**Benedictine Reflection: Silence**

We’ve all read many psychological, social, and professional benefits to meditation recently, yet Benedictines have practiced this type of silence for over 1500 years. Benedictine monasteries have been cultural centers for art, music, and intellectual growth throughout the centuries. Benedictine Don Massimo Lapponi writes, “The culture of the soul should be the foundation and final purpose of every intellectual activity.” We are more than our work and studies.

Just before break, Priory’s faculty and staff spent a day on retreat where insightful and sometimes humorous, Fr. Anselm Smedile, OSB from St. Anselm Abbey spoke on the book A Taste of Silence: How I Came To Be At Home With Myself by Bieke Vandekerckhove.

Notable highlights from the day:

We think of silence as not doing anything. Who has time for that? As people, our first tendency is to grab (experiences, possessions, status, titles, etc.). But, we are human *beings*, not human *doings*. It is much easier for us to go, go, go, to fill our minds, and overschedule our days, than it is to sit in silence while listening within. As human *beings*, we are created to feel, connect, notice, and breathe. Silence is more than just being quiet. It opens us to deeper realities we cannot express.

Sometimes our troublesome companions: sadness, anger, and fear emerge in the silence. Spending time in silence with these could open our minds and hearts while connecting us with God and others on a deeper level. In these moments, an insightful understanding may emerge. Peace in our hearts and relationships may arise. Living a meaningful life doesn’t always mean living a happy life.

When speaking with a group of parents about silent meditation and prayer, Fr. Anselm offered that to be silent, is to be open. Vandekerckhove explains, “Silence allows something wonderful to be born.”

I’m proud that our Benedictine tradition challenges us to develop intellectually while cultivating ways for the soul to speak in times of prayer and silence. May these moments grace our meaningful lives.