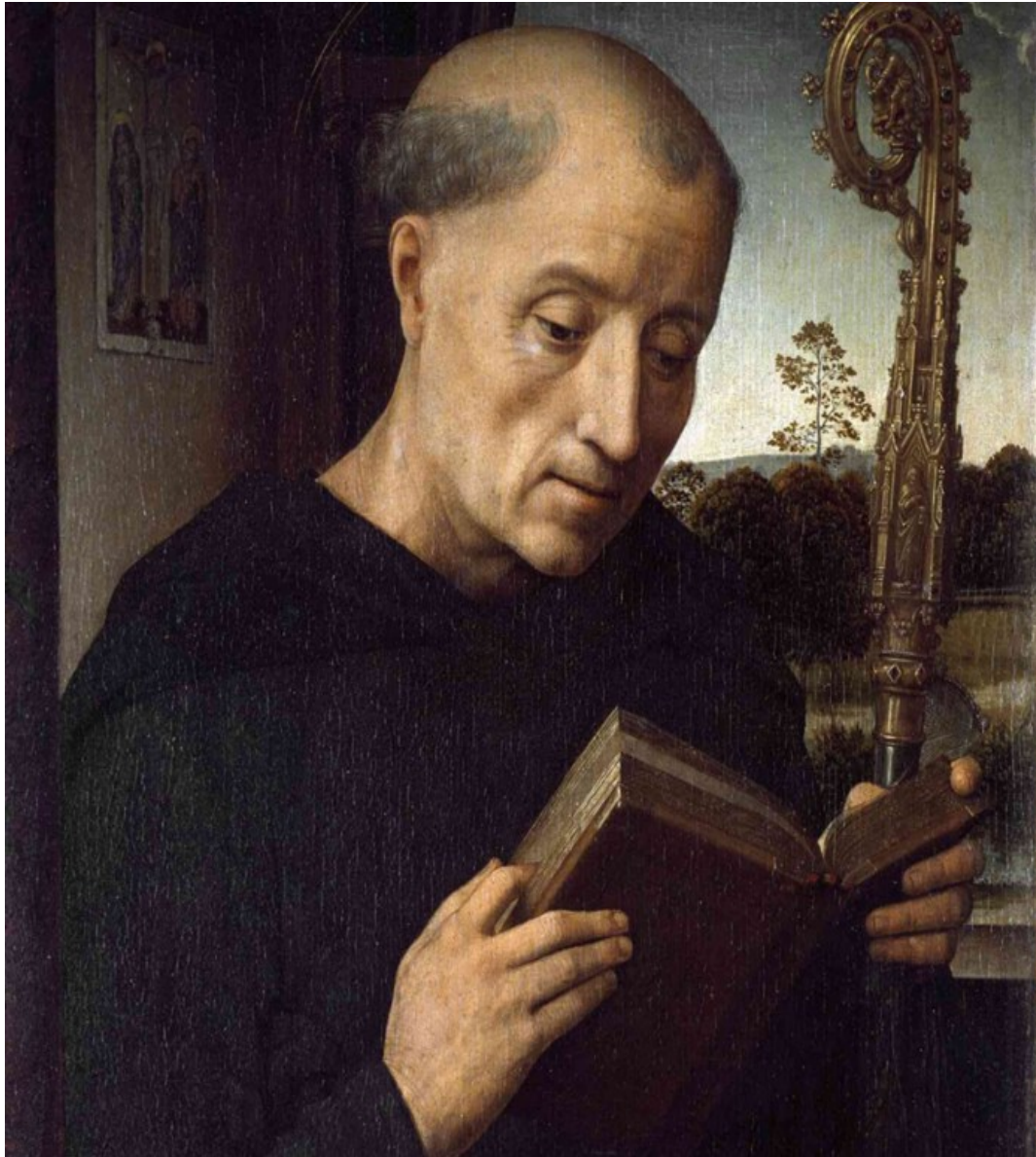


A circular gold coin with a cross design. The cross has letters: C, S, P, B in the quadrants; N, D, S, M, D in the center; and L, V, M, S on the arms. The outer ring contains the text 'L...V...B...PAX...V...R...S...N...S...M...V...'.

UIOGD

That in all things God may be glorified



*St. Benedict reading his Rule - from the Benedetto Portinari Triptych, Hans Memling
1487*

St. Benedict (ca. 480-547) was born into a Roman family in the small town of Nursia, Italy, amid the downfall of the Roman empire. As a young man, he was sent to Rome to pursue studies in the liberal arts, only to be scandalized and disillusioned by the climate of moral decadence exhibited by his fellow students and the city in decay. “Amid the confusion of the times, in which nothing seemed permanent” Benedict sought out the “essential – to make an effort to find what was perennially valid and lasting, life itself.” Benedict was *quaerere Deum* – searching for God. (Benedict XVI) Leaving the security of his family home and inheritance, in the famous words of St. Gregory the Great, Benedict “left Rome *learnedly ignorant* and *wisely uninstructed*”.

Assisted by the monk Romanus, Benedict initially lived in solitude in a cave at Subiaco, thirty miles north east of Rome, having undergone a deep religious experience there. Discovered by shepherds, notoriety of Benedict’s holiness soon spread quickly and a group of monks sought him out to become their abbot. With reluctance, Benedict agreed, though these unruly monks soon came to despise his insistence on proper monastic discipline and attempted to poison him. Later, another group of monastics would join Benedict, wherein he established twelve monasteries, each with twelve monks. This success, however, generated jealousy with the local clergy, leading Benedict to abandon Subiaco and around the year 529 founded a monastery in the ancient pagan acropolis on the hill overlooking the town of Cassino, eighty miles south of Rome. At Montecassino, Benedict wrote his famous “Rule” and served as the monastery’s first abbot until his death on the 21st March, 547, followed soon afterwards by his sister Scholastica who was buried in the same tomb as her brother.

St. Benedict medal. Benedict had a profound veneration for the holy Cross and the centrality of Jesus Christ in the spiritual life of the Christian, “valuing nothing whatever above Christ himself” (RB 72,11). The medal of St. Benedict helps express the centrality of Christ in one’s life in a powerful and tangible manner. Holy medals have an ancient tradition and one of the most famous medals is St. Benedict’s medal, originating in the late Middle Ages, officially recognized in 1741 by Pope Benedict XIV and later on commemorated in 1880 as a “jubilee medal” for the then 1,400 year anniversary of the founding of the Benedictine Order.

Spiritual Benefits traditionally associated with the St. Benedict medal include:

- Physical and Spiritual Protection from Evil and Temptation
- Obtaining for sinners the grace of conversion
- Protection and aid for persons tormented by evil and in temptations against holy purity
- Assistance at the hour of death
- Efficacious Remedy for bodily sufferings and a means of protection against contagious diseases
- Assistance for women during childbirth
- Protection during storms

Use: There is no specific way of carrying of using the Medal. It is often worn around the neck or around one's wrist, or attached to a Rosary. St. Benedict medals are very often placed in fields at the foundations of buildings. Remember, the prayerful wearing of the medal is itself a continual, silent prayer.

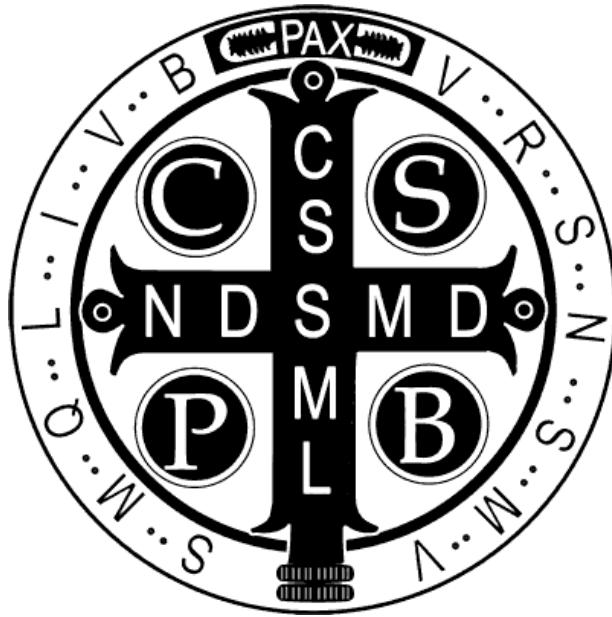
It is equally important to not be superstitious about such medals. As sacramentals, they are used in recalling the mysteries of the Catholic faith and are to be used as "sacred signs instituted by the Church to prepare us to receive the fruit of the sacraments and to sanctify different circumstances of our lives." (CCC, 1677)

The Medal and its Many Layers of Meaning



On the Front Side of the Medal

- **St. Benedict** is depicted holding a Cross in one hand, and the Rule of St. Benedict in the other. At his sides are the words "Crux S. Patris Benedicti" ("The Cross of the Holy Father Benedict"), and below his feet: "Ex S M Casino MDCCCLXXX" ("From the holy mount of Casino, 1880").
- **Chalice with Serpent:** This image recalls when a group of monks plotted to murder St. Benedict because they believed his doctrine as Abbot to be too strict. They poisoned the wine for consecration at mass, but when St. Benedict made the sign of the Cross over the chalice, it fell to the ground and shattered. (c.f. Gregory the Great, *The Life of St. Benedict*, 3,4)
- **Raven with Bread:** This image represents another attempt to murder St. Benedict, this time by poisoning blessed bread, a gift given by Florentius, a priest envious of Benedict's holiness. However, God sent a raven, who carried the poisoned gift away before anyone could consume it. (c.f. Gregory the Great, *The Life of St. Benedict*, 8, 1-3)
- **Prayer around** the image of St. Benedict in Latin: *Eius in obitu nostro praesentia muniamur* [May we be strengthened by his presence in the hour of our death."]



On the Back Side of the Medal

- **In the Center** of the medal there is the cross, which St. Benedict regularly invoked to drive away evil.
- **On the vertical** are the following letters: C.S.S.M.L. - **Crux Sacra Sit Mihi Lux** [May the Holy Cross be my light]
- **On the horizontal** are the following letters: N.D.S.M.D - **Non Draco Sit Mihi Dux** [May the Dragon never be my guide]
- **Four Large Letters Surrounding the Cross** C.S.P.B. - **Crux sancti Patris Benedicti** [The Cross of Holy Father Benedict]
- **Prayer around the Cross**, beginning from the **Right Side**:
V.R.S.N.S.M.V – **Vade retro Satana: numquam suade mihi vana** [Begone Satan! Never tempt me with your vanities]. **Left Side**:
S.M.Q.L.I.V.B. – **Sunt mala quae libas; ipse venena bibas** [All that pours from you is evil; Drink the poison yourself]
- **At the “summit” and top of the medal are the Latin words PAX – Peace**, one of the principal mottos of the Benedictine order. “If you wish to have that true life that lasts forever, then keep your tongue from evil; let your lips speak no deceit; turn away from wrongdoing; *seek out peace and pursue it.*” (RB Prologue, n. 14-17)

Saint Benedict Medal Prayer

MAY THE HOLY CROSS BE MY LIGHT
MAY THE DRAGON NEVER BE MY GUIDE.
BEGONE SATAN!
NEVER TEMPT ME WITH YOUR VANITIES
ALL THAT POURS FROM YOU IS EVIL.
DRINK THE POISON YOURSELF.

AMEN.



Saint Martin's
UNIVERSITY