

St. Benedict and the Raven - St. Benedict Classical Academy

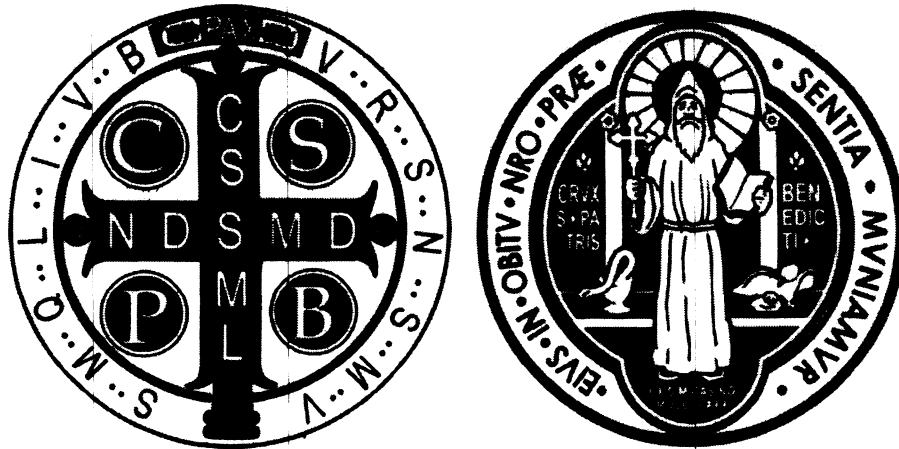


There are many great works, miracles, and images associated with our great patron, St. Benedict of Nursia. Most identify him as the author of the famous *Rule of St. Benedict*, in which he provides instruction for monastic life. At St. Benedict Classical Academy, a common association is in reference to the famous Benedictine motto, “ora et labora” - “pray and work.”

Yet perhaps less well known is the significance of two images frequently used in depictions of St. Benedict. Benedictine images and symbols often include a raven holding a loaf of bread between its beak. St. Gregory the Great is known to have elaborated on the origin and story surrounding the raven in his *Dialogues*. He claims that St. Benedict regularly fed a raven from his own portion of bread at mealtimes. On one occasion, a malicious priest poisoned the bread he was to consume. Knowing that the bread was tainted, St. Benedict called upon the raven to dispose of it and to ensure that no other being would be harmed. According to the story, the raven obeyed St. Benedict’s command and flew off with the poisoned bread.

The story of St. Benedict and the raven is not the only miraculous story involving a saint and an animal. Yet this story is particularly inspiring as it so clearly demonstrates the power of virtue, especially of charity and obedience. St. Benedict willingly sacrificed some of his own food to provide nourishment for the raven and the raven, in turn, remained obedient to St. Benedict in his hour of need. This lesson is one we frequently teach at St. Benedict Elementary- that in doing good, practicing virtue, and being charitable towards those around us, we allow God to work in our lives in beautiful ways. Those of us fortunate enough to witness the daily exchange of joy and love among children recognize that this too is a little miracle and one that so beautifully captures the spirit of St. Benedict and the mission of St. Benedict Elementary. Let us pray and work that we may grow in obedience, like the raven, towards God, and virtue, like our great and holy patron.

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C.S.S.M.L. *Crux Sacra Sit Mihi Lux* - May the holy Cross be for me a light. **N.D.S.M.D.** *Non Draco Sit Mihi Dux* - L not the dragon be my guide. **C S P B** *Crux Sancti Patris Benedicti* - The Cross of the Holy Father Benedict. **V.R.S.N.S.M.V.** *Vade retro Satana; nunquam suade mihi vana* - Begone Satan! Suggest not to me thy vain things. **S.M.Q.L.I.V.B.** *Sunt mala quae libas; ipse venena bibas* - The drink you offer is evil; drink that poison yourself. **PA** Peace

Saint Benedict Medal & Associated Prayer

The Front Of the Jubilee Saint Benedict Medal

The Saint Benedict Medal is filled with images, letters and words.

Pedestals stand on either side of Benedict. The pedestal on his right holds a cup for wine and the other a raven about to take flight. Both represent thwarted attempts to kill Benedict. This is our reminder that Christ will always come to the aid of those who call on Him.

In the area above the cup and raven the Latin words "Crux s patris Benedicti" are inscribed. They translate to "The Cross of our holy father Benedict" (CSPB).

Inscribed around the margin of the medal we find the words, "Eius in obitu nostro praesentia muniamur!" which translates to "May we be strengthened by his presence in the hour of our death!" Saint Benedict is considered the patron saint of a happy death.

Below Saint Benedict are the letters SM Casino MDCCLXXX, indicating the medal commemorates the 1400th anniversary of Benedict's death.

The Back Of the Jubilee Saint Benedict Medal

The cross on the back of the medal carries the initial letters of a Latin prayer. "**Crux sacra sti mihi lux! Nanquarr draco sit mihi dux!**" translates to "**May the holy cross be my light! May the dragon never be my guide!**" This is a constant prayer of exorcism, protecting us from the evil of Satan. **CSSMLNDSMD**

In the spaces around the cross the letters CSPB stand for, "Crux Sancti Patris benedicti", meaning, "The cross of our holy father Benedict".

Above the cross, the centuries-old Benedictine motto reads simply "Pax", "Peace".

The letters outlining the rim of the medal are the initial letters of a Latin prayer of exorcism: **VRSNSMV - SMQLIVB**, standing for "**Vade retro Santana! Nanquam suade mihi vana! Sunt mala quae libas. Ipse venena bibas!**" meaning, "**Begone Satan! Never tempt me with your vanities! Evil are the things thou profferest, Drink thou thine own poison**" With these emphatic words in constant presence, Satan cannot even approach.

Approved Blessing of the Medal of St. Benedict

Medals of Saint Benedict are sacramentals that may be blessed legitimately by any priest or deacon – not necessarily a Benedictine (Instr., 26 Sept. 1964; Can. 1168). The English also may be used and follows the Latin given below.

V. Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini.

R. Qui fecit caelum et terram.

Exorcizo vos, numismata, per Deum + Patrem omnipotentem, qui fecit caelum et terram, mare et omnia, quae in eis sunt. Omnis virtus adversarii, omnis exercitus diaboli, et omnis incursus, omne phantasma satanae, eradicare et effugare, ab his numismatibus: ut fiant omnibus, qui eis usuri sunt, salus mentis et corporis: in nomine Patris + omnipotentis, et Jesu + Christi Filii ejus, Domini nostri, et Spiritus + Sancti Paracliti, et in caritate ejusdem Domini nostri Jesu Christi, qui venturus est judicare vivos et mortuos, et saeculum per ignem. R. Amen.

V. Domine exaudi orationem meam.

R. Et clamor meus ad te veniat.

V. Dominus vobiscum.

R. Et cum spiritu tuo.

Oremus: Deus omnipotens, bonorum omnium largitor, supplices te rogamus, ut per intercessionem sancti Benedicti his sacris numismatibus tuam benedictionem + infundas, ut omnes qui ea gestaverint ac bonis operibus intenti fuerint, sanitatem mentis et corporis, et gratiam sanctificationis, atque indulgentias (nobis) concessas consequi mereantur, omnesque diaboli insidias et fraudes, per auxilium misericordiae tuae, studeant evitare et in conspectu tuo sancti et immaculati valeant apparere. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. R. Amen.

Then the medals are then sprinkled with Holy Water.

English Blessing

V. Our help is in the name of the Lord.

R. Who made heaven and earth.

In the name of God the Father + almighty, who made heaven and earth, the seas and all that is in them, I exorcise these medals against the power and attacks of the evil one. May all who use these medals devoutly be blessed with health of soul and body. In the name of the Father + almighty, of the Son + Jesus Christ our Lord, and of the Holy + Spirit the Paraclete, and in the love of the same Lord Jesus Christ who will come on the last day to judge the living and the dead, and the world by fire. Amen.

Let us pray. Almighty God, the boundless source of all good things, we humbly ask that, through the intercession of Saint Benedict, you pour out your blessings + upon these medals. May those who use them devoutly and earnestly strive to perform good works be blessed by you with health of soul and body, the grace of a holy life, and remission of the temporal punishment due to sin. May they also with the help of your merciful love, resist the temptation of the evil one and strive to exercise true charity and justice toward all, so that one day they may appear sinless and holy in your sight. This we ask through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The medals are then sprinkled with holy water.

Sources: Order of St. Benedict website, The Medal or Cross of St. Benedict: Its Origins, Meanings and Privileges (Gueranger), Catholic Encyclopedia, "The Medal of St. Benedict" (Seraphim Company)