



# THE FONT

JULY - AUGUST 2014

FOSTERING CONNECTIONS WITHIN THE ORDER OF SAINT LUKE

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*The Font*  
The Order of Saint Luke  
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## THE CALL TO SERVICE

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The Council meeting in May is now more than a month in the rearview mirror, and I am still "unpacking" the actions and work we did together. Let me share some of our work. Click on the link to the minutes in the conveyance issue for this issue, if you want to review them part of this issue.



Br. Abbot  
Daniel Benedict

As abbot I have made the following appointments that the Council affirmed: Sr. Alice Kay Hoover as Chaplain General. Br. Rusty Beals as Sacristan and as Provincial Companion for Illinois, Wisconsin and Minnesota. Br. Tom Beveridge as Canon of the Order. Sr. Jeanette Block as a member of the Daily Office Revision Team to work with Sr. Fran Ballinger on the daily office lectionary. Sr. Jeanette was appointed as Provincial Companion for New Jersey and Br. V. Aberto Alers was appointed PC for Puerto Rico. Br. I appointed Br. French Ball to serve as Webscribe to work with Martin Buck, our web site designer/developer.

One aspect of the meeting was cause for deeper reflection on our identity and core orientation as an order of religious. Our Chancellor General, Br. Scott Alford, announced that two-hundred-four annually vowed members were removed from the roll because they did not reaffirm their profession for the past two years. This is a significant membership reduction. Our professed membership, including 63 life vowed members, now stands at 546. During the conversation about this development the Council moved from consideration of attempting to reach out to former members to a recognition that we need to honor their decision not to reaffirm. Whether each

chose intentionally to not to reaffirm, or by oversight failed to reaffirm, we decided that it was important to respect the lapse. The conversation reflected a growing awareness that the intention to live the Rule of Life and Service is central to Lukan spirituality and that we need honor the Spirit's calling men and women into and out of the Order. In a sense 204 of our siblings asked to be released from their vows, and so, we released them, always ready to welcome their return when they renew their profession.

On the matter of sharing our life and work with others and inviting them to consider the Order, we discussed ways to shape perceptions and understandings. See the minutes. For a brochure developed by Sr. Sue Moore, Prior General, click on the link to "Have you heard of the Order of Saint Luke?" in the conveyance email for this issue of *The Font*. I invite you to make appropriate adaptations to reflect your experience of the Order and to share it with others.

In a post-Council development, I am pleased to share with you that the Order of Saint Luke is now a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Chancellor General, Br. Scott Alford, for taking this on and navigating the bureaucratic waters to get it done. Formerly we had been under the umbrella of The United Methodist Church in order to receive contributions. Since we no longer exist in an affiliate relationship with the General Board of Discipleship we needed to have our own non-profit status.

The Council meeting dates for the spring of 2015 are Wednesday, May 20 through noon Friday, June 22. The Daily Office Revision Team will meet all day on Tuesday, May 19, and the morning of June 20.

(Continued on Page 2)

## IN THE COMMUNION OF THE SAINTS

Sr. Heather Josselyn-Cranson, OSL  
[hjosselyn@hotmail.com](mailto:hjosselyn@hotmail.com)

Traditionally, Christian religious communities have kept necrologies of their members in order to remember each brother or sister on the date of his or her death. Such a commemoration displays the community's belief that Christ is victorious over death. Those we remember in July and August are:

July 5 Br. Thomas Davis (2005)  
Texas

July 19 Br. Ted Hoffmann  
(2013) North Carolina

July 24 Br. Jerry Allen Smith  
(2003) Kentucky

July 26 Br. Mark Mashburn  
(2007)

July 27 Br. Tom Hill (2003)  
West Virginia

August 12 Br. John Hope  
(2009)

August 19 Br. Rhymes H.  
Moncure, Jr. (2006) Bishop in  
Texas

A request: If you or your chapter are aware of other deceased members of the Order, I'd be



Sr. Heather  
Josselyn-  
Cranson

grateful if you could send me information ([hjosselyn@hotmail.com](mailto:hjosselyn@hotmail.com)) so that they may be included in the list of siblings for whom we give thanks to God.

## THE CALL TO SERVICE

Continued from Page 1

I mention this to all of you because the spring Council meeting is open to all members. While it is not like the retreat in some ways, in others it is rich with daily Eucharist and the Daily Office, and there is time for fellowship around meals and in free time. My hope is that you would consider attending, especially if you aren't able to attend the annual retreat.

One last item, Br. Rusty Beals is doing a doctor of ministry project related to member practices. I urge you to read his invitation on Page 5 and to participate in the survey. It will help Br. Rusty and I hope in

time provide us with insights about our common life as a dispersed order. The more of us who participate, the more significant and accurate the picture of our communal life.

And now I commend you to God and to the work of God's grace which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance with all the saints in light.

Br. Abbot Daniel

## SUGGESTED READINGS FOR FALL RETREAT

*"When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect. There is no other way for the land to survive."*

— Aldo Leopold, from the Foreword to *A Sand County Almanac*

This list is an invitation to the Order of Saint Luke as we move toward the retreat this fall (Oct. 22-24, 2014). Understand that it is not meant to overwhelm. Start with something here that hooks your interest and move in more deeply over time. Some of these titles are online, some are easily available in print for a reasonable price. At least one is pretty pricey. But do get started and discover the expanding mystery of our place in the community of heaven and earth.

The source of the retreat's title:

"Heaven and Earth Are Full of Your Glory" — a joint Roman Catholic/United Methodist statement on the environment. Cut and paste this shortened link: <http://bit.ly/1mePoeq>

Br. Abbot Daniel suggests the following as background or "starter reading" in opening to the human-earth relationship.

"**The Land Ethic**" by Aldo Leopold. Find it in *A Sand County Almanac* or at <http://bit.ly/1heV110> (that's Vee-One-Ell-Zero on the end of this shortened link). He recommends the whole volume, *A Sand County Almanac*—a classic by a classic naturalist.

The novels, essays and poetry of **Wendell Berry**, especially recommended **Leavings: Poems**.

**The Sacred Universe** by Thomas Berry (especially chapters 5, 9, 10, 12).

**The Christian Future and the Fate of Earth** by Thomas Berry, (especially chapters 2, 5, 7, 10 and Appendix).

**Water, Wind, Earth, and Fire: The Christian Practice of Praying the Elements** by Christine Valters Paintner. This is a "live with it" book rich in quotations, exercises, and reflections for encountering the Holy Trinity in the cosmos and imagery drawn from the earth.

Susan Muto, our presenter offered these suggestions as preparation for the retreat.

**The Soul's Journey into God by St. Bonaventure** (Classics of Western Spirituality, Paulist Press).

**Foundations of Christian Formation** by Susan Muto and Adrian van Kaam (Volume One in our Formation Theology Series).

**Pope Francis' Homily in Assisi on October 4, 2013**. It points in a beautiful way to the Franciscan appreciation of creation. Online at shortened link: <http://bit.ly/1pPPZVs>

Getting to know our presenter, **Susan Muto**. For a formal vita go to: <http://epiphanyassociation.org/content/dr-susan-muto>

Getting to know her mentor, **Adrian van Kaam**: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adrian\\_Van\\_Kaam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adrian_Van_Kaam)

## REPORT OF THE PASTORAL CARE OFFICER

Br. David A Eichelberger, OSL

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As we move into the summer season, let us continue to be in prayer for those in our Order. Be sure to make time to care for yourselves and your families.



Br. David  
Eichelberger

**We lift up the following joys:**

**Br. Abbot Daniel and Sr. Mary O.** recently were delighted to welcome their newest grandchild **Kaleia Grace Benedict**.

**Our Daily Office Revision Team** shared at our Council meeting that they are making good progress towards completing their labors in time next year.

**Br. Ron Nicholas** and **Joyce** shared that they celebrated their Holy Union in April and May in two locations.

**Br. David Roberts** announced that he will retire July 1 and will be taking a part-time position at Smith's Chapel UMC in Churchville, MD.

**Br. Canon O. French Ball** announced that he is retiring from his appointment at the Caledonia UMC, Caledonia, OH and is going to truly enjoy his retirement full time.

**Sr. Nancy Cartwright** announced her move to Dayton OH.

**Br. Joe Phillips** shared that his son **Chris** will be spending the summer studying at the University of Vienna, Austria. He asks for prayers for his son's safety while traveling in Europe and for a good summer.

**We share the following concerns:**

Br. Canon Tom Beveridge shared the concern that he recently learned that he will be facing further testing and perhaps aggressive treatment

for a recurring ailment.

**Sr. Cynthia Astle** asked for prayers for the current on-going elections for delegates to the 2016 General Conference of the United Methodist Church. She also asks for prayers for her on-going health issues.

**Sr. Heather Josselyn Cranson** asked for prayers for her mother who was recently hospitalized with pneumonia. We rejoice that at this time she seems to be gaining strength.

**Sr. Cindy Loomis-Torvi** asked for prayers for her and her family as they address ongoing health issues.

**Br. Taylor Burton-Edwards** asked for prayers for his family as they relocate from Indiana to Georgia.

**Sr. Agnes Saffoury** shared the news of the death of her sister, **Ruth Campbell Marcolina**. We rejoice that her ill health is healed and she is at peace.

**Br. Mike Ashburner** requested prayers for the family of an acquaintance, **Mr. Kobus**, whose mother fell seriously ill while visiting from Africa and is now facing deportation since she missed a scheduled meeting while she was in the hospital. There is also a concern for her medical costs since she was uninsured.

**Br. Canon Brent Sturm** shared the news of the death of **Sr. Jean Hill**, who died in June. Sr. Jean was the spouse of our deceased **Br. R. Thomas Hill** in West Virginia. Greetings may be sent to her daughter, The Honorable Martha Hill at mhill1975@hotmail.com.

**Sr. Lucy** and **Br. Scott Porter** asked for prayers for all who are affected by the forest fires in Arizona that have been burning out of control near Flagstaff, AZ. This summer is off to a difficult start across

the far west with extensive water shortages and the threat of fire.

**Sr. Linda Deming** has moved to a Medical Leave from her appointment in the Northern Illinois Annual Conference.

We also lift up prayers on behalf of: all United Methodist pastors who will be moving to new appointments, and to pastors of other denominations who are moving to new calls; for the congregations who receive them; for all who are seeking new employment; for the unemployed; the homeless and the hungry.

*Gracious God, who sustains us day by day, we give you thanks and praise for the creativity that we see on display around us, especially in this season of the year. Help us to be caring stewards of this beautiful planet. Bless us as we enjoy this time of refreshment in the Northern Hemisphere.*

*We lift up our prayers for our world that is so troubled with warfare, riot and violence. Give guidance to the leaders of the world so that all may indeed live in peace with our neighbors. We pray too for the ending of all conflicts which have their roots in religious strife.*

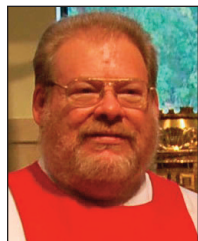
*May your Spirit be at work among us as Brothers and Sisters of our Order so that we may be your messengers of love and shalom. We pray these and our silent prayers in the name of the Blessed Trinity. Amen.*





# FROM THE PROVINCIAL GENERAL

With the onset of summer, many OSL chapters and associations will



Br. George Crisp

take a break as their members deal with a variety of transitions (ordinations, moves and retirements) or have the opportunity to enjoy vacations. Chapter

leaders might also take this time to make or review plans for the chapter's meetings and programs for the remainder of the year. If you've recruited new members, perhaps through inquirer gatherings at a denomination conference or meeting, summer is a good time to communicate with each other.

Some chapters plan late summer overnight retreats to consider program ideas for the coming year. (Other chapters hold mid-winter or post-Easter retreats.) Whatever is going on in your area, I want to encourage you to be in prayer for each other as individuals, for your chapter or association, and for the Order as a whole.

In late September, I'll be asking local chapter leaders to provide reports on their chapter's activities to share with the General Council when it meets in October. Now, here is the news from the local chapters and associations, reported on a rotating basis, culled from the reports received this spring:

No report was received from the **Dwight Vogel Chapter** at Garrett-Evangelical. As with other seminary chapters, perhaps there will be more activity when the students return for the fall term.

The **Missouri Chapter** was another chapter that made no report this spring. This group had not had a Prior for several years, but Br.

David (last name?) is the group's Chaplain and Br. Andrew Ritts serves as the Chancellor. Members keep in contact with each other electronically. More frequent meetings for those in the St. Louis area had been discussed last fall.

Br. Brian McKee reported for the **Southeastern Ohio Chapter**: "The Chapter is not meeting at this time. Br. Robert Howell and I stay in touch and we are hoping to revive the chapter in the fall of 2014 if possible. Our problem is not having a meeting place in a central location. Zanesville is the central location, and we do not have connections with a UM church in Zanesville for use of a chapel. We can no longer use the Episcopal Chapel as the new priest will not allow it unless we let him officiate communion. Since he likes to pray to St. Mary in Latin and do other things

Br. George R. Crisp, OSL, Provincial General  
revgrc@yahoo.com

not permitted by the BCP, we are just not comfortable there anymore.

The **Boston University Chapter** was discontinued in 2009, but reported in 2012 that they were reorganizing. No formal organizational activity is taking place, but Br. Jeffrey Cox reports: We are still kicking in New England with twice weekly conference prayer calls. Otherwise, informal activity is occurring. Keep praying!

Perpetual Reminder . . . Please notify the Provincial General: (1) if the contact person for your chapter or association changes due to an election of new officers, (2) if you are the contact person and you if you have updated contact information, (4) if you have additional news to share about your chapter or association, and (4) if you change your e-mail address.

## PROVINCIAL COMPANIONS

*Please contact these sisters and brothers with questions about the Order.*

### Provincial Companion

Br. Tom Beveridge  
Sr. Jeanette Block  
Br. Guy Camp

### Companion Needed

Br. Steve Sullivan

Br. Bob Jarboe  
Br. Rusty Beals

### Companion Needed

Br. Mark Parsons-Justice  
Br. Gary Smith

### Companion Needed

### Companion Needed

### Companion Needed

Br. Bill Olewiler  
Br. John Taylor  
Sr. Celia Kitchens

### Companion Needed

Sr. Julie Nygaard  
Sr. Kathy Haley  
Sr. Mary Beth Klaehn

### Province

New England  
New Jersey  
Pennsylvania

### Maryland, Delaware, Washington D. C.

Ohio

Indiana, Michigan1  
Ill., Minn., Wis.

### Iowa, Kansas, Arkansas, Missouri

Virginia, West Virginia  
Kentucky, Tennessee

### North Carolina

### South Carolina, Georgia

### Alabama, Mississippi

Florida  
Northern Texas, Oklahoma  
Southern Texas, Louisiana

### New Mexico, west Texas

The Dakotas, Nebraska  
Rocky Mountains  
Arizona, southern Nevada

### E-mail Address

tandaosl@yahoo.com  
revblock@aol.com  
goeey3@embarqmail.com

revstevesullivan@gmail.com  
or ncumcpastor@frontier.com

jarbear1974@yahoo.com  
rbeals@speednet.com or  
rbeals@dtnspeed.net

pastthewishing@gmail.com  
garysmith46@gmail.com

billrev@comcast.net  
jetvct@att.net  
pastorcelia@gmail.com

jnygaard@venturecomm.net  
silverwolf13@comcast.net  
maryklaehn@gmail.com

Continued on Page 5

## FROM THE COMPANION FOR INQUIRERS AND NEW MEMBERS

Since the last issue of *The Font*, we have welcomed three new members to The Order. They are: Robert Scharstein of Charleston SC; Corby D. Blanton, who lives in Shelby OH; and Ben Anderson Hensley from Dallas, TX. As you have opportunity, please welcome them to The Order.



you that there may be occasions when you will be invited to contact an inquirer who lives nearby. This is an opportunity to share your experience with The Order, which i]will be helpful to the inquirer and to you.

Br. Matthias, O.S.L.  
Companion for Inquirers and New Members

**Send inquiries to:**  
**Br. Matthias Tanner, OSL**  
**24 Parsons Way**  
**Poland, ME 04274-5695**  
**Phone 207-998-5654**

I have responded to two inquiries during this time. I want to remind

## FROM THE CHANCELLOR GENERAL

You will find attached to this issue minutes from our May Council meeting. These will not be approved by Council until October, so they must be considered unofficial.

I am also pleased to announce that The Order of Saint Luke is now a recognized 501(c)(3) organization with the IRS.

Br. Scott Alford  
Chancellor General

## Survey Will Aid a Brother's Doctor of Ministry Research Project

*Editor's Note: With the approval of Br. Abbot Daniel Benedict, we present this request from Br. Rusty Beals regarding his doctor of ministry project.*

I am Br. Rusty Beals. I am conducting a survey of the members of the Order of Saint Luke as part of my Doctor of Ministry project at Saint Paul School of Theology entitled *The Order of Saint Luke and New Monasticism*. You are in no way compelled to respond to the survey, but if you would like to voluntarily respond to the survey please click on the link below. By responding to the survey through the link, you are also providing your permission for me to use your response in my research.

I will protect your privacy, confidentiality, and identity in my research; I will be the only person who has access to the email account that contains your response; and the survey responses will be permanently deleted from email after my praxis thesis is completed. I will refer to you in my praxis thesis only as "sibling," and I will not use any identifying information.

My survey asks you about your

current practices of participating in the communal life of the Order, especially as the Order is a dispersed Order which is not cloistered. The survey is not meant to be critical or judgmental of your current practices; it is only meant to identify those practices. But it may challenge or encourage your practices.

Abbot Daniel Benedict has also asked me possibly to share my results to contribute to the work of the Order, and if this happens I will continue to protect your confidentiality. I may respond further to your response by email, at which time I will repeat the consent information. At any time you may contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Henry

H. Knight, III; halk@spst.edu.

List and describe as many practices as possible or with whatever time you have. An example of a practice might be "praying the daily office" or "attending a national retreat of the Order."

Here are the questions.

✓What are the practices that deepen your participation in the communal life of the Order of Saint Luke, a dispersed religious order?

✓What hinders your practices?

✓What encourages your practices?

✓Are you a Benedictine oblate or member of another religious order?

If you would like to participate in this survey, please send your responses to these questions to oslsurvey@gmail.com.

## PROVINCIAL COMPANIONS (Continued from Page 4)

Provincial Companion	Province	Email Address
Appointment pending	Pacific Northwest	
Br. Perry Polk	No. California / Nevada	perrypolk@aol.com
Br. Gilbert Stones	So. California, Hawaii	gilert@aol.com
Br. Doug Morrison-Cleary	Pacific Rim, Philippines, Singapore	doug.mc@hildormen.org
Br. Victor Alberto Alers	Puerto Rico / Caribbean	dralers@utpr.org
Need Current Provincial Companions: Pacific Northwest; Iowa, Kansas, Arkansas, Missouri North Carolina Maryland, Delaware, D.C. South Carolina, Georgia Alabama, Mississippi. For the future: Europe, Africa and South America		

1 Currently there are no chapters in Michigan (and several other states) but, there are OSL members in those areas.

# THE ORDO

Prepared by Br. Jack Fahey, OSL

## JULY

W	1	G
T	2	Anna Howard Shaw G
F	3	G
S	4	Jashwant Rao Chitambar G
<b>S</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6th Sunday after Pentecost G</b>
M	6	John Hus G
T	7	G
W	8	G
T	9	G
F	10	G
S	11	Benedict of Nursia G
<b>S</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7th Sunday after Pentecost G</b>
M	13	G
T	14	G
W	15	G
T	16	G
F	17	John Coltrane G
S	18	G
<b>S</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>8th Sunday after Pentecost G</b>
M	20	Belle Harris Bennett G
T	21	G
W	22	Mary Magdalene W (comm. James Varick)
T	23	G
F	24	Thomas á Kempis G
<b>S</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>James the Elder R, PM-G</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>9th Sunday after Pentecost G</b>
M	27	G
T	28	Johann S. Bach & George F. Handel G
W	29	Mary and Martha of Bethany G
T	30	Susanna Wesley G
F	31	G

## AUGUST

S	1	G
<b>S</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10th Sunday after Pentecost G</b>
M	3	G
T	4	G
W	5	G
		<i>Eve of the Transfiguration W*</i>
T	6	G
		<i>The Transfiguration W*</i>
F	7	John Mason Neale G
S	8	Dominic G
<b>S</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11th Sunday after Pentecost G</b>
M	10	Laurence G
T	11	Clare of Assisi G
W	12	G
T	13	Florence Nightingale G
F	14	John William Fletcher & Maximilian Kolbe G
		<b>Eve of Mary W</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Mary W, PM-G</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12th Sunday after Pentecost G</b>
M	17	G
T	18	Francis John McConnell G
W	19	Jonathan Myric Daniels G
T	20	Bernard of Clairvaux William & Catherine Booth G
F	21	Georgia Harkness G
S	22	G
<b>S</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>13th Sunday after Pentecost G</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>Bartholomew R</b>
T	25	G
W	26	G
T	27	G
F	28	Abba Moses of Scete & Augustine of Hippo G
S	29	Maggie Newton Van Cott G
<b>S</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>14th Sunday after Pentecost G</b>
M	31	John Bunyan G

### Notes on The Ordo:

All Sundays, Solemnities and Feasts are in bold type and followed by the proper liturgical color for the day or part of the day. Commemorations are noted but the seasonal color is kept. Those who wish to solemnize a particular commemoration should use Red for martyrs and Holy Cross Day and White for all others.

The color code is: W- White, R- Red, B- Blue, P-Purple, G- Green.

Gold may be substituted for White.

***2014 Retreat of The Order of Saint Luke  
Heaven and Earth Are Full of Your Glory:  
Embodying Christ's Healing Grace for all Creation  
October 22-24, 2014***

St Paul of the Cross Retreat Center,  
148 Monastery Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15203 Pittsburgh PA  
*www.stpaulsretreatcenter-pittsburgh.org/*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

CELL PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you an OSL member?    Yes    No

Is this your first time attending an OSL retreat?    Yes    No

Your first name as you'd like it to appear on your Nametag: \_\_\_\_\_

(Nametags will use the title Sr. or Br. unless you request otherwise.)

**If you have any special dietary or mobility needs, please note them in detail on the reverse.**

Please note that some rooms have private baths, but many do not. Most rooms are singles. If you want to room with someone, then please indicate that preference on this form. If you need to have a room with toilet facilities, please let me know and I will do what I can to accommodate you.

Please register me for the **2014 Retreat** (Wednesday noon, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, through Friday lunch, October 24<sup>th</sup>) at a cost of \$350.00

Please register me for **early arrival 2014 Retreat** (Tuesday night, October 21<sup>st</sup>, through Friday, October 24<sup>th</sup>) at a cost of \$390.00.

Please register me for **Monday arrival** for the DORT meeting prior to **2014 Retreat** (Monday night, October 20<sup>th</sup>, through Friday, October 24<sup>th</sup>) at a cost of \$430.00.

**NOTE: Transportation will not be provided from the airport.** A convenient way to get to the monastery is by Super Shuttle. The cost is \$26 one way. Additional passengers are \$9 so it pays to meet up with others at the airport if possible. **Reservations must be made in advance at <https://reservations.supershuttle.com>.**

Please charge my    Visa    Mastercard    My check is enclosed.

□□□□ – □□□□ – □□□□ – □□□□

Exp. □□/□□

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

***Registration deadline is September 15, 2014.***

Please return a completed registration form for each individual attending to:

Sr. Sue Moore, O.S.L., Prior General  
The Order of Saint Luke  
1002 Hunters Lane, Ashland City TN 37015

*You are welcome to send this form via email if you are not attaching a check.*

*2014 Retreat of The Order of Saint Luke*  
*Heaven and Earth Are Full of Your Glory:*  
*Embodying Christ's Healing Grace for all Creation*  
*October 22-24, 2014*

St Paul of the Cross Retreat Center,  
148 Monastery Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15203 Pittsburgh PA  
[www.stpaulsretreatcenter-pittsburgh.org/](http://www.stpaulsretreatcenter-pittsburgh.org/)

***I have the following special needs for attending the 2014 Retreat:***

Mobility:

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Dietary

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Other

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Please complete the form on the reverse of this page to register for the retreat.



# FROM THE PRIOR GENERAL

*Editor's Note: Prior General Sr. Sue Moore gave the following homily at the closing Eucharist of the May 2014 Council meeting.*

## John 14:1-3

14 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe\* in God, believe also in me. 2In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.

Sitting out in the middle of the Jordanian desert is a huge enclosed mud-brick structure with enormous gates. When you go through those gates, you find yourself inside a caravansary. In the center is a large open courtyard, with archways leading to pens on two sides for the camels and their bags, and above these stables are two floors of sleeping rooms for the travelers. There is certainly no luxury to be found here, but that huge building must have been a welcome sight to anyone who had spent the day riding through the heat of a desert day and now faced the cold of a desert night.

One article about this passage from John's gospel suggests that the Greek word *monai*, usually rendered as "dwelling places" – or as "mansions" in the KJV – has more to do with that caravansary than it does with Graceland.

Here is what it says:

"*Monai* actually means a temporary resting place for a traveler. It was associated with caravans. In those days, there would be a contingent of folks who would go ahead of the caravan to 'prepare a place' so



*"Sitting in the middle of the Jordanian desert is a huge enclosed mud-brick structure with enormous gates. ... you find yourself inside a caravansary..."*

that when the caravan arrived there, the camp ground had been prepared, the water supply located, and food prepared. The travelers in the caravan would have a place of comfort to spend the night.

"*Monai* is less about getting some fancy digs in the hereafter, in a house separate from the people you can't stand, and more about welcome, hospitality, and community for people traveling on a journey."

*[Progressive Involvement blog May 16, 2011]*

So much for all those Gospel songs that promise us a mansion in the sky by-and-by. Goodbye to preachers who have told the poor or the enslaved to accept horrid conditions in this life because their reward is coming in the next. The gospel isn't about ethereal good news later on, it is about embodied good news now.

Frankly, it is a lot easier for me to believe that Jesus was concerned about welcome and hospitality and community than to think he cared about fancy houses! Our hope is enlivened by the assurance that he has gone to prepare a place for us – not a final destination, but a place where we can rest and be renewed as we continue on the journey. A place like the desert travelers found in the caravansary.

Where do you and I find *monai*? Where do we find welcome, hospitality, and community for the journey? Many of us find it within this Order.

If you are blessed to live where there is a local chapter, you may find it within that small circle of brothers and sisters. Or perhaps you attend the yearly retreat, and find a place of hospitality and refreshment prepared for you there. Perhaps you participate in a prayer group, or in the cyber-chapter, and find a community there that welcomes and supports you.

But even more important than where we find *monai* is the question of how we offer it to others. How do we welcome those who would travel with us for a day or a season or for life? Our Lukan spirituality may not be the right spirituality for everyone – but it is our joy to offer it to others graciously, and to welcome them in whatever time they spend with us. In a world where there is too much isolation, it is our joy to offer people community.

And so, this is the question we must constantly live into: how are we preparing a place for others? A place where they will encounter the living Christ?

We create that place by living lives that exemplify our Rule of Life and Service. We create it by listening deeply to those we encounter on the way. And we share that place most profoundly when we gather at the table.

Come, be fed... Come, be fed...  
Come, be fed...

Amen.



## THE FONT

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### *FIRST CLASS MAIL*

## MOMENT FOR MEDITATION



*He turns a  
desert into pools  
of water,  
a parched  
land into springs  
of water.  
– Psalm 107:35*

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