

St. Benedict's Monastery, St. Joseph, MN
Oblate Renewal day, September 18, 2021
Benedict's Vision and Today's Intersecting Crises
Afternoon Handout

Mantra: Open wide my arms
That the suffering of the world may come in.
(mantra by Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB)

Everything that is in the heavens,
on earth, and under the earth
is penetrated with connectedness,
penetrated with relatedness.

We shall awaken from our dullness
and rise vigorously toward justice.
If we fall in love with creation
deeper and deeper,
we will respond to its endangerment
with passion.

The truly holy person welcomes all that
is earthly.
May you be drenched with the longing
for peace,
And make justice blossom on earth.
Even in a world that's being
shipwrecked, remain brave and strong.

Hildegard of Bingen

Part 1: Benedict's Way of personal transformation – Humility

The 12 Steps of Humility in the ancient Rule of Benedict are the foundational guide for personal transformation and spiritual growth. The 12 steps listed here are adapted to include the relationship between humans and between humans and creation in light of climate crisis.

1. **Keep the reverence of God, creator of the earth and the heavens, always before us.** "Creation is of the order of love. God's love is the fundamental moving force in all created things" (*Laudato Si!* para. 77)
2. **Don't follow our own will or live for ourselves but accept our role as co-creator.**
3. **Seek direction from wisdom figures and from the earth.**
4. **Endure in the struggle for justice and for the planet.**
5. **Acknowledge faults and the harm that human activity—including my own—is doing to the planet, to women, to people of color.**
6. **Renounce entitlement to an unjust share of the planet's limited resources, to wealth and to special benefits from an unjust system.**

7. **Let go of the arrogance and narcissism of the anthropocentric world view and of white supremacy.**
8. **Honor and learn from the traditions of the earth and of communities.**
9. **Cultivate silence and listen with the heart to the earth and to those whose voices are often missing.**
10. **Use language of respect and inclusion for humans and the earth. Never dismiss, reject or render invisible any parts of creation.**
11. **Advocate for all the vulnerable and for our common home.**
12. **In all times and places and with all people, live in reverence.**
[Speaking of the Earth Charter] Here, I would echo that courageous challenge: “As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning.... Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.” (*Laudato Si!* Par 207)

Reflection Questions:

1. What are your initial reactions to the steps of humility extended to our common home? Would you articulate them differently?
2. Which “step” is most challenging for you personally right now?
3. Which “step” is the most energizing for you personally right now?
4. Which “steps” would be most challenging and most energizing for you to address with a communal, parish, local area or regional response?

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