**Benedictine Reflection**

By Molly Buccola

“Your way of acting should be different than the world’s way (RB 4:20).”

The fourth chapter of St. Benedict’s Rule offers “Tools for Good Works.” The twentieth tool reads, “Your way of acting should be different than the world’s way.” It sounds like advice from a parent to a child. I hear, “You make your own choices. Don’t fall into peer pressure.”

As we know, it is not always easy to take a stand, offer an unpopular point of view, or go against the norm. But Saint Benedict shares that sometimes it is important to do just that. Our Theology claims we are created with both Grace and Free Will. We are all blessed with the Divine’s peaceful spirit while fostering a freedom to think and act as we choose.

Humanity therefore carries honor and responsibility. St. Benedict urges us to step away from the world’s noise and chaos and develop a relationship with ourselves and God. We must routinely rekindle our Grace while mindfully and intentionally choosing our words and actions.

St. Benedict suggests that when we honor our Grace, we are more likely to use our Free Will responsibly. In this way, we will develop faith to see extraordinary beauty in ordinary life. We will develop strength necessary to create boundaries for our chaotic lives. And we will develop courage to speak for the voiceless.

As humans, we seek comfort in the affirmation of others. Often, our thoughts and actions are simply *reactions* to that which we feel, see, or hear. Yet, in unique, spiritual paths from birth to death, each of us develops a unique relationship with God. May we choose to accompany, inspire, and motivate each other while leading lives of peace and justice.