

## Life in the Abbey of St Hildegard

### Benedictine Life

Like all Benedictine nuns, the sisters of the Abbey of St Hildegard live a life based on the 1500-year-old Rule of St Benedict. These rules express a long monastic tradition, reveal a very personal spiritual experience and offer guidance on how to achieve a meaningful Christian life. The Benedictine rules, shaped by the love of God and the rational knowledge about man, convey a message that is, in its essence, still relevant today. The aim and objective of a monastic – which means cloistered – life is to strive to live completely in the presence of God, to praise Him in prayer, labour and monastic community life and thus constantly to remind mankind of His existence. The focus of convent life is regular common prayer and celebration of liturgy.



Five times a day the sisters assemble in prayer to place all worries and needs of the world and the Church before God. They also pray on behalf of all those who are not able to pray yet or who cannot pray any more.

*„Vie in paying obedience one to another, no one following what she considers useful for herself but rather what benefits another, tender the charity of sisterhood chastely, fear God in love.“  
(Rule of St Benedict, Chapter 72)*

### Daily life in our monastic community

The beginning of a Benedictine vocation is the search for God. People who feel called to follow Christ freely and are prepared to lead a life in accordance with the instructions of the Holy Gospel will dedicate their life to the constant quest to make God the permanent centre of their existence and seek Him in every human being, in every encounter, in every event; and they will do this within the community of their sisters who follow the same path. At present, there are 47 sisters, representing four generations and seven nations, living in the Abbey of St Hildegard. Their everyday monastic life is characterized by mutual responsibility and solidarity, reliability and trust. Its foundations rest on a balance between prayer and labour, solitude and company. Additional pillars of this community are silence and listening, constancy and faithfulness mixed with joy and gratitude for their common calling.

Work in the Abbey is intended first of all to cover the community's living costs. But it also has a spiritual dimension. Working means taking an active part in the completion of God's divine creation and thus uniting mankind in common efforts.



*„For then are they truly monastics when they live by the labour of their hands.“  
(Rule of St Benedict, Chapter 48)*

There are many chores that need to be done inside the convent and for the monastic community life. From the outside they may look inconspicuous but they are extremely important indeed: work in the kitchen, in the grounds, in the laundry, at the tailor's. There is maintenance service, house management as well as caring for the elderly and sick sisters who are nursed to the last in wards inside the convent. In addition, the sisters run their own shop, a vineyard and winery, a workshop restoring old documents and manuscripts, a goldsmith's and a ceramic crafts studio. Two sisters are doing scholarly research on Hildegard of Bingen. Three sisters are engaged in pastoral work: one as a Spiritual Director at a Rudesheim hospital, one in charge of pilgrims visiting the shrine of St Hildegard and one as Spiritual Director for the German military. All these duties and responsibilities – as different as they may seem – have a common purpose, which forms the basis of St Benedict's maxim: "Glorify God in all things."



*„Let all guests who arrive be received like Christ.“ (Rule of St Benedict, Chapter 53)*

### Guests in the Abbey

Our guest accommodation offers a place to people who are looking for reflection, silence and orientation, people who want to ask our sisters for spiritual guidance, people who – while separating themselves from their own environment – are looking for someone to listen and talk to, people who want to draw new energy and strength from faith and prayer. Everyone is welcome to communicate with us, to pray with us or spend some time with us in silence. We make no distinction between different denominations and different ideological backgrounds when accommodating guests.

Our guest quarters offer 16 single en-suite rooms as well as a conference room, a room for meditation, a library, a kitchenette and a garden.



*„Amidst the cosmos there is man. He may be small in stature but the power of his soul is immense. Whatever he achieves pervades the universe.“  
(St Hildegard of Bingen)*

### St Hildegard of Bingen

Our patron saint, St Hildegard of Bingen, is one of the most prominent and fascinating female figures in German history. Her prophetic charisma has not changed for 900 years and still captivates people. Hildegard was radically outspoken, honest and infinitely curious about the marvels of creation. All her life was a struggle to achieve a rational faith within the conflicting areas of freedom and responsibility. She always asked questions about God, the world and mankind. So today she stands as an inspiring example to us and to those endeavouring to resolve these conflicts and questions. It is our mission, challenge and responsibility to preserve her heritage, pass on her traditions and shape the present and the future on Hildegard's values.

### Our Oblate Community

Our oblate community is a group of lay women and men who take the Rule of St Benedict as their spiritual guide in their everyday life in secular surroundings. With an official act of oblation – a promise – they forge a personal bond with our monastic community and thus participate in our prayers and our mission.

Three times a year our convent invites our oblate community to take part in retreats: we have regular contact via newsletters and offer continuous and long-term guidance from our Oblate Director Sr. Lydia :  
oblatengemeinschaft@abtei-st-hildegard.de

*„For as we advance in the religious life and in faith,  
our hearts expand and we run the way of God's  
commandments with unspeakable sweetness of love.“  
(Rule of St Benedict, Prologue 49)*

### Association of Friends of the Abbey of St Hildegard

The Association of Friends of the Abbey of St Hildegard has taken on the task of supporting the cultural, spiritual and pastoral work of our convent in a financial and non-material way. The association regularly invites members to lectures, concerts, retreats etc. These events give members the opportunity to get to know each other and exchange views. We would be delighted if you joined our association. Non-members are always welcome. If you are interested Sr. Philippa will be pleased to send you our annual programme and an application form:  
freundeskreis@abtei-st-hildegard.de

### Our Abbey Trust

Are you perhaps looking for ways to donate a legacy or inheritance to a charity? If so our Abbey Trust provides you with an opportunity to do so. Your donation will be carefully invested on a permanent basis, retain its meaning well beyond your personal life-span and leave a lasting memory that has practical significance. If you would like to help us preserve Benedictine life in our convent in a sustainable way, maintain our magnificent buildings and grounds and pass on the heritage of St Hildegard of Bingen to the next generation, please support our Abbey Trust and contact Sr. Philippa:  
klosterstiftung@abtei-st-hildegard.de  
www.klosterstiftung-st-hildegard.de



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Please have a look at our website. It will not only give you new spiritual impetus but also provide you with a lot of information about Benedictine life at St Hildegard and our online-shop: [www.abtei-st-hildegard.de](http://www.abtei-st-hildegard.de)



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### Divine Office

	WEEKDAYS	SUNDAYS
Lauds	5.30	6.00
Terce and High Mass	7.30	8.15
Midday Prayer	12.00	12.00
Vespers	17.30	17.30
Compline / Vigils	19.25	19.25

### Our Abbey Shop

For all visitors we want to create a small oasis amidst hectic everyday life. It is of the utmost importance to us to offer individual and personal service to all our customers.  
Mo – Sa: 9.30 - 17.00; Su 14.00 – 17.00  
Phone: +49(0)6722/499-116 Fax: +49(0)6722/499-185  
klosterladen@abtei-st-hildegard.de

### Guests in the Abbey

If you would like to visit us individually, want to take part in a retreat or perhaps attend a seminar, course or lecture in our guest house please contact us via phone, letter, fax or E-mail. Mo – Fr: 9.30 – 11.30  
Phone: +49(0)6722/499-122 Fax: +49(0)6722/499-178  
gaeste@abtei-st-hildegard.de

### Groups of visitors

Groups are always welcome. We offer guided tours of the Abbey church and lectures on Benedictine life or St Hildegard of Bingen. But these must be booked in advance.  
Phone: +49(0)6722/499-266  
besuchergruppen@abtei-st-hildegard.de

### Our Abbey Café

Groups of visitors as well as single guests also get a very warm welcome at our Abbey Café.  
Opening Times: from March 1st to December 23 rd: Monday, Wednesday to Saturday from 11 to 17, Sunday from 14 to 17 (closed on Tuesdays). Larger groups please register beforehand online via Email: [klostercafe@abtei-st-hildegard.de](mailto:klostercafe@abtei-st-hildegard.de) or via phone: +49 (0)6722-499-215.

