home is a perfect example of what the Sisters have achieved. Wanting to aid seniors, regardless of their faith, the original St. Therese Home in New Hope opened in 1968. Today, fifty years later, the parent organization provides senior care and housing at five different locations in the Twin Cities.

Maple Tree Monastery Childcare Center is another ripple extending into the surrounding neighborhood. In 1991, the Sisters, seeing a need, converted their unused laundry building into a childcare center to help families desiring quality, faith-based daycare.



Besides assisting the young and elderly, the Sisters also help women and children caught in situations dealing with violence, substance abuse and mental health issues.

“In our early days, we became committed to helping women and children who were facing abuse,” says Sister

Paula Hagen, Prioress of St. Paul's Monastery. “We now see that commitment being carried out at the Tubman Center.”

After deciding to build a smaller Monastery, the community of Sisters partnered with the Tubman organization to turn their existing Monastery into safe and stable

housing for women and children who have experienced family violence.

Education is important

To be a Benedictine is to seek and cherish knowledge, which in turn, makes education an important outreach ministry for the Sisters. Besides teaching at various schools since 1948, the Sisters showed their monetary acumen by financing the construction of what is now Hill-Murray School.



In 1994 the Sisters reaffirmed their support for the Community's corporate outreach programs—the

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Sister Eleanor Wartman welcomes a guest to Christmas at the Monastery

Welcoming All as Christ: 70 Years of Outreach

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Benedictine Center being one of them. The Center offers adults the opportunity to deepen their relationship with God, to encounter Benedictine spirituality and to experience the Sisters’ hospitality: “Let all guests who arrive be received like Christ.”

Associates and Oblates

As their ministries grow in scope and scale, the Sisters at St. Paul’s Monastery are enlisting Associates and Oblates—lay individuals who profess association to the Monastery and Benedictine values—to help with outreach programs as well as internal Monastery business. “We invite into formation those who

want a deeper relationship with God through Benedictine spirituality,” says Sister Mary Lou Dummer, Subprioress and Oblate Program Director. “We also encourage our Associates and Oblates to answer their Baptismal call to serve with us.”

The power of prayer

The Benedictine Sisters of St. Paul’s Monastery share the joys and sufferings of this challenging world right along with the rest of us. “Through our community prayer, we hope to extend faith and hope,” explains Sister Paula. “And, in return, we receive the prayers of others whose own values call them to service.”

Outreach by example

With today’s advanced digital technology, some may put less stock in the significance of hearing the Monastery’s bell several times a day. However, it’s likely that many more people, including those who have been helped and those being helped by one or more of the Sisters’ outreach ministries and initiatives, are thankful the bell still rings out, signaling the Sisters are here and, with God’s help, ready to assist wherever, whenever and however possible.



Former Credit River Parish bell still announces the hours from St. Paul’s Monastery

Mother Loraine: *The Founder*

Mother Loraine Tracy was elected the first Prioress of St. Paul’s Priory on Founders’ Day, June 22, 1948. Mother Loraine guided the Sisters as Prioress until 1954.



Sisters who remember Mother Loraine say that she was “tall and stately and fun loving.”

Mother Marcelline: *The Builder*

As Prioress from 1954-66, Mother Marcelline oversaw raising funds for and building both Archbishop Murray Memorial High School (now Hill-Murray School) and the Larpenteur Avenue Priory.



As a retiree at St. Therese, Sister Marcelline hosted former Prioress and Subprioress get-togethers.

Maple Tree, Yesterday and Today

by Jennie Schlauch,
Program Director

During the latter part of the 1980's, no longer in need of their laundry building, the Sisters discerned how to re-purpose it. As the need for quality childcare in the area had increased, the way forward was clear.

Sister Duane Moes (Prioress 1980-84), Sister Georgetta

Loxterkamp and other Monastery leaders began the process of converting their old laundry facility while delving into the complex State rules governing childcare.

With assistance from Peg Wangenstein of Congregations Concerned for Children, Maple Tree Monastery Childcare

Center opened in August

1991. Sisters and laypersons came onboard as staff members. Many community supporters donated furniture, toys and other equipment. It was truly a team effort.

By September 1992, I took the position of center director, a vocation that has brought me professional and personal joy beyond what I can express. I have had the opportunity to oversee remodeling the classrooms, designing a new playground and building an amazing staff of teachers. Each year brings exciting new projects and a new group of children, as stated in our mission statement, "to shelter and nourish with love and learning."



Yesterday (above): Opening day of the Prioory laundry on May 14, 1963

Today (below): Maple Tree Monastery Childcare ministry



Sister Duane welcomes Maple Tree guests to the Benet Road Monastery

A Monastery at 70, A Retreat Ministry at 35

by Samuel Rahberg, ObISB and Benedictine Center Director

"Let all guests who arrive be received like Christ."
—Rule of Benedict, Chapter 53

For exactly half of their 70 years, the St. Paul's Monastery Community has reached out to the wider community through their retreat ministry. In 1983, the Sisters officially launched the Benedictine Retreat Center at the prompting of Sister Veronica Novotny, OSB and others who had been exploring ways to share the riches of monastic life with seekers. They advocated for those outside the Monastery walls who needed the wisdom that the Benedictine tradition had to offer.

Thirty-five years later, the Monastic Community continues to welcome guests into the peace and quiet that helps people attend to God's presence.

As do all nonprofits in today's world, the Community plans, evaluates and continually improves their retreat ministry. As the Benedictine order was founded in the 6th Century, there is reason for optimism that St. Paul's Monastery and the Benedictine Center's relevance and service will continue.

Like every wave of leaders, donors, volunteers and participants that have come before, today's Sisters and staff hold to this founding conviction—the world benefits from the gifts of the Benedictine tradition. We have set to work for the sake of those who will carry the mantle after us.

As we celebrate these 70 and 35-year Community milestones, we pray that God willing, even 35 years from now, people will be retreating for peace and quiet, finding spiritual direction, or learning about the Benedictine values that extend beyond any single generation.



Excerpts from *With Grateful Hearts, The Past We Own*

by Sister Carole Sweeley, OSB

A Benedictine monastery, whatever the location, consists of sacred spaces, dreamers with eternal desires, guests who are welcomed as Christ and events that distinguish monastics as being a school for the Lord's service. In 1948, with these attributes in mind

and at heart, 178 sisters from St. Benedict's Convent in St. Joseph, Minnesota, chose to establish St. Paul's Priory at 301 Summit Avenue. What would motivate

178 sisters to move to a different diocese, seventy-five miles southeast of their Benedictine roots along the Mississippi River to new and uncharted sites? The answers again were varied and yet common: a familiar and to some a desirable educational system, family and friends in the St. Paul area and the appeal of adventures of establishing a new priory.

Committee members (to establish the new Priory) were: Sisters Loraine Tracy, Alcuin Braun, Adelia Schmidt, Aquina Hartman and Ottilia Heibel.

Meanwhile, a temporary motherhouse was founded at 301 Summit Avenue in St. Paul, the former Truman Gardner home, for the sum of \$39,000. This purchase was made on February 5, 1948, with Mother Rosamond Pratschner and Sister Ethelburga Farrell

signing the contract. On September 14, 1948 the title to the property was transferred to St. Paul's Priory. On October 1, 1948, the lots adjoining 301 Summit Avenue were purchased from Freda and Henry S. Jones.



*Committee members with Mother Rosamond on Founders' Day: June 22, 1948.
Front row (l-r): Sister Alcuin, Mother Rosamond, Mother Loraine;
back row (l-r): Sister Ottilia, Sister Adelia, Sister Aquina*

June 15, 1948 was the scheduled arrival date at 301 Summit Avenue for Sisters Elaine Keohen, Julene Ayd, Neva Kempe, Dionysia Baumann and Elstan Kubat. And on June 16, Sisters Loraine Tracy, Mary Edgar Feist and Jeroma Johnson arrived.

A momentous date our first fall was September 8th, when the first class of aspirants arrived and a special Mass was celebrated by priory weekday chaplain, Father Gerald O'Keefe. These first aspirants were: Rosemary Rader, Benita Gerold, Mildred Schmidt, Pauline Johnson, LaVerne Seidenkranz, Mary Lou Inhofer, Arlene Newman, Carol Oeffling, and Therese Rimnac. One of the first pieces of mail for the newly elected Prioress (Mother Loraine Tracy) was Pauline Johnson's application to become an aspirant.



The original St. Paul's Priory at 301 Summit Avenue

Benedictine Renewal: *Still Responding to Vatican II*

by Sister Eleanor Wartman, OSB

Vatican Council II, 1962-1965, was the twenty-first Council of the Church. Among its decrees for renewal, Pope John XXIII asked that lay people deepen their participation in the mission of the Church.

Pope Francis has reiterated this often by asking religious communities to invite the laity to become partners in planning the future. The Council's Decree on the Renewal of Religious Life "mandated a return to the intentions of the founder, a revision of its constitutions and an examination of lifestyles."

To ponder the impact this mandate had on the lives of religious women, specifically at St. Paul's Monastery, we turn to the archives of Sister Rose Alice Althoff. Sister Rose Alice was Prioress from 1966 to 1972 and amidst all the challenges happening in the Church and religious life, she guided the Community through significant change.

The Monastic Community agreed on an intensive renewal program for the summer of 1970. The presence and cooperation of every one of the members was expected. Sisters from other Benedictine communities were invited to come and administer the day-to-day operations while all the Sisters attended the meetings. It was during this time that setting aside the first Sunday of every month as a "community day" began.

Sister Rose Alice was eager to learn how the church and religious life were being renewed. She sought the services of varied speakers and provided educational and enrichment experiences to help the Sisters rediscover the charism of St. Benedict and determine how best to adapt to the needs of the twenty-first century.

Various formats were used to study the directives of the Council and the changing needs in church and society and to understand and adapt to those changing needs. The Sisters continue this practice to this day. On the first Sunday of each month, the prioress or committees arrange for study and lectures on topics involving the Community and their service to church and society.

As part of the renewal of monastic life, adaptations were made in governance, prayer, ministries and lifestyles. There was a shift, for example, toward democratic and collegial procedures in making decisions for the common good. Members were increasingly encouraged to speak up and to take responsibility for their input as plans were made to implement changes.

The governance structures began to evolve to reflect committees bringing information to the monastic chapter for discussion and approval. The Sisters also examined anew the role of the local superior. Each convent was enabled to choose their form of government – with either a superior, a coordinator or shared responsibility between

members. Communication between the prioress and members, and among the members became the norm as Sisters practiced listening skills and respect for diverse opinions.

This affected community living and lifestyles for every member of St. Paul's Monastery.

Small group living was permitted. Adaptation to mode of dress and change of the habit led to many meetings and a series of guidelines. Personal budgets and house budgets were allowed within the context of the Monastery's larger financial planning. Regular ministries shifted to choosing other areas of work, encouraging the development of unique personal talents.



*Sister Rose Alice Althoff,
Prioress 1966-72*

The Community became more aware of the conditions of the poor and earmarked monies to help them. Discussion was initiated on how to use our large Monastery building more efficiently and this led to opening our facilities to the public, i.e. senior citizens in the area, surrounding neighborhoods and parishes. Due to lack of Sister personnel, more lay people became involved in ministries and committees.

The Sisters were living amid dramatic shifts in their lifestyles even while adjusting to the departure of many of their companions who left St. Paul's Monastery to follow other ways of serving God and people. These were friends

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Benedictine Renewal: Still Responding to Vatican II

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and classmates who were now spreading Benedictine values where they lived and worked.

Questions arose for the Sisters about their own vocations and the various ways to understand community living and observances. These kinds of issues continued to be addressed during “community days.”

Through these challenging years, the Sisters became more mature and confident, more self-reliant and responsible Benedictine women. Having experienced this period of change and having practiced reflecting together as a Community helped the Sisters as they later went through fifteen years (1994-2009) of planning and working together to sell the Monastery building and surrounding land.

Our present St. Paul’s Monastery is an expression of a community of women rooted in prayer and centered in their call to serve and a testament to the seeds of renewal that were planted by Vatican II. During these years of study, the Sisters drew on the call to involve lay people as partners in planning for the future. And today in 2018, the Sisters are still gathering regularly to address the changing needs of the time, to renew the practice of Benedictine values and to draw in lay people as partners in imagining new ways of living the monastic life—whatever the future holds.

“That in all things God may be glorified.”



Above: (l-r) Sister Eleanor Wartman, Prioress 1992-96 and Sister Marie Fujan, Prioress 1996-2004

Song of Rejoicing!

by Sister Marie Fujan, OSB

Listen carefully, my child, to my instructions,
And attend to them with the ear of your heart!
We sing your praise, O God
And with Grateful hearts we give glory to your name!
Receive me, O Lord, as you have promised.
Do not disappoint me in my hope!
We sing your praise, O God
And with Grateful hearts we give glory to your name!
As we rejoice, we thank God for love and mercy!
We delight that Alleluia is our song!



Sixty Years in the Lord’s Service

by Sister Paula Hagen, OSB

This photo captures an important moment in 1957, as Sister Mary Lou Dummer (left) and I, Mary Lorraine Hagen, prepared to receive the habit and become Sister Stephen Dummer and Sister Paula Hagen, OSB. As usual, my eyes are closed for the photograph and in the background are the famed Summit Priory Red Stairs.

After Vatican II, Sisters were able to retain their original baptismal names. Mary Lou chose to do that; I, however, loved St. Paul and the shorter name so remained Sister Paula. Sixty years of joyful service in the School of the Lord’s Service have passed quickly and we celebrate our 60th anniversaries in the St. Paul’s Monastery Community on July 11, 2018. My, but time flies when you are having fun and serving with wonderful people. Thanks be to God!

On January 28th, Sister Mary Lou Dummer and I attended “Celebration of World Day for Consecrated Life,” hosted by the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. Archbishop Hebda presided over the 2:30 p.m. Mass, and Bishop Andrew Cozzens gave the homily. During the event, our 60th Jubilees were announced along with Sisters from other orders who celebrate from 25 to 75-year Jubilees in 2018.

Gratitude for the Sisters' 70 Years of Continued Service

by Sister Mary Lou Dummer, Subprioress and Oblate Program Director

I regularly request feedback from our Oblates about why they chose to participate in a year-long formation process and what effect their commitment had on them. These are a few of the responses I received from our more than 200 Oblates when I asked: "What does it mean to you and why did you become an Oblate of St. Paul's Monastery?"

Lorraine Schwarzrock, OblSB, acknowledges, "I'm deeply grateful for the commitment the Sisters have made to consecrated life. Their spiritual presence creates a peaceful oasis in the Cities, where all are welcomed as Christ. I feel God's love whenever I am with them. Their prayers, intentions and missions have far-reaching effect, bringing God's blessings to many. Their inner spiritual beauty is reflected in the beauty of the Monastery, the art, the grounds. I consider it a great privilege to be an Oblate associated with St. Paul's Monastery."

Says Oblate Marilyn Grantham, "As a Protestant, I was not familiar with oblation or becoming affiliated with a monastic order. But the idea attracted me. I looked at the St. Paul's Monastery website, called and was invited to come and to learn more about it. As a result (of Oblate

formation), I have learned to better balance my life, as St. Benedict urged in the Rule, between work, prayer and

spiritual reading, including continued Scripture study. I find being a member of a faith community comprised largely of women religious and Oblates to be inspiring... resulting in a level of spiritual grounding that I've never experienced before."

Professional writer, Oblate and frequent *Passages* contributor Michael Kassner says, "I try to spend as much time with you as possible, as it helps me understand how I should be when I am not under your watchful gaze at the Monastery. That in itself is an invaluable gift. I also have an amazing Rule to follow as I continue my faith walk. I know there is no way to repay this amazing gift, and I understand it is not even a consideration. What I would like to do is promise to move through life in a way that honors St. Benedict and each of you, my dear Sisters."

Elizabeth Fucini, an Oblate and friend of the Monastery for many years says, "I wish to say that the Sisters are wonderful. Their lives, work and hospitality are an excellent example to all who visit. Just knowing that we are held in prayer would be enough but we are offered more and gratefully accept. As I yearn to live out God's plan for me – His plan not mine – I have learned to be more accepting of myself and others. And we are always welcome. Thank you, Sisters!"

Oblates



Sister Mary Lou welcoming guests to St. Paul's Monastery



Many hands make light work: Julianna (standing) and (l-r) Sisters Marie Rademacher, Sharon Schiller and Monica Raway made 550 lip balms for the 2017 Christmas at the Monastery

First Annual St. Scholastica Award

by Annette Walker, Mission Advancement Director

In this, their 70th Anniversary year, the Sisters of St. Paul's Monastery and their Mission Advancement staff have initiated an annual award in honor of St. Scholastica. Prioress Sister Paula Hagen and the Monastic Council chose as the first recipient someone who very personally supports the Monastery Community in living the Rule of St. Benedict: **Julianna Sandin**.

Julianna generously contributes her time and talent to the Community in so many ways; in particular:

- Service to the Sisters and Staff in Healthcare
- Leadership and talent for events such as Christmas at the Monastery and the Prioress Dinner
- Beautiful dining room table décor

The award was presented to Julianna on February 10th, the Feast of St. Scholastica. In mutual admiration and love—to celebrate the virtues of St. Scholastica and Julianna—friends, family and the Community gathered for Mass, a beautiful meal and short program. The Benedictine Community of St. Paul's Monastery, in particular the Sisters in Healthcare, present their congratulations and sincere gratitude to Julianna for her faithful and loving service.

Sisters' Reflections on 70th Anniversary

Seventy Years

by Sister Jacqueline Leiter, OSB



Sister Jacqueline, professed 2003

When asked to reflect on the meaning of our seventy years of the St. Paul's Monastery Community, I researched the meaning of seventy years itself. I learned that in the Bible, seventy is a sacred number because of its factors: Seven represents perfection, and ten represents completeness and God's law.

Seventy also represents the shortness of our human lifetime: "The days of our life are seventy years... they are soon gone, and we fly away" (Psalm 90:10).

Seventy years may be our lifetime, and they are indeed short in the span of Benedictine history of over 1500 years. Our lifetime is even shorter compared to the span of the years of God's creation.

Yet the shortness of our lifetime does not make it any less significant. These are the years in which God has gifted us to live. These are the years of our journeying together as a Community, the time for us to seek God. These are our seventy years for serving others and sharing God's love in the world. Seventy years is our gift. Seventy years is our gratitude.

Sister Catherine and Sister Marie

by Mary Elizabeth Ilg, Executive Assistant to the Prioress

Sister Catherine Nehotte, OSB, was born in Minneapolis in 1961 to Geraldine and Robert Nehotte, the fourth of six children. She completed her B.A. in Business Administration at the University of St. Thomas. She currently serves as Monastic Treasurer, Chair of the Finance Committee, President of the Maple Tree Childcare Center Board of Directors and is a member of the Monastic Council. Sister Cathy is also a Human Resources Assistant at Tubman Family Alliance.

Sister Catherine said that "Seventy years doesn't seem a lot considering the over 1500 years of a living tradition of the Benedictine way of life. But that is what our Community has and we celebrate it.

"Our founding members made many sacrifices as they responded to the needs of that time and served the needs of God's people in the Twin Cities area and beyond. We as a Community continue to respond to the needs of our time and we embrace the challenges before us with the help of our oblates, associates, volunteers, and donors. Together and with the help of God, we do great things!"



Sister Catherine, professed 1987

Sister Marie Rademacher, OSB, has been a vowed Religious of St. Paul's Monastery Community for the entire 70 years of its existence—so the anniversary is especially meaningful to her.

Sister Marie grew up in Stewart, Minnesota. Her mother was a woman of deep faith who went to Mass every day. "I think she wanted us to be Sisters," she says. "One year at Christmas we got Sister dolls." It is not surprising then that she and her two sisters, Sidora and Claretta, all became nuns at St. Benedict's Monastery.

In 1948, three years after her final profession, Sister Marie was separated from her family when called to move to St. Paul. "It was a hard decision to come here, but the list of reasons to go was longer than the list of reasons to stay at St. Benedict's."

Through the Archdiocese of St. Paul, she received a two-year teaching degree from the College of St. Catherine. "I thought there was a need here in education. Somebody had to do that." Her first Mission was teaching at Holy Redeemer in Montgomery, Minnesota. Her entire teaching career spanned 49 years in different grades and elementary schools.



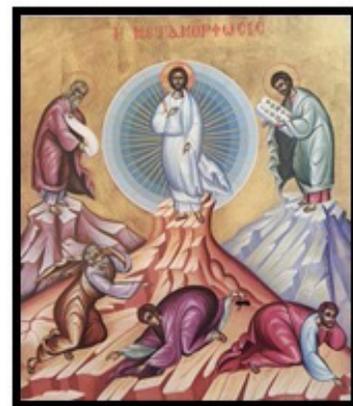
Sister Marie, professed 1945, at home with her Community: Each day, Sister Marie blesses the Monastery staff offices and public spaces

Sister Marie's next mission was 16 years in Pastoral Care at St. Therese in New Hope. She took the residents to Mass and helped them during their last days, "to make it easier for them." For her, the Mission of St. Paul's Monastery has always been to help people.

"This is the first time I am living here now, with the Community," Sister Marie says. "I was always on mission." She enjoys reading a favorite book, *Christ in His Mysteries* ("It is so good I want to eat it," she says), by Abbott Columba Marmion and mentions the chapter she is currently on, *The Blessed Virgin—Her Hidden Life*. "Imagine what she went through, having this baby, who would be God's Son!" Sister Marie's eyes light up and she is in awe.

She mentions the fact that she is the only Sister in the Community who still wears a veil. "The veil helps me to stay focused. I am not more holy. I don't want to be distracted from my purpose in life, which is thinking about God. I want to search for God and help others to know Him better."

Sister Marie looks at an icon on the wall of her room of the Transfiguration. "I am getting ready for Eternity," she says now, at age 92. "Can you imagine what it will be like up there? To be like Jesus in the Transfiguration. All light and happy." *And He was transfigured before them.*



The Transfiguration of Christ
by Manetta

In Memoriam: Sister Bertha Karels, OSB

April 18, 1913–September 15, 2017

Professed July 11, 1944

Sister Bertha (Elenora) Karels, 104, lived her monastic profession for 73 years and died peacefully on the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows.

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

—Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 72

Eulogy for Sister Bertha

by Michael P. Kassner, OBlSB

I had the privilege to interview Sister Bertha in 2016. Before then, I knew of Sister Bertha in much the same way I know others in our Community—by her actions, Benedictine Spirituality and abiding faith in God. By her actions, I mean the tenacity and drive Sister Bertha displayed in making time for prayer with her Community three times a day; a beacon of light and hope for my prayer life and that of many others.

Being in community has always been a part of Sister Bertha's life. Growing up on a 150-acre dairy farm along the western edge of Minnesota between Rosen and Ortonville during the pre-electricity early 1900s meant hard work, and the Karel family of ten pulled together just to survive. Sister Bertha fondly remembered, "The land shaped us as much as we shaped it."

Sister Bertha also talked about religion — how it shaped her life just as much as the land did. As a child, Sister Bertha equated life and religion as one and the same. Family prayer and saying the Rosary together were an integral part of each and every day. And Sunday Mass was also important to the family, as attested by it taking more than an hour by horse and buggy to get to the parish church.

When I began interviewing Sister Bertha, I had no idea what to expect. Here was a person who witnessed so many firsts: electricity, automobiles, television, space flight, and organ transplants to name a few. I tried to figure out how many times Sister Bertha attended Mass and just gave up. Three hours into the interview, Sister Bertha looked up at me and apologized, "I am sorry this is taking so long, but I have over 100 years to cover."

I left the room with a newfound respect, and inwardly praying I may someday have that kind of presence, humor and deep love for God. More than a century ago, Sister Bertha began believing life and religion were inseparable and that never changed.



A Spiritual Awakening: *The Benedictine Way*

by Karen Fleming

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances." Ezekiel 36:26-27 (NASB)

If I were to say to you that I am a product of a strict Catholic upbringing, you may have some ideas about what that means. For me, it meant Mass each Sunday and Holy Day, observing all Lenten services, family rosary every evening after dinner (not my favorite agenda as a teenager), and twelve years plus of Catholic school education.

I believed I had an excellent foundation for a strong spiritual life. I thought I was well grounded.

In late fall of 2011, I found the Monastery's Benedictine Retreat Center *Listen* brochure at my parish and attended several classes. But I came away asking myself: "Had I really learned anything? Were these classes a waste of my time?"

Looking back, I now realize that I wasn't ready. My ears and heart weren't open. Since that time, the Holy Spirit has carefully and slowly inched into my home. My spiritual home, that is: My mind, body and soul.

My journey began with a once-a-month day of prayer spent in a Monastery guest room. The room nurtured my prayer life in every way: A desk with a window view, a comfy glider rocker to sit on, but even more, the quiet. I attended longer retreats and began to volunteer at the Monastery Healthcare Center. By way of comradeship with the Sisters and gradual observation of community living, seeds were being planted. Seeds of prayer, hospitality, kindness, respect, dedicated work, daily Scripture, and peace; but most of all, love.

I like to say that the Holy Spirit now lives in my heart and saved my spiritual life. He guided my path and showed me a way, the Benedictine way.



"Sister Marie has been my inspiration to use anything I have to share," says Karen, at left above with Sister Marie Rademacher



Above: "Sacred Path," Elizabeth Fritz; "Holy Mary, Mother of God," John Ilg

At right: "The Treasure of Silence," Patricia Duncan



Art at the Monastery: *Seeing God*

Last February, the Benedictine Center hosted the Monastery's annual Juried Art Exhibit. Pictured here are five of the forty-six beautiful, original art pieces from the 2018 exhibit, *Seeing God*.

At right: "Guardian Angel," Carleton McCambridge

Below: "Dawn of a New World," Richard Mittelstadt



St. Paul's Monastery is open to the public seven days a week. Visit our website or call 651-777-8181 for our prayer schedule, hours, and special exhibits and events.



Meet Our New Membership Assistant

One of the 2016 Oblate Class, Elizabeth Pangerl first came to St. Paul's Monastery by attending a Benedictine Center presentation in January 2015.

Although Elizabeth worked in local laboratories as a scientist for fifteen years, her technical background prepared her to dive into new situations, take and edit digital photos, update the website, and revise electronic documents.



Above (l-r): Elizabeth and Sister Linda Soler

As a scientist, Elizabeth took photographs under a microscope of tiny things, used and developed complex procedures and wrote reports that were electronically shared with engineers and lawyers.

“From 2008 to 2015,” says Elizabeth, “I worked closely with a scientist at 3M who led by example and was both a laboratory

and spiritual mentor for me. He'd participated in one of Sister Carol's (Rennie) spiritual direction groups and recommended I visit the Monastery.

“As have so many others, I was immediately struck by the peaceful environment and the hospitality of the Benedictine Sisters when I first visited in January 2015.

“It was such a contrast to my rather chaotic life as a wife, mother of three and laboratory scientist. I was drawn to return to the Monastery for their events, community prayer and quiet time in the Chapel. I inquired about volunteering and somehow ended up being given an application for Oblate formation. Neither scientists nor mystics are great believers in coincidence, and I felt that I was being called to learn more about this Community.

“At an Oblate formation event, Sister Paula (Hagen) told me that I was called to appreciate and create beauty. I had never associated myself with visual arts or beauty. It contrasted so sharply with the cerebral mindset that served me working with engineers and scientists. I wrote her words down in my journal and kept them in my heart.”

Continued on next page

St. Paul's Monastery Membership in 2018

by Elizabeth Pangerl, ObISB and Membership Assistant



“We commit ourselves to a process that invites and provides formation for various forms of membership.”

—Direction Statement 2, St. Paul's Monastery

In this 70th anniversary year, Membership has a new vision for the future.

As Membership Director (and my supervisor) Sister Linda Soler says, “Membership is a goal and directive for our long-range strategic implementation plan, and its importance is voiced by all members of our Community.

“In contrast to the values of obedience, poverty and chastity found in religious life, modern society promotes power, money and sex. The promotion of religious life is counter-cultural, challenging and life changing.”

Visibility is important in the parishes and areas of education. In today's world, though, there are youth ministers, parishes, campus ministers, catechists, and religion teachers who can only talk hypothetically about a religious Sister because many have never met one.

For those seeking vowed religious vocation, Sister Linda and I found that 95% of the inquiries are electronic referrals through a vocations website. Most of the women who inquire are from outside the Twin Cities area and have not personally visited St. Paul's Monastery.

We know that the best way to discern whether vowed religious life is the right path and whether St. Paul's Monastery is where one is being called, is to visit us. Says Sister Linda, “When a woman seeking vowed religious vocation feels called to the Benedictine Way of Life, there is a screening as to where she, the discernor, would grow in her faith, seeking God.”

As Sister Linda and I explore new ways to grow in our Membership ministry, we look forward to our journey together and the liberal application of *Ora et Labora* so “*That in all things God may be glorified.*”

Meet Our New Membership Assistant

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“Toward the end of a contract at Medtronic, the Membership Assistant position was advertised and I was offered the position. There is so much beauty contained within the people and environment of St. Paul’s Monastery, my mission is simply to share with others the beauty that I have found here. Also, I’d love to have Sister Linda out there giving talks to adult groups with her inimitable style and charisma, inviting people personally for a visit. The appeal of this Community is something that is best experienced.”

Says Sister Linda, “Elizabeth embraces Benedictine values. She is very compassionate and knowledgeable in the work and approaches it with humility and good zeal. A huge plus for us is her creativity and resourcefulness, and Elizabeth’s family life is a gift to the Community.

“We are committed to learn from the past, embrace the present and prepare for the future. Our first goal is collaboration and shared resources with all forms of membership — vowed religious, Oblate and Associate — and to develop and encourage a vocation culture at the Monastery that draws the discerning to us.”



Above: Sister Louise with her “pride and joy”— the original Priory Library card catalog

Library Memories: *Books for the Ages*

by Sister Louise Inhofer, OSB

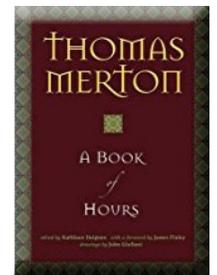
It’s been a few years since 1948, but I have so many vivid memories of my first years at St. Paul’s Priory.

Let me concentrate on my memories of the beginnings of our library. Sister Jeroma, my English teacher at the Diocesan Teachers College, was our first librarian. I don’t remember where the books were shelved at 301 Summit, but the library in Mary Hall was to the right of the front door.

Helping Sister was my first experience working in a library. I remember helping put the labels on the spines of the books, and yes, they had to be exactly the same distance from the bottom of the book. Cards and pockets were added and the books were ready for circulation. Records of the books were typed on 3x5” cards and filed in the drawers of the card file, which by the way, is still in my office. I get nostalgic when I flip through the cards wondering if any that I typed are still there. It’s kind of like visiting old friends whom I met on my journey as a Benedictine.

About that time Abbot Columba Marmion was the author to read. Martin Hellriegel, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, and Anscar Vonier are just a few other authors that I can remember. Most of these authors were way above our heads, but as time went on we grew into their writings. We still have some of the original books on our shelves.

Last, but not least, is Thomas Merton who came on the scene in the 40’s, and whose popularity seems to grow with time. While there are many wonderful authors today, I don’t want to forget my old friends.



Thank You Sisters

by Ann Bechtell, Passages Editor and Mission Advancement Assistant

St. Paul’s Monastery exists because of the Sisters of St. Benedict. When I arrive at this beautiful place and during my work day, I know that everywhere I walk and whatever I do, it is because of the years of prayer, selfless hard work and service of the Sisters of St. Benedict of St. Paul’s Monastery.

I feel honored to participate in this Community’s 70th Anniversary, and I’m sure you join with me to say, to all of the Sisters who have passed on and to all who live and serve at St. Paul’s Monastery today: *Thank you and God bless you!*



St. Paul's Monastery: 70 Years Young

by Annette Walker,
Mission Advancement Director

The official date marking the 70th Anniversary of St. Paul's Monastery is

June 22nd, the Community's Founders' Day. We will joyfully celebrate the accomplishments of 70 years of the local and worldwide service of the Sisters and Community of St. Paul's Monastery. This year, we'll combine our Founders' and Heritage Day celebrations. A celebration indeed!

Heritage and Founders' Days in a Nutshell

The **July 22nd Heritage Day** observes and honors Mother Benedicta Riepp's establishment of Benedictine Sisters in America. The **June 22nd Founders' Day** marks the founding of St. Paul's Monastery in the Twin Cities.

This fall, Hill-Murray School hosts an Archbishop Murray Memorial High School reunion. The reunion includes a reflection about the Benedictine Sisters by Sister Marie Fujan. It will be an opportunity to reminisce about how the Rule of St. Benedict has impacted many lives in 70 years.

The Sisters and their families will gather to share stories of "301 Summit" this summer, hosted by the current 301 Summit residents, the German-American Institute.

In late summer, the Monastery will host a gathering of former Sister members. Current Sisters are excited to connect with their former members, still connected to the Benedictine way of life, who chose a different life path. A great time to reconnect, share stories and rekindle friendships.

To close out the Community's special celebrations, Abbott John has been invited for an "Oktoberfest" reception in honor of all the clergy that have served this Benedictine Community for the past 70 years. Our prayers of thanksgiving will be offered with a special focus on the clergy from St. John's in Colledgeville as well as the Archdiocesan priests who have been so generous with their time. The Sisters are grateful for the many liturgies that have been celebrated in the Chapels in all of their locations.

June 22, 2018:

70th Anniversary Celebration With Archbishop Hebda



Please join us on June 22nd for a 1:00 p.m. Mass at the Hill-Murray School auditorium. Archbishop Bernard Hebda will lead us in prayers of gratitude and celebration. The celebration continues with a reception at the Monastery. Guests will enjoy a beautiful art exhibit, conversations with the Sisters and videos from yesteryear. Register on the St. Paul's Monastery website "Calendar" link or call 651-777-6850.

You Are the Gift

We are deeply honored by our supporters who have committed to a planned or estate gift to the Community. This type of gift allows you to share in the work that the Monastery Community plans for generations to come: Educational apostolate support and service, pastoral ministry, social outreach and spiritual care. An envelope is enclosed for your convenience or contact **Annette Walker** at awalker@stpaulsmonastery.org or **651-777-6850**.



Prayer Requests

The Benedictine Community of St. Paul's Monastery thanks God daily for you, for your friendship and for the opportunity to be of service.

The Community's prayer ministry is available to you anytime. You can reach out online at www.stpaulsmonastery.org: On the home page, scan down to "REQUEST A PRAYER." You can also mail your confidential prayer request to the address at left.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. -1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NKJV)

the Sisters of St. Benedict of St. Paul's Monastery
Gratefully Celebrating 70 Years in 2018

Prioress Dinner

April 12, 2018

5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Guardian Angels Catholic Church Social Hall

**Join Sister Paula Hagen and the Benedictine Community
of St. Paul's Monastery**

2018 Prioress Honorees

Don and Jean Regan

Barb Rode

Register by phone at 651-777-6850 or online at

<https://tinyurl.com/2018Prioress>

REGISTER TODAY!

Benedictine Community of

St. Paul's Monastery

Celebrating 70 Years of Service and Mission



Please Help Us...

- If you prefer electronic receipt of this newsletter, please send your email address to Annette at:
awalker@stpaulsmonastery.org
- If your address has changed or is incorrect, please call **651-777-8181** to let Annette know

Thank you!

Upcoming Dates of Note:

June 22: *St. Paul's Monastery 70th Anniversary Founders' Day* celebration (see p. 15)

Nov. 15: *Give to the Max*

Dec. 8: *Christmas at the Monastery*

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

Benedictine Center Highlights:

April 9: *The Spirituality of Gardening: Finding the Sacred in the Ordinary*

May 31-June 1: *Men's Retreat: Becoming Transformed*

August 23-25: *Work and Prayer Retreat at River Place Tree Farm*

For further information for classes at the Benedictine Center, call 651-777-7251