

## **Scholastica, Twin Sister of Benedict**

**From Gregory the Great** (c. 540-604), *Dialogues*, Book II (Life and Miracles of St. Benedict).

### **CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE: Of a Miracle Wrought by his Sister, Scholastica.**

GREGORY: What man is there, Peter, in this world, that is in greater favor with God than St. Paul was: who yet three times desired our Lord to be delivered from the prick of the flesh, and obtained not his petition? Concerning which point also I must needs tell you, how there was one thing which the venerable father Benedict would have done, and yet he could not. For his sister called Scholastica, dedicated from her infancy to our Lord, used once a year to come and visit her brother. To whom the man of God went not far from the gate, to a place that did belong to the Abbey, there to give her entertainment.

And she coming thither on a time according to her custom, her venerable brother with his monks went to meet her, where they spent the whole day in the praises of God and spiritual talk: and when it was almost night they supped together, and as they were yet sitting at the table, talking of devout matters, and darkness came on, the holy Nun his

sister entreated him to stay there all night, that they might spend it in discoursing of the joys of heaven. But by no persuasion would he agree unto that, saying that he might not by any means tarry all night out of his Abbey.

At that time, the sky was so clear that no cloud was to be seen. The Nun, receiving this denial of her brother, joining her hands together, laid them upon the table: and so, bowing down her head upon them, she made her prayers to almighty God: and lifting her head from the table, there fell suddenly such a tempest of lightning and thundering, and such abundance of rain, that neither venerable Benedict, nor his monks that were with him, could put their head out of door: for the holy Nun, resting her head upon her hands, poured forth such a flood of tears upon the table, that she drew the clear air to a watery sky, so that after the end of her devotions, that storm of rain followed: and her prayer and the rain did so meet together, that as she lifted up her head from the table, the thunder, so that in one and the very same instant, she lifted up her head and brought down the rain.

The man of God, seeing that he could not by reason of such thunder and lightning and great abundance of rain return back to his Abbey, he

began to be heavy and to complain of his sister, saying: "God forgive you, what have you done?" to whom she answered: "I desired you to stay, and you would not hear me, I have de our good Lord, and he hath vouchsafed to grant my petition: wherefore if you can now depart, in God's name return to your monastery, and leave me here alone."

But the good father, being not able to go forth, tarried there against his will, where willingly he would not stay. And so by that means they watched all night, and with spiritual and heavenly talk did mutually comfort one another: and therefore by this we see, as I said befre. that he would have had that thing, which yet he could not: for if we respect the venerable man's mind, no question but he would have had the same fair weather to have continued as it was, when he set forth, but he found that a miracle did prevents desire, which, by the power of almighty God, a woman's prayers had wrought.

And it is not a thing to be marveled at, that a woman which of long time had not seen her brother, might at that time than he could, seeing, according to the saying of St. John, "God is charity" [1 John 4:8] and therefore of right she did more which loved more.

PETER: I confess that I am wonderfully pleased with that which you tell me.

### **CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR: How Benedict Saw the Soul of his Sister Ascend into Heavenly Glory.**

The next day the venerable woman returned to her Nunnery, and the man of God to his Abbey: who three days after, standing in his cell, raising up his eyes to heaven, beheld the soul of his sister (which was departed from her body), in the likeness of a dove to ascend into heaven: who rejoicing much to see her great glory, with hymns and lauds gave the almighty God, and did impart the news of this her death to his monks, whom also he sent presently to bring her corpse to his Abbey, and had it buried in that grave which he had provided for himself; by means wherof it fell out that, as their souls were always one in God whiles they lived, so their bodies continued together after their death.

