

In the Constituting of an Abbess

by St. Benedict of Nursia

The choice of an Abbess should be based on merit and wisdom, and the community or its leaders should intervene if a wicked choice is made.

Scripture: Proverbs 11:3, 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:7, 1 Peter 5:2

Topics: "Church Leadership", "Spiritual Integrity"

Description

St. Benedict of Nursia emphasizes the importance of selecting a worthy leader for the role of Abbess, highlighting the need for the community to choose someone based on merit of life and wisdom of doctrine, rather than personal preferences. He warns against the dangers of allowing a leader who condones vices, urging the community to act with zeal for God and integrity in selecting a suitable steward for the house of God.

Transcript

In the constituting of an Abbess

let this plan always be followed,

that the office be conferred on the one who is chosen

either by the whole community unanimously in the fear of God

or else by a part of the community, however small,

if its counsel is more wholesome.

Merit of life and wisdom of doctrine

should determine the choice of the one to be constituted,

even if she be the last of the order of the community.

But if (which God forbid)

the whole community should agree to choose a person

who will acquiesce in their vices,

and if those vices somehow become known to the Bishop
to whose diocese the place belongs,
or to the Abbots, Abbesses or the faithful of the vicinity,
let them prevent the success of this conspiracy of the wicked,
and set a worthy steward over the house of God.

They may be sure

that they will receive a good reward for this action

if they do it with a pure intention and out of zeal for God;

as, on the contrary, they will sin if they fail to do it.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/st-benedict-of-nursia/in-the-constituting-of-an-abbess/>

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