

FEAST OF ST. SCHOLASTICA

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Our Prioress retreat theme this year was "Care of Soul." Did you know that there are ten references in the Holy Rule concerning care, and numerous other references that infer the who, when and how of this caring attitude and action?

One evening as I was beginning to ponder this feast and my reflection for today, it came to me that Scholastica knew the heartbeat of Benedict as his twin, better than anyone. They heard the heartbeat of each other in the womb, they felt their growing embryonic stage in their becoming a viable fetus. They felt each other's exploration within this tiny space. They probably kicked and rubbed shoulders in their movement as they prepared to leave the comfort of their home within their mother: the sound of her heartbeat, the warmth of her body and the familiarity of her voice.

In their later lives, I wondered if Scholastic may have grown to know the Holy Rule as Benedict thought through its composition. Was it part of their annual visits as they were in communion in their love of God and in their conversation with each other? Did the feminine energy of Scholastic influence the wholeness, holistic message of the Rule?

I imagine that "care of soul" found in the Rule was distilled into words because of their "twinning" of both the masculine and feminine energy of God's love made manifest in our Founders: Benedict and Scholastica. We are the blessed recipient of this twinning wholeness.

St. Benedict writes in his Rule of Benedict:

- Listen!
Ah yes, with the ear of your heart, adds Scholastica.
- The Abott/Prioress is to be a teacher!
Ah yes, guide, mentor with compassion, adds Scholastica.
- They are to be a physician,
Ah yes, to heal and invite unity between mind, heart, and body, adds Scholastica.
- They are to be a shepherd.
Ah yes, offering safety, security, shelter and to seek out the lost who have slipped from the communion of their God and sisters in community, adds Scholastica.
- Vie with one another.
Ah, yes, in love through holy zeal, adds Scholastica.

As I listened to our presenter, it was clear this meant "care of soul" was both singular and plural. Ah yes, I must care of my soul in order to care for others.

Our presenter, Dr. Emily Cash surprised us when she said you need to "pay the rent." What? What rent went racing through my head? She continued: RENT is an acronym for **REST, EXERCISE, NUTRITION, THOUGHTS.**

We all know the importance of rest, exercise and nutrition, but she offered clarity around thoughts. She encouraged us to manage our thoughts. If we are thinking ho-hum, grumbling about our bodies, ruminating about a sister that is difficult, or complaining about the weather or the latest change, these thoughts influence our attitude that unconsciously effect our actions. Most of us are familiar with the interrelationship of thought, attitudes and behaviors.

Fortunately for us as Benedictines, we have Chapter 4 on the Tools of Good Work to influence the how, what and when in care of self and other. In Chapter 4, we are called and challenged by these tools, skills, and instruments to love God fully and love neighbor as self through the commandments, beatitudes, works of mercy and so much more. We are invited to intentionally, live justice, live in right relationship with all people, the cosmos, all creations and creatures of earth.

It strikes me we have so many ways to participate in God's transforming grace. Let us "pay the rent" consciously in this gift of grace.