

Spiritual Practice of Community Saint Raphael Parish

The Sisters of St. Benedict in Ferdinand, Indiana explain the importance of community life in Benedictine practice on their website.

Before writing his Rule, Benedict lived for years as a hermit. Through this experience, he came to believe that authentic spiritual growth happens only when we live with and among “flawed human beings whose faults and failings are only too obvious.” In community we struggle through the practice of being in right relationship with people who are “stubborn...dull...undisciplined...restless...careless...scatterbrained...irritating...and tiresome.” It is only in our communities - families or monasteries, neighborhoods, workplaces, churches and organizations - that we make spiritual progress by learning to love and accept others for who they are, not for who we wish them to be.

“Benedict knew that each individual is at a certain stage of spiritual development and that living together in daily contact meant that at times there would be a strain in interpersonal relationships. He deals with those aspects of communal life by calling us forth to Christian love and forgiveness as well as mutual obedience and a sense of personal responsibility. While relationships provide challenges, they are also a means to personal growth...Benedictine spirituality recognizes that we humans do not operate in a vacuum and that what we do and say affects other people.

They should each try to be the first to show respect to the other. (Romans 12:10)... Oblates have their monastic community as well as their family and larger communities. Applying the Rule of Benedict to all will help foster personal and communal spiritual growth. “To know God and others we must understand ourselves, but to know ourselves we must rely on the help of others.” (Prayer and Community, Columba Stewart, OSB). The Rule of Benedict encourages self-awareness and awareness of others, all in relationship and rooted in God.” (Reaching for God: The Benedictine Oblate Way of Life, Roberta Werner, OSB)

“And let them first pray together, so that they may associate in peace.”
Benedict of Nursia