

# The Community of Reconciliation at Washington National Cathedral

*Radical balance in life that fosters reconciliation in the world*



Discover a powerful, spiritually centered, and eminently practical alternative to our often fragmented existence.

Welcome the balance and harmony of a cloistered community—into your own environments—home, family, the workplace, and daily life in a complex world.

Anchored through a complement of gatherings and resources at Washington National Cathedral—and experienced in a dynamic constellation of individuals, communities, and organizations—this pioneering “monastery beyond walls” provides encouragement and support for all who desire stability, wisdom, and harmony in their lives. Whatever your life stage, faith tradition, or perspective—join us as guest, friend, and companion on the journey of radical balance and reconciliation.

The best way to experience the Community—is to experience the Community! Learn more about the [Community of Reconciliation](#) » or call (202) 537-6217 or email [companions@cathedral.org](mailto:companions@cathedral.org) for a personal invitation!

## Frequently Asked Questions | *about the Community of Reconciliation*

### What is The Community of Reconciliation?

The Community of Reconciliation at Washington National Cathedral is an expanding, ecumenical, and interfaith network of individuals seeking radical balance in life that fosters reconciliation in the world.

Anchored through a complement of gatherings and resources at Washington National Cathedral—and experienced through a diverse constellation of individuals, communities, and organizations—the Community offers a powerful, spiritually centered, and eminently practical alternative to our often fragmented existence.

Participants in this pioneering “monastery beyond walls” freshly engage the ancient yet evergreen wisdom and practice of Benedictine spiritual life. Aligned with the great spiritual traditions, the this wisdom and practice introduces the balance and harmony experienced in a cloistered community—into our own environments—home, family, the workplace, and daily life in a complex world.

As companions on a journey we choose the stability of shared intention, we receive encouragement through supportive circles of wisdom, and we cheer one another along toward transformation as we honor the renewing rhythms of prayer, study, renewal, right work, and hospitality in the world.

Wherever you are on the journey—whatever life stage,

faith tradition, or perspective—join us as guest, friend, and companion on this way of radical balance and reconciliation.

### How do I contact the Community?

The best way to experience the Community—is to experience the Community! Use the links below to explore gatherings and events or call (202) 537-6217 or email [companions@cathedral.org](mailto:companions@cathedral.org) for a personal invitation!

[Learn more about the Community of Reconciliation](#) »  
[Visit the 2011 Community-at-a-Glance Calendar](#) »  
[Make a sustaining gift](#) »

### How do I participate in The Community of Reconciliation?

Participation in the Community is first and foremost an act of intention. Setting our intention to explore this wisdom way introduces us to the most amazing set of travelers and friends on our journey. And the journey itself aligns us with the wisdom of balance and “making right the world.”

Participation is also a shared endeavor. Benedict recognized that “being with,” is essential to our stability, support, and growth. We learn and are transformed through the lives and wisdom of others. So, participation

in the community “happens” as we journey.

Also, participation insists that we present no barriers to guest and stranger. Benedict saw no greater gift than the welcome of the guest and stranger as one made in the image of the Christ.

With a spirit of intention, shared support, and welcome—participation becomes flexible, hospitable, and a great adventure. All are welcome to every gathering and event with open arms. Come when it is meaningful for your spiritual journey.

Through a constellation of gatherings and events anchored at Washington National Cathedral along with an array of constellation communities around the region, participation takes place in many forms. You can even participate online and by phone through new initiatives of the Community. Know that in the way of Benedict, someone will always be waiting to welcome you at the door!

### **How does the Community operate?**

Think of the Community as a monastery on a hill—a place set apart to sound the rhythms of radical balance in life in the midst of a world that is often without balance. Every gathering, workshop, celebration, teaching session, retreat, and pilgrimage provides an opportunity for you to “listen again for these rhythms” and allow them to anchor you in a community beyond walls, nourish you with wisdom, and provide companions who support and encourage you along the way.

You might also imagine of the Community as a constellation of individuals of like intention. Wherever the intention to live lives of balance and reconciliation exists, this is a place of welcome and resonance for the Community.

Connected as a constellation of intention—wherever we are—we listen for the divine among us; explore and share spiritual wisdom; renew body, mind, and spirit; passionately engage our work in the world; and joyfully companion all we meet along the journey. In prayer, study, play, shared work, hospitality, and mutual encouragement we align ourselves with spiritual and practical life rhythms that can transform our world.

Lives, schedules, and priorities vary, so choose a participation rhythm most suited to your unique circumstances. Attend gatherings and events occasionally, weekly, monthly, seasonally—or choose to journey with a cluster of companions over the course of a year. Wherever you are on your journey—whatever your life stage, faith tradition or perspective—we invite you to experience radical balance in life that fosters reconciliation in the world.

### **What is the connection between Saint Benedict and the Community?**

The Community is rooted in the teaching and practice of Benedict, a six-century saint who established a fledgling monastic community in the hills of the Italian countryside. For more than fifteen centuries monastic communities of the Benedictine tradition have honored this wisdom way that weaves together spiritual life and practical living through lives of stability in community, shared wisdom, and transforming action in the world.

Those who chose—and were chosen—to live in this tiny monastery ordered their lives around a document known as the Rule. This simple guide offered a gentle framework for living that addressed equally the spiritual and physical realities of day-to-day life. For Benedict, every act could be an act of prayer.

Through the centuries, this vibrant model has shaped the lives of millions of spiritual seekers both within and beyond the walls of any monastery.

Today, the Community honors this same wisdom, even as we live in our own communities beyond the walls of a monastic enclosure. This wisdom way resonates throughout the great faith and wisdom traditions of the world. And so, the Community welcomes all who seek the way of balance and reconciliation—people of all faiths, traditions, and spiritual perspectives.

### **Why do you call this a monastery beyond walls?**

For centuries bells of monasteries around the world have sounded the dual rhythms of spiritual life and practical living that bring order, balance, and harmony to monastic life. And beyond the walls of every monastery neighboring farmers, busy merchants, weary travelers, and grateful pilgrims—have heard this powerful call to integrated living. So it is with The Community of Reconciliation.

We turn our attention to these rhythms for living without ever living in a monastery. In a sense, a monastery of intention holds open a space in our daily lives that centers us in the Holy. Anchored through a complement of gatherings and resources at Washington National Cathedral—and experienced through a diverse constellation of individuals, communities, and organizations—the Community sounds anew the call to lives of order, balance, and harmony.

As participants in a “monastery beyond walls” the Community freshly engages the ancient-yet-evergreen wisdom and practice of Benedictine spiritual life. As a community of intention—we listen for the sacred among us; explore and share spiritual wisdom; renew body, mind, and spirit; passionately engage our work in the world; and joyfully companion all we meet along the journey.

### **What does the phrase “radical balance in life that fosters reconciliation in the world” mean?**

Saint Benedict offered a radical alternative to a culture that had lost its way. In a society that experienced upheaval and isolation of the individual, a falling away for truth and wisdom, and purposelessness, Benedict and his followers offered a model of community, wisdom, and “making right” the world. Their lifestyle ultimately changed their world and continues to transform ours today.

Benedictine spirituality is not a private spirituality. It leads us to care for and passionately connect with the world in which we live. This way is the way of balance that transforms the world.

For many of us, this way of life is “radically” different from our daily experience. The intention and practice of a balanced life can become our contribution to an unstable world. Balance in our own lives sustains our capacity for reconciliation—making right—in our lives, our families and relationships, our places of work and endeavor. The way of balance fosters our capacity for “setting things right” in the challenging world around us. Thus, a life of balance leads to reconciliation in all aspects of our lives, relationships, and endeavor.

### **Must I follow a particular spiritual tradition to participate in the Community?**

No. Though Community foundations are rooted in Judeo-

Christian tradition, they hold meaning for all who seek balance in life and reconciliation in the world. This life way resonates across the spectrum of spiritual traditions. This way can be thought of as a “first source” of the Christian tradition, a model of community that precedes denominational diversity.

The Community asks no religious affiliations or membership requirements of participants. All are welcome to the resources, support, and encouragement offered by participation in the Community.

### **What are foundations or principles of the Community of Reconciliation?**

Spiritual life and practice in the Community is drawn from the teaching and practice of Saint Benedict. This wisdom way is echoed in the sacred traditions of the world.

Embodied in a simple document known as The Rule of Benedict and expressed in monastic communities across the centuries—the Community embraces three foundations:

- Stability born of shared intention in community,
- Wisdom nourished in mutual listening, and
- Active transformation of our lives and world.

In monastic communities these three foundations are taken as the vows of stability, obedience, and conversion. In the Community, we set them as intentions for our lives.

As companions on a journey, we develop lives built upon the stability of shared intention, we are nourished by supportive circles of wisdom, and we encourage one another toward transformation. Shared wisdom and engaged participation help center our lives in God and ground us as reconciling agents in the world.

### **What are the spiritual practices of the Community of Reconciliation?**

Spiritual practices of the Community are also founded upon the teaching and practice of Saint Benedict and the life of monastic communities. As companions on a shared journey we embrace five practices:

- Attending to the sacred among us;
- Honoring spiritual wisdom;
- Renewing body, mind, and spirit;
- Embracing our “unique work” in the world, and
- Hospitality to all we meet along our journey.

Monastic communities experience these five practices in daily rhythms of prayer, study, recreation, right work, and hospitality. In the Community we hold these as centering practices for our lives. We seek to integrate them throughout daily living, individually and together, beyond the walls of any monastery.

### **Are there any requirements to be considered a companion of the Community?**

All who set an intention to benefit from the gatherings and resources of the Community are considered companions. Shared intention sets us on a journey together.

Companions on the journey are encouraged to:

- Gather regularly in community for support and encouragement,
- Create a their own Rule for Life as a guide for integrating these foundations and practices into daily living,
- Provide financial support and works of service that build and sustain the community so that all might benefit, and above all,
- Open their spirit to the beautiful transformation of lives centered in the Holy.

Individually and in community, we seek to weave these practices and intentions throughout daily living.

### **Why do you call this a pioneering work?**

This Community began as a vision of a way to experience the benefits of monastic life, beyond the walls of any monastery. It has been a new and unfolding work. We think of it as a work in progress that we are pioneering as another aspect of spiritual life and expression in the world we live.

### **Can participation in the Community really make a difference in my life?**

This is probably best answered by participants in the

Community. Take time to visit with someone at a gathering or event and see what they have to say?

### **What is the history of the Community?**

From 2005 to 2007, a leadership team from Washington National Cathedral "visioned" the Community in partnership with the Friends of Saint Benedict, a non-profit organization that offers pilgrimages, retreats, and community gatherings focused on applying Benedictine spirituality in today's world. The vision was of a “monastery beyond walls” that sited at Washington National Cathedral.

On November 13, 2007, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Desmond Tutu extended an inaugural blessing to The Community of Reconciliation at Washington National Cathedral. During his remarks, Archbishop Tutu articulated the need for “a new global reconciling spirituality.” At this service, The Community of Reconciliation was officially “launched.”

From a small steering committee of a dozen folks, and the first meeting of three people who met to pray together on a frosty winter morning, the Community has pioneered a vibrant constellation of participants that now offers wisdom and encouragement in the lives of more than 800 individuals who consider the Community, in some way, a part of their spiritual support. Some experience the Community with a regular weekly or monthly connection while others receive encouragement online, attending constellation gatherings, or with an occasional visit.

### **What if I am already associated with a monastic community or existing order?**

Oblates and those belonging to monastic orders are always welcome to attend Community gatherings as well as consider themselves Companions. The Community is designed to enrich every individual's spiritual journey. Many of the gatherings and events of the Community are experienced in partnership with monastic Communities.

### **Must one become a companion to participate in the Community?**

No. There are many ways to be involved in the Community. Some participants occasionally attend gatherings to support their spiritual growth and renewal. Others intentionally engage learning resources of the

Community to enhance or deepen their current practice. Some participants attend events to augment the support of their regular places of worship and service. Others choose to associate as Companions of the Community along with the attendant commitments. Some choose to participate at a distance and “virtually attend” gatherings and make a pilgrimage visit to the Cathedral when possible. All are welcome to attend gatherings and benefit from resources and support without formally associating with the Community. Though all are called companions along the journey, no one is required to name their affiliation.

### **Are there any financial obligations?**

Yes. For centuries the ancient yet evergreen way pioneered by Benedictine communities has encouraged self-support as a mark of authentic spiritual balance. Benedict understood that giving as a spiritual practice can be intentional, proportional, and when shared—without burden. It is with this same spirit of intention, proportion, and shared responsibility that The Community of Reconciliation invites you to support this vibrant “monastery beyond walls.

Through individual gifts, sustaining donations, participant fees, volunteer service, and individual and foundation support we each give, as we are uniquely able. Together, we can provide for all—without burden for any.

Your one time gift today provides a foundation for the resources, guest lecturers, gatherings, workshops, pilgrimages, retreats, and constellation gatherings that sound afresh the rhythms of radical balance, spiritual renewal, and reconciling action in the world.

If you wish to make a monthly sustaining contribution or pay by check, [click here](#). For additional information or questions please telephone (202) 537-6217.

These gifts contribute to your own spiritual care and are never intended to compete with or diminish giving to your particular faith community. The Community of Reconciliation engages the principle of abundance, trusting that needs are fully met when shared by all who benefit!

Your card and personal information will be kept entirely **confidential** and transmitted and processed through secure connections. All donations are tax deductible in full or in part in accordance with IRS regulations and practice. Saint Benedict encouraged his communities to be self-supporting. In the same spirit, the Community of Reconciliation is supported by generous gifts from its

members and friends, along with individual and foundation support. These generous gifts enable us to offer all Community gatherings and many Community and Companion support events and resources without charge.

Some Community events, such as pilgrimages, learning events, guest lectures, and Benedictine Experiences, do have associated fees. Participant fees are not tax deductible.

All who participate in the Community are encouraged take on volunteer roles as part of their action of their practice of right work and reconciliation in the world. Scholarships are available so that all who have need may participate.

[Make a gift »](#)

### **How is the Community supported?**

For centuries the ancient-yet-evergreen way pioneered by Benedictine communities has encouraged self-support as an expression of authentic spiritual wisdom. Benedict understood that giving as a spiritual practice can be intentional, proportional, and—when shared—without burden. This support is rooted in prayer, right action, service, acts of justice and reconciliation, and with our financial gifts.

It is with this same spirit of intention, proportion, and shared responsibility that the Community of Reconciliation supports this vibrant “monastery beyond walls.” Through individual gifts, sustaining donations, participant fees, donated services, and foundation support we each give, as we are uniquely able. Together, we work to provide for all—without burden for any.

As these gifts support our own spiritual care and help make this life way available for others, they are also intended to complement rather than replace giving to our own faith communities and charitable organizations. The Community of Reconciliation engages the principle of abundance, trusting that needs are fully met when shared by all who benefit!

With vision, hard work, shared wisdom, creativity, and collaboration we have nurtured this community into being. And, we have accomplished all with a hospitable, pioneering spirit that allows us to celebrate, encourage, adapt, re-calibrate, and “always begin again!” We trust that there are enough resources to sustain our way in the world. This IS the way of Benedict! [Make a gift »](#)

## What does it cost?

All Community gatherings are offered without fee. Special events, workshops, lectures, retreats, and pilgrimages do have associated fees that provide for travel, speaker honorariums, materials, rooms rental, and a range of other administrative items required for programs.

The Community relies upon sustaining gifts throughout the year to provide resources for all programs and events.

[Make a gift »](#)

## How is the Community supported financially?

The Community is committed to self-sustenance and relies solely on sustaining gifts and donations of companions and other friends of the Community. We also rely on participant fees for events that have associated costs for speakers and other resource needs.

The Community was launched with a development grant from our dear friends at The FISH Foundation—with a commitment from the Community to work toward self-sustenance. In our second year, with participant support, new donations, and a sustaining grant from The FISH Foundation we were able to stabilize programming and develop a constellation of supporters capable of sustaining the Community without reliance upon grant funding.

Now in our third year, the Community is working to transition to full, self-funding. Your sustaining gifts maintain a strong foundation for the administrative resources, rental fees for space and offices, guest lecturers, gatherings, workshops, pilgrimages, retreats, and constellation gatherings that support the Community. These sustaining gifts also allow us to offer many all gatherings and most events without fee, provide for the many scholarships offered to participants with need, and help nurture and encourage a range of emerging constellation communities.

Every gift helps us sound afresh the rhythms of radical balance, spiritual renewal, and reconciling action that can change our world.

## What is the Community's annual budget?

The annual budget (fiscal year from JUL 1 to JUN 30) governs resources for all administrative, programming, educational, and facilities expenses. It also allows the

Community to provide scholarships so that every gathering and event is available to all, regardless of need.

The annual budget is designed such that if every individual who draws support and encouragement from the Community were to provide a sustaining gift of at least \$20 each month (\$240 each year) our current budget needs would be met. While we build the support base needed, many choose to make gifts over and above this amount on behalf of others with limited resources and as a visionary gift for the future as the Community continues to grow and serve a range of new participants. We have worked hard to create a giving model that serves all without burden to any.

The Community will operate ONLY within a sustainable budget. Each spring we examine our resources and tailor programming accordingly. Your decision to make a monthly sustaining gift helps us to more confidently plan for each year and insure the sustained growth of the Community. [Make a gift »](#)

## Is scholarship assistance available?

Yes. The Community works to provide scholarship assistance for all who have need.

If you wish consideration for a scholarship, please contact Greg Finch directly at (202) 537-6217 for a confidential conversation. Saint Benedict encouraged his communities to be self-sustaining. In honor of that tradition, we ask that scholarship recipients make a modest contribution and offer an act of service for the Community.

## How can I provide a scholarship for others?

Every event with a participant fee includes the registration option to provide resources for someone else to attend. We work to make every gathering and event accessible to all. Additionally, every sustaining gift, donation, and contribution helps us provide opportunities for all without burden to any.

## Is it possible to participate in the Community online?

Yes. The Community continues to develop online resources. For detailed information, audio and video resources, and a growing library of support materials visit [Visit Online resources »](#)

Additionally, feel free to explore The Community of Reconciliation Facebook page. From your Facebook account, search groups for The Community of Reconciliation. The page provides up to date conversation and ways you can support one another throughout the week.

### **Is there a yearly cycle or pattern for The Community of Reconciliation?**

Yes. Each year, The Community of Reconciliation extends an invitation for all to embark upon a threefold journey of intention, formation, and transformation. However, all are welcome to enter into the rhythms of the Community any time throughout the year. Everyone will enter the process at their unique stage in life. However, the Community offers cycles of intention in which all may participate wherever they are along the journey.

Here is an online calendar of this current year  
[Explore the Community calendar »](#)

Yearly cycles of the Community are designed for participation as time and interest allow.

### **Year Round**

The Community hosts year round gatherings for support and encouragement, including: weekly Benedictine Life and Prayer gatherings and chapter discussion sessions, monthly Creating a Rule of Life sessions and in the winter and spring, Listening, Hearing, Living sessions.

In 2011 we anticipate piloting a new *Monastery of the Heart* monthly gatherings using Joan Chittister's newest book.

Throughout the year, all are encouraged to attend regular community gatherings for their encouragement and all are encouraged to create their own rule of life and move toward integration of that rule into their daily living. Resources and monthly gatherings are available to assist the process. Most companions of the Community seek to attend Benedictine Life and Prayer gatherings, retreats and workshops, Listening, Hearing, Living events, and Benedictine Experiences when possible. Participants are also encouraged to plan a personal retreat, Benedictine Experience, or other times for rest and renewal. Following is an overview of a typical year in the life of the Community.

### **Autumn**

Each fall, a yearlong cycle begins anew with welcoming orientations and reflection days as we take stock of our lives. Newcomers learn about the way of Benedict, while Companions and Companion Candidates— small cohorts of individuals choosing a more focused period of intention— use the time to deepen their experience. In mid-November, a weekend celebration of blessing brings together family, friends, and colleagues to consider and bless our intention for balance and reconciliation.

### **Winter/Spring**

Throughout the winter, spring, and early summer, participants are supported through an integrated series of learning events. Monthly Listening, Hearing, and Living series and other events provide practical engagement with leaders in Benedictine spiritual life as we bring balance our own lives. These are all augmented by regularly weekly gatherings, monthly formation sessions, and a wealth of constellation events and retreats.

### **Summer**

During the summer, regular weekly and monthly gatherings continue. The year concludes with an early summer pilgrimage of reflection throughout the sacred spaces of the Cathedral and grounds and a Community Celebration and picnic. In 2011 we are exploring one or two summer film nights that will allow us to experience hospitality as a community.

Following is a roadmap with programs for a typical year in the life of The Community of Reconciliation.

### **The Community of Reconciliation Annual Cycle**

A typical cycle explores Benedictine foundations and practices for radical balance and reconciliation. You can experience these individually, or in a cohort with others who will journey with you throughout the year of intention. Always you are invited to attend those gatherings most helpful on your journey. Each year serves as a foundation for subsequent years and deepening in the foundations and practices of the Community.

## Autumn

- Welcome to the Community Inquirer Sessions- *evening and weekend afternoon sessions*
- Pilgrimage of Reflection- *Saturday morning*
- Weekly Benedictine Life and Prayer gatherings- *weeknight evening*
- Monthly Creating a Rule of Life gatherings- *one Monday evening each month*
- Balance & Renewal for Healthcare Providers: Embracing the Rhythms of Wellness
- Autumn Monastic Quiet Day- *Friday evening in your own home and Saturday day at the Cathedral*
- Pilgrimage of Intention- *Saturday morning*
- Celebration Weekend: Service of Blessing and Reception - *Weekend and Evening*

## Winter/Spring

- Listening, Hearing, and Living events- *Saturday morning and early afternoon*
- Mid-Winter Monastic Quiet Day- *Friday evening in your own home and Saturday day at the Cathedral*
- Weekly Benedictine Life and Prayer gatherings- *weeknight evening*
- Monthly Creating a Rule of Life gatherings-*weeknight evening*
- Mid-Winter Monastic Quiet Day- *Friday evening in your own home and Saturday day at the Cathedral*

## Summer

- Weekly Benedictine Life and Prayer gatherings- *weeknight evening*
- Monthly Creating a Rule of Life gatherings-*weeknight evening*
- Pilgrimage of Reflection- *Saturday morning*
- Community Film Night- *weeknight, tentative*
- Personal Retreat- *selected by participant*

## Experiencing the cycle again!

In the second year, many choose to more intentionally explore the foundations and rhythms of the Benedictine way. All will be supported in their development through focused events for each cohort along with their regular participation in community. As an ever expanding constellation of gatherings and events, the Community works alongside you to develop resources that support your deepening journey. [Explore the Community calendar »](#)

## And experiencing it again!!

For those continuing the journey, in the third year and following, individuals are encouraged to maintain connections with their cohort as a support for their ongoing reconciliation in the world. The Community cycle helps support the work of articulating your unique vision for reconciliation in the world. The vision might be as an individual, as a cohort, or in partnership with others.

To this end, we anticipate leading special third year pilgrimages to meaningful sites in the Benedictine tradition. Regionally and internationally, these unique gatherings are designed as working discovery pilgrimages in which you discern and design your unfolding journey alongside a cohort of trusted spiritual friends, in settings of stunning beauty and spiritual significance.

## How much of time does the Community of Reconciliation involve?

Participant involvement varies by individual, always with the goal of bringing balance to daily living. All Community gatherings are open and optional. Some participants drop in for an occasional visit. Others make attendance a weekly priority. We make it a priority to offer multiple events on a single day to afford the most flexibility in content and attendance.

We have discovered that participation in the Community helps us to make choices about our time and the way we live. Rather than adding another thing to full schedules, participants in the Community often bring a new sense of order to fragmented living. Many find that attention to the practices provides a greater sense of ease about time in their lives.

Those who choose to take a more intentional approach to the yearly cycles do accept additional commitments. They are encouraged to participate in gatherings, pilgrimages, and services that support their practice; set aside time to create a Rule of Life that integrates prayer, study, recreation, work, and hospitality into their lives; physically and financially support the work of the Community; and regularly gather with others in mutual support and encouragement. [Explore the Community calendar »](#)

## Does the Community replace my attendance at another spiritual community or service?

No. The Community is designed to foster your spiritual life wherever you learn and grow. We seek to enrich life for all

who attend and offer support for the many spiritual communities that serve you. WE partner with an expanding range of faith communities that recognize the benefit of affiliation with the Community as a resource for the spiritual lives of their congregations and communities.

### **Where does the Community of Reconciliation meet?**

Primary gatherings are held on the Cathedral Close (the Cathedral, Cathedral grounds, and buildings) of Washington National Cathedral. Because the Community is linked through spiritual relationship, it is also experienced through the constellation of gatherings, events, and resources of all who participate.

Your engagement in supportive communities and spiritual networks on and beyond the Cathedral close contributes to your experience of the Community. Thus, the Community exists wherever two or more are gathered with an intention to live lives of balance and reconciliation.

### **Can I participate in the Community if I do not live in the area?**

Yes. The Community of Reconciliation encourages anyone who seeks balance in life and reconciliation in the world to benefit from association with the Community. Currently, those at distance can receive resources and spiritual support by e-mail and engage a full range of online audio, video, and collateral materials. [Visit online resources »](#)

The Community encourages all to participate locally, fully, and regularly in gatherings and events that promote balance and reconciliation. The Community of Reconciliation website has a list of regional gatherings and resources to introduce you to what we call an expanding constellation of communities that honor the practices of radical balance and reconciliation.

We encourage you to plan a Cathedral visit whenever you are in Washington, DC, and to participate in gatherings, pilgrimages, Benedictine Experiences, and special events here and throughout the country. Several times a year we

host events specially designed for distance participants who wish to visit the Washington DC area. [Explore the Community calendar »](#)

For those beyond the Washington area we ask that you contact us to explore possibilities in your area. Beginning in the fall of 2010, we will be working with several pilot distance communities to determine the most effective way to provide support and encouragement. If you are interested in participating in the Community, becoming a Companion Candidate or Companion at distance, would like to be considered as a pilot site, or would like to participate as a constellation community, please contact us at [companions@cathedral.org](mailto:companions@cathedral.org) or (202) 537-6217.

### **What if I move away from the area?**

The beauty of a rich constellation of gatherings is that you can find support and encouragement wherever you may find yourself. We continue to develop new relationships and constellation expressions of the Community with others of like intention, so there is an expanding network of individuals and organizations to accompany you on your journey. You may even wish to host a constellation community in your new setting.

Additionally, we design many of the resources to be available online as audio, video, and print resources for your use, and plan several distance events each year. We encourage you to visit Cathedral gatherings and events whenever you visit the area. We work to make the Community accessible by all who desire to participate.

[Visit online resources »](#)

### **What if I decide I no longer wish to participate in The Community of Reconciliation?**

We recognize that time constraints, differences in need and life stage, and other factors all contribute a decision to participate in The Community of Reconciliation. If you choose another path, you will be blessed on your journey and will always be welcomed as a friend. As a community, we do encourage you to let us know of your decision and to address any areas of concern.

## Frequently Asked Questions | about the way of Benedict

### What do you mean by the phrase Benedictine Spirituality?

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

Saint Benedict, *The Rule*

These words of Benedict himself, recorded at the beginning and the end of his Rule of Life offer us the wisdom in a nutshell. The life and practice of the Community of Reconciliation is rooted in the teaching and model of Saint Benedict, a fifth-century Christian saint who established a monastic community in the hills of the Italian countryside.

Those who chose and were chosen to live in this tiny monastery ordered their lives around a document known as the Rule of Saint Benedict. The Rule offered a framework for living that addressed the spiritual and physical realities of day to day life. Saint Benedict's Rule

has continued to shape the lives of spiritual seekers throughout the centuries. Monastic communities have understood the balance modeled by Saint Benedict for more than 1500 years. Today, the Community honors this same wisdom, even as we live in our own communities beyond the walls of a monastic enclosure.

### What is a Rule of Life?

For more than 15 centuries, Benedictine monastic communities have been guided by a simple document known as the Rule of Saint Benedict. Deeply rooted in Judeo-Christian texts and tradition, the Rule continues to provide a model for lives of balance and reconciliation. The Rule has also been used by individuals associated with monastic communities and spiritual communities to help shape lives of balance within the world.

All who associate with the Community of Reconciliation are encouraged to create their own, unique Rule of Life. Each individual Rule re-contextualizes Saint Benedict's model and practices as a guiding framework for living in their own environment: family, workplace, and daily life in a complex world. These living frameworks help integrate the Benedictine practices of prayer, study, renewal, work, and hospitality into daily living.

A Rule of Life becomes the foundation for each individual's spiritual journey. For those who choose to become Companions in the Community, each Rule is acknowledged and blessed by the Community, family, friends, and colleagues at a Service of Investiture and Blessing.

## Frequently Asked Questions | about Constellation Partners

### Would you tell me more about Washington National Cathedral?

Yes. Washington National Cathedral is a spiritual resource for our nation: a great and beautiful edifice in the city of Washington, an indispensable ministry for people of all faiths and perspectives, and a sacred place for our country in times of celebration, crisis, and sorrow. Generous friends, members, and donors around the world support our mission. [More about our mission »](#)

[Support the Cathedral »](#)

### Can you tell me more about The Friends of Saint Benedict?

Yes. The Friends of Saint Benedict was founded in 1997 to carry on the work of the Canterbury Cathedral Trust in America in the area of Benedictine spirituality. In 1982, the first Benedictine Experience, held at Canterbury Cathedral, convinced a core group that an ongoing structure for organizing Benedictine retreats and educating interested groups on Benedictine wisdom could address a real hunger. Since then, The Friends of Saint Benedict and its predecessor have offered ecumenical programs for clergy and lay people to explore the Rule of Saint Benedict within a community of participants.

The Friends of Saint Benedict continues to develop material on the Benedictine Way, and many churches have established Benedictine groups. An Episcopal diocese on the East Coast has a Benedictine diocesan clergy group. These and similar programs have changed the lives of thousands of people who have come to discover the way to finding a spiritually guided balance in their lives between work, rest, and prayer.

The Friends publishes a newsletter, *Regula*, twice a year. This provides a vehicle for sharing information about experiences, as well as reflections by faculty and participants, and gives notice of Benedictine programs and

pilgrimages sponsored by the Friends of Saint Benedict and other organizations.

The Friends of Saint Benedict's primary mission is to introduce and sustain the Benedictine way of life to all persons. We offer opportunities through Benedictine Experiences and pilgrimages, through our newsletter and by promoting the Benedictine Way small group concept through parishes and other organizations.

[Learn More About The Friends of Saint Benedict »](#)

### What is a Benedictine Experience?

Benedictine Experiences provide opportunities to study and experience the balanced way of life as Saint Benedict envisaged it – in community. Giving due attention to body, mind, and spirit, Benedictine Experiences provide opportunities for men and women, both lay and clerical, to fully experience this balance in local, regional, and international settings. Designed and hosted by the Friends of Saint Benedict, gatherings lasting from a long weekend to a full week are offered at various locations several times a year.

Participants take part in an ordered day of prayer, study, work, and leisure. The framework of each day is the *Opus Dei* – the daily corporate worship of God – including prayer offices that begin with Morning Prayer, and continue with Eucharist, Evensong, and Compline to close the day. After Compline, the "Greater Silence" is observed through breakfast the following morning. Daily lectures and meditations are led by a gifted faculty. Time is set aside for silence and meditation. Mornings are devoted to meditative lectures and study. In the afternoons, time is set aside for rest, study, and work. Because the work of the hands is a vital part of the Benedictine way, participants are encouraged to take part in a work project. Evenings allow time for further talks, discussion, or music.

For more information or to register and find out about Benedictine Experience opportunities, call (202) 363-8061, e-mail [SaintBenedict@verizon.net](mailto:SaintBenedict@verizon.net) or visit [www.benedictfriend.org](http://www.benedictfriend.org).

## Frequently Asked Questions | about Registration and Logistics

### How do I register for an event?

The Benedictine way always welcomes guests with open arms. With very few exceptions (such as limited seating events and other special events) most gatherings and events are always open for you to drop in. Though many attend weekly, you are always welcome at any time. Simply attend as your schedule permits. All are welcome.

For some events that include refreshments or have fees associated with a speaker, we ask that you register online. The process is safe, secure, and private. Each event has a link for registration and/or payment. The simplest way to payment is using a credit card. You can do this securely online and will receive email confirmation of your registration and or payment along with special instructions about the event. [Register Now »](#)

### How do I pay for an event?

Most Community gatherings are offered without a participant fee, including: Benedictine Life and Prayer and Creating a Rule of Life. These events are supported by individual and grant funds, along with the donations and sustaining gifts of companions and other friends.

For those events with a participant fee, (these help defray speaker and travel costs, materials, and hospitality expenses) we strongly encourage you to register online. Each event has a link for registration and/or payment. The simplest way to payment is using a credit card. You can do this securely online and will receive email confirmation of your registration and or payment. Prior to the event you will receive an email with detailed instructions (including directions, location, and special notes) for the event.

All events that require registration are listed website at [The Community of Reconciliation Register Now »](#)

### Can I make a payment or donation by credit card?

Yes. However, at present we only take credit cards online and by phone. You can do this securely online or call (202)

537-2234 to make a telephone reservation. Online reservations will receive email confirmation of your registration and or payment. Prior to the event you will receive an email with detailed instructions (including directions, location, and special notes) for the event.

For some events (particularly those with limited seating) you will receive your tickets by mail. If you have any questions about registration or ticketing, please call Sarah Rockwood at (202)537-2234. [Register Now »](#)

### Can I make a payment or donation by check?

Yes. Though credit card registration simplifies the process, you can make a payment with a check. Complete your registration online and then bring your check or donation with you, payable to Washington National Cathedral with CoR and the event in the memo line. You will receive email confirmation of your registration and then can make payment at the door. Prior to the event you will receive an email with detailed instructions (including directions, location, and special notes) for the event.

### What about directions, parking, and accessibility issues?

For directions, parking, and accessibility questions, please visit [Washington National Cathedral »](#)

### What if I have other questions?

We always encourage you to contact us at (202) 537-6217 or [companions@cathedral.org](mailto:companions@cathedral.org) with thoughts and inquiries about the Community.

You are always welcome drop by as a guest at the office on the Cathedral close, though we encourage you to call ahead. And always, always, always, drop in to visit any of the gatherings and events where you will be welcomed with open arms.

# The Community of Reconciliation *at Washington National Cathedral*

*Radical balance in life that fosters reconciliation in the world*



WASHINGTON  
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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)

[Learn more about the Community of Reconciliation »](#)

**The Community of Reconciliation** at Washington National Cathedral

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