February 11

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Benedict of Aniane (ca. 750-821) monk

Today the Western monastic calendar commemorates Benedict of Aniane, a reformer of monastic life who lived in the Carolingian era.
Born in the middle of the eighth century in southern France, near the Spanish border, he was baptized Vitiza and brought up at the court of Charlemagne, where he carried out important duties for the king.
He came close to death during a military campaign, when he and his fellow soldiers attempted to cross a river. After this he moved to the region of Dijon and became a monk, taking the name of Benedict. Here he sought a rigorous application of the teachings of Pachomius and Basil, and then discovered the Rule of Benedict, which deeply inspired him.
Unsatisfied with the companions with whom he lived, Benedict returned to Languedoc, his native land, and founded a monastic settlement near Aniane.
His attempt to bring into being a form of monastic life worthy of the Rule of Benedict favored the political plans of Charlemagne and his successor Ludwig the Pious. The two rulers made Benedict the leader of a comprehensive reform of Western monasticism. As a step in this reform, all monasteries in the West were required to adopt the Rule of Benedict in 817.
Benedict of Aniane died on February 11, 821 in the monastery of Inda, which the Ludwig had ordered built for him near the court of Aquisgrana.

BIBLICAL READINGS
Zeph 2:3; 3:12-13; Mt 23:8-12

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

WESTERN CATHOLICS:
Blessed virgin Mary of Lourdes (Roman and Ambrosian calendars)
Benedict of Aniane, abbot (Monastic calendar)

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (3 amsir/yakkatit):
James of Palestine (6th cent.?), monk (Coptic Orthodox Church)
Julius (d. 352), pope of Rome (Coptic Catholic Church)

LUTHERANS:
Hugh of St Victor (d. 1141), doctor of the church in France
Benjamin Schmolk (d. 1737), poet in Silesia

MARONITES:
Charalampus (d. 202), martyr
Blaise of Sebaste (d. ca. 316), martyr

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:
Blaise, archbishop of Sebaste and hieromartyr