



For Immediate Release

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**Visitation Monastery of Minneapolis Launches Two New Programs:
Internship Program for Young Adults and a Monastic Immersion Experience for Women**

Minneapolis, MN—30 November 2011-- The Visitation Sisters of Minneapolis are launching two new programs within their community: the Visitation Internship Program (VIP), and the Monastic Immersion Experience. The programs are intended to identify ways in which the Sisters can address needs within the north Minneapolis neighborhood in which they live and minister, as well as ways to attract people to their community.

The VIP program, which was successfully launched this fall, is a year-long internship program where participants provide service alongside the Visitation Sisters in north Minneapolis. The Sisters have welcomed two young women as the inaugural participants to the VIP Program. Kelly Schumacher, a Minnesota native and graduate of Augustana College in Illinois, and Beth Anne Cooper, a native of New York and graduate of Hope College in Michigan, are the first two VIP participants. Both young women are immersed in their roles, teaching English as Second Language (ESL) classes to immigrants and refugees, doing advocacy work, working with grade schoolers on both schoolwork and relationship building, coaching youth sports, learning more about restorative justice, and service-learning planning for small groups that include urban immersion experiences.

The Sisters are also in the process of launching the new Monastic Immersion Experience, an opportunity offered by the Sisters to women desiring an in-depth immersion into the monastic life. Through the Monastic Immersion Experience, women are invited to live the monastic life with the Sisters for a period of six months to a year. The Visitation Sisters' engagement with the immersion participants will help keep the Salesian charism fresh and alive while nurturing a desire for prayer and community.

"While commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ is paramount to the lives of many lay persons we know, we recognize that permanent commitment may be 'down the road' for them. Having the opportunity for an in-depth experience of our monastic way of life would, at the very least, give them an opportunity to 'try on' monastic customs and values," said Sister Mary Frances Reis, contact for Visitation's Monastic Immersion Experience.

Each participant is expected to enter fully into the Sisters' life of prayer, presence and ministry during her stay. Prospective participants may come from any Christian faith tradition.

North Minneapolis is an economically challenged area of the Twin Cities, and the Visitation Sisters strive to create a prayerful presence in their neighborhood. Sister Karen Mohan, Visitation Community Leader, said that the Sisters are responding to the needs of those around them: "The Sisters are excited to offer these new opportunities that will allow for us to live out our mission of Living Jesus while welcoming new people into our community."

For more information about the VIP Program, please visit:

<http://www.visitationmonasteryminneapolis.org/visitation-companions/visitation-internship-program-vip/>

For more information about the Monastic Immersion Experience, please visit:

<http://www.visitationmonasteryminneapolis.org/visitation-companions/monastic-immersion-program/>

The Sisters of the Visitation of Minneapolis are centered in a dynamic, extended community in North Minneapolis where they strive to be a faith-filled and whole-hearted proclamation that "Jesus Lives!" They are committed to expressing their Salesian spirituality by offering neighbors peaceful presence, radical hospitality, and participation in regular, frequent prayer. The Sisters live discerning lives in a community of mutual leadership responding to and expressing God's love incarnated in a unique kind of urban monasticism.

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