

A LISTENING HEART

Benedictine spirituality requires careful listening
and responding
to the Word of God
to the call of the Jesus who leads us
and to the call of the community
that is the foundation of our spiritual life.

In a Monastery of the Heart
it is the acceptance of wisdom not our own
that asks of us the spiritual maturity
to listen first and always to the Word of God—
and allows the Word to be the testing ground
of every other demand made on our lives.

It is obedience to the greater law of love.

CONVERSION OF HEART

To the Benedictine
conversion of heart is the turning
of the soul
toward its endpoint
at all times.

The conversion of heart and life
that is the basis
of Benedictine holiness
comes when,
as a Monastery of the Heart,
we finally realize that God's will for us
is that we come to realize
that all things are of God—
all the moments of our lives,
however stumbling they may be—
and that all things call us to melt into
one great paean of praise
for the joy of having found
the God we continue to seek.

STABILITY OF HEART

Stability of heart—
commitment of the life of the soul,

faithfulness to the community,
perseverance in the search for God—
is the mooring
that holds us fast
when the night of the soul
is at its deepest dark,
and when the noontime sun sears
the spirit.

It is a long journey,
this search for God.
It is constructed of patience and trust,
of perseverance and persistence,
of the routines of dailiness
and the cataclysmic interruptions of time.
But through it all,
Benedictine spirituality tells us,
there is only one invariant
on which we must depend:
the steadiness—the stability—of the heart of God.

Excerpted from *The Monastery of the Heart: An Invitation to a Meaningful Life*, by
Joan Chittister, BlueBridge, 2011.