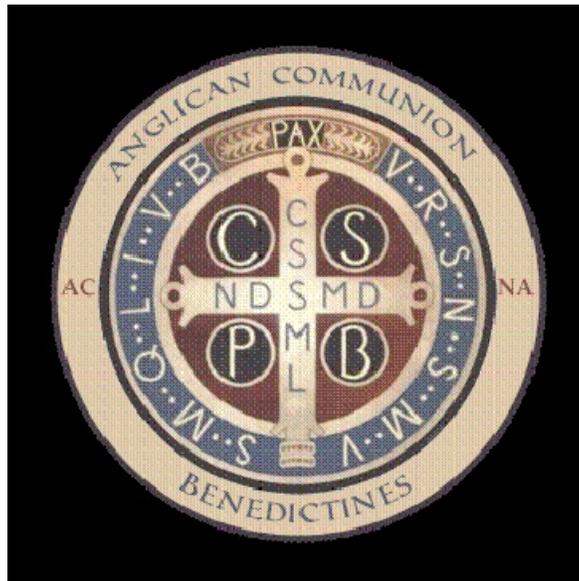


Handbook of the

Order of St. Benedict

Anglican Communion Benedictines



A Handbook For Members and Inquirers

The Venerable Patrick W. Malone, OSB Abbot

June, 2017 Edition

Our Leadership *

• The Venerable Patrick W. Malone, OSB Abbot

• Sis. Jeanie Drake, OSB, Porter

Rev. Justin Baldwin, OSB, Prior and Liturgist1

• Bro. Dorrence Stovall, OSB, Prior of the Tennessee Region, Treasurer

• The Rev. Canon Michael Pomeroy, OSB, Prior of St. Francis House

• The Very Rev. Dr Katherine Mary Martin, OSB, Abbess, (Retired)

• The Right Rev. Felix Orji, Bishop Protector

*As of May, 2017

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Introduction and Purpose

The purpose of the Anglican Communion Benedictines (“the Order”) is to make our Lord Jesus Christ known and loved as we form Christian men and women in the Benedictine Tradition.

The ACB is a Christian, Third Order community of clergy, religious and laity. Our ministry of prayer is the holy prayers of the Divine Office, also called the Divine Hours. We pray with special concern for the bishops of the Anglican Church of North America and for those who request prayer for themselves or others. We are bound together for the purpose of fellowship, prayer support, encouragement, spiritual growth and development, and service. We have a common desire to know more about monastic life and spirituality and how to live it in our daily lives in the world.

As a disbursed order we are part of the *New Monasticism* envisioned and written about by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Our members serve Christ and one another in their communities and under our understanding of the Rule of Saint Benedict. We are guided by, and part of, the Benedictine tradition.

The Order seeks to be faithful to our vows of **Obedience, Stability and Conversion**. We seek to live a full Benedictine spirituality; to love and serve God; to seek and share the truth of the Gospel; to build toward a world of peace, and godly love.

The Order admits into membership those people called to serve God and His creation in a variety of ways. Since we do not live in a monastery, we live our chosen Benedictine charisms in the daily life of the world. We have vocations that are both religious and secular. We each have active forms of ministry and exercise our spiritual gifts and talents as the Lord enables us to do so.

The Order is open to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and who hold traditional Christian values, as well as believe in the supreme authority of Holy Scripture and who are members of a church in the Anglican tradition. Oblates need not be Anglican. We seek fellowship with Christians, regardless of denominational affiliations, who have a desire to connect to the historic, apostolic church and its traditions. We are tradition rich, but not tradition bound.

You may serve as a fully professed member of the Order or you may serve as a non-professed Oblate of the Order. If you are a member of the clergy, you may have status as either a full member or associate member. This will be determined during the application process. Because we are Episcopal in structure, there are some requirements and restrictions regarding clergy affiliation for those clergy not in the Anglican Communion.

Our Charism

Our Charism (gift and mission from God) is prayer and a spiritual formation of cruciform conversion. Our ministry of prayer is the holy prayers of the Divine Office, also called the Divine

Hours. We pray for the special concern of the bishops of the Anglican Church of North America and for those who request prayer for themselves or others.

A part of this ministry of prayer is spiritual formation. Our spiritual formation is for those who are not satisfied with their own prayer life, their own Christian walk and desire a more faithful Christian life. Our formation process is cruciform, or cross shaped. This cruciform formation is to help the vowed member to apply the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus to their lives.

Our Faith

As an Anglican order we submit to the catholic and apostolic faith as understood in the Creeds of the Church, the 39 Articles of Religion of the Anglican Communion, and the Jerusalem Declaration. The Order of Anglican Communion Benedictines is a monastic order of the Anglican Church of North America.

The Rule of the Anglican Communion Benedictines

Preface

A rule of life offers people a plan for living a balanced, simple, and prayerful life. A Benedictine rule of life offers monastics a life of ora et labora (work and prayer), and a means toward the opus dei (work of God), a life focused on the divine work of prayer. A rule of life also aids the monastic as a means to fulfill their vows of stability, conversion, and obedience in day to day life.

Our Rule for the Glory of the Father, and for His Son Jesus Christ and for the Holy Spirit is:

- To live a life of prayer, praying at least three Offices daily, using those offices and prayer books approved by my Abbot;
- To live out my vows made before my Abbot or his designee, specifically to obey, to live in stability and conversion toward Christ;
- To pursue a life of manifest humility in honor of our patron, St. Benedict;
- To live a life that promotes sexual purity in the station in which I live, and to work and pray to end abortion;
- To pray daily for those lists of bishops given to me;
- To conform my life to the holy Rule of St. Benedict in all areas that apply in my life and context;
- To give as appropriately, to the Order, my local parish, and those in need, of both time and treasure;
- To labor six of seven days toward a life of simplicity and to help those whom God has called me to love, and to take a holy rest on the Lord's Day;
- To avail myself to hearing Christ-centered weekly exposition of the Holy Scriptures;
- To live out a life of conformity to the reality of my Baptism into the mystical Body of Christ;
- To participate at least weekly in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist;
- To join the rest of my Order as we gather in prayer each month;
- To work toward a beginning and then supporting a Chapter House in my parish;
- To promote and live out a life of hospitality where ever possible.

A Benedictine's Daily Way of Life

As members of the Order, we observe a common way of life that binds us together. We all live in our own social and cultural circumstances. Since we do not live in a monastery, we do not follow the same rigorous schedule of prayer, work, worship, rest, and recreation that those in cloistered monastic life often follow. As a secular Third Order then, we seek to set some standards that allow us to identify daily as monastics and to spiritually fellowship with Brothers and Sisters of the Order from whom we are physically separated.

In setting forth a Daily Way of Life, it is our desire to follow the path of our holy father St. Benedict, who in the Prologue to his Rule writes:

“Therefore we intend to establish a school for the Lord’s service. In drawing up its regulations, we hope to set down nothing harsh, nothing burdensome. The good of all concerned, however, may prompt us to a little strictness in order to amend faults and to safeguard love. Do not be daunted immediately by fear and run away from the road that leads to salvation.” What is set down in this chapter is to be the goal of all members of the Order, both professed and non-professed unless otherwise indicated. It is understood that it may take time and self discipline to achieve some of these practices. You should not beat yourself up if you fail or fall behind. Rather, you pray for more grace and more power from the Holy Spirit to continue on. We are all sinners saved by grace and all fall short of perfection.

PRAYER AND DEVOTION

Prayer is the foundation of the Order. It is expected that all members will heed the words of St. Paul who said, “Pray continually” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). However, there are certain prayers that we are to strive for on a daily basis as the minimum.

The Daily Office

Members are to say at least two of the offices each day. Morning and Evening Prayer are the preferred offices, however, Noonday and Compline may be substituted as necessary to accommodate one’s schedule. We are to keep in mind that we are not to parade our righteous acts before men, as did the Pharisees. Your work schedule or place of employment may not be conducive to your reciting one of the offices. However, you may be able to recite a rosary such as the Anglican Rosary. You may also be able to recite a Marian rosary using an inconspicuous single decade pocket rosary or finger rosary. However, you should strive to recite at least one major office each day.

Suggested Resources for the Offices

- *The Book of Common Prayer* 1928 or ACNA editions
- *Celebrating Common Prayer* (Society of Saint Francis) – see website. acb-acna.org
- *St. Benedict’s Prayer Book*
- *Christian Prayer: The Liturgy of the Hours* (one volume edition)
- *Shorter Christian Prayer*
- *The Divine Hours* (a 3 volume set by Phyllis Tickle)
- *The Glenstal Book of Prayer*

- *St. Augustine's Prayer Book*
- *Celtic Daily Prayer*
- *The Anglican Breviary* (not for the faint at heart!)
- *A Pocket Prayer Book for Orthodox Christians*

If you are new to saying the Daily Office, there is an excellent course offered by St. Andrews Theological College and Seminary called Personal Spiritual Development that deals with praying the Daily Office. It is an excellent introduction. The course is on CD ROM. If you are interested in this, please contact the Abbot for details.

The Rosary

All members are to recite the Anglican Rosary weekly, preferably on Wednesdays or Fridays. This serves as a common point of unity during the middle of the week. Daily recitation, if possible, is recommended. Emphasis is upon the Jesus Prayer portion of the Rosary and seeking forgiveness and repentance for one's sins. Some members may also wish to recite a traditional Roman Catholic Marian Rosary. This is acceptable but should not take the place of the Anglican Rosary on Wednesdays or Fridays.

FASTING

Fasting has always been an integral part of monastic life. Members of the Order should set aside the first Friday of each month as a day of prayer and fasting for the needs of the Order and the intentions of the members. You might choose to abstain from all solid foods or from meat. You might choose to only have one small meal that day. However, the particulars of the fast are left up to the individual brother or sister.

Members are strongly encouraged to set apart one half day each week for fasting. Again, the particulars are left up to the individual.

The Lenten fast is to be observed by all members. Prior to the beginning of Lent, all members should submit their proposed fast to the Abbot for blessing. The purpose of the submission is so the Abbot may offer encouragement and support and also pray wisely for each member during Lent. The proposal should not only contain the negative aspect – what you are giving up – but also the positive aspect as well – what you are going to replace it with. A typical Lenten fast might look something like this:

"I am going to abstain from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays. I am going to give up all soft drinks. I am going to memorize the 119th Psalm. I am going to go through my clothes and belongings and sort out the things I don't need and give them to the local shelter. I will receive the Eucharist daily."

Other days or periods of fasting may be called as determined by the Episcopal Visitor or the Abbot.

SILENCE

Our days are often hectic, filled with responsibilities, cares, worries, anxieties, appointments, disappointments, tension, and frustration. We need a calming influence in our lives and a time in which we just stop and listen to God speak to us in His still, quiet voice. All members of the Order are strongly encouraged to set aside a time each day in silence for quiet reflection, contemplation, study, and continued prayer.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Unless it is not possible, all members are expected to receive the Eucharist weekly. However, some of our members come from a church background where the Eucharist, or Holy Communion, is not celebrated weekly. These members are expected to receive the Eucharist whenever their respective parish celebrates it.

For those who cannot receive the Eucharist weekly, it is suggested that each Lord's Day the brother or sister participate in an Act of Spiritual Communion. The brother or sister sets aside a time during which the Anglican Rosary is prayed and then a prayer such as the following is also said:

*“My Jesus,
I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.”*

SPIRITUAL GROWTH REPORTS

Each member should submit an annual spiritual growth report to the Abbot or his designee on or about March 11th. The report should cover the previous year and should contain information relating to one's spiritual growth such as reflections, how one is pursuing one's chosen charism, any doubts you have experienced and how they were overcome, needs you are facing, significant ministry events and blessings, etc.

The purpose of the report is to help the leadership of the Order to better know how they may help the brothers and sisters of the Order through prayer, encouragement, resources, and so forth. This report should not be the same type of ministry report that a clergy member normally provides to his or her bishop.

CLOTHING AND IDENTIFIERS

Each member should wear some type of visible identifier on his or her person each day.

Acceptable items would include, but not be restricted to:

- St. Benedict medals
- St. Benedict Medal Cross
- Benedictine lapel pin
- Cross necklace or ring
- Profession cross

The identifier would preferably be something that identifies the member as a Benedictine.

We understand that some members may have vocations such as military or law enforcement where it is not possible or permissible to wear some type of identifier. In this circumstance the brother or sister is released from wearing an identifier although he or she may wish to wear it under his or her clothing.

Monastic Habit

Full habits are only worn by fully professed members of the Order.

Albs can be purchased from any major religious goods supplier. Tunic scapulars may be purchased from the Robert Gaspard Company at 1-800-784-6868 or you can visit their web site at www.robertgaspardco.com, or <http://www.monksandnunshabits.com/menu1/index2.html> Scroll down to item ML20 or ML21. The scapular should be 12 inches shorter than the tunic.

Wearing of the Monastic Habit:

- Aspirant: N/A
 - Postulant: N/A
 - Novice: tunic, white cincture and Benedictine medallion.
 - Juniorate: tunic, black cincture and Benedictine cross.
 - Solemn Vows: tunic, black cincture, Benedictine cross and hooded scapular.
- The habit must be blessed before being worn officially. It will be blessed during your profession service.

Holders of monastic offices will wear the cincture that is appropriate for their office.

- Abbot: leather belt or purple cincture
- Prior: red cincture (grey will be worn when an office holder is a non priest to avoid confusion with priests who are Canons)
- Porter: green cincture

*Note: When the holder of a monastic office leaves that office they may continue to wear the cincture for their office provided they have been granted *Emeritus* status. Emeritus status is not automatic but granted by the Abbot for long and/or meritorious service or in the case of an Abbot is granted by the Bishop. The person in Emeritus status will knot the cincture on the opposite side (e.g. left instead of right). If the office holder is not granted Emeritus status he/she will return to wearing the black cincture.

Existing members who have different styles of habits prior to January 1, 2004 may continue to wear those habits at all functions unless they desire to go with the new style of habit. Wearing of the habit is appropriate at all functions of the Order, at one's own church with the understanding of the Rector or Pastor, at monastic meetings of any kind, and retreats - or at any time we are representing the Order. One might also chose to wear the habit at home. If you are working in a situation such as shelter, hospice, food pantry, etc., where you wish to wear a simple type of monastic clothing but do not wish to wear the habit, a simple brown or black tunic may be worn. Have the tunic blessed by the Abbot, Prior, or other Priest prior to wearing it. You should wear your profession cross with the tunic.

Oblates may wear a simple alb and cincture. The cincture is white. Oblates do not have knots in their cinctures. Knots are reserved for those who have professed vows. In addition, a simple small wooden cross on a cord may be worn but should not be like the cross that is received by professed members.

The Benedictine Cross: Should be worn by professed members whenever possible and practical as a sign of commitment and belonging to the Order. This means worn with clericals and choir dress

for clergy; when in monastic clothing; and with civilian clothing (visible or under clothing). See the Abbot, or your Prior for your cross or medallion.

Deceased Members of the Order:

A member of the order may choose to be buried in their habit (as is monastic tradition). Members of their family should notify the Abbot as soon as possible of the serious illness or death of a member of the order. Deceased members will be remembered in the Order's necrology.

Forms of Address and Use of Initials

All members of the Order of Saint Benedict are brothers and sisters in Christ. No member is less or greater than another member simply because of the office they hold or their function within the order. Members have different functions so that they may best serve the order based on their skills, talents, experience and the needs of the order. Members are called at all times to respect one another.

Titles:

- Abbot
 - Verbal: Father Abbot or Abbot *first name*
 - Written: The Very Reverend Abbot *first name, last name*
 - Salutation: Dear Father Abbot or Dear Abbot
- Abbess
 - Verbal: Abbess or Abbess *first name*
 - Salutation: Dear Abbess
- Prior
 - Verbal: Father Prior or Prior *first name* (if a priest)
Brother or Sister Prior or Prior *first name* (if not a priest)
 - Written: The Reverend Prior *first name, last name* (if a priest)
Prior *first name, last name* (if not a priest)
 - Salutation: Dear Father Prior or Prior *first name* (if a priest)
Dear Brother or Sister Prior or Prior (if not a priest)
- Sub- Prior: Follow same rules as with the Prior except that in the case of clergy, the Sub Prior is addressed in written communication as The Reverend Sub Prior.
- Porter
 - Verbal: Father/Brother/Sister Porter or Fr./Sr./Br. *first name*
 - Written: Father/Brother/Sister Porter
 - Salutation: Dear Father, Sister or Brother

*Note: Members of the order who have held monastic office and been granted emeritus status follow the above protocols.

- Member of order (non monastic office holder)
 - Verbal: Father or Reverend *first name* (if a priest)
 - Verbal: Brother or Sister Deacon (if a deacon) or Simply Brother or Sister *first name* (novice through solemn profession)
 - Verbal: Brother or Sister *first name* (anyone, novice through solemn profession)

- Written: Same as above.
- Salutation: Dear Fr./Rev./Dcn./Sr./Br.

Approved Use of Initials:

The following initials may be used after a member's name. At no time should the initials or Benedictine identity be used with a political cause, commercial enterprise or any other endeavor, which could bring the order into disrepute.

- Aspirant: None
- Postulant: None
- Novice: n/OSB
- Juniorate: OSB
- Solemn Vows: OSB

MINISTRY TO OTHERS

Each member of the order is required to be actively engaged in some type of ongoing ministry project that reflects the spirit of his or her charism. Projects vary according to the spiritual gifts, talents, and abilities of each brother and sister. Projects are also determined by the physical and financial abilities of each brother and sister. It is important to keep in mind that no ministry is small or insignificant. Some of our members may be engaged in public preaching and teaching. Others may be engaged in private intercessory prayer ministries. All are equally important in the Kingdom of God.

HOUSES OF PRAYER

A House of Prayer is an assembly of Benedictines begun by a member of our Order that meets at least monthly to establish a Benedictine presence where the Divine Hours are prayed and a Benedictine culture is expressed. Learning, Prayer and Contemplation are the hallmarks of House of Prayer. Ideally, a House of Prayer will be sponsored by the local parish.

Our Current Houses of Prayer (June, 2017)

- Peace House, Auburn AL.
- St. Patrick's House, Smyrna TN.
- Abbot's House, Waukesha, WI.
- Prior's House, Baltimore, MD.
- House of Prayer Of Nigeria.

STATEMENTS OF THE ORDER OF ANGLICAN COMMUNION BENEDICTINES

Statement on Sexuality

The Anglican Communion Benedictines recognizes that human sexuality is a wonderful and complex gift from God. Because of the impact of sin, however, it is also the source of great confusion and struggle for many. Given the controversy surrounding sexuality in the Church today, especially same-sex attraction, we believe it is important that we state our position clearly. The Order is committed to handling these issues with the same grace, humility and love that Christ himself demonstrated, while also seeking to be faithful to God's Word and the traditional teaching of His Church.

The Uniqueness of Marriage

The ACB affirms the traditional teaching of the Church that marriage is a relationship consisting of one man and one woman, and therefore does not affirm same sex unions. All members, both single and married, must seek to remain pure in heart, mind and body, treating the beautiful gift of sexuality with respect and sensitivity.

Statement on Sexual Abuse

The ACB will not countenance any form of sexual abuse by our members towards anyone - especially children. We will not hide or cover up such abuse if it becomes known to us. Membership in the ACB will not shield any member from civil prosecution for such abuse. In fact, we are obligated to advocate for the victims of abuse and to see to it that Justice is served. Allegations of sexual abuse by one of our members will result in immediate suspension of the accused member's communication privileges. The Abbot, with the assistance of the appropriate Priors, will investigate such allegations, attempting to ascertain their veracity, while also tending to the pastoral care of the member.

Any member convicted of a sexual abuse crime will be dismissed from the Order.
No one convicted of a pedophilia-related crime may be admitted to the Order.

Authority in the Order of Anglican Communion Benedictines

The Order is presided over by the Abbot, with the assistance of his Priors. The Abbot is under the oversight and pastoral care of an archbishop or bishop within the Convocation of Anglicans in North America, of the Anglican Church in North America. The Abbot provides leadership, guidance, and spiritual direction to the Order. The Abbot does not exercise Episcopal functions within the Order. The Abbot must be a male, and a priest within the CANA and is elected by the membership of the order and ratified by the Episcopal Visitor. Our current Episcopal Visitor is The Right Reverend Dr. Felix Orji, Bishop in the Anglican Church in North America.

Using Anglican Prayer Beads (Anglican Rosary)

The use of Anglican prayer beads, also known as the Anglican rosary, is a relatively new form of prayer and contemplation now being used by Anglicans and Episcopalians worldwide. The term "Anglican prayer beads" was crafted by Sr. Brigit-Carol, SD of the Solitaries of DeKoven at the Vigeat Radix Hermitage some years ago. Our thanks to her for much of the description used here for this wonderful devotion.

Before we continue, be assured that there is nothing magical or superstitious about using beads to help you pray. The beads simply help you focus and spend a concentrated amount of time in prayer. Holding the beads helps you to keep your mind from wandering. How many times have you found yourself praying and then suddenly realized that you are thinking about work the next day, a problem with the children, a home repair that needs to be done, etc.? The rhythm of the prayers helps create an attitude of stillness and focus.

Since the earliest of times, people have used pebbles, a string of knots or beads on a cord to keep track of prayers offered to God. Some form of a rosary, or prayer beads, has been found in virtually every major religious tradition in the world. The Anglican form of this rosary style prayer method came out of a contemplative prayer group that met in the mid 1980s and was created by an Episcopal priest.

Comprised of 33 beads, the number of years our Lord walked this earth, it is well grounded in Incarnational theology and the symbolism contained in it points towards the Celtic view of the sanctity of all of God's creation.

The invitory bead is the bead just above the cross. It is an invitation to praise and worship God as well as an entry point into the circle of prayer.

Four larger cruciform beads remind us that the cross is the central symbol of our Christian Anglican faith, as well as reminding us of the seasons of the temporal year and the four points on the compass, thus bringing us into mindfulness of the created world.

Four groups of seven small beads form the weeks and remind us of creation, the temporal week, as well as the seasons of the church year and the seven sacraments.

There is no one set of prayers that must be used. I find it helpful to vary the prayers that I use although I still follow the same form.

Sample prayer

- **On the cross**

The Apostles' Creed

- **On the invitory bead**

"Lord, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise."

- **On each cruciform bead**

The Lord's Prayer

- **On each small weeks bead**

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." (The Jesus Prayer)

SPIRITUAL READING

All members should always be engaged in some sort of spiritual reading, especially of the Bible. This reading is to be in addition to the reading of the Scriptures in conjunction with the Daily Offices. Each brother or sister will have certain areas that appeal to him or her so it is impossible to set down a prescribed reading list. However, some suggested areas of reading would include:

- The life of St. Benedict.
- The writings of the Early Church Fathers
- Church History
- Devotional material
- Intercessory prayer
- Holiness
- The Person and Work of Christ
- Biblical and Systematic Theology
- Liturgy and Worship
- Lives of the Saints

At times during the year, the Abbot may call for a common reading selection by all members of the Order.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Order requires a measure of income to operate. There are administrative expenses associated with postage, office supplies, maintaining the web site, bank fees, etc.. There are also expenses related to professions such as profession crosses, books, medals, etc. Additionally, necessary travel costs for the Abbot to events relating to his position must be met. No one in the Order receives any type of salary or stipend.

Each full member is asked to give a minimum offering of \$150 annually to the general fund. Each associate member and Oblate is asked to give an offering of \$50 a year to the general fund. Members are then asked to give throughout the year as they are able so that we can support mission related projects, help those in the Order who are need, or other such ministry as the Lord may lead. If you are unable to give financially, please do not let it be a hindrance to you being part of the Order. Simply contact the Abbot in confidence.

ABOUT OUR PATRON, SAINT BENEDICT

The Rule of St. Benedict

The Rule of St. Benedict is too lengthy to include here. You should obtain and study a copy. Suggested sources:

- *The Rule of St. Benedict in English* (1980), Timothy Fry, OSB, Editor. Published by The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota. 1982. ISBN0-8146-1272-5
- On the Internet at: <http://www.osb.org/rb/text/toc.html#toc>
- Numerous editions are available through Amazon, and similar sources.

Saint Benedict (480-547AD)

Our only real knowledge of Benedict of Nursia comes from Pope Gregory the Great, who was himself a Benedictine monk, and who either wrote or commissioned a history of Benedict to be written. Since Gregory's purpose in writing the biography was didactic, the historical details of Benedict's life are uncertain. However, we do know that he actually lived and that the Rule he developed became the basis for Western monasticism and indeed, for much of Western civilization itself.

According to Gregory, Benedict was born into a distinguished family who desired that he receive his higher education in Rome. Once in Rome, however, he was struck by the dissolute lives of his fellow students and soon determined to leave Rome in order to pursue a life of prayer and penance. His first hermitage was in a cave on Mt. Subiaco, where he lived in such an inaccessible place that a monk friend had to lower bread and other supplies down to him in a basket. For some three years, Benedict lived in solitude and prayer, battling the temptations of evil spirits and of his flesh. During one particularly difficult temptation to lust, he became so desperate that he stripped off his clothes and rolled naked in a briar patch, a treatment that cured him of lust ever after. Icons of St. Benedict often include a depiction of stinging nettles alluding to this episode. Thus purified after his time of isolation and prayer, his secret hermitage was discovered and local peasants began to search him out for spiritual direction. Soon a group of undisciplined monks came and asked Benedict to become their abbot. Aware of their slothful ways, Benedict tried to dissuade them with a warning that he would impose strict discipline upon them. Heedless, they pressed him and soon enough found that he was serious about the disciplined spiritual life. The wicked monks, tired of strict observances, eventually hatched a plot to poison their abbot. Gregory reports that the plot was foiled by a miracle when Benedict blessed the pitcher of poisoned wine and it shattered, "as though struck by a stone". Discerning what had happened, Benedict took his leave and went back to his cave.

The solitude was not to last long, for stories of Benedict's holiness begin to circulate and other disciples gather around him. At Monte Cassino, he grouped these disciples into twelve monasteries of twelve monks and one abbot each, while he himself guided them and led his own group as well. Eventually, around 525 AD Benedict wrote his Rule, codifying the principles he had been teaching for many years. He must have been well aware of the desert fathers of Egypt for he makes reference to the works of John Cassian, and incorporates portions of the earlier "Rule of the Master" in his own work.

Until the end of his life in 547, Benedict guided the monks of the holy mountain. His sister, Scholastica, also entered into religious life and founded her own convent that followed the Rule. Gregory records numerous miraculous stories that demonstrate Benedict's wisdom and prophetic insight. Many of these stories involve the discovery of some sin committed by a monk with the subsequent confrontation and eventual repentance and restoration of the sinner.

Once two of his monks were sent on an errand in the town and ate a meal in the modest home of some generous townspeople, despite strict instruction not to do so. Upon their return to the monastery, Benedict exposed their disobedience quite precisely and the two brothers, humbled and chagrined, knelt and confessed their disobedience. In another story of divine provision, the monastery's bread began to run short and the monks started to grumble. Benedict reproved them and the next day two hundred measures of flour appeared on the monastery's doorstep, thus illustrating the Christ-like character of the Abbot.

Though a first reading of Benedict's Rule may seem harsh to modern readers, the true spirit of Benedict and of his Rule is that of a loving father who greatly desires the salvation of his charges.

In wisdom he prescribes non-heroic, but specific instructions for becoming Humble - the essence of Christ-likeness. But because he is also deeply humane and knows human nature, we also see a remarkable spirit of moderation and balance manifested. It is this balance of zeal and moderation that has established Benedict as the father to many generations of religious and continues to serve as the inspiration for those of us in the Anglican Communion Benedictines.

Our Order strives to live by the Rule of St. Benedict, as it applies to our modern, non-cloistered lives, to the extent possible, and in accordance with our individual circumstances.

If you wish to join us.....

To be a vowed member of The Order, a person must Profess and have completed our formation process. This process normally takes 18 to 24 months. The Order has a charism of prayer, contemplation and teaching.

The Professed brother or sister who has completed the initial time of formation is referred to as a novice. During this time of study, he or she has determined that they wish to make a lifelong commitment to living the Benedictine charism as a Rule of Life. Upon the recommendation of the Director of Vocations, or the Abbot's designate, and approval by the Abbot, the novice may take their juniorate or temporary vows. This may last one year. All vows are heard during a service of worship, during which the brother or sister makes vows of lifelong obedience to the Rule of St. Benedict as applied by the Order. At each level of taking these vows, the brother or sister is "clothed" with various religious articles to define their commitment to the Lord through this Order. At the service of Solemn Vows the monastic will receive their habit, is given their profession cross, and is considered a fully professed third order secular Benedictine. Upon being professed, the brother or sister may use the designation "OSB" after their name, such as "Father Robert, OSB."

Oblate

The Oblate, within the Order, is a brother or sister who enters into a period of study, and wishes to associate with the Order for the purpose of fellowship, spiritual growth, and support, but who does not necessarily wish to make a lifelong commitment of vows. They may do so at some later point in life. Oblates are also received at a ceremony. After being received, Oblates may use the designation "OOSB" after their name, such as "Brother Andrew, OOSB."

Clergy Membership

The Order resides within the Convocation of Anglicans in North America. As such, the Order must be under the protection of a Bishop within the CANA and subject to its canons. Therefore it is necessary that there be some requirements and restrictions for membership when members of the clergy are involved. Before going further, please understand that any member of the clergy, regardless of denominational affiliation may make a full profession as a Benedictine within the Order. The restrictions that are discussed here only concern membership status, not profession status. It is a principle of the Church that obedience can only be given to one bishop at a time. Therefore, only clergy who are members of the CANA may hold the position of Abbot.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The Order embraces the spirit of the original Rule of Saint Benedict as guidelines for those who wish to enter the Order. Before anyone proceeds with an inquiry into joining the Order, it is necessary that he or she be familiar with and has read the Rule for the appropriate charisms.

Bear in mind that each member must develop and participate in some form of active ministry. Admission to the Order is not automatic and we do not guarantee acceptance into the community. There is an application process and references are required. Before applying, the applicant must remember that the Order is part of the Anglican Church in North America. Becoming a member of the Order does NOT make you a member of the ACNA.

You may be a member of the Order and disagree at some point with the canons of the ACNA. However, you must understand that the canons of the ACNA, will govern the Order without question. If you are not familiar with the ACNA, please visit the ACNA web site at www.anglicanchurch.net for more information. CLERGY MEMBERS, please be sure to read the section on clergy membership.

Through careful and confidential dialog, the Abbot will determine if an inquirer has the necessary maturity and spiritual support to be accepted into postulancy. This may involve additional requests for references from previous counselors or accountability partners. The Order understands that those who live with same-sex attraction may be uncertain or torn about the issue themselves. They may be drawn to a vocation but unready to completely affirm the Order's position on sexuality. We recognize how difficult this can be and desire to provide personal and pastoral support to such inquirers. The Abbot may therefore recommend further counseling, study, or spiritual direction before accepting the inquirer's application. Once the inquirer is able to affirm the Order's position and commitments, he or she then informs the Abbot, who *may* in turn accept the inquirer's application to the Order. After acceptance into postulancy, the Abbot will receive regular evaluations from the Director of Vocation, or the Abbot's designate, as to the postulant's readiness for Profession and will decide when the postulant may make his or her Profession. Given the Order's clearly stated beliefs and commitments about Sexuality, we *cannot* accept applications from those who affirm or practice same-sex relationships, or do not practice Chastity as described above. Further, the ACB does not recognize as valid the Orders of any clergy member, whether Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, who practices or affirms same-sex relationships, or unmarried heterosexual relationships. We make this statement, not out of adversarial rejection, or 'hatred' of anyone, but rather out of our desire to be faithful to God's Word as we understand it.

We hope these guidelines, along with the discernment of the Abbot, will serve to make Profession in the ACB both embracing and uncompromising. In the end, we seek to affirm a rigorous Biblical hermeneutic that is faithful to Christ, His Church, our father St. Benedict and built upon the foundation of Divine love and grace that leads to our Salvation. Amen.

When you feel you are ready to make application to the order, please put together an application package that includes the following items:

- A completed application questionnaire at the end of this Handbook
- A cover letter stating why you are seeking a vocation with us, and what the ministry is that you seek to undertake or in which you are currently involved.
- A current resume that includes your ministry, work, and education background.
- A letter of reference. It must be from your priest or pastor. NOTE: If you are a priest or pastor, one letter **MUST** be from your bishop or other ecclesiastical authority. Clergy who cannot obtain a letter of blessing from their ecclesiastical authority cannot be accepted for membership.
- For U.S. applicants, we ask for a copy of a criminal background check. This can be obtained from your local police or sheriff's department for a small fee. Note: This requirement is waived for applicants who are already clergy within the ACNA.
- For clergy, we request that copies of ordination documents be included in your application package.
- Any other supporting documents you may wish to include.

Your application package should be sent directly to the Abbot. If you live outside the United States, contact the Abbot before sending paperwork as you may be given an alternate address and contact person to use. Items may be scanned and sent by email if you wish, but you must also send a hard copy to:

The Ven. Patrick W. Malone, OSB
Abbot
The Anglican Communion Benedictines
705 Beechwood Ave
Waukesha, WI 53186

Email: abbotpatrick@gmail.com

Formation Process

Once the application package has been received, an in-person or telephone interview will take place. The Abbot will conduct the interview. Upon approval, the applicant will be designated as a “Postulant” and will begin his or her initial studies that will consist of the following at the minimum:

- A very basic reading course (1 or 2 books) in Benedictine studies.
- Begin praying a form of the Daily Office if not doing so already.
- Begin memorizing and praying the Anglican Rosary.
- Begin keeping a journal of reflections, questions, concerns, etc. about the monastic journey.

Any other studies or requirements set down by the Director of Vocations. This time of initial formation will last 3-6 months. At the end of this period, the postulant will write a brief paper (2-3 pages) about what he or she has been learned. The purpose of this period is to give the postulant a "taste" of the monastic life without being burdensome. It is also meant to be a time of discernment.

At the end of this initial formation period, a decision will be made whether or not to allow the Postulant to become a “Novice” and enter the Novitiate. Upon approval, the Novice enters the Novitiate, which will last no less than four months and no more than one year. During this time the Novice is responsible for self-examination, ministry exploration and further study on his or her own. The Novice will be required to complete more in-depth reading assignments and will complete additional writing assignments.

During this time, the Novice reviews the appropriate Rule, and then drafts a paper examining the Rule and their application of the Rule in their ministry and daily life. The Abbot and Vocation Director(s), or his designate, will then determine along with the Novice whether he or she is ready to profess final vows to the Third Order.

If everyone agrees that a final profession is called for, a date will be set for a profession service.

Ministry Project

Upon making entry into the Order, an applicant will make known to the Abbot what ministry he or she will seek to carry out. During the vocations process, the novice will work with the appropriate vocations Director to refine his or her ministry.

Some suggestions for ministry are:

- Bishop, Priest, or Deacon
- Licensed preacher
- Chaplain (hospice, hospital, law enforcement)
- Volunteer at a food pantry, homeless shelter, clothing bank
- Minister to street people
- Intercessory prayer ministry
- Work with children at a day care, shelter, or children's hospital
- Animal rescue
- Spiritual Director
- Visiting the sick and shut-in
- Card ministry – sending cards and letters of encouragement, remembering birthdays of members of the Order, get well cards, etc.

The decision to seek membership as a Benedictine monastic must be only taken after very serious self-examination, prayerful consideration, and thorough discernment. It is a life-changing step toward a rigorous life of prayer and holiness. It requires a great deal of dedication and self-discipline. It is ultimately for life, and the taking of vows must be undertaken with the most seriousness and sincerity.

Order of St. Benedict, Anglican Communion Benedictines
APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION TO THE ORDER, AND QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____

First, Middle, Last

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell or Other Phone: _____

Email Address: _____ DOB: _____

Church Affiliation/Denomination: _____

If you are a member of the Clergy, what is your position/title: _____

If Clergy, Who is your Bishop or authority: _____

If you answer "yes" to any of questions 1 – 5, please provide explanations on a separate sheet of paper. Your answers will remain confidential with the Abbot General and Prior.

1. Are there any criminal or civil legal actions pending against you at this time? _____

2. Are there any financial matters that will hinder you as a member of the Order? _____

3. Have you ever been convicted of a felony? _____

4. Have you ever been arrested, even if not convicted, for any crime involving children? _____

5. Are you now or have you ever been under discipline from any Bishop, Church, parish or other ecclesiastical authority? YES or NO

(Circle One)

6. If accepted into the Order, do you agree to submit to the Canons of the Anglican Church in North America in all matters pertaining to the Order? _____

7. Are you a baptized Christian? _____

8. Have you read and do you agree with our Statement on Sexuality? _____

9. Do you agree to live your life in accordance with the Rule of St. Benedict, as applied by this Order, in your daily life, to the best of your ability, and as your circumstances allow?

Signature

Date

You may send this application electronically to Abbot Patrick Malone, OSB, at abbotpatrick@gmail.com

You MUST send a hard copy by mail to:

The Ven. Patrick W. Malone, OSB, Abbot

The Anglican Communion Benedictines

705 Beechwood Avenue

Waukesha, WI 53186

