

Vision | Mission

Vision: To be a listening presence.

Mission: Creating communities, steeped in Benedictine Spirituality, to serve others through compassionate listening.

The Community of Hope International was founded to form praying communities, encouraging each other in love, to be a non-judgmental listening presence to those we encounter on a daily basis.



"It's about the skills and the practices of spiritual life that prepares each one of us to be open to the other...to believe and trust that the hospitality of the Christian faith is to look for the Christ in the other person, and as we approach them to serve them and in humility provide ministry to them. Our prayer is that the stranger will receive us and look for the Christ in us."

The Rev. Dr. Helen Appelberg, COHI Founder

Benedictine Spirituality

What is it?

When St. Benedict of Nursia wrote a Rule for the monks of his monastery in sixth century Italy, he was trying to encourage those who would seek God together in community.

1500 years later that Rule is still being observed all around the world in monasteries, lay communities and all who call themselves Benedictine today.

St. Benedict said he wished to establish "nothing harsh, nothing burdensome," but to "safeguard love." The hallmarks of his Rule are: balance, humility and hospitality.

In striving to lead a balanced life we do not let any one aspect of our lives lead us to become too attached: to things, goals, success, our own ideas.

Humility helps us take ourselves not too seriously and to tread lightly through life, knowing that we are not the pinnacle of the created world.

The idea of hospitality—to see in each other the face of Christ—reminds us that we are all in this dance called "life" together, ultimately called to life in the Trinity. That is our destination, and we are to do everything we can to keep this in mind as we progress toward that end.



Community of Hope International



"A School for God's Service"

Rule of St. Benedict, Prologue, Verse 45

www.cohinternational.org

WHO WE ARE

Community of Hope International equips lay people to serve in all forms of pastoral care. Pastoral care is when a person is being “present” in a listening, compassionate, non-controlling manner to an individual or group for the purpose of consciously or unconsciously representing God to them and seeking to respond to their spiritual needs.

Through ongoing spiritual formation and practical lessons on caregiving, members learn to match theological insights and spiritual practices with their experiences of ministering to others. Our ministries:

- Home Visitation
- Nursing Homes
- Hospices
- Retirement Centers
- Hospitals
- Women's Ministries
- Youth | Children's Ministries
- Homeless
- Mission Trips
- Prison Ministry

INITIAL TRAINING

The fourteen modules used in training cover topics both theoretical and practical, ranging from teaching participants the tenets of Benedictine Spirituality to practical instruction in making a pastoral care visit. It is COHI's goal that this training awaken participants to God's call on their lives by discovering and understanding their spiritual gifts for ministry.

Benedictine Spirituality gives Community of Hope its unique emphases:

- staying true to Jesus' commandment to care for the sick...“When you do this to the least of these, you do it also unto me.”
AND

- growing each participant spiritually, within a nurturing community “because those who are the healthiest spiritually will have the most to give to others in need.”



MODULES

The 14-week, 42-hour curriculum includes:

- Module 1 | Benedictine Spirituality
- Module 2 | Theology of Pastoral Care
- Module 3 | Pastoral Identity
- Module 4 | Listening Skills
- Module 5 | Prayer, Meditation and Silence
- Module 6 | Motivational Spiritual Gifts
- Module 7 | The Pastoral Visit and Boundaries
- Module 8 | Confidentiality, Practice Visit & Debriefing
- Module 9 | Understanding Family Systems
- Module 10 | Grief: Coping with Loss
- Module 11 | Pastoral Care for Seniors
- Module 12 | Second Practice Visit
- Module 13 | Care for the Caregiver
- Module 14 | Commitment to Ministry and End of Year Retreat

CIRCLE OF CARE

The Circle of Care nurtures and sustains our Benedictine communities of Christ-centered lay pastoral caregivers who are inspired through the Rule of Benedict to seek a balance between doing for God and being with God.

At least once a month, lay chaplains gather in the Circle of Care to pray, read and reflect on The Rule of Benedict, share a meal or refreshments, enjoy continuing education, and provide each other with mutual support and encouragement as they reflect on their emotional and spiritual responses to pastoral encounters. Doing so deepens the roots of a community centered on spiritual encouragement, grace, comfort, healing, and hope.

The Circle of Care provides fertile soil for spiritual development where lay chaplains grow in their understanding of God, themselves, and others.