Hospitality in Communication: Applying the Rule of Saint Benedict to the Home

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HOSPITALITY IN COMMUNICATION: APPLYING THE RULE OF SAINT BENEDICT TO THE HOME

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HOSPITALITY IN COMMUNICATION: APPLYING THE RULE OF SAINT BENEDICT TO THE HOME

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ABSTRACT

HOSPITALITY IN COMMUNICATION: APPLYING THE RULE OF SAINT BENEDICT TO THE HOME

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Dissertation supervised by Dr. Janie Harden Fritz

Hospitality is a tradition that has been immersed into all cultures for thousands of years. Philosophically and religiously, it has roots among ancient philosophers and in the Bible. Before the modern technologies and development of the tourism industry, hospitality was found in churches and monasteries. The reciprocal relationship between the host and the stranger give metaphorical meanings to life in general because it is how we treat each other that forms the moral balance in society and gives the human person what is necessary for a healthy and full life. St. Benedict was a man who experienced the benefits of hospitality and also understood the needs of humankind. St. Benedict writes about hospitality in his book, The Rule of St. Benedict. This book was developed in 6th century and is still being used today not just with religious orders, but with lay people as well.
This work bridges *The Rule of St. Benedict* to the home through hospitality. Hospitality allows for one to merge private and public life by welcoming the stranger into his or her home. However, hospitality is not just an action, but a reflection of the state of mind of the person offering it. Therefore, only an *implaced* person can offer true hospitality. Through this discovery the research begins to explain how the lack of hospitality is not the *cause* of less communication, but that the lack of hospitality is the *effect* of less communication.
DEDICATION

To my husband, Bob, and our five children: Sarah, Bobby, Tyler, Maria, and Julia. All of them supported and believed in me through this entire project with love and encouragement. I could not have done it without them.
I have long admired houses from the time I was a young girl. I would notice porches, rooms, mantles, and decorations. This continued as an adult when I would walk my dog, Lucky, through my neighborhood. I discussed these ideas with Dr. Thames during my first semester studying at Duquesne University and that is when I came across Bill Bryson’s book, *At Home*. Then when Dr. Erik Garrett introduced me to the book, *Phenomenologies of the Stranger: Between Hostility and Hospitality*, I immediately became intrigued with hospitality. I naturally thought that these two ideas would work well together. So as I began to trace the history of hospitality in the home, I discovered the *Rule of St. Benedict*. I was fortunate to live in Latrobe, PA where the first Benedictine community in the United States exists at Saint Vincent Basilica and Seminary. Fr. Thomas Hart guided me with resources that made this project become what it is today. The librarians at Saint Vincent College were helpful and patient with me as I searched for all the material I could find about Benedictine life and Saint Benedict. I attended seminars and workshops through St. Vincent that included hospitality as one of the hallmarks of the Benedictine life. I not only was enriched academically, but also spiritually.

I would like to thank my committee, Dr. Janie Harden Fritz, Dr. Ronald C. Arnett, and Dr. Richard H. Thames, who always understood my passion for this topic and always encouraged me to achieve my goals. I began my career as a journalist so my writing had to go through a lot of changes for the academic style. At no point did my committee discourage me. Instead they gave me the support and knowledge to effectively complete
this project, especially my chair Dr. Fritz. Her enthusiasm and continued interest gave me the energy to want to keep working. I would also like to thank Dr. Calvin Troup who originally heard my ideas and recognized that the Rule of St. Benedict would be my focus.

The person I would like to thank the most is my husband Bob. His love and encouragement helped me to believe that I could finish this project. He never doubted me. He gave me strength when I was weak and joy when I was sad. He along with my loving family is what allowed me to complete this dissertation. While at no point did I necessarily have a designated work space, my children and husband controlled the sound levels and distractions so that I would be able to write. My dog, Lucky, sat at my feet every day that I worked keeping my attitude on a positive level. They all believed in me more than I did in myself some days. I could never thank them enough for their love and support. I would also like to thank my parents, Anthony and Joan Shimko. They worked so hard in their life on this earth that this dissertation represents how far they could have gone if given the same opportunity as me. Dreams can come true.
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On one side of the door stands a person in the comforts and security of his or her home (dwelling). On the other side of the door stands an unknown person (the Other) seeking reception. The minute the door opens the phenomenology of hospitality begins. Emmanuel Levinas would use the word “welcome” to describe this experience of offering hospitality to the stranger-Other in our own dwelling in his book, *Totality and Infinity*. Derrida extends this understanding as he writes in his book, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, that the way Levinas describes “welcome” as the hospitality of the stranger-Other contributes to the principle of ethics.

Either with a warm embrace, a handshake, or a gesture to walk into the entryway, the unknown person is welcomed into the environment. Also according to Levinas, the Other is revealed (Levinas 155). Whether it is because of social etiquette or fear of God, most people feel obligated to embrace a guest because it is considered ethical and morally obligated to care for the Other. However, if one views the Stranger with fear and anxiety he or she sees risks associated with the Other because the greeter may not have any idea of the person he or she is about to welcome into his or her home. There is potential for evil and many decide to shut out guests all together. Therefore, hospitality becomes a complex act that puts scholars in a decisive threshold that has both depth and breadth in a philosophical, religious, and artistic scope and causes many questions about its purpose and use (Yates 517).
The Significance of Hospitality

In today’s world we have not reached the point where we fully understand hospitality and the benefits it brings to communication if embraced correctly. We hear the term and believe it would be a good thing to do...that is if we had the time. Therefore hospitality exists on a superficial level without anyone really using it to its full potential. In fact many don’t use hospitality at all on any level and seem to withdraw from human contact. “As a culture, we are frightened people living behind locked doors, fashioning our homes as reclusive retreats from what we believe is a hostile world that drains us of the energies we most cherish” (Homan and Pratt 5). There are untapped resources that can help us understand why we do not want to offer hospitality as willingly as we should. “Hospitality is a lively, courageous, and convivial way of living that challenges our compulsion either to turn away or to turn inward and disconnect ourselves from others” (Homan and Pratt 9). Once these reasons for self-isolation are explained then perhaps hospitality could be embraced and used more frequently within society today.

Hospitality has a variety of definitions, especially to those in the modern, western world. The Oxford Dictionary defines the word as “the friendly reception and entertaining of guests, visitors, or strangers” (Stevenson). Also, the word “hospitality” in its Latin forms can denote host, guest, or stranger, and can suggest stranger as friend or foe (Yates 516). “It is a word pregnant with the potential to signify passage and mercy, or exclusion and punishment...” (Yates 516). Richard Kearney and Kascha Semonovitch link hospitality to the understanding of the “Stranger” in their edited book, Phenomenologies of the Stranger: Between Hostility and Hospitality. They see hospitality emerge at the threshold, the place
where we first encounter the Stranger (4). They explain how the door can be open or shut and can elicit a welcome kiss or a violent struggle (4). The location of hospitality and the Stranger doesn’t have to be located only in the home either, according to Kearney and Semonovitch. “Sometimes we meet strangers when we are not at home: when we are in a foreign land or a foreign part of our own land. Other times we encounter strangers who arrive at our house,” states Kearney and Semonovitch (4). They also point to Martin Heidegger who calls this crossing of the familiar with the unfamiliar the “uncanny” (4). There is also a Christian understanding of hospitality that is found in several examples throughout the Bible where it teaches to welcome the stranger as if he or she was Christ (Matthew 25:35). In addition, many see hospitality as a service industry that welcomes customers. Well-known Hotelier Jonathan Tisch explains in his book, Chocolates on the Pillow Aren’t Enough, that welcoming guests is a “paradoxical challenge – to combine the friendliness of home with the freshness, excitement and stimulation of travel” (77). Tisch explains that there is an art of welcoming and in his industry it is a requirement if one wants returning customers.

However, hospitality is not exclusively a western phenomenon nor is it limited to just one culture or nationality. It is across all and begins at the beginning of time. Desert hospitality was a necessity for survival, and the guest was often considered sacred according to James Comiskey in his ministry series titled, The Ministry of Hospitality (1). From there we find endless examples of hospitality in the Bible. Abraham entertained angels in Genesis 18:1-5, Job describes caring for the wanderer in Job 31:32, and in the second book of Kings Elisha finds hospitality in the form of meals from a friendly couple (Kings 4:8) to name just a few. Many recall the lack of hospitality when the inn keeper in
Bethlehem had no room for Mary and Joseph the night that Jesus was born. These revelations begin to explain how every person regardless of background needs human contact and support. Father Daniel Homan and Lonni Collins Pratt add to that in their book, *Radical Hospitality* by stating, “Hospitality is not optional to a well-balanced life. It meets the most basic need of the human being to be known and to know others” (Homan and Pratt 10). Hospitality addresses our own vulnerabilities and our needs for each other that fill loneliness and fear.

The *Bible* also shows the relationship hospitality has to Christianity in that it engages morals and virtues. Especially in early Christianity, people viewed hospitality as a participation in the life of God according to Amy Oden in her book, *And You Welcomed Me*. She continues to explain that with hospitality comes a readiness to enter another’s world and to cross into the unfamiliar. She states that there is a shift in the frame of reference from the self to the other to relationship, which ultimately leads to repentance (15). Both old and new testaments from the Bible identify hospitality as a duty, in particular to guests who are vulnerable or marginal in society.

Oden advances the description of the host and guest by describing the concepts of having, giving, and receiving. The host has resources and is required to “recognize both the need and full humanity of the stranger and there is a respectful balance” (26). Oden continues to fully explain the spiritual dynamics of hospitality by seeing Christ in the other and to be able to recognize when this happens. Unfortunately in today’s Western society, this concept has now been reduced to refreshments and all but faded into the background of moral obligations.
Brian Treanor also discusses the host and guest in his essay, “Putting Hospitality in Its Place” that is part of Kearney and Semonovitch’s book, *Phenomenologies of the Stranger: Between Hostility and Hospitality*. Treanor states that the host is the person who “receives people into a given space or place as guests” and the hospitality exists in the relationship between the host and guest (50). Treanor continues to explain that hospitality happens in a place and that only an implaced person can offer hospitality because he or she has to have a place in order to give place to another. Also, when we are focused on ourselves and are filled with prejudice, suspicion, anxiety, or jealousy, we have no capabilities for welcoming, listening, or receiving (Homan and Pratt11). One of the reasons many people struggle with offering hospitality is that they are not fulfilled and settled in their own lives, especially with the fast-paced technological world we live in now, yet ironically, communicating with people through hospitality can fulfill basic needs that result in overall happiness.

These sentiments are equally felt by Christine Pohl who writes about hospitality in her book, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*. Pohl begins her book with a quote from Henri Nouwen, “If there is any concept worth restoring to its original depth and evocative potential, it is the concept of hospitality” (3). Pohl writes to uncover how the tradition of hospitality has been lost in the last 300 years. She feels that the tradition of hospitality is “amazingly rich and complex” (3) but in recent times has lost its moral dimension. It is true that when we think of hospitality today we think of the industry of hotels and restaurants, hospitality committees that greet and coordinate a coffee hour, or simply having friends over for a meal. Pohl recognizes that all of these examples are acceptable, but do not fulfill the real objective of hospitality as it is meant to be interpreted – a spiritual obligation to Christianity (4).
Because of the lack of significance our society and culture has given to hospitality, Pohl finds that many people do not fully understand hospitality and only use it in its simplest forms with people they are already familiar with and to establish bonds and relationships that already exist. “Yet even this most basic form of hospitality is threatened by contemporary values, life-styles, and institutional arrangements, which have helped to foster the sense that we are all strangers, even to those to whom we are related” (13). If we can offer hospitality and welcome the stranger into a safe and comfortable place then the stranger feels included.

Pohl also recognizes that understanding strangers is a delicate situation. She describes that the most vulnerable strangers are detached from family, community, work, and church and are most common among the homeless and refugees. These detached people are those who are excluded from society and can benefit greatly from hospitality. Pohl refers to these people as marginal while Homan and Pratt use the labels ‘included and excluded.’ “When we speak of hospitality we are always addressing issues of inclusion and exclusion” (2). It’s not really clear how we determine who we include and who we exclude. However, there does seem to be a moral dimension tied to this aspect of hospitality according to Homan and Pratt. They quote a 1982 report that said, “The opposite of cruelty is not simply freedom from the cruel relationship, it is hospitality” (5). They go on to explain that hospitality is not just a moral issue, but simply a way of becoming more human because one is reaching out to another who wants to feel included and safe. Therefore, Homan and Pratt state that it’s not so much about opening one’s doors, but more about opening one’s heart (21). This idea ties hospitality to our moral obligation as a human
being and the principle of ethics as described by Levinas. In order to understand hospitality, the history of hospitality will be presented.

**History of Hospitality**

Hospitality can be seen in every era throughout time, mainly in households and churches according to Richard and Janis Haswell in their book, *Hospitality and Authoring*. This book is a sequel to a 2010 book, *Authoring*, that both also co-wrote. Richard Haswell is a retired Haas Professor of English from Texas A&M – Corpus Christi. Janis is a professor emerita of English also at Texas A&M – Corpus Christi. Their interest in hospitality grew from the correlation they made from host and guest to writer/student to teacher. The first chapter describes the modes of hospitality in history. The antiquity period begins the first look at hospitality. During this era, hospitality is referenced in three main areas: Biblical, Homeric, and nomadic (16).

**Biblical:** For people of ancient times, understanding themselves as strangers who are also responsible to care for strangers in their midst was part of what it meant to be the people of God. This is the first point in which we see hospitality connecting to faith as a Christian and as it connects to the Bible. Haswell explains that the guest (the stranger or even the enemy) is now treated with the utmost respect and welcomes him/her as “neighbor” to express the soul of Christianity (19). “Thus believers are charged not with simply welcoming the arrivant, but with loving him or her as ‘neighbor’ as the parable of the Good Samaritan makes clear” (18).

**Homeric:** In the Antiquity era, the long value of the Greeks defined hospitality as a kind treatment to strangers and travelers according to Haswell (17). People would
voluntarily extend themselves to guests for purposes other than political reasons or for commercial exchanges. There was a particular custom for Greeks that is expressed in reading of Homer’s Iliad (17). This process revolved around feasting and involved a series of actions that began with taking the hand of the guest. A traveler or guest would arrive seeking hospitality. The homeowner would take him by the hand, welcome him, and then lead him into the house. Anyone marginal to the warrior class such as women, the poor, or the non-military would not be welcomed at the feast according to Haswell (18). Seating would be arranged and then a feast would follow. During the feast, there would be questioning to learn more about the stranger or “the Other” and also possibly entertainment (18). The person then would be offered a bed, a bath, and gifts to meet other physical needs beyond food such as foot washing, baths, medical treatment, care for animals, supplies for a journey, and clothing (14). The next morning they would then be escorted to their next destinations. This format generally followed longer stays.

Ladislaus J. Bolchazy also writes about early hospitality in his book, Hospitality in Early Rome: Livy’s Concept of its Humanizing Force. This book suggests that the law of hospitality played an important role in ancient Roman culture because it was a barometer of civilization in modern and ancient primitive societies (1). Livy appreciated hospitality because it found it to be a contributing factor to world peace.

Bolchazy notes the role of hospitality in contexts where strangers have historically prompted fear. “The law of hospitality regulates the relationships between strangers. The comparative study reveals that the characteristic of many primitive peoples is xenophobia. One reason for the xenophobia of a primitive man is his belief that strangers possess
potentially harmful magico-religious powers. A primitive man coming into face-to-face contact with a stranger can be harmful as a result of his alleged magical powers, curses, spells, and the evil eye” (1). The Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert, the Kreen-Akore tribe of Brazil’s Amazon, and the Tasadays of Mindanao in the Philippines have many contacts with strangers (2). Because they have had many contact with strangers they lost the sense of xenophobia, but they still fear the strangers, in particular the white man because he has guns and germs. This research helps us to see the differences between cultures that use hospitality and those that don’t. Those who mistreated or avoided strangers learned eventually that hospitality was necessary for its own good (4). Otherwise, these cultures could not trade, have messengers or ambassadors, or speak with others. It was the key to peaceful relations.

Nomadic: Also in ancient times, strangers who traveled regularly who were nomadic depended on someone else’s hospitality according to Haswell. Nomadic hospitality functioned outside of the West and took place in Africa, Central Asia, and eastern Europe (19). A nomadic host offered a tent and food to anyone wandering who needed it. The guest was treated with respect and “traditionally it is forbidden for the host to ask any questions about the guest” (19). There was typically an exchange of gifts and the host explained useful information about the region. The difference between nomadic hospitality and biblical and Homeric hospitality is that both the host and the guest are traveling in nomadic cultures, so in future encounters the roles could be reversed for the traveler and the host (19).
During the fourth century, monasticism took root as an essential expression of Christian life (Pohl 46). Monasteries, hospitals, and hostiles were closely linked together. Monks within the monasteries were responsible to provide food, shelter, and welcome. This is the moment where St. Benedict of Nursia (480-550) appeared. He is considered to be the father of western monasteries and developed what is known as *The Rule of St. Benedict* that thoroughly discusses all the tasks of the monks in the monastery, in particular how to offer hospitality to travelers and strangers passing through (46).

The fourth century was in fact the first time in which Christian hospitality was used in larger society. The relationship of the church and individual Christians to sociopolitical institutions was changing, and with it was significance to hospitality (47). This was one of the first times that the church and government were working together. The moral culture of caring for the Other was a concern for everyone at that time.

The Middle Ages (500-1500) was a different environment for hospitality. The practice of hospitality was found in monasteries, hospitals, and within households of lay people. Julie Kerr is an expert in researching monastic hospitality. In particular she found that the medieval years between 1066 and 1250 was a critical time for monasteries in regard to hospitality and has been a focal point for much of her work. She writes about this topic and time period in depth in her book, *Monastic Hospitality*. She said she selected this time period because of the rich and varied body of surviving evidence, in particular from England in the large houses of Abingdon, Bury St. Edmunds, Christ Church, Canterbury and St. Albans. She continues to write articles as well on the subject. One article titled, “Heavenly Hosts” continues the conversation about hospitality. It was during this time
period that hospitality played an integral role in monasteries based on the historical moment. More people were traveling and it was a time of “religious reform across Western Christendom” (Kerr 24).

Kerr continues to explain, “A medieval monastery would receive lay travelers and pilgrims as well as fellow monks who could be accommodated away from worldly temptations” (24). In exchange then the monks would be able to fulfill their monastic and spiritual obligations by offering hospitality and secure salvation. They were also fulfilling and adhering to the Rule of Saint Benedict. There were downsides for the monasteries, however, such as financial burdens and an overwhelming number of guests that were hard to accommodate at once (24). Some monasteries would even try to control the length of time a visitor could remain among them and even to hold visitors accountable for expenses, Kerr explains (24). While this practice went against what the Rule of Saint Benedict recommended, the monks just felt that it was impractical. After the 12th century, offering hospitality became increasingly complex. Outsiders not only brought temptation but also infringed upon silence and prayer time (24). It was a challenge to continue to offer endless hospitality within a changing world, according to Kerr.

Kerr continues to write more about hospitality in another article, “The Symbolic Significance of Hospitality” where she explains the risks that admitting guests brought to a monastery and who managed still to still honor Christ and to follow the Rule of Saint Benedict. “The fact that Christ identified Himself as the outsider made it imperative for monks to welcome visitors warmly if they were to secure their place at the heavenly table” (125). Despite the risk, monks were taught that they could not simply protect themselves
from strangers or evil spirits by shutting the doors to the monastery (125). She looks at the initial reception of guests and the significance of space and silence.

Next, during the sixteenth century the topic of hospitality took place during economic and political changes, according to Pohl. Many of the great households were “under siege, the feudal systems were crumbling, and vagabondage peaked” (50). “Mobility, plagues, wars, urbanization, and increased trade contributed to the breakdown of rural communities. Traditional practices of hospitality were ineffective because of vagabonds and the local poor” (51).

Pohl also describes how Martin Luther and John Calvin both called for hospitality. The difference was that instead of returning the hospitality to the church, Luther viewed that hospitality be within the home (53). There were long-term consequences to identifying hospitality as separate from the church. “The domestic sphere became more privatized; households became smaller, more intimate, and less able or willing to receive strangers. The understanding of Christian hospitality diminished and the practice nearly disappeared” (53).

For many, the 18th century is where the western church lost hospitality according to Pohl. It disappeared as a significant moral practice in the 1700s. People worried about equality and respect, but they did not discuss those concerns in the language of hospitality (54). Pohl then brings the history of hospitality into 19th century America by explaining that devout Christians developed programs to meet the needs of immigrants and migrants to cities. Furthermore, inner-city missions helped address problems of poverty, disease, and illiteracy (55). Now in modern times each of these areas have their own spheres and
institutions with its own culture, rules, and specialists. Professionals within each are paid to provide a service. When institutions are specialized and offer social networks, the act of hospitality is more difficult and limiting (57).

Now when we hear the word “hospitality” we think of overnight accommodations found in a commercial hotel, motel, or bed and breakfast. We do not label ourselves as a “stranger” but more as a visitor, traveler, or guest. There does not have to be any relationship between traveler and provider because money pays for the respect and kindness that we want. On a personal level, we entertain mainly for social and status purposes. We do not see through the eyes of Christian hospitality where we would try to offer help to those marginal in society.

According to Jacques Levy-Bonvin’s article on the brief history of hotels, he gives a summary of hotel accommodations beginning in the 1200s. He gives a chronological order of how, when, and where hotels were built in relationship to the historical moment. He also tracks the amenities that were introduced and how technology impacted the business. “Nowadays, architects, designers, developers, engineers, managers, more and more are conscious that taste of guests could be different, according to their wishes or needs” states Bonvin. As a result, Bonvin explains how hotel specialists permanently “analyze new trends, define better criteria, present modern standards in order to improve quality of life in hotels” (Levy-Bonvin). It might be because of this lavish offering of hospitality among public hotels that our culture has lost its use of it within the home. We are quicker to make reservations than to ask another to stay the night at his or her home. Work also has people traveling to places that are unfamiliar and for short periods of time. Scheduling at a hotel
becomes a habit. Then perhaps offering hospitality isn’t so much for the traveler but for the strangers in our own circles.

We return to the idea that the home would be the best place for offering hospitality on an individual level because the home is a personal practice. This practice only reaffirms the significance of the understanding and use of hospitality within households emphasizes Pohl (58). However, problems within households exist today due to a variety of factors.

Robert Putnam has studied this matter extensively in his book, *Bowling Alone*. He states that in the first part of the century Americans were highly engaged with their community (27). However, a few decades ago there is a trend to pull away from one another (27). Homes are built farther away from one another and the distance allows people to seclude themselves. Isolation even within the home occurs with individual rooms. Furthermore, there is lack of porches and front yards and neighbor socialization decreases altogether, not to mention how much time is spent in driving in cars rather than in walking in the neighborhood (211).

The layout and use of rooms inside of homes is similar to a *cloister*. A *Cloister* is an enclosed place or state of seclusion, typically found in a monastery where goodness and beauty flourish according to David Robinson, author of *The Family Cloister* (20). Robinson encourages families to share in the common design of a Benedictine monastery because he understands the tensions between community and individuality as well as participation and separation (20). In our independent, self-centered/ culture it appears as though many of us have created our own cloister. Technology has enabled us to seclude ourselves from the world and only do what is good for us with minimal socialization. Even within families
living in the same house we can see mini cloisters forming that isolate each person in a room. Benedictine monasteries do not necessarily see a cloister as having a negative impact. Monks live in the cloister while at the same time understanding balance to include others into their world.

Gabriel Marcel understood this balance when he studied abstraction. Boyd Blundell writes about our human withdraw from society and our unavailability by referencing Marcel and Paul Ricoeur in his article, “Unavailability: When Neighbors Become Strangers.” Blundell explains that temporarily we need to distance ourselves from the world in order to reflect upon it (562). This idea aligns with the same ideas that Benedictine monasteries follow. While monasteries aren’t advertised as being hospitable in today’s world, history tells us otherwise.

If our homes are designed similarly to the monastery then there might be a connection with how the monks managed human communication and most importantly——hospitality. Are we able to revive elements of how the monastery used hospitality into our homes today? Let us take a closer look by learning more about how monasteries were managed. This can be done by examining the Rule of St. Benedict and the creator of it, Saint Benedict of Nursia.

*The Times of Saint Benedict*

Reviewing the historical perspective of hospitality provides another time period that shared similar difficulties that we face today. The moment was in 400 BC when life was in chaos after the fall of Rome. St. Benedict of Nursia (480-547) had given up on people in society and decided to live as a hermit. During this time he realized the errors of
his ways and decided to go back among people. He started a monastery and developed a style and code for the men to work together. This became known as *The Rule of Saint Benedict*. This book is so simply written yet filled with wisdom from scriptures that it is still being used today. The main correlation from Saint Benedict and the *Rule of Saint Benedict* is that he understood the importance of hospitality and showcases it as one of the pillars to keep a balanced and happy life.

To get a better understanding of Saint Benedict and his historical moment it is important to reference Volume 2 of the *Dialogues* of Pope Gregory. This volume doesn’t give a biographical account but a spiritual account of how Benedict lived his life. Gregory did base the content of the book on direct testimony. The *Dialogues* of St. Gregory the Great were divided into four books and discussed the lives and miracles of the Saints of Italy. The second book was devoted entirely to St. Benedict. This text showed how highly St. Gregory thought of St. Benedict and his standard of doing things in his life. The second book reads much like a conversation between Peter and Gregory about moral contemplations and miracles that happened from Benedict’s work.

Even though this is the only real record of Saint Benedict, there are other secondary accounts such as *Saint Benedict and His Times* written by Cardinal Schuster, O.S.B. Schuster explains the historical setting, St. Benedict’s family and studies, stories of miracles, the monastery program, and St. Benedict’s social contribution as well as those who continue the same beliefs today.
Further still, most editions of the *Rule of Saint Benedict* give background on the Saint as well as numerous encyclopedias and Catholic reference materials, specifically the *Modern Catholic Encyclopedia*.

*The Rule of St. Benedict*

The *Rule of St. Benedict* is the foundation of the Benedictine monastery and is a mixture of spiritual and practical knowledge. It is not only the source for the Benedictine Communities within the Catholic faith, but it also inspired the Cistercians who follow the *Rule of St. Benedict* from its original use in St. Benedict’s time before any developments. Its effectiveness, however, is not just for Christians or Catholics; it is for all people in any religion. In fact it is used by groups in other churches such as Anglican, Episcopalian, Protestants, and Buddhists. Lay people especially use it and have found its wisdom unsurmountable. *The Rule* can span so many centuries because it is written with simplicity, directness, and without pretension. The handbook searches for self-understanding, community, harmony, and ultimately the meaning of life. St. Benedict has insight into the hearts of human beings and an ear for the music of words. He also discusses harmony and combines it with the wisdom found from scriptures. He never speaks on his own authority but uses scripture.

There are many copies and versions of the book that appear in libraries, bookstores, convents, monasteries, colleges and universities as well as homes. The version selected for this project is one that the Saint Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, PA uses and teaches from as of 2017. This book is edited by Terrence G. Kardong who gives a translation and commentary of each of the 73 chapters. He begins the introduction with, "Let us open our
eyes to the light that comes from God and our ears to the voice that everyday call outs” (Kardong i.x.). This passage is an indication of the inspiration and goal that St. Benedict had for those who are reading and applying the Rule to their lives.

There are many interpretations and books written about the Rule of St. Benedict. For instance, Thomas Merton wrote The Rule of Saint Benedict: Initiation into the Monastic Tradition where he analyzes the text from his standpoint as a Cistercian. Joan Chittister wrote, The Rule of Benedict: Insights for the Ages as part of the Spiritual Literacy series. She offers commentary on each chapter to guide readers through issues that face people in the 21st century such as relationships, community, balance, work, prayer, stewardships, etc. She has also written, Wisdom Distilled from the Daily, which recounts the Rule of St. Benedict as a book of wisdom. She explains all aspects of the book so that one can understand how to gain true wisdom from the ancient text. Topics she writes about include listening, prayer, community, humility, hospitality, and obedience.

A useful text that helps guide one into the Rule of St. Benedict and into an understanding of a Benedictine community is The Benedictine Handbook. This text highlights the Rule of St. Benedict, tools for Benedictine spirituality, the Benedictine experience of God, how Benedictines live the Rule, and the Benedictine family throughout the world (both past and present). The 73 chapters that make up the Rule of St. Benedict focus on prayer, solitude, in community (family), and in the world. A contributing writer to the Benedictine Handbook, Columba Stewart, O.S.B, states that on the dynamics or tensions within monastic life is the interplay between individual and community (279). He says that
the *Rule* "speaks to both the spiritual development of the individual and the workings of a community" (279).

Stewart continues to explain that much of the first part of the *Rule* focuses on the individual with chapters on Obedience, Silence, and Humility (279). However, the *Rule* quickly transitions into community because to St. Benedict the community wasn’t something that was just functional. He felt it to be part of the texture of growth into Christ (279). Benedict saw that a healthy community required accountability. Stewart explains that Benedict writes more about obedience than any other virtue because he encourages the surrender of self-will. He explains that unless we are in honest relationships with God and other human beings we will continue to prefer our own desires and believe in self-sufficiency. According to Stewart, St. Benedict does note that a viable community has limits on what it can tolerate (282). He encourages keeping communication open and honest, noting inappropriate behavior and identifying needed help (282). Furthermore, he contributes that human growth requires challenge from relationships with other people (282).

Stewart also explains how Benedict also focused on service. He recognized Christ through the one who serves and through the one who is served. This happens by serving food, serving the sick, and reading in the church (285). Benedict wanted monks to develop an altruistic reflex that naturally places the needs of others ahead of their own (258). That is why the topic of hospitality is so great within the life of a Benedictine or to anyone reading *the Rule of St. Benedict*. 
Chapter 53 of the *Rule of St. Benedict* discusses the reception of guests and would be the chapter that applies directly to hospitality. It states, “Any guest should be received as Christ himself.” When we receive a guest we receive mercy from God. Hospitality keeps us focused on the divine presence everywhere else and not on ourselves. For those only truly at home in themselves can offer genuine hospitality, which is not controlling or manipulative, but welcomes as we are. Monastic hospitality is refreshing because it does not seek to convert, but guides you in honoring your own vows. It is always surprising and liberating to discern your own true needs.

Another contributing writer within the *Benedictine Handbook* is Kathleen Norris, who also wrote the *Cloister Walk*. She discusses her encounter with Benedictine hospitality. “Unlike commercial hospitality, which provides a comforting sameness, monastic hospitality is always surprising, as it liberates guests to discern their true needs” (126). She adds that the refreshing thing about monastic hospitality is that they are not seeking to convert anyone but guides each person in honoring his or her own vows (126). In addition, along with this need for hospitality, Norris explains that Benedict was wise enough to know that time alone for the host is needed as well. “People who give so much of themselves that they lose their own identity are not truly hospitable and no one is well served” (127).

This is a key point in not only understanding the *Rule of St. Benedict* and how it encourages hospitality but also in understanding how to offer hospitality effectively. We think that an easy solution to failing to socialize or involve oneself with the community is to just “do more.” However, it is not just the act of hospitality that creates a good community.
The hospitality has to come at a time when the host is at a good mental state. Benedict realizes that solitude is what gives a person that healthy mental state. Norris writes, “This is not fussiness or exclusivity, but a wise acknowledgement of a deep psychological truth” (126). Therefore, Benedict sees the need for solitude AND time for community. As stated previously, The Rule of St. Benedict speaks to the individual and to the community, both of which are needed for a healthy balance in society.

Benedictine Way of Life

There are several ways to interpret the pillars of the Benedictine community and the Rule of St. Benedict. One interpretation can be seen through Meg Funk in her article, “Four Concepts of a Benedictine Community in the Twenty-first Century: Listening, Community, Humility, and Hospitality.” Her intention in this essay is to “articulate the elemental of what it is we do when we do monastic community” (156). She notes that Benedictines are cenobitic, meaning that they stress community life. Therefore she explains that there are “two shafts that keep the community balanced: one is interiority represented by listening and silence; and the other is hospitality, the outward orientation” (156). This essay helps to reinforce the necessity of not just implementing hospitality but also the interiority that includes listening and silence to help form a balanced life. St. Benedict’s approach to life through solitude and hospitality may also increase our communication with one another.

How the Rule of Saint Benedict has Influenced Many Today

The impact of the Rule of St. Benedict is far reaching. Many realize the importance of the words and wisdom that St. Benedict writes about and feel as though their lives have
been transformed. Two writers stand out that discuss the importance of the Rule on the individual. Esther de Waal, a lay person, wrote a book titled, *A Life-giving Way*. In this book, de Waal discusses what Benedict tells us about the interior and exterior life, in particular how prayerful reflections can answer personal questions of whether or not one is seeking God. Another writer that was previously mentioned, Kathleen Norris also reflects on the impact of *The Rule of St. Benedict* in her book, *The Cloister Walk*. This book explains how a busy life can benefit from understanding all the precepts the *Rule of St. Benedict* offers, in particular the pillars of silence, community, and hospitality.

As previously mentioned, other writers like David Robinson discuss the importance of the Rule on the family in his book, *The Family Cloister*. He suggests that we use the structure of the monastery and the community within the monastery as a guide to family life. The father can be the acting Abbott and the family members would take on roles of the monks. He discusses family spirituality, discipline, life together, and hospitality. This book is the connection of how we can simulate the uses of the *Rule of St. Benedict* into our homes and the value it can bring with internal and external communication within society.

Furthermore, Colleen Maura McGrane writes about how the Rule can help individuals find balance with technology and the family in her article “Practicing Presence: Wisdom from the Rule on Finding Balance in a Digital Age.” She looks in particular at how technology has influenced three areas that are central to Benedictines such as mindfulness of the presence of God (silence), encountering Christ in others (hospitality), and community. She discusses the same three main pillars that others have addressed and what is needed from the *Rule* to implement a balanced and happier life.
Perhaps one of the most essential books in understanding how to apply the *Rule of St. Benedict* in regards to communication and hospitality is *Radical Hospitality: Benedict’s Way of Love* written by Father Daniel Homan, O.S.B. and Lonni Collins Pratt. This book also makes the connection between hospitality, community, and the cloister (solitude and silence). “Hospitality starts at home, after all. And you do not become good at loving the strain of being together in a family or a community if you have not yet learned to be alone” (87). Homan and Pratt explain how the monastery manages to keep all facets of life in balance, especially solitude and community, despite how opposite the two are. There is a time for work, prayer, friends, solitude, and a time to gather as a community. “The triad cloister, community, and hospitality represent this balance. These three threads of monastic life weave together to make a strong whole: a whole life and a whole person” (88). This book encourages one of the main desires of Benedict: to focus not on ourselves, but on others. This is what we need to engage with our neighbors, with our family members, and with our community so that we are no longer “unavailable” to them. Not only will balance be attained but an overall increase in communication will be attained. The result will be a happy and fulfilled life by those who participate.

If one can use the impact of the *Rule of St. Benedict* and thereby channel it to help increase hospitality, one can increase communication with all human beings in society. While it may be difficult to offer a complete resurgence of a practice that lost its practicality, studying St. Benedict and his use of hospitality in *The Rule of St. Benedict* can help one with offering hospitality within his or her home to further one’s call to the “Other” and communicate in society. How one sees the Other is how the topic of hospitality relates directly to the field of communication. It is not only a moral obligation out of the principles
of ethics, but it is a reason for one to communicate with others. This communication feeds the human soul and gives overall fulfillment and happiness.

*How do Communication Scholars Understand Hospitality?*

Hospitality can be seen throughout communication literature, not necessarily in the specific language of hospitality, but in related ways such as welcoming, loneliness, displacement, belonging, identity, public and private place, the uncanny, and the familiar and the unfamiliar. Well-established scholars relevant to the philosophy of communication, including Hannah Arendt, Jacques Derrida, and Emmanuel Levinas, in particular all have contributed to the conversation of hospitality.

Hannah Arendt begins the conversation of hospitality by introducing it through the entry of what it means to be human. She begins first by explaining the importance of the home and family. In her book, *The Human Condition* she describes how the human family is the beginning and from there a collective of families are organized into a super family, which is what we call society (29). The household was freedom from the polis or as defined as “eudaimonia.” One can have the “good life” if he or she is able to master the necessities of life in the household (Arendt 37).

One of the necessities of life is also to welcome others into one’s household. Arendt indicates the coincidence of the rise of society with the decline of the family to show how the family unit is absorbed into corresponding social groups (40). However, with technology this absorption hasn’t made a positive impact. The absorption has just led to privatization that has neither a strong family unit nor a strong social society. She calls this “modern loneliness” (58). She continues to point out that the private life means being
deprived of things essential for human life – deprived from the reality that comes from being seen and heard by others and to have relationships (58). Mass society has destroyed man, their place in the world, and in their home (59).

With Christians, one can have the good life by doing good works according to Arendt. She goes on to say that Christians do good work privately, and good works can never become a part of the world because the works should not be perceived. If the work does become perceived then it is no longer good. (76). Using what Arendt has established one might believe that a way to incorporate the good of a Christian life and still to have what is essential to human life through socialization is through hospitality.

Another scholar, Jacques Derrida, discusses hospitality at length in his work Of Hospitality. In this book, Derrida explains hospitality in terms of the foreigner and the initial contact with a stranger, foreigner or Other. On one hand there is a tension that must exist where one is welcoming and allowing another into his or her home, but at the same time staying in control. Hospitality also includes limits or borders that the guest cannot pass. Derrida says it’s nearly impossible for complete hospitality to take place. He describes it as a puzzle or paradox (aporia) because one would essentially have to abandon all claims to the property leaving the host unable to be hospitable since one needs ownership to offer hospitality (Derrida 65).

Emmanuel Levinas is another scholar who addresses hospitality in his book, Totality and Infinity. Levinas interprets hospitality as a form of welcoming in our homes or dwellings. The Other/stranger disturbs the being at home with oneself and then has to unveil the face (Levinas 174). “To see the face is to speak to the world. Transcendence is
not an optic, but the first ethical gesture” (174). Levinas goes on to explain interiority and how the home is necessary for the life of man. This interpretation combined with what Arendt and Derrida explain makes hospitality an important part of communication.

Furthermore, there are many current scholars relevant to communication that are working with content that deals with hospitality. These scholars include Richard Kearney, Brian Treanor, Boyd Blundell, Thomas Ogletree, and Edward Casey. These writers discuss various viewpoints of hospitality, whether it is through how we see strangers, our social responsibilities, or where we need to be as individuals in order to offer hospitality.

Richard Kearney is identified as one of the leading researchers and scholars studying the impact and use of hospitality within communication. He has worked on several projects that have suggested the overall importance and impact hospitality has on communication, in particular how we view the Stranger. These projects include two books, *Phenomenologies of the Stranger: Between Hostility and Hospitality*, and *Anatheism*, as well as the *Guestbook Project*, an international project that “transforms hostility into hospitality, enmity into empathy, conflict into conversation. Peace through storytelling” (Guestbook Project.org).

From his books we gain an understanding of looking at hospitality not just through the lens of inviting a guest into our home, but as an overarching theme of having the social responsibility to welcome strangers and what it means to the world around us phenomenologically. Kearney explains in *Anatheism* that we have become vacant and “unavailable” to our neighbors, family and to anyone. He makes a call for us to reignite the
hospitable nature of our being so that we can fulfill our duty as humans to one another (Kearney 29).

One of the main themes that are seen within scholarly work in communication is the connection between the stranger and hospitality. Boyd Blundell traces this theme and its roots as he writes about Kearney’s work as well as Kearney’s mentor, Paul Ricoeur, and Ricoeur’s mentor Gabriel Marcel in his article “Unavailability: When Neighbors Become Strangers.” It is in this article that one can learn about Marcel’s philosophical reflection that leads him to propose a second reflection as a way of avoiding the “spirit of abstraction” (562). The second reflection cultivates “availability” according to Marcel, which he sees as a virtue (562). The article then goes on to explain our unwillingness to be available or even our lack of availability to be a strain in being able to offer hospitality, especially when it concerns the neighbor (569).

Brian Treanor also uses Kearney’s work to discuss more about hospitality in his article, “The Anatheistic Wager: Faith after Faith.” He refers hospitality back to Kearney who states that the love of the stranger is a form of “faith seeking knowledge” and that we begin with the “presumption of love rather than fear, and welcome rather than refusal” (558). He goes on to quote Kearney from his book Anatheism: Returning to God After God by writing, “We might open our arms, our homes, or our communities to someone we should have avoided. “But such risk is not groundless. Love – as compassion and justice – is the watermark. There is a discernible difference between one who gives water to the thirsty and one who does not, between one who heals and one who maims, between one who hosts and one who shuts the door” (47).
From another perspective, communication scholars have recognized that the only way to be able to offer hospitality truly is to be implaced, or not displaced. Treanor discusses this concept at length in his article “Putting Hospitality in Its Place” that was a chapter within, *Phenomenologies of the Stranger* edited by Kearney and Kascha Semonovitch. He states: “Hospitality is a virtue of place, perhaps the preeminent virtue of place. Indeed, hospitality is so deeply connected to place that it is defined by the association” (Treanor 50). Therefore, when we think about a person who is familiar with a place, he or she is considered to be *implaced*. The person who is unfamiliar with the place is the *displaced* person. Often times we can call the implaced person the host, the displaced person the guest, and the place the home. Treanor clearly discusses how if one does not feel settled in his or her own space then he or she cannot offer the warmth and hospitality to another.

Ed Casey also discusses the issue of hospitality in his book *Getting Back into Place*. He describes place as a space in which one lives and which ultimately becomes a part of his identity – the home (22).

Casey continues on to explain how our personality and traits may dictate where we choose to live just as the place in which we live shapes who we are. Casey goes on to describe that places are experienced space of a certain sort and have a cultural dimension (25). We as people are within a landscape on Earth. We strive to achieve an orientation that allows us to settle and feel situated (25). We look to things within nature and also within things that we create, such as our house. Many homes are created based on the movement of the body or the person who inhabits them. If a home is extremely
unorganized and designed poorly for the individual inside of it that person may be caused discomfort and in some cases feel displaced as if they do not belong.

Since hospitality cannot exist with displaced persons, then it is important to understand who is displaced and why (Treanor 54). Treanor identifies God with place and describes how all people were born to a specific place and have lived in different places throughout their lives. However, it is not just about the place; it is about our experiences at the place, which is how we can understand hospitality (55).

Why should we be concerned with displacement? Displacement can cause anxiety and unsettling. This can then turn into estrangement and distancing, even from ourselves and identifying who we are and what makes us happy. The thought of not having a home unhinges us, also known as unheimlichkeit (55). This anxiety can lead to depression and has been common in our postmodern world.

Thomas W. Ogletree takes a unique approach to hospitality in his book, *Hospitality to the Stranger – Dimensions of Moral Understanding*. Ogletree explains that there are different levels of authority between the host and the stranger (4). He states that it begins with an inequality of power in the relationship with the power initially with the host. He explains that the stranger is vulnerable and needs the service of the host (4). The host is in his/her own world and has access to support systems. The stranger does not know what to expect and is unfamiliar with the surroundings. However, then the stranger can begin to tell stories. The stranger can enjoy a level of authority because he is the expert.

Ogletree then goes on to explain the equality of the host and the stranger. One has to be ready to welcome another when one is ready to enter the Other’s world. This brings
about the question of how to make ourselves ready to welcome the stranger. It may be inconvenient, untimely, or a distraction from our own daily routine.

There are many obstacles to overcome when considering hospitality. These writers in communication have recognized that hospitality is part of our social responsibility. Whether one has a religious standpoint or a philosophical standpoint, helping the stranger brings goodness and happiness back to us. As an individual and as part of society one is reminded that hospitality is a call to care for our neighbors and for strangers. Turning away or making oneself unavailable is not the answer, and this is the current status of hospitality today.

**Focus of the Project**

In summary, hospitality is a tradition that has been immersed into all cultures for thousands of years. Philosophically and religiously, it has roots among ancient philosophers and in the Bible. Hospitality was a way that people communicated with each other, in particular the stranger. Before the modern technologies and development of the tourism industry, hospitality was found in churches. The traveler sought out churches for safety and rest. The roots of hospitality began especially within the Christian tradition, in particular monasteries. Monasteries offered the foreign traveler what was needed to them while at the same time viewed him or her as in the image of Christ. It was believed that how one communicated and welcomed the stranger was indicative of the moral character of the host. The reciprocal relationship between the host and the stranger gives metaphorical meanings to life in general because it is how we treat each other that forms the moral balance in society and gives the human person what is necessary for a healthy
and full life. St. Benedict was a man who experienced the benefits of hospitality and understood the needs of humankind. He himself lived in seclusion because he had given up on the goodness of mankind. However, through one act of hospitality shown to him, he understood that his view was wrong. He learned that he needed to be a part of society, not just to live a better life, but so that he could show others that they need each other too. Everyone needs love. While communication can be difficult at times and people can get frustrated with each other, it remains a vital part of human existence. St. Benedict writes about how to effectively get along with each other and offer hospitality in his book, *The Rule of St. Benedict*. This book was developed in 6th century and is still being used today not just with religious orders, but with lay people as well. The impact of this book shows the importance of hospitality today.

Hospitality is not just found in the church, but within households. There is a way to take the connections between hospitality and communication from the standpoint of St. Benedict and apply it to the home. Our homes are the cornerstone of where the private meets the public, just as the church was hundreds of years ago. The purpose of the home is not only to provide shelter and rest for the owner, but to also offer welcome to those visiting it. The world today drives people to live independently, which ultimately could lead to seclusion. If a person spends his or her life living independently from others then offering to spend time with others slowly becomes less important. In order to build stronger communities and personal relationships, communication has to happen. The home is the most natural and welcoming environment to do so. The home can offer insight into the host, but the home can help the displaced, the marginal, and the lonely people of society. Also, often times the individuals who fit into those categories could be friends and
family that we keep at a distance. Christian hospitality in particular asks us to give to people who can’t necessarily give back. It is to offer hospitality to someone who can’t necessarily return the invitation. Hospitality is not about bragging or showcasing one’s wealth and success. On the contrary, it is to be used for good to help people feel wanted, welcomed, and accepted. St. Benedict realized that and those who read his work realize it as well. Now it is time to use these revelations in conjunction with work in the field of communication to reintroduce hospitality in our world today.

Chapter 2 seeks to define the significance of hospitality. It discusses how hospitality includes the host and the guest and can be interchangeable, but most importantly, this chapter brings out the significance of why studying hospitality is important today in regards to communication.

Chapter 3 goes into more depth about where hospitality takes place by tracing its roots through time. Each era is discussed beginning with antiquity and ending with today. Examples are given of how hospitality was implemented with an emphasis on monasteries. Also, the downfall of hospitality is discussed and how it impacts how it is viewed today.

Chapter 4 explains Saint Benedict of Nursia including his life in his early years, the historical moment, his education and work, years of solitude in Enfide, Subiaco, Monte Cassino, his character, miracles, *The Rule of St. Benedict*, and his death and remembrances.

Chapter 5 describes the main ideas and history of the *Rule of Saint Benedict* in detail. In particular, the chapter devoted to hospitality is explained and how it fits into monastic hospitality. There is a common thread that the *Rule of Saint Benedict* implements that gives
balance and peace to one’s life. Hospitality is one of those threads that can help lead human beings to a fulfilled and happy life.

Chapter 6 draws together understanding the role of hospitality within the *Rule of Saint Benedict* as well as understanding Benedictine life and its emphasis on the balance of solitude, community, and prayer.

Chapter 7 discusses using the *Rule of St. Benedict* to offer hospitality in the home. Key references in this chapter include David Robinson, Colleen McGrane, Jane Tomaine, and Father Daniel Homan, O.S.B., and Lonni Collins Pratt. All of these writers have used and implemented the *Rule of St. Benedict* into their lives and into their homes.

Chapter 8 discusses communication research that involves content similar to that of hospitality. Terminology such as the Stranger, loneliness, and displacement are defined. Also, the impact of how hospitality can affect communication is explained.
In order to understand hospitality best within Communication, it is important to recognize the link it has to some problems human beings face in everyday living. Hannah Arendt states in her book, *The Human Condition*, that our current private life is being deprived of things essential for human life, which is to be seen and heard by others and to have relationships (Arendt 58). One way to interpret this is to draw a parallel between hospitality and life in general. Hospitality is essentially being seen and heard by others when one invites them into his or her home. It is also an interaction or *action* that could possibly lead to a relationship.

Arendt goes on further to define *action* and why it is important in human life. She presents the term *vita active* in which she designates three fundamental human activities: labor, work, and action (7). Arendt views *action* to be the most essential more so than work and labor because one could survive without those. However, with action comes human plurality the basic condition of both action and speech (175). “In acting and speaking, men show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities and this make their appearance in the human world” (179). She goes on to explain that the quality of speech and action comes when people are with others in human togetherness, but when human togetherness is lost, the action loses its specific character.
Therefore, Arendt also states, action is never possible in *isolation* (188). Again, to relate these ideas to hospitality, opening one’s door to another says that one is foregoing isolation and wants to welcome another at that time. The original, prephilosophic Greek remedy for this frailty in isolation was the foundation of the *polis*. The *polis* was intended to enable men to have multiple chances to meet others outside of the household and to make meeting an ordinary occurrence of everyday life (197). The *polis* has then become according to Arendt, “the space where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things, but make their appearance explicitly” (198). Aristotle states in *Nicomachean Ethics* that, “For what appears to all, this we call Being.” Arendt explains this quote as, “That to men the reality of the world is guaranteed by the presence of others” (199). One way in which we can be in the presence of others is when we invite them into our homes. Recognizing the importance of being around others for our own personal human condition gives a new perspective on hospitality. Rather than seeing it as an obligation or a form of entertainment, hospitality now seems to be a human necessity.

Arendt’s ideas of action and speech reinforce how important it is for us to communicate with one another. Humans need to be in the presence of others on a somewhat regular basis. She does recognize that one cannot be in the public all the time. “A life spent entirely in public is shallow” (71). However, as previously stated, Arendt believes that we need to develop relationships. In one’s life there are a variety of relationships. We have relationships with our siblings and parents when we are growing up. We continue to have those relationships but add to them if we get married and have our own children. Then we have extended family relationships with aunts, uncles, and
cousins. In addition, we have work relationships, church relationships, and community relationships. How could Arendt think that our private life is depriving us of these relationships? It may appear as though we may not deliberately be depriving ourselves of these relationships, but the way in which society is currently functioning does without us even knowing it.

For example, the ancient Greeks developed the polis so that every day people would come in contact with others. If we bring that mindset into today’s world, a similar situation would be civic engagement. Robert Putnam discusses formal and informal ways Americans connect with each other in his book, *Bowling Alone*. Formal ways of connecting would be through political parties, civic associations, churches, unions, etc. (93). Putnam says that we more frequently have less formal connections such as getting together after work, gossiping with the neighbor next door, having friends over, having a barbecue, or meeting a reading group in a bookstore (93).

Most importantly, Putnam states, the visiting with friends and acquaintances has long been one of the most important social practices in America (95). While this is not labeled or identified as *hospitality*, this *action* would fit that definition. Putnam lists several figures and charts that display social visiting, which is most commonly performed and *preferred* in the home. He says the bad news is that we are doing so less and less every year (Putnam 98).

According to Putnam, some of the decline may be attributed to two-career families or to dining out more than eating at home. However, on the contrary statistics prove that dining out has not increased, therefore, the practice of entertaining friends has not moved
outside of the home but seems to be vanishing entirely (100). In addition to the lack of hospitality, Putnam has noticed a dramatic change in family connectedness – the evening meal (100). He states, “Since the evening meal has been a communal experience in virtually all societies for a very long time, the fact that it has visibly diminished in the course of a single generation in our country is remarkable evidence of how rapidly our social connectedness has been changing” (101). It is a startling statistic that our social connectedness is diminishing and yet it is important to us as human beings, according to Arendt. Along the same lines, it makes sense that our ability to offer hospitality has also diminished.

Putnam links the shift to how we allocate our time. His data collected from the 1990s reported that the average American spends 15% more time on child and pet care and a 5-7% increase in personal grooming, entertainment, sleep, exercise, and transportation. Visiting with friends fell 20% along with time for worshipping (107).

Putnam continues to give explanations for the decrease in connectedness based on pressures of time, money, and mobility. Economic hard times have led to two-career families and the introduction of more women in the workplace. In fact, working women have deeply changed the inner workings of hospitality because hospitality was most commonly managed by the housewife or the affluent housewife specifically. If a woman is working then work decreases time spent on setting up arrangements for social gatherings. However, because of the family structure changing to single-parent households or divorced couples, single moms are often isolated except for the social interaction found at work (195). Putnam states, "Women who work full-time are least likely to visit with friends, to
entertain at home, or to volunteer” (201). However, despite all of these correlations, Putnam still presents information that claims that social connectedness has diminished equally with working and non-working, men and women, and financially stressed and comfortable (201). There still must be more reasons for our want for isolation.

Instead of spending time with friends and at church, Putnam found that more people are engaging in other leisure activities such as sports. Remarkably speaking, the number one sport that Putnam states is bowling. According to Putnam, bowling is the most competitive sport in America as of 2000 (111). While the sport has had an increase in participation, the actual bowling league participation has decreased (111). The league participation allows for more communication and social interaction, which is lacking when one bowls solo. All other sports are on a decline, despite soccer leagues and basketball games (109). Even with gyms, more people are likely to purchase equipment that can be used independently in their home such as treadmills and bicycles (109).

If it’s not doing sports, then what is taking over the leisure time that most Americans have? The answer Putnam finds is that Americans are spending more time watching sports and less time doing them (113). This lack of doing or action has an effect on our social connectedness. “We spend less time in conversation over meals, we exchange visits less often, we engage less often in leisure activities that encourage casual social interaction, we spend more time watching and less time doing. We know our neighbors less well, and we see old friends less often” (115). Putnam sums it up by stating that with the less we do translates into the more likely we withdraw from social consideration for others.
Furthermore, Putnam states that the increase in television viewing habits ultimately has impacted the way we spend our days and nights. More television viewing has impacted our civic participation and social involvement (228). Putnam further studied the impact of television on social interaction by holding several factors constant when collecting data such as education level, income, and age. Overall Americans spent more time in front of the television and favored staying home for heavy television viewing and used television as a major form of entertainment (230). In addition there are psychological effects from television viewing that cause people to limit social participation because it encourages lethargy and passivity, not to mention that there is a correlation with headaches, and other physical ailments such as insomnia and restlessness as well as financial anxiety, use of cigarettes, and lack of exercise (241). The worst part is that many feel dissatisfied after watching television (241).

On the contrary, social interactions and connectedness contribute to overall happiness and health. For example, Putnam describes a study that was performed on a small Italian community in Pennsylvania named Roseto (328). This community was studied for nearly 40 years beginning in 1950 because of its strange phenomenon of the particularly healthy lives of the residents. Not one resident had a heart attack under the age of 47 despite the increased likelihood according to statistics like diet, exercise, weight, and smoking (328). Researchers were determined to discover reasons why and found that the community was tight-knit. “By day they congregated on front porches to watch the comings and goings, and by night they gravitated to local social clubs” (329). Once the younger generation rejected this type of lifestyle, the heart attack rate increased (329).
This revelation proves how social interaction and the hospitality found simply on the front porches of nearby homes impacted overall happiness and health.

Television viewing is just the tip of the iceberg so to speak with our infatuation with technology. Putnam further emphasizes that we move at such a high pace that we often resist relationship maintenance such as get-togethers, parties, or visits (hospitality) because we do not want to be bothered. Each person wants his or her own time to downshift and reboot for another high impact day, especially within the home. However, the home is where Arendt says we can have the good life if we can master the necessities of life in the household (Arendt 37). So what we want and what is being suggested through society goes against the fundamental needs of what it means to be human according to Arendt. Why then, are we seeking contentment in these ways that cannot bring happiness?

First, it is important to analyze the ways in which society dictates how we live in our own homes in relationship to technology, home structure, and function. Sherry Turkle and Neil Postman see technology as an adversary to human development in many ways. Turkle, an Abby Rockefeller Mauze Professor of the Social Studies of Science and Technology at MIT, has written a series of three books focusing specifically on the computer. In this trilogy she discusses how computers have entered into everyday lives and the impact that we can see as a culture.

In her first book of the trilogy, *The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit*, Turkle interviews people who bought and built small computers in the late 1970s and brought them into their homes. According to Turkle, the machine has entered into our social life and psychological development and as a result affects the way we think (13).
Part of this effect also comes from the high impact PCs have on children. “Children in a computer culture are touched by technology in ways that set them apart from the generations that have come before” (165). Turkle interviewed 400 people, half children and half adults. She found that computers mean different things to different people.

Turkle states that some communicate with computers because computers offer companionship, allows them to have complete control, help with self-identity, or help to enhance personal growth. What does it say about our communication process if we turn to artificial intelligence found in a machine for companionship? Turkle says that the question is not, “What will the computer be like in the future?” but instead, “What will we be like? What kind of people are we becoming? Will we still communicate with each other?” (13). She continues to describe that computers illicit strong emotions, beginning with feelings of something new and exciting but mixing with fear because the machine is so powerful (13). Computers can cause addiction and leave spouses lonely while, on the other hand, provide children electronic playmates and hold their attention unlike any other toy ever seen, even the television (14).

While there no longer has to be a specific area for a fixed PC in the home due to so many mobile devices, people can be occupied in nearly every room of the house, alone. The problem shifts from determining where to place the PC to how to avoid letting the mobile device take over a room. Each room of the home with mobile devices that displace and distract attention away from the original purpose of the room is now invading the specific original purpose and use. The mobile device has even entered into the bedroom and bathroom because people are worried that they would miss something off of their mobile
People fall asleep holding their devices as well as using them to wake them up in the morning.

Margaret Morrison¹ and Dean M. Krugman² study the relationships between television and computers in the home in their article titled, “A look at Mass and Computer Mediated Technologies: Understanding the Roles of Television and Computers in the Home.” Morrison and Krugman discuss how television viewing has been transformed over the years. Beginning as a lead technology of entertainment in the home, television has competed with VCRs, movie rental systems, and interactive gaming systems.

However, Morrison and Krugman state that U.S. homes are adopting computer mediated media technology at a rapid pace, and it seems to be the leading force changing the way information and entertainment is consumed in homes across the country (135). “In many ways the only difference between the PC and the television is the rooms they are in and peripherals they are attached to” (136). Morrison and Krugman go on to explain that the majority of media consumption takes place in the home, and the family represents a primary consumption unit (136).

Furthermore, Morrison and Krugman explain how family interaction provides context at the entry of the PC into the home (136). “The computer has been conceptualized as decreasing social interaction” (137). They found through a study completed by Vitalari, Venkatesha and Gronhaug (1985) that persons spent significantly more time alone and less

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² Dean M. Krugman, PhD, is a Professor and Head of the Department of Advertising and Public Relations at the College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Georgia.
time with family and friends, especially activities that are day-to-day behaviors done in the home (137). This typically is because the use of technology is a “one person” effort demanding absolute and full attention (137).

Morrison and Krugman’s survey conducted in 2001 found similar results. This survey determined that clustering occurred with media technologies in the home. A television room would have a television, VCR/DVD players, and stereo. Usually this clustering is a product of necessity. However, if a computer was present then there were two clusters. “Television clusters were in gathering areas of the home, which allowed for multiple person viewing” (142). On the other hand, computer clusters were found in small, isolated spaces such as an office (142).

According to Morrison and Krugman, even the language used to describe the cluster areas was different. For example television clusters were identified as “cozy and warm” while PC clusters were characterized as “isolated” (142). Television generates a large degree of social interaction because most viewing is done with other family members, especially if it involved watching a movie (143). PCs typically are an isolated machine and the room and environment usually only allow for one person, explains Morrison and Krugman (143). It can go on further to impede social interaction when one person is a heavy user, especially when others want to use the PC. Household members can resent others who overuse the computer and spend time away from the family, especially when there was online usage (145). Also, Morrison and Krugman state that some comments made through the study described stories of “computer widows” (145).
In his book, *Technopoly*, Neil Postman says that technology "redefines “freedom,” “truth,” “intelligence,” “fact,” “wisdom,” “memory,” “history” – all the words we live by. And it does not pause to tell us. And we do not pause to ask" (Postman 9). He also states that the family’s purpose in the household is for emotional protection from a cold and competitive society (75). The family was also in charge of the socialization of children and the management of information and Postman feels very strongly about it as proven in the following quote. “A family that does not or cannot control the information environment of its children is barely a family at all, and may claim to the name only by virtue of the fact that its members share biological information through DNA” (76). Currently information seems to be taking over time and control without anyone’s consent.

Returning to Putnam’s findings on television viewing reminds us that it is not satisfying. This dissatisfaction can be found in not just the programming, but also in the advertising. Advertising doesn’t want the consumer or society in general ever to be content. That is not the goal. The goal is for people to be restless and dissatisfied to the point that they are always looking for something “new.” It wants the attitude to be negative of the old way of doing things and embrace the new possibilities...constantly. Western culture has adapted and accepted that “new” does mean better. Newer homes, newer cars, newer clothes and shoes, and newer electronics and machines are the way of the future.

Lewis Mumford addresses these ideas about the machines of technology in his book, *Technics and Civilization*. He states, “By supporting the machine, capitalism quickened its pace, and gave a special incentive to preoccupation with mechanical improvements: though it often failed to reward the inventor, it succeeded by blandishments and promises in
stimulating him to further effort” (27). Therefore, people constantly want to keep working forward at a fast pace regardless of the perceived benefits currently taking place.

Another media ecologist, Marshall McLuhan, explains that these temptations of wanting more contribute to unmoral ways of thinking when he talks about the gadget-lover in his book, *Understanding Media*. He points out that technology is an extension of man and because man is a narcissist, man embraces these technologies and even may begin to idolize them.

It is this continuous embrace of our own technology in daily use that puts us in the Narcissus role of subliminal awareness and numbness in relation to these images of ourselves. By continuously embracing technologies, we relate ourselves to them as servomechanisms. That is why we must, to use them at all, serve these objects, these extensions of ourselves, as gods or minor religions (McLuhan 68).

With wanting more and seeing technology as a means to satisfy that want and allowing for it to happen independently of other people, our idea of success and happiness shifts from finding it within people and relationships to individuality and machines, explains McLuhan. We have sought to seek happiness in other methods, especially through independent and egocentric ways rather than our human condition, as Arendt sees it.

Still the home is the cornerstone of happiness as Arendt suggests. The home acts as the sanctuary for the private life. The home not only symbolizes comfort, but also acts as a book telling the story of its inhabitants to those who visit. Everything from the exterior and style to the decorations on the wall, the home acts as the cornerstone of the private life and
makes a connection to the public life when one opens his or her home to the stranger through hospitality.

The home is also the place where life is managed. Food needs to be bought and stored, clothes need washed, and money needs managed. A great deal of work goes into the home for it to function properly, which is why it is a useful category in which to study the private life. Just as archeologists study the remains of previous lives, the home is a marking of what was considered important and how time was spent based on the objects found within it. The architecture of the home is not just an aesthetic view of a house. It has a much deeper meaning according to research performed by Bill Bryson for his book, *At Home*. How a house is constructed reveals a person’s daily life, chores, responsibilities, social gatherings, and overall family communication. One could understand the values and morals of a person based on how he or she used his or her home or place.

In order to understand hospitality, we must understand the implaced and displaced person and the relationship they have with the place or home. Displacement can happen in stages according to Ed Casey who explains the idea of implantation in his book, *Getting Back Into Place*. A person doesn’t have to be completely displaced from a home. There are varying degrees of being displaced. One person could be visiting a friend in the same neighborhood. The house is different than their own house, but since it is in the same neighborhood the surroundings are familiar therefore making the displacement level lower. The level of displacement can grow higher if one goes outside of the neighborhood to another city, onto another state, and even into another country. According to Casey, we can characterize the place and our comfort level based on how we see the world. Some
people see the world smaller if they are accustomed to traveling. However, if a person never leaves his or her own community then traveling even 100 miles away can give the feeling of complete displacement. Also, more people are accepting jobs outside of their hometown causing them to travel and reestablish a new home.

Casey explains more of these distinctions through the following examples. It may even be possible to feel displaced within your own dwelling, especially if you are sharing the home or if the home is temporary. College dormitories make a perfect example of in-house displacement. Dormitories and any other forms of public housing are not designed with the inhabitant in mind. Rather they are designed to accommodate as many people in a structure. Therefore, many students do not feel at ease or comfortable to call the dormitory their home. They often have to share a bathroom; do not have their own kitchen, and no personal space. Appliances are limited and the furniture is often immovable. With all of these problems, people feel constant discomfort. In addition, these college students are already displaced from their home and familiar surroundings as it is and it is not uncommon for anxiety and homesickness to take over and disrupt a student’s ability to perform well academically. This proves that despite being surrounded by individuals, one must still feel the comforts of place where they live to fully feel implaced.

Sharing one’s own designed space can also make one feel displaced adds Casey (52). For instance, in a family of six there can be conflict within bedroom design, bathroom availability, and opportunities for relaxation or entertainment. While the actual structure may appear to be pleasing, the occupants make the flow and experience different causing tension and feelings of displacement. Hospitality can be engaged by sharing space, offering compromises with room availability, and respecting others privacy and property. If
everyone within the household can cooperate and exchange hospitality with one another then the level of displacement within one’s home can decrease explains Casey (52).

Casey also explains how displacement could also occur by having the feeling of comfort removed and the home treated as if it were a museum (53). Memorabilia, artwork, expensive furniture, etc. are items that do not allow for real living. Not having space to relax is stressful. Realty television is one of the best examples that display how not having one’s own space can be detrimental to human living. With cameras running daily people do not feel at home in their everyday life (53).

The reality show Jon and Kate Plus 8 had cameras in their home recording the married couple and their eight children. The series began in 2007 and ended in 2009 after the couple got divorced. The show continued on, but without the husband for a few more years. The husband claims that the life lived on television contributed to the couple’s fallen relationship. Museum living is rare and left only to those who are wealthy and still uphold tradition. One house that is a museum of sorts and is on television is Highclere Castle. Unlike that of any other typical home, the castle can be filmed for the television series Downton Abby without greatly affecting its inhabitants because the house is so large. However, in order to make the castle feel more at home the owners, Duke and Countess of Carna, are essentially forced to carry on the tradition and maintenance of the property. This certainly is an exception to the rule. The late Princess Diana was often quoted discussing her depression from living inside of Buckingham Palace. She felt displaced and unattached to the world.

Along with varying degrees of displacement, there are also different types of displacement according to Casey. The previous examples fall into the category of the
displacement of the stranger, which is the intuitive category (38). However, a second
category exists that may be considered existential. In our modern world, Cisco Lassiter
claims that all places are essentially the same (38). He uses the example of a McDonald’s
restaurant. If a person visits a McDonald’s in New York and also visits one in Paris, France,
the taste and experience of the meal is not that much different.

Casey says this experience can be very unsettling and can cause feelings of
displacement. To look even further with this example we can study the design of the
suburbs. When they were originally designed, people felt that having an entire
neighborhood filled with homes built the exact same way would eliminate competition and
cause people to feel a part of a community. However, not having one’s own unique house
can cause one to feel displaced because he or she is not sure what is his or her own. The
home is to be a place that compliments and displays one’s identity. If one’s place of
implacement is left generic, then one’s level of happiness and satisfaction decreases. Rather
than feeling like one is living the American dream, one can reside in a housing development
excluded from the community, and displaced.

As Americans, we generally try to create and enforce what we think is the best way
of living. However, a popular method that the Chinese culture uses for home placement
and design is *Feng Shui*. According to Terah Collins who wrote, “*The Western Guide to Feng
Shui*” the Chinese culture relied on senses to assess the land for harmonious living for
thousands of years. *Feng Shui* practitioners felt the land’s Ch’i and made sure not to disturb
it in order to maintain harmony. Americanized versions simply begin with the structure
one is living in presently. “When our personal responses blend harmoniously with the
things around us, we feel a deep sense of harmony, comfort, and security” (Collins 7).
Understanding the role displacement and living in the home is vital to our understanding of hospitality. Now that the notion of displacement has been defined and explained we can look to the history, construction, and use of the home to further understand our use of hospitality and communication within society.

Author Lisa C. Nevett, who wrote *Domestic Space in Classical Antiquity*, takes a deeper look at how cultures functioned during the antiquity time period. She begins with the statement, “Focus on the fine-grained relationship between people and the material culture of the home... leads to powerful insights into the societies in question” (3). According to Nevett, there is very little evidence that there was any single-person domestic unit in this time period. Instead, there were much more diverse groupings than what one would imagine. A “houseful” included unrelated individuals such as friends, lodgers, servants or slaves. A single person could also have lived in a cluster of separate buildings that were within a perimeter wall or an entire village could live together in one long house (17).

Domestic space can be further researched through a five-volume series *A History of Private Life* edited by Georges Duby, Phillipe Aries, and Arthur Goldhammer. Each volume addresses different time periods. Volume II discusses the Medieval time frame and Volume III discusses the Renaissance time period. The next shift in architecture and family lifestyle came in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth centuries according to Duby, Aries, and Goldhammer. The “household” was more commonly known as the “hearth.” Many are not sure where this term originated from but knew that it was used to determine population. “Throughout much of France a hearth could be associated with an extended family or
patriarchal type, with two brothers-in-law, or with two married brothers who pulled all their resources – labor, wealth, and reserves – and loved from one stew in a single “hotel” (Aries and Duby Vol. III 429). Therefore, according to Aries and Duby, enlarging the family helped in many ways. In particular larger families added security and allowed for increase in labor which helped to produce more agriculture (Vol. III 429).

Duby, Aries, and Goldhammer continue to describe the one condition that was common during the Renaissance, the concept of a two-family system. This type of arrangements occurred when a married son lived with his parents. Having two different families in one house affected the apportionment and use of the living space. The son and daughter-in-law had to be subordinate to the father, which complicated the husband and wife relationship (430). Also, Duby, Aries, and Goldhammer add that in some regions, houses were made larger to accommodate at least three or four rooms so that the two couples each had space apart from the other siblings (430). Many homes soon were four stories making them tall and narrow. This family system divided the labor and roles were differentiated at home, in the fields, and at church. Furthermore, Duby, Aries, and Goldhammer states that the stem-family system is based on the father’s authority until he relinquishes it to his oldest son (430). Therefore, the home was not about luxury items or for decoration. Instead, the house functioned to accommodate a large group of people who were trying to survive.

According to Jürgen Habermas in his book, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, he discusses how the Bourgeois family and the institutionalization of privateness began to predominate around 1750. “The privatization of life can be observed
in a change in architectural style” (44). Habermas continues to explain that the house became more of a home for each individual with less room for the family as a whole.

Habermas explains, “In the modern private dwellings in the big cities, all rooms serving the ‘whole house’ are limited to the extreme: the spacious vestibules are reduced to a scanty entrance way; instead of family and servants, only maids and cooks are left bustling about the profaned kitchen; in particular, however, the courtyards...have frequently become small, dank, smelly corners...” (44). The communal room for husband and wife and children and domestic servants has become ever smaller or has completely disappeared (45). In contrast, the special rooms for the individual family members have become ever more numerous and more specifically furnished. The solitarization of the family members even within the house nowadays is held to be a sign of distinction (45).

Furthermore, Habermas explains that in the nineteenth century the male dominated the house, even though he was not at the house often. There were rooms specifically designed for the man such as a smoking room and billiard parlor that would be used to relax after eating, and a library or office that children never entered. Women, on the other hand, withdrew from the business world and stayed primarily in the house. From this emerged a domestic morality as the woman administered all of the household tasks. Child bearing also increased between 1840 and 1900 from five to seven children. In the early 1900s where as many as 15-20 people lived in a house and there was no such thing as personal space. Communal living involved forced intimacy and intense socialization at all times, yet with all this communication, it was not the complete answer of an ideal family
life. It needed a balance, but instead headed down a road of extreme proportion. That is when the Bourgeois ideal came into effect.

Habermas defines the term “bourgeois” as a middle class person who is marked by a concern for material goods (1). Despite the simplicity of the definition, the term encompassed so much more than that. The Bourgeois ideal often appears in storybooks with images of an ideal home with individual space for each person that centered on a full-time homemaker mother and a breadwinner father each in respective stereotyped roles. Even though it was a difficult goal to achieve for most, it remained to be the ideal style for decades. It was mainly because of these high standards that the family size dropped dramatically in countries everywhere in order to accommodate the idea that more space granted a higher quality of life.

Many cannot help but to notice that the average size of a new home built in the United States within the last ten years is substantially larger than homes that were built 50 years ago. Author Bill Bryson discusses the rooms of the home along with historical significance in his book, *At Home: A Short History of Private Life*. Bryson researched the history of each room of the house to find its significance and why a comfortable home means something to us as human beings. Residential development companies are creating homes to the current trend in housing – the larger the better. One might say the larger home is needed because family sizes are larger due to having more children or welcoming extended family. However, neither is the answer. Instead, size increase is merely for more space and to accommodate further the desire for isolation. Bryson discovers how each room had a purpose and how that purpose changed with technology. Each person expects
his or her own room fully equipped with a television, computer, telephone, and any other electronic device that can make his or her solitary confinement enjoyable. Furthermore, cell phones allow for text messaging that completely eliminates the need for any conversation to take place in the house. A simple text message can alert parents of food choices, homework questions, and driving needs.

The home has become so efficient according to Bryson. Other rooms in the home may include a workout center, a game room, a dining room, a recreation room, and a study room. However, with all of these rooms and so few people to occupy them, communication among family members has become nearly extinct. Without communication and dialogue for extended periods of time so much could be lost such as our ability to be civil, compassionate, and empathetic. Family is supposed to be about love and support and the way that is typically brought about is by living together, sharing everyday experiences, and eating meals together. Giving each other too much space is almost like having mini apartments within a house.

Resurrecting the construction and use of the front porch is one way that the house can promote hospitality and community relations. The front porch is one of many design techniques that will revive neighboring and walking according to Barbara Brown, John Burton, and Anne Sweaney in their research in the article, “Neighbors, Households, and Front Porches: New Urbanist Community Tool or Mere Nostalgia.” Brown, Burton, and Sweaney acknowledge that porches are part of the Neotraditional Development that will guide suburban development. Porches enhance a sense of community and safety while at the same time “reinvigorate the suburban street for pedestrian use” (581). They continue
by adding that the decline in community came post WWII once large suburban lots were created with garages (582). Garages allowed for people to drive directly into the enclosed space and shut the door without having a conversation with the neighbors. Long commutes also meant shopping was done outside of the neighborhood. Then with technological advances such as television and air-conditioning the idea of “cocooning” began to take place as the individual drew inward and eliminated socialization (583).

While porches really only began as a use for community in the 1920s, they became a place for contact with neighbors, according to Brown, Burton, and Sweaney. There would not be pressure to talk long or to have the entire house clean. Pedestrians could walk by and say hello as they ventured out walking in the neighborhood. Furthermore, Brown, Burton, and Sweaney state that by returning the construction of the porch to more homes there could be an increase in the sense of community and of hospitality (584). Porches help people to get to know one another without the hassle of making dinner plans or a special invitation into the house. For those who are skeptical of being hospitable to the stranger, the porch implies a medium ground to begin the nature of hospitality. Derrida emphasizes that one must have the power to host and become hospitable to the stranger. By being true to one’s values, interests, and family, a person can achieve the power of hosting by using the porch. While tension still may exist with the stranger and understanding how far to invite the stranger in, there is a complex balance between the homeowner and the visitor that the porch can help initiate.

Another way that the house can promote hospitality and lessen feelings of displacement is to provide communal areas that household members use regularly for
eating and recreation according to Bohanek, Fivush, Zaman, Lepore, Merchant, and Duke. This group of scholars did research on the effectiveness of dinnertime conversation, which helps prove the significance of the softer and more communicative side of parents.

Gathering at the kitchen table for meals without distractions of technology is beneficial to communication and also establishes a feeling of home where one can relax, enjoy food, and discuss the day's events, states Bohanek, Fivush, Zaman, Lepore, Merchant, and Duke (488). Contributing to meal planning and preparation also helps communication and hones the skills children must learn to host others.

According to the research, “Studies examining family patterns of communication more generally have revealed that open and supportive communication styles, in contrast to more controlling and unsupportive communication, foster rich affective relationships between parents and children, which contribute to more positive views of the self and a higher sense of self-efficacy in children. In addition, family interactions that facilitate autonomy while not sacrificing relatedness facilitate positive and healthy self-esteem development in children” (515).

Many of these conversations take place in the kitchen of the home. The kitchen gives a sample of the bourgeois ideal because it relates to the homemaker-mother yet can incorporate the modern flare with updated technology and meals that could accommodate any schedule according to Bohanek, Fivush, Zaman, Lepore, Merchant, and Duke (515). The kitchen is one room that could help facilitate the communication patterns within families. The research goes on to prove that discussing and resolving events that are more social in
nature may also be critical to children’s success in school, perhaps by helping children resolve these stressors and thus allowing them to focus more on learning and less on non-school activities and social concerns when they are in the classroom (515).

Lastly, it is important to make each home as special as the people that reside in it. People should not feel the need to showcase possessions that they feel are representative of the life they wish they had. Instead, the home should be filled with what gives those that inhabit it pleasure and comfort. People should not copy or mimic others, but put their own style into the home. These are the things that will make a stranger’s visit to one’s home special and unique. As long as one can be true to oneself then he or she can speak from the heart. It is through this authentic genuineness that the stranger feels welcomed. The world should embrace each other and “open the door” to hospitality and communication.
As with many historical overviews, the first time period that is examined which introduces hospitality is Antiquity (8\textsuperscript{th} century BC – 300 AD). According to L. L. Lundin who wrote about hospitality in the Salem Press Encyclopedia, the concept of hospitality has strong roots in many cultures around the world. With its Western roots in ancient Greece, hospitality is often seen in ancient text as playing an important role in a culture by not only ensuring the safety of travelers, but also as a religious practice that honored the gods by overseeing their safety (Lundin). “In Western literature, this is the primordial instance of a principle that survives to this very day in Arab culture: since hospitality requires a suspension of violence, a man must protect anyone who becomes his guest – even his mortal enemy” (Heffernan 13). Therefore, hospitality encourages relationships and communication.

The characteristics associated with hospitality are showing respect for one’s guests, providing for their needs, and treating them as equals. These characteristics are also present in religions. Religions that later abide by these standards are Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Hinduism (Lundin).

One way to track how hospitality was viewed would be to analyze the writings of Homer. Homer was the epic poet who wrote the \textit{Iliad} and \textit{Odyssey}, which helped shape the basis of Greek education and culture from the time of the Roman Empire to the spread of
Christianity. Within the *Odyssey*, there are several indications of hospitality. Guests received a host’s hospitality for weeks, months, or even years. Receiving hospitality was seen as a divine right and a person’s ability to honor these traditions was a sign of his or her nobility or social standing according to Homer. As a result, not offering hospitality could damage one’s reputation.

In *Iliad*, Achilles shows hospitality by offering food, drink, and rest to his enemy King Priam when he sneaks into Achilles’ tent to beg for his son’s dead body. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus was not among the soldiers who returned home after the fall of Troy. While the story is a happy one because he was saved from disaster, his wife Penelope and son Telemachus think he is dead. His journey home includes many examples of hospitality depending on whom he encounters. The good characters offered hospitality to Odysseus or his son Telemachus. However, the bad characters did not and instead thrived off of the hospitality of others. When he returns to Ithaca, Odysseus punishes the abuse of hospitality in his own home.

In Antiquity, the long value of the Greek and Jewish people defined hospitality as a kind treatment to strangers and travelers. Andrew E. Arterbury from Baylor University discusses this in his article, *The Ancient Customs of Hospitality*. He explains that people would voluntarily extend themselves for public reasons such as political or for commercial exchanges. Private hospitality, on the other hand, is voluntarily extended to a guest. Arterbury focuses on private hospitality in the article. He states that in Greek tradition, the process of hospitality involved a series of actions that began with the stranger’s arrival (55). Then there would be the stranger’s supplication followed by the host’s reception
which could include the following: taking the hand of the guest, welcoming him or her, and leading him or her into the house (55). Arterbury also states that seating would be arranged and then a feast would follow. During the feast, there would be questioning to learn more about the stranger or “the Other” and also possibly entertainment. The person then would be offered a bed, a bath, and gifts (55). Arterbury continues to state that the next morning they would then be escorted to their next destination (55). This format generally followed longer stays. However, for Jewish people there is a slight difference in the format according to Arterbury. One difference is that the stay is generally shorter. Also, there are no gifts and typically wisdom was exchanged for provisions (55). In addition, Jews limited their hospitality to other Jewish people (55). So even within a specific time-frame, one can see how differently hospitality was carried out.

However, not all hospitality was out of moral obligation in Antiquity according to a case study done by Abdulla Al-Shorman, Abdelqader Ababneh, Akram Rawashdih, Ahmad Makhadmih, Saad Alsaad, and Monther Jamhawi titled, *Travel and Hospitality in Late Antiquity*. Their research claims that there is much evidence to prove that people traveled for leisure, trade, sports, religion, and to visit renowned cities (22). Evidence they found could be traced as far back as 1480 B.C.E. when Queen Hatshepsut made the first-ever journey for the purpose of tourism to the land of Punt (22). Many archeological and ethnographic records were analyzed from the Jordan region to show how homes were constructed for hospitality purposes. The Jordan area was a strategic location because it was in a major trade route, it had diversified resources that attracted Greeks and Romans, and the Mediterranean climate attracted tourism and hospitality (22). This particular case-study looked at the city of Umm el-Jimal. House plans for some of the top homes uncovered
had at least 20 rooms available, which is more than needed for a nuclear or even extended family (22). The style was considered to be a courtyard-house type with an inward focus (23). This design allowed for maximum social privacy and protection while at the same time allowing visitors to engage in social events. This arrangement resembles the *stabula* of ancient Rome and also modern-day motels (23). In addition to the homes, another indication that the town was made to serve travelers was the water system. A unique water system was established that used rain runoff and stored it in large pools that were constructed out of hewn stones (23). The system was carefully designed taking geology into consideration as well as the construction of structures. These findings support that these systems served many travelers passing through (25). However, one of the most interesting aspects of this area is the large number of churches. In this town there were 18 churches that came in around the sixth or seventh century (25). It was common for these structures to offer hospitality for overnight stays also (25). There is more information on how hospitality played a significant role in Christian hospitality later in this chapter.

In addition to early Greek history, hospitality can be found in early Roman culture. Ladislaus J. Bolchazy writes about it in his book, *Hospitality in Early Rome: Livy’s Concept of its Humanizing Force*. This book suggests that the law of hospitality played an important role in ancient Roman culture because it was a barometer of civilization in modern and ancient primitive societies (1). Bolchazy chose to look at Livy because he studied moral employment of history. Livy appreciated hospitality because it found it to be a contributing factor to world peace.
Bolchazy begins by explaining primitive man’s understanding of the stranger. Known as xenophobia, primitive people believed that strangers possessed potentially harmful powers (1). The Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert, the Kreen-Akore tribe of Brazil’s Amazon, and the Tasadays of Mindanao in the Philippines have many contacts with strangers so they eventually lost the xenophobia, but they still feared strangers because they had guns and germs (2). Sometimes the word for stranger is synonymous with enemy. Bolchazy compares the primitive societies’ attitude towards strangers to Greek and Roman culture. As a result, he created seven categories of hospitality: 1- avoidance or mistreatment of strangers, 2 – apotropaic hospitality, 3-Meda category of hospitality, 4-Theoxenic hospitality; 5 – Ius hospitii ius dei category; 6- contractual hospitality; 7 – and altruistic hospitality (iii). The last three are milestones in the history of the development of the brotherhood of man and the golden rule as taught by Christianity and Stoicism. The Romans were originally characterized by their xenophobic attitudes towards strangers and then gradually developed into altruistic motives for humane treatment of strangers according to Bolchazy (iii).

Bolchazy states that in Category one, the xenophobia was a real avoidance and mistreatment of strangers. Even though societies wanted to trade with each other they would leave items at a given spot so they could be picked up by the stranger. This was called silent trading (2). It was also common for strangers to be killed because they automatically were considered to be the enemy (2). This attitude is believed to be similar to that of the Greeks according to Bolchazy (2). The Homeric society considered hospitality as an acid test of civilization (2) and believed it evolved from the xenophobic environment. “For our people do not well endure a stranger, nor courteously receive a man who comes
from elsewhere,” says Athena in disguise to Odysseus as a warning to be wary on his way to the house of Alcinous (Finley). Bolchazy then goes on to describe how kings always sat on top of a tower and very rarely descended or were seen at all because of xenophobia (3). Also, outside of its borders there were similar reactions by Ethiopians, Egyptians, and Persia. Therefore, the Homeric society was conscious of the inhospitable environment outside of the borders, but also went along with it (3).

Category two viewed hospitality differently because as time progressed radical behavior towards strangers obviously could not continue, especially if people were to socialize with others outside of their own society and tribe according to Bolchazy (5). While the xenophobia might still exist, the complete avoidance and mistreatment of strangers came to a halt. The group of strangers that were treated better were traders, messengers, ambassadors, and holy men (5). Bolchazy states that there were many documented rituals for many modern primitive societies when receiving a stranger, so that the stranger would become disarmed, removed of any pollution, and rid of any evil spirits (5). Many even viewed the rites as apotropaic. Bolchazy personally viewed older peasants in Czechoslovakia as late as 1949 who still feared the stranger’s evil eye, and various trinkets were used to avert it (5). Rituals also can be seen as an initiation or ceremony so that the stranger is incorporated into a group or civilization. Some examples are the passing or throwing of a burning torch to disperse souls of ancestors (5). Another custom is to veil one’s face to counteract the stranger’s evil eye (5). To begin accepting strangers was a slow process.
Category three describes a third response to the stranger – to welcome him or her states Bolchazy (6). The xenophobia still motivated the response to be hospitable. The rationale for hospitality was so the strangers would be disarmed of their bad will making it unlikely that they would use their occult powers against the host. This Medea category was the beginning of the hospitality proper according to Bolchazy (6). “Customs such as a handshake or breaking bread with a stranger seem to have had their origin in the belief that both a host and a stranger were somehow mutually exchanging their essences and partaking of the same being” (6). One would curse oneself by cursing the other. Just as though the stranger could use powers to do harm, it was believed that the stranger could use powers to do good. Bolchazy states, “The corollary of this belief would be the desire to make a beneficial friend out of a potential enemy by treating him with hospitality, thereby winning his blessings and influencing him to do good” (7). Therefore people were viewing hospitality to gain benefits and safety.

Category four identifies the stranger with a god or supernatural being explains Bolchazy. He states, “The suspicion that a stranger was possessed of magico-religious powers may have led to the belief that he was a representative of some preternatural force or deity or that he was identified with some god” (7). The identification of the supernatural with a stranger is found in Christianity (8). There are many examples that can be used to prove this theory. Matthew (25:35): I was a stranger, and you took me in.” Abraham recognized the supernatural in the three strangers who were angels appeared in his tent (Genesis 18:1-4). Lot received two angels in the form of strangers (Genesis 19:1-2). Paul and Barnabas were taken for deities (Acts 14: 10-12). There are other examples that are not just found in the Bible. The Indians regarded the first white men they saw as gods,
although not for long, and the Japanese Storm-god Susa-no-wo rewarded hospitality and destroyed all those who refused hospitality to strangers (8). Furthermore, in Homeric literature gods frequently take on the appearance of strangers, explains Bolchazy (8). In the Iliad, gods take form in human beings who step into battle and in the Odyssey, Athena is frequently with a stranger.

Category five expressed the belief that the stranger was a representative of or identified with a deity and gave the belief that it was some god’s will that strangers be received and treated hospitably – a belief that is a milestone in the evolving ethical concept of the brotherhood of man according to Bolchazy (10). This concept ties closely with Christian hospitality.

Category six describes that strangers were once viewed as ordinary people, but then society discovered that the custom of hospitality could be put to practical use such as a contract, explains Bolchazy (11). He states, “At this point a person could enter into a quasi-contractual relationship of hospitality either with a stranger or an acquaintance for any one or all of the following reasons: (1) To enjoy the assurance of having food and shelter when visiting the guest-friend territory; (2) To have the assurance of a degree of protection in a foreign country; (3) To secure the advantages of having a friendly representative in a foreign land” (11). These contracts were frequently tacit and legal and would be based on ethical and/or religious sanctions (11). This category keeps hospitality more public than private.

Category seven is the last motive for hospitality - altruism. In Greek culture, a person cannot be considered rich and happy without having children, horses, hunting dogs,
and a foreign guest (14). In Roman culture, honor was a motive for seeking relationships of hospitality (33). “In his own days, Cicero considered it “most proper” to open one’s house to hospites and claimed that it was a characteristic credit to his country to welcome foreigners” (33). Bolchazy says that some may argue that it was more for prestige based upon power and influence rather than honor (33). Cicero believed that it wasn’t good just to welcome ordinary strangers, but also those who could influence and show power as beneficial, revealing that his true motive may have been prestige rather than honor (34). “Even if an altruistic motive was not always pure and unmixed, the ideas were still significant” (34). Bolchazy states, “Honor as a motive for kind reception and treatment of strangers is a far cry from xenophobia, fear of offending the gods of hospitality and enlightened self-interest (34). This statement shows that through these seven stages hospitality gradually accepts strangers even if the reasons are less than ideal.

The Romans followed similar categories for hospitality, although the first four categories are not as well documented as the Greeks. Therefore, much of what is stated concerning hospitality with the Romans is made through inference according to Bolchazy. If a person was a stranger and came into Rome then he or she had to register as a citizen for protection or he would be put into slavery. If the person went into slavery, it would take 40 years to buy freedom (24). There are also records of Rome expulsing strangers. When hospitality is a motivation that came from xenophobia, it is considered to be a very important civilizing step (24). “It is a humane solution to one’s suspicions regarding the ill disposition of a stranger. It represents a deterrent to war and a desire for peaceful coexistence. It encourages frequent social intercourse between strangers. It is based upon the realization that a social contract – not to harm so as not to be harmed – is preferable to
the law of the jungle” (24). The social contract was important at this time. Both the guest and the host would gain from a peaceful visit. Some motives might have been for lodging, for legal protection, and for business and political reasons. The contractual stage was characterized by a desire to treat one’s guest as one wanted to be treated in return (29).

These contracts were held in part by religious and ethical sanctions. As far as the religious aspect, the believers felt that if the law of hospitality was broken then it went against the deities and was considered a sin (29). The ethical aspect involved an agreement that was expressed with either a handshake or an exchange of a coin (29). If someone would break this agreement then it was considered ethically wrong (29). According to Bolchazy, the religious standards proceeded the ethical standards (29).

Hospitality brought Romans from xenophobia to altruism and became one of the factors which paved the way for the reception of the more advanced and reasoned teachings of Stoicism and Christianity. Bolchazy states that Cicero acknowledges that man has the impulse toward self-preservation. It is from these two ideas that Cicero concludes that it is natural for man to feel affinity with other men and to aid them, just as it is natural for him to love his offspring and preserve it (36). “Love then begins at home and ultimately must extend toward all men. To do harm to a fellow-man, whoever he may be or to deny foreigners their rights would be damaging to the structure of civil society and offensive to the gods who have established fellowship between human beings” (36). Many of the same concepts explained during this time period are similar to Christianity and to Christian hospitality based on the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.
**Biblical and Christian Hospitality**

During the Antiquity era, hospitality can also be found through religion, in particular Christianity. This can be proved through writings in the Bible. The first five books of the Bible were written by Moses 1400 B.C.E. and more was later added by other prophets over the next 100 years to complete what is known as the Old Testament. Then after the death of Christ, disciples and other writers added more text to create the New Testament. There are many citations of hospitality within the Bible that show hospitality, most often through the understanding of the *Stranger*, both in the Old and New Testaments.

**Old Testament Examples**

There are many more references of hospitality from the Bible according to Brother Laurence Machia, O.S.B. of St. Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, PA. Christians believe that loving one another will let the other know one is a disciple of Jesus. The essence of hospitality is recognizing when someone else needs one’s love and care. Hospitality goes beyond the physical needs, such as food, but includes the spiritual needs that happen when a meal is shared.

One reference is the hospitality given by Abraham when he received three angelic visitors (Genesis 18:2). When men are traveling through the dessert they are hungry, hot, and tired. Abraham ran from his tent and greeted these men. He bathed their feet, offered rest under the tree, and hurried to bring them food. He was called to a radical intentional attentiveness to details for his guests.
When we understand that people are more important than things then we can allow ourselves to be open to find new blessings. When a need of someone creates an opportunity for a relationship that is where God can come into lives. Christians view hospitality, especially from the stranger to be that openness where God has an opportunity to come into one’s life. Christian’s view that the presence of God is manifested in other people, in particular the stranger. Some say that the degree in which one invests in the person is the degree one will receive blessings. When we can share joy and blessings they double.

A second example of hospitality in the Bible is with the story of the widow of Zeraphath as told by the prophet Elijah (1 Kings 17). It had not rained in three years and a man traveled up to Zeraphath and asked her for a cup of water and bread. The woman was living in poverty and had no food herself. She gave out of her own needs. Poverty is an opportunity for faith, and God assists and helps in those moments. It is not Christian to believe that one should just worry about himself or that it is better to stay alone because people cause pain. This realization makes Christian hospitality different from social work and altruism.

There are also specific passages that refer to strangers. “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Hebrews 13:2). Another example is, “You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 10:19).
New Testament Examples

One example of hospitality in the New Testament is when Jesus is still moved with pity to help cure the sick even though he is very saddened by the death of John the Baptist (Corinthians 12). Jesus is always filled with compassion. He has experienced all of our suffering. When one is with Jesus he or she knows he or she is loved.

Another example is in Luke 14:12-14, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your kinsmen or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.” Here Jesus is explaining how hospitality is truly meant to those who cannot repay you so that the service is not given for status or social standing, but truly to help those in need.

A well-known story of hospitality is between Mary and Martha in Luke 10: 38-42. The two sisters opened their home to Jesus and his disciples. Mary spent the visit sitting at the feet of Jesus while Martha was busy working on all the food and other preparations. Martha asked Jesus to tell her sister to help her, but Jesus said that Mary chose what was better. In this instance, Mary is giving true hospitality by being attentive and listening rather than getting lost in the unimportant parts of the visit (Luke 10: 38-42).

One of the most unforgettable stories of hospitality takes place at the last supper. Jesus hosts the twelve disciples and washes their feet to show that he expects them to do the same for one another (John 13:1-17).
Now that a sampling of the biblical examples of hospitality are shown, it is logical to begin the background of how Christians took these lessons and implemented them into everyday life. Christine Pohl explains many of the key concepts and historical background of hospitality in relationship to Christianity in her book, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*. Pohl is a professor of Christian social ethics at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. She explains part of the history of the church and how hospitality was part of the Christian identity of welcoming strangers.

Pohl explains that most of the ancient world viewed hospitality as a fundamental moral practice. However, Christian understanding of hospitality was different from Greek and Roman views. Pohl states that Greek and Roman views stressed “reciprocal obligations between benefactor and recipient” (18). On the other hand, “Christians were directed deliberately to welcome those who seemingly brought little to the encounter”, according to Pohl (18).

Pohl references passages from the Bible that refers to when Jesus promised that welcoming the stranger or doing any deed for the lowly was as if one were doing it for the Son of Man. Furthermore, early Christians felt that in order to be a leader one had to be hospitable. Christian hospitality tells one to consider the marginal before thinking how it can benefit him or her. “Such hospitality reflects God’s greater hospitality that welcomes the underserving, provides the lonely with a home, and sets a banquet table for the hungry” (16).

Pohl explains how writers in the New Testament portray Jesus as a gracious host, welcoming children, prostitutes, tax collectors, and sinners into his presence (17). These
kinds of attitudes annoyed the preferred guests. It was common for Jesus to want to be with those who were less fortunate such as the homeless, the convicts, and those despised. “The intermingling of guest and host roles in the person of Jesus is part of what makes the story of hospitality so compelling for Christians” (17).

The first Christians displayed hospitality in a way that always welcomed strangers because often times them themselves were strangers in the world. The early church remembered the promises to God and saw hospitality from both points of view, according to Pohl (33). Soon, the care for strangers became a signature of the Christian gospel (33). This caring held true through the first five centuries because the church was seen as the “universal community” and that sharing meals and inviting others into one’s home was proof of the faith (35). Even into the fourth century many church leaders still feared that some might be offering hospitality to gain good favor that many were only to welcome those who were so poor that the favor could not be returned (5). The term *Charitas* means charity. The church has been the sole source for offering charity throughout time. The church was also responsible for feeding the poor. In fact, Christians are taught to look at every stranger as if he or she was Christ as it is written in Matthew 25:35.

Early Christians were aliens and they felt marginal. In Christian hospitality, Jesus is the perfect example of knowing and understanding the marginal people. He himself is often interpreted as both the host and the stranger. He is the son of God yet He deliberately lives a lesser life in order to understand those he was trying to help. This unique perspective allows his heart to touch others’ hearts. His way of teaching is often through example, every time he does something for someone he is there to help guide them.
Late Antiquity

Late Antiquity was a time of great change religiously. As previously discussed, the Greek and Roman empires dominated civilization in Europe. However, once Christianity began to spread then these empires faced disruption. Society went from polytheism to monotheism. This belief in only one god lessened the impact of rulers who were once perceived as god-like by the people. Bryan Ward-Perkins discusses this time period in history in his book *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization*. As a brief history review, the Roman Empire faced uncertainty in the fourth century when hostile invasion took place from invaders and barbarians (Perkins 1). Then as historian Edward Gibbon explains in his book *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, emperor Constantine acquired Byzantium and renamed it Constantinople so that the Roman empire became divided into the west and the east. "The advantageous position of Constantinople appears to have been formed by Nature for the center and capital of a great monarchy, opposite shores of Europe and Asia, the climate was healthy and temperate, fertile soil, the harbor secure (Perkins 458). Furthermore, Constantine gave his support to the Christian faith in the early fourth century giving substantial responsibilities to the church (Pohl 43).

Fourth and fifth century writers wrote that hospitality made sense because generous hosts would find themselves blessed in the relationship. Augustine, as quoted by Pohl, similarly argued that such acts of kindness fit into a network of need. Both giver and recipient were in need before God and although God needed none of a person's goods, God had "vouchsafed to be hungry in His poor. 'I was hungry,' saith He, 'and ye gave Me meat (Pohl 20)."
Ministry of Hospitality by James Comiskey discusses how hospitality has been rooted in Christian tradition from the very beginning in the first line of his book. He points to Fr. John McKenzie in his Dictionary of the Bible that it can be directed back to desert hospitality. “Any guest was entitled to hospitality from any host. Should host and guest be at enmity, the acceptance of hospitality involved a reconciliation” (Comiskey 1). Comiskey continues to explain that a part of hospitality is the desire to reach out (1). Hospitality breaks down barriers that we typically may hold onto because of social pressures and fears (1). In the new millennium we come to find that we need to be aware of others around us. We are more afraid to talk to strangers than in the past. Comiskey restates how St. Benedict in his Rule says that everyone should be kind to the stranger or pilgrim and to treat every visitor to the monastery as if she or he were Christ (6). This passage proves to be the cornerstone of Benedictine hospitality for centuries.

Pohl also references the same passages that Comiskey refers to that Jesus promised that welcoming the stranger or doing any deed for the lowly was as if one were doing it for the Son of Man. Furthermore, hospitality was a qualification to be a leader in early Christian communities, according to Comiskey. Outside of the Bible, the stories of hospitality continue. Comiskey states, “Early Christian writers claimed that transcending social and ethnic differences by sharing meals, homes, and worship were proof of the Christian faith” (5). He goes on to explain that at points in the fourth century church leaders were worried that clergy would be “tempted to offer hospitality in order to gain favor with the powerful so they encouraged them to welcome the poorest of people to their table” (5).
As for Christians, the church was the household of God where several family households made up the church. Therefore early Christian hospitality was offered from within the overlap of home and church (42). People from different status and background were able to come together in one place to share a meal. The church was different from the political system at the time and it was often persecuted. However, in the fourth and fifth centuries there was dramatic change because Emperor Constantine gave his support to the Catholic church. Suddenly there were substantial resources and responsibilities turned over to the church, including hospitality and care for the sick (43). Care for the needy was viewed as a form of hospitality known as “public service” (43) The church was widely responsible for this and as a result created hospitals to help manage the needs (44). The first hospital to receive attention was founded by Basil, bishop of Caesarea in 370 (44). Even outsiders of the church viewed the form of hospitality from the church as exemplary. In addition to the church and hospitals, other institutions began such as hostiles.

Suddenly there were other places that offered hospitality outside of the home and church. “The increasing dependence on differentiated and specialized institutions of care was a response to the increasing scale of need, to the increasing availability of resources given to the church, and to the church’s related responsibility to the larger population” (45). “In the writings of John Chrysostom, from the fourth and fifth centuries there are multiple settings for hospitality as well as the tensions that emerged out of such diversity. Many parishioners in his church bowed out of hospitality because the church had its own means to provide it to strangers” (45). He insisted that it remain personal and individual. He also didn’t want to rely on newly formed specialized institutions of hospitality (46).
Also, during the fourth century, monasticism took root as an essential expression of Christian life (46). Monasteries, hospitals, and hostiles were closely linked together. Monks within the monasteries were responsible to provide food, shelter, and welcome. The fifth century is the moment where St. Benedict of Nursia (480-550) can be introduced. He is considered to be the father of western monasteries and developed what is known as The Rule of St. Benedict that thoroughly discusses all the tasks of the monks in the monastery, in particular how to offer hospitality.

Middle Ages and Monasteries

The Middle Ages (500-1500) changed the way hospitality was viewed, experienced, and offered. This era was filled with changes economically and politically that caused the basic roots of hospitality to be set aside and a more elaborate approach was taken, yet along with this new elaborate approach was an overall greater need forcing a continuation of institutions such as orphanages and hostiles.

Monastic and Christian hospitality continued and reached its peak between 1066 to 1250. Various developments increased monastic hospitality, especially increase in travel. With more people traveling throughout Europe more people would need places to stay on their journeys. Julie Kerr explains this in her book Monastic Hospitality. The new ruling class in England following the Conquest of 1066 brought in more access to foreign ideas, practices, and texts (2). This renewed interest in civility brought about a new look into inviting in the stranger. Kerr studies Benedictine hospitality from 1070 to 1250 explaining that it was significant to the monks who were in charge of receiving guests as per the Rule of St. Benedict. While it seems implausible that monks had withdrawn from society, but
seemed fit to offer hospitality, there were Biblical precedents that showed that care for
guests was associated with charity (3). In fact, the Decretum, compiled by Gratian in the
twelfth century and providing the basis for much canon law, stated that “hospitality is so
necessary in bishops that if any are found lacking in it the law forbids them to be ordained”
(Pohl 49).

Some monasteries felt that if they obeyed the Rule of St. Benedict they would not be
able to have enough for themselves (5). The increase in guests changed the willingness to
offer hospitality, even among monks, because of the overall demand it caused. This is the
moment in which certain conditions begin to be realized that made the act of hospitality
easier to fulfill than others. One could be hospitable if it was within reason and if the host
was not overly saturated with guests on a continual basis (50. Many clergy had minimal
resources to offer hospitality, according to Pohl (5). Parishioners were expected to pay
tithes and to contribute to the poor relief. However, there were complaints about absentee
priests, misappropriation of funds, and administration was uneven (5).

Humanism also contributed to an increase of hospitality in this era according to
Kerr. Humanism put great importance on learning manners, speech, and control of one’s
actions and was seen as a way to attain beauty within (Kerr 6). Receiving guests offered an
opportunity to exhibit courtesy and to have an audience to witness the good conduct (7).
Suddenly, not all guests who were received were the less fortunate searching for shelter.
The account book of the Cistercian abbey of Beaulieu includes royalty, barons, church
dignitaries, monastic officials, clerics, relatives, messengers, mariners, and grooms (8). As a
result, hospitality became about grand gestures and how they made one look socially and
veered away from the marginal and the stranger. This shift of focus changed the true meaning of hospitality.

Great households belonging to bishops and lay aristocrats were central to hospitality, but often had to do with the status of the guest and reinforced existing patterns of wealth and power (Pohl 48-49). Grand hospitality became an important means for extending power and influence in the church, monastery, and lay society. Hospitality was often deliberately connected to the host’s ambition and advantage especially with aristocrats who began to participate in hospitality themselves (49). Even though it would be an enormous expense, they would offer hospitality because it proved their wealth and power. However, the meaning of authentic hospitality was lost in the effort. For instance, the lower status guests would be received at a different table and with different food. These distinctions were intended to reflect status. Sometimes even the lowest of poor were fed at the gate and not welcomed into the household at all (Pohl 51). This change was the beginning of the corruption of hospitality. There is not one historical period when ethical hospitality was natural or easy or void of being violated by members of the same community (Haswell 20). Therefore, the vagabond age in the countryside increased and the problem started to become more and more complex.

Protestant reformers emphasized offering modest hospitality without expectation or reward. However, early Protestant writers tended to de-emphasize its sacred elements (35). Then with socioeconomic changes, hospitality became less effective as a primary means for caring for the poor and strangers. Hospitality became highly commercialized as travelers increasingly depended on inns to meet their shelter needs (Pohl 35).
Institutions helped to make the burden easier on households, monasteries, and churches, but this impersonal format ultimately changed hospitality at its core because the “real” offering to the guest that comes from the host could not be achieved. Other possible provisions included hostiles and urban centers. In addition, hospitals increased so much in importance that by the 15th century many had come under municipal control.

Modern Times

Next, during the sixteenth century hospitality continued to change a great deal through social dislocations as well as economic and political changes. According to Pohl, “Many of the great households were under siege, the feudal systems were crumbling, and vagabondage peaked” according to Pohl (51). “Mobility, plagues, wars, urbanization, and increased trade contributed to the breakdown of rural communities. Traditional practices of hospitality were ineffective because of vagabonds and the local poor” (Pohl 51). Protestant reformers did not participate in the format of hospitality from the Middle Ages that involved lengthy feasts and formalities. Instead, they wanted something simple and straightforward. Also, there were a lot of refugees fleeing that needed hospitality. Martin Luther and John Calvin both called for hospitality. John Calvin longed for hospitality by stating, “This office of humanity has...nearly ceased to be properly observed among men; for the ancient hospitality celebrated in histories, is unknown to us, and inns now supply the place of accommodations for strangers” (Pohl 36). Luther also believed that hospitality should be just within the home. However, there were long-term consequences for redefining hospitality away from the church. “The domestic sphere became more privatized; households became smaller, more intimate, and less able or willing to receive
strangers. The understanding of Christian hospitality diminished and the practice nearly disappeared” (Pohl 53).

John Wesley and the 18th century English Methodists have a significant role in Christian hospitality, states Pohl (53). Methodists tried to have people remain involved with each other through meetings and weekly gatherings so that interaction could take place (53). This format allowed for spiritual growth as well as a time to organize help for the sick and needy. “Wesley recovered the practice of shared meals and also created special homes for widows and children” (53). The preachers then took turns regularly eating meals there (53). When leaders were joining in for the care of the poor and weak it was a return to the early understanding of Christian hospitality. (54). Congregating at the household table brought everyone closer and showed the diversity of people. However, Wesley never called this work hospitality and unfortunately because of doing so he contributed to the loss of the tradition.

For many, the 18th century is where the western church lost hospitality, according to Pohl (36). People worried about equality and respect, but they did not discuss those concerns in the language of hospitality” (36). Hospitality now refers to the entertainment of friends and family at home and to the industry of service through hotels and restaurants. (36)

Jacques Levy-Bonvin’s article on the brief history of hotels gives a summary of hotel accommodations beginning in the 1200s. Beginning with inns and stage posts, there were places to stay for travelers. According to Levy-Bonvin, the real increase began with the industrial revolution in the 1760s. Soon there were hotels built everywhere in Europe,
England, and America. Once trains were used instead of stagecoaches, inns began to decline. More accommodations were added making it more appealing to travelers such as indoor plumbing, luggage lifts, and a la carte menus. Soon electric and heating were added and hotels became very prestigious. The 1920s experienced a boom in hotel establishments. Hotel chains were attentive to customers and began to offer a wide range of services. The industry became very competitive and also had the ability to thrive based on increased traveling. It wasn't as simple as a lodging to accommodate a traveler. Now it was about the wishes, needs, and tastes of the guests. Specialists were always analyzing trends to ensure that every person's needs were met to ensure customer satisfaction and a return visit. This was different from the monastic view of offering hospitality.

The rise of capitalism and the middle class may also be contributing factors to the demise of hospitality in modern times (Haswell 23). Hosts needed to have the economic means to do the "job" well and to be generous to the guests in a form that appeared to be attentive regardless of having empathy for them. Within the social-etiquette framework, the host received satisfaction by giving and receiving pleasure within a closed circle of family and friends (23). Therefore, hospitality became social entertainment rather than a virtue. Hostessing became competitive within social ranks destroying the heart of hospitality in all modes.

In 19th century America, Christians created programs to help immigrants and migrants to cities through missions. These inner-city missions worked on problems of poverty, disease, and illiteracy. While these problems were solved by individuals who united around a concern, there was no community involvement which then lacked the
identification of hospitality (Pohl 56). The family meal was the way hospitality ultimately became redefined (56). Furthermore, the Salvation Army in the 19th century deliberately took on the marginal lifestyle in order to help the poor. They had no social distinction and as a result felt as though this was a vital part of being able to offer hospitality.

Today, we now have individual institutions that created individual cultures and rules. Hospitality is a personal, but is an institutionally rooted practice. It requires institutions with an identity, history, and purpose, whether family, church, or larger community. “Effective practices of hospitality are dependent on the viability of the institutions in which the practice is embedded” (57).

However, because of these large institutions and cultures that revolve around an impersonal act of hospitality, the household has become a smaller and private format for hospitality. Since it is a smaller format, many are disengaging in community and in hospitality. There is less neighbor interaction and more personal space (57).

Pohl states that households today are in trouble. Families are unstable and no one spends large amounts of time at home. Recovering hospitality will involve reclaiming the household as a key site for ministry and reconnecting the household to the church so the two institutions can partner. (58). One has to be home in order to provide significant household hospitality. Functioning full households would involve communication with the entire family that would include stories, shared commitments, and rituals (58).

While it may be difficult to offer a complete resurgence of a practice that lost its practicality, looking solely at St. Benedict and his use of hospitality can help one with
offering hospitality in one’s home to further one’s call to the Other and communicate in society.
Chapter 4

St. Benedict of Nursia

The life of St. Benedict of Nursia can be at times difficult to review because there were not many accounts recorded at the time of his life in the sixth century. Even afterwards there appear to only be a select few who have attempted to explain the saint’s life fully; therefore, the documentation is scare and is fully reliant upon these few main resources. The first book that does so is the second volume of *The Dialogues* written by St. Gregory the Great. *The Dialogues* of St. Gregory the Great were divided into four books and discussed the lives and miracles of the Saints of Italy. The second book was devoted entirely to St. Benedict. This showed how highly St. Gregory thought of St. Benedict and his standard of doing things in his life. The second book reads much like a conversation between Peter and Gregory about moral contemplations and miracles that happened from Benedict’s work. It is said that the second book of the *Dialogues* was composed between 593 and 594, nearly 40 years after the death of St. Benedict, according to Robert Atwell who wrote “A Benedictine Who’s Who” chapter in the *Benedictine Handbook* (Atwell 226).

A second book that documents St. Benedict’s life and work is written by Cardinal Schuster, O.S.B. titled, *St. Benedict and His Times*. However, in order to write this book he had to use the *Dialogues* of St. Gregory as historical, juridical, liturgical, archeological, and literacy background to create the first full biography of St. Benedict in English at the time of publication in 1951. Schuster acknowledged that there was not a pope, bishop or saint that
knew St. Benedict who took the time to record his life in the 80 years he was living (Schuster 1). As a result, Schuster only had St. Gregory's work for reference.

However, Schuster acknowledges that even though St. Gregory did attempt to somewhat record a biography of St. Benedict in the entire second book of Dialogues, he did not write a life story in typical fashion using any chronological data of that usually found in a biography. Instead he included the most striking miracles (floretem). “Aliqua de miraculis partum, quae in Italia facta audivimus, sub brevitate scriber” which translates - of the most striking miracles of the bishops and monks who then shone in Italy by their holiness (2). Therefore all of the narratives told were compiled only to report miracles, which according to Schuster was indicative of the sixth century (2). Furthermore, Gregory’s narratives are based on direct testimony and are all cited meticulously because Gregory was serious with historical information and very diligent with sources and witnesses. The four major sources of information based on St. Benedict came from his own disciples: Constantine, Valentinian, Simplicius, and Honoratus. There were also several monks who were educated by St. Benedict at Monte Cassino.

In addition to these two sources, many others who follow the Benedictine tradition through the use of the Rule of St. Benedict include biographical information about St. Benedict. In fact, most editions of the Rule of St. Benedict lead with a brief biography credited only to either St. Gregory's or Schuster's work. The Liturgical Press began publishing English versions of the Rule of St. Benedict in 1931 with an edition that was edited by Leonard Joseph Doyle and an 1980 edition by Timothy Fry. Other editors who have also published English versions of the text are Boniface Verheyen, Bruce L. Venarde,
Wyatt North, Joan Chittister, Esther de Waal, and Terrance Kardong. One source that does give biographical content of St. Benedict is *The Benedictine Handbook*. It may not be as comprehensive as the first two books, but it does review biographical content that aids in the retelling of St. Benedict's life as well as some of the stories of his miracles.

Another person that can add to the knowledge and background of Saint Benedict is Thomas Merton. Merton was a Cistercian monk of the Abbey of Gethsemani in Kentucky from 1941 to 1968 and gave a series of conferences on the *Rule of St. Benedict* to the novices of that abbey (Merton ix). These lectures were printed into a book, *The Rule of St. Benedict: Initiation into the Monastic Tradition*. The book is useful in that it gives Merton's perspectives on the meaning and implications on our lives now through the use of the *Rule of St. Benedict*. His main objective is to show how a document from the sixth century can have relevance to men and women of today. According to Merton, the *Rule* is moderate, flexible, and spiritual, and he sees it as maintenance of a set of values and not a preservation of a set of arcane behaviors. Like others have been able to discover, Merton sees how the *Rule* sets to help people live their ordinary lives extraordinarily well.

The following sections will work to describe and explain St. Benedict's life in his early years, the historical moment, his education and work, years of solitude in Enfide, Subiaco, Monte Cassino, his character, miracles, *The Rule of St. Benedict*, and his death and remembrances.

*Benedict's Early Years and Family*

According to Cardinal Schuster, O.S.B., everyone is a child of his time and cannot be studied outside of his environment that saw him grow and formed him. According to
Schuster, he locates St. Benedict’s year of birth to be in 470 in the city of Nursia (central Italy) (23). Schuster claims this point by guessing he was 30 years old at the beginning of the sixth century when he was elected abbot of Vicovaro (23). On the other hand, most other newer sources have his year of birth at 480 (Atwell 227).

Schuster goes onto to explain further about Benedict’s youth. He writes that Nursia is the town of Benedict’s birth along with his twin sister Scholastica (23). Nursia felt the effects of the Lombard invasion and became part of the neighboring diocese Spoletto and the clergy suffered a decline (24). The town had two churches: Fortuna Argentea that was later dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and another larger church, St. Lawrence (25). After the Lombard invasion St. Lawrence was burned down and the priest Santolus undertook the complete construction at his own expense (25). Despite the many Jewish people that lived in Nursia, it is clear that Christian piety and spiritual works permeated the town (Schuster 25). Nursia also claims to be the home of two other holy clergy, Eutychius and Florence, who were also contemporaries of Benedict and are known for miracles (24). When the stranger visits Nursia today, there is a stone bench in honor of St. Benedict. It is unclear whether Benedict ever returned to Nursia. Schuster assumes that the people there influenced him greatly and directed him into monasticism.

In addition, Schuster explains that Benedict is said to have been from a good family, but not necessarily of high nobility. It is claimed that his parents’ names were Eutropius and Abundantia and were from the branch of family of the Anicii (29). Ruins were identified in the ninth century that identify the family’s palace on the outskirts of Nursia.
The structure displayed wealth that would prove how the family would have been able to send their son to Rome to study (29).

_Historical Moment of St. Benedict_

While this may appear to be in the beginning of the Middle Ages, Schuster still categorizes St. Benedict as part of the traditional Roman culture or late Antiquity because of his education and spirit. From Schuster’s standpoint, he views Benedict, St. Augustine of Hippo, Leo I, and Gregory as the last Romans. What it means to be the last of the Romans, especially in the 4th and 5th centuries, directly relates to the fall of the Roman empire in the west. Schuster recalls some of the events that take place that are essential to understanding the collapse and how it affected Benedict. He particularly pays attention to the Christianity tensions.

First, however, there is general historical background knowledge that should be pointed out and which can be found through Bryan Ward-Perkins in his book *The Fall of Rome: and the End of Civilization*. Perkins teaches History at Trinity College in Oxford and was born in Rome. He enjoys combining his research in archeology with history to understand post-Roman times better. In his book, Perkins gives a chronology of the fall of Rome. Once Emperor Constantine designated a division within the Empire making Rome the capital of the West and the renaming Byzantium to Constantinople and naming it the capital of the East, a weakness was created. Agriculture in the west suffered while trade flourished in the East (188). Important dates that need mentioned begin with 376 when the Goths cross the Danube into the eastern empire (188). The Goths were East Germanic people and the Huns were nomads of Eastern Europe stimulated a great migration in the
Roman Empire (188). These invasions caused a weakness in the Roman Empire because of
the thousands of new people settling and overtaking parts of Rome (188). Some were
made part of the army and others were broken into smaller groups and resettled so as to
not cause an uprising (188). However, due to lack of food, rebellious behavior began. By
476, Romulus Augustulus was deposed by the Germanic general Odoacer, the first
barbarian to be emperor of Rome (188). No longer was the western empire in position of
power leaving Constantinople in the East (189). However, years later Odoacer was killed
by Theodoric the Ostrogoth (188). Over the next 17 years there was a strong government
and peace in Italy under Theodoric (189). However, his death in 526 brought in a period of
war and turmoil (189). The emperor of the East, Justinian, attempted to recover Italy at
this time. This attempt began a war that lasted nearly 20 years causing destruction
throughout Italy (189). Benedict witnessed political instability, famine, and war (Atwell
227).

Schuster retells part of this turnover as he brings it into the times of Benedict.
Schuster explained, “The Western Empire was about to pass out of the picture, thanks to
Odoacer who on March 5, 493, had to open the gates of Ravenna to the soldiers of
Theodoric, who ordered him killed. Then came a government which was half Roman and
half Goth and which, while observing the traditional bureaucratic forms of the imperial
republic, was in reality a dictatorship by a barbarian of great ability who was trying to
Romanize himself” (Schuster 19). After the death of Anastasius II in November 498, the
papal schism showed how far the Christian religion had fallen in Rome. Romans chose
Symmacus, but since his election was displeasing to the Byzantine party and other clergy,
Lawrence was acclaimed as the pontiff (19). For three years Rome was seen as a theater
filled with events similar to that of a civil war. “Many Catholics, among them ecclesiastics and nuns were slain in the streets. Others were robbed and beaten” (20). Then the King called both men to the court at Ravenna to help settle this religious struggle (20).

Symmacus was elected Pope and his adversaries were indignant and still fought against him and made false accusations against him (20). Symmacus was attacked by an armed band but he managed to escape. Eventually, the schism appeared to be over, but Rome remained in a constant struggle between those who chose the pope and those who chose the antipope (21). It wasn’t until May 500, that King Theodoric entered the city for a great public event in order to restore order and justice. “The Senate, and the clergy, with the Pope went out to meet him declaring that his only goal was restore its ancient splendors” (21). Bricks can still be found amid the ruins of old structures with Theodoric’s motto: Bono Rome (21). Some say that Benedict was in the crowd of students when the king arrived in Rome, but it has not been confirmed (22).

Now that the historical time period is situated, the controversy of how Christianity affected the Roman Empire can be elaborated upon. Two key perspectives can be drawn from St. Augustine of Hippo and Edward Gibbon. St. Augustine defended Christianity in his book, City of God. Augustine wrote this book in response to the allegations that Christianity caused the decline of the Roman Empire in the west. At that time traditional Roman religion would have been similar to that of Greek tradition which was polytheism. Augustine saw a separation between heaven and earth and believed that the heavenly city is what people should strive for and not the earthly city (city of man) where sin and hate exist. Further analysis explains that the city of God seeks attention and guidance from God while the earthly city seeks attention from the devil. Augustine further reflects the future
and deserved destinies of these two cities in relationship to happiness and suffering as he viewed them.

Then 18th century historian Edward Gibbon gave his critique in his book, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. This six volume work covers the time period from 98 to 1590 A.D. Chapter fifteen and sixteen from Volume 1 explicitly discusses the turmoil within Christianity and against other pagan beliefs that previously ruled the Roman Empire. Gibbon explains that Christianity is a possible reason for the decline of the Roman empire and has been criticized and attacked as a pagan because of it. His background would further suggest this stance since he was an Englishman with Protestant background. Chapter 15 begins “A candid and rational inquiry into the progress and establishment of Christianity may be considered as a very essential part of the history of the Roman Empire (347). This understanding of the place that Christianity held in this time period can put into perspective St. Benedict’s historical moment and the tribulations he experienced.

*Benedict’s Life Work and Study*

Schuster continued to describe Benedict’s education and life. About 495 St. Benedict pursued *liberalibus litterarum studiis* and studied an advanced literary course under the guidance of a rhetor appointed by the government (29). He also had a faithful nurse accompany him when he went to Rome (29). However, shortly after in about 496 he left his studies because of being frustrated with fellow students who only had regard for pleasure and not for truth (29). What they spoke was only the power of the voice and technique. Despite how others around him fell into a lewd life, Benedict drew back and withdrew from his acquaintances so that he could live in solitude (30). Therefore, he
stopped his study of humanity, renounced his patrimony, and attempted to find a place where he could fulfill his life’s purpose to serve God (30).

More details on this time of St. Benedict’s life can be found in St. Gregory’s biography of St. Benedict in *Dialogues*. Gregory states that Benedict first lived in the wilderness with just a nurse and the accompaniment of ascetes at the church of St. Peter in a place called Enfide (Gregory 52). Ascetes are those who live in extreme denial and austerity. According to Merton, these men were not exactly true monks, but they lived as hermits devoting themselves to prayer (Merton 21). It is here that he performs one of his miracles on a broken sieve (Gregory 52). This incident caused him to receive a lot of attention, which made him uncomfortable so Benedict then left to live in solitude in Subiaco and left behind the nurse and also his inherited property from his father (52).

Merton and Gregory identified this time in Benedict’s life through the phrase, “Plus appetens mala mundi perpeti quam laudes” which translates “preferring to endure the hostility of this world more than to receive its praises” (Merton 21). Since Benedict would rather have miseries of the world rather than praises from men, he fled and went to a desert (53).

*Subiaco*

Merton further discusses Benedict’s spirituality when he arrived in Subiaco (about 40 miles from Rome). For three years Benedict lived as a hermit in a cave in the valley of the river Anio (Merton 22). This is the time where he sought the desert as a way of finding reality. Many think that wanting solitude is a gift so as to not have to deal with the world. However, Benedict sought solitude as a way of facing severe trials of strength and
endurance as penitential (22). One way that Benedict survived in this way was through finding a friend named Romanus from a nearby monastery that he met along the way (22). Romanus was under the order of Abbot Theodacus and offered holy conversation to Benedict (22). Benedict arranged with him to give him a secret supply of food. This is also the moment that Benedict could be considered a monk because Romanus gave him an abbot. “The very wearing of the habit was the sign that he had consecrated his life to God by conversion of manners” (23). Merton writes that it was at this time that Benedict became serious about the path that he had chosen.

Then it was written by St. Gregory that Benedict’s life was meant to be an example for the world and therefore a candle “might shine and give light to the Church of God” (Gregory 54). Gregory writes that the Lord appeared unto the priest who had made his dinner for Easter day, and spoke unto him, “Thou hast provided good cheer for thyself, and my servant in such a place is afflicted with hunger” (54). The priest then took the meal he had prepared and went to find this man in the steep hills within a cave (54). The two men prayed together, gave thanks to God, and had a spiritual talk (54). Afterwards the priest told Benedict to rise and eat with him for it was the feast the Easter (54). Benedict did not realize what day it was because he had lived isolated from the world for so long (54). Afterwards, the priest returned to his church. Also, shepherds found him in the cave. At first they looked on him, but then eventually learned so much from him (54). Benedict taught them grace, piety, and devotion and inspired others to also go and visit him (54). They would bring him food and meat and he would give them spiritual food for their souls (54).
Gregory explains that soon after this the life of St. Benedict became famous. Many heard the reports of his virtuous life and holy life, so much so that when the abbot at a neighboring monastery died, the monastery sought Benedict out to become the new Abbot. He did not accept this request at first, but because of their relentless pleas he decided to accept it (57). He was determined to lead this group of men to a virtuous life and developed laws and rules so that they could not be unlawful and decline from the path of the holy conversation (57). Many monks were rather angry because they could no longer live their crooked way of life and could not endure his type of government (57).

Gregory defends Benedict’s actions and explains the actions of the monks with disdain. He wrote that some monks claimed that they never wanted Benedict as their Abbot and some even began to devise ways in which they could get rid of him (57). Gregory retells the story of how they decided that they would poison his wine (57). However, before Benedict drank the wine he made a sign of the cross over it according to custom and suddenly the glass broke (57). With a quiet mind, he called the monks together and asked God to have mercy on them (57). He told them that from the start that their ways of living could never agree (57). He told them to go live their own lives and that he was going to discharge himself, and with that he left and returned to the wilderness (57).

Within the writings of Dialogues II, Peter asked Gregory why Benedict would leave the group of monks, especially if they needed his guidance. Gregory replied that Benedict felt that he would have become weary trying to help them with their own faults and simultaneously diminish his own devotion (58). As result, he could have lost himself and not helped them find themselves. “For so often as by infectious motion we are carried too
far from ourselves, we remain the same men that we were before, because we are wandering about other men's affairs and not considering the state of our own soul” (58). Gregory goes on to say that it was important for Benedict to be with monks that wanted to learn and to be instructed rather to stay in a place that neither wanted to be done (58).

After this first attempt of guiding monks as an Abbot failed, Benedict continued to become famous for his miracles. This fame caused him to leave and begin his own monastery near where he lived as a hermit in Subiaco (59). Two patricians entrusted their sons Maurus and Placid to his care (59). Many others joined him as well so as groupings of small monasteries were created in order to control the colony of men (59). Each monastery had 12 monks and a prior and Benedict was in charge overall (Atwell 228). Benedict ruled these monasteries for 25 years (228). However, a jealous priest attempted to grow dissension among the monks and tried to poison Benedict's bread (Gregory 59). Because of this plot to end his life, Benedict decided to leave for yet another location; this time he arrived at Monte Cassino in 529.

These stories of Benedict reveal what is seen in either statues or medals representing St. Benedict. Some show a crow with a piece of bread depicting the attempt monks made at Subiaco. Some images may include a chalice with a serpent coming out of it to represent the poisoning at the first monastery. In all images St. Benedict is holding his Rule.

Monte Cassino

After leaving Subiaco, Benedict continued to face many battles of the same contempt held by others, according to Gregory in Dialogues II. Many people openly fought against
him. As a result, Benedict only traveled with loyal monks who supported him. He found a town named Cassino on the side of a high mountain about 80 miles south of Rome (Gregory 68). Gregory states that inside this town was an ancient chapel where the foolish and simple people worshipped the god of Apollo (68). There were also woods surrounding it in which the wicked and infidels loomed as well (68). Benedict came to this place and crushed the idols, overthrew the altar, set fire on the woods, and built an oratory of St. Martin in place of the temple for Apollo (68). He also built an oratory of St. John the Baptist over the altar (68). He preached from this place and converted those people to embrace the faith of Christ (68). Here he reaches his full development and evolution through all the stages of monastic life.

Thomas Merton writes more on Saint Benedict and his life in his book, *The Rule of Saint Benedict: Initiation into the Monastic Tradition*. He begins with a brief outline of his life that he too has referenced Schuster and Gregory. Merton describes how Benedict reached full development once he reached Monte Cassino: “The fruit of his maturity and experience and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit” (18). He was an ascete, hermit, Pachomian cenobite, and had finally created his own formula to live by, *The Rule*.

*St. Benedict's Character*

The Second Book of *Dialogues* begins by describing St. Benedict as “a man of venerable life, blessed by grace and blessed in name, for he was called Benedictus or Bennet: who from his younger years, carried always the mind of an old man” (Gregory 51). St. Gregory discusses Benedict in the highest regard “for his age was inferior to his virtue” (51).
Merton refers to some characteristics of Benedict that he studied by reading the *Dialogues* from Pope Gregory. These characteristics describe Benedict as being mature and serious. “The seriousness and gravity of Benedict have a charismatic quality, which is therefore radiant and joyous” (19). Another trait or characteristic that was known from Benedict was his detachment. As a wise child he kept himself distant and aloof from the world, especially when he realized some of the worldly values (19). Merton continues to explain that this perspective and higher level of spirituality is why he withdrew from society and fled to live in solidarity (20). Benedict also had an unshakeable faith and confidence in God and that he would always be taken care of. His only goal was to please God alone. Therefore, Benedict always applied himself fervently to prayer (35). Possibly more than anything, Merton writes that Benedict was kind and compassionate and understood human frailty (34).

Possibly one of the best examples to give to his monks and anyone else reading the *Rule*, is that Benedict worked and was a part of the community within the monastery. Merton explains how Benedict performed daily duties and held himself accountable to the same level as the monks (36). Even more, he was a man of peace. He acquired such a deep connection to God and was removed from the noises of the world (36). However, Benedict never wanted fanfare for what he did or require fuss about how he lived his life (Merton 37). “He simply lived the Gospel without talking about it” (37). Merton writes one of the best sentences to describe Benedict, “Benedict was a soul of the highest contemplation, whose prayer was united with lofty charismatic gifts as well as attaining the heights of mysticism” (38). It is evident that Benedict’s character was worthy of sainthood.
Chapter two within *Dialogues* discusses how Benedict was able to deny temptation. This story is what made Benedict the master of virtue. The story begins with a little black bird that began to fly about his face when he was praying (Gregory 55). Once he made the sign of the cross, the bird flew away (55). Suddenly, he had a terrible temptation of the flesh (55). A wicked spirit which was seen in the bird put in his memory that of a woman that he would often see. However, Benedict was assisted with God’s grace and took charge of his actions. He came to thick briers and nettle bushes in the wooded area he was traveling (55). He took off all of his garments and threw himself into the bushes (55). He wallowed in them so long that all of his flesh was torn (55). “By the wounds of his body, he cured the wounds of his soul” (55). “In that he turned pleasure into pain and he overcame the sin” (55). From that time on he felt that all temptation of pleasure subdued. Many of his followers abandoned the world so they could become his scholars. Then because Benedict was freed from temptation he was able to become the master of virtue (55).

* Miracles

One of the first miracles that is noted in the second book of Dialogues about St. Benedict is the story of the broken sieve (52). His nurse borrowed a sieve from a neighbor to make clean wheat (52). Unexpectedly, the sieve fell off the table and broke into two pieces causing the nurse to cry with sorrow (52). When St. Benedict learned of her sorrow he went into deep prayer with tears (52). Afterwards, once he rose he found the sieve was whole. He took it back to the nurse to comfort her (52). Soon, everyone in the area heard of this miracle and to remember it the sieve was hung at the church door so not only would
the people living then but also their posterity might understand how “God’s grace did work with him upon his first renouncing of the world” (52).

There are numerous stories throughout Dialogues about the happenings at each of the monasteries that show the work of Benedict (man of God). One example is that of Maurus who was sent by Benedict to save a young boy who fell into the water. He raced to the water to rescue him and was able to walk over the top of the water to reach and grab his hair (68). He claimed that the will was not of his own, but because Benedict commanded him to do so (68).

A story that lay people can relate to is one of envy (69). As with any good act there are wicked people who are envious and seek to demolish it. A priest named Florentius of a nearby church began to envy Benedict’s virtue and wanted to stop as many people as he could from visiting Benedict (69). This man saw that he could not stop people from visiting Benedict and that the more he tried the more fame Benedict’s holy life received. Yet this priest had no intention of modeling after Benedict’s virtue (69). He, however, was led by the envious state and sent Benedict a loaf of poisoned bread (69). Benedict received it and was thankful, yet he was wise to what was hidden in it (69). At dinner, Benedict commanded a crow to take the loaf and leave it where no man could find it (69). Florentius saw that he would never be able to destroy Benedict and decided to try to destroy his disciples (69). He sent seven naked young women to dance and play in front of the monks in hopes that they would inflame their minds of sinful lust (69). Once Benedict saw what measures were being taken to destroy him he felt he could no longer put these young men
at risk, so he decided to leave the monasteries (69). He was not only 10 miles away when he received word that Florentius had died and he was requested to return (69).

In addition to these miracles, Benedict was also known for the spirit of prophecy. He was able to foretell what was to happen and also be able to tell what had been done in his absence (71). For example, the monks in his monastery were ordered not to eat or drink anything out of their cloister (71). On a certain day, monks went out on business and stayed at a house of a religious woman and ate and drank (71). When they returned, Benedict questioned them and asked them where they had eaten (71). At first they lied and said they did not eat (71). However, Benedict recounted the details of their journey and they trembled and fell to his feet confessing what they had done (71). This was similar to a story of another man who was traveling to see Benedict and who also fell into temptation and ate and drank (71). This was an example of the devil talking to the people and being able to persuade them to do wrong.

There are many stories that St. Gregory published within the Second book of the Dialogues that describe the prophecies of Benedict. There are stories about the suppression of one of the Abbies, how wine was hidden, souls being delivered from the devil and that a monk received a gift of handkerchiefs. The main idea of all these short stories is that Benedict had favor with God and had the wisdom and virtue to see beyond evil. The conversation that takes place between Gregory and Peter shows that Peter asks a lot of questions regarding the records that Gregory is explaining. Gregory continues to cite example after example to show the true character of Benedict. He explains stories of Benedict healing leprosy, taming dragons, giving money to a poor man, delivering a man
from the devil, etc. Peter asks Gregory how Benedict was able to work such miracles. He explains that sometimes the miracles were done through prayer and some were done through power given by God.

Another well-known miracle of St. Benedict was that of the unmovable stone, according to the Dialogues of St. Gregory. One day monks at the abbey were trying to rebuild a section and they were in search of stones. They saw one close by and attempted to move it. The heaviness of the stone prevented it from being moved, no matter how many monks attempted. They were sure it was the devil’s doing. They asked Benedict to help them drive the devil away. He came and began to pray over the stone and made a sign of the cross over it. Suddenly, the monks were able to lift the rock with ease. This story can easily translate through metaphors into most people’s lives, yet, as with all things, Benedict had complete faith and trust in God to provide and care for his people.

Gregory also mentions a story of which Benedict’s sister, Scholastica. The two had met for a visit and Scholastica had begged her brother to stay the night. He said he could not stay because he had to get back to the Abbey. She went into prayer with her hands on the table. At that moment rain began followed by thunder and lightning. As a result, Benedict could not leave on his journey back to the monastery. At first he was angry and could not believe that she was able to send forth this type of weather to prevent him from leaving. However, the miracle of rain was able to keep Benedict with his sister for another night so they could continue their spiritual and heavenly talk (95). The next day his sister returned to the nunnery and he returned to the Abbey (95). In three days he lifted up his eyes as he was standing in his cell and saw the soul of his sister ascend into heaven in the
likeness of a dove. He sent for her earthly body and had it buried at the Abbey where the planned grave was placed.

Scholastica (480-543) followed in Benedict’s footsteps and lived a life devoted to God by being consecrated at an early age. After Benedict lived in Monte Cassino, she settled at Plombariola and began a religious community for women (Atwell 264). Scholastica is the patron saint of all Benedictine nuns.

*The Rule of St. Benedict*

The Second book of the *Dialogues* of St. Gregory ends with his acknowledgment of the *Rule of St. Benedict*. “But that the man of God amongst so many miracles, for which he was so famous in the world, was also sufficiently learned in divinity: for he wrote a rule for the monks, both excellent for discretion and also eloquent for the style. Of whose life and conversation, if any be curious to know further, he may in the institution of that rule understand all his manner of life and discipline: for the holy man could not otherwise teach, than himself lived” (Gregory 99).

According to Atwell, most believe that Benedict created the *Rule of St. Benedict* at the end of his life. Many theorize that he utilized text from *The Rule of the Master* and adapted it to the life that he had lived surrounded by monks. He made his new text short, which explains his compassion for others and his realistic approach to life (Atwell 229). Benedict was not attempting to create an Order nor was he attempting to make it commandments. It was however, made to be spiritual. Merton adds that many say that the Rule was written after 534 because Benedict quotes St. Cesarius (Merton 18). Chapter 4
gives a complete and detailed description of the *Rule of St. Benedict* and the Benedictine Order.

*Benedict’s Death and Remembrance*

According to Atwell, St. Benedict died during the Gothic War on March 21, 547 and that is also his feast day (Atwell 229). Benedict and his monks fed people during the war to help with the famine and tried to intervene to prevent cruelty. Atwell also notes that Totila, King of the Goths, sought counsel from Benedict (229).

Merton describes Benedict’s death as one of peace, mainly because it took place on Holy Thursday, 547, but also because he died the same way that he lived his life – in prayer (38). He was surrounded by fellow monks “standing” in prayer just after receiving the Holy Eucharist (38). Because of this many Benedictines have always regarded St. Benedict as a special patron of a happy death. Benedict was canonized by Pope Honorius III in 1220.

According to the Order of St. Benedict organization, to commemorate St. Benedict, there was a medal a newly designed medal struck in 1880 under the supervision of the monks of Montecassino, Italy, to mark the 1400th anniversary of the birth of St. Benedict. The design of this medal was produced at St. Martin’s Archabbey in Beuron, Germany, at the request of the prior of Montecassino, Very Rev. Boniface Krug, O.S.B. (1838-1909). Prior Boniface was a native of Baltimore and originally a monk of St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania, until he was chosen to become prior and latter archabbot of Montecassino according to the Order of St. Benedict organization. Since that time, the Jubilee Medal of 1880 has proven to be more popular throughout the Christian world than any other medal ever struck to honor St. Benedict.
There are many images of miracles that are incorporated into the medals of St. Benedict according to the Order of St. Benedict organization. For example, on the right side of Benedict there is a poisoned cup that was shattered once he prayed and made the sign of the cross over it. To the left is a raven about to carry away a loaf of poisoned bread that a jealous enemy had sent to St. Benedict. Above the cup and the raven are the Latin words: \textit{Crux s. patris Benedicti} (The Cross of our holy father Benedict). One the outside of the medal, surrounding the figure of Benedict, are the Latin words: \textit{Eius in obitu nostro praesentia muniamur!} (May we be strengthened by his presence in the hour of our death).

On the back of the medal is a large cross and on the arms of the cross are the initial letters of a rhythmic Latin prayer: Crux sacra sit mihi lux! Nunquam draco sit mihi dux! (May the holy cross be my light! May the dragon never be my guide!). In the angles of the cross, the letters C S P B stand for Crux Sancti Patris Benedicti (The cross of our holy father Benedict). Above the cross is the word pax (peace) that has been a Benedictine motto for centuries.

Around the margin of the back of the medal, the letters \textit{V R S N S M V - S M Q L I V B} are the initial letters, as mentioned above, of a Latin prayer of exorcism against Satan: Vade retro Satana! Nunquam suade mihi vana! Sunt mala quae libas. Ipse venena bibas! (Begone Satan! Never tempt me with your vanities! What you offer me is evil. Drink the poison yourself!)

Since scripture and prayer were Benedict’s focus in life, he was able to translate that into his \textit{Rule}. He sought to please God and only God. Therefore, his creation of this book was not meant to begin an Order that would essentially be spread across the world. However, because his words are kind and gentle they speak to so many regardless of religion.
Benedict’s life had periods of time that questioned his want and need to communicate with others. The hostile atmosphere in Italy caused him to reject community and communication with anyone. However, he later learns that the same hostile environments he lived through taught him how essential communication is for life. As a result, he devised the *Rule of St. Benedict* which addresses these concerns. Chapter 5 will discuss the *Rule* in detail and how it addresses hospitality.
Chapter 5

The Rule of St. Benedict

The introduction of the *Benedictine Handbook* begins by stating that when St. Benedict of Nursia put down his pen in the sixth century he completed one of the “most remarkable and long-lasting achievements of his and any other century” (Marett-Crosby vii). The text has been shared not just with Benedictine monks but also with oblates, friends, pilgrims, and visitors. What makes the *Rule of St. Benedict* so extraordinary is that most people learn something new about themselves and how to live their lives on earth (3). This straightforward text that is 73 chapters and less than 100 pages provides spiritual inspiration, but with structure and directness. Patrick Barry explains in the introduction of the *Benedictine Handbook* that while Benedict wrote this text to guide monks in their search for God, he also had an insight into the hearts of human beings in their search for self-knowledge and truth and meaning in life (Barry 4). Some chapters may deal with regulations to help make community life harmonious while others discuss discipline.

However, according to Joel Rippinger, O.S.B. who wrote “A Short History” chapter in the *Benedictine Handbook*, Benedict did not set out to establish an Order that would strictly follow the *Rule of St. Benedict* (311). In fact, Rippinger reveals that there were several other monastic rules for men such as Rule of the Master, Rule of Columban, and Rule of Isidore that were all observed and used around the time of Benedict (311). It really wasn’t until the rule of Charlemagne (742-814) in the eighth century that the *Rule of St. Benedict* became the uniform observance to imply conformity among religious orders (311).
Charlemagne was crowned the first emperor of the Romans since the fall of the Western Roman Empire by Pope Leo III. He was known for unifying Europe during the Middle Ages because of his goal in uniting all subjects and converting them to Christianity. In addition to Charlemagne, the Rule was spread by missionary work of individual monks.

Who are Benedictines?

*The Benedictine Handbook* explains the Benedictine life in a detailed way. It states that the Benedictine monk, or also known as the black monk based on the color of the habit, follows the *Rule of St. Benedict*. Monastic men and women wear a uniform to symbolize the status in the Church. Those who wear a habit increase visibility and awareness (344). The version of the *Rule of St. Benedict* for this research was translated and commented by Terrence G. Kardong. St. Benedict recognizes that there are four different kinds of monks in his opening chapter of the *Rule* which include the cenobites, anchorites, sarabaites, and gyrovagues (34). The cenobites are those who are based in a monastery and fulfill their service to the Lord under a rule and an abbot (34). The Anchorite is known as a hermit who has learned from others in the community to survive on their own with the help of God to battle against evil temptations of the body and mind (34). The Sarabaites have no formal training or guidance and have no standards. According to Benedict, this kind of monk is appalling (34). Lastly, the gyrovagues spend their lives traveling and enjoying hospitality as they are always on the move. Benedict sees them as being worse than the Sarabaites (35).

In addition to the different types of monks, there are different ways of observing the *Rule of St. Benedict* according to Dominic Milroy who wrote “Benedictines Worldwide”
chapter in the *Benedictine Handbook*. First, one can join the Order of Saint Benedict (O.S.B.) and participate and live in a monastery, yet still there are still many variations within monasteries, according to Milroy (323). There are large monasteries with 100 or more and small monasteries with less than five; some monasteries have parishes and schools and some do no work outside; there are monasteries that are rural and some specialize in agriculture, academics, education or missionary work (323).

Furthermore, there is no link between monasticism and the priesthood. One can follow the Benedictine tradition and not have the responsibilities or education of that of a priest, but that does allow lay people to also participate in the observance of the *Rule of St. Benedict* (324). These people are known as Oblates (or Third Order) and are associated with a particular monastery. The *Benedictine Handbook* defines an Oblate as “People who believe that the *Rule* has value for them as they live out their daily lives connected to a monastery” (346). Oblates may live in or outside of the monastery.

According to Milroy, there is also organization for women who follow the *Rule of St. Benedict*. Milroy explains that the Church recognizes two classes of women dedicated to living their life according to the *Rule*. The women that live in an enclosed life in a convent or monastery are nuns and those who are active with missionary work outside of the cloister are sisters. Milroy states that there are more than double the numbers of women (about 17,000) more than men who follow the *Rule of St. Benedict* (324). Especially in the United States, consecrated women were an important part of Benedictine history according to Joel Rippinger’s book *The Benedictine Order in the United States*. Rippinger states that Boniface Wimmer petitioned the superior of the St. Walburga’s Convent in Eichstatt,
Bavaria to let sisters travel to St. Mary’s, Pennsylvania. Three left in June 1852 and began the proposed school in St. Mary’s. The conditions were difficult and the sisters faced adversity with learning a new language, poverty, and harsh living conditions. There was also a power struggle between the convent in Bavaria and Boniface Wimmer. However, more nuns continued to enter St. Mary’s and by 1855 there were 39. Many tensions continued for the sisters, but still their numbers continued to grow stated Rippinger.

Still there is another group that follows the *Rule of St. Benedict* very closely known as the Cistercians according to Nivard Kinsella OCSO. Kinsella wrote an essay in the *Benedictine Handbook* titled, “The Cistercian Tradition.” The Cistercians were founded in 1098 in Burgundy by a group of monks and the abbot, Robert from the Abbey of Molesme (329). These monks were seeking a “literal observance” of the *Rule of St. Benedict*. Kinsella explains that Robert was called back to the abbey and his two companions, Alberic and Stephen Harding succeeded him as abbot (329). Stephen wrote “The Charter of Charity” as the first law of the order (329). Known as The New Monastery, it had very few join in the first several years. In 1113, Bernard of Fontaines joined the community and with him 30 new members (329). He became very powerful and left a spiritual legacy that still inspires monks and nuns today (330). There are also Cistercian nuns that also began with Bernard through his only sister Humbelina (330). The Order became very wealthy and large due to the lay people (330).

Kinsella continues to explain that after the Reformation, the Cistercians reacted by returning to the strictest observance of the *Rule* known as The Strict Observance (332). The leader of this movement was Abbot Armand-Jean de Rance of La Grande Trappe in
France (332). This reform was so widespread the monks became known as Trappists (332). This particular group was also known for total abstinence of meat and a vow of perpetual silence. Milroy explained that later in 1892, Pope Leo XIII had the abbots create two separate orders of the Cistercians, which were the Cistercians of the Strict Observance (OCSO and known as the Trappists) and the Sacred Order of Cistercians (SOC) (332). The Trappists have many writers on spirituality and monastic life.

According to Milroy, one of the best known is an American monk, Thomas Merton. He has published over 50 books and many articles and letters. Several other writers have continued to publish and have helped keep the interest level of the Cistercian tradition alive and growing (335). The Cistercian monk must have liberty of spirit and “must constantly remind himself that the whole of the Law is summed up in the two commandments, love of God and love of the neighbor” (334).

*The Impact of the Rule of St. Benedict*

Colman O Clabaigh writes an all-inclusive chapter in The *Benedictine Handbook* titled “Benedictine Holy Places” that has compiled a list of monasteries that have impact based on historical and symbolic significance from Italy, France, Belgium, England, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, and Spain (270). Beginning in Italy, the *Rule* has been spread to other countries all over the world (270). Monks and missionaries who follow the *Rule* have created monasteries of all shapes and sizes all with the commitment to the search of God.

First, the Monastery of St. Scholastica and the Sacro Speco (holy cave) at Subiaco are one of the earliest and moving sites, according to Clabaigh (270). The area is south of Rome
in an area of great natural beauty. Also in Italy is Monte Cassino. What is amazing about this location is that it has been destroyed four times and rebuilt and is the personal shrine for St. Benedict and St. Scholastica, states Clabaigh (271).

Clabaigh then goes on to explain that Benedictine monasticism in France has a lot of tradition as well. The *Rule* was followed by many monasteries alongside with legislation of the Irishman St. Columbanus (271). Medieval reforms took place in Cluny and Citeaux. However, the tradition became nearly extinct after the French Revolution until its revival in the 19th century, stated Clabaigh (272). The monastery of Solesmes near Le Mans is the most famous (272). La Pierre-qui-Vire is another distinctive monastery that combined “Benedictine and Trappist observance with a missionary charism” (272). In Belgium the Abbey of Maredsous was established in 1872 and the monastery of Cheverogne was established in 1925 with the intention of unifying the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches (272).

In England, the *Rule* has been followed since the seventh century with Augustine of Canterbury, according to Clabaigh (273). More about Augustine of Canterbury can be found in the next section, Historical Overview. The Benedictines were influential in the pre-reformation church. “The genius of English Benedictine observance lies in its moderation, urbanity and adaptability” (273). Elizabeth I forced the monks abroad where most of them became missionaries while the nuns stayed and had a scholarly existence. According to Clabaigh, Benedictine monks are represented in Ireland at Glenstal in Co. Limerick and Rostrevor in Co. Down and the oldest is the Nuns of Kylemore, which is a popular tourist destination (273).
And lastly, Clabaigh adds that one of the oldest and continuously occupied monasteries in the world is found in Switzerland at the Abbey of Einsiedeln (274). Its image of the Black Madonna is a major pilgrimage center. The Abbey of Melk in Austria overlooks the Danube and is a wonderful piece of Baroque architecture in Europe (274). Next, Germany experienced a revival of Benedictine monasteries in 1863 when the monastery of St. Martin at Beuron was re-established (274). Lastly, the Abbey of Montserrat near Barcelona in Catalonia is well known in Spain because of its dramatic presence on the side of a steep, serrated mountain. It is also known for its boys’ choir, an important library and art collection and a major publishing house (275).

Perhaps to understand the magnitude and effect that the Rule has had on people is to understand how it has been used since its conception in 534. An historical overview will explain how the growth of Benedictine monasteries grew to what it is today and how this simple text continues to touch lives.

Historical Overview

No source has recorded that Benedict set out to begin a new order of monks. Rather the opportunity presented itself when he was approached by a monastery in Subiaco. As stated in Chapter 3, Benedict left this monastery because the jealousy of the monks toward Benedict caused them to attempt to kill him. This story is reiterated by Lowrie Daly in Benedictine Monasticism. After leaving, Benedict founded 12 more monasteries nearby. Then he left that area and began another monastery in Monte Cassino (78). Again this time period is hazy because all sources rely only upon St. Gregory in his recount of Benedict in Dialogues as stated by Daly. These 14 are the only original “Benedictine” monasteries in his
lifetime. From these original 14, it is not quite clear how the initial spread of Benedict’s Rule took place. There are some indications of certain monasteries, but there is nothing credible that is historically proven correct. Daly explains that the manuscript is difficult to trace because it had been copied so many times and used in hundreds of monasteries (83). The great modern paleographer, Ludwig Traube, published Text-History of the Rule in 1898 making it the first study of the Rule of St. Benedict according to Daly (83). Daly states that it is more probable that the Rule was written in pieces and not for just one specific monastery (83). The first revision was in the 6th century and by the 8th century it had three revisions stated Daly (84). The third edition combined the first and the original edition and was termed Textus Receptus and is used in the Benedictine houses to the present century (84).

However, there is evidence that the third Abbot of Monte Cassino began to spread word of the Rule outside of the monastery. Then when Monte Cassino was taken over in 581, the monks fled to Rome taking with them the Rule according to Daly (84). The monks stayed there until 883 when it was attacked by the Saracens and had to flee again to a monastery in Teano (85). Unfortunately, the monastery was destroyed by fire in 896 and the Rule was destroyed with it, stated Daly (85).

What especially helped the diffusion of the Rule was Gregory the Great. Gregory admired Benedict and converted his own family. His admiration is clearly represented in his second volume of Dialogues that was previously explained in Chapter 3. But what also helped the spread and ultimately save the use of the Rule of St. Benedict was Charlemagne, according to Daly (85). Daly states that Charlemagne was interested in regulating monasteries and had visited Monte Cassino and read the Rule (85). He wrote to the Abbot
and asked for a copy from which many other copies were made and therefore preserving the original Rule was preserved (85). Daly states that in 817, Louis the Pious ordained that the Rule of St. Benedict should be observed in all the monasteries of the empire (85). Exact copies of the Rule had been preserved in a library in St. Gall, Switzerland in 914 and the title is Sangallensis (85).

Many say that The Rule of Saint Benedict began Western monasticism. What is Western monasticism? It differed from what preceded it because it was the pursuit of spiritual life in the community, rather than in secluded cells of the solitaries, which was the form of religious life that had been prevalent in the desert of Egypt and in the East. When Daly was writing his book he gathered knowledge from classic work done on the subject from Dom David Knowles who wrote and published The Monastic Order in England and from Dom Philibert Schmitz who wrote a seven-volume history of the tradition (ix). Daly states that once the Rule was highly publicized throughout Europe, people learned to live, work, and pray. As a result, the Benedictine order was often credited with saving Western Europe, especially after the barbarian invasions (15). Spirituality had a social dimension. Daly explains how Christian conversion took place mainly among tribes where the leader or king was often the first person to convert and then the group followed (16). However, there were conversions made out of force and from protection of a neighboring Catholic monarch (16).

According to Daly, Saint Augustine is the third person after St. Gregory and Charlemagne who is credited for spreading Benedict’s ideas of monastic life, especially into England (103). At the time of the sixth century England was "pagan in religion, divided in
sentiments, and barbaric in custom” (103) according to Daly. Pope Gregory sent Augustine out on a mission with 30 others in 595 to evangelize (103). This was a dangerous trip. Previous attempts had been made to go to England, but the Saxon conquest of England forced many of the missionaries into hiding (103). Along the way, horror stories scared the missionaries to the point that they wanted to turn back to Italy. However, Pope Gregory felt that this was the opportune time to evangelize and encouraged them to proceed to spread Christianity (103). His belief was tied to the fact that King Ethelbert of Kent married a Christian princess, Bertha (103). Once the missionaries arrived in 597, St. Augustine established the first English Benedictine monastery at Canterbury according to Daly (103).

One book that has helped trace the history of Benedictines in England through the present day is Monks of England, edited by Daniel Rees. This compilation of articles written by contributors who created original scholarship about the Benedictine congregation did so to mark the 1400th anniversary of St. Augustine’s landing in England to convert the Anglo-saxons to Christianity (ix). It begins by explaining how St. Gregory was the man behind the mission, according to the first contributor David Foster. Then it explains the contribution Augustine made once he arrived in Kent.

Margaret Truran then writes about the “Roman Mission” in chapter one of Monks of England. Truran explains that once Augustine started to evangelize, King Aethelberht went to listen to their meetings (22). He wasn’t convinced at first, but he did allow them to continue to preach as long as they didn’t force anyone to convert (22). He continued to listen to them and eventually as converted himself and was baptized (22).
baptism, King Aethelberht did not force others to convert, but many soon followed anyway. Truran states that while the date has been disputed for the baptism, she points to Bede who published *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* in 731. From here it is gathered that it took place the first year of the mission, which would be 597 (23). This was a crucial factor in the spread of Benedictine monasticism and conversion of Christianity according to Truran. Monks had permission to build and restore churches and Canterbury was to be remodeled like Rome (24).

Truran continues to explain that Augustine was consecrated bishop, and soon more missionaries arrived from Rome to help him (23). One way that the conversion was aided was by trying to respect the old pagan traditions blended with the new Christian ones. Pagan temples were transitioned into Christian churches and festivals transitioned into feast days (24). Canterbury itself was built on an ancient church. Augustine was only in England for seven years before he died in 604 according to Bede (33). The Rule became the spiritual model of whole areas across the continent.

From there the missions spread to Ireland and further onto the entire continent of England thanks to others such as Wilfred, bishop of Northumbria and later named Boniface according to another contributor to the *Monks of England* book Nikola Proksch. Proksch writes how Irish monks performed missionary work by showing a life of prayer (39). However, it was Boniface that had a wide geographical reach for his missionary work.

Then another contributor to the *Monks of England* book, Benedicta Ward, writes about the missionary dimension that spread into a revival of monasteries throughout the continent. Ward writes that there is no doubt that the sixth and seventh centuries in
Northumbria saw a “most remarkable flowering of religion and culture” (55). Ward explains that Bede was the greatest scholar of his age and the recorder of this time period. “Bede owed everything to the Roman mission, but his heroes were the Irish” according to Ward (56). Amazingly though, Bede was aware of the shortcomings of monastic life when it was led by people who did not fully understand it according to Ward (56). This turbulence caused many difficulties in the following years.

The destruction of English monasticism occurred once the Danish invaded. However the tenth century proved a revival according to Oswald McBride in chapter four of Monks of England. Alfred the Great helped defeat the Danish and attempted to repair the damage caused by a century of fighting. He knew the church had the potential for strength and tried to resurrect it in the last years of his reign according to McBride (69).

Furthermore, Anthony Maret-Crosby explains the Norman Reinvigoration chapter in Monks of England that emphasizes that The Norman Conquest impacted religious life. Then by the 11th century, there was a great outpouring of Benedictine life (84). However, there was much social change that affected Benedictine monasticism such as urbanization, democratization, and massive emigration patterns. Now there were multiple forms of religious life, not just Catholicism. Furthermore, in the 16th century the English Reformation repressed half of the monasteries and the French Revolution closed masses of monasteries in France (199).

Benedictine monasteries revived in the 19th century by Dom Prosper Gueranger in a monastery at Solesmes, France. What also encouraged growth in Benedictine monasteries at this time was the immigration of Germans to the United States. Boniface Wimmer
founded the first Benedictine monastery in the United States known as Saint Vincent Archabbey located in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. The first biography of Archabbot Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B. was published by Jerome Oetgen in 1976 titled, *An American Abbot Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B. 1809-1887*. A more complete and newer version was published in 1997 after the 150th anniversary of the founding of the first U.S. monastery. Oetgen includes a detailed description of Wimmer’s life and the vision he had to broaden Benedictine monasteries outside of Europe into the United States.

According to Oetgen, there have been 21 American Benedictine abbeys and independent priories with over 1200 monks who continue the Benedictine tradition that St. Benedict and Boniface Wimmer initiated (Xiii). The monastic communities that Wimmer established are the following: St. Vincent in Pennsylvania, St. John’s in Minnesota, St. Benedict’s in Kansas, St. Mary’s in New Jersey, Belmont in North Carolina, St. Bernard’s in Alabama, St. Procopius in Illinois, and Holy Cross in Colorado (xiv). Derived from these monasteries are parishes, schools, missions and priories that do work in Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Brazil, Taiwan, and the United States (xiv).

Similarly to Benedict, Boniface Wimmer was born into a world that had religious turmoil and political upheavals. Born in 1809 in Germany, Wimmer was an excellent student and entered into the seminary at Regensburg age 17 to study philosophy, according to Oetgen (54). The next year he entered The University of Munich. He wanted to work with the poor Germans in America and be instrumental in spreading the Order of St. Benedict for which he was willing to make any sacrifice (54). The easiest way was for him to begin his own monastery. He took along with him 18 young recruits in pursuit of
Pennsylvania near the diocese of Pittsburgh where he heard the earth was fertile, the climate mild, and the price of land reasonable (62).

The key benefactor of Boniface Wimmer and the American Benedictines was King Ludwig I of Bavaria (78). The group left August 10, 1846 aboard the Iowa for a six-week voyage (78). Other Benedictines had come previously to the United States before Boniface, but none had attempted to introduce monastic life (78). “Wimmer alone had the vision and the drive to transplant the ancient order of St. Benedict from Europe to America and on October 24, 1846 his long-held dream was fulfilled” (78). Beginning with a two-story brick school house named St. Vincent, Wimmer worked diligently to grow Benedictine monasteries throughout the country.

Joel Rippinger also writes about Wimmer’s life in his book, *An American Abbot: Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B., 1809-1887*. Rippinger explains that while Wimmer was attempting his dream that there was discontent felt by many young men under Wimmer to the point that some were relocated (Rippinger 23). Furthermore, nuns of St. Marys and others felt slighted because funds that were allocated for them were redirected by Wimmer (23). It was not just monks who didn’t see eye to eye with Wimmer. Bishop O’Connor, the bishop of Pittsburgh, confronted Wimmer many times and there was conflict on a number of issues such as how the seminary was operated, creating a brewery on monastic grounds, and having St. Vincent raised to an independent house with Wimmer as superior (24). With internal and external dissent, there was a lot of criticism about Wimmer and his personality and manner of governing. Yet, he remained focused on his vision and saw it
through. By the time of his death in 1887, he created a network of monastic houses all over the United States.

Now, according to the Catalogus of the Benedictine Order published by the Benedictine Confederation in Rome, there are 373 communities of Benedictine men with 9,453 monks and 478 communities of Benedictine women with 19,989 nuns and sisters in the world. In the United States there are 50 Benedictine women with 5,124 sisters and 47 communities of Benedictine men with 2,316 monks. Each of them follows the *Rule of St. Benedict* to this day (Chittister 212).

**About the Rule**

According to Thomas Merton’s book *The Rule of St. Benedict: Initiation into the Monastic Tradition*, he claims that it is most likely that the *Rule* was not written all at once because it was evident that there were additions, corrections, etc., especially when you see conclusion in chapter 66, but eventually there were 73 (Merton 39). Benedict continued to compose the *Rule* year to year by his experiences and monastic readings. This gradual way of constructing it through these everyday experiences is what probably helped the *Rule* last as long as it has (39). Merton also states that it is very clear that the *Rule* was not only for Monte Cassino, but for other monasteries as evident by envisioning different climates.

According to Merton, the language and text of the *Rule* is not written in classical and literary Latin, but in colloquial or “vulgar” Latin according to Merton’s research (42). Many presuppose that the vulgarisms came from the copyists rather than from Benedict himself, states Merton (42). He goes on to states that there were two main groups that copied the ancient manuscripts. Group 1 had fewer vulgarisms and was the most widely accepted
version in the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries (42). Group 2 was copied from a text at Monte Cassino and believed to be the original from Benedict (42). Still there is a third group that combines these two texts and is the one most commonly used since the Middle Ages, explains Merton (42). With that being stated, there are variations found that can affect how one interprets the Rule, especially since there is an average of one variation per page (44).

There are countless commentaries on the Rule that to list all of them would be endless. Paul the Deacon (Paul Warnerid) a monk from Monte Cassino wrote the first commentary in 786 (47). However, Merton does commend Dom C. Butler with the best modern commentary. Merton believes him to be a great modern representative of the black Benedictine tradition (50). Merton’s commentary however, is explained to be a spiritual commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict. Other commentaries that are useful would be Joan Chittister in her book, The Rule of St. Benedict: Insights for the Ages. Terrance Kardong’s The Rule of St. Benedict, and Esther de Waal’s A life Giving Way: A Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict.

Many believe that all that use the Rule of St. Benedict are all considered to be Benedictines. However, this is not the case. Merton believes that the Cistercians sought to penetrate more perfectly and more deeply into the full teaching of St. Benedict and the first Cistercians were exclusive in matters of observance (10). There is an emphasis on poverty, manual labor, silence, enclosure, mortification, etc. “Just as Moses led the chosen people out of Egypt, so St. Benedict by his charismatic action leads us out of the darkness of the world into the light of God” according to Merton (11).
The Rule Chapter by Chapter

The Rule of St. Benedict begins with a tone that is welcoming and approachable. The version of the Rule of St. Benedict used in this analysis is translated by Terrence G. Kardong. Anyone reading The Rule of St. Benedict for the first time senses warmth in the text that reads as follows: “Listen, child of God, to the guidance of your teacher. Attend to the message you hear and make sure that it pierces to your heart, so that you may accept with willing freedom and fulfil by the way you live the directions that come from your loving Father” (Kardong 1). From here the reader understands that Benedict is using scriptures as the authority while at the same time relating them back to our own lives. The spiritual guidance found using scriptures is what most find to be useful. The timeless wisdom enables the reader to feel as though Benedict himself is speaking in an intimate dialogue as a spiritual companion rather than a leader in the journey of life (5). Key chapters that are useful for those inquiring about spiritual rebirth would be chapter 4 on the guidelines for Christian living, Chapter 7 on humility and chapter 72 on the spirit of the Rule (Barry 5). However, more importantly within this particular conversation, chapter 53 on hospitality as well as chapters 56, 61, and 66 all relate to welcoming guests through hospitality. These chapters address interacting with strangers and how to make this type of communication a part of one’s life.

Chapter 4 in the Rule of St. Benedict is titled “Guidelines for Christian and monastic good practice.” This chapter truly begins with the Ten Commandments which most importantly states to love your Lord God with your whole heart and soul and strength (Kardong 80). However, the chapter continues to list many other life rules to live by such
as to avoid all pride and self-importance, not to drink or eat excessively, not to let our actions be governed by anger, not to harbor deceit in one’s heart, and to speak the truth with integrity of heart. These are just a few of the lessons reviewed in this chapter that speak to the hearts within the readers (80).

Chapter 7 discusses the value of humility. Benedict quotes scripture from Luke 14:11 that states, “For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” He then goes on to refer to Psalm 130 and 131 where we should be wary of pride because lack of humility calls for correction. He then goes on to discuss the dream that Jacob had in Genesis 28:12 where he saw a ladder with angels going up and down in a constant exchange between heaven and earth. “It is just such an exchange that we need to establish in our own lives, but with this difference for us: our proud attempts at upward climbing will really bring us down, whereas to step downwards in humility is the way to lift our spirit up towards God” (132). The notes for this chapter further explain that Christian humility is really not a human achievement at all, but rather a willingness to let God work through our weakness (137).

Chapter 72 discusses the good spirit which should inspire monastic life. The chapter states, “a good spirit which frees us from evil ways and brings us closer to God and eternal life by respecting one another with the greatest patience in tolerating weaknesses of body or character” (588). Monastic living and community life need to have love so that individuals can respect and look after one another.

_The Rule and Hospitality_
Chapter 53 is titled “The Reception of Guests” and is known as the main chapter on hospitality. The chapter begins straightforwardly by stating that “All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, who said ‘I was a stranger and you welcomed me’ (Matthew 25:35)” (420).

This is what makes this particular chapter a pillar of Benedictine life and spirituality because Saint Benedict is asking those reading the text to see Christ in the people that we meet. One may expect seclusion when we think of a monastery. However, this chapter changes that perspective. It has made the monastery a place of welcome and acceptance.

Then the text continues to explain that once the guests have been announced, the prioress or abbot and the community are to meet the stranger. First they will pray together and then have a kiss of peace (420). As far as Benedictines, this chapter is taken seriously and sees hospitality as a form of worship and part of spirituality. Joan Chittister gives an analysis of the chapter in her book The Rule of Saint Benedict: Insights for the Ages. She writes that hospitality is part of the wholeness that is the Rule of Saint Benedict. She states that the message to the stranger is clear. “Come right in and disturb our perfect lives. You are the Christ for us today” (141). This message helps put into perspective how we should approach a similar situation in our lives today. Do we talk to people we see in the elevator or say hello to the security guards in our places of employment? Do we invite neighbors into our homes or connect with people while we are getting coffee? Chittister states that Benedict wants us to let the barriers of our hearts down so that the unexpected can come in (141).
“All humility that needs to be shown in addressing a guest on arrival or departure. By a bow of the head or by a complete prostration of the body, Christ is to be adored and welcomed in them” (Kardong 420). As previously explained, humility is also a component of the Rule of St. Benedict, but within the context of hospitality, humility is needed in order to acknowledge the stranger and he or she they may have to offer. In return, the Benedictine hospitality gives the guest physical comfort as well as spiritual instruction and human support. “Benedictine hospitality is not simply bed and bath; it is home and family” (Chittister 142). Benedict attempts to teach us how to learn from one another by focusing on the other entirely.

“Great care and concern are to be shown in receiving poor people and pilgrims, because in them more particularly Christ is received; our very awe of the rich guarantees them special respect” (Kardong 420). This aspect of Benedictine hospitality introduces those marginal in society. Christine Pohl recognizes this in her book, Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition. Pohl states that strangers that are marginal in society such as homeless, refugees, migrants, and persons with severe disabilities desperately need hospitality and can benefit greatly from receiving a warm welcome, but it doesn’t have to be that these people have the hardest circumstances either. Hospitality can bring connections, community, comfort and a place where they feel companionship, recognition, and care (101). Pohl sees hospitality as multilayered because those that are marginal have such a wide array of needs. Once that door is open to everyone, the guest become increasingly diverse yet equips us to open the door wider and more often with less fear and with more confidence (103).
Next, the text continues to point out that the kitchen for the guest and for the abbot is separate so as not to disrupt the community (Kardong 420). Also the guest quarters are to be entrusted to one God-fearing member where there is adequate bedding (420). This part of the chapter helps to give balance to the life of a monk – something that Benedict always makes a priority. At a time when travel through Europe became dangerous, hostile and difficult, monasteries became the hospice system where anyone could be received at any time. As a result, Benedict did not want the monks to lose their values and structures of their lives. Therefore, he took into consideration a system where only certain monks had the responsibility to care for the guests so that others would not be disturbed. Benedict commands that if we become less, then we can be no gift for the guest at all (420).

“The Hospitality that Benedict teaches is not a social event but a holy event” wrote Verna A. Holyhead and Lynne Muir in their book, The Gift of Saint Benedict. They continue on to describe Chapter 53 in the Rule of Saint Benedict as something that is familiar to most of us and that is homelessness and loneliness. “In each of us there is some inner homelessness, some alienation from ourselves and one another which longs for a welcome” (92). Holyhead and Muir reaffirm that Benedict realizes what an imposition or disruption it might be to stop one’s daily tasks and tend to the stranger. However, in Benedict’s eyes, the person who has no time for others has no time for God (93). Instead, Benedict calls his monks to “become shelter to one another, accepting each other with their differences of personality, gifts, and physical resources” and thereby not remaining strangers (92). Even though Benedict is addressing monks, these guidelines can be applicable to any person within a community. Above all else, just by making hospitality an integral part of how we view others who are unknown to us keeps us from being completely individualistic. It
forces us to set aside our own personal agendas and listen and tend to the person who is at our doorstep.

Chapter 56, *The Prioress’s or Abbot’s Table*, also pertains to hospitality. It is a small chapter but reminds those reading it that the leader of the community was expected “to model the gift of self with strangers” according to Chittister (148). “Hospitality in the Benedictine community was attention and presence to the needs of the other. Hospitality was a public ministry designed to nourish the other in body and in soul, in spirit and in psyche” (148). It is here that Chittister adds that so often when we donate to the poor or give handouts that there is rarely a personal moment of connection. Benedictines do not just offer a bed and food, but conversation and respect – all things that make a human being human (149). Simply by having the abbot or prioress at mealtime with the guest only proves that no one is too busy to do the same.

Chapter 61 “The Reception of Visiting Monastics” looks at hospitality in a way that is different from the other chapters in that it looks at welcoming monks or nuns from far away. Benedict wants monasteries to welcome those who have traveled from other monasteries and receive them for as long as they wish to stay. There are standards that must be met in order to deal with monks and nuns from other established monasteries. Because not all monasteries followed the same rules, especially when Benedict was creating the *Rule*, it was imperative to accept the strangers, but also not to allow for overbearing and bad habits. If the traveler embraced the monastery then it would be possible to allow him to become a member, but only if he had consent from the appropriate superior (498).
Chapter 66 “The Porter of the Monastery” is a chapter also related to hospitality because this is the first place a stranger or guest is greeted upon arrival at the monastery. The Porter is responsible for taking messages, delivering replies, and is always there to answer anyone who comes to the entrance (556). The Porter is required to say “Thanks be to God” or “Bless me” in response to a knock or call (556). Many may wonder why it is important to answer a door. Saint Benedict wants the Porter to always be available and not “roaming around” (556). Benedict does not want anyone to think they are coming out of time at the monastery so, therefore someone will always be waiting. Salvation and spirituality are not found in religious gyrations alone according to Chittister. “They are in the other and our response to those is infinitely more important than our religious exercises” (171).

The Rule in Today's World

In today's world there are ways that we attempt to control any possibility of a stranger or guest visiting our homes. One example is that front doors no longer have a glass or screen door in front of them allowing for the main door to remain open. By leaving one's front door open one sends a message that one is home and available. The open door also keeps one informed about what is happening in one's surroundings. Many of us make it clear that unannounced guests are off limits. Our culture has become one that requires scheduling beforehand, even with children and their playdates. There is rarely a knock at the door even from a friend or family member without us knowing in advance. This is eliminating the possibility of God from getting into our lives. Are we helping someone feel better if we are saying when he or she can visit us instead of his or her visiting us when he
or she need us? As Holyhead and Muir point out, we all have felt an inner alienation or loneliness and sometimes one just needs another person, but often by the time arrangements are set up to actually get a visit scheduled, the moment has passed. Being there for another person can't include convenience to the point that no one is available at any time.

So why does a text that is filled with how monks live in a monastery relevant today, especially within the conversation of hospitality? The answer lies within the wisdom of St. Benedict and how he lived through his own experiences of what is required for human existence and peace brought about within and for God. The rules outlined with the Rule of St. Benedict were not just so monks knew the proper time for prayers or how to be obedient to the abbot. Benedict recognized that regardless of the tendency to become isolated from the “evil” world so that one could keep as holy as possible without temptation to sin, scripture told us that Christ is in every person, even the stranger. Thomas Merton also realized this when he attempted to seclude himself. The passage from Matthew 25:34-46 states that Christ himself is identified as the outsider and in order to have a place in heaven visitors need to be welcomed warmly. Because Benedict lived life through scriptures in order to have a close relationship with God, he understood this passage and took it to heart.

Many interpreters take only what parts of scripture they like or twist them to mean something that they can do easily. However, St. Benedict never put himself before anything. He worked to fulfill God’s commands in every way, especially in those things that were the most inconvenient. That is why the Rule of St. Benedict’s chapter on hospitality is
so important. It would be easy to tell monks that they can live in seclusion and pray all day on a schedule. There would be very rare moments that one would feel tempted to stray off of course, yet St. Benedict devised these rules in such a way that took everything into account. Julie Kerr comments on this perspective from her book, *Monastic Hospitality.* "The administration of hospitality was therefore complex since it was a way for monks to fulfil their obligations and adhere to the ideals of the order, yet might have the opposite effect and shake the very foundation of monastic discipline" (126). In true Benedictine format, doing what sometimes is not in our plans may be in God’s plans.

However, the significance doesn’t just lie in the fact that the book discusses hospitality, but that it is accompanied by other chapters on how to live with one another according to Saint Benedict. The text may be simple and it may be old, but it speaks truth unlike any other guidebook according to Chittister in her book, *Wisdom, Distilled From the Daily.* Maybe that is why it is still being used in Benedictine monasteries all over the world and among lay people of all denominations. From a religious standpoint, many feel enlightened when they read and obey what the text offers. It is these books and research that helps to shed light on how to get people to offer more hospitality. It is not just “seeing each person as if they were Christ.” Even though according to Christians that would be the first place to start, it begins by encompassing all that the *Rule* explains and that is a life of *balance.* Benedict knew that there was a lot to accomplish every day, but he wanted each monk to have time for prayer and silence, time to spend with fellow monks, and time to open themselves to those who were not part of the monastery and welcome guests. At that time, monasteries were the only places for travelers to stop and rest overnight.
According to Henri Nouwen in his book *Reaching Out*, it is through this balance of silence, communication within, and communication on the outside that a person can live the most virtuous and happiest life. He says that within the chapter on hospitality not only is it beneficial for the monks to have alone time away from guests, but that the guests also benefit from solitude (51). Nouwen seeks this clarity for all people. Even in today's world at a Benedictine retreat house, guests often comment that the solitude and silence is what is most appealing to them. It gives them the insight and reflection that is needed to regain what had been lost. Benedict understood this need and instilled it into his monks. It is with this all-encompassing wisdom that the *Rule of Saint Benedict* offers to its readers that hospitality can find its fit in the world today. This book is still relevant.

Kathleen Norris writes a chapter “Hospitality” from the *Benedictine Handbook* (125) that explains how Benedict insists that our response to when misfortune strikes must be to remain open to what God has placed before us rather than to withdraw from the world. Chapter 19 in the *Rule of St. Benedict* furthers this contention by stating that hospitality keeps us focused on the other rather than on ourselves. Despite the dangers and temptations that may come with it, Benedict is certain that it brings us closer to the mystery of the Incarnation (125).

Also, unlike the rest of the *Rule*, Benedict is stern with insisting that one should enter into hospitality. Norris writes that there is no way out of it. Even further, Benedict recognizes that one cannot offer hospitality if one has not settled him or herself. That is why hospitality is in chapter 53 out of 73 rather than in the first 10 chapters. There is no control or hope to manipulate, but a mere “welcome us as we are” mentality.
Some may see a tension between major thoughts in the *Rule* because it discusses the individual and the community. Most people regard a monastery with isolation and silence. While work, silence, humility, and obedience are all aspects that Benedict explains in the *Rule*, the language quickly changes to “we” so that it is known that the call to God is not just on an individual level, but with that of the community. Benedict believes that the life of a Benedictine has a growth into Christ “as the call is tested and refocused in the myriad interactions, formal and informal, that create monastic community” (Stewart 279). Many may wonder how one could be alone and yet a part of the community? Benedict doesn’t see it as one or the other, but as a healthy balance of all of these to make a healthy life. Chittister recognizes this by stating, “It is these dimensions that give the *Rule* life and breadth, depth and scope, antiquity and relevance, local character and universal possibility – this is what makes the *Rule* a living rule and not a dead text of past practices, not a historical document, not the pastime of eccentric antiquarians” (10). Chapter 6 will look at how these dimensions with the *Rule* have been used since the times of St. Benedict.
Chapter 6

*Benedictine Life According to the Rule:*

*the Balance of Solitude, Community and Prayer*

Now that we have learned more about hospitality, St. Benedict, the *Rule of St. Benedict*, and how hospitality is an important aspect of the *Rule* we can look to see how the Benedictine community and monastic life have used this model and carried on its traditions. The *Rule of St. Benedict* teaches how to live in a community yet have time to be alone. This tension is hard to balance, but it is rewarding once achieved as stated by Esther de Waal in her book *Seeking God: The Way of St. Benedict*. However, *balance* is the key word. Cenobites work in a community and St. Benedict has realized that this is what is important in life. Setting aside the fact that he saw it as pleasing God and using scriptures to enlighten one’s life, St. Benedict made it a point to understand how people can work, pray, and live together. A popular quote in recent times from Vivian Greene is, “It’s not about waiting for the storm to pass; it’s about learning how to dance in the rain.” This quote is very similar to the mentality that Benedict saw for his monasteries. He urged monks and others to learn how to live their life daily. Salvation and happiness was not found in the future, but that it was there in their daily life.

Joan Chittister states in her book *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily*, “Benedictine prayer is not designed to take people out of the world to find God. It is designed to enable people to realize that God is in the world around them” (28). She explains how many of us get carried up with all the work we have that we have no time for what is really important in life – the people. We look at each day as a list of obligations and are ridden with stress.
and anxiety. She goes on to explain that our tendency is to want to isolate ourselves either because we think it's easier or because it helps us to avoid temptations or aggravation. We think that we are helping ourselves. However, the Benedictines know otherwise according to Chittister. She explains that the Benedictines understand that if one eliminates these moments that there is no way for God to take a hand in one's life. There are no moments that are spontaneous, no time to enjoy people and life. Instead we are controlling life with isolation, states Chittister. We may be avoiding danger and aggravation, but on the other hand we are not building on our skills for appropriately dealing with these situations. In order to fully live life and to get the most out of it, there must be a balance and that is what Benedict teaches in his *Rule*.

Within monastic hospitality, especially Benedictine monastic hospitality, we find a blend between the ancient interpretation and Christian values, Chittister continues to explain in *Wisdom Distilled through the Daily*. It is a blend of necessity for the guest and a way for God to speak to us as the host. It is this format written in the *Rule of St. Benedict* that has stood the test of time, adds Chittister. Benedict makes no negotiations about it. With that he makes accommodations to make sure the process does not get out of hand by limiting how hospitality in the monastery is approached so that not all members are affected at once. Furthermore, Chittister states that if someone is seeking help through the form of hospitality, then Benedict feels there is no other response than to be there for them since that is what God would do.

According to Benedict on page one of the *Rule*, there are moments every day that God speaks to us. However, we have to listen carefully. Benedict realized from his early
days at Subiaco that community is vital to the understanding of our life’s purpose. Everything one studies can go into one’s brain and stay there, but the true test is to use what one learns and to use it effectively. Benedict realized that learning to be a good person and being holy is lost if a person never interacts with another person. It is easy to stay true to oneself if one is never tested. The quote from William G.T. Shedd, “A ship in the harbor is safe, but that is not what ships are meant to do” adds to this message. Our purpose as people on this earth is to interact with others and communicate because that is what other human beings need. Hannah Arendt discusses this purpose in *Human Condition* as was explained in chapter 1. Living a life in seclusion or in an individualistic way removes that part of our lives.

Most times hospitality is never convenient or when we want to do it, but our response to that shows what kind of person we truly are inside. Our display of hospitality shows the light inside of us. Even more important, hospitality shows the love that is in our lives. If we live in a smaller community of love and respect then we can offer that in return. If we do not know what love is like or haven’t experienced it then offering it to another person is nearly impossible. The beginning of hospitality starts with working on the interior of our own lives first. Monastics work on that daily through prayer and other habits that build life to where one can offer a noteworthy form of hospitality. This is what makes the entire *Rule of St. Benedict* vital to the implementation of the hospitality.

*Benedictine Monastic Life*

When one is trying to understand Benedictine monasticism there are several excellent sources of information. One is titled, *Christ the Ideal Monk*, written by D. Columba
Marmion, O.S.B. This source explains a general view of the monastic institution and a starting point character of monastic perfection based on following *The Rule of St. Benedict*.

Above all else, the Benedictine monk must seek God. Marmion states, “Never forget this truth: a man in worth that which he seeks, that to which he is attached. Are you seeking God?” (2). As a result, one who seeks God will be led to perfection and all good things. Furthermore, Marmion points out that God is not to be sought as if He were in a place somewhere. Rather God is in every being. Monks are not called to devote themselves to anything else other than to serve God with all good things (5). Also while seeking God, one remains united to Him through faith and love. “He is nearest to those who love Him” (5). If these things are not achieved then the monks are useless because they are not attempting the overall goal of St. Benedict. The seeking needs to be sincere and exclusive. This means no attachment to any other thing. But this seeking and closeness to God gives much back to the monk. There is a protection and joy. “We were made to be happy, the human heart has a capacity for the infinite; only God can fully satisfy us” (12). Therefore, Marmion explains that is why Benedictine monks believe if they seek anything else their hearts will not be happy.

Next, Marmion points out that the monastic community is taught to follow Christ in the way of his teachings and examples. This is directed to be done by contemplating the Gospels (24). Marmion further explains that Christ is the foundation of monastic perfection because Christ is perfect and is the consummation of all holiness. This is why the *Rule of St. Benedict* is considered “Christocentric” (24).
Once these ideas are understood, then the monk should show humility and a sincere love for the Abbot, according to Marmion (41). The Abbot is the representative of Christ within the monastery and all should be obedient to him. The monastery is the basis for society and the Abbot is the authority. The Abbot is also known as the pastor or patriarch. The authority is necessary to give aim and to keep the members united (41). Also, St. Benedict gives the Abbot two dominant qualities which are discretion and kindness (50). A necessity for St. Benedict when it comes to the Abbot is that he should be loved more than feared. “If the mind alone hears without the heart’s co-operation, God’s word does not bring forth all its fruit” (59). If the Abbot lives a life imitating God then all the monks within the monastery essentially are following the way of Christ, states Marmion.

Lastly, Marmion explains how the Benedictine monastery functions as a cenobitical society. The Abbot leads the hierarchy and watches over all the activity such as work and prayer from the monks (63). It is through these two activities that the monastery functions primarily. Through prayer and work the monks never cease to care for the poor, evangelize, study, or labor. It is known to the monks that liturgical and mental prayer must be joined with a balance of work so the “the most abundant fruits of monastic holiness have been brought forth” (69). In addition to work and prayer, the monastery also functions under stability and obedience. Stability is shown through the vow of the monk to the abbey or community the he takes part in.

Monastic Benedictines attempt to carry forward the divine hospitality that they see as part of God’s hospitality. John Navone explains this further in his article “Divine and Human Hospitality.” He states that we are all guests of God’s hospitality. He goes to
explain that everything from our own existence, the world, our intelligence, creativity, consciousness, companionships, plants, and animals are all pure gifts from God (329). God is seen as the host and people are the guests. When creation is discussed in Genesis 2, God welcomes all humans and excludes no one from his love (329). God then gives the gift of his only Son with the same spirit of hospitality. “Every human being is on his Father’s guest list. Just as his disciples have received the hospitality of God, they should be willing to offer hospitality to others” (329). It is through the divine understanding of hospitality that the ancient world put such obligation onto hosts (330).

Also through the divine understanding of hospitality through God is the feast according to Navone. Banquets are special meals celebrating important things “The most numerous biblical references to God as host employ the banquet language of food and drink to portray salvation” (333). Navone continues to explain how the banquet metaphor for salvation is seen repeatedly through the Bible, as most common at the Last Supper. According to Navone, this is the supreme example when God as the host offers a self-giving sacrifice as he serves bread and wine so that all will be part of one body of Christ (336). This implies the importance that the Benedictine monks place on hospitality so that all remain in one community with Christ.

Navone states that the offering of hospitality relives these stories from the Bible. Benedictine monks see hospitality in every encounter with the other person, and because they want to live as Christ lived, they want to be obedient and offer hospitality as God did. Furthermore, Navone explains that hospitality is at the heart of evangelization: “Jesus implies that to reject the evangelizing missionaries proclaiming the hospitality of God the
host in the good news that is Christ is to reject the hospitality that is their salvation” (339).

On the other hand, offering and receiving hospitality promises fulfillment.

Enterprising into monastic life is not as black and white as many may think it is. The reason the Rule of St. Benedict was written was to help these men live together with a common goal and way of life. As it was explained in Chapter 3, St. Benedict had many issues with fellow monks to the point that he relocated. Again, this might be a reason for his writing this controversial book. He understood the problems that can arise with an isolated community with various personalities and objectives. Following the Rule obediently and fully is challenging. This concept is expressed in Michael Casey’s book, Strangers to the City. Casey offers reflections on the beliefs and values of the Rule of St. Benedict from his perspectives as a Cistercian monk.

Casey explains that now more than ever, there is a big transition to joining a monastery. This way of living is drastically different from the way most lives are lived. So ultimately, joining a monastery involves a complete conversion. This is a new way of life that includes a disciplined lifestyle, listening to others, opening up to a mentor so that one acquires a new identity that is more simplistic, according to Casey (12). It is obvious that people are called into this lifestyle and that the Rule cannot be expected to be followed as closely as monks for that reason. However, in today’s society we see a need to cleanse and purify many of the habits that have taken over our lives. There is a lack of structure and obedience because everyone works on an individualistic schedule. Casey writes a list of more than a dozen standards that he thinks are normal behaviors and accepted in the
secular society that are not accepted by St. Benedict. He states, “Benedict is establishing a second and more specific level of morality” (12).

Casey points out what could be learned from the Benedictine perspective is the idea of what it means to live in a community and from that hospitality. Casey writes that participation is essential to have in an effective community (117). Without having participation, the overall morale and relationships decline as well as tasks being performed less efficiently (117). He knows that the western culture is primarily individualistic and those ideals make living in a community difficult. The foundations are completely different. This is where Casey’s understanding of mutuality comes into effect.

According to Casey, mutual obedience is to have an atmosphere that leaves room for others while the other holds back assertion. Welcoming and inviting others in can only be done by not asserting one’s own rights (111). Each person in the community essentially participates in both roles at one time or another. Each role imparts humility and also groundedness. As with every community no one person is without flaws. “We are all unavoidably unique and incomplete” states Casey (112). However, if everyone works together then everyone can reach full potential. Furthermore, what one person can’t do and what another can tie them together through layers of interactions (112).

Also in community, Casey states that people need to let other people in and put our barriers down. Community needs to be all people, not just a handful of people who don’t bother us. Therefore, hospitality is for all people.

Benedict feels that to be in the right frame of mind to be with other people one has to understand major pillars of the monastic community that include solitude, hospitality,
and prayer. These same precepts are followed by Henri Nouwen in his book, *Reaching Out*. He explains that if a person is lonely then he or she needs solitude (25). While this advice or guidance seems to be counterintuitive, Nouwen explains that the person needs the solitude to find out what is in his or her heart (25). No one else can tell him or her that, and often people fear solitude and instead make rash decisions to avoid it. However, it's the solitude that brings a person to clarity. He believes that one must know darkness to understand light. Once solitude is achieved then hospitality can take place.

Furthermore, Nouwen explains that hospitality can be confused with entertaining and showing a perfect life, but this format goes against the true nature of hospitality in that people need to show honestly who they are to develop real relationships (26). That format of community enriches others. The superficial format that implies perfection only pushes others away (26).

One of the reasons that Benedictine monasteries can practice hospitality so well through the *Rule of St. Benedict* is because of stability according to Rosemary Rader, O.S.B. Rader wrote an article titled, “Contemporary Hospitality: Where the Present Becomes the Future.” This article was featured at the American Benedictine Academy Convention in 1988 and all responses were edited by Renee Branigan. In this article she addresses where hospitality gets its roots. “Stability grounds the monastic community, stabilizes it, provides a safe and healthy environment where the internalized love of God can be visibly, externally expressed by hospitality to each other and to the increasing number of guests hoping to share in some of which we have been blessed” (24). The stable environment does give a person the ability to share the peace he or she has within to others he or she comes
into contact with through hospitality. This peacerelates to the truism that “We cannot give what we do not have” (28). Rader states that the very demeanor, enthusiasm, and willingness to listen play a role in the degree in which one can offer hospitality (28). The goal is to offer hospitality that is meaningful and genuine.

Rader also discusses the effect hospitality has on communication. She quotes Julian Van Duerbeck’s paper that was presented at “The Current State of Interreligious Dialogue” that states how hospitality can lead to distribution of shared resources and united action to create inclusive communities. The dialogue that takes place in hospitality can create unity, which transforms communication into communion (28). She goes on to write, “Such dialogue can transform indifference into commitment, toleration into understanding, independence into interdependence, uniformity to unity, and competition into collaboration” (28). Rader wants us to consider how purposeful interactions that come with offering hospitality can be one of the most effective ways in uniting people.

Living in a monastery is how Thomas Merton came to experience hospitality. Paul Pearson writes in his article, “Hospitality to the Stranger: Thomas Merton and St. Benedict’s Exhortation to Welcome the Stranger as Christ” the paradox of living as a hermit and welcoming the stranger. Pearson studied Merton because of the change of Merton’s lifestyle from wanting to flee the world to embracing it. Merton’s parents had early deaths and his only brother also died shortly after Merton entered the monastery (29). He tried to fill the void with worldly things only to find that nothing worked (29). In the monastery, however, is where Merton learned the experience of love in a community. “Whether in a family or a monastic community, the capacity to be hospitable to strangers is profoundly
related to the quality of relationships that we experience within those environments” (29). The Abbey at Gethsemani gave Merton the experience to be able to open up to others, to reach out and to practice hospitality (29).

Pearson continues to point out that the more we can accept ourselves the more able we are to accept others and the stranger seems no longer to be threatening. Pearson traced Merton’s letters and journals to understand his journey and development for hospitality. Similarly, St. Benedict withdrew from life and lived as a hermit alone in a cave. His approach was different in that he wanted to experience these trials as a way of suffering to serve God. However, his initial desire was to leave the over privileged and worldly atmosphere he experienced in his studies. There is also a connection with society today and the overall unwillingness to become available to neighbors and strangers. Technology has enabled many to live like a hermit and not have to associate with many people throughout the day. Items can be ordered online, children can be homeschooled, and entertainment can be contained within the household. St. Benedict and Merton learned that this way of living was not fulfilling. Maybe their steps of understanding hospitality could also be used for today’s issues.

Pearson continues to explain how the first time Merton went outside of Gethsemani, seven years after he entered it, he recalled that he felt alienated from everything in the world and all its activity (30). As he continued living alone and reading he began to “find the gentleness with which he could truly love his brothers” (31). Pearson reflects more on Merton’s writing in the final chapter of The Sign of Jonas that it was the right kind of withdraw because it gave him perspective. “As his feelings of compassion deepened and
widened, the sense of homelessness that he had felt in his own life allowed him to more readily empathize and identify with other men and women throughout the world who also felt oppressed, neglected, uprooted or marginalized” (32). It is apparent that Merton’s attitudes and thought processes had changed since his time of isolation. He found comfort and love through the community within the monastery similar to that of which many find in their own families and homes. Then as Merton approached his later years, he had even more mercy and compassion for others and more and more people came to visit him, according to Pearson (32).

Pearson also uncovers that Merton also was writing and publishing books and poetry, which ultimately “reflected his realization for the need for other people” according to a letter Merton wrote in 1963 to James Baldwin (36). It appeared as though Merton had a desire for solitude and also for unity and dialogue with other people, which essentially matches the descriptive phrase “hermit of Times Square” states Pearson (36). He eventually asked to have alternating periods of time when he could be by himself and then have time to be with people. In his last conference, Pearson quotes Merton saying, “‘This life is not just for me, this is for the community, for other people’” (37). Merton’s experiences displayed through his books and poetry show how even a monk needs to study and learn about hospitality so it can fulfill his life. Not all monks or Christians may agree with Benedict’s strict command of hospitality, especially those who prefer silence, and isolation such as hermits. They choose to see the negative aspects of offering hospitality and do not see how one should have to invest the time in the process.
The pillars of Benedictine life according to the Rule of St. Benedict established a healthy balance that enabled hospitality to thrive and to be appreciated. However, many other factors affected the way it could be carried out correctly. Despite efforts from institutions, hospitality became lost, even within the monastic environment.

*Elements of St. Benedict’s Hospitality in Other Institutions*

Once Charlemagne established that the Rule of St. Benedict was to be the standard book to follow for monasteries, its content was dissimilated among its readers. With that the overwhelming responsibility of welcoming strangers was assumed by the monasteries as well. Julie Kerr writes about the role of hospitality to the Benedictine community during the Middle Age years 1066 to 1250 in her article, “Heavenly Hosts,” because this was a time period that experienced high levels of hospitality. Medieval monasteries received lay travelers, pilgrims, and monks. The functionality of hospitality within monasteries was twofold. Guests had places to stay and monasteries fulfilled their spiritual obligations and helped secure their salvation by opening their doors to those in need. Kerr calls it the monk’s “afterlife insurance” (Kerr). This time in particular was important because more people were traveling and issues of civility and conduct were heightened.

Because of many problems of too many guests and abbots expecting rewards from prominent guests, somehow the words of St. Benedict got lost, states Kerr. Corruption caused monasteries to forget important guidelines that Benedict laid out, especially stating that guests should be separate from the rest of the monastery so that other monks would not be burdened. Also, the true meaning of hospitality could be lost by searching for wealthy over the poor, according to Kerr.
Aquinta Bockmann states in *Perspectives on the Rule of Saint Benedict* that Christian hospitality started to become institutionalized as early as the fourth century (167). Because so much of the responsibility of hospitality fell onto monasteries, monks began to set up hospices, homes, and hospitals as well as orphanages states Bockmann (167). This is evident from the root word of hospitality. Christine Pohl adds more about hospitals in her book *Making Room*. The hospitals that were established were for the poor strangers who had nothing (44). Then gradually these hospitals were separated according to the type of person in need such as widows, orphans, strangers, sick, and poor (44). In fact the first notable hospital was founded by Basil, bishop of Caesarea in about 370 according to Pohl (44). This hospital was established to help those suffering from a severe famine. Pohl explains that Basil was able to supply food and care for those too poor and sick. Suddenly these people did not feel excluded from the community and felt like they were more than just objects, but like people (45).

What made institutionalization of hospitality grow was the increased need, increased availability of resources that were given to the church, and the overall responsibility the church had for the population, according to Pohl (48). However, these institutions could not provide the same quality and personal care that the monastery was able to offer. Another issue with institutions was that differentiation of care for persons of different socioeconomic status began to occur, states Pohl (48). These institutions continued out of necessity, but the overall Christian hospitality that was given could not be preserved. It was these elements that were valued. Hospitals were institutions of public service and by the point of the Middle Ages had become quite separate from the church and eventually went under municipal control by the 15th century in European cities (48). Even
though this was not intended because hospitals and hospices could still attempt personal care through paid staff, it still lacked normal routines and connections. There begins a separation of the ancient philosophy of hospitality and what it has grown to through institutions.

Furthermore, Pohl explains that during the 16th century there were so much political and economic changes that the number of vagabonds increased drastically (51). There was plague, war, increased trade and urbanization that broke down communities. The old ways of offering hospitality were not working, especially if no one had enough money to live on his or her own. So many people were poor and struggling only to search for others who could help them.

In the 19th century, one institution that attempted to change that was the Salvation Army. The history behind the Salvation Army begins with the church. Mark Chapman writes about it in his book, *David W. Taylor, Like a Mighty Army? The Salvation Army, the Church, and the Churches*. Taylor has been a part of the Salvation Army for about 30 years along with his wife. In addition he comes from a heritage of Salvation Army officers dating back to his great-grandparents who worked with William and Catherine Booth. The point of his research came from his hopes of the church finding a foundation to express God's word to the world.

According to Taylor, the Salvation Army was founded in London, England in 1865 by Methodists William and Catherine Booth (xv). Now it has a presence in 121 nations according to the Salvation Army yearbook Taylor states (xv). Many see the Salvation Army as a Christian mission. It is best described in Booth’s own words, “It was not my intention
to create another sect...we are not a church. We are an Army – an Army of Salvation” (33).
The overall goal was to evangelize to the poor and in doing so to teach an individualistic attitude towards God. Booth evangelized that individuals should bypass existing church structures and community and speak to God alone (39). Since they were seeking salvation through people who could volunteer their time, the name eventually landed with Salvation Army. The Salvation Army continues to reach out to those in need, but the identification of hospitality as seen through the Rule is not the same.

Hospitality considered outside of the use of the Rule of St. Benedict lost its place in society. It doesn’t have the basis of daily living that is welcoming for the stranger or guest. Because of various things in the secular world, hospitality became a means to an end without considering the people. Because the quantity of people who needed hospitality in this time period increased, many tried to handle the need for hospitality in other ways – ways that were not personal.

_Benedictine Monasteries and Colleges_

There are many Benedictine monasteries existing today that carry on the Rule of St. Benedict and into the community, not to mention that there are many Benedictine Colleges and Universities. These schools follow the tradition of Rule of St. Benedict and how to live faithfully and with integrity in today’s world. As the Rule prescribes, these institutions focus on reading, studying, and learning within the larger aspect of Christian life. The early monasteries welcomed guests as well as young people studying for monastic vocation. “This interaction with guests and young fostered a powerful exchange of ideas and opinions and helped shape the intellectual lives of all involved” according to the Association
of Benedictine Colleges and Universities. Therefore, long before colleges and universities monasteries became centers for learning. Once immigrants moved into North America and the Benedictine monasteries were established.

Following the Benedictine tradition, Benedictine education attempts to transform the human mind and heart. Furthermore, the schools are influenced by 10 Hallmarks of Benedictine Education which include: the Love of Christ and neighbor, prayer, stability, conversation (the way of formation and transformation, obedience with a commitment to listening, discipline, humility, stewardship, hospitality, and community (Association of Benedictine Colleges and Universities). The hospitality portion focuses on the openness to the other. Just as explained in the chapter on the Rule of St. Benedict, Christ presents himself in the outsider’s vulnerability and calls the monastic to put aside individual plans and to help the unexpected person. When the stranger experiences being “at home” in this new place then the monastic discovers a new awareness of the common journey in which we are all engaged (ABCU). As a result, the Benedictine universities and colleges attempt to carry out this hospitality by inviting new people into the community and especially those who are not members of the Benedictine tradition. The schools also attempt to find new ways in which to use the talents and gifts from the students so that all races, cultures and backgrounds will be recognized. Therefore, the hope is that not one student feels like an outsider and brings about a feeling of openness because students are able to engage deeply with one another.
How to Use The Rule Today

There are many people who have studied hospitality within the Rule and work to find ways to use and apply it to life today. Demetrius Dumm, O.S.B. writes about hospitality in an article that was written for the American Benedictine Academy Convention in 1998. The theme was hospitality for the 21st century. Dumm states that most Benedictine monasteries take the words that appear in chapter 53 of the Rule of St. Benedict very seriously, and with that he attempts to explain how Benedict would understand the meaning of the stranger in our lives today. Our tendency is to live life with human wisdom that is secular. Success in the secular is typically controlled by one’s control or power. God is then the uncontrollable or unpredictable one. He states, “To live in the secular world and to accept a transcendent revelation is, then, the ultimate spiritual meaning of hospitality” (12). As he sees it, the stranger seeks to disrupt not only our schedules, but also how we see worldly values and priorities in the secular world (12). Therefore, requiring a more authentic hospitality is more radical than imagined according to Dumm. He understands that most of us believe in a certain amount of hospitality, but not too much as to overdo it (14). On the contrary, he states that a superficial offering of hospitality is dangerous. People today have a tendency to appear only to do Christian acts, but in reality have not changed their hearts; they live a life that is comfortable and shallow and refuse to be unselfish and make room for the unknown visitor (14).

Joan Chittister offers insight into how to use the Rule of St. Benedict in today’s world and its relevance to our lives in her book, Wisdom Distilled from the Daily. Chittister is a Benedictine nun and speaker. She was a prioress of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie,
Pennsylvania for 12 years. She writes a column for the *National Catholic Reporter*, "From Where I Stand." Chittister holds a master's degree from the University of Notre Dame and a Ph.D. in speech communication theory from Penn State University. She was also a research associate of St. Edmund’s College, Cambridge University. Chittister pays attention to hospitality but sees the entire *Rule of St. Benedict* as insightful. For her, the *Rule* is a book of wisdom that leads each person to a path of spiritual growth, but perhaps her way of explaining why the secular world should listen to guidelines from a monastery, especially from the 5th century, is important.

Chittister understands that most people go to a monastery to get away from the world and not analyze the world. Chittister writes, “But it may be only from a distance that we see best. It may be those who do not have money who best know that money is not essential to the good life” (9). It is the overall understanding that community is important and that Christ shows Himself through each person. In addition to that is love. She says the *Rule* states it very clearly that love costs. She said it is a daily thing to serve meals, provide needs, and ask for favors. Love can also be demanding and we need to make relationships a priority and allow people to be in our lives. “Community is the only antidote we have to an individualism that is fast approaching the heights of the pathological and sinful world” states Chittister (41). Perhaps a better explanation would be the parable she explains from the Far East. The ancients there say that people in hell have chopsticks one yard long so they could not reach their mouths. However, in heaven the chopsticks are also one yard long. The difference is that the people in heaven feed one another instead. This is the element that Chittister wants to convey to others who read the *Rule of St. Benedict*. 
Human community is essential according to Chittister. A step towards rejoining a community is through hospitality. As a Benedictine nun for many years, Chittister uses various examples of her life throughout the book. When she writes about hospitality, she explains that her community baked real bread every day. It took a lot of work and physical effort; it was eaten every day and there wasn’t much to show for all the hard work (124). In addition, they would offer bread to the soup kitchen and pantry in the surrounding community, but what she realized is that hospitality was about sharing (124). Benedictine spirituality requests that we welcome the stranger and give what we have. She says our world today in antiseptic and organized to give to those whom we know. “Benedictine spirituality says that to become whole ourselves we must learn to let the other in, if for no other reason than to stretch our own vision, to take responsibility for the world by giving to it out of our own abundance, to make the world safe by guarding its peoples ourselves” (125). She understands that the biblical method of hospitality has been diluted and seen more as a social grace rather than a spiritual act (125). While hospitality is one way of doing this, it also reflects more about the kind of people in society. If hospitality is not fake or empty then it shows tries to explain is the commitment that Benedict has through his Rule.

Esther de Waal gives an enlightening commentary on the use of the Rule of St. Benedict from her perspective as a lay person. De Waal is considered a scholar in the Benedictine and Celtic tradition and has published several books. She lived in Canterbury where her husband served as rector and became fascinated with the Rule of St. Benedict. She leads retreats and speaks at convents and monasteries. De Waal finds that she received a lot of practical wisdom the first time she read the Rule. It helped her with a busy
lifestyle as a mother of four sons. Since she implemented many of the concepts her life now is simpler and she is able to focus on more interior parts of her life now that the chaos is removed. In her book, *Life-giving Way*, De Waal shares her spiritual journey and the impact the *Rule* has had on her. She states that the *Rule* is for all denominations and goes back to what is most primal and universal in each one of us (viii). “For, coming from the undivided Church of the past, the *Rule* points us all forward to the promise of the undivided Church of the future” (viii). She further points out that the book is written by laity for laity and that is significant because the church has an emphasis on these roles now (viii).

When discussing hospitality, de Waal understands that it seems to be an odd topic for the monastery to consider since it appears as though it attempts to be secluded. However, de Waal references Benedict’s own life and how he indeed saw God in the face of the stranger. It was as though he never forgot that moment, after years of living in solitude, what an impact seeing a friendly face made upon him and his life. Benedict helps to prepare each person for judgment when God asks each person if they welcomed him as He came into their lives. Benedict teaches to welcome regardless of rank, but according to need and consideration for the weak. “He has taught me true humility and that helps me to be open to receive as well as to give,” states de Waal (137).

There are ways to apply the pillars of monastic life into our own lives. Meg Funk writes about these ideas in her article, “Four Concepts of a Benedictine Community in the Twenty-first Century: Listening, Community, Humility, and Hospitality.” Funk is a member of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, Indiana. She states, “Two shafts keep the community balanced and move it in one direction or the other; one is interiority
represented by listening and silence; and the other is hospitality, the outward orientation” (156). Funk goes on to explain that a monastery community has a presence and an energy that helps sustain each person. They also follow a leadership and a membership. In order to sustain these aspects they need to be engaged, to focus on God, and to follow scriptures. Within this community they practice listening and silence which is the interior part of the shaft. However, Funk states the technical language and teaching about listening in the tradition is under the practices of silence (163). Silence has several degrees according to Funk. The first degree is solitude. In solitude one can restart by taking the time to observe and take note of what is around us. The second degree of silence is to practice it, and the third degree is stillness. These various degrees of silence teach people how to observe (163).

The second shaft is created through hospitality, according to Funk. Funk says that it is natural for us to want to use our community to invite others in (166). However, she states that we do not necessarily have to invite others in, but that they will become attracted to what is being offered and want to know it and understand it themselves (166). There are three degrees of seriousness with hospitality. The first degree is providing a safe space (166). Benedictines attempt to offer a spacious, warm, welcoming, and interactive space. On the other hand, hospitality has to keep boundaries in so that the members do not lose their own identity and space (166). Benedict accounts for this and only has certain areas designated for visitors.

The second degree of hospitality according to Funk is the “reciprocity of the mutuality of the people who come to us” (167). This means that a person becomes
available and that he or she does what he or she can through dialogue and practice (167). This is a relationship where there is give and take.

The third degree addresses what is going on in one’s mind while he or she is offering hospitality states Funk. Every person has an inner conversation with themselves when he or she is in contact with others, according to Funk (168). People should not be thinking of ways in which the person they are welcoming can help them, or determining how much they like this new person. Funk states we are to ask what we are doing with our minds (168). We should not judge, be harsh, or be critical. Hospitality is like silence in that we can’t just do the behavior but also the inner workings. “Let them feed us and we feed them,” which helps us understand the soul on the host and guest (168). We have this opportunity to engage with others and what is coming from the inside of us shows on the outside. A person knows if one is willing to forfeit time to sit with him or her or if one is only doing it out of obligation. It is about that exchange that makes someone feel welcome.

Funk states that the term *koinonia* is a lived experience of community where the community becomes *we* (156). It essentially becomes a phenomenological part of hospitality. It is the mystical aspect when we feel like we are a part of something according to Funk. The inner part of hospitality is essential. Person A has to know that one wants him or her to be there in order for him or her to feel the warm welcome from person B. Furthermore, Funk states that hospitality is “poised, guided, parked, moved and shifted on the wheel of humility” (156). Being able to balance listening and hospitality is carried out through humility which provides the energy to live life through a sense of gratitude (170). Each person and each community or family has different characteristics, but Funk sees
humility as a way to find direction and focus to make sure that we know community is a priority and that we should be ready and willing to participate in it.

These are all ways in which we can not only use the Rule, but also use the Rule in regards to hospitality. What keeps Benedict’s idea of hospitality alive is that his purpose for it is tied to God. The overall goal of the Rule is to get people closer to God and to prefer nothing other than to please God just as Benedict lived. If one is constantly trying to please God then he or she will see God in the other people in his or her life. One way to interpret and use the Rule of St. Benedict is to implement it within the home. Chapter 7 will discuss the similarities of the home to the monastic community and ways to apply the Rule similarly.
Chapter 7

*Using the Rule of St. Benedict to Offer Hospitality in the Home*

*The wise monk had said, “One among you is Christ.”*

Many may not be familiar with the term *cloister*. Kathleen Norris writes about it in her book, *Cloister Walk*. Cloister describes the monastic life of a monk or nun in an enclosed order. Cloister also refers to a covered walkway along the side of a building. The cloister is filled with the monks or nuns from the monastery and they are part of a community internally. Norris was drawn to this type of community to help deepen her understanding of her everyday life. This type of cloister is similar to that of the family because of its sense of community, according to Norris (20). A family lives in an enclosed space of a house and the people act as a small community. This connection will enable us to understand the importance of community internally and externally as taught by St. Benedict in the *Rule of St. Benedict*. This will also connect the *Rule* to the home and family.

David Robinson writes about the connection between the *Rule of St. Benedict* and the family in his book, *The Family Cloister*. His goal is to provide the information necessary to develop a loving community within family homes by using Benedict’s wisdom. The outline of his book includes: family design, family spirituality, family discipline, family health, family life together, family service, and family growth.

Robinson explains that when we look at the members of the family as participants in the internal community, we can see there must always be guidelines to effectively manage
the household. Each parent has his or her own style of what he or she allows in the home, according to Robinson. There are rooms for sleeping, a kitchen for eating, and living rooms or relaxation, offices for studying, and dining rooms for entertaining. But the behaviors can adjust mainly because children change drastically over the time period that they live in the home, states Robinson.

Robinson explains that the family lives in an enclosure much like the monastic life. However, most families do not follow a strict schedule that the monastery follows. In addition, the family must go outside of the home to communicate and be a part of the community in order to live their lives to the fullest. Robinson takes the wisdom that he found in the Rule of St. Benedict and translates it to how we can use those same elements in our lives, especially with hospitality.

Robinson continues by explaining that many may think hospitality in the home is different than that of a monastery or any other institution because involves all the people we care deeply about, but families need to be reminded of the love they have for each other through gratitude and acts of kindness. Robinson writes, “Hospitality is more an attitude of the heart than a practice of the home. The more space for God within our hearts, the greater capacity we will have to welcome others in God’s name” (143). Robinson continues on with these analogies.

Robinson is aware that families work on a very tight schedule. Depending on the number of children within a household, there are multiple activities, sporting events, and practices that are folded into a daily schedule of work and school. Then each family takes into account dinner and bed time, so the request of welcoming one into a home, especially
unannounced seems to be a big interruption. Keeping in mind the *Rule of St. Benedict*, each person should be received as Christ. Robinson says that a challenge is to preserve family unity while welcoming others into a family circle (143). It is much easier to refuse hospitality because guests can be needy and disruptive as well as bring emotional baggage, yet by extending the welcome, the family learns far more about itself than it could imagine (143).

Robinson describes how he and his family have arranged their home as well as how they offer hospitality to guests. He states that most of the guests that come to his home are looking for food, drink, lodging, rest, spiritual refreshment, dignity and encouragement (144). As a result, they welcome the guest at the door, offer a drink and a place at the family table, provide a bed with linens and towels, pray with them, share in good conversation, and lastly they give them the gift of privacy and acceptance (144). Most importantly he tries not to judge and pays no attention to wealth or status (144). The Robinson family has not just opened their doors to someone passing through or for a short visit. Their actions are admirable, especially because they have a family to care for as well. They offered hospitality to a woman and her children in the middle of the night to get away from an abusive husband and to college students who needed a place to stay for an entire semester. Even more, they include the guests into their schedule of meals, chores, and prayers (145).

One recommendation that is used from the *Rule* and implemented into the Robinson’s family home is the need to nurture one’s own spirit as parents. Robinson states that it’s important to feed one’s soul. Taking care of guests is hard work because there is a
lot of maintenance and care that goes into a stay. “Anytime we truly reach out with the compassion of God, we’ll get weary. People are exhausting” (150). Instruct your mind and exercise your body so that you can be fully present to your children and to reach out to others in your life (152). “To refuse to offer Christ’s welcome to others is to shut off the flow of God’s love into our family” (152). It is important as Benedict teaches to make sure that one is not overdoing one’s tasks with care for others so that one does not become resentful or too tired. When this happens then one is not offering the best version of oneself and most likely is not representing one’s true values and kindness (152). It can be hard to do sometimes when we feel there is no time to take for ourselves. Parents and children both need care. It is not right to ignore one for the sake of the other and is unwise (150). However, in the end, the refreshed version of the person is much more effective.

Robinson also encourages another aspect of hospitality within family life would be to consider long term guests such as an elderly relative, an in-law, a foreign exchange students, a neighbor, a brother or sister, or a traveler as possible options. Again, the Robinson family includes the guest in family matters such as chores, meetings, devotions, and disciplines (157). Benedict states in chapter 61 that it is possible that God guided the guests to you for the purpose to learn from you (157). As a result, one should attempt to share one’s wisdom and love with the guest. One should treat them the way one would like to be treated in so that they can experience love in one’s hospitality.

A great metaphor that Robinson further uses to relate hospitality to the family is by explaining the double purpose windows have to a home to the way service in the family flows (165). In one way windows let light in and in another way they allow people to see
out. "The family cloister flows outward into the lives of the needy and inward into the heart of the family with God’s eternal pleasure" (165). This statement draws meaning from Mark 10:45 that states, “Christ did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” What hospitality does is enlighten us and turn ourselves to think of others rather than our own selfish thoughts and desires. When someone comes into one's home, one needs to ask him or her what he or she needs and make every effort into supplying that for him or her. One wants him or her to be comfortable and should offer conversation that can make him or her feel at ease. If one is offering hospitality the right way, one is not thinking about oneself. In a family, all members including parents cannot yield to selfish desires because they shut out the light of God and then the family remains in darkness filled with envy, bitterness, jealousy, fighting, and confusion (165).

Another way to encourage hospitality is through gratitude according to Robinson. Robinson sees gratitude as a quiet delight in God’s good gifts (146). On the other hand, greed demands more and more and is never satisfied with what is given. Greed cripples and imprisons; gratitude heals and frees (146). Similarly to being selfish and not thinking of others, greed causes us to focus on ourselves. Greed stands in the way of us being happy because instead of being fulfilled with God’s love, we become focused on being filled with material items. By instilling gratitude for the simple things of life rather than possessions, one will be able to offer a kind of hospitality unlike any other. One will not make the welcome be about things one has or how much money something costs. Instead, one will focus on the person in front of him or her. One will make that person feel like he or she is the center of one’s attention. One will eliminate competition or any feelings of inadequacies. Especially with Christian hospitality, the main idea of hospitality is to
welcome those marginal in society. Living in gratitude puts one’s heart and mind in the right place. Simple living also contributes to offering pure hospitality.

There is no denying that we live in a technological world filled with cell phones, computers, and remote controls. This is another reason that the Rule of St. Benedict applies. Colleen Maura McGrane, O.S.B. explains this in her article, “Practicing Presence: Wisdom from the Rule on Finding Balance in a Digital Age” that was published in the American Benedictine Review in 2013 from a convention paper that was presented at the American Benedictine Academy. McGrane is a member of the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in Clyde, Missouri. She writes that the use of technology has had serious implications in the following three areas of Benedictine lives: mindfulness of the presence of God, encountering Christ in others, and community (370). Her hope was to help society adopt a balanced approach to technology. She quotes Clifford Nass who reports that when children and teens text on their phones they do not pay attention to one another's faces and do not learn basic emotional skills (376).

The best indicator of good emotional health is being able to have a face-to-face conversation according to McGrane (376). However, McGrane continues to explain that for most of us that texting and email are more efficient and quicker. However, do those things matter if we are missing the bigger picture of what is being communicated? Most people have experienced misunderstandings that have taken place through digital media, whether one becomes upset by a short response or another person becomes angry with one because one asked an inappropriate question. These miscommunications happen when we can’t
see what the other person is feeling. It is those interpersonal communication elements that
give meaning to our relationships.

McGrane reminds the readers that it is in the face-to-face conversations that we
come face-to-face with Christ because Christ in in the faces of our brothers, sisters, spouses,
children, co-workers, neighbors, and guests (377). Furthermore, these face-to-face
conversations also build up community, friendship, and marriage. McGrane further
emphasizes that this is the message that Benedict wants each person to realize in the Rule.
Our daily life of coming into contact with people is God’s way of entering our lives
unexpectedly. McGrane asks the poignant question, “Are we willing to set our phones aside
long enough to give God welcome?” (378). In order to achieve this welcome, the Rule gives
examples of how to best manage one’s day. In Chapter 47, one must find appropriate time
for each of our actions.

McGrane says that we shouldn't try to multitask all through our day, but we should
instead give each task the proper attention. Children in society today are learning to expect
that they have to share attention from their parents with technology. As unfortunate as
this sounds, children have grown accustomed to their parents looking at their phones or
computers while they are supposed to be spending quality family time or even while they
are entertaining guests. McGrane refers back to Sherry Turkle, who was mentioned in
chapter one. While having technology is useful, Benedict would have it being used only at
certain times that would not interfere with more important face-to-face interactions (378).

Furthermore, McGrane points out that Benedict writes about meal time and that
meals have become the locus where the practice of mindfulness of God and that of
welcoming Christ in others are united (378). Mealtime is generally the focus of hospitality. The ancient format called it a feast because it was something that was looked forward to and appreciated. Our fast-paced culture removed the importance of a shared meal-time in everyday living so it is no wonder that preparing a meal for guests would seem as an interruption. This is an excellent example of how changing approaches to everyday living changes our approach to other things in life. Creating a regular meal time with face-to-face interactions with one’s family encourages us to welcome in others and to do the same with them. The completeness that comes from the interactions and sense of community and love from a shared meal is why hospitality is so important.

Social media is another aspect of technology that affects hospitality according to McGrane. Similarly to texting and email, people get lost in checking updated status or taking photos to post rather than living in the moment with those who are present to them. McGrane admits that using Facebook and blogging can take time away from spending it with family, friends, and others in the community. She references Jesse Rice who is the author of *The Church of Facebook* through a quote: “We get to enjoy glimpses into our friends’ lives – both old and new – without all that messy ‘getting to know you’ business. And perhaps most importantly to us, we get to reveal and withhold whatever we feel like. We are in control” (379). Therefore, all of the time we are spending as part of our day to connect through social media is being taken away from other priorities.

McGrane feels that a simple reduction of technology time could easily allow for a face-to-face visit from an unexpected or expected guest. We often feel as though we are maxed out on time and that we are pushed to our limits, but we are the ones who set the
priorities according to McGrane. Unfortunately, technology doesn't fulfil our lives as much as human interaction does. McGrane wants us to honestly ask ourselves if the time spent connecting online is balanced with the time we devote to our children, spouse, and friends (380). After browsing through messages we are left informed, but after hospitality, we are generally gain some kind of reward internally from the communication and interpersonal relationship.

McGrane states that the reason that ancient and monastic hospitality can be part of a revival for communication and community is that it existed before the technological distractions that we see in everyday life in the 21st century. These guidelines set forth were about human relationships and nothing else. It was the basic most fundamental approach to how to live together in a community. As various technologies entered into the world through the Middle Ages and into the Industrial Revolution, a distinct change in hospitality and the outlook we have on community changed drastically, according to McGrane (380). A common, virtuous act that reinforced our love for God and for one another somehow got lost in the agendas of the time, namely individualistic concerns. For Benedict, community was lived in a concrete place, however now community is *virtual* explains McGrane (380). McGrane believes that St. Benedict would gently, but firmly ask us to reexamine our priorities (380). If we are so concerned with connecting with distant friends on Facebook, then we should consider connecting with real people in front of us, if we are ready to communicate in a way that is less demanding.

Bringing everything back to the home is useful for us to live fulfilled lives, but it will also come at a time that lives need it and we don't even recognize it, feels McGrane.
Opening ourselves up to understanding hospitality through the Rule of St. Benedict will enable us to see the other guidelines he set up for happy living. As evident by those practicing it, a person does not have to have any religious affiliation to reap the benefits of this short, time-tested book. What it does do is help people stop the hustle bustle of life and see the signs that are presented to us on a daily basis. It returns us to communicating with people and resurrecting a sense of community.

Jane Tomaine also looks at ways to incorporate hospitality in the home through the use of the Rule of St. Benedict in her book, St. Benedict’s Toolbox: The Nuts and Bolts of Everyday Benedictine Living. She begins a chapter devoted to hospitality with a quote from Fr. Daniel Homan and Lonni Collins Pratt that appeared in their book, Benedict’s Way: An Ancient Monk’s Insights for a Balanced Life. The quote states, “Hospitality isn’t about anything as simple as the best china, lace napkins, and crystal wineglasses. It might include those, but the real meaning of hospitality has to do with what one friend called “making room inside yourself for another person” (Tomaine 120). Immediately, Tomaine recognizes the truth that many of can be manipulative and self-serving when it comes to hospitality. So far, everything that has been reviewed about hospitality in accordance with the Rule of St. Benedict tells us how hospitality should be understood. Guests should be greeted and welcomed. Humility and gratitude should be shown because in them Christ is received. Yet with all of these definitions and guidelines set forth people still take hospitality as an annoyance that must be dealt with, according to Tomaine. “We fail to see need around us. We close our fists and hold in our love. In short, we become self-protective and in the process, miserable” (121). One way to change that perspective
completely is to legitimately vision Christ at one’s doorstep and imagine how one would welcome Him into one’s home.

Tomaine asks us what words we would use to describe that moment. Would they be warmth, love, appreciation, adoration, respect, and joy? (122) Sometimes reframing situations in our lives offers that new perspective. We go about living focused on ourselves and do not consider how we might be seen on the outside looking in. Spiritually speaking though, by envisioning hospitality as being offered to God, our behavior is drastically different. St. Benedict encourages us to ask ourselves if we saw Christ in the guest and if the guest saw Christ in us.

One way that the Rule helps us to see hospitality in this way is by applying daily regimen that includes seeing Christ in our community and in our families each and every day, according to Tomaine. A family member who focuses on others’ faults or sets high expectations is not doing that. We can practice hospitality if we accept them for who they are and see the good in them. Tomaine reminds us that St. Augustine asks us to, “Have Christian eyes” (123). When we allow others to be themselves where they do not have to put on a front, then they grow as a person. This helps lead them to discovering who they are. Creating this space filled with love, acceptance, and care makes others to feel at home and at peace. This kind of environment helps us to recharge and build self-confidence, that which enables us to carry forward more positive energy to others in the future.

Just as Robinson points out, Tomaine agrees that there must be time to be able to be alone and rejuvenate as the host so that one can offer good, quality hospitality to the guests. Tomaine states that an important part of hospitality is the balance between being
an individual and being a part of the community. There must be a common respect both for
the guests and for oneself. St. Benedict knew at the time that immersing oneself in caring
for others can be exhausting and eventually lead to resentment. Similarly Tomaine points
to how Esther de Waal commented in her book *Seeking God: the Way of St. Benedict*, “Only
as I find time to live with myself and to love myself will I be able to live with others and
love them as they need to be loved” (124).

Tomaine explains that, “Forgiveness is the key in Benedictine love and spirituality
and critical to life in community” (125). This contributes to taking care of oneself. By not
forgiving another person, one is hurting oneself. As Tomaine sees it, lacks of forgiveness
takes away energy, creates negativity, and distracts our minds. If any or all of these are
present in our lives then we are not offering the best version of ourselves to our guests. It
may come out when we are talking with others such as negative comments, argumentative
perspectives, and snarky comments. No one feels welcomed when this is the kind of
conversation perpetuated by the host. It feels like a hostile environment and could cause
guests to feel uneasy. The guests most likely would not want to stay and will leave with an
unfavorable opinion of the host. Again, one wants to have his or her own life so that one
can present a quality offering of hospitality to those coming to one’s home, according to
Tomaine.

Tomaine adds that we as a society are tired and have many commitments. Very
rarely do we feel rejuvenated to the point that we want to give what little time we have to
others. Since the benefits of offering hospitality are not obvious, sometimes we need
encouraged to do it. This happened to Tomaine at the end of a hectic day once. She
explains that she was finished with her work at the church and was looking forward to going home. Just as she was about to leave she remembered that a homeless family was going to be staying there for the night. She knew she needed to stop and check in on them, but her mind was telling her otherwise. She had no energy left to do it, yet her heart encouraged her to still do it. She saw the family and had a nice conversation as well as received hugs from the entire family. When she was about to leave she felt like a new person. She said that her reluctance to offer hospitality was returned tenfold and for the little effort she gave, she received a “wave of love” back (129). She admits that it’s hard always to be present and accepting of others around us in the community, at work, and in our families, yet Tomaine offers encouraging words just the same as St. Benedict offered encouraging words in the Rule, that it is possible for us to make room one opportunity at a time.

There are ways to put hospitality into practices using advice from Tomaine. Every day there are moments to offer hospitality to those that are near. First, one should be present to others. One of the best things one can do for others on a daily basis is to pay attention and listen to those around one. When one gives someone your full attention, then one is practicing welcoming others into one’s life. It may not be easy to be present all the time, but Tomaine reassures that once one figures out what pulls one away one will be able to concentrate. Second, it is important to realize that being hospitable is rarely on our timetable. One needs to learn to be flexible and open to interruptions. Next, Tomaine states that people should create a free space for hospitality. “Instead of viewing the stranger with fear, ambivalence, or hostility, we can create a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy” (133). We can clear this figurative
space simply by being silent and setting aside our busyness, concerns, desires, and our preoccupations. When we do that and open ourselves up we can create a friendly space (133). Sometimes we think that hospitality can only work if it surrounds an event, but every day one can be hospitable just by being a welcoming person to one other person.

Tomaine explains that the next step after practicing hospitality on a daily basis with people one knows, one needs to discuss hospitality within one’s family. As parents it is important to talk to children about hospitality. One needs to explain what it is and how to do it. They need to understand why it’s important. One can even explain hospitality to pets. Then, as a family, welcome guests into one’s home. Tomaine suggests baking cookies for shut-ins, cook for someone who is ill or had a death in the family, work together in a soup kitchen (Tomaine 137). Within the family itself, it’s important to practice hospitality. Sometimes that means listening and being present, but it can also mean giving each other space. Parents, children, siblings, and extended family are all relationships that need solitude in order to maintain positive attitudes. If someone does something nice for one then one should be appreciative and thank him or her. If he or she is trying to be hospitable to one then one needs to allow them. The family meal is also a good time to practice hospitality. Each person should have the opportunity to share his or her day, but more importantly each should listen and be present to each other (138).

Even though there are many suggestions for how to offer hospitality to others in order to help them and society, there are just as many advantages to the host. The guest is not the only person who reaps the benefits of experiencing hospitality when one makes it a part of his or her household. Many people yearn to be connected to others. This desire is
evident in the growing surge into social media or there might be people who want to be less cynical about things in the world because of how it makes them feel. Being the one who initiates the hospitality can help that person with all of these things. This is what Father Daniel Homan, O.S.B. and Lonni Collins Pratt write about in their book, *Radical Hospitality: Benedict’s Way of Love*. Homan and Pratt look at ways in which Benedictine monasticism and the *Rule of St. Benedict* show people how to welcome and connect with others so not only to help the strangers and guests, but also to help themselves have a deeper connection.

Homan and Pratt begin the conversation with spirituality or the human spirit because they say that this is what holds our deepest desires and fears. Homan and Pratt also recognize that St. Benedict teaches that in order to grow as a human one needs other people. “If you want to be a person of great spirit, you can’t do life alone” (ix). In this particular moment of time more people are becoming frightened. People are becoming afraid of strangers. The media shows so many ways reasons why we need to be afraid. From the crime, attacks, murder, and chaos, our society feels that isolation is an option.

Homan and Pratt believe that finding hospitality is an option to avoid growing in hostility (xxii). “Jesus said to love your neighbor; hospitality is how” (xxii). Every day there are people we meet and we practice mini-sessions of hospitality. One option would be to greet them and have a short conversation. Another option is to walk with one’s head down and make no eye contact. The second option doesn’t allow anyone into one’s life, even for a glimpse. Not only that, but God doesn’t have an entry way into one’s life.
Homan and Pratt elaborate more on these ideas through a story set in the market in Mexico City. An American asks about the cost of onions to an old Indian selling them. They go back and forth about the price and finally the American asks if he can buy all of them. The man says no because it will cause him to lose his life. He enjoys seeing the people, smelling the market, and hearing the children. If his supply is gone with one customer then he would have no need to stay all day and he would miss all of that. Unfortunately, many do not look at life that way. They would rather make the money and not think about the relationships or the hospitality (xxxvii). So it’s not just the guest who receives gifts from moments of hospitality; the host can also receive benefits. “Saint Benedict wrote from his conviction that life truly is a journey and we are all co-travelers who need one another if we are to get home” (xxxvii). While we think it is a benefit to shut our doors and to stay isolated, the real benefit comes from the people we meet every day in a variety of situations.

Homan and Pratt explain that St. Benedict is unwavering in his command for us to offer hospitality because he knows everything that it involves. He knew it was not just a matter of opening a door and saying, "hello." If it were that easy then the Rule of St. Benedict would be even shorter than it is. Hospitality coincides with silence and solitude, forgiveness, obedience, and stability. As a result, the turn to want to offer more hospitality is a process. And according to Homan and Pratt, it may not be a soothing, but it will be transformative.

Homan and Pratt add that hospitality also has a moral dimension that makes it an ethical issue. "Hospitality is both the answer to modern alienation and injustice and a path
Many may see hospitality as something that is learned from a magazine or through Martha Stewart, but it is much more than that. It is not a superficial thing that can be fixed by sending out an invitation. “Hospitality is a lively, courageous, and convivial way of living that challenges our compulsion either to turn away or to turn inward and disconnect ourselves from others” (9).

Hospitality is a personal response to one’s own need to connect with other people, so if one keeps oneself closed off then one is hurting oneself. Therefore, Homan and Pratt see hospitality not as something one does as much as it is someone one becomes. One can make room for people one person at a time and over time one will have the ability to receive others in (38).

Homan and Pratt describe the home. Every house has rooms inside of it. There are rooms for each person to sleep, a room for cooking and eating, a room for relaxation, and rooms to get clean. As a family most people choose to have the solitude that is needed generally by being in separate parts of the house, but at meal time everyone should congregate around the kitchen or dining room table. Also, there are a lot of moments in between that we are presented with opportunities to be open to those around us that are inside and outside of the home. These are all situations that St. Benedict helps and guides with in the Rule. Homan and Pratt call it cloister, community, and hospitality. The cloister is the alone time in the home, the community is the family togetherness shared at dinner or in the living room, and hospitality refers to one’s interactions in all other relationships outside of the home (88). Monks in a monastery are able to keep all three aspects in line. The balance of these three are what make the whole person. Homan and Pratt say that
when we recognize our life being out of sorts that it is usually because one of these areas is lacking (88). St. Benedict made the monastic day balanced with prayer, work, solitude, community and recreation.

Remarkably, silence and solitude are key components in the home because everyone lives so closely together, according to Homan and Pratt. However, many misinterpret silence as just being alone. It is not uncommon for people to go into a room and shut the door. However, in the background a television, music, or computer are still going on in the background. Solitude needs silence so that the heart and mind can be quiet and hear what is needed. Furthermore, Homan and Pratt believe that what makes hospitality necessary in this triad is that each person needs simpler, uncomplicated relationships with others (104) as well as the deep, committed ones, but it is through our necessity for all of these parts of relationships that make our lives fulfilled. “Know the depths of solitude, enjoy the warmth of community, and take a hand in the companionship of hospitality” (Homan and Pratt 107).

Sometimes, the best way to approach a new habit is to think about how to begin to make a change slowly. The home is the most natural environment for hospitality. Ancient and biblical traditions tell us that, but it is important to understand the depth of hospitality so that it is not acted out superficially and without meaning. As best said by Homan and Pratt, “Hospitality is not something you do, but it is something you become” (58). By using the Rule of St. Benedict and his approach to monastic living, which is similar to that of a family in a household, people can be reminded and even taught why human interaction and communication fulfills us above all things.
Learning from Robinson, McGrane, Tomaine and Homan and Pratt, we discover that our homes need to become the place where it begins. Robinson believes that our homes are where we can teach our children, find solitude from the world, and invite others into our space. McGrane states that allowing someone into one’s space figuratively and literally means one is allowing people and God into one’s life. That interaction rejuvenates our souls and gives our hearts happiness rather than using that time for technology. Tomaine adds that we think that we are too busy to stop and have the time to think about hospitality, yet, it happens on a small scale every day with each personal encounter. Also, by slowly engaging with other people and seeing Christ within them one opens oneself up to being able to do more, explains Tomaine. St. Benedict’s wants us to see Christ in the other person. He wants us to treat that person as if he or she was Christ. In return, each person will feel respected, loved, and included.

After one has considered the basis of the Rule of St. Benedict and its call to hospitality within the balance of solitude and community, theories and philosophies within communication must be applied. Chapter 8 will discuss these theories and how they relate to communication.
Chapter 8

Hospitality and Communication

So far what we have learned from research on hospitality is that it is an ancient concept rooted in biblical concepts according to Andrew E. Arterbury in his article, “The Ancient Customs of Hospitality.” Because of the religious backdrop that leads into Christianity, hospitality was always connected to moral obligation that leads to salvation, states Arterbury. As we have seen, St. Benedict was a pioneer that further instilled the importance of the practice when he created the Rule of St. Benedict over 1500 years ago. While the Rule stayed the same, the world did not unfortunately, explains Thomas Merton. As a result, most people don’t necessarily associate hospitality with religion, God, or moral obligation at all. Hospitality has taken on a different definition that is more superficial and casual. But what is astounding is that there have been effects from the lack of hospitality that are showing up within the field of communication.

Many may ask how something that appears to be insignificant can have an impact on our lives and how we communicate. The answer is that hospitality is the end result of what a person is able to do if he or she is fulfilled as a human being. One can become fulfilled if he or she uses communication to become part of a community and family, as stated by Hannah Arendt in the Human Condition. It begins a cycle that feeds itself. The community builds the individual up so that he or she is in a place that can build up another person within the community when the other needs it.
In the field of communication, many have looked at the topic of hospitality in a variety of ways. Some such as Jacques Derrida, Richard Kearney and Ed Casey have written about it plainly as *hospitality*. Others have written about topics related to hospitality such as loneliness, displacement, belonging, the stranger, and the familiar and unfamiliar. These terms all have something in common. They all relate to communication patterns that have left humans unhappy and unfulfilled.

There is a recent revival of hospitality in humanities and social sciences according to Mustafa Dikec, Nigel Clark, and Clive Barnett who wrote an article, “Extending Hospitality: Giving Space, Taking Time.” For them this resurgence of studying hospitality comes from globalized social life. Because of spatial relocation and dislocation there is a need and a demand for hospitality. The article begins by drawing the reader in with an explanation of how a stranger’s actions from another part of the world can impact our lives. In this instance, they are referencing war and politics in which topics such as immigration, multiculturalism, and post-national citizenship are discussed. In some ways, living in a global world offers mobility and easy connections. On the other hand, migrants and refugees are facing hostility rather than hospitality.

Karen Achtelstetter writes in her article that was published from a keynote speech given at the Council for World Mission entitled, “Mission Today and the Uninvited Guest,” that Christian and ancient formats of hospitality may be the link needed to increase global relationships because it seeks to recognize the marginalized in society. Achtelstetter is the General Secretary of World Association for Christian Communication. She holds a Masters in Theology and Bachelor of Arts from Friedrich-Alexander University in Germany and a
Master of Arts degree in Women’s Studies from University of Kent at Canterbury as well as conferred as a Doctor of Divinity. Achtelstetter states that hospitality brings up the questions of human rights, entitlement, and responsibilities which can also lead to the war on terror, economic migration, and land ownership disputes. Those who have fear, racism, or refusal to accept the Other are referred to alterity. “Alterity refers to people being treated as “Other” or “alien” by being different from the dominant view, due to race, class, gender, religion, ethnicity or other defining traits” (40). The article discusses many examples and parables from the Bible and ancient times that show how the marginal are treated with dignity and respect. Also, those considered marginal are the ones who show great displays of hospitality to others.

Achtelsetter’s goal is to have the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism and the World Council of Churches help restore the rights of the marginalized by offering communication rights. Having communication for all helps to “restore the voice and visibility to the vulnerable and disadvantaged” (43). The communication she is referring to would be mass, community, and social media. Achtelsetter states that each person’s communication reflects the world we want to live in. She wants to use communication to help change how we view hospitality so that marginal people all over the world are not treated inhospitably (41). Seeing how equal rights are denied and how the marginal are labeled as the Other, demands that people accept the reality of human differences and that they show hospitality to others (40).

With that, the question of hospitality on a global level is related to geography and spatial concerns where we need to understand and to be attentive to its limits. Extensive
travel does pose its complications when one is crossing borders into unfamiliar cultures and terrain.

A book that gives the most direct connection to the implications of hospitality within communication would be *Phenomenologies of the Stranger: Between Hostility and Hospitality*. This book is a volume of work from authors situated in North America and Europe and was edited by Richard Kearney and Kascha Semonovitch. This book has articles that focus on global hospitality, sacred hospitality, and hosts and guests. These topics all apply to the discussion of applying the *Rule of St. Benedict* to hospitality for communication.

To return to the global world and welcoming the stranger, key contributors are Edward Casey and Brian Treanor. Casey’s article is entitled, “Strangers at the Edge of Hospitality.” He begins with explaining how anyone who is non-native to a country is considered a *stranger*. “To be a stranger or foreigner is to come from “elsewhere” another where that that which is habitual or familiar” (40). However, as he gets further into his explanation of the stranger, he describes the name of the gate entrance to Central Park in New York City called “Strangers Gate.” According to Casey, the metaphor of the gate signifies the edge or outer limits of a space mainly for boundary purposes. Some gates offer welcome and an unchecked admission, but others can discourage entry (42). Essentially, gates and edges can separate and bring together at once. Therefore, hospitality enacts reciprocal, but asymmetrical relationships according to Casey. He also states that hospitality can be limiting/conditional and absolute/unconditional if we meet the right criteria (42).
Conditions of Hospitality

According to Casey, the terms of conditional and unconditional hospitality lies within the edge. The furthest edge where there is full separation has no hospitality. On the other hand, when there is full fusion, hospitality cannot happen either, although Casey states that Derrida still sees that unconditional hospitality has conditional points in terms of certain laws that are enacted (43).

Jacques Derrida’s perspective on hospitality focuses primarily on the conditions. “To be what it ‘must’ be, hospitality must not pay a debt, or be governed by a duty, it is gracious, and ‘must’ not open itself to the guest (either uninvited or unlooked for), either ‘conforming to duty’ or even, to use the Kantian distinction again, ‘out of duty’ (Derrida 83). The conditional law needs the unconditional law and vice versa. The conditioned laws are considered to be the corruptions of the unconditional laws. Derrida states that hospitality cannot exist where there are “rights” of guest or “duties” of hosts (83).

Derrida does not believe that hospitality can ever be fully unconditional. He believes “true hospitality has no conditions, seeks no reward, and distinguishes itself dramatically from codified law and the concept of justice. It is not contingent upon situation, event, history, or consequence; neither does it seek to establish logic. It is merely a gift, in the purest sense” (29). The conditional and unconditional element that Derrida explains does prohibit full extension of hospitality to most. There are times that it is difficult to be completely open to welcoming guest whether it is out of fear, aggravation, interruption, etc. There are many conditions that we would see as unacceptable. In some situations the guests violate rules that are seen with hospitality such as stealing,
committing crimes, and overstaying. If someone overstays then suddenly he or she is not a guest, but is now a part of the community. Therefore, the rules for hospitality would no longer be in effect. There are also moments that allow the guest to receive benefits from welcoming another into his or her home. It might be as a status symbol, for relationships, or for promotion. “It is entirely possible to allow others entry (to one’s home, town, or country), perhaps with few if any conditions, and yet fail to act hospitably toward them” (Kearney and Semonovitch 62). Kearney and Semonovitch explain that this form of inhospitable openness negates the act all together. The formality of opening one’s doors does not mean anything to the guest if he or she does not receive the openness from a host who is implaced.

Brian Treanor picks up the ideas of the unconditional and conditional hospitality in his article, “Putting Hospitality in Its Place” found in Phenomenologies of the Stranger. Treanor points out that we ought to exhibit hospitality as dictated by our position and role in life (61). He explains that a young, single man may be able to pick up a hitchhiker along the road, but that would not be safe for a mother of two children to attempt. There are all sorts of instances that would prohibit a complete and unconditional act of hospitality. Following this mindset would not be considered a corruption of the unconditional to some religions outside of the traditional Judeo, Christian, and Muslim background.

Treanor states that hospitality is a virtue of place since hospitality always happens in a place and because hospitality consists of giving place to another (50). Therefore, only an implaced person can be hospitable (50). That is not to say that displaced people are not
kind or welcoming in their own right, but that they are not settled into a place in which they can offer it to another.

Treanor explains that displacement becomes estrangement: a distancing, both literal and metaphorical. We can become strangers to our own place and even our bodies. None of us are ever completely removed from being displaced and that can bring about total anxiety (55). It is a true fear and that is why there needs to be some form of connection. This relates to the importance of feeling welcomed while traveling. Treanor recognizes that our fear of being lost is fundamental to our human psyche and to our understanding of being a stranger (55). Furthermore, there are various degrees of both implacement and displacement so that there may be times that we can experience both states Treanor.

There are common forms of displacement, according to Treanor. First there are refugees from a disaster (social, political, or natural), widows and orphans, literal homelessness, and homeless in regards to not having a primal space, but perhaps the most forms of displacement can be existential, states Treanor. This is less obvious, but more widespread (55). Displacement that is existential is when we do not feel in place with our lives and our communities. We do not feel like we fit in with people. This can lead to anxiety and depression because people have no form of attachment not just to place, but to anything.

Our sense of attachment comes from our levels of engagement, according to Robert Putnam. However, since there have been trends towards isolation, more people are dealing with detachment and estrangement from their places.
When most people hear the word, nostalgia, they think it should bring back good memories of a previous time. However, nostalgia is a sign of displacement according to Treanor. Mainly it is a response to displacement because it is an attempt to restore a pattern of living such as tradition, simplicity, and community (65). Treanor goes on to state that the role of hospitality is to help the guest feel implanted by making him or her feel at home and feeling a part of the story. This is when we typically hear expressions such as “Make yourself at home,” and “My house is your house” (65). “Achieving this as-if implacement is not something the host can do for the guest; the host can only facilitate” (65). Furthermore, the guest feels more at home when he or she is a part of the daily rituals and family rhythms, it actually feels more inviting and welcoming for guests to feel as though they are a part of things to the point that no one is waiting on them than it does by being served.

Treanor continues to explain how language is one way that implacement can occur, especially with those traveling across borders and throughout the world. Many immigrants who have left their native country and are in search of a new life feel displacement because their language is not spoken in the new territory they choose to call “home.” They lived a life that was communicated on a daily basis with a language that was spoken by everyone they came into contact with in the community. Then once they relocate and become displaced, they feel further displaced because of the language barrier. However, it is seen in many diverse cities that ethnic and cultural groups gather together and find one another to bring a sense of belonging back to help move towards being implanted. Treanor states that, “The role of language in place, implacement, and nostalgia points the way, indirectly to be sure, toward identifying a genuinely distinguishing mark of hospitality” (Treanor 64).
Once a person is welcomed by another in the language he or she speaks, there is a movement towards "feeling at home."

Furthermore, language allows us to communicate easily with one another. Derrida questions unconditional hospitality because he does not believe it is possible to make a real stranger feel as if at home when the host has no idea what that means. Language proves that there is somewhat truth to this claim. Language goes beyond the interpersonal communication of what is unspoken. All humans require food, shelter, and clothing. However, if a person is injured or hurt in some way unseen, the host would have no way of knowing that. Language makes that form of communication possible. Furthermore, language is comfort and familiar. Language connects us to place through the dialect and natural languages according to Treanor, but language also includes narratives, stories, and wisdom. "To be at home with language is to inhabit it in such a way that its idioms, both grammatical and narrative, feel natural rather than forced" (Treanor 64).

Ricoeur also sees language as inseparable from discourse, where words can have meaning. Based on these types of arguments, Ricoeur writes the book, *The Rule of Metaphor*. "The main contribution of the study lies in proposing a holistic theory of metaphor that brings together rhetorical, semantic, and pragmatic perspectives" (44). The book defines the metaphor as "the rhetorical process by which discourse unleashes the power that certain fictions have to describe reality (Ricoeur 7).

What really made Ricoeur one of the most important thinkers of the 20th century is his trilogy of *Time and Narrative* that was published in the mid-1980s. Andreea Deciu Ritivoi explains Ricoeur's work in her book, *Paul Ricoeur: Tradition and Innovation in*
Rhetorical Theory. Ritivoi explains, “The key concepts featured in Time and Narrative are configuration and refiguration: one describes the emplotment strategies designed to structure raw experience into verbally recorded events, while the other refers to the transformation of one's own experience once that experience is analyzed in narrative terms” (44).

Volume one of Time and Narrative looks specifically at the experience of time problematized by Augustine and Aristotle as well as emplotment according to Aristotle. Volume Two explores semiotic theories of narrative through interpretations of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*, and Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*. Then Volume Three proposes a theory of Mimesis that explains the transformative power of language and the connection between language and reality.

Narratives were at one time a part of our oral culture. Narratives were the passing down of truth from one generation to another. The oral culture had to recount lived experiences and explain it in a way that others could remember it and learn from it. These stories represented the truth of lives from a particular moment, but not necessarily for future generations. Then suddenly upon the arrival of the printing press, the world became smaller. Narratives could be recorded and shared with others. All over the world we could gain information and learn. Books could be translated and stories retold.

Narratives are ordinary life configured into plots and metaphors to represent lived existence. Writers can put all of this together and into context so we as a society can cope. Narratives make sense of our lives and give witness of stories of everyday life. If we can relate then it seems authentic.
The three-fold mimesis allows the prefiguration of ordinary life to take place in phase one. The second phase abstracts and configures that into stories and then, finally, the reader can test the narrative and apply it to his or her own life using tradition and knowledge of his or her experiences.

Human action can be narrated because it is already articulated by sins, rules, and norms (Ricoeur 57). “Thus the hermeneutic circle of narrative and time never stops being reborn from the circle that the stages of mimesis form” (Ricoeur 76).

Returning to Treanor, he states, “If implacement has a linguistic component, it would seem to follow that implacement is fundamentally narrative, which should be no surprise because our identities are tied to implacement and our identities are also narrative” (Treanor 64). Being implaced is an element of offering true hospitality according to Treanor, even though he sees it as the main ingredient. The host needs to be available and offer his or her resources to the guest.

Gabriel Marcel explains this in his concept of availability. According to Marcel, we can get lost in the spirit of abstraction if we do not have a secondary reflection. This reflection causes us to not be available to others because we stay in a constant form of reflection. This state causes us to withdraw and to not be concerned with others around us.

In addition to Derrida, Ricoeur, and Marcel, hospitality can also be explained through Emmanuel Levinas. More that is added to the conversation of hospitality through *Phenomenologies of the Stranger* is through an article written by Jeffrey Bloechl titled, “Words of Welcome: Hospitality in the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas.” According to
Bloechl, Levinas sees “being in the world” is being in relation to other people. Levinas states that when we see the face of the Other it awakens the self-absorption into hospitality (236). However, Bloechl further explains that according to Levinas, it is impossible to welcome the Other person as truly Other unless passivity is a condition of our very sensibility (236).

Bloechl explains that human sensing contains intuition of what we understand about a certain thing and on its way to knowing. There is a response to the Other and then one must gather oneself and discover what is home. This must be done in order to offer what is home to the Other so that the stranger can have comfort. This is the moment that one must set aside any thoughts or actions and attend to the Other. For Levinas there is a peace in caring for the Other and welcoming them into one’s home. In addition, Levinas understands the commitment it takes to offer oneself to the stranger. There is a patience and limitless self-effacement that is without end, according to Bloechl (236).

Thomas Ogletree also looks at Levinas and his interpretation of hospitality in his book, *Hospitality to the Stranger – Dimensions of Moral Understanding*. Virtually all ethical perspectives of note in Western thought have sought to take the Other into account. Rarely is the Other’s call or appeal taken as the privileged instance which opens up the original meaning of morality itself (35). For Levinas, according to Ogletree, such openness to the stranger carries its own form of shock, but the shock reflects the painful discovery of his/her own egotistic self-absorption. Conscience emerges in response to the Other’s moral resistance to arbitrary freedom. Shame manifests the self’s awareness of the impact of the Other’s presence. Levinas is suggesting that we cannot gain access to the being of the
Other or the world of meaning and value constituted by the Other through a process of self-
discovery. Levinas is giving us an account of humanness, which embraces plurality. (49).

Essentially, Ogletree explains that Levinas attempts to locate the commencement of
moral consciousness in a readiness to welcome the Other in order to show hospitality to
the stranger. In this frame of reference, morality begins when egoism is judged and called
into question, when a self opens itself to the world of meaning communicated by the Other
and responds in appropriate ways to the Other’s need quite beyond considerations of
personal benefit or danger (58). Ogletree states, “The promise borne by the reciprocal
dialectic of host and stranger is the emergence of a new world of shared meanings”
(Ogletree 4). Therefore, to be human is to engage in communication with others.

Beyond these well-known scholars, Richard Kearney has also become an expert on
the topic of hospitality from the books, articles and projects that he has completed. He has
written over 20 books including most recently Anatheism: Returning to God after God,
Reimagining the Sacred, and Carnal Hermeneutics. He also has edited over 14 more. He
currently is the international director of the Guestbook Project- Hosting the Stranger
between Hostility and Hospitality. According to his website, Richardkearney.com, Richard
Kearney holds the Charles B. Seelig Chair of Philosophy at Boston College and has served as
a Visiting Professor at University College Dublin, the University of Paris (Sorbonne), the
Australian Catholic University and the University of Nice.

Kearney received his Bachelor’s Degree from University of Dublin in 1975, and his
Masters of Arts degree from McGill University in 1976. Then he received a Masters
Travelling Studentship from the National University of Ireland in 1977 and his Doctorate from the University of Paris X in 1980 where he studied and worked with Paul Ricoeur.

One of the projects that relates more directly to hospitality than any book is the Guestbook Project, directed by Richard Kearney. The motto for this project is “Exchanging Stories – Changing History.” According to the website www.guestbookproject.org, this initiative gives young people from communities that have been polarized by boundaries and borders the opportunity to share their stories, experiences, and dreams. “Through digital filmmaking, we encourage the youth to record their stories and engage in a new, shared, creative project” (Kearney). How the project works is that a person can record a story that is about 1 -2 minutes on his or her cell phone or any electronic device. Then he or she can download it to www.guestbookproject.org. After that, the story is shared with the world as a storybite.

Storybite is a sound bite with video similar to YouTube videos that can be shared on Guestbook Project.org or through social media. “Storybites is a new Guestbook initiative that creates a space for people to share transformative moments in which ‘the other’ becomes a guest. Overcoming violence and facilitating conflict resolution means hosting a radical and surprising shift in perspective” (Kearney). Next to each storybite is a brief introduction of the person and what the story is about. These are stories from youth all over the world seeking to find hospitality rather than hostility. They share stories of poverty, injustice, effects of boundaries and borders as well as religious and cultural beliefs. The goal is to empower a new generation of peacemakers through empathy using digital media so that history can be changed.
As evident in Kearney’s work with hospitality, one can see the progression of ideas that have linked Kearney to Ricoeur and then to Ricoeur’s mentor, Gabriel Marcel. The key connection would be the use of narratives and storytelling. Kearney uses storytelling in various works. As previously stated, narratives are part of the Guestbook Project. He also uses it in his book, Anatheism: Returning to God After God. This book is a look into theology and narratives of the lives of Mohandas Gandhi and Dietrich Bonhoeffer as well as work from Julia Kristeva, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce. Kearney is reflecting on religion and the sacred in terms of our time and place. Anatheism is different than other forms such as theism, believing in God; atheism, denying the existence of God; or agnosticism, suspending judgment about the existence or nonexistence of God. There are also forms of fideism that while still not having evidence use what is known as having the “leap of faith.”

What Kearney calls the anatheism, translated as Ana-theos, God after God, is another way of seeking and sounding the things we consider sacred, but can never fully fathom or prove. For Kearney this is another idiom for receiving back what we’ve given up as if we were encountering it for the first time (3). He compares this to Abraham receiving his son Isaac back as a gift. It is the experience of discovering God beyond what we thought was possible and it happens when God is in the Other. “Such holiness was already there - only we didn’t see, touch, or hear it” (5). So by seeing the stranger and recognizing how God exists in “the presence of holiness in the flesh of ordinary existence” we return to God after God (5).
Kearney begins chapter one in *Anatheism* by asking what happens in the instant when the sacred stranger appears. Do we offer hospitality or do we offer hostility? This is the wager that Kearney poses to the reader. In an instant do we choose hospitality or hostility, trust or suspicion, hope or despair or resignation (40). Chapter two delineates five main movements in the anatheistic wager: imagination, humor, commitment, discernment, and hospitality (4).

Brian Treanor responds to Kearney’s book in an article, “The Anatheistic Wager: faith after Faith.” Treanor points out that even though discernment plays a role in who we determine to allow in our homes, hospitality plays an even greater role because it incorporates love into our actions. “We should begin with love as our default attitude” (558). Kearney states that love is a risk, but a risk that is not groundless. “Love – as compassion and justice – is the watermark. There is a discernable difference between one who gives water to the thirsty and one who does not, between one who heals and one who maims, between one who hosts and one who shuts the door” (Kearney 47). There is a difference in attitude that separates hostility and hospitality. Kearney suggests love and hospitality.

Kearney wants to see a change in the world because of the terrors, traumas, horrors, and insults that occurs every day. He understands that theology has never been strong enough to end evil, but that maybe understanding it in this way through anatheism might. Kearney’s view of anatheistic moments are similar to that of being displaced. He writes, “The anatheist moment is one available to anyone who experiences instants of deep disorientation, doubt, or dread, when we are no longer sure exactly who we are or where
we are going” (5). He also calls it a “holy insecurity.” Therefore, having these moments of insecurity and living in a world of chaos leads society in desperate need of change. One way is through hospitality.

While Kearney aims to give an inclusive polyphonic account in various religious traditions, he does discuss *The Rule of St. Benedict*. Kearney was educated by Benedictine Monks so his praise of Christian hospitality does make sense, yet Kearney pushes for a new way of looking at God.

Kearney writes further about hospitality in hostile environments in his book, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*. Here, Kearney attempts to look at the Other differently than what traditional narratives tell us about strangers as being monstrous and to have a middle ground. Kearney wants there to be discernment between strangers coming in peace and those hostile. “In short I am suggesting that we need to be able to critically discriminate between different kinds of Otherness, while remaining alert to the deconstructive resistance to black and white judgments of Us versus Them” (67). Kearney uses Derrida’s ethics of absolute hospitality to investigate the ethics of hospitality.

Boyd Blundell combines three of mentioned scholars into one article, “Unavailability: When Neighbors Become Strangers.” He studies Kearney's book *Anatheism* as well as work from Paul Ricoeur and Gabriel Marcel. He begins by talking about the overall crisis that are occurring in the world today and that they are said to reveal something about us and that concerns Blundell. He suggests that we are locked into a consumerist narrative rather than a sacred narrative. Kearney calls upon availability as was present in Marcel’s work. Kearney states, “The muscles of availability are so atrophied
that welcoming even the neighbor, let alone the stranger, is a challenge” (Blundell 561). According to Marcel, he views availability more from the point of view of when it is absent. Availability is absent when one succumbs to the spirit of abstraction. “As soon as we accord to any category, isolated from all other categories, an arbitrary primacy, we are victims of the spirit of abstraction” (156). Through abstraction, also known as primary reflection, we have the ability to temporarily distance ourselves from the world in order to reflect upon it (Blundell 562). The overall process can overwhelm the individual and this could be how strangers remain strange.

To combat this problem, Marcel proposes a secondary reflection that does not allow the primary reflection to take over. In some ways, the period of reflection is useful in order to think through a problem. This period is similar to the need for solitude and silence recommended in the Rule of St. Benedict. However, if balance is not kept then there is no availability to the other people in the community. This is what Marcel realizes if a person stays in the spirit of abstraction (156). The person in unavailable and sees the world through the eyes of the spectator rather than the participant (156). However, secondary reflection brings attentiveness and a readiness to participate in the world (156).

Many, including Kearney, may see that there is a strain of abstraction that includes everyone, according to Blundell. Therefore, it will take great effort for all to make themselves available. Blundell references the Hurricane Katrina disaster and how 60,000 residents were left stranded. He explains that there was a radical failure of availability from all relief agencies. Being from New Orleans himself, he felt slighted and that people kept New Orleans at a distance to keep it manageable. When an individualistic abstraction
is not accompanied by Marcel’s second reflection then there is danger according to Blundell. Kearney and many others also notice the danger and are making calls for hospitality. This is what is needed to preserve the community and society so that hostility does not take over when we see the Other or the Stranger.

Communication vs. St. Benedict

There are some similarities and differences between the perspectives on hospitality from the religious point of view of St. Benedict and from communication scholars. One similarity is that there are conditions to hospitality that cannot be ignored as documented by Derrida. This similarity may not seem obvious based on the saying that all should be welcomed as Christ. However, by closely reading the Rule of St. Benedict one can find many conditions that are dealt with to make offering hospitality regularly possible.

St. Benedict understood that there are going to be situations that are not as easy to deal with, so he has specified recommendations. For example, he has guidelines for when someone from another monastery visits and if he or she is not willing to leave. He also remarks about how to deal with someone who does not follow the guidelines of the monastery and displays unacceptable behavior. However, the most basic way that St. Benedict deals with conditions is the daily care of hospitality. The guests are kept separate from the rest of the monastery. There is time for the guest to be alone. Guests are expected to follow the same schedule the rest of the monastery has. All basic human needs are fulfilled including food, rest, and shelter.

There is still the obligation to welcome each person as if he or she were Christ. However, as it was seen in the historical overview, there were times in the monastic
tradition that offering welcome to everyone at a time of religious and political upheaval was trying. Sometimes it left the monasteries destitute, which then made it known that other options for the poor and needy were necessary. As a society, there was a great need to care for one another and entire institutions were created such as hospitals and orphanages. It could not be managed alone with just monasteries or individual homes, yet as with most things a balance is never kept. It is either one extreme or the other, and so hospitality moved completely away from the personal and individual offering.

It is difficult to compare a community to an individual household as well. As Treanor states, a single man can offer a different form of hospitality than a mother of two can offer. So a community of monks can offer more hospitality than households that have to plan around children, jobs, and activities, but what is a similarity is that there must be availability. Marcel states that availability means to be there for the neighbor, stranger, or guest and is a necessity for offering hospitality. Some may think that monks and nuns have complete availability because they do not leave their cloister for work and other activities and that it would be easy for them to welcome anyone who knocks at the door. However, this is not the case. The monks have a schedule as also stated in the Rule. The monks have time for prayer, work, solitude, and community. There is a rhythm to the day. It is an interruption to stop and tend to the needs of others at any given moment. It is similar to the rhythm of the day that a family experiences. Each day brings new goals and challenges that are planned ahead of time. Stopping for the interruption of the guest is not something that is easily done.
What is different is that one may not think that a monastery gives a feeling of being at home simply because it is not a single-family dwelling. Monasteries by nature would have to be larger to accommodate all of the monks and guests. They are kept simple so there will not be anything extra that might help to make one feel that he or she is in a familiar environment. Another difference is that there is one person whose only job is to wait and greet visitors. This is very unlikely that any one household could ever do this.

Another similarity is the issue of place. Casey believes that a person must be implaced in order to offer hospitality to the displaced person. St. Benedict’s Rule can offer that because of the other standards set forth such as solitude, stability and obedience. The way of life that St. Benedict encourages is a plan that encourages implacement in every degree. He believes that each person needs solitude with silence so that each person has time to think and pray. Then, his guidelines for stability and remaining consistent in everyday life has the lay person feel settled in his or her own life. Obedience helps each person respond to one another’s needs and to keep the home stable. All of these characteristics contribute to implacement. As a result, the displaced person will be offered a true sense of hospitality.

Another similarity is the importance of language and narrative as explained previously through Ricoeur. While not every monastery or lay person may speak the exact same language, they do have the same narrative from the Bible. The reference to biblical scriptures surrounding God and Jesus is a form of language that works as a format to offering hospitality. Just as a common language that is heard for the traveler, the usage of common scripture is welcoming to the Christian. The encouraging words and safety found
in prayers helps a person to feel at home. One of the reasons that the *Liturgy of the Hours* is prayed throughout the world is that any one person knows that these are the same prayers being said at that moment by all those following the schedule. Many take comfort in those words because of the tradition and global practice of it. If one person in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania is praying at 6 a.m. on Monday morning during Week 1 then it is certain that the same prayers are being said in Sacramento, California.

Furthermore, the messages conveyed in scriptures allow each person to feel as though he or she is a part of the story as noted by Ricoeur. The purpose of psalms, proverbs, and gospels is to give parables that can be applied to human life. People can apply the knowledge and wisdom learned from these passages to their own lives. Also, they may see problems in their own lives that can be resolved by following what the scripture advises. One of the most basic tenets is to love thy neighbor as thyself, which helps to further extend hospitality and to have gratitude for it.

In conclusion, hospitality in communication has similarities and differences about how it is perceived through the *Rule of St. Benedict* and Christianity in general. However, it is clear that there is a connection between the two. This is a historical moment where hospitality has a greater role globally and culturally. In order to move forward in the direction of hospitality instead of hostility, we can learn from the works of Kearney, Ricoeur, and Marcel among many others. They have understood the relevance and importance of hospitality whether it's through availability, anatheism, or narratives and language. Hospitality allows us to take notice of the Other and help bring them to a place where they feel welcomed so that they want to be a part of the community. The
communication within community is vital to our human nature and condition as expressed by Hannah Arendt. Whether one includes Christianity as part of the formula or not, we need to be a part of each other’s lives. Therefore in doing so we need communication.
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