

BENEDICT is at his desk, writing. There's a KNOCK on the door.

CONSTANTIUS

(coming in)

Father Benedict, there are two men outside with their children who would like to speak with you. Their names are Tertullus-Senator Tertullus from Rome-and his friend Aequitius. Do you have time for them now or should I suggest they come back later?

BENEDICT

No, no-now is fine. Bid them come in.

CONSTANTIUS

Yes, Father Benedict.

(The door closes and opens again with the SOUND of men entering Benedict's room)

TERTULLUS

Father Benedict, what a pleasure to meet you.

AEQUITIUS

Yes, Father-thank you for seeing us.

BENEDICT

And who are these two young men with you?

AEQUITIUS

This is my son Maurus.

BENEDICT

And how old are you, Maurus?

MAURUS

I am twelve, Father Benedict.

BENEDICT

Twelve is an excellent age! Our Lord was twelve when he went into the synagogue to preach. And who is this?

TERTULLUS

My son, Placidus, Father Benedict.

BENEDICT

Well, Placidus, and how old are you?

PLACIDUS

I am seven, Father Benedict.

BENEDICT

And tall for your age, I see.

TERTULLUS

They are both good boys, Father Benedict. We are hoping that they can stay here with you and be educated in all things spiritual.

BENEDICT

And physical as well. We work hard in our gardens.

PLACIDUS

I love working in the garden.

BENEDICT

You do? And how about you, Maurus?

MAURUS

I love to study, Father Benedict.

BENEDICT

Ah, that is excellent. And do you say your prayers daily?

MAURUS

I do, Father.

PLACIDUS

Me, too.

AEQUITIUS

Maurus has shown an interest in all things spiritual since he could barely walk.

BENEDICT

That's always good to hear. I, too, share those interests with you, Maurus.

TERTULLUS

Father, we all live in Rome, but as you know, that is not a good place for young men to be these days.

BENEDICT

Unfortunately, no.

AEQUITIUS

We would like them to grow up in an environment like what you have created here in Subiaco.

TERTULLUS

Is it possible that you can take them on as students?

BENEDICT

Well, they would definitely be the youngest here, but...
(pondering a moment and studying the boys)
Constantius, what do you think?

CONSTANTIUS

I believe they would be a very good addition to life here, Father.

BENEDICT

So do I.

(to the boys)

And what do the two of you think? Would you like to study and pray and work with us here?

MAURUS and PLACIDUS

(together)

Oh yes, Father Benedict!

BENEDICT

Very good then. It looks like we are all agreed.

TERTULLUS

Thank you, Father! This fills us with much joy. We will miss them, but we know they will be well taken care of.

(to the boys)

Maurus, can you take Placidus outside for a moment so your father and I can speak privately with Father Benedict?

MAURUS

Of course, Senator.

(MAURUS and PLACIDUS leave)

TERTULLUS

Father, we are very drawn ourselves to everything you have established in your monasteries. But we have families and responsibilities and...well, it just isn't possible for us at this stage of our lives to join you as well.

BENEDICT

I understand. And of course you can come and visit the boys from time to time.

AEQUITIUS

Thank you, Father. And thank you for giving these boys a rare opportunity to grow into the men God wants them to be. I have a feeling they will flourish with you.

BENEDICT

I am honored that you entrust them to our care. May the Lord bless and keep you both as well as the rest of your families. We will pray for you. Keep us in your prayers.

TERTULLUS and AEQUITIUS

(together)

We will, Father Benedict!