

But if as a Guest She Was Found Exacting or Prone to Vice

by St. Benedict of Nursia

St. Benedict emphasizes the importance of maintaining community integrity through careful acceptance of members and the role of the Abbess in guiding and elevating deserving individuals.

Scripture: Proverbs 27:17, Matthew 7:12, 1 Corinthians 15:33, 1 Timothy 4:12, Hebrews 13:17

Topics: "Community Life", "Christian Virtue"

Description

St. Benedict of Nursia emphasizes the importance of maintaining a community of virtuous individuals, highlighting the need to remove those who are corrupting influences and to welcome those who set a positive example. He encourages the Abbess to discern the worthiness of each individual and to promote those who lead exemplary lives to higher ranks within the community. St. Benedict also stresses the importance of seeking consent and recommendations when accepting new members into the community, following the golden rule of treating others as you would like to be treated.

Transcript

But if as a guest she was found exacting or prone to vice,
not only should she be denied membership in the community,
but she should even be politely requested to leave,
lest others be corrupted by her evil life.
If, however, she has not proved to be the kind
who deserves to be put out,
she should not only on her own application be received
as a member of the community,
but she should even be persuaded to stay,
that the others may be instructed by her example,

and because in every place it is the same Lord who is served,
the same King for whom the battle is fought.

Moreover, if the Abbess perceives that she is worthy,
she may put her in a somewhat higher rank.

[And not only with regard to a nun
but also with regard to those in priestly or clerical orders
previously mentioned,]*

the Abbess may establish them in a higher rank
than would be theirs by date of entrance
if she perceives that their life is deserving.

Let the Abbess take care, however,
never to receive a nun from another known monastery
as a member of her community
without the consent of her Abbess or a letter of recommendation;
for it is written,

"Do not do to another what you would not want done to yourself" (Tob. 4:16).

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/st-benedict-of-nursia/but-if-as-a-guest-she-was-found-exacting-or-prone-to-vice/>

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