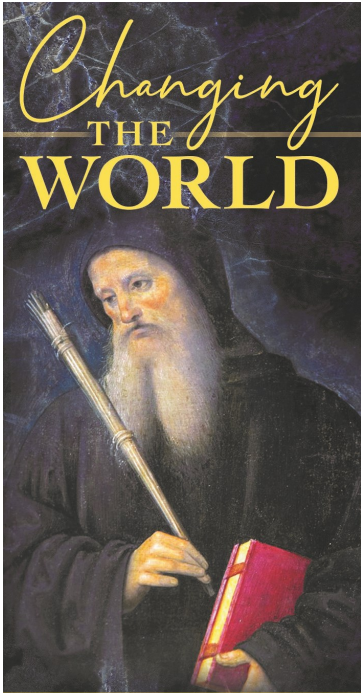


FROM FR. JASON



ST. BENEDICT

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Currently, many parishioners are heading for vacations with their families. Some who have returned from a trip have shared with me their experience of those different places. All seem to have come to the same conclusion: there is no place like Our Lady Mother of the Church! To find a Catholic Church, wherever your travels take you, and the Mass schedule there, go to www.masstimes.org. Thank you to all who remember and support our parish with their donations while away from home.

Speaking of those who travel from their home, this Thursday we will celebrate the Memorial of St. Benedict, Abbot. Benedict was born into Roman nobility in Nursia, central Italy, roughly 100 miles northeast of Rome. As a youth, Benedict was sent to Rome for studies. However, he quickly became disillusioned by the prevalent immorality and disorder, particularly among his classmates. At the age of twenty, to find peace in his soul and avoid the traps that had ensnared many of his peers, he moved to the countryside of the town of Affile, about forty miles from Rome.

Benedict wasn't interested in the praise of men; he sought only holiness. He moved closer to the town of Subiaco and took up residence in a cave. Nearby, he met a holy monk, Romanus, whom Benedict consulted for spiritual advice. At

Romanus' encouragement, Benedict took on the monastic habit and lived in the cave for the next three years as a hermit. As a hermit, Benedict prayerfully sought to root out all sin in his life, **especially the three temptations common to most men: "the temptation of self-affirmation and the desire to put oneself at the center, the temptation of sensuality and, lastly, the temptation of anger and revenge"** (Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, April 9, 2008).

Benedict was invited by a group of local monks to become their abbot. He reluctantly agreed, recognizing that his form of religious life contrasted sharply with theirs. After a brief time as abbot, **the monks so opposed him that, according to legend, they attempted to kill him by poisoning his wine.** When Benedict blessed the wine, the glass shattered, and the scheme was revealed. Shortly afterward, Benedict left the monks and returned to his cave before emerging to found monasteries in the area over the following years. Many admired him and were attracted to his radical way of living, while others envied him and sought his life. Numerous miracles are said to have taken place through his intervention, such as raising a monk from the dead, healing a boy, foreseeing future events, multiplying food and wine, expelling demons, and walking across water.

After founding twelve small monasteries in the Subiaco area, Benedict felt it was time for a fresh start. Therefore, he moved about sixty miles southeast to the mountaintop of Monte Cassino, where, at the age of fifty, he founded his most famous monastery.

As we honor this important figure in Church and world history, reflect on his humble beginnings. He witnessed the immoralities of his day and fled from those temptations to embrace a life of holiness. Reflect on the fact that God also calls us to flee from sin and embrace a life of holiness. When that happens, God can do great things through us in ways we may never comprehend. **Let us follow the example of Saint Benedict: ask God to help us seek holy daily living, and leave it up to God to use us as He wills.**

Peace,