

# **Resource Sheet 63A: St. Benedict of Nursia**

**Feast Day:** July 11  
**Born:** 480: **Died:** 547

St. Benedict was born at Nursia in Umbria, Italy. Coming from a rich Italian family, his life was full of adventure and wonderful events. As a boy, he was sent to Rome to study in the public schools but was troubled by the bad behaviour of the other students. When he was a young man, he became disgusted with the terrible lifestyle of pagan Rome (Romans who believed in false gods).

Benedict left the city and went looking for a place where he could be alone with God. He found the right spot. It was a cave in the mountain of Subiaco. Benedict spent three years there alone. The devil often tempted him to go back to his rich home and easy life. But Benedict prayed and did penance and did not give in to these temptations.

One day, when the devil sneakily tried to tempt him with bad thoughts and Benedict almost gave in to the temptation. Then he felt so sorry for the sin he would have committed that he threw himself into a bush of long, sharp thorns. He rolled around in the thorns until he was covered with scratches. From then on, his life was calm. He did not feel powerful temptations like that again.

After three years, people started coming to Benedict. They wanted to learn how to become holy. He became the leader of some men who asked for his help. But when he tried to make them do penance, they grew so angry that they even tried to poison Benedict. He made the Sign of the Cross over the poisoned wine and the glass shattered to pieces.

Later, Benedict became the leader of many good monks. He started twelve monasteries. Then he went to Monte Cassino where he built his most well-known monastery. It was here that St. Benedict wrote the wonderful rules for the Benedictine order. He taught his monks to pray and work hard. He taught them especially to be humble always.

Benedict and his monks greatly helped the people of their times. They taught them how to read and write, how to farm, and how to work at different trades. St. Benedict was able to do good because he prayed all the time. He could read minds, could tell the future and drive out demons. He destroyed many pagan statues and altars where they worshiped the false gods. He died on March 21, 547. The pope proclaimed him the patron of Europe.

**Reflection:** *"Put Christ before all else."- the Rule of St. Benedict*

Source: <http://www.holyspiritinteractive.net/kids/saints/0711.asp>