SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND HEALING THROUGH MONASTIC EXPERIENCE:  
A SOUTH KOREAN BENEDICTINE EXPLORATION  
OF THE MONASTERY STAY EXPERIENCE

by

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Regis College  
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Abstract

Western monasticism offers ways of spiritual growth and living with God in daily life through self-transcendence. It has placed a high value on the development of Christian virtues. Monasticism carries a responsibility for helping to craft a new, more fitting model to embrace a meaningfulness of suffering. The monastic view of transformation can liberate suffering into a vehicle for meaning and healing. Benedictine spirituality, in particular, has treasured many components, such as, monastic asceticism, the vowed life, silence, prayer, and meditation, for growth and healing. Through some recent initiatives it continues to strive to impart the elements for holistic healing in contemporary society. One example of this has been the creation of opportunities for monastic experience for people. Since 2002 a South Korean Benedictine monastery has provided “The Monastery Stay” experience for people. Participants in the experience live in the same way as the monks do, completely isolated from their everyday lives for a period of a few days. As a result of these short stays by people in a Benedictine monastery a glimpse is offered to them of a different way to lead life. Many have grown and experienced healing in their spiritual life and learnt how to live a contemplative life on a daily basis. By
staying in the monastery, the participants have been enabled to recognize more vividly God’s love and have come to a recognition of the importance of a balanced life of prayer, work, nutrition, and leisure in their daily life. Through this experience, the Monastery Stay provides an opportunity for the person’s spiritual growth and healing. Through this experience a person, healed or awakened to new possibility, can contribute to healing and the rebuilding of a community through the interconnection between the health of an individual and the health of a community.
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INTRODUCTION

Today, mental health disorders have become widespread phenomena throughout the world. During the year 2010, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, “there were an estimated 45.9 million adults aged 18 or older in the United States with any mental illness (AMI) in the past year…. the percentage having serious mental illness (SMI) in the past year was 5.0 percent (11.4 million adults).”¹ This result statistic indicates that one in five adults suffers from a diagnosable mental health disorder in the USA. The Mood Disorder Society of Canada reports that one in five Canadians will have a mental illness in their lifetime. At any given time, 10.4 percent of Canadians have a mental illness, and 18 percent of adolescents (aged 15–24) are reported to have experienced either mental illness or a substance abuse problem.² The Ministry of Health and Welfare in Korea in presenting the results of a 2011 survey found that one in six Koreans has experienced some form of mental illness over the past year. This result shows that the number of people with mental illness has gradually increased from 8.3 percent in 2006 to 10.2 percent in 2011. The survey reports that about 15.6 percent of the population has felt suicidal urges and about 3.3 percent have planned suicide. In 2010, it was found that about 108,000 people were estimated to have seriously attempted suicide – among them 75.3 percent have a mental illness.³

These survey results indicate that individual instances of mental illness seem to be on the rise. There may be multiple causes for these problems. The increase in individual illness can be

¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Results from the 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Mental Health Findings (Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2012), 1. In 2010, population of the USA was 309.35 million.


influenced by community and society and, in turn, individual illness can negatively affect the wider community. Continuous social problems and difficult social conditions may result in personal emotional repression. From this situation disordered or problematic behavioural issues may arise and ultimately mental illness. Professor Cho Maeng-je of the Seoul National University, who conducted research on psychiatric illness in Korea, attributes this serious phenomenon to the following reasons in society today: “modern society’s hectic schedule, fierce competition, economic difficulties and other causes of extreme stress.” Watson and Eack, professors of Social Work, claim that “while prejudice and social stigma ultimately affect the individual, they represent societal problems, and therefore, [the professors] call for community and societal-level interventions.” Thus, contemporary healing has to be approached from both the individual dimension as well as the social dimension. However, it may be a challenge to change social thought, customs, or structures all at once. Rather, personal growth and change may become the starting point. Individual healing may contribute to social healing. For instance, Thomas Merton, as a contemplative peacemaker for the world, struggled not only to remove the threat of nuclear war, but also tried to establish peace on earth among all people of good will. He states that the world’s problems are essentially at the spiritual level rather than at the superficial level.


6 Watson & Eack, 36.

For an individual to attain healing on a spiritual level, both Christian healers and those of other faith/traditions have attempted various methods. Recently, within the field of psychotherapy there has been a gradual development of interest in the use of spirituality and religion as a therapeutic tool or process. For therapy or transformation to occur, spiritually oriented psychotherapists utilize various approaches and analyses drawn from a variety of spiritual and religious methods. For instance, David G. Benner, a psychologist, was inspired by the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius Loyola to integrate psychotherapy and spiritual direction.\(^8\) Amanda Porterfield, a historian of American religion, argues with regard to the influence of Christianity on secular medicine: “the modern, psychological turn in Christianity created new impetus and opportunity for secular medicine…for pragmatic, outcome-oriented social welfare services for the sick and poor.”\(^9\) Moreover, psychotherapists have realized that an integrated approach towards the human being is helpful for holistic healing that comprises the physical, the mental, the emotional, and the spiritual, as was the goal of Jesus’ healing ministry in the Christian Scriptures.\(^10\)

The significance of transcendent resources for holistic healing is recognized both in secular healing and Christian healing. Fraser Watts, as a psychologist and priest in the Anglican faith community, has explored the intersection between psychology and theology, insisting that “the healing power may be understood in different ways in Christian and non-Christian forms of spiritual healing, but they agree on its dependence on transcendent resources.”\(^11\) Jerome A. Stone, a Religious Naturalist, claims that “an example of a transcendent resource is the occurrence of

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unexpected healing…. Traditional religious terms for such a transcendent resource are ‘miracle’ and ‘the healing power of God.’”

Norman E. Rosenthal, a medical doctor, studied meditation as transcendent resource which can contribute to healing and transformation. Thus, finding and practising the transcendent resources may be important for holistic healing, both for secular and religious healing.

Monasticism has treasured various healing resources, such as monastic asceticism, the practice of silence, prayer, and meditation. Psychotherapists can also use these techniques with their clients to promote spiritual growth and healing. For Christians, Western monasticism may offer ways of spiritual growth and healing, and a way of commitment into God in the spiritual life through self-transcendence. Michael Casey, a Trappist monk and writer, argues that, “Genuine monasticism is not self-generating. It cannot be the product of individual self-expression precisely because the goal of monastic living is self-transcendence.”

Traditionally, in order to attain the self-transcendence, monasticism has practised various Christian virtues as part of an intensive lifestyle. It also has treasured various Christian spiritual growth and healing elements, such as monastic discipline, the monastic educational system with its focus on spiritual growth, and a Christ-centred community life for the practice of love and humility. When monks achieve self-transcendence, they experience that God working in them and living with them, and in this process, spiritual growth and healing may occur. James L. Heft, a founder of the Institute for

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14 McMinn & Campbell, psychotherapists, argue that “transformation occurs in many ways. Good sermons, kind words of affirmation, suffering, prayer, medication, meditation, encouraging smiles, criticism, solitude…are all means by which change occurs.” See: Mark R. McMinn and Clark D. Campbell, Integrative Psychotherapy: Toward a Comprehensive Christian Approach (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, e2007), 387-388.

Advanced Catholic Studies, claims that “the more people realize their need for God’s healing grace and the support of a community which performs their religious practices together, the more confident they become that the long journey to authenticity will be more God’s work in them than their own.” In this sense, Western monasticism may provide a good model for Christian spiritual growth and healing as well as for a way to self-transcendence through God’s presence and grace.

In Western monasticism, a Benedictine monastery treasures many components for spiritual growth and healing and continues to strive to share Benedictine spirituality and elements for spiritual growth and healing with contemporary society. For instance, Lucia Glahn explains monastic spiritual healing through the rhythm of monastic life in the book: *Wisdom from the Monastery: A Program of Spiritual Healing.* Mary C. Earle describes her healing experience through a Benedictine monastic life in the book: *Beginning Again: Benedictine Wisdom for living with Illness.* After a three month long monastic experience at Mississippi Abbey, Trisha Day draws inspiration for her role as a spiritual guide helping others in their spiritual growth. Her book is entitled, *Inside the School of Charity: Lessons from the Monastery.* Benedictine spirituality contains various elements of spiritual growth and healing for monks and guests with the love of Jesus as the focus for their approach. Thus, experience of Benedictine spirituality may contribute to a healthy spiritual life for our contemporaries.

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In order to help guests grow spiritually and become healed through a monastic experience, a Korean Benedictine monastery has carried out a “Monastery Stay” experience since 2002. This experience welcomes all people regardless of gender, age, or religious affiliation. Those who engage in the Monastery Stay participate in key aspects of the monastic life of a Benedictine monk. Through participation over a course of several visits, people have reported that this experience can be beneficial for their spiritual growth and healing and for learning to live a continuous contemplative life in their daily lives. These reports, which will be dealt with in Chapter 2 in more detail, have appeared on the website that was created for those who experience the Monastery Stay and in interviews with monks and media following their Stay. Thus, it would be beneficial to know which elements of spiritual growth and healing in the experience have contributed to participants’ change and healing through the experience and how the experience has contributed to continued effects for community healing.

In this thesis, the author will first examine the meaning and values of monastic spiritual growth and healing from a Christian perspective, and present research to demonstrate the significance and value of the monastic experience. Secondly, the author will draw on research regarding the Monastery Stay experience: its historical background, the process it follows and the elements for spiritual growth and healing, and present the results that came about as a result of a South Korean Benedictine monastery experience. Lastly, the author discusses how individual healing can extend beyond the personal to include communal healing, and the ways in which the Monastery Stay experience can contribute to that community healing through Benedictine spirituality. An example of the Monastery Stay for families is also included.

See 40-41 pages and footnote 123-124 in this thesis.
CHAPTER 1
Monastic Spiritual Growth and Healing: the Meaning and the Values

Religion and spirituality have played a significant role in both spiritual growth and healing, and an interest in them has emerged in various fields; it can be seen in secular and religious healing experienced by both non-Christian and Christian. Historically, religion had played a central role in medicine and healing. Porterfield argues that “[early Christianity] provided innovative forms of health care as well as rituals of spiritual healing that contributed to its attractiveness and that figured importantly in its expansion.” Yet from the Renaissance period to the present day, religious healing has been largely separated from medicine in the wake of scientific development, especially in the light of the modes of Enlightenment thinking, and thus psychology and psychotherapy are regarded as separate disciplines. Torosian and Biddle, the coauthors of Spirit to Heal, explain that “the great divide between religion and medicine in Western cultures occurred almost 500 years ago…. Medicine and science have become increasingly technical and sophisticated, particularly over the past several decades.”

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23 Amanda Porterfield, 44.


25 Michael H. Torosian and Veruschka R. Biddle, “Spirituality and Healing,” Seminars in Oncology 32, no.2 (March, 2005): 232; At this time, it is an understatement to state religious healing was ignored by medicine. Morton T. Kelsey argues that “it is difficult to explain incidents of religious healing within a system which admits only the reality of the material realm and human consciousness. The only choice is to ignore a supposed healing.” See: Morton T. Kelsey, Psychology, Medicine & Christian Healing (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 266.
Recently, however, there have been numerous attempts by professional organizations to find collaborative and integrative models for both theory and practice drawing on both religion and science. Watts argues that “key changes occurred in the nineteenth century concerning both science and health that set the parameters for current approaches to spiritual healing…. [But] …the dream of such useful treatment was not tied exclusively to the advance of medical science.”

In the past twenty years, the literature of both disciplines has shown the value of constructive relations between medical science and religious healing in their being mutually supportive and critical of one another. Moreover, psychotherapists are interested in Eastern religion and its monasticism, such as the experience of healing through the practice of meditation according to the various Buddhist traditions or practicing the yoga of Hinduism.

A monumental revival of interest in spiritual healing within the Christian Church occurred in the twentieth century. Christian ministers have gradually become interested in integrated psychology, and they are actively applying psychological methods to their pastoral care. McMinn and Campbell, the authors of Integrative Psychotherapy: Toward a Comprehensive Christian Approach, report that “many churches have psychological counselling centers or extensive referral networks of mental health professionals in the community…[and] most seminaries now teach courses in pastoral care that are heavily steeped in psychological theories and practices.”

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26 Fraser Watts, 176-177.
27 Roger D. Fallot, Spirituality and Religion in Recovery from Mental Illness (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 3-4. In the field of psychotherapy, where great advances have been made in the diagnosis and treatment of many diseases, patients and healthcare providers agree with the fact that conventional medicine has limitations. This acknowledgement of the limitation has illuminated the clinical impact of religion and spirituality in the midst of the highly technological nature of current medical practice. See: Torosian & Biddle, 233.
28 E.g., Seth Robert Segall (Encountering Buddhism: Western Psychology and Buddhist Teachings), H.S.S. Nissanka (Buddhist Psychotherapy), Joseph Bobrow (Zen and Psychotherapy: Partners in Liberation), H. L. Sharma (Yoga Technique of Psychotherapy), and Kenneth G. Zysk, (Asceticism and Healing in Ancient India: Medicine in the Buddhist Monastery).
29 Fraser Watts, 77.
30 McMinn & Campbell, 21.
Christian psychology is a relatively new movement that views psychology through the lens of Christianity. However, some scholars who study both secular and Christian healing practices experience a conflict between the world of traditional Christian belief systems and the contemporary world which depends on predominantly scientific knowledge. For instance, Porterfield argues that “the relationship between Christianity and medicine, and the boundaries between them, has always been complicated.” This situation is due to divergent perspectives between Christians who deny the legitimacy of natural medicine and do not consider it part of their ministry and those who are enthusiastic supporters of natural medicine as a primary expression of their ministry. Watts describes this complication as “mixed feelings about the use of scientific evidence in connection with spiritual healing.” In fact, Christian spiritual healing cannot be perfectly measured through empirical evidences since it is ultimately through the healing work of God; however, scientists tend to request evidences of objective quality for Christian spiritual healing. Hence, Christians need to realize this struggle between the world of faith and reason, and may grow to realize ways to bridge the gap between them.

In the field of spiritual growth and healing, psychotherapists strive to find resources for healing in various spheres, and religious healers try to prove their resources for healing through scientific methods. Christians need a good model for spiritual growth and healing. Monasticism offers unique elements of healing that may prove helpful in this context. It has components that

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31 Ibid., 22-23.
32 Fraser Watts, 62.
33 Amanda Porterfield, 125.
34 Fraser Watts, 169.
35 Watts argues that “it is interesting to note two rather different attitudes that can often be found jostling alongside one another. On the one hand it is tempting to complain, on theological grounds, about the attempt to provide evidence at all. The healing work of God, one is inclined to say, is not open to human measurement. On the other hand, it is tempting to take the evidence seriously but to complain, on scientific grounds, about the poor quality of the evidence produced.” See: Ibid., 62, 169.
draw upon both religion and spirituality as healing resources for psychotherapy, and Western monasticism may provide a good example for healthy Christian living that, in turn, contributes to health.

In this chapter, the author will begin by drawing on the meaning and place of monastic spiritual growth and healing, and then will present the values of monastic spiritual growth and healing as appropriated by psychotherapy and practised within a Christian context. Lastly, the significance and expectation of a monastic experience for holistic growth and healing will be drawn on in order to stress the contribution of the monastic experience to the question of healing.

1. The Meaning of Monastic Spiritual Growth and Healing

1.1. The Place of Monasticism in Spiritual Growth and Healing

Despite philosophical and doctrinal differences, monasticism in various religions exhibits similarities in elements of lifestyle and discipline for achieving self-transcendence, such as prayer, meditation, and the monastic practice of asceticism.\(^{36}\) Through these practices spiritual growth and healing may occur. Larry Dossey, the author of *Healing Words*, argues that “practically all types of spiritual healing make use of a prayerful, meditative state of awareness. During this process the healer adopts a dispassionate, loving, and compassionate attitude toward the person in need.”\(^{37}\) One of the reasons for this phenomenon is the common human condition, namely that all human beings, regardless of race, ethnicity, and worldview, do possess common biological, emotional, and social elements.\(^{38}\) Regardless of whether it is Eastern or Western religious monasticism,

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secular healing or Christian healing, there is a profound interconnection between the physical, logical-intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects of a person. The interaction of all these aspects is important for individuals to achieve a holistic experience of the human condition which can have significant influence on a person’s health.

For instance, depression is not merely a psychological problem, but may be interconnected with physical, intellectual, emotional, social, or spiritual aspects of a person’s experience. In the monastic lifestyle, these holistic aspects of a person are profoundly interconnected. Many monasteries practice physical work (manual work), intellectual activity (monastic lessons and teaching), emotional expression (community relationships), social activity (service, ministry to people outside the monastery), and spiritual activity (regular liturgy, prayer, meditation). Thus, monasticism, which aims to achieve a holistic transformation of the person, can provide various resources for spiritual growth and healing.

An increasing interest in the link between the monasticism of Eastern religions and spiritual healing also reveals an inner power in monasticism for healing. Recently, many psychologists have expressed an interest in Eastern religions and their monastic practices that are associated with spiritual growth and healing. For instance, Kong Chhean, a Buddhist monk and psychologist, states in an interview with Carson and Koenig: “I felt a spiritual calling to help my people in the combined roles of Buddhist monk and psychologist…. Buddhist monks play an important role in psychotherapy, in Eastern and Western family therapy.” It implies that whether in a Christian or other religious monastery, monasticism itself treasures elements of spiritual growth and healing. The perspective of spiritual growth and healing with the interrelationship among monasticism, psychotherapy, and Christian spirituality is described in the figure below.

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Figure 1 shows the position and values of monasticism for both spiritual growth and healing that incorporates aspects of both psychotherapy and Christian healing. Monasticism can provide various resources for spiritual growth and healing in psychotherapy. Western monasticism can offer a good model for spiritual growth and healing to Christians. From a Christian perspective, spiritual growth and healing through an experience of the monastic life can play a role which may strengthen Christian spirituality and lead the person to an abundant spiritual life.

1.2. The Meaning of Spiritual Growth and Healing in Western Monasticism

In Western monasticism, as a type of Christian spiritual life, holistic growth and healing are rooted in the relationship between a believer and Jesus Christ. Historically speaking, monks/nuns have played various roles as spiritual healers and therapists for the healing of fellow monks, guests, the Church, and the world. Benedict (480-543) ministered to monks and guests for their spiritual growth and healing; Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) strived to heal the sick within his community and the Church; and Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) was especially
interested in holistic healing in the context of natural cosmos around her.\textsuperscript{40}

Western monasticism, one crucial form of Christian spirituality, can contribute to the spiritual growth and healing of Christians living outside of the cloister and immersed in the day-to-day struggles of secular life.\textsuperscript{41} Andrew T. Crislip, in his book \textit{From Monastery to Hospital}, presents a detailed survey of monastic healing and the transformation of health care in late antiquity. For example, he reports that “private letters from Egypt, dated between the 340s and 350s, confirm the roles of [monks] as religious healers, especially to nonmonastic followers.”\textsuperscript{42} Despite the fact that the Desert Fathers and monks lived a separated lifestyle from the secular world, they taught and healed their disciples as well as the people who visited them in their cells.\textsuperscript{43} This spiritual sharing and healing with those outside the hermitage or the cloister is ultimately based in the practices of Christianity and Jesus’ holistic healing of humanity.\textsuperscript{44} Regarding Jesus’ holistic healing, Bruce G. Epperly, a theologian and minister, points out that “the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ life weave together a profound concern for holistic healing that includes the transformation of body, mind, spirit, economics, ethnic and gender relationships, and power


\textsuperscript{43} James O. Hannay, \textit{The Wisdom of the Desert} (Mesa, Arizona: Scriptoria Books, 2009), 137. For instance, Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, writes that through Anthony of the Desert (ca. 251–356): “the Lord healed many… who suffered from bodily ills; others he purged of demons.” Pachomius (ca. 292-348), the founder of Christian coenobitic monasticism, received an ability to discern between physical illness and ailments caused by demons. He healed many patients. See: Andrew T. Crislip, 23-24.

\textsuperscript{44} Andrew T. Crislip, 21-22.
structures as the manifestation of God’s love for the world.”

The experience of an integrated life in a monastery can contribute to spiritual growth and healing for Christians who have suffered from spiritual difficulties and want to recover or deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ. The monastery has, for centuries, been a place for people to be healed. Such healing is often experienced as re-birth. Regarding this re-birth in Christ, in his article: “Final Integration toward a Monastic Therapy,” Merton developed the term “Monastic Therapy.” For Merton, Monastic Therapy means that, through finding the true self, the old person dies and a new person is born in God’s grace. He indicates that “people are called to the monastic life so that they may grow and be transformed, ‘reborn’ to a new and more complete identity…in peace, in wisdom, in creativity, in love.”

Merton implies that Monastic Therapy is ultimately different from psychotherapy although it has elements for spiritual healing and psychic well-being that are similar, such as meditation, prayer, hospitality, and the sacred liturgy. Merton claims that if one approaches the “Final Integration” through the dimension of psychology, one may not fully understand the meaning of the integration of spirituality and psychology. According to him, beyond mere social adjustment or psychological healing, Monastic Therapy pursues a life of integrated spirituality in which the

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45 Christians believe that through Jesus’ wounds they are healed and are able to have eternal life in Christ (John 3:16). When people meet with Jesus, not only their physical or psychic sufferings are healing, but also their lives have been saved by faith: “Your faith has saved you” (Matt. 9:22, 15:28, Mark 5:34, Luke 7:50, 8:48, and 17:19). Jesus’ healing in body and mind is ultimately holistic healing that related with human salvation. See: Bruce G. Epperly, *God’s Touch: Faith, Wholeness, and the Healing Miracles of Jesus* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, c2001), 9.

46 Thomas Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 200-212. Merton used the term Monastic Therapy in the context of comparing monastic therapy and psychotherapy. The meaning of Merton’s Monastic Therapy may be seen as similar to monastic spiritual healing.


49 Ibid., 210.
person unites with God through dying to the false self. It entails the self-emptying (kenosis) experienced in union with the cross of Jesus in the Paschal Mystery, through death to resurrection.50 As St. Paul says: “if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17).51 In a similar manner, Monastic Therapy also aims to achieve a new being in Christ.52

Thus, monastic spiritual growth and healing is deeply related to holistic awareness and transformation because it is not just the healing of body and mind, but involves gaining a new perspective on holistic living through God’s grace and various ascetic practices in community life. Merton argues that “this [new perspective] is suggested at [RB 7] where St. Benedict speaks of the new identity, the new mode of being of the monk who no longer practices the various degrees of humanity with concentrated and studied effort but with dynamic spontaneity ‘in the Spirit.’”53 In monastic life, this new perspective is concretely revealed through spiritual maturity and the practice of love. Frances Vaughan, the author of several books integrating psychological and spiritual growth, argues that “spiritual maturity implies connecting the inner life of mind and spirit with the outer life of action and service in the world. Self-awareness is essential for developing spiritual maturity.”54 Monastic practices can help people cultivate qualities to which they aspire by deepening the capacity for love and compassion, wisdom and transcendence. A person who longs for wholeness and understanding can be drawn into deeper contemplative practices. Through these

51 Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.
practices, a spiritual path can unfold, which can gradually lead to spiritual maturity, “in the ‘degrees of truth’ and the ‘degrees of love.’”

The ascetic practices in the monastery are not the ultimate goal but rather the means to reach the reign of God. For instance, Deutsch and Herold, scholars specializing in Bernard of Clairvaux, argue that “[Bernard of Clairvaux] always remained devoted to a very strict asceticism, but castigation was to him only a means of godliness not godliness itself, which demands of man still other things.” Moreover, ascetic practices are a means for partaking in the wounds of Jesus as well as for attaining the love of Jesus, and this participation in love can lead to growth and healing. Gertrude the Great (1256-1302), a German Benedictine and mystic who suffered physically excruciating pains and was cured of them through the experience of the healing love of God, states that “thou [hast] cured my soul, in imprinting these Wounds on it; and that, to satisfy its thirst, Thou [hast] given it the precious beverage of Thy love.” Mechtild of Magdeburg, a Benedictine mystic and sister/master of Gertrude in the same monastery, states that “I hope, whenever I touch [the Wounds of my Lord] by my desires, that a healing stream will flow forth from them, for the salvation of sinners and the consolation of the just.” Thus, ascetic practices in the monastery are one of the ways for attaining the love of God, and in the process of union with God, spiritual growth and healing may be given as a gift from God.

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55 Thomas Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, 207.
59 Ibid., 502.
Therefore, spiritual growth and healing through Western monastic practices are related to one’s becoming a real disciple of Jesus as one who has transcended oneself within God’s love beyond his [her] visible well-being or sense of adjustment to society. Furthermore, this monastic spiritual healing is not exclusive to monks, but rather it is open and available for all Christians. Through the Western monastic experience, Christians can attain spiritual rebirth, growth, healing, final maturity, and integration in and through Jesus Christ.

2. The Values of Monastic Spiritual Growth and Healing

2.1. Psychotherapy and Monasticism

For psychotherapy, monasticism can provide plentiful resources for spiritual growth and healing and a good model for holistic healing and well-being often viewed as the goals of psychotherapy. Monasticism has both aspects of spirituality and religiosity, and many psychotherapists realize that spirituality and religion can provide enhanced adjustments for individuals experiencing psychological difficulties and in need of an improved sense of well-being, and can contribute to both healing and the experience of holistic health for their clients. Dima-Cozma and Cozma, who analyzed the relationship between religion and medicine, examined the impact of religious belief on patients and drew a positive result: patients who believe in the healing power of religion often have a better prognosis for successful treatment of their condition. They argue that “religion and spirituality could have a potential positive impact on mental aspects of diseases and healthcare and could influence the quality and length of life. In

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practice, patients who believe in the healing power of religion can have a better prognosis of the condition treated. “Watts points out that secular healing may also occur through God’s healing power: “Those with a religious frame of reference will want to name the source of healing energy as ‘God.’ … Secular healing may be outside faith or theology, but it is surely not outside God.”

Thus, according to these authors, religion and spirituality can influence the quality and length of life by potentially generating a positive impact on the psychological aspects of disease and personal health.

In this sense, monasticism, which has treasured many spiritual sources as a part of religious life, may become an effective tool for spiritual healing. Monastic life itself is well organized for spiritual development, and has various sources for spiritual healing, such as liturgy, prayer, meditation, simple work, and asceticism. Each of these sources can promote an experience of the Holy and evoke one’s unconsciousness which has a healing power. For instance, Murchadh O’Madagain, a theologian who focuses on spirituality, argues that centering prayer, which is drawn from the traditional monastic practice of Lectio Divina, can provide the healing of the unconscious: “through the regular practice of centering prayer or another such method that leads to contemplation, the unconscious is gradually healed of all the emotional wounds going back to the beginning of our life.” Thus, from a secular perspective, monastic spiritual growth

62 Dima-Cozma & Cozma, 32.
63 Fraser Watts, 6.
64 Lorna Green claims that “the healing experienced at monasteries is well-known within the church … [according to Jungian depth psychology], there is a narrow boundary between the conscious and unconscious life which is occasionally crossed by an irruption or wounding of the conscious self confers upon that self great power of healing.” See: Lorna Green, Beyond Chance and Necessity: The Limits of Science and the Nature of the Real (New York : Writers Club Press, 2003),118.
and healing may be considered a rich treasure and resource for spiritual growth and healing.

Second, monasticism can provide a good model for holistic healing and well-being which are often viewed as goals of psychotherapy. Recently, psychotherapy has tended to encourage the pursuit of well-being and holistic health for the human person beyond merely treating the symptoms that have been manifested in body and soul. Albert Nolan, a popular Dominican spiritual writer, suggests that “what is significant is that today, while more and more people are making use of Western medicine, they feel the need for something more, something transcendent, something that will heal body, soul, and society – holistic healing.”

Recent trends in psychotherapy focus not merely on the treatment of illness by curing a person with an ailment, but rather, try to help a person to remain faithful to who he/she is in the process of becoming. In this sense, monastic life may provide a good model for psychotherapy in terms of holistic healing and well-being. Monastic life has many components for a holistic healthy lifestyle and well-being, such as a regular life, a balanced nutrition and moderation (fasting), a balance between work and relaxation, sleeping and waking in the regular way, various spiritual activities, the harmony of solitude and fellowship, and the life of commitment to God. Through these monastic healing ways, monks may be gradually transformed into joyful, loving, people who live a balanced lifestyle, and who may attain holistic healing and well-being.

2.2. A Christian Perspective on Healing and Western Monasticism

Although monasticism provides a particular path for self-transcendence, ultimately the goal of Western monasticism is rooted in Christian spirituality that is Christ-centred and based on

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68 Lucia Glahn, 128-247.
the Gospel. Thus, understanding Christian spiritual growth and healing can become a basis for understanding Western monastic spiritual growth and healing.

Figure 2 above describes the process of Christian spiritual growth and healing put into practice in Western monasticism for growth and healing. Ultimately, the goal of Christian spiritual growth and healing is the achievement of salvation and holiness through Jesus Christ. Spiritual growth and healing through the experience of Western monasticism is one way to attain this goal among various methods in Christianity.

### 2.2.1. Jesus as a Healer in Monastic Spiritual Growth and Healing

In Christian spiritual growth and healing, Jesus is considered the ultimate Healer, and His healing is a holistic healing. Like the Narrative Canon, in Western monasticism spiritual growth and healing is brought about ultimately by Jesus. Monastic life focuses on attaining union with God through

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69 Albert Nolan, 77-79. According to Harold Remus, Jesus was a “wounded healer” whose gift for healing others derived from his own experience of being wounded. Interpreting this concept in terms of Christian theology, Remus argued that the model for all ministers of the Gospels is manifested in the coincidence of the healing power and powerlessness within Jesus on the cross. See: Harold Remus, Jesus as Healer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 50-5,104-118.
Jesus Christ, and through the monastic life monks pursue a holistic transformation by following Jesus Christ. Monks believe that Jesus is the true master and healer. Monastic spiritual growth and healing which is gained through the grace of God occurs in the process of following Jesus Christ. According to Watts, following the example of Jesus Christ, through studying his life of healing in the Gospels, may be the best way to awaken the healer within each Christian.  

By following the teaching of Jesus, monks are not only transformed and healed but they also are devoted to reaching out in the Christian ministry of healing to pilgrims and guests. Monks strive to help the sick, the poor, and guests to achieve an intimate relationship with Jesus. For example, Benedict teaches that caring for the sick, the poor, and guests is profoundly related to the call to serve Jesus (RB 31:9, 35:1, 53: 1.15, cf. Matt. 25:31-46) and to follow Him who heals people with compassion (Matt.14:14, Mar. 1:41, Luke. 7:13). The word compassion is derived from the Latin *compassio*, a compound word of *cum* (com) and *passio* (passion), which means one suffers with the other. This compassion of Jesus heals all humanity through His Paschal Mystery. Thus, monastic spiritual healing is acquired “not through the learning of a technique, or prayer, but through partaking in a mystical ceremony.” In the mystical mediation of God’s healing through Jesus the sick may be guided towards having “[their] whole life at the disposal of God,” since all Christian healing is mediated through God’s grace.  

According to Benedict, a monastery is a school of learning God’s love and a school to learn how to be in God’s service (RB Prologue). Through the monastic life monks learn compassion and love for Jesus that may bring spiritual growth and healing at the personal level.

### 2.2.2. The Ultimate Goal of Monastic Spiritual Growth and Healing

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70 Fraser Watts, 80.
71 Ibid., 79.
As Jesus uses the power of healing as a sign of salvation and faith, monastic spiritual growth and healing defines certain processes and signs in its efforts to attain salvation.\(^{73}\) Salvation for Christians is union with God, and results in living the reign of God here and now through transcending the self through God’s grace. Porterfield claims that “beginning with Jesus, many have interpreted healing as a sign of the coming Kingdom of God, and this interpretation in turn led many communities to separate themselves from the world.”\(^{74}\) From the days of the early Church, healing has been considered part of the Eucharist. Watts argues that “the practice of Eucharist is both a remembering of Christ and a hopeful anticipation of a final celebration with him at the eschaton. So healing is … a sign of that final state of wholeness.”\(^{75}\) Jesus’ body and blood in the Eucharist are a healing remedy as well as being the meal of eternal life for those who partake. Through the Eucharist, Jesus’ healing embodies and extends the healing power of “salvation” in all its dimensions: spiritual, physical, and social.\(^{76}\) For Christians, healing is not a final goal, “but always a means for revelation; and revelation is always subsumed under the final eschatological self-manifestation of God.”\(^{77}\) Christian healing calls believers to turn their attention from the recovery of body or mind to a new life in God.\(^{78}\)

Monasticism has preserved the pattern of the early life of the Church, and is a good model for the healthy spiritual life.\(^{79}\) It emphasizes fraternal love, compassion for the weak and poor, and

\(^{73}\) Fraser Watts, 95.

\(^{74}\) Amanda Porterfield, 6.

\(^{75}\) Fraser Watts, 60.


\(^{77}\) Fraser Watts, 61.

\(^{78}\) Amanda Porterfield, 39.

an integration of prayer and work for the sake of the reign of God. Merton claims that the goal of Christian healing and the new creation is the reign of God. Beyond a psychotherapeutic perspective it is eschatological as it looks towards the end time by pursuing a holistic rebirth of human beings in community and into the redeemed time of Christ. In this sense, monastic life may provide a structure to attain a holistic rebirth and may become an eschatological model that lives out the experience of God’s love in the here-and-now. Thus, monastic spiritual growth and healing is never an end in itself, rather it is a process and a sign of salvation.

2.2.3. Monastic Asceticism and Meaningful Suffering

The experience of suffering, especially voluntary suffering embodied in monastic asceticism, has played an essential role in legitimating the monastic life of religious healers and medical practitioners. Originally, Western monastic asceticism was an extension of the meaning of Christian suffering and the way of following Jesus. Benedict teaches that the goal of monastic asceticism is not mock heroic self-flagellation but a path of self-transcendence through participating in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus (RB 49). This transcendent aspect of suffering is embodied in monastic asceticism. Monks practise monastic asceticism for the love of Christ, and these practices are in addition to the work of charity for guests. In this sense, monastic asceticism

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81 Thomas Merton, *Contemplative in a World of Action*, 210-211.

82 Amanda Porterfield, 80.

83 Greer & Lewis argue that the ascetic ideal in early Christian monasticism is rooted in following perfection in order to grow closer to Jesus: “Jesus was not a monk, but his teachings had a decidedly ascetic quality.” See: Thomas H. Greer and Gavin Lewis, *A Brief History of the Western World* (Belmont, CA: Thomson Learning, Inc., 2005, 9th ed.), 179-180. However, in the external form of discipline, Christian monasticism may have been influenced by Judaism (e.g. the Essenes of the Qumran community), Gnosticism, Neo-Platonism, and other religions. With regard to other influences on Western monasticism, see: Jean Gribomont and Placid D. Solari, “Monasticism: I. Early Christian Monasticism (to 600),” in *New Catholic Encyclopedia Supplement* 2010, ed. Robert L. Fastiggi, vol. 2. Detroit: Gale, Cengage Learning (Washington, DC: In association with Catholic University of America, c2010), 800-802.
has two meanings: participation in the Paschal Mystery (RB Prol.:50) and spiritual and material sharing with those who live outside cloister as well as visitors to the monastery. Monastic asceticism aims at attaining spiritual joy with the resurrected Christ. Terrence Kardong, a monk from Assumption Abbey in North Dakota, says that “[spiritual joy] is by no means superficial happiness… This is a deep joy that can even coexist with serious human suffering.” Monastic asceticism is an expression of the love of Jesus. Kilian McDonnell, a monk from St. John’s Abbey in Minnesota, insists that “St. Benedict would have us accept our pain and perform our mortifications for the love of Christ while we are fully conscious and sensitive to our pain. We are joyous not because of the pain, but because of the love with which our pain is joined to Christ.”

Secondly, monastic asceticism aims at spiritual and material sharing. Monks can share their communion with God and others by sharing both their material and spiritual gifts. They believe that their humanity can be made to coincide with the humanity of Jesus through suffering, and this mystical relationship can be extended to others through Christian service to the sick and the poor.

Although there is an apparent paradox between suffering as part of the religious life and suffering as a thing to be removed for health, “a fairly consistent tendency to experience suffering as a means of both self-understanding and communion with others has enabled many Christians to rest easier with pain and death, even as healing experiences have energized Christians.”

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86 Amanda Porterfield, 89-90.

Indeed, monks realize that monastic asceticism and suffering are a part of human life and can have spiritual meaning, and thus, bring a different perspective to suffering, and this positive attitude with regard to suffering can facilitate healing.\(^{88}\)

As monks open themselves to the acceptance of pain and suffering, as well as joy and human flourishing, those who practise monastic asceticism may begin to see these experiences as catalysts for transformation – of themselves, their families, the broader society, the institutions in which they serve and ultimately with the sacredness of life. Holding this view of transformation can liberate suffering into a vehicle for healing.\(^{89}\) Monasticism may carry the responsibility of helping to craft a new, more fitting model to embrace a meaningfulness of suffering.

### 3. The Significance of Spiritual Experience for Holistic Growth and Healing

Religious or spiritual experience can provide a person with healing. This value of spiritual experience is stressed in psychology and sociology. David Lukoff and Lu, transpersonal psychologists, acknowledged “the need for a psychology that was willing to study and explore experience, particularly spiritual experiences.”\(^{90}\) Morton T. Kelsey, a Christian psychologist, insists that “another school of psychological thought has developed in which religious experience and faith and the unconscious are vitally important. Indeed, religious experience is seen as mediated largely through the unconscious.”\(^{91}\)

A human person contains a spiritual aspect that can be accessed through an experience of the sacred. Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), Rudolph Otto (1869-1937), and Mircea Eliade (1907-88).  

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89 Fraser Watts, 151-152.


The experience of the sacred is similar in definition to Abraham Maslow’s “Peak Experiences,” which he describes as profound moments of love, understanding, happiness, or rapture, and the results of a peak experience produce a permanent change in the individual’s perspective. Diarmuid O’Murchu, a Catholic priest and social psychologist in the United Kingdom, suggests that through meditation, a spiritual experience may be cultivated and lead to a sense of inner calm, well-being, harmony, attunement with life, and transcendence associated with spiritual growth by rediscovering one’s inner spiritual nature.

The experience of holiness may be fostered in the monastic life. Gail Fitzpatrick, the former abbess of the Mississippi Abbey, proposed four ways of holiness, which are particularly addressed by the Western monastic tradition: courteous and prophetic living; conversion of life; following the Cross of Christ; and the vision of the eternal value of all things in a renewed creation. The experience of these ways of holiness in the monastery may provide an opportunity


93 Abraham H. Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being (Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand, 1968), 71, 87-88. From a Christian perspective, however, the ‘peak experiences’ is not always the case that God must be present in the context of the “peak experiences.” E. I. F. William, a editor of Religions, Values, and Peak Experiences points out that “peak-experiences” …are characteristic not only of specially ordained emissaries of God but of mankind in general.” Abraham H. Maslow, Religions, Values, and Peak Experiences (Harmondsworth, Eng: Penguin Books, 1976), vi.


to experience the sacred. Norvene Vest, an oblate at St. Andrew’s Abbey, claims that:

Benedict’s Rule adopted the framework of the wisdom tradition with primary attention to the way daily experience – the active or practical life – could reveal God’s presence... The Rule emphasizes daily life as the primary place of spiritual learning and experience. Most of the Rule is concerned with ordering such elements of life as meals and farming and crafts and relationships, seeing every aspect as an opportunity to practice life in abundance. That practice is aimed at two goals: purity of heart and love of God.96

Monks strive to live whole-heartedly holy lives in God’s presence with their whole life through the daily experience of monastic life. Aspects of this life include liturgy, prayer, meditation, work, reading, meals, sleep, and interrelationships in the community. These monastic practices are tools for attaining the love of God based on: “the integration of self-esteem and self-surrender” embedded in the self-sacrificial love of Jesus, whom monks want to imitate.97 Monastic practices are focused on the acceptance of God’s love, and this experience of God’s love can contribute to self-transcendence. Through a monastic experience, newness of life can be found in apparent chaos between the ruins of carefully contained lives and an invitation to surrender to God’s healing presence.

4. The Expectations of a Monastic Experience

Today, many Christian monasteries are evolving in the context of their place and mission to offer new ways of providing hospitality that allow for experience of the monastic life. These stays vary in length from days to weeks, and are offered to individuals as well as to groups. Bamberger points out that “[guests] ask to live with the community as closely as possible so they can profit from the rhythm of monastic life, and deepen their own spiritual lives.”98 The monastic

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96 Norvene Vest, Desiring Life: Benedict on Wisdom and the Good Life (Lanham, Maryland: Cowley Publications, 2000), 43-44.

97 Ibid., 61.

experience not only may offer a good guide for Christians who want to live a contemplative life in their ordinary day-to-day lives, but can also offer a place for a re-education about the faith and a shelter for souls looking for a contemporary experience of spiritual growth and healing.

Firstly, through an experience of monastic life, Christians in particular can find a practical model for the contemplative life. The participants through an experience of monastic life may attain not only holistic healing but may also learn to live a healthy spiritual life marked by spiritual growth. Indeed, Benedictine spirituality is not designed just for monks, but rather for all beginners who desire to develop a deeper spiritual life. Chittister insists that “Benedictine spirituality is simply a guide to the Gospels, not an end in itself. Benedict calls his rule ‘a little rule for beginners’ (RB 73:8) in the spiritual life, not a handbook for the elite, or the literati, or the accomplished.”

Indeed, monastic life is not an isolated life for monks but is open for all people’s spiritual life. For example, Merton realizes that monastic life is not separated from the world rather it participates in love for the world. He came to a clear understanding of this through his deep experience at Fourth and Walnut Street in Louisville.

Merton himself remembering the “Louisville Epiphany” said: “It was like waking from a dream of separateness … the conception of ‘separation from the world’ [was] a complete illusion: the illusion that by making vows we become a different species of being, pseudo-angels, ‘spiritual men,’… thank God that I am like other men, that I am only a man among others.”

Merton became aware that he was only a man among others and had to share with them the love of God. Thus, for Christians adopting the rhythms of a contemplative life in the midst of their ordinary lives, the experience of the monastic

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life can offer a good model and a starting point.\textsuperscript{102} Even though there are many books written regarding the contemplative life, direct experience of this life among the monks may provide a better and tangible model. Thus, the experience of monastic community may become a place of inspiration for continuing a contemplative life for spiritual transformation.

A second expectation of a monastic experience is that the monastery can immerse our contemporaries into “real life” and provide for them, spiritual shelter. Dennis L. Okholm, who studied Benedictine spirituality and its application for Protestants, claims: “to those who say that the monastery is not the ‘real world,’ one might respond that the Benedictine life actually takes us far deeper into the real world than most other avenues of experience…. Who has distorted reality: the monk or the materialist?”\textsuperscript{103} Today, our materialistic society leaves many suffering from mental illness, psychological problems (especially those associated with consistent stress), isolation, and/or loneliness. Given this situation, the monastic experience may be helpful in the healing associated with an illness of the heart and may offer a true rest and peace. Murray points out that “the abiding work is the work of the heart, not of the brain, the work of the heart clinging to and resting in Jesus, a work in which the Holy Spirit links us to Christ Jesus…so that every moment you are free the consciousness will come.”\textsuperscript{104} David Robinson, a Presbyterian pastor and father of three children, states that “through the past two decades of monastic retreats, I have sought to add to my life little by little, step by step, allowing the Holy Spirit to transform my heart, my will, and my lifestyle incrementally.”\textsuperscript{105} Thus, through rest in the monastery guests may be refreshed in body, soul, and spirit, and revived with respect to their day-to-day life outside the

\textsuperscript{102} Joan Chittister, 36, 45, 116-117, 190.

\textsuperscript{103} Dennis L. Okholm, \textit{Monk Habits for Everyday People: Benedictine Spirituality for Protestants} (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press, 2007), 32.

\textsuperscript{104} Andrew Murray, 113

\textsuperscript{105} David Robinson, \textit{Ancient Paths: Discover Christian Formation the Benedictine Way} (Massa; Paraclete Press, 2010), 196.
monastery, to experience spiritual growth and healing.

Lastly, a monastic experience can offer a place for a re-education in faith for those who are Christians. According to statistics from “The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Korea,” in 2010, 140,650 people were baptized in 1,647 in parishes in all areas of Korea. Yet, simultaneously, the number of nominal believers is also increasing, and after Baptism, some are absorbed into a variety of cults or pseudo-religions and are often fascinated with the meditation practices associated with other traditions, such as Yoga and Zen. Many Catholic pastoral theologians point out that this phenomenon is because of the short-term education of catechumens and a lack of continual spiritual education after Baptism. Perhaps, as well, many Christians are not aware of the richness of their own traditions. Arguably, much has been lost unnecessarily.

Kathleen O’Neill, a Trappist nun from the Mississippi Abbey, points out in the foreword of the book Inside the School of Charity: Lessons from the Monastery: “sometimes parish life is not sufficient to lead people to the depth of prayer and union with Christ they deeply long for. Many monasteries have sensed the depth of this longing…and felt called by God to respond.” Hence, if the faithful or catechumens experience the spiritual life in the monastery, it may be helpful for strengthening their Christian spiritual life. While staying in the monastery, guests can experience the witness of the simple life of the monks, their praying and working, their abandoning of their own will, property, and homes to live within the context of God’s Love as well as the fraternal love from other members of the community. This experience may help to improve the faith of the Christian guests who witness it.

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108 Trisha Day, x.
5. Conclusion

Monasticism has existed in various religious traditions, and it has adopted similar, practical approaches for individuals seeking to achieve self-transcendence despite the different goals of each of these religious traditions. In the process of these monastic disciplines monks can attain an opportunity for spiritual growth and healing, and they can share it with people who live outside of the monastery through inviting others to monastic experience. Recently, psychotherapists have realized that spirituality and religion can contribute to healing and provide relief from symptoms of illness in the body, mind, and spirit, so that one can live with a sense of holistic health and well-being. Moreover, they agree that the sacred experience can lead to transformation in a person, and spiritual growth and healing can result from the holy experience. Thus, they attempt to provide patients facing a number of challenges with a chance to experience the holy, using various paths for their patients. In this sense, monasticism can provide them with various resources for spiritual healing. In Western monasticism, however, monastic spiritual growth and healing have different goals than the ones being sought through the practice of psychotherapy. The ultimate end of Christian monasticism is union with God and life with the love of God in the here-and-now. Monastic asceticism and other various monastic practices are tools used to attain these goals. Christian monks believe that the more they love God, the more they grow and are healed, and even suffering is one of the processes for attaining the great love of God.

Originally, Christian monasticism was not founded for a special class of people, but was open to all Christians. Regarding the relationship between Christian life and monastic life, for instance, St. Basil of Caesarea, who established his monastery in the towns as a form of community, considered that monasticism is essentially integral to the Church and sets up the
monastic life as an example of the true Christian life.\textsuperscript{109} E.F. Morison, an expert on Basil of Caesarea, points out that “Monasticism may then come to the aid of the Church, not merely as an ascetic reaction against luxury and worldliness, but rather as a serious attempt to provide certain definite centres of enthusiastic devotion from which the true Christian spirit of love and self-denial may permeate both Church and nation.”\textsuperscript{110} Wallace Platt, a Basilian, claims that “Basil’s monasticism was part of a movement of considerable popularity which did in fact [result in] a renewal in the Church…. This monasticism…was not so much a protest against existing authority in the Church…but a sincere search for spiritual revitalization.”\textsuperscript{111} Historically, Christian monastic life was founded to completely follow Jesus in devotion to the Church. In this sense, even today, monasticism not only may provide a source of inspiration for the renovation of the Church, but may also offer a good model for living a healthy Christian life and for following Jesus. As Jesus heals people through their sharing in his wounds and suffering, through voluntary participation in Jesus’ suffering, monks may bring to people the healing of Jesus. Morison argues that “the monastery might well seek to remedy the shortcomings of ordinary [Christians] in this matter.”\textsuperscript{112} Indeed, the well-organized monastic life may provide an opportunity to facilitate a spiritual experience which may contribute to spiritual growth and healing.

According to the spirituality of hospitality, many Benedictine monasteries offer their guests various opportunities for sharing in the monastic life such as guided tours, retreats and special programs. This monastic experience may not only provide the guests with a starting point

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{109} W. K. Lowther Clarke, \textit{St. Basil the Great: A Study in Monasticism} (Cambridge: University Press, 1913), 121; Andrew T. Crislip, 141.
\item \textsuperscript{110} E.F. Morison, \textit{St. Basil and His Rule: A Study in Early Monasticism} (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), 135.
\item \textsuperscript{112} E.F. Morison, 123.
\end{itemize}
for spiritual growth and for spiritual transformation, but can also be extended to their ordinary life for fostering their spiritual lives. Robinson argues that “as we learn to walk together into Benedictine spirituality, we can expect that the unseen presence of Christ will come alongside us along the way, just as he did long ago on the Emmaus Road – joining us on our journey home.”¹¹³

Although there is a large amount of information and various theories regarding spiritual health in today’s society that has achieved much in terms of both medical development and scientific technology, many of our contemporaries have to rediscover the benefits of the traditional monastic life through experience and practice. Indeed, spiritual growth and healing are not enough in themselves for those using merely medical or psychological ‘knowledge,’ since individuals’ experiences are related to the spiritual ‘experience’ which is a part of the whole person, in body, soul, and spirit. Furthermore, monastic spiritual growth and healing is deeply related to living within God’s love and to sharing with people His love which is directed towards our reaching the eschatological salvation of our souls.

CHAPTER 2
The Monastery Stay Experience

Monastic spiritual growth and healing may occur in the process of rebirth through self-transcendence. Monasticism, which provides various opportunities for transformation, can contribute to wholeness and healing in taking a person beyond one’s ego-centered self to holistic health. Fitzpatrick argues that “with the basic monastic ascesis in place, that is separation from the world, silence, control of the appetites, etc., we begin to notice the peeling back of accumulated layers of a false identity, a persona, which we show to the world.”¹¹⁴ Indeed, Benedictine monasticism is not an antiquated tradition, but a valuable heritage in the Christian tradition for today.

Benedict’s consideration for monks who have a sickness in their body, soul and spirit is remarkable; he states that “care of the sick must rank above and before all else, so that they may truly be served as Christ” (RB 36:1). Moreover, his process of healing and reformation is rooted in compassion and a love for Jesus (RB 27:1.5.8). For the love of Jesus, caring by the monks for the sick and the weak of the monastery is extended to the guests who visit a monastery: “all guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ” (RB 53, 1). Moreover, when secular visitors come to the Benedictine monastery to discover the secret of a healthy life, many aspects of the monastic life contribute to and become important parts of the visit leading to the experience of the health of the body, mind, and soul.¹¹⁵

Derkse and Kessler, the coauthors of The Rule of Benedict for Beginners: Spirituality for

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¹¹⁴ Gail Fitzpatrick, 171.
¹¹⁵ Lucia Glahn, 129.
Daily Life, claim that “Benedictine spirituality is holistic, or rather: a healing spirituality.” Thus, the monastic experience which takes participants away from the routine of daily life may offer both non-Christian and Christian people the opportunity for self-transcendence and spiritual healing in a monastic setting.

Such a Monastery Stay experience as discussed in this thesis is carried out at South Korea’s Waegwan Benedictine Abbey. Through the experience of the Benedictine monastic life, which treasures numerous traditional elements for holiness, the participants practise various monastic values through a lived experience. This monastic experience is intended to help participants to experience spiritual growth and healing by reflecting on their spiritual lives and by learning to yearn for God in their daily lives, so as to be recreated through God’s grace. This spiritual healing of being a new creation in God is the final goal of all Christians as well as the participants in the Monastery Stay experience. Thus, through the experience of holistic hospitality this monastic experience may be defined as one model for monastic spiritual growth and healing.

In this chapter, the author will present research regarding the Benedictine Monastery Stay experience including: 1) its history, 2) its structure and operation, 3) the outcomes, as seen from the Benedictine spirituality lens, and then, 4) the various elements of spiritual growth and healing through this experience that draw upon the research.

The Monastery Stay is not just a theory but is a ‘practical experience.’ Through the

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117 St. Benedict Waegwan Abbey was established in South Korea by German Benedictine monks in 1909. Now, about 140 monks belong to the monastery, and they work in many places, such as schools, four retreat houses, metal craft workshop, wood craft workshop, icon craft workshop, stained glass workshop, a publishing house, and a farm, etc. In addition, about 500 lay believers have been active as the Benedictine oblate since 1998.

experience of Benedictine monastic life a contribution may be made to the attainment of spiritual
growth and healing that draws upon a holistic perspective. In fact, it may be a sign of the gift of
God’s grace, which provides the opportunity to promote a spiritual experience for people.

1. Introduction to the Monastery Stay Experience

1.1. History of the Monastery Stay Experience

Benedictine spirituality holds hospitality as one of its significant values. The Rule of
Benedict states that essential elements are “obedience, stability, conversatio morum (fidelity to the
monastic life of transformation), humility, silence, and hospitality.”119 Benedict asks his monks for
the following: “great care and concern are to be shown in receiving poor people and pilgrims,
because in them more particularly Christ is received” (RB 53:15). Following Benedict’s
instruction regarding hospitality, monks have striven to receive each guest as Christ, with warmth,
love and humility, and have shared many monastic values with their guests.120 Laura Swan, a
Benedictine nun and spiritual director, claims that “today people are integrating the Benedictine
values of hospitality, stability, work, and prayer both inside and outside the monastery to deepen
the meaning in their lives and draw near to God.”121 Indeed, many Benedictine monasteries have
programs in place to provide for a monastic experience in order to share Benedictine hospitality
and spirituality with guests.122

In South Korea, Benedictine hospitality is embodied in the Monastery Stay experience. It
was begun in 2002, as a project by a Korean Benedictine community in the hopes of bringing

120 Jane Tomaine, 121-122.
122 For instance, in America Weston Priory (http://www.westonpriory.org/exploration.html) and St. John’s
abbey (http://www.saintjohnsabbey.org/beingamonk/experience.html), in Germany Müensterschwarzach Abbey
(http://www.abtei-muensterschwarzach.de/ams/startseite/index.html) carry out the monastic experience for guests.
spiritual growth and healing to those who participated in the experience. Its origin is rooted in my own personal journey. The inspiration for the experience occurred one day when I received a group of visitors to our monastery. I was showing the guests many workplaces in the monastery. When we looked around the vegetable garden, there were a lot of large fresh cabbages, and one woman asked me, “Who will eat these beautiful cabbages?” I simply replied, “We, the monks will have these cabbages to make Kim-chi.” Then she asked: “only the monks can have these good things to eat?” When I went back into my room, her words rang in my ears. ‘Only the monks can have these good things to eat....’ During my meditation, I remembered again the meaning of the ‘Ongoing Incarnation’: ‘God became man because of His Love, yet why do we not earnestly share our life, with our neighbours at the same time that we follow God?’ Then, I asked my Abbot to open up the monastery to male youth to share our monastic life, with an emphasis on increasing vocations. He was puzzled and hesitated but eventually allowed it because of the words ‘to promote vocations.’

After obtaining the consent of the Abbot, I announced this experience in the weekly bulletins of the Korean church, and then I waited with doubt and worry about whether or not applicants would contact us. However, surprisingly many young people called me asking to experience monastic life. Eventually we began the first Monastery Stay experience in South Korea in February 2002 by inviting young lay men believers to have the opportunity to experience the monastic life for a specific length of time. For the past ten years, thousands of people have participated in the experience. Now, the Monastery Stay experience is open to anybody regardless of age, religion, or gender, as well as being available to family groups.

1.2. Structure of the Monastery Stay Experience
Participants in the experience live in the same way as Benedictine monks do, completely isolated from their everyday lives, without access to family, a cell phone, internet, etc., for a period of a few days or weeks. During their stay at the monastery, participants wake up at dawn to pray, meditate, attend the Eucharist, work at simple tasks, eat every meal in silence, attend some lectures, and learn to sing Gregorian chant. Table 1, below, provides the daily itinerary for those experiencing a Monastery Stay.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>04:50</td>
<td>Waking up with ringing of bell</td>
<td>13:10</td>
<td>Afternoon work (monastic workplace)**</td>
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<tr>
<td>05:15</td>
<td>Vigils &amp; Morning Prayer</td>
<td>17:30</td>
<td>Meditation (Visits to the Blessed Sacrament)</td>
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<tr>
<td>06:00</td>
<td>Meditation (Centering Prayer)</td>
<td>18:00</td>
<td>Evening Prayer</td>
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<tr>
<td>06:30</td>
<td>Eucharist (Sunday 10:30)</td>
<td>18:30</td>
<td>Holy reading (<em>Lectio Divina</em>)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Breakfast (with silence)</td>
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<tr>
<td>08:30</td>
<td>Morning work &amp; Lecture*</td>
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<td>Rest with monks</td>
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<td>11:30</td>
<td>Meditation (Centering Prayer)</td>
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<td>11:45</td>
<td>Midday Prayer</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:10</td>
<td>Lunch (with silence)</td>
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<td>Last night: communion with monks and the whole community</td>
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* Lecture

Topics include: Monasticism, Benedictine spirituality and vows, Centering prayer, *Lectio Divina*, Gregorian chant, Interaction with the Abbot, etc.

** Workplace

Farming, dishwashing, House Cleaning, Nursing of the elderly, Writing Icons, Making a Rosary and Candle, etc.

In common regulations

Wearing monastic habit; a ban forbidding access to family, a cell phone, internet; giving a new name and calling each other by it; eating every meal in silence with the Scripture reading, etc.

On the last day, all the participants are met with individually, and asked: “what have you felt through the experience of monastic life?” They usually reply as follows: “I felt this experience was not easy for me, especially the requirement to wake up early; however, I have experienced the importance of prayer, physical labour, and silence because I usually live with a lot of daily worry, complicated situations, city noise, and a variety of machinery.” Many youth want to have this experience again, and find themselves experiencing spiritual growth and change in their lives.
Some youth have found their religious vocation through this experience, and decide to enter the monastery. Moreover, by recently opening the experience to all people, the spiritual development fostered through the Monastery Stay experience has provided a practical and pastoral application of the contemplative life for both Christians and non-Christians. The monastic experience can bring spiritual healing and a new view of the contemplative life that can be embraced in all facets of a retreat participant’s life and also strengthening the vocation of the laity.

Glahn argues that “singing, praying, eating correctly, sleeping, taking breaks, working hard, having interesting conversations – all these tried and tested activities, drawn from the lived experience of our Christian monasteries and converts, exert a greater healing power.”123 Ten years of experience, as a Director of the Monastery Stay experience, has provided evidence that participants who have come several times have been healed from their psychological problems; some have also attempted to seek the deeper meaning of spiritual life; some became monks or nuns.

2. The Outcomes of the Monastery Stay Experience

Over the past eleven years, thousands of participants have experienced life in the monastery and have achieved spiritual growth and healing through the Monastery Stay experience. The increase of participants in the Monastery Stay gives an indication that the experience of an integrated spiritual life through a monastic retreat can provide positive results. These results, which have been described by participants, are: inner peace, spiritual growth and healing. Although all participants of the experience cannot attain change and transformation in their fullest sense, they do tend to gradually realize that through the monastic experience they can be embedded more deeply in God’s love, and achieve a personal inner peace. Many of the

123 Lucia Glahn, 129.
participants report that after their first experience of the monastery they tend to continue (to some extent) the discipline that they learned while at the monastery. This after-effect of the experience tends to keep them closer to God in their ordinary everyday lives. It also prompts the desire to take part in the experience again. In this sense, the Monastery Stay experience can contribute to a constant renewal for people who desire union with God.

According to the Rule of Benedict, the participants gradually learn how to practise Benedictine spirituality in their lives, and they may realize that living a monastic lifestyle does not have to be separated from their ordinary lives. In reflections posted on the website for participants, and interviews with television reporters, newspaper journalists, and monks, they report positive experiences regarding their transformed lives that result from their time at the monastery; e.g., an increased time of prayer, meditation and reading the Bible, enthusiastic experience with Church activities, careful consideration of family and friends, and trying to see situations in their lives from God’s perspective.124

For instance, in 2012, Andrew Jung, a participant in the Monastery Stay, stated that “through staying in the monastery I realized that God truly loves me, and this awareness had an influence on my life, changing it for the better.” Susana Lee said that “Lectio Divina and silence in the monastery are very beneficial for my spiritual life.”125 After participation in the Monastery Stay, some participants reported in an interview with PBC (Pyeong-hwa Broadcasting System) how their lives changed. John Park said that “the monastic experience provided a good


opportunity for me to realize that God is present in my daily life since my life has been gradually transformed after this experience,” Juliana Kim confessed that “before this experience, I had struggled with people who hurt my heart, but now I find myself to be praying for them with inner peace.”

On the other hand, through the Monastery Stay experience, the Benedictine monastery has also experienced some changes; e.g., an increase in the number of monastic vocations, the strengthening of the Benedictine spirituality it has practised, and a dynamic inter-communion between the local society and the Benedictine monastery.

Thus, the monks have to continually take care of the participants being mindful of God’s love: “if love for solitude and the active guarding of the heart are alive and well within a monk or nun, then the reception of guests, whether in the guesthouse or within the community itself, can be a graced Christ-event for all.” In addition, the monastic community has to find a new way, a new voice, and a new vision in order to achieve an interconnection with the local society so as to help heal people and other communities that suffer from internal and external problems. Lawrence Cunningham, a Christian historian and systematic theologian, insists that “monastic communities of the future need to give new meaning and bold shape to whole new ways of being a public voice in a world deafened by the social bedlam in which it exists.” In order to find this new meaning and way, the monastic community has to become strengthened not only to live the essential Benedictine charism but also to achieve communication with those outside the cloister, in an ongoing way.

126 Interview with Pyeong-hwa Broadcasting System (PBC).
127 John E. Bamberger, 159.
3. Elements of Spiritual Growth and Healing through the Monastery Stay Experience

A Benedictine Monastery Stay experience has many elements that can contribute to spiritual growth and healing in particular, within Benedictine spirituality including: 1) an experience of the warmth of hospitality, 2) an experience of an integrated life and a spiritual/contemplative life, 3) monastic practices such as: silence, prayer, meditation and sacred reading, 4) rituals including both the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours, 5) an experience of stability and a balanced life, and 6) the monastic environment: religious symbols, music, and art. Through these monastic experiences, “people who go to a monastery or convent to discover the secret of a healthy life will soon learn how many things are important for the health of the body, mind, and soul.”\textsuperscript{129} Moreover, ultimately, through these elements the participants may begin to find the true-self and may see their lives as God does. According to Merton, the true-self means to attain a new identity with the love of God through a profound experience of a contemplative life. Monastic disciplines can provide an opportunity to experience self-transcendence to the true-self and away from the false-self (which is an ego-centered self). One who finds the true-self, can share God’s love with others, and understands everything from the perspective of God’s eyes.\textsuperscript{130} It is a very Christian understanding of spiritual growth and transformation to view matters this way.\textsuperscript{131} With the basic monastic ascesis in place, the participants in the Monastery Stay experience a new spiritual journey in their ordinary lives that makes use of Benedictine spirituality.

3.1. Hospitality and the Experience of Warmth

Hospitality in a Benedictine monastery is a very old tradition, and even now, many monasteries continue with this beautiful custom. Through an experience of this Benedictine

\textsuperscript{129} Lucia Glahn, 129.
\textsuperscript{131} Thomas Merton, \textit{New Seeds of Contemplation}, 35-36, 60, 64.
hospitality, guests who may be undergoing a sense of alienation, loneliness, or depression, cannot only feel an acceptance with warmth and Christ-like love, but can also be drawn into an actual experience of a sense of the peace of Christ. This experience of love and peace may assist the guests in recovering from their psychological suffering. Benedictine hospitality tries to be holistic and to extend beyond the monastery to all people.

Benedictine hospitality, in which Christ is the center, advances through a holistic process and unconditional love, and may help guests to facilitate both holistic growth and healing. Benedict places great importance on establishing an environment conducive to the ongoing transformation of the monks as well as the guests. The consideration for guests is well described by Benedict in the RB 53, Of the Reception of Guests. The importance Benedict placed on welcoming guests to the monastery follows from the care that Christ showed to others. By receiving strangers and attending to their needs, Christ manifested God’s love. By being a welcoming presence to all who came to him, Christ modeled the manner in which we are called to receive all people. Interestingly, Benedict’s approach to hospitality is a holistic process which pays attention to “the spirit, the mind, and the body” as RB 53 reveals. Benedict is not excluding care of the body, even though renunciation of the body was an accepted practice during Benedict’s time:

Once a guest has been announced, the superior and the brothers are to meet him with all the courtesy of love. First of all, they are to pray together and thus be united in peace, but prayer must always precede the kiss of peace because of the delusions of the devil. All humility should 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 because he is indeed welcomed in them. ...

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Abbot shall pour water on the hands of the guests, and the Abbot with the entire community shall wash their feet (RB 53:3-7, 11-13).

Benedictine hospitality teaches us a holistic process of care by paying attention to “the spirit, the mind, and the body,” as if one was receiving Christ. Carol A. King suggests in her article, “What is hospitality?” that “the purpose of accommodations provided by [the Benedictine monastery] was not to provide comfort and pleasure, but to serve God by meeting a human need.” The guest who receives Benedict’s holistic hospitality may experience the love of Jesus because the love they receive from the ‘other’ mirrors the love God has for them. Leslie A. Hay, a spiritual director from Texas, comments that “extending traditional forms of hospitality tends to the physical aspects of hospitality just as being a warm, accepting, non-judgmental presence attends to its psychological demands. But it is love, the spiritual component of hospitality.” Extending this unconditional love may be related to healing: “unconditional love [is] a way of saying love flows freely without ego boundaries.” Phil Golding, a transpersonal psychotherapist, claims that “unconditional love is the ultimate ideal. It is the most transformative ideal to consciously strive for. It is the journey toward living this ideal in our everyday life that facilitates inner-healing and personal growth.” Thus, through unconditional love, acceptance of oneself and others plays a significant role in spiritual growth and healing. In a hospitable environment, the inclusive love reflecting God’s unconditional love keeps the guests grounded in

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134 Ibid., 5-13.
136 Leslie A. Hay, 22.
God’s love. For those who come for direction and the experience of human love from the other can come to know how much Christ loves them.\(^{139}\)

Benedict’s practice of love is not confined to monks, but extends to the pilgrim, the guests, the poor, and the world. The monastery is the place where everyone is welcomed. Monastic solitude is not opposed to communion, while it is rooted in a life in Christ with others outside of the cloister. John E. Bamberger, a monk of the Genesee Abbey, suggests that “when practiced together, enclosure and hospitality can integrate the guest into the monastic community, enabling the guest to share in the common search for God.”\(^{140}\) Hospitality is an extension of God’s love, the “unboundaried heart”, communion with the world, and one of the most sacred ministries within a monastery.\(^{141}\)

In short, Benedict emphasized that monks ought to serve their guests with holistic hospitality, as if their guests are Christ Himself. This Benedictine hospitality may bring the participants of The Monastery Stay to the experience of self-transcendence through the acceptance of this unconditional love, which can provide an opportunity for spiritual growth and healing. Moreover, the participants may discover the numerous challenges that await those who endeavour to incorporate this multifaceted approach to hospitality into their lives.

3.2. The Experience of an Integrated Life and a Spiritual/Contemplative Life

A deep experience of contemplation in the monastery can lead the monk to an integrated life of contemplation and action. The monk may become aware that every routine of monastic life can become a tool for realizing God’s presence. Cunningham points out that “the contemplative life is nothing else but making present this image of God through us. The contemplative person is

\(^{139}\) Leslie A. Hay, 56.

\(^{140}\) John E. Bamberger, 155-156.

\(^{141}\) Joan Chittister, 124.
the one who is illuminated with ‘the face of Christ.’”

Joan Chittister, a Benedictine nun and writer, explains that “contemplation is the ability to see the world around us as God sees it. Contemplation is a sacred mindfulness of my holy obligation to care for the world I live in. Contemplation is awareness of God within me and in the people around me. Contemplation is consciousness of the real fullness of life.”

Through the contemplative life monks realize that God transcends their problems in life, and they can thus see problems or suffering through God’s eyes. One of the potential results of the contemplative life is the contemplative’s ability to attain God’s love. This can also lead to change of the self or to transform from the false self to the true self. Monastic practices can contribute to gaining purification of the heart, to find the true-self, and to become united with God. In this process, monastic spiritual growth and healing occurs. Purity of heart, which is achieved through finding the true-self, may mean a healed state in body and soul. With regard to the relationship between finding the true-self and spiritual healing, Judy A. Glaister, a professor of nursing at the University of Texas, argues that “self-transcendence is a process of change that can positively influence healing. Self-transcendence is characterized by striving for new and deeper understanding and acceptance of self, others and situations that individuals face.”

Agneta Schreurs, a social psychologist, claims that “the True Self appears to be a deep and persistent longing for a ‘God-oriented’ life… It may take an extended period of critical self-examination to

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142 Lawrence Cunningham, Thomas Merton and the Monastic Vision, 82.
143 Joan Chittister, 103-104.
144 John Cassian (360-435) defines the ultimate aim of the monastic life as the living of the Kingdom of God. For him, purity of heart is the immediate goal and also the road by which one can arrive at this goal. John Cassian, Conferences. Tran. Colm Luibhéid (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 40.
145 Judy A. Glaister, 65.
sift out the authentic from the inauthentic.”

To gain this level of healing, Benedict recommends that “monks may not have the free disposal even of their own bodies and wills” (RB 33: 4).

This life of kenosis (self-emptying) can assist a person to be in communion with others since the true self embraces both the solitude necessary for encounter with God and the inner center of oneself, while at the same time it allows for the sharing of their experience of God’s love with others. This new perspective can provide spiritual growth and healing for monks as well as the participants in the Monastery Stay experience.

The contemplative life is not merely exclusive to the monastic life but is open to all people. Merton states that “the contemplative life, in its purest and strictest sense, is led in monasteries. But in a broader sense every life can be dedicated to some extent to contemplation, and even the most active of lives can and should be balanced by a contemplative element.”

Although Merton claimed that a pure contemplative life was usually achieved in monasteries, he also began to hold that there were possibilities for activity in the world to be a way for attaining a high level of contemplative life, but this concept had not yet become mature in his lifetime. Thus, for the growth of the participants’ continuing contemplative life in the midst of their ordinary day to day life, an experience of the integrated monastic life can offer a good model.

Chittister states:

Benedictine spirituality is balm and blessing in a world gone wild with activity for its own sake….The genius of Benedictinism is its concentration on loving the active life contemplatively. Benedictine spirituality brings depth and focus to dailiness. Benedictine spirituality is as concerned with the way a thing is done as it is with what is done: guests are to be received as Christ (RB 53); foods are to be

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147 James Finley, 44.
149 Joan Chittister, 36, 45, 116-117, 190.
selected with care (RB 39); the goods of the monastery are to be treated reverently (RB 32); pilgrims and the poor are to be treated with special attention (RB 66) – and all for the love of Christ. Life is not divided into parts holy and mundane in the Rule of Benedict. All of life is sacred. All of life is holy. All of life is to be held in anointed hands.\textsuperscript{150}

When participants experience this contemplative life in the monastery, the experience may become a starting point for practising contemplation in their daily life and a good guide for them to live the contemplative life outside of the cloister. This transformed attitude can contribute to integrating their lives with God. Today, many efforts are made to integrate the deep experiences of silence and harmony in the practice of contemplation in daily life.\textsuperscript{151} In order to achieve self-awareness the monastic atmosphere of silence and solitude may be considered essential elements for both monks and guests to contribute to their deeper awareness of God.

3.3. Monastic Practices: Silence, Prayer, Centering Prayer and Lectio Divina

The first step of a contemplative life is communication with God through silence, prayer, meditation (e.g. Centering Prayer), and divine reading (e.g. Lectio Divina) which are well known as tools that can be used to promote spiritual growth and healing.\textsuperscript{152} The participants in a Monastery Stay not only can learn how to practise them through the example of the monks, but may also experience an inner change in attitude by practising these elements of the contemplative life. By developing these elements through training in such spiritual practices, they gradually realize the ability “to recognize the many subtle signs by which God communicates himself – in

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., 105.

\textsuperscript{151} Frances Vaughan, 28.

\textsuperscript{152} Pargament argues that “spiritual experience represents another potentially powerful resource that can be accessed in psychotherapy. Prayer and meditation have begun to receive particular attention as resources that facilitate spiritual experience in psychotherapy…. The shift to a different kind of consciousness promoted by meditation may be especially valuable for people who suffer from two classes of psychological problems: difficulty separating themselves from their cravings (e.g., for alcohol, for drugs, for food, for sex), and difficulty coming to terms with painful emotions and experiences (e.g., anxiety, anger, depression, physical pain, difficult life histories).” See: Kenneth I. Pargament, 253, 256.
nature, in people’s hearts, in Scripture, in liturgy, in the events of one’s life history – everywhere.”

First of all, the participants in the Monastery Stay experience monastic silence with serenity. This experience of silence can contribute to spiritual healing. Henri Nouwen states that through this monastic experience during his time at the Genesee Abbey “the continuous silence is a real healing experience for me.” Monastic silence is one of the significant tools used in order to listen to God’s voice. Thus, Benedict begins his Rule with the words, “listen carefully, my son, to the master’s instructions, and attend to them with the ear of your heart” (RB Prol.:1). Chittister points out that “the Rule of Benedict clearly emphasizes the need to listen to the people with whom we live as well…. Listening is a religious discipline of the first order that depends on respect and leads to conversion.” Through the experience of monastic silence the participants take a first step towards communion with God. When they realize the importance to a contemplative life of listening to a contemplative life, they may easily learn to practise other monastic disciplines, such as prayer, meditation, and sacred reading.

Secondly, Benedictine prayer can help the participants to communicate with God, to change their minds, and to find God everywhere. Chittister describes this communication:

Prayer provokes us to see the life around us in fresh, new ways…. Benedictine prayer is designed to enable people to realize that God is in the world around them…. Like the incense in the monastic chapel, prayer is meant to call us back to a consciousness of God here and now…. Benedictine prayer has several characteristics that make more for a spirituality of awareness than of consolation. …. Out of those qualities a whole new life emerges and people are changed…. The function of prayer is to change my own mind, to put on the mind of Christ, to enable grace to break into me…. Contemplative prayer, converting prayer, is prayer that sees the whole world through incense – a holy place, a place where the

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153 Agneta Schreurs, 203.
155 Joan Chittister, 18-19.
sacred dwells, a place to be made different by those who pray, a place where God sweetens living with the beauty of all life.  

Indeed, through prayer the participants may have a new perspective on God, the world, and themselves because they live in continuous communication with God.

Andrew Murray, a Christian pastor and writer in South Africa, insists that “if we learn to persevere in prayer, its fruit will be always more abundant… and we shall obtain, as Jesus obtained when He was on earth, healing of the sick, often immediate healing, which shall bring glory to God.”  

For example, following the advice of Brother James, a Trappist monk, Nouwen prayed during his stay at the Genesee monastery for his friend, Richard, who had an accident that caused an increasing back pain, and eventually Nouwen experiences the healing power of prayer through the recovery of his friend; he says to Br. James, “Please don’t stop. Keep praying for him,” and James answers, “You so seldom know if God hears your prayers, and I feel so good that he listened to my request.”

Despite the plentiful fruits of prayer, many participants seem to have the feeling that prayer is difficult. However, through the Monastery Stay experience the participants can be provided the opportunity to learn how to pray from the example of the monks, through an introduction to and the practice of various prayers. In addition, practising prayer with a monk may help the participants to focus in prayer, and they may receive the gifts of prayer, spiritual growth and healing, from God.

Thirdly, Centering Prayer, which is a type of prayer many Benedictine monks practice

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156 Ibid., 28-29, 35.  
every day, can lead the participants to self-awareness and spiritual healing.\textsuperscript{160} In the Monastery Stay experience, participants learn the way of Centering Prayer along with how to sit comfortably with serenity then repeat a sacred word in harmony with an abdominal breathing and commit themselves to God’s presence and action. During the daily practice of this prayer in the early morning for thirty minutes, they may experience “the fostering of inner peace, relaxation, security, trust in self, self-acceptance, self-forgiveness, and the experience of connectedness.”\textsuperscript{161} Hence, O’Madagain, insists that Centering Prayer can contribute to the healing of the prayer’s unconsciousness, although this healing is not the goal of Centering Prayer but rather its effect.\textsuperscript{162} Indeed, within the context of healing, many of the components of Centering Prayer can be described as positive outcomes associated with the successful completion of therapeutic tasks.

Lastly, Centering Prayer is passive prayer in which one devotes oneself to God’s action during the prayer; similarly, \textit{Lectio Divina} is reading focused on God and actively listening to God’s voice through spiritual books, especially Scripture which is considered to be the living Word.\textsuperscript{163} Benedict considered \textit{Lectio Divina}, which has been treasured since the days of ancient monasticism, and contains prayer lasting about three hours every day with more reading on Sunday, as one of the central activities that is to occupy a monk’s day together with official prayer and work (RB 48). According to Guigo II, a Carthusian monk, through the four ascending stages of \textit{Lectio Divina}: reading – meditation – prayer – contemplation, people can become united with


\textsuperscript{161} Connors, Toscova, & Tonigan, 242.

\textsuperscript{162} Murchadh O’Madagain, 230, 269.

God.\textsuperscript{164}

*Lectio Divina* is not simply reading to gain information or knowledge, but is a kind of prayer the purpose of which is to enlighten. Chittister points out that “*Lectio*, or sacred reading, is the monastic practice of keeping our eyes on the transforming moments of life. It may be the centerpiece of all the spiritual arts of the Benedictine tradition and the most necessary for our time of all the pieces of the spiritual craft.”\textsuperscript{165} Monks believe that living God’s word can lead to change in one’s life as well as spiritual growth and healing. Paintner and Wynkoop, who studied contemplative awakening through *Lectio Divina*, suggest: “let God’s Word take hold of you, shape you, and change you. This is a transformational path…God’s gaze will guide you and reveal what you most need for your healing and wholeness right now.”\textsuperscript{166} Mary C. Earle, who was healed from her illness through the practice of *Lectio Divina*, confesses that “as I recovered from my attacks and pondered how to re-vision my illness and my life, I realized that one of my own prayer practices could help me. For years the practice of *Lectio Divina*, or sacred reading, has fed my spiritual life.”\textsuperscript{167} Thus, through the practice of *Lectio Divina* the participants in the Monastery Stay may realize God’s presence within the Word, and may grow and be healed in their suffering through the power of Scripture.

### 3.4. Rituals: Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours

Benedictine prayer in the form of liturgy has played an important role in monasticism as a form of communal prayer, and is complementary to private prayer in monastic life. The Eucharist

\textsuperscript{164} In the twelfth century, Guigo II, a Carthusian monk, mentioned these four stages; see: Guigo II, *The Ladder of Monks: A Letter on the Contemplative Life and Twelve Meditations*, trans. Edmund Colledge and James Walsh (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1978), 15.

\textsuperscript{165} Joan Chittister, 178.


\textsuperscript{167} Mary C. Earle, 3.
and the Liturgy of the Hours are representative of communal prayer. Prayer in the Benedictine tradition is offered as a community act and an act of community awareness. Monks pray “with a community and for a community and as a community.” Usually, monks gather in chapel to celebrate the Eucharist every day and pray the Liturgy of the Hours six or seven times a day. By attending this Benedictine communal ritual the participants in the Monastery Stay can be provided with an opportunity for spiritual growth and healing.

Regarding spiritual healing, rituals have a healing power. Pargament suggests that rituals have various symbols which contribute to healing: “rituals are not to be confused with a simple set of repetitive actions; rituals have power. Indeed, some would say they unleash sacred power. Rituals unfold in a symbolic context of special objects, colors, smells, shapes, sounds, touch, and places that engage people at many levels.” Young and Koopsen, the coauthors of Spirituality, Health, and Healing, claim that “during the experience of an illness, which challenges the whole being – physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual – rituals help individuals to connect with the deeper resources within themselves and with family, community, Divine Spirit, strength, and wisdom.” In this sense, Benedictine liturgy is treasured for its plentiful healing resources.

A solemn liturgy in a Benedictine monastery engages various rituals, artistic symbols and sounds, including movements such as the procession of monks, Gregorian chant, the playing of a pipe organ, and bells; the smell of incense; and the various gestures like a deep bow, kneeling, prostration and the imposition of hands. Abigail R. Evans, a practical theologian, insists that symbols in liturgy play a very significant role since they not only represent a transcendent

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168 Joan Chittister, 29, 35.
169 Kenneth I. Pargament, 82.
meaning but also “pull together the reality of the community bringing us into God’s presence.”

Moreover, for this experience of God’s presence, the liturgical calendar and the Liturgy of the Hours focus on Jesus Christ’s Paschal Mystery. Thus, through this liturgical communion the attendants can re-experience “Jesus’ sacrifice on their behalf and [the] receiving [of] spiritual nourishment through the gifts of his body and spirit.” Indeed, various symbols in the monastic liturgy have been formed for remembering the life of Jesus, and Christians believe in liturgical Anamnesis, which means Christ not only is really present but also achieves His saving deeds in the liturgy, here and now.

Monks desire to become purified and healed through attendance at liturgy, and they may attain inner peace and healing through “God’s presence and power.” A Benedictine liturgy is well placed according to daily, weekly, and yearly rhythms, and it can contribute to spiritual transformation. Mary Wolff-Salin, a Benedictine nun and Jungian psychoanalyst, insists that “[in monastic liturgy] this daily, weekly, yearly rhythm is meant to serve as what Jung calls a transforming symbol – a complex of such symbols, forming a whole and changing the psyche of the participants, as living myths do, in a way that provides meaning and, ultimately, transformation.”

The experience of the monastic liturgy can help the participants in the Monastery Stay to understand prayer, to be reminded of the significance of liturgy, to grow in their spirituality, and to

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172 Kenneth I. Pargament, 82.
174 Abigail R. Evans, 6.
perhaps experience healing of their psychological problems.\textsuperscript{176} Pargament indicates that our contemporary psychological problems may be caused by a lack of the power of ritual or our being disconnected from rituals which may cause us to bring about such things. “Disconnected from rituals, people cannot participate in purposeful acts of transformation that propel them over sacred thresholds from one place in life to another…. And lacking the power of ritual, people are less able to signify the sacred moments in life.”\textsuperscript{177}

Thus, monastic liturgy can draw its participants to the realization of the significance of liturgy in their spiritual life by being encouraged to experience “emotional catharsis, [while they] define identity, build community, and help people make meaning of change and transition.”\textsuperscript{178} Moreover, the participants may experience unity with Jesus by continuously attending the monastic liturgy which is rooted in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus, and during the liturgy they may attain spiritual awareness or spiritual healing.

3.5. Stability and the Experience of a Balanced Daily Life

The participants in the Monastery Stay experience a new lifestyle in the monastery according to a monastic timetable. They get out of their complicated and dynamic social life and stay in the cloister to follow the Benedictine Rule of stability without any devices (i.e., television, cell-phones, and Internet access) which could be used to connect with those outside the monastery. This change of time and space not only can stimulate their body, soul, and spirit and lead to the experience of a changed life, but can also contribute to their spiritual growth by contemplation thus encouraging them to enter into an experience of the love of God through the practice of Benedictine stability and a balanced daily life.

\textsuperscript{176} Eric Dean, 53.
\textsuperscript{177} Kenneth I. Pargament, 261.
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid., 261
One of the three Benedictine vows is stability. It refers to the promise that the monks will stay in one stable place and one community, and serves as a basic element for spiritual growth and transformation. Kardong suggests that “a stable life in a monastic community is a good environment in which to work at growth in the monastic virtues. And we might draw the negative corollary that it is hard to achieve spiritual growth apart from a stable community of some sort.” Jane Tomaine, an author of St. Benedict’s Toolbox, explains that stability is not merely a reference to staying in one fixed place. Rather “our primary stability is in God. We can trust that God will guide us to make changes in our life and relationships necessary for our physical and emotional well-being.” Benedict was keenly aware of human nature and composed a rule that creates circumstances where a monk’s search for God could be nourished, particularly through prayer, in solitude as well as the community. Thus, Benedict makes a clear connection for monks between “the enclosure of the monastery and stability in the community” (RB 4:78).

Benedict’s primary objective is to create a stable place where his monks can grow in love, and this was a central vision of the quest he had that guided his creation of his Rule. Benedict wants his monks to develop a firm relationship of love with God and with brothers, and to grow spiritually by staying in a stable place, as one wants to stay with his [her] beloved physically and spiritually. Thus, stability may become a measure of love. Chittister states that “here in a stable relationship with others, we find that fullness of life is more than preservation of the self and that love is more than a matter of physical response…It’s in stability that I find out that all love, to be

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180 Terrence Kardong, Conversation with Saint Benedict, 75.
181 Jane Tomaine, 53.
182 Leslie A. Hay, 4.
true love, must, at least to some degree, be celibate.” Stability may provide the opportunity for one to live totally in God and totally for others through relationships of love. Hence, the stability may compare with a spacious chrysalis or a womb of new life.

While staying at the monastery, monks and the guests may gradually grow and have a spiritual rebirth, such as in the chrysalis, which parallels a safe, creative, life-giving place. Chittister confesses that “stability is essential to the ongoing revelation of the many faces of God in my life…. Stability is what gives me time in life, time for God and time for others.” Through staying in the monastery with its serenity, the participants of the Monastery Stay may “experience tranquility and freedom from both external and internal disruptions” and may find the way to reach their inner destination because “stability is an invitation to live life deeply rather than to spend it superficially.” Thus, the practice of Benedictine stability can provide a stable place for transformation, and by staying in one place one may experience God’s love with serenity, meaning the participants may be better able to receive spiritual growth and healing as a result.

Secondly, through a well-ordered monastic timetable, the participants in the Monastery Stay experience cannot only learn how to organize their daily time while being sanctified but can also learn how to make a balanced time for prayer, work, and spiritual reading. They can also use the Stay experience to recover from physical illness or psychological difficulties by having a daily meal on time. It is believed that in some monasteries, when the rhythm and proper equilibrium of one’s life have been disturbed, illness will come as a result. Intemperance in anything, such as in eating and drinking, sleeping or waking, working or relaxing, can make one permanently ill. From

183 Joan Chittister, 158.
184 Leslie A. Hay, 63.
185 Joan Chittister, 156.
186 Connors, Toscoa, & Tonigan, 244; Joan Chittister, 155.
this point of view, it is believed in the monastery that those who live in harmony with their inner clock and the course of nature are taking care of their life and health.\footnote{Lucia Glahn, 152.}

The monastic rule is well designed to keep a balance in life according to the natural rhythm of nature. Gannon and Traub explain, for instance, that “such were the principal daily activities of Benedict and his monks – a rhythmic balance of liturgical worship, private prayerful reading, and manual labor. This kind of life ‘under a rule’ constituted his approach to spirituality.”\footnote{Gannon & Traub, 63-64.} When balance in everyday life is achieved, the healing that results becomes an energy flow resulting at some level of reintegration or improved function.\footnote{Judy A. Glaister, 64.} Hence, as illness can destroy the balance in one’s body and mind, a balanced lifestyle in the monastery can provide assistance to those seeking to reintegrate to achieve balance or improve one’s health, as well as one’s relationships. Monks lead a regular life with moderation. They desire to rise early in the morning, to meditate, to pray, to do physical work, to rest, to recreate with community members, and have a balanced diet with good nutrition. This ordinary lifestyle in the monastery can contribute greatly to their physical and spiritual health and well-being.

Benedict pursued a balance of the spiritual and the physical aspects of life; he not only stressed equally the chapel and the table to maintain a balance but also avoided excessive discipline: “we hope to set down nothing harsh, nothing burdensome” (RB Prol.: 46). Benedict considers the chapel and the table both as important places (RB 25, 44, 63), and the table is called rectorium, a place for refreshment. He does not commend an excessive fast, but rather he always considers a meal for the weak, the older, the sick, and the children (RB 31:9, 36, 37, 39, and 48). He even allows having some wine at the table (RB 40). Based on the principle of balance and an
understanding of the human condition Benedict established concrete rules with regard to food, drink, sleep, and other material conditions: “we hope to introduce nothing harsh or burdensome” (RB Prol.).

Today, many of our contemporaries struggle with an imbalanced life. Some examples of this imbalance include workaholism, the lack of prayer and spirituality, or struggles with obesity due to poor diet or fast food, irregular meals and unbalanced nutrition. By contrast, the daily routine of the Benedictine community provides a balance during the day which includes four hours of liturgical prayer and worship in the chapel, about four hours of thoughtful Lectio Divina, and about six hours spent in physical labour.\textsuperscript{190} Ora et Labora, Praying and Working as the Benedictine motto says provides a good example for a balanced lifestyle. To sum up, by staying in the monastery, participants in the Monastery Stay experience can not only experience the significance of a stay within their inner-selves, their community, and God’s love through the spirituality of stability, but can also realize the importance of a balanced life between prayer, work, nutrition, and leisure in their daily life. This Ora et Labora can bring about change, growth and spiritual healing.

3.6. Monastic Environment Religious Symbols, Music, and Art

A Benedictine monastery has various religious symbols: solemn organ music, simple melodies of Gregorian chant, and elaborate art works such as stained glass. As many psychotherapists suggest with regard to ‘Music Therapy’ and ‘Art Therapy,’ these elements can provide spiritual healing for visitors and pilgrims as well as for the monks.\textsuperscript{191} First of all, the

\textsuperscript{190} Gannon & Traub, 64.

\textsuperscript{191} There are many studies regarding “Music Therapy” and “Art Therapy.” To learn more about Music Therapy this would be helpful, see: Jacqueline Schmidt Peters, \textit{Music Therapy: An Introduction} (Springfield, Ill.: C.C. Thomas, 2000), and to learn more about Art Therapy this would be useful, see: Judith Aron Rubin, \textit{Art Therapy: An Introduction} (Philadelphia, PA: Brunner/Mazel, 1999).
liturgy in the monastery can help the attendees to realize God’s love unconsciously through many symbols, such as music or the Word of God in the liturgy. Carolyn Gratton, a theologian and psychologist, suggests that the symbols and narratives of our tradition of faith through the liturgy convincingly show us not only the relationship that unites God and community members, but also helps us to be aware of the unconscious. She continually stresses that our contemporaries need a good environment and a feeling of solidarity to nourish their private prayer.\(^{192}\) This awareness of the unconsciousness may contribute to psychic or spiritual healing.

Various symbols may transform consciousness and assist in experiencing transcendence because “symbols that are generated by the activity of unconscious agencies reflect their intent to balance the limited perspective of the ego by drawing it into experiences that expand its consciousness.”\(^{193}\) Thus, various symbols, from the Church’s tradition including the Bible, the Cross, icons, the monastic habit of the monks, and statues of the saints in the monastery, may be tools to bring to greater consciousness to both the monks and to the guests, leading them to greater healing. Monastic music and works of art are a kind of prayer that can be used to praise God. Katharine Le Mée, who as a philologist and healer is interested in Benedictine Gregorian chant, claims that “many have recognized the power of chant to offer healing to body, mind, and spirit.”\(^{194}\)

Music is one of the foundation stones of the universe (Christ as *summus musicus*), and it plays an essential part in maintaining a healthy life. It has remarkable healing power.... Music is not just of this world, it is divine and anticipates heavenly delights. It is something that flows through the body, doing us good, stimulating our breathing and massaging our organs. And it affects the mind as well as the body. Heavenly sounds lift us into another dimension, removing

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worries that might make us ill.\textsuperscript{195} Thus, monastic music, especially Gregorian chant, which consists of a melody of Biblical texts, or a majestic performance using the pipe organ have mystical healing powers.

Monastic art work also contains spiritual powers. For instance, the artistic style of icons, such as the Trinity, images of the Theotokos, and works of art depicting the saints on the monastery’s walls surrounding worshippers may lead the viewers to awareness on a spiritual level. This communion was facilitated by painters who deliberately directed both the eyes and body languages of those present in the Church towards the wall icons located in the center of the church where worshippers stood in hope of receiving and experiencing divine grace.\textsuperscript{196} Indeed, through writing icons and making rosaries, the participants in the Monastery Stay may experience purification in their mind or realize their unconsciousness that may contribute to healing. In short, a monastery is designed as a place to seek God, and all things in the monastery can become tools to meet God, as the God who heals. This healing can occur both internally through the spiritual elements, as well as through the external environment of the monastery.

4. Conclusion

An Experience of Benedictine monastic life, which calls for a well-ordered environment with a traditional spirituality, can provide an opportunity for spiritual growth and healing for people today. A Benedictine monastery in Korea has carried out the Monastery Stay experience for spiritual growth and healing for the good of all people seeking wholeness, both non-Christian and Christian alike. While staying in the monastery, they find that there are different ways of living life, such as through cooperation with others that includes the practice of humility as well as

\textsuperscript{195} Lucia Glahn, 162.
\textsuperscript{196} Amanda Porterfield, 77-79.
through the joyful living of vows. The participants may be fascinated by the different lifestyle witnessed at the monastery, and may strive to follow this life with enthusiasm when they experience monastic peace and love. Surprisingly, by learning a new lifestyle through the experience of good examples, not theory, many participants in the Monastery Stay experience enjoy not only their stay in the monastery, but also find a new vision of life and learn how to love God and neighbour.

After his experiencing of the monastic life, Christopher MacKenna, an Anglican priest and Jungian psychologist, stated that “Saint Benedict is one of the church’s great psychotherapists. He understood that emotional and spiritual growth requires an adequate container.”197 Through a stay in a Benedictine monastery, participants may experience the grace of spiritual healing. During the experience of a monastic life, they very often realize that their inner problems can be solved and healed by drawing closer to God in this sacred space.

The experience of God’s love in a hospitable environment, with people who show an “attitude of compassion, patience, and perseverance” is very conducive to both holistic healing and the integration of the interior and exterior aspects of the person’s life.198 With this new perspective of the Holy God, the participants can live on a mature spiritual level, and can realize the meaningful dimension of suffering that lies beyond egoism. For instance, when the participants learn of the twelve degrees of humility in Benedictine Spirituality (RB 7), they may have a new perspective on what it means to be a person emptied of power and humbled in love: “the Rule [of Benedict] regards it [humility] as a basic virtue necessary for every Christian…. [Humility’s] objective is…transcendence of egoism, development of love of God and of man, and

197 Christopher MacKenna, 148.
198 Leslie A. Hay, 14.
self-identification with the highest supraconscious.” An experience of monastic life may lead to the understanding that God dwells in one’s deepest self, and one may transcend from one’s ego-centered self to unite with God’s love. Wolff-Salin argues that “[one’s] personality is transformed from being ego-centered to being guided by the Self, a very different picture. In monastic language one would say something similar to Benedict’s description on the person transformed in love.” Indeed, the Monastery Stay experience is to share with the participants this Benedictine spirituality in order to live more fully and more deeply in God’s love and peace. The process of spiritual growth, transformation, and healing is given to the participants through God’s grace, and the monastic experience is one of the mediums through which this can come about.

For the continuous support of the participants, the Monastery Stay experience may consider how to practise in more detail a Benedictine spirituality outside the monastery. Eric Dean, a Benedictine Oblate, suggests that “the Rule can speak to us of values that, even apart from the daily structures of monastic life, are relevant to our own lives in ‘the outside world.’” This extension of Benedictine spirituality does not contradict Benedict’s intention, but rather it enhances it. Through this perspective of openness, the participants can live a new level of spirituality at the level of interiority as well as at the community level in society. Benedictine spirituality “is not principally for the sake of personal salvation or contemplative withdrawal. [It] is [a] means to bring the reign of Christ to the world around us through a life of community consciousness of the will of God.” Contributing to the recovery of our contemporaries and communities is another aspect of God’s call for the members of a Benedictine monastery.

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200 Mary Wolff-Salin, 86.

201 Eric Dean, 11.

202 Joan Chittister, 141.
CHAPTER 3

The Potential for Spiritual Growth and Healing of a Community through a Monastic Experience

Today, society in general and communities in particular are faced with serious social problems, such as dysfunctional families, economic globalization, war and terrorism, and climate change. Since the early 1980s, in order to find the solution to these problems, “scholars [have] begun to pursue an understanding of the multi-dimensional factors consistent with spirituality and religiosity, and identified that these factors have a strong influence on individuals.”

John Coates, a professor of social work, reports that “in relation to an individual’s mental health, research has pursued how spirituality, or the lack of spirituality, contributes to mental illnesses…. The understanding of religion and spirituality is taking a new form in anthropology [and] sociology.”

For instance, South Korea has struggled with psychological and social problems, as is evident in the sudden increase in its suicide rate, the significant number of mental illness, the growing crime rate, the increasing divorce rate, and the increased number of dysfunctional families. Thus, Koreans have attempted to find solutions to these problems through religion and spirituality with various practical methods, such as the “Temple Stay” in the Buddhist monastery,

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204 Ibid., 3

205 Alarming statistics reveal that South Korea has the lowest birth rate, the highest suicide rate, and the highest divorce rate among OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries. In 2009 in South Korea, 14,579 people committed suicide. This is about 40 persons committing suicide per day in Korea. The rate of divorce is also on the rise with about 47 per cent of married couples becoming divorced. See: Statistics Korea, “Statistics by the Cause of Death in 2009,” & “Statistics on Divorce Rate,” (10 Sep. 2010). http://www.index.go.kr/egams/stts.jsp/potal/stts/PO_STTS_IdxMain.jsp?idx_cd=1012. Accessed May 25, 2012.
“The School of Korean Traditional Culture” for an experience of Korean traditional culture, “Experience of Confucian Culture” in the Hyang-gyo, the Confucian temple, the “Farm Stay” for the experience of agricultural life, and the Monastery Stay experience in the Benedictine monastery. Through an experience of these spiritual practices, the participants in these programs may realize the importance of the spiritual life and the holistic transformation of their lives. Their new perspective at the spiritual level can contribute to both spiritual growth and the healing of their communities.

Historically, Benedictine monasteries have played a role as “a seedbed from which come diverse gifts for the building up of the church,” and many monks have contributed to the reformation of the community, society, and the Church, even though they are living in a cloistered setting. Likewise, the various ways to have a monastic experience in a Benedictine monastery, such as the Monastery Stay experience and an individual or group retreat, may become a “seedbed” in order to cultivate disciples of Jesus who can influence their communities by experiencing spiritual growth and healing in a Benedictine monastery. Regarding an extension of Benedictine hospitality, Jane Tomaine claims that “[Benedictine] hospitality is to extend beyond family, beyond neighbourhood, beyond church, and beyond our local community…. [It] extends to the earth as well.” Chittister points out that “the Benedictine heart is to be a place without boundaries, a place where the truth of the oneness of all things shatters all barriers…. Opening our


208 Jane Tomaine, 127-128.
lives to others is another dimension of Benedictine hospitality for our times.”

Open mind and open community towards God and others according to the principles of Benedictine hospitality can produce a warm love and compassion, and this love for God may gradually change both an individual and a group. For example, Nouwen reports through his experience in a monastery that “nearly spontaneously, my Jesus Prayer changed from ‘Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me’ into ‘Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us’ and I felt as if all of creation could become transformed by the endless mercy of the Son of God.” Indeed, a healed person or an awakened person through the monastic experience can contribute to the rebuilding and healing of the greater community through the interconnection between the health of an individual and the health of a community.

Thus, an experience of monastic community can lead to learning how to live with others in the community, and to recognize the role of a supportive community for holistic growth and healing. The idea of healing of the community through a healed or an awakened person is derived from and inspired by Thomas Merton’s understanding of the world in his spiritual journey.

This chapter will address the following topics: 1) the relationship between individual healing and community healing, 2) the spirituality of the Benedictine community, and 3) an example of community healing through the monastic experience for the family.

1. Interrelationship between Healing of the Individual and the Healing of a Community

The healing of an individual can be profoundly interconnected with the healing of a whole community. According to Thompson and O’Dea, collaborators working on understanding the

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209 Joan Chittister, 128.
210 Henri J. M. Nouwen, 39.
211 A healed or awakened person can contribute to the rebuilding and healing of the greater Earth community that includes all of creation. Thus, in this thesis the parameters placed on the use of community is the human monastic community and applications from this thesis will impact a wider, planetary community.
principles of social healing, there is a reciprocal interconnection and mutuality between an individual and society when explored from the psychological and spiritual perspective. In writing about social healing they claim:

The relationship between individual and societal change [and healing] was affirmed almost universally. The ways in which this insight was reflected in both personal and experientiacmatic ways represents, we believe, a deeper appreciation of power of personal transformation in effecting the social realm….We can see how the wounding of individuals has impacts on families, groups and nations, so perhaps we can speculate that healing does the same.  

As individual wounds can have an influence on community life, one’s transformation at the spiritual level can also contribute to social healing. A Buddhist monk, Maha Ghosananda, known as the Cambodian Gandhi, states: “A peaceful heart makes a peaceful person. A peaceful person makes a peaceful community. A peaceful community makes a peaceful nation. A peaceful nation makes a peaceful world.” Confucius (551-479 BC), a Chinese philosopher, teaches in the Great Learning: “If there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character. If there be beauty in the character, there will be harmony in the home... [and] nation, [and] there will be peace in the world (修身齊家治國平天下).” Hence, in order to attain healing both at the individual and communal level there needs to be some starting point. This movement towards healing and the desire for a holistic society ideally would take place simultaneously. The Monastery Stay experience or a retreat in the monastery may become one starting point for this

215 With regard to the strengthening of an individual at the spiritual level, Merton suggests that “it [the world’s problem] is a crisis of man’s [humanity’s] spirit. It is a completely moral upheaval of the human race that has lost its religious and cultural roots… The moral evil in the world is due to man’s [woman’s] alienation from the deepest truth, from the springs of spiritual life within himself [herself], to his [her] alienation from God. See: Thomas Merton, Peace in the Post-Christian Era, ed. Patricia A. Burton (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004), 127.
desired outcome for guests.\textsuperscript{216} Through the results of monastic experiences guests would probably describe their healing as originating in the spiritual and describe becoming more integrated on the psychological level thus leading to an integrated experience of wholeness.\textsuperscript{217}

Through monastic experience individuals are healed. This experience of healing originates in the spiritual order and Christians would describe it as God’s grace experienced as human love in a monastic setting. This love then can be shared with the community in which they live as the saving action of Jesus Christ continues to renew our world and bring it to wholeness through the fullness of Redemption. Nouwen stated that “my stay at the monastery has not only brought me closer to Christ, it has brought me closer to the world as well. In fact, distance from the world has made me feel more compassionate toward it.”\textsuperscript{218} Porterfield claims that “[Christians] have always linked the body of Christ with care for human suffering. Christian healing has always been directed to human suffering and to bodies – the body of Christ, the bodies of believers, the body of the church…as sites of transformation and transcendence.”\textsuperscript{219} Since a deep communion with Jesus Christ is interconnected through communion with others (cf. Matt. 22:37-40), one who has a contemplative experience involving Christ, can realize one’s true self in Jesus Christ. This can lead to the experience of being healed to such an extent as to attain a new self. The experience can contribute to the healing of one’s community, whether the community is a family, local community/society or church. This process can be seen as the responsibility to which all

\textsuperscript{216} There are various ways for the monastic experience to take place, e.g. the Monastery Stay, retreat, and visit. In this chapter, the author uses the term “guests,” to describe those who stay in the monastery but are not monks.


\textsuperscript{218} Henri J. M. Nouwen, 212.

\textsuperscript{219} Amanda Porterfield, 185.
awakened persons are called.\textsuperscript{220}

Of course, all guests who experience monastic life cannot become immediately awakened in such a short time, as it usually takes time and considerable discipline to achieve this level of healing. But, at least, they can begin a contemplative spiritual experience to seek God at a deeper level, and perhaps may experience some change within their heart to move towards wholeness. In addition, they can come to understand through a monastic experience that the awakened person realizes that a contemplative spiritual life is not confined to a monastery even though the monastery provides a place in which to promote the contemplative spiritual experience.

It is possible, however, for one to have a spiritual experience at anytime, anywhere, at any given moment as the potential always exists for a moment of interior grace. Merton points out that a Christian must love and respect the world since everything is a potential symbol for communion with God, and there is no particular place to meet God since God has entered into the world, and therefore God is everywhere.\textsuperscript{221} James Finley, who lived with Thomas Merton as a monk, suggested that where one happened to be at each moment is where one meets God, but he cautions Christians to reject “those aspects of the world that represent an unthinking and communal rejection of God…that are the communal expression of the false self.”\textsuperscript{222} Thus, the guests of the monastery need only to recall the spiritual significance of their daily life in order to find God in the ordinariness of daily life. But it is often through the practices of inner silence, prayer, and sharing with others in a loving way in one’s day-to-day life that they are able to find the way to true human life.\textsuperscript{223} In this process, they may experience spiritual growth and healing from God in

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{220} David W. Givey, 3.
\item\textsuperscript{221} Thomas Merton, \textit{No Man Is an Island}, 250; James Finley, 39, 129.
\item\textsuperscript{222} James Finley, 39-40.
\item\textsuperscript{223} Ibid., 26, 40, 125.
\end{itemize}
their communities as well as coming to experience holistic lives themselves. All guests do not need to live the lifestyle of a monk to meet God. They are called to live according to the basic human principles of love and Christian values within the context of their personal vocation as they attempt to transcend the false self and the false values of society. Merton suggests that a spiritual/contemplative life has to become part of a daily Christian life, and Christians have to strive to become filled with the light and love of Jesus Christ and the Spirit, and manifest the fruit of contemplation through social action. Through this spiritual/contemplative life, Merton hopes that all people might see and love each other as brothers and sisters in Christ because: “the nearest ‘thou’ at hand is an epiphany, a manifestation of God’s love.”

Hence, based on Merton’s perspective on the spiritual/contemplative life, the guests can begin to pursue a life which has the goal of the integration of the true self, the integration of the self with the community and ultimately the union of all people with God in a peace-filled world, where people can experience growth and healing on a holistic level.

2. Healing of Community through a Benedictine Monastic Experience

The strengthening of individual spirituality through a monastic experience may become one of the solutions for the rebuilding of community. The gift of Benedictine spirituality in the modern world is the charism of the community. Benedict establishes his monastery as a form of community according to the tradition of the Early Church (Act 2, 42), which was Christ-centered, mutually respectful and delivered spiritual freedom for all through ‘kenosis’ and ‘love.’ Through communal love, the Benedictine community could become a holy symbol or a good example to

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225 James Finley, 96.
226 Joan Chittister, 40. Benedict established his community for “Cenobites, that is to say, those who belong to a monastery, where they serve under a rule and an Abbot” (RB 1:2), and he stresses that the Cenobites are the “the strong kind” (RB 1:13).
follow for the guests. It can offer inspiration or a new vision to show how the human community
is not merely a place for competition, or accumulating wealth, or learning the best methods to earn
money. Instead it can become known as a dwelling place of wisdom and love, grounded in mutual
respect and mutual sharing. Chittister points out that “there are qualities common to community
life in the Rule of Benedict that is sadly missing from modern society. And in their stead we reap
alienation and self-centeredness and calculated cosmic ruin.” Thus, the guests may gain
spiritual nourishment through an experience of Benedictine community life since “acts of
corporate worship have the potential to be profoundly powerful resources for the care of soul.”

The first feature of a Benedictine community is to be Christocentric. This image of a
Christ-centered community can offer a modern community an inspiration for the refreshing of the
community. Benedict stressed “the love of Christ must come before all else” (RB 4, 21) in the
monastery. The Abbot is in “the place of Christ” (RB 2:2), and the monks are to obey the Abbot as
well as one another (RB 71). Benedict stated that “[the Abbot] must point out to [monks] all that is
good and holy more by example than by words” (RB 3:12). The Abbot has to take care of his
brothers with deep love, and especially should have more care and concern for the infirm, such as
children, the elderly and the sick (RB 36, 37). Benedictine community life, which is grounded in
Christ with His love and charity, can become a good model and “a sign of the power of the
Christian community to others.”

A Christ-centered community through the interaction of the Holy Spirit can help to develop love of God. This love can heal the source that creates a feeling of
human loneliness characterized by a deep inner longing and alienation in the culture of

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227 Joan Chittister, 42.
228 David G. Benner, Care of Souls: Revisioning Christian Nurture and Counsel (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker
229 Joan Chittister, 45.
affluence.  

The second feature of a Benedictine community is its being structured to be a “school of love.” The love in the community is not completely achieved at once, but rather it is completed through monastic practice with the grace of God operative in the community. Thus, Benedict founded his monastery as a form of school: “we intend to establish a school for the Lord’s service” (RB Prol.: 45). The main goal of the school is to learn about loving God and serving others, moving beyond self-centered or self-focused love. The practice of monastic asceticism is a tool for attaining this love through service. In addition, the Abbot and the elder monks can lead by example and thus contribute to the spiritual growth of the monks and the guests. In a monastic setting, change within a person comes through “the teaching of the elders, the stories of the tradition, repetition of Scripture, Liturgy, the steady perseverance through the ordeals of life, [and] the deepening of a relationship with God.” Every-day monastic life is itself an educational system for learning the love of God, and throughout life the monk strives to have a Christian perspective that is rooted in love.

The monks share with their brothers in community their heart, talents, and possessions. Benedict commends: “without an order from the Abbot, no one may presume to give, receive or retain anything as his own, nothing at all…since monks may not have the free disposal even of their own bodies and wills” (RB 33:2-4). Through this self-emptiness and kenosis, monks can imitate Christ’s unconditional and self-sacrificial love. In community, a relationship is a means of

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230 Roger D. Fallot argues that “recovery depends on the experience of loving relationship…This experience of relationship with God, often nurtured in religious practice, may have affirming and valuing motifs – that God truly cares for each person as an individual and that God is deeply interested in each person’s welfare.” See: Roger D. Fallot, 39.

231 Sorokin argues that “like St. Benedict, St. Bernard and St. John Climacus [who] view their ladders as ‘the instrument of good works,’ or as a practical course of actions leading the individual to the full realization of love… and to the union with God…. From a purely scientific standpoint, they…regarded it [to be at] least as effective and scientific as any therapeutic and educational system of our time.” See: Pitirim A. Sorokin, 390, 396.

232 Mary Wolff-Salin, 8.
spiritual evolution and transcendence. Through relationships monks can both experience the love of God through fraternal love, but also encounter the limits of their own and the differences of their brothers in the community. Benedict believes that the monks can practice Christian love for their brothers in the community, and can have an opportunity to experience their spiritual growth, even through mutual conflict or their own trial and error (RB 1, 4, 7). Thus, the Abbot and the elder monks assist not only with the younger monks’ various spiritual and physical practices, but they also act as spiritual counselors to or Confessors for guests.

As the monks receive spiritual nourishment through a dynamic living of community life, guests can also experience nourishment from a good model of the community life in the monastery. By staying at the monastery, the goal is that the guests will have a new image of community. For instance, Nouwen reports:

Here in the monastery I could look more easily beyond the boundaries of the place…become more intimately aware of the pain and suffering of the whole world…. But without the support of the community of brethren all this would have been practically impossible. My stay gave me a real new sense of community.

During their stay with the Benedictine community, guests can experience and observe different ways of living in community life which include mutual service and love, the consideration of the weak, and the well-organized community’s order and daily life. Pitirim A. Sorokin, in the chapter entitled “Monastic ‘Psychoanalysis,’ Counseling, and Therapy” from his book The Ways and Power of Love, suggests that the loving power of the monastic brotherhood through community life can provide healing and improvement: “the utilization of the loving help of the community for the therapeutic and ameliorative improvement of each member permeates indeed the whole

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234 Henri J. M. Nouwen, 212.
monastic life and organization.” Watts claims that the experience of a religious community can be very supportive: “within [religious] community the people (as children) can be help[ed] and received by an accepting parent … and this regression can also lead to maturing and new experiences that will help the person move on in a new way, re-addressing the past and going in a new direction.” Of course, through just short-term monastic experiences, guests cannot learn from all the various aspects of the spirituality practised by a Benedictine community. However, this community experience may provide a good example for rebuilding their community.

Through the experience of a divine and fraternal love in monastic community, they may be aware of becoming able to change their view of what they have experienced in a relationship with members of their community in the past. Chittister argues that “when we transcend ourselves for the other, community becomes the sacrament of human fulfillment and purpose in life…that is to free us from having to control everyone in our world and it is to free them from enslavement to our egos.” Furthermore, when guests recover their inner freedom through the experience of monastic community life, they may share this experience of love and true community with their family and community at large.

3. Example of Community Healing through Monastic Experience: Family

Recently, many authors have explored the application of Benedictine spirituality to family life. For instance, Dolores R. Leckey wrote *The Ordinary Way: A Family Spirituality*; David Robinson investigated ways for contributing to the recovery of the family functionality through Benedictine spirituality in his book *The Family Cloister: Benedictine Wisdom for the Home*; and many books for Benedictine oblates or lay persons apply Benedictine spirituality to family life,

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235 Pitirim A. Sorokin, 397-398.
236 Fraser Watts, 108.
237 Joan Chittister, 46.
work and daily life. Robinson states that “The Rule of St. Benedict offers families in the twenty-first century a wealth of wisdom, even across fifteen centuries of time. As we listen and put into practice the wisdom of Benedict, we will be embraced by God’s love and strengthened in our love for one another.” In this sense, the Monastery Stay for families in Waegan Abbey may become a good example of the application of the practices of Benedictine spirituality for the family.

In 2012, the Monastery Stay experience was carried out eight times in Waegan Abbey, and it was open for families to experience four of these times. In this experience for the family, parents and children stay in the monastery living according to the monastic ordinary life including wearing the same monastic habit. They prayed, meditated, and worked together. Especially through penitence, liturgy and conversation with family members, parents and children had reconciliations with their past faults between them. After this experience, the participants report: “through this experience my family ties can be strengthened”; “writing an Icon with a family member was beneficial to understanding each other”; “I realized that God has to become the center in my family.” “I feel my family needs to pray together.” Indeed, beyond any theory about a Benedictine spirituality for family life, direct monastic experience for family members has a strong and powerful effect on familial spiritual growth and healing. Although the families stay just a few days, it may be a good starting point for the rebuilding of the family and the ability to support each member with a love of God according to the principles of Benedictine spirituality.

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Through an experience in the Benedictine ‘family,’ the family participants in the Monastery Stay may be inspired to live in a loving way and with mutual respect in order to develop more intimate relationships within the family. In a Benedictine community, members hold everything in common as a family. Basil Hume, an Abbot of Ampleforth Abbey and Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, defines a Benedictine monastery as a “family” for learning to serve God. Thus, entering a monastery can be like becoming a new family member. Crislip claims that the “organizers of monasticism modeled their communities on the family. The new monastic family…provided both a mental framework for the monastic’s socialization and incorporation into the new community and all the necessities of life for its members.” Benedict based his monastery upon the principles of the family, and wanted all the family members to live in the love of God.

Through the experience of a Benedictine monastery, as with a new family, the family participants may learn how to foster a way of mutual love. Benedict emphasized to his brothers with regard to community life, the need to pray together, to work together, and to eat together, and stressed the need to listen to other brothers’ opinions (RB 3) and to obey one another (RB 71). He believed that monks could learn how to grow in love towards each other through community life and fraternal relationships. Robinson argues that “[Benedict] simply calls us together around the fire of God’s love and expects that we will work together building our family in love.” To foster this way of love, Benedict insists that all monks remain in the enclosure of a monastery with a vow of stability. Sometimes, to stay with family, especially with a wounded family

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241 Andrew T. Crislip, 58.
242 Kilian McDonnell, 156-169.
member, is difficult. Yet, an experience of a monastic family may offer a source for an inspiration as to “how to live in [the] family, loving and supporting one another…. We learn patience from St. Benedict.”244 Cyprian Smith claims that “[monastic life] resembles family life, and people living in the world can thus share the monk’s experience, provided that their family life is genuine – that the members of the family do find time to live and communicate with each other.”245

Hence, the participants in the Monastery Stay for family experience may possibly learn from observing what a peaceful family life with mutual love could look like, to follow such values as mutual respect, interactive love and sincere caring for each family member leading to a strengthening of family ties.246

4. Conclusion

The profound spiritual experience of an individual may transform one’s holistic being, and then, the awakened person is called to respond by going forth to rebuild the community as his [her] responsibility or prophetic vocation. This individual healing on the spiritual level may contribute to the rebuilding of community. The holistic transformation of the human person from a holistic perspective, including from the spiritual aspect, can often present an alternative solution for social problems.

For this transformation of an individual and a community, the monastic experience and retreat can offer various beneficial tools and a good pattern for living a holistic lifestyle. Mayeul de Dreuille, who is interested in monastic interreligious dialogue as a Benedictine monk, claims that the Rule of Benedict may become a “model of society.” “For centuries, [the Rule of Benedict]...”

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244 Benet Tvedten, 9.
246 This possibility presumes that the monastic family that gives witness is a healthy community. According to Benedictine spirituality regarding monastic family, the monastery has to strive to build a healthy community.
has given monasteries their atmosphere of serenity, and it remains a safe guide towards peace and justice in any society." The principles of Benedictine spirituality, such as mutual respect and love, humility, stability, and regular prayer with community members can become good tools for renewing the human community. Moran and Harris, religious educators, suggest that “a Christian celibate group, not through sophisticated techniques, but just in being itself, could make an invaluable contribution in this area for [rebuilding community].”

Through the monastic experience guests may learn how to live well in their community, and how to rebuild within their community. Although some participants of the Monastery Stay for family may live in a dysfunctional family, it is hoped that their new perspective towards family members can influence the ways toward reform within their family. For the participants, the monastic experience may contribute to the realization that not only is God’s love present everywhere and in everyone, but also that their suffering or family suffering may become a stepping stone to attaining true happiness in God. This care for an individual and family may be extended to others within the community. Robinson points out that “other families and groups, including church families and study groups, may discover Benedictine…wisdom [to be] helpful in guiding us toward [a] healthy community life.”

In Benedictine spirituality, the values of labour, a balanced lifestyle, supporting each other and hospitality can help towards the achievement of communal growth and healing. Regarding healing through supportive community, Roger D. Fallot, a clinical psychologist, argues that “people have an enhanced prognosis when they are able to participate in supportive community

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247 Mayeul de Dreuille, *The Rule of Saint Benedict and the Ascetic Traditions from Asia to the West* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2000), 364.


settings.” Monastic community life can provide the experience of a supportive community, and can contribute to spiritual growth and healing through the expression of love in the community.

Thus, Benedictine spirituality may offer a good guide for those moving from a human-centered community to a Christo-centered community, and from bodily-centered tendencies to a more holistic sense of human care.

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250 Roger D. Fallot, 70.

251 Pitirim A. Sorokin, 398.
CONCLUSION

Today, the value of monasticism for spiritual growth and healing is being rediscovered. Whether in Eastern or Western culture, monasticism is not for a religious fanatic, nor a life of excessive austerities, nor a museum exhibit piece, nor a life for those looking to escape from the world. Rather it is a way of life through which one attempts to achieve an integration of the human spirit moving towards becoming fully human as a person. Many monks try to live an integrated life in body, soul, and spirit, and devote themselves to their community to help create a better world through compassion and love. Their spiritual practices, such as prayer, meditation, vows, and asceticism, are tools for self-transcendence leading to a deeper relationship with God. Through monastic life monks not only can attain spiritual growth and healing within themselves, but can also strive to help the spiritual life of others who live outside the monastery. Psychologists and scientists have rediscovered that religious experience and spirituality may contribute to healing and lead to a healthier life for individuals. Recent practices in psychology tend to focus on holistic healing and well-being beyond the relief of symptoms. Suzan Walter, president of the American Holistic Health Association, argues that “many chronic conditions do not respond to scientific medical treatments…. The Holistic Health lifestyle is regaining popularity each year, as the holistic principles offer practical options to meet the growing desire for enjoying a high level of vitality and well-being.” The various elements of spiritual growth and healing that are treasured by the monastic environment could contribute a large part to the healthy lifestyle associated with a holistic approach to health.

From a Christian perspective, Western monasticism can contribute to promoting spiritual

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growth and healing as a model for the Christian spiritual life. Although a lifestyle of Christian monasticism may be similar to other religious monasticism, it focuses on imitating Jesus, and is directed towards the goal of living in the reign of God. This goal of the monastic life is not different from the goal of the Christian life itself, but rather the monastic life completely seeks to follow Jesus, with all the effects of the monk directed towards this end. From the beginning of monasticism, monks have never pursued a particular social position. Peter Hatlie, a Christian historian, points out that “the monastic movement was a lay movement at its very beginnings, and as such laid no claim to the kind of spiritual powers and ministry proper to the clergy.”

Despite many trial and error moments, monastic spirituality has gradually grown and advanced with the times, and has contributed to the growth of Christian spirituality. Many Christians have visited or stayed at a monastery on retreat, for spiritual counselling, for spiritual rest, and the monastic experience has been helpful for their spiritual growth and healing. Other people have come for a monastic experience in order to reflect on a personal struggle, to take time off from over-extended lifestyles with their excessive stress, or perhaps to consider some psychological problems with which they are struggling. Often their efforts to address these psychological problems can benefit from the spiritual experience.

A Korean Benedictine monastery experience, the Monastery Stay, can provide such an opportunity for spiritual growth and healing for South Koreans. During the experience, the participants experience monastic spirituality and lifestyle, such as prayer, meditation, manual labour, sharing in a community lifestyle, a balanced life, and monastic guest hospitality. In this process, the participants may experience spiritual growth and healing in their body, soul, and spirit. This transformation may be increased through repeated participation in monastic retreats.

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Through this new perspective, with the grace of God, the participants can see themselves, and their relationships differently, perhaps even coming to view themselves and their relationships more through God’s eyes.

The participants in the Monastery Stay experience sometimes express a new world view as a result of their experience. Through the new perspective gained by the participants in the experience, many individuals may become social activists for spiritual growth and healing in their communities which are currently faced with a serious threat from materialism. The participants are being called to enter into contemplation to take social healing beyond merely human ways. If they focus on spiritual awareness, growth and healing within the community can hopefully be established. They could be invited to remember Merton’s words: “the secret of the contemplative life is in this ability for active awareness, an active and expectant awareness where the activity is a deep personal response on a level which is, so to speak, beyond the faculties of the soul.” As Merton became a peacemaker by reading the signs of the times in his day, perhaps a solution to the communal and societal dysfunction for South Koreans could be realized by reading the signs of the times and entering into a profound contemplative life experience in a monastic setting. This ideal would be undoubtedly a very slow process starting with individuals, and waiting while the experience ripples out to the wider community.

The statistics indicate that South Korea is in great need of healing from its dysfunction. It is not easy to find solutions to the problems of our time that are controlled by economics. However, the participants are continually invited to pray and meditate before God, and at the same time, to be active in building God’s community on earth. It is the Christian hope that all things will be fulfilled with God’s grace inspiring generosity of heart to become actively involved in the

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creation of a peace-filled world. Thus, one solution for recovery from illness within society is individual spiritual growth and transformation. A monastic experience and retreat in the monastery may provide for South Korean society the opportunity to improve difficult social situations through the sharing of talents and possessions with others, living within a community, by participating in a balanced lifestyle, and recognizing the significance of spiritual education. Although the participants/guests cannot heal all visible problems in the community, they can pursue the establishment of God’s true love and peace as societal dysfunction is perhaps due partly to essential loss at the spiritual level rather than at the superficial level.

The study of monastic spiritual growth and healing may be extended into three fields of study: 1) the recovery of traditional Christian spirituality, 2) the implications for Integrative Psychotherapy, and 3) the implications for Eco-spirituality.

1) Rediscovery of traditional Christian spirituality for enhancing a Christian spiritual life:
The study of monastic spiritual growth and healing through the Monastery Stay experience and a retreat in the monastery can contribute to the enhancement of a Christian spiritual life as well as providing an opportunity for learning traditional Christian spirituality. Mary Jo Leddy points out, “here and now we need to reclaim and rethink the values of tradition, community” as the research of traditional monasticism may have implications for the recovery of Christian spirituality in the Pastoral field.255

2) Approaching monastic healing from a psychological perspective: The study of monasticism as a tool for spiritual growth and healing may stimulate the research of psychotherapists who seek to widen resources for spiritual healing. In fact, many psychologists are interested in spiritual healing through a variety of religious experiences, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity.

However, it is rare to study monastic experience from a psychological perspective. For example, Mary Wolff-Salin studied Benedictine monasticism from a Jungian perspective based on the monastic experience, and then published the book: *Journey into Depth: The Experience of Initiation in Monastic and Jungian Training*, in 2005. *Zen Therapy* by David Brazier and *Asceticism and Healing in Ancient India-medicine in the Buddhist Monastery* by Kenneth G. Zysk are examples of the study of Eastern religions from a psychological perspective. Monasticism treasures many resources for spiritual growth and healing, and their spiritual healing remedies need to be rediscovered and be proven by scientific methods to be effective. The monastic life can provide psychologists with spiritual experience as well as resources for spiritual healing. Thus, the study of monastic experience by psychologists may contribute to the rediscovery of the spiritual aspect of a person that transcends the limitations of their humanity, extending into their experience of the sacred. Moreover, this study can provide a model for holistic healing through the experience of the monastic lifestyle.

3) **Implications for Eco-spirituality:** Today, nature need to be healed from the diseases of pollution and destruction by human beings. This healing of nature could begin with spiritual healing within humanity. Individual healing ought to expand beyond the individual to the communal for the healing of nature to occur. There is already research regarding the relationship between ecology and monasticism, such as *Green Monasticism: a Buddhist-Catholic Response to an Environmental Calamity* edited by Mitchell and Skudlarek, and *Ecology and Monasticism* by Vasileios. Learning about eco-spirituality through the monastic experience may be stressed in the Monastery Stay experience. Benedictine spirituality also has ecological elements, such as the

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balance of the soul and the body, the living of a Christ-centred life, and living in harmony with the local environment. Chittister points out that “to live a life of Benedictine harmony means we have to become caretakers of our world, not its enemies. We have to learn to love the natural again: natural grass and natural vegetables and natural air.”

Through a monastic experience, the participants/guests may be interconnected with nature, which can be influenced by the human spiritual healing. Hence, the monastic experience may offer some starting point for the holistic healing of the individual, the community and the whole ecological system.

The Benedictine monastery may play a role like that of a woman’s womb in providing a safe place for spiritual rebirth, providing a starting point for spiritual growth and the healing of the sources that have led to the problems of our society and our earth. Although we do not all need to become Benedictine monks, to experience and learn about the simple monastic life can become an inspiration for anyone trying to overcome physical and psychological illness, or societal problems or ecological devastation. Monasticism of both Eastern and Western religions interrelating with other religious traditions, together with the social sciences and medical therapies can find a solution for the problems associated with the holistic healing of individuals, communities, and nature.

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257 Joan Chittister, 77.
Appendix: Pictures of the Monastery Stay Experience

1. The Participants of the Monastery Stay Experience

2. Experience of Prayer and Meditation
3. Experience of Simple Work
4. Experience of the Monastic Life
5. The Monastery Stay Experience for Family
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