E-BENEDICTINE / PRAYER & PRACTICE

Novena to Saint Benedict

Nine days of prayer with the Rule of Saint Benedict



Hand-colored woodcut, c. 1450–1470 · National Gallery of Art

LISTEN. PRAY. BEGIN AGAIN.

How to pray this novena

Bring one intention to God for nine consecutive days, asking Saint Benedict to pray with you. Begin on any date. To prepare for his July 11 memorial, begin July 2 and finish July 10.

01 **Begin**

Make the Sign of the Cross. Ask God to help you attend to what you are about to read.

02 **Listen**

Read the Scripture reference in your Bible, then read the short reflection. The Rule reference is there if you would like to read farther.

03 **Pray**

Pause to name your intention, aloud or silently. Pray the prayer for that day and the short invocation, which repeats on each page.

04 **Carry it into the day**

Try the small practice if it fits your circumstances. If you miss a day, simply return to prayer and continue where you left off.

THE INTENTION I AM CARRYING

THE NINE DAYS / SELECT A TITLE TO JUMP

01 Listen with the Heart
02 Make Room for Silence
03 Tell the Truth about Yourself
04 Pray Simply
05 Serve in Ordinary Work
06 Stand Beside the Sick
07 Welcome Christ in the Guest
08 Practice Good Zeal
09 Trust God’s Mercy

DAY 01 / 09

Listen with the Heart

Make room for a voice other than your own.

SCRIPTURE

1 Samuel 3:3–10

THE RULE

Prologue

REFLECT

Samuel hears his name and runs to Eli. It takes several calls, and Eli's help, before he knows how to answer. Benedict begins his Rule by asking the reader to listen with the heart. Our first task today is simply to make ourselves available. There is no need to force an answer or treat every impression as God's voice. Sometimes we learn what we are hearing by listening again.

PRAY

Pause and bring your intention to God.

Lord Jesus, you know what has brought me here. Through the prayers of Saint Benedict, quiet my hurry and make me willing to hear what I might otherwise miss. Give me the patience to listen and the courage to answer when the next step becomes clear. Amen.

> DAILY INVOCATION
>
> *Saint Benedict, pray for me. Ask God to guard me from selfishness and indifference and help me recognize and serve Christ in the people I meet. Amen.*

A SMALL PRACTICE

Let someone finish telling you what happened before you tell them what you think.

DAY 02 / 09

Make Room for Silence

Leave a little room before you answer.

SCRIPTURE

James 1:19–20

THE RULE

Chapter 6 · Restraint in speech

REFLECT

James asks us to be quick to listen and slow to speak. Benedict knows that even good words can crowd out what we need to hear. Silence is not a reason to withhold a kindness or let a wrong go unchallenged. It can be the small space in which we notice what our words are about to do. A pause gives us a chance to answer the person in front of us rather than the argument we have already begun in our head.

PRAY

Pause and bring your intention to God.

Lord Jesus, through the prayers of Saint Benedict, steady my words. When I am eager to defend myself, help me wait long enough to hear what is true. When kindness or courage requires me to speak, give me words that serve the person who will hear them. Amen.

> DAILY INVOCATION
>
> *Saint Benedict, pray for me. Ask God to guard me from selfishness and indifference and help me recognize and serve Christ in the people I meet. Amen.*

A SMALL PRACTICE

Before answering one difficult message, pause for a breath and read it once more.

DAY 03 / 09

Tell the Truth about Yourself

Come before God without a defense.

SCRIPTURE

Luke 18:9–14

THE RULE

Chapter 7 · Humility

REFLECT

In Jesus' parable, one man compares himself to the people around him. The other asks God for mercy. Benedict's chapter on humility likewise begins with remembering that we live in God's sight. There is no performance to keep up there. Humility allows us to tell the truth about a mistake without making it the whole truth about us. It also lets us receive help without pretending we had everything under control.

PRAY

Pause and bring your intention to God.

Merciful Father, through the prayers of Saint Benedict, help me bring you what I would rather explain away. Let your mercy make me honest. Teach me to receive correction without resentment and help without embarrassment, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

> DAILY INVOCATION
>
> *Saint Benedict, pray for me. Ask God to guard me from selfishness and indifference and help me recognize and serve Christ in the people I meet. Amen.*

A SMALL PRACTICE

Name one thing you need help with today. If there is someone you trust, ask them plainly.

DAY 04 / 09

Pray Simply

Bring God what you have, even if it is only a few words.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 6:5–8

THE RULE

Chapter 20 · Reverence in prayer

REFLECT

Jesus teaches that the Father knows what we need before we ask. Benedict expects prayer to be sincere and ordinarily brief, with room to stay longer when grace draws us to it. You do not need to find better words for the same grief or name every possible outcome. The need you have carried through the first three days is enough to bring again.

PRAY

Pause and bring your intention to God.

Father, you know this need better than I do. Through the prayers of Saint Benedict, help me trust you when I have run out of words. If I can do something, show me what is mine to do. Where I can do nothing, let me stay with you without embarrassment or fear. Amen.

> DAILY INVOCATION
>
> *Saint Benedict, pray for me. Ask God to guard me from selfishness and indifference and help me recognize and serve Christ in the people I meet. Amen.*

A SMALL PRACTICE

Set aside two quiet minutes. Say your intention once and spend the rest of the time with God.

DAY 05 / 09

Serve in Ordinary Work

Do one useful thing without waiting to be asked.

SCRIPTURE

John 13:12–15

THE RULE

Chapter 35 · The weekly kitchen service

REFLECT

Jesus gets up from supper and washes his disciples' feet. In Benedict's monastery, kitchen service rotates, and those who need help are to receive it. Someone still has to clean up when the meal is over. Giving that work our attention is one way to care for the people who will come after us. The work need not be noticed to make somebody's day easier.

PRAY

Pause and bring your intention to God.

Lord Jesus, you knelt to wash your friends' feet. Through the prayers of Saint Benedict, make me willing to do the work I usually hope someone else will do. Give me enough care to do it well and enough freedom to leave the credit alone. Amen.

> DAILY INVOCATION
>
> *Saint Benedict, pray for me. Ask God to guard me from selfishness and indifference and help me recognize and serve Christ in the people I meet. Amen.*

A SMALL PRACTICE

Finish one small task today that will make the next person's work easier.

DAY 06 / 09

Stand Beside the Sick

Notice what would make another person's day easier.

SCRIPTURE

Mark 2:1–12

THE RULE

Chapter 36 · Care of the sick

REFLECT

The friends in Mark's Gospel cannot get through the door, so they find another way to bring the man to Jesus. Benedict gives care for the sick priority and calls for it to be offered as service to Christ. We may not be able to change what someone is facing. But we can ask what would help, take their answer seriously, and come back after the first round of concern has passed.

PRAY

Pause and bring your intention to God.

Lord Jesus, through the prayers of Saint Benedict, be near those who are sick, tired, or afraid, and sustain the people who care for them. Make me attentive to the help that is wanted. Let me offer it without making another person feel like a burden. Amen.

> DAILY INVOCATION
>
> *Saint Benedict, pray for me. Ask God to guard me from selfishness and indifference and help me recognize and serve Christ in the people I meet. Amen.*

A SMALL PRACTICE

Check in with someone who is ill or caring for another person. Offer one thing you can follow through on.

DAY 07 / 09

Welcome Christ in the Guest

Make room for someone you did not expect.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 25:31–40

THE RULE

Chapter 53 · Receiving guests

REFLECT

In the Gospel, the people who welcomed the stranger are surprised to learn whom they received. Benedict asks his community to receive guests as Christ, with special care for the poor and those on pilgrimage. Hospitality begins before anyone is seated. The person at the door needs to know whether there is room for them, and often our first words are what tell them.

PRAY

Pause and bring your intention to God.

Lord Jesus, through the prayers of Saint Benedict, help me recognize you in the person I did not expect. Give me a welcome that does not depend on being comfortable or on getting anything back. When I cannot give what someone asks, let me still answer with kindness. Amen.

> DAILY INVOCATION
>
> *Saint Benedict, pray for me. Ask God to guard me from selfishness and indifference and help me recognize and serve Christ in the people I meet. Amen.*

A SMALL PRACTICE

Make space for someone who might otherwise be overlooked. Learn their name if you don’t know it.

DAY 08 / 09

Practice Good Zeal

Put someone else's good ahead of having the last word.

SCRIPTURE

Romans 12:9–18

THE RULE

Chapter 72 · Good zeal

REFLECT

Paul asks Christians to honor one another and, as far as it depends on them, to live at peace. Benedict asks his monks to bear one another's weaknesses patiently and look for the other person's good. We cannot make peace for both sides. We can notice the small part we are still free to change, even when a whole relationship is beyond our power to repair.

PRAY

Pause and bring your intention to God.

Lord Jesus, through the prayers of Saint Benedict, show me what I can do for peace without denying what is true. Take away my need to win every exchange. Give me patience for someone else's weakness and the humility to remember how often they have borne mine. Amen.

> DAILY INVOCATION
>
> *Saint Benedict, pray for me. Ask God to guard me from selfishness and indifference and help me recognize and serve Christ in the people I meet. Amen.*

A SMALL PRACTICE

If it is safe and fitting, take one small step toward peace. An honest apology or a quieter answer may be enough.

DAY 09 / 09

Trust God’s Mercy

Entrust your intention again, whatever has changed.

SCRIPTURE

Luke 15:11–32

THE RULE

Chapter 4 · The tools for good works

REFLECT

The father in Jesus’ parable goes out to meet both sons. One has gone far from home; the other is close enough to hear the music and still stays outside. Benedict ends his list of tools for good works by asking us never to give up hope in God’s mercy. Whatever these nine days have brought, we can ask for what we need and still receive the day that is given to us.

PRAY

Pause and bring your intention to God.

Father of mercy, thank you for receiving me as I am. Through the prayers of Saint Benedict, receive again the intention I have carried these nine days. Keep me close to Christ whether I see a change or still have to wait. Let me return to you tomorrow with the same trust. Amen.

> DAILY INVOCATION
>
> *Saint Benedict, pray for me. Ask God to guard me from selfishness and indifference and help me recognize and serve Christ in the people I meet. Amen.*

A SMALL PRACTICE

Name one thing for which you are grateful, then choose one small practice from these nine days to keep.

After the ninth day

You do not have to leave your intention behind. Keep one of these practices for the coming week, or return to a day that asked something of you that you are still learning to give.

PRAY WITH OTHERS

The Benedictine Prayer Guild is a place to bring an intention and to pray for others. If you'd like to keep praying with the community, you can also choose to hear from the Guild by email.

Visit the Benedictine Prayer Guild

SOURCES & EDITION NOTE

The Rule. Adapted from the Prologue and chapters 4, 6, 7, 20, 35, 36, 53 and 72 of The Rule of Saint Benedict, English reading edition edited by Brian Junyor, Ordinary Things Press, 2026. Copyright © 2026 Brian Junyor. Licensed under CC BY 4.0. Daily reflections paraphrase and apply passages from the Rule; prayers and practices were written for this edition.

Scripture. The daily references link to the USCCB Bible. The reflection gives a brief retelling where useful; no Bible translation is reproduced. See also the July 11 Memorial of Saint Benedict.

Devotional tradition. The earlier e-Benedictine handout presented one prayer. This edition follows the familiar practice of carrying one petition across the nine days, with a different reflection and prayer each day.

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A devotional resource from e-Benedictine.