

# (Audio Book) the Rule of St. Benedict

by St. Benedict of Nursia

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*St. Benedict's Rule emphasizes obedience, community living, and the pursuit of holiness through good works as the path to eternal life.*

**Duration:** 2:39:39

**Scripture:** Proverbs 3:5

**Topics:** "Monastic Life", "Christian Obedience"

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## Description

This sermon is based on the prologue of Saint Benedict's Rule, emphasizing the importance of obedience, prayer, moderation, and humility in the monastic life. It highlights the significance of renouncing one's will to embrace obedience under Christ as the true King, and the need for self-discipline, simplicity, and communal prayer. The sermon also touches on the process of welcoming new members into the monastic community and the commitment required to live a life of service and humility.

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## Transcript

THE PROLOGUE OF OUR MOST HOLY FATHER SAINT BENEDICT TO HIS RULE Hearken, my son, to the precepts of thy master, and incline the ear of thy heart, willingly, to hear, and effectually to accomplish, the admonition of thy living father, that by the labor of obedience thou mayest return to him from whom thou didst depart by the sloth of disobedience. To thee, therefore, is my speech now directed, who, renouncing thy own will, dost take upon thee the strong and bright armor of obedience, to fight under the Lord Christ, our true King. First of all, whatever good work thou dost begin, beg of him, with most earnest prayer to perfect, that he who hath now vowed chaste to reckon us in the number of his children, may not be saddened by our evil deeds.

For we must at all times so serve him with the goods he hath bestowed upon us, that he may not either, as an angry father, disinherit us, his children, or, as a dread lord, exasperated by our offenses, deliver us up to perpetual punishment, as wicked servants, who would not follow him to glory.

Let us therefore arise, the Scripture stirring us up, and saying, QUOTE, It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep, CLOSE QUOTE, Romans, chapter 8, verse 1, and our eyes being opened to the deifying light, let us with wondering ears attend to the admonition which the divine voice daily addresses to us, saying, QUOTE, Today, if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts, CLOSE QUOTE, Psalm 98, verse 8, and again, QUOTE, He that hath ears, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches, CLOSE QUOTE, Apocalypse, chapter 2, verse 7, and what saith he, QUOTE, Come, ye children, and hearken unto me, I

will teach you the fear of the Lord, CLOSE QUOTE, Psalm 33, verse 12, QUOTE, Run while ye have the light of life, that the darkness of death overtake ye not, CLOSE QUOTE, John,

chapter 7, verse 35, and our Lord seeketh his laborer among the multitude to whom he here speaketh, said again, QUOTE, Who is the man that will have life, and desireth to see good days, CLOSE QUOTE, Psalm 33, verse 13, If thou, hearing this, doth answer, I am he, God saith unto thee, QUOTE, If thou wilt have true and everlasting life, refrain thy tongue from evil, and thy lips, that they speak no guile, decline from evil, and do good, seek after peace, and pursue it, CLOSE QUOTE, Psalm 33, verse 14, and 15, And when you have done this, my eyes shall be upon you, and my ears shall be open to your prayers, and before you can call upon me, I will say, QUOTE, Behold, I am present, CLOSE QUOTE, Isaiah, chapter 64, verse 24, What dearest brethren can be sweeter than this voice of the Lord

inviting us, behold how in his lovingkindness he showeth unto us the way of life, our loins therefore being girthed with faith, and the observance of good works, and our feet shod with the guidance of the gospel of peace, let us walk in his ways, that we may deserve to see in his kingdom him who has called us, Ephesians, chapter 6, verse 14, and 15, If we desire to dwell in the tabernacle of this kingdom, it can only be by running the way of good works whereby alone it can be reached, but let us ask our Lord with the prophet, saying to him, QUOTE, Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle, or who shall rest on thy holy hill, CLOSE QUOTE, Psalm 14, verse 4, After this question, brethren, let us hear our Lord answering, and showing us the way to his tabernacle, saying, QUOTE, He that walketh

without spot, or worketh justice, he that speaketh truth in his heart, that hath not forged guile with his tongue, he that hath not done evil to his neighbor, and hath not received reproach against him, CLOSE QUOTE, Psalm 14, verses 2 and 3, He that rejecting out of his mind the malignant devil with his suggestions, hath brought them all to naught, and taking his thoughts while they are still young, hath dashed them against the rock Christ, Psalm 136, verse 9, All they who fearing the Lord take not pride in their good observance, but knowing that all the good they have or can do proceedeth not from themselves, but from the Lord, magnify him, thus working in them, and say with the prophet, QUOTE, Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy name give glory, CLOSE QUOTE, Psalm 113, verse 1,

Thus the apostle Paul imputed not anything of his preaching to himself, saying, QUOTE, By the grace of God I am what I am, CLOSE QUOTE, 1 Corinthians, chapter 15, verse 10, And again he saith, QUOTE, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord, CLOSE QUOTE, 2 Corinthians, chapter 10, verse 47, Hence also our Lord saith in the gospel, QUOTE, He that heareth these my word, and doth them, I will liken him to a wise man, that hath built his house upon a rock.

The floods came, the winds blew, and beat against that house, and it fell not, because it was founded upon a rock, CLOSE QUOTE, Matthew, chapter 7, verse 24, and following.

Our Lord, fulfilling these things, dearly waiteth for us to answer by our deeds, these his holy admonitions. Therefore the days of our life are prolonged for the amendment of our evil deeds. According to these words of the apostle, QUOTE, Knowest thou not that the patience of God leadeth thee to repentance, CLOSE QUOTE, Romans, chapter 2, verse 4. For our loving Lord saith, QUOTE, I will not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live, CLOSE QUOTE, Ezekiel, chapter 18, verse 23.

Having therefore, my brethren, inquired of our Lord who shall be the dweller in this tabernacle, we have heard the precept to the one dwelling, and if we fulfill the functions of this habitation, we shall become heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Therefore our hearts and bodies must be prepared to fight under the holy

obedience of his commands, and we must beg our Lord to supply that, by the assistance of his grace, which our nature is unable to perform. And if, flying the panes of hell, we will to attain to everlasting life, we must, while yet time serves, and we live in this flesh, perform all these things by the light of faith, and haste to do that now, which will be expedient for us for ever hereafter.

We are therefore now about to institute a school of the service of God, in which we hope nothing will be ordained rigorous or burdensome. But if in some things we proceed with a little severity, sound reason so advising, for the amendment of vices or preserving of charity, do not straightway for fear thereof flee from the way of salvation, which is always straight and difficult in the beginning. Matthew 7.13 But in process of time and growth of faith, when the heart has once been enlarged, the way of God's commandments is run with unspeakable sweetness of love, so that, never departing from His teaching, but persevering in the monastery and His doctrine until death, we share now by patience in the sufferings of Christ, that we may deserve afterwards to be partakers of His Kingdom.

CHAPTER I. CONVERSION OF THE SEVERAL KINDS OF MONKS It is well known that there are four kinds of monks. The first are Cenobites, that is, monastic, living under a rule or abbot. The second are Agorites, or hermits, who, not in the first fervor of conversion, but after long probation in the monastic life, have learned to fight against the devil, and taught by the encouragement of others, are now able by God's assistance to strive hand to hand against the flesh and evil thoughts, and so go forth well prepared from the army of the brotherhood to the single combat of the wilderness.

The third and worst kind of monks are the Cerebites, who have never been tried under any rule, nor by the experience of a master, as gold is tried in the furnace, but being soft as lead, and by their work still cleaving to the world, are known by their tonure to lie to God. These in twos and threes, or perhaps singly and without a shepherd, are shut up not in our Lord's sheepfolds, but in their own. The pleasure of their desires is to them a law, and whatever they like or make choice of, they will have to be holy, but what they like not, that they consider unlawful.

The fourth kind of monks are called Garovagi, or wanderers, who travel about all their lives through diverse provinces, and stay for two or three days as guests, first in one monastery, then in another. They are always roaming, and never settled, giving themselves up altogether to their own pleasures, and to the enticements of gluttony, and are in all things worse than the Cerebites. Of their miserable way of life, it is better to be silent than to speak.

Therefore leaving these, let us, by God's assistance, set down a rule for Cerebites, or conventuals, who are the most steadfast class of monks. CHAPTER II WHAT KIND OF MAN THE ABBOT OUGHT TO BE An abbot who is worthy to have charge of a monastery ought always to remember what he is called, and in his actions show forth the character of ancient. For in the monastery he is considered to represent the person of Christ, seeing that he is called by his name, as the Apostle saith, quote, Ye have received the spirit of the adoption of children, in which we cry, Abba, Father, close quote.

Romans chapter 8 verse 15 Therefore the abbot ought not, God forbid, to teach, ordain, or command but what is conformable to the commands of our Lord. But let his commands and doctrine be mingled in the minds of his disciples with the leaven of living justice. Let the abbot always be mindful that, in the dreadful judgment of God, he must give an account both of his doctrine and of the obedience of his disciples, and let the abbot know that any lack of profit which the master of the family shall find in his sheep will be laid to the shepherd's fault.

But if he have bestowed all diligence on his unquiet and disobedient flock, and employed the utmost care to cure their corrupt manners, he shall then be acquitted in the judgment of the Lord, and may say with the prophet, quote, I have not hidden thy justice in my heart, I have told thy truth and thy salvation. But they condemned and despised me. Psalm 34 verse 2 and Isaiah chapter 1 verse 2 And then finally death shall be inflicted as a just punishment upon the disobedient sheep.

When therefore anyone receives the name of abbot, he ought to govern his disciples with a twofold doctrine, that is, he ought first to show them all virtue and sanctity, more by deeds than by words, hence to such as are intelligent he may declare the commandments of God by words, but to the hard-hearted and to those of the ruder sort he must make the divine precepts manifest by his actions. In the next place let him show by his own deeds that they ought not to do anything which he had taught them to be unfitting, lest having preached well to others, quote, he himself become a castaway, close quote. First Corinthians chapter 9 verse 27 And God say unto him, thus saying, quote, Why dost thou declare my justices, and take my testament in thy mouth? Thou hast hated discipline, and cast my speeches behind thee.

And thou who didst see the mote in thy brother's eye hast not seen the beam that is in thy own, close quote. Psalm chapter 46 verse 16 and 17 and Matthew chapter 7 verse 3 Let him make no distinction of persons in the monastery. Let not one be loved more than another, except he be found to surpass the rest in good works and in obedience.

Let not one of noble parentage on coming to religion be put before him who is of servile extraction, except there be some other reasonable cause for it. If upon just consideration the abbot shall think there is such a just cause, let him put him in any rank he shall please, but otherwise let every one keep his own place, because, quote, whether bondman or freeman, we are all one in Christ, close quote. First Corinthians chapter 7 verse 13 Romans chapter 2 verse 2 And bear an equal burden of servitude unto the Lord, quote, for with God there is no accepting of persons, close quote.

Ephesians chapter 6 verse 9 On one condition only are we preferred by him, and that is, if in good works and in humility we are found better than others. Therefore let the abbot bear equal love to all, and let all be subject to the same discipline according to their deserts. For the abbot ought always, in his doctrine, to observe that apostolic form wherein it is said, quote, reprove, entreat, rebuke, close quote.

Second Timothy chapter 4 verse 2 That is to say, he ought, as occasions require, to utter fair speeches with wretches, let him show the severity of a master, and the loving affection of a father. Those who are undisciplined and restless he must reprove sternly, but with such as are obedient, mild, and patient he should deal by entreaty, exhorting them to go forward in virtue. But the stubborn and negligent we charge him to severely reprove and chastise.

Let him not shut his eyes to the sins of offenders, but as soon as they show themselves use all possible endeavors utterly to root them out, remembering the fate of hell, the priest of Silo. First Kings chapter 2 verse 12 and following With the more virtuous and intelligent, let him for the first or second time use words of admonition. But the stubborn, the hard-hearted, the proud, and the disobedient, even in the very beginning of their sin, let him chastise with stripes and bodily punishment, knowing that it is written, quote, the fool is not corrected with words, close quote.

Proverbs chapter 13 verse 13 and again, quote, strike thy son with a rod and thou shalt deliver his soul from death, close quote. Proverbs chapter 23 verse 14 The abbot ought always to remember what he is and what he is called, and know that unto whom more is entrusted more from him is exacted, and let him

consider how difficult and hard a task he hath undertaken to govern souls, and to accommodate himself to the humors of many, some of whom must be led by fair speeches, others by sharp reprehensions, and others by persuasions. Therefore let him so adapt himself to the character and intelligence of each one, that he may not only suffer no loss in the flock committed to him, but may even rejoice in the increase and profit of his virtuous flock.

Above all things let him take heed not to slight or make little account of the souls committed to his keeping, and have more care for fleeting worldly things than for them, but let him always consider that he hath undertaken the government of souls for which he shall also have to give an account, and that he may not complain for want of temporal means. Let him remember that it is written, quote, Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all things shall be given ye, close quote, Matthew chapter 6 verse 33, and again, quote, Nothing is wanting to such as fear him, close quote, Psalm 33 verse 19. Let him know that the man who undertakes the government of souls must prepare himself to give an account of them, and how greatsoever the number of brethren may be, let him know certain that at the day of judgment he will have to give to the Lord an account for all their souls as well as for his own.

Thus by fearing the examination which the shepherd must undergo for the flock committed to his charge, he is made solicitous on other men's account, as well as careful on his own, and while reclaiming them by his admonitions he is himself freed from all defects. As often as any weighty matters have to be debated in the monastery, let the abbot call together all the brethren, and himself declare what is the point under deliberation. Having heard their counsel, let him prudently weigh it with himself, and then do what he shall judge most expedient.

The reason why we ordain that all be called to counsel is because the Lord often revealeth to the younger what is best. And let the brethren give their advice with all subjection and humility, and presume not stiffly to defend their own opinion, but rather leave it to the discretion of the abbot and what he shall think more expedient. To that let them all submit, for as it becometh the disciples to obey their master, so doth it behove the master to dispose all things with forethought and justice.

In all things, therefore, let all follow the rule as their master, and from it let no man rashly swerve. Let no one in the monastery follow his own will, neither let any one presume, within or without the monastery, to contend insolently with his abbot. If he do so, let him be subjected to regular discipline.

Let the abbot, however, do all things with the fear of God, and in observance of the rule, knowing that he shall undoubtedly give an account of all his judgments to God, the most just judge. If any matters of less moment have to be done for the benefit of the monastery, let him take counsel with the seniors only, as it is written, quote, Do all things with counsel, and thou shalt not afterwards repent thee of it, unquote.

#### CHAPTER IV.

WHAT ARE THE INSTRUMENTS OF GOOD WORKS? FIRST OF ALL, TO LOVE THE LORD GOD WITH ALL OUR HEART, WITH ALL OUR SOUL, WITH ALL OUR STRENGTH. 2. Then, our neighbour as ourself. 3. Then, not to kill.

4. Not to commit adultery. 5. Not to steal. 6. Not to covet.

7. Not to bear false witness. 8. To honour all men. 9. Not to do to another what we would not have done to ourselves.

10. To deny ourselves, in order to follow Christ. 11.

To chastise the body. 12. Not seek after delights.

13. To love fasting. 14.

To relieve the poor. 15. To clothe the naked.

16. To visit the sick. 17.

To bury the dead. 18. To help those that are in tribulation.

19. To comfort the sad. 20.

To withdraw ourselves from worldly ways. 21. To prefer nothing to the love of Christ.

22. Not to give way to anger. 23.

Not to harbour revenge in our mind. 24. Not to foster guile or deceit in our heart.

25. Not to make a feigned peace. 26.

Not to forsake charity. 27. Not to swear at all, lest we forswear ourselves.

28. To speak the truth with heart and mouth. 29.

Not to render evil for evil. 30. Not to do any injury, yea, and patiently to bear an injury done to us.

31. To love our enemies. 32.

Not to speak ill of such as speak ill of us, but rather to speak well of them. 33. To suffer persecution for justice' sake.

34. Not to be proud. 35.

Not given to wine. 36. Not a great eater.

37. Not drowsy. 38.

Not slothful. 39. Not a murmurer.

40. Not a detractor. 41.

To put our trust in God. 42. When we see any good in ourselves, let us attribute it to God and not to ourselves.

43. But let us always know that evil is done by ourselves. Therefore let us attribute it to ourselves.

44. To fear the day of judgment. 45.

To be afraid of hell. 46. To desire life everlasting with spiritual thirst.

47. To have death always before our eyes. 48.

To observe at every hour the actions of our life. 49. To know for certain that God beholdeth us in every place.

50. To dash at once against Christ the evil thoughts that rise in the mind. 51.

To reveal all such to our spiritual Father. 52. To keep our mouth from evil and wicked words.

53. Not to love much talking. 54.

Not to speak vain words, nor such as move to laughter. 55. Not to love much and boisterous laughter.

56. Willingly to hear holy readings. 57.

To pray often devoutly. 58. With tears and sighs, daily to confess our past evils to God in prayer, and to amend them for the time to come.

59. Not to fulfill the desires of the flesh, and to hate self-will. 60.

To obey in all things the commands of the abbot, though he himself, which God forbid, should do otherwise, being mindful of that precept of our Lord, quote, What they say do ye, but what they do, do ye not. Unquote. 61.

Not to desire to be called holy, before we be so, and first to be holy, that we may truly be called so. 62. Daily to fulfill in deeds the commandments of God.

63. To love chastity. 64.

To hate no man. 65. To flee envy and emulation.

66. Not to love contention. 67.

To flee haughtiness. 68. To reverence the elders.

69. To love inferiors. 70.

For Christ's sake, to pray for our enemies. 71. To make peace with adversaries, before the setting of the sun.

72. Never to despair of God's mercy. Behold, these are the tools or instruments of our spiritual profession.

If we constantly employ them day and night, and have them signed with approval in the day of judgment, that reward shall be given us by our Lord as a recompense. Quote. Which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for those that love him.

Unquote. The workshop where all these things are to be done is the cloister of the monastery, and the steadfast abiding in the congregation. THE RULE OF SAINT BENEDICT 5. Of the Obedience of Disciples 1. The first degree of humility is obedience without delay.

2. This beseemeth those who, either on account of the holy servitude they have professed, through fear of hell, or for the glory of life everlasting, count nothing more dear to them than Christ. 3. These presently, as soon as anything is commanded them by the superior, make no delay in doing it, just as if the command

had come from God. 4. Of such our Lord saith, quote.

At the hearing of the ear he hath obeyed me. Unquote. 1 Corinthians 2.9 5. And to teachers he saith, quote.

He that heareth you heareth me. Unquote. Psalms 17.45 Therefore, such as these, leaving immediately everything, and forsaking their own will, leave unfinished what they were about, and with the speedy foot of obedience follow by deeds the voice of him who commands.

And thus, as it were in one and the same moment, the command of the Master, and the perfect work of the disciple, and the speed of the fear of God, go both jointly together, and are quickly effected by those who ardently desire to advance in the way of eternal life. 5. These take the narrow way, of which the Lord saith, quote. Narrow is the way which leadeth to life.

Unquote. Matthew 7.14 They live not according to their own will, nor follow their own desires and pleasures, but, abiding in monasteries, walk according to the command and direction of another, and will to have an abbot over them. Without doubt these fulfil that saying of our Lord, quote.

I came not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. Unquote. John 5.30 This obedience will then be acceptable to God, and pleasing to men, if what is commanded be not done fearfully, slowly, coldly, or with murmuring, or an answer showing unwillingness.

Because the obedience which is given to superiors is given to God, who hath said, quote. He that heareth you, heareth me. Unquote.

Luke 10.16 Hence it ought to be done by the disciples with a good will, because God, quote, loveth a cheerful giver. Unquote. 2 Corinthians 9.7 If the disciple obey with ill will, and murmur, not only in words, but also in heart, although he fulfil what is commanded him, it will not be acceptable to God, who considereth the heart of the murmurer.

For such a work he shall not have any reward, but rather incurth the penalty of murmurers, unless he amend and make satisfaction. Chapter VI. Of Silence Let us act in accordance with that saying of the prophet, quote.

I have said, I will keep my ways, that I offend not with my tongue. I have been watchful over my mouth. I held my peace, and humbled myself, and was silent from speaking even good things.

Unquote. From Psalm, Chapter 38, Verses 2 and 3. If, therefore, according to this saying of the prophet, we are at times to abstain, for silence's sake, even from good talk, how much more ought we to refrain from evil words, on account of the penalty of sin? Therefore, because of the importance of silence, let leave to speak be seldom given, even to perfect disciples, although their words be of good and holy matters, tending unto edification, because it is written, quote. In much speaking thou shalt not escape sin.

Unquote. From Proverbs, Chapter 10, Verse 19. And in another place, quote.

Death and life are in the hands of the tongue. Unquote. From Proverbs, Chapter 18, Verse 21.

For it befitteth a master to speak and teach, and it beseemeth a disciple to hold his peace and listen. If, therefore, anything must be asked of the prior, let it be done with all fitting humility and the subjection of reverence. But as for buffoonery, idle words, or such as move to laughter, we utterly condemn and

exclude them in all places, nor do we allow a disciple to open his mouth to give them utterance.

Chapter 7. Of Humility. The Holy Scripture crieth to us, brethren, saying, quote. Everyone who exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he who humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Unquote. From Luke, Chapter 14, Verse 11. By these words it declares to us that all exaltation is a kind of pride, which the prophet showeth must carefully be avoided when he says, quote.

Lord, my heart is not exalted, neither are my eyes lifted up. Neither have I walked in great things, nor in wonders above myself. Unquote.

But why? Quote. If I did not think humbly, be exalted my soul. As a child weaned from his mother, so wilt thou reward my soul.

Unquote. From Psalm, Chapter 103, Verses 1 to 2. Wherefore, brethren, if we would attain to the highest summit of humility, and speedily reach that heavenly exaltation, which is won through the lowliness of this present life, by our ascending actions a ladder must be set up, such as appeared in sleep to Jacob, whereon he saw angels descending and ascending. That descent and ascent signifieth nothing else, but that we descend by exalting, and ascend by humbling ourselves.

The ladder thus erected is our life here in this world, which through humility of heart is lifted up by our Lord to heaven. The sides of this ladder we understand to be our body and soul, in which the divine vocation hath placed diverse degrees of humility and discipline, which we must ascend. The first degree, then, of humility is that a man always have the fear of God before his eyes, and altogether flee forgetfulness.

Moreover, to be mindful of all that God hath commanded, and remember that such as condemn God fall into hell for their sins, and that everlasting life is prepared for such as fear him, and keeping himself every moment from all sin and vice of thought, word, eyes, hands, feet, and self-will, let him thus hasten to cut off the desires of the flesh. Let him think that he is always beheld from heaven by God, that all his actions, wheresoever he may be, lie open to the eye of God, and are at every hour presented before him by his angels. The prophet declared this, when in these words he saith that God is always present to our thoughts.

Quote. God searcheth the heart, and reigns. Unquote.

And again. Quote. The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men, that they are vain.

Unquote. He also saith. Quote.

Thou hast understood my thoughts afar off. Unquote. And.

Quote. The thought of man shall confess to thee. Unquote.

In order, therefore, that the humble brother may be careful to avoid evil thoughts, let him always say in his heart. Quote. Then shall I be without spot before him, if I shall keep me from my iniquity.

Unquote. The scripture also forbideth us to do our own will, saying. Quote.

Leave thy own will and desire. Unquote. And again.

Quote. We beg of God in prayer, that his will may be done in us. Unquote.

With good reason, therefore, are we taught to beware of doing our own will, when we keep in mind that which the scripture saith. Quote. There are ways which to men seem right, and anywhereof plungeth even into the deep pit of hell.

Unquote. And again. When we fear that which is said of the negligent.

Quote. They are corrupted and made abominable in their pleasures. Unquote.

But in the desires of the flesh we ought to believe God to be always present with us, according to that saying of the prophet, speaking to the Lord. Quote. O Lord, all my desire is before thee.

Unquote. Let us then take heed of evil desires, because death sitteth close to the entrance of delight. Wherefore the scripture commandeth us.

Quote. Follow not thy concupiscences. Unquote.

If then the eyes of the Lord behold both good and bad, if he ever looketh down from heaven upon the sons of men to see who is understanding or seeking God, if our works are told to him day and night by our angels, we must always take heed, brethren, lest, as the prophet saith in the psalm, quote, God behold us sometime declining to evil and become unprofitable. Unquote. And though he spare us for the present, because he is merciful and expecteth our conversion, he may yet say to us hereafter, quote, these things thou hast done, and I have held my peace.

Unquote. The second degree of humility is, if anyone, not wedded to his own will, seeks not to satisfy his desires, but carries out that saying of our Lord, quote, I came not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. Unquote.

The scripture likewise saith, quote, self-will engendereth punishment, and necessity purchaseeth a crown. Unquote. The third degree of humility is that a man submit himself for the love of God, with all obedience to his superior, imitating thereby our Lord, of whom the apostle saith, quote, he was made obedient even unto death.

Unquote. The fourth degree of humility is that if in obedience things that are hard, contrary, and even unjust be done to him, he embrace them with a quiet conscience, and in suffering them grow not weary, nor give over, since the scripture saith, quote, he only that persevereth to the end shall be saved. Unquote.

And again, quote, let thy heart be comforted, and expect the Lord. Unquote. And showing that the faithful man ought to bear all things for our Lord, be they never so contrary, it saith in the person of the sufferers, quote, for thee we suffer death all the day long.

We are esteemed as sheep for the slaughter. Unquote. And being assured by hope of a reward from God's hands, they go on rejoicing, and saying, quote, but in all things we overcome by the help of him who hath loved us.

Unquote. Likewise, in another place the scripture saith, quote, thou hast proved us, O Lord, thou hast tried us, as silver is tried with fire. Thou hast brought us into the snare, thou hast laid tribulation upon our backs.

Unquote. And to show that we ought to be under a prior, it goes on to say, quote, thou hast placed men over our heads. Unquote.

Moreover, in order to fulfill the precepts of the Lord by patience in adversities and injuries, quote, when struck on one cheek, they offer the other. To him who taketh away their coat, they leave their cloak also. And being constrained to carry a burden one mile, they go too.

Unquote. With Paul the Apostle, they suffer false brethren and persecutions, and bless those who speak ill of them. The fifth degree of humility is to manifest to the abbot, by humble confession, all the evil thoughts of his heart, and the secret faults committed by him.

The scripture exhorteth us thereunto, saying, quote, reveal thy way to the Lord, and hope in him. Unquote. And again, quote, confess thy way to the Lord, because he is good, because his mercy endureth forever.

Unquote. Furthermore, the prophet saith, quote, I have made known unto thee mine offence, and mine injustices I have not hidden. I have said, I will declare openly against myself mine injustices to the Lord, and thou hast pardoned the wickedness of my heart.

Unquote. The sixth degree of humility is, if a monk be content with all that is meanest and poorest, and in everything enjoined him, think himself an evil and worthless servant, saying with the prophet, quote, I have been brought to nothing, and knew it not. I have become as a beast before thee, and I am always with thee.

Unquote. The seventh degree of humility is, not only to pronounce with his tongue, but also in his very heart to believe himself to be the most abject and inferior to all, and humbling himself to say with the prophet, quote, I am a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people. I have been exalted, humbled, and confounded.

Unquote. And again, quote, it is good for me that thou hast humbled me, that I may learn thy commandments. Unquote.

The eighth rule of humility is, that a monk do nothing but what the common rule of the monastery, or the examples of his seniors, exhort him to do. The ninth degree of humility is, for a monk to refrain his tongue from speaking, and be silent till a question be asked him, remembering the saying of the scripture, quote, in many words thou shalt not avoid sin, unquote, and, quote, a talkative man shall not be directed upon the earth, unquote. The tenth degree of humility is, not to be easily moved and prompt to laugh, for it is written, quote, the fool exalteth his voice to laughter, unquote.

The eleventh degree of humility is, that when a monk speaketh, he do so gently and without laughter, humbly, with gravity or few words, and discreetly, and be not clamorous in his voice, for it is written, quote, a wise man is known by few words, unquote. The twelfth degree of humility is, that a monk not only have humility in his heart, but show it also in his exterior, to all that behold him. So that whether he be at the work of God, in the oratory, the monastery, the garden, on the way, in the field, or wherever he may be, whether he sit, walk, or stand, let him always, with head bent down, and eyes fixed upon the earth, think of himself guilty for his sins, and about to be presented before the dreadful judgment of God, ever saying to himself, with the publican in the gospel, quote, Lord, I, a sinner, am not worthy to lift up mine eyes to heaven, unquote.

And again with the prophet, quote, I am bowed down, and humbled on every side, unquote. Thus when all these degrees of humility have been ascended, the monk will presently come to that love of God which is perfect, and casteth out fear, to that love whereby everything which at the beginning he observed through

fear, he shall now begin to do by custom, without any labor, and as it were naturally, not now through fear of hell, but for the love of Christ, out of a good custom, and a delight in virtue. All this our Lord will vouchsafe to work by the Holy Ghost in his servant, now that he is cleansed from defects and sins.

**THE RULE OF SAINT BENEDICT 8. ON THE DIVINE OFFICE AT NIGHTTIME.** In winter, that is from the first of November till Easter, they shall rise at that time which reasonable calculation shall indicate as the eighth hour of the night, in order that having rested till a little after midnight, they may rise refreshed. As for the time that remains after matins, let it be employed in study, by those brethren who are somewhat behind hand in the psalter and lessons.

But from Easter till the first of November, let the hour for matins be so arranged, that after a short interval during which they may go forth for the necessities of nature, lords may presently follow about the break of day. **9. HOW MANY PSALMS ARE TO BE SAID IN THE NIGHT HOURS.** In winter, having first said the verse, O God, incline unto mine aid, O God, make haste to help me, psalm 69, verse 2, the words, O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall declare thy praise, psalm 50, verse 17, are next to be repeated three times.

After this, the third psalm is said, With the glory be to the Father at the end. Then the ninety-fourth psalm is to be recited, or sung, with an antiphon. Let him follow next, and then six psalms with antiphons.

These being said, and the versicle added, Let the abbot give a blessing, and then, all being seated, let three lessons be read by the brethren in turns, from the book lying on the lectern. After every lesson, let a responsory be sung. Let two of them be without the gloria, but after the third, let it be added by the cantor, and as soon as he has begun it, let all rise from their seats, out of honour and reverence to the Holy Trinity.

Let the divinely inspired books, both of the Old and New Testament, be read at Matins, together with the expositions made upon them by the most famous Orthodox and Catholic Fathers. After these three lessons and their responsories, let six other psalms follow, to be sung with an Alleluia. Then, let a lesson from the Apostle be said by heart, and after that, a verse and a supplication of the litanies, that is, Kyrie eleison.

And thus, let the Matins, or night-watches, be brought to an end. **CHAPTER X. HOW MATINS, OR NIGHT OFFICE, IS TO BE CELEBRATED IN SUMMER** From Easter till the first of November, let the same number of psalms be recited as we have before appointed, but let not the lessons be read, because of the shortness of the nights. Instead of these three lessons, let one out of the Old Testament be said by heart, followed by a short responsory, and let all the rest be performed as we have before arranged, so that, without counting the third and the ninety-fourth psalms, there be never fewer than twelve psalms said at Matins.

**CHAPTER XI. HOW MATINS, OR NIGHT OFFICE, IS TO BE CELEBRATED ON SUNDAYS** On Sunday, let them rise more seasonably for Matins, and therein observe the following order. When six psalms and the versicle have been sung, as we before arranged, let all sit down in a becoming and orderly manner, and let four lessons with the responsories be read from the book, to the fourth responsory only, let the cantor add a gloria, at the beginning of which all shall rise out of reverence.

After these lessons, let six more psalms follow in order, with their antiphons and versicle as before. Then let four other lessons with their responsories be read in the same way as the former. Next, let three

canticles be said out of the prophets, such as the abbot shall appoint.

These must be sung with Alleluia. When the versicle has been said, and the abbot has given his blessing, let four other lessons out of the New Testament be read, in the same order as before. After the fourth responsory, let the abbot begin the hymn, Te Deum Laudamus, and this being said, let him read a lesson from the Gospel, with reverential fear, while all stand.

At the end of this, let all answer, Amen, and then let the abbot go on with the hymn, Te De Cet Alus. Then, after the giving of the blessing, let Lauds begin. This order is always to be observed in singing Matins on Sundays, both in summer and in winter, except perchance, which God forbid, they rise late, for then the lessons or responsories must be somewhat shortened.

But let good care be taken that this do not happen, and if it do, let him by whose negligence it comes to pass, make satisfaction for it in the oratory. Chapter 12. How the Solemnity of Lords is to be Performed.

For Sunday's Lords, first, let the sixtieth Psalm be said plainly, without an antiphon, after which, say the fiftieth with an Alleluia, then the hundred and seventeenth, and the sixty-second, then the blessings and praises, one lesson out of the Apocalypse said by heart, a responsory, a hymn, a versicle with a canticle out of the Gospel, and the litanies, and so conclude. Chapter 13. How Lords are to be Celebrated on Ferial or Weak Days.

On Ferial days let Lords be celebrated thus, let the sixty-sixth Psalm be said as on Sunday, plainly and without an antiphon, and also somewhat more slowly, in order that all may be in their places for the fiftieth, which must be said with an antiphon, after which let two other Psalms be said according to custom, that is, on Monday the fifth and thirty-fifth, on Tuesday the forty-second and fifty-sixth, on Wednesday the sixty-third and sixty-fourth, on Thursday the eighty-seventh and eighty-ninth, on Friday the seventy-fifth and ninety-first, on Saturday the hundred and forty-second, and the canticle of Deuteronomy, which must be divided into two glorias, but on other days let a canticle out of the Prophets be said, each on its own day, according to the practice of the Roman Church, after these let the praises follow, then a lesson from the Apostles, to be said by heart, a responsory hymn and versicle, a canticle out of the Gospel, the litanies, and so conclude. Let not the celebration of Lords, or even song, even terminate, unless at the end the Lords' prayer be said by the prior, in the hearing of all, because of the thorns of scandal which are wont to arise, that the brethren, being reminded by the covenant of this prayer, in which they say, Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them the trespass against us, may purge themselves from these faults. But in celebrating the other hours, let the last part only be said aloud, that all may answer, But deliver us from evil.

CHAPTER XIV. In what manner the office of Matins is to be celebrated on the feast-day of Saints? On Saints' day, and upon all Solemnities, let the same order be observed as upon Sundays, only that Psalms, Antiphons, and Lessons be said, proper to the day itself. Their method, however, shall remain the same as before determined.

CHAPTER XV. At what seasons Alleluia must be said. From the holy feast of Easter until Ritsentide, let Alleluia be said without intermission, as well with the Psalms, as with the Responsories.

From Ritsentide till the beginning of Lent, let it be said at all the night offices, with the sixth last Psalms only. But on every Sunday out of Lent, let the Canticles, Lords, Prime, Tears, Sext, and None, be said with Alleluia. Let Evensong, however, be said with Antiphons.

Let the Responsories never be said with Alleluia except from Easter till Ritsentide. CHAPTER XVI. In what manner the work of God is to be done in the day-time.

Seven times a day, said the Prophet, have I sung praises unto thee. Psalm 118, verse 164. This sacred number of seven shall be accomplished by us, if at the times of Lords, Prime, Tears, Sext, None, Evensong, and Complin we perform the duties of our service.

It was of these hours, the Prophet said, seven times in the day I have sung praise to thee. For of the night watches, the same Prophet says, At midnight I did arise to confess to thee. Psalm 118, verse 62.

At these times, therefore, let us give praise to our Creator for the judgments of His justice, that is, at Lords, Prime, Tears, Sext, None, Evensong, and Complin, and in the night let us rise to confess unto Him. CHAPTER XVII. How many psalms are to be said during the aforesaid hours.

We have already arranged the order of the office for the Nocturnes, or Lords. Let us now dispose of the hours that follow. At Prime let three psalms be said separately, and not under one Gloria.

Presently, after the verse, O God, incline unto mine aid, let the hymn of the same hour follow, before the psalms be begun. At the end of the psalms let there be recited one lesson, a versicle, and Kyrie eleison, and let that hour conclude with a collect. Tears, Sext, and None are to be recited in the same way, that is, the prayer, versicle, and hymns of these same hours, three psalms, then a lesson, versicle, and Kyrie eleison, and let the hour conclude with a collect.

If the community be great, let the hours be sung with antiphons. If, however, it be small, let them be only recited. Let evensong be said with four psalms and antiphons.

After these let a lesson be recited, then a responsory, the hymn, versicle, and canticle out of the gospel, the litany, the Lord's Prayer, and a collect to conclude. For Camplin let three psalms be recited straight on, without antiphons. After these the hymn for that hour, the lesson, versicle, Kyrie eleison, and blessing, and so let the hour terminate.

CHAPTER XVIII. In what order the psalms are to be said. In the day hours let the verse, O God, incline unto mine aid, O Lord, make haste to help me, always be said first, and after it a gloria.

Then the hymn proper to each hour. On Sundays at prime there must be said four divisions of the hundred and eighteenth psalm. At the rest of the hours, to wit, at tierce, sext, and none, let there be said three divisions of the same hundred and eighteenth psalm.

But on Monday at prime let three psalms be said, that is, the first, second, and sixth. In the same way at prime let three psalms be said, in order, every day, till Sunday, as far as the nineteenth psalm, yet in such a way, that the ninth and seventeenth psalms be divided into two glorias. Thus it will fall out, that on Sunday at matins we shall always begin from the twentieth psalm.

At tierce, sext, and none, on Mondays, let the remaining nine divisions of the hundred and eighteenth psalm be said, three at a time, during these same hours. On two days, therefore, to wit, Sunday and Monday, the hundred and eighteenth psalm being gone through, let the psalms of tierce, sext, and none, on Tuesdays, be sung in order, three at a time, from the hundred and nineteenth to the hundred and twenty-seventh, that is, nine psalms. These psalms are always to be repeated at the same hours, for the rest of the week till Sunday, a uniform order also of the hymns, lessons, and versicles, being sung every

day observed, so that every Sunday they may begin with the hundred and eighteenth psalm.

Even song is to be sung every day with four psalms, which are to begin from the hundred and ninth, and go on to the hundred and forty-seventh, such only being expected, as are set apart for other hours, that is, from the hundred and seventeenth to the hundred and twenty-seventh, and from the hundred and thirty-third to the hundred and forty-second. All the rest are to be said in even song. And because there fall three psalms short, those of the aforesaid number that are longer, must be divided, that is, the hundred and thirty-eighth, the hundred and forty-third, and the hundred and forty-fourth.

But let the hundred and sixteenth, because it is short, be joined with the hundred and fifteenth. The order, therefore, of the psalms for even song being set down, let other matters, such as lessons, responsories, hymns, versicles, and canticles, be arranged as before. At Copland let the same psalms be repeated every day, that is, the fourth, ninetieth, and the hundred and thirty-third.

The order of the day-office being thus disposed of, let all the psalms which remain be equally portioned out into seven night-watches, or matins, and such of them as are too long divided into two. Let twelve psalms be appointed for every night. If this arrangement and distribution of the psalms displease any one, let him, if he think good, order them otherwise, provided, however, he take care that every week the whole psalter of one hundred and fifty psalms be sung, and that on Sunday at matins they begin it again, for monks show themselves to be over-negligent and indevout, who do not in the course of a week sing over the psalter with the usual canticles, since we read that our holy fathers courageously performed in one day what God grant, that we who are negligent and tepid may perform in a whole week.

CHAPTER XIX. OF THE ORDER AND DISCIPLINE OF SINGING. We believe that the Divine Presence is everywhere, and that the eyes of the Lord behold both the good and the bad, in all places.

But we believe this especially, and without any doubt, when we assist at the word of God. Let us, therefore, always be mindful of what the prophet saith, quote, Serve ye the Lord in fear, end quote, and again, quote, Sing ye his praises with understanding, end quote, and, quote, In the sight of angels I will sing praise unto thee, end quote. Therefore let us consider in what manner it behoveth us to be in the sight of God and of the angels, and so let us sing in choir, that mind and voice may accord together.

CHAPTER XX. OF REVERENCE AT PRAYER. If when we wish to make some suggestion to the powerful, we presume not to speak to them except with humility and reverence, with how much greater reason ought we to present our supplications, in all humility and purity of devotion, to the Lord God of all things.

And let us bear in mind that we shall be heard, not for our many words, but for our purity of heart and our penitential tears. Our prayer, therefore, ought to be short and pure, unless perchance it be prolonged by the inspiration of Divine Grace. Yet let all prayer made in common be short, and when the sign has been given by the Prior, let all rise together.

CHAPTER XXI. OF THE DEANS OF THE MONASTERY. If the community be large, let men of good repute and saintly lives be chosen from among the brethren and appointed deans, to be careful over their deaneries in all things, according to the command of God and the precepts of their abbot.

Let such men be chosen for deans, as the abbot may safely rely upon to share his burdens, and let them not be chosen by order, but according to the merit of their lives and learning. And if perchance any of

them, being puffed up with pride, shall be found blameworthy, and being thrice rebuked, shall show no sign of amendment, let him be put out of office, and a more worthy man substituted in his place. Concerning the provost, we make the same ordinance.

CHAPTER XXII. HOW THE MONKS ARE TO SLEEP. Let them sleep each in separate beds, and receive, according to the appointment of the abbot, bedclothes befitting their condition.

If it be possible, let them all sleep in one place, but if the numbers do not allow of this, let them repose by tens or twenties in one place with their seniors who have care of them, and let a candle burn constantly in that same cell until morning. Let them sleep clothed, and girt with girdles or cords, but let them not have knives by their sides while they sleep, lest perchance they be hurt therewith. And thus let the monks always be ready, that when the sign is given they may rise speedily, and hasten each one to come before his brother to the work of God, but yet with all gravity and modesty.

Let not the younger brethren have beds in a place apart by themselves, but separated among the elders. And when they rise to the work of God, let them gently encourage one another, because of the excuses of those who are sluggish. XXIII.

OF EXCOMMUNICATION FOR OFFENCES. If any brother be found stubborn, disobedient, proud, murmuring, or in any way gaining in saying the holy rule, or contemning the orders of his elders, let him, in accordance with the precept of the Lord, be once or twice secretly admonished by them. If he amend not, let him be reprehended publicly, before all.

But if, in spite of all this, he do not correct himself, let him be subjected to excommunication, provided he understands the nature of the punishment. But if he remain obstinate, let him undergo corporal chastisement. CHAPTER XXIV.

WHAT THE MANNER OF EXCOMMUNICATION OUGHT TO BE. The measure of excommunication or punishment should be meted out according to the quality of the faults. But the estimation of their gravity shall depend upon the judgment of the abbot.

If any brother be found guilty of small faults, let him be deprived of eating at table with the rest. The manner of his punishment shall be as follows. In the oratory he shall not intone a psalm or antiphon, nor read a lesson, until he has made satisfaction.

He shall take his portion of food after the brethren have taken theirs, in such quantity, and at such time as the abbot shall deem fit. If, for example, the brethren take their refectio at the sixth hour, let him take his at the ninth. If the brethren take theirs at the ninth, let him take his in the evening, until, by due satisfaction, he obtain pardon.

CHAPTER XXV. OF MORE GRIEVOUS FAULTS. Let that brother who is guilty of more grievous faults be denied both the table and the oratory.

Let none of the brethren discourse with him, nor keep him company. Let him be alone at the work enjoined him, continuing in penance and sorrow, knowing that terrible sentence of the apostle, who saith, that such a one is delivered over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord. I CORINTHIANS, CHAPTER V, VERSE 5. Let him take his portion of food alone, in such measure and at such time as the abbot shall think fit.

Let not any one bless him as he passes by, nor the food that is given to him. CHAPTER XXVI. OF THOSE WHO KEEP COMPANY WITH THE EXCOMMUNICATED WITHOUT THE COMMAND OF THE ABBOT.

If any brother shall presume, without the command of the abbot, to join himself in any way to the excommunicated brother, or to talk with him, or send him a message, let him incur the same penalty of excommunication. CHAPTER XXVII. HOW THE ABBOT OUGHT TO CARE FOR THE EXCOMMUNICATED.

Let the abbot have a special care of the offending brethren, for they that are well need not the physician, but they that are sick.--MATTHEW, CHAPTER IX, VERSE XII. He ought, therefore, like a wise physician, to use every means in their regard, and covertly send them, as comforters, some elderly and discreet brothers, to console, as it were secretly, the wavering one, and win him to make humble satisfaction. Let them comfort him, that he be not swallowed up by overmuch sorrow, but, as the apostle says, let charity be confirmed towards him, and let all pray for him.--I CORINTHIANS, CHAPTER II, VERSE VIII.

The abbot ought especially to have care, and, with all prudence and industry, to see that he lose none of the sheep committed to his charge. Let him know that he hath undertaken the care of sick souls, and not a tyrannical authority over such as are well. Let him fear the threat of the prophet, by whom God saith, What ye saw to be fat, that ye took to yourselves, and what was diseased, that ye threw away.--EZEKIEL, CHAPTER XXXIV, VERSE III.

Let him imitate the loving-kindness of the good shepherd, who, leaving ninety-nine sheep in the mountains, went to seek one that had gone astray, on whose infirmity he took such compassion, that he vouchsafed to lay it on his own sacred shoulder, and thus carry it back to the flock.--LUKE, CHAPTER XV, VERSE IV. Of those who being often corrected do not amend. If any brother, after being corrected, or even excommunicated for any fault, does not amend, let a sharper correction be administered to him--that is to say, let him be punished with stripes.

But if, for all that, he do not correct himself, or being puffed up with pride, which God forbid, shall also defend his doings, then let the abbot act like a wise physician, and after applying the fomentations and ointments of exhortation, the medicines of the divine scriptures, and, last of all, the punishment of excommunication and of scourging, then, if he finds that his labours have no effect, let him add what is more than all this, his own prayer, and the prayer of the brethren for him, that the Lord, who can do all things, would vouchsafe to work a cure upon the infirm brother. If he be not healed and corrected by this means, then let the abbot use the sword of separation. According to that saying of the apostle, Put away the evil one from among you.

1 Corinthians 5.13. And again, If the faithless one depart, let him depart. 1 Corinthians 7.15. Lest one diseased sheep should infect the whole flock. Chapter 29.

Whether the brethren who leave the monastery ought to be received again. If that brother, who through his own fault leaveth or is cast out of the monastery, be willing to return, he shall first promise to amend the fault for which he went forth. Then let him be received into the lowest rank, that by this his humility may be tried.

If he go out again, let him be received back till the third time, but after this let him know that all entrance will be denied him. Chapter 30. How children are to be corrected.

Every age and understanding ought to have a measure of government suitable to it. As often, therefore, as children, or those under age, commit faults, and are incapable of understanding the greatness of the punishment of excommunication, let them be punished by rigorous fasting, or sharp stripes, that so they may be corrected. End of chapter 30 31-36.

The rule of St. Benedict. Chapter 31. What kind of man the cellarer of the monastery ought to be.

Let there be chosen out of the community as cellarer of the monastery, a man who is wise, ripe in manners, and sober, not a great eater, not haughty, not hasty nor insulting, not slow, not quick nor wasteful, but fearing God, and acting as a father to the whole brotherhood. Let him have care of all things, and without the command of the abbot do nothing. Let him take heed of all that is ordered, and not sadden his brethren.

But if any brother shall perchance ask anything of him that is not reasonable, let him not, by contemptuously spurning, grieve him, but reasonably and with all humility refuse what he asks for amiss. Let him have regard for his own soul, mindful of that rule of the apostle. They that have ministered well shall purchase for themselves a good degree.

1 Timothy 3.13. Let him care diligently for the sick, the children, the guests, and the poor, knowing without doubt that for all these he shall give an account on the judgment day. Let him look upon all the vessels and goods of the monastery as if they were the sacred vessels of the altar. Let him neglect nothing, neither let him be covetous nor prodigal, not wasteful of the goods of the monastery, but do all things with moderation and according to the command of his abbot.

Above all things let him have humility, and give at least a gentle answer unto him on whom he hath nothing else to bestow, for it is written, A good word is above the best gift. Ecclesiasticus 18.17. Let him have under his care all that the abbot shall appoint, and presume not to meddle with anything from which he shall forbid him. Let him give to the brethren their appointed allowance of food, without arrogance or delay, that they be not scandalized, mindful of that divine word which tells what punishment he deserves, who shall scandalize one of these little ones.

Matthew 18.6. If the community be large, let there be given to him helpers, by whose aid he may quietly perform the office committed to his charge. Let such things as are to be given or asked for, be given and asked for at suitable hours, that no one may be troubled or saddened in the house of God. Chapter 32 Of the Iron Tools or Goods of the Monastery For keeping the iron tools, clothes, or other goods belonging to the monastery, let the abbot appoint brethren, of whose life and conversation he may be sure, and to them let him allot all things to be kept, as he shall judge most expedient.

Of these let the abbot keep a list, that, as the brethren succeed each other in their various occupations, he may know what he gives and what he receives. If any one shall use the property of the monastery in a slovenly or negligent manner, let him be rebuked. If he does not amend, let him be subjected to regular discipline.

Chapter 33 Why the Monks Ought to Have Anything of Their Own Especially let this vice be cut away from the monastery by the very roots, that no one presume, without leave of the abbot, to give or receive or hold as his own anything whatsoever, either book or tablets or pen, or anything at all, because they are men whose very bodies and wills are not in their own power. But all that is necessary they may hope for from the father of the monastery, nor can they keep anything which the abbot has not given or allowed. Let

all things be common to all, as it is written.

Neither did any one say to Dink that ought was his own. Acts 4.32 If any one shall be found given to this most wicked vice, let him be admonished once or twice, and if he do not amend, let him be subjected to correction. Chapters 34 Whether All Ought Equally to Receive What is Needful As it is written, distribution was made to every one according as he had need.

Acts 4.35 By this we do not say that there should be accepting of persons, which God forbid, but that due consideration should be shown to each one's infirmities. Therefore let him who needeth less give God thanks, and be not grieved. And let him who needeth more be humbled for his infirmity, and not lifted up for the mercy that is shown him.

And thus all the members shall be in peace. Above all things take heed there be no murmuring, by word or sign, upon any occasion whatsoever. If any one shall be found faulty in this respect, let him be subjected to most severe discipline.

Chapter 35 Of the Weakly Servers in the Kitchen The brethren are so to serve each other, that no one be excused from the office of the kitchen, unless he be hindered by sickness or other business of more profit, because a greater reward is gotten thence. But let the weaker brethren have help, that they may do their work without sadness, and let all generally have help according as the number of the community and the situation of the place shall require. If the community be great, let the seller be excused from the kitchen, and, as we have said before, such as are employed in matters of greater profit.

Let the rest serve each other in charity. On Saturday let him who endeth his week in the kitchen make all things clean. Let him wash the towels wherewith the brethren wipe their hands and feet, and let both him who goeth out and him who cometh in wash the feet of all.

He shall hand over to the seller, clean and whole, all the vessels of his office, and the seller shall deliver them to him who entereth upon his office, that he may know what he giveth and what he receiveth. Let these weekly officers, one hour before refection, take each a draught of drink, and a piece of bread, over and above the appointed allowance, that at the hour of refection they may serve their brethren without murmuring or great labour. Nevertheless, on solemn days let all forbear till after mass.

On Sunday, immediately after Lord's, both the outgoing and the incoming officers for the week shall cast themselves upon their knees before all, and ask to be prayed for. Let him that hath ended his office say the verse,--Blessed art thou, O Lord God, who didst help me and console me.--Psalm 85, verse 17. Which, being thrice repeated, he shall receive the blessing.

Let him who entereth upon his office follow immediately after, and say,--O God, incline unto mine aid. O Lord, make haste to help me.--Psalm 69, verse 2. Let this likewise be thrice repeated by all, and, having received the blessing, let him enter upon his office. Chapter 36 Of the Sick Brethren Before all things, and above all things, special care must be taken of the sick, so that they may be served in very deed, as Christ himself.

For he saith, I was sick, and ye visited me.--Matthew chapter 25, verse 26. And what ye did to one of these, my least brethren, ye did to me. Ibidem, verse 40.

But let the sick themselves bear in mind that they are served for the honour of God, and must not grieve the brethren who serve them by their extravagant demands. Nevertheless, they must patiently be borne

with, because there is gotten from such a more abundant reward. Therefore let the abbot take special care they be not neglected.

Let a separate cell be set apart for their use, and an attendant that is God-fearing, diligent, and careful. As often as it shall be expedient, let the use of baths be allowed to the sick, but to such as are in health, and especially to the young, let it be seldom granted. Moreover, the sick and weakly may be allowed the use of flesh-meat for their recovery.

As soon, however, as they get better, they must all, after the accustomed manner, abstain from meat. Let the abbot take special care that the cellarer or attendant neglect not the sick, because whatever is done amiss by his disciples is imputed to himself. CHAPTER XXXII-XXXII.

The Rule of St. Benedict. By St. Benedict of Nursia. Translated by Anonymous.

CHAPTER XXXVII. OF OLD MEN AND CHILDREN. Although man's nature is of itself drawn to feel pity for these two ages--that is, for the old and for children--yet it is fitting that the authority of the rule should provide for them.

Let their weakness, therefore, be always taken into account, and the rigour of the rule, with regard to food, be by no means kept with them. Let a kind consideration be had for them, and let leave be granted them to eat before the regular hours. CHAPTER XXXVIII.

OF THE WEEKLY READER. Reading ought not to cease while the brethren eat at table. Neither ought any one presumed to read, who shall take up the book at haphazard.

But let him who is appointed to read for the whole week enter upon his office on Sunday. After Mass and Communion let him ask all to pray for him, that God may keep him from the spirit of pride. And let this verse be thrice repeated in the oratory by all, the reader first beginning it.

O Lord, thou wilt open my lips, and my mouth shall declare thy praise. Psalm 51, verse 17. And thus, having received a blessing, let him enter upon his duty.

The greatest silence shall be kept, so that no muttering or voice shall be heard, except the voice of the reader. Such things as are necessary for meat and drink, let the brethren so minister to each other, that no one need ask for anything. Yet should anything be wanted, let it be asked for rather by a sign than by a word.

Nor let any one presume to ask questions about what is being read, or about anything else, lest occasion be given to the evil one. Should the prior, however, think fit, he may make some brief exhortation for the edification of the brethren. And let the brother who is reader for the week take a little pottage before he begin to read, on account of holy communion, and lest, perchance, it be grievous for him to fast so long.

Afterwards let him eat with the weekly officers and servers of the kitchen. The brethren must not read or sing in turns, but such only as may edify the hearers. CHAPTER XXXIX.

OF THE MEASURE OR QUANTITY OF MEAT. We think it sufficient for daily refraction, both at the sixth and ninth hour, that there be at all seasons two dishes, because of the infirmities of different people, so that he who cannot eat of one may make his meal of the other. Let, therefore, two dishes of hot food suffice for the brethren, and if there be any apples or young vegetables, let them be added as a third dish.

Let one pound weight of bread suffice for the day, whether there be one refraction, or both dinner and supper. If they are to sup, let a third part of that pound be reserved by the cellarer, to be put before them at supper. If their labour be great, it shall be in the power of the abbot to add what he shall think fitting to their ordinary allowance, taking care always to avoid surfeiting.

Let the monks be not overtaken with indigestion, because there is not sin more contrary to a Christian than gluttony. As our Lord saith, Take heed to yourselves, lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness.--Luke 31.34. But to children of tender age let not the same quantity be given, but less than to the older, in all things preserving frugality. Let all, except the very weak and the sick, abstain from eating the flesh of four-footed beasts.

Chapter 40 OF THE MEASURE OF DRINK Everyone hath his proper gift from God, one thus, another thus.--1 Corinthians 7.7. Therefore it is not without some misgiving that we appoint the measure of other men's vitals. Yet considering the condition of those in weak health, we think that one pint of wine will be sufficient for each one every day. But let those upon whom God bestows the gift of abstinence know that they shall receive the proper reward.

If, however, the situation of the place, labour, or the heat of summer, require more, let the prior do what he thinketh good, ever having a care that fullness or gluttony creep not in. And although we read, in Vitis patrum verba seniorum 5.4.31, that wine is not at all the drink of monks, yet because in these our times they will not be so persuaded, let us at least agree to this, not to drink to satiety, but sparingly, because wine make us even the wise to fall away.--Ecclesiasticus, chapter 19, verse 2. Where, however, the poverty of the place will not allow the appointed measure, but much less, or perhaps none at all, let those who live there praise God and murmur not. This we admonish above all things, that there never be any murmuring.

Chapter 41. At what hours the brethren are to take their refectons? From the holy feast of Easter until Whitsuntide let the brethren take their refecton at the sixth hour, and their supper at night. But from Whitsuntide throughout the whole summer let them fast on Wednesdays and Fridays till the ninth hour, unless they have to labour in the fields, or the extremity of the heat oppress them.

But on other days let them dine at the sixth hour. This hour for dinner shall be continued at the discretion of the abbot, if they have work in the fields, or the heat of summer be great. Let him so moderate and dispose all things, that souls may be saved, and that what the brethren do may be done without just complaint.

But from the thirteenth of September till the beginning of Lent let the brethren always take their meal at the ninth hour. From the beginning of Lent till Easter they shall take their meal in the evening. Yet let things be so ordered that there be no need of lamps during the refecton, but that all be done by daylight.

At all times let the hour for supper and for dinner be so arranged that all things be done by daylight. CHAPTER XLII THAT NO ONE MAY SPEAK AFTER COMPLIN Monks ought to keep silence at all times, but especially during the hours of the night, and therefore on all days, whether of fast or not, let them all come together presently after supper, if it be not a fasting day, and let one read the collations, or lives of the fathers, or something else which will edify the hearers. Not, however, the Heptateuch or Book of Kings, for it will not be profitable for weak understandings to hear this part of Scripture at that hour.

Yet at other times it may be read. But if it be a fasting day, let them, as we have said, come to the reading of the collations shortly after evensong. Then let them read four or five pages, or as many as the time will allow, in order that during reading all, even such as have had some work enjoined them, may have assembled together.

All being gathered together, let them say complin, after which no one shall be permitted to speak. If any one shall be found to break this rule of silence, let him be liable to the most severe punishment, except there be some necessary cause, such as the arrival of guests, or the command of the abbot. Yet even in that case let it be done with the greatest gravity and moderation.

As those who come late to the work of God, or to table, as soon as the signal of divine office shall be heard, each one, laying aside whatever occupation he may happen to be engaged in, shall hasten with all speed, and yet with gravity, lest an occasion be given for light behavior. Let nothing, therefore, be preferred to the work of God. If any one shall come to meetings after the gloria of the ninety-fourth psalm, which we would have said slowly and leisurely for this very purpose, let him not stand in the order in the choir, but last of all, or in a place which the abbot shall have set apart for such negligent people, that he may be seen by him and by all the rest, till the work of God be ended.

Thus undo penance and make public satisfaction. We have judged it fitting they should stand in the last place, or apart, for this reason, that being seen by all, they may for very shame's sake amend. For it they remain outside the oratory, some one will per chance either return to his cell and sleep, or at least sit without, and abandoning himself to idle talk, give an occasion to the evil one.

Let him, therefore, entering, that he may not lose all, but may be amended for the time to come. In the day-hours let him that shall come to the work of God, after the verse Deus in auditorium and gloria of the first psalm, stand last, as directed above, and not presume to join himself to the choir of singers, until he has made satisfaction, unless the abbot shall, by his permission, give him leave, on condition, however, that he afterwards may commend for his fault. He that cometh to the table before the verse Oculi Omnium, or Edent Pauperes, so that all may say the verse and pray, and all at once sit down at the table together, shall be corrected once or twice, if these have happened through his own fault or negligence.

And if he do not afterwards amend, let him not be admitted to a share of the common table, but being separated from the company of his brethren, let him eat alone, and let his portion of wine be taken away from him, till he be made satisfaction, and amend his way. He shall suffer the like penalty, who is not present at a verse Confiteantur, or Memoriam, that is said after meal, and let not any one presume to take meat or drink before or after the appointed time. Moreover, if anything be offered to a brother by the prior, and that brother refuse it, but afterwards have a mind for it, he shall receive neither that, nor anything else, until he have made suitable atonement.

**HOW THOSE WHO ARE EXCOMMUNICATED ARE TO MAKE SATISFACTION** At the hour when the work of God is being celebrated in the oratory, let him who for more grievous offenses is excommunicated from the table or oratory, lie prostrate before the doors, thereof saying nothing. Only with his head upon the ground, let him lie at the feet of all who go out of the oratory. This he shall do until the abbot think he hath given sufficient satisfaction.

When ordered by the abbot, he shall cast himself at the abbot's feet, and then at the feet of all the brethren, that they may pray for him. Then if the abbot shall order it, let him be received into the choir, and stand in that rank, which he shall appoint, yet so that he presume not to intone a psalm, or read a lesson in

the oratory, or do anything else, unless the abbot again order him. After each hour, when the work of God is finished, let him cast himself upon the earth in the place where he stands, and in this manner make satisfaction, until the abbot commands him to cease therefrom.

But let such as for slight faults are excommunicated only from the table, make satisfaction in the oratory as long as the abbot shall command, and let them continue their satisfaction, until he bless them, and say, It is enough. CHAPTER XLV. Of those who commit any fault in the oratory.

If any one, while reciting a psalm, responsory, antiphon, or lesson, shall make any mistake, and not forthwith atone for it before all, let him be liable to greater punishment, as one who will not correct by humility, what he hath done amiss through negligence. But for such a fault let children be beaten. CHAPTER XLVI.

Of those who offend in lighter manners. If any one, while engaged in labour, either in the kitchen, or the cellar, or in the service of others, in the bakehouse, the garden, or in any other occupation, shall do anything amiss, or break, or lose anything, or offend in any other way, and do not come presently before the abbot or community, and of his own accord confess, and make satisfaction for this offence, when that is made known by others, he shall be more severely punished. But if the fault be a secret sin, let him manifest it to the abbot only, or to his spiritual seniors, who know how to heal their own wounds, and not to disclose or publish those of others.

CHAPTER XLVII. Of making known the hour for the work of God. Let the abbot take care, both night and day, to signify the hour of the work of God, either by announcing it himself, or by entrusting the duty of so doing by some watchful brother, in order that all things may be done at their appointed times.

But after the abbot, let such as have been appointed, each in his own order, intone the psalm or antiphon. Let not any one presume to sing or read, unless he have skill enough to do so, unto the edification of the hearers. Whomsoever the abbot shall appoint to do this, let him do it with humility, gravity, and the fear of God.

CHAPTER XLVIII. Of daily manual labour. Idleness is an enemy of the soul.

Therefore, the brethren ought to be employed at certain times in labouring with their hands, and at other fixed times in holy reading. Wherefore we think that both these occasions may be well ordered thus. From Easter till the first of October, let them, on going forth from prime, labour at whatever they are required, till about the fourth hour.

From the fourth till close upon the sixth hour, let them be employed in reading. On rising from table after the sixth hour, let them rest on their beds with all silence, or if perchance any one shall desire to read, let him read in such a way as not to disturb any one else. Let none be said seasonable.

At about the middle of the eighth hour, and after that, let them work at what they have to do till the evening. If the situation of the place or their poverty require them to labour in repairing their core, let them not be saddened thereat. For then are they monks in very deed, when they live by the labour of their hands, as our fathers and the apostles did before us.

Yet let all things be done with moderation, for the sake of the faint-hearted. From the first of October till the beginning of Lent, they shall be employed in reading till the second hour complete, when tears shall be celebrated. And from that till the ninth hour, let them labour at whatever work is enjoyed them.

At the first signal of the ninth hour, let them all leave off work, so as to be ready when the second signal is given. After their refraction, they shall be employed in reading spiritual books, or the Psalms. But in Lent they must read from morning till the third hour complete.

Then let them work till the end of the tenth hour, at what is enjoyed them. In these days of Lent let each one have a book from the library, and read it all through in order. The books must be given at the beginning of Lent.

Let one or two seniors be specially appointed to go about the monastery at the hours in which the brethren are employed in reading, and see that no one be slothful, or give himself up to idleness or foolish talk, and neglect his reading, being thus not only unprofitable to himself, but also a hindrance to others. If such an one be found, which God forbid, let him be reprehended once or twice, and if he do not amend, let him be so severely corrected, that others may take warning by it. Neither let one brother associate himself with another at unseasonable times.

On Sunday all shall devote themselves to reading, except such as are deputed for the various offices. But if any one shall be so negligent and slothful as to be either unwilling or unable to meditate or read, let him have some work imposed upon him which he can do, and thus not be idle. To the brethren who are of weak constitution or in delicate health, such work or art shall be given, as shall apt them from idleness, and yet not oppress them with so much labor as to drive them away.

Their weakness must be taken into consideration by the abbot. 49. Of the observance of Lent.

Although a monk's life ought at all times be resemble of continual Lent, yet because few have such virtue, we exhort all in these days of Lent to live in all purity, and during this holy season to wash away all the negligence of their times. This we shall worthily accomplish if we refrain from all defects, and apply ourselves to tearful prayer, to reading, to compunction of heart and abstinence. In these days, therefore, let us add something over and above to our wanted task, such as private prayer and abstinence from meat and drink.

Let every one offer to God, of his own free will, with joy of the Holy Ghost, something above the measure appointed him. That is to say, let him withhold from his body something in the way of food, drink, sleep, talk, and laughter, and with spiritual joy and desire await the holy feast of Easter. Nevertheless, let each one acquaint the abbot with what he offers, and do it at his desire and with his content.

Because whatever is done without the permission of the spiritual Father shall be imputed to presumption and vain glory, and merit no reward. All things, therefore, must be done with the approbation of the abbot. Chapter 50 Of the brethren who work at a great distance from the oratory, or are on a journey.

The brethren who work at a great distance, and in the abbot's judgment are unable to come to the oratory in due time, shall fall upon their knees in the place where they are laboring, and there perform the work of God with divine fear. Also, those who are sent on a journey shall not allow the appointed hours to pass by, but perform them on the way as they are best able, and omit not to accomplish their task of divine service. Chapter 51 Of the brethren who do not go far off.

Let not the brother who goes forth upon any errand, and intends to return that same day to the monastery, presume to eat while abroad, even though invited to do so, unless per chance he has the abbot's order. If he do otherwise, let him be excommunicated. Chapter 52 Of the oratory of the monastery.

Let the oratory be what its name signifies, and let nothing else be done or treated of there. When the work of God is ended, let all go forth with exceeding great silence, and let respect be paid to the presence of God, in order that the brother who wishes to pray privately may not be hindered from so doing by the misconduct of others. If any other brother should also wish to pray secretly, let him enter without ostentation, and pray not with a loud voice, but with tears and earnestness of heart.

Therefore let not any one remain in the oratory after the work of God is ended, except for the purpose of prayer, lest he be a hindrance to others. Chapter 53 Of the manner of entertaining guests. Let all guests who come to the monastery be entertained like Christ himself, because he will say, I was a stranger and he took me in.

Matthew chapter 25 verse 35. Let due honour be paid to all, especially to those who are of the household of the faith, and to travellers. As soon, therefore, as a guest is announced, let the prior of the brethren go to meet him with all show of charity.

First let them pray together, and so be associated to each other in peace. The kiss of peace shall not be offered till after prayer, because of the illusions of the devil. And in the salutation itself let all humility be shown.

By bowing the head or prostrating on the ground before all the guests who come or go, let Christ, who is received in their persons, be also adored in them. When the guests have been received, let them be brought to prayer, and after that the prior or any one whom he shall order shall sit with them. Let the divine law be read before the guest, that he may be edified, and afterwards let all courtesy be shown him.

For this sake the prior shall break the fast ordained by the rule, unless perchance it be one of those special days on which it cannot be broken. The brethren, however, shall keep their custom fast. Let the abbot pour water on the hands of the guests, and let both him and the whole community wash the feet of the same, after which they shall say this verse, We have received thy mercy, O God, in the midst of thy temple.

Psalms 48.10. But let the poor and strangers especially be diligently entertained with all care, because in them Christ is more truly received, for the simple fear of the rich doth beget them honour. Let the kitchen for the abbot and the guests stand apart, in order that the latter, who are never wanting in a monastery, may not disquiet the brethren by their untimely arrivals. Into this kitchen let the brothers who can perform its duty well enter for a year.

They shall have assistance when they need it, in order that they may serve without murmuring. When they have less labour, let them go forth to work where they shall be appointed, and not only in these, but in all other offices of the monastery, let consideration be shown them, so that when they need help it be given, and when they are without work, they obey and do what is commanded them. Let the care of the guest-room be entrusted to a brother, whose soul the fear of God possesseth.

Let there be a sufficient number of beds there, and let the house of God be by wise men wisely governed. By no means let anyone, unless appointed thereunto, either mix with or separate from the guests, but if he shall meet or see them, after humbly saluting and asking their blessing, he shall pass on, saying that it is not lawful for him to talk with a guest. By no means let any monk, without the abbot's permission, receive from his parents or from anyone else, or give to another, letters, tokens, or any gifts whatsoever, and if anything be sent to him, even from his parents, let him not presume to receive it, unless it be first told the

abbot.

If he order it to be received, it shall be in his power to appoint the person to whom it shall be given, and let not the brother to whom perchance it was sent be grieved, lest an occasion be given to the devil. Whosoever shall presume to do otherwise shall be subjected to regular discipline. Chapter 55 Of the Clothes and Shoes of the Brethren Let clothing be given to the brethren suitable to the place where they live, and to the temperature of the air, because in cold countries more is needed, and in warm less.

The arrangement of all these shall be left to the discretion of the abbot. Nevertheless we believe that for temperate places it will be sufficient for each monk to have a cowl and tunic. The cowl in winter to be the thicker stuff, but in summer finer and worn thin, also a scapular for work, and shoes and stocking to cover their feet.

Let not the monks find fault with the color or coarseness of things. They shall be such as can be procured in the country where they live, or bought at the cheapest rate. Let the abbot take care of their dimensions, that they be not too short, but of a size suitable to those who wear them.

On receiving new clothes let them always give up the old ones at once, to be laid in the wardrobe for the poor. For it is sufficient for a monk to have two tunics and two cowls, as well for change at nights, as for the convenience of washing. Anything beyond this is superfluous, and must be cut off.

Also they shall give back their shoes and whatever is worn out when they receive anything new. When sent on a journey they shall receive drawers from the wardrobe, and on their return shall restore them washed clean. Let their cowls and tunics on such occasions be somewhat better than those they ordinarily use.

They shall receive them on setting out, and restore them to the wardrobe on their return. Let a straw mattress, a blanket, coverlet and pillow suffice for their bedding. This the abbot shall frequently examine, to prevent the vice of proprietorship.

And if any one be discovered to possess anything which he hath not received from the abbot, let him be subjected to the severest correction. To root out the vice, let all things be given them by the abbot which shall be necessary, that is, a cowl, a tunic, shoes and stockings, a girdle, a knife, a pen, a needle, a handkerchief and tablets, that all pretence of necessity may be taken away. However, let the abbot always bear in mind that sentence from the Acts of the Apostles.

And distribution was made to every one according as he had need. Let him therefore consider the infirmities of such as are in need, and pay no regard to the ill will of the envious. In all his ordinances let him always think on the retribution of God.

The abbot shall always make his meals with the guests and strangers. But as often as there are few guests, it shall be in his power to invite any of the brethren he may choose. Let him take care, however, that one or two seniors be always left with the brethren, for the sake of discipline.

57. Of the artificers of the monastery. If there be artificers in the monastery, let them exercise their crafts with all humility, provided the abbot shall have ordered them.

But if any of them be proud of the skill he hath in his craft, because he thereby seem to gain something for the monastery, let him be removed from it, and not exercise it again, unless, after humbling himself, the

abbot shall permit him. But if any of their work is to be sold, let those who make the bargain take heed, and presume not to defraud the monastery in any way. Let them remember Ananias and Sapphira.

55. Lest they, or any who defraud the monastery, should incur the death of their soul, and these did the death of their body. And in the prices themselves let not the vice of avarice creep in, but let things always be sold somewhat cheaper than by seculars, that in all things God may be glorified.

58. Of the manner of receiving, and the manner of receiving, and the manner of receiving, brothers, to religion, let not an easy entrance be granted to one who cometh newly to religious life, but, as the apostle saith, try the spirits, if they be of God. If, therefore, the newcomer persevere knocking, and continue for four or five days patiently to endure both the injuries offered to him and the difficulty made about his entrance, and persist in his petition, leave to enter shall be granted him, and he shall be in the guest hall for a few days.

Afterwards he shall be in the novitiate, where he shall meditate, and eat, and sleep. Let a senior, who has the address of winning souls, be appointed to watch over him narrowly and carefully, to discover whether he truly seeks God, and is eager for the work of God, for obedience, and for humiliation. Let all the rigor and austerity by which we tend towards God be laid before him, and if he promise stability and perseverance, at the end of two months let the whole rule be read to him with the addition of these words.

Behold the law under which thou desirest to fight. If thou canst observe it, enter in. If thou canst not, freely depart.

If he shall still persevere, let him then be brought back to the aforesaid cell of the novices, and again be tried in all patience. After the lapse of six months, let the rule be read to him again, that he may know unto what he has come. If he still persevere, after four months let the same rule be read to him once more.

If he shall then promise, after due deliberation, to observe all things and do everything commanded him, let him be received into the community. Knowing that he is from that time forward under the law of the rule, so that he can neither leave the monastery nor shake off the yoke of the rule, which, after so long a deliberation, might have been accepted or refused. And when they admit him to profession, he shall, in the presence of all, make a promise before God and his saints, of stability, amendment of manners, and obedience, in order that if at any time he shall act contrarywise, he may know that he shall be condemned by him whom he mocketh.

He shall draw up the form of this promise in the name of the saints whose relics are on the altar, and of the abbot there present. With his own hand he shall write it, or, if he knoweth not how, another, at his request, shall write it for him, and the novice shall put his mark to it, and lay it with his own hand upon the altar. After doing this, let him presently begin the verse, Uphold me, O Lord, according to thy word, and I shall live.

Let me not be confounded in my expectation. Psalm 118 and verse 116 Let the whole community repeat this three times, adding at the end, Glory be to the Father! Then let the new brother cast himself at the feet of all, that they may pray for him, and from that hour he shall be counted as one of the community. If he hath any property, he shall either first bestow it upon the poor, or, by a formal gift, hand it over to the monastery, without any reserve for himself.

Because for the future he must know that he hath not so much as power over his own body. Let him therefore presently, in the oratory, be stripped of his own garments, and be clothed in those of the monastery. But the garments of which he is divested shall be kept in the wardrobe, that if, which God forbid, he should consent, by the persuasion of the devil, to leave the monastery, he may be stripped of his habit and expelled.

But he shall not have again the writing of his profession, which the abbot received from him at the altar, that shall be kept in the monastery. Chapter 59 Of the Sons of Nobles, or of the Poor that are Offered If any nobleman shall perchance offer his son to God in the monastery, let the parents, if the child himself be under age, make thee a foresaid promise for him, and together with the oblation, this was a host in a chalice in which there was some wine, the child held them in his hands during the ceremony of dedication. Constit.

L. F. Cap. XVIII. Let them wrap that promise and the hand of the boy in the altar cloth, and thus dedicate him to God.

But with regard to his property, they shall, in the said document, promise under oath, that they will never either give or furnish him with an occasion of having anything, either by themselves or by any other person or means whatsoever. If they will not do this, but wish to offer something, as an alms to the monastery, by way of acknowledgement, let them make a donation of whatsoever they please, and reserve the income of it to themselves. Let matters be so managed that no expectation remain with the child, whereby being deceived he may perish, which God forbid.

As we have learned by experience in the case of others, let those who are poor act in the same way, but such as have nothing whatever shall simply make the promise, and with the oblation give up their son before witnesses. CHAPTER XVI. OF PRIESTS WHO DESIRE TO DWELL IN THE MONASTERY.

If any one of the priestly order shall request to be received in the monastery, let not permission be speedily granted even unto him. However, if he shall persist in his request, let him know that he will have to keep all the disciplines appointed by the rule, and that no relaxation will be made in his favor, according to that which is written, Friend, for what art thou come? MATTHEW XXVI. Nevertheless he shall be allowed to stand next after the abbot, to give the blessing, and to say mass, provided the abbot order him.

Otherwise he shall presume to do nothing, knowing that he is subject to regular discipline, and particularly obliged to give unto all examples of humility. If his position in the monastery shall have been given to him on account of his order, or for any other reason whatsoever, let him remember that his true place is the one fixed by the time of his entrance, and not that which is yielded to him out of reverence for his priesthood. But if any cleric shall likewise desire to be admitted to the monastery, let him be put in the middle rank, but only on condition that he promise observance of the rule and stability in it.

CHAPTER XVII. OF MONKS THAT ARE STRANGERS, HOW THEY ARE TO BE RECEIVED. If any monk who is a stranger shall come from a distant place, and desire to dwell in the monastery as a guest, and being content with the customs he findeth there, doth not trouble the monastery by his superfluous wants, but is satisfied with what he findeth, let him be entertained for as long a time as he desireth.

And if he is reasonable, and with loving humility, reprehend or point out any abuse, let the abbot prudently take notice of what he sayeth. For the Lord hath perchance sent him for that very reason. But if, after a time, he should desire to take up his abode there, let him not be refused, especially since they had ample

opportunities of discovering his manner of life, during the time he lived among them as a guest.

If, however, during that time he was found troublesome or faulty, not only shall he not be incorporated with the community, but even be told with all civility to depart, lest others should be corrupted by his bad behavior. But if he doth not deserve to be sent away, not only let him be received into the society of the community, when he makes the request, but let him even be persuaded to stay, that by his example others may be instructed, because in every place we serve one God, and fight under one king. The abbot may also put him in a somewhat higher rank, if he should find him well deserving of it, and not only may the abbot exalt a monk to a higher place than is his due, but also any of the aforesaid priests or clerics, if their lives be such as to deserve it.

Let the abbot, however, beware never at any time to receive a monk into his community from a known monastery, without the consent of his abbot, or letters of commendation from him, because it is written, What thou wilt not have done to thyself, do not to another. Matthew 7.12. Chapter 62. Of the Priests of the Monastery If any abbot desire to have a priest or deacon promoted to holy orders, let him choose from his monks one who is worthy to fill the office of priesthood, but let him that is ordained beware of haughtiness and pride, and presume not to do anything except what is ordered by the abbot, while aware that he is now much more subject to the discipline of the rule.

Let him not, by reason of his priesthood, forget the obedience and discipline of the rule, but rather strive to advance more and more in the service of God. He shall, however, take his rank from the time he entered the monastery, except in his office at the altar, and also, in case the community's choice and the abbot's desire be to advance him higher for his holiness of life. He must, nevertheless, observe the rules prescribed by the deans or provosts, and if he presume to act contrarywise, he shall be judged, not as a priest, but as a rebel.

If, after frequent admonitions, he does not amend, the bishop shall be informed of his behavior. If even after this he grow not better, and his faults become notorious, he shall be thrust out of the monastery, provided his disobedience be such that he will not submit and obey the rule. Chapter 63.

Of the Order of the Community. The brethren shall hold that rank in the monastery which is fixed for them by the time of their conversion, by the merit of their life, or by the appointment of the abbot. And let not the abbot disquiet the flock committed to him, not, as it were by an arbitrary use of power, arrange anything unjustly, but let him always consider that he is to give an account to God of all his judgments and of all his works.

Therefore, let the brethren receive the pacts, approach to communion, intone a psalm, and stand in choir, according to that order which he shall appoint, or which they hold among themselves. In all places, without exception, let not order be decided by age, neither let it be a prejudice to any man. For Samuel and Daniel, though mere ewes, set in judgment upon the elders.

With the exception, therefore, of those for whom special reasons the abbot shall advance, or loser, let all rest keep the order of the conversion. For example, he who cometh to the monastery at the second hour of the day must know that he is lower than the man who came at the first hour, no matter what his age or dignity may be. But with regard to children, let them be kept under discipline on all occasions, by all indiscriminately.

Let the juniors, therefore, honor their seniors, and let the seniors love the juniors. But in addressing each other by name, no one shall call another by his simple name. Let the seniors call the juniors brothers, and let the juniors call the seniors fathers, out of reverence.

But because the abbot representeth the person of Christ, he shall be called domnus, and abbot, not as if he took the title upon himself, but out of honor and love of Christ. Let him remember to conduct himself in such a way as to be worthy of so great an honor. Wheresoever the brethren meet each other, let the junior ask a blessing from the senior.

When the senior passeth by, let the junior rise, and give place to him to sit down. Nor shall the junior presume to sit with him, unless his senior bid him to do so, in order to accomplish that which is written, in honor preventing one another. Romans chapter 12 and verse 10 Little children, youths, shall keep their respective places in the oratory or at table with due discipline.

Everywhere careful watch shall be kept over them, till they come to the age of understanding. End of chapter 63 End of chapters 58 to 63 Chapters 64 to 69 of the Rule of St. Benedict This is a LibriVox recording. All LibriVox recordings are in the public domain.

For more information, or to volunteer, please visit [LibriVox.org](http://LibriVox.org). Recording by Marianne The Rule of St. Benedict by St. Benedict of Nursia Translated by Anonymous Chapter 64 Of the Election of the Abbot In the election of an abbot, let the following method always be observed. Let he be constituted abbot, whom either the whole community, by common consent, shall elect in the fear of God, or whom a small part of the same shall choose with greater wisdom. Let him who is to be raised to this dignity be chosen on account of his virtuous life, his learning, and his wisdom, even though he be the last in the community.

But although the entire community, which God forbid, shall with one accord choose a man who supports them in their evil practices, and these, by some means, become known to the bishop in whose diocese that place is situated, or to the abbots, or to the neighboring Christians, let them nullify the election of these wicked men, and appoint a worthy steward over the house of God, knowing that for this they shall receive a good reward, if they do it with a pure intention, and through zeal for God, and, on the contrary, that they sin if they neglect to do so. When once established in his office, let the abbot always reflect how weighty a burden he hath received, and under whom he must give an account of his stewardship. Let him also know that it is more becoming in him to do good unto others than to hold sway over them.

He must therefore be learned in the divine law, that he may know whence to bring forth new things and old. He must be chaste, sober, and merciful, and always prefer mercy to justice, that he himself may obtain mercy. He shall hate vice, and love the brethren.

Even in his corrections he shall act with prudence, and be guilty of no excess, lest, while too eagerly scouring off the rust, the vessel itself be broken. Let him bear in mind his own frailty, and remember that the bruised reed must not be broken. By this we do not mean that he should allow vices to grow up, but, as we have said before, with prudence and charity seek to root them out in such a way as shall be expedient for each case.

And let his aim be rather to excite love than to inspire fear. He must not be trivalent and anxious. Neither let him be over-exacting, not headstrong, nor jealous, nor over-suspicious, for then he will never be at rest.

Even in what he orders, whether it pertain to God or to temporal matters, let him be prudent and considerate. Let him be discreet and moderate in the works which he enjoins, bearing in mind the discretion of Holy Jacob, who said, If I shall cause my flocks to be over-driven, they will all die in one day. Therefore, adopting these and the like principles of discretion, which is the mother of all virtues, let him so temper all things that the strong may have somewhat to strive after, and the weak, not from which they may flee away.

Especially let him observe this present rule in all things, that after having ministered well, he may hear from the Lord what the good servant heard, who gave corn to his fellow servants in due time. Amen, I say unto you, over all his goods he will place him. Matthew chapter 24 and verse 47 Chapter 65 Of the Provost of the Monastery It often happens that by the appointment of a provost, Note.

This corresponds to our prior. St. Benedict uses *praepositus* and prior synonymously. End note.

Great scandals arise in monasteries, because some, so appointed, being puffed up with the malignant spirit of pride and esteeming themselves to be second abbots, take upon themselves to tyrannize over others, to foster scandals, and to promote dissensions in the community, and especially in those places where the provost is instituted by the same bishop of abbots as the abbot himself. How foolish this custom is may easily be perceived. For a handle for pride is given to the provost from the very beginning of his appointment, because his thoughts suggest to him that he is now released from the power of the abbot, since he is instituted by the very persons by whom the abbot himself is instituted.

Hence arise envy, quarrels, distractions, rivalries, dissensions, and disorders. And while the abbot and the provost are at variance with each other, it must of necessity follow that their souls are in peril during this dissension. Those also who are under their charge run to destruction by adhering, some to one side and some to the other.

The sin of this danger lieth principally upon those who were the authors of such an appointment. Therefore, we see that it is expedient for the preservation of peace and charity that the entire government of the monastery depend upon the will of the abbot. As we have before arranged, let all the business of the monastery be transacted, if possible, by the deans, according as the abbot shall have determined, in order that, many being sharers in the same office, no one may become proud.

But if either the circumstance of the place require a provost, or the community with reason and humility ask for one, and the abbot think it expedient, he shall, with the advice of such of the brethren as have the fear of God before them, nominate and appoint one himself. Let the provost do with reverence what shall be enjoined him by the abbot, in no way going against his will or ordinance, because the higher he is advanced above the rest, the more carefully he ought to observe all the precepts of the rule. If the provost be found viciously inclined, or deceived by the haughtiness of pride, or contemptor of the holy rule, let him be warned by word of mouth four times.

If he do not amend, let the correction of regular discipline be applied to him. If with this he do not grow better, he shall be deposed from the dignity of the provostship, and a worthier man put in his place. If, after this, he be not quiet and obedient in the community, let him be expelled from the monastery.

The abbot shall nevertheless bear in mind, that for all his judgments he shall have to give an account to God, lest perchance his soul burn with the flames of envy and jealousy. At the gate of the monastery let there be stationed a wise old man, who knows how to receive and to give an answer, and whose ripeness

of age will not suffer him to wander from his post. He ought to have a cell near the gate, that such as come may always find him at hand, ready to give them an answer.

As soon as any one shall knock, or a poor man cry for aid, let him presently answer, Thanks be to God, or invoke a blessing, and with all mildness of the fear of God, let him reply speedily in the fervor of charity. If he need help, he shall have a junior brother with him. The monastery ought, if possible, to be so constructed as to contain within itself all necessaries, that is, water, a mill, a garden, and a bakehouse.

Also, that the various crafts be exercised within it, so that there be no occasion for monks to go abroad, because it is in no wise expedient for their souls. We wish this rule to be frequently read in the community, that no brother may excuse himself on the score of ignorance. Chapter 67.

Of Brethren Who Are Sent on a Journey. That those who are to be sent on a journey commend themselves to the prayers of all the brethren, and of the abbot, and always at the last prayer of the work of God let a commemoration be made of all that are absent. When they come back, they shall, on the very day of their return, lie prostrate on the ground of the oratory during all the canonical hours while the work of God is being fulfilled, and beg the prayers of all on account of the faults they may have committed on the way, by sight or hearing of evil things, or by idle discourse.

That no one presume to relate unto others what he has seen or heard outside the monastery, because this is a fruitful source of evil. If anyone shall presume to do so, let him be liable to the penalty prescribed by the rule. In like manner shall he be punished, who shall presume to break the enclosure of the monastery, or go anywhere, or do anything, how trifling so ever, without leave of the abbot.

Chapter 68. If a Brother Be Ordered to Do Impossibilities. If any hard or impossible commands be enjoined a brother, let him receive the injunctions of him who biddeth him with all mildness and obedience.

But if he shall see that the burden altogether exceeded the measure of his strength, let him patiently, and in due season, state the cause of this inability to his superior, without manifesting any pride, resistance, or contradiction. If, after his suggestion, the prior shall still persist in his command, let the brother know that it is for his good, and trusting in the assistance of God, let him obey through love for him. Chapter 69.

That No One Presume to Defend Another in the Monastery. Special care must be taken that on no occasion one monk presume to uphold or defend another in the monastery, even though they be very near of kin. In no way whatsoever let any monk presume to do this, because exceeding great occasion of scandal may arise from thence.

If any one shall transgress in this point, let him be severely punished. CHAPTER VIII. The Rule of St. Benedict by St. Benedict of Nursia.

Translated by Anonymous. Chapter VII. That No One Presume to Strike Another.

Let every occasion of presumption be avoided in the monastery. We ordain and decree that no one, unless the abbot hath given his authority, shall be allowed to excommunicate or to strike any of his brethren, such as trespass in this respect, shall be reprehended in the presence of all, that the rest may be inspired with fear. But let all have strict discipline and care over children until their fifteenth year.

Yet this also must be done with moderation and discretion. For he who shall, without the abbot's leave, presume to chastise such as are above that age, or to be unduly severe even towards the children, shall

be liable to regular discipline. Because it is written, What thou wouldst not have done to thyself, do not thou unto another.

Tobit 4.16 CHAPTER VIII. That the Brethren Be Obedient to Each Other. The service of obedience by all is not to be rendered to the abbot only.

But the brethren shall also mutually obey each other, knowing that by this path of obedience they shall go unto God. Therefore, when the command of the abbot, or of other superiors constituted by him, have been first obeyed, to which we suffer no private orders to be preferred, the juniors shall obey their seniors with all charity and diligence. If anyone be found contentious, let him be rebuked.

But if a brother be rebuked for even the least thing by the abbot, or by any of his seniors, or, if he shall perceive that the mind of his senior is even slightly, be it ever so little, moved against him, he shall, without delay, prostrate himself at his feet, and remain there till that commotion be appeased, and he receive a blessing. If anyone be too proud to do this, let him be liable either to corporal punishment, or, if he prove contumacious, let him be expelled from the monastery. CHAPTER VIII.

Of the Good Zeal Which Monks Ought to Have. As there is an evil zeal of bitterness, which separateth from God, and leadeth to hell, so there is a good zeal, which separateth from vices, and leadeth to God and life everlasting. Let monks, therefore, exercise this zeal with most fervent love, that is to say, let them, quote, in honour prevent one another, unquote.

Romans, Chapter XII, Verse 10. Let them bear patiently with each other's infirmities, whether of body or of mind. Let them contend with one another in the virtue of obedience.

Let no one follow what he thinketh profitable to himself, but rather that which is profitable to another. Let them show unto each other all brotherly charity with a chaste love. Let them fear God, love their abbot with sincere and humble affection, and prefer nothing whatever to Christ, and may he bring us to life everlasting.

Amen. CHAPTER VIII. That the whole observance of perfection is not contained in this rule.

We have written this rule, that by its observance in monasteries we may show that we possess, in some measure, a brightness of manners, or the beginning of a good religious life. But for such as hasten forward to the perfection of holy living, there are the precepts of the Holy Fathers, the observance whereof leadeth a man to the height of perfection. For what page or what passage is there in the divinely inspired books of the Old and New Testament, that is not a most perfect rule of man's life? Or what book is there of the holy Catholic Fathers, that doth not proclaim this? That we may by a direct course reach our Creator.

Moreover, what else are the collations of the Fathers, their institutes, their lives, also the rule of our holy Father Basil, but examples of the good living and obedience of monks, and so many instruments of virtue? But to us who are slothful, and lead bad and negligent lives, they are a matter for shame and confusion. Therefore, whosoever thou art that dost hasten to the heavenly country, first accomplish, by the help of Christ, this little rule written for beginners. And then at length thou shalt come, under the guidance of God, to those loftier heights of doctrine and of virtue, which we have mentioned above.

THE END Whosoever shall follow this rule, peace on them. Galatians chapter 6 verse 16 End of chapters 72-73 End of the Rule of St. Benedict by St. Benedict of Nursia Translated by Anonymous

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