

APOSTLE'S CREED

*We travel on our way to promised the land
living *now* into Jesus' promised life,
guided by signposts of the *Rule* of St. Benedict.

Please join in as much as you can.

---Per---vay---nee---ez (3X) Listen....listen for this word. (*Reader 1* p. 40)

We shall ARRIVE! Trip preparation: Use 3x5 card to write answers. Q. p. 6

Signpost 1 Listen! Listen! Listen!

That FIRST and very important word. HOW is GOD saying "Listen!" to you today? p. 33

My delivery hopes something will get "stuck" in your mind --that you have to
wrestle with it, tug at it, have an "AHA!" with it or even---laugh.

What are we listening FOR? (*Reader 2* p. 8) Benedict's Rule as a **path home**. p. 8-9

>> Baptismal Call **ALL 1.** -- Response: **I will with God's help.**

Signpost 2 Open!

All 2. -- The Rule is a way to open our hearts and lives to the divine light.

p. 33-34 "getting it right".....we don't...

till we sit at the feet of Jesus with Mary who chose the "better part" ...and LISTEN.

p. 34_ "We put on a heart of love and do our work for love of God and others."

How does Benedict's Rule help us travel more lightly, freely, **aware of God's presence?**

Signpost 3 Find Godeverywhere!

p. 19 Seek the light as if our lives depended on it. (*Reader 3* p. 18)

Exercise: **ALL 3.** -- Response: **God is with me.**

(Picture God being with you in every daily activity.)

"...THE Holy Spirit is...a witness to the person we choose to be at every moment." p. 19

Movie: Shall We Dance? --Susan Sarandon explains her seeing marriage as so important:

Because we all need someone to witness our life, that we were here! We lived!

The beauty of life is in listening and finding God

in **every** part of **every ordinary moment ...all the time....**

p19. "...all moments are key moments and life itself is grace." ---Frederick Buechner

All 4. ---- **"Just to be is a blessing. Just to live is holy."** (--- Abraham Joshua Heschel)

Opening the Toolbox of St. Benedict's Rule

What tools lead us to LISTEN, OPEN, and FIND GOD in "the ORDINARY?"

The structure of the Rule is:

A prologue and 73 chapters, each one titled to describe its content.

Some specific main topics are: pp. 29-30

*** Divine Office or "Work of God"**-----The eight daily times of community prayer
----that are the PRIMARY OCCUPATION of monastics.

*** Roles for community members**-----Abbot (Abbess / Prioress), who is the superior or top leader of the community; cellarer, who distributes food/utensils to members; porter, who greets visitors at the gate. Focus is on qualities which ALL members need and descriptions of how they are to treat one another.

St. Benedict calls us to see the importance of "being" over "doing."

***Being a COMMUNITY**-----Relationships, ways to form peace and harmony
in every part of DAILY "living together."

Included are: the process of joining the community,
meals, clothing, work, discipline and sleeping arrangements.

***Spiritual Direction**-----Nurturing our relationship with God
through prayer, study, Lenten practices and pursuing Humility.

Sr. Joan Chittister** summarizes steps to humility as---- know that God is God,
God's will is best for us, acknowledge faults, accept direction, learn from
community members and listen to others, endure without growing weary.
Be content with less than the best, let go of image-making,
refrain from ridicule, speak kindly, be simple, serene. (Not in that exact order.)

Anglican author Esther do Waal:

ALL 545

. : It is all about love. It points me to Christ. (*Reader 4* p. 29-30)

Look at Benedict's Rule for practical and down-to-earth instructions
for peacefully forming a community of belonging and fulfillment, listening and silence.

It is a way of learning together in "a school for the Lord's service.....
nothing harsh, nothing burdensome."

It calls for an extraordinary understanding of individual's weaknesses.
It provides methods of guidance and help to amend faults and safeguard love.
It encourages compassion for those who fail, have a hard heart,
or are troubled or distressed.

Sr. Joan Chittister describes Benedict's Rule as like a rail
you can hold onto while ascending a staircase

Jane Tomain (p. 12) Tells us the word Rule comes from the Greek *canon*
which means trellis--which supports the vine for greater fruitfulness (and flowering).

**** Sr. Joan Chittister, "The Monastery of the Heart," p.186**

All 6. -- “Benedict gives us specific ways to live with Christ in our hearts.” p. 13

“Every happening in life, great or small, is a parable of God speaking to us.

The art of living is to get it.”---Malcom Muggeridge, quoted from movie The Ultimate Gift.

The Rule is a path to home.

We are traveling to the promised land, living into Jesus' promised LIFE, through the Rule.

God's plan & will for me...where to from here?

Breadcrumbs p. 37

Can you discover some of the BREADCRUMBS in your life recently?

As you read/ study/ reflect/ practice while using this TOOLBOX book,

-----stay aware of what speaks to you, even the smallest notice of a thing may be important!

---what questions you have / what questions YOU,

---what you seek and how that unfolds for you.

Is your “sense of things” that your direction

is about to shift, change, veer or stay on course “as is”? What tells you?

How do you seek God's will? Little intuitions, realizations, insights, noticings?

Tools: Listen! Open heart! God is in Everything!

Try a “TRUST-STRETCHING” MANTRA:

ALL 7. -- God is in

R: everything L: everywhere C: All the time.

Movie: August Rush ...a 10 year old boy delights in every sound in fields, streets, above, below, and all around, because it is all heard as MUSIC ...which he eventually writes into a symphony.

God uses all our “parts”: body feeling mind spirit (gut) p. 37

others, senses, songs, art, movies...etc.

Discovery is usually gradual, found in threads in our past and our unfolding “now.”

Sometimes we find, like the Portugese proverb says, “God writes straight with crooked lines.”

The song, Broken Road by Rascal Flatts is an example of finding God's will

...even throughout one's past. (Copy in front)

Suggestions:

Jane Tomaine's Tools: pp. 20-22; Listening for God in a Task (P.A. blessing –smile!)

Turning to God through Thanksgiving

Tangible reminder of God's Presence

pp. 39-40; Following the Breadcrumbs

Living Reflectively

[Return to & examine Questionnaires on Relationships -- pp. 15-16](#)

CLOSING: p. 13 Purpose of studying our TOOLBOX book on the Rule of St. Benedict!

YOUR OWN TOOLBOX -- you are unique & creative!

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Spend more time with whatever idea / page calls to you.

Fridge magnets.....cover over Business ones with favorite sayings.

---Hang "guidance" cartoons, quips, prayer cards,

-----images of God's presence.

Bathroom mirror....prayer partner's name/ intentions...Morning Offering

Gratitude ---list, calendar, journal, "word," sharing how God blessed me today

Sticky notes --stuck into places where family will find them

...or you will as you sort thru task

Tangibles—God Box; pocket coin, cross, pebble, verse

Nature / backyard / park --message in color/ shapes in sky /tree branches,  
leaf & stone.

"Gift" word: virtue or quality to practice for the day, week, month, year

"Thorn- in- side" -- find blessing in the challenge

Flip channel in brain: terrible can become terrific --depends on focus in situation.

Notice signs (to you ) of "God loves me!" ..... and believe it!!!

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## Apostles Creed --- Pray together

- Listen and you shall arrive!
- 3x5 card --- Prepare for "trip."

Signpost 1 LISTEN Benedict's Rule is a path home.

All 1. --- I will with God's help!

Signpost 2 OPEN

All 2. --- The Rule is a way to open  
our hearts and lives to the divine light.

Signpost 3 FIND GOD...everywhere

All 3. --- God is with me.

"...all moments are key moments and life itself is grace."

All 4. ---- **"Just to be is a blessing. Just to live is holy."** (--- Abraham Joshua Heschel)

**The Rule:** a trellis -- supports vine for greater fruitfulness

Main occupation of monastics:

"Work of God" --- Divine Office -- Community Prayer, 8x daily

**Members' Roles:** Abbot, Cellarer, Porter, Qualities in All Members

**Forming COMMUNITY:** Peace & harmony in daily living together.

Joining community, meals, clothing, work, discipline.

**Spiritual Development:** Nurturing our relationship with God

Prayer, study, Lenten practices, humility→attitudes and actions that  
keep one pliable, kind, teachable, interdependent for good of whole.

All 5. --- It is all about love. It points me to Christ.

The Rule promotes ...A school for the Lord's service:

Each member gets what they need when weak, ill, hard hearted,  
unruly, distressed or troubled.

All 6. --- **Benedict gives us specific ways to live with Christ in our hearts.**

**God's will for me?** Discovery, discernment, finding my path.

"Where I've been" shines a light forward. Gradual guidance.

**TRUST** mantra--

All 7. --- **God is in**

**R: everything L: everywhere C: ALL THE TIME!**

**TOOLS** for Developing our Relationship with God

Suggested tools are found at end of each book section. Create your own.

## Broken Road

I set out on a narrow way many years ago  
Hoping I would find true along the broken road.  
But I got lost a time or two  
Wiped my brow and kept pushing through.

I couldn't see how every sign pointed straight to you,  
That every long lost dream led me to where you are.  
Others who broke my heart, they were like northern stars  
Pointing me on my way into your loving arms.

This much I know is true  
That God blessed the broken road  
That led me straight to you.

I think about the years I spent just passing through.  
I'd like to have the time I lost and give it back to you.  
But you just smile and take my hand.  
You've been there; you understand:  
It's all part of a grander plan that is coming true.

Every long lost dream led me to where you are.  
Others who broke my heart, they were like northern stars  
Pointing me on my way into your loving arms.