

## Solemnity of St. Benedict, Patriarch of Western Monasticism

July 11, 2019

Reflection by Prioress, Sister Judith Murphy, OSB

Proverbs 2: 1-9; Ephesians 6:10-13, 18; MT 19:27-29

Today is truly a day to celebrate: --St. Benedict and Scholastica, his sister

--monasticism and our monastic life

--our Jubilarians, and their lives lived in this community

### St. Benedict

What we know about Benedict is primarily distilled from the Rule he wrote. The Rule of Benedict manifests a compassionate and humane writer.

This Rule is not based on legalism, or extreme asceticism. It is based on **love for the community, care for those in need, and respect for individual need and decision-making**. Joan Chittister, OSB says: *In a lifestyle that stresses simplicity of life, the preservation of life lived so humanely remains paramount*. Balance, perhaps considered a modern discovery, is evident right there in Benedict's Rule.

Benedict was a leader steeped in Scripture and in the Eucharistic community. In the Eucharistic community, there is the Incarnation reaching all creation. Our life also is steeped in Scripture and Eucharist and community, which continue to form each of us throughout our lifetimes. Today's readings must have been familiar to Benedict. **Proverbs** is reflected in Benedict's call to *listen to wisdom with the ear of your heart*: he says, *treasure my commands*. Benedict calls his followers to **intelligence and understanding**, to pursue and seek wisdom like hidden treasure. Like the Ephesians we are called to "*hold our ground, armed and in readiness for the gospel of peace*." "**Armed for the gospel of peace**" // the wording holds dynamic tension that calls us to faith.

In our community retreat at the end of June, Anne McCarthy suggested that to understand the legacy of a community, it helps to look to Jubilarians we celebrate.

Each of these women: **Sisters Vivian, Ann, Eleanore, Patricia and Mariella manifests our legacy**. Each one is formed in Scripture and in the Word made flesh. In the

local church that is this community we join together to discern the action of God in Scriptures and in Eucharist, // and to join in the work they impel us to.

Think of the many lives these women have touched in their lifetime, in their families, in their work, in this community. Each one formed and living out her recognizably distinct life and style—sharing herself, // sharing herself where there is need. Supported and affirmed by family and friends, still recognized as her own unique **self**, yet unaccountably changed, each in her own distinct way. ---- consecrating the world by faith; // in fidelity communicating with the world. Such is the giving of God: it gives human beings the power to give ourselves. Each, as Teilhard put it, still a part of the evolving universe, ...the clay still between the hands of the Creator // shaping immeasurable possibilities according to the creative will. Formed, and still themselves—engaged with the world.

And trusting in the Jesus Christ of today's gospel: How is one to gain eternal life (**or, better stated) fullness of life? // Come and see.**

What is our community's legacy? Who knows how each of these women interacted with the divine alchemy of grace in her life? How each one accepted the Rule of Benedict // and community life to become who she is? How each personality and character, in her own distinct way, ...consecrates the world by faith, and in fidelity communicates with the world.

Each one ----**running in the way of God's commands.**

The closing lines of our gathering hymn this morning put it:

***May we awaken to the life by which we live! We stand together now in joyful gratitude.***

**This is truly a day to celebrate!**