St. Placid Priory

Welcome to the forest where monastic life thrives, and you will thrive.

The Priory Spirituality Center ✦ Meeting Space ✦ The Priory Store ✦ www.stplacid.org

Fall – Winter August 2026

Hospitality: Pass it on!

By Angela Hoffman, OSB

St. Benedict directs us to "receive all as Christ." RB 53.1

You can tell if someone has genuinely welcomed you. You feel seen, cared for, listened to and important in their presence. They give you their full attention even though they might have other things to attend to. Your very presence is important to them.

I am sure Benedict didn't mean this hospitality only for the stranger at the front door. Whether friend, community member or stranger, we are asked to see Christ in everyone and to look out for their needs. In this way, our needs are met too… since the "other" is doing the same for us. For some of us, it is easier to be the "helper" than the "receiver," but both are needed.

When we make hospitality our spiritual practice, we share part of ourselves and trust that the other holds our shared parts as sacred. This kind of trust crowds out the fear that we may be taken advantage of or somehow manipulated. This kind of hospitality is sometimes easier to practice with strangers than the people we live with!

Hospitality also leads us to forgive those who wrong us. Consider that Jesus had every reason to reject Peter after he had denied knowing him in Jesus' time of great need. Instead, Jesus gave Peter a prominent role in his new community. We know we are valued even though we are creatures of our Creator. God is open and vulnerable to be accepted or rejected.

May we build bridges of hope and respect instead of walls of fear! We all have the privilege of being loved by God, and this is a privilege to be shared with everyone. St. Benedict was right—visitors give us much, and we pray that visitors take even more back with them and pass it onto others.

From the Priory

On the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6, the Sisters hosted our employees and volunteers for a lovely dinner thanks to our chef, **Nico**.

Affiliate **Cheryl Gudger** helped us celebrate the Feast of St. Placid at Mass and dinner. She also volunteered at Reception while here.

Sr. Angela Hoffman attended the January 29 Conference of Benedictine Prioresses in Baltimore, MD, returning with news from other monasteries.

February 3, **Sr. Sharon McDonald** fell, resulting in a hip fracture. She received excellent care at Providence St. Peter's and now resides at St. Joseph Residence, along with **Sr. Therese Gonneville**. She loves having visitors and retains her sense of humor.

Sr. Laura Swan spoke on February 10 at the Shelton Public Library on her research and writing of the Priory's history. She had spent a week at nearby Holly House for this purpose. She will return there for a week in late fall.

February 11, we hosted our friends from the **Catholic Woman's Club**, Tacoma, for lunch and their meeting. **Srs. Monika Ellis** and **Laura Swan** did a presentation on the history of Benedictine Women and of the Priory.

We invited the monks of **Saint Martin's Abbey** for a Pie Extravaganza on February 14. We enjoyed great conversation—and tasty pies!

On March 1, **Srs. Angela Hoffman** and **Sonja Weber** attended the Eye-2-Eye fundraiser for Homeless Services. We donated a beautiful gift basket for the silent auction.

Hieu Pham Dang became a Candidate in a March 10 ritual at Evening Praise. Candidacy is a time of formal discernment around joining our community.

April 11, a group arrived at the Spirituality Center from California for a 30-day Ignatian retreat. They were a quiet inspiration.

Sr. Anna-Camille Wooden attended the Benedictine Subprioresses' Meeting May 11-17.

Sr. Angela Hoffman was re-elected prioress during our May 18-19 Discernment and Election days, facilitated by **Sr. Aileen Bankemper**, St. Walburg Monastery, Kentucky. Present to observe was Congregation of St. Benedict President **Sr. Nancy Bauer**, St. Benedict's Monastery, Minnesota. Congratulations, Sr. Angela!

On June 8, the Sisters began their yearly retreat. **Dr. Mary Pandiani** was our retreat director for the first four days, with the last four in silence.

On June 27, we celebrated **Sr. Angela Hoffman's** 60th Jubilee at Morning Praise. Many friends and family members, as well as some of our Oblates, attended the ritual, reception and dinner.

Also during our retreat time, our new stainless steel **kitchen island** was installed—and very *quietly* done, too. This island, which was made possible by the good will and generous donations of so many of our friends and supporters, is making meal preparation for the community, guests and retreatants so much easier and safer. Thanks to all who gave to this important project. Chef Nico's smile says it all!

Sr. Paz Vital made her Perpetual Monastic Profession on July 11, the Feast of St. Benedict, within a Communion Service at Evening Praise. Dinner with lively conversation followed. The community also held a private celebration the next evening, complete with piñata!

Benedictine Explorers

In June and July I participated in St. Placid's Benedictine Explorers program for women discerning a Benedictine vocation. It was an opportunity to take part in the Sisters' daily rhythms of prayer and work, and to get a sense of what life is like in the monastery.

There were classes: meditation, Centering Prayer, monastic history, and ecological justice. Time in silence and solitude was a priority; the interior journey is an essential part of Benedictine monastic life.

"Listening with the ear of one's heart" is a familiar phrase, though perhaps it's better understood as a practice: that of listening with your whole self with gathered attention to God's presence. God's presence could be anything the moment calls you to, e.g. watching two young bucks getting into mischief in the cemetery, or doing the dishes.

The Benedictine interior journey is related to community. And so hospitality is the great Benedictine virtue. What is hospitality anyway? My

time at St. Placid has chiseled it down to mean something like "the giving of oneself to another for the other's sake," making others feel they truly belong *here*.

And I saw that feeling so few get, and so many long for, on display at St. Placid in a variety of ways. The wide net of seekers this community embraces. They do so over coffee after Mass, at dinner in their dining room, in quiet, intimate moments of prayer and study, or in festive celebrations. I met Catholics here, and Buddhists. Africans and Asians, and people who've never had a home outside of Lacey.

I believe true community can't really happen unless we feel free to show up with our whole selves—even when that self doesn't feel like a whole self. Even when we feel deeply in need of healing or in a temporary state of disrepair. That may be why we respond so well to the Gospel scripture that's pretty much the rule book for practical compassion: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

If I've explored and found anything at St. Placid these three weeks, it's just that: practical compassion. Practiced daily, hourly, in subtle and not so subtle ways. I don't know what my future looks like, if God is calling me to monastic life here or has some other way in store. But I do know the Sisters of St. Placid are living out the rule book the Gospel scripture teaches us. And I want to be part of that.

—Mary Taylor

Are *you* a young Catholic woman discerning a religious vocation? Learn more about Benedictine Monastic life by contacting Sr. Paz Vital 360.438.2595.

OBLATES

Our Oblate year ends with ceremonies that welcome new oblates and new candidates, as well as the renewal of promises by oblates and affiliates. This year was special, as it was also St. Placid's Foundation Day and Mother Benedicta Riepp's birthday, June 28.

During the Evening Praise rituals, the sisters also renew their monastic promises. These rituals, enclosed in the chanting of Evening Praise, are a time of connection, commitment and renewal held in sacred space. And thanks to the wonders of technology, we are able to include Zoom participants in the experience. We welcomed four new candidates: **Katherine Duck**, who became a candidate via Zoom from far away North Carolina, and **Joanne Flowers, Lorraine Musson** and **Clara Hsu**, all of whom were able to attend in person. We have four new oblates who were all able to be present as they made their promises: **Michele Hogan**, **Jenny Levesque**, **Marchelle Burkey**, and **Lynda Sandschulte**.

Oblates have been part of Benedictine life for centuries. They carry the values and charism of St. Benedict's Rule into all the places monks may never go and are living witnesses to a life lived in Christ. And oblates have stepped in to help at the monastery to keep things (and sisters!) going. This community of sisters, oblates, candidates and guests walk, as St. Benedict wrote, "together to life everlasting."

—Anna-Camille Wooden, OSB

Oblate Candidates Lorraine Musson, Clara Hsu, and Joanne Flowers

New Oblates Marchelle Burkey, Michele Hogan, Linda Sandschulte, and Jenny Levesque

From the Archives

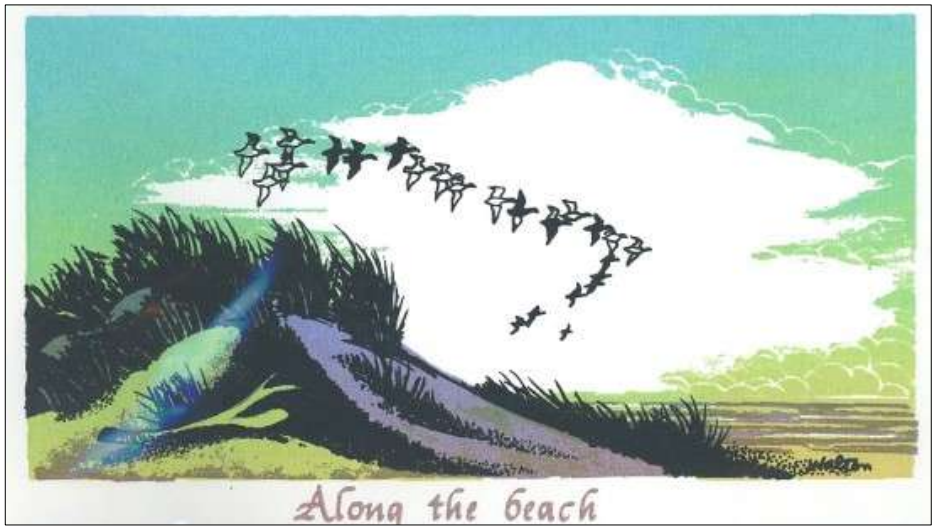
Keeping Our History Alive

Pictured at right is one of many hand-made cards created by Sr. Nathalie Karels. In front of a gradient water-color beach, birds are in flight, and beach grass sways in the wind. Among her creations, Sr. Nathalie also left us with collections of her inspiration, including technique books, catalogs, writing, and tokens of art by other artists. Her hand-made card shown here includes a gouache technique that, "when once started, must be completed while the area remains properly moist to achieve a delicate gradation of varying tones." (Higgins pg. 12) When dry, she added a pen drawing detailing the scene.

Sr. Nathalie Karels

Using various media, Sr. Nathalie was a dedicated practitioner of artistic technique, with many of her valuable pieces having gone through several sketches and drafts until finally making it to print. In the Priory today, her creations are still cherished, most recently at Sr. Angela Hoffman's 60th Jubilee celebration. On her invitations *and* on her cake was reproduced an original card design by Sr. Nathalie showing a candle with colorful blooming flame and an elegant "Christ our Light, Alleluia."

A gifted artist and calligrapher, Sr. Nathalie's artwork reflected her love of landscape, relationships, and her Benedictine faith. *—Claire Schwartz*



IMAGES OF PEACE

Art Show & Sale

October 25 through December 23
at St. Placid Priory
9:00 AM – 5:00 PM Daily

Show includes pieces inspired by Zentangle®. Mark your calendar! All art remains on the walls until end of show.

In Memoriam

Sam Hunt
d. April 25, 2026
—friend of the community

Sid Chaloner
d. April 29, 2026
—friend and Placid Club Member

Ollie Clausing
d. May 23, 2026
—friend of the community

Johaness Balladeo
d. May 24, 2026
—son of friends Aida and Leonardo Balladeo

Justine Fleck
d. June 20, 2026
—friend of the community

GOINGS ON AT THE CENTER

"Let all guests who arrive be received as Christ." (RB 53)

Benedictine hospitality is a sacred invitation to recognize Christ in each person who arrives and to offer a place where that person feels seen, valued, and accepted.

People from various faith traditions, backgrounds, cultures, nationalities, and life experiences come here. Some guests arrive deeply rooted in prayer, while others come carrying questions and uncertainty. Some come with joy, others grieving a loss, and some with a longing to experience God's presence more deeply. Each person brings a unique story. Each person bears the image of God. Each person is very welcome.

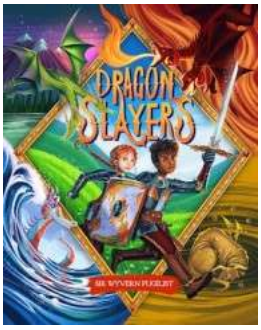
On your first visit, you will be receive a tour of the Spirituality Center and the public spaces in the Priory. You'll find a clean room prepared with care, a peaceful atmosphere that honors silence, and the space needed to rest, pray, and reflect.

For those who wish, compassionate spiritual directors are available to listen without judgment to your hopes, fears, questions, and experiences of faith.

Sr. Angela's Jubilee and Sr. Paz's Perpetual Profession Guests

Sister Laura's Scriptorium

Books that Merit Attention



Dragonslayers. The Essential Training Guide for Young Dragon Fighters by Sir Wyvern Pugilist, Paraclete Press, 2025. Tweens & teens (and the young at heart) will delight in this "sort of" graphic novel that introduces (or reaffirms) what it means to live a virtuous life, the Jesus story, and the lives of the saints. The graphics are gorgeous and this is simply FUN. Makes a great Confirmation gift, by the way.

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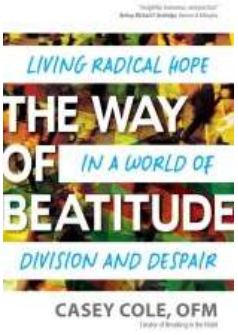

The Way of Beatitude. Living Radical Hope in a World of Division and Despair by Casey Cole, OFM, Ave Maria Press, 2022. This is deceptively simple. In 10 chapters on 10 words or phrases from the Beatitudes, Franciscan Friar Cole invites us through story and reflection to consider best ways to integrate Jesus' invitation into our lives. This is a popular author.

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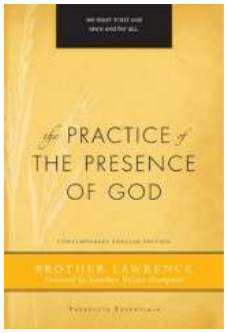

The Practice of the Presence of God by Brother Lawrence, Paraclete Press, 2010. I was fortunate to encounter this classic in my early 20s. Brother Lawrence affirmed that what I was doing and experiencing was legitimate prayer. And it's been my walk ever since. This is also Pope Leo's favorite book on prayer and spirituality.

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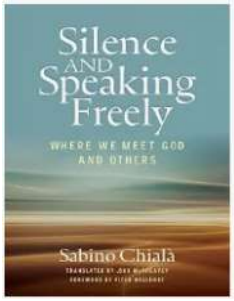

Silence and Speaking Freely. Where We Meet God and Others by Sabino Chialà, Liturgical Press, 2026. This is a gentle study, the fruit of Lectio Divina, on the place and practice of silence and gentle, authentic conversation. This is a much needed antidote to the tenor of voices today.

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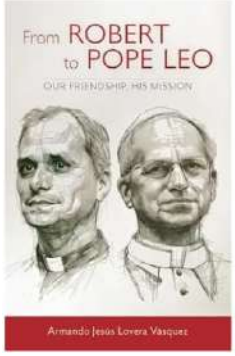

From Robert to Pope Leo. Our Friendship, His Mission by Armando Jesús Lovera Vásquez, Liturgical Press, 2026. In this gentle read, Vásquez shares insights into Pope Leo's personality, spirituality, and family influences that only a longtime friend could share. I enjoyed this.

Visit Our Website: www.stplacid.org

Benedictine Sisters
St. Placid Priory
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The Conference Center
The Priory Store
500 College St NE
Lacey, WA 98516-5339

Fall – Winter
August 2026

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The **Priory Arts Shop** is online at **stplacid.org/shop** or in our **lobby**. The **Priory Store**, located in the monastery lobby, is now open most **Fridays** from **Noon to 3:00 PM** & **Saturdays** from **10:30 to 3:00 PM** and **by request other days.** Please call 360.438.1771 to make sure we're open.

Welcome to Sunday Mass:
If you are feeling well, not sick, please join us for **Sunday Mass at 9:00 AM**. Masks are optional; please bring your own if desired.

Liturgy of the Hours:
We pray **Morning Praise** weekdays at 8:00 AM except for the second Monday at 11:30 AM. **Noon Praise** is typically at 11:50 AM, and Evening Praise (with Communion) is usually at 5:00 PM Monday thru Friday. **Please call ahead 360.438.1771** if you plan to attend Praise in case there should be a change in schedule. On some weekday **feast days** we have Evening Praise at **4:30 PM** and Mass at **5:00 PM**.

St. Placid gratefully accepts donations:

https://tinyurl.com/DonateStPlacidPriory

Spirituality Center Staff:

Lorraine Musson	- Center Coordinator
Paz Vital, OSB	- Program Coordinator
Monika Ellis, OSB	- Staff

Directions

Southbound on I-5
Take Exit 109
Right turn onto Martin Way
Right at next light onto College St NE
Second right turn is our driveway

Northbound on I-5
Take Exit 109
Left turn onto Martin Way
Right at second light onto College St NE
Second right turn is our driveway