

December 3, 2022

Sister Judith Murphy, OSB , Prioress

Funeral Reflection for Sr. Margarita Walters

Good morning! We come together today to pray with and for our Sister Margarita and to give thanks for the ways she has shared life with each and all of us. Her path to get here to this community was longer than some of ours, and maybe more complex along the way. Yet she too, heard the first words of the Prologue to the Rule of Benedict: Listen to my instruction with the ear of your heart. And she found herself among the common hungers shared here.

As we become familiar with the Rule of Benedict, we see that Benedict's vision was saturated or marinated in the Scriptures, both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. It can be a life study for us to read with the rule in one hand and the scriptures in the other, and to see what receives emphasis in the life described in the Rule, and let this lead us deeper into the scriptures. Human beings in search of God; and, God in search of us.

In today's assembly of Margarita's community, friends, and family, we face again the mysteries and realities of death, of love, and of life. We are aware again that life—hers and ours-- is precious to us, and we are grateful that our life is precious to God as well. Isaiah tells us that God affirms life, God “will destroy death itself, that web that is over all people”. We look to God to save us from death. And it is love that somehow overcomes death.

John Chrysostom said as consolation, “Those whom we love and lose are no longer where they were before. Now they are wherever we are.” We remember our dear departed, that cloud of witnesses before us, and we look to loved ones who will remember us. We remember Margarita's life with gratitude.

Humility, obedience, mutual obedience, work and prayer—all of these are realities in this Benedictine life-- as we learn, over a lifetime, to “run in the way of God's commands”---of God's command to love.

Jesus Christ reveals God's love for us and calls us to love one another. We grow to do this as we come to know and believe in the love God has for us. Hunger for this to be our reality is a hunger that we share, a shared aspiration in this life.

Eye has not seen; ear has not heard, what God has readied for those who love. We don't know what eternal life means, but even so we trust in it.

As we listen with the ear of our hearts today, may we grow in gratitude and appreciation for the precious gift of life and God's promise of fulness of life.