

At the Gate of the Monastery

by St. Benedict of Nursia

St. Benedict emphasizes the importance of a wise gatekeeper and community structure for spiritual growth within the monastery.

Scripture: Proverbs 31:20, Galatians 5:13, Colossians 3:23, Hebrews 13:2, 1 Peter 4:9

Topics: "Monastic Life", "Christian Hospitality"

Description

St. Benedict of Nursia emphasizes the importance of hospitality and service within the monastery, appointing a wise old woman as the porter to receive and give messages with maturity and meekness. The porter is instructed to promptly attend to those who come to the gate, responding with gratitude and warmth, inspired by the fear of God and charity. St. Benedict also highlights the need for the monastery to be self-sufficient, providing all necessary resources within the enclosure to prevent the sisters from wandering outside, which may not be beneficial for their spiritual well-being. The Rule of St. Benedict is to be frequently read in the community to ensure that all sisters are aware of their responsibilities.

Transcript

At the gate of the monastery

let there be placed a wise old woman,

who knows how to receive and to give a message,

and whose maturity will prevent her from straying about.

This porter should have a room near the gate,

so that those who come may always find someone at hand

to attend to their business.

And as soon as anyone knocks or a poor person hails her,

let her answer "Thanks be to God" or "A blessing!"

Then let her attend to them promptly,

with all the meekness inspired by the fear of God
and with the warmth of charity.
Should the porter need help,
let her have one of the younger sisters.
If it can be done,
the monastery should be so established
that all the necessary things,
such as water, mill, garden and various workshops,
may be within the enclosure,
so that there is no necessity
for the sisters to go about outside of it,
since that is not at all profitable for their souls.
We desire that this Rule be read often in the community,
so that none of the sisters may excuse herself
on the ground of ignorance.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/st-benedict-of-nursia/at-the-gate-of-the-monastery/>

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