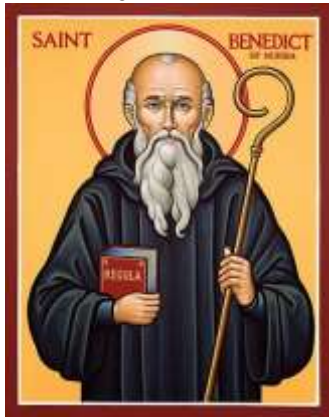


Our Venerable Father Benedict

23rd Day of the Holy & Great 40 Days Fast — March 14



Benedict was born in Nursia [Noceria] a province in Italy, in the year 480 A.D., of wealthy and distinguished parents. He did not remain long in school for he alone saw that because of lack of knowledge one can lose "the great understanding of his soul." He left school "an unlearned wise man and an understanding fool." He retreated to a monastery where he was tonsured by the monk Romanus after which he withdrew to a steep mountain where he remained in a cave for more than three years in a great struggle over his soul. Romanus brought him bread and lowered it down the steep mountain on a rope to the opening of the cave. When Benedict became known in the vicinity and in order to retreat from the glory of man, he withdrew from this cave. He was merciless toward himself. Once, when an unclean and raging passion of the flesh seized him, he removed all his clothes and rolled around naked in the thorns until he repelled every thought of a woman. God endowed him with many spiritual gifts: he discerned thoughts; he healed; he expelled evil spirits; he raised the dead; he appeared to some openly; and to others who were distant, he appeared in dreams. At one time, Benedict perceived that the glass of wine served to him was poisoned. When he made the sign of the cross over it, the glass burst. In the beginning he established twelve monasteries and in all of them, he placed twelve monks each. Later on, he founded the special order of the Benedictines which exists even today in the Roman & Byzantine Churches. On the sixth day before his death, he ordered that his grave which had been prepared earlier be opened for the saint foresaw that his end was near. He assembled all the monks, counseled them and then gave up his soul to the Lord whom he had faithfully served in poverty and in purity. Scholastica, his sister by birth, lived in a convent and looking up to her brother, she greatly mortified herself and reached a high state of spiritual perfection. When St. Benedict gave up his soul, two monks, one traveling on the road and one at prayer in a far away cell, simultaneously saw the same vision. They saw a path extending from earth to heaven, covered with a precious woven fiber and illuminated on both sides by rows of men. At the head of the path, there stood a man of indescribable beauty and light who said to them that this path was prepared for Benedict, favored by God. As a result of this vision, these two brothers learned that their good abbot departed from this world. He died peacefully in the year 543 A.D. and entered into the eternal Kingdom of Christ the King.

CROSS-VENERATION TROPARION (Tone 1 – pew book page 223)

Save Your people O Lord, and bless Your inheritance. * Grant victory to Your Church over evil, * and protect Your people by Your Cross.

Troparion of Benedict (Tone 8 – pew book page 376)

In you O Father the divine image was strictly preserved; * taking up your cross you followed Christ. * You taught us by example how to spurn the flesh for it passes away * and how to care for the soul which is immortal. * Therefore, O Venerable Father Benedict * your soul rejoices with the angels.

Kondakion of Benedict (Tone 6)

You were made wealthy by God's grace, * and your deeds proved the worth of it. * You became a person really pleasing to Christ, * full of the Spirit's gifts from prayer and fasting. * You healed the sick and banished devils, * and you are certainly the vigilant guardian of our souls!

CROSS-VENERATION KONDAKION (Tone 7 – pew book page 224)

No longer does the flaming sword guard the gates of Eden, * for the tree of the Cross has come to quench it wondrously. * The sting of death and the victory of Hades have been driven out. * For You, O my Savior, stood and called out to those in Hades: * Enter again * into paradise.

Prokimenon of a Venerable (Tone 7 – pew book page 377)

Precious in the eyes of the Lord * is the death of His faithful.

*Verse: What can I return to the Lord * for all He has given me?*

Alleluia of a Venerable (Tone 6 =pew book page 377)

*Verse: Happy the man who fears the Lord * and greatly delights in His commands.*

*Verse: His posterity will be mighty * upon the earth.*

Communion Hymn of a Venerable (pew book page 377)

The just man will be remembered forever; * evil news he will not fear.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Concluding Hymn sung once by Priest; twice by people

Having suffered the Passion for us, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us!

Preterp'ivij za nas Strasti, Isuse Christe, Syne Bozij, pomiluj nas!



Daily Prayer During The Great Fast

(February 20 — March 31)

O Lord Jesus Christ, our God, and Hope of all on land and of those far away at sea; You have established these holy days of fasting by Your law and the prophets as a way for our mortification and repentance. At the proper time, You manifested Yourself in the flesh on this earth, and by Your fast of forty days and nights, You sanctified the practice of fasting and commanded us to follow Your example. As a merciful and gracious God, enable us to continue these holy days of The Great Fast with perfect repentance, with humility instead of hypocrisy, with fervent prayer, with hunger and thirst, with frequent prostrations, and with a contrite heart. Enable us, also, to complete this time of The Great Fast without fault and with a pure conscience, keeping our faith intact and achieving victory over sin. Send an angel of peace to watch over our lives, to protect us from all snares of our enemies, and to assist us in the performance of good deeds. Strengthen us by Your power so that we may accomplish the spiritual works of The Great Fast. Then, with our passions in control and our souls and bodies properly cleansed, we will be worthy to partake, without condemnation, of Your most pure Body and Your most precious and life-giving Blood. For You are the merciful and gracious Lover of Mankind, Who came down to earth to save all; and we give glory to You (+) and to Your Eternal Father, and Your All-Holy, Gracious, and Life-Giving Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.