

Feast of St. Benedict

Jubilee Celebration of Sister Victoria Marconi, OSB (75th Jubilee), Sister Callista Kaley, OSB (70th Jubilee), Sister Hilary Halpin, OSB (60th Jubilee), Sister Patricia Crowley, OSB (60th Jubilee) and Sister Susan Kilduski, OSB (25th Jubilee).

July 11, 2020

By Sister Judith Murphy, OSB, Prioress

Proverbs 2:1-9; Ephesians 6:10-13; Matthew 19:27-29

I wish you all a very happy feast of St. Benedict! We will soon hear our sisters repeat the promises each one made quite a few years ago, totaling almost 300 years in service to God's people. This is a time when each of us can give thanks for this life we have been called to, together. It is our time to celebrate with our jubilarians, and to thank them for their presence and witness to the possibility of community among people of faith.

It may give us an opportunity to reminisce either alone or with one another and tell our "vocation story" as we remember again our coming to a point in our life when we asked to be allowed to enter this community, then a time of learning the ropes, and over our time together, coming to be a community. Benedict calls the monastery a school of the Lord's service—we may have had a sense of giving our lives to God, but soon enough we learned there was not much we could do directly for the Lord; --yes, of course, adoration and thanksgiving, and some work for the coming of the reign of God through our works...and as we proceeded to ask and learn who this Jesus is, and as we are told by Matthew in one of the stories of the end times, Jesus taught "whatsoever you do for the least of my brothers and sisters, you do unto me." That's some of what we can do for the Lord. We keep being brought back to an understanding that in community we are the school of the Lord's service for one another. Our daily interactions provide ample opportunities to learn of Jesus' teaching—to love one another---with all the ups and downs of that process. Benedict promises there is hope that from a lifetime of such, we may come to "run in the way of God's commands." We know that this running can happen with or without the presence of cane or walker or wheelchair.

We may be glad that Peter raised the question to Jesus in today's gospel selection: What will we get out of all of this? Later on, when some of the followers turned away from Jesus and he said to the apostles, do you also want to go away? Peter can only say, No, Lord, you are the one who has the words of life.

Lord, you will show us the path of life...the path where there is life. Paths can be rough, challenging, smooth, well-lighted or scary dark. The path may get somewhat smoothed by those who walked it

ahead of us. And there can be helpful hints of hazards to watch out for. Sometimes much of what we learn feels like we have to learn it for ourself, yet we can see around us and in one another, other travelers, other witnesses, other discoverers who walk this journey with us.

Our feast day this year comes after more than one hundred days of COVID-19, and I think it is important to acknowledge its reality that is so present to us and to the entire human community right now. We are learning to deal with limitations and precautions that seem to turn life as we have known it upside down. Our community was hit hard, and we have been affected in many ways, individually and as a group, and there are precautions we need to take in our daily living together. It is hard to take it all in. It seems it may be with us for a long while.

May our life together be a daily source of nurture and support, as we live together through this time that none of us could have predicted. But we will endeavor together to understand and accept and trust that even now ---our gracious God calls us to fullness of life.