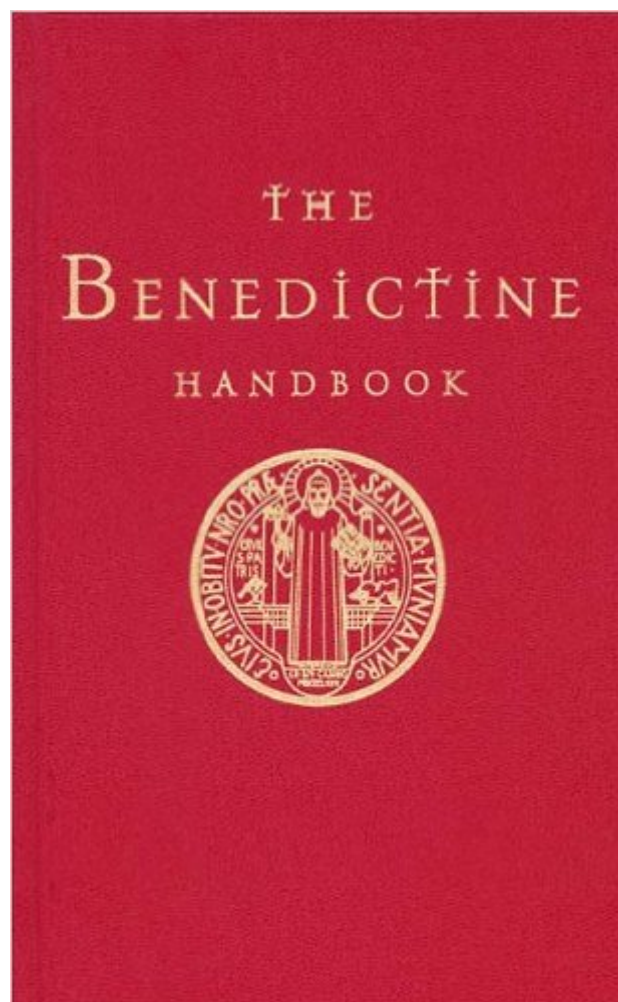


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The Benedictine Handbook



Synopsis

The Benedictine Handbook is a lifelong companion for oblates, associates, and friends of the Benedictine communities. Many people who visit communities for retreats and quiet days look for help in integrating into their daily lives some of the things they see and experience. This handbook will help people follow the Rule of Benedict as it explains the essential elements of Benedictine spirituality. It provides information on the spread of the Benedictine movement, its outstanding figures, and the main branches of the Benedictine family today. It also includes a simple version of the Daily Office and a collection of Benedictine devotions. It is a member's handbook" that deepens the sense of belonging among those who seek regular contact with a Benedictine community. The Benedictine Handbook will appeal to a broad range of readers who may or may not be familiar with Benedictine literature. The contributors to The Benedictine Handbook come from Benedictine backgrounds in the United States and Europe. Chapters and contributors include in Part One: Tools of Benedictine Spirituality *The Work of God, - by Demetrius Dumm; *Lectio Divina, - by Michal Casey; *Prayer, - by Mary Forman; *Work, - by Lauren McTaggart; *Perseverance, - by Kym Harris; *The Vows, - by Richard Yeo; and *Hospitality, - by Kathleen Norris. Part Two: The Benedictine Experience of God includes *A Simple Daily Office, - by Fr. Oswald; *Benedictine Prayers, - by Fr. Anthony; *A Benedictine Who's Who, - by Robert Atwell; and *Benedictine Holy Places, - by Colman O'Clabaigh. Part Three: Living the Rule includes *In Community, - by Columba Stewart; *In Solitude, - by Maria Boulding; *As Oblates, - by Patrick Phelan; and *In the World, - by Esther de Wall. Part Four: The Benedictine Family includes *A Short History, - by Joe Rippinger; *Benedictine Orders, - by Dominic Milroy; and *The Cistercian Tradition, - by Nivard Kinsella. The contributors to Part Five: A Glossary of Benedictine Terms are Terrence Kardong and Jill Maria Murdy. A Benedictine Handbook also includes *Preface to the Rule, - by Patrick Barry; and *The Rule (Patrick Barry's Version). -"

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Customer Reviews

The Benedictine Handbook is a wonderful resource for anyone interested in spiritual development, particularly through the Benedictine tradition and practice. Edited by Anthony Maret-Crosby OSB, it includes authors who are both 'full-time' Benedictines (i.e., residential Benedictines in monastic communities) and part-time, oblate Benedictines. Some are names that will be well known to the readers of spiritual literature (Kathleen Norris, Esther De Waal), and others, while lesser known, are no less skilled in their appointed tasks for this text. The book is arranged in six primary sections. The first section is The Rule. Originally in Latin, this handbook presents a new translation of The Rule by Patrick Barry OSB, which eliminates the traditional numerical coding in favour of a more wholistic approach. It begins appropriately with the word 'Listen', and ends appropriately with the section stating that this Rule is merely the beginning. The second section looks at specific practices of Benedictine spirituality. These include Hospitality, Perseverance, Work, Prayer, Lectio Divina, and more. These are all meant to come together to shape the entire life of the Benedictine -- they are not to be separate and compartmentalised, but rather joined together in harmony for life. The third section, entitled 'The Benedictine Experience of God', looks at the specific prayers and liturgies followed by Benedictines, as well as an interesting section on historical figures (up to the 20th century) in Benedictine tradition, as well as a listing of holy places specific to the Benedictine way. The Benedictine who uses this text will probably most frequently turn to the Daily Offices, Little Hours, and Prayers contained in this section.

This book has some helpful and useful information for those considering the life of a Benedictine Oblate, quite a bit of helpful and good info in fact. The essays on the different aspects of Benedictine life are quite good for the most part. Unfortunately, there is also some very concerning things, particularly in the section which highlights important Benedictines through the ages. On more than one occasion, a Monk/Nun/Sister who has for all intents and purposes left the faith, is presented as some sort of role model. An example can be found in a monk who went to India, studied other religions for years and was described as "being open to all roads to God". Well, that's

fine, except the Hindu god, is not God and if you are studying a path towards one, you are sure as heck not coming closer to the true God revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. In other occasions, those who are in open dissent from the Magisterium of the Church are presented in this same manner. Again, I find this disappointing because there is also a large amount of good information in the book. The big problem, of course, is separating the good from the bad. For those who are well formed in their faith, this would be relatively easy. However, considering the state of catechesis in the Church (openly acknowledged by our Bishops by the way), the likelihood that many who read this text are not able to weed out the bad from the good is far too high. And let's be honest here, they really shouldn't have to. The dissent and modernity never should have made it into the book to begin with.

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