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## **Prayer: the heartbeat of Benedictine spirituality**

by Joan Chittister

Benedictine prayer,  
the heartbeat of Benedictine spirituality  
is always about  
the presence of God in time --  
this time, our time, my time.

Benedictine prayer is not mindless repetition  
of endless formulas.

It is about the immersion in the mind of God  
that living the God-life requires,  
if we are to be faithful to it  
all our living days.

Prayer restores the soul  
that is dry and dulled  
by years of trying  
to create a world  
that never completely comes.

It heals the wounds of the day  
and reminds us who we want to be  
at the deepest, truest part of us.

Prayer lightens the load.  
It gives fresh direction and new energy.

It fixes the eye of the soul  
on the real ends of life,  
when the real goals of real time  
seem unattainable.

It feeds the streams  
of silence and sacred reading,  
public and private prayer,  
that are the pulse  
of Benedictine life.

Benedictine prayer is steeped  
in the psalms --  
the cry of the poor throughout time.

It immerses us in the fullness of the scriptures  
and their history of salvation.

It fills us with the Gospel accounts  
of the life and message of Jesus.

As regular as the movement of the clock,  
Benedictine prayer becomes for us  
the pulse of the day,  
the rhythm of a life that might otherwise  
be caught in the drumbeat  
of ambition or profit or self-centeredness.

Prayer is the sustaining force  
of a Monastery of the Heart  
in a demanding world.

Prayer in the Benedictine tradition,  
and so in a Monastery of the Heart,  
springs from the reflection and soul-wrestling  
that brings us to the bar of our deepest selves,  
seeking forgiveness, pleading for strength.

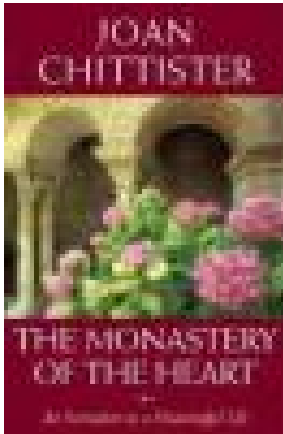
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It is said in concert  
with monastics of the heart everywhere,  
with those for whom care for the soul  
and care for the world  
are always equal concerns.

In a Monastery of the Heart,  
we do not pray merely to pray.

We pray to become  
more a sign of the mind of God today  
than we were yesterday.

The Benedictine prays  
to put on the mind of God  
more and more  
and forever more.



[This reflection comes from Sr. Joan Chittister's book *The Monastery of the Heart:*

*An Invitation to a Meaningful Life* (BlueBridge).]

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