



Saint Willibrords Abbey – Doetinchem – The Netherlands

We are Benedictines monks who live according to the Rule of the holy abbot Benedict of Norcia (+547 A.C.). Although the Abbey has a classic and ancient appearance it was recently built during the years 1948-1952. The first monks were sent from the Abbey of Saint Paul in Oosterhout, just after the second World war. They lived several years at the nearby castle of the mediaeval estate called The Slangenburg, from 1945 until they moved into the self-built monastery in 1952.

The present community counts six monks. We belong to the international Benedictine Congregation of Subiaco. Originating from a foundation of the abbey of Solesmes (France), according to the spirituality of the founder of this abbey in 1833, dom Prosper Guéranger OSB, our priority is living a contemplative religious life. In our search for God the daily praise of the divine office is the centre of our spiritual and communal life. As saint Benedict wants us to put nothing above the opus Dei: the work for God.

Nevertheless we need to earn our own living. At the moment our main work is the reception of guests. As saint Benedict teaches us that we must honour in every guest our Lord Jesus Christ himself, we want to offer hospitality to the many people that are nowadays searching for meaning in their lives. For personal and private retreats of male guests the abbey has 8 rooms available. These houseguests live inside the monastery, close to the community, sharing prayer and meals with the monks.



Nearby, in our former farmhouse, we have an accommodation for groups (male/female) to a maximum of 21 participants. The guesthouse has 18 bedrooms, a large conference room and several meditation rooms. We called our guesthouse “centre of silence” because we want to offer a place of peace in our noisy society. We think the main contribution a monastic community can pay to our world is to create and maintain a place where God can be God. And silence is the principal attitude to discover God in ourselves and to listen to what He has to say us.

In order to preserve this emptiness we have introduced and practised the zen meditation since 40 years as a means to deepen the Christian practice of meditative prayer. As the Western mystics teaches us: the object freed meditation is a way to contemplate God, we believe that we can learn also from the Eastern mystic tradition to achieve the goal of every monastic life:

searching for God and loving Him with all your heart.

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Sint Willibrordsabdij
Abdijlaan 1
Doetinchem / Niederlande

info(at)willibrords-abbey(dot)nl