

THE MIRACLES OF ST. BENEDICT

(8) The Jealousy of Florentius

[adapted by Deacon Roy Goetz, from [The Dialogues, Book II](#) by [St. Gregory the Great](#)]



As time passed, many people in the [Subiaco](#) region had grown fervent in their love for Christ. Florentius, a local priest was jealous of Benedict's success and set out to undermine the saint's work. He denounced Benedict's way of life and encouraged people to stay away from him and his monasteries. Still, under Benedict's direction vocations multiplied, which infuriated Florentius. Blind with jealousy, Florentius decided to send a poisoned loaf of bread to the holy man. Benedict was aware of Florentius' evil intentions, but still thanked him for the gift. Calling his pet raven, Benedict said, "Take the bread and do not be afraid! Take it away from here and leave it where it cannot be found." Florentius, realizing that his attempt to poison Benedict had failed, now tried to tempt and destroy the faith of Benedict's monks. To do this, he sent seven depraved women to dance in the courtyard of the monastery to tempt the monks away from their way of life. When Benedict noticed this from his window, he feared that some of his monks might go astray. Feeling sorry for Florentius, and being convinced that his enemy's hatred was real, Benedict put his monasteries under the direction of priors, gathered some of his closest monks and left Subiaco. As Florentius was standing on the balcony of his house, congratulating himself on Benedict's departure, the structure suddenly collapsed, crushing him to

death. [Maurus](#) sent word to Benedict asking him to return to Subiaco now that the troublesome priest was dead. Benedict was overcome with sorrow and regret, for not only had his enemy been killed, but one of his own disciples had rejoiced over his death.

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