



DECEMBER 2019

Welcoming Christ

Skies are quiet and dark in December, and each morning the sunrise paints the sky in deep shades of blue, purple, and pink – Advent colors. It is a cold time of watching and waiting. We wait for the dawn, for the warmth and light of a new day, and above all, for Christ.

The Spanish word *esperar*, meaning “to wait,” can help us enter into this Advent time. Its meaning is deeper and richer than its usual English translation. In addition to speaking of a time of waiting, *esperar* is used to express an attitude of hope and expectation.

During these long, dark winter nights, we are not simply waiting; rather we believe and expect that our hope will be realized. As we long for the warmth and the light of day, we know and expect that the sun will rise each morning and spring will come after the long winter. We also wait and hope in this time of welcoming Christ coming into the world and into our hearts. Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, beautifully expresses our expectation and trust in these words from the Benedictus prayer we sing each morning:

Your heart is full of mercy, O God.
The bright dawn will break upon us,
giving light to those in darkness,
guiding hearts to the way of peace.

The Sisters of St. Paul’s Monastery invite you to enter this Advent season with a spirit open and welcoming Christ’s presence in your heart. May you receive God’s blessing and peace as you, in turn, share it with the world around you.

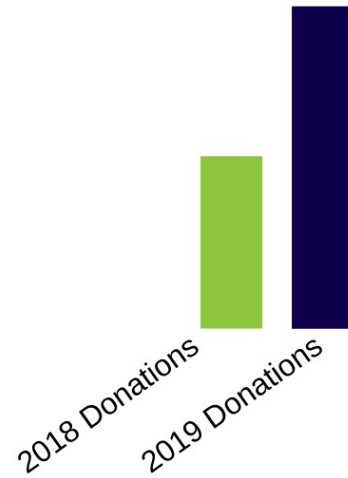
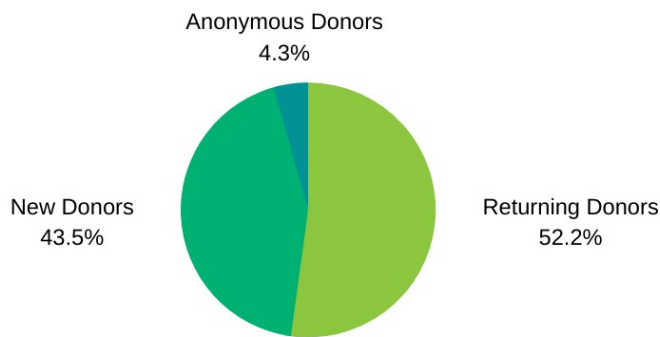
Sister Jacqueline Leiter, OSB
Monastic Leadership Team





NOV. 14, 2019

THANK YOU, DONORS!



Thank you to all of our supporters for making this year's Give to the Max Day a huge success. Through your generous support, we nearly doubled the donations from last year!

Let's give special welcome to our new donors! We are so grateful for them and all our donors.

This year's donations will help finance the care of our senior Sisters and make essential capital improvements. Thank you for listening to God's call to support our mission and ministries.





Reflection on the Winter Solstice

by Jeff Dols, ObISB

As we near the season of Advent and longest, darkest nights of the year, I thought I'd share a journal entry from last year's Solstice, and the reflection piece it inspired.

This morning, I had the most profound experience of enlightenment in my hour of walking at the park before dawn. It was clear and dark, which first enabled me to see the stars perfectly aligned. Then, as I rounded the corner, I was dazzled by the magical Christmas lights dancing on the trees and the path. I realized, if not for the darkness, the stars and the lights would have remained hidden from my sight.

I then had a reflective moment, wondering if given a chance, I would go back to being the person I was 10 years ago, before my life of chronic pain began, if it meant I would lose all of the insights and spiritual growth that has happened since then. When I started to realize the answer was 'No' I wouldn't want to go back, suddenly the whole path opened up to me. I realized that everything I've experienced had led me to this moment, which was suddenly whole, complete.

The Stars are Aligned

*Whenever we use that familiar phrase,
we always exclude the implied part.
Yet the unspoken speaks volumes
about the human condition
and how we get ourselves into so much suffering:
"I will be happy when the stars are aligned –
the way I want them to be!"*

*The thing is, the stars are already aligned,
and they always will be.
It is we who don't like the way life is aligned.*

*Our unwillingness to accept reality
leads to all manner of discord.
And it has always been so.*

*Yes, the stars of our lives are already aligned,
and the sooner we learn to accept that,
the sooner we can learn to live in freedom and joy.
Happiness need not wait for a perfect future.
If we can't accept the reality of the present moment,
we may miss the wonder and beauty
hidden in life as it is.*



THE 12TH ANNUAL
Christmas
at the *Monastery*



Get Tickets Today!



REJOICE!

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.*



Frost-bitten windows
revealing God's artistry
picture's of God's love

Sister Rose Alice

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Advent

The word *Advent* derives from the Latin *adventus*, meaning “coming.” In the early Church, Advent was a season of preparation for baptism on the feast of the Epiphany. It was a time of penance, prayer, and fasting. By the sixth century, Christians connected Advent with the idea of “coming,” but their expectation was for the *parousia*, the second coming of Christ, not the coming of Christ as a baby in a manger. It was not until the Middle Ages that Christians connected Advent with Christ’s first coming at Christmas.

Today Advent combines remembrance and anticipation. We look back in our history at God’s mercy and grace, such as God’s calling the Hebrew people out of slavery in Egypt and leading them into the Promised Land. In a way, Advent reminds us that we today may find ourselves in a sort of exile or land of darkness, and we too call out to God to save us. We remember Christ’s first coming, and we also wait in expectation for his return.

At the Monastery, our Chapel Advent wreath is a symbol that helps us to slow down so that we may remember and anticipate Christ’s coming. A candle is lit on each of the four Sundays of Advent. The light shines brighter as a new candle is lit each week, reminding us of our Advent journey and our need to prepare our hearts. This Advent, we invite you to consider a tradition such as lighting candles to help you enter more deeply into this season. We offer the following prayers for each week as you light your candles.

Week 1: Hope

God our Hope, you are the light and hope in our darkness. This Advent, help us to slow down. Help us to listen to your voice in our hearts and in each other. As we prepare our hearts to welcome you and celebrate your birth on Christmas, we place our hope in you. Amen.

Week 2: Peace

God our Peace, you sent your Son into our world as the Prince of Peace. This Advent, as we strive to become the persons you call us to be, fill us with your abiding peace. Help us share that peace with everyone we meet, especially those who need it most. Amen.

Week 3: Joy

God our Joy, help us to notice and be aware of the joy you bring in the ordinary moments of our lives. Help us to be aware of your presence each day so may approach the manger with grateful hearts on Christmas. Amen.

Week 4: Love

God of Love, may your light shine in our hearts always. As Christmas draws closer, we remember your great love and are grateful for your sending Christ into our world, Emmanuel, God with us. May your love transform our hearts and our lives and touch everyone we encounter. Amen.



Photo by Michael Kassner, OblSB

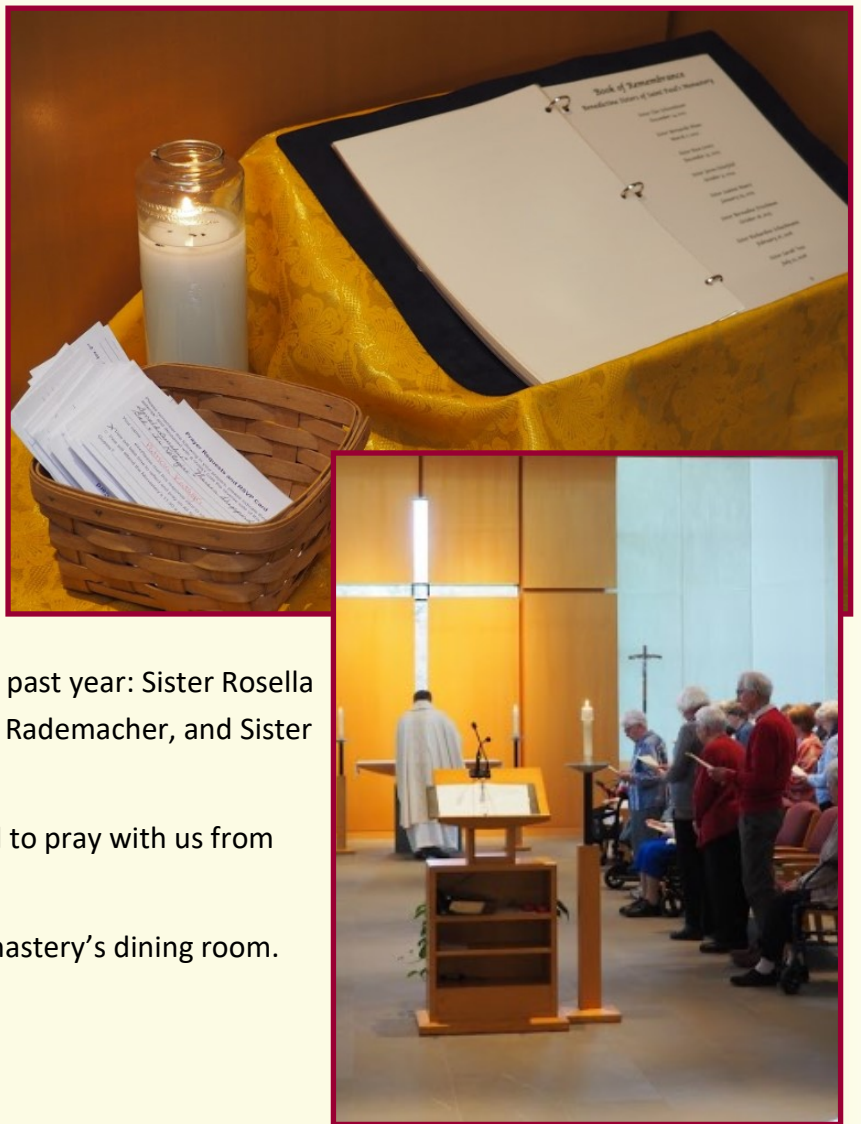
All Souls' Day

All Souls' Day is a special time of remembering our deceased sisters and brothers with whom we share life in the Body of Christ. We were joined with many of you and Fr. Michael Joncas at Eucharist in hope that one day we will all share in the purifying journey toward a full encounter with God, face to face.

It was a special time to remember family and friends who have died. We especially remembered the Sisters who passed away this past year: Sister Rosella Schommer, Sister Mary Courteau, Sister Marie Rademacher, and Sister LaVerne Hudalla.

Those of you who couldn't join us were invited to pray with us from your home or workplace.

Following prayer, we enjoyed lunch in the monastery's dining room.



Bishop Andrew Cozzens at the Monastery

by Sister Linda Soler, OSB, Monastic Leadership Team

When Bishop Andrew Cozzens visited the Monastery on October 31, he was given a tour, read the Gospel at the Vigil for All Saints, and then shared a meal with our Monastic Community and guests.

During the meal the Sisters shared where they were on mission in the Archdiocese, and Bishop Cozzens shared more about the Synods that are happening in the Archdiocese. He received a blessing from the Sisters, and he gave a blessing in return. We thanked Bishop Cozzens for his servant leadership.

Christmas Tradition Reflection

At the Monastery, one Christmas tradition is to allow the characters and objects of the crèche to speak to us and deepen our prayer and our experience of the season. Imagine listening for an invitation in the story of each character or object for this moment in your life. To enjoy this practice, too, here are a few ways to enter into it.

Angel—The angel proclaimed the good news of Christ’s birth to the shepherds. *What message am I called to proclaim? How can I share joy with those around me?*

Shepherds—After hearing the message of the angel, the shepherds went in haste to see the child. *How may I allow myself to listen to a message of good news and go with haste to check it out?*

Stable—*How am I invited to make my heart a home for Christ? How can I be open and welcoming to others?*

Mary—Mary said “Yes” to God. She treasured all these things, and pondered on them in her heart. *Are there things God is calling me to to take time to slow down and ponder in my heart?*

There are many more characters and objects in the Christmas story. Consider their stories when you see a Christmas crèche or when you read or listen to the Gospels. You may imagine yourself within the story. Listen with your heart to the invitations you hear.



Now Showing in the Monastic Art Gallery

The Monastery Art Gallery's last exhibit of the year is from the Lake Country Pastel Society, and it is available for viewing from November 18, 2019 through January 24, 2020.

As always, the Sisters and Community invite everyone to visit the Monastery and enjoy the exhibit. These vibrant pastels bring bright and beautiful color and mark to the landscapes in this exhibit, and the talented artists invite us into vistas where they feel a strong Spiritual presence, and guests are invited to spend time with each painting to share these connections.



Above: "Superior Sunrise" by Lindsay David Lee



At Right: "Leaping Over" by Frederick Somers

Advent Prayer

God of hope, who brought love into this world,
be the love that dwells between us.
God of hope, who brought peace into this world,
be the peace that dwells between us.
God of hope, who brought joy into this world,
be the joy that dwells between us.
God of hope, the rock we stand upon,
be the center, the focus of our lives always,
and particularly this Advent time.

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 of workshops, retreats, and meaningful conversations rooted in Benedictine insights about the life lived well. Whether your interests are primarily about life and work, prayer and meditation, community and connection, or art and spirituality, there's something coming up for you!



Reclaiming Darkness as Essential to the Spiritual Life

Friday, December, 6

9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

with Kiely Todd Roska and Eily Marlow

Darkness is a place of limited sight and not knowing, and

Advent is a time to practice living in the dark in new ways. Darkness can be a place of fear, of shadow, of pain. Darkness can also be a place of germination, of freedom, of new life. In this workshop we will develop rituals and practices that can help us see darkness in a new way, embracing the wisdom it has to bring. The Psalms will be our guide as we explore their subtle and expressive responses to our bewildering, beautiful lives.



Finding My YESES for This Year

Thursday, January 9

9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

The outset of a new year calls us to be clear-eyed about our lives. Choosing our yeses for the year means learning to say no to other things (even some good things) when a bigger YES is calling. Otherwise, old patterns and half-hearted commitments prevent us from engaging the purposes, relationships, and joys that give our lives deep meaning.

Join with others who know these pressures and who take new beginnings seriously. Gather for prayerful reflection about your yeses for 2020 and find practical guidance for keeping the most important things clearly within view.

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

benedictinecenter@stpaulsmonastery.org

651.777.7251

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www.stpaulsmonastery.org



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.