

**Praying with Imagination: A Retreat with *The Saint John's Bible***  
**Saint John's University School of Theology-Seminary**  
**July 19-July 25, 2009**

**Retreat Description**

“Praying with Imagination” is a retreat designed to engage the imagination and prayer through art. Participants will pray using images from *The Saint John's Bible* and engage in the practice of prayerful art. The participants will pray each morning using a form of prayer called *visio divina*, based on the ancient practice of *lectio divina*. We will follow a simple format of gazing at an image from *The Saint John's Bible* and listening to an accompanying scripture text (see p. 3).

In the afternoons, participants will have an opportunity to engage the arts through bookmaking, which combines the practice of writing as well as creating visual images. The arts of poetry, creative writing, copying, calligraphy, as well as drawing and painting with a variety of mediums will be encouraged. Participants will also be introduced to artists and art works at Saint John's University. Through prayer and artistic expression, we will deepen our sense of creativity and wonder in our work and ministries. Please note that this is *not* a workshop or a class on bookmaking.

**Goals**

- To enhance our capacities as artists and to encourage a place for art in our lives
- To offer ministers who are artists an opportunity to combine art and prayer
- To encounter artists and ministers who foster creativity

**Dates:** July 19-25, 2009

**Location:** Collegeville Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research on the campus of Saint John's University.

We are holding the retreat at the Collegeville Institute on Saint John's campus, a beautiful setting for art, prayer and community. (See <http://collegevilleinstitute.org/Facilities> for directions to the Institute). The Collegeville Institute is a residential community with apartments, each with 2-3 bedrooms. Participants will share an apartment with one or two other people; each person will have their own bedroom, and share a bathroom and living space. Please indicate your roommate preference when you register. The Institute has ample indoor and outdoor space for your solitude and contemplation.

Retreat Director: Kathleen A. Cahalan

Artistic leaders: Peggy Thompson and Judith Lang Main

Registration and information: Cindy Maile, [cmaile@csbsju.edu](mailto:cmaile@csbsju.edu); 320-363-2612

Praying with Imagination  
**RETREAT SCHEDULE 2009**

**Sunday, July 19**

- 3:00 p.m. Welcome and Introductions  
Teaching on *visio divina* and the retreat  
Book-making opportunities on the retreat
- 5:00 p.m. Evening Prayer, Abbey Church  
5:30 p.m. Dinner
- 7:00 p.m. Evening Prayer: *Visio divina* (Butler Center)

**Daily schedule: Monday - Friday**

- 7:00 a.m. Morning Prayer (Saint John's Abbey)  
Breakfast, SJU Refectory or Institute
- 8:30 a.m. *Visio divina* with the Saint John's Bible, Butler Center

**Thursday, July 23:** Day of fasting and silence

- 10:30 a.m. **Monday, July 20:** Presentation on the Saint John's Bible (optional)  
10:30 a.m. **Friday, July 24:** Tour of the Abbey Church (optional)
- Noon Noon Prayer, Abbey Church  
Lunch, SJU Refectory
- 1:00 p.m. Book-making arts (Peggy Thompson and Judith Lang Main)
- 4:00 p.m. **Wednesday, July 22:** Saint John's Pottery Studio
- 5:00 p.m. Eucharist, Abbey Church  
Dinner, SJU Refectory  
**Friday, July 24, Feast!** 6:00 p.m., Butler Center
- 7:00 p.m. Evening Prayer, Abbey Church
- 7:30 p.m. Festival of poetry and song

**Saturday**

- 7:00 a.m. Morning Prayer, Abbey Church  
Breakfast, SJU Refectory or Institute
- 8:30 a.m. *Visio divina* with the Saint John's Bible, Butler Center
- 10:00 a.m. Sharing our books
- 12:00 p.m. Departure

## ***Visio Divina Prayer***

The *visio divina* prayer is a form of *lectio divina*. An excellent online resource for *lectio divina* can be found at: <http://www.valyermo.com/ld-art.html>. The format includes gazing at an image from *The Saint John's Bible* and listening to an accompanying scripture text:

We gaze at the image and listen to the Word (*lectio*)

- *Listen for a word or phrase (contemplatio)*
- *Speak the word or phrase aloud*

We gaze at the image and listen to the Word

- *Share with the group what you see and hear (meditation)*
- *Explore the meaning of what you have encountered*
- *Discuss together, listen attentively*

We gaze at the image and listen to the Word

- *We share a prayer aloud (oratio)*
- *We rest in the silence*

### **Some guidelines for our time together...**

This retreat is designed for group prayer and sharing, in our own group during *lectio/visio divina* prayer each morning and with the monks of Saint John's at daily prayer and Eucharist. It is also a time for personal "work," both your personal prayer as well as artistic work. In order to pray together as well as individually, participants are invited to follow these guidelines:

1. As able, please attend the liturgy of the hours and Eucharist at Saint John's Abbey.
2. We will keep silence from 9:00 p.m. through 8:30 a.m.
3. During our prayer times, listen attentively. Attend to who is speaking. Speak a second time only after everyone has had a chance to share.
4. Consider a moderate fast and holding silence on Thursday, July 23; we will celebrate with poetry and singing in the evening. Please bring something to share.
5. Dress comfortably and be sure to bring walking shoes and bug spray. For those new to the Saint John's campus, you will see from the map that the Collegeville Institute is about a 5-10 minute walk from the Abbey Church. In addition, there are numerous hiking trails in the woods and along the lakes. You may also enjoy swimming in the lake, so bring a swimsuit and towel.
6. Bring a journal and spiritual reading. Each morning after our shared *lectio/visio divina* prayer, there will be time for personal reflection. It is a time intended for quiet writing or reading, though you may use this time however you wish.
7. We have art supplies available but you are also free to bring your own materials.
8. Participants are required to be present for the entire event. Please keep telephone calls and e-mail to a minimum. Please do not leave campus during the retreat.
9. Participants need to depart by noon on Saturday, July 25.
10. Pray for each other.