

Opening Prayer

Almighty and everlasting God, your precepts are the wisdom of a loving Father: Give us grace, following the teaching and example of your servant Benedict, to walk with loving and willing hearts in the school of the Lord's service; let your ears be open to our prayers; and prosper with your blessing the work of our hands; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Reception of a Postulant

It is appropriate that this Rite of Reception take place before Vespers.

Dean of Formation: Abbot David, I present to you **Marie Patricia Hughes** who has asked to be received as a Postulant into the Companions of Saint Luke.

Superior: Marie, as directed by the Rule of our Holy Father Benedict, you are to be guided on this journey by a senior member of the community. I have therefore appointed **Sister Anna Grace** to be your Formation Guide during your period of training and discernment. Be open to her guidance and wisdom. Use her experience to learn to live into your Baptismal Vows as expressed by the Rule of St. Benedict. Be faithful in your reports, reflections, and in the *Opus Dei*, keeping in mind that she is available and willing to help make the 'rough places plain' in your journey to Christ.

Now bow your head and pray for God's blessing as you begin your journey as a Postulant in our Community.

May Almighty God bless you in his mercy, and make you always aware of his saving wisdom.
Amen.

May God strengthen your faith with proof of his love, that you may persevere in good works. **Amen.**
May God direct your steps to himself, that you may learn to walk in charity, humility, and peace, and may the blessing of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you forever.
Amen.

To the new Postulant:

Superior: Marie, as directed by the Rule of our Holy Father Benedict, you are to be guided on this journey by a senior selected by me. I have therefore appointed **Sister Anna Grace** to be your Formation Guide during your period of training and discernment. Be open to *her* guidance and wisdom. Use her experience to learn to live the Rule. Be faithful in your reports, reflections, and in the *Opus Dei*, keeping in mind that she is available and willing to help make the 'rough places plain' in your journey to Christ.

To the Formation Guide:

Superior: Dear **Sister Anna Grace** I charge you to be the Formation Guide for our new Postulant as she enters this new stage on her journey to Christ, following the teachings of Blessed Benedict. You are to be her servant, guide, and mentor, and to support her with your wisdom and example.

Vespers for the Solemnity of our Holy Father St. Benedict

Opening Sentence

If I say, "Surely the darkness will cover me, and the light around me turn to night," darkness is not dark to you, O Lord; the night is as bright as the day; darkness and light to you are both alike. *Psalm 139:10,11*

The Invitatory and Psalter

V: O God, make speed to save us.

R: O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Alleluia

O Gracious Light *Phos hilaron*

O gracious Light,
pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven,
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!

Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
and our eyes behold the vesper light,
we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,
O Son of God, O Giver of life,
and to be glorified through all the worlds.

The Psalm or Psalms Appointed

Psalm 113 *Laudate, pueri* **Prayed by Marie Hughes**

His disciples carried Benedict to the Oratory where he did arm himself for his death by receiving the Body and Blood of our Lord.

¹ Hallelujah! Give praise, you servants of the LORD; *
praise the Name of the LORD.

² Let the Name of the LORD be blessed, *
from this time forth for evermore.

³ From the rising of the sun to its going down *
let the Name of the LORD be praised.

⁴ The LORD is high above all nations, *

and his glory above the heavens.

⁵ Who is like the LORD our God, who sits enthroned on high, *
but stoops to behold the heavens and the earth?

⁶ He takes up the weak out of the dust *
and lifts up the poor from the ashes.

⁷ He sets them with the princes, *
with the princes of his people.

⁸ He makes the woman of a childless house *
to be a joyful mother of children.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Psalm 115 *Non nobis, Domine* Prayed by Holly Puckett

The monks beheld a way stretching from his cell to heaven shining with numerous lamps by which Benedict, beloved of the Lord, ascended to God.

¹ Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your Name give glory; *
because of your love and because of your faithfulness.

² Why should the heathen say, *
"Where then is their God?"

³ Our God is in heaven; *
whatever he wills to do he does.

⁴ Their idols are silver and gold, *
the work of human hands.

⁵ They have mouths, but they cannot speak; *
eyes have they, but they cannot see;

⁶ They have ears but they cannot hear; *
noses, but they cannot smell;

⁷ They have hands, but they cannot feel; feet, but they cannot walk; *
they make no sound with their throat.

⁸ Those who make them are like them, *
and so are all who put their trust in them.

⁹ O Israel, trust in the LORD; *
he is their help and their shield.

¹⁰ O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD; *
he is their help and their shield.

¹¹ You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD; *
he is their help and their shield.

¹² The LORD has been mindful of us, and he will bless us; *
he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron;

¹³ He will bless those who fear the LORD, *
both small and great together.

¹⁴ May the LORD increase you more and more, *
you and your children after you.

¹⁵ May you be blessed by the LORD, *
the maker of heaven and earth.
¹⁶ The heaven of heavens is the LORD'S, *
but he entrusted the earth to its peoples.
¹⁷ The dead do not praise the LORD, *
nor all those who go down into silence;
¹⁸ But we will bless the LORD, *
from this time forth for evermore. Hallelujah!
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

The monks beheld a way stretching from his cell to heaven shining with numerous lamps by which Benedict, beloved of the Lord, ascended to God.

Psalm 116 *Dilexi, quoniam* Prayed by Jo Ann Horton

His disciples carried Benedict to the Oratory where he did arm himself for his death by receiving the Body and Blood of our Lord.

1. I love the LORD, because he has heard the voice of my supplication, *
because he has inclined his ear to me whenever I called upon him.
2. The cords of death entangled me; the grip of the grave took hold of me; *
I came to grief and sorrow.
3. Then I called upon the Name of the LORD: *
“O LORD, I pray you, save my life.”
4. Gracious is the LORD and righteous; *
our God is full of compassion.
5. The LORD watches over the innocent; *
I was brought very low, and he helped me.
6. Turn again to your rest, O my soul, *
for the LORD has treated you well.
7. For you have rescued my life from death, *
my eyes from tears, and my feet from stumbling.
8. I will walk in the presence of the LORD *
in the land of the living.
9. I believed, even when I said, “I have been brought very low.” *
In my distress I said, “No one can be trusted.”
10. How shall I repay the LORD *
for all the good things he has done for me?
11. I will lift up the cup of salvation *
and call upon the Name of the LORD.
12. I will fulfill my vows to the LORD *
in the presence of all his people.
13. Precious in the sight of the LORD *
is the death of his servants.

14. LORD, I am your servant; *
I am your servant and the child of your handmaid; you have freed me from my bonds.
15. I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving *
and call upon the Name of the LORD.
16. I will fulfill my vows to the LORD *
in the presence of all his people,
17. In the courts of the LORD'S house, *
in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Hallelujah!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

His disciples supported his weak limbs. Benedict stood up, his hands lifted toward heaven and with prayer he breathed forth his soul.

The Lessons

A reading from Proverbs 2:1-9 (RCL) **Read by Sr. Joanna**

- My child, if you accept my words
and treasure up my commandments within you,
² making your ear attentive to wisdom
and inclining your heart to understanding;
³ if you indeed cry out for insight,
and raise your voice for understanding;
⁴ if you seek it like silver,
and search for it as for hidden treasures —
⁵ then you will understand the fear of the LORD
and find the knowledge of God.
⁶ For the LORD gives wisdom;
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;
⁷ he stores up sound wisdom for the upright;
he is a shield to those who walk blamelessly,
⁸ guarding the paths of justice
and preserving the way of his faithful ones.
⁹ Then you will understand righteousness and justice
and equity, every good path;

Here ends the Reading.

The Song of Mary *Magnificat* **Lead by Sr. Toni** *Luke 1:46-55*

O Blessed Benedict your spirit now rejoices with Christ in heaven. O Kind Shepherd, preserve your flock and strengthen them by your holy prayer. Let them enter into heaven on the way you, their Guide, have shown them

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; *
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed: *
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.
He has mercy on those who fear him *
in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm, *
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things, *
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has come to the help of his servant Israel, *
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
The promise he made to our fathers, *
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

O Blessed Benedict your spirit now rejoices with Christ in heaven. O Kind Shepherd, preserve your flock and strengthen them by your holy prayer. Let them enter into heaven on the way you, their Guide, have shown them

Homily – Sister Catherine Ann

Renewal of Annual Profession

The Dean of Formation presents the Annually Professed:

Dean of Formation: Abbot David, I present **Sr. Catherine Ann, Sr. Joanna, Sr. Toni, Br. Gregory, Sr. Margaret Mary, Sr. Clara, Br. Raymond, Sr. Mary Magdalene, Sr. Julian, Sr. Karen Elizabeth, Sr. Katherine and Sr. Judith.**

Superior: My Brothers and Sisters, what do you desire?

Each Answers individually: I desire to renew the Vow of my Profession in this Community for another year.

Superior: Do you freely and voluntarily renew your vow to the service of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the one holy catholic and apostolic Church?

Each person individually responds: I do.

Superior: Will you continue to live under your Baptismal vows as expressed by the Rule of St. Benedict, and the threefold Benedictine Vows of Stability, Obedience and Conversion of Life?

Each Answers individually: I do.

Superior: Will you continue to follow the teachings of the Gospels, and the constitution and Customary of the Companions of St. Luke?

Each Answers individually: I do.

Superior: May Almighty God who gave you the grace and the will to renew your Profession, help you to remain true to your vow, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Superior: The Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless you, perfect you in love and in holiness, and bring to fruition what has begun in you. **Amen.**

Superior: Let us pray.

Lord, grant to your servants the grace to continue steadfast in *their* holy vocation, growing in all virtues, and faithfully fulfilling *their* duties, that with singleness of heart *they* may prefer nothing to Christ and come with us and all your saints together to eternal life. **Amen.**

Renewal of Oblate Promises

The Prior/Prioress or an appointed senior member presents the Oblates:

Br. Stephen Francis: Abbot David, I present **Sr. Brigid, Br. Willard, Sr. Margaret, Br. Joseph Florian, and Sr. Hildegard.**

Superior: My Brothers and Sisters, what do you seek?

Each Answers individually: To renew the offering of myself to God as an Oblate of the Companions of Saint Luke.

Superior: May the grace and mercy of God be with you.

Superior: Do you freely and voluntarily desire to renew your Oblate promises made to Almighty God in the sight of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Holy Father Benedict, and all the angels and saints as an Oblate of the Companions of St. Luke?

Each Answers individually: I do.

Superior: Do you renew your promise to dedicate yourself to the service of God and humanity by living into your Baptismal vows as expressed by the Rule of St. Benedict; and by the Constitution and Customary of the Companions of St. Luke, as appropriate to your state in life?

Each Answers individually: I do.

After each Oblate has made their Promise, the Superior says: May God strengthen you in your faith and continue within you the grace of perseverance in your offering of yourself to serve God and

humanity in accordance with the spirit of the Rule of St. Benedict and of this Community. May God reward you according to his promises, and bring us together into everlasting life. **Amen.**

May the blessing of Almighty God, ✠ of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, come down upon you and remain with you forever. **Amen.**

The Prayers

V: The Lord be with you.

R: And also with you.

Let us pray.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

Suffrages **A** **Lead by Sr. Anna Grace and Sr. Brigid:**

Sr. Anna Grace: Show us your mercy, O Lord;

Sr. Brigid: And grant us your salvation.

Sr. Anna Grace: Clothe your ministers with righteousness;

Sr. Brigid: Let your people sing with joy.

Sr. Anna Grace: Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;

Sr. Brigid: For only in you can we live in safety.

Sr. Anna Grace: Lord, keep this nation under your care;

Sr. Brigid: And guide us in the way of justice and truth.

Sr. Anna Grace: Let your way be known upon earth;

Sr. Brigid: Your saving health among all nations.

Sr. Anna Grace: Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;

Sr. Brigid: Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

Sr. Anna Grace: Create in us clean hearts, O God;

Sr. Brigid: And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.

Collect of the Day

Eternal God, who made Benedict a wise master in the school of your service and a guide to many called into community to follow the rule of Christ: grant that we may put your love before all else and seek with joy the way of your commandments, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Commemoration of Benedict of Nursia, Monastic, c. 543

We have a building from God, * a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

V. Come, children, and listen to me.

R. I will teach you the fear of the Lord. **lead by Sr. Brigid**

Gracious God, whose service is perfect freedom and in whose commandments there is nothing harsh nor burdensome: Grant that we, with your servant Benedict, may listen with attentive minds, pray with fervent hearts, and serve you with willing hands, so that we might live at peace with one another and in obedience to your Word, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

A Collect for the Companions of St. Luke

Gracious God, you raised up in your church the Companions of St. Luke to be a new monastic community devoted to Christ in constant prayer and in work. Help us, as sons and daughters of St. Benedict, to bring healing to a wounded world through contemplative prayer until we dwell with you, O Father, and the Incarnate Word and the Holy Spirit in inexpressible joy, for ever. Amen.

A Collect for the Presence of Christ

Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. Amen.

The General Thanksgiving

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made. We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

[\[Include authorized intercessions or thanksgivings—opens new window\]](#)

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.

Naming of Novices

The Naming of Novices should take place following Vespers. This separation underlines the initiatory quality of the rite and its place in the discernment process, distinguishing it clearly from the commitment made in Annual or Solemn Profession.

Presentation

Dean of Formation: Abbot David, I present to you Jo Ann Horton and Holly Rebecca Puckett who have completed their initial period of discernment as Postulants.

Questioning of each Candidate

Superior: My Sisters, what do you ask?

Each Postulant responds: By the mercy of God and the Order and drawn by the love of God, I ask you to teach me to follow Christ with the Gospel for my guide, according to the Rule of Saint Benedict and the customs of the Companions of Saint Luke.

Superior: May the grace and mercy of God be with you.

The Admonition

A brief passage from the Rule may be read, either from the Prologue or elsewhere, and the Superior may add a few words to the Postulants about the meaning of this step in the discernment process. Then the Superior shall say:

You have begun to learn that the way to God is hard and difficult. If you choose to continue on this path you must truly seek God, showing eagerness for the Work of God, for obedience, and for the trials that accompany true discernment. You have read the Rule under which we live and under which you are choosing to serve. If you are determined to follow it faithfully, welcome. If not, you are free to depart. Is it your desire to persevere in your intention?

Each Postulant responds: It is, God being my helper.

Superior: My Sisters, because Saint Benedict admonishes us that every time we begin a good work we should pray earnestly to the Lord to bring it to perfection, let us pray that what is not possible to us by our own efforts God's grace may supply to our Sisters.

The Superior announces the name by which each Novice is to be known in Community, and, if it is appropriate, says a brief word about the choice of name.

To each novice, the Superior announces: Be known henceforth among us as Sister N. **TBD**_____.

Superior to the new Novices: Dear Sisters, as directed by the Rule of Saint Benedict, you are to be taught and guided on your journey by a senior selected by the Superior of this community. You will continue to be supported by the Formation Guide who has helped you during Postulancy during this period of training and discernment. Be open to their guidance and wisdom. Use their experience to learn to live the Rule. Be faithful in your reports, reflections, and in the *Opus Dei*, keeping I mind that they are available and willing to help make the 'rough places plain' in your journey to Christ.

To the Formation Guides: Dear Sister Anna Grace and Br. Steven Joseph, I charge you to continue to be the Formation Guides for our new Novices as they begin their spiritual journey to Christ following the Blessed Benedict. You are to continue to be their servant, guide, and mentor, supporting them with your wisdom and example.

May the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, come down upon you and remain with you forever. **Amen.**

Closing Prayer

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen.
Ephesians 3:20

V. Let us bless the Lord. Alleluia.

R. Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Alleluia