



# ST. PAUL'S MONASTERY

## E-NEWSLETTER

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October 2020 Edition



**October—A month committed to the possibility of change, transformation, and the Pascal Mystery**

As a part of our commissioning service at the September 12 day of community meetings, each member of the community was presented with a copy of her first vows. We were invited to reflect on that original commitment to seek God with this community and to be of service to one another and the Church.

The Benedictine Feasts days of February 10 and July 11 are typically the dates marked by commitment for a monastic. October 18 is my anniversary date. It was on this day in 1987 that I professed my first vows. The reason for such a date was due to the fact that I entered the Novitiate on the Feast of the Triumph of the Cross, September 14 of 1986, and so a date in October of the following year made sense.

One of the vows, Conversion of Life, or Fidelity to the Monastic Way of Life as it is known today, speaks to me so much of the season of fall. Its meaning for me is the turning to and embracing the will of God. Fall is a time of conversion of life. It provides us a special time to reflect on the meaning of fidelity to the monastic way of life, which is continually open to change. Like nature in the fall, I strive to ready myself to let go and to surrender whatever is requested of me.

This life to which we are professed is itself an expression of the Paschal Mystery. We enter into the dying of Jesus that we may rise with him. We strive to conform ourselves to the will of God. We live out our promise of fidelity to the monastic way of life through daily acceptance of our human condition and steadfast dedication to communal life.

I am grateful for my vocation, those who have inspired my vocation, and my spiritual mentors in community.

I pray that in all that I am and all that I do, God may be glorified! How does the season of fall invite you to a conversion of life?

***Sister Catherine Nehotte, OSB***

Prioress



## Faithful Volunteers

by Sister Mary Lou Dummer, OSB



For the past several years, Jaci Bush, ObISB, and Lorraine Schwarzrock, ObISB, two faithful servants, have shared their gifts and deepened their commitment with the Oblate Process. For me, they were the “go-to” persons whenever I needed help with planning events, with everything related to communications, keeping the data base current, hospitality, proofreading, editing and covering details and so much more. Recently they have responded to God’s call to serve in other ministries. They will continue to be active Oblates of St. Paul’s Monastery and supporting the mission of the Monastery. I am so grateful to them and ask God’s Blessings for them always. Thank you Jaci and Lorraine.

*Where There is Hope and Trust, There is God.* Together we weave the rich fabric of the Benedictine Way of Life and it is with you that we create a bright future. Thank you for being a small spark of light and hope and continue to walk with us during these difficult times.

As Jaci and Lorraine began serving in other ministries, I prayed about finding the right person to assist me with the Monastery’s Oblate Program. On June 4, I received an offer from Travis Salisbury, Oblate since 2015, to deepen his commitment to St. Paul’s Monastery, by volunteering with the on-going formation of our

Oblates. Because of his knowledge of technology, Travis has agreed to partner with me to help the Monastery navigate in this virtual world by offering events via Zoom and other on-line events. Travis said, “I’m excited to share my knowledge and expertise with you and the community. I think we are in a spot of unique growth and reconnection in the time of the Pandemic. God is calling us to something amazing through all this and I am honored to be able to share in that with St. Paul’s Monastery.” In September, with Travis’ help, we offered the Annual Oblate Retreat by Abbott John Klassen via Zoom. Travis managed the registrations and set up and facilitated the retreat. Thank you, Travis.



*Travis Salisbury, ObISB and  
Sister Mary Lou Dummer, OSB*

*Where there is hope and trust, there is God.*

# Christmas at the Monastery is Coming!

by Mission Advancement



The Sisters of St. Benedict of St. Paul's Monastery look forward to our 13<sup>th</sup> 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. 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. 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!



## 2020 Paver Blessing in October

by Mission Advancement

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 in a Paver Blessing. This year we have several new paver bricks to be placed around the statue of St. Benedict. We will have a ceremony on October 10 with those who are having pavers installed. We 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 celebrate God's work.



## Thank you to our 2020 Christmas at the Monastery Sponsors

by Mission Advancement



We value the friendship and support of our sponsors as we look forward to the upcoming Virtual Christmas at the Monastery event, December 12. If you'd like to become a sponsor please [click here](#).

*Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas.*

*Calvin Coolidge*



## Sacred Space, Sacred Distance

by Sister Jacqueline Leiter, OSB

[Moses'] sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him . . . (Exodus 2.4, NRSV)

I am now in my third week of distance teaching, and it is the most peculiar experience of my professional life. I never imagined that I would teach from an empty room at the monastery in front of a computer, while my third graders sit with an iPad at home:

The word *distance* has never meant so much to me. *Distance* is the physical space between my students and me. The monastery is about 15 minutes from the neighborhood where they live, but it may as well be 15 light years. *Distance* is the isolation that my students, colleagues, and I feel, unable to meet and learn together. *Distance* is powerlessness; I am not able to sit down next to a student and listen to and help him read. I can't sit next to her and help her write a story. I can't watch from across the classroom for signs that alert me that someone needs extra help. *Distance* is a vulnerable feeling of wondering how I will help these children learn, and wondering if I can make a difference.

*Distance* is communicating with my students over Google Meet (similar to Zoom). I hear loneliness in their voices when they speak about how much they want to see their friends and teachers, and about how much they want to be in school. I hear it when they proclaim how much they love their teachers (whom they have never met in person). When asked, "What are you going to do this weekend?" their answer is "Stay at home," or "Nothing." They have nothing to look forward to. They may not know the word *isolation*, but it is mirrored in their little faces and voices.

When Moses was a baby, his mother kept him hidden and set him in a basket floating on the river to save his life. Egyptians were looking to kill all the Hebrew baby boys. His older sister, Miriam, hid in the reeds, watching and waiting *at a distance* to see what would happen. There wasn't much she could do, yet she stayed there to make sure her little brother was safe. And so she was there at the crucial moment when Pharaoh's daughter arrived and found the baby. Miriam was ready to come forward and speak the words for him to ensure his safety.

Like Miriam, I am powerless in the world pandemic situation that surrounds us. I can't change the circumstances so that my students can come to school. But like Miriam, I can also stand *at a distance*, watching and waiting. I can anticipate the moment when, over Google Meet, I can speak the word my students need to hear about how smart and wonderful they are. *At a distance*, I can send them lessons, check their work, and do my best to figure out what they need next so I can help them learn. *Distance* may be an empty space, but is also a sacred space that can be filled with compassion and a willingness to be present in the moment.

## Humor on wearing a Face Mask. Can that be?

by Sister Linda Soler, OSB

I started ministry at Hill-Murray School again this fall. As expected, there was a generosity shown to all employees by providing a face shield, mask, and whatever we would need during this pandemic. I thought to myself "I don't want to cover up my smile for the students, so I will try the face shield." Since I am not one for reading directions because of my mechanical mind, it was a no brainer to assemble it. However, when I first put the face shield on, I was shocked with the clarity of the shield because it was anything but clear. This isn't like Hill-Murray School who takes pride in their employees. Why would we have been given this quality of a face shield? So, I went back to the drawing board and forced myself to look at the directions. First step was, Remove the protective film from "both" sides of the clear lens. It was one of those "O my gosh" moments. After I removed the protective coating, I was singing "I Can See Clearly Now". Lesson learned. Once again, Hill-Murray shines with their choice of product. Now my next challenge will be to answer the phone wearing the face shield. Yikes.



## Maple Tree Childcare Graduation!

by Jennie Schlauch

Congratulations to our Preschool graduates this year! It was a really special day for everyone, especially for the kids who got their own gown and cap. We bless them with our hopes and prayers as they start their journey into kindergarten.





## The Feast of Hildegard of Bingen

by Sister Paula Hagen, OSB

Saint Hildegard of Bingen was a twelfth century Benedictine abbess in Germany. In her day, her influence in spirituality and politics spanned across much of Western Europe. Her sermons and her illuminated visions and interpretations are still deeply moving and continue to touch many today, as does her music. Saint Hildegard was named a woman Doctor of the Church by Pope Benedict XVI on October 7, 2012. We remember her today as a woman with a variety of great gifts as an artist, composer, healer, poet, theologian, and mystic.

On Saint Hildegard's feast day, September 17, we celebrated with special prayers and psalms at morning and evening prayer. The liturgy was created by Karin Barrett and included Hildegard's writings. In the dining room, we created a display of several articles that represented Hildegard, including contemporary icons, bookmarkers and prayer cards of the batik hanging outside the dining room which features Hildegard and two other Benedictine women saints.



Hildegard's vision was of all of creation as sacred. She experienced Scripture in these words, "The Word is a Holy Greening . . . verdant and ever-growing . . . a green fire . . . the energy of greening truth flaming forth . . . the green force of all life. The Word of God manifests itself in every leaf and every human soul." To represent this vibrant greening, the display included a colorful pot with a very green jade plant.

In an often-quoted story from her writings, Hildegard described herself as "a feather on the breath of God."

Listen: there was once a king sitting on his throne. Around him stood great and wonderfully beautiful columns ornamented with ivory, bearing the banners of the king with great honor. Then it pleased the king to raise a small feather from the ground and he commanded it to fly. The feather flew, not because of anything in itself but because the air bore it along. Thus am I a feather on the breath of God.

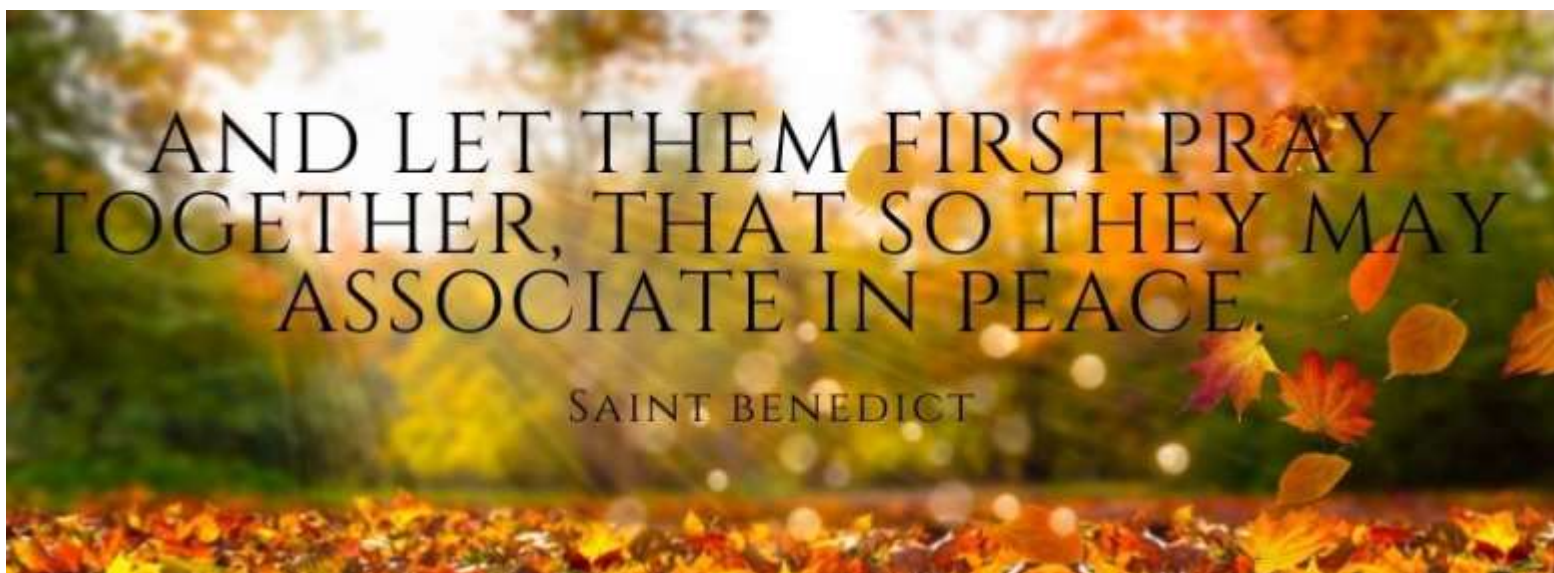
Hildegard represents God's call to all people to be faithful in our world today. We are reminded that God invites each of us to be a feather, open to God's grace and responding to God's call in each moment.

# Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum Cloth Prayers

by Monastic Leadership

In November 2001, after a consultation process with all the monasteries of Benedictine Women around the world, it was decided to use the name *Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum* (CIB) to designate all communities of Benedictine women recognized by the Abbot Primate. While each of these communities has its own unique character, we have come to recognize and appreciate our unity in the Rule of St. Benedict and in the Benedictine tradition that has flowered in countries and cultures throughout the world.

At the 2018 *Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum* symposium each region brought a cloth that represented their region. At the end of the symposium each region was given the cloth from another region and was asked to hold that region in prayer until the next symposium in 2022. We recently received the cloth from Region 7 which represents Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine. During the month of September we will hold this region in prayer. At the end of the month, the cloth will be mailed to the next community. This exercise has allowed us to share in the wealth and diversity of the Benedictine tradition throughout the world. Each morning we pray, "For the Benedictine Sisters throughout the world, especially in Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine, may God bless them in their ministries and keep them safe."





## 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 and asking you to 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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**helps, and we are so grateful**

**for your support!**



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 happy 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, 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)

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](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](#). 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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