



ST. PAUL'S MONASTERY

E-NEWSLETTER

January 2021 Edition



It is our joy to connect with you in welcoming the New Year, a chance to pause from the unprecedented and unexpected challenges of 2020. Know that at the Monastery, you occupy a place in our daily conversations and at our Liturgy of the Hours, often by name.

We share your longing for assurance that in 2021 things will be good for us all and for all our families. In our partnership of prayer and hospitality, we treasure the model of resiliency we find in one another.

I anticipate the opportunity to welcome an increase of deep joy into my personal life this year, along with ways to sustain it. We Benedictines, continue to seek ways to respond to old and new challenges across the globe. There was a time, when "joy," for me, was merely a synonym for "happiness" or "exuberance," and would likely occur after receiving something I wanted. But I soon discovered that kind of joy is fleeting. Now older, and hopefully wiser, I realize that the joy I want, and truly need, comes only in partnership with a Higher Power, which, for me, is Christ.



What it is that makes joy stand out for you? I offer these ideas:

- Deep joy is a gift of the Holy Spirit and is the only gift that can sustain my resiliency and happiness when life becomes difficult.
- Joy is a choice which calls for a special way of being responsible to myself and to others. We can pray in confidence, "You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence" (Psalm 16:11).
- Joy is a mental and spiritual strength which helps us choose only what is capable of truly satisfying us.
- Joy and suffering often come together. I may fight suffering or try to run from it. Yet I know that there is available to me a resilience that will raise me up in the midst of it.

Continued on next page.



Joy as an Infallible Sign

by Sister Mary White, continued

- Joy is a sense of well-being, which cannot be destroyed by any circumstance which may happen in my life – not even by a poor economy, an illness, or a lost job.

Who in your life do you consider to be a joyful person? Why do you think that is? How will you nurture joy in your 2021 life? May you find some time to ponder all these thoughts about joy in 2021 and let us remember these words, as we move forward: “Be Joyful in Hope, Patient in Affliction, Faithful in Prayer” (Romans 12:12).

*“Joy is an infallible sign of the presence of God.”
Teilhard de Chardin*

We Benedictine Sisters, Oblates, and Associates think and pray for you, our treasured friends. We miss you. We are awaiting the day when we can share hospitality again.

Many blessings on a happy new year to you all!!

— Sister Mary White, OSB
Monastic Leadership Team

"For with God nothing will be impossible." Luke 1:37 (RSVCE)

DEAR DONORS AND
VOLUNTEERS OF ST. PAUL'S
MONASTERY:

**WE
APPRECIATE
YOU!**

Thank you for your prayers, donations,
contributions of time, and your dedication to the
ministries of St. Paul's Monastery in 2020.

Discernment in a Challenging Year

by Jeff Dols, Director of Benedictine Center



As I write this, I've just finished a wonderful online Benedictine Center retreat with Kathleen Cahalan and the School of Discernment. This three-day retreat-at-home via Zoom turned out to be a new and interesting way of being "on retreat." While all of us wished we could've been together at St. Paul's Monastery, the experience of exploring discernment together via Zoom during this pandemic year seemed completely appropriate.

As we discussed together, 2020 has been a year of discerning many things we've never had to think much about before. Everything from how to do our work, how to educate our kids, how to keep our elder parents safe and yet not isolated, how to shop, how to celebrate the holidays. It seems everything was a major new decision that required deep discernment. Yes, there's been much to discern, especially the central question of what God is calling us to do in this unique and challenging year.

For me, discerning God's call this year has been one of listening deeply for the Spirit's invitation and being willing to move flexibly where my gifts were needed most at the time. When I was initially set to retire in February from my corporate career, it appeared God's call was for me to assist Sister Mary Lou with Oblate administration. But shortly before my retirement date, I received the invitation to apply for the open Mission Advancement Director position, and so I answered that call and began working at the Monastery in early March.



Little did I know that was just part one of God's call for me. Within one week of starting my new position, COVID led to the difficult decision to close the Monastery doors to the public. Shortly after that, we said farewell to Sam Rahberg as he left his role as director of the Benedictine Center, and I sensed the call to fill in as the Interim Director. There has been much to discern in the months since then, as the pandemic lingered and the financial impacts deepened existing organizational challenges in the summer and into the autumn. We made the shift to offering online programs but we had to make the painful decision to pause programming starting in January and say goodbye to Associate Director Kiely Todd Roska and Carol Jorgenson, Hospitality Assistant.

Continued on next page.

Discernment in a Challenging Year

by Jeff Dols, continued

Consequently, we have looked at different staffing models to cover the needs of both Mission Advancement and the Benedictine Center starting in January. Our goal is to continue to support the spiritual direction ministry and provide a level of electronic communication to the Benedictine Center stakeholders. We also want to put the Center in a position to support individual retreat guests and hosted groups at a point when the Monastery can open publicly.

As a result of God's latest call to discernment, I have decided to focus my attention primarily on the Benedictine Center, with Jennifer Pozanc now moving into the role of Mission Advancement Director starting in January. Jennifer joined us in May as Associate Director, and has been a wonderful addition to the Mission Advancement team and a real gift to the Monastery. Over the summer and fall, Jennifer has gradually taken on more responsibility for the day-to-day operations of Mission Advancement. As Jennifer has shared her many gifts, Sr. Catherine Nehotte and the Leadership team have supported me in transitioning and fully handing the reigns of Mission Advancement to Jennifer. I congratulate Jennifer on her promotion and look forward to consulting and collaborating with her as I continue my role with the Benedictine Center.

Maple Tree Monastery Childcare Elves at Play!

by Jennie Schlauch, Program Director, Maple Tree Childcare

In an effort to make the seriousness of the COVID precautions more accessible and understandable, we introduced the Christmas Elves, Buddy and Holly. Before our Elf friends could join us they needed to quarantine. Now the quarantine is over and they will be romping about the toddler and preschool classrooms being the rascally elves that they are. We thank Deb Dox (Tara's mom) for making the elves their face masks and sleeping bags.



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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!

Strengthened in Solitude

by Terri Rose, Oblate Candidate



I am a member of the Oblate formation class of 2019-2020. My class finished its scheduled formation physically distanced from each other and the community. What has strengthened for me through this experience is the gratitude I feel for receiving - and *listening* - to the call to become a Benedictine Oblate. In 2019, my heart was ready to enroll in “a school for God’s service” (*RB Prologue*) and my mind and body were ready for the obedience, moderation, and humility formation would introduce. Long before the pandemic, I knew my own expectations for how external circumstances should be was muting both my relationship with God and my community. My attachments to my own will and desires created conditions on love in my relationships and made gestures of service feel unfulfilling. Though I had good intentions, they weren’t enough. *The Rule* provided hope. It put my experience into words and assured me that I was in beautiful company navigating this shared human condition. And now I have guideposts and practices to use each day as life changes for all of us.

For me, the pandemic has intensified human tragedy and made it visible in our own homes. Worldwide, in developed and undeveloped countries alike, we were forced to participate in isolation, poverty, and death. These realities weren’t just on the news anymore, far away, making us feel sympathetic. Rather, this time, before bed we first had to wash our masks, call an isolated parent, and pray for our own children’s abruptly changed lives.

As I continue my Oblate formation in solitude, I hear the voices of those that have experienced these tragedies long before the pandemic. In this silence, I also hear how these conditions of isolation, poverty, and death will continue to be realities long after my own experience of the pandemic is over. External circumstances will always be challenging. And it is not my role to control them or judge their intensity. My role is to accept and listen for the will of God in *all moments* and *all conditions*. That is exactly why my gratitude, and *trust*, in Benedictine spirituality has strengthened through this past year; it is teaching me how to turn fully towards God and *listen* to him from there.

Oblates

“External circumstances will always be challenging. And it is not my role to control them or judge their intensity. My role is to accept and listen for the will of God in all moments and all conditions.”

[Life Transitions: Finding God in the Center of the Unknown](#)



A five-week, online retreat led by
Sister Paula Hagen, OSB, and
Christine Jurisich

Sat., January 16—Sat., February 20, 2021

Change is a part of life, but that doesn't make it any easier. Have you experienced dramatic changes and loss? Or are you sensing something subtle from within as a result of having more quiet time? However your life has been impacted this year, it is important to give yourself the sacred time and space to honor, reflect on, and discover new life in this time of change.

You will appreciate this retreat if you...

- Are trying to cope with loss: of a loved one, relationship, or job, or just loss of normalcy
- Want to make meaning out of your time of transition
- Want to feel supported as you navigate this uncertain time

In our five weeks together, you will have the opportunity to...

- Explore prayer practices and tools to help you through transitions and uncertainty
- Be empowered to see God in the center of transitions in your daily routine, in the people around you, and in forgiveness and letting go
- Be in contact with others who are in transition
- Learn about the stages of grief and how to navigate them

Cost: \$40. Scholarships are available; please e-mail Sister Paula at: srpaula@stpaulsmonastery.org

[Click here to register](#)



Christine Jurisich's work in retreat ministry began fifteen years ago as a participant of the Sisters of St. Paul's Monastery *Ministry of Mothers Sharing* (now *Within*

Ministries). For ten years thereafter, the Sisters mentored Christine as she developed her ministry as a national retreat facilitator-trainer and writer. Christine is the author of *Retreat, Reflect, Renew: A Sacred Journal for A More Peaceful You*, and foundress of the *Retreat, Reflect, Renew Ministry*.



Sister Paula Hagen, OSB, has over 30 years of experience in retreat development and as a retreat facilitator. In addition to a Master's in Family Systems, Sister Paula

trained as a retreat director at the Franciscan Renewal Center. She created and published several *On the Journey Retreats* for use in parishes nationwide and created and published the *Ministry of Mothers Sharing Journal* and materials for parishes, also used nationally.

Sisters' Words of Wisdom: Sister Agnes Trombley, OSB

by Ann Bechtell, Mission Advancement Assistant

When Sister Agnes was born, her name was recorded as Celeste Therese Trombley in the Sacred Heart Parish of St. Paul, Minnesota. Celeste Therese was the fifth of six children born to George and Agnes Trombley. At six months old, her family moved to North Minneapolis and joined St. Anne's Parish.

Sister Agnes recalled that "St. Anne's was a very family-centric Parish. The priests I remember best were our Pastor Father Richard and Associates Father Eichinger and Father Murray. I recall that Father Richard was very kind and compassionate."

At St. Anne's Parish School, Sister Agnes was taught by Benedictine Sisters from grades 1-8. These Sisters made an impression. In fifth grade, Sister Agnes recalls considering religious life. "That was also the year my older sister, Doris Mae-whose professed name was Sister Laurent-joined the Community at St. Benedict's Monastery (in St. Joseph, Minnesota).

"It was a lot more common, in those days, for girls to express an interest in vowed religious life. A lot of my classmates thought they wanted to be nuns, and a lot of them joined various religious orders. Sister Louise and Sister Mary Claire (Inhofer) are now at St. Paul's Monastery with me. I can remember at least six others who became vowed Benedictine nuns.

"As my ministry was in education, I attended the Diocesan Teachers' College for two years. My first two teaching assignments were at both in St. Paul at Maternity of Mary and St. Bernard's, after which I taught at St. Boniface in Hastings.

"So, during this time, there are blessings to be found. We are never more drawn to the light than when we are surrounded by darkness." Sister Agnes' Words of Wisdom to all during the pandemic.

"After teaching for about 15 years, I was sent to study theology and completed a master's in Sacred Studies at St. John's University. After graduation, I was assigned to teach religion at Hill-Murray, which at that time only taught high school-age children. After three years at Hill-Murray High School, I served as a Pastoral Care Worker at St. Raphael's in Crystal until 1980, when our Prioress Sister Rosemary Rader, called me home to the Monastery to work in Formation. I also spent 10 years in Pastoral Care at St. Therese of New Hope before being called back to the Monastery to once again work in Formation when Sister Carol Rennie was our Prioress."

When I asked Sister Agnes what words of wisdom, inspiration or greetings she would like to relay, I couldn't write fast enough; I should've had a tape recorder. Here are some of the beautiful things Sister Agnes told me.

"Since March, it has been a time to step back and ponder. I have welcomed the quiet, but my heart goes out to those struggling with all of the terrible impacts of this pandemic. It happens that I was in the hospital with pneumonia in late October. As I struggled to breathe, I continually thought of and prayed for those with COVID also struggling to do so.

To continue reading, [click here](#).



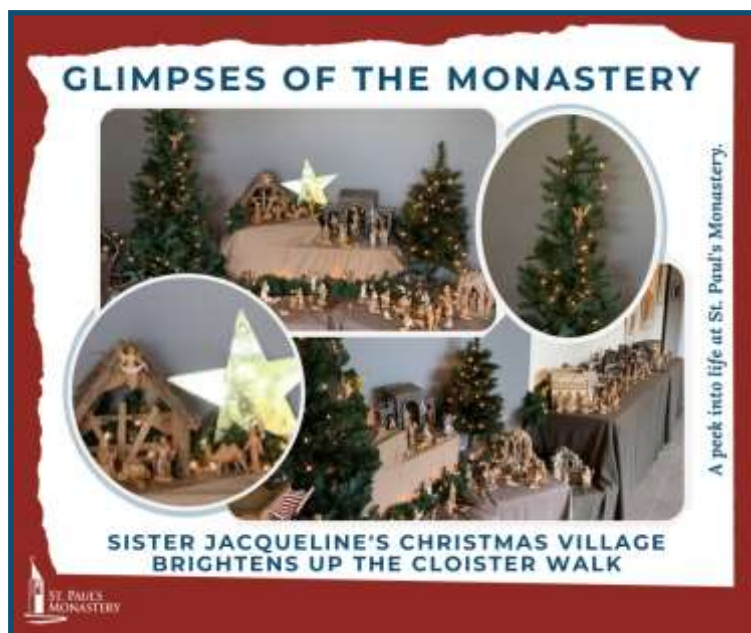
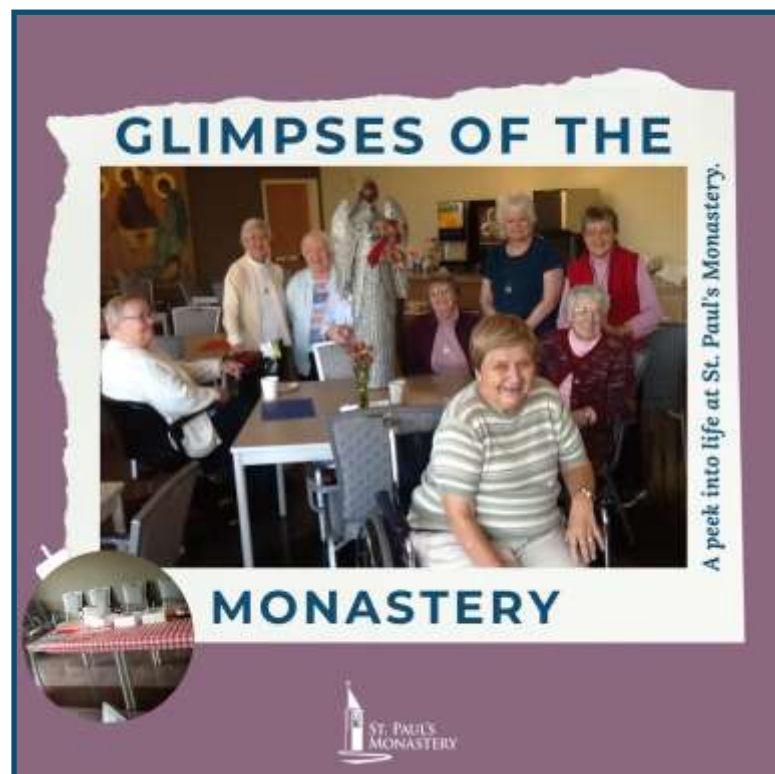
Above: Sister Agnes Trombley, OSB

Around the Monastery

by Mission Advancement

Right: Many of the Sisters enjoyed pie and sang Christmas carols as they admired the new angel statue. The pies were a generous donation from Lisa Kupcho and Beth Lehman. Lisa and Beth have been throwing a pie party and donating pies to the Sisters for many years at Christmas. This year did not disappoint as there were a variety of pies to choose from and the Sisters loved them all.

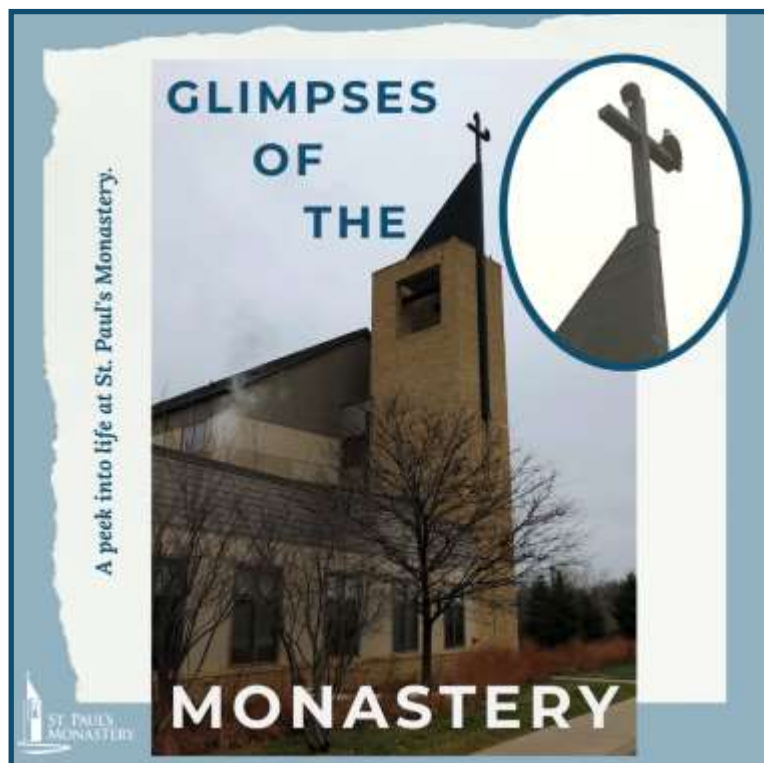
Pictured sitting (l-r): Sisters Benita, Virginia, Carol and Agnes; standing (l-r): Sisters Mary Lou, Louise, Mary, and Paula.



Left: Sister Jacqueline Leiter shares her Christmas Village with the Community every year. Here you see part of the collection beautifully arranged in the Monastery Cloister Walk.

Right: "Eddie the Eagle." In December, Sister Mary Lou Dummer noticed two eagles sitting on the St. Paul's Monastery bell tower. Sister Mary Lou's brother, Eddie, died suddenly at the end of October, and she said she felt his presence watching over her when she saw the eagles. She stood and watched them for a long time as they gazed out over the campus.

Pictured: An eagle pair has found the St. Paul's Monastery bell tower an excellent perch.



Commemorative Pavers

Honoring Those Who Light Our Way



Order for a
Fall 2021 Installation

Sizes

4X8 Paver: \$125
Up to three lines of text

8X8 Paver: \$250
Up to eight lines of text

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. The Sisters and those who visit the plaza remember your loved ones in prayer.

*Thank you and
God Bless you!*



[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 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.



*Happy
New Year!*
2021

From all of us to all of you!



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
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