

# Praying with the Church The Saint Benedict Prayer Group at Saint Martin Roath



Always we  
begin  
anew

## THE SAINT BENEDICT PRAYER GROUP

is company of parishioners at St. Martin Roath who pray the Divine Office each day following a simple order found in the St. Benedict Prayer Book.

In addition they make intercession each day for the Church, the parish and the world. Prayer is the work or *liturgy* of the Christian each day. In our parish the celebration of the Divine Office and the Mass form the heart of this work. Members of the Group may not be able to be present in Church to pray but as part of the praying Church they pray the Office in their homes or wherever they are.

# PRAYING THE DIVINE OFFICE

## Always we begin anew

### Some guidelines for those who are part of the St. Benedict Prayer Group

**Time and place** - The form of the Divine Office in the prayer book follows a cycle for morning and evening prayer for each day of the week. Choose a time and place carefully for both your morning and evening prayer time. Try and stay with this as a having a regular place and time to pray helps to discipline us.

#### The Office

Both the forms of the office for morning and evening are simple structures. They are a framework within which to pray. Try and read the words of Office slowly and deliberately - it helps to articulate the words, speaking softly and gently. You are not reading a book - but praying the texts. Before you begin, sit or kneel in a position that is neither too formal nor the same as you would for relaxing in front of the TV.

It often helps to have in the place you pray a focus for your attention, an icon, a crucifix, a lighted candle. Before you begin simply sit in silence, recollect that you are in the presence of God and that you are joining the Church in prayer and adoration. As you develop this time of prayer you will find the things that most help you settle into it and pray the office. The silence before you begin helps to relax your body and still your mind. As you prepare in this way don't worry too much about distractions at this stage. They will come and go, simply move forward into a time of prayer.

When you are ready simply begin to pray the Office. In all our prayer there appears to be a certain structure that helps direct our prayer. I find the word **ACTS** a helpful reminder.

**A** reminds us of the **Adoration** we owe God. We are the creature and God is the Creator - we worship and adore him simply because he is God. This is what we mean by worship - to give God his worth. All prayer brings us into the presence of God. We pray to deepen our sense of that presence and to open our hearts and minds to God's grace and mercy. In our prayer we adore and worship God the Holy and Undivided Trinity.

**C** can remind us of **Confession** - the need we all have to confess that we need God's mercy and forgiveness. We may call to mind our own sins knowing that God loves us, and calls us always to begin anew.

## Always we begin anew

**T**reminds of **Thanksgiving**. Christians are called to be people of thanksgiving, people of the Eucharist. At the heart of our celebration of the mystery of the Mass is thanksgiving. The word *eucharist* means thanksgiving. During the Mass we recall with great thanksgiving before the Father the saving events of our Lord's life death and resurrection. United as we are with him by virtue of our baptism we offer thanksgiving through him to the Father. This Great Thanksgiving, focussed in the Eucharistic Prayer, is ritually enacted in the Mass. Having then been nourished and sustained by the grace of the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood we are sent out to live lives of based on the Eucharist. Lives that reflect something of the life we have shared in the Holy Communion. Lives that are generous, self giving, lives that are filled with thanksgiving, lives set apart for God's glory. Every day there will be much for which we can thanks. Unite all this with the great canticle of praise and prayer offered by the Church every day.

**S**reminds us of **Supplication or Intercession** - made for others. Intercession is part of the mystery of prayer through which we bring into the presence of God other people, situations, our parish and its life and ministry. Faith allows us simply to bring other people and situations to God and leave them there.

Think of the friends of the paralytic bringing their friend who was sick in the presence of Jesus. They needed to work to do this - they opened up the roof and lowered him down. Their faith in Jesus allowed them to simply bring their friend and place him in the presence of the Lord. We do this each time we make intercession for others. In faith, we leave others and particular situations in the presence of God.

Following are a number of headings for intercession for each day. During your prayer time, before the **Lord's Prayer** and **Hail Mary** think about these and bring them into your prayer. You may add to these petitions as is necessary and according to your situation.

## Always we begin anew

### SUNDAY *pray for:*

All those who join us for the Mass at St. Martins

For the Diocese, for the Bishops of the Church

For the lapsed

For our families and those we shall meet during this week

For those with who we work or recreate with

Give thanks for the grace and mystery of the Mass and that we may  
all grow

in faith and in the love of God and of each other.

### MONDAY *pray for:*

The members of our St. Benedict Prayer Group

The members of our Parochial Church Council and for Fr. Irving

The Parishes of the Deanery of Cardiff

Our ministry to the young people and families of the parish

For the elderly, the housebound of our parish

For the bereaved.

### TUESDAY *pray for:*

For all those baptised at St. Martin's, for their parents and god  
parents

For local schools, their pupils, staff and governors

The members of the Mother's Union

Those who are persecuted for their Christian faith

For all members of religious communities

For all who are dependant on drugs and alcohol

### WEDNESDAY *pray for:*

For all who work with the homeless in this City

For the sick and for local medics, for the hospitals and hospices in  
this City

For our Government and Parliament and for the Welsh Assembly  
Ministers

For peace in the world

For the work of St. James Hospital, Mantsonyane, South Africa

For those we support via the Saint Martin Supporting Fund

**THURSDAY** *pray for:*

All parish clergy

Those who receive the Blessed Sacrament in their homes

For a greater love and reverence for Jesus Christ present in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood

For the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament

For the Unity of the Church and for Pope Benedict and Rowan Archbishop of Canterbury

**FRIDAY** *pray for:*

That all Christians be a sign of holy living and faith to their families and friends

For a deeper spirit of penitence in our lives and the grace to make a good confession of our sins

That we may communicate and commend the way of the Christian life more effectively

For the faithful departed, and our own departed families and friends

**SATURDAY** *pray for*

The work and witness of the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham

For the Society of our Lady of Walsingham (SOLW)

For all parents and children and for our Sunday Schools

For those with marital difficulties, for divorced and separated people

For abused children and young people and for their abusers

For all with who we shall worship on Sunday

*In the St. Benedict Prayer Book you will find a treasury of prayers to use. Explore this book and if there are any questions please ask Fr. Irving. The book also contains a great amount of Christian teaching - reflect on this and be inspired, be renewed in faith and in the valuable part you play as a member of the Church*

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Some space for your own notes

## Some words from Mother Mary Clare SLG

Anglican Sisters of the Love of God

Prayer in its wholeness is relationship with God. Our part in prayer is to be the 'good ground' our of which the seed can grow and, if we will let it, be multiplied a hundredfold by our sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.

Worship and Intercession are both acts of our will. In worship we give ourselves to God in the simple humility of being what we are, God's creatures, and that means we give everything - our past and present, our desires for the future, our relationships and all the circumstances of our life - and in then offer all to God's loving care

In Intercession, we are giving our will to be united with God's purpose in all circumstances in which we may be involved. This is where the future comes in, and where the right ordering of our desires is the essential part of intercession.

Worship and prayer are both founded in perfect trust, and this is the meaning of faith. We can trust perfectly in the goodness of God, who will that all people be healed, made perfect in Christ, which is salvation. We can therefore entrust through our prayer all our concerns for others, for our loved ones and our world. This willing our will with God's will is our prayer of intercession

To intercede for others we must give up our wills, how often we hang on to those whom we pray, we struggle, we are anxious, we are fearful and we pray to change a situation or person. Intercession means giving up those for whom we pray to God. Prayer is God's activity within us and is within each of us the surrender of each moment to God's divine mercy

We pray as we live, in the true humility of dependence upon God's love. Humility is the true basis of intercession, a humility which walks before God moment by moment.

Prayer in all its senses is a deeper surrender of ourselves and those for whom we pray to the love and mercy of God

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## ST. BENEDICT (c.480-c.547)

was born in Nursia, in northern Italy. Raised in a Christian family, all he wanted was to serve God.

In due course he traveled to Rome for his education, but was utterly appalled by the decadence, cynicism and corruption he found there.

He then retreated to a cave in a deep valley west of Rome where he lived in prayerful solitude, seeking Christ.

Stories of his holiness soon attracted others and after three years he was coaxed from the solitary life to be a leader for a demoralized monastic movement in chaotic times not unlike our own. As the Roman Empire disintegrated, those who sought the monastic life tended to be either wild and undisciplined or struggling under excessively severe, ascetic regimens.

Benedict offered a better way. He crafted a rule remarkable in its time, and to the present day, for being comprehensive, compassionate, and redolent with common sense. He founded a dozen communities, the largest and most famous of which is Monte Cassino near Naples. Throughout Europe, the hundreds of monasteries following the Rule of St. Benedict were stable centers of learning, commerce, and good governance that became the network on which medieval and modern Europe were built.

Today many people throughout the world follow the Rule of St. Benedict. His common sense rule of life, inspired by the Gospel, gives direction to those seeking to follow Christ in the 21st Century. At the heart of any Benedictine Community is the daily offering of prayer. The St. Benedict Prayer Group at St. Martin's becomes part of this company of men and women in offering each day prayer - the lifting up of the heart and mind to the Lord. Today, many such communities continue to grow in both the Anglican and Roman Catholic Church.

*May the Love of God the Father enfold us, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ sustain us, the fire of the Holy Spirit burn within us. May Benedict and all the Saints pray with us and for us. May God the Holy and undivided Trinity be ever worshipped and adored.*