



ST. PAUL'S MONASTERY E-NEWSLETTER

September 2020 Edition



Hello September!

Fall is a favorite season for many of us. All around we see folks collecting dried seeds for spring planting, some are nurturing the ground with rich soil or cleaning a bird feeder. Others may be modifying daily schedules to accommodate school or childcare needs. We are all seeking normality in a time of uncertainty amidst global health concerns. All around we are hearing the following words, intending to offer comfort: "We are all in this together."

While medical experts are studying what the scientific community can offer, folks, young and old, are finding creative ways to connect with one another safely, through neighborhood and family gatherings, unselfishly including those in danger of being left behind.

We, like millions of others who experience challenging circumstances, search for and uncover unrealized inner strength by turning to our religious and spiritual roots. Here at our monastery we pause together several times each day combining our own prayers with the many of your own which you bring to our attention. One prayer often chanted is Psalm 144.

Blessed be God,
My shield, in whom I take refuge,
My safeguard and my fortress,
my stronghold, my deliverer,
My shield, in whom I take refuge.

Globally these prayers are invoked by Christians of the Universal Church, which Catholics refer to as the Mystical Body of Christ.

Continued on next page.

The goldenrod is yellow,
The corn is turning brown,
The trees in apple orchards
With fruit are bending down
- Helen Hunt Jackson



Continued from page 1.

It is the Church which Jesus Christ Himself has entrusted to the care of the faithful, you and me. We in turn join our prayers, and yours, with the prayers of all the saints alive, dead or not yet born.¹ It is these prayers which spur good people into action as a force for the making of a better world for everyone.

Today many Christians rejoice in Pope Francis' invitation into a deeper appreciation of the fullness of God's inclusive love by welcoming our brothers and sisters of non-Christian Faiths into our universal family with the words, "...while people from various global faiths may be '*seeking God or meeting God in different ways,*' it is important to keep in mind that '*we are all children of God.*'"

St Teresa of Avila has been credited with the following words as a message to each one of us. It speaks to the message of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ in this world and our part in it.

Christ has no body now but yours
No hands no feet on earth but yours
Yours are the eyes with which God looks with
Compassion on this world
Yours are the feet with which God walks to do good
Yours are the hands with which God blesses all the world

May we all have the grace to continue to be the Church which Jesus Christ established.

We at St. Paul's Monastery promise each of you our continued love and support. May you enjoy and cherish the colorful months of fall and do all you are able to keep yourself and everyone else healthy and safe.

Sister Mary White, OSB

Monastic Leadership Team

¹ Revelations, Chapters 5 and 8; 1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12; Tim. 2; James 5:16



Annual Retreat

by Sister Mary White, OSB

For our annual retreat, we had the joy of welcoming Sister Donald Corcoran, OSB, Cam., from New York via Zoom. Sharing from her many years as a Benedictine Monastic and her knowledge of the wisdom of the Christian East and the West, she offered a challenge to us as Benedictine Women in the ever-changing world of today. We were reminded of the need for cooperation and understanding between Christian Churches of the world in order to bring the full message of Christ to the people we enlightened by writings of both ancient and contemporary teachers.



We focused on how our vow of fidelity to monastic living (*Conversatio Morum*) helps us in our movements from contemplation to action in the broader world. With awareness of our human gifts and limitations, we acknowledged how our common life in the spirit of St. Benedict can become a wellspring of Christ's Light in us and around us.

A large part of the blessings of this retreat was the leisure of each day and the opportunity of spending special time together in silence, in reading and in prayer.

At the close of the week, as is our custom, we renewed our monastic vows, followed by the beautiful Litany of the Saints.

Lighting the Christ Candle

Prayed by Sister Linda Soler at Opening of Retreat

We gather as a Community and demonstrate our awareness of Christ's Presence by lighting this candle to remind us that Christ is here to bless us, heal our pain and call us to new growth.

On our prayer table we have:

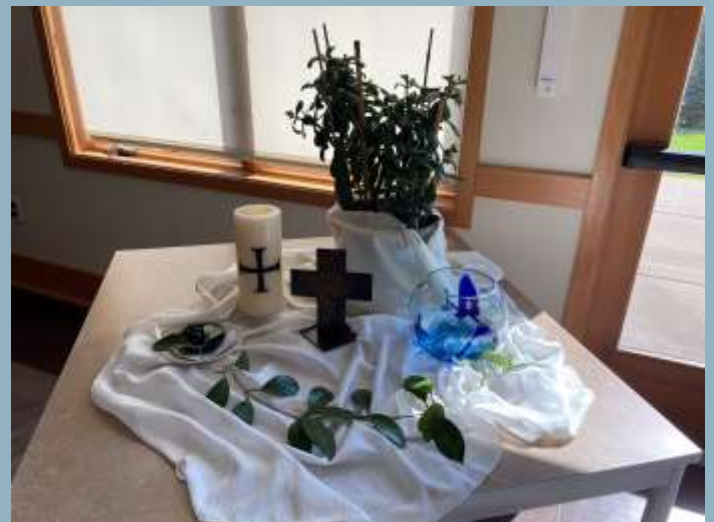
(Holy Water) - To renew our Baptismal call to discipleship.

(Cross) - To renew our call to be united to Christ in our Cross of death and resurrection.

(Jade Plant growing in Mother Earth) - To renew our love for the beauty of Mother Earth and our Monastery.

To nourish our community liturgical life, (a slip from our plant in Chapel.)

So that in all things God may be Glorified. Amen.



Christmas at the Monastery is Coming!

by Mission Advancement



The Sisters of St. Benedict of St. Paul's Monastery look forward to our 13th annual **Christmas at the Monastery** fundraiser event which is scheduled for December 12. **Christmas at the Monastery** is our Community's largest event, and we are so grateful for your support over the years.

Because of the coronavirus, this event will not be what it was in the past. This year, we need your help more than ever as we reinvent **Christmas at the Monastery**. Along with our fantastic silent auction, we'll have an online marketplace and the Sisters will be broadcast live during an interactive virtual event.

Highlights include:

Online Marketplace – December 7-13

Silent Auction – December 12, 2:00-4:30 p.m.

Virtual Social Hour with the Sisters – December 12, 3:00-4:00 p.m.

We invite you to support our event this year as a sponsor or a donor, and we hope you can join us virtually on December 12. Your tax-deductible contribution supports our Sisters and sustains our ministries by providing sacred spaces where all are welcomed as Christ for prayer, retreats, spiritual renewal, art exhibits, and the beauty of creation. Your donations advocate for children, young adults, families, and marginalized individuals. Ultimately, your donations allow us to share Benedictine Values, the Joy of the Gospel, and prayer for all God's people. Thank you for your continued generosity and consideration. Your gift makes a difference at St. Paul's Monastery in the lives of the Sisters, in our ministries and in the surrounding community.

To sponsor **Christmas at the Monastery** today, please submit your sponsorship online here: [Sponsor Now](#)

View our Sisters as they talk about Christmas at the Monastery past and present!





Oblate Day of Retreat

by Sister Mary Lou Dummer, OSB

In the past, Oblates of St. Paul's Monastery have been invited to on-going formation events. Some events were scheduled for "Oblates Only", and some were joining Benedictine Center events. Because of the COVID pandemic, the Monastery continues to be closed to the public and no in-person events will be scheduled for the time being. Some events will be on-line through Zoom.

Oblates are encouraged to attend an annual Day of Retreat and Renewal of Commitment. This year the annual retreat is scheduled for Saturday, September 26. From 10:00-11:30, Oblates will have a conference via Zoom, and then they will continue their retreat in private reflection, silence and solitude. Before the retreat, participants are given questions to ponder on stability and their commitment to the Benedictine Way of Life. Details include:

Abbot John Klassen, from St. John's Abbey, will give the conference

Change in the Time of Pandemic: Sources for Stability in the Rule of St. Benedict.

What does the promise of stability mean for Oblates?

If you are an Oblate, please register [here](#). If you have any questions about registration, please contact Travis Salisbury at salisbury.travis@gmail.com.



Trust in the Slow work of God

Blog by Christine Jurisich

Christine previously served as a Regional Coordinator, retreat writer, facilitator and trainer in Ministry of Mothers Sharing (MOMS), a ministry formerly sponsored by St. Paul's Monastery and directed by Sister Paula Hagen, OSB.

Trust? "Trust in the slow work of God," has been my mantra for the past several months. Sometimes I recite it in a centered, trusting, and peaceful way. Other times I say it with an irritable, impatient, and resentful tone. It depends on the day - and now that I think about it - how much news I've watched. Regardless of how peacefully or irritably I recite my mantra, there is something in those words from Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's poem, "Patient Trust," that give me hope.

Patience? This pandemic seems like a long time (and it is!) but it is helpful to remember that this is not a long time according to God's measure. Yes, we are grieving for the freedom we used to have and the tragic loss of life due to COVID-19. There is frustration over a divided country, anger over racial injustice, and a feeling of instability over violent looting. It can be easy to feel a sense of hopelessness or powerlessness. But when I trust in the slow work of God, I am reminded that the grace of God is alive and active.

[Read more](#)



A School for the Lord's Service

by Sister Jacqueline Leiter, OSB

St. Benedict used the metaphor of *a school for the Lord's service* to describe the monastic way of life. All schools have routines and rules designed to forge a community of students who work together and help each other learn. In the *Rule*, St. Benedict set down specifics for the monastery about how monastics should live, work, and pray together to help them grow in the love of Christ and each other.

The *school for the Lord's service*, however, is not for monastics alone. For all Christians, life is a school and we are lifelong learners. Whether you are in a monastery, at work, in a family, among friends, in prison, or anywhere else, you are in school. All of life is an opportunity to grow in self-knowledge, to learn to love and serve one another, and to become more like Christ.

During this time of pandemic, there has been a lot of planning around the re-opening of our nation's schools. There is concern for the safety and well-being of children, staff, and families. Two Sisters from the Monastery are now preparing to be a part of this re-opening.



Sister Linda Soler is returning to Hill Murray School. Hill Murray is opening in August for in-person learning with many adaptations and precautions to protect students and staff so that learning can continue. Sister Linda serves in Campus Ministry and as the Spiritual Coach for the varsity football team. Being engaged in active ministry is deeply meaningful and important for her. She understands and respects teenagers, encouraging them to be their best and to live their faith. She tells them, "You may be the only Bible a person ever reads." Her welcoming presence at the school will be a great support to the students in navigating and thriving in these challenging times.

I am also returning in September to teach at an elementary school on the East Side of St. Paul. I teach English as a Second Language and work mostly with children of immigrant families, helping them learn to read, write, and communicate in English. Helping children and families feel valued and welcome members of the school community is central to my ministry. My school is adapting a distant-learning approach to ensure that students, staff, and families are safe and remain healthy. Teaching from a distance over the computer will be a new and strange experience, but will still be an opportunity to be a welcoming and compassionate presence to students.

This new school year will be a unique opportunity for compassionate service to families, students, and colleagues. Sisters Linda and I are grateful for your prayers for them and for their school communities as they continue to welcome students and all guests as Christ. May God bless you on your journey of learning in your *school for the Lord's service*, wherever you may be. All of life is a school, and we are all learners.



Remembering Pegeen

by Sister Louise Inhofer, OSB

I wasn't always a voracious reader. Sure, I had books as a child and enjoyed reading them. I remember in first grade bringing a book to school because it seemed to fit in with something we were learning. I was afraid to ask for it when we were finished. So there you have it, I already had *lost a book* on my record.

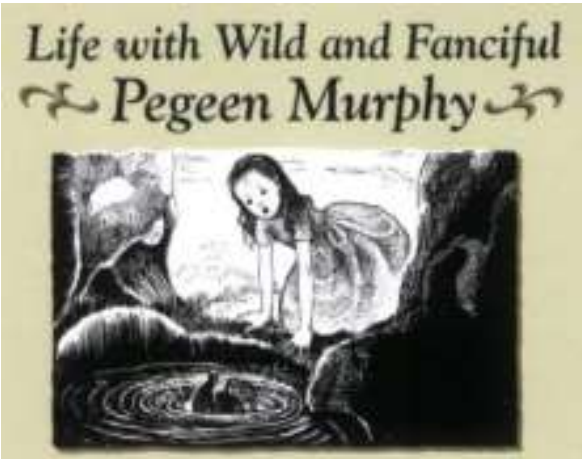
Another of my books had a chapter entitled "Pig in the parlor;" the rest of the story? I have no idea.

We didn't have a library as such in my grade school, but on second floor there was a small room with a few shelves of books. When I was in fifth grade my classroom was on the second floor and once a week we could go, one row at a time, and choose a book. I remember reading many of those books, but *The Secret Garden* by Francis Hodgson Burnett was one of my favorites.

One afternoon a librarian from the Public Library came and talked about the importance of reading and most important of all for me, a book about a little girl named Pegeen whose antics could turn the world upside down. I just HAD to read that book. The public library was about a mile away on Emerson and Broadway. I was allowed to walk there in those days, thus I got my first library card. The first book I checked out was *Pegeen* by Hilda Van Stockum. I can only say that I enjoyed it and became a regular patron.

Years have passed since I read *Pegeen* and it has crossed my mind off and on over the years. Funny I never checked to see if it was still available, until the other day when I checked Amazon and sure enough it is still available. I also learned that it is the third in The Bantry Bay Series. The first two books are about the O'Sullivan family and we are introduced to Francie, a very precocious boy. He seems older than his age and has rather ingenious solutions to a variety of situations. He meets Pegeen in book two and they share many adventures. I don't know why the librarian didn't recommend the other titles, but she didn't so I never knew about them until recently. Too bad, I would have loved them at the time.

Years have passed and I am now a voracious reader of all genres (except horror), including children's books. To be continued next month—I hope you enjoy books too and read along with me.



Audio Visual Equipment Needed

by Mission Advancement



As many of you know, our [Christmas at the Monastery](#) event this year will be a virtual experience. We are working hard to bring you and the Sisters together and continue this great event. Earlier this year, we had the Virtual Open Door. What a great time to interact and see life at the Monastery.

With the changing times and the need to change the way we deliver these events to you, we must also update our technology to continue to bring the level of interaction that is desired right now. Footage for the Virtual Open Door was mostly recorded on a cell phone. Whereas it had some good quality footage, it is not the most efficient or creative way to bring this interaction to you.



and know that the price to invest in new equipment will be anywhere between \$500 and \$1200. We are reaching out to you to see if you can help us reach our goal. We are requesting and gathering donations for a new camera with video capability. If you can contribute, even a little, we would very much appreciate it and would be grateful. Please visit our [webpage](#) if you can help us today.

Earlier this summer, an anonymous donor, after hearing about our efforts to connect people, gave \$240 toward new video and streaming equipment. We are so grateful. We have looked into different equipment and services we can use



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us every quarter. Every little

bit helps, and we are so

grateful for your support!



Beauty of Change

by Brooke Eikenberry, Marketing and Communications Coordinator

Autumn has always been my favorite time of year. As a child, the change from the thick, muggy summer to the crisp, cool air of fall meant a return to school and new beginnings. As an adult, I still look forward to the palpable change around me as summer ends and fall begins. The landscape ablaze in reds, yellows, and oranges, serves as a reminder of the beauty of change—and of endings and new beginnings.

The end of this September marks the year anniversary of my employment as the Marketing and Communications Coordinator at St. Paul's Monastery—a year so marked by change, even this self-professed lover of change has at times forgotten to look for the beauty in it.

In some ways, many of the changes have been easy. My previous position as a Communications Specialist at a church in California was mostly remote, as was my job before that one. Being very familiar with the ins and outs of a telecommute position—as well as being an introvert—made the change to working from home in March quite easy.

Living thousands of miles away from family for eight years, first in North Carolina and then in California, made me adept at keeping and building relationships through virtual means. Even outside of my professional work, social media and video calls had been my normal for many years, so the new reliance on it isn't new to me. Although I admit, when I moved back to Minnesota to be closer to family I did not expect to rely so heavily on video chats to stay connected with them.

But, not all of the changes have been so easy. Some of my family members are in very high risk groups and concern for them weighs heavily on me at times. The new protocols for mask-wearing, doctor appointments, etc., while necessary and important, have their difficulties. As a parent, the approaching school year brings difficult questions of hybrid learning versus distance only, screen time, socializing, and mental health, amidst the very real concerns of staying safe in a pandemic.

With the move to virtual-only events at the Monastery—including our annual Christmas at the Monastery—some may grieve the loss of in-person interaction with friends and Sisters at the Monastery. The desire to be face to face—to be able to touch and hug another person—is real and understandable.

But, I also know and have experienced the wonderful community that can be built on social media and other virtual means. Even just this year, in the midst of a pandemic, I have made new friends that are very dear to me—friends I have only met through video chats with my younger sisters. Had we not been faced with this current situation, we most likely never would have started these group video chats and developed this friendship, as they live several states away.

This year, for me and perhaps for many of you, the changing of seasons from summer to fall it is harder to see the beauty in the change. But, I encourage all of us to breath in the cool, crisp air and marvel at the beauty of leaves, as we remember that with God, “all things work together for good” (Romans 8:28).





The Benedictine Center is offering online programs via Zoom. Your presence would make the conversation richer. If you have not used Zoom, the Benedictine Center staff is glad to help you become familiar with the program when you register.



Lean Times, Living Stories [online]

with Diane Millis and Samuel Rahberg

October 8, 9—Noon

During tough times, our narratives often become rote. Therefore, it is all the more incumbent that we reflect upon the stories we are telling ourselves as our communities navigate the difficulties of transition, loss, and diminishment. [Register here.](#)

Together in Contemplation: A Practice-Based Spiritual Formation Group [online]

with Jody Reis Johnson

Tuesdays, 7-9 pm, Sept. 22, Oct. 13, Nov. 17, and Dec. 15

Join Jody Reis Johnson for a 4-month spiritual growth group aimed at deepening your relationship with God through contemplative practice, spiritual readings, and discussion. This program will take place online via Zoom. [Register here](#) or call 651-777-7251.



Writing our way to Understanding [online]

with Victor Klimoski (at Silverwood Park)

Sept. 21, Oct. 19, Nov. 23 7–9 PM

Joan Didion says that she only recognizes what she is thinking when she finally puts it down in words. This series invites writers to deepen their skills of written expression by exploring several key Benedictine concepts: community, stewardship, and hospitality. [Register here.](#)

What Crisis Teaches: a Benedictine Perspective

with Victor Klimoski [online]

October 22, 9-11 AM

This conversation explores what we have learned from the pandemic through the prism of Benedict's call to attentiveness, listening and conversion of life. [Register here.](#)



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 St. 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 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](#). Or you can go to the “Ministries” tab and select “Community Prayer Ministry.” Prayer requests go to all the Sisters who pray daily for these intentions at Evening Praise, during weekly adoration, and during the Rosary. May God bless you and your loved ones.



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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To connect with or support Community ministries, visit us at www.stpaulsmonastery.org
[Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#)