~~~ IN THE MIND OF SAINT BENEDICT ~~~

The monastic enclosure, as envisioned by our most Holy Father Benedict, is a place where souls are lost in the sight of God. All the souls in the monastery are called to union with God. Because all the souls in the monastery alike seek the Face of God, they are fused together like iron in the fire. They are transformed together in the Light of God. All the monks are one with one another, and they live together in the Charity of Christ and in the purity of the Spirit of God. Their life is totally built on mutual respect and complete trust – in God and in each other. They live under the guiding hand of their Father in Christ, the Abbot, whose part it is to have for his sons a concern that is much more than ordinary solicitude. Even though difficult at times, the monks bear one another's burdens and they help one another to find themselves in Christ. In truth, they are at least beginning on earth to build the heavenly city.

If the monk is ever to build a solid and enduring foundation of the heavenly city, if he is ever to reach the reality of the heavenly city, he must first work to make himself real. He must discover the reality of the truth about himself, humbly acknowledging to himself that all that is evil within him must be cast away. The foundation of the monastic edifice – a sacred edifice indeed – is the humility of all its living stones. Only by building on truth and humility can such a place as a monastery be built at all. Because the monastery is built on the love that is begotten in Christ, the monk who lives in such a temple cannot but taste the goodness of God in everything he undertakes to do.

Whatever is here said for monks who live in monasteries can in all truth be said for nuns who live in convents. ❑