



BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF CHICAGO

Jubilee Celebration – Feast of St. Benedict
July 11, 2025
Sr. Mary Susan Remsgar

Reading I - Proverbs 2:1-9
Gospel - Matthew 19:27-29

Good morning, and welcome to you, our Oblates and guests, who have joined with us in celebration of the Solemnity of our Holy Father, St. Benedict, and the 75th Jubilee of our Sr. Callista Kaley. We are very happy that you are here to rejoice with us and to give thanks on this wonderful occasion.

I would like to begin my reflection for this feast day by calling our attention to St. Peter in today's Gospel. Peter, as we have known him from various gospel accounts, seems to have somewhat of a curious and impulsive personality. He pretty much says or does the first thing that comes to mind when seeing or hearing something that causes an emotional response. Prior to what we just heard in this gospel passage from Matthew, Peter and the other disciples had just witnessed something that certainly made Peter very curious. You may recall the story of Jesus being approached by a wealthy young man who asked what he needed to do to possess everlasting life? Jesus responded by saying, "Keep the commandments." To which the young man replied, "I am doing that...what more can I do?" Jesus said, "If you seek to become perfect, go, sell your possessions, give to the poor, come follow me and you will have treasure in heaven." The young man couldn't do it and sadly left Jesus.

That's all it took for Peter to pipe up and ask the question of Jesus: "We have left everything to follow you. What can we expect from it?"

Jesus' response is both simple and profound: "You will receive a hundred times more and inherit everlasting life." Peter was a little slow to catch on to Jesus, kind of like us sometimes, but we know Peter eventually did come to grow in his understanding as Jesus transformed Peter through the gifts of the Holy Spirit making Peter the rock upon which God built His Church.

Our first reading today, provides us with a more detailed answer to Peter's question of what will be given to us? In the Book of Proverbs, Solomon is giving advice to his son. He lovingly pleads with his son to seek God's wisdom, to treasure God's word so that the son may experience the many benefits which come from seeking and knowing God. This advice is offered to us, too.

The author of the Book of Proverbs tells us that as we open our hearts, seek wisdom, listen for it, we will come to know and understand God more deeply, to experience God's loving kindness and merciful fidelity. We will be guided to walk with honesty and integrity. We will be protected and we will be able to choose what is good and right, not just for ourselves but for others. We will acquire and possess wisdom which calls us to carefully listen to what God speaks to our hearts and to respond with love. While the gift of wisdom is offered to all, we each need to look for it, to be receptive to it and to recognize it.

The Rule of St. Benedict offers us the way to seek wisdom. In the Prologue to the Holy Rule, St. Benedict instructs us to listen with the ear of our heart. The monastic way of life is about growing an open, listening heart. St. Benedict teaches us how to grow such a heart by searching for wisdom in all creation and in community with one another. Our Benedictine Vow of Fidelity to the Monastic Way of Life means building community as we live, work and pray together in good times and not so good times. This is how we help each other grow ever more open and loving hearts. God's grace of perseverance in the midst of

our human struggles, difficulties, and weaknesses enables us to be shaped by the community and transformed, also, by God's grace. Fidelity is a lifelong journey we travel with God and with one another.

Today, Sr. Callista, we celebrate God's fidelity and yours. Thank you for your 75 years of faithfulness in seeking wisdom, seeking God with us, your Benedictine sisters. You have been graciously gifted by God, especially with the gift of music and the gift of teaching. And you have honored God and us by developing those gifts which you have so generously and lovingly shared with us in community and with your students and friends, many of whom are here today to celebrate with you, to thank you, and to express their love for you. Today, we honor you, Sr. Callista. You are, for all of us, such a real, true, genuine, and inspiring reminder of God's faithful love and goodness.

Once again, we turn to St. Benedict who offers us courage, strength, hope, and joy with these words: "Do not be daunted immediately by fear and run away from the road that leads to salvation. It is bound to be narrow at the outset. But as we progress in this way of life and in faith, we shall run on the path of God's commandments, our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love." We are grateful to God for you, for your long and faithful life with us. We ask God to bless you with continued good humor, lasting joy, deep peace, and most especially, the inexpressible delight of God's unending love for you.

So now, I invite you, Sr. Callista, to once again, renew the vows you made to God and to this community 75 years ago.