



**The Story of St. Benedict and the raven.** It is related by Saint Gregory the Great (+603) that in the wilderness Benedict fed a raven with a portion of his bread. When a jealous and wicked priest tried to kill Benedict with poisoned bread, Benedict coached the raven to take the deadly bread to a place where it could not harm another. The raven complied.

In April 2005 for Pope Benedict's first big Mass in St. Peter's Square to inaugurate his pontificate, and when people were still buzzing a bit about why he chose the name "Benedict," another interesting bird event occurred. ....I believe it was just after the sermon of the Mass, in a silent aftermath ... no choir singing, no organ playing, no one talking... **a raven flew out** from behind the Basilica, .... swooped in a couple of circles over where the altar was positioned, cawing loudly, and then disappeared from whence it came. Benedict chose the name "Benedict" in part because of the pivotal figure of **St. Benedict of Nursia**, whose monastic tradition played such an important role in the development of liturgical worship and in the preservation of Western civilization. St. Benedict is very often depicted with a raven in artistic representations.

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