

**AN
ELDER
SAID...**



**Edifying Stories
and Teachings from
Ancient and Modern Times**

■ On the Occasion of the Commemoration of St. Benedict (14 March)

“The Demons Exploit Our Indolence”*

IN ONE of the monasteries founded by the servant of God **Benedict**, there was a monk who was troubled by the passion of slothfulness.

This unfortunate monk would grow impatient during the time of common worship, and when all of the other Brothers would kneel down before God, he would leave the Church and give himself over to idle talk and indolence.

His Elder admonished him many times, but having accomplished nothing, he took him to the man of God, St. Benedict, and revealed his passion to him.

The Holy Father, after modestly censuring the Brother's indolence as was fit and fortifying him with admonitions, sent him back to the monastery.

After his return, the Brother kept the Saint's advise for barely two days; but on the third day, he returned to his demonic habit, and during the time of common prayer began to roam about aimlessly.

When his good Elder saw that the monk had once again been conquered by the demon of listlessness, he went to St. Benedict and told him what had happened.

The man of God answered him: *“I will come and will correct him.”*

So the Saint went to the monastery and stood with the Brothers in Church.

As soon as the psalmody ended and the Brothers knelt to pray, the Saint saw a young man resembling an Arab who, catching hold



of the edge of the raso of the Brother who did not have the patience to dedicate himself to prayer, dragged him out of the Church.

When the prayers had finished, St. Benedict went out and found the monk outside.

Then, for his spiritual blindness, he hit him with his staff, and from that moment on, the Brother was freed from the slothfulness that had dominated him.

Henceforth, he eagerly stood with the other Brothers until the end of the prayers, without the demon daring to approach him, but instead completely distancing himself from him.



(*) Source: Simplified rendition from the *Evergetinos*, Vol. II, Hypothesis X, 5th ed., by Abbot Victor Mathaios (†) (Athens: 1958), pp. 104-105.