



Monday, March 15, 2021

We Gather

1:45 - 2:15 p.m. Retreatants at St. Benedict's Community check into the center

2:15 - 2:30 p.m. *All Retreatants log into the "Place of Grace"

2:30 - 3:00 p.m. *We gather and meet each other at the "Place of Grace"

As we check in for Meet and Greet on Monday, you will be asked to respond to this question **"If I were going on the trip of a lifetime, what is the one thing I would have to take with me for the journey?"**

We Proclaim & Integrate

3:00 - 3:45 p.m. *Opening Worship (Please prepare your own communion.)

3:45 - 4:00 p.m. Bio Break

4:00 - 4:30 p.m. *Content Time

4:30 - 5:45 p.m. Silent Reflection

5:45 - 6:30 p.m. Evening Meal with your community/ St. Scholastica

6:30 - 7:00 pm Retreatants will gather in their respective places for group reflection at St. Benedict's or online at St. Scholastica

7:10 - 8:30 p.m. *Covenant Groups (Please review the Covenant Group packet materials.)

8:30 - 9:10 p.m. Retreatants will gather in their respective places for Social Time. St. Scholastica will be assigned to Breakout Rooms as outlined in the packet; St. Benedict will gather together in a mutually designated room

9:15 - 9:45 p.m. *Evening Prayer

9:45 p.m. Great Silence

Tuesday, March 16

6:45 - 7:00 a.m. *"Place of Grace" opens (please join in silence)

7:00 - 7:15 a.m. *Centering Prayer

7:15 - 7:30 a.m. *Morning Prayer

7:30 - 8:15 a.m. Breakfast in your own community (Please plan on dining together if you wish.)

8:30 - 9:15 a.m. *Spiritual Practice / Lectio Divina & Silence -- Lectio materials are in the packet.

We Discern and Reflect

9:15 - 10:30 a.m. Covenant Groups

10:30 - 10:45 a.m. Retreatants at St. Benedict's check out of their rooms

10:45 - 11:15 a.m.*Exploring Spiritual Exercises

11:15 - Noon *"Community Discernment" -- Covenanting and soft farewell to total group

12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Lunch in respective sacred spaces

We Go Forth

1:00 - 2:30 p.m. *Closing Worship

Attention

Retreat Enhancements

Passcode: Pray

When you join the meeting or get kicked out of the Place of Grace and are logging back in, you will use the Passcode: “**Pray**.” Using the Passcode will prevent you from waiting to get back in and will free up others to participate in the retreat more fully.

Breakout Rooms

So that everyone may have the opportunity to visit with all our sisters and brothers, we will be using the Breakout rooms differently.

Instead of being put into your Covenant Group, St. Scholastica will join your assigned Breakout room number for the evening Social Time. Check the packet to see the room number you should join. To join, you simply click the room number.

ARE WE THERE YET?



Grace and peace from the March leadership team of James Brewer, Judy Dye, Samm Johnston, Pat Norris, Becky Potter and Carol Roettmer Brewer. Our thanks to Adam Lassen for his coaching and hours of technical work.

Our theme is “Are We There Yet?” During our time together we will explore the stories of journeys in the Scriptures and in our lives. We will remember the power and hope in them as we seek to go deeper with God’s spirit as a part of our Lenten journey. We will have opportunities to share stories, silence and laughter.

In this packet is some of the content that we will share. Please print out this material for our time together.

Also, please note the schedule. It is the same schedule with guidance for each holy space. One change is that we will be having Zoom small groups in St. Scholastica for Social Time. Please see the packet for directions to the Zoom Social Time. St. Benedict will again meet as a group in their preferred location.

As we check in for Meet and Greet on Monday, you will be asked to respond to this question: If I were going on the trip of a lifetime, what is the one thing I would have to take with me for the journey?

COVENANT GROUPS

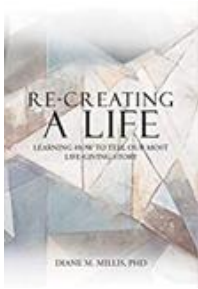
An important aspect of our Covenant Community Retreats provides for gathering in the same small group for each retreat. We have agreed to be prayerful, attentive and confidential. We value times of silence.

As Patricia Loring has written, "Simple, respectful, prayerful listening is as good for the soul of the listener as for the person listened to."

Please check in with each other, listen without giving advice, and promise to pray for one another until you meet again.

Covenant Groups	
Room 1	Ann S, Barb,Samm, Jamie, Judy
Room 2	Carla,Kelly, Ann G, Tom
Room 3	Amelia, Doug G, Chuck, Jim, Becky
Room 4	Janice,Pat N, Larry, Sally, Corinne
Room 5	Adam, Bonnie,Amy, Cathy, Pat J
Room 6	Cheryl, Mark, Dale, Michelle
Room 7	Doug O, Jeanette, Susan, Jeff
Room 8	Jim, Teri, Carol, Todd

If you happen to be listed with the wrong group, please accept my apologies and join the correct room. --Adam



In her book, ***Re-Creating A Life, Learning How to Tell our Most Life-Giving Story***, Diane M. Millis offers tools for working with the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves. She teaches a practice for listening and responding to another's story. Listeners may choose to respond in one or more of three ways:

- o **NOTICE** – what they noticed in the teller and in themselves as the story was shared
- o **APPRECIATE** – what they appreciated and learned from the story that was shared
- o **WONDER** – what questions they wondered about as they listened (open, honest questions)

These responses invite the storyteller to consider alternative ways of naming and narrating how Mystery is at work in the stories we tell.

Dr. Millis' response practice would work well in settings like our Covenant Groups.

They could also be adapted for listening more closely and /or journaling with our own stories.

- o **Notice** – we pay attention to what stirs in our heart as we retell our story.
- o **Appreciate** – What do we appreciate about ourselves in the story we are telling?
- o **Wonder** – How would we listen to our story if we actually believed that something new was being revealed in this telling? Can we listen to our own story as if we are hearing it for the first time? What happens if we let go of judgement and turn to wonder, become curious?

***Re-creating A Life, Learning How To Tell Our Most Life-Giving Story* by Diane M. Millis, PhD**

Introduction
Seeing Differently: A Lenten Journey with Your Camera
Lent 2020
Val Isenhower

In Mark 8:22-26, Jesus touches the blind man's eyes once but the man does not see fully. It took a second touch for the man's sight to be restored. Seeing differently with the eyes of our heart means we are given the gift of a second touch. This retreat is about experiencing the second touch of Jesus to help us slow down, look at the world in new ways and then connect our new sight to our spiritual journeys.

Henry David Thoreau says, "The question is not what you look at, but what you see." Applying his quote to our lives means instead of looking at the world in the same way each and every day, we adjust our sight to really see what is around us. Paying attention to the movement of the Holy Spirit and gifts from God help us see and experience life differently.

The practice of seeing differently takes time and practice! The first step is allowing God into the activity.

Used with Val Isenhower's permission.

Val teaches contemplative photography at BeADisciple.com. She usually offers an Advent class, a Lenten journey, and a Journaling with Your Camera class in the summer.

Val Isenhower is the owner of V. Isenhower Photography, and she specializes in meditative photography. Val offers workshops on "Spirituality and Photography" across the country. She is the author of a book on spirituality and photography — *Meditation on Both Sides of the Camera* (Upper Room, 2012) and has written articles on the subject.

Suggestions for Silent Reflection with a Journey Story

(Don't try to do all of these. Pick one. Start there and follow where the Holy Spirit leads.)



Listen to a journey story – a personal story of an earlier journey, a current journey or a biblical journey story.

- o Tell the story out loud if possible.
- o Use Diane Millis' framework for responding to the narrative.
 - NOTICE
 - APPRECIATE
 - WONDER
- o Where in the story are you being invited to take that “**second look**” that Val Isenhower described?
- o If this is a story of a past journey, what would you like to say to your younger self in the story? How has this journey/event influenced your life? Did the journey end? How did you feel at the end of the journey? Where did/does this journey lead?
- o If this is a current journey, what resources do you have for this journey?
- o During your journey were you aware of God's presence and/or action? If so, describe in detail. Looking back, do you see God's presence/action during the journey?
- o Go deeper with any of these by asking, “What does that make me think?” Follow the Thread...
- o Give expression to whatever touches your heart in this story with color, movement, voice, words. Write, draw, sing, dance.

Questions for Social Time:

What has been your happiest memory this past year, 2020?

Knowing the Covenant Community, what one book would you recommend to us and why?

What song best describes where you are in life's journey just now? Why?

Social Groups Suggestions

*Facilitators:

Room 1

*Jim Brewer

Barb Maynes

Susan Davies

Open

Room 2

*Becky Potter

Mark Richardson

Todd Karges

Ann Sherer-Simpson

Room 3

*Pat Norris

Amalia Spruth-Janssen

Judy Dye

Jim Bendorf

Room 4

*Carol Roetmer Brewer

Dale Coates

Janice Farrell

Jeff Adams

Room 5

*Samm Johnson

Mark Krutz

Pat Joy

Tom Hyde

Lectio Divina Variation* Luke 18: 35-43

Sister Joan Chittister, "The Time is Now," p. 23.

As they were approaching Jericho, a blind beggar was sitting beside the road. When he heard the noise of the crowd going past, he asked what was happening.

They told him that Jesus of Nazareth was going by.

So he began shouting, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

The crowd ahead of Jesus tried to hush the man, but

he only shouted louder, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

When Jesus heard him, he stopped and ordered that the man

be brought to him. Then he asked the man, "What do you want me to do for you?"

"Lord," he pleaded, "I want to see!"

And Jesus said, "All right, you can see! Your faith has healed you!" Instantly, the man could see, and he followed Jesus, praising God. And all who saw it, praised God, too.

Journaling: A Spiritual Practice by Word and/or Art

“And the Lord answered me: ‘Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it.’” --Habakkuk 2:2

“Now write what you have seen, what is, and what is to take place after this.” --Revelation 1:19

Journaling as a Spiritual Practice

“Ordering Your Private World,” by Gordon McDonald.

There is no right or wrong way to journal. Loose leaf notebook or spiral bound. Leather bound or paper. Pen or pencil. Some may prefer a sturdy feel of importance or permanence to their journal. Others may choose to use a computer. Whatever pleases you and works best for you is okay.

A spiritual journal differs from a diary in that as a faith practice, it is enhanced by engagement in prayer. A short prayer to open one’s heart and mind to God’s presence. To constitute a “practice” means that journaling becomes a habit, or at least a routine. Perhaps writing at the beginning or end of each day.

One idea is to “bookend” your day with your time for prayer at beginning or end, and journaling (with prayer) at the beginning or end of your day. Piece of advice: banish the editor in you. Just let the thoughts and words flow. The purpose is to deepen our spirits by cultivating an awareness to the Holy in our lives.

The Psalms might be regarded as the earliest prayer journal, with the psalmists reflected on their lives with God. The practice of journaling has been around for centuries. Examples include Augustine’s Confessions, from the 4th Century. The Puritans used diaries as a tool in the 17th Century. Scottish pastor Maurice Roberts had this insight: The logic of this practice is inevitable once men (human beings) have felt the urge to become molded in heart and life to the pattern of Christ.

If you are more visually inclined, an art journal is another option. An art journal is a visual diary; it combines elements of writing, drawing, painting, collage, and even printmaking to express yourself. This includes your everyday life, as well as your bigger hopes, dreams, and fears. A single page will often fuse words and illustrations to offer a look at what’s going on inside your head and heart.

You may or may not wish to share your journal thoughts/art with others. You may want to re-read what you have written to witness your own journey or for reflection.

-- Further Resources · “Journaling as Spiritual Practice” by Helen Cepero · “Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within” by Natalie Goldberg · “Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life” by Anne Lamott · “If You Want to Write” by Brenda Ueland · “An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith” by Brenda Brown Taylor · “Journal Keeping: Writing for Spiritual Growth” by Luann Budd · “Spiritual Journaling: Recording Your Journey Toward God” by Richard Peace · “Life’s Companion: Journal Writing as a Spiritual Quest” by Christina Baldwin. There is also a section in Marjorie Thompson’s “Soul Feast.”

SAUNTERING: A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

*"If you're John Muir, you want trees to live among, If you're Emily, a garden will do.....
For how many years did I wander slowly through the forest.
What wonder and Glory I would have missed had I ever been in a hurry!*

--"Leaves and Blossoms Along the Way" (from "Felicity" by Mary Oliver

A Parable of Sauntering

Edited version of Albert W. Palmer (*The Mountain Trail and Its Message*)

There is a lesson of the trail which John Muir taught me. There are always some people in the mountains who are known as "hikers." They rush over the trail at high speed and take great delight in being the first to reach camp and in covering the greatest number of miles in the least possible time. They measure the trail in terms of speed and distance.

One day as I was resting in the shade, Mr. Muir overtook me on the trail and began to chat in that friendly way in which he delights to talk with everyone he meets. I said to him, "Mr. Muir, someone told me you did not approve of the word 'hike.' Is that so?" His blue eyes flashed, and with his Scotch accent he replied, "I don't like either the word or the thing. People ought to saunter in the mountains - not hike!"

"Do you know the origin of that word 'saunter?' It's a beautiful word. In the Middle Ages, people went on pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and when people in the villages through which they passed asked where they were going, they would reply, "A la sainte terre," 'To the Holy Land.' They became known as sainte-terre-ers or saunterers. Now these mountains are our Holy Land, and we ought to saunter through them reverently, not 'hike' through them."

John Muir lived up to his doctrine. He was usually the last man to reach camp. He never hurried. He stopped to get acquainted with individual trees along the way. He would hail people passing by and make them get down on hands and knees to see the beauty of a little bed of microscopic flowers. He often appeared at camp with some new flowers in his hat and a little piece of fir bough in his buttonhole.

There are people who "hike" through life. They rush along the trail of life feverishly seeking to make a dollar or gratify an appetite. Or one could "saunter" along this trail of life, to measure it in terms of beauty and love and friendship, to take time to know and understand the men and women along the way, to stop a while and let the beauty of the sunset possess the soul, to listen to what the trees are saying and the songs of the birds, and to gather the fragrant little flowers that bloom all along the trail of life! There are the peculiar rewards of those who become saunterers!

--Many saunterers journaled. Most notably, Henry David Thoreau, famed for "Walden Pond" and civil disobedience, wrote the essay "Walking," published in "The Atlantic" after his death, extolling the virtues of sauntering in nature.

5 “3” Day Spiritual Academy 2021

Schola Contemplationis.

The Great Plains Covenant Community wishing to respond to the challenging times created by the COVID-19 pandemic with the opportunity to gather as a worshiping and learning community has designed a virtual/on-site retreat with the intention of providing an opportunity for clergy and laity to tune their hearts with God through a daily rhythm of prayer, worship, learning, and reflection. Each day includes teachings by gifted spiritual leaders, morning and evening prayer, periods of silence, eucharist, and a small group opportunity to share with and encourage one another. The hope is to engage and open the participant's heart and mind and body and spirit to deepen their walk with God.

Using a model that has been refined through retreats held during 2020, the Schola Contemplationis will offer both in-person, on-site accommodations at St. Benedict Center for those comfortable with social gatherings following CDC recommended guidelines, as well as an on-line only, Zoom based participation.

The theme of Schola Contemplationis is **Breaking Ground for New Seeds: Letting the wisdom of the past inform our response to the present and the future that sprouts from it.** Offerings by Fr. Thomas Leitner, O.S.B. and Fr. Joel Macul, O.S.B. will provide us insights from the history and perspective of St. Benedict and the monastic order he founded to enrich our spiritual life in the Word of God.

Cost

Registration must be accompanied by **full payment**: the in-person cost is \$275 and the on-line cost is \$100.

No payments will be accepted at the event itself.

All registrations must be completed on-line and paid with a credit card.

Please Register By March 27th 2021

Online at www.gpspiritualformation.org