St. Benedict Comes to New Beginnings!!

“The love of Christ must come before all else.” At New Beginnings we believe that God is calling us to be shaped by the Rule of St. Benedict, which is grounded in scripture and centered on Christ.

“Am I daily becoming a more loving person?” Benedict borrowed freely from earlier monastic writers, but it was his emphasis on how his monks treated one another that made his rule unique. Benedictine spirituality, grounded in the here and now of our daily lives, helps us to see every human face as an icon of Christ and every task as holy if offered to God.

St. Benedict said that the monk with his pots and pans in the kitchen is doing as holy a work as the monk in the choir.

“St. Benedict’s Little Rule for Beginners”

**Stability** means to stay in one place within our own hearts, not to run when things get tough, but to commit to the long haul and trust in God’s ability to do His work in and through us.

**Obedience** comes from the root word “to hear” and means to listen with an open heart to God speaking, wherever and through whomever that might be. Obedience, Thomas Merton said, results in “the freedom to be able to do in the depths of your heart what you really want to do”.

**Conversion of life** involves, as Joan Chittister describes it, “commitment to your own adulthood”, taking responsibility for your own choices and growth.

I do not view monasticism as a retreat from the world, but as an entry into its beating heart.

—The Monastic Year

**Benedictine Lay Order**—We meet the last Saturday of each month from 9:30 a.m. to noon to study the Rule of Benedict, its spirituality and to support one another on our journeys. We are committed to loving and serving God, our families and our communities. If you are interested in joining us, please call the office for more information. You are welcome!!

**Community of Hope Lay Chaplaincy Program**—This is a training program for lay volunteer hospital chaplains which uses Benedictine spirituality as it’s foundation. Classes are tentatively scheduled to begin in the fall of 2008.
There is hope. You are not alone. For all of us on the journey to recovery, the road can seem long and we can feel alone in our search for freedom. Here at New Beginnings, where prayer is an integral part of all that we do, we will be offering a Twelve Step Program which will be supported by learning and experiencing together contemplative prayer practices in the context of a committed, caring community.

Meeting God in the Twelve Steps—A monthly retreat.
We will meet together on the third Saturday of each month from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., beginning our day silently in God’s presence in centering prayer (Christian Meditation). The leaders will work the steps with us and we will learn the ancient art of Lectio Divina (Sacred Reading), using scripture and our Big Book. The first month will be an overview of the 12-Steps and we will talk about one step per month after that for 12 months. Ongoing mentoring or spiritual direction will be offered to those who are a part of our monthly meetings. Our prayer is that this contemplative 12-step program will provide a pathway to the freedom, transformation and healing that only God can provide.

The Director of this program is Patti Hale who has recently joined the New Beginnings staff. We are grateful that Patti will be bringing to New Beginnings her gifts, talents, and gentle compassion. The team for this program also includes Mr. Kim Sawyer, Karen Miller and Marie Noack. Patti shares a bit of her testimony with the twelve step program over the past twenty years. “We all want to connect at deep meaningful levels with God and our friends and families. We want to be in touch with ourselves at a spiritual, mental and emotional level. My experience with the 12 Steps and with contemplative prayer practices is that, together, they are a powerful set of tools that can bring me out of loneliness and isolation into a richer, broader way of life and into deep connectedness as I share myself with others. When I admit that I am powerless over my problems (Step 1) I can believe God has the power to do for me what I cannot do for myself. This gives me the God has called Marie to do, but we all have a contribution we can make. Mother Teresa used to say: “You can do what I cannot do. I can do what you cannot do, and together we can do great things”.

Together We Can Do Great Things

In one of the most beautiful of all scriptural promises, God tells us, “Behold I am making all things new.”

A fresh wind is blowing through New Beginnings as God reveals His plans to add to the already existing ministries of spiritual direction, retreats and spiritual formation. The new Twelve-Step Program with a contemplative base, the expansion of the Benedictine Lay Order, Community of Hope lay chaplaincy training, and involvement in serving the poor are some of the ways God is making things new at New Beginnings.

As the ministry expands, so do its needs. God has abundantly blessed Marie’s faithfulness to trust Him to provide for New Beginnings by bringing healing and transformation in many lives through this ministry, but she cannot do it alone. We can’t all do what God has called Marie to do, but we all have a contribution we can make. Mother Teresa used to say: “You can do what I cannot do. I can do what you cannot do, and together we can do great things”.

We are asking you to prayerfully consider becoming a partner with us in the mission of New Beginnings. Whether you can make a one-time donation or a commitment to give regularly, please know that you will be an integral part of God’s work here in this place.

Thank you for giving to the Lord at New Beginnings House of Prayer!
ALLELUIA! The Easter season brings back to us, the glorious ALLELUIA! Praise be to God for His magnificent love of His Son Jesus, and that same love for us.

Where are you this Easter season? Someone told me they are still experiencing Lent, some are burdened with many losses, hurts and pains, and are finding it difficult to speak the word, ALLELUIA. We are taking this season to pray for you. New Beginnings continue to be here for the ones who are able to shout the ALLELUIA and for those who are not.

I want to thank the many people who have given to New Beginnings. I want you to know how very much I appreciate all you have done. Because of you, we are able to reach out and touch so many lives. So much is happening because you have given. Whether it has been through your financial offerings, your time, or your prayers, it is all happening because

Those of you who know me well, know I have a place I often retreat at called, Lebh Shomea House of Prayer in Sarita, TX. This view is outside my room on my porch. Silence and prayer are the keys to the transformation of one’s life when you are at this beautiful place. Silence, which can be very intimidating is filled with the voices, presence and love of God. Nature enfolds you through the continual breezes, the deer, and other animals that just roam the grounds. What is silence to me? Healing, renewal, struggle with answer, clarity, restoration, deep and transforming time with the Beloved. One thing I can promise, you will not leave the way you went! I encourage you today, to take time to “be”, even if it means in your own home. Be still... and you will know God. (Revised from Psalm 46:10). Once you know God, you will be forever changed! All shall be well, and all shall be well, all manner of things shall be well. ~Julian of Norwich

The Monastic Corner...Silence, In Search of God’s Love

True silence is the search of man for God. It is the suspension bridge that the soul in love with God builds to cross the dark, frightening gullies of its own mind, the depthless abyss of its own fears that impede its way to God. True silence is the speech of lovers. For only love knows its beauty, completeness, and utter joy.

St. Benedict and St. Therese of Lisieux

The ninth step of humility is that we control our tongues and remain silent, not speaking unless asked a question, for Scripture warns, “In a flood of words you will not avoid sinning., (Proverbs 10:19), and “A talkative person goes about aimlessly on earth” (Ps. 140:12)
~Rule of St. Benedict.

The spiritual person is silent because at heart he wants to spend time with God, and to do that he must withdraw from human conversation. He does not keep silent because he dislikes other humans, but because small talk is small. Chit-chat is to the life of prayer what static is to radio reception. The spiritual person’s instinctive withdrawal alienates him from the mainstream and pushes Silence is the fruit of solitude, and the contemplative seeks a secret place with the same compulsion the sinner seeks his den of vice. Jesus was constantly going to a solitary place to pray and he tells us to do the same (Matthew 6:6). Benedict calls for the oratory to be kept quiet so the monks may find a secret place of prayer, and as a child Therese instinctively sought out a private places for prayer and distinct times of silence. In my free afternoons I went behind my bed in an empty space which was there, and that it was easy to close myself in with my bed curtain. I thought about God, life, Eternity. After I made my first communion, that heavenly day let unspeakable memories in my soul! I don’t want to enter into detail here. There are certain things that lose their perfume as soon as they are exposed to the air; there are deep spiritual thought which cannot be expressed in human language without losing their intimate and heavenly meaning. ~St. Therese Lisieux

When we begin to place these acts in our life, we will begin to reach that love of God which being perfect drives out all fear.
Adapted from, The Rule of Benedict & The Little Rule, The Little Way
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Denice Foose, Director of Funding  
Carol Antill, Director of Prayer and Intercession  
Janie Huntington, Spiritual Director & Newsletter Editor  
Patti Hale, Director of 12 Step Ministry

Mission Statement
We are an ecumenical, contemplative house of prayer which offers opportunities for spiritual growth and formation in an atmosphere of prayer in sacred spaces. We are grounded in community and pledge to reflect God’s glory by being His hands, His feet and His unfailing love.

God is in our present, waiting for us there.  
Joan Chittister

It is a very Benedictine quality, that of the sacredness of the ordinary, present moment. I was thinking of this as I was watching my grandchildren playing messily in the mud left in our yard after a heavy rain. All that was real to them as they played seemed to be the wet, brown earth they were forming into fairy castles and forts. I was led to wonder when the last time was that I had paid that kind of undivided attention to anything or anyone. Richard Foster talks about studying people in our lives who are words of God to us, just as we study Holy Scripture. They are icons of Christ, deserving of our prayerful attentiveness, especially those whom we think we know so well. Look and listen with your heart to the people in your life. God is speaking!!

Janie,  
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