

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The first vow the Benedictine monk or nun takes is obedience. The second is stability of life. Stability requires the monk to literally stay put in his monastery for life. He turns away from flitting from one entertainment to another or from one community to another.

Stability means putting down deep roots. It means blooming where you are planted. It means, "Don't worry about the things you cannot change. Instead do what you can with what you have where you are."

In a fast changing and mobile world, the virtue of stability is necessary more than ever, and in building a Benedictine Option parish stability is vital. For the local parish stability means joining one parish and getting involved with that community in our stewardship, our worship, our prayers and our service

However, it is an increasing practice for Catholics in the United States to belong to more than one parish and to worship at various parishes according to their schedule. It is as if the different Catholic parishes are franchise operations--like McDonald's--and folks just drop in to whatever parish seems to be right for that particular weekend. This kind of church hopping and church shopping does not build the commitment and stability that is required for real spiritual growth. Stability is linked with obedience because we cannot build stability unless we submit to the practicalities of the parish schedules and requirements. That stability and obedience make up an important element in spiritual life. Through stability and obedience, we stop saying to God "I'll do it my way" and we start saying to God "I'll do it your way."

The vows of stability and obedience are the way we do this, and if it is sometimes tough and requires self sacrifice, well, that's part of the deal! But it is through these times that we become stronger and learn more about how to trust the Lord in all things.

Finally, it is through stability that we deepen our spiritual lives. Stability is closely linked to contemplative prayer. In stability we learn to sit still. In obedience we learn to listen, and only as we sit still and listen can we learn to discern the still, small voice of the Lord in our lives.

I therefore strongly encourage you to join this parish if you are not already a member, and to get involved and put down your roots in this community. The stability you eventually require will keep you rooted and secure when difficult storms arise.

Your Pastor,
Fr. Longenecker