**Benedictine Thoughts in Stormy, Uncertain Times**

By Molly Buccola

Rumble, rumble, crack, flash, whoosh! Recent storms forced us to slow down, rearrange, and even stop at points. Extreme weather seldom disrupts Bay Area residents. In this place, Mother Earth both provides and protects. Like clockwork, our lives follow the same general pattern. We seem to be in complete control. This is not the case for most of our world.

Lately we’ve developed a heightened awareness of our dependence on natural resources and each other. Mother Nature reminds us that we are part of something greater. We rely on the earth and each other more than we’re comfortable to admit. While this thought could be unnerving and scary, it also offers a sense of grace and peace.

The storms interrupt and are initially frustrating, but as we sit in moments of impatience, we have an opportunity to welcome a perspective shift. We observe, listen, feel, exhale, before continuing on with our go-go-go nature. We are offered a moment to “let God be God.”

Benedictine tradition sees monastics as individuals who are part of a community that is larger than that which they see. This community stretches beyond space and time. The Benedictine community is local, national, and global. The Benedictine community is now, yesterday, and centuries past. It includes all of creation since the beginning of time and spanning to tomorrow and future generations.

Benedictines are founded on a principle that honors our interconnected nature. Their practices and beliefs are centered on a commitment to this widespread community. St. Benedict was well aware that much of life is beyond our control, and as individuals living within the community, it is our responsibility to “listen with the ear of the heart” (Rule of Saint Benedict, Prologue), “welcome others as Christ” (Rule of Saint Benedict, Chapter 53) and "first show in deeds rather than words all that is good and holy (Rule of Saint Benedict, Chapter 2)."

 One key motto is “ora et labora.” Ora (prayer) suggests much of this life is beyond our control and when personally grounded in faith, hope, and love, we are motivated to labora (work) to serve the community.

In this stormy time of uncertainty, may we look to the Benedictine tradition as a guide to reestablish personal relationships with God and to serve a world in need of our gifts.