

# The Community of Reconciliation at Washington National Cathedral



## Mid-Winter Monastic Quiet Day

Friday and Saturday | February 25/26, 2011 | Washington National Cathedral

A Benedictine Spiritual Community  
of The Friends of St. Benedict and Washington National Cathedral



*Listen carefully, my child,  
to the master's instructions,  
and attend to them  
with the ear of your heart.  
This is advice from a father  
who loves you;  
welcome it, and faithfully  
put it into practice.*

Saint Benedict, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*

# Mid-Winter Monastic Quiet Day



*How do we make choices that bring balance to lives that seem to have so many urgent demands? Can we navigate the pushes and pulls of daily living with action born of deep serenity rooted in the Holy? What will we use to guide us along our shared journey?*



For centuries— bells of monasteries around the world have signaled the integrating rhythms of spiritual life and practical living that order monastic

life. And beyond the walls of every monastery— neighboring farmers, busy villagers, weary travelers, and grateful pilgrims— have heard a gentle call to these reconciling rhythms.

The Community of Reconciliation invites us to stop and listen in the midst of our everyday lives as we create a ‘monastery of the heart.’ Our Monastic “Quiet Day” sets apart a full 24 hour period for prayer and silence in the tradition of monastic life.

Our Quiet Day begins in our own homes on Friday evening and continues Saturday throughout the beautiful spaces and grounds of the Cathedral close. All who wish to set aside time and place for silence, reflection, and renewal are welcome.

As in a monastery, our quiet day is guided by the rhythms of several practices— intentional silence, observance of the Daily Office, individual and corporate prayer, the Eucharist, reflective reading, shared work, and the taking of meals together. Together, we create a ‘monastery of the heart’ that allows us to participate in authentic contemplative

practices that nourish balance in life and reconciliation in the world.

Throughout a growing constellation of expressions, the Community of Reconciliation at Washington National Cathedral continues to provide the opportunity to experience community, wisdom, and transformation as we freshly interpret and integrate the rhythms of prayer, study, renewal, work, and hospitality throughout our lives. Together, we set our intention— to *listen* to ancient yet evergreen wisdom that shapes our lives. We still ourselves— to *hear* the centering call of the Holy, birthed in prayer, silence, and reflection. And we *live* from a place of radical balance— supported and encouraged by our communities of intention.



This Monastic Quiet Day guide will assist you with the practices that will be experienced in homes around the city and then with one another as we gather at the Cathedral on Saturday morning.

**Remember, your Quiet Day begins on Friday evening, so download and review this document in advance. Also print and bring a copy with you on Saturday morning.**

Our time together is one of exploration, discovery, and experience. Wherever you are on the spiritual journey—whatever faith tradition or perspective— you are welcome here. There are no right and wrong choices, only the way of intention and discovery. If you hunger for a life centered in the Holy that brings balance to life and reconciliation to the world— this is right where you belong.

***Welcome!***

# About the Quiet Day

## Overview

Our day of reflection, dialogue, and shared silence offers a place for stillness and reflection that brings centering perspective and renewal. Surrounded by the mid-winter beauty of the Cathedral and grounds we will explore life balance, reconciliation, and our own personal spiritual journey using the model of Saint Benedict. Benedictine practices of prayer, wisdom, recreation, work, and hospitality guide our exploration and discovery as we experience community, wisdom reflection, and transformation welcomed.

Monastic environments set aside place and time to more readily experience the rhythms of silence, reflection, and renewal. Some of us have experienced the profound peace and renewal that comes from spending time in a monastic setting. Whether for a day or an extended period, these experiences help us along our spiritual journey and align us with the great tradition of Benedictine spirituality.

As in a monastery, our quiet day is guided by the rhythms of several practices—intentional silence, observance of the Daily Office (a way of Prayer at regular intervals guided by the Psalms of the Judeo-Christian tradition,) individual and corporate prayer, the Eucharist, reflective reading, shared work, and the taking of meals together. During our time this ‘monastery of the heart’ offers a chance to participate in an authentic contemplative experience in ways that nourish balance in life and reconciliation in the world.

Join us at The Monastery of the Heart...

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## Our Setting

As you review the following schedule for our day of quiet you will notice we begin Friday evening in our own homes. In the monastic tradition, silence is observed throughout the evening and night following a meal and our setting of intention through prayer.

Saturday morning we gather from all parts of the region in the Chapel of the Cathedral College for a service of vigils. Thus, the prayers of vigils become our first spoken words—shared together in a community of intention.

The services are open to all faith traditions and perspectives. Following vigils, we move to the Refectory of the Cathedral College to share prayer, simple meals, silence, study, intentional conversation, and reflection. Throughout the day, we will experience the beautiful spaces and architecture of the Cathedral College, Nave, and gardens as a backdrop to our spiritual journey.

A light breakfast is included with your participant fee and we encourage you to bring a lunch to share or purchase one in the Cathedral Store. Following are specific details to follow as your guide for your time at home and our time together.

Whoever you are, whatever your faith tradition, life stage or perspective, you are welcome.

## THE MID-WINTER MONASTIC QUIET DAY | Friday in your own home, 6pm

**Friday February 25, 2011** | In your own home

- 6pm            **Dinner** (enjoy with your family or alone, note that participants in homes around the region will be with you in intention!)
- 7:30pm        **Office of Compline**— Your quiet day begins | See *The Specifics* below
- 7:45pm        **The Great Silence** (Plan to cease conversation from this point forward)

**THE MID-WINTER MONASTIC QUIET DAY | Saturday, 7:30am-3:30pm**

**Saturday February 26, 2011 | At Washington National Cathedral**

- 7:30am **Vigils** | Washington National Cathedral-Cathedral College Chapel (see directions following)
- 8:00am **Breakfast** | Cathedral College Refectory | in silence
- 8:45am **End of the Great Silence** | Instructions for the day
- 8:55am **Call to prayer** | Bell
- 9am **Morning Office** | Cathedral College Chapel
- 9:30am **Conferences are optional, concurrent, and repeated twice during the day.**  
**Conference #1** | *Praying the Daily Office* | Cathedral College Chapel | with Kurt  
**Conference #2** | *Creating a Rule of Life* | Cathedral College Common Room | with Greg
- 10:15 **Recreation and Reflection** (optional) | Bishop's Garden, grounds weather permitting
- 11:15am **Call to prayer** | Bell
- 11:25am **Call to prayer** | Bell
- 11:30 **Mid-Day Office** | Cathedral Library
- Noon **Eucharist** | Cathedral Nave great choir
- 12:45pm **Lunch, Reading, and conversation** | Cathedral College Refectory
- 1:25pm **Call to study and reflection** | Bell
- 1:30pm **Conferences are optional, concurrent, and repeated twice during the day.**  
**Conference #3** | *Praying the Daily Office* | Cathedral College Chapel | with Kurt  
**Conference #4** | *Creating a Rule of Life* | Cathedral College Common Room | with Greg
- 2:25pm **Call to prayer** | Bell
- 2:30pm **Silent Prayer | Mid Afternoon Office** | Cathedral College Chapel
- 2:45pm **Community reflection and discussion** | Cathedral College Common Room
- 3:15 pm **Blessing** | Clean up
- 4pm **Evening Prayer** | Cathedral Nave | *Optional*

*Note: All spaces of the Cathedral and grounds are available for reflection including the Nave and chapels, Cathedral Center for Prayer and Pilgrimage (dependent upon volunteer host availability,) Bishop's Garden, Olmstead Wood, and Cathedral Close.*

## THE SPECIFICS | For your Friday evening experience at home.

**Friday February 25, 2011**—your monastic experience will be greatly enhanced if you begin Friday evening and honor this schedule in your home. Take time with your family or housemates to explain what you are doing— why you are being silent and what it means for them. Explain that you have set your intention for a time to step away from the pace of the daily world—to be still, to reflect, to center.

With children you may want to show them this program and talk about how every one of us can choose silence to renew ourselves, to rest, and to prepare ourselves for our daily work. This is a wonderful teaching opportunity that just might impact your family life for years to come! Be sure to tell them you are going to be silent through the night (after you pray the Office of Compline) and ask that they not talk to you unless absolutely necessary.

Experiencing silence at home with the support of those who surround you models a goal of the Community of Reconciliation, to integrate the rhythms of balance throughout all facets of our daily lives and relationships. Make this a gentle exercise—Benedict reminds us that our practice is never to be burdensome and is always an invitation. As we leave behind the distractions of the computer, the radio, the television, and extraneous chatter—we discover that we have created a cloister in the midst of our daily lives.

Following is a detailed guide for Friday evening at home and Saturday at the Cathedral. Attention to the guide will provide the most authentic experience of a Monastic Quiet Day. As always, in Benedictine practice and in the Community, adapt it for use in ways that are “not burdensome.”

**6pm**      **Dinner** (please enjoy with your family, friends, or alone)

Dinner at home is a good place to talk about your quiet day. This meal requires nothing special other than to be intentional about it being part of your quiet day. Knowing that you are having dinner at the same time as other participants around the region offers a wonderful dynamic to the meal. You may want to speak a blessing for all who are setting this time aside and whom you will soon meet! During your meal you may want to gently read aloud a short selection from the Bible, a sacred text, a spiritual reading, or favorite poem. Complete your meal and clear the dishes. Remember, right work is part of our cycle. Benedict reminds us that our work can be prayer.

**7:30pm**      **Office of Compline**— Your Quiet Day begins at home

Your quiet day formally begins with the Office of Compline, a prayer service designed to welcome stillness, reflection, and enter the night in peace. Compline is the last prayer service of the day in the Monastery. The service provides a beginning for our shared day as well as a prelude to the Great Silence to follow. Remember, this is an act of intention with grace for all around us rather than a stern rule to be obeyed.

Compline offers us a chance to reflect upon our day— those things we have done well alongside those that perhaps we might wish to have done differently. Through the liturgy of Compline we acknowledge our shortcomings and embrace Divine protection through the night.

(If you have a *Book of Common Prayer* you will find Compline on page 127. The key Psalms are 4 and 91 which are traditional Compline psalms. Just think, you will be joining monks, nuns, and laypersons around the world who are all reading these exact same psalms at about the same time as you are.)

In the *Book of Common Prayer* the Office flow is self explanatory.

If you do not have a *Book of Common Prayer* or wish to simplify things you can use the following Order of Service for Compline.

You will need a Bible or a copy of the Psalms or you may wish to use other literature and readings.

## A Simplified Office of Compline

We suggest that you read this office in silence. Alternate prayers are included for folks of other faith traditions.

### Opening prayer

*The Lord Almighty Grant us a peaceful night and a perfect end. Amen*

*Our help is in the name of the Lord*

*The maker of heaven and earth*

*Or alternate prayer*     *Holy One, we welcome peace this night and put our day to rest.  
Our help is born of the sacred,  
We rest in the arms of all creation.*

### Silent reflection on your day/confession response:

*Lord forgive me for I have sinned against you through my own fault*

*In what I have done*

*And what I have left undone*

*For the sake of your son Jesus Christ forgive me*

*Or alternate prayer*     *This day has been filled with opportunity for kindness, right work, love, and service.  
At times I have embraced these opportunities and at times I have lost my way.  
I release the regrets of this day and enter this night with hope to embrace the new day.*

### Psalms 4 and 91

Read these from your Bible or select other texts that acknowledge our desire to center in the Holy.

### Scripture

*Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.*

*Resist him, firm in your faith 1 Peter 5:8-9a*

### Silence

**The Lord's Prayer** Or other prayer of blessing

### Closing

*Antiphon— Guide us waking O lord and guard us sleeping*

*That awake we may watch with Christ*

*And asleep we may rest in peace*

Nunc dimittis

*Lord you now have set your servant free*

*To go in peace as you have promised*

*For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior*

*Whom you have prepared for all the world to see*

*A light to enlighten the nations*

*And the glory of your people, Israel*

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, As it was in the beginning is  
now and will be forever. AMEN*

*Alternate antiphon*     *Glory to all that is sacred, creator, Christ, and guide. We accept our part of the great  
unfolding that was, and is, and will be. AMEN*

*Repeat antiphon*

**7:45pm**

**The Great Silence**— In a monastery conversation ends after Compline and continues through breakfast the next day. We will follow the same practice so please refrain from speaking after this point. Plan to begin the Great Silence immediately following the Office of Compline. Retire early to be ready to fully experience the day on Saturday that begins in the Chapel of the Cathedral College. Our goal is not silence for the sake of silence, it is creating a silence that allows us to rest, reflect, and renew. Use this time to read poetry, journal, reflect, imagine, meditate, read and rest.

## Saturday February 26, 2011 | For your experience at Washington National Cathedral

In some monasteries the monks and nuns wake at 3:30 am to begin their day. We aren't suggesting you do that (unless you are truly adventurous) however, we do suggest that you rise early to prepare for a full day in our 'monastery.' Perhaps you will want to acknowledge God immediately, maybe even before you get out of bed. Something simple like 'Lord thank you for this new day' will suffice.

Continue your day of silence with intention. Be mindful of everything you do from brushing your teeth to dressing. Set the tone for your day by being fully present in all things. You may have to remind your family you are being silent (especially if you have kids). The simple standard gesture of putting finger to lips will usually remind them that you are having a special day.

*On your way to the Cathedral remain in silence.* Remember to bring this guide for the day. Keep the radio off in the car and if traveling with someone else to the Cathedral refrain from talking. Park on surface parking at the Cathedral, make your way to the Cathedral College which is the last building on the close as you drive around the cathedral.

If you are at distance or not able to join us for other reasons you can use this guide to participate at home. Every intention to experience the rhythms of silence and prayer is honored, wherever you are located.

### 7:30am **Vigils** | Washington National Cathedral- Cathedral College Chapel

Remember we are still in silence. We speak when called for during Vigils but conversation is discouraged. On arrival, enter the Cathedral College, make a turn to the right and head down the long hall to the Chapel. A greeter will point the way. Remember, work to make your transition to the chapel in silence. Plan to arrive a few minutes early to settle.

Following Vigils we will process to the Refectory. Remember we are still in the Great Silence.

### 8:00am **Breakfast** | Cathedral College Refectory | in silence

We will take our meal in silence and as in the monastery the Rule of St. Benedict will be read. Simple instructions will be offered. After our meal we will honor the practice of work by placing our dishes as directed. Some will be asked to help with clean up.

### 8:45am **End of the Great Silence** | Kurt Aschermann and Greg Finch | Instructions

### 8:55am **Call to prayer** | Bell

Throughout our day, we will sound a bell five minutes before each prayer service. When you hear the bell please go immediately to the chapel so the Office can begin promptly as scheduled. (Saint Benedict called the monks/nuns to drop what they are doing when they heard the bell and hasten to the chapel for 'nothing is to be preferred to the work of God.')

### 9:00am **Morning Office** | Cathedral College Chapel

During our three services we will pray using the *Episcopal Book of Common Prayer* (provided). Our chairs will be situated opposite each other so we can read the Psalms antiphonally. We will also use a more contemplative way to pray the Office together and will 'practice' this method before beginning the Office. Some will be asked to read scripture and lead prayer.

### 9:30am **Conference #1** | *Praying the Daily Office: A Discipline for All* Chapel | with Kurt

Many Christian monastics assert that the power of Benedictine spirituality rests in participation in The Daily Office, the most basic exercise of the monastery. Explore how to pray the Office using *The Book of Common Prayer* and how to pray a simplified Office using your Bible or other sacred text.

### **Conference #2** | *Creating A Rule of Life* | Common Room | with Greg

Learn to bring the rhythms of prayer, study, recreation, right work, and hospitality into daily living using the "trellis" of a Life Rule. This conversation with gently explore the frameworks for monastic living in ways that are accessible to all.

*(Conferences during our retreat are voluntary, concurrent, and repeated so that all may attend both. If you wish to participate, go directly to the Chapel or Common Room. If you do not wish to participate feel free to use the time as you see fit either in the Cathedral Library or elsewhere on the Cathedral Close. Keep track of the time if you leave the Cathedral College so you can participate in the next Office.)*

- 10:15am**      **Recreation and Reflection** for prayer, journaling, reflection, walking, meditation, and silence. We ask that you respect those who wish to remain silent during this time. Refreshments are available in the refectory. We ask that you reduce conversation to a minimum.
- 11:15am**      **Call to prayer** | Bell
- 11:25am**      **Call to prayer** | Bell repeated
- Noon**          **Eucharist** | Cathedral Nave, great choir
- 12:45pm**      **Lunch, reading, and conversation** – Cathedral College Refectory
- 1:25m**        **Call to study and reflection** | Bell
- 1:30pm**      **Conference #3** | *Praying the Daily Office: A Discipline for All* | Chapel | Kurt
- Conference #4** | *Creating A Rule of Life* | Common Room | Greg
- 2:25pm**      **Call to prayer** | Bell
- 2:30pm**      **Silent Prayer** | **Mid-afternoon Office** | Cathedral College Chapel  
We will enjoy extended silence together before praying the Office
- 2:45pm**      **Community reflection and discussion** | Cathedral College Chapel
- 3:15pm**      **Blessing** | Clean Up
- 4pm**          **Evening Prayer** | Cathedral Nave great choir | *Optional*

#### Notes

- Feel free to bring your own copy of the Book of Common Prayer, Bible, and other sacred texts.
- You may want to bring reading material (poetry, scripture, wisdom literature) for the practice of lectio divina (a reflective reading and meditation process) and quiet time.
- Bring your journal if you wish.
- Wear comfortable clothing. Cathedral architecture can create a wide range of temperatures. Additionally, weather permitting, we will spend time in the garden. So you may want to bring layers of clothing to adapt to changing temperature.
- Evening prayer begins at 4pm in the great choir of the Cathedral. It offers a wonderful close at the end of our time together for all who wish to continue the experience.
- You may wish to continue your quiet day even after you leave the community; it is sometimes hard to “come down” after 24 hours of silence—another thing you will want to discuss with your family.

*We look forward to being with you at the Monastery of the Heart—*

# About Our Leaders



**Kurt Aschermann** is an independent consultant who also serves as President of the Charity Partners Foundation. He has also been an active contemplative for over 30 years since experiencing Benedictine spirituality at Holy Cross Monastery in upstate New York (where he has been an Associate for 26 years.)

Kurt blends his active business, family and private life with a serious commitment to a balanced contemplative life. Aschermann believes his life is experienced best in silence, contemplation, prayer and play.

Kurt leads the Community's programming in Monastic Quiet Days and has been a member of The Community of Reconciliation since its inception. If you would like additional information or wish to host a quiet day in your setting, please contact us at [companions@cathedral.org](mailto:companions@cathedral.org)



**Greg Finch** directs The Community of Reconciliation at Washington National Cathedral and founder of the consulting firm **Wild Geese Among Us** in Washington, D.C.

Greg serves as adjunct assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the George Washington University School of Medicine as well as adjunct faculty at Wesley Theological Seminary and the Princeton Theological Seminary Center for Continuing Education. He holds a doctorate in medicine, spirituality, and aesthetics along with graduate degrees with honors in divinity, spirituality and the arts, spirituality and medicine, arts management, and architecture from Princeton Theological Seminary, Wesley Theological Seminary, the American University, and Texas A&M University and was an associate fellow with Dr. Christina Puchalski at the George Washington Institute for Spirituality and Health

## About Your Arrival

**Washington National Cathedral Directions** | For detailed instructions on visiting the Cathedral by foot, auto, or metro visit: <http://www.nationalcathedral.org/visit/>.

**Parking** | FREE parking is available on the Cathedral Close on weekends and after 3:30PM weekdays and (NOTE: Garage parking is free on Sundays only.)

**PLEASE NOTE:** *Neighborhood 2 hour parking restrictions are strictly observed on all streets, so please park on the close. We seek to model hospitable relations with our neighbors. We ask that you respect our neighbors and honor all parking restrictions.*

*We encourage you to remove all belongings from your car when parking and to also mind your purses and wallets while visiting any of the open spaces of the Cathedral.*

**Washington National Cathedral** | Map of the Cathedral Close  
Visit <http://www.nationalcathedral.org/pdfs/CloseVisitorMap.pdf> for a map of the Close and parking areas.

**Cathedral College** | Chapel, Refectory, Common Room, Library | Directions

The College is located at the intersection of South Road on the Cathedral Close and Woodley road on the southwest corner of the Close. Park on South Road on the east side below the Cathedral. You will be provided an access code for the day that will permit access to the building. We ask that you remain on the first floor only.





**The Community of Reconciliation** at Washington National Cathedral is an expanding, ecumenical network of individuals seeking balance in life and a deepening commitment to reconciliation in the world.

**The Community engages ancient yet evergreen** wisdom and practices of Benedictine spirituality to discover the balance and harmony found in a cloistered community—right in our own environments—family, the workplace, and daily life in a complex world.

**Anchored through a complement of gatherings** and resources at Washington National Cathedral— and experienced through an expanding constellation of individuals, communities, and organizations— the Community offers a practical alternative to our often fragmented existence.

**As part of this monastery beyond walls, we experience** daily living infused with stability, wisdom, and transformation as we honor the refreshing rhythms of prayer, study, renewal, right work, and hospitality.

**Friends of every prespective, faith tradition, and life stage are welcome.**



— WASHINGTON —  
NATIONAL CATHEDRAL

## **The Community of Reconciliation** *at Washington National Cathedral* *Radical balance in life that fosters reconciliation in the world*

To learn more about upcoming gatherings and events, to register, make a donation, or for additional details visit [www.nationalcathedral.org/community](http://www.nationalcathedral.org/community)

Massachusetts Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue NW | Washington DC | 20016 | 202-537-6217 [companions@cathedral.org](mailto:companions@cathedral.org) | [www.nationalcathedral.org](http://www.nationalcathedral.org)

*This event is made possible in part with the generous support of individual donors and the sustaining gifts of all who companion with the Community.*

*As an act of hospitable stewardship of our environment and reconciliation with our planet this document is printed on recycled 30% post consumer waste paper product.*