

Holy Christmas: Day 9, Saturday before Epiphany January 2, 2021 Rule of St. Benedict

As a new calendar year begins, so does a new cycle of reading regularly *The Rule of St. Benedict*, as practiced by Benedictine monks, nuns, and oblates. Since 2001 as a Benedictine oblate I have joined with Benedictines around the world in the daily reading from The Rule of St. Benedict. This Christian wisdom literature of the 6th century guides and informs Benedictine spirituality. Benedict interprets, informs and models the Gospel through his words, guidance, and inspiration.

At the first of the calendar year as the new cycle of reading begins (the practice is to read through the Rule daily in three cycles covering the entire year) – Benedict says in his Prologue:

“Listen carefully. . .listen with the ear of the heart”. . .Every time you begin a good work, you must pray to God most earnestly to bring it to perfection. . .Let us open our eyes to the light that comes from God, and our ears to the voice from the heavens that every day calls out this charge: ‘If you hear God’s voice today, do not harden your hearts.’”

(Psalm 95:8)

One of my favorite writers is Sr. Joan Chittister OSB, who writes a beautiful commentary of The Rule, that accompanies the daily reading. Knowing that I have shared this many times in social media, my blog, and other writings - (excuse my being redundant or just a retiree repeating himself) - she speaks again the meaning from St. Benedict in this holy season of Christmas, just before the celebration of Epiphany, and at the beginning of a new year:

“Let nothing go by without being open to being nourished by the inner meaning of that event in life. . . What attention to the spiritual life does change (in us) is our appreciation for the presence of God in our dull, mundane lives. . .Benedict reminds us that life is short, that we don’t have time to waste time, that some things are significant in life and some things are not. We all have to ask ourselves what time it is in our own lives. We each have to begin to consider the eternal weight of what we are spending life doing.”

(Chittister, *Insight for the Ages: The Rule of St. Benedict*, notes on the Prologue)

Blessings in this season of Christmas and for a holy New Year! Christ is born! The Word became flesh and dwells among us! Arise. . .light has come! For unto us a Savior is born. . .See the star! Worship the Christ! Love God and others!

William H. Wilson (Bill)+