



RAMTELL

RamTell E-Newsletter August 2025

Benedictine Stewardship integrates prayer and work

Reflection

For more than 1500 years, the women and men who follow the Rule of Saint Benedict have shown themselves to be generous, grateful, and responsible stewards of all God's spiritual and material gifts. The Benedictine motto, *Ora et Labora* (prayer and work) is itself a stewardship commitment. Benedictines promise to integrate their spiritual lives with their material existence, treating all the goods of the monastery with the same reverence and care as they do the sacred vessels of the altar.

Care for Creation is an essential component of Benedictine life. So is hospitality, care for the poor and vulnerable, and profound respect for all human persons made in the image and likeness of their Creator. The followers of Saint Benedict know that

every spiritual and material gift belongs, first and foremost, to God alone. We are but stewards of God's bounty, called to take care of, and share generously, the spiritual and material blessings we have received from God's goodness.

Benedictines pray always because they combine their formal prayers (both personal and in community) with all their daily activities. *Ora et Labora* means integrating these two essential dimensions of their lives—prayer and work. As a result, *what* they do is less important than *how* they do it or *why* they do it. If every hour of the day and night is consecrated to the praise of God, then everything that a Benedictine does becomes an expression of the *Opus Dei* (the Work of God).

Although Pope Leo XIV is an Augustine, not a Benedictine, he clearly understands the importance of integrating our spiritual and material lives. In a recent homily reflecting on the contrasting experiences of Jesus' friends, Mary and Martha, the Holy Father said:

Although it is true that we must live out our faith through concrete actions, faithfully carrying out our duties according to our state of life and vocation, it is essential that we do so only after meditating on the Word of God and listening to what the Holy Spirit is saying to our hearts. To this end, we should set aside moments of silence, moments of prayer, times in which, quieting noise and distractions, we recollect ourselves before God in simplicity of heart. This is a dimension of the Christian life that we particularly

need to recover today, both as a value for individuals and communities, and as a prophetic sign for our times. We must make room for silence, for listening to the Father who speaks and sees in secret (Mt 6:6).

Benedictine women and men "make room for silence." They listen carefully to the Word of God as it "speaks and sees in secret." In their prayer and work they strive to take the gifts they have been given and to cultivate them responsibly and share them generously with others. Benedictine spirituality teaches those who follow the Rule of Saint Benedict, and all of us, how to be good stewards, how to care for Creation, and to share God's gifts with everyone we encounter, especially the poor and vulnerable.



Profile

Monastery Immaculate Conception The Sisters of Saint Benedict Ferdinand, Indiana

The Sisters in Ferdinand are one of the largest Benedictine communities of women in the United States — over 100 members strong and thriving. Monastery Immaculate Conception was founded in 1867 by four young Benedictine sisters who came to Ferdinand to teach the children of area settlers. Since then, more than 1,000 women have entered the community over the years, and the Sisters have expanded their ministries beyond education and beyond Ferdinand. Today, Sisters of Saint Benedict from

Ferdinand serve as teachers, social workers, parish ministers, counselors, nurses, attorneys, youth ministers, administrators, entrepreneurs, activists, chaplains, librarians and more.

Sister Anita Louise Lowe, O.S.B., who was just elected to her second term as Prioress, describes her community as being committed to the future. The direction that the Sisters have chosen can be seen in four main areas: 1) Living their monastic values with integrity, 2) Committing to

Vocation Ministry as a whole community, 3) Partnering with others to respond to local, regional, national, and global issues, and 4) Continuing the planning efforts that were begun two years ago (in July 2023) to assure that the Sisters remain good stewards of their spiritual and material gifts.

Sister Anita Louise explains that these four areas of the Sisters' commitment are closely inter-related. "The way we live our monastic values is what attracts women of faith to join us," she says. And she adds, "The integrity of our witness will also convince prospective partners (individuals and organizations) to join hands with us in addressing the serious issues facing our communities here at home and throughout the world." Finally, Sister Anita Louise believes that the Sisters' good stewardship of their physical facilities, their ministries, and their monastic witness (their prayer and work), always carried out in cooperation with God's grace, will determine their future strength and vitality as a Religious community dedicated to both contemplative prayer and apostolic work in southern Indiana and beyond.

Saint Benedict counsels all his followers to welcome guests as they would Christ himself, so visitors are always welcome at Monastery Immaculate Conception. Guided tours are available most days, and guests are always welcome to join the Sisters for the Liturgy of the Hours and Mass. For specific information, consult the Sisters' website at thedome.org or contact:

The Sisters of Saint Benedict
802 E. 10th St.
Ferdinand, IN 47532-9239
Phone: [1-812-367-1411](tel:1-812-367-1411)

RamTell, Inc. is proud to support the prayer and work of the Benedictine Sisters as they pursue their four distinctive goals and build their future as a community of faith. "We strive to be both realistic and hopeful about the future," Sister Anita Louise says. "God has blessed us for 158 years now—through good times and hard times. We are confident that, if we remain faithful to our Community's Benedictine values, our future will be strong and bright."