

Prayer to St. Benedict for a Happy Death

“O holy Father, St. Benedict, blessed by God both in grace and in name, who, while standing in prayer, with hands raised to heaven, didst most happily yield thy angelic spirit into the hands of thy Creator, and hast promised zealously to defend against all the snares of the enemy in the last struggle of death, those who shall daily remind thee of thy glorious departure and heavenly joys; protect me, I beseech thee, O glorious Father, this day and every day, by thy holy blessings, that I may never be separated from our dear Lord, from the society of thyself, and of all the blessed. Through the same Christ our Lord. *Amen.*”

St. Benedict himself revealed to St. Gertrude – also one of the greatest saints in the history of the Catholic Church, and herself a Benedictine nun – that “whoever reminds me of the extraordinary privilege with which God deigned to glorify my last moments, shall experience my particular assistance in his final combat. I will be a faithful protector against the assaults of the enemy. Fortified by my presence, he will escape the snares of the evil one and safely attain eternal happiness.”

V/. St. Benedict

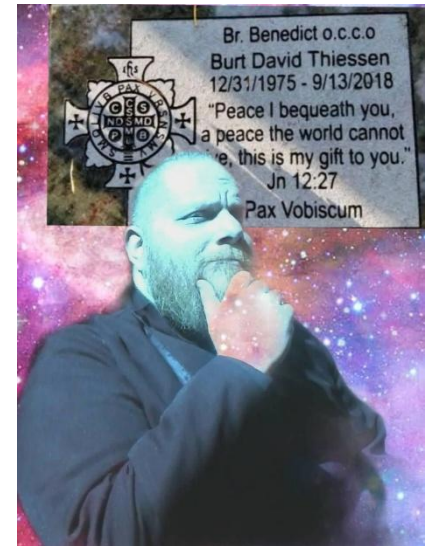
Lenten reflection by Abbot Oscar Joseph, OCCO

In the spirit of using Lent as a conversatio opportunity I was inspired to transform our most fearful event into a motivation for leading a joy filled life.

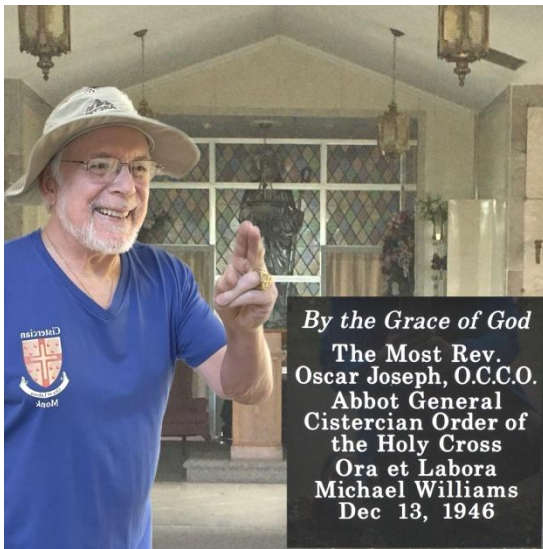
“Remember to keep death before your eyes daily

Notice our grave markers. My joy is prayer, work, and my God given tasks.

Br. Benedict’s joy was in giving peace to others.



At the moment of his death his family and medical staff felt Angels in his room.



I have already consecrated my marker and visit it from time to time.

Br. Benedict often said, "Miracles are always happening because God loves you. He's got your back."

Br. Benedict was a life professed Cistercian monk who went on to heaven on September 13, 2018.

He was an exceptionally holy monk whom the Abbot loved dearly. Br. Benedict was humorous, captivating and a dear lover of our Lord. His wife, Alexis, describes Br. Benedict as *“a deeply devoted man, not only to God but to his family, friends and any stranger who needed prayer or a friendly conversation. He had a gift for making anyone feel like family. He could see people's hearts and never held a grudge.”* In loving memory of Br. Benedict and our love for the Cistercian Order we have founded the **“We Got Your Back Program”**.

“Remember to keep death before your eyes daily.” St Benedict is reminding us to live life to the fullest. Self indulgence, the modern definition of living to the fullest, ultimately leads to an earlier death. St. Benedict defines the fullest in the Holy Rule.

1. “LISTEN, MY SON.”

Silence allows us to reflect on ourselves and to be more attentive to others, it helps us be more peaceful, and it puts us in God’s presence.

2. WORK HELPS US KEEP A HEALTHY MIND.

“Idleness is the enemy of the soul,” Benedict writes. He mandated that his monks divide their time between work, reading, and prayer, in such a way that they developed a balanced body, mind, and soul.

“Remember to keep death before your eyes daily

3. TRANSFORM EVERY TASK INTO PRAYER.

For St. Benedict, every task participates in the creative work of God and the sufferings of Christ. Work should be considered as a service to others and as a form of prayer.

4. OUR DAYS SHOULD FOLLOW A RHYTHM.

The Holy Rule imposes a time for everything: prayer, work, reading, reflection ... There is a beginning and end time for each task.

5. BE ATTENTIVE TO OTHERS.

For St. Benedict, respect must characterize all our relationships with other people. “Let all be received as Christ,” he said, speaking of visitors, “especially the poor and travelers.” If we are all attentive and considerate to each other—even to our enemies—we will contribute to building a world that reflects God’s love.

6. PRACTICE DISCIPLINE.

Forcing ourselves to follow a well-designed schedule actually frees us from slavery to our impulses.

7. READ OFTEN TO FEED YOUR MIND AND SOUL.

Reading good books can give us fresh ideas, make us more empathetic, broaden our mind, and teach us wisdom from the past and the present.

8. UNDERSTAND AND RESPECT YOUR OWN PRIORITIES.

For monks, the highest priority is to seek God, especially in prayer. Everything in the Rule is organized around this principle; St. Benedict repeats over and over, in slightly different formulations, “Let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ.” We need to know what our own priorities are, and respect those priorities in the way we use our time.

9. MAKE PEACE WITH OTHERS.

In various ways and circumstances, St. Benedict urges his monks to apologize whenever they may have offended others. He reminds them of the injunction from Holy Scripture to “seek after peace and pursue it” and, “in case of discord with anyone, to make peace before the setting of the sun.” This helps us grow in goodness, as well as contributing to the stability of the community.

10. LIVE EACH DAY AS IF IT WERE YOUR LAST.

The holy abbot told his monks to “keep death before your eyes daily.” This helps us remember our priorities and focus on the essentials.

St. Benedict’s insight into humanity continues to be valuable today. We can be happier, better people, with God’s help.