

The Episcopal Church of the Holy Trinity welcomes you!



SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. JULY 7, 2024

A Reading from a treatise entitled
The Teacher
By Clement of Alexandria

Jesus our Teacher has set before us the true life and has effected the education of those who abide in Christ. The cast and character of the life he enjoins is not particularly formidable, though it is not made altogether easy by reason of his gracious kindness. He makes demands, it is true, but then gives them such a character that they can be put into practice.

In my understanding God formed us out of dust, regenerated us by water, enabled us to grow through the Spirit, educated us by the Word, and directed us by his sacred precepts towards our adoption as heirs and our salvation. He did this in order to transform an earth-born human being into a holy and heavenly being by his coming, and so fulfil to the utmost his own divine utterance: 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness.' It is Christ, in fact, who became that perfect realization of what God spoke; the rest of humanity is conceived as being created merely in his image.

Hence, let us who are children of the good Father and infants at the breast of the good Teacher fulfil the Father's will, pay heed to the Word, and be truly fashioned by the saving life of the Saviour. Then, inasmuch as we shall already be leading a heavenly life which makes us divine, let us anoint ourselves with the unfailingly youthful oil of gladness, that incorruptible oil of sweet fra-

grance. This we do by regarding the Lord's life as a shining example of incorruptibility and by following in the footsteps of God.

Christ's main concern is to consider the way and the means in which our life might be rendered better. In order to give us a life that is simple and unencumbered by worry, he sets before us the life of a pilgrim, one that is easy to lead and easy to leave on our ongoing journey to the attainment of eternal happiness. He teaches that each one of us must be his own storehouse. 'Do not worry about tomorrow'; in other words, we who have devoted ourselves to Christ ought to be self-sufficient and our own servants, living life from day to day.

It is not for war that we are being educated, but for peace. War requires serious preparation, and self-indulgence craves the acquisition of an endless supply of food. But peace and love, those simple and quiet sisters, require neither arms nor endless preparation, and the Word is our sustenance. This Word has received the charge to show us the way and to educate us. From him we learn to love simply and humbly, and to honor everything that relates to the pursuit of truth, the love of humanity, and the love of excellence. In short, through him we become like God through sharing in his moral excellence. So we must not slide back into carelessness and sloth, but strive unceasingly. We will then become what we dare not hope for, what we dare not imagine.

[Source: Celebrating the Seasons]

SAINT:

Benedict of Nursia Monastic, c. 543

Benedict is generally considered the father of Western monasticism. He was born around 480, at Nursia in central Italy, and was educated at Rome. Rome at this time was in the midst of considerable political and social instability. Benedict's disapproval of the manners and morals of his society led him to a vocation of ascetic renunciation. He withdrew to a hillside cave above Lake Subiaco, about forty miles east of Rome, where there was already at least one other hermit.

Gradually, after many setbacks and considerable opposition, a community grew up around Benedict. Sometime between 525 and 530, he moved south with some of his disciples to Monte Cassino, midway between Rome and Naples, where he established another community, and, around 540, composed his famous monastic Rule. He died sometime between 540 and 550 and was buried in the same grave as his sister, Scholastica.

*It has been said that no personality or text in the history of monasticism has occasioned more studies than Benedict and his rule. The major problem for historians is the question of how much of the rule is original. This is closely related to the question of the date of another, very similar but anonymous, rule for monks, known as *The Rule of the Master*, which may antedate Benedict's Rule by ten years. This does not detract from the fact that Benedict's firm but reasonable rule has been the basic source document from which most subsequent Western mo-*

nastic rules were derived. Its average day provides for a little over four hours to be spent in liturgical prayer, a little over five hours in spiritual reading, about six hours of work, one hour for eating, and about eight hours of sleep. The entire Psalter is to be recited in the Divine Office once every week. At profession, the new monk or nun takes vows of "stability, conversion of life, and obedience."

The prologue to the Rule says: "And so we are going to establish a school for the service of the Lord. In founding it we hope to introduce nothing harsh or burdensome. But if a certain strictness results from the dictates of equity for the amendment of vices or the preservation of charity, do not be at once dismayed and fly from the way of salvation, whose entrance cannot but be narrow (Matthew 7:14). For as we advance in the religious life and in faith, our hearts expand and we run the way of God's commandments with unspeakable sweetness of love. Thus, never departing from his school, but persevering in the monastery according to his teaching until death, we may by patience share in the sufferings of Christ (1 Peter 4:13) and deserve to have a share also in his kingdom."

Gregory the Great wrote Benedict's Life in the second book of his Dialogues. He also adopted Benedictine monasticism as an instrument of evangelization when, in 596, he sent Augustine and his companions to convert the Anglo-Saxon people. In the Anglican Communion today, not only are there several Benedictine communities, but the rules of many other religious orders also have been strongly influenced by the Benedictine rule.

LF: Renato Aguila, a member of our vestry, needs a temporary place to stay beginning July 7. He will be teaching English as a second language for the Enderun English Summer Camp and he hopes to avoid a long commute to work. The Enderun campus is in McKinley Hills and a place nearby would be most appreciated. Please contact the office if you have any leads.