

R3. The only desire that moves Saint Benedict is to please only God. His election by God is complete.

R4. Benedict ends up in Enfide with his nurse who tenderly accompanies him. His nurse is the only link that connects him to his past. But he knows where he is going. Normally we do not take anyone with us when we enter the monastery. Once again, God asks him to resign: Benedict breaks with his past by separating from his nurse.

R5. The Lord uses everything, even the “broken sieve” to get something. Faced with the temptation of pride, his renunciation is to flee from his nurse and look for another path. He escapes the wave of admiration and becomes a monk, wanting to please only God.

Animator: The cave looks like the desert. Being in the desert was Benedict's desire when leaving Rome. Like Jesus, Benedict seeks to mature and become a man of God. In the cave, he faces himself, his thoughts, desires and needs. He knows how to channel his energies. It took three years for Benedict to become “one” with himself, with God and with men.

R1. Saint Benedict sought holiness throughout his life. Saint Benedict's life was deeply marked by radicalism, the definitive break with the pleasures of the world, profound spirituality, extraordinary prodigies and fearless spiritual battle.

SONG: to Saint Benedict

Instrumental Music – silence – Reflexion

Animator: In Benedictine spirituality, so to speak, methods of great importance emerged to help in the deepening of Christians who seek to live their baptism with radicalism, as well as in the vocational discernment of those who still seek to live that same radicalism.

R1. Pope Paul VI repeatedly recalled that the monk has, in the Church, a special and distinct function, which consists of being a presence, a sign that exerts a secret fascination, only for the fact of being a contrast, whose example provokes amazement at his way of acting while being present with God and among men, which is prayer.

R2. The Monastic life exercises “radiation” and has the function of bearing witness to an invisible presence and reminding the world, constantly distanced from God, that this presence that transcends all realities is alive and active among us.

R3. The monk is one who chose to live his baptism radically; he is an ordinary Christian, who lives, in the monastery, the common Christian life, but in the greatest perfection, in fullness. Leave everything else aside, forget about all interests to be a Christian and live in search of God. He is someone who seeks to be what his name indicates – a man of God.

L4. “Therefore, nothing comes before the Divine Office.” With these words of Saint Benedict, we can understand the importance of the Divine Office in the life of the monk and in our LIFE as Benedictine Sisters of Divine Providence. Along with work and Lectio Divina, the common celebration of the Divine Office is one of the main activities; it is part of an entire life consecrated to God. Indeed, for the monk, the love of God is translated, above all, by continuous prayer, of which the Divine Office is the main act and the strongest support.

Dir.: The Office also greatly influences his spirituality, since the monk feeds on the Word of God and allows it to be part of his life.

Psalmody

Instrumental Music – silence – Reflexion

Animator: Every act of the monk must be a response to the Word of God contained in the Holy Scriptures, the living voice of God, which speaks to him daily. We call this daily encounter with the Word Lectio Divina, which literally means “divine reading.” It is a prayerful reading of the Word, a spiritual reading, as done in the Spirit and by the Spirit. Lectio Divina is, above all, a dialogue with God, intimate, personal and, at the same time, ecclesial.

R1. In Lectio Divina, the monk listens to the Word of God and responds to it in prayer, but for this to happen an attitude of listening, humility and openness of heart is necessary. It is divided into a few main steps: reading, meditation, prayer and contemplation.

Animator: The Word of God is the vital food to nourish our spirituality and truly be the Benedictine Sisters of Divine Providence that the Father desires. As our Constitutions say in Art. 72: “The Sister should be very attentive in listening to the Word of God, by applying herself faithfully to spiritual reading and continuing to listen to the inspirations that God communicates through creation, the events of daily life, encounter with others and interior inspiration (...) allowing herself to be guided by the Word of God, which is the essential element for the deepening of the divine dialogue and a necessary for the contemplative-apostolic vocation of the Sister.” (Const. Art. 70)

ACCLAMATION SONG
WORD OF GOD: Mt 13, 44-46

Instrumental Music – silence – Reflexion

Animator: To enter the Kingdom a total decision is necessary. He is wise who, having discovered this “Treasure,” “sells” everything else, to acquire it. Between the temporal and the essential, we must choose the best part, which is being with the Lord. The one who guarantees us victory, the Kingdom of God, manifested by Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Saint Benedict placed the person and the Gospel of Jesus as the most important realities of his life. He lived for Jesus, with Jesus and for the things of the Kingdom of God. With this, he saw people and the world in a different way.

(Present written on cardboard the word: HUMILITY)

R2. One of the pillars of Benedictine spirituality is humility. The monks seek to live humility to follow Jesus Christ “meek and lowly in heart” (Mt 11, 29).

All: Humility is the surest way to be able to carry out, daily, our life of conversion to God. It is by following Jesus' path of “abasement” that we can grow in charity.

(Present written on cardboard the word: WORK)

R1. The Work is important for the monk, to be able to sustain himself, as Saint Benedict tells us, and to guarantee his separation from the world. It is the fruit of his hands offered to God in the Eucharistic sacrifice. It is a testimony, to the extent that it shows the world that work dignifies man, also helping him to develop the social and moral virtues, essential for a life of prayer.

All: Work is an instrument to be used in a specific mission to restore everything in Christ. United to Christ, we redeem the world through our work, consecrated to God.

(Present written on cardboard the word: OBEDIENCE)

R3. Another important pillar of the Benedictine spirituality is obedience. The monks seek to live it to follow Christ, who became “obedient to death – and death on a cross!” The monk seeks to obey the Abbot and his brothers in order to fulfil the will of God in everything.

All: The Obedience is an instrument on our path of conversion to God. Through obedience, we learn to abandon our own desires and adhere to the will of the Lord, who always wants the best for each of us.

SONG: to Saint Benedict

All: Oh glorious Patriarch Saint Benedict, who well understood the importance of converting all peoples to the Christian faith, protect and bless our missions, of which we have chosen you as a special patron. Ensure that our Missionary Sisters are always animated by a true apostolic spirit and know how to unite contemplation with their apostolic activities, always seeking to build the Kingdom of peace, justice and love. Awaken, glorious Saint Benedict, in the hearts of our Sisters, the missionary spirit and make our Congregation a true Cenacle, where, in prayer and work, your program "Ora et Labora" it is fully realized. Help our Sisters, so that all of them, even in the midst of the dangers and difficulties of unknown lands, can always persevere in the service of the Lord, remaining faithful until the end of their days. Amen.

Final Song: to Saint Benedict

MOMENTS OF PERSONAL PRAYER



Dear Sister, Saint Benedict made the Subiaco cave a place to be born again, integrating his being, his relationship with God, facing all the challenges. In silence and prayer, he became firm and strong in faith. He learned that the most important thing in life is to put oneself entirely in the hands of God.

Just as Saint Benedict retired to Subiaco, eager to find God, so you are also invited to retreat to silence and prayer, listening to the Father with the ear of a disciple, letting yourself be led by Him.

TO PRAY...

First Moment

Looking at the Life of Saint Benedict

Saint Benedict placed the person and the Gospel of Jesus as the most important realities of his life. He lived for Jesus, with Jesus and for the things of the Kingdom of God. With this, he saw people and the world in a different way. He gave the highest value to Jesus, letting go of

everything that occupied its place in his heart. He learned to empty himself of everything to fill himself with God.

The Word of God that Saint Benedict lived: Phil 3, 7 – 9

What did I have or have to lose for Jesus?

Second Moment

Looking at the Life of Saint Benedict

Saint Benedict initially experienced loneliness, the deep silence of listening to God, himself and the world. And he discovered the value of life in community, together with his brothers of the same ideal. God does not want us alone, but always in communion with our brothers: together, sharing life, faith. Together, traveling the paths of life, helping each other, sharing forgiveness, being servants of each other.

The Word of God that Saint Benedict lived: Eph 4, 27, 30 – 32; 5, 1 - 2

To whom do I owe evangelical love?

Do I live in love?

Third Moment

Looking at the Life of Saint Benedict

Saint Benedict fought the sins of the tongue with all his energy. The murmur of someone who is never happy with anything. Nothing works for him/her. Murmur that undermines the peace of the community and sows division and unrest among members. And the disrespectful comments about other people's lives, for which we throw them into the gutter, killing them in some way. He called these individuals "burrows that eat away at the peace of the Lord."

The Word of God that Saint Benedict lived: James 3, 2 - 9

Whom am I harming by misusing my language?

Fourth Moment

Looking at the Life of Saint Benedict

Saint Benedict always sought holiness. Even within a life somehow distanced from God, he felt a deep attraction for him. This made him leave everything and begin to follow a more determined path in the direction where God wanted to take him. He went to the desert, lived in solitude and prayer. He then joined a community of brothers, becoming their spiritual Father. He lived there until his death.

The Word of God that Saint Benedict lived: Lk 19, 1 – 6

Zacchaeus did everything he could to go and meet Jesus and stay with Him. And what do I do?

Fifth Moment

Looking at the Life of Saint Benedict

God blessed Saint Benedict with many gifts. One of them was to look into hearts, to know their feelings. Another is the gift of knowing the future. He also had the gift of compunction: he was deeply aware of sin and felt great regret for it. His was also the gift of tears: an expression of pain for evil or of uncontrollable joy at the revelations of God in his life, in the life of the world.

The Word of God that Saint Benedict lived: 1 Cor 12, 4 - 11

God gave me gifts to put at the service of the community. Which are? How do I use them?

Sixth Moment

Looking at the Life of Saint Benedict

May the Holy Cross be my light! Do not be the dragon my guide!

Be gone from me, Satan; do not persuade me of vain things!

What you suggest is bad! Drink your own poison!

The Word of God that Saint Benedict lived: Mk 8, 22 – 25

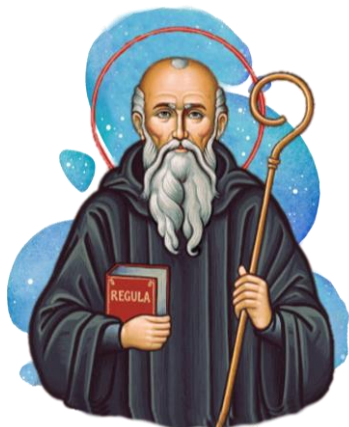
Whom do I need to bring to Jesus to see?

Do I accept that others lead me to Jesus?

What signs does God use to meet me?

At the end of the day, make your commitments to live them during this month.

FINAL CELEBRATION



Animator: Benedict by grace and by name, from childhood he had the heart of an adult and, wanting to please only God, he listened to the Lord, who was looking for his worker. Saint Benedict, overcoming the excitements of the spirit, travelled hard and rough paths, embarked on the narrow path that leads to life.

Saint Benedict, leading a solitary life, managed to keep his heart open only to God. Moved solely by the love of God, he gathered other men, with whom, as a father, he placed himself in the school of the Lord's service.

On this day, we are invited to contemplate his figure as a master of listening to the Word of God, of deep and persevering listening. We must always learn from this great Saint to give God the place he deserves in our lives: the first place, offering him, with prayer, our daily activities.

Celebrating the person of Saint Benedict is praising God for his life, venerating him, loving him and imitating his way of loving and serving Jesus.

SONG: to Saint Benedict

Instrumental Music – Silence

A person enters with a lit candle and says: “Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” (Lk 14, 11)

(The lit candle is placed next to the word humility)

Animator: By speaking this way, Jesus shows us that all exaltation is a kind of pride. It is because of a lack of humility that, for many, prayer does not produce fruit. This happens because we do not enquire into the reality that we are poor and indisputably need God.

R1: We do not accept to stop being masters of the situation and leave everything in the hands of God.

R2: We pray many times, but we do not leave aside our own security, our points of view to give way to the will of God, and we always reserve ourselves to the action of the Spirit.

Animator: It is necessary to open oneself to the grace of God; letting God act in us... that is also humility. We need to recognize that we are dust and to dust we will return and that our life belongs only to God.

All: It should not be said anything I can offer; because the poorest hands are the ones that open the most to give all.

Animator: Humility is not simply the confession of one's own errors; it is, before that, the attitude of looking at God and valuing the abyss that separates us; I being finite and He being infinite.

R1: Humility is a means to become aware of one's own spiritual situation, because it is about being true to oneself.

Instrumental Music – Silence

A person enters with a lit candle and says: “Whoever does not want to work, should not eat either... we urge that, while working, they eat their own bread in peace.” (2Ts 3)

(The lit candle is placed next to the word work)

Animator: Another way in which Saint Benedict teaches us to live holiness is through humble and responsible work. Working to live modestly, in addition to earning a living, helps us establish the limits of an austere life. We want to experience work as a blessing, despite the weight and fatigue it entails, despite the uncertainty faced with the difficulties of daily subsistence. Therefore, we look at the mystery surrounding the House of Nazareth.

R1. We are certain that nothing that Jesus, Mary and Joseph experienced in it, not even the smallest gesture, ceased to be fruitful for the Salvation of the world.

R2. Everything there sprang from the dynamism of a love without limits. Looking at the Holy Family, we become aware of the missionary dimension of our work. When we assume responsibility, in response to a mission, in free and joyful obedience, then the work becomes missionary.

All: Go and work for the world, I will be with you until the end. It is time, the Lord called me: Lord, here I am!

Animator: Saint Benedict was the man of work. In his life, we see him dedicated to working for several hours. Work is part of a man's life. It will be up to us to give the work direction, the true meaning, making it a noble mission.

R1. Saint Benedict said that to be a true monk you must live by the work of your hands. In his rule, he has precisely fixed the hours in which the monks will wander in reading divine things and the hours in which they will perform the necessary work. These works are numerous in a monastery.

R2. May Saint Benedict teach us the love and dedication to work, even if it is difficult, so that we can be agents of transformation of the society.

R3. Work is an excellent time to meditate. While our hands are busy, we can praise God with our mouth or with our heart. This is a means of keeping our soul serene and asking Him to lead our activity to a good conclusion.

All: (Singing) Incline the ear of your heart. From a pious father get a lesson: pray and work, it is his law! Let us all serve the same King.

Instrumental Music – Silence

A person enters with a lit candle and says: “The Son can do nothing for himself except what he sees his Father doing. What He does, the Son also does, because the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he does.” (Jn 5, 19)

(The lit candle is placed next to the word obedience)

Animator: For Saint Benedict, obedience is the virtue of those who have nothing more dear than Christ.

R1. The Obedience establishes self-renunciation, thus favouring union with God.

R2. The foundation of obedience is not found in a word of Christ, but in an attitude that He Himself practiced, that is, His own being.

R3. In itself, obedience is directed only to God, because it consists of renouncing to do one's own will, renouncing to follow one's own inclinations and desires, renouncing to organize one's life according to his will, and thus meriting to perceive and discern the will of God. God, what He judges to be good, pleasing and perfect.

Animator: The Obedience is not a destruction of the person or the freedom, but rather its highest concretization. In this way, the soul, freed from its own will, allows God to act in it to carry out His work.

All: (singing) Listen, my son: is the Father who speaks. At the voice of God, the man keep silent.

Animator: The Obedience is a very valuable instrument on our path of conversion to God.

R1. Through obedience, we learn to abandon our own desires and adhere to the will of the Lord, who always wants the best for each of us.

R2. The Obedience is an act of faith, which does not exclude the freedom of those who obey, but rather presupposes it. Only someone who is entirely free can abandon himself in the hands of the Father, seeking to fulfil his will.

All: (Singing) Incline the ear of your heart. From a pious father get your lesson: to pray and work, it is his law! Let us all serve the same King.

Animator: For Saint Benedict, the Lord himself shows us the “way of life”, that is, the Gospel. It is necessary to walk this path, travel along it. So, if you hear his voice today, do not harden your heart.

Word of God: Phil 3, 7 – 9

Sharing the Retreat

Song: to Saint Benedict

Final Payer:

All: God, our Father, grant us, following the example of Saint Benedict, the grace to imitate him throughout his life, so that we can put Jesus Christ, our way, truth and life, at the centre of our hearts. May we be firm and faithful in the ways of Christ poor, humble and obedient, and thus faithfully follow our Christian vocation and achieve the perfection that we set out to achieve in Jesus Christ.

A hug of Peace