



It is my great pleasure to welcome you to our website and introduce you to our way of life as Benedictine monks at the Abbey of Saint Mary and Saint Louis. Over a millennium and a half ago, our Holy Father Benedict placed great attention on the reception of guests, and it is upon his instructions on the subject that I will base my introduction. He noted that “after the guests have been received, they should be invited to pray; then the superior or an appointed brother will sit with them” (Rule of Saint Benedict 53:8). I would like to fulfill the first precept by praying for your growth in holiness. May you grow each day in your knowledge and love for the Lord Jesus and may his Spirit guide you to what he wants you to be. I also request your prayers for our community, specifically that we may grow in numbers and holiness.

As for the second precept, “to sit with you,” I would like to fulfill it by giving you a word on the goal of monastic life. In a world that seeks freedom with an enthusiasm perhaps greater than ever before, we would like to describe our Benedictine way of life as a journey towards that freedom. It is our deep conviction that:

To love God with all our being,
to be abandoned to Him,
possessed by Him,
and so able, through His Spirit,
to love our neighbor as ourselves
is, as human beings, our greatest freedom.

The apparently effortless freedom of the artist, the gymnast, or the dancer is the fruit of long hours of discipline and practice. So, too, the patience, gentleness, and wisdom of the mature monk are the fruit of quiet perseverance in a life that blends the structure of the Rule with a constant openness to the demands of the Spirit. Ours is a life of growth toward complete freedom, that freedom which will be ours as children of God when, in His mercy, we see Him face to face. But here and now we may grow daily in our union with Him and, as our union grows, so does our freedom.

Everyone yearns for the freedom of holiness, and each has his unique path to it. It is my prayer and hope that by learning of our path you may find applications for your own journey into an ever-deeper union with God.

Laus Tibi Domine,
[Abbot Thomas Frerking](#)

