

Saint John's Abbey is a Benedictine monastery in Collegeville Township, Minnesota, affiliated with the American-Cassinense Congregation. The abbey was established following the arrival in the area of monks from Saint Vincent Archabbey in Pennsylvania in 1856. Saint John's is one of the largest Benedictine abbeys in the Western Hemisphere, with 133 professed monks. In 1856, five monks of Saint Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, arrived in St. Cloud, Minnesota, at the behest of Joseph Crétin, Bishop of St. Paul. They established the priory there and began to minister to the German immigrants in central Minnesota. One of the first ministries of the new community was Saint John's College, which would come to be known as Saint John's Preparatory School. In 1862 the community moved some miles west, into the wooded area of the valley, and again in 1865 to the shores of Lake Sagatagan. It was in this location that the community began to flourish, and in 1866 the priory was raised to the status of Abbey. A school founded at the abbey grew into Saint John's University in 1883.

By the early 1950s the monastic community had reached nearly 450 monks, and had outgrown the original abbey Church and so plans were made to construct a new, larger worship space which could accommodate a larger congregation. The liturgical movement which would culminate in the Second Vatican Council was in full swing at Saint John's and so the new church was also to be designed with some of the anticipated liturgical changes in mind. In 1954 the community selected Marcel Breuer to design not only the new church but an addition to the monastic enclosure. The monastic choir stalls and Abbot's throne were placed in a less traditional semi-circular shape around the main altar, which also served to invite the congregation closer. The Church was designed so that even with a capacity of over 1500, the entire community was able to feel like they were intimately involved in the liturgy. Perhaps the most striking part of the design was the facade and bell tower, which itself was shaped like a large bell and sat suspended over the main entrance of the Church. The "banner" rises 112 vertical feet in front of the Church and houses 5 bells which sound the hours and call the monastic and university communities to prayer. Construction of the church began on May 19, 1958, and lasted until August 24, 1961. The church was consecrated in the fall of 1961 and serves to this day as the principal liturgical space of both the monastic community and the university. The monastic community gathers for morning prayer, midday prayer, Mass, and evening prayer every weekday and (except for rare occasions) these liturgies are open to the public. On the weekends there is not public midday prayer. All liturgical events in the Abbey Church are broadcast on the Abbey website, as well as through the Saint John's University on-campus cable system. In addition to the preparatory school, the abbey also established Saint John's University, which was connected to the abbey itself by "the Quadrangle", at the time the largest building west of the Mississippi River dedicated to education. The north facade of the building is the largest wall of stained glass in the world and contains 430 colorful hexagons of abstract design. The abbey also operates Liturgical Press, one of the foremost liturgical publishing houses in the United States. Also located on the grounds of the abbey are the Collegeville Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research, the Episcopal House of Prayer (Diocese of Minnesota), the original Minnesota Public Radio studio, and the Saint John the Baptist Parish Center. The 2,500-acre grounds of the abbey comprise lakes, prairie, and hardwoods on rolling glacial moraine, and have been designated Saint John's Arboretum. The Abbey Church, with its banner bell tower, is one Marcel Breuer's best-known works. In its undercroft is a chapel that contains the relics of Saint Peregrine.

A historic district of 17 buildings at Saint John's Abbey and University was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 for having national significance in the themes of architecture, community planning and development, education, and religion. It was nominated for being an architecturally and historically significant campus of a leading religious and educational institution of the Order of Saint Benedict. Outside of St. John's, the abbey's monks serve 16 parishes along with various nursing homes and hospitals in the Diocese of Saint Cloud and in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. A sister priory of Saint John's, Trinity Benedictine Monastery, is located in Fujimi, Japan. The abbey's Hill Museum & Manuscript Library houses the world's largest collection of manuscript images. This library is also the home of The Saint John's Bible, the first completely handwritten and illuminated Bible to have been commissioned by a Benedictine monastery since the invention of the printing press.