

**MAY 2020**

*"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household"*

(Ephesians 2:19, NIV)

### *One God, One People, One Light*

The world I knew as a child is so much larger now; no longer just my own family and country, but a world that includes persons living oceans and continents away who I will never meet. St. Paul's message to the Ephesians that we *are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household* (Eph. 2:19, NIV) exactly expresses what my sense of "world" is today.

While this current health crisis is horrific, it also is an opportunity for every person to realize how we are all *truly* "members of his household": Inseparable, interconnected, interdependent.

Many of us, as we seek Light and Truth, have come to recognize people of all cultures and faiths as sisters and brothers; whether Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Jew, Indigenous, or Atheist. For our very survival, we must honor the unique contribution of everyone in our world community.

As we seek Light and Truth, we discover that the path includes times of Darkness, such as disease, deprivation, deception, profound grief and loss, and violence. Our Faith calls us to enter our Darkness and submit to the Light, often at a great cost.

For Christians, Jesus Christ is the True Light, causing a new creation to be born in the midst of the old, and is always transforming chaos into cosmos. In looking around, it is obvious that many people, young and old, are unselfishly contributing to keep our hope alive.

At our morning, mid-day, and evening Liturgy of the Hours, we at the Monastery bring our fear, doubt, and, hope-filled yearnings to Christ, our Light. As part of a shared worldwide Community, we pray with and for you, always.

In Jesus Christ's Resurrection we are filled with hope. Together we will keep that hope alive.

A Sister with you in Light and Hope,

***Sister Mary White, OSB***  
***Monastic Leadership Team***



## Hinge on the Monastery's Virtual Open Door

*Mission Advancement Team*

We are living in highly unusual times. Things that were formerly an important part of everyday life are no longer even possible. The Sisters at St. Paul's Monastery are experiencing the impact of these changes.

Naturally, during our Stay-at-Home order, the Sisters are not currently able to "Welcome all as Christ" to their Monastery home. But though all seems quiet when viewed from outside, there is still plenty going on behind the closed Monastery doors; in the physical as well as the virtual.



*Above: Sister Lucia at the doors of the Monastery Chapel*

For the past few weeks, the Mission Advancement team has been busily brainstorming ways to keep the Sisters connected. You may have seen our first endeavor, which was part of the Sisters' Beacon of Hope communication: [a video of the Sisters in the Chapel singing their blessing](#).\*

Next we posted daily online Easter Season *Lectio* reflections from the Sisters. And now we are working on plans for a week-long Facebook event in May: "Monastery Virtual Open Door." The week will include daily virtual communications from the Sisters, who want to let us all know how they are doing and how they are adjusting to being cloistered in the Monastery—a new experience for these Sisters who have always worked in the "school for the Lord's service" (RB: Prologue).

Key to all these efforts is the presence of someone inside the Monastery who serves as the "hinge" on the virtual open door. That someone is Sister Lucia Schwickerath. (In the aforementioned video, you will see Sister Lucia's arm wave in front of the camera as she directs the Sisters in song.)

As our team dreams up creative new ideas for capturing videos, interviewing Sisters, and signing them up to author online posts, Sister Lucia is the gracious facilitator at the center of it all. She has made it possible to keep the virtual doors open.

Prior to volunteering to help with all of this, Sister Lucia had never even recorded a video before. But here's what we all know about the Sisters of St. Benedict: They get things done! All of us in Mission Advancement are so grateful to you, Sister Lucia, for your "can do" attitude, graciousness, and commitment to continuing the Monastery's outreach ministry.

*\*To view the Sisters' video blessing, search for "Blessing from the Sisters of St. Paul's Monastery" on YouTube.com or [click here](#).*

## **An Easter Reflection, John 20:19-31**

*by Sister Lucia Schwickerath, OSB*

The Easter scriptures speak of the Resurrected Lord and of the early disciples, who were “locked in,” looked upon the “wounds of Christ,” and given the greeting of “Peace!”

Obviously, the resurrected Christ was radically transformed by the experience of death; even his nearest and dearest did not recognize him. When shown his hands and side the disciples believed, yes, even Thomas! The wounded and suffering Christ is still among us in the world. Do we recognize the “Suffering Jesus” in ourselves, in our closest companions and the wounds of the church? Might we have a part in healing our wounded Church?

Are our empty church buildings signs of the Church’s hidden emptiness, its woundedness? Could our present “lock down” symbolically expose today’s fearful flock who dare to call themselves the Body of Christ? We and all who call themselves the Church! Are we being asked to show the world a completely different face of Christianity? Maybe we think too much about converting the world and not enough about converting ourselves? Maybe our Risen Redeemer is saying, “We need a radical change from a static way of ‘being Christians’ to a dynamic way of ‘becoming Christians,’” authentic followers of Christ!

The early Church of Jews and gentiles experienced the destruction of the Temple in which Jesus prayed and taught his disciples. This was not a pandemic related to health, but it was another kind of catastrophe. They found a courageous and creative solution, replacing the altar of the demolished temple with the Jewish family table and the practice of sacrifice of burnt offerings and blood sacrifices with reflection and praise.

Early Christianity, when banished from the synagogue, sought a new identity all its own. All learned anew to read the Law and the Prophets and interpret them afresh. Are we not in a similar situation at this time of pandemic? Might we do the same, refuse to accept our empty and silent churches as little more than a brief, temporary measure soon to be forgotten, but instead embrace this time as an opportune moment to seek a new identity as Christians: those who welcome all as Christ!

*Reflection inspired by “Christianity in a time of sickness,” by Tomas Halik who, during the Communist regime in Poland was active in the underground church.*



“...and that by believing you  
may have life in his name.”

(John 20:31b)



## ***A Goodbye Letter from Sam Rahberg***

During these days of global pandemic and social distancing, I have been reflecting a great deal about human connection and how Benedict's lasting wisdom is rooted in the communal dimensions of our spiritual lives. I have been thinking especially about those of us who are connected through the Benedictine Center, remembering you in my prayers because you have been an integral part of my spiritual community for many years.

Fellow pilgrims, I am writing today to announce my resignation as Director, effective April 29. Some of us have met through programs and retreats, or we have crossed paths through emails and phone calls. And if we haven't met personally, we've still shared a connection through the important work of the Benedictine Center. I will miss this unique work, but I have every intention of continuing to carry Benedictine values into the world through my life and relationships.

I leave you in good hands with my dear colleagues, S. Virginia Matter OSB, Kiely Todd Roska, Carol Jorgensen, Tod Twist, and Chris Folkenson. And they are not alone. [Sam's full letter here.](#)



## ***Lectio Divina for***

**April 30, 2020**

(Thurs., Third Week of Easter)

Scripture:

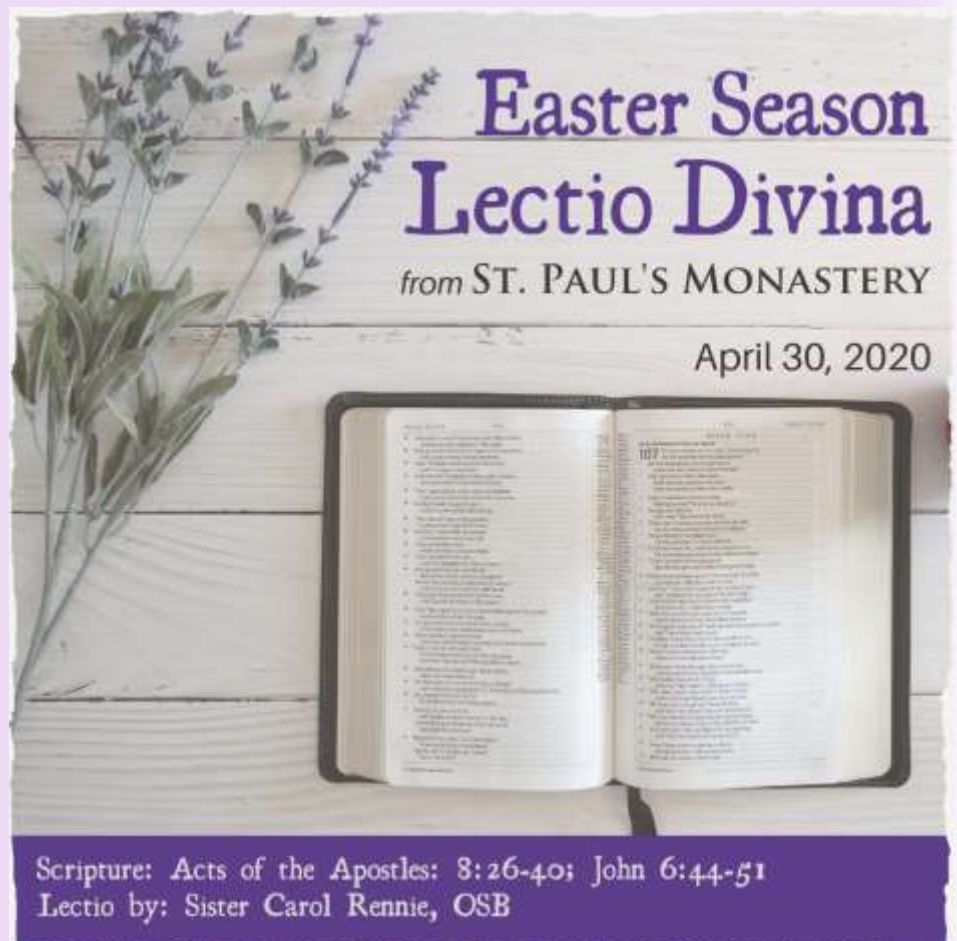
Acts of the Apostles: 8:26-40

John 6:44-51

"How can I understand unless someone instructs me?" the eunuch asks. The Spirit is our great teacher! I often think I know what is best but when I open myself completely, the Spirit offers me faith, peace and new life with joy. What might you learn by opening yourself to the Holy Spirit today? —Sister Carol Rennie, OSB

*We invite you to read today's scripture passages and shared thoughts, stop to reflect, and take note of your own thoughts and feelings—noticing how God is speaking to you. May God be praised!*

Join us daily on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) through the Easter season for the rest of this virtual *Lectio Divina* series.





## Hope in This Easter Season

*by Sister Jacqueline Leiter, OSB*

We are now into Easter, yet this year, it is difficult to feel the joy the Easter Season usually brings with its beautiful liturgies, songs, flowers, and alleluias. Like the apostles locked away in the upper room, in these days of pandemic, we may instead feel afraid and isolated.

We may, like the apostle Thomas, feel untrusting and unable to recognize even our friends for who they are. Yet it was outside the empty tomb, in the locked room, and by the shore of the sea that Jesus appeared to his followers. Jesus calmed their fears, saying, "Peace be with you" and breathed the Holy Spirit onto them. How we, too, yearn for peace in our hearts!

Today, we may still feel that we are in a Good Friday time rather than Easter. If that is where we are at the moment, perhaps we are called to live and remain in this time and space, and listen to and receive what it offers. What is the invitation to pray in this pandemic time and space?

It may feel hard to pray because we may feel tired, and we may have thoughts of worry, grief, or fear running through our minds. We may feel overwhelmed and overloaded when we listen to the news and find ourselves at a loss for words to pray. Can we be gentle with ourselves and with our fear? In our fear, can we, like the Israelites wandering in the wilderness, pray by simply remembering that we are always in God's presence?

One of the lessons of this pandemic is the smallness of our world. In prayer, we may be invited to unite our own feelings with those of the world around us. We may be reminded to be grateful and feel compassion for others.

If we have no words of our own, the words of Scripture can also help us pray. Three psalms that may seem particularly appropriate are Psalm 23, Psalm 27, and Psalm 91.

Another prayer invitation may be to simply go for a walk in nature and listen and watch. We may look out our window at the sky and the trees or listen to the birds. Where do we hear God's voice?

The Holy Spirit invites us to pray in many different ways. In these days which still feel very dark, may we each find our own invitation to seek God. May peace grow within us, like a seed sprouting in the soil. May we share that peace with those around us.



# My Benedictine Legacy

*“We thank God for you and always mention you in our prayers!” 1 Thessalonians 1:2*

Dear Friends of St. Paul’s Monastery,

The passage above beautifully expresses how we Sisters feel about our wonderful St. Paul’s Monastery Community of friends!

As Prioress of this Community, one of my goals is to support the care of our Sisters while sustaining the ministries of the Monastery long into the future. In order to assure that future, we are pleased to announce the introduction of *My Benedictine*



*Legacy*. The purpose of *My Benedictine Legacy* is to encourage the friends of St. Paul’s Monastery to remember the Sisters in their planned and estate gifts. Your gift will provide an increasing and stable source of annual income to our Monastery.

With your support we have educated countless students, served in parishes and homes, welcomed all as Christ at the Monastery and wherever we have served, and shared our monastic heritage through retreats and programs at our Benedictine Center. We are continuing to develop our legacy. In addition to our Monastery, Maple Tree Monastery Childcare Center and Hill-Murray School, our campus also includes Tubman and CommonBond Communities. Our Sisters work

with our partner organizations as employees, Board members and volunteers. We all live the Benedictine value of hospitality. All live Mother Benedicta Riepp’s vision of supporting children, women, and families. One of our legacies is this neighborhood of good works based on Benedictine values.

**Are you planning your legacy? Will your legacy continue your lifetime of good works and charitable vision? Would you like St. Paul’s Monastery to be part of your legacy?** By joining *My Benedictine Legacy* of St. Paul’s Monastery, your good works will last in perpetuity. You will continue educating, housing and supporting children, women, and families and providing a place for Benedictine Spirituality to thrive in the Twin Cities. Without affecting your current finances, your thoughtful estate planning offers a practical way for you to assure the future of St. Paul’s Monastery. *My Benedictine Legacy* automatically includes our current Legacy Society members.



**Joining *My Benedictine Legacy* is easy.** If you would like information on how to make a planned gift to the Monastery through *My Benedictine Legacy*, please let us know. If you have already included the Monastery in your estate planning, thank you!—and please confirm this with us. (For an example of bequest wording, please [click here](#). To speak to someone at the Monastery, please contact Mission Advancement Director Jeff Dols at: [jdols@stpaulsmonastery.org](mailto:jdols@stpaulsmonastery.org) or 651-777-6850.

As part of *My Benedictine Legacy*, you will:

- Know you and your loved ones are remembered in daily prayer by the Sisters
- Know that you continue your lifetime of good works
- Receive a personalized welcome package from our Community
- Receive invitations to special *My Benedictine Legacy* events and educational programs
- Be listed on the official *My Benedictine Legacy Honor Roll* (**optional**)

*(continued on next page)*



## *My Benedictine Legacy* (continued from previous page)

In addition, your *My Benedictine Legacy* commitment may provide tax advantages for your estate. Therefore, you may also want to discuss your plans with your investment or tax advisor.

Please consider joining our *My Benedictine Legacy* of St. Paul's Monastery today.

Thank you for your friendship.

In Christ,

Catherine Nehotte, OSB

Sister Catherine Nehotte, OSB

Prioress, St. Paul's Monastery

*"We must run and do now what will profit us forever." (RB: Prologue)*

### **Prayer and Communications During COVID19**

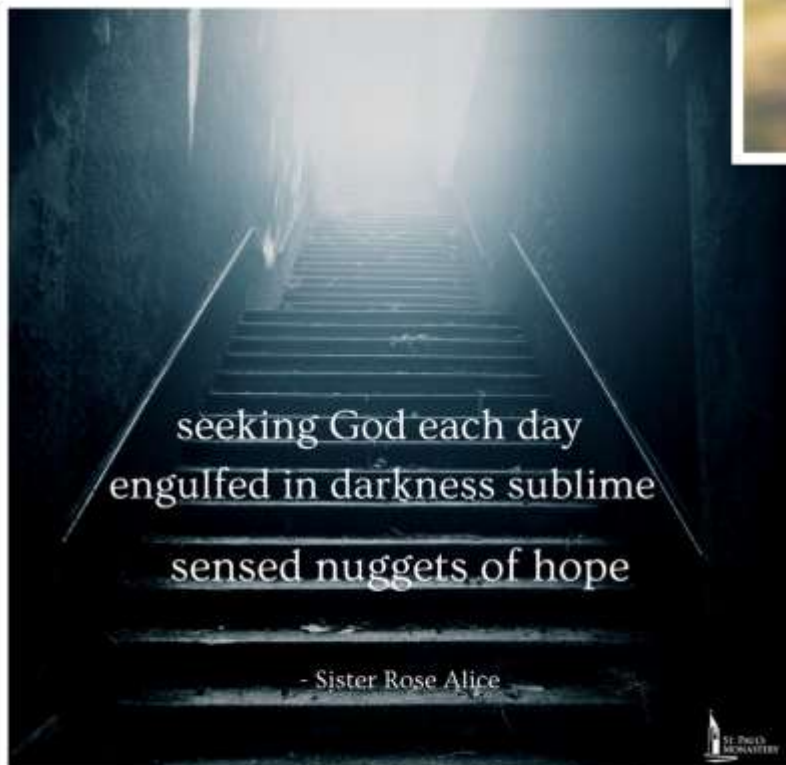
*by Linda Larson, OblSB*

During the pandemic my daily life has become much simpler. I often think about my parents and grandparents and how important daily prayer was to them. I have added the daily mass from Loretto Abbey in Toronto, Ontario, Canada on YouTube to my morning prayers. To me scripture reading seems richer when shared.



Another part of my new routine is to try to check in with at least two people on the telephone every day. Especially the elderly and people living alone. Listening seems easier since I don't have that much to talk about!

It's all a reminder that we are in this together, that we are not in control, and that life is fragile. Above all I appreciate the miracle and blessing that God has given by creating us.





## Restoration and Protection Promised

### *Isaiah 43:1-7 (NRSV)*

But now thus says the LORD,  
he who created you, O Jacob,  
he who formed you, O Israel:  
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name, you are mine.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;  
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;  
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,  
and the flame shall not consume you.

For I am the LORD your God,  
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.  
I give Egypt as your ransom,  
Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.

Because you are precious in my sight,  
and honored, and I love you,  
I give people in return for you,  
nations in exchange for your life.

Do not fear, for I am with you;  
I will bring your offspring from the east,  
and from the west I will gather you;

I will say to the north, "Give them up,"  
and to the south, "Do not withhold;  
bring my sons from far away  
and my daughters from the end of the earth—

everyone who is called by my name,  
whom I created for my glory,  
whom I formed and made."



## ***Charlie and Sister Linda***

As the Sisters of St. Benedict of St. Paul's Monastery founded it, they naturally have a deep connection to campus neighbor Hill-Murray School (HMS).

Sister Linda Soler is part of this long tradition. She serves in the HMS campus ministry, and recently became the spiritual coach for the hockey team. "I love it. They nurture my vocation!" she said. "To see that team, to see Charlie (Strobel, pictured at right with Sister Linda) out there skating...it just brings joy to my heart. He works hard not just for himself, but for his team."

John King at *GameOn!Minnesota* wrote about Sister Linda and Charlie's winning relationship; [click here](#) to read the full, heartwarming story.



## **Easter in Community Celebration**

*by Sister Linda Soler,  
Monastic Leadership Team*

On Easter Sunday, the Monastery Leadership team sponsored a party for the Monastic Community. The theme of our party was "Gonna Take a Sentimental Journey."

Each Sister brought an item to share that holds a memory of a loved one, an accomplishment, a favorite place of ministry, or a friend or family member that brought a cherished memory.

These memories, shared in fellowship, made for a delightful gathering that we Sisters will not forget. Doris Day was there is spirit as the song "Sentimental Journey" played in the background.

To end our festivities, each Sister received a bag of Easter candy donated by students from Hill-Murray School, and we sang "All God's Creatures Got a Place in the Choir."

From our Community to yours: We know that this Easter is challenging us in ways we have never experienced before. Despite the trying times in which we find ourselves, let us seek to experience God's direction and blessings. As we celebrate the Risen Lord, may we keep our eyes continually on God's promises.



*Above: Sisters Andrine, Catherine, Andriette, Karen, Mary and Lucia*

## A Benedictine Reflection

by Debra Samuelson, OblSB

I'm a retired pastor, and also a Lay Oblate. I read the Liturgy of the Hours every morning (OK, *almost* every morning) and was struck recently (Wednesday Morning, week III) by Psalm 114: "Earth, be humbled before the Holy One, for rock was turned into pools of water and stone into a flowing spring."

Usually when I've read those words I've thought of those changes happening in an instant but the last time I read these verses I thought, "What if this happens through nature and the natural processes God put into order at the beginning of time? That would take a *long time* 'to turn rock into pools of water and stone into a flowing spring'."

Sometimes the promises of God do take a *long time*, and it's hard to wait. And in the meantime, during that wait there is no promise of no difficulties.

I used to talk sometimes about "Saturday" - that time in between the devastation of Good Friday and the promise of the Resurrection - as the longest and most difficult time in our lives. Saturday can last a *long time* when what we are experiencing in our lives is the carnage of Good Friday.

And yet....

As the disciples, who had been with Jesus day in and day out, who had heard Jesus tell them that he would be killed *and* that he would be raised from the dead in three days --- as the disciples *could not* remember that promise of new life when they were living in Saturday, their lack of memory of and belief in the promise of new life did not stop the promise. The promise of resurrection life will not be stopped - by anything, so certain is that promise.

But sometimes it takes time.

Sometimes a *long time*.

Sometimes it takes *much* too long a time.

And we are a people who do not like to wait.

And yet....

God is faithful even when we are not. And we can count on and live in and live out of that promise.

We will get through this. We will get to the other side. And, in the midst of that promise, it still - isn't easy.

Let us pray: O Lord our God we believe. Help our unbelief.

Open our eyes, that we might see your promise of new life in the little things along the way, in the midst of this uncertain time. Open our ears that we might *hear* your promise of new life - all around us. Open our hearts, that we might *be* your promise of this resurrection life in the little actions we take - small things we do that make a *big* difference in the lives of others.

In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.





## We Are “Alone Together”

by Jerry Malak, OlsB

**Alone Together** – a shining example of Benedictine hospitality during normal times and amidst a universal pandemic.

**Alone Together** impacts Oblate candidates from the very start as they prepare for oblation: praying **alone together**.

As the St. Paul’s Monastic Community gathers for prayer three times daily, we as Oblates also gather with the them, no matter where we are.

We stand united in prayer **alone together**. Sister Rose Alice Althoff, OSB, my mentor and friend, taught me that concept as I prepared to become a part of this Community. With thoughts of her and her favorite pastime she might tell us again about being **alone together**:

*Uncertainty stalks,*

*Lives cope, open hearts and minds hope*

***Alone Together.***



# THANK YOU!

Healthcare Workers, First Responders,  
and all Essential Workers



## Supporting Others

by Jennie Schlauch, Maple Tree Childcare Center Director

The Maple Tree Monastery Childcare babies do not mind social distancing as long as we keep the toys coming!

The center plans to remain open during the Coronavirus crisis. We are pleased to be able to help many essential workers do their jobs for the good of our community. Our teachers have been very flexible and are giving the children excellent care.

We appreciate your prayers as we strive to do our best under difficult circumstances!



## Our Library During the Pandemic

*by Sister Louise Inhofer, OSB*

Is the library open? Yes! May we go in? Again, yes! The library is open to all the Sisters within the monastery. It's so nice to have a library in our home. Like us, the library is ready to 'keep its distance'. The table nearest the door has been converted so no one needs to spend a lot of time in the room. Everything needed to checkout and return books is right there.

There are books on the table that I thought the Sisters would enjoy, and believe me, they are circulating! These days we need a good story to keep our minds off the tragedy in the world. Whoever thought a pandemic would be good for circulation (of books, that is).

Series books are very popular as well and it's so much fun to see the 1<sup>st</sup> of 3 get checked out, and then watch to see if 2 and 3 are next. It's a good sign that the first story is worth continuing. Every few days books are exchanged for more variety as the Sisters take part in this opportunity.

Note that at this time all books are overdue except the ones checked out since the home stay was declared (there isn't time to be overdue since they are being read so fast!). I would ask all of you reading this to check your own library to see if you have any Monastery books. Please plan to return them as soon as possible especially if you are out and about. The door will be locked but leaving it in the entryway will be fine and will give a Sister the opportunity to enjoy it during our quarantine.

Know that we Sisters are well, and praying for all of our loved ones. We miss you: STAY WARM, STAY HEALTHY, and STAY HOME!



## Happy Birthday in Isolation

*by Bernie Troje, Oblate*

The day started out with a Zoom meeting with ten fellow members of the Ignatius Volunteer Corps. I was practicing isolation on my 77th birthday, but at least 17 family and friends throughout the day wished me Happy Birthday. The ten, in-person visitors were six feet away and outside the house. Two of my three sons came over with their families. (Rarely do I see all members of the family at once.) Andy's family brought a pizza and an ice cream cake my granddaughter Macy made. Nick's family brought barbecued pulled pork for sandwiches. They all sang "Happy Birthday" and left with one-fourth of my homemade birthday carrot cake. As they were leaving they picked out medical masks that my wife is making each day. I also got phone calls from more family and friends all the way from Thunder Bay, Ontario where my sister Janet lives to southwest Georgia and Houston where my oldest son Chris lives. The "frosting" on the birthday was the lengths of these visits and phone calls. No one was in a hurry. Celebrating a special day in isolation sure made it memorable.





# Commemorative Pavers

*Honoring Those Who Light Our Way*

Our Gathering Plaza is blessed with pavers engraved with messages from the Sisters, Oblates, relatives, and friends of St. Paul's Monastery. Click on the button below to print the form and create your own paver message to commemorate a special occasion or honor a Sister, your parents, other family members, or friends. Your tribute paver makes a difference in the prayers of the Sisters and all who visit the Plaza.

*Thank you and God Bless you!*



Order by  
**Aug. 14** for  
**Fall 2020**  
Installation

## Sizes

**4 x 8 Paver : \$125**

Up to 3 lines of text,  
18 characters per line

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**8 x 8 Paver : \$250**

Up to 6 lines of text,  
18 characters per line

[Click Here to  
Print the Paver  
Order Form](#)

## Prayer Schedule

*Even though our doors are closed temporarily, we are grateful  
that you are praying with us in spirit!*



*“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

### MONDAY–SATURDAY

Morning Prayer: 8:00 AM

Midday Prayer: 11:30 AM

Evening Prayer: 5:00 PM

*For further information, call  
651-777-8181 or visit us online at  
[www.stpaulsmonastery.org](http://www.stpaulsmonastery.org)*



### *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 an online prayer request, the Monastery website has two different ways to do so. You can use the “Prayer Requests” link at the top of our home page ([www.stpaulsmonastery.org](http://www.stpaulsmonastery.org)). Or you can go to the “Ministries” tab and select “Community Prayer Ministry.” Prayer requests go to the Sisters in the Healthcare Center who pray for these intentions during their 3:30 p.m. daily Rosary. May God bless you today.





Go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and choose

“St. Paul’s Monastery”

Your account will appear as normal but you'll see "Supporting: St Paul's Monastery" right under the search bar, and **0.5% of your purchase will come back to us every quarter. Every little bit helps, and we are so grateful for your support!**

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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.

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support Community  
ministries visit us at:

[www.stpaulsmonastery.org](http://www.stpaulsmonastery.org)