

Although the Life of a Monk

by St. Benedict of Nursia

A monk's life should be marked by purity and restraint, and during Lent, one should increase their service through private prayers and abstinence.

Scripture: Psalm 37:5, Proverbs 3:6, Proverbs 16:3, Proverbs 16:9, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Ephesians 5:10, Philippians 2:13, Colossians 3:23, 1 Thessalonians 1:6, James 4:15

Topics: "Lenten Discipline", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

St. Benedict of Nursia emphasizes the importance of observing Lent with purity and diligence, urging the brethren to cleanse themselves of negligence through prayer, tears, reading, compunction of heart, and abstinence. He encourages increasing spiritual practices during Lent, such as private prayers and fasting, to offer God something beyond the usual measure. St. Benedict advises seeking the Abbot's approval for any additional offerings during this time to avoid presumption and vainglory.

Transcript

Although the life of a monk
ought to have about it at all times
the character of a Lenten observance,
yet since few have the virtue for that,
we therefore urge that during the actual days of Lent
the brethren keep their lives most pure
and at the same time wash away during these holy days
all the negligences of other times.
And this will be worthily done
if we restrain ourselves from all vices
and give ourselves up to prayer with tears,

to reading, to compunction of heart and to abstinence.

During these days, therefore,

let us increase somewhat the usual burden of our service,

as by private prayers and by abstinence in food and drink.

Thus everyone of his own will may offer God

"with joy of the Holy Spirit" (1 Thess. 1:6)

something above the measure required of him.

From his body, that is

he may withhold some food, drink, sleep, talking and jesting;

and with the joy of spiritual desire

he may look forward to holy Easter.

Let each one, however, suggest to his Abbot

what it is that he wants to offer,

and let it be done with his blessing and approval.

For anything done without the permission of the spiritual father

will be imputed to presumption and vainglory

and will merit no reward.

Therefore let everything be done with the Abbot's approval.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/st-benedict-of-nursia/although-the-life-of-a-monk/>

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