

**Shalom at the Monastery, A Retreat Ministry of the Benedictine Sisters of Mount Angel
840 S. Main St., Mount Angel, OR 97362 www.benedictine-srs.org**

**The Creative/Spiritual Life Circle
(In person or Zoom)**

In memory of Jan Alsever, a woman of joy

The Creative/Spiritual Life Circle is a Benedictine-centered discussion group whose concept is simple: people who gather together on a regularly scheduled basis to share -- without interruptions or cross-talk -- whatever is gratifying us or amazing us or troubling us or puzzling us about the intersection of creativity and spirituality. In the Circle, we draw no conclusions, make no judgments and offer no advice or critiques. We simply listen to each other with the ears of our hearts and draw insights from what we hear. We engage with, and learn from, each other. We practice hospitality and humility.

The Circle is a dynamic experience founded on a four-fold premise:

1. That all people are inherently creative because we all share in the image and likeness of our creator, God. The spirituality of living God-centered lives is the ultimate creative act. (*Rule of St. Benedict 72:1-12*)
2. That each one of us has been given gifts of creativity and spirituality that are as individual as we are. These gifts vary from person to person in one way or another, and evolve throughout our lives. (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)
3. That our gifts of creativity and spirituality, like all gifts, are to be used to build up the Kingdom of God. They are not to be buried, hoarded, squandered or ignored. They are to be shared and celebrated in the spirit of faithful stewardship. (Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 12:42-48; *Rule of St. Benedict 57:9*)
4. That creativity and spirituality blossom in supportive communities, because that's where people thrive, too. (*Rule of Benedict Prologue 45-50*)

The Creative/Spiritual Life Circle meets on the 3rd Saturday of each month, beginning on September 18, from 1:15-2:30pm, in the Chapter Room. The discussion is facilitated by Susan Black, an artist, writer and QAM Oblate Candidate, whose goal is to illuminate the twinned delights of creativity and spirituality.

All are welcome. There are no pre-requisites, qualifications or homework, and no need to bring anything beyond your open mind and your generous spirit. An offering of \$5-10 per session to the Benedictine Sisters is optional but would be most appreciated.

To register: call Sister Dorothy Jean Beyer, 503 845-2556 or email dorothyjeanb7@gmail.com, three days before the session. **Please choose in person or Zoom format when registering.**

About the Facilitator: Susan Black

I was born in New York City and grew up in suburban Connecticut, where I lived until moving to San Francisco in 1996. I came to Aurora, Oregon in 2014.

After majoring in English Literature (Art History minor) in college, I pursued a demanding, nearly four-decade career in public relations, corporate communications and freelance writing. My work was centered in New York City, even after I moved West. Recent years have seen me develop my identity as an artist/writer; this process has taken on more depth now that I realize that visual art and memoir writing are expressions of my spirituality, not merely hobbies. Other creative pursuits include reading, gardening and cat- and chicken-keeping.

A lifelong Catholic previously grounded in Ignatian spirituality, I discovered the Benedictines and the Queen of Angels Monastery soon after I arrived in Oregon, and have been privileged to come to know many of the Sisters. Their example and their charism inspired me to investigate Benedictine Oblation. Study as an Inquirer during 2020-21 and getting acquainted with QAM Oblates spurred me on, and I am now a Candidate.