

Benedictine Spiritual Practices (Cont.)

What Does it Mean to Be in Right Relationship?

“Being in right relationship” is wholly other than “being in *the* right relationship.” It isn’t about finding the right person *for me*; it’s about being the right person to others in the way I show respect to them, in the way I accept their humanity - even their weaknesses and irritating personality traits. For Benedictines, being in right relationship means that we treat everyone we encounter with loving kindness and patience. This Benedictine practice is exceedingly difficult for most of us, for most of our lives. We stumble through being in right relationship. We practice clumsily like beginners running through piano scales. But, we keep practicing, because we hope that eventually, with faithful practice, that our way of being present to others will be rich and meaningful. (Tracy Rittmueller)

As a Benedictine practice, obedience is intimately linked to being in right relationship, *conversatio*, humility, and listening. Benedictine obedience is ultimately directed not to other humans or to ourselves, but through the agency of others and the deepest yearnings of our own hearts, in love, to God.

In Chapter 4 of his rule, St. Benedict tells us, “*Do not be proud, nor given to wine (Titus 1:7, 1Tim 3:3). Do not be a glutton, nor given to much sleeping, nor slothful (Rom 12:11).*”

What is the relationship between serious commitment to God and physical or bodily disciplines? Is there any relationship? Benedict’s response to this is moderation. In themselves, self-regard, pleasures of food and drink, and rest are all gifts of God to be enjoyed. But when they become excessive and addictive (controlling us instead of our controlling them), then they are severe barriers to the Benedictine life.

“To attribute to God, and not to self, whatever good one sees in oneself; but to recognize always that the evil is one’s own doing, and to impute it on one’s self.” (Benedict of Nursia)

Our St. Raphael Oblate Chapter will meet on Saturday, September 30 from 9 - 11 am in the chapel. Anyone with interest is welcome! Questions? Please direct them to 67eileenfsmith@gmail.com.