



NOVEMBER 2019

The Season for Thanks

A student asked me recently, “Are grateful and thankful the same thing?”

According to Google, “gratitude and thankfulness” are both feelings of appreciation and are synonymous with each other. However, they differ in direction: Gratitude is directed *outwardly*, whereas thankfulness is directed and experienced *inwardly*.

Gratitude is developed when we discover who God really is even through the difficult times and through the silence of prayer that can only bring us closer to God. We have a God who loves and responds to us in times of need. We can look back at our graces, yet we need to look forward to the graces to come. How mysterious it is in gratitude for we who believe in God through our faith.

The *Rule of St. Benedict* reminds us how gratitude is the antidote of murmuring and grumbling. St. Benedict had a low tolerance for such behaviors in the monastic community. In the Liturgy of the Hours we have an opportunity to stop and be grateful for graces we receive on a daily basis.

At St. Paul’s Monastery, we invite you to share our gratitude for your shared gifts and talents. We look to you for praising God for the glory and honor to help build God’s kingdom and making the *Rule of Benedict* come alive.

Practicing gratitude this Thanksgiving is a bountiful time of God’s blessings, so **that in all things God may be Glorified!**

Sister Linda Soler, OSB
Monastic Leadership Team





THE 12TH ANNUAL
Christmas
at the *Monastery*



Get Tickets Today!



Saturday, December 14, 2019
3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Benedictine Community of
St. Paul's Monastery

<https://tinyurl.com/christmasmonastery2019>

Volunteers for Christmas at the Monastery are needed. If you would like to help, please call: 651-777-6850.



Comments of the Oblate Renewal Service

by Michael Kassner, ObISB

Joining fellow Benedictine oblates to renew our commitment each year is a privilege and a blessing.

Before becoming an oblate, my faith walk was going nowhere. I was searching for answers, but nothing fit. The formation process plus the loving tutelage of the Sisters at St. Paul's Monastery showed me where to look, and the Rule of Benedict provided the answers.

I'm still a work in progress, but each year I recite the Renewal of Oblation promising--albeit humbly--fidelity of heart, fidelity to the monastic life, and obedience to the will of God, and that fits like a time-worn glove.



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Relection on 2019 Oblate Retreat

by Jeff Dols, Oblate

On September 28, I had the opportunity to participate in my first ever Oblate Retreat. For those of us in the 2019 Oblate class, it was our first opportunity to meet the broader community of Oblates, and also our first chance to get together with each other since our Final Oblation in June. Overall, it was a wonderful day of catching up, networking, and learning.



Going in, I was curious what an Oblate Retreat would be like, and the experience did not disappoint! First of all, it was a picture-perfect fall day to be on retreat, and in the spirit of the day's theme of Sabbath, our facilitator, Sister Ephrem Hollermann, OSB, gave us multiple opportunities to commune with nature and experience the Monastery grounds in silence and solitude. Some walked the labyrinth, some sat in the cool but bright sunshine, and others paid their respects to the Sisters in the cemetery. During midday prayer, we got to experience the awesome sight of the Chapel filled to capacity with Sisters and Oblates praying together in full voice!

As we gathered in the dining room to begin the retreat, one of Sister Ephrem's opening questions was "What did you sacrifice to be here today?" Several at our table talked about giving up something on our to-do lists, which we came to understand was precisely the point of setting aside Sabbath time. And in return for our "sacrifice", what do we gain? There were many blessings, including: new connections with other Oblates, better understanding of the coming year of Oblate programming, and insights about what other Oblates are doing, including a planned trip by one of our members to serve at the border. Mostly, we gathered new insights from Sister Ephrem on the history and meaning of Sabbath – from both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, as well as the *Rule of St. Benedict*. We explored the meaning of Shabbat, which literally means "rest" in Hebrew, as well as the importance of seven – setting aside not only seventh day as special, but also the Sabbath (seventh) year and the Jubilee (every fiftieth) year. At our tables, we discussed these questions:

What do we lose if Sunday becomes just like any other day?

What are some cultural realities behind our seeming inability to slow down, to rest, to give our Sundays over to God and the restoration of our minds, hearts, and bodies?

How might I seek to resist conflicting cultural forces in order to make Sunday truly God's day – a day of rest, renewal, delight and blessing?

We concluded that when we allow the Sabbath to become just another day to get our work done, we lose the opportunity to focus on our most important relationships, with family and friends, with God, and with our inner-most selves. We lose the opportunity to reflect, renew and recharge before beginning another week of work. Sister Ephrem then tied it all together by reflecting on *the Rule* and Benedict's instruction of "Ora Et Labora", Pray & Work. We need both. Thus, we ended our retreat renewed to begin again our work as Oblates, bringing the Benedictine Spirit into our communities.

Benedictine Presence at Sacred Heart in Robbinsdale

by Sister Mary Lou Dummer, OSB

On October 10, Sister Karen Sames and I were invited to speak to the Sacred Heart Women's Club at Sacred Heart Parish in Robbinsdale.

We shared the history of our Benedictine presence in their parish and school, how we carry out our Mission today, and how they can continue to support us.

The women enjoyed the photos we brought and the reminiscences of our Sisters who taught at Sacred Heart School from 1948-92. They especially enjoyed the pictures that showed Sisters changing from full habit to contemporary clothing.

Today the Benedictine Sisters carry out our Mission, our *ora et labora*, at 2675 Benet Road in St. Paul. We share the campus with Hill-Murray School, Tubman, CommonBond Communities, and Maple Tree Childcare Center. Along with we vowed religious Sisters, we are a growing community of Benedictine Associates and Oblates. We have an active Social Justice Outreach and many individuals and groups are nourished in prayer, peace and retreat at our Benedictine Center.

The women at Sacred Heart Parish enjoyed hearing about our various ministries and how we continue to be good stewards of all the gifts and resources with which God has blessed us. We invited them to the Monastery for retreat or a day of reflection. Some plan to join us for Christmas at the Monastery on December 14th.

Together with our friends and benefactors we move into the future with hope, living the Benedictine values found in the Gospels and the *Rule of St. Benedict*.



Above (l-r): Sister Mary Lou and Sister Karen presenting at Sacred Heart Parish



Something Precious This Way Comes

Everyone enjoys the Maple Tree kids' annual Halloween program at the Monastery!

The staff and Sisters all come out to see the parade of Harry Potters, Wookiees, pirates, fairies, elves, cowboys and girls, firefighters, astronauts, and superheroes. The Sisters make sure to have a front row seat to enjoy the kids' program and get hugs afterwards.

God bless and keep these dear and precious little ones.

2019 Paver Blessing

by Annette Walker, Mission Advancement Director

On Friday, September 27, 2019, twelve guests joined the Sisters for mid-day prayer. We then proceeded to the St. Benedict Plaza for the "Blessing of the Pavers." Since the beginning of our Sacred Ground initiative, we continue a yearly tradition: Remembering and honoring the Sisters and our loved ones in their work and showing our gratitude for their tradition and legacy.

We appreciate everyone who is able to attend this event, it demonstrates dedication and appreciation for the Benedictine Community. The Sisters appreciate the opportunity to join with all guests in blessing each paver as well as offering prayers.

The purpose of Sacred Ground touches on a few important Benedictine Values – Environmental Stewardship, awareness of God through beauty of our land, a peaceful, contemplative space to pray and to appreciate God's work.

All are welcomed as Christ at the Monastery, and we invite you to join the Community in prayer (our prayer schedule is on page 12).

To create your commemorative paver in honor of a Sister or loved one, anniversary or other life event, you will find an order form under the "Support" menu on our website or by [clicking here](#).



Above: Guests and Sisters at mid-day prayer prior to the Paver Blessing



Above: Prioress Sister Catherine Nehotte delivers the blessing



Above: Anthony Helmer from McGough installs the pavers



At right: Guests watch as Sister Virginia Matter blesses her family's paver

*It is good to give thanks,
to lift our hearts to God.
Alleluia.*

Liturgy of the Hours

Essay on the Taizé Service at St. Paul's Monastery

by Michael Kassner, ObISB

During World War Two, Brother Roger Schütz had a vision:

“The defeat of France awoke powerful sympathy. If a house could be found there, it would offer a way to assist some of those most discouraged, those deprived of a livelihood; and it could become a place of silence and work.”

Acting upon his vision, Brother Roger decided to help the people of war-torn Taizé, a small French village right in the middle of the fighting.

Little did Brother Roger know his humanitarian efforts would eventually lead to the formation of a religious community of Catholic and Protestant brothers, and turn Taizé into a popular pilgrimage destination. So much so, that thousands of visitors from around the world — in particular, young adults—travel to Taizé each year.

Brother Roger also introduced what has become a globally-recognized trademark of the French community — the singing of chants during prayer services. “It is a time to rest in God, to let the words listened to and sung penetrate one’s being.” [mentions Brother John, a Taizé monk.](#)

There’s no preaching or teaching, just an elegantly simple service consisting of short chants repeated over and over in the dark. The cantor sings the entire chant once, after which attendees can join in or just listen, letting the music wash over them.

What impresses nonmusical types such as myself is the simple yet affective nature of the chants. For example, [Bless the Lord](#):

*Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.
Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life.*

To recognize Brother Roger’s desire for world-wide prayer and reconciliation, the Sisters at St. Paul’s Monastery read a Bible passage in both English and another language during the service.

Towards the end of the service, a large crucifix is moved to the center of the chapel while "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom" (Luke 23:42) is sung. People, if they wish, approach and spend a few moments reverencing the crucifix.

As the last chant is sung, it's time to be quiet, reflect on the service, and, in my case, thank God for being there to witness it.

Every third Friday of the month, St. Paul’s Monastery holds their Taizé prayer service at 7 PM. Everyone is welcome.



The background is a painting of a stone archway. The arch is made of large, dark, textured stones. Through the arch, a bright, hazy landscape is visible, suggesting a path leading to a bright horizon. The overall color palette is dominated by blues and purples, with a bright white light at the end of the path.

Prayer for Our Beloved Deceased

We believe
Jesus died and rose from the dead.

We believe
Those who have fallen asleep
Will share
In the joy of His resurrection.

We hope
They shall shine brightly,
Be like the stars forever.

We ask this through Christ our Lord
Who lives and reigns
With You and the Holy Spirit Forever
and ever.

Amen.



Family Ties

by Sister Karen Sames

The Gerold Family Reunion was held on September 9, 2019 at Uncle Norbert and Aunt Marie's Farm. Mark and Sam Lano hosted the gathering of approximately 100 family members.

Sister Benita had a wonderful time visiting with all her nieces and nephews (about 25 were able to attend) from all over the U.S.

The family lovingly refers to reigning siblings, (pictured at left from l-r) Dennis Gerold, Anise Ditter and Sister Benita as "the royalty."



Above (l-r): Sisters Jacqueline Leiter, Prioress Catherine Nehotte, Virginia Matter, Linda Soler and Susan Bourauel

School Spirit

by Sister Linda Soler, Monastic Leadership Team

Hill-Murray School invited the Sisters to their Homecoming activities on Friday, September 28. We certainly appreciated their hospitality and generosity and say: "Thank you to our Hill-Murray neighbors!" What's more, the Hill-Murray Boys' Varsity team won 46 to 27 against DeLaSalle. Sister Linda was especially happy for the team as she serves as their home-game Spiritual Coach. She works with the student athletes to bring Christian values to the game. Football is bigger than the game itself; it's more about our faith in Jesus as Hill-Murray Pioneers.

On Sabbatical—Renewed Roots New Wisdom

by Jill Ackerman, director of Missions Advancement at the Benedictine Sisters of the Annunciation

“It is customary in Benedictine communities, for an outgoing Prioress to take a sabbatical to find renewal, and rest, and explore where God might be leading her next,” explains Sister Nancy Gunderson of how Sister Paula Hagen, former Prioress of St. Paul’s Monastery, connected with her.

When the Sisters in her community encouraged Sister Paula to do what she’s always wanted to do while on sabbatical, she reached out to Sister Nancy to inquire if she could spend a month of her sabbatical with her at Annunciation Monastery, creating art and learning new techniques that would tap into and awaken her creative side. Sister Nancy agreed and the two spent the month of July creating and exploring art together.



During her time at Annunciation Monastery, Sister Nancy offered some suggestions for art projects to consider and Sister Paula chose five. Among the project was a story quilt. Sister Nancy invited her to think of a life event that was memorable, and Sister Paula would like to record. Having just come off a 30-day retreat, with 10 days in silence, she chose to event “Sabbatical” and named her art quilt, “Renewed Roots: New Wisdom.” Displayed on her quilt of orange and yellow hues are symbols, names, scripture verses and quotes, that represent her story. She says, “What gives you renewed energy is the process of creating, learning to use a paint brush, or whatever medium you prefer, to express spirituality, values and ideas.”



Another project that delighted both Sister Nancy and Sister Paula alike, was creating wisdom doll. Sister Paula says her wisdom doll has been with her, in a sense, for her entire life. As a young girl, her father acknowledged and affirmed her rare gift of seeing what needs to be done and doing it. “This gave me a chance to express myself into the form of my wisdom doll.”

Sister Nancy shared, “We have had so much fun creating art together. The projects we have created are not only fun, but they are a form of prayer, calling us to self-reflection and how God directs our lives. God is creative and stirs our hearts!

After the month of creating and what Sister Nancy described as “playing,” was over, Sister Paula continued in the next stage of her sabbatical. She researched and reflected upon Women’s Benedictine Spirituality and learned more about the history of the Benedictine women who established Benedictine communities in the United States.

Prayer Schedule

“Nothing is to be preferred to the Work of God.”

—Rule of Benedict, Chap. 43



SUNDAY

Morning Prayer: 10:00 AM

Eucharist: 11:00 AM

Evening Prayer: 5:00 PM

*For further information, call
651-777-8181 or visit us online at
www.stpaulsmonastery.org*

MONDAY–SATURDAY

Morning Prayer: 8:00 AM

Midday Prayer: 11:30 AM

(Mon., Fri., Sat.)

Eucharist: 11:30 AM

(Tue.—Thu.)

Evening Prayer: 5:00 PM

Taizé Prayer: 7:00 PM every 3rd Friday of the month



COMMUNITY PRAYER MINISTRY

Here to Serve You in Prayer



We Would Love to Hear from You

Let us, in fellowship, “lay (our) petitions before the Lord God with the utmost humility and sincere devotion.” (*Rule of St. Benedict, Chap. 20*) If you would like to send a prayer request or concern via our website, you will find the request submission form on the Home page (www.stpaulsmonastery.org), just under the header “St. Paul’s Monastery Community.” The requests are passed onto the Sisters in the Healthcare Center who pray the 3:30 p.m. daily Rosary for these intentions.



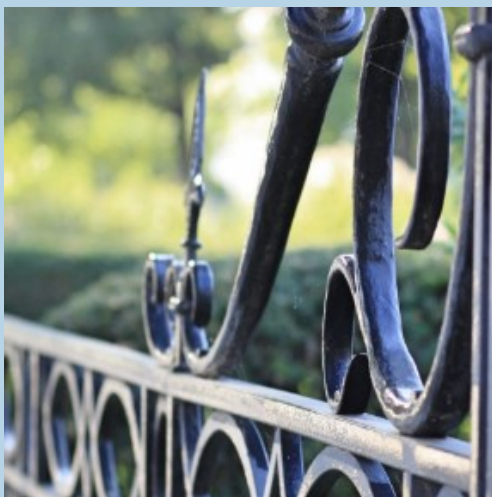
BENEDICTINE CENTER OF ST. PAUL'S MONASTERY

Welcome, Retreat and Spirituality Seekers!

www.benedictinecenter.org

“As soon as anyone knocks the porter of the monastery replies, ‘Thanks be to God’ or ‘Your blessing, please’. Then the porter provides a prompt answer with the warmth of love.” (RB 66:3-4)

Embodying this vision of hospitality, the Benedictine Center is a threshold between St. Paul's Monastery and the wider world. Staff members serve as Benedict's porter, ready to welcome each guest with all the gentleness that comes from God. The Benedictine Center shares the Monastic Heritage of St. Paul's Monastery with all who seek to live with the Gospel as their guide. The Benedictine Center partners with talented presenters to offer a wide array workshops, retreats, and meaningful conversations rooted in Benedictine insights about the life lived well. Whether your interests are primarily about life & work, prayer and meditation, community and connection, or art & spirituality, there's something coming up for you.



Welcoming Prayer

**Friday, November 22,
9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
with Diane Boruff
and Mary Lapham**

The Welcoming Prayer is a method of consenting to God's presence and action in our physical and emotional reactions to

events and situations in daily life. The practice complements the Centering Prayer. This introduction is most helpful to those who have been using Centering Prayer for a year or more. Participants will explore and practice the Welcoming Prayer through teaching sessions, personal reflection time, group practice, and time for conversation.



Together in Contemplation
Tuesdays, Nov 12 and Dec 10
7 p.m.—9 p.m.
with Jody Reis Johnson

Writers in the Christian contemplative tradition have long upheld the practices of silence and community as invitations into holy mystery. Quiet down the noise and find companions along the spiritual path. Join Jody Reis for a 4-month spiritual growth group aimed at deepening your relationship with God through contemplative practice, spiritual readings, and discussion about the journey we share. Participants will be asked to establish their own daily practice of silent prayer or meditation.

**To register or for further
information, e-mail or call us:**

benedictinecenter@stpaulsmonastery.org

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St. Paul's Monastery

Mission Statement

We, the Sisters of St. Paul's Monastery, are a community who 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.