

The logo features a red cross symbol on the left, with a vertical line extending above and below the horizontal bar. To the right of the cross, the word "Mepkin" is written in a large, elegant, red cursive script. Below "Mepkin", the words "Affiliate Program" are written in a smaller, red, sans-serif font.

Mepkin

Affiliate Program

We, the Mepkin Community, recognize the gift our Cistercian heritage is to us. As we move into the future, we continue to invite others into a lifetime commitment to this way of life while wishing to share this contemplative tradition with a broader community. We offer the opportunity to make a temporary commitment to the Cistercian way of life through our Monastic Guest Program, the Monastic Institute, and the Monastic Residency Program. We see this as a way of continuing and expanding the interspiritual experience we have fostered through the long history of our Monastic Guest Program.

Interspiritual experiences differ from ecumenical or interfaith experiences in that there is a sharing from a more contemplative and experiential level. And so the question becomes not so much “What do you believe?” but “How do you pray?”- “How do you experience God, the Holy, the Sacred?”

This endeavor seeks to respond to “the signs of the times” and the hopes and dreams of those who seek God in the 21st century.

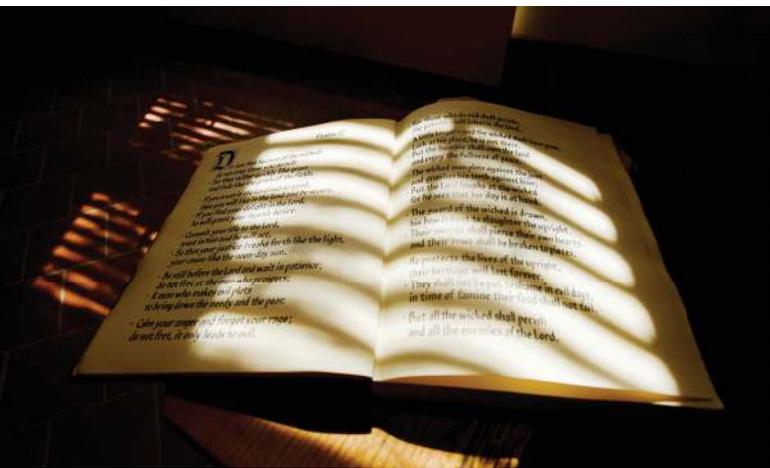


Monastic Institute

During the month of July men and women have the opportunity to fully participate in monastic life as it is lived at Mepkin Abbey through our Monastic Institute. Participants will explore the Rule of Benedict and the Core Elements of Cistercian monastic life and what relevance they may contribute to providing rich interspiritual experiences for those of various religious traditions. They will engage fully in all the activities of the monks: formal prayer seven times a day, personal prayer, manual labor, some community meetings, spiritual companionship, formal classes and contemplative dialogue. The Institute also serves as a requirement to begin the residency program.

For more information or to request an application, contact monasticinstitutemap@gmail.com

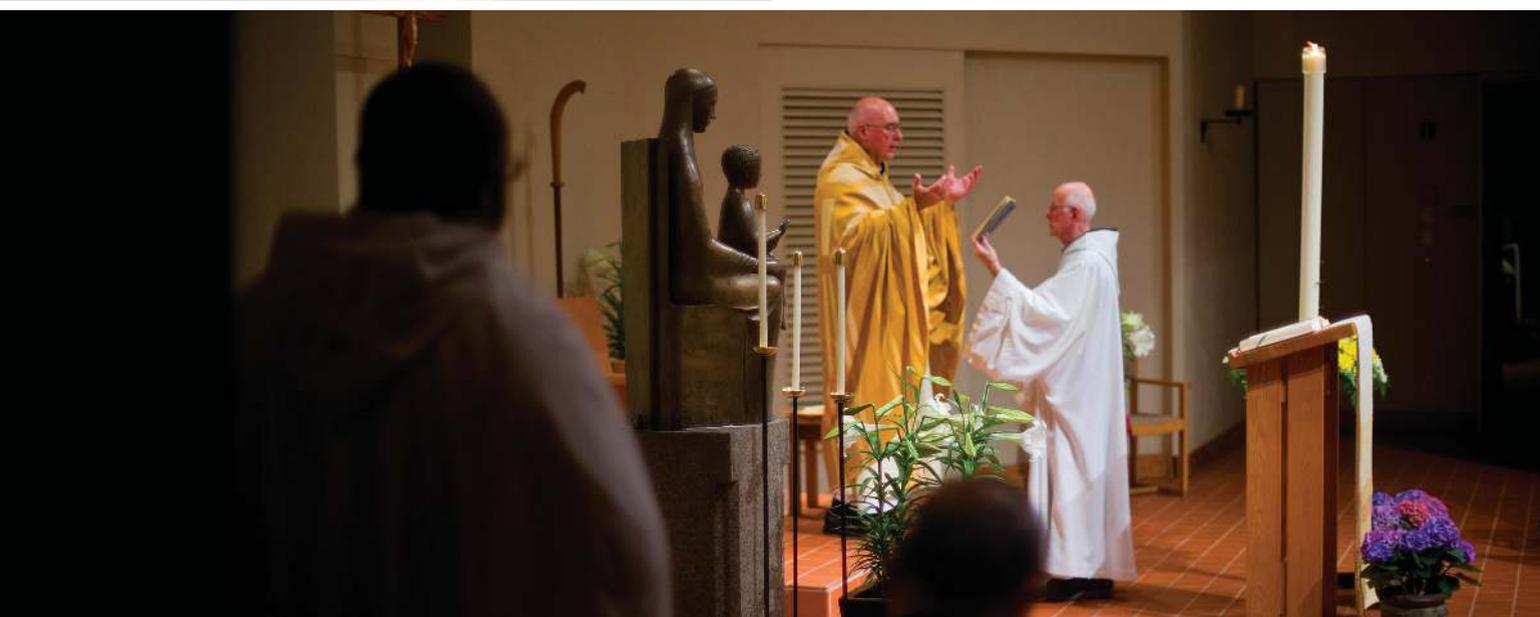


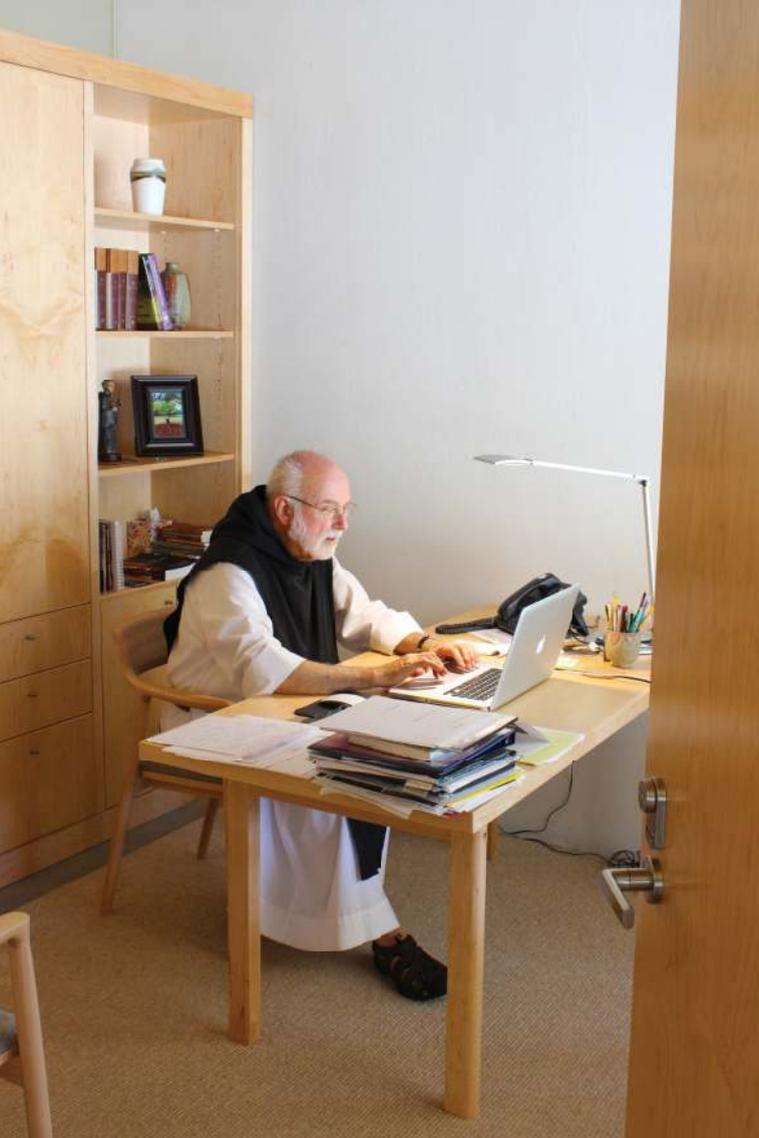


Monastic Guest Program

Mepkin Abbey offers an opportunity for those of any faith tradition to have a month-long immersion experience of monastic life. Monastic Guests come for a sabbatical or often as a personal transition time while sharing fully in the daily routine of monks from Vigils at 3:20 AM to Compline at 7:30 PM. They are provided with a room and private bath within the monastic enclosure.

For more information or to request an application, contact monasticguestmap@gmail.com





Monastic Residency Program

This program, for men of any faith tradition, entails a temporary commitment of a year as an affiliate member of our Mepkin Community, living the Cistercian way of life. Those accepted into the program engage fully in all the activities of the monks. These include, liturgical prayer seven times a day, personal prayer, manual labor, some community meetings, spiritual companionship and formal classes. Those interested are required to attend the Monastic Institute Program.

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For more information or to request an application, contact monasticresidencymap@gmail.com



In his book *Blessed Simplicity*,

Raimundo Panikkar speaks of “monkhood” as a possible human archetype – a constitutive dimension of human life. The monk is one way of realizing this universal archetype. The monk, then, is not the archetype but gives expression to the archetype which Panikkar calls “the search for the center.”

Christian monasticism is a way of life. It is a commitment to the uncompromising search for the Absolute and the readiness to break through all the obstacles on the way. In the path toward the Center, the vows are the means for pilgrimage toward God. Monks adopt a solitary journey beyond the supportive environments of their culture, of social life or even religious traditions. Monasticism is a counter-culture movement that is found in virtually every spiritual tradition. It is a way of life that shows tremendous adaptability to many ways of life, but not everybody is called by God to enter a monastery in a formal sense. Yet within each of us is the “monastic archetype,” a contemplative or spiritual dynamism towards human wholeness found only in God that needs to be cultivated.

Monks become a subculture, indeed a subversive culture, that offers an alternative to the larger, consumer-driven culture, in which we are all immersed. This subculture is a supportive, nurturing environment that allows each person to mature and enjoy a type of human and spiritual flourishing to which the larger culture is unable to lead.

The Mepkin Affiliate Program MAP is our way of reaching out to a great number of our brothers and sisters who experience the need to develop their monastic dimension but cannot do it for they lack a necessary, supportive environment. They may find a spiritual mentor who will help them pursue their growth, but even then they will usually need, at least for a period of time in their lives, a community that models ongoing spiritual growth. This holistic environment provides a space to hold them while realizing that there comes a moment when one has to jump into the dark and search in the great solitude of the heart. There they are not afraid to explore the deep places of the human heart, and find ways to live a more contemplative life in whatever situations they find themselves.