



Benedictine Bits

Saint John's Pottery



Home for over 40-years on the Saint John's campus, the pottery studio embodies the Benedictine value of stewardship in multiple aspects. Each work of art created at Saint John's Pottery is fabricated from the use of local and natural substances, from the harvested clay, to materials utilized in the firing process. Logs used to fire and stoke the flames are gleaned from the Abbey Arboretum and selected based on the duration and temperature at which they burn. Even the kiln used to fire the pottery was built with recycled brick.

To complete their creations, up to 12,000 works of art are carefully hand placed into the Johanna Kiln, named in honor of Sister Johanna Becker of Saint Benedict's Monastery. Sister Johanna was a renowned historian, scholar, and teacher of Asian art, closely mentoring master potter, Richard Bresnahan who has served as pottery director since 1979. Gathering in community every other fall, around 60 volunteers work together to successfully fire and stoke North America's largest wood burning kiln, burning consecutively for ten days.

Of course, Benedictine hospitality is evident throughout the framework of Saint John's Pottery. From the reception of visiting scholars, mentoring students, welcoming guests, and inviting them for daily tea, all guests are welcomed as Christ. As stated in Matthew 25:35,

"I was a stranger and you welcomed Me."